

Renate Thomas, *Athletenstatuetten der Spätarchaik, und des Strengen Stils*. *Archaeologica* 18. Verlag Giorgio Bretschneider, Rom 1981, XII und 187 Seiten, 18 Abbildungen, 93 Tafeln.

The work under review represents one more Ph. D. dissertation published by Giorgio Bretschneider in his valuable series 'Archaeologica'. The thorough and painstaking research that goes into an academic enterprise of this kind often makes for unexciting reading, but at the same time it provides information difficult to obtain and well worth considering. In the light of this greater gain, minor imperfections and the occasional pedantic approach or the over-ambitious setting of goals can be forgiven, while the industry and patience of the whole should be applauded. My comments shall therefore move from these premises.

Thomas' dissertation was presented to Cologne University in 1979. H. G. Niemeyer, under whose direction the author worked, is personally interested in the study of small bronzes and must have suggested the topic. His preface (p. v) underlines the importance of the Severe Style in the development of Greek Art, and acknowledges the risks involved in drawing general conclusions from a numerically limited group of monuments. Yet this is the primary purpose of the author's work: to outline the art-historical development of athletic statuettes during the Early Classical period, in order to gain a more precise understanding of the phase which spans the gap between the Archaic and the Classical (p. I). This greater goal is never overlooked or abandoned through the intricacies of stylistic analysis and iconographic grouping, and if conclusions may not find total or immediate adherence, at least the author has the courage of her convictions and presents her own answer to the difficult problem of definition.

Basic to the approach is in fact the issue of whether the Severe period can be considered a stylistic phase in its own right. Is it simply a continuation of the Archaic, or is it rather a prelude to the Classical? Is it a response to historical or to socio-political events? Is it influenced by philosophical thinking or by purely technical developments? Thomas outlines previous opinions on the subject, starting with Winckelmann's and ending with W. Fuchs' 1976 review of my own 'Severe Style'. On p. 15 she provides an encapsulated summary of such divergent positions, which makes it all too clear that no agreement has been reached. This review of pre-existing scholarship may be dismissed as a standard requirement for all doctoral dissertations, but its value here lies in the statement of the premises and biases on which subsequent theories were formulated. All too often such premises have been rendered invalid by subsequent discoveries, yet the theories continue to be defended. Thomas usefully reminds us that the Olympia pediments – a major cornerstone of studies on the Severe Style – were only found in 1875. The compilation of a chronological table of archaeological discoveries would seem a desirable project for younger students.

From the complexity of previous positions stems Thomas' decision to reach her own conclusions through the analysis of a limited group of monuments. Bronze statuettes are unquestionable Greek originals, whose production was particularly abundant in the Late Archaic–Early Classical period, as contrasted with earlier or later times. They fall into three major categories: one third represents gods and heroes, approximately one fourth shows athletes and female figures, while a more limited number depicts warriors, shepherds or offering-bearers. An additional group utilizes the naked human figure as a mirror- or vessel-support. The athletic category is rich enough to be considered representative – especially since, despite Thomas' division into themes (pp. 16–17), it is made to include warriors, male mirror-supports and 'kouroi' if sufficiently athletic to qualify, whether through attributes, physique or poses. In this respect, Thomas' material occa-

sionally overlaps some treated by L. O. Congdon, in her 'Caryatid Mirrors of Ancient Greece' (1981); Thomas' geographical assessment is also somewhat at variance with that formulated by R. Tölle-Kastenbein in her study of 'Frühklassische Peflosfiguren. Originale' (1980), at least in evaluating Athens' role in the making of bronze statuettes. It is, nonetheless, significant that within the last two years no fewer than three publications have appeared, dealing with the Severe period, either directly or indirectly, through the analysis of small bronzes. Of more general scope, but focussed on the same issue of stylistic changes from Late Archaic to Early Classical, is the forthcoming publication of papers delivered at a Symposium held at the University of Cincinnati in April 1982.

Thomas presents a total of 151 statuettes, illustrating all but 31 of them with at least one photograph; given this rich visual commentary, it seems ungracious to complain that some pieces appear only in frontal view, but in cases such as Pls. 88,2 or 29, additional views could have been helpful. She divides her material by iconography, regardless of chronology and regional affiliation, although statements on these aspects are continually made within the basic discussion. The more traditional format of a systematic catalogue has been eschewed in favor of a running commentary supplemented by long informative footnotes. While this arrangement makes for more connected reading, it does not enforce total description, so that headdresses, inscriptions and other details occasionally go unmentioned, despite their potential importance (see, e. g., head ornament or attachment: pls. 57,1; 80,2; 89,2; inscription: pl. 3,1 and 2; unusual rendering of eyebrows: pl. 43,1; function of statuette: pls. 61; 77,2).

The athletic types discussed by Thomas break down as follows: 6 runners, 2 jumpers, 11 diskoboloi in various moments of the event, 4 akontists, 3 wrestlers, 2 boxers/pankratiasts, 2 runners in armor, 1 charioteer, 12 riders, 2 participants in the *kalpē* – the horserace during which the rider jumped off his mount and finished running on foot with his animal. A second group depicts not actual contests but training and the life in the palaestra: one figurine is a piggyback ballplayer, 3 are dancers in armor, 4 are hockey players, 9 are oil pourers and apoxyomenoi in various poses. One final athlete is at rest, sitting: his only claim for inclusion seems to be his physique. The same ambiguity of definition attaches to several among the 'victors' composing the third subdivision: 3 diadoumenoi, 2 winners triumphant and 6 praying. A large fourth grouping gathers 43 libation pouring statuettes in various poses (some admittedly representing Apollo), while the last section – a sort of catchall – discusses 34 kouros whose loss of attributes (which many of them once held in their now hollow fists) disqualifies them from more precise characterization. Within this section, little account is taken of dimensions: with few exceptions, height is given in each pertinent bibliographical footnote, but the evidence of the smallest pieces is considered on a par with that of figures whose larger size allows for more ambitious renderings.

The potential dangers of this approach are especially obvious in matters of dating. No true chronological framework exists for Late Archaic and Early Classical sculpture in the round, and the statuettes are no better provided with external evidence for their time of production. Thomas takes as 'cornerstones' the Kritian Boy (dated shortly before 480) and the Doryphoros (around 440 B. C.), but greater or lesser adherence to the stylistic innovations of monumental sculpture would logically seem proportionate to the importance – and size – of the small bronzes. In addition, minor arts are often allowed a freedom of rendering which might have been out of place in a more formal public monument. Thomas is scrupulous in reporting all dates proposed in the literature on each piece, but she trespasses occasionally beyond her self-imposed chronological boundaries (e. g., p. 68), and in a few instances seems conservative in her dating.

The selective criteria for the material reviewed by Thomas are not always clear. She states: 'Die hier behandelten Bronzestatuetten kommen mit Ausnahme des kleinasiatischen Festlandes und der ionischen Inseln aus der gesamten griechischen Welt' (p. 16). Yet some of her pieces are definitely attributed to Asia Minor and to Samos (e. g., runner, p. 21 ns. 110 and 116; rider, p. 64 n. 269; kouros, p. 139 n. 668). She includes some male mirror-supports, but excludes patera-handles, perhaps because the latter may not represent athletes. It would be important to know, however, if the position of the mirror-athlete is to some extent suggested by the need of the user for a stem-like body to grasp, thus requiring that the arms be held away from the body and raised at least to waist level. Should these practical considerations have had some influence on the type of athlete represented, statistics on the greater or lesser popularity of a sport event or attitude may be distorted accordingly.

I append some specific comments on items in the 'catalogue' section.

*P. 26, pls. 3,2; 4,2; 5,2:* I am not convinced that Athens NM 6614 was meant to be seen primarily in profile view, nor that he is a runner at the start: his arms are raised higher than those of other starters, and are farther apart, so that his entire torso is exposed. Both the profile of his face and the ribs (or digitations) over the flanks look awkward as contrasted with the much more satisfying frontal view. That he is a jumper still seems to me the most plausible among the suggested interpretations.

*P. 27, pls. 6,1–2; 7:* New York MMA 08.258.11 may also not be a starting runner. If not an 'athlete throwing a back handspring', as suggested by C. H. Young, then he may be a jumper 'landing', since the main objection (the position of his feet) could be eliminated if his original attachment were known. Thomas' suggestion, that the Magna Graecian origin of the piece explains a 'misunderstanding' of the artistic motif as rendered in Greece proper, may be unnecessary (as well as her rather pessimistic opinion of Western Greek art) in consideration of Pythagoras' expertise in athletic statuary. The anatomical details of the piece would imply for me a date later than ca. 450.

*Pp. 44–45, pl. 19:* This Diskobolos in Stuttgart looks so impressionistic and slender, so torsional in his motion, that I wonder whether it could be a later imitation of the so-called Pythagoras' Diskobolos type, of which a full marble copy from Side is now known besides the hip-herm in the Terme. Since Myron's Diskobolos and Polykleitos' Diadoumenos were reproduced in fourth-century minor arts, a similar dating for the Stuttgart piece (here placed 'somewhat later than ca. 470') does not seem impossible.

*Pp. 47–48, pl. 20,2:* I fail to see how the raised right hand of this athlete in Sparta could have held a spear in readiness for the throw, since the palm faces the viewer.

*Pp. 58–59, pls. 23,2; 24:* Pankratiast in London, BM 212, dated ca. 480. Too early?

*P. 62:* It is stated that the short chiton was worn exclusively by divine charioteers. But surely the Archaic drivers on the architectural reliefs from Iasos, Kyzikos and Myus can only be human? (see C. Laviosa, *Annu. Scuola Arch. Atene* 50–51 [n. s. 34–35], 1972–73, 397–418).

*P. 63:* That Greek horsemen rode always without saddle may be disproved by the equestrian ridgepole akroteria from Gela and Kamarina, where a saddlecloth is clearly indicated in vivid color. (This point will be elaborated in a forthcoming article by G. Szeliga; see L. Bernabò Brea, *Annu. Scuola Arch. Atene* 27–29, 1952, 75–82.)

*Pp. 68–70:* Thomas makes the intriguing suggestion that some statuettes of warriors apparently suspended in mid-air show competitors in the *kalpē*, a sport ultimately derived from a battle practice. In this connection she cites the Dioskouroi from Lokroi-Marasà. Could the akroterial Amazons from the Athenian Treasury in Delphi be shown in the same dismounting action, rather than riding sidesaddle? As Thomas correctly points out, the line between sports and epic/military actions is difficult to draw and some of these figurines may be mythological rather than athletic depictions. It is noteworthy, however, that rider statuettes occur earlier than representations of other contests (p. 64).

*P. 77, pl. 35,1:* This frontal view of a ballplayer in Vienna does not show the peculiar rendering of the hair over the neck, below the ears. The side views in the original publication, as well as the strange salience of the eyebrows, make me question a Greek provenience for this piece, at least to judge from photographs.

*P. 86, pl. 43,2:* Athlete with strigil in Hannover. The hair rendering is indeed peculiar, and the parallels cited are not valid, since the ears show, while in the Hannover bronze they are totally covered. Only in cases of page-like coiffures does the (truly long) hair hide the ears of the figure.

*Pp. 87–88, pls. 44; 45,1:* Youth in the Louvre, Br. 163. It is difficult to judge without autopsy, but could the 'weiche Masse' in his left hand be a liver? The hole in his right fist seems too large for a strigil; Thomas rightly places this statuette outside the athletic groups.

*P. 97, pl. 53:* The Adorant in New York, MMA 08.258.10, was allegedly bought in Smyrna. Although a Magna Graecian manufacture cannot be excluded, why not compare with the Nisyros Stele? (H. Hiller, *Ionische Grabreliefs*. *Istanbuler Mitt. Beih.* 12 [1975] 161 pl. 10.2–3.) If cogent, this comparison would highlight the diffusion and relative uniformity of the Severe Style.

*P. 97, pl. 44:* This ephebe from Carnuntum is traditionally compared to the Ligurio Ballplayer and assigned to a Peloponnesian workshop. To be sure, Carnuntum lay on the amber route and may have received Greek imports at any time. But the akme of the site is during the Roman period, and the statuette seems to me 'provincial' enough to be local. The rendering of the hair strands in front of the ears recalls somewhat similar locks in another athlete in Vienna (Thomas p. 77, pl. 35.1; mentioned *supra* in this review). This similarity has prompted attribution of both figures to the same region and I would agree, except for locating it in Austria rather than in Greece.

*Pp. 98–99 n. 436:* To the bibliography on kneeling figures, add F. T. Van Straten, *Bull. Ant. Beschaving* 49, 1974, 159–89; and E. Simon, *Antike Kunst* 21, 1978, 66–69, where the ivory kneeling youth from a cithara in Samos is identified as a dancer.

*P. 106 and pl. 59, 1–2:* Instead of 'Athen, Nat. Mus. 15 270' read 'London, Brit. Mus. 1934.11–16.1'.

*Pp. 106–107, pl. 60:* The libation-pourer from Abai (between Phokis and Boiotia), Louvre Br. 4236, indeed recalls Magna Graecian types, and – to my mind – especially the youth from Selinus (Langlotz, *Die Kunst der Westgriechen* pl. 81). Why was the latter not included?

*P. 121, pls. 73; 74, 1:* The statuette from Bologna now in Paris, *Bibl. Nat.* 98, is inscribed to Asklepios, but since it depicts a longhaired youth it could not represent the healing god himself and is therefore considered the dedicant. The possibility that it is Apollo is not mentioned by Thomas, yet it would explain the coiffure and thus allow for a later date (Jeffery, *Local Scripts* no. 40, dates the inscription ca. 450–425 B. C.; cf. Thomas n. 569).

*P. 123 pl. 75, 2:* Libation-pourer in Syracuse. The casual pose, with left hand on hip, seems inappropriate for a ritual occasion. In general, the five subdivisions established for the 'Spender'-type are not clearly articulated.

*P. 124, pl. 76, 1:* *Fogg Art Mus.* 1972.328. Can a libation be poured with the left hand? I find the identification doubtful.

*P. 126:* The statement that Kleobis and Biton are the earliest kouros wearing shoes has now been invalidated by C. Vatin's observation that the statues are inscribed with the names of the Dioskouroi, whom they must portray: *Bull. Corr. Hellén.* 106, 1982, 509–25.

*P. 128, n. 605:* The kouros from the Temple of Artemis at Kalapodi is misleadingly described as having been found 'in der Cella dieses Tempels in einen Orthostaten eingelassen'. It was in fact fastened, in secondary use, to an offering bench together with other votives, and R. Felsch not only defines it an Apollo but even, perhaps erroneously, a cult image.

*P. 128, pl. 80, 1:* Mirror support from Thebes, London, Brit. Mus. 224. To the bibliography in n. 608 add E. Langlotz, *Studien zur nordostgriechischen Kunst* (1975) pl. 58 and pp. 153–54, where the long and unusual hairstyle is described as a ritual cover, perhaps made of animal skin; contra see L. O. Keene Congdon, *Carvayid Mirrors of Ancient Greece* (1981) no. 111 and pl. 92, with a technical explanation of some peculiarities.

*P. 135, pl. 88, 2:* Athens NM 16.198, from Epidauros. The mantle over the shoulders of this headless figure may once again suggest Apollo rather than a generic athlete. The comparison cited (n. 649) does not wear the mantle in the same fashion; other kouros-types with a small scarf-like wrap, in marble, have been found in Athens (E. B. Harrison, *Agora* 11, pl. 22, nos. 108–109), but they too wear it differently.

*P. 136, pl. 98,1:* A bearded man (Kassel Br. 697) seems out of place among the kouroi, although Thomas rejects possible mythological interpretations. She rightly stresses the developed anatomy; it is worth noting the unusual rendering of the proper shift in the genitals caused by the balancing on the weight leg – a trait which does not seem to occur on other small bronzes in the group and may suggest a date definitely after 450, as advocated by Thomas for the bronze Brit. Mus. 213, pls. 92.2, 93.

*P. 138, pl. 90,2:* Why is this jumper in Munich, from Corinth, listed here away from its legitimate category? That its pose is restful rather than active should not determine exclusion, since the diskoboloi are grouped together regardless of the greater or lesser movement depicted. The jumping weight in its left hand is assurance enough of the kind of sport in which the Munich bronze is engaged.

The second section of the book deals with chronology and regional attribution and includes even female bronze figurines. Thomas distinguishes seven phases of development, conveniently corresponding to each decade of the period under consideration. The earliest athletic statuettes are dated ca. 510–500 B. C., slightly later than similar occurrences in monumental sculpture. The next decade witnesses an increasing interest in representing lively action. The general enrichment in themes and formulas is attributed to the individualistic influence of Ionia, not only on vase painting but also in the realm of the small bronzes (p. 145). The Severe Style proper begins during the span 490–480, and manifests itself in a reduction of the formal, thematic and typological range of Late Archaic art. Athletes stand rather than act, and the moment before the action is often depicted, rather than the action itself. Even motion-motifs like those of the Athena Promachos or of the Zeus with the thunderbolt turn into 'poses' instead of representations of true action.

This Severe Style peaks around 480, and hence decreases to the point of turning action into ritual or attribute. The Artemis Zeus is therefore attributed to the period 480–470, which to me seems too early, despite Thomas' comments about concomitant changes in the rendering of musculature during this phase. By 470–460 the Severe Style is looser, proportions are slenderer, three-dimensionality stronger, expressions and moods more frequently depicted. An inner motion replaces the outer. Yet in a final phase (460–450 B. C.) the action returns, and the libation-pouring or praying athletes once again engage in throwing the discus or the javelin. To this moment in art belongs, among the monumental works, Myron's Diskobolos. Yet this renewed liveliness and naturalism once again subside with the inception of the Classical period, 450–440 B. C.

The geographical picture seems dominated by the production of the Peloponnesians, where Doric Style is seen as replacing Ionic around the turn of the fifth century. The peplos is artistically accepted there earlier than in other areas of Greece, and this change in costume is considered symptomatic of Doric currents (p. 154) – yet the Olympia pediments have often been described as possibly influenced from Ionia or the islands. Distinctions among Peloponnesian workshops remain difficult, although Arkadia is quite productive. Athens loses artistic importance under Peloponnesian impetus: shortly after 480 B. C. statuettes disappear and do not recur until ca. 460–450, when the Severe Style has become diluted. Ionic traits remain stronger in Central Greece, but no Severe statuettes are said to have been made in East Greece for approximately 40 years. Magna Graecia is considered to be under influences not only from the Greek mainland but also from Etruria, and its reaction against Archaic mannerisms seems less drastic, although noticeable. Yet the individuality of Magna Graecian types may be less pronounced than stated (p. 163 and n. 791), now that the Ugento God is correctly interpreted as Zeus and not Poseidon (R. Wünsche, *Jahrb. DAI* 94, 1979, 77–111; N. Degraffi, *Lo Zeus Stilista di Ugento* [1981]).

Conclusions place this chronological and regional outline against philosophical and literary manifestations, in an attempt to correlate the whole. The stylistic movements expressed in the formula 'thesis/antithesis/synthesis' may be partly conditioned by political and historical circumstances, but no change in society is considered responsible for the innovations (p. 168). Neither the plastic arts, nor poetry and philosophy make a rectilinear transition from Archaic into Classical, but the process is more complex and articulated. This is a balanced approach, which would carry greater conviction, could Thomas' chronological and geographical attributions be more demonstrable and thus more reliable. I must confess that some of her regional attributions leave me unconvinced, especially when I cannot see the similarities among figures on which she bases them. In addition, the grouping by athletic events, while significant for the rendering of individual events, presents too many gaps or too few examples in each category to allow for proper assess-

ment. Should chronological placement be questioned, the frequency or the very inception of certain renditions would be shaken.

These doubts are inevitable when the material under discussion is so varied, fragmented and widely distributed. Thomas is to be commended for having tackled the subject, especially since she has clearly considered a much larger number of bronzes than the items included in her final listing. That she has tried to answer a much larger question is also to her credit, and is bound to spark future fruitful discussion.

Bryn Mawr College

Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway