

INTRODUCTION: THE ART OF ART HISTORY IN GRECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY*

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This volume interrogates a tension fundamental to the project of “classical art history.” To what extent can we talk about the processes of making, viewing, and writing about images in classical antiquity as “art history”? Is it justified to discuss ancient “art” as *art* in the first place? And if modern systems of “the arts” are anachronistic, what language should be used to analyze the qualities and experiences associated with viewing images—or, indeed, responding to other media—in ancient Greek and Roman historical perspective?

Nothing better exposes—or rather conceals—this tension than a painting by the Dutch-born, British artist Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema (figure 1).¹ The title of the painting confirms that we are dealing with *A Picture*

* As explained below, this co-edited volume stems from an organizer-refereed panel at the annual meetings of the American Philological Association and Archaeological Institute of America in Philadelphia in January 2009; our ideas were greatly sharpened by the lively discussion after the panel. Although written by only one of the editors, this introduction formulates ideas that have occupied us both for some considerable time. The chapter itself was written during the generous tenure of an Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship at the Winckelmann Institut für klassische Archäologie, Humboldt Universität zu Berlin. For their comments on an earlier draft, I am grateful not only to the volume’s contributors (above all to Verity Platt), but also to the anonymous external reviewer, Charles Martindale, and Luca Giuliani. On behalf of all the contributors, moreover, our collective thanks to the team at *Arethusa*—especially Martha Malamud, John Dugan, and Madeleine Kaufman—for publishing the volume with such enthusiasm, care, and efficiency.

All translations are my own.

1 On the painting (*Opus CXXVI*), which formed a pair with a second image of an imagined ancient *Sculpture Gallery*, see Swanson 1990.175, no. 165. More generally on painted Victorian recreations of Rome, see Prettejohn 1996 and (specifically on Alma-Tadema) Prettejohn 2002.

Gallery. As so often with Alma-Tadema's work, however, the painting collapses the historical distance between the ancient world and late nineteenth-century Victorian Britain: this wistful archaeological reconstruction purports to depict not a *modern* picture gallery, but rather an *ancient* (or more specifically ancient Roman) *pinacotheca*. This explains the various pictures on display, all of which derive from models known from Pompeii and Herculaneum: to the left can be seen the tell-tale horse and spears of the so-called "Alexander Mosaic";² in the center are images of Medea and the sacrifice of Iphigenia (associated with the Greek artists Timomachus and Timanthes respectively).³ Removed from their original frescoed walls in Campania and bounded within geometric surrounds, ornamental floral borders, or wooden cases, each image is presented as an autonomous panel-painting in its own right: the pictures within the picture are physically and metaphorically framed like the paintings of the modern gallery (and Alma-Tadema's gilded canvas itself).⁴ Other features similarly mirror the display strategies of the modern museum: note, for instance, how the legends accompanying these "masterworks" assign them to their relevant master artist, just like the inscription within the frame of Alma-Tadema's own painting.⁵ This also explains the rather Victorian looking gallery-goers, dressed in Roman togas and shawls, but each nonetheless recognizable from the contempo-

2 The painting derives from a floor mosaic excavated from the House of the Faun in 1831; for a full discussion, see Cohen 1997.

3 See Pliny *HN* 35.73, 136. The context of the incomplete Medea portrait from Herculaneum (MNN inv. 9976) is not known, although the wider Greek and Roman reception of Timomachus's lost painting is well treated in Gutzwiller 2004a (with full bibliography concerning the Herculaneum painting at 342, n. 8). On the original context of the Iphigenia painting (MNN inv. 9112) in the House of the Tragic Poet, Pompeii VI.8.3, see Bergmann 1994.249–54. Alma-Tadema visited Pompeii in 1863.

4 On the centrality of the frame to modern western definitions of art, (erroneously) deemed to separate the privileged realm of the aesthetic from the mundane world of the "interested" observer of everyday existence surrounding it, the crucial analysis is Derrida 1987.37–82, responding to Kant 1987.72 (§14). Duro 1996 examines the subsequent "rhetoric" of the frame in the modern visual arts. For framing devices in Greco-Roman visual culture, see Platt and Squire forthcoming.

5 Following Pliny the Elder, the landscape at the center of the back wall is attributed to Marcus Ludius (*HN* 35.116–17), and the rather Venetian-looking lion to the lower right is ascribed to [Pau]sias (*HN* 35.123–27)—although one has to know one's Pliny to get the teasing reference. Note, too, the inscriptions surrounding the portrait of Nerva above the door and the inscribed central chair. In an earlier 1867 painting of the same scene, the Iphigenia scene is further inscribed with the name of Tima[nthes] (*HN* 35.73); see Swanson 1990.144–45, no. 90.

rary British art scene.⁶ Their enraptured gaze fixates on a painting that we are unable to see. Depicting only the back of the easel cut off by his own picture frame, Alma-Tadema signals something sublime that, by its very nature, lies beyond the figurations of his canvas.

What is so interesting about this picture is its visual articulation of a familiar and coherent set of ideas about art, art history, and the history of artistic appreciation. Like Alma-Tadema's painting exhibited in one of the galleries in Towneley Hall, the ancient images on display are deemed to invite a gaze of quiet reflection and considered contemplation; we are faced in this supposedly ancient gallery with art in its familiar, autonomous, post-Enlightenment form.⁷ Still more strikingly perhaps, the "classicism" of these Roman paintings is visually assimilated to the neoclassicism of Alma-Tadema's own painting: a shared *stylistic* ideal binds the ancient with the modern. In this way, the assumed "art" of antiquity goes hand in hand with a supposedly timeless aesthetic that stretches between the classical world and our own: the artist's attempt at historical reenactment imposes contemporary frameworks of aesthetic appreciation onto antiquity, (con)fusing the modern art gallery with its imaginary Greco-Roman equivalent.⁸ In doing so, moreover, Alma-Tadema visualizes the critical assumption that lies latent in the pursuit of all Greco-Roman art history precisely *as* "art history," whether

6 See Swanson 1990.175, no. 165 and Barrow 2001.79. The standing figure at the center has the features of Ernest Gambart (Alma-Tadema's dealer), and seated in front of him are Henry Wallis (an artist and dealer, hence shown at the easel), Charles Deschamps (Gambart's nephew), and Madame Angelée (Gambart's mistress). In the background are P. J. Pilgeram and Léon Lefèvre (Gambart's successors), and to their right, Paul Durand-Ruel.

7 Of course galleries of paintings, or *pinacothecae*, were an established feature of Hellenistic and Roman visual display, and we know of much earlier collections of paintings too (like those assembled in the Athenian Propylaea in the fifth century); see, e.g., van Buren 1938.76–80, Schefold 1952.32–34, Ehlich 1953.186–94, Ehlich 1979, esp. 8–20, Elsner 1993, Strong 1994.13–39, Bergmann 1995, esp. 98–102. The question, though, must be about the differences as well as the similarities between ancient and modern practices: to what extent would such galleries have looked like this one or elicited these sorts of response? For a rather more "modernist" account of the Roman *pinacotheca*, see Tanner 2006.267–73 on how "framing each picture as an independent object of visual interest" (271) "served to inculcate a rationalist sensibility, congruent with the cultural patterning of elite and rhetorical culture" (265).

8 Cf. Tanner 2006.3, analyzing a different painting by the same artist: "Alma-Tadema's paintings engage a series of key concepts in the modern institution of art as high culture and project them back onto classical antiquity: the heroic status of the artist as creator, the autonomy of art, and norms of cultivated connoisseurship on the part of authentic art lovers—all concepts which . . . still centrally inform the dominant paradigm in classical art history writing."

in the academy or, indeed, in the museum:⁹ namely, that ancient objects can be understood according to modern “aesthetic systems,” forged—or at least rationalized—during the course of the eighteenth century.¹⁰

It is precisely the scare quotes surrounding “art,” “art history,” and “aesthetics” that this guest-edited issue of *Arethusa* sets out to interrogate. Taking our lead from a burgeoning bibliography beyond the traditional confines of classics, our aim is to probe the artifice of our own cultural discourses of “art,” as much removed as they are derived from Greco-Roman thought and practice; to do so, moreover, by considering the different sorts of frameworks in which antiquity theorized the production and consumption of image-making.¹¹ In interrogating ancient and modern discourses of “art history,” our aim is to examine still more fundamental ideas about “art” at large—ideas that align with other cultural practices, in other cultural media, that are grouped together on the basis of their (assumed) related functions, purposes, and effects. Was art ever rationalized as an independent sphere of ancient cultural and intellectual life? How did ancient modes of discussing the visual arts resemble, employ, and critique discussions of other cultural spheres? And in what ways do ancient constructions of art history relate to modern aesthetic frameworks, in particular those cultivated in the wake of the Enlightenment?

9 On the museological stakes here, the crucial volume remains Karp and Lavine 1990; note also Beard and Henderson 1995 on these themes in relation to the modern museological display of Greco-Roman material.

10 On the concept of “rationalization” in this context, see Tanner 2006.21–29 and Tanner in this volume. One does not have to go to a nineteenth-century painting to find the Roman household constructed as a *locus* for aesthetic reflection: classical archaeologists have verbally articulated the ideological assumptions that Alma-Tadema’s picture visualizes. Compare, e.g., Bartman 1991.82 on sculptural displays in the Roman house (citing Plin. *HN* 36.27): “In some respects the private realm of the *domus* provided a superior environment for the pendant’s viewing and appreciation. In its gracious rooms and verdant courtyards the viewer was likely to find the quiet leisure necessary for the contemplation of nuances of form and meaning . . . For all its bestowal of status upon its proud possessor, the sculptural decor of the private dwelling could also serve to engage visitors in the formal refinements of the visual arts.” For a sophisticated reexamination of the issue, see Neudecker 1998, esp. 77–78.

11 As such, our project aligns with a renewed interest in the ideological histories of art history itself reflected in, e.g., Preziosi 1998. Although our edited volumes share a common title, our inflections are rather different—Preziosi’s emphasis is on the historiography of art history, while ours also lies in the assumed notions of “art” in the first place.

A MODERN SYSTEM OF THE ARTS?

Of course, these questions are not particular to modern approaches to art, aesthetics, and art history alone.¹² The essential problem that we are tackling is about the applicability of modern concepts to ancient cultural spheres. We might compare, for example, the debate between “primitivist” and “modernist” historians of the Greek and Roman economies, in particular Moses Finley’s argument about the sociological “embeddedness” of ancient as opposed to modern “autonomous” economic systems;¹³ or else, responding to the pioneering work of Michel Foucault, the tussles about the extent to which “sexuality” is a meaningful cultural category in antiquity, despite the lack of a comparative conceptual vocabulary.¹⁴ As in every branch of cultural history, the stakes of these debates lie in our negotiation of the simultaneous proximity and distance of antiquity—the Greco-Roman world’s peculiar capacity to seem familiar and strange to us by alternating degrees.¹⁵

In terms of art history, at least, one of the most important attempts to tackle these questions was by the German-born, American scholar Paul Oskar Kristeller, who published two essays on “the modern system of the arts” between 1951 and 1952.¹⁶ Kristeller argues that our modern notions

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- 12 Foundational here is Foucault 1972, on how categories like “literature,” “politics,” “economics,” “art,” and “aesthetics” are modern coinages, “which can be applied to medieval culture, or even classical culture, only by a retrospective hypothesis, and by an interplay of formal analogies or semantic resemblances” (22).
- 13 For an excellent survey of the debate, see Ian Morris’ preface to Finley 1999.ix–xxxvi. The comparison is developed by both Osborne and Tanner in their respective contributions to this volume.
- 14 The bibliography is enormous, but the essays in Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin 1991 still provide an excellent guide. The polarized responses to Davidson 2007 demonstrate how residual (and ideologized) the debate remains. For the compared historicity of “art history” and “sexuality,” see Neer in this volume, as well as Habinek’s contribution (more generally comparing the universalist-historicist dilemmas of “art” with those of, e.g., “religion” and “literature”).
- 15 The overarching point is made with exemplary clarity by Beard and Henderson 2000.6: “*Classics* is a subject that exists in that gap between us and the world of the Greeks and Romans. The questions raised by *Classics* are the questions raised by our distance from ‘their’ world, and at the same time by our closeness to it, and by its familiarity to us. In our museums, in our literature, languages, culture, and ways of thinking” (emphasis in original).
- 16 The articles are combined and reprinted in Kristeller 1990. An abridged form of the same argument appears in Kristeller 1997. For a recent reassessment of Kristeller’s achievements (and a general hagiography), see Monfasani 2006, especially Labalme 2006. Specifically on the postwar context in which (the German) Kristeller was writing, see Elsner in this volume.

of the “Fine Arts,” conceived in the Enlightenment, do not apply to antiquity or, indeed, to any culture prior to the eighteenth century. Moreover, he suggests, such concepts as taste, genius, and the creative imagination were nurtured by the Enlightenment and never previously assumed the sorts of significance with which they are so readily ascribed today. As subsequent critics have pointed out, Kristeller’s thesis is premised upon a conflation of weak and strong claims: the argument that the *Beaux Arts* (as an “irreducible nucleus” comprising painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and poetry) were invented in the eighteenth century slips into a supposition about the eighteenth-century invention of “aesthetic autonomy” at large.¹⁷ But within Kristeller’s subsequent survey of art criticism through the ages—classical, mediaeval, Renaissance, and, finally, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (in France, England, and Germany)—Kristeller dedicates some nine pages to the “art history” of Greco-Roman antiquity. Antiquity, Kristeller claims, never grouped together the five arts of the modern western mindset; what is more, Greek and Roman writers “knew no Muse of painting or of sculpture: they had to be invented by the allegorists of the early modern centuries”:

Thus classical antiquity left no systems or elaborate concepts of an aesthetic nature, but merely a number of scattered notions and suggestions that exercised a lasting influence down to modern times but had to be carefully selected, taken out of their context, rearranged, reemphasised and reinterpreted or misinterpreted before they could be utilized as building materials for aesthetic systems. We have to admit the conclusion, distasteful to many historians of aesthetics but grudgingly admitted by most of them, that ancient writers and thinkers, though confronted with excellent works of art and quite susceptible to their charm, were neither able nor eager to detach the aesthetic quality of these works of art from their intellectual, moral, religious and practical function or content, or to use such an aesthetic quality as a standard for grouping the fine arts

17 See, especially, Porter 2009a.15–16, as well as the critiques of Porter and Osborne in this volume.

together or for making them the subject of a comprehensive philosophical interpretation.¹⁸

The language of Kristeller's analysis testifies to the paradox of his historicist enquiry: while attempting to eschew the cultural anachronisms of "art" and the "aesthetic," the author cannot help but operate within these terms—hence his recourse to "fine arts," "charm," "excellent works of art," "aesthetic quality," etc.¹⁹ Kristeller, we might say, articulates precisely the "Alma-Tadema effect" with which we began. In highlighting the cultural contingency of his own critical framework, however, Kristeller also finds himself without an alternative idiom for articulating the history of "art history" before its supposed invention. Such is the grip of post-Enlightenment aesthetics on our modern western cultural consciousness, it seems, that abandoning our rhetoric of art altogether would mean abandoning the project of saying *anything* whatsoever about its prehistory.

It took the epistemological upheavals of the late twentieth century to return critics to this paradox.²⁰ Only in the last twenty-five years or so have sociologists and cultural historians seriously engaged with the larger stakes of Kristeller's thesis, and in particular, Kristeller's closing speculations about the "causes for the genesis of the system [of aesthetics] in the eighteenth century" (1990.225). While Pierre Bourdieu talks of the "cultural capital" invested in art since the Enlightenment,²¹ Terry Eagleton draws attention to the social, ethical, and political ideologies that nurtured the development of aesthetic enquiry in the eighteenth century (and ever since).²² Philosophers and art historians have also responded to Kristeller's

18 Kristeller 1990.174. As Richard Neer notes in this volume (pp. 181–82), Heidegger reached a related conclusion, albeit from a very different starting point—namely, that "the magnificent art of Greece remains without a corresponding [Greek] cognitive-conceptual meditation on it, such meditation not having to be identical with aesthetics."

19 Cf. Kristeller 1990.226: "The various arts are certainly as old as human civilization, but the manner in which we are accustomed to group them and to assign them a place in our scheme of life and culture is comparatively recent." For an astute commentary, see Porter 2009a.22.

20 On the subsequent reception of Kristeller's thesis in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, see more generally Porter 2009a, esp. 2–4.

21 See Bourdieu 1984, esp. 5–7; cf. Bourdieu 1987.203: "The work of art exists as such . . . only if it is apprehended by spectators possessing the disposition and the aesthetic competence which are tacitly required."

22 See Eagleton 1990. Compare also Abrams 1989a, esp. 153–58, on Romantic eighteenth-century notions of aesthetics and their various theological (Pietist) investments.

claims, revising and expanding his central thesis—none more so than Larry Shiner, whose 2001 monograph on the eighteenth-century “invention” of our modern “system of concepts, practices and institutions” for theorizing art declared direct inspiration from “Paul Oskar Kristeller’s essays of fifty years ago.”²³ Others, like Arthur Danto, graft Kristeller’s thesis about the eighteenth-century “revolution in art” onto their essentialist teleologies of art across the ages (1997, esp. 187), while Hans Belting attempts to excavate the archaeology of art before its essential invention, situating the paradigm shift not in the eighteenth century, but rather in the theology of the Renaissance.²⁴

Whether or not we accept Kristeller’s hypothesis—and that is the underlying question addressed by each of the following articles—the stakes of the debate have never been more important, nor more resonant across a broad spectrum of different academic fields. Uneasily situated in the disciplinary no-man’s land between classics, archaeology, and art history, classical art history has witnessed the clamors against traditional approaches to “art” from each and every corner.²⁵ On one side is archaeology, which has made a taboo of “art” in an effort to stave off any association between material culture and aesthetic value—an association that has long driven an illicit antiquities trade, not least in the Mediterranean.²⁶ “all

23 Shiner 2001 (quotation, 10); Shiner delivers an impassioned defense of his project, and Kristeller’s own, in Shiner 2009. For related attempts to flesh out Kristeller’s historiography, associating changing concepts of art and artists with different social, political, and economical developments, institutional histories, and technological innovations, see also, e.g., Kernan 1990, Berleant 1991, Goehr 1992, Mattick 1993 and 2003, Becq 1994, Woodmansee 1994, Mortensen 1997, Williams 2004.7–53.

24 See Belting 1994. Still more fundamental—at least in German-speaking circles—is Belting 2001, on the project of what Belting terms “image-anthropology” (*Bild-Anthropologie*): offering a series of “suggestions for a science of the image,” Belting is highly critical of the aesthetic assumptions of *Kunstgeschichte* as traditionally framed (26). The book has had a very considerable impact in German scholarship, but much less so in the Anglophone world.

25 On the fate of classical art history in the early twenty-first century, especially in English-speaking lands, see Donohue 2003.4: “The study of ancient art exists in a disciplinary no-man’s land. Within art history it holds a marginal position; within textually based disciplines it is seen as irrelevant; and within many forms of archaeology it is variously condemned as effete, exclusive, destructive, or simply lacking validity.” For some overviews of the current state of (Anglophone) classical art history, see, e.g., Ridgway 1994, 2005, and Kampen 2002 (especially on American scholarship). Compare also Tanner 1994 and Elsner 2007a, both mainly concerned with the field as practiced in the UK.

26 See, e.g., Brodie, Doole, and Watson 2000.12: “Most, if not all, collectors (and some academics and curators too) regard antiquities as works of art. They argue that regardless of

art is material culture . . .” as James Whitley insists, “Classical art history therefore is archaeology or it is nothing.”²⁷ On the other side is art history, which, buffeted by the new historicist concerns of cultural historians, has attempted to throw off its tradition of connoisseurship, replacing its old-fashioned image of elite aestheticism with a new historicist breed of “visual culture studies” during the 1990s.²⁸ It is no coincidence that Kristeller’s historicist account of “art” came to be championed at precisely the time when so many departments of “art history” metamorphosed into departments of “visual studies.”²⁹

While the late twentieth century witnessed these increasing clamors for a new mode of “ideology critique,” the early twenty-first has seen a slow but sure interest in the sorts of aesthetic frameworks banished only a decade ago.³⁰ As Wendy Steiner puts it, invoking the language of “beauty” has become a “magnet for the cultural anxieties of our day—a way of registering

their origin they should be put on display for all to see and appreciate—a celebration of human artistic genius that transcends time and space . . . Of course, art is in the eye of the beholder, but claims of art cannot be allowed to justify destruction and illegal looting. Many objects marketed as works of art have been ripped from historical buildings or monuments”; cf. Brodie, Doole, and Renfrew 2001, Brodie and Tubb 2002, Brodie, Kersel, Luke, and Tubb 2006. Other archaeologists have taken their lead from Gell 1998, esp. 1–11—an attempt to replace assumptions about “indigenous aesthetics” with a cross-cultural “anthropological theory of art”: “I think that the desire to see the art of other cultures aesthetically tells us more about our own ideology and its quasi-religious veneration of art objects as aesthetic talismans,” as Gell puts it, “than it does about these other cultures” (3; note also the summary and response in, e.g., Osborne and Tanner 2007b).

- 27 Whitley 2001.xxiii. For a much more subtle (though no less programmatic) analysis, see Shanks 1996.59–65. Such an approach chimes in particular with the German national tradition of classical archaeology that, having developed independently of *Klassische Philologie* and *Antike Geschichte* since the late nineteenth century, subsumes classical art history under classical archaeology: see below, pp. 145–46.
- 28 Gaskell 1991.182 nicely labels the project “retrieval art history,” in which the objective is to “interpret visual material as it might have been when it was first made, whether by the maker, his contemporaries, or both.”
- 29 On the political ideologies underpinning “visual culture,” see Herbert 2003 together with the discussions in, e.g., Bryson, Holly, and Moxey 1994, Jencks 1995, Mitchell 1995, and Mirzoeff 1999. On these developments and their impact on the study of Greco-Roman art history, see Squire 2009.79–87; for two different critical responses, see Neer and Osborne in this volume.
- 30 Cf., e.g., Gilbert-Rolfé 1999, Prettejohn 2005, Scarry 1999, de Bolla 2000, de Bolla 2001.1–22, Brand 2000, Crowther 2002, Butler 2004, Scruton 2009. Earlier important soundings on the same theme include Mothersill 1984, Crowther 1993, and Lyotard 1994.

the end of Modernism and the opening of a new period in culture.”³¹ Related calls for the reinvention of aesthetics have turned afresh to the classical world for inspiration,³² and recent work on Philodemus’s first-century B.C. treatises on poetics, rhetoric, and music—reconstructed on the basis of the carbonized remains from the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum—has added a renewed impetus to such projects.³³ What is more, these developments have seeped back into the agenda of classical studies itself—with the exhortation to resist the lures of “culturalism,” for example, and return instead to the aesthetic appreciation of Greek and Roman literary texts.³⁴

These tussles about the historical contingency of art and the larger role of aesthetics play out still fiercer battles about the future of research in the humanities—the ongoing negotiation between the universalizing and essentialist narratives of structuralism, on the one hand, and the historical relativism that has subsequently come to dominate the academy, on the other. It is perhaps understandable that classics, a fundamentally historicist discipline (albeit one with essentialist aspirations), should find itself at once so sympathetic to Kristeller’s narrative of rupture and rift, and yet simultaneously so reluctant to renounce the “Alma-Tadema effect” with its romantic promise of seamless continuity between the ancient and modern worlds. The conflicting perspectives of the following articles would certainly suggest as much. For all their differences in opinion and approach, however, our contributors share in the conviction that classical art history is uniquely situated to find a way out of the current impasse between historicizing and essentializing approaches. Moreover, in croaking at each other across tiny ponds, and isolating the formal and material study of their subject from its wider theoretical implications, classical archaeologists have

31 Steiner 2001.xv, xvi. Steiner’s own analysis purports to resurrect a “time when beauty, pleasure, and freedom again become the domain of aesthetic experience and art offers a worthy ideal for life” (240).

32 Not least in Alex Nehamas’s recent attempt to abandon the sorts of aesthetic disinterest championed by Kant and Schopenhauer in favor of a bodily grounded concept of beauty, which Nehamas associates with the classical aesthetics of Plato; see Nehamas 2007.1–35, arguing that beauty is “part of the everyday world of purpose and desire, history and contingency, subjectivity and incompleteness” (35).

33 On the international Philodemus Project, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, see <http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/classics/philodemus/philhome.htm>.

34 Most notably in Martindale 2005: drawing attention to the aesthetic value of Latin texts, Martindale declares that “part of my purpose is to urge fellow classicists to make more use of the tradition of philosophical aesthetics from Kant to the present” (3). Martindale’s work has caused quite a stir in (historicist) classicist circles: cf., e.g., Farrell 2006.

all too often shirked their responsibility to engage with these sorts of macroscopic debates.

In this capacity, it is worth emphasizing that modern systems of theorizing the arts, and indeed art history itself, descend directly from the study of Greco-Roman material. Whether we trace art history's origins to Joachim Johann Winckelmann and his 1764 *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums*³⁵ or earlier to Giorgio Vasari (whose *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori*, first published in 1550, was itself modelled after a Roman prototype in Pliny's *Natural History*),³⁶ classical material has always played a classic role in the formation of the discipline. In coining a new field of philosophical enquiry between 1750 and 1758—one that distinguished between the logical knowledge of the mind and the perceptual knowledge of the senses—Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten deliberately turned to ancient Greece to provide a literal etymology for “aesthetics.”³⁷ Although Immanuel Kant's *Kritik der Urteilskraft* avoids discussion of ancient artworks—in fact, of almost any artistic examples whatsoever—his conceptual system likewise owes much to Winckelmann and, not least, to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, whose 1766 treatise on *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* is itself framed as a response to Winckelmann's description of an ancient classical statue group.³⁸ When lecturing in the 1820s, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel challenged the sorts of *Schwärmerei* implicitly associated with Kant and the Kantian aesthetic; and yet he, too, explained the dissolution (*Auflösung*) of art as an autonomous entity in terms of a shift from the classical Greek to the Romantic, positing the Christian Reformation as the crucial turning point. Hegel, we might say, laid the ground for Kristeller's own mode of historicist critique; once again, though, Hegel's teleological exposé of eighteenth-century aesthetic enquiry was premised upon the study of ancient and modern artistic production with a comparative historical perspective.³⁹

35 For a new translation, see Winckelmann 2006. The classic Anglophone treatment is Potts 1994, supplemented by the excellent analysis of Pommier 2003.

36 Preziosi 1998.21–27 insightfully compares Vasari's and Winckelmann's conceptual frameworks and methods.

37 On the relationship between ancient philosophical traditions and Baumgarten's project of aesthetics, see Büttner 2006.9–10.

38 On Kant 1987 and its relation to the work of Lessing (especially Lessing 1984), see the bibliography assembled in Squire 2009.49–57, 97–116.

39 Hegel's lectures on aesthetics are still best translated by T. M. Knox in Hegel 1975; for further discussion and bibliography, see Squire 2009.58–71.

The fundamental point is this: whatever its relation to earlier systems, the eighteenth-century articulation of aesthetics as an autonomous field of philosophical enquiry was itself implicated in responses to classical precedents. Whether we like it or not, modern discourses of art are bound up with Greco-Roman material in the same way that, as Alma-Tadema so conspicuously demonstrates, our modes of viewing Greco-Roman “art” are themselves inextricable from modern conceptual histories. As a result, it is only by comparing and contrasting ancient with modern modes of conceptualizing art that we can hope to understand either cultural system—and, indeed, both.

THE “INVENTION OF ART HISTORY” IN GRECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY

Much headway has been made in this direction, not least in recent work on the different social, cultural, political, religious, and propagandistic functions of Greek and Roman images. In Anglophone scholarship, one of the most important contributions came in 1979, with Richard Gordon’s seminal article on “Production and Religion in the Graeco-Roman World,” in which he expressly contrasted modern aestheticizing agendas with ancient theologically grounded modes of theorizing, conceptualizing, and interacting with images. Gordon’s article has reverberated in Anglophone scholarship ever since—from Peter Stewart’s important analysis of “statues in Roman society,”⁴⁰ to Jaś Elsner’s various contributions to the study of “visuality and subjectivity in Roman art and text” (to cite just two British examples).⁴¹

If one takes a broader international perspective, however, it is

40 Cf. Stewart 2003.10: “One way or another, classical art history has been concerned with Roman sculpture as a kind of art, not Roman statuary as a remarkable accumulation of objects working in society.” Stewart, however, maintains that “the modern boundaries established between portraits, cult images, dedications, and ‘statues-as-art’” pertain “to some extent” to antiquity, although they “were not so pronounced as they might seem” (17).

41 Cf., e.g., Elsner 1996.526: “Beside this literary world, in which art was really quite profoundly theorized . . . is a world of religious phenomenology, magic and initiation, in many ways more familiar from Byzantine and Medieval saints’ lives than from the evolutionary art histories of naturalism reproduced by Pliny, Quintilian, and Cicero.” Besides his book-length treatment of Roman art between the principate and late antiquity (Elsner 1995), some of Elsner’s most important contributions to the field are now collected in Elsner 2007b.

remarkable to see how different ideologies of “Greco-Roman art” are, in fact, shaped by different national traditions of (what in Britain is called) classics, classical archaeology, and classical art history.⁴² In Germany, for example, *Antike Kunstgeschichte* (still more *Antike Bildwissenschaft*) is very much subsumed within *Klassische Archäologie*. Indeed, since the late nineteenth century, *Klassische Archäologie* has evolved as an entirely separate field from both *Klassische Philologie* and *Antike Geschichte*.⁴³ Although classical material has arguably influenced the modern German artistic tradition more than that of any other European country, contemporary German scholarship tends to give a single programmatic answer to the questions explored in the current volume. Take, for instance, the words of Tonio Hölscher in what has quickly become the foundational German undergraduate textbook for the *Grundwissen* of classical archaeology:

In manchen Ländern wurde sogar an den Universitäten eine Trennung von “Kunstgeschichte der Antike” und “Klassischer Archäologie” vollzogen. Entsprechend hat die Neuere Kunstgeschichte sich von Anbeginn vorwiegend mit Werken der “Kunst” befaßt. Diese Trennung von “Kunst” und materieller Kultur ist aber eine Erscheinung der Neuzeit, die für die Antike nicht gilt. Antike “Kunstwerke” waren nicht museale Objekte des Kunstgenusses, sondern hatten Funktionen im Leben . . . Dieselben Funktionen wurden z.T. von Gegenständen erfüllt, die heute kaum unter den Begriff der “Kunst” fallen.⁴⁴

42 On the specific British and French, as opposed to German, traditions of classical archaeology, see, e.g., Snodgrass 2000b and Lissarrague and Schnapp 2000 respectively. This is not the place to embark upon an archaeology of classical archaeology, still less to detail different national traditions: for some guides, see, e.g., Morris 1994 (focusing on archaeologies of Greece), Sichtermann 1996 (on the German tradition), Dyson 2006, especially 86–132 (a transnational and comparative history of the discipline at the end of the nineteenth century).

43 On this German tradition specifically, see, e.g., Hölscher 2000a, esp. 10–14; cf. more generally Sichtermann 1996.9–27 and Marchand 1996. Of course, it would be artificial to posit too stark a delineation between different national traditions: some of the German perspectives explored in this paragraph are just as evident in, e.g., Smith 2002.64–71.

44 Hölscher 2002.13. For other articulations of the same position, see, e.g., Hölscher 2000a.9, 2000b.156, and, most recently, Ritter 2008.12–13. For a related (but international) vision of classical archaeology—arguing that the discipline also has something particular to teach departments of art history—see Snodgrass 1987.132.

Some countries have even witnessed a separation between “art history of antiquity” and “classical archaeology” in their universities. The “newer art history” has accordingly concerned itself from the beginning with works of “art” above all else. This separation of art and material culture, however, is an invention of modernity: it does not apply to antiquity. Ancient “artworks” were not museum objects of artistic delight; rather, they had real-life functions . . . These functions were partly fulfilled by objects that today have scarcely to do with our concept of “art.”

Although he leaves the “countries” unspecified, Hölscher must be thinking of the American university system, in which (what Hölscher defines as part of) classical archaeology is frequently dispatched to departments of art history. To realize the twenty-first century national ideologies at stake here, one only need remember the rather different German classical archaeological tradition of just a century ago. In the larger scale of things, it is not very long since German *Institut für klassische Archäologie* proudly employed a much more “artistic” rhetoric of *Meisterforschung* and *Kopienkritik*—a rhetoric, some might say, that still very much endures, despite protestations to the contrary.⁴⁵

Although keeping an eye on the broader international traditions that are at stake, the current volume was conceived in response to one academic contribution in particular, one conceived and written in English: Jeremy Tanner’s 2006 book on *The Invention of Art History in Ancient Greece: Religion, Society, and Artistic Rationalisation*.⁴⁶ Tanner brings to what he calls the “cultural rationalisation of art” in antiquity an unabashedly sociological approach. Classical art historians, Tanner explains, are faced with an uneasy balancing act between primitivist and modernist perspectives: on the one side are those historicists who emphasize the radical alterity of ancient responses to (what we call) art; on the other are those essentialists

45 On that rhetoric, associated with Adolf Furtwängler in particular, see, e.g., Marvin 2008, esp. 137–50 (with further bibliography) and Junker and Stähli 2008 (for a Germanophone response). For a more sensitive (albeit maverick) German reaction to the question of Greek and Roman “art,” see Giuliani 2005. On the politicized ideologies at stake in this (post-war) German intellectual agenda, even (and perhaps especially) in classical archaeology, see Elsner’s contribution to this volume.

46 For Tanner’s essential argument, see Tanner 2006.12–19, foreshadowed in Tanner 2005.

who, in quite literally approaching art in modern terms, run the risk of collapsing past into present—just like Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema.⁴⁷ With his firm emphasis on chronological development within antiquity (in particular, on the epistemological shifts of the fourth and third centuries B.C.), Tanner attempts a comparative sociology that navigates between the primitivist and modernist camps: while the specific cultural meanings attributed to art collecting and criticism are significantly different between the ancient and modern worlds, he argues, they are variant specifications of parallel practices, marked by a range of family resemblances that render them mutually intelligible to each other.

What Tanner offers classical scholarship, as he explains in this volume, is a social, political, and intellectual history of image-making in antiquity (and beyond it) oriented around the compass of transcultural sociological theory. It is an approach that, in some ways, resonates with James Porter's recent championing of ancient aesthetic thinking—his argument for continuity rather than rift before, during, and after the eighteenth century.⁴⁸ According to Porter, the problem lies not in the broad assimilation of ancient with modern systems of the arts, but rather in the mistaken modernist assumption of aesthetic autonomy in the first place: Kristeller's contrived "modern system of the arts" is alien to antiquity, Porter argues, because it is also alien to modernity (2009a.13):

Did the modern system of the arts, in the form that Kristeller wants us to imagine it, *ever exist at all?* I believe it did not, because that system is a historical construct that has been put together by Kristeller himself, one that is all the trickier in that it is exemplified perfectly by no one, but is instead elaborated through a series of fleeting cameos . . . It looks as if there was in fact *no* canonical

47 Cf. Tanner 2006.12–19.

48 See Porter 2009a, esp. 17: "It is for this reason that aesthetic questions are, I believe, our best bet for gaining access to the problems of art in antiquity—not because art is the ultimate resting point for such an enquiry, but because it represents a relay to something else: it is a window onto modes of sensory experience, onto modes of attention generally, onto perceptual habits and cognitive styles, and, therefore, onto the social relations that are embedded in things." Porter's comments form part of a larger enquiry on the "origins of aesthetic inquiry in ancient Greece" (see Porter 2010a), and chime with comparable German projects within the field of classical philosophy (cf., e.g., Büttner 2006.9–12, and compare the remarkably interdisciplinary project of Franz 1999).

“nucleus,” but only a loosely defined and ever-changing grab-bag of items that fell under the newly discovered rubric of “fine arts” during this era (emphasis in original).

There are important differences between Tanner’s sociological model, especially its concern with strict historical development, and Porter’s essential (and wholly more essentialist) emphasis on perception and experience, grounded in the study of lesser-known Greek critical texts. But the thrust of Porter’s argument generally concurs with Tanner’s conclusion about the “invention of art history” in ancient Greece. As Tanner puts it, “The final outcome of this process of cultural rationalisation [in antiquity] was the production of art with a rather purely aesthetic and art-historical orientation, primarily for connoisseurs and collectors.”⁴⁹

Whatever else we make of Kristeller’s arguments—or the subsequent responses to them—there are very conspicuous differences between ancient and modern discourses of “aesthetics.” The question, we might say, is why the *notion* of aesthetic autonomy established itself in the eighteenth century (or why it has been so vehemently challenged in the twentieth and twenty-first). Perhaps better, we might ask ourselves why these concepts did not take root in the Greco-Roman world—at least to the same extent, or in the same sorts of ways.

Perhaps an example can best clarify what we mean here: the painting of *Aphrodite Anadyomene* attributed to the fourth-century Greek painter Apelles.⁵⁰ As with almost every other renowned painting and statue from antiquity, Apelles’ actual work is lost, known to us only through literary texts and a series of later visual imitations.⁵¹ Five poems are dedicated to the painting in the *Planudean Anthology* (*Anth. Plan.* 178–82), translating the image into the conventional language of Greek ephrastic epigram.

49 Tanner 2006.302. It is the ambiguous “rather purely” of Tanner’s formulation with which Porter would take issue; for Tanner’s own response to Porter’s approach, see below, pp. 281–83.

50 For some introductory comments on the painting, see Havelock 1995.86–88; cf. also Overbeck 1868, who collects Greek and Latin sources, along with Bergmann 1995.89, n. 20 (with detailed bibliography).

51 See *LIMC* 2.1.54–57, s.v. “Aphrodite,” nos. 423–55. The painting was famous enough to serve as an ephrastic subject in the fifth book of Quintus of Smyrna’s *Post-Homerica* (Quintus Smyrnaeus 5.69–72) and as a tableau to be imitated by Byrrhaena in Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses* (*Met.* 2.17).

But the most detailed discussion of the painting comes in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* amid a longer discussion of Apelles and his oeuvre (*HN* 35.91–92):

Venerem exeuntem e mari diuus Augustus dicauit in delubro patris Caesaris, quae anadyomene uocatur, uersibus Graecis tali opere dum laudatur, aeuis uicta, sed inlustrata. cuius inferiorem partem corruptam qui reficeret non potuit reperiri, uerum ipsa iniuria cessit in gloriam artificis. consenuit haec tabula carie, aliamque pro ea substituit Nero in principatu suo Dorothei manu. Apelles inchoauerat et aliam Venerem Coi, superaturus etiam illam suam priorem. inuidit mors peracta parte, nec qui succederet operi ad praescripta liniamenta inuentus est.

[Apelles'] "Venus Rising from the Sea," known as the *Anadyomene*, was consecrated by the divine Augustus in the temple of his father Caesar: it is a work which has been celebrated in certain Greek poems which, though they have outlived the painting, have perpetuated its fame. When the lower part of the picture became damaged, no one could be found to repair it; but the very damage that the picture sustained thereby added to the glory of the artist. Time and damp at last effaced the painting, and, during his reign, Nero had it replaced by a copy painted by the hand of Dorotheus. Apelles also began work on another Venus (the Venus of Cos), which would have outshone even the former painting. But death invidiously prevented its completion, nor could anyone be found to complete the work according to its prescribed outline.

As a symbol of consummate artistic skill,⁵² and a challenge to posterity, the *Anadyomene*, at least as conceptualized by Pliny, might seem wholly familiar within our own modern modes of art history in the twenty-first century. The painting, after all, was highly prized and subject to the

52 Worked with "the most polished craftsmanship" (*politissima arte*), as Cicero had earlier claimed (*ad Fam.* 1.9.15).

ravages of time (foreshadowing the sorts of Romantic narratives so prevalent in the early nineteenth century). This is presumably the reason why a certain Dorotheus later restored (indeed, replaced) the image; or why, even in Apelles' own lifetime, the island of Cos commissioned a second, related image. Most striking, however, is the way in which the history of the painting is here collapsed into the history of its creator: Pliny structures his narrative around the virtuoso dealings of its maker—the masterful Apelles, whose prodigy no other painter could repair or, in the case of the second painting, complete in accordance with its original prescribed master plan (*praescripta liniamenta*). These sorts of anecdotal asides may seem in keeping with more modern art-historical modes, themselves derived, at least in part, from the very model that Pliny bequeathed to us. Viewed through the lens of Renaissance imitations—Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, Titian's *Venus Anadyomene*, or Antonio Lombardo's bas-relief, each of which has spurred countless imitations of its own—Apelles' *Anadyomene* can function as an *objet d'art* par excellence.⁵³

But the *Natural History* simultaneously suggests that Apelles' *Anadyomene* led multiple lives, even when Pliny was writing some four centuries after its creation.⁵⁴ Certainly, the image constitutes a celebrated example of painterly mastery. And yet it is also a source of poetic inspiration for a series of “Greek poems” that have outlived the painting and that have now “brought it to light” (*inlustrata*).⁵⁵ Dedicated at the center of an Augustan civic building program and within a temple complex dedicated to Julius Caesar, this object takes on other roles besides: we are dealing with (a painting of) a goddess apprehended in the sacred context of a temple; a commodified piece of booty transferred from Greece to Rome in an act of imperial appropriation and, in its new Roman cultic context, with an allusion to the divine ancestry of the Julio-Claudians, guided by the generative auspices of Venus herself.⁵⁶ The painting's context, and therefore its sig-

53 As Mack 2005.86 puts it of Renaissance engagements with the painting, “what even the mighty Romans could not restore, their worthy successors, the Florentines, through Botticelli, could recreate.”

54 More generally on the remove of Pliny's text from modern concepts of art history, see the important comments in Gordon 1979.7.

55 Compare Pliny's comments on Myron's bronze statue of a cow, “celebrated in famous poems” (*celebratis uersibus laudata*, *HN* 34.57).

56 Strabo 14.2.19 describes the original purpose of the object in the temple at Cos as a “votive offering” (*anathêma*), adding that the painting “of the female founder of his family” was subsequently dedicated by Augustus in honor of his father. In return for the painting, the

nificance, vacillates (un)easily between that of temple, picture gallery, and victory monument: any attempt to write an “art history” of the *Anadyomene* must take account of those various religious, political, and cultural roles whereby the status of the object veers between the comfortably familiar and the radically other.

Many of these themes are explored in the epigrammatic treatment of the painting. The adulation of (the image of) *Aphrodite Anadyomene*—so beautiful that even Athena and Hera would concede her supremacy (*Anth. Plan.* 178, 181, 182)—operates alongside and through associated discourses of visual epiphany. What is more, those discourses themselves infringe upon ephrastic epigram’s own meta-literary concern with manifesting and occluding that visual image through these verbal poems: the *enargeia* involved in experiencing the epiphanic appearance of the painted goddess, made at once present and absent by means of Apelles’ artistic mediation, becomes a figure for the complex representational status of a painted image that is itself represented through epigrammatic language—for the promise and failure of ephrastically turning images into words.⁵⁷ Apelles, claims Archias, saw the naked Aphrodite herself, just as she was born from the sea, laying bare (in every sense) his apparition through the act of drawing her naked (*Anth. Plan.* 179.1–3). According to Julian of Egypt, Apelles’ creative midwifery stands in comparison with the ocean that originally bore the goddess, rendering the sea’s original birth of Aphrodite through the liquidity of paint (*Anth. Plan.* 181.1–2). In another variant, Democritus draws attention to the impropriety of viewing a naked divinity in the first place (*Anth. Plan.* 180.5), returning to the dominant topos of associated epigrams on the Knidian Aphrodite, with their conflation of original prototype and mimetic replication (cf. *Anth. Plan.* 159–72). To be sure, these poems monumentalize the *technê* of the artist: so convincing is Apelles’ painting, as one epigram has it, that viewers should step away from it “so as not to be splashed by the foam that drips from her locks as she wrings them out” (*Anth. Plan.* 181.4–5). By doing so, however, the epigrams also stage concerns about the

Coans purportedly received a remission in Roman tribute of 100 talents. On the political stakes here, see Pollitt 1978.166–67. Bergmann 1995.89 suggests that it was this painting that Nero coveted for private display in his Domus Aurea—and that Vespasian subsequently restored to public view in the Temple of Peace (Suet. *Vesp.* 18).

57 On the poems, see, especially, Gutzwiller 2002.102–04. For an analysis of the “evasive epiphanies” staged by epigrams on both the Knidian Aphrodite and the *Aphrodite Anadyomene*, see Platt 2002b, esp. 35, and Platt forthcoming, chapter four.

performance of this evasive epiphany, at once performed—and deferred—through the *technê* of language:⁵⁸ in representing the desirous beauty of Aphrodite, writes Leonidas of Tarentum, Apelles figured her “not painted, but alive” (οὐ γραπτόν, ἀλλ’ ἔμψυχον, *Anth. Plan.* 182.4).⁵⁹

The *Anadyomene* played shifting roles within shifting literary genres, many of them culturally removed from our own modes of conceptualizing what the “artwork” is—the *ontology* of the image, as it were. The role ascribed to Apelles in the process can lull us into a false sense of security about ancient concepts of the artist—the talented “Old Master” praised for both his epiphanic (in)sight and technical prowess. But when we encounter imitations of the painting in an Ostian bath complex or in a Pompeian peristyle (figure 2), it is worth remembering that this “artwork” could mobilize that full range of interrelated discourses, and others besides:⁶⁰ a nod to classicizing tastes, certainly, but the iconography might also spur reflection on associated ideas of cultural ownership, artistic illusionism, and the potential theological dangers that inhere in the act of seeing (and what is more, of being seen to see).⁶¹ Behind the resemblances between ancient and modern modes of art history, in other words, is a world of difference. And it is here that the dangers of anachronism most conspicuously lurk.

BUT IS IT ART . . . ? EIGHT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

In engaging with these broad themes, this volume has a conceptual archaeology of its own: it derives from a panel held under the joint auspices

58 See Platt 2002b.40: “Yet while the *Anadyomene* series is ostensibly about *visual* creativity, the absorption of such a motif into the literary medium of the epigram turns it into a reflection on the *technê* of the poet himself, and the *literary* genesis of the text; it is ultimately verbal *technê* which has power over the reader” (emphasis in original).

59 As in so many other ephrastic epigrams, the use of *empsychos* here relates to a burgeoning Hellenistic bibliography on the philosophy of vision founded upon a Socratic concern with rendering the invisible soul visible (cf. Xen. *Mem.* 3.10.3). At the same time, Leonidas (like so many other Greek writers, regardless of their specific chronology) capitalizes on the established pun that inheres in the verb *graphein*, relating to the acts both of *writing* and *drawing* (cf., e.g., Lissarrague 1992, Boeder 1996.149–65, and Männlein-Robert 2007).

60 On the painting from the Casa della Venere in Conchiglia, Pompeii II.3.3, see *PPM* 3: 140–42, nos. 45–48.

61 For a related example of the way in which Pompeian wall painting could conflate different viewing modes, collapsing modern art-historical categories of the secular and sacred, see Platt 2002a.

of the American Philological Association and the Archaeological Institute of America, as part of their combined annual meetings in Philadelphia in January 2009. Following the acceptance of the organizer-refereed panel in March 2007, the editors issued an open call for papers, receiving a range of abstracts from a formidable array of specialists. In the review of abstracts that followed, we tried to strike a balance between different disciplinary perspectives—visual, material, philological, literary, cultural historical, philosophical, and those grounded in reception studies. In particular, we privileged contributions that dealt with the cross-fertilization of these different approaches: papers that reconciled variables of category, geography, and chronology in innovative ways, for example, or that explored how architecture, sculpture, and painting themselves embodied, flaunted, and critiqued contemporary, verbally mediated cultural discourses.

Although the current volume maintains the integrity of that original conference panel, we have made three significant alterations. First, as a consequence of the rich discussions that followed, we commissioned two additional papers, one by Richard Neer (focusing on archaic and classical material) and the other by one of the editors, Verity Platt (on the intersection between Hellenistic discourses of visibility and cult practice). Second, we altered the order of papers, placing Jeremy Tanner's paper at the end rather than at the beginning of the proceedings and inviting him to address some of the post-paper debates. Third, and finally, we invited Jaś Elsner to act as an independent respondent, bringing together the different themes of the volume in a concluding *envoi*.

We begin with James Porter, who delivers a sustained meditation on ancient and modern systems of conceptualizing the arts while pointing to the *longue durée* that stretches between them. What is perhaps most distinctive about Porter's approach is its inter-medial perspective, reconstructing a discourse of the arts that unites visual culture with the likes of poetry, music, and dance.⁶² The root questions of aesthetics remain valid within the study of classical antiquity, Porter argues, so long as we strip down our own (mis)understandings of the term—in particular, the mistaken assumption of aesthetic autonomy. As Porter explains, this means abandoning the dogmatic historicism epitomized by the work of Paul Oskar Kristeller; but it also means searching for theories of *relative* autonomy, both in ancient texts

62 Cf. above, pp. 147–48.

(Plato, Aristotle, and the Hellenistic euphonists), and in foundational modern treatises (among “Kant and his peers”). In this way, the ancient critical tradition can shed light on the modern, highlighting the artificiality of such overarching categories and revealing the fabrication of “modernist” myths of aesthetic autonomy. To be clear, Porter does not deny historical difference, but rather takes issue with the ideologically grounded assumption of incommensurability. While cultural philosophers like Larry Shiner maintain that “the Greeks had no word for it,”⁶³ Porter would claim that art existed before its labelling as such, just as gravity existed before Newton was hit on the head by an apple. Baumgarten’s coinage of “aesthetics,” in short, owes more to its Greek conceptual history than its Greek etymology alone.⁶⁴ If, as cultural historians, we posit too large a chasm between the ancient and modern worlds, there can be no getting across; worse still, Porter warns, we will end up denying the fundamental continuities in human sentience that bridge the historical divide between past and present.

The enduring tension between aestheticism and historicism is also the subject of Richard Neer’s paper. Interrogating a Francophone tradition of cultural history, Neer exposes the assumptions that continue to inform scholarly attempts at rationalizing and excluding aesthetic judgment: on the one hand, he argues, traditional art-historical methods have depended upon the logical priority of a concept of style; on the other, modern modes that privilege “visual culture” have attempted to uncover “viewing experiences” in isolation from aesthetic preconceptions, thus importing the ideological

63 See Shiner 2001.19–27, and compare Shiner 2009—an equally impassioned rebuttal of Porter’s position.

64 Although coming to the subject from the different perspective of ancient critical texts, Porter’s position resonates with dominant twentieth-century paradigms within classical archaeology: cf., e.g., Robertson 1991.2–3: “A verbal distinction between ‘craft’ and ‘art’ was never made in antiquity, nor in the Middle Ages or early Renaissance; not, I think, before the early sixteenth century. That the distinction was not verbalized must mean that it was not clearly thought out; but that something had existed, for ages before the verbal distinction was made, onto which we can properly extrapolate our conception of ‘art’ seems to me absolutely certain. Mediaeval and Renaissance painting and sculpture certainly qualify, and so does sculpture (and painting too, only so little of it survives) in ancient Greece.” Robertson’s position very much endures among a number of Anglophone classical art historians in the twenty-first century: compare, e.g., Stewart 2008.2–3, complaining that to talk of Roman “visual culture” or “visual history” runs “the risk of throwing out the baby with the bath water. They leave an art-shaped hole in the historical discourse. So far as I am concerned, ‘art’ it is. And art history this is” (3). (For Stewart’s image of the baby in its bath water, in a precisely analogous context, see Robertson 1991.1.)

(and anachronistic) assumptions of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Turning to Jean-Pierre Vernant's analysis of archaic Greek image-making and patterns of semiosis as his paradigmatic example, Neer suggests that, for all its importance and influence, Vernant's approach risks sidelining the visual realm altogether, collapsing material examples into oversimplified cultural paradigms of theorizing representation. By way of corrective, Neer implies that language, stylistic analysis, and archaeological contextualization can work together to generate a historicized "phenomenology" of the image in which the mobilization of visual effect and response allows us to develop a still newer mode of "new classical art history"—one that reconciles traditional formalism and connoisseurship with modern critical modes of cultural analysis.

In some ways, Verity Platt's paper on the aesthetics of the sacred in the Hellenistic world begins where Neer's study of archaic and classical phenomenology leaves off. Despite the avowed—indeed sometimes militant—secularism of the twenty-first-century academy, religious experience remained fundamental to Greek and Roman concepts of (what we deem) the art object. Even the most sophisticated critics of Greco-Roman visual culture rely on too stark a contrast between "sacred" and "aesthetic" modes of viewing, Platt argues.⁶⁵ What is more, this has been at the cost of a wholly false dichotomy in modern art-historical scholarship whereby certain (archaic and classical) groups of objects are treated in terms of a supposed "ritual" function, while others (especially from the Hellenistic and Roman periods) become the subject of a differentiated mode of "connoisseurial" (and hence sociological and political) interpretation. In art history, as in so many other spheres, classicists have appropriated the ragbag category of the "Hellenistic" as way of assimilating the ancient to the modern.⁶⁶ So it is, for example, that while Tanner has recourse to religion in explaining the development of naturalism in archaic and classical Greece, his complex analysis of the "rationalization of art" might be said to downplay the continued importance

65 The foundational analysis here is Elsner 2000 (revised as 2007b.1–26). Analyzing the interchange between ancient aestheticizing attitudes to the image, on the one hand (the "concomitant fascination with the sheer artistry of art" [Elsner 2007b.3]), and ancient ritualizing approaches, on the other (the "culture of sacred images and ritual-centred viewing," 3), Elsner points to the "dynamic spectrum of interchanging visualities that appear to have existed in a permanent dialectic and that could manifest together in the same viewer" (25).

66 Cf. below, p. 160, n. 79.

of theology, ascribing to religion an all too minimal role in the “reasonable ways of looking at pictures” that dominated Hellenistic Greece and Rome.⁶⁷ As Platt contends, and as Apelles’ *Anadyomene* arguably shows, religious experience continued to define cultural attitudes to what modern scholars have over simplistically deemed *objets d’art*—whether statues in the library, ephrastic performances in Alexandrian texts, or epigraphic inventories of objects displayed in the temple.⁶⁸ If we are to understand what the image was in the ancient world—once again, its ontology—we cannot afford to overlook the implications of viewing it with questions about religion, devotion, and epiphany: where modern art history, almost by definition, privileges secular approaches, the ancient world surrounded the image in an ever-expanding concatenation of theological significance.⁶⁹

Religion is one of the many comparanda that Thomas Habinek brings to bear on his “naturalist” account of aesthetics. As a cultural historian acutely interested in social anthropology, evolutionary studies, and cognitive psychology, Habinek sets to work on “ancient art” with a truly interdisciplinary conceptual toolbox. From the combined perspectives of neuroscience and anthropology, Habinek argues, “art” can be compared to all manner of other cultural phenomena that are at once *intrinsic* to our human evolutionary makeup, but also *socially* determined by the specific contingencies in which that blueprint finds distinct cultural expression.⁷⁰ Habinek’s contribution is characteristically provocative, adding its own essentialist take to the transhistorical conclusions of James Porter and Jeremy Tanner in particular: “‘art,’” as he concludes, “. . . is a secure category that can be defended on both evidentiary and theoretical grounds without dependence on notions of a fixed, universal subjectivity or ideological privileging of one set of historical practices or one historical period over another” (p. 221–22).

67 See Tanner 2006.205–76; for Tanner’s response to this argument, see below, pp. 276–81.

68 Contrast, for example, the highly aestheticizing perspective of Kousser 2008.141–42 (unwittingly perpetuating, e.g., Tanner 2006.226–33), who concludes as follows of the Athena Parthenos “copy” in the Pergamene Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros: “In so far as a particularized meaning for the Athena Parthenos existed in such ensembles, it was more likely as a ‘fine art reproduction’ than as a religious or political symbol.”

69 For the larger demonstration of the point, see Platt forthcoming. On our own modern western “theologies of viewing,” forged during the Reformation and removed from earlier thought and practice, compare Squire 2009.1–193.

70 The foundational text here is perhaps the special issue of the *Journal for Consciousness Studies* that focused on “art and the brain” (Goguen 1999), especially the contributions by V. S. Ramachandran and William Hirstein, and by Semir Zeki.

One of the issues that Habinek's article raises—returning to a theme already suggested by Richard Neer—is that images have the semblance of being universally interpretable. Unless he has knowledge of the original language (and the particular conventions of its presentation), “Joe Public” would probably not head to the library to read a Greek papyrus, and yet the crowds that frequent museums of antiquities attest to the fact (or at least widespread assumption) that material objects *can* communicate across removes of chronology, geography, and cultural perspectives—furthermore, that visual imagery can do so in a way that verbal language cannot. Whether or not to call this innate sensibility an “aesthetic” depends, as Habinek contends, on exactly what we mean by the term: our broad and conflicting definitions of aesthetics in the twenty-first century have to do with the particularities of our own post-Enlightenment perspectives. But so long as we concentrate on the faculty of perception itself, there is a universal—and in every sense, essential—story to be told.⁷¹ In historicist terms, moreover, we can find an archaeology for such phenomenologies of perception, reason, and materiality in Greek and Roman Stoic philosophy.

If Habinek ends by discussing highbrow philosophical texts, Robin Osborne returns to the nitty-gritty of ancient material production, focusing on the perceived role of the artist in archaic, classical, and Hellenistic Greek culture. Ever since Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz's groundbreaking 1934 work *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist*, critics have shown how modern, western understandings of art are themselves the product of a certain conception of the artist—as heroic creator, inspired genius, indeed, even mediator of the Holy Spirit.⁷² Classical archaeology has very much tended to operate within these terms, privileging prosopographies of Masters and Master workshops, even when their names have been lost (or rather, perhaps, never widely known).⁷³ While literary texts and inscriptions have

71 For Habinek, though, this universal story intensifies rather than diminishes the need for historical specificity: the faculty of perception demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between mind and environment.

72 For an English translation, see Kris and Kurz 1979; on the specific Christian Pietist underpinnings of modern Romantic concepts of the artist, see Mason 1993.225–33 and Tanner, p. 273, in this volume.

73 Most obviously in the attribution of Greek vase-painting, ascribing individual objects to known or supposed “artists.” The approach is indebted to the work of Sir John Beazley in particular, but it is in fact derived from an earlier tradition of connoisseurship, especially Giovanni Morelli's attributions of Renaissance paintings. For discussions of the ideological stakes, see, e.g., Elsner 1990, Vickers and Gill 1994.1–32, Shanks 1996.37–41, Whitley

passed down the names of many ancient image-makers and their works—as in the case of Apelles’ *Anadyomene*—the historical factors influencing the recognition and suppression of artistic agency vary wildly according to time and place: that we know the names of so many Attic potters and vase-painters but of none of the craftsmen who carved the Ara Pacis, for example, hardly maps onto post-Enlightenment concepts of the role and status of the artist.⁷⁴ As Osborne demonstrates, moreover, Greek artists’ signatures (like other inscriptions) retained a performative function that, in many senses, is quite alien to that familiar from the post-Enlightenment western world: rather than turn objects into autonomous “art” objects, signatures “did” things in and for specific social contexts.⁷⁵

Many scholars have dealt with the question of the artist’s status in antiquity.⁷⁶ In his contribution, though, Osborne looks not to Roman imperial texts—to Pliny, Quintilian, or Pausanias—but rather to the archaeological record itself. Through a quantitative epigraphic survey of “artistic” signatures from archaic through classical Greek culture, Osborne demonstrates that there was no qualitative development in the history of signing objects between the sixth and the fourth centuries B.C.: there was no “rise of the artist” in the fourth century, as Osborne puts it, because the artist never

1997 (with response in Oakley 1998), Rouet 2001.1–24. This sort of prosopographic commitment to “personal styles” is to be found in virtually all other branches of classical archaeology, not least in the study of Greek sculpture: see, e.g., Palagia and Pollitt 1996 and Corso 2004–07 (a two-volume project dedicated to the “art of Praxiteles”); compare also Richardson 2000, on the supposed “identifiable figure painters” working in Campania, and Getz-Gentle 2001 (applying a similar strategy to the “personal styles” of much earlier Cycladic sculpture). Vollkommer 2001–04 arguably offers only the culmination of this overarching academic obsession.

74 For some introductory comments on the problem of writing “a history of art without artists,” see, e.g., Osborne 1998.9–21 (on archaic and classical Greek material), along with Stewart 2008.10–38 (on Roman objects). Specifically on the artists of the Ara Pacis, see Conlin 1997, with response in, e.g., Claridge 1999.

75 In this sense, Osborne’s work builds upon that of François Lissarrague in particular: see Lissarrague 1985, 1990, 1992, and 1999; compare also Osborne and Pappas 2007.

76 Foundational, once again, is Kristeller 1990, on the absence of any ancient distinction between “artist” and “craftsman” (170–71), and the full spectrum of meanings encompassed by the Greek term *technē* and the Latin word *ars* (166); cf. also Shiner 2001.22–24. On Greek artists specifically, see Stewart 1979.101–14: “That the Greeks had no word for ‘art’ or ‘artist’ has clearly little or no bearing on the problem at hand, for the appearance of the artist as an autonomous creator well after the codification of Greek terminology for the arts was simply the result of an historical accident” (111).

arose.⁷⁷ Osborne's paper attempts something still all too rare among classical archaeologists: it studies the evidence of Greek vase-painting alongside that of Greek sculpture. In doing so, Osborne also returns us to some of the fundamental tensions with which this introduction began. On the one hand, his alien characterization of the classical artist might seem to align him with primitivist rather than modernizing approaches to Greco-Roman art history. On the other, Osborne explains this historical particularity in unabashedly modernizing terms: Greek artists, he posits, were concerned not with making themselves visible, but rather with enhancing the *aesthetic* appearance of the object ("denying that ceramic vessels are or can be works of art makes no sense," p. 250).

Inscriptions are also one of the sources introduced by Ken Lapatin, whose paper addresses the repatriation of objects in antiquity. As curator of one of the largest and most fiercely contested American collections of antiquities, Lapatin knows only too well the idealism that belies modern western notions of "aesthetic disinterest"—that our peculiar investment in aesthetics forms part of a much larger set of discourses about cultural property, ownership, and heritage. And yet, Lapatin demonstrates, these debates were themselves paralleled in antiquity—as again witnessed in the example of the *Aphrodite Anadyomene*: in the ancient and modern worlds alike, art histories are forged around analogous issues of national and civic identity, political self-aggrandizement, and the workings of comparable tourist industries. There are always competing narratives about an object's value. Lapatin's conclusions chime with some of Margaret Miles' recent work (2008) about art as plunder in the Roman world, with her literary focus on Cicero's *Verrine Orations*. For our purposes, though, Lapatin takes us quite literally *beyond* the aesthetic, exposing parallel social concerns, cultural institutions, and political practices that continue to inform art history in both ancient and modern perspectives.⁷⁸

It is fitting that Jeremy Tanner, whose 2006 book on the *Invention*

77 As such, Osborne most conspicuously challenges the narrative framework of Tanner 2006.141–204 (rearticulated in Tanner 2005.185–90), as well as some of the assumptions latent in Neer 2002, esp. 87–134.

78 One might well contrast Lapatin's highly politicized interest here with the aestheticizing perspective of Tanner 2006.264–75, concerned with a much more "rationalist culture of viewing"—with how "settings . . . served to inculcate a rationalist sensibility, congruent with the cultural patterning of elite philosophical and rhetorical culture" (265).

of Art History in Ancient Greece supplied the initial impetus of this volume, should provide the last contribution before Jaś Elsner's response. Tanner offers a concise rearticulation of his comparative sociological approach to Greco-Roman art history, clarifying his position in the light of the volume's other contributions (especially those of Platt, Porter, and Osborne). His method, Tanner explains, takes from Talcott Parsons a theory of "expressive symbolism" and "comparative differentiation," while deriving a model of "cultural rationalization" from the work of Max Weber in particular. Tanner keeps one eye on the macro-scale of ancient-modern comparisons and the other on the micro-scale of chronological change within each specific time frame: his particular method is to relate the Greek "rationalization" of art to other social, cultural, political, economic, religious, and, institutional developments between the late classical and Hellenistic periods.⁷⁹ The discourses of art history that emerged in the Greek world, Tanner explains, share fundamental structural similarities with those that developed in the western world between the late fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, themselves founded upon ancient paradigms. What is more, such family resemblances should encourage us to compare "art histories" from other, non-western cultures—not least those of ancient China.⁸⁰ Tanner therefore seeks a compromise between primitivist and modernist approaches, subtly differentiating his account, for example, from Porter's: as he explains, different social, cultural, and (especially) institutional contexts—the Greek polis, the Renaissance humanist court, and eighteenth-century Pietist theology—imposed dif-

79 It is worth noting, however, that Tanner's particular focus on the Hellenistic as the key moment of cultural rift is by no means new, at least among classical philologists. Recent analyses of Hellenistic literary and visual cultures have tended to offer closely related narratives (especially in the context of epigrammatic epigram): cf., e.g., Goldhill 1994.205: "[In the Hellenistic world] the culture of viewing is constructed—in part at least—in and by a series of written responses to works of art . . . Hellenistic culture is where 'art history' as a discipline first develops—with all the implications of that for the relations between a viewer and art" (rearticulated in Goldhill 2007.2); Männlein-Robert 2007.10: "Sie [Bilder und Artefakte] werden als reine Kunstwerke verhandelt" (note the Kantian ring, and contrast the more nuanced phrasing of Rouveret 1989.461). This philological framework, in fact, stretches back to much earlier scholarship on "Hellenistic art and poetry": see, e.g., Webster 1964.157 on how Callimachus's descriptions of artworks "reflect the beginning of scholarship in the history of art" (or compare the much more subtle and sophisticated analysis of Onians 1979.53–94). For some preliminary resistance to this model, see Platt in this volume, along with Squire 2009.241–49.

80 Cf., e.g., Tanner 2006.300–01, together with, e.g., Tanner 2007.

ferent limits (and afforded different opportunities) for developing different degrees of artistic autonomy at different times and places.

Jaś Elsner ends the volume by returning—characteristically—to the bigger picture. Situating our discussions within a much longer art-historiographic perspective, Elsner demonstrates the different ideological investments at play in each and every one of the volume's various contributions: when it comes to questions of art and aesthetics, as indeed to any other sphere of intellectual enquiry, "the stakes are always in part philosophical and theoretical, and never wholly empirical" (p. 291). As Elsner concludes, such "presentism" is itself a historical phenomenon: from the very beginnings of the discipline—whether we look to the Germanophone precedents of Winckelmann, Lessing, Kant, Herder, Schopenhauer, and Hegel, or to the more immediate ancestry of Riegl, Wölfflin, Sedlmayr, Gombrich, and, yes, of Kristeller himself—art history has always been forged from the intersection of ancient materials with modern ideologies. There is always a story of continuity to be told, in other words, just as there is always also a potential narrative of rift. Elsner's own story of historicist particularity, no less than essentialist universality, consequently gets to the heart of the epistemological challenges of understanding art—in whatever terms.

The following eight papers bring together a spectrum of different disciplinary outlooks, relating ancient to modern vocabularies of sensation, perception, and phenomenology, while exploring the associated political, social, and theological practices that these imply. Certain subjects are, of course, underrepresented, and other objects and texts are almost entirely overlooked—an inevitable consequence of our broadly defined remit. There remains scope, for example, for homing in on variables of genre, space, and time—whether to form a more unified narrative of linear chronological development or to complicate that chronological focus by comparing and contrasting art-historical modes across different literary forms (Hellenistic epigram, Vitruvius's *On Architecture*, Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*, Pliny's *Natural History*, Pausanias's *Description of Greece*, Dio Chrysostom's *Twelfth Oration*, Philostratus's *Imagines*, etc.).⁸¹ There also remains

81 Such a project would give a much more complicated and uneven history of ancient "art" criticism than is often assumed: compare, for example, how Bertrand 1881.53–54 argues concerning his *Imagines* that "one day Philostratus had a new idea [*une pensée neuve*], and on that day created a genre that outlived him and inspired imitators: he created art criticism [*il créa la critique d'art*]."

room to combine histories of visual objects with changing ancient theories of viewing and spectatorship, especially epistemologies of extramission and intromission, themselves so contested in the ancient world.⁸² Perhaps most pressingly, there is a need for renewed investigation into the shared language of ancient visual and literary critical response, founded around such Greek concepts as *glykýtês* (“sweetness”), *hôra* (“seasonality”), *hêdonê* (“delightfulness”), *alêtheia* (“truth”), *chrômata* (“colors”), and *habrotês* (“elegance”).⁸³ This volume, like the conference from which it stems, is intended as an invitation for further reflection on these (and other) topics and not as some *fait accompli*: we hope that others will pick up where we leave off.

We cannot promise that individual papers will agree with each other, the editors, or even with the founding premises of this introduction; indeed, it was very much our hope that they would not. Rather, this volume was conceived in a spirit of cross-disciplinary exchange—an attempt to build some intellectual bridges between the study of Greco-Roman visual culture and that of its social, cultural, and intellectual contexts. Some contributors privilege transhistorical modes, while others emphasize historical rupture. For all the differences in attitude, position, and outlook, however, each of the following papers seeks to forge new connections between different specializations within the field—whether comparing verbally mediated discourses with actual practices of visual production and consumption, relating ancient frameworks to modern theories of response, or dissecting the posthumous reception of ancient ideas, texts, and objects. In an academic climate where these different modes of analysis are all too often wrenched apart to form different disciplines, even confined to different academic departments, our aim is to demonstrate the merits of a more synthetic approach.

Whether we associate this objective with clamors for a “new classical art history” or instead label it some new breed of “Greco-Roman visual

82 For some related work in this direction, see, e.g., Nelson 2000. On theories of intromission and extramission in the ancient world, see Lindberg 1976.1–17, Simon 1988, and Nightingale 2004.7–14. Morales 2004.1–35 provides one of the most stimulating introductions to Greek and Roman epistemologies of vision, while Bartsch 2006 investigates their collective cultural remove from our own.

83 For a related rallying cry, see Porter 2009a.23: “The most productive, if least explored, way of confronting the problems of art and aesthetic reflection in antiquity is not by addressing this or that medium or literary or art criticism proper, but by transcending the barriers between the various art forms and their contemplation or analysis in order to arrive at what they share in common.”

culture studies,”⁸⁴ the contributors remain convinced of the need to study ancient and modern material alongside each other. Just as modernity can offer a cultural critique of ancient “art” and “art history,” so, too, can antiquity shed light on the parameters of our own cultural horizons. If Greco-Roman material is to recover its importance within the broader pursuit of art history, moreover, it must be through precisely this sort of comparative venture: this volume is offered to the advancement of that cause.

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84 For two different criticisms of such epistemological programs, see the articles by Neer and Tanner in this volume.