



RELIGION AND ART IN ANCIENT GREECE

ERNEST ARTHUR GARDNER

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**BY
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primitive statues of the gods which were said to have been set up or dedicated by various persons in the heroic age. An example is offered by the Trojan Palladium already mentioned; another was the statue of Artemis carried off from Tauris by Iphigenia and Orestes; rival claimants to this identification existed at Sparta and at Brauron in Attica. The legends of dedication are of no historic value; the story of the Palladium itself was unknown to Homer, though it occurred in later epics. All that can be asserted of such images is that they were of unknown antiquity, and that local patriotism claimed for them a heroic origin. Much the same may be said of Dædalus. It need not be discussed here whether an actual artist of this name ever existed. The information we have as to Dædalus is of two kinds; on the one hand, we find tales of a mythical craftsman and magician, to whose invention many of the most typical improvements in early Greek sculpture are attributed; on the other hand, we have records of many statues of the gods, extant in historical times in various shrines of Greece, which were attributed to him. Such attributions are not really of greater historical value than the traditions of dedication in the heroic age which we find elsewhere. The name of Dædalus having once become famous in this connection, it was natural that many statues of primitive style and unrecorded origin should be attributed to him. More importance may be attached to the fact that the sculptors who actually made some of the early statues of the gods in Athens and in the Peloponnesus are described as the pupils or by some as the sons or companions of Dædalus. In this way his name is associated with some of the early schools that had the greatest influence in Greece, especially on the representation of the gods in sculpture. There are other traditions of early schools of sculptors, the marble workers of Chios, the bronze founders of Samos, who devoted themselves mainly to making statues of the gods, some of which survived throughout historical times. When we turn from tradition and consider the early examples of statues of gods that may still be seen or are recorded by extant copies, we find that these fall into two classes. On the one hand, there are more or less exact repetitions of the primitive stock or stone, the cylindrical tree-trunk or the rectangular block cut from the quarry, with the rudest indication of head and arms and feet, deviating as little as possible from the original shape of the block. When images of this sort were, as was

often the case, of wood, they have, of course, disappeared; but we can sometimes recognise copies of them upon reliefs or in stone. On the other hand, we find another class of images which approximate more to the attainments of Dædalus as described by rationalising writers of later date. These images are completely in human form, and, if male, are usually nude. They have their legs separated in a short stride, the left foot being usually advanced; their arms are either set close to their sides, or one or both of them is raised from the elbow; their whole shape suggests a rigid system of proportions and a more or less conventionalised form. These images have no resemblance to the modifications of the primitive stocks and stones, and could not well be directly derived from them; they are found in great numbers upon many sites of early sanctity in Greece itself and in Greek settlements around the Levant, notably in Cyprus, Rhodes, and Naucratis in Egypt. Sometimes they seem to represent the god, sometimes the dedicator; but all alike show the attempt of the early Greek craftsman to imitate the products of more advanced and finished art which he saw around him. Many of them are derived from Egyptian types; others show the influence of Mesopotamian art, or of the hybrid craftsmanship of Phoenicia. The borrowing or imitation of such foreign types may at first sight appear to show even less promise of artistic progress than variations on the old native images; but it is not in its origins, but in its development and perfection that the chief excellence of Greek art is to be found.

The types borrowed by sculpture from foreign art are almost exclusively of human form. The monstrous mixed forms in which the deities of Egypt or Mesopotamia often found the expression of their superhuman and mysterious powers do not seem to have appealed to the imagination of the Greeks. Such mixed forms were, indeed, frequently borrowed by early decorative art, and on "Orientalising" vases we constantly find human-headed and bird-headed quadrupeds, usually winged, and human-headed birds. The delight in winged figures generally, which was mainly decorative in early times, also finds its origin in Oriental woven stuffs. Greek sculpture adopted and translated into stone or bronze some of these mixed types— notably the human-headed bird and the human-headed winged lion; these it identified as the Siren and the Sphinx of Greek myth, and associated them with the mysteries of the tomb. To some other forms, that of the Centaur

and the Satyr and the Triton, it also gave considerable scope. But all these, if not human, are hardly to be regarded as divine; they are mostly noxious, and, even if benignant, do not attain the rank of gods. Perhaps a nearer approach to divine character is to be found in the river-gods, who are often represented as bulls with human heads or as human with bull's horns; but here, too, we have only to deal with minor deities. No sculptor represented Dionysus in this way, even though he was called "bull-shaped" by poets; nor is the horse-god Posidon even represented as a Centaur. The horse-headed Demeter of Phigalia remains the strange and solitary exception, however we may explain her existence.

The process by which the early human types were gradually improved and made more life-like, by a continuous struggle with technical difficulties, by constant and direct observation of nature, and by the building up of an artistic tradition in different schools and families, is a question that concerns the history of art rather than our present study. But it is impossible to distinguish rigidly between the two, because these types, whether of the nude standing male figure, of the draped female, or of the seated figure, are all of them used alike to represent human and divine personages; and, apart from inscriptions of dedication or conditions of discovery or distinctive attributes, it would often be impossible to tell whether any particular statue was meant to represent, for example, the image of a god or a conventional portrait of a man. These nude male statues, commonly known by the name of "Apollo," were certainly, some of them, made to commemorate athletes, whose images were set up either in the place where they won their victories or in their native town; others were placed over graves as memorials of the dead; and even in a sacred precinct it is sometimes uncertain whether the god himself is represented or the worshipper who dedicates this record of his devotion.

At this early period, therefore, Mr. Ruskin's strictures as to the impossibility of distinguishing the individuality of the different gods must be admitted, and even supplemented by an admission of the impossibility of distinguishing gods and goddesses from human beings. The explanation is obvious enough. During this age of early progress the constant aim of the sculptor is to attain to complete mastery over the material and to perfection

of bodily form. In religious art, what corresponds to this is the struggle towards anthropomorphism—first to represent the gods in human form, and then to make that form the most perfect that human art can devise. During this stage of artistic and religious development the type and the ideal cannot be distinguished. It was only when a type or a varying series of types had been brought to perfection in the fifth century, so as to satisfy the demand for a harmonious system of bodily proportions, for beauty of outline and dignity of countenance, that these types could be used as a means of expression for the religious ideals of the nation. In developing the type the accidental has to be discarded, and with it much of the feeling of individuality; works of early archaic art, for all their defects, often show more sign of individual character than the more perfect works of the earlier part of the fifth century. The attainment of the type is followed by an infusion of character and individuality, drawn from the artist's trained memory and observation with clear artistic intention, not from the mere caprice of an accidental recollection or a casual peculiarity of a model. The character and individuality thus expressed must be considered in subsequent chapters; it is only necessary here to distinguish it from the suggestion of an individual, almost of a caricature, which we find sometimes in archaic art, and which is certainly to be seen occasionally in works of Florentine sculpture. During the period of the rise of Greek sculpture the various schools were advancing each in its own way towards what has been called naturalism in art, as opposed to realism on the one side and idealism on the other. That is to say, they were striving by constant study of the athletic form, of proportions and muscles, of drapery and hair, to attain to a series of types both in harmony with themselves and in accordance with nature; and they were too much absorbed in this attempt to go far beyond their predecessors in rendering the character of the gods according to the form consecrated by tradition. Even in the expression of the face the same process is to be traced. In early works we find sometimes no expression at all, or an apparent stolidity which is really the absence of expression; in the archaic smile we see an attempt to enliven the face, and possibly also, as we have noticed, to express and even to induce the benignity of the deity. But this attempt, made with inadequate artistic resources, tends to result in a mere grimace; and as we approach the transitional age before the greatest

period of sculpture, we often find a reaction against any such exaggeration of expression in a severity and dignity that may have a certain grace of their own, but that are in some sense a retrograde movement so far as the expression of character is concerned.

It follows that the statues of the gods dating from this early period, however interesting they might be for the history of sculpture, would not, even if we possessed many more of them than we do possess, throw very much light upon the development of the ideas of the Greeks concerning their deities. They would probably conform to a limited number of clearly defined types. The most familiar of all, the standing nude male figure, would, if beardless, usually represent Apollo, with a bow or a branch of bay, or sometimes other attributes. A similar type, bearded, would stand for Zeus or Posidon or Hermes, if provided with thunderbolt or eagle, with trident or fish, or with a caduceus. Similar figures might also be draped, and still represent gods; or, if female, would serve for Hera, Artemis, Aphrodite, and sometimes for Athena, if she was represented without her arms and ægis. Then, too, there was the seated type, usually enveloped in full drapery, which might readily be adapted to a statue of any of the chief gods. In all of these there is no question of distinguishing the gods from one another in character and individuality; apart from attributes, there is hardly any attempt to distinguish gods from men.

Perhaps the earliest class of statues in which we find any attempt to give artistic expression to superhuman power is that in which we see the god in vigorous action, often striking with his characteristic weapon: Zeus with his thunderbolt in his raised right hand, Posidon with his trident, or Athena advancing rapidly with brandished spear and shield advanced. But even these figures, apart from their divine attributes, show no essential distinction from human combatants. It is a significant fact that it is still a matter of dispute⁶ whether one of the most famous statues of the early fifth century, "the Choiseul-Gouffier Apollo," represents a god or an athlete. This is neither because the Greeks at this time idealised their athletes nor because they humanised their gods, but because they typified them both;

⁶ Even if this dispute be regarded as now settled by weight of evidence, the fact that such a dispute is possible retains its significance

that is to say, they represented them by a type which was the most perfect rendering within their power either of man or of an anthropomorphic deity. Here we have the material form provided by means of which the ideals of the succeeding period were to find their artistic expression—such a typical or normal human form is, in fact, the logical expression of anthropomorphism in its most literal sense—the making of gods after man's image. But those who believed rather that man was made after God's image would look to find in the prototype something more and higher than can be seen in its earthly copy. This notion, even if not formulated by philosophy until a later age, certainly underlies the idealistic art of the fifth century.

CHAPTER 5. IDEALISM

The age which followed the great Persian Wars was the time of the highest political, literary, and intellectual development in Greece. Nor was it unfavourable to strength and depth of religious feeling among the people. If the more thoughtful among them were inclined to doubt whether some of the stories told about the gods were either probable or edifying, these were the very men who, on the other hand, were most capable of appreciating the higher and nobler conceptions of the gods which we find in contemporary poets. And the great delivery from the Persians not only gave the Greeks a confidence in themselves which justly increased their national pride and thereby strengthened their national ideals, but it also gave occasion to a confidence in the gods and a gratitude to them which found expression in numerous buildings and offerings. All this religious activity could not fail to have considerable influence upon the common people; and in some cases, as at Athens, there was the necessity of replacing the temples and statues that had been destroyed or carried off by the Persian invader. At the time when a demand occurred for new statues of the gods, the rapid progress of the art of sculpture made it inevitable that these new statues should not be mere reproductions or reminiscences of the ones they replaced, but fresh and original conceptions, worthy of the increased skill of the artist and of the nobler ideals of the people. And by one of those coincidences which we meet so often both in the history of art and in that of literature, just at the time when the material conditions, the spirit of the people, and the rapid advance of art gave the utmost scope for artistic creation, there arose the man of transcendent genius to give full expression to the religious and artistic aspirations of the time. The age of Pericles was also the age of Phidias. It is true that there was an interval between the defeat of the Persians and the period of highest attainment in Greece; and during this interval many temples were built or rebuilt, and many statues were set up as objects of worship or as dedications to the gods. Some of these may have anticipated to a certain extent the work of Phidias; several of them were of colossal size, like his chief masterpieces, and thus, even

from the technical point of view, may have prepared the way before him; one, the Apollo by Calamis at Apollonia, was about forty-five feet high, and so actually rivalled the Zeus and Athena of Phidias in size. But of these statues we know little or nothing. As to the two most famous works of Phidias himself, the Athena Parthenos within the Parthenon at Athens and the Zeus at Olympia, we are better informed, so far as elaborate descriptions and the somewhat rhetorical appreciations of later writers are concerned; and we possess some extant copies which tell us something of their pose and attributes. But any notion we may form as to their true artistic and religious character must be mainly dependent upon our imagination; and even for their relation to the religious ideals of the people we are dependent for the most part upon indirect evidence. Though the art of sculpture was so closely bound up with the life of the people in Greece, we find very few references to its greatest works; it is evident that the Athenians, for example, took the greatest pride in the buildings that adorned their Acropolis and in the sculptures they contained; yet when Pericles, as reported by Thucydides, speaks of the statue of the Athena Parthenos, it is only to reckon the gold of her drapery as part of the possible resources of the state. We know that in the eyes of Pericles and of his hearers the preciousness of the material was only an incident in the artistic character of the work; but what is felt most deeply is often the least spoken about. Later descriptions, such as that of Pausanias, lay emphasis on the details and accessories of the statue, the ornamentation of helmet and shield and sandals; they lay themselves open to the stricture of Lucian on "such as can neither see nor praise the whole beauty of the Olympian Zeus, great and noble as it is, nor describe it to others that do not know it, but admire the accurate work and fine polish of his footstool and the good proportions of the basis, enumerating all such details with the utmost care." At the same time even such information as they give us is welcome, since it aids our imagination to reconstruct the appearance of the whole. These great chryselephantine statues were placed within the cella of a temple, lighted only through the door and by some infiltration through the marble roof, and their effect was calculated for these conditions. The rich tone and subtle reflections of the ivory and the gold, mingled with coloured inlays of enamel or precious stones, and tempered and harmonised by a "dim

religious light," must have been most impressive; and the grandeur of the figures was enhanced by their colossal size. But in all this we are still dealing only with conditions and accessories, not with the art itself and the religious ideals which it expressed. These are perhaps easier for us to appreciate in the case of the Zeus than of the Athena, though we are better provided with copies of the latter. We are accustomed in our own religious art to the attempt to express divinity in the form of a mature man of unspeakable majesty and benignity. To the Greeks, indeed, the human figure of Zeus was not merely an incarnation, but the actual form of the god himself; the god was not thought of as having taken upon himself the sorrows and the weaknesses of our mortal nature, but as sharing only its ideal perfection. Yet that the effect was not altogether dissimilar is shown by such a passage as that we find in Dion Chrysostom: "A man whose soul is utterly immersed in toil, who has suffered many disasters and sorrows, and cannot even enjoy sweet sleep, even such an one, I think, if he stood face to face with this statue, would forget all the dangers and difficulties of this mortal life: such the vision you, Phidias, have invented and devised, a sight 'to lull all pain and anger, and bring forgetfulness of every sorrow.'"

The same writer elsewhere puts into the mouth of Phidias an explanation of how he had attempted to embody in his statue the current conception of the god, and even the epithets that belonged to his worship. "My Zeus," says the sculptor, "is peaceful and altogether gentle, as the guardian of a Hellas free from factions and of one mind with itself. Him, taking counsel with my art, and with the wise and noble Elean state, I set up in his temple, mild and majestic in a form free from all sorrow, as the giver of life and livelihood and all good things, the common father of men, their saviour and their guardian, so far as it is possible for a mortal man to conceive and to copy his divine and inexpressible nature. And consider whether you will not find the image according with all the epithets of the god; Zeus alone is called the father of gods and their only king, and also god of the city and of friendship and society, and of suppliants too and strangers, the giver of harvest, and by innumerable other titles. And for one whose aim it was to display all these qualities without speaking, is not my art successful? The strength of the form and its imposing proportions show the power to rule and the king; the gentle and amiable character shows the father and his

care; the majesty and severity show the god of the city and of law; and of the kinship of men and gods the similarity of their shape serves as a symbol. His protective friendship of suppliants and strangers and fugitives and such like is seen in his kindness and his evident gentleness and goodness. And an image of the giver of possessions and harvest is seen in the simplicity and magnanimity displayed in his form; he seems just like one who would give and be generous of good things. All this, in short, I imitated as far as possible, being unable to express it in speech." This description is, of course, the work of a late and rhetorical author, but it is the work of a man who was familiar with these great statues that are now lost to us, and was capable of appreciating them. His criticism may not be so thorough and subtle as the analysis of the Greek type of Zeus made by Brunn in his *Götteridealen*; but it is based on similar principles, the observation of the physical type and the spiritual expression which serves best to embody the majesty and benignity of the god. After all, we come back perhaps to the saying of Phidias himself, and his quotation from Homer; here, too, it is the brow of the god that is emphasised, and the nod that shook Olympus while it granted a prayer. It is in such effects rather than in any detailed description that it is possible to realise the nature of a great work of art.

What success in the attainment of its aim was here reached by the art of the sculptor may perhaps best be estimated from the often quoted sentence of Quintilian, perhaps the noblest praise ever accorded to an artist by a critic: "The beauty of the statue even made some addition to the received religion; the majesty of the work was equal to the god." We might indeed, without irreverence, impute to Phidias the words uttered in a very different sense by one who later gave a new and higher interpretation to a formula of "the received religion" in Greece: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you."

The other great Phidian ideal, that of Athena, was represented by several statues, both in Athens and in other cities. As to these we have a certain amount of information, and even a certain number of copies, which show us the pose and the accessories of the various statues; some of the better ones even suffice to give us some notion of the beauty of their original. We have also descriptions by ancient writers, which tell us, as in the case of the

Olympian Zeus, much about the decoration of the statue; but we have not in this case any appreciations of the effect upon those who saw it. The ideal of Athena is in some ways more difficult for us to comprehend than that of Zeus, partly because it is less universally human, and more peculiarly characteristic of Greece and even of Athens. The notion of the mother goddess is common to most religions; that of the "queen and huntress, chaste and fair" is at least familiar to us in literature, and readily commends itself to the imagination. But Athena, though she has something of both these characters, has a nature different from both. It is impossible to derive her varied mythological functions from any one origin; but here it is not the origin of her worship that concerns us, rather its meaning and influence as these affected the people of her chosen city. Just as Zeus was the ideal of all that was best in the Hellenic conception of manhood and the god of a united Hellas, so Athena is especially the goddess of Athens, the giver and fosterer of all those qualities that made the Athenians what they were, the creatress of that ideal city sketched in the wonderful speeches of Pericles. Her gifts are the arts of war and peace, and all artistic and intellectual activity, as well as the olive and other characteristic products of Attic soil, and the clear and luminous air and stimulating climate which Attic writers are never tired of extolling, and of associating with the peculiar genius of the Athenian race. One can imagine how Dion Chrysostom might have recognised the expression of these various qualities in the broad and majestic, yet keenly intellectual brow, in the wide and clear eyes, and in other features; but the extant copies of the Athena Parthenos cannot do more than assist our imagination in realising how the sculptor represented the goddess of Athens. Here, too, as in the case of the Zeus, it is difficult for us to avoid the error of regarding the statue as a mere philosophical abstraction, an impersonation of the qualities it represents. Athena in later art, as set up in libraries and museums, was doubtless such an impersonation, just as she is in modern art unreal and comparatively uninteresting. But the Athenian believed intensely in the existence of his goddess. He believed that the ceremonies connected with her ancient image were necessary to the continuance of her favour to her city and people, and that the new temples and statues set up in her honour would still further delight her and ensure her protection and her abode among her

grateful worshippers. The statue by Phidias within the Parthenon offered not merely that form in which she would choose to appear if she showed herself to mortal eyes, but actually showed her form as she had revealed it to the sculptor. To look upon such an image helped the worshipper as much as—perhaps more than—any service or ritual to bring himself into communion with the goddess, and to fit himself, as a citizen of her chosen city, to carry out her will in contributing his best efforts to its supremacy in politics, in literature, and in art. If a work of art could have this actual influence upon religious emotion, and through it upon practical life, it may be said to have attained the utmost that any human effort can achieve in the service of God.

The religious influence of art in the fifth century is, as we have seen, closely associated with the state; the Athena Parthenos and the Olympian Zeus appealed to their worshippers as citizens of Athens and as members of the privileged Hellenic race. It would be easy to trace a similar character in almost all the great statues of gods that are recorded as belonging to this period. Thus the Dionysus of Alcamenes is not the dreamy god of wine and pleasure that we find at a later age, but an august figure, bearded and enthroned, the giver of the riches of the earth and the wine, the god in whose honour all the great Dionysian festivals were held; the same sculptor's Hermes is the guardian of ways and gates, the giver of increase to flocks, not the youthful and athletic messenger of the gods. Hephæstus, too, especially when associated with Athena, is the patron and teacher of all handicrafts, himself the ideal artisan, practical and genial, but with none of his godhead lost in a too human individuality; even his lameness—characteristic of the smith in all folk-lore—is lightly indicated, not dwelt on as an interesting motive. Various statues of particular gods may, of course, emphasise one side or another of their functions. Athena may be worshipped and represented as goddess of Victory or of Health; but here, too, it is usually some recognised state cult that underlies the representation. Outside Athens we find the same conditions. To take only one instance, the colossal gold and ivory Hera of Argos, made by the chief Argive master Polyclitus, is the great goddess of the city, just as Athena is of Athens. She was represented as the bride of Zeus, who annually renewed her maidenhood at the great Argive festival of the divine marriage; and we

cannot doubt that Polyclitus expressed in this statue, which was hardly less famous than the masterpieces of Phidias, all the essential features of the great religious ideals that underlay this primitive rite. His Hera had neither the warlike nor the intellectual and spiritual characteristics of the Attic Athena; but she was the goddess of womanly grace and beauty in the bride, and embodied that perfection of physical form which Argive art sought also in its athletic figures, and which was in a sense a part of the religion that found expression in the great athletic games. Some gods—Apollo, for example—seem in fifth-century statues to have a more individual character. Just as in earlier times the name Apollo serves to cover a multitude of statues of which some may be meant to represent individual men, so even in the age of Phidias we sometimes meet with a figure of athletic type or of youthful beauty as to which it is possible to doubt whether it is an Apollo; this may be partly the result of the great popularity of the type in all ages of Greek sculpture which led to its more rapid development and earlier individualisation. But the Apollo of this period is never the mere dreamy youth of later time; it has been well said that he is the god who, in the mythical athletic contest, could surpass Hermes in the foot-race and Ares in boxing; the embodiment of all-round physical and intellectual excellence, the combination of music and gymnastic, which again brings us back to a national Hellenic ideal. Throughout the representations of the gods in the art of the fifth century we find the same essential character. They embody in themselves the expression, by means of the most perfect physical forms, of the qualities attributed to the god himself, or given by him to his worshippers. They are no impersonal abstraction of these qualities, but are real and living beings, in whom these qualities exist to a degree impossible for a mere mortal. But, on the other hand, they have nothing of the passions and emotions, the weaknesses and imperfections of mortal nature. In this they are inconsistent, perhaps, with that Homeric presentment of the gods which the greatest artists consciously set before themselves. But we cannot wonder that an age of such clear and lofty intellectual and moral perceptions should have rejected what it felt to be unworthy in the current notions of the gods, and should have selected only what it felt to be truly divine. Art did not, however, remain very long upon its highest level of religious feeling; but in Greece, by a fortunate coincidence, the age of the

greatest religious ideals was also that of the highest perfection of physical type in art as well as of technical skill in execution. We do not therefore find in this age that the sculptor lacks the power to express his ideas, or that his ideas are too strong for the forms in which they are expressed; there is rather that perfect harmony between the two that, here as elsewhere, is characteristic of Hellenic art.

CHAPTER 6. INDIVIDUALISM

The great religious ideals of the fifth century were, as we have seen, closely bound up with the subordination of the individual to the State; and their expression in sculpture was also due in almost every case to the employment of the artist by the community. In the fourth century, on the other hand, we find on every side a stronger assertion of individuality. It was a commonplace among Attic orators in the fourth century to contrast the private luxury and ostentation of their own day with the simplicity of life among the great men of the earlier age, whose houses could not be distinguished from those of the common people, though their public buildings and the temples they raised to the gods were of unparalleled splendour. In religion, and above all in religious art, we find something of the same tendency. There are few if any records of the dedication during the fourth century of those great statues of the chief gods which were looked back to by all subsequent generations as the embodiment of a national ideal. But there were, perhaps, more statues of the gods made in the fourth century which were the objects not merely of artistic admiration, but of intense and sometimes morbid personal devotion. The mere list of the gods preferred for representation is an indication in itself; while in the fifth century, Zeus and Athena and Hera, the great gods of the State or of the Hellenic race, are the subjects of the most famous statues, in the fourth century it is rather Aphrodite and Dionysus and Asclepius, those whose gifts contribute to individual happiness or enjoyment, that offer most scope to the powers of the artist.

And the sculptors themselves, in the fourth century, show more individuality of style. In the latter part of the fifth century the genius of Phidias had so dominated religious art that the works of his successors, men like Alcamenes and Agoracritus, could hardly be distinguished from his. But the great sculptors of the fourth century, Scopas and Praxiteles and Lysippus, not to mention others of less note, devoted themselves not so much to the expression through perfect physical form of great religious ideals, but to a realisation of the character and, so to speak, the personality of the gods

whom they portrayed. And they did this by the same means by which they expressed in their art the characters and passions of heroes or of men, thereby removing the gods from the sphere of passionless benignity and power which is assigned to them by the art of the fifth century. Such a treatment evidently gave more scope for variety in the styles of the sculptors; and although we can sometimes trace the influence of one upon another, yet each clearly shows his own characteristics. We are expressly told of Praxiteles that he showed the most admirable skill in infusing into his marble works the passions and emotions of the soul; and the extant remains of the statues made by Scopas and Lysippus show that they also, each in his own way, attained the same results.

If the sculpture of the fifth century was ethical, expressing noble ideals of character whether in gods or men, that of the fourth century may be called psychological. It is not content with character; it expresses also mood and even passion, and thereby gives more prominence to individuality. At first sight it is not easy to realise how this change came to affect the representations of the gods. The gods of Homer are, indeed, full of individual character; but we have seen how in the fifth century, though the greatest sculptors declared it was the gods of Homer that they represented, these representations were idealised and raised above those human touches in which the individuality is most conspicuous. There was, in the Homeric hymns and in the lyric poets, a delight in details of incident and in personal peculiarities and even in romantic tales about the gods; and in the fourth century, when the high idealisation of the preceding age is no longer so strong in its influence, we find a similar tendency in art as well. While the great statues of the gods in the fifth century are almost all represented as either enthroned or standing, not employed in any particular action or function, the most characteristic examples of the statues of gods made in the fourth century have almost all some definite motive. We may take as an example what was perhaps the most famous statue of antiquity, the Aphrodite by Praxiteles at Cnidus. The goddess is represented as nude; and it is often said that goddesses would not have been so represented in the fifth century. It is true that full drapery seems more consistent with the dignified and august figures of Phidian art. But if the religious type had required that Phidias should make a nude goddess, we may be sure he

would have made her naked and unashamed, with no more self-consciousness than a nude Apollo; above all, he would not have thought it necessary to provide a motive for her nudity. With Praxiteles it is otherwise. He represents the goddess as preparing for the bath, and just letting her last garment slip from her hand on to a vase that stands beside her; and, in addition to this provision of a motive—an excuse, one might almost say—for representing her without her clothes, he hints, from the instinctive gesture of her other hand which she holds before her body, at a half-conscious shrinking from exposure, a feeling of modesty which, however suitable to a woman, is by no means consistent with a high ideal of the goddess. The face and figure are of extraordinary physical beauty of type, of a breadth and nobility which contrast with the smaller, prettier, and less dignified forms of later art; the gesture, too, has not the conscious coquetry which we see in such a work as the Venus de' Medici. But, on the other hand, we must recognise that the statue represents the goddess under a human rather than a divine aspect, that even her mood and feeling of timidity are portrayed in a manner which, however charming in itself, is totally inconsistent with her worship as a great goddess. We are not surprised to hear that this statue inspired a personal passion; she is the goddess of love, and is represented as not beyond the reach of human attraction; but she is brought down to the level of mortals, rather than capable of raising mortals to a higher sphere by her contemplation. It is the same, though perhaps to a less degree, with other statues of the gods made in the fourth century. The motives with which the later Greeks went to visit the great statues of the Phidian age were, as we have seen, to a great extent religious, and their contemplation was regarded to some extent as a service; here we have "idolatry" in its highest form. But those who went to see the Aphrodite of Cnidus went chiefly to enjoy the beauty of the statue; and although this may be the best thing from the artistic point of view, it certainly has not the same religious import.

There is another element in the individuality of fourth-century statues which may appeal to modern artists, and which certainly did appeal—in an inverted manner—to early Christian writers of invectives against pagan idolatry. It was said that Phryne had posed as a model for the Cnidian Aphrodite of Praxiteles; and the character of the goddess was inferred from

that of her votary. It is clear that a Greek artist could not have, in the case of a nude female statue, the same choice of types constantly present to his observation and his memory as he had in the case of male statues; and the individuality of the model, however beautiful, would thus tend to assert itself against the type. Thus personality and individual character, "the ultimate condition of beauty," to use Mr. Ruskin's words, in modern as in Tuscan art, comes much nearer to expression in the fourth century than in the fifth. But a study of such a statue as the Cnidian Aphrodite shows us nevertheless that in the beauty of the type and the avoidance of the accidental, the art of Praxiteles was as far removed from realism as it was from the vague generalisation of Græco-Roman and modern pseudo-classical art. It is full of life and individuality, but it is the individuality of a character realised within his mind by the artist, not merely copied from the human model he set before him.

Another method by which the motive becomes prominent in the art of the fourth century is to be seen in the interpretation of mythological conceptions. These are realised and embodied in statues; but the statues offer a new, sometimes, it seems, almost an accidental and trifling version of a solemn religious conception; it appears as if the artist were playing with a mythological subject. Thus in the statue made by Praxiteles of Apollo Sauroktonos, "the lizard-slayer," the god stands with an arrow in his hand, as if trying to catch with it a lizard who runs up a tree; it suggests a boyish game rather than the epithet of a god. Again, the worship of Artemis Brauronia at Athens was one of the oldest and most sacred cults in the city, and women at marriage and at other critical times of their life used to offer her their garments, thereby bringing themselves into close contact with the goddess and claiming her special protection, the garments being actually placed on the old image. If, as is probable, the Artemis of Gabii is a copy of the statue substituted by Praxiteles for this old image, we see there the goddess, as a graceful girlish figure, fastening a cloak upon her shoulder. This may be taken as symbolical of the earlier custom of placing the garments on the statue; but we have evidence that the worshippers were not content with such a symbolic contact, but had the actual garments placed on the new statue as they had been on the old. Here we have probably a case of unsuccessful substitution; the artistic representation did

not suffice to replace the actual rite. But the representation itself is doubtless intended in a way which, however graceful, does not represent any deep religious feeling; one feels that the artist found the subject a convenient one as an artistic motive, rather than that he had any deep religious idea to express.

We must not, however, go too far in denying religious ideals to the fourth century altogether. Some of the gods, who came very near to the life of man, but who were nevertheless worshipped with a real belief in their power and benevolence, found at this time their fullest expression in art. An example may be seen in the Demeter of Cnidus, the mother sorrowing for her daughter, whose suffering brings her into close sympathy with human weakness, and whose mysteries, perhaps more than any other Hellenic service, brought men and women into personal communion with the gods. We may take as another instance the head of Asclepius from Melos in the British Museum. Here, as Brunn has pointed out in his admirable analysis of its forms, we may recognise not so much the god as the half-human, half-divine physician, a genial and friendly spirit who persuades rather than commands. The expression is not only intellectual, but has also an infinite gentleness, as of one not himself unacquainted with mortal pain and sorrow; and such a conception, as we know from Christian art, often appeals to those who find the majesty of Zeus too distant, the idea of his godhead too abstract. In such almost human ideals the individuality of the fourth century finds its full scope, as in other half-human creations of the artist's imagination. Apollo as the inspired musician or—if we accept the derivation of the Apollo Belvedere from a fourth-century original—as the disdainful archer, Hermes, the protector and playmate of his little brother Dionysus, and many other such representations of the gods in their personal moods and characteristic actions, seem in many ways less divine, less full of religious feeling than such an Asclepius; if the great gods are brought too near to human passions and weaknesses, they cannot but lose much of their divinity.

One might easily multiply examples of similar motives in the statues of the gods made in the fourth century; but we should find the same underlying principles in all cases. The gods are indeed more clearly realised as having

personal character and individuality, and for this reason they may sometimes inspire keener personal feelings of worship or even of romantic devotion. But the older and higher conceptions of the gods, as an essential part of the State religion, and as embodying the ideals of the race or of the city, are no longer to be found, except in a somewhat lifeless continuance of the fifth-century tradition. The intensity of expression which we find in human heroes is, indeed, expressed also in such types as that of Apollo the musician or of Dionysus the god of inspired enthusiasm. But this tendency is not fully developed until a later age. The subtle distinctions of character between the different gods are, on the other hand, now most keenly observed and most skilfully rendered. But in spite of this, one does not feel that the artist has the same belief in the gods and in their power as we can see in the Phidian age. If his artistic attainment is possibly more skilful, the religious import of his work is certainly less.

city itself or its presiding genius represented in a statue which seems at first sight a mere allegory of its situation. The way in which the figure is seated, half turned on herself, and with her feet resting upon the shoulder of the river that swims below her, seems to suggest an artificially invented symbolism; yet we are expressly told that this statue received great veneration from the natives of the district. In the decay of the belief in the gods, there seems to have been a craving for nearer and more real objects of worship.

We can see the same tendency in a more extreme form in the deification of human beings. Though some examples of this occur earlier, especially in the case of the heroes or founders of cities, these are not placed on a level with the gods; but the worship of Alexander, and in imitation of him, of his successors, placed him in a distinctly divine rank. It is difficult to say how far this was due to non-Hellenic influences. In the case of Alexander, with his marvellous, almost superhuman achievements, and his final solution of the great drama of the contest of East and West, such idealisation is easy to understand; and we find not only that Alexander is himself represented as a god, but that his expression and cast of features come to affect the sculpture of his age, even in the representations of the gods themselves. On coins, too, his head occurs; an honour that before his time was not given to mere mortals. In other cases this worship of men reached a pitch which was a matter of shame to the later Greeks; thus Demetrius Poliorcetes, when he gave Athens back her freedom, was welcomed at the city with divine honours. Even hymns were composed in his honour, of which we find specimens preserved.⁷ After welcoming his advent at the same time as that of Demeter, the poet addresses him thus:—"Other gods are either far away, or they have no ears, or they exist not, or have no care for us. But we see thee, a present deity, not of wood or stone, but real; therefore we pray to thee." It is true that such materialistic and atheistic expressions were probably reprobated by many at the time, as well as by later writers; but the mere possibility of their public enunciation shows how far the Athenians had gone from their old religious beliefs.

⁷ Athen., VI, 63

