

Greek Sculpture: Function, Materials, and Techniques in the Archaic and Classical Periods

Edited by Olga Palagia. Pp. xxiii + 326, figs. 94, pls. 8. Cambridge University Press, New York 2008. \$36.99. ISBN 978-0-521-73837-8 (paper).

This collection of essays on the production, distribution, and use of sculpture in the ancient Greek world is long awaited and will become a staple in the libraries of scholars and students alike. While these subjects have been treated before in other publications, their assembly into a single volume is welcome. Palagia has gathered a winning cast of contributors: each essay is written by an authority on the subject in prose that is lucid and engaging. The themes of the volume, as set out in the title, are present throughout. Each author begins his or her essay with a short history of the subject, explaining the development and refinement of techniques and the influences of both domestic and foreign cultural trends on artistic style. All illustrate their points with a mixture of familiar and less familiar examples, and several introduce recently excavated objects into their discussions. The bibliography is thorough and directs the reader to further sources on the subjects.

An essay by Boardman ("Sources and Models") opens the book and explores the influences of Egypt and the Near East on the development of the Daedalic style in Crete. Sturgeon's essay ("Archaic Athens and the Cyclades") focuses on the impact that the importation of marble from the islands and the opening of quarries around Attica had on the development of monumental stone sculpture in the sixth century. She emphasizes the process of creation, beginning in the quarry and finishing with the adornment of statues with metal attachments, locks of hair, and paint. Particularly interesting is her discussion of the physical characteristics of types of marble,

such as color, grain, and texture, and how they affect the final product. Palagia's essay ("Classical Athens") picks up where Sturgeon leaves off, focusing on the prolific output of sculpture in that city after the Persian Wars. She describes in detail the planning, crafting, and installation of architectural sculpture on temples around Athens and Attica, focusing in particular on the Parthenon. Such additions as locks of hair in lead, weapons in metal, wreaths of gold, and the application of bright paint resulted in sculpture that was far more lively and vivid than it appears today. Her detailed analyses of the specialized techniques employed in the production of chryselephantine sculpture and sculptural appliqué, such as on the frieze of the Erechtheion, are especially welcome.

The study is not limited to sculpture and monuments of the Greek mainland. Barletta discusses the sculpture of Magna Graecia, including the techniques employed in the production of terracotta figurines, statues, and architectural sculpture. Higgs treats the construction and decorative sculpture of two fourth-century monumental tombs in Asia Minor: the Nereid monument and the mausoleum at Halikarnassos. Although every essay treats the subjects of materials and technique, two chapters in particular focus on the mechanical processes involved in the production of sculpture. Mattusch ("Archaic and Classical Bronzes") and Palagia ("Marble Carving Techniques") answer those tricky technical questions that students seem always to ask but that professors never have adequate time to answer in lectures. Mattusch outlines the development and history of creating sculpture

in bronze, including the sphyrelaton technique, the application of gold leaf to bronzes, the use and production of molds and working models, and the process of lost-wax casting. This complex procedure is clearly illustrated in a full-page diagram. The methods used when carving stone are equally well explained by Palagia, who worked closely with sculptor Stelios Triantis to learn the nature of stone and how it reacts to the various tools of the artist. The reader is guided through the many stages of a statue's creation, from the quarry to the application of the final finish. Palagia describes in detail the tools one would have found in the workshop of an ancient sculptor, how each one was used, and the distinctive marks they made. Although humbling for the chemically/geologically challenged, Herz's chapter ("Greek and Roman White Marble") is invaluable, containing up-to-date information on methodologies currently being used to determine the provenance and use of marbles around the ancient Mediterranean. Herz provides a brief history of ancient marble quarrying before moving on to a more technical summary of the scientific methods now available to archaeologists and art historians to help them indentify, classify, and restore marble artifacts more accurately. The comparison of isotopic ratios in broken

pieces of marble, for example, aids the accurate reconstruction of marble statuary and stelae. Isotopic analysis of the marble may also reveal later repairs and mismatched assemblages of fragments, facilitating accurate reconstructions and restoration.

As a specialist in Greek sculpture, I welcome this volume into my library and refer to it often. Several chapters appear on my graduate and undergraduate syllabi. The writing style is consistently clear, and my students have responded well, finding even the most technical explanations easy to follow and helpful in their overall understanding of the production of sculpture and its uses in archaic and classical Greece. My only complaint lies with the construction of the book itself. I own the paperback edition; the binding began to give way after only a few uses and half of the pages are now loose. Since this book will see plenty of use, investing in the hardbound edition might be worthwhile.

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