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Diana Rodríguez Pérez, ed.

*Greek Art in Context: Archaeological and Art Historical Perspectives*

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A critical study of the contexts of artifacts requires a solid awareness of the methodologies available to investigate a wider network of relationships, as the Italian art historian Giovanni Previtalli showed (G. Previtalli, "Alcune opere 'fuori contesto': Il caso di Marco Romano," *Bollettino d'arte*, 6th ser., 22, 1983, 43–68). This need is even more relevant today as researchers can now use a wider range of techniques to work on contexts, such as the many possible forms of archaeometric analysis, which require a firm methodological command by scholars in the humanities.

Important reflections on working on contexts with reference to ancient materials are proposed by the sixteen papers published in the volume *Greek Art in Context: Archaeological and Art Historical Perspectives*. This book, a selection of the papers presented at the 2014 conference Greek Art in Context held in Edinburgh, is a useful collection of case studies related to the Greek world(s). In the introduction, Diana Rodríguez Pérez calls for a holistic view of Greek material culture in which archaeology and art history contribute to the study of the same horizon with different approaches; essential here is "the multifaceted and fluid nature of the concepts of context" (12).

The volume is organized into four parts, each of which brings together different contributions around a specific aspect of the notion of "context." The first part is titled "Location and the Find-Spot" and includes analyses of physical spaces in which artifacts were displayed in antiquity or have subsequently been found. The opening paper by Sheila Dillon and Tim Shea considers a group of tombstones and Roman portrait statuary from Athens starting from their find locations. This contribution calls for sculpture to be treated from an actual archaeological point of view, paying attention to the life history of findings. Elizabeth P. Baltes discusses the dynamic landscape of ancient cities in connection with statues of famous individuals. Analyzing the case of the Athenian Agora, she outlines important methodological sets such as location/context and context/microcontext, which help interpret ancient sculptures in public spaces as part of a broad, never-static network of relationships. Eleni Manakidou introduces a new setting, central Macedonia. Here multiple types of contexts are considered in order to investigate the presence of imported Greek pottery and locally produced vases in the Archaic period; her paper also considers a distinction between coastal and hinterland areas, which is a crucial geographical issue in working on ancient cultural phenomena.

The contributions to the second part, "Experiencing Material Culture," emphasize the role of contexts in shaping attitudes and behaviors of the audience vis-à-vis images on monumental and portable scales. Bonna D. Wescoat and Rebecca Levitan address the long-standing issue of the visibility of the Parthenon frieze. The authors carried out an experiment installing full-scale panels in the Nashville Parthenon (US) that reproduced some reliefs of the western frieze. Then, through interviews, they explored how much of the frieze was perceived and understood by various types of audiences, characterized by different ages, backgrounds, and levels of familiarity with the ancient Parthenon and the Nashville Parthenon. If the specificity of the ancient viewer is considered, such experimental approaches can be useful for understanding the perception mechanisms for ancient works.

Winfred van de Put stresses the importance of contexts—archaeological, historical, and cultural—for understanding how an image was read in antiquity. He also calls for openness to multiple approaches and methodologies to broaden the range of questions we can ask ancient materials. Katerina Volioti discusses fifth-century-BCE black figure vases from the Haimon Group. In particular, the author investigates the impact of repetitive images from a psychophysiological point of view. The fact that repetition triggers "feelings of familiarity, comfort and reassurance" (91) would have facilitated the success of these vases. This interpretation adds an interesting perspective to the analysis of workshop practices such as the recurring use of patterns and could productively engage with studies on Warburg's concept of *Pathosformel* ("pathos formula"), which indicates expressive schemes and gestures that recur and survive across time conveying messages.

The last paper in part 2, by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, focuses on a single object, the Eurymedon vase. The author believes that the viewer is intended to read simultaneously the two separate sides of the vase, depicting a Greek and a Persian, respectively—as if the vase were representing a sexual act as it is happening, a hypothesis that raises many questions about the narrative techniques on Greek vases. The author, in highlighting that the vase conveys the theme of sexual domination, identifies its original context in the ancient military environment, with reflections regarding our own times.

The third part of the volume deals with “Historical and Artistic Contexts” and shows the different range of methodologies that can be used to discern the contexts of ancient artifacts. Marion Meyer’s contribution urges the correct use of literary sources in connection with ancient artworks such as the western pediment of the Parthenon: it would be incorrect to necessarily explain images with texts, given that later sources may be inspired by earlier images. Matteo Zaccarini also stresses the importance of a well-balanced use of literary sources, taking the example of the Stoa of the Herms, “one of the archaeological ghosts of the Classical Athenian Agora” (132). A discussion of this sort is very welcome given that scholars working on antiquity often use literary sources as an indistinct body of information, whereas ancient authors reveal their own specific interests and precise choices.

Helle Hochscheid emphasizes the importance of exploring Athenian sculptural production using the principle of “Art Worlds.” In her analysis, a wide range of artists, support personnel, and patrons lets us better understand classical Athenian sculpture with a more comprehensive view. Samantha Masters and Alexander Andrason aim to contextualize the fifth-century-BCE Athenian vase iconography that is generally identified as Helen and Paris. The authors believe that such an interpretation, which emphasizes adultery, is incompatible with the ideal of marital bonds and harmony within the Athenian context during that period, whereas a reading of the iconography as a general representation of courtship would be a better fit. Frank Hildebrandt analyzes five fragmentary Apulian vases of monumental size now in Hamburg. He carries out an iconographic analysis to reconstruct the context in which these vases, attributed to the Darius Painter, were produced and used.

The fourth and last part of the volume, “Recontextualization,” deals with the manifold kinds of reception processes triggered by the circulation of Greek artifacts and artists across the Mediterranean and over time. Carmen Sánchez Fernández investigates multiple issues related to the arrival of fourth-century-BCE Attic pottery in the Iberian peninsula. Her contribution analyzes the different uses of Greek vases by the Iberians—for instance, as cinerary urns. Another side of the coin is the imitation of Greek pottery by local workshops. Moreover, the author reflects on the dynamics of pottery production and the market. Analogously, Stine Schierup highlights the impact of a specific Greek pottery shape, the Panathenaic amphora, in southern Italy, with particular reference to funerary contexts. In this case as well, the author considers both the imported amphorae, not necessarily brought to Italy by winners of athletic competitions, and the local production of pseudo-Panathenaic amphorae, as well as the appropriation of the typology to convey different messages such as civic values.

Moving eastward in this Mediterranean journey, Alice Landskron focuses on the Heroon of Trysa, in ancient Lycia (present-day Turkey), a monument richly decorated by reliefs (now at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna) for which she suggests a date around 400 BCE. Its varied imagery spurs reflection on the role of local motifs and on the reception and manipulation of Greek iconographies in a region that had unique cultural features due to interactions among the Anatolian, Greek, and Persian worlds.

The closing paper, by Sally Waite, through the case of the Kent Collection of ancient pottery in Harrogate (UK), addresses the issue of collecting as a phenomenon fostering the circulation of objects across time and space, which often entails a lack of certain information about the exact findspot. However, the multiple stories of objects found, sold, and transported into different countries and continents emerge as part of the complex biographies of artifacts and deserve attention when these objects are displayed in museums.

The volume ends with a list of references, followed by an index that allows the reader to explore the content through different trajectories. Because there are multiple issues bridging the sixteen contributions, the reader can take different paths through the book; however, the footnotes of the individual papers might have provided more links between contributions.

The papers are illustrated with black-and-white figures (which sometimes are not perfectly legible), drawings, maps, and graphs; chapters 5 and 11 could have used illustrations of the discussed materials, whereas references to figures are missing in the text of chapter 16. The volume has few typos.

As the editor herself notes, the contributions in the volume mainly focus on sculpture and pottery, due to a lack of response from specialists in architecture. Nevertheless, the range of topics investigated by this collection (including, e.g., architectural sculpture) is more multifaceted than that stated in the table of contents. The geographic coverage of the contributions, which understandably is not exhaustive, also provides a useful picture of the diverse areas affected by Greek cultures.

In conclusion, this volume is a valuable contribution to the study of the ancient Greek worlds that offers much inspiration for future advancements on themes such as circulation, manipulation, reuse, and appropriation, which are central to current discussion. It is also full of food for thought for scholars working on diverse topics and disciplines such as urban palimpsests and museum studies.



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