

## BOOK REVIEW

*The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Greece*. By JUDITH BARRINGER. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp. xxi + 438. Paper, \$95.00. ISBN 978-5-211-7180-9.

There is no lack of textbooks devoted to Greek art and archaeology. From stalwarts like John Boardman (*Greek Art*, 1964), William R. Biers (*The Archaeology of Greece*, 1980), and John Griffiths Pedley (*Greek Art and Archaeology*, 1993), to newer texts by Richard T. Neer (*Greek Art and Archaeology*, 2012) and Mark D. Stansbury-O'Donnell (*A History of Greek Art*, 2015), any scholar who undertakes to write a survey of Greek art and archaeology has signed up for the difficult task of creating something new. Judith Barringer throws her hat into the ring, successfully, with 2014's *The Art and Archaeology of Ancient Greece*.

Like other surveys, Barringer's text is an introduction to the art and archaeology of ancient Greece designed for the undergraduate student. But Barringer is able to create a fresh, current survey of Greek art by doing three things. First, she adheres to the current trend of placing ancient works of art within their larger contexts and emphasizing their function in the Hellenic world. Second, Barringer also places Greek art within its larger context of the ancient world, comparing objects to the Near East, Egypt, and Rome. Finally, Barringer eschews the division between archaeology and art history and instead exploits the advantages of both disciplines in her textbook.

Barringer's text contains seven chapters, which chronologically cover the art and architecture of ancient Greece, from the Bronze Age through the Hellenistic period. She concludes with a chapter on Roman art as it relates to Greek art. Within each chapter, Barringer further organizes her narrative of Greek art by grouping works within themes. For example, Chapter 2 ("The Geometric Period") is organized under themes like "discussion of colonization," "defining oneself," and "early temples." The artworks covered are of various media, from both the public and private spheres, and range from famous works that are required in any Greek art survey (like the Parthenon) to lesser known works (like the gold oak crown from Vergina).

Many features of this book will appeal to students, including Barringer's cogent writing and the outlines and timelines that begin each chapter. In addition, the book is filled with about four hundred high quality color photographs, some of which are atypical views of famous works (for example, see Figure 3.11 of the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi). Students will also appreciate the numerous text boxes within the book, which cover a myriad of topics, from techniques to issues of connoisseurship. These text boxes often have additional photographs, drawings, or reconstructions that serve to bring these issues to life. Finally, the textbook includes an extensive glossary and bibliography arranged by chapter and theme.

Instructors will find much of Barringer's text valuable, especially the introduction. At the outset, Barringer defines the disciplines of art history and archaeology and how they are often pitted against one another and she explains how she is using both disciplines to her advantage. Perhaps most valuable in the introduction, though, is Barringer's discussion of "art" and "artists." In short, students become aware that art in the ancient world always served a function and that artists were, for the most part, considered artisans and craftsmen.

But Barringer's text is not without flaws. First, the labels of the artworks make it difficult for the beginning student to know what the object is or what the scene represents. For example, the famous Exekias amphora with the scene of Ajax and Achilles playing a game of dice is labeled as "Fig 3.332a-b Vatican City, Musei dei Vaticani 344 from Vulci, Attic black-figure amphora signed by Exekias, c. 530 BC, terracotta, H 61 CM." This deviates from the standard artist, title, date, location, and the label makes no mention of what this famous scene in vase-painting represents.

In addition, her text boxes, while overall very helpful, also have some missed opportunities. Nowhere in her discussion of the Parthenon does she bring up the endless debate over the Elgin Marbles. In addition, Barringer does not mention any of the recent high profile cases of repatriation of Greek works of art. Finally, a more in depth discussion of the history of archaeology would have been beneficial, especially contemporary advances in the field like underwater archaeology. Also, while she tries to place Greek art within its larger context, there is definitely room for improvement in this regard. Only rarely does Barringer explicitly compare Greek works with other cultures, and when she does she usually does not say much about it. For example, Figure 1.8 is a drawing of a fresco from Egypt that is included to make the point that the Minoans had contact with other cultures. But Barringer does not discuss how this Egyptian painting is Minoan in its

style. In addition, the timelines at the beginning of each chapter rarely include any historical events outside of the Greek world.

Finally, Barringer's textbook is not markedly different from Richard T. Neer's *Greek Art and Archaeology*, published in 2012 by Thames and Hudson (\$82). Barringer and Neer have similar ideas regarding a new survey of Greek art and presumably began writing at the same time. Both texts reflect current trends in research, emphasize context and function, highlight famous works along with lesser-known objects, and utilize text boxes to highlight current issues in the field. While Neer includes extensive case studies of important sites, Barringer tries to stress Greek art's relationship with the rest of the ancient world and extends this discussion to include Rome. Ultimately, an instructor would be hard pressed to choose between Barringer and Neer for a course in Greek art.

Despite its few faults, Barringer's textbook serves as an up-to-date and well-rounded introduction to the art of ancient Greece. Barringer tells the narrative of Greek art in an accessible way that will be attractive to students and she provides jumping-off points for further research and discussion within a Greek art class.

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