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INTRODUCTION

In the five centuries between the Persian Wars and the death of Kleopatra, the Greeks not only created some of the ancient world's best-known monumental sculptures, but also gave them complex and at times contentious afterlives. As visual and written sources attest, the Greeks washed, perfumed, and polished statues; they poured libations upon them and placed in their hands the bloody viscera of animal sacrifice. They prayed before sculptures and sang hymns; they knelt, touched marble chins in supplication, and clasped their arms around unyielding bodies of bronze or wood.

Given the character of the Greeks' relations with sculptures – physical, tactile, highly interactive – it is not surprising that more negative practices too occurred. The Greeks damaged statues, looting them in war, stealing or vandalizing them in peace. They overturned marble sculptures and melted down bronzes; heads were cut off, eyes slit, projecting limbs broken away. And they removed images from view, warehousing them or reusing them in new contexts.

These afterlives of Greek monumental sculptures are unfamiliar to the general public and infrequently discussed by specialists; creation, not use, has been the focus of scholarly inquiry. But just as birth is only the starting chapter in an individual's biography, so, too, an image's origin is just the beginning of its history. This book seeks to reconstruct the afterlives of Classical and Hellenistic sculptures, the complex histories that followed

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their commissioning by patrons, creation by artists, and setting up in high-profile locations. It concentrates not on the Greeks' normative, valorized interactions with them but on those deemed inappropriate, aberrant, or dangerous. Combining a broad survey of sculptural afterlives with case studies of major historical incidents, it shows how the Greeks carried out such dangerous interactions, and also how they responded to and commemorated them. In doing so, this book challenges what I call the myth of Greek exceptionalism and offers instead a more nuanced understanding of the role of sculptures in Hellenic society.

The myth of Greek exceptionalism holds that the maltreatment of statues – while regularly practiced elsewhere within the ancient Mediterranean world – was barbaric, deviant, and fundamentally un-Hellenic. As is discussed in Chapter 3, the Greeks themselves first promulgated this myth in the aftermath of the Persian wars of 490 and 480/79 BCE. It was then reiterated and adumbrated by later generations, so that by the early second century the Athenians could complain that the Macedonian king Philip V characterized the Romans as barbarians (*barbaros*), while he himself "had so polluted at the same time all human and divine law … [that] half-burned, mutilated statues of gods lay among the fallen doors of their temples."[1]

This attitude, so prevalent in the ancient literary sources, has affected modern scholarship as well. As Zainab Bahrani has argued, "[A]ligning themselves with the ancient Greeks, [scholars] see the mutilation and theft of statues as a barbaric act of violence."[2] And while specialists in the Ancient Near East, Egypt, and Rome have extensively investigated such negative interactions with sculptures, Hellenists have neglected them.[3] At the same time, the recent discussion of aesthetic rationalization in Greece – with its emphasis on artists' treatises, armchair art histories, and the formation of art collections – has shifted the focus away from sculptures as functional objects to present them instead as autonomous works of art.[4]

This book complements such studies by offering the first comprehensive historical account of the Greeks' negative interactions with monumental sculptures. It in no way seeks to deny the existence or significance of rationalizing, aesthetic approaches; indeed, the tracking of such attitudes from their first articulation in Homeric epic, through the technical and philosophical treatises of the Classical era, and into the art historical narratives of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, has been a critical achievement of contemporary scholarship.[5] My argument is simply for the concurrence of these attitudes (most visible in elite literary sources) with other, less intellectualized approaches toward monumental sculptures. And I suggest that these latter approaches – together with the cultural practices they entailed, for example the washing, feeding, and so forth described earlier – profoundly affected the afterlives of sculptures during the Classical and Hellenistic eras.

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This book aims to recapture such afterlives; it also recalibrates the myth of Greek exceptionalism. It draws on written, archaeological, and visual sources to demonstrate that the Greeks did engage in negative interactions with monumental sculptures, in a manner that was characteristic as well of other ancient Mediterranean societies. But it also suggests that the Greeks were distinctive, first, for the range of image-related behaviors deemed unacceptable; second, for their characterization of such actions as barbaric and un-Hellenic; and third, for the outsized responses these incidents generated, as the Greeks sought to make amends for the past and ensure its preservation in memory.

The *range of image-related behaviors deemed unacceptable* was unusually broad in Classical and Hellenistic Greece. To judge from their myths, their laws, and historical accounts of particular incidents as well as the visual evidence, the Greeks anathematized the intentional, malicious mutilation or destruction of statues; this included, for example, the chopping off of heads, smashing of hands or feet, and injuring the faces of marble sculptures; as well as the dismemberment or melting down of bronzes.[6] Given the cruel intent as well as the long-lasting effect of such actions, this is not surprising. But the Greeks also deemed problematic a range of behaviors that modern observers might consider less pointed or upsetting, for instance "collateral damage" to religious dedications in war; theft; disreputable behavior directed toward images (e.g., stealing the offerings meant for divine statues, or befouling them with excrement); re-carving or reuse of funerary monuments; and warehousing of portraits of disgraced political leaders.[7]

This problematizing of many image-related behaviors is comprehensible given the way monumental figural sculptures functioned in Classical and Hellenistic Greece. These works of art honored the gods, commemorated the dead, and celebrated living individuals. In doing so, they took on a critical role as privileged sites for contact with powers absent or inaccessible in everyday life. Due to their communicative role, these images were particularly valuable – and vulnerable. Any action that affected their functioning, whether malign or inadvertent, had powerful repercussions for the civic community in the short term. In addition, since in the Greek world memory was created above all through monuments rather than texts, damage to statues had important implications for collective memory.[8]

In consequence, the Greeks were more protective of their sculptures and less pragmatic about cases of damage or reuse than other ancient Mediterranean societies. This is not to suggest that such damage never occurred; certainly it did. Particularly in times of war, the Greeks regularly made use of sculptures, for instance looting those of the opposing side for material gain, or redeploying their own to shore up fortifications.[9] But they did not do so lightly, as is demonstrated by the howls of protest that ensued (frequently preserved in literary sources) as well as attempts at reparation visible in the archaeological

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record.[10] It is consequently important to approach the subject of Greek sculptural afterlives with a sensitivity to Hellenic mentalities and an attempt to reconstruct them, rather than imposing our own. What might be understood nowadays as an inevitable, albeit regrettable, outcome of military or political conflict could take on supernatural repercussions for the Greeks; this serves as a useful reminder of the radical difference between modern approaches to sculpture and those of the ancient Hellenes.

The Greeks' characterization of such actions as barbaric and un-Hellenic is also noteworthy. It set them apart from other ancient Mediterranean societies, in which Near Eastern kings, for example, boasted of their abduction of other rulers' sculptures; Egyptian pharaohs ceremoniously created and then mutilated images of foreign enemies; and Roman senators institutionalized the re-carving or destruction of disgraced individuals' portraits in the process now known as "damnatio memoriae."[11] The Greeks, too, engaged in negative interactions with sculptures, but in comparison with their Mediterranean counterparts their practices were more covert, haphazard, and ambivalent. They also created a powerful discourse that condemned such interactions, labeling them as barbaric and "other"; this discourse was articulated with special clarity in elite texts, but can be detected as well in more broad-based communal practices.[12]

As this book's chronological discussion in Chapters 3–6 will demonstrate, the Greeks' condemnation of negative interactions with monumental sculptures had a concrete historical cause. It was spurred initially by the Persian wars of 490 and 480/79, particularly the invasion of Greece and the Persians' destruction of funerary monuments, temples, and divine statues there. It was maintained due to the ways in which the Greeks chose to remember the Persian invasion: in plays and speeches about the historical episode, in artistic renderings of its mythological analogue, the sack of Troy, and in commemorative practices such as the preservation of ruined temples and damaged sculptures.[13] This condemnatory attitude was extended and applied to other problematic episodes, such as the attack on the popular religious sculptures known as herms in 415 and the wartime pillaging of Philip v in the late third to early second century.[14]

Furthermore, I would suggest that the Greeks' attitude toward damage to sculptures was unusual because their experience – of massive invasion, destruction, and near annihilation by a major foreign power – was likewise extraordinary. It reflects Greece's origins as a small, weak, vulnerable association of cities on the borders of great empires.[15] It was through the Greeks' suffering during the Persian Wars, as well as their eventual success, that they defined themselves in opposition to *barbaroi* such as the Persians and other non-Hellenes.[16] One aspect of their self-definition concerned the proper treatment of sculptures, with statue destruction ranked along with Oriental luxury and subjection to

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despotism as "other": senseless, barbaric, impious.[17] In this way, a historical investigation of the Greeks' negative interactions with monumental sculptures has much to tell us not only about art, but also about the formation of Hellenic identity.

The outsized responses such interactions generated were a final distinctive aspect of sculptural afterlives in ancient Greece. While responses to the Persian Wars are especially familiar to modern scholars, noteworthy as well were the actions provoked by the attack on the herms – including a political witch-hunt, show trials, and the exile or execution of at least twenty-four elite Athenian men[18] – as well as Philip v's destruction of Attic religious statues and funerary monuments, detailed in Chapter 6. I have found no parallels for these responses within other ancient Mediterranean societies, whether in terms of the social upheaval they caused or the elaborate memorial practices they engendered. They thus offer useful insights into characteristically Greek anxieties and presuppositions surrounding the proper treatment of images.

At the same time, it is important to stress that Greek responses to sculptural damage were by no means uniform. Rather, they varied, and their variations have much to tell us concerning significant pressure points in Hellenic society. As will be discussed in Chapters 1–2, certain types of sculptures and particular forms of damage were generally unproblematic; others were not. So, too, as the case studies detailed in Chapters 3–6 demonstrate, damage to images could take on extraordinary significance under specific historical circumstances. This book identifies and elucidates the "sliding scale" by which the Greeks judged negative interactions with sculptures. It thus has much to tell us about what they as a society valued most; it also reveals their abiding and irremediable fears. In this way, it offers an illuminating perspective on the interconnections between one of the Greeks' great cultural achievements – monumental figural sculpture, so influential from the Roman period to the present day – and the mundane experiences of daily lives in the Classical and Hellenistic eras.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS STUDY

In Greece, damage to monumental public sculptures was *both* a natural outcome of Hellenic cultural practices and at the same time a heavily weighted symbolic action that evoked extreme responses. My book examines these two seemingly contradictory statements in sequence. Part I (Chapters 1–2) offers a transhistorical exploration of the ontology of Greek statues, Part II (Chapters 3–6) a chronological investigation of damage to statues and responses to it during the Classical and Hellenistic eras.

This book begins in Chapter 1 with an examination of the afterlives of Hellenic sculptures, using as a case study an unusual but telling example: voodoo magic. Greek voodoo dolls – tiny lead figurines identified with particular

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individuals and manipulated in ways intended to affect those depicted – are worth analyzing because they are among the most personal and intimate manifestations of the Greeks' negative interactions with sculptures. They are also useful for this study because they are associated with ancient magical handbooks and curse tablets, which offer a clear articulation of how such interactions were expected to work. They thus allow us to construct an explanation for why Greek sculptures were damaged and why such damage was problematic; this provides an overarching theoretical framework for the analysis in later chapters.

With this framework established, I turn in Chapter 2 to a broader discussion of the use and abuse of monumental public sculptures in ancient Greece. The emphasis is on understanding negative interactions as part of a larger set of Hellenic practices involving statues, including as well the washing, clothing, feeding, and so forth described earlier. Taken together, these practices offer a vivid illustration of the horizon of expectations Greeks brought to sculptures;[19] they show what Greeks did with statues, and also what they hoped statues could do for them. In this way, they enhance our understanding of the ontology of Hellenic sculptures; this is particularly important because the literary texts explicitly addressing this question are few in number and biased toward the elite.

The historical discussion of damage to sculptures and the responses it evoked begins in Chapter 3 with an analysis of the Persian invasions of the early fifth century. These invasions, and the destruction of monuments that resulted from them, exercised a formative influence on the ancient Hellenes. They led to an Orientalizing of damage to sculptures, a characterization of it as irrational, impious, and prototypically barbaric. This characterization was promulgated in major monuments such as the Parthenon, in literary texts like the Early Classical playwright Aeschylus' *Persians*, and in communal practices that kept the memory of the invasions alive for centuries. An analysis of this seminal episode thus helps to explain the problematic status of damage to sculptures in the later Classical and Hellenistic eras.

Chapter 4 turns to the most notorious instance of the Greeks' negative interactions with sculptures, the so-called mutilation of the herms in 415. This well-organized and widespread attack by Athenian aristocrats on popular religious depictions of the god Hermes offered a challenge to the prevailing Hellenic understanding of such violence as barbaric and "other." It evoked an extraordinary response – including the exile or execution of prominent citizens and the confiscation of their property – that made clear how deeply upsetting such an attack could be. The incident also demonstrated how violence to minor religious sculptures could be interpreted as a threat to the city, one with wide-ranging military and political implications.

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Drawing on both written texts and archaeological remains, I document the Athenians' reactions to the mutilation and their perpetuation of it in memory; the analysis shows how damage to sculptures carried out by Greeks became a sign of social deviance.

Despite such strictures, damage to monumental public sculptures did occur in ancient Greece; Chapters 5–6 offer two case studies elucidating when it was justified, and why it was, in these cases, nonetheless problematic. Chapter 5 examines the large-scale transformation of the Kerameikos in the Late Classical to Early Hellenistic era, when fortifications were strengthened, the soil level raised, and roads narrowed or eliminated; in the process, many elaborate and beautifully carved marble funerary monuments were injured, taken down, or appropriated by others. As the analysis of the historical context makes clear, the grave stelai were not maliciously attacked; rather, they suffered collateral damage in the course of Athenian military preparations for a siege. At the same time, close examination of the archaeological evidence indicates how much was lost, with deleterious consequences for family and civic memory.

While rare in the democracies and oligarchies of the Classical era, damage to leaders' portraits became increasingly significant under the Hellenistic monarchies. Chapter 6 surveys the textual and archaeological evidence for several of these attacks, focusing on well-attested incidents involving the late Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt, Philip V of Macedonia, and the generals of Greek inter-polis federations. It demonstrates that while the destruction of a ruler's image could follow the death of the king and help to legitimize his successor, it could also take place in more fluid and dangerous circumstances as a form of symbolic protest against a still-powerful monarch. In this way, it can be seen as an extreme and negative example of how sculptures mediated the complex interaction between rulers and subjects.

The afterlives of Greek sculptures did not cease with the advent of the Roman empire, but they did change in character. The Conclusion to this book examines the new practices the Romans promulgated with regard to Hellenic statues; these included the looting and collecting of such works; the creation of art historical accounts of them; travel to Greece; and the copying and adaption of Hellenic images for new purposes. I assess the significance of these practices in Rome as well as their effect on the subsequent reception of Greek sculpture during the Renaissance. At the same time, I argue that these aesthetic and rationalizing approaches to Hellenic statues, while common, were not uniform. As the many Early Christian attacks on Greek sculptures make clear, interactive and ritualized responses were still possible as well; damage to statues in the centuries after Constantine was intended to neutralize this still-potent threat.

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EVIDENCE, METHODS, AND PARAMETERS

Although the Greek afterlives of sculptures have generally been neglected by scholars, there is considerable evidence for them. This book draws together the numerous and varied sources, including literary accounts of Greeks' interactions with sculptures and inscriptions detailing the laws governing such interactions, as well as specific incidents; depictions of them on sculpted reliefs and vase painting; signs of damage and reworking on the statues themselves; and archaeological evidence for their contexts. Such a broad range of sources can be complex to navigate, but is nonetheless useful; it offers a richer and more nuanced picture of the afterlives of monumental sculptures than is otherwise possible. At the same time, a wide survey encourages comparison among the different sources of information; this helps to correct for the biases inherent to particular types of evidence.

Histories, dramas, speeches, and philosophical texts are an important source for the afterlives of sculptures, and the most influential scholarship on the subject has relied on them.[20] These literary texts regarding negative interactions with sculptures come in two major forms: the discussion of particular incidents and broader generalizations. For the first, the texts concerning historical incidents are abundant, especially for episodes with wide-ranging repercussions; historians, dramatists, and orators in particular have much to say about events such as the Persian sack of the Acropolis or the mutilation of the herms.[21] The literary sources are likewise plentiful for incidents that might be termed *mythological* or *heroic* rather than strictly historical, for instance, the destruction of the Trojan war hero Protesilaos' portrait or the abduction of the Athena statue known as the Palladion.[22] These latter sources (largely poetic in character), do not reflect actual events, but they nonetheless have much to tell us about what the Greeks imagined and feared. So do the broader generalizations. Comic texts, for example, document Hellenic attitudes very effectively through their use of *hierosylos* (temple-robber) and *tymborychos* (tomb-breaker) as intentionally shocking insults, while laws preserved in the literary sources prescribe heavy penalties for such actions.[23] And philosophical discussions analyze the status of images and consider how individuals should interact with them.[24] In this way, they articulate Greek norms regarding the treatment of sculptures; these form the background against which episodes of damage took on their particular power.

While literary texts are highly informative, they need to be analyzed carefully. These sources do not reflect the attitudes of a broad cross-section of Greek society, but rather that of their moneyed and politically powerful elite authors; this is problematic since, as the discussion of voodoo figurines in Chapter 1 demonstrates, attitudes toward attacks on sculptures were strongly informed by class. Even more problematic is the fact that the texts form part of a literary

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tradition in which negative interactions with sculptures are without exception described as barbaric; as discussed in Chapter 3, this begins with plays and histories created in the aftermath of the Persian Wars and continues, with few alterations, to the end of the Hellenistic era. These texts thus played a key role in formulating the myth of Greek exceptionalism; they have affected not only later ancient literary discussions, but also modern scholarship.

Literary texts concerning images have been critical for the scholarship on particular incidents of damage to sculptures, for instance, the Persian sack of the Acropolis, discussed in Chapter 3, and the Athenian mutilation of the herms treated in Chapter 4. They have also affected more general discussions of the ontology of the image in ancient Greece. They have been central, for example, to the analyses of Jean-Pierre Vernant, who argued in an influential series of articles that Archaic Greek statues were not recognized by their contemporary viewers as images at all; rather, they were "'presentifications' of the invisible," substitutes for their divine or deceased prototypes.[25] Only in the Classical era were such works of art understood as images in the modern sense of the term, that is, as mimetic representations of their referents.

Vernant's anthropological approach has served as a useful corrective to earlier aesthetic analyses, and has encouraged a new appreciation of the Greek image as a historically specific category.[26] At the same time, due its near-exclusive reliance on literary texts, Vernant's work has offered a very unified and consistent model of the ontology of Hellenic sculptures. This book builds on Vernant's work and also complements it through the inclusion of new epigraphic, visual, and archaeological evidence. What the new evidence suggests is that throughout the Classical and Hellenistic eras, Greek statues were more than simply mimetic representations.[27] They still had the potential to serve as vehicles for communication with powers absent or inaccessible; this is what made damage to them so dangerous, and on the other hand so effective a tactic. In this way, my book's broader evidentiary basis leads to a messier, more complex picture of the ontology of Greek sculptures; this deepens our understanding of these works of art.

Looking broadly at the evidence is also helpful when seeking a comparative perspective from which to evaluate the Greeks' negative interactions with sculptures. Much recent scholarship on other periods has focused on such negative interactions, often termed *iconoclasm*.[28] This scholarship can be illuminating; it offers methods of approach and identifies pertinent issues for these often much better-documented eras, that may usefully be applied to Greece as well. It also makes clear the culturally specific character of the Greeks' negative interactions with sculptures by showing what is typical, and also what is not, about Hellenic practices.

Hellenists' neglect of this scholarship has been above all due to a reliance on literary evidence. The Greek theorization of the image was much less complex

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and contentious than that seen in other periods, for instance, Byzantium and the Reformation, and although some philosophers scoffed at statue worship, there was never a concerted effort on the part of leaders or the general public to call into question the status of images as such.[29] But while Greek theorizations of the image were very different from those of later eras, this was not always the case for Greek *practices*. As epigraphic, visual, and archaeological sources make clear, illuminating commonalities exist, for instance, between Greek rituals surrounding divine statues and the Byzantine cult of icons, or Hellenic attacks on ruler portraits and the political iconoclasm of the French Revolution.[30] A broader methodological scope is thus among the advantages of a wide-ranging survey of sources on the Greeks' negative interactions with sculptures because it facilitates comparisons with practices in other eras, with the benefits that such comparisons can bring.

For these interactions, Greek inscriptions are an important though rarely exploited source of information. We have epigraphic sources of two types: first, inscriptions referring to particular historical episodes, and second, general rules. Inscriptions of the first type can help to illuminate events documented as well through literary or archaeological evidence. So, for example, the Attic Stelai of 414–13 show the social and economic repercussions of the mutilation of the herms; they corroborate the testimony of the main literary sources, Thucydides and Andokides, and offer precious information about the wealth and status of those accused in the conspiracy.[31] Other inscriptions are by contrast valuable precisely due to their independence from literary texts. They document episodes unattested elsewhere, for example, an attack on the portrait of the Carian ruler Hekatomnos, or the destruction at Delphi of statues of the Phokaian leaders who sacked the sanctuary there.[32] From such inscriptions, we gain useful information about the perpetrators of negative interactions with sculptures – or at any rate, those believed to be guilty – as well as the response of the polis community to their acts.

Inscriptions of the second category (general rules) offer different heuristic benefits. A law from Elis, for example, specified that any individual who injured the inscription was to undergo the same punishment as one convicted of "the theft of a sacred image."[33] So, too, the well-known anti-tyranny decree from Ilion provided for the destruction of sanctuary dedications and funerary monuments commissioned by aspiring tyrants, as well as the erasure of their names from inscriptions; in an interesting twist, others could pay to have their names inscribed atop the erasures as an unorthodox, yet pragmatic means of raising polis revenue.[34] These inscriptions are informative less because they show what actually happened – there is no indication at Ilion, for example, that the specified punishment was ever carried out – but rather because they demonstrate what was anticipated or feared. They thus have much to tell us about the role sculptures played in the Greek imaginary; they suggest the importance

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