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Chapter Five

Conjuring up the Wonders: from text to image

Like the ancients, writers of the Renaissance excelled at the description of places and works of art, made in an elaborate virtuoso style, in order to compete in expressive strength with the thing itself described. On the other hand, painters of religious art in the Renaissance have spent their time engaging in an inverse procedure. This might be described as an Early Modern parallel to ancient ekphrasis (ἔκφρασις) in reverse, transforming descriptions found in the Bible and the *Golden Legend* into representations in the windows and on the walls of churches, in what became one of the great achievements of the visual arts and the Church Triumphant. So too, in the Renaissance and Early Modern periods, architects engaged in the same pursuit when they drew up representations of monuments long lost, often, but not exclusively, on paper and in two dimensions.

Sometimes their research into, and understanding of, long-lost buildings subsequently influenced those architects' own designs and built projects. In Italy in the sixteenth century, with the burgeoning interest in antiquarianism, and curiosity about ancient edifices, a significant number of those lost monuments from the ancient past were re-imagined by artists and architects, in painting, in the new and highly important industry of print making, as well as in projects by erudite architects and their patrons.¹

1 Peter Fane-Saunders, *Pliny the Elder and the emergence of Renaissance architecture* (New York, 2016), avoided the term ekphrasis because it is culturally inflected, but a number of historians and art-historians have used the term recently. See Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis: the illusion of the natural sign* (Baltimore-London, 1992), esp. the foreword, xiii–xvii, for reverse ekphrasis, and 1–28, 'Picture and word, space and time: the exhilaration—and exasperation—of *Ekphrasis* as a subject', for a good account of the concept. Jaś Elsner, 'Art History as Ekphrasis', in *Art history* 33/1 (2010), 11–27. In addition: Robert Romagnino, *Théorie(s) de l'ekphrasis entre Antiquité et première modernité* (Paris, 2019); J. Cale Johnson and Alessandro Stavru, 'Introduction', in J. Cale Johnson and Alessandro Stavru eds, *Visualizing the invisible with the human body: physiognomy and ekphrasis in the ancient world* (Berlin-Boston, 2019), 1–10; Arthur DiFuria, *Maarten van Heemskerck's Rome: Antiquity, Memory, and the Cult of Ruins* (Leiden-Boston, 2019), 282. Yona Dureau ed., *Images sources de textes, textes sources d'images* (Les Ulis, 2020); Hubertus Günther, 'Das Erlebnis der Architektur in der "Hypnerotomachia

Note: My thanks to Peter Fane-Saunders. All errors are mine alone. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

In the Early Modern period, architects—especially those of a theoretical bent, and those who wrote treatises—were often engaged in attempts to represent buildings of the ancient past that were no longer extant, but which were known through ancient texts. This textual to visual process, creating two-dimensional drawings and three-dimensional objects, might be considered ingenious or vain, but it was both a miracle and a mirage, and always, as Jaś Elsner described it, a process that is inevitably a betrayal: something lost in translation.² Neither a drawing or reconstruction can bring back the original, except as imitation or pastiche, because this process involves the illusionary representation of the unrepresentable.³ These architects' various attempts at this process, which is much more than the simple and oversimplified concept of 'reconstruction', offer a fascinating insight into both their thought processes and their mindsets.

One of the finest instances is that of Pirro Ligorio (c.1512–83) and his collation and interpretation of some of the most celebrated vessels of antiquity, wherein he mistranslated and misunderstood some information. This went on to have implications for the built forms of the *'Thalamegos trireme'*, or *'Megala'* ship and the ongoing design and construction of the Cortile del Belvedere in the sixteenth century (see Marco di Salvo, chapter 8).

'Reconstruction' is a restrictive term for what was actually taking place in treatise illustrations, architectural drawings and building design and construction in this period. Where does the measured drawing leave off, and flight of fancy begin? Peter Fane-Saunders' impressive volume on Pliny the Elder (AD 23/24–79) uses the term reconstruction, but also introduced whimsy, flights of fancy, and the mind's eye, into an operation by architects of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of describing, both in word and image, extant ancient monuments 'for posterity' by 'logging the ancient remains that lie before them' before they disappear forever (see Peter Fane-Saunders, chapter 1).⁴

Poliphili", in Barbara von Orelli-Messerli ed., *Ein Dialog der Künste: Neuinterpretation von Architektur und die Beschreibung in der Literatur der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Petersberg, 2020); Paulina Spiechowicz, "'Concordantia oppositorum': il paradosso dell'ecfrasi architettonica nell'*Orlando furioso* di Ludovico Ariosto", in *Studi rinascimentali* 18 (2020), 79–94. See however, Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, imagination and persuasion in ancient rhetorical theory and practice* (London, 2009), esp. the introduction, 1–7, where she defined the term as 'A speech that brings the subject matter vividly before the eyes', and noted that all other definitions are modern; see also 6 n.12 for the first modern use of the word in Italian, *ecfrasi*, by Gregorio Comanini (1550–1608), *Il Figino, ovvero il fine della pittura* (Mantua, 1591).

2 Krieger, *Ekphrasis*, xiii, xvi. Elsner, 'Art History', 11–27.

3 'Pastiche', in Krieger, *Ekphrasis*, xv.

4 Fane-Saunders, *Pliny the Elder*, chapter 12, 229–80, at 242.

Yet this was not all that was going on. Indeed, from Ciriaco d'Ancona (1391–c.1453) to Maarten van Heemskerck (1498–1574), from Andrea Palladio (1508–80) to Vincenzo Scamozzi (1548–1616), architects and painters were conjuring up in two dimensions, on paper, canvas and other materials, images of the lost three-dimensional architectural wonders of the ancient world. Two architects of significance in this respect were Giuliano da Sangallo (c.1445–1516) and Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1484–1546), both the focus of recent studies in this regard.⁵ This approach continued in the seventeenth century with artists and architects alike, with such examples as the temple of Fortuna Primigenia at Palestrina, by Pietro da Cortona (1597–1669) and Domenico Castelli (c.1582–1657), and so many more.⁶

For the Early Modern period, the seven ancient Wonders are a most pertinent place to start.⁷ Van Heemskerck, who enjoyed a five-year sojourn in the Eternal city from 1532, depicted some of the Seven Wonders in his splendid canvas of 1535–6 now held at the Walters Art Museum, *Panorama with the Abduction of Helen* (Fig. 5.1).⁸ The Colossus of Rhodes, the Lighthouse or Pharos of Alexandria,

5 Cammy Brothers, *Giuliano da Sangallo and the Ruins of Rome* (Princeton, 2022) examined how his studies and inventive representations of Roman ruins formed an integral part of his work as an architectural designer or, to use another term, were operative criticism, also examined by Francesco Benelli, 'Antonio da Sangallo the Younger's reactions to the Pantheon: an early modern case of operative criticism', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 78/3 (2019), 276–91, based on Manfredo Tafuri's concept. Fundamental is Ingrid D. Rowland, *Ten Books of Architecture: the Corsini Incunabulum with the annotations and autograph drawings of Giovanni Battista da Sangallo* (Rome, 2003).

6 Jörg Martin Merz, *Das Heiligtum der Fortuna in Palestrina und die Architektur der Neuzeit* (Munich, 2001); Jörg Martin Merz, *Il santuario della fortuna in Palestrina: vedute e interpretazioni attraverso i secoli* (Palestrina, 2016); Victor Plahte Tschudi, *Baroque antiquity: archaeological imagination in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2017), 1, 14.

7 Peter Clayton and Martin Price eds, *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World* (London-New York, 1988); John Romer and Elizabeth Romer, *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World: a history of the modern imagination* (London, 1995); Inmaculada Rodríguez-Moya and Victor Mínguez, *The Seven Ancient Wonders in the Early Modern World* (London-New York, 2017); Michael Higgins, *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World: science, engineering and technology* (New York, 2023).

8 <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/21286/panorama-with-the-abduction-of-helen-amidst-the-wonders-of-the-ancient-world> [accessed 14.02.2024]. The subtitle is probably mistaken because, as has been pointed out by Adam Sammut, 'Maarten van Heemskerck's Eight Wonders of the Ancient World: Contesting the Image in an Age of Iconoclasm', in *Dutch Crossing* 38/3 (2018), 1–23, at 20 n.17, only a few of the Wonders were actually depicted. By contrast, Martin Stritt, *Die schöne Helena in de Romruinen. Überlegungen zu einem Gemälde Maarten van Heemskercks*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt A.M., 2004), I, 44, interpreted it as metonymy, as explained also by DiFuria, *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 172 and 469 n.16, 283, his inclusion of 'some as opposed to all of the ancient wonders [. . .] was thus a natural choice'. See also Caecilie Weissert, 'Nova Roma: Aspekte der Antikenre-

and the temple of Artemis at Ephesus appear together with the Hanging Gardens within a landscape full of ruins, as well as a rainbow in the right-hand background. He understood perfectly well that these monuments had never been located all together in one place, but it was part of his flexible, flight of fancy approach to the ancient past, the rainbow reiterating that ephemeral moment of wonder. But van Heemskerck's knowledge of what exactly were the Seven Wonders of the World, and what they might have looked like, appears to fall short at this time: his depiction does not include a pyramid, let alone two or three, or a temple dedicated to Zeus with an oversize statue within it.



Fig. 5.1: Maarten van Heemskerck, *Panorama with the Abduction of Helen Amidst the Wonders of the Ancient World*, oil on canvas, 147.3 x 383.5 cm, 1535–6, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 37.656 (photo: <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/21286/panorama-with-the-abduction-of-helen-amidst-the-wonders-of-the-ancient-world> [accessed 18.06.2024]).

In a brilliant manoeuvre, in 1553, after his return home, van Heemskerck painted a self-portrait with the Colosseum in Rome in the background, having clearly done his research and discovered that Martial (38/41–102/4), in his *Epigrams*, had deemed the Colosseum to be an additional, eighth, Wonder:

zeption in den Niederlanden im 16. Jahrhundert', in *Artibus et historiae* 29/58 (2008), 173–200. Ron Spronk, 'Maarten van Heemskerck's Use of Literary Sources from Antiquity for His Wonders of the World Series of 1572', in Jane Fenoulhet and Lesley Gilbert eds, *Presenting the Past: History, Art, Language, Literature* (London, 1996), 227–41. Ilja Veldman, "'Eloquent Inventions": Maarten van Heemskerck inspired by Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert', in Ilja Veldman ed., *Images for the Eye and Soul: Function and Meaning in Netherlandish Prints (1450–1650)* (Leiden, 2006), 45–89. Karl Ehenkel et al eds, *Recreating ancient history: episodes from the Greek and Roman past in the arts and literature of the early modern period* (Leiden, 2001), esp. Anton Boschloo, 'The representation of history in artistic theory in the early modern period', 1–25.

Let barbarous Memphis speak no more of the wonder of her pyramids, nor Assyrian toil boast of Babylon; nor let the soft Ionians be extolled for Trivia's temple; let the altar of many horns say naught of Delos; nor let the Carians exalt to the skies with extravagant praises the Mausoleum poised in empty air. All labor yields to Caesar's Amphitheater. Fame shall tell of one work in lieu of all.⁹

The advantage for a visual artist such as van Heemskerck seems clear: the Colosseum actually could be seen and inspected in all its material magnificence by interested visitors (Fig. 5.2).¹⁰ The significance of this additional Wonder, also later made into a print in 1572 without his portrait, was to imply the accuracy of all of his representations—because it could be verified on the spot by anybody interested to do so—and by association, the veracity and accuracy of the other Seven Wonders, for which no such verification had been possible for a very long time. Surely, van Heemskerck knew about the new Martial edition published by his colleague and collaborator Hadrianus Junius—the dutchman Adriaen de Jonghe (1511–75)—in the 1560s, given that, as Spronk and DiFuria have noted, not only did the Rederijkerskamers (Chambers of Rhetoric) study seriously the ancient sources, but van Heemskerck had close contacts with these humanists in Haarlem, including Junius who composed many captions for his prints, including the Wonders series.¹¹

Eventually, van Heemskerck drew up eight individual illustrations of the Wonders which were then engraved by Philippe Galle (1537–1612) in 1572.¹² His images of these monuments were so visually compelling they became the roster, akin to the standardizing order of the orders achieved by Sebastiano Serlio (1475–c.1554) in 1537, with his treatise *Regole generali di architettura* (for which see César Manrique, chapter 4). Just two years earlier, in 1570, Palladio's utterly compelling *Quattro libri*

9 Martial, *Martial. Epigrams*, trans. David Roy Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge MA, 1993), *De Spectaculis Liber*, 1, 'Barbara pyramidum sileat miracula Memphis, Assyrius iacet nec Babylona labor; nec Triviae templo molles laudentur Iones, dissimulet Delon cornibus ara frequens: aëre nec uacuo pendentia Mausolea laudibus inmodicis Cares in astra ferant. Omnis Caesareo cedit labor Amphitheatro, unum pro cunctis fama loquetur opus'.

10 <https://fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/explore-our-collection/highlights/103> [accessed 14.02.2024]. See the discussion in DiFuria, *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 217–42, 281–6.

11 M.Val. *Martialis Epigrammaton libri XII* (Antwerp, 1568); there was an earlier unacknowledged edition printed in 1559. Spronk, 'Maarten van Heemskerck', 127; DiFuria, *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 282.

12 See Marco Folin and Monica Presti, 'Da Anversa a Roma e ritorno: le 'Meraviglie del mondo' di Maarten van Heemskerck e di Antonio Tempesta', in *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 64/1 (2022), 30–67, with extensive bibliography. Also see, Maria Luisa Madonna, "'Septem mundi miracula" come templi della virtù: Pirro Ligorio e l'interpretazione cinquecentesca delle meraviglie del mondo, in *Psicon* 3/7 (1976), 24–63.



Fig. 5.2: Maarten van Heemskerck, *Self-portrait with the Colosseum*, oil on canvas, 42 x 54 cm, 1553, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (photo: <https://data.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/id/object/1521>, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

di architettura appeared in print, with his reconstructions of the ancient Greek and Roman house, as well as the basilica. What was particularly innovative about van Heemskerck's depictions was the extent to which he aimed at placing each Wonder into an apparently historical context, as well as depicting workers in and around each monument, and highlighting the sheer importance of their architectural invention.¹³ This, all the while generally eschewing any representation of the technical innovations that characterized several of the Wonders in the ancient sources.

His list was inspired by and indebted to a text which had only been published after his Walters Art Museum painting had been completed: the account provided by Pedro Mexía (1497–1551), in his *Silva de varia lección* (Seville, 1540) (*Miscellany of Several Lessons*), most probably read by van Heemskerck in the Italian transla-

¹³ Rodríguez-Moya and Mínguez, *The Seven Ancient Wonders*, 8.

tion (Venice, 1544) by Mambrino Roseo da Fabriano (c.1500–73/80).¹⁴ This source was recently identified by Marco Folin and Monica Preti in their study of the prints of van Heemskerck and Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630). Using Mexía's text as his departure point, with its citation of ancient sources, van Heemskerck could, if he felt the need, also have investigated these sources for himself, written in Latin, or in translations into Latin from the Greek, or from Latin into Italian, such was the plethora of publications in translation that became available in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. More importantly, the *Silva's* repeated observation that the ancient sources contradicted themselves was surely a godsend for an artist such as van Heemskerck, because it allowed him to pick and choose the information from the past that would best suit his pictorial, representational strategies when composing his eight drawings. Unlike Scamozzi, who misleadingly used Early Modern compendia and digests without acknowledging them, as though he had read the original sources (for which see Milburn, chapter 6), van Heemskerck surely appreciated and found helpful the fact that Mexía's digest precisely flagged up to his readers such contradictions in the sources, which, in a way also suggested that a reader or artist might be free to choose his own preferred list of the Seven Wonders and the order of their depiction (3. 30. c.294r):

Delle sette maraviglie del mondo le quali sono in diversi luochi nelle sei sono tutti gli autori conformi, ma qual sia la settima sono varie l'opinioni, e similmente differenza nell'ordine di porre una innanzi l'altra, ma io intendo dir prima delle mura di Babilonia, che sono anoverate per una di queste maraviglie [. . .]

Of the Seven Wonders of the World, which are in different places, of six all authors agree, but opinions differ as to which is the seventh, and similarly the order in which one is placed before the other, but I intend to speak first of the walls of Babylon, which are counted as one of these Wonders [. . .].

¹⁴ Pedro Mexía, *Silva de varia lección* (Seville, 1540), trad. It. *Della selva di varia lettione* (Venice, 1544; 2ed. 1547 (that consulted at the Biblioteca Correr, Venice); 3ed. 1555). See Folin and Preti, 'Da Anversa a Roma e ritorno', 32. See also, Anna Bognolo, 'Nel labirinto della *Selva*: la traduzione italiana della *Silva de varia lección* di Mambrino Roseo da Fabriano', in Valentina Nider ed., *Il prisma di Proteo: riscritture, ricodificazioni, traduzioni fra Italia e Spagna (sec. XVI–XVIII)* (Trent, 2012), 257–306; Anna Bognolo, 'Roseo, Mambrino', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 88 (2017), 465–8. For the significance of Mexía's text appearing in so many translations see, José María Pérez Fernández, 'Andrés Laguna: Translation and the Early Modern Idea of Europe', in *Translation and Literature* 21/3 (2012), 299–318, at 315, it 'appeared in translation into Italian, French, and English over at least seventy-five editions. In his preface Mexía declared that his purpose was to distribute among readers in the vernacular the sort of knowledge which so far had only been available to those who could read Latin'.

The Great Pyramid of Giza

The Great Pyramid of Giza is generally considered the first Wonder, because it is the oldest, and because it largely survives to the present.¹⁵ Dating from Old Kingdom Egypt, around 2560 BC, it was built for the pharaoh Khufu (c.2589–66 BC), and Heemskerck deliberately placed workers in the foreground, and in the river, thus creating a scene of work in progress, despite the Pyramids appearing complete beyond (Fig. 5.3).

The pyramids were Mexía's third Wonder and, in this case, he flagged up how difficult their form was to describe (c. 296v–97r):



Fig. 5.3: Maarten van Heemskerck/Philippe Galle, *The Great Pyramid of Giza*, engraving, 1572, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1891-A-16450 (photo: Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.114915>).

¹⁵ Peter Clayton, 'The Great Pyramid of Giza', in Clayton and Price, *Seven Wonders*, 13–37.

Erano le Piramide certi edifici, che cominciavano in quadro, & così andavan fino alla cima assottigliandosi della forma, che é un diamante in punta, però erano di tanta grandezza, & altezza, & di talei & tante pietre, & in tanta perfettione, che é cosa difficile molto da scrivere [. . .]

The Pyramids were certain buildings that began in a square and went all the way up to the top, becoming tapered in shape, which is a diamond at the tip, but they were of such size & height, & of such many stones, & in such perfection, that it is very difficult to write [. . .].

The list of writers Mexía cited included Pliny and his *Natural History* (*Naturalis historia*) which van Heemskerck could have read in Italian (It. trans., Cristoforo Landino, Venice, 1476); Diodorus Siculus (fl. 60–30 BC); Herodotus of Halicarnassus (c.484–25 BC); Ammianus Marcellinus (332/35–391/400) and his *Res gestae* (Am. li.xxii), but also a modern source: the *Legatio Babylonica Opera, scilicet legationis babilonicae libri tres, Oceani Decas, Carmina, hymni et epigrammata* (Seville, 1511) written by Pietro Martire d’Anghiera (1457–1526) based on his visit there in 1501. Yet, Mexía’s text at this point conjures up no visual image of what these pyramids might have looked like or why they were such a marvel. Indeed, the sources he cited, such as Herodotus’s *Persian Wars* spoke of their technical marvel, but not of their specific form (2. 125):

After laying the stones for the base, they raised the remaining stones to their places by means of machines formed of short wooden planks. The first machine raised them from the ground to the top of the first step. On this there was another machine, which received the stone upon its arrival, and conveyed it to the second step, whence a third machine advanced it still higher.

The first Italian translation of Herodotus was by Matteo Maria Boiardo (1441–94), published in Rome in 1533, followed by later editions of 1539 and 1553, and was based on the Latin translation by Lorenzo Valla (1407–57).¹⁶ It is uncertain whether van Heemskerck read this translation, but given that the date of its printing coincides with his burgeoning interest in the subject of the Wonders, signalled by the Walters Art Gallery painting of the same years, it is pertinent that he chose not to

¹⁶ *Herodoto Alicarnasseo Historico, delle guerre de greci, et de persi*, trans. It. Mattheo Maria Boiardo (Venice, 1533; 1539; 1553). Philo of Byzantium (c.280–c.220 BC) was apparently astonished by the techniques and materials used for the pyramids’ construction, but it was not possible van Heemskerck could have known of this text: the first translation into Latin by Lukas Holste (1596–1661) remained unpublished until 2023: Federico Condello and Lucia Floridi eds, *Pseudo-Filone di Bisanzio, Le sette meraviglie del mondo. Introduzione, testo critico, traduzione, note esegetiche e testuali; con la traduzione latina di Lukas Holste* (Bologna, 2023). ‘While it is impossible to build the pyramids in Memphis [today], it is marvellous to describe them [. . .] The sheer size of the squared masonry is difficult for the mind to grasp and everyone is mystified at the enormous strength that was required to prize up such a weight of material’, from Romer and Romer, *The Seven Wonders*, trans. Hugh Johnstone, 231.

depict any construction machines at all; on the other hand, this also was a consistent choice for his eight illustrations.

Certainly, van Heemskerck could have examined the second text flagged up by Mexía, the description by Diodorus Siculus in his *Historical Library* (1. 63), because the first Latin translation had been published in Bologna in 1472, translated by Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), *En damus Diodori Siculi Historici Graeci, quae nunc quidem extare noscuntur opera*:

The eighth king, Chemmis of Memphis, ruled fifty years and constructed the largest of the three pyramids, which are numbered amongst the Seven Wonders of the world [. . .] by the immensity of their structures and the skill shown in their execution they fill the beholder with wonder and astonishment.

Yet again, this text offered no visual clues, but it did mention the plurality of the pyramids. Whereas Diodorus considered all three pyramids together as one of the Wonders, Strabo of Amaseia (c.64 BC–AD 21) in his *Geography* (17. 1. 33), regarded only two of the three pyramids as worthy of being counted among the Wonders:

one comes to a kind of mountain-bow; on it are numerous pyramids, the tombs of the kings, of which three are noteworthy; and two of these are even numbered amongst the Seven Wonders of the World.

Van Heemskerck surely knew of Strabo's work, either by way of the first translation into Latin by Guarino Veronese (1374–1460), published at Rome in 1469 or, quite probably, given his aim to have published as engravings his illustrations of the Seven Wonders, the contemporary translation into Italian: Strabo, *La prima parte della Geografia di Strabone, di greco tradotta in volgare italiano da M. Alfonso Buonacciuoli* (Venice, 1562), and Strabo, *La seconda parte* (Ferrara, 1565), which appeared in the decade leading up to the production of Galle's engravings.¹⁷ Given his apparent knowledge of this text, van Heemskerck depicted one large pyramid flanked by two obelisks, with a further two obelisks in the background to the left of what could be taken to be a second pyramid, topped by an obelisk. This mixing of two distinct typologies, pyramid and obelisk, had appeared in a woodcut image in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* attributed to Francesco Colonna (1433–1527), published by Aldus Manutius (1452–1515) in Venice in 1499 (Fig. 5.4).¹⁸ But in this in-

¹⁷ For Alfonso Bonacciuoli of Ferrara (1502–81) see, Elpidio Mioni, 'Bonacciuoli, Alfonso', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 11 (1969), 454–5.

¹⁸ *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice, 1499). Also see, Oren Margolis, *Aldus Manutius—the invention of the publisher* (London, 2023), ch. 2 'After Daedalus', 57–89. For obelisks, Brian Curry, *Obelisk: a history* (Cambridge MA, 2009); Fane-Saunders, *Pliny the Elder*, 132–6.

stance, van Heemskerck does appear to demonstrate his specific knowledge of Mexia's text which, in its concluding paragraphs, flagged up the possibility of other works as strong candidates for being considered Wonders (c. 300v–301r):

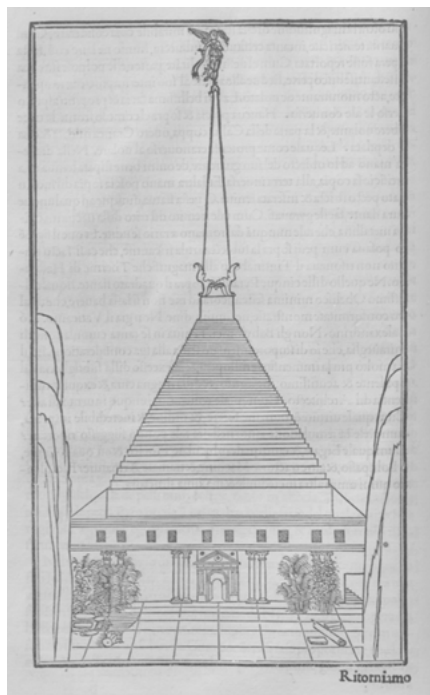


Fig. 5.4: *Hypnerotomachia Polifili*, 'temple', 1499 (photo: Archive.org, <https://archive.org/details/hypnerotomachiap00colo/page/n29/mode/2up> [accessed 18.06.2024]).

Lodovico Celio nel libro delle sue antiche letitioni narrando queste sette meraviglie non pon per la settima questa torre di Faro, ne i giardini Pensili, ma l'Obelisco di Semiramis, il quale era una cosa della medesima fattura, che le Piramide, che cominciava parimente in quadro, & finiva in punta, ne havevano dalle Piramide questi Obelischi differenza alcuna se non che gli Obelischi erano di un pezzo solo, ne percio delle Piramidi molti minori pò si scrive di alcuni grandi à guisa di torri, et di bellissima pietra, & hoggi di ne è uno in Roma chiamata la Guglia la qual fu condotta d'Egitto che è cosa maravigliosa veder la sua grandezza; & pensar come fusse quivi condotta per mare. Di questo di Semiramis, che come ho detto lo racconta Celio per la settima maraviglia, scrivono che era di piedi cento cinquanta di altezza, & ventiquattro di grossezza il suo quadro che in tutto sarebbe il suo circuito novantasei, & fu questa pietra cosi intiera cavata dalle montagne di Armenia, & cosi per commandamento della Regina Semiramis trasportata in Babilonia di Caldea, che in vero considerar come si potesse cavare, alzare, & condurre par cosa incredibile quando l'antiquita non avesse havute cose cosi stupende, & maggiori, che sappiamo per tanti degni auttori esser certe. D'altri grandissimi Obelischi che furon fatti da i re di Egitto scrive Plinio nel libro xxxvi. nel capitolo ottavo, et nono, dove dice in qual modo si cavavano intieri fuori delle miniere di quella pietra.

Lodovico Celio in the book of his ancient writings, narrating these Seven Wonders, does not place as the seventh this tower of Faro, nor the Hanging Gardens, but the Obelisk of Semiramis, which was a thing of the same make, as the Pyramids, which also began in square form, & ended at the tip, nor did these Obelisks differ in any way from the Pyramids, except that the Obelisks were of a single piece, and therefore of the Pyramids there are many smaller ones, some of which are large like towers, and of beautiful stone, & today there is one in Rome called the Spire, which was brought from Egypt, which is marvellous to see its grandeur; & think how it was brought thither by sea. Of this one of Semiramis, which, as I have said, Cælius recounts as the seventh marvel, they write that it was one hundred and fifty feet high, & twenty-four feet thick, which would be ninety-six in all, & this stone was so entirely quarried from the mountains of Armenia, & thus by the command of Queen Semiramis transported to Babylon of Chaldea, that to consider how it could be quarried, raised & led seems incredible when antiquity had not seen such stupendous & greater things, which we know from so many worthy authors to be certain. Of other great obelisks that were made by the kings of Egypt, Pliny writes in Book xxxvi. in chapter eight, and nine, where he tells how that stone was quarried intact from the mines.

Whether van Heemskerck looked personally at Mexia's main source, Pliny the Elder, who wrote of the pyramids in his *Natural History* (36. 16) is uncertain, but if he did this text was hardly suitable for explicit depiction in the 1570s, because Pliny had followed Herodotus in writing of the cruel way the building of the pyramids were financed, in this case not focusing on the Great Pyramid of Cheops and the prostituting of his daughter, but rather the smallest of the three pyramids built by Mycerinus (r. 2530–25 BC) and financed by the prostitution of Rhodopis (36. 17): 'She was once a fellow-slave and concubine of Aesop, the philosopher of fables, and we are even more amazed that such expense was met by the earnings from prostitution'. Counter-Reformation cultural context could hardly embrace prostitution as the method for financing the creation of a Wonder.¹⁹

¹⁹ Rodríguez-Moya and Mínguez, *The Seven Ancient Wonders*, 200–01. Notably, van Heemskerck's title is in the plural, '*Pyramides Aegypti*' (The pyramids of Egypt), and many successive artists would follow his arrangement. Van Heemskerck's caption in Latin reads: 'Ardva pyramidvm phary miracvla reges. Svrgentes gradibvs moles, monvmenta sepvltis, Struxere, et rapidi docvere Hyperionis ignes. Vicinos ferre, ad magnae confinia Memphis'. 'Egypt is home to the pyramids, lofty marvels that the kings built for their tombs, and whose enormous masses, rising by degrees, perpetuate the memory. These kings thus forced the fires of the impetuous Hyperion to support emulators on the borders of the great Memphis'.

The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus

Mausolus ruled Caria (377–53 BC) as part of the King of Persia’s empire. The son of Hecatomnus of Mylasa (r. 395–77 BC), he established his capital on the coast at Halicarnassus c.370–65 BC (modern Bodrum) and lived there with his sister Artemisia, whom he had married in childhood. His enormous tomb monument was a combination of architecture and extensive figural sculpture that created an iconographic programme of royal apotheosis as well as giving its name to future mausolea.²⁰

This is Mexía’s fourth Wonder and the first author he cited was Aulus Gellius (c.125–after 180) and his *Attic Nights* (*Noctes Atticae*) (10. 18) which described Artemisia’s rather macabre post-mortem action: ‘Artemisia, inflamed with grief and with longing for her spouse, mingled his bones and ashes with spices, ground them into the form of a powder, put them in water, and drank them’.²¹ Yet, Mexía’s description of the structure (c. 298r–v), on the contrary, was not based in the least on this entirely non-visual text and instead was highly visual:

[. . .] era di marmo eccellentissimo la pietra di tutto questo edificio che cingeva di circuito quattrocento, & undici piedi, & venticinque gombiti in altezza, haveva intorno ventisei colonne d’ammirabil pietra, & miracolosa scultura, & era aperto da tutte le parti con archi di settantatre piedi di larghezza fu fabricato per mano di più eccellenti maestri che fussero in quei tempi.

[. . .] the stone of this entire building was of the most excellent marble, encircled by a circuit of four hundred and eleven feet and twenty-five gombits in height, with twenty-six columns of admirable stone and miraculous sculpture around it, and open on all sides with arches seventy-three feet wide. It was built by the hand of the most excellent masters of the time.

Mexía also listed other ancient sources in the margins of his commentary, singling out Strabo’s *Geography* (14. 2. 16) where the author nominated Artemisia as the patron, although the monument was most likely only brought to ‘completion’ during her very short reign of two years, 353–51 BC.²² Yet, why Mexía should cite the single line of Strabo: ‘Then to Halicarnassus, the royal residence of the dynasts of Caria,

²⁰ Rodríguez-Moya and Mínguez, *The Seven Ancient Wonders*, 103.

²¹ Aulus Gellius, *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, trans. John Carew Rolfe (Cambridge, MA-London, 1927). As noted by Pier Mattia Tommasino, *The Venetian Qur’an: a Renaissance Companion to Islam* (Pennsylvania PA, 2021), 164, ‘Mexía’s *Silva*, based on the model of the *Attic Nights* by Aulus Gellius, spread throughout sixteenth-century Europe and became the archetype of an ancient genre that had been given a new life’.

²² The Roman poet Lucian had Diogenes say, ‘Mausolus will mention his tomb in Halicarnassus built by his wife and sister, Artemisia’, *Lucian, Dialogues of the Dead. Dialogues of the Sea-Gods*.

which was formerly called Zephyra. Here is the tomb of Mausolus, one of the Seven Wonders, a monument erected by Artemisia in honour of her husband', and ignore the three important passages written on the subject by Vitruvius (c.80–70 BC—after c.15 BC) remains a mystery;²³ this omission being all the more striking, especially because Mexía had made clear mention of the mausoleum's outstanding sculptures executed by the best artists of the time, a topic specifically discussed by Vitruvius, who spoke of these in the context of a list of treatises written by ancient authors, as well as listing those sculptors possibly involved, whose work also had caused it to be included among the Wonders, suggesting van Heemskerck personally had read Vitruvius on the matter (7. 12–13):

Each front was assigned to a separate artist, to ornament and try his skill thereon [. . .]. The great art displayed by these men, caused this work to be ranked among the Seven Wonders.

Mexía also nominated the Latin author Gaius Julius Hyginus (c.64 BC–17 AD) who considered the mausoleum one of the Seven Wonders, mentioning the striking stones of its construction as well as its height at 80 feet.²⁴ Pliny in his *Natural History* (36. 4) also furnished quite detailed information regarding its size and shape:

It is 63 feet long on the north and south sides, shorter on the façades, its total circumference is 440 feet, it rises to a height of 25 cubits. And is surrounded by 36 columns. They called the circumference a 'colonnade' [. . .] For above the colonnade is a pyramid, equal in height to the lower part, contracting by 24 steps to the topmost point; on the summit is a marble four-horse chariot, made by Pythis. When this is included, it brings the whole building to a height of 140 feet.

Dialogues of the Gods. Dialogues of the Courtesans, various trans. 8. vols, (Cambridge MA, 1969–92) (7. 24).

²³ Vitruvius mentioned it briefly (2. 8. 11), within a larger discussion about Mausolus, Artemisia, and the city they had had built: 'The site of the city bears a resemblance to a theatre, as to general form. In the lowest part of it, near the harbour, a broad wide street was laid out, in the middle of which was built the Mausoleum, a work so remarkable that it is classed among the Seven Wonders of the World'. Also see Geoffrey Waywell, 'The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus', in Clayton and Price, *Seven Wonders*, 100–23, at 104. The first Spanish translation of Vitruvius was only published four decades after Mexía was writing, in 1582 by Miguel de Urrea and Juan Gracián.

²⁴ Hyginus, *Fabulae from The Myths of Hyginus*, Mary Grant trans. (Lawrence KS, 1960), 232, 'The temple of Diana at Ephesus which the Amazon Otera, wife of Mars, made. The Monument of King Mausolus made of marble blocks, 80 feet high, 1,340 feet around. The bronze statue of the Sun at Rhodes, which is colossal, being 90 feet high. The statue of Olympian Jove which Phidias made, a seated statue of gold and ivory, 60 feet high. The palace of Cyrus the King of Ecbatana, which Memnon made, of many coloured and shining white stones bound with gold. The wall in Babylon, which Semiramis, daughter of Dercetis made, of baked brick and bitumen, bound with iron, 25 feet broad, 60 feet high, and 300 stades in circuit. The pyramids in Egypt, whose shadow isn't seen, 60 feet high'.

Van Heemskerck clearly knew this text and, rather teasingly, depicted horses at the four corners of the edifice set over the projecting entablature above paired Solomonic spiral columns;²⁵ they do not appear with the chariot at the upper limit of the image, presumably as a suggestion that they were above in the clouds where they could not be seen. Unlike the impressive, sketched reconstructions of Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, where the columns of the colonnade surrounding the tomb are depicted as being monolithic and entirely free-standing, van Heemskerck boldly decided to depict freestanding columns on pedestals situated directly in front of the wall structure where they frame statues in niches (Fig. 5.5).



Fig. 5.5: Maarten van Heemskerck/Philippe Galle, *The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus*, engraving, 1572, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1904-3303 (photo: Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.114927>).

²⁵ Fane-Saunders, *Pliny the Elder*, 7, 12, 255–71. See Antonio da Sangallo the Younger's plan and elevation of the tomb of Lars Porsenna. Fabio Colonnese, 'The tomb of Porsenna: textual and graphical translations of Pliny's 'Labyrinthus Italicus'', in Robert Carvais et al. eds, *Traduire l'architecture. Texte et image, un passage vers la création?* (Paris, 2015), 161–72.

Van Heemskerck's image also was in contrast to the illustration offered in 1521 by Cesare Cesariano (1475–1543), in his Italian translation of Vitruvius, published in folio format in Como, where a single colossal statue stands atop the mausoleum.²⁶

Van Heemskerck included the following caption by Junius indicating his awareness of Artemisia's first act as a mourning widow, most likely based on Mexía's digest of the ancient sources:

Mavsoli a bvsto calidos havrire mariti Deposcens conivnx cineres, pietatis advitae Exemplo
posvit tvmvlvv spirantia cvivs Artifices svmmi caelarunt marmore signa.

A wife trying to steal from the stake, the hot ashes of Mausolus, her husband, set up a tomb
as an example of eternal affection, the greatest artists sculpted statues in marble that
seemed to be endowed with life.

The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus

Herodotus, in his *Persian Wars* (1. 92) recounted how Croesus of Sardis, who reigned c.585–46 BC, patronized construction of the new temple, some of whose columns are held by the British Museum and have inscriptions on them including, 'BA KP AN ΘHK EN'; 'βα[σιλες] Κρ[οῖσος] ἀν[έ]θηκεν', 'King Croesus dedicated (it)'.²⁷

In Mexía's account (c. 298v–299v) of what he nominates as the temple of Diana, he provided a varied list of ancient authors ranging from the well-known such as Pliny (16. 36), and Strabo (14), to a series of less well-known authors whose ancient accounts had received an *editio princeps* relatively recently, permitting Mexía to flaunt his wide range of reading. These authors included Gaius Julius Solinus (c.210–58), *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* (Venice, 1473), the *Cosmographia sive De situ orbis* of Pomponius Mela (fl. 43–50) (Milan, 1471) (ch. 1), the *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri IX* (Strasbourg, c.1470) of Valerius Maximus (fl. 30) (lib. 2), and Aulus Gellius. As if this was not enough, in the margin Mexía added even more ancient authors:

²⁶ Cesare Cesariano, *Di Lucio Vitruvio Pollione De architectura libri dece traducti de latino in vulgare* (Como, 1521), c. 41v. See also Romer and Romer, *The Seven Wonders*, 101.

²⁷ British Museum, no. 1872,0405.20, excavated by John Turtle Wood (1805–94). See St John Irving, 'John Turtle Wood, discoverer of the Artemision 1869', in *Isis* 28/2 (1938), 376–84; Debbie Challis, *From the Harpy Tomb to the wonders of Ephesus* (London, 2006), 55–76 and 114–39 for the British excavations at Halicarnassus and Ephesus. The inscription is found in Annick Payne, 'Native Religious Traditions from a Lydian Perspective', in Sandra Blakely et al. eds, *Religious Convergence in the ancient Mediterranean* (Atlanta GA, 2019), 231–48, at 232.

Pluta. Ne la vita di Alessandro & Cicero li. della natura de gli Iddii in dui luochi & nel lib. Della divinatione.

Plutarch in the *Life of Alexander* & Cicero, book on the *Nature of the Gods* in two places, & in the book *Of Divination*.

Certainly, the published account by Solinus was full of useful details for Mexía, including the name of the arsonist responsible (40. 2):

The glory of Ephesus is the temple of Diana, work of the Amazons. It was so magnificent that Xerxes, when he had burned down all the other temples in Asia, spared it. But Xerxes' clemency did not long protect these sacred shrines from evil. For Herostratus, to immortalize his name by committing a crime, set fire to the noble building with his own hands, from a desire to achieve wider fame, as he himself confessed. It is recorded that the temple of Ephesus was burned down on the same day as Alexander the Great was born at Pella.²⁸

Vitruvius (10. 2. 11–12, 15) was yet again ignored by Mexía, despite the fact that, in three separate paragraphs, he described the ingenious methods deployed by the architect Chersiphron (fl. 6th century BC) to transport the stone columns from the quarry to the building site, his son Metagenes's adoption of the same method to transport the entablatures, and finally, how this extraordinary quarry was first discovered, thus setting out a tripartite marvel of technical and observational genius:

He [Chersiphron] made a frame of four pieces of timber, two of which were equal in length to the shafts of the columns and were held together by the two transverse pieces. In each end of the shaft he inserted iron pivots, whose ends were dovetailed thereinto, and run with lead. The pivots worked in gudgeons fastened to the timber frame, whereto were attached oaken shafts. The pivots having a free revolution in the gudgeons, when the oxen were attached and drew the frame, the shafts rolled round, and might have been conveyed to any distance.

I must digress a little and relate how the quarries of Ephesus were discovered. A shepherd, of the name of Pixodarus, dwelt in these parts at the period in which the Ephesians had decreed a temple to Diana, to be built of marble from Paros, Proconnesus, or Thasos. Pixodarus on a certain occasion tending his flock at this place, saw two rams fighting. In their attacks, missing each other, one fell, and glancing against the rock with his horns, broke off a splinter, which appeared to him so delicately white, that he left his flock and instantly ran with it into Ephesus, where marble was then in much demand. The Ephesians forthwith decreed him honours, and changed his name to Evangelus.

²⁸ The first English translation was, Arthur Golding trans, *The Excellent and Pleasant Worke of Iulius Ca. Solinus* (London, 1587) The trans used here is Arwen Apps, 'Gaius Iulius Solinus and his Poly-histor', (PhD diss., Macquarie University, 2011): <https://topostext.org/work/747> [accessed 24.04.2024].

The technical challenge for Chersiphron was also described by Pliny (36. 21), who had it resolved through a dream about the goddess Artemis:

[. . .] the architect was driven to such a state of anxiety and desperation as to contemplate suicide. Wearied and quite worn out by such thoughts as these, during the night, they say, he beheld in a dream the goddess in honour of whom the temple was being erected; who exhorted him to live on, for that she herself had placed the stone in its proper position. And such, in fact, next morning, was found to be the case, the stone apparently having come to the proper level by dint of its own weight.

It was convenient for van Heemskerck to ignore all Vitruvius's and Pliny's texts, just as Mexia had done—although Mexia's reason remains unknown—because a constant in his depictions was that, notwithstanding sculptors, stonemasons, and architects being shown, all the buildings were also illustrated as being complete, and only partially—in separate vignettes usually in the foreground—as being in the process of being built, which is where the construction techniques would have had to be depicted.

Van Heemskerck's depiction of this monument represents a true flight of fancy (Fig. 5.6). He completely eschewed any attempt at depicting an ancient Greek temple, and instead illustrated a building having a *mélange* of Early Modern architectural elements, with which he would have been familiar with from his travels, especially his sojourn at Rome.²⁹ Rising above three broad steps which form a stylobate, is the Hecatompedon, a hundred-foot-long building which looks like a sixteenth-century church. Composite columns or semi-columns with capitals identical to that in the left foreground, are set above pedestals. A similar arrangement pertains to the smaller storey above, and again to the diminutive third storey with pilasters which is surmounted by a long barrel vault covering the edifice all the way along its length from the façade to its rear termination. Albertian or Della Porta-like volutes connect the lower, lateral 'aisles' to the higher central 'nave' of this temple. To the right, in the foreground, is Croesus, the crowned monarch patron of the temple who gazes to his left, where three figures appear to be discussing the plan of the temple represented in plan on the board by a series of columns. Van Heemskerck thus referenced the ancient nature of the temple in ground plan, while in perspective he offered something contemporary. In the foreground, in the centre and on the left, diligent stonemasons are shown carving other architectural elements, perhaps supervised by the architect, armed with compass and rule. The celebrated statue of the goddess Artemis, with her multiple breasts, does not make an appearance whatsoever, presumably a consequence of the conservative re-

29 Bluma Trell, 'The Temple of Artemis at Ephesos', in Clayton and Price, *Seven Wonders*, 78–99.



Fig. 5.6: Maarten van Heemskerck/Philippe Galle, *The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus*, engraving, 1572, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1891-A-16452 (photo: Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.114924>).

sponse in artistic matters provoked by the Counter Reformation which was entirely current in 1572.³⁰

The Pharos at Alexandria

The Pharos, or lighthouse, at Alexandria, situated on the Egyptian Delta was the last monument to be added to the ‘standard’ list of the Seven Wonders of the World, as noted by Mexía (c. 300r-v). It was constructed in 332 BC, when Alexan-

³⁰ In an ancient parallel, St Paul had condemned silver idols in the first century AD, but in Ephesus the crowd responded ‘Great is Diana of the Ephesians’ (Acts 19: 24–34). See, for Solomonic columns, Juan Antonio Ramirez, *Construcciones ilusorias: arquitecturas descritas, arquitecturas pintadas* (Madrid, 1988), 35.

der the Great of Macedon (356–23 BC) came with his troops from Memphis, Egypt's ancient capital, and established a new capital at the fishing village of Rhacotis, located on an isthmus between an inland lake and the sea, which he renamed Alexandria.³¹

Mexía cited various ancient authors including Pomponius Mela (2. 104), and Pliny the Elder, and then added (c. 300r), 'this island called Faros according to some because a great helmsman of Menelaus who was buried there was called that'; yet he also cited Caesar's *Commentaries* (3. 112), where the name is simply given as being that of the island on which it was built.³² Indeed it was Homer (8th century BC), in the *Odyssey* (4. 351), who sowed the earliest confusion about the name of the place, while Pliny in his *Natural History* (36. 18) provided details of its cost and the building's patron, as well as the name of the architect and its function:

Another tower made by a king is glorified—the one on Pharos, the island that dominates the harbour of Alexandria. People say that it cost eight hundred talents. To complete the account, we should add that it was through the generosity of King Ptolemy that permission was granted for the name of Sostratus, the Cnidian, the architect, to be inscribed on the structure itself. Its function is to shine with beacons for ships as they make voyages by night—to warn them off from the shallow waters and to reveal the entrance to the harbour.

Mexía did not cite Strabo's *Geography* (8. 25) in which the dedication on the Pharos was transcribed: 'Sostratus the Cnidian, friend of the sovereigns, dedicated this, for the safety of those who sail on the seas', an omission all the more surprising given that Strabo's text offered the most visual account of the lighthouse (17. 1. 7–10):

Pharos is an oblong island, is very close to the mainland, and forms with it a harbour with two mouths; for the shore of the mainland forms a bay, since it thrusts two promontories into the open sea, and between these is situated the island, which closes the bay, for it lies lengthwise parallel to the shore [. . .] the extremity of the isle is a rock, which is washed all round by the sea and has upon it a tower that is admirably constructed of white marble with many storeys and bears the same name as the island.

Like Pinocchio's nose growing longer and longer, the supposed height of the Pharos kept getting taller and taller. As Peter Clayton noted, for Epiphanes it was 306 fathoms high (559.6m); in the *Jewish War*, Josephus (c.37–c.100) described its visibility at sea as being 300 stadia (34 ½ miles); Lucian of Samosata (115–c.180) proposed 300 miles. Certainly, van Heemskerck captured the main point because

³¹ Peter Clayton, 'The Pharos at Alexandria', in Clayton and Price, *Seven Wonders*, 138–57. Fane-Saunders, *Pliny the Elder*, 13–14.

³² *The Commentaries of Caesar*, trans William Duncan (London, 1753).

his lighthouse towers monumentally above the rock on which it is perched, dominating everything below it as well as the town in the background (Fig. 5.7). He conveyed the sense of its stupendous visibility from afar by including enormous, rocky mountains in the far distance, which of course were entirely extraneous to the actual flat, monotonous Egyptian Delta. He also referenced one crucial aspect of the mechanism that the ancient writers agreed about, namely a huge fire in its base, which of course cannot be seen, but which the billowing smoke above instead represents. Absent, however, are the mirrors supposed to have been at the top of the structure to reflect the strong light from the fire below. Also absent is the crowning statue dedicated to the sailors' saviour, Zeus Soter, that Posidippus (c.310–c.240 BC) described (AB 115).³³



Fig. 5.7: Maarten van Heemskerck/Philippe Galle, *The Pharos at Alexandria*, engraving, 1572, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1891-A-16449 (photo: Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.114916>).

³³ Benjamin Acosta-Hughes et al eds, *Labored in Papyrus Leaves: Perspectives on an Epigram Collection Attributed to Posidippus (P.Mil.Vogl. VIII 309)* (Cambridge MA, 2004).

The lengthiest description of the Pharos dates to 1166 and was written by a traveler, Abou Haggag Youseff Ibn Mohammad el-Balawi el-Andalousi (fl. 1166). He was writing after the building had been damaged in 956 by an earthquake, and noted that parts had been rebuilt, but the most singular observation he made came at the outset: ‘The building is square, about 8.5m each side’. Van Heemskerck, by contrast, depicted the Pharos as clearly circular at its base, a circular ascending spiral above, and capped by a circular *tempietto*; its base resembles the sort of fortified architecture represented by the work of Michele Sanmicheli (1484–1559). His choice of the circular form may have been based on knowledge of Roman coins, because the half-drachmas of Hadrian (117–38), struck at Alexandria, like most Renaissance medals for the founding of buildings, are simply too small and imprecise to interpret concretely one way or the other: the Pharos might be circular or square. Somewhat later coins produced under Antoninus Pius (138–61) represent the building as having hard edges, indicating the corners of a squarish building, unless this was simply the result of a change in pictorial technique?³⁴

Junius’s poetic caption focused on its benevolent function to seafarers:

Cvrsibvs extrvxti rativm Ptolemaee Regundis. Nocturnis pharon, vt qvvm nox tenebrosa si-
leret, Clara, vicem in Phaebe, vomerent funalia lvcem, Infida vt nili sic tvtivs ora svbirent.

He built a lighthouse to guide the ships of the Ptolemaic city on their nightly voyages, so that, when the dark night falls silent, the luminous torches spread their brightness, rivals of Phoebe, and that the ships may approach the treacherous banks of the Nile in greater safety.

The Statue of Zeus at Olympia

The king of the gods’ statue at Olympia, was the core site and focus of worship for centuries, long before this crucial shrine dedicated to Zeus was eclipsed in the collective memory by the games held in the same place.³⁵

34 Peter Clayton, ‘The Pharos at Alexandria’, in Clayton and Price, *Seven Wonders*, 148–53. In one of the most celebrated mosaics in the ducal chapel of San Marco in Venice, dating to the thirteenth century and located in the Zeno Chapel, St Mark is depicted arriving by boat in Alexandria, with the Pharos—now rebuilt as a mosque—represented with a domed upper tier, which might imply that the entire lighthouse was circular. So too, in the twelfth century, the drawing by Al-Gharnati is a model of ambiguity Rodríguez-Moya and Mínguez, *The Seven Ancient Wonders*, 63 fig. 3.3.

35 Martin Price, ‘The Statue of Zeus at Olympia’, in Clayton and Price, *Seven Wonders*, 59–77.

Pedro Mexía went straight to the point in his account: Phidias's enormous, seated statue of Zeus seemed caged so tightly in its temple that it certainly could not have stood up, and this was its sole defect (c. 298r–v):

[. . .] dicono che fu Fidia in una sola imperfettione tassato, che non compensò bene la proportione dell'immagine con il tempio; perché la fece che sedeva et così grande che imaginandosi come sarebbe stata se fusse stata in piedi non poteva per niun modo capir nel tempio.

[. . .] they say that Phidias was guilty of a single imperfection, that he did not compensate well for the proportion of the figure with the temple; because he made it sitting and so large that, imagining how it would have been if it had been standing, he could not in any way understand the temple.

Indeed, in the first century AD Strabo had also described the statue thus (8. 3. 30):

The statue is made of ivory and of such size that although the temple itself is very large, the sculptor may be criticized for not having appreciated the correct proportions. He has shown Zeus seated, but with his head almost touching the ceiling, so that we have the impression that if Zeus moved to stand up, he would unroof the temple.

Van Heemskerck depicted Zeus in just this way, his head framed by the ribs of the dome either side, and his hair just overlapping the crowning oculus (Fig. 5.8). He included naked male participants in the games in the foreground, wrestling, running, and being crowned with laurel. All this is dominated by the enormous, monumental architecture of the shrine behind, a massive, curved niche articulated with Doric pilasters without and within. Built by Libon of Elis around 466–56 BC using the local stone, on the middle day of the games 100 oxen were slaughtered and burned on the altar in front of Zeus's temple, which protected his sacred cult image, apparently sculpted by Phidias (c.480–30 BC).

Van Heemskerck may well have known of the description by Pausanias (c.110–c.180) found in its 1551 Latin translation, but its detailed description of materials and their colours was hardly helpful for a black and white print, more useful was the information about the presence of the eagle (5. 11. 1–2):

The god sits on a throne, and he is made of gold and ivory. On his head lies a garland which is a copy of olive shoots. In his right hand he carries a Victory, which, like the statue, is of ivory and gold; she wears a ribbon and – on her head – a garland. In the left hand of the god is a sceptre, ornamented with every kind of metal, and the bird sitting on the sceptre is the eagle. The sandals also of the god are of gold, as is likewise his robe. On the robe are embroidered figures of animals and the flowers of the lily.

The throne is adorned with gold and with jewels, to say nothing of ebony and ivory. Upon it are painted figures and wrought images. There are four Victories, represented as dancing women, one at each foot of the throne, and two others at the base of each foot. On



Fig. 5.8: Maarten van Heemskerck/Philippe Galle, *The Statue of Zeus at Olympia*, engraving, 1572, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1891-A-16455 (photo: Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.114921>).

each of the two front feet are set Theban children ravished by sphinxes, while under the sphinxes Apollo and Artemis are shooting down the children of Niobe.³⁶

Hardly any of this detailed information was incorporated into van Heemskerck's print, but he did depict Zeus's symbol of victory in his right hand, while in his left hand rather than a sceptre there is an orb, and it rests upon the eagle rather than the other way around. Zeus appears barefoot rather than wearing sandals, and no flowers or animal figures adorn his garments. From an artistic point of view, it would have been near impossible to depict all the things Pausanias mentioned while maintaining the legibility of the image, and the colour of individual materials such as gold, precious stones, ivory and ebony, could hardly be conveyed in a black and white print.

³⁶ Romulus Amasaeus trans, *Veteris Graeciae Descriptio* (Florence, 1551) (5. 11. 1–9); Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, various trans, 5 vols (London-Cambridge MA, 1918–35), II.

Junius's inscription completed the image:

Elis olympiadvm mater, qvae signat achivvm. Nobilibvs fastos lvdīs, miracvla claudit: Phidiacvm qve iovem ostentat niveo ex elephanto. Qvalis caesarie ac nvtv concvssit olympvm.

Elis, mother of the Olympiads, which, for the Greeks, mark the calendar with noble games. Enclosing marvels and offering to the eye, Phidias's Jupiter, all snowy ivory, who, with a nod, once shook Olympus.

The Colossus of Rhodes

In 408 BC the capital of Rhodes was created from three distinct territories, each with their own principal city and, following this, five harbours were established. Repelling the siege of Rhodes by Demetrius (337–283 BC), the son of Antigonus (382–01 BC), of 305 BC, the Rhodians commissioned a gigantic bronze sculpture of their deity.³⁷

Mexia provided the essential details (c. 295v–296r):

Era questa una statua ò figura d'huomo da gentili offerita, & dedicata al Sole, & altri dicono a Giove, de incredibil grandezza fatta di metallo, & alta come una gran torre di maniera, che non può immaginarsi come si potesse alzare, et fabricar.

This was a statue or figure of a man offered by gentiles, & dedicated to the sun, & others say to Jupiter, of incredible size made of metal, & as tall as a great tower of such a kind, that one cannot imagine how it could be raised, & constructed.

He also cited the *Historiae adversus paganos* of Paulus Orosius (375/385–c.420) (Augsburg, 1471) which referred to pagan vanity and the consequent hubris of the project (c. 296r):

[. . .] fu questa cosa smisurata, & vanità sì grande, che non parve che la terra potesse longo tempo partire, perche solo cinquantasei anni scrive il medesimo Plinio, & Paolo Orosio, che stette in piedi, nel fin de quali cade per un gran terremoto.

[. . .] this thing was immeasurable, and such a great vanity, that it did not seem that earth could sustain it for a long time, because only fifty-six years [later] writes the same Pliny, & Paolo Orosius, that it remained standing, at the end of which it fell due to a great earthquake.

That the statue had toppled over and been broken into pieces was a key point reported by the other ancient sources such as Pliny, for example, who had this to say (34. 41):

37 Reynold Higgins, 'The Colossus of Rhodes', in Clayton and Price, *Seven Wonders*, 124–37.

56 years after its erection, [it] was overthrown by an earthquake, but even lying on the ground it is a marvel. Few people can make their arms meet round the thumb of the finger, and the fingers are larger than most statues.

So too Strabo in his *Geography* (14. 2. 5):

[. . .] the Colossus of Helios [. . .] but now it lies on the ground, having been thrown down by an earthquake and broken at the knees.

Therefore, van Heemskerck's representation of the Colossus is remarkably unphilological (Fig. 5.9). Following the graphic example of the French Franciscan André Thevet (1516–90), in his *Cosmographie de Levant* (Lyon, 1554), 104, where the Colossus's legs straddle the harbour entrance, one foot on each side, and a ship passing between them, its uppermost mast almost touching his genitals, van Heemskerck replicated and expanded upon this image. He depicted what appears to be an animated but safe working harbour with boats within and without. The ship between the Colossus's spread legs emphasizes the statue's enormous height,



Fig. 5.9: Maarten van Heemskerck/Philippe Galle, *The Colossus of Rhodes*, engraving, 1572, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1926-416 (photo: Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.114923>).

and the technical sophistication that designing and constructing it in such a way would imply. On the other hand, it was simply impossible for a bronze statue of these dimensions to have its legs apart, set astride the harbour entrance. The vase in its right hand has smoke or flames or both billowing out from it, suggesting a link in function to the Pharos of Alexandria in guiding ships to port.³⁸

Strabo, Pliny, and Philo had the most to say about this statue, of which less was known than the other six Wonders. Philo described in impressive detail how the statue was constructed, explaining that because of its enormous size, it was cast, bit by bit, lowest layer first and then the casting machines set upon this lowest layer and casting of the second layer began, and so on and so forth until completion.³⁹

Perhaps what liberated van Heemskerck from the ancient sources was the fact that, following the collapse of the statue during the earthquake of 226 BC, it remained in situ on the ground until in 654 AD when the Arabs took Rhodes and shifted the fragments across the strait to Asia Minor where they were sold, thus leaving no material trace or contemporary depiction of the colossus. Cunningly, van Heemskerck not only depicted the complete, standing monument, but also the head, in the foreground, as a work in progress, that might just allude as well to its toppled-over state.

Although of a much later date, and unknown to van Heemskerck, an Italian pilgrim, Nicola Martoni (fl. 1390s), wrote of seeing the statue in situ in Rhodes in 1394–5, and related local lore that one of its feet was still located at the Fort of St Nicholas (previously a church), Mandraki Harbour's east entrance, the other resting on the other side.⁴⁰

Van Heemskerck as usual included a pithy inscription by Junius:

Septimos decies cubitos aequare colossus, Dictvs, par turri mole svb nomine solis, Aere cavo factvs, saxorum vasta caverna, Intvs, apvd Rhodios sacros accepit honores.

38 When making his series of engravings in 1608, Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630) distinguished himself from van Heemskerck's depiction of the Colossus by showing it as toppled over and in pieces. See Folin and Presti, 'Da Anversa a Roma', 40.

39 Denys Haynes, 'Philo of Byzantium and the Colossus of Rhodes', in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77 (1957), 311–12, reprinted in Higgins, 'The Colossus', 130–2. Higgins, *The Seven Wonders*, 6, points out that Philo's, or Pseudo-Philo's text could date as late as the sixth century AD, and the unique textual survival of the ninth century is not intact and omits part of the description of the Temple of Artemis and the Mausoleum entirely.

40 Léon Le Grand, 'Relation du pèlerinage à Jérusalem de Nicolas de M. notaire italien', in *Revue de l'Orient latin* 3 (1895), 566–669; also see Michele Piccirillo, *Io notaio N. de Martoni. Il pellegrinaggio ai Luoghi Santi da Carinola a Gerusalemme 1394–1395* (Jerusalem, 2003); Michele Piccirillo, 'Martoni, Nicola', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 71 (2008), 352–4, who noted that Martoni was educated: he knew the Holy Scriptures and quoted Roman history and the Homeric poems, although he was confused between Trojans and Romans and between the Colossus of Rhodes and the Colossians of Asia Minor to whom Saint Paul wrote one of his letters.

Seven cubits high, they say, the mass of the Colossus looked like a tower raised to the glory of the sun. Its hollow bronze body formed a cavern full of rocks and in Rhodes it received divine honours.

The Hanging Gardens

It was Antipater of Sidon (170–100 BC) in his *Palatine Anthology* (*Antologia Palatina* some of whose epigrams are attributed to the synonymous Antipater of Thessalonica) composed one of the earliest lists of the Wonders as an ekphrasis:

I have set eyes on the wall of lofty Babylon on which is a road for chariots, and the statue of Zeus by the Alpheus, and the hanging gardens, and the Colossus of the Sun, and the huge labour of the high pyramids, and the vast tomb of Mausolus; but when I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their brilliancy, and I said, "Lo, apart from Olympus, the Sun never looked on aught so grand".⁴¹

He considered Babylon and the Gardens as separate Wonders, also ranking another two of them as being 'the best': the statue of Zeus at Olympia, and the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus. The Pharos at Alexandria was yet to be nominated. Van Heemskerck certainly could not have known of this text because the Ms. Pal. graec. 23 was only discovered at Heidelberg in 1607, by the French humanist Claude Saumaise (1588–1683). The list had, however, been reported by other ancient authors.

Mexia returned to the issue of which Wonders were 'in' and which 'out' in the concluding paragraphs of his account because, again, he was aware of the confusion and contradictions among the ancient sources, but wanted to do his best as someone compiling a digest (c. 300v):

Questa é l'ultima meraviglia quantunche da molti non sia nel numero di queste sette annoverata, ma in suo luoco i Giardini pensili che habbiano detto che erano in Babilonia [Lattantio Firmiano.], che eran sopra quelli archi, & torrioni, di maniera, che sotto vi conversava la gente dove erano molti altissimi alberi con molte fontane. La forma di questo edificio scrive distesamente Diodoru Siculo maravigliosamente nel terzo libro il quale io lascio à dietro per non esser piu longo [Li. Xii.].

This is the last marvel, although it is not counted among the number of these seven by many, but in its place are the Hanging Gardens which were said to be in Babylon [Lactantius Firmianus.], which were above those arches and towers, in the manner that people were talking underneath where there were many very tall trees with many fountains. The

⁴¹ *The Greek Anthology*, trans. William Roger Paton, 5 vols (London, 1915), 4, *Epigrams* (9. 58).

shape of this building Diodoru Siculo writes marvelously at length of in the third book which I leave behind so as not to be longer [Li. Xii].

This was the only Wonder for which ancient, pagan, Jewish, and biblical sources collided, and comprised a tower (a veritable tower of Babel); or a city, and tower or lofty structure (Gen. 10:10, 11.8–9), where the confusion of tongues took place. Pictorially, the affront to, and contempt of God, was depicted by artists such as Pieter Breugel the Elder (1525/35–69) in 1563 in his large canvas in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, by including clouds as an ominent warning of what is about to befall its inhabitants. Breugel’s tower is a work still in progress, with Nimrod in the left foreground inspecting the stonemasons’ work, something van Heemskerck omitted. But, perhaps, the dark cloud in the centre, set over the mountains and walls in the background, where *Babylonis Muri* appears ominously, reinforces the sense of impending distaster, in contrast to the magic of the Hanging Gardens to the right (Fig. 5.10)



Fig. 5.10: Maarten van Heemskerck/Philippe Galle, *The Walls and Gardens of Babylon*, engraving, 1572, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1904-3304 (photo: Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.114931>).

In his account of the walls, Mexía stated (c. 295r-v):

[. . .] par incredibile la grandezza del luoco, & sito della cittade [. . .] la torre di Babello, della quale piglio il nome della cittade [. . .] le mura maravigliosamente alte, & con mirabile artificio lavorate [. . .] son differenti gli auttori, & non concordi dell'altezza, & grandezza di questo circuito, che potrebbe nascere per esser la misura che fanno diversa [. . .] erano si larghe, che vi potevano andare sei carra da cavalli insieme alla volta senza impedirsi l'un l'altro [. . .] i giardini fatti à mano sopra de gli archi, & torrioni dove erano alberi di smisurata grandezza [. . .].

[. . .] the grandeur of the place, & site of the city seems incredible [. . .] the Tower of Babel, from which the city takes its name [. . .] the walls marvellously high, & with admirable artifice worked [. . .] the authors differ, & do not agree on the height, & grandeur of this circuit, which could arise from the measure they use being different [. . .] were so wide that six horses and carts could go around at the same time without hindering each other [. . .] the man-made gardens above the arches & towers where there were trees of immense size [. . .].

Of the established Seven Wonders of the ancient world, Babylon was exceptional: Herodotus did not mention the Gardens, although he did describe the city.⁴² As Karen Foster noted, ‘the descriptions of five later writers, who were themselves quoted and paraphrased by others and whose accounts of the Gardens are often opaque, contradictory, and technologically baffling at best’; even the earliest account dates to c.280 BC many centuries after the Hanging Gardens no longer existed.⁴³ Indeed, archaeological excavation to this day has found no trace or convincing evidence for their existence. In terms of conjuring up a convincing image of them, that was hardly an issue, but exactly how to depict them posed some interesting questions. Some scholars today believe that they may have been a series of sunken terraces, rather than a raised garden, in which case they ought not be depicted in the same way as the other Wonders: as large structures prominently rising above the ground. Indeed, the description by Diodorus Siculus (2.7) made it sound like a theatre carved out of, and constructed on, the hillside making it part of the landscape rather than a prominently vertical structure like the other Wonders:

⁴² Irving Finkel, ‘The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, in Clayton and Price’, *Seven Wonders*, 38–58. John Milton Lundquist, *Babylon in European Thought* (New York, 1995); Jean-Jacques Glassner, *La tour de Babylone: que reste-t-il de la Mésopotamie?* (Paris, 2003); Béatrice André-Salvini ed, *Babylone* (Paris, 2008); Stephanie Dalley, *The mystery of the Hanging Garden of Babylon: an elusive world wonder traced* (Oxford, 2013); Stephanie Dalley, *The city of Babylon: a history, c.2000 BC–AD 116* (Cambridge, 2021).

⁴³ See the thoughtful article, Karen Polinger Foster, ‘The Hanging Gardens of Nineveh’, *Iraq* 66 (2004), 207–20, with this summary: ‘the Babyloniaca of Berossus, written about 280 BC, which does not survive save in quotations and condensations from it in other sources, among them two works by the first-century AD Josephus, who twice quotes the short note about the gardens’.

There was also, beside the acropolis, the Hanging Garden, as it is called [. . .], because the approach to the garden sloped like a hillside and the several parts of the structure rose from one another, tier on tier, the appearance of the whole resembled a theatre.

Once again it was Strabo who offered the most useful account of the gardens:

[. . .] on this account that this [the Walls] and the Hanging Garden are called one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The garden is quadrangular in shape, and each side is four plethra in length. It consists of arched vaults, which are situated, one after another, on checkered, cube-like foundations. The checkered foundations, which are hollowed out, are covered so deep with earth that they admit of the largest of trees, having been constructed of baked brick and asphalt—the foundations themselves and the vaults and the arches. The ascent to the uppermost terrace-roofs is made by a stairway; and alongside these stairs there were screws, through which the water was continually conducted up into the garden from the Euphrates by those appointed for this purpose. For the river, a stadium in width, flows through the middle of the city; and the garden is on the bank of the river.

Heemskerck followed the early writers in visualizing the Hanging Gardens as a large structure projecting above ground, together with the walls of the city and its tower. He located it across the river from the tower, the walls, and the gate dedicated to Semiramis, close to the riverbank, as described by Strabo. It thus became a monumental building, rising high above ground level, that filled the view, alongside the tower of Babel and the walls. It is no wonder then, for consistency's sake in artistic terms, that Heemskerck chose to depict the Hanging Gardens as a rectangular, three-story building based on a series of arched vaults supporting and sustaining the 'hanging' garden above.

The Colosseum, and Conclusion

In contrast to the seven preceding engravings depicting the traditional Seven Wonders of the World, when he came to depict the Colosseum, van Heemskerck changed tack: unlike the pristine, modern-looking monuments of the rest of the series, in this case it was illustrated as a ruin rather than a reconstruction (Fig. 5.11).⁴⁴ It was shown as being properly ancient, in contrast to the other Wonders which all look brand new, and some, such as the temple of Artemis, being depicted with architectural forms very close to relatively recent contemporary ecclesiastical architecture such as that which could be found in Rome.

⁴⁴ DiFuria, *Maarten van Heemskerck*, 283–4.



Fig. 5.11: Maarten van Heemskerck/Philippe Galle, *The Colosseum at Rome*, engraving, 1572, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-1891-A-16456 (photo: Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.114930>).

Why did van Heemskerck decide to illustrate the Wonders when he did, and what might be their significance in a wider context? Although his main source, Mexía's *Silva*, cited the *Historiae adversus paganos* of Paulus Orosius (375/385–c.296r), van Heemskerck represented as intact and standing the Colossus of Rhodes and it was only Tempesta, subsequently, who depicted this as having toppled to the ground and as lying in pieces. It would be quite difficult to interpret van Heemskerck's pristine, modern Wonders as unworthy monuments except—perhaps—the walls of Babylon. Rather, they were depicted by him as being marvellous and to be admired. This, then, seems to be the most likely motive on his part: to create attractive images of the fabulous Wonders of the ancient past, in order to sell them successfully, commercially, on the open market.

Van Heemskerck's compelling, illustrated series of the Wonders were just one of innumerable examples in the Early Modern period of how things so easily got lost and found in translation. Not just humanist translations from one lan-

guage to another, and not only the shift from manuscripts to incunabula and then to *cinqucentine*, but also from word to image, and what was chosen and what was, for whatever reason, left aside. Pedro Mexía deliberately avoided citing Vitruvius, and van Heemskerck followed his lead: after all, there were so many other ancient sources that provided more, and more interesting, information. Pliny the Elder, of course, was a hugely important source, as has been recently demonstrated, as was Strabo, for whom much more work on his Early Modern reception and influence needs to be done.⁴⁵

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⁴⁵ My thanks to Sundar Henny, see his ‘Caught in the crossfire of early modern controversy: Strabo on Moses and his corrupt successors’, in *Intellectual History Review*, 28/1 (2018), 35–59. Now see, Patrick Gautier Dalché, ‘Strabo’s reception in the West (fifteenth-sixteenth centuries)’, in Daniela Dueck, *The Routledge companion to Strabo* (New York-London, 2017), 367–83, at 374 for Buonacciolì’s translation of the 1560s.

