



International symposium **ANTIQVAE FEMINAE**

**Ancient Female Sculptural Portraits and their
Afterlife - Studies, Analyses and Digital
Reconstructions**

**May 19–22, 2026
Forum of the Weltmuseum Wien
KHM-Museumsverband**

The symposium is organised within the framework of the research project:

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In collaboration with:



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**KUNST
HISTORISCHES
MUSEUM**

ANTIQVAE FEMINAE

International Symposium

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

TUESDAY, 19/05/2026

13:00 Welcome

14:00-14:30 Presentation

Georg Plattner, Director of the Antikensammlung and the Ephesos Museums, Kunsthistorisches Museum

Manuela Laubenberger, Curator of the Antikensammlung and the Ephesos Museums, Kunsthistorisches Museum

Montserrat Claveria Nadal, Professor of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

A. Sculptural Portraits of Antiquae Feminae in Ancient and Antiquarian Contexts

14:30-15:00

Conference 1:

Christiane Vorster, "Outstanding among others" – Greek portrait statues of women and their afterlife

15:00-15:25

Antonella Ferraro, Fabiana Cozzolino & Debora Papetti, New Archaeological Discoveries at the Crypta Balbi (Rome)

15:25-15:50

Raffaella Bucolo, Revisiting the Female Bronze Portrait from the Capitolium of Brescia: Image, Identity, and Meaning

15:50-16:15

Montserrat Claveria, Imaging Women in Provincial Hispania: Identity and Status in Roman Female Portraits at the Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya

16:15-16:40

Ines Ferjan, Carving Provincial Women: Female Funerary Portraiture across the Inland Balkans

16:40-17:05

Jelena Anđelković Grašar & Nadežda Gavrilović Vitas, Roman provincial female portraiture, visual communication as message once and now. Case study Serbia

17:05-17:30

Cristina-Georgeta Alexandrescu, Portraits of Women from Moesia Inferior: Visual Representations and Cultural Identity

17:30-17:55

Eva Christof, Female Portrait Statues with Bust Crown in Roman Asia Minor

WEDNESDAY, 20/05/2026

9:15-9:45

Conference 2:

Laura Buccino, I ritratti femminili della collezione di Vincenzo Giustiniani: contesto espositivo seicentesco, identificazioni antiquarie e nuovi dati

9:45-10:10

Saray Garcia-Martinez, Olympias of Epirus and Livia Augusta: Image, Power, and the Early Modern Reception of Female Antiquity through Sculptural Relief

10:10-10:35

Sladjana Domuz, Visual Strategies of Power – Cleopatra VII

10:35-11:05 COFFEE BREAK

11:05-11:30

Lisa M. Anderson-Zhu, Why Does She Look Like This? Contextualizing an Enigmatic Portrait Bust from Roman Egypt

11:30-11:55

Chiara Lombardi, Isis: Images and Female Presences from Egyptian Tradition to Reception in Roman Campania

11:55-12:20

Hourig Sourouzian, New portraits of queen Tiye, Great Royal Consort of King Amenhotep III (S. XIV aCr.)

12:20-12:45

Ying Wang, Divine Couple, Gendered Spheres: Reassessing the Han Dynasty's Queen Mother and King Father

12:45-14:30 LUNCH BREAK

B. Iconography, Properties, Messages

14:30-15:00

Conference 3:

Astrid Fendt, Iconography, style and message of female Roman portraits

15:00-15:25

Novella Lapini, Le matrone romane: dai ritratti alla storia

15:25-15:50

Anne Kleineberg, Innovative Portraits of Roman Women – Function and Relevance of Female Busts from the Early Imperial Period

15:50-16:20 COFFEE BREAK

16:20 –16:45

Julia Lenaghan, Beyond the Portrait Head: Using the Female Body to Identify Julio-Claudian Imperial Portraits

16:45-17:10

Xinping Wei, From Virtue to Divinity: A Study in the Aesthetic Politics of Early Roman Imperial Female Portraits

17:10-17:35

Antonia Soler i Nicolau, Designations for women in Rome: a terminological approach that supports iconography

THURSDAY, 21/05/2026

9:15-9:40

Markus Trunk, Faustina minor: ihre Rolle zwischen Adoptivkaisertum und antoninischer Dynastie

9:40-10:05

Beatrice Cacciotti, Auguste in villa: le due Faustine. Documentazione archeologica e inquadramento iconografico in contesti romano-laziali

10:05-10:30

Clara Durand, Claudia Semne and the Visual Construction of Memory: Portrait Multiplication and Identity in a Roman Funerary Context

10:30-11:00 COFFEE BREAK

11:00-11:25

Alejandra Izquierdo Perales & Luis Romero Novella, Questioning the Isiac Legacy in the Representation of the Virgin Mary: A Dialogue between Egyptology and Classical Iconography

11:25-11:50

Marija Jović & Jelena Anđelković Grašar, The Power of Image: The Evolution of Roman Empresses visual communication on Coinage and its reception within the Socio-Political Context

11:50-12:15

Pedro David Conesa, The Iconographic Evolution of Fulvia Plautilla on the Obverses of the Roman Mint and Its Reflection in Portraiture Based on Selected Case Studies

12:15-14:00 LUNCH BREAK

C. Conservation/Restoration, Marble Analysis and Polychromy

14:00-14:30

Conference 4:

Walter Prochaska, Not always Carrara - Provenance analysis of ancient white marble today

14:30-14:55

Petya Andreeva, V. Anevlavi & W. Prochaska, Faces of Power at the Empire's Edge: Imperial Women Portraits from Philippopolis (Thrace)

14:55-15:20

Simona Perna & Mar Sánchez Hernández, Draped in stone: calcite alabaster and the afterlife of roman female portraiture

15:20-15:45

Robert Krickl, Gabrielle Kremer, Robert Linke & Eva Steigberger, Recent examples of polychromy research on ancient female portraits in Austria

15:45-16:15 COFFEE BREAK

16:15-16:40

Isabel Moreno-Martínez, Diferencias de biografía material entre los retratos femeninos y masculinos del Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya

16:40-17:05

Elena Mora, Conservation of the sculptures of Queen Tiye in the Funerary Temple of Amenhotep III in Luxor, Egypt

17:05-17:35

Conference 5:

Vasiliki Anevlavi & Manuela Laubenberger, Göktepe Marble as a Game Changer in the Study of Ancient Portraits: Case Studies from the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

FRIDAY, 22/05/2026

D. Sculptural Portraits of Antiquae Feminae and Digital Humanities: Reconstruction/recreation and dissemination

9:15-9:45

Conference 6:

Martin Langner, 3D acquisition, analysis and visualisation of the ancient and modern perception of sculptural portraits

9:45- 10:10

Daniele Bursich, Ally Super & Patrick Lenaghan, Traditional Sculpting vs. 3D Printing. Current Options for Adding Value to a Broken Female Statue

10:10-10:35

Ana Zapatero Romero, Juan Antonio Barceló & César Carreras, Methodological Challenges in the Application of Machine Learning to Ancient Female Portraits

10:35-11:05 COFFEE BREAK

11:05-11:30

Nova Barrero Martín, Trinidad Nogales Basarrate & María José Merchán García, Female Portraiture in Colonia Augusta Emerita: Iconographic Studies and Advances in 3D Reconstruction

11:30-11:55

Clara Irene Toledano Rubí, Female Sculptural Portraits in Domestic Contexts: The Case of the *Hermae* from *Domus* 2B at Empúries

11:55-12:20

Clara Irene Toledano Rubí & Montserrat Claveria, *Aemilia*: A Digital Resource for Gender integration in Online Cultural Engagement

12:20-12:50 Final dicussion and closing

“OUTSTANDING AMONG OTHERS” - GREEK PORTRAIT STATUES OF WOMEN AND THEIR AFTERLIFE

Christiane Vorster

Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

There is a striking discrepancy between the significance of statuary portraits of women in the Greek world and the attention this type of monument has received in archaeological research to date. This most certainly requires explanation.

In archaic and classical times, portrait statues of women were widespread. Priestesses, poets, wives, mothers and daughters of the bourgeois elite and even hetaerai, portrayed in life-size statues made of marble and bronze, were encountered by passers-by in sanctuaries as well as on the arterial roads and the agorai of cities. Even the oldest monumental human figure in Greek sculpture, the statue of Nikandre from Delos, was donated by a self-confident young woman and there is good reason to believe that the statue depicts the donor herself. In the Hellenistic era, the number of female portrait statues increased significantly once again, not least due to the influence of Hellenistic queens, whose portraits reaffirmed the ruling claims of their respective dynasties.

The situation in Rome was however quite different. Female portrait statues were a rare exception in public spaces and even Augustus had to obtain the Senate's approval before erecting portrait statues of his wife and sister, Livia and Octavia, in 35 BC. This only changed over the course of the Roman Empire. Remarkably enough though, portrait statues of Greek women, mainly from the 4th century BC, provided the preferred models to represent respectable Roman matronae and were considered exemplary until Late Antiquity.

The fact that we know so little about Greek portraits of women is partly due to the nature of the imperial tradition. Apart from a few exceptions, portraits of famous Greek women were of no interest to the Romans, so that hardly any copies of the prototypes were made. Only a few selected statue types were considered appropriate to bear portraits of distinguished Roman women. These statue types were copied countless times until the end of antiquity, but in this process, they lost their original identity.

This deficit of archaeological evidence was further exacerbated by the scientific approach of modern art history that was bound to the idealistic tradition of the 19th century. Depending on the period and purpose of the investigations, portrait statues of Greek women were referred to as korai, goddesses or simply as “Gewandstatuen”, and, at best, were appreciated as examples of an artistic landscape or period, with no further semiotic analysis of their function and message. This stands in stark contrast to the pre-scientific view of the Renaissance, when antiquarians endeavoured to rediscover portraits of famous women, especially the heroines of the Roman Republic.

NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES AT THE CRYPTA BALBI (ROME): CONTEXTUAL, ICONOGRAPHIC AND MATERIAL ANALYSES OF TWO LIFE-SIZED FEMALE MARBLE HEADS

Antonella Ferraro

Fabiana Cozzolino

Debora Papetti

Museo Nazionale Romano

Since early 2024, extensive archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken at the Crypta Balbi, one of the four sites of the Museo Nazionale Romano, as part of preparatory operations for the development of a new visitor itinerary across the external archaeological zone. This initiative forms a component of the broader project “*Urbs, dalla città alla campagna romana*”, funded through the National Programme for Complementary Investments to the PNNR, which aims at the architectural restoration and comprehensive functional redevelopment of the entire block in central Rome, of which only a portion currently houses the museum. In line with the objective of expanding public access and interpretative frameworks, the investigations have focused on the central courtyard, an area that had already produced significant evidence in earlier campaigns. Although the excavation is still ongoing, the emerging results substantially enhance our understanding of this sector of the ancient city, formerly occupied by Rome’s third theatre and its imposing colonnaded portico—the *crypta*—constructed in 13 BC at the instigation of Augustus by Lucius Cornelius Balbus, financed with spoils from his campaigns in Libya.

From the medieval stratigraphy—corresponding to phases of abandonment, spoliation, and the large-scale conversion of ancient marbles into lime—two life-sized female marble heads have been recovered, likely portraying divine figures. One is characterized by a distinctive bow-shaped coiffure at the crown, while the other features a classicizing hairstyle. Notably, one head preserves minute pigment residues on the hair and displays a deliberate cut that removed the upper portion of the coiffure.

This contribution presents the archaeological context of the discovery, the iconographic assessment and the conservation procedures carried out by the technical staff of the Museo Nazionale Romano, and the results of the analyses aimed at understanding the nature of the marble and the traces of colour. It will also discuss the public-facing valorization initiative *Crypta Balbi: cantiere aperto*, a six-month programme (9 July–27 December 2025) designed to engage both scholars and the broader public with ongoing research activities on the site, offering a preview of preliminary excavation results and selected sculptural finds.

REVISITING THE FEMALE BRONZE PORTRAIT FROM THE CAPITOLIUM OF BRESCIA: IMAGE, IDENTITY AND MEANING

Raffaella Bucolo

ERC project: The Roman Emperor Seen from the Provinces/Università di Verona

Keywords: Roman imperial portraits; Bronze; Flavian Dynasty; Brescia

In 1826, six extraordinary bronze portraits were unearthed during the excavations of the Capitoliium Temple in Brescia, one of the most remarkable discoveries of Roman portraiture in northern Italy. The group, now housed in the Museo di Santa Giulia in Brescia, consists of five male and one female portraits. While the male heads have received significant scholarly attention, especially concerning their potential identifications and chronological framing, the female portrait has often remained in the background of the discussion.

Characterised by an elaborate coiffure typical of the Flavian period, featuring voluminous braids wound into a large bun tied at the nape and a high frontal crown of ringlets, the portrait has traditionally been linked, though never conclusively, to the empress Domitia Longina (c. 50-55 - 126-130s CE), wife of Domitian and a prominent presence in the imperial sphere. This attribution, consistently accompanied by a question mark, reflects the broader methodological challenges in securely identifying portraits of this empress, whose official likenesses display considerable variability across different media.

At the same time, the *toupet* coiffure became a widespread fashion among elite women, revealing how imperial models could be appropriated across the empire, blurring, at times, the boundary between imperial and private elite imagery.

This paper aims to re-examine the Brescia female bronze portrait through an integrated approach that combines stylistic and iconographic analysis with 3D digital modelling, allowing for an in-depth examination of its formal features and a comparative dialogue with other visual media.

The study also contextualises the portrait within the broader corpus of Flavian imperial imagery, comparing it with other sculptural types possibly associated with Domitia Longina, especially with numismatic representations, which offer valuable insights into the depiction of the empress's facial features, public image and its evolution.

The research forms part of the RESP Project (ERC-funded), which focuses on the study of Roman imperial provincial portraits, between coinage and sculpture, through interdisciplinary and digital methodologies.

IMAGING WOMEN IN PROVINCIAL HISPANIA: IDENTITY AND STATUS IN ROMAN FEMALE PORTRAITS AT THE MUSEU D'ARQUEOLOGIA DE CATALUNYA

Montserrat Claveria

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona – Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica

Keywords: Female representation; Roman portraits; Roman provincial art; Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya; Archaeometric analysis

The collections of the Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya (MAC) preserve a diverse group of Roman female portraits originating from different regions of the Iberian Peninsula. This heterogeneity reflects the complex formation history of the museum's collections, which includes materials recovered during excavations conducted by some of its early directors outside Catalonia, acquisitions or gifts made through the antiquities market, and the incorporation of external collections that formed part of the institution's initial holdings. Among these were the collections of the Museu Martorell and those of the Museu of the Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona.

Most of these portraits lack a documented archaeological context. Several pieces were already included in the earliest critical compilations of Roman sculpture in Hispania, most notably in the works of Antonio García y Bellido (1947; 1949)[1]. Subsequent scholarship has further refined the chronology of some sculptures and has discussed their possible classification as either locally produced works or imported pieces on the basis of stylistic and iconographic analysis. Nevertheless, the interpretative potential of this group of portraits has not yet been fully explored.

Within the framework of the *Antiquae Feminae* project (Ref. PID2022-137896OB-I00), which provides the scholarly context for the present symposium, this series of portraits has been reassessed through a multidisciplinary approach. This methodology combines documental, stylistic and iconographic studies with "multi-method-approach" for marble provenance analysis, and a consideration of the material biography of the sculptures (conservation/restoration work), enabling a more comprehensive understanding of their representational properties, production, use and later trajectories.

The results of this research make it possible to propose a more precise contextualisation of several portraits within the provincial territories of Roman Hispania. While these sculptures generally adhere closely to the visual canons established in the imperial centre, they also reveal meaningful variations in the representation of women in provincial environments.

In this sense, the study identifies specific representational tendencies that contribute to defining the social status of the women portrayed and that simultaneously reveal regional markers of identity within female sculptural portraiture. By examining this group of portraits preserved at the MAC, the paper analyses how images of women functioned as visual instruments through which status, identity and cultural affiliation were expressed and constructed in the provincial societies of Roman Hispania.

[1] Antonio García y Bellido, "Estudios sobre escultura romana en los museos de España y Portugal", *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos* LIII.3, 1947, 537-567; Id., *Esculturas Romanas de España y Portugal*, Madrid: CSIC, 1949.

CARVING PROVINCIAL WOMEN: FEMALE FUNERARY PORTRAITURE ACROSS THE INLAND BALKANS

Ines Ferjan

University of Edinburgh

Keywords: Female funerary portraiture; Roman provincial art; Female representation; Identity

Groundbreaking work by Erna Diez, focused on provincial funerary art in the provinces of *Noricum* and *Pannonia*, sparked a significant interest in the study of provincial art, extending this interest to other regions as well[1]. Diez's perspective on provincial art proposed that local identity in the provinces blended with Roman influences, leading to the development of distinct forms of portraiture within the provinces.

This approach will be adopted to discuss female provincial portraiture. The goal is not to assess the quality of carving or the value of an artifact, but rather to observe different practices and influences within the inland Balkan region. Specific examples will be used to explore the factors that influenced female portraiture, how the material impacted carving, and the differences between portraits carved on imported and local materials.

This paper explores the representation of female identity through funerary portraiture on stelae from the inland Balkans during the Roman period, examining how the carving of women's images was shaped by local workshop traditions, material availability, and the negotiation between provincial and imperial visual norms. Female portraits, whether rendered as busts, half-figures, or full figures, played a central role in communicating familial memory and social belonging, yet their stylistic execution varies considerably across the region. By focusing on female portraiture specifically, this study addresses how women were visually constructed within provincial communities, and how these images articulated gendered aspects of identity, status, and cultural affiliation.

The carving of female portraits reveals a complex interplay between artistic competence, material characteristics, and the symbolic expectations surrounding women's commemoration. Portraits executed in imported marble, often arriving as partially prepared pieces, share comparable facial features with those carved in local stone; this is evidence that sculptors relied on stable, widely recognized models for female representation in the region. These models emphasized idealized femininity over individualized realism, placing the focus on attributes such as hairstyle and dress, which themselves carried messages about status and cultural orientation.

To analyse the provincial portraiture, a bottom-up approach can provide some conclusions on why provincial portraiture did not achieve the same artistic level or recognition as portraiture from the major Roman centres. It is important to highlight that funerary art is very individual, yet still follows local standards, as the individual would aspire to fit into the community. This community likely had some local attributes, cultural identity and authenticity, and to follow these standards would give individuals a sense of belonging and inclusion within the community. After examining female funerary portraits from the inland Balkans, both imports and local production, it becomes clear that the style of portraiture follows the same pattern, no matter the quality of material.

[1] Erna Diez laid the foundations for the first international colloquium on Roman provincial art, entitled *Studien zum provinziäl-römischen Kunstschaffen: Grabplastik in Noricum und Pannonien*, held in Graz in 1989.

ROMAN PROVINCIAL FEMALE PORTRAITURE, VISUAL COMMUNICATION AS MESSAGE ONCE AND NOW. CASE STUDY SERBIA

Jelena Anđelković Grašar

Nadežda Gavrilović Vitas

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Keywords: Feminine; Portraits; Art; Communication

Speaking of the Roman female portraiture, traditional studies were centred on marble busts, statues, and imperial sculptures – often from major urban centres (Rome, capitals, important provincial artistic centres). These works of art were made of high-quality materials, in a high stylistic manner, and connected to elite patronage, which once dominated scholarly attention. Whether studies considered Roman elite women or imperial portraiture, in the majority of cases, they were shaped by stylistic, iconographic, and often elite-centred frameworks. Thus, female portraits were usually standardised based on hairstyle, facial features, attributes, and clothing descriptions, aligning them with known types, in most cases connected with the imperial "types" (e.g., portraits resembling those of Livia, Julia Domna, Faustina, etc.). The goal of the traditional approach was usually chronological dating and stylistic attribution, but not socio-cultural interpretation.

New scientific approaches tending to interdisciplinarity and including new methodological approaches such as women's history, gender studies and body politics appeared in the international academic literature almost along with feminism. On the other hand, the Serbian academic community needed more time to embrace this new research approach, which eventually opened space for revision of some existing theories and new discussions and conclusions that might be useful for further research on the topic, which is certainly needed.

The paper aims to present some of the most important research questions, possible answers and conclusions opened for further discussion:

Defining Roman provincial female portraiture – are these women just imperial and elite? Why are female divinities excluded from the feminine context? Is there a space for female slaves in Roman provincial visual culture? Why are these portraits in research usually associated with sculptures or tombstones? Can we consider minor arts as relevant testimonies of some feminine existence? Can we broaden the image typology from the ideal-imperial looking type to the archetype, antitype, or just type? How interdisciplinarity enables us to switch from a "style-typology" approach toward a more holistic, context-rich, socially embedded understanding of portraiture related to usual material remains, and can we there possibly find some individual characters there? How does contextual interpretation, instead of purely representational reading, change representation to the mental image and introduce visual language?

All these questions aim to present that the recent Serbian academic community seriously contributed perception of the feminine provincial portraiture, challenging the elitist and urban bias and making the portraits of provincial women being part of the broader narrative. Portraiture in Roman provinces was not just an imitation of imperial models, but could assert local identity, status, memory and beliefs – often on a funerary or domestic-simple level. Gender-sensitive, social-historical, symbolic and interdisciplinary frameworks to the study of Roman art showed that women are not passive subjects but active participants in visual culture, that their identity and status are encoded in minor arts, tomb paintings and grave goods, thus contributing to the cultural memory of the military and male-oriented space.

PORTRAITS OF WOMEN FROM MOESIA INFERIOR: VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Cristina-Georgeta Alexandrescu

“Vasile Pârvan” Institute of Archaeology, Bucharest

This study examines the limited yet compelling corpus of female portraits from Moesia Inferior, with particular attention to their role in funerary contexts and their contribution to the visual construction of women's identities in this Lower Danubian province. Although scholarship on Roman provincial identity and gender representation has expanded considerably in recent decades, the imagery of women from Moesia Inferior remains comparatively understudied. The material survives only in modest quantity and often in fragmentary condition, consisting primarily of funerary stelae accompanied by a smaller number of sculptural fragments, reliefs, and isolated portrait heads. Where funerary inventories or associated objects are known, they are rarely preserved in a complete state and have received minimal systematic analysis. As a result, the visual and social dimensions of female commemoration in the province have not been fully integrated into broader discussions of provincial art, local identities, or the dynamics of cultural expression along the Lower Danube.

The present research reassesses this modest but valuable body of evidence through a combined iconographic and contextual approach. Particular emphasis is placed on hairstyles, clothing, and jewelry, as well as bodily posture, key indicators of status, cultural affiliation, and self-representation within the Roman world. Inscriptions, when present, provide an additional layer of information regarding familial relations, legal status, and ethnic background, allowing for a more holistic reading of commemorative strategies. The study also addresses the methodological challenges inherent to the corpus: uneven archaeological documentation, the scarcity of stratigraphic data, and the complicated post-excavation histories of many monuments, which often limit the interpretive potential of the material. These issues are acknowledged not as insurmountable obstacles but as factors that shape and refine the analytical framework.

By situating the portraits of women from Moesia Inferior within the broader traditions of Roman provincial art, this study explores how local communities engaged with imperial visual norms while simultaneously articulating distinctive regional identities. The analysis underscores the active role of women and their families in negotiating forms of representation that communicated social respectability, familial values, and cultural belonging. In doing so, it contributes to wider debates concerning gender, status, and identity in the Roman provinces, demonstrating that even a small and fragmented corpus can yield important insights into provincial society.

Ultimately, the study argues for more integrated research strategies that combine visual, textual, and material evidence. Such approaches are essential not only for reconstructing the lived realities of women in Moesia Inferior but also for understanding the symbolic roles they played within their communities. The portraits examined here reveal the province as a dynamic and culturally diverse region where local traditions interacted with imperial artistic models in complex ways. By foregrounding the visual dimensions of female commemoration, this work enhances our understanding of how women participated in and were represented within the social and cultural landscape of the Roman Empire's Lower Danubian frontier.

FEMALE PORTRAIT STATUES WITH BUST CROWN IN ROMAN ASIA MINOR

Eva Christof

University of Graz

Keywords: Roman Asia Minor; Woman; Bust crown; Agonothete

Portrait statues of women in Roman Asia Minor are documented through two primary sources: epigraphical evidence, such as inscriptions on statue bases, and sculptural remains. However, complete sculptures that allow for the straightforward identification of specific individuals are exceedingly rare. More commonly, we encounter fragmented remains, such as headless clothed statue bodies or loose female heads. These fragments may have originally belonged not only to an individual but also to representations of goddesses or female personifications. As a result, reconstructing honorary statues of women that were once displayed in the public or semi-public spaces of Roman cities presents significant challenges.

In Roman Asia Minor female portrait statues adorned with a bust crown are unequivocally depictions of real women from elite families. Ancient sources indicate that the distinctive bust crown – featuring small male and female busts of the emperor, his wife, his sons and sometimes a god or goddess – was reserved for male and female agonothetes, individuals responsible for organizing and financing athletic competitions in their city. Such female honorary statues might be erected alongside their husbands or male relatives, who are often similarly depicted wearing the bust crown. In cases where marble statue portraits of women include this crown, their identity as high-status members of society is certain. Furthermore, according to epigraphical sources, some women wearing the bust crown, associated with the organization of athletic competitions, held the prestigious role of *archiereia*, high priestess, at the provincial level.

This study seeks to examine female honorary statues and female heads adorned with bust crown that have survived. It aims to investigate their original provenance, dating, and archaeological contexts, shedding light on representations of women from elite families in Roman Asia Minor.

FEMALE PORTRAITS IN THE COLLECTION OF VICENZO GIUSTINIANI: SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CONTEXT OF DISPLAY, ANTIQUARIAN IDENTIFICATIONS, AND NEW EVIDENCE

Laura Buccino

Università degli Studi di Firenze

Keywords: Collection of antiquities; Galleria Giustiniana; Female portraits

The inventory compiled at the death of Vincenzo Giustiniani (1564–1637) and the engraved plates of the *Galleria Giustiniana*, provide crucial evidence for the study of the female portraits that formed part of the rich collection of antiquities assembled in Rome during the first half of the seventeenth century and displayed across the marquis's numerous residences. This material enables the original contexts of display of these female portraits to be reconstructed, as well their thematic and ideological relationships with other sculptures, and the antiquarian identifications current at the time, also through comparison with other contemporary Roman collections.

A selection of the ancient works from the collection was published in the *Galleria Giustiniana*, the first editorial undertaking of this kind to be completed. This was made possible thanks to the patron's exceptional financial resources and cultural interests, which established him as a key figure within the intellectual and artistic circles of his time. The two volumes of engravings are essential for identifying and attributing Giustiniani sculptures, including the female portraits examined here, and make it possible to trace the present locations of works previously considered lost. Studying the identified examples enables a more precise assessment of the accuracy of early antiquarian identifications, the scope and aesthetic orientation of restoration practices, and the chronological framework of the sculptures.

OLYMPIAS OF EPIRUS AND LIVIA AUGUSTA: IMAGE, POWER, AND THE EARLY MODERN RECEPTION OF FEMALE ANTIQUITY THROUGH SCULPTURAL RELIEF

Saray García-Martínez

Institut Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica

Keywords: Reception of Antiquity; Early Modern Collecting; Sculptural Relief; Female Effigies; Classical Iconography

Two Early Modern reliefs, preserved in the Museo Nacional del Prado and la Granja de San Ildefonso, depict female figures from Antiquity—Olympias of Epirus and Livia Augusta—which, despite their classical subject matter, were carved in a post-antique context. The historiographical identification of both figures has depended largely on the inscriptions accompanying the reliefs, which guide the viewer's reading and condition their interpretation as portraits of specific historical women. The Early Modern character of these works, however, raises fundamental questions regarding the visual construction of Antiquity and the ways in which certain female figures were reinterpreted, re-signified, and endowed with new symbolic meanings in accordance with the cultural, political, and scholarly interests of the period in which they were produced and received.

Being carved in the Early Modern period, the iconographic attributes, gestures, attire, and compositional elements of both reliefs invite a critical reassessment of the representational schemes traditionally associated with Olympias and Livia since Antiquity. This paper therefore proposes a comparative analysis between images inherited from the ancient world—known through literary sources, material evidence, and visual traditions—and the formal solutions adopted in these Early Modern reliefs. Its principal aim is to determine to what extent these effigies adhere to strictly ancient iconographic models or, conversely, incorporate reinterpretations, anachronisms, or enrichments characteristic of Early Modern visual culture.

The study also addresses the complex historical and cultural reception of both female figures. Olympias of Epirus, mother of Alexander the Great, and Livia Augusta, wife of Augustus, occupied central positions within the political and moral discourses of their respective historical contexts, becoming objects of both admiration and criticism in ancient sources. Through the combined examination of Greco-Roman literary texts, later historiographical traditions, and surviving visual evidence, the paper analyses how the images of these women evolved in their representation over time.

From this perspective, both reliefs are understood not merely as works of art, but as cultural products embedded within a tradition of the reception of Antiquity, closely linked to collecting practices, erudite taste, and the moral and political re-reading of the classical past in the Early Modern period. The study thus situates itself within a history of reception attentive to processes of transmission, selection, and reinterpretation of ancient female models, highlighting both the continuities and the transformations in discourses surrounding female power.

VISUAL STRATEGIES OF POWER - CLEOPATRA VII

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Known as the last pharaoh of Egypt and celebrated since antiquity as a *femme fatale*, deliberately used her portraits as instruments of power. Each depiction was carefully staged to convey political legitimacy, dynastic authority and cultural status. This paper examines how Cleopatra purposefully crossed iconographic boundaries and developed a visual language that combined Greek ruler iconography, Egyptian sacred kingship and Roman political symbolism. This hybrid iconography enabled her to address different audiences such as subjects, allies and opponents at the same time.

Her numismatic portraits are particularly revealing. Features such as the strongly modelled forehead, the pronounced chin and the accentuated nose are not intended as naturalistic representations, but are deliberately designed signals of royal authority. Egyptian temple reliefs incorporate the attributes of Isis, embedding Cleopatra in the tradition of sacralised queenship. Roman receptions partially reframed and integrated these images into propagandistic narratives, further altering their iconographic impact.

The paper also examines early modern antiquarian reception, in which ancient portraits were morally charged, reinterpreted and aesthetically exoticised. In collections, copperplate engravings and scholarly debates, Cleopatra appears as a symbol of political danger, female power and cultural fascination. These receptions illustrate how deeply historical messages are embedded in iconographic features and how they continue to resonate across centuries.

The connection between ancient pictorial strategies and their post-antique reception demonstrates how a single female ruler can function as a laboratory for the staging of power, gender constructions and cultural identity. Cleopatra's portraits become key media that not only reflect the significance of ancient rule, but also reveal the mechanisms of iconographic meaning-making: from antiquity to the modern representation of female power.

WHY DOES SHE LOOK LIKE THIS? CONTEXTUALIZING AN ENIGMATIC PORTRAIT BUST FROM ROMAN EGYPT

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Keywords: Roman; bust; Isis; reconstruction; context

This paper focuses on an almost unique portrait of a woman from Roman Egypt. Housed at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, the bust-length portrait depicts the matronly woman wearing cosmetics and a hairstyle of the late second to early third century CE[1]. Her only item of clothing is a knotted pink fringed shawl characteristic of the goddess Isis, which leaves both of her breasts fully exposed. Whether the portrait represents the woman as a priestess of Isis or as though she were in the guise of Isis herself depends on the purpose for which it was created. Although the representation of the woman bears many similarities to portraits on wood, linen, and in plaster from funerary contexts in Roman-period Egypt, as well as to portrait busts in stone, the difference in shape and in materials used is notable. Crafted from terracotta covered in a thick layer of gesso and painted using pigments common to Roman Egypt, the bust is only half life-size and could not have been used to cover a mummified individual. The first known owner of the portrait bust was Giovanni Dattari, an expert in Egyptian numismatics, making the connection of the bust to Egypt reasonably secure but giving no information about its original find context. The bust appears to have a single, frontal viewpoint, suggesting it was placed in a niche. Evidence from wall paintings, especially funerary contexts in the Western Oases, may indicate that the Walters portrait bust is an extremely rare survival of a portrait type local to that region of Egypt.

Despite the fact that the greenish-gray cast of the flesh tones caused by a surface consolidation treatment in the 1940s was removed and unsightly losses to her eyebrows, nose, and breasts were in-painted, the current appearance of the bust leaves viewers feeling uneasy. Digital reconstructions will help to clarify the appearance of the woman's face, especially of her makeup, in antiquity and to better understand the intended viewing angle for the bust, with the hope of identifying the best display setting for the object in the Museum's galleries.

[1] Bust of a Woman, late second-early third century CE, Egypt, terracotta with plaster and pigments, H: 11 1/8 in. (28.2 cm). The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, acquired by Henry Walters, 1912, accession number 22.408.

<https://art.thewalters.org/object/22.408/>

ISIS: IMAGES AND FEMALE PRESENCES FROM EGYPTIAN TRADITION TO RECEPTION IN ROMAN CAMPANIA

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Keywords: Isiac Iconography; Female Agency; Campanian Reception

The iconography of Isis in Roman sculpture reflects a complex evolutionary trajectory. Spanning from Pharaonic Egypt to the Roman Mediterranean, this development was fundamentally shaped by the Hellenistic mediation of the Ptolemaic era. The goddess, reinterpreted through the lens of the major female deities of the Greek pantheon, underwent a progressive rearticulation that harmonized persistent Egyptian attributes with evolving Graeco-Roman aesthetic standards.

Within this Mediterranean framework, the Campanian region serves as an exceptional case study for such reception. In urban centers like Cumae, Puteoli, Neapolis, Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Beneventum, both public and domestic cultic assemblages offer a diverse repertoire of artifacts. These range from monumental marble and basalt statuary to intimate bronze figurines and terracotta votives. Such sculptural evidence highlights the integration of traditional Egyptian symbols, including the Hathoric crown, the tyet knot, and the sistrum, with Hellenistic-Roman stylistic elements such as the chiton and himation, the cornucopia, and the rudder. Particular attention is given to the Isis *Lactans* type, a motif predating the Lagid period that underwent significant formal transformations under Roman influence.

Beyond the divine effigies, the Campanian record documents the existence of priestesses and cult officiants. These figures underscore the prominent visibility of women in ritual performances and their active agency in managing Isiac sanctuaries. Furthermore, the fragmented state of many life-size statues is interpreted not merely as a taphonomic accident, but as material testimony to the eventual decline of public pagan cults amidst the religious shifts of Late Antiquity and the ascent of Christianity.

Ultimately, the Campanian evidence suggests that depictions of Isis and her followers are more than stylistic exercises. They function as sacred female portraits that illustrate a broader process of cultural translation. The variety of media and typologies reflects the versatility of Isiac sculpture and offers vital insights into the role of women and their representational modes within the ancient Mediterranean religious landscape.

NEW PORTRAITS OF QUEEN TIYE, GREAT ROYAL CONSORT OF KING AMENHOTEP III

Hourig Sourouzian

The Colossi of Memnon and Amenhotep III Temple Conservation Project / DAI

Queen Tiye is well known for her statues and two-dimensional depictions deriving from diverse sites and kept in museums at Cairo, Berlin, Brussels and Paris, that provide an exquisite portraiture of this exceptional queen, described in many publications including a recent monography consecrated to the iconography of the queen. This talk will present in detail the four new statues discovered during investigations and conservation works carried out under my direction by 'The Colossi of Memnon and Amenhotep III Temple Conservation Project' in the 'Temple of Millions of Years' of the king at Thebes (Luxor West Bank). These statues of the queen accompany colossal statues of the king that have been newly raised at the gates of the second and third Pylons of his temple.

The first pair of these royal colossi are hewn in red quartzite from Gebel el-Ahmar near Cairo, like the pair seated at the first pylon and known as the Colossi of Memnon, while the second pair is exceptionally sculpted in Egyptian alabaster, originating from the quarries of Hatnub, near Minya in Middle Egypt. The four statues of Tiye standing near the colossal king, depict the queen in all her splendor and majesty. This talk will present the portraits of the queen as masterpieces of monumental sculpture and describe the various aspects of her iconography over the regnal years. The recent unveiling of the alabaster colossi by the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities of Egypt and the Secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities, will be mentioned with a short video resuming the method of their mounting. The reassembled head of a smaller limestone statue, as well as a few representations in bas-relief found on sandstone wall fragments in the ruins of the temple, will also shortly be described.

The restoration work carried out by Elena Mora, stone conservator of our project, will be presented in a separate paper.

DIVINE COUPLE, GENDERED SPHERES: REASSESSING THE HAN DYNASTY'S QUEEN MOTHER AND KING FATHER

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Keywords: Queen Mother of the West; King Father of the East; gender archaeology; Han dynasty mortuary art; divine function allocation

The complementary imagery of the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu) and the King Father of the East (Dongwanggong) constitutes a vivid embodiment of the Han Dynasty's yin-yang cosmology and gender power structures in visual art. Adopting a gender archaeology perspective and drawing on newly discovered archaeological materials, this study systematically reconstructs the genetic formation and evolutionary trajectory of this paired imagery. Its developmental course presents a clear three-stage model: originating in the mid-to-late Western Han Dynasty, it took shape as sporadic symmetric configurations driven by yin-yang philosophy and eastern maritime immortality cults; transitioning from the late Western Han to the mid-Eastern Han, social upheavals and political maneuverings led to the dominance of Xiwangmu and the temporary disappearance of Dongwanggong imagery; finally, against the backdrop of the in-depth integration of Confucianism and yin-yang thought in the mid-to-late Eastern Han, it crystallized into a stable, mutually complementary iconic system with distinct functional divisions.

Within this evolutionary framework, an analysis of the configuration and circulation of visual elements reveals the Han society's cognition and regulation of gender roles underlying such functional distribution. Furthermore, it demonstrates that the evolution of this complementary imagery essentially serves as a microcosm of gender power negotiations in real social contexts. Dongwanggong's counterbalancing role embodies the regulation of male power within the sacred sphere, while the emphasis on Xiwangmu's maternal divinity signifies the deepening and expansion of female power within its socially recognized domain.

The newly excavated depiction of Xiwangmu accompanied by her children, from the late Eastern Han tomb relief at Tengzhou Dongshahe M54, provides critical evidence for interpreting the gendered division of divine functions. This configuration not only visually reinforces Xiwangmu's maternal role as a guardian of procreation and lineage continuity but also marks the crystallization of a clearly gendered functional system: While Xiwangmu presides over concrete domains of reproduction such as life creation and progeny prosperity, Dongwanggong embodies abstract symbolic meanings tied to cosmic order and ruling principles.

ICONOGRAPHY, STYLE AND MESSAGE OF FEMALE ROMAN PORTRAITS

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Keywords: Female Roman portrait; Iconography; Style; Message; Ideal

In my lecture, I will present characteristic female portraits of both female rulers and women from the Roman Republic and Imperial period who are unknown to us today. My focus will be on the collection of life-size marble portraits in the Antiquities Collection at the Württemberg State Museum in Stuttgart and the Glyptothek in Munich. The aim is to discuss the iconography, style and message of the portrait heads and statues and to place them in an overall historical context. We will discuss how much of the reality of the time we find in the portraits and how the female portraits reflect contemporary social ideals.

Depictions of women from the Hellenistic period introduce concepts that contribute to those found in portraits from the Republican and Imperial periods. In chronological order, I examine the changing iconographic and stylistic features of female portraits over the course of more than three centuries. I examine the personal and imperial messages inscribed in portrait busts and statues and deliberately conveyed by them. We find ourselves at an intersection between individual identity and state propaganda. Understanding female Roman portraits requires that we view them not as mere snapshots, but as visual codes that communicated the social status and moral integrity of the women depicted.

The iconography of female portraits is largely determined by hairstyles. While simple ones dominated during the Roman Republic, complex curls became popular during the Imperial period. The elaborate nature of these hairstyles signalled not only wealth, but also access to female slaves for daily styling. The hairstyles of the empresses sparked hair fashions that were imitated by other women. This was complemented by prescribed clothing. For example, the stola served as the ceremonial robe of married matrons and symbolised their inviolability. In portrait statues, this social status is reinforced by gestures such as the gesture of veiling. It was intended to express virtues attributed to Roman women, such as modesty and chastity (*pudicitia*).

In terms of the style of the portraits, we can see a spectrum ranging from realism to idealisation. During the Roman Republic, a veristic style prevailed, which emphasised wrinkles and signs of ageing even in women. This was intended to underscore virtues such as fidelity and wisdom. With the beginning of the Principate under Emperor Augustus in 27 BC, this changed to a more tranquil style that made use of classicist elements. Empresses such as Livia were now depicted with timelessly smooth, almost divine features. This idealisation served to visually reinforce the grandeur of the imperial family and the new state order associated with it.

The central message of Roman portraits was always politically or socially motivated. In public spaces, the women of the imperial family acted as guarantors of dynastic stability and the religious virtue of piety (*pietas*). Public portraits of high-ranking women in the Roman Empire thus served as moral role models for society as a whole.

In a private context, especially in funerary art, the focus was on religious statements and the representative social staging of the deceased in connection with their family. This can be seen in female funerary statues and reliefs made of marble, as well as accompanying inscriptions. The addition of specific attributes served to permanently honour female diligence and the importance of women for the continuity of the family.

Mummy masks and portraits handed down from Roman Egypt provide information about the colourfulness of Roman portraits and the presence of other decorative elements that are usually lost. Polychromy created liveliness. Jewellery emphasised the grace of the deceased and also conveyed their social status.

FROM PORTRAITS TO HISTORY

Novella Lapini

Università di Firenze

The aim of this paper is to highlight female portraiture as a key element in tracing the evolution of women's history in ancient Rome.

The presence of female portraits in non-private contexts marks the final phase of the Republic and the emergence of matrons from the domestic sphere to assume, for the first time with Cornelia, a symbolic public value, however complex it may be to define.

The *ius imaginum* granted in 35 BC to Octavia and Livia represents a crucial step in defining a public role for matrons, although they belonged to a restricted circle, which soon became the *domus Augusta*.

The birth of a dynastic regime ensured the continuous expansion of tributes to the women of the imperial family, whose portraits populated the public spaces of the city - the forums, the temples, the porticoes, etc.

This trend was favoured by the fact that, both in the Julio-Claudian dynasty and during the adoptive Principate, the ties with the founder of the dynasty and between emperors were essentially guaranteed by female lineage. Therefore, the most important matrons of the imperial house played a key role in ensuring dynastic continuity and establishing blood ties in contexts where these elements were essential to ensure the loyalty of the armies and the favour of the people.

The proliferation of tributes to the matrons of the imperial family is clearly reflected in the contemporary granting of official titles and honours. The title of *Augusta*, which became increasingly widespread during the transition from the 1st to the 2nd century AD, and the *consecratio post mortem*, which became common for the most important women of the *domus Augusta* in the 2nd century AD.

The analysis of female portraiture also allows us to understand how the example set by the matrons of the imperial house was able to offer a model for contemporary women.

Female members of the senatorial-equestrian elite or the municipal ruling class were clearly able to best imitate the lifestyle of the women belonging to the *domus Augusta*. Following their example, these matrons were able to hold priestly roles, become benefactors and city patrons, earning in return honorary inscriptions and portraits that decorated the public spaces of colonies and municipia.

Women from lower social classes referred to this model on the only occasion they were allowed to appear in public, namely in funerary monuments, when they are portrayed both in words and in physical appearance in the style of their contemporary empresses, demonstrating their adherence to the model represented by the imperial family, which permeated every aspect of society.

The study of Roman female portraiture in the centuries spanning from the Late Republic to the first two centuries of the Principate, therefore, allows us to reconstruct the history of the female condition from a privileged point of view, intertwining literary and epigraphic sources with archaeological data.

INNOVATIVE PORTRAITS OF ROMAN WOMEN – FUNCTION AND RELEVANCE OF FEMALE BUSTS IN THE EARLY IMPERIAL PERIOD

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For Livia and all other female members of the imperial family, the early imperial period saw an unprecedented intensity of public honorary statues being erected for women in Roman antiquity. In addition to portrait statues, free-standing busts were an important form of Roman portrait sculpture and an essential part of the representation of Roman women. As an innovative form of portraiture, it depicts the head and only a part of the upper body. It is important to note that it was not until around 40/30 BC that the free-standing bust was established in Italy and served as an alternative medium for life-size Roman portraits made of marble or bronze. This made it possible to use portraits that were not limited to a public function, allowing Roman women to be represented in new contexts, primarily in houses or villas. For non-imperial portraits, funerary contexts must also be taken into account.

But which role models could be visually communicated by the free-standing bust? Can similarities and differences in comparison to statues be identified? The specific representational potential of the bust can only be explored by comparing form, style and iconography, which have not yet been systematically examined, from a syn- and diachronic perspective. In the case of free-standing busts, a fundamental question arises regarding a new form of portraiture: how could established role models be iconographically realized in different ways? It is also relevant here to consider the extent to which the ambivalence of the portrait head and the part of the body should be evaluated in terms of construction gender identity and gender-specific role models.

Thus, the depiction with the stola was certainly an essential component of portrait representation and referred to the virtuous and morally exemplary wife in Roman society, thereby continuing traditional role models that had been valid since the Roman Republic. On the other hand, the use of iconographic key elements of the goddess Aphrodite/Venus reveals not only diverse concepts of the *femina stolata*, but also new iconographic elements that were not part of Roman female statues in the same way.

BEYOND THE PORTRAIT HEAD. USING THE FEMALE BODY TO IDENTIFY JULIO CLAUDIAN IMPERIAL PORTRAITS

Julia Lenaghan

ERC project: The Roman Emperor Seen from the Provinces/Università di Verona

In the 20th century scholars, aided by photographs and casts, defined groups of related portraits for the women of the Julio-Claudian imperial family. When more than one portrait repeated the same model, they gave the model a name followed by the word type. This important and useful method does not however allow us always to arrive at the identity of the woman represented by the portrait because the physiognomies and hairstyles of related family members were similar and overlapped. That is, scholars still debate, for example, who is represented by the portrait heads in the Caere-Munich 316 type or the Adolphseck-Formia or the Pantelleria-Hispanic Society types. Addressing the question of identity from a different perspective, this paper turns to the body types that were repeated with the portrait heads of these Julio-Claudian women. The bodies were larger and more visible than the heads and were designed to be easily legible; they are part of the context of the portrait heads. Presenting one body type that patrons and sculptors repeated in conjunction with the “Leptis Malta” portrait type and with the “Pantelleria-Hispanic Society” portrait type, the paper distinguishes the aspects of full figure that performed as indicators of contemporary fashion, traditional morality, and social status. These details of body define the honorand as much as the portrait type and, understanding that repeated bodies are as important as repeated heads, we hypothesize more securely about the intended identity of the women portrayed. The paper considers identifications for young women, whom modern scholarship often overlooks, such as Drusilla the sister of Caligula, Julia daughter of Drusus the Younger, and Claudia Antonia the eldest daughter of Claudius.

FROM VIRTUE TO DIVINITY: A STUDY IN THE AESTHETIC POLITICS OF EARLY ROMAN IMPERIAL FEMALE PORTRAITS

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Keywords: Livia; Faustina; Portrait; Disciplinary power; Sublime

Portrait sculpture of women in the early Roman Empire transcended mere physical resemblance, serving as a visual pivot for the operation of imperial power and the construction of its legitimacy. This study aims to demonstrate that the iconographic evolution of portraits, from Livia in the Augustan era to Empress Faustina of the Antonine dynasty, clearly maps the strategic transformation of imperial power techniques. This shift progressed from relying on the disciplining of the body through ethical symbols to strategically capturing the sublime through aesthetic experience. To elucidate this trajectory, this study constructs an analytical framework underpinned by Michel Foucault's concept of "disciplinary power" and Longinus's theory of the sublime. Through meticulous decoding of pivotal portraits, it unveils their profound political-philosophical implications.

During the formative phase of imperial order, power sought to shape conformist subjects through visual mechanisms. Livia's portrait—with its austere nodus hairstyle, head-covering *palla*, and restrained posture—constitutes a quintessential Foucauldian 'disciplinary apparatus'. These iconographic features are not passive reflections but actively produce 'docile bodies' aligned with imperial moral ideals. It transformed the abstract social ethic of 'Pudicitia' into a visible, tangible, and imitable visual paradigm, rendering Livia's image the visual embodiment of Augustus's moral law. Power's operation at this stage was microscopic and pervasive, aiming to internalize external norms into conscious individual behavior through sustained visual surveillance, thereby establishing social order at the bodily level.

Yet when power seeks eternity and sanctity, its strategies must transcend the ethical governance of the mundane body, ascending to a more comprehensive aesthetic dimension. This decisive shift finds its full expression in the deified portrait of Empress Faustina. Its iconographic strategy systematically eschews mundane references, instead constructing a supernal, idealized image through meticulous emulation of goddesses like Aphrodite's poses and attributes, coupled with the transcendent, flesh-like texture achieved by highly polished marble. The ultimate purpose of this visual construction lay in evoking a Longinus-inspired experience of the sublime. Confronted by this visual force, a fusion of divine majesty and supreme ideal beauty, the viewer's everyday rational judgement was momentarily suspended, replaced by an aesthetic tremor blending awe and rapture. It is precisely in this moment when subjectivity is temporarily dissolved by sublime emotion that power achieves its most profound intervention: political authority no longer requires ethical exhortation to justify itself, but directly transforms into an aesthetic order that is both captivating and beyond question. The trajectory from Livia to Faustina represents an aestheticized process whereby power's operation transcends the disciplinary control of bodily conduct to capture the subject's emotions through the sublime.

By focusing on the core philosophical concepts of 'discipline' and 'sublime,' this study attempts to trace the evolution of power aesthetics behind early Roman imperial female portraiture. It explains the visual shift in iconography from simplicity to opulence, from the mundane to the sacred, revealing how imperial power strategically employed art to transform its rule from an external coercive norm into an internal, emotional aesthetic identification.

FROM VIRTUE TO DIVINITY: A STUDY IN THE AESTHETIC POLITICS OF EARLY ROMAN IMPERIAL FEMALE PORTRAITS

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Keywords: Roman History; Latin Lexicography; Latin Epigraphy; Gender; Ancient Women

As part of the *Antiquae Feminae* PID2022-137896OB-I00 project, we are compiling a glossary of terms used to designate women in Rome, from the exalted title of 'Augusta' to the concept of 'serva vicaria', meaning the slave of a slave, including names of professions such as 'gladiatrix', 'medica,' obstetrix,' 'pistrix,' etc., and legal terms such as 'agnata,' which refers to a woman born after her father's death, or 'turpis femina,' which, in addition to indicating a woman who is not honest, implies a series of privileges inherent to her person. We are not looking for epithets, but rather nouns and also adjectives used as nouns, so that all of them are words that designate a concrete reality that is different from the rest.

In this study, we will offer an example of some of the concepts included in our glossary and relate them to some of the portraits also analysed by our research project. The aim is to combine philology with iconography in order to provide a comprehensive overview and thus complement the images with terms found in literary texts, epigraphic texts and texts from the *Corpus iuris civilis*.

FAUSTINA MINOR: HER ROLE BETWEEN ADOPTIVE EMPIRE AND ANTONIN DYNASTY

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Keywords: Faustina minor; Adoptivkaisertum; Parthermonument

By Hadrian's order, Annia Galeria FAUSTINA (*16. February 130 A.D.) got, already at the age of 8 years, engaged to L. Verus who was almost the same age. After Hadrian's death, the engagement was called off and young Faustina got engaged to Marcus Aurelius (*121 A.D.). No later than in spring 145, the wedding of the two took place. The origin of the first type of portrait of the younger Faustina is generally only dated back to the year 147 and is probably to be associated with the awarding of the Augusta-title and the birth of Domitia Faustina.

Within the adoptive empire, which had been practiced since Nerva, Faustina, as biological daughter of Hadrian's adoptive son Antoninus Pius and future wife of his adoptive sons Lucius Verus or Marc Aurel, had played from early on a special role that linked the principle of the adoptive *optimus princeps* with the dynastic construct of the Antonine dynasty. Given this special significance, it is hard to imagine that official portraits of the adolescent girl were allegedly created only relatively late. Therefore, it shall in particular be examined the role Faustina may possibly have played in connection with the so-called Parthian monument from Ephesos whose 'adoption relief' refers to a constellation from the year 138 A.D.

AUGUSTE IN VILLA: THE TWO FAUSTINAS. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DOCUMENTATION AND ICONOGRAPHIC CONTEXTUALIZATION IN CONTEXTS FROM ROME AND LATIUM

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Keywords: Portrait of Faustina the Elder; Portrait of Faustina the Younger; Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli; Villa of the Antonines at Lanuvio; Imperial residential contexts

The number of surviving portraits of Faustina the Elder and Faustina the Younger is extremely large, and, in many cases, because of the fortuitous nature of the discoveries, little or nothing is known about their place of find. Starting from a circumscribed territorial area and recovering data on the archaeological provenance of some portraits, the aim is to verify the presence of the two Augustae in relation to lines of dynastic policy, to the relationship with the general decorative system/programme of the exhibition context, to the broader framework of the iconographic models adopted, and to the dynamics of artistic production in the service of imperial patronage. The discussion ranges from Hadrian's residence at Tivoli to that of the Antonines at Lanuvium, from the imperial estate of Lorium to that of Tor Paterno, and finally to the villa of Lucius Verus at Acquatraversa, while also considering several attestations from luxurious private residences in an urban context.

CLAUDIA SEMNE AND THE VISUAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEMORY: PORTRAIT MULTIPLICATION AND IDENTITY IN A ROMAN FUNERARY CONTEXT

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Keywords: Portrait multiplication; Divine iconography; Commemorative identity; Self-representation; Visual strategies

This paper re-examines the exceptional corpus of sculptural portraits associated with the freedwoman Claudia Semne, discovered between 1792 and 1793 near the church of San Sebastiano on the Via Appia. The monument, commissioned by her husband Marcus Ulpius Crotonensis, an imperial freedman under Trajan, contained a rich and complex visual programme dedicated to a non-elite woman. Thanks to archival descriptions, antiquarian drawings, surviving sculptures, and modern digital tools, it is possible to reconstruct the tomb with Claudia Semne's portraits. Thus, this contribution proposes an integrated analysis of these sculptures, analysing their original arrangement and iconographic strategies to provide a new graphical reconstruction and understand the visual effect of these sculptures within the tomb.

The tomb originally displayed multiple sculptural representations of Claudia Semne, among which the surviving pieces are: a life-sized portrait bust framed within a tympanum, held aloft by two winged figures; a portrait of Semne reclining on a *kline*; a small portrait head; an inscription referring to simulacra in *formam deorum*, and lost statues of Claudia Semne as Spes, Fortuna and Venus. Furthermore, three decorative pediments – one preserved, two lost – adorned the inner *aediculae* of the tomb, bearing the attributes of these goddesses. Together, these works form a remarkable case of portrait multiplication within a single funerary context.

This paper shows how Claudia Semne's portraits navigated the tension between individual likeness and idealised divine imagery. The life-sized tympanum portrait, whose hairstyle and modelling reflect early Hadrianic styles, presents Claudia Semne with dignity and maternal virtues, but also evoking sensuality with Venus through the drapery slipping from her shoulder. The lost statuette of Claudia Semne as Spes, embodied hope and the statue of Fortuna was intended to symbolise good fortune and intercession between the living and the divine. The dedication "Fortunae Spei Veneri et memoriae Claudia Semnes" carved on the funerary altar confirms that Claudia Semne's commemorative identity was intentionally crafted through associations with divine qualities: beauty (Venus), fortune (Fortuna), and hope (Spes).

Antiquarian drawings by Labruzzi and descriptions by Visconti and Uhden helped reconstruct the lost pieces, while also introducing misinterpretations that shaped later scholarship.

A new graphical reconstruction of the tomb's interior now makes it possible to visualise how these images interacted within the confined funerary space. The model restores the original placement of the portraits, showing that Claudia Semne's face appeared repeatedly along the walls, creating an effect of pervasive presence. The reconstruction also demonstrates how divine attributes, architectural decoration, and portrait likenesses combined to produce a unified commemorative message.

This study demonstrates that this tomb is a highly sophisticated visual programme dedicated to a non-elite woman in Imperial Rome. The repetition of Claudia Semne's portraits in busts, statuettes, and on the pediment, and their distribution both inside and outside the tomb, suggest a strategy explicitly aimed at reaffirming the centrality of her memory. It was not a homogeneous representation of her identity, but rather a plurality of images that contributed to constructing a polysemic figure creating a cumulative effect of visual omnipresence.

QUESTIONING THE ISIAC LEGACY IN THE REPRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN EGYPTOLOGY AND CLASSICAL ICONOGRAPHY

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In the Roman Empire, the cult of Isis held a special spot due to the spread of Eastern cults and the relationship that some emperors had with this divinity of Egyptian origin. Nevertheless, this goddess would be reinterpreted and adapted to the Roman worldview, both religiously and iconographically. In this context, an iconography of Isis developed that, although it preserved some Egyptian elements, was Roman in character. Due to her popularity, in recent centuries it has been suggested that, given the widespread presence of images of Isis throughout the Roman Empire, the earliest representations of the Virgin Mary adopted an Isiac iconography. Special attention has been given to images of *Isis lactans*. However, as we can appreciate through archaeology, the preferred form of representation of Isis in the Roman Empire was not *Isis lactans*.

The presentation will be organized through three points. Firstly, we will address the iconography of Isis in the Roman Empire. To achieve this goal, we are going to analyze its iconography and the type of representations used in the Roman world, to see its influences and evolution over time. We will also discuss whether these processes were homogeneous in the Roman Empire or whether there was some heterogeneity at the regional level. Also, to this end, we will use some iconographic examples found in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in its sculpture and numismatics collections. Secondly, we will analyze some of the earliest representations of the Virgin Mary in the Roman Empire. We are going to take an extensive journey through the iconography of the Virgin Mary in early Christianity, as seen in representations on sarcophagi, fresco paintings, and mosaics. Thirdly, we will examine other forms of female representation present in the Roman Empire that also connect directly with Marian iconography.

THE ICONOGRAPHIC EVOLUTION OF FULVIA PLAUTILLA ON THE OBERSES OF THE ROMAN MINT AND ITS REFLECTION IN PORTRAITURE BASED ON SELECTED CASE STUDIES

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Possibly one of the *Augustae* of the Severan dynasty least addressed by contemporary historiography is Fulvia Plautilla, wife of Caracalla. Despite the brief period she spent at the imperial court (201–205 CE), a considerable variety of coin types was struck in her name, to the extent that scholars such as Nodelman and Varner have argued that she was the *Augusta* with the greatest number of monetary types in the entire Empire, bearing in mind that her coinage was produced over only three years. Scholarly attention has primarily focused on the analysis of her legends within the framework of Severan policy, as well as on the use of obverse coin portraits to identify representations of the Augusta. However, the iconographic evolution evident in her coinage has not been examined in depth. It may be proposed that this development resulted from a political strategy promoted by Septimius Severus, aimed at emphasizing Plautilla's role as the hope for dynastic continuity through her marriage to Caracalla.

In the earliest issues, Plautilla is depicted with the *Melonenfrisur* hairstyle and markedly youthful features. In her later types, however, she is represented in accordance with the aesthetic preferences of the imperial court, particularly through hairstyles reminiscent of those worn by Julia Domna. A similar progression can be observed in her physiognomic traits, where childlike features are abandoned in favor of a more mature appearance, characterized by an aquiline nose, hollowed cheeks, and a pointed chin. This artificial evolution, developed across the five types attributed to her, may have been the result of a deliberate program orchestrated by the imperial chancery, a hypothesis that forms the central focus of this study. Furthermore, through the analysis of coin reverses, this paper will discuss several specific marble portraits that we have been able to identify, which may be interpreted as representations of Caracalla's wife, despite the interpretative difficulties arising from her *damnatio memoriae*.

NOT ALWAYS CARRARA - PROVENANCE ANALYSIS OF ANCIENT WHITE MARBLE TODAY

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Keywords: Provenance studies; Archaeometric methodology; Isotopes analysis; White marble

“Multi-method-approach” has now been for many years the buzzword in marble provenance analysis. Nevertheless, a true combination of the results of different analytical methods is rarely applied in the sense of the combined simultaneous use of a large number of analytically obtained numerical variables. It will be demonstrated here that the combination of data from isotope analysis, chemical data, and data from the chemical analysis of inclusion fluids of an artefact and of course, in combination with a corresponding database, substantially enhances the accuracy of marble provenance analysis. It is explicitly pointed out that the unchallenged collection of data on the chemical composition of marbles from different sources (and different analytical procedures) most probably implies severe differences in their comparability. As illustrated by some examples from the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum (e.g. Arete from the Celsus Library in Ephesos), with the help of a combination of analytical methods and our collection of quarry samples and data, a safe provenance analysis can be achieved.

FACES OF POWER AT THE EMPIRE'S EDGE: IMPERIAL WOMEN PORTRAITS FROM PHILIPPOPOLIS (THRACE)

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Keywords: Imperial portraiture; Prokonnesian marble; Heraklea/Miletos marble; Philippopolis; Roman provincial culture

This paper examines the representation of imperial women in sculptural portraiture from Philippopolis (modern-day Plovdiv), a key urban center in the province of Thrace and the seat of the Thracian *koinon*. Philippopolis played a crucial role in the Romanization of the province, as portraits of emperors and imperial family members served as powerful tools of propaganda, reinforcing Roman authority and identity. The rare discovery of imperial female portraits from this region offers a unique opportunity to explore how Roman ideology was localized and how empresses were represented in a provincial context.

Three portrait heads are analyzed as case studies, identified through stylistic and iconographic analysis as representations of Empress Sabina (wife of Emperor Hadrian) and Empress Julia Paula (wife of Emperor Elagabalus). These works are significant not only as rare examples of imperial female portraiture from Philippopolis but also for the insights they offer into the role of female representations within the sculptural discourse of the Roman Empire, particularly in its peripheral provinces.

An essential aspect of this research is the archaeometric evaluation of marble provenance, establishing that the sculptural portrait heads of the empresses were made from marble extracted from the renowned quarries of Prokonnesos and Heraklea/Miletos. The use of these marble resources raises important questions concerning Philippopolis' involvement in broader trade networks and the role of imported materials in the production of official portraits. Despite the availability of local marble resources, the choice of Prokonnesian and Heraklea/Miletos marble underscores a desire to align with the well-known materials traditionally associated with official portraiture. It also invites further reflection on the understanding of imperial iconography in provincial centers. The question arises as to whether local artisans were not only using prestigious materials but were also well-acquainted with the iconographic conventions that defined the portraits of the imperial family members, particularly those of women. This suggests that sculptors in Philippopolis were engaged with – and perhaps even trained in – the stylistic and iconographic traditions of official portraiture.

The study also situates these portraits within a broader diachronic context, comparing them with other known imperial portraits from Philippopolis. This approach offers new perspectives on the intersection of materials, iconography, and power in the Thracian lands, highlighting Philippopolis' role in the transmission and local adaptation of Roman culture at the edge of the Empire.

DRAPED IN STONE: CALCITE ALABASTER AND THE AFTERLIFE OF ROMAN FEMALE PORTRAITURE

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Keywords: Imperial portraiture; Prokonnesian marble; Heraklea/Miletos marble; Philippopolis; Roman provincial culture

This paper examines the use of calcite alabaster in Roman female portraiture and statuary, with particular attention to the material properties, carving strategies, and later restoration practices that underlie the combination of coloured decorative stone for dress and white marble for flesh. The point of departure is a modern marble portrait bust of Livia from the Mallorcan Delpuig collection, whose alabaster body provides a revealing case study for investigating both ancient sculptural practices and their early modern reinterpretation.

Building from this example, the presentation analyses a corpus of Roman female statues and portrait types in which calcite alabaster appears with notable frequency in comparison to other coloured stones. This preference is closely linked to the physical and optical characteristics of the material—its fine crystalline structure, translucency, chromatic variability, and distinctive veining. When carefully selected, cut, and oriented, these features were deliberately exploited by ancient sculptors to articulate the visual effects of textile, such as folds, thickness, and surface modulation. Through this materially informed carving process, the stone itself becomes an active representational device, producing a pronounced skeuomorphic effect in which natural patterning substitutes for sculpted detail.

From a technical perspective, the use of calcite alabaster is closely associated with medium- and small-scale statuary, rather than large monuments, and with a relatively restricted range of subjects, including goddesses, female portraits, and selected animal figures. In these works, skeuomorphism extends beyond drapery to encompass the imitation of other materials, such as fur or wood, occasionally evoking archaic sculptural forms (*xoana*). The paper explores how these material choices intersect with workshop practices, carving sequences, and the mechanical limitations and advantages of alabaster as a stone.

The study further addresses the afterlife of these sculptural strategies through early modern restoration and production practices. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, alabaster was frequently employed for sculpted busts and draped bodies, reflecting both a technical appreciation of the material and a conscious engagement with classical sculptural models. Several restoration and production scenarios are examined, including modern alabaster busts supporting ancient heads, bodies carved from ancient spolia paired with ancient or modern heads, and entirely modern compositions executed in freshly quarried stone. These practices provide valuable evidence for the reception of ancient material aesthetics and for evolving approaches to restoration and reconstruction.

Finally, the paper situates the use of calcite alabaster and mixed-stone carving techniques within a broader comparative and gender-aware framework, incorporating selected examples of male portraiture and divine representations. This wider perspective allows for a more nuanced assessment of how coloured stone functioned across different sculptural categories, while highlighting the particular material and visual significance of alabaster in female statuary. The paper ultimately aims to contribute to current discussions on stone selection, surface effects, and material agency in Roman sculpture, and to underline the importance of material-based analysis for understanding both ancient production and its later conservation and reinterpretation.

RECENT EXAMPLES OF POLYCHROMY RESEARCH ON ANCIENT FEMALE PORTRAITS IN AUSTRIA

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Keywords: Polychromy; Pannonia; Noricum; Funerary monument

From 2021 to 2026, the *Heritage Science Austria* project *PolychroMon* conducted the first systematic study on polychromy in Roman stone monuments in the Danubian provinces. Investigations on cult, votive, funeral and architectural artefacts were carried out by an interdisciplinary team consisting of members of the Austrian Archaeological Institute / Austrian Academy of Sciences, Federal Monuments Authority, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna and State Collections of Lower Austria. As illustrative examples of female portraits investigated in the framework of the project, two objects are discussed which contrast strongly with each other in many aspects – two-dimensional vs. three-dimensional depiction, known vs. unknown excavation, sedimentary vs. metamorphic rocks, antique vs. modern polychromy – thus representing endmembers within the full range of various properties of artefacts. The first example is a polychrome painted arenitic limestone slab showing a full-body representation of a woman wearing local “Pannonian” clothing, likely originating from a 1st-2nd century AD funeral monument (<https://lupa.at/4411>). The excavation in 1972 as reused element in a late antique burial site in Brunn am Gebirge (Lower Austria) is well documented – less so are the restoration measures up to the current exhibition in the town’s museum. Comprehensive non- and microinvasive pigment analyses – comprising imaging, spectroscopic and digital modelling techniques – were able to identify the phases and the distribution even of subtle traces not discernible with the naked eye, finally enabling a detailed clothing reconstruction. The second example is a marble funerary medallion from the Antonine period portraying two women, displayed in the City Museum Petersberg in Friesach (Carinthia; <https://lupa.at/835>). The original findspot is unknown but it has been publicly displayed in the city for centuries, associated with a folk etymology of the city’s name – mainly based on a misinterpretation of the depicted females as two men. Multispectral imaging and cross-section analyses provided no robust evidence for preserved ancient polychromy, however for multiple painting between its discovery and the second half of the 19th century – contrasting with contemporary practices of extensive cleaning conforming to the idea of a supposedly “white antiquity”.

DIFFERENCES IN THE MATERIAL BIOGRAPHY OF FEMALE AND MALE PORTRAITS IN THE MUSEU D'ARQUEOLOGIA DE CATALUNYA

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This paper presents a comparative study of the material biography of female and male portraits preserved in the Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya, with the aim of identifying possible differences in their conservation trajectories, restoration histories, museographic visibility, and current state of preservation. The study is grounded in the hypothesis that the gender represented may have influenced the valuation of these works, both in antiquity and in the modern period, either directly or indirectly, and may therefore have shaped not only their present condition but also modern decisions regarding their documentation, treatment, display, and storage.

The research is based on the systematic analysis of the museum's portrait corpus through a set of comparable variables, including the number of female and male portraits, the existence of modern copies, state of conservation, degree and typology of deterioration, the history and chronology of conservation-restoration interventions, display or storage status, and level of visibility within the museum narrative.

Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the paper seeks to determine whether distinct patterns can be identified between the two groups and to what extent, these patterns reflect material and historical conditions or, alternatively, modern biases in selection, heritage prioritisation, and institutional care. The study's main contribution lies in introducing a gender perspective into the conservation analysis of ancient sculptural portraits and in proposing material biography as a critical framework for reassessing the museological and conservation practices applied to archaeological collections.

CONSERVATION OF THE SCULPTURES OF QUEEN TIYE FROM THE FUNERARY TEMPLE OF AMENHOTEP III IN LUXOR, EGYPT

Elena Mora

Colossi of Memnon and Amenhotep III Temple Conservation Project

Keywords: Conservation; Restoration; Sculptures; Alabaster; Polychromy

Egyptian archaeological heritage never ceases to fascinate us. Egypt's geographical location, its long ancient history, and its climatic conditions have allowed its material culture to reach us, and in many cases, to be preserved in an incredible way.

In the Funerary Temple of Amenhotep III in Luxor, called the 'House for Millions of Years' in ancient Egypt, numerous remains of his important and imposing statues have been found, testifying to the grandeur of the artistic production of this reign (1387-1348 BC). 'The Colossi of Memnon and Amenhotep III Temple Conservation Project' working since 1998 under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, was directed by Hourig Sourouzian, and in co-direction with Rainer Stadelmann until 2019, Dietrich Raue since 2022, and Kathrin Gabler in 2025. In this project, conservation has been a priority aiming to preserve sculptural and architectural the remains in the temple, from their discovery until their display.

The colossal statues of Amenhotep III, from the Second and Third Pylons of the Temple, hewn respectively in quartzite and Egyptian alabaster, have been excavated, restored, studied, and reassembled over these years by a large international multidisciplinary team. The alabaster colossi have just been raised in their original places at the gate of the Third Pylon, in November 2025. These colossal statues, ranging from 14 to 17 meters in height, represent the king seated, accompanied by his queen consort, Tiye. The preserved parts are in an impressive state of conservation, despite the 3,400 years passed since their creation and their collapse 3200 years ago.

To guarantee their preservation, it was essential to understand the materials from which the statues were made—in this case, quartzite and alabaster—the quality of the stone, and its geological characteristics; as well as to study the damage and deterioration and the causes of the damage.

The statues of Queen Tiye sculpted on the right side of the enthroned king are stunningly beautiful. The carving and polishing of hard stones, demonstrate the extraordinary skill and knowledge of the ancient Egyptians to work on any type of stone. Traces of pigments that formed part of their decoration have been preserved, despite having been buried and in contact with water and salt for such a long period of time. This shows that these statues, like all other sculptures of ancient art, were polychrome and not simply carved from stone as we are accustomed to seeing them now.

GÖKTEPE MARBLE AS A GAME CHANGER IN THE STUDY OF ANCIENT PORTRAITS: CASE STUDIES FROM THE KUNSTHISTORISCHES MUSEUM, VIENNA

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Keywords: Marble provenance; Göktepe marble; Roman Imperial portraiture; Archaeometric analysis; Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna; History of collection

Since the early 2010s, Göktepe marble has emerged as a pivotal material in the study of ancient sculptural production, following a series of pioneering provenance investigations that demonstrated its distinctive archaeometric signature. Long-term research led by D. Attanasio and colleagues established a robust framework for identifying this marble and assessing its role within Roman sculpture on a large, diachronic scale. Through the systematic provenance determination of over one hundred Roman Imperial portraits spanning roughly five centuries, it became possible to quantify patterns in marble selection and use across time. These studies revealed that Göktepe marble accounted for a substantial proportion of sculptural production, far exceeding other well-known marbles such as Parian Lychnites, Carrara, or Dokimion, whose use appears comparatively limited. The evidence suggests that Göktepe marble was already favoured for high-quality portraiture by the early second century AD, gaining particular prominence during the Severan period and remaining in circulation well into Late Antiquity. Subsequent research has confirmed the widespread distribution of Göktepe marble across the Roman world, from the Iberian Peninsula to the Balkans and North Africa. New provenance data from sculptural artefacts housed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, significantly enrich this picture, particularly through the identification of Göktepe marble in female portraits. These case studies underscore the importance of marble provenance analysis not only for reconstructing trade and supply networks but also for refining our understanding of artistic choices, workshop practices, and social representation in Roman portrait sculpture.

The Kunsthistorisches Museum's collection of Greek and Roman Antiquities houses a large number of marble portraits with many post-antique additions. Since the circumstances surrounding the finds of most objects are unknown, other methods and approaches must be used to classify and interpret the ancient images and their post-antique additions or alterations.

Based on the analyses of the research-team Prochaska-Anevlavi, we are investigating the role these results play in (art) historical classification and dating, and how helpful they can be in individual cases.

3D ACQUISITION, ANALYSIS AND VISUALISATION OF THE ANCIENT AND MODERN PERCEPTION OF SCULPTURAL PORTRAITS

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Computer-assisted research into ancient portraiture is active in several areas. Firstly, standards are increasingly being developed for the appropriate digital recording of sculptures and their metadata. Secondly, computational 3D shape comparison is also yielding new approaches to researching the production and reception of ancient portraits. Thirdly, the post-ancient use of portraits can be reconstructed and visualised in virtual reality. This lecture will summarise these research areas using selected examples from the speaker's own practice.

TRADITIONAL SCULPTING VS. 3D PRINTING. CURRENT OPTIONS FOR ADDING VALUE TO A BROKEN FEMALE STATUE

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Keywords: Digital restoration; 3D printing; modeling; Casting; Conservation

In the Julio-Claudian period, a sculptor used two large blocks of marble to make a statue of a beautiful young imperial princess, shaping the legs from one and the torso from another. To these, he added, in smaller pieces, a head (known in other Roman replicas), arms, and feet, all attached in a complicated system of plugs and receiving sockets. In the modern period, we are unaccustomed to marble sculpture as an integral part of our landscape, and we no longer carve marble statues in large numbers by hand. This significant change in habit and economy made it difficult for the museum curators and conservators in the 20th and 21st centuries to find artisans with the skill set needed to re-assemble the parts of this interlocking statue. However, in recent years computer technology and 3D scanning presented the museum responsible for safeguarding the statue two new, non-mutually exclusive options for curating the object. A modern sculptor could now study an accurate and inexpensive reduced scale 3D print out to understand the composition and structural links without interfering with the original marble and an adept software operator could add missing elements by means of digital sculpting programs and then print a restored version of the original statue in plastic. Both options rely on traditional study and aim to enhance the value of the object by restoring its original aspect. Yet they produce different results and raise different questions. The sculptural approach calls into question the definition of restoration which sculptors routinely practiced from antiquity to the 19thc. and the digital approach raises questions about the economic value of mechanically-made copies. Presenting the visually striking results of both options, this paper shows the significant gains in academic knowledge that both processes enabled and the modern strategies available for the museum. Above all, the project forces us to evaluate our prejudices concerning originals and copies.

METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES IN THE APPLICATION OF MACHINE LEARNING TO ANCIENT FEMALE PORTRAITS

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Keywords: Digital restoration; 3D printing; modeling; Casting; Conservation

This paper examines the methodology of the application of machine learning in the study of ancient sculptural portraits, and of the problematics that arise from the particularities of the field. It focuses both on the limitations of traditional iconographic approaches and the new challenges that arise from the use of new techniques and technologies such as, but not limited to, machine learning.

As a case study, the Lliv-IA project investigates the potential and limitations of neural-network classification models trained on images of portraits in sculpture from Livia Drusilla and other women in the roman era.

Firstly, we address the theoretical foundation of such applications, and the structure of convolutional neural networks, the implications of the choice of algorithms, and the constraints derived from the scarcity of available and quality assured training data, a pervasive issue in the study of ancient sculpture.

To mitigate the effects of these problematics, we propose the integration of transfer learning methodologies in future applications, hoping, with the use of pre-trained models, to partially compensate for the limited datasets. This section emphasises the importance of adapting technological solutions to the particular characteristics of the field of cultural heritage and archaeological material.

The second part of the paper, presents a controlled experiment, using Google's Teachable Machine not as analytical tool but as a demonstration of this kind of technologies and the practical problematics one may encounter when applying them to sculptural portraiture. The experiment reveals several critical issues:

- 1.Variability and quality of photographic records, including differences in lighting, angles and backgrounds, which significantly affect the model's behaviour;
- 2.Fragmentation and restoration of the pieces, which alter the original intended morphology of the pieces and lead to misinterpretations;
- 3.And overfitting due to small datasets, resulting in the over-representation of a relatively small number of pieces that bias the results and don't allow generalisation when new images are introduced.

By analysing these challenges, this paper does not simply assess whether AI can “recognise” the portraits it’s given, but rather the theoretical foundations and the implications of computational approaches for the humanities. It highlights the extreme sensitivity of these systems to variables that are utterly unavoidable when studying archaeological materials, thus demanding careful tinkering of methodologies, rather than direct importation from other fields.

Ultimately, our aim is to propose a realistic framework for the use AI in the study of *antiquae feminae*, both regarding its potential and its limitations. Our aim is not –as it’s mainly discussed in mainstream literature– to replace the expert, but to give them yet another tool to make the identification of the studied statues and contribute to broader conversations about the role of digital technologies in classical portrait studies.

FEMALE PORTRAITURE IN COLONIA AUGUSTA EMERITA: ICONOGRAPHIC STUDIES AND ADVANCES IN 3D RECONSTRUCTION AND RECREATION

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Trinidad Nogales

Museo Nacional de Arte Romano de Mérida

María José Merchán

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The collection of female portraits documented in the colony of Augusta Emerita, both official and private in nature, is undoubtedly exceptional within the Hispanic context—not only because of the size of the assemblage, but also due to its variety and uniqueness. This presentation aims to offer a comprehensive overview of the studies related to this remarkable corpus.

The significance of this collection of female portraits has prompted substantial research focusing on their formal, iconographic, and stylistic conception. These efforts have been complemented by advances in the analysis of marble provenance—the essential raw material—which have provided new nuances and contextual data for the assemblages, particularly within the official sphere.

In recent years, 3D recreation techniques have been incorporated, enabling a more secure analysis of the pieces and the establishment of conservation protocols, while also serving as a fundamental tool for dissemination at the National Museum of Roman Art (MNAR).

A further line of progress, arising from these recent efforts, involves the 3D reconstruction of certain works, especially those that show traces of now-lost metal attachments such as the jewelry that once adorned them. The application of new technologies to this field of research is yielding its first results, both in advancing scholarly study and in enhancing knowledge transfer. Altogether, these developments contribute additional resources for disseminating the extraordinary portrait collection of Mérida housed at the MNAR.

FEMALE SCULPTURAL PORTRAITS IN DOMESTIC CONTEXTS: THE CASE OF THE *HERMAE* FROM *DOMUS* 2B AT EMPÚRIES

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Keywords: Female portraiture; *Hermae*; Roman *Domus*; Empúries; Digital 3D reconstruction, Domestic space

This paper examines the presence and significance of female sculptural portraits in a domestic context through the case study of two marble *hermae* discovered in the peristyle of *Domus* 2B at Empúries (Catalonia, Spain). Dated to the first half of the 1st century CE and carved in Luni-Carrara marble, the sculptures represent Roman matrons dressed in *stola* and *tunic*. Their location within one of the most representative reception areas of the house highlights the important role of female imagery in elite domestic architecture, where portraits could function simultaneously as indicators of status, expressions of family identity, and vehicles of memory. Through this focused case study, the paper emphasizes the potential of digital humanities methodologies for reinterpreting and communicating female sculptural portraits in Roman domestic settings.

Technical analysis of the sculptures suggests that they were conceived to be viewed frontally and displayed in a highly visible area of the peristyle, probably marking the entrance to one of the principal spaces of the *domus*. The heads were carved separately and inserted into conical sockets, traces of which are still preserved, while the arms were likely made of wood and attached using iron fittings visible on the sides of the bodies. These wooden extensions may have supported garlands during ritual or festive occasions, reinforcing the symbolic and performative dimensions of the sculptures within the domestic environment.

The study was developed within the framework of the *Antiquae Feminae* research project, which places particular emphasis on archaeological context as a key element for understanding female sculpture in domestic settings. The contextual information associated with the findspot provides valuable evidence regarding the function, visibility, and symbolic role of the *hermae* within the house. This evidence also serves as the basis for a digital reconstruction aimed at restoring the original spatial and visual context of the sculptures and communicating these aspects to a wider audience.

The research combines archaeological and art historical analysis with digital heritage methodologies. The *hermae* were documented through high-resolution 3D scanning and virtually re-situated within a digital reconstruction of the second building phase of *Domus* 2B. This process made it possible to analyze not only their material and iconographic characteristics, but also their relationship with the surrounding architectural space and other symbolic elements of the domestic decorative program, such as the domestic cult altar located in the peristyle garden.

Special attention is given to methodological transparency in the process of digital reconstruction. A graded scale of archaeological evidence was applied throughout the reconstructed domestic space in order to clearly distinguish between elements supported directly by archaeological remains and more hypothetical restitutions. Reconstructed features of the sculptures are based both on the archaeological data from the original context and on the study of Julio-Claudian female portrait typologies, especially hairstyles, which played a central role in communicating status, moral values, and ideals such as *gravitas* and *austeritas*. Hypothetical color reconstructions of the garments, informed by comparisons with Roman sculpture and wall painting, are also explored as a way of assessing how color may have shaped the visual impact of these portraits, while maintaining a clear distinction between hypothetical reconstructions and elements supported by the archaeological record.

AEMILIA: A DIGITAL RESOURCE FOR GENDER INTEGRATION IN ONLINE CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

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Keywords: Digital Humanities; Gender; Roman Women; Interactive Digital Exhibition; Cultural Dissemination

Aemilia is an interactive digital exhibition that examines the different stages of Roman women's lives, aiming to foreground the complexity and diversity of their roles within Roman society. Developed within the Spanish State Research Agency *Antiquae Feminae* project PID2022-137896OB-100 (UAB), the exhibition experiments with digital formats of cultural dissemination inspired by platforms such as Google Arts & Culture and the Smithsonian.

This resource engages with current debates in Digital Humanities by addressing how gender can be critically integrated into digital cultural engagement. Rather than reproducing simplified or stereotypical narratives, *Aemilia* seeks to reframe Roman womanhood through curated content, interactive storytelling, and accessible design.

This paper presents *Aemilia* as both a digital resource and an experimental framework for gender-aware cultural mediation, reflecting on its design principles, narrative strategies, and potential for public engagement. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing discussions on the role of digital environments in reshaping the interpretation and dissemination of historical knowledge from a gender perspective.

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