
This neatly-planned and attractive *libellus* (just 167 pp. of text) is by way of knitting together themed aperçus from current visual and literary scholarship on Hellenistic culture, and (as the title indicates) represents a sharply-focused return to territory studied by Z through upwards of a generation (moving from poetry to art and poetry). (His bibliography goes decidedly patchy after 2000: eg no Nigel Spivey, *Enduring Creation* [2001], for the section on pain/pity in stone: but ‘visuality’ has been the ‘hot’ topic of the pentade, and TSS can take electronic aeons to turn into academic books.) The writing is simple plain style, and the critical approach is commonsensical, shorn of gaze theory or any other high jinks with reading and framing, ekphrasis or (heavens, no) psychoanalysis. Both art history and poetological components are resolutely conformist, taking up mainstream readings by Bing and Gutzwiller, by Paul Zanker and Andrew Stewart, and insetting them with a welter of compiled hypotheses that evince audacity and fancy unremarked, everything politely dignified throughout as from this ‘authority’ and that ‘scholar’—except just the once, when a bumper note singles out Simon Goldhill, (as if) all over the shop on ekphrasis (184-5). Periodic claims for innovation miscast the book’s contribution, which is (I repeat) essentially synthetic—except when Z sensibly holds out against the consensus for a ‘religious’ dimension to even the most stylized and self-reflexive of artefacts (116: no, there is no time / this is no place to critique or even problematize the concept).

Subjects (objects) feature: boxing and Aphrodite in Apollonius, Callimachus’ *Hecale*, *Hymns*, and *Victoria Berenices*, Herodas’ baby and goose, Posidippus’ gems and various other epigrams, Theocritean cups, boxing, and baby Herakles: the usual suspects (‘of course’, 48). Z writes vividly enough about what is vivid in his text excerpts, but too often lapses into the (out)mode of unpursued acclaim for ‘realism’, as if that still cuts it. (To mean anything, *quis nescit?*, ‘realism’ must depend on its others, and ordain, and specify, its *cui bono.*) Anyone can tell he’s genuinely in touch with ‘his’ poems. Not so with the ‘art’, though. Thirty-odd favourites of Hellenistic sculpture are presented (rather muddy quality): Aphrodites and Gauls, Faun and Satyr, Boxer and
Angler, Shepherdess and the old wino with her amphora, Nike and Farnese Hercules; plus Telephus frieze, Alexander mosaic, and a Narcissus mural. But none of them are ‘documented’ (sized; state of preservation/restoration noted; etc.)—and Z swallows plenty of fabulation about dating of originals, status of ‘copies’, and find-spots. (See M. Beard et al., Classical Art [2001].) The jacket (and fig. 30) shows Lo Spinario, and Z carefully points out that the British Museum has a version with (what he calls) ‘a naturalistic head’, whereas the (featured) version in Rome sports the ‘severe style’ head of a ‘Classical ephbe’ which hands him the ‘impropriety’ of mimetic idioms he and Z are after (134); no time to notice that object lesson—the bent left knee, let alone to dwell on the sport of body re-positioning within this culture of variation, proliferation, and citation. (‘Why must a kouros stand?’ is the ideological axiom exposed by this thorn in the soul.) Press the borders of ‘viewing’ harder, I say—explore some; then we’ll have to learn to care for the materialities of these battered chunks and restored hunks as well as their in-built iterability. The blank refrain ‘realism’ obtrudes less often here—though claims such as a ‘realistic body’ to go with the Venus de Milo’s ‘idealized head’ won’t survive a proper look (136). But Z’s work is clear, sound, compact. And if you haven’t met the ideas before, then he will help you respond imaginatively to the energy, as well as his fetishized energy, of Hellenistic art.

The first chapter sets out Z’s programme. Three chapters then showcase ‘modes of viewing’ designed to ‘involve viewers and readers visually and spatially’ (27). We should always have expected writing to wire in the function of address (nothing specially poetic about that). It’s not news either that depiction encodes (appellates) viewing (nothing specially Hellenistic about this). But, yes, play between figure and ground, porous proscenium and frame transgression, interpretive co-authoring and evocative lacunae, scripted role for audiences as participant observers, posited intruders, and willing victims, are all strong hermeneutic lines of engagement with artworks as ‘events’, and ‘Hellenistic’ culture knew as many ‘performative’ contrivances and conceits as any of our theatres of modernity, operators, tropes, and—modes. Read with art, imagine with text—yes, we do that, outside Classics, and why not inside, too? Chapter 5 does generic hybridization, across graphic and glyphic media, courting the same formalist sterility as dogged Hellenistic poetry till rather recently: actually, you could
easily, if not inventively, define culture as this interactive modality, just as the themes yoked to make the final chapter, 'pleasure and pain', clearly stand for the affective intent in representation: it's not clear that choosing these particular foci from the gamut of emotional incitations and excitations has any warrant beyond organizational convenience (the tidy mind). For these poems and sculptures know all about tedium and alienation and simpering, too, if you let them—and (most important) they solicit complex, confused, ambivalent, mixed feelings. Not just within modes of viewing, but between moods of responding: it is even a rule of [Hellenistic] mimesis that the intellectual and emotional work in with the ideological and libidinal, to afford these societies the means for imaginative praxis. For my liking, Z stays much too close in to his weave of examples commissioned to function as illustrations. This is bound to suggest that this is what the artworks were; and that has to be a let-down.

Z's problem: 'Hellenistic' culture is a frame which lumps together far too wide a world to accommodate into a single homogeneity without risking—effacing—the thrust of instantiation. (Hence the congruent, confluent, collusiveness of this [sort of] book.) If the diadochic kingdoms (and their fractions) competed within the same economy of representation, and a livery of classicizing art was matched with internationally marketed post-classical revisionisms, nevertheless each state apparatus also touted its own distinctive take, and trajectory, on taste as of power: Pharaonic panache and Hellenic kitsch competed in Alexandria, but not Macedon or Syria; Athens and Pergamon could sing from the same songsheet to different tunes; the same visual signs shifted associations as they migrated, cloned, re-formed. Mobility inhered in all this mimesis. My wounded Celt here meant otherwise when (I knew it) you got/lost/copied/revised yours there; and counterparts traded on each other's traces even as they left them behind. Stories of originary inspiration were ironized by claims to reproduce authentic traditions, as archaizing neologisms took the limelight. Their artists faked it, too; and no theory ever circulated without bogus theory. Just as contemporary criticism prompts, frames, creates Z's project, so it permits our response to the postmodernism abroad in the Greek world's first ecumenical art culture, with its museums and collections, art market and salaried masters, its theory and creative writing. We can't visit without going there—can't leave ourselves behind. So positivism is as
beggared as objectivism—as Callimachus and Lysippos could both enjoy rubbing in, for a start. (And do.)

If there is advantage in positing a single cultural régime within which to compare and contrast optic and poetic practices of signification, then the cost must be recognition for the radical difference of the instance. The radical theorist Aristotle becomes a witness to standard Greek thinking; the conspicuous consumption boasted by the mass-defying marble appendage in marble (whether separately created or not) nails whatever sculpture to automatic cliché ...: ‘How lifelike! How piquant! How saucy! How pathogenic!’ And add whatever poetry to the litany: ‘Miniaturism. Hybridization. Self-canonization. Citationality ...’. To sum up the workings of this mimetic cosmos is bound to dumb down difference—and make you write, again and over, ‘typical of ..., in a manner wholly consonant with ..., also illustrates ..., precisely paralleled in ..., illustrates perfectly ...’ et sim., et sim. True, Z does have a brave shot at contrast every once in a while—‘it looks as if early Hellenistic poetry’s mode of vision was more developed than that of contemporary visual art in this respect’—but at this level of generalization it never amounts to more than an ‘interesting possibility’ (55). Nowhere near as interesting as these fantastic repertoires of scripted happening and figural thinking. I expect Z’s Modes of Viewing to turn on and tune up students and experts in both his sub-disciplines: but what good can be served by the signal it emits, the withdrawal symptom, that Theory is not welcome here?

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