

## BOOK REVIEW

*An Introduction to Greek Art.* By SUSAN WOODFORD. London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Pp. xvi + 206. Paper, \$29.95. ISBN 978-14725-2364-8.

Susan Woodford has edited and Bloomsbury has republished her 1986 edition of this work, whose subtitle (“Sculpture and Vase Painting in the Archaic and Classical Periods”) indicates its primary foci. Woodford, who both teaches and lectures at the British Museum, knows her subject area and her audience well; the latter is a general audience but the book meets scholarly expectations and would be quite suitable for use in introductory Greek civilization or art history courses.

The most efficient way of evaluating this new edition is to compare with its predecessor. The most dramatic and obvious difference is in the number of illustrations which have now been produced in color. While this may not be important for sculptures whose original colors are long faded or erased, it is critical for the understanding and appreciation of vase painting. The decision to print in color adds immeasurably to the work and Bloomsbury is to be congratulated not only for agreeing to this improvement but also for providing high quality images in a reasonably priced work.

For those unfamiliar with the earlier edition, a review of the table of contents may be helpful in evaluating it. (Those familiar with it can see from this how little the text has changed.) Woodford begins with two chapters that set the stage by examining Geometric, Corinthian, and Attic black figure pottery. In the two succeeding chapters she shifts to archaic architectural and free standing sculpture and grave stelai, while the fifth chapter discusses early red figure pottery, including the Panathenaic amphorae. Chapters six through ten explore the architectural sculpture and vase painting of the classical period. Among these chapters seven and ten are devoted to the sculptural decoration of particular buildings—the Temple of Zeus at Olympia and the Parthenon respectively.

Chapter eleven combines the examination of the vase painting and sculpture of the late fifth century, and chapter twelve restricts itself to the “new horizons” characteristic of fourth century sculpture. The narrative concludes with a new

chapter on “Art in Greek Society” which serves essentially as a condensed review of material otherwise scattered throughout the preceding chapters. This chapter excepted, the only new material in the narrative is a two page section in chapter twelve on the frieze of the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. Woodford here offers a comparison of its subject matter and style with her earlier (and longer) discussion of the Parthenon frieze.

The first edition concluded with supplementary material which here reappears although with new headings. What was the “Conclusion” of the earlier work is now an “Epilogue,” and the “Notes” have become the “Appendix.” The latter contains brief comments on literary sources, names of vase painters, names given to sculptures, the authenticity of the Hermes of Praxiteles, the use of color in sculpture (here also enhanced by color illustrations), Doric and Ionic orders, Greek temple plans, the identification of mythological figures and stories, and a new section on establishing dates. The Glossary has been expanded somewhat; new entries include, e.g. Lapiths, triglyphs, symposium, and—has it come to this?—Zeus. Other supplementary materials include a new two-page timeline (alphabet to Alexander) and a thoroughly revised list of suggested readings; of the suggestions only four of nineteen entries are holdovers from the 1986 publication. The index has expanded from three to six pages, but it would appear that the only change is the size of the type font.

The new edition of the book is longer by twenty pages than its predecessor; most of the additional material reflects Woodford’s laudable—and unfortunately increasingly necessary—attempt to provide information required to comprehend even an introduction to the subject. I suspect that her experience at the British Museum has impressed upon her the fact that she (and we) can expect little or nothing of the cultural literacy we all used to take for granted. In that regard the book certainly merits consideration for adoption in introductory courses at the secondary or collegiate level. My only concerns about adopting it myself stem from the short shrift that it gives Greek architecture and the fact that it excludes from its chronological scope what seems a natural extension, namely a chapter on Hellenistic sculpture. Woodford has done such an admirable job with what she has given us that I simply wish she had given us more.

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