

Essays in Global Color History



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Essays in Global Color History

Interpreting the Ancient Spectrum

Edited by

Rachael B. Goldman

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For our students

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THE MATERIALITY OF COLOR IN ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN ART

JENNIFER M.S. STAGER

Technologies of replication have long played a strong hand in removing color from images and in selecting form over material color. This excision of color contributed to the technical and intellectual disembodiment of the Western artistic and philosophical traditions, which came to elevate the mind as something separate from and superior to the body. Color has been a player in this splitting; explanations for color as phenomenon tend to cleave rather than bring together mind and body. In this essay, I turn to the material presence, or materiality, of color in the ancient Mediterranean world of the sixth-fourth centuries BCE, a status that, I argue, brings mind and body into unified being.

The modern, Newtonian explanation for the phenomenon of color as a property of light differs significantly from ancient Mediterranean ideas about color. This difference is important because our responses to the polychromy of the ancient world are conditioned by fundamentally different explanations of color.¹ In the ancient world color was considered material rather than a trick of perception. In what follows I will explore how the materiality of ancient colors, their status *as matter*, converged with artists' representational intent.

As matter, color constituted an object rather than merely characterizing it. The primary importance of particles of matter (*hylē*) to create form is grounded in Presocratic philosophical investigations into the nature of the universe. On the one hand colored matter is thought to be produced in the body of the earth and exhaled onto its surface; on the other hand, the earth itself is made up of colored matter.² If color is matter, color must constitute form. As Empedocles puts it: 'As when painters are decorating offerings, men through cunning well skilled in their craft – when they actually seize pigments of many colours in their hands, mixing [juxtaposing] in

¹ Newton (1704). Among Newton's most prominent detractors are Blake and Goethe, who presents a more 'Aristotelian' view of color in his *Zur Farbenlehre* of 1810.

² On matter and Presocratic philosophy see Porter (2010) 144–176, Ierodiakonou (2005).

harmony more of some and less of others, they produce from them forms resembling all things (*eidea pasiv aligkēia*).³ Although form, outline, and shape come to be associated with the ideal and with ideas in the later history of aesthetics, in the ancient Mediterranean form and matter worked together to create objects.⁴ The suppression of matter is a byproduct of the elevation of form in the later history of aesthetics. Because matter retains, even in antiquity, an association with the feminine, the excision of colored matter from the history of art leaves only a reduced, masculinist narrative.⁵ Bringing color and matter back into our approach to visual culture is, thus, part of a larger project of more equitable aesthetics.

Embedded within the argument that color in the ancient Mediterranean is fundamentally material is a related argument about how parts relate to wholes. Particles of colored matter combine to form a whole, but a whole that is always only an assemblage of parts. This relationship of parts to wholes, or the pieced-togetherness of whole objects, is most obvious in polychrome bronze and chryselephantine sculpture built up from different alloys and materials or in paintings and mosaics built up from colored strokes or stones.⁶ In this essay, however, I will focus primarily on the additive colors of pigments on sculptures, which present a particularly complex example of part-to-whole relations.

An Apulian vase from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art depicts an encaustic painter applying color to a sculpture of the god Herakles [Fig. 1]. The sculpture stands on a base in its shrine and the painter works on the body *in situ*. The animate bodies depicted on the vase – the painter, his assistant, the divine audience of Zeus and Nike, and Herakles beholding his own image in the making – are all rendered in the terracotta palette of the red-figure technique. Two signs mark the image of Herakles as a sculpture: the rectangular base on which the figure stands and the white color in which the sculpted body is depicted.

Historical precedent suggests that we take the white pigment as a shorthand for the whiteness of marble. However, marble is neither homogeneous nor monochrome, and current research suggests that marble in ancient Mediterranean art was often painted – even white in areas intended to appear thus.⁷ We can, therefore, understand the white figure as that of a sculpture of Herakles coated with a base layer of white in preparation for additional pigments.

The painter is depicted applying pigments to the surface of the sculpture's white body. He has already filled in much of the statue's lion skin attribute, and is in the process of completing the body and club. An assistant readies hot rods over a

³ Empedocles B23, trans. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (1983); Porter (2010) 152.

⁴ See, for example, Aristotle's *De an.* II.2.409–415.

⁵ On this see Summers (1993).

⁶ See Daehner and Lapatin (2015) for a discussion of the dazzling polychromy on ancient bronze sculpture, in which the sculpture is accented with copper lips and nipples, bone teeth, silver finger and toe nails.

⁷ Thorsten Opper, pers.comm., 2010; Brinkmann (2003) 39; Herz (2008) on the colors within white marble.

brazier, which the painter will use to heat the wax with which to mix the mineral pigments and wax directly on the surface of the sculpture in the encaustic technique.⁸

The vase's composition shows Herakles watching the completion of his own image. The image of a body is in the process of becoming the image of *his* body through the application of colors. In this case I am not referring to iconographic details, but to the materials that literally *make* the image. This image of a painter completing the sculpture of Herakles is the visual equivalent of Pliny's oft-quoted claim that of all of his sculptures, Praxiteles preferred those which Nikias had painted.⁹ Colored materials bring about a kind of animation that the un-particularized body lacks. As distant beholders we have grown accustomed to looking at generalities, which spare us the uncanny experience of witnessing an image in all of its colorful particulars.

ZEUS AND GANYMEDE

A fully painted, half-life-sized terracotta sculpture of Zeus and Ganymede stood in the sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia from the early fifth century BCE [Fig. 2].¹⁰ Zeus' hair and full beard are painted the rich blue-black (probably the pigment Egyptian blue) described in Greek texts as *keanos*.¹¹ His eyebrows, lashes, and irises are also

⁸ On the encaustic technique see Von Bothmer (1951) 158. On encaustic in Romano-Egyptian mummy portraits see Walker (2000) and Borg (1996). On the use of encaustic to paint ships in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, see Glastrup (1995). Vase painters in antiquity typically deployed a limited palette. As with other media, the passage of time has diminished what colors remain on ceramic vases; especially since additional colors were often added after firing and thus were more vulnerable than the iconic reds and blacks fired into the form. In reconstructing the colors of ancient images, vases have helped to parse patterns. See Brinkmann (2003) 54, fig. 72; 64, fig. 97; 106, fig. 175; 113, figs. 190–191; 116, figs 195–196.) The limited range of colors deployed by vase painters, coupled with the manner in which these images have often been reproduced in black and white or circulated as line drawings, have contributed to the removal of color from ancient art. When we substitute images from vases for 'lost originals', these images replace the imagined original with a real image absent the originals' polychromy.

⁹ Plin. *HN* 35.133.

¹⁰ For the narrative of Zeus and Ganymede, see Hom. Hymn to Aphrodite 200–216; *Il.* 5.265–279, 20.231–235 and Pindar *Ol.* 1, esp. 44–45. The story of Ganymede is a popular myth, first appearing in the *Iliad* (5.265) and common in visual representations dating from the first half of the 5th century, with a hiatus in the latter half of the 5th century, to a resurgence in the mid-4th century BCE that stretched into a curious embrace by Christianity in the Middle Ages, and then steadfast popularity in the Renaissance and beyond; on which see Davidson (2007) 184. On the absence of all manner of abduction scenes in the visual arts of the second half of the 5th century BCE, see Stewart (1990) 84–85.

¹¹ I reject the argument put forth in Brinkmann (2008) 23 that poetry and the visual arts do not inform each other's color vocabularies. I understand that he makes this argument

painted the same blue-black color, while his pupils are slightly darker still. His flesh is painted the deep reddish-brown characteristic of the well-trained male body, and he wears a darker red robe embroidered with repeating images of Pegasos along its border. In his left hand Zeus carries a staff. Under his right arm he carries the boy Ganymede, whose own bare flesh carries the slightly lighter tones of an *ephebe* (but not the pale pigment associated with female flesh).¹² Ganymede's hair and eyes are reddish-brown and he carries a red cock, presumably a gift from Zeus, in his left hand. Zeus's blue-black eyes cast a sweeping gaze, while Ganymede looks downward, perhaps at the mortal world from which he is flying in the arms of the king of Olympos [Fig. 3].

Zeus' divinity shines forth from within his body through his hair and eyes.¹³ Textual descriptions and visual images from Egypt, Greece, and the Near East characterized aspects of the divine and heroic body as *keuanos* at least as far back as the third millennium BCE. Color in this context does not merely qualify the hair, beard, and eyes, but makes these features into the hair, beard, and eyes of Zeus. The vivid color of Zeus' gaze and head dazzles so that he seems to move even when still [Fig. 4]. The beholder witnesses the shining color on the surface of the figure, produced through the application of pigment and a buffing agent, yet the figure appears to generate this shimmer from within. Color unifies surface and interior by producing the effect of interiority, of power and animation produced in the body itself and made manifest on and through its surface.¹⁴ This polychrome Zeus both represents the deity and makes present the divine.

Traditional readings of this piece, which is frequently reproduced in black and white, barely mention its polychromy, while placing excessive weight on its form.¹⁵

in support of the technical analysis that characterizes his methodological approach and from which the current study certainly benefits, but it is intellectually impossible for verbal colors and visual colors to remain entirely distinct. Brinkmann is correct to point out the pitfalls of relying entirely on textual evidence to understand color in the ancient world, for verbal and visual references never map directly onto each other; however his statement that the two spheres (verbal and visual) operate independently of each other participates in the very isolationist thinking that his research attempts to overcome. Indeed, his exhibition catalogue includes a chapter dedicated to the textual sources.

¹² I stress this because some discussions of the *erastes/eromenos* relationship liken the younger man to a woman because he is penetrated. This pairing is based precisely on the fact that the *eromenos* is *not* a woman. The sexual pairing is not about the substitution of one orifice for another, but the active selection of a male partner in the bloom of youth.

¹³ For a discussion of shining and image-animation, see Zorach (2005) 195.

¹⁴ On absence and presence in Greek sculpture, see Neer (2010) 28.

¹⁵ Andrew Stewart's (1990) attention to the pigments of Zeus and Ganymede is a notable exception to the tendency of scholars to overlook entirely the sculpture's polychromy. The photograph accompanying the description is, unfortunately, black and white, but this is no doubt due to the cost of color reproductions at the time this book went to press. Vinzenz

Without its color, the image does not function. Zeus without *keanos* is simply another man offering love gifts to a boy. *Kuanos* reveals Zeus' divinity to his audience, while simultaneously affirming the narrative that the image depicts. Ganymede is rising to Olympus in order to serve Zeus and the other deities the red (*eruthros*) nectar that keeps him and them *keaneoi*.¹⁶

The sculptural group appropriately emphasizes Ganymede's mortality in contrast to Zeus' immortality.¹⁷ Ganymede's hair [Fig. 5] is the more common light reddish-brown. In some accounts and depictions he is described as *xanthos* (yellow-haired), perhaps to further emphasize the contrast of his locks with the blue-black of his captor.¹⁸ The relative pallor of Ganymede's skin in contrast to Zeus' marks their different stages of manhood in much the same way that their different sizes do.¹⁹ The specificity of color (*keanos*) marks Zeus as divine in deliberate contrast to Ganymede, a mortal like the statue's beholder. In receiving and reciprocating Zeus' piercing blue-black gaze, the beholder experiences a frisson of what Ganymede will experience in his new role as cupbearer to the gods. Ganymede, notably, keeps his eyes averted from Zeus' divine gaze; instead, he tracks the mortal world that he leaves behind. Polychromy animates these two figures in substantively different ways.

Bluebeard(s)

A trio of hybrid creatures sculpted from limestone and covered with one layer of stucco and another of various colorful pigments occupied a pediment of the Hekatompedon on the Archaic Acropolis (ca. 560 BCE) in a scene that also included the figure of Herakles wrestling a sea-creature [Figs. 7–8].²⁰ The so-called 'Bluebeard' pediment has been restored and installed as a centerpiece of the New Acropolis Museum in Athens. This sculpture is most frequently illustrated using a watercolor produced in 1904, or a black and white photograph. The new context allows a closer examination of its details, although independent photography remains prohibited. I am including both the image from the recent exhibition 'Archaic Colors' at the New Acropolis Museum and an image of the early 20th century watercolor first published

Brinkmann has successfully side-stepped the limitations placed on color by traditional presses by publishing through his own press, Biering and Brinkmann.

¹⁶ Hom. *Hymn to Aphrodite* 207.

¹⁷ Davidson (2007) 170–200 has argued that the popularity of Ganymede's story derives primarily from his role serving red nectar to the gods, which sets him apart, both physically and experientially, from other mortals. Ganymede's contact with the literal stuff of divinity differentiates him from the various other mortals who are intimate with Zeus.

¹⁸ Hom. *Hymn to Aphrodite* 202.

¹⁹ Davis (1996) 262–276. The appearance of Zeus and Ganymede in this sculpture resembles a contemporary or slightly earlier Attic bell-krater attributed to the Berlin Painter and now in the collection of the Louvre. Here, Ganymede's hair is also painted a lighter shade (*xanthos*) than Zeus' hair and full beard.

²⁰ Hurwit (1999) 106–111, figs. 76–83, plate III.

by Theodor Wiegand.²¹ Recent examination of the sculpture reveals that what is typically described as a single, composite body, may actually be a trio of entwined figures.

The three creatures each have a human head, torso, and arms, and appear connected to a twisting, snake-like body with wings. This trio is typically considered one figure with three heads. And the figure *is* difficult to parse. Do we see three snake-men bound together by their likeness and coiled tails, or does each torso and head belong to a single body with three-pronged tail? A large wing patterned with red and blue juts from the back of the rightmost torso. Additional wings might have been added entirely in pigment. Each body holds a different attribute in his left hand. In the absence of further conservation and testing to determine whether additional wings or a wing were added in pigment, one can assume from the presence of three heads, torsos, attributes, and tails, that the so-called ‘triple-bodied’ figure is in fact a trio. I will refer to the sculpture as ‘Bluebeard(s)’ to mark the uncertainty.

My intention is not to offer yet another tendentious iconographic interpretation of ‘Bluebeard(s),’ but a phenomenology of the image’s polychromy. A significant amount of the original color remains visible. Although many details of the building complexes on the Archaic Acropolis remain disputed, we know that much of its freestanding and architectural sculpture was painted and many of these pigments remain visible today.²² The gallery label in the New Acropolis Museum describes the figures of this pediment as ‘alive with color,’ a turn of phrase that emphasizes the animation enacted through polychromy. In addition, the colors on ‘Bluebeard(s),’ particularly the blue of their eponymous beards, draw on an extensive cross-cultural history of pigments and their related materials, a history that asserts itself in the experience of the image.²³

The three naked torsos overlap one another to display their reddish-brown painted flesh. Their well-muscled, brown-colored arms are displayed in profile, and their elegant, blue-coiffured heads in three-quarter view. Each figure’s head gazes out at a slightly different angle, covering a wide swath amongst them; each holds his muscled arms bent at the elbow, although only the central figure has both arms visible; and each holds an attribute – a bird, water, and possibly a sheaf of wheat, re-

²¹ Wiegand (1904). The medium of watercolor and the deterioration of the sculpture’s colors already underway by the early 20th century filtered the image Wiegand produced, but it remains the most widely circulated. See Brinkmann (2003) 26, fig 23a-b. The most frequently reproduced 19th-century watercolors of antiquities were produced by the family Gilliéron, who was the subject of a recent exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, *Historic Images of the Greek Bronze Age: The Reproductions of E. Gilliéron & Son*, May 17, 2011–June 17, 2012.

²² Pandermalis (2012).

²³ For a summary of the various suggested identifications of Bluebeard(s) (none satisfactory), see Hurwit (1999) 108.

spectively.²⁴ Strikingly, a full stylized dark blue beard covers each figure's face. The hair and beard of each head, like that of Zeus in the previous example, are painted with the rich pigment Egyptian blue that was ubiquitous throughout the ancient Mediterranean in antiquity. This hair flows in rivulets to the shoulders and curls back from each forehead, revealing prominent sculpted brown eyebrows above deeply incised, black-lined eyes. The punched pupils are painted black, as are the incised lash-lines. The deep carving outlining the eyes evokes some of the effects produced by inlaid eyes, here executed through the combination of paint and incision. The different angles of each head offer a sequential narrative, as though each head and torso is simultaneously individuated and three visions of a singleton. In returning the gaze of each figure, the beholder must mimic this rotation or animation.

The surface of the sculpted hair and beards painted with a three-dimensional layer of Egyptian blue pigment creates the effect of hair sculpted from blue material or lapis lazuli. The shallow volume of the pigment layer is effectively deepened through its contact with sculpted limestone.²⁵ The pigment itself takes up real space.²⁶ Nevertheless, through its association with the limestone support, pigment takes on the illusion of greater volume for the beholder. The blue color appears as pigment (actual material), as lapis lazuli (the material referent), and as the even less tangible *keuanos*.

Pigment and limestone merge in Bluebeard(s) to produce the effect of sculpted lapis lazuli and to transform the object (the sculpted limestone) into something other than itself, something virtual. Pigment plays between its 'true' material state (inexpensive components of Egyptian blue), its simulacrum as sculpted lapis lazuli (the high-value and high-status stone), and its representation of blue beards, replete with divine associations. The image oscillates between different states: *keuanos*, pigment, beard, body.²⁷

The beholder also moves between the real space of her feet on the ground, the space of the pigment's material reality, and a virtual or representational space in which figures with beards of lapis lazuli confront her. Unpainted sculpture also incites movement between real and virtual space; however, applied pigment occasions a more profound instability by multiplying the illusions that a beholder must integrate and parse.

²⁴ Hurwit (1999) 108. These distinct attributes are not present in paintings published by Wiegand (1904).

²⁵ On planar vs. virtual images and their operations in 'real space,' see Summers (2002) 1.9, esp. 83.

²⁶ On the real space of the *tâche* see Tuma (2002).

²⁷ On oscillation, see discussion in Neer (2002) 65.

Blue Beards in Context

The blue pigments on the figure of Zeus and on Bluebeard(s) draw on an extensive tradition in the ancient Near East, Egypt, and the Mediterranean of images worked from blue-colored materials. These pigments and the images they form derive their legibility and produce their effects within a tradition of facture no longer familiar to the modern beholder. Lapis lazuli and blue-black pigments operated within a panoply of associations that were so familiar as to be obvious, perhaps even inherent, for the ancient beholder. The mimetic relationship between pigment and preceding material is not of straightforward dependence, but pigment and colored material coexist as terms within the finished representation of 'Bluebeard(s)' and the Olympian Zeus; their relationship is not merely a mimetic one, but one of mutual interdependence.

In addition to numerous textual references to beards and coiffures of lapis lazuli in Sumerian, Akkadian, and Greek texts, material culture yields a number of objects with beards sculpted from high-value stone. Among the earliest are the so-called 'lyres' buried in the Royal Cemetery at Ur (2650–2500 BCE). The 'lyres' were buried along with many portable objects, ceramics, and metals, and the site yielded countless objects formed from lapis lazuli. The body of each lyre is crafted of wood that has been inlaid with various precious materials, such as ivory, gold, carnelian, and lapis lazuli. A bull's head of gold, silver, and lapis lazuli tops the wooden body. The head of the lyre, now in the collection of the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia, consists of a gold sheet with openings for attached hair, beard, ears, horns, and eyes.²⁸ A sheet of gold hammered over a wooden core formed the base of each horn, with attached lapis lazuli tips. The eyes were assembled from lapis lazuli for the lid and iris, and shell for the white into which the iris is set. Each eye was then fitted into the opening in the gold head and attached with copper wire. Over seventy tesserae of lapis lazuli carved into curls were attached to the head core using bitumen. An additional fifty-eight tesserae of lapis lazuli were carved into beard locks and arranged into a pattern of longer and shorter pieces. The beard pieces were attached to the head using copper alloy wire and backed with silver.²⁹ These attachments mask the materials that attach them to the figure, concealing this disruption to the outward presentation of a completed whole form. Although the specificity of language severs blue from beard, they are unified in the material of lapis lazuli. Blueness is not simply a quality of surface. The beard *is* blue and without this blueness, there would be no beard, only wires and silver backing. Form (beard) depends on material (lapis lazuli) and color (blue) takes up real space; its materiality confronts the beholder directly.

²⁸ The University of Pennsylvania, along with the British Museum, co-sponsored the original excavation in the 1920s and early 1930s.

²⁹ Greene (2003).

Lapis lazuli is found primarily in the Badakhshan region of modern Afghanistan.³⁰ From as early as the sixth millennium BCE, it was exported throughout the Indus valley, Mesopotamia, and Egypt.³¹ The dark blue stone is composed of multiple minerals and often flecked with shimmering metallic pyrites.³² It held significant monetary, social, and affective value.³³ Its closest equivalent in our own society would be the social and monetary value accorded to diamonds.³⁴ Objects, sculpture, tablets and inlay, portable seals, beads, and charms made with lapis lazuli have been found throughout excavations in the ancient Near East, especially in tomb contexts and in raw form as foundation deposits.³⁵ A cache of cylinder seals from Thebes (Boeotia) included many formed from lapis lazuli, where the color and value of the stone were among the reasons for their pride of place within the hoard.³⁶ Stashes of the unworked stone were buried with elite persons, used as offerings to deities, and buried along boundary lines. The most high-quality stones were often hoarded in treasuries, changing hands only through elite gift exchange, as war booty, or tribute.³⁷ Although the stone circulated widely, before the 6th and 7th centuries CE, it was highly unusual that lapis lazuli was ground into ultramarine, a pigment prized for its deep, vibrant color and the difficulty and expense of its production.³⁸ Artists, instead, used Egyptian Blue, one of the earliest artificial pigments, to produce a deep lapis lazuli-like blue.³⁹ Egyptian blue is a calcium-sodium bisilicate of copper and is

³⁰ On the extensive lapis lazuli trade see Moorey (1999); Feldman (2006) 16.

³¹ Feldman (2006)16; Aston, Harrell and Shaw (2000) 39–40; Lucas and Harris (1999) 398–400; Winter (1999); Casanova (1999) 191–193. Recent excavations undertaken by a team from the University of Pennsylvania in conjunction with the Iranian antiquity authority in Iran revealed a lapidary way-station at which stones from the surrounding areas were collected and distributed for broader trade. (Holly Pittman, pers. comm.).

³² Plesters (1966) 63.

³³ Winter (1999).

³⁴ Moorey (1999) 178.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 177.

³⁶ Feldman (2015).

³⁷ Moorey (1999) 181.

³⁸ The only context known to me in which lapis lazuli was ground into a pigment in antiquity is on a group of astragali which bear traces of ground lapis lazuli. These were mentioned in a recent presentation by Hericlia Bercoulaki at the EFA ‘Couleurs’ conference in April 2009 to appear in Jockey (forthcoming). On the value of the pigment lapis lazuli, see the classic Baxandall (1988).

³⁹ Panzanelli (2008) 136 # 20. On the long, laborious process of extracting ultramarine from lapis lazuli, see Plesters (1966) 64. Artificial ultramarine was first introduced in 1828, *ibid.* 74. On the technical production of Egyptian blue see Kakoulli (2009) 61–66. On Egyptian blue in Greek painting, see Calamiotou et al. (1983). On Egyptian blue on Egyptian bronzes, see La Niece et al. (2002). For lapis lazuli used as eye makeup in Persia, see Farmanfarmanian (2000). On ultramarine and its substitutes in the Middle Ages, see Raft (1968).

technically a ceramic or glass.⁴⁰ The substitution of pigment for material also substituted technical skill for economic value.

After the third millennium sources for lapis lazuli seem to have grown scarcer and fewer objects crafted from the stone appear in second- and first-millennium contexts.⁴¹ Egyptian blue gained popularity as a means of giving objects the blue-black hue associated with lapis lazuli ‘from the mountain.’ A discussion of lapis lazuli ‘from the kiln’ emerges in the textual record in the middle of the second millennium BCE as do references to lapis lazuli adjusted by boiling and lapis lazuli mixed with glass.⁴² This suggests a certain amount of preoccupation with the possibility of substituting something man-made and artificial for a natural resource born of the earth. Indeed, turquoise, which enjoyed esteem almost on par with that accorded lapis lazuli in the fourth millennium BCE, fell increasingly out of favor in part because of the ease with which it could be counterfeited, and its potential for losing its color when oiled.⁴³

Under the Persian Empire, ‘Egyptian blue’ pigment was often used to paint beards and hair. On the tomb of Artaxerxes III above the terrace at Persepolis, excavators found abundant traces of Egyptian blue pigment on the hair and beard from a sculpture of a Persian soldier.⁴⁴ The same artificial pigment was used to paint the beards of sculptures adorning the buildings at Persepolis. Many fragments of such beards were found during excavations.⁴⁵ Initial reports suggest that several different blue pigments, and not only Egyptian blue, were used on beards depicted at Persepolis.⁴⁶ The recent US version of the *Bunte Götter* exhibition, *Gods in Color*, at the Sackler Museum at Harvard University, included the reconstruction of a fragment from Persepolis depicting Ahuramazda in the winged disk with blue beard and hair.⁴⁷

Although physical (as opposed to textual) examples of blue beards are much less frequent outside of Persian and earlier Mesopotamian art, a south Italian or Si-

⁴⁰ Vitruvius offers an extended description of the manufacture of Egyptian blue (*De Arch.* 7.11.1). On this see Davidovits (2004).

⁴¹ Feldman (2006) 117.

⁴² Moorey (1999) 182; Feldman (2006) 117.

⁴³ Moorey (1999) 179.

⁴⁴ Tilia (1978) 39.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Herzfeld (1941) 267, fig. 372; Herzfeld (1931) nos. 189–193. Lumps of green, red, and blue are now in the Persepolis Museum; Nagel (2010).

⁴⁶ Nagel (forthcoming).

⁴⁷ Unfortunately this reconstruction was not published with the rest of the catalogue, Brinkmann and Wünsche (2008), but should be published separately: Ahura Mazda in the Winged Disk, Achaemenid Persian, Persepolis, Hall of 100 Columns, 486–460 BC. Limestone Original: Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop, 1943.1062. Color Reconstruction: plaster, acrylic paint, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, 1943.1062.X. As with all reconstructions this represents a ‘best guess’ on the part of the curators.

ilian terracotta head from the second half of the fourth century BCE, now in the collection of the Getty Museum, provides another interesting example. The head is sculpted of terracotta and has thick, curly hair (some locks of which were sculpted separately and affixed) and an equally full and curly beard with less substantial mustache. The figure's mane was painted a reddish-brown (hematite), while the beard and mustache were covered with Egyptian blue. The shape of the eyes, like those of the 'Bluebeard(s),' is deeply incised and the pupils lightly incised. The flesh and lips were also painted. Although initially given the general designation 'head of a god, probably Zeus', recent association with finds from Morgantina secured an identity as Hades, rendering the combination of blue beard and red hair particularly significant.⁴⁸

Skin

The faces of the 'Bluebeard(s)' are painted the same reddish-brown as the sculpture's naked torsos.⁴⁹ The brown color of the skin signals time spent outdoors acquiring the muscles that are sculpted beneath it. Brown pigment represents bodily flesh while serving as the sculpture's actual epidermal covering, cloaking its limestone core.⁵⁰ The myth of the sculpted body is that it contains something beneath its surface, some homunculus of a self.⁵¹ Painted pigmentation literalizes that myth. The pigment both represents and is the body's skin, without necessarily pursuing verisimilitude. It constructs the illusion of the body beneath even as it physically covers the sculpted limestone core (and its enveloping stucco). If depictions of drapery in figurative sculpture construct the illusion that a body lies beneath, that the drape covers something real, we must understand the procedures of painted flesh as

⁴⁸ Lyons, Bennett, and Marconi (2013).

⁴⁹ On the likelihood that the flesh of all Greek sculptures was painted see Richter (1944) 325. See also Brinkmann and Wünsche (2007a) 32; Brinkmann (2008) 26, although I find no citation of the catalogue from 1960 of sculptures with painted skin to which he refers. On the convention of rendering the flesh of men brown and that of women white in ancient Greek art, see Pomeroy (1994) 303–309; Fountoulakis (2004); for a significant exception in the Egyptian context, see Eaverly (2004). On the application of brown body-color by men, see Hannah (2004). On whitening or reddening the body, see Xenophon *Oec.* 10; Plautus *Truc.* 294; Xenophon *Cyr.* 8.1.41; Herodotos 4.191–194, 7.69; scholiast on Aristophanes' *Knights* (230a.6); Theophrastus *de Lapidibus* (8.48–60), as cited in Hannah (2004) 100 and no. 1; see also *Od.* 16.174–176 (darkening of Odysseus, also discussed below) and *Od.* 18.195–196 (whitening of Penelope). On white dress prescribed for priestesses of many Greek cults, see Connelly (2007) 90–91; Lapatin (2001) 19. On Latin color words, skin, and medicine see Bradley (2009) 131–132; Goldman (2013) ch. 5.

⁵⁰ On skin containing the body and soul see Neer (2010) 16, 147–155; see also Empedocles fr. 126 DK, trans. K. Freeman, cited in Neer (2010) 172.

⁵¹ Gell (1998) 131; Neer (2010) 105.

related but different.⁵² The choice to cover the surface of the sculpture with pigment literalizes the components of the body.

In papers describing reactions to the vigorous 19th-century cleaning of a portion of the Parthenon marbles in the British Museum one observer described the head of Selene's horse as having been 'skinned.'⁵³ The cleaning is described as a 'ferocious skinning.' Another writer described the stripped patina as having once 'knit [the marbles] in a single unity.'⁵⁴ The layers of paint correspond in a real sense to the layers of skin that mark the outermost boundary of the body and are the body's largest organ. Pigment operates simultaneously as a distinct physical layer and as what unifies the disparate parts beneath its surface; it is both constituent part and constitutive of the whole body.

As is often remarked upon in discussions of ancient polychromy, the English word 'color' has its roots in the Latin *celare* ('hide') and *occulere* ('cover'). The Greek equivalent, *chrōma* is related to the term *chrōs* ('skin').⁵⁵ This genealogy (etymology) marks color off as a term of mere surface, distracting scholars from the embeddedness of surface, its fundamental role in constructing (and containing) the body.⁵⁶ *Chrōs*, however, refers to the organ of skin itself, which possesses solid substance, and *chroma* retains this association.⁵⁷ *Chrōs* itself can refer to the outer layer of the human body, or to the entire body and its limbs, as well as more generally 'color.'⁵⁸ Thus, it is only in the translation into Latin that the materiality of color drops out and surface-ness begins to dominate. The integrated relationship between surface and depth that we have seen in the examples discussed above were not exceptions. An ancient Greek conception of color encompasses the duality of surface and depth; the linguistic move towards surface-ness in Latin may imply a shift in what the term could encompass. Certainly we have progressed to ever-narrower definitions of color, such that in English it most typically refers to hue.

Skin was considered inviolable in the ancient Greek world.⁵⁹ In exploring the taboo against medical dissection of human cadavers, Henrich von Staden assesses the significance of skin in ancient Greek culture. It was, he writes, 'a magical symbol of wholeness and oneness, of the integrity of the individual or collective organisms that might become susceptible to disintegration or fragmentation.'⁶⁰ Herakles tore off his own skin in trying to shed the burning, poisoned robe. Von Staden argues

⁵² Neer (2010) 149–165.

⁵³ Jenkins (1999).

⁵⁴ Jenkins (2001) 12, 45.

⁵⁵ Chantraine (2009) 1233; Price (1883) 6.

⁵⁶ On surface/interior relations see Neer (2010) 143–181.

⁵⁷ I am grateful to Andrew Stewart for raising this point.

⁵⁸ Chantraine (2009) 1233.

⁵⁹ Von Staden (1992) 227.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 228.

that Herakles' loss of his skin makes his apotheosis inevitable, for 'to be without skin entails not only being without power but also being without identity.'⁶¹

The importance of an individual's physical skin extended metaphorically to communities, which could be surrounded by a 'skin' that unified the individual parts into a coherent, functioning group.⁶² For this reason, skin also played a role in several foundation myths, such as the association of Kekrops with the skin of a sacred ox and the story of Dido using the skin of an ox to outline the circumference of Carthage.⁶³ The skin of sacrificial animals was removed whole and not burnt along with the rest of the corpse as visible evidence for the purity and wholeness of the sacrificed animal.⁶⁴ Not only does skin mark the wholeness of the body that it contains, but it is also the surface on which information about interior parts can be read.⁶⁵ Changes in skin color or luster can be external markers of internal happenings, whether blushing, blanching, turning green, or bruising.⁶⁶ If color is the skin of an art object, time will surely violate its integrity. Stripped of its original colored surfaces – oftentimes by human intention – the ancient art object may fail to resolve for the modern beholder into an identifiable whole.

The abstraction of parts into a unified whole is one of the hallmarks of sculpture in various media in which the pieces used to construct the image are effaced by the illusion of wholeness. On the one hand, pigment unifies the sculptural body by concealing joins and crafting a unified surface; on the other hand, pigments break the body into associated blocks of color, shattering the unified whole that they bring into being. In the discourse on panel painting, this problem of part versus whole is figured by the *tâche*, or brushstroke, and the visual contest between its visibility as such and its participation in the creation of the whole picture.⁶⁷ In sculpture this problem is further complicated by the disjunction between the pieces of support joined to create the sculpted body and the application of pigment, gilding, and other attachments to that body.⁶⁸ In this sense, the sculptural body fragments before the beholder in two separate and distinct ways: the assemblage of forms that make up the sculptural body always risk revealing themselves as mere pieces; the colors that finish the body's surface simultaneously unify that surface by effacing its piecemeal construction and fragment that surface into every color and *tâche* applied to it. The body of sculpture and beholder are at once whole beings and assemblages of col-

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 229.

⁶² *Ibid.* 228.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 227–228.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 229.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Because of his self-skinning, Herakles became associated with a variety of gruesome skin diseases.

⁶⁷ Tuma (2002).

⁶⁸ Sturgeon (2008) 52–53, 55, 59; Barletta (2008) 81–82, 103–104; Higgs (2008) 193–200.

ored materials. Wholeness comes, not as we have come to expect through a unified monochrome surface, but through the visible stitched-togetherness of parts.

This tension present in sculptural and painted bodies pictures the same tension present in the human body. Although formed of many parts and systems, we operate with the body as a whole, so that each piece is integrated into the overall entity that is integral to an intact self. The Greek term *demās* refers to a person's build assembled from pieces, with an explicit etymological association with architectural construction through the verb *demō*.⁶⁹ Wholeness is linked to the idea of a self: who we are beyond the particularities of each individual body. The self is beyond the body, yet housed within it. The fragmenting effects of color jeopardize both the wholeness of the figural body and the wholeness of the beholding self. In order to escape fragmentation, which happens on the material level, the self must be dematerialized. What the particularity of pigment on sculpture or in painting does is to pick out the parts from the whole. The legend recounted by Pliny and Cicero that the classical painter Zeuxis selected the best parts of the five most beautiful maidens in order to paint Helen's incomparable beauty literalizes this piecemeal nature of the artistic whole.⁷⁰ This dematerialization of the self has its roots in aspects of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy that are embraced by modern western philosophy, especially Kant and Hegel, giving rise to the formalism which has long dominated the discipline of the history of art.⁷¹ In the Ancient Mediterranean, however, most literary and material evidence show the self, not as separate and disjunct, but as the assembled parts of the material body.

THE LANGUAGE OF MATERIALS

Akkadian, Sumerian, and Greek texts all deploy the word for lapis lazuli to mean at times the material itself (e.g., this object or palace was made of the stone lapis lazuli) and at other times to mean 'possessing the deep blueness of lapis,' or 'shining or shimmering in the manner of the stone lapis' (but not necessarily blue in color). Lapis lazuli accrued high value not only from its blue color but also from its bright shimmer, thus, 'let them cut the pure lapis lazuli from the lumps, the brightness of pure lapis lazuli.'⁷² These twin terms, blue and shimmer, could operate together or independently, so that the term for lapis lazuli describes an object's color or an object's refraction of light, or the two simultaneously. As I argued above, a material's capacity to reflect light should not be extracted from its color, but is an essential component of what makes up color.

Lapis lazuli is also a detail utilized to connote sexual desirability and potency. An Akkadian love incantation reads 'love charm, love charm / his horns are of gold

⁶⁹ Chantraine (2009) *demō*; Vernant (1989) 22.

⁷⁰ Plin. *HN* 35.36.64–66, Cic. *Inv. Rhet.* 2.1.1. For recent commentary, see Mansfield (2007); on the humanist discussion of this myth, see Baxandall (1986) 35–44.

⁷¹ Porter (2010) 70–120.

⁷² Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta 6.1.

/ his tail of lapis / it is placed in Ishtar's heart.⁷³ The Akkadian hymn recounting Ishtar's Descent into the Underworld does not specify the materials of the goddess's adornments (crown, necklace, earrings, brooches, girdle of birthstones, bangles) that she strips off one by one as she descends farther and farther into the Underworld, but her lover Tammuz plays a lapis flute in a sympotic setting amidst courtesans.⁷⁴ The longer Sumerian version of the hymn, however, does specify the materials adorning Inanna, or Akkadian Ishtar, as made of lapis lazuli: 'The measuring rod (and) line of lapis lazuli she gripped in her hand, small lapis lazuli stones she tied about her neck.'⁷⁵ The underworld is described as 'the palace, the lapis lazuli mountain,' which links the material of lapis lazuli with the earth that produces it.⁷⁶ The poem describes the goddess herself as finely-worked lapis lazuli. Ninšubur entreats Inanna's father 'let not your daughter be put to death in the nether world / let not your good metal be covered with the dust of the nether world / let not your good lapis lazuli be broken up into the stone of the stone worker.'⁷⁷ A related lament to Nanna concerning the fate of Inanna in the Underworld reads: 'When will she release her, the lapis she has accumulated? When will she release her? ... The lapis lazuli I had, my lapis has been used up.'⁷⁸ Lapis lazuli stands in for the alluring body of the Queen of Heaven. Shattering the stone signals her demise. Lapis lazuli describes the stone itself, the color blue, darkness, shimmer, the sky, and the divine body.

This semantic confluence of material, color, and quality surfaces identically in Greek, in which the term for lapis lazuli, *kuanos*, refers to the stone, and also to something dark, blue, or shimmering.⁷⁹ According to Plato, *kuanos* comprised *to lampron* (shimmer), white (*leukos*), and black (*melas*).⁸⁰ Accounts of Greek color emphasize the importance of luster, shimmer, and brilliance – of *to lampron*, in Greek

⁷³ Charms and jewelry made of lapis lazuli may have had an additional apotropaic component, on this see Winter (1999) 50–51. Compare with the description of the defeated Bull of Heaven: 'Gilgamesh called craftsmen, all the armourers / and the craftsmen admired the thickness of its horns / thirty minas of lapis lazuli was (needed for) each of their pouring ends / two minas of gold (was needed for) each of their sheathings.' Dalley (1991b) 82.

⁷⁴ Dalley (1991b) 155–162.

⁷⁵ Kramer (1951) 8. Compare with the 'inlaid' armband of Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos. In Gilgamesh, 'as soon as the Mistress of the Gods arrived [she said] "Behold, O gods, I shall never forget (the significance of) my lapis lazuli necklace, I shall remember these times, and I shall never forget."' Dalley (1991b) 114.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 4, ln. 72. Natural lapis lazuli is described as 'lapis from the mountain.'

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 9, ln. 210–213.

⁷⁸ George (1985) 111–112.

⁷⁹ Irwin (1974) 28–9, 79–110. On different translations of the term, see Descamps-Lequime (2006) 91–92.

⁸⁰ Pl. *Ti.* 68c 5–6.

art.⁸¹ The prevalence of words for shimmer in ancient Greek texts, and the seeming dearth of words for particular hues in these same texts, are often marshaled as sufficient evidence for a Greek *preference* for brilliance over of hue.⁸² In a circular turn, these texts manqué are then marshaled to bolster scholarly insistence on the importance of unadorned white marble and its lustrous effects: retrospectively, if hues were unnamed in Greek texts and absent from Greek sculptures, both text and image retain their noble simplicity. Of course, most marble is not actually white in hue, and no marble is actually completely monochromatic.⁸³ Luster is, in fact, part of color. By divorcing luster from color, scholars efface the import of pigment's relationship to the sculptural interior and project a false picture of Greek image practice. Luster has been erroneously pried from color in order to retain an idealized image of sparkling white marble antiquity in the face of overwhelming evidence of a preference for a *combination* of variegated hues and shimmer.

To lampron / *he lamprotes* is significant for Greek aesthetics, but scholars err in wresting it from the category of color. *To lampron* is a part of ancient Greek color vocabulary. In his *Timaieus*, Plato offers a theory of color in which he describes the components of each hue.⁸⁴ For *kuanos*, Plato offers a formula of white + black + *to lampron*.⁸⁵ Luster is a component of the color *kuanos*, but the effects themselves are a part of what makes up the color, not a category apart from *chrōma*. If we turn for the moment to *kuanos* in other cultural contexts, we find here as well that luster, an aspect of *poikilia*, is a part of what makes lapis lazuli a desirable material and part of what imbues the color/material with value. In ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian contexts color is an accepted and acceptable part of the visual tradition and no such splitting of hue and radiance takes place.

⁸¹ Among the ancient sources on luminosity and brilliance as a component of color, see Pl. *Ti.* 68c, Plut. *Per.* 10.1; and on the addition of wax to increase it, Plin. *HN* 35.36.97. Scholars who have recently analyzed *to lampron* include Neer (2010); Duigan (2004) 80; Stewart (1990) 36–42; Irwin (1974).

⁸² A recent example of this is Walter-Karydi's talk given at the color colloquium at the French school in Athens in 2009, publication in Jockey (forthcoming). In an otherwise deft discussion of the relationship between the use of many colors on sculptural surfaces and the emergence in the sixth century BCE of a correspondence between surface decoration and the surface decorated, Walter-Karydi framed the debate in terms of darkness and lightness and characterized Homer as uninterested in hue.

⁸³ Some museums have begun qualifying the hue 'white' by describing the hues that appear in the marble's veining as well. See, for example, the collection at the University Art Museum at Princeton. On the possibilities within the hue category 'white' see especially Wittgenstein (1977) I.3–5. On the tyranny of whiteness, see Batchelor (2000) 9–19.

⁸⁴ A particularly vexing aspect of Plato's work is that he is both one of the major sources about ancient Greek color and a source of the repression of color in favor of form.

⁸⁵ Pl. *Ti.* 68c. See Ierodiakonou (2005). For contemporary 'experiments' in color-making and the four-color palette, see Brecoulaki (2006) 29–42.

A basic definition of the term *poikilos* is ‘variegation’ which was an aspect of color that was highly valued in the ancient Mediterranean.⁸⁶ Polychromy thematizes duration precisely because of its changeableness; some color simply does not survive, and in its absence beholders prioritize other properties of the image and cease to see or account for what color remains. *Poikilos*, however, is an important and valuable term for understanding how color works, both in antiquity and today.⁸⁷

Sappho uses color terms deftly in her poems, often at moments of particular significance, and she offers an important account of *poikilos* in Fragment 1, which opens ‘Deathless Aphrodite of the spangled (*poikilo*-) mind.’⁸⁸ Sappho opens her poem with the *poikilo*-compound, invoking *poikilotbron* / *poikilophro:n* Aphrodite. With that first word Sappho names what follows, her demonstration of *poikilia*. Sappho begs Aphrodite of the shimmering, dappled, changeable, adorned, and variegated mind (or throne). In describing an aspect of the goddess Aphrodite as *poikilos*, Sappho invokes the goddess’s bodily adornment as well, finery that acts as an instrumental part of her divinity. Sappho’s poem plays out the *poikilia* with which she begins; she speaks the variegation for which she praises the goddess.

For the first three stanzas Sappho as supplicant speaks and a color-word appears in each stanza (*poikilo*-, *chrusos*, *melas*). The movement between gold and black is a kind of *poikilia*, and the juxtaposition of bright and dark colors recurs throughout ancient Mediterranean visual and textual arts. In lines 18–20 the poem breaks mid-line with *tina*, and Sappho as poet offers up the voice of the goddess in place of her own: ‘whom should I persuade (now again) / to lead you back into her love? Who, O / Sappho, is wronging you?’ From the moment that (Sappho as) *poikilo*-Aphrodite enters the poem the color-words disappear. Shimmer shifts from visual to authorial. As Aphrodite, Sappho lists the repercussions that she will mete out to the unnamed person who has wronged Sappho.

Finally Sappho steps back into her own supplicant position, and speaks directly to the goddess with the final two lines: ‘Come to me now: loose me from hard / care and all my heart longs / to accomplish, accomplish. You / be my ally.’ This movement between Aphrodite and Sappho pictures the changeableness that *poikilos*

⁸⁶ On the nuances of this term see Neer (2002) 16; Detienne and Vernant (1978) 25–31, 49–51, 288.

⁸⁷ Both Sanskrit (*pekala*) and Sumerian (*gunu*) speak of variegation and changeableness as well, although these words appear to have no etymological relationship to *poikilos*, meaning they developed independently in response to the linguistic needs of each language group to describe shimmering, variegated materials. From *ePSD*: *gunu* [SPECKLED] (477x: ED IIIa, ED IIIb, Old Akkadian, Ur III, Old Babylonian, unknown) wr. *gun3*; *gu2-un-gu2*; *gu2-nu*; *gun5* ‘(to be) speckled, multicolored; (to be) hatched (in sign names); to anoint, smear on, apply makeup’ Akk. *barmu*; eqû. N. Veldhuis and D.M. Goldstein, pers. comm.

⁸⁸ Many have wrestled with the *poikilo*-compound. Carson (2003) 2–5 uses Voigt (1971) for the Greek, but amends *poikilotbron*’ to *poikilophro:n*, which is not the standard interpretation of the text. On Sappho’s authorial voice and power, see Winckler (1990).

describes between voices, bodies, and states of being.⁸⁹ Sappho constructs a *poikilos* Sappho, like to *poikilos* Aphrodite.⁹⁰

Homer offers rich testimony for the varied uses of the term for lapis lazuli (*keanos*). I turn now to these *ekphraseis* of what Sandrine Dubel has called ‘painting in metal.’⁹¹ In the ekphrastic narration of the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*, for example, *keanos* describes the colored enamel laid by Hephaestus into the metal shield. The color terms capture the virtuosity of the world created on the shield – the gold ripening into darkness, the dark vines climbing silver poles, and saturation of the lapis lazuli ditch cut in striking contrast to the bright tin fence that surrounds it.⁹² This movement between colors dazzles. Individual colors shimmer but their juxtaposition moves.⁹³ The careful juxtaposition of colors animates the image and this generative action is the source of colors’ terrible pleasure and power.

The breastplate that Agamemnon dons for battle in *Il.* 11.17–30 also bears extensive work in lapis lazuli, in concert with other bright and valuable materials.⁹⁴ The cumulative effect of the juxtaposition bronze, silver, gold, lapis lazuli, and tin is as overwhelming, auspicious, fleeting *poikilos*, and as beautiful as the rainbows that Zeus arches through the clouds.⁹⁵ The passage goes on to describe Agamemnon’s swords, studded with gold, his sheath covered with silver and gold, and his shield covered with ten circles of bronze and twenty bosses of tin, with on central boss of

⁸⁹ On Sappho’s double-consciousness, see Winckler (1990) 162–176, who reads Fragment 1 alongside *Iliad* 5.

⁹⁰ I have chosen to use the citation form *poikilos* as an adjective in English rather than decline the Greek to match gender and number in English, thus circumventing any confusion about dialects (e.g. Aeolic) and different contexts.

⁹¹ Dubel (2006).

⁹² This infusion of color contrasts sharply with descriptions of the Homeric world as one that favored value (light/dark) and disregarded hue, on this most recently see Walter-Karydi (forthcoming). While darkness and lightness are often opposed, hue remains a part of these constructions, which generally account for the combination of hue, saturation, and brilliance that constitutes color.

⁹³ On juxtaposition as a form of color mixing, see Arist. *Sens.* 439b15.

⁹⁴ Agamemnon received his breastplate as, we are told, a guest-gift from the mythical King Cinyras, a son of Apollo. His armor thus bears some direct connection to divinity, although unlike the armor commissioned for Achilles, it was not forged by a divine hand. It is worth noting that Hephaestus willingly forges the arms for Achilles in reciprocation for Thetis having saved him when he was thrown out of Olympos. In this respect the shield he fashions for Achilles adheres to the reciprocal demands of aristocratic gift-exchange, albeit in slightly altered terms. On aristocratic gift-exchange, see Kurke (1999) 103–111; 71–73, 121–129, 143–147.

⁹⁵ For the lengthiest discussion of the rainbow in ancient Greek, see Arist. *Mete.* 3.2–5. Aristotle describes the bands of individual colors of the rainbow as made up of tiny fragments of cloud that reflect that particular color. These cloud fragments cohere to form the band of that color. See also Empedocles B50.

lapis lazuli into which is set the Gorgon. The serpents of lapis lazuli worked into Agamemnon's shield function in much the same way as the Gorgon's head (or those of 'Bluebeard(s)') – entrancing and repelling beholders as the serpents 'writhe toward the throat.' Their serpentine forms combine with the shimmering material from which they are formed to animate the snakes. Color writhes to delight and awe the beholder. The bands of lapis lazuli, gold, and tin overwhelm in much the same way, but substitute rhythm for the particularity of mimesis. The properties of these materials with contrasting hues (bronze, gold, deep blue, tin) and varied capacities to refract light create a physical barrier between the world and the man and visually shield him from harm.⁹⁶

These colored materials are described as 'like rainbows' both because they are arranged in bands and because they inspire wonder (*thauma*) in their beholder. In the fourth century BCE dialogue, *Theaitetos*, Plato makes the connection between *thauma* and the rainbow explicit. Socrates responds to Theaitetos' confusion with the following statement:

I see, my dear Theaitetos, that Theodoros had a true insight into your nature when he said that you were a philosopher, for wonder is a feeling of a philosopher, and philosophy begins in wonder. He was not a bad genealogist who said that Iris is the child of Thaumas.⁹⁷

Wonder is an important effect of ancient Mediterranean art and of polychromy. Wonder is also a feeling of a philosopher. Iris is the child of Thaumas. Wonder engendered the rainbow, which remains one of the wonders of the natural world.⁹⁸

The Homeric texts offer other possible meanings for the term *kuanos*, all of them linked to magic and divinity. In Book 24 of the *Iliad*, Thetis covers herself in a dark mourning veil, darker than any other, and *kuanos* describes that darkness of hue and saturation (*Il.* 24.94).⁹⁹ *Kuanos* also describes the following: the magical cloud (*kuanēē nephele*) in which Apollo hides Aeneas (*Il.* 5.345), the cloud that envelopes Polydorus after Achilles has killed him (*Il.* 20.418), the permanent dark cloud surrounding the mountain housing Scylla's cave (*Od.* 12.75), as well as the dark sandy earth at the bottom of Charybdis (*Od.* 12.243).

Kuanos can characterize divine hair: Poseidon's dark locks (*kuanochaites*) (*Il.* 13.563; 14.390; 20.144; Hes. *Theog.* 278), Hector's hair as Achilles drags his corpse

⁹⁶ Lapis lazuli is often joined with other materials in this way, e.g. the cornice above the bronze walls of Alkinoos' palace is formed from lapis lazuli (*Od.* 7.87), or the frequent juxtaposition of lapis lazuli and gold in Mesopotamian and Egyptian art, on which see Moorey (1999) 177; Winter (1999) 49.

⁹⁷ Pl. *Tht.* 155d., trans. Fowler (1921).

⁹⁸ On the rainbow, see James (1996); Fischer (1998) 35–36, 113.

⁹⁹ *kuanostolos* Bion 4–5 *kuanēov de kalumma* in Hom. *Hymn to Demeter* 43.

behind his chariot after killing him (*Il.* 22.401–402),¹⁰⁰ and the brilliance of Zeus' eyebrows as he renders judgment (*Il.* 1.528).¹⁰¹ When Athena boosts Odysseus' appearance before he reveals himself to Telemachos, she makes his skin and hair *keuanos* once more (*Od.* 16.176). *Keuanos* can refer to hue, to brilliance, or to the combination of these qualities. Presumably this passage does not mean that Athena made Odysseus' face a blue-black color, but that she gave his skin the deep shimmer associated with *keuanos* and youth. She makes him something *more* than mortal Odysseus. Telemachos, upon seeing his father thus, wonders if he is a god, and remarks 'even your skin has changed,' a shift that marks the improved Odysseus.

On the one hand skin, or surface, is the vehicle of the beholder's reception of color and the substance against which light and shadow play, but on the other hand it is precisely color's surface-ness that leaves *chrōma* open to indictment by ancient and modern commentators alike. The colored surface is *poikilos*, a quality that is both desirable and unstable (and therefore distrusted), or desirable precisely because of its instability. This passage in the *Odyssey* highlights both the wondrousness and the changeableness of the colored exterior. Greek texts suggest that surface appearance was intended to mark that which it contained. What our earlier exploration of painted sculptural groups revealed is that this *chrōma* penetrates beneath the surface of a monument, either by constituting the physical whole, as in the case of objects sculpted from colored materials, or by relating to the other materials used in an object's construction in order to present a whole. Because we confront *chrōma* as surface, we risk reducing it to the superficial. At the same time, by treating a surface as something distinct from (or less valuable than) the interior to which it relates, one denies the necessity of surface to the constitution of bounded body.

The relationship between color and illusion is one source of the anxiety expressed about color in certain Greek texts.¹⁰² The mistake, however, of later critics has been to take this anxiety as a universal condemnation of color and its effects and to remake the images of classical antiquity in this (false) image. It is a fitting irony that this mistake is possible precisely because of color's changeableness. What Greek texts demonstrate is that color was integral to the material world inhabited by gods and men, and that the pleasures taken in color's effects were similar to those taken by beholders of color in other cultural contexts, such as Mesopotamia. What differentiates the Greek situation from these other cultures is not any lesser ubiquity of color, applied and integrated, but our possession of texts that interrogate the experience of color.

¹⁰⁰ While neither Hector nor Odysseus are divine, Odysseus receives his *keuanos* from the goddess Aphrodite, and Hector his only after death, and it has the effect of both likening him to the gods and distinguishing him from those who still live.

¹⁰¹ *LSJ* suggests that Poseidon's epithet 'dark-haired' may refer to his relationship to the sea, but there is little to support this, for other gods and men are described as having hair of *keuanos*, a term which is used to describe ether, but not water in Homer.

¹⁰² On color and deception, see Duigan (2004) 78–81.

Kosmēsis

Hesiod's account of the creation of Pandora describes the capacity of color to cloak humble materials with a stunning exterior and to render something of inherent evil or danger deceptively beautiful. Her *kosmēsis* at the hands of the gods is fitting punishment for man's theft of fire. Her surface will beguile them and they will fail to notice the disjunction between exterior and interior, between the earth-wrought vessel and its appearance as a blindingly beautiful (first) woman.

This deceptive image provides the form after which all subsequent women are modeled. Hesiod explicitly links the deceptive *kosmēsis* that brings Pandora into being with the character (*ēthos*) of mortal women. Just as the made-up Pandora deceives and conceals, so do the mortal women formed after her. The relationship between cosmetic color and women is one from which the Western tradition has never fully escaped.¹⁰³ The rejection of color in the history of Western art is one part of the suppression of the feminine from its story. Color in the form of cosmetics was a part of the *kosmēsis* of a woman, a part of what completes her, but the necessity of which signaled a basic lack. Color was also one means of linking Easterners with women, and so its expulsion has scrubbed both women and non-Western cultures from the dominant records (I do not mean that the feminine and the Eastern are not put to use in the service of a form-driven history of art, but that both are denied constitutive status).¹⁰⁴

Kosmēsis derives from the verb *kosmeo*, which has an interesting array of related meanings. The prototypical meaning is 'to order or arrange,' and is often used to describe ordering an army.¹⁰⁵ It can also be used more generally to mean arranging or preparing. In other contexts it can mean 'to rule' or 'to hold office' (*ta kosmoumena* means 'orderly institutions [of government]'). Directly relevant to the story of Pandora, *kosmein* can also mean 'to adorn, equip, or dress,' and is most often, but not exclusively, used like this to describe women.¹⁰⁶ Each definition inflects the other in what is known in linguistic circles as 'spreading activation,' in which one linguistic form maps onto multiple senses. Cosmetics can adorn as a form of protection, either amuletic or to increase the number of surface layers between one's interior (or even one's unadorned surface, which might reveal too much about one's interior)

¹⁰³ Brown (1997) 39.

¹⁰⁴ This is true even in Summers (2002) extensive rerouting of the story of art to rest less on the shoulders of classical Greek art and more on traditions developed in Egypt and Mesopotamia and developed in 13th century Islam. The end towards which these earlier eastern traditions are working remains the linear perspective of the Italian Renaissance, the coup de grace in the story of form and line dominating color.

¹⁰⁵ Chantraine (2009) 549, s.v. *kosmeo*; Liddell and Scott (1996) 984–985, s.v. *kosmeo*.

¹⁰⁶ *Kosmein* can also mean to perform funeral rites, specifically to sprinkle the tomb with dust and pour libations to adorn the space of the dead, to complete the orderly (fitting) funeral practices – or even more concretely, to bury someone. *Kosmein* describes men arranged for battle, institutions and persons arranged to govern effectively, women arrayed for view, tombs adorned for the dead and the gods, as well as the dead buried in their tombs.

and those outside. Embellishment acts as protection. Although *kosmein* gives rise to the modern English term cosmetics, *kosmein* was never the exclusive purview of pigments. The gods outfit Pandora (or her clay core) with golden necklaces, fine clothes, and spring flowers as well as a lying nature, and speech. Her *kosmēsis* encompasses both her external adornment and her interior ‘self.’¹⁰⁷ *Kosmēsis* does include adornment through the application of pigments, forging a link between adornment and death. Women have used toxic substances to color their skin.¹⁰⁸

Kosmēsis relates to a host of other words with the root *kosm/-*, including *kosmos*, or universe, and *kosmopoieo*, to make the world or to frame a system of the world.¹⁰⁹ Writing about the *kosmos* of archaic temple architecture, Clemente Marconi has argued ‘that the figures of the building are its *kosmos*, its adornment’ and they adorn both the building and the divinity to whom the building is dedicated.¹¹⁰ He writes:

Kosmos at the very beginning conveyed, to the Greeks, an unmistakable idea of order, both in the material and moral sense. It was from this very idea of material and moral order that the meaning of *kosmos* expanded to signify form, government, decoration, and honor, and it was this idea of order and good regulation that led philosophers, perhaps even as early as Pythagoras, to use the word *kosmos* to designate the order of the world and the universe.¹¹¹

Despite the importance of each individual part of the architectural adornment for the building’s *Gestalt*, the pieces of the building have traditionally been studied as part of typologies and in isolation from the rest of the building.¹¹² Marconi writes:

They generally begin by dismembering the figural decoration of the temple into its components – acroteria, pediments, and friezes, Doric or Ionic. They then discuss how the images of these dismembered parts correspond to the different compositional laws proper to each component and to its original position on the building. The original figural decoration of the temple – the adornment of the divinity – is shattered, dismembered, and torn into pieces.¹¹³

While the original composition (*kosmos*) of the building is shattered, these individual pieces are studied, not as the fragments they are, but as wholes to be compared with

¹⁰⁷ On the abstract gifts with which the gods outfit Pandora, like *charis* and *pothos*, see Faraone (2001) 91.

¹⁰⁸ On deadly forms of *kosmēsis*, see Carastro (forthcoming). A woman’s *kosmēsis* could eventually destroy not just the surface of her self, but the interior of her body as well. The practice of making up the dead for view to temporarily delay the visibility (on the surface of the body) of death despite the arrest of the body’s internal systems brings together *to kosmein* (‘to adorn’) and *to kosmein* (‘to bury’).

¹⁰⁹ Chantraine (2009) 549, 570–1; Marconi (2004) 211.

¹¹⁰ Marconi (2004) 212.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 211.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 212.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

other wholes. Color marks out these pieces, even as it unifies them. Just as *kosmēsis* makes Pandora, and thus women, so can ornamentation (*kosmopoiesis*) make a world.

Pigments and materials construct bodies and images, create or invoke interiors, and act on other bodies in the space that they take up. Color in ancient Mediterranean art is all around us, in the surviving literature, written into passages about materials and light effects, on the surviving monuments in the form of remaining marks, in images incompletely sculpted, in holes for metal attachments, sockets emptied of their inlaid eyes, recovered paint pots, and unworked stone, or variegated earth.¹¹⁴ Colors bear traces of the mud, insect or plant from which they derive, as well as traces of the places from which they emerge.¹¹⁵ Color's materiality traverses geographic, social, and bodily boundaries, and makes and remakes. Words for colors often make this materiality known through language and describe a world animated through color. Colors operate as parts that cohere or seem to cohere into a whole. These part : whole relationships scale our experience of the represented body, from the particles that create a pigment or colored material, to the pieces that form a part of the whole body, and finally to that body as a part of the space into which it is set. Each of these notional wholes coheres through color, but can always return again to its constituent parts, at times even reduced again to particles. The materiality of color in antiquity is also, however, a unifying idea that connects different practices across the wider Mediterranean.

¹¹⁴ Archaeological method depends upon our ability to distinguish between different colors and striations in the earth and to reconstruct these different colors as layers, features and objects of the past.

¹¹⁵ Finlay (2004) attempts to trace the natural histories of the seven hues that make up the traditional rainbow.