

Nadia J. Koch. *Paradeigma: Die antike Kunstschriftstellerei als Grundlage der frühneuzeitlichen Kunsttheorie*.

Gratia: Tübinger Schriften zur Renaissanceforschung und Kulturwissenschaft 50. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013. xvii + 464 pp. €78. ISBN: 978-3-447-06573-3.

Nadia J. Koch names her book, a 2011 postdoctoral dissertation, for the *paradeigma*, the final model from which an artist or architect of the ancient world would have produced an object. The word allows another interpretation, one connected to a central thesis of Renaissance studies. This is the idea that the authors of early modern art theory drew from and redefined for a new audience the art theory of the ancient Greek and Roman world. No one would argue with that statement, repeated in innumerable works, from narrowly focused journal articles to generalized undergraduate textbooks. Koch's approach, however, is new and can be restated as a series of questions. Exactly what was this ancient theory that somehow survived the intervening centuries until it could be rediscovered? How did authors from the classical period to imperial Rome write about art? What did early modern authors do with this material? The questions correspond to the three sections — systematic, historical, and history of reception — into which Koch divides her book.

As its structure indicates, the book straddles two different disciplines. One is classical archaeology, and Koch begins tracking art theory with the fifth century BCE. The other area is the history of art theory in the early modern period, and here Koch expands a field that focuses primarily on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, pushing her inquiry into the eighteenth century. Koch wishes to demonstrate that in the ancient world no less than in the early modern, art theory was as much a mixture of the practical as of the philosophical. On the other hand, she wants to draw a line of descent to the early French academy and its placement of painting, so much more abstract than sculpture, at the top of the artistic hierarchy.

The reader of Koch's first section receives a thorough introduction to the wide array of information that still survives about Greek and Roman workshop practice.

Turning to the back of the book, the reader will find a useful glossary that translates terms into German. Koch's second section is likewise a survey and interpretation of the textual sources and the scholarly literature about them. Although none of the major theoretical works by Greek artists survives, Koch pulls together evidence from disparate sources to discuss technical as well as philosophical aspects of Greek theory, relating them to concepts in her first section. A tradition going back to classical Greece ended with imperial Rome's connoisseurs and amateurs, figures critical to Renaissance arguments for the nobility of painting.

Fascinating though the earlier parts of the book are, not to mention dazzling in their erudition, Koch's third section is the one that will be of most interest to scholars of the early modern. Here she traces the reception of ancient art theory starting with Petrarch. Her discussion of Leon Battista Alberti is illuminating, showing that his theoretical works followed a more than merely rhetorical goal and that his knowledge and transformation of ancient sources were more thorough than some scholars have argued. Especially in linking Alberti to Franciscus Junius, Koch shows how the primacy of painting, a concept foreign to the ancient world, received its final polish. Junius, a philologist and antiquarian, had in his care the library and antiquities of the noted patron and collector, Thomas Howard, Second Earl of Arundel, but he was also interested in, knowledgeable about, and influential on the art of his own time. His case is a further refutation of the divorce between practice and aesthetic theory.

Of value to anyone interested in ancient art and its reception, Koch's rich and complex book reminds us that art theory is a strange beast. It can refer to how an artist creates a physical object, but its other meaning concerns the intellectual framework within which the artist operates and the viewer understands the artist's product. But the two aspects are never fully separate. Koch demonstrates how widespread knowledge of art practice must have been in the ancient world, even in the circles of those who had no call to apply it, and she clarifies how thinking shifted across time, moving toward a greater emphasis on the artistic imagination and on painting.

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