

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS



Review: [untitled]

Author(s): John Boardman

Source: *The Classical Review*, New Series, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1980), p. 308

Published by: [Cambridge University Press](#) on behalf of [The Classical Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3064407>

Accessed: 30/06/2011 16:18

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=cup>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Cambridge University Press and The Classical Association are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Classical Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

J. VERCOUTTER, J. LECLANT, F. M. SNOWDEN, J. DESANGES: *The Image of the Black in Western Art. I: From the Pharaohs to the Fall of the Roman Empire*. (Publications of Menil Foundation Inc.) Pp. xi + 352; 385 figures, many in colour; 5 maps. New York: William Morrow, 1976.

This is the first of three volumes sponsored by the Menil Foundation on the iconography of blacks in western art, the product of years of photo-archive research. Further studies of historical and literary sources are planned. The quality of the Foundation's own archive is reflected in the excellent photographs, brilliantly, not to say lavishly, reproduced. But this is not coffee-table art history. There is a perceptive introduction by the general editor, Ladislav Bugner, and the narrative has been written by scholars who are not primarily art historians. The first half of the book, by Vercoutter and Leclant, deals with the arts of ancient Egypt, the Kushites, and Meroites. The longest chapter, on Greco-Roman art, is by Snowden, whose *Blacks in Antiquity* (1970) is the fullest scholarly account of the subject available to classicists. Desanges and Leclant add shorter chapters on the black in ancient North Africa (mainly mosaics) and in Greco-Roman Egypt.

Snowden's chapter complements his book, which remains an essential source. He makes a good point, that art historians have perhaps been slow to recognize mixed black-white Nilotic types in Greek art, while the pure Negroid has, of course, always been readily observed. The Minoan-Mycenaean world offers a few pictures, with its usual odd mixture of realism and utter stylization. In Archaic Greece the blacks present artists with their earliest exercises in ethnic characterization, nearly as early as any attempts to differentiate more than age in features. Only the creation of the mixed animal-human satyr-centaur head is earlier, and it is not surprising that some scholars have sought a connection here — wrongly, although the satyr and black do meet in later Greek art. The Caeretan master (figs. 150-1) is surprisingly skilful in differentiating Greek, Nubian, and Nilotic features even before the end of the sixth century. The black remains an exotic but by no means rare subject in Greek art, sympathetically observed and with no profoundly pejorative intention, though the status or skills of some at Hellenistic courts prompt a number of 'funny' or grotesque representations. Hellenistic artists also, however, exhibit a notable feeling for the distinctive sensitivity of expression and posture of their black models. The Greeks themselves were not all that fair-skinned, but it is perhaps surprising that Greek artists refrained from representing the Ethiopian Memnon, handsomest of the heroes at Troy (*Od.* 11, 522), as a black, and the argument that an eastern origin was at times preferred for him is belied by the black attendant he is given from the mid-sixth century on.

Finally, the classicist will do well to linger over the Egyptian representations of blacks, many of them powerful and moving studies, whether they are of captives or dignitaries; and especially those of the seventh and sixth centuries BC, when Greek artists were taking their first faltering steps in monumental statuary and towards fully representational art.

Lincoln College, Oxford

JOHN BOARDMAN

GABRIELE FOERST: *Die Gravierungen der pränestinischen Cisten*. (Archaeologica, 7.) Pp. viii + 220; 74 plates. Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1978. Paper.

WINFRIED WEBER: *Die Darstellungen einer Wagenfabrt auf römischen Sarkophagdeckeln und Loculusplatten des 3. und 4. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.* (Archaeologica, 5.) Pp. 148; 31 plates. Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 1978. Paper.

ANTONIO GIULIANO, BEATRICE PALMA: *La maniera ateniese di età romana. I maestri dei sarcofagi attici*. (Studi miscellanei, 24.) Pp. 72; 2 figures, 67 plates. Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, 1978. Paper, L. 40,000.

These three classical archaeological studies were recently published in Rome. In each a body