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The stuff of the gods

The material aspects of religion in ancient Greece

Edited by Matthew Haysom, Maria Mili & Jenny Wallensten

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SECRETARY'S & EDITOR'S ADDRESS

Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies
Stockholm University
106 91 Stockholm, Sweden
secretary@ecsi.se | editor@ecsi.se

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ABSTRACT

The "material turn" in the humanities and social sciences has brought about an expanded understanding of the material dimension of all cultural and social phenomena. In the Classics it has resulted in the breaking down of boundaries within the discipline and a growing interest in materiality within literature. In the study of religion cross-culturally new perspectives are emphasising religion as a material phenomenon and belief as a practice founded in the material world. This volume brings together experts in all aspects of Greek religion to consider its material dimensions. Chapters cover both themes traditionally approached by archaeologists, such as dedications and sacred space, and themes traditionally approached by philologists, such as the role of objects in divine power. They include a wide variety of themes ranging from the imminent material experience of religion for ancient Greek worshippers to the role of material culture in change and continuity over the long term.

Keywords: Greek religion, Etruscan religion, Mycenaean religion, materiality, religious change, *temenos*, temples, offerings, cult statues, terracottas, *omphalos*, cauldrons, sacred laws, visuality, purity, pollution, gods' identities, divine power, inscribed dedications

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BOOK EDITORS

Matthew Haysom, Newcastle University
Maria Mili, Glasgow University
Jenny Wallensten, Swedish Institute at Athens

CAROLINE VOUT

17. The stuff of crowded sanctuaries

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood,
Knowing the truth of things unseen before

Ezra Pound, *The Tree*, lines 1–2

Abstract

When we think about ancient Greek sanctuaries, we conjure a landscape densely populated by statues and other votive offerings. Yet still we focus on selected features (the cult statue, temple pediments, particular reliefs or inscriptions) and on how these features interacted with one another to create spaces for sacred viewing. In contrast, this paper looks neither at single statues, nor for sightlines, but at crowding and the ecstasy and truth that comes from the suffocating, some might say, de-sensitizing, sense of experiencing masses of objects, many of them positioned haphazardly. Few dedications in Greek sanctuaries had the charisma of the Delphi Charioteer, but even the most mundane of votives might grow in aura, animacy even, when put next to other objects. Shifting the focus away from epiphany and *ecphrasis* towards "shock and awe", this paper asks that we also look for the ancient experience of god in repetition, redundancy and plethora.*

Keywords: sanctuaries, sculpture, experience, Athenian acropolis, Olympia, Delphi

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Re-grouping

When we think of the material aspects of religion in ancient Greece, we think of sanctuaries full of "gifts to the gods"—truckloads of dedications, from the meagre to the monumental, the mundane to the extraordinary. Yet the plans and reconstructions included in our textbooks are as pristine as the ruined landscapes are desolate: Pheidias' Promachos waving from an abandoned acropolis, or his Athena Parthenos alone inside a partially unwrapped temple.[1] Often this is about expediency: we *know* that the Parthenon's terraces were crammed with statuary and people, just as we know that its interior was stuffed with booty, sacred furniture, and the like. What we don't know, and hesitate to approximate, is where these objects were placed. But without approximation, or at least imagination, we unsurprisingly obsess over bringing order to the Acropolis, about sacred space, sightlines, and architecture (about whether one could or could not see the Parthenon frieze). What about crowding, distraction, and the effects of these phenomena? About being overwhelmed, swept away, alienated and confused? Just as we have known since at least the 19th century that Greek sculpture was polychrome, but for the most part continue to study it as though it were white, so too, despite talking about "wars of monuments"[2] and about "assemblages", we are more skilled at bringing individual ob-

* I would like to thank Robin Osborne for his reading of an earlier draft of this paper, Jessica Lightfoot, Henry Spelman, Hannah Willey, the participants at the *Stuff of the Gods* conference, in particular Julia Shear and Zacharias Andreadakis, the organizers, Matthew Haysom, Maria Mili and Jenny Wallensten, and the text's anonymous readers.

[1] See, for example, Spawforth 2006, 76–77 and 140.
[2] Hansen 1996, 257–276 as discussed in Mylonopoulos 2006, 87, and Scott 2010.

jects into dialogue with other individual objects, or with specific terrain, than at contemplating accumulation and plethora. So what if the Athena Promachos' spear and helmet were visible from Sounion?[3] This need not have made her the most affecting sight on the Acropolis. Perhaps one had to retreat almost that far to put her in the spotlight. At eye-level, she was rather the centauromachy on her shield:[4] what was her role in the sculptural orchestra?

The makers of plans and reconstructions are not alone in seeing the Promachos as the only statue on the Acropolis worthy of more than a walk on part, beyond, that is, the gleaming Parthenos, and ancient olivewood Athena Polias, each of these tantalizingly housed in separate temples, where they embody "epiphanic climax".[5] In her chapter, 'Material epiphany: encountering the divine in cult images', Verity Platt discusses this "doubling" of images, describing the Parthenos as a mimetic likeness that is "epiphanic in appearance and effect", and the Polias as a sign of divine presence that is "epiphanic in origin".[6] Her analysis has much to recommend it, but renders the rest of the Acropolis as rehearsal, when, if we remember Pausanias (cf. Robin Osborne's paper in this volume, *Chapter 1*), he mentions at least four other Athenas, including one usually attributed to Myron, between the Propylaea and the Parthenon alone, not to mention Athenas on its pediments, and sculptures of deities from Hermes and the Graces, Aphrodite, Hygieia, Artemis, Earth asking Zeus for rain, Poseidon and two more Zeuses, through Herakles strangling the snakes as evidence of his divine parentage and potential, and Procne, whom the gods will turn into a nightingale, to a stone on which the satyr Silenus rested when Dionysus visited.[7] For all that some statues of mortals make his list, he makes it clear that he does not want to write about "the more obscure *eikones*", and is soon back to the *theōn agalmata*.[8] By the end of the tour, in addition to the Erechtheion's contents and the statues of Athena on its terrace, blackened from the fire of the Persian sack, we have stumbled upon a bronze Apollo and Artemis and a seated Athena, had further indication of the author's desire to talk about "all things Greek in like fashion", and learned that "the most worth seeing" Pheidian *agalma* of Athena is neither the Parthenos or Promachos but the enigmatic Athena Lemnia.[9]

Pausanias' gaze is, as he is keen to remind us, as selective as it is interrogative. It is not only that there was too much to talk about; it is that his job was to cut a swathe through it, to produce not a catalogue but a panorama, as rich in story as in logic. "I shall not even record all those [Olympic victors] whose statues have been set up ... Those only will be mentioned who themselves gained some distinction, or whose statues happened to be better made than the others", he says of Olympia, making sure to put his curatorship centre-stage.[10] Before he turns to the victor statues, he groups first the altars, then the statues of Zeus, some of which were grouped for real, for example, along the path leading from the Metroon to the Stadium, then the votives. As Julia Kindt acknowledges, "No matter what ordering criteria were applied, thematic grouping of monuments must surely have encouraged direct comparison of neighbouring objects, turning any walk through the sanctuary into an ongoing engagement with a multitude of stories, identities and events, lined up in ever-new combinations and associations depending on the path one followed and where one looked".[11] The options were limitless. Scholars suggest that by the time that Pausanias was writing, there were at least 1,000 bronze victor, honorific and votive statues for Pausanias to choose from, and that this guesstimate is on the low side.[12]

Everyone must have had their own strategy for making sense of this *embarras de richesses*, looking, for example, for representations of Herakles, or for the oldest objects, or latest additions, or for dedications made by their city. Yet when scholars think about *experiencing* the divine, and about how images in sanctuaries facilitated that experience, they privilege access to certain statues, especially *agalmata* (and this is despite recognising that "cult statue" is a problematic term).[13] Certainly, doors and barriers made some statues special—harder to see than others.[14] But all statues in sanctuaries were special to someone: we think of the female friends in the Koan Asklepieion in Herodas' Hellenistic mime, noticing the statues of a girl and her apple, of an old man, of a boy choking a goose, and a woman named Batale, as much as the *agalmata*

[3] Paus. 1.28.2 (an impossible claim).
[4] Paus. 1.28.2.
[5] Platt 2011, 77. See also Petridou 2015.
[6] Platt 2011, 83–114.
[7] Athenas: Paus. 1.23.5, 1.24.1–3 (the Athena and Marsyas group is often linked to a work of Myron described by Pliny [*HN* 33.57]; see Stewart 1990, 147, figs. 290–291). Hermes and the Graces: Paus. 1.22.8 and Frazer 1898, vol. II, 268–273. Aphrodite: Paus. 1.23.2. Artemis: Paus. 1.23.7. Earth and Procne: Paus. 1.24.3. Poseidon and Zeuses: Paus. 1.24.4. Herakles: Paus. 1.24.2. Stone: Paus. 1.23.5. Still useful here is Stevens 1936.
[8] Paus. 1.23.4: τὰς γὰρ εἰκόνας τὰς ἀφανεστέρας γράφειν οὐκ ἐθέλω.
[9] Apollo: Paus. 1.24.8. Artemis, Athena and summary nature: Paus. 1.26.4 (δεῖ δέ με ἀφικέσθαι τοῦ λόγου πρόσω, πάντα ὁμοίως ἐπεξιόντα τὰ Ἑλληνικά). And on the Lemnia, Paus. 1.28.2–3: καὶ τῶν ἔργων τῶν Φειδίου θέας μάλιστα ἄξιον Ἀθηνᾶς ἄγαλμα ἀπὸ τῶν ἀναθέντων καλουμένης Λημνίας. On the Athenia Lemnia in the archaeological and literary record, see Hartswick 1983; 1998.
[10] Paus. 6.1.2. Helpful here is Elsner 2001.
[11] Kindt 2012, 134.
[12] Bol 1978, 1.
[13] See e.g. Donohoe 1997; Pirenne-Delforge 2008, 271–277; Mylonopoulos 2010; Platt 2012.
[14] Mylonopoulos 2011.

by Timarchos and Kephisodotos.[15] For all that this is a mime, and their responses inviting of ridicule, it is also indicative of the unpredictable ways in which viewers cope with crowded display. It reminds us that all statues can be accented by other statues or by more ephemeral types of dedication; or subject to restricted access, belittled, overlooked even.[16]

In the material mayhem of the sanctuary, in a world in which city-states wanted their dedications placed in the "most conspicuous or *epiphanestaton* position available" and sacred laws policed how the space was used in an attempt to keep walkways clear, there were more pressing things to worry about than the distinction between *agalmata* and *eikones*.[17] *That* distinction is largely an artefact of ancient texts, as indeed is our emphasis on god as (single) image, and image as god, an emphasis born of an ecphrastic tradition that begins with Homer, an ecphrastic tradition that is honed over time by the focus on naturalism and Hellenistic epigrams' exploration of the relationship between representation, vision and artistry (literary as well as sculptural and painterly). By the time we get to Pausanias's account of Olympia, and his excursus on Pheidias' Zeus, the cult statue has become the major vehicle for this thinking.[18] Small wonder that elements of that description are interchangeable with ancient epigrams like, "Either god came from heaven to earth to show you his image, Pheidias, or you went to see god",[19] and that our understanding of how sanctuaries staged the divine fixates on god and what god looked like.

But how does this fixation map onto entering a sanctuary (not attempting to make sense of that experience latterly in writing, but breaching the *temenos* and experiencing god's power in and of the moment)? It is hard to reproduce for others the charisma of seas of statues, all of them "property of the gods": think of Homer again bemoaning that, unlike the immortals, he cannot tell of the *plethos* or mass of Achaeans who came to Troy, before doing the best that he can and committing to a list.[20] "All things Greek in like fashion". Temple inventories deploy a similar device, measuring god's power in the weight of the gifts. It is only predictable perhaps that when ownership is transferred, and these gifts are removed from a sanctuary or temple to be borne into Rome in triumph, their wow-factor should again lie in their collective mass: Flavian author, Josephus, for example, speaks of the authority of objects in heaps, not as if transported from Jerusalem one by one in procession, but more amorphously or organically than that, "flowing, so to speak, like a river".[21] This is not only possible because each element is matter out of place. It is *impossible* "adequately to describe the number of these spectacles and their magnificence in every conceivable aspect",[22] just as it is for Pausanias' source to capture in measurements the impression gained from looking at Pheidian Zeus. In the same period as Josephus, or a century or two later, the author of *On the Sublime* attempts to theorize the effects of such magnificence: "excess produces ecstasy rather than persuasion ... and in all respects, wonder together with astonishment always proves superior to the merely persuasive and pleasant". He continues, "It is a natural inclination that leads us to wonder not at the little streams, however clear and familiar, but at the Nile, Danube, Rhine, and, above all, Ocean".[23] If it were not for these lesser examples, we might not grasp the latter's expansiveness.

As important as acknowledging alternative pathways through the display is this transporting thrill and thrall of the ensemble of statuary as ensemble—big, small, metal, wood, primitive, state-of-the-art, all of it working together in harmony or cacophony to disorientate as well as give answers. I quote art critic Jonathan Jones, on the "Bronze" exhibition at London's Royal Academy in 2012: "A few steps into this exhibition my heartbeat started to race and my head was pounding ... Bronze is miraculous ... From here on it's a rush of treasures ... All human life is here, cast in bronze".[24] For Jones, as, I suggest, for many visitors to the ancient sanctuary, it is the cumulative effect that floors, and makes the statues give sound, replacing rational, measured response with something

[15] Herod. 4. And not just statues: read philosophical texts, and we discover that the god by which Plato's Phaedrus swears (*Phdr.* 236d–e) is a random plane tree.

[16] See e.g. Paus. 8.31.8 on a statue of Kore, the base of which is completely covered by ribbons.

[17] Tarn 1924, 149, n. 42 and, on sacred laws and sacred spaces, Gawlinski 2015 and T13. *Lex sacra* Rhodes, 3rd century BC (*LSS* 107 10–18): "... it is not permitted for anyone to request that a statue or some other votive offering be set up in the lower part of the sanctuary from the propylaion ... or in any other spot where votive offerings will prevent people from walking past ..."

[18] Paus. 5.11.9: "I know that the height and breadth of the Olympic Zeus have been measured and recorded; but I shall not praise those who made the measurements, for even their records fall short of the impression made by the sight of the image. Nay the god himself, according to legend, bore witness to the artistic skill of Pheidias. For when the image was quite finished, Pheidias prayed the god to show by a sign whether the work was to his liking. Immediately, runs the legend, a thunderbolt fell on that part of the floor where down to the present day the bronze jar stood to cover the place" (transl. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod). See e.g. McWilliam *et al.* 2011; Lapatin 2001, 80–81.

[19] *The Greek anthology* 16.81.

[20] Hom. *Il.* 2.488–493: "But the multitude (πληθὺν) I could not tell or name, not even if ten tongues were mine and ten mouths and a voice unwearying, and the heart within me were of bronze, unless the Muses of Olympus, daughters of Zeus who bears the aegis, call to my mind all those who come beneath Ilios. Now will I tell the leaders of the ships and all the ships" (transl. A.T. Murray, revised by W.F. Wyatt).

[21] Joseph. *BJ* 7.132–136.

[22] Joseph. *BJ* 7.132.

[23] Longin. 1.4 (οὐ γὰρ εἰς πειθὼ τοὺς ἀκροωμένους ἀλλ᾽ εἰς ἔκστασιν ἄγει τὰ ὑπερφυᾶ: πάντη δέ γε σὺν ἐκπλήξει τοῦ πιθανοῦ καὶ τοῦ πρὸς χάριν ἀεὶ κρατεῖ τὸ θαυμάσιον, …) and 35.4.

[24] Jones 2012.

Fig. 1. Terracotta votive statues in situ *around altar at Ayia Irini, Cyprus. © Medelhavsmuseet, Stockholm. Photograph: Swedish Cyprus Expedition (C01801).*

far more physical. "Looking" (and the kind of assessment of an object that might today count as "art historical analysis") is too constrained for what Jones is doing here; better, "feeling"? Potentially useful too is James Heffernan's distinction between ecphrasis, "the verbal representation of visual representation", pictorialism, and iconicity, which "embraces sounds and sets of relations as well as visual properties".[25] We circle back to Homer, where in one of the two cities depicted on the Shield of Achilles, it is the *blur* of "young men whirling in the dance" with, in their midst, flutes and lyres sounding continually that has "the women stand, each by their door, and wonder".[26] "Wonder" (*thauma)*, the currency of several of our passages, is a body-blow, and one that was thought to change people, to strike them dumb or blind them. In the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*, it is not one, but multiple "wondrous acts", that cause the sailors to feel the force of his power, freak out, and be transformed into dolphins.[27]

More and more work is being done on the positioning of votives in sanctuaries, on and around altars, propped up next to statues, suspended from the rafters, but with the aim, more often than not, of creating hierarchies of dedication rather than theatres of lived experience (*Fig. 1*).[28] If it is experience we want, these small finds have, ultimately, to be factored in, but there is plenty there in Pausanias already, and his tens of statues on the Athenian Acropolis, at Olympia or on the terraces at Delphi, for us to think with.[29] And unlike the crowds of objects in manubial temples in Rome, which mark a particular moment of acquisition and triumph, these statues, crucially, celebrate a rich, *longue-durée* history.[30] As James Davidson has stressed, "This sense of time as accumulative might also be vividly represented in the literal piling up in temples and treasure houses of offerings made during previous festivals and recorded in temple accounts ... Timefulness, was a critical element in the Greek conception of what differentiated mortals from immortals and the basis of all intercourse between them. The gods were not merely deathless but ageless, beyond time, beyond change".[31] For some viewers, "godhead" might reside in the pile's chronological confusion as well as in the mix of shapes, sizes and substances. For others, it took this confusion and each statue's presence in a crowd to bring out its particular properties.

In what follows then, our focus is not on who was responsible for putting particular examples in particular places but on reception, especially the effects of agglomeration, and a visitor's movement through it. The difficulty of plotting the position of enough of our examples means that the picture is, by necessity, impressionistic. Not that this need stall us. As studies of cognitive engagement with exhibits in museums have shown, although artefacts that are more visible in space are more likely to be remembered, "not all visibility is equally impactful". Not only this, but "many elements of the visit (e.g., visitors' goals, additional interpretive material), can disrupt the carefully planned spatial influence envisioned by the curator". Interestingly for us, though the competition that arises from the co-visibility of artefacts might have a negative impact on the amount of attention allocated to each of them, it can also "enhance the visitor's deeper cognitive processing of the exhibition's content". "What could be seen as less optimal", "haphazard", or "a 'distracted' way of interacting with artworks, in fact, resulted in enhancing the interactions". It does not matter whether one takes multiple glimpses, or stands and gazes, it is cumulative time that is important. While the use of mobile eye-trackers has advanced analysis of exhibitions as a set of separate artworks, still, it is "their *synergy*, resulting in exhibitions becoming more than the 'sum of their parts', that remains a truly challenging question".[32]

[25] Heffernan 1993, 3.

[26] Hom. *Il.* 18.494–496 (esp. αἳ δὲ γυναῖκες / ἱστάμεναι θαύμαζον ἐπὶ προθύροισιν ἑκάστη).

[27] I thank Jessica Lightfoot for this point. For τάχα δέ σφιν ἐφαίνετο θαυματὰ ἔργα, see *Hymn. Hom. Bacch.* 34 and, for "wonder" in art, at the emergence of Classical sculpture, Neer 2010, 57–69.

[28] A recent exception is Cusumano *et al.* 2013, whose edited volume rallies scholars to broaden their approaches to the study of ancient religion to include emotional and cognitive responses, with all of the intensity of divine presence that those bring with them.

[29] Paus. 5.16–20 and, for Delphi, book 10.

[30] Welch 2006, 131.

[31] Davidson 2010, 217. Also relevant here are Linders 1987, 116; Petsalis-Diomidis 2010, 272.

[32] Krukar & Dalton 2020. For cognitive approaches to ancient religion, see e.g. the new Cambridge University Press series on ancient religions and cognition, edited by Esther Eidinow and Tom Harrison, and, Eidi-

Fig. 2. Casts of Acropolis korai*, some of them painted to give an impression of what they may originally have looked like, Museum of Classical Archaeology, Cambridge. Photograph: © Caroline Vout and Museum of Classical Archaeology, Cambridge.*

Fig. 3. Installation of Francis Alÿs's exhibition "Fabiola" at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2008. Los Angeles (California), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). © Photograph SCALA, Florence, 2016. Digital Image Museum Associates/LACMA/ Art Resource NY/Scala, Florence.

Seriality

A recent art exhibition, "Serial classic. Multiplying art in Greece and Rome" at the Fondazione Prada in Milan reminds us that "Collectiveness and individuality are not mutually exclusive" and that "repetition or 'sameness of typology' is fundamental for ensuring that Greek art was able to become and remain what it always had been—classical".[33] Repetition or sameness of typology is also fundamental for accessing the experience of visiting a sanctuary, and the ancient experience of worship. Back on the Archaic Athenian Acropolis, centuries before Pausanias' wandering, indeed before the Persian sack of 480 BC and the wealth of building promoted by the Athenian and then Roman empires, thickness of display already allowed for several large-scale, stone equestrian statues, similar to one another in the posture of horse and rider, the placement of the rider's hands and the turn of his head.[34] But these were in a minority compared to the *korai* or maidens, of which we have 297 torsos and fragments (*Fig. 2*).[35] Although all are very much of the block from which they were cut, and stiff as opposed to naturalistic, they compete with each other in the colour, decoration and fall of their drapery, as well as in their jewelry and what they carry in their hand. They offer it, and their nubile beauty, to the goddess. The dearth of male counterparts makes this competitive sisterhood more impressive: in contrast, only a handful of *kouroi* are known, and the earliest of these thought by some to date from the 5th century BC.[36]

How do we make sense of this differentiated seriality? A productive parallel is Mexico-based artist Francis Alÿs's "Fabiola" installation at London's National Portrait Gallery in 2009 and other international venues, which brought together over 300 modern versions of a 19th-century painting of the Roman *matrona* Fabiola, patron saint of the abused and the widowed, most of them painted, but some made from less predictable materials (*Fig. 3*). These "images become a thronging procession," writes Jonathan Anderson in the journal *Religion and the Arts*, "each face directing its attention toward the next in a kind of endless deferral".[37] Because each is similar yet distinct in its handling of likeness, so "likeness" is undermined by something closer to liturgy, where, to cite Anderson again,

now's recent AHRC-funded "Cognitive approaches to ancient religious experience" project with Armin Geertz.

[33] Settis 2015, 55.

[34] Keesling 2003, 12; Eaverly 1995, 5–6 and 23–46, citing Raubitschek 1949.

[35] Karakasi 2003, 115, n. 1.

[36] Martini 1990, 80. Although note Payne & Mackworth Young 1950 (first published 1936), 43.

[37] Anderson 2014, 275.

> repetition can be a means of expanding meanings and more thickly inhabiting them—resisting interpretative collapse rather than contributing to it. Repeated activities, images, readings, and phrases can be a means of more slowly and carefully attending to, absorbing, and digesting their content and implications. The point of liturgical recitations of a prayer, for instance, is not to 'detach' that prayer from tradition ... but to immerse oneself in it until one more fully inhabits its words and speaks them as one's own—in chorus with all others who have inhabited the same tradition. We often glimpse this dynamic at work in religion, because repetition has this effect primarily when motivated and oriented by devotion (drawing oneself toward another) rather than consumption (taking for oneself).[38]

In the ritual-led world of Greek religious practice, it is hard to think that the Acropolis *korai* did not work like this, especially given the public role accorded to unmarried girls or *parthenoi* at religious festivals.[39] By the time we get to the Parthenon decades later, 29 female figures head up the procession on the east frieze;[40] many more women must have been involved in the real Panathenaia. As those in the 6th century BC wound their way from the city-gates at the Kerameikos through the Agora to the Acropolis,[41] they would eventually have been met by, and merged with, the *korai*, who rehearsed the gift-giving that they themselves were about to enact,[42] and perhaps also asked viewers which group was more beautiful, the flesh or the marble. "Spectators could have treated the cortège as a kind of 'Brautschau', a parade of the marriageable girls of the wealthier classes"—a suggestion that becomes more plausible when we set this parade against the statuary, and it and the statuary amidst the animals brought for sacrifice.[43] As Diane Favro has noted of Rome's state processions, "A major ritual parade poured over the cityscape, damming traffic, ebbing away from some monuments and locales while flowing towards others. The sights, sounds, smells, and activities overwhelmed the senses of urban residents". They animated the stone structures to turn space into spatial dynamics. But enduring accounts can only do so much: their very fixity underplays the "erratic liveliness of the original procession" and the realities of moving through a "crowded cityscape".[44]

Athens was by no means unique. The Temple of Hera on Samos is another notable example.[45] The statues of *korai* and *kouroi* "that populated sanctuaries as votive offerings were both individual and serial—like voices in a chorus".[46] Salvatore Settis' choral analogy is made more literal when we remember Euripides' chorus of women, chosen for their beauty and sent by the Agenoridae of Tyre to be *hierodouloi* or attendants at Delphi, likening themselves to gold-wrought *agalmata*,[47] or the girls of the 7th-century BC poet Alkman's *Partheneion*, touting their wares for would-be suitors at a grand public festival, and singing of their beautiful eyes, hair, outfits, jewellery.[48] As they sing and dance, they remind us perhaps of *Odyssey* 8 and Odysseus's wonder at the skilful dancing of the Phaeacian boys in the prime of youth, or of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and the way in which the Delian Maidens amaze and beguile with their dancing, collapsing the categories between participant and audience, human and divine.[49] We are back to the whirling of the Shield and to the aural and visual effects that elicit *thauma*. It is both of these together, complexity and polyvalence, that fuel the feeling of epiphanic presence.

Back in Athens or Samos at the close of the 6th century BC, worshippers would likely have felt this affinity, swelling the ranks of the pre-assembled *korai*, and turning them from accumulative tableau to vibrant throng that came together to speak of a shared project. In this way, the *korai* created a bond between the god and her worshippers, managing expectation, prescribing roles, and building momentum. They perhaps also, if any of them was meant as goddess not a girl, and indeed once statues other than *korai* are taken into account, blurred otherwise impenetrable boundaries.[50] Whether the variations between them made them as infinite as grains of sand or "continuous as stars", or invited judgment like Paris' goddesses, their multitude took the visitor from an everyday to an epic register, leaving them weighting chaos and cosmos.

Distinction

The sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi presents a more heterogeneous crowd of statuary than the Archaic Athenian Acropolis. But at Delphi too, taking this crowding seriously shifts our focus from "what god looked like" to how god felt, and

[38] Anderson 2014, 284. He contrasts the mass-effect of these hand-made images to the potentially dulling effect of images made by mechanical reproduction.
[39] Parker 2005, 218–252.
[40] Parker 2005, 264. Although note now Shear 2021 (118–148) and her emphasis, quite rightly, on change over time.
[41] Rhodes 1995, 44–45.
[42] Osborne 1994.
[43] Parker 2005, 264.
[44] Favro 2014, 85.
[45] Karakasi 2003, 13–34.
[46] Settis 2015, 55.
[47] Eur. *Phoen.* 220–221.
[48] https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5294 (last accessed, 5 April 2021) and Swift 2016.
[49] Hom. *Od.* 8.261–265; *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 149–164, and Lightfoot 2021, 98–106.
[50] The Peplos Kore (New Acropolis Museum, inv. no. 679) is now often reconstructed and identified as an Artemis. But note Karakasi 2003, 135.

dispenses with the unhelpful "is this art?" question.[51] By the time we reach the Roman empire, Nero is said to have snaffled some 500 bronzes of gods and men from the site's "forest of bronze".[52] But from the Archaic period on, statues and other dedications were springing up all the time, each new addition changing the terrain to put existing images on a revised footing. The situation was similar all over Greece: at Olympia, for example, the first of a host of statues to be mentioned by Pausanias as inside the Heraion (a Hera and a Zeus) are, comparatively speaking, *erga hapla*, "simple works" that are "crude" or "frank".[53] As they grow old-fashioned, they are less of this world, and more straightforward in divine authority.

A series of fires at Delphi makes Pausanias's account of its Apollo temple more contingent, though even it contains, in addition to the hearth, an altar, and an iron chair on which Pindar supposedly sat whenever he came to Delphi, two statues of Apollo, curiously, only two statues of the Fates, and a Zeus.[54] The fact that this chair is of iron, and only the second of the Apollos (the one in the Holy of Holies) accorded any kind of description at all, makes its material, gold, all the more remarkable. "Whereas the medium of any singular image might be functionally 'invisible'", writes Anderson of Fabiola again, "when presented in a crowd ... each seems to revel in its own material particularities".[55] The presence of the Fates, "bestowers of good and bad",[56] and, ultimately, independent agents of their guide Zeus, adds a further dimension, making the question of divine authority more pressing. Outside, in the forecourt, were various maxims, "know thyself" included, a phrase that the poet Juvenal will claim came from heaven.[57]

Delphic Apollo works in mysterious ways, proliferating, respawning and splintering, every time another city or group of cities chose to dedicate a statue in his honour. By the end of the 5th century BC, there were, according to Michael Scott's tentative reconstructions,[58] some 30 monumental Apollos on the terrace east of the temple alone: at one extreme, a small Daedalic statue, dedicated by Echecratides of Larissa, supposedly the very first offering on the site and probably dated to the mid-7th century BC,[59] and at the other, on top of the terracing wall to the east and the south, 20 large-scale Apollos, dedicated in around 500–470 BC by the Liparians to commemorate the number of ships that they had captured from the Etruscans.[60] On the cusp, chronologically, of what we now call "Classical" style, this divine army was presumably more anatomically defined, caught already perhaps in the kind of contrapposto stance that defines the New Acropolis Museum's Kritias Boy and the Louvre's Miletus Torso.[61] At about the same time, following the Battles of Artemision and Salamis, the Hellenic League against Persia countered number with height, dwarfing Delphi's existing Apollos and facing down the temple itself with a bronze of nearly six metres. Prow in hand, this Apollo was "not so much a traditional *kouros* dedication as a man of war", and one that was quickly generating its own offspring in similar smaller, neighbouring Apollos by the Peparethians and Epidaurians.[62]

These struggles for spatial domination of the sanctuary were struggles to define divinity: although none of these statues was "art" in the sense that Alÿs's exhibition is art, by virtue of their juxtaposition if nothing else, they lent themselves to, if not required, aesthetic analysis—and aesthetics creates new gods. No city could fix god forever: perhaps also in the 5th century BC, the Amphictyony had erected an Apollo statue of a massive 15.5 metres, while, almost immediately after Salamis, Alexander I of Macedon had put up a giant golden statue of himself.[63] There were also other kinds of dedication, the tallest of the tripods, the so-called "Serpent Column", erected in 479 BC, already tall enough at nine metres to leave the Salamis Apollo in the shade.[64] God was made manifest in the dialogue, or perhaps better, the disparity between the statues—in the glimpse of Apollo's ship or spear,[65] the glistening of gold or bronze, the awe instilled by an aged block or the attractions of a chiselled torso, the rude insertion of Alexan-

[51] See e.g. Whitley 2001, xxiii; 2012 and, in response, Squire & Vout 2011; Squire, 2015; Tanner 2013.
[52] Paus. 10.7.1 and Jacquemin 1999, 166: "*forêt de bronze*".
[53] Paus. 5.17.1. Relevant here is Arafat 1996, 68–69.
[54] Paus. 10.24.4–5.
[55] Anderson 2014, 278.
[56] Hes. *Th.* 215–222.
[57] Juv. 11.27–28.
[58] For ease of reference, I use Scott 2010, appendices A–D and figs. 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7. In many cases, his suggested siting of these statues is, as Scott admits, far from secure and in fig. 4.4, what is labeled 114 should be labeled 166 (Sitalkas Apollo).
[59] Paus. 10.16.8; Jacquemin 1999, 170 and no. 333; Scott 2010, no. 1.
[60] Paus. 10.16.7; Ioakimidou 1997, 47–50, no. 5; Jacquemin 1999, 121–122 and no. 337; Scott 2010, 92 and no. 116.
[61] Kritian Boy, *c.* 480 BC, New Acropolis Museum, Athens, inv. no. 698 and Miletus Torso, 480–470 BC, Louvre, Paris, Ma 2792.
[62] On the Salamis statue (*c.* 480 BC), Jacquemin 1999, no. 309; Scott 2010, 83–84 (including quote) and no. 103; Paus. 10.14.5; Hdt. 8.121. On the Peparethian and Epidaurian dedications, both after 480 BC, Jacquemin 1999, nos. 387 and 284; Scott 2010, 84 and nos. 104 and 106; Paus. 10.15.1.
[63] On the Amphictyony's dedication of Apollo "Sitalkas" (Paus. 10.15.1–2 and Diod. Sic. 16.33.1), see Jacquemin 1999, 15, 47 and no. 018 (who moves its dedication from the 4th to the middle of the 5th century BC) and Scott 2010, 100 and no. 166, and, for the Alexander statue in 479 BC (Hdt. 8.121), Jacquemin 1999, no. 347; Scott 2010, 87 and no. 114.
[64] Jacquemin 1999, no. 3010; Scott 2010, 85 and no. 109. The remains of the column are now in Istanbul.
[65] The statue of Apollo with spear was dedicated by the Megarians in the second half of the 5th century BC (Plut. *Mor.* 402A and Paus. 10.15.1): Jacquemin 1999, no. 358; Scott 2010, no. 170.

Fig. 4. Delphi Charioteer, c. 470 BC. Photograph: © Hirmer Fotoarchiv, 561.0603.

der's dynastic dominance,[66] the clash of cultures, styles, scales, materials. Visitors must have been spinning, impressed and bewildered by an ever-changing scenography that left them not knowing where to look—silenced or blinded—between persuasion and ecstasy.

As Stephen Halliwell has recently argued, the interaction between "ecstasy" (with all of the emotional intensity, sensuous immediacy, and transformative potential that that brings with it) and the cognitive values of "truth" lies at the heart of Greek poetics.[67] Perhaps too Greek religious experience, especially if we factor in, as we must, the drama of the natural landscape at Delphi, and its changing seasons, the heat of the sun, the smell, the dust. When the chorus of Athenian women first encounters Delphi's Temple of Apollo in Euripides' *Ion*, they are impressed by its symmetry and the light bouncing off the marble as they "cast their eyes in all directions", trying to make sense of it through their experience of home.[68] The failure of their ecphrasis to fit what archaeologists know to have been the temple's decoration is not only due to the nature of the text (i.e. that ecphrasis is not a factual report but a "verbal exercise designed to create the theatrical illusion of an absent presence in the eyes of the spectators").[69] It is also, arguably, due to the multi-sensory nature of the site itself. "Conspicuous by his absence, in fact, in the details of the [temple's] Gigantomachy is the figure of Apollo himself, a prominent actor in such scenes and no doubt, as the archaeologists have claimed, he was depicted here too. After all, how could Apollo *not* be visible on the decorations that adorn his own temple?"[70] The answer is about something bigger than his absence from the *Ion's* ensuing narrative. As the messenger in another Euripidean play puts it, when he and Neoptolemos arrive in Delphi to seek the god's favour: "we spent three radiant courses of the sun in looking around, and filled our eyes".[71] As they well understood, Apollo was not in individual artefacts, but in the aggregate.

Taking crowding seriously also means taking distinction seriously. One of the best-known finds from Delphi, the 5th-century BC bronze Charioteer (*Fig. 4*), discovered in pieces in 1896, was once part of a chariot-group with horses.[72] Although we do not know definitely where exactly it was displayed, it was probably on the tall terrace above the polygonal wall overlooking the temple from the north,[73] commanding a privileged position, and, according to Scott, opening up "a whole section of the sanctuary for dedication".[74] However isolated in reality, everything about the figure asked that its ensemble was seen as a work apart: its copper lips reveal a flash of silver teeth, the pattern on its headband is also inlaid with silver, and its foil lashes frame eyes of white paste set with chestnut irises and black onyx pupils.[75] Nothing is too much for the god to whom it is dedicated. Often described as "columnar" in quality, its stiff body, and remote, emotionless face

[66] Scott 2010, 87, n. 57 on the "particularly un-Greek" nature of this monument.
[67] Halliwell 2011.

[68] Eur. *Ion* 184–236.
[69] Zeitlin 1994, 149.
[70] Zeitlin 1994, 150.
[71] Eur. *Andr.* 1085–1087:
ἐπεὶ τὸ κλεινὸν ἤλθομεν Φοίβου πέδον,
τρεῖς μὲν φαεννὰς ἡλίου διεξόδους
θέᾳ διδόντες ὄμματ'ἐξεπίμπλαμεν.
[72] The Delphi Charioteer, *c.* 470 BC, bronze, Delphi (Delphi Museum, inv. 3484, 3520 and 3540): see Homolle 1897; Chamoux 1955; Rolley 1990; Neer 2007, 237–238; and Adornato 2008, who questions the fit with inscribed base 3517. For its find-spot in later fill, see Mattusch 1988, 127, n. 26.
[73] Smith 2007, 129–130.
[74] Scott 2010, 89, and fn. 73 claims it opens up a new area for dedications. His reference to Rolley 1990, 297 is, however, a dead-end.
[75] Mattusch 1988, 130.

are in Apollo's image.[76] It is as supportive of his divinity as is the temple's architecture.

We can call this the "enchantment of technology" if we want to.[77] But we underestimate this impact, if we do not also appreciate the magnetism of the sculpture's beauty, and the ways in which this highly "individualised" offering asked to be set apart from the growing gaggle of gods and other dedications below it.[78] Pausanias may not have been very interested in beauty, but then, like Charles Freeman, who recently retold the history of the bronze horses of San Marco, he is a historian of a sort, "and passion is not among his tools. It takes a Goethe to fancy the golden horses stepping off their plinths, or a Ruskin to write of them 'blazing in their breadth of golden strength'". The author of this critique, Jan Morris continues,

> Of course Freeman has to deal with matters of provenance and technique, but I tended to skip those parts ... Freeman does a decent and honourable job in tracing their story, but to my mind the way the animals incline their heads so tenderly one towards another, the thoughtful look in their eyes and the soft clouding of their breaths on winter mornings—all these things make it apparent to me that they were never actually made by anybody, but simply came into being as darlings of God.[79]

Conclusion

God is, and always was, bigger than his image; and every image is more (or less) than its maker or patron intended; it becomes a different image as it is joined by other images, and waxes and wanes over time (so, for example, the six-metre-tall Apollo when dwarfed by the serpent-tripod, by the statue of Alexander and by the Amphictyony's statue, the last of these large enough to compete not just at Delphi, but on a world stage). Realising this is one thing; working with it, and the un-predictability it creates, another thing entirely. But if we want to re-experience the "stuff of the gods", we have to try to supplement description (whether by Pausanias, or by today's archaeologist) with something that is less itemising and rationalising, less about representing facts than staging feelings, about capturing the visceral nature of the encounter. This is why poetry and plays have proven just as profitable. Thinking in terms of groups of objects (not "assemblages", as they are, when they are ordered in the catalogue, but—more amorphous than that—shifting swathes of objects, and further to this, about repetition, redundancy, idiosyncrasy) opens up different perspectives by virtue of new vistas, perspectives that understand that glimpsing the divine is as good as it gets. In the process, description is replaced by drama, representation by presence, and single stratigraphic events with build-up.

I end not with an appeal to expand our vision and to bolster the need for empirical data and the brilliant readings of Platt and others with thought experiments of a more capacious, if impressionistic kind. Putting Pheidian Zeus and Athena Parthenos back in their temples, ironically, closes the doors on their context. Instead, I reach for a different kind of image, the conjuring of the painting from the proem of Longus' 2nd-century AD novel, *Daphnis and Chloe*.

> When I was hunting in Lesbos, I saw in the grove of the Nymphs the most beautiful spectacle I ever saw, a painted image, a history of love. The grove indeed was very beautiful ... But that picture, as having in it not only an excellent and wonderful piece of art but also a tale of ancient love, was far more delightful ... In it were women giving birth and other women adorning babies in swaddling clothes, babies abandoned and beasts feeding them, shepherds taking them up, youngsters plighting their troth, a pirate raid, an enemy invasion.
>
> When I had seen, with amazement (*thauma*) everything to do with love and many other things, I had a desire (*pothos*) to write something in response ...[80]

If it is everything to do with god, rather than everything to do with love, we are after, we could do worse than confront the chaos of the sanctuary, with its competing claims on the visitor's attention, for only then does it live, and keep eliciting wonder. Capturing everything is, of course, as impossible for us as it was for the ancients. But in trying to capture it, we get closer to the "desire" that they experienced—a "desire" that is, and always was, theologically, critical.

CAROLINE VOUT
University of Cambridge

[76] Mattusch 1988, 129. Compare the charred fragmentary statue of Apollo from the Halos deposit at Delphi, *c.* 550 BC, Delphi Archaeological Museum, inv. 10413, 9796, 9797, as well as the fragments of the chariot-team of Apollo from the centre of the east pediment of his Archaic temple.
[77] Gell 1992.
[78] Scott 2010, 89.
[79] Morris 2004.
[80] Longus, *proem*, 1–2.

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