

Humanities Seminars Program

Technological Wonders of Classical Antiquity II

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Thursdays 10:00a.m. – 12:00noon

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This course focuses on the ancient Greek technologies of sculpture and temple construction. In marble quarries quarrymen and sculptors looked for best blocks of stone to produce impressive sculptures, usually carved out of one block (monolithic). From the colossal nude males of the Archaic period, to the stunning nude females of the Hellenistic times, sculptors learned how to challenge material limitations and cultural norms. Greek sculpture usually involved a handful of specialists. Sculptors were also expected to work closely with several other specialists to erect a Greek temple. They joined stone masons, gilders, woodworkers and others for 15 years (447-432BCE) to build the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis, a great accomplishment of architectural expertise, artistic inspiration, and managerial skill. The annual building accounts vividly describe how various craft specialists from different social strata collaborated to complete in record time the largest temple project in mainland Greece.

FEB. 1 AND FEB. 8: STONE: MONOLITHIC MIRACLES

Quarries of white marble were busy places in ancient Greece. Quarrymen and sculptors looked for best blocks of stone to produce impressive sculptures, usually carved out of one block (monolithic). From the colossal nude males of the Archaic period, to the stunning nude females of the Hellenistic times, sculptors learned how to challenge material limitations and cultural norms.

Focus piece: Aphrodite of Melos

Optional Readings: Hasaki 2013; Palagia 2006; Russell 2013

Hasaki 2013: E. Hasaki, "Chapter 9: Craft Apprenticeship in Ancient Greece: Reaching beyond the Masters," in W. Wendrich (ed.), *Archaeology and Apprenticeship: Acquiring Body Knowledge in the Ancient World*, Tucson, pp. 171-202.

Palagia 2006: O. Palagia, "Chapter VII: Marble Carving," in O. Palagia (ed.), *Greek Sculpture: Function, Materials, and Techniques in the Archaic and Classical Periods*, Oxford, pp. 243-279.

Russell 2013: B. Russell, "Chapter 8: Statue Production," in *The Economics of the Roman Stone Trade*, Oxford, pp. 311-351.

FEB. 15 AND FEB. 22 PART II: PARTHENON: A PARADIGM OF PERFECTION

The Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis was built between 447-437 BCE. Hundreds of workers coordinated their skills to achieve a result that was a miracle of both architectural and sculptural design. Through building accounts we get a glimpse of the sublime and the mundane in such an undertaking. Construction expertise and managerial skills led to what was at the time the largest temple project in mainland Greece.

Focus piece: The Athenian Parthenon

Optional Readings and a Video: Acton 2014; Korres 1995; Secrets of the Parthenon

Acton 2014: P. Acton, "Chapter 7: Construction Industries," in *Poiesis: Manufacturing in Classical Athens*, Oxford, pp. 202-229.

Korres 1995: M. Korres, *The Stones of the Parthenon*, Los Angeles.

Secrets of the Parthenon: NOVA/PBS (www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaDTGn1_IkM)