ROMAN PELOPONNESE III
SOCIETY, ECONOMY AND CULTURE UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE:
CONTINUITY AND INNOVATION

Edited by
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Cover illustration: Head of city goddess (Tyche) of Sparta
(Sparta Archaeological Museum inv. no. 7945; photo courtesy of O. Palagia)

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The internal borders of the Peloponnese as depicted on the map are an approximation only, as their precise location varied over time.
SCULPTURES FROM THE PELOPONNESE IN THE ROMAN IMPERIAL PERIOD*

Olga Palagia

Abstract: A great number of sculptures of the Roman imperial period have come to light in the Peloponnese. Portraiture, reliefs, architectural sculptures, sarcophagi, divine images, personifications, are all represented in abundance. Even though bronze statues are attested by footprints on statue bases, the majority of extant sculptures are in marble. Pentelic marble predominates and it appears that Attic workshops dominated the Peloponnesian market, as is also indicated by Athenian artists’ signatures. Attic sarcophagi were imported in abundance though we have instances of local imitations as well as imports from other centers like Prokonnesos. The Peloponnese can also boast of some late antique works including a possible portrait of Constantine, as well as a handful of fine copies of classical masterpieces. Laconia became an important center of production in the Roman period as attested by sculptors’ signatures and sculptures in local (Taygetos) marble. The villa of Herodes Atticus at Loukou was a great repository of Greek and Roman sculptures collected by Herodes and his successors and can be compared to Hadrian’s villa at Tivoli.

Introduction

Sculptural production in the Peloponnesian flourished between the principate of Augustus and the early 4th c. A.D. Quantities of sculptures from that period have been excavated in the Roman colonies of Corinth and Patras. Panhellenic sanctuaries like Olympia, Isthmia and Epidauros were also embellished with statuary, and so were the prosperous cities of Sparta and Messene. Most sculptures functioned in a sacred or funerary context or served to decorate public spaces like theaters. Architectural sculptures were mostly confined to arches or stoas though temple E in Corinth was exceptionally decorated with pedimental statues.1 Private villas also housed statuary, particularly in late antique times when pagan homes offered sanctuary to images of the Greek pantheon.2 Portrait sculpture flourished, with many high-quality portraits erected to honor individuals (Fig. 1) or commemorate the dead.3 Imperial portraits could serve as center-pieces of theater stages or nymphaia; in addition, their distribution may reflect the existence of imperial cults.

* I am grateful to Athanasios Rizakis for inviting me to contribute to this volume, and to Hans R. Goette and Petros Themelis for their advice and generosity in providing photographs for the illustration of this article.

1. See, for example, the Trajanic arch over the Lechaion Road in Corinth (Edwards 1994), as well as the Antonine “Captives’ façade” in the same city (Johnson 1931,101-06, cat. nos 217-26; Stillwell et al. 1941, 71-75, figs 48, 50-51; Ridgway 1981b, 444; Sturgeon 2003, 354 n. 16). Caryatids from Corinthian buildings: Sturgeon 2003, 354 with ns 15-16, fig. 21.4. Pedimental statuary in Pentelic marble of the 1st c. A.D. from temple E in Corinth: Stillwell et al. 1941, 210-30; Ridgway 1981b, 441, pl. 95d.

2. Cf. late antique villas in Messene and Corinth: Deligiannakis 2005 (Messene); Stirling 2008 (Corinth).

3. Private portraits: see, e.g., Datsoúli-Stavridi 1987 (Sparta); Spyropoulos 2006, figs 18-20; 22-32 (Loukou); Petropoulos 2007, 193-94, fig. 14 (Patras); Sturgeon 2009 (Isthmia); Bol 2008, 149-50 and Krumeich 2008, 83-85, pls 14, 3; 15, 1 and 3 (Olympia). Fig. 1 shows an over-life-size priestess (?) of the 1st c. A.D. from the Heraion in Olympia, Olympia Museum Λ 144. It is exceptionally of Parian marble. The high quality of its workmanship and heroic size originally prompted a tentative identification with Poppaea Sabina which is now rejected: Treu 1897, 259; Krumeich 2008, 83-84, pls 14, 3 and 15, 1 with earlier references.
Fig. 1. Portrait statue of a priestess (?), so-called Poppaea Sabina, in Parian marble. From the Heraion of Olympia. Olympia Museum Λ 144 (Photo: German Archaeological Institute, Athens neg. no. Hege 717).
or the personal interest of the honorands in individual cities and sanctuaries.⁴

Hadrian’s influence prompted the erection of numerous portraits of Antinoos during his lifetime, attesting to local cults that were founded to please the philhellene emperor (Fig. 2).⁵ In late Hadrianic and early Antonine times the patronage of Herodes Atticus left its mark in Olympia, Corinth and Isthmia. In addition, Herodes’ Villa at Loukou has yielded a rich crop of private portraits, imperial portraits of Hadrian, the Antonines and Septimius Severus, copies of classical masterpieces, and reliefs, both classical and Roman.⁶ It provides a Greek parallel for Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, and continued in use until the 5th c. A.D. judging by a mosaic representation of the sophist Helikonios, who wrote a history of the world until Theodosius I.⁷

Reproductions or variants of famous masterworks could be placed as dedications in sanctuaries, sometimes duplicating the still extant originals, or in domestic shrines and gardens. Herodes’ taste for Athenian sculpture, documented by his Nymphaion at Olympia and the sculpture collection in his Villa at Loukou is largely reflected in the entire sculptural production of the Peloponnese in the Roman


5. A mystery cult of Antinoos was established by Hadrian in Mantinea (Paus. VIII. 9, 7-8). Images of Antinoos came to light in Patras (Athens, National Museum 417 [Fig. 2] and 418; Meyer 1991, 29-31, cat. I 7 and I 8; Rhomiopoulou 1997, no. 79; Goette 1998, 36; Kaltzas 2002, no. 723); Mantinea (Athens, National Museum 698: Clairmont 1966, no. 64); Corinth, theater (Sturgeon 2004, no. 25 and perhaps no. 26); Isthmia, sanctuary of Poseidon (Sturgeon 1987, no. 57); Myloi (Argos Museum: Meyer 1991, 27-28, cat. I 4). There was a cult of Antinoos in the villa of Herodes Atticus at Loukou, which contained a unique seated cult statue (Astros Museum: Spyropoulos and Spyropoulos 2003, fig. 12; Spyropoulos 2006, 131-32 fig. 24), a bust (Astros Museum 173: Meyer 1991, 28-29, cat. I 5; Datsouli-Stavridi 1993, 38, pl. 27α-b) and an Egyptianizing head of Antinoos as Osiris (Astros Museum 232: Datsouli-Stavridi 1993, 29-30, pl. 17α-ζ). Most of Antinoos’ images from the Peloponnese are in Pentelic marble but there are examples in Thasian marble like the two busts from Patras, the statue(s) from the Hadrianic theater in Corinth and the seated statue from Loukou.


7. For Helikonios, see Wirth 1964. Loukou mosaic of 5th c. A.D. with the philosopher Helikonios holding a scroll with his name: Spyropoulos and Spyropoulos 2003, fig. 8 (misidentified as a personification of Mt. Helikon).
imperial period. The Argive and Sicyonian Schools of the classical and Hellenistic periods were now defunct and Pentelic marble dominated the markets. Quantities of Attic sarcophagi were imported into the Peloponnese or served as models for local imitations. Imitations of Attic and other sarcophagi in Laconia and Arcadia, for example, are easily distinguished by the use of local marble, from Mt. Taygetos in Laconia (Fig. 3) and from Doli ana in Tegea. Asiatic sarcophagi were also imported, for example in Patras, Sparta and Hermione (Fig. 4) but they are few and far between.

Few sculptors’ signatures from the Roman Peloponnese have come down to us. The majority are Athenians with a few local sculptors operating in Laconia (attested by signatures and by unfinished works), while workshops in Corinth, Isthmia and Epidaurus, for example, seem to have produced small-scale works and architectural sculptures. Grave reliefs also tended to be local affairs judging by their modest scale and low quality of carving.

The exception that proves the rule is a monumental grave relief of the 1st c. A.D. in Epidaurus showing the deceased as Hermes. A handful of statues from the Roman Peloponnese also depict the deceased in the guise of a god, with individualized heads belonging to naked bodies that draw on classical prototypes. The Thasian marble statue of a young man as Diomedes (Fig. 5) from a tomb adjacent to the gymnasium of Messene reproduces a well-known

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9. An imitation Attic sarcophagus with erotes and garlands in Taygetos marble is embedded in an Ottoman fountain near the church of Panagia ton Boubalon in Mistras (Fig. 3). Locally produced sarcophagus with Achilles outside the walls of Troy, possibly in Doli ana marble, Tegea Museum 3: Koch 1993, 247, figs 2-3; Karapanagiotou 2005 and ead. 2009 (attributing it to a Laconian workshop which cannot be right, if it is made of local Doli ana marble).

10. Sparta: British Museum GR 1839.8-6.5; see Walker 1990, cat. no. 47. Hermione: Kyrou 1990, 207; Koch 2009, 122, fig. 8.


14. On the significance of such practice, see Hallett 2005, 259-64.
high classical type, which was occasionally used for imperial portraiture, and is highly idealized, perhaps implying heroization. The inscribed base of an honorary statue of the 1st c. A.D. that stood next to it describes the honorand, Theon, as a hero. A statue in Pentelic marble from Gytheion showing the deceased youth as Dionysos preserves all the trappings of that god: wreathed with ivy, he holds a kantharos in his right hand, resting his left hand on a vine, and is accompanied by a panther. It dates from the 3rd c. A.D. and the body type derives from a Hellenistic prototype.

Even though votive reliefs in the Roman period are few, Laconia not only produced quantities, they were also chiefly carved of local Taygetos marble. The reliefs in Pentelic marble found in Herodes Atticus’ Villa at Loukou were obviously part of his sculpture collection and very likely imported from Attica. In late antique times when marble quarries ceased to operate and marble became scarce, local sculptors repaired and reworked earlier statues to serve as portraits of governors or emperors.

The present survey depends on published material and may be regarded as preliminary; the picture conveyed here may change with the study of Roman sculpture from important sites like Patras or ancient collections like that in the Villa at Loukou which are still largely unpublished. We will discuss selected sculptures found in the Peloponnese in order to highlight themes and problems pertinent to the region. In this period we prefer to speak of sculptures found in the Peloponnese rather than of Peloponnesian sculpture in its own right.

Sculptors’ Signatures
Sculptors’ signatures in Roman times are less common than in earlier periods; artists tended to sign on the statues themselves, possibly because their
Fig. 5. Statue of heroized dead youth as Diomedes in Thasian marble. From Messene. Messene Museum 8664 (Photo courtesy of Petros Themelis).
works were shipped out unaccompanied to be installed at destination without the supervision of their creators. It is interesting that the majority of signed works in the Peloponnese were the products of Attic workshops. Five portraits in Pentelic marble signed by Athenians were dedicated at the Metroon and the Heraion in Olympia in the 1st c. A.D. First, the portraits of Claudius (Fig. 6) and Agrippina Minor, erected in the Metroon to form part of the imperial cult in Claudius’ lifetime, were signed by the Athenians Phlathenaioi and Hegias (on the stump bracing Claudius’ right leg) and Dionysos son of Apollonios (on Agrippina’s plinth).21 The image of Claudius as Jupiter, with scepter and eagle (Fig. 6), was directly inspired by a prototype created in Rome as attested by a statue found in Lanuvium.22 The Athenian version, however, is more animated and livelier than its Roman model. In addition, three honorary portrait statues of Eleian ladies set up in the Heraion were signed by Athenian artists: two headless images of the same statuary type were signed by two different sculptors, Eros (on the left knee) and Eleusinios (on the plinth),23 while a third, reproducing the type of the Large Herculeanum Woman, was signed on her right knee by Aulos Sextos Eraton.24

The only sculptor’s signature from Roman Corinth is that of the Athenian Theodotos, inscribed on a marble revetment plaque of the scenaes frons of the Hadrianic theater.25 Roman Sparta was exceptional. Not only did it leave a substantial sculptural production in local Taygetos marble in the form of sarcophagi (Fig. 3), reliefs, architectural sculptures and the odd acrolith,26 there are also records of local sculptors in both marble and bronze. In the time of Augustus, an association of worshippers of the Dioscuri participating in an annual banquet (σιτηθέντες) included the sculptors who made the votive reliefs (in Taygetos marble) for the occasion. Two such sculptors are known: Mantikles son of Sosikrates and Antilas son of Anetidas.27 In the first half of the 3rd c. A.D. Demetrios son of Demetrios signed three honorary marble portraits herms.28 These were modest works but Sparta in the first quarter of the 3rd c. A.D. could also boast of a local bronze sculptor. [---] son of Dionysios, no ethnic, therefore local, signed as τεχνείτης a bronze group of over-life-size imperial portraits.29 The inscription describes these portraits as divine (θεῖα agalmata indicating that they were recipients of imperial cult. The large base is now fragmentary and contains erasures suggesting a case of dannatio memoriae. Two reconstructions have been proposed: a family group of Elagabalus, one of his wives, his mother, Julia Soemias, Alexander Severus, his mother, Julia Mamaea, and Julia Maesa, erected in A.D. 221/230 or Septimius Severus, Julia Domna, Caracalla, Geta and Fulvia Plautilla, erected between A.D. 203 and 205.31 The statue base is often associated with an

21. Claudius, Olympia Museum Λ 125: Treu 1897, 244-45; Stone 1985, 381-82, pl. 82, 2; Hitzl 1991, 38-43, pl. 13a. Agrippina Minor, Olympia Museum Λ 143: Treu 1897, 256-57; Stone 1985, 382, pl. 83, 1; Hitzl 1991, 43-46, pl. 14c. Agrippina’s portrait was found near the Heraion but is generally assigned to the Metroon group.


27. Sparta Museum 203: IG V 1, 209; Spawforth 1986, 324 n. 33; Palagia 2001, 293 n. 63 with further references. Another relief: IG V 1, 208.

28. IG V 1, 538, 539 and 540; SEG 11, 1950, 796-97; Spawforth 1984, 274-77.

29. Inscribed statue base of Taygetos marble in the Sparta Museum: Spawforth 1986, 317; 323-24, fig. 1; Palagia 2001, 298-99, fig. 13. The artist’s signature is in the genitive (|[Διονυσίων της θείων ζησμάτων) according to a well-known formula implying that he also made all practical arrangements for setting them up.


Fig. 6. Colossal portrait statue of Claudius in Pentelic marble, signed by the Athenian sculptors Philathenaios and Hegias. From the Metroon of Olympia. Olympia Museum Λ 125 (Photo: German Archaeological Institute, Athens, neg. no. OLYMPIA 2126).
over-life-size bronze portrait of a Severan empress. The portrait was found flattened, her face battered, in a Roman building on the acropolis of Sparta, and was promptly thought to have fallen victim to damnatio memoriae. Her hairstyle is typical of wigs worn by female members of the Severan house and she has been variously identified with Julia Mamaea (Alexander Severus’ mother), Julia Aquilia Severa (one of Elagabalus’ wives) or Plautilla (Caracalla’s wife). Whereas both Plautilla and Julia Mamaea had suffered damnatio memoriae and subsequent mutilation of their portraits, Julia Aquilia Severa did not. If the portrait belonged to the latter, then another explanation had to be found for her crushed image. Christian desecration or damage inflicted by the collapse of the building have both been proposed. Regardless of what actually happened to the bronze statue, it is perhaps significant that of the three, only Plautilla can be shown to have had any connection with Sparta. Laconia issued Roman imperials featuring her (in A. D. 202-205), Caracalla, Septimius Severus, Julia Domna and Geta, the exact members of the imperial family, in fact, who may have been honored with bronze statues in the same period if the massive base is correctly assigned to them. Caracalla’s special relations with Sparta are also documented by his recruitment of a Spartan contingent in A.D. 214 that probably served in his Parthian campaign until 217. This increases the probability that the bronze sculptor [---] son of Dionysios was active in Sparta in the early years of the 3rd c. A.D.

Marble Copies of Classical and Hellenistic Masterpieces
A number of high-quality Roman copies and variants of well-known masterpieces of Greek sculpture came to light in the Peloponnese. They are in Pentelic marble favoring fifth-century prototypes and are very likely products of Athenian workshops. We will discuss copies that are unique in some way or have special significance.

A standing, nude Zeus from Olympia with long hair falling on his shoulders (Fig. 7) is more likely a copy of a Severe Style prototype than a Roman creation even though no other copies of this type have come down to us. His idiosyncratic coiffure with long locks rolled over a hairband recalls the fragmentary plaster cast of a Severe Style bronze head found in Baiae, where the man’s long locks are rolled up over a braid that is tied around his head. A copy of the post-Pheidian Dresden Zeus, also from Olympia, is of special significance because its presence in Olympia establishes the identity of the type as Zeus rather than Asklepios or Hades as had been suggested.

A reduced copy of Pheidias’ Athena Parthenos of the 2nd c. A.D. from Patras (Fig. 8) preserves the right half of her shield, reproducing important details of the amazonomachy on the exterior which are not available in other copies. A colossal, fragmentary cult statue of Amphitrite in Pentelic marble that formed part of an early Antonine cult-statue group with Poseidon in his temple at Isthmia seems to draw heavily on Agorakritos’ statue of the Mother

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36. Varner 2004, 164-68 (Plautilla); 195-98 (Julia Mamaea).
37. Ricardi (1998, 264-67) attributed the damage to Christian desecration, Kourinou Pikoula (2001, 428) to the collapse of the building, at the same time questioning the association of the bronze portrait with the inscribed statue base.
of the Gods that stood in Athens. Amphitrite’s statue base carried relief narratives inspired by creations of Pheidias and his pupils; the slaughter of the Niobids is dependent on the armrests of the throne of Pheidias’ Zeus at Olympia, while the Calydonian boar hunt may document an otherwise unknown classical prototype. The Isthmia group is attributed to an Athenian workshop. Pausanias (II. 1, 8) describes another cult-statue group set up by Herodes Atticus and therefore only a few decades later than the extant marble group: it was made of ivory and gold and stood on a base with a different relief narrative. We do not know the size of Herodes’ group but it need not have been colossal. It is likely that both groups stood in the cella of Poseidon’s temple.

Another echo of Agorakritos’ work is preserved in a fragmentary Neo-Attic relief from the Asklepieion in Corinth, presumably imported from Athens. It reproduces a peplos figure from the statue base of Agorakritos’ Nemesis at Rhamnous. She is shown alongside a seated Zeus that derives from an unknown source, following the usual practice of Neo-Attic reliefs of combining figures from different Attic monuments.

A copy of Lysippos’ Herakles Farnese in Pentelic marble from the Roman Bath of Argos (Fig. 9) is probably the most accurate reproduction extant. The original stood in Argos too, as attested by the type’s appearance as a mint mark on a posthumous Alexandrine of the early 3rd c. B.C.

Finally, the collection in Herodes’ Villa at Loukou comprised an important copy of the second-century B.C. group of Achilles and Penthesilea. It is the only copy extant retaining Achilles’ head, showing that it was turned away from Penthesilea who was collapsing at his feet.

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44. Isthmia Museum: Sturgeon 1987, 76-113, pls 34-42 (Amphitrite) and 45-50 (statue base).
45. Harrison (1996, 60 n. 209) has suggested that the Isthmia statue base was copied from Agorakritos’ base of the Mother of the Gods in the Agora of Athens, and that Agorakritos had adopted Pheidian designs for the reliefs on his base. For a possible fragment of Agorakritos’ statue base found in the Athenian Agora (Agora A 3001), see Palagia 2006, 124 with n. 56.
47. Corinth Museum S 1449: Palagia 2000, 73-74, fig. 4.12; Sturgeon 2003, 366. On the Zeus type, see Böhm 2004, 96-101 fig. 58.
48. 2nd c. A.D. Argos Museum: Marcadé 1957, 408-413; Moreno 1995, 52 fig. 4.4.2.
49. Moreno 1995, 44 fig. 4.4.1.

Fig. 7. Statue of Zeus in Pentelic marble. From the gymnasium of Olympia, attributed to the Nymphaion of Herodes Atticus. Olympia Museum A 170 (Photo: Hans R. Goette).
City Goddesses

Tyche as a city goddess had several cults in the Peloponnese, documented chiefly by Pausanias, and was also a popular coin type on Roman imperials. In Sparta her cult was associated to a number of other cults, including the imperial cult. Roman Tyche was usually depicted with a mural crown, as in two heads found in Corinth (one belonged to the pedimental sculptures of temple E). There are, however, two unusual heads of city goddesses (Figs 10-11) of high quality that merit further discussion. A colossal head of Tyche from Sikyon (Fig. 10), made of Pentelic marble and once inserted into a statue that is now lost, exceptionally combines her mural crown with a helmet. This may indicate a fusion between Tyche and Roma. Pausanias (II. 7, 5) records a temple of Tyche in Sikyon housing a xoanon; Tyche wear-
ing a mural crown and holding a cornucopia is shown on Roman imperials issued in Sikyon under Plautilla.\textsuperscript{55} The representation of Roma as a city goddess wearing a mural crown as attested by the head in \textbf{Fig. 10} is a new invention and was probably related to the imperial cult as was customary with most cults of Roma in Greece.\textsuperscript{56}

A life-size head of a city goddess in Pentelic marble of the 2nd c. A.D. found in Sparta (\textbf{Fig. 11}) wears a unique mural crown decorated with a figural scene.\textsuperscript{57} The high quality of carving and exceptional iconography suggest an import, presumably from a great artistic center like Athens. The right part of the scene on the turreted crown is damaged but it is possible to make out two frontal, striding figures in short chitons. They are arranged in a schema implying conflict, as exemplified by Athena and Poseidon in the west pediment of the Parthenon.\textsuperscript{58} The figure on the right stands above the center of Tyche’s forehead, while the one on the left is an Oriental on a slightly smaller scale. The scene has been variously interpreted as an amazonomachy or as Aeneas escaping Troy with his son Ascanius and father Anchises (hypothetically restored on the now damaged right side), and the goddess has been accordingly identified with either the Tyche of Sparta or a personification of Ilion.\textsuperscript{59}

Quite apart from the fact that no sculptural representations of Ilion are known, the corkscrew curls falling at the sides of Tyche’s head (\textbf{Fig. 11}) and her double chin are reminiscent of Ptolemaic queens, which points to a possible Ptolemaic prototype for the city goddess of Sparta.\textsuperscript{60} It has been shown that the amazonomachy was a popular subject in Sparta and may have functioned as a city crest.\textsuperscript{61}

In sum, sculpture in the Peloponnese in the Roman imperial period is remarkable for retaining classical and classicizing forms like sculptured pediments and copies or adaptations of classical works, at the same time following new trends especially

\textsuperscript{55} BMC Peloponnesus 56, no. 244.
\textsuperscript{56} For the association of the cult of Roma with the imperial cult in the Peloponnese, see Mellor 1975, 106-07; 208-09.
\textsuperscript{57} The head has been dated to the late Hadrianic/early Antonine period. The body is lost. Palagia 1994; Franken 2002.
\textsuperscript{58} Cf. Carrey’s drawing of the west pediment: Palagia 1993, fig. 3.
\textsuperscript{60} Palagia 1994, 72. A good parallel is provided by a colossal limestone head of a Ptolemaic queen, Alexandria Museum 21992: Kyrieleis 1975, 184-85, M 10, pl. 103, 4.
\textsuperscript{61} Palagia 1994.
as regards architectural sculptures, imperial portraiture or new personifications. The Peloponnese can boast of at least one outstanding villa with a magnificent sculpture collection which was evidently assembled in Attica and elsewhere. The region was dominated by Athenian artists and materials but local works were also produced, especially in more isolated parts like Laconia which also produced its own marble.

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Fig. 10. Head of city goddess wearing helmet and mural crown, here identified with Roma as city goddess. Pentelic marble. From Sikyon. Sikyon Museum 324 (Photo: Olga Palagia).

Fig. 11. Head of city goddess wearing mural crown with figural scene, here identified with the Tyche of Sparta. Pentelic marble. From Sparta. Sparta Museum 7945 (Photo: Olga Palagia).

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