Lastly, and continuing on this theme, should we be looking in Livy for a deep thread of dismay, that the civic exemplarity, his long run of magisterial elections that had debated and refined every more precisely, had, to all intents and purposes, come to an end; or did he perhaps hint that the highly contingent and sometimes difficult choices were signs of instability? Was Rome’s fate too important to be left to an annual election, with all the possibilities that it might go wrong? One might wonder whether L. has or has not successfully argued for the separation of the magistracy from its holder. The exemplarity argument suggests that the magistracy survived even Caucine Forks, but the debates which Livy reveals suggest that he at least was acutely aware that office-holders defined their offices.

This is a book which in the end probably tells us more about Roman literature than about Roman politics. Yet the argument is profoundly political. Ultimately, the reader will take away from L.’s account a sense of the interplay between magisterial rhetoric and constitutional form, between individual virtue and collective responsibility. Romans worried about this, and if Livy is at all representative of a more widespread historiographical concern, they worried about it productively and in sophisticated ways. This review was written during a bitter US election campaign in which the rhetoric has been wound to a pitch we have seldom seen. The questioning of what constitutes civic virtue, eligibility, and the very nature of the state the candidates wish to lead has become acute, and if the concepts are to some extent shared to the point of tedium, there is no doubt that the language of argument has moved to the extreme, which indicates sharply divergent ontological assumptions. If states produce the candidates they deserve, and are defined by their elected representatives, then we should all be reading L. and Livy with increased attention.

Rome / St Andrews

Christopher Smith


The business of studying ‘Greek artists’ is once again booming. Of course, artists have always been central to the disciplinary workings of classical archaeology – from Adolf Furtwängler’s landmark studies of Kopienkritik and Meisterforschung in Germany, to Sir John Beazley’s wholly more British connoisseurial attempts to attribute Greek vases to named or unnamed painters. If the flurry of books dedicated to individual ‘artists’ is anything to go by – following a long-standing precedent, not least Vasari’s 1550 ‘Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori’ – our scholarly commitment to the lives and works of Greek ‘masters’ shows little sign of abating.¹

¹ Among countless other recent examples, see e.g. C. Davison – G. Waywell, ‘Phidias: the sculptures and ancient sources’ (London 2009); C. Roscino, ‘Polignoto di Taso’ (Rome 2010); É. Moignard, ‘Master of Attic black figure painting: the art and legacy of Exekias’ (London 2015). This has not just been an academic concern, as reflected in the numerous exhibitions and accompanying catalogues centred on single Greek sculptural ‘masters’: e.g. H. Beck – P. Bol (Edd.), ‘Polyklet: Der Bildhauer der griechischen Klassik’ (Frankfurt 1999); P. Moreno (Edd.), ‘Lisippo: l’arte e la fortuna’ (Rome 1995); N. Kaltsas – G.
Yet not so long ago, at the end of the twentieth century, many heralded the ‘death’ of the artist altogether. One rallying cry came from poststructuralist literary theorists (and none more so than Roland Barthes, who famously pronounced ‘la mort de l’auteur’ in 1967); another derived from the ‘visual cultural’ turn of art history itself, attempting to rescue the discipline from its long-standing connoisseurial grip.¹ Whatever their ideological motivation, many late-twentieth-century historians of Greek art likewise deemed issues of artistic agency – with all their baggage of ‘personality’, ‘originality’ and ‘genius’ – an irrelevant embarrassment: Greek art, as Rhys Carpenter memorably put it in 1960, should be thought ‘an anonymous product of an impersonal craft’.²

In this short but provocative book, Jeffrey Hurwit (H.) sets out to overturn that view, along with its «arid, «posthumanist» (6) assumptions. The argument replays a thesis first voiced some twenty years ago, when H. bemoaned the intrusion of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault – ‘patron saints of literary theory and cultural studies’ – within the hallowed sanctuary of classical art history.³ In order to champion Greek artists as «self-assured» (149), «original» (e.g. xvi, 147, 191 n.24) and «proud» (e.g. xv, 18–19, 52, 61, 67, 76, 179 n.27, 147, 150) – a phenomenon rooted in the «endemically Greek» spirit of agonistic competition (153) – H. turns to practices of signing: artists’ signatures, he argues, can confirm the importance of individual agency to the development of Greek art. To quote the preface (xv), the book «broadly surveys and describes a phenomenon – the art of signing, the inscription of identity – that cuts across the principal genres of ancient Greek art»; if «the practice of signing… sets the Greeks apart from the other peoples of the ancient world», «it also offers some insight into Greek conceptions of art, the artist, and artistic originality, and for that reason alone the phenomenon merits our attention» (xvi).⁴


² R. Carpenter, Greek Sculpture (Chicago 1960), v (discussed by H. at 163–164 n.7); compare more recently e.g. R. Osborne, ‘Archaic and Classical Greek art’ (Oxford 1998), 9–21, on an ancient ‘history of art without artists’; cf. A. Burford, ‘Craftsmen in Greek and Roman society’ (London 1972), arguing that «the concept of the genius, in the post-Renaissance or modern sense, never came into being in antiquity, early or late … The Musæes spoke to Homer, Hesiod, Vergil; but no divine voice prompted Onatas, Pheidias, Parrhasios, Protogenes or Pasiteles» (207).

³ Cf. J. M. Hurwit, ‘The death of the sculptor’, AJA 101, 1997, 587–591, at 587; cf. ibid. 591: «Reports of the death of the ancient sculptor … seem to me to be greatly exaggerated … many scholars do not even think he is very sick. Why kill him?»

⁴ Although such works go without mention in H.’s book, the business of studying artist-signatures is also booming outside classical art history: in addition to John Castagno’s encyclopaedic reference-volumes (cf. http://www.artistssignatures.com/index.php), see e.g. D. Boffa, ‘Sculptors’ signatures and the construction of identity in the Italian Renaissance’, in: A. V. Coonin (Edd.), ‘Scarlet Renaissance: essays in honor of Sarah Blake
The work itself is tightly structured, making this a handy one-volume student handbook: the endmatter – an ‘index of artists and signatures’ (including references to almost 300 extant or attested signatures), accompanied by sixteen short entries on ‘ancient literary sources’ and concise glossary – is also well suited to that undergraduate audience.¹ As for the book’s organisation, H. structures his intervention around three sections – the first ‘On the status, originality, and difference of the Greek artist’, the second asking ‘Who signed what, where, how?’, and the third reserved for ‘Speculations’ (in a single chapter, posing ‘Why?’). The second section, with its eight surveys of signatures in different media, is by far the longest, accounting for over two-thirds of the book’s total length. But H. in fact provides food for thought throughout: his three sections function both as isolated reads and as a tightly organised whole.

Because H. has attempted to frame his survey around a larger argument, let me begin by saying something about each chapter in turn. After a brief preface, explaining how «ancient Greeks liked to write things on their works of art and craft» (xiii), the first chapter starts with a general introduction. H. takes his lead from the inscribed Euthykartides kouros-base, dedicated on Delos in the late seventh century. Although the sculptor’s «artistic personality» is irretrievably lost» (4), H. concedes, this inscription is nonetheless «about self-promotion … mastery of material and form … [and] Euthykartides’ rivalry both with other sculptors for commissions and with other dedicants for the favor of Apollo» (6). For H., the suggestion of ‘pride’, ‘piety’ and ‘prestige’ contradict the widespread ancient Greek literary account of craftsmen as common banausoi: while «Xenophon, Aristotle, and Plutarch, on their high horses, might not have held him in much esteem» (9), an artist like Euthykartides «was no common laborer, no mere banausos – at least not in his own mind, which is the one that counts» (10).

From this starting-point, the second chapter explores the status of artists working in Greece in relation to those working among other ancient peoples (‘Greek ‹exceptionalism› in the ancient world’). One objective here lies in situating Greek practices of signing against those of Egypt and Mesopotamia: where – with some notable exceptions – «an artist’s signature does not exist» within the «depersonalizing» cultural parameters of the Near East, «Greece is a very different story» (18). Another objective lies in distinguishing the self-conception of the «Greek» artist from his «Etruscan» (19–20) and «Roman» (20–29) counterparts, working «closer to home» (19). Just as «the impulse for self-identification among Etruscan artists seems to have been weak» (20), «actual signatures signed by Romans (as opposed to Greeks employed by Romans) are rare» (26). This whole discussion is somewhat beleaguered by an outdated ethnic determinism, one that presupposes a neat distinction not just between ‘Greek’ and ‘Roman’ art, but also – on the basis of attested names – between ‘Greek’ and ‘Roman’ artists. Can we

¹ Given that audience, it is unfortunate that Cambridge University Press failed to copy-edit the glossary, with inconsistent transcriptions of Greek throughout: some words are marked with macrons (e.g. agôn, korê, sêma, stoikhêdon), while others are not (e.g. anetheke, emblema, epoiese, oinochoe, stele, etc.).
really assume, for example, that a gem inscribed in Greek with the words PHÆLIX EPOIEI points to «a Greek (slave or freedman) who had taken a Roman name and worked for Roman patrons» (27)? And what is at stake in such delineations of ‘Greek’ vs. ‘Roman’ identity in the first place? ¹

In the eyes of this reviewer, the strongest part of the book is its subsequent second section, with its eight chapters (chapters three to ten) surveying signatures in gems, coins, wall- and panel-painting, mosaics, vases, metalwork and sculpture. Each of these chapters gives a solid overview of signing-practices in specific visual media: as a collective, they will prove a particularly useful teaching resource, providing students with material for class discussion and analysis.

Along the way, this second section also asks some stimulating cross-medial questions. Why is it, for example, that ‘autographs’ on gems appear later than those in sculpture and vase-painting (cf. xv, 34–36)? How should we explain the disproportionate number of coin-signatures in the western Greek world – above all in Greek southern Italy – as compared with those from eastern city-states (44–45)? Likewise, when it comes to signing monumental buildings, does the very dearth of signatures reflect something about civic architectural programmes: might we think «that the signatures of builders … were normally regarded as inappropriate additions to the fabric of, say, temples and treasuries that were sacred, public, corporate efforts…» (55)? Throughout, H. proves as reliant on ancient literary sources as he does on extant materials (nowhere more so than in the case of wall-

and panel-painting, where no actual signatures survive). But he also keeps an eye on differences between media: one thinks, for example, of his argument that in the field of mosaics there seems a «modest correlation between signature and quality... not often found in other artistic genres» (70) – a point conspicuously relevant in the context of metal-work (100) and vase-painting, where there seems «no strict or necessary correlation between quality and signing» (91). Of these chapters, the longest is H.'s survey of sculptors' signatures, leading to five general conclusions (140–3): «The signing of sculpture followed no rules; «signing had regional and chronological dimensions»; «most extant sculptor signatures are proxies, not autographs»; «the decision to sign was usually not the sculptor's to make»; and «font size is not an infallible guide to artistic status».

The detailed nature of H.'s reviews prescribes against detailed commentary, but I restrict myself to just two brief observations. The first pertains to the names found on Hellenistic and Roman gems (36–38): as I have argued elsewhere, the «playfulness» (36) that H. detects in the positioning of signatures seems sometimes to extend to the very form of the names inscribed; rather than simple 'autographs', some attested names seem to pun – in miniature – on those of celebrated masters in painting and sculpture. So it is, for example, that in addition to the 'Daidalos' who signed a second-century garnet in Paris (36), taking on the name of the mythical father of all craftsmanship, we also find the likes of 'Sostratus', 'Phidias', 'Scopas', 'Polyclitus' and 'Pamphilus'. Are gems, as Verity Platt asks, inherent more 'medium-aware' than other ancient visual genres, and might we associate this aspect with the inherently 'replicatory' functions of sealstones? Second, and still with reference to such noms de plume, there seems more evidence for 'forged' names than H. suggests (82; cf. 180 n.40). Vase-painting provides some intriguing examples: in addition to a number of vases signed 'Douris' but clearly by a different hand (attributed to the Cartellino Painter and Triptolemos Painter), the name 'Polygnotus' (referring to the celebrated painter from Thasos?) is used by some three different red-figure vase-painters. In the Imperial Greek world, at least, there is considerable evidence for the celebrated names of past sculptors being used by their latter-day counterparts – hence the proliferation of craftsmen by the name of e.g. 'Myron', 'Praxiteles' and 'Pheidias'; the practice, I think, helps us to understand the fascinating case of the 'Theodorean' artist(s), whose miniature Tabulae Iliaceae refer back to the miniaturist mastery of canonical precedent (Plin. HN 34.83; Posidipp. 67A-B).

With its survey now complete, the book's third and final section zooms out to some broader 'speculations'. Earlier, H. had commented that «what is so remarkable ... is not that there are so few Greek artists' signatures, but so many» (30). Here, in the final chapter, the book asks 'why?'. H. remains sanguine about the inherent limitations of the evidence: while «it is impossible to know why a Greek

1 That is, until the Roman period: in addition to the 'Lucius' inscription mentioned on 27 (CIL 4.27173), note the intriguing 'Seleukos' inscription from cubicum d of the Villa Farnesina (cf. S. Wyler, 'Roman replicas of Greek art at the Villa della Farnesina', Art History 29, 2006, 213–232, at 216).


3 See S. B. Matheson, 'Polygnotus and vase-painting in Classical Athens' (Madison 1999), 3; cf. A. Burford, op. cit., 210 («Among Athenian vase-painters of the second quarter of the fifth century BC, it is clear that several different hands all signed themselves Polygnotos – it can only be, in emulation of the great painter of pictures»). More generally on the 'authorial' games of Greek vase-painting, see now G. Hedreen, 'The image of the artist in Archaic and Classical Greece: art poetry, and subjectivity' (New York 2016).

artist who did not sign his work, did not», he suggests, «the best we can do is suggest why a Greek artist who did sign his work, did» (147). According to H., the «broadest reason» is that the Greek artist «was human» – that is, that he responded to an egoistic impulse «deeply seated in the human psyche» (147). At the same time, H. notes that «no Greek artist signs all of the time, and most Greek artists do not sign at all, and so were quite capable of resisting a supposedly universal and innate human impulse» (150). «Entrepreneurship» and a «mercantile dimension» offer some explanation here (150–1). Ultimately, however, the phenomenon has «to be situated in a broader cultural context» (152), and one related to parallel cultures of Greek literary authorship: «the impulse to sign the work of art (literary or visual) ... may often have been generated by something endemically Greek: the agon (labor, but also contest, competition)» (153). All this can «tell us something fundamental about the Greek artist in general»: «whether he was a potter or vase-painter working in a shop near other workshops... or a sculptor vying for commissions with other sculptors or a free painter setting his talents against others», he was obsessed with outdoing his rivals through technique and conception, with making things better and thus new’ (155).

What, then, to make of the book as a whole? Many classical archaeologists will no doubt welcome this intervention, aimed primarily against those «who wish to overthrow the idea of the individual creative artist as the principal generator of artistic change and who wish to banish the concepts of genius or personality or originality from art historical discourse» (6). Indeed, the book in one sense allows classical art history to get back to connoisseurial business as usual («let us just stipulate that artists shape culture and culture shapes them, and move on», 6). In line with eighteenth-century, neoclassical views of Greek art (above all, those of Johann Joachim Winckelmann), H.’s ‘Greek artist’ is ultimately defined by his inherent artistic ‘freedom’. This explains the second chapter’s account of ‘Greek exceptionalism’ in particular, where there is something pretty suspect about H.’s non-Greek ‘others’: H. proves shy of using the word ‘oriental’, but there can be no doubting his view of those poor, suppressed individuals who struggled in vain to find modes of ‘original’ or ‘creative’ self-expression («The canonical, orthodox nature of Egyptian art ensured a uniformly high standard of production ... . But convention smothered most impulses for stylistic originality,» 16).¹

Whatever we make of the book’s conclusions, there seems to me an intrinsic tension in how H. arrives at them. Fundamental to the argument, after all, is an assumption that ‘autographs’ work in certain sorts of ways. Among other things, a signature is «implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) an expression of pride in one’s work» (xv); for all his careful rhetoric that signatures need not express «individual artistic genius», «inner vision» and «originality» (4), H. likewise argues that the presence of a name reflects an artist’s «impulse to declare, with his signature, his own identity» (6; cf. 159: «the signature was thus a device that produced kleos»). But does the surveyed corpus of materials end up supporting this hypothetical claim? H. puts special store on particular examples (above all

¹ As H. himself concedes in a footnote (165 n.28), «the situation may, it is true, be more nuanced than this...»
Euthymides’ ‘Revellers Vase’, with its celebrated boast «As never Euphronios!»: 88–89, 95–96, 153, 155–156). Again and again, however, he has to admit not only that the vast majority of works in all media go without signature (e.g. 150), but also that there is an apparent «randomness» (140) about which materials are signed. In this sense, the very lack of correlation between ‘signatures’ and supposed ‘quality’ raises a question in logical structure: in essence, H. proceeds from the assumption that signatures convey a certain kind of significance rather than find a means of supporting that preliminary hypothesis.

No less troublesome, I think, is the bibliographic elephant in the room: the fact that there is no reference here to the monumental 5-volume ‘Der Neue Overbeck’ (DNO), finally published in 2014, but already heralded in a number of previous publications. Early on in the book, H. refers to Vollkommer’s edited two-volume ‘Künstlerlexikon der Antike’, billing it as the go-to place for «most of the artists and architects discussed or mentioned in this book» (163 n.6). But the landmark DNO project goes without mention, despite its consolidation of around 1400 artist-inscriptions (expanding and revising Loewy’s 1885 ‘Inschriften griechischer Bildhauer’), and some 4280 testimonies to Greek artists in total. In one sense this omission might seem unimportant: after all, the book «does not catalogue every extant Greek artist’s signature» (xv); indeed, in introducing signatures beyond the realm of sculpture and painting, H. surveys media conspicuously omitted in DNO (most attested gem-cutters, for example, as well as architects, mosaicists, metal-workers and vase-painters). Still, the DNO project, some ten years in the making, has surely reconfigured the scholarly landscape for studying both ‘artists’ and ‘signatures’. Even before its publication, H.’s volume risks seeming somewhat outdated.

Of course, one must forgive H.’s book for failing to engage with a project that was published just a year or so before its appearance. Yet, as a point of reference, the work also throws H.’s larger polemic into question. H. takes issue with ‘the many academically trendy, Barthesian reports of the «death of the artist (or author)>> (6). But I wonder whether he is not flogging a dead horse. True, theoretical developments are woefully sluggish to gain traction in classical archaeological projects, some ten years in the making, has surely reconfigured the scholarly landscape for studying both ‘artists’ and ‘signatures’. Even before its publication, H.’s volume risks seeming somewhat outdated.

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2. R. Vollkommer (Ed.), ‘Künstlerlexikon der Antike’ (Munich 2001–2004); H. also cites Vollkommer’s discussion of ‘Greek and Roman artists’ (op. cit., 109) – e.g. at 165 n.1, 167 n.78, 178 n.7, 183 n.9, 190 n.2.

circles. Some fifty years after Barthes first coined this catchphrase, however, I think the 'trends' have moved on. Indeed, there is arguably no more monumental confirmation of this than DNO itself.

Other oversights strike me as no less important. The volume omits reference not only to the latest work on Greek artists as ‘creators’, but also to questions that have been simmering (with different ideologically derived answers) over the long stretch of the twentieth century.1 Where much intellectual energy has been spent in recent years thinking about the development and degree of art’s ‘ration-alisation’ in Greek and Roman antiquity – not least in the wake of Jeremy Tanner’s important work2 – H. comes down rather uncritically on the ‘modernist’ side: so it is, for example, that just as a Late Classical painter like Pamphilos can be described as a «Renaissance Man» (9), numerous «Greek Vasaris» (154) are said to have been active in the late fourth and third centuries BC. What is missing in all this is a critical or cross-cultural awareness about the larger ideological and historiographic stakes: the problem is less that H. retreats behind a rose-tinted Enlightenment narrative about the ‘freedom’ of the Greek artist, than that he seems to do so without knowing it.3

In both his concise surveys and his circumspect appraisal about remaining interpretive problems («not every such question can be answered, at least not with

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the evidence available to us», xv), H. has done a useful service. But where H. ends up modernising the ancient artist, so that Greek artists essentially mirror those of later western Europe, the remaining challenge lies in adopting a more comparative, self-aware and critically nuanced perspective. Only then, I think, will we be placed to make sense of the Greek ‘artist’. And only then will we have a better sense of what Greek art is – or what classical art history might be.

London

Michael J. Squire


Das Buch handelt von der Vorstellung, dass der Blick eines Menschen, eines Dämons oder einer Gottheit eine alles bezwingende Wirkmacht entfalten und dass er diejenigen, die von ihm erfasst werden, bezaubern oder behexen kann. Βασκανία ist der im Untertitel genannte griechische, fascinatio der lateinische Terminus für die insbesondere durch das Medium des Blicks erfolgende und den Betroffenen meist Unheil bringende Behexung. Dieses kulturgeschichtliche Phänomen aus dem Bereich der Magie und des Wissens um die Wirkmacht übernatürlicher Potenzen wird heute im allgemeinen dem Volksbrauch zugeordnet. Keineswegs ist es auf die Kulturen des griechisch-römischen Altertums beschränkt.

Während ihrer Tätigkeit in der Abteilung Rom des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts musste die Rezensentin erfahren, dass die Namen mancher (einen großen Namen habender) Fachkollegen im Beisein anderer, ebenfalls bekannter italienischer Kollegen nicht ausgesprochen werden durften. Schon das Hören dieser Namen bringe, so wurde ihr erklärt, Unheil, da die Namensträger das malocchio besäßen. Wir müssen also nicht glauben, dass das Wissen um den ‘bösen Blick’ nur antiken, vormodernen und in religiösen Vorstellungen fest verhafteten Geisteswelt angehört; vielmehr herrscht es ebenso in unserer heutigen, westlichen Welt bis hin in hohe Gelehrtenkreise.


On the specific cultural discourses said to have given rise to the Renaissance artist – informed above all by Judaeo-Christian ideas, whereby the artist encapsulates the disegno of divine creation – the key (uncited) work is E. Kris – O. Kurz, ‘Legend, myth, and magic in the image of the artist’, trans. A. Laing – L. M. Newman (New Haven [1934] 1979).