UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

De-Christianizing Greek Religion: Material Affect and Belief

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies

by

Ranjani Atur

Committee in charge:

Professor Christine M. Thomas, Chair

Professor David G. White

Professor Claudia Moser

June 2021

The dissertation of Ranjani Atur is approved.

_____

David G. White

_____

Claudia Moser

_____

Christine M. Thomas, Committee Chair

June 2021

De-Christianizing Greek Religion: Material Affect and Belief

by

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It takes a village to complete a dissertation, and this one is the product of the support and hard work of many people. To begin, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my excellent committee members, who have saved this project from innumerable and avoidable errors. I am indebted to David White, whose encyclopedic knowledge of ancient and medieval religions, not to mention obscure literary and material sources across a wide geographical and chronological range, has been instrumental in giving the comparative element of this project true depth. I am grateful to Claudia Moser for sharing her passion for sacred space with me. The skills that she has imparted to me, such as reading site plans and applying spatial theory, have been integral to this project. To Christine Thomas, the supervisor of this dissertation, I owe more thanks and praise than I can possibly include here. With her trademark brilliance, patience, and good humor, she has given my (at times, overly) enthusiastic and ambitious ideas form, direction, and substance. Her expertise in ancient Mediterranean religions, archaeology, and theory can be seen in every word of this dissertation. Everything good about this project is a direct result of my committee's involvement: all credit goes to them (all errors are my own!). I would also like to note that this work was produced as a result of the AAUW American Dissertation Fellowship Award, for which I am truly grateful.

This dissertation marks the end of a long journey that would not have been possible without the help and support of countless people. I am thankful to all of my teachers who have imparted knowledge to me over the years. So many faculty members from Georgetown University's Classics department and UCSB's Religious Studies and Classics departments have given me valuable advice and criticism, and special thanks is due to Douglas Boin, Ann Taves, Dwight Reynolds, Wendy Wiseman, Fabio Rambelli, Aryeh Amihay, Helen Morales, Robert Morstein-Marx, and Sara Lindheim. I cannot begin to express my thanks to Gregory Hillis, who always made time to talk to me about a wide range of subjects and whose excellence as a teacher I aspire to emulate. I am also deeply indebted to Young Richard Kim for his invaluable insight into the academic job market and prudent advice through this past year. I am likewise grateful to my fellow graduate students, especially Marshall Evans, Yevgeniy Runkevich, Mayumi Kodani, Tejas Aralere, Yanitsa Buendia de Llaca, Michael Ium, and Collin Sibley, for the many intellectual conversations inside and outside of the classroom that have shaped my own thoughts, and whose friendship I treasure. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Andrea Johnson, whose invaluable assistance in navigating the administrational side of this process is matched only by her unwavering support and friendship.

It is an understatement to say that this project, let alone this degree, would not have been possible without the professional and personal support of my spouse, Noah Segal. His unparalleled ability to distill a riot of ideas into cogent and concise thoughts helped to streamline the arguments presented throughout these chapters. From providing the insight of a Classicist, to proofreading and editing this project, he has selflessly contributed hours of his time and effort, and his assistance has been critical at every stage of this dissertation. I am equally overwhelmed by and grateful for his unwavering and tireless support (practical and moral), compassion, humor, and encouragement throughout this process, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a good day when I first sat next to him in Greek 243.

Finally, my family: I would like to thank my father, who has been my longtime bookstore buddy and always bought me each and every book that I could desire. His thirst for learning and critical thinking, and his passion for all things religion and philosophy, inspired me to pursue this degree. I would like to thank my mother for reading books with me every day after school throughout all the years of my childhood. Through the many long hours of violin practice, she instilled in me the discipline and work ethic that enabled me to persevere through this degree. I would also like to thank my sister for her companionship through many adventures – a true friend in dark times. My family's love and support has made this journey possible.

Santa Barbara, California
June 8th, 2021

For Noah.

Education

B.A. in Classics and History, 2013
Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

Post-Baccalaureate Program in Classical Languages, 2014
Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

M.A. in Religious Studies, 2016
The University of California, Santa Barbara
Thesis: A Theory of Sacred Space in Ancient Greek Temples

Ph.D. in Religious Studies, 2021
Dissertation Title: De-Christianizing Greek Religion: Material Affect and Belief
Dissertation Advisor: Professor Christine M. Thomas
Comprehensive Exam Fields: Early Christianity; Greek and Roman Religion; Archaeological Methods and Theory; Contact between Ancient India and Ancient Greece.

Awards and Fellowships

2014-2019 Central Fellowship Package
2015 Towbes Fellowship Award for Outstanding First-Year Graduate Student
2018 Birger A. Pearson Award for Academic Achievement in the study of Christian Origins and Hellenistic Religions
2019 Mellon Engaging Humanities Graduate Fellow
2020 UCSB Religious Studies Department Dissertation Fellowship
2020-2021 American Association of University Women: American Dissertation Fellowship

Conference Papers Presented

2019 "Paul's Speech in Athens and the Challenge of Conversion in Greek Sacred Landscapes," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Diego.
2020 "Seeing is Believing: Considering Viewership in Ancient Greek Religion via Indian Darsan," Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, virtual.

ABSTRACT

De-Christianizing Greek Religion: Material Affect and Belief

by

Ranjani Atur

Our understanding of ancient Greek religion, once disproportionately founded on textual evidence, has in the last five decades increasingly acknowledged the value of material evidence and the unique insights it gives us on the topic. New media, however, are accompanied by new challenges in interpretation. Given our chronological and cultural distance, it is challenging to theorize the role of material objects, such as sacred images, votives, and shrines, in shaping religious experience, and the theological significance of those objects continues to elude us. This is of course a reflection of the nature and amount of evidence, but also a product of most scholars' culturally western background, which denies the religious value of material objects. Thus, the perspective from which most attempt to understand materiality in ancient religion impedes the realization thereof.

This project offers a new framework for approaching ancient Greek religion that recognizes the importance of material objects. More specifically, it situates the cognitive and emotional aspects of ancient Greek religion within the built material realm. Through close examinations of sacred statues, votive offerings, and the placement of shrines and temples throughout the city, I argue that material culture was a central component of Greek religion, essential in establishing a personal relationship between the worshipper and the divine. In order to combat the influence of the predominant western perspective, this work features a strong cross-cultural and comparative element, placing the ancient Greek evidence in

dialogue with other observable, polytheistic, and image-centric traditions. Chapter 1 examines sacred images as indices of divine presence that enable viewer-worshippers and gods to see and recognize each other. Chapter 2 argues that sacred images function as affective archives, whose tactility and manipulability produce a horizontal relationship of friendship between viewer-worshippers and deities. The final chapter looks at the geographical emplacement of ancient Greek religion and the responses of diaspora Judeans and early Christians inhabiting the ancient Greek sacred landscape to its vitality. These chapters show that material culture reinforced the religious worldview of the ancient Greeks and was a major factor in the survival and continuation of Greek traditional religion for several centuries after Christianity became the state religion. This work not only enriches our conceptions of ancient Greek religious experience but is integral to our understanding of the engagement between Greek religion and early Christianity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

There was once a man named Amasis who, having deposed the ruler Apries, became the Pharaoh of Egypt in the sixth century BCE—or so Herodotus tells us.[1] Being of common rather than royal descent, Amasis II was at first scorned by his subjects. In order to win their respect and honor, Amasis refashioned one of his possessions, a golden footbath in which he and his guests cleaned their feet, into an image of a god and set it up in the public space of the city. When Amasis learned that that the Egyptians frequented the image for the purpose of worship, he drew their attention to the profane origins of the image. The very object in which his guests had once vomited, urinated, and cleaned their feet, was now the recipient of their reverence. So, too, ought they to honor Amasis, likewise of mundane origins but now elevated as their ruler. So saying, Amasis convinced the Egyptians to accept his rule.

This peculiar and intriguing story has captured the attention, not just of modern scholars, but of many in the ancient world as well. Aristotle, for example, references this passage in his explication of male leadership in the male-female union.[2] Athenagoras, a second-century Church Father and Christian apologist, is another such person.[3] Hostile to all material forms of worship, Athenagoras sees in this anecdote evidence for the artifice of images: the mutation of the gold from the form of a footbath to the form of a deity proves that it is mere matter. There is nothing essentially sacred about it, and therefore the statue cannot be expected to effect miracles, produce oracles, or accept sacrifices.

---

[1] Hdt. 2.169-182; particularly 172.

[2] Arist. *Pol*. 1259b 7-9.

[3] Athenagoras, *Leg*. 26.

Athenagoras' opinion has infected, whether indirectly or not, modern interpretations of the passage. For example, the analyses of Leslie Kurke and Deborah Steiner, despite eschewing Athenagoras' overtly polemical bent, nevertheless remain within his interpretive lens by citing the properties of the image's material (gold) as justification for its ability to inspire reverence.[4] In Steiner's study, in which images function as both *eikones*, objects that give viewers access to another reality, and *eidola*, imperfect and deceptive purveyors of truth, the tale of Amasis evokes images in their capacity as *eidola,* as Herodotus cautions his audience against equating interior and exterior qualities. [5] For Herodotus' audience, the main takeaway might be that "a mere redefinition of function and form cannot produce a parallel transformation in the internal essence of a thing."[6] Though the statue is made of gold, and therefore elevated and pure, its former function as a footbath renders it an unworthy vessel of any real divine presence. The statue remains undeserving of worship, just as Amasis himself, a lazy despot, is unequal to the position of Pharaoh.

This interpretation leaves something to be desired. Firstly, there is nothing in the text to suggest that Herodotus was actually censuring Amasis and the Egyptians in this episode. Herodotus characterizes Amasis' actions as stemming from his *sophia* (wisdom or shrewdness). That he seems generally well-disposed towards Amasis' rule in Egypt should further discourage a pejorative reading of this passage. Far more interesting, then, is the fact

---

[4] Deborah Steiner, *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 126–29; Leslie Kurke, *Coins, Bodies, Games, and Gold: The Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Richard Seaford, "Reading Money: Leslie Kurke on the Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece," *Arion* 9.3 (2002): 145–65.

[5] Steiner, *Images in Mind*, 5, 126–29.

[6] Steiner, *Images in Mind*, 128.

that the Egyptians flock to offer worship to the object once it has taken on the recognizable form of a deity. The interpretations above are correct in saying that there is nothing *essentially* sacred about the object or its material, given that it was formerly a footbath. And yet, not only do the Egyptians revere it, no qualms are expressed in the story over its profane origins even after Amasis' revelation. In fact, Amasis' desire for acceptance of his rule directly hinges on the sacred status and continued worship of the footbath-turned-deity: only through the acknowledgement that the profane can become hallowed can Amasis secure respect for his new position.

The interpretations above, with their emphasis on the external material of the statue and Herodotus' warnings against tyrants, obscure the much more interesting and important question for scholars of Greek religion and materiality: what is it about religious objects within specifical cultural matrices that designates them as sacred? Although the context for this particular story is Egyptian, there is no dearth of such objects in the ancient Greek world, and their importance cannot be overstated. Despite the numerous ancient philosophical and satirical critiques of images of gods (e.g. Lucian vividly describes colonies of mice and rats nestled within hollow statues of gods and goddesses in their temples, and Diagoras famously claimed to have chopped up a *xoanon* of Herakles for firewood without any adverse consequences),[7] images of the gods were richly venerated by ancient Greeks, so much so that the attack on *herms* in Athens stirred up public hysteria.[8] As such, attention to religious

[7] Lucian, *Zeus Trag*. 7, 8.

[8] Thuc. 627. Even Cicero, who had many philosophical propensities, so loved and honored his statuette of the goddess Minerva that, when he was exiled from Rome in 58 BCE, he made provisions for the Minerva to be removed from his house and dedicated at the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Plut. *Vit. Cic*. 31).

objects and how they function for the people of ancient Greek society is necessary for any scholar seeking to understand ancient Greek religious experience.

This is particularly relevant today as our understanding of ancient Greek religion, once disproportionately founded on textual evidence, has in the last five decades increasingly come to depend on material evidence and the valuable insights it gives us on the topic. It is a well-established fact that Greek religion was non-doctrinal and non-text-based; indeed, among the extant textual sources, very few even describe popular religious practices. The general overreliance on these few textual sources has made it notoriously difficult for scholars to understand the parameters of Greek religion and reconstruct ancient Greek religious experience. But the paucity of text-based sources is neatly balanced by the preeminence of material ones, such as images of gods, altars, shrines, temples, votives, amulets, etc. Ubiquitous in the ancient world, these material objects had enormous religious significance for ancient Greeks, and as such are a valuable source of evidence for Greek religious beliefs, structures, and practices.

Accordingly, this project centers on ancient Greek religious objects and their role in religious life. It holds that material objects are meaningful for the people interacting with them within a specific cultural matrix. In ancient Greece, small- and large-scale material objects (temples, shrines, altars, houses, statues, votives), through their production and display, not only reflected the beliefs and practices of the people who created and interacted with them but also reinforced those very beliefs and practices. Therefore, an analysis of the ways in which the ancient Greek interacted with her material surroundings can impart a great

deal of information on the richness and complexity of pagan[9] attitudes of worship, a neglected topic in the modern study of Greek religion.

Through close examinations of sacred statues, votive offerings, and the placement of shrines and temples throughout the city, I argue that material culture was a central component of Greek religion, essential in establishing an affective relationship between the worshipper and the divine. The guiding questions of this dissertation are, 1) how do material objects render divine presence immanently?, 2) what is the role of religious objects in engendering a horizontal relationship, i.e. personal, intimate, and reciprocal, between humans and gods?, and 3) how does the emplacement of Greek religion within a specific geographical and material landscape reaffirm those same religious, ideological structures? Through an exploration of these topics, I hope to reconstruct the affective quality of ancient Greek religious experience and show the vibrancy of the tradition.

Nowhere is the emphasis on affective materiality and lived religious experience more needed, nor more neglected, than in the study of ancient Greek religion. This is because of the way in which Greek religion was studied in the very early academy, which was characterized by Christian triumphalism and Enlightenment rationalism. Receiving Greek religion mainly through the polemics of early Christian writers and their own Christian, monotheistic, aniconistic backgrounds, scholars of the seventeenth through the nineteenth

[9] I use the term 'pagan' here to refer to practitioners of traditional Greek (and Roman) religious practices. Scholars have shied away from this term in recent years because of the pejorative nature of the word (as a Christian term) and tend to use "polytheism" instead. But "polytheism" is a modern designation, set up in opposition to monotheism; the emic phrase *polutheos doxa* (the belief in many gods) does not have the same connotations as "polytheism". For this reason, I will use the word "pagan" instead to distinguish between those performing traditional Greek and Roman religious practices and adherents of Jewish and early Christian traditions.

centuries utilized a comparative method that pitted Greek religion against Christianity. Greek religion, lacking a dogma, creed, central scripture, and other facets of the Christian tradition, was placed on the opposite, "primitive" end of an evolutionary scale of religion, which was characterized by polytheism and fetishism.[10] This perspective is summed up nicely in the following description of Greek religion by Robertson Smith: "…in primitive life, all spiritual and ethical ideas are still wrapped up in the husk of a material embodiment. To free the spiritual truth from the husk was the great task that lay before the ancient religions, if they were to maintain the right to continue to rule the minds of men."[11] That Greek religion, among many others, was supplanted by Christianity indicates its failure to accomplish this task.

To what extent does this perspective still hold sway? The intervening century has undoubtedly seen a shift, in large part thanks to Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood's *polis*-religion model. Its claim that Greek religion was embedded fully within the *polis* and can only be understood through the structures of the *polis* has counteracted the intrusion of Christianizing categories.[12] Rather than searching for categories of creed, doctrine, and belief within Greek religion (or judging it on the lack thereof), proponents of this model, as well as most scholars in its aftermath, ground Greek religious practice in Greek culture, language, and society.

---

[10] Marjorie Wheeler-Barclay, *The Science of Religion in Britain, 1860-1915* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 23–27. See discussion in Marshall McKee Evans, "Emotional Rescue: Idolatry and Affective Conversion in 1 Corinthians 8-10" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2020), 7–45.

[11] W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1889), 439–40.

[12] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, "What Is Polis Religion?," in *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander*, ed. Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 295–322; Julia Kindt, "Polis Religion – A Critical Appreciation," *Kernos* 22 (2009): 9–34.

Actions and practice, rather than belief, are prioritized. Harrison has gone so far as to asseverate that the recession of Christianity in Western society means that it is no longer a meaningful point of comparison.[13]

And yet, there is a prevailing tendency to define Greek religion by the absence of those aspects that are central to Christianity, or what Robert Garland referred to as a "negative catechism,"[14] seen in statements from popular introductions to Greek religion like, "Practice not belief is the key,"[15] and "Greek religion…[is] ritualistic in the sense that it was the opposite of dogmatic."[16] Even works specifically on the topic of "personal religion" focus on the ritual behaviors prescribed for individuals in literary sources like epic poetry, plays, and philosophy.[17] Similarly, many of the most popular and noteworthy introductions to Greek religion completely ignore the role of material objects. Sacred images in and of themselves are given little space in Robert Parker's influential and almost encyclopedic works and receive no more than one girthy paragraph in Zaidman and Pantel's introductory

[13] Thomas Harrison, "Belief vs. Practice," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, ed. Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 22.

[14] Robert Garland, *Religion and the Greeks* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1994), ix.

[15] Simon Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3.

[16] Robin Osborne, "Archaeology, the Salaminioi and the Politcs of Sacred Space in Archaic Attica," in *Placing the Gods: Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece*, ed. Susan E. Alcock and Robin Osborne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 144.

[17] Stephen Instone, ed., *Greek Personal Religion: A Reader* (Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2009). Although Instone's focus is on individual practice, his work examines the types of behaviors prescribed for individuals in ancient Greek literary sources like epic poetry, plays, and philosophy. As such, it is unable to address either religious practice in cult (as attested by materials sources) or the internal motivations of people undertaking these practices.

text.[18] Religious objects (images, votives, altars) are addressed in Price's *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* and Burkert's introduction to Greek religion, but in mere pages.[19] Such trends belie Harrison's claim regarding the demise of Christianity as our intellectual background.

In fact, it is the perception of Christianity's apparently diminished role in Western society that blinds us to the many ways in which its presuppositions have pervaded our cultural stance on all manner of subjects. This is particularly evident in the reluctance to credit material objects as religiously potent, a problem that is neatly encapsulated in the following misgivings about this project expressed by an anonymous grant reviewer:

> I don't see that the proposal shows much sensitivity to the manifest logical problems involved in seeing a physical object as a god, a problem that, combined with a principle of interpretive charity, must motivate us to discount claims that sane people have really held such beliefs. Without such beliefs, however, religiously affective attachment to such objects is also hard to understand and thus something we should be reluctant to credit.[20]

---

[18] Louise Bruit Zaidman and Pauline Schmitt Pantel, *Religion in the Ancient Greek City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 60. The tendency to prioritize "theological" over material aspects of religion prevailed among scholars of Indian religions as well until the late twentieth-century. For a critique of this practice, see Joanne Punzo Waghorne and Norman Cutler, eds., *Gods of Flesh, Gods of Stone: The Embodiment of Divinity in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), particularly p.1-7.

[19] Price, *Religions*; Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. John Raffan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).

[20] NASEM Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship 2020-2021 Competition; Applicant: Ranjani Atur; Application date: December, 2019.

Setting aside the fact that "sane" adherents of several world religions today make liberal use of religious materiality like images and icons, this comment unwittingly replicates the belittling attitude of early Christians towards "idolatry," and Protestant (and Enlightenment) denigrations of materiality as empty and inert. A less extreme example can be seen in the refusal to countenance "belief" as a viable category of analysis (instead of simply redefining its parameters) within Greek religion among the scholars mentioned above. That "belief" is the sole prerogative of Christianity is so culturally ingrained that even these responses to the triumphal lens ultimately reproduce and reaffirm the very perspective they seek to challenge.

Such entrenched assumptions implicitly inform the types of questions being posed and the nature of the sources consulted. Let us revisit Steiner's analysis of the Amasis anecdote. Taking umbrage with Heraclitus' negative characterization of images, Steiner attempts to reconcile the obvious efficacy of images with their many critiques. And yet, the placement of Herodotus' tale alongside the philosophies of Heraclitus, Democritus, Dio Chrysostom, and Plato, all of whom emphasize the gap between the image's surface appearance and internal nature, means that Steiner's own point of entry into this inquiry is a critical one. Too, there are several problems with relying solely on philosophical treatises, the first of which is that they express the view of only a small segment of society.[21] Moreover, the survival of these texts into the modern era was largely dependent on Christian copying and transmission, a process that greatly favored Hellenistic philosophers whose ideas in one

[21] It must be noted that even among these philosophers, as well as others like Zeno, who is similarly critical, there is no consensus as to what the exact relationship between deity and image is, nor as to where the problem actually lies.

way or another validated Christian ideas.[22] Texts that denigrate images survive while those that might have supported them, if ever they were written, do not. This overreliance on unrepresentative and overwhelmingly literary sources continues to impede our ability to understand the role of materiality in Greek religion.

In the last decade, however, scholarship on ancient Greek religion has made enormous progress, and the current project builds on the several notable and influential trends in the field. The first development has been in the area of "belief." The idea that the Greeks had several religious beliefs is mooted in Versnel's 2011 study, *Coping with the Gods*. The aptly named appendix, "Did the Greeks Believe in their Gods?" (which, unlike Paul Veyne's book of a similar title, actually tackles the question of belief), overturns two of the hitherto prevailing conceptions of Greek religion: that "belief" entails a statement of faith and that Greek religion is mere ritualism.[23] Pointing to the diversity of early Christian "doctrine," Versnel undermines the distinction between Christian and Greek beliefs. Citing from a wide variety of epigraphical, material, and literary sources from many genres in this

[22] Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 4–5.

[23] Hendrik S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 539–59. For Veyne, see Paul Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?: An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). On ritualism, see Robert Parker, *On Greek Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 30–32; Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 96–103. For J.Z. Smith, the Protestant background of the modern university led to "the study of religion as, essentially, a Protestant exercise" (98).

and his other works, Versnel shows the complexity and depth of the beliefs undergirding Greek religious practice.[24]

Several others have followed suit. In her seminal 2012 work, *Rethinking Greek Religion*, Julia Kindt argues that while "thinking" and "acting" may be theoretically distinct, in practice these are not fundamentally separate activities.[25] Religious actions, including the production of and interaction with objects, can provide a window into the cognitive and mental dimensions of Greek religion. *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, edited by Kindt and Esther Eidinow, similarly prioritize beliefs, paying attention to prayers, curses, art, and opinions regarding the afterlife and new gods. An interesting step is taken again by Eidinow and Kindt, this time alongside Robin Osborne, in the edited volume, *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion*.[26] Rejecting the singular "theology," the authors claim multiple theologies for the ancient Greek world. These theologies, differing based on time and place, were embedded in religious customs, argues Eidinow. Despite being rather too literary, this volume expands our definition of theology and normalizes the variance in beliefs throughout the Greek world.

This emphasis on belief has sparked a tangential interest in "lived religion." Questioning the divisional focus in scholarship on "cult practice," "civic religion," "votive religion," or "mystery religions," proponents of this model are interested in religious practice

---

[24] See also Hendrik S. Versnel, ed., *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1981); Hendrik S. Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

[25] Julia Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Kindt, "Polis Religion."

[26] Esther Eidinow, Julia Kindt, and Robin Osborne, eds., *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion*, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

as a collective. Such studies prioritize the agency of individuals and their embodied experience of Greek religious structures. Jörg Rüpke has been instrumental in inciting interest in Roman religion as lived religion. His study, *On Roman Religion*, brings individual interpretations and interactions with gods, rituals, and places to the foreground, and sheds light on the interplay between individual experience and institutionalized systems of religion.[27] On the Greek side, Angelos Chaniotis's work on emotions in religious contexts likewise spotlights individual experiences that are nevertheless firmly grounded in communal expectations and structures.[28] *Lived Religion in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, edited by Rüpke, Valentino Gasparini, Rubina Raja, and others, features contributions from several notable experts in Roman and Greek religion, ancient Judaism, and early Christianity.[29] This volume contextualizes these traditions in the ancient Mediterranean to postulate the vibrancy of ancient religious experience. Not only does the "lived religion" model provide access to the individual level of religious experience, it situates religious experience and belief on a spectrum, emphasizing multivocality and diversity.

---

[27] Jörg Rüpke, *On Roman Religion: Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome*, Townsend Lectures/Cornell Studies in Classical Philology (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016).

[28] Angelos Chaniotis, "Emotional Community through Ritual: Initiates, Citizens, and Pilgrims as Emotional Communities in the Greek World," in *Ritual Dynamics in the Ancient Mediterranean: Agency, Emotion, Gender, Representation*, ed. Angelos Chanotis (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2011), 264–90; Angelos Chaniotis, ed., *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World*, vol. 1 of *Alte Geschichte* Band 52 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012).

[29] Valentino Gasparini et al., eds., *Lived Religion in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Approaching Religious Transformations from Archaeology, History and Classics* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110557596.

There have also been congruent strides in the theorizing and examination of material culture. This is most evident in Milette Gaifman's work, particular her article, "Theologies of Statues in Classical Greek Art."[30] The word "theology," inasmuch as it has been underutilized in studies of Greek religion has rarely been applied to Classical art. Gaifman, taking the view that objects and art are meaningful, not just aesthetically but ideologically, examines paintings of sacred statues as an example of visual theological discourse. The various ways in which sacred statues are depicted in other media articulate the complex relationship between objects and gods within Greek religion. Jaś Elsner's work on votives is also relevant.[31] Elsner characterizes votives as affective objects that instantiate materially the immaterial relationship between worshippers and gods. As such, they make the human-divine relationship explicit for viewers and worshippers. In both of these works, material objects are treated as active religious agents that exist alongside human actors; the interactions between the material and human actors are central shape religious beliefs and lived religious experience.

Building on these foundations, this project advances the scholarly discussion of ancient Greek religion by situating the cognitive and emotional aspects of religious experience within the built material realm. More specifically, it explores the affective nature of material religious objects, such as statues, votives, shrines, and temples, and their resultant capacity to actualize the personal human-divine relationship within the geographical and

---

[30] Milette Gaifman, "Theologies of Statues in Classical Greek Art," in *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion*, ed. Esther Eidinow, Julia Kindt, and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 249–80.

[31] Jaś Elsner, "Place, Shrine, Miracle," in *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*, ed. Ittai Weinryb (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 2–25.

spatial context of ancient Greek cities. Combining approaches from Religious Studies, Classics, and Art History, this dissertation takes as its premise the understanding that material objects (including large-scale objects like architecture), are fundamentally entangled with people, societal and cultural structures, places, and other objects. Through their entanglement, objects connect all of these elements together in order to make, express, and reaffirm meaning for the individuals interacting with them.[32] They are therefore integral in shaping religious experience.

Two methodological choices require some explanation. The first is the comparative approach to the ancient Greek material. The comparative endeavor, once shunned, has slowly regained traction in the years since Jonathan Z. Smith's efforts in setting up parameters for responsible, historical comparison. Cautioning that "the 'end' of comparison cannot be the act of comparison itself,"[33] Smith identifies four steps in the comparative enterprise: description, comparison, redescription, and rectification. The task of the scholar is to first locate a given exemplum within its social, historical, and cultural context, with attention to how it has been received in our own scholarly milieu. Having described both exempla in this way, the scholar can proceed to a comparison, noting significant points (similarities and/or differences) of interest. The goal is twofold: a redescription of the data in light of the other,

[32] Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012); Colin Renfrew, "Mind and Matter: Cognitive Archaeology and External Symbolic Storage," in *Cognition and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Symbolic Storage*, ed. Colin Renfrew and C. Scarre (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 1998); Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Horizon Press, 1974).

[33] Jonathan Z. Smith, "The 'End' of Comparison: Redescription and Rectification," in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age*, ed. Kimberley C. Patton and Benjamin C. Ray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 239.

and a rectification of the academic categories governing the discipline. Undertaken in this way, comparison becomes a fruitful way to deepen our understanding of certain phenomena.

This is a reductive restatement of Smith's work, but it is necessary because, in this project, modern Indian Hindu, Mesoamerican Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox practices, to name a few, are incorporated as comparanda to the ancient Greek material, and some of my readers may balk at the data chosen for comparison. Some may even accuse me of "cherry-picking" without regard to the manifest problems in grouping these exempla together. Why do these disparate cultures, so far removed geographically and chronologically from the ancient Greek material, belong together in this study, and how can they be useful to the study of ancient Greek religion? In asking this, these readers will conveniently forget that the perspective from which we have been approaching Greek religion, and with which we have been implicitly comparing it, is equally geographically, chronologically, and culturally distanced. Indeed, it is the specifically Protestant triumphal lens and Enlightenment rationalist perspectives of most western scholars that have led us to characterize materiality as inert and empty, and Greek religion as mere ritualism. This is to say, the perspective from which most attempt to understand materiality in ancient religion impedes the realization thereof.

In this project, I place the Greek material in dialogue carefully and specifically with other cultures that also use material objects in worship practices. Doing so accomplishes two very important things. First, it allows me to normalize religious materiality. The fact that modern, observable groups continue to use images, icons, altars, votives, and temples, presents this phenomenon as acceptable and common, and proceeding to the Greek material from this stance enables us to see how materiality functioned in the ancient world, freed from

our critical assumptions. This methodology also permits the entry of new models and methods into the study of Greek religion. It is important to note that in this project, I in no way suggest that the Greek material is the *same* as any of these other materials. Rather, I claim that these varied approaches to the modern evidence, which recognize the affectivity of objects, can be fruitfully adapted and applied to the Greek material, wherein objects are also (yet differently and uniquely) affective. This comparative approach aids in combating the intrusion of Christianizing assumptions.[34]

The second methodological choice is the scope of the evidence utilized in this project. Throughout the ensuing chapters, material, epigraphical, and literary sources from the archaic period to the Roman period, from across the Greek-speaking world and the Roman empire make an appearance, though the majority of the evidence comes from Classical Attica. While the choice of evidence is justified further in each chapter, it behooves me to address the utility of such an approach, namely that it further challenges the long-lasting influence of the *polis*-religion model. If Greek religion is embedded in the structures of the *polis*, as this model maintains, then Athenian religion has a distinct flavor from Corinthian religion, and so on. This is undoubtedly true, but we must remember that such a narrow lens is only useful when situated alongside a wider one. To isolate Athenian or Corinthian religion fully is to once again impose Christian denominational distinctions on the Greek material. Greek religion existed and was recognizable across place and time: customs developed from older ones, and travel ensured the spread of such practices. The breadth of this approach helps

[34] For further justification of cross-cultural and trans-historical comparative work, see Barbara A. Holdrege, "Interrogating the Comparative Method: Whither, Why, and How?," *Religions* 9.2 (2018): 58.

identify the overarching *patterns* of Greek religion and establishes a new framework for later examinations of site-specific material.

The methodologies and theories employed in this project aim to enrich our understanding of Greek religion by "de-Christianizing" its study. Accordingly, in chapter one, I challenge the tendency of modern scholars to study sacred images as *objets d'art.* It is a truism in scholarship that to view a sacred image was to encounter a being who looked back; yet, scholars persist in focusing on issues of aesthetics and production at the expense of apprehending the object's religious potency. Even the phrase "religious gaze," used by scholars like Elsner, Verity Platt, and Kindt to differentiate between secular and religious modes of viewing, is often overly dependent on the aesthetics of the image. Materials like *chryselephantine* (a mix of bronze and ivory) were meant to communicate the otherworldliness of the divine and highlight the unbridgeable gap between humans and gods. In this chapter, I understand sacred images as indices of divine presence and the religious gaze as a mental activity that unlocks the potency of those objects. I compare this process to *darśan*, the Indian mode of sacred viewing, which initiates a live connection between gods and humans, satisfying each entity's desire for recognition and subjectification. Understanding the religious gaze as active and haptic enables us to view sacred images as anything but inert.

The second chapter addresses the emotional aspect of ancient Greek religious experience by arguing that sacred objects, as repositories of affect and emotion, localize the presence of the gods as social actors. Because Greek religious behavior has often been characterized as transactional (*do ut des,* "I give so that you will give"), and due to the general modern reluctance to associate affect with religious materiality, affectivity is as yet

unexplored in scholarship on Greek religion. I use comparative practices from Meso-America and India (such as cradling, feeding, bathing statues, and the ritual of *puja*) to show that sacred images enable affectivity. In ancient Greece, votive reliefs and vase paintings that depict casual and intimate interactions between worshippers and materially emplaced deities outside of ritual contexts can be read in such a way as to showcase these affective bonds. The tactility and materiality of sacred images blurred the hierarchical boundaries between gods and humans, making each party dependent on the other. Ancient Greeks bathed, fed, kissed, dressed, and even disciplined statues of the gods, actions which engendered feelings of nurture and warmth and created a closeness between the two parties. Understanding the affective dimension of sacred images in this way allows us to reinterpret the term "sacred landscape." Rather than merely testifying to past divine encounters, the sacred landscape is constituted by daily interactions between divine and human social actors. Thus, ancient Greek landscapes were contoured by flows of agency as humans and gods lived alongside each other.

Because western religions like Christianity and Judaism have long been diaspora religions, functioning independently of geographical space, the emplacement of Greek religion within a particularly geographical landscape has previously escaped much notice by scholars. Thus, in the first half of the final chapter, I turn to the ancient Greek religious landscape. More specifically, I examine the ancient Greek landscape as a network of connected, meaningful places. Religious places, identified as any location of religious actions, function relationally, in that they connect locations, objects, people, and ideological structures. The performance of religious actions in these places not only produce meaning,

they also serve to entangle personal and spatial histories, with the result that places manifest and reaffirm an individual's identity.

This picture of Greek religious materiality, divested of Christianizing assumptions, must change the way that we perceive both Greek religion and early Christianity. Too often, scholars shy away from treating Greek religion and early Christianity within the same study, viewing them as distinct and unrelated traditions. This is a mistake, not only because the two religions were in conversation with one another in the ancient world, but also because scholarly conceptions of both have been constructed in a mutually reinforcing manner. Thus, in the second half of chapter three, I turn to Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. I examine 1 Cor. 8-10, which presents the debate amongst the Corinthians regarding *eidolothoutos*, or food offered to gods, as a spatial discourse. In 1 Cor. 8-10, Paul sets up a model for former pagan converts to the Jesus movement on how to navigate the ancient Greek sacred landscape without compromising their loyalty to the Judean god. Reading the passage in this way reaffirms the importance of the geographical landscape within Greek religion and sheds light on the way in which the materiality of Greek religion hindered and perhaps even prevented conversion to the Jesus movement in the first century CE and beyond. Only through a reinterpretation of early Christian experience based on this clearer understanding of Greek religion can we begin to overturn the Christian triumphal lens that has dominated scholarship.

In this project, I show the essential importance and agency of materiality within ancient Greek religious experience. Not only did material culture play a central role in establishing relationships between human worshippers and their deities, it also reinforced the religious worldview of the ancient Greeks and was a major factor in the survival and

continuation of Greek traditional religion for several centuries after Christianity became the state religion. The version of Greek religion as vibrant and dynamic presented here helps us understand the lamentations of third and fourth century church-fathers regarding Christians voluntarily participating in pagan rituals, as well as the concerted building program undertaken by Christian officials in order to reimagine the sacred landscape of the city through a Christian perspective. This work therefore not only enriches our conceptions of ancient Greek religious experience but is integral to our understanding of the interactions between Greek religion and Christianity in the ancient world and beyond.

Chapter 1
To See and Be Seen: Sacred Images and the Religious Gaze

1. Introduction

"i, whose mud-colored palms
were sculpted for blessing
fingers carved
inch by inch
into meaning

now sit behind unfaultable glass

where eyes linger ravenous
on the misshapen shattering
of my breast

the brusque edges left
from severed hands.

if i bled in the uprooting
    of my body,

            the shredding
of muscle   from bone,

like you   they
    would not see it."

-- *excerpt from "letter to nydia…from an unnamed goddess" by Sharanya Sharma*[35]

Written from the perspective of a statue of an Indian goddess on display at the Art Institute of Chicago, this poem critiques the way in which modern processes of viewing

[35] Sharanya Sharma, "letter to nydia, blind girl of pompeii, from an unnamed goddess," *Sixty Inches from Center*, n.d., sixtyinchesfromcenter.org/three-poems-by-sharanya-sharma/.

reduce artifacts and other "things"[36] to mere objects of art and contemplation.[37] Once worshipped and adored by those seeking her blessings, and whom she in turn blessed, the goddess-statue now sits passively behind glass in a museum, an object to be gazed at. The statue, originally viewed not just for its form but for its meaning as the goddess herself, is now observed only aesthetically; "eyes linger on the misshapen shattering of my breast, the brusque edges left from severed hands." In being viewed in this way, the goddess-statue is desacralized and disempowered in that her religious meaning and potency are completely subordinated to her aesthetic and artistic value.[38] The hands that were carved in order to offer blessings no longer (or are no longer able to) do so. Even if someone were to recognize the religious valence of the statue and wish to worship it, the means of display (in a glass case) prevents the statue from acting as anything more than a 'dead' object.[39]

---

[36] With the word "thing," I refer to Ian Hodder's concept of a "thing," which is a material object that gathers and links humans, ideas, and other things into networks of relationships. See Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), particularly chapters 1-2.

[37] See also Richard H. Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999). In the Introduction, Davis gives the example of a statue of a yakṣī found in the village of Didarganj, which was removed from its shrine by two British officials in 1917 and installed as an art piece in a museum as an example of "primitive" art (3-8).

[38] Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius and Piotr Piotrowski, "Introduction," in *From Museum Critique to the Critical Museum*, ed. Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius and Piotr Piotrowski (Farnham Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).

[39] Ivan Gaskell, "Sacred to Profane to Back Again," in *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium.*, ed. Andrew McClellan (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 148–62. Gaskell urges museums to rethink methods of display to allow for an object's sacred status to take precedent over its function as an *objet d'art.* He gives the example of a Tibetan Buddhist altar at the Newark Museum which was officially consecrated by the Dalai Lama in 1990 and can be an object of worship. Likewise, the Russian sacred icon, the *Virgin of Vladimir*, is displayed in the State Tretyakov Gallery according to museum criteria but is connected to a nearby church and can be accessed by worshipers at all times. It is moved to the church a few times a year according to the church calendar for liturgical use. These kinds

The critique leveled at western modes of viewing, particularly in museum contexts, is important especially as it pertains to the ascription of aesthetic qualities to religious objects. Based in the historically Protestant Christian emphasis on the emptiness of objects (or idols), as well as western Enlightenment ideological structures, this mode of viewing is problematic. It strips "things" of their ability to produce meaning and results in viewers gaining only a surface-level (literally) glimpse of the object. In doing so, it imposes a subject-object dichotomy that renders both the spectator and the object passive: the spectator merely imbibes the art put on display by the museum, and the object is the passive recipient of the viewer's gaze.[40] Moreover, the imposition of western artistic values on objects means that important religious artifacts are dismissed because of their lackluster or "primitive" appearance. Therefore, in moving objects from their religious context to an artistic one, we not only overlook the role of any one object in its religious and cultural milieu, but also misunderstand the whole religion and its use of objects.

Ancient Greek religious artifacts are not exempt from this problem. Whether because the academy was shaped by the same western hegemonic structures that led to this mode of viewing, or because scholars often see and study statues in their museum contexts (or some combination of the two), the emphasis on Greek religious objects as art is a problem reflected in scholarship.[41] Despite the commonplace acknowledgement that most Greek art was

---

of compromises allow non-religious people to view the object secularly while also learning about its importance and use in religious practices.

[40] See Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 2001); Gaskell, "Sacred to Profane." Gaskell writes that academics think of objects in museums as "de-sacralized," but for religious practitioners the object may still retain its sacred condition.

[41] Since the second half of the twentieth century, when critics became vocal about the imperialist and western aspects of museum displays, the idea of a 'critical museum,' which

religious, notable works on Greek sculpture and art present images of gods alongside all other "secular" or non-religious images. Many scholars focus on art-historical issues of style and form, patronage and production, mimesis and aesthetics.[42] No doubt, an artistic analysis can yield important information and contribute to an understanding of the object's religious function, but a purely artistic analysis fails to recognize that sacred images are different from other sculptures in that they are more than the sum of their artistic components.

Images of gods and goddesses lie at the heart of ancient Greek religion.[43] For the ancient Greeks, these types of sacred images were not just art; they were ways of connecting to the divine realm. Just like the statue of the unnamed Indian goddess, statues of gods in ancient Greece were often indistinguishable from the god or goddess to whom they

---

aims to problematize the museum's participation in hegemonic discourse through its displays, has risen in popularity. Still, the transition from art museums to critical museums remains more theoretical than actual, and the problematic treatment of religious objects continues. Religious objects associated with ancient Greek society and culture are a peculiar category because they, unlike the Indian statue/goddess, belong to a culture and religion that are no longer practiced by a living group of people. As such, critiques of imperialism and appropriation apply differently to these objects. Complicating the matter further is the fact that much of the western world traces its ideological and cultural roots back to ancient Greece and thus purports to have ownership of ancient Greek artifacts.

[42] See J. J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art: Criticism, History, and Terminology*, Yale Publications in the History of Art 25 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Andrew F Stewart, *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Both are standard texts for classicists and art historians. Pollitt in particular is silent about any aspect of ritual or religion associated with divine images. For critiques, see Jaś Elsner, "Image and Ritual: Reflections on the Religious Appreciation of Classical Art," *CQ* 46.2 (1996): 515–31; R.L. Gordon, "The Real and the Imaginary: Production and Religion in the Graeco-Roman World," *Art History* 2 (1979): 5–34. See also Nigel Jonathan Spivey, *Greek Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Spivey does treat images of gods separately, but the emphasis is still on style, terminology, and the economics of statue-production.

[43] I will use the phrases "images of the gods," "divine images," and "sacred images" interchangeably throughout this chapter to refer to any image that depicted a divine being and was used in worship practices.

referred.[44] They were the focus of worship in temples, homes, and public places throughout the ancient Greek world. Ancient Greeks worshipped, kissed, adorned, paraded, fed, and washed statues of their gods as signs of devotion and prayer. Yet, images of Greek gods and other sacred objects are displayed and viewed, in museums and textbooks, as objects of art. When we, as viewers, focus on the beauty and naturalism of sacred images, they suffer the same fate as in the poem above; their religious valence is neglected in favor of the aesthetic value. But unlike the poem, it is to our detriment more so than the object's.

A related problem is one of categorization. Which images are divine images and which are purely artistic in their purpose? For many scholars, only "cult statues," or statues that were placed in the *cella* of a temple and which were the main focus of worship within that temple, qualify as "religious." All other images of gods, such as votive dedications and statuettes, are not religious in the same way and are therefore treated as works of art.[45] This narrow definition greatly curtails the number of images that can be considered as "sacred," particularly when one takes into account the paucity of extant cult statues. This not only results in most divine images being categorized as art, it also leads to the erroneous impression that religious images were not important.

---

[44] Studies will often describe the statue as representing a god or goddess. I do not use the word "represent," because it implies that the statue was meant to imitate the deity in form. In saying that the statue refers to the god, I attempt to retain the ambiguity of the statue's relationship to a divine being.

[45] For example, Spivey, *Greek Sculpture*, 95–119. Spivey separates idols or cult images from votives and votaries. Votives are defined as gifts for gods, not necessarily as images that could receive legitimate worship of themselves. The focus of Spivey's section is on issues of public display and honor. It is also interesting to note that this section is significantly longer than any section dedicated solely to cult images and their religious function.

For example, Pantel and Zaidman devote all of one paragraph to "Images of the Godhead," in their popular introduction to Greek religion.[46] The conclusion of this paragraph is that while images were prevalent, cult statues would have been shut up in the *cella* for most of the year and were therefore unimportant. It is certainly true that some sanctuaries restricted access to the cult statue, and only priests and priestesses had unlimited access to the *cella* for the upkeep of the statue. These restrictions were rarely universal, applying instead to people of certain genders, ethnicities, or social statuses, and only on certain days of the year. Herodotus states that Kleomenes was prevented from entering the Temple of Athena on the Athenian Akropolis because Dorians were not allowed to enter.[47] For most temples, the only restrictive requirement was that the viewer be adequately purified before entering the presence of the deity or cult statue.

Furthermore, the term "cult statue" is purely a scholarly invention. The division of cult statues from votive statues is entirely nominal, based on location, installation, appearance, and other such factors.[48] There are certain undeniable distinctions, namely that the cult statue was the only one installed in the *cella* and was the recipient of the communal

---

[46] Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel, *Religion*.

[47] Hdt. 4.72. Only women could enter the shrine of Dionysus at Bryseia and Kore at Megalopolis, except for once a year when men could enter. The shrine of Leukothea at Chaironeia prohibited Aitolians from entering. For temple restrictions. see P.E. Corbett, "Greek Temples and Greek Worshipers: The Literary and Archaeological Evidence," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 17.1 (1970): 149–58. See also the *LSCG* (*Lois Sacrées des Cites Grecques*) and the *LSS* (*Lois Sacrées des Cités Grecques, Supplement*), both of which contain several inscriptions detailing access restrictions. For laws regarding access to sanctuaries, see Eran Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents (NGSL)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

[48] See Joannis Mylonopoulos, ed., *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Boston: Brill, 2010). The introduction by Mylonopoulos gives an overview of the factors which set apart a cult statue.

and large-scale sacrifices performed at the temple. But the desire to see just one image in any temple as *the* god is an imposition of monotheistic tendencies onto polytheistic plenitude. If we agree that the primary purpose of the cult statue was to connect the worshiper with the god, then the votive statue served much the same function. Votives were worshipped just as much as the cult statue (if not more, given the ease of access) by visitors to the temple. They received offerings, prayers, and small-scale sacrifices. Many votives also faithfully reproduced the cult statue's appearance and could even take the form of monumental statues on bases. Ultimately, both the votive and the cult statue were dedications and gifts to the presiding deity of the temple, and both were means of worshipping that deity.[49] Thus, limiting studies of religious objects based on modern terminology that does not correspond with any ancient categories or distinctions is not feasible.

More importantly, when viewed as art objects, sacred objects are not recognized as reflections and mediators of Greek religious belief. I do not mean "belief" in the Christian sense of choosing to have faith, though issues of faith and affect will be addressed in the next chapter. In this case, belief simply refers to the basic worldview structured by Greek religious ideologies.[50] For example, this definition of belief is reflected in the statement that the

[49] "The *agalma* of the god or goddess was both a dedication to the divinity and a representation and an evocation of it, 'glorious gifts in which the gods must also delight,'" Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion*, 44–45.

[50] I discuss the issue of belief in greater detail in the Introduction. This sense of belief is similar to the oft-cited 'Judeo-Christian worldview.' Many Americans who are non-religious or marginally religious still have certain basic beliefs about the world, such as the idea that there is only one god, or that god is good, or that ethics can be defined as the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.

Greeks believed in the existence of the gods.[51] Sacred images reveal ancient Greek beliefs about the nature of divine beings and means of connecting and communicating with them. Because propitiation of divine images occurred in domestic, private, and communal worship, it is evident that certain kinds of material objects were considered effective means of mediating relationships with divine beings. We can also say with some certainty that, *contra* early Christian and Greek philosophical claims about the emptiness of idols, sacred statues had religious potency. Studying how statues fit into ancient Greek constructions of divinity and paradigms of worship can bring new insight into communal and personal belief, heretofore neglected.

Therefore, this chapter examines images of ancient Greek gods and goddess, not as *objets d'art*, but as powerful objects that connected individuals to divine beings. The guiding questions of the chapter are: 1. What is the relationship between an image of a god and the god to whom it refers?, 2. How did the image operate in ancient Greek worship?, and 3. How does an understanding of sacred images as dynamic and potent change our understanding of Greek religious beliefs and individual experience? I will argue that sacred images operated as indices of divine presence which, when confronted by a viewer-worshiper, elicited a religious response. The viewer, in directing a religious gaze as this image, was able to see not only the image's material form but the deity itself. Thus, sacred images provided ancient Greeks with a way to have dynamic and individualized interactions with their gods.

To that end, I will begin the chapter by presenting "popular" (e.g. not philosophical) Greek views on the relationship between statues and gods in literary and material sources. I

[51] H. S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World v. 173 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2011), particularly Appendix 4.

will use theories of cognitive pathways to identify what kinds of evidence are useful when studying the experiential dimension of Greek religion. I then analyze different definitions of the religious gaze which distinguishes sacred images from secular ones. I propose to understand sacred images as indices of divine presence and the religious gaze as a mental activity that unlocks the potency of those objects. In section three, I introduce the model of *darśan* (sacred seeing in Indian traditions) as a comparandum to the Greek material. I examine the goals of *darśan* in connecting gods and humans and satisfying each entity's desire for recognition and subjectification. I then root this model in ancient Greek evidence to show how we can understand the experience of sacred images. Finally, in the conclusion, I demonstrate the utility of this model for understanding the role of materiality in shaping and reflecting Greek religious beliefs.

2.1 Statues and Gods: Pagan Evidence

If you were to ask an ancient Greek whether a statue of Athena was the goddess herself, she would probably respond in the affirmative. The statue or *agalma* is the *thea* herself.[52] If you were to push the worshiper and ask whether the goddess is always the statue

[52] Along with several technical words, such as εἰκών (*eikon*), ἄγαλμα *(agalma*), ἕδος **(***hedos*), βρέτας **(***bretas*), ἀνδριάς (*andrias*), and ἵδρυμα **(***hidryma*), most of which were used interchangeably, the words θεός (*theos*) and θεά (*thea*) were equally used to refer to divine images. See Simona Bettinetti, *La statua di culto nella pratica rituale greca* (Bari: Levante, 2001), 25–63; Mylonopoulos, *Divine Images*, 5; Jan N Bremmer, "The Agency of Greek and Roman Statues: From Homer to Constantine," *Opuscula* 6 (2013): 7–8. For a study of the history of these terms and issues in translation, see Alice A. Donohue, *Greek Sculpture and the Problem of Description* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Alice A. Donohue, "The Greek Images of the Gods: Considerations on Terminology and Methodology," *Hephaistos* 15 (1997): 31–45. This recognition of images as gods can also be seen in scholarship on Indian iconic religions. While historically, scholars of Hinduism have attempted to explain away the direct experience of gods through their images, more recently they have begun to explore the material embodiment of divinity. See Joanne Punzo Waghorne and Norman Cutler, eds., *Gods of Flesh, Gods of Stone: The Embodiment of Divinity in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Catherine Clémentin-Ojha,

or *only* the statue, she would probably respond in the negative. No, the statue and the goddess are distinct entities, but can be the same at times.[53] The nature of this response, both contradictory and ambiguous, is what makes the study of Greek sacred statues so difficult. Outside of philosophical treatises, no ancient source explicitly and clearly explains the relationship between a material image and the god to whom it refers. Because Greek religion was non-doctrinal and non-textual, the challenge facing scholars is in finding sources that reflect "popular" attitudes towards sacred statues and attempting to locate religious experience within those sources – a task easier said than accomplished.

It is likely from these ambiguous and inexplicit attitudes towards sacred images that early Christians derived their critiques of idol-worship. Although few explicit reasons are given in the Hebrew Bible for the prohibition against idolatry, later texts (in the Hebrew Bible and among Christian authors) provide some insight. Where justification is given, the complaint against idols falls along two, often not entirely distinct lines. The first is that images are made by men, and the second is that the materials themselves are profane.[54] The emphasis on the profane source of the statue suggests that the authors of these texts thought that people believed that the statue itself was the god. Other sources, particularly the New Testament and the writings of early church fathers, point to the literal emptiness of the statue

---

"Image Animée, Image Vivante: L'image du culte Hindou," in *L'image Divine: Culte et Méditation dans l'Hindouisme: Études Rassemblées par André Padoux*, ed. André Padoux, Centre National de La Recherche Scientifique UPR 249, l'Hindouisme, Textes, Doctrines, Pratiques (Paris: Éd. du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1990).

[53] Jennifer Larson, *Understanding Greek Religion: A Cognitive Approach* (London: Routledge, 2016), 72.

[54] Moshe Barasch, *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea* (New York: New York University Press, 1992).

(i.e. the inside of the statue was hollow) as a metaphor for its religious futility.[55] These critiques have little basis in how most ancient Greeks perceived their sacred images.

Ancient Greeks, for the most part, did not think that they were worshipping the statue itself, nor that the deity lived within the statue. Unlike Egyptian and Mesopotamian theophanic traditions, in which the deity was thought to reside in the statue, there were no magical invocation rites in ancient Greece to give life to the cult image.[56] And yet, they addressed statues as though addressing a goddess herself. Heraclitus criticized his fellow countrymen for talking to statues, comparing it to conversing with empty houses.[57] Of course, Heraclitus is mocking the use of statues in worship practices, but we can glean from this statement that people did talk to statues of gods. Ostensibly they did so with the understanding that the gods could hear what they were saying; otherwise, people would not have bothered to do so. If speaking before statues of gods was akin to speaking directly to the gods, there was a tangible connection between the material object and the divine world even without any theophanic rituals.

Several literary sources preserve instances of statues moving or speaking according to the god's will. The *xoanon* of Artemis Ortheia would grow heavier or lighter in the priestess' arms, reflecting the goddess' dissatisfaction or pleasure, during the ritual whipping of young

---

[55] Deborah Steiner, *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[56] Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 88; Barasch, *Icon*, 41; Antony Spawforth, *The Complete Greek Temples* (London ; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 78.

[57] "Moreover, they talk to these statues as if one were to hold conversation with houses, in his ignorance of the nature of both gods and heroes," Heraclitus, fragment 5. This fragment was cited often by early Christian writers as evidence that even the Greeks did not really believe in the efficacy of statues. See discussion of this passage in Mose Barasch, *Icon*, chapter 3; Sarah Iles Johnston, "Animated Statues."

boys in Sparta.[58] Another statue of Artemis was so powerful that a priestess held the statue aloft during war in order to drive the enemy Aitolians insane.[59] When Camillus' soldiers, having captured Vei, asked Juno's image whether she was willing to go to Rome, the image nodded assent and spoke words of acquiescence.[60] The statue of the dead athlete Theagenes of Thasos, having been whipped every night by a rival for several days, finally fell on the rival and killed him.[61] Of the famous Palladion in Troy, Apollodorus and Strabo record that the statue looked away and up to heaven in anger as Ajax raped Cassandra.[62] This last instance is mythological rather than quasi-historical, but nevertheless attests to the Greek belief that sacred images conveyed divine presence.

A related idea is that actions done to an effigy are theoretically done to the deity. Herodotus tells us of the young man who molested the statue of Aphrodite of Knidos and was driven to suicide afterwards by the goddess.[63] In other instances, people whose prayers were not answered by the gods became angry and punished the image of the god. When crops in Arcadia failed, boys who had been sacrificing and praying before Pan year-round resorted to beating Pan's statue. Another man, angered at Hermes' lack of response, smashed his statue

---

[58] Paus. 3.16.10-11.

[59] Plut. *Arat*. 32.2.

[60] Livy, 5.22; Hendrik S. Versnel, "What Did Ancient Man See When He Saw a God? Some Reflections on Greek and Roman Epiphany," in *Effigies Dei: Essays on the History of Religions*, vol. 51 of *Numen Book Series* (Brill, 1987), 42–55.

[61] Theocr. 7.106.

[62] Apollod. *Epit*. 5.22; Strabo 6.1.14; Lyc. *Alex*. 361.

[63] Hdt. 6.61.

of the god to which he had been regularly sacrificing.[64] Less scandalously, people would touch, kiss, and bathe cult statues, and would weave intricate garments for the statues in order to honor the deity.[65] Temples were considered to be the home of the deity referred to by the cult statue, and the doors of the temple were always left open during communal sacrifices so that the statue-deity could watch the people participating in the sacrifice.[66] Such actions only make sense if the ancient Greeks closely and strongly associated the image with the deity.

Recall for a moment the hypothetical conversation with an ancient Greek at the start of this section. We have seen now how the statue for all intents and purposes was the deity in the examples above. But ancient Greeks also knew that the statue was not the god in any essential way, in that gods existed apart from their statues. Thus, Aphrodite is said to have

---

[64] Theocr. 7.106: This passage tells us about boys beating the image of Pan in Arcadia when the crops failed; Babrius 119: a man who sacrifices every day to Hermes to no avail smashes the statue on the ground; Suet. *Calig.* 5: After the death of Germanicus, people were so upset that they threw out the Lares and upended the altars of the gods.

[65] During the *Plynteria* and *Kallynteria*, the statue of Athena Polias was undressed, veiled, and bathed. This was done only by women appointed to this task as the sight of Athena in dishabille was inappropriate for anyone else. Xenophon tells us that it was bad luck for Alcibiades to return to Athens on the day that Athena Polias was being bathed, lest he catch sight of her. In this instance, seeing the statue unclothed was akin to seeing the goddess bare, despite the fact that the statue was aniconic and did not resemble Athena's anthropomorphic form at all. Athenian women also wove a grand *peplos* to be presented to the statue of the goddess during the Greater Panathenaic festival, an act which was pleasing to the goddess. See Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 92; Mylonopoulos, *Divine Images*, 2; Jaś Elsner, "Between Mimesis and Divine Power: Visuality in the Greco-Roman World," in *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. R.S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 52; Jean Pierre Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays* (Princeton University Press, 1991), 158–59.

[66] Birgitta Bergquist, *The Archaic Greek Temenos: A Study of Structure and Function* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1967), 75–80.

cried, “Alas alas! Where did Praxiteles see me naked?” upon seeing her statue at Knidos.[67] In another epigram, Polyclitus the sculptor claims to have seen Hera the goddess and formed his statue based on what he saw.[68] In these examples, the statue resembles the goddess but they are two distinct entities. Herodotus writes of a Spartan nurse who prays to the *agalma* (cult statue) of Helen to make a child in her care beautiful. When she leaves the temple, the goddess appears to her (*epiphanênai*), separate from her statue, and grants the request of the nurse.[69] Even in the example of temple doors being left open for the statue-god to observe the sacrifice, the god is expected to simultaneously be on Mt. Olympus, accepting the smoke drifting upwards from the sacrifice.

Evidently, the ancient Greeks themselves had to grapple with these distinctions because the fifth-century BCE saw a rise in vase paintings that portrayed both the god and his image next to one another.[70] A calyx krater from early fourth century Tarentum, now in the

---

[67] *Anth. Plan.* 162. This epigram is attributed to Plato (Pl. *Epin*. XVII), though it is probably a spurious attribution. Also, “Paris, Anchises, and Adonis saw me naked. I know of these three only. But how did Praxiteles?” *Anth. Gr.* 16.168. The epigram is attributed to Antipater of Sidon.

[68] “Polyclitus the Argive, who alone saw Hera with his eyes, And molded as much as he saw of her, has shown her beauty to Mortals, as far as is lawful. We, the Unknown shapes beneath the folds, are reserved for Zeus.” *Anth. Plan.* 216 = GP 1968: Parmenion 14, translation from Gow and Page (1968: vol.1, 297).

[69] Hdt. 6.61.3. See Johnston, “Animating Statues,” 449 for a discussion of the “location” of the goddess Helen during this encounter.

[70] K. Schefold, “Statuen Auf Vasenbildern,” *JDAI* 52 (1937): 30–75; Brita Alroth, “Changing Modes in the Representation of Cult Images,” in *The Iconography of Greek Cult in the Archaic and Classical Periods: Proceedings of the First Internatioanl Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, Organised by the Swedish Institute at Athens and the European Cultural Centre of Delphi, Delphi, 16-18 November 1990*, Kernos Suppl. 1 (Athens: Liège, 9-46), 1992; M. de Cesare, *Le Statue in Imagine: Studi Sulle Raffigurazione Di Statue Nella Pittura Vascolare Greca*, ed. R. Hägg (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1997).

Allard-Pierson Museum in Amsterdam, depicts the statue of the Apollo in his temple and the Apollo himself sitting outside the temple playing the lyre.[71] A slightly earlier fragmented volute krater, attributed to Polygnotos, shows Ajax attacking Cassandra with two figures of Athena nearby, one a small statue of the goddess holding a spear and a much larger head of the goddess herself.[72] These are only two of many such examples. These vases suggest that deities were present in the vicinity of their statues or at least aware of the events going on near their statues, but not limited to the statue like their Egyptian counterparts.

These textual and material examples are significant because they speak to the complexity of Greek beliefs regarding divine nature and its relationship with material images. Sarah Iles Johnston writes, "…beliefs about gods' materiality and location…are fluid, changing to suit the needs of the situation of the worshiper…there is no reason to assume that…the god was unquestionably understood to be inside the statue."[73] Sometimes the gods were the same as the statue, and sometimes they were separate. Johnston is undoubtedly correct, but what circumstances effected either state? When might the god be

---

[71] Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum 2579, attributed to the Painter of the Birth of Dionysus (see *RVAp* 1, 36 no. 10). The vase dates to 380 BCE. For discussion of the style of the painted statue, see Gaifman, "Theologies of Statues," 255-269; Platt (2011) 31-50. For discussion of the cognitive theories associated with this vase, see Larson, *Understanding*, 72–73.

[72] The volute krater, dated to 440 BCE, is in the J. Paul Getty Museum (79.AE.198). Gaifman notes that the difference between the two figures is indicated by stylistic choices. The frontality of the smaller figure, with the dedicated peplos and archaic smile, is evocative of the archaic style of sculpture. The small image, then, is stylistically imitating the ancient statue of Athena, the Palladion, that was housed in that temple. The larger head of Athena is shown in profile, typical of fifth-century naturalism. The contemporaneous styling of the head suggests the goddess's actual presence. See Gaifman, "Theologies," 258.

[73] Sarah Iles Johnston, "Animating Statues: A Case Study in Ritual," *Arethusa* 41.3 (2008): 449.

present through the statue and when not?[74] These contradictions and ambiguities would not have been a problem for the ancient Greeks who understood their religion from an insider perspective; that is to say, their knowledge of the god-statue relationship was implicit, their enactment of such religious ideas ingrained. It is only scholars, who expect evidence to fall neatly into distinct categories of analysis, who are bothered by the contradictions inherent to Greek religion.[75] Yet, understanding these innate, unarticulated distinctions is necessary for the reconstruction of ancient Greek religious experience.

The methodology employed by Jennifer Larson in her study, *Understanding Greek Religion*, can be usefully applied here. Larson applies recent theoretical trends in the field of cognitive religion to the ancient Greek evidence in an attempt to nuance the dominant social constructivist approach, pointing out that the human mind is not a "blank slate upon which culture inscribes patterns of infinite variety."[76] Individuals shape, participate in, and reaffirm cultural structures. While the role of cognition should not be overstated and ought to be tempered with a heavy emphasis on cultural frameworks, this model helpfully merges the

[74] I say "through" the statue rather than "in" the statue because "in" suggests that the god inhabits the statue at times. It is also rather problematic to say that the god becomes the statue or the statue becomes the god, though this is slightly more accurate. This idea - that the statue *is,* for all intents and purposes, the god will become clear later on in the chapter. For now, I say "through the statue" to maintain clarity.

[75] Versnel, *Inconsistencies*, 14–22. Versnel cites Quentin Skinner in saying that scholars suffer from "the strain towards congruence." The desire for coherence and congruence is reflective of two irrational assumptions on the part of scholars: 1. Humans are capable of consistently producing logical thought sequences, and 2. Language is the perfect means by which one can communicate these logical thought sequences unambiguously to each other. This particular book represents Versnel's push towards polysemy as he looks at three inconsistent and contradictory portraits of the god Hermes that all operated simultaneously in Greek society.

[76] Larson, *Understanding*, xii.

individual and cultural dimensions of religious experience. Myths and rituals are centered in Larson's study, but material culture can benefit just as much, if not more, from this approach. Her reassessment of the "irrational" as a product of normal thought processes can shed light on the seemingly contradictory perceptions of the god-statue relationship.

Of particular relevance are the concepts of intuitive and reflective cognition.[77] Beliefs are processed either through the intuitive pathway, which is "fast, effortless and implicit," or the reflective pathway, which is "relatively slow, effortful and explicit."[78] Intuitive beliefs are learned implicitly throughout childhood, during which time a child first learns how to view and associate with the surrounding world according to cultural and societal norms: "when I am hungry, I should eat," or "what I throw in the air will come back down." These statements do not need to be made explicit because this type of cognition is automatic and experiential, allowing us to "function in daily life without consciously calculating how to execute every movement and decision."[79] The reflective pathway, on the other hand, is the product of analysis and logic and makes explicit things that are not self-evident: "eating green vegetables makes me healthy," and "throwing rocks at other people is against the law." Such thoughts rationalize the pursuit of or abstention from certain behaviors. They allow people to make sense of intuitive thoughts or experiences. Although these pathways are

[77] Larson builds on work of theorists such as Susanne Langer, who distinguished between discursive symbols found in ordinary language and non-discursive ones found in art and music, and Pierre Bourdieu, whose theory of *habitus* is cognitive but transmitted culturally. See Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[78] Larson, *Understanding*, 11.

[79] Larson, *Understanding*, 12.

distinct, the barrier between them is permeable according to Dan Sperber.[80] People who know that the earth revolves around the sun still sometimes comment on the sun's "movement." Beliefs that are reflective can become intuitive through repetition, and intuitive beliefs can be unlearned through the reflective process.[81]

The interplay between these categories of beliefs can shed light on religious thought. As Bourdieu's theory of practice has shown, intuitive religious beliefs are usually experienced through daily religious practice.[82] Reflective religious beliefs, on the other hand, are expressed in myths, allegories, and other doctrinal texts. For example, an intuitive belief may be that God understands the language you speak when praying. This is taken for granted and not usually made explicit. When pressed, however, one might formulate the reflective belief that God understands all languages because he is omniscient.[83] Another example would be the idea that God can hear your thoughts and see your mind, which only becomes explicit through the aforementioned idea that God is omniscient and omnipresent, or perhaps even that God is inside you. Larson carefully notes that although reflective religious cognition often elaborates on or reacts against intuitive religious cognition, there is no

---

[80] See Hugo Mercier and Dan Sperber, "Intuitive and Reflective Inferences," in *In Two Minds: Dual Processes and Beyond*, ed. Jonathan Evans and Keith Frankish (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 149–70.

[81] Larson gives the example of an initially reflective belief, "four is an even number," that for most of us has become an intuitive belief. Intuitive beliefs, such as the belief that the earth is flat, can be unlearned as one becomes educated on the topic.

[82] Bourdieu, *Outline*.

[83] Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 383. The gods speak Greek: the "divinity understands Greek, even if it is another question whether he speaks it," (John Gould, "On Making Sense of Greek Religion," in *Greek Religion and Society*, ed. Patricia E. Easterling and John Muir (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 16).

difference in value. That is to say, reflective cognition is not more advanced than intuitive cognition. For Larson, this explains the gap between doctrinal Christianity and practiced Christianity, doctrinal Buddhism and practiced Buddhism.[84]

Ancient Greek beliefs regarding sacred images and gods are complex precisely because worshipers had different needs in reflective and intuitive situations. Stories of a god being separate from his statue, or not present at all in his statue, are expressions of reflective beliefs. Rather than merely reflecting daily experience, these examples are purposeful. They are attempts to make explicit the rationale behind a deity's presence outside his statue as well as the statue's efficacy in enabling communication between the worshiper and the god. Thus, Aristagora's unsuccessful bid to be healed by spending a night in Asklepios' sanctuary at Troizen is explained away by saying that the god was busy in Epidauros that night and was away from Troizen.[85] In the *Iliad*, Theano and the Trojan women propitiate Athena with a *peplos* and ask that Diomedes be defeated. The line, "Athena denied the prayer," accounts for Diomedes' subsequent survival and victory.[86] In this way, the efficacy of praying in a sanctuary or before a statue is not called into question.

The need to explain *why* a worshiper's petition was unsuccessful also reveals an important intuitive belief: when I pray in front of a statue, the god is present, and hears and sees me. Thus, Epictetus angrily comments, "And if an image of god were present, you

---

[84] Larson, *Understanding*, 19.

[85] H. S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World v. 173 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2011), 91, 403.

[86] Hom. *Il.* 6.311.

would not dare to do any of the things which you are doing."[87] This intuitive belief can help explain the worship of Apollo at Delos and Delphi where his return from the Hyperboreans was celebrated annually. Versnel points out that although an arrival logically points to a period of absence, his departure to other places is never mentioned and there is no closure of temples or suspension of cultic activity in these sanctuaries.[88] The Dioskouroi and Dionysus were also thought to wander abroad and appear in epiphany internationally, but worshipers continued to invoke them throughout Greece. Individuals also persisted in worshipping before the cult image in temples where epiphanies of the deity were recorded. Apollo granted several epiphanies in his own temple in 279, Artemis Leukophryene in Magnesia in 207, and Athena at Lindos in the early 5th century BCE.[89] Despite knowing that a god was traveling, worshipers still expected the deity to listen when they prayed before an image.[90]

A late sixth-century BCE plate (fig. 1.1) depicting Cassandra's rape at the hands of Ajax is particularly interesting because it alludes to both reflective and intuitive beliefs, straddling the overlap between the two.[91] In the plate's central image, Ajax and a nude Cassandra, only partially visible, stand before the figure of Athena. I say "figure" because it

---

[87] Epictetus in Arr. *Epict. diss*. 2.8.12-14.

[88] Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 90.

[89] Versnel, "What Did Ancient Man See When He Saw a God?"

[90] Worshipers also expected gods to hear when they prayed silently or in an open field where there was no image. The gods were always expected to hear prayers and see the individual when one needed them.

[91] The plate is attributed to Paseas, late 6th century BCE (New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, 1913.169). According to some authors, Ajax drags Cassandra out of the temple (Verg. *Aen*. 2.403; Eur. *Tro*. 70; *Dict. Cret.* v.12; Hyg. *Fab.* 116.) Others write that Ajax raped Cassandra inside the temple (Tryphiodorus 635; Quint. Smyrn. 13.422; Lycoph. *Alex*. 360, with the Scholion).

is unclear whether this is a statue or the animated goddess herself. Athena is presented in a guise reminiscent of statues: she is depicted in profile, and her feet are close together, making the statue's pose stiff and statuesque.[92] But her arm is raised and ready to throw a spear, which suggests that the figure is the animated goddess. Through Athena's figural ambiguity, the plate questions whether Athena was there witnessing the events or whether she was away from her temple.

If we view the figure as an unanimated statue, then we might read the plate as follows. Temples were places of asylum and Cassandra ought not to have been attacked within Athena's temple. But because all sources hold that Cassandra was attacked, and because that point is crucial to other subsequent events in Greek mythology, the plate might be suggesting that Athena was not there to stop the attack. The lack of *contrapposto* and Athena's lack of visual contact with Cassandra support such a reading. On the other hand, if we interpret the central figure as the actual goddess, then we see the cause of Athena's anger and her subsequent punishment of Ajax. Both Pseudo-Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca* and Hyginus' *Fabulae* claim that Athena was directly involved in Ajax's death on account of his misdeeds in her temple.[93] The plate might also be asserting that Cassandra's intuitive experience was of the goddess Athena through her statue. But viewers of this plate can reflect on the tale and understand that perhaps Athena was absent (like Asklepios from Troizen) and therefore unable to stop the violation of her priestess.

---

[92] Gaifman, "Theologies," 259–60.

[93] According to the *Bibliotheca*, Calchas warns the Greeks that Athena was upset at the treatment of her priestess and would punish the Greeks if they did not kill Ajax. When Ajax takes asylum at another altar, the Greeks leave without punishing him. Athena then persuades Zeus to send a storm to destroy their ships. Hyginus's *Fabulae* 116 states that Ajax survives his shipwreck, but is lifted up in a whirlwind, struck in the chest by Athena's fire, and killed.

Fig. 1.1: Attic red figure plate, attributed to Paseas, late 6th century BCE. Dimensions: H. 3cm, Diam. 18.7cm. Museum/inventory number: New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, 1913.169. Bibliography: *ARV*2 163.4. Description: Athena (potentially as a statue) stands on the left, right arm raised with spear in hand, facing the other two figures. Ajax (far right) tries to pull Cassandra (center) away from the statue.

The figural ambiguity offered on this plate mirrors the fluidity of these two categories, reflective and intuitive. The two categories are not entirely distinct, as we can see intuitive beliefs underlying reflective stories and myths.[94] We can even say that the reflective aspect of this plate and other stories are building on or responding to the intuitive belief that gods are present in their statues. In the story told by Herodotus of the Spartan nurse and the goddess Helen (which I mentioned earlier), the goddess' epiphany is a reflective device to elaborate on the intuitive idea that praying before an image was effective. Certainly, ancient Greeks believed that the gods could appear independently of their statues, but although

[94] Larson claims that the boundaries between reflective and intuitive thoughts are permeable, though myths and other stories tend to fall into the reflective genre. I agree with Larson's argument, but I also think that myths, in responding to intuitive beliefs, can help us understand those intuitive ideas.

stories of these kinds of epiphanies abounded, they always happened to someone else.[95] For the average individual, interactions with the divine were limited to their appearances through images and dreams. Analyzing these kinds of religious beliefs can also shed light on ancient religious experience.

Some scholars have explained the experience of seeing deities through statues by turning to the power of ritual. For art historians Jaś Elsner and Verity Platt, ritual was fundamental for viewing a statue religiously. Ancient Greek culture was highly imagistic, and public spaces were filled with statues of men (philosophers, political leaders, etc.) as well as gods, but they were viewed differently.[96] While modern viewers might struggle to distinguish between these various plastic forms, the ancient viewer knew when to deploy a "religious gaze" versus a "secular gaze."[97] According to Elsner, an object's function in ritual allowed individuals to view it with a religious gaze or a ritual-centered gaze, which "denies the appropriateness of…interpreting images through the rules and desires of everyday life."[98] In this view, it is the placement of an image in a religious space and its participation in ritual

[95] Parker, *On Greek Religion*.

[96] There was no strict divide between secular and sacred in the ancient Greek world. Food and art, and activities like washing and eating, could be secular or sacred, depending on the context.

[97] On religious gaze, see Jaś Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*, Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 88–158; Jaś Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 29–66; Verity Platt, "Viewing, Desiring, Believing: Confronting the Divine in a Pompeian House," *Art History* 25.1 (2002): 87–112.

[98] Elsner, *Roman Eyes*, 25.

activity that allowed people to view the object religiously and see the deity rather than the form of the statue.

Certainly, ritual was an important part of communicating with the gods through their statues, but the role and importance of ritual ought not to be overstated. There is some evidence for an installation ritual called *hidrysis* that "aim[ed] to integrate the god within a city or some other community and to create good conditions for receiving the benefits of his divine benevolence."[99] This evidence is scanty, and Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge is one of the few scholars who have attempted to piece together the various components of this ritual, mainly from plays and inscriptions. But *hidrysis* was only done for those images modern scholars refer to as "cult statues," the official statue of a temple that received community-wide sacrifices and prayers. All other images, even the statues that received individual and private worship in temples of other gods, did not undergo this process.

Different methods of summoning the gods at important methods have also been classified as ritual. For example, a routine prayer of invocation before sacrifices and other

---

[99] Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge, "Greek Priests and 'Cult Statues': In How Far Are They Unnecessary?," in *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Joannis Mylonopoulos (Boston: Brill, 2010), 126–28. Pirenne-Delforge uses the phrase "set up" to mean ritually installed. She argues that this is why the appearance and form of the divine object do not matter; regardless of its shape, the object or statue becomes divine through this process of installation. Primary sources that mention this ritual are mainly plays and inscriptions. Euripides, *IT* 976-78: Euripides has Orestes searching for an ancient image of Artemis to 'set-up' in Athens (ἄγαλμ᾽Ἀθηνῶν τ᾽**ἐγκαθιδρῦσαι** χθονί). The *scholia* to one of Aristophanes' plays, in which Trygaios installs a goddess in the city with pots of green mixture and the sacrifice of a sheep, explains that gods were set up by boiling cereals in pots and then sacrificing an animal, often an ox or a goat (Aristoph. *Pax* 922-924). An inscription from Magnesia mentions the reinstallation of Artemis' *xoanon* in a new sanctuary (LSAM 33). The presence of a small fragment from an Athenian *Exegetikon* preserved in Athenaeus attests to the pot or vessel's role in the installation ritual (Ath. 11.473b-c: ἀγγεῖον δ᾽ἐστὶν ἐν ᾧ τοὺς κτησίους Δίας ἐγκαθιδρύουσιν, ὡς Ἀντικλείδης φησὶν ἐν τῷ Ἐχηγητικῷ γράφων οὕτως).

communal activities called the deity in whose honor the sacrifice was being conducted to appear within the temple or beside the altar.[100] One hymn by Callimachus describes the temple shaking and the keys of the sanctuary turning in their locks as Phoebus Apollo entered his temple in Cyrene.[101] Individual prayers often included the words κλῦθι, ἄκουε, and ἄκουσον, in order to persuade the deity to hear the voice of the supplicant.[102] But this evidence implies only that the god was summoned to be present during these moments, not that the god was ritually impelled to enter the statue. Whether these prayers were addressed to statues or outside of temple settings is unclear, and the lack of any formulaic rendering of prayers suggests that this was not a ritual but merely convention.

The process of ritually animating statues, which has been assumed by several scholars, was a much later phenomenon and restricted for the most part to theurgic and Hermeticist movements.[103] In these traditions, the statue acted as a *symbolon* and became a receptacle for divine (or demonic) substance. The exact process by which the divine power was enticed into the material vessel is detailed in the works of the theurgists Iamblichus,

---

[100] Giulia Sissa and Marcel Detienne, *The Daily Life of the Greek Gods*, Mestizo Spaces (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 176. There are several hymns by Callimachus that describe and celebrate the god's arrival or *epidēmia* during a festival or sacrifice.

[101] Callim. *Hymn* 2; L. Weniger, "Theophanien: Altgriechische Götteradvente," *ARW* 22 (1923): 18–22; Sissa and Detienne, *The Daily Life of the Greek Gods*, 176–77.

[102] Versnel, *Faith, Hope and Worship*, 29.

[103] Steiner, *Images in Mind*; Christopher A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Sarah Iles Johnston critiques Steiner and Faraone's assumption that statues were ritually animated in the Classical and Hellenistic periods, particularly when there is no evidence for such practices during these time periods. See Johnston, "Animating Statues"; Adria Haluszka, "Sacred Signified: The Semiotics of Statues in the *Greek Magical Papyri*," *Arethusa* 41.3 (2008): 479–94.

Julian the Chaldean, and Proclus, among others.[104] The idea of ritual animation has entered modern scholarship through the writings of Renaissance Christian thinkers who, reading Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, assumed that all statues in antiquity behaved this way. A large portion of *De Civitate Dei* book 10 addresses the Hermeticist movement and contradicts the idea that god can be "shut up and contained in a place."[105] Nevertheless, there is no evidence for such a ritual process in any earlier period of Greek and Roman history.

2.2 The Cognitive Dimension of Viewing Sacred Images

Without incontrovertible evidence for ritual's function in catalyzing a religious mode of viewing, we must turn instead to the cognitive dimension. This is not to deny that ritual was important; indeed, if we define all forms of worship as ritual, then all religious objects have ritual contexts. But there was no formal, communal ritual, either in the production process or afterwards, that sacralized and set apart religious objects.[106] The fact that religious

[104] According to Johnston, Proclus writes most explicitly on the process of making statues to enhance their ability to house the divine power, but several others mention this as well. See Procl. *In Ti.* 3.300.16-20; *Asclep*. 24.81, 36.89-90, 38.90-91; Iambl. *Myst*. 5.23 (233.9); Psell. *Epist*. 187.

[105] August. *De civ. D* 10.17. It is also possible that these thinkers were familiar with the works, not only of the theurgists, but of Porphyry and Plotinus who, in the third century CE, set the stage for the theurgists through their Neoplatonist metaphysical contemplations. For more information on the theurgists and Hermeticists in the fourth century, see Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*, Mythos (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986); Peter T. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Peter T. Struck, "Pagan and Christian Theurgies: Iamblichus, Pseudo-Dionysius, Religion and Magic in Late Antiquity," *AncW* 32.1 (2001): 25–38; Heidi Marx-Wolf, *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority: Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century C.E*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

[106] The production of sacred images was a burgeoning trade. While only sculptors like Pheidias or Praxiteles, makers of monumental or exceptionally beautiful statues, earned personal fame, workshops all over the Mediterranean made divine images, particularly statuettes that were to become votive offerings or be placed in domestic shrines. See Spivey, *Greek Sculpture*, 91–95. Spivey cites the dismay of Demetrios, the Ephesian man who made

objects were venerated outside of specific spatial or ritualistic contexts points back to the cognitive aspect of the gods' manifestations, namely that people experienced divine presence through statues because it was in accordance with their expectations. From an etic perspective, we can say as Versnel does that, "It is not the gods who decide where they are or from where they arrive. It is the mortal manipulator, who may even claim the authority to decide who *is* god and who is not."[107] Thus, it is not that the gods travel from shrine to shrine when they are ritually summoned. They manifest where they are expected because their existence is in the mind of the believer.

Against a ritual-centered mode of viewing we can situate Julia Kindt's cognitive definition of the religious gaze. She correctly challenges the emphasis on ritual, stating that secular gazes could be employed in ritual contexts and religious gazes existed outside of ritual contexts. A person in a temple looking at the deity would be able to view the object religiously, wherein they would see the deity herself, while also deploying a secular gaze, noting and appreciating the material form of the statue. The simultaneity of these gazes can explain statements in which words like *agalma* and *thea* are used interchangeably within the same sentence. The divine image is at once a statue and the god. The ability to view an object religiously or otherwise is dependent on the person's frame of mind. "In short, it matters less what one looks at, or where one looks, but how."[108] When one sees with a religious gaze, a purely mental activity, one gains an insight into the very nature of divinity.

---

miniature silver shrines of Artemis, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (19.20). The uniformity of votives, such as the terracotta statuettes from Ayia Irini, indicates that production of images of gods was an important, and possibly lucrative, trade.

[107] Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 94.

[108] Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion*, 54.

Kindt sees in the story of Parmeniscus an example of religious viewing through which glimpses into divine nature are provided. This admittedly "eccentric" source was first presented in Semus' lost *History of Delos,* which dates to the third century BCE, but is now accessible through Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, a collection of tales from earlier authors.[109] There are, of course, some issues in basing arguments of a cognitive religious gaze on Parmeniscus' journey, not least because it is a single story and quite short. The first problem is that the story is preserved in a source that dates from six centuries later than Semus' *History of Delos*. Undoubtedly, the story as it has been preserved in Athenaeus has undergone changes, both because of the intervening span of time and to suit Athenaeus' needs in his discussion of humor in the ancient world. The second problem is the formulaic crafting of the tale. The story follows the literary tropes of the oracular genre, namely that the oracular prophecy is initially misunderstood and later revealed in a plot twist. Thirdly, Felix Jacoby and others have suggested that this is an etiological story composed to explain a particular dedication by Parmeniscus (thought to be the same as Parmeniscus) from the Letoon in Delos.[110]

[109] The *History of Delos* dates tentatively to the third century BCE, while Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*, a collection of oral tales and fragments from earlier authors, dates to the third century CE. The Parmeniscus of this story might be the Greek philosopher. If so, the historicity of Parmeniscus is attested by Diogenes Laertius (9.20). See Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion,* 38-39 for a discussion of the historicity of this tale.

[110] Joseph Eddy Fontenrose, *The Delphic Oracle, Its Responses and Operations, with a Catalogue of Responses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Felix Jacoby, "Semos von Delos," *RE* 2.2 (1923): 1357–59. For other etiological stories that explain dedications, see Steiner, *Images in Mind*, 82. On the problems associated with this story, particularly its historicity, see Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion*, 39; eadem, "Parmeniscus' Journey: Tracing Religious Visuality in Word and Wood," *Classical Philology* 105.3 (2010): 252–64.

Nevertheless, the story of Parmeniscus can be useful for exploring the cognitive aspect of Greek religion. For Kindt, the story is useful "because of – not despite – its narrative shaping."[111] All storytelling is based in a cultural framework of meanings and associations with which the audience was intimately familiar; otherwise, the story would not make sense. In short, fiction needs to be verisimilar. Ancient historical sources, on the other hand, tend to catalogue the exceptional. As such, this fictional account of Parmeniscus can shed light on popular ways of thinking about the gods and their divine representations. Moreover, it is one of the few literary sources that focuses on the individual believer and his experience of viewing. As such, it testifies to the existence of a cognitive dimension in ancient Greek religion.

The story begins with the aftermath of Parmeniscus' visit to the shrine of Trophonios: he leaves unable to laugh, an apparently common side-effect of visits to this shrine. Upon hearing the oracular pronouncement regarding his lost laughter at Delphi, Parmeniscus misunderstands the Pythia's advice and honors his own mother. This confusion, typical of the oracular genre, leads him to believe that he has been deceived by the gods. One day he happens to travel to Delos. After taking in the sights, he visits the shrine of Leto, possibly expecting to see a beautiful statue of the goddess. When he sees the archaic *xoanon* of the goddess, he laughs in surprise and subsequently understands the oracular pronouncement. This leads Parmeniscus to honor the goddess Leto henceforth.

The text of the story is as follows:

[111] Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion*, 39.

> Παρμενίσκος δὲ ὁ Μεταποντῖνος, ὥς φησιν Σῆμος ἐν πέμπτῃ Δηλιάδος, καὶ γένει καὶ πλούτῳ πρωτεύων εἰς Τροφωνίου καταβὰς καὶ ἀνελθὼν οὐκ ἔτι γελᾶν ἐδύνατο. καὶ χρηστηριαζομένῳ περὶ τούτου ἡ Πυθία ἔφη·
>
> εἴρῃ μ᾽ ἀμφὶ γέλωτος, ἀμείλιχε, μειλιχίοιο. |δώσει σοι μήτηρ οἴκοι· τὴν ἔξοχα τῖε.
>
> ἐλπίζων δ᾽ ἂν ἐπανέλθῃ εἰς τὴν πατρίδα γελάσειν, ὡς οὐδὲν ἦν πλέον, οἰόμενος ἐξηπατῆσθαι ἔρχεταί ποτε κατὰ τύχην εἰς Δῆλον· καὶ πάντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν νῆσον θαυμάζων ἦλθεν καὶ εἰς τὸ Λητῷον, νομίζων τῆς Ἀπόλλωνος μητρὸς ἄγαλμα τι θεωρήσειν ἀξιόλογον. ἰδὼν δ᾽ αὐτὸ ξύλον ὂν ἄμορφον παραδόξως ἐγέλασεν· καὶ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ χρησμὸν συμβάλλων καὶ τῆς ἀρρωστίας ἀπαλλαγεὶς μεγαλωστὶ τὴν θεὸν ἐτίμησεν.[112]

> Parmeniscus of Metapontum, as Semus says in the fifth book of *History of Delos*, distinguished in birth and wealth, was no longer able to laugh after he descended into Trophonius and returned. When he consulted the oracle about this matter, the Pythia said: "You ask me about consoling laughter, o inconsolable one. The mother will give it to you at home. Honor her greatly." He expected that he would laugh after returning to his country, but when nothing changed, thinking that he had been deceived, he went by chance to Delos. Admiring all the things on the island, he went to the Letoön expecting to see a remarkable *agalma* of Apollo's mother. But seeing that it was wooden and formless, he unexpectedly laughed. Understanding the oracular response, and freed from his inability [to laugh], he honored the goddess greatly.[113]

Kindt's analysis highlights the cognitive dimension of Parmeniscus' journey, which is actually a journey towards insight into divine nature. The verb *thaumazein* signals Parmeniscus' intent to view Leto secularly and aesthetically. He is sightseeing on Delos and thinks to "sightsee" the statue of Leto. Leto's shapeless image, however, repels the sightseer's intent to see something beautiful or noteworthy. His resulting laughter brings upon him an understanding of the oracular response. He finally switches from an aesthetic gaze to a religious gaze, which is internally focused, and he learns the truth, i.e. that divine nature eludes the grasp of human understanding. The shift from an aesthetic to a religious

[112] *FGrHist* 396 F10 = Ath. 14.614a-b.

[113] All translations are mine unless otherwise specified.

gaze happens cognitively in that Parmeniscus' mindset elucidates different results from the viewing process.

The emphasis on the cognitive successfully challenges a ritual-centered definition of the religious gaze. Yet, although Kindt is right to say that *how* one approaches an object is more important than *what* the object is, her analysis is curiously centered around the external appearance of the object. For Kindt, Parmeniscus' insight into the inaccessibility of the divine in the form of the oracle and the statue is dependent on the statue's aniconic, crude form. Aniconic statues highlight the discrepancy between divinity and its material representations: "…its crude form captures and stresses the unbridgeable gap separating the human from the divine sphere."[114] It acts as a container for the god's untenable force.[115] Iconic representations, on the other hand, "communicate the otherworldliness of the divine through surplus of splendor and bodily perfection," the very same divine essence that the aniconic image tries to conceal.[116] Materials like chryselephantine, gold, and marble showed that gods were more perfect than humans. When Parmeniscus' aesthetic gaze finds no purchase in the shapeless *xoanon*, his disappointment ushers in a transition from an externalized view to a religious vision that is fully based in the method of representation.

Kindt is not the only scholar for whom a successful divine image must strike a delicate balance between identity and alterity. Platt's study of divine epiphany in the ancient

---

[114] Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion*, 46.

[115] Kindt, "Parmeniscus' Journey," 257; Steiner, *Images in Mind*, 81; Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals*, 153–55. Kindt seems to follow Steiner in viewing statues as containers of divine essence, somewhat problematically as I have already pointed out in the first half of this chapter.

[116] Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion*, 46.

world portrays epiphany as dependent on the naturalism and beauty of the statue.[117] Worshipers, overcome with the statue's splendor and naturalistic appearance of the statue, would have thought that they were seeing the goddess herself. By contrast, aniconic statues had to rely on origin stories that verified their divine nature in order to effect epiphanies. Likewise for Larson, who takes a cognitive approach, iconic statues suggest divinity because the anthropomorphic face elicits an innate response from humans. Mental awareness is attributed to aniconic statues on account of their divine origins and special powers.[118] In these analyses, it is the external appearance (e.g. material, form, beauty, etc.) that, in defining how one will look at the statue, holds the key to understanding divine nature.

Tying the religious gaze inextricably to the external form of the statue ultimately reaffirms the same modern, western mode of viewing with which this chapter began. If the external form of the statue is the key to unraveling the inner meaning, then we are left with a passive viewer and a passive object once again. Gazing at the statue, the viewer "reads" what the creator of the image "wrote" through its external form. Hans Dieter Betz describes this process as "analogous to the creation of the artwork, only in reverse direction."[119] In the first step, one turns the epithets and virtues of the god into a statue with certain attributes. Upon

---

[117] "Naturalistic forms…have no specific ritual function and are seen to elide their status as images in order to constitute 'gods themselves,'" Verity J. Platt, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 119.

[118] Larson, *Understanding*, 70–71.

[119] Hans Dieter Betz, "God Concept and Cultic Image: The Argument in Dio Chrysostom's 'Oratio 12 (Olympikos),'" *ICS* (2004): 139. The idea of "reading" statues is similar to Betz's argument that the process of viewing a statue was simply a reversal of the process of creating a statue. One turns the epithets and virtues of the god into a statue in the first step, and one reconverts the image into those same epithets and virtues in the second.

viewing the statue, one then reconverts the image into those same epithets and virtues as the second step. Not only does this perception impose monovocality onto a dynamic process, it also assumes that symbols are a definitive language.[120] Actually, symbols are evocative and associative, conveying a web of ideas that are inexplicable and even paradoxical. Symbols are effective in religion precisely because they can be interpreted so broadly. Thus, the ambiguity of an image's symbolic attributes allows two worshipers to view a sacred image and experience divine presence based on their individual interpretations, rendering each encounter deeply personal.

Any definition of the religious gaze has to account for the individual and active nature of this process. It is not a passive process in which a viewing subject contemplates an object, but rather a dynamic process wherein two viewing subjects see each other. Platt correctly states that, "To view a cult image was to encounter a being who looked back."[121] Religious gaze as a mental activity is not, as Kindt suggests, a cognitive processing of an object's meaning, but rather a mindset that incites a viewer-worshiper to see another viewing subject instead of a work of art. Only in allowing for the sacred image's vitality can scholars capture the difference between purely artistic and religious objects. In order to divest the religious gaze of any aesthetic concerns, we must first emend this type of interpretation of sacred images and their meaning.

The classification of sacred images as either iconic or aniconic, upon which the above analyses rest, reflects once again the issues of modern, scholarly terminology. As with the term "cult statue," "iconic" and "aniconic" are scholarly inventions of the nineteenth century.

---

[120] Dan Sperber, *Rethinking Symbolism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

[121] Platt, *Facing the Gods*, 78.

Because these words do not correspond with any ancient Greek distinctions, they distort our perception of the ancient evidence.[122] Scholars generally consider aniconism to be an early, archaic practice when artistic techniques had not yet advanced far enough to create naturalistic representations of the divine.[123] But aniconic statues continued to be made and worshipped even after anthropomorphic statues came into vogue.[124] From the Classical period onwards, the style of a statue was a matter of choice.[125] Even as late as Pausanias'

[122] Milette Gaifman, "Aniconism: Definitions, Examples and Comparative Perspectives," *Religion* 47.3 (2017): 336; eadem, "Aniconism and the Notion of 'Primitive' in Greek Antiquity," in *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome*, ed. Joannis Mylonopoulos (Boston: Brill, 2010). According to Gaifman, the word 'aniconic' was coined by the German archaeologist Johannes Adolph Overbeck (1826-1895) who sought to promulgate the notion that early Greek worship was pure in its perception of god as completely unlike humans. He negated the Greek word *eikon* with *an-*, perhaps misleading readers into thinking that this was an ancient Greek word. The earliest version of this word is *aneikoniston*, something that cannot be represented, and it appears in Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis* as he communicates the impossibility of representing the Christian god. Thus, the use of the word "aniconic" already belies an underlying Christian interpretation of god. See Johannes Adolf Overbeck, "Über das Cultusobjeckt bei den Greichen in seinen ältesten Gestaltungen," *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich-Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Phil.-Hist. Klasse* 16 (1864): 121–72.

[123] Milette Gaifman, *Aniconism in Greek Antiquity*, Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 18–19. Nineteenth and twentieth century scholars traditionally characterized aniconic statues as 'primitive.' See Martin P. Nilsson, *Greek Folk Religion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998). Ancient Greeks only scoffed at the worship of non-figural or aniconic images when it was practiced by non-Greeks.

[124] Pausanias does not always date the *xoana* to which he refers, so it cannot be assumed that they are archaic. Several *xoana* were made in the post-archaic periods, such as the *xoanon* of Hekate made by Myron (referenced in Paus. 2.30.2), Apollo Smintheus made by Scopas (Strabo 13.1.48) and Asklepios at Sparta (Paus. 3.14.7). See Irene Romano, "Early Greek Cult Images" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1980), 351-64.

[125] Alongside aniconic statues, which usually featured anthropomorphic faces (particularly eyes) and were dressed and bedecked with jewels and crowns, aniconic markers like stones and trees were also objects of worship throughout the duration of Greek religion (Gaifman, *Aniconism in Greek Antiquity*). Aniconic and iconic figures of Hermes were

time, ancient Greeks did not distinguish between *agalma* and *argoi lithoi* (unwrought stones) because they had the same function and served the same purpose.[126]

Furthermore, the statues that scholars refer to as "aniconic" were quite common in the ancient world. Indeed, some of the more famous sacred images were aniconic. Athena Polias, the protector deity of Athens in whose honor the Panathenaia was conducted, was a wooden *xoanon*. The sanctuary of Aphrodite at Paphos featured as the central object of worship a stone, which was depicted on several Roman coins.[127] Aniconism was also associated with household and individual religion. Zeus Ktesios was present in the storeroom of most homes as a jar, filled with olive oil and herbs, and even more common was the sight of herms placed on porches or outside gates.[128] Other aniconic monuments included some crossroads shrines (such as the one in the Athenian agora), pillars, poles, and stelae (especially in Arcadia and Thessaly).[129] Given the prevalence of aniconic images, it seems odd that Parmeniscus should

---

worshipped simultaneously and in much the same way, though they evoked different aspects of the god (Versnel, *Inconsistencies*.)

[126] According to Pausanias and several other ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, aniconic worship was an earlier form of worship that eventually evolved into anthropomorphic statuary. See Varro *apud* August. *De civ. D.* 4.31; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.27-39; Strabo 1.2.7-9; Cic. *Leg*. 1.8.24; Xenophanes, fragments 14-16. In practice and in popular religion, aniconic worship and iconic worship were not different. For many philosophers, aniconic worship was a purer form of worship because it alluded to the deity's transcendence (e.g. Varro, Clement of Alexandria). Dio Chrysostom, on the other hand, claims that aniconism is primitive, and imagistic descriptions of deities (in plastic form and poetry) are more advanced (*Or*. 12.45-47). On Varro and Dio Chyrsostom, see Hans-Josef Klauck, "Nature, Art, and Thought: Dio Chrysostom and the *Theologia Tripertita*," *JR* 87.3 (2007): 333–54.

[127] Gaifman, *Aniconism in Greek Antiquity*, 170–75.

[128] Robert Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), chap. 1.

[129] Gaifman, *Aniconism in Greek Antiquity*, 211–32.

be overly surprised or disappointed upon seeing the aniconic Leto, especially since the word *agalma* simply referred to the main statue in a temple without implying that it was iconic.[130]

Moreover, the idea that aniconic and iconic statues conveyed divine nature differently based on their external form has been challenged recently by Milette Gaifman. Certainly, some wooden images were especially revered by ancient Greeks on account of their legendary origins.[131] But several, especially the post-Archaic *xoana* which are attributed to specific artists like Myron and Scopas, were not gifts from Zeus or discovered miraculously. Aniconic objects functioned the same way as iconic objects did, and there was no difference in ritual or worship when directed at aniconic images. The fact that worship could take place with no image at all, with just an altar or other ritual implements, demonstrates that divine presence was not dependent on the external or aesthetic form of any material object.

How, then, does a sacred object denote Greek ideas about divine nature? In her study of Greek aniconism, Gaifman eschews distinctions between iconic and aniconic images and adopts the phrase "index of divine presence" from anthropologist Alfred Gell. This phrase refers to any object that indicates divine presence, or the potential for divine presence, to a worshiper by focusing his or her attention. As an index of divine presence, an object "is the

---

[130] Kindt refers to Parmeniscus' disappointment throughout chapter two. She writes, "Through the eyes of the viewing subject, Leto's 'looks' are presented as quite literally disappointing" (Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion*, 47). The text does not explicitly convey Parmeniscus' disappointment. Possibly the use of *amorphon* and *xulon*, as opposed to simply *xoanon* (used by other writers, such as Pausanias), is meant to imply that the viewing encounter was anticlimactic.

[131] The analysis of aniconic statues often rests on the divine origins of these statues. For Platt, like Kindt, iconic statues convey divinity through the use of materials like chryselephantine and marble, which are expensive and beautiful. Aniconic statues are not able to do this and so legends crop up, in which the *xoanon* is a gift from Zeus or has been discovered miraculously in a fisherman's net (as with the olivewood mask of Dionysus Phallen at Methymna).

physical recipient of acts addressed to the deity, such as prayer, gestures of salutation, or the making an offering [*sic*]."[132] Thus, it is not the physical form of the statue that is worshipped, or even seen but the deity himself through the acts performed before a statue.

This concept is an adaptation of or reference to Peircean semiotics, which has been used to analyze sacred images to great effect.[133] Instead of identifying a dyadic relationship between sign and object (the thing to which the sign refers), Peirce posits the interpreter as the integral third party, the person who reads the sign as a referent to an object. From a Peircean standpoint, a statue is an index of a god in that it signifies the presence of the god without enunciating a specific relationship between the statue and the god to whom it refers.[134] It does so not through any similarity (in appearance, material, etc.), but because "it is in dynamical…connection both with the individual object, on the one hand, and with the senses or memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign, on the other hand."[135] The aniconic or iconic appearance of the statue is irrelevant to the object's potency and ability to signal divine presence. Aniconic statues are simply "non-figural" indices of divine presence.

---

[132] Gaifman, "Aniconism," 338.

[133] For Peircean semiotics applied to sacred statues, see Haluszka, "Sacred Signified." For its application to civil statues, see Fritz Graf, "The Oracle and the Image: Returning to Some Oracles from Clarus," *ZPE* 160 (2007): 113–19.

[134] Haluszka, "Sacred Signified," 480. In not enunciating any specific relationship between statue and god, this semiotic theory allows scholars to analyze statues without contradicting any emic perspectives of the statue-god relationship.

[135] Charles Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," 1955, reprinted in *The Philosophical Writings of Peirce* (New York, 2011) 98-119, 107. For Peirce, symbols and indices are not the same. Symbols more than indices are culturally constructed in the mind of the interpreter. As such, they lose their significance when there is no interpreter. Haluszka and others who apply Peircean semiotics tend to use the word index for something that focuses attention. I will follow suit and use index in this way.

Despite being an oversimplification of Peirce's complex theory of signs, this brief explanation shows how sacred images were able to focus worshipers' attention on religious, not artistic, matters.[136] For our purposes, the phrase "index of divine presence" needs to be slightly emended because as it stands, it impels a monolithic interpretation of sacred images. For Peirce, smoke (sign) signals fire (object) to a person who sees it (the interpreter), and so smoke = fire. It is therefore helpful to view indices of divine presence as objects that connect humans, other objects, and ideological structures.[137] Sacred images guide the attention of the viewer-worshiper not only to the larger religious structures that dictate the form of a particular deity, but also to the individual's own knowledge and experience of the god. In this way, a sacred image can elicit an individualized response from a viewer, based on his position within and knowledge of those ideological structures. Moreover, in connecting

[136] The ability of religious objects to focus attention is explored at length by cognitive archaeologists Colin Renfrew and Steven Mithen. According to Renfrew and Mithen, objects can act as external symbolic storage for religious ideas by shifting the attention of the viewer to religious matters. See Colin Renfrew, "Mind and Matter: Cognitive Archaeology and External Symbolic Storage," in *Cognition and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Symbolic Storage*, ed. *idem* and C. Scarre (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 1998); Steven J. Mithen, "The Supernatural Beings of Prehistory and the External Storage of Religious Ideas," in *Cognition and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Symbolic Storage*, ed. Colin Renfrew and C. Scarre (Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 1998).

[137] Hodder, *Entangled*. According the Hodder's theory of object agency, objects are entangled with society, connecting humans, objects, and other things together in heterogeneous mixes. The object is therefore bigger than its function or its meaning to any one person. For example, a watch can be described aesthetically and functionally, but they also tell us about the systems of power that dictate global time and systems of knowledge that have influenced watch-making and time-keeping. A libation jug can be analyzed based on its physical properties and its biography (production, exchange, use, consumption), but it also connects humans with gods, earth and sky, in the moment of its use. Any one person might only be aware of a few of these connections and therefore experience the watch or jug differently from someone else or throughout their lives as their knowledge changes.

humans to a variety of other people and ideas, a sacred object can be viewed aesthetically and religiously simultaneously, as in the story of Parmensicus.

Viewing statues as multivocal indices of divine presence is a significant step towards understanding the religious gaze.[138] Certain types of objects are culturally designated as indices of divine presence. For ancient Greeks, the difference between this type of object, including all "iconic" or "aniconic" (stones, herms, pillars, trees, wooden *xoana*) images, and other, mundane objects need not have been made explicit. These ideas are culturally ingrained such that ancient Greeks would have intuitively known *how* to approach secular versus religious objects. When an ancient Greek worshiper approached an index of divine presence, she would automatically respond with a religious gaze, which would then actuate an interaction between the worshiper and the deity himself.

3.1 Cross-Cultural Approach: Theories of *darśan*

At this point, in order to better understand the purpose of the religious gaze, as well as the nature of the interaction compelled by it, I propose bringing in the model of *darśan* as a comparandum to the Greek religious gaze. *Darśan* is the process of seeing and being seen by the divine via sacred images in Hinduism. In particular, William Elison's ethnographical account and subsequent theorizing of *darśan* in modern day Mumbai can be a useful analytical tool for the study of this process in ancient Greece.[139] According to Elison, *darśan* is accomplished through the exchanging of glances between two viewing subjects – the

[138] I will henceforth use the phrase "index of divine presence" to mean a multivocal index, as per Hodder's interpretation of object agency.

[139] William Elison, *The Neighborhood of Gods: The Sacred and the Visible at the Margins of Mumbai*, South Asia across the Disciplines (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018).

human worshiper and a materially emplaced deity – and is characterized by mutual recognition.[140] The flow of energy or personal substance catalyzed by the visual gaze renders the human subject porous and the sacred image potent.[141] Observing this vital interaction in another culture that makes extensive use of sacred images can help scholars of ancient Greek religion better understand the cognitive and experiential aspects of the religious gaze.

It is of course necessary to proceed with caution when employing a cross-cultural approach. Although *darśan* was important in ancient Indian religious practice, Elison and other scholars have focused on the modern practice of *darśan*, which has undoubtedly developed and changed in the intervening centuries.[142] *Darśan* in these studies is a modern phenomenon and may not be identical with any ancient formulation of the practice, in India or in Greece. This type of approach also assumes that divine images function the same way in two distinct cultures, ancient Greece and modern India, despite significant cultural differences. Images of deities are considered to be one of the five fundamental forms of the deity in certain Indian traditions, while the relationship between the statue and god is not spelled out clearly in ancient Greece, as I established in the previous section of this chapter.[143] Formal *darśan* in temples is part of a ritual process that does not always mirror

---

[140] Materially emplaced deity refers to any image (statue, painting, photograph) that acts as an index of divine presence.

[141] Elison, *The Neighborhood of Gods*, 4–5.

[142] On *darśan,* see Diana L. Eck, "Darshan of the Image," *IICQ* 13.1 (1986): 43–53; Diana L. Eck, *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); J. Gonda, *Eye and Gaze in the Veda* (Amsterdam, 1969). On this process in Buddhist practices, see Nancy Falk, "To Gaze on the Sacred Traces," *History of Religions* 16.4 (1977): 281–93.

[143] Indian religious traditions, while not doctrinal in the way that Christianity or other "religious of the book" tend to be, are more theologically and doctrinally inclined than Greek

ancient Greek customs to the extent of our knowledge.[144] Given that images could function in a variety of ways even just throughout the history of ancient Greece, it seems difficult to draw any parallels between these two vastly different cultures.

And yet, this type of cross-cultural approach can have significant benefits. Rutherford characterizes the tendency of scholars to stress difference over similarity as a reaction to earlier generations of anthropologists and historians who, in searching only for similarities, imposed a monolithic model on those traditions.[145] Despite the fact that *darśan* does not correspond exactly to the ancient Greek process of viewing divine images, there is an overall structural similarity that can be compared. A cross-cultural approach also provides a variety of sources and information to supplement the (relatively few) literary and material examples from ancient Greece. Perhaps most importantly, it can help scholars "repopulate" Greek religion. Without any ancient Greeks to reactivate sacred images, we cannot see Greek sacred images in action, as it were. We then rely too much on our own experience of the statues, focusing on aesthetic and artistic qualities (as I said at the beginning of the chapter). Hinduism, as a practiced religion, affords scholars the opportunity to observe interactions between sacred images and worshipers and see how images actively engage viewers in a

---

religion. The push towards doctrinal rigidity through individual schools of thought has increased slowly but surely in the last two millennia especially.

[144] Ian Rutherford, "Theoria and Darśan: Pilgrimage and Vision in Greece and India," *The Classical Quarterly* 50.1 (2001): 133–46. Rutherford mentions that other rituals such as *arati* (the waving of earthen lamps) can enhance the efficacy of the *darśan*. He also points to the ritual whereby the image is installed in a temple or "activated," in which the eyes of the statue are ritually and symbolically opened.

[145] "Kojève, Alexandre | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy," n.d., https://www.iep.utm.edu/kojeve/. 142. Scholars of this generation include religious historians like Eliade who, in works like *The Sacred and the Profane*, focuses on the similar structures, rituals, and myths of several different religions ((San Diego: Harcourt, 1987).

dynamic relationship. When firmly rooted in ancient Greek evidence, this model can shed light on the dynamism and potency of ancient Greek statues when viewed with a religious gaze.

Chapter three of Elison's *The Neighborhood of Gods* explores the process by which artifacts of visual culture affect those who view them.[146] I will provide a brief summary of the model of *darśan*, and then elaborate on the particular aspects that make it a valuable comparandum. It is important to note that, like Gaifman and Haluszka, Elison approaches statues from a Peircean standpoint as indices of divine presence and observes how the process of *darśan* engages the human subject and sacred image in an active and dynamic relationship. *Darśan,* the process of seeing and being seen by the gods through the mediation of a material image, involves two parties from the emic perspective: the viewer-worshiper (the slave) and the god (the master). *Darśan* is considered effective when the human subject (the viewer) attains recognition from the god through the image, recognition that is contingent on the specific regime of power relations that determine the relationship between humans and gods as hierarchical. In Elison's example, the hierarchical relationship, in which god is a figure whose powers are "celestial and terrestrial, otherworldly and mundane," is construed as normative theologically. The worshiper's desire for recognition endows him with the ability to change or transcend historical progress and incite human flourishing.[147]

---

[146] Elison, *The Neighborhood of Gods*, 113.

[147] Kojève, *Introduction to the Study of Hegel: Lectures on "The Phenomenology of Spirit,"* 22. According to Elison, the correspondence between obedience to god(s) or spirits as a condition for human successes/flourishing is present in a variety of religions. The idea that proper respect and piety towards the gods results in the possibility of prayers being fulfilled and the city being blessed is well-attested in Greek religion. I will come back to this idea later in the chapter, as well as in chapter two.

To explain this relationship and process of exchange, Elison relies on Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic models of the master-slave relationship as well as Alexandre Kojève's theories of subjection and subjectification.[148] According to these theoretical frameworks, the relationship between the two parties – the master and the slave – turns on the desire for recognition.[149] The slave wants recognition from the master, a recognition that he is normally denied in society. The master must grant this recognition for, in refusing to recognize the slave, he forfeits the fulfillment of his own desire for recognition. The subordination of the slave to the master is what subjectifies the slave, which is paralleled (according to Elison) in the relationship between human subject and deity.

There are several benefits to this model of religious seeing. The first is the description of *darśan* as effecting a "live connection." Elison refrains from describing this connection as "communication," which suggests that what passes between the two entities is "meaning." Instead, *darśan* activates a transfer of energy between the human subject and the divine being, usually through the eyes.[150] This flow of energy *could* be a form of communication

---

[148] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977); Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Hogarth Press, 1977); Kojève, *Introduction to the Study of Hegel: Lectures on "The Phenomenology of Spirit."*

[149] The master-slave dialectic comes from a passage in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* in which the self-consciousness is constituted in being recognized as self-conscious by another self-consciousness. According to Hegel, this movement results in one self-consciousness mastering the other and subsequently finds that it can no longer attain the recognition it craves since the slave cannot offer affirmation freely. Kojève's interpretation of Hegel combines Marxist materialism and Heidegger's temporalized ontology and ultimately determines that this movement is circular in nature. For Lacan, who was deeply influenced by Kojève, subjectivity and subjectification is defined by desire. The lack of and desire for recognition provides the condition for subject formation. See "Kojève, Alexandre," in Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, https://www.iep.utm.edu/kojeve/.

[150] Hindu, and more specifically Tantric, texts maintain that the operations of the are emissions of light energy from the eyes of the seeing subject. See David White, 2021 for a

through which meaning is conveyed, but that would be dependent on the particular individual. The phrase "live connection," disregards the internal condition of both the human subject and the sacred image. That is to say, the "faith" or "belief" of the worshiper, as well as the meaning or presence of divine power in the sacred image, are secondary to the connection created. It therefore gives scholars a way to understand the interaction without contradicting emic or individual perspectives of this process.

The metaphor of electricity has been used frequently by Indian subjects of ethnographies to explain the live connection. Christopher Pinney's study of *darśan* through photographs, *Camera Indica*, documents the norms of visual worship in which the subject's gaze activates a visual circuit.[151] His subject, a man named Tiwari, says, "Suppose you want to use some electric power – you make a connection, fit your tube light, lay the wiring, provide a switch, connect this to the overhead wires. If the power is available, the tube is fine, the wiring is fine, the switch is fine, the tube light will come on – (*chalega!*) – with belief and without belief."[152] In this instance, the light will turn on regardless of whether one

---

detailed explanation and comparison with theories of extramission put forth by select ancient Greek philosopher, David Gordon White, *Daemons Are Forever: Contacts and Exchanges in the Eurasian Pandemonium*, Silk Roads (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021), 59–67; idem, *Sinister Yogis* (Chicago London: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2011), 123–25. The prioritization of sight over other sensory faculties is present in Greek culture as well, particularly in Greek philosophy. For vision in the ancient Greek world, see Michael Squire, ed., *Sight and the Ancient Senses*, The Senses in Antiquity (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016); Helen Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon*, Cambridge Classical Studies (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[151] Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[152] Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*, 166-67. Vivekānanda, influenced by nineteenth century Theosophist Madame Blavatsky (herself influenced by Franz Anton Mesmer's Magnetic system), similarly used the language of electricity and electromagnetism in his *Raja Yoga* to define *prāṇa* and *ākāśa* not as mere "breath" and "ether" but as the tangible and transformative current of those things. See David Gordon

has belief or not. Likewise, the live connection is established with the god through *darśan* regardless of faith.[153] Communication, on the other hand, does rely on the internal state of the viewer-worshiper.

Another benefit is the emphasis on agency, both the agency of the human subject and the material object. Elison, following Katherine Pratt Ewing, defines the human subject as multivocal, elusive, and shifting based on a variety of discursive fields.[154] The subject, in his desire for recognition, becomes aware of his own autonomy and acts. He actively worships the deity, sacrifices and offers food and prayer, but he also often works to change his existing circumstances, thereby bringing about the desired result. The subject is thus an active participant in his own subjectification, despite the fact that this process requires an external gaze.[155] The sacred image also acts with agency. Despite being the object of the viewer's

---

White, *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: A Biography*, Lives of Great Religious Books (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), chaps. 6–7, specifically p.129-130.

[153] It seems that Tiwari is using 'faith' in the Christian sense of the word. Belief or faith in the Christian sense would involve an individual making a choice to believe in the process, and would condition the efficacy of the live connection on this active choice. This does not mean, of course, that there is no belief presented here. Tiwari, and other practitioners of *darśan*, 'believe' that material images are capable of conveying the divine gaze to the viewer. This belief is grounded in religious orthodoxy through the ritual "opening of the eyes" ceremony performed for three-dimensional images, but becomes loosely transferred onto photographs, prints, and other two-dimensional mass-produced images of gods. This type of belief is therefore evocative of a religion's basic worldview – the world works this way whether one accepts it or not.

[154] Katherine Pratt Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis and Islam* (Durham, [N.C.] ; London: Duke University Press, 1997), 32-36. Ewing pushes back against Lacan for whom the Symbolic Order is monolithic and deterministic. Ewing follows Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in claiming that there are multiple discursive fields that lay claim to the multivocal subject. See Elison, *The Neighborhood of Gods*, 113, for exploration of Ewing's differences on the Symbolic Order.

[155] For Kojève, the slave possesses the key to his own liberation. He is unsatisfied with his condition and works to change it according to his desires.

gaze, it actively exerts a pull on the viewer. Elison writes, "…the scopic relation is initiated not by the viewer as an agent but rather by the Other that affirms the viewer as a subject in the first place through the gesture of recognition."[156] Displays of sacred images in public spaces exert their power over "unsuspecting" human subjects in those spaces who are drawn then drawn into *darśan*.[157] Thus, the relationship between the viewer and the sacred image can be characterized as a subject-to-subject relationship, not subject-to-object

The last, and perhaps the most important, advantage of this model is Elison's point about the integration of the subject. Elison describes his unique position in relation to images of gods: he is an outsider of Indian religious culture in that he does not personally subscribe to any Indian faith system, but as an ethnographer and scholar he is deeply familiar with Indian religious customs and expectations.[158] Passing by many painted statuettes on a film set in Mumbai, Elison finds that he is *not* interpellated by the object in that the statue does not initiate a live connection between him and the divine being it represents.[159] The obvious reason is that he, as an unbeliever, has not yet internalized a reaction to images that have an

---

[156] Elison, *The Neighborhood of Gods*, 115.

[157] In imagistic cultures like Indian (specifically Hindu) culture, public spaces that are filled with divine images make loud statements to the people passing through regarding the dominant ideologies and power relations of society.

[158] I refrain from saying Hindu religious culture because although Hindu culture is predominant and most widely known for its use of sacred images, there are other Indian religions (such as Buddhism and Jainism) that utilize similar types of sacred images, though less frequently in public since they tend to be minority religions.

[159] Elison uses Althusser's concept of interpellation, according to which "a person's configuration as a subject… is summoned by the ideological structure within which it operates" (Elison, *The Neighborhood of Gods*, 315). See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

unfamiliar iconography, and images that he recognizes elicit only interpretations of iconography. Therefore, Elison "has nothing in [his] subjective makeup to be interpellated."[160] The less obvious answer, and the one that Elison ultimately puts forth, is the degree of his integration as a subject within the cultural and ideological structures involved. Because Elison is integrated to a lesser degree in the many ideological structures at hand in Mumbai, he is not interpellated by the statuettes of gods or goddesses present on the film set. Subjects who are integrated to a greater degree in the political, religious, and other ideological structures of Mumbai are more likely to be interpellated by the statues.

3.2 Application in Studies of Greek Religion

The practice of using material objects as indices of divine presence in Indian religions has been traced back by many scholars to contact with ancient Greek culture.[161] While this practice might itself have been introduced to ancient Greece by Near Eastern, Hittite, and Egyptian sources, by the archaic period the use of divine images was fundamental to Greek religion.[162] Ancient Greeks visited temples in order to see and be seen by the materially emplaced deity, though this activity was not restricted to images in temples.[163] This was

---

[160] Elison, *The Neighborhood of Gods*, 315.

[161] Patrick Olivelle and Frederick M. Asher, eds., "Early Indian Art Reconsidered," in *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[162] Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 88–92; Sarah Iles Johnston, ed., *Ancient Religions* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). See particularly the contributions by Fritz Graf and Jan Assmann in *Ancient Religions*.

[163] The actual temple building was not a congregational space in ancient Greece. Activities and meetings were held in temple courtyards, but the inside of the temple was reserved for those seeking out the blessings of a god or goddess. Elsner, "Image and Ritual," 515–31.

accomplished by exchanging visual glances with the material index of divine presence. A terracotta column-krater indicates how important the sacred image was for suggesting divine presence [fig. 2].[164] The painting on the obverse depicts an artist applying pigment to a statue of Herakles with the actual Herakles watching. The pairing of this with the reverse side, which shows Athena reclining with other deities, has led scholars to think that this depicts the apotheosis of Herakles. Rather than showing him ascending to Mount Olympus in a chariot, the vase implies his apotheosis through the creation of his cult image, through which people can officially recognize him and worship him as a god. The sacred image signals Herakles' divinity and establishes him as a deity who can be propitiated.

Fig. 1.2: Terracotta red-figure column *krater*, attributed to the Group of Boston 00.348, ca.360-350 BCE. Dimensions: H. 51.5cm. Provenance: acquired in 1950 from Robert E. Hecht, Jr., Rome. Museum/inventory number: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 50.11.4. Bibliography: RVSS 78, 266. Description: Obverse (left), an artist paints a statue of Herakles; Reverse (right), Athena with other deities.

[164] This terracotta red-figure vase is Apulian, dating from 360-350 BCE, attributed to the Group of Boston 00.348. It is on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Sacred images were touched and kissed and, most importantly, seen in an attempt to venerate the deity. The primacy of the faculty of vision is well attested in ancient Greece.[165] Sight was thought to be both corporeal and haptic. It was the result of a tangible, physical connection between the eye and the viewed object. Among ancient philosophers, there were different theories regarding the specifics of this phenomenon. According to Democritus and other proponents of intromission, light emitted from the perceived object touches the surface of the viewer's eye to initiate vision. Extramission, treated by Empedocles, Plato, and others, maintained that the viewer's eye emitted a ray of light that, in conforming to the viewed object's form, created visual perception.[166] Whether these accounts of vision reflect popular opinion or not is difficult to say. But the prominence of the evil eye and the perceived ability of the visual gaze to affect the viewed object's state of being suggests that the potency of gazing was commonly accepted.[167] Without a physical connection, seeing could not occur.

The process of seeing that took place between worshipers and divine images upholds viewing as an "active, bodily encounter."[168] The religious gaze enabled the viewer to direct

---

[165] Squire, *Sight*; Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon*; Platt, *Facing the Gods*.

[166] Squire, *Sight*.

[167] See David Gordon White, "Netra Tantra, at the Crossroads of the Demonological Cosmopolis," *Journal of Hindu Studies* 5.2 (2012): 145–71; White, *Daemons Are Forever*, 59–67. White treats theories of vision in both Indian and Greek contexts, with an eye to the role of vision in enabling demonological possession. He argues that, while the details differ slightly, in both regions the gaze effected a tangible and potent connection between the viewer and the viewed which allowed one to bodily and mentally influence the other.

[168] "Ancient optics typically configures vision as haptic and corporeal; seer and seen, through emanations, actually touch each other." Morales, *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon*, 29; for a broader discussion of this process and an overview of different optical theories, see 16–30.

his vision towards a sacred object and "see" (in a bodily and haptic way) the deity. It was for this reason that most divine images had prominent eyes.[169] Aniconic *xoana* were usually given facial features, and eyes tended to be drawn onto these wooden statues. This is also true of certain forms of domestic worship. The image below (fig. 3) depicts a woman standing before an altar and herm, bending down to make eye contact with the herm. The herm depicted on this red-figure kylix is quite elaborate, with eyes and detailed facial hair. Herms, which are some of the more prevalent aniconic images, always featured eyes, as did stelae and other sacred pillars. The significance of sacred images in Greek worship can be accounted for in this way.

Fig. 1.3: Attic terracotta red-figure *kylix*, tondo (interior), attributed to the Curtius Painter, ca. 450 BCE. Provenance: Italy, Selva la Rocca. Museum/inventory number: Berlin, Staatliche Museum F2525. Bibliography: *ARV*2, 931.4. Description: Woman (left) stands before a herm in profile (right) and bends, placing both hands on the herm's shoulders, and gazes into the herm's eyes. An altar (center) stands between the two figures.

The religious gaze in many ways functions as *darśan* does in connecting two entities in a culturally defined hierarchical relationship for the purpose of mutual recognition. In

[169] Eyes were usually the largest part of the face and were made of ivory inlay. The irises were generally painted on.

order to understand the hierarchical nature of this relationship, we must first examine ancient Greek conceptions of divine nature. The Greek gods, just as in many other religious conceptions of supernatural beings, were both like and unlike humans. It is important to note that the gods of myth and poetry are not the same as the gods of cult or of practiced religion. There is certainly some overlap of traits, qualities, and abilities between the gods described in the mythologies of Homer and Hesiod and the gods addressed by worshipers in inscriptions, prayers, and votives, but they are not the same beings.[170] The gods are unlike humans in that they are generally immortal and ageless and powerful. It was accepted that the gods as a collective were "the uncontrollable and inevitable element shaping and constraining human life and human lives."[171] The gods were very much involved in worshipers' lives, individually and collectively; the history of any city-state was a testament to the gods' engagement in human affairs. Xenophon's Clearchus says, "For all things everywhere are subject to the gods and they control all things equally."[172] At times, they even presented

[170] Jon D. Mikalson, *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 16-19; 18, n.60. The overlap between the gods of myth and of daily religion is something that is constantly shifting based on the needs of the worshiper. A goddess can be described according to her mythic properties in one moment and according to her universal powers the next. If we go back to the cognitive pathways I explored earlier, we could say that the gods of myth and poetry fall along the reflective pathway of cognition while the characteristics exhibited by the gods of cult and practiced religion are evocative of the intuitive pathway. I will explore the nature of the gods in greater depth in the next chapter.

[171] Parker, *On Greek Religion*, 67.

[172] Xenophon, *Anabasis* 2.5.7. The whole passages reads, "I could never deem happy a man who is aware that he has disregarded such oaths. For I do not know with what swiftness of foot he might escape the hostility of the gods or any place to which someone might flee, nor do I know any dark spot to which he might run off or how he might withdraw to a secure place. For all things everywhere are subject to the gods and they control all things equally."

qualities that we could characterize as omnipresence and omniscience.[173] Gods were expected to hear prayers even if the individual was not in or near a shrine, and it was thought that they could see everything from their perch on high.[174]

And yet, as projections of the human mind, they are like man in terms of form and behavior.[175] They have powers, but they are limited, just like humans. For example, lines 15-17 in the hymn to Zeus by Kleanthes from the third century BCE read, "Nothing occurs on the earth apart from you, o God, nor in the heavenly regions nor in the sea except what evil men do in their folly."[176] Zeus is identified as knowing and having control over everything that goes on, but this quality does not extend to overseeing evil. Apollo claims to be omniscient in a passage narrated by Herodotus, saying, "I know the number of the sand and

---

[173] Versnel explores the degree to which Greek gods are omniscient and omnipotent. Interestingly, Versnel points out that there are debates among Christian theologians as to the application of the word 'omnipotent' to the Christian god. He concludes with Ph.E. Devinish's proposition that, "What it will make sense to say a divine being can do depends on what it makes sense to say a divine being does" (Ph.E. Devenish, "Omnipotence, Creation, Perfection: Kenny and Aquinas on the Power and Action of God," *MT* 1 (1985) 105-117).

[174] See Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*; Versnel, *Faith, Hope and Worship*. From their position on Mount Olympus, which is somewhere in the heavenly vaults of the sky, the gods in epics and other literary sources are presented as being able to see everything that goes on down below.

[175] Versnel writes, "Gods do not exist without man. They *are* projections because they are human creations. Hence they are like mortals in form and behavior" (Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 388.).

[176] Versnel emphasizes the contradiction contained in this passage, the idea that Zeus controls everything but not evil men. If so, how can Zeus truly control everything in the world? How are evil men outside of his realm of influence? Like with the rest of Greek religion, the contradictions do not bother ancient Greeks, only scholars who wish to create definite categories of analysis.

the measure of the sea, I understand the speech of the dumb and hear the voiceless."[177] Later in the same text, Herodotus has Apollo admit that not even the gods can escape destiny.

The interplay between the gods' supra-human and human qualities is the defining characteristic in allowing humans to have a relationship with divine beings. The gods' control of human lives and nature made it imperative to approach them. Their anthropomorphism (the ascription of human mental experiences and motives to non-humans) made it possible to approach them. For approaching the gods was integral to Greek religion, just as it is among the subjects of Elison's anthropological study. Interactions between humans and gods were quite beneficial for all parties involved. Humans approached gods as great and powerful beings, showing *timé* (honor) and *charis* (favor or grace) to the gods for their power and for the good things they provided to humans.[178] Gods rewarded such propitiation with potential wish-fulfillment and prayer-granting.

This type of interaction between gods and humans is foundational to Greek religion and describes the daily experience of connecting with the gods. On the part of humans, honor and piety were shown by sacrificing, offering food and other libations, giving gifts, making dedications, building temples, singing and dancing, among other things.[179] In literary sources,

---

[177] Hdt. 1.47.

[178] Mikalson argues that using the words 'master' and 'slave' to describe the relationship between gods and humans is incorrect; the Greeks had slaves and did not think it worthy of a freeman to enter into a 'slave' position, even with the gods. Rather, it is the relationship between 'a good subject' and a 'good king' (2010, 21). See also Theodora Suk Fong Jim, *Sharing with the Gods: Aparchai and Dekatai in Ancient Greece*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[179] Piety in ancient Greece is not defined in the Christian sense of loving god, but rather as *eusebeia*, showing proper respect for the gods, and *hosiotes*, religious correctness (conforming to the religious laws and traditions of the community). Mikalson distinguishes between these two aspects of piety, saying that not to sacrifice would have been seen as *asebeia* (not showing the proper respect for the gods), while sacrificing in the wrong way or

the gods would sometimes make it known how they wished to be worshipped. Herodotus tells us that Pan commanded Pheidippides, as he was crossing the Arkadian mountains, to tell the Athenians to pay him more attention, as he had often assisted them in the past and would continue to do so in the future.[180] Gods in the Homeric hymns explicitly dictated the terms of their reciprocal relationship. Demeter demands that the people of Eleusis build a temple for her, saying she will instruct them in her mystic rites so that they can perform them correctly. Apollo, having instructed the Cretans in the proper forms of worship, threatens them with enslavement should they be disobedient.[181]

In the daily practice of religion, offerings tended to be simpler. Large-scale communal sacrifices took place at the altar outside of the temple, but people still made offerings of some kind when approaching images of the gods.[182] Grain cakes, fruits, bread, and other things that ancient Greeks themselves ate on a daily basis were often placed in the hands or on the knees of divine images. Within a temple setting, these edible offerings could also be placed on *trapezomata* (tables made of wood or stone with divots on the surface

---

on the wrong day would be *anosion*. The phrase καλῶς καὶ εὐσεβῶς ("beautifully and with proper respect") was often used in inscriptions to describe the way in which public figures performed sacrifices and other rituals for the gods (see *IG* II^2 668.10-13 from 282/1, *IG* II^2 780.14-15 from 252/1; *Agora* 15.253.10-12 from 118/7; *SEG* 18.26.9.11 from 137/6; *Agora* 16.277.3-4 from 11 BCE). Failure to show proper piety resulted not in divine punishment but legal punishment (e.g. Socrates).

[180] Herodotus 6.105.2.

[181] *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 270-74; *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, 480-85.

[182] Given that the god was thought to receive the sacrifice from Mt. Olympus as the smoke spiraled upwards, it seems likely that the doors to the *cella* were left open for the god to see not just the sacrifice but the *people* who were participating in the sacrifice. People wanted to be seen by the gods when committing acts of piety so that they could be recognized as such.

where offerings were laid out).[183] The temple of Athena Polias on the Athenian Akropolis, commonly known as the Erechtheum, contained small altars to Hephaistos and the heroes Boutes and Erechtheus inside of the temple where small-scale, private animal sacrifices could be offered to the goddess in front of her image.[184] Besides any material offering, a person would always have a small prayer or song to recite in a whisper or silently while standing before the god's image, even when passing by road-side shrines.[185] The offering of beautiful objects was pleasing to the gods, though non-material offerings, such as prayers and praise, were equally welcome.

Each offering, both material and non-material, indicated goodwill and continued to build the individual's relationship with the deity, which in turn made it more likely that the deity would respond to favorably to the worshiper. In the same *Hymn* to Apollo, the god of prophecies promises to reveal the plans of the immortals to humans and to honor them unceasingly. Such favor was essential for personal and communal gain. Plato puts the following words in Euthyphro's mouth: "If someone knows how to say and do in his prayers and sacrifices what is pleasing to the gods, these things are religiously correct and *save private households and the common interests of the* city. But the opposites of those pleasing

[183] David Gill, "Trapezomata: A Neglected Aspect of Greek Sacrifice," *The Harvard Theological Review* 67.2 (1974): 118. According to Gill, the custom of placing food on top of piles of stones throughout the countryside for Hermes is thought to have been adapted to the temple setting in this way. Most *trapezomata* were made from wood and do not survive today. These tables were placed nearby the statue of the god or goddess. A fifteenth-century CE Byzantine manuscript of the Magical Treatise of Solomon contains an image of a mermaid before a table with food on it, perhaps attesting to the persistence of offering-tables (Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 3632 Bonionensis, fol.358r).

[184] On the Athena Polias and layout of the Erechtheum, see Pausanias 1.26-5-1.27.6.

[185] Versnel, *Faith, Hope and Worship*.

things are religiously incorrect, and they overthrow and destroy everything."[186] Theophrastus writes, "One must sacrifice to the gods for three purposes: to give honor, to show gratitude, or because of one's need of good things."[187] Gods could and did help humans with fertility (of crops, animals, and humans), prosperity, health, and safety, which was particularly important during war or seafaring (frequent occurrences in the ancient world). These areas were not only integral to human survival but also, to some degree, out of human control; bringing divine favor and aid upon oneself, one's family, and one's community was always one of the highest religious priorities.

Mutual benefits aside, the relationship between the two parties remained highly asymmetrical. It was a relationship between two unequal parties in which one party is significantly more powerful and deserving of respect. Thus, the traditional interpretation of this paradigm as "commercial exchange" defined by *do ut des* ("I give so that you give") does not do justice to the complexity of the relationship between the individual and the divine. Proponents of this model often point to Book 1 of the *Iliad*, when the priest Chryses prays to Apollo for vengeance against the Greeks. In this passage, he reminds Apollo of the temple he built and the sacrifices he burned for the god.[188] This reminder has led people to think that Apollo "owes" Chryses something because of the things Chryses has done in the past. I follow Larson in seeing Chryses as appealing to the history of reciprocity between

---

[186] Pl. *Euthphr*. 14b, emphasis mine.

[187] Theophr. *Peri Eusebeias*, frag. 12 (see W. Pötscher, *ΠΕΡΙ ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑΣ* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 42–44).

[188] "Hear me, you of the silver bow who guard Chryse,/ Mighty ruler of sacred Kylia and of Tenedos,/ If ever I roofed a gracious temple for you, Smintheus,/ Or if ever I burned for you the fat thigh bones/ Of bulls and goats, accomplish my desire:/ Let the Danaoi pay for my tears with your arrows" (Hom. *Il*. 1.37-42).

himself and the god Apollo. They have a relationship based on *charis*, the favor that Chryses has shown to Apollo (through building temples and offering sacrifices) as well as the favor Apollo has shown to Chryses throughout his life. Chryses is therefore not expecting Apollo to "pay up"; rather, he is asking the god to do Chryses a kindness for the sake of their longstanding relationship.

Moreover, despite the appeal to a relationship in which both parties have contributed to the other's wellbeing, the inequality is quite pronounced in this situation because the benefits given by the gods were those that ensured human survival and therefore nonpareil. No sanctuary, gold, or sacrifice could be perceived as equivalent. The nature of the reciprocal relationship always reinforced the unequal dynamics of the relationship. Moreover, relationships with the gods did not always turn out according to the worshiper's wishes. Gods frequently rejected prayers and offerings, refusing to fulfill the wishes or needs of the person. Sometimes these rejections could be traced to moral or ritual violations on the part of the giver, but frequently no reason was given at all.[189] While this sometimes hurt the gods – Theocritus tells us of boys beating the image of Pan in Arcadia when the crops failed[190] -- it nevertheless establishes the supremacy of the gods as compared with the worshiper.

The asymmetry of this relationship is evocative of Elison's iteration of the master-slave relationship. Among both parties, there is a strong desire for the other's recognition of one's self. Humans want the gods' recognition of themselves as powerless but pious beings who, in pleasing the gods, may be deserving of material aid. The gods, on the other hand,

---

[189] Larson, *Understanding,* 42.

[190] Theocr. 7, 106. For humans punishing images of the gods, see Hendrik S. Versnel, "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer," in *idem* (ed.), *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 37–42.

desired (and even needed) recognition through worship. Gods whose worship was mainly regional were tied to the fortunes of those worshipping them; not answering prayers meant that they would not be worshipped.[191] The human subject, unsatisfied with his condition in life, seeks divine aid but in an active way. The Greeks recognized the importance of their own efforts in securing the desired result and exerted themselves in the pursuit of their desires. For example, Athenians might pray for victory in war but they nevertheless prepared well for battle. Knowing that certain things were outside of their control, they prayed, reminding the gods that they had acted with *eusebeia* in the past and that the gods themselves had helped out in the past. This reminder of the mutual relationship was a way for the human subject to secure the gods' favor.

This mutual recognition is enacted through the connection established by the religious gaze. The religious gaze, which Kindt defined as *how* someone views an object, is automatically activated when one encounters an index of divine presence.[192] It sets in motion a form of vision that goes beyond the limitations characteristic of "regular" vision. The asymmetrical nature of the relationship differentiates viewing a god from viewing another person or mundane object. Thus, when a worshiper looks at a divine image, he does so as a subordinate with a constant need to appease the gods through material and non-material offerings, as evidenced by the practice of making offerings right before or during the process

[191] Larson points to an 'Age of Hera' in the Geometric and early Archaic periods, where worship of Hera was at its peak on account of her ties to Argos and Mycenae. But the regional and ethnic character of Hera's worship meant that after the sixth century when Mycenae no longer had the same prestige, Hera too ceased enjoying the same prominence (*Understanding*, 40).

[192] What sets apart certain objects as indices of divine presence is cultural and ingrained into people of that culture. Ancient Greeks would have known intuitively which objects were sacred, not least because there would have been evidence of other individuals' worship.

of gazing at the statue. The worshiper is laid bare to the god's sight but has few clues to the god's state of mind and so only sees the deity as he knows him. This lack of knowledge allows the god to be recognized as a superior otherworldly being who can reveal himself and offer aid to worshipers *if and when* he chooses to.[193] Thus, each party is subjectified according to Greek religious strictures.

The benefits of Elison's model discussed in the previous section apply to Greek religion as well, making a cross-cultural approach more compelling. The term "live connection" as opposed to "communication," which is the term generally used by scholars of Greek religion, is particularly appealing. Because it disregards the internal state of the worshiper, the idea of a live connection allows scholars to analyze larger structures of beliefs without dealing with questions of individual belief or affect.[194] In the ancient Greek world, there was undoubtedly a spectrum of belief. The strength of this system of interpretation is that it allows scholars to recognize the internal, cognitive nature of the religious gaze without making any statements on an individual's level of "faith." In also disregarding the meaning

---

[193] Stanley Stowers, "The Religion of Plant and Animal Offerings versus the Religion of Meanings, Essences and Textual Mysteries.," in *Ancient Mediterranean Sacrifice*, ed. Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 37–39. Stowers uses the phrase "epistemological uncertainty" to refer to the imbalance of knowledge that exists between god and worshiper. The god is presumed to know everything about the worshiper but the worshiper is limited in her knowledge about the god's state of mind. This distinguishes religious interactions from social interactions. For Larson's explanation and application of this concept, see Larson, *Understanding Greek Religion*, 13; 50, n.41. Burkert also discusses the "knowledge barrier" or *adēlotēs* between humans and gods (see Walter Burkert, *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1999). For interactions with gods in which they always possess 'strategic information,' see Pascal Boyer, "Why Do Gods and Spirits Matter At All?," in *Current Approaches in the Cognitive Science of Religion*, ed. Ilkka Pyysiäinen and Veikko Anttonen (London ; New York: Continuum, 2002), 68–92.

[194] I will address the role of affect in forming relationships between humans and gods in the next chapter.

attributed to the image, notions of a live connection do not contradict any emic understandings of the statue-god relationship.[195] Finally, using this term can also allow scholars to bridge the divide between personal and public religion because the live connection is personal but can take place in public spheres and during public events.[196] The term's flexibility makes it applicable in a variety of religious and cultural situations.

The agency of the object is also compelling in the context of Greek religion. Although many statues, specifically the kind that scholars refer to as cult statues, were placed in temples, divine images were not restricted to sanctuary spaces. Most crossroads and neighborhoods had their own shrines in public spaces, and statues were present within the domestic sphere.[197] These statues exerted their influence on the members of that particular household, neighborhood, or society in that they elicited a religious response. Upon seeing sacred images, people would automatically and somewhat involuntarily offer prayers to those gods. Praying before sacred images was therefore not so much a choice as a response to the object's own agency. As a result, worship, too, was ubiquitous. The average Athenian owed

---

[195] Theurgists and Neoplatonists in the third and fourth centuries CE who thought that divine beings had to be called into material receptacles like statues might not hesitate to characterize their interaction as a live connection.

[196] I will also come back in the next chapter to the idea that the divisions between private and domestic religion on the one hand and public and communal religion on the other can and should be collapsed.

[197] See Heather F. Sharpe, "Bronze Statuettes from the Athenian Agora: Evidence for Domestic Cults in Roman Greece," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 83.1 (2014): 143–87; Parker, *Polytheism*. Sharpe focuses on bronze statuettes of gods and goddesses that would have been placed in household shrines and to which prayers and libations would have been addressed each day by the male heads of household. Parker, on the other hand, looks at non-anthropomorphic divine presence in the home. Hestia was worshipped through the hearth, the central feature of a Greek house; Zeus Ktesios through a jar in the storeroom; and herms which were placed outside the door or front porch of the property.

worship to a few hundred gods by dint of their membership in families, tribes, *phratries, demes*, and cities.[198] I will further explore the power and influence of divine statues in public spaces on ancient Greeks, especially those who might have been considering joining the early Jesus movement, in chapter three.

The most important point, to my mind, is Elison's argument about degrees of integration. Because he is not fully integrated in the ideological and religious structures of Mumbai, Elison is immune to the sacred image's exertion of power. Similarly, as scholars of a dead religion, we are not able to enter into a relationship with the images of gods that we study. Despite the fact that we are able to study and recognize the iconography and symbolism of an image, we cannot establish a live connection with Zeus because we are not encapsulated in ancient Greek culture and religion. This concept sheds light on how ancient Greeks were able to unconsciously establish live connections with the sacred images throughout their cities and also how certain groups were *not* able to understand the use of images.

For individuals who were born and brought up within ancient Greek culture, the religious ideas and frameworks that enabled a scopic relationship were ingrained. Even visitors from other areas of the ancient Mediterranean could, to a lesser degree, engage in a live connection. Ovid describes a young man traveling through Lycia who, coming upon a foreign altar, offers a prayer to the deity before asking his companion to which god the altar

[198] Jon D Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 150–68.

is dedicated.[199] Despite not knowing the goddess to whom he addressed his prayers, the man was aware of what actions to take when facing an altar. Paul is an interesting counterpoint to this example. Unlike modern scholars who are entirely unintegrated in the structures of Greek religion, Paul is a Hellenistic Jew and is therefore somewhat integrated. He travels through the Hellenistic world and bemoans the prevalence of sacred images everywhere. The images in public spaces do not exert themselves on Paul in the same way as on a pagan believer in that they do not initiate a scopic relationship. But Paul's familiarity with and abhorrence for idols and idolatry mean that he is interpellated by their existence. In his letters, we see a deep resistance and, perhaps, anger towards this very quality of sacred materiality.

4. Conclusion: Revisiting Parmeniscus

Now that we have a more nuanced understanding of the religious gaze and its role in initiating mutual recognition between humans and gods, let us return to the story of Parmeniscus. The encounter with Leto's *agalma* on Delos is the crux of this account, but it is not the only supernatural interaction experienced by Parmeniscus. All three of Parmeniscus' divine interactions (first in Lebadaia, next at Delphi, and finally on Delos) showcase the various but legitimate ways to approach the gods in the ancient Greek world. In each, we can see the asymmetrical and hierarchical relationship between Parmeniscus and the god in question. These experiences all work together to inform Parmeniscus' confrontation with the goddess Leto. Through the visual connection set in motion by the religious gaze,

[199] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 6.321-28. "…I saw an ancient altar, smeared with sacrificial ashes…and I, observing him, echoed the words, 'Forget not me!' which, having done, I turned to him and said, 'Whose altar can this be?'..."

Parmeniscus and Leto recognize and subjectify each other. This mutual recognition heals Parmeniscus and gains Leto a lifelong devotee.

Of the three episodes in question, Kindt focuses her analysis on the last two - the oracular consultation at Delphi and the religious gaze on Delos – possibly because no details are provided in the story about Parmeniscus' visit to the shrine of Trophonios. It is necessary, however, to read these three episodes together because the story itself links them through familial connection with Apollo.[200] According to some sources, Trophonios is the son of Apollo and blessed with the god's oracular prowess.[201] He is also credited with building Apollo's temple at Delphi, which is where the Pythia acts as a mouthpiece for the god's prophecies.[202] Leto is well-known as the mother of Apollo and Artemis, and Delos is especially important as the site upon which Leto gave birth to Apollo. We must therefore begin with the visit to the shrine of Trophonios.

Parmeniscus visits Lebadaia, Boiotia where, ostensibly, he seeks knowledge about his future from the god Trophonios. Athenaeus tells us only that, having gone down into the shrine, Parmeniscus loses his ability to laugh. Fortunately, other sources provide more detailed accounts of visits to this oracular shrine. The oracle itself is old, possibly functioning as early as the sixth century BCE. While claims that it functioned in Homeric times are probably apocryphal, the oracle was well-known and important to Athenians at least by the

---

[200] Parker argues that gods operated within networks, particularly familial networks. Thus, one could propitiate Athena to plead one's case with Zeus, her father. In this instance, it seems that the family of Apollo is working together throughout Parmeniscus' journey.

[201] According to Paus. 9.37.5, Trophonios was actually the son of Apollo and not King Erginos. Eventually, the earth opens up and swallows Trophonios at Lebadaia, and Apollo designates that spot as an oracular shrine in honor of Trophonios.

[202] *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 295-7; Paus. 9.37.5.

second half of the fifth century.[203] Details about the divinatory procedure are revealed by much later writers, such as Pausanias, Philostratus, and Maximus Tirius.[204] According to these accounts, a person wishing to consult the oracle Trophonios in order to learn about the future had to prepare himself for a terrifying experience.

The process is more or less as follows: the consultee stays for a number of days in a building nearby, during which time he undergoes purification and offers sacrifices to Trophonios and those close to him (his children, Apollo, Zeus, and Demeter who was said to be his nurse).[205] On the night of the descent, after two young attendants help the consultee bathe in the river Herkyna, he drinks of the fountains *Lethe* and *Mnemosyne*. Descending into the cave by a ladder, he lies down on his back and enters a small opening legs-first, holding honey cakes as offerings. He is then shown the future, visually and/or auditorily.[206] After he

---

[203] Raymond Clark suggests that there is evidence of this shrine in Lebadeia in the Odyssey (see Raymond J. Clark, "Trophonios: The Manner of His Revelation," *TAPA* 99 (1968): 63–75.) Herodotus mentions early consultations by Croesus (Herodotus 1.46) and Mys (Herodotus 8.133.1-134); these mentions may also be apocryphal. For Athenian references from the fifth century BCE, Euripides, *Ion* 300-2, 404-9; and passing references in Aristophanes, *Nubes*, particularly line 506. Clark mentions that Dichearchus, a pupil of Aristotle, wrote a work entitled ἡ εἰς Τροφωνίου Κατάβασις, which is lost.

[204] Paus. 9.39.2-3; Philostr. *V A,* 8.19. For other mentions and general information regarding the oracle of Trophonios, see also Ael. *VH,* 3.45; Strabo, *Geographica*, 9.2.38.

[205] Purification included abstaining from hot baths, bathing only in the river Herkyna (Paus. 9.39.3). Meat was allowed as consultees sponsored several sacrifices. Pausanias also claims that the statue of Trophonios was crafted by Praxiteles.

[206] Plutarch writes that Timarchus, uncertain whether he is awake or dreaming, feels a blow on the head as his soul is set loose (*De gen.* 589F-592E). Earlier scholars have suggested that this was an incubatory oracle, wherein the subject saw divine visions in his dreams, but most scholars now agree that the consultee was awake while he experienced visual and/or auditory input of some nature. Peter Jackson, "Apparitions and Apparatuses: On the Framing and Staging of Religious Events," *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 24.3 (2012): 291–300; Clark, "Trophonios."

emerges senseless and terrified, he sits in the chair of Mnemosyne and recites what he learned, and is then carried off by his family to recuperate. It is only then, according to Pausanias, that he recovers his faculties and regains the ability to laugh (which, the reader must assume, was at some point taken from him).[207]

Oracular shrines such as this one grant opportunities for humans to consult divine beings about the future and lessen to an extent the knowledge imbalance between the two parties. In order to do this, the consultees must appease the gods through sacrifices and offerings. Yet, the records from Pausanias and others attest to the dangers of this process – consultees exited the shrine terrified, raving, and unable to laugh. These consequences highlight the asymmetry of the human-god relationship in that direct, close contact with the gods was difficult for humans.[208] Anchises, after sharing Aphrodite's bed, fears for his life and health in the *Hymn* to Aphrodite.[209] Homer writes that gods are dangerous when they manifest themselves clearly.[210] In tales where *phantasma* or *eidola* are seen, they are

---

[207] This particular detail is only included in Pausanias but has been confirmed by inscriptions. See Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion*, ch. 2 for details.

[208] Parker, *On Greek Religion*. Parker claims that stories of direct epiphanies abounded in ancient literature, but always as something that happened to someone else. Most people only experienced epiphany in dreams, one of the safer ways of interacting with divine beings. For scholarship on dream epiphanies, see van Straten, Folkert T. 1976. "Daikrates; dream: A votive relief from Kos and some other kat' onar dedications" (*BABesch* 51:1-38); Hanson, J.S. 1980 "Dreams and Visions in the Graeco-Roman world and Early Christianity *(Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt II* 23 (1): 1397-427); Renberg, Gil, *Commanded by the gods: An epigraphical study of dreams and visions in Greek and Roman religious life* (Dissertation, Duke University, 2003); Harris, William V. 2009, *Dreams and experience in Classical antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003) 23-122; Larson, *Understanding Greek Religion*, 88-95.

[209] *Hymn. Hom. Aphr.* 175-195.

[210] Hom. *Il*. 20.131.

described as "dim" or "veiled," perhaps implying that the lack of clarity in vision protects the viewer. At other times, the gods appeared in mortal forms (human or animal) or as invisible spirits whose presence had to be detected through other senses. In the shrine of Trophonios, the consultee only stood a chance of recovering if he appeased the god well.[211]

Unlike this oracular shrine, which required direct and close contact with supernatural powers beyond human capacities, the oracular shrine at Delphi was quite safe for humans.[212] In Athenaeus' story, Parmeniscus visits Delphi to ask Apollo how he might regain his laughter and hears an answer through the Pythia, the priestess appointed to be Apollo's mouthpiece. In reality, there were many ways for consultees to ask questions and receive answers at Delphi and similar places like Dodona. Most questions at Delphi and Dodona were yes or no questions, or formulated along the lines of, "Whom should I worship in order to get ____?".[213] Other questions were asked and answered by lot. In these cases, meaning

[211] Priests of this oracle would sometimes discourage people from entering the cave if the omens did not show Trophonios' favor.

[212] On epiphanies, see Verity Platt, "Epiphany," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, ed. Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Platt, *Facing the Gods*; Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), 102–67; Versnel, "What Did Ancient Man See When He Saw a God?"; Versnel, *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*, 191; Albert Henrichs, "What Is a Greek God?," in *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations*, ed. Ruth N Bremmer and Andrew Erskine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 33–35.; Henrichs, Albert, "Epiphany," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Hornblower and Spawforth (Oxford University Press, 1996); Nanno Marinatos and Dmitris Kyrtatos, "Epiphany: Concept Ambiguous, Experience Elusive," *ICS* 29 (n.d.): 226–34. On the challenge of identifying the gods in epiphanies, see Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 38. On Homeric epiphanies, see Bernard C. Dietrich, "Divine Epiphanies in Homer," *Numen* 30 (1983): 53–79; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 102–13..

[213] Sarah Iles Johnston, "Oracles and Divination," in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, ed. Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 477–89; Evans Richard, ed., *Prophets and Profits: Ancient Divination and Its Reception*, 1st

was assigned to certain numbers or colors, and these were drawn at random to answer the question (e.g. like a Magic-8 Ball). These methods provided worshipers with a way to once again seek knowledge from the gods but modestly. In this way, the gods' ability to provide detailed answers to queries was not tested.

But Parmeniscus' experiences at both Trophonios and Delphi do not go according to plan. Parmeniscus' experience at Delphi in particular shows signs of literary fashioning, as Kindt points out. Tales belonging to the oracular genre demonstrate the superiority and inaccessibility of the gods to human seekers, as the consultee always fails to dig past the surface-level interpretation of the oracular response, much to his own detriment. The most famous example of this is Delphic Apollo's response to Croesus, telling him that he would reign until a mule sat on the throne of the Medes. Little did Croesus guess that by "mule," Apollo meant Cyrus who had mixed parentage. Likewise, in this tale, Parmeniscus misunderstands "mother" to mean his own mother instead of Apollo's mother. At Trophonios, Parmeniscus does not regain the ability to laugh like all other visitors to the cave, and we are not told why.

These two episodes, when paired together, seem to highlight the asymmetry of the human-god relationship. Parmeniscus presumably makes hefty offerings to the gods in both places, but it is not a *quid pro quo* situation, and he receives more than he bargained for. The gods cannot be controlled by human actions. Yet, Versnel is correct to argue that, "Saints (even God himself) must do what people want them to do, no less and — preferably — no

---

ed. (New York: Routledge, 2017). See also Larson, *Understanding Greek Religion*, chapter two; Versnel, *Faith, Hope and Worship*.

more."[214] Only in responding to prayers can gods receive the recognition they crave from their worshipers. The consequence of these first two encounters is that Parmeniscus thinks that he has been deceived by the gods. Neither party has gained recognition, on account of which their communication thus far has been ineffective.

This is remedied when Parmeniscus visits the Letoön on Delos. The Letoön on Delos was one of two such famous shrines, the other one being the sanctuary of Leto in Lycia. The shrines of Leto and Apollo had particular importance on Delos since the island permitted Leto to give birth to Zeus's son on its land. The Delians celebrated Leto and the birth of Apollo on the island with an annual festival. This sanctuary was small and old and featured a wooden *agalma* dressed in a linen chiton and linen mantle and wearing sandals. She also had several ornaments (e.g. a gold belt decorated with precious stones, rings, necklaces) and a purple himation for festival occasions.[215] The statue might have been quite big, larger than life-size, judging from the size of the statue base.

When Parmeniscus enters the shrine, he sees an index of divine presence that naturally elicits a religious response. In directing a religious gaze at the statue, Parmeniscus sees the goddess Leto herself. But as an index, the statue of Leto referred to many things, people, and ideas; as the interpreter, Parmeniscus would have been able to interpret the index in many different ways. Given the goddess' stature on Delos, it is understandable that Parmeniscus expected a grander image of the goddess. Thus, Parmeniscus sees the goddess and acknowledges the incongruity between her and the material form of the index with his laughter. Simultaneously, he looks at the statue with a religious gaze and establishes a live

[214] Versnel, *Faith, Hope and Worship*, 38.

[215] Romano, "Early Greek Cult Images," 202-207.

connection with the goddess, finally resulting in mutual recognition. In seeing the goddess and the superiority of divine knowledge and power, he finally understands the oracular response. Parmeniscus is recognized by the goddess as a worshiper and his ailment is cured; the goddess, having solved Parmeniscus' problem, receives his worship and honors forevermore.

The dynamism and potency of sacred images should be evident by now from this and other examples presented in this chapter. Images of the gods, as indices of divine presence, provided a live connection between the viewer-worshiper and the god when viewed through the cultural lens of the religious gaze. The desire for mutual recognition was enacted and satisfied through this connection, making images foundational to Greek religious experience. As an index, each divine image could be read differently and in ways unique to particular individuals, thereby initiating a deeply personal religious interaction. The ubiquity of these images in the public and private sphere makes them one of the greatest untapped sources of evidence for religious beliefs and individual experience in the ancient Greek world.

In interpreting material objects as expressions and manifestations of belief, scholars can overturn Christianizing perceptions of materiality and "idols." While the anti-idolatrous rationale is not made explicit in the Hebrew Bible, the complaints leveled against idols in this and later Christian texts fall along two, not entirely distinct, lines. Statues cannot be divine because: 1. they are made by men, who are by nature not divine, and 2. the materials used to make statues are profane.[216] Thus, neither is the physical form of the statue sacred nor can it be a vessel for a divine being. The aniconic arguments championed by ancient Jews and also by certain Hellenistic philosophers caused early Christians to view statues as "empty." Even

[216] Barasch, *Icon*, 18.

now, scholars working on Greek religion struggle to divest themselves of these lingering misconceptions and seek to justify the use of images by turning to their social and economic properties, or by dismissing them as unimportant.

A cross-cultural approach that "normalizes" the use of material objects in religious practices allows us to situate the Greek evidence in its own ancient, polytheistic context and to challenge the traditional perception of sacred images as meaningless and ineffective. Moreover, this methodology is necessary for any scholar wishing to understand Greek religion untainted by outsider perspectives. Greek religion was only one of many ancient Eurasian traditions that made liberal use of material objects as indices of divine presence in one way or other. In this chapter, I have argued for just such an approach to ancient Greek religion. In doing so, I hope to have shown how scholars can comb the material record to undertake questions of ancient Greek religious belief and experience.

Chapter 2
Leveling the Praying Field: Affective Materiality and Horizontal Relationships

1. Introduction

Fig. 2.1: Lucanian terracotta, red-figure bell krater, Classical (430-420 BCE), attributed to the Pisticci Painter. Museum/inventory number: Basel, *Antikenmuseum,* Coll. Ludwig 70. Bibliography: *LIMC* 2, 217 no. 273, pl.206. Description: A statue of Apollo stands on the left with snakes entwined around him and the dismembered bodies of two boys at his feet. In the center, Antiope aims an axe at the statue while Laokoön looks on in dismay. An animated Apollo stands at the far right.

The painting on the vase above provides a unique depiction of the death of Laokoön's son (fig. 2.1). The vase itself is a Lucanian red-figured bell krater dating to the fifth century (c.430 BCE), attributed to the Pisticci Painter.[217] On the far left is a sacred image of Apollo. At the foot of the statue lies the dismembered boy, and curled around it are the serpents responsible for the boy's death. Antiope, the wife of Laokoön, raising an axe high above her

[217] The vase is currently part of the Basel *Antikenmuseum*, Collection Ludwig 70. *LIMC* 2.217, no. 273, Pl. 206. See *LIMC* VI (1992), 198 for categorization details.

head approaches the sacred image from the right.[218] Behind her, Laokoön clutches his head in dismay. The animated god himself, holding the same symbols as his statue-form, stands at the far right watching the scene unfold. Despite the serene facial expressions, this painting exudes emotionality: the gestures acquaint viewers with Antiope's anger and Laokoön's growing dismay and horror. The events as presented through this painting do not correspond exactly with any known, literary versions of the myth,[219] and other vases on which this myth appears boast only the two Apollos and the murdered boy.[220] This painting alone preserves Antiope's emotional encounter with Apollo.

The emotionality of this painting, by far its most intriguing aspect, has somehow evaded notice thus far. In one line of inquiry, the "doubling" of the god as both sacred image and animated deity reaffirms the discreteness of these two forms.[221] However much Antiope harms the sacred image with her axe, she cannot inflict any damage upon the actual god who

---

[218] An alternative interpretation put forth by Zeigler asserts that the vase depicts the killing of Troilos and his being torn into parts within the sanctuary of Apollo, though this is a minority opinion. See Konrat Zeigler, "Thymbra" (*RE* 6A (1): 1936), 694-9.

[219] According to Apollodorus, Apollo sends the serpents to punish Laocoön for engaging in intercourse with his wife in front of the sacred image (*Epit*. E.5.18). In Sophocles' lost tragedy, Apollo's serpents kill the boys to punish Laokoön, a priest of Apollo, for violating his vow of celibacy. Quintus Smyrnaeus's *Posthomerica* instead credits the deaths of Laocoön and his sons to Athena, who is angered by Laokoön's attempts to dissuade the Trojans from accepting the horse. Virgil's *Aeneid* subscribes to this version of the story as well (2.195-233).

[220] For example, an Apulian red-figured bell krater fragment (c.380/370 BCE) from the Jatta collection in Ruvo, although fragmentary, shows the serpents devouring two boys before Apollo's sacred image, while the god and his sister Artemis watch from the left, see Christoph Auffarth, "The Materiality of God's Image: The Olympian Zeus and Ancient Christology," in *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformation*, ed. Jan N Bremmer and Andrew Erskine (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 479–80; Alroth, "Changing Modes."

[221] Auffarth, "Materiality"; Alroth, "Changing Modes."

exists without the statue. According to another interpretation, Antiope raises her axe not against Apollo's image but the snakes entwined around it.[222] The snakes are seen as the immediate cause of her son's death, and so it is the snakes against which she vents her anger. These interpretations display an unwillingness, or perhaps inability, on the part of scholars to associate emotions with materiality. No doubt results of the deeply entrenched aniconism of the western academy, they necessarily fall short of satisfactorily explaining this painting.

Contextualizing the painting in Greek cultural and religious practices can help challenge these types of analyses. Firstly, instances of anger directed at statues abound in ancient Greece. Pan's sacred image in Arcadia was beaten whenever the crops failed; when Hermes failed to fulfill his devout worshipper's prayer, his sacred image was smashed on the ground; an athlete routinely whipped the statue of his rival, Theagenes; Romans threw out their Lares after Germanicus' death.[223] A smashed statue of Venus in a Corinthian temple, predating Christianity, confirms this practice.[224] This type of behavior has even continued into the modern period, as images of saints in Portugal, Italy, and Spain were tied up, spat upon, and whipped when local populations are threatened with inclement weather and

[222] Laokoon cat. 1 (E. Simon) in *LIMC* 2 (1984), 197. For examples of ancient Greeks directing their anger at sacred images, see the previous chapter.

[223] Theocr. 7.106; Babrius 119; Theocr. 7.106; Suet. *Calig*. 5. Many more examples exist. For example, Neptune's sacred image was removed from the *pompa deorum* by Augustus after the god was charged with causing a storm (Suet. *Aug.* 15), images of heroes were punished by burial (Artem. 4.78), and temples were sometimes razed to the ground (Artem. 2.33). See H.S Versnel, "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer," in *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 37–42.

[224] The statue's disfigurement predates Christianity, and the manner of its mutilation strongly implicates a disgruntled worshipper.

epidemics.[225] Sacred images are the physical recipients not just of worship, but of all the worshippers' emotions and actions.[226] Given the apparent normalcy of venting anger through violence against sacred images, the idea that Antiope aims her axe at the snakes rather than Apollo's image underwhelms.

The "doubling" of the god is slightly more complex; while Auffarth is correct to say that Antiope's actions against the image will not harm the god, such a limited statement only obscures the significance of this painting. It goes without saying that the gods existed independently of their sacred images. But to distinguish so rigidly between the image and the "living" deity, to presume that only one of the two figures can be the actual god, is a monotheistic approach to a polytheistic system, the hallmark of which is plenitude.[227] In polytheistic systems, divinity is a composite, "capable of distributing its agency into a diverse constellation of (culturally specific) indexes,"[228] meaning that Apollo, or any deity for that matter, can manifest himself in multiple forms and multiple images at once. Not all of these indexes are considered to be equivalent to the divinity or to each other, but they all

[225] Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 38. See also Gallop, R., *Portugal: A Book of Folk-Ways* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 134.

[226] Conversely, Lucian tells us of a man who, having recovered somewhat miraculously from a fever, thanks the god by gilding the god's sacred image in his home (Lucian, *Philops*. 18).

[227] Timothy J. McNiven, "Things to Which We Give Service: Interactions with Sacred Images on Athenian Pottery," in *An Archaeology of Representations: Ancient Greek Vase-Painting and Conteporary Methodologies*, ed. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis (Athens: Institut du Livre, 2009), 308–9.

[228] Beate Pongratz-Leisten, ed., *The Materiality of Divine Agency*, 1st ed., Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records Vol. 8 (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 20.

simultaneously convey the will and agency of the deity to whom they refer.[229] In this painting, both Apollos hold the same symbols, and their positioning—far left and far right, facing each other—frames the ongoing action. Thus, the "doubling" is an artistic device that connotes not the separateness of image and deity but their connection.

When the painting is read in this light, the emotionality of the scene becomes of primary interest. The display of emotion is significant when we consider the non-ritual context of the event depicted in the painting. The expressed emotion is not a prescribed ritual response but an unscripted action. Of further note is the direction of Antiope's anger, namely, against the sacred image. The image is central because without it, Antiope has no outlet for her anger, no way to convey her feelings to the god. The animated god's presence and attention to the unfolding events shows his awareness that he is the object of her rage. Antiope must vent her rage at the invisible, immaterial god who was responsible for, or at the very least a bystander in, the death of her child *through* her actions against the material, visible sacred image.

That the displayed emotion is anger is also of great import. While we tend to think of anger as a sudden sense of blind fury, it is actually much more than that, particularly in

[229] This is Alfred Gell's theory of the distribution of agency, itself based on Marilyn Strathern's theory of the partible person, which explains the relationship between a god and his many images, all of which act as indexes of divine presence and are therefore worshipped. The god is present in all of them as well as independent of any of them. This theory further explains why people who have statuettes of Athena in their home altar still visit the many temples of Athena on the Akropolis, or why people travel to Epidauros to see Asklepios despite his local presence: not all of them are equal. The divine presence can be thought to manifest more strongly in some images and places than others. See Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

ancient Greece.[230] Anger is a desire for revenge, to hurt the other party as one has been hurt, on account of some perceived slight. Anger is therefore a privilege of power, inseparable from a sense of hierarchy; social inferiors do not become angry with their superiors.[231] In other words, Achilles can be angry with Agamemnon but Chryses needs Apollo to enact his anger against the Greeks. Antiope's anger then is not merely a momentary reaction to the death of her son; it is an allusion to a preexisting relationship between herself and Apollo, and one that is close and familiar enough that, in this instance, she can approach him not as an inferior but as an equal in her anger. In this way, the vase painting blurs the boundaries between human and divine beings.

The present chapter will therefore focus on the horizontal relationship between humans and gods. The guiding questions of this chapter are: 1. How can we interpret individual instances of emotion in Greek art within the larger framework of Greek religion?, 2. What is the role of the sacred image in enabling an emotional, horizontal human-divine relationship, and 3. How does understanding the human-divine relationship as an affective bond change our perception of Greek religious experience within a sacred landscape? I will argue that the humans and gods had a relationship that was shaped by affective interactions with sacred images of gods. The sacred images acted as affective archives, allowing each

---

[230] David Konstan, "Affect and Emotion in Greek Literature," *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2015, https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935390.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935390-e-41.

[231] Aristotle says of anger, "Let anger be a desire, accompanied by pain, for a perceived revenge, on account of a perceived slight on the part of people who are not fit to slight one or one's own" (*Rh.* 2.2, 1378a31-33). For a recent collection of studies on affect in ancient Greek texts, see Monica D'Agostini, Edward M. Anson, and Frances Pownall, eds., *Affective Relations and Personal Bonds in Hellenistic Antiquity: Studies in Honor of Elizabeth D. Carney* (Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2020).

encounter to build on previous ones. In this way, individuals were able to define their religious self-identity horizontally and approach the gods as fellow social actors. Thus, Greek cities were inhabited by divine and human actors who, in relating to each other, reconstituted and sacralized the sacred landscape of that city.

To that end, I will begin the chapter by introducing the problems brought on by the study of ancient emotion and demonstrate how affect theory provides a lens through which emotional and behavioral responses to gods can be read as manifestations of the affective bond between humans and gods. I will then turn to sacred images and their affective capabilities. In order to explicate this, I bring in comparanda from India and Meso-American Catholicism, where people use sacred images to develop and maintain intimacy between themselves and gods. I propose to understand the tactility and manipulability of sacred objects as key to forming a horizontal relationship with gods to counter-balance the more traditional, vertical relationship established through official worship like community sacrifice and festivals. In section three, I examine votive reliefs that depict human-divine interactions as a case study. I reexamine them in light of the affective models set out in sections one and two, and argue that these votive reliefs were a way for worshippers to remind the deity of affective moments in their relationship and, in so doing, build and maintain their horizontal relationship of friendship. Finally, in the conclusion, I demonstrate the utility of this model for understanding the sacred landscape as co-inhabited by divine and human actors, the interactions of which reconstitute the sacred landscape on a daily basis.

2.1 Emotions versus Affect

Traditionally, historical inquiries have overlooked the role played by emotion, both individual and collective, in shaping the historical processes that are their object. This

disregard for emotions can be attributed to the influence of Marxism, structuralism, and other schools of historical interpretation that dissociate cognition from emotion.[232] The influence of this trend on scholarship in Classical studies, in which the rationality of Greek culture has been traditionally stressed, can be easily detected.[233] Greek culture is seen as an evolutionary development from myth to philosophy, logic, and reason. And yet, it has recently been recognized that emotions are interwoven with memory and cognition and determine our daily behavior and decisions far more than cognition.[234] Emotions undergird ancient Greek culture and its production of texts and art, and without studying emotions we cannot hope to understand either the culture or its output.

The study of emotions, however, poses analytic challenges. Rosenwein summarizes the problem neatly by writing, "some scholars view emotions as innate whereas others consider them to be 'social constructions'."[235] If emotions are innate, then they are transhistorical, remaining the same for millennia even if the means of expressing them have changed. If emotions are constructs, each emotion is specific to a culture, time, and place,

---

[232] Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, trans. Keith Tribe, Emotions in History (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), Introduction.

[233] An exception to this is E.R. Dodds's study on the irrationality of Greek religion, which challenges the traditional view of Greek culture as fully rationalistic. See Eric R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

[234] Angelos Chaniotis, "A World of Emotions: The Making of an Exhibition - Ideas | Institute for Advanced Study," 6 March 2017, https://www.ias.edu/ideas/2017/chaniotis-world-of-emotions.

[235] Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Introduction," in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 2.

and unique to its social setting.[236] This debate is particularly pertinent for scholars of ancient Greece. On one side are scholars like Kalimtzis, who claims that anger in Athens is anger *qua* human, and on the other are those like Konstan, who argues that those feelings labeled as *pathê* by Aristotle do not correspond strictly to modern ones. This division, a product of eighteenth-century Enlightenment era thinkers who firmly contrasted nature and culture, now hinders us in the study of emotion, particularly when retrojected onto pre-Enlightenment cultures. Moreover, if we acknowledge as even the transhistorical school does that the expression of emotion has changed, then it becomes even more challenging to analyze emotions in art—how can we be sure that what we see is anger, or surprise?

A further issue is that everyday language construes emotions as a "form of positive residence."[237] That is, emotions seem to be personal property, belonging to and residing within a particular subject or object. When we say, "that movie is sad," or "I have a feeling," the emotion and subject are equated. This perception of emotion's locus stems from a conflation of bodily sensations and emotion. We feel sensations physiologically—anger in the chest, sadness in the stomach—and so define their locus internally. Then, in order to make sense of them we match them to words (angry, sad) that are necessarily limited, thereby reducing various feelings to a state of stasis.[238] This poses a problem for scholars of

---

[236] Rüdiger Schnell, "Historische Emotionsforschung: Eine Mediävistische Standortbestimmung," *FS* 38 (2005): 180, 213. For the history of this distinction, see Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, chapters 1-3.

[237] Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *ST* 22.2 (2004): 119.

[238] Several scholars configure the relationship between feelings, emotions, and affects differently. In this case, I follow Brennan who argues that feelings and emotions provide a unified interpretation of sensory information, matching bodily sensations to words, (Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004], 5; Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed, "Introduction: Some Ways to Read with Feeling," in *Reading*

ancient Greece. The ancient evidence for emotion is scanty; textual sources represent the views only of the author or a small section of society, and material examples only the artist or perhaps commissioner. Going back to the vase painting of Antiope: this construction of emotion means that her anger is localized to her body in that specific context. If emotion resides locally in a state of stasis, how can it tell us anything about larger ideological structures?[239]

The issues brought out by the study of ancient emotion can be neatly circumvented if, rather than focusing on emotions, we shift our attention to affect. Affect theory is the analysis of bodily movements, intensities, and sensations. Recent decades have seen the rise of the "affective turn," the theorizing of affect and their application within a variety of fields across the sciences and humanities. It is not my intention to give a comprehensive overview of affect theory, nor to contribute in any meaningful way to the field. The concept of affect is notoriously slippery and multitudinous.[240] Affect theory's malleability in addressing the diverse concerns of these vastly disparate disciplines means that there is not now, nor is there likely to be, any one universal theory of affect.[241] In this chapter, I will only touch on aspects of affect theories as they relate to the present study of ancient Greek religious experience.

---

with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible, ed. Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed [Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019], 2).

[239] Particularly in art, there is a temptation to interpret one painting's emotionality and from there generalize about all of Greek art. See, for example, Gerhard Neumann, *Gesten und Gebärden in der griechischen Kunst* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965).

[240] Seigworth and Gregg write, "…it is more tempting to imagine that there can only ever be infinitely multiple iterations of affect and theories of affect: theories as diverse and singularly delineated as their own highly particular encounters with bodies, affects, worlds" (Seigworth and Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," 3–4).

[241] Seigworth and Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," 3. In this chapter, we will eschew the neuroscientific and biological definitions for the more cultural and historical approaches

While in common speech affect and emotion are used interchangeably, in reality affect is more than mere emotion or thought. Affects are forces, variations, or intensities that exist viscerally, "beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing."[242] As such, affects preexist perception, cognition, language, and even bodily sensations of emotions. But affects are not static, residing physiologically in one form. For Deleuze, affects are "becomings" that drive bodies towards movements, thoughts, and emotions.[243] Affects can therefore be seen as (unconsciously) motivating and manifesting *through* bodily sensations and responses (emotional, cognitive, and behavioral). For the purposes of the present study, then, emotional and behavioral responses are outward indications of an affected internal state.

Affect is always both intimate and impersonal. It is intimate because it is felt and experienced within the personal space of the body at the immediate level. In centralizing the body, theories of affect attempt to capture and articulate lived experience, as well as the traces and effects of said experience.[244] Because affects are transient and momentary, always

---

to affect. The theories that broaden Deleuze's focus on affect as "becomings" and "changes" which move through communities and culture, shaping history and establishing knowledge and power, will be the foundations on which the current work is based. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987). See discussion of Deleuze's theory in Felicity J. Colman, "Affective Self: Feminist Thinking and Feminist Actions," *CF&FSS* 14.5 (2010): 11.

[242] Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.

[243] Colman, "Affective Self: Feminist Thinking and Feminist Actions," 11; Black and Koosed, "Introduction: Some Ways to Read with Feeling," 4; Seigworth and Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," 1; Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Post-Contemporary Interventions (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

[244] Black and Koosed, "Introduction: Some Ways to Read with Feeling," 4. The body as central to affect was posited by Spinoza who claimed, "No one has yet determined what the

changing and moving (unlike archives, which are stable), affect theory recognizes and analyzes lived experience as constantly shifting, moving, and varying between several sensations and perceptions without requiring stasis.[245] But affect does not arise within the individual; in fact, there is no "originary" state for affect. It always arises and is transmitted in a state of relatedness or in-betweenness.[246] That is, affect is the change or variation that occurs when bodies (human, non-human, objects, abstractions) collide and is transmitted between those bodies as a field of responses, intensities, and emotional charges. Affect theory is therefore not the study of any one individual's internal state but of all bodies (human, non-human) participating in larger, culturally defined, affective economies.

In this way, affect theory provides an analysis of emotions and bodily sensations that resists any binary postulation of emotion as either an interior state or social condition.[247] Emotional and behavioral responses, and the affects underlying these outward manifestations, are experienced at the personal level. But, they are defined and managed at

---

body can do," in Baruch Spinoza, Andrew Boyle, and Theophilus Stephen Gregory, *Spinoza's* Ethics *and* On the Correction of Understanding (Philadephia: Pennsylvania State University, 1959), 87.

[245] Mrinalini Rajagopalan, *Building Histories: The Archival and Affective Lives of Five Monuments in Modern Delhi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 5–12. For Foucault, modern endeavors of history transform documents into monuments, i.e., turn documents into incontrovertible, empirical truths. Derrida's understanding of the archive brings together embodied authority and space: "*there* where men and gods command…*in this place* from which *order* is given." Both are critical of the monovocality of the monument or archive, among many other problems. See Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002), 7; Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1.

[246] Affect is an "impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of religion *as well as* the passage (and the duration of passage) of forces or intensities" (Seigworth and Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," 1).

[247] Black and Koosed, "Introduction: Some Ways to Read with Feeling," 1.

the larger cultural level, which means that these affective responses—what they respond to, how they manifest, and what they mean—are defined through larger economies of culture and representation. Furthermore, as affect is being transmitted between bodies, it exerts a "stickiness" and binds these bodies together in a network of means and attributes, ultimately empowering these bodies with agency.[248] Thus, as part of a larger affective economy, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors actually *do* things: they align individuals with spaces, objects, other individuals, communities, and cultural structures, and allow them to make meaning in and through this connected network.

2.2 Affect in Greek Religion

Applying this affective model of experience to Greek religion has many benefits. To begin, affect theory's focus on the body can helpfully redress the predominant socio-cultural assessments of Greek religion as a set of rituals and prescribed behaviors enacted in, by, and through the *polis*. Even studies on personal religion or religious experience define it as a series of ritual actions undertaken by individuals: "so-and-so wrote this on a curse tablet, so-and-so dedicated this votive offering," etc. The temptation to reduce experience to actions is understandable given the nature of our evidence – objects and words are preserved for us, and the people are not. But religion is not just about language, doctrine, text, structures, ritual; it "moves people in their bodies,"[249] and in so doing binds together bodies and objects and communities. In focusing on affect, we can reinterpret objects and words in such a way as to access the internal experience of and motivations behind them, and in a way

[248] Rajagopalan, *Building Histories*, 5.

[249] Black and Koosed, "Introduction: Some Ways to Read with Feeling," 1.

"repopulate" them. We can therefore see Greek religion as not just something that people *did*, but also as something that people felt.

Secondly, in couching emotion as an affective response, we bypass the aforementioned problems associated with the study of emotion. Emotions and the means of expressing them may be socially constructed, but subtending them are affects that are universal to humans and nonhumans. The Stoics themselves distinguished between *pathos* and *propatheia*, pre- or proto-emotion.[250] As participants in larger affective economies, emotions are not confined to the personal space of an individual but are created and managed through larger cultural structures and economies of representation.[251] The subject who experiences the emotion "is simply one nodal point in the economy, rather than its origin and destination."[252] Thus, however scholars choose to identify ancient emotions, they are undeniably signs of affected internal states. Moreover, in looking not at any one painting or text but many together, scholars can move from singular instances of emotion to study the collective religious mentality that was defined by cultural and ideological structures and in turn defined religious experience.

Viewing emotions and behaviors as affective responses can illuminate the human-divine relationship as an affective bond. That is to say, emotional and behavioral exchanges between humans and gods are not disparate, isolated incidents, nor are they mere signals of an affected internal state. They work together, building one on the other, to bind both parties

---

[250] Konstan, "Affect and Emotion"; Margaret R. Graver, "Philo of Alexandria and the Origins of the Stoic Προπάθειαι," *Phronesis* 44 (1999): 300–325.

[251] Rajagopalan, *Building Histories*, 5; Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015); Ahmed, "Affective Economies," 129–30.

[252] Ahmed, "Affective Economies," 121.

together in a deeply affective relationship that is emotional and reciprocal. The parameters of this relationship are defined by ideological structures, affective communities, and by previous and potential future encounters. That is to say: the bond looks backward, forward, sideways, and up and down. Emotional and behavioral responses are therefore products of all other such interactions and in turn engender more. Thus, evidence of affective responses to gods in ancient literature or art can be seen as another building block in the affective bond between human and deity, ultimately part of a mutually pleasing, reciprocal, and increasingly personal human-divine relationship.

Recently, scholars have begun to recognize emotions as inherent to the celebration of Greek festivals and performance of rituals. Angelos Chaniotis has even argued that cult regulations, rituals, and spaces were designed to arouse consciously certain emotions in worshippers.[253] If the prescription for mood was not followed, the festival could be halted.[254] The common experience of these emotions created close ties between the emotional community (a group of people expected to feel the same set of emotions during worship) and

[253] Sometimes, cheerfulness, *euphemia* (good talk), and piety were required. A decree from Messene, referencing Scipio's order to celebrate the health of Gaius, states, "He also commanded us to spend this day every year with sacrifices and wearing crowns, as cheerful and [--] as possible [**ὅσοις δυνάμεθα ἱλαρώτατα και [--]τατα]**" (*SEG* 23.206). For prescribed mood for festivals, see J.J. MacAloon, "Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle in Modern Societies," in *Rite, Drama, Festival: Rehearsals toward a Theory of Cultural Performances*, ed. J.J. MacAloon (Philadephia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 253; Angelos Chaniotis, "Dynamic of Emotions and Dynamic of Rituals. Do Emotions Change Ritual Norms?," in *Ritual Matters: Dynamic Dimensions in Practice*, ed. Christiane Brosius and Ute Hüsken (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010).

[254] Chaniotis references the interruption of the Eleusinian Mysteries in 335 BCE on account of the Athenians' fear after the destruction of Thebes (Plut. *Vit. Alex.* 13.1; Arr. *Anab.* 1.10.2). See Chaniotis, "Emotional Community," 265, n.5.

the deity.[255] For example, Martzavou shows how the Epidaurian miracle inscriptions create incredulity, anxiety, and then hope in readers in order to encourage trust in Asklepios's healing powers.[256] The confession stele from Asia Minor, which describes the wrath of offended gods and their punishment of the offender with illness, accident, death, destruction of property, etc., incite fear and anxiety to construct deities as punitive, fearsome, and powerful.[257] De Jáuregui's study of the verb *tharsein* in epiphanic appearances and speeches reveals that mystery cults dispelled fear and engendered hope and trust in the salvatory powers of gods among worshippers.[258] In acknowledging the presence, and even prescription, of emotions in ancient Greek religion, scholars such as Chaniotis have successfully combated the popular perception of Greek religion as mere ritualism, and the notion that faith is the sole prerogative of Christianity.[259]

---

[255] Chaniotis, "Emotional Community."

[256] The god is characterized sometimes as a benign parent, gentle and tender, and other times as fearsome and punitive. In either case, Asklepios is hierarchically superior, a mighty divinity, and the human supplicants his subordinates.

[257] Angelos Chaniotis, "Constructing the Fear of Gods: Epigraphic Evidence from Sanctuaries of Greece and Asia Minor," in *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World*, ed. Angelos Chaniotis, vol. 1 of *Alte Geschichte* Band 52 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012).

[258] Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui, "'Trust the God': Tharsein in Ancient Greek Religion," *HSPh* 108 (2016): 1–52. The scholarly emphasis on epiphany, in particular, is greatly detrimental to our study of encounters between humans and gods in the ancient world. The concept of epiphany and the overstatement of its importance will be challenged at length later on in this chapter.

[259] On the concept of "ritualism," see Parker, *On Greek Religion*, 30–32. On this history of this phrase, see Smith, *To Take Place*, 96–103. For J.Z. Smith, the Protestant background of the modern university led to "the study of religion as, essentially, a protestant exercise" (98).

But these studies disproportionately emphasize a small subset of religious emotion—fear, awe, faith, and trust—that necessarily formulate the human-divine relationship vertically. In all of the above examples, the gods are constructed as transcendent and immaterial, and humans their unqualified inferiors.[260] Of course in certain contexts Greek gods were conceived as transcendent, particularly through their characterization as omniscient and omnipotent.[261] They could and did help and harm people, which was the reason for offering worship to the gods in the first place; it allowed humans to protect themselves and also pursue the possibility of having their prayers granted.[262] But an unqualified presentation of Greek religious emotion as one-way, a type of *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, overlooks the reciprocal nature of the human-divine affective bond. Gods relied on human worshippers for recognition just as much as humans relied on them. It also does not explain Antiope's anger in the vase painting discussed earlier. Based on this model, viewers should expect Antiope to express fear or awe. Antiope's anger instead places her in a privileged position in relation to Apollo. A purely vertical formulation of the human-divine relationship does not do credit to the affective bond, characterized by reciprocity and closeness rather than solely fear and awe.

---

[260] See Pleket's study of epigraphy in which worshippers presented themselves as the gods' slaves, H.W. Pleket, "Religious History as the History of Mentality: The 'believer' as Servant of the Deity in the Greek World," in *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 152–92.

[261] It was accepted that the gods as a collective were "the uncontrollable and inevitable element shaping and constraining human life and human lives" (Parker, *On Greek Religion*, 67). Xenophon's Clearchus says, "For all things everywhere are subject to the gods and they control all things equally" (Xen. *An.* 2.5.7).

[262] Jim, *Sharing with the Gods*.

In modern religions, this horizontal relationship can be seen in instances of lived religion. For example, a prayer addressed to the Virgin Mary from a church in France uses the imperative in a prayer: "Guérissez ma chèvre. C'est mon seul moyen de vivre" (Cure my goat. It is my only means of living).[263] Students in Istanbul are similarly informal when petitioning God for aid in passing their annual exams, saying "It is all the same to you, God, isn't it?"[264] Evidently, people do not only and always approach divinity as awed and fearful devotees.[265] Years of knowing and relating to divinity outside of scripture, doctrine, and official worship results in the kind of intimacy we see when worshippers abuse the images of saints who did not comply with their wishes. Thus, we see a sign outside a modern German house that reads, "This house was in the hands of God and it burned down three times; for the fourth time it has been rebuilt and is now entrusted to St. Florian."[266]

This type of horizontal approach to the divine is also quite common in ancient Greek religion, and readily apparent in lived religious encounters.[267] Reciprocity and mutual care was a defining feature of Greek religion and dictated the majority of religious practices. Individuals came to know the gods through these religious practices, which shaped the way

---

[263] Serge Bonnet, *Prières secrètes des Français d'aujourd'hui: Épiphanie* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976). This particular prayer calls to mind several ancient Greek examples wherein people prayed for the health of their livestock, Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 8.

[264] Geoffrey Lewis, "The Saint and the Major-General," *AS* 22 (1972): 249–53. See analysis of this in Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 34.

[265] Jennifer Scheper Hughes, "Cradling the Sacred: Image, Ritual, and Affect in Mexican and Mesoamerican Material Religion," *History of Religions* 56.1 (2016): 77.

[266] Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 38.

[267] To paraphrase Versnel, one must look to prayers and informal religious encounters more so than sacred texts and religious sermons in order to learn how religion is actually experienced (Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 1).

they approached and related to the gods. The problem for ancient historians is of course that most of the extant material speaks to extraordinary circumstances. The miracle inscriptions and confession steles are not representative of daily experience. But if in the vertical formulation, divinity is immaterial and transcendent, then for the horizontal dimension we must instead look at instances where divinity is material and immanent. An analysis of the horizontal relationship will complete the picture of how human and divine beings interacted and experienced each other in ancient Greece. This is what the next section will explore.

3.1 Sacred Images and horizontality in comparative perspective

When we think about how the ancient Greeks knew their gods, several possible answers come to mind. The first and most obvious is myths, stories, and other narratives that revealed the identity and personality of each deity. Stories of the gods were shared orally and visually, and played an important part in socializing children into Greek religion and culture. The second could be through communal rituals wherein a deity was enlisted to protect and oversee an entire *polis* community. The patronage of a deity was an essential part of a *polis*'s social identity. But both of these methods entail a one-way flow of information from top to bottom. Humans learned about the gods but there was no way for the gods to learn about their individual worshippers. Having knowledge *of* the gods is not quite the same as knowing the gods personally.

This brings us to the sacred image: the Greek gods were nowhere more immanent and material than through their sacred images. As indexes of divine presence, images are integral to knowing and being known by the gods. They are so in two ways: visually and tactilely. "Vision affords acquaintance without complete encounter, while tactility provides for an

encounter without acquaintance."[268] Both methods are necessary and complementary. Visual interactions confirm at the intellectual level that the deity is an intentional viewing and thinking subject. Exchanging glances with a sacred image makes individuals aware of themselves as the object of the image's gaze. That is to say, they see themselves through the eyes of the image. In this way, the subjectivity of the sacred image is recognized. But touching is equally important. The image's tactility confirms its subjectivity at a sensory and intimate level.[269]

It is for this reason that touch is such an integral part of several religions, ancient and modern. In March 2020, amid rising cases of the novel coronavirus, hundreds of people lined up at the Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg to kiss a visiting shrine.[270] In Madrid, where authorities asked worshippers to refrain from kissing the hands and feet of statues of Mary and Jesus, people chose to skip church altogether, even on Easter, because the main allure was gone.[271] St. Peter's statue in his Basilica in Rome has been worn away almost

---

[268] H. Kreitler and S. Kreitler, *The Pyschology of the Arts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 206. See discussion of this in Polly Weddle, "Touching the Gods: Physical Interaction with Cult Statues in the Roman World" (Doctoral Dissertation, Durham University, 2010).

[269] Gell, *Art and Agency*, 134. For Gell, these two methods work together to animate an idol. I argue that the sacred image's religious power in ancient Greece, particularly with reference to images that were not ritually animated or installed (i.e., the majority of images), depended only on the mindset of the viewer. However, I think that the two methods Gell identifies are the two ways of relating to and knowing/being-known by the god through the sacred image.

[270] Isabelle Khurshudyan, "Russia's Coronavirus Cases Rising, but the Orthodox Church Holds to Traditions Such as Kissing Icons," *Washington Post*, n.d., https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-coronavirus-orthodox-church/2020/03/26/5a6635a6-6ab2-11ea-b199-3a9799c54512_story.html.

[271] "Another Victim of Coronavirus: Spain's Religious Statue-Kissing," *Reuters*, 6 March 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-spain-easter-idUSKBN20T2JC.

completely in parts from pilgrims touching it.[272] In the previous chapter, only the visual aspect was addressed, through which I concluded that the image was a dynamic, active agent rather than an inert object. This section will explore physical interactions with sacred images and show that the image's tactility and manipulability reaffirmed its role as an affective social actor. To that end, I will first employ a comparative approach and examine living traditions that, like Greek religion, make liberal use of sacred images in daily worship practices. The resultant model of sacred images will then provide a framework within which the ancient Mediterranean evidence can be situated and analyzed.

a. Hindu *pūjā*

Let us first look at Hindu physical interactions with sacred images. These interactions most commonly fall under the category of *pūjā*, the daily, domestic rites of worship performed by members of the household. There are many kinds of *pūjā*, each depending on the sect, community, and needs of the worshipper, but the domestic form of *pūjā* is as follows: *Pūjā* begins in the morning when the gods are roused from their sleep. During the day, usually once in the morning and once in the evening, members of the household will offer prayers, fruits, and flowers to the deities. They are fed the three main meals of the day—breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Lamps are lit in the morning and evening so that they do not have to reside in the dark, and in the evening, the gods are put to sleep once more. Some families will even close the door to their domestic altar room for an hour in the afternoon so

[272] Weddle, "Touching the Gods."

that the gods can nap in peace. The images are also bathed and dressed on a regular basis.[273] *Pūjā* can be understood as a way for the family to care for their household gods.

These daily interactions of *pūjā* are not merely symbolic actions; the actions involve elaborate flows of meaning between human and divine beings. In its various forms, *pūjā* is meant to bring about an enhanced level of intimacy between the worshipper and deity.[274] While *pūjā* is no doubt used to honor the deities are revered guests, it also establishes them as members of the household. The types of activities performed—cooking, serving, washing, dressing, entertaining, waking, and putting to sleep— are common, family activities, and powerful in their domesticity and simplicity. "They are precisely the acts which ordinary people have most carefully refined through daily practice with loved ones in the home."[275] The sacred images are therefore not just revered but adored; indeed, images of baby Krishna in particular are cradled and rocked and cared for.[276] The affection with which householders approach the gods in their home shapes the way they relate to divinity.[277]

---

[273] Puja Sahney, "Mandir and Visa Status: Purity, Auspiciousness, and Hindu Homes in the USA," *MR* 12.3 (2016): 322–45.

[274] Paul Courtright, "On This Holy Day in My Humble Way: Aspects of Pūjā," in *Gods of Flesh, Gods of Stone: The Embodiment of Divinity in India*, ed. Joanne Waghorne and Norman Cutler (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 34–38.

[275] Eck, *Darśan*, 47.

[276] Tracy Pintchman, "Courting Krishna on the Banks of the Ganges: Gender and Power in a HIndu Women's Ritual Tradition," *CSSAAME* 24.1 (2004): 26; Hughes, "Cradling the Sacred," 58.

[277] *Nota bene:* By "family gods", I do not mean the official familial gods or gods of the family, the *kuladevata*. This is a category of divinity in many cultures (ancient and modern) and refers to the gods that are uniquely worshipped by and offer protection to a particular family. In this situation, I merely refer to the fact that the gods, through their domestic situation, become a part of the home and the family.

b. Niños and San Tadeo in Mexical Catholicism

The second comparative example is the Catholic practice of cradling sacred images in Mexico and Central America, and in immigrant families from this background in the US. Cradling small, three-dimensional images has become one of the primary ways of interacting with the infant Jesus as well as a range of adult saints, including Saint Jude (Tadeo).[278] Most Catholic families in Mexico have a Niño, an image of baby Jesus. Each night, the Niño is changed into pajamas and rocked to sleep. Each morning, the Niño is woken and returned to the altar, and the TV is turned on as entertainment. On Christmas eve, families take their Niños to church and rock them to sleep while the priest sings lullabies specifically for the baby Jesus images. Not just women, but men and children, participate in this type of care for the Niño, which is understood to be almighty even while it is treated as an infant in the care of the family.

Even images of adult saints are cared for in this way. Images of Saint Jude are cradled in the crook of the arms and swaddled in baby blankets. Devotees will frequently carry their sacred images around with them, kissing the objects absent-mindedly. The images often show signs of wear and tear due to their handling by children, who become quite possessive of them as they might with a toy doll. Teens and older children will sometimes treat their images with casual disregard. One girl was observed putting out her cigarette casually on the head of her St. Tadeo. Despite the seeming roughness of these encounters, subtending them is a perceptible feeling of tenderness towards the sacred. More than pity, compassion,

[278] Hughes, "Cradling the Sacred," 55.

sorrow, penitence, and remorse, the emotions characterizing the posture of worshippers to the Niño are affection, warmth, tenderness, gentle care, and concern.[279]

c. Analysis

Evidently, sacred images encourage tactile interactions that, 1) materialize gods as fellow social actors and, 2) enable a horizontal relationship between humans and gods. Let us take them one at a time. The boundary between materiality and beings in iconistic traditions is permeable and shifting.[280] Through the sacred image, the transcendent, immaterial deity condenses into a "particular, immediate, and accessible form, sharing a time and a place with the devotee."[281] According to these ontological systems, both humans and gods are thing-beings, or beings bounded by flesh or some other material, who occupy the same plane. This allows them to relate to each other. Thus, when a woman dressing Krishna's sacred image in a temple pricks him with a pin, she is immediately dismissed for not relating to him as a fellow thing-being, capable of being hurt; in short, she ignores his personhood.[282] As fellow

[279] Hughes, "Cradling the Sacred," 65.

[280] Hughes cites Ann Taves' designation of certain thing-beings (including special objects, natural plants and sites, and animals) as "special". As thing-beings, humans consider themselves as participants in this panentheon of "special" beings. See Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2009).

[281] Courtright, "On This Holy Day," 38.

[282] Jayananda, who teaches a class on ornamenting deities, says, "So when we stress that you shouldn't put pins into Krishna we mean it. I fail anybody who does it automatically, no matter how well they dressed the deity. Because that means that they have not understood that Krishna is a person" (Urmila Mohan, "Dressing God: Clothing as Material of Religious Subjectivity in a Hindu Group," in *The Social Life of Materials: Studies in Materials and Society*, ed. Adam Drazin and Susanne Küchler [London: Bloomsbury Press, 2015], 144).

thing-beings through their sacred images, gods become social actors capable of relating to humans through human forms of communication.

This, in turn, creates the potential for horizontality in the human-divine relationship. Bounded by the form of the material image, divine beings, who are theologically construed as transcendent and omnipotent, are revealed as helpless, needing human assistance as much as humans need divine aid.[283] Don Carlos, a subject in Hughes' study of sacred images in Mesoamerican Catholicism, describes sacred images as *pequeños y impotentes*, small, powerless, and in need of care.[284] In this form, divinity is dependent on (and also subject to) the care of human beings. Thus, humans have the opportunity to switch roles with divine beings and act as caregivers. For Don Carlos, the notion that he, having lost his own son, might be a tender father to God is more moving than the notion of God as father. In blurring spatial, temporal, and hierarchical boundaries between humans and gods, the sacred image empowers the human worshipper and privileges his position in relation to the divine.

The sacred image, then, acts as an affective archive. By this I mean that the object is culturally constructed in such a way as to move people into certain affective (behavioral and emotional) responses. The actions elicited by the object, such as touching or carrying, express and reiterate intimacy with and affection for the sacred.[285] Each affective interaction builds on previous ones, until it becomes a repository of affect.[286] This personal, familiar

---

[283] Versnel, *Coping with the Gods*, 347.

[284] Hughes, "Cradling the Sacred," 63–65.

[285] Hughes, "Cradling the Sacred," 59; Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Series Q (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 7.

[286] According to research by Renfrew and Mithen, objects are able to act as external symbolic storage for religious ideas. This does not mean that certain ideas are coded in to the object by the craftsman and then simply read by viewers. Rather, it means that several

relationship becomes integral to an individual's way of knowing the god. Thus, when a Hindu Ganesha pendant went missing and was later found, several people unrelated to the family chided the deity like a naughty child that had wandered off, causing consternation in the household. Others joked that Ganesha, who was supposed to remove obstacles, was instead causing problems.[287] Even though the small Ganesha pendant was not *their* pendant, with which they had had previous interactions, their treatment of the recovered deity still exudes the casual familiarity that is inseparable from their conception of Ganesha. Thus, the physical, material closeness demanded by the sacred image becomes an affective, immaterial intimacy with the deity.

3.2 Affective interactions with sacred images in Greek religion

The type of anthropological fieldwork with living agents employed in the above examples is not possible for ancient Greece; and yet, what evidence there is indicates that sacred images, through their tactility and manipulability, required actions of care in domestic and public religious settings from worshippers. Because it has hitherto been presumed that sacred images were not important to Greek religion, or perhaps because the relationship of the material image to the deity has remained opaque, these types of practices have thus far escaped scrutiny. It has become something of a truism that ancient Greeks touched, kissed, bathed, fed, and adored their sacred images, but how this happened, who undertook these actions, and their significance for our grasp of religious experience has largely been

---

cultural and religious ideas are coalesced into the object through its form and purpose. People who encounter that object, depending on their religious and cultural integration, understood its purpose and how to interact with it, and in doing so reiterate its religious valence. In this case, it is not just religious ideas but emotions and relationships that are being coded into the object. See Renfrew, "Mind and Matter"; Mithen, "The Supernatural Beings."

[287] Jayasinhji Jhala, "Journey with Ganesh," *South Asian Popular Culture* 4.1 (2006): 43.

overlooked. We must now turn to these valuable pieces of evidence in order to glean a fuller picture of the ways in which the gods were known and experienced by the ancient Greeks through their sacred images.

In this section, I will use a wide variety sources, textual and material. The dating of these sources ranges from the archaic period to the Roman period, even as late as the second or third centuries CE. They also span a wide geographical region, from Asia Minor to the western Roman empire. I cite examples from epics, poems, and plays alongside epigraphical evidence for decrees and temple regulations and inventories to show that these types of practices were not just authorial fabrications but rather entrenched in Greek religious expectations. Vase paintings that portray religious activity can also be enormously useful.[288] While it might be irresponsible to generalize about Greek religious practices from vase paintings, the artwork can bolster the information provided in other sources while adding a visual component to our analysis. The broad scope of the evidence demonstrates that while much of religious practice was unique to particular *poleis* and time periods, nevertheless there was a lot of continuity across time and space in how people approached the gods.

These paintings are not documentary photographs of religious practice. Vase painters (usually from the lower classes, even slaves) had quite a bit of latitude in crafting scenes when they were not directly commissioned. Therefore, what we see is what they imagined their world to be and in the way they wished to present it to themselves. And yet, they had to bear in mind the tastes and preference of their paying customers, which meant that their

[288] This is in contrast to vases that display mythological content. Even the example vase painting of Antiope and Apollo used at the beginning of the chapter, despite not corresponding exactly with any other textual or material version of the myth, nevertheless deals with mythological content. It is not always possible to deduce anything about lived religious practice from the behaviors shown in these contexts.

creations had to be at least somewhat verisimilar.[289] Recently, it has been argued that gestures on vase paintings function as verbs, expressing emotions. Gestures, even conventional ones, indicate action (e.g., raised arms as an attitude of prayer), but also evince the emotions associated with performing that action (in the case of praying, devotion or piety).[290] Studying vase paintings in great numbers, scholars have been able to identify certain expressive gestures with a range of emotions.[291] The vase paintings can then attest not just the range of actions but also, by displaying emotions, the affectivity between humans and sacred images.

a. Feeding and eating

Most studies on food in religion center around animal sacrifice at communal festivals, but there were many ways for individuals and individual families to share food with the gods. On a daily basis, individuals were accustomed to offering to the gods fruits and grain cakes, things that each family would have eaten themselves and so would have had on hand. This was often done by placing the edible items directly in the hands or on the knees of a sacred image (or, in the case of *hermai,* on top of the pile of stones).[292] Many temples also featured

[289] McNiven, "Things to Which We Give Service: Interactions with Sacred Images on Athenian Pottery," 302–3.

[290] Timothy McNiven, "Emotional Adverbs" (Professor McNiven was kind enough to share this as yet unpublished work with me).

[291] Many studies have attempted to define gestures based on only a small selection of paintings (see Neumann, *Gesten und Gebärden in der griechischen Kunst*). This is problematic because gestures can change in meaning and function across time and place. Only by looking at a wide variety of vases from different times and places is it possible to identify what aspect of a given gesture's meaning stays constant.

[292] See for example Ar. *Av.* 518, *Eccl*. 777. The *LSCG* (Paris 1962), 76-78, and 129 also mention τὰ ἐς χεῖρας and τὰ ἐς γούνατα in the context of food offerings.

a long table on which food items, sometimes called *trapezomata*, could be placed.[293] Remains of tables or *trapeza* have been found in front of Athena Hygeia's statue base in her temple on the Akropolis and in the *cella* of Apollo Zoster before his statue base.[294] Offering tables have also been described by Pausanias, Athenaeus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, according to whom the tables were piled high with simple offerings like cheese, barley cakes, vegetables, and fruits.[295] The divots in these tables also suggests that libations were poured out directly onto them.[296] Despite the attention given to sacrifice, it is evident that offering food through deposition was just as important, more frequent, and a more direct method of feeding the gods.

Aside from these types of small-scale offerings, ancient Greeks would also share their meals with gods. Individuals who, having conducted small-scale sacrifices at indoor altars, ate the sacrificial meat in the sanctuary dining room also placed a portion on the *trapeza* so

---

[293] *Trapeza* are often shown in vase paintings and votive reliefs. A *stamnos* by the Villa Giulia painter (Villa Giulia 983, c.480 BCE in Rome) portrays a table on which loaves of bread are piled high.

[294] A 1st century CE inscription from Smyrna attests to the table placed before the statue of Helios Apollo Cisauloddonos. Building accounts for the Athenian Hephaistaion provide for an offering table (*IG* I^2 371). Several other temple inventories record tables alongside the sacred images. For a comprehensive list, see Gill, "Trapezomata."

[295] Athenaeus says that Athenians set out barley cakes, olives, cheese, and leeks on a table for the Dioskouri in the Prytaneion (Ath. 4.137e). Pausanias describes the food table placed before the statue of Herakles at the temple of Demeter and Kore in Megalopolis (8.31.3-4). Dionysius of Halicarnassus admires the Romans for offering simple foods and wine in earthen jugs, and criticizes the tendency of others toward vulgar display (Dion. Hal. 2.23.5).

[296] A table from Troizen had vases attached to the top for libations (*IG*, IV, 773).

that the god could feast with them.[297] When a member of the religious association of Herakles and Diomedon at Kos was married, the best selections of meat were placed on Herakles' *trapeza* so that the god could feast with the other wedding-goers as a guest.[298] This practice was probably mirroring domestic food practices, where people left foods for the gods on the household shrine, and sometimes even set places for the gods at table to ensure they received a fair portion of food and drink.[299] There is precedent for this in the *Odyssey* when Eumaios, after slaughtering a pig and burning some meat wrapped in fat on the hearth for the gods, divides the rest into seven portions, one of which he places on a table for the Nymphs and Hermes.[300] That Eumaios is praised for giving the gods their own portion of meat, aside from the burned offerings, indicates that this was accepted practice.

This practice of eating alongside the gods is depicted in vase paintings as well. A *stamnos* attributed to the Dinos painter depicts a mask of Dionysus mounted on a column, in front of which is a table supporting two *stamnoi* and a cup (fig. 2.2).[301] This is not just a libation scene because while the women hold *skyphoi*, on the table is a *kantharos* (cup) for Dionysus. The women are not just pouring wine out for the god, they expect him to enjoy his own cup of the wine alongside themselves. This is even more explicit in a red-figure *stamnos*

---

[297] Corbett, "Greek Temples and Greek Worshippers: The Literary and Archaeological Evidence," 150.

[298] *SIG*^{3}, 1106, Column C, 95-101.

[299] Plutarch, frag. 95

[300] It is likely that this table was placed in front of the household shrine (Hom. *Od.* 14.418-38). Gill further points to the origin for the story of Prometheus at Mekoné, in which someone was disturbed that the gods were receiving such small portions of food. Placing an extra seat at the table solves this issue. See Gill, "Trapezomata," 136–37.

[301] Naples, Museo Archaeological Nazionale 2419, dating to ca. 430-400 BCE.

attributed to the Eupolis painter, where a draped, masked pillar of Dionysus stands facing left between two *maenads*, one of whom bows and offers him a kantharos filled with wine (fig. 2.3).[302] Again, they are not merely pouring out a libation but actually giving the god his own share of the drink.

Many explanations have been offered for why the Greeks felt the need to share their food with the gods. In the first place, bringing household edibles to sacred images in temples was an act of care. Individuals felt that they were able to nurture the gods. Where a place is set at the table for the god, it seems more likely that individuals thought they were sharing a meal with the gods. Plutarch even suggests that by giving the gods a portion of one's own meal and placing it on the specified table, the whole meal becomes sanctified.[303] Individuals who were allowed to eat food from the *trapeza* must have certainly felt that they were eating sanctified food shared by the god.[304] In all of these case, simple acts of feeding and eating alongside the gods through their sacred images reaffirmed the deity as a friend, even a member of one's family, engendered feelings of warmth and nurture, and shaped their knowledge of the god.

Fig. 2.2: Attic terracotta red-figure *stamnos*, attributed to the Dinos Painter, ca. 430-400 BCE. Provenance: Italy, Nocera dei Pagani. Museum/inventory number: Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 2419. Bibliography: *ARV*2, 1152, 2. Description: A mask of Dionysus is mounted on a column (center). A table stands in front of the god, supporting two *stamnoi* and a *kantharos*. Maenads with *thyrsoi* stand on either side.

[302] Paris, Louvre G407.

[303] Plutarch, Frag.95

[304] The poor were sometimes given the smaller edible items, like grain cakes, from the *trapeza*. At Sounion and Delphi, it seems that even ordinary worshippers were rewarded with food from the *trapeza* for special acts of piety (e.g., bringing the biggest onion for Leto). See Gill, "Trapezomata."

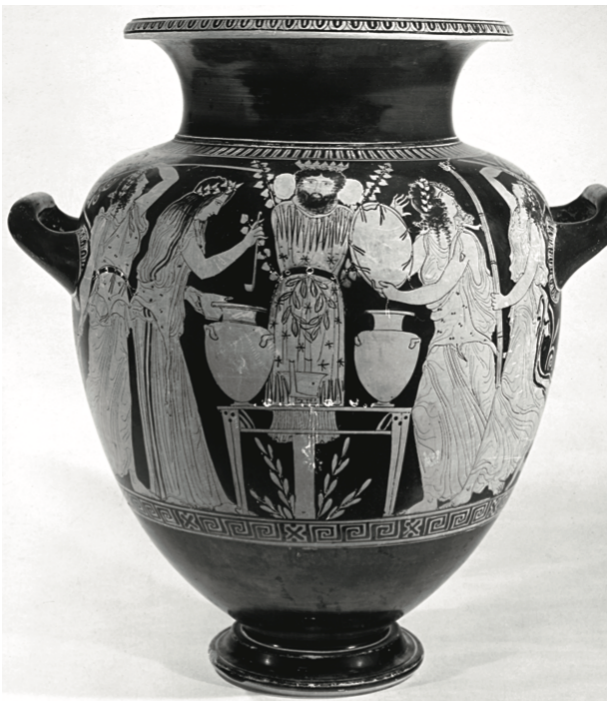


Fig. 2.3: Attic terracotta red-figure *stamnos*, attributed to the Eupolis Painter, ca. 450-440 BCE. Dimensions: H. 39cm, W. 40.4cm, Diam. 32.2cm. Provenance: Vulci. Museum/inventory number: Paris, Louvre G407. Bibliography: *ARV*2, 1073.10. Description: A draped mask of Dionysus stands in the center facing left with a *maenad* on either side. The *maenad* on the left bows and offers the god a *kantharos* filled with wine.

b. Clothing

People were also able to care for the gods by dressing them. It is probable that most sacred images of gods and goddesses were dressed in a variety of clothing. Even the archaic *xoana* of Athena Polias, Samian Hera, Leto on Delos, Ephesian Artemis, and many more wore several garments, sometimes layered one on top of the other.[305] Archaeologists have tentatively identified clothes racks in some temples, which is further evidence that many gods had a full wardrobe stored in their temples.[306] The deities often had official wardrobe mistresses who changed their clothes when necessary and appropriate. For example, on the twelfth day of the Artemision at Magnesia, the *xoana* of the Twelve Gods were dressed in their finest clothing and processed into the *agora*.[307] The commission for these clothes went to specific *poleis* or groups of women. For example, sixteen women wove a garment each year for Hera at Olympia in a special room; the *ergastinai* and *arrephoroi* of Athens were responsible for weaving the goddess' *peplos* every four years; and the Athenians were

[305] Irene Bald Romano, "Early Greek Cult Images" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1980), 411–18.

[306] Even in Hom. *Il.* 5.87, 6.301, Hecuba propitiates Athena with her finest robe, but no mention is made of the goddess wearing it. Romano believes that individual dedications of clothing were not put on the sacred image. Other studies show that, besides the dedication of used children's clothing to Artemis at Brauron, many of the nicer clothes dedicated by elite individuals or groups were worn at some point by the deity. See Cecilie Brøns, *Gods and Garments: Textiles in Greek Sanctuaries in the 7th-1st Centuries Bc*, Ancient Textiles Series 28 (Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2017).

[307] Weddle, "Touching the Gods," 49. Propertius 4.2 tells us that Vertumnus in Rome had several clothes (silk tunics, turbans, togas, peddlers' tunics) and accessories (scythe, weapons, lyre, fishing rod, nets), and was dressed according to the time of year. Pliny, too, mentions that Herakles was dressed in triumphal clothing on important occasions (Pliny, *NH*, 34.33). See also Philip Kiernan, *Roman Cult Images: The Lives and Worship of Idols, from the Iron Age to Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), chapter 5.

ordered to make a bountiful *kosmos* (wardrobe) for Dione at Dodona.[308] Each city could therefore feel a connection with the image of the deity wearing the fruit of their labor.

More commonly, individuals could participate in the dressing of sacred images through smaller offerings. There are many casual mentions of dressing sacred images with flowers, ribbons, pins, and other small gifts left on or near the sacred images by individual worshippers. These offerings were very similar to the edible items discussed in the section above. Pausanias tells us that at times it was impossible to see some sacred images because of the sheer number of garlands or ribbons placed on it.[309] Pausanias also notes that the image of Hygeia at Titane was barely visible because it was completely surrounded by locks of hair. These locks were cut off by individual women and placed on the head of the goddess, probably in order to supplicate or thank the goddess for her aid.[310] A cup in Copenhagen attributed to the Sokimasia Painter, and a column-krater by the Pig Painter, show youths placing wreaths on the heads of herms to adorn the gods.[311] It has been suggested by some scholars that clothing the deity imposed distance between humans and gods, both for the safety of humans and also to convey the inaccessibility of the divine.[312] Because of the

---

[308] Cecilie Brøns, "Iconographic Evidence for the Dressing of Cult Statues," in *Gods and Garments*, 1st ed. (Oxbow Books, 2017), 183–238; Romano, "Early Greek Cult Images," 411–20; Weddle, "Touching the Gods."

[309] Garlands: Paus. 3.26.1-2; ribbons: Paus. 8.31.8.

[310] Paus. 2.11.6.

[311] Copenhagen, National Museum 6327; New York market, Borowski. See McNiven, "Things to Which We Give Service: Interactions with Sacred Images on Athenian Pottery," 317.

[312] See Cecilie Brøns, "Discussion:: Dressing of Cult Statues," in *Gods and Garments*, 1st ed. (Oxbow Books, 2017), 251–66.

parallelism with offering meals to the images of the gods, it seems more likely that the sacred image allowed worshippers to dote on and care for the deity as they would other humans, and clothing provided a tangible connection between worshipper and god.

c. Touching, kissing, and other forms of caring

Evidence for touching sacred images is the most copious. Ancient Greeks (and Romans, for that matter) frequently touched and kissed the face, ears, hands, and knees of statue in gestures of worship. Lucretius tells us that roadside images were worn down by the hands and kisses of the travelers.[313] The image of Herakles at Agrigentum was so well-loved, says Cicero, that its mouth and chin were worn away from men and women kissing it.[314] Servius informs us that people touched the foreheads of sacred images in order to access the divinity's mind.[315] Some temples in the western Roman empire even had steps in front of the statue bases so that individuals could reach the statue to touch and anoint the image while worshipping.[316] There were, of course, certain images that had regulations restricting who could approach the image and touch it.[317]In explicitly recording instances where access to the

[313] Lucr. *Rer. Nat.* 1.316-318: *tum portas propter aena signa manus dextras ostendunt adtenuari saepe salutantum tactu praeterque meauntum*.

[314] Cic. *Verr*. 2.4.94: *...usque eo, iudices, ut rictum eius ac mentum paulo sit attritius, quod in precibus et gratulationibus non solum id venerariverum etiam osculari solent*. For kissing statues, see also Heliod. *Aeth*. 7.8.7; Theophr. *Char*. 1.7, 2.2.7

[315] Serv. *Aen*. 3.60

[316] Kiernan, *Roman Cult Images*, 203. Steps have been found in several temples in the western Roman empire, particularly at Saint-Aubin-sur-Gaillon and in the northern cella at Puy Lautard.

[317] For restrictions, see Corbett, "Greek Temples and Greek Worshippers: The Literary and Archaeological Evidence," 150–52.

sacred image was barred, however, Pausanias and other sources imply that it was quite acceptable in most temples to enter and engage with the image.[318]

Touching and kissing are also presented in interactions between humans and gods on vase paintings. A black-figure *skyphos* attributed to the Theseus painter shows a potter's workshop in which a man grasps the beard of a herm in supplication.[319] On a cup in Würzburg, dating to the early sixth century BCE and attributed to the Epeleios painter, an athlete grasps the beard of the herm with one hand and places the other on the herm's head.[320] In a *pelike* from Berlin attributed to the Perseus painter, a priest's assistant walking past a herm partially turns back to pinch the tip of the god's penis (fig. 2.4).[321] On another vase, we see an Athenian man praying before a statue with his right arm raised, hand half-open, and index finger extended upward (fig. 2.5).[322] The hand gesture conveys that the worshipper is throwing a kiss to the deity.[323] The kissing gesture is repeated one of the Foundry Painter's image in which a man in a sculptor's workshop faces Athena's image and

---

[318] Pausanias specifically notes of the temple of Aphrodite at Sikyon that one could only pray to the goddess from the door, implying that this was not the case elsewhere (2.10.4). In Herodas' Fourth Mime, a crowd of people has already assembled by the time the temple building is opened in the morning so that people can enter (Herod. 4.54).

[319] Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Art Museums, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of David M. Robinson, 1960.321.

[320] Würzburg, Martin von Wagner Museum 475. The Curtius painter also illustrates a woman leaning across an altar to place one hand on each shoulder of a herm (Berlin, *Antikensammlung* F 2525).

[321] Berlin, *Antikensammlung* 2172.

[322] New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 08.258.25.

[323] This gesture was used in the Near East for many years before its appearance in Greece. In both contexts, it refers to a kiss. See McNiven, "Things to Which We Give Service: Interactions with Sacred Images on Athenian Pottery," 303–5.

extends his index finger to her, and on a black-figure *hydria* by the Priam painter in which an old man throws a kiss to a statue of Athena during the fall of Troy.[324]

Fig. 2.4: Attic terracotta red-figure *pelike*, attributed to the Perseus Painter, early classical (ca.480-460 BCE). Dimensions: H. 20cm. Findspot: Etruria; Museum/inventory number: Berlin, *Antikensammlung* F 2172. Bibliography: *ARV*2, 581-4. Description: A youth holding a sacrificial basket passes the herm, turning back to touch its phallus.

[324] Munich 2650; Rome, Vatican Museums, Astarita 733.

Fig. 2.5: Attic terracotta red-figure *oinochoe*, attributed to the Group of Berlin 2415, Classical (c.470-460 BCE). Dimensions: H. 20.3cm, Diam. 13.8 cm. Findspot: Sicily. Museum/inventory number: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 08.258.25. Bibliography: Richter, Gisela M. A. "The Department of Classical Art: The Accessions of 1908. IV. Vases" (*BMMA* 4(6), 1909), 103, 105, fig. 7. Description: Man (left) stands on the ground gazing up at a statue of Athena on a pillar (right) and raises his right arm with his index finger curled in a kiss.

Worshippers also often whispered their prayers into the image's ears. Seneca criticizes this practice, remarking that the gods can hear the worshippers regardless of proximity.[325] But whispering into the god's ear was not merely an issue of being heard, for worshippers expected to be heard even when whispering far away.[326] Nor was whispering undertaken only in instances of magic or cursing.[327] Worshippers whispered wishes which

[325] Sen. *Epist*. 41.1: *Nonsunt ad caelum elevandae manus nec exorandus aedituus ut nos ad aurem simulacra quasi magis exaudiri possimus, admittat: prope est a te deus, tecum est, intus est*.

[326] Cic. *Div*. 1.129: *Ex quo fit ut homines etiam cum tacite potent quid aut voveant, non dubitent quindi illud exaudiant*.

[327] Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 26–33.

they did not want overheard, usually in matters of love or shame.[328] It is for this reason that "whisperer" gods were so popular. Many cities boasted a Hermes Psithuros, Aphrodite Psithuros, or Heros Psithuros. People would even approach priests of other temples to ask if they could whisper into the god's ears.[329] From this, we can conclude that worshippers confided in the gods what they could not and would not reveal to anyone else; there is a strong sense of intimacy that arises from this practice.

Besides these practices, worshippers anointed, pampered, and physically petitioned statues. At the official level, statues were bathed and anointed with oil or water, processed through the city, and sometimes even taken to the theater to watch performances and shows.[330] Anointing statues with oil or water could sometimes be undertaken by individuals.[331] The Ephesian Artemis was anointed so much that the surface of the statue was blackened.[332] Where the statue was out of reach or touching was prohibited, worshippers

---

[328] For example, Ps. Tib. 4.5.17: *...optat idem iuvenis quod nos, sed tectius optat: nam pudet haec illum dicere verba palam*; 4.6.15: *Praecipit en natae mater studiosa, quod optet. Illa aliud tacita clam sibi mente rogat.* Aristaenetus 16 also tells us of a bashful lover who prays silently.

[329] Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 26–35; Weddle, "Touching the Gods," 75–89; Kiernan, *Roman Cult Images*, chapter 5.

[330] Bathing was restricted to a very small group of cult officials because they would see the god or goddess naked. Only brides and mothers could bathe Venus at Rome (Ov. *Fast.* 4.133); Athena Polias was bathed only by girls appointed to be *praxiergidai* and *loutrides*; she was washed and dressed on the north side of the Erechtheion to shield her from others' gazes (*IG* I3 7). It was a bad omen for any others to see the goddess undressed (Xen. *Hell*. 1.4.14).

[331] Women and girls were allowed to anoint Segestan Diana with perfume (Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.77).

[332] Paus. 4.31.8; Pliny *NH* 17.213-4; Philostr. *Her*. 9.6; Jaś Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100-450* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 204.

mimed the action of anointing. Women also pretended to dress the hair of Juno and Minerva and held up mirrors for the goddess to view her hairdo.[333] Some informed the gods of the time of day, others performed plays, songs or shows for the images.[334] People attached petitions or messages of thanksgiving after a prayer was fulfilled to the sacred image itself, and one man even gilded his statue in gold after a miraculous recovery from a fever.[335]

These types of religious practices, which were common, widespread, and objects of Christian ridicule, are not symbolic.[336] These actions, while common, frequent, and perhaps even routine, were nevertheless emotionally charged. It was not merely about providing the gods with things they need, but rather a means by which worshippers could communicate their feelings to the gods through human language, gestures, and actions.[337] Acts of caring, like touching or kissing the gods, or "combing" their hair and anointing them with perfume, were expressions of warmth, nurture, and affection. Similarly, small or personal items, like cakes, fruits, pins, brooches, ribbons, or garlands, can be understood as extensions of the self.

---

[333] Weddle, "Touching the Gods," 56; Kiernan, *Roman Cult Images*, 201.

[334] Seneca in August. *De Civ. D*. 6.10; see Kiernan, *Roman Cult Images*, 200–202.

[335] Attaching petitions and thanksgivings: Henk S. Versnel, "Writing Mortals and Reading Gods: Appeal to the Gods as a Dual Strategy in Social Control," in *Demokratie, Recht und soziale Kontrolle im klassischen Athen*, ed. David Cohen and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002), 37–76; Weddle, "Touching the Gods," 75–89. See also Juv. 10.56; Philostr. *Her.* 3.2; on sacred stones/trees, see Philostr. *Im.* 2.33, Silius Ital. 6.691; Ov. *Met*. 8.755; Arn., *Adv. Nat*. 5.16-17. For gilding of the statue: Luc. *Philops.* 18; Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 34.

[336] For example, Ambrose, *Expos*. *Psalm.* 118.10.25; Basil, *De Spir. Sanct*. 18 (45); Or. *C. Cels.* 7.62, *Comm. In Joh.* 6.5.30.

[337] Kiernan, *Roman Cult Images*, 201.

In being placed on or in front of the sacred images, these emotionally charged objects formed permanent links between the dedicant and the deity.[338]

3.3 Analysis

This whole process turns on itself. The sacred image is an affective archive: tactile and bounded, it encourages a certain kind of affective response from viewer-worshippers that blurs the boundaries between humans and gods. Because it is manipulable, worshippers "take care" of it, feeding it, clothing it, touching it, and generally pampering it. These actions are attended by feelings of warmth, nurture, and affection, emotions which, in turn, confirm that the sacred image is an intentional subject. Because the image is the same as the deity for the integrated worshipper, the affective responses that are produced by and simultaneously shape the horizontal interaction with the sacred image are generalized to the deity, creating and reaffirming the human-divine affective bond. This bond ensures that all future encounters with the gods are similarly affective. Thus, the affective relationship with the statue shapes the way people relate to deities even outside of their images.

This helps us understand "casual" interactions between humans and gods that do not fit the expected mold. People often greeted sacred images on their land or usual walking routes with no more than a simple hello.[339] In the *Dyskolos*, we learn from Pan that that his neighbor Knemon is forced to greet Pan each day as he passes, as is custom.[340] Letters to

---

[338] Jessica Hughes, "'Souvenirs of the Self': Personal Belongings as Votive Offerings in Ancient Religion," *RRE* 3.2 (2017): 196.

[339] Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 33.

[340] Men. *Dys*. 5-12. This is a comedy so it is likely to be exaggerated, but without conveying a grain of truth, jokes would not be funny. We can therefore assume that people were in fact expected to greet gods as they passed by them.

gods often reflected similarly informal language, with many people using a simple *vale* as a sign off.[341] When Asklepios appears to Polemon at Pergamon to warn him away from water, Polemon responds cheekily to the god.[342] An inscription in the sanctuary of the Mountain Mother at Lydia memorializes one man's anger at the goddess after his slave ran away: "I dedicated to you a girl by the name of Sympherousa, whom I have lost, so that you can look for her yourself."[343]

It is important that these affective interactions are taken as a composite. The fragmentary nature of the evidence tempts scholars into treating each affective encounter as an isolated incident. But when taken together, the many affective interactions become manifestations of the affective relationship between worshipper and deity. Let us turn once again to the vase painting of Antiope and Apollo. Contextualized in this model of an affective human-divine bond, Antiope's anger becomes not just a momentary flash of anger at the death of her son, but a statement on her relationship with Apollo. She is allowed to approach him with anger precisely *because* they have a personal relationship, and she approaches him not as an inferior but as a longstanding friend. Ancient Greeks could therefore choose to approach the god as a supplicant, friend, or both, depending on the context.

---

[341] Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 33.

[342] Philostr. *Vit. Soph*. 1.25.4: Polemon asks, "And what if you had to cure an ox?"

[343] Phōtios M. Petsas, ed., *Inscriptions du sanctuaire de la mère des dieux autochtone de Leukopetra (Macédoine)*, Meletēmata 28 (Athènes: Centre de Recherches de l'Antiquité Grècque et Romaine, 2000), no.53; Chaniotis, "Emotional Community," 279.

4.1 Votive reliefs: Problems with Interpretation

In this section, I will examine votive reliefs on which both gods and worshippers are presented together as a case study for how ancient Greeks expressed and managed their relationship with the gods. One of the few types of material evidence for personal religion, commissioned and dedicated by individuals or individual family groups, all votives bear witness to the actions, motivations, and feelings of real people undertaking private, practical worship.[344] Votive reliefs with both humans and gods are therefore individual expressions of religious self-identity, by which is meant "the place a person assigns himself in relation to the god he worships."[345] They exhibit a concerted effort on the part of the worshipper to communicate his perception of his relationship with a particular god to viewers. In this section, I will explore what the motivation behind such reliefs was, and how the affective model set up so far in this chapter can change the analysis of these reliefs.

Before we can do so, it is necessary to confront and redress several of the current, dominant interpretations of the reliefs. The first problem with the current analysis is the notion that votive reliefs were prefabricated and mass-produced. Ancient Greeks simply bought premade reliefs from workshops and dedicated them as necessary, as a mere matter of

---

[344] Votives reflect not cosmological, eternal concerns, nor community concerns, but practical concerns. In their daily lives, individuals make most use of the "problem-solving" aspect of religion, asking and thanking deities for divine assistance. See David Morgan, "The Practicality of Votive Culture," *MR* 13.1 (2017): 110–12; Frank Graziano, *Miraculous Images and Votive Offerings in Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Elsner, "Place, Shrine, Miracle," 9.

[345] Folkert T. van Straten, "Images of Gods and Men in a Changing Society: Self-Identity in Hellenstic Religion," in *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World*, ed. Anthony W. Bulloch et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 248. Van Straten debates about whether worshippers' relationships with gods is purely personal or communal, though I would argue that it is both. The religious structures of Greek society dictate the form and parameters of this relationship that is felt at the personal level.

form. Votives are then seen as entirely uninformative regarding the dedicant's religious identity. Though long held, this perception does not bear up to scrutiny. Votives' incorporation of typically painted elements (landscape, perspective, complex composition) indicate that they were emulating painted wooden *pinakes*, which were inexpensive and made on commission.[346] Too, Lawton has compellingly argued that despite the conventional patterns of drapery, posture, and positioning, the varying numbers, sex, and activities of worshippers in each relief point to individual orders.[347] One particular relief moves the boy-servant and sacrificial animal from their usual position at the front to the back of relief in order to prominently display a kneeling female to commemorate their unique religious experience.[348] Such flexibility suggests that reliefs were customized according to the wishes of the dedicant.

This argument further rests on the categorization of several votives as "replacement" votives, which functioned as stand-ins for actual ritual action when its undertaking was

[346] Painted wooden *pinakes* were much more inexpensive and therefore the more common form of dedication, particularly in Athens after the sumptuary laws of 317/6 went into effect. John H. Kroll, "The Parthenon Frieze as a Votive Relief," *AJA* 113.4 (2009): 83; van Straten, "Images of Gods," 253, 258.

[347] Carol L. Lawton, *Votive Reliefs*, ASCSA 38 (Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2017), 10; G.T. Despinis, "Il rilievo votivo di Aristonike ad Artemis Brauronia," in *Le orse di Brauron: un rituale di iniziazione femminile nel santuario di Artemide*, ed. Bruno Gentili and Franca Perusino (Pisa: ETS, 2002). Christine Thomas and Thomas Drew-Bear also point out that in certain cases where a dedicant seems to have purchased a stock item, an inscription is prominently included to customize the display. See Christine M. Thomas and Thomas Drew-Bear, *Phrygian Votive Steles* (Ankara: Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, 1999), 28.

[348] van Straten, "Images of Gods," 252.

considered too expensive or requiring too much effort.[349] This idea stems from a passage in Pausanias in which the author describes a group of men at Orneae who, having vowed to sacrifice a certain number and kind of animal to Apollo for his aid in defeating the Sicyonians, decided that the expense and effort were too great and dedicated instead bronze figures representing a sacrifice and procession.[350] While this may have occurred in the ancient world, the prevalence of this phenomenon has been vastly overstated. In Herodas' Fourth Mime, a woman sacrifices a chicken as she dedicates her *pinax*.[351] Several vases paintings depict scenes of sacrifice, procession, and prayer, with a *pinax* in the background, indicating that these activities generally accompanied votive dedication.[352] As such, it is more likely that the reliefs were customized to some degree to reflect the activities performed by individual dedicants.

The second issue in current analyses is that the deity figure is construed symbolically. According to this school of thought, the illustrated deity is merely an artistic convention to convey symbolic divine presence and, by extension, divine favor. This argument rests on the fact that what is being shown is not an epiphany.[353] In these studies, epiphany is defined

---

[349] Votive figurines of sacrificial animals and processional scenes on reliefs have sometimes been read as ritual replacements, see Elsner, "Place, Shrine, Miracle," 9–11.

[350] Paus. 10.18.5.

[351] Herod. 4.54.

[352] van Straten, *Hiera Kala: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 107, 118.

[353] Interestingly, Klöckner does think that some reliefs at least are displaying an epiphanic encounter. She cites a relief in which a woman, in Klöckner's imagination at least, rears back in alarm at the sight of Dionysos and Ploutos (Votive relief, Chalkis, Museum 337, see Anja Klöckner, "Getting in Contact: Concepts of Human-Divine Encounter in Classical Greek Art," in *The Gods of Ancient Greece* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010], 110–11.). Klöckner's opinion is not shared by most scholars, particularly

narrowly as an actual manifestation of the deity apart from his or her sacred image, often accompanied by heavenly scent, radiance, and sound, which would awe and frighten the human viewer.[354] But in most votives reliefs the viewers look toward the gods but do not react in fear or awe, covering their eyes and turning away.[355] In one relief from Megara, a banqueting hero and his companion completely ignore the group of humans worshipping them from behind.[356] Evidently, then, these are not literal epiphanies. As such, the god's presence must be symbolic, an artistic convention to convey the general belief in the unseen, imagined presence of gods, and to imply the success of the worshippers' ritual communication.[357] Reliefs therefore can be seen to "give visual form to an abstract notion of divine favour."[358]

The scholarly emphasis on epiphany is rather unfortunate because it belies the rarity of its occurrence in ancient Greece, and in so doing obscures the interpretation of this type of scene. Instances of traditional epiphany, where the deity appears to a human, not in a "safe" animal form but in their true form, and outside of dreams or visions, abound only in literature, not personal experience. Epiphanies of this sort were matters of report, always

---

because very few reliefs preserve this type of fearful reaction on the part of the human viewer-worshipper.

[354] Klöckner, "Getting in Contact," 120–25.

[355] Lawton, *Votive Reliefs*, 16.

[356] Paris, Louvre MA 2417.

[357] Klöckner, "Getting in Contact," 125.

[358] Platt, *Facing the Gods*, 37.

something that happened to someone else, usually a small and limited group of people.[359] Furthermore, such close encounters with gods were not always desirable because of their deleterious effects of the viewer's health.[360] Most importantly, there is no evidence that suggests that what happened within temples was epiphany, particularly as it is described in literature.

But neither is the presence of the deity only symbolic. Let us look at the Archinos relief (fig. 2.6).[361] From the sanctuary of Amphiaraos at Oropos, this relief is unique because it separates into three registers what most combine into one. In the middleground, Archinos is bitten by a snake while sleeping in the sanctuary. In the foreground, we see the god Amphiaraos binding the wakeful Archinos. In the background, Archinos dedicates a relief (probably the very one we see) to the god in thanksgiving. While only the background is literally true in the modern sense, none is wholly or only symbolic. Each register visualizes a different layer of Archinos' experience. The middleground reveals the common conception of what happens when one undergoes ritual incubation, especially given that snakes were

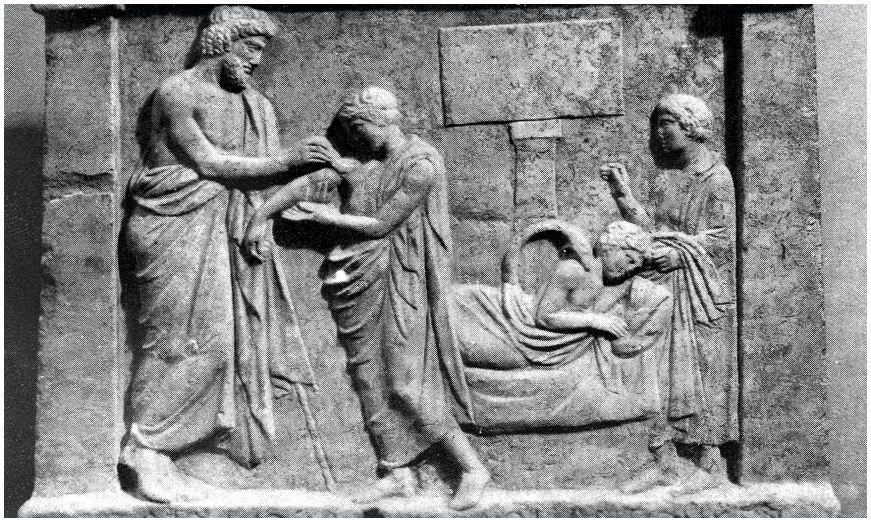
[359] Traditional epiphany, where the deity appears to a human independent of their statues, outside of dreams or vision, and not in a "safe" animal or mortal form, abounded in literature but rarely occurred for actual individuals. Robert Parker describes this as something that always happened to someone else, a friend of a friend, whose story was passed along from person to person until it was commonly accepted that epiphany *could* happen, even if only to someone else, Parker, *On Greek Religion*, 11. Petridou's argument that epiphanies enhanced the social status and agency of the individual rests on the fact that epiphanies were only ever perceived by a small, limited number of people, usually members of the socio-political elite. See Georgia Petridou, "Emplotting: The Divine Epiphanic Narratives as Means of Enhancing Agency," *RRE* 1.3 (2015): 322.

[360] Ov. *Tr.* 2.103-5, on Actaeon's death after seeing Diana naked. Even close encounters through oracular shrines, like that of Trophonios, frequently resulted in memory loss, loss of laughter (Parmeniscus, for example), and other undesirable outcomes (Paus. 9.39.2-3; Julia Kindt, *Rethinking Greek Religion* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], chap. 2).

[361] Athens, NM 3369.

"safe" forms of gods and usually associated with healing deities.[362] Archinos uses the foreground to convey his apprehension of the events according to cultural expectations, which is that the god came to him and healed his arm. The background connects the circumstance of the dedication with the reason behind it. Without showing what literally happened, this relief nevertheless encapsulates Archinos' belief in the very real presence of Amphairaos.

Fig. 2.6: Attic votive relief, Pentelic marble stele, medium relief, late Classical (400-380 BCE). Findspot: Oropos, Amphiaraion. Dimensions: H. 0.49m, W. 0.545m. Museum/Inventory number: Athens, NM 3369. Bibliography: Karouzou, Semni, *National Archaeological Museum: collection of sculpture. A catalogue* (Athens, General Direction of Antiquites and Restoration, 1968), 150, pl. 47a. Description: The relief shows Archinos, the dedicant, in three different registers, each within the Amphiaraion; foreground: Amphiaraos healing Archinos, middleground: an incubation in which a snake bites Archinos, background: Archinos dedicating a thanksgiving votive to the god.



[362] Actual close contact with the gods was dangerous for humans. They were only able to safely interact with the gods through sacred images, oracles, within dreams, or through animals. Zeus Meilichios often appeared to people in the guise of a snake. See Folkert T. van Straten, "Daikrates' Dream: A Votive Relief from Kos and Some Other Kat' Onar Dedications"," *BABesch* 51 (1976): 1–38; Gil Renberg, "Commanded by the Gods: An Epigraphical Study of Dreams and Visions in Greek and Roman Religious Life" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 2003); Larson, *Understanding*, 88–95.

Although epiphany rarely occurred in lived religious experience, visual encounters with the gods were quite common because they occurred through the sacred image.[363] Contextualizing the reliefs in Greek religious behavior can elucidate this point. The types of activities performed in these scenes, such as sacrifices, processions, and prayer, commonly occurred within temple precincts, often under the watchful gaze of a sacred image (for example, fig. 2.7).[364] That these activities accompanied the dedication of a votive is significant because votives were placed as close as possible to the sacred image, sometimes even in its lap. The architectural framing of the scenes is also notable: the deity figure(s) is framed by pillars, suggesting a central *cella* or temple door, and the worshippers gaze at deities from across an altar, which was usually placed on axis with the central *cella*. In one votive, worshippers even place their offerings on a *trapeza*, which was always located within the *cella* directly before the sacred image.[365] When we consider that images when viewed religiously conveyed divine presence to viewer-worshippers, it is not at all clear that this the deity figure is merely symbolic.

[363] Van Straten, too, refrains from categorizing all such interactions on votive reliefs as epiphanies, and sees them instead as a concrete expression of an abstract relationship between gods and men.

[364] Bell-krater, Frankfurt a.M. VF B413.

[365] Agora S 2457; Gill, "Trapezomata."

Fig. 2.7: Attic terracotta red-figure bell krater, Classical (475-425 BCE), attributed to the Hephaistos Painter. Provenance: Nola, Italy. Museum/inventory number: Frankfurt a.M. VF B413. Beazley, *ARV*2 1683.31BIS. Description: A man (left) offers a cake at an altar (center) while a young boy to his right holds up a tray to him. An image of Apollo in profile (right) looks towards the action.

Fig. 2.8: Attic votive relief, Pentelic marble stele, low relief, Classical (420-400 BCE). Dimensions: H. 0.545m, W. 0.67m. Findspot: Athens, Akropolis, Asklepieion (S. Slope). Bibliography: Karouzou 1968, 141. Museum/inventory number: Athens, NM 1338. Description: A worshipper stands before an altar. Hygieia stands behind the altar, reaching with her right arm over the altar towards the worshipper. Asklepios sits in the back on a stool with a snake behind his knee.

The naturalistic appearance of the illustrated deity should not be a deterrent.[366] For example, Hygeia's naturalism in pose and drapery definitively defies any identification as a statue for some scholars (fig. 2.8).[367] Although on Greek vases sacred images are depicted as small, rigid, and on bases, they do not appear as such on votive reliefs from this time period.[368] Nor is it possible to compare these Classical, Attic reliefs with later, western, Roman reliefs that portray statues stepping down from their bases to interact with viewer-worshippers (fig. 2.9).[369] While Platt argues that Asklepios' similarity in fig. 2.8 to his image at Epidauros is solely a device to help viewers identify the deity,[370] it seems more likely that it falls in the category of "die lebenden Statuen."[371] Straddling the line between rigidity and

[366] Klöckner, for instance, juxtaposes animated deities with "lifeless sculptures" in her work. This means that any deity figure that is even slightly naturalistic resists categorization or identification with a statue. See Klöckner, "Getting in Contact," 109.

[367] Athens, NM 1338. For discussion, see Lawton, *Votive Reliefs*; Klöckner, "Getting in Contact," 114.

[368] These reliefs stand in stark contrast to vase paintings from the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, in which statues of gods were clearly shown as such: in miniature form, with rigid posture, and set up on a base. The fifth-century trend of depicting the deity in "plastic" and "living" forms together on a vase has convinced scholars that ancient Greeks thought of these two forms as distinct, and so the examples on the votive reliefs must be of animated deities. See, for example, the vase painting of Antiope and Apollo discussed earlier in this chapter. The living god and sacred image share the same iconography to draw a parallel between the two figures, but the Apollo on the left is mounted on a base and therefore clearly an image. On the rising trend of depicting a god in double-form, see Gaifman, "Theologies." For issues with interpreting them, see McNiven, "Things to Which We Give Service: Interactions with Sacred Images on Athenian Pottery."

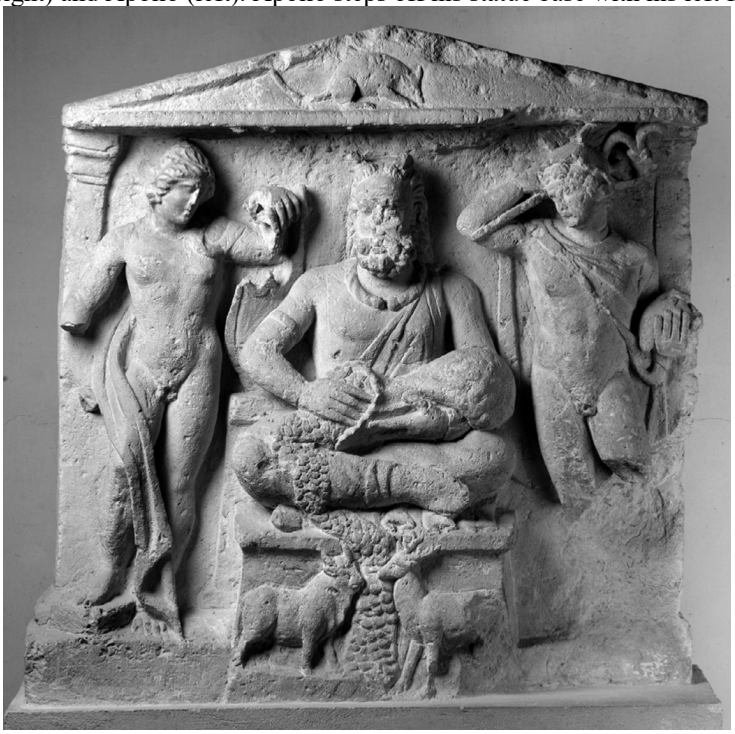
[369] Kiernan, *Roman Cult Images*, 197. Reims, Musée Saint-Rémi 978.20189.

[370] Klöckner, "Getting in Contact," 109; Platt, *Facing the Gods*, 37. Klöckner further cites a late relief in which gods are portrayed frontally, with no human contact, as "unequivocally…lifeless," (110; citing Venice, AM 118: *LIMC* III).

[371] K. Schefold, "Statuen auf Vasenbildern," *JDAI* 52 (1937): 30–75.

naturalism, such illustrations signal that statues were anything but lifeless. More recently, Alroth has argued for the likelihood that both forms, living or plastic, are always co-implicated in any illustrated deity figure.[372] Ultimately, the votive reliefs relate that divine presence was a real part of the worshipper's experience, and an even more real aspect to their expressions of religious self-identity.

Fig. 2.9: The Reims Cernunnos. Limestone altar with high relief, ca. 30-100 CE. Dimensions: H. 125cm, W. 110cm, Th. 41cm. Findspot: Reims (Marne). Museum/inventory number: Reims, Musée Saint-Remi, 978.20189. Description: The Celtic god Cernunnos is seated in the middle with a bag of coins in his lap. He is flanked by Mercury (right) and Apollo (left). Apollo steps off his statue base with his left foot.



[372] Alroth, "Changing Modes," 9. Schefold's designation of "die lebenden Statuen," or "the living statues" refers to illustrations of gods that appear statuesque but move and interfere in the pictured events, but Alroth seems to be going further in her suggestion that the division between the animated and plastic forms of deities is at best vague. Even fully animated looking deities, then, can be identified as their cult image or sacred image; the two forms are inseparable. Pausanias and other ancient authors frequently use the words *agalma* and *theos* interchangeably, even within a single sentence. This linguistic slippage reflects their co-identification in the ancient world. For examples and analysis, see Donohue, "The Greek Images of the Gods: Considerations on Terminology and Methodology," 45; Romano, "Early Greek Cult Images," 2–3, 44, 257–58; McNiven, "Things to Which We Give Service: Interactions with Sacred Images on Athenian Pottery," 300.

This brings us to the third and final problem, the issue of audience. Because of our own vantage point in approaching votive reliefs, that is, as external observers, we frequently conceive of the relief's primary audience as other human visitors to the sanctuary space.[373] This is only partially true. As physical objects, votives demanded sensory interaction—sight and touch—from viewers who could appreciate not just the artwork of the relief but the power of the deity who had fulfilled so many prayers.[374] Votive picture tablets in the Basilica of the Consolata at Turin, which contain visual testimonies of the Virgin's miracles, replicate the church's icon in miniature to connect for viewers the miracles attested in the tablets with the miraculous powers of the Virgin and prayer in that church.[375] The overwhelming monumentality of such displays would have substantially shaped viewers' experience of the sanctuary.[376] But given that votives were often locked away inside the temple, boasted only first names with no other identifiers, and in the case of tablets were folded up, the importance of human spectators seems overstated.[377]

---

[373] For the primary audience of a votive being other humans, see Barry Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 182–83; Joseph Day, "Interactive Offerings: Early Greek Dedicatory Epigrams and Ritual," *HSCP* 96 (1994): 40–41; these views are addressed and discussed in Mary Depew, "Reading Greek Prayers," *Classical Antiquity* 16.2 (1997): 237–44.

[374] In Alexandrian poet Herodas' Fourth Miniambus (3rd century BCE), two friends Kynno and Phile dedicate their own votive relief and then walk through the sanctuary space, even into the back room of the temple, to view and admire other votives to Asklepios and Hygeia (Herod. 4.20-22).

[375] Elsner, "Place, Shrine, Miracle," 12–14.

[376] The sacrality and sanctity of several shrines, ancient and modern, have been determined by the number and quality of votives on display. See Elsner, "Place, Shrine, Miracle," particularly p.15; Ittai Weinryb, ed., *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

[377] Among the votive reliefs found in the Athenian agora, very few names are preserved. Of these, even fewer have any identifying information (demotic, etc.,) beyond a first name.

The primary and intended audience of votives was, in fact, the gods themselves. Small votives were often pinned right onto the sacred image and perishable offerings like food or flowers were placed in the hands or laps of the image. Larger reliefs were placed as near to the statue as possible. After dedication, these votives became the property of the gods. They were not to be moved by any human other than a priest, and when space was needed for new offerings, older ones were buried within the *temenos* to keep them within the ownership of the presiding deity.[378] Recent work on written prayers, particularly those for divine justice, were written in the style of letters as direct communications to the deity. Even the prayer tablets that were not folded up and buried (like curse tablets) were meant thereafter to be read and accessed only by divine powers.[379]

This suggests that the audience was likely to be supernatural; only a god would have knowledge of the dedicant's identity without additional information provided.

[378] Jessica Hughes, "Studying Votives Across Cultures," *MR* 13.1 (2017): 104. Votives had to be "tidied" out to make room for new dedications. Because the entire *temenos* was considered the home of the presiding deity, burying the votives created new space in the temple while also respecting their divine ownership. In modern India, offerings to deities are returned directly to the worshipers so that they do not pile up around images. The offerings, whose essence has been consumed by the deity, transmit the deity's saliva and grace (*prasāda*) to the worshiper in being returned.

[379] See Versnel, "Reading Gods"; Depew, "Reading." While for *defixiones* (lead curse tablets) it has been assumed that the act of writing makes the curse permanent, Versnel argues that the prayers for divine justice are written down rather than spoken in order to be available for "continuous reading" (25). He finds comparanda in chapels throughout the Mediterranean and Latin America, where letters (containing prayers) sent from all over the world are placed "in the visual field or at least in the immediate vicinity of the statue of the holy addressee" (22) and must not be removed by anyone other than the clergy. He concludes that "[t]he notion of divine omniscience, for that matter, as far as it prevails at all, is as inoffensive to the idea that letters are there to be *read* as it is to the truism that oral prayers are intended to be *heard*" (23).

4.2 Votive Reliefs: A Reinterpretation

If the deity was the main intended audience, then how can we understand this type of votive relief? In order to answer this question, the votive reliefs, and votives more generally, must be read as material instantiations of the affective bond between humans and gods, according to the model set up in this chapter. I argue that votives, like the practices discussed earlier (feeding, clothing, touching) were tools employed by worshippers to express as well as maintain and manage their horizontal relationship with the gods. As physical objects, votives materialize and make visible the immaterial, invisible relationship between the dedicant and deity.[380] Furthermore, votives were emotionally charged, imbued with the sentiments of the dedicant through the process of gifting the object to the deity.[381] Displayed in sanctuaries in perpetuity, votives served as lasting visual reminders of this relationship to the deity, focusing his or her attention on the dedicant. Thus, dedicants used votive offerings to make their horizontal relationship visible and memorable to the gods.

What was the purpose of doing this? Some scholars, appealing to Marcel Mauss's theory of universal reciprocity despite several pertinent critiques of the model, have seen this as evidence of the *do ut des* ("I give so that you will give"), transactional nature of Greek religion, wherein gods needed to be bribed to provide aid.[382] There are many problems with

---

[380] Ittai Weinryb, ed., "Votives and Material Religion," *Material Religion*, *Votives: Material Culture and Religion* 13.1 (2017): 102–3; Elsner, "Place, Shrine, Miracle."

[381] Ittai Weinryb, "Of Votive Things," in *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*, ed. *idem* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), xii..

[382] According to Mauss, gifts "are offered [to the gods] under obligation as the price of a benefit from a higher power," Elsner, "Place, Shrine, Miracle," 5. For critiques of this model, see Maurice Godelier, *The Enigma of the Gift* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 108–99; Neil Coffee, *Gift and Gain: How Money Transformed Ancient Rome*, Classical Culture and Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1–21; Ittai Weinryb,

this view. Firstly, the concept of *do ut des* is a wholly modern, scholarly construction rather than an ancient description of religious practice.[383] Secondly, while studying any one votive in isolation may give an impression of commercial exchange, examining large numbers of them together quickly dispels any illusions of transaction.[384] Votives were offered, not as a bribe, but in thanksgiving to the gods for an already fulfilled prayer. They only needed to be dedicated *if* the prayer was actually answered positively, and even then ancient Greeks had up to a year afterwards to fulfill their vow.[385] They could even ask someone else to thank the gods on their behalf if they were not able to do so themselves. Thus, the phrase *do ut des*, and any attending ideas of a transactional religious system, must be retired.

Robert Parker urges scholars to shift their conception of votive behavior from *do ut des* to an exchange of *kharites*, where "one good turn deserves another."[386] Mortals bring gifts that are pleasing to the gods (*kharienta*) and the gods return that which is pleasing to the

---

"Introduction: Ex Voto as Material Culture," in *Ex Voto: Votive Giving Across Cultures*, ed. Ittai Weinryb (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2016), 3.

[383] Indeed, the formulation *do ut des* only appears in ancient Latin texts in the plural. Despite this, some scholars continue to use it, even as recently as 2018 (see Verity Platt, "Clever Devices and Cognitive Artifacts: Votive Giving in the Ancient World," in *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*, ed. Ittai Weinryb [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018], 142).

[384] Jörg Rüpke and R. L. Gordon, *Religion of the Romans* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 102, 149–50.

[385] This is in sharp contrast to medieval and modern Europe, as well as modern India, where offerings are given at the same time that request is being made in a gesture of goodwill and as an establishment of trust that a future offering of thanksgiving will be made, should the request be fulfilled. See White, *Daemons Are Forever*, 95, 121.

[386] Robert Parker, "Pleasing Thighs: Reciprocity in Greek Religion," in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*, ed. Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite, and Richard Seaford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 119.

mortal (*khariessa*). It is essential that these not be read as payment. It was commonly accepted that divine favors could not be paid back because they were of such great value. People who made offerings with a transactional mindset were not only refused but sometimes even punished.[387] This is not so much a trade of goods as of favors, with an implication rather than obligation that these favors ought be repaid in kind. Catholic tile votives, which often read, "thanks for a favor received," operate similarly.[388] Viewed as exchanges of favors, votive behavior then becomes an expression of friendship.

Votive reliefs depicting encounters between humans and gods double down on this message of friendship. Not only do they focus the attention of the god on the worshipper, they remind the god of the horizontality of their relationship visually. In these votive reliefs, as opposed to reliefs which are divided into registers vertically, the gods and humans are depicted on the same plane. The architectural elements, like pillars, temple doors, and altars, should be seen as "link[s] rather than a demarcation point,"[389] that actually connect the two entities on the same plane. For example, in fig. 2.8, the altar positions Hygeia and the worshipper in a temple; both reach over the altar to almost touch.[390] In others, no visual

[387] See Plato's accusation against the poets who suggest the rich can stave off divine punishment with lavish acts of *kharis* (*Rep.* 363b-366b). See also Parker, "Pleasing Thighs," n.50.

[388] Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 42–62.

[389] van Straten, "Images of Gods," 250.

[390] Richard Cohen documents a similar iconographical phenomenon in Buddhist wall paintings in the Ajanta caves. The painting on the right wall of Hārītī's shrine depicts a group of people engaged in a *pūjā* for Hārītī. The painting on the opposite wall shows the result of the *pūjā*: Hārītī grants *darśan* to her worshippers. The painted architectural setting of the ritual actions and subsequent *darśan* mirror the shrine itself, suggesting divine-human engagement on the same plane. See Richard Cohen, "Naga, Yaksini, Buddha: Local Deities and Local Buddhism at Ajanta," *HR* 37.4 (1998): 380–91.

element separates the two figures who exist unequivocally on the same plane. See, for example, fig. 2.10, where the deity (in snake form) and man look at each other quite closely.[391]

Fig. 2.10: Fragmentary Attic votive relief dedicated to Zeus Meilichios by Olympos, Hymettian marble, ca. 330 BCE. Dimensions: H. 0.19m, W. 0.21m, Th. 0.08m. Findspot: Athens, in the wall of a modern house, west of the central part of the Stoa of Attalos, Athenian Agora. Museum/inventory number: Athens, Agora I 2201. Bibliography: Hesperia 12 (1943), 49 no.9. Description: A large, bearded serpent (Zeus Meilichios) faces the head of a man, probably the dedicant.

These votives are showcasing a moment when the god and human recognized, paid attention to, and interacted with each other affectively. Let us examine a small selection.

[391] Agora I 2201

Fig. 2.11: Votive relief, marble, possibly fourth century BCE. Dimensions: H. 0.27m, W. 0.41m, Th. 0.052m. Provenance: Unknown. Museum/inventory number: Padova, MC 820. Bibliography: Ghedini, Francesca, *Sculture greche e romane del Museo Civico di Padova* (Roma: Museo Civico di Padova, 1980) 18-19, no.2. Description: A bearded god, possibly Zeus Meilichios, sits on the left. A family group of worshippers approach from the right. Between them is a child on the ground, directly at the god's feet, reaching up with its hands.

Fig. 2.11 depicts a god seated on the left, perhaps Zeus Meilichios, and worshippers approaching from the right. At the god's feet is a baby, reaching up his hands. Ancient Greeks often dedicated their babies to a god or goddess by placing the child at the feet or in the arms of a sacred image. This was a sign of trust in the deity but also affection. In inscriptions, the phrase *en tais anklaias* ("in the arms") is usually used to denote a parent's affectionate embrace of their child. In placing the child in a god's arms, not only is the parent designating the deity as a co-parent, or co-protector of the child, but they are also displaying their own affection for the god, allowing him to hold and care for the child.[392]

[392] Chaniotis, "Emotional Community," 278–80.

Several reliefs show people raising their arms in prayer (for example, fig. 2.12).[393] It might be tempting to interpret the gesture of prayer as merely a convention, but as discussed earlier, gestures in art are emotional verbs. Because art is non-verbal, and facial expressions were rarely used to communicate emotion in art, gestures display emotion.[394] It is important to remember that votive reliefs were dedicated in order to thank the gods. The expensive and elaborate artworks suggest that the worshippers, having had their prayers fulfilled, spared no expense in dedicating a beautiful, lavish offering of thanksgiving. Moreover, religious gift giving has been recognized as an outward expression of appreciation and gratitude. The role of gratitude has been underestimated because verbs that could mean "to thank" in dedicatory inscriptions are usually translated as "to praise" or "to commend."[395] In ancient Greece, these concepts were closely related, even overlapping. Gratitude in particular is a unique emotion socially because of its ability to create deep and long-lasting ties of cohesion between two parties. Thus, not only are the votives imbued with this emotion, the reliefs also highlight the feelings of gratitude, piety, and devotion felt by the dedicants.

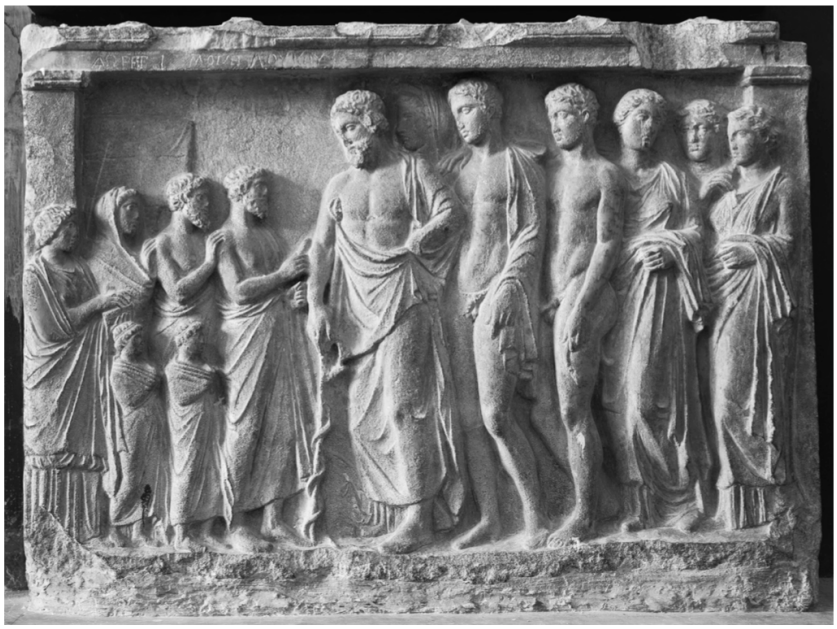
---

[393] Athens, NM 1402.

[394] McNiven, "Emotional Adverbs," (unpublished). See also Christina Clark, "To Kneel or Not to Kneel: Gendered Nonverbal Behavior in Greek Ritual," *Journal of Religion & Society*, Women, Gender, and Religion (2009): 6–8. Clark argues that gestures acted as verbs in actual religious practice, not just art. She says that nonverbal communication was essential to religious practice, where through gesture, posture, and proxemics, bodies spoke on behalf of people. "…from infancy, people learn to use their bodies inside their own cultural and socio-economic contexts and to interpret the bodily behavior of others" (7).

[395] This circumlocution is due to both the lack of a single term meaning "to thank" in ancient Greek (as in many other languages) and because Greek gods primarily wanted honor and admiration. Versnel points out though that concepts of praise and thanks are closely related even in modern languages—"to thank" developed from "to think" or *denken*/gedenken—and that in ancient Greece, aretologies, hymns, reports of a god's power all express gratitude by implication. Versnel, "Religious Mentality," 42–62.

Fig. 2.12: Votive medium relief dedicated to Asklepios, marble, ca.400-350 BCE. Dimensions: H. 0.53m, W. 0.74m. Findspot: Monastery at Loukou (Kynouria) where it had been kept before 1821. Museum/inventory number: Athens, NM 1402. Bibliography: Svoronos 1903-12, 351-2, pl. 35.4. Description: On the left, a family group of worshippers (two women, two men, two boys) face Asklepios with their right arms raised in a gesture of worship. Asklepios stands leaning on a staff with his sons, Podaleirios and Machaon, and his daughters, Iaso, Akeso, and Panakeia.



By far, the most interesting votives are ones depicting kneeling worshippers. Of the extant votive reliefs, thirty-one of them depict kneeling worshippers, of which twenty-five come from Attica.[396] Traditionally, based only on literary sources in which kneeling is denigrated as a barbarian custom, a sign of base humiliation and thus unbefitting for Greeks, these reliefs were assumed to emphasize the inability of women to contain their emotions.[397] However, more recently it has been acknowledged that kneeling was less uncommon, and perhaps less gendered that thought previously. It is more likely that kneeling occurred when

[396] Elpis Mitropoulou, *Kneeling Worshippers in Greek and Oriental Literature and Art* (Athens: Pyli Editions, 1975); Folkert T. van Straten, "Did the Greeks Kneel before Their Gods?," *Babesch: Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 49 (1974): 159–89; Lawton, *Votive Reliefs*.

[397] Char. 16.5 relays Theophrastus' account of the superstitious man who behaves more like a woman than a man. Polybius, too, categorizes kneeling as female behavior (15.29.9, 71.32.15.7). Plutarch describes kneeling as disgraceful (*Superst.* 3.166).

the worshipper felt extremely close to the deity. This could have been due to the urgency of the prayer or because certain gods (the healing gods, Demeter, Artemis, Herakles, certain forms of Zeus) were more accessible to worshippers and helped them more frequently. Either way, kneeling was a sign of emotional closeness.

Fig. 2.13: Attic votive relief, Pentelic marble, ca. 340 BCE. Dimensions: H. 0.25m, W. 0.40m. Museum/inventory number: Athens, NM 1408. Findspot: Peiraeus or Athens. Bibliography: Description: A bearded god (probably Zeus) sits on a throne (left) holding sceptre and phiale. A woman kneels before him, arms extended to touch the knees of the god. Another woman approaches with her right hand raised in a gesture of worship, followed by two children. At the far right are two servants, one of whom holds a basket on her head.

Thus, we can see that in fig. 2.13 that the order of the procession has been rearranged in order that the woman in the front may kneel immediately before the god and actually reach out to touch his knees.[398] The kneeling worshipper reaches for the feet or the knees of the deity in many votives of this type (fig. 2.14, 2.15).[399]

[398] van Straten, "Images of Gods," 252.

[399] Figure 2.16: Athens 1st Ephoria, 3A, 10A; figure 2.17: Agora S 1646.

Fig. 2.14: Attic votive relief to Palaimon, Hymettian marble, ca. 340 BCE. Dimensions: H. 0.225, W. 0.30m, Th. 0.04m. Findspot: Temple of Herakles Pankrates and Palaimon near Ilisos. Museum/inventory number: 1st Ephoria Pankrates no.3A, 10A; SEG 16, 184. Bibliography: Mitropoulou 1975, 26-7 no.2. Description: A bearded god reclines on the right holding a phiale and cornucopia while two worshippers approach from the left, one of whom is kneeling with arms extended to the gods knees and legs.

Fig. 2.15: Attic votive low relief, Hymettian marble, ca. 325-300 BCE. Dimensions: H. 0.225m, W. 0.31m, Th. 0.07m. Findspot: Athens, Agora, Section T #1490 in early Byzantine fill. Museum/inventory number: Athens, Agora S 1646. Bibliography: *Agora* 31, 67, 219, no. 8, pl. 35. Description: Demeter (left) is seated on a rock; Kore and Ploutos, holding a child, stand in the center. A worshipper (far right) kneels, arms extended towards the feet of Ploutos.

Knowing as we do that kneeling and praying occurred in front of a sacred image (as mentioned earlier, the knees and ears of several sacred images were worn away from worshippers' daily touch), it becomes clear that these votive reliefs are expressing the experience of a god's divine presence through his or her sacred image. That these votives are highlighting the emotional connection between the worshipper and the materially emplaced deity is also apparent. Ancient prayers were often highly emotional, expressing hope, love, and trust in the god, as well as despair and anger against other people.[400] These prayers were recited before or whispered into the ear of a sacred image, making these interactions emotionally charged. The votive reliefs can be read, then, not necessarily as a snapshot of actual emotional encounters, but as a long-lasting expression of the type of emotionality that characterized the human-divine relationship on account of the materiality of sacred image.

Votives like these were prominently displayed in and around the sanctuary between the moments of their dedication and deposition in a burial pit. Some large reliefs were mounted on a base to be freestanding. Others had *tenons*, which meant that they fit into sockets in a horizontal surface, possibly the ground. Smaller reliefs were displayed on shelves lining the *temenos* walls or on benches within a temple building. In open-air sanctuaries, the sides of hills preserve display slots cut into the rock itself where reliefs would have been placed.[401] Because the votives were relatively permanent, they served as lasting reminders of these ephemeral affective moments to the gods and other humans.

In doing so, they underscored the relationship of friendship between human and deity. The supplicant could then call upon this relationship of friendship when appealing to

[400] Versnel, "Religious Mentality"; Depew, "Reading."

[401] Thomas and Drew-Bear, *Phrygian Votive Steles*, 43.

the deity for aid, much as we, today, might include, "We've been friends for a long time" or "we've always been there for each other in times of need" as a preamble to a favor request. This seems strange to us because today, we more commonly ask for favors by saying, "I will do something for you if you do something for me." But this is not necessarily the case in ancient Greece. Parker points out that the most common alternative in Homer to, "if I ever helped you in the past, help me now," is "if ever *you* helped me in the past, help me again now."[402] This was also the common practice among Roman senators who, when asking for favors always reminded the letter recipient of previous favors they had done for the letter writer. The idea is that these phrases (and votive reliefs) give the history of two parties' relationship together. In establishing this, the dedicant can call upon the friendship and the benefits entailed by it for current favors, and in giving or receiving favors sets the stage for future favors. As such, the votive reliefs are not just *expressions* of friendship. Each votive relief is another building block in the foundation of this affective human-divine relationship.

In this section, I focused on votive reliefs that present both the worshipper and deity interacting because they explicitly make visible that which is no longer so: the affective interactions between humans and gods made possible by the sacred image. But this model of interpretation can be generalized to most, if not all, offerings. Votive statuettes of the deity (or other deities related to the temple's presiding deity),[403] figurines of the dedicants in worshipful poses, wooden *pinakes*, and even perishable items like food and flowers, while each distinct in its own way, all expressed and further developed the relationship of friendship between human and deity. While only the marble offerings were durable enough

[402] Parker, "Pleasing Thighs," 120.

[403] Thomas and Drew-Bear, *Phrygian Votive Steles*, 40.

to serve as lasting reminders of this invisible bond, the worshipper remembered all of them and was able to remind the deity verbally in the prayers uttered before the sacred image. Seeing votives as expressions of friendship not only allows us to overturn the *do ut des* model entirely, it also fills out the picture of the human-divine relationship as vertical *and* horizontal, depending on the circumstance.

5.1 Conclusion: Sacred Images and Sacred Landscapes

"No one is to possess a shrine in his own private home… To establish gods and temples is not easy; it's a job that needs to be very carefully pondered if it is to be done properly. Yet look at what people usually do — all women in particular, invalids of every sort, men in danger or any kind of distress, or conversely when they have just won a measure of prosperity: they dedicate the first thing that comes to hand, they swear to offer sacrifice, and **promise to found shrines** for gods and spirits and children of gods…with the result that on open spaces or any other spot where such an incident has occurred **they found the altars and shrines that fill every home and village."**[404]

The above passage records Plato's disdain for the superstitious behavior of his fellow countrymen and his annoyance at the sheer number of shrines set up in public and private spaces. It is certainly possible, even probable, that Plato is exaggerating the number of shrines and the frequency of their dedications. And yet, there are several attestations to such practices through the material and epigraphical record. One epigram, for example, indicates that "Hageloxeia, daughter of Damaretos, set up this [image of] Artemis by the crossroads while she, a maiden, lived in the house of her father. For [Artemis] was revealed to her near the warp of the loom like in the light of a fire."[405] Despite Plato's criticisms, then, it is clear that that religious shrines and spaces were ubiquitous in the ancient Greek cityscape.

[404] Pl. *Leg.* 909d-910d.

[405] *Anth. Pal.* 6.266.

And, indeed, they really were everywhere. We usually only pay attention to major temples because they are frequently described in literary sources and survive in some part, due to the durability of their materials and size, within the archaeological record as well. But daily encounters with the gods happened with frequency outside of official temple spaces, starting in the domestic sphere. Each household had a main shrine, filled with the household gods, many of whom were also dispersed through the house. Zeus Ktesios, a pot filled with grain, covered in cloth, and anointed with oil, was placed in the storeroom and worshipped there.[406] Hestia was worshipped at the hearth several times a day, particularly before mealtimes. Outside of the doorway, there would usually be a Herm, an Apollo Agyeius (as a propylon or altar), and often an aniconic statue of Hekate.[407] These gods, particularly herms, were also placed on gates and doorways to buildings, sometimes as a three-dimensional sculpture, and sometimes as two-dimensional, carved images on doorways.[408] Thus, anyone entering or exiting a house, a gate, or any other building, would have come into contact with the gods.

Roads were filled with gods as well. In rural spaces, Herms generally took the place of "road signs," acting as signposts for travelers at crossroads and other boundaries. There were also numerous shrines within the city, mainly to gods noted for their protection of roads

[406] Ath. 473b-c: "The right way to set up the signs of Zeus Ktesios is this: Take a new jar with two ears and a lid to it and wreath its ears with white wool, and stretch a piece of yellow (anything you can find) from its right shoulder and its forehead, and pour ambrosia into it." See also Men. *Ps. Hercules*, frag. 519k; Isaeus, 8.15-16. See discussion in Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses*, 6–7; Parker, *Polytheism*, chap. 1.

[407] Clem. Al. *Protr*. 4.44; see Johanna Best, "Religion of the Roadways: Roadside Sacred Spaces in Attica" (PhD Dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 2015), 44.

[408] Janett Morgan, *The Classical Greek House* (Bristol: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2010), 459.

(Hermes, Apollo Agyieus, Hekate) but also Aphrodite and Zeus at times.[409] These shrines, sometimes called *parodia hiera,* were small or medium sanctuaries bordered by one or more streets, close to workshops, shops, and other public spaces, as well as neighboring houses in residential neighborhoods.[410] Wycherley writes, "Gods and heroes also lived in many modest or even humble abodes on ordinary steets as next door neighbours to ordinary citizens."[411] Each shrine was somewhat unique, but almost always featured a small altar and an image of the deity.[412] Activities at roadside shrines did not require priests and so were accessible to anyone wishing to worship at any time. In this way, people could take charge of their own relationship with the gods without any mediating figures.

The ubiquity of these shrines is encompassed in the notion of a sacred landscape or religious landscape. Coined to address and encompass the many variations and iterations of religious space, the term reflects the shift in scholarly attention from single, isolated sites, to their regional and geographical distribution. The sacred landscape has become a topic of increasing relevance in examinations of ancient Greek religion, politics, and culture.[413] Without any coherent definition, religious landscape refers to many things, most obviously

---

[409] Best, "Religion of the Roadways," 17; R.E. Wycherley, "Minor Shrines in Ancient Athens," *Phoenix* 24.4 (1970): 283–95.

[410] L. Costaki, "Πάντα Πλήρη Θεῶν Εἶναι: Παρόδια Ἱερὰ Στὴν Ἀρχαία Ἀθήνα," in *Μικρός Ιερομνήμων Μελέτες Εις Μνήμην Michael H. Jameson*, ed. A.P. Matthaiou and I. Polinskaya (Athens, 2008), 146–47.

[411] Wycherley, "Minor Shrines," 295.

[412] Theoc. *Ep*. 4 (*Anth. Pal*. 4.437): this passage records someone giving directions to a traveler, telling them to "look for oak trees and a newly carved image of fig-wood"; see discussion in Best, "Religion of the Roadways," 52.

[413] Marietta Horster, "Religious Landscape and Sacred Ground: Relationships between Space and Cultin the Greek World," *Rhr*.227 (2010): 436.

the topography of Greek temples. Greek temples and shrines commemorated events in which the gods participated in human affairs. For example, the shrine of Poseidon in the Temple of Athena Polias (sometimes called the Erechtheion) memorializes the contest between Poseidon and Athena for patronage of the city. Notably, for Susan Alcock, the sacred landscape is not merely topographical but ideologically and symbolically constructed. A reflection of historical processes, the sacred landscape is an expression of civic, cultural, and political identity. Thus, Alcock and others study the landscape in order to learn about how (and in opposition to what) groups of people constructed their identity.[414]

Alcock is correct in challenging the perception of the sacred landscape as a fixed and inert topographical route. The sacred landscape, in its sensitivity to historical processes, was constantly shifting and moving. But even in Alcock's formulation, the sacred landscape is generated by and populated with places, buildings, or political groups, not individual people. It merely shifts in terms of which events and whose dedications it commemorates. Thus, the sacred landscape comprises many material markers of former interactions between humans and gods, and where humans can come into contact with the divine in their present situation. This is certainly partially correct in that, according to Plato, when the location for a temple was not mythologically marked, advice for its location came from the gods in a vision, oracle, or dream.[415] Even roadside shrines were founded on spots where individuals

---

[414] Susan E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 170–72; Susan E. Alcock and Robin Osborne, eds., *Placing the Gods: Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Susan E Alcock, John F Cherry, and Jas Elsner, *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[415] Pl. *Leg.* 909d-910d; see Depew, "Reading."

experienced divine presence. But this picture of the sacred landscape as merely a series of places needs to be "repopulated."

It is important to remember that Greek cities were populated by both human and divine actors. Divine presence was "produced" by sacred images. By this, I refer to the ability of sacred images as physical objects to "produce [divine] presence" and put the gods within human reach.[416] Through their sacred images, gods were rendered as social actors alongside the ancient Greeks. Significantly, the architecture of the city was designed to highlight and focalize the attention of passersby on the sacred image and, by extension, divine presence. Sacred spaces were marked off by *horoi*, or boundary stones, to draw the attention of viewers.[417] Some sanctuaries, particularly sacred goves, springs, or grottos, were encircled by fences to set them apart from other natural features, while urban sanctuaries either had low walls or no walls, making the sacred image visible from the street.[418] The role of herms as ancient "road signs" meant that they had to be placed where they would be noticed, usually at crossroads or other boundaries, and at eye level or a little higher to draw the gaze of travelers. In fact, many sacred images were placed on columns or doorways (or even drawn on walls) at eye level so that the eyes of the image could affect individuals, thereby interpellating them.[419]

---

[416] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, "Epiphany of Form: On the Beauty of Team Sports," *NLH* 30.2 (1999): 359.

[417] Usually on 30-40 centimeters wide, these stones might not have been visible from a great distance, but they were certainly noticeable in urban areas, where people walking along a given street would realize where the boundaries between religious and non-religious space were.

[418] Best, "Religion of the Roadways," 138.

[419] Studies have shown humans are especially attuned to the presence of "eyes" on objects. Humans have developed this as an evolutionary tendency so that they are always

Moreover, these shrines were places of human activity. Particularly in urban areas, roads did not only facilitate movement, they also provided space to conduct business, socialize, and participate in cultural activities alongside the gods. In rural areas, shrines were like rest stops. They are described as pleasant, shaded, open-air enclosures, which featured benches and springs so that travelers could recuperate, rehydrate, and eat something before continuing on their journeys. An epigram describes an image of Hermes inviting travelers to sit down and relax in his shrine.[420] Furthermore, the visible evidence of worship would have also drawn the notice of passersby. For example, Ovid places the following words in the mouth of a young man who, traveling through Lycia, comes across a shrine to an unknown goddess: "I saw an ancient altar, smeared with sacrificial ashes…and I, observing [my friend worshipping] echoed the words, 'Forget not me!'"[421] Despite not knowing the goddess or the customs, the man sees evidence of worship (the sacrificial ashes, his friend's prayer) and offers his own worship. Similarly, Arnobius writes, "If ever I caught sight of a stone anointed and dressed with olive oil, I worshipped it just as if some power resided in it."[422] The low

---

aware of external gazes; as such, their attention is especially drawn by anything with a pair of eyes (see Stewart E. Guthrie, *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion*, 1. issued as an Oxford Univ. Press paperback. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).) Studies have shown that when people draw eyes on their bags or belongings, they are less likely to lose them or forget them somewhere because they become "personalized" or "anthropomorphized" through their eyes Matt Hutson, *The 7 Laws of Magical Thinking: How Irrational Beliefs Keep Us Happy, Healthy, and Sane* (New York: Plume, 2013). Ancient Greek sacred images always prominently featured eyes in ivory inlay, even on aniconic statue; this made it easier to communicate with the images and for the images to interpellate viewers (see Larson, *Understanding*, chap. 1.).

[420] *Anth. Pal.* 9.314.

[421] Ov. *Met*. 6.321-28

[422] Arn. *Adv. Nat*. 1.39.

walls, or lack thereof, of many shrines would have meant that the sacred image and evidence of worship (either through votive objects or people actively praying) would have been visible to anyone walking by.

After noticing the shrine and sacred image in this way, the individual would stop to offer worship. For example, once people entered a rural, open-air sanctuary, they would rest and "honor Hermes Enodios as is customary,"[423] which could entail a variety of actions. People would share parts of their meal with the sacred image in roadside shrines, giving them vegetables, cheese, and wine.[424] One man dedicates his own hat to Enodia in thanks for his safe journey, but many others would have offered flowers.[425] Some might have even offered stones, according to one epigram in which an image of Hermes says, "Men who pass by me have heaped up a pile of stones sacred to Hermes and I, in return for their small kindness, give them no great thanks but tell them there are seven stadia more to Goat Fountain."[426] They might have also anointed the image. Theophrastus' superstitious man, upon passing a

[423] *Anth. Pal*. 10.12.

[424] *Anth. Pal.* 6.299: "A portion of this great bunch of grapes for you, Hermes Enodios, is set down, and a lump of rich cake from the oven, and a black fig, and soft olives and a bit of a wheel of cheese, and Cretan meal, and a heap of…, and an after-dinner drink of wine. May Cypris, my goddess, also enjoy these…" Also, *Anth. Pal*. 9.316, in which Hermes as part of a double herm with Herakles complains that he has to share the offerings with Herakles: "I hate this sharing, and get no pleasure from it. Whoever brings us something, let him serve it to each of us and not in common for us two…" See discussion of both of these passages in Best, "Religion of the Roadways," 87.

[425] Nic., *Georgics*, frag.74 = Ath. 15.684d: Nicander recommends that worshippers offer flowers of yellow elecampane or purple aster at roadside enclosures, and hang them up on the images of gods where they will be highly visible.

[426] *Anth. Pal*. 16.254.

crossroads stone, stops to anoint it in oil and worship on his knees before proceeding.[427] At the very least, a quick prayer or short greeting would have been common practice.[428]

This evidence must change the way we approach sacred landscapes. Sacred landscapes were not merely markers of liminal zones were humans *could* approach the gods. Indeed, based on the model of affective bonds set up in this chapter, the evidence presented in this section displays that affective responses were impelled multiple times during the day across the city. Every time an individual passed an image, they saw not just the deity and a venue for worship, but actually their affective bond and relationship with that god made visible. Because sacred images localized divine presence and focalized attention on the affective bond between viewers and gods, the sacred landscape can be understood as a materialization of this affective relationship. Humans and gods cohabited within the ancient Greek city and interacted on a daily basis, and so the sacred landscape was contoured by flows of decentered and distributed agency. Thus, while the sacred landscape did commemorate past human-divine encounters, it was more importantly reconstituted each day through the presence and interaction of human and divine actors.

---

[427] Theophrastus, *Char*. 16.5; see also Babrius 48, in which Hermes responds to a dog who wishes to anoint him, "I shall be grateful to you if you do not lick off such olive oil as I already have and do not pee on me. Beyond that, pay me no respect." Although humorous, it indicates that it was common for these images to be anointed with olive oil by general worshippers.

[428] Sostratos says, "I always pray to you as I go past," which indicates that a short greeting was probably required (Men. *Dys*. 571-574).

Chapter 3
Paul Against Place

1. Introduction

> *De locis quidem locus est retractandi ad praeveniendam quorundam interrogationem. Quid enim, inquis, si alio in tempore circum adiero, periclitabor de inquinamento? Nulla est praescriptio de locis. Nam non sola ista conciliabula spectaculorum, sed etiam templa ipsa sine periculo disciplinae adire servus dei potest urguente causa simplici dumtaxat, quae non pertineat ad proprium eius loci negotium vel officium. Ceterum et plateae et forum et balneae et stabula et ipsae domus nostrae sine idolis omnino non sunt: totum saeculum satanas et angeli eius repleverunt. Non tamen quod in saeculo sumus, a deo excidimus, sed si quid de saeculi criminibus attigerimus. Proinde si Capitolium, si Serapeum sacrificator vel adorator intravero, a deo excidam, quemadmodum circum vel theatrum spectator. Loca nos non contaminant per se, sed quae in locis fiunt, a quibus et ipsa loca contaminari altercati sumus : de contaminatis contaminamur. Propterea autem commemoramus, quibus eiusmodi loca dicentur ut eorum demonstremus esse quae in iis locis fiunt, quibus ipsa loca dicantur.*
>
> Regarding places, this is the place for addressing the question that some people may raise. Indeed, what are you saying, that if at some point I go to the circus, I will be in danger of pollution? There is no rule about places. For the servant of god is able to go, not only to those gathering places of the spectacles, but even to the temples themselves, without danger to his practice, in as far as he does so for a simple and necessary cause, which is not connected to the specific business or activity of that place. But the streets, the forum, the baths, the taverns, and even our own houses are not altogether free of the pagan gods: devils and angels fill the entire world. We fall away from god, not because we are in the world, but if we participate in the offenses of the world. Therefore, if I enter the Capitolium or the Serapeum as a sacrificer or worshipper, I will fall from god, just as if I enter the circus or the theater as a spectator. The places themselves do not pollute us, but rather what happens in those places, by which, as I have already said, the places themselves are polluted: we, then, are polluted by those polluted places. Now, because of these things, we remind you to whom places of this sort are consecrated, that we might show you that the things that happen in these places are of them, to whom the places are consecrated.

In his *De Spectaculis*, Tertullian lays out in great detail his argument against Christian attendance at shows, games, and any kind of spectacle in general. There may not be a specific commandment, "You shall not go to the circus," but to do so is an act of idolatry.[429]

[429] Tert., *De Spect*. 3

Tertullian's argument takes many tacks: idols are paraded and venerated at spectacles, pagan gods are venerated with sacrifice and prayer, the history of spectacles attest to their pagan origins, and the types of activities are not only offensive to God, they arouse in the spectator emotions that are forbidden to the committed Christian. For the purposes of this chapter, however, Tertullian's most interesting argument comes in *De Spectaculis* 8. Tertullian acknowledges that the places (*loci*) cannot pollute the Christian, particularly those who enter them for an entirely separate purpose. This position is then qualified: the activities that occur within these places contaminate even the places themselves, and through this defilement the places pollute Christians (*de contaminatis contaminamur*). Seemingly simple, Tertullian's perception of place, more specifically pagan religious place, is actually quite complex and lies at the heart of this particular treatise.

Place matters. This statement is both deceptively simple and obvious. Neither is the concept of place straightforward and easily apprehended, nor is it something most humans are aware of as they go about their daily lives. Studies of Greek religion focus largely (and somewhat disproportionately) on the who, what, why, and to whom while neglecting the issue of "where?"[430] This is possibly due to a confluence of the nature of the ancient evidence as well as our Western, theological orientation. While many ancient religious sites have been excavated, they are yet a small percentage of the total number of religious places in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. Add to this the fact that most ancient textual sources reflect minimally on religious places (other than issues of siting particular shrines), and it

[430] Parker, *Polytheism*, 50. This problem is not unique to scholars of Greek religion. Richard Cohen describes the similar tendency of scholars of Buddhism to ignore "place": "That which is properly Buddhist is universal, never local; it is preserved in texts, not archaeological sites (except insofar as they reproduce textual paradigms)" (364). See Cohen, "Naga, Yaksini, Buddha."

becomes clear that not much can be known about the majority of religious places. Furthermore, the western, theological approach defines religion as solely discourse based and spatially dislocated.[431] As a result, studies of Greek religion consider the concept of place as secondary to other questions.

This issue of place requires attention because Greek religion was an emplaced religion, by which I mean its structures and actors were rooted in particular geographical locations.[432] Shrines were set up to commemorate a deity's actions and interventions in the history of a particular city. Athena Polias' temple was built on the site of her contest with Poseidon for patronage of the city, and incorporated both the olive tree (Athena's gift) and saltwater spring (Poseidon's gift) into its structure. The Athenians dedicated the statue of Apollo Alexikakos because the god cured the plague in Athens, and in 480 they set up an altar to the North Wind for destroying the Persian fleet at Thermopylae.[433] The gods themselves were embodied and emplaced within the ancient landscape through their sacred images, and were localized alongside humans as actors. In a landscape where each god would have been present in multiple locations, albeit with distinct personae (e.g. Athena as Polias, Parthenos, and Nikē all on the Akropolis, or Zeus as Ktesios in the home and as Poleius on the Akropolis), place becomes a very important factor in differentiating gods.[434] Too, all of

[431] J.Z. Smith demonstrates the ways in which religions like Christianity and Judaism, which were uprooted from their emplacement and diasporic, developed to function independently of geographical location. Smith, *To Take Place*, 74–95; Christine M. Thomas, "Place and Memory: Response to Jonathan Z. Smith on 'To Take Place', on the Occasion of Its Twentieth Anniversary," *JAAR* 76.3 (2008): 775.

[432] Thomas, "Place and Memory," 775–76.

[433] Ar. *Ran*. 847-8; Paus. 2.34.2; Hdt. 7.189.

[434] Parker, *Polytheism*, 50.

the religious activities discussed in the last two chapters (gazing, feeding, clothing, touching, praying) were likewise grounded in place, as were the attendant human and divine actors. Thus, a picture of Greek religion that overlooks the locatedness of religious actors and activities is incomplete.

In this chapter, we will turn to the importance and role of place in ancient Greek religious experience. The guiding questions of this chapter are: 1. Where were religious places in the ancient Greek world and what did they mean for those interacting with them?, 2. What is the role of place in the formation and reaffirmation of personal and social identities?, and 3. How did the social construction and distribution of religious places in the ancient city impact the inhabitants' lived experiences (pagans, Jews, and Jesus-followers alike)? I will argue that places were not just sites or buildings, "containers" inside of which people conducted their lives, but were actually meaningful. The performance of religious activities in place produced and reaffirmed the meaning of the place as well as the individual conducting the actions. As such, identity was dispersed across place, and it was *through* the landscape (a network of meaningful places) that people's sense of self was manifested and maintained.

To that end, I will begin the chapter by examining the problems in current scholarly interpretations of ancient Greek religious place and explore how the recent theorizing of place and landscape provides a way to move from a Cartesian approach towards a recognition of the dynamic entanglement of people and places. Turning to ancient Greece, I will explore the performance of religious activities in producing meaningful interactions with place. More specifically, I will broadly summarize the kinds of rites of passage ancient Greeks might have undergone at different stages of life as a means of assuming different

social identities, paying particular attention to the locatedness of these acts. I propose that the relative permanence of places sparked memories of previous acts, enabling individuals to spatially and temporally localize and manifest these various identities in an unconscious but integral process. In section three, I reexamine Paul's first letter to the Corinthias 8-10 through the model set up in section two. I explore Paul's response to the conflict between the so-called Strong and the Weak as spatial discourse that was meant to establish limits for engagement with the surrounding pagan material landscape. Such a reading not only reaffirms the importance of the landscape to Greek religious experience but also reveals that the pagan landscape was an obstacle to Christian conversion well into Late Antiquity.

2.1. The "where," "what," and "who" of Place: Theories and definitions

Where were the religious places of the ancient Greeks? The conclusion of the previous chapter touched on this question broadly. In short, they were everywhere. But a little more precision is warranted. The comprehensive textual and archaeological records for Attica make it a strong starting point for scholars of religious place. From this, the landscapes of other ancient locations can be extrapolated. The first step when considering place is to examine location. Below are a series of maps which chart the locations of shrines, temples, and altars in and around Athens.

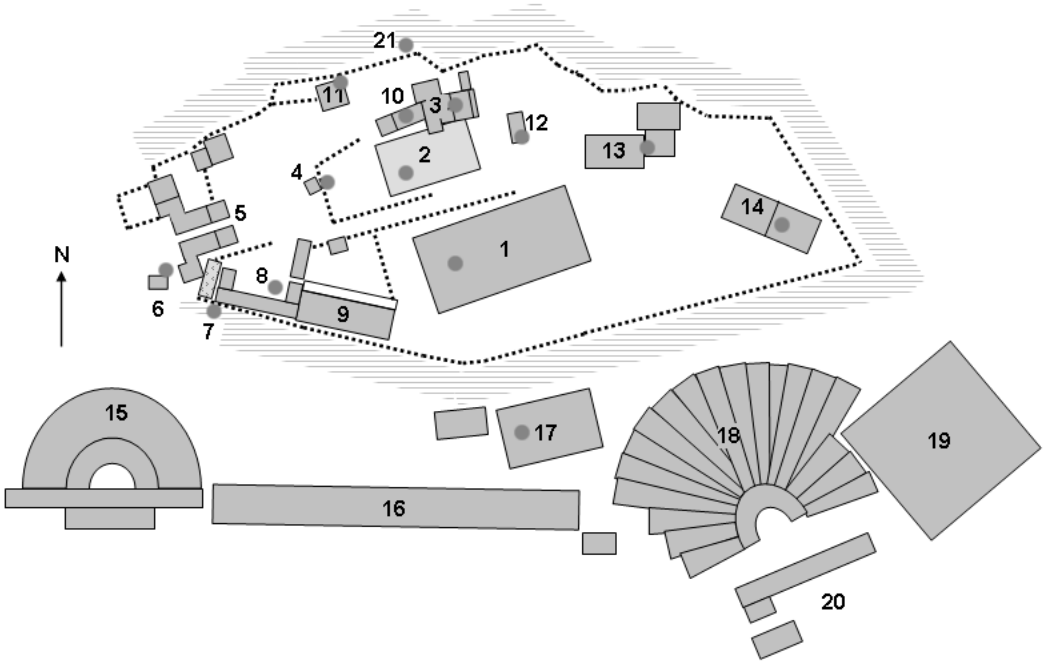


Fig. 1. Plan of the Akropolis, religious shrines marked with a red dot. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

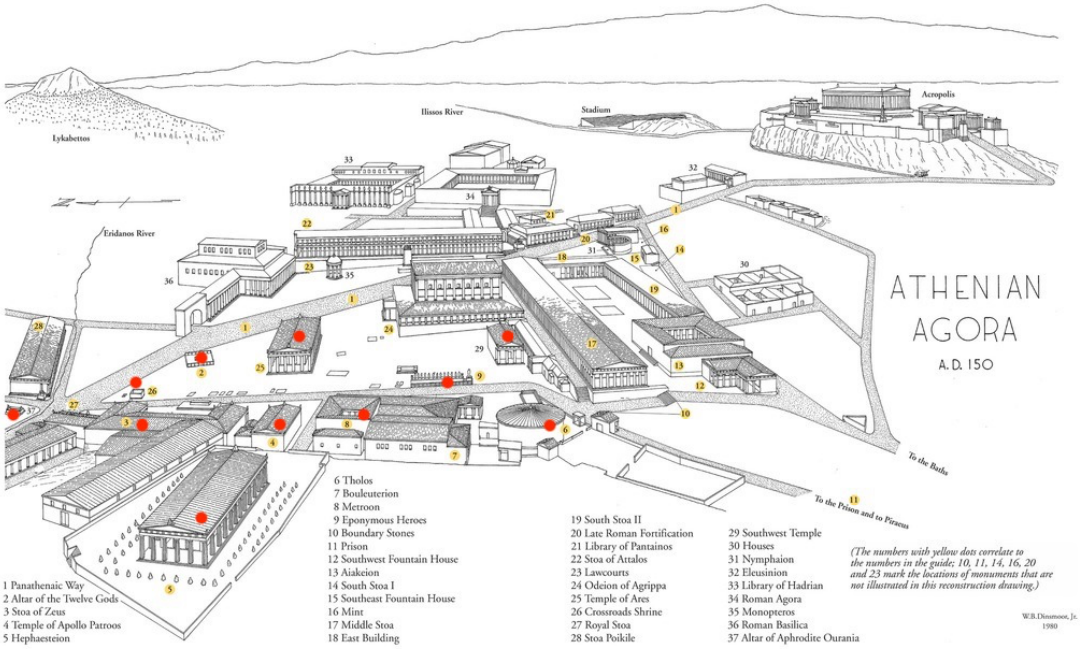


Fig. 2. Plan of the Athenian Agora in 150 C.E., religious shrines marked with a red dot. Source: ASCSA Agora Excavations, in AgoraPicBk 16 (1976).

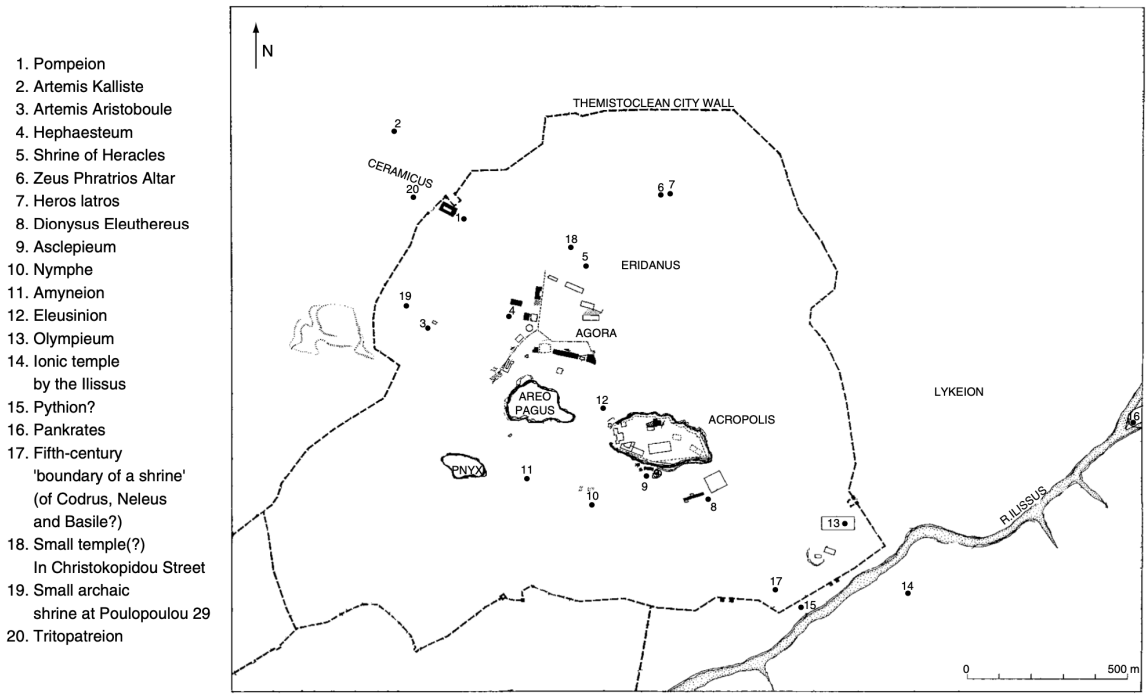


Fig. 3 Map of temples and sanctuaries that have been archaeologically located in the city of Athens, excluding those of the Acropolis and Agora, created by Parker, R., 2009, *Polytheism*.

Religious sites in the Agora and the Akropolis of Athens (figs. 1, 2) have been the focus of much scholarly scrutiny, given that both of these areas were public and central to the political activity of the city-state. But less attention has been given to religious sites outside of the city center. In figure 3, Robert Parker has plotted religious sites that have been located archaeologically outside of the Agora and Akropolis but still within the inhabited space of Athens. His map shows twenty shrines, temples, or altars. Figure 4 expands further, locating religious sites outside of the inhabited city which were nevertheless the focus of major religious activity. The sheer number of shrines in this relatively small region is staggering.

These maps, detailed though they may be, still do not present a full picture of religious place in Attica, not least because they only include shrines that have been located. The people of Attica were divided into several different groups: *demes, phratries, gene,*

orgeones, and private cult societies.[435] All of these groups had their own altars and religious places throughout their villages and the surrounding countryside. Even private dining and drinking clubs, which were not overtly religious and did not own their own shrines, would have offered libations and sacrifices at their events and may have claimed the patronage of a particular god.[436] Of the evacuation of the Athenian countryside during the Peloponnesian war Thucydides tells us, "They (the inhabitants) were distressed and resentful at leaving their houses and the shrines which had been traditionally theirs right from the time of the ancient constitution, and at being forced to change their way of life and to do no less each than abandon his own native city."[437] Shrines were not just everywhere, they were integral to the identity and way of life of Athenians in the countryside.

The vast majority of these rustic shrines have not been found, but the site of Halai Aixonides provides a good example of the general type. This *deme*, which was built from two villages, features a Hekataion at a crossroads, four small temples situated among houses in the southeast section of the village, and a larger temple in the northwest. This larger shrine was the Aphrodision of Halai, an important sanctuary where *deme* decrees were likely to have been displayed.[438] There was also a slightly larger sanctuary of Apollo Zoster a few

---

[435] In 508/7 BCE, Cleisthenes established 139 demes and 10 tribes into which all Attic citizens were organized. This new system was superimposed on the earlier social organization of *phratries* ("brotherhoods" or kinship groups), which nevertheless persisted. There were at least thirty phratries, and perhaps as many as the demes themselves. Each family belonged to a phratry through the male line, and the phratry was responsible for legitimizing boys and providing them with the opportunity for citizenship.

[436] Robert Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 335–36.

[437] Thuc. 2.16.

[438] Parker, *Polytheism*, 69.

miles south of the villages, the site of many important religious festivals. Additionally, there were probably several "nature" shrines which do not survive today: rivers, springs, groves, fields, as well as mountains and caves depending on the location of a given *deme*. While the exact number and size of such local religious sites varied greatly, all *demes* featured a number of places where individuals and small groups could conduct the religious affairs associated with their families, kinship groups, and *demes*.

Sites that were not overtly religious in function or purpose must likewise be considered. In many modern cultures, there is a tendency to isolate religion spatially and temporally, but in ancient Greece religion permeated all aspects of life. As such, religious activity was dispersed across a wide array of locations.[439] Statues of gods were placed throughout the domestic setting, e.g. in the storeroom, the hearth, doorways, and the yard, at the very least. Sacred images and altars were also constructed throughout people's lands and fields, major thoroughfares, and workshop or factory complexes.[440] Many "non-religious" public buildings were also the sites of religious activity. Meetings of the assembly and lawcourts opened with sacrifices to the gods, and gods were called on to witness oaths and

[439] Jan N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion*, G&R 24 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, trans. John Raffan (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985); Julia Kindt, "Polis Religion – A Critical Appreciation," *Kernos* 22 (2009): 9–34. Christine Thomas has also aptly pointed out that the focus on an individual cult or place is a reflection of our western, Christian definition of religion as "doctrines about the divinity, rather than as ritual practices and habitual behaviors of human worshippers" (112). She advocates religious behavior and religious practice as a better starting point for understanding ancient Greek religious experience. Christine M. Thomas, "Locating Purity: Temples, Sexual Prohibitions, and 'Making a Difference' in Thessalonikē," in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē: Studies in Religion and Archaeology*, ed. Laura Nasrallah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 109–32.

[440] Best, "Religion of the Roadways."

other legal proceedings in these venues. Games, shows, and other public events also featured sacrifices, libations, and prayers. Sacred images of gods could even be brought in to these arenas to watch the action alongside humans.[441] In conclusion, if every location in which religious activity occurred were plotted on these maps, we might find that more places than not were sites of religious activity.

[441] Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel, *Religion*, 93.

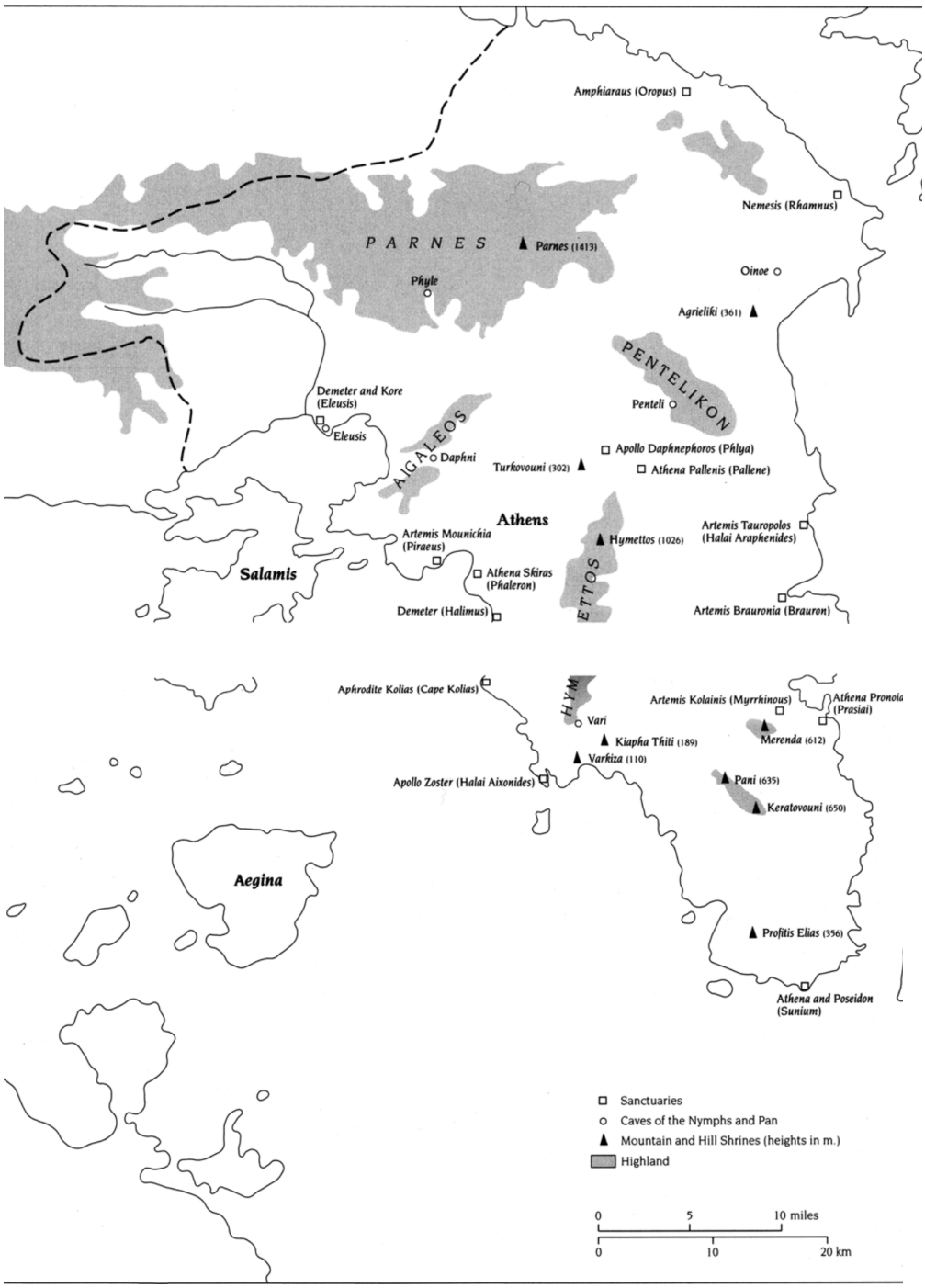


Fig. 4 Map of cave, mountain and hill shrines, and principal sanctuaries outside Athens and the Piraeus, created by Parker, R., 2009, *Polytheism*.

Although the above maps (figs. 1-4) are enormously helpful when visualizing the distribution of religion across the ancient landscape, their utility when considering the meaning of religious place is limited. Maps reveal location, but location is only a small

aspect of place as a concept. This may seem surprising because modern, western cultures conceive of place as a discrete, static, and essential entity that exists outside of and separate from human bodies, i.e. a mere container in which human activities occur.[442] Based in such preconceptions, earlier archaeological methods approached place as a geometric form, the meaning of which could be apprehended from a distanced, disengaged, vision-centric perspective.[443] But humans do not encounter place as abstract, objective data onto which meaning is conferred.[444] A place is always the place *of* something; it is meaningful and relational. Place is therefore more than geographical location, a set of architectural features, and even the sum of its parts.[445]

A definition is warranted. For the purposes of this chapter, place represents a location(s) which, through its implication in the human world, is best understood as a locus of meaning.[446] Meaning develops through interactions between entities (objects, people, places, ideological structures, etc.), so we can conceive of place as a relational web of

---

[442] For an early critique of this model, see Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, 7th ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

[443] John C. Barrett, *Fragments from Antiquity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); Julian Thomas, "The Politics of Vision and the Archaeologies of Landscape," in *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*, ed. Barbara Bender (London: Routledge, 1993), 19–48; Yannis Hamilakis, "Afterword: Eleven Theses on the Archaeology of the Senses," in *Making Senses of the Past*, ed. Jo Day (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013), 409–20.

[444] This is the 'Hegelian supplement' model, in which a place is made and meaning is later bestowed onto it by a particular culture. In this model, a monolithic meaning can then be read or decoded by visual observation of the place. For critiques of this perspective: Julian Thomas, *Time, Culture and Identity: An Interpretive Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 2008), 90.

[445] Emma-Jayne Graham, *Reassembling Religion in Roman Italy* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 46.

[446] Smith, *To Take Place*, 28; Thomas, *Time, Culture and Identity*, 83.

meanings.[447] As such, humans through their embodiment actually bring place into being.[448] This is not a conscious or unidirectional process. Rather, place is always disclosed to people as already meaningful because of their *habitus,* the "almost-unconscious formation as being-in-space that one receives from the earliest days of childhood, instilled by repeated actions and movements through space."[449] These repeated actions by bodies enmeshed in cultural structures simultaneously reaffirm place as meaningful. Furthermore, the meaning of place is never static. Human agency, experience, memory, and cultural, social, and power structures are constantly being integrated and enmeshed with place as a result of human activities and interactions, with the result that place is always in the process of "becoming" *through* these other things.[450]

Just as places "become" through their interactions with humans, so too human identities are constructed through their habituated landscape, that is, through movements in space and time.[451] The self is not an essential, bounded, sovereign entity. Humans are only

---

[447] Thomas, *Time, Culture and Identity*, 92.

[448] Smith, *To Take Place*, 28. Actions, intentions, and recollections are all types of interactions between people and place through which meaning develops, see Claudia Moser and Cecilia Feldman, "Introduction," in *Locating the Sacred: Theoretical Approaches to the Emplacement of Religion*, ed. Claudia Moser and Feldman, Cecilia (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 1.

[449] Thomas, "Place and Memory," 776; Bourdieu, *Outline*, 76–78.

[450] Peter F. Biehl, "Enclosing Places: A Contextual Approach to Cult and Religion in Neolithic Central Europe," in *Cult in Context: Reconsidering Ritual in Archaeology*, ed. David A. Barrowclough and Caroline Malone (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), 178–80; Graham, *Reassembling Religion*, 46.

[451] "The experience of sensing places, then, is both thoroughly reciprocal and incorrigibly dynamic. As places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed," (Keith H.

aware of themselves as situated in place and time, and so identity is a relational process. Humans manifest sets of relationships through which they exercise agency. Each person's biography is therefore constitutive, built up from previous encounters and located acts that themselves have significance only through the same web of relationships between people, culture, structure, things, and places.[452] Because place existed in the past and continues into the present, it can call the past to mind.[453] Embodied in the present then, in a specific temporal and spatial locus, is a self that is simultaneously dispersed or *stretched* across place and time. Personal histories are also spatial stories, and place enters directly into a sense of selfhood.[454]

The entanglement of place and identity means that place is always multivocal.[455] Places and landscapes can sustain multiple narratives and meanings, which means that a single location has the capacity to be a different place (locus of meaning) to different people.[456] This is especially true when we consider that all of the relations in which humans,

---

Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 107.

[452] Thomas, *Time, Culture and Identity*, 50–52.

[453] This is aided by the human tendency to memorialize place materially. Moser points out that the materiality of place (e.g. buildings, objects, walls) can, through its permanence, serve as lasting reminders (to oneself, to others in the community, and in religious places to the gods) of ephemeral actions. Claudia Moser, *The Altars of Republican Rome and Latium: Sacrifice and the Materiality of Roman Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 8.

[454] Thomas, *Time, Culture and Identity*, 90; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[455] See Hodder, *Entangled*.

[456] Veronica Strang describes the conflict between the aboriginal community in the Cape York peninsula in Australia and the Euro-Australian cattle-herders as a difference in lived relationships. For the indigenous group, the land embodies ancestral beings. There is thus a

places, and objects are enmeshed are structures of power. Thus, the experience of place is a reflection of how one is positioned within the cultural discourse of power. Accordingly, place is always contested. The social construction and production of place reinforce dominant cultural ideologies, but place is also consumed strategically.[457] Despite attempts to impose a monolithic, unitary meaning upon a place, particularly when monumental architecture is involved, "the resulting configurations will always be used 'against and despite' themselves."[458] As individuals struggle for position in the meaningful world, they resist, test, and reinterpret places with the result that the meaning of place, and of the self by extension, is being constantly renegotiated. The linking of places in different narratives of personhood may actually produce subversive and new ways to interpret the landscape.

2.2. Meaningful, "lived" place in Ancient Greece

How do we move from two-dimensional dots on a map to an understanding of religious places as loci of meaning in ancient Greece? One way is to make an in-depth study of one or a small group of religious sites, paying attention to the types of people who were allowed within, the narratives associated with it, and the different rituals that marked that

---

close, reciprocal relationship between humans and the land. They are entangled together morally and socially. The Euro-Australian herders instead view the landscape as hostile and wild, a thing to be tamed for the production of wealth. The two communities have different mental images of the same landscape, but also are engaged in different sets of lived relationships. One's sense of place is therefore irreconcilable with the other's. Veronica Strang, "Competing Perceptions of Landscape in Kowanyama, North Queensland," in *The Archaeology and Anthropology of Landscape*, ed. Peter Ucko and Robert Layton (London: Routledge, 1999), 206–18.

[457] Lefebvre, *Production*; Thomas, *Time, Culture and Identity*, 92.

[458] Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 19; Thomas, *Time, Culture and Identity*, 92.

place as sacred.[459] Another way is to look at the landscape as a whole. This latter approach, which will be employed in this chapter, relies on Julian Thomas' definition of lived landscape as:

> a network of related places, which have gradually been revealed through people's habitual activities and interactions, through the closeness and affinity that they have developed for some locations, and through the important events, festivals, calamities, and surprises which have drawn other spots to their attention, causing them to be remembered or incorporated into stories.[460]

Thus, this chapter centers on people, focusing on how religion shaped individuals' lives and on the purpose of certain types of religious performances. By then looking at the locatedness of these acts, we can observe the distribution of personhood across the landscape, thereby transforming the landscape from inert to habituated.

"Religious activity" is a huge category denoting an enormous range of practices, and so the scope needs to be narrowed. This section will focus more specifically on those religious activities by which an individual's life was measured, or what many refer to as rites of passage.[461] Rites of passage not only marked a transition from one age group to another,

---

[459] This type of approach has merits but is also quite limiting. As stated earlier, domestic, rural, and even many urban shrines do not survive. This leads to a disproportionate focus on the few major temples and sanctuaries which are extant and for which there is detailed information. Moreover, where rural shrines do survive (e.g. Halai Aixonides), little is known regarding either the human and divine proprietors or the religious activities that might have occurred there (Parker, *Polytheism*, 67). The result is that these places are largely ignored in studies of Greek sacred space, and the picture of ancient Greek religious experience, agency, and identity remains vastly incomplete.

[460] Julian Thomas, "Archaeologies of Place and Landscape," in *Archaeological Theory Today: A Reader* (London: Continuum International Pub. Group, 2001), 173. NB: I use the terms "landscape" and "religious landscape" interchangeably in this chapter because ancient Greeks did not limit their religious activities only to overtly religious places like temples and shrines.

[461] See van Gennep's influential work that termed, defined, and analyzed "rites of passage": Arnold van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage* (Paris: Émile Nourry, 1909).

they were also the means by which different social identities were assumed.[462] The social fabric of a Greek city was differentiated by kinship, gender, class, and citizenship, but also through membership in voluntary associations. It is worth repeating that there was no separation of secular and sacred, either in space, time, activity, or identity, in ancient Greek culture. This is as true for the private as for the public sphere; there was no polis without religion and appeals to the gods were an important source of legitimation for groups and individuals in society. Indeed, candidates for archonships were asked whether they had an Apollo Patroos and Zeus Herkeios and where these shrines were.[463] People's individual, family, social, and civic identities were all mediated through the performance of religious activities in religious places. The ancient Greek's fundamental and complex sense of self was the totality of these different identities.[464] Thus, the starting point for considerations of identity and place must be rites of passage and their locations.

Before delving into the material, the organization and nature of the evidence must be addressed. In the interest of concision, the longer, detailed list of important rites of passage (including summary of activities, sources, etc.) has been relegated to **Appendix A**; what follows in this section is a broad and general overview of select rites of passage. It is important to note that these lists, both in the body of the chapter and the appendix, are in no

[462] David D. Leitao, "Adolescent Hair-Growing and Hair-Cutting Rituals in Ancient Greece: A Sociological Approach," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone (London: Routledge, 2003), 110.

[463] Arist. *Ath. Pol*. 55.3; Parker, *Polytheism*, 16. The use of the possessive is interesting here. The idea that one *had* an Apollo Patroos suggests that gods belonged to certain groups and families, in that their worship was the prerogative of those groups.

[464] Leitao, "Adolescent Hair-Growing"; Parker, *Polytheism*, 10.

way comprehensive. Such a study would require an entire book in itself. For the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on the general *types* of rites undergone by the average ancient Greek throughout his or her life (e.g. birth celebrations, weddings), and examine broadly the types of locations in which such activities took place (e.g. home, *phratry*, *deme*, countryside, or urban sanctuary space).

Two further points need to be made. Firstly, the evidence spans the Greek world from the Archaic to the Roman periods. Due to the preponderance of the Attic literary and material records, however, the evidence skews heavily towards Classical Athens. In fact, approximately two-thirds of the rituals presented below are either specifically Attic in nature or are attested mainly in the Attic material. Wherever possible, I have bolstered the Attic sources with evidence from other regions. In no way am I suggesting that these rituals were performed by all Greeks (each city had rites unique to its population) and ritual continuity cannot be assumed over an eight hundred year range. Rather, I look for overarching patterns of religion in the ancient Greek world. Ancient Greeks, like people of many other religious backgrounds, underwent various rites of passage that mediated enrollment in different groups throughout their lives; I will analyze their locational significance. Secondly, while a spatial organization of the evidence might be desirable, many of the listed activities cross the boundaries between home and neighborhood, countryside and urban sanctuary, etc. Some, like the wedding, have components in several locations. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, I have opted for a broadly chronological presentation from birth to adulthood, but pay particular attention to the spatial dimension in the analysis.

a. Rites of Passage

1. *Amphidromia* (*oikos* and neighborhood): A ritual performed around the hearth (Hestia) of the home to introduce the child into the household and place him or her formally under the protection of Hestia. This was followed by a sacrifice to the gods at either the domestic altar or an altar in the neighborhood (perhaps belonging to a *phratry*) and feasting with members of the *phratry*.

2. Naming ceremony (*oikos*): This might have happened at the same time as the *amphidromia* or a few days later. Both boys and girls were placed around the hearth (Hestia) and given their names in the presence of the household. Offerings were then made to the gods.

3. *Choes* (*oikos* and neighborhood): Celebrated on the middle day of the Anthesteria, boys (and perhaps girls) about to enter their third year of life were wreathed, decorated with amulets, and allowed to be present at the sacrifice to Hermes Chthonios conducted with the *phratry* at home or at a *phratry* altar.

4. Birthday celebrations (γενέθλια) (*oikos*) : At least in Athens, it is likely that children were celebrated on their birthdays with sacrifices and offerings to the gods.

5. Presentation and offerings to *Kourotrophos* and *kourotrophic* (child-nurturing) gods (shrines/temples in *demes* and cities): Sometimes done at birth, sometimes in early childhood, and sometimes at multiple points in the first sixteen years of life, the presentation of a child to a deity occurred within a temple or shrine. In doing so, parents attempted to ensure the welfare, protection, and health of their children. River gods and gods of childhood (*Kourotrophos*, Artemis, Hermes) were the main recipients.

6. Introduction to the *phratry* during the *Apatouria* (neighborhood): This Ionian festival was conducted at a *phratry*'s local altar and oversaw the introduction of boys (and sometimes girls) into the *phtratry*. Boys were introduced once between the ages of 0-3, and again around the 16. Sacrifices were offered to Zeus Phratrios, Athena Phratria, and Artemis, and boys dedicated a lock of their hair to Artemis to thank her for protection.

7. Choruses (sanctuary spaces in *deme* and countryside): Young boys and girls sang and danced within the *temenos* of a temple during important festivals through their *phratry*'s choral group. Not only did this serve as an induction into the kinship group, it was also the venue in which girls could enter into society by being exposed to the male gaze and examined by spectators as potential brides for their sons.

8. Service to goddesses (temples, especially in major sanctuaries): Religious settings provided girls with agency and opportunities for public roles. Virgin girls were often in charge of caring for a particular goddess (e.g. tending to their statues). They could also have additional roles as *arrephoroi*, *kanephoroi* (basket-carriers), *kleidophoros* (key-bearer), *hydrophoroi* (water-bearer), and others within temples and festivals. Through their duties, girls were able to spend time in temples and in public during processions and other festivals. These positions were highly coveted and families dedicated statues of their daughters who served in these capacities. This type of service was very important for girls' civic identities.

9. Ritual hair growing (*oikos*, neighborhood, temple) : Throughout their childhood and early adulthood, boys and girls might have grown out and cut their hair for particular gods and goddesses at various points. This would mainly be done to either request or thank the deity for protection during a transitional stage. This is why girls generally dedicated their hair before marriage or childbirth, while boys might have done so before joining the *phratry* or

the *ephebate*. This was done in the temple of the god to whom the hair was dedicated, and the hair was then displayed on or near the sacred image.

10. Gymnasia and athletic competitions: Gymnasia often had their own religious calendars. On their festival days, boys participated in competitions, offered sacrifices, and performed hymns as a part of their maturation process.

11. *Ephebeia* (major urban and rural sanctuaries): Upon turning eighteen, Attic boys were inducted into the cohort of *ephebes*, through which they offered sacrifices, toured sanctuaries, and provided escorts for religious processions.

12. The wedding (*oikos,* neighborhood, major sanctuaries): The wedding involved several ritual elements, including the *proteleia* (prenuptial sacrifices conducted at temples), childhood offerings (dedicating hair, belts, veils, toys to Artemis and Aphrodite at their temples), bridal baths (with water sourced from local sacred springs), the wedding feast (which may have been held in the dining rooms of a sanctuary), and the *katakhusmata* ceremony (which integrated the bride into her husband's home through hearth rituals). Propitiation of the gods at all these stages guaranteed their protection in this transitional phase or averted the anger of Artemis at this exit from childhood.

13. Pregnancy and childbirth (major sanctuaries): Concerned with the birth and welfare of their children, women made dedications at sanctuaries to Artemis, Asklepius, Athena, and Demeter. Statuettes of infants as well as clothing soiled during childbirth were offered and displayed in the sanctuary, usually near the sacred image. Clothes were stored long-term in the deity's *kosmos*. Fathers also offered sacrifices at their *phratry* altar and libations at private religious associations to celebrate the birth of their children.

14. Household religious rites (*oikos*): As heads of household, men were responsible for tending the household shrines of Zeus Ktesios, Zeus Herkeios, Apollo Agyieus, and others, and for offering libations and prayers at mealtimes. The head of household sacrificed at the domestic altar on behalf of his family and also at *phratry* and *deme* altars on behalf of these groups. Women tended the hearth within the home and also performed religious duties with women of the neighborhood at local shrines. The Thesmophoria was celebrated annually by married women and mothers at local sanctuaries to Demeter.

15. Priesthoods for men and women (neighborhood, *deme*, major sanctuaries): Men likely served as priests at *deme* temples, and might even have represented their *deme* in delegations to Athens for larger city-wide festivals. Wives of prominent men served as priestesses at local *deme* temples to goddesses and could also hold priesthoods throughout the city depending on the prominence of their family. In Athens, women held about forty state priesthoods. Through these positions, women had public roles in throughout the city.

Each of these religious activities enabled ancient Greek individuals to don and display their membership in different groups. In the domestic setting, people were inducted into the *oikia* by the rites conducted around the hearth, like the *amphidromia* and the *katakhusmata*, and the daily rites marked individuals' position within the household (e.g. male head of house, women of the house, etc.). Rituals conducted at springs (collecting water for the bridal bath), rivers (dedicating children), and cave shrines (e.g. nuptial offerings, ritual hair cutting), grounded and linked people geographically. Religious activities at *phratry* and *deme* shrines, such as the *Apatouria* sacrifices, as well as activities in other shrines through *phratry* or *deme* membership, such as choral groups, initiated youths into their kinship and geographical

subdivisions, setting the stage for their impending citizenship within a city-state. In each of these locations, then, individuals were able to perform and reaffirm their different identities for themselves and those around them.

b. Analysis

> As soon as I turned seven I was an *arrephoros*,
> then, I was an *aletris*; when I was ten I shed
> my saffron robe for the Foundress, being a bear at the Brauronia;
> And once, when I was a beautiful maiden, I was an *kanephoros*,
> wearing a necklace of dried figs.[465]

The above segment from Aristophanes' *Lysystrata* is a good example of how narratives of selfhood are constructed through the process of memory. Memory is a complex phenomenon. It involves the "hauling-back" of sensory experiences, but it is also concerned with language in that it is the *significance* of experiences through which the sensory aspects are remembered.[466] This significance, and indeed memory as such, is socially constructed. It is a representation and interpretation of the past to oneself, in which the past is reordered and restructured and pieced into a narrative to create a story of the self.[467] Public and personal past meld together and become incorporated into the present through the embodied self, and produce the composite, complex, and still "becoming" self. We see this happening in the above lines as the Athenian women list past rites of passage. Each one builds on the other to create a narrative of civic service. By remembering and bringing the past into the present through their embodiment, the Athenian women protesting the war against Sparta claim their

[465] Ar., *Lys*. 641-7

[466] Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), 45.

[467] Thomas, *Time, Culture and Identity*, 51–52.

right as "cultic citizens" to speak and be heard by the men. The composite of selfhood legitimates them in this moment.

The role of memory in guarding against the fragmentation of the self depends largely on place. While not mentioned in the passage outright, place is paramount. In this scene of the play, the women have barricaded themselves on the Akropolis, where several of the activities mentioned would have occurred. The *arrephoria* would have taken place between the shrines of Athena Polias and Pandrosus, and *kanephoroi* were depicted prominently on the Parthenon frieze for their roles in the Panathenaic procession. It is also likely that the procession to Brauron for the Brauronia would have started on the Akropolis from the shrine of Artemis Brauronia. Place is associative and calls to mind memories of public and private pasts. The experience of place is a manifestation of one's identity. Thus, being on the Akropolis in proximity to places like the temples of Athena Polias, Pandrosus, Aglauros, and Artemis Brauronia, the Athenian women are able to recall, narrate, and thereby embody, the aspects of their identity that lend them authority.

The associative capacity of place is further aided by the material objects that memorialize ephemeral religious performances.[468] In sanctuaries to Artemis, Aphrodite, Athena, Nymphe, Nemesis, Demeter, Pan and the Nymphs, and the Tritopatores, *loutrophoroi* used in wedding rituals like the bridal bath and later dedicated by brides were on display to visitors.[469] The Shrine of *Nymphe* on the Akropolis, for example, has more

[468] Mithen, "The Supernatural Beings"; Renfrew, "Mind and Matter."

[469] Shrines at Rhamnous, Mounychia, Delos, Corinth, and a few other places also preserve *loutrophoroi* and nuptial *lebes*. See Victoria Sabetai, "The Wedding Vases of the Athenians: A View from Sanctuaries and Houses," *Mètis*, *Des Vases Pour Les Athéniens* 12 (2014): 51–79.

offerings associated with marriage than any other place.[470] Bronze plaques depicting maturation rites were dedicated and displayed in the temple to Hermes at Kato Syme, and similar plaques showing lovers praying to Hermes and Aphrodite were displayed at Locri.[471] Locks of hair, belts, garments, and garlands were placed on the sacred image to the point that the image of Hygeia at Titane was completely obscured.[472] Within the home, vases with paintings of *kanephoroi* or with nuptial functions would have been treasured and displayed. On the Akropolis, statues of *arrephoroi* displayed in the shrines of Athena, Aglauros, and Pandrosus, the Parthenon frieze depicting the *kanephoroi,* and perhaps reliefs or friezes in the shrine of Artemis Brauronia, would have unconsciously prompted Aristophanes' women to recall their own pasts.[473]

The *Lysistrata* is, of course, fictional, and the controversial text and punctuation of this particular segment has led some to dismiss the content altogether. Yet, it is useful for considering the process, wholly unconscious, by which selfhood and place are tied together, becoming mutually dependent through one's *habitus* (which dictated culturally specific and appropriate ways to engage with one's surroundings). Furthermore, because a thing can only reflect an individual's own knowledge back to her, the experience of place actually "places" an individual in society. That is to say, the calling to mind of the *arrephoria* and Brauronia

---

[470] John Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 361–64.

[471] Nanno Marinatos, "Striding across Boundaries: Hermes and Aphrodite as Gods of Initiation," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone (London: Routledge, 2003), 130–51.

[472] Paus. 2.11.6.

[473] *IG* 2^2 3461, 3465-6, 3470-3, 3482, 3488, 3496-7, 3515-16, 3528, 3554-6, 3634.

identifies the speakers of the passage as elite Athenian women, for only they undertook these rites in those places. Others experienced the Akropolis based on their former performances of religious activities appropriate to their position in Athenian society.[474] Furthermore, the experience of exclusion was no less important to a sense of place and identity. Many temples restricted access to slaves, metics, foreigners, and sometimes women; certain groups were barred from specific activities. For example, slaves had to participate in the religious rites of their master's house, regardless of their own familial gods and practices. It is not difficult to imagine that for these groups the landscape was a physical evocation of their struggle for power and position in society. Knowing this can help scholars overcome the silence of the material and literary record on such unprivileged groups and restore, if only hypothetically, multivocality to the ancient Greek religious landscape.

3.1 Case Study: 1 Corinthians 8-10

a. Setting the stage

In this section, we will turn to Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapters 8-10. I shall show that in these particular chapters of the letter, Paul employs spatial categories to define the extent to which members of the *ekklēsia* could engage with the pagan landscape around them. Paul uses the debate over *eidolothoutos*, or food offered to the gods, among the Corinthians to set up a model for how former pagan converts to the Jesus movement could honor their commitment to the Judean god while still inhabiting their formerly meaningful landscape. The spatial discourse within this passage both reaffirms the argument presented in the previous section regarding the importance of the Greek religious landscape and the

[474] Though this chapter has focused on rites of passage, religious activity more generally served the same function.

entanglement of place and self, and changes our perception of early Christian experience in the pagan material landscape.

This shift in focus might seem incongruous in a study on ancient Greek religion, and yet a reexamination of 1 Corinthians and the experience of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* is crucial for our understanding of Greek religion. In many ways, the neglect of the pagan material landscape as an integral part of Greek religious experience and identity can be traced to Paul's denigrations of religious materiality. Because modern scholars have received Paul in a world where Christianity has triumphed over Greek paganism, and Protestant and Enlightenment aniconism over religious materiality, scholars have taken Paul's description of his mission, his audience, and his success at face value, to the great detriment of our understanding of Greek religion. Indeed, for many nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars, Paul's words also carry authority as scripture. But to what extent can and should Paul's descriptions of Greek religion inform modern scholarship?

As a diaspora Judean in the Hellenistic world, Paul spoke Greek fluently and had a passing familiarity with pagan traditions, on account of which he likely thought of himself as the ideal candidate for expressing the *euangelion* to the pagans around him. Yet, despite his Hellenistic background, we must doubt his aptitude for the task at hand. To begin with, Paul, though fluent in Greek, employed a vocabulary derived specifically from the Septuagint. It is unlikely that the general Greek audience was acquainted with the Jewish valence of familiar Greek words. For example, when Paul refers to the pagan gods as *daimones*, he is calling them "demons" based on the usage of *daimon* in the Septuagint.[475] In Greek, however,

[475] At least six different Hebrew words were translated as *daimon* in the Septuagint. All of the Hebrew words, some of which were categories or proper names of demons, had a negative connotation. For the Judean diaspora population, *daimon* would have been

daimon simply meant a lesser divinity. So, Paul's point in 1 Cor. 10:20, that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to *daimones*, might not have registered as the critique Paul intended.[476] Similarly, the *eidol-* root words that Paul uses to warn against activities related to pagan gods and images had no negative connotations to Greek pagans.[477]

Equally, it is abundantly clear that Paul's perspective on Greek religion was severely limited by his Judean background. We must remember that Paul was a member of a minority religious and ethnic group in the ancient Mediterranean, whose scriptures were overtly hostile to the religious practices of the pagans. For example, the authors of the Hebrew scriptures mistakenly thought that pagans believed that the statue itself was a god and worshipped the mere material form. They therefore condemned the worship of other gods and the making of images which, constructed from profane materials by human hands, could and did lead to all sorts of immorality.[478] Many of the words used to refer to images of the gods in the Hebrew Bible, such as *aven* (vanity), *elil* (nothing), or *gillulim* (excrement), reaffirm their negative connotation.

That Paul inherited this hostility towards the signs of pagan religiosity around him comes through quite forcefully in his letters. This is made explicit by his use of *eidol-* related words. *Eidolon* in Greek simply means "form," and is a neutral word. But the Greek

---

translated as "demon." See Dale Basil Martin, "When Did Angels Become Demons?," *JBL* 129.4 (2010): 657–77.

[476] Derek Newton, *Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth*, JSNT 169 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Paula Fredriksen, *Paul: The Pagans' Apostle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 40.

[477] Jorunn Okland, *Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005), 161.

[478] Barasch, *Icon*, 18.

translators of Hebrew scriptures use *eidolon* seventy times in the Septuagint to translate several different Hebrew words for pagan gods and images, many of which were pejorative (such as the ones listed above). Thus, when Paul uses *eidolon*, he is automatically denigrating the gods of his pagan audience. In his various letters, he further describes the pagan gods as speechless, mere anthropomorphized images, subordinate deities, demons, the worship of whom leads to immorality and impurity. Paul's very premise regarding pagan gods disparages them as falsehoods, empty images, ultimately devoid of meaning, and therefore drastically misunderstands and misrepresents pagan religion.

It should be evident by now that Paul is not being descriptive but rather polemical in his diatribes against pagan materiality. Thus, recontextualizing Paul's spatial discourse in the pagan material landscape can advance our understanding of Greek religion as well as the experience of early Jesus-followers. In the first place, because the Corinthian *ekklēsia* was mainly (if not entirely) composed of former pagans, this letter highlights the challenges facing Greeks converting from the spatially-rooted, majority religion of paganism to the minority tradition of the Judeans that used to be emplaced but was no longer so in the diaspora. Given that for Greeks, place and self were mutually constitutive and inextricably entangled, changing one necessitated a shift in the other. But while the self can be changed, the landscape cannot be remade. Moreover, awareness of place as a locus of meaning is usually brief and unselfconscious, which means that for ancient Greeks, the process of changing one's "formerly life-assuring and meaning-generating habitus"[479] was an uphill battle, not easily resolved. Secondly, in providing a lens into the Judean diaspora populations

[479] Kathy Ehrensperger, "Between Polis, Oikos and Ekklesia: The Challenge of Negotiating the Spirit World," in *The First Urban Churches 2: Roman Corinth*, ed. James R. Harrison and Laurence L. Welborn (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016), 105.

through Paul's own viewpoint, the Pauline epistles are a useful source for considering the experience of the Judeans, a minority group, within the pagan landscape. Thus, the Corinthian correspondence makes visible at least one subversive interpretation of the ancient Greek landscape.

Several things must be noted at the outset, the first of which is the definition of terminology. In this section, the term 'Jesus-followers' is being used in place of the anachronistic term 'Christian' to refer to people, both Judean and Greek, who believed that Jesus was the Messiah and acted accordingly. During Paul's time, the Jesus movement was still largely intra-Jewish, and the followers of Jesus were also Jewish. Even in the communities Paul established (or corresponded with), which tended to be predominantly Greek rather than Judean, members likely identified as 'Jewish' despite their pagan past. Too, in this section, Judean and Greek are ethnic identifiers, while Jewish and pagan are religious ones. In antiquity, divinity was ethnically embedded, which generally meant that Judeans worshipped the Jewish god and Greeks worshipped Greek ones. But membership in the *ekklēsia* complicates this schema, as we shall see later on, so it will be necessary at times to distinguish between Greek (formerly pagan) members of the *ekklēsia* and Greek pagans.

The third and perhaps most glaring problem that requires elucidation is that of the religious identity of Roman Corinth. As pointed out earlier, much of the evidence in section 2 comes from Classical Athens; how well, if at all, does a model predominantly based on Classical Athenian sources map onto Roman Corinth? This question can be divided into two sub-problems: 1) Athenian versus Corinthian religion, and 2) Greek versus Roman religion. Let us start with the first issue. Given the geographical rootedness of religious practices, the conscientious Classicist will be disinclined to generalize from Athenian to Corinthian

practices. This tendency is a holdover from Sourvinou-Inwood's popular *polis*-religion model, in which the culture, religion, and traditions of each neighborhood, let alone *polis*, are utterly unique. While many practices were, in fact, specific to particular locales, a synchronic approach has benefits as well. Athens and Corinth were quite close to each other, and ancient Greeks frequently traveled to nearby and faraway cities to participate in religious events. This means that Athenians and Corinthians were able to recognize and adapt to local customs with relative ease. Furthermore, the breadth and span of the evidence used in section 2, some of which comes from Greek Corinth, indicates that it is possible to speak of a common "Greek religion," at least when dealing broadly.[480]

This brings us to the religious identity of Roman Corinth as opposed to Greek Corinth. In 146 BCE, Corinth was sacked by the Roman army under Lucius Mummius. The city and outlying areas were still inhabited by Greeks, though somewhat sparsely, until 44 BCE when it was refounded by Julius Caesar as a Roman colony. At that point, Roman freedmen joined the Achaian Greeks and resettled the city.[481] Earlier models, following ancient authors like Pausanias and Aelius Aristides, proclaimed the overall Greek identity of Roman Corinth. The later recognition that Pausanias in particular was writing with an agenda

[480] Of course, more specifically Corinthian evidence is desirable and achievable, though it is beyond the scope of the current project. For the purposes of this chapter, the model set up earlier in section 2 is detailed enough to establish the "patterns" of an overarching Greek religion.

[481] Corinth is unique in this way. In other Roman colonies, military veterans settled alongside the preexisting Greek inhabitants of the city, Christine M. Thomas, "Greek Heritage in Roman Corinth and Ephesos: Hybrid Identities and Strategies of Display in the Material Record of Traditional Mediterranean Religions," in *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*, ed. Steven J Friesen, Daniel N Schowalter, and James C Walters (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 118.

reperceived the city as predominantly Roman.[482] Today, the language of hybridity has been used to great effect. Corinth was a hybrid city inhabited by Greeks and Romans, and identity was negotiated and improvised on a daily basis in public and private.[483]

The archaeological evidence attests to both continuity and discontinuity in religious identity.[484] At least four major Greek sanctuaries (i.e. the temples of Aphrodite, Apollo, Demeter and Kore, and the Asklepeion) were reconstructed in Roman Corinth in more or less the same location. Architectural changes, on the other hand, indicate ritual discontinuity. For example, the dining rooms at the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore were repurposed in the Roman era. The language of votive offerings and inscriptions also reveal more of a public interest in Roman deities, priesthoods, and religious identity.[485] New Roman shrines were also added and clustered around the periphery of the lower forum.[486] Because Roman religion had a distinct flavor from Greek religion, it is likely that at least publicly religious identity

---

[482] Thomas also points out that Pausanias is writing in Greek rather than Latin, which was the official language of Roman Corinth. Thus, when Pausanias transmits the Greek names of deities, it is difficult to know whether he is accurately describing the Corinthian situation or if he is using the Greek equivalents of Latin names, Thomas, "Greek Heritage," 119.

[483] Cavan W. Concannon, *"When You Were Gentiles": Specters of Ethnicity in Roman Corinth and Paul's Corinthian Correspondence*, Synkrisis: Comparative Approaches to Early Christianity in Greco-Roman Culture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 47–74.

[484] Nancy Bookidis, "Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.," in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N Schowalter and Steven J Friesen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Barbette Stanley Spaeth, "Greek Gods or Roman? The Corinthian Archaistic Blocks and Religion in Roman Corinth," *American Journal of Archaeology* 121.3 (2017): 397; Thomas, "Greek Heritage."

[485] Mary Beard, John A. North, and S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1:314.

[486] Bookidis, "Religion in Corinth," 152–57.

changed significantly. And yet, within the home and around neighborhood shrines at crossroads and fountains, Greek language and practices continued to dominate. There is little doubt that these household religious activities continued to be of significance. Greek divisions of society into *demes* were superseded by Roman structures, but Ehrensperger argues that *phratries* and other kinship groups retained relevance, particularly in the religious sphere.[487] It could very well be that even in Roman temples, acts of piety (e.g. offering perishable items, praying) showed continuity with earlier forms.

More relevant for the present chapter is that Roman religion, while different from Greek religion, was nevertheless similarly rooted in place.[488] Roman shrines and temples were ubiquitous and meaningful, experiential places, and life throughout the Roman empire was measured with religious activities. Within the home, Romans worshipped their *penates, lares,* and *genii*, and many of these statuettes have been found in excavations of domiciles dating to the Roman period in Athens.[489] Plutarch mentions that city-wide festivals also

[487] Ehrensperger, "Between Polis."

[488] Scholars tend to focus on the differences between Greek and Roman religion. This is certainly prudent given the many variances. Nevertheless, especially when contrasted with Judaism and Christianity, Greek and Roman religion had much more in common than not. They were both polytheistic, iconistic, emplaced traditions, and the broad categories of religious activity and experience were close enough as to be intelligible to members of the other culture. Indeed, by the first century CE, Greeks and Romans had been in contact for quite a while. People traveled throughout the empire and were able to participate in local religious traditions without issue. Therefore, in a project like this, which focuses on the overall structures of ancient polytheisms, it is more useful to observe their similar functioning than get bogged down in the minutiae.

[489] Sharpe, "Bronze Statuettes from the Athenian Agora: Evidence for Domestic Cults in Roman Greece." Note also that before being exiled, Cicero dedicated his domestic statuette of Minerva, which he had honored greatly, to the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 31). This suggests the importance of sacred images within the Roman home.

merited sacrifices at home.[490] Birthdays, weddings, and other life events were celebrated religiously with family and friends inside the home and in shrines around the city.[491] Roman religious activities, like Greek ones, were also an integral way of showing off one's loyalty to the Roman empire. Roman religion featured a robust hierarchy of priesthoods, a position in which people around the empire participated and took pride. This phenomenon has been studied at great length by countless others, so I will not go into detail here. A study of rites of passage in Augustan Rome would be useful here, but is beyond the scope of the current project. Suffice it to say, in daily practice and personal devotion to the gods, the patterns of Roman religion are much more similar to Greek religion than they are different, especially when placed against the structures of ancient Jewish and Christian practice, as they are in this chapter.

a. 1 Corinthians 8-10: The text

We come at last to 1 Cor. 8-10. This well-known passage has been the subject of much study, but usually in terms of food: what food is allowed and what is prohibited to early followers of Jesus. We shall see that this set of chapters, which presents the debate between the so-called Strong and Weak factions of the Corinthian *ekklēsia* is also a good case study for the entanglement of lived place and identity. Seemingly about food, the conflict between the two groups actually revolves around issues of lived place, as I shall argue. Thus, a reanalysis of this 1 Cor. 8-10 is crucial not only to our perception of the lived

[490] Plut., *Quaest. conv.* 693F.

[491] John E. Stambaugh, "The Functions of Roman Temples," *ANRW* 16.1 (1978): 554–608; Kathryn Argetsinger, "Birthday Rituals: Friends and Patrons in Roman Poetry and Cult," *ClAnt* 11.2 (1992): 175–93.

experience of *ekklēsia* members, but also to our interpretation of Paul's argument in the epistle.

This passage has garnered much scholarly attention. Interestingly, the number and, moreover, the diversity of these scholarly interpretations are reflections of Paul's lack of clarity in these chapters. A brief summary of Paul's argumentation is necessary:[492]

8:1-13: Paul addresses the issue of *eidolothoutos,* food sacrificed to a god. From Paul's words in this section, there seem to be two factions within the Corinthian Pauline community.[493] The one group (likely the group that wrote to Paul about this issue in the first place) has argued, we can assume, that they ought to be allowed to eat sacrificial offerings. This group has been termed the "Strong" by scholars, in opposition to those whom Paul describes as *asthenēs*, or "Weak."[494] This latter group comprises people who were so accustomed to their gods (7) before joining the *ekklēsia* that in eating sacrificial offerings they might be destroyed [in their faith] (11). Paul acknowledges the validity of the Strong's argument in 8:4, saying, "Hence, as to the eating of food offered to gods, we know that no

[492] Most of the text and translations used are *NRSV*.

[493] I use "Pauline community" and "*ekklēsia*" interchangeably in this section.

[494] NB: Paul himself does not describe any group as Strong. Paul only contrasts the *asthenēs* (weak) with those who have knowledge or *gnosis*. This latter group has been termed as the "Strong" by modern scholars.

pagan god[495] in the world really exists, and that there is no god but one."[496] Yet, he urges them to reconsider for the sake of the Weak who, seeing the Strong participating in meal, may be tempted likewise.

9:1-27: This chapter is seemingly unconnected to the topic of chapters 8 and 10. Paul lists his rights as an apostle, follower of Jesus, and teacher of the Corinthians. He goes on to say that he has forgone those rights in order not to cause obstacles to any fellow Jesus-follower ("Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ" [12]). 9:19-23 is a well-known passage, wherein Paul describes his mission and the means by which it might be accomplished: "I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some" (22). To the Judeans he becomes as a Judean, to the Greeks he becomes as a Greek, and so on and so forth, in order to win them over.

10:1-22: At this point, Paul returns to the topic of food offerings. In the first half of this section (1-13), Paul recounts the story of the Israelites who, eating and drinking before the golden calf, fell into pagan practice once more. He warns his readers to heed the lesson lest they too turn again to the pagan gods (*eidololatrai*). The readers are then exhorted to flee from this type of worship (φεύγετε ἀπὸ τῆς εἰδωλολατρίας [14]). It is not to gods but to

---

[495] NB: I have translated εἴδωλον (*eidolon*) as "pagan god" rather than "idol". I do so because Paul uses the word to refer to the pagan gods, who were usually embodied in sacred images. As noted above, the word itself is pejorative and undercuts the emic conception of sacred images as gods.

[496] This verse is a notable exception. Many, including the *NRSV*, place quotations around "no pagan in the world really exists," and "there is no god but one" to indicate that Paul himself is quoting someone else (probably the letter from the Corinthians to him). This tendency, as well as my reasons for omitting said quotation marks, will be discussed at some length below.

demons that pagans sacrifice, and a follower of Jesus cannot partake of both the table of the lord and of demons (21).

10:23-11:1: This section begins with the admission that all things are lawful (Πάντα ἔξεστιν [23]), though not necessarily beneficial. Nevertheless, members of the Pauline community should eat anything sold in the marketplace without asking questions (25). Similarly, they should eat what is set before them without question when attending a meal hosted by a Greek pagan *unless* they are informed that it has been offered to a god, and only then should they abstain for the sake of the *other person*'s conscience (27-29).

It is immediately clear that there are some glaring inconsistencies. The apparent disconnect topically and thematically in chapter 9 and the excursus in the first half of chapter 10 alone have convinced some scholars that 1 Corinthians is actually a compilation of several different letters from Paul to the Corinthians.[497] As scholarly consensus today reaffirms the compositional unity of the epistle as a whole and of this passage in particular, modern readers are left with the daunting task of making sense of this convoluted passage.[498]

---

[497] Since Johannes Weiß first proposed this theory in 1910, the position has been taken up by many scholars though they remain in the minority, Johannes Weiss, *Der erste Korintherbrief*, KEK (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910). Most recently, Welborn has examined the portions of the letter that contain contradictions (e.g. on factions, 1:10-12 vs. 11:18-19; on travel plans: 4:17-21 vs. 16:5-9; on idol fool: 8:1-13 vs. 10:1-22) in service of his argument that sections of at least three distinct letters were organized thematically as 1 Corinthians. See Walter Schmithals, *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians*, trans. J.E. Steely, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971); Walter Schmithals, "Die Korintherbriefe als Briefsammlung," *ZNW* 64 (1973): 263–88; Robert Jewett, "The Redaction of 1 Corinthians and the Trajectory of the Pauline School," *JAAR*, *Supplement* 44.4 (1978): 398–444; Laurence L. Welborn, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1 - 4 in the Comic-Philosophic Tradition*, JSNT Suppl. Early Christianity in Context 293 (London: T & T Clark International, 2005).

[498] In particular, B.J. Oropeza, "Laying to Rest the Midrash: Paul's Message on Meat Sacrificed to Idols in Light of the Deuteronomic Tradition," *Biblica* 79.1 (1998): 57–68.

We must start by addressing attempts to mitigate the contradictions in this passage altogether. Such an approach is most apparent in the assignment of quotation marks to certain lines: 1 Cor. 8:1 ("all of us possess knowledge"), 4 ("no pagan god in the world really exists" and "there is no god but one"), and 8 ("Food will not bring us close to god. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do").[499] Despite the fact that most translations place these lines in quotations, this is a scholarly construction; the Greek text does not set up these proclamations as quotations.[500] These lines are read much differently with the quotation marks. They shift from being Paul's acknowledgement of the Strong's position to Corinthian "slogans" that Paul quotes before repudiating them.[501] This implicit desire to see consistency and coherency across Paul's letters is problematic because in this early period, Paul's conceptions of how to follow Jesus were anything but static.[502] Furthermore, Paul's correspondence was occasional in both frequency and context (i.e. addressing specific issues in specific communities).[503] As such, the letters defy being read as systematic theology or doctrine.

---

[499] Fotopoulos considers 8:5a and 8:6 to be Corinthian slogans as well. See John Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth: A Social-Rhetorical Reconsideration of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1*, WUNT 2. Reihe, 151 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 17.

[500] J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols*.

[501] Murphy-O'Connor, *Keys*, 76–128; Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols*. Fotopoulos writes, "…if all stated positions in 8:1-8 are Paul's, then the apostle's statements and doctrinal positions become contradictory, if not incoherent" (33).

[502] Helen Bond, "Paul, the Corinthians, and Reconciliation," *Stud. World Christ.* 9.2 (2003): 191.

[503] Joseph A. Marchal, ed., *Studying Paul's Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

Even with the quotation marks, there are still inconsistencies that require clarification. The efforts to provide lucidity are too numerous to summarize in a work like this, but the major lines of inquiry (and their weaknesses) bear mention. In one vein of argumentation, a distinction is drawn between *eidolothoutos* (8:1-13, 10:1-22) and *hierothoutos* (10:23-11:1). *Eidolothoutos* is food offered to a god within a temple and thus forbidden as idolatry.[504] *Hierothoutos* (lit. "offered to a god") on the other hand refers to food sold in the marketplace and eaten at home. The latter is only indirectly and distantly connected to idolatry, and is therefore a viable option for consumption. This philological distinction has been widely disputed by many who have demonstrated that *hierothoutos* can refer to food offered and eaten in a temple and food purchased from the market, or that *hierothoutos* is entirely synonymous with *eidolothoutos* and Paul only uses the latter in 10:28 because of its familiarity to former pagans.[505]

Others who do not rely on a philological distinction between *eidolothoutos* and *hierothoutos* still differentiate between the food-offerings in chapters 8 and 10 based on the location of the food.[506] Generally it is argued that the food-offerings in chapter 8 and 10:1-22

---

[504] This is famously argued by Ben Witherington III in several of his works. Ben Witherington III, "Not so Idle Thoughts about Eidolothuton," *TynBul* 44.2 (1993): 237–54; Ben Witherington III, "Why Not Idol Meat?," *BRev* 10.3 (1994): 38–54; Ben Witherington III, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995). According to Witherington, *hierothouton* is only forbidden if a "pagan host makes a point about it being meat that comes from a pagan temple" ("Why not idol meat?", 42).

[505] Alex T. Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy*, JSNT 176 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 320.

[506] Gordon Fee, "Εἰδωλόθοθτα Once Again: An Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 8-10," *Bib* 61 (1980): 172–97; Bruce N. Fisk, "Eating Meat Offered to Idols: Corinthian Behavior and Pauline Response in 1 Corinthians 8-10 (A Response to Gordon Fee)," *TJ* 10 (n.d.): 49–70. Oropeza concisely summarizes the debate between Fee and Fisk, as well as others, over

are within a temple context and so prohibited, while the food-offerings in 10:23-11:1 are sourced from the marketplace, and therefore permitted. It is certainly true that 8:1-13 addresses food offered in a temple. Yet, Paul does not outright forbid but only advises against this.[507] This is in stark contrast to his stern admonitions in 10:1-22.[508] A further locational assumption is that 10:27-29 refer to meals eaten within the home, for which ingredients would have been procured from the market. Some have even suggested that meals in the home were mainly familial celebrations with no "sacramental" aspect to the food.[509] Firstly, a domestic context cannot be assumed. Many dinner parties were held at shrines and in temple dining rooms where the food offered to the gods was eaten by family members.[510] Secondly, as established in the previous chapter, prayers were recited, libations and portions of food offered to the gods, at all family meals. The inconsistencies still abound.

Other scholars postulate reasons why and to whom food-offerings might be harmful. Theissen, for example, has proposed that poorer groups strongly associated meat with religious activity and were likely to be the "Weak." Rich people could afford to eat meat

---

location: Oropeza, "Laying to Rest the Midrash: Paul's Message on Meat Sacrificed to Idols in Light of the Deuteronomic Tradition."

[507] The phrase used in 8:10 is "reclining in a temple (ἐν εἰδωλίῳ κατακείμενον)," referring to the pagan practice of eating while reclining.

[508] Even were we to accept 8:4, 7 as Corinthian slogans, the rest of the passage provides a clear indication of Paul's ambivalence. He urges the Strong to reconsider eating only on account of the resulting effect on the Weak.

[509] Wendell Lee Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1985).

[510] Newton has acknowledged this possibility as well, Newton, *Deity and Diet*.

outside of religious contexts and therefore would not have been bothered in the same way.[511] Theissen's trouble is the equation of *eidolothoutos* with sacrificial meat. In fact, the verb *thuo* can more generally mean "to offer," in which case *eidolothoutos* simply becomes food (e.g. grain cakes, fruits) offered to an idol. These types of edible offerings were affordable by even the poorest and were the most common offerings. Gooch takes a similar tack by arguing that the notion of sacrificial offerings as harmful was popular among Judeans. Paul is therefore upholding his Judean sensibilities when advising against eating food offered to a god, and the Corinthian Strong are former pagans who did not associate the food with any religious meaning.[512] But in this case the opposite has also been argued, whereby the Judean members of Paul's community were the Strong ones who had knowledge, unlike the former pagans, that pagan gods and food offerings were meaningless.[513] Clarity remains elusive.

Most of the above interpretations center on *eidolothoutos* – the food itself, its location, or its significance for different groups of people. The identities of the Strong and the Weak are derived from each scholar's conception of *eidolothoutos*. This is understandable given the first line of the passage—Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων ("concerning

---

[511] Gerd Theissen, *The social setting of Pauline Christianity: essays on Corinth*, trans. John H Schütz (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 121–43. NB: Friesen disputes the designation of any Corinthians in the Pauline community as "rich." He pushes back against the New Consensus with his model of socio-economic status in Corinth, which shows the majority fell into different strata of poverty. See Steven J. Friesen, "Prospects for a Demography of the Pauline Mission: Corinth among the Churches," in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. Daniel N Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 351–70.

[512] Peter David Gooch, *Dangerous Food: I Corinthians 8-10 in Its Context*, Etudes Sur Le Christianisme et Le Judaïsme 5 (Waterloo, Ont: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 1993).

[513] A list and summary of the major players in this conversation is helpfully provided in Fotopoulos, *Food Offered to Idols*, 4–37.

food offered to gods…")—but it is nevertheless problematic. Not only does Paul theoretically permit eating food-offerings in 8.1-13 and 10:27-29, he actually instructs members to eat everything sold in the market without asking or worrying about its status (10:23-26). Certainly, not all food sold in the market was *eidolothoutos* but Paul's instruction is unequivocal.[514] Paul is at best ambivalent about *eidolothoutos* and the act of eating such food. Of paramount significance is that nowhere in this passage is there an outright prohibition against eating sacrificial offerings, despite there being scriptural precedent for such a moratorium.[515] The term *eidolothotous* does not occur in pre-Pauline literature but clear precursors do exist (e.g. Num. 25.2, Exod. 34.15, Lev. 17.7).[516] That Paul is deliberately opaque is therefore all the more noteworthy and reveals that there is more at stake than food offered to the gods and the consumption thereof.

3.2. Lived Place: A Solution

Focusing on lived place rather than food-offerings can help make sense of Paul's apparent contradictions. That Paul is making spatial distinctions in 1 Cor. 8-10 is undeniable. Paul seems to be talking about temples and shrines (εἰδωλείῳ) in chapter 8, the marketplace in 10:25-26, and either a domestic or shrine setting in 10:27-29. Consuming food-offerings is explicitly allowed in 10:25-26, with reference to the marketplace. In temple and domestic settings, it is permitted only in a qualified manner. While there is nothing essential about

---

[514] David Horrell, "Idol-Food, Idolatry, and Ethics in Paul," in *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism, and Christianity*, ed. Stephen C. Barton, T & T Clark Theology (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 5.

[515] Cheung, *Idol Food*, 43; Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 179–83.

[516] 4 Macc. is the only relevant Septuagint text but might very likely post-date 1 Corinthians. See Horrell, "Idol-Food," 3.

either the food or the location that accounts for Paul's instructions, a consideration of each of these locations as lived, meaningful places for Greek individuals, and the implications of dwelling in those places for newly minted members of the *ekklēsia,* is integral to a renewed interpretation of Paul's argument. To do so, we will first establish the goals and parameters of Paul's mission to the Nations. We will then look at Paul's lived experience within pagan landscapes and explore how his Judean background informed his mission and message to his Greek audience. Finally, we will reexamine the text of 1 Cor. 8-10 as a spatial discourse. We will see in this passage Paul's attempts to reconcile his message to the Nations with the realities of continuing to inhabit a formerly meaningful pagan landscape.

As stated earlier, the Jesus movement was still largely intra-Judean in the first century CE, and many traveling apostles focused their efforts on diaspora Judean communities. Paul, on the other hand, proclaimed himself as the apostle to the Nations (*ethne*). Having grown up in a diaspora Judean community himself, Paul spoke, read, and heard the Scriptures in Greek. He was familiar with the pagan community and landscape around him. As such, he felt himself to be uniquely placed to take Jesus's message to the Nations. Moreover, Paul was of the opinion that the good news or *euangelion* about Israel's messiah and god's kingdom was always meant to go to the Nations.[517] Paul's apocalypticism and his belief that the end-times and the kingdom were at hand lent an urgency to this mission to the Nations. It is within this context that all of his letters must be read.

But what was his message to the Nations and what did he expect of them? As stated earlier, all members of the *ekklēsia* would have considered themselves to be Jewish, but to what extent were they to observe the Torah, and what did this process of conversion or

[517] Fredriksen, *Paul*, 3.

commitment look like? This question is quite complicated. Divinity was ethnically embedded in the ancient Mediterranean, so people worshipped the god(s) of their land and family. This means that only people who were ethnically Judean worshipped the Judean god, likely one of the reasons that the Jesus movement was mainly intra-Judean at this early juncture. Similarly, ancient Greeks owed worship to the gods of his family, neighborhood, *deme*, private associations, etc., alongside the Pan-Hellenic deities.[518] Such ethnic designations would have made it difficult to "convert," not least because to stop offering worship to one's gods could have dire consequences, both for the safety of one's community in the face of divine wrath, and for one's own membership, rights, and privileges in that group.

Yet, there were some Greek pagans who, even before Paul's time, might have attempted to commit fully to the Judean god. The terms "god-fearers" or "sympathizers," used by scholars to denote pagans participating in Jewish activities, covers many different levels of interest in and commitment to Judaism.[519] At different times and places, it could refer simply to pagans who supported synagogues financially (e.g. Julia Severa in Akmoenia), pagans who offered worship to the Judean god alongside their own, pagans who observed the Sabbath, or perhaps even pagans who wanted to commit fully to the Jewish religion. Indeed, a third century CE synagogue inscription from Aphrodisas lists both god-fearers (partial converts) and proselytes (full converts). For this latter group, circumcision may have provided a way to express this commitment.[520] But recently, Thiessen has argued

---

[518] See n. 461 above.

[519] Tessa Rajak, "The Jewish Community and Its Boundaries," in *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*, ed. Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak (London: Routledge, 2004), 9–28.

[520] By Paul's time, there are references to "sympathizers." Seneca, quoted by Augustine, complains about the spread of Sabbath observation (in August. *De civ. D.* 6.11). Petronius in

that many Judeans across the diaspora denied the possibility of conversion to Judaism. In those circles, circumcision was a *sign*, not a mediator, of Judean ethnic identity.[521] Simply becoming circumcised did not make someone Judean, and Greeks could only offer worship to the Judean god as Greeks.

Paul, too, makes ethnic distinctions between Judean and Greek followers of Jesus. Judean Jesus-followers had to continue to uphold Torah observance. Despite some scholarly views to the contrary, Paul many times characterizes the Torah as a privilege of the Israelites and a pathway to the recognition of Jesus as messiah (e.g. Rom. 3:1, 7:12, 9:5, 10:4). The Torah, futile without Jesus, is of utmost importance through Jesus, and many continued to live by their ancestral customs well into the second century. This can be seen in Paul's continued support of Judean circumcision. Not only does he boast of having been circumcised himself (Phil. 3:5), he also believes it matters to the Judean god; otherwise, his language in Rom. 3, 9-11, and 15 do not make sense.[522] Some behavioral nuances were no doubt necessary (for example, the changes to dining company in Galatians), but overall Paul meant for his fellow Judeans to continue their ancestral practices.

On the other hand, for Paul, not only can a Greek *not* become a Judean, they *ought not to*. Paul's reading of the biblical prophets maintained that God's kingdom would contain two distinct groups, Israel and the Nations. This meant that Greeks needed to remain

---

the mid-first century CE mentions both those who worship the Jewish god (pagan sympathizers) and those who are circumcised according to the law (the Jews), (August. *De civ. D.* 6.11). Epictetus apparently complained about Greeks acting the part of a Jew (in Arr. *Epict. diss*. 2.19.21).

[521] Matthew Thiessen, *Contesting Conversion: Genealogy, Circumcision, and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1–16, 111–41.

[522] Fredriksen, *Paul*, 86, 107.

ethnically Greek, even were it possible for them to change their ethnic identifier.[523] Somewhat paradoxically, then, Greek members of the *ekklēsia* were not bound to the Torah in the way that Judean Jesus-followers were, which is why Paul discourages Greeks from practicing circumcision; nevertheless, they still had to uphold the basic Jewish tenets expressed in the Torah, i.e. exclusively worshipping the Jewish god without images. Thus, when Paul describes his readers in 1 Cor. 12:2 as those who used to be ἔθνη led by speechless gods (τὰ εἴδωλα τὰ ἄφωνα), he is not saying that they are no longer ἔθνη (of the Nations). Rather, they used to be ἔθνη who followed speechless gods, but now they are ἔθνη who follow Jesus.[524] Paul is not making an *ethnic* distinction, he is drawing a *religious* one: members of the *ekklēsia* had to remain ethnically Greek, but they could not be pagan any longer. In other words, they had to be Greek, but act 'Jewishly.'

This is an important point. For Greeks and Romans, all gods were worthy of worship. Adding another god to the pantheon was a frequent enough occurrence (e.g. Magna Mater, Isis, Serapis). The god-fearers even added the Judean god to their pantheon, offering non-exclusive worship alongside the Judeans while continuing to honor their own gods.[525] Since the Judean community accepted this level of non-exclusive participation, many Greeks might have been tempted to simply add Jesus to the pagan pantheon as well. In Paul's mind,

---

[523] Fredriksen, *Paul*, 164.

[524] Ehrensperger, "Between Polis," 106.

[525] Goodenough's comprehensive study of apotropaic amulets showcases many amulets and charms that invoke Greek and Egyptian gods alongside the Jewish god. See Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 13 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953).

however, this would have violated the basic commandments of acting in a Jewish manner; membership in the *ekklēsia* had to be exclusive. Any activity that could be construed as worship of the pagan gods had to be eschewed.

The spatial discourse in 1 Cor. 8-10 takes on new meaning when considered in this light. All of the places mentioned in this passage (temples, homes, and marketplaces) were part of each Corinthian Greek's lived landscape. Of these three locations, the marketplace alone was not religiously valent. It is true that there were few fully "secular" places in ancient Greece, and many marketplaces did feature small temples or shrines, but there were likely many ways to interact non-religiously with the market and its goods. But because important religious activities were usually performed in temples and sometimes in domestic settings, these places had the potential to recall, manifest, and reaffirm one's identity as a pagan. Greeks had likely interacted with such places *through* their paganness throughout their lives up until this point and as a result, to be in a temple was to be a pagan.

Joining the Jesus-movement meant that these types of religious places had to be reinterpreted. This was undoubtedly easier said than accomplished, and it is this struggle with lived place that is being played out in this passage. A Hellenistic Judean in the diaspora himself, Paul's activities "triangulated" between fellow Judeans, proximate pagans, and pagan gods, and he was aware that place could present a potential obstacle to membership in the *ekklēsia*.[526] But he does not forbid the *ekklēsia* members from frequenting pagan places. This is partially because it would not have been possible to live in Corinth and avoid such places, and because Paul, recognizing the enormous challenge of transforming one's *habitus*,

[526] Fredriksen, *Paul*, 61.

encourages his readers to continue with many aspects of their former lives.[527] Paul's belief in the imminent arrival of the end-times also informed his decision to change as little as possible in his instructions to Judean (e.g. Romans) and Greek followers of Jesus. Those disposed to go dine with unbelievers could do so, and wherever they went, members of the *ekklēsia* were to take care to give no offense (1 Cor. 10:27, 32). Yet, aware as he is of the agency of place in manifesting and reaffirming pagan identity, Paul is careful to restrict the kinds of behavior one could display in these places in order to maintain exclusive commitment to the Judean god.

In setting up a model for responsible engagement with potentially pagan places, Paul draws on his own experience of the pagan landscape as a diaspora Judean. The traditional perception of Judeans in the diaspora is that they were isolationist, maintaining distance from their social and material environments.[528] There is some truth behind any assumption of a closed Judean group, expressed by both Judean and pagan authors.[529] Some Judeans criticized other members of their communities for not being isolationist enough and

---

[527] Ehrensperger, "Between Polis," 119.

[528] Philo glosses Balaam's oracle, which says of Israel that "a people will dwell alone" (Num. 22:9b LXX) by explaining that this is so "not because their dwelling-place is set apart and their land severed from others, but because in virtue of the distinction of their peculiar customs they do not mix with others to depart from the ways of their fathers" (*Mos.* 1.278).

[529] Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, vol. 1, 2, 3 (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974). Pagan authors did poke fun at the Judeans, but Fredriksen points out that the habits and behaviors of outsiders usually inspired ethnic insults. The Greeks considered their Persian enemies effeminate and servile, but were themselves branded as such by the Romans later on. Egyptians and Jews received ribbing for their fussiness regarding food. Fredriksen writes, "We should regard the accusations of extreme antisocial behavior leveled at ancient Jews, then, with a healthy skepticism…Much more of the ethnographic insult remains for Jews than for other groups because of the accidents of history: the anti-Jewish material was preserved and reused, for different polemical ends, but later Gentile Christians" Fredriksen, *Paul*, 45.

interacting with pagans.[530] But such a closed-off picture of Judean experience retrojects later Rabbinic stipulations and Christian characterizations.[531] During Paul's time, group boundaries were much more flexible.[532]

As such, there was a greater degree of interaction, assimilation, and integration than has previously been assumed. By the first century CE, Judeans had been living in cities around the Roman empire for several centuries already and might have constituted as much as ten to fifteen percent of some ancient cities' populations.[533] This means that their social context consisted of pagans, pagan space, and the pagan gods. There is considerable material and textual evidence that speaks to Judean engagement with their pagan milieu. Indeed, the growing Judean concern regarding intermarriage with Greeks during the Second Temple period is a clear indicator of Judean involvement outside their ethnic group.[534] In Egypt and Asia Minor, Judeans were participating in the athletic activities of the gymnasium, and Alexandrian Judeans were only expelled from the gymnasiarchic games in Alexandria in 41 CE, Paul's own lifetime.[535] Inscriptions from theaters, hippodromes, and *odeons* from around

---

[530] Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1:267–75.

[531] Acts is a notorious offender in this regard. In Acts 10:28, Peter describes the Jews as forbidden from associating with non-Jews.

[532] Rajak, "Jewish Community."

[533] Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 34.

[534] Christine Elizabeth Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 24–33, 68–91. See discussion in Thomas, "Locating Purity," 125.

[535] Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 57–59.

the Roman empire attest to Judeans as actors and gladiators as well as athletes. They were also interested in civic life. Paul himself is identified as a citizen of Tarsus. A first century list of Cyrene's *ephebate* records the names of Jesus, son of Antiphilos, and Eleazar, son of Eleazar.[536] Judeans additionally had a material presence in the city through the construction of synagogues. The Ostian synagogue is particularly early, dating to the late first century CE, and prominently located despite being on the outskirts of town.[537] As Fredriksen says, "Jews lived, and lived thoroughly, in their cities of residence throughout the Diaspora."[538]

Many of these enterprises would have necessarily entailed involvement with pagan religious practices. The stele in Cyrene on which Jesus and Eleazar's names appear was itself dedicated to Herakles and Hermes, the gods of the gymnasium. As *ephebes*, they would have had to participate in civic activities honoring the gods (as discussed earlier in the chapter) and perhaps even swear their oaths on pagan gods.[539] The *odeon* and theater were places of religious activity as well, and Judeans in those arenas would at the very least have been in the presence of sacred images, prayers, and sacrifices. In Egypt, a Judean named Jacob ben Achilles even worked as a guard in a pagan temple.[540] The pagan gods were difficult to avoid and Judeans in the Hellenistic period had to develop ways to safely and comfortably engage with these aspects of Hellenistic culture.

---

[536] Fredriksen, *Paul*, 46.

[537] Beard, North, and Price, *Religions of Rome*, 1:267.

[538] Fredriksen, *Paul*, 48.

[539] It is not until 200 CE that imperial law permits Jews to hold public office without having to perform duties that went against their religious inclinations.

[540] A papyrus from 295 CE mentions a Jew named Jacob ben Achilles who was a guard at the temple of Serapis in Egypt, Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 67–68.

As a result of such close contact, some Judeans even began to adopt pagan ideas and expressions in their own lives. Pagan formulas such as *dis manibus* appear on Judean funerary finds, and three inscriptions on Judean tombstones from the first centuries BCE and CE mention that the departed has arrived in the realm of Hades. Zeus, Helios, Gaia, and other major gods of the pantheon are frequently called upon as witnesses in Judean contexts. Moschos, identified epigraphically as a Judean, was prompted in a dream by two local gods to free his slave and, having done so, left an inscription within the gods' temple. Pagan deities are depicted in the mosaic floors of Judean houses and synagogues. For example, a house in Dura portrays Orpheus playing a lyre, Moses holding a club of Herakles, and the souls of the dead in the valley of the dry bones as Greek psyches.[541] This is not as drastic a step as it seems to modern readers. Many Judeans did recognize the "spirits" (gods, daimones) of the pagan world as powerful beings. The crucial difference is that these spirits were inferior to the Judean god. Judeans clearly found ways to relate to these spirits in a manner that was "in accordance with their loyalty to their One God."[542]

Although Paul probably did not engage with pagan ideas to such a great extent himself, he nevertheless inherited the tools developed by the minority diaspora Judean community to navigate the pagan landscape around them without compromising their religious loyalty. Paul and many other Judeans who did travel and speak with pagans were able to engage with their pagan surroundings as Judeans. As a result, being inside a temple or

---

[541] Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 67.

[542] Ehrensperger, "Between Polis," 119. Paul himself acknowledges the existence of these other gods in 1 Cor. 8 5-6: "Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom we exist."

attending a meal either in a temple or the home of a pagan friend (the places mentioned in 1 Cor. 8-10) reflected only one's Judean identity back. It is likely that this background and experience as a Judean negotiating the landscape around him greatly informs Paul's instructions to his Greek audience on how to behave "Jewishly" in the time remaining before the apocalypse.

Thus, in 1 Cor. 8 and 10:27, when Paul acknowledges not just the right of *ekklēsia* members to be in places of the pagan gods but also to participate to an extent in the pagan activities around them, he is actually revealing the attitudes of many Judeans like himself to their pagan surroundings. Indeed, we might even say that this is the *gnōsis* that the so-called Strong embody and exhibit. These Strong members of the *ekklēsia* are likely those people who have been Jesus-followers long enough to have successfully changed their *habitus*. That is to say, they have internalized this Judean way of interacting with their pagan surroundings.[543] Being in temples, attending meals at a pagan's house and even eating the food served there without asking questions, are not harmful to these members' loyalty to the one true Judean god.

But while instructing his congregation on acting Jewishly is important to Paul, it is not his ultimate goal. As a Messianist, Paul firmly believed that the apocalypse was

[543] Among the Strong might even be some Judean members of the Jesus movement. There was a substantial Judean population in Roman Corinth (see Nasrallah, "1 Corinthians"). Based on the evidence presented in Acts, earlier scholars assumed that the Corinthian Judeans were hostile to Paul's message. Not only is Acts an unreliable source at best for Paul's life and communities, such a view reflects a later Christian tendency to read Judean resistance in opposition to passive acceptance. See Meeks, *First Urban Christians*, 25–27; Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, "Historical Approaches: Which Past? Whose Past?," in *Studying Paul's Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods*, ed. Joseph A. Marchal (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 13–32. Despite this, it is clear that Paul's Corinthian correspondence addresses only Greek former-pagan members of the *ekklēsia*, so Judean presence among the Strong cannot be postulated with any certainty or even probability.

imminent. As such, it is essential to Paul that he save as many people as possible (ἵνα τοὺς πλείονας κερδήσω [9:19]). He explains his method in great detail in 9:19-23: to the Judeans he becomes as a Judean, to the Greeks as a Greek, all in order that he might save some people (ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω [9:22]). For Paul, spreading the news of the messiah and the approaching kingdom of god and saving as many people as he possibly can is the defining aspect of his mission to the Nations.

As such, he also prominently recognizes in 1 Cor. 8:9-11 and 10:28 that joining the *ekklēsia* necessitated a dramatic shift in how his audience could interact with their material context, one that might only be achieved with great difficulty for newer members of the *ekklēsia* (i.e. the Weak). That they had to interact with temples, shrines, and banquets was without doubt. Paul expects that they will enter these places, but sets up parameters and limitations for how they can interact with the place. If meaning is generated through the performance and repetition of located acts, then changing the activities can change the meaning. This is the purpose of the excursus in 1 Cor. 10:1-22. It is not merely being in the presence of pagans and pagan gods that causes the Israelites to fall once more into their pre-covenantal state of idolatry and consequently be punished by the Judean god. The emphasis is on *eating* and *drinking* because these are the religious activities that connect humans to pagan gods and reaffirm the meaning of religious places. By limiting the types of activities that the newer Greek members of the *ekklēsia* can participate in, Paul attempts to shift the meaning of those places for the members of his *ekklēsia*, helping them learn how to interact with them as non-pagans.

More importantly, Paul's desire that each member of the *ekklēsia* be saved and not stumble in his or her loyalty to the Judean god leads him to urge the Strong to similarly

abstain from eating and drinking. In 8:9-13 and 10:28-39, right after acknowledging the right of the Strong to participate in pagan activities, he urges them not to do so. In chapter 8, Weak members of the *ekklēsia* might see those with *gnōsis* eating in a temple and follow suit. This would only reaffirm their pagan identity in that place, and would therefore violate their loyalty to the Judean god. 10:27 is a little less clear: he advises the Strong only to stop eating if they are informed that the food has been offered to a god, and then only for the sake of others. The knowledge that the food has been offered to the gods transforms a non-overtly-religious context (either at a temple dining room for a wedding or some such event or at someone's house) into a religious one, and is therefore harmful to the Weak. His argument in chapter 9 helps us make sense of this.[544] In this seemingly unconnected chapter, Paul lists his many rights, which are granted to him and all others in the Torah. But Paul emphasizes that he foregoes those rights *for the sake of others*: ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐχρησάμεθα τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ ταύτῃ, ἀλλὰ πάντα στέγομεν ἵνα μή τινα ἐνκοπὴν δῶμεν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ χριστοῦ (9:12). He willingly gives up his rights in order that he might save as many as possible (9:22).

Understanding this can help us make sense of the relational nature of Paul's response to the debate between the Strong and the Weak. He exhorts the Strong *not* to eat or drink in the presence of the Weak members of the *ekklēsia*. The Weak, seeing the others eating and drinking offerings to the gods in religious places, will think that these activities are permitted for themselves as well. But because of their longtime habit of eating and drinking in temples *as pagans*, in doing so again they will revert to their former identities (as did the Israelites in in 10:1-22). Such practices in such places can be a πρόσκομμα, a stumbling block, to the Weak, i.e. those newer members of the *ekklēsia* who have not yet internalized a Jewish way

[544] Horrell, "Idol-Food," 10–11.

of experiencing pagan places. Horrell rightly points out that this "stumbling" should not be understood as an outrage or anger on the part of the Weak against the actions of the Strong.[545] It is simply that such actions will seem permitted to those whose lived experience of places like temples and banquet tables is as pagans and therefore mutually exclusive from fellowships within the *ekklēsia* (10:21).

When read in this way, 1 Cor. 8-10 becomes much more clear to the reader. Chapter 9 and the excurses in 10:1-22 not only fit neatly into Paul's argument, they are integral to his overall point. Focusing on lived place also reconciles the apparent contradictions in Paul's logic between 8, 10:1-22, and 10:23-29. It is not the food, the identity of Jesus-followers, or the location in and of themselves that Paul is prohibiting, but rather the combination of these three things in a pagan locus of meaning, which might lead Jesus-followers back into their pagan ways. Thus, in this passage, we see Paul's efforts to acknowledge two modes of lived place – a Jewish one and a Greek one – without compromising on exclusive loyalty to the Judean god.

This reading of 1 Cor. 8-10 restores multivocality to the ancient Greek landscape. It showcases the subversion of the dominant spatial organization on the part of diaspora Judeans and Greek members of the *ekklēsia.* It is important to note that we have only Paul's word that there existed in Corinth two factions. But Paul's letters are meant to be rhetorical and persuasive, and we must doubt whether his description of the schism and the identities of people at Corinth was accurate.[546] Newton has saliently questioned the reductionism of a this

[545] Horrell, "Idol-Food," 8.

[546] Indeed, Paul's division has been viewed with prudent suspicion by many scholars, some of whom believe that the Weak did not actually exist and only serve Paul's rhetorical

bipartite division, claiming instead that there were probably multiple viewpoints vying for space and validation, more even than Paul could address in his letter, for which reason he draws attention instead to "communal considerations."[547] Just as there were multiple viewpoints, it is likely that there was also a variety of lived experience within the ancient Greek landscape based on members' positions in society, which must be borne in mind. Finally, a glance at 2 Corinthians is enough to indicate that 1 Corinthians did not meet with universal success. Many members must have resisted Paul's characterizations of them.[548] The experience of the *ekklēsia* is therefore a useful case study for scholars of ancient Greek space, as it helpfully makes visible the contested nature of the ancient Greek landscape.

4. Conclusion

In June of 601 CE, Pope Gregory wrote a letter to Ethelbert, the Anglo-Saxon king of Kent, telling him to destroy pagan temple buildings (*fanorum aedificia everte*) in his realm as part of his conversion mission.[549] This was common practice among Christians and Christian monarchs in Late Antiquity.[550] Just a few short weeks later, he wrote another letter to England, this time to Abbot Mellitus, telling him to destroy only the idols within the temples.

---

needs. On the "weak" as nonexistent, see John C. Hurd, *The Origins of 1 Corinthians* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983), 117–25; Gooch, *Dangerous Food*, 61–72.

[547] Newton, *Deity and Diet*, 2.

[548] Nasrallah, "1 Corinthians."

[549] *Epistle* 11.37 in *The letters of Gregory the Great*, trans. John R. C Martyn (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2004).

[550] George Demacopoulos, "Gregory the Great and the Pagan Shrines of Kent," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.2 (2008): 353–69.

Provided that the temples are well-built, they were to be converted to Christian churches.[551] In this second letter, he writes, "…seeing that their places of worship are not destroyed, the people will banish error from their hearts and come to places familiar and dear to them in acknowledgement and worship of the true God." Destroying the temples meant utterly erasing pagan identity by changing the material landscape. Transforming the buildings, on the other hand, meant capitalizing on their attachment to such places, gradually replacing pagan with Christian meaning. In both tactics, the pagans' intimate connection to their religious places is central.

Coming back to Tertullian's *De Spectaculis* 8, we can see that this connection between selfhood and place undergirds Tertullian's slightly abstruse assertions on place. In its wide range of meanings, *locus* can refer to locations, sites, and geographical regions as well as place as it has been defined in this chapter, i.e. a relational web of meaning. When Tertullian agrees with his imagined interlocutor that the places themselves are not forbidden (*nulla est praescriptio de locis*), he is talking about the architectural site or building. Thus, he says that Christians can enter these sites only at times when no games, shows, or other spectacles are occurring within. The Christian must have a purpose entirely unrelated to these events. When he later says that the *loci,* defiled by pagan activities, can in turn defile the Christians, *locus* refers to meaningful place. Being present at pagan events in the circus or the theater, a Christian acts in a pagan way and becomes once more a pagan. It is for this reason that all such places should be avoided at all costs.

In his writings, Tertullian is struggling to define Christian identity in relation to the surrounding pagan world, and to establish the limits of compromise as Christians inhabit the

[551] *Epistle* 11.56 in *The letters of Gregory the Great*.

pagan landscape.[552] *De Spectaculis* 8 is an important source for modern scholars of the ancient world in several ways. The first is that it illuminates the experience of the "weak" Gentiles in Paul's community. Tertullian was born in 155 CE and was raised as a pagan for much of his life. It is not until the very end of the second century (c. 197/198) that he turned to Christianity. His struggle as a former pagan with the material, religious landscape around is important for two reasons. The reading of 1 Cor. 8-10 presented in the previous section is to some extent based in conjecture, because the Corinthians' *own* description of their concerns is lost. We have only Paul's word for it, which is most commonly read from a Christian triumphal vantage point wherein pagan traditions are considered devoid of meaning. But seeing that two centuries later pagans like Tertullian who become Christian after already habituating their material landscape for years are indeed battling the effect of those places only strengthens a lived-place-centric reading of Paul's epistle.

The second reason is because it changes the perception of the ancient landscape. The landscape was not merely the setting in which people lived. It was an agent, working alongside humans to generate meaningful experiences. This explains why out of the thousands of temples that existed in the Roman empire, only a hundred or so were converted into churches, and of those only a handful before the end of the fifth century.[553] Indeed, one wonders how successful Abbot Mellitus' conversion of pagans was given the reuse of pagan temples and shrines. Based on sources from Medieval England (and even Reformation era

---

[552] Robert D. Sider, *Christian and Pagan in the Roman Empire: The Witness of Tertullian* (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2001).

[553] Frances J. Niederer, "Temples Converted into Churches: The Situation in Rome," *ChHist* 22.3 (1953): 175–80; Luke Lavan and Michael Mulryan, eds., *The Archaeology of Late Antique "Paganism"* (Brill, 2011).

Germany), where the bulk of the population outside of urban, elite, educated circles continued several pagan practices, we can assume that it was not very successful at all. For Christians seeking to instill exclusivity, still elusive in these late centuries, the pagan mindset had to be battled not only intellectually but also spatially.

Conclusion: Turning the Tables on Paul

In one of the more well-known passages in the Acts of the Apostles, the author describes Paul's visit to the city of Athens (Acts 17:16-34). In this brief pericope, commonly referred to as the Areopagus speech, Paul is troubled by the ubiquity of shrines and sacred images in Athens (described as *kateidolon*) and makes a speech before the Areopagus denouncing all religious materiality. Paul claims that god "does not live in shrines made by human hands" (17.24) and that "we ought not to think that god is like gold, silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals" (17.29). At the end of his impassioned polemic, the author of Acts writes that some members of Paul's Greek audience, such as Dionysius the Areopagite and Damaris, believed him and decided to join his community of Messianist Jesus-followers.

Although the historical veracity of this or any other account in Acts is dubious, this passage, commonly referred to as the Areopagus speech, is nevertheless interesting for two reasons: 1) its preoccupation with pagan religious materiality, and 2) its presentation of Paul as a successful apostle to the Nations. This is to say, the author of Acts paints Paul as someone who was able to dialogue effectively with pagans and lead them away from pagan objects to the god of the Judeans. Acts' portrait of Paul endures. Indeed, this speech is still held up today in missiological circles as an exemplar of Paul's missionary activity through constructive interfaith dialogue.[554] By the end of the first century, then, just a few scant

[554] Robert Dunham, "Between Text & Sermon: Acts 17:16-34," *Interpretation* 60.2 (2006): 202–4. Although a few scholars view Athens as a failed mission, most others consider it to be a dramatic success. See discussion in Flavien Pardigon and William Edgar, *Paul against the Idols: A Contextual Reading of the Areopagus Speech* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2019).

decades after Paul's lifetime, his reputation as the evangelist of the Nations had been cemented.

The presentation of Paul as a *successful* evangelist can in many ways be seen as the root of the Christian triumphal lens. The canonization of such texts has lent Paul's words, both real (i.e. in his authentic letters) and imagined (e.g. such as in Acts), the authority of scripture, with the result that this minority aniconistic, polemic against the majority imagistic religion of antiquity has been accepted as an accurate description of ancient Greek religion. Paul's misapprehension of and ill-feeling towards pagan religious practices and materiality has colored modern conceptions of ancient Greek religion. The notions that pagan materiality was devoid of meaning and that pagans themselves were a sort of *tabula rasa* with no beliefs of their own, both of which are insinuated in the above speech in Acts, have undergirded many of the studies on Greek religion that I critique in the Introduction of this project. Although few scholars today would outwardly endorse Paul's naked hostility towards pagan religious categories, their neglect of categories like "belief" and "materiality" within Greek religion can be best understood as a reinscription of Paul's skewed perspective.[555]

This project has attempted to liberate the Greek evidence from such Christianizing perspectives by situating religious materiality, such as images of gods, votives, and religious spaces, at the center of Greek religion and religious experience. Many of the scholars mentioned in the Introduction, such as Versnel, Kindt, Gaifman, Rüpke, and others, are not unaware of this problem, and great strides have been made in de-Christianizing the study of

[555] Waghorne addresses this problem among scholars of Indian religions as well, writing that while these scholars have been too "outwardly sophisticated to use terms like idolatry," their brief and shallow explanations of such images reveals their inherent discomfort in dealing with such topics. See Waghorne and Cutler, *Gods of Flesh, Gods of Stone*, 1.

Greek religion. Recent years have seen many important studies on belief, affect, emotionality, and experience. This project adds to such endeavors by situating the cognitive and emotional aspects of Greek religious experience within the built material realm. Material objects are treated not as inert but as active, affective, religious agents that produced, mediated, and reaffirmed relationships with the gods. In doing so this study attempts to overturn subject-object and human-material dichotomies, and demonstrates the rich complexity of Greek religious belief.

Thus, Chapter 1 argued for the potency and dynamism of sacred images in ancient Greece. These sacred images were not mere *objets d'art*, but were active agents that shaped individuals' religious experience. Sacred images acted as indices of divine presence that, when viewed through a religious gaze, a culturally established mental framework, established a live connection between the viewer-worshipper and deity. To see how sacred images might have operated in ancient Greece, we placed the Greek material in dialogue with sacred images in modern Indian traditions, wherein the process of *darśan* allows viewer-worshippers to see and be seen by the gods. This interaction, which lay at the heart of Greek religion, was enabled by the sacred image, through which the deity could become materially emplaced. This view of sacred images as dynamic agents effectively overturns conceptions of objects as empty and normalizes the use of objects in worship practices.

Chapter 2 further examined religious objects by looking at their emotional and affective properties. Many studies on religious emotion focus disproportionately on emotions like fear and awe, due to the nature of their (mainly textual) sources. This leads to a vertical conception of the human-divine relationship. Studying objects as affective can help balance this view. In this chapter, we saw how in ancient Greek religion, the tactility and

manipulability of sacred images invited affective interactions (e.g. bathing, feeding, kissing, dressing, and disciplining) that blurred the hierarchical boundaries between human and divine parties. Gods and humans became interdependent in this way. Comparisons with Indian *puja* and Meso-American cradling of *niño* figures show how images act as affective archives, allowing each encounter to build on previous ones, and as such build and maintain a horizontal relationship of friendship and intimacy. This cross-cultural approach to religious materiality redresses the scholarly focus on the human-divine relationship as vertical, a product of the theological orientation of studies on religion. Because images localized the presence of the gods within the landscape, the gods lived alongside the ancient Greeks as fellow social actors, friends, and family.

Finally, chapter 3 explored the influence of large-scale material objects, such as shrines and temples, on religious identity and experience. More specifically, this chapter examined the entanglement of place and identity. Too often, place is treated as an abstract container for human activity. In this chapter, place was treated as a locus of meaning, a web of relationships between humans, places, things, and ideological structures. The performance of religious activities in specific places connected individuals' identities with place. Places, through their materiality, manifested and maintained people's religious identities. In this way, the landscape reaffirmed the ideological structures of Greek religion. The second half of this chapter reexamined early Christianity in light of this picture of Greek religious landscapes through a close reading of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapters 8-10. In viewing the debate between the so-called Strong (a scholarly designation) and the Weak in Corinth as a spatial discourse in which Paul was attempting to define the limits of

engagement with pagan sacred spaces for members of his *ekklēsia*, we can see how the material landscape proved a hindrance to Greek converts to the Jesus movement.

The cross-cultural, synchronic, and comparative lenses employed throughout this project help turn the tables on Paul and, in so doing, challenge the very validity of the Christian triumphal lens. In the first place, we must stop reinscribing Paul's perspective. Not only did Paul not understand Greek religion, he also was not attempting to accurately represent it in his letters. Paul wrote persuasively and polemically, delineating not how things actually were but how he thought they ought to be. In fact, sources like 2 Corinthians show that Paul was not an unmitigated success among his pagan audience, and many resisted his descriptions of them. Additionally, in his critique of religious materiality, Paul was in the minority in the ancient Mediterranean. Putting the ancient Greek material in dialogue with other ancient and modern polytheistic and/or materialistic traditions allows us to eschew a Christian, aniconistic starting point. Through this methodology, we not only revitalize religious objects, we normalize ancient Greek religion.

Secondly, this view of pagan religious materiality as dynamic and meaningful has implications for how we interpret interactions between pagans and Christians in the decades and centuries after Paul, namely the triumphal idea that pagans converted peacefully and *en masse* to Christianity. It used to be thought that the conversion of the Roman empire from pagan to Christian was a process that happened naturally, with very little effort on the part of Christians besides explaining the superiority of Christianity. This notion was based in early Christian accounts of conversion, which exist mainly in anecdotal form. In these sources, the success of the conversion is often due to the individual's "overwhelming conviction that the

Christians *are right*."[556] While many emphasize healings, exorcisms, or other such miracles, several portray a Christian triumph over materiality, in which a saint or Christian official is able to raze temples or overthrow sacred images by words of prayer alone.[557] Pagans, upon seeing that the images were unable to right themselves after being thrown to the ground, realized the error of the ways and became Christians. But given the nature of these sources, and the fact that these stories do not relate what happens *after* the moment of so-called conversion, the success of the conversion, if defined as exclusive commitment to the Christian god, is debatable.

Recognizing the vitality of religious objects allows us to see that shrines and other objects of worship in public places reaffirmed and encouraged pagan modes of being. As material objects, they exerted a certain agency over the people around them by guiding their attention to pagan gods and activities. Several Christian officials in the third and fourth centuries complained about Christians going to pagan places and participating in pagan activities. For example, Bishop Cyprian laments in the third century that the Christians of his city voluntarily participate in pagan sacrifices. In the previous chapter, we saw Tertullian urging his fellow Christians to stay away from pagan places of spectacle. The fact that multiple Early Christian apologists and church fathers, such as Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Minucius Felix, Athenagoras, Justin Martyr, John Chrysostom, and Augustine, to mention just a few, expend a great deal of time and effort to condemn the materiality of pagan traditions suggests that pagan materiality continued to be a problem well into the Late Antique period.

---

[556] MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 9.

[557] MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, 10; see also n.24.

While these authors limited their actions to scathing words on paper, more direct action was taken by groups of Christians throughout the empire. Beginning in the third and fourth centuries, Christians began to mutilate sacred images. Their focus on the heads, fingers, hands, and feet of the image, i.e. the parts of the sacred image most touched and interacted with by worshippers, was a conscious effort to destroy the agency of the image.[558] These and other religious objects were thrown into dumpsites or bodies of water, and bronze images were melted down for reuse. Nor did shrines escape such treatment. When possible, religious buildings were torn down. Otherwise, images of gods carved into the pediment were subjected to the same mutilation as freestanding statues, and the religious potency of the temple metaphorically eradicated.

And so, we have come full circle back to the starting point of this project: the dismantling of the Christian triumphal lens. I have presented Greek religion divested of Christianizing assumptions. When viewed in this way, neither Greek religion nor early Christianity look the same as before. Indeed, the picture in the paragraph above of a protracted and at times violent battle between Christians and pagans in the first several centuries of the common era unquestionably topples the triumphal narrative, whereby pagans quietly abandoned their former views for the superior doctrines of Christianity. Peaceful sermons speaking to the emptiness of statues and prayers that toppled images and shrines were not enough to sway religious sentiment. Paganism was a vital force, one which needed to be eradicated through legal codes, financial incentives, and even violence. Of the legislation permitting the destruction of pagan shrines and objects, Augustine wrote, "yet, many people are corrected by them and have been turned toward the living god and are daily

[558] Kiernan, *Roman Cult Images*, 271.

converted."[559] That the destruction of pagan materiality was a necessary step in the religious conversion of the empire speaks not only to the vitality of ancient Greek religion but the arduous effort of early Christians to overcome it. It will take a similarly arduous effort for scholars to rethink our approaches to Greek religion, early Christianity, and their interactions in antiquity, but I hope that this project has laid the foundations for such a reconsideration.

[559] August., *Ep*. 93.26, 91.8.

Appendix A: Rites of Passage

a. Birth and Early Years

Births were celebrated quite widely in ancient Greece, and children were welcomed into the home, family, and society with religious activity. While not much is known about the specific types of activities, infants and young children did undergo several types of rituals, most of which would have occurred in the home and the neighborhood, in the presence of family.

1. *Amphidromia*: In Athens (and maybe other cities as well), newborns underwent the *amphidromia*, a ritual to formally place the child under the protection of Hestia and introduce him or her into the *oikia* within a certain number of days after being born.[560] There are many variants to this practice. The celebration probably began as a private one, restricted to women (and perhaps a few select men) of the house. Either the infant was carried in a circle around the domestic hearth (Hestia) and was then placed on the ground, or the infant was placed on the ground and a group of adults (perhaps the midwives, the father, or designated men of the household) would run around the hearth and child.[561] This was followed by a sacrifice to the gods.[562] Members of the *oikeioi* (persons associated with the house) would then send gifts to the family and infant and would be invited to feast with the family that night in a banquet. It is likely that the banquet would have only been conducted

[560] The fifth, seventh, and tenth day have all been proposed, though many scholars agree that the *amphidromia* occurred on the fifth and the naming ceremony occurred on the tenth Richard Hamilton, "Sources for the Athenian Amphidromia," *GRBS* 25.3 (2004): 243–51.

[561] Schol. Ar. *Lys*. 757

[562] Eur. *El.* 1125-28; *Anecd.Bekk.* 1 207.13. Plautus places the sacrifice on the fifth day after birth, though he might have been talking of a Roman version of the ritual (*Truc.* 423).

for the birth of boys, and this venue could be where boys were first presented to the *phratry* of the father as proof of the child's legitimacy.[563]

2. Naming ceremony: Several scholars and ancient sources combine the naming ceremony with the *amphidromia*, though some view the naming ceremony as happening a few days afterwards. Both boys and girls were placed around the hearth (Hestia) and given their names in the presence of the women of the house and perhaps the father or select men.[564] If this rite was on a separate day from the *amphidromia*, offerings would be made again to the gods for the protection and health of the child.[565]

3. *Choes*: Not much is known past birth for young girls, but Attic boys might have undergone a ritual during the Choes (the middle day of the Anthesteria) to celebrate their maturation into their third year of life. The Choes was celebrated in the home with the *oikia*.[566] The iconography of many miniature *choes* (beakers for drinking wine, 13 centimeters and smaller), produced in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, show young boys participating in apparently ritual activity.[567] It is likely that these young boys were wreathed,

---

[563] Ephipos, a fourth-century comic poet, identifies the feast after the *amphidromia* as the main and most elaborate part of the event to which the extended family would have been invited (Ath. 370c-d). Parker, *Polytheism*, 13–15; Hamilton, "Sources for the Athenian Amphidromia."

[564] Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion*, 136–40.

[565] Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel, *Religion*, 62–64.

[566] Callimachus describes an Athenian in Egypt celebrating this festival in his home (Callim. *Aet*. fr. 178.1–5). See also Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 215; Parker, *Polytheism*, 290.

[567] Gerard van Hoorn, *Choes and Anthesteria* (Leiden: Brill, 1951). It is interesting to note that some of the *choes* present mixed groups of children (boys and girls). However, the majority depict groups of boys or only one boy.

decorated with amulets and apotropaic bracelets, gifted toys, and allowed to participate in the sacrifice and offerings to Hermes Chthonios and Dionysus as well as the banquet at home.[568] An inscription from the second century CE, which records the rules of conduct for an Athenian private religious club, the Iobacchoi, lists the Choes alongside important rites such as marriage, ephebeia, and citizenship, suggesting that the participation of young boys, and the libations offered by their parents, was an important first step in their journey towards becoming full citizens.[569]

4. Birthday celebrations (γενέθλια): Unlike Roman adults, who celebrated their own birthdays as well as those of their close friends, Greek adults might not have celebrated their birthdays each year. However, there is evidence to show that, at least in Athens, children were celebrated on their birthdays with sacrifices to the gods.[570] For example, Electra asks her mother Clytemnestra to make an appropriate sacrifice for the birth of her child in the baby's tenth moon, which Hamilton takes to mean in the birth-month of the child one year later.[571]

b. Childhood to Adolescence

---

[568] Greta L. Ham, "The Choes and Anthesteria Reconsidered: Male Maturation Rites and the Peloponnesian Wars," *Bucknell Review* 43.1 (1999): 201–18.

[569] *IG* 2^2 1368,127-36; this inscription was displayed on a stele. See also Ham, "Choes and Anthesteria," 203.

[570] Eur. *Ion* 653; Callim. *Hymn*. 3.74; Hdt. 1.133; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.10 Schol. Aesch. *Eum*. 7; Nonnus 5.139; Plaut. *Persa* 769; Ter. *Phorm.* 48.

[571] Eur. *El.* 1125-28, particularly 1126. See Hamilton, "Sources for the Athenian Amphidromia," 246.

1. Presentation and offerings to *Kourotrophos* and *kourotrophic* (child-nurturing) gods: The welfare and health of children were a constant concern in the ancient world, and *kourotrophic* gods were often petitioned to watch over and protect them. The goddess *Kourotrophos* was particularly revered in Attica and was the co-recipient of offerings on numerous occasions, but many gods and goddesses were associated with children. Rivers, for example, were closely connected with fertility and children, so ancient Greeks often prayed to rivers for offspring and viewed their children as "gifts" of the river.[572] As such, these children were presented to the river and sometimes even named after the river god. For example, Cephisodotus was named after the river Cephisus at Echelidai and his mother, Xenokrateia, dedicated a relief in which she is presenting her son to the river god. Important rivers had sacred precincts with altars and small temples along their banks, but offerings could equally be thrown into the water.[573] Ancient commentators explain the practice of children dedicating their first locks of hair to the river as "a token of the fact that the growth of everything comes from water."[574]

2. Introduction to the *phratry* during the *Apatouria*: The *apatouria*, a uniquely Ionian festival, was the main celebration of the *phratries* during which youths were made members of the group under the auspices of the gods. The festival was conducted at a

[572] Parker, *On Greek Religion*, 76.

[573] In Mykonos, the river Acheloos received three lambs "in the stream" (*LSCG* 96.34-37; for discussion, see Parker, *On Greek Religion*, 76.).

[574] Parker, *Polytheism*, 431. Parker cites Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 4.145; Aesch. *Cho.* 6; Paus. 1.37.3, and others who either mention or explain this practice.

phratry's local altar.[575] According to two lexicographers, both boys and girls were introduced into the *phratry* during this festival, while others suggest that a girl could only be introduced if she were an ἐπίκληρος (heiress).[576] It is likely that outside of exceptional circumstances, this festival was restricted to men and boys. Boys were introduced into the *phratry* on at least two different occasions with two different sacrifices: a μεῖον (possibly for boys aged 0-3) and κουρεῖον (possibly for older boys around the age of 16). This type of two-stage process is also attested in Delphi.[577] These sacrifices were conducted on the second day of the celebration, certainly to Zeus Phratrios and Athena Phratria, as well as to Artemis and perhaps Hephaistos, Heracles, Dionysus, and others, depending on local tradition. Upon their presentation to the *phratry*, which usually occurred with a libation to Heracles another sacrifice to Artemis on the third day, boys would also cut off a lock of their hair and dedicate it to Artemis to thank the goddess for protection during their childhood and in the transition to adulthood.[578] Many sources suggest that without these formal introductions into the *phratry*, boys could not pursue citizenship upon their eighteenth birthday.

3. Choruses: Young girls and boys participated in the chorus at important festivals (such as the Dionysia) through their *phratry.* These choral performances would have been performed within the *temenos* of a temple or shrine. The children who perform in these

[575] Xen. *Hell*. 1.7.8. On locations: *IG* 2^2 1237 (RO 5) 67: the phratry of the Deceleans celebrated this festival at its own altar in Decelea.

[576] *Suda* a 2940; Pollus 8.107; on ἐπίκληρος, see Is. 3.73.

[577] Parker, *Polytheism*, 458–61. Parker cites a number of sources that flip the ages of the boys at the two sacrifices, probably as a result of some confusion and the similarity between the two sacrifices.

[578] Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel, *Religion*, 64–66.

choral groups and participate in associated rituals (e.g. placing wheat on the banks of the river Meilichos as a gift to Artemis before entering the temple of Dionysus for a performance) are often referred to as τὰς ἐπιχωρίους παρθένους (children of the region), underscoring their identity as part of a geographical or family association.[579] Vases show mixed choruses as well as single sex ones. The girls in the junior choruses appear to be in the period between puberty and marriage, while other choruses were made up of girls having just made the transition into marriage. Young girls who performed maiden songs as ritual dance-events would have been exposed to the male gaze for the first time through these events and would have been examined by spectators as potential brides for their family members.[580]

4. Service to goddesses: Although the voices and bodies of girls, and women more generally, were strictly controlled and regulated in ancient Greek public life, religious settings were an important exception and provided the venue for girls to take on important, public roles.[581] It is important to note that only girls from elite, wealthy, privileged families would have taken part in such prestigious activities. However, given that elite girls were the most secluded in Greek society, these positions gave them the opportunity to see and be seen in public while also exercising religious agency and establishing relationships with their goddesses.

Young, virgin girls (from pre-puberty to adolescence) were often pledged to the service of a particular goddess, usually Artemis, Athena, Aphrodite, or Hera. In Athens, the

---

[579] Claude Calame, *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece: Their Morphology, Religious Role, and Social Function* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 32.

[580] Clark, "To Kneel or Not to Kneel." On the importance of choral dancing: Pl. *Leg*. 672e

[581] Clark, "To Kneel or Not to Kneel," 6.

youngest girls, aged seven to eleven, could participate in religious rituals as the *arrephoroi*. These girls were charged with carrying secret implements during rites of Athena and Pandrosos on the Akropolis.[582] Their other duties included setting up the warp for weaving Athena's *peplos* during the Chalkeia and participating in the Arrephoria. Athenian girls might have then served as an *aletris*, sacred grain grinder, through which position they prepared specially baked bread for religious rites along with other food.[583] Young girls also served as "hearth initiates" at the Eleusinian mysteries, and offered prayers and sacrifices on behalf of the initiates.[584]

Young girls between the ages of five and ten were also placed in the service of Artemis Brauronia. These girls not only tended the goddess, they also participated in the local rituals of the *Arkteia* by "playing the bear." Not much is known about this position. Black-figured bowls found at Brauron as well as in Artemisian sanctuaries at Mounychia, Halai (Artemis Tauropolos), Melite (Artemis Aristoboule), and elsewhere show young girls singing, dancing, racing in the nude, and participating in other athletic feats.[585] Other, unprovenanced fragments of red-figure krateriskoi depict similar scenes but also feature bears and human figures wearing bear masks. Whether these are representative of a mythic past or actual events during the *Arkteia* is unclear, especially given that Artemis is frequently

---

[582] Paus. 1.27.3.

[583] Joan Breton Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 32. See also *Suda*, s.v. *anastatoi*.

[584] Connelly, *Portrait*, 33.

[585] Christopher A. Faraone, "Playing the Bear and the Fawn for Artemis: Female Initiation or Substitute Sacrifice?," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone (London: Routledge, 2003), 45.

associated with bears, but it could be that young girls who participated in these rites did so as initiation into the next stage of their childhoods.[586]

There were several other positions for maidens. Having reached puberty, a slightly older girl could serve as *kanephoros*, the basket-carrier who walked at the front of religious processions. Nearly every festival required ritual implements, so there were plenty of opportunities for young girls to carry the *kanoun* filled with those objects.[587] Numerous vase paintings of ritual activity also showcase a *kanephoros* in the background. This was a highly important religious and social experience for young girls and families often named these girls with pride in dedicatory inscriptions. Being a *kanephoros* also provided girls with a good opportunity to be seen in their marriageable splendor. Maidens were also in charge of caring for and maintaining the sacred images within a temple. In Athens, *plyntrides* were responsible for washing Athena's clothes while *loutrides* washed the goddess herself. The position of *ergastinai*, the workers who wove Athena's *peplos*, could have likewise been held by young girls. *Hydrophoroi* were especially important at Ephesos and Didyma, and at Latina in Karia the most esteemed office for young girls was *kleidophoros* (key bearer). Inscriptions from across the Hellenistic world, particularly in Asia Minor, attest to the variety of priesthoods available to virgins.[588]

The locations for these positions were varied, though they are mainly attested for the larger and more important sanctuaries. The *arrephoroi* likely lived on the Akropolis in

---

[586] Faraone, "Playing the Bear"; Gloria Ferrari, *Figures of Speech: Men and Maidens in Ancient Greece* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002); Connelly, *Portrait*, 32.

[587] van Straten, *Hiera Kala*, 10–24, 162–64.

[588] Connelly, *Portrait*, 39–41.

housing attached to the shrine of Pandrosus, and other girls in the service of a goddess might have likewise lived in special quarters attached to a sanctuary complex. The *kanephoroi* would have continued to live at home but would be allowed to take prominent positions in public activities, such as heading a procession around a city or between temples. For example, during the Panathenaia, these girls would have led the procession from the bottom of the Akropolis up to the top, through the Propylaia, around the Akropolis, between the Erechtheion and Parthenon, and finally up to the altar. Locally, girls might have participated with their mothers in the care of altars and shrines to goddesses, particularly the virgin goddesses. Families took such pride in these positions that statues of their daughters were dedicated and displayed prominently in public places like the Akropolis and Agora.[589] The connections that formed between girls and goddesses during these formative events can be seen in later supplications to the deities in which these moments were recalled.

5. Ritual Hair Growing: Boys and girls cut and offered locks of their hair to gods within their temples and on tombs of heroes on several occasions throughout their childhood, usually to thank the gods for their protection or to request it in the next stage of life. The locks of hair were usually displayed for a period of time on the sacred image, on a hero's tomb, or on an offering table.[590] For girls, this mainly occurred before their weddings (this will be discussed below). Both boys and girls in Corinth cut their hair at the tomb of Medea's children, maidens offered their hair at the tomb of Iphinoe in Megara, and Euripides tells us

[589] Joseph W. Day, "Servants of the goddess: Female religious agency in archaic and fifth-century Greek epigrams and dedications," in *Épigramme dans tous ses états: épigraphiques, littéraires, historiques*, ed. Eleonora Santin and Laurence Foschia (Place of publication not identified: ENS éditions, 2016), 207–22.

[590] Paus. 2.11.6.

that Troezenian maidens cut their hair for Hippolytus.[591] In other instances, adolescent hair cutting was the fulfillment of a vow made by the parents when their children were just born.[592] For boys, the ritual of hair-cutting often occurred as they entered a new stage of life and with it a new social group. Evidence suggests that boys actually grew out their hair for a period of time before cutting it in a process called "growing hair for the god."[593] Thus, while the actual hair-cutting and offering happened within a sanctuary, the ritual of growing one's hair over several months crossed the boundaries between "sacred" and "profane" space. The epigraphic evidence also suggests that this was not a cohort-ritual but a family one. In some cases, fathers got to choose the sanctuary at which the boy's hair would be cut.[594] In other instances, the hair was offered by the whole family or certain members of the family.[595] In Panamara, three inscriptions state that fathers cut their hair along with their sons.[596] This was a way for people to perform family and group identity in public while also securing protection for dangerous transitional phases.

---

[591] Corinth: Pausanias 2.3.6-7; Megara: Pasanias 1.43.4; Troezen: Eur. *Hipp.* 1423-30.

[592] On Panamara: *I. Str*. 405, 417, 444, 445, 483; on Paros: *IG* 12.5.173.5. See also *Anth. Pal.* 6.198, 10.19.

[593] Eur. *Bacch*. 494 (for Dionysus); Diphilis frag. 66 Kock (for unnamed god); Paus. 8.20.3 (for the river Alpheios); Himerius 23.7 (for Dionysus). Hair was grown for a variety of deities including Apollo at Delphi and the nymphs in Euboean Amarynthos. See Leitao, "Adolescent Hair-Growing."

[594] Theophr. *Char*. 21.3; Theopomp. *FGrH* 115 F 248 = Ath. 605a-d.

[595] At the sanctuary of Asclepius and Hygeia on Paros, from the third century BCE: *IG* 12.5.173.3, 5 (offered by mother); *IG* 12.5.173.4 ("ephebic" hair offered by father). A brother is also mentioned in a first beard offering from the first century BCE in Paros (*Anth. Pal.* 6.242).

[596] *I. Str.* 402-428, 463. See also Leitao, "Adolescent Hair-Growing."

6. Gymnasia and athletic competitions: The gymnasia was where boys underwent athletic and military training in preparation for their citizenship. Participating in the rites of the gymnasia and other athletic competitions was restricted to boys and also highly religious in nature.[597] Most gymnasia had their own religious calendars which marked the festivals during which youths from that particular gymnasium went out into the public to participate in ritual events or when the public came within the walls of the gymnasium for sacrifices and games.[598] Youths had their own festivals within the walls as well, such as the Hermaia.[599] During this festival, the boys offered sacrfices to Hermes Agonios or Hermes Enagonios and might have performed the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes* to underscore the connection between Hermes' and the boys' transition to adulthood.[600] In competitions at Sparta, adolescents had to fight older men wearing female masks.[601] At Kato Syme on Crete, boys might have had to wrestle each other, older men, or hunt animals as part of their maturation process.[602] It is also at the Hermaia (and perhaps other events like this), according to Plato, that boys could, for

[597] Parker, *Polytheism*, 249.

[598] *IG* 2^2 1227 (from the Athenian cleruchy of Salamis); *SEG* 26 139 (an inventory from an Athenian gymnasium from the second century BCE in which numerous gods and altars are listed).

[599] Aeschines refers to laws restricting the presence of older males within the gymnasia during the Hermaia competitions (1.10).

[600] Sarah Iles Johnston, "'Initiation' in Myth; 'Initiation' in Practice: The Homeric Hymn to Hermes and Its Performative Context," in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone (London: Routledge, 2003), 155–80.

[601] Johnston, "Initiation," 157.

[602] Marinatos, "Striding."

the first time, sacrifice on their own account.[603] Gymnasia, filled with sacred images and altars, were therefore social and religious places.

7. Ephebeia: When Attic boys turned eighteen, they were inducted into the *ephebeia*, a two year period during which the boys served as *ephebes*, or citizens-in-training. This transition was celebrated by the family as well as the cohort of ephebes. Families might go to a sanctuary and offer the locks of the boy or even the boy himself to the god for protection. One lexicographer tells us that before cutting the lock of hair, boys and their families poured a libation of wine for Heracles and then gave a drink of wine to those present in a ritual called the *oinisteria*.[604] A votive relief that shows a father presenting a naked adolescent to the god Heracles probably commemorates this event. As a cohort, the ephebes first swore their ephebic oath in the sanctuary of Aglauros on the Akropolis, near the Erechtheion, and called on several gods as witnesses. After this, the *corps* of ephebes toured several sanctuary sites, provided escorts for processions, and made sacrificial offerings at sanctuaries as a group.[605] In these settings, ephebes were seen performing their religious and social identities for the public eye.

c. The wedding

The rituals associated with the ancient Greek wedding were dispersed across a series of places in the landscape.

---

[603] Pl. *Lys.* 206c-207a; Parker, *Polytheism*, 251.

[604] Hesych. *o* 325; Parker, *Polytheism*, 437.

[605] Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion*, 142. Ephebes were participants in several important festivals, such as the *Aianteia, Diisoteria, Eleusinia, Epitaphia, Galaxia, Hephaisteia, Oschophoria, Panathenaia, Plynteria*, in the processions for Artemis Agrotera, the Great Gods, in torch races, and other such events.

1. *Proteleia*: The *proteleia* was a category of prenuptial sacrifices undertaken by the bride and her parents to ensure the welfare of the bride during her marriage.[606] The sacrifices were conducted in the sanctuaries of whichever gods and goddesses were associated with this rite, including Artemis, Aphrodite, Athena, Zeus and Hera Teleia, Pan and the Nymphs, and the singular Nymphe (meaning "bride"), among others. While evidence for such sacrifices has been found at major sanctuary spaces, it is likely that families and brides celebrated the *proteleia* at their local deme shrines, and perhaps even on a smaller scale in the home.[607] At Locri, Hermes was petitioned alongside Aphrodite in marriage rites.[608] Artemis in particular had to be appeased before a girl's wedding night when she transitioned fully from childhood to adulthood.[609] There is also evidence suggesting that brides had to donate one drachma into the offering box for Aphrodite Ourania for marital success.[610] The bridegroom might also have made sacrifices to Hera, Aphrodite, the Tritopatores, and others, but would have done so through his *phratry* at the *phratry*'s local altars.[611]

---

[606] Alternatively, the Suda defines the *Proteleia* as a day on which parents took their daughter to the temple to perform prenuptial sacrifices (*Suda* π 2865 s.v. προτέλεια); see also Parker, *Polytheism*, 440, n.88.

[607] For the timing and location of such sacrifices, see Anne Marie Verilhac and Claude Vial, *Le Mariage Grec: Du Vie Siecle Av. J.-C. a l'Epoque d'Auguste* (Athènes: Peeters, 1998), particularly 291.

[608] Marinatos, "Striding."

[609] "Before a bride goes into the bedchamber, she must bring a sacrifice to Artemis as a penalty," *SEG* 9, 72.84-5; LSCG *Suppl*. 115 B 1-2. In Euripides' Iphigenia at Aulis, the prenuptial sacrifice to Artemis is performed outdoors in a prominent sanctuary space (433-449).

[610] *SEG* 41.182.

[611] Pollux 3.38; *Etym. Magn.* 220.54-7.

2. Marriage offerings: Several epigrams also attest to the kinds of offerings and dedications set up by brides in the days preceding their wedding. One reads, "Before her marriage Timareta dedicated, as was fitting for a maiden to a maiden, to Artemis Limnatis her drums, her lovely ball, the net that protected her hair, and her dolls and the doll's clothing,"[612] and another, "Alkibia dedicated the sacred veil for her hair to Hera, when she reached the time of her lawful wedding."[613] An epigram by female poet Nossis on the occasion of her daughter's wedding reads, "Most revered Hera, you who often descending from heaven behold your Lacinian shrine fragrant with incense, receive the linen wrap that with her noble child Nossis Theophilis…wove for you."[614] In addition to this, brides would dedicate locks of hair, belts, clips, childhood toys, and other such belongings to Artemis or other goddesses, many of which were displayed on the statues themselves.[615] It has been suggested that grooms performed torch-races in honor of Pan before their marriage, but this has been challenged more recently.[616]

3. The bridal bath: Girls were bathed with sacred water in the home before their weddings. Women of the household would process to the river or sacred spring, fill *loutrophoroi* with water, and bring them back for the ritual bathing. At Athens, the water

---

[612] *Anth. Pal.* 6.280.

[613] *Anth. Pal.* 6.133

[614] Gow-Page, *GP* 3.

[615] Herodotus tell us that the girls and boys of Delos cut off a lock of hair before marriage, wind it around a spindle, and place it on the tomb of the Hyperborean girls who died in Delos located within the sanctuary of Artemis (4.34). Pollux also mentions marriage as an occasion on which brides dedicated locks of their hair (3.38).

[616] Parker, *Polytheism*, 442, n.97.

came from the Enneakrounos, the fountain house for the spring Callirrhoe, according to Thucydides.[617] Bridegrooms might have bathed in or sprinkled themselves with water from local rivers or springs to pray for fertility.[618]

4. The wedding and feast: On the day of the wedding, incense would be burnt and a sacrifice would have been set up in the groom's father's house. A similar sacrifice and banquet would be held by the bride's father in his home, either the day before or the day of the wedding.[619] The wedding itself, while perhaps calling upon deities to witness the union, was not overtly religious and occurred within the home of one of the two families. The *oikia,* extended family, neighbors, and other close friends would all be invited to partake in the sacrifice and the banquet, during which libations were poured for a variety of gods.[620] While this usually occurred in the home, certain wedding feasts might have taken place in sanctuary spaces, particular those of Pan and the Nymphs.[621] An inscription from Kos dating to 300 BCE states that any member of the group in charge of caring for the Herakles' sanctuary space could have a wedding there and could use part of the meat from the festival for the feast, provided that the god was invited.[622]

---

[617] Thuc. 2.15.5.

[618] Schol. Eur. *Phoen.* 347; John Howard Oakley, *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*, Wisconsin Studies in Classics (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 15.

[619] Oakley, *The Wedding*, 11–12. See also Men. *Sam.* 673-4: "They are holding your wedding; the wine is mixed, the incense is burning, the ritual has begun, and the sacrifice has been kindled in Hephaistos' fire."

[620] It is unclear to what extent women were participants in such a banquet. Likely they were only present in their capacity as servers of food and drink.

[621] Literary evidence for weddings taking place in sanctuaries: Men. *Dys.*

[622] *SIG*^{3}, 1106, Column C, 95-101.

5. After the wedding: The *katakhusmata* ceremony integrated the bride into the husband's home and family and is very similar to the *amphridromia*. The bride sat next to the hearth while members of her new household, mainly women, would shower her with coins, dates, dried fruits, figs, and nuts.[623] On Kos, girls were required to sacrifice to Aphrodite Pandemos within one year of marriage.[624] In Athens, men who were recently married were required to conduct a sacrifice at the *Apatouria* during which they would introduce their wives formally into the *phratry*.[625] It is also possible that young couples propitiated the gods together for marital harmony. At Locri, several bronze plaques from the seventh to the fifth century BCE show young couples worshipping Hermes and Aphrodite. Whether this happened before the marriage or after is unclear, but given the identity of the deities (Hermes and Aphrodite, not a married couple like Zeus and Hera), there is probably some connection to the sexual aspect of marriage. This could be an important moment for young couples in their relationship.[626]

d. Adulthood

Most of the activities from this point forward are not necessarily rites of passage, and adult involvement in religious activity has been discussed at length by other scholars. But I

[623] Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion*, 139.

[624] All free women of Kos had to sacrifice to Aphrodite Pandemos according to their means within the first year of marriage (*ED* 178a(A). This is similar to provisions in Cyrene. See Matthew P. J. Dillon, "Post-Nuptial Sacrifices on Kos (Segre, 'ED' 178) and Ancient Greek Marriage Rites," *ZPE* 124 (1999): 63–80.

[625] Zaidman and Schmitt Pantel, *Religion*, 66.

[626] Marinatos, "Striding."

will mention just a few religious activities and responsibilities that highlight the entanglement of religious, family, civic, and social identity throughout the ancient landscape.

While women are usually placed within the confines of the house, especially according to literary sources, the epigraphical and material evidence attests to the religious duties that took women outside home and village. Concerned with the birth and welfare of their children, women made dedications at several sanctuaries, especially those of Artemis, Asklepius, Athena, and Demeter. Statuettes of male infants found in Artemis Brauronia's sanctuary suggest a hoped-for or successful birth of a male heir. Women also dedicated clothing soiled during childbirth to Artemis as expressions of gratitude.[627] These clothes were displayed in the sanctuary, usually near the sacred image, though they were not placed on the image itself, and afterwards formed part of the deity's *kosmos*.[628] Again, epigrams reveal the types of offerings made by women:

> "Micythe dedicated me, this statue, to Athena. She vowed it as a tithe on behalf of her children and herself."[629]
>
> "Callirrhoe dedicates to Aphrodite her garland, to Pallas her tress, and to Artemis her girdle; for she found the husband she wanted, she grew up in virtue, and she gave birth to boys."[630]

---

[627] Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion*, 131–32.

[628] Romano, "Early Greek Cult Images," 414.

[629] *IG* 1^3 857. See also *IG* 12, 5.1 ("Telestodice erected this statue for you, Artemis. She is the mother of Asphalius and daughter of Therseles); *IG* 2^2 4613 (Lysistrate dedicated this to Heracles on behalf of her children). On female religious agency, see Day, "Servants."

[630] *Anth. Pal.* 6.59.

> "Before her marriage, Timareta dedicated…to Artemis Limnatis her drums, her lovely ball, the net that protected her hair, and her dolls and the doll's clothing. Daughter of Leto, hold your hand over Timaretus' child and protect the girl in a pious way."[631]

Ancient authors described marriage as tearing girls away from their ancestral gods, but associations with the gods of their childhood (like Artemis) persisted throughout their lives as wives and mothers. As such, the connections between women and the *kourotrophic* gods was especially deep. Fathers are also mentioned at times in dedications when they were undertaken jointly, and fathers would also have celebrated the birth of their children by offering sacrifices in their *phratries* and libations for their private religious associations.[632]

In Attica, men had religious obligations through their membership in several different groups. Within the *oikia*, the head of household was responsible for tending the shrines of the home on a daily basis, particularly those of Zeus Ktesios, Zeus Herkeios, and Apollo Agyieus, and for offering libations and prayers at mealtimes. The head of household was also responsible for sacrificing on behalf of his family within the home, and tending to the tombs of his ancestors. The more prominent the *genos,* the more of a role the father would have had outside the home as well. It is likely that men at one point or another served a priest of a

[631] *Anth. Pal.* 6.280. Part of this epigram was cited earlier as evidence for the kinds of offerings made by brides. The second half of the epigram links the woman's childhood connection to Artemis Limnatis with her new status as mother.

[632] The stele setting out the rules of conduct for the *Iobacchoi* lists the birth of children as an occasion on which members had to offer libations to the gods and give wine to the other members. See Ham, "Choes and Anthesteria."

deme cult, through which position he would sacrifice on behalf of all fellow demesmen.[633] He would also attend sacrifices and festivals through the *phratry* and *deme* as a representative of his family, and might have been one of the deme delegates in a given year to sacrifice in Athens on behalf of the deme. Each year, the head of household would also participate in the Rural Dionysia and perhaps even take his family (women included) to watch the festivals. Aside from these obligations, men also had to offer sacrifices and libations through their private religious associations. As such, a man's religious obligations, while centered quotidianly within the *oikos*, also took him through the neighborhood, countryside, and city.[634]

Women from prominent families also had the opportunity to participate in such activities.[635] There were probably daily rites, especially around the hearth, that the women of the household took charge of. While women may have conducted most of their duties with the other members of the *oikia*, they were also members of neighborhood networks, through which women celebrated rites in honor of Hecate and Adonis in addition to Hestia. These rites would have occurred sometimes within the women's quarters of a home or at neighborhood shrines.[636] For example, women of the Erchian deme were in charge of

---

[633] The Tetrakomia of the Phaleron region was an organization of four demes centered on a shrine of Herakles. The men of the association were responsible for tending the shrine and also competed annually in a dance. See Parker, *Athenian Religion*, 328.

[634] Many private religious associations owned their own altar and shrine to a particular god or set of gods. Fees paid to the association would finance the religious activities and membership guaranteed the ability (or duty) to sacrifice at the association's shrine.

[635] Evidence for women's religious agency is not restricted to Attica. Women enjoyed what scholars have termed a 'cultic citizenship' across the Greek states.

[636] Parker, *Polytheism*, 13.

sacrificing to local goddesses like Artemis, Kourotrophos, Hera Thelchinia, Ge, Semele, Athena Erchia, Hera Teleia, and Leto as well as Athena Polias, Aglaurus, and Pandrosus. Not only did women oversee these sacrifices, they could also serve as priestesses for local cults, particularly if their husband belonged to a prominent *genos*.[637] Women held about forty state priesthoods in Athens and several more across the Greek-speaking world.[638] There were also several important positions that women could hold, such as weaving clothes for goddesses or washing the sacred image on festival days. These positions enabled women to leave the confines of the home and be present within sanctuary spaces and attached workshops throughout the countryside and city.

The Thesmophoria festival bears brief mention, though it has been studied widely in the context of women's religious agency. It is worth noting that most ancient Greek cities celebrated this three-day, all-women's festival in September in any local sanctuary of Demeter. Married women would camp out within the sanctuary and help the priestess of Demeter (usually an important woman from the local phratry or deme) perform rites and sacrifices to Demeter and Kalligeneia (Good Birth). Athenaeus tells us that the women of Democritus of Abdera's household so looked forward to this festival that they asked

[637] Some of the high-ranking priesthoods were "inherited priesthoods," meaning that the position was restricted to a particular clan. By the imperial period, married women often held priestly office jointly with their husbands (e.g. Athena Lindia and Zeus Poleius at Lindos (*I.Lindos* 105-6), Panamara at Karia, Hekate at Lagina, etc.). The priesthoods of the Imperial cult were regularly shared by husband-wife teams by the mid-first century CE. See Riet van Bremen, *The Limits of Participation: Women and Civic Life in the Greek East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology v. 15 (Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1996), 114–41, 273–96.

[638] Connelly, *Portrait*, 41–44.

Democritus not to die during the festival and prevent them from being able to celebrate it on account of the pollution of death.[639]

Families also celebrated certain rites together as a family unit. Rites within the home were usually conducted in the presence of the whole family.[640] An anecdote in Antiphon indicates that others (e.g. male friends or, in this instance, a slave mistress) might also be invited to participate in the sacrifice, libations, burning of incense, and feast in honor of Zeus Ktesios.[641] City-wide festivals were also likely to have been celebrated within the home. The Anthesteria, Kronia, and Diasia all involved extended families gathering within the home for feasting and drinking.[642] The festival of the Hieros Gamos might have involved a shared meal between husbands and wives in the privacy of their home. Outside of the home, the family might have attended festivals like the Rural Dionysia in the countryside together.[643] Family units also visited sanctuaries together to offer sacrifices and thanksgiving dedications.

---

[639] Ath. 2.46e-f.

[640] "When Ciron sacrificed to Zeus Ktesios, a sacrifice about which he was especially serious, he did not admit either slaves or non-family members. He did everything himself, but we shared in this sacrifice and joined with him in handling and placing the sacrificial victims and in doing the other things. He prayed that the god give us health and good "property," and this was only natural because he was our grandfather" (Isae. 8.16).

[641] Antiph. 1.15-18.

[642] Parker, *Polytheism*, 42.

[643] "Heracles, what man on earth refuses to come to dine when one of his circle has sacrificed?" Men. *Dysk.* 558-62, 612-14. This scene refers to a household sacrificing together at a deme shrine.

Several votive reliefs from major sanctuary sites, especially those of Asklepius, present the whole family worshipping the deities together.[644]

[644] Family groups on votives are shown on four out of five reliefs from the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron and fifteen of twenty-six in Pankrates and Herakles by the Ilissus. Other temples and healing sanctuaries also preserve such reliefs. See Lawton, *Votive Reliefs*.

Bibliography

Ahmed, Sara. "Affective Economies." *ST* 22.2 (2004): 117–39.

———. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2015.

Alcock, Susan E. *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Alcock, Susan E, John F Cherry, and Jas Elsner. *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Alcock, Susan E., and Robin Osborne, eds. *Placing the Gods: Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

Alroth, Brita. "Changing Modes in the Representation of Cult Images." Page 1992 in *The Iconography of Greek Cult in the Archaic and Classical Periods: Proceedings of the First Internatioanl Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, Organised by the Swedish Institute at Athens and the European Cultural Centre of Delphi, Delphi, 16-18 November 1990*. Kernos Suppl. 1. Athens: Liège, 9-46.

Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses: Notes towards an Investigation." *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Translated by Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971.

Argetsinger, Kathryn. "Birthday Rituals: Friends and Patrons in Roman Poetry and Cult." *ClAnt* 11.2 (1992): 175–93.

Auffarth, Christoph. "The Materiality of God's Image: The Olympian Zeus and Ancient Christology." Pages 465–80 in *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformation*. Edited by Jan N Bremmer and Andrew Erskine. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.

Barasch, Moshe. *Icon: Studies in the History of an Idea*. New York: New York University Press, 1992.

Barbette Stanley Spaeth. "Greek Gods or Roman? The Corinthian Archaistic Blocks and Religion in Roman Corinth." *American Journal of Archaeology* 121.3 (2017): 397.

Barrett, John C. *Fragments from Antiquity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Basso, Keith H. *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

Beard, Mary, John A. North, and S. R. F. Price. *Religions of Rome*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Bergquist, Birgitta. *The Archaic Greek Temenos: A Study of Structure and Function*. Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1967.

Best, Johanna. "Religion of the Roadways: Roadside Sacred Spaces in Attica." PhD Dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 2015.

Bettinetti, Simona. *La statua di culto nella pratica rituale greca*. Bari: Levante, 2001.

Betz, Hans Dieter. "God Concept and Cultic Image: The Argument in Dio Chrysostom's 'Oratio 12 (Olympikos).'" *ICS* (2004): 13.

Biehl, Peter F. "Enclosing Places: A Contextual Approach to Cult and Religion in Neolithic Central Europe." Pages 173–82 in *Cult in Context: Reconsidering Ritual in Archaeology*. Edited by David A. Barrowclough and Caroline Malone. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007.

Black, Fiona C., and Jennifer L. Koosed. “Introduction: Some Ways to Read with Feeling.” Pages 1–12 in *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible*. Edited by Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019.
Bond, Helen. “Paul, the Corinthians, and Reconciliation.” *Stud. World Christ.* 9.2 (2003): 189–204.
Bonnet, Serge. *Prières secrètes des Français d’aujourd’hui: Épiphanie*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1976.
Bookidis, Nancy. “Religion in Corinth: 146 B.C.E. to 100 C.E.” *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Edited by Daniel N Schowalter and Steven J Friesen. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.
Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
Boyer, Pascal. “Why Do Gods and Spirits Matter At All?” Pages 68–92 in *Current Approaches in the Cognitive Science of Religion*. Edited by Ilkka Pyysiäinen and Veikko Anttonen. London ; New York: Continuum, 2002.
Bremen, Riet van. *The Limits of Participation: Women and Civic Life in the Greek East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*. Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology v. 15. Amsterdam: J.C. Gieben, 1996.
Bremmer, Jan N. *Greek Religion*. G&R 24. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
Bremmer, Jan N. “The Agency of Greek and Roman Statues: From Homer to Constantine.” *Opuscula* 6 (2013): 7–21.
Brennan, Teresa. *The Transmission of Affect*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.
Brøns, Cecilie. “Discussion:: Dressing of Cult Statues.” Pages 251–66 in *Gods and Garments*. 1st ed. Oxbow Books, 2017.
———. *Gods and Garments: Textiles in Greek Sanctuaries in the 7th-1st Centuries Bc*. Ancient Textiles Series 28. Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2017.
———. “Iconographic Evidence for the Dressing of Cult Statues.” Pages 183–238 in *Gods and Garments*. 1st ed. Oxbow Books, 2017.
Burkert, Walter. *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions*. 4. repr. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1999.
———. *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*. Translated by John Raffan. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985.
———. *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
Calame, Claude. *Choruses of Young Women in Ancient Greece: Their Morphology, Religious Role, and Social Function*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997.
Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Randall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
de Cesare, M. *Le Statue in Imagine: Studi sulle Raffigurazione di Statue nella Pittura Vascolare Greca*. Edited by R. Hägg. Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1997.
Chaniotis, Angelos. “A World of Emotions: The Making of an Exhibition - Ideas | Institute for Advanced Study,” 6 March 2017. https://www.ias.edu/ideas/2017/chaniotis-world-of-emotions.
———. “Constructing the Fear of Gods: Epigraphic Evidence from Sanctuaries of Greece and Asia Minor.” *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of*

Emotions in the Greek World. Edited by Angelos Chaniotis. Vol. 1 of *Alte Geschichte* Band 52. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012.
———. "Dynamic of Emotions and Dynamic of Rituals. Do Emotions Change Ritual Norms?" *Ritual Matters: Dynamic Dimensions in Practice*. Edited by Christiane Brosius and Ute Hüsken. New Delhi: Routledge, 2010.
———. "Emotional Community through Ritual: Initiates, Citizens, and Pilgrims as Emotional Communities in the Greek World." Pages 264–90 in *Ritual Dynamics in the Ancient Mediterranean: Agency, Emotion, Gender, Representation*. Edited by Angelos Chanotis. Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2011.
———, ed. *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World*. Vol. 1 of *Alte Geschichte* Band 52. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012.
Cheung, Alex T. *Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy*. JSNT 176. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999.
Clark, Christina. "To Kneel or Not to Kneel: Gendered Nonverbal Behavior in Greek Ritual." *Journal of Religion & Society*. Women, Gender, and Religion (2009): 6–20.
Clark, Raymond J. "Trophonios: The Manner of His Revelation." *TAPA* 99 (1968): 63–75.
Clémentin-Ojha, Catherine. "Image Animée, Image Vivante: L'image du Culte Hindou." *L'image Divine: Culte et Méditation dans l'Hindouisme: Études Rassemblées Par André Padoux*. Edited by André Padoux. Centre National de La Recherche Scientifique UPR 249, l'Hindouisme, Textes, Doctrines, Pratiques. Paris: Éd. du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1990.
Coffee, Neil. *Gift and Gain: How Money Transformed Ancient Rome*. Classical Culture and Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
Cohen, Richard. "Naga, Yaksini, Buddha: Local Deities and Local Buddhism at Ajanta." *HR* 37.4 (1998): 360–400.
Colman, Felicity J. "Affective Self: Feminist Thinking and Feminist Actions." *CF&FSS* 14.5 (2010): 543–52.
Concannon, Cavan W. *"When You Were Gentiles": Specters of Ethnicity in Roman Corinth and Paul's Corinthian Correspondence*. Synkrisis: Comparative Approaches to Early Christianity in Greco-Roman Culture. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.
Connelly, Joan Breton. *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
Corbett, P.E. "Greek Temples and Greek Worshippers: The Literary and Archaeological Evidence." *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 17.1 (1970): 149–58.
Costaki, L. "Πάντα Πλήρη Θεῶν Εἶναι: Παρόδια Ἱερὰ Στὴν Ἀρχαία Ἀθήνα." Pages 145–66 in *Μικρός Ιερομνήμων Μελέτες Εις Μνήμην Michael H. Jameson*. Edited by A.P. Matthaiou and I. Polinskaya. Athens, 2008.
Courtright, Paul. "On This Holy Day in My Humble Way: Aspects of Pūjā." Pages 33–52 in *Gods of Flesh, Gods of Stone: The Embodiment of Divinity in India*. Edited by Joanne Waghorne and Norman Cutler. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
Cvetkovich, Ann. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Series Q. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.
D'Agostini, Monica, Edward M. Anson, and Frances Pownall, eds. *Affective Relations and Personal Bonds in Hellenistic Antiquity: Studies in Honor of Elizabeth D. Carney*. Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2020.

Davis, Richard H. *Lives of Indian Images*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999.
Day, Joseph. "Interactive Offerings: Early Greek Dedicatory Epigrams and Ritual." *HSCP* 96 (1994): 37–74.
Day, Joseph W. "Servants of the goddess: Female religious agency in archaic and fifth-century Greek epigrams and dedications." Pages 207–22 in *Épigramme dans tous ses états: épigraphiques, littéraires, historiques*. Edited by Eleonora Santin and Laurence Foschia. Place of publication not identified: ENS éditions, 2016.
Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.
Depew, Mary. "Reading Greek Prayers." *ClAnt* 16.2 (1997): 229–58.
Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
Despinis, G.T. "Il rilievo votivo di Aristonike ad Artemis Brauronia." *Le orse di Brauron: un rituale di iniziazione femminile nel santuario di Artemide*. Edited by Bruno Gentili and Franca Perusino. Pisa: ETS, 2002.
Dietrich, Bernard C. "Divine Epiphanies in Homer." *Numen* 30 (1983): 53–79.
Dillon, Matthew P. J. "Post-Nuptial Sacrifices on Kos (Segre, 'ED' 178) and Ancient Greek Marriage Rites." *ZPE* 124 (1999): 63–80.
Dodds, Eric R. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
Donohue, Alice A. *Greek Sculpture and the Problem of Description*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
———. "The Greek Images of the Gods: Considerations on Terminology and Methodology." *Hephaistos* 15 (1997): 31–45.
Duncan, Carol. *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. London: Routledge, 2001.
Dunham, Robert. "Between Text & Sermon: Acts 17:16-34." *Interpretation* 60.2 (2006): 202–4.
Eck, Diana L. *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. 3rd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
———. "Darshan of the Image." *IICQ* 13.1 (1986): 43–53.
Ehrensperger, Kathy. "Between Polis, Oikos and Ekklesia: The Challenge of Negotiating the Spirit World." Pages 105–32 in *The First Urban Churches 2: Roman Corinth*. Edited by James R. Harrison and Laurence L. Welborn. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2016.
Eidinow, Esther, Julia Kindt, and Robin Osborne, eds. *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion*. Cambridge Classical Studies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
Eliade, Mircea, and Willard R. Trask. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion ; [the Groundbreaking Work by One of the Greatest Authorities on Myth, Symbol, and Ritual]*. A Harvest Book. San Diego: Harcourt, 1987.
Elison, William. *The Neighborhood of Gods: The Sacred and the Visible at the Margins of Mumbai*. South Asia across the Disciplines. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.
Elsner, Jaś. *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*. Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

———. “Between Mimesis and Divine Power: Visuality in the Greco-Roman World.” *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*. Edited by R.S. Nelson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
———. “Image and Ritual: Reflections on the Religious Appreciation of Classical Art.” *CQ* 46.2 (1996): 515–31.
———. *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph: The Art of the Roman Empire AD 100-450*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
———. “Place, Shrine, Miracle.” Pages 2–25 in *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*. Edited by Ittai Weinryb. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.
———. *Roman Eyes: Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.
Evans, Marshall McKee. “Emotional Rescue: Idolatry and Affective Conversion in 1 Corinthians 8-10.” Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2020.
Ewing, Katherine Pratt. *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis and Islam*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
Falk, Nancy. “To Gaze on the Sacred Traces.” *History of Religions* 16.4 (1977): 281–93.
Faraone, Christopher A. “Playing the Bear and the Fawn for Artemis: Female Initiation or Substitute Sacrifice?” Pages 43–68 in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*. Edited by David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone. London: Routledge, 2003.
———. *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
Fee, Gordon. “Εἰδωλόθοθτα Once Again: An Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 8-10.” *Bib* 61 (1980): 172–97.
Feldman, Louis H. *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
Ferrari, Gloria. *Figures of Speech: Men and Maidens in Ancient Greece*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002.
Fisk, Bruce N. “Eating Meat Offered to Idols: Corinthian Behavior and Pauline Response in 1 Corinthians 8-10 (A Response to Gordon Fee).” *TJ* 10 (n.d.): 49–70.
Fontenrose, Joseph Eddy. *The Delphic Oracle, Its Responses and Operations, with a Catalogue of Responses*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
Fotopoulos, John. *Food Offered to Idols in Roman Corinth: A Social-Rhetorical Reconsideration of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1*. WUNT 2. Reihe, 151. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003.
Foucault, Michel. *Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge, 2002.
Fowden, Garth. *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*. Mythos. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.
Fredriksen, Paula. *Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017.
Friesen, Steven J. “Prospects for a Demography of the Pauline Mission: Corinth among the Churches.” Pages 351–70 in *Urban Religion in Roman Corinth: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Edited by Daniel N Schowalter and Steven J. Friesen. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005.

Gaifman, Milette. “Aniconism and the Notion of ‘Primitive’ in Greek Antiquity.” *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome*. Edited by Joannis Mylonopoulos. Boston: Brill, 2010.
———. “Aniconism: Definitions, Examples and Comparative Perspectives.” *Religion* 47.3 (2017): 335–52.
———. *Aniconism in Greek Antiquity*. Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
———. “Theologies of Statues in Classical Greek Art.” Pages 249–80 in *Theologies of Ancient Greek Religion*. Edited by Esther Eidinow, Julia Kindt, and Robin Osborne. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
Garland, Robert. *Religion and the Greeks*. London: Bristol Classical Press, 1994.
Gaskell, Ivan. “Sacred to Profane to Back Again.” Pages 148–62 in *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium.* Edited by Andrew McClellan. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.
Gasparini, Valentino, Maik Patzelt, Rubina Raja, Anna-Katharina Rieger, Jörg Rüpke, and Emiliano Urciuoli, eds. *Lived Religion in the Ancient Mediterranean World: Approaching Religious Transformations from Archaeology, History and Classics*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110557596.
Gell, Alfred. *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
van Gennep, Arnold. *Les Rites de Passage*. Paris: Émile Nourry, 1909.
George Demacopoulos. “Gregory the Great and the Pagan Shrines of Kent.” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.2 (2008): 353–69.
Giddens, Anthony. *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984.
Gill, David. “Trapezomata: A Neglected Aspect of Greek Sacrifice.” *The Harvard Theological Review* 67.2 (1974): 117–37.
Godelier, Maurice. *The Enigma of the Gift*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.
Gonda, J. *Eye and Gaze in the Veda*. Amsterdam, 1969.
Gooch, Peter David. *Dangerous Food: I Corinthians 8-10 in Its Context*. Etudes Sur Le Christianisme et Le Judaïsme 5. Waterloo, Ont: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 1993.
Goodenough, Erwin R. *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*. 13 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953.
Gordon, R.L. “The Real and the Imaginary: Production and Religion in the Graeco-Roman World.” *Art History* 2 (1979): 5–34.
Gould, John. “On Making Sense of Greek Religion.” Pages 1–33 in *Greek Religion and Society*. Edited by Patricia E. Easterling and John Muir. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
Graf, Fritz. “The Oracle and the Image: Returning to Some Oracles from Clarus.” *ZPE* 160 (2007): 113–19.
Graham, Emma-Jayne. *Reassembling Religion in Roman Italy*. New York: Routledge, 2021.
Graver, Margaret R. “Philo of Alexandria and the Origins of the Stoic Προπάθειαι.” *Phronesis* 44 (1999): 300–325.
Graziano, Frank. *Miraculous Images and Votive Offerings in Mexico*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. “Epiphany of Form: On the Beauty of Team Sports.” *NLH* 30.2 (1999): 351–73.
Guthrie, Stewart E. *Faces in the Clouds: A New Theory of Religion*. 1. issued as an Oxford Univ. Press paperback. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
Haluszka, Adria. “Sacred Signified: The Semiotics of Statues in the *Greek Magical Papyri*.” *Arethusa* 41.3 (2008): 479–94.
Ham, Greta L. “The Choes and Anthesteria Reconsidered: Male Maturation Rites and the Peloponnesian Wars.” *Bucknell Review* 43.1 (1999): 201–18.
Hamilakis, Yannis. “Afterword: Eleven Theses on the Archaeology of the Senses.” Pages 409–20 in *Making Senses of the Past*. Edited by Jo Day. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013.
Hamilton, Richard. “Sources for the Athenian Amphidromia.” *GRBS* 25.3 (2004): 243–51.
Harrison, Thomas. “Belief vs. Practice.” *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*. Edited by Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
Hayes, Christine Elizabeth. *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities: Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
Henrichs, Albert. “What Is a Greek God?” *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations*. Edited by Ruth N Bremmer and Andrew Erskine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. http://universitypublishingonline.org/edinburgh/ebook.jsf?bid=CBO9780748642892.
Herrero de Jáuregui, Miguel. “‘Trust the God’: Tharsein in Ancient Greek Religion.” *HSPh* 108 (2016): 1–52.
Hodder, Ian. *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.
Holdrege, Barbara A. “Interrogating the Comparative Method: Whither, Why, and How?” *Religions* 9.2 (2018): 58.
van Hoorn, Gerard. *Choes and Anthesteria*. Leiden: Brill, 1951.
Horrell, David. “Idol-Food, Idolatry, and Ethics in Paul.” *Idolatry: False Worship in the Bible, Early Judaism, and Christianity*. Edited by Stephen C. Barton. T & T Clark Theology. London: T & T Clark, 2007.
Horster, Marietta. “Religious Landscape and Sacred Ground: Relationships between Space and Cultin the Greek World.” *Rhr* 227 (2010): 435–58.
Hughes, Jennifer Scheper. “Cradling the Sacred: Image, Ritual, and Affect in Mexican and Mesoamerican Material Religion.” *History of Religions* 56.1 (2016): 55–107.
Hughes, Jessica. “‘Souvenirs of the Self’: Personal Belongings as Votive Offerings in Ancient Religion.” *RRE* 3.2 (2017): 181–201.
———. “Studying Votives Across Cultures.” *MR* 13.1 (2017): 104–6.
Hurd, John C. *The Origins of 1 Corinthians*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983.
Hutson, Matt. *The 7 Laws of Magical Thinking: How Irrational Beliefs Keep Us Happy, Healthy, and Sane*. New York: Plume, 2013.
Instone, Stephen, ed. *Greek Personal Religion: A Reader*. Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2009.
Jackson, Peter. “Apparitions and Apparatuses: On the Framing and Staging of Religious Events.” *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 24.3 (2012): 291–300.
Jacoby, Felix. “Semos von Delos.” *RE* 2.2 (1923): 1357–59.
Jewett, Robert. “The Redaction of 1 Corinthians and the Trajectory of the Pauline School.” *JAAR* 44.4 *Supplement* (1978): 398–444.

Jhala, Jayasinhji. “Journey with Ganesh.” *South Asian Popular Culture* 4.1 (2006): 35–47.
Jim, Theodora Suk Fong. *Sharing with the Gods: Aparchai and Dekatai in Ancient Greece*. Oxford Classical Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
Johnson-DeBaufre, Melanie. “Historical Approaches: Which Past? Whose Past?” Pages 13–32 in *Studying Paul’s Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods*. Edited by Joseph A. Marchal. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.
Johnston, Sarah Iles, ed. *Ancient Religions*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.
———. “Animating Statues: A Case Study in Ritual.” *Arethusa* 41.3 (2008): 445–77.
———. “‘Initiation’ in Myth; ‘Initiation’ in Practice: The Homeric Hymn to Hermes and Its Performative Context.” Pages 155–80 in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*. Edited by David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone. London: Routledge, 2003.
———. “Oracles and Divination.” Pages 477–89 in *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*. Edited by Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
Khurshudyan, Isabelle. “Russia’s Coronavirus Cases Rising, but the Orthodox Church Holds to Traditions Such as Kissing Icons.” *Washington Post*, n.d. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-coronavirus-orthodox-church/2020/03/26/5a6635a6-6ab2-11ea-b199-3a9799c54512_story.html.
Kiernan, Philip. *Roman Cult Images: The Lives and Worship of Idols, from the Iron Age to Late Antiquity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
Kindt, Julia. “Parmeniscus’ Journey: Tracing Religious Visuality in Word and Wood.” *CPh* 105.3 (2010): 252–64.
———. “Polis Religion – A Critical Appreciation.” *Kernos* 22 (2009): 9–34.
———. *Rethinking Greek Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
Klauck, Hans-Josef. “Nature, Art, and Thought: Dio Chrysostom and the *Theologia Tripertita*.” *JR* 87.3 (2007): 333–54.
Klöckner, Anja. “Getting in Contact: Concepts of Human-Divine Encounter in Classical Greek Art.” Pages 106–25 in *The Gods of Ancient Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
Kojève, Alexandre. *Introduction to the Study of Hegel: Lectures on “The Phenomenology of Spirit.”* Edited by Allan Bloom. Translated by James H. Nichols Jr. New York: Basic Books, 1969.
Konstan, David. “Affect and Emotion in Greek Literature.” *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2015. https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935390.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935390-e-41.
Kreitler, H., and S. Kreitler. *The Pyschology of the Arts*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1972.
Kroll, John H. “The Parthenon Frieze as a Votive Relief.” *AJA* 113.4 (2009): 547–68.
Kurke, Leslie. *Coins, Bodies, Games, and Gold: The Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
Lacan, Jacques. *Écrits: A Selection*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Tavistock, 1977.
———. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Hogarth Press, 1977.
Lane Fox, Robin. *Pagans and Christians*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986.

Langer, Susanne K. *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993.
Larson, Jennifer. *Understanding Greek Religion: A Cognitive Approach*. London: Routledge, 2016.
Lavan, Luke, and Michael Mulryan, eds. *The Archaeology of Late Antique "Paganism."* Brill, 2011.
Lawton, Carol L. *Votive Reliefs*. ASCSA 38. Princeton: The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2017.
Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Horizon Press, 1974.
Leitao, David D. "Adolescent Hair-Growing and Hair-Cutting Rituals in Ancient Greece: A Sociological Approach." Pages 109–29 in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*. Edited by David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone. London: Routledge, 2003.
Lewis, Geoffrey. "The Saint and the Major-General." *AS* 22 (1972): 249–53.
Lupu, Eran. *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents (NGSL)*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
MacAloon, J.J. "Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle in Modern Societies." Pages 241–80 in *Rite, Drama, Festival: Rehearsals toward a Theory of Cultural Performances*. Edited by J.J. MacAloon. Philadephia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984.
MacMullen, Ramsay. *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1997.
Marchal, Joseph A., ed. *Studying Paul's Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.
Marinatos, Nanno. "Striding across Boundaries: Hermes and Aphrodite as Gods of Initiation." Pages 130–51 in *Initiation in Ancient Greek Rituals and Narratives: New Critical Perspectives*. Edited by David Brooks Dodd and Christopher A. Faraone. London: Routledge, 2003.
Marinatos, Nanno, and Dmitris Kyrtatos. "Epiphany: Concept Ambiguous, Experience Elusive." *ICS* 29 (n.d.): 226–34.
Martin, Dale Basil. "When Did Angels Become Demons?" *JBL* 129.4 (2010): 657–77.
Marx-Wolf, Heidi. *Spiritual Taxonomies and Ritual Authority: Platonists, Priests, and Gnostics in the Third Century C.E*. Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.
Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Post-Contemporary Interventions. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
McNiven, Timothy J. "Things to Which We Give Service: Interactions with Sacred Images on Athenian Pottery." Pages 298–324 in *An Archaeology of Representations: Ancient Greek Vase-Painting and Conteporary Methodologies*. Edited by Dimitrios Yatromanolakis. Athens: Institut du Livre, 2009.
Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
Mercier, Hugo, and Dan Sperber. "Intuitive and Reflective Inferences." Pages 149–70 in *In Two Minds: Dual Processes and Beyond*. Edited by Jonathan Evans and Keith Frankish. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Mikalson, Jon D. *Ancient Greek Religion*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.
Mikalson, Jon D. *Greek Popular Religion in Greek Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
Mithen, Steven J. "The Supernatural Beings of Prehistory and the External Storage of Religious Ideas." *Cognition and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Symbolic Storage*. Edited by Colin Renfrew and C. Scarre. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 1998.
Mitropoulou, Elpis. *Kneeling Worshippers in Greek and Oriental Literature and Art*. Athens: Pyli Editions, 1975.
Mohan, Urmila. "Dressing God: Clothing as Material of Religious Subjectivity in a Hindu Group." Pages 137–52 in *The Social Life of Materials: Studies in Materials and Society*. Edited by Adam Drazin and Susanne Küchler. London: Bloomsbury Press, 2015.
Morales, Helen. *Vision and Narrative in Achilles Tatius' Leucippe and Clitophon*. Cambridge Classical Studies. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
Morgan, David. "The Practicality of Votive Culture." *MR* 13.1 (2017): 110–12.
Morgan, Janett. *The Classical Greek House*. Bristol: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2010.
Moser, Claudia. *The Altars of Republican Rome and Latium: Sacrifice and the Materiality of Roman Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
Moser, Claudia, and Cecilia Feldman. "Introduction." Pages 1–12 in *Locating the Sacred: Theoretical Approaches to the Emplacement of Religion*. Edited by Claudia Moser and Feldman, Cecilia. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014.
Murawska-Muthesius, Katarzyna, and Piotr Piotrowski. "Introduction." *From Museum Critique to the Critical Museum*. Edited by Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius and Piotr Piotrowski. Farnham Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015.
Murphy-O'Connor, J. *Keys to First Corinthians: Revisiting the Major Issues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Mylonopoulos, Joannis, ed. *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome*. Boston: Brill, 2010.
Nasrallah, Laura. "1 Corinthians." Pages 427–72 in *Fortress Commentary on the Bible*. Edited by Margaret P Aymer, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and David A Sánchez. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014.
Neumann, Gerhard. *Gesten und Gebärden in der griechischen Kunst*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965.
Newton, Derek. *Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food at Corinth*. JSNT 169. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
Niederer, Frances J. "Temples Converted into Churches: The Situation in Rome." *ChHist* 22.3 (1953): 175–80.
Nilsson, Martin P. *Greek Folk Religion*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998.
Oakley, John Howard. *The Wedding in Ancient Athens*. Wisconsin Studies in Classics. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993.
Okland, Jorunn. *Women in Their Place: Paul and the Corinthian Discourse of Gender and Sanctuary Space*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005.

Olivelle, Patrick, and Frederick M. Asher, eds. “Early Indian Art Reconsidered.” *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
Oropeza, B.J. “Laying to Rest the Midrash: Paul’s Message on Meat Sacrificed to Idols in Light of the Deuteronomic Tradition.” *Biblica* 79.1 (1998): 57–68.
Osborne, Robin. “Archaeology, the Salaminioi and the Politcs of Sacred Space in Archaic Attica.” *Placing the Gods: Sanctuaries and Sacred Space in Ancient Greece*. Edited by Susan E. Alcock and Robin Osborne. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
Overbeck, Johannes Adolf. “Über Das Cultusobjeckt Bei Den Greichen in Seinen Ältesten Gestaltungen.” *Berichte Über Die Verhandlungen Der Königlich-Sächsischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften Zu Leipzig, Phil.-Hist. Klasse* 16 (1864): 121–72.
Pardigon, Flavien, and William Edgar. *Paul against the Idols: A Contextual Reading of the Areopagus Speech*. Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2019.
Parker, Robert. *Athenian Religion: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
———. *On Greek Religion*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.
———. “Pleasing Thighs: Reciprocity in Greek Religion.” Pages 105–26 in *Reciprocity in Ancient Greece*. Edited by Christopher Gill, Norman Postlethwaite, and Richard Seaford. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
———. *Polytheism and Society at Athens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
Petridou, Georgia. “Emplotting: The Divine Epiphanic Narratives as Means of Enhancing Agency.” *RRE* 1.3 (2015): 321–42.
Petsas, Phōtios M., ed. *Inscriptions du sanctuaire de la mère des dieux autochtone de Leukopetra (Macédoine)*. Meletēmata 28. Athènes: Centre de Recherches de l’Antiquité Grècque et Romaine, 2000.
Pinney, Christopher. *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
Pintchman, Tracy. “Courting Krishna on the Banks of the Ganges: Gender and Power in a HIndu Women’s Ritual Tradition.” *CSSAAME* 24.1 (2004): 18–28.
Pirenne-Delforge, Vinciane. “Greek Priests and ‘Cult Statues’: In How Far Are They Unnecessary?” *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome*. Edited by Joannis Mylonopoulos. Boston: Brill, 2010.
Plamper, Jan. *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*. Translated by Keith Tribe. Emotions in History. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
Platt, Verity. “Clever Devices and Cognitive Artifacts: Votive Giving in the Ancient World.” Pages 141–58 in *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*. Edited by Ittai Weinryb. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.
———. “Epiphany.” *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*. Edited by Esther Eidinow and Julia Kindt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
———. “Viewing, Desiring, Believing: Confronting the Divine in a Pompeian House.” *Art History* 25.1 (2002): 87–112.
Platt, Verity J. *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
Pleket, H.W. “Religious History as the History of Mentality: The ‘believer’ as Servant of the Deity in the Greek World.” Pages 152–92 in *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*. Leiden: Brill, 1981.

Pollitt, J. J. *The Ancient View of Greek Art: Criticism, History, and Terminology*. Yale Publications in the History of Art 25. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.
Pongratz-Leisten, Beate, ed. *The Materiality of Divine Agency*. 1st ed. Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records Vol. 8. Boston: De Gruyter, 2015.
Pope Gregory. *The letters of Gregory the Great*. Translated by John R. C Martyn. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2004.
Pötscher, W. *ΠΕΡΙ ΕΥΣΕΒΕΙΑΣ*. Leiden: Brill, 1964.
Powell, Barry. *Homer and the Originof the Greek Alphabet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
Price, Simon. *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
Rajagopalan, Mrinalini. *Building Histories: The Archival and Affective Lives of Five Monuments in Modern Delhi*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.
Rajak, Tessa. "The Jewish Community and Its Boundaries." Pages 9–28 in *The Jews Among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire*. Edited by Judith Lieu, John North, and Tessa Rajak. London: Routledge, 2004.
Renberg, Gil. "Commanded by the Gods: An Epigraphical Study of Dreams and Visions in Greek and Roman Religious Life." Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 2003.
Renfrew, Colin. "Mind and Matter: Cognitive Archaeology and External Symbolic Storage." *Cognition and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Symbolic Storage*. Edited by Colin Renfrew and C. Scarre. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 1998.
Richard, Evans, ed. *Prophets and Profits: Ancient Divination and Its Reception*. New York: Routledge, 2017.
Romano, Irene Bald. "Early Greek Cult Images." Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1980.
Rosenwein, Barbara H. "Introduction." Page 2 in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*. Edited by Barbara H. Rosenwein. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.
Rüpke, Jörg. *On Roman Religion: Lived Religion and the Individual in Ancient Rome*. Townsend Lectures/Cornell Studies in Classical Philology. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016.
Rüpke, Jörg, and R. L. Gordon. *Religion of the Romans*. Cambridge: Polity, 2007.
Rutherford, Ian. "Theoria and Darśan: Pilgrimage and Vision in Greece and India." *The Classical Quarterly* 50.1 (2001): 133–46.
Sabetai, Victoria. "The Wedding Vases of the Athenians: A View from Sanctuaries and Houses." *Mètis* 12 *Des Vases Pour Les Athéniens* (2014): 51–79.
Sahney, Puja. "Mandir and Visa Status: Purity, Auspiciousness, and Hindu Homes in the USA." *MR* 12.3 (2016): 322–45.
Schefold, K. "Statuen Auf Vasenbildern." *JDAI* 52 (1937): 30–75.
Schmithals, Walter. "Die Korintherbriefe als Briefsammlung." *ZNW* 64 (1973): 263–88.
———. *Gnosticism in Corinth: An Investigation of the Letters to the Corinthians*. Translated by J.E. Steely. 3rd ed. Nashville: Abingdon, 1971.
Schnell, Rüdiger. "Historische Emotionsforschung: Eine Mediävistische Standortbestimmung." *FS* 38 (2005): 173–276.

Seaford, Richard. “Reading Money: Leslie Kurke on the Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece.” *Arion* 9.3 (2002): 145–65.
Seigworth, Gregory J., and Melissa Gregg. “An Inventory of Shimmers.” Pages 1–28 in *The Affect Theory Reader*. Edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.
Sharma, Sharanya. “Letter to Nydia, Blind Girl of Pompeii, from an Unnamed Goddess.” *Sixty Inches from Center*, n.d. sixtyinchesfromcenter.org/three-poems-by-sharanya-sharma/.
Sharpe, Heather F. “Bronze Statuettes from the Athenian Agora: Evidence for Domestic Cults in Roman Greece.” *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 83.1 (2014): 143–87.
Sider, Robert D. *Christian and Pagan in the Roman Empire: The Witness of Tertullian*. Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2001.
Sissa, Giulia, and Marcel Detienne. *The Daily Life of the Greek Gods*. Mestizo Spaces. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
Smith, Jonathan Z. “The ‘End’ of Comparison: Redescription and Rectification.” Pages 237–41 in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age*. Edited by Kimberley C. Patton and Benjamin C. Ray. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
———. *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.
Smith, W. Robertson. *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1889.
Sourvinou-Inwood, Christiane. “What Is Polis Religion?” Pages 295–322 in *The Greek City: From Homer to Alexander*. Edited by Oswyn Murray. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
Spawforth, Antony. *The Complete Greek Temples*. London ; New York: Thames & Hudson, 2006.
Sperber, Dan. *Rethinking Symbolism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
Spinoza, Baruch, Andrew Boyle, and Theophilus Stephen Gregory. *Spinoza’s Ethics and On the Correction of Understanding*. Philadephia: Pennsylvania State University, 1959.
Spivey, Nigel Jonathan. *Greek Sculpture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
Squire, Michael, ed. *Sight and the Ancient Senses*. The Senses in Antiquity. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016.
Stambaugh, John E. “The Functions of Roman Temples.” *ANRW* 16.1 (1978): 554–608.
Steiner, Deborah. *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.
———. *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.
Stern, Menahem. *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*. Vol. 1, 2, 3. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974.
Stewart, Andrew F. *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
Stowers, Stanley. “The Religion of Plant and Animal Offerings versus the Religion of Meanings, Essences and Textual Mysteries.” Pages 35–56 in *Ancient Mediterranean*

Sacrifice. Edited by Jennifer Wright Knust and Zsuzsanna Várhelyi. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
Strang, Veronica. “Competing Perceptions of Landscape in Kowanyama, North Queensland.” Pages 206–18 in *The Archaeology and Anthropology of Landscape*. Edited by Peter Ucko and Robert Layton. London: Routledge, 1999.
van Straten, Folkert T. “Daikrates’ Dream: A Votive Relief from Kos and Some Other Kat’ Onar Dedications".” *BABesch* 51 (1976): 1–38.
———. “Did the Greeks Kneel before Their Gods?” *Babesch: Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 49 (1974): 159–89.
———. “Images of Gods and Men in a Changing Society: Self-Identity in Hellenstic Religion.” *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World*. Edited by Anthony W. Bulloch, Erich S. Gruen, A.A. Long, and Andrew F Stewart. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
Strathern, Marilyn. *The Gender of the Gift: Problems with Women and Problems with Society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
Struck, Peter T. *Birth of the Symbol*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
———. “Pagan and Christian Theurgies: Iamblichus, Pseudo-Dionysius, Religion and Magic in Late Antiquity.” *AncW* 32.1 (2001): 25–38.
Taves, Ann. *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2009.
Theissen, Gerd. *The social setting of Pauline Christianity: essays on Corinth*. Translated by John H Schütz. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004.
Thiessen, Matthew. *Contesting Conversion: Genealogy, Circumcision, and Identity in Ancient Judaism and Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
Thomas, Christine M. “Greek Heritage in Roman Corinth and Ephesos: Hybrid Identities and Strategies of Display in the Material Record of Traditional Mediterranean Religions.” *Corinth in Context: Comparative Studies on Religion and Society*. Edited by Steven J Friesen, Daniel N Schowalter, and James C Walters. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
———. “Locating Purity: Temples, Sexual Prohibitions, and ‘Making a Difference’ in Thessalonikē.” Pages 109–32 in *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē: Studies in Religion and Archaeology*. Edited by Laura Nasrallah, Charalambos Bakirtzis, and Steven J. Friesen. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
———. “Place and Memory: Response to Jonathan Z. Smith on ‘To Take Place’, on the Occasion of Its Twentieth Anniversary.” *JAAR* 76.3 (2008): 773–81.
Thomas, Christine M., and Thomas Drew-Bear. *Phrygian Votive Steles*. Ankara: Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, 1999.
Thomas, Julian. “Archaeologies of Place and Landscape.” Pages 165–86 in *Archaeological Theory Today: A Reader*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=436964.
———. “The Politics of Vision and the Archaeologies of Landscape.” Pages 19–48 in *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*. Edited by Barbara Bender. London: Routledge, 1993.
———. *Time, Culture and Identity: An Interpretive Archaeology*. London: Routledge, 2008.
Travlos, John. *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971.
Tschumi, Bernard. *Architecture and Disjunction*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. 7th ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.
van Straten. *Hiera Kala: Images of Animal Sacrifice in Archaic and Classical Greece*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
Verilhac, Anne Marie, and Claude Vial. *Le Mariage Grec: Du Vie Siecle Av. J.-C. a l'Epoque d'Auguste*. Athènes: Peeters, 1998.
Vernant, Jean Pierre. *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*. Princeton University Press, 1991.
Versnel, Hendrik S. *Coping with the Gods: Wayward Readings in Greek Theology*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
———, ed. *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*. Leiden: Brill, 1981.
———. *Inconsistencies in Greek and Roman Religion*. Leiden: Brill, 1998.
———. "What Did Ancient Man See When He Saw a God? Some Reflections on Greek and Roman Epiphany." Pages 42–55 in *Effigies Dei: Essays on the History of Religions*. Vol. 51 of *Numen Book Series*. Brill, 1987.
Versnel, Henk S. "Writing Mortals and Reading Gods: Appeal to the Gods as a Dual Strategy in Social Control." Pages 37–76 in *Demokratie, Recht Und Soziale Kontrolle Im Klassischen Athen*. Edited by David Cohen and Elisabeth Müller-Luckner. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002.
Versnel, H.S. "Religious Mentality in Ancient Prayer." Pages 1–63 in *Faith, Hope and Worship: Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*. Leiden: Brill, 1981.
Veyne, Paul. *Did the Greeks Believe in Their Myths?: An Essay on the Constitutive Imagination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
Waghorne, Joanne Punzo, and Norman Cutler, eds. *Gods of Flesh, Gods of Stone: The Embodiment of Divinity in India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
Weddle, Polly. "Touching the Gods: Physical Interaction with Cult Statues in the Roman World." Doctoral Dissertation, Durham University, 2010.
Weinryb, Ittai, ed. *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.
———. "Introduction: Ex Voto as Material Culture." Pages 1–22 in *Ex Voto: Votive Giving Across Cultures*. Edited by Ittai Weinryb. New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2016.
———. "Of Votive Things." Pages xi–xviii in *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*. Edited by Ittai Weinryb. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.
———, ed. "Votives and Material Religion." *Material Religion* 13.1 *Votives: Material Culture and Religion* (2017): 102–3.
Weiss, Johannes. *Der erste Korintherbrief*. KEK. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910.
Welborn, Laurence L. *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1 - 4 in the Comic-Philosophic Tradition*. JSNT Suppl. Early Christianity in Context 293. London: T & T Clark International, 2005.
Weniger, L. "Theophanien: Altgriechische Götteradvente." *ARW* 22 (1923): 18–22.
Wheeler-Barclay, Marjorie. *The Science of Religion in Britain, 1860-1915*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010.
White, David Gordon. *Daemons Are Forever: Contacts and Exchanges in the Eurasian Pandemonium*. Silk Roads. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2021.

———. “Netra Tantra, at the Crossroads of the Demonological Cosmopolis.” *Journal of Hindu Studies* 5.2 (2012): 145–71.
———. *Sinister Yogis*. Chicago London: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 2011.
———. *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali: A Biography*. Lives of Great Religious Books. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.
Willis, Wendell Lee. *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1985.
Witherington III, Ben. *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995.
———. “Not so Idle Thoughts about Eidolothuton.” *TynBul* 44.2 (1993): 237–54.
———. “Why Not Idol Meat?” *BRev* 10.3 (1994): 38–54.
Wycherley, R.E. “Minor Shrines in Ancient Athens.” *Phoenix* 24.4 (1970): 283–95.
Zaidman, Louise Bruit, and Pauline Schmitt Pantel. *Religion in the Ancient Greek City*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
“Another Victim of Coronavirus: Spain’s Religious Statue-Kissing.” *Reuters*, 6 March 2020. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-spain-easter-idUSKBN20T2JC.
“Kojève, Alexandre | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy,” n.d. https://www.iep.utm.edu/kojeve/.