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6 Pathos, physiognomy and ekphrasis from Aristotle to the Second Sophistic

Physiognomy and ekphrasis: Some methodological observations

I would like to begin with some methodological observations. The title of this chapter might seem awkward. First of all, in Greek literature the words physiognomy and ekphrasis never occur together: the first occurrence of the verb *physiognomonein* is in Demosthenes, namely in his oration *Against Aristogeiton* (98.4) which dates back to the third quarter of the fourth century BC¹; while for the first technical occurrence of *ekphrasis* as a description of “persons, animated and inanimated things, occasions and places” we have to wait until much later. It occurs only in the first century AD, in the preliminary exercises for the training of orators, the *Progumnasmata* of the Alexandrian sophist Aelius Theon.² We have, for sure, plenty of texts dealing with physiognomy from the Homeric epoch onwards, and we have, also from Homer onwards, ekphrastic texts describing persons, animated and inanimated things, occasions and places.³ This means that both practices – that of physiognomy and that of ekphrasis – exist in Graeco-Roman literatures much earlier than, and independently from, their explicit theorization. One could even go further and say that physiognomic and ekphrastic passages occur throughout Greek and Latin literature, and that their importance lies in the rhetorical effect they produce on the audience, not in the theories that have been conceived to explain them.

Still, we face a major problem: can we associate the two practices of physiognomy and ekphrasis? This is a tricky question, since we do not have texts that *problem- atize* physiognomy and ekphrasis in the same context, or that establish an explicit relationship between them. What we do have is a series of texts from Aristotle to the Second Sophistic in which physiognomic and ekphrastic matters are treated in a way that makes plausible, if not altogether likely, the existence of a reciprocal connection

1 The trial for which this speech was written took place some time between 338 and 324 B.C. It is noteworthy that Demosthenes is the only 4th century author using this verb. It then occurs only in the Pseudo-Aristotelian treatises on physiognomy, which date back to ca. 300 B.C. Other occurrences listed in the TLG as early are titles that might in fact have been conceived later (cf. Anthisthenes's *Physiognomonikos*, Athen. 14.656f; and the chapters 5 and 6 of Hippocrates's *Epidemics*).

2 Aelius Theon, *Progumnasmata* 118.7: ἔκφρασις ἐστὶ λόγος περιηγηματικὸς ἐναργῶς ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλούμενον.

3 The most useful survey of physiognomy *avant la lettre* is still Evans 1969. For ekphrasis, see Downey 1959 (who however rightly points out that a *comprehensive* survey of ancient ekphrasis, i.e., independently of the occurrence of the term, does not exist).

between them. Passing in review through every possible piece of evidence on this subject would easily exceed the limits of this chapter: I will, therefore, focus on the first group of texts that deal with physiognomy and ekphrasis, written either by Aristotle or by his immediate pupils, and with texts belonging, roughly speaking, to later authors, with a special focus on the philosophical and rhetoric movement of the Second Sophistic. We shall see that all of these texts tackle, on the one hand, ekphrastic issues that square with the theoretical requirements of physiognomy, and, on the other, that physiognomic matters seem to entail an ekphrastic mode of description. The working hypothesis of this chapter, then, will be that physiognomy is in itself an ekphrastic practice grounded in rhetorical theory, and that, conversely, the ekphrastic description of characters such as gods, heroes, and humans relies, to a great extent, on empirical data drawn from physiognomical analysis.

A *pathos*-based physiognomy

I will start with the Corpus Aristotelicum. It is a well known fact that the most influential work on physiognomy written in Antiquity was a two-volume treatise that until modern times circulated under the name of Aristotle.⁴ Most scholars think that both of these books were written within the Peripatus, possibly by direct pupils of Aristotle, as they rely heavily on what Aristotle himself wrote about physiognomy.⁵ But it may as well be possible that the author was Aristotle himself, at least of part of these writings, as we have evidence for Aristotle being the author of “one book” on *Physiognomy*.⁶

⁴ The most recent commented editions of the Pseudo-Aristotelic *Physiognomonica* are: (in English) Swain 2007, 639–661; (in Italian) Ferrini 2007; (in German) Vogt 1999; (in Spanish) Martínez Manzano and Calvo Delcán 1999.

⁵ The first modern philologists questioning the authorship of Aristotle were Valentin Rose (1854, 221–225) and Richard Foerster (1893, 696–708). The *communis opinio* nowadays is that the *Physiognomonica* were written before pseudo-Aristotelian works such as the *Problemata physica*, i.e., around 300 BC (Vogt 1999, 192–197).

⁶ Diogenes Laertius (3rd cent. AD) lists the title Φυσιογνωμονικόν α’ (“Physiognomics, *one book*”) as an Aristotelian work (5.25). P. Moraux has however made a plausible argument that this title might have been interpolated later (1951, 186–190 and 238), and then adopted in the spurious *Vita Hesychii* (6th cent. AD), which has Φυσιογνωμονικά β’ (“Physiognomics, *two books*”). Earlier mentions of Aristotle’s physiognomic works are by the grammarian Julius Pollux (2nd cent. AD), who refers to “Aristotle’s physiognomizing” (Ἀριστοτέλης φυσιογνωμονεῖ; 2.135), and the physician Galen (also 2nd cent. AD), who alludes to “another book about physiognomic theories” (κατ’ ἄλλο σύγγραμμα φυσιογνωμονικῶν θεωρημάτων, *Quod animi mores corporis temperamenta sequantur* 7) by Aristotle. The anonymous author of the Latin *De physiognomia liber* (4th cent. AD) quotes as Aristotelian passages that are not included in the extant Ps.-Aristotelic treatises, and refers to issues that are not even mentioned in them. This could entail that he draws on texts that are larger than, or altogether different from, those that came down to us as Ps.-Aristotle. The first explicit reference to the *Physiognomonica* is by the 5th century anthologist Joannes Stobaeus, who quotes a whole passage from them (805a1–18) at *Eclogae* 1.47.6.

This could entail that he wrote a second book on the topic that went lost, or, more simply, that in antiquity the two books written by his pupils were perceived as one book authored by Aristotle. What we can say for sure is that Aristotle uses physiognomical material throughout his writings, mostly in his biological works.⁷ The passage in which he provides a theoretical basis for physiognomy is, however, contained in a work about logic, the *Prior Analytics* (70b7–32)⁸:

Τὸ δὲ φυσιογνωμονεῖν δυνατὸν ἐστίν,

- (1) εἴ τις δίδωσιν ἅμα μεταβάλλειν τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὅσα φυσικά ἐστι παθήματα. μαθὼν γὰρ ἴσως μουσικὴν μεταβέβληκέ τι τὴν ψυχὴν, ἀλλ' οὐ τῶν φύσει ἡμῖν ἐστί τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, ἀλλ' οἷον ὄργανα καὶ ἐπιθυμίας τῶν φύσει κινήσεων.
- (2) εἰ δὴ τοῦτό τε δοθείη καὶ ἓν ἐνὸς σημείου εἶναι,
- (3) καὶ δυναίμεθα λαμβάνειν τὸ ἴδιον ἐκάστου γένους πάθος καὶ σημείον, δυνησόμεθα φυσιογνωμονεῖν.
- (4) εἰ γὰρ ἐστίν ἰδίᾳ τινὶ γένει ὑπάρχον ἀτόμῳ πάθος,

οἷον τοῖς λέουσιν ἀνδρεία, ἀνάγκη καὶ σημείον εἶναι τι· συμπάσχειν γὰρ ἀλλήλοις ὑπόκειται. καὶ ἔστω τοῦτο τὸ μέγιστον τὰ ἀκρωτήρια ἔχειν· ὁ καὶ ἄλλοις ὑπάρχειν γένεσι μὴ ὅλοις ἐνδέχεται. τὸ γὰρ σημείον οὕτως ἴδιον ἐστίν, ὅτι ὅλου γένους ἴδιον ἐστὶ τὸ πάθος,⁹ καὶ οὐ μόνου ἴδιον, ὥσπερ εἰώθαμεν λέγειν. ὑπάρξει δὴ καὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ γένει τοῦτο, καὶ ἔσται ἀνδρείος [ὁ] ἄνθρωπος καὶ ἄλλο τι ζῶον. ἔξει ἄρα τὸ σημείον· ἐν γὰρ ἐνὸς ἦν. εἰ τοῖνυν ταῦτ' ἐστί, καὶ δυνησόμεθα τοιαῦτα σημεία συλλέξει ἐπὶ τούτων τῶν ζῶων ἂ μόνον ἐν πάθος ἔχει τι ἴδιον, ἕκαστον δ' ἔχει σημείον, ἐπεὶ περ ἐν ἔχειν ἀνάγκη, δυνησόμεθα φυσιογνωμονεῖν. εἰ δὲ δύο ἔχει ἴδια ὅλον τὸ γένος, οἷον ὁ λέων ἀνδρείον καὶ μεταδοτικόν, πῶς γνωσόμεθα πότερον ποτέρου [sc. πάθος] σημείον τῶν ἰδίᾳ ἀκολουθούντων σημείων; ἢ τε εἰ ἄλλῳ¹⁰ τινὶ μὴ ὅλῳ ἄμφω, καὶ ἐν οἷς μὴ ὅλοις ἐκάτερον, ὅταν τὸ μὲν ἔχη τὸ δὲ μὴ· εἰ γὰρ ἀνδρείος μὲν ἐλευθέριος δὲ μὴ, ἔχει δὲ τῶν δύο τοδί, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ λέοντος τοῦτο σημείον τῆς ἀνδρείας.

It is possible to make inferences from physical features,

- (1) if it is granted that the body and the soul are altered together by the natural affections: in fact, by learning music a man has altered something in his soul, but this affection is not one of those which are natural to us; but rather such natural motions as angers and desires.
- (2) If then this is granted, and also that there is one single sign for one single affection,
- (3) and if we could grasp the affection and the sign proper to each kind [of animal], we shall be able to make inferences from physical features.
- (4) For if there is an affection that belongs properly to some indivisible kind,

⁷ See *Ar. Hist. An.* 488b12–25, 491a20, 491b12, 492a1, 491b12–18 and 23–26, 492a1–4, 7–12 and 30–b3, 494a16–18, 497a7, 538b2, 588a, 608a11–21, 608a21–b18, 610b20–614b30, 629b5–10 (for discussion of these passages, see Sassi 1988, 53–56 and 196–197; Raina 1993, 21–24; Vogt 1999, 133–144); *An.* 421a25; *Eth. Nic.* 1123b6, 1128a10; *Gen. an.* 769b18–20; 774a36.

⁸ For discussion of the passage, see Ross 1949, 501–502; Mignucci 1969, 725–726; Burnyeat 1982, 193–238; Lloyd 1983, 126–127; Burnyeat 1994, 3–55; Manetti 1987, 126–129; Smith 1989, 227–228; Raina 1993, 20–21; Vogt 1999, 120–133; Allen 2001, 13–86; Lo Piparo 2003, 142; Ferrini 2007, 26–27; Boys-Stones 2007, 53–55; Strobach and Malink 2015, 563–569.

⁹ Ross brackets τὸ πάθος, which I include following the manuscripts C and n¹.

¹⁰ Here I follow the emendation of Waitz 1844, 539 (ἢ τε εἰ ἄλλῳ instead of ἢ εἰ ἄλλῳ, as in Ross).

as courage to lions, **it is necessary** that there should be some sign of it; for it is assumed that body and soul are affected together. Let's suppose that this sign is having large extremities: this sign may belong also to other kinds [of animals], although not as wholes. For the sign is proper in the sense that the affection is proper to the whole kind, though not proper to it alone, as we are used to say. Indeed, this sign will belong also to another kind, and a man may be brave as well as some other animal. Therefore, it will have the sign, for it has been assumed that there is one sign for one affection. If then these things are so, and we can collect signs of this sort referring to those animals which have only one affection proper to them, and if each affection has a sign, since **it is necessary** that it has a single sign, then we shall be able to make inferences from physical features. But if the whole kind has two properties, e.g. if the lion is both brave and generous, how will we know which of the signs that follow properly is the sign of which [sc. affection]? Perhaps if both belong to some other [kind] though not to the whole of it, and if, in those [kinds] in which each one is found though not in all of their members, some members possess one of the affections and not the other: e.g. if a man is brave but not generous, but possesses, of the two signs, that of braveness, it is clear that this sign of braveness refers also to the lion.¹¹

Here Aristotle claims that physiognomy is possible because the soul and the body are changed together (*hama*) by the same natural affections (*phusika pathemata*). Aristotle explains the kind of affections that produce changes in both the soul and the body: these are not the result of an *activity*, like for instance learning music, but on the contrary of natural emotions *which happen* to man, such as anger and desire. The examples provided by Aristotle clarify that physiognomy deals not with what a man *actively does*, but with his *passive*, that is, with what he *passively undergoes* due to the circumstances that affect his body. Therefore, Aristotle continues, if we can find one physical sign (*semeion*) for every *pathos*, physiognomy lets us infer the affection that is proper to each kind of animal. Again, Aristotle provides an example: the body of lions, which is characterized by large extremities, is the sign for the *pathos* characteristic of the lion, which is courage. The possibility of a physiognomical inference is made available every time the sign corresponding to the *pathos* characteristic of a certain animal, in this case the large extremities, occurs in other animals or even in mankind: in such cases we know that these animals or men have the same *pathos* as the lion, that is courage. Aristotle is clear about the fact that this method is not absolutely reliable. In fact, if it is *necessary* (*ananke*) that every *pathos* corresponds to some sign (*einai semeion ti*) and that there must be one sign (*semeion . . . hen ekhein*) of courage, the univocal attribution of this very sign to courage is all but necessary, for every *pathos* may apply to a variety of animals and one animal may have more than one *pathos*.

Physiognomical knowledge is, therefore, a probabilistic kind of knowledge, since it relies on four hypotheses: 1) body and soul change together in all natural *pathemata*; 2) there is one sign for every *pathos*; 3) it is possible to grasp the *pathos* and the sign proper to each class of animals; 4) this very *pathos* applies to one class of animals. Obviously, since none of these hypotheses can be verified, physiognomy

¹¹ All translations in this chapter are mine.

cannot yield apodeictic results, but only probable diagnoses which are sometimes fitting, other times not.

Nevertheless, even taking into consideration the shortcomings of physiognomy, the foundation Aristotle provides for it in the *Prior Analytics* is of the utmost importance. Given that physiognomy is not always reliable, and therefore not an exact science, it is nonetheless possible to practice it and to draw knowledge from it – albeit with a margin of error. But what kind of knowledge? It is a very peculiar kind of knowledge, which is related to *pathos*, if we stick to what Aristotle says.¹² Indeed, alone the fact that the word *pathos* occurs seven times in this passage (and is implied an eighth time, at 70b27), suggests that physiognomy is about *paskhein*, since it does not diagnose what men and animals *actively do*, but what *passively happens* to them, or, to be more precise, what happens to their bodies as a consequence of what happens in their souls.¹³ This link to *pathos* is a core feature also in the treatises on physiognomy that have come down to us under Aristotle's name. Their common premise is, as in *Prior Analytics*, that soul and body influence each other *sympathetically*. Changes in the body, such as those caused by drunkenness and illness, affect the state of the soul, and, conversely, affections of the soul, as in cases of love and fear, appear to change the exterior features of the body (808b11–12)¹⁴:

Δοκεῖ δέ μοι ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα συμπαθεῖν ἀλλήλοις· καὶ ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς ἕξις ἀλλοιουμένη συναλλοιοῖ τὴν τοῦ σώματος μορφήν, πάλιν τε ἡ τοῦ σώματος μορφή ἀλλοιουμένη συναλλοιοῖ τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἕξιν.

It seems to me that soul and body affect each other sympathetically. A changed state of the soul changes also the appearance of the body; and again, a changed appearance of the body changes the state of the soul.

This *pathos*-based interrelation between body and soul is crucial for physiognomy. We find it also in another work of Aristotle, at the beginning of *De Anima* (403a16–24)¹⁵:

¹² It should be noted that Aristotelian virtues are *permanent* conditions, and therefore radically different from *non-permanent* emotions (see Rapp 2002, 545). On the “pathetic” character of physiognomy and its main focus on emotional (i.e. *non-permanent*) rather than characterological (i.e. *permanent*) features, see esp. Stok 2008, 268–269. On the distinction between *ethos* and *pathos*, see Prioux 2011, 150–153. On the issue, see also Tsouna 1998, 185–186.

¹³ For a survey on *pathein/paskhein* in Aristotle (limited however to *Categories*, *On Generation and Corruption*, *Metaphysics* V, *NE* and *EE*), see Oele 2007. For a more general discussion, see Fortenbaugh 1975; Croteau 2016, 57–73.

¹⁴ On the wording of this passage, see the perspicuous observations of Raina 1993, 82, n. 51 and Ferrini 2007, 244.

¹⁵ The passage has been discussed by Hicks 1907, 195–199; Ross 1961, 168–169; Wisse 1989, 64–76; Wedin 1996, 1–38; Everson 1999, 157–158; Polansky 2007, 50–55; Rapp 2002, 550–552; Shields 2016, 94–99.

ἔοικε δὲ καὶ τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς πάθη πάντα εἶναι μετὰ σώματος, θυμός, πραότης, φόβος, ἔλεος, θάρσος, ἔτι χαρὰ καὶ τὸ φιλεῖν τε καὶ μισεῖν· ἅμα γὰρ τοῦτοις πάσχει τὸ σῶμα. μὴνυεῖ δὲ τὸ ποτὲ μὲν ἰσχυρῶν καὶ ἐναργῶν παθημάτων συμβαινόντων μηδὲν παροξύνεσθαι ἢ φοβεῖσθαι, ἐνίοτε δ' ὑπὸ μικρῶν καὶ ἀμαυρῶν κινεῖσθαι, ὅταν ὀργᾷ τὸ σῶμα καὶ οὕτως ἔχη ὥσπερ ὅταν ὀργίζηται. ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον τοῦτο φανερόν· μηθενὸς γὰρ φοβεροῦ συμβαινόντος ἐν τοῖς πάθεσι γίνονται τοῖς τοῦ φοβουμένου.

But all the affections of the soul seem to be found together with a body: such as anger, gentleness, fear, pity, boldness, as well as joy and loving and hating – for along with these the body is affected in some way. This is shown by the fact that sometimes, when strong and vivid affections occur, nothing provokes or frightens us, while at other times we are moved by small and faint ones, whenever the body is upset and in such a condition as it is when it is furious. And this is even clearer: when nothing frightening occurs, people have the affections of a frightened person.

Here we learn that the *pathe* of the soul follow the body (*einai meta somatos*), and that together with them (*hama*) the body is affected as well. The adverbs *meta* and *hama* illustrate well what Aristotle means here: the sole fact that the body is affected in a certain way entails, more or less automatically, that an affection is also occurring in the soul. The switch between the affection of the body and that of the soul is so immediate that a body that is affected by a strong emotion like anger or fear can move others to the same emotion that has befallen it even if no event is taking place that would justify the arising of this very emotion. An upset body conveys what cannot be seen, that is, a *pathos* of the soul. And just as the *pathe* of the soul can have an immediate effect on the body, whenever we encounter a body that bears the signs of such a *pathos*, we are automatically affected by it as well. It is important to note that the *pathos* of the soul befalls us more than any other *pathos*, even if such a *pathos* is strong and vivid (*iskhuron kai enargon*). The words used by Aristotle give us an important insight into the hierarchy of *pathe* that is implied in this passage. The *pathe* not belonging to a soul may be strong and vivid, but they will not affect us as long as they do not befall our soul.

The vividness of bodily emotions

It should be noted that to describe the immediate visibility of these *pathe* Aristotle uses an adjective, *enargos*, that will be used in the Second Sophistic to define the vividness of ekphrastic descriptions. We will return to this peculiar *enargeia* later on; here this vividness is a feature of emotions that *can be seen* and that are weaker than the emotions of the soul, which on the contrary *cannot be seen* except through the mediation of the body. As we saw in the passage from the *Prior Analytics*, the affections of the body refer to the affections of the soul and are to be understood as physical signs of non-physical emotions. Here we learn that the way the body reacts to such emotions can however be also deceptive, since the correspondence between the appearance of the body and the circumstances occurring to the body is not always granted: bodily appearances can indeed depend on modifications of the soul which

take place independently of exterior events and circumstances. This allows us to draw an important conclusion as to the function of physiognomy. “Reading” the emotions of the soul through the “language” of the body means not only becoming aware of the sympathetic relationship between soul and body. It also means *getting involved in these emotions*, since these very emotions are emotions of a soul that will in turn affect our own soul. The physiognomic reading of the body yields, therefore, a very peculiar kind of knowledge, which is not purely objective because it necessarily involves the one who is doing the “reading”. This process might well be defined as “ekphrastic”, as one of the most important features of *ekphrasis* is precisely its ability to emotionally involve the audience in a fictional description of an absent object. I will delve into this issue later on.

For now, let me focus on another passage of Aristotle, in which the role played by emotions in describing fictitious events is explicitly thematised. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle again uses the “ekphrastic” adjective *enargos*, this time to describe the ideal plot of a narration (1455a22–33)¹⁶:

δεῖ δὲ τοὺς μύθους συνιστάναί καὶ τῇ λέξει συναπεργάζεσθαι ὅτι μάλιστα πρὸ ὀμμάτων τιθέμενον. οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ἐναργέστατα [ὁ] ὁρῶν ὡσπερ παρ’ αὐτοῖς γιγνόμενος τοῖς πραττομένοις εὐρίσκοι τὸ πρέπον καὶ ἥκιστα ἂν λανθάνοι [τὸ] τὰ ὑπεναντία. ... ὅσα δὲ δυνατὸν καὶ τοῖς σχήμασιν συναπεργάζομενον. πιθανώτατοι γὰρ ἂπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως οἱ ἐν τοῖς πάθεσιν εἰσιν, καὶ χειμαίνεσι ὁ χεμαζόμενος καὶ χαλεπαίνει ὁ ὀργιζόμενος ἀληθινώτατα. διὸ εὐφυοῦς ἢ ποιητικὴ ἐστὶν ἡ μανικοῦ. τούτων γὰρ οἱ μὲν εὐπλαστοὶ οἱ δὲ ἐκστατικοὶ εἰσιν.

In constructing plots and working them out by the help of speech the poet should, as much as he can, put the scene before his eyes. Thus, by visualizing the events most vividly¹⁷ – as if he were present at their occurrence – he will find what is appropriate and be least likely to overlook contradictions. . . . The poet should also, as far as possible, work out the plot by using the gestures. For, if their natural ability is equal, the poets who are involved in the affections are the most convincing; the one who is distressed conveys distress and the one who is angry conveys rage most truthfully. And that is why poetry needs either a gifted nature or a madman, as the former are impressionable and the latter possessed.

In order to be realistic, a fictional story must be as vivid as possible (*enargestata*): the poet should put before his eyes (*pro ommaton tithemenon*) the story he wants to represent. Furthermore, to maximize the persuasive effect of his fiction, he should make use of gestures (*skhemasin*) which show his emotions. The poet who blusters and rages is the most convincing: therefore, poetry is a matter of either impressionable

¹⁶ For discussion of the passage, see Bywater 1909, 239–243; Gudeman 1934, 302–309; Rostagni 1945, 97–98; Else 1957, 486–502; Lucas 1968, 173–177; Golden and Hardison 1968, 215–220; Dupont-Roc and Lallot 1980, 278–284; Gill 1984, 152–153; Eden 1986, 71–73; Halliwell 1987, 145–148; Calame 1991, 3–22; Belfiore 1992, 136–137; Stohn 1998, 269–275; Schmitt 2008, 550–553; LaCourse Munteanu 2011, 84–90.

¹⁷ I stick to the reading *enargestata* (“most vividly”) instead of *energestata* (“most actually”), which is featured only in manuscripts N^a A^c.

or inspired persons, that is, of persons who are potentially or actually dominated by *pathos*.

The whole passage has an ekphrastic flavor: we will see that the canonical definition of *ekphrasis* occurring in the *Progumnasmata* features not only the adjective *enargos*, but also the locution *pro ommata agein*. What is important here is again the issue of *pathos*: a fictional plot needs strong emotions in order to appear realistic, and a poet who is able to convey them. Even if physiognomy as such is not mentioned in this passage, the fact that the good poet is the one who makes use of gestures, blusters and rages, is an unmistakable hint at his outward appearance, which must be as “pathetic” as possible in order to be convincing. And this *pathos* is in itself ekphrastic, since the scope of poetry is to bring before the eyes a fictional story which does not exist but must appear as realistic as possible.¹⁸

I now move on to the next passage, which is drawn from the anonymous treatise *On the Sublime*, a work that goes back to the 1st century BC and is conventionally attributed to Pseudo-Longinus (15.1–2)¹⁹:

καλεῖται μὲν γὰρ κοινῶς φαντασία πᾶν τὸ ὀπωσοῦν ἐννόημα γεννητικὸν λόγου παριστάμενον ἤδη δ' ἐπὶ τούτων κεκράτηκε τοῦνομα ὅταν ἂ λέγεις ὑπ' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ πάθους βλέπειν δοκῆς καὶ ὑπ' ὄψιν τιθῆς τοῖς ἀκούουσιν. ὡς δ' ἕτερον τι ἢ ῥητορικὴ φαντασία βούλεται καὶ ἕτερον ἢ παρὰ ποιηταῖς οὐκ ἂν λάθοι σε, οὐδ' ὅτι τῆς μὲν ἐν ποιήσει τέλος ἐστὶν ἐκπληξίς, τῆς δ' ἐν λόγοις ἐνάργεια, ἀμφοτέραι δ' ὁμως τὸ τε <παθητικόν> ἐπιζητοῦσι καὶ τὸ συγκεκριμένον.

The term *phantasia* is used generally for any kind of thought which arouses the production of speech; but the term has also become dominant every time under the effect of enthusiasm and *affection* it seems to you that you see what you speak about and you put it before the eyes of the audience. It will not escape you that rhetorical *phantasia* wants to achieve something different from the *phantasia* of the poets: in poetry the aim is astonishment, in speech it is *vividness*. Both, however, seek <*affection*>²⁰ and excitement.

This passage also deals with the link between *pathos* and ekphrasis, but is more explicit than the previous ones. The anonymous author of the treatise relies on Stoic concepts such as *phantasia* and *ennoema*,²¹ but seems to be sticking to the above-mentioned passage from Aristotle's *Poetics* when he says that enthusiasm and emotion are capable of “putting before the eyes” what is said. In fact, this kind of

18 On the ekphrastic aspects of Aristotelian *pathos*, see Dow 2015, ch. 10.3. ‘Aristotelian Passions Involve Exercising *Phantasia*’, at 189–198.

19 The passage has been widely discussed: Russell 1964, 122–126; Hertz 1983, 585–586; Casertano 1983, 123–125; Meijering 1987, 42; Mazzucchi 1992, 206–208; Beil 1993, 234–236; Webb 1997, 117–118; Dross 2004–2005, 275–277; Labarrière 2006, 71–93; Goldhill 2007, 4–7; Bartsch 2007, 90; Webb 2009, 101–102; Togni 2014, 217–223; Webb 2016, 216–218.

20 The passage needs to be integrated: παθητικόν has been proposed by L. Kayser (cf. Russell 1964, 122), while H. Lebègue (1939) has συμπαθές.

21 On the stoic sources on which Longinus relies, see Togni 2014, 226–235.

emotional visualization affects not only the process of *conveying* rhetorical and poetic content through words, but also the process of *acquiring* that content at the hearing of those very words. Enthusiasm and *pathos* bring about a “visual effect” both in poetry and rhetoric, albeit with different outcomes: in poetry, emotional visualization arouses astonishment (*ekplexis*); in rhetoric, vividness (*enargeia*).²²

As we will see in the next passage, other ancient authors do in fact link vividness to poetry. The following excerpt is drawn from the *Institutio oratoria*, a large textbook on the theory and practice of rhetoric written by the Roman rhetorician Quintilian in the first century AD (6.2.29–32).²³

At quo modo fiet ut adficiamur? Neque enim sunt motus in nostra potestate. Temptabo etiam de hoc dicere. Quas φαντασίας Graeci vocant (nos sane visiones appellemus), per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo ut eas cernere oculis ac praesentes habere videamur, has quisquis bene ceperit is erit in adfectibus potentissimus. [Has] Quidam dicunt εὐφαντασιωτοῦς qui sibi res voces actus secundum verum optime finget: quod quidem nobis volentibus facile continget; nisi vero inter otie animorum et spes inanes et velut somnia quaedam vigilantium ita nos hae de quibus loquor imagines prosecuntur ut peregrinari navigare proeliari, populos adloqui, divitiarum quas non habemus usum videamur disponere, nec cogitare sed facere: hoc animi vitium ad utilitatem non transferemus. [Ad] Hominem occisum queror: non omnia quae in re praesenti accidisse credibile est in oculis habeo? non percussor ille subitus erumpet? non expavescet circumventus, exclamabit vel rogabit vel fugiet? non ferientem, non concidentem videbo? non animo sanguis et pallor et gemitus, extremus denique exspirantis hiatus insident? Insequentur ἐνάργεια, quae a Cicerone inlustratio et evidentia nominatur, quae non tam dicere videtur quam ostendere, et adfectus non aliter quam si rebus ipsis intersimus sequentur.

But how do we generate these emotions? In fact, emotion is not in our own power. I will try to explain this. We rightly call *visiones* what the Greeks call *phantasiai*, and it is through these that images of absent things are represented to the mind in such a way that we seem to see them with our eyes as if they were present, and whoever will be in control of them will have the greatest power over the affections. Some people say that he who can imagine in himself things, voices and deeds well and in accordance with truth is *euphantasiotos* [good in summoning up *phantasiai*], and that if we want we can acquire this power easily; if it is not true that in minds at rest, in groundless hopes, and in daydreams these images of which I speak are haunting us so that we seem to believe that we travel, we cross the sea, we fight, we address peoples, we spend wealth that we do not actually possess, and we do not think but act: we will not turn this error of the soul into utility. When I am complaining that a man has been murdered will I not have in

²² As it becomes clear at the end of the discussion of *phantasia* (15.8), this distinction relies on the fact that poetry implies an exaggeration that goes beyond the limits of what is credible, while rhetoric must always respect what is possible and true. Vividness is therefore related to a realism that is not guaranteed in poetry. This distinction appears however problematic, as in other passages of the treatise (especially of the same chapter 15) vividness is indeed attributed to poetical figures. On this distinction and its problems, see Ravenna 2004–2005, 25; Dross 2004, 73; Webb 2009, 101; Togni 2013, 69–79.

²³ Secondary literature on the passage: Webb 1997, 118–121; Webb 2016, 209–211 and 214–215; Nocchi 2016, 8–9. For a general overview of *adfectus* in Quintilian, see Schryvers 1982, 47–57; Webb 2009, 89–106; Togni 2013, 63–65; Croteau 2016, 27–32.

my eyes all the things which might believably have happened in the case under consideration? Will the assassin not burst suddenly from his hiding place? Will the victim not be terrified when it finds itself surrounded, will it not cry out or plead or run away? Will I not see the one who is delivering the blow and the one who is stricken by it? Will his blood, his pallor, his groan, his open mouth exhaling his last breath not be impressed upon my mind? This gives rise to *enargeia*, which Cicero calls *inlustratio* and *evidentia*, which seems not so much to say as to show [the actual event], and the affection will follow no less than if we were present at the actual events.

As we have already seen in the anonymous treatise *On the Sublime*, Quintilian also deals with the emotions from a rhetorical point of view.²⁴ The good rhetorician is the one who, like the poet in Aristotle's *Poetics*, is able to imagine and represent fictive stories so realistically that they are able to convince their audience. These stories have a persuasive power which is linked to their unlimited ability to stir up emotions (*in affectibus potentissimus*). As in Aristotle and Pseudo-Longinus, these emotions depend on the vividness with which the absent things being described are brought before the eyes of the audience (*rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo ut eas cernere oculis ac praesentes habere*). Quintilian refers to Greek terms which he might have drawn from the Stoic tradition, such as *phantasiai* and *euphantasiotos*; the other seminal term we have here is that of *enargeia*, which we have already seen in Aristotle and Pseudo-Longinus. The final sentence of this passage is particularly telling: here we learn that Cicero, who lived a generation before Quintilian, translated the Greek word for vividness, *enargeia*, into the Latin nouns *inlustratio* and *evidentia*. This entails that a whole tradition dealing with issues related to *enargeia* must have existed long before Quintilian in the Latin-speaking world, and that only with Cicero the Romans became aware of it. In this passage, the ekphrastic "bringing before the eyes" has a forensic application as well: a good patron in court must be able to imagine, in great detail, the circumstances of a murder. He must be able to visualize the assassin bursting from his hiding-place, the victim trembling, crying for help, begging for mercy, and turning to run. He must see the fatal blow delivered and the stricken body fall, as well as the blood, the deathly pallor, the groan of agony, and the death-rattle. The patron must, in other words, be able to construct the physiognomical features of both the assassin and the victim, although he was not present at the murder. The description of the outward features of the persons involved in the murder transforms what is absent into reality, and thus emotionally stirs up the jurors who will have to decide about the guilt or innocence of the accused. Physiognomy in a case like this is highly fictional, and yet it still serves a rhetorical purpose: that of convincing an audience by acquiring control of its emotions.

²⁴ The passage of pseudo-Longinus discussed above and Quintilian's passage from the *Institutio oratoria* may rely on a common source. Scholars have in fact pointed out the common features between them: Lana 1951, 44–45; Manieri 1998, 129; Dross 2004, 61–83; Webb 2009, 96–103; Togni 2013, 63–67.

Emotional involvement in the physiognomic description

Lucian, a representative of the Second Sophistic, follows a strategy similar to that of Quintilian (*The Parasite: That Being a Parasite is an Art*, 40–41)²⁵:

“Ἴνα τοίνυν μὴ πάνυ θαυμάζῃς μηδὲ τὸ πρᾶγμα σοὶ δοκῆ χλεύης ἄξιον, φέρε προτυπωσώμεθα παρ’ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς ἡγγέσθαι μὲν αἰφνίδιον εἰς τὴν χώραν ἐμβεβληκέναι πολεμίους, εἶναι δὲ ἀνάγκην ἐπεξίεναι καὶ μὴ περιορᾶν ἕξω δηουμένην τὴν γῆν, τὸν στρατηγὸν δὲ παραγγέλλειν ἅπαντας εἰς τὸν κατάλογον τοὺς ἐν ἡλικίᾳ, καὶ δὴ χωρεῖν τοὺς ἄλλους, ἐν δὲ δὴ τούτοις φιλοσόφους τινὰς καὶ ῥήτορας καὶ παρασίτους. πρῶτον τοίνυν ἀποδύσωμεν αὐτούς· ἀνάγκη γὰρ τοὺς μέλλοντας ὀπλίζεσθαι γυμνοῦσθαι πρότερον. θεῶ δὴ τοὺς ἄνδρας, ὧ γενναῖε, καθ’ ἕκαστον καὶ δοκίμαζε τὰ σώματα. τοὺς μὲν τοίνυν αὐτῶν ὑπὸ ἐνδείας ἴδοις ἂν λεπτοὺς καὶ ὠχροὺς, πεφρικότας, ὥσπερ ἤδη τραυματίας παρεμύοντες· ἄγωνα μὲν γὰρ καὶ μάχην σταδιαίαν καὶ ὠθισμὸν καὶ κόνιν καὶ τραύματα μὴ γελοῖον ἢ λέγειν δύνασθαι φέρειν ἀνθρώπους ὥσπερ ἐκείνους τινὸς δεομένους ἀναλήψεως.

ἄθρει δὲ πάλιν μεταβάς τὸν παράσιτον ὁποῖός τις φαίνεται. ἄρ’ οὐχ ὁ μὲν τὸ σῶμα πρῶτον πολὺς καὶ τὸ χρῶμα ἡδύς, οὐ μέλας δὲ οὐδὲ λευκός – τὸ μὲν γὰρ γυναικί, τὸ δὲ δούλῳ προσέοικεν – ἔπειτα θυμοειδής, δεινὸν βλέπων ὁποῖον ἡμεῖς, μέγα καὶ ὕψαιμον; οὐ γὰρ καλὸν δεδοικότα καὶ θῆλυν ὀφθαλμὸν εἰς πόλεμον φέρειν. ἄρ’ οὐχ ὁ τοιοῦτος καλὸς μὲν γένοιτ’ ἂν καὶ ζῶν ὀπλίτης, καλὸς δὲ καὶ εἰ ἀποθάνοι νεκρός;

Well, to not make you wonder at all, and enable you to not take this matter as a joke, let us imagine that we have been reached by the news that the enemy has suddenly invaded our territory; that we have to face him, as we don’t want the outlying land to be ransacked; that the general issues the order of a muster of all young men; that all of them gather, including philosophers, rhetoricians, and parasites. Well, we have to strip them first, as it is necessary that those who are going to wear armour have to be naked first. Look at each one of them, my noble sir, and put their bodies to the test. You will see that some of these bodies are thin and white because they are underfed – they shiver as if they were lying wounded already. Now, isn’t it ridiculous to say that men like these, who need rest, are able to stand fights, a stand-up battle, pressure, dust, and wounds?

Now go and observe how the parasite appears like. Isn’t he first of all full-bodied, with a pleasant skin, not dark and not pale – he doesn’t look white like a woman nor tanned like a slave –, and isn’t he high-spirited, with a keen look as ours, grand and full-blooded? For it is not good to have a fearsome and feminine eye at war. Couldn’t a man of this kind have a good life as an hoplite, and wouldn’t he have a good death if he were to die too?

The text is a joke-filled description of the figure of the parasite, who turns out to be more fortunate than philosophers and rhetoricians. Philosophers and rhetoricians lead an unhealthy life, while the parasite, who avoids all dangers, turns out to be the perfect gentleman. This contrast becomes all the more evident when it comes to a physiognomic description of the two kinds of men: philosophers and rhetoricians

²⁵ A good commented translation is that of V. Longo (1993, 106–107). The most thorough study of the parasite’s dialogue is Nesselrath 1985. For discussion of the passage, and especially the physiognomic features included in it, see esp. 400–410.

look thin and pale, underfed and with goose-flesh, as if they had already been wounded in a battle. The parasite, on the contrary, is full-bodied, his flesh has a nice colour, neither too pallid nor too tanned. His outward appearance allows us to see what cannot actually be inspected, namely his appetitive spirit (*epetai thumoeides*). And this spirit is good, *kalos*, in every respect: his looks are *kalos*, *kalos* is his serving as a hoplite in a time of war, and he is *kalos* even if he were to die in battle. The moral dimension disclosed by the physiognomic description is jokingly turned upside down and has, therefore, an ironic flavor: the immediacy of the ensuing ekphrastic evidence is however extremely telling. Lucian is providing a representation of interior qualities, i.e. of *pathemata*, by making them visible through physiognomic features. This representation also involves the emotions of the audience, which is invited to side with the parasite rather than the philosophers and rhetoricians.

We can observe something similar in the next passage, which is drawn from Philostratus the Elder's *Imagines*, a text from the 3rd century AD which describes a series of paintings displayed in a villa located in Naples. Here the Persian queen Rhodogoune is described (2.5.4–5)²⁶:

Αισθάνεσθαι μοι δοκεῖς, ὦ παῖ, τοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ κάλλους καὶ βούλεσθαι τι καὶ περὶ τούτου ἀκούειν. ἄκουε δὴ. σπένδει μὲν ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Ἀρμενίων τροπῇ, καὶ ἡ ἔννοια εὐχομένης. εὐχεται δὲ αἰρεῖν τοὺς ἄνδρας, οὓς νῦν ἤρηκεν, οὐ γὰρ μοι δοκεῖ ἔρᾶν τοῦ ἔρᾶσθαι. καὶ τὸ μὲν ἀνειλημμένον τῶν τριχῶν αἰδοῖ κεκόσμηται τὸ ἀγέρωχον κολαζούση, τὸ δὲ ἄνετον βακχεύει αὐτὴν καὶ ῥώννυσι, καὶ ξανθὸν μὲν καὶ χρυσοῦ πέρα τὸ ἀτακτοῦν τῆς κόμης, τὸ δὲ ἐπὶ θάτερα κείμενον ἔχει τι καὶ ἐς αὐγὴν παραλλάττον ὑπὸ τοῦ τετάχθαι. τῶν δὲ ὀφρύων χαρίεν μὲν τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἄρχεσθαι καὶ ὁμόθεν ἐκπεφυκέναι τῆς ῥίνος, χαριέστερον δὲ τὸ περιῆχθαι, δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὰς μὴ προβεβλήσθαι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περιβεβλήσθαι αὐτοῖς. ἡ παρεῖα δὲ ὑποδέχεται μὲν τὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀμμάτων ἴμερον, εὐφραίνει δὲ τῷ ἰλαρῷ, τὸ γὰρ φιλομειδὲς ἐν παρεῖᾳ μάλιστα, καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ κέκρανται μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ χαροποῦ ἐς τὸ μέλαν, παρέχονται δὲ τὸ μὲν ἰλαρὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ, τὸ δὲ ὠραῖον ἀπὸ τῆς φύσεως, τὸ δὲ γαῦρον ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄρχειν. στόμα δὲ ἀπαλὸν καὶ ἀνάεστον ὀπώρας ἐρωτικῆς, φιλήσαι μὲν ἥδιστον, ἀπαγγεῖλαι δὲ οὐ ῥάδιον. ἂ δὲ ἀπόχρη σοι μαθεῖν, ὄρα, παιδίον. χεῖλη ἀνθηρὰ καὶ ἴσα, στόμα σύμμετρον καὶ παραφθγγόμενον τὴν εὐχὴν τῷ τροπαίῳ, κἂν παρακοῦσαι βουληθῶμεν, τάχα ἔλληγιεῖ.

You seem, my boy, to feel the beauty in her and desire to hear something about this also. So listen! Rhodogoune is pouring a libation for her victory over the Armenians, and the conception is that of a praying woman. She prays to overpower men, as she has now overpowered them; for it doesn't seem to me that she loves to be loved. The part of her hair that is fastened up is arranged with an awe that chastises her arrogance, while the part that hangs loose makes her look like a Maenad and gives her strength; the disarranged part of her hair is blond, even more than gold, while the part lying on the other side differs also somewhat in brightness because of its orderly arrangement. Charming is the way her eyebrows begin at the same point and rise together starting from the nose; even more charming is the curve they make, for they should not only stand above the eyes in order to protect them, but also form an arch around them. The cheek

²⁶ On the passage: Lehmann-Hartleben 1941, 31 n. 43; Newby 2009, 335–336; Squire 2013, 110. For an overview of the role of *pathos* in Philostratus's *Imagines*, see Prioux 2011, 160–163 (on the Rhodogoune passage, see 161–162).

takes over the yearning that emanates from the eyes, and yet it delights thanks to its joy – for it is mostly in the cheek that the love for laughter can be seen – and the eyes vary from grey to black; the joy they bring about arises from the occasion, their beauty from nature, their haughtiness from her power. The mouth is soft and full of “love’s harvest,” most sweet to kiss but not easy to describe. Observe, my boy, all you need to learn: the lips are blooming and even the mouth is symmetrical and utters its prayer before the trophy of victory; and if we endeavour to listen attentively, perhaps it will speak in Greek.

As has often been noted, we have no historical nor archaeological evidence for the existence of the gallery of paintings described by Philostratus. Most scholars agree, therefore, that the *Imagines* is a purely fictional *ekphrasis*, which was conceived by its author as a playful exercise of his rhetorical abilities.²⁷ This passage describes the picture of the Persian queen Rhodogoune, daughter of Artaxerxes II (5th cent. BC), who became famous in antiquity for having defeated the Armenians in a battle. Philostratus depicts Rhodogoune from the viewpoint of a narrator, a sophist who recounts to a young boy the picture he had admired in the Neapolitan gallery. Queen Rhodogoune is extremely beautiful, so beautiful that her charm is not without consequences for those who look at her picture. This becomes clear right at the start of the description. The sophist invites the young boy to listen to his description if he has a *feeling* (*aisthanesthai*) for the Persian queen, and a *desire* (*boulesthai*) to hear about her beauty. Rhodogoune is charming because of her eyebrows (*charien.. chariesteron*); her eyes are delightful (*euphranei toi hilaroi*). The maximum of emotional involvement is, however, stirred up by her mouth, which is most sweet to kiss (*phile-sai men hediston*) – and therefore also not easy to describe (*apangeilai de ou rhadion*). We are told that her lips are full of colour, well proportioned, and that they even come to life, potentially speaking, to those who look at the picture. It soon becomes clear that the more the picture is filled out with physiognomical details, the more the audience becomes involved in it. Eventually, the switch from visual to auditive features culminates in a synaesthesia that makes the fiction perfect. Paradoxically enough, the non-Greek-speaking Rhodogoune is about to utter some words in Greek, which shows once again that the picture does not stand on its own, but on the contrary invites the audience to interact with it notwithstanding the linguistic barrier between the audience and Rhodogoune. And this interaction is a pathetic one, as we have seen: because of her irresistible charm, Rhodogoune stirs up emotions that are difficult to describe, and require therefore to be conveyed through both visual and auditive means. In order to fully account for her beauty, Philostratus must appeal not only to the viewer, but also to the listener.

A similar involvement of the audience in the description can be observed in a passage drawn from a work that has many features in common with Philostratus’s *Imagines*, namely the *Descriptions of Statues* by Callistratus, a sophist who lived in

27 See the detailed discussion in Bachmann 2015, 43–52.

the generation after Philostratus the Elder. The passage describes the statue of a Maenad made by the renowned sculptor Scopas (4th century BC) (2.1–4)²⁸:

Οὐ ποιητῶν καὶ λογοποιῶν μόνον ἐπι πνέονται τέχνη ἐπὶ τὰς γλώττας ἐκ θεῶν θειασμοῦ πεσόντος, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν δημιουργῶν αἱ χεῖρες θειοτέρων πνευμάτων ἐράνοις ληφθεῖσαι κάτοχα καὶ μεστὰ μανίας προφητεύουσι τὰ ποιήματα· ὁ γὰρ δὴ Σκόπας, ὡσπερ ἕκ τινος ἐπιπνοίας κινηθεὶς εἰς τὴν τοῦ ἀγάλματος δημιουργίαν τὴν θεοφορίαν ἐφήκεν. τί δὲ ὑμῖν οὐκ ἄνωθεν τὸν ἐνθουσιασμόν τῆς τέχνης διηγοῦμαι; ἦν βάκχης ἀγάλμα ἐκ λίθου Παρίου πεποημένον ἀλλαττόμενον πρὸς τὴν ὄντως βάκχην. ἐν γὰρ τῇ οἰκείᾳ τάξει μένων ὁ λίθος τὸν ἐν λίθοις νόμον ἐκβαίνειν ἐδόκει· τὸ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενον ὄντως ἦν εἶδωλον, ἡ τέχνη δ' εἰς τὸ ὄντως ὄν ἀπήγαγε τὴν μίμησιν. εἶδες ἂν ὅτι καὶ στερεὸς ὢν εἰς τὴν τοῦ θήλεος εἰκασίαν ἐμαλάττετο γοργόητος διορθουμένης τὸ θήλυ καὶ εἰς ἐξουσίαν ἀμοιρῶν κινήσεως ἦδει βακχεύεσθαι καὶ τῷ θεῷ εἰσιόντι τὰ ἔνδον ὑπῆχει. πρόσωπόν γε μὴν ἰδόντες ὑπὸ ἀφασίας ἔστημεν· οὕτω δὲ καὶ αἰσθήσεως συνείπετο δῆλωμα μὴ παρουσίας αἰσθήσεως, καὶ βάκχης ἐκβακχεύων θειασμὸς ἐμηνύετο θειασμοῦ μὴ πλήττοντος καὶ ὅσα φέρει μανίας οἰστρώσα ψυχὴ τοσαῦτα πάθους διέλαμπε τεκμήρια ὑπὸ τῆς τέχνης ἀρρήτῳ λόγῳ κραθέντα. ἀνεῖτο δὲ ἡ κόμη ζεφύρῳ σοβεῖν καὶ εἰς τριχὸς ἄνησιν ὑπεσχίζετο, ὃ δὲ καὶ μάλιστα τὸν λογισμόν ὑπεξίστη, ὅτι καὶ τριχὸς λεπτότητι λίθος ὢν ἐπέιθετο καὶ πλοκάμων ὑπήκουσεν μιμήμασιν καὶ τῆς ζωτικῆς ἔξεως γεγυμνωμένος τὸ ζωτικὸν εἶχεν. ἔφης ἂν ὅτι καὶ αὐξήσεως ἀφορμὰς ἡ τέχνη συνήγαγεν· οὕτως καὶ τὸ ὀρώμενον ἀπιστον καὶ τὸ μὴ πιστὸν ὀρώμενον.

Not only the arts of the poets and prose writers are inspired when the frenzy from the gods falls on their tongues, but also the hands of the sculptors that are seized by the gifts of more divine inspirations prophesize creations that are possessed and full of madness. So Scopas, as if he were moved by some inspiration, imparted to the crafting of this statue his own divine frenzy. But why shouldn't I describe to you the inspiration of his art from the beginning? There was a statue of a Maenad, crafted in Parian marble, which had been transformed into a real Maenad. In fact the stone, while retaining its natural order, seemed to depart from the law which governs stones; what showed itself was really an image of something, but art had carried imitation over into actual reality. You saw that the stone, although it was hard, became soft in representing the feminine, and that its vigour corrected the femininity; you also saw that the stone, although it does not have the power to move, knows how to leap in Bacchic dance and that the interior responds to the god which enters into it. But when we saw the face we stood still due to our speechlessness; so telling was the manifestation of sense perception, although sense perception was not present; and the frenzy of a possessed Maenad was shown without any shock; and all the signs of affections displayed by a soul goaded by madness shone bright, mingled by art in an unutterable speech. The hair fell free to be tossed by the wind Zephyrus, and it was divided into the flowers of the hair. But this indeed transcended reason: that although the material was stone, it followed the lightness of hair and it complied with the locks of the hair through the imitated features, and though void of the disposition of life, it nevertheless had life. You might say that art has gathered the elements of a growth, so unbelievable is what you see, so visible is what you do not believe.

Callistratus's description dwells on the frenzied nature of the Maenad and the sculptor's ability in conveying her emotions. As in Philostratus's text, the described statue

²⁸ For a detailed analysis of the passage, see Bäßler and Nesselrath 2006, 27–39. See also the chapter of Maria Gerolemou in this volume.

interacts with the audience, which stands speechless as soon as it sees the face of the Maenad. In this case, the ekphrastic effect leads us to imagine a visual perception which, in reality, does not exist (*aistheseos suneipeto deloma me parouses aistheseos*). The description of the Maenad appeals to the senses, and is therefore confined to the visible: but the liveliness it provides appeals to imagination, as it hints at what *cannot* be seen, the *pathe* of the Maenad. And as in Philostratus, the viewer becomes part of the fiction, because he is emotionally involved in the Maenad's madness (*idontes hupo aphasias estemen*).

Conclusion

This leads us to one of the four *Progumnasmata* which have been preserved: that of Nicolaus the Sophist, who lived in the 5th century AD (*Prog.* 68.9–10)²⁹:

μετὰ ταύτην δὲ τὴν ἔκφρασιν καὶ φαμεν· ἔκφρασις ἐστὶ λόγος ἀφηγηματικὸς, ὑπ' ὧν ἄγων ἐναργῶς τὸ δηλούμενον. πρόκειται δὲ ἐναργῶς, ὅτι κατὰ τοῦτο μάλιστα τῆς διηγήσεως διαφέρει· ἢ μὲν γὰρ ψιλὴν ἔχει ἔκθεσιν πραγμάτων, ἢ δὲ πειρᾶται θεατὰς τοὺς ἀκούοντας ἐργάζεσθαι.

And we say that ekphrasis is a descriptive speech which brings what is described vividly before the eyes. “Vividly” is added because in this way it differs indeed from narration; the latter gives a plain explanation of actions, while the former tries to make the hearers into spectators.

The *Progumnasmata* were texts that featured preliminary exercises for students of rhetoric. The purpose of these exercises was to prepare students for writing declamations after they had completed their education with the grammarians. These exercises were carried out by students of rhetoric, who had begun their schooling between ages twelve and fifteen. Among the exercises featured in the *Progumnasmata* was that of ekphrasis, which is the reason why the *Progumnasmata* feature proper definitions of ekphrasis. Nicolaus, whose *Progumnasmata* follows on those of Aelius Theon (1st cent. AD), Hermogenes of Tarsus (2nd cent.), and Aphthonius of Antioch (4th cent.), states that ekphrasis is a descriptive speech that brings what is described vividly before the eyes. “Vividly” is added because in this way ekphrasis differs from other kinds of narration, which only provide a plain explanation of actions. The peculiar fact about ekphrasis, Nicolaus says, is that it tries to make the hearers into spectators (*peiratai theatas tous akouontas ergazesthai*).

We saw already in Philostratus and Callistratus what this means: a vivid description, especially of physiognomical features, appeals to the *pathe* of the viewer or the listener, thus involving him in the descriptive process. This idea can be traced back to Pseudo-Longinus and Quintilian. The passages from Aristotle that we looked at

²⁹ The most thorough discussion of the *Progumnasmata* is Webb 2009, 39–59.

suggest, however, that an earlier origin for a *pathos*-centered relationship between physiognomy and ekphrasis is possible. Aristotle might not have thought about physiognomy and ekphrasis in the same way as later authors did, but he certainly developed ideas about both topics that had a profound influence on his immediate successors and throughout antiquity. It is thanks to these ideas that we can suggest a fruitful connection between *pathos*, physiognomy and ekphrasis, although this connection will become evident only four centuries later, among the rhetoricians of the Second Sophistic.

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