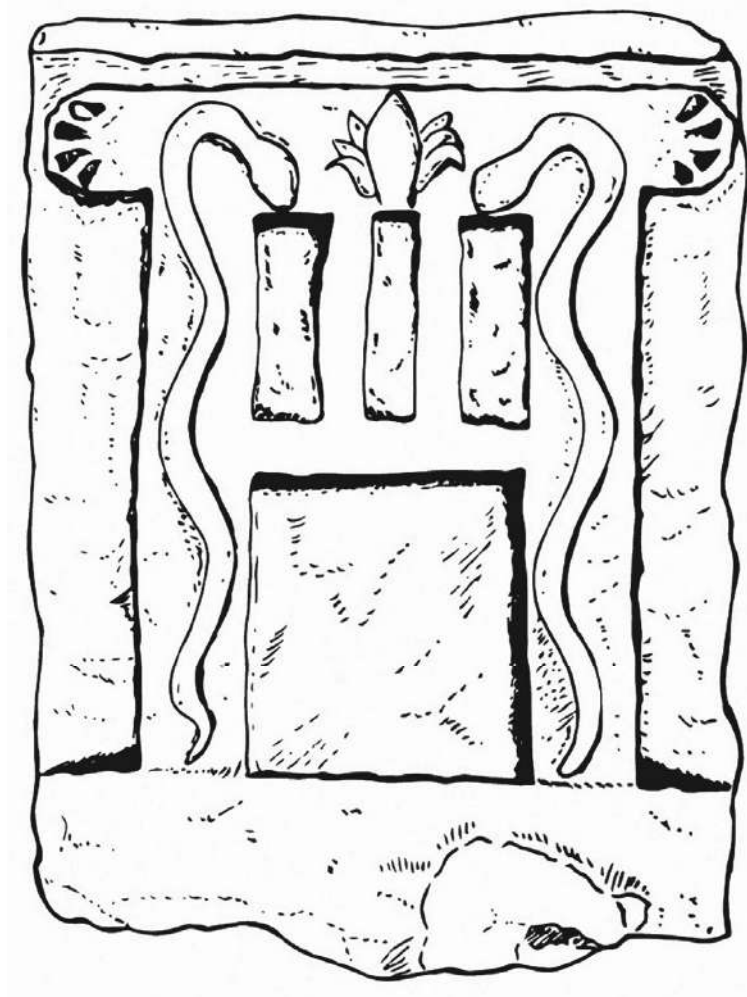




The

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF SPARTA



— *The* —

HISTORICAL
REVIEW
OF SPARTA

edited by
Giorgio Piras and Rita Sassu



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The Historical Review of Sparta

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The statues near Lycurgus in the theatre of Sparta

Giulia Vannucci *

Keywords: theatre, statue base, Publilius Optatianus, Anatolius, Lycurgus.

Λέξεις κλειδιά: θέατρο, βάση αγάλματος, Πουβλίλιος Όππατιανός, Ανατόλιος, Λυκούργος.

Abstract:

This paper aims to analyse two statue bases which Sparta dedicated to two proconsuls of Achaia in the 4th cent. AD in the theatre near the statue of Lycurgus. After a brief description of the theatre and its building phases, the paper focuses on the lives and careers of the two honorands: Publilius Optatianus and Anatolius. The last part attempts to underline the significance of setting up these two statues of provincial governors in the theatre, near the one of mythical lawgiver. This choice will be analysed in relation to their place of exhibition and to their socio-cultural context. In late antiquity, it was common in the province of Achaia to set up statues of imperial officials and local personalities in association with statues or monuments from its Greek past.

Σκοπός της παρούσας εργασίας είναι η ανάλυση δύο βάσεων αγαλμάτων που αφιέρωσε η Σπάρτη σε δύο προξένους της Αχαΐας τον 4ο αι. μ.Χ. στο θέατρο κοντά στο άγαλμα του Λυκούργου. Μετά από μια σύντομη περιγραφή του θεάτρου και των οικοδομικών του φάσεων, η εργασία εστιάζει στη ζωή και τη σταδιοδρομία των δύο τιμώμενων: Πουβλίλιος

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Όππατιανός και Ανατόλιος. Το τελευταίο μέρος επιχειρεί να υπογραμμίσει τη σημασία της τοποθέτησης αυτών των δύο αγαλμάτων επαρχιακών διοικητών στο θέατρο, κοντά σε εκείνο του μυθικού νομοθέτη. Η επιλογή αυτή θα αναλυθεί σε σχέση με τον τόπο έκθεσής τους και με το κοινωνικοπολιτισμικό τους πλαίσιο. Στην ύστερη αρχαιότητα, ήταν σύνηθες στην επαρχία της Αχαΐας να στήνονται αγάλματα αυτοκρατορικών αξιωματούχων και τοπικών προσωπικοτήτων σε συνδυασμό με αγάλματα ή μνημεία από το ελληνικό παρελθόν της.

The theatre

The theatre, known to travellers since the 18th cent., is located north of modern Sparta on the southern slopes of the ancient acropolis below the sanctuary of Athena Chalkioikos (fig. 1).¹ Archaeological investigations were carried out by the British School at Athens from 1906 to 1910 under the direction of R.C. Bosanquet and later R.M. Dawkins² and from 1924 to 1927 under the direction of A.M. Woodward.³ After the excavations from 1960 to 1963, carried out by C. Christou⁴ at the expense of the Archaeological Society, the investigations were again undertaken by the British School at Athens with G. Waywell and J. Wilkes starting in 1992.⁵

The building of the theatre has been dated back to the late 1st cent. BC, probably to 30-20 BC,⁶ «when C. Julius Eurikles was ruler of Sparta, which now received highly-favoured status having supported Octavian-Augustus at Actium».⁷ The ancient writers (Hdt. 6, 67; X. 6, 4, 16; Plu. *Agis* 29, 2)⁸ record a *theatron* in Sparta in the Classical period,

¹ Bulle 1937; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998; Walker, Waywell 2001; Waywell 2002; Sear 2006, pp. 405-407 with bibliography.

² Bosanquet, Wace, Dickins et alii 1905-1906 [Dickins], pp. 394-406.

³ Woodward, Hobling 1923-1925, pp. 119-158 [Woodward]; Woodward 1925-1926, pp. 175-209; Woodward, Droop, Lamb 1926-1927, pp. 3-36 [Woodward]; Woodward 1928-1930, pp. 151-240.

⁴ Christou 1960, p. 230; *Arch. Delt* 17, 1961/1962, B', p. 84 [Christou].

⁵ Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995 [Waywell, Wilkes]; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998; Waywell, Wilkes 1999, pp. 437-455.

⁶ Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995 [Waywell, Wilkes]. The date is suggested by the style of the theatre and its architecture and by the pottery fragments «recovered from the mud-brick that forms the artificial make-up of the cavea»; Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, p. 99.

⁷ Waywell, Wilkes, Walker 1998, p. 100; see also Waywell, Wilkes, Powell et alii 1995, pp. 440, 449-451 [Waywell, Wilkes]; Waywell 2002, p. 247.

⁸ For the literary references on the theatre see Bosanquet, Wace, Dickins et alii 1905-