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BODY LANGUAGE IN HELLENISTIC ART AND SOCIETY

JANE MASSÉGLIA



OXFORD

*Body Language in Hellenistic
Art and Society*

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For G. A. and A. M. A.

'in radicibus vis'

PREFACE

The seeds of this book were sown in Oxford when, as a Masters student, I was asked to write consecutive essays on the Kazanluk Tomb in Bulgaria and the Cancelleria Reliefs in Rome, two monuments whose interpretation, I was convinced, hinged on what people were doing with their hands. It is a revised version of the doctoral thesis on ancient body language which followed, but while some of the more superficial details have changed, the central premise remains the same: that body language in art is not simply a product of visual or technical convention, but of social expectation and even prejudice. What is considered appropriate corporeal behaviour for a particular individual speaks volumes about their place in their community, and figurative art preserves these attitudes and codes of conduct long after all human agents are gone.

The transformation of this study from thesis to published volume has taken several years, and is the result of great generosity from colleagues and funding bodies. A great debt of thanks is owed to the ERC-funded project The Social and Cultural Construction of Emotions: The Greek Paradigm, who awarded me a scholarship in 2011 to undertake the necessary revisions. I am especially grateful to the project's Principal Investigator, Angelos Chaniotis, for his support. I would also like to thank the Fellows and staff of Lincoln and St John's Colleges for helping to keep body and soul together, and to all the students who patiently endured discussion of my developing ideas.

Thanks are due to many colleagues who took time to read and comment on early drafts, among them Ralf von den Hoff at Freiberg, and Chris Gosden and John Ma in Oxford. I am especially grateful to Bert Smith, my former supervisor, who has steered this study from doctoral proposal to publication, to the much-missed Simon Price who oversaw the very first revision, to Sheila Dillon at Duke University who generously commented on the final draft, and to my friend and colleague Peter Thonemann, who has perhaps done more than anyone to persuade me to get things done.

It seems to have become common practice in many institutions to levy very large fees for supplying existing images of artefacts from their digital libraries, on top of the usual (and proper) fees for reproduction, even when a publication is academic and non-commercial. These enormous charges strike me as being at odds with a public institution's remit to promote and make widely accessible the contents of their collections. I am extremely grateful, therefore, to the army of photographers who have made their pictures available for use under the Creative Commons initiative. Particular thanks are due to Marie-Lan Nguyen, known to many archaeologists and teachers by her online handle Jastrow, who has done so

much to make the European museums accessible. In the spirit of reciprocity, and in the hope that it might be of some service to present and future colleagues, I make all my own images here (those attributed to J. E. A. Masségia) available for future reproduction within the bounds of copyright, and ask only for their attribution.

Several museums and image archives were extremely helpful throughout the publication process. The Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, the Cast Gallery of the University of Göttingen, the Wriston Art Galleries of Lawrence University in Appleton WI, the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, the Berlin Antikensammlung, the DAI and ArtStor were among those who provided multiple images for this volume free or 'at cost'. It was also a great pleasure to do business with the Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke at Ludwig Maximilians Universität in Munich, whose image department employs a heart-warming voluntary chocolate-bartering system.

Finally, I thank my wonderful family and friends for their support, encouragement, and promises of cake.

Jane Masségia

Oxford
2013



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- 5.14 Bronze figurine of 'frail' hunchback with amphora 'hat'. Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, Munich 4317. Photo: Renate Kühling.
- 5.15 Figurine of dwarf with oversized penis Walters Art Gallery, 54.1103. Photo: © The Walters Art Museum.
- 6.1 Marble relief base depicting lion hunt. Paris, Louvre Ma 858. Photo: © Marie-Lan Nguyen / Wikimedia Commons.
- 6.2 Terracotta figurine group of girls playing ephedrismos. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 0904. Photo: © Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.

APPENDIX 2

- App. 2.1 Examples of rest postures from various cultures. G.W. Hewes, 'World distribution of certain postural habits' *American Anthropologist* 57 (1955), 231-44, fig 1.
- App. 2.2 Terracotta figurine of seated youth. London BM 1877,0515.6 (C330). Photo: Higgins (1986), fig. 188.
- App. 2.3 Line drawing of the East Terrace of the Hierothesion at Nemrud Dağ. Drawing: G. R. H. Wright (1953), with permission of Donald H. Sanders and Eisenbrauns publishers.