

**A HANDBOOK OF  
GREEK SCULPTURE;  
PP. 524-588**

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*A handbook of Greek sculpture*

Ernest Arthur Gardner

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Appendix

## APPENDIX

§ 6a. CRETE. Before any systematic excavations in Crete were possible, it had been suggested by various authorities that the centre of the early civilisation of which sporadic examples had been found in Greece and in some of the Aegean Islands would be found in the ancient realm of Minos. The recent establishment of Cretan autonomy has given opportunities of which the archaeologists have not been slow to avail themselves, and many sites in Crete have now been explored, above all the two great palaces of Cnossus (by Mr. Arthur Evans) and Phaestus (by Dr. Halbherr). The results of these excavations have not indeed any very direct relation to the history of Greek sculpture, as defined in this volume; but the objects which they have brought to light and the discussions to which they have given rise have yielded much evidence as to the early civilisation and art of the Aegean, and as to the relations of its peoples to one another and to the older civilisations of the East. And the actual works of art that have been found show far more completely than could be inferred from the discoveries made at Mycenae and elsewhere in Greece itself the level of artistic attainment that had been reached in the Aegean region some thousand years, and even two thousand years, before the rise of what we know as Greek sculpture.

It is evidently impossible to give here even the barest sketch of the civilisation and art of which Crete was the chief centre. Architecture, pottery, and decorative art generally have left numerous remains, which must be studied together in order that each may be understood. But the results of such study, so far as they can at present be gathered, may be summarised as follows. As early as the third millennium before our era there existed a sort of confederation of the peoples surrounding the

eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, and these people also had international relations with Egypt and with other nations of the East. The rise of their art can be traced, mainly by the help of pottery, in Melos,<sup>1</sup> and more especially in Crete.<sup>2</sup> It is not identical with what is commonly known in Greece as Mycenaean, though it shows many similarities to it both in motives and technique; the Mycenaean art of Greece may indeed be regarded as a later local branch of this earlier and more widely spread art of Crete and the Aegean. It need, therefore, no longer be regarded as an isolated phenomenon, a strange outburst of artistic activity, of which the affinities are obscure and the origin unknown. On the other hand, the history of the Mycenaean civilisation in Greece itself, and especially on the mainland, still remains obscure; but so far as can be gathered from the evidence at present available, it would appear that the rich artistic production which we find at Mycenae, Sparta, and elsewhere was not indeed, as was once supposed, the work of extraneous artists, but owed its origin in a great degree to the islands. The chieftains for whom it was made—very probably the traditional heroes of Homer—may probably have been conquerors coming from the north; they may represent the first wave of the immigrants from that direction who came in greater force at the Dorian invasion. However this may be, the art which decorated their palaces neither came in with them, nor altogether departed with them. Its continuation, especially in purely decorative work, is attested both on the islands and on the mainland, and so offered both a basis of form and a training in execution which were invaluable as a preparation for the more national Hellenic art that was later to arise among the same people.

As regards actual works of sculpture of this early period that have been discovered in recent years, both Crete and Greece itself have yielded some examples. There are a few statuettes in lead, bronze, ivory, or other materials, which do not, however, add very much to our notion of the art that could produce such masterpieces as the Vaphio cups. Several of the figures resemble the men on those cups, not only in dress, but also in their exaggerated slowness of proportions and in the peculiar way in which the sinews are

<sup>1</sup> See excavations at Phylakopi.

<sup>2</sup> See *British School Annual* and *Monumenti Antichi*.

indicated by lines drawn along the limba. The most remarkable of Cretan discoveries of this kind have been the coloured reliefs in plaster (*gesso duro*) from the palace at Cnossus. These cannot, indeed, be altogether separated from the frescoes of the same palace, which, as works of painting, do not come within our present scope; but in their use of relief in inferior material as a basis for painting they offer a curious analogy to the coloured reliefs in rough limestone which we find in Athens some thousand years later; we even see some resemblances in modelling, as in the same peculiar emphasis of the sinews. It is evident that, with such an interval of time, we cannot look for any continuous or direct influence of the one on the other. Some of the resemblances are probably due mainly to similarity of materials and technique; but it is possible that there may also have survived through the interval some artistic traditions or tendencies that preserved, in the new growth of sculpture, some of the distinctive features of the old decorative work. As to subject, some of the Cretan reliefs represent scenes from bull-fights, reminding us of the Vaphio cups or of the Tiryns fresco; there is one particularly fine head of a bull in low relief, which probably comes from such a scene. Others represent processions of courtiers or officials, or people bearing offerings, such as remind one of the decoration of Egyptian or oriental walls; but here too there are some curious analogies to similar subjects on early Greek decorative reliefs. The new evidence, on the whole, confirms the impression made on us by the old. The civilisation and the art of which we see the finest products in Crete or at Mycenae left behind it many traditions and survivals, but it was not, by any direct inheritance, continued in the art of Greece in the historical age. And the more we wonder at the barbaric splendour of these early kings, the more we become convinced that the art which they fostered had few, if any, of the essential characteristics that distinguish Hellenic sculpture. Such common features as we notice are just those that are present in archaic art of historic Greece, but are gradually eliminated by its progress to a more perfect development.

§ 21a. The Naxians were well known in early Greece as carvers of the marble which distinguished their island as well as the neighbouring island of Paros; and some of the colossal works which they began may still be seen unfinished in the quarries where they were cut. One of the most famous of their





FIG. 131.—Sphinx dedicated by the Naxians (*Fouilles de Delphes*, II. v.)

dedications was the colossal Apollo at Delos. At the rival shrine of Delphi they also set up one of the most conspicuous of all the monuments, and this has happily been recovered in an almost complete state by the French excavators. It consists of a colossal sphinx, mounted on an Ionic column of peculiar early form; this was placed just above the rock of the Sibyl, in front of the platform on which the temple stood. The sphinx, to which we are accustomed as a symbol over a tomb, is doubtless meant here as an allusion to the oracle. The statue itself offers another example of an attempt we have seen already in various works of archaic art—the attempt to reproduce in marble on a large scale a motive taken from minute decorative art. And here, because the scale is colossal, the process is more difficult and its defects are more conspicuous. We see, as in a small bronze, the back-curved wings, the indication of plumage on them and on the breast, and other conventional features of the smaller treatment. But the large scale of the face has evidently been too much for the sculptor. Here, as in the Hera of Olympia, we see the thin waves of hair over the forehead, the flat eye-balls with merely incised lids, the straight mouth with thin lips, and the blankness of expression which contrasts strongly with the exaggerated grimace of many archaic faces. It is the same timid, indecisive style that we have seen elsewhere in works associated with Samos and with Boeotia; it is instructive to find another example belonging to Naxos, for it shows us that the early Attic series of female statues, which are by many associated with influence from the islands, and especially from Chios, by no means represents a style that is characteristic of the Aegean islands. But, apart from its defects of detail, the boldness of design of this sphinx on its lofty column shows us the vigour of the Naxian sculptors, who did not shrink from the great difficulties of execution and transport which a work on such a scale must imply.

§ 22a. The excavations of Delphi have brought to light many interesting remains of Peloponnesian art, among which those that concern us most, as supplying valuable evidence for the history of sculpture, are the metopes of the Treasury dedicated by the Sicyonians, and two early nude statues of "Apollo," more than life-size, signed by an Argive sculptor. Both architectural sculptures and independent statues of the "Apollo" type have hitherto been but scantily represented from this region at so

early a period. The Sicyonian Treasury was in ancient times the first to meet the eye of a visitor to Delphi as he advanced up the Sacred Way. Its foundations, in rough limestone (poros), are still to be seen. The remains of sculptural metopes found beside them may belong either to the partly extant building or to a still earlier one, of which the architectural members are built into the extant foundations; this latter is perhaps the more probable theory, since it explains the good preservation of the surface and the remains of colour by suggesting that the sculptures only remained a short time on the building before it was superseded. In any case the metopes are among the earliest architectural sculptures we possess, and date from the earlier part of the sixth century B.C. We have noticed in other cases the way in which the designs of metopes in stone were borrowed from small decorative panels in bronze. Here the technique suggests another comparison; the figures are coloured in a more or less conventional manner, while the background is left plain, in the natural brown colour of the stone; and the effect produced must have been very similar to that of the figures painted on Corinthian or Sicyonian vases approximately contemporary with the Treasury. The relief is bold, but there is not much of that refinement of detail which we see later in the athletic art of the same region. The subjects are such as we see on some other early metopes, such as those of Selinus. The relief of Europa on the bull (Fig. 132) is common to both (cf. Fig. 22), and is not dissimilar in treatment, though the Sicyonian work has not the same delicacy of incised lines which we were in the Selinus metopes inclined to attribute to the influence of metal-work; single decorative types are not common on metopes; such a figure of a boar on the Sicyonian Treasury reminds us of the Selinus sphinx, as well as of subjects common on vases. The two most interesting of the series represent mythological scenes; in one of them we see the ship *Argo*, with the two *Dioscuri* seated on horseback in front of it. On its deck stand two musicians, *Orpheus* and another, who are mere repetitions of the musician type with which we are familiar on primitive statuettes from Rhodes, Cyprus, Naucratis, and elsewhere. The other (Fig. 133) is a more ambitious and complicated composition; in it we see a group of three warriors, each carrying javelins over his shoulder, guiding along a drove of cattle, who are kept in their course by other javelins held