

**Silvio LEONE, Polis, Platz und Porträt. Die Bildnisstatuen auf der Agora von Athen im Späthellenismus und in der Kaiserzeit (86 v. Chr. – 267 n. Chr.). Urban Spaces Bd. 9. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter 2020, X + 276 S., 133 s/w-Abb., EUR 119,95, ISBN: 978-3-11-065283-3**

The importance, complexity, and appeal of the topic of this book, *Polis, Platz, und Porträt: Die Bildnisstatuen auf der Agora von Athen im Späthellenismus und in der Kaiserzeit (86 v. Chr. – 267 n. Chr.)* are immediate to anyone interested in Roman history and essential to anyone interested in the Greek East under the Roman Empire. The Athenian Agora was the political heart of Athens and became the cultural heart of the Greek world from the fifth century BC through to the fifth c. AD. In the Roman period local Athenians, self-identifying Greeks, and true Romans all knew and valued its cultural heritage status. Those that could consciously used it for their own agendas. The city, however, continued vibrantly after the Romans. The Agora for centuries was a living residential quarter, and in modern times the ancient Agora has again assumed priority status as a symbol of cultural heritage. So Leone's topic inherently involves many different fields of speciality from archaeology to epigraphy, from political history of the 5<sup>th</sup> c BC to that of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c AD, from literary analysis to art history, from urban studies to cultural heritage management and all of the fields are ever growing as new studies and finds are made. This makes it a fascinating challenge and in part explains why a holistic study of the Roman era of the place so invested in its Greek heritage has not truly been attempted. Sheila Dillon, a seasoned expert of Roman statuary in the Greek East and a senior collaborator with the American excavations in the Athenian Agora, has published a comprehensive chapter on precisely the same topic.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the prospect of Leone's full study dedicated to this significant topic is exciting but also daunting – even to review.

The initial three pages, however, warn the reader to expect too much. It is explicit in the foreword and implicit in the two-page table of contents that the work behind the appealingly alliterated title and handsome cover is a doctoral dissertation (Freiburg, directed by R. von den Hoff). The rigid structural outline of the dissertation leaps out of the table of contents, making it clear that there will be few concessions to the reader and that there has been little editorial re-casting of the material. The contents are listed in an ever creasing sequence of numbers (at times reaching four digits, 4.3.2.2) with little help from font, character, or spacing. So in Chapter 4 Chronological analysis, the

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<sup>1</sup> "Portrait Statues in the Athenian Agora in the Roman Period: The Archaeological Evidence" in C. Dickenson, ed. *Public Statues across Time* (Routledge: New York, 2021).

table of contents promises a checklist for every chronological division; for example, "Platzanlage und Architektur" (4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.3.1 and 4.4.1), "Bildnisstatuen" (4.1.2, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, and 4.2.4), "Andere Bildwerke" (4.1.3, 4.2.3, 4.3.3, 4.4.3). The repeating entries obscure the unique entries in each section. In Chapter 5, the repetition is not lateral but vertical. Subheadings and then sub-subheadings of the same title; for example, 5.1.3 "Monumentformen und Materialien", 5.1.3.1 "Statuen und Basen", 5.1.3.2 "Materialien". It may not be out of place to wonder how accessible this kind of formatting is.

The content of this work, however, is informed and intelligent. The premise, that the statue habit (the process and dialogue of ostentatious commemoration) is an important barometer of historic (social, religious, political) concerns, is valid and widely accepted in the field. Because statue monuments dominated the visual landscapes and spatial experience of the inhabitants of every city in antiquity, the statue habit has been a focal point of departure for various rich studies concerning the classical world for now over thirty years. Furthermore, one notes more broadly that demonstrations around modern honorific statues in the USA and UK in 2020-2021 have manifested the veracity of the academic premise to the general public. Leone applies this premise to the statuary habit of the open space of the Athenian Agora during the Roman period, the almost four centuries from the sack of Sulla to the sack of the Heruli. These monuments had not been the subject of such attention until the publication after this book of the chapter by Dillon, noted above. The focus here is primarily on three intertwined themes of statue habit and the place – the city's approach to and integration of a new category of honorand, the Roman leader, how this body of material reflects changes in social fabric and status of the city, and how the context uses, creates and maintains internal historic references which shape group memory and identity for the city. To trace these themes in the Roman period, the author uses three bodies of evidence: literary, archaeological, and epigraphic. Of these the evidence most used is Pausanias (Ch. 2), a corpus of bases and some statuary found in the general area of the Agora (with one exception a base from the Acropolis) (fully presented in a catalogue), and the textual information recorded on the bases plus the information from one decree (also in the catalogue). In general, the results are cautious and perhaps predictable within the framework of the Greek East under Roman rule but the annotated discussion touches continually and reasonably on interesting topics.

Chapter 1 the Introduction presents the aims of the study, a full description of the state of the research (which includes a comprehensive summary of the scholarship on the Agora), and a sensible methodology. It will use primarily the evidence of statue bases for bronze statues. These of course were not limited

to the Agora but the Agora was the place where the city (the polis, the demos, the boule, the areopagus) would most naturally place its dedications.<sup>2</sup> Chapter 2 On Pausanias and Chapter 3 On the Agora immediately before and after Sulla provide further introductory stage-setting material.

The author dedicates Chapter 2 entirely to Pausanias whose visit to the Agora is an important testimony but notably lacks mention – with the exception of the statue of Hadrian – of the statuary of the Roman period. By examining the path which Pausanias followed, the monuments which he noted, and the context in which he wrote, the author reminds the reader that the helleno-centric Pausanias in the second century AD was not inclusive, enjoyed finding opportunities to add commentary relating to beloved historic Greek authors, had a conscious agenda to emphasize events before 146 BC (the Sack of Corinth) and after Hadrian, and preferred monuments of historic people which were interchangeable with the person because these monuments served as points of departure for stories/history lessons (*logoi*). The content is careful and clear, and the author adds a few good points to this much-discussed topic. A nice detail is a table on p. 31, in which the author presents statistically the number of statues mentioned divided by subject (23 divinities, 23 historic personage, 13 eponymous heros), the number in each category that are actually mentioned as statues as opposed to real people (that is, monuments denoted by *agalma*, *eikōn*, *andrias* plus genitive as opposed to those referred to by name) and the number in each category which lead to *logoi*. The conclusion, that the portrait statues have a more immediate presence than statues of divinities (only 1 in 8 as opposed to almost 1 in 2 is referred to with a statue image word) and trigger more stories (1:4 vs. 1:10) is unsurprising but clearly demonstrated. The chart also shows that the sculptors of the portrait statues are rarely mentioned (1 in 23 cases vs 10 in 23 cases) but here the absence of the statue itself, on which the sculptor might have put his name, is not considered. In any case, the entire making process of the statues is not a point of interest for Leone anywhere in the book and here he is keen to emphasize Pausanias' view of the statues as people and history. This reinforces the importance of statuary for society as collective memory and history. The effectiveness of the chart makes one wonder whether the author might have included comparative charts for the Acropolis or Athens in general.

Chapter 3 first takes the reader on a journey through the statue landscape of the Agora, quadrant by quadrant, prior to Sulla's entrance into the city in 90 BC. Running through all of the Agora's statuary evidence of all types (literary, archaeological, and epigraphic) and mentioning almost all the monuments

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<sup>2</sup> One returns to this methodology only after finishing the book and the catalogue – see below.

erected prior to 90 BC attested in literature (for example, the Tyrannicides, Eirene, Demosthenes), the author here prepares the reader with the reference points (most of which were already mentioned in the preceding chapter on Pausanias) by which the Roman period monuments will be measured. The second part of the chapter argues that these monuments survived the forces of Sulla because damage caused by his troops was more a literary *topos* than an archaeological fact. They will therefore be a presence alongside which the Roman period material grows. Interestingly, here he notes also the presence of votive statues which get little or no mention anywhere else in the study.

Chapter 4 presents the material substance of the book, dividing it chronologically into sections of easily comprehensible political eras: Sulla to the end of the Republic, Augustus and the Julio-Claudians, the Flavians through Hadrian, the Antonines to the Herulii. It discusses the main building projects of each era, indicative of the interests/focal points of each era, and then lists the statue monuments. In the late Republican period, the new Roman honorand is readily accepted, well-represented by 10 honours and the monument for Cassius and Brutus significantly placed near the Tyrannicides. The Julio-Claudian period includes the easy shift from the Hellenistic ruler Attalos II reused to represent the Emperor Tiberius and statue bases for bronzes of Claudius as Apollo Patroos and Livia as Boulaia. The late first to early second century is marked by the honours for the Emperor Hadrian [1 base, 1 marble statue, 2 statues seen by Pausanias (cats. 70-73), and 29 altars as compared to the evidence for not one portrait statue of Augustus and only 7 altars] and the significance of a potentially large monument for the Ti. Cl. Atticus Herodes, father of the famous Herodes Atticus) which likely included 13 bases (6 attested, cats. 74-79, for him and possibly the same number for his wife, cat. 80), one statue from each deme. The Antonine to Herulian period shows few imperial honours, many locals, and a collection of marble statues perhaps of cultural figures from the Odeion. There are short sections on the non-portrait statues for each period, which are indeed scant in comparison and here one wonders about the inclusion of an 'Augustan' (dated only by its script) base for Lykourgos the Orator (cat. 28). All of the monuments discussed are to be revisited in different thematic sections in Chapter 5, analysis by theme as opposed to chronology.

Yet in this chapter 4 the reader begins to sense some of the methodological weaknesses in the work. It (4.3.2) introduces a base for a statue of Trajan found just north of the Library of Pantainos and a marble statuary fragment found in room 2 of the building but then omits both from the catalogue because the base suits an intercolumniation and the fine surface of the statuary suggests it

was always indoors. However, another very fragmentary base (cat. 61) found in the same general area is included. The reader immediately wonders how can one be sure that a base indicates an outdoor as opposed to indoor monument. Reviewing his evidence and arguments, one begins to be confident that virtually all the marble monuments were likely to have been indoors, at least under a roof. Thus, the discussion of a group of seven marble statues as Antonine refurbishment for the Odeion of Agrippa is interesting but it too creates unease in the reader. Why are these statues included? What is it that makes them public honorific statues from the Agora and not like the aforementioned statue of Trajan, honorific statues inside a building? Also their long working life strikes the reader as a further archaeological difficulty. One reads that these Odeion statues flanked an entrance way to the fifth century Palace of the Giants. The illustration of catalogue 84 in fact shows that a re-used late-antique head<sup>3</sup> has been mounted on the himation statue and the entry of catalogue 104 speaks of reworking of the statue support.

Chapter 5 is the formal critical analysis of the monuments presented in Chapter 4. It examines the dedicators and establishes that the city (the *aeropagus*, the *boule*, and the *demos*) was the main awarding body; the honorands by group and records a fluctuation from interest in the Romans in the first c. BC/first c. AD to a return to mainly honours for Greeks from the late to early second c. AD onwards; the locations and shows finds clusters in certain periods (for example Republicans at east near Panathenaic way built up in the second century BC) as well as pointed references (Brutus and Cassius near the Tyrannicides); the physical forms of the monuments' bases (columnar, rectangular, orthostates – fig. 9 which attempts to illustrate these form is however far too schematic) and sculpture (three equestrian monuments and a majority of statuary standing bronzes). It then moves to a more political perspective, starting with the interesting question of imperial honours and cult, then turning to the added meaning that specific locations within the Agora gave, and finishing with an overview of monuments in Athens. Here too the material covered is well-presented and stimulating. In fact, it gives rise to questions that the author has opted, perhaps wisely, not to handle. Section 5.1.1.1 explains the word order and its intent to reflect underlying social hierarchy – the city (the *Aeropagus*, *boule*, and *demos*) traditionally comes first and then the honorand. Yet in the monuments for the Roman imperial family the placement becomes inverted, a subtle change, which Leone sees echoed in the monuments to Ti. Cl. Atticus Herodes in which the *deme* responsible for the statue comes after the name of the honorand. This discussion, however, omits mention of the fact that dedicator might appear on

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<sup>3</sup> Agora Museum inv. no. S 1604, LSA 2293 = Last Statues of Antiquity (<http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/>).

crown mouldings (extremely apparent in his catalogue nos. 59, 65-69) which have become disassociated with their shafts as well as possibly on some part of an architectural frame into which a base was set. Similarly, the discussion's focus on nominative and accusative reminds the attentive reader that the monument of Attalos reused for Tiberius (cat. 37) features the Emperor's name in the dative – it is a dedication to him rather than a statue monument of him. In discussion of the imperial presence, the author, recording the limited number of bases, rightly informs the reader that the presence of emperors had other manifestations as the altars and statue of Trajan in the Library of Pantainos and a head of Septimius Severus found in the area of the Temple of Apollo Patroos demonstrate. In doing so however he reinforces the reader's frustration with the confusing limitation of the study to the open public space of the Agora which is hard to define and to the recurring archaeological problems. As Dillon (cited above) points out, the altars found in the Agora may not come from the Agora. What in fact is the rule or expectation for altars in the Agora?

Equally important and well-handled is the discussion of the connections of the Emperor and his family with cult complexes in the Agora – Claudius with Apollo Patroos (cat. 46), Caius Caesar with Ares (base from the Theatre of Dionysos), Livia Boulaia (cat. 36) with the Bouleuterion, Hadrian with Zeus Eleutherios (cat. 72) as well as votive references to emperors elsewhere in the city as Eleutherios. These associations set the imperial family on a level that is truly beyond other mortals. The reader remains curious to know however what a statue of Claudius as Apollo Patroos might have looked like (not just which leg bore the weight). We are more accustomed to the emperor as Zeus.

The section (5.1.2.5) dedicated to women also makes one pause. Beyond members of the Hellenistic and Julio-Claudian ruling families (Arsinoe and Berenice noted by Pausanias, and bases for Livia, Drusilla, and Agrippina the Younger), there are two monuments which include wives; that of a local Athenian and Roman office-holding bigwig Q. Trebellius Rufus features his wife, a priestess of Roma, and presumably small son (cat. 52) and a base for Atticus' wife by the deme Pandionis (cat. 80) probably accompanied a similar honour for him. Two other attestations for women are not strong; both cat. 99 and 100 are so fragmentary that they add little, both might easily have reached the Agora at a second moment, and one of the two (cat. 100) seems a base again for a couple. Finally, Varia Archelais, mother of the Proconsul L. Aemilius Iuncus (cat. 94) is an unusual base in which the woman and her son are in the nominative cases. This requires some explanation. Thus, is there really good evidence for honorific statues for women showing new social interaction in the Agora?

In the comparative discussion in which other parts of the city are examined, facts about the Acropolis are particularly interesting. Bronze statuary dominates and there are far more indications of reuse of bases than in the Agora, suggesting that the city was less inclined to permit this. The multiple statues of Hadrian, both those in Olympeion erected by various Greek cities and especially those in the Theatre of Dionysos awarded by every deme, provide a point of reference, model, for those awarded to Ti. Cl. Atticus Herodes (and his wife) by all 13 demes. There one wonders about the probability of a twenty-six statue monument in the Agora and the security of the original location for these statues – most of the extant bases were found re-used in the church of Panagia Pyrgiotissa.

Chapter 6 considers the life of the Agora after the sack of the Heruli. It demonstrates that the tradition of honorific statuary diminishes but does not die out in Athens. This occurs all over the Roman world and in fact, Athens has a high number of late-antique statuary elements. Yet the Agora as a public space populated by traditional polis dedications ends in the fifth century. A columnar base for Eudocia, of the early fifth century, found near the Palace of the Giants, and the herm for Iamblichos, found near the Stoa of Attalos, an earlier object re-inscribed in the late fourth century, are cited as demonstrations of the last traces of the tradition. This reads convincingly but it perhaps ends the thematic discussion of the polis as an awarder of statues and the geographic-archaeological discussion of the Agora a bit too fast. For example, Julian reports Constantine's satisfaction at an armoured statue of himself set up by the Athenians (LSA 100) and a base for Rufus Festus of the mid fourth century (LSA 103), found on the Acropolis, was an honour put by the city in its traditional form – the *aeropagus*, the *boule*, and the *demos*. Although the function of the Agora changed with palatial domestic use, monuments needed to be disposed of and statuary, particularly marble statuary, continued to be prized. How many marble statues might have been brought into the area in the fifth century precisely for palatial decoration? Several re-carved marble were heads found in the Agora (one of which, noted above, is on a statue, cat. 84, from the Palace of the Giants). When would the marbles have ceased to have value?

The catalogue, practically the same length as the text of Chapters 1-6, consists of all secure, probable, and likely statue monuments that were on display in the public space of the Agora between 86 BC and 267. It is an extremely useful presentation of the 106 items that constitute the basis of the chronological discussions of Chapter 4 and the analysis of Chapter 5. Each entry has an easily legible chart that lists its evidence category or categories, date, and find loca-

tion followed by a brief discussion and bibliography. The discussion is always concise; perhaps even too much so, the single Latin inscription (cat. 50) passes without comment on the language. The discussion also focuses more often on the figure that might have gone on top than on the monument itself. For example, the base for Appius Claudius (cat. 7) has clamps cuttings which attach it to a block behind and no clear setting markings on its upper surface, so how are we to imagine the structure of this monument? The upper surfaces of the separately made crown mouldings, of which cat. 65-68 are surely a set from area of the Stoa of Attalos, get attention because they clearly supported bronzes. Yet crown mouldings by definition crown another element and since many of the other entries are rectangular shafts, one would be interested to know about which bases have the same dimensions and lack the dedicator and might have gone under these crown mouldings. The cuttings on the undersides of the blocks – perhaps difficult for Leone to access – would be relevant. Were these crown mouldings dowelled to the bases or simply fitted carefully on top? In the former case, there is some hope for mapping. In the entry on the only marble statue in the catalogue preserved with its plinth (cat. 104) no comment is made as to how it might have been set on its base. The bases for Drusilla and Agrippina are said to have lowered surfaces to receive a plinth and so to have supported marble statues.

During the reading of the text, a few questions had entered about context, the attribution of material to the open space of the Agora, and post-267 use of the Agora. The excellent catalogue inadvertently reinforced these. We are never told what makes an object secure, probable, or likely to have come from the Agora. Of the 104 entries from the Agora (106 minus the decree and the base from the Acropolis,) the find location of 12 is the post-Herulian wall; 8 to late antique constructions (one of these from the Palace of the Giants); five are ascribed to various functional water-related structures which seem late-antique if not later (cat. 71, the cuirassed statue used as drain cover, cat. 50 a marble head, cats. 83, 84, 86 are near aqueduct); 13 are re-used in the church; and 32 other are ascribed to structures (buildings, walls, and even a grave) that are post antique, Byzantine or modern. Thus, c. 60 percent of these objects continued to be used as building material after their original deployment as honorific monument. How do builders of the post Herulian wall, the late antique areas, and the post-antique constructions collect material? If cat. 81 for Lollianos found on the Acropolis can reasonably be assigned to the Agora on account of literary sources (L. notes this in his methodology in Chapter 1, p. 12), what else might have moved out and what might have moved in during various building projects? Probably there is little way now to gain a secure grasp on this issue. Dillon's archaeological approach is much more comforting

and circumspect in this regard. She both grasps, acknowledges, and attempts to address the problem. She looks specifically at portions of the post-Herulian wall in proximity to the Agora and in which architectural elements from the Agora were found. Bases in these portions have high probability of coming from the Agora. We might also begin to apply emerging concepts with greater rigour in these cases. For example, Leone is quite sure that for the most part the outdoor statues were of bronze and that most marble statues were indoors. His catalogue shows positively 23 bases with bronze statues as opposed to three bases for marble statues. The three marble bases are a broad shallow base of the late first c. BC for a Eukles (cat. 20) which uses the front surface of an earlier base as its top surface and was found in fill of the 6<sup>th</sup> c AD plus two imperial bases for Agrippina the Younger (cat. 39) and Drusilla (cat. 38, very fragmentary). He might have done well to push this further. Does any of his marble evidence – a late first century head for insertion (cat. 53), a cuirassed state of Hadrian (cat. 71), the figures from the Odeion area (cat. 83-89 and 104), and the three bases mentioned – convincingly come from the outdoor space in the years between 86 BC and AD 267? And as a footnote does this mean that the city (boule, areopagus, and the demos) dealt primarily with bronze statues?

From all of the above description and comments, it emerges clearly that this is a thoughtful and thought-provoking work. The most important of the criticisms concern the definition of the open-space and the methodology behind the inclusion/exclusion of monuments. They do not detract significantly from the book's valuable contribution or the main conclusions. They also provide a starting point for further studies and reconstructions.

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