

ABSTRACT

M. Bruun-Lundgren, *CYPRIOTS IN STONE. Limestone sculpture in late Hellenistic and Roman Cyprus*, Department of Classical Archaeology, Göteborg University, 2002, 289 pp. with 34 figs. and 58 pls.

This study has two main aims. One is to present a catalogue of images of human beings that were produced in limestone at Cypriote workshops during the late Hellenistic and Roman times. The other is to investigate the material from different angles in a discursive part, following the catalogue.

The vast production of limestone sculptures had been firmly established in the island ever since the Archaic age. The two main functions of the limestone sculptures were votive or funerary. Since local sculptural traditions were long-lived, the dating of the items poses a problem. Also treated is the related issue of what a portrait is and what it is not.

The high-status portraits in bronze and marble, representing the rulers and other prominent persons in the society, constituted prototypes for the local limestone sculptors. An investigation of these high-status portraits found in the island has therefore been carried out. The technique and colouring of the limestone sculptures are also considered, since many of them bear evident tool-marks and colour (mainly fragmentarily preserved).

The original settings of the sculptures in sanctuaries or at tombs are discussed. Because of the special functions of the sculptures, they were subjugated to certain iconographic rules and since their postures were stiff, the anatomy of the bodies was not developed. Great care was instead taken to depict details in hairstyle, garment and personal adornments and consequently one chapter treats these aspects. The frequency of wreaths, worn by the males is a specific local trait. Occasionally local Cypriote fashion can also be detected in a female headdress or in a hairstyle. Different groups of internally similar sculptures can be detected, suggesting that they derive from the same work-shop or group of work-shops. Reasons for the drastic decrease of votive sculpture after the Julio-Claudian period are also discussed, as well as reasons for the appearance and disappearance of the funerary busts during the first century AD.

Overall questions posed in the different chapters are: to what extent are foreign influences discernible in the local limestone sculpture and to what extent were local sculptural traditions retained. And connected with this, when foreign influences are discernible, from which areas did the Cypriote sculptors get their inspiration. The influences from Rome were certainly limited in a distant province such as Cyprus, where the Hellenistic Greek culture was firmly established. Still the Cypriote limestone sculptors were not unacquainted with Roman official portrait art. The direct prototypes emanated probably not directly from ateliers in the distant capital, but from places not so far from Cyprus, such as Alexandria, Cyrenaica, Asia Minor or Delos. While some of the limestone heads presented here adhere in a high degree to the contemporary portrait art outside of the island, some others are very provincially made. For the most part, the items are an intermingling between these two orientations. Some specific and long-lived local features recognised here survived into the Medieval art, as seen in Egyptian Coptic art.

Keywords: Cyprus, Hellenistic, Roman, provincial, art, limestone, sculpture, votive, funerary, technique, colouring, hairstyle, dress, wreath.