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**William Hutton, *Describing Greece. Landscape and Literature in the Periegesis of Pausanias. Greek Culture in the Roman World.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Pp. 372. ISBN 0-521-84720-6. \$95.00.**

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Pausanias' *Periegesis* has become a very popular subject. Many monographs, collective books and separate journal articles have been published during the last 25 years, following Christian Habicht's *Sather Classical Lectures (Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece, 1985)* and the very good introduction to the Italian edition by Domenico Musti (*Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1981*). These recent publications have taken seriously Pausanias' profile and his work at face value. One of the major trends of these publications is the appreciation of Pausanias' work as a complex literary enterprise and not just as a data bank to be plundered without taking into consideration the context of each piece of information. Such a flourishing of interest in Pausanias' work has also been inspired by increasing interest in the world to which Pausanias belonged (the Greek world under Roman rule) and, closely connected to this, by the question of what it means to be Greek when the power is held elsewhere. William Hutton's work is a very successful product of this recent scholarly activity. The book is clearly written, with well-defined aims, very complete and adequately integrated bibliographical information -- even in German, Italian and French. The author asks good questions and demonstrates good sense in tackling them. The "Introduction" -- which is curiously the title of the first chapter -- recalls that Pausanias' *Periegesis* is one of the more useful texts to survive from antiquity. Whatever the subject of a book on ancient Greece may be, there is every likelihood that you will find references to Pausanias there. That usefulness has not prevented the author himself from being considered for a long time as a "dependable dullard", a point of view that has caused the potential value of a comprehensive literary study of the *Periegesis* to be overlooked. Hutton's book wants to fill this gap and "to analyze Pausanias' literary aims and methods and show how they are essential to an understanding of his testimony on any subject, whether we are looking to him for topographical information or for evidence of the attitudes and mentalities of the time in which he lived" (p. 5). Being an exceptional example of ancient travel literature, Pausanias' *Periegesis* may take advantage of the recent scholarship on the literature of travel in modern literary and cultural studies. Describing a journey is a cognitive process deeply rooted in its author's choices. Such a process provides important cultural insights, especially on the question of identity in a period when that identity was in a state of ambiguity. In this context, religion is a crucial field and Hutton agrees with Jas Elsner's interpretation of Pausanias as a "pilgrim",<sup>1</sup> a point to which he returns in the last chapter. The main thesis of Hutton's book is that "Pausanias' literary aims and methods are not only essential things to understand as background

for an interpretation of his account; those aims and methods are, in their own right, illuminating artifacts of the time in which Pausanias lived" (p. 9).

Still in this first chapter, "Introduction", Hutton briefly recalls what we know about Pausanias -- very little, and nothing coming out of his text --<sup>2</sup> and gives an introduction to the *Periegesis*. Topographical disposition is adequately qualified and some passages of Books I and II give a view of Pausanias' methods. Firstly, sights lead to stories, even if in some cases, stories may give order to the sights. Secondly, the abrupt beginning of Book I does not imply the loss of a preface (Hutton never tackles the abrupt close of the *Periegesis*).<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, Pausanias is not just a recorder of facts but presents himself as an authority who knows about his subject and emphasizes his selectivity: his work was carefully planned, deliberately executed over a long period of time and probably built on many different journeys and visits. Finally, the archaizing focus does not prevent the text from being deeply rooted in the present state of his visits on the spot. Hutton's introduction ends with a very sensitive presentation of Pausanias' reception in the modern world, returning to the thesis of the "dependable dullard" and discussing Pausanias' purpose of delivering a "travel guide", or something else. Without overlooking the possibility of using the text for travel (even though a traveller using Pausanias would often be lost in the middle of nowhere...), Hutton rightly states that Pausanias' travel presentation is an adequate tactic that gives structure to an immense amount of material. It also gives a vivid image of the present Greek landscape and gives the authority of an eyewitness to the author himself. Hutton's whole book shows how far that preliminary assertion is relevant, without ever ignoring the fact that Pausanias' *Periegesis* regularly defies generalization.<sup>4</sup>

The second chapter ("Pausanias' world") outlines the cultural background of Pausanias' work. Second sophistic, Hellenism and philhellenism are briefly presented in order to define and measure the originality of the *Periegesis*. Far away from an abstract and idealized Hellenism, Pausanias' work accurately portrays the present state of the physical symbols of Hellenic tradition. Yet the state at the time was Roman, and Hutton briefly discusses the very popular question of Pausanias' attitude toward Roman rule.<sup>5</sup> Pausanias in fact adopts numerous positions on this subject and, on this point also, his work defies simple characterizations. Hutton seems to hesitate in connecting silence about Roman and contemporary affairs with disdain or disapproval. He then compares the *Periegesis* to other contemporary works, and shows how Pausanias is conscious of the responsibility of the Greeks themselves in bringing about their own downfall, just as, reflecting the trends of the day, he emphasizes religious monuments and is deeply interested in providing descriptions. More original and even unique are the number of descriptions we find in Pausanias' work and the deep interaction between sights and stories (*theoremata / logoi*), the disinterest towards the Imperial cult, the literary form which has been chosen, and the self-effacement of its author. Much more might be argued to qualify the "disinterest" towards the Imperial cult, even though Hutton does briefly return to the subject in the last chapter.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the literary form and the results of the topographical method on the construction of the physical and cultural landscapes of Greece, the next three chapters are important milestones.

These chapters are respectively entitled: "Designing *Periegesis*", "Marking territories", and "City descriptions". The first of these chapters confronts two basic questions: "why Pausanias chooses to cover the area that he does; how he divides that

area in smaller units for the purposes of his description" (p. 54-55). Hutton wonders whether Pausanias had any firm opinion as to the geographic connotation of Hellas: the very notion of *panta ta Hellenika* in the first Book (1.26.4) does in fact indicate that this is not the case. Therefore, it is difficult to understand the motivation behind dealing with some areas and not others. Four criteria are proposed by Hutton: the richness of the historical and mythical traditions pertaining to each territory; the quantity and quality of the physical remains of antiquity; the extent of Pausanias' personal familiarity with the territory, and the ease with which the territory can be incorporated into the author's overall design. Even though they are hypothetical, these criteria often -- but not always -- make sense, as the chapter demonstrates. Another point of usefulness of such a fluid interpretation is to invalidate the search for a single comprehensive "program" for the work (p. 62), which is one of the possible excesses of the new trend in "Pausanian" studies. Regarding the borders of each of the territories that form the different books (except Elis and Olympia), these are in accordance with contemporary borders and support the hypothesis of Pausanias' desire to anchor the Greek antiquities in the country's present-day state. The hypotheses regarding the sequence of Pausanias' books are more speculative and it is difficult to press any argument too far.

Chapter 4, "Marking territories" analyses the methods used in describing territories. As James Frazer and Carl Robert already remarked several decades ago, the "radial plan" is one of the main topographical principles of the *Periegesis*. This whole chapter aims to refine this intuition, dividing the description tools into primary and secondary hubs, with some cases of "multiple hubs". Here also mythological and historical considerations play a role in Pausanias' choices. But I would be more cautious before asserting, as Hutton does, that "where he finds the human monuments lacking, Pausanias responds by treating the land itself with greater respect and attention than anywhere else in his *Periegesis*" (p. 92). Arcadia, the region that inspires this remark, is exceptional in many respects in the *Periegesis*, and attention to the landscape might also be connected to the "savage" antiquity of many local traditions. Pausanias' second book is the chapter's "case-study" and Hutton gives many very useful insights into Pausanias' topographical methods, which are conveniently summarized at the end. One problem, nevertheless, remains (p. 111): in Aegina, Pausanias does not perform a sacrifice at the sanctuary of Zeus but at the sanctuary of Damia and Auxesia (2.30.4), an important piece of information for understanding Pausanias' own religiosity.

Chapter 5, "City descriptions" applies to the cities the hypothesis of the "radial plan". Corinth is the test case, because of the uncommonly good access to archaeological data on this site, which allows a deep evaluation of Pausanias' choices, selections, and arrangements. Nevertheless, archaeological data have been largely interpreted with the *Periegesis* in hand. Some circular reasoning is inevitable. The identification of Temple E, for example, remains a problem, I think, and I would not reject as quickly as Hutton the hypothesis that sees this temple as the colony's Capitolium, precisely because of the thematic associations made by Pausanias in that city where "there are no Corinthians any more" (2.1.2.) and where identity is a more crucial problem than anywhere else (a problem of which Hutton is conscious, p. 146).

With its beautiful title "The landscape of language", the sixth chapter fills a gap in Pausanias scholarship. Language and literary style make the *Periegesis* something truly unparalleled in our Greek literary heritage. In a very clear, cautious, and useful analysis, Hutton considers the problems of the *Periegesis* style. Pausanias resisted Atticism, one of the major linguistic trends of his time, a choice that might be "one

aspect of his response to the realities of Roman rule" (p. 237). The visible homage to Herodotos is another important characteristic, which is very different from servility, on the one hand, and which might be interpreted as a deliberate reaction to the contemporaneous culture, on the other. Another example of this intellectual independence, which may be added to Hutton's explanation, is found in 9.30.3, where Pausanias refers to a discussion about the respective dates of Homer and Hesiod. Regarding Pausanias' models, Hutton postulates another filiation -- an old thesis, here rehabilitated -- in the work of his compatriot Hegesias of Magnesia on Sipylos. The question of a "Sipyrene school" (p. 222) is interesting and perhaps even more crucial than Hutton thinks. A lemma in the Suda (sigma 443 Adler) informs us that Simonides, a Hellenistic author of Magnesia on Sipylos, wrote an epic poem on the Galatian invasion. Beyond the emulation of Homer and Herodotos in coping with this kind of subject, Pausanias' interest was perhaps also rooted in a local literary tradition.

The seventh chapter ("Sui generis") handles the problem of the literary genre to which Pausanias' *Periegesis* belongs. The question of the "travel guide" resurfaces here, with a rigorous reflection on the differences between ancient and modern travellers' expectations.<sup>7</sup> There is a major risk of circular reasoning in discussing the periegetical genre: since we have lost most of the works entitled "*Periegesis*", aside from those of Pausanias, it is by reading the features of Pausanias' text that we are able to reconstruct such a literary production. Furthermore, Pausanias never refers to his own work using the term *Periegesis*. It would have been useful if Hutton had looked more closely at the vocabulary Pausanias uses to designate *Periegesis* and at the few passages where he describes what is pertinent to his "logos" or "sungraphe" and what is not (a brief paragraph p. 248-249). In any case, this chapter usefully inscribes Pausanias' work in the global landscape of Greek literature and underlines his deep originality.

The final chapter ("A perieget's progress") searches for the occasional glimpses attesting an evolving outlook over time: the authorial attitude of Pausanias must have evolved over the long course of the composition of his *Periegesis*. The first topic is Pausanias as an historian. Evaluating the Hellenistic digressions of the book one, Hutton comes to the inescapable conclusion that these pieces primarily aim at imitating historiography writing. Moreover, for Hutton, book one is quite different from those that follow, with long digressions disconnected from the local realities. I do not totally agree with this evaluation because each of the Athenian book's digressions is connected with a concrete object, seen during the visit on the spot. Of course, Ptolemy or Attalos are not local natives as Aratos, Philopoimen or Epameinondas are in the cities where their stories are anchored. But digressions are very long too in Books 2, 8 and 9, in the same vein as the Herodotean ones. I do not identify the same change of attitude that Hutton finds in the way Pausanias copes with history in the different books. There is an evolution in the technique of presentation, because Athens was a very special case: Pausanias treats it first. This book exhibits a strong feeling for local identities and Pausanias was proud of his expertise in the field (for example 1.1.4). Hutton is perfectly correct to state that: "The very image of Greece that Pausanias creates with his itineraries, a collection of independent entities that are nevertheless connected with one another intrinsically and integrated into a well-ordered whole, is one that Pausanias no longer views simply as a literary construct to be faced with a mixture of Herodotos and Hegesias and Polemon, but a reflection of the true nature of Greece, a nature that still has meaning for his own time" (p. 303). But I am not completely convinced that Pausanias ever

saw this identity as a "simple" literary construct. His text does not seem to me to present an evolution in this respect.

On the other hand, regarding religion, Pausanias attests an evolution himself. In a well-known passage in the eighth Book (8.8.2-3), he refers to a change of mind about theogonic stories. He has become more cautious dealing with what he thought before to be simple-minded tales. Arcadia was a keystone in this change, but Hutton considers that the development of Pausanias' religious thought is far less pronounced than in the historical realm, even though he makes an explicit statement for the first and none for the second. I would not eliminate so quickly one of the author's very rare assertions regarding his personal conceptions. Travelling in Arcadia is not the same experience as writing about Arcadia. The "religious experience" could have happened in Arcadia, but be nevertheless reflected in the redaction of some other books.

In the same chapter, Hutton discusses, in a very interesting development, Pausanias' conception of the goddess Tyche. He briefly returns to the subject of the Imperial cult, strongly condemned in Book 8 (8.2.5), something which is decidedly important for the religious conceptions of our author. However, there is a contradiction in Hutton's treatment of the two questions: "conversion" on the one hand, and condemnation of the Imperial cult on the other. For the first, Hutton assumes that all the *Periegesis* books take into account the "conversion" of the eighth Book. For the second question, he does not understand the neglect of the monuments related to the Imperial cult in the earlier books in terms of either disdain or criticism. I think that the eighth Book is the culmination of a criticism, which is more or less implicitly present in the *Periegesis* as a whole.

In conclusion, I enjoyed studying this book. It is a very welcome addition to the recent scholarship on Pausanias and his work.

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#### Notes:

1. Jas Elsner, "Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World", in *Past & Present* 135 (1992) 3-29 [republished in R. Osborne (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Greek and Roman Society*, Cambridge, 2004, 260-285, with a *postscript* 2003].
2. An interesting hypothesis of Denis Knoepfler would have been useful in this context: "Pausanias à Rome en l'an 148?", in *Revue des Etudes grecques* 112 (1999) 485-509.
3. On that abrupt end, see now the interesting hypothesis of Pierre Ellinger, *La fin des maux. D'un Pausanias à l'autre. Essai de mythologie et d'histoire*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2005 (Histoire), 199-223. See also H. Siderbottom, "Pausanias: Past, Present, and Closure", in *Classical Quarterly* 52 (2002) 494-499.
4. On this point, see the forthcoming paper by Madeleine Jost, "Unité et diversité: la Grèce de Pausanias", in *Revue des Etudes grecques* (2006).
5. One of the main passages on this question is 8.27.1, where Pausanias seems to refer to the Roman rule as a "misfortune" (*sumphora*). Hutton hopes "to publish an article examining this issue in the near future" (p. 47, n. 41). To his very complete bibliography on the subject, he would need to add: Johanna Akujärvi, *Researcher, Traveller, Narrator. Studies in Pausanias' Periegesis*, Stockholm, 2005 (*Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia*, 12), 286-291. On this book, which is different but

complementary to Hutton's, see the review of Steven D. Smith (BMCR [2006.05.39](#)).  
[6.](#) I will address this problem in a part of a forthcoming book entitled: *Retour à la source. Pausanias et la religion grecque*.  
[7.](#) See also Maria Pretzler, "Turning Travel into Text: Pausanias at Work", in *Greece and Rome* 51 (2004) 199-216.

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