



The Æsthetic Basis of Greek Art of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B. C. By Rhys Carpenter

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To cite this article: Stephen B. Luoe (1922) The Æsthetic Basis of Greek Art of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B. C. By Rhys Carpenter, *The Art Bulletin*, 5:1, 24-25, DOI: [10.1080/00043079.1922.11409725](https://doi.org/10.1080/00043079.1922.11409725)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00043079.1922.11409725>



Published online: 22 Dec 2015.



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of the Sibyl and the Queen of Sheba, stand side by side. The appearance of the other Sibyls and the worthies of the Old Testament in Vicente's drama she refers to that general mediæval tradition, especially significant in the Mystery Plays, according to which the Sibyls were conceived as endowed with a power of Christian vaticination equivalent to that of the Prophets. In the course of her exegesis she adds many data to our knowledge of the evolution of the Mystery Play from the ecclesiastical liturgies, particularly in her discussion of the participation, in the Christmas services, of a person acting the rôle of a Sibyl as harbinger of the Last Judgment; and her general treatment of the Sibyls in art and literature at the end of the monograph provides a useful and well-chosen compendium. The most interesting parallel to the *Auto* that she adduces is the Roumanian folk-tale, based upon a Greek prototype, which represents a Sibyl, here the sister of Solomon, as clinging to the virginal state for fifty years in the hope that Christ might be born from her. All this tradition and material, of course, Gil Vicente has sifted and combined into a work of original merit, by a sprightly invention all his own, and yet the problem of the play's meaning is difficult enough to have justified Miss King in utilizing it as a text for a dissertation that will prove valuable not only to literary scholars but also to students of Christian iconography.

She has also made it hard for a reviewer to perform his conventional duty of picking some flaws. Doubtless Vicente's Prophets and Sibyls wore the sumptuous theatrical costumes upon which she lays so much stress in her argument, but she is too ready to state their existence as a fact when it seems, in reality, only to be inferred from similar interludes and sculptured or painted groups. Whatever the faults of Lycophron, to whose *Alexandra* she alludes in examining the ancient conception of the Sibyls, his fame or at least notoriety demands a more adequate description than "one Lycophron of Chalkis, a witless poet of the end of the third century;" in any case, "witless" is the last adjective that should be applied to the oversubtle Lycophron, and he was active not at the end but at the beginning of the third century B. C. One of the most helpful features of these *Bryn Mawr Notes and Monographs* is the marginal employment of captions summarizing the substance of the paragraphs; but, evidently in an effort to break away from the lifeless diction of ordinary scholarship, Miss King sometimes indulges in picturesque headings that perplex rather than aid the reader. It is pleasant, however, to have her err in this direction when here and there she vouchsafes in the margin additional information. The same desire for less stilted language occasionally results in obscurity, as when, on page 37, it is not clear whether the Sibyl or the Queen of Sheba is smiling at Solomon, or on page 44, one cannot readily see to which "legend in learned literature" Gil Vicente may have been indebted. Yet such infinitesimal defects are the negligible vices of a great virtue, for like Ruskin, though her hand is less heavy, Miss King has really achieved an expository style that delights as well as instructs. In her earlier and much longer monograph, *The Way of St. James*, the rambling manner is perhaps somewhat exaggerated; in the present essay sound learning and charm of presentation are in pleasing balance.

Chandler R. Post

THE ÆSTHETIC BASIS OF GREEK ART OF THE FIFTH AND FOURTH CENTURIES B. C. BY RHYS CARPENTER. BRYN MAWR NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS, I. 263 PP. BRYN MAWR, BRYN MAWR COLLEGE; NEW YORK, LONGMANS, GREEN & CO., 1921.

The new series of *Bryn Mawr Notes and Monographs* starts its existence admirably with this little volume. The format is the same as that employed by the Hispanic Society, the Museum of the American Indian of New York, and the American Numismatic Society,

which means that the book is of handy size, and easy to carry in the pocket. For this reason, it will be a useful adjunct to the equipment of the studious traveller in classic lands, and form a ready book of reference and guidance for the serious student, who too often goes to Greece oversupplied with the so-called "scientific" study of Greek art, and ill equipped with true æsthetic principles. It is these principles which this book seeks to furnish. It presupposes a certain amount of knowledge of the history of Greek art, and the principles of archæology, and devotes itself entirely to a discussion of the philosophy of æsthetics as applied to art, and particularly to the art of Greece.

Professor Carpenter is admirably fitted to do this work. He is not only an archæologist, and a teacher of archæology, but a poet of no mean capacity and a finished master in the use of his native tongue. It is highly proper that a book on æsthetics should be written in a beautiful style; for a book on such a subject, couched in a slovenly manner, would for that very reason defeat the purpose for which it was intended.

There are many reviews of this book, some of which are highly complimentary, others of which seem to "damn with faint praise;" but, for my own part, I find scarcely a thing to criticise. The prevailing thought that occurred to me in reading the book, with the possible exception of Chapter III, which deals with the æsthetics of Greek sculpture, is that the writer deals with much more than Greek art and often in a manner that makes the reader forget that after all the book is directly concerned with the art of Greece primarily. This is particularly the case with the last chapter, which concerns architecture, where Professor Carpenter involves the reader with discussions of Gothic and Baroque as well as Greek.

Extremely illuminating and suggestive is the discussion of the theory of dimensions that Professor Carpenter lays great stress upon in his discussion of sculpture and architecture; I especially agree with the point made that Greek architecture had no particular conception of the enclosure of space.

For the advanced student, this book cannot be too highly recommended. It is not, however, a book that can be put with advantage in the hands of a beginner; but in its field, it is not too much to say that it is one of the best, if not actually the best book in English on æsthetics as applied to Greek art.

Stephen B. Luce

THE PALACE OF MINOS, A COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF THE SUCCESSIVE STAGES OF THE EARLY CRETAN CIVILIZATION AS ILLUSTRATED BY THE DISCOVERIES AT KNOSSOS. VOLUME I: THE NEOLITHIC AND EARLY AND MIDDLE MINOAN AGES. BY SIR ARTHUR EVANS. 542 FIGURES IN THE TEXT, PLAN, TABLES COLORED AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLATES. NEW YORK, MACMILLAN, 1921. \$25.40.

At last, more than twenty years after the discovery of the Knossos palace and ten years after the last extensive campaign on the site, there has appeared the first volume of the publication of these epoch-making excavations. If at first sight the reader is inclined to grumble that the price is prohibitive, that the book is under the size now fairly established for archæological publications, that there is no complete plan of the palace in the first volume, his feeling when he finally lays the book down is nevertheless one of sincere gratitude to the author for the immense service he has rendered. A younger scholar would doubtless have published the work more promptly and in an improved form, but it is nevertheless well that the excavation of the Knossos palace was vouchsafed to so careful an observer and to so ripe a scholar. From the outset the site of Knossos was dug with scrupulous care. The author (p. 683) states that a sieve was constantly at work to salvage