

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

WILLIAMS (D.) **The East Pediment of the Parthenon from Perikles to Nero** (BICS Supplement 118). London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 2013. Pp. xviii + 102. £38. 9781905670437.

doi:10.1017/S0075426915000877

After nearly 200 years of research, the pedimental statues of the Parthenon still repay close scrutiny, as this book amply demonstrates. Williams' re-examination of the statues of the east pediment now in the British Museum leads to some valuable insights. Even though I do not find myself in agreement with all his conclusions, his discussion of issues arising from the fragmentary nature of the material points in the right direction. However, we do not see the whole picture because the author chooses to exclude the fragments from the east pediment now in the Acropolis Museum (with the exception of the so-called Selene) even though they serve to illuminate some of the problems that he comes up against in his study of the material in London.

Part 1, 'The Classical pediment', deals with questions of figure identification, restoration of lost attributes and positions of figures within the pediment, as several were recut in order to fit in the narrow space. Williams' thorough study of cuttings at the backs and tops of figures illuminates the process by which the finished sculptures were adjusted into the restrictive frame of the pediment. He brilliantly restores the attributes of Kore (E), Demeter (F) and the running Hekate (G) as a pomegranate branch (E), a sheaf of wheat and a sceptre (F), as well as a pair of torches (G) by comparison with images in Attic pottery. The restoration of a bronze palm tree next to Leto (K), however, is purely conjectural. This figure is more likely to be leaning against another seated figure, probably Apollo, who is now lost. The identification of the female charioteer (N) in the north corner with Nyx rather than Selene (who should ride a horse rather than a chariot), based on pictorial imagery, is thoroughly convincing.

In further questions of identification, however, the author's dependence on the iconography of

Attic vase-painting does not always produce happy results, as two-dimensional art was not always in agreement with developments in sculpture. This is especially evident in the representation of the miraculous birth of Athena, the subject of the east pediment. Even though Attic vases always depict a miniature Athena springing out of the head of a seated Zeus, this solution has been questioned by generations of Parthenon scholars, who have argued that Athena on the Parthenon was shown standing next to Zeus in accordance with the *Homeric Hymn to Athena*. But the author hesitates to disregard the testimony of the vases. The crucial issue of the lost central figures is essentially glossed over with the excuse that we do not have certain and substantial fragments of the main figures. Most scholars, however, would agree that we do have substantial fragments of Hera, one of the central figures, in the Acropolis Museum (Peplos Figure Wegner and head Acr. Mus. 2381).

Williams' resurrection of Rhys Carpenter's (*Greek Sculpture*, Chicago 1960, 137–38) identification of the reclining figure D as Ares, instead of the generally accepted Dionysus, is to my view rather problematic. It is based on the schematic braid at the back of D's head which Williams takes for a ledge for the support of a now lost bronze helmet. He also explains the cutting at the top of D's head as a means of securing a metal dowel for the attachment of this helmet. This, however, is best explained as a *meniskos* hole by analogy with a similar hole in the top of Hera's head (Acr. Mus. 2381). The hole in Acr. Mus. 2381 could not have supported a *stephane*, as posited by Williams, because her hair is pierced with two rows of holes for the insertion of metallic flowers which leave no room for any additional head ornaments. The putative addition to D of a helmet entirely made of metal would form a contrast with the helmet of Athena in the west pediment, which is partly made of marble with cheek-pieces and crests added in bronze. Williams also explains a hole at the front of D's ankle as supporting a greave pad, an accessory that is more commonly depicted in vase-painting. Comparison with the Ares Borghese (another Classical nude wearing a helmet and an ankle

ring) is not really useful in this respect; not only is the significance of his ankle ring still being debated but even the identification with Ares has been challenged (*cf.* A. Avagliano, 'L'Ares tipo Borghese: una rilettura', *ArchClass* 62, 2011, 41–76). Finally, D's depiction as a symposiast is more appropriate for Dionysus; there are no images of a reclining Ares in vase-painting or other media.

Williams also reports on Giovanni Verri's detection of traces of Egyptian blue on the waves before Helios (A), the chests of E and F, and the draperies of L and M. The full results of Verri's analysis are forthcoming in the proceedings of the conference *Rethinking the Parthenon* that took place in Athens GA on 17–18 October 2014.

Part 2, 'Hellenistic and Roman additions and repairs', discusses the evidence of such interventions in the fabric of the temple, notably the replacement of geison block 20 (19), for no repairs can now be detected in the extant sculptures except for recuttings, for example in the seat of K and the rear of L. Williams observes that the damage only affected the area between figures J and M, and attributes it to a lightning strike. Figure J that stood on geison block 20 (19) was probably replaced and the seat of K was reinforced with an additional piece, which Williams recog-

nizes in a fragment reproduced in an 18th-century watercolour by William Pars.

He also attributes to this repair certain dowel holes and cuttings for cramps, for example those in the rear of the skirt of the Peplos Figure Wegner, added in an attempt to secure some figures into slightly changed positions. Apart from the fact that these particular cuttings cannot be dated, the damage is unlikely to have affected figures near the centre like the Peplos Figure Wegner or the horse heads in the northern corner.

Because the mouldings of the replacement geison block 20 (19) were dated by Manolis Korres to the first century AD ('The Parthenon from antiquity to the 19th century', in P. Tournikiotis (ed.), *The Parthenon and its Impact on Modern Times*, London 1994, 140), Williams associates the Roman repair with the bronze inscription in honour of Nero that was inserted into the east architrave of the Parthenon in anticipation of his projected visit to Athens, and suggests that the replacement statue of Apollo (J) may have carried, in fact, Nero's portrait. This is a plausible explanation, offering a useful insight into the afterlife of the monument.

OLGA PALAGIA

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
palagia@enternet.gr