

Cambridge University Press

0521553407 - Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers

K. W. Arafat

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In the course of describing his travels in mainland Greece in the second century AD, Pausanias explicitly and implicitly reveals many of his attitudes and preferences towards the past and the present which governed, and arose from, those travels. In this book, I consider how Pausanias approached and carried out the task he had set himself. The major part of the study concerns his attitudes to the Romans in Greece, but his attitudes to the past are also considered, and it is a central tenet that Pausanias' examination of the present is indistinguishable from that of the past, indeed that the former was shaped to a significant extent by the latter. Pausanias himself is the starting point of this study: it is not a study of Greece and Rome, nor of provincial attitudes, Roman buildings, or individual emperors. It would not be possible (even if it were my intention) to look at all that the Romans built or dedicated in Greece nor at their pervasive impact on life in the province of Achaia.¹

There have been several full-scale commentaries since the pioneering (and still, in some respects, unsurpassed) work of Sir James Frazer. The ever-growing wealth of archaeological evidence (mostly confirming the value of Pausanias) increasingly renders the compilation of a comprehensive commentary an impractically burdensome task. In tandem, there have been many articles and monographs on aspects of Pausanias, including several in recent years, of which that by Christian Habicht is the broadest in scope.² That, like this, is a personal view; it is hard to see how it could be otherwise, for Pausanias is an author who provokes a response, to whom it is hard to remain indifferent.

¹ Following modern standard usage, 'Achaia' refers to the Roman province, 'Achaëa' to an area of the northern Peloponnese (cf. Alcock (1993) 233 n.17).

² E.g. Bultrighini (1990), Bearzot (1992), Elsner (1992), (1994), Habicht (1985).

Cambridge University Press

0521553407 - Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers

K. W. Arafat

Excerpt

[More information](#)

As modern readers, we may approach him as an Ur-Baedeker,³ or use his work as an archaeological handbook for excavations, and we may reproach him for not discussing what *we* would like him to discuss. Specialists in history, literature and archaeology have found in him much to stimulate and infuriate alike. But these strands in Pausanias' work are inseparable, and he cannot fully be understood without consideration of his background, of the regions about which he wrote and in which he was brought up, and of the context, literary, historical and political, of his life and writings. Much has been written on imperial Greek literary attitudes to Rome, and how they are reflected in, for example, Aelius Aristides or Lucian (notably in Jonas Palm's survey, which includes what is still by some way the most detailed consideration of Pausanias' attitudes towards Rome, albeit only twelve pages in length).⁴ But we must meet him on his own territory, and that is the Greece and Asia Minor of the second century AD. It is the territory of the Roman province of Achaia, or rather a part of that province, that he guides us through, but his origin in Asia Minor provides a constant backdrop to his writings.

Pausanias' work is by far our best surviving example of a *periegesis*, a genre of descriptive writing which is mostly lost. The fact of the preservation of Pausanias' text may have caused its importance to be exaggerated: one index of that importance is its accuracy, which can be continually re-assessed as more archaeological discoveries occur. But it is not the only measure, and if a series of other comparable texts had been preserved, they might have proved equally important even if in different ways. The purpose of this book is not to assess Pausanias' accuracy – not, that is, to create another archaeological or historical commentary – but to examine his working methods, the cultural background against which he wrote, and the attitudes apparent in his work. The particular focus is on Pausanias' personal attitudes: they are personal because he made them so, by writing in the first person, by laying great stress on autopsy, by frequently weighing arguments, and by giving reasons for preferring one view or another. In the same way, he not uncommonly expresses his own

³ There has long been a divergence between those seeing him as an ancient Baedeker and those who are not content with this neat (but surely erroneous) categorization; refs in Elsner (1992) 6 n.13, but he is wrong to say that only Veyne (1988) 3, 101, 'openly contests' this view (cf. Alcock (1993) 174): those who previously did so include Robert (1909); Robinson (1910) 213, (1944) 166; Strid (1976) 11; now also Dihle (1989) 260, (1994) 249.

⁴ Palm (1959) 63–74 (interestingly, more space than he devotes to most other writers). Forte (1972) 418–27, the only other attempt, is much more superficial.

Cambridge University Press

0521553407 - Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers

K. W. Arafat

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

3

opinion, or his uncertainty as to the truth of a particular story or ascription.

There are two inextricably linked elements to this study: in chapter 2, I examine Pausanias' attitude to antiquities, his consideration of the pre-Roman period in Greece, the terminology he uses, and how his preoccupations are reflected in his choice of which objects, buildings, and cults to describe. In chapters 3 to 6, I look at his attitudes to the events, personalities and art of the Roman period from Mummius to Pausanias' own time. While these elements are distinct, they are also complementary: both are structured in terms of individuals, respectively artistic and political, rather than in terms of events. But while the examination of the Roman period is structured in terms of rulers and their actions, with a chapter on benefactors, the pre-Roman period (particularly before the Persian wars) is examined through the personalities and genealogies of artists, and the sequence of artistic developments associated with them. This structure reflects Pausanias' own methods: as he makes a consistent attempt to distinguish one period from another, so does this book, through setting the art, architecture and cults which Pausanias documented against the differing contexts of their own times.

Chapters 3 to 5 consider an aspect of Pausanias' work hitherto not adequately studied, namely his writings on, and attitudes towards, the rulers of Roman Greece from Mummius to Marcus Aurelius. Mummius' destruction of Corinth in 146 BC was by any reckoning a crucial event in the history of Roman Greece, and thus Pausanias regards it; his writings on the history of the Hellenistic period to 146 BC have recently been examined in detail by Cinzia Bearzot⁵ in a valuable study which explains much of the background to the period with which I am concerned. I examine Pausanias' attitudes to the influential figures of this period – Mummius, Sulla, Julius Caesar, and the emperors whom he mentions – through his references to their activities in Greece, and how they reveal Roman attitudes to the sites and objects of Greece. And I consider what we can learn of Pausanias' view of the very institutions of the Republic and the Empire themselves. A brief chapter considers the few private benefactors whom Pausanias mentions, most notably the sophist Herodes Atticus.

Throughout, Pausanias' account is examined in conjunction with other literary sources and with the archaeological record, in order to

⁵ Bearzot (1992). Also useful on this period is Palm (1959) 63–5.

consider those works which he cites, and those which he does not but which are known from other sources, since the omissions in Pausanias can be as significant as the inclusions in illuminating his working method, and above all his individuality and personality. It is hoped that in this way a coherent view of what is distinctively Pausanian will emerge.

It is a truism in Pausanias studies that he is less interested in the present than in the past, and this study will not disturb that view. But it will argue that the imbalance is considerably less than has generally been perceived. In fact, although Pausanias has comparatively little to say of most emperors, as of most Republican leaders, he has much more to say than has been hitherto acknowledged. A fuller understanding of Pausanias' methods of narration and description, and of his own attitudes, seen in comparison and contrast with those of other writers, will lead to a broader understanding of the way the Roman Empire was viewed by some of its subjects, and of the attitudes of the Romans to their own art and institutions as well as to those of their predecessors.

Two related issues are relevant here: perceptions of the emperors current in Greece and Asia Minor, particularly after their deaths; and the role of imperial benefactions and patronage in building in the provinces.

While these issues will be repeatedly addressed in chapters 3 to 5, an illustration of how Pausanias' narrative can give rise to the question of contemporary perceptions of the emperor may usefully be given here. During his tour of Corinth, Pausanias says that 'Augustus was emperor of Rome after Caesar, the founder of the present city of Corinth' (2.3.1). It seems remarkable that he had to introduce Augustus and spell out his place in the sequence of Roman rulers. The inference that Augustus was somehow unfamiliar to Pausanias' intended readers may seem highly improbable, however logically it may appear to follow. The phrasing may simply be intended to stress Caesar's role as the founder of Corinth. But it may indicate exactly such unfamiliarity, or perhaps that such popular perceptions of Augustus as there were among the people Pausanias was writing for effectively constituted folk-history by his day. In that case, Pausanias may have felt that he had to spell out exactly who Augustus was as well as why he was relevant to that particular part of his description. The remoteness in time of Augustus would have been an important factor in forming perceptions of him in Pausanias' day, some 150 years later.

Cambridge University Press

0521553407 - Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers

K. W. Arafat

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

5

The issue of Pausanias' readership is discussed in more detail later, but here it may be noted that if Pausanias sees himself as, in effect, educating his readers, we may assume that they do not consist exclusively of a highly educated elite.

Arising from the question of what were the contemporary perceptions of Augustus is the further question of how those perceptions could be kept alive. The imperial cult is one possibility, and it will recur throughout this study.⁶ Another is straightforward historical or biographical writing, the latter including the dissemination of information in such forms as the copies of the *Res Gestae*. The popular accessibility of the copy at Ankyra (see below, p. 28–9) suggests that such information would have been available to Pausanias and to his readers; whether either took advantage of such availability cannot be known. A third means of maintaining the profile of the emperor in the provinces consisted of the physical reminders of his reign scattered round Greece and Asia Minor, from which a traveller and recorder like Pausanias himself would have been able to glean a fairly comprehensive picture.

Here the second reference in Pausanias to Augustus is instructive: at the Argive Heraion, among later imperial offerings, he says that 'before the entrance stand statues of women who have been priestesses of Hera, and statues of heroes, including Orestes; for they say that the statue which the inscription declares to be the emperor Augustus is really Orestes' (2.17.3). It is interesting that the locals know enough to be able to deny that this statue is a portrait of Augustus; and that Pausanias agrees with them. This, of course, does not mean that they *would* know a statue of Augustus if they saw one: it may mean no more than that they would know an emperor from a hero, irrespective of identity (this passage is discussed further on p. 126 below).

Pausanias' perceptions of Augustus and the other emperors whom he discusses form a substantial part of this book; but they need to be set against the role of the emperor in this period, and particularly the role of the emperor in relation to the provinces. In other words, while there is a concentration on Pausanias as a Greek from Asia Minor in the Roman system, attention is also given to how Rome views, and deals with, Greece and the Greeks.

A fundamental, but perhaps easily overlooked, issue is that of how active any emperor was, how personal his involvement, and how far

⁶ Although imperial cults generally ended with the death of the relevant emperor, some aspects of the worship of Augustus continued (Price (1984a) 61).

Cambridge University Press

0521553407 - Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers

K. W. Arafat

Excerpt

[More information](#)

he impinged on his subjects. As Fergus Millar has shown, the emperor's role was essentially to respond to petitions from his subjects, rather than to take the initiative himself.⁷ In general, the emperor would have undertaken minimal intervention in the affairs of the provinces; this is true also of the governor. Thus emperors would not have had a 'Greek policy' – apart from Hadrian, the exceptional nature and extent of whose interest in Greece will become apparent in the course of this book – and the personal involvement of the emperor in daily life and in provincial building programmes would have been limited.⁸

Most imperial benefactions in the provinces took the form of responses to initiatives from local donors, and owed most to the motivations of such donors, who would wish to associate their gifts with the ruling emperor for reasons such as the advancement of their own careers. In the case of buildings put up at public expense, from the late first century AD, it became standard practice that a licence from the emperor had to be issued before they could be erected.⁹ This also should not be taken to imply that the emperor initiated such buildings.

The buildings which Pausanias mentions in connection with each of the emperors – and those which he does not, but which are known from other sources – form an important part of this book. But they are seen alongside the wider view Pausanias gives us of each emperor. The greater part of this book is structured around the biographical aspect of Pausanias' writings, looking at the key Roman figures he mentions and their activities as they affected Greece. However, the comparison with the biographical writings of Suetonius and Plutarch is in fact minimal. Biography, with a particular emphasis on character, was their main purpose, whereas the biographical information that Pausanias gives us is mostly incidental, arising naturally from his description or discussion of particular monuments or buildings. Indeed, occasions will be remarked on where he apparently deliberately passes over an opportunity to comment on an individual's actions or character. Whether this gives his account greater objectivity, even reliability, than those of Suetonius or Plutarch, is better assessed as each example occurs, but the selectivity of his remarks requires examination of the criteria which he employs in making them.

⁷ Millar (1977). ⁸ Millar (1977), (1987); Mitchell (1987b).

⁹ Garnsey and Saller (1987) 37.

Cambridge University Press

0521553407 - Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers

K. W. Arafat

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

7

The starting point and linking thread of this study is the commonly expressed belief that Pausanias writes with disdain for modern art and buildings, and prefers 'old masters'. It will be argued that this is a simplification and that he does not have a universal disdain for things modern, but a layered, more subtle approach, which affects what he chooses to refer to, and how he does so. Through such references we can gain an understanding of the varied opinions he held of each of the individual Romans he discusses, and an overall picture of how he regards Rome as a whole and how he contrasts it with the past.

As a complementary process must be admitted the perceptions of Greece, particularly of the Classical period, commonly held in Pausanias' day. How far it can be said that Rome encouraged respect, perhaps an exaggerated respect, for the past of Greece will become apparent, but at the least, Pausanias' own views must be seen against the background of those most in evidence in other sources of the period. Here the comparative (and in some cases actual) contemporaneity of the events and personalities Pausanias was treating allowed, almost necessitated, a greater stress on individuality. In this, as in many central aspects, his writing must be seen as a product of its age, and of his position as a native of Asia Minor under the Roman Empire.

While Pausanias' uniqueness as a surviving source in itself guarantees his continuing importance, he should not be treated as an isolated phenomenon: his cultural and historical background must constantly be borne in mind when reading his work. This theme recurs throughout the following chapters, but here two fundamental points may briefly be noted. First, Pausanias grew up and worked in a world shaped by the Romans, and by Hadrian in particular. Secondly, he was from Asia Minor, not mainland Greece, which was the subject of his travels and writings. These factors have central implications for his writing, and must be examined in detail if his world and his attitude to it are to be comprehensible. The period he lived in, and his geographical origin, were crucial in forming his attitudes by providing him with an education of a particular kind, with an interest in travelling to Greece, and with the pervasive influence of the Roman Empire. This is not to suggest educational determinism since, as I shall argue, I believe that although Pausanias had the same type of education as his contemporaries, his writing differed from theirs in several important respects.

In the following sections, these themes will be examined as a means

Cambridge University Press

0521553407 - Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers

K. W. Arafat

Excerpt

[More information](#)

of setting the scene for detailed consideration of Pausanias' approaches to pre-Roman as well as Roman Greece, and to the notable individuals of the Roman Republic and early Empire.

ORIGINS AND BACKGROUND

Pausanias' origins and background will be examined under three closely related headings: (i) Pausanias and his work, (ii) historical background, (iii) cultural background.

(i) Pausanias and his work

The few facts and inferences that can be gleaned about Pausanias' life have been gathered by several scholars.¹⁰ The picture of his work that is now accepted (and is followed here) is that we have it complete in ten books, written between the 130s and c. AD 175–80. This conclusion is primarily inferred from Pausanias' own work, which includes hints about the chronology as well as the geography of his travels, many of them in the form of cross-references between books.

There may also be inferred from Pausanias' writings what is arguably the most significant fact for understanding him and his work, namely that he was a native of Asia Minor (in all probability Lydia, and specifically Magnesia ad Sipylum), and not mainland Greece.¹¹ On his travels in mainland Greece he was, in Christian Jacob's phrase, 'un *xénos* venu d'ailleurs'.¹² Pausanias was enabled by his origins to distance himself both from Rome and from mainland Greece itself, and it is in this light that his approach to Greece, ancient and modern, should be seen.¹³

Pausanias' writings must also be set against his objectives, raising the question of what exactly he set out to encompass: the key here is his stated intention to cover *panta ta hellenika* (1.26.4). Some difficulty

¹⁰ Habicht (1985) 8–19; Regenbogen (1956) 1012–3; Frazer 1.xv–xxii.

¹¹ Frazer 1.xix; Habicht (1985) 13–17 with refs, including a response to Diller (1955) 270, who sees Lydia only as Pausanias' residence at the time he wrote; Musti (1987) xix; Jacob (1980–1) 44.

¹² Jacob (1980–1) 44; similarly, Susan Walker classes Pausanias among 'foreign visitors' (Walker (1984) 252). These sentiments find ready parallels in the works cited in the previous note.

¹³ I disagree with John Elsner's view of Pausanias as exceptional because he 'chose to travel in and write about *his own native land*' (Elsner (1992) 7, his italics); the passage that Elsner cites in support of this position (9.36.5) gives no hint that Pausanias thought of mainland Greece as his home. Also '*his own land*' (Elsner (1992) 9, cf. 28); 'his homeland' (Elsner (1994) 244).

Introduction

9

has been felt here by Frazer and Habicht, both of whom give more than a simple rendering of this expression: Frazer translates it as 'the whole of Greece, or, more literally, all things Greek', and Habicht repeats Frazer's translation, adding "'all the Greek matters" would be closer to the actual wording'.¹⁴ Both the phrasing and the context make it clear that Pausanias is 'thinking aloud' and hurrying to end a historical digression in order to continue the task he has set himself. That task was to write about 'the whole of Greece'; as Habicht rightly concludes, 'Pausanias clearly intended to describe Greece in its entirety'.¹⁵ This view finds further support in Herodotos 1.5.3–4, the phrasing of which is closely followed by Pausanias.¹⁶ Such deliberate imitation constitutes a demonstration of Pausanias' own learning; the allusion would not have escaped his readers, nor would Pausanias have wished it to. But this is not just empty mimicry, since Pausanias is following Herodotos also in making a programmatic statement at an early stage in his work.

Thus Pausanias intended to describe the whole of Greece, although it is clear that he did not in fact accomplish this objective.¹⁷ The intended scope of Pausanias' work is remarkable not so much *per se* – his older contemporary Dionysios the Periegete, for example, set himself to write about the entire inhabited world (see below, p. 23 n.57) – as for the immense detail that he combines with that scope. Much of this detail derives from his constant emphasis on the local, the differences between the various parts of Greece, their practices and traditions. The use of local elements is central to Pausanias' working method: the use of local myths, the interest in and recording of local cults, the stress on local identifications of statues and sculptors, and the frequent citations of written sources, local informants and guides (all covered by the word *exegetai*),¹⁸ all bear witness to a determination on Pausanias' part to ascertain what lies at the heart of the communities he is visiting.¹⁹

¹⁴ Frazer 1.xxv; Habicht (1985) 6. Elsner offers a variety of meanings, not all of which are compatible with the Greek (Elsner (1992) 5, 11, 14, 22; (1994) 245, 252; cf. Alcock (1993) 120).

¹⁵ Habicht (1985) 6; also, p. 3: 'the whole of Greece is his topic'; Frazer's 'he professes to describe the whole of Greece . . .' (1.xxv) is misleading, as Pausanias is merely giving an earnest of intent. There are other occasions when Pausanias tells us he must end a digression and return to his main theme (e.g. 1.4.6). ¹⁶ I thank Michael Trapp for pointing this out to me.

¹⁷ On what Pausanias does and does not cover, Habicht (1985) 4–5.

¹⁸ Frazer 1.lxxvi–vii, with ancient references; Jacob (1980–1) 46–8; Veyne (1988) 5, 132–3. As an example of Pausanias' use of local informants for an area's history and tradition, Roy (1968).

¹⁹ Eisner's view that Pausanias 'pays no attention to . . . local color' is surely untenable (Eisner (1991) 32).

Cambridge University Press

0521553407 - Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers

K. W. Arafat

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Pausanias' prime interest was in the city and its sanctuaries,²⁰ a very specific type of site at which one would expect to find correspondingly specific types of art, communal symbols of state religion and therefore of state identity. At least part of Pausanias' interest in sanctuaries is therefore derived from his evident concern with what constitutes a city. Hence his interest in symbols of community identity, which inevitably involved antiquity and concentrated particularly on sanctuaries, which were the focus of the community *par excellence*. If the citizens of a town were interested in their community's history, it would be to the sanctuary that they would go to see the manifestations of that history. Antiquity legitimizes a site, and in dealing with sanctuaries Pausanias would inevitably be dealing with antiquities and their significance.

Thus Pausanias' interest in religious matters is in part an inescapable consequence of his interest in civic identity and its manifestations, since it is within cult buildings (and especially temples) that so many such symbols were stored. This does not, however, result in a mere catalogue of cult buildings: other structures in sanctuaries and civic centres which had little or no religious function are also described, perhaps for their importance in communicating civic identity, government and history (the Stoa Poikile in the Athenian Agora is a case in point, with its paintings of the battle of Marathon). It would therefore be unwise to deduce from the number of shrines described that Pausanias' prime interest was in religion; equally, however, it is necessary to be sensitive to the complex of personal, religious and cultural interests which might have been combined with such historical concerns to determine the choice of sites and monuments and the manner of their description.

In view of the arguments adduced in the preceding paragraphs, I am reluctant to see Pausanias as a pilgrim.²¹ In addition, pilgrimage implies a journey by a devotee in pursuance of a primarily religious objective, whereas Pausanias visits the shrines of a multitude of gods and heroes, certainly with a considerable interest in religion but not with one single identifiable religious objective, nor as a devotee of so many deities. Indeed, the extent of the complementary interest in non-religious matters marks Pausanias out as *pepaideumenos* rather than pilgrim. The breadth of Pausanias' objectives is reflected in –

²⁰ Snodgrass (1987) 77.

²¹ *Contra* Elsner (1992), esp. p. 20 seeing 'the whole of Pausanias' account as a pilgrimage'; also, Hornblower (1994b) 51 n.130.