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## PAUSANIAS AND ORAL TRADITION\*

λέγω δὲ οὐκ ἐς συγγραφὴν πρότερον ἦκοντα, πιστὰ δὲ ἄλλως Ἀθηναίων τοῖς πολλοῖς.  
(Paus. 1.23.2)

What I am about to say has never been written down before, but it is generally believed by the Athenian people.

This is Pausanias' announcement before he launches into a story about a hitherto unknown aspect of the assassination of Hipparchus and of Hippias' subsequent rule of terror. Nowhere else is Pausanias so explicit about his use of local, oral tradition. At this point he is still at the beginning of his *Periegesis*, halfway through the first book, which features a number of programmatic statements about his aims and methods.<sup>1</sup> In this context every statement about the construction of the text has a special significance.<sup>2</sup> Pausanias is clearly aware of the fact that oral tradition is a different kind of source materials, and he sees the local story as a valuable addition to his literary sources. The passage also conveys a sense of the momentousness of writing down this information for the first time, the point when oral tradition enters literature.

I contend that this passage, though unique in the *Periegesis*, represents one of Pausanias' special interests, and one he did indeed have reason to be proud of, namely his attention to local, oral tradition. This aspect of Pausanias' work has hitherto been largely neglected. Scholars who use the *Periegesis* roughly fall into two groups: some seem to take it for granted that what Pausanias tells us is local, oral tradition without exploring the nature of this source material further, while others focus on searching for any literary sources used in the *Periegesis*.<sup>3</sup> In this paper I investigate the cultural conditions that made collecting oral tradition an attractive project because a researcher and author could expect to find both co-operative informants and an interested readership. This is followed by an analysis of how oral tradition appears in the *Periegesis*, and finally I consider the implications of Pausanias' handling of oral tradition for our use and understanding of his work.

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<sup>1</sup> Paus. 1.39.3, 1.26.4, 1.6.1.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Elsner, 'Structuring Greece: Pausanias' *Periegesis* as a literary construct', in S. E. Alcock, J. Cherry, and J. Elsner (edd.), *Pausanias: Travel and Imagination in Roman Greece* (Oxford, 2001), 3–20, esp. 3–8, on the structuring of Pausanias work.

<sup>3</sup> See P. Veyne, *Did the Greeks Believe in their Myths?* (Chicago and London, 1988), 5 (oral tradition and local books), 17, 46, 76, 99–100 (focus on literary sources alone). Other examples: D. Musti (ed.), *Pausania: guida della Grecia*, 1. *L'Attica* (Rome, 1982); xxxii; E. Meyer (ed.), *Pausanias: Beschreibung Griechenlands* (Zurich, 1954), 36–8; see also C. Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1985), 101; K.W. Arafat, *Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers* (Cambridge, 1996), 19.

## THE BACKGROUND: SECOND SOPHISTIC CULTURE AND INTELLECTUAL PEER COMPETITION

Pausanias came from Asia Minor, possibly from Magnesia on Sipylus, and he was no doubt a member of the wealthy, educated élite of his city.<sup>4</sup> In literary and cultural terms he lived in the heyday of the Second Sophistic. This label applies to the time and individuals covered by Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*, but it stands for a much wider phenomenon that characterizes élite culture in the entire Greek east of the Roman Empire. This culture was based on educational ideals that valued an intimate knowledge of a canon of classical texts.<sup>5</sup> Pausanias writes for a readership familiar with a wide range of classical Greek literature and he expects them to have a general knowledge of Greek culture and tradition.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, the passage quoted at the beginning needs this context in order to be fully understood, because the story of Harmodius and Aristogiton was so well known to Pausanias' readers. As early as the fifth century both Herodotus and Thucydides found it necessary to criticize the rich tradition surrounding the story of the tyrannicides. Even then the event was already a matter of legend and song, and, in spite of the rather dubious circumstances, it became a celebrated example for political theory.<sup>7</sup> Pausanias' discovery of a new aspect of the story could therefore be presented as an achievement that his educated peers would appreciate.

Pausanias' interest in oral tradition can be seen in the context of the intellectual competition that was part of Second Sophistic culture. Public life offered various opportunities to use one's more or less flawless Attic, to drop elegant references to ancient texts into the conversation, or to show off one's knowledge of impressive trivia.<sup>8</sup> Wealthy men with the ability, leisure, and interest pursued intellectual activities such as collecting rare literary texts and out-of-the-way information.<sup>9</sup> Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistai* (sophists at dinner), though exaggerated, shows this kind of knowledge in action at a fictitious dinner party where the guests compete in presenting the most witty and educated comments and literary quotes on various aspects of dining.<sup>10</sup>

Unknown details in a familiar setting, namely connections to the Greek literary tradition, were especially welcome as part of a good party piece, and a proof of intellectual prowess. If the *Periegesis* is anything to go by, an inquisitive traveller in mainland Greece could collect a wealth of such scarcely accessible but reassuringly Greek information which might interest educated readers anywhere in the Roman Empire, but especially in the Greek cities of the east. Pausanias' research in Greece was perhaps eccentric in its thoroughness and attention to detail, but much of the

<sup>4</sup> Habicht (n. 3), 13–15; Meyer (n. 3), 15; O. Regenbogen, 'Pausanias', *RE* suppl. VIII (1956), 1008–97, at 1012–13; W. Gurlitt, *Über Pausanias* (Graz, 1890), 56–7, 130.

<sup>5</sup> See Dio Chrys. *Or.* 18.6–17: basic reading list for a Greek education (absolute minimum). Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 1.8.1–12, 10.1.46–131; T. Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge, 1998), 94–100.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. 2.30.4 (literature), 2.21.7, 8.42.1 (tradition).

<sup>7</sup> Hdt 5.55–65, 6.123; Thuc. 1.20, 6.55–9; [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 28. Symposium songs: *Ath.* 15, 695A–B. Political example: Arr. *Anab.* 4.10.3–4; Dem. 19.280, 21.170. Tyrannicide statues: Paus. 1.8.5.

<sup>8</sup> See S. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire* (Oxford, 1996), 27–56; G. Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius: Apuleius and the Second Sophistic* (Leiden, New York and Cologne, 1997), 73–88. Lucian *Rhet. Praec.* 15–22. On language issues, see Lucian, *Pro lapsu*.

<sup>9</sup> 'Bibliomania': Sandy (n. 8), 43, 60–2; Gell. *NA* 9.4.1–5, cf. preface 12; see also Lucian's *Adversus indoctum*.

<sup>10</sup> See also Plutarch's collection of subjects for dinner conversation, *Quaest. Conv.* (*Mor* 612C–748E).

material presented in the *Periegesis* responds to the educated peer competition that must have been part of Pausanias' life.<sup>11</sup> This does not mean, however, that it is just a compilation of intriguing details, perhaps an interestingly presented representative of the *varia historia* genre.<sup>12</sup> Pausanias' encounter with the sites, monuments, and histories of Greece had a meaning beyond the presentation of interesting new information because it was an exploration of Greek cultural identity.<sup>13</sup>

## LOCAL HISTORY AS CRUCIAL CULTURAL ACTIVITY

While the *Periegesis* covers a wide range of topics that might have attracted the interest of educated readers,<sup>14</sup> local myth and history clearly have pride of place in Pausanias' work. This is perhaps not surprising in a cultural travel book that deals extensively with historical sites, but history, and local tradition in particular, was a general preoccupation of Pausanias' contemporaries. The past was a matter of pride for the Greeks, who had now lost their political independence. When a visiting sophist praised a city in his rhetorical performances, he would not forget to refer to historical highlights, beginning with the mythical foundation by a distinguished hero.<sup>15</sup> Embassies sent out by cities would attempt to impress other Greek cities or the imperial authorities with accounts of the great history that made their own community particularly worthy of special attention, and they could expect the opposite party to be duly impressed.<sup>16</sup>

Local history, which included what we would define as myth, served as a common idiom in the interaction between communities, an idiom that both Pausanias' informants and his readers would have understood. Relationships between founding heroes and mythical kings, memories of crucial alliances in past wars, or links defined by cults and supraregional sanctuaries formed a complex network. Pausanias documents such connections and he uses them as a political, cultural, historical, and chronological framework for the *Periegesis*, a mode of structuring history and historical geography that his contemporaries would have found familiar.<sup>17</sup> By the Roman imperial period some of these relationships were centuries old and had a long history of being honoured by the cities involved, while others were still being developed by projecting new connections into the distant past.<sup>18</sup> A whole supraregional

<sup>11</sup> See Paus. 1.29.2, 9.30.3, 10.24.3; cf. 1.29.2, perhaps also 8.37.6. (explicit references to Pausanias' scholarly expertise).

<sup>12</sup> e.g. Ael. *VH* and *NA*. Pausanias' *Periegesis* as *varia historia*: C. Robert, *Pausanias als Schriftsteller* (Berlin, 1909), 6, 8, 110; A. Kalkmann, *Pausanias der Perieget: Untersuchungen über seine Schriftstellerei und seine Quellen* (Berlin, 1886), 271–82; G. Pasquali, 'Die schriftstellerische Form des Pausanias', *Hermes* 48 (1913), 161–223, at 161, 193–6. Against their argument: Habicht (n. 3), esp. 28–94, 141–51; J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias's Description of Greece* (London, 1898), 1.lxxvii–xcvi.

<sup>13</sup> M. Pretzler, 'Turning travel into text: Pausanias at work', *G&R* 51 (2004), 1–18, at 18.

<sup>14</sup> e.g. 'scientific' topics such as plants: 1.35.4, 8.12.1; animals: 2.28.1, 3.25.7, 5.5.2, 5.5.7, 8.4.7, 8.10.9, 8.16.2, 8.17.3, 8.21.2, 10.29.2, 10.36.1–2; rivers: 5.7.1, 7.22.11, 8.18.1–6, 8.22.3, 8.44.3–4, 8.54.1–3; springs: 1.38.1, 4.30.2, 8.19.2–3; lakes: 2.37.5–6, 3.21.5; other phenomena: 1.44.6, 2.24.3, 3.21.4, 5.12.1–3, 5.12.7, 7.24.7–13. Outside Greece: 1.42.5, 4.34.1–3, 5.7.4–5, 5.14.3, 6.6.4, 6.26.6, 9.21.1–6, 9.31.1, 10.13.1–3.

<sup>15</sup> See Dio Chrys. *Or.* 33.1 (describing the stereotypical praise of a city) *Men. Rhet.* 1.2 pp. 353.4–359.10 Spengel.

<sup>16</sup> P. A. Stadter, *Arrian of Nicomedia* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1980), 153; Swain (n. 8), 69; e.g. *Aristid. Or.* 19, 23.

<sup>17</sup> Pretzler (n. 13), 13–15.

<sup>18</sup> O. Curty, *Les Parentés légendaires entre cités grecques* (Geneva, 1995).

organization, namely Hadrian's Panhellenion, was based on such principles.<sup>19</sup> No wonder that cities were keen on historical research, or fiction posing as research. For example, an inscription from Argos honours an Antiochus of Aegeae in Cilicia for establishing an ancient relationship between Argos and his native city.<sup>20</sup>

In the Greek east of the Roman Empire local history was recognized, and used, by communities and their élites as a versatile asset in dealing with present problems. Historical 'research' carried out to improve this commodity included the re-creation, embellishment, and invention of historical tradition, and would often be conducted with widely known Greek traditions in mind. For example, the *Iliad* and the stories of Heracles offered many opportunities for local additions. This process was already well under way in the classical period, and it can be seen in the political arguments of cities as reported in the historical sources as well as in their choices of monuments, for example at Delphi.<sup>21</sup> As a Greek literary canon developed, local traditions increasingly focused on the texts that were most widely read. For example, Pausanias records that in Tegea different monuments were linked to contradictory variants of the story of Telephus, probably evidence for an adaptation of local stories to new storylines created for Attic drama which were soon more widely known than the local version.<sup>22</sup>

For local communities such links with generally known texts added respectability to their version of the past, and they ensured that outsiders would be able to assess local stories and relate them to the wider framework of Greek history. One would expect that in Pausanias' time in particular local notables with a classical education would be keen to show off their status as *pepaideumenoí* by explaining how their own history fitted in with the literary tradition. This in turn made local tradition attractive to educated outsiders such as Pausanias and his readers because it added new aspects to stories that they all knew so well. Thus we hear of an additional Arcadian contingent that set out to participate in the Trojan War but did not make it into the *Iliad*'s Catalogue of Ships because it returned home from Aulis before the Greeks sailed for Troy; we are told of a story from the Persian Wars that Herodotus seems to have overlooked; and we follow the wanderings of Orestes, that are at most alluded to in Attic drama.<sup>23</sup>

This is exactly the kind of information Pausanias seems to be looking for: the local exclusive with a familiar background, in other words, a variety of local perspectives on a world dominated by the cultural legacy of Athens. Within the context of the *Periegesis* these local variants become more tangible because they are so often combined with monuments or inscriptions that 'corroborate' the stories. Pausanias does not just want to include aspects of history that are not well covered in the widely read texts, he also wants to impress with his thorough research.<sup>24</sup> As we have seen,

<sup>19</sup> Swain (n. 8), 75–6; A. J. Spawforth and S. Walker, 'The world of the Panhellenion: I. Athens and Eleusis', *JRS* 75 (1985), 78–104; A. J. Spawforth and S. Walker, 'The world of the Panhellenion: II. Three Dorian cities', *JRS* 76 (1986), 88–105; C. P. Jones, 'The Panhellenion', *Chiron* 26 (1996), 29–56.

<sup>20</sup> L. Robert, 'Documents d'Asie Mineure', *BCH* 101 (1977), 43–132, at 120–9; *SEG* II 549.

<sup>21</sup> e.g. Hdt. 9.26–8; Thuc. 1.126–8; Delphi: Paus. 10.9.5–8, 10.9.12, 10.10.3–5.

<sup>22</sup> Paus. 8.45.7, 8.47.4, 8.48.7 (with a note on the discrepancies between the stories), 8.54.6. See M. Pretzler, 'Myth and history at Tegea—local tradition and community identity', in T. H. Nielsen and J. Roy (edd.), *Defining Ancient Arkadia* (Copenhagen, 1999), 89–128, at 91–2, 113–14.

<sup>23</sup> Paus. 8.28.4–6 (men from Teuthis at Aulis); 1.40.2–3, 1.44.4 (some Persians defeated at Megara); 2.31.4, 2.31.8–9, 3.22.1, 7.25.7, 8.5.4, 8.34.1–4 (Orestes).

<sup>24</sup> Paus. 1.6.1: wants to include Hellenistic history because it is not widely known (e.g. in 1.6.2–8.1, 8.10.5–8, 10.19.5–23.14); diligent on site research: 1.28.7, 8.21.2, 9.39.14 (explicit statements), e.g. 8.38.5, 8.49.1 (investigating inscriptions on empty statue bases).

there was a good chance that his peers would indeed be impressed, even if (or exactly because) his interest in little-known facts often went beyond what a well-read audience might have expected. After all, however unfamiliar and new some details may have appeared, even to Pausanias himself,<sup>25</sup> they usually found their place within the Greek tradition, where they could serve to add an interesting facet to the past that was so important to Greeks under the Roman Empire.

Thus when Pausanias travelled around Greece for at least twenty years<sup>26</sup> in order to discover and record historical information that was not well known, stories that had never been written down, or accounts that contradicted what was known from literary sources,<sup>27</sup> this was not just the obscure hobby-horse of an eccentric: he could proudly expect a positive response to his research and an interest in the results presented in his work.<sup>28</sup>

### HOW ORAL WAS LOCAL TRADITION?

By the Roman period a lot of local information could be found in libraries, and there is no doubt that Pausanias did consult books on the places and regions he was planning to see.<sup>29</sup> How likely is it that most of the places he visited did have a rich oral tradition?

Before we turn to the mode of transmission, we need to look at Pausanias' informants. Local tales are likely to be current among all strata of society, but the learned accounts preserved in our ancient sources are more likely to represent the versions of the educated élite. Leading families often had orally preserved ancestral traditions, and they made an effort to connect these with regional history, for example by claiming important historical figures among their ancestors.<sup>30</sup> At a time when, as Pausanias puts it, some cities even 'lacked means equal to those of a man with an average fortune',<sup>31</sup> the leading families of a community could make quite an impact on local tradition and on the memorial landscape: they would not only fill many of the influential positions such as magistracies and priesthoods, which often involved financial contributions, but they also had the means to set up new monuments or to renovate and change old ones. Moreover, they had a vested interest in the tradition of their city, because they had most to gain from the interaction with other cities and with the Roman authorities.

<sup>25</sup> e.g. 7.18.12, 8.15.1–4, 8.25.4–7, 8.37.8, 8.42.4; cf. 8.3.3.

<sup>26</sup> Frazer (n. 12), 1.xv–xvii; Habicht (n. 3), 9–12; E. L. Bowie, 'Inspiration and aspiration: date, genre and readership', in Alcock et al. (n. 2), 21–32, at 21–4.

<sup>27</sup> e.g. Paus. 1.6.1, 1.27.3, 10.17.13 (not widely known), 1.23.2 (never written down), 9.5.3 (note that he could not find a new angle to a well-known story); comparison with literary sources (for Pausanias often poetry): 3.24.10–11 (Homer vs. Laconian traditions), 2.1.1 (Eumelus vs. Corinthian tradition), 2.6.5 (Hesiod and Ibycus vs. Asius and the Sicyonians), 9.18.6 (*Thebais* vs. *Thebans*).

<sup>28</sup> Pace Habicht (n. 3), 1–2, 20–2 and A. Diller, 'Pausanias in the Middle Ages', *TAPA* 87 (1956), 84–97, Pausanias' work was read in the decades after its completion. See Ael. *VH* 12.61 and Bowie (n. 28), 29; M. W. Dickie, 'Philostratus and Pindar's eighth Paean', *BASP* 34 (1997), 11–20, at 15–20; Frazer (n. 12), 1.xv, n. 6; Gurlitt (n. 4), 11, n.27 (p.73); Regenbogen (n. 4), 1009.

<sup>29</sup> Pretzler (n. 13), 2–3.

<sup>30</sup> R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989), 95–131. e.g. *IVO* 449, 450 (mid-second century), 486, 487 (mid-third century): two men called T. Flavius Polybius; Paus. 8.9.9–10 (Podares, a Roman citizen of Mantinea, claims descent from a war hero of the fourth century).

<sup>31</sup> Paus. 8.33.2 (referring to Thebes, Orchomenus, and Delos): αἱ μὲν ἀνδρὸς ἰδιώτων μέσσην δυνάμει χρημάτων καταδέουσιν ἐς εὐδαιμονίαν; certainly a wealthy man's perspective!



For example, Pausanias describes the Mantinean *heroon* of a general named Podares (fourth century B.C.) that was rededicated to a namesake and alleged descendant three generations before Pausanias' own time. The fact that the later individual was a Roman citizen already towards the end of the first century A.D. shows that his family must have been influential. Incidentally, Pausanias' history of Mantinea names only three Mantineans, all called Podares and members of the same family: a possible indication that the family continued to influence at least the version of local history he had access to when he visited the city.<sup>32</sup> Plutarch of Chaeronea was one such lone eminent citizen in a tiny Greek town, and he took the responsibility of this position very seriously.<sup>33</sup> Local stories from Boeotia crop up now and then in Plutarch's extensive work, and the exaggerated invective *De malignitate Herodoti* shows that even a moderate man was not beyond being carried away by local patriotism. In the *Life of Antony* he uses his own family tradition to illustrate local history.<sup>34</sup>

Some members of local élites were surely capable of writing down their versions of local history, and some may well have done so, even if no local histories of the period survive.<sup>35</sup> This, however, does not mean that oral tradition did not continue to play a crucial role within a community, because even in its most literary period ancient Greek culture was very much an oral culture where learned discourse and public speaking were valued particularly highly. There would still be many opportunities to relate, discuss, and embellish the past in conversation, and it is to be expected that local history was a common topic of conversation, particularly among the *pepaideumenoi*.

Literary and oral cultures are often seen as incompatible, since texts are thought to supersede oral stories which survive only among the uneducated common people.<sup>36</sup> The interaction between these two ways of communication is, however, much more complex, and various kinds of more or less literary ways of transmitting information can coexist. The choice of the medium of transmission depends on the context and function of the information that is being passed on, and preferences differ from culture to culture.<sup>37</sup> The difference between oral and literary tradition is never clear-cut and they interact in various ways. As we have already seen, classical texts informed local stories, and, through authors with an interest in local history, oral tradition continued to contribute to ancient literature.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> F. Hiller v. Gärtringen, 'Pausanias' arkadische Königsliste', *Klio* 21 (1927), 1–13, at 10, Paus. 8.9.9–10, 8.10.5.

<sup>33</sup> Plut. *Dem.* 2.

<sup>34</sup> Plut. *Malign. Hdt.* (Mor. 854E–874D); local history: *Cim.* 1–2, *Ant.* 68.4–5, *Dem.* 19, *Alex.* 9 (Chaeronea), *Cam.* 19, *Sull.* 16–21, *Pel.*, *De gen.* (Mor. 575A–599A). See also the Delphic Dialogues (Mor. 384C–439A); Pausanias' short description of Chaeronea (9.40.5–12) unfortunately does not provide good comparative material.

<sup>35</sup> See the list in E. L. Bowie, 'Greeks and their past in the Second Sophistic', in M. I. Finley (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Society* (London and Boston, 1974), 166–209, at 184–8.

<sup>36</sup> e.g. Veyne (n. 3), 43–6.

<sup>37</sup> R. H. Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication* (Oxford, 1988), 164–8; A. Portelli, *The Text and the Voice: Writing, Speaking and Democracy in American Culture* (New York, 1994), 3–15.

<sup>38</sup> On the interaction between oral and written tradition (and examples from various ethnographical contexts), see Finnegan (n. 37), 110–22; A. Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison, WI, 1997), 45–6.

## PAUSANIAS AS COLLECTOR OF LOCAL STORIES

Travel in the ancient world involved meeting people and asking for information, and Pausanias was clearly eager to talk to local people. He records facts supplied by many local guides and informants,<sup>39</sup> and it is likely that he looked for private hospitality wherever he could, which would have given him ample opportunity for conversation, most likely with members of the élite.<sup>40</sup> Most of Pausanias' questions, where we can reconstruct them, arose on site, prompted by a particular monument or work of art; and some of his lines of argument could only have come about through a combination of observation and discussion during a visit.<sup>41</sup>

It is clear that all local informants who contributed material for the *Periegesis* were faced with a visitor who would not simply listen to his guides: Pausanias' work shows traces of his discussions with local experts. For example, he records that in the small Lydian city Temenou Thyrae a landslide led to the discovery of some large bones which were considered to be those of Geryon.<sup>42</sup> Quickly the landscape around the findspot was invested with meaningful place names connected to Geryon. Pausanias relates how, clearly at his inquisitive best, he challenged this tradition and forced the local guides to come up with the 'real story' which connected the bones with a local eponymous hero. Such discussions were surely informative and interesting for both sides involved, because Pausanias would have been able to add new aspects and connections to existing stories, and his questions could open up new lines of enquiry for the local historians.

Enquiries of this kind are a very complex way of collecting information: modern historians and ethnographers are concerned about the relationship between the stranger who asks the questions and his local informants because various factors such as the social role, situation, and motives of both parties have a crucial influence on the outcome of the investigation.<sup>43</sup> Unlike a modern researcher, Pausanias would not have been concerned with concealing his high social class and his educated interests, and his local informants may have tried to offer him information that was likely to impress him. The people in the example above 'corrected' their story in a way that would have been acceptable to any Greek intellectual of the period. The impact of the enquiry on site should also not be underestimated. Visual stimuli and specific questions can lead to answers that local informants would perhaps not otherwise give. Pausanias' collection of Arcadian ruined cities and their eponyms seems to have come about in this way: it is clearly influenced by the routes he travelled, and by the ruined cities he saw.<sup>44</sup> He may well have been told various versions of local histories that another man would not have heard in this form; his social standing and behaviour would have triggered a particular set of responses, and his questions and arguments may often have led his guides to deliver the answers he expected to

<sup>39</sup> L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London, 1994<sup>3</sup>), 264–7; Frazer (n. 12), 1.lxxvi–vii both with a collection of references. C. P. Jones, 'Pausanias and his guides', in Alcock et al. (n. 2), 33–9. Note Paus. 2.28.2: a site where he did not find local informants.

<sup>40</sup> Pretzler (n. 13), 6–8; Casson (n. 39), 87–90, 197–209.

<sup>41</sup> e.g. Pausanias' description of the chest of Cypselus that shows him struggling with the decipherment of an ancient work of art. Paus. 5.17.5–19.10; see also A. M. Snodgrass, 'Pausanias and the chest of Kypselos', in Alcock et al. (n. 2), 127–41.

<sup>42</sup> Paus. 1.35.7–8.

<sup>43</sup> C. L. Briggs, *Learning How to Ask: A Socio-linguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interviewer in Social Science Research* (Cambridge, 1986), 39–59; Portelli (n. 38), 9–12.

<sup>44</sup> Arcadian ruins: J. Roy, 'The sons of Lykaon in Pausanias' Arcadian king-list', *ABSA* 63 (1968), 287–92; visual aids for interviews: J. C. Johnson, *Selecting Ethnographic Informants* (Newbury Park, 1990), 36–7; see also Briggs (n. 43), 44.



hear.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the information he collected still originates in the knowledge of the local people and in their views about what was worth telling about their community.

Once Pausanias had collected enough material, he had to integrate it into his description of Greece. This involved the assessment of large amounts of historical material of variable provenance and quality. Many accounts were not explicitly linked to any of the conventional chronological (for Pausanias mainly genealogical) frameworks, and he would have to resort to his own calculations in order to prepare them for further use in the *Periegesis*.<sup>46</sup>

Pausanias was well aware of problems with conflicting local traditions, and he speaks with the authority of a man who feels competent in the matter.<sup>47</sup> His main concern is with contradictions between the traditions of different places, or between a local story and the literary tradition, especially Homer, Pausanias' paramount historical authority.<sup>48</sup> He has to concede that many Greek myths, especially genealogies, had various contradictory versions which could not always be reconciled.<sup>49</sup> When Pausanias found contradictions between local stories he was faced with a dilemma, and in good Herodotean fashion he often chooses to repeat the problematic account together with an appropriate comment.<sup>50</sup> Sometimes he gives an impression of resignation, and he admits that he has to accept the legends as they stand even if they are not true history, or else he leaves it to the reader to decide which account to believe.<sup>51</sup>

Deliberate manipulation of local stories is a particular concern. Pausanias is suspicious of accounts that seem influenced by the desire to enhance a community's glory, and he is wary of historical constructs such as etymological connections or genealogies of eponymous heroes, although he himself makes extensive use of the same methods.<sup>52</sup> Megarian tradition seemed especially flawed to Pausanias, and although, as he says, he wanted to relate their local stories, he could simply not agree with what they had told him. Too many details could not be reconciled with the literary tradition, and in Pausanias' view the Megarians were too obviously trying to hide the fact that their city had once been conquered.<sup>53</sup> He also notes the impact of widely known literature on local tradition: the best example is his suggestion that Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* made the Argives remember only seven chief heroes in the campaign, because this was the number familiar to the Greeks in his day, although originally there had been many more.<sup>54</sup>

As we have already seen, greater or lesser manipulation of local, oral tradition was a ubiquitous phenomenon, and Pausanias' caution and criticisms are in principle

<sup>45</sup> e.g. Paus. 1.35.7–8; cf. 2.23.5–6, 7.23.7–8, perhaps also 2.2.2, 4.32.3, 10.14.5–6 (discussions), 7.26.13, 8.25.7–11, 8.41.5 (learned arguments presented by locals), 5.6.2, 2.31.4; see also 4.32.3. (educated guesses, prompted by Pausanias' questions).

<sup>46</sup> This becomes particularly clear where Pausanias makes mistakes: e.g. 6.4.6–7, 6.9.4–5 with Frazer (n. 12), 1.lxxv–lxxvi, 8.27.11, 8.42.8–10 (based on Hdt 7.145, 153–63, and an inscription of a monument in Olympia), 10.36.9.

<sup>47</sup> e.g. Paus. 1.38.7, 4.2.3, 4.33.1, 8.15.7, 8.53.5, 9.16.7 (general comments on the state of Greek tradition).

<sup>48</sup> e.g. 1.41.3–6, 4.2.2–3. Importance of Homer: 2.21.10.

<sup>49</sup> Paus. 9.16.7, 8.53.5, 1.38.7; cf. 4.33.6, 8.15.7. Note his exasperation with multiple versions of the same story: 4.33.1.

<sup>50</sup> e.g. Paus. 6.3.8; cf. 1.41.4–6.

<sup>51</sup> Paus. 3.19.5, 4.4.3; cf. 2.15.1.

<sup>52</sup> Paus. 2.1.6, 2.30.5, 5.1.9, 10.6.5.

<sup>53</sup> Paus. 1.41.3–6; cf. 1.39.6, 1.44.3.

<sup>54</sup> Paus. 2.20.5; see also 3.25.5–6, 8.22.6.

justified. He was well aware of the various uses of local stories in the life of a Greek city of his own day, and he must have known how tradition was adapted everywhere in the Greek world whenever cities or individuals needed a good story for their own ends. Not only Pausanias' interest in local tradition, but also the problems with the material he collected, were a product of the social and cultural conditions and preoccupations of Greeks under the Roman Empire.

### ORAL TRADITION OR LITERARY SOURCES?

We shall now return to Pausanias' work and reassess the text. Is it possible to determine how literary and oral tradition were merged when the text was composed? More importantly, how can we tell them apart? Oral tradition is likely to be local, and it is possible to assess the local context and relevance of a story in Pausanias' work to determine whether it is likely to be based on local information. However, Pausanias could simply have been following a literary compilation of local history. I explore this possibility before I turn to the oral tradition recorded in his work.

Historical accounts in the *Periegesis* are based on a variety of sources, as we would expect in a work that deals with the complete history of a country and its regions. Pausanias cites a wide range of literary sources, among them numerous historiographical works.<sup>55</sup> He frequently gives references when an author is in disagreement with his own or a third opinion, but the basic sources for a historical *logos* often remain anonymous. He also draws upon authors that he does not cite, for example Polybius, who is at least mentioned as a historical figure, and Plutarch, who remains unnamed.<sup>56</sup> As a quarry of information for classicists and archaeologists alike, the *Periegesis* has been subjected to intensive and at times inventive *Quellenkritik*.<sup>57</sup> Studies that try to name sources for single *logoi* or special periods can yield interesting results,<sup>58</sup> but I remain unconvinced that source criticism for the *Periegesis* as a whole is possible.

Where Pausanias' sources can be identified it seems that he preferred to use the standard works for the period in question. These were often accounts written soon after the events they cover, and, given Pausanias' general predilection for the ancient, the choice of the earliest possible source is not surprising.<sup>59</sup> The assumption that he used unknown late *periegesis*, handbooks, or compilations of classical historians<sup>60</sup> is unnecessarily complicated and it only moves the source problem back in time: Pausanias probably knew the standard works, and it is equally possible that

<sup>55</sup> See Regenbogen (n. 4), 1070; D. Ambaglio, 'La periegesi di Pausania e la storiografia Greca tradita per citazioni', *QUCC* n.s. 39.3 (1991), 129–38; T. Eide, 'Pausanias and Thucydides', *SO* 47 (1992), 124–37, 124–3.

<sup>56</sup> Habicht (n. 3), 97–8; Regenbogen (n. 4), 1070–1.

<sup>57</sup> C. Bearzot, *Storia ellenistica in Pausania il periegeta* (Venice, 1992); M. Segre, 'La più antica tradizione sull'invasione gallica in Macedonia e in Grecia', *Historia* (Milan) 1 (1927), 18–42, at 23–9; O. Fischbach, 'Die Benutzung des thukydideischen Geschichtswerks durch den Periegeten Pausanias', *Wiener Studien* 15 (1893), 161–91; Kalkmann (n. 12).

<sup>58</sup> A. R. Meadows, 'Pausanias and the historiography of classical Sparta', *CQ* 45 (1995), 92–113; L. Pearson, 'The pseudo-history of Messenia and its authors', *Historia* 11 (1962), 397–426, esp. 408–14.

<sup>59</sup> Meadows (n. 58), 113; Bearzot (n. 57), 283–4.

<sup>60</sup> Kalkmann (n. 14); U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, 'Die Thukydideslegende', *Hermes* 12 (1877), 326–67, at 341–7 = *Kleine Schriften* 3 (Berlin, 1969), 1–40, at 15–21; see the overview in Habicht (n. 3), 163–8; Jacoby, *FGrH* IIIb, commentary, 60–2, 64; E. Meyer, 'Messenien', *RE* suppl. XV (1978), 155–289, at 243–4; J. Hornblower, *Hieronymus of Cardia* (Oxford, 1981), 72.

he himself extracted the relevant information and tailored it to his needs in a particular passage.<sup>61</sup> Most of the historical narrative in the *Periegesis*, however, remains without a clear reference to literary sources, and in all but the most exceptional cases, usually long historical ‘digressions’, it is hardly possible to suggest an appropriate ancient work that Pausanias may have used. I believe that this is due to his extensive use of local tradition, a kind of material that is difficult to estimate and evaluate in the traditional *Quellenkritik* manner, which may well account for the rather unimpressive results of that method for Pausanias’ *Periegesis*.<sup>62</sup>

Numerous titles and small fragments of local histories have survived while the works themselves have not, leaving ample room for speculation. Pausanias himself rarely mentions special local literature, except where he proudly presents the discovery of unique ancient books, all doubtful examples because the alleged authors are mythical figures.<sup>63</sup> Sometimes, in cases where local history includes an extensive narrative, the use of a local written source seems possible. A good example of this is the detailed description of a battle at Mantinea that supposedly took place in the mid-third century B.C.<sup>64</sup> Pausanias is the only author to report this seemingly important event, which does not seem to fit into its political and historical context.<sup>65</sup> The minutely detailed account may be based on a written source, which was certainly strongly influenced by historiography, so much so that some details seem to be taken from other famous battles such as those at Plataea and Cannae.<sup>66</sup> The story, however, is likely to be local since it is attached to a trophy, probably a not particularly conspicuous monument, on the plain south of Mantinea, and it seems strongly influenced by the tradition of one particular family. The account of the battle also contradicts the histories of Sparta and a number of other states, and probably also what had become the Greek historical mainstream,<sup>67</sup> which would have made its dissemination beyond Mantinea rather unlikely.

The existence of such elaborate (possibly written) accounts in some Greek cities is perhaps a logical consequence of a culture in which local tradition in the hands of a highly literate élite was such a powerful instrument in intercity relations. The local history of Mantinea seems to have undergone a thorough overhaul when Hadrian visited the city<sup>68</sup> and, as part of this process, the account of the battle does make sense. Local literary accounts used by Pausanias would perhaps differ in style and detail from the oral tradition he had heard, but less so in focus and

<sup>61</sup> e.g. Paus. 4.6.1–6 on Messenian history, with Meyer (n. 60), 242–6.

<sup>62</sup> Jacoby, *FGrH* IIIb, 314, 322; commentary, pp. 60–2, 64.

<sup>63</sup> Paus. 2.31.3 (a book by Pittheus, the grandfather of Theseus), 8.37.12 (verses by the nymph Erato), 9.27.2 (Pamphus and Orpheus)

<sup>64</sup> Paus. 8.10.5–8.

<sup>65</sup> R. Urban, *Wachstum und Krise des achäischen Bundes*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 35 (Wiesbaden, 1979), 39–45. Cf. Habicht (n. 3), 101–2 with references to a number of theories at nn. 22–4, e.g. G. Fougères, *Mantinee et l’Arcadie Orientale* (Paris, 1898), 487; J. A. O. Larsen, *Greek Federal States: Their Institutions and History* (Oxford, 1968), 309–10 with 309, n. 4; W. K. Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography* 2 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1969), 61–2; K. J. Beloch, *Griechische Geschichte* 4.2 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927<sup>2</sup>), 523–7, defends Pausanias’ account.

<sup>66</sup> Plataea: involvement of an Elean seer of the family of the Iamidae (cf. Hdt. 9.33, 35; Paus. 3.11.5–8); Cannae: Aratus of Sicyon at Mantinea uses Hannibal’s strategy (cf. Polyb. 3.115; Liv. 22.47).

<sup>67</sup> Megalopolis, Achaea/Sicyon, Sparta: Agis IV dies in the battle, contrary to the rather important events involving his death in Sparta as reported in Plut. *Agis* 16–21.

<sup>68</sup> Paus. 8.8.12, 8.9.7–8.

bias because they were also local stories collected and adapted by an élite in order to enhance their importance and to impress interested outsiders. The problem is that possible written accounts of local history usually cannot be dated because local historiographers had been at work since the late classical or at least early Hellenistic period.

Even if Pausanias explicitly speaks of local informants, he might not always be dealing with oral tradition. He often introduces a piece of information with phrases such as 'they say' or 'I have heard', and sometimes he explicitly refers to local information: 'the Athenians say', 'this is what the Eleans told me'.<sup>69</sup> The difficulty here is that ancient authors commonly used phrases like 'they say' as an introduction to quotations of all kinds, often from other literary works.<sup>70</sup> Although I believe that Pausanias' references to local informants do often indicate oral tradition, it is important to be cautious, as his description of Phigalia illustrates. He visited the remote Arcadian city specifically in order to see an image of Demeter Melaina, so he clearly knew about the statue in advance. The information was outdated and was probably taken from a book, perhaps in connection with information about the sculptor Onatas, who features prominently in the story. Most people in Phigalia did not even know that the image had ever existed and only one old man could recall what had happened to it. Nevertheless, Pausanias presents a long, detailed description and history of two images, a wooden original and an early classical replacement in stone, complete with a lengthy Delphic oracle and details about relentless divine vengeance after the destruction of the earlier image, and he claims that this is what the Phigalians say.<sup>71</sup> Did his solitary aged informant remember so many details while everyone else had forgotten about the lost statue? Oral information was clearly involved, but it seems likely that at least part of what Pausanias tells us about Demeter Melaina is based on a literary source.

What hope is there of getting any closer to the local, *oral* tradition in Pausanias' work? As we have seen, he must have been exposed to such traditions wherever he went. It is unlikely that he would have ignored this wealth of material in favour of written local histories that often seem to exist only in the mind of literature-focused scholars. Even Jacoby had to admit that he could not trace Pausanias' sources,<sup>72</sup> and nothing could show more conclusively that there is simply not much evidence for potential literary sources that Pausanias may have used apart from those he is actually citing. This is not to say that none of Pausanias' work is based on earlier literature, but the thought of Pausanias heading for the local library to copy down any special written accounts seems unrealistic<sup>73</sup> in a world where even asking for access to local books would have involved conversations with people who were likely to volunteer plenty of information. Pausanias may

<sup>69</sup> See J. Hejnic, *Pausanias the Perieget and the Archaic History of Arcadias*, Rozprawy ceskoslovenské Akademie Ved, sesit 17, Rocník 71 (Prague, 1961). 'They say', etc.: λέγουσιν, φασίν, ὁ ἐκείνων (normally the ethnic is used here) λόγος. Terms for local people: οἱ ἐπιχώριοι (e.g. 7.25–7, 8.28.1), ὁ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ἐξηγητής (e.g. 1.13.8, 9.3.3); people who could be found close to a site: οἱ προσοικοῦντες (5.6.6), οἱ περὶ τὸ ἱερόν (8.37.5). See also Eide (n. 55), 133.

<sup>70</sup> See Meyer (n. 3), 37–8: λέγουσιν a typical phrase to introduce quotations from books; note Pasquali (n. 12), 191–2: enquiries as literary topos; cf. Kalkmann (n. 12), 14–24. Phigalia: Paus. 8.42.12–13.

<sup>71</sup> Paus. 8.42.3–7, with references to locals in 3 (φασίν οἱ Φιγαλεῖς), 4 (φασίν), 5 (a note that they do not remember some details). Pausanias' remark about the reasons for his visit: 8.42.11.

<sup>72</sup> Jacoby, *FGrH* IIIb, 314 and 322; commentary, pp. 60–2, 64.

<sup>73</sup> See Veyne (n. 3), 46, 76.

well have consulted such local histories where they existed, but oral tradition was probably abundant and more relevant to particular locations than what could be found in books.

The connection between history and specific places is particularly important to Pausanias. His work often contains stories that are connected to a peculiar aspect of local culture, such as unique customs or festivals or a special feature of the memorial landscape, for example peculiar monuments, works of art with special iconographical details, or unusual place names. This kind of information is ubiquitous in the *Periegesis*, and in spite of the great variety of traditions reported in the work it is also striking to see recurring patterns, such as similar ways in which stories are connected to the landscape or answers to similar questions that recur over and over again. These are the traces of comprehensive research activities by one man whose distinctive individual preoccupations prompted local stories wherever he went.<sup>74</sup>

Some accounts in the *Periegesis* look like typical quotations from literary sources, although they are strongly influenced by local, oral tradition. The Arcadian genealogy at the beginning of Book 8 is a good example. With its long list of city eponyms it looks like an excerpt from a written source, especially in view of the fact that such a list is actually preserved in Apollodorus' work.<sup>75</sup> Pausanias' statement that he has compiled the genealogy from what the Arcadians told him seemed unlikely before Roy was able to show that a central part of the Arcadian genealogy, namely the list of the sons of Lycaon, is indeed heavily dependent on Pausanias' itinerary in the region. This supports Pausanias' claim that at least a part of the genealogy is based on original research.<sup>76</sup>

Any literary record of local stories that is not just a product of fantasy needs to be based ultimately on a compilation of oral tradition, however remote or distorted the original stories may have become through literary or oral transmission. The process of turning oral tradition into literature is taken for granted for earlier authors, most notably Herodotus or epic poets who had no (or not much) earlier literature to draw upon. Centuries later Pausanias still had the option of compiling such evidence and of preferring it to the libraries of literary evidence that he had at his disposal. His evident admiration for Herodotus<sup>77</sup> may have provided a special incentive to gather oral tradition wherever he could.

A close look at Pausanias' stories shows that the source problem becomes much more complex (but also more interesting) once one takes into account the oral tradition he collected. Every passage that seems to be derived from local stories needs to be carefully considered, especially when it reports events that are long in the past even for Pausanias. Many accounts presented as local tradition in the *Periegesis* appear to be significant for the contemporary local community, and, in comparison with alternative sources, Pausanias' stories often show traces of a process of adaptation to local needs. Traces of (sometimes recent) adaptation that serves the formation and preservation of community identity<sup>78</sup> are a good indication of contemporary oral tradition, especially when a story is firmly attached to local

<sup>74</sup> Pretzler (n. 13), 8–10.

<sup>75</sup> Apollod. 8.1.1–2.1.

<sup>76</sup> Roy (n. 44), with Paus. 8.6.1.; see also Hejnic (n. 69), 6–10.

<sup>77</sup> Bowie (n. 26), 25.

<sup>78</sup> R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992), 108–13; Pretzler (n. 22), 111–19.



monuments, customs, or names, linking them to the community's past or providing a historical explanation for peculiar features of local culture.<sup>79</sup>

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The recognition of oral tradition as the source for much of what Pausanias tells us offers a new angle of assessment. Local, oral tradition is likely to be authentic and contemporary material, which makes Pausanias' historical accounts a unique source for Roman Greece. Thus the stories complement his comments on the state of monuments and communities, which have long been recognized as crucial for our understanding of the state of Greece in the second century A.D. Pausanias never seems unrealistically negative about what he saw, and the local tradition he records suggests that most communities were alive and actively involved in the political and cultural life of the eastern Roman Empire. The *Periegesis* therefore joins the epigraphical evidence as an important corrective to other literary sources that present a deserted Greece full of ruins.<sup>80</sup> Pausanias' work is especially valuable because, with its wealth of oral tradition in a local setting, it documents the way in which the long and illustrious past of mainland Greece registered in the landscape and in the minds of the people who lived there. Much of the history told in the *Periegesis* is connected to definite locations: Pausanias creates a memorial landscape for his readers that is at least a reflection of how the local people invested their environment with history and meaning. It is perhaps ironic that an author so famous for his predilection for the archaic and classical periods thus becomes such an important source for his own period.

If much of Pausanias' information is indeed based on local, contemporary sources, its value as a source for any earlier period becomes doubtful. The *Periegesis* has been used as a source for all periods of Greek history back to archaic times, especially when there are no alternative, and chronologically more appropriate, sources. The lack of information, especially for the smaller Greek cities and sanctuaries, makes it tempting to use the one ancient source that gives so many details. Oral tradition can at times preserve accurate memories over long periods, but without external evidence it is impossible to reconstruct how a story was adapted or manipulated and its original form cannot be restored. Pausanias' information can only become valuable historical evidence if it is compatible with other historiographical sources, or if Pausanias backs it up with a plausible link to an earlier monument.

Pausanias' historical accounts have often been proved wrong, and at times they contradict historiographical works that could, or should, have been known to him and to his local informants. As local, oral tradition, however, such erratic histories illustrate how Pausanias' Greek contemporaries dealt with their history, what they considered significant, and how they adapted the past to serve their present needs. History in this context does not need to be accurate in the sense of 'what really happened', as long as it is functional for the people who make use of it. Many unique historical details in the *Periegesis* can be explained in this way, and this approach seems more constructive than dismissing problematic passages as Pausanias' mistakes. Again his history of

<sup>79</sup> See L. Lacroix, 'Traditions locales et légendes étiologiques dans la périégèse de Pausanias', *JS* (1994.1), 75–99.

<sup>80</sup> See S. E. Alcock, *Graecia Capta: The Landscapes of Roman Greece* (Cambridge, 1993), 24–32. e.g. Strab. 8.8.1–2; Polyb. 36.17.5–9; Sen. *Ep.* 14.3 (91), 10; Cic. *Fam.* 4.5.4; see also Cic. *Flac.* 16.62–4; Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.81; Ov. *Met.* 15.425–30; cf. U. Kahrstedt, *Das wirtschaftliche Gesicht Griechenlands in der Kaiserzeit* (Berne, 1954).



Mantineia offers a good example: according to Polybius, the city, which had sided with Sparta against the Achaeans and Macedonians, was taken and all inhabitants killed or sold in 222 B.C. It was founded with new settlers under the name of Antigonea. Pausanias records the name change, but he explains it as a voluntary gesture of the Mantineans in gratitude for Antigonos Doson's victory over Sparta.<sup>81</sup> When Hadrian restored the old name, if not earlier, the Mantineans needed a version of their past that emphasized a continuity between the city known from classical texts and their own community, even if this connection was historically inaccurate.<sup>82</sup>

It is often difficult to assess single aspects of a city's history in such detail, but it is possible to discover peculiar aspects of a community's set of local traditions. Pausanias' descriptions of larger cities usually come with a historical introduction and a collection of monuments and locations linked to stories. He provides a sample of what was important for a community and which aspects and periods of the long and rich history of Greece they chose to highlight. Even within the constraints of Pausanias' own interests and predilections these selections differ widely between cities, and the local angle on a great event can be surprising. For example, Megara's past as reported by Pausanias seems to be defined in response to Athenian tradition, which was reflected in so many important literary works. Pausanias records a specifically Megarian Persian War story, he points out a temple that seems to have become a monument to Athenian aggression in the Peloponnesian War, and he has a lot to report concerning early (mythical) disputes between the neighbours, down to the conflict over Salamis in which Solon was said to have been involved.<sup>83</sup> A similar phenomenon can be found in Tegea, with its anti-Spartan stance and corresponding gaps in its local history where the Tegeans sided with Sparta. Pausanias' statement that the Achaeans were responsible for the Roman sack of Corinth could perhaps reflect the viewpoint of the people of Corinth, which was, after all, a Roman colony. Historical locations could become a special focus of local tradition, for example the battlefield of Marathon with its cults, traditions, and even ghost stories, most with a truly local character.<sup>84</sup> While all these versions of local history might be inaccurate or at least highly selective, Pausanias' account illustrates just how many slightly different versions of Greek history could coexist with each other and with the classical texts.

A focus on the oral tradition recorded in Pausanias' *Periegesis* shows just how complicated it is to use his work as a source. Close attention to his meticulous way of recording what he saw *and* heard on site allows a reassessment of what his accounts are actually telling us: the contents of his stories become less trustworthy while their context comes into view. Much information that was thought to be applicable to some historical problem may turn out to be irrelevant if arguments based on Pausanias are revisited with this view in mind. What we gain, however, is a much closer insight into the society of Roman Greece, a region with a great past that in many ways surpassed, transcended, and defined its contemporary significance. Often even the most stout defenders of Pausanias find it hard to explain why a man with a lot of common sense who usually shows a thoughtful approach towards his sources could get his

<sup>81</sup> Paus. 8.8.11; Polyb. 2.57–8.

<sup>82</sup> Hadrian: Paus. 8.8.12, 8.9.7–8, 8.10.1–2, 8.11.8.

<sup>83</sup> Paus. 1.39.4–44.10. Persians: 1.40.2–3, 1.44.4; temple with unfinished statue: 1.40.4; Salamis: 1.40.5. Note 1.41.4–5: Pausanias disagrees with the Megarians.

<sup>84</sup> Tegea: Paus. 8.44–54, see Pretzler (n. 22). Corinth: 2.1.1, cf. a more Achaean (Polybian?) view in 7.7–16. Marathon: 1.32.3–5.

history so terribly wrong. In their local context, however, many apparent mistakes suddenly make sense, and Pausanias is once again vindicated as a faithful reporter with an interest in the unusual. The explanation of problematic historical passages is a satisfactory by-product of a study of oral tradition in Pausanias; what matters more, however, is that awareness of this special source situation should make a difference to the way in which the *Periegesis* is read and interpreted. Many passages within Pausanias' work still await reconsideration.

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