

Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram

Down to Philip

Edited by

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Cover illustration: *Les Bergers d'Arcadie* (Paris, musée du Louvre) by Nicolas Poussin, 1650-5. One shepherd traces with his finger the monument's inscription, *ET IN ARCADIA EGO*. As an image of the act of reading an inscription, the painting reprises, centuries later, the Hellenistic poets' reflection upon their inscribed models in literary epigram. (C) Photo RMN/© René-Gabriel Ojéda.

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EPIGRAMS ON ART
VOICE AND VOICELESSNESS IN ECPHRASTIC EPIGRAM

Irmgard Männlein-Robert

Hellenistic epigrams on works of art are for the most part transmitted in Book 9 of *AP*, in the *APL*, as well as in the Milan Posidippus Papyrus (P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309). Though it is often hard to distinguish ecphrastic epigrams on the basis of their content from the thematically more general and essentially more capacious subgenre of “epideictic” epigrams of a rhetorical stamp,¹ they do exhibit distinctive traits. Above all they attempt to imitate inscriptional epigrams and are incomplete in their descriptions. Their frequently unsatisfactory differentiation from epideictic epigrams is connected with their transmission: in Book 9 of the *AP*, for example, a group of largely uniformly ecphrastic epigrams from poem 584 until the end of the book follows on the heels of an epideictic grouping interspersed with epigrams on works of art (1–583). It is on this basis that we can discern the underlying anthology of Cephala as the source of the separation of these two types of epigram.²

What is an Ecphrastic Epigram? Characteristics and Tendencies

In the Hellenistic epigrams that deal with works of art, we normally do not find any detailed, complete description of the work’s form or even of its artistic details.³ In other words, ecphrastic epigram does not deal primarily with a differentiated and coherent description in the sense of a full epideixis or rhetorical *descriptio* as formulated in imperial and late antique school texts for all manner of possible subjects.⁴ In this essay,

¹ On this, see esp. Lauxterman (1998).

² On the research, see Lauxterman (1998: 526–9); Waltz, Aubreton, and Buffière (1957: 7.xxxi–xxxvii); and Rossi (2001: 15–6).

³ E.g., Leonidas of Tarentum 31 and 90 GP (= *APL* 306–7), on which, see below; for an exception, see Rossi (2001: 16).

⁴ Aelius Theon *Progymn.* 118.7–120.11 (Spengel 2); Aphthonius *Progymn.* 46.15–49.2 (Spengel 2); Hermogenes *Progymn.* 16.11–17.8 (Spengel 2); Libanius *Progymn.* 853–4 (Reiske 4). The phrase, ἔκφρασις ἀγαλμάτων, ecphrasis on works of art, appears first in

“ecphrasis”—or rather the anachronistic modern expression “ecphrastic epigram”—follows present-day scholarly fashion in designating epigrams that take as their subject works of art, such as paintings, portraits, gems, and statues which yet, as is often the case, fail to describe them in a detailed, objective, and analytical fashion (for which epigram with its few lines affords very little room).⁵ So the concern here is not poetic imitations of art imbued with a stirring *enargeia* (clarity), but rather the poetic identification of a work of art and the poetic *mise en scene* of an important interpretative pronouncement on it.⁶ When the name of the artist is even mentioned (on which, below), it is only when the epigram has to do with famous pre-Hellenistic artists like Myron, Praxiteles, and Lysippus whose works were well known.⁷ Pointed allusions to one of their famous works appeal to the corresponding background knowledge of the recipient. Thus, while scholarship on “ecphrastic epigram” has from time to time been more interested in actual descriptions (*ecphrasis/descriptio*) for their art-historical usefulness,⁸ it nevertheless always deals with a piece of poetry that reflects a work of art and its specific function.

In Hellenistic epigram, it is the act of observing the work of art that is thrust to the fore. Most often, this act is expressed through a dramatic *mise en scene*, even in dialogue form, and in expressly mimetic fashion. Besides matters of perception, such poems also touch on how the work of art ought to be judged and evaluated. Recent scholarship has situated these poems within the framework of a “culture of viewing.”⁹ Yet it is often impossible to place an epigram within the “genre” of ecphrasis. Indeed, many Hellenistic epigrams seem to play on their generic ambiguity.¹⁰ Literary epigram, moreover, often imitates inscriptional

Nicolaus (fourth-fifth century) *Progymn.* 67.16–71.5 Felten (= Spengel 3.492.10–23). On ecphrasis see, e.g., Friedländer (1912), Graf (1995), Fantuzzi (1997), Webb (1999).

⁵ For ecphrasis thus characterized, see Lauxterman (1998: 525–37); Goldhill (1994); Gutzwiller (2004b: 340, n. 3); and Zanker (2003: 59–62).

⁶ Krieger (1995: 46–7); Fantuzzi (1997: 943).

⁷ Numerous miniatures of famous works of art—for private households, for example—are attested for the imperial period, which should be true also for the Hellenistic period, on which see Gutzwiller (1994: 361; bibliography in n. 47).

⁸ Such as, e.g., Benndorf (1862); Schwarz (1971: 134–40 *et passim*); and Hebert (1989); cp., *contra*, Friedländer (1912: 55).

⁹ Goldhill (1994); Gutzwiller (2004b); Zanker (2004).

¹⁰ See, for example, the two epigrams of Asclepiades that show amatory and funerary features alongside their ecphrastic elements (Sens (2002b: 250–1)). Meleager combines ecphrastic and erotic themes especially frequently, e.g., 110–1 GP (= *AP* 12.56–57), on which see Gutzwiller (2003: *passim*).

conventions¹¹ in which the viewer and the act of observation hold an essential role. These elements are thus integrated into these poems from the outset. In addition to deictic elements taken over from inscriptions (mostly demonstrative pronouns, since they create the fiction of direct sensory perception), requests that the passerby “look” are also stereotypical. But in literary epigram what had been the viewer of a monument is transformed into the reader of a scroll.¹² It is thus left to the reader to imagine the work of art since the new writtenness of poetry severs the previously close connection between art and text characteristic of inscribed epigram, whether funerary or dedicatory.¹³ The reader must reconstruct for himself in his here and now the often layered context of the artwork. New, too, are the emphatic directions given by epigram’s speaker who steps forward in the role of an authoritative exegete and directs the gaze of the addressee.¹⁴ The actual subject of an ecphrastic epigram is therefore often the interpretation of an artwork. Ecphrastic tendencies and elements are found with especial frequency in dedicatory and funerary epigrams and not least in puzzle epigrams. In this last subgenre, ecphrasis needs to be taken in its original sense as description—as explanation and interpretation—here, of symbols.¹⁵

Another innovation in Hellenistic ecphrastic epigram is that poets use works of art to speak not only about artistic values, but also their own poetological principles. These epigrams belong therefore not only to a Hellenistic “culture of viewing” together with its philosophical and cultural background;¹⁶ they also say something about poetological conditions and literary epigram’s potential. Theoretical considerations underlying the production of art, especially of painting, sculpting, and engraving become analogous to poetic creation. The premise for this is, of course, the old analogy between the “sister arts” which here comes to the fore due to those arts’ shared interest in realism when presenting

¹¹ Sens (2002b: 250–1).

¹² References at Rossi (2001: 17, n. 13).

¹³ On the writtenness of poetry, see Blum (1977), Pfeiffer (1978), Bing (1988b) and (1995); on the severing of art from text, Rossi (2001: 17–21).

¹⁴ On “showing” in ecphrastic contexts, Boehm (1995: 38–40) and Rossi (2001: 17, n. 13).

¹⁵ Note the comparable ecphrases on letters (as symbols); see, e.g., Heraclitus 1 GP (= *AP* 7.465), Alcaeus of Messene 16 GP (= *AP* 7.429) (on which, see Bruss (2002–3) and, more extensive, Männlein-Robert (forthcoming 2006/7: ch. 5.3).

¹⁶ Goldhill (1994: 197–223) as well as Gutzwiller (2002a), Zanker (2003: 72–102) and Sens (2005a: 209–16).

their subjects.¹⁷ Epigrammatists praise artists (especially older ones such as Myron and Lysippus) and their works in whom they find contemporary Hellenistic benchmarks for quality; thus mentioning the artist's skilful "hand" and his laborious work becomes *de rigueur*. Sculpture, for instance, appears analogous to epigram, exhibiting the same principles of composition and reception.¹⁸ Poets playfully highlight how this art-form creates illusion, even as they subtly puncture it¹⁹ (through, e.g., the naming of the artist, his material, and pointing out shortcomings of the work of art)—all this with characteristic self-referentiality. The strikingly frequent absence of the name of the artist whose creation the epigram celebrates is symptomatic.²⁰ If our eye is directed toward the abilities of the artist even as he remains anonymous,²¹ then either we are dealing with poems on famous works of the masters who had long become the object of poetic *imitatio* and *aemulatio*,²² or else with an implicit reference by the artist to his own art. Not least, even terms having to do with writing media, such as *pinax* (see below), which appear in the specific context to be related to the work of art, often prove upon further investigation to be signals demanding the epigram to be read from a poetological perspective.

Yet, it is not just that poetic principles are embodied in an analogous work of art; rather, from the Hellenistic era on, epigram more frequently disrupts the traditional analogy drawn between the sister arts and emphasizes their differences.²³ Indications of the repositioning of poetry's relationship toward plastic art and its ramped-up self-styling

¹⁷ Hagstrum (1958: 3–128); Sprigath (2004).

¹⁸ Zanker (2003).

¹⁹ On the implicit destruction of the illusion, see Becker (1992).

²⁰ Above all in epigrams that take up statues of poets, for example Theocritus *AP* 9.599 (= 15 GP), 9.600 (= 17 GP), 13.3 (= 13 GP), and 7.664 (= 14 GP); so also Leonidas of Tarentum, *APL* 306 (= 31 GP) and *APL* 307 (= 90 GP); see also Männlein-Robert (2004).

²¹ See, for example, Erinna *AP* 6.352 (= 3 GP); Antimachus *AP* 9.321.1–3; Anonymous *APL* 97 and 127; Satyrus *APL* 195; Alcaeus of Messene *APL* 196 (= 19 GP); Antipater of Thessalonica *APL* 197 (= 89 GP *Garland*); Anonymous *APL* 142.5, 194, 265.1; cp. also Antipater of Sidon *AP* 9.790 (= 92 GP). The further literature in Häusle (1980: 52, n. 119) and Gow-Page (1965: 2.366) shows that the matter has not really been settled and no consequences drawn.

²² As, for example, Myron's *Cow* (see above).

²³ As has been noted in the most recent scholarship, e.g., Mitchell (1986), Heffernan (1993), Becker (2003), Männlein-Robert (forthcoming 2007). On the prior history and the famous dictum of Simonides on the matter ("painting is silent poetry; and poetry, a speaking picture"), see Sprigath (2004); on Lessing's reactivation of the ancient differentiation between these arts, see Krieger (1995).

as its superior exist from the earliest days of the Hellenistic period. A famous epigram by the mid-to-late-fourth-century²⁴ Boeotian poetess Erinna 3 GP (= AP 6.352) may serve as an example. It is putatively the first “ecphrastic” epigram:

Ἐξ ἀταλᾶν χειρῶν τάδε γράμματα· λῶσθε Προμαθεῦ,
 ἔντι καὶ ἄνθρωποι τὴν ὀμαλοὶ σοφίαν.
 ταύταν γοῦν ἐτύμως τὸν παρθένον ὅστις ἔγραψεν
 αἰ καὺδᾶν ποτέθηκ', ἦς κ' Ἀγαθαρχίς ὄλα.

This picture is the work of delicate hands. Good Prometheus,
 There are men whose skill is equal to yours.
 At least if whoever drew this girl so truly
 Had added also her voice, you would be the complete Agatharchis.

(trans. after Paton)²⁵

Deictic reference here points to the portrait of a young woman named Agatharchis. The portrait’s verisimilitude (ἐτύμως, 3) places the (unnamed) human artist in the ranks of the divine artist, Prometheus. It is notable that the artist’s hands are characterized as delicate (ἀταλᾶν, 1). However, the *enallage* here, the transference of the adjective ἀταλᾶν, collapses the girl’s delicate hands together with the artist’s, the one who paints so true to life.²⁶ Yet the epigrammatist introduces a further, poetological level into her poem: the delicacy of the hands begs to be applied also to the poetess Erinna and her elegant and refined style.²⁷ The artistic skill (σοφία, 2) which, on a superficial level, is ascribed to the painter, is laid claim to by the poetess for herself. The dual sense of the γράμματα points in that direction, as well. The term normally refers to “lines,” that is, something written, i.e., poetry,²⁸ but may also refer to a painting (in the sense of its “lines” or contours).²⁹ Erinna uses this term specifically because of its ambiguity and hints not only

²⁴ On her dating, Scholz (1973); cp. Gutzwiller’s earlier dating (1997a: 203–4).

²⁵ (1916–9: 1.485–7).

²⁶ Gutzwiller (2002a: 88). See also Murray and Rowland in this volume, 223–5.

²⁷ Cp. the Apelles anecdote (Pliny, *nat. hist.* 35.81) wherein Apelles, visiting the studio of his colleague Protogenes and not finding him there, drew a colored line of highest refinement on a tablet. When Protogenes returned, he was able to deduce the work as Apelles’ specifically because of the line’s finesse (*subtilitas*).

²⁸ See, for example, Erinna 1.6–8 GP (= AP 7.710.6–8), Asclepiades 4 GP (= AP 5.158) and 32.3–4 GP (= AP 9.63.3–4); in addition, Callimachus fr. 398 Pf. and 53 GP (= AP 7.471), Leonidas of Tarentum 101.1–2 GP (= AP 9.25.1–2), Herondas 4.24.73, Theocritus 23 GP (= AP 7.262), Callimachus fr. 64.7–8 Pf. Further attestations in Rossi (2001: 335, n. 2).

²⁹ For example, at Euripides *Ion* 1146.

at the painting, but also at her own poem, a device found elsewhere in Hellenistic poetry.³⁰

There is of course yet another indication that Erinna's compliment to the artist is merely a pretext. For with the remark in the last verse, "had [he] added also her voice" (an impossibility for the painter), the praise of the apparently perfect illusion breaks down. The very bounds of the painter's art—within which he is undoubtedly in full control—are shown him, for it is not his art, but that of the poetess, *her γράμματα*, that can present the "voice." With this, Erinna definitively shifts in her pronouncements away from the medium of plastic art, painting, into the medium of poetry, voice, and points to its superiority (though, ironically and perhaps in order to underline the painting's deficiency, she refrains from exploiting her medium's potential by allowing Agatharchis' voice to speak. Here for the first time in early Hellenistic poetry we detect a distance between plastic art and poetry, between image and text.³¹

A similar constellation appears in two epigram cycles that belong to the literary book culture of the Hellenistic period: the ecphrastic epigrams by Nossis and Posidippus. The eleven epigrams by Nossis, from Epizephyrian Locri in southern Italy, are mostly ecphrastic. Though now scattered about *GA*, they derive from a reconstructable original poetry book arranged by the poetess herself.³² In her ecphrastic epigrams, Nossis ensconces herself in the scene as a tour guide who points out works of art in a temple that had been set up there as dedications, and in short dramatic scenes she examines the chief elements of their ability to impress the viewer. In the same way as a priest, who traditionally was the one to explain the works of art placed in a sacred precinct, it is now the poetess who, as exegete, offers a tour by means of the collection of her poems, using the sacred space as the backdrop for her own art. The parallels between the characteristics of the women represented in the portraits and Nossis' own poetry are particularly pronounced in the dedication of the self-portrait of a certain Callo (Nossis 6 GP = *AP* 9.605):

Τὸν πίνακα ξανθοῦς Καλλῶ δόμον εἰς Ἀφροδίτας
εἰκόνα γραψαμένα πάντ' ἀνέθηκεν ἴσαν.

³⁰ See e.g. Theocritus 15, 81 and Herondas I 24; IV 73.

³¹ In greater detail on this matter, see Männlein-Robert (forthcoming 2007: ch. 3 and ch. 6); on the criterion of "wholeness," see Bing (1988a).

³² Gutzwiller (1997a: 213–6) and (1998b: 75–7, 85–7); Skinner (1991: 33–5); Luck (1954: 183, 187).

ὡς ἀγανῶς ἔστακεν· ἴδ' ἅ χάρις ἀλίκον ἀνθεῖ.
 χαιρέτω, οὐ τίνα γὰρ μέμψιν ἔχει βιοτῶ.

In the temple of blond Aphrodite did Callo dedicate the tablet,
 having drawn a likeness equal [to herself] in all respects.
 How sweetly it stands there! Look how her gracefulness blooms.
 Let her rejoice, for her lifestyle is blameless.

The viewer of Callo's picture in the temple of Aphrodite stands in awe of its verisimilitude and grace and encourages another to view (ἴδ', 3). The multivalent terms *πίναξ* ("tablet for writing or drawing") and *γραψαμένα* ("write or draw") reflect not only a tablet bearing a picture, but the tablet's more familiar function as a medium of writing.³³ The self-portrait of Callo thus stands for Nossis' epigram itself, which in turn represents its composer in true detail and true to life. Appropriately, it represents her not by describing the painting, but through that most basic element of language, a name: for "Callo" signifies the "beauty" to which the portrait is "equal in all respects". The rest—"how sweetly she stands there! Look how her gracefulness blooms"—is just a gloss. The apostrophized viewer in line 3 corresponds with the reader of Nossis' epigrams, who is drawn into the imaginary dedicatory scene. The arrangement of the art works in the temple picks up the disposition of the epigrams in the literary collection of Nossis' ecphrastic epigrams. The reader is transformed into a viewer of art invited to see the work with his own eyes. The poetess presents her readers with her poems just as the exegete in the temple of Aphrodite shows the viewers the works of art.³⁴ Above and beyond mere seeing and viewing of *objets d'art* in the situation as it is depicted, the poem demands to be taken as an allegory for reading and interpreting.

Posidippus follows the same principle. A contemporary of Nossis, his *oeuvre* has been considerably expanded since the 1990s through the discovery of the Milan Posidippus Papyrus (P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309).³⁵ With the date for its composition placed easily in the second half of the third century B.C., the epigram collection contains ecphrastic topoi and

³³ Cp. also the *Pinakes* of Callimachus, a bibliographic encyclopedia (on which, see Blum (1977)), as well as the notion of *pinakes* as bearers of (prose) dedicatory inscriptions (on which, Bing (2004: 284–5)). Earlier, cp. Homer *Il.* 6.168–9, 176.178.

³⁴ Casson (1974), Bing (2002) and Jones (2001: 33–9).

³⁵ On the question of authenticity, see the summary of the discussion in Acosta-Hughes, Kosmetatou, and Baumbach (2004: 4–5).

elements in the sections *Lithika*, *Hippika*, and *Imatika*,³⁶ and especially in the fifth section made up of epigrams on bronze statues, *Andriantopoiika*. In its programmatic introductory poem (62 AB), the speaker draws the attention of young contemporary sculptors to the works of the artist Lysippus and his students as exemplary models. They should, so the speaker, exceed the older masters such as Polyclitus in lifelike presentation. In the following poems, the speaker appears as an exegete guiding the sculptors he is addressing through an exhibition of works recommended as worthy of imitation. For these “Pictures at an Exhibition,” however, in comparison to Nossis’, the aesthetics and methodology of producing art stand in the foreground. The space envisioned for this viewing of art is significant and new. No longer a temple, as in Nossis, the space is now a profane “gallery” in which the reader imagines his viewing. The second epigram of this section (63 AB)—the first of the *Andriantopoiika* devoted to one particular work of art—establishes parallels with the poetic theory and aesthetics of Posidippus himself: this poem points the imaginary viewer to a particularly realistic bronze of the poet and philologist Philitas of Cos, in many respects considered the founding father of the Hellenistic avantgarde.³⁷ This epigram reveals the multi-level composition of ecphrastic epigram:³⁸

τόνδε Φιλίται χ[αλ]κὸν [ῥ]σον κατὰ πάνθ’ Ἐκ[α]ταῖος
 ἄ]κ[ρ]ιβῆς ἄκρους [ἐπλ]ασεν εἰς ὄνυχας,
 καὶ με]γέθει κα[ὶ] σα]ρκί τὸν ἀνθρωπιστὶ διώξας
 γνώμ]ον’, ἀφ’ ἡρώων δ’ οὐδὲν ἔμειξ’ ἰδέης,
 ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀκρομέριμον ὄλ[η] κ]ατεμάξαστο τέχνη
 πρ]έσβυν, ἀληθείης ὀρθὸν [ἔχων] κανόνα·
 αὐδῆσ]οντι δ’ ἔοικεν, ὅσῳ ποικίλλεται ἦθει,
 ἔμψυχ]ος, καίπερ χάλκεος ἐὼν ὁ γέρων·
 ἐκ Πτολ]ε]μαίου δ’ ὠδε θεοῦ θ’ ἅμα καὶ βασιλῆος
 ἄγκειτ]αι Μουσέων εἵνεκα Κῶιος ἀνὴρ.

This bronze, similar to Philitas in all aspects, Hecataeus accurately moulded it down to the tip of the toes, following the human [measures] in height and body and without instilling anything from the image of heroes. In fact with all his skill he portrayed the old perfectionist by adhering to the canon of truth.

³⁶ On which see Papalexandrou (2004: 247–58).

³⁷ Spanoudakis (2002: 26–8); Bing (2003).

³⁸ See also Gutzwiller (2002b: 46–8); Kosmetatou (2004c: 196–7); Zanker (2004: 68–9); Bing (2003); Hardie (2003); Bernsdorff (2002) and Sens (2005a: 209–16).

He looks like one on the point of speaking, embellished with such character,

[alive], although the old man is of bronze.

And here, [by order of Ptole]my, god and king at the same time,
the man from Cos [has been set up] for the sake of the Muses.³⁹

The exegete turns the gaze of the viewer above all toward the artistically successful representation of Philitas (5). The naming of the artist Hecataeus, considered a member of the school of Lysippus, and the mention of the statue's material, bronze (1, 8),⁴⁰ underline the illusionary intent in evoking the statue. Rather than describing the work's immediate effect, the poem constitutes a reflection on the fundamental aspects of the statue, its circumstances, and the methods for making this kind of art. The aesthetic premises of plastic art, here easily recognizable (e.g., precision, 2; detail and realistic form, 2–7), converge with Posidippus' own stylistic and poetic program which follows the example of the poet-scholar Philitas of Cos.⁴¹ The description of art thus becomes a poetic tool—it is worth recalling the statement in the fourth distich that the statue seems ready to speak (7–8). As a matter of fact, of course, the statue cannot really speak.⁴² The failure of the monument's voice and its inability to speak, foregrounded here as in Erinna, constitute one of the plastic arts' essential deficits.

An important programmatic aspect of this epigrammatic epigram—the first actual such of the *Andriantopoïka*—lies in its presentation of reciprocity between poetry and bronze sculpture. The sculptor's subject is a poet, the poet's subject is a bronze. Hecataeus' artistic abilities and Philitas' poetic principles converge, while Posidippus relies upon Philitas' poetic principles and consequently demonstrates his own—poetic—imitation of Philitas, an imitation of some importance in contemporary poetics. Just as plastic artists ought to take Lysippus and his style as models for their own creations, so Hellenistic poets take Philitas of Cos as prototype of an innovative new style in epigram and elegy.⁴³ It is worth pointing

³⁹ Translation by Austin in Austin and Bastianini (2002: 87).

⁴⁰ Further references in Rossi (2001: 17–8, n. 14).

⁴¹ On which, see Spanoudakis (2002) and Bing (2003).

⁴² Otherwise the paradox in line 8 cannot be resolved; see Sens (2005a: 215, n. 31); contra, Scodel (2003b), whose suggested emendation ἄγκειμαι, which allows the bronze statue of Philitas to speak the last distich, contradicts contemporary epigrammatic convention of hinting at merely apparent speech by works of art. See, for example, also Erinna 3 GP; Asclepiades (*sive* Archelaus) 43.3 GP (= *AP* 120.3); Dioscorides 15.4 GP (= *AP* 6.126.4); Anonymous (*sive* Damagetus) *AP* 97.6, *inter alia*.

⁴³ See also Spanoudakis (2002: 26–8).

out that since Philitas (320–270 B.C.) is an older contemporary of Posidippus, the poem's emphasis on the age of Philitas might be taken as evidence that Posidippus attributes to him the same authority with which older, pre-Hellenistic poets were imbued.⁴⁴

Dialogue as Ecphrastic Method

Posidippus' famous epigram on Kairos serves as an especially representative example of an ecphrastic epigram.⁴⁵ In this poem, an inquiring passerby quizzes a statue of Kairos by Lysippus;⁴⁶ and the statue, here represented as passive, answers the viewer's questions.⁴⁷ The conversation unfolds into a (self-)description of the Kairos statue, but only through a series of riddling hints⁴⁸—this, in marked contrast with pre-Hellenistic dialogues between viewer and artwork. Posidippus 19 GP (= 142 AB = *API* 275).⁴⁹

- Τίς, πόθεν ὁ πλάστης;—Σικυώνιος.—Οὐνομα δὴ τίς;
—Λύσιππος.—Σὺ δὲ τίς;—Καιρὸς ὁ πανδαμάτωρ.
—Τίπτε δ' ἐπ' ἄκρα βέβηκας;—'Αεὶ τροχάω.—Τί δὲ ταρσοῦς
ποσσὶν ἔχεις διφυεῖς;—'Ιπταμ' ὑπηνέμιος.
—Χεὶρὶ δὲ δεξιτερῇ τί φέρεις ξυρόν;—'Ανδράσι δειγμα
ὡς ἀκμῆς πάσης ὀξύτερος τελέθω.
—'Η δὲ κόμη τί κατ' ὄψιν;—'Υπαντιάσαντι λαβέσθαι
νῆ Δία.—Τάξόπιθεν δ' εἰς τί φαλακρὰ πέλει;
—Τὸν γὰρ ἅπαξ πτηνοῖσι παραθρέξαντά με ποσσὶν
οὔτις ἔθ' ἰμείρων δράζεται ἐξόπιθεν.
—Τοῦνεχ' ὁ τεχνίτης σε διέπλασεν;—Εἶνεκεν ὑμέων,
ξεῖνε, καὶ ἐν προθύροις θῆκε διδασκαλίην.

⁴⁴ See Scodel (1980: 317); Hunter (2001: 251); since old age connotes wisdom (*sophia*), Hellenistic art always depicts the poets in their majority.

⁴⁵ On its authenticity, see Benndorf (1867: 44).

⁴⁶ On relief and fragmentary copies of this statue, see Moser von Filseck (1988: 151) and von Hesberg (1988: 330, n. 85); for reconstructions of the bronze from literary sources, Moser von Filseck (1988: 151–9). For further texts on the statue of Kairos, see Gow-Page (1965: 2.499–500).

⁴⁷ Rasche (1910); Kassel (1983) and (1991); also Burzachechi (1962).

⁴⁸ Contrast the epigram inscribed on the base of a small boy's statue from the Asclepion in Cos (end of third century B.C.). While still a dialogue between the viewer and the statue, in contrast with literary epigram, it offers no ecphrastic self-description; text in Beazley and Gow (1929: 120–2).

⁴⁹ As in comedy, for example; see Aristophanes *Peace* 657–95; Plato *Comicus* fr. 204 *PCG* VII K-A where, of course, the muteness of statues is noted as characteristic.

Who and from where is the sculptor?—From Sicyon.—And his name?
 —Lysippus.—And who are you?—Kairos the all-subduer.
 —Why do you stand on tip-toe?—I am always running.—Why do you have
 a pair of wings on your feet?—I fly with the wind.
 —Why do you hold a razor in your right hand?—As a sign to men
 that I am sharper than any edge.
 —And why is there hair over your face?—For the one who meets me
 to grasp at,
 by Zeus.—And why is the back of your head bald?
 —Because none whom I have once raced by on my winged feet
 will now, though he wishes it, take hold of me from behind.
 —Why did the artist fashion you?—For your sake,
 stranger, and he set me up in the portico as a lesson.⁵⁰

The bronze Kairos, the personification of the propitious, but fleeting, moment,⁵¹ is here presented in a medium contrary to his own proper essence—as a stiff, motionless statue. While this statue may at first be puzzling, its significance emerges in the course of the epigrammatic dialogue. The figure of Kairos presents an abstract idea—the propitious moment—together with its proper characteristics, *in concreto*. The details taken as whole do have a specific meaning, and the epigram explains them. Through its striking attributes, the statue makes an oblique reference to something beyond its mere appearance; it is an allegory, to be interpreted.⁵² By dramatizing the process by which the allegory's message becomes manifest, the epigram also demonstrates how such allegorizing ought to be carried out and how one should react “correctly” to such a strange picture. It is worth pointing out that, although the epigram offers a paradigm for allegorical interpretation, there was no *standard* allegorizing iconography such as we find in medieval and renaissance religious art. Allegorizing ecphrases as a group do not constitute an iconographic handbook. Rather each individual explanation is *ad hoc* and indispensable, for even an experienced interpreter would not understand the image without the epigram's help. That said, the first impulse must always come from the inquiring viewer, who here opens the dialogue. His questions arise from an obvious irritation, from being unable to figure out on the basis of standard real-world criteria

⁵⁰ Translation after Austin and Bastianini (2002: 181).

⁵¹ Kerkhoff (1973: 256–274); Pfister (1938: 136–9); Moreno (1990: 920–6).

⁵² For interpretation in such epigrams, see Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004: 228–38) The line of development that Hinks (1939: 119) proposes for allegory as *continua metaphora* first appears in dialogical epigram.

what the statue represents. At first appearance, the epigram's leading questions—those about the artist, his provenance and name—seem to reflect some sort of artist's signature on the statue itself or its base. After all, it is just that kind of information that the passerby can actually read and understand. And yet, the subsequent allegorizing of *Kairos* goes far beyond a mere artist's signature. The goal of the plastic artist, like that of the epigrammatist, lies in the instruction (*didaskalia*) of men (cp. δειγμα, 5). This instruction makes particular sense when taken as preparatory, or propaedeutic—as the statue's location in the portico, the entryway (ἐν προθύροις, 12) implies,⁵³ that is, “before the actual task.”⁵⁴ For it may lead readers to enter the edifice of the rhetorical tradition or of contemporary philosophical teaching (especially of the Stoics) so as to explore the doctrine of *kairos* more fully.⁵⁵ Here, the poet Posidippus figures *Kairos* in an unconventional and paradoxical way—as a phenomenon of time which is always fleeting, yet embodied as a spatially fixed and motionless bronze. Clearly, one cannot grasp the characteristics of *Kairos* even in so artful a bronze statue as this one; rather one needs the dialogical epigram's interpretive help.⁵⁶

Another ephrastic epigram—a rare instance of an inscribed text transmitted with its image and in its original context—presents an especially notable explanation of unclear elements. This is the Menophila relief from Sardis, dated between the second century B.C. and the first A.D. The structure of the epigram is analogous to that of purely literary *griphos*-epigrams, by which it was certainly inspired.⁵⁷ Ephrastic in the truest sense of the word, the poem explains in the words of an imagined dialogue the details and signs carved on the grave relief of Menophila. Through its own allegorizing, the poem explains the initially disparate elements as symbols of an intellectual concept and in connection with Menophila's virtues (the basket that appears in the relief, for example, is a sign of her well-disciplined virtue). The epigrammatic text thus shines light on and interprets a work of art otherwise not understand-

⁵³ On the archeological consequences for the poem's placement of the statue, see Moser von Filseck (1988: 275–7).

⁵⁴ See Aristotle, *EN* 110a8.

⁵⁵ Current in rhetoric since the time of Gorgias, on whom see Dionysius of Halicarnassus *De comp. verb.* 12; Kinneavy-Eskin (1998: 836–44, esp. 841); and see Robert (1992: 427–8) on *kairos* as a rhetorical and artistic category.

⁵⁶ So also Gutzwiller (2002a: 95–6).

⁵⁷ Text: *GVI* 1881; more recent bibliography in von Hesberg (1988: 312–6), Gutzwiller (1998b: 265–7), Hunter and Fantuzzi (2004: 336–8).

able on its own, though without recourse to any sort of standardized interpretation of allegories.

Sequences of Ecphrastic Epigrams

One special feature of Hellenistic ecphrastic epigrams is their appearance in series: there are numerous epigram sequences devoted to the same artwork or the same subject of artistic interest. These result, first of all, from the fact that Hellenistic epigrammatists were grappling with the question of the relationship between poetry and plastic art, not to speak of their penchant for variations on a theme in accord with the rhetorical principles of *variatio* and *aemulatio*. It must be admitted, however, that some of the epigram sequences we have also arose through late antique and Byzantine editors of epigram collections who aimed at a certain grouping and arrangement.⁵⁸ In the extant sequences of *AP* (which often arranges such epigrams by the same author side by side),⁵⁹ a peculiar dynamic informs the poems' referential interactions.

Epigrams on mostly pre-Hellenistic poets are especially popular.⁶⁰ We shall focus especially on two by the contemporary poets Leonidas of Tarentum and Theocritus on a bronze statue of the poet Anacreon. The poems employ quite differing structures and have differing aims. In both, the sculptor remains unnamed; nor is he their theme. Leonidas 31 GP (= *AP* 306) takes up the statue of Anacreon in great detail,⁶¹ directing the viewer's gaze (θάξο, 2) to the pose of the drunken old poet, his eyes, clothing, shoes, age, mouth, open as if ready to sing, and instrument, the lyre—in short, it is a factually descriptive, “ecphrastic” poem in the narrow sense. Anacreon's characteristics here do not, of course, really correspond to his biographical reality; rather, they are topical elements distilled from his sympotic and erotic verse.⁶² On

⁵⁸ On which see Cameron (1993), Gutzwiller (1998b), and Lauxtermann (1998).

⁵⁹ Especially those of Antipater of Sidon and Meleager, on which see Gutzwiller (1998b: 227–322).

⁶⁰ Gabathuler (1937); and see Rosen and Barbantani and Acosta-Hughes in this volume.

⁶¹ Compare Leonidas of Tarentum 90 GP (= *AP* 307) in iambs; Antipater of Sidon with five epigrams on Anacreon: *AP* 7.23, 26, 27, 29, and 30 (GP 13–17); and Antipater of Thessalonica 85 GP *Garland* (= *AP* 9.792). See Goldhill (1994: 206–7) and Gabathuler (1937: 71, 98).

⁶² See Rossi (2001: 282–3).

the whole, the poem constitutes a poetic reflection of Anacreon's sculptural representation. On the other hand, an epigram ascribed to Theocritus, 15 GP (= AP 9.599)⁶³ presents itself as an inscription on the base of that statue. In typical inscriptional-ecphrastic manner, the poem urges the stranger to look carefully at the statue of Anacreon on Teos (Θᾶσαι... σπουδῶ, 1–2) and to report about it when he returns home. The epigram takes a peculiar twist, however:⁶⁴ it goes on, after the address to the viewer, to mention Anacreon's erotic and pederastic inclinations. Only with the addition of this information can we form a precise image of the poet (see ἀπρεκέως, 6). The epigram thus states explicitly that a thorough viewing of the statue does not suffice to arrive at a correct description of Anacreon. Even more, the opening gambit—the exhortation to view—turns out to be just a game on an ecphrastic *topos*, since, by the end, the reader has encountered no description of the statue, no reference to its life-likeness, never mind any mention of individual attributes.⁶⁵ But this means that an essential facet of Anacreon cannot be communicated through the external image of a person (cp. ἀνδριόντα, 1; εἰκόν', 3), but only through the medium that Anacreon himself served, poetry. Theocritus' epigram thus marshals itself in competition with the statue through its additional reference to his pederastic inclinations. The fame of Anacreon, Theocritus emphasizes, rests upon his erotic poetry and its sympotic context. The exhortation to the passerby “to view carefully” ostensibly has only the statue in mind, while in reality it is concerned with the epigram imagined as an inscription on its base. The epigram itself, in turn, affords an equally thorough vision of Anacreon inasmuch as it claims that it alone can render a complete description of Anacreon. Thus the opening address to an exemplary passerby turns out to be composed not only for people on Teos, but is aimed at Theocritus' readers. The absence of the artist from the poem might also be taken as revealing the poet's art-critical, and finally poetological, intent. Further deviations from the standard pattern might be adduced. The poem's Doric dialect as well as its metrical form clearly distance Theocritus from Anacreon's

⁶³ On the transmission of the *Sylloge* of the bucolic manuscripts, see Rossi (2001: 361–75); on a possible third-century edition of Theocritus' epigrams, see Gutzwiller (1996: 119–38).

⁶⁴ For a general treatment of this epigram with further detail, see Bing (1988a) and Rossi (2001: 279–80).

⁶⁵ On the functionless and incomplete inscriptional elements of this epigram, see Rossi (2001: 280).

Ionic poetry.⁶⁶ The breach here is not only with plastic art, but rather also with the poet Anacreon who is identified here through a peculiar and narrow caricature,⁶⁷ his pederasty. Inasmuch as Theocritus counts Anacreon explicitly among the “old” poets (4), the Hellenistic author reveals a sense of his own modernity.⁶⁸

Among the numerous variations on the selfsame subject or work of art, those on the mythical and literary figures of Niobe and Medea are most prominent. In the plastic arts, both figures appear in an especially striking scene modeled on poetic precedents. In the Hellenistic period, this artistic presentation in turn becomes a topic for epigrams with ephrastic elements. During that same era, Niobe was presented many times in stone statuary.⁶⁹ The Hellenistic series of Niobe epigrams⁷⁰ does not so much describe or dramatize the viewing of the artwork,⁷¹ as deal with its underlying subject, Niobe, and her hybris.⁷² The artwork acts as a pretext for raising ethical and moral themes, and to present the drastic consequence of Niobe’s errant behavior. Another sequence of Hellenistic and imperial-era epigrams (*AP* 135–143) concerns Timomachus of Byzantium’s painting that, following Euripides’ harrowing scene (*Medea* 1019–80), shows Medea steeled for the murder of her children, sword in hand and profoundly torn. The arrangement of this series is notable. From an incipient understanding of Medea and her motivations to kill her children in the first epigrams, in later epigrams the description slides into lack of comprehension and hatred. This movement can be traced to Stoic ethical discussions on the emotions in response to the famous monologue of Medea going back to the time of Chrysippus (third century B.C.).⁷³

The 36 epigrams on the bronze *Cow* of the classical sculptor Myron (*AP* 9.713–42 and 793–8), the oldest of which are Hellenistic, are

⁶⁶ The epodic structure (iambic trimeter followed by hendecasyllables) constitutes a reminiscence of Anacreon whose poetry in fact used other such combinations (e.g., iambic trimeter followed by hemiepes or ithyphallics); see Bing (1988a: 119–20).

⁶⁷ Rossi (2001: 282–3) gives a literary and critical survey of the reception of Anacreon.

⁶⁸ On the age of poets, see also Herondas 8.78–9, Callimachus *Hymn to Zeus* 60 and fr. 92, 75.54, 194.7 Pf., and Posidippus 63 AB.

⁶⁹ See Pliny, *nat. hist.* 36.28, on which see Ridgway (1990: 82–4, with plates).

⁷⁰ Theodoridas 18 GP (= *AP* 132), Antipater of Thessalonica 87 GP *Garland* (= *AP* 133), Meleager 128 GP (= *AP* 134), and Anonymous 129.

⁷¹ Rossi (2001: 27), Gutzwiller (2002a: 107–9); see esp. Meleager 128 GP (= *AP* 134).

⁷² As, for example, in Aeschylus *TrGF* 3.265–80 [Radt] = fr. 154–167b Radt.

⁷³ Gutzwiller (2004b).

especially famous.⁷⁴ Though they have scant art-historical value, modern research has come to appreciate these epigrams which, as a group, comment on the lifelikeness of this sculpture,⁷⁵ originally installed as a dedication on the Acropolis of Athens. These epigrams pose as inscriptions on the base of the bronze conveying the information one would conventionally expect. But in place of a distinctly ephrastic description, they attempt to catch the essential impressions left by the sculpture. The work of art thus serves merely as a stimulus to reflect on how one ought to view, consider, and judge the plastic arts (i.e., they work within the “culture of viewing”).⁷⁶ Aesthetic aspects predominate: the effect of the plastic arts on viewers, verisimilitude in artistic imitation, etc. Often, the terms are familiar from poetic theory (such as ψεύδος, ἀπάτη,⁷⁷ πλάττειν),⁷⁸ where they describe the illusionary. Thus the fictionality of poetry, a perennial subject of theoretical discourse, is now applied to an artwork, which is discussed according to the criteria of deception and lying—that is, of illusion.⁷⁹ Myron’s “lie” arises from the confusion between his *Cow* and a real animal, from the fact that the viewer (whether animal or man) errs even when he encounters the *Cow* face to face; and Myron becomes a putative deceiver. Hellenistic praise of the *Cow* reveals the high value placed during this era on verisimilitude in artistic representation. Previously, only quasi-mythical artists such as Daedalus, Hephaestus, and Prometheus had demonstrated

⁷⁴ On material remains and the transmissional history, see Corso (1994: 49–91). Posidippus 66 AB, transmitted apart from *AP* in the *Andriantopoiika* of P. Mil. Vogl. VIII 309, may be one of the oldest on Myron’s *Cow*.

⁷⁵ The variations by Antipater of Sidon (*AP* 9.720–4, 728 = 36–40 GP) speak narrowly to what is perhaps the oldest such epigram, Leonidas of Tarentum 88 GP (= *AP* 9.719); on this relationship, see Gutzwiller (1998b: 245–50). On the epigrams’ comments on lifelikeness, see Fuà (1973: 49–55), Speyer (1975: 171–9), Lausberg (1982: 224–5), and Laurens (1989: 83–5), along with the dismissive judgment of Gow-Page (1965: 2.64): “a somewhat tedious competition.” Now, contra, see Gutzwiller (1998b: 245–50) and Männlein-Robert (forthcoming 2007: ch. 4.1). Pliny traces the fame of the *Cow* back to the epigrams themselves (*nat. hist.* 34.57: *Myronem . . . bucula maxime nobilitavit, celebratis versibus laudata quando alieno plerique ingenio magis quam suo commendantur*).

⁷⁶ Goldhill (1994), Gutzwiller (2002a), and Žanker (2004).

⁷⁷ See, for example, “Anacreon” *AP* 9.716.2: σφετέρη ψεύσατο χειρὶ Μύρων (on the dating of this poem to the Hellenistic period, see Page (1981: 146) and Cameron (1993: 2)); Leonidas of Tarentum 88.1 GP (= *AP* 9.719.1): οὐκ ἔπλασέν με Μύρων, ἐψεύσατο; cp. also Anonymous *AP* 9.737, 741, Julianus *AP* 9.739, and Dioscorides *AP* 9.734.

⁷⁸ E.g., *AP* 9.718–9, 723, 726; cp. 727, 732, 734, 736; cp. also πλάττειν in Antipater of Sidon 40 GP (= *AP* 9.724).

⁷⁹ Illusion, so far as ancient literary criticism is concerned, comes above all through the use of “likely details” (realistic touches) to create a “real” atmosphere (on which, Barthes (1968: 84–9)).

the talent to produce works of art imbued with such lifelikeness. Now and forevermore an historical and human artist could take his place alongside these mythical and divine exemplars.⁸⁰

We begin the bovine sequence with a Hellenistic variant wrongly ascribed to Anacreon (*AP* 9.716)—

Βοίδιον οὐ χοάνοις τετυπωμένον, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ γήρωσ
χαλκῶθεν σφετέρῃ ψεύσατο χειρὶ Μύρων.

Myron pretended this heifer was the work of his hands,
but it was never cast in molds; it turned to bronze due to old age⁸¹—

together with an epigram by the Hellenistic poet Leonidas of Tarentum, first half of the third century B.C. (88 *GP* = *AP* 9.719):

Οὐκ ἔπλασέν με Μύρων· ἐψεύσατο, βοσκομέναν δέ
ἐξ ἀγέλας ἐλάσας δῆσε βάσει λιθίνῳ.

Myron did not make me; he was lying. While I was at pasture
he drove me from the herd and attached me to a stone base.

The mention of “bronze” in the first epigram makes it unmistakably clear that, in dealing with the cow, the poem is really concerned with an artwork, something also evident in the naming of the artist, Myron, as well as in the use of the technical terms of artistic production, such as *χοάνοις τετυπωμένον* (“cast in molds”). But “Anacreon” immediately eliminates the impression that the poem deals with an artifact: its effect was produced not through *technê* (art), but through a metamorphosis into a bronze, the freezing of a living, aged animal. Myron’s “lie” thus consists of saying that a work of nature was really a work of art he produced. The discussion of lifelikeness and the realistic presentation of artworks, well known from ecphrastic contexts, here gives way to the old poetological discourse on truth and deceit that had circulated from the time of Hesiod and dealt with “lying” poets, their influence on the soul of the public (*psychagogia*), as well as the particulars of poetic truth.⁸² Since Plato, critics had paired the lying, imitative poets with the equally deceptive plastic artists in the polemic against them.

Leonidas also charges Myron with “lying.” According to his *Cow*, who after all was an eyewitness and thus ought to have first-hand knowledge,

⁸⁰ On anecdotes on artists, see Kris-Kurz (1934 [repr. 1995]: 89–99).

⁸¹ Translation after Paton (1916–19: 3.395).

⁸² Fuller account in Rösler (1980).

the artist tied her fast to a stone platform and so represented what was really a work of nature as his own. Here the terms *πλάττειν*, *ψεύδεσθαι*, and *ψεύδος* speak not just to the matter of Myron's truthfulness and the success of the art work's ability to create an illusion, but are relevant also to corresponding questions dealt with in contemporary poetics.⁸³ i.e., poetical principles are here applied to a work of art and reflected from the perspective of the theory of sensory perception. However, an epigram by Antipater (of Thessalonica)⁸⁴ highlights the relationship between poetry and the plastic arts (84 GP *Garland* = AP 9.728):

ἅ δάμαλις δοκέω μυκήσεται ἦν δὲ βραδύνη
χαλκός ὁ μὴ νοέων αἴτιος, οὐχὶ Μύρων.

The heifer, I think, is about to moo; but if it takes its time
it's the fault of the senseless bronze, not Myron's.

In this instance, the poet has us consider a—real—cow's lowing, which, of course, we never actually hear; and so the epigram locates the cause for this failure in the bronze's lack of capabilities in (sensory as well as mental) perception.⁸⁵ The materiality of the cow points anew to one of the clear restrictions of plastic art: even if Myron is capable of creating a deceptively lifelike cow, he is still incapable of giving the material, bronze, one of the essential characteristics of liveliness, the ability to speak aloud. Here, the criterion of "voice" assumes a key role alongside others having to do with liveliness, such as movement and vision (cp. Erinna 3 GP = AP 6.352 and Posidippus 63 AB). The epigram thus emphasizes once more the deficiency of an artwork. Taken as a whole, it is clear that the epigrams on Myron's *Cow* are purely literary texts; the *Cow*, a famous work known well to contemporary readers, serves only as a vehicle for originally poetological categories and concerns.⁸⁶ Ecphrastic epigrams thus offer us partial evidence for reconstructing Hellenistic poetics. Here also, we discern in the medium of poetry itself contemporary interest in critically comparing the sister arts (*paragone*).⁸⁷

⁸³ Meijering (1987), Puglisi (1985); on "lying" as a matter to be taken up by poets, see Callimachus, e.g., *Hymn to Zeus* 65; 31.4 GP (= *Ep.* 13.4 Pf. = AP 7.524.4); cp. also Theocritus *Id.* 7.44 (πᾶν ἐπ' ἀλαθείᾳ πεπλασμένον ἐκ Διὸς ἔρνος).

⁸⁴ So Gow-Page (1968: 2.86), with reasonable doubts; *contra* see Argentieri (2003: 142).

⁸⁵ In accord with the basic definition of νοεῖν, on which see LSJ s.v. (1), with references to, e.g., Aristotle *de an.* 427a26–7 and Homer *Il.* 3.396.

⁸⁶ Schwarz (1971: *passim*) and Hebert (1989: *passim*) are at pains to attempt an art-historical reconstruction, against which Rossi (2001: 25–7) rightly argues.

⁸⁷ See the section above on characteristics and tendencies. On the renaissance term

These reflect on the value of sensory impressions in contemplating works of art: it is only the internal viewer in the epigrams on Myron's *Cow* who suffers the illusion that he is dealing with a real cow. A more distanced speaker, not further identified, typically points out this error, for he understands what is artful about this particular work and can draw attention to it, while never constructing any sort of emotional relationship with it. On the one hand, then, the poem makes it clear that deception and illusion are based upon the sensory perception (αἴσθησις) of the viewer alone; on the other, it sets this errant viewing against the act of "correct" viewing. Narrated by a speaker whose perspective echoes that of a knowledgeable exegete, this articulation presents a reflective, intellectual "seeing" (*phantasia*) and constitutes a new mode of viewing art in which the recipient comes to the fore as an authoritative judge. As a viewer, he must transgress the bounds of purely sensory perception and thereby grasp the illusionary character of an artwork even as he enjoys the artfulness of the illusion. The epigrams demonstrate that such a process of reflection is possible only through the media of speech and writing, which their poetry itself serves. In sum, then, the ephrastic epigrams on Myron's *Cow* reproduce reflexes of contemporary poetological and philosophical thought, as well as the latent competition between poetry and plastic art.⁸⁸

On the Relationship Between the Arts

Ephrastic epigrams demonstrate that the relationship between the so-called "sister arts" was substantially more complex already in the Hellenistic age than heretofore assumed. That relationship fluctuates between analogy (as, for example, with Nossis), complementarity (e.g., Posidippus), and contest (e.g., the epigrams on Myron's *Cow*), the last of which comes to the fore particularly in cases dealing with programmatic statements by poets on their own art and medium. The genre of ephrastic epigram plays a leading role in delineating this complex since it naturally involves the relationship between the media of voice, writing, and image. Indeed, the epigrams even come to express contemporary

"paragone," first used by Leonardo da Vinci, and on the quarrel between the sister arts it describes, see Sprigath (2004).

⁸⁸ For a more discursive treatment on this, see Männlein-Robert (forthcoming 2007: chap. 4.1.5).

philosophical and literary-aesthetic discussions. Hellenistic epigrammatic texts thus prove to be poetologically and literary-critically relevant texts that reveal important insights into the self-understanding of Hellenistic poets and their work.

The long *Nachleben* of Hellenistic epigrammatic texts can be shown through an early imperial example by Geminus from the *Garland of Philip*. The poem reveals how the post-Hellenistic age could compete with its predecessors, deploying notable *topoi* and enshrining them in epigram (Geminus 6 GP *Garland* = *APL* 30):

χείρ με Πολυγνώτου Θασίου κάμεν· εἰμὶ δ' ἐκεῖνος
 Σαλμωνεύς, βρονταῖς ὅς Διὸς ἀντεμάνην,
 ὅς με καὶ εἰν Ἄϊδι πορθεῖ πάλι καὶ με κερανοῖς
 βάλλει μισῶν μου κοῦ λαλέοντα τύπον.
 ἴσχε, Ζεῦ, πρηστήρα, μέθεες χόλον, εἰμὶ γὰρ ἄπνους
 ὁ σκόπος, ἀψύχοις εἰκόσι μὴ πολέμει.

The hand of Thasian Polygnotus made me. I am that
 Salmoneus who raged against the thunders of Zeus,
 who destroys me again even in Hades and strikes me with lightning,
 since he hates my image even though it can't speak.
 Stop, Zeus! Relent in your anger! For your target—me!—
 is unbreathing. Stop waging war against lifeless images!⁸⁹

In this dramatized scene, the mythical Thessalian hero Salmoneus addresses his adversary, Zeus, directly, since the god threatens to destroy him with a lightning bolt. The speaker, who is dead, delivers essential information on the scene (Hades, lightning-tossing Zeus) and on the background of the event portrayed in Polygnotus' painting (his attack on Zeus with the latter's lightning bolts and Zeus' revenge which cost Salmoneus his life).⁹⁰ The painted hero draws attention to his creator Polygnotus and to the medium in which he is depicted, a painting. A witty feature of the poem is thus that Salmoneus speaks, only to say that he is a dumb and lifeless reproduction (μου κοῦ λαλέοντα τύπον, 4; ἀψύχοις εἰκόσι, 6), a joke which alludes simultaneously to his imaginary existence in Hades in his artistic representation. Thus there is a conspicuous play with terminology of (re)presentation (cp. τύπον, 4; εἰκόσι, 6), not to mention the paradoxical speaking of an expressly dumb painting (cp. κοῦ λαλέοντα, 4). The poem draws our attention to

⁸⁹ Translation after Gow-Page (1968: 1.265).

⁹⁰ On speaking objects from the very beginning of the (inscribed) epigrams see more detailed Burzachechi (1962); Häusle (1979b).

the artist's hand, a *topos* in such epigrams,⁹¹ and emphasizes the artistry of his work. More importantly, perhaps, it highlights the self-referentiality⁹² of the—speaking—work of art as a characteristic proper to Hellenistic ecphrastic epigram. Of course, the voice of the dumb painting of Salmoneus becomes audible—or rather visible—only through the (written) epigram. The net effect? Once more, in the poem's voice we hear that competitive tension, recognizable from the earliest date in the Hellenistic period, between the media of image and text.

⁹¹ E.g., Erinna 3 GP (= AP 6.352), Parrhasius 2 *FGE*, Anonymous AP 13.17; Apollonius of Rhodes 3.135–6.

⁹² On the self-referentiality of ecphrastic epigrams see the interpretation of Echo-epigrams in Gutzwiller (2002a: 104–7).

