

Summary

Was There a Greek Miracle?

This article is a retrospective commentary in Turkish by which the author refers to his paper originally titled "Was There A Greek Miracle ?" that he presented in German at the symposium organized by the Foundation of Alexander von Humbolt in the University of Freiburg between the dates of April 6-9, 1999. Here, under the light of art, culture and history during the late 6th and the 5th centuries B.C., an account is given of the role that the Ionian art of sculpture played in the creation of Athenian Classicism.

In the first part, the evolution of Ionian art of sculpture between 600-450 B.C. is traced in relation to the development of terra-cotta wares. The type selected is from the group of women wearing chitons and shawls in broadcloth, and generically called "korai with birds" because of the bird held in their hands. The author states that the development of this type, created by the Ionian master craftsmen and cherished in the antique world by means of the locally produced or imported copies of her (Fig. 1-5), had come to an end in the year 530 B.C., but it emerged again in its Ionian form in Athens around 500 B.C. (Fig. 6,7,9,11). It is in this period that Ionia came for the first time under the artistic influence of Athens. Attention is drawn to Athens' entering the Classic period in about 490 B.C. with these terra-cottas, which are essentially Ionian creations. Its reversion to the figurines of maidens, wearing their own traditional peplos, took place about 480 B.C. And from this date onwards, the terra-cottas from Ionian and Rhodes also are depicted as clad in peplos (Fig. 10,12).

In the second part, the author reviews, with reference to the sculptures of women, the plastic arts of Athens that show a similar development to that of terra-cottas between 600-450 B.C. He remarks that in the years 600-550 B.C., the sculptures of women are represented with a particular garment (Fig. 13,14). For the period circa 540 B.C., when Athens started, for the first time, to undergo the process of becoming Ionian, he points out the Ionian Goddess as an example (Fig. 15). Explaining that she is different in origin from the sculptures of early Attica, the author cites, as proof for this fact, her similarity with the two Ionian "korai with bird", one of them dated to a time earlier (Fig. 16) and the other later (Fig. 17). Contrary to the dark period that confounded Ionia as of 530 B.C., the retrieval of an excessive quantity of Ionian "korai" in Athens (Fig. 18,19) should be related to the emigration of Ionian artists to Hellenia (Greece), the cause of this migration being the Persian domination of Anatolia that had begun in 547 B.C. Anatolian art's dependence on Athens since then can be seen with the three "korai" recovered at Xanthos, all of them draped with peplos (Fig. 22-24).

In the third part, the Ionian identity is scrutinized. Such facts as to why art is different on two sides of the Aegean, and why it is Ionia that switches on the process for "the birth

of Western civilization” are cross examined against such statements put forward by opinionated scholars on Antiquity as, “Ionians are Eastern or Anatolian Greeks, because they speak Greek”. The author interpolates that long before Greek Classicism, the elements which created it were already active in Neo-Hittite art, and refers to some of its properties, the depiction of feelings on the face and the three dimensional form. In so much as the “archaic smile” –unfamiliar to Doric art– was adopted from the East, it was naturalized solely by the Ionian artists about 600 B.C. (Fig. 30,32,35), and brought to Athens in the second half of the 6th century. Equally, the concepts of “movement” and “three dimensionality” which gave rise to Athenian Classicism were created by the Ionian craftsmen. As much in the same manner with the “smile (Fig. 29,30), hair braided at end (Fig. 28,30), and mode of dress (Fig. 33,34)” which were handed over to Ionia via Phrygia, the root for the continuation in Ionia (Fig. 30) and Attica of “folding the shawl’s hem in zigzags” was also to be found in Neo-Hittite art (Fig. 38).

In the last part, it is set forth that the essence of that which created Athenian Classicism had existed as the collective product of Anatolian people in the period prior to Athenian Classicism. The Anatolian substance in Ionian art becomes clearly evident from the instance of having three different interpretations for the Leto of Elmalı as to her being a work of the Neo-Hittites, Phrygians or Ionians (Fig. 32,35,36).

In conclusion, “thought creates art and culture, not the language”. Along with the argument that “no colony in history has been deserved to surpass the motherland of the colony in creativity” are emphasized as important arguments supporting the author’s argument.