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A Cultural History Of Gesture

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

1991

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Bremmer, J. N., & Roodenburg, H. (1991). A Cultural History Of Gesture. s.n.

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1

Walking, standing, and sitting in ancient Greek culture

JAN BREMMER

In his pioneering article on the techniques of the body (see Thomas, p. 3 of this volume) Marcel Mauss also paid attention to ways of moving, while drawing upon his own experience.¹ In the First World War he had noted differences in marching between the French and the English, and after observing nurses during a stay in a New York hospital he realized the influence of the American cinema on the way French girls walked. If he had lived today he would surely have noted the curious way in which models have started to move on the catwalk in recent years and the abolishment of the goose step by the East German Ministry of Defence in the summer of 1990, only months before the German reunification. Admittedly, in his interest in ways of walking Mauss had been pre-empted by Balzac, who, like other nineteenth-century authors, was fascinated by the physiognomical theories of Lavater (1741–1801). In 1833, he published an entertaining treatise, *Théorie de la démarche* ('Theory of walking'), which contains many perceptive comments which are still valuable.² Balzac's contribution, though, has largely been forgotten and Mauss's investigations have hardly received the attention they deserve; indeed, in most of the subjects he enumerated research has still to begin. In this chapter I would like to follow up this interest in ways of moving and concentrate

both on the manner in which the ancient Greeks walked, stood, and sat and upon the values they attached to these body techniques.³

WALKING

The subject of walking is less strange than would appear at first sight. Homer had already noted the hero's stride, and the gait of males attracted interest all through antiquity until the times of the anonymous late Latin physiognomist and Ambrose, who succinctly formulated the importance of physiognomical interest: *habitus mentis enim in corporis statu cernitur*.⁴ Unfortunately, the interest of our sources is limited to the upper classes and their public *personae*. Nowhere do we even get an inkling as to how males and females moved in private. As is so often the case, this aspect of ancient private life belongs to a world which is irretrievably lost.

Let us start our analysis with some passages from Homer, our oldest literary source. When Paris challenges the Greeks to a duel in order to decide whether he can keep the beautiful Helen, he arrives on the battlefield armed to the teeth with a bow, sword, and two spears. Menelaus, Helen's deceived husband, sees him approaching 'with long strides (*makra bibas*) in front of the throng' (*Iliad* 3.22). The poet clearly draws the picture of an impressive warrior whose gait denotes powerful movement in order to impress the enemy. In other words, Paris' gait belongs to that category of behaviour that modern ethologists call *Imponierverhalten*.

Despite his being heavily armed and showing off, Paris immediately loses courage when he faces Menelaus and is only saved from death by the intervention of his protectress Aphrodite. When his brother Hector in turn challenges the Greeks, he is confronted by the huge, terrifying Ajax who rushes forward 'with a smile on his grim face, and with his feet below he went with long strides, brandishing his far-shadowing lance. And the Greeks rejoiced when they saw him' (7.211–4). In this passage too the long strides belong to the picture of the impressive warrior whose arrival on the battlefield heartens his comrades.

We find similar gaits in the battle for the ships of the Greeks.

After Achilles had withdrawn into his tent in anger, the situation became critical for the Greeks, as 'the Trojans pressed forward together and Hector led them on with long strides.' The Trojan hero is preceded by Apollo who is even more impressive, waving the terrible aegis 'which Hephaestus gave Zeus to carry to terrify men' (15.306–10). In this case also, Hector and Apollo are pictured as being frightening leaders and warriors whom it would be extremely hard to resist. On the Greek side, Ajax remains as a kind of last bulwark 'going about the many decks of the fast ships with long strides, and his voice reached to heaven' (15.676, 686). Somewhat later in the same battle, Homer even seems to use the expression 'with long strides' as a kind of shorthand depiction of impressive behaviour when he says: 'Ajax was the first to challenge him taking long strides' (13.809; similarly 16.534).

In the *Odyssey* the expression occurs twice. After Polyphemus has been blinded by Odysseus, he carefully searches among his sheep in order to prevent Odysseus and his comrades from escaping. When he notices that his favourite ram is the last one to come out he wonders what has happened as it was always 'the first to graze on the fresh flowers of the meadows with long strides' (9.449–50): the ram as the perfect commander. Our final example is Achilles. When Odysseus had finished speaking to him in the underworld, 'the soul of Achilles went away with long strides' (11.539). It is a fine poetic detail that the last glimpse of Greece's greatest hero shows him in all his might and glory.

In Homer, then, walking with long strides was the sign of the great commander who wanted to assert himself on the battlefield. In the later part of the Archaic age (c.800–500 BC), Greek battle tactics were completely transformed by the introduction of the phalanx, a formation in which the troops had to stay together in one line. In this disposition there was no longer room for heroes asserting themselves by striding ahead. So it can hardly be chance that in the Classical period (c.500–300 BC) virtually nothing more is heard concerning this gait of males. The only time it is still mentioned is in Aristophanes' *Birds* where the cock 'parades with big strides like the Persian king' (486). The Persian king was considered to be larger than life and was evidently supposed to walk accordingly.⁵ Yet this particular gait was not completely forgotten, as in the early Hellenistic pseudo-Aristotelian *Physiognomy* the most

perfect male type, the leonine type, moves slowly (cf. below) 'with a long stride' (809a), and the *makrobamon*, or 'the man with the long stride', is seen as an effective operator (813a). This quality recurs in the second-century AD Smyrnaean sophist Polemon, whose physiognomic work only survives in an Arabic version – and that accessible only in a Latin translation! According to him, the *amplitudo gressus* denotes *fides*, sinceritas, *magna efficacia*, animus *elatus* ('noble mind') *et irae absentia*. These moral qualities are far removed from the heroic world, but the origin of the explanation can still be seen, albeit through a glass darkly.⁶

If the heroes of the Archaic age were not on the battlefield, were they still asserting themselves through their gait? We can probably give a positive answer to this question, as the seventh-century poet Archilochus (fr.114) sings: 'I don't like the great general, walking with wide strides,' / boasting with his locks, his moustache shaven.' Evidently, in peacetime the 'big men' walked in a way nowadays perhaps best paralleled in the macho way of walking of the hero in the Western. And like so many other valued qualities, this gait found its reflection in early Greek onomastics as well, since males could be called Eurybatos, or 'He who walks with wide steps', the best known example being the traitor who caused the defeat of the famous Lydian king Croesus against the Persians in the middle of the sixth century."

In fifth-century Athens, the leading cultural centre of Greece, the development into a democracy had marginalized the political position of the aristocracy. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that walking with wide strides disappeared into the background although it did not disappear completely. When in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (422 BC) a son tries to teach his father to walk in an upper-class manner, he still advises him 'to swagger luxuriously, with legs apart' (1169). Yet most aristocrats must have felt the pressure for less ostentatious behaviour and therefore chose to distinguish themselves in a different way.⁹ It is now the ability to walk quietly and slowly which comes to the fore, although Athenian comedy (Phrynichus fr. 10 K.–A.) ridiculed a timid walk. When in Plato's *Charmides* (159A,B) Socrates asks Charmides, Plato's maternal uncle and a member of the Athenian elite, to define *sophrosyne* or 'temperance and chastity', he answers that he thought it was 'doing all things in an orderly and quiet fashion – for example, walking in the street.'

Naturally, Plato could be importing contemporary standards in his picture of his uncle, who died in 403 BC, but Plutarch in his biography of Pericles (5.1) also praises the *praotes*, or 'gentleness, unhurriedness', of the politician's gait, and a character in Sophocles' *Thyestes* (fr. 257) says: 'Come on, let's go quickly. For just haste never shall be the subject of reproach.' Moreover, it seems not impossible that this quiet way of walking went along with more quiet gestures in general. From the late sixth century onwards, Athenian aristocracy had been developing a growing control of emotions and refinement of manners. And just as ancient Egyptian art contrasts Egyptian self-control with foreign lack of restraint and in sixteenth-century Europe northerners start to mock southerners for their exuberant gesturing (Burke, Ch. 4 in this volume), so fifth-century tragedy contrasts Greek self-restraint with foreign abandonment. It is therefore hard to believe that this development had no influence on gestures in general."

The slow gait of the Athenian aristocrat must have struck a happy medium, as Athenian comedy consistently mocked those males who used to walk around in long tunics as being effeminate or passive homosexuals: apparently, they walked too slowly." On the other hand, the fourth-century orator Demosthenes (37.52, 55; 45.77) surely did not intend to praise his opponents by mentioning that they always walked fast. These Demosthenic orations (32 and 45) are particularly interesting because they concern the walks of people who have good reason to be conscious of prejudice against them and to fear that others will use their personal habits as grounds for increasing hostility against them. In both cases, the persons attacked fall short of the Athenian ideal of the leisured, open, and friendly citizen; it is only an arrogant man, according to Theophrastus' *Characters* (24.8), who has no time for conversation when he is walking in the street. Understandably, then, Aristotle (*Ethica Nicomachea* 4.3.34) states that to walk slowly is the sign of the *megalopsychos*, or 'great-souled' man. The words of Alexis (fr. 263 Kock, tr. C. B. Gulick), the most productive fourth-century author of comedies, sum up well the importance of the proper gait in Athens:

This is one trait which I regard worthy of no gentleman – to walk in the streets with careless gait when one may do it gracefully. For

this nobody exacts any toll from us, and one need not bestow any honour in order to receive it again from others. Rather, to them who walk with dignity comes full meed of honour, while they who see it have pleasure, and life has its grace. What man who pretends to have any sense would not win for himself such a reward?

The idea recurs in the physiognomists where the *kosmios*, or 'honest, orderly', citizen is slow in his movements (Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomy* 807b; Adamantius, p. 413 Foerster). In fact, in late antiquity an orderly (*kosmion*), quiet (*hemeron*, *hesychon*) and leisurely (*scholaion*) but not sluggish gait is the cultural ideal of pagans and Christians alike. Ambrose put it well in his handbook on the duty of the clergy, *De officiis* (1.18.74f), 'I do not think that it is becoming to walk hurriedly . . . [but] a commendable gait is where there is the appearance of authority, the assurance of weight and the mark of dignity, and one which has a calm, collected bearing.' It is this calm, unhurried gait, which will be the mark of the gentleman in Rome (see Graf, p. 47 of this volume), the middle ages and early modern Europe (see Burke, p. 77, and Roodenburg, p. 159, in this volume)."

Let us now for a moment move to the gait of women. In contrast to the male way of moving, women in the Archaic age apparently walked with very small steps (see Thomas, p. 5 of this volume). At least, when the goddesses Hera and Athena appeared before Troy to help the Greeks, they 'resembled in their steps the timorous doves' – exactly the opposite of the striding heroes.¹³ As women in ancient Greece were so often contrasted with men, and as socially disapproved behaviour could be termed 'womanish' by the Greek males," we can probably discover further features of proper male walking by paying attention to similarities between females and effeminate males.

A number of females in good spirits are said to have a *habros* foot or walk in a *habros* way; the same expression is used of the Persians, Lydians, and young Ganymede, the wine-pourer of Zeus. Only once, in Euripides' *Medea* (829–30), is the word used of adult male Athenians when they are said to walk *habros* through the air, but it is never found in relationship to individual adults. The word is usually translated with 'dainty, delicate, luxurious', but late Byzantine lexicographers explain it as 'light'. Even though the latter

explanation is inspired by semantical rather than phonological knowledge – *habros* as *a-baros*, or 'without weight' – it seems to point in the right direction.¹⁵ The word is clearly used for people who are, or should be, in extremely happy circumstances: Lydians and Persians were notorious for their life of luxury. Apparently, they did not have to put down a masculine step but could, so to speak, tiptoe through life.¹⁶ On the other hand, the Greek ideal appears from names such as *Iobates*, or 'He with the powerful step', and *Deinobates*, or 'He who walks with impressive step'. The Church fathers also stressed that the proper Christian male step had to be powerful and steadfast. In the Classical age such admonitions would surely have been superfluous.¹⁷

Some women not only walked on their toes but also wiggled their hips. In the sex-segregated society of ancient Greece it was of course inconceivable that individual decent women would parade on the streets in such a way, so it comes as no surprise that the sixth-century poet *Anacreon* used the expression 'walking in a wiggling manner' of courtesans (fr. 458) and also called the female followers of *Dionysos* 'the hip-swaying *Bassarids*' (fr. 461) – the sexual behaviour of these followers being rather suspect as *Euripides*' *Bacchae* clearly illustrates.¹⁸ Apparently, some wealthy Athenians also moved along in such a way, as we learn from *Aristophanes* that a wiggling of the behind – the term used, *sauloproktiao*, contains the word for lizard, an animal that flicks its tail – was considered to be 'the gait of the rich'; perhaps similarly, the Chinese mandarins used to waddle along.¹⁹ Now in Greece it was only a small step from effeminacy to the accusation of passive homosexuality – the ultimate in effeminate behaviour – and this step was indeed taken. Rather surprisingly, 'wiggling' is also used of the satyrs who were sometimes pictured as engaging in homosexual behaviour, just as the *kinaidos*, the 'passive homosexual' but also the 'wagtail'(!), could be recognized by his 'hip-swaying' according to Hellenistic physiognomists.²⁰

Mauss, in his essay on the techniques of the body, related that he could recognize a girl from a convent as she would walk with her fists closed. And he could still remember his teacher shouting at him: 'Idiot! why do you walk around the whole time with your hands flapping wide open.' How did the Greek male walk in this respect? We can only approach this aspect in a circumspect way as

we have no direct sources, but a passage in Aeschylus' *Prometheus*, where the protagonist of the play defiantly speaks to Zeus' messenger, will help us on the way: 'never think that through terror at Zeus' will I shall become womanish and shall entreat my greatly hated enemy with hands upturned in a woman's way to release me from these bonds' (1002–6). Why would it be womanish to be with hands upturned?

The answer must probably be looked for in the period before Aeschylus when to be with hands upturned would have denoted a man without weapons, that is a man who had symbolically abdicated his manhood. It is in line with this interpretation that the passive homosexual carried his hands upturned and flabbily according to Hellenistic physiognomics,²¹ and the orator Dio Chrysostom (c.40–115) inveighs against certain citizens of dubious sexual reputation that they converse 'with upturned palms' (*Orationes* 33.52). The notion of a symbolic abdication of manhood may also explain why the Greeks stretched their arms to heaven with their palms turned toward heaven when they prayed: a diminution of status is a universal feature of prayer,²² the modern(?) gesture of raising the hands when faced with an armed opponent stands in the same tradition. Although none of these testimonies helps us to understand precisely how the Greek male carried his hands while walking, they all point to the weight attached to a proper bearing regarding this aspect. In this respect, it is also noteworthy that Spartan youths, like their Athenian contemporaries, were obliged to keep their hands within their garments. In Greece, the hand was considered the organ for action and therefore could only be shown by real males.²³

We are left with two more important aspects of walking. First, where and how did the walker look? The question may seem odd to us but evidently not to the ancient Greeks, as gaze was subject to social norms. In public, Spartan youths were only allowed to look towards the ground, and Diogenes the Cynic did not permit the sons of his master to look about them in the streets; similarly, younger Japanese were (still?) not supposed to look higher than the breastbone of the elder. The gaze of a modest maiden should be downcast, as is the case with the modern Greek Sarakatsani, but it is typically the manly Amazon who carries the name Antiope, or 'She who looks straight into the face.' And as the lowering of the eyes

seems to be a universal sign of submission, it is unsurprising that ashamed males also lowered the eyes.²⁴ Moreover, as rolling eyes denoted the madman and those in despair, squinting eyes treacherous persons, and looking around the passive homosexual, we may safely assume that a 'proper' male looked steadfastly at the world.''

Finally, the head. According to the sixth-century(?) poet *Theognis* (535–6) the heads of slaves were never straight but always crooked and their necks oblique, the terms 'straight' and 'crooked' being not only used in a physical but also, as is so often the case, in a moral sense. The downcast eyes of youths and maidens also suggest that they did not carry their heads upright and the same applied, apparently, to adult women. By contrast, therefore, free males must have kept their heads erect, as is also shown by the fact that it was noted when males hung their head in shame, despair, or mourning. And just as some rich citizens did not walk correctly (see p. 21), some did not keep their heads upright but let them incline to the side – according to the physiognomists a sign of passive homosexuality and androgyny.²⁶

In classical and later times, then, the proper male behaviour in public walking required a leisurely but not sluggish gait, with steps that were not too small, with the hands firmly held and not upturned, the head erect and stable, the eyes openly, steadfastly, and firmly fixed on the world.

STANDING

In general, we may suppose that the requirements for walking also applied to standing, but unfortunately, in this area preliminary studies are totally lacking. It is significant, however, that in Homer falling heroes are sometimes compared to trees being felled. As parallels in ancient Celtic and Russian poetry show, the comparison implies that the heroes stood firmly and proudly on the battlefield. The idea was still alive at the beginning of the fifth century, as the following anecdote by Herodotus (9.74) illustrates. During the battle of the Greeks against the Persians at Plataeae (479 BC) the Athenian veteran Sophanes carried an anchor fastened to his belt with a bronze chain. Whenever he came into contact with the enemy, he would anchor himself in order to prevent their attacks

forcing him back. According to another, and perhaps more credible, version of the story he only bore the device of an anchor on his shield, which he kept continually spinning round and round. The same insistence on standing firmly occurs in the poem of Archilochus on the great commander, whose beginning we have already quoted; it continues: 'but I would like to have a short one and bow-legged to behold, [but] firmly standing on his feet, full of heart.' The poem also teaches us that the legs should be straight. Comedy mocked those Athenians who had misshapen calves. Bow-legged people were dim-witted according to Aristotle (in Anonymus Latinus 86), whereas according to Anacreon (fr. 473) 'knock-kneed' males were cowards and according to the physiognomists passive homosexuals.²⁷

With another aspect of standing we move onto firmer ground. When we look at early Greek statues we cannot but be struck by the fact that before the end of the seventh century statues portraying gods (with the exception of Zeus) or heroes seated are rare, whereas sitting goddesses are perfectly ordinary; yet Homer very often describes meals at which the adults were sitting at the table, or assemblies in which the heroes sat down to confer. Sitting in itself, then, did not carry any stigma, but evidently it was the standing position alone which portrayed the hero in all his glory. Moreover, the heroes, when portrayed, only wear short tunics or hardly any clothes at all. Evidently, they were very keen to show themselves in their full physical power.²⁸

Was there any difference in the way in which men and women stood? In modern Western society, when standing, men in general take up more space than women by, for example, keeping their legs further apart. As Greek women walked with smaller steps, they probably also took up less space when standing. However, the only women Greek males would observe standing were the cheaper prostitutes, who had to pose in front of their brothels. In present-day Algeria prostitutes break the rule of space for their gender by assuming masculine poses, such as spreading their arms out or standing with the legs wide. Would the same have been the case in ancient Greece?²⁹

The importance of standing started to decline in the later

Archaic age, around 600 BC, as we now find an increasing number of statues of sitting gods. At the same time the aristocrats started to recline at dinner and allowed themselves to be pictured in this position while dressed in long tunics – the first signs of the gradual abandonment of the old warrior ethos. The custom of reclining, which had been taken over from the Orient, also meant a devaluation of the posture of sitting at the symposium, as now females and youths were allowed to sit next to reclining males.³⁰ In all these cases, though, sitting took place on proper seats. Sitting on the ground was a rather different matter, as we will try to show next.

SITTING

Let us start with the beggar. The Greek word for hare, a cowering animal, is *ptox*, a word closely related to that for beggar, *ptochos*, which literally means someone who crouches or cringes. Although the Greek beggar often sat on the ground, as of course beggars do all over the world, his low position was intensified, so to speak, by cringing as well. In this case, sitting suggests a posture of self-abasement, which aims at evoking feelings of pity.³¹

We find similar postures of inferiority in supplication, a ritual which frequently occurred in war-torn Greece. Already in Homer we can clearly see the features which suggest a total self-abasement. The suppliant comes forward with his hands empty and outstretched (cf. 'Walking', this chapter), throws away his weapons, and crouches or kneels before the supplicated. Suppliants could even approach their opponents' wives – a sign of symbolic abandonment of manhood. In other cases, though, the suppliant did not enter into an immediate face-to-face relationship but sat down by a place which guaranteed his safety, such as an altar of a god.³² Another possibility would be the hearth of a house or that of a city, which in Greece was its sacred centre symbolizing the solidarity of the community. Sitting by the hearth as suppliant, then, suggested an appeal for integration into a new group but, as with the beggar, such a wish could only be fulfilled in a manner which, as the best modern student of Greek supplication has expressed it, 'inhibits aggressive reaction by a ritualised act of self-humiliation'.³³

Like suppliants, slaves and brides were also incorporated into their new households by a ritual which involved sitting near the hearth, though these categories may not have cringed. A similar symbolism could be found in Greek mysteries, where the candidate had to sit on a fleece, with veiled head and in complete silence. In all these cases an important transition was dramatized by the assumption of a humble posture before being raised to a new status.³⁴

Our final example of ritual sitting concerns mourning. In the *Iliad* (19.344f), after Hector has killed Patroclus, Achilles 'keeps sitting in front of the ships with upright horns mourning his dear friend'. But when he hears this terrible news for the first time, his reaction is more violent. He pours ashes over his head, scratches his face, puts ashes over his clothes, pulls out his hair and rolls in the dust (18.23–7). And when Iris, the messenger of the gods, finds Priam after the death of Hector, he is rolling on the ground with manure on his head and neck (24.161–3). Ajax, too, in grief after his madness, 'sits quietly without food, without drink' (Sophocles, *Ajax* 324f). As in our other examples – begging, supplication, rites of integration, and initiation – sitting or lying on the ground is part of a complex of gestures which all aim at a total self-abasement of the subject. It is therefore not surprising that when satyrs are portrayed masturbating – an activity typical of slaves and rustics who cannot afford to pay for nice girls – they are often sitting.³⁵

The presentation of the self in public, then, was often acted out according to the contrast of high (upright carriage) and low (sitting, prostration); the positive side of 'upright' in this contrast is also shown by the fact that the Greek word *orthos* ('upright') and its cognates frequently carry the meaning 'prosperity', 'uprightness', or 'restoration'. The opposition high–low is of course indicative of a society with strong hierarchies. In a democratic world, both high (thrones, higher seats for directors, etc.) and low (bowing, curtsying) are becoming less and less acceptable.³⁶

CONCLUSION

1 In ancient Greek culture the body served as an important location for self-identification and demonstration of authority. By its gait, the Greek upper-class not only distinguished itself from supposedly effeminate peoples such as Persians and Lydians, but also expressed its dominance over weaker sections of society such as youths and women. And although I have found no literary evidence that slaves could not display an upright carriage either, it seems important to note that on vases and reliefs they are regularly portrayed as sitting in a squatting position or as being of a smaller stature; significantly, on the vases their position is sometimes occupied by dwarfs. The passive homosexual also played an increasingly important role in this process of Greek male self-identification, as time and again we have seen that those males who did not comply with the rules of the proper gait were designated as effeminate and passive homosexuals.³⁷ The same preoccupation was prevalent in ancient Rome, where the accusation of an effeminate gait belonged to the stock-in-trade of everyday invective against political opponents or religious deviants, such as the followers of the Phrygian Magna Mater. This aspect, although not completely absent, is a major difference from modern Greek concepts of honour and masculinity, which are much more preoccupied with heterosexuality and a possible domination by women. It is undoubtedly the existence of institutionalized pederasty in the Classical period and its gradual disintegration which is the cause of this difference.)"

2 The origin of the particular Greek gait probably lies before the Archaic age when every free male carried arms and continually had to be prepared to fight for himself in order to preserve his reputation and possessions. In such a society it is of cardinal importance not only to be physically strong but also to look like a real man. Such a situation explains, I suggest, the upright carriage, the steadfast look – also important in battle – and the long stride. Similarly, among the modern Greek Sarakatsani whose value system originated in times when they were not yet dominated by a central authority, the ideal youth is handsome, manly, narrow-

hipped, and nimble, and at public occasions such as weddings he will be noticed because of his upright carriage.³⁹

3 In the course of the Archaic age important changes took place in Greek society. Many communities became urbanized and the aristocracy lost its prominent position on the battlefield. Both developments will have contributed to the refinement of manners and control of emotions I have already signalled. By their open display of self-control the elite distinguished itself once again from the masses, but now in the public sphere of the city. And it can hardly be chance that we first hear of an unhurried gait in the case of Pericles, the leading politician in Athens from 460 to 430 BC, since he seems to have been particularly attentive to his public image: Plutarch relates in his biography of Pericles (7.2) that he withdrew from weddings precisely at the moment that the real festivities started, as he considered them beneath his dignity. The fact that war was professionalized in Greece in the fourth century and permanently removed from the hands of the urban elite may explain why the unhurried gait remained the ideal all through antiquity: constructing and maintaining a public body was one of the means by which the elite upheld its superiority. The rise of Christianity meant no significant break in this respect, as important Church fathers, such as Clement of Alexandria and John Chrysostom, were steeped in the Greek cultural tradition and followed upper-class pagan Greek ideals in their prescriptions of the proper Christian gait.⁴⁰

4 We come to our final point. In March 1530 Desiderius Erasmus published a small treatise, *De civilitate morum puerilium libellus*, in which he proposed a new ideal of comportment for children by raising the threshold of modesty. His book was an enormous success, and in the sixteenth century alone it passed through eighty Latin editions. Regarding the gait, Erasmus stated that it should be steady but not hasty (1.28: *incessus sit non fractus nec praeceps*). The chapter on gait, though, is only one of a series of prescriptions regarding parts of the body, such as the head, the arms, and the voice. What they all have in common is that they aim at controlling bodily expressions and, not surprisingly, frequently correspond with the rules we have discovered.⁴¹ Erasmus's prescriptions fitted the early modern civilizing process but were hardly invented by him. As he knew the Classics by heart and had

edited Ambrose's *De officiis* in 1527, we may safely assume that many of his rules came straight from antiquity. Ambrose's observations on the proper gait derive from Cicero's *De officiis* (1.131), who in turn derives his material largely from the Stoic Greek philosopher Panaetius, the Stoics being known for their orderly gait.⁴² In short, it seems very likely that Erasmus's prescriptions on gait and much else ultimately derive from Classical and Hellenistic Greece!

NOTES

For information and comments I am most grateful to Nick Fisher and Professors Adolf Kohnken and Simon R. Slings.

- 1 M. Mauss, 'Les techniques du corps', *Journal de psychologie normale et pathologique*, 39 (1935), pp. 271–93, reprinted in his *Sociologie et anthropologie* (Paris, 1950), pp. 365–86 — *Sociology and Psychology* (London, 1979), pp. 97–123. But note also the caustic remark of the late Erving Goffman, quoted in Y. Winkin, 'Entretien avec Erving Goffman', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 54 (1984, 85–7), p. 85: 'A côté de ses observations, il n'y a rien dans l'article de Mauss'. On Mauss see R. di Donato (ed.), *Gli uomini, la società, la civiltà. Uno studio intorno all' opera di Marcel Mauss* (Pisa, 1985). Abolishment: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 August 1990.
- 2 *Oeuvres complètes de Honoré de Balzac* (40 vols, Paris, 1912–40), vol. 39, 613–43 (I owe this reference to Benjo Maso). Physiognomical interest: M. Dumont, 'Le succès mondain d'une fausse science: la physiognomie de Johann Kaspar Lavater', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 54 (1984), pp. 2–30, esp. pp. 29f.
- 3 As regards the archaic and classical Greek material I am much indebted to B. Fehr, *Bewegungsweisen und Verhaltensideale* (Bad Bramstedt, 1979), a pioneering study unduly neglected by the classical world, even though my approach is different and covers a much longer period.
- 4 Ambrose, *De officiis* 1.18.71, probably remembered by the early medieval Othlo de Saint-Emmeran, *Liber proverbiorum*, Patrologia Latina (ed. Migne) (PL)146.312C: *Gestu corporis habitus demonstratur mentis*. I quote the Anonymus Latinus and Ambrose from the

- following new editions: J. André, *Anonyme Latin. Traiti de Physiognomie* (Paris, 1981), and M. Testard, *Saint Ambrose. Les devoirs*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1984), who notes that the conventional, longer title of the book, *De officiis ministrorum*, is not based on any manuscript tradition (pp. 49–52).
- 5 Persian king: E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian. Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 95–6. It may also be significant that Herodotus transcribed the Persian name Bagapata as Megabates, or 'He with the big step', whereas Ctesias (29.9) gives the more correct form Bagapates; cf. R. Schmitt, 'Medisches und persisches Sprachgut bei Herodot', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 117 (1967), pp. 119–45, esp. pp. 130, 142–3.
 - 6 Polemon, in R. Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomonici* (2 vols, Leipzig, 1893), vol. 1, pp. 260–2; similarly the fourth-century Adamantius (ibid. p. 398) and Anonymus Latinus 75, in André, *Anonyme Latin*, who both drew on Polemon. For the reception of the classical physiognomical treatises in the Middle Ages see J.-C. Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1990), pp. 233–4.
 - 7 In my interpretation of this term, *diapleghmenon*, I follow V. Pisani, 'Sulla radice PLIX-', *Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoires orientales et slaves*, 6 (1938), pp. 181–92.
 - 8 Eurybatos (– as / es): D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting of the Archaic Period* (Berkeley, Calif., and London, 1988), p. 575, no. 71; Herodotus 6.92, 9.75 (an early fifth-century Aeginetan); Thucydides 1.47.1 (a fifth-century Corcyrean); Demosthenes 18.24 and H. Wankel ad loc. (the betrayer of Croesus). For the name see A. Heubeck, 'Iolaos und Verwandtes', *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft*, 48 (1987), pp. 149–66, esp. p. 159, but note that Homer (*Iliad* 1.320, 2.184, 11.127; *Odyssey* 19.247) uses the name exclusively for heralds and evidently interpreted it as 'Broad-ranger'. Typically, the name no longer occurs after the second century BC.
 - 9 Cf. P. Bourdieu, *La distinction* (Paris, 1979); note also the popular and perceptive R. Girtler, *Die feinen Leute* (Frankfurt and New York, 1989).
 - 10 For the growth in self-control, as yet uncharted by Greek historiography, see the preliminary observations in my 'Adolescents, *Symposion*, and Pederasty', in O. Murray (ed.), *Symptica* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 135–48, esp. pp. 143–4. Egypt: W. Helck, 'Die Ägypter und die Fremden', *Saeculum*, 15 (1964), pp. 103–14, esp. p. 105. Tragedy: Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, pp. 130–3.
 - 11 Cf. Plutarch, *Moralia* 317C, who contrasts the *praon* gait of Virtue with the hurried step of Fate; the same expression recurs in Plutarch's

- (*Fabius* 17.7) description of the Roman statesman Fabius after the Roman defeat at Cannae, and in Diogenes Laertius' life of the fourth-century philosopher Heraclides (5.86). Long tunics: Eupolis fr. 104, R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetae comici Graeci* (Berlin and New York, 1983ff), hereafter 'K.-A.'; Archippus fr. 45, T. Kock, *Comicorum Atticorum fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1880–8), hereafter 'Kock'; Ephippus fr. 19 K.-A.; Anaxilas fr. 18 Kock; note also Demosthenes 19.314.
- 12 Pagans: Galen, *Pro puero epileptico consilium*, p. 5.18, ed. Keil, Lucian, *Timarion* 54.5; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 6.10. Christians: Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.11.73.4; Basil, *De ieiunio* 1.9 (Patrologia Graeca (ed. Migne) (PG) 31.177); Gregory Nazianzen, *Adversos Eunomianos* 5.24, *Orationes* 22.4 (PG 35.1137); John Chrysostom, PG 52.772, PG 59.677. Not sluggish: Basil, *Epistulae* 2.6, *Sermones* 20.1 (PG 32.1353); Pseudo-Macarius, *Sermones* 1.3.3, ed Berthold. Middle ages: Schmitt *La raison des gestes*, p. 94; add Dante, *Purgatorio* 3.10–11, *Inferno* 4.112, 15.121–4, 16.17–18 (with thanks to Robert Parker).
- 13 *Iliad* 5.778, largely repeated in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 114 for the goddesses Iris and Eileithuia. Achilles, when residing in women's clothes at the court of King Lycomedes of Scyros 'walks like a maiden' (Bion 2.19f); also the close friends whom Theseus took along to Crete 'in drag' had learned to walk like maidens (Plutarch, *Theseus* 23).
- 14 'Womanish': H. Herter, 'Effeminatus', in *Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum* (1959), vol. 4, pp. 619–50.
- 15 Females: Euripides, *Medea* 1164, *Trojan Women* 506, *Helen* 1528, *Iphigeneia at Aulis* 614; note also Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.11.68.1. Ganymede: Euripides, *Trojan Women* 820. Persians: Aeschylus, *Persians* 1073; Bacchylides 3.48. Lydians: Aeschylus fr. 60; Herodotus 1.55. Lexica: Orion 3.11 (ed. Sturz); *Etymologicum Magnum Auctum* and *Symeonis Etymologicum* (ed. Lasserre and Livrada) s.v. *habros*.
- 16 Luxurious Lydians: D. Curiazi, *Museum Criticum*, 19–20 (1984–5), pp. 137, 154f. Persians: H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 'Decadence in the empire or decadence in the sources', in *Achaemenid History*, ed. eadem (Leiden, 1987), vol. 1, pp. 33–45; Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian*, pp. 126–9; P. Briant, 'Histoire et idéologie. Les grecs et la "décadence perse"', *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque*, ed. M.-M. Mactoux and E. Geny (3 vols, Paris, 1988–9), vol. 2, pp. 34–47. Note that the term is also used by Telecleides (fr. 25 K.-A.) to characterize the happy life in Athens in the earlier part of the fifth century.
- 17 Iobates: Hesiod fr. 43 (a).88, cf. Heubeck, 'Iolaos und Verwandtes'. Deinobates: *Inscriptiones Graecae* 11.2516. Church fathers: Gregory Nazianzen, *Orationes* 6.2 (PG 35.724), 22.4 (PG 35.1137).

- 18 Cf. E. R. Dodds on Euripides, *Bacchae* 222–3; H. S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion* (2 vols, Leiden, 1990–1), vol. 1, pp. 159–60.
- 19 Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1169, 1171–3 and Scholion ad loc.; for related terms see *diasauloumenon* (fr. 635 K.-A.; *Etymologicum Magnum*, 270.38) and *saikonisai* (fr. 882 K.-A.; note also Hermippus fr. 5 West); Hesychius s.v. *diasalakonison*, *diasauloumenon*; Suda s.v. *diasalakonisai*; Eupolis fr. 176 K.-A. may imply the same hip-swaying. Mandarins: C. Thubron, *Behind the Wall. A Journey through China*, 2nd edn (Harmondsworth, 1988), p. 49.
- 20 Satyrs: Euripides, *Cyclops* 40; for satyrs as passive homosexuals see F. Lissarrague, 'The sexual life of satyrs', in *Before Sexuality. The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. D. M. Halperin et al. (Princeton, 1990), pp. 53–81, esp. pp. 64–5. *Kinaidoi*: J. J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire* (London, 1990), pp. 45–70. 'Hip-swaying': Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica* 808a. For the physiognomists and homosexuals, see M. W. Gleason, 'The semiotics of gender: physiognomy and self-fashioning in the second century C.E.', in *Before Sexuality*, pp. 389–415. For dancing like a wagtail see F. Naerebout, *The Dance in Ancient Greece. Three Studies* (Diss. Leiden, 1991).
- 21 Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica* 808a; note also that according to the Anonymus Latinus (98), in André, *Anonyme Latin*, the androgynous man *resupinatas plerumque manus praemovet*; similarly Adamantius, in Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomoni*, p. 416.
- 22 Greek prayer: *Iliad* 5.174, 6.257, 7.130, 24.301; *Odyssey* 9.294, 13.355; Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes* 172; Bacchylides 11.100, 13.138, 15.45; Herodotus 9.61; Euripides, *Helen* 1095; G. Neumann, *Gesten und Gebarden in der griechischen Kunst* (Berlin, 1965), pp. 78–81; F. T. van Straten, 'Did the Greeks kneel before their Gods?', *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving*, 49 (1974), pp. 159–89, esp. p. 161.
- 23 Spartan youths: Xenophon, *Lakedaimonion politeia* 3.4. Athens: K. Polaschek, *Untersuchungen zu griechischen Mantelstatuen* (Diss. Berlin, 1969), pp. 16f. Hand: E. Fraenkel on Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 1357.
- 24 Youths: Xenophon, *Lakedaimonion politeia* 3.4; Diogenes Laertius 6.27 (Diogenes). Japan: M. Argyle and M. Cook, *Gaze and Mutual Gaze* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 77. Maidens: F. Bomer on Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.681. Sarakatsani: J. K. Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage* (Oxford, 1964), p. 287. Universal sign: Argyle and Cook, *Gaze and Mutual Gaze*, p. 30. Antiope: *Lexicon*

- Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Munich and Zurich, 1981), vol. 1 s.v. Antiope II (literary and iconographic evidence).
- 25 Lowering the eyes: Sappho fr. 137; Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 528, 1385; Euripides, *Heracles* 1199, *Orestes* 460f. Rolling eyes: J. Kamerbeek on Sophocles, *Ajax* 447; D. Page on Euripides, *Medea* 1174; add Euripides, *Orestes* 837, cf. L. Koenen and P. J. Sijpesteijn, 'Euripides, *Orestes* 835–46 (P. Mich. Inv. 3735)', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, 77 (1989), pp. 261–6. Squinting: Eustathius on *Iliad* 2.217. Passive homosexual: Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica* 808a; Adamantius, in Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomonici*, p. 415; Anonymus Latinus 98, in André, *Anonyme Latin*. The physiognomists pay much attention to the eyes (Anonymus Latinus 20, in André: *Nunc de oculis disputandum est, ubi summa omnis physiognomoniae constituta est*), cf. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica* 811b; Polemon, in Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomonici*, pp. 106–70; Adamantius, in Foerster, pp. 305–47; Anonymus Latinus, in André, 20–43.
- 26 Adult women: Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 2.1.22. Despair, mourning, shame: Euripides *Ion* 582; Aristophanes, *Birds* 1609; Pausanias 10.30.3 and 31.5; Neumann, *Gesten und Gebarden*, pp. 135f, 140. Rich: Archippos fr. 45 Kock; Dio Chrysostom 4.112. Passive homosexuals: an unknown comedian quoted by Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.11.69.1; Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica* 808a; Polemon, in Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomonici*, p. 276; Adamantius, in Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomonici*, p. 416; Anonymus Latinus 98, in André, *Anonyme Latin*.
- 27 Heroes as trees: H. Fränkel, *Die homerischen Gleichnisse* (Gottingen, 1921), pp. 36ff. Celtic: E. Campanile, *Ricerche di cultura poetica indoeuropea* (Pisa, 1977), p. 119. Russian: M. L. West, 'The rise of the Greek epic', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 108 (1988), pp. 151–72, esp. p. 154. Comedy: Eupolis fr. 107 and K.-A. ad loc.; note also on the Greek vocabulary of words like 'bow-legged' W. Meid, *Das Problem von indogermanisch /b/* (Innsbruck, 1989). Passive homosexuals: Pseudo-Aristotle, *Physiognomonica* 810a; Polemon, in Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomonici*, pp. 204–6; Adamantius, in Foerster, *Scriptores physiognomonici*, p. 359; Anonymus Latinus 70, in André, *Anonyme Latin*.
- 28 So, persuasively, argues the inspiring study by H. Jung, *Thronende und sitzende Gotter* (Bonn, 1982); on statues of sitting divine females add F. Graf, *Nordionische Kulte* (Rome, 1985), p. 44; R. Ozgan, 'Ein neues archaisches Sitzbild aus Knidos' in *Festschrift für Nikolaus Himmelmann*, ed. H.-U. Cain et al. (Mainz, 1989), pp. 47–51.

- 29 Western society: E. Goffman, *Gender Advertisements* (London, 1970). Greek prostitutes: H. Herter, 'Die Soziologie der Antiken Prostitution im Lichte des heidnischen und Christlichen Schrifttums', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 3 (1960), pp. 70–111, esp. p. 87. Algerian prostitutes: see the fine analysis by Willy Jansen, *Women without Men: Gender and Marginality in an Algerian Town* (Leiden, 1987), pp. 175–89.
- 30 For these developments and their implications see Jung, *Thronende und sitzende Cotter*, pp. 132–8; Bremmer, in Murray, *Symptotica*, p. 139.
- 31 Crouching beggar: J. Gould, 'Hiketeia', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 93 (1973), pp. 74–103, esp. p. 94 n.104; for sitting beggars see Euripides fr. 960; Antiphanes fr. 248 Kock.
- 32 Here I follow closely the fine analysis of Gould, 'Hiketeia', pp. 94–101. Suppliants and wives: Bremmer, *Mnemosyne*, IV 33 (1980), pp. 366f. Suppliants sitting at or on altars: K. Latte, *Heiliges Recht* (Tiibingen, 1920), p. 106, n. 17; add Herodotus 6.108; Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 32; Euripides fr. 554; Andocides, *On the Mysteries* 44; Lysias 13.24, 52; Aeschines 1.60 (as a kind of protest); Menander, *Sicyonius* 190; Van Straten, 'Did the Greeks Kneel before their Gods?', p. 183 219n; C. Aellen et al. (eds), *Le peintre de Darius et son milieu* (Geneva, 1986), pp. 71–86.
- 33 Hearth of person: *Odyssey* 7.153; Euripides, *Heracles* 715; Thucydides 1.36.3; Apollonius Rhodius 4.662–71 and Scholion. Hearth of city; Andocides, *On his Return* 15; Parthenius 18. Note also the sitting suppliant in the Cyrene cathartic law: R. Parker, *Miasma* (Oxford, 1983), p. 350. Best student: Gould, 'Hiketeia', p. 89.
- 34 Slaves: Scholion on Aristophanes, *Plutus* 768. Brides: Bremmer, *Birth, Maturity and Death in Ancient Greece* (London, 1992), ch. V. Sitting initiates: Parker, *Miasma*, p. 285.
- 35 For more examples of sitting in mourning see N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford, 1974), p. 218f. Satyrs: Lissarrague, 'The sexual life of satyrs', pp. 57 and 70. Masturbation: K. J. Dover, *Creek Homosexuality* (London, 1978), pp. 96–7.
- 36 For sitting and prostration in cross-cultural perspective see also the interesting study by R. Firth, 'Postures and gestures of respect', in *Echanges et communications. Melanges Claude Lévi-Strauss* (2 vols, The Hague and Paris, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 188–209.
- 37 Slaves: N. Himmelman, *Archäologisches zum Problem der griechischen Sklaverei* (Mainz, 1971); C. Bérard, 'Pénalité et religion à Athènes: un témoignage de l'imagerie', *Revue Archéologique* (1982), pp. 137–50, esp. 144–6; V. Dasen, 'Dwarfs in Athens', *Oxford Journal of*

- Archaeology* 9 (1990), pp. 191–207. Political opponents; Sallust, *Catiline* 15 (the gait of the notorious Cataline was 'sometimes fast, sometimes sluggish'); Cicero, *Orationes* fr. A xiii.22; Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.30.1. Religious deviants: Juvenal 2.17; Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11.8; Augustine, *De civitate dei* 7.26.
- 38 Modern Greece: M. Herzfeld, *The Poetics of Manhood* (Princeton, 1985); D. Gilmore (ed.), *Honor, and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean* (Washington, 1987). Institutionalized pederasty: see my 'Greek pederasty and modern homosexuality', in *From Sappho to De Sade. Moments in the History of Sexuality*, ed. Jan Bremmer (London, 1989), pp. 1–14.
- 39 For the display of virility in an acephalous society see A. Blok, 'Rams and billy-goats: a key to the Mediterranean code of honour', *Man*, 16 (1981), pp. 427–40. Sarakatsani: Campbell, *Honour, Family and Patronage*, p. 279. Fierce look: J.-P. Vernant, *La mort dans les yeux* (Paris, 1985), pp. 39–40; add Euripides, *Heracles* 163.
- 40 On Clement, John, and Christian deportment, see now Peter Brown, *The Body and Society* (New York, 1988), pp. 122–39 and 305–22, respectively.
- 41 Erasmus: the best study of Erasmus's treatise is H. de la Fontaine Verwey, 'The first "book of etiquette" for children: Erasmus' *De civilitate morum puerilium*', *Quaerendo*, 1 (1971), pp. 19–30, reprinted in his *Uit de wereld van het boek* (3 vols, Amsterdam, 1975–6), vol. 1, pp. 41–50; see also F. Bierlaire, 'Erasmus at school: the *De civilitate morum puerilium libellus*', in *Essays on the Works of Erasmus*, ed. R. L. DeMolen (New Haven and London, 1978), pp. 239–51; R. Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 76–9.
- 42 Civilizing process: N. Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* (2 vols, Basel, 1939); H. Pleij, *De sneeuwpoppen van 1511* (Amsterdam, 1988); R. Muchembled, *L'Invention de l'homme moderne* (Paris, 1988). Ambrose's source: Testard: *Saint Ambrose. Les devoirs*, pp. 22–6. Cicero's source: M. Testard, *Cicéron. Les devoirs* (2 vols, Paris, 1965–70), vol. 1, pp. 25–49. Stoics: Lucian, *Hermetimus* 18.

1: Walking, Standing, and Sitting in Ancient Greek Culture. Jan Bremmer (Sterling scholarship), 15-35 Ch. 2: Gestures and Conventions (in Roman Oratory/Quintillian) and Stage). Fritz Graf (in oratory, gesture was part of actio/hypokrisis and was formalized. Graf is an outstanding scholar), pp. 36-58 Ch. 3: The Rational of Gestures in the West (3rd-13th cen.). J.-C. Schmitt, pp. 59-70. Very superficial Ch.