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Author(s): John Elsner

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## IMAGE AND RITUAL: REFLECTIONS ON THE RELIGIOUS APPRECIATION OF CLASSICAL ART\*

It is a cliché that most Greek art (indeed most ancient art) was religious in function.<sup>1</sup> Yet our histories of Classical art, having acknowledged this truism, systematically ignore the religious nuances and associations of images while focusing on diverse art-historical issues from style and form, or patronage and production, to mimesis and aesthetics.<sup>2</sup> In general, the emphasis on naturalism in classical art and its reception has tended to present it as divorced from what is perceived as the overwhelmingly religious nature of post-Constantinian Christian art. The insulation of Greek and Roman art from theological and ritual concerns has been colluded in by most historians of medieval images. Take for instance Ernst Kitzinger's monographic article entitled 'The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm'.<sup>3</sup> Despite its title and despite Kitzinger's willingness to situate Christian emperor worship in an antique context, this classic paper contains nothing on the Classical ancestry of magical images, palladia and miracle-working icons in Christian art. There has been the odd valiant exception (especially in recent years),<sup>4</sup> but in general it is fair to say that the religiousness of antiquity's religious art is skirted by the art historians and left to the experts on religion.<sup>5</sup>

It is clearly the case that religious ways of viewing images began to predominate over what may be described as more aesthetic (or even secular) responses to art in the culture of late antiquity.<sup>6</sup> But, while the Second Sophistic produced some of the most impressive aesthetic celebrations of images ever composed in the ancient world,<sup>7</sup> it is

\* This paper was originally written for a conference on art and ritual at the Courtauld Institute. Versions have been delivered at seminars in Bristol, Cambridge, Princeton and Reading. I am grateful to Catharine Edwards, Christopher Kelly and John Patterson, William Childs and Froma Zeitlin, and Helen Morales for their invitations to speak at these respective institutions. My thanks are due to all those who came and commented on those occasions, and in particular to Paul Cartledge, Robin Osborne and an anonymous reader for this journal for their comments on an earlier draft.

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. A. Stewart, *Greek Sculpture* (New Haven and London, 1990), pp. 43–51 and esp. R. Gordon, 'The Real and the Imaginary: Production and Religion in the Graeco-Roman World', *Art History* 2 (1979), 5–34.

<sup>2</sup> The standard volume for art historians on ancient views of art (J. J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art* [New Haven and London, 1974]) is strikingly silent about any aspect of ritual or religion, as already pointed out by Gordon (n. 1), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> E. Kitzinger, 'The Cult of Images in the Age before Iconoclasm', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954), 84–150, reprinted in E. Kleinbauer (ed.), *The Art of Byzantium and the Medieval West. Selected Studies by Ernst Kitzinger* (Bloomington, Indiana), pp. 90–156.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. M. Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea* (New York and London, 1992), whose history of medieval concepts of the image gives two chapters to antiquity (pp. 23–62); H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago, 1994 [v.o. 1990]), pp. 36–41 on images and religion, 78–101 on funerary and saints' portraits, 102–114 on the imperial image.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, C. A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (New York and Oxford, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> See especially, J. Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from Paganism to Christianity* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 249–87.

<sup>7</sup> For a brief discussion of the ekphrastic literature, see G. Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London, 1993), pp. 147–55. The key texts are the ekphrasis in the novels, in the collections by the Elder and Younger Philostratus and by

also true that it simultaneously generated a remarkable literature which testifies to the ritual, prophetic and magical importance of art in the Graeco-Roman imagination. To Artemidorus of Daldis (who wrote in the second century A.D.), for instance, statues of gods seen in dreams were no different, from the point of view of a dream interpreter, from the gods themselves (*Oneirocritica* 2.35, 2.39).<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it was important to be aware of the precise materials from which the divine statue was made,<sup>9</sup> of its position and context,<sup>10</sup> if one was to find the correct interpretation of a dream. In effect, in order to predict the future, the dreamer had to develop an acute and precise visual memory, sensitive to the aesthetics and attributes of divine statues and cult images.

What is particularly striking about texts which refer to images in the second and third centuries A.D. is that ritually motivated, talismanic and religious modes of viewing existed side by side with aesthetic responses to images—often in the same writer and sometimes in the same text. Take, for example, this aestheticist flourish from Aelius Aristides' speech 'Against those who burlesque the mysteries', delivered in early 170 A.D. (*Or.* 34.28):

In modelling and sculpture, by what is the spectator most overcome? Is it not by the fairest and most magnificent statues, the ones which have achieved the limits of perfection in these matters? The Olympian Zeus, the Athena at Athens—I mean the ivory one, and also, if you wish, the bronze one, and by Zeus, if you wish, the Lemnian Athena—all these statues embody the unsurpassable skill of the craftsman and offer unsurpassable pleasure to the spectator.

Compare this with the following, from the second of Aristides' *Sacred Tales*, composed during his retirement in the winter of 170–71 A.D. (*Or.* 48.41–3):

Athena appeared with her aegis and the beauty and magnitude and the whole form of the Athena of Phidias in Athens. There was also a scent from the aegis as sweet as could be, and it was like wax, and it too was marvellous in beauty and magnitude. She appeared to me alone, standing before me, even from where I would behold her as well as possible. I also pointed her out to those who were present—there were two of my friends and my foster sister—and I cried out and I named her Athena, saying that she stood before me and spoke to me, and I pointed out her aegis. They did not know what they should do, but were at a loss, and were afraid I had become delirious, until they saw that my strength was being restored and heard the words which I had heard from the goddess... Thus the goddess appeared and consoled me, and saved me, while I was in my sick bed and nothing was wanting for my death. And it immediately occurred to me to have an enema of Attic honey, and there was a purge of my bile.

Callistratus, and in Lucian. The latter have been conveniently collected and edited by S. Maffei, *Luciano di Samosata: Descrizioni di Opere d'Arte* (Turin, 1994). For discussion, see on the novels S. Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel* (Princeton, 1989) and F. I. Zeitlin, 'The Poetics of Eros: Nature, Art and Imitation in Longus' Daphnis and Chloe', in D. M. Halperin, J. J. Winkler and F. I. Zeitlin (eds.), *Before Sexuality* (Princeton, 1990), pp. 417–65; and on the Elder Philostratus N. Bryson, 'Philostratus and the Imaginary Museum', in S. Goldhill and R. Osborne (eds.), *Art and Text in Ancient Greek Culture* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 255–83, M. E. Blanchard, 'Philostrate: Problèmes du texte et du tableau', in B. Cassin (ed.), *Le plaisir du parler* (Paris, 1986), pp. 131–54, M. Conan, 'The *Imagines* of Philostratus', *Word and Image* 3 (1987), 162–71 and J. Elsner (n. 6), pp. 23–39.

<sup>8</sup> See Barasch (n. 4), pp. 32–3.

<sup>9</sup> *Oneir.* 2.39: 'Statues that are fashioned from a substance that is hard and incorruptible as, for example, those that are made of gold, silver, bronze, ivory, stone, amber or ebony, are auspicious. Statues fashioned from any other material as, for example, those that are made from terra cotta, clay, plaster, or wax, those that are painted, and the like, are less auspicious and often even inauspicious.' See P. Cox Miller, *Dreams in Late Antiquity: Studies in the Imagination of a Culture* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 29–31.

<sup>10</sup> *Oneir.* 2.37: 'If Asclepius is set up in a temple and stands upon a pedestal, if he is seen and adored, it means good luck for all. But if he moves and approaches or goes into a house, it prophesies sickness. For then especially do men need the god. But for those who are already sick, it signifies recovery.'

The appreciation of Phidias' ivory Athena in this vision from the *Sacred Tales* (with its intense emphasis on the goddess' beauty, magnitude, scent and visual presence) is no less aesthetic or impassioned than in the rhetorical equation of unsurpassable pleasure and unsurpassable skill. But the aesthetics are animated by a spirit of salvific revelation, personally vouchsafed to the sick visionary, which goes beyond art-appreciation—beyond the museum visitor's list of 'the fairest and most magnificent statues'—into the realms of epiphany and miraculous healing. The enema of Attic honey, one assumes, is the final gift of Phidias' Attic Athena—providing at least temporary alleviation for the sick man's ills.

Even in those ekphrastic texts which one would most clearly identify with a rhetorical celebration of ancient art at its most naturalistic, we occasionally find a prophetic, allegorical or talismanic flavour to the description of images. In Achilles Tatius' novel, *Leucippe and Clitophon* (probably composed in the third quarter of the second century A.D.), a number of key moments are punctuated by vivid ekphrasis of paintings.<sup>11</sup> At 5.4, the sight of an ill-omened picture is taken as a sign:

Those who profess to interpret signs bid us pay attention to the stories of pictures, if such happen to meet our eye as we set forth to our business, and to conclude that what is likely to happen to us will be of the same character as the event of the painted story. You see then how full of miseries is this drawing—unlawful love, shameless adultery, women's woes; I therefore recommend you to desist from this expedition of yours.<sup>12</sup>

Needless to say, despite the precautions of the novel's protagonists, the painting's awesome predictions come true. In the ekphrasis of Callistratus, an unjustly neglected series of descriptions of ancient statues written in the third or fourth century, we find a fusion of the ideals of naturalism in art with those of sanctity. In 3.1, discussing the Eros of Praxiteles, as a 'sacred work of art', Callistratus proclaims

Bronze gave expression to him, and as though giving expression to Eros as a great and dominating god, it was itself subdued by Eros, for it could not endure to be only bronze; but it became Eros just as he was.

Here, in a masterly rhetorical fusion of the traditional tropes of mimesis, desire and the sacred identity of god and statue, Callistratus presents the very naturalistic illusionism of the sculpture as part of its divine nature as a statue of the god of Desire.<sup>13</sup>

My concern in this paper is not with the rhetorical alignment of aesthetic and religious discourses of art in the Second Sophistic, nor with full anthropology of ancient visions, dreams and functions of images, a subject well surveyed in the first part of Charly Clerc's book *Les théories relatives au culte des images chez les auteurs Grecs du II<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C.*<sup>14</sup> Rather, I shall focus on one particular element of that anthropology—namely the use of images in religion and ritual. Clerc's excellent

<sup>11</sup> See the discussion of S. Bartsch, (n. 7), pp. 40–79.

<sup>12</sup> On this passage, see Bartsch (n. 7), pp. 65–9, 72–6, and S. Goldhill, *Foucault's Virginity: Ancient Erotic Fiction and the History of Sexuality* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 71–2.

<sup>13</sup> Compare Callistratus 10.1–2 where, after an elaborate opening which presents the power of Asclepius as dwelling within his statue, the orator reverses the conceit to imply that art, having the power to delineate character and to portray the god in an image of Paeon 'even passes over into the god himself. Matter though it is, it gives forth divine intelligence, and though it is a work of human hands, it succeeds in doing what handicrafts cannot accomplish.'

<sup>14</sup> See C. Clerc, *Les théories relatives au culte des images chez les auteurs Grecs du II<sup>e</sup> siècle après J.-C.* (Paris, 1915), pp. 9–85. See also Barasch (n. 4), pp. 23–49.

book, which is primarily about the polemics (Christian and pagan) for and against the use of images in worship,<sup>15</sup> is less about ritual than about idolatry—and in this sense, despite its concern with the second century A.D., it interprets its subject in categories which are ultimately Judaeo-Christian. By exploring something of the ritual evocations of Greek art as represented in Second Sophistic texts, we can examine how the religious dimension of images affected their reception in ancient times, without taking a position on 'idolatry' and hence succumbing to the dangers of interpretative Christianization. Nonetheless I shall argue that, on the level of ritual practice and indeed of what one might call visual theology (that is, thinking about one's gods through their images), there was a great deal more continuity between antiquity and the Christian middle ages than is usually allowed.<sup>16</sup>

The use of images in religious ritual is a key element in their incorporation into the imaginative and spiritual life of antiquity. It was precisely because of the existence of festivals in which images were periodically dressed, paraded, washed and worshipped, and because of the stories which such repeated sacred actions came to generate, that art could attain the epiphanic and emotional heights of Aristides' vision of Athena, Lucius' devotion to Isis in the *Golden Ass* (*Met.* 11.3–6, 24–5), or Calasiris' worship of Isis in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* (7.8.7). Such charged moments of religious experience were the energized product of centuries of careful cultivation of sacred images.

As a source on the issue of art and ritual, one text stands out beyond all others in its richness of information about ancient attitudes and practices in relation to images. This is the evidence of Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, written (like the works of Achilles Tatius, Artemidorus and Aelius Aristides) in the second half of the second century A.D.<sup>17</sup> While other texts, in particular Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* and Lucian's *De Dea Syria*, may supplement Pausanias' information—taking antiquity's reflections on art and ritual beyond Greece into Egypt and the Levant, no ancient source is so rich in its discussion of images, or in its presentation of antiquarian,<sup>18</sup> mythological,<sup>19</sup> and religious detail.<sup>20</sup> Pausanias' text belongs with a host of Second Sophistic pilgrimage-related accounts, from the world of Artemidorus' catalogue of dreams, collected in the temples of Asia Minor, Italy and Greece,<sup>21</sup> via Aelius

<sup>15</sup> Clerc (n. 14), pp. 89–258. For the early Christian attack on idolatry, see P. C. Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 15–68.

<sup>16</sup> Some examples of continuity in the secondary literature: on pagan pilgrimage in the context of a study of Christian pilgrimage, see B. Kötting, *Peregrinatio Religiosa: Wallfahrten in der Antike und das Pilgerwesen in der alten Kirche* (Regensburg and Münster, 1950), pp. 12–79; and on the interrelations of Christian and pagan dream-visions, see Miller (n. 9).

<sup>17</sup> On Pausanias, see J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece* (London, 1898), 6 vols., esp. vol. 1; J. Heer, *La personnalité de Pausanias* (Paris, 1979); C. Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley, 1985); J. Elsner, 'Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World', *Past and Present* 135 (1992), 3–29, now reprinted with added discussion in J. Elsner (n. 6), pp. 125–55. On historical and cultural context, see S. E. Alcock, 'Landscapes of Memory and the Authority of Pausanias', in *Pausanias Historien* (Geneva, 1996; *Entretiens Fondation Hardt* 41), pp. 241–76.

<sup>18</sup> On Pausanias' antiquarianism see E. D. Hunt, 'Travel, Tourism and Piety in the Roman Empire', *Échos du monde classique* 28 (1984), 391–417, esp. pp. 398–401; and K. Arafat, 'Pausanias' Attitude to Antiquities', *Annual of the British School at Athens* 87 (1992), 387–409.

<sup>19</sup> On Pausanias' myths see P. Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?* (Chicago, 1988 [v.o. 1983]), p. 3, pp. 95–102.

<sup>20</sup> For the focus on religion see esp. Heer (n. 17); Frazer (n.17), p. xxxiii; Habicht (n. 17), p. 23 (with n. 91); and Elsner (n. 6), pp. 129–31, 144–50.

<sup>21</sup> See Miller (n. 9), pp. 29–31, 77–91, with bibliography.

Aristides' long-held devotion to the cult of Asclepius,<sup>22</sup> to Plutarch's priestly and philosophical reflections on image and ritual,<sup>23</sup> as well as the more 'foreign' ambiances evoked by Philostratus' early third-century *Life of Apollonius* and the *De Dea Syria*.

But in the wealth of information offered through Pausanias' systematic autopsy, in the open juxtaposition of overtly connoisseurial attitudes with overtly religious ones,<sup>24</sup> in his concern with the sacred heartland of Greece, Pausanias remains simply unrivalled.<sup>25</sup> Just as his text offers a kind of schizophrenia in its combination of myth-historical information with sacred material whose existence Pausanias signals but which he cannot reveal (except to other initiates),<sup>26</sup> so in his discussion of images, Pausanias presents two discourses of art (the 'art-historical' and the 'ritual-centred') on an equal level. These discourses, whose simultaneity and co-existence give the Second Sophistic's writing on art such a keen interest, would eventually—by the fifth and sixth centuries A.D.—become mutually exclusive. Ultimately, the masterpieces and cult images which Pausanias admires in the temples of Greece, would (after their removal as prestige museum pieces to Constantinople) be feared, and even destroyed, as demonic idols.<sup>27</sup>

In what follows I shall concentrate on three aspects of the relation of images and ritual in Pausanias.<sup>28</sup> The first is the distinction of a ritual-centred language for art in Pausanias' work from what we might regard as a more conventionally connoisseurial or art-historical discourse. The second is where specific images are associated with unusual or remarkable rites, which occasion explicit discussion in the text. The third is where images themselves serve a ritual function.

<sup>22</sup> On Aelius Aristides and Asclepius, see C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (Amsterdam, 1968) and Miller (n. 9), pp. 184–204.

<sup>23</sup> Some passages of Plutarch evince as much interest in ritual as Pausanias—for instance the discussion of priestly lifestyles and eating habits in *De Iside et Osiride* 4–5, 7–8 (352C–354A), or the different kinds of offerings in the daily ritual timetable in the same text (79, 383A–384C). In the *De E apud Delphos*, Plutarch writes of various ritual details which need explaining (2, 385CD). The early twentieth-century French literature on Plutarch was rich on this topic (if marred by a series of perhaps inevitable Christianizing assumptions)—see P. Decharme, *La critique des traditions religieuses chez les Grecs des origines au temps de Plutarque* (Paris, 1904), pp. 413–501 and C. Clerc, 'Plutarque et la culte des images', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 70 (1914), 107–24.

<sup>24</sup> On the importance of religion in Pausanias, see Frazer (n. 17), p. xxxiii, Habicht (n. 17), p. 23 (and n. 91).

<sup>25</sup> On the 'sacred landscape' of Greece and Pausanias' place in helping us to reconstruct that, see S. E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 172–214 (esp. 173–5); see also S. E. Alcock, 'Minding the Gap in Hellenistic and Roman Greece', in S. E. Alcock and R. Osborne (eds.), *Placing the Gods: Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 247–61, esp. 257–9.

<sup>26</sup> See Elsner (n. 6), pp. 144–52.

<sup>27</sup> On the removal of antiquities to Constantinople, see C. A. Mango, 'Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963), 55–75; S. G. Bassett, 'The Antiquities in the Hippodrome of Constantinople', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 45 (1991), 87–96; T. F. Madden, 'The Serpent Column of Delphi in Constantinople: Placement, Purposes and Mutilations', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 16 (1992), 111–45. On Byzantine attitudes, see Mango (above) esp. p. 56 and 59–70; H. Saradi-Mendelovici, 'Christian Attitudes towards Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity and Their Legacy in Later Byzantine Centuries', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990), 47–61.

<sup>28</sup> Good contextual accounts of religion in the Roman empire are R. MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven, 1981) and R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (London, 1986), pp. 27–261 (pp. 159–60 on statues). Briefly on image and ritual, see Barasch (n. 4), pp. 33–6.

## I. DISCOURSES OF ART HISTORY AND DISCOURSES OF RITUAL

... and there are statues of Zeus, one made by Leochares and one called Polieus. I shall give the customary mode of sacrificing to the latter without adding its traditional cause. Upon the altar of Zeus Polieus they place barley mixed with wheat and leave it unguarded. The ox, which they keep already prepared for sacrifice, goes to the altar and partakes of the grain. One of the priests they call the ox-slayer, kills the ox and then, casting aside the axe here according to the ritual, runs away. The others bring the axe to trial, as though they do not know the man who did the deed. Their ritual, then, is such as I have described. As you enter the temple they name the Parthenon, all the sculptures you see on what is called the pediment refer to the birth of Athena, those on the rear pediment represent the contest for the land between Athena and Poseidon. (Pausanias 1.24.4–5)<sup>29</sup>

It is striking that, immediately before entering the Parthenon, Pausanias should devote a longish paragraph to a ritual associated with a statue of Zeus outside the temple. Indeed, he seems rather more interested in describing the details of the ritual than in the sculptures of the Parthenon (most of which he never mentions). While perhaps he can be accused of somewhat sketchy art history (by the modern student of Greek sculpture in search of a rare glimpse of ancient autopsy), Pausanias presents the anthropologist of ancient religion with a most precise account of the ritual details at the altar of Zeus Polieus. Indeed, in the case of the two statues of Zeus he mentions, we might say that the ritual narrative of sacrifice constitutes a different mode for relating to the image from the art-historical. The first statue is described as 'made by Leochares' (1.24.4), a famous sculptor of the mid fourth century B.C. associated in ancient art-historical legend both with the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus and with Alexander.<sup>30</sup> The second image, which is not linked to a famous artist, is defined by its title 'Polieus' and by its particular rites. At the very least, an art-historical and a religious appreciation of images are placed side by side. Moreover, when relating the narrative of sacrificial action, it matters to Pausanias that barley be mixed with wheat, that it remain unguarded, that the priest who slays the ox should run away, that it be the axe rather than the man which is brought to trial and so forth.<sup>31</sup> All this implies not only a very specific selectivity about this particular ritual on the part of those who performed it, but also a deep sensitivity and inquisitiveness on the part of Pausanias as participant and observer.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> On this passage see M. Verrall and J. E. Harrison, *Mythology and Monuments of Ancient Athens* (London, 1890), pp. 423–9; Frazer (n. 17), ad loc., vol. 2, pp. 302–4; L. Beschi and D. Musti, *Pausania: Guida della Grecia: Libro I: L'Attica* (Milan, 1982), ad loc., p. 351.

<sup>30</sup> See Pliny, *Natural History* 36.30 and Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 7. praef. 13, with H. Stuart Jones, *Select Passages from Ancient Writers Illustrative of the History of Greek Sculpture* (London, 1895), pp. 172–5.

<sup>31</sup> This ritual, the Bouphonia, is also described as length by Theophrastus, quoted by Porphyry, *De Abstinencia* 2.29f. There, unlike in Pausanias, the aition-myth for the cause of the ritual is given; see L. Bruit Zaidman and P. Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 169–71.

<sup>32</sup> As a compiler of local rituals Pausanias rates quite as highly as he does in the collection of myths. On the latter theme (Pausanias as mythographer) see esp. Veyne (n. 19), p. 3, pp. 13–14. For further examples of Pausanias' ritual precision, see 1.27.2–3 (on the Arrhephoria); 2.11.7–8 and 12.1 (on the image of Coronis and sacrificial practice at the sanctuary of Asclepius at Titane); 2.35.5–8 (the festival of Chthonia at Hermione); 3.14.9–10 (comparative puppy sacrifices at Sparta and Colophon); 5.13.2–3 (sacrificial rules at the Pelopium in Olympia and a comparison with those at Pergamus on the river Caicus); 5.13.8–5.14.3 (the sacrificial rituals at the altar of Olympian Zeus); 5.15.10–11 (the monthly Elean sacrificial liturgy at all the altars at Olympia—whose order Pausanias follows in his description at 5.14.4–10); 5.16.7–8 (women's

Pausanias emphasizes the entirety of the ritual process from beginning to end. He places the image of Zeus Polieus not within an art history of its commission, creation and reception, or within an artist-centred narrative of the development of illusionistic form (like the kind of art history we find in Pliny the Elder and occasionally in Pausanias himself), but within a *ritual* history which describes an exceptional but repeatable process. One might speculate that Pausanias' retelling itself constitutes a literary but still religiously meaningful repetition of the ritual act.<sup>33</sup> Certain details of the ritual—for instance the mixture of barley and wheat, the use of an axe for the slaughter, the animal being bovine rather than, say, a sheep (the ritual was called the Bouphonia, after all)—are clearly important to its nature; others (for instance the number of priests involved in this sacrifice, which Pausanias does not specify) are perhaps not essential and could be varied. In the case of this ritual, unlike a historian whom we might expect to search out a reason for a historical phenomenon, Pausanias is quite explicit about not going into the ritual's 'traditional cause'. In this kind of narrative and this kind of viewing, certain issues are taboo.

Later in his description of the Acropolis, when approaching the Erechtheum (1.26.5), Pausanias again gives very precise information about the ritual niceties of its altars:

There is also a building called the Erechtheum. Before the entrance is an altar of Zeus the Most High, on which they never sacrifice a living creature, but offer cakes, not being wont to use any wine either. Inside the entrance are altars, one to Poseidon, on which in obedience to an oracle they sacrifice also to Erechtheus, the second to the hero Boutes, and the third to Hephaestus. On the walls are paintings representing members of the clan Boutadae; there is also inside—the building is double—sea-water in a cistern. This is no great marvel, for other inland regions have similar wells, in particular Aphrodisias in Caria. But this cistern is remarkable for the noise of waves it sends forth when a south wind blows. On the rock is the outline of a trident. Legend says that these appeared as evidence in support of Poseidon's claim to the land.<sup>34</sup>

Whereas he fails to mention the Caryatids, Pausanias nonetheless focuses carefully on which foods cannot be offered at the altar of Zeus and on how the altar of Poseidon is shared by Erechtheus as a recipient of sacrifice. He is far from insensitive either to visual or architectural matters (he mentions both the paintings and the fact that the 'building is double'), but his focus is principally on ritual details, natural wonders or phenomena (the sea-water cistern, the sign of the trident) and their mythological causes in the ancient foundation myths of Athens. Note that this time Pausanias gives causes—the origins of natural wonders are not problematic in the way that the origins of ritual acts may be. Through myth, especially the link to Poseidon, these sights are tied directly back to the rituals with which Pausanias opens his account of the Erechtheum—namely the linkage of Poseidon with Erechtheus

rituals at the Heraean games in Olympia); 6.20.2–4 (the rituals in honour of Eileithuia and Sosipolis at Mt Cronius); 7.18.9–13 (the Laphria festival at Patrae in honour of Artemis); 7.20.1–2 (the rituals at the Eurypylos festival, Patrae); 8.2.2–3 (comparison of human and non-animal sacrificial practice); 8.13.1 (rituals in the life-style of the priest and priestess of Artemis Hymnia at Orchomenos, with comparanda from the cult of Artemis of Ephesus); 8.15.2–4 (rites of Demeter at Pheneus); 8.37.8 (unusual sacrificial rituals to the Mistress near Acacesium); 9.2.7–9.3.8 (the festival of Daedala at Plataea); 9.39.5–14 (rituals at the oracular shrine of Trophonius).

<sup>33</sup> For writing as *rite de passage*, see M. Harbsmeier, 'Elementary Structures of Otherness', in J. Céard and J. C. Margolin (eds.), *Voyager à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1987), pp. 337–55, p. 337. For writing as itself a form of literary pilgrimage see (on Gregory of Tours in late antique Gaul) R. Van Dam, *Saints and their Miracles in Late Antique Gaul* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 142–9.

<sup>34</sup> On this passage see Verrall and Harrison (n. 29), pp. 483–96; Frazer (n. 17), ad loc., vol. 2, pp. 330–40; Beschi and Musti (n. 29), ad loc., pp. 361–2.

through the shared altar. In effect, Pausanias offers here a hint at an ancient view of these sacred precincts not in terms of modern art-historical notions of decoration or architecture but in the light of ancient mythic and liturgical expectations within a holy place.

In trying to construct a cultural history of ancient Greek art—of what images meant and how they were related to—we must look not only at the objects which survive or the ways such images were imagined in highly literary texts like the *Imagines* of Philostratus or the novels, but also at the religious reflexes of viewers like Pausanias. In this respect what matters is the stories that were told and believed about rituals, not the historicity of the claims about past events which Pausanias relates. Of course, Pausanias does offer a significant discourse of *art history* in a recognizable sense. There are hints in his text of an evolutionary account of the development of sculpture parallel to that of Pliny.<sup>35</sup> There are frequent lengthy descriptions of important works of art, from programmes of painting and sculpture,<sup>36</sup> to highly decorated objects like the chest of Cypselus at Olympia or the throne of Apollo at Amyclae,<sup>37</sup> to the major cult statues.<sup>38</sup> Some of these offer a marked aesthetic sensibility, as when he comments on Phidias' most celebrated statue (5.11.9):

I know 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.

Moreover, Pausanias' very extensive exposure to ancient art of all periods and types elicits a series of connoisseurial observations hardly out of place in a traditional formalist art history. He frequently compares images as being alike and even by the same hand.<sup>39</sup> In his discussion of the statues on the Athenian Acropolis, Pausanias distinguishes between 'artistic workmanship' and 'mere antiquity' (1.24.3). He even remarks on significant iconographic shifts in the history of representation—such as the introduction of female nudity in sculpture (9.35.6–7).

However, my point is that beside this highly developed language of aesthetics, style and historical evolution, is a discourse of ritual all too often suppressed in modern accounts of ancient art. As I suggested earlier, Pausanias is by no means a unique case in the religious art-appreciation of the Second Sophistic. In Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, for instance, the statue at Olympia of the athlete Milo claspng a pomegranate is described and explained by the sage (*V.A.* 4.28). An art-historical formulation of the image ('the antique style of the sculpture') stands side by side with both local myths ('the stories told among the people of Olympia and Arcadia') and Apollonius' own explanation, relating the iconography to ritual details in which the pomegranate is revealed to be a fruit sacred to Hera and Milo to have been her priest. This combination of art-historical and ritual-centred discourses is echoed by Philostratus at *V.A.* 6.4, where the statue of Memnon in Egypt is seen stylistically (as

<sup>35</sup> On Pausanias' interest in techniques and materials for dating objects, see Arafat (n. 18), pp. 392–7, and, on Pausanias' 'Plinian' view of 'the development of sculpture as one straightforward process punctuated by [artistic] innovators', *ibid.* pp. 403–6 (quotation from p. 405).

<sup>36</sup> For example the paintings of the Stoa Poikile at Athens (1.15.1–3), Polygnotus' murals at Delphi (10.25.1–31.12) and the architectural sculpture at the temple of Zeus in Olympia (5.10.6–9).

<sup>37</sup> The Chest of Cypselus: 5.17.5–19.10; the throne at Amyclae: 3.18.10–19.1.

<sup>38</sup> For instance Athena Parthenos (1.24.5–7), Hera of Argos (3.17.1–3), Asclepius at Epidaurus (2.27.2), Zeus at Olympia (5.10.2 and 5.11.1–11), Aphrodite Ourania (6.25.1).

<sup>39</sup> Some examples: 2.4.5, 2.25.10, 3.10.8, 9.40.3–5. Impressive identifications of a hand include 7.26.6 and 9.10.2.

'Daedalic'),<sup>40</sup> as a *thauma* (in the context of the travel-narrative of Apollonius visiting Egypt) and as a religious object. Apollonius and his party not only 'understood that the figure was in the act of rising to make obeisance to the sun' but go so far as to emulate the image in sacrificing to the 'Sun of Ethiopia', and then to Memnon himself.

## II. IMAGE AND RITUAL

As we have seen, the ritual appreciation of an image may be seen as a kind of alternative (not necessarily an exclusive one) to what we would regard as a more straightforwardly art-historical response. At Sicyon, Pausanias notes (2.10.1):

In the gymnasium not far from the market-place is dedicated a stone Heracles made by Scopas. There is also in another place a sanctuary of Heracles. The whole of the enclosure here they name Paidize; in the middle of the enclosure is the sanctuary, and in it is an old wooden figure carved by Laphaes the Phliasian. I will now describe the ritual at the festival. The story is that on coming to the Sicyonian land Phaestus found the people giving offerings to Heracles as to a hero. Phaestus then refused to do anything of the kind, but insisted on sacrificing to him as to a god. Even at the present day the Sicyonians, after slaying the lamb and burning the thighs upon the altar, eat some of the meat as part of a victim given to a god, while the rest they offer as to a hero...<sup>41</sup>

Here the theme of Heracles is introduced through a stone image by a famous name, the fourth-century B.C. sculptor Scopas (another of those responsible for the Mausoleum).<sup>42</sup> However, although he opens in an art-historical vein, Pausanias moves by association to another sanctuary of Heracles, at Sicyon but 'in another place'. This also has a statue, which Pausanias describes by its age and medium as 'an old wooden figure', and by its artist, Laphaes the Phliasian. However, more interesting to him (or at least described at greater length) are the festival and rituals over which Laphaes' statue presides.

The rituals at the Paidize combine the kinds of offerings made to a god with those made to a hero.<sup>43</sup> Pausanias' account is not simply a catalogue of mythological charters given for such practice, nor a random listing of liturgical oddities (such as the details of the sacrifice) for their own sake. The ritual combination of deity- and hero-worship raises a theological question in material and performative terms. The myth gives two versions of Heracles—the hero whom the Sicyonians had venerated and the god whom Phaestus honoured. Contemporary ritual practice resolves the theological conflict about the status of Heracles by performing both kinds of worship. In doing so, it prompts a ritual-sensitive viewer like Pausanias to question the peculiarity of this particular version of Heracles at the Paidize.

Pausanias turns to the myth to understand the ritual and the deity in the sanctuary. Art and its liturgical context have a theological resonance far beyond their formal, material or stylistic implications. Beside the discourse of artists which relates so alluringly to post-Renaissance art-historical concerns is a liturgical and theological

<sup>40</sup> On the 'Daedalic style' in Graeco-Roman art-writing, see S. P. Morris, *Daedalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 238–56 and N. Spivey, 'Bionic Statues', in A. Powell (ed.), *The Greek World* (London, 1995), pp. 442–59, esp. pp. 446–8; on Pausanias and Daedalus, see Morris (above), pp. 246–51 and Arafat (n. 18), pp. 403–4.

<sup>41</sup> For discussion of worship of Heracles as hero and god, see Frazer (n. 17), ad loc., vol. 3, p. 64.

<sup>42</sup> See Stuart Jones (n. 30), pp. 168–72, pp. 177–80. On the Heracles at Sicyon, see A. Stewart, *Skopas of Paros* (Park Ridge, NJ, 1977), pp. 90–91.

<sup>43</sup> On hero and divine sanctuaries in Greece, see E. Kearns, 'Between God and Man: Status and Function of Heroes and Their Sanctuaries', in A. Schachter (ed.), *Le sanctuaire Grec* (Geneva, 1992; *Entretiens Fondation Hardt* 37), pp. 65–99.

discourse of art far closer to early Christian disputes about whether the Virgin was *Theotokos* or *Christotokos* (Mother of God or Mother of Christ), and to the long history of discussion about how exactly Christ could combine two natures (divine and human) in one person. For the Sicyonians, the cult of Heracles at the Paidize manages to combine two normally exclusive identities: Heracles is both a god and a hero. The difference between these roles is emphasized by the different kinds of sacrifice, but the unity of it being one and the same Heracles worshipped in this way is defined by the single statue which receives the rituals. Art and ritual are here inextricably, theologically linked.

Beside this theological quality to images in their sacral context, a quality which in some sense defines the nature of the deity,<sup>44</sup> is a more magical resonance. Take the strange story of the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta (Pausanias 3.16.7–11):

The place named Limnaeum is sacred to Artemis Orthia. The wooden image there they say is that which once Orestes and Iphigenia stole from out of the Tauric land, and the Lacedaemonians say it was brought to their land because there also Orestes was king... The Spartan Limnatiens, the Kynosourians, the people of Mesoa and Pitane, while sacrificing to Artemis, fell to quarrelling, which led also to bloodshed; many were killed at the altar and the rest died of disease. Whereat an oracle was delivered to them, that they should stain the altar with human blood. A man used to be chosen by lot and sacrificed; but Lycurgus changed the custom to a scourging of youths, and so in this way the altar is stained with human blood. By them stands the priestess, holding the wooden image. Now it is small and light, but if ever the scourgers spare the lash because of a youth's beauty or high rank, then at once the priestess finds the image grow so heavy that she can hardly carry it. She lays the blame on the scourgers, and says that it is their fault that she is being weighed down. So the image ever since the sacrifices in the Tauric land keeps its fondness for human blood.<sup>45</sup>

This is a famous image, with an impeccable mythical pedigree. Here we are altogether outside art-historical discourse and into a world where certain material objects are linked with the mythical and divine past, the sacred Greece which gives meaning to Pausanias' modern narrative.<sup>46</sup> The theology of this statue, unlike the Sicyonian Heracles, lies not so much in the different kinds of worship appropriate to it, as in its miraculous qualities and its relentless demand for human blood. The statue of Artemis Orthia, like other sacred marvels in Pausanias' text, breaks natural laws in becoming heavy when not offered enough blood and challenges human taboos with its need for the blood of human beings.<sup>47</sup>

With Artemis Orthia we have no reference to an artist (the statue was a xoanon), although the image is quite precisely described—'small', 'light' and 'wooden'. Instead Pausanias tells the myth of its origins. Not only is it identical with the famous Tauric statue (which had figured in Euripides' play *Iphigenia in Tauris*) but it is linked through Orestes with the place in which it now receives worship. Pausanias reports some dispute about which of several claimants is the real Tauric goddess (statues belonging to the Lydians, the Cappadocians and the Syrians of Laodiceia were also candidates for the honour, 3.16.7–8),<sup>48</sup> but he has no doubt that the

<sup>44</sup> See M. Beard, 'Reflections on "Reflections on the Greek Revolution"', *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 4 (1985), pp. 207–13, p. 211.

<sup>45</sup> On this passage see Frazer (n. 17), ad loc., vol. 3, pp. 340–44; D. Musti and M. Torelli, *Pausania: Guida della Grecia: libro 3: La Laconia* (Milan, 1991), ad loc., pp. 226–7, with archaeological bibliography. Another Second Sophistic account of this image, largely in accordance with that of Pausanias, is in Philostratus, *V. A.* 6.20. On the Orthia festival generally, see N. M. Kennell, *The Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta* (Chapel Hill, 1995), pp. 70–76.

<sup>46</sup> See Elsner (n. 6), pp. 144–52.

<sup>47</sup> Compare the sanctuary of Lycaean Zeus in Arcadia (8.38.6) with Elsner (n. 6), p. 147–8.

<sup>48</sup> On this dispute, see Heer (n. 17), pp. 228–9.

authentic image is this one. His reasons are based on the image's supernatural powers as demonstrated by the ritual he describes. Ritual and magical power define authenticity. It is not custom or ritual practice which demands the shedding of human blood, but it is the statue itself; this blood (for which the goddess has what is described as a 'fondness' or 'enjoyment', ἡδυσθαί, 3.16.11) is the link between the Orthia and its origin among the Taurians.

In the ritual of flogging with its elision of and yet allusion to human sacrifice,<sup>49</sup> and in the strange heaviness which overcomes the statue if her altar's intake of blood is insufficient, we are offered some sense of the danger of cult images in antiquity. Such statues are not to be profaned—as the disease and death of those who originally quarrelled at her altar attest. In this sense the art object is not entirely distinct from the goddess it represents. One is reminded of the Aphrodite of Cnidos in Pseudo-Lucian's *Amores*, a text perhaps written not much after Pausanias in the late second or third century A.D. This Aphrodite—placed in a position so as to be as visible as possible, to be seen in her nudity from all sides—is capable of representing the ideal object of sexual desire to both a straight man and a gay (*Amores* 13–14). But when a youth does succumb to the forbidden temptation, interacting not merely with the eyes but physically, his attempt at lovemaking is marked by a permanent blemish on the statue and he is punished by suicide (*Amores* 16–17).<sup>50</sup>

The Artemis Orthia belongs to a whole world of charismatic and miraculous images in Graeco-Roman religion.<sup>51</sup> Sacred images may be magical—whether this magic belongs to myth-history, like the tale of Seleucus' sacrifice (1.16.1) when 'the wood that lay on the altar advanced of its own accord to the image and caught fire', or to personal experience.<sup>52</sup> Pausanias himself witnessed the wood which caught light without fire following magical incantations chanted by Lydian priests at Hierocaesareia and Hypaepa (5.27.5), and the supernatural effects on the offerings made to Mycalessian Demeter (9.19.5):

Here is shown the following marvel. Before the feet of the image they place all the fruits of autumn, and these remain fresh throughout the year.

Statues may be apotropaic, able to bind wandering spirits and prevent them from troubling the land.<sup>53</sup> Take the case of the image of Actaeon at Orchomenos (9.38.5):

A ghost, they say, carrying a rock was ravaging the land. When they inquired at Delphi, the god bade them discover the remains of Actaeon and bury them in the earth. He also bade them make a bronze likeness of the ghost and fasten it to a rock with iron. I have myself seen this image thus fastened. They also sacrifice to Actaeon as to a hero.

<sup>49</sup> On the occasional death of flogged youths, see Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 18.2, with Kennell (n. 45), pp. 73–4.

<sup>50</sup> On this text, see M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Vol. 3: The Care of the Self* (Harmondsworth, 1990), pp. 212–13; J. Elsner and A. Sharrock, 'Re-Viewing Pygmalion', *Ramus* 20 (1991), 149–82, esp. pp. 156–7; R. Osborne, 'Looking on Greek Style: Does the Sculpted Girl Speak to Women Too?', in I. Morris (ed.), *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 81–96 and Goldhill (n. 12), pp. 102–110 (esp. 103–4). On the statue, see C. M. Havelock, *The Aphrodite of Knidos and Her Successors: A Historical Review of the Female Nude in Greek Art* (Ann Arbor, 1995).

<sup>51</sup> An excellent modern discussion of one category of such images (apotropaic or talismanic statues) is Faraone (n. 5) with the review discussions in the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 4 (1994), 270–89.

<sup>52</sup> On images and magic, see Clerc (n. 14), pp. 63–82.

<sup>53</sup> See Faraone (n. 5), pp. 74–93, 136–40, idem, 'Binding and Burying the Forces of Evil: The Defensive Use of "Voodoo" Dolls in Ancient Greece', *Classical Antiquity* 10 (1991), 165–205, and Barasch (n. 4), pp. 36–9.

Numinous images may have miraculous effects on their beholders—not only healing, as we have seen in the case of Aelius Aristides,<sup>54</sup> but also the provision of remarkable qualities (10.32.6):

There is also near Magnesia on the river Lethaeus a place called Aulae where there is a cave sacred to Apollo, not very remarkable for its size, but the image of Apollo is very old indeed, and bestows strength equal to any task. The men sacred to the god leap down from sheer precipices and high rocks, and uprooting trees of exceeding height walk with their burdens down the narrowest of paths.<sup>55</sup>

Some images—like the horse-statue dedicated by Phormis at Olympia—may affect animals as well as humans with supernatural charisma (5.27.3). Finally, as the works of Aelius Aristides and Artemidorus repeatedly emphasize, images were closely associated with dreams of a prophetic, curative or protective nature.<sup>56</sup> Such dreams might occur in front of images, might include images or might protect beholders from revealing what they have seen in a particular sanctuary, including its statues and works of art.<sup>57</sup> Or dreams might lead the beholder into a holy place, as at the shrine of Isis outside Tithorea and the temples of the nether gods near the Meander (10.32.13).

The point I am trying to make here is that the range of ancient responses to art cannot be fully accommodated without giving serious consideration to the kinds of attitudes and sacredly charged images so vividly portrayed by our ancient sources and in particular by Pausanias. It is all too tempting to rely on antiquity's more philosophical and literary accounts, with their sophisticated plays on naturalism and enargeia, their polemical rhetoric and their moralizing agendas. Beside this literary world, in which art was really quite profoundly theorized (especially during the Second Sophistic) by the likes of the Philostrati, is a world of religious phenomenology, magic and initiation, in many ways more familiar from Byzantine and Medieval saints' lives than from the evolutionary art histories of naturalism reproduced by Pliny, Quintilian and Cicero.<sup>58</sup>

### III. IMAGE AS RITUAL

A particular, in some ways extreme, form of the sacred phenomenology of images can be glimpsed in those moments when Pausanias describes works of art that themselves became elements of ritual. Take the case of the offering of the Orneatai at Delphi (10.18.5):

The men of Orneae in Argos, when hard pressed in war by the Sicyonians, vowed to Apollo that, if they should drive the host of the Sicyonians out of their native land, they would organize a daily procession in his honour at Delphi, and sacrifice victims of a certain kind and of a certain number. Well, they conquered the Sicyonians in battle. But finding the daily fulfilment of their vow a great expense and a still greater trouble, they devised the trick of dedicating to the god bronze figures representing a sacrifice and a procession.

In one sense this is a nice story and, as Pausanias concedes, a clever *sophisma*. But that ignores the fact that the Orneatai had to find a way out of their dilemma—a way that

<sup>54</sup> On Aristides, see Lane Fox (n. 28), pp. 160–63 and Miller (n. 9), pp. 184–204; on statues and healing, see Clerc (n. 14), pp. 37–45.

<sup>55</sup> See Frazer (n. 17), ad loc., vol. 5, p. 401.

<sup>56</sup> On images and dreams, see Clerc (n. 14), pp. 49–54, Barasch (n. 4), pp. 31–3 and Miller (n. 9), pp. 28–35.

<sup>57</sup> For instance the dreams Pausanias himself has at the Athenian Eleusinium (1.14.3), at Eleusis itself (1.38.7), at the Carnasian Grove outside Messene (4.33.4–5).

<sup>58</sup> See Pliny, *Natural History* 34.54–65, 35.1–148; Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 12.10.1–9; Cicero, *Brutus* 70; see also Pollitt (n. 2), pp. 73–84.

would not ruin them financially and would not offend the god. It was through visual representation, through creating mimetic images that they resolved the problem. But their imitation was more than a mere group of images, certainly more than a 'trick'.<sup>59</sup> It imitated not just particular figures and animals, but rather a process of sacrificial *action*. This is a different level of mimesis from that usually discussed by ancient art theory (from Plato onwards) since it imitates not so much a static object as a dynamic set of relations, not just something material but a performance. Moreover the offering from the Orneatai had an identity with the ritual they had promised; not only did it represent the sacrifice and procession they had vowed, but—so far as the god was concerned—it *was* that sacrifice and procession. Again, here we find ourselves close to the kinds of identity between image and representation theorized by Christian theologians to justify the way Christ could be identical with his icon in person but not in substance. The bronzes from Orneae are not the same as a 'real' procession and sacrifice in material terms, but nevertheless *are* that ritual in the terms necessary to satisfy the god.

The implications of the offering from Orneae are formidable. Much ancient art is blandly labelled 'votive' in the handbooks. But if 'votive' in its antique context should evoke anything like what the bronzes of the Orneatai at Delphi suggest, then we must radically revise our sense of the power and significance of such offerings. They were not simply works of art, gifts, or tokens of exchange with the gods;<sup>60</sup> they may have carried magical and dynamic religious properties—they may also have been charged ritual objects in their own right. Moreover, the notion of performative or ritual imitation complicates the dynamics of mimesis in ways not usually suggested by those for whom imitation implies naturalism and illusion. Here on the contrary, we have kinds of mimesis which prefigure the ways in which the emperor or the eucharist could be seen as imitations of Christ.

One question constantly raised by these various ritual meanings and contexts for images is the relation of the representation to its prototype.<sup>61</sup> In what sense is an image identical with the deity or activity it represents? The magical and theological properties of images, as well as the way the offering of the Orneatai could actually substitute as a ritual, hint at a much more dynamic interpenetration of image and referent, representation and prototype, than we usually allow for in discussions of mimesis. As in the ancient practice of iconoclasm and *damnatio memoriae* where on some level the destruction of the image is the destruction of the person condemned, so here more positively the worship or context of the image asserts the actual *presence* of its prototype.

On the complexity of the image-referent relationship, let us look briefly at Pausanias' discussion of the statue of Theagenes of Thasos (6.11.6–9).<sup>62</sup> Theagenes was an extremely famous athlete who had won one thousand four hundred crowns (6.11.5). His story is introduced with the following anecdote (6.11.2–3):

In his ninth year they say, as he was going home from school, he was attracted by a bronze image of some god or other in the market-place; so he caught up the image, placed it on one of his shoulders and carried it home. The citizens were enraged with what he had done, but one of

<sup>59</sup> The *sophisma* is related to what Faraone (n. 5) calls 'the ruse of the talismanic statue', see pp. 94–112.

<sup>60</sup> For a good survey of these aspects of ancient votives, see T. Linders and G. Nordquist (eds.), *Gifts to the Gods* (Uppsala, 1987; *Boreas* 15).

<sup>61</sup> Highly relevant here are the reflections of D. Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1989), esp. pp. 61–81, pp. 83–4 (mainly on ancient Classical images).  
<sup>62</sup> On this story, see Frazer (n. 17), ad loc., vol. 4, pp. 38–9.

them, a respected man of advanced years, bade them not to kill the boy, and ordered him to carry the image from his home back again to the market-place. This he did and at once became famous for his strength, his feat being celebrated throughout Greece.

The supernatural strength of Theagenes and his fame are made to rest on relations with a statue.

This interplay of man and bronze-image continues after Theagenes' death with the following account (6.11.6):

When he departed this life, one of those who were his enemies while he lived came every night to the statue of Theagenes and flogged the bronze as though he were ill-treating Theagenes himself. The statue put an end to the outrage by falling on him, but the sons of the dead man prosecuted the statue for murder.<sup>63</sup>

The idea of Theagenes having quite 'departed this life' is undercut not only by his enemy's treatment of his image as though he were alive, but more supernaturally by the statue's own response in punishing the assailant. The statue is not only prosecuted but found guilty and punished with exile by being dropped into the sea.

However, when famine comes upon the Thasians, the Delphic oracle instructs them to receive back the exiles. This they do, interpreting the oracle to mean exiled people, but their action still fails to stop the famine. A second trip to Delphi yields the response (6.11.8): 'But you have forgotten your great Theagenes.' Pausanias continues (6.11.8–9):

And when they could not think of a contrivance to recover the statue of Theagenes, fishermen, they say, after putting out to sea for a catch of fish caught the statue in their net and brought it back to land. The Thasians set it up in its original position, and are wont to sacrifice to him as to a god. There are many other places that I know of, both among the Greeks and among barbarians, where images of Theagenes have been set up, who cures diseases and receives honours among the natives.

The dropping of the statue into the sea was an act of legal banishment. Yet even in exile, the image was present in the city (as its prototype was present in the image)—so much so that famine ravaged the land. On its return, the image was not simply restored to its place but treated very differently. Its journey into the sea and back had become a *rite de passage* beyond heroism into divinity. The private flogging of Theagenes by an enemy was replaced by public rituals of worship; the original attraction of Theagenes as a boy to a bronze statue of a god which had pointed to his unique strength as an athlete was mirrored in his identity with a bronze statue which marked his divinity. This divinity is proved by other images of Theagenes Pausanias knows which cure diseases.<sup>64</sup> The god may be present not only in one image but (simultaneously) in many. Indeed this is one way in which his divine nature is marked.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

No ancient writer sat back and assessed or conceptualized the relations of art and ritual—indeed such reflective thinking about the validity of art in relation to religion was a signal contribution of Christian theology. However, in his painstaking enumeration of particular instances, Pausanias certainly provided a rich evidential base for the range of practices with images which took place in Roman Greece and for the stories recounted to justify or explain such rituals. Perhaps the critical element

<sup>63</sup> This story was often repeated and referred to in antiquity, cf. Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 31.95–99, and Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 5.34.

<sup>64</sup> For the image of Theagenes as a healing statue, see also Lucian, *The Parliament of the Gods* 12.

underlying the sacred functions and supernatural qualities of art in this ritual-centred discourse is an *identity* (postulated by worshippers) between the god and the image, or the act and its representation (as in the case of the sacrifice of the Orneatai). The represented is not just in the image, the represented is the image.

This point, of the identity of prototype and representation, is vividly emphasized in the account of the bearded, oracular Apollo in the *De Dea Syria*, probably written by Lucian in the second century A.D. (36–7).<sup>65</sup>

About his deeds I could say a great deal, but will describe only what is especially remarkable. I will first mention the oracle. There are many oracles among the Greeks, many among the Egyptians, some in Libya and many in Asia. None of the others, however, speaks without priests or prophets. This god takes the initiative himself and completes the oracle of his own accord. This is his method. Whenever he wishes to deliver an oracle, he first moves on his throne, and the priests immediately lift him up. If they do not lift him up, he begins to sweat and moves still more. When they put him on their shoulders and carry him, he leads them in every direction as he spins around and leaps from one place to another. Finally the chief priest meets him face to face and asks him about all sorts of things. If the god does not want something to be done he moves backwards. If he approves of something, like a charioteer he leads forward those who are carrying him. In this manner they collect the divine utterances, and without this ritual they conduct no religious or personal business... I will tell something else which he did while I was present. The priests were lifting him up and beginning to carry him, when he left them below on the ground and went off alone into the air.

About a statue like this there are no doubts: it is identical on some level with the deity, its every action pulsates with holy charisma. However cynically we may read the text to adduce the invention and manipulation of a phenomenon by a priestly class (and there is evidence in Lucian's other writings of such cynicism about religious 'extremists'—for instance in his *Alexander the False Prophet* or his *Peregrinus*),<sup>66</sup> the many worshippers at the temple did not see it like that. For them, this image was a god, its actions were supernatural, its utterances oracular.

It is here, in the supernatural identity of image and prototype, that the Second Sophistic's 'ritual-centred' discourse of sacred art (in writers like Pausanias and the Lucian of the *De Dea Syria*, as well as in Artemidorus' dreams of statues and gods, and in the visions of Aelius Aristides) parts company with the 'aestheticist' discourse of ancient art history. For the very themes of deception, absence and illusion which characterize mimesis and which are most eloquently praised by such writers as the Philostrati (or by Lucian in ekphraseis like *Zeuxis*) are impossible to reconcile with the fact that a particular stone or wooden image may be experienced by its worshippers as a miracle-working god: in the identity of stone and deity there is no space for the imitations, deceptions and illusions of naturalism. When the Younger Philostratus says that the deception (*ἀπάτη*) inherent in art is pleasurable and involves no reproach since no harm can come of it (*Imagines* proem 4), he is quite simply writing from a series of assumptions radically different from those which inform the ritual discourse of the danger of images because of the presence of their supernatural prototypes.<sup>67</sup>

The special interest of the Second Sophistic's writings on art lies in this unresolved

<sup>65</sup> After more than a century of discussion about the authorship of the *De Dea Syria*, the modern consensus has tended to assert the work as Lucian's. See R. A. Oden, *Studies in the De Syria Dea* (Missoula, Montana, 1977; Harvard Semitic Monographs 15), pp. 4–46 and C. P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge, MA, 1986), pp. 41–3.

<sup>66</sup> On these two cases, see the discussion of Jones (n. 65), pp. 117–48. Generally on Lucian and religion, see *ibid.* pp. 33–45.

<sup>67</sup> On the theme of antipathetical discourses of ancient art, focusing on the issue of 'the real', see further Elsner (n. 6), pp. 21–48, esp. 46–8.

conflict about the status of images: either they deceive with all the eloquence of illusionism or they are what they portray in a supernatural and potentially dangerous manner. At rare moments the two discourses may appear to fuse in a rhetorical hyperbole (as in the passage by Callistratus quoted earlier), at times they co-exist in the same writer (as in the diverse works, ekphrastic and religious, by Lucian) or even in the same text (as in Pausanias). But the axioms on which these two discourses operate—deception (which is to say, difference, in that one thing pretends to be another) and identity—are mutually exclusive.

When seen in these terms, the arrival of Christianity in the fourth century would not involve a straightforward artistic shift from the naturalistic splendours of Classical art to the schematic forms of religious symbolism (as has so often been asserted). Rather, there was the gradual suppression of ‘deceit’ (images which appeared to be what they were not) coupled with a powerful affirmation of the ritual nature of art. Images as an integral element of sacred ritual would be bolstered by the force of theological justification, especially during and after the period of Byzantine Iconoclasm. The theology was precisely targeted at the issue of identity—so that the icon of Christ was identical with him in person but not in substance.<sup>68</sup> This distinction allowed icons to be worshipped, to cause miracles, to perform in civic and sacred ritual, while at the same time preserving them from being idols (that is, mere wood or stone worshipped as if it were divine).<sup>69</sup>

Because, in this sense, the Christian production and use of art was a theologically justified and adapted refinement of the practices of Graeco-Roman polytheism, we can detect remarkable similarities and continuities between the classical and the Christian phenomenologies of religious image-worship. For instance, there is a striking correspondence between the account of the spinning and staggering image of Apollo in the *De Dea Syria* and Russian pilgrims’ (much later) descriptions of the Hodegetria icon of the Virgin and child, the palladium of Constantinople, whose icon staggered with divine charisma in its weekly street processions through the city on Tuesdays.<sup>70</sup> Again the phallus-climbers of the *De Dea Syria* have a certain affinity with Stylite saints who became a feature of the same region in the fifth century.<sup>71</sup> Likewise the ritual precision of Pausanias’ description of *Graecia religiosa* is paralleled by the wealth of liturgical detail and precision highlighted in our most important early Christian account of Jerusalem pilgrimage. Writing in the 380s, the Spanish lady Egeria devotes a large section of what survives of her description to ‘the daily services of the holy places’ (*Peregrinatio Egeriae* 24.1–49.3, where the

<sup>68</sup> For discussion of the Iconophile apology for icons, see e.g. Barasch (n. 4), pp. 185–243, esp. 192–8 and J. Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (New Haven, 1990), esp. pp. 67–98. For a view of the arguments of Iconoclasm in an ancient intellectual context stretching back to Plato, see C. Osborne, ‘The Repudiation of Representation in Plato’s *Republic* and its Repercussions’, *PCPhS* n.s. 33 (1987), 53–73.

<sup>69</sup> At the same time, Greek Christianity retained the language and style of ancient ekphrasis (including all the tropes of mimesis) with which to celebrate its sacred images. Likeness, however, in the Byzantine context, referred to the spiritual nature of the prototype and not to a naturalistic imitation of physical presence. See L. James and R. Webb, ‘“To Understand Ultimate Things and Enter Secret Places”: Ekphrasis and Art in Byzantium’, *Art History* 14 (1991), 1–17, esp. 12–14.

<sup>70</sup> See the fourteenth-century description by Stephen of Novgorod in G. P. Majeska, *Russian Travellers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Washington, 1984), p. 36.

<sup>71</sup> See D. T. M. Frankfurter, ‘Stylites and *Phallobates*: Pillar Religions in Late Antique Syria’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 44 (1990), 168–98, esp. pp. 184–8 on the methodological problem of generalization and ‘archetypalism’.

manuscript abruptly breaks off).<sup>72</sup> Like Pausanias, Egeria is sensitive to the visual and architectural ambience of ritual,<sup>73</sup> but is in the end less interested in the art *per se* than in its religious and liturgical uses.

The burden of my argument has been to emphasize a ritual-centred attitude to images in antiquity, which influenced both ways of seeing and ways of thinking about art. The importance of ancient art within a religious sphere of experience is part of a deep continuity between pagan and Christian, ancient and medieval responses to images (despite the profound changes in conceptualizing and defining the icon which Christian theology introduced). Art history has tended to assume that classical art—the art of naturalism and ekphrasis—was much more like Renaissance art and art-writing than it was like the arts of the middle ages;<sup>74</sup> but the evidence for image and ritual should give us pause for thought. It may in fact be that the sacred images of Byzantium and the medieval west were closer to the arts of ancient polytheism than either the Church Fathers or the Renaissance antiquarians would have wished or acknowledged.

*Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London*

JOHN ELSNER

<sup>72</sup> On Egeria and liturgy, see J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (London, 1971), pp. 54–88 and J. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship* (Rome, 1987), pp. 55–64, 90–93.

<sup>73</sup> For instance 25.8–9 on the decor of the churches, 36.5–37.3 on the relics at the Holy Sepulchre.

<sup>74</sup> Such is the implication, for instance, of E. H. Gombrich's discussion of Classical art in *Art and Illusion* (London, 1960), esp. pp. 99–125, and *The Heritage of Apelles* (London, 1976), pp. 3–18.