

The Many Faces of Hellenistic Sculpture

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Understanding the facial expression of a sculpture, and through this expression the emotion it embodies, should be one of the paramount tasks of a critic – at least a critic of Hellenistic sculpture. Critics of the Archaic and Classical periods of Greek sculpture can of course be excused on this score, since the faces of their periods exhibit such stereotypical expressions.¹ But Hellenistic critics have no excuse; the portraits of their period display the whole range of human expression and emotion.

Now, a crude understanding of facial expressions is the inheritance, both genetic and cultural, of nearly all people: for example, to know when our parents, bosses, or spouses are happy, angry, or sad, by reading the corresponding expressions from their faces, is one of the paramount tasks of daily life. To reliably distinguish subtleties of their expressions, and the blends of emotion they betray, however, is a refined skill intuited by only a few. Intuited, that is, until Paul Ekman made learning this skill possible thirty years ago by his discoveries in the analysis of facial expressions.² In this paper I propose to apply his method to Hellenistic sculpture.

¹ For Archaic sculpture, consider only the fallen warrior on the pediment of the temple at Aigina: dying from an arrow wound to the chest, he smiles glibly (Fig. 1). For Classical sculpture, especially sculpture of the Severe style, consider only the Apollo on the pediment of the temple at Olympia: amid the chaos of the Centauromachy he placidly extends his arm, enjoining calm (Fig. 2).

² These initial discoveries, recorded in *Unmasking the Face*, will serve as our template for the analysis of Hellenistic expressions. Two notes about these discoveries. First of all, they have been recently updated in a second book, *Emotions Revealed*, that has just become available during the writing of this paper; we use here the old techniques in the hope that they are not now obsolete. Secondly, these techniques regard only the superficial appearance of an expression, noting its variations, combinations, and their meanings. Ekman, and the many facial specialists he has spawned, have since refined this original technique, developing a far more sophisticated technique – the Facial Action Coding System, or FACS – that regards instead the muscles below the surface of an expression, encoding according to the precise movements of these muscles. In fact, the FACS can reputedly identify as many as ten-thousand expressions. Although this newer system permits an analyst to specify an expression far more precisely and objectively than was previously possible, it is of no use to the art critic, primarily because sculpture is static, whereas the observation of facial muscles requires that they move.

My aim is to show the power of this method to help us understand Hellenistic sculpture, or indeed the sculpture of any period for which the depiction of human emotion is a goal. After explaining the basics of Ekman's method,³ I will apply it to some of the most famous – and, not coincidentally, most expressive – Hellenistic portraits. These analyses should help persuade a skeptic that the method can be applied to art, producing a richer appreciation of the works it analyses. More specifically, though, I will then apply the Ekman method to Hellenistic portraits of philosophers.

Critics have noticed the expressiveness of these portraits, and have speculated on their meanings, being so bold as to associate each one's particular expression with a different doctrine of that philosopher's school. Foremost among these critics has been Paul Zanker, whose recent work has placed the Hellenistic philosophers' portraits into a complex history of intellectual portraiture in antiquity.⁴ Despite the validity of his historical approach, not to mention his alertness to the subjectivity of previous critics in their speculations about the meanings of philosophical facial expressions, even Zanker misses and mistakes features of them that an acquaintance with Ekman's method easily elicits and corrects. I hope, therefore, that by using Ekman's method to improve the analysis of an observer so deft as Zanker, its utility to Hellenistic criticism, and indeed to art criticism more generally, might be placed beyond doubt.

³ Inasmuch as this is the method of *Unmasking the Face*, it is the method of Ekman and Friesen; but for brevity's sake I will speak simply of "Ekman's method," recognizing additionally that he has been the major contributor in this book and since.

⁴ Zanker, P. 1995. *The Mask of Socrates: The Image of the Intellectual in Antiquity*. Berkeley.

Ekman's Method of Facial Analysis

There are always three overlying elements in a facial expression: the static, the slow, and the rapid.

The static features are the “more or less permanent aspects of the face—pigmentation, the shape of the face, bone structure, cartilage, fatty deposits, and the size, shape, and location of the facial features.”⁵ The last of these, the permanent facial features, are most important to analysis because they are the background against which facial expressions take place; or, more accurately, they are the very material of the expressions themselves.

This introduces a first problem into our particular analysis of Hellenistic sculptures. As we will see, for example, eyebrows raised in an arc signify surprise. But if we look at a still photograph of someone whose eyebrows are high in an arc, we cannot conclude with certainty from it that he is surprised; after all, he might be someone whose eyebrows are always that way – because of his bone structure, say. For him, surprise would be registered by eyebrows in an *especially* high arc. Since we do not know the static features of the subjects of Hellenistic sculpture, conclusions based upon them about the emotions portrayed might seem unwarranted.

Although we should keep this proviso in mind, skepticism on its account would be too extreme. Let us remember also that there was no *person* Laocoön for whom the facial bone structure, say, might spoil our analysis. In the cases of actual subjects, additionally, this is a problem, but not too serious. Sculptures were often made of famous men years after their death, offering their sculptors generous liberty. When their subjects were alive, moreover, sculptors would not have taken much less liberty with their

⁵ Ekman 1975: 11.

features. The goal of a sculpture, even a philosopher's portrait, was often programmatic, as Zanker argues.⁶

The second and third elements of a facial expression, the slow and the rapid, are the data of expression analysis. The rapid movements of the forehead, eyebrows, eyelids, nose, mouth, and cheeks flicker signals of emotion, sometimes for only an instant, often for seconds. These quick movements report the emotions of a moment; a lifetime of such movements create marks such as wrinkles that record their patterns, and thus patterns of emotion. These are the so-called slow elements of a facial expression. As George Orwell said, "At fifty everyone has the face he deserves."

In order to catalogue systematically the data of the rapid and slow elements, Ekman divides the face into three regions: (1) the forehead and brow; (2) the eyes (especially the eyelids); (3) the lower face (especially the mouth, but sometimes also the nose). For each region there are many possible movements. The mouth, for instance, can be puckered, opened and tense, closed and pulled down, etc. By focusing on the particular movements in each of these three regions, and seeing how they are combined, a facial analyst can diagnose with great precision and objectivity the emotion conveyed by a face.

According to Ekman, there is nearly always at least one movement in each region that is characteristic of each basic emotion. The basic emotions include at least the following six: surprise, fear, disgust, anger, happiness, and sadness. While he hints that there may be more – such as excitement, shame, and contempt – he wished to restrict himself to the emotions for which convincing cross-cultural evidence had already been gathered. For he and his associates have traveled the world, investigating even tribes who had no contact with Western media, determining that at least these six expressions are universal, in the sense that people in all cultures demonstrate them in their own lives, and

⁶ Zanker 1995: 40-145.

associate them with the same emotions as we do.⁷ The thoroughness of these investigations should allay the reservations of anyone who suspects that the facial expressions and emotions of Americans are inapplicable to the alien cultures of antiquity.

Needless to say, anyone who wishes to appreciate the complexity of Ekman's method needs to read his book; but for our purposes it is necessary to make a quick study of these six basic emotions and their characteristic movements in each of the face's three regions. At this point, then, it will be best to place alongside this text Figures 3-8, which illustrate the six basic emotions in their fullest expression. Make sure to find in each illustration the movement mentioned in the description of each emotion below. The movements will be noted in the order of the regions already mentioned. To repeat this order: (1) the forehead and brow; (2) the eyes (especially the eyelids); (3) the lower face (especially the mouth, but sometimes also the nose). Hints will be labeled with lower case letters, in order to distinguish them from region numbers.

The first of these (Fig. 3) is surprise. (1) (a) "The eyebrows appear curved and high"; (b) "the skin below the brow is stretched"; (c) "horizontal wrinkles go across the forehead". (2) (d) "The eyes are opened wide during surprise, with the lower eyelids relaxed and the upper eyelids raised"; (e) "the white of the eye – the sclera – shows above the iris, and often below as well". (3) (f) "The jaw drops during surprise, causing the lips and teeth to part"; (g) "but there is no tension or stretching of the mouth".⁸

As with all of the Figures, Figure 3 depicts its emotion, surprise, in its fullest expression. That is to say, each of the three regions of the face shows its respective movement, and each of these movements is quite pronounced. Variations of expression can therefore be produced by making each of these movements less pronounced, or by showing surprise movement in only one or two of the three regions. In this way, for

⁷ Ekman 1975: 23-28.

⁸ All quotations in this paragraph are from Ekman 1975; in order of appearance, they are found on the following pages: 39,45,45,40,45,40,45. Multiple quotations will be cited this way in order to streamline a text already cluttered by numbers and letters.

instance, someone could show a surprise mouth (3 (f) and (g)), but have neutral eyes, brow and forehead. Even within this combination, great variation is still available, because the jaw can drop to different degrees, causing the lips and teeth to part more or less. And each of these variations has its own meaning. In fact, Ekman separates these many variations into four main types of surprise; of these, we need mention only one, which will become important later, when we turn to the philosophers: “Surprise looks questioning when only the eyes and brow movements of the full-face surprise expression occur.”⁹ Figure 3* illustrates this questioning type of surprise.

The second basic emotion is fear, illustrated in Figure 4. (1) (a) “The eyebrows appear raised and straightened”; (b) “the brows are lifted as they are in the surprise brow, but in addition to the lift they are drawn together so that the inner corners of the brow are closer together in fear than in surprise”; (c) “there are usually horizontal wrinkles across the forehead, but typically they do not run across the entire forehead, as they do in surprise”. (2) (d) “The upper eyelid inner corner is raised, exposing sclera, and the lower eyelid is tensed and drawn up”; (3) (e) “The mouth is open and the lips are either tensed slightly and drawn back or stretched and drawn back.”¹⁰ This last feature gives fear more than the usual variation, since there are two fear mouths.¹¹

All the variations mentioned for surprise apply equally to fear: each of the movements can be diminished in intensity, and one or two of the movements can be altogether absent. “When the brow is held in the fear position,” for example, and the other regions remain neutral, “the meaning of the expression is worry or slight apprehension, or controlled fear.”¹² Figure 4* illustrates this expression. If the brow is held in the fear position while the eyes and mouth are given the signs of other basic

⁹ Ekman 1975: 43.

¹⁰ All quotations in this paragraph are from Ekman 1975; in order of appearance they are found on the following pages: 50,50,50,63,63.

¹¹ These multiple signals of fear in the mouth, along with the multiple mouths for disgust, happiness, and sadness, require the qualification ‘at least’ in the earlier formulation that, “there is nearly always *at least* one movement in each region that is characteristic of each basic emotion.”

¹² Ekman 1975: 52.

emotions, the results are complex, just as the combinational possibilities are enormous. These are the so-called emotional blends, which lend Ekman's method its great subtlety. Because of their quantity and complexity, we will delay examining them until the end of this section, and then only as an illustration of the phenomenon. Specific blends will, however, draw our attention as soon as we begin our analyses of particular Hellenistic sculptures.

The third basic emotion is disgust, illustrated in Figure 5. (1) (a) "The brow is lowered". (2) (b) "Lines show below the lower lid, and the lid is pushed up but not tense"; (c) "lowering of the upper lid"; (3) (d) "The nose is wrinkled"; (e) "the cheeks are raised"; (f) "the upper lip is raised"; (g) "the lower lip is also raised and pushed up to the upper lip, or is lowered and slightly protruding". This last feature makes disgust like fear, insofar as there are two disgust mouths, just as there were two fear-mouths. This additional variation may make disgust seem more difficult to analyze, whereas in fact the expression of disgust is actually quite straightforward: it alone exhibits wrinkling of the nose, and can easily be identified by this peculiarity.¹³

One type of disgust, contempt, will become important in our later analyses, and it is different enough to merit its own illustration, Figure 5*. It is shown by a variation on the closed-lips disgust mouth – for which see 5(g). "The contempt is shown in the tight, slightly raised corners of the mouth with lip pressed against lip."¹⁴ A contempt mouth differs from a disgust mouth by being raised more often on one side (unilateral) than on both (bilateral).

The fourth basic emotion is anger, illustrated in Figure 6. (1) (a) "The eyebrows are drawn down and together"; "in both the anger and fear brows, the inner corners of the eyebrows are drawn together. But in anger the brow is also lowered, while in fear the brow is raised. In anger the brow may actually appear to be angled downward or just to

¹³ All quotations in this paragraph are from Ekman 1975: 76.

¹⁴ Ekman 1975: 71.

be lowered in a flat fashion”; (b) “the drawing together of the inner corners of the eyebrow usually produces vertical wrinkles between the eyebrows”; (c) “no horizontal wrinkles will appear in the forehead in anger, and if there is any trace of such lines, they are the permanent wrinkles of the face”; (2) (d) “The lower lid is tensed and may or may not be raised”; (e) “the upper lid is tense and may or may not be lowered by the action of the brow”; (f) “the eyes have a hard stare and may have a bulging appearance”; (3) (g) “The lips are in either of two basic positions: pressed firmly together, with the corners straight or down; or open, tensed in a squarish shape as if shouting”.¹⁵

Anger is unique among the basic emotions in that it must appear in all three regions for the person to register anger at all. The other emotions, remember, can be registered in only one region of the face – the brow, say – but be absent from the others, which might be neutral, or exhibit one or two other emotions. By contrast, an anger brow, combined with neutrality or some other emotion in the other regions, would not mean anger. The anger brow alone, as we will see, signals only that the person is in a serious mood, or concentrating on something intently.¹⁶ Figure 6* illustrates this expression. Its solo anger brow appears over and over again in the Hellenistic philosopher portraits, lending them an air of deep thought.

The fifth basic emotion is happiness, illustrated in Figure 7. (1) There is no sign of happiness in the brow or forehead.¹⁷ (2) (a) “The lower eyelid shows wrinkles below it, and may be raised but not tense”; (b) “crow’s-foot wrinkles go outward from the outer corners of the eyes”. (Since the crow’s-foot have been obscured in Figure 7 by the model’s hair, an additional illustration of happiness, 7*, that does show them has been included.) (3) (c) “Corners of lips are drawn back and up”; (d) “the mouth may or may not be parted, with teeth exposed or not”; (e) “a wrinkle (the naso-labial fold) runs down

¹⁵ All quotations in this paragraph are from Ekman 1975; in order of appearance they are found on the following pages: 82,82,96,97,97,97.

¹⁶ Ekman 1975: 83.

¹⁷ This lacuna requires the qualification of ‘nearly always’ in the earlier formulation that, “there is *nearly always* at least one movement in each region that is characteristic of each basic emotion.”

from the nose to the outer edge beyond the lip corners”; (f) “the cheeks are raised”.¹⁸ The most characteristic feature of the happy face is of course the smile, which is perhaps the most easily recognized expression signal. Happiness is the only basic emotion that is positive. All the others are negative – besides surprise, which is neutral.

The sixth basic emotion is sadness, illustrated by Figure 8. (1) (a) “the inner corners of the eyebrows are drawn up”. (2) (b) “the skin below the eyebrow is triangulated, with the inner corner up”; as compared with this triangulation in sadness, in happiness this area forms an arc, and in surprise a heightened arc; in anger and disgust the area is flattened, whereas in fear it is widened, forming a rectangle, not an arc; (c) “the upper eyelid inner corner is raised”. (3) (d) “The corners of the lips are down or the lip is trembling”.¹⁹

In order to anticipate the phenomenon of emotional blending, which we will encounter in the next two sections of this paper, two additional Figures (9 and 10) have been included with some descriptive notes. These are both blends of sadness and anger. However, Figure 9 blends a sad lower face with an angry upper face, while Figure 10 reverses the blend. To make the phenomenon of blending easiest to see and understand, the blends are shown at the bottom of the page, below the pure expressions from which they have been derived are above. Other blends will be illustrated to match the precise blends we find in the Hellenistic portraits. To these portraits we now turn.

¹⁸ All quotations in this paragraph are from Ekman 1975: 112.

¹⁹ All quotations in this paragraph are from Ekman 1975: 126.

Facial Analysis of the Most Expressive Hellenistic Portraits

One of the easiest emotions for anyone to see in the face of another is happiness. To warm up, then, we can easily observe the happy expressions in Figures 11-13: the Smiling Child,²⁰ the Head of Fauno Colla Macchia,²¹ and the Head of a Nymph,²² respectively. Unfortunately our reproductions are poor, and this presents a first obstacle to the complete analysis of sculptural expressions. Autopsy is sometimes needed. Even still, the smile is obvious each time in these photographs: (c) the corners of the lips are drawn back and up. The Nymph's lips are parted, and the Child's are not; it is hard to tell with the Fauno. But it doesn't matter, since both are signs of happiness (d), with the parted lips often signifying a greater degree of happiness. As the degree grows, along with the sharpness of the smile, so too do (e) the naso-labial folds. Accordingly, the Nymph and the Fauno have deeper folds than does the gently smiling Child. For all, however, (f) the cheeks are raised.

The only Greek portraits, of any period, that exhibit these and the other signs of happiness, it turns out, are children, satyrs, and nymphs. As we will see, there is far more Greek exploration of the negative and neutral expressions. The only neutral expression is surprise, and the most famous portrait which shows it is that of Pompey, illustrated in Figure 14.²³ The telltale sign is his forehead and its wrinkles. They are rather deeply carved in the unmistakable formation of surprise: (c) horizontal wrinkles go across the forehead; in fact they form two arcs to match the fact that (a) the eyebrows appear curved and high. It is difficult to say whether (b) the skin below the brow is stretched, and more so whether (d) the eyes are opened wide, with an attendant raising of the upper eyelids.

²⁰ Bieber, Fig. 546.

²¹ Bieber, Fig. 582.

²² Bieber, Fig. 567.

²³ Pollitt, Fig. 26.

The problem is that the pupils have been effaced from this statue, like so many others. Judgments about the elevation of eyelids observe whether the sclera (the white) shows. Without sclera or pupil, then, it is often difficult to judge the eyelids. Nevertheless, the forehead alone is enough to register Pompey's surprise.

But surprise is not all that he seems to feel here. His mouth says more, although it is hard to say exactly what. The naso-labial folds are deep, suggesting happiness, as in the nymphs, fauns, and children. Were Pompey to seem happy, this expression would therefore place him far below his dignity. And yet there is another emotion for which the mouth is drawn back, as it is in a smile: contempt. In contempt, the mouth is often lifted at one corner (g), as Pompey's may be doing here on his left, ever so slightly. The emotion would suit the returning conqueror of Asia. The diastole of hair famously conjures Alexander; his brow says surprise, or perhaps skepticism about others' accomplishments; it makes sense that his mouth registers contempt. Together these features constitute a comfortable amusement, a loftiness that tips into the ridiculous, as the puffy cheeks make Pompey seem more the content but *bemused* merchant than a fearsome son of Zeus.

More serious now is the understandable expressions of fear that we find on Odysseus' Steersman and Odysseus himself, both from Sperlonga, as well as the Chiamonti Gaul. These sculptures are illustrated in Figures 15-17.²⁴ Most of the elements of fear are apparent in the Sperlonga group: in both, (b) the inner corners of the brows are drawn together, (c) there are horizontal wrinkles across the forehead, (e) the mouth is open and the lips seem tensed and drawn back; in Odysseus at least, (d) the upper eyelid is raised. Fear is to be expected of men putting out the eye of a cyclops, drunken or otherwise.

The unbroken Chiamonti Gaul helps because he shows some fear elements more readily. In him we see (a) the raised and straightened eyebrows, along with (c) the

²⁴ Pollitt, 127; Pollitt 87a; Biers, 10.40.

horizontal wrinkles. He also shows nicely how (b) the brows are lifted as they are in the surprise brow. (Indeed, notice how his brow resembles that of Pompey.) But in addition to being lifted, (b) the brows are drawn together, so that the inner corners of the brow are closer together in fear than in surprise. (By contrast, the vertical wrinkle this proximity forms is absent from Pompey, whose surprise is unalloyed with fear.)

Even without sclera or pupil, the Gaul undeniably shows (d) raised upper eyelids: they have nearly been swallowed by his brows. However, this may result from him looking up in the original composition, of which we have only other statues, and not the original plan. The mouth is open (e), but it is difficult to tell whether it is tense – a sign of fear – or relaxed – a sign of surprise. The comparison photograph (Figure 18) is a mixture of fear in the upper face and surprise in the lower. Its resemblance to the Gaul argues a similar analysis: fear and surprise. Once again, this is to be expected, considering the trauma of his surroundings: compatriots slaying their wives and committing suicide in the face, we presume, of Pergamene victory. Surprise at defeat might be blended with fear for his own life.

Next comes sadness, which, like the other negative expressions and their blends, is not hard to find in Hellenistic sculpture. The most famous example of this emotion is perhaps the Man from Delos; but even more expressive are two of the Pseudo-Senecas (Hesiod), and the Demosthenes Medallion.²⁵

In the marble Pseudo-Seneca (Figure 19) we find the clearest demonstration of how (a) the inner corners of the eyebrows are drawn up, so that (b) the skin below the eyebrow is triangulated, with the inner corner up. Sadness is equally evident in his mouth, which is open but not tense, as in fear and anger. It shows (c) the corners of the lips down, even though there is a moustache that obscures them somewhat. Notice, however, that even the moustache droops down, conveying the same effect. Once this

²⁵ Respectively: Pollitt, 10.35; Richter 165, in bronze, and 172, in marble; Richter 1409.

droopiness has been seen in marble, we can find it more easily in the more famous bronzes (Figures 19* and 20).

The twofold advantage of the Man from Delos (Figure 20) is that his sclera and pupils are intact, and he wears no facial hair. His eyelids turn a little downward at the outer corners, making the characteristic downward slope of sadness (b), and (c) the droopiness of his mouth at the corners is not hidden by a moustache. The Demosthenes Medallion (Figure 21) exhibits (a) the strong vertical wrinkles that form between the brows when they are drawn up dramatically. Coming together and up in the middle (b), the brows also angle downward at the outer corners. Like the mouth and its moustache, these brows are also droopy. We will examine the more famous full-body statue of Demosthenes in a moment: it seems to portray a mixture of anger (or at least contemplation) with sadness. This sadness of the statue becomes more salient when it is seen in light of this medallion, where it is unalloyed.

Before examining anger and its alloys, we cannot neglect the most famous of Hellenistic sculptures, Laocoön (Figure 22). He shows a blend of sadness and fear, or perhaps surprise. For sadness notice the brows and eyelids: (a) the brows are drawn up in the middle, making (b) the skin underneath and the eyelids form a triangle. This is much like the marble Pseudo-Seneca. As with him, Laocoön's mouth is open, but open wider (c). His thick moustache makes it impossible to say with certainty whether it is tense or not. Were it tense, this would be fear and sadness, a combination that fits the subject well. As Ekman and Friesen write, the fear and sadness blend, "could also occur when there is distress, without crying, about actual or impending pain."²⁶ They illustrate just such a blend (Figure 23), which resembles Laocoön, although the mouth is too tense. Laocoön's mouth seems therefore to register surprise as much or more than fear. His overall expression and emotion would then be one of sadness, mixed with either fear or surprise, all of which match his sad, surprising, and fearsome circumstance.

²⁶ Ekman 1975: 122.

Whatever the final configuration of this analysis, it contributes to an old debate over the expression of this statue. Winckelmann notoriously claimed that, “however much the surface may be agitated, so does the expression in the figures of the Greeks reveal a great and composed soul in the midst of passions.”²⁷ Of the Laocoön in particular he said, “Such a soul is depicted in Laocoön’s face – and not only in his face – under the most violent suffering.”²⁸ Winckelmann did not find Laocoön impassive so much as able to bear his pain without any ignoble rage. A facial analysis confirms this view – there is no anger – but it also elicits two strong emotions – fear and sadness, the components of physical distress – that Winckelmann may have considered unworthy of Laocoön. A facial analysis thus sides with Lessing, who claimed that ‘the Greek’, “felt and feared, and he expressed his pain and grief.”²⁹ The same mixture of pain and grief, fear and sadness, with all the same features, is apparent in Alcyoneus of the Pergamon Altar (Figure 24).

Anger may be seen in the Bronze Head from Olympia, illustrated in Figure 25.³⁰ Anger is unique among the expressions, as we have already observed, since it must be shown in all three regions of the face in order to be conveyed unambiguously. Winckelmann was correct to assert that rage is missing from Greek sculpture: no single example can be found that shows anger in all three regions. There is, however, this example, which shows it in the brow and perhaps also the eyes.

For the brow is (a) drawn down and together, reversing the slope of sadness. (b) Vertical wrinkles make the middle of the brow resemble sadness or fear, but they are more pronounced. This anger brow differs, moreover, from the fear brow by (c) lacking horizontal wrinkles, which, if present, must be permanent (slow or static) features of the subject. Although this portrait does seem angry, we should remember that the brow alone

²⁷ Cited in Lessing 1984: 7.

²⁸ Cited in Lessing 1984: 7.

²⁹ Lessing, 1984: 9.

³⁰ Bieber, 144.

shows intense concentration (Figure 6*). As for the eyes, nothing can be said without autopsy, or at least a better photograph.

Now that we have seen anger by itself, it is time for the Demosthenes of Polyeyktos (Figure 26).³¹ In this portrait, anger or concentration in the upper face predominates, with all the same features as the Bronze Head from Olympia, except that (d) horizontal lines on the forehead argue an additional element of worry. Furthermore, Demosthenes looks downward, and this is a sign of sadness consistent with the downward slope of eyebrows and mouths that we have already seen, from Ekman models and Hellenistic sculpture alike. As for the mouth itself, it may be downturned; again, it is impossible to know for sure with Demosthenes' facial hair and our photographs of him. But remembering the Demosthenes Medallion – adduced as an example of sadness earlier – we may see the same mouth here.

Before turning to philosopher portraits, we must examine one of, if not *the*, most expressive sculpture from the wider Hellenistic tradition. This is the portrait of Euthydemos I of Bactria, illustrated in Figure 27.³² He shows anger in his brows by their convergence on his nose with an (a) angle like that of the Bronze Head from Olympia, creating similar (b) vertical wrinkles in the middle. His eyes are 'beady', as we would say, which may be (d&e) tensing of the lids or (f) the bulging of the eyes that are also typical of anger. However this may be, his anger expression is blended with (g) a wrinkling in the upper nose that may be a permanent feature, but otherwise betrays disgust. Finally, (h) the corners of the mouth turn downwards, which would indicate sadness alone, were they not also puckered as can be the disgust mouth.

All told, this portrait is as mysterious as that of Pompey already discussed. Each one is a blend of emotions that do not often go together: surprise and contempt in the first instance, anger, disgust, and a hint of sadness in the second. The latter combination is

³¹ Richter, 1399.

³² Pollitt, 71.

common enough, at least, to furnish a parallel picture, Figure 28, which is a combination of anger (in the upper face), and disgust (in the lower). All that lacks is the sadness which gives Euthydemos a perfectly understandable world-weariness to season his imperious anger as ruler of a tough kingdom and his disgust with his barbarian subjects.

The facial analysis of sculpture, and Hellenistic particularly, is not without obstacles, as we have seen. Without the privilege of autopsy, we must make due with photographs which sometimes obscure in shadow the very part of the face we need most to analyze. We are often dealing, moreover, with photographs of Roman copies, in which some of the subtlety of an original Greek facial expression may be dulled. Additionally, many of these copies are damaged, especially in their noses, and lack the details like pupils that would be needed to resolve outstanding questions about the expressions of their eyes. In the case of philosopher busts, finally, the details of the mouth have been covered by facial hair. And yet these problems should remain provisos rather than inhibitions. Our application of Ekman's method to some of the more mysterious blends of expression in Hellenistic sculpture has, all the same, yielded gratifying results. With some confidence, therefore, we should turn our attention to the philosophers.

Facial Analysis of Hellenistic Philosopher Portraits

According to Zanker, the tradition of the philosopher portrait does not begin in earnest until the third century. Before that, for example,

Plato was depicted not as a philosopher, but simply as a good Athenian citizen (in the sense of an exemplary embodiment of the norms), and this is true of all other intellectuals of fourth-century Athens for whom we have preserved portraits.³³

Figures 29-32 depict the three most famous of these fifth and fourth century philosophers, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, as well as Aristotle's successor at the Lyceum, Theophrastos.³⁴ In each one, observes Zanker, there is a conventional hairstyle and a well-kept beard. We may notice also how straightforward are the facial expressions. Each has neutral mouth, nose, and eyes.

All that merits comment is their furrowed brow; but even this is done with moderation. Each has horizontal wrinkles; Aristotle alone lacks the vertical ones. Theophrastos has the most furrowed brow, making (a) deep vertical wrinkles between the eyebrows. These can be signs either of anger (contemplation) or sadness, as we have seen. Since there is nothing else remarkable in his face, it must be simply contemplation. Plato's is less furrowed, but it comes with a slightly drooping brow and apparently downcast eyes. If this is sadness, it is a very mild form.

For more extreme expressions, we must wait for the Hellenistic philosophers: the Cynics, Skeptics, Stoics, and Epicureans. There is not a sufficiently detailed portrait of Diogenes, the founder of the Cynics, but for each of the other schools there are famous sculptures of at least one of their leading lights: Carneades of the Skeptics (the Academic Skeptics, that is, as opposed to the Pyrrhonians), Zeno, founder of the Stoics, and

³³ Zanker 1995: 76.

³⁴ Respectively: Richter 465; Zanker 38; Richter 985; Richter 1022.

Epicurus. They are illustrated in Figures 33-36.³⁵ We shall take them in this order, juxtaposing comparable Ekman photographs or recalling ones we have already seen.

Although the identity of the Cynic in the Capitoline is unknown, his facial expression is indubitable: disgust. All the signs are present – at least those we can see. (a) The brow is lowered; (b) lines show below the lower lid, and the lid is pushed up but not tense; there is (c) lowering of the upper lid; (d) the nose is wrinkled; (e) the cheeks are raised. As for the mouth, it is impossible to determine whether the upper lip is raised and whether the lower lip is pushed up to the upper lip – these being the final two signs of disgust. But were this Cynic to shave (an unthinkable action for a philosopher who despises all artificial conventions and wears his beard as a badge of his fidelity to raw nature),³⁶ we would not be surprised to find the final two signs of disgust in his mouth.

This portrait is part of a full-body statue, and the typical Cynic's disgust with convention is as evident in his body-language as it is in his facial expression. Zanker writes,

Everything about his appearance expresses contempt for bourgeois manners and values: the clumsy, flat-footed stance, drooping shoulders and belly sticking out, the garment sloppily wound around the body and awkwardly held together in the fist, the uncombed, matted hair falling in his face, the untended clump of beard, and, finally, the wrinkled face with its vacuous, squinting look.³⁷

Whether or not the look is vacuous – aren't all portraits without pupils? – it is indeed squinting, and this is a hallmark of disgust. The accompanying Ekman photograph (Figure 33*) provides a comparison of full-face disgust. That the Cynic's whole facial expression should complement his body-language is as much a testament to the psychological acumen of the ancient sculptor as it is a reason to someday complement this analysis of Hellenistic faces with another of Hellenistic bodies.

³⁵ Zanker 72a; Richter, 1683; Zanker, 53a; Zanker, 66.

³⁶ On the amusing role of the beard in ancient philosophical culture, see Zanker 1995: 108-113.

³⁷ Zanker, 1995: 130.

In Figure 34, Carneades' expression is easily analyzed as one of surprise. (a) His eyebrows appear curved and high, which seems (b) to stretch the skin below, as far as we can tell. Most characteristically, (c) horizontal wrinkles go across the forehead, following the arcs of the eyebrows, much as we saw in Pompey's statue.³⁸ Without sclera and pupil, it is impossible to be sure with Carneades whether his eyes are wider than usual; but they seem neutral, as does his mouth. He therefore registers surprise in his brow and forehead alone, preserving in his lower face the equanimity prized by all Hellenistic philosophical schools. This combination is the look of questioning we saw earlier, in Figure 3*. We should not ourselves be surprised to find the foremost of the Skeptics exhibiting it, since they specialized in raising doubts and questions for whatever theses their opponents proposed. Carneades famously traveled to Rome to showcase his dialectical abilities, persuasively arguing before the senate in favor of traditional morality, and the next day arguing just as persuasively against it. Not surprisingly, the senate expelled him and his Skeptical colleagues.

This brings us finally to the two biggest rivals in Hellenistic philosophy: Zeno and Epicurus. Both boast unforgettable brows. Zanker writes of Zeno's that, "the powerful contraction of the muscles in the brow can carry only a positive connotation, that is, it must signify effortful and concentrated thinking."³⁹ This extraordinary effort was one of the cardinal virtues of Stoicism, which demanded of its followers purity, and thus strength, of will in all circumstances – whether the Stoic be an emperor, like Marcus Aurelius, or a slave, like Epictetus. But it cannot be effort alone that distinguishes the Stoics, since Epicurus' brow is no less contracted. Zanker himself says this brow advertises that "Epicurus is the great pioneering thinker, remote and unattainable on his

³⁸ Figure 14.

³⁹ Zanker, 1995: 95. Of this exalted effort, Zanker (97) adds: "We need only recall Zeno's well-known and later on still popular image of the clenched fist, which holds the laboriously gained truth in an iron grip (Cic. *Acad.* 2.145), or of Kleanthes' fingers worn to the bone from nervously rubbing them together while thinking (Sid. *Apoll. Epist* 9.9.14)."

seat of honor.”⁴⁰ However, in order to articulate the difference between these positions, both philosophic and physiognomic, we need to analyze these brows with the finer criteria we have learned from Ekman.

Starting with Zeno, we find that the brow is contracted not so much in effort as in sadness. Many of the signs are there. Although the skin below the eyebrow is not triangulated, (a) the inner corners of the eyebrows are nonetheless drawn up. This feature gives both brows some of the droopiness characteristic of sadness. As well, (c) the upper eyelid inner corner is raised, accentuating the effect. The mouth is, as usual, obscured by facial hair, but the drooping moustache achieves the same sad effect as when (d) the corners of the lips are down. Comparison with an Ekman photograph of pure sadness (Figure 35*) should help to confirm this analysis. Zeno is sad, then, which appears ironic if we remember that Stoics were supposed to be impassive, but not so surprising if we contemplate what sort of inner loneliness results from the cultivation of impassivity in all spheres of life, including love and friendship.

Epicurus exhibits no less irony. As Zanker wrote, his expression does indeed advertise his remoteness and unattainability, but these features stem from an apparent anger. After all, (a) brows are drawn down and together, which gives them anger’s generic slope inward, converging on the nose. Miraculously, the severity of this convergence does not produce vertical wrinkles, although they do seem to be beginning as they rise over the nose (b). There are some horizontal wrinkles, but they are mild compared with the depth of the wrinkles that (c) lie above the tilting brow, accentuating this effect. Either (d) the lower eyelids are tensed, or (e) the upper eyelids are lowered, since there is little room for the absent sclera. All told, this gives the eyes (f) a hard stare. While the mouth is covered with facial hair, and anger signs in all three regions of the face are needed to make an uncontroversial analysis, Epicurus appears no less angry than the Bronze Head from Olympia, which was adduced earlier as the closest Hellenistic

⁴⁰ Zanker, 1995: 122.

sculpture comes to unambiguous anger.⁴¹ To confirm this analysis further, compare Epicurus with the Ekman photograph of anger below him (Figure 36*).

The Epicureans famously sought pleasure, where this was not joy, ecstasy or indulgence, but instead a freedom from care that was complemented by the stable satisfaction of intellectual life. Despite their bruited dogmatic differences with the Stoics, both sought the equanimity that was the common goal of all Hellenistic philosophers – whether this was conceived as a freedom from care or a total impassivity. It is thus ironic to find the eponymous founder of the Epicureans as affected by care as his rival, Zeno. Whereas the Stoic was sad, though, Epicurus appears angry. We saw earlier how the look of contemplation was but the brow of anger. Epicurus' sculptor has taken that look to an extreme, supplementing it with the contracted eyes that are also symptomatic of anger. Whether Epicurus was an angry man, in contradiction with his own teachings, or whether an exaggerated portrait only makes him seem that way, we cannot know. The mere possibility of such an irony is yet another fruit of the facial analysis of Hellenistic sculpture.

⁴¹ Figure 25.

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