

**The Athenian Agora, Volume XXXV: Funerary Sculpture.** By Janet Burnett Grossman Pp. xxxiii + 248, b/w figs 23, plates 128, plans 2, tables 12. American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Princeton, N.J. 2013. Price not available. ISBN 978-087661-235-4 (hardcover).

In 1965 Evelyn B. Harrison, to whom this work is dedicated, published her findings on the Archaic sculptures, including the funerary monuments, from the Agora excavations as *Agora XI: Archaic and Archaistic Sculpture*. It seems only fitting that Janet Burnett Grossman, a former student under Harrison, would compile a work that serves as a companion to that chronological study of funerary sculpture from the Athenian Agora. Grossman undertakes a wide and initially daunting examination of grave monuments of the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods, uncovered by the Agora excavations between 1931 through 2011. Since no new Archaic funerary sculptures have been discovered since Harrison's 1965 publication, Grossman does not reduplicate that effort by including them in her volume.

Grossman organizes her volume into six chapters. The first three chapters are devoted to examining the subject of funerary sculpture on a variety of different levels. Chapter one provides a brief, yet vital discussion of past scholarship on Attic funerary monuments dating from the Classical through Roman periods. Grossman offers a great service to students and professors alike, who wish to learn more about the development of this topic. She undertakes this task chronologically beginning with the 19<sup>th</sup> century German scholar Alexander Conze, known for his formidable, albeit rough, chronological sequence of 2,158 funerary monuments (*Die attischen Grabreliefs* 1 [Berlin 1893], 2 [Berlin 1900], and 3 [Berlin 1906]). Some of the seminal authors to the study of funerary sculpture included in this chapter are Frel (*Les sculpteurs attiques anonymes, 430-300* [Prague 1969]), Kurtz and Boardman (*Greek*

*Burial Customs* [Ithaca 1971]), Oliver (ed. *The Epigraphy of Death: Studies in the History and Society of Greece and Rome* [Liverpool 2000]) and Gray ("Self-Representation of the *Milesioi* on the Sculpted Gravestones of Roman Attica" [diss. Univ. of California, Berkeley 2002]). Grossman briefly describes the various authors' fundamental goals, but is not shy to challenge their methodology when she has the opportunity. Nowhere is this more apparent than in her evaluation of the scholarship of Morris (*Burial and Ancient Society: The Rise of the Greek City-State* [Cambridge 1987]), Nielsen (et al "Athenian Grave Monuments and Social Class" *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 30 [1989] 411-20) and Bergemann (*Datenbank der attischen Grabreliefs des 5. Und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.: Projekt Dyabola* (<http://www.dyabola.de>) [Munich 1998]), all three of whom observed funerary sculpture more as cultural artifacts than art, part of a 20<sup>th</sup> century movement towards the incorporation of anthropological theory into Classical Archaeology. Grossman states that their conclusions were based on "selective use of certain funerary monuments" (5). She goes on to say that anthropological approaches, not just towards Attic grave stones, but to Athenian society, must be used carefully because of the limitations of funerary sculpture generally, and specifically its lack of completeness and unknown original context. Grossman ends the chapter on a lighter note admitting that Attic grave monuments are indeed cultural artifacts and commends those who attempt to study them in such a manner, but confesses that her interest in this volume is to examine them as sculpture.

Grossman, in chapter two, takes a wide approach to examining funerary sculpture from Athens and Attica. She begins the chapter with an overview of trends among funerary monuments common to specific time period, from Archaic down to Roman. This leads nicely to a section devoted to the various types of funerary monuments found in Attica (*stelai* and *naiskoi*, *lekythoi*, *loutrophoroi*, animals and

columnar monuments). Here Grossman's description is simple and straightforward, providing the reader with a chronological guide to the appearance of each specific monument type in the archaeological record and providing multiple references to the photographs located at the back of the volume. A table containing all 389 funerary sculptures compares monument type with date, and clearly displays the results of her studies (33). Ten tables visibly illustrate Grossman's findings based on gestures, poses, clothing and costume, attributes and origins, and social status for men and women. A final table examines characteristics of portraiture – crow's feet, furrowed brows, naso-labia folds and Venus rings – in order to determine the age and status of men and women (36).

Chapter three focuses on the 389 post-Archaic funerary sculptures found in the Athenian Agora and serves as an introduction to the subsequent catalogue, which consists of chapters four to six. Although Grossman admits that the majority of the pieces in the catalogue are of medium to low artistic merit and technical skill, the range of quality is nonetheless vast with several unique and rare sculptures being found among the corpus. One monument I found worthy of note was #385, a funerary altar inscribed to Valeria Fortunata. This altar contains a bilingual inscription (Latin and Greek) on the front and reliefs of a tympanum and cymbals or castanets adorning the left and right side respectively. The reliefs suggest some Bacchic and Dionysian connection, and the rare bilingual inscription suggests that the husband of the deceased woman, Antiochos Caesaris, whose name is also inscribed, wished to emphasize his connection with both Athens and Rome.

Grossman touches in a brief section of the chapter how she identified the 389 sculptures as funerary in function, since none were recovered in their original context. Other worthwhile topics she mentioned include criteria for dating

the monuments, evidence of a foreign population, the pattern of reuse, and habits in funerary craftsmanship. While these are important subjects for anyone interested in ancient sculpture, I found their placement in this chapter a bit abrupt and out of place, perhaps due to their overall brevity.

The catalogue in this volume is organized primarily by period, beginning with the Classical (ch. 4), then Hellenistic (ch. 5) and Roman (ch. 6). Each chapter and subsequent time period is then subdivided by monument type followed by gender of the deceased, and finally the pose of the deceased (standing, seated, kneeling). Although Grossman's description of the catalogue's organization was initially a bit puzzling, her decision ultimately allows the reader to draw comparisons based on period, monument type and gender without great difficulty. The reader is also benefited by a series of helpful tables scattered in the second chapter and the wonderful photographs of the sculptures themselves, taken by Angelique Sideris that adorn 128 plates.

The catalogue entries were detailed with no glaring omissions, and the addition of bibliography and comparanda, where available, from outside the Agora should be pleasing to those in academia. A two page glossary near the front of the volume allows this work to be appreciated by those outside of the academy as well. This volume is truly a labor of love by Grossman. This is an invaluable resource for anyone wishing to study Attic funerary sculpture, either from an iconographic perspective, with emphasis on gender and body position, or monument type.

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