

BOOK REVIEW

Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World. Edited by JENS M. DAEHNER and KENNETH LAPATIN. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2015. Pp. 368. Hardcover, \$65.00. ISBN 978-1-60606-439-9.

Though exceptionally rare, Hellenistic bronze sculptures are renowned for their fine details, life-like qualities, and often the sensational nature of their discoveries. In an effort to examine the technical aspects of these pieces alongside their respective styles, scholars and contributors across 13 countries and four continents collaborated for one of the most impressive exhibitions to date. *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World* featured works from 34 museums, and the show traveled from Florence's Palazzo Strozzi, to the J. Paul Getty Museum, and finally to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Appearing in both English and Italian, the volume from this show includes a catalogue of the works on display and numerous scholarly essays on various topics (e.g. aesthetics, costs, contexts, dating, typologies).

"Reframing Hellenistic Bronze Sculpture" by Jens Daehner and Kenneth Lapatin introduces the reader to the subject of bronzes by summarizing the significance of these forms and giving a brief historiography. Following this introduction, Andrew Stewart ("Why Bronze?") examines the value of bronze in relation to aesthetics, production costs, and marble. Though it never quite replaced marble as a medium, the author observes that this metal alloy became *symbolic* of mankind's artificial essence and his overall mutability, thus making it the material *par excellence* for representing mortal persons and athletic victors. Of course, to commission a bronze was always an expensive endeavor, but Stewart explains how savvy and accomplished sculptors of the Hellenistic period could save money on production costs in various ways (e.g. thinning the walls of a piece, substituting lead for tin, using recycled bronze scrap). Value was also ascribed to the "finishing" techniques of bronzes like tooling or cold work, any patina that imitated ephemerality (e.g. blushing or bruising), and polychromatic effects (e.g. silver and copper accents, inlaid eyes). Such polychromy is outlined further by Sophie Descamps-

Leguime in “The Color of Bronze: Polychromy and the Aesthetics of Bronze Surfaces.” Of course, “color” was limited to only a few hues (e.g., red, white, yellow), and these were mostly reserved for the face and clothing. Recognizing, however, that the ancients’ perception of bronzes would change as these forms visibly corroded, Descamps-Leguime indicates that a new appreciation and desire for a naturally dark patina began during the Hellenistic period (e.g. “Corinthian bronze”).

Several essays in *Power and Pathos* describe the various contexts of Hellenistic bronzes. As revealed in “Contexts of Discovery” by Seán Hemingway, these works were initially displayed in civic locations or sanctuaries, and empty statue bases left *in situ* often give researchers today a sense of their original arrangement, composition, and scale. With regards to the surviving bronzes themselves, most have been found submerged in seas around the Mediterranean, and recent discoveries from the Aegean are even addressed separately by George Koutsouflakis and Angeliki Simosi [“Hellenistic Bronze Sculptures from the Aegean Sea: Recent Discoveries (1994–2009)”].

A welcomed addition to the volume and exhibition was the incorporation of bronzes from further East. Though there are few examples, especially when compared to the material from the Mediterranean, Matthew P. Canepa (“Bronze Sculpture in the Hellenistic East”) discusses the eastern adoption of Greco-Macedonian naturalism and iconography, sometimes in conjunction with indigenous casting techniques, and he describes the display of these pieces in prestigious urban and religious contexts across Mesopotamia.

Naturally, the text of *Power and Pathos* is partially devoted to the appearance of Hellenistic sculptures and the figural types that were cast. While the earliest honorific statues date to the start of the 5th century BC (e.g. the Tyrannicides), R.R.R. Smith details the precipitous growth of honorific portraits known as *eikōn chalkē* (“*Eikōn chalkē*: Hellenistic Statue Honors in Bronze”). Along with hundreds of statue bases with intact inscriptions, extant city decrees illuminate the process of nominating or proposing an award for royalty, military personages or citizen benefactors. Smith also goes on to consider other sculptural likenesses from this period, such as athletes and non-citizens.

As evident from the remaining bronzes, there was an increased desire for realistic portrayals. In “*Aletheia/Veritas*: The New Canon,” Gianfranco Adornato focuses on this newfound interest in “truthfulness,” a quality that can only be achieved when harmonizing unique and unidealized traits with psychological feeling or *pathos*. Though this type of *pathos* was documented in Classical literature (i.e., Xenophon), it was not made manifest until the Hellenistic period. In addition

to the *au courant* realistic portrayals of contemporary leaders and athletes, Christopher H. Hallett explores deliberately “antiquated” (i.e. “Archaizing,” “Classicizing”) productions and the possibility that these were created to satiate or fool consumers interested in the aesthetics of previous periods (“Looking Back: Archaic and Classical Bronzes of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods”).

Following these academic articles is the catalogue complementing the *Power and Pathos* exhibition, an appendix notating the alloy composition of a select number of bronzes, and an index at the end. The text accompanying the images in the catalogue, along with providing basic information and a brief bibliography, recounts the appearance of each artifact and other factors like discovery, noteworthy technical details, and historical importance. As many have come to expect from Getty publications, the glossy images are in a large format and of high quality, enhancing the reader’s appreciation of such intricacies like inlaid eyes, well-placed lashes, and the variegated patterning in the facial hair. Having had the opportunity to experience the show on several occasions in Washington, D.C. (December 13, 2015 to March 20, 2016), leading both groups of students and adults, I wholeheartedly commend the ambitious scope and presentation of the exhibition. From the vacant Lysippos base in the first room, to the commanding position of the Arringatore, this exhibition spurred a sense of excitement and wonder. Although it has concluded and all the pieces have returned to their specific institutions, the present volume chronicling this once-in-a-lifetime assemblage of rare artifacts is still available for purchase.

Naturally, with such a small sample of bronzes to examine, there remains quite a bit of controversy surrounding these forms, particularly with regards to the subject of replication. While some scholars fervently disagree with the notion of serial reproduction, *Power and Pathos* espouses and emphasizes the concept that these works were repeatedly cast, creating numerous replicas (for more, see the chapter “Repeated Images: Beauty with Economy” by Carol C. Mattusch). This factious issue was highlighted in an informative scholarly exchange between B. Barr-Sharrar and B.S. Ridgway [published as responses to Ridgway’s initial assessment of *Power and Pathos* via BMCRA (2015.09.02)]. Indeed, while it is wise to keep this contentious debate in mind, it should not eclipse the enormous contribution of this volume, which is more concerned with outlining the artistic style of the Hellenistic period. For such a reasonable price, *Power and Pathos* contains a remarkable amount of technical, aesthetic, and historical information, and it is highly recommended for those interested in art, technology, and cultural exchange.

University of Mary Washington, rgondek@umw.edu

RENEE M. GONDEK