

Questions of the birth of the artist are often reckoned to be related to the emergence of the craftsman as an individual who identifies himself on his works. But there has been rather little discussion in this context of the actual evidence for craftsmen identifying themselves in Greek painting and sculpture. This despite the fact that there is a rather substantial body of material which is relevant to this question, both in the form of painters' and potters' signatures on painted pottery, both from Athens and from elsewhere, and in the form of sculptors' signatures, characteristically on the base of free-standing sculpture or sometimes on relief sculptures themselves.

Two reasons for this neglect have been the unhelpful organisation and incomplete state of Jean Marcadé's *Receuil des signatures de sculpteurs grecques* (Paris, 1953, 1958), and the reluctance of scholars of painted pottery even to raise the question of whether the craftsman signing a pot should be considered to have identified himself thereby as an 'artist', in one tradition because it is considered obvious that he has and in the other tradition because it is obvious that he cannot have done.

This paper looks at the chronological distribution of signatures of both pot painters and sculptors, and where and how those who sign identify themselves, and at how signatures relate to other aspects of the form and content of the object signed. I argue that when looked at from the viewpoint of signatories the decision of the artist to make himself identifiable emerges as no simple matter, but one strongly influenced by particular circumstances, and that the relevant circumstances include very localised matters closely connected to the particular object being made, and very general concerns of a political nature. These findings both reinforce the conclusion that the issue of the 'birth of the artist' must be seen in a full sociological context and at the same time emphasise that being an artist was in important ways an aesthetic matter.