

BOOK REVIEW

Greek Art and Archaeology c. 1200-30BC. By DIMITRIS PLANTZOS. Atlanta: Lockwood Press, 2016. Pp. 304. Paper, \$49.95. ISBN 978-1-937040-57-4.

This book is a lively translation of the 2011 version written in Greek. It matches up very favorably with the similar recent textbooks such as Pedley (a 5th edition in 2011), Neer (2011), Barringer (now in paperback (2015)). These texts cover very similar ground but differ in their scope. Plantzos confines himself to Iron Age through 30 BC. This is one of the most instructively illustrated textbooks that this reviewer has ever seen. Each of the 592 magnificent color illustrations has been strategically positioned to coordinate with accompanying text and incredibly well blended into the large page format. Commentary is well organized, terse, pointed and minimalist in description. Bibliographies accompany each chapter although omitting some prominent American scholarship. To facilitate student comprehension chronological tables, maps, and site plans are abundant and complemented by specific treatment of major art or architectural examples.

The first chapter crisply presents an overview of the sources and methodology of archaeology, seen as a confluence of art, history, material culture, essentially the cultural core of a civilization. While alluding to prominent and often romanticized past discoveries, Plantzos insists upon the integration of field archaeology with preservation of what has been uncovered, and with comparative studies at all levels. Resting on the premise that narratives do embody cultural values and that visual images congeal a culture's past and present, he likens the task of teaching Art and Archaeology to that of becoming an "acrobat of sorts," who must painstakingly balance solid textual and material evidence with cogent interpretation. A very brief discussion of the Late Bronze Age, the final prehistoric period in Greece, leads into the summary treatment of the usual suspects connected with the early Iron Age such as the Dorians and the Sea peoples. Pottery evidence is well integrated with excavation histories and prominent architectural and artistic components.

Chapter 2 divides the chronology of the Iron Age (1100–700 BC) into Sub-Mycenaean (1100 BC 1050 BC), Protogeometric (1050 BC 900 BC) and Geometric (900–700 BC). Appropriate examples tracing the development of pottery

shapes, styles, and decorations, which distinguish each period, are uniformly presented in an exceptionally well ordered, attractive format. Special subjects such as the Dipylon Vase appear on a colored, highlighted background inviting close reading.

Chapter 3 consists of a comprehensive survey of the Archaic Period (700–480 BC) subdivided into Early (700–620 BC), Middle (620–575 BC) and Late (575–480 BC). Topics such as economic development, political organization, colonization, and the formation of tyranny in the Early Archaic period are examined in specific geographical contexts. For Corinth, special attention is drawn to the influence of the Orientalizing period on its minor arts, productions in gold and bronze, and pottery with a full examination of the Chigi Vase. For Athens, similar procedures lead to a discussion of the Polyphemus Vase and to consideration of other pottery workshops functioning in the Cyclades. Plantzos offers a very lucid explanation of the origin and life of the Daedalic sculptural style, followed by a comprehensive treatise on archaic architecture—temples, plans, full terminology with excellent illustrations.

The section on sixth century pottery is informative and exhaustive. Shapes, names, and function of numerous vessels form a useful chart; the Francois Vase holds center stage; treatment of Athenian black figure is balanced by that in other Greek cities. There is persuasive evidence for the widespread resonance of Plato's Symposium with sympotic vase paintings. Abundant examples illustrate the technical explanation of red figure and its continued manufacture. A profusely illustrated commentary on the evolution of monumental sculpture and architecture includes Egyptian prototypes, the kouros and the kore—each accompanied by a bevy of well-chosen examples diachronically presented. The evolution of funerary stelai and the growth of sanctuaries across Greece is reflected in the sculpture of pediments and friezes in Athens, Delphi, and Aegina.

The Classical Period (480–336 BC) Chapter 4 begins by noting how the defeat of the Persians marked the triumph of democracy and the emergence of a middle class in Greece. Plantzos introduces the Severe style (480–450 BC) exemplified in hollow cast bronzes and in the marble pediments of the Temple of Zeus in Olympia. He presents each monument of the second half of the fifth century BC Athenian Acropolis and Agora as well as the sculptures of the Panathenaic procession. The Temple of Poseidon at Sounion, the shrine of Artemis at Brauron, and the Temple of Apollo at Bassae provide comparisons. Funerary and votive reliefs follow discussion of the major works of Pheidias and Polycleitos. Additional topics

include changes in pottery, the emergence of monumental fresco painting, the architecture exemplified by various temples (Asclepius at Epidauros, Athena Pronaia and Apollo at Delphi), by the Mausoleum and frieze of Halicarnassos, the monument of Lysicrates in Athens, and the theaters in Athens and Epidauros.

Fourth century improvements in domestic architecture as well as increased use of the Hippodamian town grid plan may have been factors augmenting the popularity and frequency of sports and games, predictably reflected in art. Plantzos devotes attention to three major fourth century sculptors and their known works, Kephisiodotus, Praxiteles, and Skopas. After highlighting fourth century Macedonian tomb paintings, the chapter concludes with commentary on metallurgy and the emergence of coinage throughout the Greek world in the late fifth and fourth centuries BC.

The Hellenistic Period (336–30 BC) Chapter 5 breaks into three stages. The first is the effort of Alexander to consolidate his kingdoms (336-275 BC); the second their flourishing (275–150 BC); the third Roman political, cultural and military incursions (150–30 BC). The decline of the city state coupled with centralized power and the fostering of monarchy in the Hellenistic world of newly founded cities led to experimentation in architecture, art, and urban planning. Plantzos explores such changes in public architecture with examples drawn from Pergamum, Lindos, Didyma, and Athens. After briefly treating domestic and palace architecture, he traces the development of Hellenistic free standing and relief sculpture—with emphasis initially on Lysippus—through the three phases of the period. An impressive list includes statues attributed to Lysippus, the Pergamon Altar, the Nike of Samothrace, the Bathing Aphrodite, the Aphrodite of Melos, Aphrodite and Pan, Apollo Catharoedus, and the famed Laocoon. Logically portraiture, and votive reliefs lead into a robust explanation of Macedonian tomb painting. Subsequently the reader encounters commentary on mosaics, ancient painters, painted funerary stelai and examples of skiagraphia and skenographia, as found in early Pompeian painting styles. In a survey style, the chapter closes with a look at pottery and the minor arts inclusive of the Megarian bowls, the decorative art in glass bowls, finely crafted gold jewelry, portraiture on coins and finally exquisite seal stones.

As a textbook this volume provides a very viable platform current, comprehensive, and convenient for teaching a survey approach which promotes more than a fleeting academic traction.

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