

THE END OF THE ARCHAIC STYLE

THE late Francis Henry Taylor wrote in his *Taste of Angels* “. . . not even a statesman at a peace conference is more unable to repudiate a previously held opinion than the academic potentate who passes as an authority in his particular field.” Rhys Carpenter has managed to guide both himself and numberless students through the reefs of vested opinion into the open waters of free research. He may not agree with the conclusions reached in this paper; but they are the result of his unorthodox teaching.

The common assumption that all Archaic sculpture met a sudden death along with Mardonios and his Persians on the battlefield of Plataia, and that after 479 B.C. all Greek sculptors throughout all Hellas immediately adopted new forms and mannerisms to express their ideas is utter and unsupported nonsense. The efforts of the last few decades of scholarship have, by pushing the origins of the Archaic farther back into the mists of the Greek Dark Ages, served to underscore the essential theme of this paper. No style so deeply rooted for so long in the eyes of all Greeks everywhere could have come to an instant and universal end.

The great majority of the troops who fought at Plataia tramped or sailed back to their native cities through lands untouched by the invader to intact towns, homes and families. Like victors in every war their one determination was to maintain the *status quo* for which they had risked their lives. Every one of these warriors had on his conscience some vow made before or during the heat of combat, and he lugged on his back a heavy bag of booty with which to carry it out. If he had in mind a statue he could only imagine it in Archaic terms. The whole of the Dorian world knew nothing else.

By contrast the Athenians toiled back over the dusty passes of Kithairon, down through ruined orchards, blackened vines, to a city filled with roofless homes and gutted shrines. Little if anything remained of the past that called for keeping or rebuilding. Theirs was only a savage will to shape the future.

The difference between the two attitudes is dramatized by two monuments erected almost immediately after the battle. One, the most important memorial to Plataia, was a colossal bronze Zeus set up in the Altis at Olympia. All the Greeks who had fought at Plataia contributed to it, and these included Athens and several of the Aegean islands as well as a predominant number of Dorian states. As the sculptor of this piece they chose Anaxagoras of Aegina. Although we know nothing more of Anaxagoras, the figures from the Temple of Aphaia, phrased suavely and elegantly in the late Archaic style, supply a good visual suggestion of the appearance of the image.¹

¹ All sculpture cited in this article is too well known to require separate references. It may be well to have at hand Miss Richter's indispensable *The Sculpture and Sculptors of the Greeks* which illustrates almost all of them.

At almost the same moment, in 477, the Athenians dedicated a group of the Tyrannicides, Harmodios and Aristogeiton. It was the only sculptural monument commissioned by the state for home consumption until long after the battle. This group is so consistently repeated in numerous copies that its appearance, even in detail, is plain. The only surviving traces of the Archaic tradition consist in the fixed smiles and in the snail-shell curls on the head of Harmodios. Otherwise the figures introduce a freedom of pose, a naturalness of action and a powerful anatomy entirely divorced from Archaic convention.

What do we know of the general state of Greek sculpture shortly before and after the battle of Plataia? Very little except from ancient literature, and here the focus is on Aegina. Both Kallon and Onatas worked on the Athenian Acropolis before 480; and the latter was still active in the sixties of the fifth century. Glaukias' career must have been well established by 488 when he executed a major monument at Olympia and seems to have continued until well after the Persian Wars.

Kallon of Elis and Menaichmos and Soudas of Naupaktos about whom almost nothing is known, have usually been dated about this time.

Two shadowy great names intrude into the picture. One of these was Kalamis of Athens. Despite the flowery adjectives showered on him by Roman romantics, only two significant facts have survived. In the sixties he was working with Onatas at Olympia on a chariot group; and since his share in the commission was the horses and boys that flanked the chariot itself, his role appears to have been a relatively minor one.² Pliny records that he also made a chariot group by himself; but that a well-meaning later sculptor replaced the Charioteer, feeling "that the artist who excelled in representing horses should not be thought to have failed in the treatment of the human figure."³ These clues are slight but each tends to place the work of Kalamis in the Archaic tradition.

The second vague, but important, figure was Pythagoras of Rhegion. He was active at Olympia about the time of Plataia and continued to practice there for many years. Pliny provides the one peculiarity of his style: "he was the first to represent sinews and veins and bestow attention on the hair."⁴ These details, amply applied to the pediments of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, find earlier parallels only in the most experimental sculptures executed by Athenians before the battle of Salamis.

The evidence is scanty at best. What little there is indicates strong Aeginetan influence for at least two decades after 479 B.C.⁵

As for Athens we have an enormous wealth of material, largely contained in the fabulous deposit found on the Akropolis. When the Persian invaders swarmed over

² Pausanias, VI, 12, 1.

³ XXXIV, 71.

⁴ XXXIV, 59.

⁵ Recent excavations at Pyrgi in Etruria have produced evidence of Aeginetan connections in the decade 480-470. See Giovanni Colonna in *Archaeology*, XIX, 1, January 1966, p. 18.

the sacred hill one hot September night in 480 they dutifully carried off almost every scrap of gold and silver and bronze that they could find. Two important metal heads they missed, struck off in a moment of high excitement and not recovered before the ashes of the burning temples gave them cover. The large array of marble offerings were of no practical use, and these were joyfully overturned to smash on the rocky hill top. When the Athenians returned a year later they collected these fragments and piously buried them in a great pit south of the ruined Second Parthenon. This deposit was "closed," and its exhumation was performed so immaculately that even the most portentous names in scholarship have never been able to violate its virginity.

The picture of the state of Athenian sculpture that it reveals at this moment in time is perplexing. Obviously every piece must have a terminal date of 480; and equally obviously very few bear a date of initiation. The temptation is to string the fragments out in logical stylistic sequence to cover the whole Archaic period. One of the unrealized handicaps of this process rests in the presumption that the latest archaic pieces represented here must indicate the last of the Archaic style. Since none of them represents the extraordinary freedom of the Aegina pediments, and since we know that two of the major Aeginetan sculptors were at work on the Akropolis at this time,⁶ it seems reasonable to assume that further development, phrased in Aeginetan terms (or other?), took place after the sack of the citadel. Heavy emphasis has been placed on the assumption that Athens, under the tyranny of Peisistratos and his sons, was a wealthy city and consequently a large number of major dedications were set up in their time. Experts have determined precisely what mannerisms belong to which decade. Yet the reigns of the tyrants had only a grudging following. Toadies to the tyrants might be expected to make rich offerings on the Akropolis; but these should have been show pieces, phrased in terms of precious metal or in bronze, hence unlikely to have survived the Persian sack.⁷ Austerity came to Athens with the reforms of Kleisthenes; and the state had hardly achieved an even keel when Marathon demanded its every effort.

This decisive conflict made a very deep impression on every Athenian. Their city had stood alone against impossible odds, and won! In the decade that followed, every Athenian felt, reverently, that he himself had stood with the gods. The state continued its ruthless quest for supremacy, warring without too much expense with Dorian Aegina, but providing the means for an increasing number of its citizens to fulfill the vows, openly or covertly made, to memorialize their participation in the miraculous battle of Marathon. Hence it seems reasonable to conjecture, rather than parcelling out the evidence on a decade by decade basis, that a goodly share should be considered as dedications after 490 B.C.⁸

⁶ One of the bronze heads from the deposit is obviously Aeginetan in style.

⁷ In all considerations of Greek sculpture one is constantly forced to think in terms of marble, while the more important monuments were in bronze.

⁸ In support of this proposal witness the lack of weathering and the fine preservation of the paint on so many of the figures.

A very small proportion of the finds do not conform to Archaic standards. The first is a Nike, set up in memory of Kallimachos who died as commander-in-chief on the beach at Marathon. The mannerisms are thoroughly Archaic, but for the first time the goddess leaves her traditional kneeling pose and strides forward as the archetype of the Nike of Samothrake.⁹

The Euthydikos Kore and her ineptly named brother, "The Blond Boy," break with custom in their unsmiling mouths, willfully irregular hair and square features. In all these respects the "Kritios Youth" can join, although his relationship is that of a first or second cousin. More importantly he demonstrates that before the Persian sack some sculptor had subtly overcome the Archaic "Law of Frontality" and allowed the body to adjust itself naturally to his off-balance stance.

Two other major pre-Persian survivals in Athens have been known for more than a generation and have been badly underestimated. Almost immediately after the defeat of the Barbarians, Sparta became mistrustful of the astonishing enterprise of Athens. While Themistokles spent months persuading the Lakonians not to march on his defenseless city, all Athens turned out to rebuild the shattered walls of both the Akropolis and the town. The urgency of this work was so great that they paid no attention to the materials they used. North of the Erechtheion still stand quantities of column drums from the temples burned by the Persians; and in one section of the city wall near the Dipylon Gate a gap was plugged with two statue bases of very great importance.

Both of these illustrated games. Of the five types of sport they show, only wrestling and the chariot have a long history in Greek pictorial art. The other three, a ball game, hockey of a sort, and a cat-and-dog fight are unique as subject matter. This originality of subject in itself represents a break with Archaic tradition, showing that patrons as well as artists were interested in experimentation. Yet the sculptors, obviously with their patrons' approval, set themselves entirely new problems. On the chariot base the figures are long and slim, projected in revolutionary terms. On the other base, feet are foreshortened, whether from the front or from the rear. Back views become almost a commonplace although they had never appeared before; and the artist of the cat-and-dog fight not only had the temerity to show veins in one arm, but also attempted to make the drapery over the other arm fit and amplify the action of the limb beneath it.

Traditionally these reliefs are dated a decade or two before the battle of Marathon. Yet their experimentation in the roles of anatomy and costume lead directly into the trend of the Heroic Style. They would not be dated so early except for their concordance with the metopes of the Treasury of the Athenians at Delphi; and this extraordinary monument has widely been delegated to a date between 510 and 500 B.C.¹⁰

⁹ Cf. Raubitschek in *A.J.A.*, XLIV, 1940, pp. 53 ff.

¹⁰ The French, however, who excavated the building, have consistently supported a post-

Did a decade or a decade and a half interrupt the demonstrable flow of rebellion against Archaic strictures only to have the Tyrannicides spring without parentage into full Heroic bloom two years after Plataia?

The Athenian Treasury at Delphi dominated the Sacred Way as one entered the sanctuary by the old gate. Immediately after Marathon, Athens enjoyed the admiration of all Greeks, and it had at hand the booty from the battlefield to pay for the perpetuation of its immortal moment. Delphi was its favorite pan-Hellenic site. The city's "lot" on the Sacred Way offered the perfect place to remind the Greek world of what it had done. An inscription on the face of the terrace wall flanking it on the south and consequently facing the pilgrim beginning his ascent to the temple was recorded by Pausanias, and still exists to confirm his evidence. It reads: "The Athenians dedicated first fruits of Marathon to Apollo."¹¹

Onto this most expensive and richly-ornamented building that Athens ever built before the final Parthenon the city lavished the finest materials and skills available in the ancient world. It used rare marble for mere building blocks. The akroteria, the pediments and all the external metopes bore sculptures, an extravagance no earlier Doric building had ever seen. That this jewel box could have been conceived during the austere reforms of Kleisthenes, when the politics and economics of Athens were undergoing basic change, makes little sense. As a definite statement of Athens' attitude after Marathon it is entirely credible.

Marathon date, and in this have been supported by Miss Shoe's (Mrs. Meritt's) study of the mouldings.

¹¹ Miss Richter, *op. cit.*, p. 126, note 45, justifies her dating of this monument in the decade 510-500 B.C. as follows: "(1) The swallow-tail clamps used in the construction of the Treasury are earlier than the Z-shaped clamps used for the terrace." Since she places the building and the terrace at different points in time, and since the inscription is on the terrace wall, she infers that the latter bore the trophies at Marathon. To this we can only point out that in the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina, dated a decade later than the Treasury by Miss Richter, both types of clamps are used indiscriminately. What we have to deal with here is not a problem of date, but of two different contractors. "(2) The form of the capitals with the stiff echinus of the period just before 500." Since no Doric capitals earlier than the temple of Zeus at Olympia (*ca.* 470) can be dated with precision, this argument rests upon inference. "(3) The fact that the marble was Parian, not Penetelic, which would have been the more likely material used after 490 B.C." The material of the Second Parthenon, it is true, was Pentelic marble easily obtained from local quarries. It would have cost no more than Parian to have shipped it to Delphi. Yet the use of Parian marble for building blocks as well as for the sculptures indicates a reckless extravagance with a precious material. One is reminded of Louis XIV's expenditure on the glass and mercury that emblazoned the whole long wall of the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. The material used in the Athenian Treasury is a testimonial to the city's determination to impress. "(4) The consideration of the expected return of the Persians after 490, which would prevent the erection of important monuments." This consideration did not deter the Athenians from undertaking the Second Parthenon, projected as the largest temple on the Greek mainland, during this decade. "(5) The style of the sculptures which appear to be earlier than the Aegina pediments." Here we hit the problem at its source, since legally everything that *looks* Archaic *must* predate 479. But the inscription remains despite every effort to reinterpret it. And it makes good sense.

Fragments of almost all of the carved metopes have survived. Significantly the Labors of Herakles, the pan-Hellenic hero, occupied the short side over the entrance and the long wall to the north where very few people would see them. The long wall to the south, facing the entrance to the Sacred Way, and the shorter west wall featured the Deeds of Theseus, Athens' local counterpart of Herakles. Here deference is shown to a legend common to all Greeks, but dramatic emphasis is given to a civic demi-god.

The sculptures themselves embody almost all of the oddities shown in the latest pre-Persian experiments recovered in Athens. Ordinary Archaisms remain in the treatment of the hair, features, pose, anatomy and drapery. Yet some of the eyes are rendered as flat facets, a peculiarity only paralleled by the bases from the Themistoklean circuit wall. While the belly of Herakles as he kills the Stag is phrased in the formal way of the Aegina sculptures, Theseus attacks a Minotaur whose abdomen is modelled in masses so fluid that their counterpart will not be seen again for two centuries. In a monumental scene with Athena Theseus reaches toward the goddess with an arm whose elbow clearly contains veins and sinews, while his chiton falls in folds whose irregularity deliberately defies Archaic pattern.

These odd little tokens of change find perfectly dated parallels in Athens just before Salamis and Plataia. So far as we know there are no others. Their fusion, amplification and conclusion may be seen in the Tyrannicides of 477, and in the sculptures of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia—if one dares twitch the toga of academe to permit Athenian participation there.

If the Treasury of the Athenians was indeed erected in the decade between Marathon and Salamis, where should one place the pedimental figures of the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina? Every one agrees they must be later than the metopes on the Treasury: ergo, they must then come after the Persian Wars.

Archaic mannerisms, honed almost to a fine point, dominate every detail and represent the culmination of generations of study and accomplishment. Yet almost every figure embodies an inconspicuous, but adroit, break with the Law of Frontality. Only the latest fragments from the Persian debris on the Akropolis give any indication of this development. We are reminded that both Onatas and Kallon had worked in Athens before, and were popular after, Plataia. To them should be credited infusing this new discovery into the frame of the Archaic, while Kritios and Nesiotes branched boldly into a whole new manner of expression.

The excavations at Aegina have shown that three groups of sculpture were made to occupy only two pediments. They are so identical in style that it is virtually impossible to distinguish between them. In this plethora of riches we can only wonder at the economic surplus of a very small state which could allow it to discard one whole series once the initial contract had been signed. Between 490 and 480 Aegina was almost incessantly at war with larger Athens, an unlikely time for the indulgence of aesthetic whims.

Here Herodotos comes to the rescue, for he states that after the battle of Salamis: "In the sea fight the men who won the most renown were the Aeginetans, and next to them the Athenians."¹² Hence the Aeginetans took home the largest share of the spoils. And after the battle of Plataia he relates that the Spartans sent out their helots to collect all the plunder of the battlefield, and adds: "Much of this the helots showed, as much as they could not conceal; but much they stole and sold to the Aeginetans, so much in fact that the Aeginetans thereby laid the foundation for their great fortune by buying gold from the helots as if it were mere bronze."¹³

Immediately after Plataia the Aeginetans were richer than ever before. They had a whole corps of competent artists for whom they had had small employment. Now they undertook by far the richest monument that we know of on Aegina.

The Temple of Aphaia is neatly sited on a hilly promontory where, victoriously, it could survey burned-out Attica. On it the islanders lavished a generous share of their war time profits. If one set of pedimental figures did not quite measure up to parochial standards, they could order another one. Meanwhile, their considerable supply of local talent, some trained in post-Marathonian Athens, could and did supply sculptures in the Aeginetan manner throughout western Greece.

If the date of the Temple of Aphaia be after 480, the artificial limit to the survival of the Archaic may be discarded. What, then, became of the style?

Between the Aegina Temple and the Parthenon only one important datable building survives, the Temple of Zeus at Olympia. Whatever may have been the precise origins of its sculptures,¹⁴ they are phrased throughout in terms of the bulky dynamism of the Tyrannicides. Archaic details still intrude in the hair and grin of one Lapith and in the chiton of one of the Lapith women. On the other hand, the Apollo hints at a new development in the flatter planes of his torso and of the drapery over his arms. Rounded anatomy and tubular folds are here beginning to reflect an alien trend, not yet clearly defined. Half a generation later the Parthenon reveals its full development.

Essentially what happened in this short space of time was the application of the brilliant technique, not the mannerisms, of the Archaic to the turbulent forms of the Heroic whose essential structure remains. There is no other clue to the origin of the swift and scintillating change from one broad flat plane to another or to the sharp sparkling ridges of the draperies that so swiftly translated the almost primordial Heroic into the elegant race of supermen that people the Parthenon.

The generation that built that Temple revered the memory and the tastes of its forebears who had defeated the Persians. Not having participated in the battles it could not entirely comprehend the full significance of its inheritance. It viewed the

¹² VIII, 93.

¹³ IX, 80.

¹⁴ For one solution cf. *Hesperia*, XXI, 1952, pp. 295 f.

Archaic as too mannered and superficial, the Heroic as too unrefined. Yet there was something admirable in each . . .

Thus, in the end, the Archaic never died, but was married to its younger and stronger competitor. The results of this union proved universally satisfactory for at least three quarters of a century.

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