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‘To haunt, to startle, and way-lay’: Approaching ornament and figure in Graeco-Roman art*

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment’s ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight’s, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.[1]

This is a book about how we approach classical traditions of image-making. Our aim is to probe the historical ways in which Graeco-Roman artists conceptualised, constructed and interrogated the field of vision – that is, to explore how ‘imagery’ itself came to be envisaged in the eyes of ancient makers and viewers. At the same time, we seek to situate that history against a larger conceptual backdrop: to (re-)build some disciplinary bridges between the classical archaeological study of Graeco-Roman objects, defined by a particular set of geographical and chronological parameters, and the broader disciplinary questions of art history, oriented around more transhistorical, diachronic and cross-cultural comparative concerns.[2]

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1 Wordsworth 1815, 1.310 (*Poems of the Imagination* no. VII, 1807).

2 As such, our project in this book is very much an extension of others – above all, that of Platt and Squire (eds.) 2017, dedicated to the ‘frames’ of Graeco-Roman art, while also re-thinking categories of ‘parergonal ornament’ (see e. g. Platt and Squire 2017: esp. 7–12, 38–59). There are numerous introductions to the current state of classical art history, which sits somewhat uncomfortably – at least in Anglophone contexts – between the disciplinary paradigms of ‘classics’ and ‘art history’: cf. e. g. Donohue 2003 (‘The study of ancient art exists uneasily in a disciplinary no-man’s land’, 4); Donohue 2005, 1–14; Kampen 2002; Elsner 2007; Lorenz 2016, esp. 3–9. For my own thoughts – with some comments about the differences between Germanophone and Anglo-Saxon traditions – see Squire 2011a, 372–381, along with e. g. Squire 2012.

While the intellectual ambitions of the volume are wide-ranging, its specific remit is narrower in scope: to shed light on classical traditions of image-making by examining the rapport between 'ornament' and 'figure' in Graeco-Roman art. As numerous contributors stress, these are modern terms: our language is loaded with anachronistic assumptions about form and value, and the semantic distinction lacks any straightforward counterpart in ancient Greek or Latin.[3] Yet it is precisely the relationship between 'ancient' materials and posthumous 'modern' western (as indeed other) frameworks that interests us. A series of questions ensues. If classical traditions of image-making are recurrently celebrated for their mimetic naturalism, what role should we ascribe to visual components that exceed, defy or destabilise that figurative dimension? Can we talk about 'ornament' as a meaningful (which is to say, perhaps, meaning*less*) category in Greek and Roman art? Likewise, what is the relationship between ancient visual forms that lend themselves to iconic interpretation on the one hand, and those that resist such modes of response on the other?

The book does not offer uniform answers to these questions. Definitions of 'ornament' and 'figure' vary – sometimes widely – across chapters. Likewise, contributors tackle the all-important 'and' that connects our key terms in different ways, whether defining the relationship as either antithetical or complementary, or else challenging the pairing of these terms in the first place. As editors, our aim has not been to lay down a partisan line and ask colleagues to follow suit. Rather, the book is motivated by a desire to initiate new conversations, and across traditional disciplinary lines.

Above all, participants have been invited to combine close formal analysis of their material case studies with broader cultural historical critique. By exploring the different ways in which ancient images construct the field of visual imagery, chapters seek to probe not only the forms of ancient images, but also the cultural work that they performed. 'Neoformalist' would be one way of describing that collective approach, combining close observation of individual works with broader cultural historical analysis.[4] Another way of characterising it – as reflected in the volume's polyglossia – would be as an attempt to bring together different academic traditions, working across the national parameters of so much Anglophone, Germanophone and Francophone scholarship in particular.

3 On ancient terminologies, see Platt and Squire 2017, 45–47 – along with the chapters in this volume by e. g. Hölscher, Dietrich, Platt, Barham and Reinhardt (with further references). On Greek delineations of *kosmos*, see Marconi 2004, Hölscher 2009 and Haug 2015a, 22–24 (esp. 22–23, n. 63). The fullest discussion of the semantics – in connection with pre-Socratic philosophers – is Kerschensteiner 1962, esp. 4; cf. Kranz 1955; Diller 1956; Kahn 1960, 219–230; Lämmli 1962, esp. 1.20–26; Haebler 1967; Cartledge 1998, esp. 3–4; I have not been able to consult Dognini 2002. On associated Roman ideas of *decor* and *ornamentum*, see above all Pollitt 1974, 341–347, along with Marvin 1993; Perry 2002 and 2005, esp. 28–50; Swift 2009, esp. 16–17; and Squire 2015, 591–594 (with further bibliographic review).
4 Cf. Platt and Squire 2017, 5–6.

Our book surveys an array of different media, ranging from architecture and plastic sculpture to the pictorial representations of painting and mosaics, while also paying attention to visual forms that exist between these three- and two-dimensional modes. By extension, chapters pay close attention to fluctuations of space and time, traversing the ancient Mediterranean, and moving from the Early Iron Age through to late antiquity. We do not apologise for juggling so many variables, nor do we make any claim to comprehensiveness. For what ultimately unites our project is a concern with what we label the 'ontologies' of ancient images. As we hope to demonstrate, categories of 'ornament' and 'figure' do not constitute a timeless dialectic for approaching (Graeco-Roman) images; rather, shifting attitudes and relationships open up exciting questions about what images were in antiquity, no less than what they are in cross-cultural perspective. If relationships between ornament and figure help us appreciate how the visual field came to be materialised and conceptualised in antiquity, they can also stimulate new ways of connecting ancient traditions with those of other cultural times and places.

I

Introductions to edited volumes have a habit of quickly becoming diffuse. Before sketching the scholarly backdrop to our project (16–22), and before outlining the structure of the chapters that follow (22–28), let me therefore turn to a concrete material case study to tease out some of our concerns. A painted pot from the British Museum – emblazoned on the front cover of our book – seems an appropriate place to begin: the so-called 'Euphorbus Plate', usually dated to the last quarter of the seventh century BC (Fig. 1.1).[5]

This object will be familiar to most readers of this volume: it is frequently reproduced in introductory textbooks, and it regularly features within introductory student surveys on Greek art. The plate was found in the Rhodian settlement of Kameiros, and acquired by the British Museum in 1860. In stylistic terms, our object is usually associated with the so-called 'Wild Goat Style' of the eastern Greek islands, and there has been much debate about its relationship with other Ionian regional schools.[6] At

5 London, British Museum: inv. A749. For a recent overview of scholarship, see Giuliani 2013, 99–102 (translating Giuliani 2003, 125–129), with further bibliography at 285, n. 35. The best formalist analysis of the object is Simon 1976, 54–55, no. 31. On the history of the supposed workshop, see Schiering 1957, esp. 11–12.

6 For a brief introduction, cf. Boardman 1998, 141–144 (mentioning the Euphorbus Plate at 143), and 2001, 35–38. More detailed overviews can be found in Walter 1968, esp. 129 (no. 623), Walter-Karydi 1998, esp. 292–293 (with references to the author's earlier work) and Attula 2006, 86–87.

Fig. 1.1: Euphorbus Plate, found in Kameiros on Rhodes, probably made in the last quarter of the seventh century BC. London, British Museum: inv. A749 (1860/0404.1).

any rate, its three 'figures' are easy enough to make out. Dressed in hoplite armour, two warriors are portrayed in the first moment of engagement; each advances with the left leg forward, and each wields a spear in his upturned right hand; the spears are shown just shy of meeting, but direct viewers to the centre of the composition. A third warrior – who has fallen in battle, and who is shown reclining to the lower left – provides a narrative context for the duel: his position visually aligns him with the warrior standing above, and he is wearing similar armour (the same shield and helmet), carefully distinguished from that worn by the warrior to the right. By the seventh century, such scenes of one-on-one combat, conducted over the body of a fallen comrade, were becoming fairly generic. On our plate, however, identifying inscriptions have been added to the figures: the labels specify that we are looking at

a duel between 'Menelaus' (Μενέλας) and 'Hector' (Ἕκτωρ), who are shown fighting over the body of 'Euphorbus' (Εὔφορβος).[7]

Scholarly discussion of this object has tended to focus – almost exclusively – on the relationship between our scene and the Homeric rendition of a related myth (*Iliad* 17.1–113).[8] The Iliadic version of the story describes how Menelaus, after noticing the demise of Patroclus, and in an effort to protect his body, fought and killed a Trojan warrior named Euphorbus;[9] before Menelaus managed to strip Euphorbus' body of its armour, Apollo intervened and spurred Hector into combat. At this point, rather than face Hector, Menelaus retreats, leaving the corpse 'with many a turn, like a bearded lion being driven from the fold by dogs and men – by their spears and their shouts' (*Il.* 17.108–111).

Much has been made of the (im)precise alignment between the visual minutiae of our scene and the verbal details of the Homeric narrative.[10] Where Homer has the Greek Menelaus kill the Trojan Euphorbus and then withdraw as Hector approaches, the fallen Euphorbus here appears to be more closely associated with Menelaus than with his Trojan compatriot. Indeed, according to Homer's version, Menelaus and Hector never do actually fight over Euphorbus' body: although the scene on our plate is in one sense perfectly imaginable against the narrative setting of Homer's poem, the depicted duel has no strict counterpart in the *Iliad*. Such discrepancies have led a number of scholars to associate the imagery with an alternative version of the myth.

7 On the inscribed letter-forms, see below, 10–12: while the names Μενέλας and Εὔφορβος are to be read from left to right, Ἕκτωρ reads from right to left. As Fittschen 1969, 174 notes, it is 'allein durch die Beischriften' that the imagery becomes a heroic, mythical scene. In the whole constellation of surviving ancient art, there is no other undisputed extant image of Euphorbus: cf. *LIMC* 4.1: 69, s. v. 'Euphorbos I'.

8 Discussions are numerous – and conclusions diverse: cf. Schefold 1964, 8–9, 84, and 1993, 17–18, 143; Friis Johansen 1967, 77–80 ('There can hardly be any other satisfactory explanation of all these remarkable features than that the painter of the Euphorbus plate was inspired for his figure-group by a model from the North-East Peloponnese, in whose art battle-groups like the one he chose to portray had been exceedingly popular since the Early Proto-Corinthian days', 79); Fittschen 1969, 174, no. SB 78; Cook 1983, 2–3; Ahlberg-Cornell 1992, 65–66; Snodgrass 1998, 105–109 (concluding that 'the Euphorbus Plate is very far from being the star witness of Homeric inspiration that it first seemed', 109); Burgess 2001, 77–81 ('I conclude the the Rhodian plate and the Argive tradition are actually "Iliadic-derived" phenomena. That is, the Iliadic tradition is their ultimate, if perhaps vague, inspiration', 81); Wachter 2001, 221, no. DOH 1, 310–311; Giuliani 2013, 98–102 ('There is no avoiding the fact that what is actually depicted has very little to do with the substance of the episode related in the text', 100).

9 It has been argued that the character of Euphorbus was a specifically 'Homeric' invention, designed to suit the narrative frame of the *Iliad*: see Mühlestein 1987, 79–89, with further bibliography in Burgess 2001, 220–221, n. 111.

10 For a critique of the methodological issues, cf. Squire 2009, 122–139, and Squire 2011a, esp. 139–145 (both with detailed bibliographic survey); cf. Squire and Elsner 2016, along with Grethlein's chapter in this volume.

Noting the supposed form of the Argive lettering,[11] and looking to corroboratory evidence from ancient texts,[12] some have gone still further: are we perhaps dealing not with the 'Homeric' account, they have asked, but with a local (perhaps 'Argive') variant?

Within the context of a book on *Ornament and Figure in Graeco-Roman Art*, what makes the Euphorbus Plate so rich is less the issue of 'Homer and the artists' than the means by which the painter goes about constructing his visual field. Fundamental is the gesture of taking a functional, circular object – a round, three-dimensional plate, 39.4 cm across – and delineating within it a self-contained, two-dimensional space for figurative representation.[13] The painter's subsequent distinction between field and ground is achieved by a variety of means: a series of borders demarcate a circular pictorial frame, ranging from a thick black rim around the edges of the interior tondo to internal painted circles of varying thickness (two of them occupied by a further zigzag). Around this are laid out additional circles, extending outwards so as to encase the three-dimensional object: most prominently, a ring of painted dots spins about the plate, contained within two circular lines. Beyond the circles, around the lip, are still more painted patterns, at once framing the central image and defining the tactile outer area of the plate. The outer perimeter is segregated into a series of self-contained sections, each delineated by four lines (there are over twenty in number, of uneven dimensions); within each of these spaces, we find additional 'Punktrosetten' – patterns of either five or six painted dots, rendered in a circular, floral arrangement, almost like thumb-impressions that suggest the touch of the user.

So much for the surrounding frame. But what of the pictorial space within? At the centre of the plate, the painter has fashioned a distinct representational field for the three named protagonists to occupy. The use of polychrome makes the figures stand out against the creamy surface: the bodies are outlined in black silhouette, while the cuirass and greaves (and, in Hector's case, also the helmet) are left as white ground; likewise, varying shades of ochre brown are used for the exposed flesh, lower tunic and helmet.[14] With any circular object, a specific challenge lies in the need for a

11 See below, n. 28: particularly important was Böhlau 1898, 73, arguing – unconvincingly, in my view – that the plate was an attempt to replicate an Argive-Corinthian bronze plaque.

12 Above all, Paus. 2.17.3, mentioning the display (in the Argive Heraion) of a shield which Menelaus supposedly captured from Euphorbus: cf. e. g. Böhlau 1898, 73; Schiering 1957, 104–105; Friis Johansen 1967, 80; Cook 1983, 2; Ahlberg-Cornell 1992, 65; Schefold 1993, 17–18; Snodgrass 1998, 107; Burgess 2001, 77–78; Wachter 2001, 310–311. Sceptical – but in my view more convincing – is Giuliani 2013, 285, n. 40 ('It seems that there was neither an old, Argive story of a duel between Menelaos and Hector nor a corresponding Argive iconography').

13 On the delineation of visual field from ground, see in particular Schapiro 1969; cf. e. g. Taylor 1964, 1–67 and Arnheim 1974, 239–241.

14 Cf. Simon 1976, 54: 'die Haut der drei Krieger ist rotbraun, goldbraun sind die beiden Helme links, die Helmbüsche und die kurzen Chitone'. In contrast to the helmets of Menelaus and Euphorbus, the

groundline – a plane on which the bodies and figurative actions are situated:[15] in our case, this is achieved via a gently curving contour in the lower section of the tondo, at once nodding to the rounded design of the plate and providing a topographical surface for the depicted figures to stand or recline on. It would have been possible to leave the space below that line empty. But the painter evidently judged it undesirable to do so: instead, he filled the area with an interwoven guilloche pattern; beneath – forming, in effect, a lower exergue – are more decorative shapes, stretching outwards to the edge of the frame. Even in this lower band ordered symmetry proves crucial: witness, for example, the painter's (slightly misjudged?) mathematical calculations, whereby three apsidal shapes painted in black are interspersed with a corresponding silhouette that is left 'empty' of internal adornment.[16]

If the circular interior provides a privileged inner space for the figures, the boundaries between framed representation and framing surrounds prove to be inherently permeable. For one thing, we might observe how the figures break free from the circular frame that contains them: to the left, Menelaus' right foot, helmet and right hand protrude beyond the internal border (Fig. 1.2), just as, to the right, Hector's spear punctures the surrounding cyclical boundary; in each case, the frame doubles up as a figurative backdrop – something layered behind the foreground.[17] No less impor-

crest of Hector's helmet is coloured, while the lower body is left white. All three figures wear greaves, which are left white against the painted exposed flesh (although the greave on Menelaus' left leg is adorned with criss-crossing shapes). In certain places, the perimeters of the greaves are delineated not with a continuous contour, but with dotted lines (as most clearly visible in the case of Euphorbus) – which recall the circular row of dots around the plate's perimeter.

15 On the history of fabricating groundlines on the surface of Greek painted pottery – stretching all the way back to the earliest figurative schemes of Geometric art – see Hurwit 1977, esp. 18–22 and Hurwit 1992 (developed from Hurwit 1975); the richest discussion is Dietrich 2010, 106–302, discussing the early history on 107–113. Haug 2015a charts a related development in connection with the history of Attic Geometric vase-painting, reaching to the end of the seventh century; cf. Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 13–20, 32–33, and (emphasising the continuity with Mycenaean vase-painting) Rystedt and Wells (eds.) 2006.

16 So important is this symmetry that it comes, at the lower left-hand side of the exergue, at the cost of cramming three such painted patterns into a space that can barely accommodate them: while the trio of forms fits comfortably into the area to the right, the unpainted apsidal shape at the centre is not situated at a strictly perpendicular angle to the horizontal line (it leans slightly to the left); insufficient space has been provided for the patterns to the left, resulting in the crowded composition at the edge.

17 Close examination – particularly evident when inspecting the crest of Menelaus' helmet – confirms the order in which the different elements were painted, and in turn underscores the painter's deliberate breaking of the frame. The painter began by drawing the circular frame; he then demarcated the figures, showing them as overlapping with that boundary (hence the residual visibility of the underlying lines). The situation might be contrasted with another contemporary plate from Kameiros, also illustrated in this chapter (Fig. 1.5): in this latter case, after all, the outer circular frames were evidently painted *after* completing the central winged figure; this explains how – unlike with the tail of the bird carried in her right hand – the plate's outer frames have been designed to accommodate

Fig. 1.2: Detail of the same plate.

tantly, the visual patterns of the frame seep into the figurative area of the picture: the very space that our figures occupy is awash with 'floral' patterns, dotted rosettes, circular designs and rectilinear geometric forms.[18] Some of these shapes visually echo the ones around the outer perimeters of the plate. In the case of the internal picture, however, many of the forms are obscured by the surrounding circular perimeter: they are shown not in their entirety, but as semicircles eclipsed by the frame. As if to drive home the play between centre and periphery, the middle of the plate – just beneath its pivotal fulcrum, and the point around which the object was originally spun on the potter's wheel – is occupied by a polychrome circle. On one level, this form, complete with coloured centre and globular border, mirrors the shape of the shields on either side of it. On another, this shape mirrors the composition of the plate as a whole: when viewed in the context of the two-dimensional representational field, as indeed

the figure's two protruding feet. For the relationship between figure and frames in Greek painted pottery, see Hurwit 1977 and 1992, along with Dietrich 2010, 106–302, esp. 114–137 (with detailed further bibliography), and Marconi 2017; cf. also Kéi's chapter in this volume.

18 With a view to both the seeping of ornament into the representational field and the breaking of the frame, one might compare the (roughly contemporary) Protoattic amphora from Eleusis (Figs. 3.2–3.3, 8.6): in addition to the chapters by Grethlein and Neer in this volume, cf. Hurwit 1977, 24–25; Osborne 1988, 1–6; Haug 2012, 36–40; Haug 2015a, 173–178; Platt and Squire 2017, 17–20, 32–33. The mid-seventh-century 'Aristonothos krater' from Cerveteri – discussed in the context of Neer's chapter in this volume (Figs. 8.4–8.5) proves equally relevant here.

against the real-life three-dimensional plate on which that painterly space is structured, the circle is loaded with different sorts of figurative potential.

Look more carefully at the bodies of the three warriors and we find a similar confluence of decorative and figurative motifs. Particularly striking is the armour in which the figures are decked out, not least their cuirasses.[19] Whether seen from the front (in the case of Menelaus and Euphorbus), or from the back (in the case of Hector), the creamy colour of each cuirass echoes the surface of the ceramic object. At the same time, both plate and cuirass serve as sites for painted embellishment: notice the hems of the tunics, for example, the zigzag patterns at the bottom of the breastplates, and not least the symmetrical patterns emblazoned at the top. In the case of the breastplate volute-spirals, we are dealing with shapes loaded with at least three sorts of internal visual resonance. First, within the visual field of the tondo, the forms echo the spirals at the upper register of the circular frame. From a different perspective, second, the volute patterns mirror the contours of contemporary armour, which themselves modelled pectoral muscles through precisely these sorts of coiling patterns. Third, they allude to actual bodily forms – that is, to physical, anatomical features which cuirasses at once cover up and suggestively expose.[20]

Still more interesting are the shields themselves (Fig. 1.3).[21] To the left, we see the inside of the shields held by Menelaus and Euphorbus. Indeed, the two circular devices serve as figurative counterparts to the ceramic plate on which they appear: both are complete with dotted perimeter-boundary (this time white dots rendered against a black rim), and both feature an internal double-volute pattern (again closely related to the patterns in the frame). Conversely, to the right, Hector's shield is seen from the outside, this time featuring the emblematic figure of an eagle.[22] In technical terms, the bird is unique within the plate's imagery: it has been rendered according to

19 The point could be extended: one might observe, for example, how the semicircular shapes of the helmets visually echo the eclipsed circular shapes around the edge of the frame.

20 The best overview of Greek armour in English remains Snodgrass 1967; I have learned in particular here from discussions with François Lissarrague (whose book on visual representations of Archaic and Classical Greek armour is eagerly awaited). More generally on the representation of armour on Greek painted pottery, and the interplay between pattern and anatomical forms, see above all Lissarrague 2008 – along with Lissarrague's chapter in this volume. Highly stimulating on armour as a 'second' skin – in the context of sixteenth-century Renaissance painting and sculpture – is Stoichita 2012; cf. also (in relation to the much later cuirass of the Prima Porta Augustus) Squire 2013a.

21 On the 'double-grip' shield portrayed here, cf. Viggiano and van Wees 2013, 57–59: in the case of Menelaus' shield, shown from the inside, we clearly see the armband (*porpax*) for inserting the left forearm up to the elbow, and the grip (*antilabê*) occupying the inner rim for grasping with the left hand.

22 On the significance of shield-emblems in Greek vase-painting – a hugely stimulating but understudied subject – see Chase 1902, along with Vaerst 1980. Ahlberg-Cornell 1992, 65, draws a parallel between this eagle and a related device on Hector's shield painted on an aryballos in Paris (Louvre, inv. 669).

Fig. 1.3: Detail of the same plate.

the practice developed by Corinthian black-figure vase-painters – that is, of painting a 'figure' in black silhouette and then marking out details through subsequent incisions; as motif, the bird is almost introduced like a quotation, an allusion to the cavalcades of animals found on Corinthian ware, themselves contained in circling bands of decoration. For all the figurative force of this eagle, however, we are here looking not at a *real* bird, but at an *image* of a bird, forming part of Hector's own military adornment (his *kosmêsis*, as it would have been called in Greek):[23] the 'eagle' is a figurative representation *within* the shield's internal representational frame, albeit one that is surrounded by 'Punktrosetten' that mirror those outside its internal figurative space.

The presence of writing on the plate – still rare at the time of its production – further complicates the painterly delineation of space. With these three naming inscriptions, the sequence of letters moves in different directions, proceeding along both horizontal and vertical axes in order to occupy the available space. In each case, the inscriptions are painted within the figurative realm of the representation. Likewise, there is an intriguing correlation between the arrangement of letters and the bodily schemata of the protagonists whom they identify. With 'Menelaus', the alphabetic characters mirror the bodily outline of the figure, with one arm raised to hold the spear (at the left), the other lowered so as to clasp the shield (to the right). By contrast, in the case of 'Hector', the angle of the five letters roughly aligns with the diagonal of the warrior's raised right forearm. Of the three inscriptions, the name 'Euphorbus' follows the straightest course, so that the lettered movement from left to right underwrites the supine position of the associated figure – while also accentuating the shape of the shield around which the scene's action unfolds. If in each case the arrangement of letters aligns with the static outlines of the figural forms, the direction of writing – from left to right with the name of Μενέλας, and from right to left with the name of

23 For the significance of the term, see Lissarrague's chapter in this volume.

Ἕκτōρ – maps onto the scene of figurative combat: in each case, the progression of letters accentuates the suggestion of dynamic movement.[24]

What, then, are we to make of these alphabetic characters? While the letters form part of the pictorial field, they are nonetheless extrinsic to the representational scene: they may be visible to external viewers of the plate, but they are unseen by the protagonists depicted within. While the inscribed names appeal to alphabetic decipherment – inviting audiences to view them as letters rather than as mere graphic strokes[25] – they here exist within the realm of other painterly adornments.[26] As patterns, the very form of these characters draws out the contours of adjacent shapes: the rounded silhouette-figures of the omicron and phi letters, for example, mirror the outline of adjacent cyclical patterns (as indeed the circular shapes of the shields, not to mention the rotund form of the plate itself); likewise, the symmetrical pattern to the left of Menelaus is structured around what looks to be a 'chi', with its associated 'v-' shapes recalling the upsilon in 'Euphorbus'.[27] In all this, the presence of writing accentuates questions about where decorative forms stop and figuration begins (and vice versa). Much has been written about the specific forms of these letters, above all in an effort to pinpoint the geographical derivation of our plate: some have associated

24 On the figurative uses of written letters on early Greek painted pottery, see in particular Osborne and Pappas 2007. Cf. more generally Lissarrague 1985; 1990, esp. 125–135; 1992, esp. 191–197; 1999; Hurwit 1990; Henderson 1994; Snodgrass 2000; Steiner 2007, 74–93; Gerleigner 2015. On parallels with the inscriptions of Archaic sculpture, see the pioneering discussion of Dietrich 2017, 302–315. Jeffery 1990, 154, notes that 'all the elaborate filling-motives characteristic of the style were painted in, and the picture finished, before the inscriptions were inserted; for they are squeezed in just as the motives leave room for them.'

25 It is worth remembering here that, within Greek semantics, the boundaries between 'writing' and 'painting' were inherently fluid: there was no unambiguous distinction between the two (*grammata* could refer to the 'strokes' of alphabetic letters and graphic depiction). The clearest demonstration of the point comes in the proliferation of so-called 'nonsense inscriptions', above all in Archaic and Classical Attic vase-painting (for bibliography, see Immerwahr 1990, esp. 44–45; cf. Lissarrague 1985; 1990, 125–135; 1992, 191–197; 1999; Henderson 1994, esp. 90–94, 103–113).

26 On related – albeit later – games with different types of signification in early red-figure Attic vase-painting, see especially Lissarrague 1992, 200; Neer 2002, 63–64; 1995, 132–133; and Steiner 2013 (discussing a famous pelike in the Hermitage Museum of St Petersburg: inv. 615).

27 Note too how closely related alphabetic *grammata* signal different letters according to their orientation: mu and sigma merge into the same pattern; in the case of Menelaus' name, the close resemblance is underscored by the shifting alignment of the writing. By extension, one might note how the upsilon in the name of Euphorbus mirrors not only the 'v'-shaped geometric patterns to the left of Menelaus, but also the figurative schema of Euphorbus' legs (rendered to form an upturned 'V'), the outline of the lower bodies of Menelaus and Hector, and – at ninety degrees – the bent right arm of both figures. Needless to say, I am not arguing for a 'studied' or 'knowing' set of arrangements and configured correspondences here. Rather, such internal echoes form part and parcel of the artist's play with the fluid boundaries between geometrical pattern and figurative significance.

Fig. 1.4: Detail of the same plate.

the truncated shape of the lambda in 'Menelaus' with a Doric Argive alphabet,[28] for instance, while others have noted the non-Argive (and highly idiosyncratic) rendition of the beta in 'Euphorbus'.[29] But no less important is the way in which these letters complicate efforts of 'decoding' the picture in the first place: writing is introduced as something that exists – quite literally – *between* figurative and ornamental modes.

The point takes us to perhaps the plate's most dazzling aspect: the flurry of pattern that occupies the upper centre, at precisely the space where the gazes of Menelaus and Hector meet (Fig. 1.4). Emerging from the circular perimeter of the frame are lines that extend into the representational space of the picture; the curving contours twist and turn like organic tendrils, before metamorphosing into two symmetrical pairs of coils, almost like the volutes of an Ionic capital. Between each set of double-spirals is an additional palmette, and connecting them below is a chequerboard design (comprising an interwoven pattern of painted and unpainted diamond shapes). At the lower edge – connected to the triangular embellishment above it, but shown behind the tip of Hector's spear – is yet another circular embellishment, echoing in miniature the rounded shields to either side.

As compositional folly, this matrix of interconnected patterns serves to direct the viewer's gaze towards the central action. By extending into the realm of picto-

28 On the 'Argive' lambda, usually discussed alongside other supposed 'Argive' influences (cf. above, n. 11), cf. Schiering 1957, 104–105; Cook 1987, 56; Jeffery 1990, 153–154 (with 353–354 and 358, no. 47); Cook 1987, 56; Wachter 2001, 221, no. DOH 1 (with thorough bibliography). The spelling 'Menelas' is also Doric.

29 See in particular Jeffery 1990, 154, 354 (tentatively suggesting an association with the alphabet of Kalymna), and Wachter 2001, 221, no. DOH 1. 'The writer of our inscription will have been a foreigner, who had moved to famous Rhodes and worked there', Wachter concludes. 'He may have come from Kalymna. But he may also have come from Argos; for it is obvious that he would have immediately given up the peculiar "Argive" letter-form of beta in favour of the local – and widespread – standard form, whereas his lambda was sufficiently similar to the normal East Greek shape of the time not to cause any confusion …'

rial representation, the device emphasises a vertical axis that continues all the way past Euphorbus' outstretched knee to the groundline below. Indeed, it is worth noting how, towards the bottom of the tondo, a spiral pattern emerges from the horizontal groundline, extending this vertical plane.

But there is more to this framing embellishment than first meets the eye. The conglomeration of shapes, unfolding from the frame, may look like mere decorative fancy, devoid of figurative significance. As we survey the configuration of shapes, however, our interpretive framework shifts: are we looking here at pure painterly pattern, or do we see the suggestive characters of a face that stares back at us?[30] On either side of the triangular chequerboard pattern – organically emerging from it like leaves – are two almond-shaped patterns that suggest eyes; at their centre are 'pupils', rendered once again as ringed circles, but this time painted in thick black silhouette. Above, traced in curving contours of diminishing painterly thickness, are two lines that are reminiscent of eyebrows: as a result, the volute-spirals take on the figurative likeness of ears; likewise, the small circular ring below the eyes suggests a nose, so that the symmetrical pairs of dots intimate, if not freckles, perhaps the tender flesh of cheeks. One might compare other frontal faces on contemporary vases, among them another plate – also from Kameiros (and likewise housed in the British Museum) – emblazoned with a running Gorgon-like winged figure (Fig. 1.5).[31] The similarity is striking. But so too are the differences. After all, the design on the Euphorbus Plate is redolent not just of a face, but of a head framed within a helmet – complete with crest above and tapered bronze nosepiece below. The schematic impression of that helmeted visage paradoxically brings out its figurative force, recalling the appearance

30 Two (brief) discussions have drawn attention to the point: Simon 1976, 55 ('Zwischen den beiden Helden erscheint ein unheimliches Augenpaar, zusammen mit einem aus hellen und dunklen Rauten gemusterten "Nasenrücken" … Vielleicht aber läßt es sich darüber hinaus auf den Zweikampf selbst beziehen, indem es Hektor und Menelaos im wortlichen Sinne voreinander schützt. Keiner von beiden wird den anderen verwunden, beide gehen unversehrt aus diesem Treffen hervor'); Schefold 1993, 18 ('Oft blicken Vasen und Geräte mit solchen Augen, aber einzigartig ist es, wie Voluten auf Brauenbögen ruhen und ein Dreieck flankieren, das man mit dem Nasenschutz eines Helmes vergleichen kann, so daß das Ganze wie das Symbol eines kriegerischen Dämons wirkt. Augen sind als unheilabwehrendes Motiv uralt und weit verbreitet'). Cf. also Neer 2012, 140. More generally on the incorporation of eyes on ancient objects, see Squire 2016a, 20–24 (with further bibliographic review); cf. Boardman 1976; Martens 1992, esp. 284–363; Steinhart 1995; Rivière-Adonon 2011; compare also Haug 2015b; Grethlein 2016; and Bielfeldt 2016, esp. 136–139 (the latter discussing not only Greek 'eye-cups', but also the ways in which circular ceramic forms could themselves be rendered as 'pupils'). Compare also Kéi's discussion in this volume of an amphora and oinochoe, complete with palmette-patterns under their handles; there, as here, the addition of eyes turns the pattern into a figurative face (146).

31 London, British Museum: inv. A748: for discussion (and comparison with the Euphorbus Plate), see Simon 1976, 55–56, no. 32; on the framing of the winged figure, cf. above, n. 17.

Fig. 1.5: Pottery plate, found in Kameiros on Rhodes, showing a winged goddess – with a Gorgon's head, wearing a split skirt, and holding a bird in each hand; last quarter of the seventh century BC. London, British Museum: inv. A748 (1860/0404.2).

of real-life helmets, which delighted in exploiting pattern to summon up a brazen impression of a warrior's facial likeness.[32]

The emergence of this face further attests to the dynamic interplay between decorative and mimetic forms. What we might have assumed to be mere ornamental exuberance – an extension of the frame, pattern devoid of representational meaning – is transformed into something pregnant with figurative potential. Once we look into the

32 The most detailed catalogue – based on helmets from Olympia – is now Frielinghaus 2011 (with extensive surveys of the literature).

plate, and perceive the frontal face looking back at us, it is likewise hard to *un*-see it once more.[33]

To this should be added a word about the position of the motif, sandwiched as it is between the two warriors at the moment of their embattled engagement. On one level, the pair of eyes renders the plate a sort of mirror – or by analogy, one might think, a reflective shield: looking frontally at the (deeply frontal!) object, the viewer is confronted with his own stare, and the orientation of the plate is perfectly aligned with such head-on engagement.[34] Approached from the figurative scene in which the face emerges, however, the frontal stare is embedded within the represented action, providing the viewer with a different perspective on the scene. As our viewpoint shifts, the emerging form renders the *en face* stare between the two protagonists: it immerses viewers within the depicted action, revealing what Menelaus and Hector – rendered here in profile – themselves see. From this perspective, the face's 'helmeted' appearance takes on a particular significance: not only do viewers now experience the interlocked gaze that the plate represents, they also gain an impression of a head framed within the cosmetic surrounds of a helmet.

My opening case study – situated, of course, within its own various cultural historical, geographical and chronological frameworks[35] – does not provide any straightforward answer to relationships between 'ornament' and 'figure'. Nor can the Euphorbus Plate stand for some all-encompassing 'Greek' (still less 'Graeco-Roman') set of visual cultural frameworks. Yet what makes this case study so rich is the dizzying spin into which such distinctions are projected: like the eyes that emerge from the representational frame of the plate, this imagery at once delights, arrests and unsettles. To quote my opening epigraph, it functions 'to haunt, to startle, and way-lay' ...

33 The 'twofoldness' at play here might take us to Wollheim's key discussion of 'seeing in' in relation to 'seeing as' (Wollheim 1980, esp. 205–206 – indebted, of course, to Wittgenstein 1972, 193–229): see the chapters in this volume by Grethlein and Neer, along with the essays in Kemp and Mras (eds.) 2016. Ancient writers might be said to have anticipated parts of the thinking: cf. Squire 2013b, esp. 102–104, on Phil. *VA* 2.22 (with further references).

34 On the trope of frontality, above all in Archaic Greek imagery, see Frontisi-Ducroux 1986; 1989; 1991, esp. 178–88; and 1995. The key recent discussion is Mack 2002 (on depictions of the Gorgon); cf. Hedreen 2007 and 2017; Grethlein 2016.

35 For a (segregated!) discussion of 'ornament' in the context of contemporary painted pottery from Rhodes, see Schiering 1957, 70–90; the key work here remains Jacobsthal 1927, and cf. also Riegl 1893, 112–232. Numerous other discussions of the relationship between the 'ornamental' and 'figurative' aspects of early Greek vase-painting could be compared: for a scholarly overview, see Haug 2015a, 25–29 – and compare also the chapters in this volume by e. g. Haug, Neer and Grethlein. Fundamental are Himmelmann 1968 ('Im Gegensatz zu mancher modernen Epoche erleidet die ornamentale, scheinbar abstrakte Form im Griechischen im Allgemeinen keinen Verlust an Gegenständlichkeit', 266); Hurwit 1992 ('What happened in the sixth century ... was essentially the divorce of ornament from representation: images were images; florals were inorganic ornaments; they each had their distinct places on the vase; and that, on the whole, was that', 66–67); and Dietrich 2010, esp. 107–113.

One might go still further. After all, the suggestive power of the Euphorbus Plate lies in its invitation to think about classical visual traditions through a shifting critical lens: it reveals how the history of ancient image-making – and the rise of mimetic strategies for which Greek and Roman art is so often championed – goes hand in hand with more abstract, schematic and hybrid forms. Far from existing in a binary relationship, ornament and figure here collude and coalesce, and in a variety of engaged and complementary ways. As such, the object launches us into the very workings of ancient visual perception: it acts out a lesson in the cultures of viewing – in how both ancient and modern eyes construct meaning from what they see.

II

Of course, ours is by no means the first volume to home in on the visual category of ornament, nor to probe its relationship with figurative forms. Over the last quarter-century, and the last decade in particular, there have been numerous calls to re-evaluate the semantics of 'decoration', spurring a veritable industry of 'ornament studies'.[36] This revisionist agenda forms part of a larger reorientation of aesthetics and art history – a movement from the centre to the margins,[37] and by extension from ideas of autonomous and transcendental 'art' to the visual cultures surrounding each and every act of representation.[38] If, in the wake of the eighteenth century in particu-

36 Fundamental is Derrida 1987, 15–147 (translating Derrida 1978, 44–168), on *La vérité en peinture*: for a review of recent scholarship, and emphasising the importance of Derrida's critique for approaching ancient materials, see Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 47–59. A selective sample of books and interventions – many of them discussed in more detail in the chapters that follow – would include: Camille 1992; Grabar 1992 (with stimulating review by Olin 1993); Morgan 1992; Duro (ed.) 1996; Carboni 2001; Frank and Hartung (eds.) 2001; Raulet and Schmidt (eds.) 2001; Schafter 2003; Trilling 2003; Brett 2005; Moussavi and Kubo (eds.) 2006; Zamperini 2008; Gleniger and Vrachliotis (eds.) 2009; Golsenne, Dürfeld, Roque, Scott and Warncke 2010; Beyer and Spies 2011 (alongside the other chapters in the same edited book); Payne 2012; Dekoninck, Heering and Lefftz (eds.) (2013); Picon 2013; Weinryb 2013; Necipoğlu and Payne (eds.) 2016.

37 For a powerful demonstration of the point (applying a Derridean approach to the images drawn in the margins of mediaeval manuscripts), see Camille 1992, esp. 9–55: 'While an examination of marginal art is timely, considering current critical debates over centre and periphery, "high" versus "low" culture and the position of the "other" or minority discourse in elitist disciplines such as art history', as Camille's Derrida-influenced argument puts it (10), 'we must be careful not to think of the medieval margins in Postmodern terms … Things written or drawn in the margins add an extra dimension, a supplement, that is able to gloss, parody, modernize and problematize the text's authority while never totally undermining it. The centre is … dependent upon the margins for its continued existence.'

38 On the rise of 'visual culture studies', and some of the disciplinary reorientations of 'art history' departments over the last quarter-century, see Herbert 2003, together with the discussions in Bryson,

lar, modern critical agendas have tended to approach ornament as an effective antitype to the work of art, even as 'ethically suspect',[39] postmodern and post-structuralist critics have delighted in turning the tables. As a source of alterity, pleasure and diversion, the category of ornament has consequently taken on a significance all of its own: to quote Derrida, ornament has emerged as a key 'passe-partout' for opening up cultural ideas of visual production – and as a means of deconstructing the ideological frameworks of post-Enlightenment aesthetics.[40]

For all their rich provocations, however, such re-evaluations have yet to penetrate classicist circles. Despite the huge importance of Graeco-Roman materials in structuring, shaping and propping up modern western aesthetics, whether in the Enlightenment or for that matter earlier in the Renaissance,[41] classical visual culture has been conspicuously absent in recent reappraisals of ornament.[42] In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, art historians have tended to overlook the formative roles of ancient art in shaping modern cultural attitudes, as indeed the purchase of post-Enlightenment heuristic categories for approaching classical images. For their part, classical archaeologists have tended to work in isolation from the larger field of art history: they have continued to apply cultural distinctions between 'ornament'

Holly and Moxey 1994; Mitchell 1995; and Mirzoeff 1999. For some sharp-sighted overviews of the term's epistemological stakes, see Bal 2003; Elkins 2003, esp. 125–95; and Cherry 2004. On the (largely unacknowledged!) debt to earlier Germanophone art historical traditions, see Bredekamp 2003.

39 I quote from the sharp-sighted comments of Adams 2006: 88: 'Decoration and ornament have a venerable history but that history was largely stopped in its tracks by modernist imperatives that deemed a concern with ornament ethically suspect and inimical to art and design's higher purposes. If modernist antipathy to the pleasures of decoration and ornament explains their demise, then a renewed interest in alterity may, in part, explain its revival. Over the last couple of decades, various strands of post-structuralist theory have done much to insist on the significance of modes of activity, thought and practice that the prescriptions of modernism found impossible to accommodate … It is here, under the aegis of postmodernity, that ornament and decoration have recently assumed a renewed significance.'

40 On the Derridean 'passe-partout' (introduced in Derrida 1987, 13), and its importance for understanding the integration of framed empty spaces, see Platt and Squire 2017, 49–52 and Zorach 2017, 594–600.

41 Particularly important in this context is Renaissance thinking about the 'grotesque', fuelled above all by the rediscovery of Nero's Domus Aurea in the late fifteenth century: for discussion and bibliographic review, see Squire 2013c. More generally on how ancient writings about art shaped modern western frameworks of critical interpretation, cf. the impressive overview of Koch 2013. One might think here of the recourse to ancient exempla in all manner of different cultural contexts – from Renaissance rejections of Late Gothic exorbitance, through Neoclassicist rebuffs to Rococo styles, to modernist claims for 'non-ornamental' architecture in the twentieth century.

42 Typical is e. g. Necipoğlu and Payne 2016, 4, declaring of their groundbreaking book on *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local* that it 'purposely excluded topics of ancient ornament, in the interests of promoting a more tightly integrated volume'.

and 'figure', without probing how ancient and modern attitudes map onto one another.[43]

When it comes to modern western aesthetics, and especially to modern ideas about ornament, the influence of one Enlightenment philosopher stands out above all others: Immanuel Kant.[44] Kant tackled ornament within his 'Analytic of the Beautiful' – part of his *Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urtheilskraft*), first published in 1790.[45] The philosophical context for Kant's comments – within the 'Third Moment', above all in chapter 14 – is a discussion of the 'pure judgment of taste' [*das reine Geschmacksurtheil*], and a distinction between 'empirical' and 'pure' aesthetic judgments of beauty.[46] As is well known, Kant's thinking was directed less to the forms of manufactured artworks than to the beauties of nature [*das Naturschöne*]. In order to explain how 'pure' judgments of beauty operate, Kant nonetheless adduced a number of artistic scenarios where 'charm' [*Reiz*] and 'emotion' [*Rührung*] are said to influence aesthetic response. The distinction between 'that which gratifies in sensation' [*was in der Empfindung vergnügt*] and 'that which pleases by means of its form' [*was durch seine Form gefällt*][47] leads to one of Kant's most famous art historical soundbites:[48]

> *Selbst was man Zieraten (Parerga) nennt, d. i. dasjenige, was nicht in die ganze Vorstellung des Gegenstandes als Bestandstück innerlich, sondern nur äußerlich als Zutat gehört und das Wohlgefallen des Geschmacks vergrößert, tut dieses doch auch nur durch seine Form: wie Einfassungen der Gemälde, oder Gewänder an Statuen, oder Säulengänge um Prachtgebäude. Besteht aber der Zierat nicht selbst in der schönen Form, ist er, wie der goldene Rahmen, bloß um durch seinen Reiz das Gemälde dem Beifall zu empfehlen, angebracht, so heißt er alsdann Schmuck, und tut der echten Schönheit Abbruch.*

43 More generally on the applicability (or not) of post-Enlightenment views of art for approaching ancient Graeco-Roman traditions, see the essays in Platt and Squire (eds.) 2010. Compare also – in this volume – the chapters by Hölscher, Barham and Reinhardt.

44 Cf. the analyses in this volume by Neer and Platt, along with the passing discussions in the chapters by Dietrich, Barham, Reinhardt, Trimble and Elsner (on Kantian ideas of the *parergon*). A more detailed introduction to Kant's comments can be found in Platt and Squire 2017, 38–59, on which my discussion here draws.

45 The bibliography on Kant's aesthetics is of course enormous, not least in the wake of Derrida 1987, 37–82; for a brief orientation, cf. Platt and Squire 2017, 39, n. 71. Hammermeister 2002, 21–41 offers a useful summary and critique, as well as an overview of immediate responses to Kant by both Schiller (42–61) and Schelling (62–86).

46 For an overview of the context of Kant's comments here, see Rivera de Rosales 2008; on the concept of 'freedom' that underpins Kant's account, see e. g. Guyer 1993.

47 Kant 1987, 69–72, translating Kant 1924, 62–6: I refer here to Werner S. Pluhar's English translation of the *Akademie* 1793 edition; for the German text, I cite Karl Vorländer's German edition, based on the third and last version of the text to be published during Kant's lifetime in 1799 (with deviations from the earlier two editions signalled in the footnotes).

48 Kant 1987, 72 (adapted), translating Kant 1924, 65. On Kant's comments here – and the key response of Derrida 1987, 15–147 – see e. g. Carroll 1987, 131–54; McCloskey 1987, 60–79; Kemal 1997, 68–72; and Marriner 2002.

> Even what we call ornaments [*Zieraten* (*Parerga*)] – i. e. those things which do not belong to the complete presentation of the object internally as a constituent, but only externally as a complement, and which augment our taste's liking – do so only by their form; as, for example, the frames of pictures or the draperies of statues or the colonnades around palaces. But if the ornament does not itself consist in beautiful form but is merely attached – as a golden picture-frame, so as to recommend the painting by its charm [*Reiz*] – it is then called *finery* [*Schmuck*] and takes away from genuine beauty.

In the formulation adopted in the 1793 and 1799 editions,[49] ornaments [*Zieraten*] are said to amount to subservient, 'parergonal' adjuncts to the central artistic *ergon*: they are removed from the work of art that they paradoxically delineate.[50] A little later, in the sixteenth chapter, Kant would further develop the point, explicitly adducing 'Zeichnungen *à la grecque*' by way of example.[51] While Kant himself associated such forms with what he labels 'free beauty' (*pulchritudo vaga*), as opposed to the 'adherent beauty' (*pulchritudo adhaerens*) of figurative art,[52] what matters is the very distinction that is drawn between the two: coloured with late eighteenth-century German ideological assumptions about the proper realm of art on the one hand, and about 'finery' or '*Schmuck*' on the other, Kantian aesthetics laid the ground for modern hierarchical segregations between the proper 'content' of an image and the superfluous frivolity of its surrounding 'adornment'.

Kant provided systematic philosophical justification for some of the most abiding tenets of modernist aesthetics. On the one hand, he established an intellectual framework for cultural distinctions between the 'fine' and 'decorative' arts, as played out in attitudes towards the 'beaux arts' and 'arts décoratifs'.[53] On the other, he helped

49 Kant introduced the term *parerga* (as indeed the example of 'frames of pictures' [*Einfassungen der Gemälde*]) only in his second and third editions of 1793 and 1799: the term does not feature in the first, 1790 edition, although Kant did introduce the 'wie der goldene Rahmen' analogy in the final sentence of the passage cited; cf. Platt and Squire 2017, 40–42.

50 On the paradox, see in particular Derrida 1987, 54 (translating Derrida 1978, 87): 'A *parergon* comes against, beside, and in addition to the *ergon*, the work done [*fait*], the fact [*le fait*], the work, but it does not fall to one side, it touches and cooperates within the operation, from a certain outside. Neither simply outside nor simply inside.' As Neer reminds us in this volume (206–207), Kant's comments in the passage do not map in any straightforward way onto the categories of ornament and figure: 'his prime example of the *parergon* was sculpted drapery, which he understood to be ancillary to, and a foil for, the rendering of the human body, even though it is depictive through and through.'

51 Kant 1987, 76–78, translating Kant 1924, 69–72 (quotation from 70): for discussion, see especially Harries 1994, esp. 89–92, and Menninghaus 2000, esp. 32–9 – along with Neer's chapter in this volume.

52 As Neer points out in this volume (207), 'Kant did not simply oppose figure to ornament', but 'instead ... relativized the terms in a complex, multi-dimensional way' – 'he proposed a labile relation between two subsidiary pairs: figure-ground on the one hand, and figure-ornament on the other.'

53 On the formation of such segregations in the eighteenth century, the key contribution remains Kristeller 1990, 163–227 (combining two articles first published in 1951 and 1952): cf. Mortensen 1997 and Shiner 2001, with Squire 2010, esp. 137–144. For an anthology of relevant critical writings, see Frank (ed.) 2000.

to frame discussion of ornament as peripheral (even inimical) to art – and hence to art history. In the early twentieth century, Kant's hierarchical valorisation of the *ergon* over parergonal *Zieraten* gave rise to modernist calls to do away with ornament altogether. In a famous 1908 lecture on *Ornament und Verbrechen* (first published in French in 1913), Adolf Loos even went so far as to label ornament a modernist 'crime', since 'freedom from ornament is a sign of spiritual strength': 'the evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornament from utilitarian objects', as Loos put it.[54] At the same time, this category of ornament, and its supposed remove from figurative forms, has proved central to art historical analyses of non-western visual traditions. One might think of Hegel's 1820s *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, for example, in which ornamental and hybrid forms are associated with the 'symbolic' pre-art [*Vorkunst*] of the oriental east, necessarily preceding the figurative forms of the 'classical'.[55] Alternatively, consider the history of conceptualising so-called 'arabesques' – associated above all with Islamic artistic traditions, and thought to embody the 'other' to western figurative traditions.[56] In all such discussions, the category of 'ornament' amounts to something more than a formal quality of the image: it is loaded with social, cultural and ideological values – assumptions about what images are, no less than about what images should be.

Such assumptions about ornament, and questions about their validity, have given rise to a flurry of recent reappraisals. While 'ornament' was not of course a completely marginalised aspect of later nineteenth- and twentieth-century criticism,[57] there can be no denying – as the editors to an important recent anthology put it – that 'orna-

54 For the earliest French publication of 'Ornement et crime', see *Les cahiers d'aujourd'hui* 5 (June, 1913), 247–256; the German translation of 'Ornament und Verbrechen' appeared in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* (24 October 1929). An English translation can be found in Loos 1998, 167–176 – and on the history of publication, see Adolf Opel's introduction (7–17) within the same book. On modernist appropriations of Loos' arguments, and their response to nineteenth-century traditions of theorising ornament, see Banham 1957; Long 1997 and 2012; Trilling 2003, 119–136, and di Palma 2016, esp. 21–23; cf. also Platt's chapter in this volume. On the immediate backdrop to Loos' comments – analysed not just against the supposed 'crisis' of the decorative arts in a world of industrialisation, but also against the arts and crafts and emerging art nouveau movements – see Gombrich 1979.

55 For the most frequently cited English translation of Hegel's oral lectures (based on the second, 1842 edition by H. G. Hotho), see Hegel 1975. Bibliography on Hegelian aesthetics is currently booming: for an anthology of different disciplinary perspectives, see Kottman and Squire (eds.) 2018.

56 The most scintillating introduction to the historiography of the arabesque – centred in particular around the intellectual archaeology and influence of Riegl 1893 (translated as Riegl 1992) is Flood 2016 – with detailed further bibliography in the notes at 362–363; cf. Kühnel 1977; Grabar 1992 (with Olin 1993); and Necipoğlu 1995; on underlying Enlightenment aesthetic frameworks, see e. g. Harries 1994 and Menninghaus 2000.

57 Cf. Neer's chapter in this volume – discussing e. g. Jones 1856 and Gombrich 1979, as well as the intervening work of Gottfied Semper and Alois Riegl. Many of the interventions cited above (n. 36) offer more detailed overviews of the scholarly historiography: see in particular Gombrich 1979, 33–62; Schafter 2003, 15–59; and Brett 2005, 106–136.

ment is back'.[58] Despite Loos' modernist calls to dispense with ornament, contemporary architects are delighting in its rehabilitation in ever more playful ways.[59] Within scholarly circles too, ornament has emerged as one of the foremost concerns of 'visual culture studies', not only in reassessing western traditions, but also within current calls for more 'global' and 'comparative' modes of art history.[60]

It is here, contributors to this book argue, that Graeco-Roman materials have the potential to play a key critical role – at once so integral to the formulation of modern western aesthetics, and yet culturally removed from those critical frameworks. It is not that classical art historians have failed to discuss the relationship between 'ornament' and 'figure'.[61] If our volume has a polemic, it is rather that their discussions have been carried out in hermetic isolation from the larger field of art historical enquiry. Two problems stand out in particular. The first lies in the uncritical way in which so much classical scholarship has applied post-Enlightenment ideas about ornamental and figurative forms: scholars have imposed modern interpretative frameworks onto their ancient materials without questioning the validity of doing so.[62] A second – and very much associated – problem lies in the classificatory manner in which the 'ornamental' forms of Greek and Roman art have been discussed. For classical archaeologists, the 'ornamental' aspects of ancient visual culture have predominantly served the ends of taxonomy and typology: in studying all manner of different media – whether Greek vase-painting, for example, architectural assemblages, Roman frescoes or mosaics – scholars have approached ornament as a means of categorising materials, usually studying the decorative 'surrounds' in isolation from the figurative forms that they frame.[63] The tendency is in one sense understandable, providing as it does a means

58 Necipoğlu and Payne 2016, 1: 'From our vantage point today,' the editors continue, 'what seemed a definitive and irreversible death blow to ornament turned out to be only an ushering in of a protracted phase of its disappearance.'

59 For discussion, see especially Brolin 2001 and Payne 2012, along with Platt's chapter in this book (discussing numerous recent contemporary case studies; cf. the chapters by Picon, di Palma and Sarkis in Necipoğlu and Payne (eds.) 2016, 10–43 – on the 'contemporaneity of ornament in architecture' (with more detailed further bibliography).

60 For some of the most scintillating recent interventions, see e. g. Elkins 2007; Carrier 2008; Belting 2011 (translating an influential German book first published in 2001); and Elsner (ed.) 2017. Particularly important here is the anthropological approach of Gell 1998, re-thinking 'ornament' (and the 'technology of enchantment', 76) from the perspective of agency.

61 Some of the richest work has been in the context of Late Geometric Greek vase-painting (e. g. Himmlemann 1968; Hurwit 1992; Haug 2015a). One might also compare Verity Platt's recent discussions of Campanian wall-painting (above all Platt 2009, with her discussion in this volume); Platt's work stands in stark contrast to e. g. Sauron 2000, which instead reads Augustan ornamental motifs as loaded with allegorical political significance (cf. Squire 2013a, 271–272).

62 For a related polemic, see e. g. Platt and Squire 2017, 6, n. 12 – responding to the associated project of Ehlich 1953 on *Bild und Rahmen in der Antike*.

63 For a brief overview – with discussion of the scholarly frameworks established by e. g. August Mau, Sir John Beazley and Lucy Shoe Merritt – see Platt and Squire 2017, esp. 9–12.

of cataloguing, attributing and dating material. But it comes at a substantial cost: the fundamental question that scholars have failed to ask is whether – and indeed how – categories of 'ornament' and 'figure' served to structure the ancient field of visual representation.

III

Our book cannot aspire to offer a comprehensive treatment of ornament and figure in Graeco-Roman visual culture. Rather than provide some encyclopaedic overview of how these categories did or did not play out in ancient art, our aim has been more provocative. Most previous art historical studies start out from accepted assumptions about what ornament and figure entail: they turn to particular case studies either to confirm or refute preconceived intellectual ideas. In looking to ancient materials, by contrast, we have encouraged contributors to re-think those visual forms have been so pivotal in shaping modern western approaches, and yet which prove culturally distant and removed: by exploring the fluidity between the poles, we invited contributors to generate new ways of defining, conceptualising and problematising such semantic distinctions.

Tonio Hölscher begins with an ambitiously transhistorical survey, focused above all on architectural materials.[64] For Hölscher, ancient 'ornament' functioned very differently from the ways assumed by modern western viewers: Greek notions of *kosmos*, related in turn to Roman ideas of *decor* and *ornamentum*, served to counterbalance the mimetic dimensions of ancient art; rather than serve 'representation' – in the sense of 'making present' – 'cosmetic' elements had the role of bestowing and embellishing cultural value.[65] To demonstrate the point, Hölscher discusses a variety of architectural case studies, while also introducing a range of visual media (including bronze vessels, three-dimensional sculpture and plastic reliefs). At the same time, he exploits shifting chronological ideas about ornament and figure to trace a continuous history of Greek architectural embellishment, stretching from the Early Archaic world (discussed here in connection with the seventh-century temple at Prinias) to Imperial Roman monuments (above all, the Augustan *Ara Pacis*).

Jonas Grethlein takes a different tack. Like Hölscher, he is concerned with the history of semantic distinctions between ornament and figure in antiquity, and not least the relationships between ancient and modern attitudes. Where Hölscher's essay is structured along chronological lines, however, Grethlein's contribution

64 The subject of ancient architectural adornment has come in for renewed interest in recent years: see especially the contributions to Lipps and Maschek (eds.) 2014.

65 Hölscher's comments here draw on earlier pioneering discussions: see especially Hölscher 2009 and 2015, 38–47.

adopts a more phenomenological and diachronic approach. In particular, his chapter seeks to redirect attention away from 'ornament' as something that can be defined in formal terms and towards the pictorial category of the 'ornamental' – that is, as an aspect of the representing medium that spills into the level of the represented object. Grethlein explains his thinking with reference to the famous Protoattic amphora from Eleusis (Figs. 3.2–3.3; cf. Fig. 8.6), demonstrating the fluidity between its 'figurative' and 'ornamental' forms. Still more ambitiously, he applies his interpretive framework to a parallel phenomenon in verbal narrative: like the ornamental aspects of contemporary vase-painting, the repeated, 'formulaic' language of Homeric epic has the capacity to generate meaning beyond what it formally denotes.[66] In a final flourish, Grethlein examines the transhistorical applicability of his theoretical approach ('no matter the medium, no matter the epoch', 94): if the 'ornamental' is a category of pictures in general, and one with close parallels in verbal narrative, its specific forms are always dependent on the presiding cultural conventions of representation.

Annette Haug's chapter is in some ways an attempt to square Hölscher's historical framework with Grethlein's more theoretical approach. Of all the contributions to this book, hers stretches furthest back in time: she deals with the very origins of Greek figurative art, above all in the context of Late Geometric painted pottery.[67] At the same time, Haug's predominant concern lies in the interface between the representational pictorial space of vase-painting and its delineation within a three-dimensional, ceramic object. Fluctuations between the ornamental and figurative aspects of Geometric vase-painting, she argues, go hand in hand with the interplay between pictorial representation and plastic form: to demonstrate the point, Haug examines how suggestive three-dimensional forms could function alongside painted two-dimensional embellishments – whether bringing to mind other sorts of objects, alluding to zoomorphic shapes, or incorporating additional plastic elements.

66 In this connection, it is worth noting how the Greek language of *kosmos* (and above all the verb *kosmein*) could be used as a critical term for pictorial *and* poetic embellishment: even as early as in the Homeric epics, we hear of rhapsodists and speakers 'adorning' a spoken performance (e. g. *Il.* 2.214 and *Od.* 8.492; Neer 1995, 147, n. 13 also compares, e. g., Pl. *Ion* 530d and Gorg. fr. B11). While focused on Homeric epic, Grethlein's transmedial approach to the 'ornamental' as a category crossing between visual and verbal forms might lead us to all manner of other case studies. One might think in particular of Hellenistic and Imperial Greek *technopaegnia* (*Anth. Pal.* 15.21–22, 24–27), and above all of the 'pictorial-poetic' *carmina cancellata* of Optatian (Publilius Optatianus Porfyrius) in the early fourth century: for discussion, frequently touching on the interplay between pattern and figurative designs, see the essays in Squire and Wienand (eds.) 2017; cf. Squire 2016b and 2017b.

67 Haug's discussion forms part of an approach to Geometric vase-painting developed in her important book on *Bild und Ornament im frühen Athen* (Haug 2015a). On the 'ornamental' aspects of Geometric art, and their association with the 'Oriental' east, particularly influential was Poulsen 1912, esp. 108–116: while arguing that 'die dunkelsten Zeiten der hellenischen Kunst nicht ohne Strahlen der ewig leuchtenden, östlichen Sonne gewesen sind' (116), Poulsen suggested that the history of Greek figurative art emerges from the contact with more 'primitive' and 'oriental' eastern traditions.

François Lissarrague continues the focus on painted pottery, albeit proceeding to Attic black- and red-figure vase-painting from the sixth and fifth centuries BC. His specific subject lies in the motif of warriors 'adorning' themselves with cuirasses, greaves and helmets – the phenomenon referred to in ancient Greek as *kosmêsis*. Greek armour is a particularly rich source for thinking about ornament and figure: if arms were intended to conceal the body of a warrior (covering it in a brazen trim), they also had to align with his figurative frame; by extension, the very adornments of extant cuirasses and greaves play upon an instability, often oscillating between abstract designs and patterns that bring to mind the suggestive outline of hidden anatomical forms. Rather than survey surviving bronze materials themselves, Lissarrague here explores the ways in which Attic vase-painters turned to the visual representation of armour to offer their own meditative mediation of such themes. On the one hand, clear parallels can be drawn between the vase-painter's articulation of bronze surface and his own adornments of the pot (as demonstrated with reference to scale and palmette patterns). On the other hand, Lissarrague demonstrates how the combined figurative and ornamental forms of armour proffered a rich means for contemplating the 'cosmetic' embellishments of vase-painting at large: with typical self-reflexive artistry, Attic painters clothed the subject of *kosmêsis* with a distinctive pictorial panoply of representational games.

Representational games also lie at the core of Nikolina Kéi's chapter. Like Lissarrague, Kéi discusses Attic black- and red-figure vases. Rather than focus on a single iconographic subject, however, she homes in on the figures, objects and floral elements that occupy the area beneath a pot's handles.[68] Here, as in the earlier Geometric materials discussed by Haug, the plastic form of a vase collides with its two-dimensional space for pictorial representation. And yet, Kéi argues, these painted motifs could also help viewers to grasp – to get a literal and metaphorical hold on – larger issues of semantic interpretation. As she concludes, these motifs defy modern ideological distinctions between the figurative and the ornamental. While in one sense occupying a 'marginal' position within the architectural frame of the vase, the images painted beneath the handles of a pot could nonetheless influence visual interpretation in a variety of ways – by separating or interconnecting the two sides, for example, directing the viewer's gaze, or by diverting attention away from other registers. The area, in short, is handled with a potential suggestive significance of its own: by underscoring, qualifying or undercutting the scenes that they frame, the space around the handles provides an axis around which visual interpretation could pivot.

The interface between three-dimensional, plastic forms and two-dimensional surface is also one of the themes addressed in Nikolaus Dietrich's chapter –now turning from vase-painting to Archaic and Early Classical Greek sculpture. As Die-

68 Kéi's contribution here draws on a rich assemblage of earlier work (too little known in Anglophone scholarship): in addition to Kéi 2010, see also Kéi 2011 and most recently Kéi 2016.

trich explains, the poles of ornament and figure are fundamental to modern scholarly narratives about the 'Greek revolution' and the rise of Classical mimetic forms:[69] Archaic artists, to quote John Boardman, 'treated the … body almost as an exercise in pattern and composition'.[70] Such critical modes prove deeply problematic when it comes to sixth-century Attic sculpture, Dietrich argues, since the supposedly 'ornamental' systems of pattern and deviation could in fact be harnessed for a variety of 'figurative' ends. This leads to a different history of Greek sculpture, and to a new explanation for both the 'demise' of Archaic modes and the rise of more naturalistic and mimetic forms.[71] Fundamental are the shifting attitudes to what Dietrich terms the 'contingency' of the sculpted representation. The transition between Archaic and Classical strategies forms part of a radical change in conceptualising visual form: on the one hand, a shift away from the statue as a site for conspicuous artistic display; on the other, a movement towards approaching it as a self-standing entity in its own right ('a causality intrinsic to the mimetically produced reality itself', 168).

The next chapter, by Richard Neer, in one sense brings together the themes of the preceding six chapters. As his title makes clear, Neer examines how Greek distinctions between ornament and figure evolved over time: incorporating analysis of vase-painting, architecture and sculpture (in particular the caryatids of the Erechtheum), he proceeds chronologically from the 'Geometric' to the 'Classical'. But the chapter does something else besides. While 'ornament' and 'figure' can be understood as transhistorical and essential categories, Neer argues, relationships between the two are always historically determined. With reference to the first claim, the chapter takes its lead from *Gestalt* psychology (the intersections with Grethlein's chapter are particularly rich here): notions of 'figurality' and 'ornamentality' are not properties that inhere in an object, the chapter argues, but rather rely on the eye of the beholder ('ornament is more a way of seeing than a coherent class of entity in the world', 209). With regards to the second claim, Neer traces how Greek distinctions between the ornamental and the figurative – as indeed between figure and ground – always take on an ideological dimension: with the rise of ever more complex narrative scenes from the eighth to seventh centuries, the very boundaries between ornament and figure could be manipulated to distinguish between different viewing communities, and above all between social and political groups.

With Verity Platt's contribution, the book begins a gradual transition towards 'Roman' visual forms.[72] Platt takes her cue from the so-called 'materialist turn' within

69 For one of most influential accounts, see Gombrich 1977, 99–125; cf. Gombrich 1950, 49–64.

70 Boardman 1996, 86.

71 Fundamental here is now Neer 2010; cf. Elsner 2006; Tanner 2006, esp. 31–96; Squire 2011b, 32–68 (with further bibliography at 209–213).

72 The most sustained attempt to re-think 'Roman' ideas of decoration is Swift 2009 – with provocative overview at 1–25 and conclusions at 187–195: Swift champions social functions, discussing do-

the humanities, exploring its ramifications for approaching first-century AD cultural attitudes.[73] Setting aside Kantian aesthetic hierarchies, and exploring ancient terminologies of *ornamentum* and *parergon*, the chapter uses ancient materials to re-think post-Enlightenment segregations of the figurative from the ornamental. More specifically, Platt examines the materialist cosmologies of Stoic philosophy as a way of making sense of 'material culture'. Such philosophical parameters play a key role in shaping Roman cultural attitudes towards medium, form and meaning, she argues; likewise, Stoic philosophy can help us to unpack important questions about aesthetic, biological and cosmological systems played out in Roman art. Platt demonstrates the point in two ways. First, adopting a literary perspective, she examines Pliny the Elder's account of painting in Book 35 of his *Natural History*: the seemingly 'parergonal' features of Plinian art history embody broader structuring patterns, informed by assumptions about *natura* as rational force. Second, from an archaeological perspective, Platt turns to the contemporary decorative schemes of Campanian wall-painting, taking the House of the Gilded Cupids in Pompeii as her case study. The assemblage of different painterly elements in this house offers a material counterpart to Pliny's materialist concerns, she concludes: Roman frescoes manifest a parallel cultural preoccupation with the themes that imbue Pliny's account – an interest in the capacity of material form to manifest the *physis* of natural materials on the one hand, and a concern with human practices of artistic imitation and adornment on the other.

The terminology of 'ornament' – and its embellishment with anachronistic, post-Enlightenment ideologies of value – forms an elegant bridge with Nicola Barham's chapter. One of the recurrent difficulties that contributors to this book have faced is the difficulty of finding a language in which to describe the visual components of Graeco-Roman imagery. But what, asks Barham, is at stake in our recourse to the word 'ornament' itself? The English term – like its cognates in French, German and other European languages – derives from a Latin word: *ornamentum*. Yet, as Barham emphasises, Latin *ornamenta* encompass an array of semantic meanings that are quite removed from those of its modern-day derivatives. To demonstrate the point, the chapter assembles an array of ancient *testimonia* – from literary texts through to monumental inscriptions, relating to a gamut of different visual media and forms. At the same time, Barham uses her literary materials to challenge any straightforward distinction between the 'ornamental' and the 'figurative' in the Roman cultural mindset: far from delineating something as marginal or inferior, she argues, the rhetoric of *ornamentum* served to champion an image's visual power; referring to a range

mestic mosaics, vessels, jewellery and dress. Particularly relevant for our project is Swift's analysis of 'non-figurative floor mosaics' at 27–104: cf. Muth's chapter in this book.

73 For the 'materialist turn' and its importance for re-thinking Graeco-Roman art history, see now Platt 2016.

of figurative forms, this term functioned both to celebrate an image's impact and to define it in relation to the surrounding visual environment.

Where Barham discusses Latin texts, Arne Reinhardt turns to a single material case study to explore the associated aesthetics of Roman *decor*: a so-called 'Neoattic' sculpted marble drum from the first-century BC, originally used as the head of a well. The object – now housed in Schloss Tegel in Berlin – is decorated with a Dionysian frieze, and around its three-dimensional circular span we find the repeated form of a standing satyr. The schema occurs three times in total: in each case, the satyr is shown with the same backward turn of the head, and with legs and arms in closely related pose. But what should we make of such iconographic repetition? Classical archaeological interpretations have traditionally associated this sort of 'uninventive' replication with an assumed lack of 'artistic' originality. By contrast, Reinhardt advances a radically different explanation, pointing to a fundamental discrepancy between post-Enlightenment attitudes and those circulating (literally and figuratively) around his marble drum. Rather than functioning as 'parergonal' pattern, and far from signalling some visual deficiency, this sort of figurative reiteration – paralleled in numerous other Roman 'decorative' contexts – was a highly valued element of Roman artistic production. Seen from this perspective, the ornamental repetition of the figure can be understood in relation to contemporary rhetorical ideas of *variatio* (as discussed by the likes of Cicero, Quintilian and the Younger Pliny).[74] At the same time, the discrepancies between ancient and modern approaches point to a larger cultural historical divergence between post-Kantian ideas of 'decoration' and Roman aesthetic ideals of decorous decoration.

The following two contributions, by Jennifer Trimble and Jaś Elsner, both relate to the interplay of ornament and figure in Roman funerary art. While Trimble focuses on a single case study from the second century AD (the Tomb of the Haterii just outside Rome), Elsner surveys the corpus of Roman sarcophagi from the second and third centuries. Despite their different subjects, both chapters explore not only the slippage between 'figurative' and 'ornamental' motifs, but also the significance of such self-referential play within mortuary contexts.[75]

As Trimble explains, the imagery surrounding the Tomb of the Haterii is particularly rich for approaching Roman ideas about ornament and figure. The tomb is famous for its so-called 'crane relief' (Fig. 12.1), one of the most frequently reproduced images in introductory surveys of Roman art. As the chapter explains, however, the imagery of this relief has to be understood within the framework of the tomb as a whole, inviting viewers to differentiate between figurative and ornamental forms only

74 Fundamental on Roman rhetoric ideas of replication, and their significance for approaching contemporary visual culture, is Anguissola 2012; more generally on the importance of rhetoric for approaching the workings of Roman visual culture, see the essays in Elsner and Meyer (eds.) 2014.
75 For further comments here – in relation to 'framing' the dead – see Platt 2017 and Squire 2017a.

to problematise any such semantic distinctions. Trimble discusses numerous aspects of the monumental complex – animal figures that look like vegetal patterns leaping up pilasters, for example, and cupids carved as figurative and vegetal hybrids. Ultimately, she argues that the very interaction between figurative and ornamental forms mediated ontological questions about transformation, mediality and loss.

Elsner's chapter picks up the themes of Trimble's analysis – in particular, her discussion of 'framing' and *mise en abyme*. Taking as his case study the sculptural adornment of Roman sarcophagi, Elsner examines those visual elements which self-consciously replicate, allude to or comment upon other elements in the same object. His chapter's 'neoformalist' approach richly intersects with Reinhardt's discussion of figurative repetition. Here, though, the concern lies in both Roman cultural attitudes to the visual sphere and the use of images to frame the dead: the very decoration of a sarcophagus posed fundamental questions about materiality, form and the body contained within.

The last chapter, by Susanne Muth, introduces an additional final medium: mosaics. No less importantly, Muth also expands the chronological and geographical framework of the book, incorporating discussion of both Roman Imperial and late-antique mosaics, and from across the Roman Empire. Classical archaeological scholarship has conventionally drawn a straightforward distinction between the 'figurative' and 'ornamental' components of Roman mosaics, Muth argues. Yet what is most striking about the examples discussed here is their blurring of such categories – the 'ornamentalisation' of 'figures', as she puts it, no less than the 'figuralisation' of 'ornaments'. Developing the arguments of other contributors (especially Platt, Barham, Reinhardt and Elsner), Muth relates this interplay back to Roman cultural and rhetorical ideas about *decor* and *ornamentum*. The different components of mosaic design, she concludes, share a similar set of aims and objectives, oriented around the interaction with the viewer on the one hand, and the definition of space on the other.

As the brief overview above suggests, our volume does not offer an exhaustive treatment. It will already be clear that our project brings together a range of experts, with different medial interests, academic backgrounds and interpretative agendas. As a collective, though, the book aims to be more than the sum of its parts: by re-thinking the relationship between antiquity and subsequent western traditions, it hopes to bring the *kosmos* of Graeco-Roman art into renewed and productive contact with the constellations of art history.

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