

Bernard Holtzmann. *La sculpture de Thasos. Corpus des reliefs II: Reliefs à thème héroïque. Volume I: Texte, Volume II: Planches*. pp. 221, 84 plates. Athens: École française d'Athènes (Études Thasiennes 25). ISBN 978-2-86958-311-5, paperback €74.

This volume has all the virtues of a traditional scholarly catalogue writ large. It also has the substantial drawbacks of the same genre.

First, the virtues. Many years in the making, in significant part because of the sheer difficulty of accessing the material in the museum at Thasos, this is as complete a collection of the relevant Thasian material as can be achieved. Works known only from description or sketches and works of which photographs exist, but where the stone itself has disappeared, are all included. Each work is carefully traced to its modern provenance, and the plausible relationship between that provenance and where it was set up in antiquity is discussed. Each work is carefully described, and then discussed in individual commentaries which pick out the peculiar features of each relief and consider the grounds on which one might reckon the piece votive or funerary and on which one would offer a date. All of this is done with a certain lightness of touch, indeed charm, and sometimes wit. And for each piece where this is possible there is, in the Plates volume, a photograph of high quality, reproduced at a size adequate for detailed observation.

The reliefs included take two forms. There are scenes of horsemen, on the one hand, most of them scenes of a horseman hunting; and there are scenes of *symposion*, on the other. Rather wonderfully, a single piece, illustrated appropriately on the cover, combines a horseman with a reclining diner. Preceded by an introduction, devoted to what we know about heroes and their iconography and what we know about heroes on Thasos, in particular, the two catalogues of material are each followed by a commentary, making sense of each corpus as a whole. These commentaries are particularly devoted to tracing the iconography of the reliefs in question, and both are important for our understanding of Greek sculpture more widely. The discussion of the representation of horsemen is important because this motif acquires a general importance in Macedonia and Thrace that it does not achieve in southern Greece, and the question of how exactly those northern interests play out is not straightforward. The discussion of the heroic/funerary banquets is important because Thasos

offers both an exceptionally early example of such a scene (which vies with an example from Paros, significantly, to be the very earliest such scene), and a uniquely long and rich series of such scenes, extending over some 175 examples and eight centuries. Changes over time in the iconography can therefore be closely observed (for all that the main external check on dating is the style of accompanying inscriptions, when present), and the play between local factors and the impact of the wider world can be traced with some confidence.

No one will read these volumes without profit. Holtzmann's experience and sharp eye repeatedly draws attention to the significance of details that might otherwise pass unnoticed, and his ability to draw apt and instructive parallels with material from elsewhere in the Greek world is admirable. But at this point the drawbacks of the genre and the approach cut in. Because this is a publication of Thasian sculptures, not a single object not believed to come from Thasos is illustrated. Indeed, the 'text' volume has no illustrations at all. The volume is usable only for those with access to a good classical archaeology library.

This narrow conception of what a catalogue is extends more generally. The reliefs illustrated here are at no point set within the wider history of sculpture on Thasos. This is no doubt in part because this is just part of the definitive publication of the sculpture, but the absence of full publication only makes it more necessary to situate what we have here against the wider history of Thasian sculpture, which no scholar knows better than Holtzmann. Further, the decision to break down the reliefs not only between distinct iconographic types, but according to the presence in the imagery of particular details and according to whether what is preserved is fragmentary or not, privileges iconography above all else, and means that only if they cut up the plates volume and re-order it can readers old-fashioned enough to be interested in style, or concerned with chronological distribution for other reasons, get more than a general impression of change over time.

If there is no interest in the history of Thasian sculpture here, there is similarly no interest in Thasian history. The question of what sort of a society it might be that supported this continuous and heavy demand for heroic/funerary banquet scenes does not figure. Holtzmann's story in general is that reliefs that start as formally 'heroic', that is attached to hero cult, become 'banalized' for general funerary use, but only the most fleeting attempt is made to play this out against what we know of

Thasian cult practice (and we are given no account at all of funerary practice). So too, although a significant proportion of these reliefs have remains of inscriptions, some of which go beyond simple names (one extends to 16 lines), Holtzmann has no interest in these inscriptions (bar the possibility of dating on their basis), either in themselves or in their relationship to the reliefs. The reliefs here have become essentially detached from everything else.

Reading the work of a fine scholar is always a pleasure, but in this case the pleasure is distinctly qualified by the many missed opportunities.

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Barbara A. Barletta. *The Sanctuary of Athena at Sounion*. pp. 360, with col. and b/w ill. 2018. Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens (Ancient Art and Architecture in Context 4). ISBN: 978-0-87661-967-4, hardcover £65.

The extensive and lavishly illustrated book by Barletta is partly based on an unpublished manuscript by H.A. Thompson, the former director of the Agora Excavations, and of W.B. Dinsmoor Jr., the architect of the excavation. It was first editorially revised by M. McAllister and finally Barletta assumed the task to publish it after her own intensive studies of the sanctuary and its remains. Because of her untimely death, she did not see the final publication which was provided meticulously by D. Scahill.

After a general introduction (pp. 2–13) dealing with the topography and an overall history of research at Sounion, Barletta starts her treatise with a detailed research history of the sanctuary of Athena (Ch. 1, pp. 14–52), which began more than one hundred years ago with the excavations by V. Staïs. The discovery of many architectural elements of the temple of Athena being one of the ‘itinerant temples of Attica’¹ on the Athenian Agora stimulated the vivid interest of the American excavators, who undertook their own investigations at Sounion

between 1967 and 1969. Barletta herself has thoroughly studied all finds and architectural parts that were kept in the National Museum at Athens, in the former excavation depot at Sounion, now in the museum at Lavrion, and on the spot. Unfortunately several objects from the former excavation depot at Sounion as well as from the site of the sanctuary itself had meanwhile vanished (p. 12). For the illustrations and maps, Barletta could lean on the archives of the ASCSA, the Agora Excavations, and her own drawings and photos. Many finds are for the first time here published in usable illustrations. For a publication that draws so heavily on former material from different archives as well as on own data, it would have been appropriate to quote the date and authorship of every plan or photo in their legends. Regarding the votive relief of the so-called Stephanophoros (p. 23f., fig. 16) of 470/60 BC, regrettably the convincing explanation by Th. Schäfer² has been omitted.

The oval enclosure to the Northwest of the sanctuary remains enigmatic, especially considering the disposition of the two temples in relation to it, if the enclosure should indeed be earlier than these and the rectangular temenos wall as Barletta holds. If this was the earliest feature on the spot, then why did the builders choose a slope with a gradient of more than 10% instead of the rather flat hilltop? After repeated autopsy, I hold this oval enclosure to be a Late Roman or Early Byzantine sheepfold or mandra being constructed from the stones of the rectangular temenos wall. Such mandra are frequently found in South Attica, generally preferring slopes instead of flat sites.³

In Ch. 2 (pp. 54–84) Barletta discusses the so-called ‘Small Temple’ in the sanctuary of Athena, which was excavated by V. Staïs, who dated it to the 6th cent. BC and interpreted as a predecessor of the classical temple. Thompson and Dinsmoor hold instead that it was contemporary with it and suggested that it was the heroon of Phrontis, the helmsman of Odysseus (Hom. *Od.* 3,278–285), who was killed by Apollon at Sounion. The arguments in favour of his cult at Sounion, which is nowhere attested, are meagre. Because of the inexistent foundations of the two stylobates in front of the temple and its very shallow foundations in general it has to be assumed that the columns and the entablature were made from wood, while the walls of the naos most probably consisted of mudbrick. Barletta,

¹ H.L. Thompson 1962 *Itinerant Temples of Attica*, Abstract of Paper read at General Meeting, 1962, *AJA* 66, p. 200; *Agora XIV*, 160–168.

² Th. Schäfer, *Dikella, Terma und Tettix. Zur Palästritenstele von Sounion*, *MDAI(A)* 111, 1996, pp. 109–140.

³ H. Lohmann, *Atene. Forschungen zur Siedlungs- und Wirtschaftsstruktur des klassischen Attika* (Köln – Wien 1993) pp. 254–260.