

Neesen (1989), and Roochnik (1996). Other significant contributions to the study of ancient technology from Prehistoric to Byzantine times include Evelyn (2002) and Humphrey et al. (1998). Burford (1972), Roebuck (1969), and White (1984) represent the first generation of monographs on ancient technology and the status of artisans. All these studies expand on the pioneering study of the 19th c., Blümner (1885–1887). The ancient references to ancient artists are also presented in Overbeck (1858 [1959]) and, in a shorter version and in English translation, in Pollitt (1990).

For style, technique, trade, and connoisseurship in Greek pottery, see Boardman (2001). Other standard references are Noble (1988), Sparkes (1991), Scheibler (1986), and Cuomo Di Caprio (1984). The step-by-step shaping of most Athenian vessels and many other technical details are superbly illustrated in Schreiber (1999). A series of conferences on less popular decorative techniques for Athenian vases (i.e. coral red, 'Six technique') has brought to light interesting aspects of technique and distribution; see Cohen (2006), Lapatin (2008), and Tsingarida (2009). Rice's handbook on pottery analysis (1987) provides a solid background for the more technical aspects of pottery-making across cultures and periods.

For bronze-casting techniques, the works by Haynes (1992) and Mattusch (1996a, 2008) are standard references. The conference volumes *From the Parts to the Whole* (Mattusch et al. 2000) and *Fire of Hephaistos* (Mattusch 1996b) emphasize technical aspects of ancient bronzes. Hemingway (2004) also sheds more light on technical issues and new methods that display hidden clues on ancient repairs.

For sculpture techniques and the locations of marble workshops, see more recently Palagia (2006a), Rockwell (1993, with earlier bibliography), and Nolte (2005). Stewart (1990) on Greek sculpture combines well an art-historical survey with political and social-historical aspects of Greek sculpture. He also provides a list of ancient testimonia in translation. For marble quarries, especially on Paros, see Schilardi (2000). Other crafts not covered in this essay include ivory-working (Lapatin 2001) and woodworking. Ulrich's (2007) monograph on the woodworking in the Roman period touches on issues relevant for all of Greco-Roman antiquity. On gem-cutting, see Boardman (2001b) and Plantzos (1999: 38–41).

Craft apprenticeship (mainly in the textile industry) is documented in Hellenistic and Roman papyri from Egypt (Bergamasco 1995). The apprenticeship contracts outline in detail the duration of craft apprenticeship, the duties of the master and the apprentice, wages, and even the days of vacation per year.

CHAPTER 14

Ancient Writers on Art

Kenneth Lapatin

14.1 Introduction

Modern historians of Greek art – unlike their colleagues who study the arts of many other periods and cultures – have the advantage of numerous ancient texts that address the production, reception, and function of artifacts in multiple media, from architecture, sculpture, and painting to mosaics, metalwork, engraved gems, jewelry, and coinage. As many citations throughout this collection of essays testify, these written sources are a boon to scholars, providing valuable information about ancient artists, patrons, and viewers, as well as objects that survive and those that are irretrievably lost. Indeed, for some media, such as panel painting, wooden sculpture, and textiles, texts are virtually all we have (Reinach 1921; Pollitt 1990: 124–180, 206–220; Robertson 1975; Meiggs 1982; Vickers 1999; Koch 2000). But ancient writings on Greek art also present pitfalls. Most Greek and Latin authors discuss what we today call 'works of art' not as their principal subject, but rather in some other context. Whether their agenda is religious, social, political, historical, rhetorical, philosophical, aesthetic, or antiquarian, ancient writers frequently employ 'art' as a convenient tool for making some other point. This is true even in cases when their aim seems to be art-historical. Also, most such writers lived and wrote long after the works they discuss were created. Pliny and Pausanias, arguably the two most important ancient authors on Greek 'art' (see further below), lived in the 1st and 2nd c. AD, respectively. They were chronologically more distant from the 'Golden Age of Athens' of the mid 5th c. BC than we today are from the death of Michelangelo in 1564. To be sure, they lived in cultures with some continuity

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with the Archaic and Classical past, but society had changed considerably: the Greece they knew was under the domination of Rome, and negotiating cultural interaction was for them and other contemporaneous writers a considerable challenge. Another pitfall for us today in utilizing ancient Roman writers is the fact that their Latin vocabulary does not always express well the ideas, circumstances, and culture of those who originally commissioned, produced, and viewed Greek art. Pliny himself recognized that 'there is no Latin name for the *symmetria*' observed by Lysippos (HN 34.65); the Roman concepts of *imitatio* and *aemulatio* discussed by many authors, moreover, are not exact equivalents of Greek *mimesis*, for the needs, desires, and taste of Roman patrons (of literature as well as of art) were different from those of Archaic, Classical, and even Hellenistic Greeks (Pollitt 1974; Perry 2002, 2005).

Post-antique collections of ancient written sources on Greek art present modern readers with hundreds – indeed, thousands – of passages that are of interest to scholars and students, but these are necessarily removed from their larger literary contexts. Organized according to some overarching principle, be it alphabetical, chronological, geographical, by medium, artist, or some combination thereof, such collections, often in or with translation and accompanied by commentary, are both convenient and useful, but the many short extracts they contain risk being treated as objective reports with an aura of historical 'truth' rather than as part of some larger ancient argument (see e.g. Junius 1694; Overbeck 1868; Stuart-Jones 1895; Reinach 1921; Miller 1929–1931; Meiggs 1982; Corso 1988–1991; Hebert 1989; Pollitt 1990; Stewart 1990; Lapatin 2001; Muller-Dufeu 2002).

Written accounts of finely crafted objects, what we today call 'works of art', are nonetheless as old as the earliest Greek literature (even older, if we include those mentioned on the Linear B tablets of Mycenaean Greece), and they continued to be penned through the Roman Empire, Late Antiquity, and Byzantium, more than a millennium after the creation of some of the objects described. Homer invokes many beautiful items in both epics credited to him. In Book 18 of the *Iliad*, for example, he describes in great detail the legendary Shield of Achilles, 'enriched with many a wonder by the cunning hand' of the craftsman god, Hephaistos. This 130-line *tour de force*, however, is less an accurate account of contemporaneous visual culture than a disquisition on the cosmic order and the virtues of peace and good government. Even texts written by craftsmen who seem to provide detailed accounts of their practice must be read 'with a grain of salt'. We know that many ancient sculptors, painters, and architects wrote technical treatises (see further below), but only one survives in its entirety: Vitruvius's *De Architectura*, written at the end of the 1st c. BC. Vitruvius seems to provide a handbook for creating and decorating buildings of different types, but recent scholarship suggests that the principal

aim of his project was to demonstrate his own proficiency and credibility in order to gain the favor of the emperor Augustus and other potential clients (Nichols forthcoming).

Ancient poets, dramatists, orators, satirists, philosophers, historians, and others all wrote about 'art', recording valuable information about individual craftsmen, objects, techniques, purposes, styles, dates, and historical circumstances, and much else. Neither the space allocated for this essay, nor, indeed, several larger volumes, would be adequate to list, let alone analyze, the vast corpus of ancient texts on Greek art. J.J. Pollitt (1990: 6–9; 1974: 9–71) has usefully identified four categories into which ancient writers on art might be placed: compilers of tradition, literary analogists, moral aestheticians, and professional critics. This chapter is organized somewhat differently, for some ancient authors combine approaches and/or draw on a variety of sources. It aims to provide an overview of several genres of writing that invoke ancient art and to highlight some authors who are particularly significant or representative.

14.2 Inscriptions

Whether painted, carved, engraved, cast, hammered, or scratched, inscriptions *on* works of art – unlike many other types of writing *about* art – tend to be contemporaneous with their production and most probably come from the hand of the craftsman. The earliest date to the late 8th c. BC, when artists' signatures and dedicatory inscriptions appear on vases and stone (Boardman 1998: fig. 162; Hurwit 1999: 90–91, figs. 62, 63; Snodgrass 2000; Osborne 2010). Such inscriptions continued to be produced throughout the first millennium BC and provide valuable information not only about the identity of craftsmen and the purposes of their products, but also about the self-perception and projection of both artists and patrons. Indeed, some signatures, such as that on the base of a statue carved by Euthykartides of Naxos, demonstrate that artists dedicated their own work (Marcadé 1953–1957: vol. 2, 46; Jeffrey 1961: 304, no. 3; Boardman 1978: fig. 56; Stewart 1990: pl. 40; in general, Scheibler 1979).

Early signatures often provide just a name and a verb, *epoie* or *epoiesen*: 'so-and-so made [this]', but often the object – physical as well as grammatical – is not only implied, but is also present in the form of a first-person accusative pronoun, *me*: 'so-and-so made me'. Thus the object speaks, becoming animate and autonomous. Signatures of potters appear long before those of vase-painters (Immerwahr 1990; Cohen 1991; Wachter 2001; Osborne 2010), and craftsmen also signed mosaics, metalwork, coins, gems, and even temples, as well as statues and statue bases (Löwy 1885; Marcadé

1953–1957; Jeffrey 1990 (1961); Franke and Hirmer 1964: 49–53; Richter 1968b: 333; Stewart 1990: 22–24; Lawrence 1996: 220, col. 2, n. 12; Dunbabin 1999: 14, 25–26, 33; Keesling 2003: esp. 22–35; Lapatin and Wight 2010: 34).

Inscriptions sometimes provide additional information about craftsmen: the name of their father, tribe, or hometown, especially, it seems, when working abroad. They also record the status, family connections, and other circumstances of the deceased – in the case of funerary markers (Richter 1961; Clairmont 1993) – or dedicator – in the case of votives – as well as the intended recipient of the object. Such commemorative and votive inscriptions are often written in verse, perhaps reflecting actual dedicatory utterances and/or encouraging viewers/readers to repeat them aloud (Rouse 1902; Raubitschek 1949; Day 1994). One of the most illuminating early inscriptions is cut into the thighs of the bronze male figure in Boston already mentioned in Chapter 5, which dates to the early 7th c. BC (Boardman 1978: fig. 10): ‘Mantiklos dedicated me to the far-shooter of the silver bow as a tithe, do thou, O Phoibos [Apollo], give something pleasing in return’ (Jeffrey 1961: 90–91, no. 1, pl. 7; Stewart 1990: 4, pl. 11; Day 1994: 39–43; Papalexandrou 2004: 84–86). Whether Mantiklos is the artist or, more likely, the patron is uncertain, but the inscription succinctly reveals something of the roles played by material culture in the reciprocal relationships between gods and men.

Inscriptions serve other purposes as well. For scholars today, they are extremely useful in establishing and refining chronology and origin, as their content (e.g. names of magistrates or artists’ lineages) and form (i.e. shape of letters and dialect) can help to date and place artifacts. Also, in diverse media the figures depicted are sometimes labeled, although such name inscriptions often seem redundant: who needs to be told that the muscle-man wearing a lionskin and holding a club is Herakles, or the armed female wearing a snakey *aegis* (a shield-like cape) is Athena? Nonetheless, scholars – and perhaps the ancients too – would have misidentified several figures without such inscriptions: the rediscovery of ‘lost’ painted labels on the east frieze of the Treasury of the Siphnians at Delphi (cf. Figure 7.1), for example, has allowed for the proper identification and interpretation of the depicted myth (Brinkmann 1985; Shapiro 1988).

Writing in and of itself, moreover, frequently served as a form of decoration: on vases and elsewhere, inscriptions are often carefully placed. And in the 6th c. BC the relatively new technology of writing, apparently, could serve as a symbol of status. Hence, perhaps, the prevalence of so-called ‘mock’ or ‘nonsense’ inscriptions on drinking vessels and other painted pots. These sometimes are formed by mere blobs, but frequently employ letters and sometimes even approximate words. They are written by literate as well as

illiterate painters and are often onomatopoeic. At Athens, they seem to have been especially popular during the early years of the Athenian democracy (Beazley 1929: 361–362; 1932: 194–195; Immerwahr 1990: 44–45; Lissarrague 1990b: 123–139; 1994; Sparkes 1991: 112–113; Jubier 1998 [2002]).

Public accounts inscribed on stone also provide a trove of information about diverse works of art. A fragment of the so-called ‘Marmor Parium’, an ancient chronological table, for example, reports that replacement statues of the Tyrannicides at Athens, originally produced by Antenor but carried off by the Persians, were erected in 477/6 BC (Figure 21.1). Inventories of ancient temple treasuries, meanwhile, record in considerable detail the imagery, dedicators, and locations of thousands of lost objects, many fashioned from precious and/or perishable materials (Linders 1975; Aleshire 1989; Harris 1995; Hamilton 2000; Lapatin 2005). Building inscriptions provide data about processes of quarrying and transporting materials and the construction and finishing of structures, as well as details of contracts with and wages paid to individual craftsmen. From the accounts of the so-called Erechtheion on the Athenian Acropolis, for example, we learn that citizens, slaves, and resident aliens worked side by side and were paid the same wages for carving figures for the frieze – amounts determined by the size of the job (Randall 1953; see also Burford 1969, 1972; Scranton 1969).

Perhaps most interesting for art historians or archaeologists are those inscriptions that reveal something about the intended, or desired, reception of a given artifact. The word *agalma*, ‘delight’, is often used to denote statues dedicated as votives, while *xoanon* undergoes a transformation in meaning from ‘something carved’ to ‘sacred statue’ (Donohue 1988; Keesling 2003). Artists, meanwhile, might boast about – and on – individual objects: an early 5th c. BC Boeotian stele that depicts a boldly foreshortened male figure is proudly inscribed ‘Alxenor of Naxos made me – just look!’ (Boardman 1978: fig. 244; Stewart 1990: pl. 254). A verse inscription scratched into a rather unassuming Late Geometric terracotta drinking cup evidently manufactured on Rhodes, but found at Pithekoussai on the island of Ischia off the coast of Naples, refers, apparently jokingly, to the enormous and finely-decorated golden cup of Nestor described by Homer in the *Iliad* (11.632–37; Immerwahr 1990: 18–19; Ridgway 1992: 55–57). Such writings indicate self-consciousness. The famous inscription painted on an amphora by a late 6th c. BC red-figure vase-painter, however, has perhaps been over-interpreted by modern scholars: ‘Euthymides painted me ... as never Euphronios’ is frequently taken as a jibe directed at the skill of a rival painter in the Athenian potters’ quarter, but, as has been noted, the two parts of the inscription appear on opposite sides of the vase. ‘As never Euphronios’ might refer to the act of drawing the foreshortened image of a twisting reveler, but it may instead have

been meant to proclaim Euthymides's proficiency in revelry or some other activity, especially as the vessel was designed for use at a *symposion* – a drinking party (Boardman 1975: fig. 33; Vickers and Gill 1994: 97–98).

The form as well as content of inscriptions can also be revelatory: sculptors' signatures on statue bases seem to become larger and more prominent in the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, their increased size apparently reflecting the greater importance of artists' identities in an age obsessed with status and connoisseurship (Tanner 2006: 206–209, cf. 153–155). Inscriptions, moreover, were evidently 'read' and interpreted by other ancient authors – long before modern archaeologists – in the hope of explaining older objects. Pausanias cites inscriptions regularly (Whittaker 1991), and he and others occasionally misunderstand them, or, like their modern counterparts, extrapolate from them, filling the 'gaps' between what was actually written and what they would prefer to learn (Keesling 2005a; Newby and Leader-Newby 2007).

14.3 Artists' Treatises

As mentioned above, Vitruvius's *De Architectura* is the only treatise by an ancient artist – in this case an architect and military engineer – that survives in its entirety, but the names of authors, titles, and even extracts of other ancient artists' treatises are preserved. Vitruvius lists authorities whose works (now lost) he consulted in order to demonstrate his qualifications – almost as if providing a modern bibliography – as does Pliny the Elder (see below). These lost cited works include treatises on the Parthenon and other famous buildings by their architects. The earliest of them probably dealt with technical matters, 'heroic feats of engineering' (Pollitt 1995: 20) such as moving large stones from quarry to building site and erecting monumental structures, as well as design and proportion, which seem to have been the chief concerns of later architects/authors.

Architects were not the only artists to take up the pen. Vitruvius mentions that the painter Agatharchos, as mentioned by Plantzos (Chapter 8), wrote about perspective in the second half of the 5th c. BC, and we know from Pliny that the 4th c. BC painter and sculptor Euphranor wrote *On Symmetria* and *On Colors*; that the painter Apelles wrote about proportion, composition, and style; and that other painters, such as Parrhasios, Melanthis, and Asklepiodoros, wrote books that were still available to be consulted in the 1st c. AD.

Perhaps most influential in antiquity, however, was a treatise called the *Kanon* by the Argive sculptor Polykleitos (see Chapter 5), which was illustrated, apparently, by a statue, which we today call the Doryphoros (Figure 5.4). This treatise, too, is lost, but quotations are preserved in several other authors. Some

of these quotations, such as 'the work is most difficult when the clay is on the nail', are relatively straightforward descriptions of stages in the process of lost wax bronze-casting, here referring to applying the final finish to clay models. Other passages, such as 'perfection arises *para mikron* from many numbers', have exercised scholars, but leave no doubt as to the sculptor's concern with *rhythmos*, composition, and *symmetria*, the commensurability of parts through mathematically determined proportions (e.g. Pollitt 1974: 14–23; 1995: esp. 21; Tobin 1975; Stewart 1978, 1990: 160–163). Greek and Latin authors who cite Polykleitos and his *Kanon* include Plato, Strabo, Plutarch, Pausanias, Cicero, Pliny, Quintilian, and others, but some of the most revealing passages are to be found in the medical treatises of Galen, written in the 2nd c. AD. Galen's concerns are far from art-historical, of course, but he found Polykleitos's work supremely useful for understanding and explaining morphological changes in muscles engendered by flexion and extension, for the sculptor had 'broken down the motor capabilities of the body into a series of opposites for the purposes of schematic and clear exposition' (Leftwich 1995: 48). Though writing for quite different audiences, the sculptor and the doctor shared an abiding interest in the human body and, perhaps, increasing their own status beyond that of mere craftsman into the ranks of the intelligentsia; indeed, in the late 5th c. BC and afterwards, artists, like doctors and sophists, seem to have participated in a rationalized and commoditized pedagogy, competing with one another professionally by teaching theoretically as well as practically through production (Leftwich 1995; Metraux 1995; Tanner 2006: 161–182; see also Koch 2000).

In the 4th c. BC, Euphranor and Silanion both published 'alternative' canons, but it was not until the 3rd c. that another sculptor, Xenokrates, penned a work that attempted a more global historical perspective. He reviewed the texts of earlier authors and added *akribeia* (accuracy of detail) to *rhythmos* and *symmetria* as the criteria by which both sculpture and painting should be judged. He saw art as undergoing a gradual evolution from primitive beginnings through refinements resulting in eventual perfection in both sculpture and painting, thus establishing the basis of what to this day remains standard art-historical periodization. Xenokrates's teachers were disciples of Lysippos, so it is Lysippos's new canon of proportions that Xenokrates enshrines. Nonetheless, Pheidias, Polykleitos, Myron, and Pythagoras are all credited with playing key roles along the continuum in the development of sculpture. Individual painters, too, were evidently singled out as making breakthrough advances at various stages of their art. Although Xenokrates's work, too, is lost, his evolutionary model, which privileges 'inventors' and 'perfectors' of a specific technique or style, was employed by several subsequent authors, who combined chronological and alphabetical lists of artists and subjects in attempts to write grander histories of art. Circa 280 BC Douris of

Samos compiled a series of anecdotes relating to the lives of major artists, and shortly thereafter Antigonos of Karystos joined this biographical approach with Xenokrates's professional criticism. His work was critiqued in six books (!) by Polemon of Elis (or Ilion) in the 2nd c. BC, who seems to have been so obsessed with reading old inscriptions and artists' signatures that he was dubbed *ho stelokopas*, 'the tablet-glutton'; he also wrote individual books on the monuments of Olympia, Delphi, and the Athenian Acropolis. All of these texts, now lost, were eventually utilized by Marcus Terentius Varro and other authors, such as Strabo, who often cites significant works of sculpture in his *Geography*, which fortunately does survive. Other lost guidebooks on local antiquities were written by Heliodoros of Athens in the 2nd c. BC; by C. Lucinius Mucianus on the antiquities of Asia, where he served as proconsul under the emperor Nero; and by a certain Alketas about the offerings at Delphi. Perhaps closest to a modern art history, however, was the five-volume account of masterpieces everywhere (*nobilis opera in toto orbe*) written in the 1st c. BC by the Neapolitan sculptor Pasiteles (Stuart-Jones 1895: xvii–xxi; Jex-Blake and Sellers 1896: xvi–xci; Pollitt 1990: 3–6; 1974: 12–31, 73–80; Koch 2000). Their factual content aside, these Late Classical and Hellenistic texts seem to mark a change from artists writing instructional treatises for other artists to the writing of art history for cultured readers. Such volumes included not only lists of artists and genres but also, and perhaps as importantly, instructive models for proper viewing (Tanner 2006: 235–276).

14.4 Pliny and Pausanias

Two ancient texts stand out as being most informative about ancient Greek art: those written in the 1st and 2nd c. AD by a Roman knight, Gaius Plinius Secundus, and a Greek traveler from Asia Minor, Pausanias. Pliny the Elder was born at Como in northern Italy in AD 23/4 and died in 79. From the writings of his nephew, Pliny the Younger, we are well informed about his life, his method of work (tireless), and the circumstances of his death (investigating the eruption of Mt Vesuvius). The 37 books of his *Natural History*, dedicated to Titus, the son of the emperor Vespasian, who became emperor two months before Pliny's death, are his only works to survive (he also wrote another 102 volumes, now lost). The *Natural History* is one of the longest Latin texts to have been passed down through the Middle Ages – on account of its perceived utility.

Modern scholars often refer to Pliny's 'art history' (e.g. Jex-Blake and Sellers 1896; Isager 1991), but the sections of Pliny's *Natural History* that treat the history of art do so because of the author's interest in the natural world: works of art are fashioned from natural materials. In fact, of 37 books, only the last five deal with art to any extent. Book 1 contains the author's

preface and a table of contents for each subsequent book, which includes the total number of facts, investigations, and observations therein, and a list of authorities. (All together, Pliny claims that his work deals with 20,000 matters of significance, drawing on 2000 works by 100 selected authors, with added observations of his own; modern scholars, however, have counted citations of more than 470 individual authors.) Book 2 addresses cosmology, astronomy, meteorology, and geology; Books 3–6 treat geography and ethnography; Book 7 anthropology and human physiology; and Books 8–32 – the vast bulk of the work – zoology, botany, agriculture, and pharmacology. In Books 33 and 34 Pliny discusses metals – principally gold, silver, and bronze – from mining and refinement to jewelry-making and bronze-sculpting. It is here that he preserves much valuable information about lost works of Greek bronze statuary, from the early self-portrait of Theodoros of Samos to masterpieces cast by Pheidias, Polykleitos, and Lysippos. Book 35 addresses pigments, and thus the works of famous painters, now entirely lost: Apollodoros, Zeuxis, Parrhasios, Apelles, and others. Book 36 explores stone, and thus marble-carving by such masters as Pheidias, Praxiteles, and Skopas, as well as the construction of monumental buildings, such as the Mausoleum at Halikarnassos, the Artemision at Ephesos, and the Pharos at Alexandria. Pliny's work ends with Book 37, in which he describes hundreds of precious and semi-precious stones, as well as pearls and amber, and briefly discusses gem-engraving and some methods of forgery. All of these chapters contain not just titles and descriptions of works of art, but also a combination of historical information, biographical anecdotes, and aesthetic critique drawn from various sources. Thus it is from Pliny that we learn that Parrhasios won a competition by painting an image of a curtain so realistic that it fooled his rival Zeuxis; that Pythagoras was the first to sculpt veins and sinews; and that the Laokoon – carved by Hagesandros, Polydoros, and Athenodoros and belonging to Titus – 'must be considered superior to all other products of the arts of painting and sculpture' (*HN* 34.59, 35.65, 36.37, trans. Pollitt).

Pliny's biases are sometimes those of his sources, whose words he at times copies – or translates – verbatim, but he is not merely an uncritical excerpter, copier, and compiler, as he is sometimes portrayed. He chooses carefully amongst his sources, and often updates them. Overall, however, his agenda, as stated in his preface, was not to write a book that was pleasing, but one that was useful, and throughout the *Natural History* he praises the bounty of nature and describes its abuse and destruction by man. He can, in many ways, be called a proto-environmentalist, and his combination of scientific investigation with chauvinistic moralizing, often at the expense of the Greeks, must be viewed in a Roman cultural context (see e.g. Coulson 1976; French and Greenway 1986; Wallace-Hadrill 1990; Isager 1991, 2003; Healy 1999; Murphy 2004; Carey 2006; Tanner 2006: 235–246).

Pausanias, unlike Pliny, was not widely praised by his contemporaries, nor, apparently, much read in antiquity. What little we know about his life is from his text, the goal of which was to examine and communicate to his audience what was unique and/or significant about individual cities and sanctuaries of mainland Greece. Born in Asia Minor, he was not, as some scholars have considered him, a Greek seeking to explain his homeland, but rather an interested outsider, touring numerous foreign *poleis*; hence his desire, at every stage, to explore and compare particularly local monuments, institutions, myths, and religious customs, many of which were alien to him, for these are what set each *polis* off from the others. Monuments of the past loom large for Pausanias, not only because the past shapes the present, but also because it requires more explanation. Indeed, contemporary monuments, such as colonnaded streets, arches, and aqueducts, are mostly overlooked, because they were familiar to his audience. Pausanias is particularly concerned with religion – ritual and votive offerings – not just on account of his own personal piety, but because religious monuments function as communal symbols of local identity and thus reflect the state of Greece under the Roman Empire (Elsner 1992; Arafat 1996; Bingen 1996; Alcock et al. 2001; Hutton 2005; Pretzler 2007).

Pausanias's text is divided into ten books, organized geographically, treating Athens, Attica, and Megaris (1); Corinthia and Argolis (2); Lakonia (3); Messenia (4); Elis, including Olympia (5 and 6); Achaia (7); Arcadia (8); Boeotia (9); and Phocis (10). Northern Greece, the Islands, and Asia Minor are not addressed systematically, but are invoked at various points, as are sites and monuments both further east and in Italy. Scholars of the 19th and early 20th c. hotly debated the reliability of Pausanias's text, but because excavations have persistently corroborated his observations, his accuracy is no longer the issue it once was, though he does make occasional mistakes (Frazer 1896; Papahatzis 1974–1981; Musti et al. 1982; Habicht 1985; Pritchett 1998–1999). Pausanias writes in the tradition of historians, such as Herodotos, to whom he occasionally alludes, and his chief concern seems to be with factual accuracy, rather than any kind of rhetorical effect. He makes judgments largely based on autopsy, often revealing his use or doubt of local sources and/or consideration of variant explanations, as for example at 2.17.3, when he agrees with his guides at the Argive Heraion 'that the statue which the inscription declares to be the emperor Augustus is really Orestes' (trans. Frazer). Like archaeologists and art historians today, Pausanias employs a comparative method to determine the age of monuments. Indeed, one of the reasons we are so comfortable using his text today is that he exercised judgments similar to our own, evaluating works based on the criteria of technique, materials, and style, and thereby placing them into relative chronologies and attributing them to specific artists. For example, he writes of two statues of Apollo at Thebes and at Didyma: 'Whoever has seen one of these images and has learned

who the artist was, requires no great skill to recognize, on beholding the other, that it is a work of Kanachos's" (9.10.2, trans. author, adapted from Frazer). For Pausanias, the past was not one great soup, but was clearly divided into various periods, and their monuments could be appropriately attributed based on various factors, such as whether an image was wrought or unwrought, or made of wood, stone, or hammered bronze. It is to Pausanias that we are indebted for much of our knowledge of Archaic Greek sculpture (e.g. his description of early portraits in the form of *kouroi* at 8.40.1). He also provides a long and detailed description of Pheidias's Zeus Olympios and the paintings that surrounded it (5.11.1–11), and numerous other lost works, allowing for the recognition of ancient representations of them in other media (McConnell 1984; Lapatin 2001). His detailed accounts of the lost wall-paintings of Polygnotos and other artists have led scholars to attempt reconstructions (1.15.1–4, 10.25.1–31.12; Pollitt 1990: 127–140, 143–144; Stansbury-O'Donnell 1989, 1990). But Pausanias provides much more than just descriptions of works, for he continually attempts to present them in their cultural landscape. Indeed, although often considered a guidebook writer or pilgrim, he might better be called a cultural geographer on account of his deep interest in local history, mythology, and religion. Such anecdotes as the trial of the statue of Theagenes of Thasos for murder (6.11.2–9), moreover, provide unique insights into the intersections of art, history, religion, culture, and identity.

14.5 Homer and the Poets

Homer was blind, according to legend, but the poet credited with composing the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* delighted in describing finely wrought objects: arms and armor, vehicles, vessels, textiles, jewelry, furniture, and so on. The gleam and shimmer of such items as well as their elaborate decorations are vivid in his verses, and scholars have long debated whether such objects, mostly considerably finer than anything preserved in the archaeological record, refer to actual artifacts of the late 8th c. BC, or are memories or heirlooms of the Aegean Bronze Age. Whatever the case, such items, for the most part, are invoked for narrative rather than archaeological reasons. For example, in Book 19 of the *Odyssey*, the hero describes to his wife a brooch: 'the pin to it was golden and fashioned/With double sheathes, and the front part of it was artfully/Done: a hound held in his forepaws a dappled/Fawn, preying on it as it struggled; and all admired it/How, though they were golden, it preyed on the fawn and strangled it/And the fawn struggled with his feet as he tried to escape him' (226–231, trans. Lattimore). Although this passage demonstrates how Homer, like many later writers, praised verisimilitude, it tells us less about the visual arts in Homeric Greece than it serves the poet's narrative purposes: on one level,

accurate description of the brooch, a gift from Penelope, lends support to the suggestion of Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, that her husband will soon return to Ithaka; on another, as in similes featuring dogs and fawns elsewhere in the epic, the passage suggests that Odysseus will upon his return destroy the suitors (Rose 1979: 223–225).

In the early 5th c. BC, Pindar employed the visual arts as an analogy for his own art (Shapiro 1988), a theme taken up by Hellenistic and Roman poets (see below). Greek dramatists often featured statues, paintings, and figured tapestries in their plays (Miller 1929–1931). Some monuments, such as the metopes of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, described by the chorus of Athenian women in Euripides's *Ion*, add local color; others, such as Kreusa's childhood weaving or the celestial tapestry in the same play, or the purple textile in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*, are not only crucial to plot development, but, like Penelope's brooch in the *Odyssey*, also laden with resonant significance (Miller 1929–1931; Vickers 1999).

In the Hellenistic period, a retrospective tendency, as well as the increased virtuosity of both writers and artists, led to such compositions as Kallimachos's (sadly fragmentary) ironic description of Pheidias's Zeus Olympios in *Iambus* 6 (Kerkhecker 1999; Acosta-Hughes 2002) and Posidippos's recently recovered epigrams about famous Greek sculptors and intricately carved gemstones (Austin and Bastianini 2002; Acosta-Hughes et al. 2004; Gutzwiller 2005). Other epigrams dating from the Hellenistic period on, written by Latin authors, such as Statius and Martial, as well as by Greeks, describe architecture, paintings, and metalwork, as well as gems and statuary. Myron's cow and the works of Pheidias, Praxiteles, and Lysippos seem to have been especially popular (e.g. Overbeck 1868; Corso 1988–1991; Muller-Dufeu 2002; Coleman 2006: lxxvi–lxxviii; Prioux 2007, 2008). Here, too, for the most part it is the verisimilitude and virtuosity of the artwork, and thus implicitly of the poet, that are praised, along with the taste, power, and goodwill of the patron, frequently a royal or Imperial personage.

The Latin poet Horace, too, often compares the visual arts and poetry – to the advantage of the latter. He, like other Augustan poets, invokes paintings, statuary, gems, ivories, silver, and precious textiles, but not so much to provide a scene with descriptive detail as to offer a foil to his own verse, which he presents as the proper and most effective form of commemoration (Laird 1996). Like Pindar, he casts his poems as monuments. Of the visual arts themselves, he seems to disapprove, as they constitute external signs of wealth and luxury; connoisseurship and finely wrought artifacts are further suspect because of their association with the Greeks; and, perhaps most importantly, ocular fixation distracts from true insight into the state of one's soul (Hardie 1993: 121). As Michael Squire notes (Chapter 31), however, the 'ideal' Roman response to art finds eloquent expression in Vergil's *Aeneid* 6.847–53).

14.6 Orators, Rhetoricians, and Essayists

Analogies between word and image were frequently invoked by speech-makers, providing not only parallels for their art (Benediktson 1985) but suitable illustrations of specific points. Thus numerous 'facts' about ancient Greek art are preserved in the speeches of public orators. Cicero, who describes many plundered objects in his prosecution of the corrupt Roman governor of Sicily, Gaius Verres, frequently represents the contemporary physical world – places, topography, and monuments – to his listeners, using these as agents of persuasion (Vasaly 1993; Miles 2008). Analysis of his *Letters*, meanwhile, helps to clarify his own personal preferences for collecting Greek art (Marvin 1989).

Cicero (*Brut.* 70) and other rhetorical theorists also use the visual arts to make vivid stylistic comparisons. Thus the late 1st c. BC literary critic Dionysios of Halikarnassos writes, 'I think one would not be wide of the mark in comparing the oratory of Isocrates to the art of Polykleitos and Pheidias for its august, dignified, and grand style, and that of Lysias to the art of Kalamis and Kallimachos for its lightness and grace' (*Isoc.* 1, trans. Stewart 1990: 263). The most extensive comments along these lines are those of Quintilian (*Inst.* 12.10.3–9), penned in the later 1st c. AD, drawing on the Xenokratik tradition and other sources for comparisons to both painting and sculpture. But Quintilian departs from Xenokrates, for his culminating highpoint is not the art of Lysippos, but rather Pheidias, who is said to have 'added something to traditional religion' (Pollitt 1990: 5; 221–223). Of course, Roman taste, as much as if not more than Greek, lies behind many of these statements, which emphasize *décor* – 'appropriateness' of style and subject matter – as a criterion for success. Romans were interested in Greek works of art (like literature) not only as great masterpieces of the past, but also as models for the creative emulation of their contemporaries (Perry 2002, 2005; see also Pollitt 1974: 58–63, 81–84).

Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus, a prolific writer of the late 1st and early 2nd c. AD, traveled widely, but spent much of his life in his hometown of Chaironeia in central Greece, not far from Delphi, where he served as a priest for 30 years. He was thus intimately familiar with the shrine (Zagdoun 1995), and deeply interested in religious matters in general, many of which were treated in his numerous essays, particularly the *Quaestiones graecae*, which addressed antiquarian concerns. Plutarch, however, is best known for his *Parallel Lives*, a series of paired biographies of Greek and Roman statesmen in which he often cites works of art. His *Life of Perikles*, for example, provides much information about the construction of the Parthenon and other buildings on the Athenian Acropolis (see Pollitt 1990: 187–189; Stadter 1989), while

other *Lives* mention various portrait statues (e.g. *Alex.* 2; *Dem.* 31.44–45) and include accounts of venerable statues sweating, shedding tears, and exuding blood (Donohue 1988: 422–429).

In the 2nd c. AD, Lucian of Samosata, a self-proclaimed Syrian who once served as a sculptor's apprentice, frequently employed the visual arts as a metaphor for his own literary practice (Romm 1990; Dobrov 2002). He also writes in several of his satires about the physical deprivations of artists, the comparative appeal of their individual works, and the contrast between surface beauty and inner construction, among other topics (*Imagines; The Dream or the Cock* 24; *Zeus Tragodos* 7–12). Two authors named Philostratos (apparently grandfather and grandson), meanwhile, composed books of *Eikones*, descriptions of paintings of mythical subjects, which a certain Kallistratos later imitated with his *Statuarum descriptiones*. Scholars once heatedly debated whether the artworks they described actually existed, but today these so-called *ekphraseis* (sing. *ekphrasis*) are accepted as literary exercises. Their tone is emotional as much as, if not more than, aesthetic, but they nonetheless provide valuable evidence as to diverse modes of ancient response to images. Later orators and writers, such as Dio Chrysostomos (especially *Or.* 12, treating Pheidias's Zeus Olympios) and Libanios, also developed lengthy descriptions of works of art, both actual and fictional, and the responses they evoked (or should evoke) in their viewers, who, like Pausanias, were poised between the Greek and the Roman worlds (Pollitt 1983: 213–227; Bryson 1994; Goldhill 1994; Elsner 1995, 1996, 2007a, 2007b; Dewender and Welt 2003; Bäbler and Nesselrath 2006; Costantini et al. 2006; Squire 2009; and on the genre of *ekphrasis*, Webb 2009).

14.7 Philosophers

From the Archaic period, philosophers, too, engaged with material culture, questioning the value of visual images largely on account of the easily blurred line between representations of people and things, and who or what was being represented. This problem would occupy thinkers for centuries – especially as works of art became more and more successful at imitating nature – and would be revived by early Christians attacking idolatry. Circa 500 BC, Herakleitos criticized Greeks who ‘talk to these *agalmata* of theirs as if one were to converse with houses, in ignorance of the nature of both gods and heroes’. Xenophanes of Kolophon noted the relativism of anthropomorphism: ‘The Ethiopians say that their gods are snub-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have blue eyes and red hair. But if oxen or horses or lions had hands and could draw and make things as men do, horses would make their gods like

horses, oxen like oxen, and they would draw their forms and mould their bodies just like the bodies they each have themselves’ (trans. Stewart 1990: 45, 134; Donohue 1997).

For Plato, the deception practiced by artists, representing in one material what exists in another (or in two dimensions what exists in three), was especially dangerous – even more so when we recall that for him what existed in three dimensions was but a pale reflection of a perfect form. Imitations, he argued, are necessarily inferior to the things they imitate, and pleasing representations pander to the senses, encouraging men to allow themselves to be deceived. Plato's rejection of imitation (*mimesis*) applied not just – or even principally – to the visual arts, but, regardless of the expert knowledge (*technē*) employed to produce them, to poetry, drama, and music as well (Webster 1952; Ringbom 1965; Pollitt 1974: 41–49; Demand 1975; Brumbaugh 1976; Keuls 1978; Brancacci 1995; Janaway 1995, 2009; Halliwell 2000, 2002; Kamtekar 2008).

For Xenophon and Aristotle, meanwhile, the ‘artist’ or craftsman was a kind of slave, serving others, working with his hands, getting dirty. The Greek muses personified intellectual arts: poetry, literature, music, and dance. There was no ancient muse of the visual arts: Hephaistos was lame (Burford 1972; Stewart 1990: 65–72; Tanner 1999; Lapatin 2007: 133–134). Individual artisans, nonetheless, are occasionally invoked positively in philosophical texts. Aristotle praises Polykleitos and Pheidias for mastery of their craft (*Eth. Nic.* 6.7.1–2; 1141a9–13). Xenophon reports that Socrates admired Zeuxis as well as Polykleitos, and in one of his dialogues Socrates discusses the creation of the most beautiful forms with the painter Parrhasios, the sculptor Kleiton (Polykleitos?), and the armorer Pistias. Here, painting is ranked most highly on account of its superior ability to represent visible beauty, character of the soul, and momentary feeling, though, as usual, some might disagree (Xen. *Mem.* 1.4.2; 3.10; Stewart 1990: 83).

For other authors, the skill necessary to create impressive works was of less interest than a kind of ‘spiritual intuition’ – which the Greeks came to call *phantasia* – through which the sublime qualities of the gods could be perceived by a visionary artist and the lives of men improved by his creations. The origins of such thoughts are ascribed to the ‘Middle Stoa’, a fusion of Platonic idealism, Aristotelian perceptualism, and Stoic psychology that occurred in the Hellenistic period (Pollitt 1974: 52–55; Stewart 1990: 20; Zagdoun 2000: 166–170, see also 31–34, 72–73; Tanner 2006: 283–287), and they were revived in the 2nd c. AD under the so-called ‘Second Sophistic’, when classicism of all kinds was extremely popular. Thus both Pheidias and Praxiteles were credited with journeying to Olympos and seeing the gods whom they so successfully represented.

14.8 Historians and Others

Numerous other authors also addressed the visual arts. Herodotos famously describes the dedications of the Lydian king Croesus at Delphi (1.50–52, 1.91.1; Parke 1984; Flower 1991; Vickers and Gill 1994: 45–46, 55–56); Thucydides challenges the standard explanation of the motivation of the Tyrannicides Harmodios and Aristogeiton (Figure 21.1) and provides a contemporary account of the finances of the Parthenon (6.56–59, 2.13); Diodoros writes about the early history of sculpture and Greece's debt to Egypt (Pollitt 1990: 12–15, 28). There is evidence, too, of more esoteric writings: Theopompos is recorded to have written a book on marvels (*Peri thaumasion*), including accounts of strangely active statues. *Automata*, which moved by themselves, were described and explained by Hero of Alexandria and others in the Hellenistic period (Donohue 1998–1999). Moreover, we have vivid descriptions of the magnificent funeral carriage of Alexander the Great (Diodoros 18.26.3–28.4; Pollitt 1990: 218–220) and the art-laden procession orchestrated by Ptolemy II Philadelphos, narrated by Kallixeinos of Rhodes (preserved in Ath. 5.197C–203B; Rice 1983); likewise the Egyptian king's extraordinary tent filled with works of art and other luxurious furnishings was also inventoried by Kallixeinos: it has been called the world's earliest temporary art exhibition (Ath. 5.196A–197C; Calandra 2008, 2009). Moving from large-scale public displays to more secret uses of material culture, ancient writers on magic, too, frequently invoke artifacts, for they were essential to their practice (e.g. Faraone 1992, 2001a).

14.9 Conclusion

The works of many other authors not mentioned above also contain useful information about ancient art, both 'facts' about production and attitudes about reception. Numerous classical texts can be mined (e.g. Stewart 1998) for information about the visual arts, but these texts do not always tell us what we might want to know (Small 2003). The texts – or their authors – are not without biases. Ancient writers were not objective observers and are often far from neutral. Ancient texts about Greek art, like the artworks themselves, were carefully constructed for specific aims and audiences. Thus they need to be seen in larger contexts: literary, cultural, and religious (Gordon 1979). And because the visual arts formed a significant element in the cultural landscape of ancient Greece and Rome, they themselves can help to illuminate texts, rather than merely vice versa.

FURTHER READING

Several modern anthologies of ancient texts on art provide convenient reference points: Pollitt (1983, 1990) treats all the arts, with passages in English translation, some commentary, and further bibliography. The earlier compilations of Junius (1694) (in English) and Overbeck (1868) (Latin and Greek) also remain useful. Stuart-Jones (1895) (Greek and Latin with English translation), Stewart (1990) (English with critical commentary), and Muller-Dufeu (2002) (Greek and Latin with French translation) address sculpture; for painting, see Reinach (1921) (Greek and Latin with French translation and commentary), Koch (2000) (German), and especially the relevant chapters of Robertson (1975). For Pliny and his sources, see especially Jex-Blake and Sellars (1896) (Latin with English translation and commentary) and the analysis of Isager (1991). Especially valuable overall is Pollitt (1974), which provides a clear and detailed examination of the different approaches of various authors and the particular meanings of specialized terms, but other approaches to the material, less strictly art-historical, such as those elucidated by Gordon (1979), should also be kept in mind. Tanner (2006), meanwhile, provides a dense and provocative view of ancient art history, drawing on modern sociological theory.

For scholarship addressing the writings of specific authors or literary genres, readers should consult the references in the relevant section of the essay above. These include text editions with introduction, translation, and commentary (e.g. Frazer 1896; Papahatzis 1974–1981 (in Greek); Musti et al. 1982 (Italian) on Pausanias), as well as monographic treatments, articles, and collections of essays (e.g. Habicht 1985; Elsner 1992; Arafat 1996; Alcock et al. 2001; Hutton 2005; Pretzler 2007 on the same author). Artists' signatures and dedicatory inscriptions are collected and analyzed by Löwy (1885), Raubitschek (1949), Marcadé (1953–1957), Jeffrey (1961), Schleiber (1979), Cohen (1991), Snodgrass (2000), Newby and Leader-Newby (2007), and Osborne (2010). Burford (1972) is indispensable for ancient building accounts. Linders (1975), Aleshire (1989), and Harris (1995) should be consulted for temple inventories. Early artists' treatises are best addressed by Pollitt (1995). For Roman sources and their biases, see especially Marvin (1989), Hardie (1993), Perry (2002, 2005), and Elsner (2007a).