

1-1-1995

# The Pediments of the Parthenon, by O. Palagia

Katherine Schwab

Fairfield University, [kaschwab@fairfield.edu](mailto:kaschwab@fairfield.edu)

Originally appears in American Journal of Archaeology. Copyright 1995 Archaeological Institute of America.

## Peer Reviewed

---

### Repository Citation

Schwab, Katherine, "The Pediments of the Parthenon, by O. Palagia" (1995). *Visual & Performing Arts Faculty Publications*. 6.  
<http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/visualandperformingarts-facultypubs/6>

### Published Citation

Schwab, Katherine. 1995. Review of *The Pediments of the Parthenon*, by O. Palagia. *AJA* 99(1):162-163.

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Visual & Performing Arts Department at DigitalCommons@Fairfield. It has been accepted for inclusion in Visual & Performing Arts Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Fairfield. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@fairfield.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@fairfield.edu).

in the literary sources, if it is not for anecdotal reasons, it is because they represented a departure from the standard type, probably in their actions" (p. 213). Another possible criterion for mention by authors such as Pausanias would be the fame of the victor depicted or the renown of the dedicator or the sculptor of a work.

FRANCES VAN KEUREN

SCHOOL OF ART  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
ATHENS, GEORGIA 30602-4102

THE PEDIMENTS OF THE PARTHENON, by *Olga Palagia*. (Monumenta Graeca & Romana 7.) Pp. 74, ills. 120, with an appendix. E.J. Brill, Leiden 1993. \$100. ISBN 90-04-09683-3.

In the last two decades Parthenon studies have been stimulated by the restoration project of the Acropolis, by symposia and the subsequent publication of those papers, and by the display of plaster casts of the sculptural program. The long-term project to restore the Parthenon, as well as other structures on the Acropolis, continues with the work of M. Korres under the supervision of the Committee for the Preservation of the Acropolis Monuments. Korres's publication of the east facade of the Parthenon is forthcoming. Parthenon symposia include the 1982 Parthenon-Kongress in Basel, organized by E. Berger, who was also editor for *Parthenon-Kongress Basel* (2 vols., 1984). Another symposium, "Athens and Beyond," was held in conjunction with the exhibition "Goddess and Polis: The Panathenaic Festival in Ancient Athens" (1992-1993) and was organized by the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, while being guest-curated by J. Neils, who also served as editor for the catalogue. Yet another symposium, "The Interpretation of Architectural Sculpture in Greece and Rome," took place at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1993. The last papers, including one by O. Palagia on the Parthenon east pediment, will appear in *Studies in the History of Art* 49.

Plaster cast collections are most significantly represented at the Skulpturhalle in Basel and at the Center for Acropolis Studies in Athens. These two displays allow for new discoveries and they assist scholars in joining fragments when the original pieces belong to different collections or when the image is only known from the Carrey drawings. With these resources, newly identified or excavated fragments can be matched or associated with specific figures, as in the work by A. Mantis and his reconstruction of the middle south metopes.

As a result of these studies, scholars have been able to offer new observations and interpretations of the Parthenon sculptural program. In her present study of the Parthenon pediments, O. Palagia is in an excellent position to reexamine a number of issues concerning placement, identification, iconography, and technical considerations of the figures in both pedimental groups. Her thorough review of the scholarship and her examination of the travelers' drawings and the extant marbles are fully evident. Previous comprehensive studies of the pediments since

the 1950s—those by F. Brommer, E. Berger, G. Despinis, E. Harrison, and E. Simon—provide a basis for discussion and comparison. These studies reveal the difficulties in associating fragments with specific figures and their locations in the pediment. Palagia includes useful charts for the two pediments in an appendix (pp. 60-61) with proposed identifications arranged chronologically from 1963 to the present. It is helpful to consult this appendix prior to reading her introduction.

The introduction describes the history of the sculptures and their associated scholarship. Palagia's narrative synthesizes concisely the compelling history of the temple and identifies which sculptures in the pediments were seen in situ by visitors, including Cyriacus of Ancona in the 15th century, among the early visitors to the Acropolis, and others through the 19th century. For readers less familiar with the scholarship of the Parthenon, this chapter will be especially helpful as an introduction to Parthenon studies.

Chapter 1 is devoted to the east pediment with the following subheadings: A. Figures Drawn by Carrey, and Selene; B. Principal Fragments Attributed to the East Pediment; and C. The Lost Figures at the Centre. Palagia presents the reader with previous documentation and identification(s) for each figure by their assigned letter A-O, and her current assessment for each of the figures. A few examples of some of the disputed figures are given here.

Figure D has been identified as either Dionysos or Herakles, and arguments exist to support either one. Palagia gives the evidence for both, and ultimately points to a fourth-century reflection of figure D as Dionysos, on the Monument of Lysikrates, as evidence for assigning Dionysos to figure D in the east pediment. Representations of Dionysos contemporary with the Parthenon, however, never show him both nude and with short hair or with the "heroic hairstyle" (p. 19). Parallels for a nude Herakles with short hair, on the other hand, are well attested. The "heroic hairstyle" is still an issue. The muscular physique and prominent eyes are both features one readily associates with Herakles. In the case of figure D, questions remain. Palagia's arguments are unnecessarily complicated by the publisher having reversed the photographs in illustrations 24 (figs. A-B) and 31 (figs. A-G).

The best-known sculptures in the east pediment are figures K, L, and M. Only the identity of figure M as Aphrodite is widely accepted. Palagia proposes Leto for figure K and Artemis for figure L, with the possible addition of a wingless Eros behind Artemis. These suggestions will, no doubt, prompt further debate.

In section B Palagia discusses Acropolis Museum 2381, consisting of three fragments forming the head of a goddess, usually identified as Hera. At issue is a cutting on the right side of the head toward the back, which Palagia asserts is a dowel hole for attachment to the tympanum. Earlier, E. Harrison had recognized this cutting as a Roman repair and positioned the head turned to the spectator's right. Palagia's interpretation of the cutting prompts her to move the figure and turn it in the opposite direction (compare ill. 20 with ills. 12-Harrison, 15-Berger). The veiled head originally was adorned with an elaborate wreath, seen clearly in illustration 56 in which the head is turned to the spectator's right. The veil, appropriate for a bride or consort, may have been lifted up with her left

hand in the traditional manner, but that portion of the head has not yet been recovered. The image of Hera on the Baksy krater, shown with the wreath, the veil, and the hand gesture, further supports such a combination in the sculpture. By moving Hera to the spectator's right of Zeus, Palagia follows earlier reconstructions proposed by K. Jeppesen and E. Simon. This still leaves unexplained the Peplos Figure Wegner (Acr. Mus. 6711), a large torso fragment assigned to Hera. The preserved kolpos is higher on the side where one would expect a raised arm, the left arm lifting her veil. Holding a scepter, as shown in illustration 20, will not alter the line of folds, but the larger gesture of holding an edge of the veil will raise it.

Other fragments previously assigned to the pediment are removed by Palagia who suggests that Acr. Mus. 880, figure H, and Acr. Mus. 6713 may belong to freestanding sculptures. Acr. Mus. 6673 (lyre fragment) does not belong with Apollo in the east pediment, and she questions Acr. Mus. (ex-Nat. Mus.) 5679, the hand/thunderbolt fragment discovered by G. Despinis, as belonging to the Parthenon.

In section C, in her discussion of the central group, Palagia prefers to see a standing figure similar to Zeus in the east pediment of the earlier Temple of Zeus at Olympia. Yet an enthroned Zeus at the Birth of Athena is very much part of a long iconographical tradition. The strongly Pheidian representation of Zeus on the Baksy krater further supports a seated figure at the center of the east pediment.

In chapter 2 Palagia discusses the west pediment, which fortunately has more sculpture preserved (figs. A–W). Again, her narrative is thorough and her conclusions are clearly presented. A few observations can be offered here. Figure G, Nike as charioteer for Athena, and figure O, Amphitrite as charioteer for Poseidon, are described as “stepping down” from their respective chariots (pp. 44, 49). These charioteers are braking, with one foot outside the wheel. Artemis, as charioteer, does this as well on the Bassai frieze. Amphitrite's preserved torso, pulling back to provide a counterweight, would better explain this braking action. Representations of charioteers stepping down show the figure in a more upright position with one foot on the ground behind the chariot floor, while the other foot remains on the chariot floor to steady it. Reaction to Zeus's thunderbolt in the center would further justify a braking action as the horses reared up.

In her monograph Palagia provides the reader with a wealth of information and a careful examination of the marble sculpture. Her reconstruction drawings, which are of high quality, allow for study and comparison with previous reconstructions. The numerous photographs provide us with views that have been inaccessible until now. Her conclusions, based on new evidence and a reexamination of previous documentation, will form the basis of renewed debate on the Parthenon pediments. As she has said in the preface, “this book is intended as an interim report.” We can look forward to future publications on the Parthenon by Palagia and other scholars as more discoveries are made and new fragments are excavated.

KATHERINE A. SCHWAB

FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT  
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY  
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT 06430-7524  
KASCHWAB@FAIR1.FAIRFIELD.EDU

THE TOMB OF LYSON AND KALLIKLES: A PAINTED MACEDONIAN TOMB, by *Stella G. Miller*. Pp. xlv + 129, color pls. 5 with 9 figs., black-and-white pls. 27 with 128 figs., map, appendices 3. Philipp von Zabern, Mainz 1993. ISBN 3-8053-1153-2.

In 1942 the Greek archaeologist Charalambos Makaronas discovered a major Hellenistic painted tomb near Lefkadia in the central Macedonian plain. The tomb contained the burials of 18 persons, and was marked by extensive interior painted decoration. Called after Lyson and Kallikles, whose names appear on the lintel, the tomb included the interred remains of four generations of a second-century B.C. family otherwise unknown in the annals of Macedonian history. The discovery went unheralded except for a brief notice by O. Walter in *AA* (1943) and a postwar review of archaeological events published in *Makedonika* by the excavator himself.

By the early 1970s Stella G. Miller had established herself as a leading student of the architecture and decoration of Macedonian tombs, and she joined Makaronas to publish a photographic essay on the tomb in *Archaeology* in 1974. Makaronas died in that year, and Miller turned to other matters, thereby postponing the intended joint scholarly publication of the tomb. Miller has completed the task two decades later. It has been worth the wait.

Miller's work is a complete publication that not only corrects the errors in Walter's report, but also depends upon the recently discovered field notes of the excavator. The excavation was accomplished under difficult circumstances in 1942, and Makaronas's notes leave much to be desired. Inadequate recording of the day makes it impossible, for example, to determine adequately the circumstances of the tomb's discovery, including the number and provenience of the small finds. Insofar as possible Miller has painstakingly reconstructed the excavation, depending upon the excavator's notes and her own detective work in museum storerooms. She has complemented her work with a series of outstanding new color and black-and-white plates, as well as a number of drawings.

But this is more than the publication of an important Macedonian tomb whose interior Second Style painting may provide a link between the decorative art of Macedon and Rome. Miller, who now must be regarded as our best living authority on Macedonian tombs, uses her description of the Tomb of Lyson and Kallikles as a vehicle for a perceptive essay on Macedonian tombs in general. The discussion of every aspect of this tomb—e.g., painted decoration, architecture, burials, small finds—is placed in the context of our knowledge about Macedonian tombs in general. The result is the most complete and exacting analysis of Macedonian tombs to be found anywhere.

Defining the Macedonian tomb as “a built chamber tomb roofed with a barrel-vault, covered by an earth tumulus, and found in Macedonia or areas where Macedonian influence may have been particularly strong” (p. 1), Miller sees no direct morphological development of this type of monument. Admitting the difficulties inherent in describing the origin of the tombs (i.e., Asia or Europe?), she dates their first appearance in Macedonia to shortly after the mid-fourth century B.C., with a subsequent history of at least two more centuries. No consistent orientation of the tombs