

blunt intimidation. Not infrequently, they seek all these reactions simultaneously: works like those at Abu Simbel, for example, not only presented the king as a god incarnate but reminded the Nubians none too subtly that a ruler capable of such costly feats of engineering must also command a formidable military force. The actual reactions that such sculptures evoke range from the desired responses to their opposites: contempt for the grandiosity of their patrons, resentment of their extravagance, and aesthetic condemnation of their obtrusive presence. Percy Bysshe Shelley's sonnet ›Ozymandias‹ gloats over the fate of a gigantic statue of Ramesses similar to those at Abu Simbel, transformed by time from a demonstration of power to a symbol of mortality: »Gaze on my works, ye mighty, and despair.« Indeed, over-life-size images of a ruler make the most obvious and easy targets for vengeful destruction after his fall, a fact demonstrated by the fate of monuments from Domitian's huge equestrian monument in the Roman Forum to Saddam Hussein's statue in Baghdad.

The heavy emotional and political baggage that colossal portraits carry, therefore, justifies special attention to works of this format, their original contexts and their historical implications. Brigitte Ruck's study, based on her doctoral thesis, is a welcome contribution to scholarship on Roman portraiture, and one that will provide her fellow scholars with a useful source of information and methodology in the coming years. Her approach and choice of material differs from but complements that of Detlev Kreikenbom's earlier survey: she examines material from a much narrower geographical range, but a longer time span, and a broader variety of artifacts. Kreikenbom's 1992 volume ›Griechische und Römische Kolossalporträts bis zum späten ersten Jahrhundert nach Christus‹ surveyed extant colossal sculptures from the entire Mediterranean region, ending, as the title indicates, with the early principate of Trajan. Ruck confines her survey to material in or from the city of Rome, but expands her focus to include not only surviving sculptures but bases and inscriptions, as well as literary records of lost works. These latter include the huge statue of Nero in the guise of Sol that originally stood at the entrance to his Golden House, and the great *Equus Domitiani* in the Roman Forum, described in helpful although frustratingly imprecise detail by Statius (*Silvae* 1, 1). By focusing on a small but significant location, she is able to examine material from a five hundred year period, works that most probably inspired emulation throughout the Roman Empire and set trends that patrons elsewhere followed. The decision to focus only on works from within the ancient city limits, unfortunately, requires the exclusion of one of the most beautiful surviving colossi of Roman antiquity, the great *Antinous-Bacchus* from Tivoli, only about thirty kilometers from Rome, which now stands in the *Sala Rotonda* of the Vatican. *Antinous's* dramatically god-like images must therefore be represented only by two fragmentary works of city-Roman provenance (catalog nos. 24 and 25). Nonetheless, the deci-

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When one gazes at the colossal image of an historic person, whether it is a statue of Ramesses II at Abu Simbel, the fragments of Constantine's enormous statue in Rome or the Presidential portraits on Mount Rushmore, certain physical and emotional reactions are unavoidable. The act of craning the neck backward to look up at the huge image, and the resulting vertigo, the inevitable comparison of its scale with one's own stature, and the consequent feelings of insignificance and vulnerability evoke a range of powerful responses. Patrons who commission such images and artists who execute them may hope to inspire religious awe, humble loyalty, delight at the technological daring of the works, or

sion to focus only on the capital city is a reasonable one, since the body of material that Rome provides is already quite extensive.

The catalog of this material, presented in table format on pages 279–300, includes a total of 115 surviving objects: 72 sculptures, and 42 statue bases. Ruck subdivides the extant sculptures into works that were certainly or very probably found in Rome, on the one hand (catalog 1.1, nos. 1–46), and those for which a city-Roman provenance can be inferred (catalog 1.2, nos. 47–64), on the other. She further subdivides each of those groups into male and female portraits. The inscribed blocks and tablets she groups into bases that are fully or almost fully preserved (catalog 2.1, nos. 73–81) and those that are fragmentary, but whose original dimensions can be reconstructed using epigraphical methods (catalog 2.2, nos. 82–115). These groups are subdivided into inscriptions for emperors or members of the imperial house, on the one hand, and magistrates on the other. In many cases, it is clear that Ruck has not only seen but measured and examined these objects herself, although in others she has had to rely on information from the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, since many of these blocks are inaccessible, or partially obscured by their present display.

Where first-hand measurement of objects is not practical, Ruck makes effective use of secondary sources. The Capitoline Museums, for example, contain a very large number of portrait sculptures, both life size and over life size, for which the catalogue by Klaus Fittschen and Paul Zanker provides thorough and reliable measurements. In Table 1 (pp. 22–25), she compares the measurements of these objects, reconstructing the total height of a statue to which a portrait head could belong by calculating the ratio of the head or face to the overall height of the body. (It does not matter if these heads actually did belong to complete statues, as opposed to busts; the object is to determine how closely they do or do not approximate life-size). The results demonstrate that the great majority of surviving sculptures fall within the range of life-size to about one and one half times life size, while those of more than one and one half times life size are the outliers, the works that must have impressed their contemporaries with their unusually large proportions. She thus arrives by a slightly different route at the same definition of »colossal« dimensions that Kreikenbom adopted (op. cit. 3–6).

Applying a similar method to the widths of statue bases and their inscription tablets, she determines that the normal range of size is a total width of 105 centimeters or less, and a width for the central, inscribed area of the tablet of 85 centimeters or less. The outliers have total widths ranging from 121 to 134 centimeters, and mid-section widths of 96 to 115 centimeters (Tables 4–5, pp. 28–33). Inferring the height of a statue that a base could support, based on the evidence of cuttings for marble plinths or bronze dowels, and of the ratios of height to maximum width in well preserved statues, she arrives at the conclusion that a standing figure would

have a ratio of about little more than two-and-a-half times the width of the inscription. A colossal statue, then, would require a base with a middle section of at least one meter. If only the tablet, rather than the entire base, survives, however, one must allow for the possibility that the statue was seated or mounted on horseback in which case the width of the sella curulis or of the horse's body would require a broader plinth for a life-size figure. Statues that shared a base with several other portrait statues would also have to be somewhat more compact than those on individual bases, to allow room between the figures for extended arms and attributes. Table 8 (p. 135), therefore, provides a very useful guide for the height of statues in each of those common formats that could belong to inscriptions of widths ranging from 60 to 180 centimeters.

Ruck divides her text into five chapters: definition of colossal scale; contexts of exhibition of colossal portrait statues; a chronological survey from the Republic through the era of the third-century soldier emperors; colossal statues of late antiquity; and conclusions. In all of these sections, she bases her inferences on meticulous study of the physical evidence, and application of her own method. The second chapter, on the architectural settings of colossal statues, is particularly helpful in reconstructing how the Roman viewer would have interacted with these objects: as cult images or votive offerings in temples; as freestanding statues in open spaces; in the niches of an architectural façade; atop triumphal arches, columns, or monumental tombs; on the estates both of private citizens and of imperial figures (the great colossus of Nero originally belonged to this category), or within tombs. It is here that her survey of inscriptions and bases is particularly helpful in reconstructing lost sculptural programs that once formed an organic part of their architectural settings. Inevitably, however, when the evidence consists of incomplete bases or tablets, Ruck must often concede that the evidence for colossal scale of the statues they once supported is inconclusive.

Having established this groundwork for the settings of the statues, Ruck can then demonstrate persuasively in the following chapters how the competition in each successive dynasty to outdo its predecessors led to an expansion of scale both in building programs and in the sculptures that decorated them. Thus, over life size statues of the living emperor, which Augustus carefully avoided along with any suggestion of Hellenistic claims to divine kingship, had become commonplace by the time of Trajan. The Forum Traiani was essentially an enlarged version of the Forum Augustum, closely modeled on the former in its layout and sculptural program, but much more spacious. Statues that occupied comparable positions in the later complex, such as the equestrian statue of the emperor in the center of the open space, could no longer be life-size without being dwarfed by their surroundings. The allegedly Christian emperor Constantine, ironically, employed even more extravagantly divine iconography for his own image than most

of his predecessors. The huge statue whose fragments stand today in the Palazzo dei Conservatori may have been recut from a posthumous statue of the deified Hadrian. In its new context, however, the statue appropriated the imagery and scale of an enthroned Jupiter to a lifetime representation of the emperor. The find spot of the fragments in the Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine leaves little doubt that it did not stand in an architectural niche, as had been standard for portrait statues within buildings, but in the center of the eastern apse. Such a position evoked the placement of a divine cult statue in a temple.

The photographs, drawings and diagrams that appear in fifty plates serve their purpose quite well in clarifying Ruck's descriptions and analysis. All are in black and white, and the great majority of photographs are in quarter-page format or smaller, which does not allow the illustrations of sculpture to convey much artistic nuance. Stylistic analysis, however, is not the focus of this book, and the decision to opt for thorough illustration rather than more beautifully produced images is appropriate. This is not, obviously, a book with much appeal for general audiences or undergraduate students, but will be a very useful source for scholars dealing with portrait sculpture or epigraphic material connected with portraiture.