

## SHORTER NOTES

### PHIDIAS AND CICERO, *BRUTUS* 70

Phidias' absence from the survey of sculptors in Cic. *Brut.* 70 is curious, explanation in terms of differing histories of sculpture only partly convincing.<sup>1</sup> I suggest that Cicero has valid literary motives and is wittily undermining the Atticist position by adaptation of what was a rhetorical *topos*, the parallel development of Greek prose and sculpture from archaic sparseness to classical expertise and dignity: see Dem. *Eloc.* 14,<sup>2</sup> D. H. *Isoc.* 3, p.59 U-R;<sup>3</sup> more elaborate but partly deriving from Cicero and less homogeneous is Qu. 12.10.7–9. Cicero assumes the reader's knowledge of the commonplace, pointedly ignores the quality of grandeur and dignity, and develops a theory of technical progress on the basis of *veritas* and grace to attack the Atticists from their own preferences. The resulting model serves to demote Lysias, imitated by the Atticists but merely the counterpart of Calamis, *strigosior* (64) like archaic sculptures (cf. Dem. loc. cit. *περιεξεσμένον*) and superseded by later progress. The analogy thus obliquely repeats the brief but charged parenthesis in 66 that Demosthenes superseded Lysias.

On this interpretation Polyclitus is the natural acme, perfecting the archaic style and acceptable to both Cicero and the Atticists for his *diligentia ac decor* (Qu. 12.10.7; cf. e.g. Luc. *Salt.* 75 ἔμμετρος ἀκριβῶς, Overbeck 953 ff.). Phidias has no place in the list since he is pre-eminently the sculptor of the majestic style (e.g. Qu. 12.10.9) and cannot continue but only contrast with the archaic style. A survey of sculpture, however, which must exclude Phidias is intrinsically suspect and, though more tentatively, I suggest that Cicero does not only attack the Atticists on their own ground but intends us to note the absence of Phidias and so remind us obliquely that a more balanced record should recognize both Phidias and, in prose, Isocrates, who, the rhetorical parallels suggest, was Phidias' counterpart: I suspect that the whole *topos* originated as an illustration of Isocrates' introduction of the new periodic style and that, just as Phidias broke with the past to originate a new classical style perfected by Polyclitus (Plin. *N.H.* 34.56), so Isocrates 'primus instituit dilatare verbis et mollioribus numeris explere sententias' (Cic. *Orat.* 40). Isocrates was the Atticists' *bête noire* among Attic orators but for Cicero the qualities of both Lysias and Isocrates are required to produce the perfection of a Demosthenes (*Brut.* 32–5). On this interpretation Cicero's redrafting of the history of sculpture is a humorous paradox in keeping with the surrounding exaggerated eulogy of Cato (contrast 293 ff.) and there is extra point in 68

<sup>1</sup> For details see A. E. Douglas ad loc., more recently *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, i.3 (1973), 108–15. He rightly notes Cicero's focus on technical progress, but I doubt his restriction to bronze-casting.

<sup>2</sup> διὸ καὶ περιεξεσμένον ἔχει τι ἡ ἐρμηνεία ἢ πρὶν καὶ εὐσταλές, ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἀγάλματα, ὧν τέχνη

ἐδόκει ἡ συστολὴ καὶ ἰσχύνη, ἡ δὲ τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα ἐρμηνεία τοῖς Φειδίου ἔργοις ἤδη ἔοικεν ἔχουσα τι καὶ μεγαλεῖον καὶ ἀκριβές ἡμα. The later style is that of Isocrates and Gorgias (see 12).

<sup>3</sup> εἰκάσαι τὴν μὲν Ἴσοκράτους ρητορικὴν τῇ Πολυκλείτου τε καὶ Φειδίου τέχνῃ κατὰ τὸ σεμνὸν καὶ μεγαλότεχνον καὶ ἀξιωματικόν, τὴν δὲ Λυσίου τῇ

where the original context of the *topos* is introduced with unnamed but obvious reference to Isocrates.

The history of painting which follows is conventional (cf. D. H. *Isai*. 4, p.96 U-R) but again has polemical bite: archaic painters have fewer colours, the greater variety of the classical style is the counterpart of *omnes oratoriae virtutes* alleged in Cato (65) and realized by Demosthenes (35). Compare the truer assessment of Cato in 298: 'intelleges nihil illius liniamentis nisi eorum pigmentorum, quae inventa nondum erant, florem et colorem defuisse.'

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Καλάμιδος καὶ Καλλιμάχου τῆς λεπτότητος ἕνεκα καὶ τῆς χάριτος.

## TOO MANY ABLATIVES SPOIL THE BROTH

at inde

prodit anus diuamque uidet lymphamque roganti  
 dulce dedit, tosta quod texerat ante polenta.      450  
 dum bibit illa datum, duri puer oris et audax  
 constitit ante deam risitque auidamque uocauit:  
 offensa est neque adhuc epots parte loquentem  
 cum liquido mixta perfudit diua polenta.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5. 448-54

The orthodox explanation of the syntax of lines 453-4 is that repeated by the most recent commentator, F. Bömer (P. Ovidius Naso *Metamorphosen*. Buch IV-V (1976), p. 343): 'neque adhuc epota parte ist Abl. absol.; der Gegenstand, mit dem Ceres den Jungen überschüttet, ist *mixta* . . . *polenta*.' The ablative absolute is in itself unexceptionable (cf. *Met.* 5. 172-3, 9. 574-6), but the proliferation of three ablatives in two verses is awkward writing. As transmitted, line 454 is the product of a copyist who, as is often the habit of copyists, was confining his attention to the verse on which he was engaged and still had 'tosta . . . polenta' from line 450 echoing in his head. Unless I am much mistaken, Ovid wrote

neque adhuc epota parte loquentem  
 cum liquido mixtae perfudit diua polenta;

'as he was still speaking the goddess soused him with what yet remained undrunk of the liquid-mixed barley.' For *neque adhuc* = *et nondum* Bömer provides ample parallels; to his examples of substantival *liquidum* add *Moretum* 45.

An English version of these lines which keeps closely to the original is bound to read stiffly; but there is nothing stiff about the Latin as emended, and a reader conversant with Ovid's style would not be disconcerted to find the syntactical complement of *parte* withheld until the following verse. Indeed the word almost cries out to be picked up by a genitive, since there is nothing in the immediately preceding context to which it can be conveniently referred; and the enjambment 'loquentem / . . . perfudit' also helps to discourage the assumption of an absolute construction for the words 'nec . . . parte' (cf. Kenney in (ed.) J. W. Binns, *Ovid* (1973), p. 138 n.116). Analogous if not strictly parallel separation of *pars* from