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R.R.R. Smith, *Roman Portrait Statuary from Aphrodisias. Aphrodisias II. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 2006. Pp. xiv, 338; figs. 27, b/w pls. 163. ISBN 3-8053-3527-X. €76.80.*

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In *Roman Portrait Statuary from Aphrodisias*, R.R.R. Smith and his colleagues publish the corpus of Aphrodisian portrait sculpture from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD. In addition to a catalogue which sets new standards in terms of the clarity and detail of the presentation of the contexts of the finds of both statues and bases (part II), the volume offers an interpretation of the characteristic uses and forms of portraiture in the same period (part I). Here, in accordance with the character of the publication, the emphasis is placed on interpreting the finds in terms of their specific local and Aphrodisian context. While some (including this reviewer) might quarrel with aspects of the broader theoretical agenda which is built on this basis, it speaks to the quality of the publication that it is sufficiently comprehensive in its collection and detail-oriented in its presentation of the data that it provides scholars with a superbly rich resource for developing their own arguments in different directions. It will be an indispensable point of reference for all future students of Roman portraiture.

Part I consists of two chapters which offer a detailed analysis of the statue habit and the history of portraiture in Aphrodisias from the 1st century BC to 3rd century AD. Smith argues that Aphrodisias offers a unique opportunity for a local contextual approach to Roman portraiture, by virtue of the large number of well-preserved high quality sculptures with identifiable find-spots in Aphrodisias, and the extensive epigraphic documentation which accompanies them, allowing a detailed reconstruction of "a single local economy of statues and symbolic honours" (4).

Chapter 1 addresses issues of context, broadly synchronically. In addition to basic archaeological aspects of context (deposition and display), it also contains a wealth of interesting analysis of broader civic and honorific contexts (who gets honoured, terms of honouring, how many honorific statues per year) and their intersection with certain aspects of the monuments themselves -- for example the fascinating detail that while the city paid for an honorific statue, the honorand paid for the base, accounting for the fact that while the scale of statues remains roughly constant, statue bases become progressively taller, with more elaborate mouldings, as elements in competitive self-promotion (26-7, 34).

Chapter 2 places the main dateable portraits in their specific display contexts within the

framework of the physical and political history of Aphrodisias. It uses these specific physical and historical contexts to make sense of the varying appropriations of old Hellenistic traditions and newer Roman iconographic or stylistic options as "thoughtful, active, satisfying choices in their local context" rather than failures to match some supposed Metropolitan norm (40). Particular emphasis is placed on how statues worked as groups in specific monumental settings (the theatre, the bouleuterion, the agora gate, the baths, the Sebasteion etc) "as embodiments of personal identities and civic virtues". Again, this focus brings out important and interesting dimensions of the material: the distribution of money to councillors being made alongside the relevant benefactor's statue (41); the variation of the Sebasteion relief portraits from the "officially distributed Julio-Claudian portrait images" (47); the decision of a Roman quaestor requiring the restoration of some portraits removed from the theatre logeion (55); the identification of the "neoi" as a distinctive age-group, young men aged twenty to thirty, older than epebes, but depicted in a youthful classicising type which, but for their context, we might not recognise as portraits (52).

Much of the detailed information on which this analysis is based can be found in a useful appendix detailing epigraphically attested honorands with tabulation of their names, roles/offices, deeds or virtues for which honoured, who honoured by, who oversees erection of statue, statue form, provenance, date (75-97). The focus on local context is supported with maps and plans at a wide-range of scales. General city maps of Aphrodisias and its immediate environment locate the major buildings, tombs and sarcophagus find spots. A city map shows the distribution of the find spots of inscribed statue-bases. A series of maps of each of the major contexts of portrait-statuary display (bouleuterion, theatre etc) show the specific findspots of all the statues and bases from each context, with helpful miniature pictures of the relevant statues in cases of programmatic groups, obviating any inconvenience in visualising programmes which might be caused by the typological organisation of the catalogue in part II.

The catalogue, written by Smith and his colleagues, is organised according to sensible typological criteria: statues (wearing the toga (ch. 3); in armor (ch. 4); naked (ch. 5); wearing the himation (ch. 6); of women (ch. 7); busts and herms (ch. 8); detached portrait heads, of emperors (ch. 9), of local men (ch. 10), of local women (ch. 11); portraits in relief, stelai and other reliefs (ch. 12), select sarcophagi (ch. 13). The quality of the little essays prefacing each chapter and of the individual entries is uniformly excellent. The analytical description of each statue is superbly detailed, based on extremely careful looking and an encyclopaedic knowledge of Roman imperial sculpture, to the extent that even quite small fragments can be sensibly located in terms of type and date. One minor quibble: it would perhaps have been helpful if, in addition to the largely excellent black and white plates which record the individual objects, it had been possible to have a CD with digital versions of the images: although the quality of the plates is very high, sometimes key details discussed in the catalogue entries are so small that it is not possible to check them through the plates.

As catalogues go, Smith's is quite a polemical one, informed by a very explicit theoretical agenda. This is in itself welcome: we should certainly think about the implicit assumptions and tacit agendas which inform catalogues, since they are such basic research tools. S. argues against "traditional" approaches to Roman portraits which, he asserts, have been primarily "concerned to answer a single question: what date?", and to place such portraits in an "abstract" narrative "of a gradual stylistic evolution" (7-8). "This narrative and the premises on which it is based", namely "steady development...constant stylistic change", are "inadequate, indeed false, to a complex ancient situation", as also are the more recent models of multi-stranded development "in

which different categories follow their own evolutionary lines". Their base model, Smith claims, is "the wrong one". The correct alternative involves distinguishing "two kinds of change: one more archaeological and technical, to do with slow broad adjustments of manufacture and format (surface finishing, piecing, plinth and support morphology) that carried at the time no social significance; and one more historical to do with real life changes in self-representation, broad costume preferences, and the meaning and effect of images". The former tend to be "long and slow", the latter "sporadic and unpredictable" (8), best addressed through exploration of "the many local factors that might make up a statue's total context" (9).

How persuasive is this programme? S. and his colleagues certainly demonstrate its value in this single site study, and most contemporary scholars (including the reviewer) would share S.'s generally social and contextual approach. There is a danger, however, that an exclusive emphasis on local context and short term historical events, may throw out the baby of perfectly valid efforts to understand patterns and processes of long term and spatially extensive artistic (and socio-cultural) change, with the bath-water of the rather mechanical evolutionary approaches which S. criticises. Furthermore, the conceptualisation of the two types of change advocated by S. seems to me to be not entirely well-founded.

In practice, both the materials in the catalogue and S.'s careful analysis suggest that there are many structuring forces which transcend the local context which shape the institutional history of portraiture at Aphrodisias and the visual choices available to, and made by the producers of Aphrodisian portraiture. Both the uses and the forms of portraiture at Aphrodisias are embedded in, and shaped by, much broader systems of social relations and cultural representation. As the entries in the catalogue suggest, the "Cyrene type" himation statue was very popular in Cyrenaica and Greece, but a relatively unusual choice in Asia Minor during the 2nd century AD (172), whilst a bust of Germanicus of the Béziers type reproduces Italian prototypes with remarkable fidelity (230). The transmission and appropriation of visual types cannot be understood in purely local terms.

The sociological context for such interregional patterning has at least two grounds. First, the most important members of the local Aphrodisian elite were embedded in status competitions which ramified beyond Aphrodisias itself, as we discover in the case of individuals like Antonia Tatiana, honoured in Ephesos as well as Aphrodisias and by the references often made on statue bases to relatives who were senators in Rome (25, 218), presumably advertising connections which could potentially be of benefit to the community. Correspondingly, the status games which gave rise to the practice of honorific portraiture were inflected by changes in the political organisation of the empire, and by changes in elite-populus relations, which are linked to the medium to long term transformation of social and political structures in the Roman empire. Second, artists were mobile. We know of Aphrodisian artists who signed sculptures almost certainly actually produced in Rome (part of the reason for their ethnicity being an important component of the signature). Such mobility on the part of artists was complemented by that of both objects and prototypes (sarcophagi, imperial portrait prototypes), making the concept of "local manufacture" perhaps as complicated in the Roman empire as in the modern world (in what sense is a Toyota Nissan produced in Newcastle 'British', or a Rover in Nanjing a 'Chinese' car?). It seems difficult to understand such phenomena unless we think in terms of broader interregional and even empire wide structures and trends operating on the medium or long term, which S. seems to argue against in his emphasis on the "sporadic and unpredictable" character of change, and on "local manufacture", local history, contemporary events and "real life" (8).

S. is perfectly well aware of these factors, of course, but they enter his account of the development of Aphrodisian portraiture merely as background, rather than as factors to be treated systematically in their own right. This is not so much a criticism, as an attempt to specify the scope of the validity of S.'s theoretical programme, and of the criticisms he makes of alternative approaches, looking for broader scale changes. The generalisations of some earlier more wide-ranging studies may be flawed, but it is not because they are "abstract", where as the local focus is empirical and concrete. The focus on the local is just as much an abstraction and simplification -- abstracting from the larger scale provincial (or regional) level, and ultimately empire-wide, aspects of elite competition and organization of art production -- as regional studies or even empire wide-studies of particular categories of statuary or portraiture. The history of portraiture has emergent properties not reducible to the sum of the totality of local contexts.

S. draws a distinction between (1) "long and slow" archaeological/technical changes in manufacture and format" (including surface finish), with "no social significance", and (2) "sporadic and unpredictable", "more historical to do with real life changes in self-representation, broad costume preferences, and the meaning and effect of images" (p. 9). This distinction seems to me not well-founded, since in practice technical aspects of sculptural practice and socially determined modes of self-representation interact in quite complex ways on varying temporal and spatial scales. They cannot be so sharply segregated from each other. Take, for example, changing treatments of hair and skin in second century, and later, portrait sculpture. The use of the drill to represent the hair -- a technical change -- is at least in part shaped by the desire to represent the real life changes in self-representation to which S. refers, namely fancy new coiffures adopted by the Metropolitan elite. In addition to a socially motivated desire perhaps to represent the distinctive sheen of the perfume-anointed skin of the well-groomed man, it seems likely that there is a certain technical-stylistic logic to the development of a heightened emphasis on the polishing of areas representing surface skin, as a striking visual counterpoint to the roughness and blackness of the drilling in the hair. While on one level purely stylistic and technical, on other levels the trend is highly social, though on a level different than reference to 'real life': drilling and polishing required heightened levels of labour input in portrait production, so commissioning a portrait which deployed these techniques was a social statement in itself. Such demand in turn informed the further development of specific skills (drilling, polishing) and changes in the division of labour in portrait production, creating very complex processes of feedback between aspects of sculptural technique, style and possibilities of social and cultural self-representation. The interaction between the social and the technical creates a certain stylistic entelechy, sociologically underpinned on a number of levels.

The analytical issues are tremendously complex, but it seems clear that we need to develop conceptual frameworks which permit in principle a number of different relationships among the technical, the stylistic and the social: from mutual autonomy, to mutual determination, including the possibility of one or other factor being the leading or determinant one. The specific character of those relationships in any particular instance is an empirical question. The problem with S.'s formulation is that it effectively defines out of existence long term spatially extensive socio-stylistic trends, and thus is not conducive to developing analyses at the level of resolution where they might be visible. Such patterns of change are certainly more complex than the simplistic formulations of uniform stylistic evolution which S. rightly criticises, but that does not mean they do not exist. Developing an adequate understanding of structured patterns of continuity and change in Roman art requires analysis on many different scales and at many different levels of (stylistic, chronological etc) resolution. The local level of analysis identified by

S. is one level, and has made for an exceptionally rich analysis and unusually interesting catalogue of the material from a single site, but it is misleading to suggest that this is the one correct level of analysis, and that others are necessarily "false" or "inadequate to a complex ancient situation". They may simply address aspects of the complexity of Roman art different than those illuminated by the particular approach adopted by S. in this contribution.

As is suggested by our ability to draw on the materials presented by S. and his colleagues to criticise S.'s general theoretical stance, his analysis - and especially the catalogue as a whole - is in practice potentially more true to these complexities than the model he advocates. Consequently, these criticisms do not seriously affect either the quality or the importance of the contribution made by S. and his colleagues in this catalogue. But they do they suggest we might question the inferences which S. draws about a) the character of change in Roman art; and b) the range of legitimate approaches to the study of the history of Roman portraiture. The catalogue contains a wealth of information, superbly presented, which will be of great value to scholars pursuing a wide-range of research programmes, some of which will be based on theoretical premises very different than S.'s, and that is exactly what a good catalogue should make possible.

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