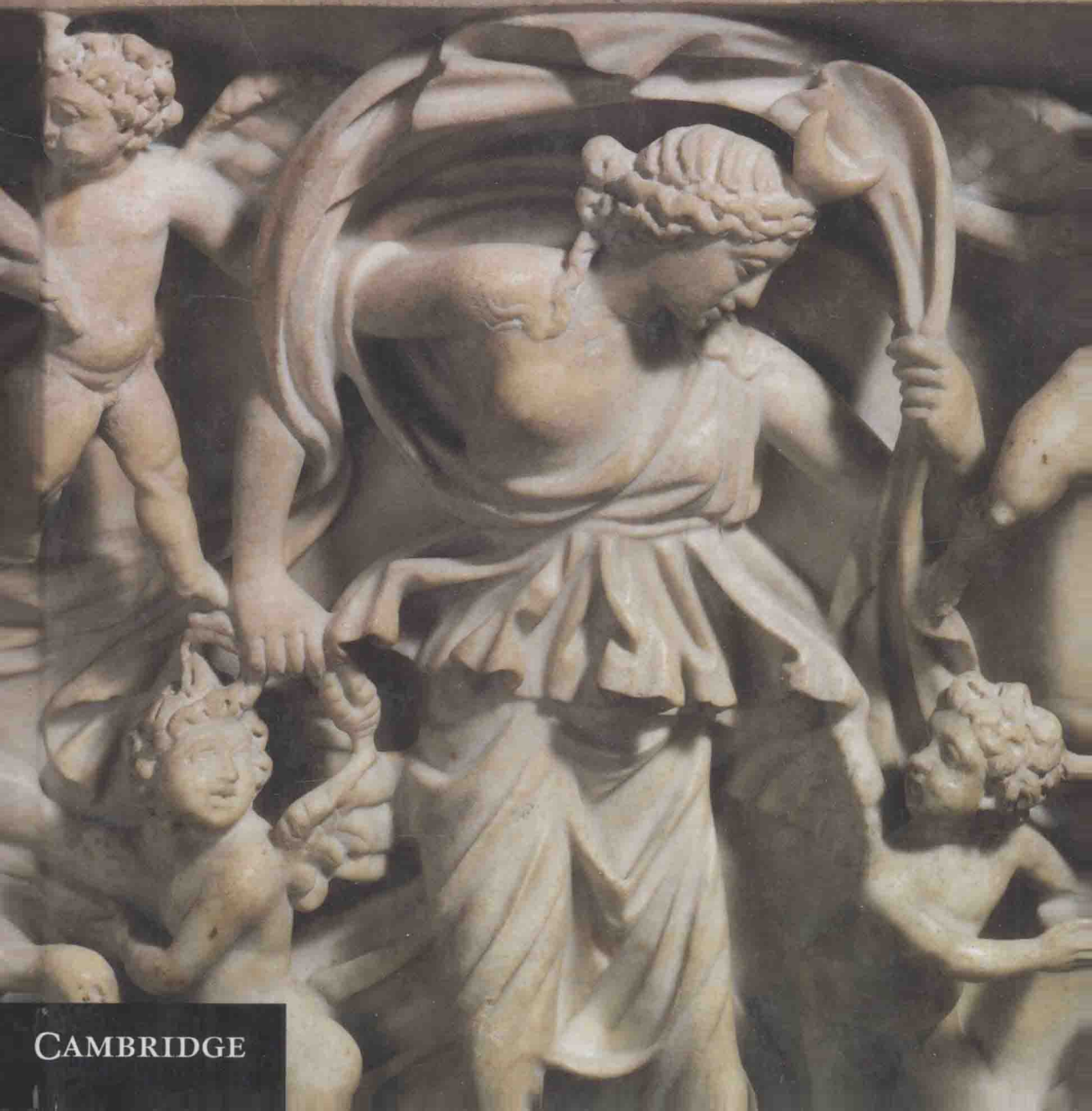


Verity Platt

GREEK  
CULTURE  
IN THE  
ROMAN  
WORLD

# Facing the Gods

Epiphany and Representation in  
Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion



CAMBRIDGE

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## Note on the text

Faced with the classicist's familiar dilemma over dating and nomenclature, I have used BCE/CE rather than BC/AD for dates, and have retained the familiar Latin forms of Greek names, except in Chapter 8, where (with the exception of Selene), I have used the Roman rather than Greek names of deities portrayed in Roman funerary art. Any abbreviations in the main text that are not listed on pp. xvi–xviii employ the conventions of Liddell and Scott's *Greek–English Lexicon* (LSJ). Translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

The second half of Chapter 4 is reworked from my article 'Evasive Epiphanies in Ekphrastic Epigram', published in *Ramus* 31 (2002: 33–50). Chapter 7 is an extended and revised version of 'Virtual Visions: *Phantasia* and the Perception of the Divine in *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*', published in E. Bowie and J. Elsner (eds.), *Philostratus* (Cambridge, 2009: 131–54). I am grateful to Aural Publications and Cambridge University Press for their permission to reuse this material.

## Abbreviations

AA	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i>
A&A	<i>Antike und Abendland. Beiträge zum Verständnis der Griechen und Römer und ihres Nachlebens</i>
AION	<i>Annali dell'Istituto universitario orientale di Napoli</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJPh	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
AntC	<i>L'Antiquité classique</i>
Anth. Pal.	<i>Anthologia Palatina</i>
Anth. Plan.	<i>Anthologia Planudea</i>
AntK	<i>Antike Kunst</i>
ArchEph	<i>Αρχαιολογική Ἐφημερίς</i>
ARV <sup>2</sup>	Beazley J. D. <i>Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters</i> . Oxford, 1963
ASR	<i>Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs</i> . Berlin
AthMitt	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i>
BABesch	<i>Bulletin Antieke Beschaving. Annual Papers on Classical Archaeology</i>
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London</i>
BMMA	<i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>
BSA	<i>Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
Carm. Epigr.	Buecheler, F. and A. Riese (eds.). <i>Anthologia Latina sive Poesis Latinae Supplementum. Pars Posterior: Carmina Epigraphica. Fasciculus II</i> . Leipzig, 1897
Carm. Sep.	Kholodniak, I. I. (ed.). <i>Carmina Sepulcralia Latina</i> . St Petersburg, 1897
CEG	Hansen, P. A. <i>Carmina Epigraphica Graeca</i> . 2 vols. Berlin, 1983–9
CIA	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
ClAnt	<i>Classical Antiquity</i>
CPh	<i>Classical Philology</i>
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i>

CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
CW	<i>Classical World</i>
DK	Diels, H. (ed.). <i>Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> . 6th edn. Rev. W. Kranz. 3 vols. Berlin, 1952
EA	<i>Epigraphica Anatolica</i>
EG	Kaibel, G. <i>Epigrammata Graeca</i> . Berlin, 1878
EL	<i>Études de lettres</i>
GP 1965	Gow, A. S. F. and D. L. Page. <i>The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams</i> . 2 vols. Cambridge, 1965
GP 1968	Gow, A. S. F. and D. L. Page. <i>The Greek Anthology. The Garland of Philip and Some Contemporary Epigrams</i> . 2 vols. Cambridge, 1968
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
FD	<i>Fouilles de Delphes</i>
FGrH	Jacoby, F. (ed.). <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Berlin and Leiden, 1923–62
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
I. Iasos	(IK 28.1–2) Blümel, W. <i>Die Inschriften von Iasos</i> . 2 vols. Bonn, 1985
I. Knidos	(IK 41) Blümel, W. <i>Die Inschriften von Knidos</i> . Bonn, 1992
I. Mylasa	(IK 34–5) Blümel, W. <i>Die Inschriften von Mylasa</i> . 2 vols. Bonn, 1987–8
I. Stratonikeia	(IK 21, 22.1, 22.2) Şahin, M. Ç. <i>Die Inschriften von Stratonikeia</i> . 3 vols. Bonn, 1981, 1982, 1990
ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae. Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Berolinensis et Brandenburgensis Editae</i> . Berlin, 1873–
IK	<i>Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien</i> . Bonn, 1972–
Inscr. Perg.	Fraenkel, M. <i>Die Inschriften von Pergamon</i> . Altertümer von Pergamon 8. 2 vols. Berlin, 1890–5
IOSPE	Latyshev, V. V. <i>Inscriptiones Antiquae Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini</i> . St Petersburg, 1916
IstMitt	<i>Istanbuler Mitteilungen</i>
IvM	Kern, O. <i>Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander</i> . Berlin, 1900
JDAI	<i>Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JRA	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
JRH	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
KA	Kassel, R. and C. Austin. <i>Poetae Comici Graeci</i> . Berlin, 1983–

KRS	Kirk, G. S., J. E. Raven and M. Schofield. <i>The Presocratic Philosophers. A Critical History with a Selection of Texts</i> . 2nd edn. Cambridge, 1983
LBW	Le Bas, P. and W.-H. Waddington. <i>Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure</i> . 3 vols. Paris, 1851–70
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> . Zurich, 1981–99
LSAM	Sokolowski, F. <i>Lois sacrées de l'Asie Mineure</i> . Paris, 1955
Mansi	Mansi, J. D. <i>Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio</i> . 31 vols. Florence and Venice, 1759–98
MD	<i>Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici</i>
MÉFRA	<i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité</i>
MH	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OGIS	Dittenberger, W. <i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae. Supplementum Sylloges Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . 2 vols. Leipzig, 1903–5
PCPS	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
PMG	Page, D. L. <i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> . Oxford, 1962
PPM	<i>Pompei. Pitture e mosaici</i> . Rome, 1990–2003
QUCC	<i>Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica</i>
RA	<i>Revue archéologique</i>
RAC	<i>Rivista di archeologia cristiana</i>
RCCM	<i>Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale</i>
RE	Pauly, A., G. Wissowa et al. <i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Stuttgart, 1894–1980
REA	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
RIA	<i>Rivista dell'Istituto nazionale d'archeologia e storia dell'arte</i>
RM	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung</i>
RRC	Crawford, M. H. <i>Roman Republican Coinage</i> . Cambridge, 1974
RSP	<i>Rivista di studi pompeiani</i>
<i>Sammelbuch</i>	<i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten</i> . Strasburg
SB	Shackleton Bailey, D. R. <i>Anthologia Latina</i> . Stuttgart, 1982
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
Syll. <sup>3</sup>	Dittenberger, W. <i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> . 4 vols. 3rd edn. Leipzig, 1960
SyllClass	<i>Syllecta Classica</i>
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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## Introduction

Ἀφροδίτην ἐλεφαντίνην ἐν ἀπαλοῖς μυρρινῶσιν ᾄδουσιν ἀπαλαὶ κόραι.  
διδάσκαλος αὐτὰς ἄγει σοφὴ καὶ οὐδὲ ἔξωρος. ἐφιζάνει γὰρ τις ὥρα καὶ  
ῥυτίδι πρώτῃ, γήρως μὲν τὸ ὑπόσεμνον ἔλκουσα, τούτῳ δ' αὖ  
κεραννύσα τὸ σωζόμενον τῆς ἀκμῆς. καὶ τὸ μὲν σχῆμα τῆς Ἀφροδίτης  
Αἰδοῦς, γυμνῆ καὶ εὐσχήμων, ἡ δὲ ὕλη συνθήκη μεμυκός ἐλέφαντος.  
ἀλλ' οὐ βούλεται γεγράφθαι δοκεῖν ἢ θεός, ἔκκειται δὲ οἷα λαβέσθαι.

βούλει λόγου τι ἐπιλείβωμεν τῷ βωμῷ; λιβανωτοῦ γὰρ ἱκανῶς ἔχει  
καὶ κασίας καὶ σμύρνης, δοκεῖ δέ μοι καὶ Σαπφοῦς τι ἀναπνεῖν. ἐπαινετέα  
τοῖνυν ἡ σοφία τῆς γραφῆς, πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι τὰς ἀγαπωμένας λίθους  
περιβαλοῦσα οὐκ ἐκ τῶν χρωμάτων αὐτὰς ἐμιμήσατο, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ  
φωτός, οἷον ὀφθαλμῷ κέντρον τὴν διαύγειαν αὐταῖς ἐνθεῖσα, εἶτα ὅτι  
καὶ τοῦ ὕμνου παρέχει ἀκούειν. ᾄδουσι γὰρ αἱ παῖδες, ᾄδουσι, καὶ ἡ  
διδάσκαλος ὑποβλέπτει τὴν ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν κροτοῦσα τὰς χεῖρας καὶ ἐς τὸ  
μέλος ἱκανῶς ἐμβιβάζουσα.

Aphrodite, made of ivory, delicate maidens are hymning in delicate  
myrtle groves. The chorister who leads them is skilled in her art, and not  
yet past her youth; for a certain beauty rests even on her first wrinkle,  
which, though it brings with it the gravity of age, yet tempers this with  
what remains of her prime. The type of the goddess is that of Aphrodite  
goddess of Modesty, naked and graceful, and the material is ivory, closely  
joined. However, the goddess is unwilling to seem painted, but she stands  
out as though one could take hold of her.

Do you wish us to pour a libation of discourse on the altar? For of  
frankincense and cinnamon and myrrh it has enough already, and it  
seems to me to give out also a fragrance as of Sappho. Accordingly the  
artistry of the painting must be praised, first, because the artist, in  
making the border of precious stones, has used not colours but light to  
depict them, putting a radiance in them like the pupil in an eye, and,  
secondly, because he even makes us hear the hymn. For the maidens are  
singing, are singing, and the chorister frowns at one who is off key,  
clapping her hands and trying earnestly to bring her into tune.

Philostratus, *Imagines* 2.1–3<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Transl. from Arthur Fairbanks's Loeb Classical Library edition, 1969 (with some modifications).



A statue, a song, a scent: the stage is set for Aphrodite. A libation of *logos* – composed by her singing worshippers, by the painter, by the narrator of the ekphrasis, by Philostratus himself – is poured in expectation of her presence. But where is the goddess? In an infinite recession of registers, she stands as an ivory image, depicted within a painting, described within a text. This Aphrodite, here in her guise as a goddess of Modesty (*aidōs*), is surely beyond our grasp. Ivory, medium of duplicity (and the gate through which false dreams pass), signals the statue's capacity to tempt and deceive, even as its flesh-like tones and organic warmth recall the wish fulfilment granted to Pygmalion (whose living doll, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was also made of ivory).<sup>2</sup> And yet, despite the veil of representation that stands between reader and goddess, Aphrodite 'does not want to seem painted'; she is 'set forth' or 'projected' (ἐκκεῖται) from the screen of discourse, willing herself to be 'seized', even 'possessed' (λαβέσθαι) by the viewer. Is it not strange to impute motives to the image in this way, to refer to it as 'the goddess' (ἡ θεός), rather than 'the statue'? What does it (she?) want?<sup>3</sup>

She wants, Philostratus suggests, to be experienced as an epiphany.

Here, in the programmatic introduction to his second book of ekphraseis, Philostratus gives form to an abiding tension that exists between art and the sacred (and, indeed, at the heart of representation itself): what does it mean to make the gods present through acts of human creativity? How can images be experienced as divine, when their material, their facture, their framing are so clearly dependent upon cultural artifice? When, as in the opening words of the ekphrasis, deity must be inevitably coupled with statue, Aphrodite with ivory (Ἀφροδίτην ἐλεφαντίνην), in a necessary symbiosis of form and matter? The text generates a double affect akin to the play of 'absorption and erudition' that accompanies the viewing of any naturalistic image, giving form to the viewer's simultaneous desire for the image to be 'real' and recognition of its status as a man-made object.<sup>4</sup> In this sense the ivory

<sup>2</sup> *Met.* 10.243–97: see Rosati (1983), Elsner (1991, 2007: 113–31), Sharrock (1991a, 1991b), Hardie (2002: 173–226), Salzman-Mitchell (2008) and, on the fantasy of living statues, K. Gross (1992: esp. 69–75) and my discussion of agalmatophilia in Chapter 4, 183–8. Clement of Alexandria (*Protrepticus* 4.57.2) and Arnobius (*Adv. Nat.* 6.22) tell us that Pygmalion actually fell in love with an ivory statue of Aphrodite. On deception in the *Imagines*, see McCombie (2002), R. Webb (2006b) and Squire (2009: 416–27). Philostratus mentions the gates of dreams at 1.27.3, alluding to *Od.* 19.563–7, on which see Amory (1966) and Cox Miller (1994: 14–17), with my discussion in Chapter 6, 253–4.

<sup>3</sup> On the concept of 'what pictures want', see W. J. T. Mitchell (1994).

<sup>4</sup> On the relationship between 'absorption and erudition' in the *Imagines*, see Newby (2009), whose helpful phrase reappears throughout this book. On the desire to collapse distinctions between image and prototype in practices of viewing, see Freedberg (1989) and Maniura and Shepherd (2006).