Facing the Gods

This is the first history of epiphany as both a phenomenon and a cultural discourse within the Graeco-Roman world. It explores divine manifestations and their representations both in art and in literary, historical and epigraphic accounts. The cultural analysis of epiphany is set within a historical framework that examines its development from the archaic period to the Roman Empire. In particular, a surprisingly large number of the images that have survived from antiquity are not only religious but epiphanically charged. Verity Platt argues that the enduring potential for divine incursions into mortal experience provides a reliable cognitive structure that supports both ancient religion and mythology. At the same time, Graeco-Roman culture exhibits a sophisticated awareness of the difficulties in apprehending deity and representing divine presence, and of the potential for the man-made sign to lead the worshipper back to an unmediated epiphanic encounter.

VERITY PLATT is Associate Professor in the departments of Classics and Art History at Cornell University, having previously taught at the universities of Exeter and Chicago. Her research interests include attitudes to the sacred image in antiquity, ancient theories of representation, the relationship between image and text, and Roman wall-painting and funerary art. This is her first book.
GREEK CULTURE IN THE ROMAN WORLD

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Facing the Gods

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

VERITY PLATT
To my parents,
Jane and Richard Platt,
with love and thanks.
Colours are all muddled up
and the image is entangled
with the thing
and the eyes burn.

Saadi Youssef, *Poetry*

He believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they themselves are the most delicate and evanescent of moments.

James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*
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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.

Abbreviations

AA Archäologischer Anzeiger
ΑΔΑ Αντικείς και Αβαντλίαντ. Βενίτραζες ημνηνίας Εργοι και Ρώμες και τους Ναννήπολις
AION Annali dell’Istituto universitario orientale di Napoli
AJA American Journal of Archaeology
AJPh American Journal of Philology
ANRW Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
AntC L’Antiquité classique
Anth. Pal. Anthologia Palatina
Anth. Plan. Anthologia Planudea
AntK Antike Kunst
ArchEph Αρχαιολογικη Εφημερίς
ARV² Beazley J. D. Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters. Oxford, 1963
ASR Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs. Berlin
AthMitt Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung
BABesch Bulletin Antieke Beschaving. Annual Papers on Classical Archaeology
BCH Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
BICS Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London
BMMA Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art
BSA Annual of the British School at Athens
CIA Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum
CIL Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CJ Classical Journal
CIAnt Classical Antiquity
CPh Classical Philology
CRAI Comptes rendus de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres
List of abbreviations  xvii

CQ  Classical Quarterly

CW  Classical World


EA  Epigraphica Anatolica

EG  Kaibel, G. Epigrammata Graeca. Berlin, 1878

EL  Études de lettres


GRBS  Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies

FD  Fouilles de Delphes


HSCP  Harvard Studies in Classical Philology


ICS  Illinois Classical Studies

IG  Inscriptiones Graecae. Consilio et Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Berolinensis et Brandenburgensis Editae. Berlin, 1873–


IOSPE  Latyschev, V. V. Inscriptiones Antiquae Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini. St Petersburg, 1916

IstMitt  Istanbuler Mitteilungen

IvM  Kern, O. Die Inschriften von Magnesia am Maeander. Berlin, 1900

JDAI  Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts

JHS  Journal of Hellenic Studies

JRA  Journal of Roman Archaeology

JRH  Journal of Religious History

JRS  Journal of Roman Studies

List of abbreviations

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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>MD</td>
<td><em>Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEFRA</td>
<td><em>Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Antiquité</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MH</td>
<td><em>Museum Helveticum</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTS</td>
<td><em>New Testament Studies</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCPS</td>
<td><em>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUCC</td>
<td><em>Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td><em>Revue archéologique</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAC</td>
<td><em>Rivista di archeologia cristiana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCCM</td>
<td><em>Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REA</td>
<td><em>Revue des études anciennes</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhM</td>
<td><em>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIA</td>
<td><em>Rivista dell’Istituto nazionale d’archeologia e storia dell’arte</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>RM</td>
<td><em>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>RRC</td>
<td>Crawford, M. H. <em>Roman Republican Coinage.</em> Cambridge, 1974</td>
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<td>RSP</td>
<td><em>Rivista di studi pompeiani</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sammelbuch</td>
<td><em>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten.</em> Strasburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEG</td>
<td><em>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</em></td>
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<td>SyllClass</td>
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<td><em>Transactions of the American Philological Association</em></td>
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<td><em>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</em></td>
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