Introduction

Ἀφροδίτην ἐλεφαντίνην ἐν ἁπαλοῖς μυρρινῶσιν ᾄδουσιν ἁπαλαὶ κόραι. διδάσκαλος αὐτὰς ἄγει σοφὴ καὶ οὐδὲ ἔξωρος. ἐφιζάνει γάρ τις ὥρα καὶ ῥυτίδι πρώτῃ, γήρως μὲν τὸ ὑπόσεμνον ἕλκουσα, τούτῳ δ' αὖ κεραννῦσα τὸ σῳζόμενον τῆς ἀκμῆς. καὶ τὸ μὲν σχῆμα τῆς Ἀφροδίτης Αἰδοῦς, γυμνὴ καὶ εὐσχήμων, ἡ δὲ ὕλη συνθήκη μεμυκότος ἐλέφαντος. ἀλλ' οὐ βούλεται γεγράφθαι δοκεῖν ἡ 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 τοίνυν 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 ὑποβλέπει τὴν ἀπᾴδουσαν 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[1]

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[1] Transl. from Arthur Fairbanks's Loeb Classical Library edition, 1969 (with some modifications).

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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).[2] 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' (ἔκκειται) 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?[3]

   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.[4] In this sense the ivory

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[2] *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.

[3] On the concept of 'what pictures want', see W. J. T. Mitchell (1994).

[4] 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).

Aphrodite occupies a perfect position as the lure between books 1 and 2 of the *Imagines*, an embodiment of art's sensuous promise and the inevitable experience of thwarted desire that accompanies any act of beholding (or reading).[5] The goddess's palpable presence draws us in, only to be revealed as a play of mirrors; the shuttling between Ἀφροδίτην and ἐλεφαντίνην, or goddess and image, is a programmatic expression of the continual shifting between wonder and wisdom (*thauma* and *sophia*) generated by the text's educated exegete, whose word-pictures express now emotional involvement with the painting's content, now detached commentary on the *technē*, or skill, of the painter.[6]

Yet there is more at stake in this particular ekphrasis, signified by the elaborate ritual frame that shapes our mental picture (or *phantasia*) of Aphrodite.[7] For although the goddess exists as a statue within a painting within a text, the epiphanic manoeuvre by which this ontological hierarchy is collapsed is generated by a hymn. Aphrodite is made present and palpable for the reader through a series of embedded textual performances prompted by the ekphrastic fireworks of the sophist, who conjures up the hymnic invocation directed by the female choir-mistress (the *didaskalos*) within the text. Together, these enact a libation of *logos*, a verbal offering that through its synaesthetic potency stands for (is literally *redolent* of) the fragrant offerings poured upon the altar in the painting, and which, through a sensuous form of intertextuality, 'breathes forth a scent of Sappho' (Σαπφοῦς τι ἀναπνεῖν).[8] Sappho it was who, as a *didaskalos* of maidens similar to those described in the painting, invoked Aphrodite in her famous hymn as 'enthroned in many colours' (ποικιλόθρονα) and 'weaver of wiles' (δολόπλοκε), begging her to facilitate the fulfilment of her desire for an elusive love-object.[9] In this way Philostratus indirectly invokes Aphrodite

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[5] On the structure of the *Imagines*, see G. Anderson (1986: 265–6), Elsner (1995: 37–9, 2000a) and Braginskaya and Leonov (2006). On ekphrasis, see my discussion in Chapter 4, with bibliography.

[6] On the significance of *paideia* in the *Imagines*, see Maffei (1991) and Elsner (1995: 21–39). The important of *technē* is twice made clear in the proem to book 1, where it is used to refer to proportion (1) and the use of colour (3).

[7] On the relationship between epiphany, representation and *phantasia*, see my discussion in Chapters 5 and 7, esp. 320–9, on Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. On *phantasia* in the *Imagines*, see Elsner (1995: 37–8), Abbondanza (2001), Thein (2002) and Squire (2009: 340–2).

[8] Cf. Libanius on the offering of a 'feast of *logoi*' to Artemis as the crowning event of celebrations in honour of her cult, in a letter to Bacchius of Tarsus, *c.* 362 CE (83 Norman, with Goldhill, 2006: 118–19). On synaesthetic effects in the *Imagines*, see Manieri (1999) and R. Webb (2006b: 120–2).

[9] Sappho fr. 1, lines 1–2; cf. *Imagines* 2.1.3, where Philostratus describes the maidens as 'honey-voiced (μελίφωνοι), to use a charming expression of Sappho', evoking fr. 71.6, μελλιχόφων[ος, 'soft-voiced'. On the role of Aphrodite in the hymn, see A. Cameron (1939),

as a goddess of painting (and writing, for *graphein* refers to both), allud-
ing to epithets that would, of course, be entirely appropriate for a col-
lection of ekphraseis in which painted and rhetorical 'colours' are woven
together in an increasingly dazzling examination of the playful elusiveness
of both prototypes within images, and images within texts.[10] Through this
play of allusion and description, the ekphrasis becomes itself a form of
worship.

By pointing to Sappho's *Hymn to Aphrodite* (itself placed first within
the collection of her poems known to antiquity), Philostratus facilitates
a form of indirect epiphany, diverting us to an ancient prayer in which
the goddess was indeed presented as animate and present, speaking and
smiling to and through her female devotee(s).[11] His ekphrasis closes with
the maidens singing of Aphrodite's birth: 'By looking upward they indi-
cate that she is from Heaven (Ouranos), and by slightly moving their
upturned hands they show that she has come from the sea, and their smile
is an intimation of the sea's calm (τὸ μειδίαμα δὲ αὐτῶν γαλήνης ἐστὶν
αἴνιγμα).' Their use of aetiological myth to narrate the goddess's original
epiphany prompts a smile (μειδίαμα) that echoes Sappho's description of
Aphrodite 'smiling with an immortal countenance' (μειδιαίσαισ᾽ ἀθανάτῳ
προσώπῳ), uniting the goddess with her worshippers through gesture
and performance.[12] The ekphrasis suggests that when experienced within
the context of *ritual* – when the song can actually be *heard* – text and
image can generate a 'real' experience of the divine. Crucially, however,
such encounters can be facilitated only through the most exquisite human

Page (1955: 12–19) and West (1970), who play down the poem's epiphanic aspects; Bowra
(1961: 198–205), on the hymn as a private prayer; Saake (1972: 55–60); Stanley (1976); Carson
(1996); Greene (1996a: 243–6); Hutchinson (2001: 159–60); Winkler (2002: 42–53) and Nagy
(2007: 25–8). On the reception of Sappho in antiquity, see Reynolds (2002: 67–74).
Philostratus' implicit comparison of Sappho to the female *didaskalos* with her maiden pupils
also offers a female paradigm of the homoerotic pedagogic relationship between the sophist
and *pais* established in book 1, on which see Elsner (2004: 173–7).

[10] On Sappho's use of the epithet *poikilothronos*, see Scheid and Svenbro (1996: 53–60). On colour
in the *Imagines*, see Dubel (2009); on the correspondences Philostratus suggests between visual
and rhetorical techniques, see Conan (1987), Beall (1993), Cassin (1995: 493–512) and R.
Webb (2006b). On the use of γράφειν to mean both 'to paint' and 'to write', see Lissarrague
(1992), Boeder (1996: 149–65), Neer (1998) and Squire (2009: 147–8, 347–8, on *Imagines*
2.18.3; 421–2, on *Imagines* 1.31.1, 3).

[11] On the programmatic positioning of Sappho fr. 1 within collections of her works formed
during the Hellenistic period, see Winkler (2002: 42–3).

[12] Fr. 1, line 14. Compare *H. Hom.* 5.3, which describes Aphrodite as 'always smiling' (αἰεὶ
μειδιάει): see Boedeker (1974: 23–6, 32–5) on Aphrodite's Homeric epithet φιλομμειδής, and on
the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, my discussion in Chapter 1, 63–72. On the ritual
orchestration of myth in archaic and classical choral poetry and the mutually reinforcing
relationship between belief and practice in Greek religion, see Kowalzig (2007).

technē: the ivory must be 'closely joined' (συνθήκη); the choristers must sing 'in tune' (ἐς τὸ μέλος). In this sense *thauma* and *sophia*, or absorption and erudition, need not be mutually contradictory. Indeed, it is only through such co-ordinations of wisdom and skill – through the acquisition and demonstration of *paideia* – that the divine might actually be apprehended. It is significant in this sense that the final phrase of the ekphrasis describes the maidens' smiles as an *ainigma* of the sea's calm at Aphrodite's birth, a verbo-visual 'riddle' that by intimating divine epiphany nevertheless reasserts its resistance to all but the most subtly calibrated invocations of presence.[13]

Nowhere is this careful equilibrium between mortal skill and divine radiance more palpable than in Philostratus' description of the precious or 'cherished' gems (τὰς ἀγαπωμένας λίθους) that have been 'cast around' the painting (περιβαλοῦσα), presumably as a kind of frame.[14] On one hand, the *technē* required to manipulate base pigments into transparent, gleaming stones is presented as a sign of the painter's *sophia* – his technical wisdom. On the other hand, the suggestion that he has painted with light itself (ἐκ τοῦ φωτός) to generate a radiance (διαύγειαν) that transforms the jewels into shining eyes takes us beyond the boundaries of representation, shifting into a revelatory mode. In their dazzling indeterminacy, the gem-eyes are akin to the iridescence of Athena's epiphany at *Imagines* 2.27.3, when she springs fully formed from the head of Zeus: 'As for the material of her panoply (τὴν δὲ ὕλην τῆς πανοπλίας), no one could guess it; for as many as are the colours of the rainbow, which changes its light now to one hue and now to another, so many are the colours of her armour'.[15] Likewise the embroidered flowers on the garments of Aphrodite's *korai* at 2.1.3 'are miraculous

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[13] Compare 1.6.3, where the allegorical significance of the Erotes' play is described as a 'beautiful riddle' (καλὸν τὸ αἴνιγμα). Significantly, 2.1 makes visible an Aphrodite who is present but unseen at 1.6.7, signified only by offerings in a rural shrine: 'Do you look, please, at Aphrodite (σὺ δέ μοι τὴν Ἀφροδίτην βλέπε). But where is she and in what part of the orchard yonder? . . . Be sure that Aphrodite is there, where the Nymphs, I doubt not (οἶμαι), have established a shrine to her.' The pointed contrast in 2.1, which makes 'Aphrodite' the very first word of book 2, draws attention to the increased emphasis on the sacred in the second book of the *Imagines*, with its focus on divine epiphany and its corresponding rituals in 2.1, 2.16 (Palaemon) and 2.27 (the birth of Athena). I am grateful to Jaś Elsner for sharing with me an unpublished piece on Philostratus' use of religion in these ekphraseis.

[14] This is the interpretation of περιβαλοῦσα suggested by Fairbanks, following Benndorf and Schenkel (1893). It does not, however, preclude the idea that the gems are 'scattered around' Aphrodite's shrine as votive offerings. On the dedication of gem collections, or *dactyliothecae* in temples, see Pliny *HN* 37.11 and Suetonius *Divus Iulius* 47.

[15] On this and parallel descriptions of divine materials at 1.10.3 (Amphion's chlamys), 1.16.4 (Pasiphae's iridescent tunic) and 2.2.2 (Achilles' chlamys), see Dubel (2009: 317).

[literally *daemonic*] imitations' (δαιμονίως ἐκμεμίμηται).[16] When experienced as divine or daemonic, matter (*hulē*) has the power to confound conventional categories of material, colour and description altogether, just as at 2.1.1 Aphrodite resists her status as a painted statue and wriggles out of conventional iconographic schemata, being simultaneously 'modest' and 'naked' (note the juxtaposition of Αἰδοῦς, γυμνή).[17] The gem-studded frame that surrounds her, and points to the ekphrasis' status as a frame for the book itself, is simultaneously matter and light, a painted *ainigma* that demonstrates the artist's skill while pointing to the divinity of its depicted content.

As one might expect, the programmatic ekphrasis of *Imagines* 2.1 foregrounds the act of looking. But in line with Philostratus' increased emphasis on the sacred in book 2, the visual operations he traces within the text continually push beyond the conventional limitations of human artistry in order to suggest that the object of the gaze *looks back*.[18] In this respect the all-seeing gems encourage us to read anew the dancing *korai* of the opening paragraph: are they maidens, or, in a pun on an alternative meaning of κόρη ('pupil'), might they too be eyes?[19] Surrounded by all-seeing gems and dancing 'eyes', the statue of Aphrodite cannot but be imbued with a subjectivity of her own, viewed as a sentient being who 'does not want to seem painted', but to engage directly with her worshippers beyond the frame. In this way, Philostratus not only highlights a cultural predilection to attribute agency to anthropomorphic divine forms, but also demonstrates how a complex

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[16] Fairbanks translates 'are represented with wonderful truth'. Compare 2.34, the final ekphrasis in the collection where the Horai are described, in a wonderful echo of 2.1, as being depicted 'with miraculous skill' (δαιμονίου τέχνης): see Elsner (2000c).

[17] On *hulē* as matter itself ('that from which [things] are generated', as opposed to 'wood'), see Arist. *Metaph.* 1032a17, and in late antique theology, Finney (1994: 47–53). Philostratus may imply here that Aphrodite is represented in the *Pudica* pose, with her arms concealing her breasts and pudenda, yet as the juxtaposition of Αἰδοῦς and γυμνή suggests, such a simultaneous revelation and concealment of the goddess's body is itself a form of visual paradox. On the problems inherent in making Aphrodite visually and corporeally accessible to her mortal viewers, see my discussion of Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos in Chapter 4.

[18] See above, n. 14, and on objects that look back, Elkins (1996: 46–85).

[19] See LSJ s.v. κόρη, citing Pl. *Alc.* 1.132e–133a: 'Have you observed that the face of the person who looks into another's eye is shown in the optic confronting him, as in a mirror, and we call this the pupil (ὃ δὴ καὶ κόρην καλοῦμεν) for in it is an image (εἴδωλον) of the person looking?' (translation from W. R. M. Lamb, *Plato*, vol. VIII Loeb Classical Library, 1955). Cf. the proem to *Imagines* 1, where Philostratus specifically claims that 'the varying nature of bright eyes the plastic artist does not bring out at all in his work; but the "grey eye", the "blue eye", the "black eye" are known to painting' (καὶ αὐγὰς ὀμμάτων ὁποῖαί εἰσιν ὁ πλαστικὸς μέν τις ἥκιστα ἐργάζεται, χαροπὸν δὲ ὄμμα καὶ γλαυκὸν καὶ μέλαν γραφικὴ οἶδε, proem 2): see Newby (2009: 325).

interweaving of ritual performance, synaesthetic effect and iconographic, literary and mythological know-how might generate *enargeia*, 'clarity' or 'vividness', in the (mind's) eye of his viewer-readers.[20] In short, he reveals to us the mechanics of epiphany – the cultural codes of representation, performance and reception by which the gods might be made present and accessible to mortal perception. In doing so, he also demonstrates the high level of self-consciousness with which the relationship between epiphany and cultural practice was explored, celebrated and problematised in the literature of imperial Greece (or as he himself termed it, the 'Second Sophistic').[21] For Philostratus was well aware that in order to come face to face with the divine, one must – as the title of this book suggests – supply the very face one seeks.

I start with Philostratus because, as Charly Clerc long ago observed, it is in the prose literature of the second and third centuries CE that we find our most sustained, sophisticated theorisation of the relationship between Greek gods and their images.[22] Texts such as the *Imagines* and Philostratus' works on more overtly sacred themes, such as the *Heroicus* and the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, repeatedly draw attention to the idea that within Greek culture, epiphany (by which I mean the manifestation of deities to mortals) inspired, and was in turn inspired by, practices of visual and literary representation, generating a mutually reinforcing bond that operated within both identifiably sacred contexts and the cultural imagination at large.[23] In examining this relationship, Philostratus and his contemporaries repeatedly highlight the hermeneutic challenges raised by the notion of unmediated access to beings who are by definition invisible and incorporeal, and the difficulty of conveying such experiences through human modes of expression. For example, even a supposed 'first-hand' account of epiphanic autopsy, such as that supplied by Aelius Aristides in his *Sacred Tales* (which relate his experiences of incubation in the sanctuary of Asclepius at Pergamon), is filtered through a complex process of rhetorically self-conscious

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[20] On *enargeia* in the *Imagines*, see R. Webb (2006b), and in Second Sophistic literature more broadly, my discussion in Chapter 5, with further bibliography. On the attribution of agency and interiority to sacred images, see Gell (1998: 134–6).

[21] *Lives of the Sophists* 481. For a discussion of the term and its potential drawbacks as a description of the period's literature, see Goldhill's introduction to his 2001 edited volume, esp. 14–15, and Whitmarsh (2001b: 42–4), with my discussion in Chapter 5, 215–18.

[22] Clerc (1915).

[23] Graf (2004a: 1122) defines epiphany (and the Greek term ἐπιφάνεια) as 'the manifestation of a deity in a spontaneous vision, or during an actual ritual process, as well as in stories'. On the unity of the Elder Philostratus' *œuvre*, see Lannoy (1997) and Elsner (2009a).

narration.[24] Despite the inevitably aporetic nature of much epiphanic dis-course, however, these authors repeatedly advance modes of reading and viewing that offer the possibility of crossing the gap between human artifice and divine reality – between 'ivory' and 'Aphrodite'.

Crucially, for Philostratus, as for Dio Chrysostom, Pausanias, Aelius Aris-tides and Plutarch, any attempt to access divinity in the present is heavily dependent upon the cultural conventions of the past. Just as Aphrodite's maidens must invoke her presence by telling the story of her birth (her first epiphany, itself a programmatic demonstration of her divine identity), so Philostratus' attempt to render Aphrodite present through language in the *Imagines* must draw upon the hymnic invocations made by his lit-erary predecessor Sappho. Such a concern for the cultural conditions of divine presence (and equally, its absence) is therefore inseparable from the broader motivation of Second Sophistic thinkers to recover and pre-serve their religious and cultural history; their sense of 'secondariness' is inevitably dependent upon what came before.[25] In this sense, the model of epiphany they advance is dependent upon a particularly Hellenic form of *paideia*, which looks to sacred tradition in order to emphasise continu-ity with the living religious culture of the present. So it is that while Part II of this book concentrates upon the relationship between epiphany and representation in the Second Sophistic, Part I addresses some of the reli-gious, artistic and literary practices that characterised epiphanic discourse in archaic, classical and Hellenistic Greece, providing the necessary cultural background for a proper understanding of epiphany in the Greek culture of the Roman Empire. Even so, we shall see that in many cases, the intense interest in the phenomenon displayed by later Greek writers entails that much of our evidence for its earlier history is filtered through imperial texts. In order to understand the various epiphanic strategies employed by archaic and classical cult statues, for example (as I do in Chapter 2), it is ne-cessary to perform a kind of textual archaeology, sifting between competing strata of evidence while bearing in mind the interpretative idiosyncrasies and ideological commitments of the author at hand. We might call it the 'curse of Pausanias' that the Narnia of Greek religion is often only accessible through the wardrobe of later tradition. Yet as much recent scholarship has

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[24] See my discussion in Chapter 6, 260–6, 288–90, together with Pearcy (1988), S. Harrison (2000–1), Petsalis-Diomidis (2006b), Downie (2008a) and Holmes (2008).

[25] On the attempts of Second Sophistic authors to re-enter or 'animate' the past, see Bowie (1970), Swain (1996: 65–100), Schmitz (1997, 1999), J. Connolly (2001), Whitmarsh (2001b: 26–9, 41–89) and R. Webb (2006a), with my discussion in Chapter 5.

demonstrated, Pausanias and his colleagues have a great deal to offer the historian of antiquity in their own right.[26]

Until recently the role played by epiphany in Greek culture received rather limited scholarly attention; for decades the standard reference work for historians of Greek religion has been Friedrich Pfister's attempt to catalogue a definitive typology of human–divine encounters in an encyclopaedia entry of 1924.[27] Yet several recent doctoral theses, conferences and ensuing publications have suggested that the cognitive and hermeneutic dilemmas raised by epiphany are of particular interest to contemporary scholars.[28] The vanguard has been led by cultural historians of the French school inspired by Jean-Pierre Vernant's structuralist approach to religious *mentalité*, such as Renée Koch Piettre, together with classical philologists excited by the potential for deconstructive readings of the modalities of divine presence and the aporetic nature of epiphanic language in literary texts.[29] Epiphany

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[26] On attitudes to Greek religion in Second Sophistic literature, see most notably Elsner (1997a, 2001b), Lightfoot (2003), Aitken and Maclean (2004), Galli (2004), Goldhill (2006), Rutherford (2009), Whitmarsh (2009), and, on Pausanias in particular, Elsner (1992, 1994, 1995: 125–55, 2007: 29–66), the papers gathered together in Bingen (1996) and Alcock *et al.* (2001), Hutton (2005b) and Pirenne-Delforge (2008).

[27] Pfister (1924), where he distinguishes between epic, mythic, legendary, cultic and Christian epiphanies; see also Pax (1955), who focuses upon cross-cultural similarities between Greek, Indo-Iranian, Egyptian, Babylonian and Christian models of epiphany, Lührmann (1975), who emphasises their soteriological function, Lane Fox (1986: 102–67), who traces the cultural history of Greco-Roman epiphany against the background of religious change in late antiquity, Versnel (1987), on the vexing question of what ancient viewers actually saw in their visions of the gods, and, for helpful summaries of epiphany's role in Greek religion, Cancik (1990) and Graf (2004a).

[28] Doctoral theses include Stevens (2002) and Turkeltaub (2003), on Homeric epiphany, Platt (2004), on which the present volume is based, and Petridou (2006, to appear in book form with Oxford University Press), which offers a comprehensive survey of the evidence for epiphanic experience in literary and epigraphic sources, together with an analysis of their role in Greek cult and significance for cultural and political identity. Conferences in America and the UK have led to a special edition of *Illinois Classical Studies* on the role of epiphany in Greek religion from Minoan Crete to early Christianity (2004), and a forthcoming volume edited by Petridou and Platt (in press) which foregrounds the special hermeneutic challenges raised by epiphany in Graeco-Roman literature, art and philosophy.

[29] In an unpublished doctoral thesis Koch Piettre (1996) explores the semiotics of epiphany across a range of literary and philosophical texts of the archaic and classical periods with particular reference, following Vernant, to the body of the divine: see also Veyne (1987), Koch Piettre (1999, 2001, 2005), Jaillard (2007: 69–98) and Belayche (in press). The European research project *FIGVRA. La représentation du divin dans les mondes grec et romain* (directed by Nicole Belayche) is also sure to yield interesting work on epiphany. On literary epiphanies, see in particular Pucci (1998, 2002) and Bierl (2004), on Homeric epiphany; Wildberg (1999–2000, 2002) and Sourvinou-Inwood (2003), on Greek drama; Hunter (1986, 1992), Henrichs (1993a), Vestrheim (2002) and I. Petrovic (2007), on Hellenistic poetry; and Feeney (1991:

is a subject, after all, with a long literary pedigree and a powerful (albeit more secular) resonance in modernist fiction.[30]

Classicists have shown less interest, however, in the *visuality* of Graeco-Roman epiphany – the practices of viewing, and thinking about viewing, that informed and reflected the ways in which invisible gods were made visible to their worshippers.[31] Admittedly, not all epiphanies are 'visions': from the shouts of encouragement heard at the battle of Salamis to Zeus' thunderclaps and Hecate's howling hounds at Stratonikeia, epiphanies can be sonic (and even olfactory) as well as visual.[32] Manifestations of divinity often involve significant crossover between the categories of 'vision' (*opsis*) and 'miracle' (*aretē*), and have much in common with other forms of sacred semiosis, including oracles and portents.[33] Yet insofar as manifestations of divinity can only gain significance through human perception (or *aisthēsis*),

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75–7, 1998: 104–7), on epiphany in Hellenistic epic and Latin literature. For a sophisticated deconstructive reading of the epistemological dilemmas and elusive language intrinsic to scenes of epiphany in the Homeric epics, see Stevens (2002, in press). On epiphany in the Greek novel, see T. Hägg (2002), and, in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, Elsner (2007: 289–302).

[30] On James Joyce's adaptation of divine epiphany (most notably in *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man*), to refer to 'a sudden . . . manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phrase of the mind itself' (Joyce, 1963: 216), which enables the thinker to access a kind of inner vision or mental clarity, see Hendry (1963), Beja (1971) and Bowen (1979). On epiphany in Romantic and modernist literature more generally, see Langbaum (1983), Nichols (1987), Bidney (1997) and Tigges (1999) with Maltby (2002) on moments of vision in the post-modern novel. For a subtle analysis of the appropriation and transformation of pagan epiphany by modern Greek poets such as Cavafy, Sefaris and Sikelianos, see Klapaki (2005, in press).

[31] Notable exceptions are Gordon (1979: 10–11, discussed in Chapter 2, 78), Gladigow (1985–6, 1990), van Straten (1992a, a brief abstract), Platt (2002), Elsner (2007: 289–302), Gaifman (2008b, in press) and Klöckner (2009). The role played by epiphany in religious modes of viewing is briefly acknowledged by Donohue (1997: 44–5) and Steiner (2001: 95–104), while the related difficulties of representing the divine in image form are explored by Frontisi-Ducroux (1986, 1988, 1991) and Vernant (1990b, 1991: 27–49, 151–63). On epiphany in Minoan visual culture, see Matz (1958), R. Hägg (1986) and C. D. Cain (2001). On visuality as a 'cultural system' distinct from the mechanism of vision, concerned with both historical techniques of viewing and reflection upon the act of viewing, see Foster (1988) and Nelson (2000), with Levin (1997), on the historicity of vision.

[32] Salamis: Herodotus 8.84.2. Stratonikeia: *I. Stratonikeia* 10, on which see Belayche (in press) and my discussion in Chapter 3, 157. On sonic epiphanies, see Versnel (1987: 50–1) and Wiseman (in press).

[33] On the relationship between epiphany and aretalogy, see Lührmann (1975), who takes the extreme position of denying that *epiphaneiai* ever refer to personal appearances, rather than miraculous demonstrations of power, and Versnel (1987), who surveys the range of strategies, from full anthropomorphic manifestations to meteorological phenomena, by which divine presence was experienced in antiquity. Petridou (2006: 62–76) emphasises the popularity of what she terms *pars pro toto* epiphanies, in which attributes or symbols of the gods are experienced metonymically as manifestations of the gods themselves. On parallels between epiphanies and oracles, see my discussion in Chapter 1, 54–5.