



Learning to View Art with Philostratus' *Eikones*
A lecture by Dr Graeme Miles
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The *Eikones* (or *Imagines*) of Philostratus is a work of the first half of the third century AD, describing an art gallery, which may or may not have existed, on the Bay of Naples. Written in a virtuosic and allusive Atticising Greek, it presents itself not simply as a series of descriptions but as a guide to educated viewing.

The dominant concern in the older scholarship on this text has been the extraction of information about ancient art; the descriptions seemed to offer the tantalising possibility of learning about works no longer extant. The poet Goethe himself was at one point keen to have the images reproduced by contemporary artists. More recently, attention has shifted to the work as a unique source for the history of art interpretation, and it is with this that the present lecture is concerned. Drawing on several examples I will look at some of the ways in which Philostratus represents images through literature, and how he playfully approaches the problems raised by a realist art.

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