

SOCRATES AND GORGIAS AT DELPHI AND OLYMPIA: *PHAEDRUS* 235d6–236b4

It is a commonplace of modern criticism that every text is to be located within a complex network of cultural practices and material. Students of the ancient world may sometimes feel at a disadvantage; we simply do not have as much information as we would like in order to contextualize thoroughly. This has been especially true in the study of Platonic dialogues. The meagre remains of the writings of the sophists against whom Plato measured himself and of the art to which he refers (to mention only two areas) entail that analysis of Plato is often confined to the structure of his philosophy. Of course, the requirements of Plato's arguments must always be assigned primary importance; the relative lack of information about Plato's cultural context has not prevented detailed exposition of his method and achievements. Occasionally, however, a kindly fate allows us to set a dialogue, or part of it, in its appropriate material and ideological context and to create an interface between literary, philosophical, and archaeological evidence. Such evidence may not alter our evaluation of Plato's arguments on the analytic level, but it can enrich our appreciation of his literary artistry and recapture for us some of the resonance that his work would have had for a contemporary audience.

At *Phaedrus* 235c–d, Socrates declares that he could deliver a speech on the topic of why a beloved should yield rather to the suitor who does not love him than to the one who does, a speech that would compete with Lysias' treatment of the same theme (as recently recited by Phaedrus). In his eagerness to hear this speech, Phaedrus exclaims:

τῶν ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ βελτίῳ τε καὶ μὴ ἐλάττω ἕτερα ὑπέσχησαι εἰπεῖν τούτων ἀπεχόμενος, καὶ σοι ἐγώ, ὥσπερ οἱ ἐννέα ἄρχοντες, ὑπισχνούμαι χρυσὴν εἰκόνα ἰσομέτρητον εἰς Δελφοὺς ἀναθήσειν, οὐ μόνον ἐμαυτοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ σὴν (235d6–e1).

If Socrates delivers a better speech, and one which avoids the arguments used by Lysias, Phaedrus will dedicate a life-sized golden statue of himself at Delphi, as the nine archons swore to do, and will even add one of Socrates. Socrates replies that Phaedrus is mistaken if he thinks that one could make such a speech without using Lysias' argument that the non-lover is saner than the lover; such an argument is necessary. Phaedrus grants this point and renews his offer in slightly different terms:

ποιήσω οὖν καὶ ἐγώ οὕτως· τὸ μὲν τὸν ἐρώντα τοῦ μὴ ἐρώντος μάλλον νοσεῖν δώσω σοι ὑποτίθεσθαι, τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν ἕτερα πλείω καὶ πλείονος ἄξια εἰπὼν τῶνδε [Λυσίου] παρὰ τὸ Κυψελιδῶν ἀνάθημα σφυρήλατος ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ στάθῃτι (236a8–b4).

Phaedrus grants the necessity of employing the *topos* of the sickness of the lover, but promises that if in other respects Socrates can deliver a worthier speech than Lysias, a statue of Socrates made of worked metal (*σφυρήλατος*) will be set up next to the offering of the Cypselidae at Olympia.

The most recent modern treatments of this episode have regarded it with some perplexity. The reference to the nine archons may seem relatively unproblematic. We learn from Aristotle's *Constitution of the Athenians* 7.1 (and 55.5) that the archons swore to dedicate a gold statue if they transgressed the laws. Yet all is not as straightforward as it first appears; as R. Hackforth comments, there is no mention of

the archons' statues being life-sized or set up at Delphi.¹ C. Griswold notes that although the archons' dedication was a form of punishment, Phaedrus' offer has the feel of a prize or a bribe to it,² while for G. Ferrari, the offer is simply a bribe.³ The remarks of these scholars leave various questions unanswered. Why are the first statues life-sized and why are they to be set up at Delphi? What is the precise significance of Phaedrus' modulation from the example of the archons to the dedication of a statue of Socrates as well? Why does Phaedrus choose Olympia and the Cypselid offering as the context for his next offer, and does the move from one sanctuary to another represent an increase in stakes? If so, how? My aim in this article is to solve some of the puzzles of the passage by examining ancient testimonia on statues of Gorgias at Delphi and Olympia, and on the nature of the Cypselid dedications at Olympia. Such an examination will prove that almost every detail of the text of the *Phaedrus* in question has a wider significance for the themes of the dialogue as a whole. Such results may seem almost 'too good to be true', and some of them must certainly remain in the realm of speculation, yet it need not surprise us that Plato extends the effects of his argumentation into the minutiae of his text. Indeed, recent work on Plato confirms that he made a practice of doing so.⁴

GORGIAS AT DELPHI AND OLYMPIA

It was W. H. Thompson in his commentary on the *Phaedrus* who first brought Gorgias into the picture. While discussing golden statues in the context of the *Κυψελιδῶν ἀνάθημα*, he referred to the 'golden statue' of Gorgias at Delphi, but did not attempt to draw any specific connections with Phaedrus' first offer of a dedication at Delphi.⁵ The Delphic statue of Gorgias was well known in antiquity. In his description of dedications in the vicinity of the temple of Apollo, Pausanias comments ἐπίχρυσος δὲ εἰκὼν, ἀνάθημα Γοργίου τοῦ ἐκ Λεοντίνων, αὐτὸς Γοργίας ἐστίν ('a gilded image, an offering of Gorgias of Leontini, represents Gorgias himself' 10.18.7). In the Roman period, the statue seems to have been regarded as a monument to the influence and remunerative possibilities of oratory.⁶ The most suggestive ancient testimonium, however, is that of Athenaeus 11.505d-e:

Ἑρμιππος δὲ ἐν τῷ περὶ Γοργίου ὡς ἐπεδήμησε φησὶ ταῖς Ἀθήναις Γοργίας μετὰ τὸ ποιήσασθαι τὴν ἀνάθεσιν τῆς ἐν Δελφοῖς αὐτοῦ χρυσῆς εἰκόνης, εἰπόντος τοῦ Πλάτωνος, ὅτε εἶδεν αὐτὸν, ἥκει ἡμῖν ὁ καλὸς τε καὶ χρυσοῦς Γοργίας, ἔφη ὁ Γοργίας ἡ καλὸν γε αἱ Ἀθῆναι καὶ νέον τοῦτον Ἀρχιλόχον ἐνηνόχασιν''.

Gorgias returns to Athens after the dedication of his golden statue and meets with the irony of Plato, who mocks him and the statue by addressing Gorgias as 'golden' (χρυσοῦς). In spite of its anecdotal nature, this evidence suggests that Plato was both

¹ R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* (Cambridge, 1952), p. 33. Plut. *Vit. Sol.* 25 does assert that the statues were to be life-sized and set up at Delphi, but these details may be a corruption of the tradition due to the influence of the *Phaedrus*. Compare W. H. Thompson, *The Phaedrus of Plato, with English Notes and Dissertations* (London, 1869), *ad loc.*; P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian 'Athenaion Politeia'* (Oxford, 1981), p. 135. On ἰσομέτρητον, see further G. J. de Vries, *A Commentary on the Phaedrus of Plato* (Amsterdam, 1969), p. 77.

² C. Griswold, *Self-Knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus* (New Haven, 1986), p. 54. His solution is that Socrates' victory will signal Phaedrus' transgression of the Delphic command to 'know thyself'.

³ G. R. F. Ferrari, *Listening to the Cicadas* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 103-4.

⁴ See, for example, Ferrari's discussion of the topography at the beginning of the *Phaedrus* (pp. 2-4), and A. Nightingale's work on intertextuality in Plato's *Gorgias* (*CA* 11 [1992], 121-41).

⁵ Thompson, p. 22.

⁶ Pliny, *H.N.* 33.83, Cic. *De Or.*, 3.129, Dio Chrys. 37.28, Philostr. *V.S.* 1.9.4., Val. Max. 8.15.

aware of Gorgias' action, and disapproved of it.⁷ The golden statue and Plato's reaction offer a revealing subtext for the conversation of Socrates and Phaedrus. As the latter starts to speak at 235d, he is conforming to the paradigm offered by the nine archons, 'I promise you that I, like the nine archons, will set up a golden statue.' Half-way through his sentence, however, another influence makes itself felt: the statue will be life-sized and dedicated at Delphi, and there will not only be a statue of the person to be chastised (Phaedrus, according to the archon paradigm), but also one of the successful orator, Socrates: *ἰσομέτρητον εἰς Δελφοὺς ἀναθήσειν, οὐ μόνον ἑμαυτοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ σήν*. Phaedrus' enthusiasm leads him to abandon his picture of himself as the sinner punished and causes him to shift his focus to Socrates. Given the constraints of chronology, of course, the character of Phaedrus cannot be aware that he is assimilating Socrates to the model of Gorgias; Gorgias' dedication and his encounter with Plato must occur after Socrates' death.⁸ To the reader, on the other hand, the implicit message is clear. If Socrates can deliver a successful speech, he will be acknowledged as the equal, or even the superior, of Gorgias, one of the most successful orators of his day.

It goes without saying that such a comparison would hardly have been congenial to Socrates.⁹ Phaedrus' mistake here is illustrative of his misplaced priorities throughout the first part of the dialogue.¹⁰ He cares more for cleverness and display than for the pursuit of wisdom, and this being so, he would probably have regarded Gorgias, as well as Lysias, as a suitable paradigm for rhetorical excellence. Socrates shows his distaste by 'anticipating' to Phaedrus Plato's own later remark to Gorgias: *Φίλτατος εἶ καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς χρυσοῦς, ὦ Φαῖδρε*. Both Gorgias in Athenaeus and Phaedrus are described as *χρυσοῦς*. The meaning of this adjective in the *Phaedrus* passage has been a subject of debate. Hackforth translated 'what a pattern of golden-age simplicity,' to which W. J. Verdenius responded that a reference to the Golden Age as a time of simplicity would be inappropriate; he renders *χρυσοῦς* as 'a fine fellow'.¹¹ The subtext of Gorgias' statue clarifies the irony involved: Plato's version of Socrates' response declares 'It is not I who am golden; I am no Gorgias. You, on the other hand, Phaedrus, are truly "golden" (*ὡς ἀληθῶς χρυσοῦς*), because you share Gorgias' (and Lysias') simplistic approach to rhetoric.' Socrates is made to reject the (proleptic) assimilation to the model of Gorgias and at the same time he rebukes his companion for misguided priorities.

One might suppose that Phaedrus has learned his lesson, but such is not the case. When he renews his offer, all thought of his own intellectual culpability has disappeared. When he offers to set up a statue of Socrates at Olympia, there is no mention of a punitive likeness of himself, even though one of the famous sights of Olympia was the row of statues, the *Zanes*, leading up to the entrance of the stadium and representing fines levied on athletes who had broken the rules of the Olympic

⁷ The nature of the Platonic critique implicit in Athenaeus' anecdote has recently been studied by P. Angeli Bernardini and A. Veneri, 'Il *Gorgia* di Platone nel giudizio di Gorgia e l' 'aureo' Gorgia nel giudizio di Platone (Athen. 11,505d-e)', *QUCC* n.s. 7 (1981), 149-60, who conclude that Gorgias is being criticized for his mercenary attitude towards his profession and his ostentation in displaying his wealth.

⁸ On the dramatic date of the *Phaedrus* see de Vries, p. 7. The same passage in Athenaeus cited above recounts Gorgias' none-too-favourable reaction to the dialogue bearing his name; evidently the hostility between Plato and the sophist extends over the composition of more than one dialogue.

⁹ Cf. 267a6-b2.

¹⁰ Cf. Griswold, pp. 18-25, 52-3; Ferrari, pp. 7-9.

¹¹ Hackforth, pp. 33-4, with note 1 on page 34; W. J. Verdenius, 'Notes on Plato's *Phaedrus*', *Mnemosyne* 8 (1955), 272. Griswold, p. 54, interprets *χρυσοῦς* ironically as 'truly golden', that is 'inwardly rich'.

Games.¹² I shall be returning to the question of the placement of Socrates' statue and the Cypselid dedication a little later, but for now I would like to examine whether the paradigm of Gorgias has been left behind or whether it still haunts Plato's text. As it happens, Gorgias is still very much present.

Pausanias tells us that if, at Olympia, one were to walk from the Leonidaion to the right towards the Great Altar, one would come across many statues. One in particular is of importance for the present investigation: *καὶ τὸν Λεοντίων Γοργίαν ἰδεῖν ἔστιν ἀναθεῖναι δὲ τὴν εἰκόνα ἐς Ὀλυμπίαν φησὶν Εὐμόλπος ἀπόγονος τρίτος Δηικράτους συνοικήσαντος ἀδελφῇ τῇ Γοργίου... εὐδοκιμῆσαι δὲ Γοργίαν λόγων ἔνεκα ἐν τε πανηγύρει τῇ Ὀλυμπικῇ φασι...* (6.17.7-8). There was indeed an honorary statue of Gorgias at Olympia, although this statue was not dedicated by him personally, but by his grand-nephew Eumolpus. In 1876, ten metres northeast of the northeast corner of the Zeus temple at Olympia, German excavators uncovered a black limestone base inscribed with an epigram:

Χαρμαντίδου Γοργίας Λεοντίως

*Τῇ μὲν ἀδελφῇ Δηικράτης τῇ Γοργίου ἔσχεν,
ἐκ ταύτης δ' αὐτῷ γίγνεται Ἴπποκράτης,
Ἴπποκράτους δ' Εὐμόλπος, ὃς εἰκόνα τήνδ' ἀνέθηκεν
δισσῶν, παιδείας καὶ φιλίας ἔνεκα.*

*Γοργίου ἀσκήσαι ψυχὴν ἀρετῆς ἐς ἀγῶνας
οὐδεὶς πω θνητῶν καλλίον' ἤρε τέχνην
οὐ καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος γυάλοις εἰκὼν ἀνάκειται
οὐ πλούτου παράδειγμ', εὐσεβίας δὲ τρόπων.¹³*

This is, without doubt, the base of the statue that Pausanias saw. The first stanza describes the relationship of the donor, Eumolpus, to Gorgias. The second declares that no mortal has ever discovered a more noble method for training the soul for the contests of virtue than Gorgias. It refers to the other statue of Gorgias at Delphi (the vales of Apollo) and adds defensively that it was not a demonstration of his wealth but of his piety. As has been remarked, the end of the inscription shows that Gorgias had been criticized for the ostentation of his dedication (as was indicated also by the anecdote in Athenaeus) and that some deprecation of this criticism was felt to be appropriate.¹⁴ The base is dated by letter forms to the first half of the fourth century B.C.¹⁵ As was the case with the allusion to the statue of Gorgias at Delphi, the dramatic date of the *Phaedrus* prevents the supposition that Plato is having the character of Phaedrus make a conscious allusion to the statue of Gorgias at Olympia, but once again, it does seem likely that Plato intends his reader to make the connection. In particular, if the dedication of the statue at Olympia was meant to be a defensive move in response to widespread (not only Platonic) criticism of Gorgias' golden statue at Delphi and the values it was seen to entail, it is tempting to see these references in the *Phaedrus* partly as Plato's response. Even as Phaedrus attempts to shift his ground and offer Socrates something new, Plato has him continue to conform

¹² Paus. 5.21.2-3. These images were made of bronze rather than gold.

¹³ W. Dittenberger and K. Purgold, *Die Inschriften von Olympia* (Amsterdam, 1966) = E. Curtius and F. Adler (edd.), *Olympia*, Volume 5, No. 293. I reproduce the text of I. Z. Tzifopoulos, who has recently reexamined the stone, in 'Pausanias as a ΣΤΗΛΟΣΚΟΠΙΑΣ. An Epigraphical Commentary of Pausanias' *ἩΛΙΑΚΩΝ A and B*' (Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1991), p. 211 (with bibliography and commentary). Cf. P. E. Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1989), no. 830.

¹⁴ Bernardini and Veneri, [n. 7], 156.

¹⁵ For dating on the grounds of historical plausibility, see M. Fränkel, *Arch. Zeitung* 35 (1877) 43, No. 54.

to the Gorgianic paradigm. The oblique references to the representations of Gorgias at Delphi and Olympia are Plato's way of demonstrating two things: Phaedrus' participation in a set of moral and intellectual sophistic values common to Gorgias and Lysias, and his own contempt for these values. In order to specify the precise significance of Phaedrus' second offer, however, it is necessary to consider the prospective context of the statue of Socrates at Olympia, the dedications of the Cypselids.

THE CYPSELIDS AT OLYMPIA

The most recent commentators on 236b3 have been unable to shed any light on the nature of the Cypselid dedication mentioned there. Both C. J. Rowe and G. J. de Vries cite Aristotle *Politics* 1313b22 to make the point that Cypselid dedications were comparable to the Pyramids of Egypt, but de Vries concludes that 'it is impossible to ascertain what precisely the ἀνάθημα was, nor on what occasion it was erected' (although he tentatively proposes that 'Perhaps the wording suggests that the Cypselids' ἀνάθημα was σφυρήλατον, too').¹⁶ Yet the nature of the dedication is not as much of a mystery as these comments would suggest. Both the Suda and Photius' lexicon have informative entries under *Κυψελιδῶν ἀνάθημα*. We learn that the 'dedication of the Cypselids' was a golden colossus, dedicated not by the Cypselids, but by Cypselus himself.¹⁷ The source of their information is Agaclytus in his work on Olympia, who states that the colossus was located in the temple of Hera, and was a result of Cypselus' vow that he would dedicate a tenth of his people's possessions if he should become tyrant. Other versions cited are those of Didymus, who said Periander made the dedication to keep the Corinthians from luxury and boldness, and Theophrastus (following Aristotle), who gave it as an example of the things tyrants do to keep their people occupied.¹⁸ From Strabo, we learn that the statue was of Zeus, and was *sphyrelaton*, that is, of hammered metal.¹⁹ Pausanias does not mention the statue when he describes the sights of the temple of Hera (it must have disappeared before his time), but he does refer to it earlier in Book 5, reporting that Cypselus dedicated a golden statue to Zeus at Olympia. When he died before the inscription of his name, the Corinthians asked whether they could inscribe the name of their city on it, but they were refused (5.2.3).

We are now in a position to be precise about the way Phaedrus has raised the stakes. Rather than a life-sized statue at Delphi, Socrates will be set up as a 'colossal' statue in Olympia, executed in an archaic style and located in the temple of Hera.²⁰ Moreover, the reader familiar with Olympia might recall that Eumolpus' statue of Gorgias was placed not in the temple next to statues of the gods, but outside in the

¹⁶ C. J. Rowe, *Plato: Phaedrus* (Warminster, 1986), p. 152; de Vries, pp. 78–9.

¹⁷ Hermias, in his scholion on 236b, gives the version where it is the sons of Periander who make the dedication after having regained the tyranny. For a detailed discussion of the identity of the dedicator(s), see J. Servais, 'Le "Colosse" des Cypsélides', *L'Antiquité Classique* 34 (1965), 148–52.

¹⁸ On the inscription, see below. Thompson, *ad loc.*, also cites the colossus.

¹⁹ Strabo 8.3.30; 8.6.20. For the archaic nature of *sphyrelaton* statues, see Servais, 160–2, and J. Papadopoulos, *Xoana e Sphyrelata* (Rome, 1980), pp. 11–12.

²⁰ Of course, the term colossus itself is not proof that the statue was larger than life, since the word may originally have meant merely a statue with its legs placed together, but Strabo does call the Zeus *εὐμεγέθης* (8.6.20). Cf. Servais, 156–7; Papadopoulos, pp. 86–7; A. A. Donohue, 'Xoana' and the Origins of Greek Sculpture (Atlanta, 1988), p. 27 and n. 65. Griswold (p. 54) is incorrect to say that the statue would have been placed in the temple of Zeus, but his association of the statue of Socrates with Zeus, the patron god of philosophers in the *Phaedrus*, receives confirmation.

precinct, among the statues of mere mortals; the epigram assimilates him to the role of a trainer. Socrates, on the other hand, will be moving in higher circles.

Thus far, my analysis stands on fairly firm ground. The subtext of the banter between Socrates and Phaedrus looks to two dedications of statues of Gorgias, and undermines both his self-advertisement and his grand-nephew's attempts at a defence of him. The reference to the Cypselid dedication places Socrates within the temple of Hera and connects him to Zeus. Proximity to Zeus does not, however, exhaust the significance of the statue's prospective placement, for the colossus was not the only Cypselid offering in the temple of Hera. At this point, we leave (relative) certainty behind and enter into the domain of speculation. Plato refers to only one Cypselid dedication, that is, the colossus, but I suggest that his literary presentation both within and outside the immediate context of 235d–236b may have been influenced by a second dedication.

When Pausanias made his tour of the temple, he saw there a cedar chest with carved figures on it. This chest, he reports, was an offering of Cypselus' descendants; Cypselus was hidden in it when the Bacchidae were searching for him shortly after his birth (5.17.5). The chest was divided into several panels and Pausanias gives an extensive description of them; they depict numerous scenes from Greek mythology, some labelled, some not, and the chest has rightly been described as a mythological picturebook.²¹ Socrates, then, will not only be next to a colossal statue of Zeus, but also to a mythological compendium. To be sure, Plato's primary reference at *Phaedrus* 236b3–4 must be to the colossus, yet the presence of the Cypselid chest is not without resonance. For B. Schweitzer, in fact, the reference to the chest was the primary one. He translates Phaedrus' offer to Socrates as an offer to be set up next to the chest ('dann sollst du zu Olympia neben der Lade der Kypseliden in Gold getrieben stehen'), and finds the point of the placement in the fact that next to the chest was an archaic gold statue of Zeus. According to Schweitzer, then, Phaedrus is equating Socrates with Zeus at Olympia.²² Here, however, the picture becomes complicated. Schweitzer is clearly following Pausanias' description of the temple. As he begins to enumerate the contents of the interior, Pausanias mentions an image of Hera sitting on a throne with Zeus standing beside her. These works are characterized as 'simple' or 'crude' (*ἀπλά*) (5.17.1). Two sections later, he states that the statues he has just listed are ancient and constructed of gold and ivory.²³ Only after describing other, later dedications does Pausanias move on to the Cypselid chest. There is nothing in the text to indicate that the standing Zeus, the only statue of Zeus that Pausanias mentions in the temple, was next to the chest. Schweitzer's statue of Zeus is thus not to be identified with the Cypselid Zeus, especially since the statue described by Pausanias may well have been chryselephantine, and the Cypselid Zeus was made of hammered gold (that is, it was *sphyrelaton*).²⁴ Yet Schweitzer's comments on the significance of the style of the standing Zeus are suggestive – it was archaic, old-fashioned, and thus Phaedrus' offer acquires a comic touch: Socrates' statue will be located among archaic examples of sculpture.²⁵ Even though Schweitzer's Zeus is not the same as the Cypselid one, the style of the Cypselid Zeus was also old-fashioned. Why should Phaedrus be interested in setting Socrates in an archaic context and in

²¹ B. Schweitzer, *Platon und die bildende Kunst der Griechen* (Tübingen, 1953), p. 24.

²² Op. cit., p. 23.

²³ Paus. 5.17.3. Servais, 169 n. 69, follows W. Dinsmoor in supposing that the group of Hera and Zeus was not chryselephantine and is opposed by Pausanias by virtue of its simplicity to the gold and ivory statues that follow. Yet even these are described as *ἀρχαία*.

²⁴ Cf. Servais, 169 n. 69.

²⁵ Schweitzer, p. 23.

the vicinity of the chest? Schweitzer answers that the chest was of interest to Plato on account of the fullness of its mythological descriptions, and this is surely true, but in a more pregnant and specific sense than Schweitzer realized.

In order to uncover and explicate the mysteries of the allusion to the Cypselid chest, it is necessary to return to an earlier stage in the *Phaedrus*, to the moment when Phaedrus chooses the place for an afternoon of conversation. Socrates and Phaedrus settle down in the vicinity of a shrine of the river god and the Nymphs that is itself full of statues and dedications (230b). At first, Phaedrus thinks that this may be the spot whence Boreas abducted the Athenian princess Oreithyia, and there follows a discussion of the rationalizing interpretation of myths. Socrates declares that this method of interpretation is clever and new-fangled, but a waste of time. If one rationalizes one myth, then one has to rationalize them all, and what will the scholar make of the Centaurs, the Gorgons, and other composite creatures? The real task is, of course, to know oneself, whether one is metaphorically like Typhon (a quintessential composite monster), or not (229c6–230a6). Thus, even before the question of panhellenic dedications has come up, the topic of mythology has been much in evidence. Socrates has declared his preference for leaving well alone the literal truth status of mythological stories. Small wonder, then, if Phaedrus associates Socrates with old-fashioned intellectuals, and if his perceived intellectual conservatism is then transferred into the realm of art, so that Socrates is placed between an archaic *sphyrelaton* statue and a famous chest that serves as an early mythological handbook. Indeed, immediately before Phaedrus' first offer of the statue at Delphi, Socrates has declared that wise and ancient (παλαιοὶ...καὶ σοφοί) men and women, such as Sappho and Anacreon, will refute him if he concedes to Phaedrus that Lysias' speech is the last word on the subject of love (235b6–c5). Phaedrus seems to have every excuse for thinking that Socrates is an intellectual, mythological, and rhetorical conservative; it will take the entire dialogue for him to realize, insofar as he can, that Socrates is more radical than he dreams.

Even the individual scenes on the chest become resonant when considered in the context of the dialogue as a whole. The most striking example concerns the myth of Boreas and Oreithyia that started the discussion of rationalization. The fourth panel of the chest shows Boreas' rape of Oreithyia. In this depiction, Boreas has serpents' tails instead of feet (Paus. 5.19.1). Not only do the chest and the dialogue share the myth, but the Boreas on the chest is depicted as precisely the kind of composite creature that Socrates has refused to rationalize.²⁶ We need not infer that a reference to the chest is explicit, but it is possible that the earlier discussion of rationalization has created a climate of allusion in which the chest plays a part. This supposition is strengthened by the myths portrayed on some of the other panels of the chest. The first panel contains no less than three chariot scenes, the race of Pelops and Oenomaus, Amphiarus mounting a chariot wild with rage against Eriphyle, and lastly, a depiction of a chariot race at the funeral games of Pelias.²⁷ The origin of Plato's conception of the soul in the *Phaedrus* as a winged two-horse chariot and driver has often been debated.²⁸ While it would be foolish to suggest that there was

²⁶ Nor is Boreas the only composite entity on the chest. Next to him is carved the fight between Heracles and triple-bodied Geryon. Other composites include the Centaurs (Paus. 5.19.7–8).

²⁷ Paus. 5.17.7–10. Amphiarus is reported as being so angry that he can scarcely restrain himself from attacking Eriphyle. Do we have here an anticipation of the transports of passion characteristic of the black horse in the myth of the charioteer (254)?

²⁸ Cf. J. Dumortier, 'L'attelage ailé du *Phèdre*,' *REG* 82 (1969), 345–8, and Schweitzer, pp. 61–6.

only one major influence on Plato's image, it can be no coincidence that the race of Pelops and Oenomaus is described by Pausanias with the following words: *ἐκατέρω μὲν δὴ δύο αὐτῶν εἰσὶν ἵπποι, τοῖς δὲ τοῦ Πέλοπος ἐστὶ πεφυκότα καὶ πτερὰ* (5.17.7). Pelops drives a two-horse chariot and his horses are winged. Nor is this the only instance of winged horses on the chest. The highest portion of the chest contains a scene which Pausanias refers to the death of Patroclus. There are women in two-horsed chariots receiving armour from a man (probably Hephaestus giving the armour to Thetis), and the horses have golden wings (5.19.8). Here is a precedent for Plato's model of the human soul as a winged chariot team and charioteer that gains plausibility from the fact that, as we have seen, he may have referred to the chest earlier in the dialogue. While it cannot be argued that the chest actually generated Plato's conception of the soul in this dialogue (after all, the composite soul makes not infrequent appearances in Plato's philosophy), it is possible that its particular incarnation in the *Phaedrus* is connected to the depictions on the Cypselid chest.

One other portion of the chest deserves mention here. The second panel depicts a woman with a white child on one arm and a black child on another, both asleep. Inscriptions identify the figures as Sleep and Death with their nurse Night. Next to them a beautiful woman, Justice, is striking an ugly one, Injustice, with her staff and at the same time choking her (Paus. 5.18.1–2). The connection with the myth of the charioteer is more obscure in these instances, but it is tempting to suggest that the struggle of the black horse of the soul with the white horse owes part of its iconography to the black and white children and the fight between Justice and Injustice on the chest.²⁹

The prospective dedication of a statue of Socrates next to famous Cypselid dedications would thus be especially meaningful for an ancient audience that had any familiarity, as they surely did, with the nature of these dedications. Socrates is associated with Zeus, with artistic and mythological conservatism, and many of the mythological images of the dialogue are either resumed or anticipated in the scenes presented on the Cypselid chest. It is true that Plato has not used the chest in a systematic fashion; the offering is full of scenes that have no connection with the themes of the dialogue. Yet the partial coincidence of subject matter is noteworthy, and in light of the chest's physical proximity to an item that can more certainly be identified as the object of Platonic allusion, the Cypselid Zeus, the coincidence seems significant. *Phaedrus*' attempts to move Socrates to speak have transported us from Gorgian self-advertisement and a subsequent (undermined) defence of the Gorgian ethic to a whole range of artistic and intellectual topics. Yet even if we discount the similarities in imagery between the chest and the dialogue as a whole, further examination of the relationship between the Cypselid Zeus and the statue of Gorgias at Delphi will move us towards some of the final themes of the *Phaedrus*, as I now demonstrate.

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD

There is a curious discrepancy in the sources concerning the precise constitution of Gorgias' golden statue at Delphi. Pausanias describes the image as *ἐπίχρυσος*, gilded, while Cicero declares that it was 'non inaurata statua sed aurea', not gilded but (pure) gold.³⁰ It is not my purpose here to demonstrate the correctness of one tradition over

²⁹ For descriptions of the black and white horses, see 253d3–e5.

³⁰ Pliny, *H.N.* 33.83: 'auream statuam et solidam', and Val. Max. 8.15: 'universa Graecia...statuam solido ex auro posuit, cum ceterorum ad id tempus auratas collocasset', follow the account of Cicero.

another, but if Gorgias' dedication was gilded, or even if there was merely a contemporary rumour that it was gilded, one of Socrates' remarks at the end of the dialogue becomes particularly pointed. At 279b8–c2, after he has demonstrated with some severity that what his contemporaries call the science of oratory is not really a science at all, Socrates ends the discussion with a prayer:

ΣΩ. ...δοίητέ μοι καλῶ γενέσθαι τᾶνδοθεν· ἔξωθεν δὲ ὅσα ἔχω, τοῖς ἐντὸς εἶναι μοι φίλια. πλούσιον δὲ νομίζοιμι τὸν σοφόν· τὸ δὲ χρυσοῦ πλήθος εἴη μοι ὅσον μήτε φέρειν μήτε ἄγειν δύναίτο ἄλλος ἢ ὁ σώφρων.

Socrates wants to be good on the inside and wants his outer attributes to match this inner nobility. He wants to be 'truly golden'. He prays to think that a wise man is rich and that he himself may have only as much gold as a moderate man can make use of. Griswold has already connected this prayer with Phaedrus' promised gold statues at the beginning of the dialogue, pointing out that the term 'golden' at 235e2 needs to be taken metaphorically.³¹ The pious wish for inner wealth contrasts with the greed for gold that Plato would like to make a sophistic characteristic; only the wise are truly wealthy. If Gorgias' golden statue is a subtext here, however, the prayer becomes even more *ad hominem*. Gorgias' dedication was, or was rumoured to be, gilded; its outside did not match its inside. Similarly, Gorgias' claims to knowledge and virtue are belied by what Plato sees as his moral and intellectual bankruptcy. Only the virtuous man is wealthy, therefore Gorgias' wealth is not what it seems and this implication finds a concrete expression in a gilded statue.

In an interesting coincidence, the Cypselid colossus also is connected with the problem of being 'truly golden'. An exploration of this topic will take us momentarily away from the *Phaedrus*, but the relevance of the digression will, I hope, remain clear. Photius' lexicon and the Suda report that an epigram was associated with the statue, but it is clear that the text of this epigram was much disputed. In all four versions, the pentameter is identical, but there is great variation in the hexameter. Photius' lexicon gives two possibilities:

Εἰμὶ ἐγὼ χρυσοῦς σφυρήλατός εἰμι κολοσσός
ἐξώλης εἴη Κυψελιδῶν γενεά.

and

Εἰμὶ ἐγὼ ναξὸς παγχρύσεός εἰμι κολοσσός

In the Suda, the epigram is reported a little differently:

Αὐτὸς ἐγὼ χρυσοῦς σφυρήλατός εἰμι κολοσσός·

and

Εἰμὶ ἐγὼ νάξιος, παγχρύσεός εἰμι κολοσσός

The scholarly consensus seems to be that the report in the Suda is inferior to and derived from the one in Photius, but even if the Suda is discounted, problems remain.³² C. Cobet emended the first εἰμί of the hexameters to εἰ μή in order to remove the unacceptable hiatus between εἰμί and ἐγώ, and he was followed by J. Geffcken, who interpreted the epigram as a grandiloquent and tyrannical boast: 'if this is not a pure gold statue, may the family of the Cypselids be destroyed.'³³ In his

³¹ Griswold, p. 54.

³² Servais, 156.

³³ C. Cobet, 'Ad Photii Lexicon', *Mnemosyne* 9 (1860), 422–6; J. Geffcken and G. Herbig, 'Ναξός', *Glotta* 9 (1918), 97–109. Geffcken asserts that the second version of the epigram, which reads ναξός, is the correct one, and that the version that reads σφυρήλατος is a simplified and

detailed treatment of the epigram, J. Servais argued against Geffcken that such words would be extreme even for a tyrannical dedication; no Greek would ever call up the spectre of such a terrible vengeance on his family. On the contrary, the pentameter conforms well to curse formulas as we know them and is thus a real curse, such as would never have been inscribed on the statue. Geffcken is also criticized for supposing that the statue was made of solid gold (as implied by his preferred reading, *ναξός*), when in fact, the technique of hammered metal sheeting over a wooden core was the only method of constructing metal statues available at the time of the dedication. Servais rejects the first version of the hexameter (which reads *σφυρήλατός*), because it boasts of a technique that would have been unexceptional at the time, and accepts the second (still reading *εἰ μὴ* and *ναξός*) because the flagrant adynaton (the statue was clearly *not* solid) makes the curse gain its full force: 'if I am not a solid gold statue, may the family of the Cypselids be destroyed.' This curse, he speculates, enjoyed a purely parodic literary existence, since we know that the Corinthians were not allowed to modify the statue at Olympia after the downfall of the Cypselids.³⁴ The statue itself must have had some other dedication, which may be partially reconstructed from the rejected first version of the epigram. It probably contained the names of the dedicators in the pentameter and started the hexameter with the name of the deity represented. Thus the gist of the original would have been something like 'I am a golden hammer-worked statue of Zeus, dedicated by the Cypselids'.³⁵

Servais' interpretation is carefully considered, and has the merit of having taken archaeological and art-historical issues into account. His final reconstruction, however, is elaborate and problematic. It entails the assumption that the parodic curse has entirely displaced the original epigram, in spite of the fact that the original was inscribed in a major sanctuary and available for inspection, while the parody was transmitted – how? Was it in such frequent oral circulation that it became proverbial and displaced the original once the latter had become unreadable or disappeared centuries after its inscription? Did the parody circulate in some kind of epigram collection? Yet surely, once the parody is dissociated from the physical context that makes the first line an adynaton, the curse loses its point. It is only a curse when one can actually see that the statue is not solid, and it is asking much of the inheritor of the parodic tradition to supply the requisite archaeological knowledge to make the curse effective centuries later. More than most dedicatory epigrams, the curse is context dependent.³⁶ The corruption of the textual tradition is best explained by the wearing away of the inscription, which may have caused illegibility and confusion at quite an early stage (perhaps in Plato's day). In the end, Geffcken's presumption of an arrogant tyrannical boast still seems to be the best solution to the problem of the inscription; it would not be remarkable for the Cypselids, a family not unknown for its extremes in other areas, to make such a boast.³⁷ It seems clear (if the interpretation

vulgate tradition, the one known by Plato. The meaning of *ναξός* has been disputed, but the word seems to mean 'full' or 'solid': Servais, 161–2 with note 47. On C. Gallavotti's unconvincing emendation of *ναστός* to *ἄξους* (*RFIC* 40 [1962], 291–4), see Papadopoulos, p. 87.

³⁴ See above, note 21.

³⁵ Servais, 159–71.

³⁶ On the interdependence of statue and epigram, see J. Svenbro, *Phrasikleia. Anthropologie de la lecture en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1988), p. 50.

³⁷ Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that such a dedication would be almost unique. The terminology of votive dedications was quite conservative and such a vaunt is unparalleled. Cf. Svenbro, p. 47, M. Lazzarini, 'Le formule delle dediche nella Grecia arcaica', *Memorie dell'Accademia nazionale dei Lincei. Classe di scienze morali storiche e filologiche*, series 8, vol. 19.2 (Rome, 1976), pp. 58–60.

of *ναξός* as 'solid' is correct), that the original version of the dedication must have read *σφυρήλατος*. Perhaps the boast of the hexameter consists not in the term 'hammer-worked', but in the combination of gold with the technique. The verse would then vaunt that the image was a golden, as opposed to a bronze, *sphyrelaton*.

How is this controversy related to the theme of being 'truly golden' in the *Phaedrus*? The simplest reading of the connection between the Cypselid dedication and Socrates' prayer at the end of the dialogue sets the two in the same relationship that existed between Gorgias' statue and the prayer. Socrates' wish to be homogeneously virtuous and moderately rich stands in opposition to the moral dichotomy between Gorgias' interior and his exterior and the physical dichotomy between the surface of a gilded statue and its interior. This double dichotomy is recapitulated in the dedication by Eumolpus of Gorgias' statue at Olympia: Gorgias dedicated at Delphi 'not because of wealth, but because of piety'. The golden statue of Zeus was constituted of hammered sheets of gold over a wooden core. Again, the interior does not match the exterior. Although it seemed as though locating Socrates' statue next to the Cypselid Zeus in Olympia might mark the acme of dedicatory achievement, even this is not good enough for the philosopher. He must be pure gold, and that gold must be metaphorical. In fact, one may imagine that any type of gold would have been preferable to Socrates rather than the gold of the Cypselid image, which was an expression of a tyrannical ethic and originated either from a forced tithe on all the Corinthians, or from the theft of Corinthian women's golden ornaments at the Olympic festival.³⁸ Rather than being a motionless statue in a sanctuary, a statue that is a representation of a vaunt (whether Cypselid or Gorgianic), Socrates prefers the mobile and interactive life of the philosopher.

If the confusion over the text of the Cypselid epigram existed even in Plato's time, that is if the variant *ναξός* was known as an alternative reading, it is even more likely that Plato is playing on the tension between a statue of solid gold and one with only a golden exterior. It is indeed notable that both the Gorgias at Delphi and the Cypselid Zeus at Olympia are associated with a conflict in the sources over material; this coincidence, and the thematic importance it assumes in the context of Socrates' prayer, incline me to believe that issues of construction were current in Plato's day. Finally, I might add that even if Servais' reconstruction of the history of the epigram is correct, it does not challenge my hypothesis that Plato is playing with these issues. Indeed, the assumption of two competing epigrams strengthens my case.

The play Plato engages in with the statues of Gorgias, the Cypselid Zeus, and their associated inscriptions, is itself thematic for the dialogue as a whole. The discussion of writing at the end of the *Phaedrus* engages in an examination of the same issues of motionlessness and motion that are implicit in Socrates' ultimate rejection of assimilation to either statue. Rather than being immortalized as a victor or a trainer through a statue, rather than granting approval to permanent memorialization through writing, Socrates prefers living discourse to immobile and lifeless writing or statuary celebration.³⁹ We learn from 257c–258c that even the politician's law codes and inscriptions are forms of self-praise and self-memorialization. Thus they are akin to the memorials set up by Gorgias and the Cypselids. The myth of Theuth and Thamus and its aftermath (274c5–278b5) argue that writing does not leave behind

³⁸ The tax: Arist. [*Oec.*] 2.1346a; Strabo 8.3.30, 8.6.20; Paus. 5.2.3. The story according to which Periander stole the gold from the Corinthian women to fulfil a vow he had made to dedicate a golden statue if he won the Olympic chariot race (Diog. Laert. 1.96) reminds us uncomfortably of *Phaedrus*' own agonistic ethos and offer.

³⁹ I hope to take up the larger theme of the place of statues in the *Phaedrus* elsewhere.

anything safe or secure, but is like a picture that always means the same thing. Both writing and statues share the same weakness; they are essentially dead and fruitless. Moreover, a piece of writing will always need its author to come to its aid and explain what it means/he meant. Is it not significant that both the statue of Gorgias at Delphi and the Cypselid Zeus were historically misinterpreted? That Gorgias' grandnephew needed to come to his great-uncle's aid and explain the motivation of the dedication? That even this defence is not enough given the critique of rhetoric adumbrated in the *Phaedrus*? Again, we have learnt that the Cypselid Zeus was a point of contention over the inscription of an epigram that would identify the dedicators and speak for them: the citizens of Corinth asked to inscribe their names as dedicators on the statue in order to efface the memory of the Cypselids. Even though the sanctuary at Olympia did not allow tampering with the dedication, the march of time itself created a similar confusion over whether the preserved dedication was a vaunt or a curse. Certainly, this epigram needs the aid of its father to explain what it means. What more perfect illustration could we ask of the Socratic contention that a piece of writing is fundamentally helpless?⁴⁰ Gorgias and the Cypselids, from the Socratic point of view, would have done better to rely less on memorials and dedications and more on leaving behind a living and operative tradition of virtue that would not fail in the second or third generation.

The trail that Phaedrus lays when he makes his offer of a golden statue to Socrates has led us far indeed, and is proof, if any were needed, that the study of Plato's references to material artefacts has much to offer to interpreters of his dialogues. The implicit critique of Gorgias' dedicatory practice is not merely a passing blow at the sophist, but is integrated with the major themes of the dialogue: the quality of the virtuous life, the practice of writing, and the kind of immortality that one should aim for. Once introduced in the references to Gorgias' Delphic statue, these concerns continue to resonate as Phaedrus moves from Delphi to Olympia. Finally, they are recapitulated in the prayer with which Socrates ends the dialogue. Pursuit of the implications of all the dedications has led us far afield, but we may console ourselves with the thought that we have been engaging in the *περίπατος*, the circular path that structures both Socrates' and Phaedrus' afternoon walk, and the circuit of the souls in the place beyond the heavens.⁴¹

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⁴⁰ To be sure, Socrates' argument is that a piece of writing always means the same, does not change. It only underlines his point, however, if we discover that even an inscription can give rise to different textual traditions: *πλημμελούμενος δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἐν δίκη λιοδορηθεὶς τοῦ πατρὸς αἰεὶ δέεται βοηθοῦ· αὐτὸς γὰρ οὐτ' ἀμύνεσθαι οὔτε βοηθήσαι δυνατὸς αὐτῷ* (275e3–e5).

⁴¹ I would like to thank June Allison, Andrea Nightingale, Stephanie Winder, and the anonymous referee of *Classical Quarterly* for their helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.