

that the discussion remains interesting and vibrant – however, some of the chapters in the central part do suffer from long lists of evidence thinly disguised as academic prose.

Hirt's results accentuate the problems related to the lacunose evidence as well as the unreliability of the Roman epigraphic habit – hardly anything was ever recorded in inscriptions in a systematic manner. And even if such documents would have been produced, only a small part of them would have survived for us to study. Another very important aspect is the local and regional nature of the Roman administration: little evidence for centralized administration or even imperial policies regarding public extractive operations could be found. The general administrative organization of each province, the geographical and geological realities of each quarry and mine resulted in varying solutions in different areas. The revenue produced by the extractive operations was important for the emperor as shown by the many officials and the resources allocated to them, but the high number of private entrepreneurs involved shows that the imperial involvement was intended to be kept at a minimum whenever possible. In addition, it becomes clear that for example quarrying most marbles was not done for revenue, but rather as a display of imperial wealth and power.

Studying administration and bureaucracy might seem a boring topic to many, but Hirt also manages to showcase the practical problems which needed to be solved by individual officials – for instance, who had to deal with acquiring all the donkeys needed in the Egyptian marble quarries. The overall view of the various levels of administration from the day-to-day work in the quarries all the way to the corridors of imperial power in Rome is fascinating.

Eeva-Maria Viitanen

ANN C. GUNTER: *Greek Art and the Orient*. Cambridge University Press, New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-83257-1 (hb). XIV, 257 pp. GBP 50, USD 85.

Ann C. Gunter's *Greek Art and the Orient* is an ambitious take on the somewhat exhausted topic of the "Orientalising" period in Greek art. The monograph insists on offering no easy answers, and instead draws on a range of theories and scholarship to show what a multifaceted and complicated issue the transfer of art can be. Although material is drawn from different parts of the greater Mediterranean, the focus is on Assyria, the most powerful empire in the area during the 8th century BC.

Gunter starts off – and in fact concludes – by deconstructing oppositions such as "East" and "West" or "Greek" and "Oriental" as well as the homogeneity that existed within Assyria itself. "Art and 'Assyrianization' along the Imperial Frontiers" provides examples of both the standardization of art - for example Syrian and Lebanese ceramics in the 7th century BC – and deviations from set standards – "provincial" style seals as serving local needs rather than being mere poor imitations. "Conceptual Geographies and Frameworks" points out the flaws of using Homer to extrapolate ancient divisions and oppositions, or perhaps rather how he has been misinterpreted and simplified, and suggests the "Orientalising" period is a product of drawing parallels between 19th-century interactions between Europe and the Far East, and antiquity. While the aforementioned chapter debunks the existence of Eastern versus Western, "Defining and Interpreting Styles" does the same in terms of art, emphasizing how difficult it is to correlate style and ethnicity. After that, the focus returns to interactions within the Assyrian empire:

"Imperial Ideologies and Modes of Appropriation" discusses the range of ways artefacts and artisans could travel, not only through trade but as gifts, booty, and royal propaganda.

Greek Art and the Orient is almost too much of a good thing. The monograph is so densely packed with theory, overviews of scholarship, and alternate explanations that the reader struggles to process it all, much less summarize it into a short review. Gunter offers more questions than answers, and the cynic might say the only conclusion the monograph reaches is that we can conclude very little. Mainly, Gunter seems to argue against the title of the monograph itself: she makes a case for a cultural sphere covering the entire eastern Mediterranean and points out the paradox of contrasting two parts of the same whole.

Despite being a demanding read, the work is worth the effort, particularly for those already familiar with the basics of art-historical theory and Assyria. The reader might be frustrated by how *Greek Art and the Orient* keeps diving into finer and finer distinctions – the fine nuances make it very difficult to get enough leverage to say anything on the topic – but no one can deny Gunter's discussion is thoughtful and learned. The reader is left wishing Gunter would elaborate on how the distinctions she draws would have been perceived in antiquity, but perhaps that is a topic for a different day and a different monograph.

Elina M. Salminen

MICHAEL SQUIRE: *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York 2009. ISBN 978-0-521-75601-3. XXVI, 516 pp., 25 plates, 142 ill. GBP 75, USD 120.

This well-researched book focuses on a hotly debated topic which has interested scholars since antiquity: the relation between the visual and verbal spheres. With a mastery of a huge bibliography, Squire contests the traditional logocentrism, which dominates the modern study of ancient art and literature, and suggests new methodologies for both viewing and reading.

The book is divided into three parts. In Part 1, Squire locates the origins of the modern modes of viewing and reading images in the Lutheran Reformation and in the famous 1766 essay on Laocoon by G. E. Lessing. In fact, while Lutheran ideas about the importance of the text for unlocking the meaning of an image laid the foundation for the origin of logocentrism, the influence of Lessing's *Laocoon* reinforced the theory whereby texts and images work independently. The result was the imposition of Lutheran assumptions and Lessing's ideas about images and words onto Graeco-Roman culture, regardless of the fact that ancient viewers and readers may have had a different experience of, and approach to, visuality and verballity. Squire argues against this set of methodological assumptions and attempts to show how "visual and verbal realms are interpenetrative, intertwined and interdependent" (p. 145) with the analysis of some examples of Greek and Roman objects and monuments bearing ephrastic texts (funerary reliefs, symposium vases, domestic mosaics, and the wall-paintings of the Casa degli Epigrammi). However, there is some doubt whether the discussion, which often repeats what other scholars have already written about those examples and rarely includes the author's personal viewpoint, does successfully sketch "a different mode of approaching visual and verbal relations in the Graeco-Roman world" (p. 11).

In Parts II and III, Squire looks in more detail at four specific case studies for a broader