Dimitris Plantzos

2 Greek Sculpture in the Roman Empire: The Literary Sources

Abstract: This chapter examines the reception of Greek sculpture by the intellectuals of the Roman Empire.

Keywords: Looting, collecting, copying, Pliny the Elder, Pausanias

Introduction

Greek art, sculpture and painting in particular, features prominently in the literature of the Romans. Although agendas may vary, as well as a source's degree of relevance, accuracy or plain reliability, modern scholarship has dwelt extensively on Greek and Latin texts of the Republican and the Imperial periods in order to construct a coherent history of Greek sculpture. The narrative thus created acts in parallel with the material record, though not always in complimentary fashion with it. As the viewpoint of those Roman accounts is demonstrably different from that of fifth-or fourth-century Greek authorities discussing their own culture, the study of Roman texts provides valuable insights into the afterlife of Greek sculpture. The aim of this chapter is to offer a summary account of the ways Roman intellectuals received Greek sculpture based on the written texts they left behind, as well as briefly to suggest the types of evidence modern scholars may find in them.

Looters and collectors

The written record paints quite a vivid picture of the ways in which Roman society was introduced to the wealth of images provided by Greek sculpture. Statues from Greece were being brought to Rome already in the Hellenistic period, in the form of plunder first and as collectors' items soon afterwards.[1] By the time of the Empire thousands of bronze and marble images of Greek gods and goddesses, heroes, athletes, and warriors had already been removed to Roman forums, sanctuaries and villas – not to mention copyists' workshops – in order to satisfy an initial sense of curiosity which soon developed into a new sort of collective taste: the love of things Greek. Cities in Magna Graecia were the first to provide Greek statuary to be paraded through

1 See Boardman 1994, 272–291.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9781614513537-002

the streets of Rome during the triumphant processions habitually awarded to victorious generals: we hear that when, in 209 B.C., the South Italian city of Tarentum was sacked by the Roman army in retaliation of that city's siding with Hannibal, a vast number of statues and paintings was carried off to Rome, 'almost as many as those taken from Syracuse' by general Marcellus in 211 B.C.[2] One of those statues, a colossal Heracles by Lysippus, was eventually dedicated by another general, Fabius Maximus, on the Capitoline.[3]

Macedon and Central Greece followed suit, as the Roman Senate was always quick to take advantage of the muddled politics of the Greek cities at the time and the grave strategic mistakes often made by their leadership. A three-day triumph was celebrated by general Titus Quinctius Flamininus in 194 B.C., including, as historian Titus Livy relates, the display of 'statues in bronze and marble' mostly taken from Macedon and King Philip V and, to a lesser extent, the cities in Greece.[4] Two hundred and eighty-five bronze statues, as well as two hundred and thirty marble ones are said by the same source to have been paraded through Rome by general Marcus Fulvius in 187 B.C., after his victorious siege of Ambracia in Western Greece.[5] Statues, as well as gold and silver plate, textiles and furniture had been removed from Seleucid Syria by Scipio in 189 B.C.,[6] and Plutarch recounts that when Aemilius Paullus celebrated his own triumph against Macedon in 167 B.C., a whole day was barely sufficient to display merely 'the statues, the paintings and the colossal figures, which were carried on two hundred and fifty chariots'.[7] One of the statues paraded by Aemilius Paullus was most likely the Athena by Phidias which, according to later sources, was dedicated by the general in the temple of Fortuna on the Palatine Hill.[8] Following Macedon's final surrender to Metellus in 148 B.C., the celebrated Granicus Monument, designed and executed by Lysippus, was taken from the Macedonian sanctuary of Dion to the Campus Martius in Rome where it stood thereafter as 'the chief ornament of the place'.[9] Two years later, the sack of Corinth by Mummius seems to have overwhelmed Rome and its elites with more Greek art than ever before.[10]

As Rome was being inundated with sculptures, paintings and any other sort of Greek art, a great number of artists from the captured lands found their way to Italy as well, be that as slaves or migrants in search of a better work environment.

2 Livy 27.16.17; see Pollitt 1986, 153–159 for a comprehensive discussion. Also Beard and Henderson 2001, 89–91.
3 Plin. *HN* 34.40; Strabo 6.278.
4 Livy 34.52.4.
5 Livy 39.5.15.
6 Plin. *HN* 33.149–150; Livy 37.59.35; 39.6.7.
7 Plut. *Aem.* 32.2. On painting in particular, see Plantzos 2018, 286–289.
8 Plin. *HN* 34.54.
9 Velleius Paterculus 1.11.2–5.
10 Strabo 6.381.

Some acquired fame and wealth in their new homeland, and seem to have worked for the launching of a new age in Hellenistic/Graeco-Roman aesthetics.[11] This new cultural ethos did not pass unnoticed nor was it spared the scorn and rage of the more conservative (or elderly) among the Roman ruling classes. Plutarch, for one, relates how the above mentioned Marcellus was blamed, back in the late third century B.C., because 'he filled the Roman people [...] with a taste for leisure and idle talk'.[12] Slightly later, in 195 B.C., Cato the Elder is reported by Livy to have argued that 'those statues brought from Syracuse' were enemies of Rome, themselves having captured the Romans rather than the other way round.[13] Although the criticism against the new fashion would persist for some time to come, the tide was impossible to subdue, and by the advent of the Empire Italian art had been transformed in its entirety.

Looting eventually led to collecting.[14] Greek art began to be seen as cultural capital, enhancing its owner's intellectual and social status and, when auctioned off, Greek statuary could fetch considerable sums. With time, sensibilities progressed, and tastes became more sophisticated. Whereas the crude Roman generals of the third and second centuries B.C. seemed impervious to the allure of Greek art,[15] a new generation of collectors-cum-connoisseurs was soon to arise. By the time of Cicero in the first century B.C., an international art market was in full swing, involving a host of agents, dealers, copyists and restorers catering for the emerging cultural and social elites and their newly acquired tastes. Cicero's letters to his dealers Atticus (68/67 B.C.) and Gallus (61 B.C.) are indicative of his passion for Greek sculpture as well as the uses he was reserving it for.[16] As Greek sites, such as the sanctuaries at Delphi, Olympia, and Athens, or whole islands such as Rhodes, were still being quarried for bronze and marble statues well into the first century A.D.,[17] it became necessary to bring some order into the chaos of subjects, makers, meanings and provenances so as to make sense of their significance as well as enhance their value. By the second century A.D., Greek sculpture had established itself as a fixture to the Roman *domus*: in Lucian's *Lover of Lies*, for example, Myron's Discus-thrower (Chapter 11, Fig. 14), Polyclitus'

11 See Chapter 19. Also: Squire 2009, esp. 202–238; 2011, 291–300; Pollitt 1986, 162–163.

12 Plut. *Marc.* 21.

13 Livy 34.4.2–3.

14 On Romans as collectors of Greek art, and sculpture in particular, see: Beard and Henderson 2001, 91–105; Mattusch 2005, esp. 353–359; Dillon 2000; Stewart 2008; Neudecker 1998; 1988; Bartman 1991; Pollitt 1986, 159–162; Dwyer 1982.

15 See, for example, Plin. *HN* 35.24 and Velleius Paterculus 1.13.4 on Mummius and his notorious 'lacking in culture'.

16 Squire 2012, 611–617; Pollitt 1986, 159–162.

17 Cf. the statement in Plin. *HN* 34.36 about '3000 statues still existing at Rhodes, and no smaller number believed still to exist at Athens, Olympia and Delphi' at some point in the mid-first century A.D.; the figure is sometimes inflated to a perhaps improbable 73,000 for each site (cf. Beard and Henderson 2001, 83).

Diadumenus (Chapter 11, Fig. 16; Chapter 20, Fig. 1), the Tyrannicides by Critius and Nesiotes (Chapter 11, Fig. 6) and a sculptural portrait by Demetrius,[18] all most likely copies, are mentioned among other works as forming the sculptural decoration of a single house belonging to a member of the upper class.[19] It seems that diversity in subject-matter, style and date, an eye for inscriptions, as well as a penchant for technical prowess, informed the tastes of Roman collectors of Greek sculpture in the first couple of centuries of our era.[20] Through a play with settings as well as a shift between old and new content which encouraged multiple meanings, Greek statues were used as signifiers of social status and intellectual superiority.

Pliny as an art historian

Gaius Plinius Secundus, today mostly known as Pliny the Elder, was a member of the equestrian order who combined his service as a commander at the Roman army and navy with his own interests in natural history.[21] He was born in around A.D. 23 and died in the month of August of the year 79, while observing the volcanic eruption of Vesuvius which devastated Pompeii and Herculaneum. Pliny was also a practitioner of law, a polymath, and a most prolific author; all his works – including the twenty volumes of his *History of the German Wars*, the six volumes of his manual on rhetoric, and his eight volumes on grammatical problems – are now lost, with the exception of the thirty-seven books of his *Natural History*. This is a massive proto-encyclopaedia relating knowledge accumulated through time, systematic scholarship, and the meticulous reading of previous authorities. The *Natural History*, which was in fact left unfinished, was dedicated to Titus, son and successor of the emperor Vespasian, a few months before Pliny's death. It is one of the most extensive Latin texts to have survived through the Middle Ages.

Pliny's task in the *Natural History* is to encompass knowledge of all things natural: he writes on cosmology, astronomy, meteorology, geology, geography, ethnography, anthropology, zoology, botany, agriculture, pharmacology, and mineralogy. Besides his own notes, gathered through his many years of army service across the Empire, Pliny in his preface claims to have used 2000 earlier works by 100 authors, though this number could be proved to be significantly higher.[22] Towards the end of the vast project, in books 33 to 37, Pliny discusses metals, minerals, rocks, stones and precious stones as well as their uses. As he saw fit to include bronze-sculpting in

18 On Demetrius, whose work is less known to us, see Keesling 2012.
19 Lucian *Philops*. 18.
20 See Bartman 1991.
21 See Lapatin 2012, 280–283; Pollitt 1990, 1–6. Also Tanner 2006, 235–246; Isager 1991.
22 Lapatin 2012, 281.

the discussion of metals, stone-carving in the discussion of stone, painting when talking about natural pigments and seal-cutting in his essay on precious stones, the author added long and detailed accounts of these crafts: his listings of artists, works, patrons, collectors and critics, as well as his reports from the art market of his time, set a pattern that to a certain extent is still followed today.

Although the relevant sections of the *Natural History* read like an art history of sorts, and have been treated as such by modern scholarship,[23] Pliny's intentions were far from art-historical; as a matter of fact he often makes it clear in his text that these sections are mere digressions from his stated purpose, to compile a universal natural encyclopaedia. Out of the '20,000 noteworthy facts' he claims to be dealing with in his project, only a small portion relate to what we today understand as 'art history'. His narrative is based on an evolutionist view of art, promoting artistic innovation, recognising an inherent urge towards naturalism, identifying individual and collective peaks, and admitting the inevitability of decline. There appears therefore to be a certain overlap with the topics pursued by many early modern and modern art historians, from Giorgio Vasari's 16th-century *Lives of the Artists* to Ernst Gombrich's 20th-century *Story of Art*. Pliny's account – including vast numbers of facts and figures which would otherwise remain unattested today – has been a great source of information for the study of classical sculpture; moreover, it has created an empirical paradigm which seems difficult to ignore.

One of Pliny's main concerns when discussing art in *Natural History* which would be familiar to most contemporary art historians is a certain fixation with origins.[24] He begins his account of bronze statuary by stating which was the first image of a god made of bronze to have been erected in Rome (a statue of Ceres dating from c. 485 B.C.).[25] Then he goes on to say that the first *portrait* statues officially erected at Athens were Antenor's Tyrannicides of 510/09 B.C.,[26] before discussing some more 'firsts', including the making of colossal figures, the erection of statues on pillars, and the dedication of memorial chariots. After several such digressions, the author offers his own periodization for the 'immeasurable multitude of artists [who] have been rendered famous by statues and figures of smaller size'.[27] It is thus deduced that Pliny's art history caters primarily for his contemporaries in Rome trying to make sense of the thousands of Greek statues decorating private and public spaces – as well as of those still in Greece awaiting transfer to the new metropolis. His narrative is solidly linear and fundamentally teleological: artists form a single line, seemingly enlisted

23 Cf. Tanner 2006, 235–236.

24 In many ways, art history's and archaeology's 'obsession with origins' has proved to be very much a modern concern: see recently González-Ruibal 2013, 10–15.

25 Plin. *HN* 34.15.

26 Plin. *HN* 34.17. See, however, Taylor 1991, 13–15, arguing for a slightly later date of the group, in 509–507 B.C.

27 Plin. *HN* 34.49.

to the same cause, and are judged as 'outstanding' or less so based on their success in achieving life-like imitation (*veritas*), a refined sense of proportion (*symmetria*), and a close attention to detail *(diligentia)*.[28] Thus, Phidias is thought to have been the pioneer of sculpture, revealing its potential and developing its technological apparatus; Polyclitus is said to have refined Phidias' accomplishments into perfection; Myron, who is somehow thought by Pliny to postdate the previous two, is credited with 'expanding the scope of realism' through the cultivation of rhythm and commensurability, only to be surpassed by Pythagoras of Rhegium who was able to render naturalistic details such as hair and veins; finally, it was Lysippus who outshone all others in view of his perfection of symmetry, attention to detail, realism, and sheer volume of works produced.

Pliny's account of Greek sculpture, therefore, consists of a linear narrative culminating in the achievement of lifelikeness in sculpture, with special reference however to what could be seen in Rome itself; the author meticulously records what is displayed where, who brought it there, and at what cost. Nevertheless, the story of Greek bronze-sculpting as it emerges from the *Natural History* seems to have been constructed much earlier, already in the early third century B.C., by authorities such as Xenocrates of Sicyon and Antigonus of Carystus, cited by Pliny as practicing artists, as well as authors of treatises dealing with the history of their own craft.[29] A certain bias towards Sicyon, for example, could be attributed to a somewhat self-promoting Xenocrates, who created an evolutionary classification of his *métier* leading, through a canon of five masters, to the ultimate triumph of the Sicyonian School with Lysippus, to whose artistic heritage Xenocrates counted himself. A similar narrative is presented also for painting, in book 35 of the *Natural History*, where Sicyon is credited with both the emergence (tentatively) of the craft and its culmination with Apelles in the later fourth century B.C. Such empirically constructed historical narratives, based on the succession of masters and disciples, or the historically significant line of leaders, followers, and their masterpieces, soon became standard practice when compiling a history of art, literature, or philosophical thinking. Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*, dating from the second century A.D., and St Jerome's *On Illustrious Men*, from the early fifth century A.D., are good examples of histories compiled on the basis of what could be described as a 'biographical approach'.[30]

When, early in book 34 of the *Natural History*, Pliny is listing chronologically all sculptors known to him, according to four-year intervals supplied by the Olympiads, he notes that, to his mind, the craft subsided (*cessavit deinde ars*) soon after the 121st Olympiad, thus sometime in the very beginning of the third century B.C., only to have

28 Plin. *HN* 34.54–65.

29 Pollitt 1990, 3–4.

30 See Jer. *De Vir. Ill.* 15.58 for discussions of stylistic coherence; cf. Philostr. *V S* 524.

a recovery of sorts just before 150 B.C.[31] True to his conviction that sculpture reached its peak with Lysippus, Pliny finds it difficult to credit any later sculptors with achievements greater than his; he does, however, comment favourably on particular works, mostly among those on display in Rome itself, like the Laocoön kept in the palace of Emperor Titus, which Pliny says 'was superior to any painting and any bronze';[32] its three authors – Hagesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus, all Rhodians – remained in relevant obscurity, however, as they had to share credit for a single task.

As promised in book 34, book 36 offers a more comprehensive account of sculpture as the representation of likeness (*similitudo*) – what the Greeks knew as *techne plastike*, 'plastic art' – since sculpture in marble was thought to be earlier than bronze-sculpting.[33] The approach remains biographical, to be sure, catering for Pliny's enthusiasm for the anecdote as well as the fable: from Phidias' relation with his pupil Agoracritus,[34] to the stories surrounding Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Cnidus[35] and the petty scandals created by Greek sculptors resident in Rome,[36] the *Natural History* offers a compendium of factual information, somewhat biased or arbitrary though valuable nonetheless, through which to make sense of a craft that was highly praised for centuries.

Pausanias as a cultural tourist

Pausanias was born in Asia Minor, most likely in the Lydian city of Magnesia ad Sipylum, some time in the early second century A.D. (ca. A.D. 110–115 according to the most convincing view).[37] By the time of his death, soon after A.D. 180 as all available evidence seems to suggest, he had completed a ten-volume *Tour of Greece*, a meticulous description of 'all things Greek' (*panta ta hellenika*).[38] What this entailed was in fact an autopsy of what at his time was already considered 'old Greece': Athens and Attica, the Peloponnese, and parts of the Greek mainland (Boeotia and Phocis), thus excluding Northern Greece and the islands, and his native Asia Minor. Although he is sometimes treated as 'a Greek pilgrim' who 'chose to travel in and write about *his own native land*',[39] Pausanias is best described as a *xenos*, a Hellenized Roman citizen

31 Plin. *HN* 34.52.
32 Plin. *HN* 36.37–38. On the three Rhodian sculptors of the Laocoön, see Chapter 4 n. 13 and Chapter 19 n. 126.
33 Plin. *HN* 34.35.
34 Plin. *HN* 34.17.
35 Plin. *HN* 34.20–21.
36 E.g., Plin. *HN* 34.34. On Greek sculptors in Rome, see Chapter 19.
37 Bowie 2001.
38 Paus. 1.26.4.
39 Elsner 1992, 7 (emphasis in the original); such characterizations seem to persist, despite the disapproval of more recent scholarship.

who, as 'an interested outsider', seeks to explore and comprehend the Greek past as it could be seen surviving through its material traces.[40] He is chiefly interested in cities and their sanctuaries, the art and architecture they contain, religious practices and the establishments where they are hosted; in short, he is mostly after cultural expressions of collective identity, and this inevitably informs his focus on antiquities and their significance, as they construct sites of communal memory.[41]

Pausanias modelled his discourse on the example of Herodotus and the *periegetic* tradition at large (from Hecataeus in the sixth century B.C. to Polemon of Ilium in the second).[42] He successfully emulates, albeit often diverging from it, the Herodotan paradigm of presenting local mythology and history through the discussion of monuments as well as his systematic use and citation of earlier, often conflicting, sources. Based on methodical autopsy, Pausanias displays a deep interest in all artistic expression – architecture, sculpture, painting, as well as art less monumental – while at the same time exploring its cultural and social context. Convinced that the past informs the present, Pausanias tours Greece as a cultural landscape in an effort to explain historical monuments; thus he is mostly indifferent to contemporary art or architecture, which he presumes to be known to all. Next to his literary sources, which he discusses, often comparatively, for the benefit of his readers, Pausanias relies significantly on the assistance of local *exegetai* ('expounders'), who provide him with information on local traditions, sites and monuments – resident antiquarians of sorts who seem to have supplied valuable insights.[43] As with Pliny, Pausanias' discourse strikes a resonant chord with modern archaeologists and historians of classical art: not only are his accounts based on autopsy, but he also tries to be critical of his sources, written or oral; more to the point, Pausanias employs a comparative method in his discussion of buildings and artefacts, based on their technique, material or style.[44] Thus, he is able to claim that 'a wooden effigy of great size seated on a throne [...] wearing a *polos* on its head' he saw in the temple of Athena Polias at Erythrae should be attributed to the Athenian sculptor Endoios, based on 'the quality of its workmanship' as well as its similarity with other sculptures, presumably inscribed, standing in the vicinity;[45] or to suggest that two statues of Apollo – a bronze one at Didyma in Asia Minor and one at Thebes made of cedar-wood – may be attributed to the same master, Canachus of

40 Lapatin 2012, 282. On Pausanias' project, its historical and cultural dimensions and its affinities with the Second Sophistic, see chiefly: Habicht 1985; Elsner 1992; Arafat 1996; Bingen 1996; Alcock, Cherry and Elsner 2001; Hutton 2005; Pretzler 2007.

41 See Arafat 1996, 8–12; Also, generally, Alcock 1996; Alcock 2002, 1–35. On Pausanias and the Greek rural landscape: Snodgrass 1987, 67–92.

42 See chiefly Bowie 2001, 25–27; Arafat 1996, 16–24.

43 See Jones 2001.

44 Lapatin 2012, 282–283.

45 Paus. 7.5.9. See Pollitt 1990, 20.

Sicyon, by merely looking at them, a task that requires 'no great skill' (*sophia*), owing to the two statues' similarities.[46]

Pausanias' main concern was with the past as an agent shaping the present. His scope, therefore, as well as his methodology, are fundamentally historical. In studying the past through its material remains he tries to introduce historical taxonomies to the art he is shown while touring Greece. As with Pliny, Pausanias is also interested in origins and evidently impressed by a piece's antiquity. He accepts wooden effigies (*xoana*) of gods and men as the earliest in Greek sculpture,[47] and acknowledges the mythical Daedalus as their inventor (in which case he refers to them as '*daedala*').[48] Although mostly concerned with authorship and subject-matter, Pausanias often produces stylistic comparisons. Besides being used as a tell-tale sign of authorship, as in the examples cited above, style in his discourse may serve as a tool for chronology: simplicity and crudity, for example, are thought to indicate a statue's antiquity.[49] Similarly, the image (*andrias*) of Arrhachion the pankratiast in the assembly-place in Phigalia in the Peloponnese – a statue described by Pausanias as a 'likeness' (*eikon*), though surely not a portrait in the modern sense of the term – is considered *archaion* in every respect and not the least of all in its shape (*schema*): Pausanias' description ('the feet are close together, and the arms hang down by the side as far as the hips')[50] seems to refer to what modern scholarship would understand as a *kouros*. As a general rule, the most ancient (*ta malista archaia*) among the statues he sees are rather rudimentary in their technique (*hapla*): an 'old' (*archaion* or *palaion*) or 'most old' (*archaiotaton* or *palaiotaton*) statue (say pre-fifth century B.C.) is generally considered to be 'coarser in style' (*argoteron ten technen*).[51] The history of sculpture, in other words, may be read as a copious process towards sophistication, and Pausanias feels obliged to credit each great achievement to its inventor, as in the case of the Samians Rhoecus and Theodorus who were 'the first men to melt bronze and to cast images'[52] or Callimachus who is (dubiously) credited with being 'the first sculptor to drill holes through stones'.[53]

Pausanias is never quite forthcoming with personal remarks or value judgments, besides pointing out that a certain work might be 'worth seeing' (*theas axion*).[54] A statue of Pandion on the Athenian Acropolis, a number of statues of Asclepius in

46 Paus. 9.10.2. See Pollitt 1990, 20; Strocka 2002; Lapatin 2012, 282–283.
47 See Arafat 1996, 53–57 (with bibliography).
48 Paus. 9.3.2; see also 9.40.3.
49 E.g., Paus. 5.17.1.
50 Paus. 8.40.1.
51 Paus. 10.38.7. Cf. Arafat 1996, 47–50.
52 Paus. 8.14.8.
53 Paus. 1.26.7.
54 Cf. Pollitt 1974, 10.

Messene, and a bronze statue of Athena in the town of Alipheira at Arcadia[55] are among the sculptures that are designated by Pausanias as 'worth seeing', in a list that also includes temples, sanctuaries and theatres. The concept of *Theoria* – the act of looking at sanctuaries and the art that decorates them combined with intellectual inquiry[56] – has rightly been used to enrich our understanding of Pausanias' agenda, one that certainly transcended any modern notions of 'sight-seeing', including what we today understand as cultural or even religious tourism. His *periegesis* is in many ways a quest for signs of a shared cultural identity which seems, in his mind, to be evident in the very materiality of the statues he describes. Hence, major focal points of Greek religion such as the two chryselephantine statues by Phidias, in Athens (Chapter 12, Fig. 4) and Olympia respectively,[57] are described in terms of their technique and iconography as if by someone who comprehends their fundamental significance as cultural landmarks rather than mere'sites' worth seeing. As such, his project is well situated within the cultural climate of his own times, and more particularly the intellectual milieu of the Second Sophistic.[58]

Theoria is also performed by Pausanias as he navigates through sanctuaries replete with statuary. He makes a point of describing the statues that fit in what to his mind is any particular sanctuary's main significance: thus, he dwells on effigies of athletes when at Olympia, but omits them when visiting Delphi, where he is more concerned with oracles and divination.[59] The configuration of statues within sanctuaries is also important to him: aiming to facilitate the potential visitor's route (a trait that for many modern commentators makes Pausanias' text read like an ancient *Baedeker* of sorts), the description of the statues' actual settings or relation to one another helps evoke the aura of a classical site of worship – and collective identity-forging.

Thinkers and critics

Greek art of the fifth and fourth centuries BC was thought by Roman intellectuals to hold eternal value, in the sense that it did not merely make a statement about the past; it was considered, alongside Greek literature, to be particularly significant for the present. The very term *classicus* ('classical') – originally referring to what could only be a privilege for the propertied gentlemen of the highest class – was by the second

55 Respectively: Paus. 1.5.4; 4.31.10; 8.26.7

56 See Rutherford 2001.

57 Athena Parthenos: Paus. 1.24.5–7; Olympian Zeus: Paus. 5.11.1–11. See also Chapter 12. On Pausanias' efforts to 'see' cult statues in various parts of Greece, see Tanner 2006, 45–46 and Rutherford 2001, 42–43.

58 See Rutherford 2001, 49–50.

59 See Paus. 10.9.2; cf. Arafat 1996, 43–45.

century A.D. associated with what we understand, read and teach as *classics* to the present day.[60] Classical art, in particular, was seen by many authorities to combine the ephemeral with the timeless: a most telling passage may be found in Plutarch's *Life of Pericles*, where Phidias and Pericles' works on the Athenian Acropolis are said to have been 'created in a short time for all time'.[61] Presumably echoing contemporary views on the subject, Plutarch goes on to state that the Acropolis monuments were 'at once antique' upon their creation, whereas even to his day they seemed 'recent and newly wrought'. In this sense, Greek art and culture were seen to exercise an authoritative hold on the present.

For many Roman thinkers, from the Republic to the Late Roman Empire, Greek sculpture, besides its aesthetic appeal or rather because of it, served as a vehicle for the conceptualisation of the human condition. One such authority was Quintilian (Marcus Fabius Quintilianus), a well-known rhetorician of the first century A.D., who turned to Greek sculpture and painting in order to produce stylistic comparisons between art and rhetoric.[62] His account of sculpture, however, seems to depart from the narrative suggested by Xenocrates and put to such good use by Pliny.[63] Whereas Quintilian accepts the supremacy of the Sicyonian School for painting, he maintains that, in sculpture, Phidias (and Alcamenes) were superior to Polyclitus, and thus Athens reigned supreme. For Quintilian, Phidias excelled in the making of effigies of gods rather than men; as a matter of fact, he adds, Phidias' chryselephantine statue of Zeus at Olympia 'seems to have added something to traditional religion'.[64] Greek orator Dio Chrysostom expanded on this kind of praise in an oration delivered in AD 97.[65] According to Dio, Phidias is the 'best and noblest of artists', who has managed to create 'a sweet and engaging sight, an inescapable delight for the eyes'; even the bulls led to the altar, he adds, 'would willingly submit to those who prepare them for sacrifice, if they could do it as a favour to the god.' Phidias' contacts with the divine were being discussed already in the first century B.C., when Cicero had one of the characters in his dialogue *On the Orator* claiming that Phidias (as well as his fourth-century colleague Praxiteles) 'first went up to heaven and made copies of the forms of the gods and then represented them by art'.[66] What these statements suggest, besides the irresistible appeal of Phidian craftsmanship so many centuries

60 The second-century A.D. author Aulus Gellius attributes in his *Noctes Atticae* the use of the term *classicus* to his roughly contemporary orator, and personal friend to Marcus Aurelius, M. Cornelius Fronto (Gell. *NA* 19.8.15) with reference to earlier texts suitable for the members of the highest class, and therefore designated as 'first class' themselves. See Schein 2011, 76–78.
61 Plut. *Per.* 13. See also Chapter 12.
62 Pollitt 1990, 5–6.
63 Quint. *Inst*. 12.10.1–10.
64 Quint. *Inst*. 12.10.10.
65 Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.50–2.
66 Cic. *De Or.* 2.9.

after its execution, is the intensive theoretical work on Greek sculpture and Greek art in general produced by Late Hellenistic and Roman scholarship. According to those thinkers, Greek sculpture's commitment to the imitation of the real world (which the Greeks theorised as *mimesis*, a term loosely translated in Latin as *imitatio* or *aemulatio*),[67] far from being a mere trick of their trade, provided their public with a means to enrich their own life and ideas. Phidias' cultural intuition (*phantasia*),[68] for example, is used by Roman philosophers as an arch-paradigm of how to negotiate divinity.[69]

The literary genre that most aptly encapsulates the paradigmatic value Greek art held for the Romans is that of the *ekphrasis*. Usually described as extended and detailed literary expositions on real or imaginary artworks, as well as of 'faces and objects and places and ages and many other things',[70] the *ekphraseis* are rhetorical exercises on style as well as content aiming at enlivening the meaning of a particular object or monument for the sake of an educated audience.[71] Drawing from a tradition going back to Homer and Plato, the *ekphrasis* was constituted as a genre proper after its use by first-century B.C. poets such as Catullus and Virgil, and the systematic attention it received from the rhetoricians active within the Second Sophistic cultural movement, such as Hermogenes of Tarsus (second century A.D.) and Aphthonius of Antioch (third or fourth century A.D.).[72] The piece on Phidias' Olympian Zeus by Dio Chrysostom quoted above belongs to this category. Several authors of the Imperial period compiled collections of *ekphraseis*, presumably of imaginary works, though mostly of paintings.[73] Even so, many references to actual Greek statues – or their copies – may be found in such works, as for example Lucian's persistent references to the statue of Aphrodite of Cnidus by Praxiteles.[74] A later work, illustrating both the breadth and the limitations of the genre, is the *Descriptions*, a short compilation of fourteen *ekphraseis* of marble and bronze statues, by an otherwise unknown sophist named Callistratus (third or fourth century A.D.). Dry, affected, and rather derivative, Callistratus' work is for the most part interested in rhetoric rather than sculpture; still, his florid descriptions of a 'Bacchant by Scopas', an 'Eros by Praxiteles', or the 'Statue of Narcissus' in their actual settings (which the sophist very likely never saw) suggest that the quest for naturalism had by his time become the virtue Roman audiences had come stereotypically to appreciate in Greek sculpture.

67 See, in general, Perry 2005.

68 Pollitt 1974, 52–55; 203–205; 293–297; Pollitt 1990, 5–6; 221–224; Zagdoun 2000, 31–34; 72–73; 166–170; Tanner 2006, 283–287.

69 Squire 2011, 167–174.

70 Hermog. *Prog*. 10. Cf. Dion. Hal. *Rhet*. 10.17; Lucian, *Hist. Conscr.* 20.

71 See chiefly Webb 2009; Heffernan 1993. For further analysis, see Squire 2009, 139–146; 231–247.

72 See Hermog. *Prog*. 10 and Apth. *Prog.* 12 respectively.

73 See, chiefly, the two sets of *Imagines* by Philostratus the Elder and his grandson Philostratus the Younger respectively; cf. Elsner 2007, 7; 31–32; 67–68; 138–146; 149–150; Elsner 1995, 24–28.

74 Cf. Lucian, *Imagines* 1–10 (with further references to Phidias and his Athena Lemnia; Alcamenes and his Aphrodite in the Gardens, and so on); *Amores* 13–14.

Conclusion

Greek sculpture was received by the Romans as a quintessential expression of what they came to recognize as their own classical tradition. The bodies of those Greek men and gods, cast in metal, carved in stone or – most commonly – mechanically replicated from antique originals, provided to the Roman elites much more than sophisticated decoration for their sanctuaries, forums, city dwellings and country mansions; besides their use as inherent ingredients of a newly emerging cultural identity – whereby Greek sculpture was promoted as tangible proof of Rome's intellectual genealogy – the statues of the Greeks, as well as their copies, imitations, variants, and re-worked versions, stood as models of humanity which proved essential to Roman thought and ideology. The rehabilitation of Greek art as a *bona fide*, and thoroughly renewed, idiom was a process that left a distinctive trace on much of the writing of the Late Republican and Early Imperial periods; later authorities had a lot to add on the uses of this art, sculpture in particular, by a people entirely different to the Greeks. When studying those valuable texts, therefore, we need to be constantly reminded, as John Boardman warns, that some of those 'writers and artists, or patrons of art, could turn the Greek idiom to totally new purposes which served a type of state quite unknown to the Greek world'.[75] In many ways, and quite inevitably, we are obliged to study Greek sculpture in its Roman translation. The authorities reviewed in this chapter, such as Pliny and Pausanias, Cicero, Quintilian, or the philosophers of the Late Empire, face their own problems of familiarisation, comprehension, and eventual translation. In a sense, it is their contribution, alongside the systematic looting, copying, and dealing with Greek statues practised by their fellow Romans, that re-invented Greek sculpture as the paradigm of Western art, turning it from merely 'Greek' to 'classical'.

Bibliography

Alcock, S.E. 1996 *Graecia Capta. The Landscapes of Roman Greece*. Cambridge.
Alcock, S.E. 2002 *Archaeologies of the Greek Past. Landscape, Monuments and Memories (W.B. Stanford Lectures)*. Cambridge.
Alcock, S.E., Cherry, J.F. and Elsner, J. (eds.) 2001 *Pausanias. Travel and Memory in Roman Greece*. Oxford.
Arafat, K.W. 1996 *Pausanias' Greece. Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers*. Cambridge.
Bartman, E. 1991 "Sculptural collecting and display in the private realm," in E.K. Gazda (ed.), *Roman Art in the Private* Sphere. *New Perspectives on the Architecture and Décor of the Domus, Villa and Insula*, 71–88. Ann Arbor.
Beard, M. and Henderson, J. 2001 *Classical Art. From Greece to Rome*. Oxford.

75 Boardman 1994, 291.

Bingen, J. (ed.) 1996 *Pausanias Historien. Huit exposés suivis de discussions, Vandoeuvres-Genève, 15–19 août 1994*. Geneva.
Boardman, J. 1994 *The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity*. London and New York.
Bowie, E. 2001 "Inspiration and aspiration. Date, genre, and readership," in Alcock, Cherry and Elsner 2001, 21–32.
Dillon, S. 2000 "Subject selection and viewer reception of Greek portraits from Herculaneum and Tivoli," *JRA* 13, 21–40.
Dwyer, E.J. 1982 *Pompeian Domestic Sculpture*. Rome.
Elsner, J. 1992 "Pausanias: a Greek pilgrim in the Roman world," *Past & Present* 135 (1), 3–29.
Elsner, J. 1995 *Art and the Roman Viewer. The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*. Cambridge.
Elsner, J. 2007 *Roman Eyes. Visuality and Subjectivity in Art and Text*. Princeton.
González-Ruibal, A. 2013 "Reclaiming Archaeology," in A. González-Ruibal (ed.), *Reclaiming Archaeology: Beyond the Tropes of Modernity*. Oxford.
Habicht, C. 1985 *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece*. Berkeley and Los Angeles.
Hardwick, L. and Stray, C. (eds.) 2011 *A Companion to Classical Receptions*. Malden and Oxford.
Heffernan, J.A.W. 1993 *The Museum of Words. The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery*. Chicago and London.
Hutton, W. 2005. *Describing Greece. Landscape and Literature in the Periegesis of Pausanias*. Cambridge.
Isager, J. 1991 *Pliny on Art and Society. The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art*. London and New York.
Jones, C.P. 2001 "Pausanias and his guides," in Alcock, Cherry and Elsner 2001, 33–39.
Keesling, C.M. 2012 "Syeris, Diakonos of the Priestess Lysimache on the Athenian Acropolis (*IG* II^2 3464)," *Hesperia* 81, 467–505.
Lapatin, K. 2012 "Ancient writers on art," in T.J. Smith and D. Plantzos (eds.), *A Companion to Greek Art*, vol. i, 273–290. Malden and Oxford.
Mattusch, C.C. 2005 *The Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum. Life and Afterlife of a Sculpture Collection*. Los Angeles.
Neudecker, R. 1988 *Die Skulpturenausstattung römischer Villen in Italien*. Mainz.
Neudecker, R. 1998 "The Roman villa as a locus for art collections," in A. Frazer (ed.), *The Roman Villa: Villa Urbana*, 77–91. Philadelphia.
Perry, E. 2005. *The Aesthetics of Emulation in the Visual Arts of Ancient Rome*. Cambridge.
Plantzos, D. 2018. *The Art of Painting in Ancient Greece*. Athens and Atlanta.
Pollitt, J.J. 1974 *The Ancient View of Greek Art. Criticism, History and Terminology*. New Haven and London.
Pollitt, J.J. 1986 *Art in the Hellenistic Age*. Cambridge.
Pollitt, J.J. 1990 *The Art of Ancient Greece. Sources and Documents*.^{2} Cambridge.
Pretzler, M. 2007 *Pausanias. Travel Writing in Ancient Greece*. London.
Rutherford, I. 2001 "Tourism and the sacred: Pausanias and the traditions of Greek pilgrimage," in Alcock, Cherry and Elsner 2001, 40–52.
Schein, S.L. 2011 " 'Our debt to Greece and Rome': Canon, class and ideology," in Hardwick and Stray 2011, 75–85.
Snodgrass, A.M. 1987 *An Archaeology of Greece. The Present State and Future Scope of a Discipline*. Berkeley and Los Angeles.
Squire, M. 2009 *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*. Cambridge.
Squire, M. 2011 *The Iliad in a Nutshell. Visualizing Epic on the Tabulae Iliacae*. Oxford.
Squire, M. 2012 "Greek art through Roman eyes," in T.J. Smith and D. Plantzos (eds.), *A Companion to Greek Art*, vol. ii, 599–620. Malden and Oxford.
Stewart, P. 2008. *Statues in Roman Society. Representation and Response*. Oxford.

Strocka, V.M. 2002 "Der Apollon des Kanachos in Didyma und der Beginn des Strengen Stils," *JdI* 117, 81–125.
Tanner, J. 2006 *The Invention of Art History in Ancient Greece. Religion, Society and Artistic Rationalisation*. Cambridge.
Taylor, M.W. 1991 *The Tyrant Slayers. The Heroic Image in Fifth Century B.C. Athenian Art and Politics*. Salem, MA.
Webb, R. 2009 *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*. Farnham and Burlington.
Zagdoun, M.-A. 2000 *La philosophie stoïcienne de l'art*. Paris.