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THE HELLENISTIC TURN IN BODILY REPRESENTATIONS

Venting anxiety in terracotta figurines

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In the archaic age (600–480 BCE), Greek sculptors began to represent the human body in the round: their limbs finally lost their matchstick appearance. According to the 5th-century BCE sophist Protagoras (Plato, *Theaetetus* 152a–f), man was ‘the measure of all things’. It would seem that Greek artists took this motto to heart and from the archaic age onwards until the dawn of the Roman Empire in the late 1st century BCE, they focused their entire powers of observation and creativity on the human body. The representations underwent many changes, struggling between two poles, realism (*mimesis*) and idealism, either trying to show mimetically the human body as accurately as they could or, alternatively, showing it as well as they could according to certain notions of beauty. Disability did not earn a rightful place in representations until late in the Hellenistic age (322–31 BCE), and mainly in a cheap and mass-produced art form, terracotta figurines. After a quick review of the various artistic movements that preceded the Hellenistic age and a time of change, we will consider a selection of physical deformities represented in terracotta figurines and what the function of some of these objects may have been.

Preliminary thoughts

Art often expresses a society’s deepest joys and fears, its transgressive limitations and taboos. There is something pervasive in Greek art, a latent form of anxiety that was possibly due to an appalling view of the afterlife. They had no vision of paradise but instead one of ever growing numbers of ghosts in the land of shadows, the Underworld – Hades (also called ‘Plouton’ which meant the ‘rich one’ in Greek). This awful view of death and its aftermath may explain their obsession with youth, with living life to the full, and their fear of inexorable old age. The greatest gift the gods could bestow on humans was to pluck them in the flower of youth (Herodotus 1.31). Their anxiety may also have come from constant warring between similar people, with often no end in sight, or possibly something even deeper, a sense of divine injustice. One could come to terms with losing limbs from a sudden disease or combat, treachery or pillage, but how did men reconcile their faith in the gods’ almighty powers, wisdom and just retribution when children were not all born physically or mentally able? To avoid feeling powerless, Greek artists

made sure the mimetic, experimental approach of their art was reined in by idealism which sought to show what one could be or should be rather than what one actually was. As a society, the Greeks sought to control their surroundings by reaching for order and balance. And their idealized art served this *kosmos*, this worldview. The Greek word *kosmos* contained the notions of ‘order’, ‘arrangement’ and ‘beauty’ all in one. Thus, there was very little space in such an ordered universe, where the order itself was beauty, for images of disability. From about 600 to the 330s, idealized representations tend to take over most other representations. They were best embodied in the aristocratic young Greek male, well-proportioned, white and athletic.

Greek artists’ stock-in-trade for hundreds of years consisted mainly in idealized types, reproducing famous marble or bronze sculpture. A statuette originally found in Smyrna (Figure 13.1), measuring 0.29 m and dating to the 1st century BCE, is a small-scaled clay imitation of the famous *Diadoumenos* of Polykleitos, a youth tying a fillet around his head after a victory in an athletic context, in c.430 BCE. The life-size *Diadoumenos*,¹ is 1.86 m in height.

The *Diadoumenos*, was evidently still favoured by customers as it was being reproduced in terracotta series, i.e. in large numbers, four hundred years later. Numerous terracotta copies of famous sculptures by Polykleitos and later Lysippos, were found throughout the Mediterranean. These images were archetypes of what men sought to be, images of winning athletes, living among the *aristoi*. The sculptor Polykleitos sought to capture the ideal proportions of the human (mostly male) figure and wrote a treatise called *Kanon*, which exemplified his aesthetic



Figure 13.1 The *Diadoumenos*. Terracotta figurine, Paris, Musée du Louvre, on loan from New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 32.11.2. Photograph © Alexandre G. Mitchell.

principles, or mathematic proportions, called *symmetria* in Greek. To this day, we commonly use the term canon as ‘rule’.

Images of disability in the Greek iconographic landscape are extremely rare prior to the Hellenistic age, whether in marble statuary, clay terracotta figurines or painted vases in the black- or red-figure techniques.² The ‘others’ consist in representations of women, old age, foreigners, figures from the Dionysian world and dwarves, none of which count as disabled human beings. Of course, even though dwarfism is not a disability, dwarves in Greek art contrast greatly visually with the *Kanon* or male athlete. However, if the affected individuals also suffered from related debilitating physical ailments like a front-to-back curvature of the spine, a pronounced sway of the lower back (lordosis) and bowed legs, then they would be considered disabled – from our point of view, as the status of disabled individuals in Antiquity was more complex than today. *Achondroplasia* was the most common type of short-limbed dwarfism, with often some *macrophally*. Dwarfs played a similar role as the other representatives of the ‘otherness’ category (ethnic jokes are rooted in the fear of the ‘other’ and his perceived difference): they lent their distinctive traits to the genre of caricature, to amuse the greater public and reaffirm the *kanon*, almost pay homage to the ruling imagery.

Caricature was a well-known a genre since the archaic age. The word itself comes from the Italian *caricare* (‘to load’: first used in descriptions of some of Annibale Carracci’s works). It consists in the grotesque or ludicrous representation of persons or things by exaggerating their most characteristic and striking features. In Greek caricature, African facial traits were often used in conjunction with dwarfism to emphasize the contrast with normally proportioned Greek men and women with Caucasian facial traits.

On one side (Figure 13.2) of a small *askos* (wine drinking vessel), a bald, deformed man leans on a staff; the other side shows a roaring lion. The man’s body is absurdly small compared to his enormous head, larger than the whole body. He is leaning, his cloak folded under his left arm and hanging off the staff. He is strikingly caricatured. When examining unusual imagery, as we shall in this chapter, one should always keep in mind the visual representation of usual or ‘common’ imagery. The contrast ensures we do not overlook any potentially abnormal or grotesque representations. The figure’s attitude is that of many nonchalant strollers or bystanders at the palaestra or the agora, seen in thousands of Greek vase-paintings. With such a huge head



Figure 13.2 Caricatured bystander. Attic red-figure askos, Paris, Musée du Louvre, G610, 460–440 BCE. Photograph © Alexandre G Mitchell.

and pensive attitude, this figure could be a caricature of a sophist; not one in particular but what the common artisan in the Potters quarter thought of sophists, who spent their time thinking or chatting at the palaestra (for a physiognomic study and interpretation, see Zinserling 1967).

With the sudden changes in the geopolitics of ancient Greece, the loss of democracy, becoming part of Alexander's new empire, then refragmented at his death into smaller kingdoms, and eventually being beaten into shape by the Roman Empire, there was a simultaneous, distinct and almost paradigmatic shift in artistic experimentation. The need to show humans as they are, *mimesis*, was a need almost as strong as that of showing an idealized view and it was contained for a long time. The Greek anxiety which had previously turned to balance and idealism in the archaic and classical periods had a new way of venting its distress: *pathos*. For the first time, one could see faces contorted in pain or extreme pleasure. One could identify the fear of the unknown in the deep-set eye sockets of works by the famed Hellenistic sculptor Scopas. Idealism had not disappeared; it was just subdued in favour of *mimesis*. The Greek world had become much larger within a few decades: it extended all the way to India. One can barely imagine the conflicting artistic influences that infused and merged at the time. Still, there was no space in expensive materials and art forms, like marble sculpture or metal works, for images of disability. One must look in an entirely different direction: cheap clay market-produced, easily copied and moulded, terracotta figurines.

Grotesque terracotta figurines

With a few exceptions, it is only in this material and art form that we find thousands of representations of so-called 'grotesques', a wide-ranging umbrella term that refers to figurines displaying various forms of physical deformities. They were first studied in depth by Jean-Martin Charcot's team at the Salpêtrière in Paris in the 19th century (Régnauld 1900, 1909). These medical doctors with a clear interest in archaeology offer fascinating insights into some of these previously unidentified objects. Despite their good intentions, we now understand that iconodiagnosis is fraught with dangers, chiefly overinterpretation of artistic objects as medical objects whilst disregarding their intended use or function. But the potential results are worth the risk. When D. Gourevitch teamed up with the medical doctor M. Grmek (Grmek and Gourevitch 1998), they produced excellent results, models of the fine balance required in the study of 'pathological grotesques'.

Indeed, as I have discussed elsewhere (Mitchell 2013) these figurines do not all show pathologies and need to be differentiated. Some of the caricatured, grotesquely deformed faces and bodies are in fact standardized caricatures, typical theatrical types, small versions of stage comedy actors, probably reproduced in terracotta as mementos of plays that people had seen performed or knew of. Other grotesques were in fact visual parodies of specific, well-known 'serious' models. The aim of these was humorous, to attract the eye and be purchased by prospective buyers at the market. There was nothing pathological about them. The close inspection of some of these parodies reveals a clever and bitter sense of humour, parodying boxers or famous types, like the *spinario*, a bronze sculpture which shows a young idealized boy pulling out a thorn from the sole of his foot. Others still were representative of what one might call a social realistic vein. They produced terracotta figurines in a veristic style with, apparently, no other interest than to show a failing body in old age or similar subjects. Pathological grotesques followed a mimetic approach that was very close to that of portraiture, but just as portraiture always included at least some small dose of idealism, pathological grotesques might have been true to their model in the observation of individual parts of the body, yet, as we shall see, still more often than not presented 'idealistic' *reconstructed* bodies and types.

A great many grotesques are in fact caricatures. There is a clear distinction between a pathological grotesque and a caricature: a caricature consists in the *intentional exaggeration*

of someone's most characteristic features to produce a comic effect, whereas a pathological grotesque is an *intentional realism* towards the actual representation of a phenomenon: in other words, a portrait. Of course, artists did not follow our distinctions and principles, so a number of caricatured aspects coexist with realistic mimetic pathologies. Here, we will only discuss pathological representations, pathologies that would have been so debilitating that they would probably have been considered to be a *disability*.

Our first terracotta figurine (Figure 13.3), from Smyrna in Asia Minor was produced towards the end of the Hellenistic period. It shows a hunchback suffering from *acromegaly*, an uncommon chronic metabolic disorder in which there is too much growth hormone and the body tissues gradually enlarge in addition to other deformities. This male figurine in the Louvre³ is unusual as it shows a number of deformities in one same body and exemplifies the problem suggested above: at first glance we have a hunchback dwarf with his head dug in between the shoulders. His ribs are pushed forward, and his hips deformed. These would definitely categorize this individual as being disabled. He is also bald, his nose large and hooked, his head anatomically placed where his neck should be, at the level of the clavicle, the insertion of the neck's trapezius muscle.

The age of the individual, which can be surmised from observing his face, seems far older than the muscular upper body. A man with such deformed hips and weak legs, could not have carried the weight of the upper body and still reached an old age. Even if we imagine that his lips are swollen because of an allergic reaction, why would they be missing the line joining them? This figurine is a mixture of closely observed pathologies and unrealistic aspects.

The next figurine, also from Smyrna (Figure 13.4),⁴ shows a crowned dwarf with a hump on his back, a gaping mouth and a prominent ribcage. This deformity may be caused by Pott's disease (Grmek and Gourevitch 1998: 217–19). A few details make this 'pathological'



Figure 13.3 Hunchback suffering from acromegaly. Terracotta figurine, height 8 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, MNC266 (Myr 705) 100 BCE–100 CE. Photograph © Alexandre G Mitchell.



Figure 13.4 Dwarf with Pott's disease. Terracotta figurine, from Smyrna, height 7.5 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, CA5190. 2nd century BCE. Photograph © Alexandre G. Mitchell.

grotesque something more than a medical showcase: his enormous phallus, the suspension hole in his back and traces of red paint.

Traces of red paint have been found on many pathological grotesques and is the apotropaic colour *par excellence* throughout antiquity and to this day in many parts of the world. As far as the large phallus is concerned, it was 'talismanic in itself' (Stevenson 1975: 47). And, to quote Gourevitch (1998: 214), 'the frequency of hunchbacks in ancient art is not as much caused by the real frequency of this pathological state than the magical meaning that is attributed to them ... to reinforce this apotropaic effect, hunchbacks in good-luck artefacts were often given a huge phallus'. A suspension hole implies that the figurine was designed to be hung from a hook on a wall for example, like an amulet. The dwarf was crowned with ivy, which needs to be explained. The figure is not an athlete, evidently, but could be participating in a banquet as a comic entertainer, which is in itself a good reminder that being disabled did not mean that one could not work or earn a living in antiquity or at least earn one's keep. E.-J. Graham (2013) in a seminal study discusses this very problem from the point of view of palaeopathology, showing from the close examination of bones of 'disabled' individuals that they were also affected by certain bone or cartilage ailments linked to repetitive gestures, typical of manual labour.

The crown could be a Dionysian sign. Smith (1991: 136) writing about unusual representations, genre and peasant imagery, states 'part of the Dionysian countryside is an impressive series of old labourers, derelict women and peasant boys. Many carry explicit badges of Dionysian membership, like ivy wreaths and most should be seen as part of his realm.' He might also serve as an apotropaic figurine, with the talismanic power of a priapic god and the focal power for envy and physical disability all in one. D. Gourevitch (1998: 329) suggests that this figurine and

other similar ones may have been inspired from truly observed clinical patients, especially with certain developmental diseases linked to a dysfunctional hormonal activity.

Whether the figurine was apotropaic or medical in nature, both these aspects are ‘means of control’ to counteract human powerlessness in the face of nature’s random choices. Medicine is a rationalization, an attempt at naming, identifying and possibly curing what must have seemed a whim of the gods; producing ‘anti-disease’ figurines was a magical attempt to avert from what was perceived as being evil. Medical classification and magical amulets to control human fears and anxiety.

An uncommon facial acromegaly is shown in a small terracotta head in Brussels (Figure 13.5). This endocrine disorder is astonishingly rendered, with excess growth hormone production, characterized by gigantism and facial features with frontal bossing, a thick and hard nose, deepening of creases on the forehead and nasolabial folds, enlargement of the lower lip, nose and auricles (Volteranni 2002). The individual is also bald and his eyes closed which may indicate he is asleep or dead. Acromegaly takes a number of forms. It is an unusual affection, not genetically inherited, linked to growth hormone hypersecretion.

The most common cause for this affliction is a tumour of the hypophysis but as D. Gourevitch notes (1998: 199) these internal aspects are not artistically represented; only the external effects that manifest themselves with large hands and feet, prominent maxillaries, are shown in the figurines.

The next head (Figure 13.6), was described by F. Régnault (1907: 26–7) as one of a number of representations of leprosy. S. Besques (1971–2: 234) was under the impression that the nasal deviation was due to a clumsy gesture during the production. This is quite unlikely as the precision of these figurines is very delicate and the artist would have simply rectified his mistake. D. Gourevitch (1998: 250) noted that the curious nasal deformity resembled the outward effects of a different and very specific infectious disease called rhinoscleroma. This is a chronic granulomatous condition of the nose and other structures of the upper respiratory tract. Thus, this would have been very different from leprosy.

Rhinoscleroma was not lethal in itself, but left untreated could lead to sepsis, bleeding or other chronic conditions that could be fatal. It is a disease which is however more often identified in tropical climates, in Africa and South America than the Eastern Mediterranean where this figurine was found. Interestingly, the outward signs of leprosy, certain facial



Figure 13.5 Facial acromegaly. Terracotta head, Brussels, Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire M398, height. 3.2 cm. Photograph © Alexandre G. Mitchell.

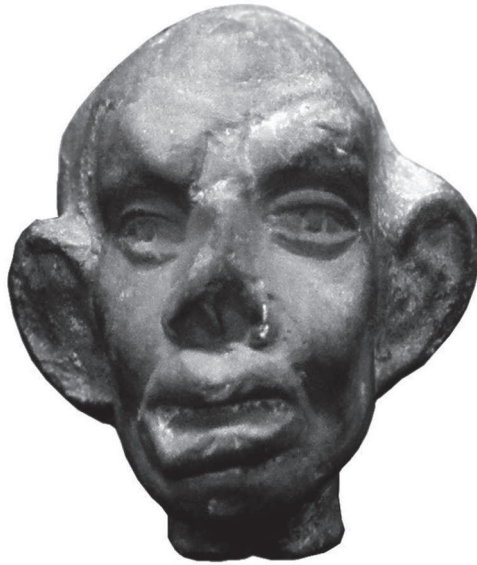


Figure 13.6 Leper (?). Terracotta head, from Smyrna, Paris, Musée du Louvre, E144. 1st century BCE Photograph © Alexandre G. Mitchell.

deformities, were sometimes called *leontiasis* in antiquity but *leontiasis ossea* is in fact an entirely different condition as we shall see.

Cases of leontiasis were known in classical antiquity but also in ancient Egypt, as reported by various authors with different interpretations and descriptions (Ashrafian 2005). *Leontiasis ossea* describes a number of conditions where a patient's face resembles that of a lion. The main mechanism of true leontiasis ossea is a defect in differentiation and maturation with the replacement of normal bone with immature woven bone (craniofacial fibrous dysplasia). Many conditions may mimic a leontiasis face: endocrinopathy (gigantism or acromegaly, Cushing syndrome, secondary hyperparathyroidism after uraemia), neurology (neurofibromatosis), infection (syphilitic osteoperiostitis after the 15th century in Europe, Pott's disease by tuberculosis), tumour (paranasal sinus) that create an alteration of the cranial structures with cranial asymmetry, facial deformity, nasal stuffiness, bulging eyes (proptosis) and visual impairment or unilateral blindness (Mitchell and Lorusso 2013: 21–2). Another small terracotta head from Smyrna (Figure 13.7), shows some of the distinctive signs of leontiasis ('lion face') with hypertrophied maxillaries which give the impression of a lion's nose. The figure's grotesque facial features, are emphasized by the lack of facial hair, the baldness, a huge forehead and the fact that the ears are left unfinished. A human skull in Bologna (Figure 13.8), shows all the previously described outward signs of leontiasis ossea, the overgrowth of bone in the facial and cranial bones and just like in Figure 13.7, the maxilla must have progressively grown, eventually affecting the eye orbits, mouth, nose and sinuses. From a visual point of view, the lion face is clearly distinguishable, with a frightening prognathism because of the protruding lower maxilla.

In some cases, it is particularly unfortunate that the artwork should be fragmentary. For instance, a 6 cm high terracotta head in the Louvre shows what is considered to be a 'monkey head' (labelled 'tête de singe hellénistique' in the museum). Yet, this very same head could well be a representation of a classic case of leontiasis ossea (Mitchell and Lorusso 2014: 28). The cranium of Figure 13.9 is different from the maxillofacial area. In a human the maxillofacial area, composed of the mouth, jaw, face, is smaller than the cranium. But in an ape (Figure



Figure 13.7 Leontiasis ('lion face'). Terracotta head, from Smyrna, Paris, Musée du Louvre, E/D 1747. 1st century BCE. (After Gourevitch 1998: fig. 179, pp. 233–4.)



Figure 13.8 Human skull with leontiasis. Bologna, Luigi Cattaneo Museum, Institute of Human Anatomy. Photograph © Scott D. Haddow.

13.10), the two zones are almost identical in size. We have here a human face, slightly elongated into that of an ape's. But this head cannot be an ape's head. This is a mixture of various potential pathologies and unrealistic deformities. His hair is combed and parted in the middle, he has some facial hair, a rather trim beard that runs around the face but not over the upper lip. However, the pronounced facial features might be explained by a condition of leontiasis ossea.



Figure 13.9 Leontiasis ('lion face'). Terracotta head, Paris, Musée du Louvre, CA3006, height 6 cm. 1st century BCE. Photograph © Alexandre G. Mitchell.

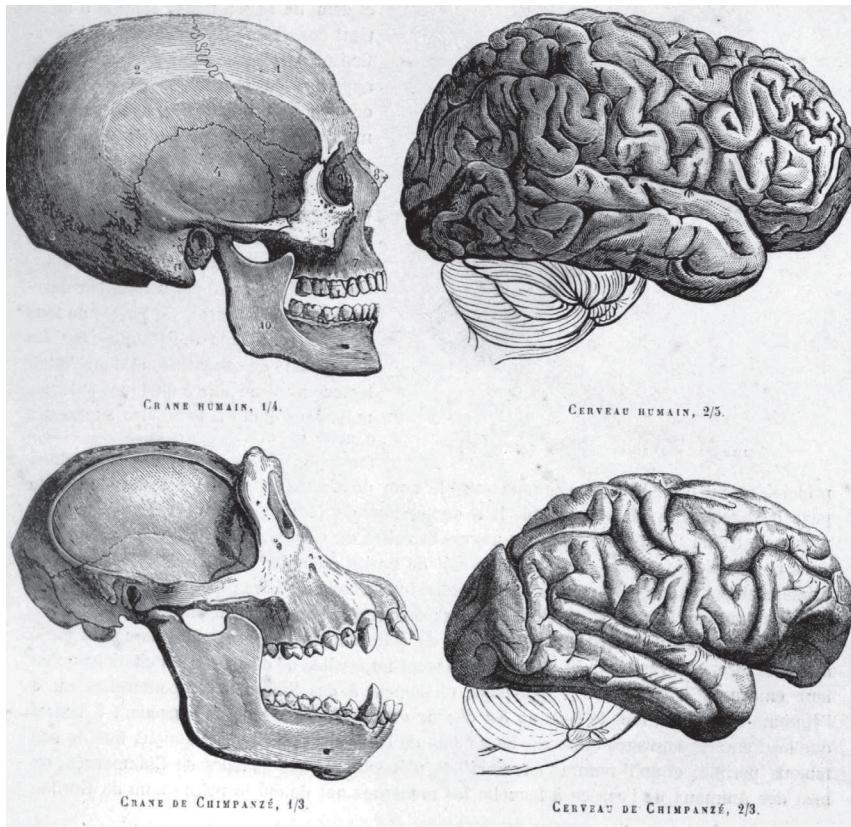


Figure 13.10 Comparison of ape and human skulls. Plate after Gervais 1854–5: 15

Conclusion

It is clear from the various representations that there was a wide range of representations in the Hellenistic period which differed greatly from those produced previously and, among the so-called grotesques, an almost equally vast number of different types, both male and female. What seems to be most interesting here, is that on close examination, while some of the representations display disabled individuals, the objects themselves are not straightforward medical wax figures. Even if some, if not many of these objects were produced based on the detailed observation of real clinical cases, the multiplicity or the improbable or impossible combination of certain diseases makes the interpretation of the objects all the more complex. None of the images described in this chapter were found in healing sanctuaries. If so, one might have been tempted to interpret them as *ex-votos*. We have numerous examples of *ex-votos* from healing sanctuaries dedicated to Asclepius, including hands, feet, eyes, noses, ears, breasts, brains and so on. Yet, none of these were injured or deformed. The *ex-votos* are perfect specimens (Stevenson 1975: 100, *contra* Roebuck 1951: pl. 40, no. 63).

The most plausible explanation for many of these objects remains an apotropaic one, i.e. good luck charms against the evil eye (Mitchell 2013). Some scholars imagined that a certain type found in numerous materials and art forms (clay terracotta figurines, clay lamps, mosaics, copper alloy figurines) suffered from tuberculosis because of the figure's distinctive choking gesture with both hands around its throat. Others thought it was the sign that the ingestion of a foreign object had blocked its breathing, others still that we were witnessing a form of autoerotic asphyxiation, as it is a known fact that strangulation increases the sense of pleasure and possibly explains the enlarged penis which is often found in this type. Yet, the penis is far too large to be in proportion with the rest of the body, and it is not in erection in these figures, whereas asphyxiation by hanging provokes the so-called 'death erection'. This type is found in large quantities, and often has a suspension hole in the back and sometimes visible traces of red paint. Based on an inscription in a mosaic in a Roman villa on the island of Cephalonia, this type was identified as a personification of Envy (*Phthonos*), suffocating with jealousy. The notion of the evil eye is based on envy (Greek: 'phthonos', Latin: 'invidia'), as envying consists in coveting by looking. The figurines probably hung near house thresholds as apotropaic symbols (Slane and Dickie 1993; Mitchell 2013). Most scholars agree on the talismanic properties of the phallus, of fertility and prosperity and a protection against the evil eye and evil spirits. Phallic amulets were ubiquitous in the Greek and Roman world, from good luck charms, to the numerous tiny (4-6 cm) bronze phallic amulets tied around the necks of babies and infants.

The need for these images was rooted in the precarious nature of human life in Antiquity, far more so than today, and the accompanying feeling of powerlessness when faced with a short life expectancy. Some of the images may have been produced to titillate the darker side of the human psyche, just like the preserved remains in the Hunterian museum in London, that reveal a morbid desire to be satisfied, or a way for viewers to reassure themselves they were still alive. These objects were a far cry from the visible pathos in the facial expression of *The Laocoon* for instance, but all the same they were produced in an effort to name and control an ever present fear, not to visually and faithfully present different physical disabilities to medical students. I chose the term anxiety because of its semantic weight. Anxiety is when anxious feelings are ongoing and do not subside. For those experiencing anxiety, these feelings cannot be easily controlled. Whether it was the terror of Apollo's priest, Laocoon, being torn apart by a divine snake come from the sea, whilst witnessing the murder of his own sons, or the fearful look in the eye of a Potts' disease sufferer with horrific physical deformities, these images were all produced in the same day and age. The difference between these images was their visual

impact. Indeed, marble statues were costly and took time to be designed and produced for a patron, whether it was a private client, a corporation or a city. There are obvious limitations in this opulent and often propagandist form of art which are absent from cheaper materials like clay. Terracotta figurines were often moulded and produced in large series, for the marketplace. This means that they had to follow the laws of the market, i.e. follow or lead the fashion to be purchased. We find these grotesque terracotta figurines all around the Mediterranean and in great numbers. Their impact must have been relatively important as they continued to be produced for hundreds of years. As I mentioned at the very beginning, it is important to keep in mind that mainstream images were produced in far greater numbers than grotesque images. Small, easily transportable, terracotta versions of famous sculpted types were ubiquitous, because that was what most could afford to purchase. But even if the grotesque figurines were but a fraction of the 'common' ones, they were still found in great numbers.

In a recent publication, C. Laes (2014: 197–201) referred to the work of evolutionary psychologists who describe the various reactions of people throughout the ages when confronted to 'strangeness'. These attitudes, i.e. *shame*, *mockery*, *fascination*, *pity* and *fear*, were almost interlocked in the ancient Greek world. The feeling of shame may have occurred when confronted with disability in one's own family, tribe, close social structure, but only versus the outside world, the greater social circle or the foreigner. Indeed, one is only as strong as one's weakest link, and in a 'shame-culture', i.e. based on honour, shaming the other was as important as ensuring one's physical and intellectual integrity. Mockery was inherent to shame-cultures and very well explained by the philosopher Bergson in his study of social laughter. The guiding principle is social cohesion and according to Bergson, when we mock someone we do so because they are different or act differently from the rest of the main group. They are poked fun at to ensure they return to the fold and protect the integrity of the group. Yet other principles have their limitations. Bergson's other principle of comical deformity, a deformity that a normally built person could successfully imitate (1921: 23), is less pertinent: the philosopher was probably not aware of our pathological terracotta figurines when he wrote this. In societies where hubris was punished 'by the gods', where one tried to keep one's head down, pity may have come from the feeling that one's able-bodiedness or mental prowess could be diminished at any given time. Did they imagine that disabled individuals were punished by the gods, for personal or ancestral reasons? After all, Greek mythology has often been understood as generational curses or described ironically as 'une affaire de famille' (Giraudoux 1937), where individuals are punished generations later because of an ancestral evil deed. Fear was a natural reaction when confronted, like pity, with something one could have been afflicted with, or the fear of divine retribution or simply the fear of the unknown. The most interesting concept is 'fascination', a wonderfully multi-faceted notion explored by P. Quignard (1994) and which we have alluded to here in the morbid attraction viewers might have had to grotesque visual re-enactments of spectacular deformities and pathologies.

These five attitudes are useful to understand individuals' reactions to disabled individuals, but can they help us understand the large-scale clay production of pathological representations? And what does this say of the Greek visual conception of disability? Artists chose to show disabilities only in a popular kind of object that was ultimately found in funerary and domestic contexts and not in healing sanctuaries. The figurines were often syncretic, mixing clinically observed disabilities with other incongruous details that seriously complicate their interpretation. Some of the figurines even present incompatible diseases. It is as if physical disabilities were part of the building blocks of an art form that showed 'constructed' types, whatever their intended use, rather than realistic medical representations.

Notes

- 1 See Stewart (1993) 173, figs. 383-5.
- 2 With a few exceptions, like the turned feet of Hephaestus on a number of vase-paintings, e.g. a Laconian cup from Rhodes (Mus. Arch. 10711, 550 BCE) or a Caeretan hydria (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Mus., 3577 (M218), 550 BCE).
- 3 See also Besques 1972: D1176, pl. 235.e.
- 4 See Besques 1972: D1183, pl. 236.a.

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