Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 143

Roman Copies, Collecting, and Culture in the Bay of Naples and Beyond

Papers in Honor of Eugene J. Dwyer

Edited by
Sinclair W. Bell and Brad Hostetler



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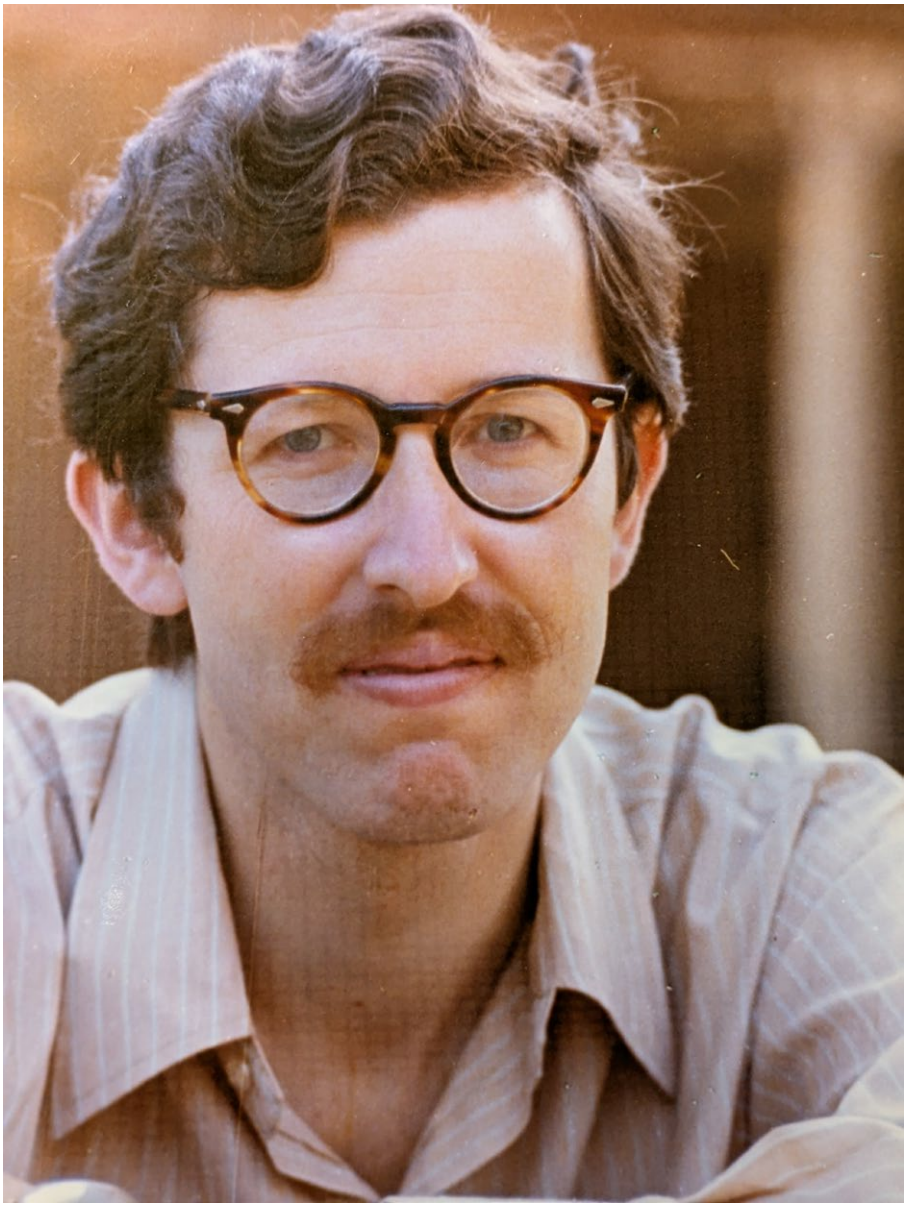
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Eugene J. Dwyer as a graduate student in Pompeii, June 1971.
Photograph by Johannes Felbermeyer; supplied by Sharon Herson.

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Preface

Sinclair W. Bell and Brad Hostetler

More than twenty years ago, I (SWB) was working on a research project about a Roman relief sculpture that was said to have been found during the early excavations of Herculaneum. By chance, I stumbled upon a website that compiled archival information related to the Real Museo Borbonico. I wrote to the website's creator, who responded not only promptly but also generously: indeed, he opened up a whole new world of archival information to me, an act of generosity that at once made my study a much more complex undertaking but also ultimately a much richer and more rigorous one. And our correspondence has continued to flow regularly from that first day, during which I have been the fortunate beneficiary of his seemingly limitless knowledge about and infectious enthusiasm for the antiquities and afterlife of the ancient cities around the Bay of Naples. That researcher was, of course, Eugene Dwyer (or Gene as his friends affectionally call him). And my own experience of his knowledge, generosity, and kindness is but one of many similar stories that we have heard in the process of putting together this volume in his honor.

My (BH) first encounter with Gene was also one of generosity. I stepped onto Kenyon's campus in the fall semester of 2017, beginning a one-year appointment. Gene had coincidentally announced that he would retire at the end of that same academic year. This period of overlap turned out to be magical: he invited me to his classes, shared his syllabi, and read an article that I was developing. He even gifted me precious books from his library, including an original set of Gibbon once owned by the Kenyon Classicist Barker Newhall. I was fortunate enough to turn that one year into two, then into a permanent position, and finally into tenure, where I strive to fill the very big shoes left by Gene in his 45 years at Kenyon. Alumni repeatedly speak with me about how much they miss Professor Dwyer's lectures on Greek and Roman art and architecture, and his seminar on collecting. As one who sat in his classes, I count myself among this group! He left lasting impressions on his students, the department, and the college.

The volume could not have become a reality were it not for the support, cooperation, and patience of the nine contributors to this volume, most of whom are longtime friends of Gene's and who share their recollections of him in their individual chapters. This reminiscence by Carol Mattusch, which is not in her chapter but which she kindly shared with us, is indicative of Gene's wide learning and her and others' high esteem of him: "I have always asked Gene questions about Pompeii and Herculaneum for which I couldn't find answers. Once he gave me his extensive hand-written lists of bronzes, which included catalogue numbers of Bayardi and of the Antichità di Ercolano, as well as the references in Ruggiero, Comparetti and de Petra, museum numbers by Finati, the Real Museo Borbonico, Ruesch, up to the current inventory numbers, along with Alinari and other photographers' numbers. Not long after that, I mentioned to Gene the similar but not so thorough catalogue by Pagano and Prisciandaro, and he replied, a little surprised, "Oh I don't have that!" It was almost gratifying to have found a book that Gene didn't have."

We are also grateful to Kenyon College, the Department of Art History, and especially the Office of the Provost, for their support of the publication of this volume through a Faculty Research Grant: it was important to us that most of the works discussed in this volume should be published in color, and it is thanks to the support of the College that we have been able to realize that goal. The Visual Resources Center and Chalmers Library Special Collections & Archives each provided assistance and permissions to reproduce images in this volume.

We would also like to thank Gene himself and his wife Ellen Mankoff, who kindly assisted us in procuring photographs of him from over the years.

Finally, we are grateful to the staff at Archaeopress, who produced the volume so efficiently and to such a high standard.

Abstracts

Triumph over Death: Italic Funerary Furniture in the Getty Museum

Claire Lyons and Jessica Arista, The J. Paul Getty Museum

Over 350 carved bone appliqués in the J. Paul Getty Museum represent the remains of two funerary couches dating to the second and first centuries BC. On one couch, fulcra with ivy tendrils and the heads of lynxes and maenads allude to the cult of Bacchus. Reliefs of Greek warriors, a bound Gallic captive, trophies, shields, and generals embellished a second couch. This scene may represent a biographical narrative of martial prowess or an illustration of the sacrifice of the Trojan prisoners in Homer's *Iliad*. Delicate friezes of putti carrying garlands probably decorated a wood casket (*kibotos*) that held cosmetics and toilette implements.

Between the Middle Republic and the early Empire, upper class patrons in Italy commissioned richly decorated biers in the form of a couch (*lectus funebris*), which was carried in funeral processions and either deposited in burial chambers or cremated. Intersecting around the ideology of triumph, the iconography of military victory and the cult of Dionysos has precedents in Macedonian chryselephantine *klinai*. The Getty appliqués were allegedly found in Cerveteri. Bone-veneered couches are scarce in Etruria but are prevalent in the central Apennine and Adriatic regions from Abruzzo to Marche, whence they spread to northern Italy and Transalpine Gaul.

Analysis utilizing portable X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, visible-induced luminescence imaging, and digital microscopy revealed the once opulent polychromy. Pliant and durable, the bone was sliced into plaques that were glued together and carved. The fragments preserve toolmarks and traces of pink, yellow, and red pigment, as well as possible gilding; the eyes of the larger lynx heads probably held glass inserts. Peptide mass fingerprinting confirmed the use of cow bone for most appliqués and elephant ivory for a single male head. Bioarchaeological analysis identified human skeletal remains.

'Fitter for the Wash-Tub': The Old Fisherman/Seneca in the Louvre

A.A. Donohue, Bryn Mawr College

The dark-marble statue in the Louvre (Ma 1354; MR 314; N 706) of an old man, famous since its discovery in Rome near the end of the sixteenth century, continues to raise questions. Its early identification as the 'dying Seneca' persisted until the eighteenth century, when, demoted to its current status of 'Old Fisherman,' it joined the Graeco-Roman sculptural repertoire of elderly, unattractive workers and possible destitutes. Scholarly emphasis on tracing the origins of such 'genre' representations and determining the originals behind the putative Roman copies led to the conclusion that the Louvre figure goes back to a Greek model of the third century BC. It seems increasingly clear, however, that such 'genre' figures are essentially Roman, and the Louvre statue differs significantly from the fishermen with which it is regularly compared.

Review of the extensive early restorations and additions suggests that the figure was originally shown in a stepping motion. The basin into which it was set was not added simply to conform to the story of Seneca's suicide, but rather because the lower legs were completely lacking. That the statue was deliberately partial and intended to be displayed as if partially submerged has not been questioned, although none of the comparable fishermen shares this rendering. The notable features of the statue are most closely paralleled in representations in relief and painting of *fullones* (fullers) at work. This proposal is not inconsistent with the findspot of the Louvre statue in the area of the great parks on the Esquiline, possibly the *horti Maecenatis*, as it has become clear that the decorative programs of Roman gardens and villas were not exclusively mythological or pastoral, but could include aspects of the productive world and its mundane activities, offering settings for large-scale three-dimensional representations of non-bucolic workers.

The Archaistic Athenas in Naples and Athens: Some Second Thoughts

Mark D. Fullerton, The Ohio State University

Among the most intriguing of the many statues from the Villa of the Papyri is a striding Athena of a type documented also by several fragments from the Akropolis of Athens. This type's mixture of stylistically distinct features suggested to most that the type was an archaizing creation of the late Roman Republic or early Empire, with all extant versions created in Athens.

Recently, I have revisited the origins of archaism in Greek sculpture by 1) re-examining the best-documented works of archaizing statuary and painting from the fifth and fourth centuries BC; 2) exploring the increasing stylistic diversity among the evolving sculptural styles of the Classical era; and, especially, 3) re-considering the historical contexts within which this retrospective style developed.

I now propose that the Herculaneum Athena type, and similar archaistic works such as Alkamenes' Hekate and Hermes, were created during the second half of the Peloponnesian War, either inspired by or inspiring the contemporaneous change from an Archaic to an archaistic Athena form on Panathenaic amphoras (*c.* 430–400 BC).

The marble fragments from the Akropolis should then preserve the Classical original of the Herculaneum type, as Maria Bruskari argued some 40 years ago. The original location of the statue preserved in these fragments is unknown, but thematically the type shares much with the sculptural program of the Athena Nike complex, rebuilt at the time of the Archidamian War (431–421 BC) and filled with visual references to Athens' ancient victories and divine favor. Moreover, the inherent apotropaism of the Herculaneum statue's form, and its liminal location in the villa, separating and connecting atrium and tablinum, wielding both spear (attack on those besieging the citadel) and aegis (defense of Athens and its institutions), mirrors that of the Athena Nike bastion, which both preserves and glorifies the defensive rampart of Athens' ancient citadel.

Wearing Antiquity: The Use of Sealing Stones on Finger Rings in Byzantium

Brad Hostetler, Kenyon College

Signet rings of the Roman imperial period were traditionally equipped with sealing stones, but by the ninth and tenth centuries, the medieval Romans (i.e. the Byzantines) had largely moved away from this practice. There are, however, a few Byzantine rings that break from this trend and continue (or revive) the ancient practice. This chapter examines why wearers made use of sealing stones for their signet rings at a time when this format had largely fallen out of favor?

I argue for three reasons that might explain this Byzantine interest in sealing stones in the ninth and tenth centuries. The first is an appreciation for the antique. Whether they were fitted with reused ancient gems or newly carved stones in the medieval era, I argue that the rings attempted to revive an ancient style, a practice consistent with the broader trends of this period. The second explanation is the growing association between gems and the representations of emperors, beginning with Constantine and culminating in the transformation of imperial dress in the ninth century. I argue that wearing rings with gems was one way in which the Byzantine elite could show their connection to the imperial office. The third explanation for the use of sealing stones is the continued belief in their magical and medicinal efficacy. Just as ideas about the special powers of stones were documented in Hellenistic and Roman sources, so too did Byzantine intellectuals preserve these practices into the medieval era. This study shows the long and continued engagement that the Byzantines had with their Roman imperial past — whether it was expressed through the material and style of a signet ring or by the beliefs that these stones held for their owners.

The First Bourbon Publication of the Finds from Herculaneum and the Biography of a Long-lost Marble Satyr

Carol C. Mattusch, George Mason University

In 1740, a marble satyr (MANN 6348) was found at Herculaneum, its location not thoroughly recorded. A copper engraving illustrating the figure appeared in the *Disegni intagliati in rame di pitture antiche ritrovate nelle scavazioni*

di Resina, 1746, the first official Bourbon publication of finds from Herculaneum. Evidently only three copies of that lavish leather-bound folio (H 48 cm) were bound. Ottavio Antonio Bayardi included the satyr in his list of 350 bronzes and marbles that were known by the time he published – without illustrations – his *Catalogo degli antichi monumenti dissotterrati dalla discoperta città di Ercolano*, 1754/55. In 1773, nearly twenty years later, Thomas Martyn and John Lettice published a translation of Bayardi's *Catalogo*, *The Antiquities of Herculaneum,* with illustrations of some of the 738 paintings that Bayardi had listed, using illustrations that had been published in 1757, in volume 1 of the *Antichità di Ercolano*. They did not include sculptures. In 1792, an engraving of the statue was produced by Nicola Fiorillo (*Rami inediti* no. 113), but it was never published. And that was nearly the end of the marble satyr's publication history, until 2018, when it appeared in an exhibition: *Ercolano e Pompei: Visioni di una scoperta.* A number of questions arise about this sculpture: can we locate where it was found? Was the figure from a private garden? Were the pieces all found at about the same time? How can we explain the restoration? From these enquiries, a larger question emerges: why was a volume of the *Antichità di Ercolano* about the marbles never published?

English Country House Collections of Classical Sculpture and Roman Collecting Habits: A Methodological Comparison

Jane Fejfer, University of Copenhagen

On January 2nd 1787 Henry Blundell wrote to his friend, fellow collector and fellow Catholic Charles Townley: 'I am not pleased at yr saying I am now become fairly a collector; What I have done was only, as it were, ye sport of a day, as I w.d not be thought to be Idle while abroad' *(British Museum Townley Archive TY7/1316)*. In this paper I present a short introduction to the history of the Ince Blundell collection of Classical sculpture and then ask the following three questions: *Firstly*, why did Henry Blundell protest against being called a collector? I approach the question with outset in Sarah Macdonald's broad definition of collecting as a 'self-aware process of creating a set of objects conceived to be meaningful as a group'. *Secondly*, how does Blundell's amassment of about 600 classical marble sculptures, the largest collection ever formed in private hands in Britain, accommodate itself into 18th century British and European collecting habits? *Lastly*, how may Blundell's sculpture collection and English country house sculpture collections more generally inform on Roman period sculpture collecting habits? Sometimes considered (archaeologically) worthless refashioned relics, I argue that these Roman sculptures form a unique and overlooked repository for understanding what Roman sculptural art 'is' and what may have motivated ancient Romans into forming collections of sculpture.

From Kitsch to the Sublime: The Many Lives of Mt. Vesuvius

Nancy H. Ramage, Ithaca College

Only one small wall painting showing Mt. Vesuvius survives from antiquity, but an awakened interest in depicting the volcanic mountain near Naples begins in the 17th century, when it was believed by the deeply religious population that the local Saint Januarius could restrain the lava simply by gesturing for it to stop flowing. In the 18th and early 19th centuries, under the influence of the Age of Enlightenment, celebrated artists such as Pierre-Jacques Volaire and Joseph Wright of Derby made huge paintings of Mt. Vesuvius in eruption for their well-heeled clients. The style of these paintings, often showing the eruptions amid violent storms, or under the moon, has been referred to as 'the Sublime.' This study compares such grandiose works with the modest and portable paintings made for ordinary travelers seeking mementos of their own tours of the region. Most of these latter paintings were made by artists whose names are not known to us, but who were skilled at capturing the famous places that their clients wished to remember. Also in the 18th century, painters were influenced by the contemporary scientific studies of Mt. Vesuvius by Sir William Hamilton, British envoy to the court of Naples, sent as letters to the Royal Society of London, and illustrated by beautiful hand-colored engravings after paintings by Hamilton's artist, Pietro Fabris. A change in taste, and the publication of historical novels like *The Last Days of Pompeii*, encouraged artists like John Martin to paint the mountain and the destroyed cities as he imagined them during the cataclysmic event in Roman times. The drama of such earlier studies of the volcanic mountain is finally compared to 19th and 20th century interpretations, culminating in a spectacular painting by Andy Warhol, which is reduced to kitsch by its popularity within the tourist industry.

Death and Resurrection in Pompeii. Gypsum Casts from Pompeii Eternized in Poetry from Campbell to Komunyakaa

Eric M. Moormann, Radboud Universiteit

Starting from Eugene Dwyer's study on the gypsum casts of Pompeii victims, made from the 1860s onwards and known thanks to many illustrations and evocations in novels and films, this paper focuses on the very rare poems which expand on this motif. Two of them, the late 19th-century 'Out of Pompeii' by Wilfred Campbell and 'Body of a Woman' by Yusef Komunyakaa published in 2000 have the same cast of a woman as their topic. The cast was well known and stirred the romantic idea of a young inhabitant, full of vigor and love. Modern studies, however, have made clear that the victim was male. Komunyakaa also wrote a poem about the cast of a dog. The three poems illustrate the eternal engagement with Pompeii as a sepulcher of innocent people who are intermediates between modern visitors and old inhabitants.

Giacomo Boni e il mausoleo da Tor di Quinto a Villa Blanc: Questioni di metodo

Pier Giovanni Guzzo, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei

Il mausoleo circolare che si trova a Roma sulla via Nomentana davanti a Villa Blanc è il risultato di una ricostruzione dovuta a Giacomo Boni tra il 1895 e il 1897. Boni riadoperò materiali dallo scavo effettuato a Tor di Quinto di un mausoleo a doppia torre su basamento comune in calcestruzzo. Si discute delle questioni di metodo relative alla realizzazione di una sola torre con materiali probabilmente in origine pertinenti a due torri, all'interno delle teorie di John Ruskin.

The circular mausoleum located in Rome on the Via Nomentana in front of the Villa Blanc is the result of a reconstruction carried out by Giacomo Boni between 1895 and 1897. Boni reused materials from the excavation carried out in Tor di Quinto of a mausoleum with a double tower on a common base in concrete. The methodological issues relating to the construction of a single tower with materials probably originally pertaining to two towers are discussed against the background of the theories of John Ruskin.

Author Biographies

Jessica Arista is an Associate Conservator of Antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum. She holds an M.S. in Art Conservation from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. Her training and work experience include positions at the National Gallery of Art, Kaman Kalehoyük excavation, the Walters Art Museum, Harvard Art Museums, and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston where her work focused on conservation of the ancient Greek collection. Jessica is a member of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) and a co-founder and board member of the Conservation Association of Los Angeles.

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Jane Fejfer is an Associate Professor at the SAXO Institute at the University of Copenhagen. Her research is centered on the visual culture in the Roman world and on the role and function of mythological sculpture in the Roman East. She is also looking into the challenges and potentials of introducing collecting as a phenomenon useful for investigating assemblages of art works in the Roman world.

Mark Fullerton is Professor of History of Art and Classics and Chair of Classics at The Ohio State University. His research and teaching encompass a wide range of topics in the Art and Archaeology of the ancient Greek and Roman worlds. His special areas of expertise are Greek and Roman Sculpture, the art of the Hellenistic era, and the relationship between style and the conveyance of meaning in Classical art.

Pier Giovanni Guzzo spent his entire career, after specializing at the Italian Archaeological School in Athens, in the State Archaeological Superintendency. He directed the excavations at Sibari and the Museo Nazionale Romano alle Terme di Diocleziano. He has been Superintendent in Taranto, Bologna, Pompeii, Reggio Calabria, Naples, and Caserta. He is currently a National Member of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei and a member of the board of directors of the Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte.

Brad Hostetler is Associate Professor of Art History at Kenyon College (Gambier, Ohio). He specializes in the art and material culture of Late Antiquity and Byzantium, with a particular focus on text and image relationships.

Claire Lyons is curator of antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. A specialist in pre-Roman Italy, she has organized numerous exhibitions, most recently, *The Kingdom of Pylos: Warrior-Princes of Mycenaean Greece* (2025–2026). Among her publications is the forthcoming catalogue *Etruscan and Italic Art in the J. Paul Getty Museum*, and co-edited volumes on *Antiquity & Photography: Early Views of Ancient Mediterranean Sites* (2005), and *The Archaeology of Colonialism* (2002). Claire has excavated at Poggio Civitate, Corinth, Metaponto, and Morgantina.

Carol C. Mattusch, Mathy Professor emerita at George Mason University, chairs the Board of the International Bronze Congresses and is on the Board of the American Friends of Herculaneum; she is a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a corresponding member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. Her books include *Bronze Sculpture in the Classical World: Text, Context, Technology* (2026); *Enduring Bronze* (2014); *J.J. Winckelmann, Letter and Report on the Discoveries at Herculaneum* (2011); *The Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum: Life and Afterlife of a Sculpture Collection* (2005); *Classical Bronzes: The Art and Craft of Greek and Roman Statuary* (1996). She curated *Pompeii and the Roman Villa* (2008), and *The Fire of Hephaistos* (1996).

Eric M. Moormann is emeritus professor of classical archaeology in Radboud University (Nijmegen, The Netherlands). His research includes the topography and art of Rome, especially under the emperors Nero and

Domitian, and the cities buried by Vesuvius. Reception history of antiquity is another theme he is working on. Over the last decade, he has been involved in the research project 'Mapping the Via Appia,' studying the fifth mile of this ancient road in all its archaeological aspects.

Nancy H. Ramage, an art historian, has written widely on Greek, Etruscan, and Roman antiquity, as well as on the archaeological finds in ancient Sardis. The book she wrote on Roman art with her husband, Andrew Ramage, became a standard text for university students. She is fascinated by the history of the restoration of ancient sculpture, and the history of collecting, whether by the connoisseurs of the 18th century, especially Sir William Hamilton, or the modern collections of the Cone sisters of Baltimore. She is Charles A. Dana Professor of the Humanities and Arts Emerita at Ithaca College and a life member of Clare Hall, University of Cambridge.

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Eugene J. Dwyer: Archaeologist of the Archives

Sinclair W. Bell

This volume presents nine chapters in celebration of the career, contributions, influence, and person of Eugene J. Dwyer (**Figure 1; also Figures 5, 6**), Professor of Art History Emeritus at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio.

Born in Buffalo, he grew up in Hamburg, NY and was educated at Frontier Central High School, Harvard College (BA, 1965) and the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (MA, PhD 1974). While studying for his doctorate in fine arts and archaeology, he lived for extended periods in Rome and Naples, Italy, where he specialized in the archaeology of Pompeii. While at Kenyon (1973–2018), Gene taught ancient art (with a special interest in the art and architecture of the Roman empire), the history of architecture, architectural design, and the history of collections. His publications tracked largely along those same themes, which led us to select the following title for this volume: *Roman Copies, Collecting, and Culture in the Bay of Naples and Beyond*.

Limits of space prevent us from providing a comprehensive survey of all of Gene's published work, which ranges widely in subject and extends across more than 50 years (starting in 1969). Rather, the intention of this essay is to discuss his major scholarly works to date, in particular the contents of and reception to his two monographs, as well as several important essays in edited collections. The full range of his interests are reflected in his bibliography collected elsewhere in this volume, including his many substantial contributions to non-academic, public-facing venues.[1]

In addition, the nine chapters that follow find inspiration from and pick up the threads of many of Gene's ideas and interests. These commissioned essays by ten senior scholars span the fields of ancient Roman and Italic art history, architecture and archaeology. The papers focus on the visual and material culture of the Bay of Naples and Italy, from their points of creation in the late Republic and early Empire to their reception in the Medieval, Early Modern, and Modern worlds (compare **Figure 2**, discussed further below). The essays share an interest in several issues of longstanding scholarly inquiry: copies of famous marble statue types in antiquity (e.g., the Old Seneca in the Louvre, archaistic Athenas) and their later restorations and interpretation; the formation of collections of antiquities, from their original sites of display to their reconstitution in Early Modern venues (especially England); nineteenth and twentieth-century visual and poetic representations of Mount Vesuvius and of Giuseppe Fiorelli's gypsum casts of Pompeian victims; and case studies of a wide array of both well-known (e.g., gypsum casts from Pompeii, a long-lost Satyr statuette) and previously understudied or overlooked objects (e.g., an ivory funerary couch), whose imagery is subject to fresh interpretation and contextualized within its wider social and cultural settings.

Whether read separately or together as a whole, those chapters – most by many longtime colleagues and friends alongside some more recent ones – offer eloquent testimony to the inspiration he has provided over the years: from his rigorous method, sound judgment, and deep knowledge to his personal generosity, kindness, and humility. We hope that this introduction, combined with the chapters that follow, will encourage the un-initiated reader to pick up Gene's work for the first time and also prompt the familiar reader to revisit it. There is so much in his writing that repays (re)reading.

Pompeian Domestic Sculpture. A Study of Five Pompeian Houses and Their Contents

Gene wrote his dissertation under the supervision of Professor Peter von Blanckenhagen at New York University, where he completed his studies in 1974. His dissertation was transferred via xerox to University Microfilms in 1975; it was published as a monograph in

[1] In his bibliography, we were unable to fully document Gene's many public-facing contributions that helped make Pompeii, its art, and archival materials accessible to a wider audience, including his articles on https://bloggingpompeii.blogspot.com/, his posts on his personal Google Sites website (now discontinued), and his consulting work on a film that accompanied the exhibition *Pompeii and the Roman Villa* (2008).



Figure 1. Eugene J. Dwyer in Pompeii, 2010. Courtesy of Eugene J. Dwyer.

the Archaeologica Series by Giorgio Bretschneider in Rome in 1982 (**Figure 3**).

Few American scholars face the daunting prospect of having their unpublished dissertation reviewed by a senior scholar in a venerable European journal. Even so, that was Gene's fate when the German classical archaeologist Hartmut Döhl reviewed his dissertation in xerox form for *Gnomon* in 1980. Fortunately, Döhl's review – the first of Gene's career – was a strongly positive one (he and the reviewer went on to become longtime correspondents and later collaborators). It is worth reproducing a section of the review here, not only as a snapshot of the field at the time but also for its highly memorable opening:

> Unpublished dissertations or those reproduced only by xerography are often like illegitimate children; they struggle to attract attention or recognition. This also applies to Dwyer's work, which deals with a topic that is important for Pompeian studies but has apparently remained largely unknown ... [2]

Döhl concludes his review:

> Measured against the general state of research and the increasingly urgent need for studies that first of all work on the material basis, one can only be grateful to the author for having undertaken this 'back-breaking' task of providing a long-overdue overall assessment of at least some of the Pompeian houses. The great care taken in the research, the solid compilation of the inventories of finds, and the sober commentary are particularly appealing.[3]

The selection of Gene's dissertation for a published peer review of considerable length (two, full pages)

[2] Döhl 1980: 693 ('Ungedruckten oder nur xerographisch vervielfältigten Dissertationen geht es oft wie illegitimen Kindern, sie haben es schwer, Aufmerksamkeit oder Anerkennung zu finden. Das trifft auch für die Arbeit von Dwyer zu, die ein für die Pompejanistik wichtiges Thema behandelt, aber offenbar weithin unbekannt geblieben ist.')

[3] Döhl 1980: 694 ('Gemessen an der allgemeinen Forschungslage und dem immer dringenderen Bedärfnis nach Untersuchungen, die zunächst einmal die materielle Basis auf arbeiten, kann man dem Verf. nur dank bar sein, daß er sich der 'knochenbrechenden' Tätigkeit unterzogen hat, wenigstens für einen Teil der pompejanischen Häuser die längst fällige Gesamtbeurteilung zugeben. Sympathisch berührt die große Sorgefalt beim Recherchieren, die solide Zusammenstellung der Fundinventare und die nüchterne Kommentierung.')



Figure 2. Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, A Roman Amateur, 1868. Oil on panel, 22 × 33 1/4 in. (55.9 × 84.5 cm). Yale University Art Gallery, Mary Gertrude Abbey Fund, 1965.25.

indicates how novel and thus how greatly anticipated his work was at the time. That novelty lies in the fact that previous approaches had prioritized the objects *as objects* – especially highly prized, aesthetically pleasing ones – over their architectural contexts of display (e.g., issues of visibility, sightlines) and what those contexts could potentially reveal about the social aspirations, financial resources, and consumption habits of the owners. By surveying the contents of five Pompeian households, Gene's scholarship answered 'the increasingly urgent need' for such 'a long-overdue overall assessment,' as Döhl noted.

Gene next published a series of articles about Roman iconography, particularly in sculpture, that arose from material he had studied as part of his dissertation research.[4] These were followed by the publication of his first book, *Pompeian Domestic Sculpture. A Study of Five Pompeian Houses and Their Contents* (1982), which was a revised version of his dissertation. The work was divided into two major parts, which were preceded by front matter. In the latter, he offered preliminary remarks about the book (p. 5), a bibliography and list of abbreviations (pp. 7–11), and an introduction (pp. 13–16). There he provided a brief outline of the history of excavations at Pompeii, in which he drew attention at the outset to his own interest in the totality of household contents:

> The importance of finding works of Roman sculpture *in situ* has been recognized almost from the beginnings of scientific archaeology. Less appreciated has been the knowledge to be gained about workshops and production of art works through the study of related finds. The high rate of survival among Pompeian artifacts permits the reconstruction of workshop practices and individual craftsmen's oeuvres – a circumstance nearly unique in the study of Roman art.[5]

Part I consists of five chapters that are organized by house: (1) House of M. Lucretius (IX, III, 5): pp. 19–52,

[4] Dwyer 1978, 1979a, 1979b, 1981.

[5] Dwyer 1982: 13.

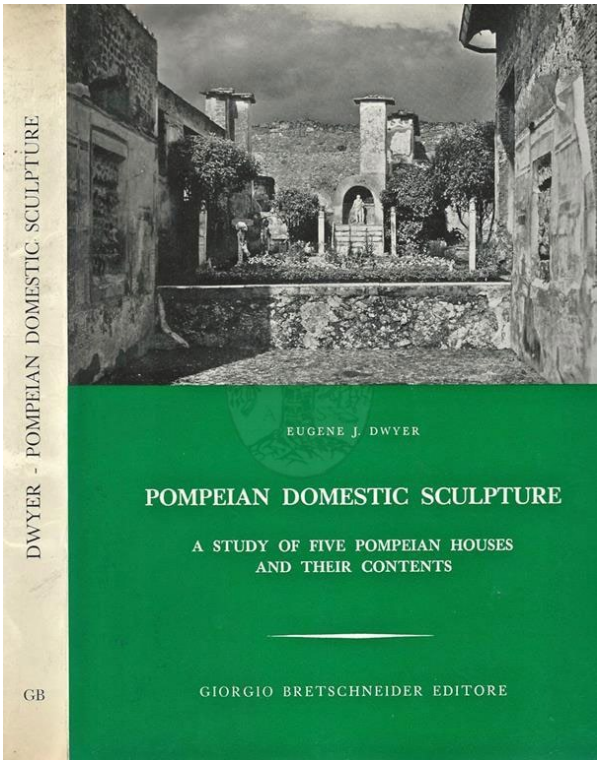


Figure 3. Cover of Pompeian Domestic Sculpture: A Study of Five Pompeian Houses and their Contents, 1982. Courtesy of Giorgio Bretschneider Editore.

figs. 1–56; (2) House VII, XII, 17: pp. 53–56, figs. 57–66; (3) House of Camillus (VII, XII, 22/23): pp. 57–67, figs. 67–84; (4) House of Fortuna (IX, VII, 20): pp. 69–78, figs. 85–118; (5) House of the Citharist (I, IV, 5): pp. 79–110, figs. 119–181. As Gene notes in his introduction, three of the houses were selected in part because the results of their excavations had never been published.[6] Each chapter is organized according to separate sections which address (to the extent possible given the extant remains and records) the history of excavation, the building history, the question of ownership, and the household inventories with detailed commentary on each object, including description, dimensions, state of condition, workshop attribution (where relevant), excavation history, and bibliography.

The catalog contains a total of 298 items, of which 142 are from the House of M. Lucretius, 8 from House VII 12, 17 from the House of Camillus, 25 from the House of Fortuna, and 106 from the House of the Citharist. These items include sculptures and reliefs, as well as tools and jewelry. In addition, in the case of the House of M. Lucretius, there are two pieces of architectural decoration, and, in the House of the Citharist, a mosaic with a figurative motif. In addition to collecting the finds from these five houses, Gene included several objects from the rest of the Pompeii excavation area (figs. 182–229) for comparison.

As the book's title and subtitle indicate, Gene's work focused on providing a reliable, up to date inventory of the finds, with an emphasis on the sculptures in each house but also including their overall furnishings, such as utensils. To that end, he conducted extensive research in the collections in the museums in Pompeii and Naples, where he found that some items that had been recorded in the excavations could no longer be traced. His inability to locate some finds was undoubtedly frustrating for him but the careful notation that he provided based on his on-site work provided scholars at long last with a firm foundation upon which to build. Also not to be forgotten here was the crucial resource that he (and the publisher) provided through the generous illustration of these finds, totaling 229 figures, and the reproduction of the appendices (see below).

Part 2 contains synthetic chapters on 'The Pompeian House' (pp. 113–120), 'Free-Standing Sculpture' (pp. 121–128), and 'Relief Sculpture' (pp. 129–134). By pulling together the contents of the five houses and analyzing the sculptural contents by category, Gene sought to lay down a set of wider, governing principles about Pompeian (and by extension, Roman) notions of domestic décor:

> The exhibition of sculpture within the Pompeian house followed rather carefully defined and almost universally applied conventions. (The fact that we can speak of a 'Pompeian house' in these terms is not without interest.) These conventions, in turn, had a perceptible influence on the sculpture itself. This essay will explore the ways in which the 'industries' that produced most of the freestanding and relief sculpture catalogued in Part I met the requirements of the domestic market having well-defined notions about the place and function of sculpture.[7]

These three sections are followed by a summary of the book's scope and arguments (pp. 135–137). Finally, the book closes with four appendices (pp. 139–163) of great archival value. In the first three, Gene provides

[6] Dwyer 1982: 16.

[7] Dwyer 1982: 111.

transcriptions of previously unpublished excerpts from the excavation diaries, which are kept in the archives of the Museum of Naples. In the fourth appendix, he reprints a previously little-known description of a significant bronze portrait from House I, IV, 5.

The importance of Gene's contribution to Pompeian studies was extensively recognized by contemporary reviewers, who responded strongly positively to his work in journals in France, Italy, and Germany as well as the UK and USA (for the sake of convenience, we have translated all reviews into English in what follows).[8] For instance, Roger Ling wrote in *The Journal of Roman Studies* in 1983:

> There are numerous valuable comments on matters affecting the production and display of domestic sculpture: e.g. the types which were favoured, the roles which they played, their visibility, and what they meant to the patron ... All this gives a fascinating insight into the taste (or lack of it) of the Pompeian bourgeoisie in the last years of the city.[9]

Writing in *Klio* in 1984, Jana Kepartová noted:

> Some of the material presented by D[wyer]. has not been published before. The work has been carried out with great care ... Overall, this publication is a valuable work that provides a solid foundation of information for further processing of the material presented. (The author has demonstrated in an exemplary manner how the material can be processed in his work on Oscilla.) It is only to be hoped that other houses in Pompeii will be treated in this or a similar manner.[10]

Also appearing in 1984, Hubertus Manderscheid wrote in *Archeologia Classica*:

> These brief critical observations are not intended to diminish the merit of the author, who has completed the thankless task of rediscovering material that had been, so to speak, buried a second time. Although some readers may consider his results too modest, it must be pointed out that the analysis of the inventory of only five houses cannot provide a definitive and comprehensive result, which only a survey of all the sculptural material in Pompeii could achieve. ... However, the author always demonstrates a broad knowledge of Pompeian sculpture. It is to his credit that he has succeeded in initiating an investigation that has been awaited for at least a hundred years, and this beginning has undoubtedly led to some important results. For this and for his meticulous research, he deserves our thanks.[11]

And Richard Brilliant wrote as follows in *The Classical World*:

> Following the lead of Edward Falkener and Giuseppe Fiorelli, and in the manner of Tatiana Warscher's *Codex Topographicus Pompeianus*, Dwyer has composed a true syllabus of the Pompeian system of domestic sculpture... This book takes a well-deserved place among the basic scholarly works on Pompeii.[12]

In the latest review to appear (1991), Roger Hanoune noted in *Revue Archéologique* that:

> It was an extremely wise idea to study the sculptures of Pompeii's houses not as art for art's sake or museum pieces, but in relation to the architecture that serves as their setting; this was achieved very satisfactorily by E.J. Dwyer in this presentation of five houses in the same central area of the city, which are not among the most important in Pompeii: they are interesting and representative precisely because of their ordinariness.[13]

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[8] For reasons of space, we do not discuss two other reviews of his monograph: Kockel 1984; Balty 1988.

[9] Ling 1983: 230.

[10] Kepartová 1984: 325 ('Im ganzen genommen stellt diese Publikation eine wertvolle Arbeit dar, die eine Grundlage solider Information für weitere Bearbeitung des vorgestellten Materials bildet. (Wie man das Material bearbeiten kann, hat der Verf. in seiner Arbeit über Oscilla vorbildlich gezeigt.) Es ist nur zu wünschen, daß auch andere Hauser in Pompeji auf diese oder ähnliche Weise behandelt werden.').

[11] Manderscheid 1984: 407 ('Queste brevi osservazioni critiche non vogliono diminuire il merito dell'A., che ha portato a termine l'ingrato impegno di riscoprire un materiale che era stato, per così dire, sepolto una seconda volta. Sebbene qualche lettore possa considerare troppo modesti i suoi risultati, si deve obbiettare, che l'analisi dell'inventario di sole cinque case non può fornire un risultato definitivo e complessivo, a cui solo un'indagine su tutto il materiale scultoreo di Pompei potrebbe portare. Un lavoro di tale ampiezza non si può pretendere da una tesi di laurea. L'A. dimostra però sempre un'ampia conoscenza della scultura pompeiana. È un suo merito essere riuscito a dare l'avvio ad un'indagine attesa da almeno cento anni, e questo inizio ha portato indubbiamente alcuni risultati importanti. Per questo e per le sue ricerche minuziose si deve ringraziarlo.').

[12] Brilliant 1984: 320; 321.

[13] Hanoune 1991: 414 ('C'était une idée extrêmement judicieuse que d'étudier les sculptures des maisons de Pompéi non comme de l'art pour l'art ou des pièces de musée, mais dans leurs rapports avec l'architecture qui leur sert de cadre; c'est ce qui a été réalisé de façon très satisfaisante par E. J. Dwyer dans cette présentation de cinq maisons de la même zone centrale de la ville mais qui ne sont pas parmi les plus importantes de Pompéi: elles sont intéressantes et représentatives par leur banalité même.').

These reviews attest to the widespread recognition of Gene's monograph at the time as a highly valuable and innovative contribution to Pompeian studies, as well as to Roman art, architecture, and archaeology more broadly. To partially repeat two of the aforementioned assessments, Gene's study of 'a topic that is important for Pompeian studies but has apparently remained largely unknown,' '...succeeded in initiating an investigation that has been awaited for at least a hundred years.'[14]

In addition to his monograph, Gene published several important essays in which he considered Pompeian sculpture from different points of view, such as his chapter on 'Decorum and the History of Style' and another on 'Collectible Singletons' in a volume on Roman collectors and eclecticism.[15] He also produced studies of Roman domestic architecture in the Bay of Naples, including an influential essay on 'The Pompeian Atrium House in Theory and in Practice' and one on 'The Unified Plan of the House of the Faun.'[16] Finally, he has written essays and numerous book reviews about the provenance of artifacts and domestic display around the Vesuvian sites as scholarly interest in these topics has continued to grow.[17]

In the nearly 50 years since the publication of his first monograph, his work – alongside the above-mentioned essays – has indeed gone on to provide the 'solid foundation' that reviewers predicted it would.[18] To trace the full 'impact factor' of his research, quantitatively at least, one would need to consult a search engine of academic citations, such as Google Scholar. For our qualitative purposes here, however, a few examples of his work's broad impact on recent scholarship should suffice as evidence of our general claim. These include the dissemination of his ideas into standard reference works about Roman sculpture and iconography, such as chapters on 'domestic displays' and 'iconography and social practice in the domestic sphere'[19]; case studies of the sculptural programs, furnishings (e.g., vessels, utensils), and painted programs within individual Pompeian houses, including some on which he himself had published (e.g., the House of M. Lucretius) as well as others in which his ideas are applied[20]; synthetic, interpretive monographs about domestic decorative programs and their value for writing Roman social and economic history (especially of the 'middle-classes'), such as Samuli Simelius's *Pompeian Peristyle Gardens* and Emanuel Mayer's *The Ancient Middle Classes: Urban Life and Aesthetics in the Roman Empire, 100 BCE-250 CE*[21]; and, more broadly still, analyses of the relationship between Roman art, artisans, and market economies, particularly through the lens of domestic decoration.[22]

In essence, Gene's work marked the start of a 'paradigm shift' in studies of Roman housing. That impact is succinctly summarized by Ria Berg and Ilkka Kuivalainen in their recent re-evaluation of the finds from the House of M. Lucretius, which Gene originally studied:

> The early date of the discovery of the house doomed a large part of its numerous finds to be dispersed beyond recovery in the vast collections of the Museo Nazionale Archeologico of Naples (MANN), where the finds were taken immediately after their unearthing. The first attempt to identify and recontextualise them was made by Eugen[e] Dwyer, in his valuable pioneering work *Pompeian Domestic Sculpture: A Study of Five Pompeian Houses and their Contents* (1982). The main purpose of his study was to publish the statuary assemblage of the house and situate it within its wider architectural, social, and material context; however, the work also contains a preliminary catalogue of the finds, locating many of them within the collections of the MANN. His catalogue is admirable in its *prodigiously contextual interest* ...[23]

All in all, an impressively far-reaching outcome for a project that was initially likened (albeit charitably) to 'illegitimate children; they struggle to attract attention or recognition ...'

Pompeii's Living Statues. Ancient Roman Lives Stolen from Death

With his second monograph (2010), Gene turned to the fascinating history and controversial legacy of the plaster casts made by Giuseppe Fiorelli of the ancient Pompeians who had perished in the famous eruption (**Figure 4**), a topic about which he had already published two earlier studies.[24] Gene traces the history of the development of the cast-making process and the popular reception of the casts through four chapters:

[14] Döhl 1980: 693; Manderscheid 1984: 407.
[15] Dwyer 1988–1989; 2012a.
[16] Dwyer 1991; 2001.
[17] E.g., Dwyer 2013; 2015; 2021.
[18] Kepartová 1984: 325.
[19] E.g., Gazda 2015; Ravasi 2015; Costa 2022.
[20] E.g., Sigges 2002; Barrett 2017; Berg and Kuivalainen 2019; Spinelli 2019; Trentin 2019.
[21] Simelius 2022 (esp. Chap. 4, on decorative features such as sculpture and 'the parameters of socioeconomic display'); Mayer 2012.
[22] Harris 2015; Flohr 2019.
[23] Berg and Kuivalainen 2019: 51; our emphasis.
[24] Dwyer 2007a; 2007b; see also 2011.

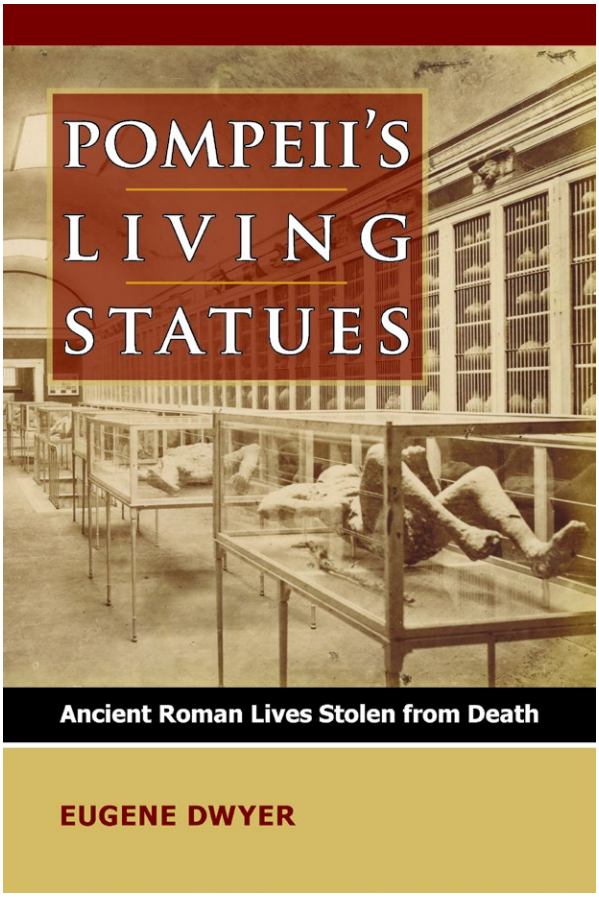


Figure 4. Cover of Pompeii's Living Statues: Ancient Roman Lives Stolen from Death, 2010. Courtesy of the University of Michigan Press.

'Forerunners'; 'First Impressions'; 'Second Thoughts'; and an 'Epilogue.' As he notes in his monograph, the significance of this discovery for the history of the discipline of archaeology, especially Roman studies, can hardly be understated: 'Almost by itself, Fiorelli's discovery and exploitation of the casts changed the purpose of archaeology from an exclusive focus on the collection and classification of artifacts to the material reconstruction of ancient history.'[25]

Gene's study draws upon two distinct but contemporary bodies of evidence: excavation reports and popular media (newspapers), and photographs. As in his earlier work on Roman domestic sculpture, he carefully gathers and organizes all of the available archival data in a way that reminds the reader of Manderscheid's remark above ('the thankless task of rediscovering material that had been, so to speak, buried a second time…'). This scrupulous method allows him to ferret out overlooked details, clarify previous misunderstandings, and provide long-lost (hi)stories of the 'living statues.' Just as he scrutinizes the technical details, he succeeds in contextualizing the wider cultural and historical significance of these finds.

Indeed, as reviewers noted, Gene's study of these famous 'statues' was groundbreaking not only for the myths that it exploded, but also for its contribution to the history and cultural politics of archaeology. The art historian John R. Clarke, writing in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, observed:

> Dwyer's delightful little book, part cultural history, part historiography, admirably succeeds in providing a context for the strange and sensational practice of making plaster casts of the victims of the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79 … This is a book for scholars and students of Pompeii, for the general public interested in the 'bodies' phenomenon, or for those just wanting to see pictures of the first casts of the victims. It is also of interest to scholars looking for some precision about the archaeology of this first scientific work at Pompeii in the context of the haphazard treasure hunting that had gone on from 1748 to 1861.[26]

Similarly, in his review in the *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, the ancient historian Andrew Wallace-Hadrill noted:

> In addition to pulling together the evidence, in newspaper reports and photographs, for these 'living statues' (the term being borrowed from Gregorovius), Dwyer thereby offers a thoughtful insight into Fiorelli's contribution to archaeology and its intellectual and political background … This delightful volume is a welcome contribution to understanding what made Fiorelli and his methods so important, and to show how intimately archaeological method is linked to political and ideological change.[27]

And the Roman archaeologist Penelope Allison wrote:

> D[wyer]. takes an interesting and original approach to these plaster casts, their history and the role they have played in our understanding of changing approaches to the Pompeian remains. This is an

[25] Dwyer 2010: 2.

[26] Clarke 2012: n.p.

[27] Wallace-Hadrill 2012: 984.

> important addition to the mass of publications on things Pompeian.[28]

In the period since the book's publication, it has been interesting to track the different ways in which scholars outside of Classical Archaeology proper have drawn upon it. For instance, Sophie Thomas, a scholar of English Romantic literature and visuality, wrote about the casts in the context of the historical imagination in an article on 'Pompeii, the Body, and the Imprint of the Ancient World' for *Word & Image*.[29] In addition, the archaeologist Paul Reilly put the ontological uncertainty of the casts at the center of his discussion, 'Palimpsests of Immaterial Assemblages Taken out of Context: Tracing Pompeians from the Void into the Digital.' In his article in the *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, he picks up where Gene's book leaves off and seeks to drag the casts into the 'digital' age:

> Ontologically ambiguous, conceptually not structure, artefact, ecofact, or deposit, and sitting on the cusp of being either (or neither) positive or negative stratigraphic features, they are, nonetheless, sealed contexts. Stratigraphically, this (im)material assemblage is also simultaneously earlier, co-terminus, and later than the volcanic spew. These residues and traces are, in fact, palimpsests encapsulating 'the dual process of inscription and erasure' (Lucas 2012, p. 115), demanding ontological inspection. How autonomous are they? Are these voids actually the final resting places of the victims of Pompeii? Eugene Dwyer is by no means alone in sensing the eschatological ellipsis implied in the title of his book: *Pompeii's Living Statues: Ancient Roman Lives Stolen from Death* (Dwyer 2010).[30]

Where the casts had earlier been made to serve as 'a new canon of showpieces: the archaeological artefacts as works of art,' Reilly suggests that every age will continue to make them available for their own, novel ends.[31] The plaster casts are 'living statues' not just because they appear life-like, but because *we* refuse to let them die.

Coda: In His Own Words

In closing, we offer two thoughts:

The first concerns the illustrations selected for the cover of this volume and for this chapter: a photograph from Luigi Spina's project 'Sing Sing, Pompeii's body (*Il corpo di Pompei*)' and Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's painting *A Roman Amateur* (1868) (**Figure 2**), respectively. These two illustrations reminded us of Gene's work, because of the way in which he has encouraged us all to look with fresh eyes at our Roman subjects, especially mundane and overlooked objects.

Many will already be well acquainted with this painter's work, but most are likely less familiar with this painting in particular, which is now in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery. As helpfully described by C. Franklin Sayre:

> *A Roman Amateur* (Fig. 1) vividly depicts a somewhat mundane scene from the life of a wealthy Roman prior to the devastation of Pompeii in 79 A.D. Gathered around a bronze and marble table, located in the amateur's atrium, are five Romans who are admiring a gold and lapis lazuli statuette of Venus. The amateur, dressed in an elegant toga of white and pale yellow and seated next to the table, gestures towards the statuette as his guests look on. Around these figures are scattered various art objects ranging from the marble fountain-statue of a bacchante that stands beside the pool to the wall paintings in the background. Through the columns in the rear is seen a sunlit garden and, farther beyond, the shape of Mt. Vesuvius. Finally, on the edge of the bronze table supporting the statuette of Venus is found Alma-Tadema's signature and the date, 1868.[32]

One of Gene's profound contributions has been his careful attention to how Romans lived with sculptural and other objects in their homes, in all their *ordinariness* (to reprise R. Hanoune's review above: 'elles sont intéressantes et représentatives par leur banalité même.'). While the social status of those depicted in Alma-Tadema's painting is anything but 'ordinary,' the shared activity that they undertake – of *close looking* of a Roman statuette in a domestic setting – seems fitting

[28] Allison 2011: 611.
[29] Thomas 2017.
[30] Reilly 2015: 3.
[31] Dwyer 2005.

[32] Sayre 1973: 12. However, his description is not without its inaccuracies. As A.A. Donohue (pers. comm.) informs me: "A 'bacchant' is a female follower of Dionysus. Presumably Sayre is referring to the statue of the satyr with cymbals that, with its base, is placed on top of the fountain element. The satyr is mentioned on p. 144 and the painting is reproduced on p. 146 in Habetzeder 2012." My sincere thanks to Professor Donohue for this observation.

as a tribute to a scholar who has himself encouraged, through his teaching and his scholarship, such close looking: the careful attention to an object's details, the meticulous reconstruction of its architectural context, and the reappraisal of the conventional scholarly wisdom about Roman systems of artistic value within the wider social landscape(s).

Indeed, if there is a single contribution that we would like to highlight here, it would be Gene's placing of works of art in the realm of economics or what could be called consumerism – a point alluded to by the cover illustration by photographer Luigi Spina: the museum inventory tag on the statuette which resembles a price tag.[33] Spina's project 'Sing sing' refers to the prison-like storage facilities in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, whose 'cells barred by grates preserving the memories of a material culture that hails from Pompei and Ercolano.'[34] His photographic project seeks to capture the Museum's ancient contents in its modern carceral setting:

> Bronze, glass, ceramic, and terracotta artifacts fill these rooms, evoking the catastrophic eruption of 79 AD that brought everyday life in this area to a sudden end. The shelves are cluttered with candle sticks, decorations, handles, statues, pots, oil lamps... and even charred bread. It all bears living and highly significant testimony to the natural holocaust when the actions of the God Vulcan led to an unprecedented tragedy. Luigi Spina's photographs lead us in the discovery of the cells, their contents, the masterpieces hidden from the eyes of the public.[35]

In the context of this collection, the cover photograph is also an appropriate representation of the kinds of stored-away objects that Gene resurrected and re-inserted into their domestic settings. It also reminds us of how he studied pieces not as standalone works of art, but as parts of collections and ensembles, laying the foundation for current work in this area.[36]

Second, it seems only appropriate to end this brief overview of Gene's work, its reception, and its influence by surrendering the stage to the honorand himself. To that end, we have selected a few favorite quotes from



Figure 5. Eugene J. Dwyer preparing for a lecture at Kenyon College, 1989. Courtesy of Special Collections & Archives, Kenyon College.



Figure 6. Eugene J. Dwyer in Capri, 1989. Courtesy of Eugene J. Dwyer.

[33] My thanks to Prof. A.A. Donohue (pers. comm.) for discussion on this point.

[34] https://www.fivecontinentseditions.com/en/p/sing-sing-il-corpo-di-pompei/

[35] https://www.fivecontinentseditions.com/en/p/sing-sing-il-corpo-di-pompei/

[36] For instance, see Fejfer 2020 for a recent summary on the state of this field.

his work in paying tribute to him as a literary stylist. After all, it is one thing to conduct archival research, to produce original ideas, and to synthesize knowledge, as he has done so well; but it is quite another task to communicate that knowledge with a sense of precision and 'style' (loaded word that it is). And so we end with two images of him in the two places that defined his life and career – Kenyon College (**Figure 5**) and Italy (**Figure 6**) – and with some memorable quotes from Gene's various works:

On Pompeian domestic sculpture:

> Although the use by Pompeians of works once thought to have belonged to 'the figural art of the Greeks' as candelabra and the like has been considered evidence of the Romans' Philistinism, it is more likely that the explanation for such adaptations is to be found in their reluctance to collect art as an end in itself. Some habits were just too dangerous.[37]

On the 'living statues':

> In 2003 the exhibition Tales from an Eruption: Pompeii, Herculaneum, Oplontis opened to other cities throughout the world. The exhibition has attempted to combine the viewing of objects in a museum setting with the presentation of information about their specific archaeological context. Among the contexts from Pompeii that have contributed objects to this exhibition, the 'Alley of the Skeletons' (Vicolo degli Scheletri), the site of Fiorelli's first casts, is represented by an amber statuette, a silver medallion with an image of the goddess Fortune, and silver hand mirror, all of which were found in the vicinity of the body of the woman denoted in this study as victim no. 4. It is consoling and no small wonder to see that the little treasure that the woman struggled to preserve at the time of the destruction survives today.[38]

And on the legacy of Pompeii:

> As the serious damage inflicted on the city by seasonal rains and inadequate maintenance in recent years has made clear, Pompeii is constantly changing, usually for the worse. Nevertheless, some discoveries are made from year to year, often adding some new dimension to the site. The modern visitor may feel gratified to see some of the same sights (and sites) as Beckford, Goethe, Chassériau, and Bergman did, but much of what these illustrious visitors experienced in their time has now vanished, only to be experienced or resurrected in their surviving art works and recollections. For just that reason, the archaeological site of Pompeii is virtually indistinguishable from its simulacra – from its reception. There is no moral to be drawn from recognizing this double existence: it is a gift of post-modernity that we can profit from. The editors of *Pompeii in the Public Imagination* have given us a stimulating and provocative collection of essays in interpretation of this ruin that changes from year to year, yet always remains the same.[39]

[37] Dwyer 2012a: 318.
[38] Dwyer 2010: 123.
[39] Dwyer 2012b: n.p.

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Triumph over Death: Italic Funerary Furniture in the Getty Museum

Claire Lyons and Jessica Arista

In 1987, the J. Paul Getty Museum accepted a donation of furniture appliqués carved from bone. After the wooden supports to which they were attached had disintegrated in antiquity, the reliefs had collapsed into a heap of 359 pieces, posing a challenge for reconstructing the original object(s). A project to make sense of the group revealed that it was even more complex than suspected and comprised the *disiecta membra* of three distinct pieces of veneered furnishings dating from the mid-second to the mid-first century BC.[1]

The full picture came into focus beginning at the edges, like a jigsaw puzzle. Spool-shaped elements threaded with an iron rod formed tapered feet. Undecorated plaques covered lathe-turned wooden legs composed of campaniform and torus moldings. Lynx head protomes projecting from the top and bottom of an undulating frame unmistakably pertain to headrests (fulcra). Fulcra feature on a distinctive type of Italian couch, which furnished domestic interiors, especially for reclining at a meal, and tomb chambers, where they functioned as biers. The Getty couches almost certainly belonged to a funerary context. Glued rather than pinned to a wooden structure, the reliefs were little more than ephemeral decoration and were not intended to endure. Furthermore, mingled amongst the broken appliqués were human skeletal remains (see below, pp. 25–26).

Between the Middle Republic and the early Empire, upper-class patrons in Italy commissioned richly decorated biers in the form of a *lectus funebris*, which were carried in funeral processions and either deposited in burial chambers or cremated. Hundreds of luxurious bone-veneered couches have been excavated in cemeteries. Typically, the decoration alludes to feasting and drinking wine, convivial pleasures that were enjoyed in life and promised in the afterlife to the followers of the cult of Bacchus.

In addition to heads of lynxes and bacchants, finely carved reliefs of semi-nude male figures dressed in hip-mantles, helmeted heads of warriors, and a Gallic captive are also present. Obvious differences in the scale and quality of workmanship between the Dionysian reliefs with maenads and grapevines and the military figures are also evident in the lynx protomes, which are too numerous for a single couch. A third group of delicate egg and dart moldings, narrow friezes of garland-bearing putti, and fragmentary implements must have belonged to a wooden casket that held jewelry and toiletries. Overall, the typology of the components leaves no doubt as to the mortuary nature of these appliqués.[2]

In this overview of the Getty's carved bone appliqués, we examine their provenance and propose a preliminary attribution of the fragments to 'Couch A,' 'Couch B,' and a casket. Individual fragments are inventoried 87.AI.101.1–.359 and are referred to in the following discussion by the final numbers (.1, .2, etc.). Remarking on the iconography and dating, this study situates the furnishings within funerary rites practiced by Etrusco-Italic and Roman communities during the late Republic. Appendix 1 summarizes the scientific analysis conducted on the appliqués, which revealed information on the materials and techniques used to create these extravagant works of the furniture-maker's art.

[1] The authors acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of former Getty Villa intern Eric Beckman, who first recognized the components of a couch among the splintered fragments. We also thank Susanne Gänsicke, John Pollini, Peter Schertz, Rachel Kousser, Sarah Madole Lewis, and Richard De Puma for their advice on this project. We are grateful to the volume editors for the opportunity to share this study in honor of Gene Dwyer, whose research on the Vesuvian cities has been invaluable to his friends at the modern 'Villa dei Papiri' in Malibu.

Appliqués for a funeral couch, Etrusco-Italic, 150–50 BC, bone, ivory, stone, mineral pigments, and gold, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Malibu, California, Gift of Herbert L. Lucas (on loan from 1979), 87.AI.101.1–.359, viewed 28 January 2026, <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103WFS>. See Appendix 2 for links to additional illustrations.

[2] The fundamental catalogue of bone funerary couches is Letta (1984). On the status of current research, see Sapelli Ragni (2008), Bianchi (2010), and Letta (2014).

Provenance and Modern Dispersal of the Appliqués

According to museum records, the appliqués were allegedly found in Cerveteri (ancient Caere). The rite of burying the deceased on a bone or ivory-veneered couch is scarce in Etruria, where terracotta and stone cinerary urns produced in Volterra, Perugia, and Chiusi were favored. Many cinerary urns take the form of a Greek *kline* with a portrait of the individual reclining or lying on the lid, conceptualizing death in terms of dining and eternal sleep.[3] Mid-second-century BC Chiusine urns depicting a man reclining on a couch with fulcra and turned legs suggest that the ornate Italic types decorated with figural appliqués were familiar in elite domestic settings, though few are found in Hellenistic Etruscan cemeteries.[4] Bone reliefs depicting military tunics mounted as trophies, a subject depicted on several of the Getty fragments, decorated a couch excavated in Tomb 174 in the Bufaloreccia necropolis at Cerveteri (100 BC – AD 100).[5] Four couches in Chicago with Bacchic imagery, which for a time had erroneously been restored as a table, were found in Orvieto, perhaps from the same tomb.[6] Bone furniture appliqués are more common in Latial (Bolsena, Falerii Novi, Marino, Ostia, Praeneste, Rome, Sezze, Ventotene) and Umbrian settlements (Acquasparta, Cascia, Gubbio, Norcia, Otricoli, Santa Maria degli Angeli, and Spello).[7]

There are compelling reasons to connect the Getty reliefs with a set of bone carvings that was partly dispersed on the London art market. Fifteen appliqués were sold at auction in 1966 and according to Sabine Faust, they can be assigned to two stylistically distinct couches (**Figure 1**).[8] A bacchant wearing a nebris, a male figure standing in the ideal semi-nudity of a hero or god, and the helmeted head of a warrior have near identical counterparts in Malibu.[9] In the Israel Museum are a helmeted warrior and two bound captives, both types represented in the Getty group.[10] They were said to derive from a larger series that was circulating on the art market—possibly the Getty group of 359?.[11] The same medallion with a frontal helmeted head is in the Getty and Princeton collections, though the latter is larger.[12] The replications lend credence to the hypothesis that the Malibu, London, Jerusalem, and Princeton appliqués formed a single lot, which was unearthed sometime before 1966. Other related veneers, which must have numbered in the hundreds to cover two couches, were either unrecovered or dispersed.

Absent records of excavation, one cannot be certain whether the complete group represents two couches from the same tomb or whether components from disparate findspots were commingled in the modern era. All the Getty fragments, however, display similar craft techniques and tool marks, and figural reliefs were mixed with undecorated veneers from the couch legs, as well as with the remains of human burials (see below Appendix 1). Our supposition that they originated in a single tomb context must remain unconfirmed but is highly plausible.[13]

Couch A

Lynx fulcrum protomes

Couch A is characterized by a fulcrum decorated with a high relief protome of a lynx head, sharp fangs visible in its gaping jaws. The head was fashioned from a hollow long bone shaped into a rectangular core (.83), with reliefs added to the top of the snout, cheeks, and long vertical ears (.118). The eye sockets are deeply cut, probably for the insertion of glass or stone eyes.[14] Strands of the mane extend onto the surrounding surface of the fulcrum (.82) and some fragments show

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3 Pieraccini 2000.

4 Cormier 2022: pl. 28.

5 Bianchi 2006. On the bone-carving refuse found in the Vigna Parrochiale area of Cerveteri, see Colivicchi 2007: 147n308.

6 Chicago, Field Museum, acc. 289. A significant collection of Roman bone facings with Dionysiac motifs is in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, inv. 84.73, viewed 28 January 2026 <https://www.vmfa.museum/artworks/facings-for-a-couch-64585>. See also the group from Corinth in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. RES.28.107, with military motifs: Vermeule 1989.

7 Cormier 2022, Appendix 2.

8 Faust 1989: 219. See Sotheby's London (1966: 52–54, 118–128 [and four additional fragments not in the catalogue]). Lots from this group were purchased by R. Hecht, Kamer, Giblin, Langtry, and Royal Athena Galleries.

9 Compare lot 127 (semi-nude male) and lot 124 (helmeted head now in Princeton) with precise counterparts in the Getty set (.141 and .123).

10 Jerusalem, The Israel Museum, inv. IMJ 75.43.122–124, donated by Herbert Cahn. Jucker and Camporeale 1991: 287–88 (said to be 'ivory'). We thank curator Galit Bennett-Daher for making photographs of these pieces available.

11 Jucker and Camporeale 1991: 288. Münzen und Medaillen A.G. Basel 1972: 22, 25, lot 58.

12 Appliqué with the head of Athena Parthenos, Etruscan, H. 4.5 cm, third–second century BC, Princeton University Art Museum, inv. 2002.29, viewed 28 January 2026, <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/40722>. This roundel was part of the group sold at Sotheby's London (1966: lot 124).

13 See below, Appendix 2.

14 Costamagna (2014: 126n41) proposes that bitumen was imported from Egypt and used as an adhesive for glass eye inserts. The feline on a couch from Tomb 2 at Fossa retains a white glass eye insert with a green pupil, and a leopard on the same couch has cavities for the addition of glass spots on its fur: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Elementi_di_un_letto_funebre_in_osso,_20_ac-20_dc_ca,_dalla_tomba_2_di_fossa_(AQ)_02.jpg> (viewed 28 January 2026).

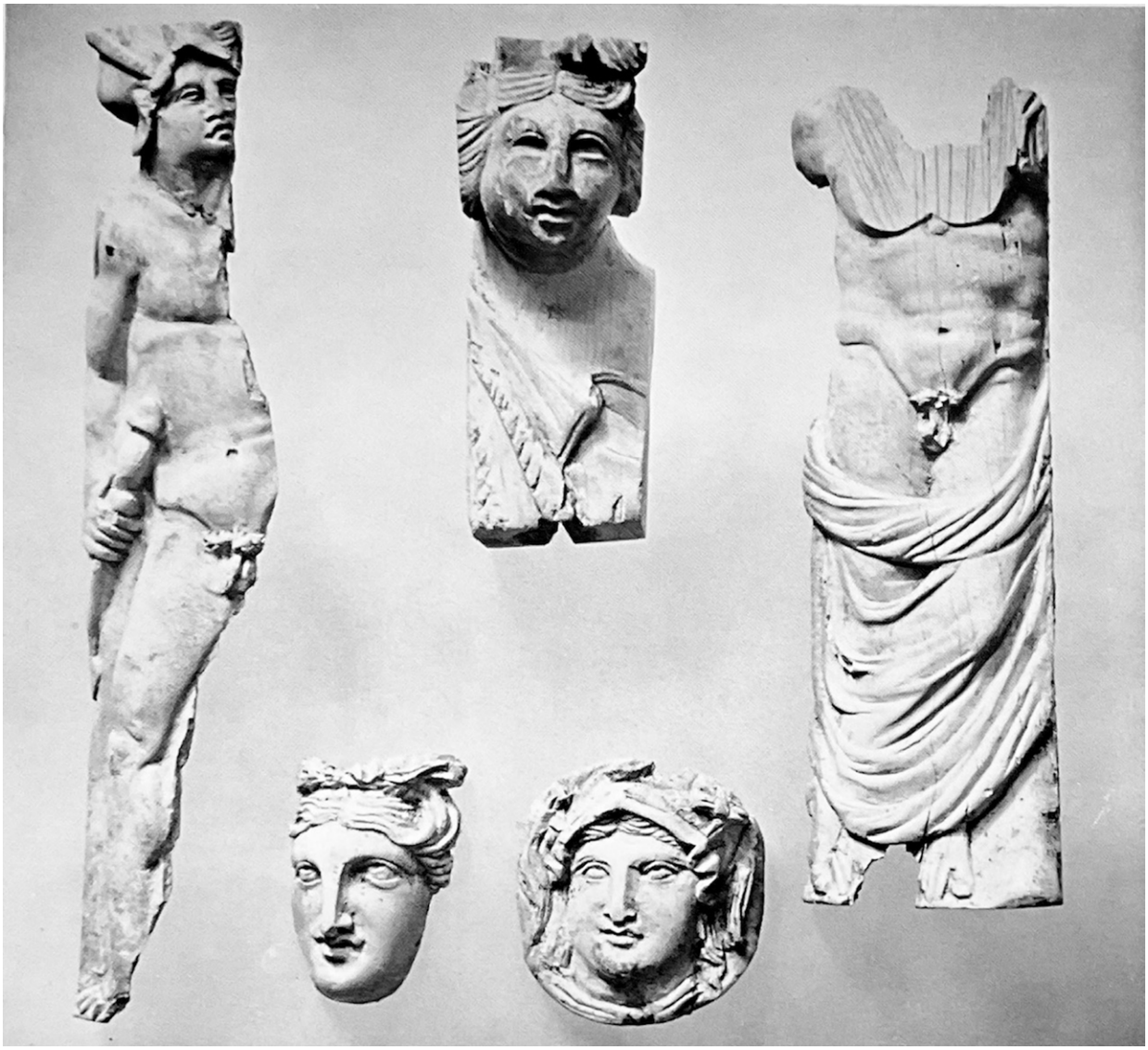


Figure 1. Bone couch appliqués from a Roman couch. Photograph: after Sotheby's London 1966: 52, lots 126, 121, 119, 124, and 127.

twisted vine tendrils surrounding the feline mane (.81, .85).

Lynx fulcra protomes similar to those on Couch A come from sites in Abruzzo (Gioia dei Marsi, Amplero, Navelli, Fossa, and Poggio Picenze), Umbria (Norcia), and Marche (Ancona).[15] Reputed to exude an alluring fragrance, lynxes were sacred to Bacchus, god of wine, and connote the feminine sphere of perfume and seduction. Most are associated with female burials, though not exclusively. Ivy or grape vines entwining the protome are connected with the regeneration of verdant nature and occur on funerary couches from Monteleone di Spoleto, Ancona, and the Roman Grotelle shipwreck at Ventotene.[16] Those from excavated contexts belong to the earlier production phase of bone-veneered couches and date from the second into the first century BC.[17] For female devotees of the cult of Bacchus, lynxes wreathed with ivy leaves recall his consort Ariadne, who is shown seated with

[15] Bianchi 2006: 45–50 and Cormier 2022: Appendix 2, 'Répartitition géographique des lits antiques'. Compare especially the lynx protomes from Navelli: Bovero *et al.* 2014: figs. 24–25.

[16] Costamagna 2014: 124–26, fig. 22; Diana 2008: 104–05, fig. 1.

[17] Martellone 2014: figs. 25, 30.

the god on a couch strapped to the back of an ass on an Apulian krater in St. Petersburg.[18] Writing not long after Couch A was made, the Augustan poet Propertius addressed an elegy to Bacchus, whose lynx-drawn chariot conveyed Ariadne heavenward (*Elegies* III.17).

Bacchant fulcrum reliefs

Even more resonant of the Bacchic sphere are a group of female heads with plump faces and a center-parted coiffeur bound in a headband (mitra) and crowned with ivy leaves (.120, .206). Like the lynx heads, hollowed sockets would have accommodated inserted eyes (**Figure 9**). The heads belong to female bust appliqués, some of which have a round scar that was scored with a sharp instrument for the attachment of a frontal face. They wear a fringed fawn-skin (*nebris*) tied at the right shoulder (.116, .103, .105). One female head has strands of softly waved hair flowing back from either side of the face (.102), comparable to one of the London heads.[19] The bacchants and lynxes of Couch A are carved in a vernacular Italic/Roman style typical of many couches, a number of which have been fully reconstructed (**Figure 6**).

Bacchants were members of the Dionysian entourage and roundels with their image in high relief were applied to the lower end of couch fulcra. A female wearing a mitra and ivy wreath from a mid-first-century BC couch found in Tomb IIA at Monteleone di Spoleto is contemporary with the Getty female busts and lynx head.[20] Among the leaves on head .120 are round buds crossed by incisions to form poppy capsules. A near complete couch from Amplero is supported on legs with bold relief masks of Somnus, who also wears a crown of poppies.[21] The iconography constructs death around sensual pleasures of drinking and feasting, transforming the *lectus tricliniaris* into a metaphor for sleep and rebirth in the afterlife.

Couch leg plaques

Undecorated trapezoidal and semi-circular plaques were glued to the wooden legs of couches. Approximately 50 plaques, some with an offset groove at the lower edge, represent eight distinct convex and concave profiles that covered torus, campaniform, and discoid moldings (see e.g. **Figure 7**). Tubular elements probably served as spacers between the moldings and enclosed the lower part of the leg above the foot. Several are stained on the interior from the iron rod that was inserted in the legs to support the weight of the frame, coverlets, and dead body.

Couch B

Lynx fulcrum protomes

To Couch B we attribute a different style of lynx protome, which was attached to at least three individual fulcra. Unlike the lynxes of Couch A, these felines have slanted eyes in relief, their irises and drilled pupils touching the upper lids (.106, .109, .321, .323; **Figure 2**). Projecting well above the fulcrum, pointed ears were carved in one piece with the high cheeks and wrinkled snout. The heads were built up from five bone laminates assembled in vertical slices from the ears to the mouth. This version of lynx is apparently unparalleled among Italic couches, and the subtle finish of the burnished bone surface connects them with a group of standing draped male figures.

Semi-nude males

Six male figures, which would have been about 20 cm in height had the heads and feet been preserved, were carved from multiple vertical bone laminations. The most complete preserves the proper right side of a nude torso garbed in a hip mantle, the drapery of which bunches in a thick roll over the top of the thighs. Two slightly smaller-scale figures don a sword strap (*balteus*) over the right shoulder, depicting the victorious general type. One man's right arm is bent at the elbow with fingers curved in a parade grip to grasp the hilt of his lowered sword (.127, **Figure 3**); an oval shield with a midrib is visible behind the shoulder of the other (.139). On a third fragment (.132), a scabbard with a rounded chafe hangs from a sword strap. Three taller male figures, possibly gods, stand with their right arm raised, as if supporting a staff (.249, .250, .141), the pole of which is visible, resting on the fourth male's crooked left forearm (.133). Two fragments of lower legs swathed in the mantle pertain to figures standing at rest with the left leg crossed over the right, balanced on the toes (.221 and .230). An oval body shield with a rectangular umbo (scutum, .225) and a hand holding a pole on which is mounted an anatomical cuirass (.246, with part of a shield below) reveal that the draped figures are participating in a triumphal event featuring the display of captured enemy arms.

[18] St. Petersburg, Hermitage inv. 295; Cormier 2022: pl. 31.1.

[19] Faust (1989: 219) identifies the female figures in London as Artemis. The figure wearing a fringed nebris (Sotheby's London 1966: lot 119) is analogous.

[20] Monteleone di Spoleto: Costamagna 2014. Also compare the maenad roundels on a fulcrum from Poggio Picenze: Martellone 2014: 48, fig. 30.

[21] Amplero: Letta 2014 and previous bibliography. Falerii Novi: Caretta 2014.



Figure 2. Fragmentary lynx protome from a fulcrum, 150–50 BC. Bone. J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Gift of Herbert L. Lucas, 87.AI.101.106. Photograph: Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

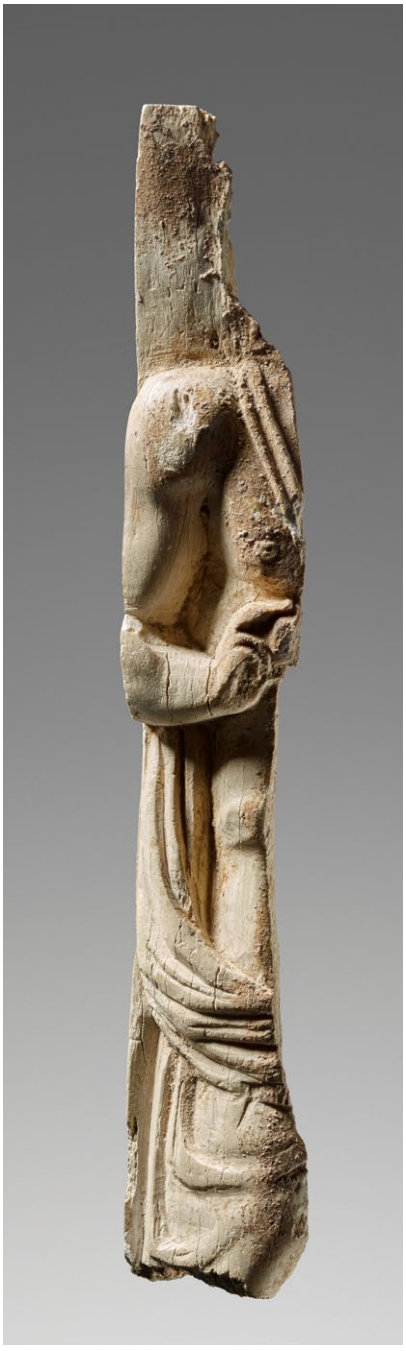


Figure 3. Fragmentary appliqué of a heroic general, 150–50 BC. Bone. H. 13.6 cm. J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Gift of Herbert L. Lucas, 87.AI.101.127. Photograph: Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

All the semi-draped males are headless, as is their counterpart in London, which preserves the full body from the shoulders to the feet (**Figure 1**, right).[22] A damaged male head (.121) is the only piece in the set that is made of ivory. Carved in the round, the head turns in an upward glance, but only the lips and clean-shaven chin are intact. It is possible that the head may have joined the torso of one of the larger semi-nude males. The larger appliqués are slightly concave on the reverse and could have encased the cylindrical upper portion of the leg on a chair or couch, but it cannot be excluded that a frieze of tall mantle figures was affixed to another kind of wood object.

Idealized semi-nude males are a Hellenistic type, and the posture of the figures resting in a crossed-leg stance (.221, .230) and holding a staff characterizes gods such as Poseidon/Neptune and Dionysos/Bacchus. The Greek vogue for the enveloping hip-mantle was introduced on Roman honorific statuary in the second century BC.[23] Baldrics and swords are attributes of heroic military leaders. The Tivoli General in Palazzo Massimo and the Aquileia Navarch, who holds a sword pommel in the parade grip, are freestanding portraits of this hip-mantle type, although the portraits are more modestly draped.[24]



Figure 4. Helmeted head, 150–50 BC. Bone. J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Gift of Herbert L. Lucas, 87.AI.101.123. Photograph: Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

Warriors and weapons

Heads of warriors wearing helmets with peaked visors belonged to full-length figures like one formerly in London, who advances right holding a scabbard as he looks up to the left (**Figure 1**, left). Two heads (.124 and .125, **Figure 10**) and a third in Jerusalem depict the same character.[25] Shown in three-quarter perspective, their upturned faces and distant 'melting gaze' echo a Hellenistic stylistic koiné that infused cinerary urns and Etrusco-Italic architectural sculpture, such as the second-century BC sculptures from the Catona sanctuary near Arezzo.[26] A head of a draped figure wearing a plumed helmet (.123, **Figure 4**) is replicated in a slightly larger counterpart in Princeton, which is identified as Athena.[27] Both reliefs are carved as medallions and may have been attached to the lower culmen of a headrest. Thematically, the reliefs of Couches A and B distill the visual program of the mid-second-century BC terracotta temple pediment from Sentinum (Civita Alba), which combines Dionysos with his consort Ariadne on Naxos with vignettes of a Celtomachia.[28] Oblong body shields with a vertical spine and rectangular umbo (.124, .128, .225), scabbards with semi-circular chapes (.130, .132), and two trophies (muscle cuirass and tunic, .246, .142) are consonant with displays of captured weaponry on triumphal reliefs, such as the Aemilius Paullus monument in Delphi and the Tomb of Cecilia Metella on the via Appia in Rome.[29]

Bound captive

Most distinctive among the Getty appliqués is the figure of a naked bearded man crouching on an uneven ground, his left leg drawn up in front of his chest and hands bound behind his back. Looking up apprehensively to the right, his unruly locks of hair and pathetic expression mark him as a foreign, probably Gallic prisoner (.126; **Figure 5**). A pair of carved bone

[22] Sotheby's London 1966: no. 127.
[23] Hallett 2005: 120–32.
[24] Tivoli General: Museo Archeologico Romano inv. 106513, 100–50 BC; Aquileia Navarch: Aquileia, Museo Archeologico Nazionale inv. 51.965. See Cadario 2005: 612, fig. 2; 2015/16; and 2017. A fragmentary torso in Palestrina is of the same type; Agnoli 2002: 176–79, cat. II.13, 'statua maschile paludata,' an over life-size man holding the pommel of a sword.
[25] Jerusalem, Israel Museum inv. 75.43.122, H. 4.2 cm.
[26] Steingräber 2000: 243–44, figs. 91–92.
[27] See above, n. 12.
[28] Torelli 1993; Steingräber 2000: 244–45.
[29] Taylor 2016.

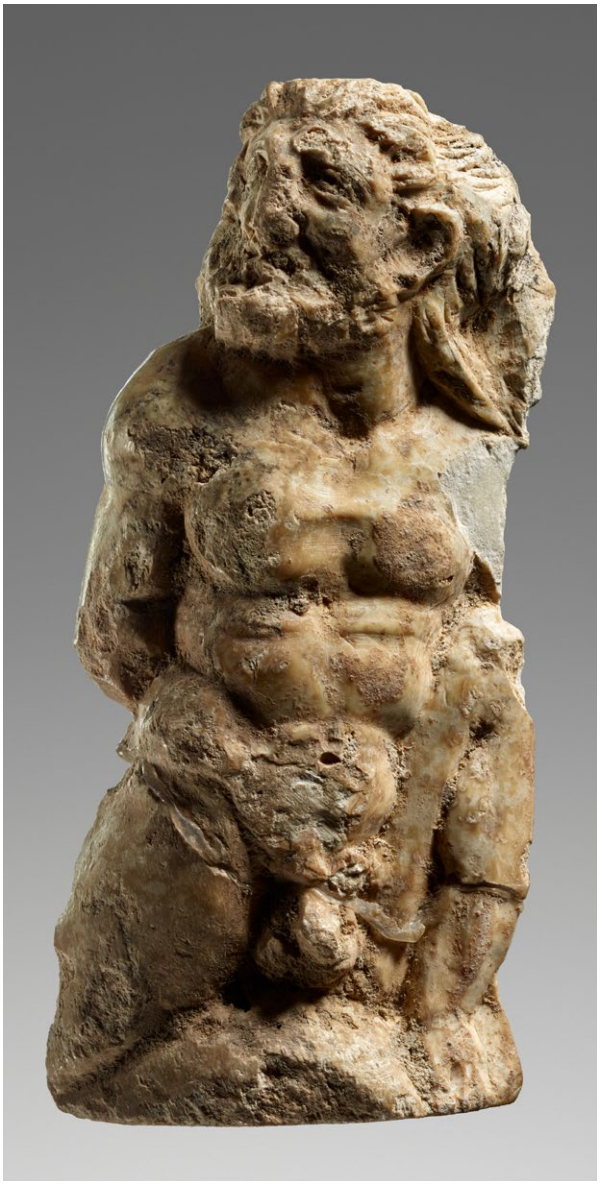


Figure 5. Bound captive, 150–50 BC. Bone. J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Gift of Herbert L. Lucas, 87.AI.101.126. Photograph: Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.

captives in the Israel Museum are identical to the Getty relief, but instead depict beardless youths.[30] They are mirror images, one glancing up to the right and the other to the left.

The mantle figures, warriors, and captives may have populated a single narrative composition or formed two pendant groups on the ends of the couch. Giovannangelo Camporeale connected the Jerusalem captives with Achilles' sacrifice of twelve Trojan youths at the funeral pyre of Patroklos (*Iliad* 23.170–177).[31] The Trojan sacrifice, most famously, is the subject of the wall paintings in the François Tomb from Vulci, where Achilles' vengeance is juxtaposed with scenes of Etruscan heroes slaughtering Romans. Two Praenestine bronze cistas of notable artistic quality, the Revil cista and the Napoleon cista, depict both bearded and youthful captives being led to a pyre piled with a booty of shields, helmets, and cuirasses. A prosperous client commissioned the San Severo sarcophagus in Orvieto with the scene of the Trojan sacrifice and the motif also recurs on a Faliscan red-figure stamnos as well as on two Volterran urns dated to the late third century BC.[32]

Greek artists largely avoided the brutal act perpetrated by Achilles, but as the above works show the myth was favored in funerary settings in southern Etruria, Falerii, and Praeneste. Its depiction on Couch B would be a notable addition to the repertoire of Trojan sacrifice scenes in central Italy. Significantly, scenes of Greeks prevailing over Trojan adversaries terminate in the third century just as Rome was consolidating its dominion over neighboring towns in Etruria. The Homeric episode became a mythological paradigm of national consequence and can be read as a proxy for the conflict between Etruscan, Latin, and Roman communities, who claimed descent from Greek or Trojan heroes.[33] As the François tomb paintings imply, such a narrative was charged with identity politics. In an Etrusco-Italic context, the Homeric episode may well have awakened memories of the savage mass sacrifices of prisoners perpetrated by both the Etruscans of Tarquinia and the Romans (Livy 7.15.10 and 7.19.2–3).

Alternatively, the *adligatus* motif, which refers to an individual tied to a tree, was a standard topos in the iconography of seated captives bound to the base of a trophy or armored mannekin, a Roman innovation. Toward the end of the second century BC subjugated prisoners of war were displayed as human booty in triumphal parades. They first appeared on Republican coinage and thereafter in the applied arts and architectural sculpture.[34] Confiscated armor and weapons formed monumental tableaux on the Tropaea Marii, which were installed on the Capitoline

[30] Jerusalem, Israel Museum inv. 75.43.123 and 75.43.124.

[31] Jucker and Camporeale 1991: 287–88.

[32] For comments on these examples, see Maggiani 1985, 209–12.

[33] Lowenstam 2008: esp. 157–70.

[34] Kinnee 2016.

after the Roman general Marius's victory in the Gallic campaigns in 101 BC. It is tempting to reconstruct the three captives, helmeted warriors, and semi-draped heroes as participants in a triumph, which situated the deceased and the extended clan within an honorable family tradition of martial virtue. Historical reliefs commemorated conflicts in which Romans and their Etruscan and Italic *soci* resisted the incursions of the Gauls in northern Italy, such as Caere's stunning defeat of Gallic mercenaries in league with Syracuse, who attacked the city by land and sea in 384 BC.[35] The presence of military gear and the foreign features of the captives, who are paired as mirror images as if tied to opposite sides of a trophy, suggests that the reliefs of Couch B pertain to conflicts of recent memory rather than to the Homeric sacrifice of the Trojan youths.

Cosmetic Casket

Reliefs of winged putti (.97–.101 and five others), narrow segments of egg and dart moldings (.69, .232), and a delicately worked frieze of volute vine tendrils (.96, .305, .307) were most probably fittings from a wooden casket (*kibotos*, *kiste*). A standard part of the female funerary kit, caskets were elaborate confections composed of a wooden box, hinged lid, and interior compartments to hold cosmetics, jewelry, and other accoutrements of the feminine toilette. The lid and sides were decorated with floral and figural moldings and reliefs. Vanity boxes of this kind have been found in Chiusi, Capua, Cumae, Pompeii, Succivo, Tarquinia, and other sites.[36] The possession of elegant toiletry caskets reflects an interest in an elite lifestyle of bodily care and *cosmesis* that grew in importance at this time.[37]

Friezes of putti lifting garlands of leaves and fruit emerged on relief ceramics made in Pergamon around the mid-second century BC and register the influence of a Pergamene design vocabulary.[38] For the appliqués of putti supporting garlands with gorgon masks above the festoons, a stone frieze from Sutrium dating to 100–50 BC offers a contemporary parallel.[39] The casket to which these bone reliefs belonged would have been similar to an example from Falerii Novi with registers of moldings and disks, and another from Aquinum, the lid of which has egg and dart moldings around a medallion of a female head.[40] A thin roundel with the profile head of Mercury (.122), who wears a petasos and a chlamys draped high around his neck, was probably affixed to the center of the casket's lid.

Four fragments of white stone may evidence the remains of an alabastron for scented oil and unguents. Several smooth curved rims and a disk with concentric moldings (.87) resemble a lidded pyxis. Tubular grooved implements were probably used as cosmetic or unguent applicators (.158, .357, .358, .359). Possibly functioning as spindles, the two rods (.68 and .164) are similar to implements found in Tomb 5512 at Tarquinia, which contained material broadly dating from the fourth to the first century BC, including bone laminations for a casket.[41]

Bone-veneered Couches in Italic Burial Ritual

The evidence that at least two couches and a cosmetic casket may have come from a single tomb is consistent with the assemblages documented in over two hundred similar burials. Tombs containing bone-veneered couches are concentrated mainly in Abruzzo, which was a leading production center, as well as in the regions of Lazio and Umbria (**Figure 6**). Their popularity in upland Apennine regions has been connected with local economies that were reliant on pasturing livestock. Cattle supplied craftsmen with ample discarded bone to recycle for a variety of applied arts and implements. Though bone was ubiquitous, it was not merely an inexpensive substitute for costly exotic wood, tortoise shell, and ivory. Durable and pliant, bone can be polished to a lustrous surface that is not easily distinguished from imported ivory.

The headboards, frame, and legs of custom-made couches were completely reveted with pre-cut plaques and figural reliefs, which were glued to the wood substructure. The recurrence of duplicate appliqués at distant sites suggests that ateliers skilled in fine cabinetry, intaglio, intarsia, glass inlay, polychrome painting, and gilding traveled to fulfill commissions. Not intended to endure household wear and tear, their products were delicate show-pieces and must have been assembled in situ. The wide dissemination of these elaborate couch/biers is sometimes attributed to a diaspora of immigrant craftsmen from the courts of Pergamon and Alexandria to serve a western clientele. However, the typology of the couches is peculiar to the Italic interior and argues for a local artisanal production that flourished from the late third century BC into the early first century AD.

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[35] Holliday 1994.
[36] Iozzo 2012: pls. XXI–XXIV.
[37] Bispham 2013: 60–61.
[38] Kuttner 1995: 157–78.
[39] Kleiner 1980: 41, fig. 14. On the Roman couch found on the Esquiline, putti are making garlands of fruit; Talamo 1987/1988: 32.
[40] Aquinum: Bovero *et al.* 2014: 86, fig. 22; Falerii Novi: Caretta 2014: figs. 17–18.
[41] Cavagnano Vanoni 1996: 258, cats. 214–15, pl. LVb.



Figure 6. Bone-veneered funerary bed with lynx fulcra, from Collelongo, tomb 14, 2nd–1st century BC. Photograph: Sailko, CC BY 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>, via Wikimedia Commons.

Bone and ivory embellishments were a well-established tradition in fine cabinetry and the funeral genre is attested in South Italian visual art already in the fourth century. On an Apulian volute krater by the Darius Painter, for example, a female attendant holds a parasol protectively over the head of the young Archemoros, whose body is extended on a *kline* highlighted in added white paint.[42] During the late Republic and early Empire, the rite of *prothesis* on a couch was conspicuous among the upper classes in rural communities. Aristocratic funerals were orchestrated public events pivoting on the cortège that accompanied the body, carried aloft on a resplendent bier, to the grave site. More or less contemporary with the Getty appliqués, a first-century BC relief from Amiternum pictures the crowded procession of agitated mourners, family members, a troupe of musicians, and eight pallbearers escorting the deceased — or an effigy reclining as if at a banquet — under a starry canopy.[43] The couch was placed inside a tomb chamber to serve as a catafalque for the inhumed remains or, more rarely, was cremated with the body. In addition to ceramic grave goods and personal effects, other bone and ivory accoutrements were regularly deposited, such as toiletry caskets, footstools, and parasols.[44] The burial of these luxurious yet ephemeral furnishings signified both the religious beliefs of the family and a final social performance of conspicuous consumption.[45]

Emulation or Assimilation?

Precedents for the sudden spate of bone-veneered couches in the late Republican period can be sought in Macedonia in the chryselephantine *klinai* made for aristocratic and princely patrons. Around forty have been excavated at Korinos (Pydna), Ayios Athanassios, and other sites in the years since the discovery of the remarkable *klinai* in the royal tombs at Aigai.[46] They depict Greek cavalry fighting Persians, hunts, and the Dionysian thiasos. Between the late fourth and early third century BC, the practice of burial on opulent *klinai* decorated with colored pigments, gold, and glass was adopted by the ranks of courtiers, officers, and guards — the companions of Alexander — for whom

[42] Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 81934, 350–325 BC. See Taplin 2007: 211, fig. 79.

[43] L'Aquila, Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo, inv. OPS 222.

[44] Mascelli 2014–2015.

[45] On the performative function of the funerary *klinai* (couches) in presenting the deceased as an *exemplum virtutis*, see von Hesberg (2018, 103–107). The author notes a preference for banquet equipment in *kline* burials in the Hellenistic east as well as rural communities in the West, a practice that is not in evidence in Rome (p. 106).

[46] Kousser 2024; Kottaridi 2013: 296–314.

elephant ivory exemplified the exotic luxuries won in the conquest of Asia. Even accounting for the survival of couches into the early third century, a gap of close to a century separates the Graeco-Macedonian *klinai* from the inception of the Italic type, which is distinguished by the articulation of the 'baroque' molded legs and curved fulcra.

Two themes that infuse Macedonian funerary iconography are pervasive in the Italian corpus — the worship of Bacchus/Dionysos and the commemoration of military prowess. Bacchic iconography is most common and reflects the infiltration of the Greek god from Magna Graecia and Etruria and his assimilation — despite the decree of 187 BC (*Senatus consultum Bacchanalibus*) banning the Bacchanalia throughout the Italian peninsula — into central Italian cults such as that of Fufluns Pacha and Roman Liber.[47] Women in particular were drawn to the ecstatic, salvific dimension of Dionysism, to which the imagery of lynxes, bacchants, and vines allude. Reliefs illustrating captured armor and tunics mounted as trophies regularly decorate couches found in the territories of Roman expansion in northern Italy, transalpine Europe, and the Greek mainland.[48] Battlefield valor, evoked by the figures of heroic generals, warriors, and their captives spoke more directly to mainstream Roman Republican values. Notwithstanding this apparent tension, Dionysian and martial motifs are regularly juxtaposed on the same couch or within the same tomb. The two themes intersect around the ideology of triumph — the triumph of Dionysos, victory in war, and the conquest of death.[49]

In the West, the privatization of the Hellenistic court taste for elegant banquet couches, credenzas, and tripod tables influenced domestic interiors. The trend is conventionally dated to the second century BC when the military commanders Lucius Cornelius Scipio Asiaticus and Cnaeus Manlius Vulso returned with bronze and ivory *lecti tricliniarii* as spoils of war from successful campaigns in Asia Minor in 189 and 187 BC (Pliny *Nat.* 34.8.14; Livy 39.6.7). Their flamboyant triumphs, it is suggested, spurred the upper classes in towns outside of Rome to emulate the displays of status enjoyed by metropolitan elites, in a process of 'auto-Romanization.'[50] But the evidence of fourth-century red-figure vases, Tarentine gilt terracottas appliqués, and Etruscan urns indicates that this genre of furniture aligned with established funerary traditions and was mediated via Magna Grecia and Etruria as much as Rome.

The necropolis at Fossa (L'Aquila) documents an informative sequence of mortuary traditions that culminated in Italic practices that were to some degree independent of metropolitan Roman models.[51] Some patrons held office in civic administrations or served as military allies of Rome, returning with booty on the model of Alexander's Companions or Vulso. But weddings, funerals, and political alliances could also have offered opportunities for connectivity and emulation within and between municipalities. By the end of the third century, social hierarchies were becoming more sharply defined and modest burials were increasingly supplanted by displays of ostentation. Grave goods witness the ambition to secure one's position in the social order through property and prestige. Large built chamber tombs housing opulent couches and toiletry boxes heralded a culture of prosperity, leisure, concerns for bodily care, and adornment, in which Greek protocols of banqueting and Dionysian eschatology were dominant. Through the competitive luxury of bone-veneered couches and burial accoutrements, the elite ranks of ethnic communities popularized an original product of Italic art that endured well into the early Empire.

[47] Mac Góráin 2020: 6–7. On the funerary role of Fufluns/Dionysos, see Pizzirani 2009: 40–49.
[48] Bianchi 2006: 45–50.
[49] Colivicchi 2002; Mac Góráin 2020: 20–22.
[50] Cadario 2015/16.
[51] Bispham 2013: 62–66.

Appendix 1. Materials and Manufacturing Techniques: A Technical Study of Carved Bone Appliqués from Funeral Furnishings

Jessica Arista

The materials and techniques used in the manufacture of the bone funerary couch appliqués were studied utilizing Peptide Mass Fingerprinting, portable X-ray fluorescence analysis (pXRF), as well as with visual examination methods including ultraviolet radiation, visible-induced luminescence (VIL) imaging, and digital microscopy. Analysis identified the type of bone from which the appliqués were carved and documented their condition, toolmarks, fabrication methods, and the decorative substances that were originally applied.

Peptide Mass Fingerprinting

Fifteen fragments of bone were sampled and characterized using Peptide Mass Fingerprinting (PMF), an analytical method that identifies the animal species from the unique peptide mixture of collagen-based material.[52] Conservation scientist Dan Kirby carried out the analysis and identified 14 of the samples as cattle bone. PMF analysis confirmed our visual identification of the skeletal material, based on the presence of Haversian canals, and preserved morphological features, such as the cancellous material remaining on many appliqués. One sample taken from a male head (.121) was determined to be elephant ivory, possibly indicating the use of a more costly imported substance for the faces of prominent figures. The prevalence of cattle bone on Couches A and B and the casket aligns with the practices observed on previously published funerary and domestic furniture. Given the abundance of cattle and the size of their bones, cattle were the most common sources of animal bone used in antiquity in the production of decorative and utilitarian objects.[53]

Construction

This group of bone fragments can be associated with at least two funerary couches and a toiletry casket, as well as a small lidded pyxis and several implements likely used for cosmetics. The great majority belonged to couches A and B, which were ornamented with hundreds of individually hand-carved plaques. The bone plaques were mainly applied in two ways. Single-layered veneers sheathed the couch legs and fulcrum with trapezoidal, semi-circular, and rectangular plaques and frames. Thicker pieces of bone were built up from multiple laminations that were glued together, providing the required depth for carving sculptural elements in high relief. The assembly of these elements on wood furniture is comparable to other known examples.[54] The veneers were attached to each other and to the now lost wooden substrate most likely with animal glue. Only one fragment (.105) exhibits a round hole on its back, suggesting the possible use of a dowel in construction. Several cylindrical or curved fragments exhibit significant iron staining indicating contact with an iron-rich material during burial. The presence of iron was confirmed with portable X-ray fluorescence spectrometry,[55] indicating that iron rods were inserted to strengthen the couch legs, as has been found in other excavated funerary couches.[56]

The bone veneers comprise various types of decorative elements. Generally, they were sawn from longitudinal sections of cattle long bones. Cancellous material is visible on the backs or interiors of some fragments, but on others much of the cancellous material had been removed. In the case of the couch legs, for example, single-layered veneers were formed by sawing the bone to shape and removing cancellous material, presumably with a chisel, as numerous chisel marks are visible on the backs of numerous leg veneers (**Figure 7**). Fine parallel striations visible on their edges indicate that the leg veneers were then carved to shape with a rasp. The outer surfaces are compact and smooth with fine polishing marks, indicating buffing as the final step.

For the creation of the high-relief appliqués, the artisan sawed 'blanks' of various irregular shapes from large bones and shaped them with claw-toothed chisels and rasps. Additionally, the surfaces to be joined

[52] The following objects were analyzed with Peptide Mass Fingerprinting: 87.AI.101.69, .83, .104, .118, .120, .121, .122, .123, .124, .125, .126, .127, .106, .321, and .206. Dan Kirby Analytical Service performed the PMF analysis on the Getty bone (14 March 2019 and 20 February 2020 reports on file in the Antiquities Conservation Department, Getty Villa). See Kirby *et al.* 2013.

[53] St. Clair (2003: 2) notes that 'Bones used for carving were basically from the waste from butchered animals, particularly cattle, sheep, and goats, but also pigs, donkey, deer, horse, and camel among others...At the Palatine East, as elsewhere the bones of larger animals were preferred, and cattle was the predominant species.' See also St. Clair 2003: 30.

[54] St. Clair 2003; See also Bovero *et al.* (2014) and Mols (1999: 105–08) on construction methods, materials, and tools.

[55] A Bruker Tracer 5i portable X-ray fluorescence spectrometer was used to identify the presence of iron. A selection of three fragments were analyzed: 87.AI.101.33, .82, .213.

[56] For the iron rods that supported a couch from Navelli, see De Palma *et al.* (2014: 67, fig. 14).



Figure 7. Front and back of a leg veneer detailing the differing surface treatments. The front, display surface is highly polished, while on the back cancellous material has been removed and the surface exhibits chisel marks, presumably to texturize the surface and aid adhesion to a wooden substrate with glue. J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Gift of Herbert L. Lucas, 87.AI.101.31. Photographs: Jessica Arista (technical views).

were scored with V-shaped knife incisions. Most bone fragments display toolmarks from the repeated use of a multi-toothed chisel to shape the lamination, resulting in long, roughly parallel striations (**Figure 8**). It appears that the artisan employed chisels of at least two sizes since the width between teeth on one fragment (.126) measures 0.41 – 0.48mm, while very similar parallel striations on another piece (.105) are wider, measuring 0.65 – 0.82mm. Determining the original width of the chisels was hindered by overlapping toolmarks. The laminations were then joined together, presumably with animal glue,[57] to create larger blocks of sufficient depth for carving figures in high relief, such as the lynx heads, maenad busts, fulcrum protomes, and the standing semi-nude males. Tool dimensions and depths are very similar across fragments and help to establish that the relief and plain plaques in this set were made with similar, if not the same, tools. Analogous construction methods employed for bone and ivory objects have been documented throughout antiquity,



Figure 8. Back of bound captive showing parallel striations of a claw-toothed chisel for shaping and v-shaped knife grooves for adding texture to the surface to assist in adhesion to a wooden substrate with glue. J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Gift of Herbert L. Lucas, 87.AI.101.126. Photograph: Jessica Arista (technical view).

[57] Although no physical evidence of ancient glue remains on the bone fragments, their laminar forms and technique of roughing the joins aligns with the application of an animal-derived adhesive.



Figure 9. Traces of gold leaf associated with a female head. J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Gift of Herbert L. Lucas, 87.AI.101.120. Photographs: Courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program and Jessica Arista (technical view).

witnessing a tradition of specialized craftwork that can be traced as far back as ancient Egypt.[58]

Surface decoration

Fine carving of facial features, hair, and clothing was accomplished with small tools of v- and u-shaped profiles. No applied surface decoration is readily visible, such as the polychromy and gilding that are amply preserved on the luxurious *klinai* from the Macedonian royal tombs at Aigai.[59] Upon examination under magnification with a Keyence digital microscope, however, traces of gilding were observed on two fragments and were confirmed with X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (**Figure 9**).[60] Since the gold leaf traces were found embedded in soil from burial, it cannot be assumed they are in their original locations. Their presence suggests, however, that at least some elements of the decorative couch reliefs may have been gilded. Additionally, a red, iron-rich pigment was identified on the edge of one helmet (**Figure 10**). Possible particles of yellow pigment trapped in the dirt on several figures were also observed; no Egyptian blue was observed. It is likely that much of the surfaces of the bone appliqués would have been painted and gilded. Due to the inherently fragile nature of the applied substances and water-based binding media, it is not surprising that the tomb environment and modern handling have contributed to the loss of colorful pigments and gilt embellishments. Additional surface ornamentation likely included inlays in the eyes of some figures of Couch A, such as the lynx head (.118) and maenad heads. While the eyes retain no visible evidence of inlays or adhesive, the recessed sockets are deep with flat bottoms, suggesting that they were originally enhanced with inserted eyes of colored glass or stone. This embellishment differs from the treatment of the eyes of the human and feline heads on Couch B (e.g. lynxes and helmeted warriors), where the eyes, irises, and pupils were delicately carved on the bone surface.

Human Remains

Notably different in texture, shape, and color are eight fragments of unworked bone that stood apart from most other plain and relief plaques examined during the course of our study. One in particular (.24) resembled a fragment from the occipital area of a skull. Dr. Roselyn Campbell[61] identified the fragment as the upper part of a right eye orbit. She identified additional fragments as sections of long bones (.167, .169, .165, and .25) and three cranial fragments (.229, .231, .19). The small size of the fragments did not allow an identification

[58] St. Clair 2003: 28.
[59] Brecoulaki *et al.* 2014.
[60] A Bruker Tracer 5i portable X-ray fluorescence spectrometer was used to identify the presence of gold on .247. Gold leaf traces were observed on .120 but were not analyzed.

[61] We are grateful to Roselyn Campbell, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Anthropology, Purdue University, for examining the skeletal material.

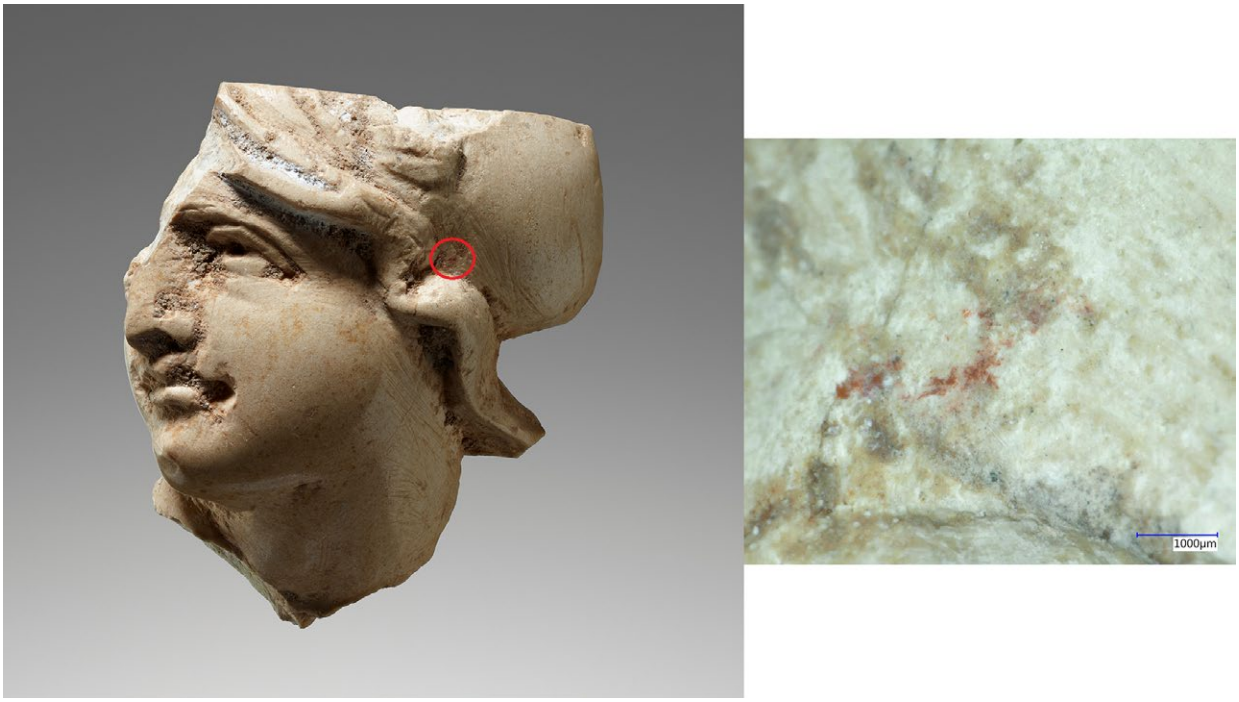


Figure 10. Trace of red pigment on a helmeted head. J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Gift of Herbert L. Lucas, 87.AI.101.125. Photographs: Courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program and Jessica Arista (technical view).

of the sex or age of the deceased individual(s). Five of the eight fragments were analyzed by Peptide Mass Fingerprinting analysis, which confirmed that the bones are human remains. These findings would suggest that the bone fragments were not recovered from workshop debris or a residential context but rather derived from a burial in a chamber tomb or cist grave. As the above analyses show, both couches had been fully finished and decorated with polychrome pigments, gilding, and probable glass eye inserts prior to burial. None of the human skeletal material or decorative cattle bone veneers exhibit any evidence of burning, and presumably the deceased was inhumed.

Appendix 2: Selected Components of Couches A and B and a casket

Couch A Lynxes

Lynx head core (.83): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062EV>

Right lynx ear (.118): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062FQ>

Fulcrum with lynx mane (.82): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103YGX>

Couch A Bacchants

Head of a Bacchant (.206): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062J8>

Bacchant bust (.103): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103YH3>

Bacchant bust (.102): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062F8>

Couch B Lynxes

Lynx left ear, eye, snout (.109): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062FE>

Lynx right ear, eye, snout (.321): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062NN>

Male heads

Warrior head (.124): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103YH7>

Medallion with bust of Mercury (.122): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103YH5>

Ivory male head (.121): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103YH4>

Male figures wearing hip-mantles

Semi-nude male, oval shield (.139): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062G4>

semi-nude male holding a staff (.133): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062FX>

male wearing a *balteus* and scabbard (.132): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062FW>

Armor and Trophies

Shield (.128): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062FS>

Shield (.225): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062JT>

Trophy (.142): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062G7>

Hand holding a trophy (.246): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062KD>

Friezes and implements

Putti bearing garlands (.101): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103YH2>

Plaque with floral scroll (.96): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062F6>

Egg and dart molding (.69): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062EE>

Roundel or lid (.87): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103YGY>

Implement (.68): <https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/1062ED>

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‘Fitter for the Wash-Tub’: The Old Fisherman/Seneca in the Louvre

A.A. Donohue

> ‘The famous Seneca is another subject of dispute. . . . He was placed in a bath by the restorer, and restorers may make the hands denote what they please; but the aubject expression of the face [is] fitter for the wash-tub than for the solemn act of libation to Jove.’
> –Joseph Forsyth, *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters during an Excursion in Italy, in the Years 1802 and 1803*, 210.

The statue Ma 1354 in the Louvre has been well known since it was found in Rome near the end of the sixteenth century, but there remains uncertainty about its subject, its artistic pedigree, and its meaning in antiquity. Today, it is generally agreed that its initial identification and restoration as the Roman Stoic Seneca committing suicide are incorrect; it is instead believed to be an imperial Roman statue, derived from a Greek original of the third century BC, representing an aged fisherman. It can be shown, however, that the early interpretation as Seneca is less misguided than is usually assumed: it is consistent with the knowledge of Seneca’s life and works at the time, and it has iconographic precedents. The identification as a fisherman is also unsatisfactory, and a different identity and action can be proposed for the figure on the basis of Roman parallels.

The statue (**Figure 1**) is an approximately life-sized figure of an old man carved in black marble, shown as if standing in an elaborate vase. He looks upward; his left arm hangs at his side; he raises his right hand. He wears an alabaster loincloth that falls behind him and acts as a support. His legs, shown only to mid-calf, rest on a thin sheet of red marble inserted into the top of the grey marble vase to simulate its contents.[1]



Figure 1. Statue of ‘Dying Seneca/Old Fisherman.’ Paris, Musée du Louvre Ma 1354. Photograph: Musée du Louvre/ Maurice and Pierre Chuzeville; © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

[1] It is a pleasure to offer this essay to Eugene Dwyer in tribute to his scholarship and in recollection of the sweltering circuit of Vesuvian sites that he, Ellen, and I survived some years ago. I thank the editors for their careful work and for providing several helpful references. I am also grateful to C.C. Mattusch, M.L. Levkoff, and R. Ricci for their expert advice, to M.C.B. Kelly for preparing the manuscript and illustrations, and to the staff and librarians of Canaday Library, Bryn Mawr College, who secured publications and other materials for me: M.H. Hansen (Special Collections), K. Willcox, and J. Long. For permission to reproduce images, I thank

The Identification and Restoration as Seneca

The history of the statue after its discovery is relatively easy to summarize. Its treatment illustrates changing practices in and attitudes toward the restoration of ancient statuary.[2] As was customary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the statue was extensively repaired and reconstructed. It was thought to depict the death of the philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC/AD 1–65), an episode known from ancient texts: ordered by the emperor Nero to commit suicide, Seneca cut his veins and died in a bath. The statue was restored in accordance with this interpretation and provided with a vessel. In the eighteenth century, the identification as Seneca was rejected, and it was recognized instead as an old fisherman. The Senecan restorations remained in place, however, even after 1807, when the statue was purchased in the sale of the Borghese collection and transferred to Paris.[3] In the later nineteenth century, however, there was growing awareness that flawed restorations could (and did) lead to serious errors of interpretation, and in 1922 the figure was ultimately removed from the glaringly post-antique vase on which it had been placed and set on a plain base.[4] Attitudes later shifted again, away from a commitment to recovering the original state of ancient works and towards recognizing instead the value of all the stages by which objects have reached the present day, and in 1991 the statue was reunited with its vase. It is now displayed in a thematically conceived gallery devoted to pieces from the great collections of ancient sculpture formed from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century.[5]

Despite commitments on the part of scholars and institutions to contextualize earlier practices of collection and restoration, condescending attitudes ('the imaginatively restored antique fragment known in the eighteenth-century [sic] as "Seneca cutting his veins"'[6]) still color even attempts to treat all phases of restored works even-handedly ('At the most basic level, *Seneca* was essentially created by Renaissance restoration'[7]), and critical accounts of historical practices can make individual cases seem absurd: '[I]n the case of the *Dying Seneca*[, T]he restorer transformed an ancient statue of an emaciated fisherman into a depiction of the Roman philosopher Seneca committing suicide in the bath by adding a basin inlaid with red porphyry to represent blood.'[8] Considered in such terms, identifying the statue in the Louvre as Seneca may indeed seem at best misguided, but such a verdict is not wholly justified. Features of its state of preservation and of its anatomy and physiognomy are compatible with the information about Seneca available at the time of discovery, and the reconstruction of the figure standing partly submerged in a vessel has precedents in the iconography of Seneca's death.

Discovery, Ownership and Restoration

The first reference to the statue appears to be a statement in the *Memorie di varie antichità trovate in diversi luoghi della città di Roma* (Memoirs of various antiquities found in different places in the city of Rome) of the Roman sculptor Flaminio Vacca (1538–1605). Their publication in 1594 establishes the terminus ante quem for the discovery on the Esquiline, the exact date of which is unknown. 'In another vineyard adjacent to the one mentioned, I recall, was found there a Seneca of black marble, with other fragments of statues, and

Olga Novoseltseva of The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; Dr. Nele Schröder-Griebel of the Museum für Abgüsse, Klassischer Bildwerke, Haus der Kulturinstitute, Munich; and Jackie and Bob Dunn of PompeiiinPictures. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Antiquités grecques, étrusques et romaines, catalogue no. Ma 1354; other inventory nos. MR 314, N 706: Olivier 2010. Census ID 155622: https://database.census.de/detail/155622 (15 August 2024); Haskell and Penny 2024, 1:20, fig. 12; 493-97, no. 76 (entry revised by A. Aymonino: 1:xvii); 2:438-41 (unnumbered figures); 3:316-19, figs. 1-7. H. 183 cm with vase, 121 cm without; W. 89 cm; D. 107 cm. Materials: black marble (body); alabaster (garment); enamel (eyes); African marble (vase). For the thin slab of red marble, see Pressouyre (1969: 87n1), Baratte (1989), and Queyrel (2016: 374 and fig. 375). The statue has been known by several appellations: Sénèque mourant (Dying Seneca), Borghese Seneca, Seneca im Bade (Seneca in the Bath), Vieux Pêcheur (Old Fisherman), Old Angler, African Fisherman, Borghese Fisherman. For the type, see Laubscher (1982: no. Ib, 9n29, 10, 13–14, 54–55, pl. 3) and Bayer (1983: 149, 197, 248, no. G2).

2 Grossman *et al*. 2003; Scott 2023.

3 Recent research on the sale arranged in 1807 by Napoleon of material from the Borghese collection and its transfer to Paris: Martinez (2004a); Louvre Ma 1354: Martinez (2004b: 150–51, no. 0255).

4 Ravaisson-Mollien 1876. For the removal of the vase, see Baratte (1989): 'Puisque l'identification avec Sénèque devait être abandonnée, il avait paru bon il y a quelques décennies de séparer la statue et le bassin, et de le présenter sur un socle plus neutre.' See also Pinelli (1991: 265), cited by Borbein *et al*. (2006: 286, no. 634).

5 'Salle du Manège,' Denon wing, level 0, room 405. Installation view of Ma 1354: Maffre Architectural Workshop, viewed 20 August 2024, <https://www.mawarchitectes.com/Salle-du-Manege-Collection-d-Antiques-des-XVIIe-et-XVIIe-siecles> [*sic*]. For the purpose of the gallery and the detailed examination of the statue undertaken by the Louvre in connection with its reinstallation: Baratte (1989) and Loyrette (2006).

6 Jordan 1986: 239.

7 Beard and Henderson 2001: 8.

8 Thompson 2016: 55–56. Haskell and Penny 2024 (Aymonino), 1:493 for the present state ('Modern vase: marmo africano, with a veneer of rosso antico inside simulating water stained by blood'); comments on the earlier methods of coloration are inconclusive: 1:495 n. 3 (references from the seventeenth [porphyry] and eighteenth ['superficie tinta di color rosso'] centuries); 1:493 (on Longhi's restoration: 'placed on a vase of africano marble, unhollowed so that it seemed full of water, and reddened in imitation of blood').

some pieces of *termini*.'[9] There seems to be no serious disagreement that this 'Seneca' is to be identified with the statue now in the Louvre.[10] Vacca's comment establishes only that the statue was found at some point in his lifetime before he published his *Memorie* and that it was identified as Seneca at a likewise undetermined time before 1594. While it is sometimes stated that the statue was found by Vacca and that the identification was made and not merely reported by him, there is no evidence for these suppositions.[11]

It has long been known that the statue was initially owned by the Altemps.[12] Nonetheless, the fame accruing to it as part of the far more celebrated Borghese collection has overshadowed the previous affiliation.[13] Archival documents published by Amilcare Quirino Gaviglia have now provided detailed information about its early ownership, location, and restoration.[14] Accounts from the Altemps archives document payments from 1599 through 1602 for restorations carried out on the 'Seneca' that will have been commissioned by the patron and collector Giovanni Angelo Altemps (1587–1620). The documents include the names of the restorers and the amounts they received for their work. The first payments are recorded in 1599. The accounts mention the restoration of the Seneca, its bath, a piece of alabaster for its belt, its eyes, and a vase of African marble in which it stands, with its pedestal.[15] There is also a record of a payment in July 1601 for the transportation of the statue from the workshop of Silla Giacomo Longhi to the Palazzo Altemps.[16]

Beyond providing documentation for some obviously added elements of the statue — the vase, the belt, and the eyes — the accounts furnish no information about the nature or extent of the 'restoration' of the body. The most detailed description the documents offer is of the 'bagno,' 'vaso,' or 'vasso' of African marble; an account of September 1602 lists 'il vasso de Africano dove sta il Seneca con teste et maniche intagliati et lustrati' (the vase of African marble where Seneca stands with carved and polished heads and handles).[17] The heads — two, one each in the center of the front and of the back — are protomes of rams decked with knotted fillets in the manner of classical bucrania. The ram is the emblem of the Altemps family, but the significance of the statue goes farther than mere ownership, for, as Gaviglia explains, Seneca's status for Christians as a protomartyr held particular importance for Giovanni Angelo because of events in his family's history.[18]

The Altemps accounts support an early date for Peter Paul Rubens's well-known drawings of the statue in its restored state, which have sometimes been assigned to the period from 1604 to 1608, his second stay in Rome. It is clear, however, that he would have been able to see the restored 'Seneca' at the Palazzo Altemps during his first stay in 1601–02.[19]

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[9] Vacca 1594 [1704]: 15, §85: 'In un' altra Vigna incontro alla detta, mi ricordo vi fu trovato un Seneca di marmo nero, con altri frammenti di statue, & alcuni pezzi di termini.' *Termini* in this passage is sometimes translated as 'herms'; for the meaning and use of the two terms: Echinger-Maurach (2021: 19). The *Memorie* were reprinted several times; for example: Amidei (1741: 251) and Nibby (1820: 36, §85 — *Memorie* separately paged). A slightly different text of Vacca's report is given by Schreiber (1881, 79, §86) [*sic*]: 'Mi ricordo, ad una uigna rincontro alla detta ui fù trovato un Seneca di marmo nero, con altri framenti di statue et non sò che pezzi de termini.' For the findspot, see *infra* pp. 59–60.

[10] Nibby's note a to Vacca's report (*supra* n. 9: 1820, 36 §85) suggests that the Seneca might be the one in the Villa Pinciana (Borghese): 'Il Seneca qui riferito può credersi, che sia quello che si vede nel Palazzo della Villa Pinciana.' The statue mentioned by Vacca, however, was by then in Paris; either Nibby's information was not current, or he was referring to the bust of 'Pseudo-Seneca' in the Borghese collection, although it does not match Vacca's description of black marble: Rome, Museo e Galleria di Villa Borghese, inv. no. 230; see The Gallery of Ancient Art, viewed 20 August 2024, <https://ancientrome.ru/art/artworken/img.htm?id=7223> (there labelled 'Aesop'). Nibby's identification is noted under 'Comments' in Kirchner *et al.* (2008–2012), but the bust in question is misidentified.

[11] According to Malgouyres (2015: 500): 'The statue was discovered by Flaminio Vacca in 1594 on the Esquiline. He immediately named it *Seneca,* before any project or interpretation had been carried out.' Ker (2009: 299) states that it was 'discovered on the Esquiline in 1594.' Queyrel (2016: 374 and fig. 375) writes that the statue was found 'en 1584,' presumably an error for 1594, the date of Vacca's *Memorie*.

[12] E.g., in a letter to Jan van den Wouwer of July 1604, published in 1615, Philip, the brother of the Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens, states that the statue of Seneca is in the Palazzo Altemps in Rome: '[S]tatua L. Annaei Senecae . . . Romae in aedibus Ducis Altemsij extat' (Gaviglia 2004: 46, 52n13; 2006: 207, 211n6).

[13] For example, Haskell and Penny (1982: 303) do not mention that it had been owned by the Altemps, and they state (71) that the statue 'is not recorded for certain until it belonged to the Borghese.' In view of its early possession by the Altemps, Häuber (2014: 538) suggests that the statue was found in a vigna owned by a 'Sig.r Abbate Altemps.' For the findspot: *infra* pp. 59–60.

[14] Gaviglia 2004; 2006.

[15] For the transcriptions of the documents, see Gaviglia (2004: 51–52; 2006: 210): 'restauratura del Seneca,' 'bagno del Seneca,' 'un pezzo d'Alabastro per fare la fascia al Seneca,' 'li occhi del Seneca,' and 'un vaso del Africano dove sta il Seneca con suo pedestali.'

[16] Gaviglia (2004: 49, 52; 2006: 208, 210): 'Libro Mastro 1601–1602.'

[17] The September 1602 invoice of Stefano Longhi continues: 'Per havere fatto il suo piedestalo sotto al detto vasso con suoi comesi et carteli intagliati' (Scoppola *et al.* 1987: 295; Gaviglia 2004: 52; 2006: 210).

[18] Gaviglia 2004: 49–50; 2006: 209. For the Christian embrace of Seneca, see Ker (2009: 179–225), Schmitz (2013: §B.3, B.5.1; 2016: §B.3, B.5.1), Wilson (2014: 216–19), and Torre (2015).

[19] Eleven drawings: Prinz (1973: 417), Miesel (1963: 314–15 ['Of what originally must have been a rather numerous series only two autographs survive.']). Drawings dated to 1601–02: Miesel (1963: 314–15 ['in the early years of Rubens' Italian period during his first stay in Rome, 1601–1602. . . . [T]hey are not of the highest quality and are most satisfactorily interpreted as student works.']), Van der Meulen (1994: 2:34–40, 3:figs. 21–30 [drawings by and after Rubens]), Gaviglia (2004: 50–51, 53n30; 2006: 209), and Thielemann (2018: 79–81); cf.

The documents, then, prove that the restoration of the statue as Seneca in his bath was commissioned and executed while it was owned by the Altemps, before it entered the Borghese collection. Consequently, the long-held belief that the Borghese were responsible for the restoration and the related suggestion that it can be attributed to the sculptor Nicolas Cordier must be abandoned.[20] The assumption that the statue was restored while in possession of the Borghese rested largely on its inclusion in Scipione Francucci's *La Galleria dell'Illustrissimo e Reverendissimo Signor Scipione [Caffarelli] Cardinale Borghese* of 1613, which was long considered to be the earliest certain reference to the statue. It is a long description in verse praising the collection of Cardinal Scipione Cafarelli Borghese, at that time still housed in his residence in the Borgo. Francucci's stanzas describing the 'Seneca moribondo nel bagno, statua eccellente' (dying Seneca in his bath, excellent statue) show that it was displayed in its restored state.[21]

That the transfer of the statue from the Altemps collection to the Borghese must have taken place between 1613, the date of Francucci's poem, and 1610 is established by an inventory of objects in the Palazzo Altemps of 30 March 1610. It lists '[u]na statua di Seneca in un Vaso con suo piede antica con suo pomo e fiocho' (a statue of Seneca in a vase with its ancient base with his pommel and garland).[22]

The apparently swift initial identification of the statue as Seneca and its subsequent restoration as a depiction of his suicide are consistent with what was known or believed about him at the time. Considerable information of varying accuracy was available in the late sixteenth century from ancient and post-antique texts and images.

Classical Texts Relating to Seneca's Suicide

The Roman writer and Stoic philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC/AD 1–65), sometimes referred to as Seneca the Younger, remained a well-known, if controversial, figure long after his death. His reputation as an historical figure and a moral authority (even for Christians) rested on the availability of his own writings — primarily the letters, tragedies, and philosophical essays — as well as the works of other writers in which he appears. There is an immense literature on his complicated and uneven reception through the centuries.[23] Unquestionably the most memorable event of his life was his death: after he was accused of taking part in a conspiracy against Nero, whom he had tutored and counselled, he was commanded by the emperor to commit suicide.

Accounts of his death are preserved in the work of three historians: Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio Cassius.[24] That of Tacitus in the *Annales* (15.63–64), written around AD 100, is the longest and most detailed. Seneca's wife, Paulina, insisted on joining him in suicide: 'After this, they made the incision in their arms with a single cut. Seneca, since his aged body, emaciated further by frugal living, gave slow escape to the blood, severed as well the arteries of the legs and knees' (15.63). He is 'exhausted by the racking pains' but dictates at some length to his secretaries. A digression explains how Paulina was prevented from completing her own suicide; the narrative then returns to Seneca. As cutting his veins had not been efficacious, he requested and drank hemlock, alluding to the example of Socrates. When the hemlock likewise proved too slow, he 'entered a *stagnum*' of warm water, saying as he sprinkled his slaves that he was making an offering to Jove the Liberator; the warm water, however, had no effect. At last, carried into a *balneum,* the steam dispatched him, and he was cremated without a funeral.[25]

Haskell and Penny (1982: 303 ['drawn in its restored state by Rubens, probably in 1608']), Haskell and Penny (2024 [Aymonino]:1:494 [drawn from different angles in its restored state by Rubens when still in the Palazzo Altemps, probably in 1606 or 1607], and Logan and Plomp (2005: 112–15, and cat. nos. 22 and 23 ['*c.* 1606–8']). Convenient chronology of Rubens's life: Belkin and Healy (2004: 327).

[20] Gaviglia (2004: 46; 2006: 207) notes a document mentioning a minor repair made in 1620 to the socle under the vase. The restorations nonetheless continue to be attributed to the Borghese and to Cordier; e.g., Zirpolo (2008: 30n6), Spivey (2013: 235, caption to fig. 9.13), Thompson (2016: 55–56), and Gasparotto (2021: 52). Attributions to Cordier made before 2004: e.g., Baratte (1989), and Gaborit (2000). The 'Seneca' has figured in discussions of the work of Cordier (1567–1612) as a restorer of antique polychrome sculpture as well as a creator of such figures; e.g., Pressouyre (1969: 86–88; 1984).

[21] Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borgh. 184; facsimile, viewed 21 August 2024, <https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borgh.184/0125>. Gaviglia 2004: 46; 2006: 207. For the *Galleria*: Donati (1977).

[22] Gaviglia 2004: 48, 52, 53n17; 2006: 208, 210, 211n9. Evidently a bladed weapon of some kind and a garland were part of the composition at that time.

[23] For a concise summary of Seneca's reception, see Schmitz (2013; 2016). For his life, reputation, and reception: Griffin (2008) and Braund (2015: 26–28). See also *supra* n. 18 for the Christian reception.

[24] Discussed in great detail, primarily with respect to literary qualities, by Ker (2009: 17–40), Griffin (2008: 49–51), and Braund (2015: 15–17).

[25] The events leading up to and following the suicide are recounted in Tacitus, *Ann*. 15.60–65. Text from Jackson (1937); translation adapted from Jackson: 'Post quae eodem ictu brachia ferro exsolvunt. Seneca, quoniam senile corpus et parco victu tenuatum lenta effugia sanguini praebebat, crurum quoque et poplitum venas abrumpit; saevisque cruciatibus defessus. . . . Seneca interim, durante tractu et lentitudine mortis, Statium Annaeum, diu sibi amicitiae fide et arte medicinae probatum, orat provisum pridem venenum. quo damnati publico Atheniensium iudicio extinguerentur, promeret; adlatumque hausit frustra, frigidus iam artus et cluso corpore adversum vim veneni. Postremo stagnum calidae aquae introiit,

The references to Seneca's suicide in Suetonius's essay on Nero, written around AD 120, and in the history of Rome written in the early third century AD by Cassius Dio, preserved only in epitome, mention the event but do not describe the action itself in great detail. Suetonius reports that Nero 'drove his tutor Seneca to suicide' (35.4).[26] Dio Cassius, as epitomized, alludes to the coming suicide by saying that 'Seneca now found himself under accusation' (61.10) before denouncing at some length his hypocrisy and licentiousness. He subsequently gives an account of the episode that differs from that of Tacitus: 'So he opened her [sc. Paulina's] veins as well as his own. But as he died hard, his end was hastened by the soldiers; and she was still alive when he passed away, and thus survived' (62.25).[27]

Tacitus's detailed account of the suicide thus connects the bloodletting with water and a bath, and it also furnishes information about Seneca's appearance. Explaining the slow effect of the first cuts to Seneca's veins, Tacitus remarks that his 'body was aged and thin from his spare diet' (*senile corpus et parco victu tenuatum*). This minimal description could be developed on the basis of impressions derived from Seneca's own and others' writings about his character and way of life.[28] Renaissance readers could also apply ideas about possibly corresponding physiognomic traits, as well as notions about the expressions and gestures that would have been appropriate for such a person in such a situation. Both the condition of the statue when it was found and the qualities of the figure as perceived at the time are compatible with the ancient textual evidence.

State of Preservation of the Altemps/Borghese Statue

Information about the state of preservation of the statue is surprisingly scanty, and even now, distinguishing restored from original elements remains to some extent a matter of opinion.[29] There is no doubt about the vase, the majority of the garment, and the eyes; all are both obvious and known from the Altemps accounts to be restorations. There is to date no documentary evidence to support judgements about other restorations. The torso and the head are agreed to be original, although, with the exception of some parts of the top of the head, the surface of the entire statue was polished in the course of restoration.[30] Repairs to the face include part of the nose, the center of the upper lip and mustache, and most of the lower lip.[31] The arms are generally thought to be restored, although it has been suggested that they are ancient, were separately made, and had been rejoined to the figure after its discovery.[32]

Descriptions of the condition of the legs are inconsistent. Some, if not all parts, of the legs are said to have been missing and restored. The figure is said to lack 'one thigh'[33] or 'both legs from the crotch to below the knees.'[34] Restorations are also described somewhat vaguely and in relation to the thighs; the

respergens proximos servorum addita voce, libare se liquorem illum Iovi liberatori. Exim balneo inlatus et vapore eius exanimatus, sine ullo funeris sollemni crematur.' For stagnum: *infra* n. 89.

[26] Text and translation from Rolfe (1997): 'Senecam praeceptorem ad necem compulit, quamvis saepe commeatum petenti bonisque cedenti persancte iurasset suspectum se frustra periturumque potius quam nociturum ei.' (He drove his tutor Seneca to suicide, although when the old man often pleaded to be allowed to retire and offered to give up his estates, he had sworn most solemnly that he did wrong to suspect him and that he would rather die than harm him.)

[27] Text and translation from Cary and Foster (1925: 130–31): Περὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν ἄλλων τῶν ἀπολωλότων πολὺ ἔργον εἰπεῖν· ὁ δὲ δὴ Σενέκας ἠθέλησε μὲν καὶ τὴν γυναῖκα Παυλῖναν ἀποκτεῖναι, λέγων πεπεικέναι αὐτὴν τοῦ τε θανάτου καταφρονῆσαι καὶ τῆς σὺν αὐτῷ μεταλλαγῆς ἐπιθυμῆσαι, καὶ ἔσχασε καὶ τὰς ἐκείνης φλέβας, δυσθανατήσας δὲ δὴ καὶ πρὸς τὸν ὄλεθρον ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἐπειχθεὶς προαπηλλάγη αὐτῆς, καὶ οὕτως ἡ Παυλῖνα περιεγένετο. οὐ μέντοι πρότερον ἑαυτοῦ ἥψατο πρὶν τό τε βιβλίον ὃ συνέγραφεν ἐπανορθῶσαι καὶ τἆλλα (ἐδεδίει γὰρ μὴ καὶ ἐς τὸν Νέρωνα ἐλθόντα φθαρῇ) παρακαταθέσθαι τισίν. καὶ ὁ μὲν οὕτως ἐτελεύτησε, καίπερ τήν τε συνουσίαν τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὡς καὶ ἀσθενῶν προειμένος, καὶ πᾶσαν αὐτῷ τὴν οὐσίαν ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν οἰκοδομουμένων προφάσει κεχαρισμένος, καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ὕστερον ἐπαπώλοντο. (It would be no small task to speak of all the others that perished, but the fate of Seneca calls for a few words. It was his wish to end the life of his wife Paulina at the same time with his own, for he declared that he had taught her both to despise death and to desire to leave the world in company with him. So he opened her veins as well as his own. But as he died hard, his end was hastened by the soldiers; and she was still alive when he passed away, and thus survived. He did not lay hands upon himself, however, until he had revised the book which he was writing and had deposited his other books with some friends, fearing that they would otherwise fall into Nero's hands and be destroyed. Thus died Seneca, notwithstanding that he had on the pretext of illness abandoned the society of the emperor and had bestowed upon him his entire property, ostensibly to help to pay for the buildings he was constructing. His brothers, too, perished after him.)

[28] See Braund (2015: 16) for Seneca's own statements about his way of life; and Griffin (2008: 55–56) for the discrepancy between his frugal and ascetic habits and his antithetical behavior and expressed opinions.

[29] As Lorenz Baumer (2013: 14) has observed about the figure, it can be difficult to distinguish the ancient parts from the modern: 'Dans le cas du *Sénèque mourant*, . . . la restauration fut si bien réussie qu'il est à ce jour difficile de voir la différence entre les parties antiques et les compléments modernes.'

[30] Baratte (1989), De Lachenal (2000: 194 [the most detailed description of the restorations]), Olivier (2010), and Häuber (2014: 539). Möbius (1976: 202n17) notes the conflicting information about the restorations, citing as examples Wiegand (1916: 2n1 [nose, both arms, and thighs]) and Charbonneaux (1963 [head and arms]).

[31] De Lachenal 2000: 194.

[32] Martinez (2004b: 150): 'Très restaurée (les jambes et les bras [?] semblent modernes)'; De Lachenal (2000: 194): 'Le braccia, pertinenti ma lavorate a parte, sono state riattacate alle spalle dopo la scoperta.'

[33] Haskell and Penny 1982: 303.

[34] Beard and Henderson 2001: 1.

calves are rarely mentioned.[35] It is not surprising, then, to find a lack of consensus about the original extent of the legs. Some assume that they were rendered in their complete length, as they are in well-preserved examples of closely similar figures.[36] Others, however, maintain that the legs were originally depicted only down to mid-calf, so that the figure would have appeared to be partly submerged.[37] There is a wedge-shaped section at the bottom of each calf; they are darker than the thighs, closer in color to the torso and head, and appear to provide the horizontal surfaces that now serve to allow the figure to stand on the thin slab inserted at the top of the vase representing the water reddened by 'Seneca's' blood.[38]

It is clear that the skill of the early restorers can make it difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish original material from restorations. Some help in understanding the state of preservation of the Altemps/Borghese statue is furnished by an article published in 1876 by Charles Ravaisson-Mollien (1848–1919), at that time an attaché in the Département des Antiques in the Louvre.[39] In tracing the history of publications of the collections in the Louvre and presenting his ideas about the content of such works, he forcefully advocates including information about restorations. He discusses errors in interpretation arising from mistaken restorations, citing as one example the old fisherman in the Louvre that was wrongly identified as Seneca and, once correctly recognized as a fisherman, misclassified with respect to type. He illustrates the statue, together with other figures, in drawings intended 'to show how a restoration, otherwise very well done, can mislead' by associating a statue with one sculptural type when it is later shown to belong to another. The drawing of the figure in the Louvre (**Figure 2**) indicates some reconstructed sections in dark hatching: the arms below the shoulders, the rear sections of the garment, and the vase. Although it is generally agreed that the thighs are almost completely restored, the drawing shows only a section of the right thigh, a thin band at the top of the left thigh, and the wedge-shaped pieces ending the calves in hatching.[40]

The crucial question of the original extent of the legs, then, remains open. If no fragments of the lower legs or feet were recognized when the statue was discovered, assuming that they had never existed would not have seemed unreasonable.

Early Interpretations of the Altemps/Borghese Statue

The statue has made sharply different impressions on viewers throughout its history.[41] There seems to be no disagreement that it represents an old man, but beyond that, even today there is no consensus. Some see him as pitifully decrepit, others as still muscular and hale.[42] The expression of the figure has likewise been read in very different ways, often in clear connection with whether it is considered to represent Seneca or, since the eighteenth century, a fisherman or other common worker. In considering how the statue may initially have been seen, the best evidence may be Francucci's description of 1613 and Balthasar Moretus's comments

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[35] E.g., De Lachenal (2000: 194): 'Le gambe da metà coscia (la sinistra è in due pezzi ricongiunti)'; Olivier (2010): 'les jambes au haut des cuisses'; Häuber (2014: 536–37); Queyrel (2016: 374): 'Les bras et les jambes avec les cuisses sont des restaurations.' Beard and Henderson (2001: 1) note parenthetically: 'only a small wedge of calf seems to be ancient.'

[36] E.g., Häuber (2014: 537): 'Given the fact that in the Louvre statue the legs were not restored in their entirety.' Examples of closely similar statues with full legs: Vatican City, Musei Vaticani 2684 (*infra* p. 46); and Rome, Musei Capitolini, Centrale Montemartini MC 1112, found 1880, Rome, Viminal Hill near Via di Milano (Via Milano): Helbig (1963–1972: 2:301, no. 1479), Laubscher (1982: 103, no. 3a [Rome-New York type]), Bayer (1983: 258, no. G 29), and Powers (2023: 98 no. 6).

[37] E.g., Pollitt (1986: 143): 'the old fisherman seems to have been depicted as if he were wading in shallow water'; Beard and Henderson (2001: 2–3): 'very likely depicted wading in the water, hence nothing below the top of the calves.' The statue is not included in the discussion of partial figures in Winter (1970: 51–79 ['Demi-Figures and Impressionistic Settings']), although 'statues of old fishermen sitting nude on top of a rock' are mentioned (75). See Haskell and Penny (2024; 3:317 fig. 5: plaster intaglio, Bartolomeo and Pietro Paoletti, 1834-1841, showing the figure immersed in a vessel to a point just at or below the knees).

[38] Perhaps these are meant in the comment by Beard and Henderson (2001: 1; *supra* n. 35). In some photographs of the de-restored statue, the sections at the bottom of the calves look white. For the slab: *supra* nn. 1 and 8.

[39] Ravaisson-Mollien (1876: quotation 148–49, 149n1 for pls. XVI–XVII, pl. XVI.1 for Louvre Ma 1354 [here **Figure 2**]). The drawing appears to be an adaptation of Clarac (1832–1834: pl. 325, no. 2247). For Charles Ravaisson-Mollien in 1877, see Lemaître (1878: 441): 'Département des Antiques. . . . Attachés: MM. Héron de Villefosse et Charles Ravaisson-Mollien.' He was *conservateur adjoint* of the Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities at the Louvre from 1886 to 1910. Obituary: Reinach (1919).

[40] Häuber (2014: 536n13) quotes her unpublished work of 1992 on her observation of an intermediate piece (*Zwischenstück*) that had been added to the left thigh, which she thinks was needed by the restorer in order to provide the statue with a left leg in a standing, rather than lifted, position. See *infra* pp. 53–58 for the position and action of the figure.

[41] For a lively summary of the critical fortunes of the statue: Haskell and Penny (1982: 303–05, no. 76).

[42] Prinz (1973: 417): 'this statue of an elderly man with stooping posture and exhausted body'; Ridgway (1990: 334): 'thin but not unmuscular'; Queyrel (2016: 317): 'ce pauvre hère' (this poor wretch). McGrath (1997: 2:287), on Moretus's preface of 1615, writes that the body is 'at once attenuated and firmly muscular'; Smith (1998: 254), discussing the version of the type (which he considers to derive from a 'famous Hellenistic statue') found in the Hadrianic Baths at Aphrodisias (Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung, inv. Sk 1630, viewed 21 August 2024, <https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/698407/> and <https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/1093361>; Laubscher [1982: 100, no. 1c]): 'Other copies show the original had a rather crass, rustic physiognomy and a sagging, withered body.'



Figure 2. Drawing of Louvre Ma 1354 indicating restorations. After Ravaisson-Mollien 1876: pl. XVI, 1.

about it in a publication of 1615. Both, of course, were written after the identification as Seneca had been made and accepted.

Francucci's description of the 'excellent statue' is colorful and highly interpretive. In his basin of warm water, the old man 'is already fainting and languishes. Yes, his face is pale, but not lost, his veins are cut, and his chest bloodless' (E entro ad un vaso in tepid'onda accolto / Mirasi un Vecchio, che già manca, e langue. / Pallido hà sì, mà non smarrito il volto, / Et incise hà le vene, el petto esangue).[43] Some of Francucci's more fervid statements, as for instance when he speaks of the figure standing with face turned to heaven and his strong soul not fearing death, have been linked by Sylvia Pressouyre with the religiosity of the time.[44]

The comments on the statue by Balthasar Moretus in fact refer to the engraving of one of the drawings Rubens had made in 1601–02 and that appeared in the second, posthumous 1615 edition of Seneca's prose works by the Flemish humanist Justus Lipsius (1547–1606). Seneca, prevented from making a will, wished to leave his friends 'his sole but fairest possession — the image of his life' (*imago suae vitae*; Tac., *Ann.* 15.72).[45] For Lipsius and his Neostoic circle, which included Rubens and his brother Philip, not only did Seneca's intangible *imago* hold importance, but representations of his physical appearance did as well.[46] Lipsius published the first edition of the work in 1605. It included three images, engraved by Theodoore (Dirck) Galle, of busts of Seneca. Two are side views of the same beardless figure looking upward; the third shows a bust of the unkempt-looking figure that is known today as 'Pseudo-Seneca.' Lipsius was dissatisfied with the images of Seneca it contained.[47] After Lipsius's death, Balthasar Moretus, who had taken over from his father as publisher, solicited images from Rubens for a new edition, which was published in 1615.[48] One of the images is a bust; the other is a frontal view of the figure of 'Seneca' that Rubens had drawn in 1601–02 (**Figure 3**).[49] In his preface to the reader, Moretus explains the

[43] Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borgh. 184 (*supra* n. 21), fol. 118v.

[44] Pressouyre (1969: 88) relates his description to the kind of dramatic expressions of piety inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises* (1522–1524) of Ignatius of Loyola: 'Sta con fronte serena al Ciel rivolto / ne spira l'alma, ben che versi il sangue / non che fuga il morir l'animo forte / ma paventa di lui forse la Morte.'

[45] Translation from Jackson 1937. Cf. Horace (*Carm.* 3.30.1–5) for his poetry as a *monumentum aere perennius* (monument more lasting than bronze); one wonders if his notion of leaving an intangible memorial could have provided a model for Seneca.

[46] For Seneca's *imago* and for the importance of visual representations to Lipsius and the Neostoics: Ker (2009: 281–324) and Braund (2015: 15–17); for the relationship between Rubens and Lipsius's teachings and works: Morford (1991: 181–210). For Lipsius's 'Christianized Stoicism': Lagrée (2016). For the significance of Seneca's suicide for Lipsius: McGrath (1997: 2:285).

[47] For Lipsius's expression of dissatisfaction and the replacement of the first images: Morford (1991: 7–10; 2006: 239–41), McGrath (1997: 2:286), and Ker (2009: 291–304).

[48] For the illustrations in the edition of 1615: McGrath (1997: 2:285–87), Thielemann (2006: 180–87), and Lojkine (2019: 49–53). Morford (1991: 185) suggests that using the Altemps/Borghese statue for the 1615 edition was intended to flatter Lipsius's dedicatee, Pope Paul V, a Borghese, and his nephew Cardinal Scipione Borghese. Rubens's brother Philip had delivered the dedicatory copy to the Pope: Morford (1991: 37) and Santucci (1999: 102). In 1604, Philip had stated the location of the statue to be the Palazzo Altemps in a letter (*supra* n. 12) to Jan van den Wouwer (Woverius), a close associate of Lipsius and instrumental in the preparation of the posthumous edition: Morford (1991: 41–48).

[49] Engraving by Cornelis Galle of Rubens's drawing of the Altemps/Borghese 'Seneca' in Lipsius (1615): McGrath (1997: 1:fig. 190). The drawing by Rubens himself is presumed lost, but copies survive: Judson and Van de Velde (1978: 1:160–63, no. 31; 2:fig. 108) and Van

acquisition of the new images. He identifies the statue as having formerly been in the Altemps collection and currently in that of Cardinal Borghese, and he gives an elaborate description of it.[50]

Moretus's description of the Altemps/Borghese statue is detailed, interpretive, and, addressed to the reader, instructional:

> It is truly a rendering of someone who, in the bath, has already breathed his last breath and dies in the middle of speaking his golden words and giving his advice. The image gives a lively, vived [*sic*], fiery impression. You see his hands and fingers so stretched forth that you, in the light of Tacitus, clearly recall the man who dictated to the summoned scribes the precepts of wisdom and firmness. Not even the torments of approaching death, cleverly suggested in his face by the artist, prevented the philosopher from uttering these. His face is anything but beautifully formed. It makes a vague African impression with his open mouth, his swollen lips, his distended nostrils, so that you very easily can [ascertain] that the man was born in Cordoba of Cordoban parents. But also look at his body with a little more attention. Through the long illness, through much study and, as Tacitus maintains, through little nourishment, it is emaciated; it is established that he has hardened himself by heavy exertions such as work in the field, and digging in vineyards. His meager skin, through the drying up of life's sap, has become wrinkled and loose and through work tough and callous, and his veins and muscles which work had made to swell and protrude, are repeated by the sculptor cleverly and carefully.[51]

Moretus is careful to explicate specific features of the statue in light of Tacitus's account.[52] As close to Tacitus as he tries to stay, however, he sometimes goes beyond



Figure 3. Drawing of 'Dying Seneca', Peter Paul Rubens. Saint Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum OP-5499. Courtesy of The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg; photograph © The State Hermitage Museum.

what is visible in the statue, and the more fervid passages instead evoke the figure as Rubens had seen and rendered it in accordance with his own perceptions and theories.[53] This way of placing the content of images above their visual qualities is consistent with ekphrastic practice at the time, as has been shown by Svetlana Alpers. In explaining why, when Giorgio Vasari's account of artists' lives (1550 and 1568) was built on a framework of stylistic development with specific periods, his descriptions of all the works he treats, no matter how visually different, all sound the same, she found a convincing answer in the conventions of classical descriptions of works of art that provided models for the Renaissance.[54] Moretus's

der Meulen (1994: 2:36–37, nos. 8–9; 3:figs. 22–23). The drawing Hermitage 5499 (here **Figure 3**) is accepted as original by some: e.g., Logan and Plomp (2005: 112 no. 22). The engraving reverses the drawing, so that the left hand is raised. For Moretus's explanation of Rubens's addition to the loincloth: Judson and Van de Velde (1978: 1:162–63).

[50] For discussion and a close paraphrase of Balthasar Moretus's preface explaining the replacement of the images: Judson and Van de Velde (1978: 1:160–163), Morford (1991: 183–84), McGrath (1997: 2:287), and Ker (2009: 294–99).

[51] Judson and Van de Velde (1978: 1:161–62; 162–63n1 for the Latin text). Thielemann 2006: 181–82; 2018: 83–84.

[52] Thielemann (2018: 83) suggests that Moretus follows the biography of Seneca that Lipsius had included in the edition of 1605, in which he calls Seneca 'a physically fit old man, a *senex bene exercitatum*.' He does not think that Lipsius had yet seen Rubens's drawing.

[53] For interpretations of changes that Rubens made to the figure: Ker (2009: 301) and Thielemann (2018: 79–92).

[54] Alpers (1960: 199): 'Vasari's type of ekphrasis is duplicated in all Renaissance attempts to describe paintings.' Giorgio Vasari (1511–74): Vasari (1550 and 1568). See *infra* pp. 50 and 52 for ancient examples: Theocritus, *Idyll* 1; Callistratus, *Eikones* 4.

hortatory description, in its focus on narrative and moral content, is entirely consistent with the emphasis in his era on instruction focused on contemporary values rather than historical analysis and thus offers insight into contemporary responses to the Altemps/Borghese statue.

Models for Likenesses of Seneca

What could be inferred from texts was, however, not the only information about Seneca's appearance available when the statue in the Louvre was found. While until the fifteenth century the majority of information about Seneca came from texts, there were also pictorial representations in a range of media that may have been known, directly or indirectly, at the time of the discovery on the Esquiline.[55] They comprise both likenesses of Seneca and depictions of his suicide.

As has often been noted, securely identified ancient images of Seneca are almost completely lacking in all media, in contrast to the many portraits and pseudo-portraits of other philosophers and writers.[56] The single exception was not found until 1813, and it came as a great disillusionment to many. It is a third-century AD double herm discovered in Rome; one head is labelled 'Socrates' in Greek; the other, in Latin letters, 'Seneca.'[57] 'Seneca' looks neither old nor emaciated, but instead middle-aged and corpulent. (One begins to understand why he was accused of hypocrisy during — and after — his lifetime.)

Images of Seneca are preserved from the Middle Ages in manuscripts, paintings, and textiles. Even when he is not shown in a standardized fashion, such as in his role as a teacher, the images remain bound by the typological and stylistic conventions of their contexts, and their primary goal is not physiognomic likeness in the modern sense.[58] During the Renaissance, however, there emerged genres of historical and literary works in which images of figures from antiquity were important, not incidental, elements, and with them the goal of presenting authentic likenesses. Beginning in the fourteenth century, works *de viris illustribus* were produced in a range of media and formats.[59] They were modelled on classical collections of two- and three-dimensional images of famous individuals that were known or known about. Two examples of Roman texts, well known but not extant, are Varro's *Hebdomades vel de imaginibus libri XV*, which contained portraits of and epigrams about 700 famous Greeks and Romans, and perhaps Atticus's work on portraits.[60] There is also textual evidence that statues of Roman mythological and historical figures (the *summi viri*, greatest men) were displayed in the porticoes and exedras of the Forum of Augustus, each with an inscription giving his name and titles and another honoring his achievements (*elogia*).[61]

Archaeological evidence such as coins and statues furnished materials for Renaissance scholars and authors to prepare such latter-day collections of images. In the absence of reliably identified ancient portraits of Seneca, collections of images could either exclude him or improvise. The antiquarian Fulvio Orsini (1529–1600), librarian to the Farnese, did not include Seneca in his *Imagines et elogia virorvm illvstrivm*

[55] For an excellent overview of the corpus, see Marcos (2019); *The Warburg Institute Iconographic Database* offers an online gallery of images of 'Seneca', viewed 22 August 2024, <https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/>.

[56] Nothing is known about the 'Senecae statua tota veneranda' that is mentioned in Claude Bellièvre's description of *c.* 1512 of the collection of the Massimi in Rome; Lanciani (1902: 172): (Commissariato di Raffaele, 1515) 'La più antica descrizione dell'antiquario "in edibus Maximorum Rome" è quella di Claude Bellievre [*sic*], del 1512 circa, nella quale sono mentovati . . . "Senece statua tota veneranda"'; and Lanciani (1906: 42–43).

[57] Found on the Caelian hill, on the site of the Villa Mattei/Villa Celimontana, near the church of S. Maria in Domnica. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung, inv. Sk 391, viewed 22 August 2024, <https://id.smb.museum/object/698814> and <https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/17038>: Fabricius and Scholl (2016: 28–29, cat. 19, 'Doppelherme des Sokrates und Seneca' [R. Von der Hoff and K. Hallof]) and Franchi dell'Orto (1999: 39–40). See Möbius (1976: 202n19) for scholarly opinions about the herm, noting its inconsistency with other information about Seneca's appearance and the possibility that either his father is represented or the inscription is not true.

[58] Marcos 2019: III.B; Lojkine 2019: §§3–23.

[59] For the Renaissance revival of the genres: Dwyer (1993), Cunnally (1986: 316n11), and Madigan (2022: 1–7) on the background to Andrea Fulvio's *Illustrium imagines* of 1517.

[60] Pliny the Elder, *HN* 35.11 (text and translation Rackham 1952): 'imaginum amorem flagrasse quondam testes sunt Atticus ille Ciceronis edito de iis volumine, M. Varro benignissimo invento insertis voluminum suorum fecunditati etiam septingentorum inlustrium aliquo modo imaginibus, non passus intercidere figuras aut vetustatem aevi contra homines valere, inventor muneris etiam dis invidiosi, quando immortalitatem non solum dedit, verum etiam in omnes terras misit, ut praesentes esse ubique ceu di possent. et hoc quidem alienis ille praestitit.' (The existence of a strong passion for portraits in former days is evidenced by Atticus the friend of Cicero in the volume he published on the subject and by the most benevolent invention of Marcus Varro, who actually by some means inserted in a prolific output of volumes portraits of seven hundred famous people, not allowing their likenesses to disappear or the lapse of ages to prevail against immortality in men. Herein Varro was the inventor of a benefit that even the gods might envy, since he not only bestowed immortality but despatched it all over the world, enabling his subjects to be ubiquitous, like the gods. This was a service Varro rendered to strangers.) M. Terentius Varro (116–27 BC), *Hebdomades*: Skydsgaard (1992), Sallmann (2006a; 2006b: IV.37), and Landfester (2007; 2009). T. Pomponius Atticus (110–32 BC): Kierdorf (2006a; 2006b).

[61] Forum of Augustus, dedicated 2 BC: Kockel (1995: 290–91) for the statues, and Coarelli (2014: 110–11). For the *elogia*: Sage (1979) and Shaya (2013). For the ancient literary tradition: Joost-Gaugier (1982). The Roman *elogium* is an honorary inscription used in several contexts: Schiemann (2006a; 2006b).

et ervditorum of 1570, a work for which he explicitly cites Varro and Atticus as precedents.[62] Subsequently, however, he identified a marble bust in the Farnese collection as Seneca, and it is included in Theodoor Galle's publication of 1598, which contained material from Orsini's collection, reformatted as an alphabetized collection of engraved portraits and retitled *Illvstrivm imagines, ex antiquis marmoribus, nomismatibus, et gemmis expressae: quæ exstant Romæ*.[63]

The bust in question is one of the many ancient versions of the type conventionally referred to as 'Pseudo-Seneca'; its identity in antiquity is still debated.[64] It is labelled in the *Illustrium imagines* of 1598 as Seneca and as being in the collection of Cardinal Farnese.[65] It remains unclear when and how Orsini came to identify the bust in the Farnese collection as Seneca.[66] Orsini made extensive notes in preparation for Galle's publication. Johannes Faber and Gaspar Schopp edited these notes and translated them into Latin; they were published in 1606 in the second edition of Galle's book.[67] Faber's note on the engraving of the Farnese bust explains that it had been identified on the basis of a contorniate once owned by Cardinal Bernardino Maffei with an image inscribed 'Seneca.'[68] The contorniate has never been found or even seen by another; for the most part, it has been assumed lost, but doubts have been raised about its authenticity.[69]

In any event, Rubens was much taken by the Farnese bust, and in 1608 he took back to Antwerp what is variously thought to be either a modern replica or an ancient version of it. It appears in his painting *The Four Philosophers* (*c.* 1612) and is one of the images he provided for the 1615 edition of Lipsius's volume of Seneca's works. In both, Rubens changed the image in ways that make it difficult to identify specific pieces within the otherwise recognizable type.[70] Earlier, in his painting of the *Dying Seneca*, he had combined the body of the Altemps/Borghese statue with a head that is often identified as the 'Pseudo-Seneca.'[71] (It should also be noted that a certain amount of overlapping between the types can also be observed.) Partly owing to the numerous extant examples, the type became extremely popular, and its identity as Seneca does not seem to have been widely questioned until Johann Joachim Winckelmann published doubts in 1767. He pointed out the disparity between Seneca's poor reputation in his own lifetime and the large number of copies from that era.[72] As it is not clear either when Orsini recognized the Farnese bust as Seneca or when the Altemps/Borghese statue was christened, it is likewise not clear which identification influenced the other, if

[62] Orsini 1570. Wallis (2016: 233–35) for Orsini's reference to Varro and Atticus.

[63] Jongkees (1960: 3–16) for the history of these volumes, Dwyer (1993: 468–69), Mango (2001: 387–91), and Wallis (2016: 227–40).

[64] For the Pseudo-Seneca: Strandman (1950), Richter (1965: 1:58–66 ['Pseudo-Seneca–Hesiod?']), Pasquier (2000), Mango (2001), Ker (2009: 301–04), Wallis (2016: 101–03), and Wallis (n.d.). This figural type is not to be confused with the body of literary works known under the appellation 'Pseudo-Seneca.'

[65] Galle (1598: Index, 'Seneca philosophus. 131'; pl. 131, 'Seneca. Apud Cardinalem Farnesium in marmore.'). Farnese bust: Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 6187; photograph, viewed 23 August 2024, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Catalogue_of_the_Museo_Archeologico_di_Napoli_(inventory_MANN)>, 3.1: Farnese Sculptures (Catalogue).

[66] Prinz (1973: 412) suggests that Lipsius may have been involved in the identification; Morford (1991: 6) for the friendship of Orsini and Lipsius.

[67] Galle 1606: 'Appendix ad Imagines illustrium'. Wallis (2016: 232–33, 232n36) for their separate publication in the same year: Faber (1606).

[68] Faber (1606: 74 ad no. 131 [the numbering of the plates was retained from the first edition of 1598]): 'Quòd autem ista sit *Senecae* imago, ex numo aeneo grandiusculo (*contorniatum* vulgò dicunt) intelligitur, quem olim Bernardinus Cardinalis Maffaeus habebat, cum nomine inscripto, SENECA.' Faber then cites Tacitus and Dio Cassius as sources for information about Seneca. Wallis (2016: 101 and n. 69, with translation): 'That this is the portrait of Seneca, however, might be known from a large bronze coin (commonly called a contorniate) that Cardinal Bernardino Maffei once owned, [with] the name SENECA inscribed.'

[69] Lost: Prinz (1973: 411), Pasquier (2000), Mango (2001: 389), Belkin and Healy (2004: 269n2), and Malgouyres (2015: 499). Skepticism expressed by Winckelmann in the posthumous edition of the *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1776: 809–10) in Borbein *et al.* (2002: 777): 'diese Münze aber hat weder er selbst, noch sonst jemand gesehen' ('but neither he [sc. Faber] nor anyone else has ever seen this coin' [trans. Lodge 1968: 2:308]); for commentary, see Borbein *et al.* (2007: 479 ad 77, 16–17). See also Forsyth (1813: 239 and 247 n. b; cf. 2001: 121–22 [217–18], n. 231 [slightly different text of the second edition of 1816]): 'The busts called Seneca . . . are all anonymous, authenticated by no medal, and as questionable as the genius and virtue of Seneca himself'; the note continues: 'I pay no regard to the contorniate medallion bearing the name of Seneca, a medallion no where to be found, and depending only on the suspected authority of Orsini'; and Heintze (1974: XI): 'Den Kontorniaten, auf den er sich als Beweis beruft, bringt er allerdings nicht, er kann ihn nicht bringen, da ein solcher nicht existiert,' cited by Van der Meulen (1994: 2:137n3 [ad no. 117]). For the question of authenticity: Thielemann (2006: 184 and n. 93). For the otherwise unknown contorniate and for contorniates in the sixteenth century: Cunnally (1986: 316n10).

[70] For Rubens's bust as a modern replica: Prinz (1973: 412 ['Rubens acquired a replica']), Morford (1991: 6–7 ['Rubens . . . bought a replica of the bust']), and Ker (2009: 301 ['his own copy']). For Ruben's bust as an ancient work: Cunnally (1986: 314 ['the so-called Bust of Seneca that Rubens cherished as one of the choicest antiquities in his collection']), Healy (in Belkin and Healy 2004: 260, 268), and Malgouyres (2015: 500). See also Vickers (1977). For changes: e.g., Prinz (1973: 417): 'Rubens, who made the sketch for the engraving, changed the aspect of the marble bust into a lifelike portrait, thus practising what he had preached to his pupils when painting from antique marbles.' For his treatise *De imitatione statuarum*: Thielemann (2018).

[71] E.g., Möbius (1976: 202).

[72] Winckelmann 1767b: 115–16. Winckelmann expresses doubts about its identification as Seneca in the posthumous edition of the *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*: Winckelmann (1776: 809–10, in Borbein *et al.* [2002: 777]). See also Borbein *et al.* (2007: 478–79) and Mango (2001: 394). References to busts to which Winckelmann refers are conveniently assembled in Borbein *et al.* (2006: 302–03, nos. 672–79).

influence there was.[73] The coexistence of these types of 'Seneca'[74] is striking, as they do not closely resemble each other at all. The most obvious difference is that locks of unruly hair straggle over the forehead of the 'Pseudo-Seneca,' while the forehead of the Altemps/Borghese figure is clear, and his hair and mustache are well groomed. Nonetheless, in his preface to the 1615 edition of Lipsius, Balthasar Moretus describes the engraved image of the bust owned by Rubens in terms very similar to those he used about the statue:

> The second portrait that you see was made by the same Rubens from a marble original, which he brought with him from Rome and keeps in his own most elegant Museum. It is clearly the same as the likeness of the same philosopher in the possession of the most illustrious Cardinal Farnese and published with insufficient accuracy by Fulvius Ursinus in his *Imagines Illustrium* with a commentary by Faber of Bamberg. … It differs to some extent from the earlier portrait [i.e., the *Dying Seneca*] in that the hair is long and unkempt. But it most excellently represents the leader of a manly school of philosophy, a man of powerful intellect and great courage, a man almost worn out by sleepless nights spent in study. Thus even the likeness of his face itself attracts the viewer to the noble writings of his most wise intellect.[75]

Rubens himself, in his painting of *The Dying Seneca* (*c.* 1612/13), combined the frontal view of the Altemps/Borghese statue with a head that is reminiscent of the 'Pseudo-Seneca.'[76]

It seems, then, that the absence of reliably identified ancient portraits of Seneca was no obstacle to recognizing his likeness in the Altemps/Borghese statue. Its bodily and facial features were sufficiently readable in terms of current knowledge of the man and his works to make the identification satisfactory. There was also iconographic evidence available that was compatible enough with accounts of his suicide to allow the fragmentary statue to permit its being interpreted as Seneca in the act.

Representations of Seneca's Suicide

Narratives and representations of Seneca's suicide are known in several versions from the thirteenth century on.[77] Starting early in the thirteenth century, there is a long series of illustrations for both works of Seneca and texts about him that show him standing or reclining in a vessel or a tub, often clearly wooden, and with or without Paulina as a partner in suicide.[78] As neither Suetonius nor Dio Cassius gives concrete details — not even a location, let alone a bath — that would be helpful in depicting or recognizing the scene, Tacitus's account in Book 15 of the *Annales* must be the ultimate foundation for any information that is not the product of pure invention.[79] His works, however, do not seem to have been much read even as early as the third century, and there is very little evidence for interest in him until the eleventh.[80] Books 11–16 of the *Annales* remained almost unknown until the fourteenth century and the discovery of the manuscript at Monte Cassino.[81] They became available in learned circles after around 1360, when Boccaccio acquired (by unclear means) the eleventh-century 'Second Medicean' manuscript from the library at Monte Cassino and transferred it to Florence.[82] In his commentary on Dante's *Comedy* (*c.* 1374), he gives a 'literal exposition' of Tacitus's account of the suicide:

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[73] Malgouyres (2015: 500), for example, has argued that Orsini's identification of the Farnese bust was already known when Vacca (as he assumes) made his; similarly, McGrath (1997: 2:285 ['a perceived resemblance to the bust of Seneca recently identified by Fulvio Orsini']) and Wallis (n.d. ['The similarity of this head in style to that of the Louvre Old Fisherman led to the Old Fisherman also being identified as Seneca, and placed in a marble basin to evoke Seneca's bathtub suicide.']).

[74] A third type was also current: Mango (2001: 391–93). Lipsius (1605: title page, lower left); it was replaced by the bust of 'Pseudo-Seneca' in the edition of 1615.

[75] Judson and Van de Velde (1978: 1:165–66; 166n1 for the Latin text). Discussion and translation: Morford (1991: 9) and Thielemann (2006: 184–85).

[76] *Der sterbende Seneca* (*The Dying Seneca; The Death of Seneca*): Munich, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek München, inv. 305 (by Rubens: *c.* 1612/13), viewed 23 August 2024, <https://www.sammlung.pinakothek.de/en/artwork/wE4KXQExZ5>; McGrath (1997: 2:282–94). The version in Madrid is thought to be a workshop copy of 1612–15; Museo del Prado inv. P003048, viewed 23 August 2024, <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-death-of-seneca/b067f605-a563-483b-8efe-4058a8338ea3>; McGrath (1997: 2:282–97). For features of the 'Pseudo-Seneca' in the painted figure: Wallis (2016: 100).

[77] Texts: Ker (2009: 179–201, 274–284). Images: Marcos (2019: III.B.2).

[78] Ker 2009: 189–90, 194–97; Braund 2015: 17. Marcos (2019) illustrates several, listed here with dates of the manuscripts and objects in parentheses: *Proverbes de Sénèque* (1275–1300); *Roman de la Rose* (*c.* 1350, 1352, fifteenth century); *Des cleres et nobles femmes* (1401/1402; ca. 1450); Jans der Enikel, *Weltchronik* (*c.* 1410–1430; *c.* 1420); medal by Filarete (*c.* 1445); Boccaccio, *De mulieribus claris* (*c.* 1474; 1541).

[79] Ker (2009: 189) suggests that the feature of the bath in medieval illustrations may have derived from the 'lost Suetonian narrative or from a commentary on Boethius.'

[80] Benario 2012: 117–18.

[81] Conte *et al.* (1994: 542–43): 'Tacitus seems to have been surprisingly unpopular in antiquity. . .. In the Middle Ages, too, Tacitus was hardly known and could easily have failed to survive to our times.' He began to be better known after 'Zenobi da Strada discovered the lone medieval manuscript of *Annales* 11–16.' Cunnally (1986: 314n3) for fifteenth-century accounts of Seneca's suicide that follow Tacitus.

[82] Benario (2012: 118) and *supra* n. 81 for the discovery of the manuscript by Zenobi da Strada.

> According to what Cornelius Tacitus wrote in the fifteenth book of his *Annals,* . . . [h]aving already lived to be a hundred years old, he had the veins of his arms opened. Because the blood was flowing out of his body slowly, however, he then likewise had them open the veins of his legs and knees. As the life slowly left his body, he called for secretaries and had them write down still more praiseworthy things that he dictated to them (for as long as he had the strength to speak) for the benefit of his reputation and of those who would read them after his death.
>
> Because Death was so slow in coming, he implored Statius Annaeus, his doctor and trusted friend of many years, to give him poison. Having already prepared it long beforehand, he gave it to Seneca, who drank it. The desired effect did not come, however, because his limbs, already cold, allowed no route by which the poison could reach his heart. At last, he had himself placed into a very hot bath. As he sank into the tub, he took some water in his hands and sprinkled it upon those slaves who were closest to him. They heard him say that that was the libation he offered to Jove Liberator. Shortly thereafter, his death was brought by the hot steam of the water. His body was burned with neither pageantry nor official ceremonies, according to the ancient customs.[83]

Boccaccio's recounting of Tacitus's account conflates the two incidents of the *stagnum* and *balneum*: 'si fece alla fine mettere in un bagno d'acqua molto calda, . . . E poco appresso dal vapore caldo dell'acqua fu ucciso.'[84] Given the late dates for both the rediscovery of the manuscript of *Annales* Book 15 and of Boccaccio's *Commentary*, neither is a likely source for the earlier images of Seneca in a tub or vessel.

The detail of the bath, however, is mentioned in a very different account of the death of Seneca. Jacobus de Voragine (1228/30–1298) describes Seneca's suicide in his *Legenda sanctorum*, generally known as the *Legenda aurea* (*Golden Legend*) of *c.* 1260:

> We read in a certain history, admittedly apocryphal, that when Seneca, Nero's tutor, was looking forward to a reward worthy of his labors, Nero ordered him to choose which branch of a given tree he would prefer to be hanged from, saying that this was the reward he was going to receive. When Seneca asked why he was being condemned to death, Nero brandished a sharp sword over his head, and Seneca bowed his head and backed away from the sword, stricken with fear at the threat of death. Nero asked him: 'Master, why do you bow your head and dodge the sword?' Seneca answered: 'Because I am a man and therefore I fear death and am unwilling to die.' Nero: 'And I fear you even now, as I feared you as a child! That is why I cannot live in peace and quiet as long as you are alive!' 'If I must die,' said Seneca, 'at least allow me to choose the mode of death that I would prefer!' Nero: 'Choose quickly! Don't delay your death!' Then Seneca lay in a bathtub filled with water and opened the veins in both arms; and as the blood flowed out, his life ended. So his very name, Seneca, was a presage. *Se necans* means killing oneself, and though he was forced to do so, he died by his own hand.[85]

This version seems to stand behind other near-contemporary texts that feature the episode.[86] The

[83] Canto IV: Literal exposition. Translation from Papio (2009: 233–34). Text from Guerri (1918: 2:82): 'E, avendo giá il centesimo anno passato, si fece aprir le vene delle braccia, e appresso, percioché il sangue lentamente usciva del corpo, similmente si fece aprir le vene delle gambe e delle ginocchia; e, mentre lentamente mancava la vita sua, infino che gli bastaron le forze di poter parlare, fatti venire scrittori, piú cose degne di laude in sua fama e in bene di coloro che dopo la sua morte le dovevan vedere, fece scrivere. Ma, prolungandosi troppo la morte, pregò Stazio Anneo medico, lungamente stato suo fido amico, che gli desse veleno, il quale egli lungamente davanti s'aveva apparecchiato. Il quale preso, né d'alcuna cosa offendendolo, per li membri, che erano giá freddi e niuna via davano donde il veleno potesse al cuore trapassare; si fece alla fine mettere in un bagno d'acqua molto calda, nel quale entrando, con le mani, que' servi che piú prossimani gli erano, presa dell'acqua, risperse. Da' quali fu udita questa voce: che esso quello liquore sacrificava a Giove liberatore. E poco appresso dal vapore caldo dell'acqua fu ucciso, e senza alcuna pompa o solennitá di funebre ufficio fu, secondo il costume antico, arso il corpo suo.'

[84] Ker (2009: 274) correctly notes the differentiated stages reported by Tacitus.

[85] Ryan and Duffy 2012: 346–47. For this passage, see (Ker 2009: 192–93). For the text: Maggioni (1998: 1:559–75 [LXXXIV. De sancto Petro apostolo]). For the passage: Maggioni (1998: 570) and here, Maggioni (2007: 1:637–38, 212–21): 'Si legge in una storia apocrifa che quando il suo precettore Seneca sperava di avere un compenso adeguato al suo servizio, Nerone gli ordinò di scegliere al ramo di quale albero volesse essere impiccato, dichiarando che questo era il compenso che avrebbe ricevuto da lui per la sua opera. Quando Seneca domandò ca requireret unde hoc mortis supplicium meruisset, acutum gladium super eius uerticem crebro uibrari fecit. Seneca uero nutu capitis minanti cedebat gladio, uehementer metuens periclitari mortis periculo. Cui Nero ait: "Magister, ut quid nutu capitis minanti gladio cedis?" Cui Seneca: "Homo sum et ideo mortem uereor et inuitus morior." Cui Nero ait: "Sic adhuc ego te metuo ut puer metuere consueui, quare te uiuente quiete non potero uiuere." Dixitque Seneca: "Si me mori necesse est, saltem mihi concede ut quod uoluero mihi eligam genus mortis." Cui Nero: "Festinus eligas, tantum mori ne differas." Tunc Seneca balneo in aqua facto in utroque brachio sibi minui fecit et sic nimio sanguinis fluxu uitam ibidem finiuit. Et sic quodam presagio Seneca nomen habuit, quasi se necans, quia quodammodo licet coactus manupropria se necauit.'

[86] For the *Golden Legend* as source for the episode of Seneca's death in Jean de Meun's section of the *Roman de la Rose* (*c.* 1275); Arnold

account of the death is quite precise: 'Tunc Seneca balneo in aqua facto in utroque brachio sibi minui fecit et sic nimio sanguinis fluxu uitam ibidem finiuit.' Nonetheless, Seneca's bloodletting and the use of water are, apart from Nero's cruelty, the only details consistent with Tacitus's account.

The physical realities of Seneca's suicide would not have been completely unknown to his younger near-contemporary Tacitus. According to him (*Ann.* 15.64), Seneca first cuts the vessels of his arm or arms, then of his legs and knees, and only then enters a *stagnum* of warm water (*stagnum calidae aquae introiit*), and is finally carried into a *balneum* and suffocated by steam (*balneo inlatus est et vapore exanimatus*).[87] While it has not been possible to identify which of Seneca's several villas is the one located four miles from Rome in which the suicide took place, literary and archaeological evidence gives a good idea of the kind of property it would have been in reality and likely in Tacitus's conception.[88] The *stagnum* would have been the kind of sizeable constructed pool that is known as a feature of Roman villas in many parts of the Empire.[89] The *balneum* into which he was carried should probably be understood as an independent structure equipped to furnish a number of bathing, heating, and cooling options.[90]

It may not have been lost on Tacitus and his contemporary readers that *balnea*, like *villae*, were a focus of Seneca's hypocritical — or at least performative — moralizing. In the *Epistulae morales*, a one-sided pseudo-correspondence addressed to his younger friend C. Lucilius (Iunior), composed after AD 62, he several times denounces luxurious *villae* among the corrupt features of places like Baiae, although he himself owned several such properties, including one at Baiae.[91] In Letter 86, Seneca describes the *villa* at Liternum in Campania that had belonged to Scipio Africanus (236–183 BC). Although clearly large and well equipped, the property, with its structure of cut stone (*villa . . . lapide quadrato*), its towers (*turres*), its well, hidden by buildings and greenery (*cisternam aedificiis ac viridibus*), and its fishponds (*piscenae*), is made to sound somewhat like the *villae* built in the hills above Cumae by Marius, Pompey, and Caesar, which, as he remarks to Lucilius, 'you will see that they were not *villas*–they were camps' (*scies non villas esse, sed castra*; *Ep.* 51.11).[92] Seneca's longest comments are about Scipio's *balneolum angustum* (small bath). In its simple construction, lack of windows, and minimal facilities even for providing water, it contrasts the hard virtues of past Roman ways with the extravagantly decorated structures and weak practices of the present. The letter is a striking example of the condemnation of modern luxury that is a common topos in the literature of the late Republic and early Empire. Archaeological evidence, too, suggests that during the early Empire, the *balnea* of villas, which had been part of the main domestic block, became more elaborate, perhaps inspired by imperial examples, and developed into independent structures.[93] That Tacitus describes the dying Seneca being ferried from a pool of warm water to a stream bath certainly works another transformation of the already moralized elements of Roman bathing habits that would likely have had

of Liège, *Alphabetum narrationum* (*c.* 1308); and Chaucer, *Monk's Tale* (*c.* 1387): DiMarco (1994). Ker (2009: 192) calls the *Golden Legend* and Jean de Meun's part of the *Roman de la Rose* 'two especially prominent thirteenth-century versions.'

87 Ker (2009: 274–79) gives a detailed discussion of Tacitus's narrative, the realia and associations of Roman bathing, and later interpretations of the suicide at 'Bath Time.' Selected illustrations of the episode in the *Roman de la Rose*: Marcos (2019: III.B.2.a).

88 Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.60 (text and translation from Jackson 1937): 'Is forte an prudens ad eum diem ex Campania remeaverat quartumque apud lapidem suburbano rure substiterat' (By accident or design, Seneca that day had returned from Campania and broke his journey at one of his country-houses four miles out of Rome). For this *suburbanum* in Tacitus and later writers: Ker (2009: 328–33). There is an immense literature on the villas of the Roman wealthy class; for a useful overview: Marzano and Métraux (2018).

89 For summary of scholarship on Roman 'water-display': Rogers (2018: 46–56); for 'water features' in Roman villas: Zarmakoupi (2014: 141–78); for 'aquatic culture' in Roman villas, particularly in Spain: Stephenson (2009); water in Roman gardens: Jansen (2018). Neudecker (2015: 393–94) observes that in Roman villas, 'nothing ever happens without water.' *Stagnum* is also the term used of large public pools such as the Stagnum Agrippae, Stagnum Augusti, Stagnum Neronis, Stagnum Domitiani, and Stagnum Traiani. McGrath (1997: 2:287) for Lipsius's interpretation of the *stagnum* 'as a *solium*, a tub or basin, of warm water,' and for Rubens's representation of the 'bath.'

90 Marzano 2007: 43, 189–93; Zarmakoupi 2014: 198–202; Rogers 2018: 31–39.

91 For Seneca's family wealth: Griffin (2008: 26) and Braund (2015: 25–26). For Nero's gifts to Seneca, including properties: Tac. *Ann.* 14.53–55; Cass. Dio 62.25 (*supra* n. 27). For criticisms of Seneca's wealth and hypocrisy: Berno (2023: 110–41 ['Seneca's *Luxuria*']). For Seneca's properties: Seneca, *Ep.* 12 (12.1, 4: veneram in suburbanum meum; 12.1: de inpensis aedificii dilabentis; 12.1: sed villam veterem esse; haec villa); *Ep.* 51.1 (contenti sumus Bais); *Ep.* 104 (104.1: in Nomentum meum fugi; 104.6: postquam vineas attigi); *Ep.* 110.1 (ex Nomentano meo); *Ep.* 123.1 (in Albanum meum perveni). *Ep.* 55 for features of the *villa* once owned by the rich Servilius Vatia (unknown) near Cumae and Baiae, including two artificial grottoes (speluncae . . . manu factae) and a stream (rivus) drawing its water from the sea and Lake Acheron. For *Ep.* 12, 55, and 86: Henderson (2004). For the importance of Scipio's villa to Seneca and later readers: Ker (2009: 275, 346–58). Neudecker (2015: 390) calls Seneca's letters to Lucilius 'contrived' and compares them to Cicero's letters on his villas and their decoration.

92 For archaeological and anecdotal evidence for the siting and features of villas in the second century BC designed to meet challenges from civil strife and piracy: Marzano (2007: 35–37).

93 Marzano (2007: 189–93) for developments in baths and other features of villas in response to political and social changes in the early Empire; followed by Zarmakoupi (2014: 199); see also DeLaine (1999).

meaning for his contemporaries.[94] (It may also be an ironic touch that contributes to the ambiguity of his ostensibly positive account of Seneca.) Post-antique readers and illustrators, however, would be unlikely to be familiar with this background, and, not surprisingly, they visualized the scene in terms of their own knowledge. It is not surprising, then, that Seneca was long represented as dying in a tub.

The version of Seneca's death told in the *Golden Legend* appears to be represented on the reverse of a fifteenth-century Italian bronze medal (**Figure 4**). It is one of a series of medals that was attributed in the late nineteenth century to the 'Médailleur aux Empereurs romains' (Medallist of the Roman Emperors) but is now generally accepted as the work of the sculptor and architect Antonio Averlino, called Filarete (*c.* 1400–*c.* 1469).[95] The obverse of these medals carries a profile bust of an emperor; the reverse, a figure or scene relating to him.[96] The obverse of the medal in question shows a profile bust of Nero facing the viewer's right and a variety of inscriptions identifying him.[97] The reverses of the extant examples are consistent in composition but not in details. The scene on the reverse has no parallel in Roman coinage. On the left, Nero, in military dress and seated on a curule chair, reaches with his right hand toward a naked male, visible only above the tops of his thighs, standing in an elaborately decorated vessel who steadies himself with his left hand on its rim and stretches his right arm toward Nero. In some examples, it is clear that the man's lower right arm is streaming blood.[98] A large tree, often clearly a date palm, stands between and behind them. In some examples, an inscription such as 'NERO AUG' appears in the exergue and establishes the identity of the figure on the left.

The scene was not correctly identified until 1970, when Balázs Kapossy recognized that it showed the suicide of Seneca; others subsequently reached the same conclusion independently.[99] Those who have proposed or accepted this interpretation generally



Figure 4. Uniface cast of reverse of medal after design by Master of the Roman Emperors (Filarete?), ca. 1445. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 1986.319.12, The Erich Lederer Collection, Gift of Mrs. Erich Lederer, 1986. Photograph: Open Access/Public Domain.

cite Tacitus as the source.[100] John Cunnally, noting that ancient accounts do not record Nero's presence at Seneca's suicide, suggests that 'the Medallist may have relied on the more fanciful account in the *Legenda aurea*, which has the suicide taking place immediately after a confrontation between the Emperor and his tutor.'[101] His discussion focuses on the final part of the passage, in which Nero demands that Seneca choose the method of his suicide, but he does not mention the immediately preceding exchange. It is, however, Nero's initial demand of Seneca that confirms the *Golden Legend* as the source for the scene: 'Nero ordered him to choose which branch of a given tree he would prefer to be hanged from.' There is an obvious and literal explanation for the presence of the tree between the figures, which is otherwise difficult to explain. Its inclusion is entirely consistent with the structuring of illustrations with narrative content that reflect the classical descriptions of works of art, texts that served as models not only for commentary and explication, but also for the process of composition.[102]

[94] Ker (2009: 274–75) for Seneca's actions in terms of specific elements of Roman bathing.
[95] For the history of attribution: Spencer (1979), Cunnally (1986: 314), and Smołucha-Sładkowska (2018: 4).
[96] For remarks on the series: Spencer (1979: 557–58, Appendix I); Pollard *et al.* (2007: 243).
[97] For the Nero medal: Spencer (1979: 558), McGrath (1997: 2:285 and 291n19), and Pollard *et al.* (2007: 244–45, no. 227).
[98] For the path of the blood: Cunnally (1986: 316); detail of right arm: Cunnally (1986: 315, fig. 2).
[99] For the identifications by Kapossy (by private letter in 1970), Möbius (1976), and Cunnally (1986), see Glass (2015: 37n18) and Smołucha-Sładkowska (2018: 4).

[100] Möbius (1976: 201), Pollard *et al.* (2007: 24), and Cunnally (1986: 314n3) for Tacitus and for fifteenth-century texts that follow his account closely.
[101] Cunnally 1986: 314.
[102] Möbius (1976: 202–03) explains the palm tree as a symbol of virtue that cannot be broken by tyranny; Cunnally (1986: 317), on the basis of the similarity of the reverse to scenes of Christian martyrdom, explains the palm as the symbol of the martyr's victory over death.

Although the medal is included in studies of the iconography of Seneca,[103] discussions of the Altemps/Borghese statue have not, to my knowledge, mentioned it in connection with the figure or as a possible model for the restorations. The date of the medal is established by Filarete's known activity in Rome between 1433 and his departure for Milan in 1451. It is clearly not possible for the Altemps/Borghese statue to have served as a model for the naked man in the vase.[104] That the reverse is possible, however, has not, to my knowledge, been suggested.

The addition of the vase has often been singled out for criticism, if not ridicule, as an especially arbitrary feature of the restoration. It does not seem to have been noticed that there are similarities between the elaborate vessel shown on the medal and the Altemps vase. While they differ in overall shape, the bodies of both are divided into horizontal zones. The vase on the medal is more elaborately decorated, but in the center of each front side is an animal protome: a bucranium flanked by garlands on the medal, and on the marble vase, the head of the Altemps ram decked like a classical bucranium.[105] The medal seems an obvious model.

The scene on Filarete's medal is consistent both with the *Golden Legend* and with the earlier representations of Seneca standing half-visible in a large vessel.[106] The medal could plausibly still have been known in artistic and learned circles in Rome in the late sixteenth century and suggested an identification for a legless statue of a man. On the medal, Seneca is visible only above the tops of his thighs; as the Altemps/Borghese statue seems to have preserved at least some length of its legs, it was obviously necessary to supply it with a vase that would not hide parts intended to be visible and be consistent with the understanding of the ancient textual sources.

The identification and restoration of the Altemps/Borghese statue were, then, neither arbitrary nor risible. The figure remained Seneca until doubts arising in the mid-eighteenth century began to pose challenges to his identity.

Not Seneca, Not a Fisherman

> Vorne vier nickende Pferdeköpfe,
> Neben mir zwei blonde Mädchenzöpfe,
> Hinten der Groom mit wichtigen Mienen,
> An den Rädern Gebell.
>
> In den Dörfern windstillen Lebens Genüge,
> Auf den Feldern fleißige Spaten und Pflüge,
> Alles das von der Sonne beschienen
> So hell, so hell.
>
> Detlev von Liliencron, 'Viererzug'

Quite early in the eighteenth century, opinion began to turn against the Altemps/Borghese 'Seneca.' Jonathan Richardson, Jr., for instance, had seen the statue at the Villa Borghese in 1720. When he and his father in 1722 published a description of it on the basis of his notes, they mentioned features noted by Francucci and Moretus such as his weakness from loss of blood and unattractive face, but their judgement now was altogether different. To them, the figure looked 'savage' and 'disagreeable' and is little more than an undignified, 'weak old man.'[107] Nearly half a century later, in 1763, Winckelmann expressed his distaste for the statue in the *Abhandlung von der Fähigkeit der Empfindung des Schönen in der Kunst, und dem Unterrichte in derselben* (*Treatise on the Capacity for Sensitivity to the Beautiful in Art and the Method of Teaching It*). Holding forth to his young friend Berg on one of his favorite topics, the incompetence of other scholars, he condemns the figure in sweeping terms: 'Through such experts what is claimed to be a Seneca in the Bath, in the Villa Borghese, has been paid some attention, but it has a web of veins like knitting and is in my eyes not worthy of being considered ancient art. This judgment will seem like heresy to most, and a few years ago I would not have dared to state it publicly.'[108] By 1767, he

[103] Marcos 2019: III.2.c.
[104] Noted by Cunnally (1986: 314).
[105] For the krater-like vase on the medal, which has no close ancient parallels: Möbius (1976: 199–200). He notes its similarity to a vase represented among those carried by the soldiers in Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar*, canvas IV (*c.* 1485–1506), which is closer in general shape to the Altemps vase: Hampton Court Palace, Royal Collection, viewed 26 August 2024, <https://www.rct.uk/collection/403961/the-triumphs-of-caesar-4-the-vase-bearers>.
[106] Marcos 2019: III.B.2. Cunnally (1986: 314n3) notes a sketch by Filarete of the female personification 'Memoria,' naked to the groin, emerging from a vase that somewhat resembles the one on the medal.
[107] Richardson (1722: 296–97): 'Seneca in the Bath; Prodigious Expression of a Weak Old Man! He has lost so much Blood that He can hardly support himself upon his Legs, which bend, and give way under him. His Air is Savage, and very Disagreeable. ... [A]nd the whole Figure has an apparent want of dignity.'
[108] Winckelmann (1763: 7) and Rehm (2002: 215): 'Durch solche Kenner ist der vorgegebene Seneca im Bade, in der Villa Borghese, in Achtung gekommen, welcher ein Gewebe von strickmäßigen Adern ist, und in meinen Augen der Kunst des Alterthums kaum würdig zu achten. Dieses Urtheil wird den mehresten einer Ketzerey ähnlich sehen, und ich würde dasselbe vor ein paar Jahren noch nicht öffentlich gewaget haben' (translation Carter 2013: 151). The treatise is addressed 'An den Edelgebohrnen Freyherrn, Friedrich Rudolph von Berg, aus Liefland.' In 1756, Winckelmann recorded his opinion of the statue when he saw it at the Villa Borghese: 'Der Seneca ist

had found the evidence to demote 'il preteso Seneca nel bagno' to the status of a slave from ancient comedy fetching food from the market with a carrying-bag. In the *Monumenti antichi inediti*, he cites as comparanda two small figures in the Villa Albani and a large statue in white marble that closely resembles the 'Seneca.'[109] The same arguments appear in condensed form in the *Anmerkungen über die Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* published the same year.[110]

When Winckelmann advanced his interpretation of these figures as domestic slaves, the large statue was still in the Villa Doria Pamphilj. It had been found around 1650 at Anzio (ancient Antium) during the excavations there by the Pamphilj and was restored in 1658 by Adam-Claude Brefort. In 1773, Prince Andrea IV Doria gave it to Pope Clement XIV for his new museum in the Vatican, for which the antiquarian Giovanni Battista Visconti served as curator. It preserves much more of its legs and arms, as well as a bucket held in its left hand. It resembles the figure in the Louvre quite closely in its pose, leaning forward with knees slightly bent, its balding head, the features of its face, and its loincloth. To make the statue suitably modest for display, the loincloth was lengthened, and apparently at this time it was also noticed that in the bucket, the shapes of fish were clearly discernible. The obvious conclusion was that the statue represented a fisherman, and that identification has remained dominant.[111]

Interpreting the 'Old Fishermen'

The identity as fisherman has served as the basis for interpreting every aspect of the Louvre statue, from the smallest details to its overall purpose and meaning. The task of analysis is not so simple as might be expected. The presumption that a Hellenistic bronze original lies behind this and similar statues is no longer universally accepted. The abandonment of the paradigm of Greek original/Roman copy permits better evaluation of the Roman contribution, but as the principles of *Kopienkritik* — chief among them, the criterion of fidelity to a hypothetical original — continue to break down, the nature of the corpus that has been assembled around the Louvre statue

sehr schlecht gearbeitet.' (The Seneca is very badly worked.): Raspi Serra (2000: 48), in Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Allemand 68, fol. 8; facsimile, viewed 26 August 2024, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100376188/f10.item>.

[109] Winckelmann (1767a: 2:256–57 [Parte Quarta. Riti, Costumi ed Arti. Capitolo IX. Il Teatro, II. La Commedia, C]): 'Il preteso Seneca nel bagno nella villa Borghese mi reca il motivo di riportare al Num. 193. una figurina di marmo esistente nella villa dell' Emo Alessandro Albani, la quale indubitatamente ne rappresenta un servo della commedia mandato al mercato con la sporta, ch' e' tiene nella mano sinistra, a provvedere della roba per la mensa, come il Sosia dell' Andria di Terenzio. Simile a questa figurina se ne ritrova un' altra della stessa grandezza nella medesima villa, ma senza maschera, e l' una e l'altra si rassomigliano ad una statua che mirasi nella villa Panfilj, di grandezza naturale, la quale, a riserva del marmo, è tanto simile al suddetto erroneamente intitolato Seneca, che l' una di queste statue sembra ricopiata dall' altra. Il marmo di quella della villa Borghese è bigio, e bianco quello dell' altra della villa Panfilj. Da questo confronto credo possa argomentarsi, che anche quel preteso Seneca ne rappresenti un servo. La denominazione sotto la quale sin ora è stata cognita questa statua, non può avere altro fondamento, se non il corpo piegato all'innanzi, e qualche somiglianza ma lontana con le teste che passano sotto il nome di quel filosofo; con questa supposizione si è conformato il risarcimento di essa, nel sustituire in luogo delle gambe, che mancavano, un vaso di marmo affricano, nel quale questa statua riman ficcata, per figurarne come un labbro da bagno; senzachè anco le braccia sono state rifatte di nuovo. La somiglianza però della testa di questa statua con quelle di Seneca non è altra se non quella che può avere un viso raggrinzato qualunque siasi ad altri visi pur raggrinzati: voglio dire che s' ella non è maggiore, vi corre molta differenza, particolarmente ne' capelli, essendone ricoperta la fronte di quel filosofo, quando la fronte dell' una e dell' altra statua è calva.' (The alleged Seneca in the bath in the villa Borghese gives me reason to refer again to No. 193, a marble figurine in the villa of the Most Excellent Alessandro Albani, which undoubtedly represents a servant of comedy sent to the market with the shopping bag, which is held in the left hand, to provide the stuff for the table, like Sosia of the Andria of Terence. Similar to this figurine, another of the same size can be found in the same villa, but without a mask, and both resemble a life-size statue that was admired in the Panfilj villa, which, except for the marble, is so similar to the aforementioned erroneously titled Seneca that one of these statues seems copied from the other. The marble of that of Villa Borghese is grey, and that of the other, of the villa Panfilj, is white. From this comparison I believe it could be argued that even that alleged Seneca represents a servant. The name under which this statue has been known up to now can have no other basis than the body bent forward, and some resemblance, but distant, with the heads that pass under the name of that philosopher. Its restoration was done in accordance with this assumption, in substituting, in place of the legs, which were missing, an African marble vase, into which this statue was thrust, to look like the rim of a bath; without the fact that the arms have also been remade. But the resemblance of the head of this statue to those of Seneca is none other than that which a wrinkled face can have to other faces which are also wrinkled: I mean that if it is not greater, there is a great deal of difference, particularly in the hair, the forehead of that philosopher being covered with it, when the forehead of both statues is bald.); Borbein *et al.* 2011–2021: 1:513–15; 2:680. Villa Albani 340 and 334: Borbein *et al.* (2006: 287, no. 637) and Bol (1992: 401–09, nos. 393–94, pls. 280–83 [U. Mandel]).

[110] Winckelmann (1767b: XIV, 66; XV, signed in Rome, 1 September 1766), Borbein and Kunze (2008: 16, 78).

[111] Vatican City, Musei Vaticani 2684: Helbig (1963–1972: 1:431–32, no. 544), Lippold (1956: 302–04, no. 38, pl. 137), Calza (1977: 87, no. 104, pl. 66 [B. Palma], and 87n3 for the correction through archival records of the incorrect attribution of the restoration to Algardi; Häuber [2014, 536] corrects the misspelling there of Brefort's name), Laubscher (1982: 99, no. 1a), Bayer (1983: 248, no. G 1), and Visconti and Visconti (1790: 42–43, pl. XXXII). For photographs of recent restorations, viewed 26 August 2024, <https://www.patronsvaticanmuseums.org/en/restoration/projects/statue-old-fisherman>; exhibition: Museo Civico Archeologico di Anzio: 'La Statua del Vecchio Pescatore e il Mare di Anzio,' 15 June 2019 – 12 January 2020, viewed 26 August 2024, <https://www.comune.anzio.roma.it/archivio10_notizie-e-comunicati_0_1814.html>; for photographs taken from several angles: 'Il vecchio Pescatore ed il Mare di Anzio' (R. Luciani), viewed 26 August 2024, <https://www.2la.it/arte/4463-il-vecchio-pescatore-ed-il-mare-di-anzio/>.

is becoming less clear. The diversity that has been remarked in the corpus of 'Old Fishermen' makes it difficult to be sure what features that occur within even the single 'Seneca' type can be taken as reliably informative about the statue.[112]

Basic questions about the Louvre statue remain open. One of the most obvious is: Who is he? Some would identify him as a personage from mythology; Odysseus, the Boeotian fisherman Glaukos, and the fisherman Diktys of Seriphos have been suggested.[113] Such proposals have the advantage of placing the statue in the category of mythological representations, a category of classical art that is relatively well understood. There has not been wide acceptance of these suggestions, however, and the Louvre statue, along with its associates, is almost universally placed within the poorly understood class of 'genre figures.' These representations of anonymous (or at least anthropomorphic) images engaged in 'everyday' activities are generally regarded as a social phenomenon as much as an artistic one. The shift in both art and literature away from mythological subject-matter and toward the real world is recognized as a feature of Hellenistic Greek culture determined largely by historical and social conditions. It was long taken for granted that, having gained control of Greece, the Romans simply took over this repertoire along with other cultural features they did not fully understand, but there is growing awareness that, at least in individual cases like the sculptural sub-set of miserable-looking old people, the evidence points to Roman conception as well as execution.[114] In any event, the category of 'genre' in statuary involves both subject-matter and function.

The Louvre statue and his fellows are consistently judged as representations of old people who are physically and mentally or emotionally worn down and decrepit. A frequent comparison is the Younger Pliny's description, in a letter written possibly after AD 104 to his agent Annius Severus, of a small *Corinthium signum*, a Corinthian bronze statue, of an old man:

> Out of a sum of money I have inherited I have just bought a Corinthian bronze statue, only a small one, but an attractive and finished piece of work as far as I can judge — though in general maybe my judgement is limited, and certainly very much so here. But this is a statue that I feel even I can appreciate, for being nude it does not hide any defects it may have nor fail to reveal its merits. It represents a standing figure of an old man; the bones, muscles, sinews, and veins and even the wrinkles are clear and lifelike, the hair is sparse and receding from a broad brow, its face is lined and neck thin, and it has drooping shoulders, a flat chest, and hollow stomach. The back view, within its limits, gives the same impression of age. The bronze appears to have the true colour of a genuine antique; in fact every detail is such as to hold the attention of an artist as well as delight the amateur, and that is what persuaded me to buy it, novice though I am.[115]

Pliny qualifies the description with the conventional Roman denials of expertise in the visual arts, but his list of the physical features of old age shows off his close observation of the piece, and he takes pleasure in the details that, in real life, would likely not hold such appeal. It seems that the capacity to divorce the technical skill of a representation from the nature of the subject, today a hallmark of cultural sophistication, was also operative in Pliny's time. Nonetheless,

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[112] For the variety in format, attributes, poses, and anatomical and physiognomic features: e.g., Ridgway (1990: 334–35 ['copies and variants']) and Queyrel (2016: 315–17 [replicas evaluated with respect to the assumed bronze original]). Picón (1985: 365) and Pollitt (2022: 261n3) note the different tallies for the type in Laubscher (1982) and Bayer (1983).

[113] Häuber (2014: 544–45) for this question, citing proposals by Schädler (Odysseus) and Ridgway (Glaukos); Biard (2022: 23) for Stähler (Diktys). Ridgway (1990: 347n36) credits the suggestion of Glaukos to C. Czapski.

[114] On 'genre figures': Adornato (2015: 53–54) and Biard (2022). For the possibility of a Roman origin: Ridgway (1971: 351–52; 1990: 313–48 ['Genre Figures'], 332–38 ['Old Destitutes']; 2006: 643 and n. 3), Pollitt (1986: 141–47), and Queyrel (2016: 317). See Pollitt (2022: 133–47) for discussion of the Hellenistic genre of 'haggard and careworn old men and women' (133) and the corpus of Roman variants and for the change in Roman times from votive and funerary function to primarily decorative use.

[115] Pliny, *Ep.* 3.6. 1–4. Text and translation from Radice (1969): 'Ex hereditate quae mihi obvenit, emi proxime Corinthium signum, modicum quidem sed festivum et expressum, quantum ego sapio, qui fortasse in omni re, in hac certe perquam exiguum sapio: hoc tamen signum ego quoque intellego. Est enim nudum, nec aut vitia si qua sunt celat, aut laudes parum ostentat. Effingit senem stantem; ossa musculi nervi, venae rugae etiam ut spirantis adparent; rari et cedentes capilli, lata frons, contracta facies, exile collum; pendent lacerti, papillae iacent, venter recessit; a tergo quoque eadem aetas ut a tergo. Aes ipsum, quantum verus color indicat, vetus et antiquum; talia denique omnia, ut possint artificum oculos tenere, delectare imperitorum. Quod me quanquam tirunculum sollicitavit ad emendum.' Date: Sherwin-White (1966: 225).
Hallett (2023: 85–89), proposing to identify a 'new kind of large, exquisitely worked bronze statuette that appears sometime in the late second and early first centuries BC' as an '*objet d'art*' that was turned to votive use in Roman times, quotes Pliny's letter and cites as a comparison a statuette of an old, clothed herdsman, while acknowledging that 'the statue of an old fisherman from the Hadrianic Baths at Aphrodisias probably makes a better comparison.' For the votive function of the presumed Hellenistic originals, and for Pliny's letter and the suggestion that 'a Hellenistic work had somehow made its way into the Roman art market': Pollitt (2022: 145–46).

accounting for these figures remains difficult for modern observers, who often find them individually troubling and collectively baffling.

The representation of what is considered ugly, distasteful, or shocking was a topic for learned speculation in antiquity. For example, in Plutarch's *Quaestiones Convivales* (5.1; *Mor.* 673C–74B; *c.* AD 99–116), the question is posed, 'Why we take pleasure in hearing actors represent anger and pain but not in seeing people actually experience these emotions.' The discussion extends to the visual arts: the sight of actual illness and death hurts us, but paintings and statues of the distressed give us pleasure. Cyrenaean philosophical theory is offered to explain the phenomenon: 'We are shocked to see consumptives, but we contemplate statues and paintings of them with pleasure, because the mind, by its own nature, is attracted to imitations.'[116] Such an appeal to the pleasure of representation is likely only to exacerbate the modern viewer's uneasiness about images of people who, in real life, would evoke pity, contempt, or fear.

Perhaps more acceptable is the idea that they are 'apotropaic,' a concept that cannot be universally applied,[117] but has the virtue of justifying the troubling representations by finding in them a putatively constructive function. Alan Wace included the Louvre statue and several similar figures in his discussion of 'grotesques and the evil eye' of 1904. Contesting the widespread but ill-founded attribution of such figures to Alexandria, he argued for their popularity and production across the Mediterranean.[118] More recently, Mark Rose has proposed a specific apotropaic function for images of fishermen who show physical signs of tuberculosis.[119] Images for which some level of apotropaic function is plausible are known in classical painting, mosaic, and small-scale statuary, but it is not clear that large-scale sculpture would have served the same purpose.[120]

Another possible function that has been suggested for these presumably Hellenistic statues is votive.[121] François Queyrel, seeking to explain the function of the putative bronze original he believes stands behind the group, cites the mentions of dedications by fishermen and peasants among the votive epigrams collected in Book 6 of the *Palatine Anthology*. However, he cautions against simply assuming that the presumed original was offered by a poor fisherman much like the one represented, seeing instead in what must have been an expensive votive a realization of an idealized pastoral world that inspired its patron.[122] The extent to which a hypothetical Hellenistic ancestry would be binding on the entirely Roman corpus of 'Old Fishermen' is not clear; nor is it necessary. Pliny the Younger expressly intends to dedicate his new statue: 'However, my intention was not to keep it in my house (I have not any Corinthian bronzes there yet) but to place it in

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[116] Date: Jones (1966: 72–73). Text and translation by Clement and Hoffleit (1969: 'Table Talk' 5.1): Διὰ τί τῶν μιμουμένων τοὺς ὀργιζομένους καὶ λυπουμένους ἡδέως ἀκούομεν, αὐτῶν δὲ τῶν ἐν τοῖς πάθεσιν ὄντων ἀηδῶς . . .
'Καὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν θεαμάτων ὅμοια πεπόνθαμεν· ἀνθρώπους μὲν γὰρ ἀποθνήσκοντας καὶ νοσοῦντας ἀνιαρῶς ὁρῶμεν· τὸν δὲ γεγραμμένον Φιλοκτήτην καὶ τὴν πεπλασμένην Ἰοκάστην, ἧς φασιν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον ἀργύρου τι συμμῖξαι τὸν τεχνίτην, ὅπως ἐκλείποντος ἀνθρώπου καὶ μαραινομένου λάβῃ περιφάνειαν ὁ χαλκός, ἰδόντες ἡδόμεθα καὶ θαυμάζομεν.
'Τοῦτο δ,' εἶπον, 'ἄνδρες Ἐπικούρειοι, καὶ τεκμήριόν ἐστι μέγα τοῖς Κυρηναϊκοῖς πρὸς ὑμᾶς τοῦ μὴ περὶ τὴν ὄψιν εἶναι μηδὲ περὶ τὴν ἀκοὴν Βάλλὰ περὶ τὴν διάνοιαν ἡμῶν τὸ ἡδόμενον ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀκούσμασι καὶ θεάμασιν. ἀλεκτορὶς γὰρ βοῶσα συνεχῶς καὶ κορώνη λυπηρὸν ἄκουσμα καὶ ἀηδές ἐστιν, ὁ δὲ μιμούμενος ἀλεκτορίδα βοῶσαν καὶ κορώνην εὐφραίνει· καὶ φθισικοὺς μὲν ὁρῶντες δυσχεραίνομεν, ἀνδριάντας δὲ καὶ γραφὰς φθισικῶν ἡδέως θεώμεθα τῷ τὴν διάνοιαν ὑπὸ τῶν μιμημάτων ἄγεσθαι κατὰ τὸ οἰκεῖον.' (We have a similar experience in relation to the plastic arts. We feel acute pain at the sight of the sick or the dying; but a painting of Philoctetes or a statue of Jocasta gives us pleasure and elicits our admiration. They say that the artist added silver to Jocasta's face in order to give his bronze statue the appearance of a person on the verge of death. This, my Epicurean friends,' I said, 'is really good evidence in favour of the Cyrenaics, who contend in their dispute with you that it is not in our sight or our hearing but in our minds that we receive pleasure from sights and sounds. A hen that cackles ceaselessly or a cawing crow is unpleasant and painful to hear, but the imitator of noisy hens and crows delights us.)
For this passage in connection with Roman representations of fat and thin bodies: Bradley (2011: 11). For discussion of the notion that elite patrons and audiences in antiquity would have viewed 'the images of ancient rustics' with 'disdainful amusement': Pollitt (2022: 141).

[117] See, e.g., Benson (1967: 48–49) for difficulties defining the Gorgon in the pediment of the Archaic temple of Artemis on Corfu as 'apotropaic.'

[118] Wace (1903/1904: 103–104, A.5–7) for fishermen; not all the examples in his category of 'Genre Figures (Marble Statuettes)' are in fact small.

[119] Rose 2018. His focus is small stone and bronze figurines, and he does not discuss the Louvre statue or its fellows.

[120] Ridgway (1990: 335) for doubt.

[121] Votive function: Pollitt (2022: 145–46) and Häuber (2014: 543–44) for discussion of theories, Himmelmann (1980: 87 ['als Weihgaben reicher Leute']), Laubscher (1982: 47–49), and Bayer (1983: 190 ['Kollektive Weihungen von Fischergilden']); for dedications by guilds of fishermen in Roman times: Corcoran (1963: 98). Kunze (1999), positing that the Hellenistic figures, which are shown carrying humble offerings, were set up in sanctuaries as votives, links their representational content to their function.

[122] Queyrel (2016: 317–18), criticizing Kunze (*supra* n. 121). Similarly, Laubscher (1982: 47). Epigrams for dedications by fishermen: e.g., in Book 6 of the *Anth.Pal.*, see 6.4 (Leonidas of Tarentum, third century BC), 6.5 (Philippus of Thessalonica, first century AD), 6.11 (Satrius), 6.13, 6.38, and 6.90. Emme (2018: esp. 206) sees a progression within the corpus from the simple, pious fishermen and country-folk that served as votives in Hellenistic sanctuaries to figures in the idyllic pastoral world of poets like Theocritus and Vergil.

some public position in my native town, preferably in the temple of Jupiter; it is clearly a gift well worthy of a temple and a god,' and there are epigrams for dedications by fishermen in Roman times.[123] Chrystina Häuber has proposed that the Louvre statue was a dedication placed in a healing sanctuary on the Esquiline.[124]

Pliny explicitly rejects the idea of keeping his new statue in his house, apparently rejecting one further function that has been suggested for the 'Old Fishermen' and related images: decoration.[125] Seeing these now-discomfiting statues as 'decorative' can perhaps offer a path to rehabilitate them, if one thinks in terms of *decor* in the sense of appropriateness, as, for example, shown in Cicero's peevish concern that the subject-matter of the works of art he buys be suitable for their intended location.[126]

In considerations of 'decorative' uses for sculpture, generalizations about Greek and Roman culture come into play. For example, Guillaume Biard, in contrast, discussing the relationship of statuary to landscape in Hellenistic times, asserts that the works placed in Greek sanctuaries have religious significance and are not intended to gratify the senses or provide erudite amusement, unlike copies made in imperial times.[127] This distinction perpetuates the old dichotomy between the putative Greek original and the assumed Roman copy, positing a contrast between meaning on the one hand and on the other, a fundamental triviality.

The degree to which a presumed Hellenistic pedigree can help account for images created for a clientele and context in a Roman world is not clear. For example, the body and head of an 'Old Fisherman' were found separately in the 'South Agora' / 'Place of Palms' at Aphrodisias.[128] Probably originally placed in the Hadrianic Baths,[129] the 'Old Fisherman' has been dated 200–400 AD, within the period of activity of the 'Sculptor's Workshop' in the city, which produced stylistically distinctive works. R.R.R. Smith sees the statue as 'a very striking re-interpretation' of a putative famous bronze Hellenistic original, now furnished with 'a restyled body of some power and a lean, sensitive expression. This is a refined, philosophical-looking fisherman, re-interpreted to serve as tasteful decoration in a bath complex.'[130] The 'philosophical' look is owed to obvious stylistic (and to some extent typological) features from the later second century AD and beyond; it is less clear that the sculptor used these elements in order 'to render his fisherman more immediate, human, and accessible.'[131] Julie Van Voorhis, in contrast, declines to speculate on the sculptor's intentions and sees in the 'exaggeration of the musculature' the 'Workshop's own distinctive' style.[132] It remains to be asked why, if the figure is a fisherman, no matter how philosophical or well muscled he may be, he is shown old, balding, and bent over, rather than young, upright, and visibly up to the job.[133] The meaning of the figural content remains obscure.

[123] Pliny, *Ep*. 3.6, 4–5; text and translation by Radice 1969: 'Emi autem non ut haberem domi (neque enim ullum adhuc Corinthium domi habeo), verum ut in patria nostra celebri loco ponerem, ac potissimum in Iovis templo; videtur enim dignum templo dignum deo donum.' For dedicatory epigrams: Corcoran (1963: 98) and Hopkinson (2015: 281).

[124] Häuber 2014: 545–47.

[125] Ridgway (1971: 351), discounting their function as votives or civic display, remarks, 'The only possibility is that they were decorations for private gardens, though the taste that enjoyed a picture of indigent senility in the midst of a luxury villa may seem questionable to us.'

[126] Pollitt (1974: 341–47) for Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum* (*c*. 68–44 BC) 1.4.3; 1.6.2; 1.8.2; 1.10.2.

[127] Biard (2022: 21): 'Jamais, semble-t-il, ces oeuvres ne visent le pur plaisir des sens or le seul amusement érudit, contrairement aux copies d'époque impériale.'

[128] Berlin, Staatliche Museen Sk 1630 (*supra* n. 42); Van Voorhis (2018: 34–35 and n. 130 for the findspot and date of discovery [1905]) and Smith (1998: 253–55). Geyre, Musée Archéologique d'Aphrodisias 89–3, found in 1989; Van Voorhis (2018: 34n130) and Smith (1998: 253–55). Other fragments possibly belonging to the statue: Smith (1998: 254).

[129] Van Voorhis (2018: 34): 'it most likely was displayed in the Hadrianic Baths'; Smith (2007: 213): 'Somewhere in the palaestra court also stood votive statues of a Satyr blowing the double flutes and of an old Fisherman. . . . Both would have been appropriate figures for the Baths in the second or third century; the Fisherman is obviously well suited to a bath setting.'

[130] Smith 1998: 254.

[131] Smith (1998: 259): the sculptor 'was clearly borrowing from contemporary portrait vocabulary.'

[132] Van Voorhis 2018: 34–35.

[133] It is worth comparing Berlin Sk 1630 with a figure from the villa at Chiragan in Roman Gaul (Toulouse, Musée Saint-Raymond, Musée d'Archéologie de Toulouse Ra 46; Laubscher [1982: 101, no. 1h] and Bayer [1983: 252, no. G 11]) that has been held to be exceptionally similar to it (e.g., Capus [2019]: the Berlin statue 'bears uncanny similarities to our own specimen'). The Chiragan statuette, dated to the third or fourth century AD, is of dark Göktepe marble (a link with Aphrodisias). Its state of preservation precludes certain identification as a fisherman. Described in terms of leanness and prominent musculature, it is said to give an impression of physical decline (e.g., Rey-Delque 1975: 91); its posture, however, is straighter than that of the Aphrodisias figure, and from every angle it looks sturdier and fitter. It is not clear that either Berlin Sk 1630 or the figure from Chiragan must be a fisherman. The statuette Paris, Musée du Louvre Ma 4926, viewed 26 August 2024, <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010278441>, evidently also from the Hadrianic baths at Aphrodisias, depicts a young Aethiopian bath attendant: Baratte 2001. He wears an *exomis* and stands with his right leg slightly to the side. His right arm has been broken away at the shoulder; in his left hand he holds a situla at the level of his thigh. There is no reason why Berlin Sk 1630 could not likewise have held a situla or similar bucket-like object and represented a bath attendant; for photograph of casts of torso and head and of non-joining plinth with right leg and left foot: Classical Art Research Center, viewed 26 August 2024, <https://www.carc.ox.ac.uk/carc/

While the Roman 'Old Fishermen' *are* Roman and should not be read primarily in Hellenistic terms, there can be no doubt that part of their ancestry lies in the stereotypes within the sprawling and inclusive tradition in literature and art of the 'pastoral' and that the themes and conventions continued to appear into imperial times.[134] Fishermen appear quite frequently in pastoral literature, in which they are characterized as old, hardworking, and poor.[135] A prominent example is a passage in the first *Idyll* of Theocritus (*c.* 300–260 BC). A goatherd sings about a wooden cup bearing elaborately figured scenes. One shows an old fisherman:

> Beside these, an old fisherman and a rock are carved,
> A rugged one on which the old man hastily drags a great net in for a cast,
> Looking like a man laboring hard.
> You would think he was fishing with all the strength of his limbs,
> So swollen are the sinews all around his neck,
> Gray-haired though he is, but his strength is worthy of a young man's.
> Just a little way from the sea-worn old man ... (lines 39–45).[136]

The poem is often cited in discussions of the 'Old Fishermen' as an example of the close connections in the pastoral genre between literature and art.[137] It is not simply the similarity in subject-matter that is striking, but also the similar way that contradictions govern both representations. Biard has pointed to the parallels between Theocritus's fisherman, who, although advanced in age and visibly struggling with his net, still has youthful strength, and the 'Old Fisherman,' whose body appears simultaneously degraded by age and energetic, as some observers have noted.[138] Another consideration is that the reality of fishermen's lives, particularly in Roman times, differed from their representation in literature. Fish and other seafood played a large part in Greek and Roman diets,[139] and the evidence of inscriptions attests the prosperity of individual fishermen as well as their professional organizations, despite their low social status.[140] It may be that apparent visual contradictions within the Louvre figure echo the dissonance between conventional views of physical labor and social class and observable realities.

Another 'pastoral poem' that has been related to the Louvre statue is *Idyll* 21 of the Theocritean corpus; it is generally considered not to be the work of the poet, but to have been written by an imitator.[141] The moralizing poem on the virtues of hard work focuses on two old fishermen lying on beds made of dry seaweed in their poor hut, their only possessions the tools of their trade (6–16).[142] As one, Asphalion, recounts his dream to his unnamed colleague, he mentions their hunger (40–41). He has dreamed of struggling to land a large fish that proves to be golden, which he promptly releases, fearing that it might belong to gods (39–

resources/Databases/Plastercasts/Plaster-casts-and-the-diffusion-of-classical-art/Lincoln-Professorship>.

Norbert Franken (2018) convincingly proposes to identify two Hellenistic bronze statuettes wearing loincloths and holding the handles of lost objects as bath attendants with an *askos* in each hand; I owe this reference to Sinclair Bell. The figure from Chiragan is not securely associated with a fragment with a foot on the base of a tree, and the possibility of a tree-trunk support at the back of the neck is only a suggestion: Capus (2019). The already flexible category of 'fisherman' is evidently adaptable to a wide variety of physical occupations.

[134] For Greek and Latin pastoral literature: Fantuzzi and Papanghelis (2006), Fantuzzi and Stanzel (2006), Zanker (2008), and Biard (2022: esp. 23–25).

[135] Corcoran (1963: 100–01), Pasquier (2012: 1541), Häuber (2014: 546), and Thalmann (2023: 182–83). For discussion of the inclusion of fishermen in the 'pastoral': Fredericksen (2014). For the complaining fishermen in Plautus's *Rudens*: Rey-Delque (1975: 93); see also *infra* p. 53 and n. 160. For the persistent topoi of the poor conditions of fishermen's lives: Alciphron (second-third century AD), Book 1, *Letters of Fishermen* (numbering Schepers, followed by Benner and Fobes 1949): 1 and 10 (storms); 2 (unending, fruitless toil in harsh conditions); 3 (poverty and danger); 8 and 20 (disappointing catches; pirates); 13 and 17 (torn nets). Rosenmeyer 2006, 142 (1.17), 142–43 (1.20); for the dangers of the sea: Zanetto 2019, 129–30.

[136] Text from Hopkinson (2015); translation from Zanker (2008: 11):

> τοῖς δὲ μετὰ γριπεύς τε γέρων πέτρα τε τέτυκται
> λεπράς, ἐφ' ᾗ σπεύδων μέγα δίκτυον ἐς βόλον ἕλκει
> ὁ πρέσβυς, κάμνοντι τὸ καρτερὸν ἀνδρὶ ἐοικώς.
> φαίης κεν γυίων νιν ὅσον σθένος ἐλλοπιεύειν,
> ὧδέ οἱ ᾠδήκαντι κατ' αὐχένα πάντοθεν ἶνες
> καὶ πολιῷ περ ἐόντι· τὸ δὲ σθένος ἄξιον ἄβας.
> τυτθὸν δ' ὅσσον ἄπωθεν ἁλιτρύτοιο γέροντος . . .

For the poem: Zanker (2008: 10–13), Prioux (2021: 387–88), and Biard (2022: 23–24).

[137] For comments on methodological approaches to the relationship between Hellenistic art and literature: Trinquier (2009). Funke (2019: 140–45) suggests that Alciphron draws on generalized typological visual imagery in his *Letters of Fishermen* rather than on specific works of art. She illustrates (142, fig. 8.1) but does not discuss or identify the example of the type of the 'old fisherman' Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi inv. 49364 (*infra* n. 145); she accepts the origin of the type in the third century BC (140).

[138] Biard 2022: 23–24. Conflicting opinions: *supra* n. 42.

[139] For the contrast between ordinary fishing and the raising of exotic fish for the market in rich villas: Purcell (1995: 158–59); for fish-breeding in villas and the attendant ideologies: Marzano (2007: 89–90).

[140] Corcoran 1963; Marzano (2018), examining the evidence for various activities in the fishing industry, finds that the 'ordinary men' working in it 'remain almost invisible' (445).

[141] Kirstein (2007: 139–212), Zanker (2008: 22–23), Biard (2022: 24–25), and Thalmann (2023: 181–82).

[142] The equipment enumerated is very similar to the objects dedicated by fishermen in the *Anthology* (*supra* n. 122). Their baskets and caps recall some figures of 'Old Fishermen'; Häuber (2014: 540) for fishermen's gear and for comparison with the *Idyll*. For conventional references in epigrams to fishermen's tools, see Ypsilanti 2006; Funke 2019: 143 n. 19.

57). His companion advises him to stick to catching real fish and thereby avoid going hungry (63–66). In addition to the elements of the poor and wretched lives of fishermen for which the poem provides evidence, Asphalion's dream has suggested a different interpretation of a feature of some 'Old Fishermen.' Sometimes the outstretched right arm is taken to indicate the action of angling with a pole; sometimes the raised right hand is taken to be a conventional gesture of address or supplication, or — supporting the interpretation of these figures as originally votive — of prayer.[143] In discussing the passage in *Idyll* 21, however, Robert Kirstein reports the suggestion by Dieter Salzmann that this gesture could be one made by someone, like Asphalion, who has made a surprising discovery.[144] In the best preserved of the statues closest to the Louvre figure, the one in the Vatican, that the right lower arm was raised seems certain (only the hand and the adjoining end of the arm are restored). There is, however, little further evidence to confirm the position of the right arm of these figures, as in most of the statues in the group with preserved bodies, the right arm has been lost just below the shoulder.[145]

As none of the now-standard comparanda for the Louvre statue was known at the time of its discovery, it seems likely that the arms were restored on the basis of the medal by Filarete insofar as it was possible to accommodate what remained of the stone at the shoulders (**Figures 1 and 4**). The hanging left arm has been made to be held away from the body in a position similar to the arm of the figure steadying himself on the rim/handle of the vase. The restored right arm differs from the medal in that it bends at the elbow rather than extending downward in a straight line; again, the position may have been chosen in accordance with indications in the remaining stone.

Given the state of preservation of most of the statues associated with the Louvre figure, there seems little possibility of using gestures to interpret the emotional state depicted. Still less is it possible to determine overall mental state with any accuracy. The 'Old Fishermen' have been called stupid on the basis of their facial features as interpreted by ancient physiognomic theory.[146] While little is left of the Louvre statue, however, it does offer some clues to its identity.

Interpreting the Louvre Statue

The most striking feature of the Louvre statue is the dark color of the marble.[147] The color is not often found among the corpus of 'Old Fishermen.' Ridgway notes only two other examples in dark stone: a statuette from Byblos and the figure from the villa at Chiragan.[148] The dark stone is often taken to imitate the color of the bronze of the hypothetical original.[149] As the great majority of the statues related to the Louvre figure are carved in light-colored stone, however, the assumption that the dark materials are intended to imitate bronze is not supported.

The dark color of the Louvre statue has also been interpreted as an indication of the race or ethnicity of its subject. As early as 1615, Moretus remarked that the statue 'makes a vague African impression,' mentioning not the color, but rather his 'open mouth,' 'swollen lips,' and 'distended nostrils,' all explained by his being 'born in Cordoba of Cordoban parents.'[150] Seneca's

[143] For discussion: Häuber (2014: 542–44, 546); supplication or witness: Queyrel (2012: 133); a votary's gesture of address: Queyrel (2016: 316).

[144] Salzmann, oral suggestion to Kirstein (2007: 196 and n. 592). Bernsdorff (2008: n. 18) prefers the standard explanation that the fisherman holds a fishing-rod in his right hand.

[145] Vatican City, Musei Vaticani 2684: *supra* n. 111; Berlin Sk 1630 (Aphrodisias; *supra* n. 42) is broken below the right shoulder; a fragment of a right arm and a right hand (which may not be pertinent to the statue: Queyrel [2016: 316, 317, fig. 377]) have been restored in casts: Frederiksen and Smith (2011: acc. No. CG.H.36) and Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, viewed 27 August 2024, <https://collections.ashmolean.org/object/781290>; Aphrodisias 81–06 (Atrium House, statuette), right shoulder and arm missing: Lockey (2010: 197, pl. 140); Beirut (Byblos, statuette), right arm from biceps to dolphin on which hand would have rested appears to be restored: Laubscher (1982: 102, no. 1i) and Bayer (1983: 251, G 7); Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung inv. no. Sk 1742 (from Burnabat), right arm broken away at shoulder: Laubscher (1982: 101, no. 1f), Bayer (1983: 252, no. G 10), and <https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/1093360> (viewed 27 August 2024); Denmark, private collection, right arm missing from shoulder, appears to have been raised: Bayer (1983: 250, no. G 6); Paris, Musée du Louvre Ma 470 (statuette), viewed 27 August 2024, <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010278253>, right arm missing from biceps: Laubscher (1982: 101, no. 1g) and Bayer (1983: 253, no. G 13); Rome, Musei Capitolini, Centrale Montemartini MC 1112, right arm lost below shoulder: *supra* n. 36; Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano 77.827: Laubscher (1982: 103, no. 2) and Bayer (1983: 253, no. G 14); Sassari, Museo Nazionale 'G.A. Sanna' 7874, right shoulder and arm lost: Laubscher (1982: 101, no. 1e) and Bayer (1983: 249–50, no. G 4); Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi inv. 49364, right arm missing below shoulder: Laubscher (1982: 101, no. 1d); Bayer (1983: 249, no. G 3); Toulouse, Musée Saint-Raymond, Musée d'Archéologie de Toulouse Ra 46: *supra* n. 133.

[146] Ridgway (1990: 335) for other readings; Laubscher (1982: 49–59) for conventions and types in physiognomic and other texts; Queyrel (2016: 317) cites and accepts the thick lips and large ears as denoting stupidity. Parts of the lips in the Louvre figure and other statues have been reconstructed.

[147] It is often called 'bigio morato'; e.g., Haskell and Penny (2024 [Aymonino]:1:493). For this material: Häuber (2014: 535 and n. 4) and Attanasio *et al.* (2009: 313).

[148] Ridgway 1990, 335. For the figures, see *supra* nn. 133 and 145.

[149] Imitation of bronze: Häuber (2014: 535 and n. 5 for references) and Capus (2019). Ridgway (1990: 335) suggests instead that the choice may reflect 'Egyptian preferences in statuary media.'

[150] *Supra* p. 38. Judson and Van de Velde (1978: 1:161–62). McGrath (1997: 2:287, 292–93, n. 38) suggests that the color was a factor in Moretus's assumption and sees the possible influence of Rubens's

family had immigrated to the Roman colony, likely from northeastern Italy, at an undetermined time, and he would therefore have been categorized not as 'Hispanus,' but instead 'Hispaniensis.'[151] Whatever bearing his speculative ancestry might have had on his actual appearance does not alter the cultural perceptions of the early seventeenth century that gave rise to Moretus's comments. In any event, the dark color is likely to explain why, when he became a fisherman, he became the sole 'African fisherman' among the light-colored figures with similar features that were known by then.

A different ethnic comparison, explicitly related to the dark stone, has been offered for the statue: Callistratus, writing probably in the third or fourth century AD, describes a statue of a naked male 'Indos' made of nearly black stone and set up as a votive to the Nymphs.[152] Callistratus first focuses on characteristics of the *genos*: the color of the body and hair and of the contrasting white irises of the eyes. He then describes the man as cheerfully drunk, unsteady on his feet, and ready to sink to the ground.[153] Richard Neudecker has drawn attention to the similarities between the description and the Louvre statue, but it is not clear that they are decisive for the interpretation of the statue.[154] The description of the long, flowing hair (*chaitē)* as *euthales*, thriving, and *oulēs*, thick, does not fit the Louvre statue,[155] and he does not appear to be reveling (*komazōn)*. Some version of a cheerful drunkenness, perhaps in connection with a Dionysiac festival,[156] seems more plausible for the 'Indos' as described than for the Louvre figure.

Contemporary social concerns have uncovered the complexities within Greek and Roman representations of race and ethnicity.[157] It is not clear that the Louvre statue belongs within this discourse. He seems to have received a special ethnic designation solely on the basis of the color of his stone, and most likely in the era in which he was discovered. It is sometimes undeniable that in antiquity the characteristics of material were used to enhance representational features, as for instance in the figure of an Aethiopian from Aphrodisias. Automatically to conflate the medium of representation with subject matter, however, is a naive misconception. The use of speckled porphyry and green stone for portraits is sufficient caution against assuming the representational equivalence of image and reality.[158]

Suggested explanations for the unsteady-looking stance of the Louvre figure include, in addition to drunkenness, his attempt to balance himself while

expressed admiration for the fitness and strength of African bodies in ancient statuary (including, to contemporary eyes oddly, the Farnese Herakles). See also Ker (2009: 301) and Thielemann (2018: 79).

[151] Griffin 2008: 25.

[152] Callistratus, *Eikones* 4: Altekamp (1988: 94–95) and Bäbler and Nesselrath (2006: 50–55). Text and translation from Fairbanks (1931: 388–91): Παρὰ κρήνην Ἰνδὸς εἱστήκει ἀνάθημα ταῖς Νύμφαις ἱδρυθείς. ἦν δὲ ὁ Ἰνδὸς λίθος μελαινόμενος καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐκ φύσεως τοῦ γένους αὐτομολῶν χρόαν, εἶχε δὲ εὐθαλῆ μὲν καὶ οὔλην τὴν χαίτην οὐκ ἀκράτῳ τῷ μέλανι λάμπουσαν, ἀλλ ἐκ τῶν ἄκρων πρὸς κόχλου Τυρίας ἄνθος ἐρίζουσαν· οἷον γὰρ εὐπαθοῦσα καὶ νοτιζομένη ταῖς προσοίκοις Νύμφαις ἡ θρὶξ ἐκ ῥιζῶν ἀνιοῦσα μελάντερος πρὸς τοῖς ἄκροις ἐπόρφυρεν. Ὀφθαλμοί γε μὴν οὐ συνῇδον τῷ λίθῳ, κατὰ γὰρ τὰς τῶν ὀμμάτων κόρας περιέθει λευκότης κατ' ἐκεῖνο τὸ μέρος τῆς πέτρας μεταπιπτούσης εἰς λευκότητα, καθ ὃ καὶ τῆς τοῦ Ἰνδοῦ φύσεως ἡ χρόα λευκαίνεται. Μέθη δὲ αὐτὸν ἐξίστη καὶ τὸ μεμεθυσμένον οὐ κατεμήνυσεν ἡ τοῦ λίθου χρόα — οὐ γὰρ ἦν αὐτῷ μηχάνημα τὰς παρειὰς φοινῖξαι σκέποντος τοῦ μέλανος τὴν μέθην —, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ σχήματος κατηγόρει τὸ πάθος· παράφορός τε γὰρ καὶ κωμάζων εἱστήκει οὐ δυνάμενος ἐρείδειν τὼ πόδε, ἀλλ ὑπότρομός τε καὶ ὑπὸ τὴν γῆν ὀκλάζων. Ὁ δὲ λίθος ὑπὸ τοῦ πάθους ἐώκει πληγέντι καὶ οἱονεὶ σπαίρει τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς μέθης ἐμφανίζων σεισμόν. εἶχε δὲ ἁβρὸν οὐδὲν τοῦ Ἰνδοῦ τὸ εἴδωλον οὐδ εἰς τὴν κατὰ χρόαν ἐξήσκητο χάριν, ἀλλ εἰς μόνων τῶν μελῶν συμβολὴν διήρθρωτο. ἀσκεπὴς δὲ ἦν καὶ γυμνὸς ὡς ἂν τῶν Ἰνδικῶν σωμάτων πρὸς τὸ τῆς ἀκμῆς φλογῶδες εἰωθότων ἀπανδρίζεσθαι. (By a spring stood an Indian, set up as a dedication to the Nymphs. The Indian was of a marble verging on black and shifting of its own accord to the colour given by nature to his race; and it had thick, woolly hair, shining with a hue not exactly black, but at the tips vying with the brilliancy of Tyrian shellfish; for the hair, as if it were well cared for and moistened by the neighbouring Nymphs, was rather black where it rose from the roots but grew purple near the tips. The eyes, however, were not of a colour to match the marble; for whiteness encircled the pupils of the eyes, since the marble changed to whiteness at that point where the natural colour of the Indian becomes white. Drunkenness was overcoming him, and yet the colour of the marble did not betray his drunkenness — for the artist had no means by which to redden the cheeks, the black colour being proof against this effect of drink — but this condition was indicated by the attitude; for he stood reeling and jovial, not able to plant his feet steadily, but trembling and tending to sag to the ground. The marble resembled a man overcome by this condition, and it all but quivers as it indicates the trembling that comes from drunkenness. There was nothing delicate about the statue of the Indian, nor yet was it carefully wrought to match the charm of its colour, but it was perfected only as regards the composition of its limbs. It was unclothed and nude, on the ground that the bodies of Indians are wont to endure manfully the fiery heat of the midday sun.)

[153] The text was first published in Venice in 1503 by Aldus: Altekamp (1988: 111). In theory, it could have been known at the time the eyes of the statue were being restored in enamel.

[154] Neudecker (1988: 54–55, 57–58) and Häuber (2014: 538).

[155] It recalls instead the description of Memnon's hair in the Elder Philostratus, *Imagines* 1.7.305 K.

[156] As suggested, for example, by Bäbler and Nesselrath (2006: 54–55). Brigitte Hundsalz (1987: 112–13) has also suggested that a Dionysian festivity might explain the unsteady pose of the Louvre statue; her argument for a Dionysian interpretation rests also on the loincloth worn by it and other figures.

[157] The literature, already large, is growing steadily. Greek: Eaverly (2023); Roman: Bell (2022).

[158] For the Aethiopian Louvre Ma 4926, see *supra* n. 133. For examples of statuary and portraiture in porphyry: Del Bufalo (2018: 99–124). For photographs of portrait of Julius Caesar in green stone, Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung Sk 342: <https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/1062542> (viewed 27 August 2024).

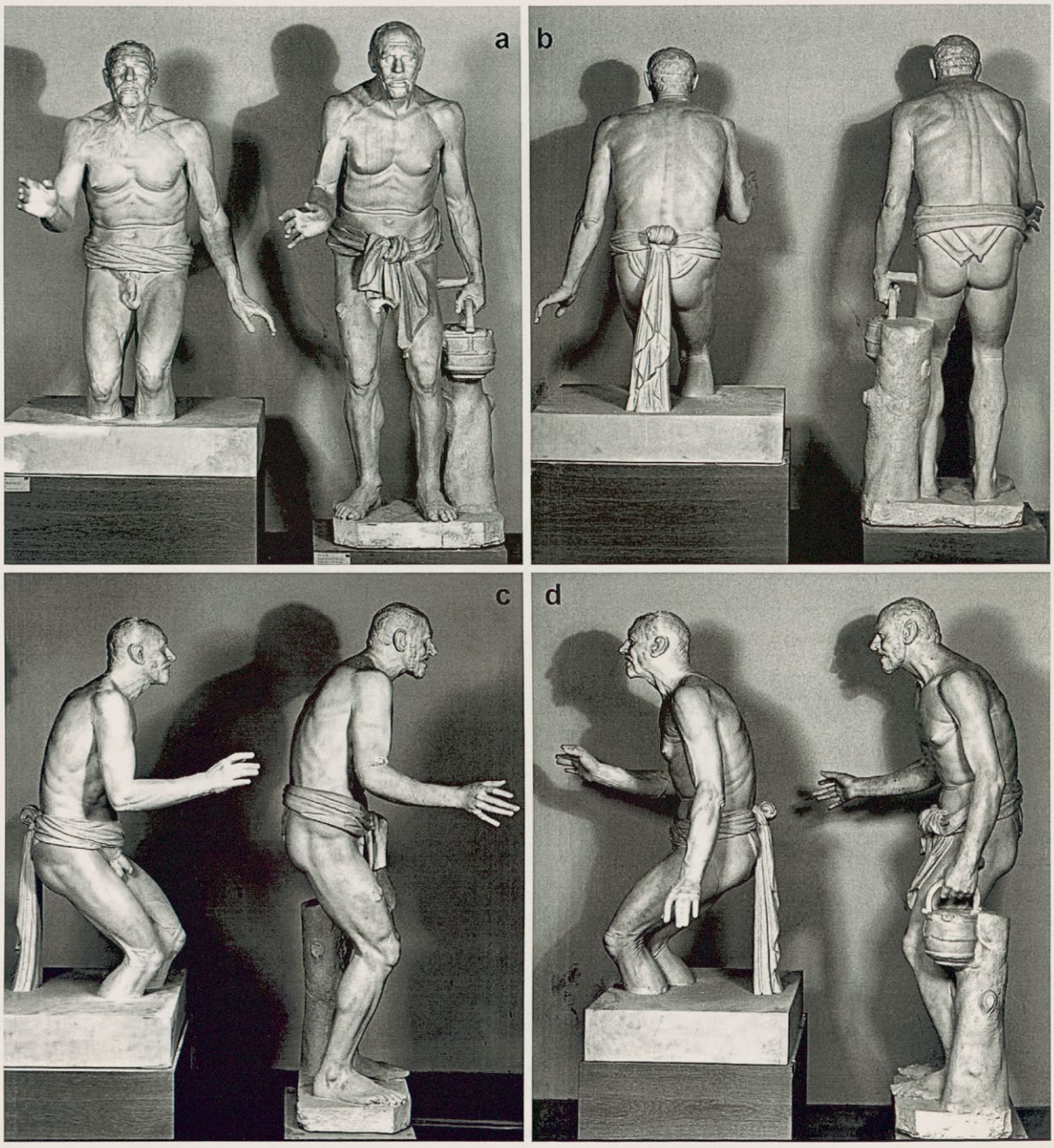
standing in a boat, as well as simple old age.[159] While not entirely convincing, these proposals are more plausible than any act connected with fishing. The torso shows no indications, as are visible on some 'Old Fishermen,' that he ever held a fishing rod or carried a bucket or basket of fish. Another point that has been taken to prove that he is not a fisherman is the absence of a hat or cap, which is standard equipment for the occupation.[160] In general, he does not conform to the iconography of fishermen who have been securely identified in painting, mosaic, or small-scale statuary.[161]

Another feature of the Louvre figure suggests that he is not a fisherman: he slightly raises his head so that his gaze is directed not downward, but straight on or slightly upward, an impression intensified by the contrasting color of his eyes. As Nancy de Grummond remarks, '[W]e must ask, where are the fish?' She further observes, 'What is remarkable is that the old man rolls his eyes toward heaven, as if he is looking not for fish, but for birds,' and she proposes that 'the whole category of Hellenistic fishermen should be revisited' in order to see if they might instead be bird-catchers using limed sticks.[162] Whatever the figure is doing, he evidently does not need to pay attention to what is happening below his gaze.

If the Louvre figure is not drunk, stupid, or fishing, what is he doing? The most careful and discerning analysis of the statue has been made by Häuber, who observed it closely in connection with her detailed topographical study of the area of the Esquiline in which it was found. While frankly acknowledging the lack of a factual basis for decisively determining the original placement and meaning of the statue, she suggests, on the basis of textual, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence, that it was a votive set up to the healing nymphs Querquetulanae Virae, attested not far from the temple of 'Minerva Medica'/Fortuna Virgo.[163] The many topographic and archaeological topics she treats are beyond the scope of this essay, but her close observations about the Louvre figure provide important evidence for its interpretation.

Three features of the statue noted by Häuber are especially significant: the position of the shoulders; the position of the hips and buttocks; and the position of the left leg. Photographs taken by Heide Glöckler comparing casts of the Louvre figure and the similar statue in the Vatican demonstrate these points (**Figure 5**).[164] Häuber has drawn attention to the position of the shoulders. Although the Vatican figure certainly carries a bucket in its left hand, the arm does not hang straight down; the upper arm is drawn slightly back, as it is also on the Louvre statue. In both, the right shoulder is higher than the left.[165] It is as if the shoulders are straining to steady or to support the body. On the reverse of Filarete's medal, as the naked figure shown in three-quarter front view steadies himself on the rim/handle of the vessel, his left shoulder and upper arm are shifted backward, and the entire left arm is held away from the body. The backward movement is more extreme in the *Eureka* by the sculptor Thompson Dagnall (**Figure 6**), which shows Archimedes, having observed how his body displaced water in his bathtub, hoisting himself from a large vessel. The aged, spare figure, whose lower body is hidden by the vat, is clearly based on the 'Old Fisherman' type, but the exaggerated elements of the posture (exactly what the right leg, of which the thigh is just visible, will do next is unclear) and face express both physical effort — he is lifting, not merely steadying or supporting his body — and mental and emotional excitement.[166] Häuber has also observed differences in the back views of the two statues. The comparison of the casts shows clearly that the buttocks of the Vatican figure are not even; the proper left is lower than the right. The buttocks of the Louvre statue are more evenly positioned. Differences within the torsos reflect differences in the position of the legs. The Vatican statue is the more upright in stance, and while both the knees are slightly bent, the proper right leg, seen from the front, appears to bear the entire weight of the figure. In contrast, side views of the Louvre statue show both legs more deeply bent and the proper left leg held slightly higher and forward, so that the figure would appear to have been shown in some kind of movement; seen from the front, its weight does not

[159] Ridgway (1990: 334) for age and boating (E. Simon); Häuber (2014: 542 and n. 76) for the 'unstable stance.'
[160] Häuber (2014: 540 and n. 52) for discussion and references. Queyrel (2016: 317) explains the absence of a hat by suggesting that the figure represents a diver looking for murex along the shore. In Plautus's *Rudens* (*c.* 200 BC), however, the *piscatores* complaining of their poverty and hard lives also list shellfish among their prey (290–304).
[161] Compare, for example, representations of fishermen in Roman-era mosaics in Greece: Kankeleit (1999; 2003).
[162] De Grummond 2006: 310–11. Queyrel (2016: 133) interprets the eyes turned to heaven as a gesture of imploring.
[163] Häuber 2014: 535–48; summary 545–46.
[164] Häuber 2014: 537, 464 fig. 94 a–d. Musei Vaticani 2684: *supra* n. 111.
[165] Häuber 2014: 541–42. She notes that this position leaves visible the left profile of the Louvre statue, which she thinks is the primary intended view of the figure.
[166] Thompson Dagnall, *Eureka* (1990), Manchester, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, Altringham Terrace, viewed 27 August 2024, <https://www.sculpturecarving.com/archimedes>.



94, A-D. Plaster casts of the statues of the 'fisherman' in the Louvre (cf. fig. 93; left) and of the fisherman in the Vatican Museums (inv. no. 2684), Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke (M. F. A.) München. Cf. **B 9.**

Figure 5. Comparisons of casts of Louvre Ma 1354 and Vatican 2684. After Häuber 2014: 464, fig. 94 a-d; courtesy of Munich, Museum für Abgüsse Klassischer Bildwerke; photograph: H. Glöckler.



Figure 6. Thompson Dagnall, *Eureka*, 1990, Manchester. Photograph: The University of Manchester, viewed 7 July 2024, <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/archimedes-277302>; Creative Commons.

appear completely supported by the proper right leg.[167]

[167] Häuber 2014: 537. Cf. Rubens's drawing (date disputed) of the left side of the Louvre figure, in which the higher and more advanced position of the proper left leg is clear and the proper left buttock is shown slightly higher: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Album F249, inf. Fol. 7inv. shelfmark F 249 inf. n. 7, p. 15: Inventory-Catalog of the Drawings in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana: https://digital-exhibits.library.nd.edu/2d498adc70/inventory-catalog-of-the-drawings-in-the-biblioteca-ambrosiana/items/8a7e93124c; Van der Meulen (1994: 3: fig. 21); Haskell and Penny (2024:3:316 fig. 1 [there dated *c.* 1606–1607; *supra* pp. 37-38]. Rubens's renderings are vivid but not necessarily wholly reliable. In a drawing of the back of the figure, the proper left buttock is shown significantly and inaccurately lower than the right: Private collection, *c.* 1606–1608; Logan and Plomp (2004, 2005: 113, cat. no. 23). See Thielemann (2018: 79–81) for Rubens's renderings of the Louvre statue: 79: 'Rubens had made a series of meticulous drawings that captured the statue in all its details from six different angles'; cf. 81: 'In the case of Seneca . . . Rubens' special interest in these elements is already evident in the studies. In the frontal view [here **Figure 3**], he exaggerated the maccaturae and gave the old man's flaccid breasts a dynamic asymmetry that cannot be found in the sculpture nor in the later painting. It would seem that Rubens considered this part of the sculpture's physiology too rigid, too unresponsive to the eloquent gesture of the right arm. Improvements on the model are not uncommon in the artist's copies; they echo his conviction that all art could be brought closer to perfection.'

Perhaps the most important of Häuber's observations concerns the position of the left leg. She observed a '*Zwischenstück*,' an intermediate piece, that had been added to the left thigh. She explains it as part of the early restorer's effort to change the statue by making the left leg straighter than it had originally been in order to make the reconstruction with the vase succeed. She suggests that the left leg was originally raised, as if the figure were taking a step upward.[168] It is not necessary to posit that the statue had more complete legs when it was found; the photographs comparing the casts show that there are sufficient indications within the torsos to establish that the left leg of the Louvre statue had once been raised and that the legs would not have matched each other in position, as do the legs of the Vatican figure.

The position of the legs is only one of several features of the Louvre statue that have suggested its appearance might be intended to represent a pathological state. Certainly, it has been used as an illustration of physical as well as emotional misery.[169] Häuber had once speculated that the effects of a particular rheumatic condition were shown, but although physicians likewise saw a portrayal of pain, the specific diagnosis was not confirmed, and she withdrew the suggestion.[170]

The Louvre statue, then, shows an old man, thin but not emaciated, quite muscular,[171] with his head held slightly upward and turned slightly to his left,[172] his left leg noticeably lifted in a motion of stepping in place, the lower legs and feet not represented, and his arms held in a manner suggesting that they are in some way braced or straining to help steady or support the weight of the body.

'Fitter for the Wash-Tub'

The Scottish traveler Joseph Forsyth (1763–1815) did not admire the statue when he saw it at the Villa Borghese during his trip to Italy in 1802–03. The acerbity of his remarks about it and other works of art may be partly

[168] Häuber 2014: 536. The action of stepping in place differentiates the Louvre figure from its comparanda.

[169] The statue, with its 'distended veins,' was used to illustrate 'heart failure in the aged': Schultz *et al.* (1962: 534); Karakas (2011: 88): 'portrayed as if wading in shallow water, shuffling, stooped, and emaciated, with thinning hair, heavily lined face, and prominent varicose veins'; emotional distress: Queyrel (2012: 133). The example of the type in Syracuse (*supra* nn. 137 and 145) has been diagnosed with superior vena cava syndrome and gynecomastia: Galassi, Cossarizza, and Varotto 2023.

[170] Häuber 2014: 542.

[171] Rubens's drawings of the figure seem to exaggerate the musculature: see especially Van der Meulen (1994: 3:figs. 21, 22, 24, and 30).

[172] Häuber 2014: 542.

explained by the fact that he wrote his account while interned in France for eleven years after the truce established by the Treaty of Amiens was broken and Napoleon ordered the arrest of British subjects in his territories; in the preface to his book he remarks on his 'long captivity.'[173] Forsyth comments that 'the abject expression of the face, and the stiff inclination of the body, are fitter for the wash-tub than for the solemn act of libation to Jove.'[174] His gibe may have been more correct than he knew. There are close parallels for the Louvre figure in an unexpected corpus: Roman paintings and reliefs showing fullers at work.

There is a great deal of epigraphical and archaeological evidence for the activity in Roman times of fulling, the preparation and cleaning of woolen textiles. The evidence spans all Roman eras and much Roman territory,[175] and, because the processes involved pertain both to the manufacture and trade in textiles and to their everyday use as garments, the work of fulling sheds light on many features of Roman society and economic life.[176] Representations of fulling are not very numerous, but they are helpful in illustrating several stages of the process.[177]A small number of paintings and reliefs shows the step in fulling that is probably most familiar because most sensational: the trampling by fullers of cloth, usually garments, in containers of cleaning agents.[178] Although fuller's earth was one of the substances regularly used, aged urine has dominated both the popular and scholarly imagination, most likely because it confirms general conceptions about the contempt in which Romans — no admirers of physical labor of any kind — held this occupation and its practitioners.[179] In any event, the task of washing clothing by trampling could not have been very pleasant, as it was carried out in waterproof tubs that were often placed in narrow treading stalls.[180]

One side of a painted pillar in the *fullonica* of L. Veranius Hypsaeus in Pompeii (VI.8.20; **Figure 7**) carries two scenes of fulling.[181] The lower image shows a row of occupied fulling stalls. In three of them, small figures that look like children stand in vats and appear to scrub clothes by hand.[182] The fourth, larger figure stands facing the viewer in a tub in a stall, its walls up to the level of his chest. His clothing, short or perhaps hitched up, leaves his legs bare from mid-thigh; his legs below the middle of his shins are hidden by the contents of the tub. His right leg is slightly lifted, and his left is slightly bent; with his arms spread wide, he steadies or supports himself with his elbows and hands on the sides of the stall. A fragmentary painting at Gourjade (Castres) in Roman Gaul preserves parts of a similar scene. A pair of legs belonging to a man wearing a loincloth and standing in a vessel are shown to mid-shin; his right leg is slightly lifted. A larger figure stands, the preserved left arm stretched out to the side like the fuller in Pompeii.[183]

A funerary relief from Sens, also in Roman Gaul and dated to the second century AD, carries two superimposed scenes: the upper shows a man shearing textiles; the lower, a fuller in a stall (**Figure 8**). Both are surrounded by equipment. The fuller, bearded and wearing a short *exomis*, his head turned to his left, stands in a rectangular structure. His lower legs are hidden by the solid walls of its bottom section; his arms are held at his sides, bent at the elbows as he grasps the supports to either side.[184]

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[173] Forsyth 1813: v; 2001: lxvi.
[174] Forsyth 1813: 239; 2001: 122–23 (217–18).
[175] For evidence in western Anatolia and Egypt: Flohr (2017: n. 2; Le Quéré 2024 for the eastern Mediterranean.
[176] For the growing literature on Roman fulling: Flohr (2002–2023). For discussion of the façade fresco showing cloth-workers (Pompeii IX.7.7, Shop of Verecundus) that highlights the difficulties of interpreting such examples of 'arte plebea': Petersen (2015: 223–25).
[177] Flohr 2013: 30–33, and 108–46 for images in the context of archaeological evidence for processes.
[178] Clarke (2003: 116 and n. 55) and Flohr (2013: 20, fig. 1; 30–33, fig. 6; 112–15, fig. 13; 126, fig. 26; 136–37, fig. 33). A funerary relief from Forlimpopoli shows a fuller immersed to his waist in a large tub: Forlì, Museo civico; Zimmer (1982: 128–29, no. 43), Flohr (2013: 136–37, fig. 33), and Bartoli (2015). For the work of treading and the reference to the 'saltus fullonius' (fuller's jump) in Seneca, *Epistulae* 15.4: Joshel and Petersen (2024, 95–96).
[179] For the association of fullers with filth: Joshel and Petersen (2024, 101, 112–13). The sensory unpleasantness of fulling tends to be exaggerated; e.g., Holliday (1993: 89): 'a noisome process that required trampling the fleece in vats of human urine.' Many of those assumptions, however, have been debunked: e.g., Bradley (2002), Flohr (2003, 448–49); (2012; 2013, 114–15). Such views have influenced the emerging scholarship on 'smellscapes'; e.g., Nissin (2022: 14–16).
[180] Flohr (2013: 22–26 [identification of fullonicae]; 112–14 [treading in stalls]; 135–46 [fulling stalls]), Wilson (2003: 443–44 [for the accord between iconographic and material evidence for these installations]), Monteix (2007), and Brun (2021: §33).
[181] Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale inv. no. 9974: Clarke (2003: 112–16, pls. 4–5) and Flohr (2011b, 94-99); Flohr (2011a: 90 and fig. 51 [there labelled VI 8, 2.20–21]; Le Quéré (2024, 154). For copies of the images in the Museo della Civiltà Romana, inv. MCR 3424–MCR 3419 and discussion: Parisi Presicce and Rossini (2017: 204–05, no. 2 [S. Foretsa]). Joshel and Petersen (2024: 84) suggest the importance of the pillar in interpretations of the painted frieze (now faded) in the fullery of Vesonius Primus, Pompeii VI.14.21–22.
[182] Andrew Wilson (2003: 443) sees the children as suggestive of slave labor; John Clarke (2003: 115–16), noting that one figure is 'fat and bald,' sees instead 'the artist's use of size hierarchy.'
[183] Dardenay (2014: 383, fig. 1 for the legs; 385, fig. 4 for the arm; 393 for the restoration) and Dardenay (2018, 82).
[184] Sens, Musée municipal, J 128–129, 27 August 2024, <https://www.pop.culture.gouv.fr/notice/joconde/01890001215> for bibliography; Espérandieu (1911: 11–12, no. 2768), Zimmer (1982: 237, no. 166), and Larsson Lovén (2001: 48–49; 2007: 175–76, pl. 14, fig. 4), fig. 4; Le Quéré (2024: 62–63 and fig. 5: scene of shearing only).



Figure 7. Naples Archaeological Museum inv. no. 9974, fresco of fullers from Pompeii VI.8.20. © Jackie and Bob Dunn, viewed 7 July 2024, <www.pompeiiinpictures.com>; photograph by Johannes Eber.

A similar freestanding structure, this time combining a deep rectangular base with two walls, is shown in one of the well-known painted friezes in the House of the Vettii in Pompeii (VI.15.1; AD 60s-70s) showing cupids and psychai engaged in a variety of recreational activities and practical tasks (**Figure 9**).[185] On the east wall of the large *oecus* north of the peristyle, cupids busy themselves processing cloth or garments. The two closest to the north corner are treading in the stall. Their feet and lower legs are hidden in the base. Both rest their right forearms on their raised right thighs.[186] The cupid whose left side is toward the viewer holds his left elbow on or against a short projection from the wall behind him, evidently bracing or steadying himself. His companion's left side is not visible. Miko Flohr, explaining the need for both equipment and personnel to be stable for this stage of the fulling process, has pointed to the use of low walls around fulling tubs 'to enhance the stability of the worker'; the walls 'could serve as supports for the worker's hands' so that 'he could use his feet more freely.'[187]

[185] Cupid friezes: Clarke (2003: 98–104), De Angelis (2011), and Monteix (2016); Le Quéré (2024: 168–69 and fig. 52).

[186] *Pace* Monteix (2016: 203), they do not appear to be 'pushing down on their raised leg to emphasize their movement and effort'; the visible right hand of the cupid on the right dangles.

[187] Flohr (2013: 135): 'in general, they seem high enough for a *fullo* to put his arms on them without needing to lift them above his shoulders.' The paintings showing workers supporting their arms or forearms on the low walls flanking fulling stalls from the fullonica of L. Veranius Hypsaeus (here **Figure 7**) and from Gourjade (Castres) are cited by Le Quéré (2024, 153–54). Monteix (2016: 203) also sees



Figure 8. Sens, Musée municipal inv. J 128-129, Gallo-Roman funerary relief with textile workers, detail. Photograph: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, NY.

While it is clear that the frieze of cupids presents an imaginary world, its elements are derived from a conventional iconography that is anchored in reality to the extent that viewers can recognize and interpret the images. The scene of fulling cupids seems to mix features of that work with elements taken from representations of the treading of grapes. The similarity of the iconography has been recognized by Flohr, Nicolas Monteix, and Alexandra Dardenay. Flohr points out the long history of 'the use of human feet as an instrument in production'; Monteix, arguing against taking the scene as 'evidence for the history of technology,' sees it as an adaptation of a scene of grape-treading; and Dardenay emphasizes the striking differences between the representations of fullers at work and scenes of vintage.[188] Grape-treaders are usually shown working in groups; the

that the cupid 'supports itself with its left arm' on the projection. Monteix (2016: 203n27) has drawn attention to the skeletal evidence in the remains of fullers for changes due to repeated arm movement. For the skeletal evidence from the area of the *fullonica* and necropolis in the area of Casal Bertone in Rome (first through third century AD) and reconstruction of the work in fulling stalls that produced the changes: Musco *et al.* (2008: esp. 39, illustration); Le Quéré (2024, 164–66) for the anthropological and palaeopathological studies there and for other evidence of the hazards to fullers' health. De Angelis *et al.* (2022) have determined that the people buried at Casal Bertone were of North African and Near Eastern descent. See Gourevitch (2011: 39–53) for the dangers to the health of fullers.

[188] Flohr (2013: 113–14), Monteix (2016: 203–204), and Dardenay (2014: 385–88, figs. 5–8).



Figure 9. Pompeii, House of the Vettii, oecus, east wall, cupids. © Jackie and Bob Dunn, viewed 7 July 2024, <www.pompeiiinpictures.com>; photograph by Miriam Colomer.

grapes are visible; the workers step high and gesture energetically, sometimes to musical accompaniment. Most significantly, while they may hold hands with each other, they do not make use of structural elements to steady or support themselves, possibly because they have sufficient room to move and so keep their balance.

The representations of fullers at work in fulling stalls account for several major features of the Louvre statue. He is a thin but still physically capable old man.[189] He leans slightly forward and seems to be steadying or supporting himself with arms held to the side while stepping in place. He does not look down. His lower legs and feet were perhaps not shown. If the Louvre figure represented neither Seneca nor a fisherman, but a fuller, how can his eventual presence on the Esquiline be accounted for?

With the exception of the cupid frieze in the House of the Vettii, the extant representations of fullers either are funerary in nature or belong somewhere within the class of representations of the work of commercial establishments. Although the part of the Esquiline where the Louvre figure was found is not very far from the bustling, rather down-market Subura district,[190] to my knowledge, the works displaying the activities of shops and businesses were in painting or relief, not statuary.

The findspot of the statue on the Esquiline has been investigated by Häuber, who sees two possibilities for its ancient location: in the *Horti* of Maecenas or in the sanctuaries in that area.[191] Häuber suggests that the statue was a 'special version' of the Vatican Louvre type of 'Old Fisherman,' and would identify it as a votive to the healing nymphs Querquetulanae Virae that shows not a fisherman, but an old man raising his arm in prayer.[192] She stresses the excellent workmanship and expensive material of the statue, which raises the question of whether such a votive might be not a dedication by an individual, but rather a collective gift by a group such as a guild. Eva Bayer had proposed that the original statue might have been a dedication by a guild of fishermen; in Roman times, textile workers likewise had guilds.[193]

[189] While there is some evidence for at least one female fuller (Welsh 2006/2007), Lena Larsson Lovén (2007: 176) notes that to her knowledge, 'no women ever appear in scenes where this kind of low-status jobs are in focus.'

[190] For the Subura and its history: Renkert (2019) and Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project (2002–2016: nos. 10aa, 10Aab, 10abcde, 10f, 10g, 10h).

[191] Häuber 2014: 537–38. Queyrel (2016: 374 ad fig. 375) gives the findspot as 'sur l'Esquilin, dans les *Horti Lamiani*.' *Horti Lamiani*: Museo Ninfeo, Soprintendenza Speciale di Roma, Archeologia Belle Arti Paesaggio, viewed 27 August 2024, <https://www.museoninfeo.it/en/the-museum/>; Barbera *et al.* 2010. According to Frédéric de Clarac (1851: 155, no. 2247), citing Vacca, the statue 'a été trouvée au XVIe siècle, à Rome, près des trophées de Marius' (was found in the sixteenth century in Rome, near the trophies of Marius).

[192] Häuber 2014: 536, 540, 542, 545–46.

[193] Quality of statue: Häuber (2014: 535–37). Dedication by guild of fishermen: Bayer (1983: 190). For guilds of textile workers: Flohr (2012), Liu (2013), and Landskron (2020: 182 and n. 39). Pollitt (2022:

One of the most striking qualities of the Louvre statue is its need for the addition of a visual context that would make its identity and activity immediately clear; for that reason, it has often been suggested that it was placed in or close by water. While it is not impossible that such enhancement could be provided in the setting of a sanctuary, a more likely situation is one of the two great estates, *horti*, that were in the area of the Esquiline where the figure was found. There is considerable uncertainty about the precise boundaries of the *Horti Maecenatis* and the *Horti Lamiani* at any given time in the long history of the area from the late Republic through the Empire, as privately owned properties came into imperial hands and underwent sometimes drastic changes.[194] The complicated archaeological and topographical evidence can make interpreting specific artifacts difficult; for example, the Louvre statue is generally considered to have been carved in the second century AD, but Häuber has advanced arguments for an Augustan date, even raising the possibility that Maecenas himself may have commissioned it.[195]

There are problems of terminology and categorization that hinder understanding of *horti* and *villae*.[196] Nonetheless, if the *hortus* is in any measure a realization of the notion of *rus in urbe* as evoked by Martial (the countryside in the city; *Ep*. 12.57, *c*. AD 100), then the evidence for the sculptural decoration of Roman country villas may shed light on that of the *horti* ringing the city.[197] The most familiar repertories of such material are mythological and pastoral. The similarities among the latter, the 'sacro-idyllic' landscapes in painting, and Roman pastoral works of literature such as Vergil's are well established. One common thread is the presence of hardship and hard labor, sometimes overt, sometimes implicit, but always present. Siri Sande has argued persuasively that these representations of hard work are an endorsement of the virtues and rewards of traditional Roman ways of life.[198]

The Roman ideology of *mos maiorum* would seem to be just as important as the Roman ideal of the productivity of the villa that Purcell has identified in a remark by Cassiodorus (*Variae* 12.15.5; *c*. AD 533–38) about the pleasure of watching countryside activities from the city of Scyllaceum, unwalled, so that a visitor would think it was both a rural city and an urban villa.[199] The goal of productivity is usually conceived in relation to monetary value, but another important element of the ideology of the villa is the ideal of self-sufficiency.[200] While the reality may have been quite different, in theory the villa was a self-contained world, and pastoral and agricultural work was not the only kind of labor that kept the establishment operating smoothly. Large numbers of domestic servants, both slaves and freedmen, are attested for rich households. Many of them performed specialized functions.[201] Fulling was necessary both to produce woolen textiles and to clean and maintain woolen clothing, and there is ample evidence that it took place in villas.[202] Inscriptions attest that fullers were among the large domestic staffs in upper-class and imperial households.[203]

The outdoor labor force that contributed to the well-ordered prosperity of villas was given artistic form; so, too, was the domestic staff. It has been observed that while Roman literature is filled with references

146), cites the epigram *Anth. Pal.* 7.295 of Leonidas of Tarentum, which mentions a monument for Theris the fisherman set up by his guild.

[194] For the history and topography of the Roman *horti*: Moretti Cursi (2019). For the historiography of Roman gardens: Hilbold (2018). *Horti* of Maecenas: Häuber (2014) and Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project (2002–2016: nos. 10abcde, 10tu, 10v). *Horti* of L. Aelius Lamia: *supra* n. 191.

[195] Häuber (2014: 536, 537–38) for the statue and for Maecenas's property in Egypt; some have linked features of the manufacture and iconography of the statue and other figures found in the area with Egypt.

[196] For example: Purcell (2001: 548–51) and Hartswick (2018a: 72–77; Myers (2024, 4–12).

[197] *Rus in urbe*: Purcell (1987: esp. 203); Myers (2024), 8. Sculpture in Roman gardens and *horti*: Neudecker (1988), Häuber (1983), Paolucci (2007), Neudecker (2015), and Hartswick (2018b).

[198] Sande 2011. For the Romans' ideas of their early agricultural practice: Purcell (1996: 121–22).

[199] Cassiodorus, *Var.* 12.15.5: Text from The Latin Library, viewed 27 August 2024, <https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cassiodorus.html>: 'Spectaculum quoque pulchre laborantium non adimitur in civitate sedentibus. cernuntur affatim copiosae vindemiae, arearum pinguis tritura conspicitur, olivarum quoque virentium vultus aperitur. non eget aliquis agrorum amoenitate, cui datum est de urbe cuncta conspicere. hoc quia modo non habet muros, civitatem credis ruralem, villam iudicare possis urbanam et inter utrumque posita, copiosa noscitur laude ditata.' Translation from Bjornlie (2019: 482): 'Furthermore, residents in the city are not deprived of the fine spectacle of their labors. Satisfyingly abundant grape harvests are descried, the heaped chafe of the threshing floors is evident, and the features of green olives are also in view. Nothing of the pleasantness of the countryside is lacking for one who is able to view everything from the city. For this reason it has no walls, that you will think it a rural city, that you will believe it an urban villa and, situated between both, it becomes known in praise as being abundantly wealthy.' Purcell (1995: 159; cited by Häuber [2014: 547]) writes instead that Cassiodorus is 'praising a *villa* whose main rooms give the chance of seeing people "charmingly laboring".' Purcell also cites Cicero, *Fam*. 7.1, but there is no mention there of 'people going about their ordinary activities.'

[200] Marzano 2007: 82–101.

[201] Bradley (1994: 57–80) for the ideal of self-sufficiency (59) and for specialized and unspecialized labor by slaves; Joshel and Hackworth (2014: 162–213 ['Slaves in the Villa'], 162–65 for specialized labor).

[202] Marzano 2007: 121–23.

[203] Treggiari (1973: 253 for chart) and Flohr (2003: 450).

to the servants whose work supported the style of living enjoyed by those who could afford it, there are surprisingly few images of them until the third century AD.[204] It seems that efforts were made in designing villas to keep mundane household activities and those who performed them out of sight, while in certain contexts, such as banquets, necessary servants of types deemed appropriate were present both in person and in representations.[205] Figures of servants at work were not only small-scale ornaments; statues equipped to carry functional torches, lamps, and trays were of a size that allowed them to mingle with the living inhabitants. Several such statues are preserved, and they were familiar enough to have been mentioned in poetry and represented in painting. In the efficient Roman household, as Eugene Dwyer has observed, even statues had to earn their keep. Their sophisticated viewers may well have appreciated them as aesthetically pleasing heirs of the tradition of functional images that goes back to the golden torchbearers of Homer's Phaeacians; the same viewers would also have understood them as a reminder of the tiring labor that the living slaves endured. Neither the statues nor the human beings could complain.[206]

Just as modern viewers find it difficult to accept, or even comprehend, Greek and Roman representations of pastoral characters in which the picturesque shades alarmingly into the uncomfortable, it may be impossible for us to enter into the mind of the Roman for whom a statuary version of a domestic laborer constitutes appropriate decoration. We are too (if still insufficiently) aware of the cruelty attending a stratified and slavery-based society to take at face value the Roman representations of a manufactured world — virtuous, prosperous, and operating harmoniously inside and out. The Louvre statue may be one of its inmates who sees behind the ideal of self-sufficiency the fundamental self-satisfaction.

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[204] Dunbabin (2003: 443–46) focuses on attendants at banquets.

[205] For the separation of spaces and facilities for servants from those of the family and guests in Hadrian's villa at Tivoli: Opper (2008: 140–41, 144–48); for the control of slaves' movements: Joshel (2013) and Joshel and Hackworth (2014: 162–213).

[206] Homer, *Od.* 7.100–102; Mattusch (2017); Lenski (2013: 147): the objects 'normalized the labour of slaves as something right and good, even pleasing to the eye.' For Roman statues and statuettes 'earning their keep': Dwyer (2012: 312, 315).

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The Archaistic Athenas in Naples and Athens: Some Second Thoughts

Mark D. Fullerton

The Athena in Naples

Among the most intriguing of the many well-preserved statues recovered from the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, and now on display in the Archaeological Museum of Naples, is a somewhat over human-size striding marble Athena (**Figures 1–2**). The statue is approximately two meters tall and largely intact, with only a few restorations.[1] It was carved from a bright white, likely Pentelic, marble, and shows the goddess Athena in profile, striding forward with her left leg, moving from viewer's left to right; the right leg is shown frontally, and the right foot trails, slightly. She wears a thin chiton with short overfold, over which is draped a diagonal mantle, fastened at the right shoulder and hanging from that shoulder to just below the right knee. The goddess' aspect is warlike; she is helmeted, and her aegis is draped over her outstretched left arm, acting as a shield. Her upright right arm would originally have held a spear, undoubtedly in bronze.

This Athena is rendered in a style termed 'archaistic,' owing to its employing without precisely reproducing the distinctive forms and features of styles characteristic of earlier eras, often, as here, combining these with stylistic features typical of the work's own era of production. This categorization presupposes that such features have changed over time, as one sees in the organic development from abstraction to naturalism that can be detected in Greek art over the first millennium BC. Here, and as more broadly applied in discussions of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, the term archaistic is used literally, referring not to all visual borrowings from the past but only to those dating after the 'Archaic Period' (*c.* 600–480 BC) that employ features typical of works dating to that period. In practice, moreover, the term is limited to works that date a generation or more later than the Archaic period, while works dating soon after 480 BC that retain Archaic features are generally called archaizing or mannerist.

What sets archaistic works apart, according to this terminology, is the suggestion of a deliberate decision to reproduce, and thus refer conspicuously and deliberately to, a style, and era, temporally removed from that of the work's creation. Works in archaistic style, so defined, occur at least by the High Classical period (450–400 BC), and such works follow their own stylistic and functional developments, both related to and parallel with the well-known changes of style in Greek art in general that occurred throughout the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Since Roman divine statuary ("*Idealplastik*") tended to draw stylistic inspiration from the entire sequence of Greek art from at least 600 BC onward, including the stylistically retrospective works themselves, it can be a challenge to unravel the nexus of stylistic borrowings and references involved.

The Herculaneum Athena both foregrounds and illustrates these challenges and opportunities. First, unlike many Roman statues of deities, there are no other 'replicas' — statues so similar as to suggest the existence as a statuary 'type.' While there are other examples of Roman statues of Athena/Minerva striding and brandishing weaponry in a warlike manner, some of them archaistic, none look exactly, or even approximately, like our statue from the Villa of the Papyri.[2] There is every reason to suspect, therefore, that this statue, although employing any number of earlier stylistic traditions, was an 'original' work uniquely created for its particular and prominent location within the villa.

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[1] I have had the pleasure of knowing Gene Dwyer as both a friend and a colleague for forty-some years. It seemed appropriate to choose a topic that deals with the Bay of Naples, an area on which his research has been centered. But as anyone who knows Gene will attest, his knowledge and interests spread far beyond this region and this time period. I first worked on these sculptures as a graduate student at Bryn Mawr, and years of teaching and looking have caused me to adjust my earlier views, hence the title.
For a more complete description, including state of preservation, later restorations, and current condition, see Mattusch (2005: 147–51).

[2] Fullerton 1990: 46–57.



Figure 1. Herculaneum Athena. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale. © DeA Picture Library / Art Resource, NY.



Figure 2. Herculaneum Athena from front. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale. © Vanni Archive/ Art Resource, NY.

Location and Impact of the Herculaneum Athena in the Villa

According to Karl Weber's plan (**Figure 3**), the Athena was placed between the two columns of a gate-like passageway between the 'square courtyard' and the so-called tablinum.[3] The former room was the location for display of a substantial collection of portraits of historical figures and other subjects. As its name suggests, the latter room is a rectangular exedra with an opening at the center of the back wall leading to the peristyle around the large rectangular garden. It was thus a space of passage, but at the same time also a point of pause. This 'tablinum' did not share the co-axiality of the atrium and intervening square peristyle, as it would in a traditional atrium house, but rather was perpendicular to it, creating a bent-axis arrangement. This arrangement affected the viewer's experience of the Athena in two ways. One would view it, and pass by it, while negotiating a 90-degree turn from peristyle/ atrium axis into that of the large garden, emphasizing the 'tablinum's' role as a de-centering connecting space between the house proper and the large garden. It also creates a clear view of the statue, in outline and framed between two columns, from both peristyle and garden.[4]

[3] On Weber's work at the villa and his plan, including the findspots of statuary, including the Athena: Mattusch (2005: 33–54, 147). Gene Dwyer's contributions to our current understanding of Roman domestic displays of sculpture are considerable, to say the least, e.g.: Dwyer (1982; 2010; 2012).

[4] See Pandermalis (1971: 205, no. 41) for the Athena, and esp. Beil. 8, 9, 10 for a clear and useful re-drafting of Weber's plan and excellent visualizations of the statuary arrangement; a proposed view of the Athena from the large garden recreates its framing by two pairs of columns.

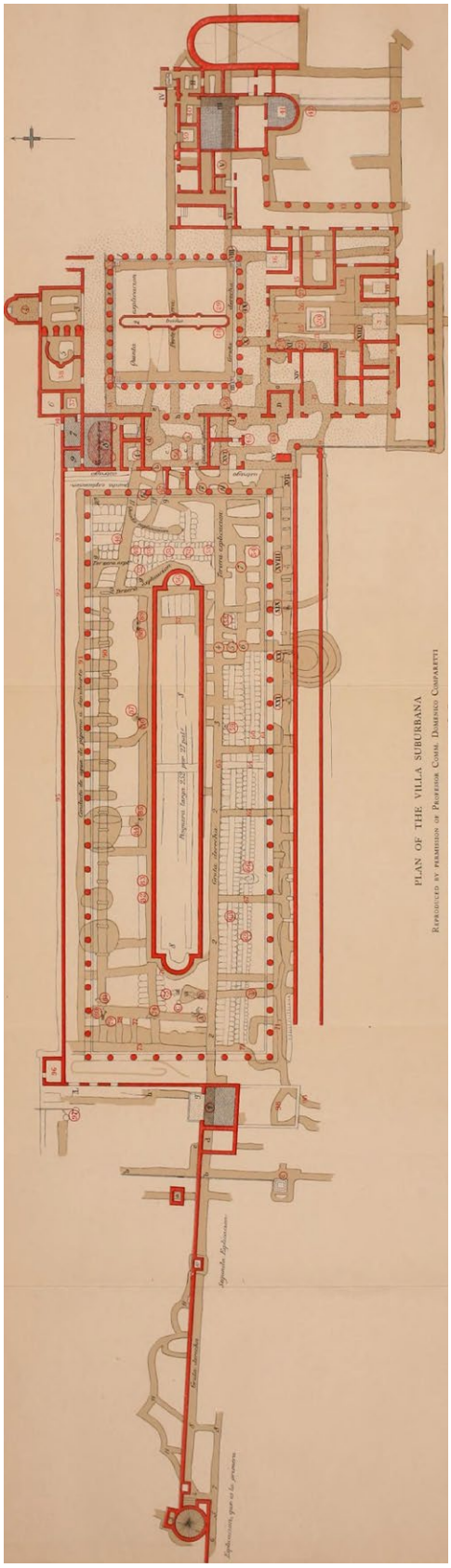


Figure 3. Weber Plan. After Waldstein and Shoobridge 1908: 441. Wikimedia Commons.

This Athena would also have drawn attention to itself, and sharply, through its material, color and pose. Around three-fourths (63 of 85) of the statuary in the villa was bronze, including all of the statues in the atrium, all of the statues in the square courtyard, and all of statues in the tablinum, aside from one classicizing veiled female figure.[5] So, in sum, assuming a visitor to the villa takes the typical path from entry to atrium to peristyle courtyard, they would pass by, using data from sculptures that survived, 23 bronze statues before first encountering a marble statue, the Athena, carved from white marble and painted in bright, even garish, colors.[6] Its effect must have been considerable, re-creating or at least referencing, mortal response to a divine apparition.

Finally, the Athena would have stood out, and further transfixed its viewer, by the extraordinary flatness of its overall form. Much of the statuary in the villa, except that placed tightly against wall, would have invited a visitor to move around and explore various points of view; the Athena, set between two closely spaced columns, discourages, even excludes, this mode of viewing; lateral views are all but impossible; one appreciates its composition only from the front or, although much less so, from the back. Its form, position, and action are constructed in outline; there is no other statue in the villa that compares in this respect, since none other is based on a figural type that is fundamentally two-dimensional. The statue and its architectural frame are perfectly designed to complement one another. Moreover, the relationship between them offers a vital clue to identifying the likely source for the figural type itself.[7]

Panathenaic Athena and Panathenaic Amphoras

It is generally agreed that the peculiar composition of the Herculaneum Athena was inspired not by statuary

[5] The marble statue in the tablinum (Mattusch 2005: 152) was found set in front of the north wall of the room, well clear of the axis created by the Athena in the gateway to the room and the passage to the large garden portico that opens from the back wall of the tablinum. It is an amalgam of the Larger and Smaller Herculaneum types of draped female; its very strongly idealized face suggests that it was a personification, perhaps of feminine domestic virtue, rather than a portrait, as were many statues of this general type. For the Athena's relationship to the other statues in the tablinum, see Mattusch (2007: 159).

[6] The marbles from the villa were, as was usual at the time, overcleaned and appear completely white, remains of color having been thereby removed. More recently excavated pieces from the area have remains of color, and it is safe to assume that the Athena was painted, and perhaps even gilded, as well. On color in ancient sculpture, recently, Stager (2022: esp. ch. 2).

[7] For the highlighting of single important works within the sculptural program of a Roman domicile see, especially, Dwyer (2012: 315).

but by a two-dimensional prototype: the striding Athena figures that adorned and identified the oil-filled amphoras that served as prizes in the Panathenaic games at Athens.[8] The oil, it seems, and not the vase, was the actual prize, as it was more valuable than the vessel, but the Panathenaic vase came to serve much like the modern athletic trophy — all but valueless in practical terms (once the oil was used) but treasured for its symbolic significance. Some winners literally took these objects to their graves and, consequently, a fairly large number of them are preserved, often entirely intact.

The vase type is well known. The first examples, dating to around the time of the first Panathenaic festivals, traditionally founded in 566 BC, are of the then current type known today as a 'panel amphora,' since a reserved window-like section allows for a figural scene in the black-figure technique characteristic of the early Archaic era (**Figure 4**).[9] Each bears on its obverse side the image of Athena striding boldly from viewer's right to left and clad in the early Archaic form of Doric peplos with overfold, her snaky aegis falling down her back (thus only partially visible), helmeted, and wielding the spear and shield of a hoplite. Running vertically from top to bottom in front of the goddess is an identifying inscription: ΤΩΝ ΑΘΕΝΕΘΕΝ ΑΘΛΩΝ ('from the games at Athens'). The games were founded, as many think, to honor the role of Athena in the victory of the Olympian gods over the Giants, something of a 'foundation myth' for the emergence of the Greek pantheon as divine rulers of the cosmos.[10] This aggressive, warlike aspect of the goddess is central to that theme, eliciting her epithet of Promachos ('foremost in battle'), but the type, owing to this usage, is referred to as 'Panathenaic.'[11] On the reverses of these vases are depicted athletes competing in a specific event of the games, presumably that for which this particular prize was awarded; the one on this vase drives a two-horse chariot.

The connection between the Herculaneum Athena and the Archaic striding warlike Athena from Panathenaic vases, and related Archaic types in painting and sculpture, is well established.[12] The Panathenaic Athena, as she appears on these prize amphorae, shows a distinct and revealing development from its origin in the earlier sixth century through the succeeding centuries, its usage coming to an end in the Hellenistic era. The earliest change is the addition of a Doric column to either side of Athena around 540 BC — a generation or so after the beginning of the series; atop each column is perched a cock (**Figure 5**).[13] These columns persist into the fourth century with certain variations over time; some later columns are Ionic, for example, and late in the Classical period figures apparently representing statues are placed atop the columns in place of cocks. That the Herculaneum Athena was displayed, as shown above, framed between



Figure 4. Burgon Amphora. London, British Museum, B130. © The Trustees of the British Museum / Art Resource, NY.

[8] On these, especially Neils (1992), Bentz (1998), and Tiverios (2007). For the Panathenaic festival itself, see now Shear (2021: esp. 1–38). It is likely that much Hellenistic and Roman sculpture follows pictorial prototypes, especially, as in this case, when its composition is essentially two-dimensional.

[9] Burgon Amphora: Bentz (1998: 123, no. 6.001, pls 1–2).

[10] Shear 2021: 41–45.

[11] The famous Athena Promachos of Pheidias, a large bronze statue that dominated the Acropolis, it seems, stood quietly in typically High Classical contrapposto. The more warlike Panathenaic Athena was of a different type.

[12] Mattusch 2007: 160.

[13] Bentz 1998: 124, no. 6.073, pls 23–24.



Figure 5. Antimenes Painter/Circle, Panathenaic Amphora. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 56.171.4. Photo in the Public Domain.



Figure 6. Berlin Painter Workshop (480–60 BCE), Panathenaic Amphora. Hanover, Dartmouth College, C959.53. Photo in the Public Domain.

two columns strongly reinforces its connection with these vase images.

The first significant stylistic change occurs in the first part of the fifth century. An example attributed to the Berlin Painter, a red-figure artist working in the black-figure style that long remained traditional for Panathenaics, introduces incised swallowtail drapery for the section of the peplos below the knees (**Figure 6**). The pattern, with its sharply angular forms, is itself typical of the later Archaic period and persists beyond 480 BC in 'mannerist' work, but its introduction into a figure that is highly traditional in both form and function is significant.[14] The extremely foreshortened torso of Athena, which functions here to accentuate both the proportions of the vase and the sharp recession of its shoulder, is a hallmark of the painter's work. Evolving fold patterns, proportions and poses were characteristic of the highly experimental first decades of the fifth century. Artists in both two- and three-dimensional media were experimenting widely in order to engage with the challenge of transforming a flat and static tradition of representation into one more convincingly reflective of the visual world itself. It is significant for later developments to note that already at the point of transition from Archaic to Classical, there was felt a need to 'update' the figures found on these vases while respecting the authority and continuity of their traditional forms. These are, in some ways, our first truly 'archaistic' works.

Changes of a similar nature occur in the last quarter of the fifth century and early fourth. The so-called Kuban Group of Panathenaics, named for a region of

[14] Bentz 1998: 145, no. 5.074.



Figure 7. Kuban Group (*c.* 410–390 BCE), Panathenaic Amphora. London, British Museum, B605. © The Trustees of the British Museum / Art Resource, NY.

the Caucasus where an example from around 430 BC was found, shows Athena in the traditional right to left stride, located between two columns, and viewed from behind, her aegis visible hanging down her back (**Figure 7**).[15] The overfold of the peplos, however, falls in a swallowtail not made up of sharply angular zigzag folds but of smoother wavy lines, still suggesting the three-dimensional nature of the folded garment but in a more curvilinear, 'High Classical' style current at the time. The motif resembles, and perhaps references, the rendering employed on what appears to be the first High Classical statue rendered in a fully archaistic style — the Hekate Epipyrgidia of Alkamenes, likely set up on the Athena Nike terrace around 425 BC, roughly contemporary with the Kuban Group.[16]

These archaistic drapery patterns do not simply persist into the fourth century, but in fact proliferate. An amphora from the beginning of the century (390/89 BC) retains many features of the late fifth century style and layout; Athena's pose, proportions, garment, and stride closely reflect those of the Kuban Group (**Figure 8**).[17] In place of the peplos overfold is shown a long overskirt (*ependytes*) with a long central pleat now flanked by a flaring pattern of pleats at each side that animates the goddess's bold stride by suggesting the movement of her legs; unlike earlier representations, her right leg shows clearly through drapery that clings closely to her buttock, thigh, and calf. These pleats are also given considerable substance both in the wavy swallowtail termination and the clear indication of fold lying against fold. The traditional stiffness of the figural type is retained but there is an unprecedented sense of volume and animation.

One final Panathenaic, about a generation later than the one just discussed (363/2 BC), illustrates developments toward the end of the Classical Period (**Figure 9**).[18] First of all, the goddess strides not from right to left but from left to right and is shown from the front rather than the back. This development is not well explained, although it breaks a precedent more than two centuries old in an artform that was defined, more than anything else, by its adherence to tradition. A clue to its motivation might be provided by a third change, the angle at which she holds the shield. On all earlier Panathenaics the shield is seen from the outside and is held perfectly parallel to the picture plane. It serves as the ideal ground for the figural decoration that is often, as was the case on actual rather than divine shields, a gorgon, or some other apotropaic device. The change occurring here marks a distinct visual break with the past, and its objective seems to be three-dimensionality. Athena holds her shield nearly perpendicular to the picture plane; her left arm is shown along the inside of the shield, slightly foreshortened, like the shield itself, with the inside of her white forearm standing out vividly against the black inner surface of the shield. The archaistic fold patterns of her peplos recall what we have seen

[15] Bentz 1998: 158, no. 5.237.

[16] Fullerton 2021: 32–36.

[17] Bentz 1998: 167, no. 4.004.

[18] Bentz 1998: 175, no. 4.080.



Figure 8. Panathenaic Amphora. Detroit, Institute of Arts, 50.193. Photo in the Public Domain.



Figure 9. Panathenaic Amphora. Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, 93.AE.55. Photo in the Public Domain.

on earlier examples, but are far more elaborate and mannered, especially the flamboyantly curved and slender tips of the swallowtail patterns in her peplos overfold. These echo the forms of an additional garment not seen on earlier Panathenaic Athenas — the small mantle wrapped around each upper arm and across the back of her shoulders. Its recession in space literally diagrams the three-dimensionality of her divine form, creating a tension between flat and solid forms that is a hallmark of the archaistic style from

this point down through Hellenistic and into Roman times.[19]

It should be noted that the incidents of iconographical change we have traced correspond to eras of profound historic transformation in Greece generally and Athens specifically. The Berlin Painter worked in the years leading up to and following the Greek victory over Persia, in which Athens played a particularly large role and, because of which, was transformed from city-state into the capital of an Ionian 'empire.' The Kuban Group dates to the years of the Peloponnesian War,[20] which ended up challenging, weakening and then, in effect, dismantling the economic and political aspects of Athens' Delian league. The fourth century, when the archaistic style as we know it best from works of Hellenistic and Roman art was in fact formed, constituted in its entirety, an era of crisis. The early years were consumed with absorbing the impact of the collapse of the Delian League and the largely unsuccessful efforts by Athens' traditional rivals, especially Sparta and Thebes, to take advantage of the new power vacuum. The vacuum was filled, of course, by Macedonians, who adumbrated centuries of non-Hellenic powers controlling the Hellenic world, and in the end created a Hellenistic one.

These were therefore trying times, when traditional seats of power were challenged and often weakened. In such circumstances resistance to change can prompt not only a clinging to past traditions, practices, and artistic forms, but shifts in attitudes towards the relationships between past and present. This shift can perhaps be seen in the changing nature of archaism itself. In the fifth century it consisted of taking contemporary forms and making them look older, like the archaizing of Hekate's peplos. In the Late Classical, the feeling is more of taking ancient forms, like formalized drapery patterns, and updating them. The former attempts to justify the present by claiming a perhaps fictive antiquity. The latter seems more to be appropriating an ancient past and making it present — more escapist than aspirational, as one might expect in time of difficulty and even despair. We now turn to a sculpture that is clearly a product of this second phase.

The Archaistic Athena(s) in Athens

From the time of its recognition as what we call an archaistic work, rather than a copy of an Archaic work as it was first thought to be, the Athena from the Villa of the Papyri was held to be an exquisitely carved Roman original — a pastiche of stylistic features and garments from the Greek Archaic era blended with others that are characteristically High Classical. It was an especially successful pastiche, as its prominent display suggests, based loosely on the Panathenaic Athena figure on vases but also a Roman creation in and of itself. It is also noteworthy that this statue, unlike many works of Roman *Idealplastik*, is without replica in statuary or relief, although this may have been due to its being displayed in a private space during the century or so it was above ground.

This issue became more complicated, albeit more interesting as well, when in 1986 Dr. Maria Bruskari published several marble fragments that she discovered in the storerooms of the Akropolis Museum and claimed them to be from a marble statue of what, if she is correct, could now be called the same 'type' as the Herculaneum Athena.[21] Moreover, some twenty years earlier Evelyn Harrison, in her volume on Archaic and Archaistic statuary, had published a fragmentary marble head from the Agora that she clearly demonstrated to be of the same type as that of the Athena in Naples.[22] Bruskari noted that the workmanship of the Akropolis fragments was consistent with carving of the Classical era, specifically the fifth century BC, while Harrison argued that the head was more likely Hellenistic, not only by its workmanship, but also, and more compellingly, owing to its resemblance to works of Hellenistic classicism of the second century BC, which differ strongly from the head of the Athena in Naples. Moreover, the head was found by the Agora excavations in the area of the Akropolis North Slope, where many objects were found that had tumbled from the hilltop above. Therefore, it is generally accepted that the head and the drapery fragments all come from a statue that should have stood on the Akropolis itself. That work, according to Bruskari, was Classical and in Harrison's view was Hellenistic. Despite the considerable difference between the intact statue in Naples and the fragmentary example preserved by the Akropolis body fragments and Agora head, it is largely agreed that one must 'copy' the other or, possibly but less likely, they both derive from some other statue, entirely lost.

[19] In fact, it has been argued that this highly elaborate play of line with its impossibly attenuated forms marks the beginning, in the fourth century and Hellenistic period, of a 'true' and 'comprehensive' archaistic style as opposed to the mere retention of some traditional stylistic features; Havelock 1965.

[20] Fullerton 2021: 39–41.

[21] Bruskari 1986: 80–82; Fullerton 1990: 58; Mattusch 2005: 151n12; Mattusch 2007: 163–64.

[22] Harrison 1965: 78, no. 124, 73–75.



Figure 10a–d. Fragments of Statue of Herculaneum Athena Type. Athens, Acropolis Museum. Photos courtesy of the Acropolis Museum.

A closer comparison of the Akropolis/Agora fragments with the Naples statue might help elucidate the issue. There are four fragments from the Akropolis. One (joining fragments, inv. nos 7782, 2899; **Figure 10a**) preserves much of the long (proper) right corner of the diagonal mantle, including a substantial portion of the zigzag folds along the inner and outer edges. A second fragment (inv. no. 3198; **Figure 10b**) preserves the (proper) left leg, with which the goddess strides forward, from approximately mid-thigh to mid-shin, as well as a triangular section of drapery continuing to the (viewer's) left from the figure's inner knee nearly to the inside of the (proper) right leg. This fragment preserves sections of all three prominent vertical pleats of the chiton skirt and several of the vertical folds that fall between these pleats, but no trace of the bottom section of any of the pleats, which, on the Herculaneum statue, terminate in duplicated swallowtail patterns. A third fragment (inv. no. 7181; **Figure 10c**) preserves the goddess' left upper arm from the shoulder joint to her forearm, ending just short of the wrist. The crease at the inner elbow is clearly indicated, and the upper surface of her arm preserves a section of the scaly aegis that it supported, which breaks off short of the curled snakes that would have adorned its lower edge. The gorgoneion on the aegis, which was separately worked and attached, does not survive, but cavity into which it was set is preserved. The scales lack the incised feathering on the Naples piece,[23] but the surface is quite weathered, so they may have disappeared. A fourth fragment (**Figure 10d**) preserves a small section of the back of the aegis showing perhaps a dozen scales and a small curl from the end of one of Athena's locks.



Figure 11. Head from Agora of Herculaneum Athena Type. Athens, Museum of Ancient Agora, S 1064. Photo courtesy of the Agora Excavations.

The head from the Agora preserves about three-quarters of the face, most of one eye (left) and the mouth, a small section of snail curls above the preserved eye, and, on the proper right side, one corner of the helmet's neckpiece with wavy locks emanating below it, and an earring (**Figure 11**). The upper of the two strands of beads around the neck is also preserved. While fragmentary, the head is well-enough preserved to indicate that it was quite different in structure from the head of the Herculaneum statue. Its form is more blocklike with a sharp angle between the lateral and frontal surfaces of the cheeks, chin and forehead, larger eyes, and heavier proportions. The head of the Herculaneum statue (**Figure 2**), however, is smaller and more delicate with more curvilinear transitions from plane to plane, smaller eyes and mouth, and, most obviously, the inverted V-shaped forehead more typical of the Late Classical and Hellenistic eras. Harrison contends that the Agora head resembles less High Classical style than it does Classicizing imitators of the Late Hellenistic era.

To take stock for a moment, we have here an intact Roman marble statue datable to before AD 79 and likely not much earlier than the time of Augustus. There is physical evidence of a very similar marble statue, slightly smaller and stylistically very different, that nonetheless corresponds in subject, pose, helmet and aegis. This second statue was all but certainly erected on the Akropolis of Athens, many miles from the Bay of Naples; there is some evidence that it was created, or modified, in the late Hellenistic era, but there are other explanations for the style of the head. The

[23] Mattusch 2005: 150.

simplest is that the statue from the Akropolis was a fourth century work, created to evoke the Panathenaic Athena, and that its head was rendered in the style of the previous century in order not to contrast with its archaizing pose and garment.[24] The statue in Naples was made most likely in the first century BC as an adapted version of this Akropolis statue, modified to fit the tastes of the time, by which fully Classical heads (very often Late Classical) placed on strongly archaizing bodies were the norm. It might then be helpful to consider just what an archaistic style looked like, or may have looked like, in each of these periods.

The Archaistic Style in the High Classical Period

It is generally agreed that a truly archaistic style in Greek sculpture developed during the High Classical period.[25] To an extent, that conclusion is dependent on the definition of the term; as noted above, stylistic change is seldom sudden, and Archaic features were retained, most obviously in vase painting, well after 480 BC on vases termed 'mannerist' rather than archaistic, implying a chronological continuity.[26] There are also, already in the later Archaic period, examples of 'emblematic' archaism, in which a later image purposely imitates an older one as a means of identification. The most obvious example are scenes in which a statue is differentiated by the living figures represented around it. The clearest example is the Vivenzio Iliupersis Hydria by the Kleophrades Painter from the first decades of the fifth century, on which the human protagonists are shown in the late Archaic style of the time and the Palladion of Athena is posed stiffly wearing the fold-less peplos typical of figures from the first half of the sixth century and earlier (**Figure 12**).[27] On archaistic works, old features are not simply retained and juxtaposed with later features but the two are blended, usually by visibly later features being rendered in the stiffer and more abstract manner that characterizes older work. Such works necessitate the existence of these later features and thus presuppose the decades of development that led to their creation.

Interestingly, however, the best-known, and likely most conspicuous, examples of archaism, like the Athena on the red-figure vase discussed above, use the anachronistic features not to indicate a statue, but to underscore the 'statuesque' qualities of the work



Figure 12. Kleophrades Painter, Hydria from Vivenzio. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, 81669. Scala / Art Resource, NY.

itself. Most illustrative is the triple-bodied Hekate by Alkamenes erected on the Nike Temple bastion of the Akropolis around 425 BC and known from relief depictions, at least two relatively faithful copies, and numerous later imitations and adaptions (**Figures 13–14**).[28] Each of its three figures, attached to one another at the back, wears a fully up-to-date Doric peplos belted over a long overfold, including High Classical modelling folds over its chest. However, the drapery over the legs consists of a strongly symmetrical pattern of rigid looping catenaries over the legs anchored by a prominent vertical central pleat. The lower edge of the overfold is similarly archaizing with its again symmetrical V-pattern zigzag folds forming its lower hem.

The Hekate's columnar symmetry and archaizing forms emphasize several aspects of its nature, function, and significance. As an apotropaic device, it must first of all be permanently fixed in place, like a column; it cannot desert its protective perch on the Nike bastion. Since it is designed to avert the unknown and unseen threats to the land it protects, it must also inhabit the realm of the unreal, which its inherently impossible form allows it to do. Its rootedness and archaism, moreover, evoke the distant past and continuing presence of the Athenian demos, descended from ancient earth-born kings.[29] These are aspects and concepts that will

[24] Mattusch 2007: 163–64.
[25] Fullerton (1990: 1–12) for one historiographical survey of this issue. For the view that a 'truly' archaistic style arises only much later: Havelock (1965).
[26] For the terminology used here: Pollitt (1986: 175–84).
[27] Vivenzio Hydria: Cerchiai (2006).
[28] Most recently: Fullerton (2021: 32–36, 40).
[29] These are features the Hekataion clearly shares with its counterpart, the Herm, which was also an emphatically non-naturalistic and immovable object similarly set up at points of transition and uncertainty as an apotropaic device; Fullerton 2021.



Figure 13. BSA Hekate. Athens, British School at Athens, 521. Photo courtesy of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens.



Figure 14. Agora Hekate. Athens, Museum of Ancient Agora, S 1277. Photo courtesy of the Agora Excavations.

persist, indeed proliferate, in the succeeding Late Classical period.[30]

The Archaistic Style in the Fourth Century

As mentioned above, one view of the development of the archaistic style, and one with many adherents over the years, saw the fourth century and Hellenistic era as constituting the era in which archaism was invented, and our brief look at the Athena figures on Panathenaic vases offered some of the evidence put forth to support such a view.[31] As Childs recently outlined, art in the

[30] On autochthony in Classical Athenian art and culture, see, e.g., Clements (2021).
[31] Fullerton 1990: 1–12.



Figure 15. Xenokrateia Relief. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 2756. Author Photo.

fourth century reflects a 'certain nostalgia for the "good and simple past"' that he attributes, at least in part, to an indulgence in eastern luxury best illustrated, but by no means limited, to the architecture, painting, and burial goods of Macedonian tombs.[32] At the very least, accounts of the development of sculptural style from the High Classical into the Late Classical era invariably focus on the increasing complexity of the phenomenon. Fourth-century works simultaneously cite prominent sculptures of the preceding century and update those models with a greater emphasis on the volume and substance of forms, favoring an elaboration of drapery with patterns more independent from than modelling (in effect, concealing rather than revealing) the body underneath. The fourth century Panathenaic Athenas are consistent with this 'Rich Style,' as it is termed, in their flamboyant elaboration of archaizing forms that tend to exist as pattern separate from the body.[33] At any rate, more examples of archaizing sculpture in a greater variety of types date to the fourth than to the fifth century. The most straightforward are those that continue a fifth century tradition, not just the Panathenaic figures that have already been discussed but those that clearly quote Alkamenes' Hekate and Herm at the Akropolis entrance.

We begin with two examples that are technically from the very end of the fifth century rather than the fourth, but both, like much sculpture of this decade or so, adumbrate Late Classical developments. Indeed, the style of the fourth century as a whole is so clearly rooted in the last quarter of the fifth that many recognize a fundamentally consistent artistic style (sometimes called the 'Rich Style') dating from the 420s to the 370s BC.[34] In terms of archaistic styles, a uniformly retrospective archaistic style ('looking back at looking back,' if you will) gives way over time to those that look backward and forward all at once.

First is a marble votive relief found at New Phaleron named after its dedicator Xenokrateia (**Figure 15**). It depicts, like most votive reliefs, a gathering of deities and worshippers. At either end are shown Apollo sitting in a tripod at left and the river god Kephissos (to whom the relief is dedicated) at right; the two deities clearly frame the scene. Just behind and above Kephissos is shown a figure clearly modelled after the Hekate Epipyrgidia, as we know it from the replicas in the BSA and the Agora (**Figures 13–14**).[35] This figure is single, not triple, but the similarity in form ensures the relationship, and its placement at the limit of the relief strongly suggests its function as an apotropaic

[32] Childs 2018: 264–70.
[33] Childs 2018: 270–78.
[34] E.g. Fullerton (2016: 203–25) and Childs (2018: 26–27).
[35] Childs 2018: 317–18, figs 91–92; Fullerton 2021: 32–36, 40, figs 6–7.



Figure 16. Bassai Frieze. London, British Museum, 1815,1020.10. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

boundary marker. Much of the figure's torso is shown; she is similar in form to the two statuary examples, wearing a Classical peplos belted over a long overfold. The drapery pattern is a flatter, more schematized version of what we know from the other examples including a sharply carved, very low relief zigzag border on the overfold's edge; unlike them, however, she holds something (a flower, painted on?) upright in her right hand. The BSA and Agora figures are headless, so this representation is of particular importance. She wears a polos with a simplified and rather heavy *Wellenfrisur* pattern of hair atop her forehead. Her features are more Classical than Archaic; she does not smile. But there is a heaviness and blockiness to the proportions and form of her face that are already in the late fifth century well out of fashion; this is clearly an archaism, meant to distinguish the figure as a statue from the animate gods and mortals around it.

Very similar, and only slightly later, is the statue, also in the form of a single-bodied Hekataion, at which the victim of an assaulting centaur takes refuge on the frieze of the Temple of Apollo Epikourios at Bassai in Arcadia (*c.* 400–390 BC) (**Figure 16**). It shares the apotropaic nature of the Xenokrateia idol, and many details of form, including the literally statuesque head, but the drapery patterns are much less schematized. The folds over the torso of the image are more rounded, the pleats of the overfold project more strongly, terminating in a quite plastically rendered zigzag pattern. The flamboyance of the victim's companion, whose pose is dramatic in the extreme, that both clings to the body with modelling folds and collects in voluminous curvilinear masses flowing away from the body, is already fully fourth century. The contrast between the pathos of these Lapith women and the otherworldly nature of the statue creates a gripping contrast that could not be more fourth century, regardless of when the work dates.

Finally, related to these Hekataia are the Palladia from the Iliupersis pediments of the Temple of Hera at Argos (*c.* 390 BC) and the Temple of Asklepios at Epidauros (*c.* 370 BC). The former is somewhat similar in style to the Bassai idol, although its Archaic garment makes it look rather different (**Figure 17**). The Epidauros Palladion



Figure 17. Palladion from Argive Heraion Pediment. Athens, National Archaeological Museum. Author Photo.



Figure 18. Palladion from Epidauros Pediment. Athens, National Archaeological Museum. Author Photo.

is a generation later than the Argive and looks it — far more three dimensional in its mantle folds with strong texturing of the chiton cloth (**Figure 18**).

All these images are, ostensibly, representations of three-dimensional statues and in differing ways retain into the Late Classical the Alkamenean archaism formulated for that period around 420 BC.[36] More closely related to the Late Classical Panathenaic Athena figures already discussed, and therefore more relevant to the issue at hand, are the increasingly standardized archaistic relief figures that also arise and proliferate at this very time. Likely not the earliest example, but the most closely datable, and therefore a good starting point, is the frieze of draped female dancers from the propylon of the Temenos at Samothrace (**Figure 19**).[37] The figures in this procession of dancers and musicians preserve a corpus of slight variations on a theme. Each wears a thin chiton over which is draped a long diagonal mantle with overfold, fastened at the left shoulder. The polos that each wears indicates that the figures are divine, whether nymphs, graces, or some other attendant deity particular to this cult and site. The presence of a ruffle along the fold of the overfold is not easy to explain. This seems an addition on the part of the designer meant, however illogically, to enhance the decorative delicacy and linear intricacy of the figure. The frieze combines the representational quality of a Classical figural procession with the decorative repetition and abstraction of an architectural molding. This is a flamboyant new Late Classical take on the archaism of Alkamenes, and its influence on contemporary Panathenaic amphoras (or vice versa) is underscored by the presence here, although on some figures only, of the small, wrapped swallowtail

[36] It is very likely that the Hekataion in the British School is Late Classical and the example from the Agora as well. They may have formed part of otherwise lost narrative groups, or, more likely, they functioned as apotrapaic Hekataia at the entrance points to buildings either public or private. The Alkamenean herm also continued, and can be documented, somewhat modified, as a statue support for the figure of Sisyphos II from the Daochos Monument at Delphi; Childs (2018: 171–73).

[37] Lehmann and Spittle 1982: 172–208.

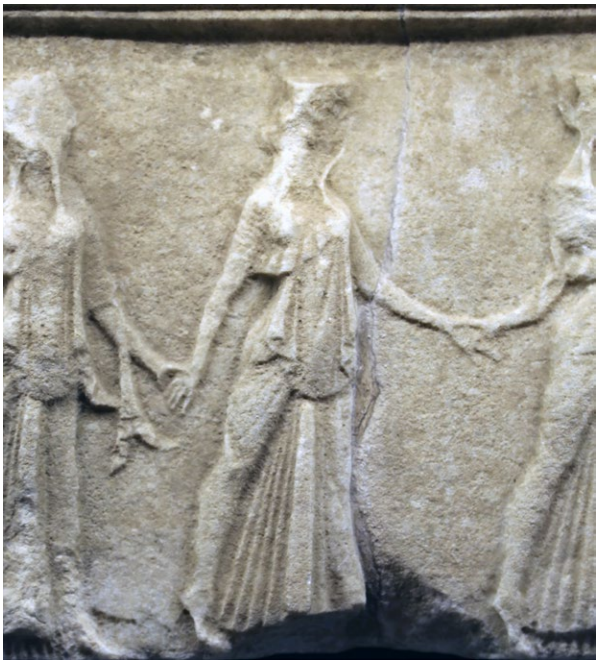


Figure 19. Frieze from Propylon of the Temenos at Samothrace. Paleopolis, Archaeological Museum of Samothrace. Author Photo.

mantle. The composition and style together both reflect and project the ceremonial quality of the space that the frieze adorns, and the frieze's almost hypnotic combination of repetition and formalism and with grace and animation fits well in a space devoted to the practice of a 'mystery' religion, as was the cult of the Cabiri, or Great Gods, at Samothrace.

The Archaistic Style in Hellenistic and Roman Times

Despite their apparent dissimilarity, these graceful dancers of Samothrace and the aggressively confrontative Athenas on the prize amphoras share many features of garment and style, together providing useful (and datable) touchstones for sorting out the subsequent development and diffusion of the archaistic style. Each is dated to the third quarter of the fourth century, on the very eve of the Hellenistic period, and they provide the last chronological fixed points for a chronology of the archaistic style.[38] The basic figural type that each represents will subsequently have a long life in the representation of a wide variety of deities, both subsidiary and Olympian, in both decorative and votive relief sculpture. The dates are often disputed for individual monuments, but the corpus of archaistic relief images of Olympian and other deities that came to proliferate in Hellenistic times can be related to both the Samothrace dancers and the Athenas on Late Classical Panathenaic Vases. It is now largely agreed that in the course of this development the volume and fluidity of both the dancers and the Athenas often give way to a rigidity and linear elaboration in these reliefs as they develop into late Hellenistic and Roman times. Not surprisingly, at the same time there emerges a corpus of 'archaistic' types for the depiction of Olympians (and certain other subjects) in relief.[39] There is, as is typical of the era, great variety in the copies, imitations and adaptations of the established types, which consist of both two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms, although that distinction becomes blurred as some artists take more flowing and volumetric forms and make them flatter and more linear while others do the opposite. Moreover, alongside this evolved a very different, more volumetric and even 'baroque' take on the archaistic style that arose in the Greek cities of Ionia and Anatolia. In this view, which I have argued elsewhere, there is a basic split in the development around the third century that followed roughly geographic lines, although these two trends did influence one another and, as well, the Roman examples that follow.[40]

There are clear difficulties in establishing a firm chronology for the archaistic style, as in other realms of art, during the Hellenistic era, not only because of the contemporaneous co-existence of retrospective

[38] For a two-stage development of the archaistic style in the Late Classical and Hellenistic eras: Havelock (1964).

[39] There has been significant disagreement concerning the exact date and nature of this transformation. The Four Gods Base from the Akropolis preserves images, in an elaborate and highly schematized archaistic style, for Athena, Zeus, Hermes, and Hephaistos; these recur repeatedly in Hellenistic and Roman archaistic reliefs, as outlined below; Zagdoun 1989: 153–55; Brahms 1994. This monument, the suggested dates for which range from the fourth to the first century BC, seems to illustrate especially well a transition from a Classical to a Hellenistic form of archaism, on which more below. It also exemplifies a persisting disagreement about the date of this Four Gods Base (whether fourth century, as often argued, or late Hellenistic) and, consequently, the pattern of development in the archaistic style from the fourth to first centuries. Cf. Harrison (1965: 85), who, in agreement with Havelock (1964), argues that the Four Gods Base is late Hellenistic or Roman and not Classical, its schematism and repetitive quality resulting from the techniques and objectives of the 'Neo-Attic' workshops, which produced roughly similar forms of decorative sculpture continuously from around the first century BC to the end of the empire. A fragmentary decree relief from the Agora datable to 321/0 BC preserves the lower section of an archaistic draped figure. If the relatively fluid and volumetric nature of its drapery is taken as representative of the late fourth century, this modest piece reinforces the evidence of the Samothrace frieze that the highly linear and schematized archaism embraced by the Romans was a later development, following the Roman conquest of the East and no earlier.

[40] Fullerton 1987.



Figure 20. Kallimachos Relief. Rome, Capitoline Museums, 614. Author Photo.

and progressive effective forces but also because regional stylistic variation, a phenomenon of Greek art from its beginning, comes even more to fore in the expanded culture of Hellenism during the final three centuries BC. Nonetheless, the basic evolution of 'more naturalistic' to 'more artificial' forms as argued by Harrison and Havelock seems valid, at least for the representation of Olympian deities and not infrequently in the depiction of other subjects as well.

What can be said, in summary, is that by the time of the decoration of the Villa of the Papyri, in the second half of the first century BC, the rigid, linear, quality of archaistic figures, their stencil-like formalism and consistency, reinforced by evolving techniques of mechanical reproduction ostensibly used in the 'Neo-Attic' workshops, resulted in the creation of a repertoire of figures not only serving as established prototypes for the representation of each subject, but also providing basic schemes (poses, garments) that could be adapted to different subjects. This resulted, as one might expect, in a greater schematism, often with sometimes arresting simplification of complex forms, especially of drapery, to their simplest approximation.

To take one example only from the many that exist, we can consider a relief of Pan and three Graces, signed by a sculptor named Kallimachos, in the Capitoline Museum, which draws heavily on the archaistic forms of Late Classical and Hellenistic models without precisely repeating any (**Figure 20**).[41] Most obvious are the two Graces to the right whose basic pose and some aspect of their garment come from the Hermes of the four-gods type; the Grace in front of them, who turns to look back, quotes the Panathenaic Athena in her garment and the Samothrace maidens in her pose. The gestures are as mannered as the proliferation of patterning that makes up their garments. Their faces, as is typical of these reliefs, bear no trace of archaism but display the delicacy and beauty of the Late Classical and Hellenistic forms that predominate in Roman *Idealplastik*, both in statuary and relief. Drapery patterns, however, are sharply angled, pleats

[41] Pollitt 1986: 177–78, fig. 187.

are aggressively parallel, even when curved, and the ruffles on mantle borders lose all softness and volume, being reduced to simple flat zigzag. The simplest and most repetitive of patterns rule. One wonders if the signature, rare in Roman work, was a perhaps humorous reference to the famous Classical sculptor thought to have created the intricately draped images of maenads that were a staple of Neo-Attic art; the Romans described his work as *katatexitechnos*, something like, 'meticulous to excess, or prone to elaborate detail' or perhaps a reference to the early Hellenistic poet of whom the same might be said.

The Date of the Akropolis Athena

By way of, or perhaps on the way to, a conclusion, let us return to the Athena on the Acropolis. There is little doubt that the statue from which we have fragments among the marbles in the Akropolis storerooms bears some relationship to the beautifully preserved large statue in Naples. What might that relationship be? Maria Brouskari, who keenly recognized the connection, considered workmanship of the Akropolis fragments to be Classical and took them to be from the original of the Herculaneum 'type,' putting the term in quotes since there are no other versions, and, as is clear by comparison, the statue in Naples is by no means a close copy of the work that once stood in Athens.[42] Dr. Brouskari generously showed me these pieces some years ago, and while I agree with her assessment of them as Classical, to my eye the style is fourth century BC rather than fifth. I also agree that the head from the Agora excavations on the North Slope should go with the body fragments from the Akropolis, where, I also agree, the Classical statue stood.

As to style, it is easy enough to compare the fragments with the statue and notice significant differences. The fragment preserving a section of the advanced left knee (no. 3198; **Figure 10b**) could hardly be more different in style from the corresponding section of the Naples Athena. The three vertical flat pleats of the former can clearly be discerned, but those on the Athena fragment are much more deeply cut and thus framed by distinct shadows that cause them to project strongly forward. As on the Herculaneum Athena there are vertical folds between these primary pleats, again far more volumetric on the Athens pieces and therefore creating a strong chiaroscuro effect in the modelling of this section of drapery. The left knee itself bends at a somewhat sharper angle, the clinging drapery reveals its form more clearly, as do the more projecting catenary folds running from skirt pleats to shin. The garment worn by the Herculaneum Athena 'type' under its mantle, a thin chiton with short overfold, comes into fashion in the High Classical period, especially toward the latter part of the century. Its form on the Athens Athena, however, seems noticeably later. The narrow pleats hanging from under the outstretched, aegis-bearing, arm, are much more intricately worked than on fifth century examples.[43] The metallic-looking incised lines along the outer surface of these folds give much more depth and visual interest to the form, creating an almost 'crinkly' effect in the thin chiton fabric. The emphasis on volume and texture seen in the drapery here is much more at home in sculptures of the fourth century than in the fifth generally, as well as in the Late Classical archaistic works in various media discussed above. Indeed, it was demonstrated above that it was exactly this quality that separated fourth century archaistic works from those of the fifth.

As to exactly where in the fourth century this archaistic Athena should date, it clearly shares features with the palladion from the Iliupersis pediment of the Asklepion at Epidauros, which is generally dated around 380/70 BC (**Figure 18**). That temple's sculptures are said to mark a transition at that time from the 'Plain' style to the 'Rich' style in fourth century sculpture.[44] To my eye, the Athena is further along in that development than are the Epidauros pieces, showing more volume, intricacy, and complexity in its drapery renderings. A date well into the second quarter of the fourth century seems likely. Significantly, perhaps, that is precisely the time (362/1 BC) that Panathenaic Amphoras first occur with Athena striding from viewer's left to right (like our Athena) rather than from right to left, as they had done for some three hundred years. It is difficult to think this a coincidence, but whether a statue inspired the modification in the prize amphoras or the Athena was simply designed after its most recent painted models we may never know. What can be said, however, is that the pronounced, even dramatic, changes displayed by the Panathenaic Athenas of the following quarter-century show an entirely new conception of the Panathenaic Athena as a three-dimensional, even 'statue-esque,' entity, suggesting that a new prototype in statuary form may well have existed by that time.

I accept the attribution of the Agora head (**Figure 11**) to the same statue as the body fragments from the Akropolis, but one possible reservation about placing

[42] Brouskari 1986: 82.

[43] The Nemesis of Rhamnous by Agorakritos, known from extant fragments that have allowed the identification of Roman copies, is a good example from the late fifth century; Despinis 1971.

[44] Childs 2018: 213–15.

this Athens/Agora Athena in the fourth century might arise from its style. That it pertains to the 'type' is beyond doubt; the form of the helmet, the earring, and necklace, as well as the hair flowing out from the neckpiece of the helmet, correspond exactly to those on the Naples Athena statue. However, the structure, proportion, facial features of the Agora head differ strongly from those of the Naples Athena. The former has a heavy, blocky head with relatively flat face and strong facial features. The forms are High Classical, to be sure, but as Evelyn Harrison noted, correctly, its closest comparison is with the works of late Hellenistic classicizing sculptors of Athens such as Euboulides, which closely imitated the forms and proportions of the mid-fifth century.[45] The Herculaneum Athena's head represents the hairstyle, rounded face, and delicate features that are characteristic of Hellenistic statuary and reliefs. These too are Classicizing, but, like much Hellenistic work they reprise (or retain) the style of the fourth century rather than that of the fifth, exaggerating the beauty and delicacy of its models just as Euboulides' work exaggerates the severity and authority of theirs. It would seem then that an analysis of the two heads reinforces the argument, made by Harrison and followed by me in an earlier article, that the Athens Athena is a late Hellenistic archaizing creation of which the Herculaneum statue is, by any analysis, only an approximate copy at best.[46]

I now would propose that the Agora head, which belongs to the statue documented by the Akropolis fragments, reflects an already eclectic and retrospective trend in sculpture of the fourth century BC. Like the body, (and such works as the fourth century Panathenaic Athenas which were surely its inspiration) it is a blend of the old and the new. In the fourth century, the structure and features of this head were already recognizably old-fashioned, just as the garment was decidedly archaic/archaistic. The use of such a style for this statue would mitigate the discordance between the body and the head, and, it seems, such contrast may have been the convention for early archaistic draped statuary. The style in draped sculptures, as all recognize, begins with the Hekate Epipyrgidia. While neither of the early replicas described above preserve its head, there are, as we have seen, at least two reliefs that seem to quote the monument: The Xenokrateia Relief and the Bassai frieze. Both have formalized classicizing faces and hairstyles, not archaistic like the drapery, but distinctly older looking than the era of the reliefs' creation. A similar phenomenon was likely in play in the Athena itself; as we shall see below, archaistic representations in Hellenistic and Roman times had archaistic heads and/or faces only rarely.

There is virtually no evidence for the original location of this Athena apart from its having been found on the North Slope. This suggests, but by no means ensures, that it originally stood somewhere in the northern sector of the Akropolis. Such a location would be logical, since that was the location of the Archaic Athena Temple and its fifth century replacement, the Erechtheion, which took on its cultic functions. The rites celebrated there, and the reliquary gallery-like assemblage of objects and images said to have been housed there,[47] were closely connected with the Panathenaia, since the two temples successively housed the ancient image of Athena that was the very focus of the festival itself. The connection of the building with the ancient age of regal Athens is well documented,[48] and an archaizing image, that has been shown to be closely related to the images on Panathenaic Vases, would make perfect sense somewhere in the Athena Polias temenos. Given the apotropaic nature of the image and the documented use of archaizing styles for similar figures such as herms and hekataia, it would also make sense if, like these other figures, it was set up at or near the entrance to the precinct or the temple itself, but again this is pure speculation. Alternatively, setting the findspot aside, and given its archaistic form and strongly apotropaic nature, one might expect it to have been erected near the entrance to the Acropolis itself, in the Propylaia/Athena Nike Sanctuary complex. There it would have shared its protective duties with Alkamenes' two earlier archaistic guardian figures, the Hekate Epipyrgidia and the Hermes Propylaios.[49]

The Herculaneum Athena: Sources and Style

The date of the Herculaneum Athena itself is not problematic. It surely was a part of a collection put together for the Villa of the Papyri and very likely created for the purpose, since, as demonstrated above, it served as the centerpiece of the domicile and its décor. It was then created around the time of the villa's construction in the middle to second half of the first

[45] Harrison 1965: 73–75.
[46] Fullerton 1989: 66–67.
[47] For the Erechtheion as reliquary: Hurwit (1999: 200).
[48] Clements 2016; Fullerton 2021.
[49] The Hekate, we know from Pausanias (2.30.2), was on the Nike Bastion as its epithet indicates. The Hermes, again as is its epithet suggests, was likely in the Propylaia and may have stood just to the viewer's left of the main entrance to the Akropolis, as argued in a recent PhD dissertation by Laura Hutchison (2020). Brouskari (1986: 82) places the Athena as well near the entrance to the Akropolis, although she has it contemporary with the Herm and Hekate, from the time of the Archidamian War.

century BC, before and during the beginning of the Imperial epoch. The owner is taken to be a L. Calpurnus Piso Caesoninius (d. 42 BC) who served as proconsular governor of Macedonia, which at that time included Greece, Achaia becoming a separate province only in the Augustan era.[50] That he was also the person who had the villa equipped with statuary is a logical conclusion, but not certain.

As has been shown, the pose, garment types and the basic drapery patterns of the Herculaneum Athena derive from the Late Classical Athena from the Acropolis, while its style is entirely different. The flatness of its forms, the simplified and repetitive drapery patterns, in particular the pleats between the legs with their simplistic omega-shaped terminations (albeit this section of the Athens figure is not preserved), and the flat angular zigzag folds of the long diagonal mantle are noticeably less naturalistic than those on the Athens fragment where each fold curves to react to its adjacent fold. The ruffle on the diagonal border of that mantle is rendered by a single simple zigzag line that entirely lacks volume, projecting only enough to be visible. Again, this section is not preserved on the Athens statue but one can only assume that its rendering there was more comparable to that seen on fourth century archaistic works like, for example, the Samothrace dancers. Also in a strongly Hellenistic classicizing tradition is the head of the Herculaneum statue. It lacks entirely the High Classical blockiness of the Agora head. Like many late Hellenistic / early Roman figures, it follows Late Classical precedents with its rounded cranial structure, V-shaped hairline, and softly rendered delicate features, not unlike many Hellenistic versions of Praxitelean goddesses, the Nike of Samothrace being the most famous. But this is no gentle Venus. Her Roman Classicism comes out in the strong lines of her features and serious aspect, one scholar comparing her, aptly, to an Augustan war deity, the Mars from the Ara Pacis.[51]



Figure 21. Artemis from Pompeii. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, 6008. Barker Newhall Photographic Collection, Kenyon College. Photo in the Public Domain.

Conclusion

While it is certain that the Herculaneum Athena was modelled after the fourth-century archaistic Athens statue preserved in four fragments from the Akropolis of Athens, it is at the same time a new creation that followed only the pose, garment types, and general drapery arrangement of its model. The stylistic differences between the two, particularly in the rendering of drapery, are precisely those that are generally recognized as being typical of archaistic works from the final, first century BC, phase of Hellenistic archaism. The Hermes and nymph relief in the Capitoline Museum signed by Kallimachos (**Figure 20**) provides an excellent example of a similar transformation in that more two-dimensional

[50] Mattusch 2005: 20–23; Fullerton 1989: 67n52. In that article I argued that the statue was set up by this Piso's son, L. Calpurnius Piso Pontifex (cos. 15 BC) who also served in Greece and was honored on the Acropolis by a statue, not preserved, likely a portrait or other standing figure. I now think this is unlikely since I doubt that the Athena statue was added to the collection that it so clearly anchors, although it is not entirely impossible that it was added later to serve this function.

[51] Pandermalis 1971: 192.

sculptured medium. Yet statuary versions of this style from around the same time are many as well; the Artemis found at nearby Pompeii is a typically Roman and therefore especially revealing example (**Figure 21**).[52] Unlike the Athena, she has a clearly archaizing head, most likely because, unlike the Athena, the statue is a fully Roman archaistic creation, not a copy or adaptation of a much earlier archaizing work. The development of the archaistic style from more naturalistic forms of the Late Classical to more abstract of late Hellenistic and Roman works reverses, in effect, the prevailing stylistic trajectory in Greek art of the first millennium BC. The somewhat ironic conclusion is that the exaggeratedly abstract, even simplistic, archaism of the Herculaneum Athena serves as an 'updating' of its Classical model, undertaken in order to accommodate the expectations of a Roman viewer as to what an archaistic style should look like.[53] But those expectations remain only partially fulfilled, since, atypical among Roman archaistic statues, this Athena reflects a specific, already archaizing Late Classical original.

Viewing the Herculaneum Athena was therefore a complex, multiply referential experience, doubtlessly baffling to all but a Roman elite who had personally viewed its Athenian model *in situ*. Only those fortunate few, and likely but few of those, would have been familiar with that Classical work and, more important, those works and styles that it, in turn, referred to and revived. In this respect the Herculaneum Athena not only functioned as the focal point of the viewer's passage through the villa, but also, and perhaps more so, served to epitomize the elitist Hellenism that provided a thematic structure to its sculptural and architectural display.

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[52] Fullerton 1990: 22–29, fig. 10.

[53] For Roman views of the archaic/archaistic styles, see, e.g., Hallett (2012: 84–86). He sees Roman archaistic works especially as 'updates' of Archaic works, that largely retain the conspicuous formal artificiality of their Archaic models, which were, of course, themselves well known to Roman viewers (Hallett lists several Archaic works known to have stood in Rome) and were often imitated while, unlike Classical and Hellenistic works, seldom copied. As argued here, the Herculaneum Athena differs significantly from such works in being a Roman interpretation of an already archaizing work from the Classical period proper. At the same time it reflects an awareness of the style of contemporaneous Roman archaistic statuary and relief, as Hallett defines it, in its overt formalizing of its Classical source.

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Wearing Antiquity: The Use of Sealing Stones on Finger Rings in Byzantium

Brad Hostetler

The Cabinet des Médailles is home to a rare type of Byzantine signet ring (**Figures 1–2**).[1] The shape, decoration, and inscriptions are typical of the ninth and tenth centuries, but the inclusion of a gem on the bezel is not. The emerald intaglio features a bust length image of Christ with a short beard and the arms of a cross behind his head.[2] It is set in a gold band decorated with niello vine scrolls and two monograms on the shoulders that spell a traditional invocational prayer, Κύριε βοήθει (Lord help). The Greek inscription on the bezel, surrounding the emerald and written in reverse, repeats this prayer, and is expanded to include the name and court title of the wearer, +Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθ(ει) Βασιλείῳ παρακοιμωμ(ένῳ) τοῦ δεσπ(ότου) (Lord help Basil the *parakoimomenos* of the emperor).[3] The title, *parakoimomenos* (chamberlain), was a distinguished and high-ranking office that was held by only one person at any given time.[4] We know of two people by the name Basil who held this office in the ninth and tenth centuries. Basil I, the Macedonian (r. 867–86), served as *parakoimomenos* for Michael III (r. 842–67) before he himself became emperor; Basil Lekapenos, a member of the ruling family, served in this position for several emperors from 948 to 959 and again from 963 to 985.[5]



Figure 1. Ring of Basil the *parakoimomenos*. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. Schlumberger.126. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 2. Ring of Basil the *parakoimomenos*. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. Schlumberger.126. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[1] While I have known Gene for less time than have others in this volume, his impact on my life has been no less significant. This chapter is inspired by the many conversations that we have shared. A version of this paper was presented at the 59th International Congress on Medieval Studies in 2024; my thanks to Antje Bosselmann-Ruickbie, Genevra Kornbluth, Lynn Jones, Jonathan Shea, and Shannon Steiner for their invaluable suggestions and advice.
Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. Schlumberger.126, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr/ws/catalogue/app/collection/record/1418>.

[2] Schlumberger (1885: 346) was of the opinion that the gem was made of glass paste, but Cheynet and Morrisson (1992) confirmed that it is an emerald.

[3] For a transcription of the inscription, see Schlumberger (1885: 346) and Cheynet and Morrisson (1992). For additional literature, see Vikan and Nesbitt (1980: 18) and Bosselmann-Ruickbie (2011: no. 139, pp. 288–89).

[4] Kazhdan 1991: s.v. 'Parakoimomenos' (A. Kazhdan).

[5] Schlumberger 1885: 347–49. Schlumberger (1885: 349) and Cheynet and Morrisson (1992) note the similarity of this depiction of Christ to that found on the coins of Michael III, suggesting that the ring belonged to the older Basil. See Kurysheva (2013) for an alternative interpretation.

Whereas seal stones were the preferred medium for signet rings in the first two centuries of the Roman imperial era, such types were in the minority at the time when Basil commissioned his ring. Why then did he wear a ring in a style that had seemingly fallen out of fashion long ago? Scholars have traced the formal evolution of Byzantine rings, but little attention has been given to those that are fitted with sealing stones.[6] This essay considers the re-emergence of this signet ring type in the ninth and tenth centuries, and does so in two parts.[7] In the first part, I provide an overview of Byzantine signet rings and identify the small group to which that of the *parakoimomenos* belongs. In the second part, I investigate why this type of ring would likely be of interest to such a high-ranking official. I consider three contexts: an appreciation for ancient Roman styles, the wearing of gems in order to show one's connection to the emperor, and a belief in the magical and medicinal use of gemstones. This study, presented to Gene Dwyer in honor of his life-long work on post-classical reception of Roman art, considers Byzantium's engagement with its imperial past through the lens of gemstones on finger-rings.

Signet Rings in Byzantium

Byzantine signet rings were functionally no different from their ancient Roman counterparts. They possessed a bezel with an engraved design that, when pressed into a bed of soft wax, left behind a relief impression. These wax sealings were used in the home in order to 'lock' and protect valuable possessions. They were also attached to written correspondence and legal documents in order to 'sign' and authenticate the messages that they contained. For Basil the *parakoimomenos*, his ring would have been used to carry out his functions of office and to signify his membership in the imperial court.

In a society where Christian modesty was promoted, the signet ring was considered the one piece of jewelry that was accepted by the early church fathers. Clement of Alexandria, writing in the late second and early third centuries, notes that for women signet rings were not 'for ornament, but for sealing things which are worth keeping safe in the house, in the exercise of their charge of housekeeping.'[8] For men, the signet ring was necessary 'while engaged in public business or discharging other avocations in the country,' and that 'other finger-rings are to be cast off.'[9] Clement classified rings by function: those that seal are acceptable and those worn for adornment are not. These admonitions were not always followed, and the surviving material bears this out. The British Museum alone houses one of the largest collections; 150 rings — signet or otherwise — that have been dated to the Byzantine era (fourth to fifteenth centuries).[10] Public and private collections preserve a wide range of rings in gold, silver, and bronze; this variety speaks to the fact that these objects were worn and used by all levels of society.

Scholarship traditionally classifies signet rings as jewelry. I suggest that the Byzantines saw them differently.[11] In the *Basilika*, a law code largely assembled under Basil I, the title of one law states: 'The signet ring is not in the class of ornaments.'[12] While the full text does not survive to us, a twelfth-century commentary, the *Ecloga Basilicorum*, expounded upon it:

> This present chapter says that whenever one speaks of ornaments — indeed, things that are for the adornment and comeliness of our bodies — he does not also include the signet ring under the designation of ornaments; that is to say we have [a signet ring] not for the purpose of adornment and comeliness, but for itself, for sealing.[13]

The purpose of this law was to clarify the status of signet rings. According to the *Ecloga Basilicorum*, when a person bequeaths their ornaments, or jewelry, the

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[6] See, principally, Vikan and Nesbitt (1980: 16–20), Bosselmann-Ruickbie (2011), and Spier (2013: 48–49). Albani (2015) examines five rings with ancient gems that date to the twelfth century and later; her focus is on whether or not the wearers would have understood the iconography.

[7] The question of whether this was an uninterrupted practice from antiquity or a 're-emergence' of a forgotten form is not my concern in this chapter. The paucity of material makes this a difficult question to answer.

[8] Δίδωσιν οὖν αὐταῖς δακτύλιον ἐκ χρυσίου, οὐδὲ τοῦτον εἰς κόσμον, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ ἀποσημαίνεσθαι τὰ οἴκοι φυλακῆς ἄξια διὰ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν τῆς οἰκουρίας; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.11.57.1, translation from Roberts and Donaldson and Coxe (1885: 285).

[9] Εἰ δὲ ἄρα δέοι καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐμπολιτευομένους καὶ ἄλλας τινὰς τῶν κατ' ἀγρὸν διοικουμένους πράξεις, πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ἄνευ γυναικῶν γενομένους ὑπὲρ ἀσφαλείας ἀποσφραγίζεσθαί τινα, δίδωσιν καὶ ἡμῖν εἰς τοῦτο μόνον σημαντῆρα, τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀπορριπτέον δακτυλίους, ἐπεὶ 'κόσμος' κατὰ τὴν γραφὴν 'χρυσοῦς φρονίμῳ παιδεία'; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 3.11.58.2, translation from Roberts and Donaldson and Coxe (1885: 285).

[10] This figure is based on my own search of the British Museum's online catalog as well as the rings published in the two catalogs by Dalton (1901; 1912).

[11] On this topic: Hostetler 2024.

[12] Ὁ σφραγιστήριος δακτύλιος οὐκ ἔστι τῶν κοσμίων; *Basilicorum libri LX* 2.2.71.

[13] Τὸ παρὸν κεφάλαιον τοῦτο λέγει, ὅτι, ὅτε τις λέγει κόσμια ἤτοι τὰ πρὸς καλλωπισμὸν ὄντα καὶ εὐπρέπειαν τῶν ἡμετέρων σωμάτων, οὐ περιλαμβάνει οὗτος ἐν τῷ τῶν κοσμίων ὀνόματι καὶ τὸν σφραγιστήριον δακτύλιον, τουτέστιν ὃν ἔχομεν οὐκ ἐπὶ καλλωπισμῷ καὶ εὐπρεπείᾳ, ἀλλ' εἰς τοῦτο αὐτό, εἰς τὸ σφραγίζειν; *Ecloga Basilicorum* 2.2.71. See also Hostetler (2024: 629).

signet ring should not be included as it had legal and practical functions tied to a specific wearer and was therefore not exclusively an object of personal adornment.

In Byzantium, there were several different ways to produce a sealing. Those in wax were made by rings, cone seals, and bi-valve seals, whereas sealings in lead and gold were produced by boulloteria.[14] A boulloterion is a pair of pliers whose teeth — engraved with the signet design — were clamped onto a blank lead disc to produce a seal impression. While only a few of the fragile wax sealings survive, 17,000 lead sealings are preserved at Dumbarton Oaks.[15] This relative abundance of sealings in lead is a valuable source for the study of Byzantine administration as they regularly include names, titles, and offices.[16] It has been convincingly argued that signet rings, which do not always have specific bureaucratic identifiers, may have been used in private contexts, while boulloteria were used for state functions.[17]

Gary Vikan and John Nesbitt identify the two main ways in which medieval Byzantine signet rings are distinct from their ancient Roman predecessors.[18] The first difference is material. Whereas the Romans were more likely to possess signet rings with intaglio gems on their bezels, the Byzantines preferred to have their sealing devices engraved directly into the metal. This move away from sealing stones can be seen as early as the first century. According to Pliny the Elder, 'many people do not allow any gems in a signet-ring, and seal with the gold itself; this was a fashion invented when Claudius Caesar (r. AD 41–54) was emperor.'[19]



Figure 3. Ring with Marc Antony as Hercules. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 25218. Photo by Giorgio Albano and courtesy of the Ministero della Cultura, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli.

The gradual move away from sealing stones on rings is also evident in the surviving material. Jeffrey Spier cataloged more than 1000 engraved gems that can be dated from the mid-third to the early seventh century — a noticeably sharp decline from the estimated surviving 100,000 engraved gems dating from the era of Augustus to the end of the Severan Dynasty.[20]

The second way in which Byzantine signet rings are distinct from their earlier counterparts is a shift from sealing devices that emphasize images to those that consist only of inscriptions. In his study of domestic collections in Pompeii, Dwyer discusses a signet ring, found in the central peristyle of the Casa del Citarista, that exemplifies the iconographic type of the Roman imperial period (**Figure 3**).[21] The carved onyx, set into

[14] For an overview of these different types of sealing devices, see Vikan and Nesbitt (1980).
[15] Oikonomides 1985: 6–7.
[16] For an overview of lead sealings with bibliography, see Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection (2021).
[17] Vikan and Nesbitt 1980: 25. The case of a certain Theophilos, *strategos* of Kibyrrhaiotai, supports this view. There exists a gold signet ring and two lead sealings that have been convincingly attributed to this military governor. For the lead sealings, see Schlumberger (1884: 261) and Zacos and Veglery (1972: nos. 1658 and 2523); for the ring, see Campagnolo-Pothitou and Cheynet (2016: no. 131, p. 153). For Basil Lekapenos, one of the possible owners of the *parakoimomenos* ring, at least one of his lead sealings is known to us: Washington, DC, Dumbarton Oaks, inv. BZS.1947.2.828, viewed 31 March 2024, <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1947.2.828>. For this attribution, see Oikonomides (1986: p. 73, no. 69).
[18] Vikan and Nesbitt 1980: 18–19. See Vikan and Nesbitt (1992), an unpublished manuscript of a catalog of small finds at the Menil Collection that was made available on Vikan's personal website, viewed on 3 March 2024, <https://independent.academia.edu/GaryVikan>.
[19] Contra vero multi nullas admittunt gemmas auroque ipso signant. id Claudii Caesaris principatu repertum; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 33.6, translation from Rackham (1952: 21).
[20] Spier 2007: 11; cf. Spier 2011 and Platz-Horster 2011: 221. Spier (1993: 43) estimates that as few as 100 datable gems can be attributed to the period 250–600 CE.
[21] Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 25218. Dwyer 1982: p. 98, fig. 165.



Figure 4. Ring of Akakios. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. 57.2104. Photo courtesy of the Walters Art Museum.



Figure 5. Ring of Michael the *mandator*. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. 57.1053. Photo courtesy of the Walters Art Museum.

a gold band, features an image of a nude male figure that has been identified as Marc Antony in the guise of Hercules.[22] The name of Salonos, a famous gem-cutter, is also included in the left field.

In the fourth and fifth centuries, rings inscribed only with personal names began to emerge. These names were usually written as monograms — unique designs that are formed from the letters of a personal name, family name, and/or title. One example is seen on a silver signet ring in the Walters Art Museum, where the Greek letters of the name Akakios (A-K-I-O-Y), rendered in the genitive, are attached to the A at the center (**Figure 4**).[23] The eighth century witnessed a shift from personal monograms to longer invocations, beginning with the phrase Κύριε βοήθει (Lord help) or Θεοτόκε βοήθει (Theotokos help) followed by the wearer's name.[24] If the wearer was someone of status, the name may be followed by a court title and/or occupation.



Figure 6. Ring for an unnamed woman. London, British Museum, inv. 1853,0108.23. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Two rings demonstrate the designs typical of the ninth- and tenth-centuries. The ring of Michael the *mandator*, also at the Walters, is solid gold and features a wide band decorated with niello vine scrolls. Two cruciform monograms on the shoulders together read Θεοτόκε βοήθει (Theotokos help) (**Figure 5**).[25] The oval-shaped bezel, with two projections above the hoop, is engraved with a uniformly cut four-line inscription, enclosed within an engraved-dotted border. The inscription, written in reverse, follows the *boethei* formula described above: +Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δ(ούλῳ) Μιχαὴλ β(ασιλικῷ) μανδάτ(ορι) (Lord help thy servant Michael imperial *mandator*). This gold and personalized ring belonging to an imperial official can be contrasted with one that was mass-produced (**Figure 6**).[26] A ring at the British Museum resembles that of Michael the *mandator* in form and design, but it is made of bronze, and its three-line *boethei* inscription — clumsily executed on the bezel and written in reverse — lacks personalization: +Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθει τῆς φορού(σης) (Lord help the wearer). The feminine form

[22] Hekster 2004: 172, with bibliography.

[23] Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. 57.2104, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/40080/signet-ring-2/>. See also Hostetler 2021.

[24] For the significance of this invocation see Van Den Hoek, et al (2015: 325–29).

[25] Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. 57.1053, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/28054/seal-ring/>. For additional literature, see Bosselmann-Ruickbie (2011: no. 180, p. 306).

[26] London, British Museum, inv. 1853,0108.23, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1853-0108-23>. For additional literature, see Bosselmann-Ruickbie (2011: no. 162, p. 298).



Figure 7. Ring of Basil. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. 57.1581. Photo courtesy of the Walters Art Museum.



Figure 8. Ring for an unnamed man. London, British Museum, inv. AF.245. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

of the final word indicates that this ring was worn by a woman. Her anonymity and choice of bronze contrast sharply with Michael's personalized inscription on his gold ring.

The ring of the *parakoimomenos* follows the inscriptional formula described above but includes a carved emerald on the bezel. I have been able to identify five additional signet rings and one cone seal, dating to the ninth and tenth centuries, that may have originally featured sealing stones as part of their designs. A ring at the Walters most closely resembles that of the *parakoimomenos* (**Figure 7**).[27] Cast in silver and preserving traces of its gilding, it features niello vine scrolls on the band and an oval-shaped Greek inscription, written in reverse, along the circumference of the bezel: +K(ύρι)ε βοήθει τῷ σῷ δούλῳ Βασιλείου, ἀμήν (Lord help thy servant Basil, amen).[28] The inscription surrounds a central cavity, which is now fitted with a second-century carnelian featuring an intaglio image of a biga, a charioteer being pulled by two horses. According to museum records, this carnelian was added to the ring at some point between 1954 and 1979, and therefore cannot be assigned with certainty as original to this ring.[29] While this gem is not my concern, its presence indicates that the ring was designed to accommodate a gem.

The British Museum has two rings dated to the ninth to tenth centuries that may also be included in this group. Both have a similar composition to that of the *parakoimomenos*. One, made of silver, is decorated on the band with an engraved image of a wavy serpent-like shape accompanied by three stars (**Figure 8**).[30] The

[27] Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, inv. 57.1581, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://art.thewalters.org/detail/31627/ring-with-a-greco-roman-cameo/>.

[28] The name is in the genitive while 'thy servant' is in the correct, dative case. A contemporary lead sealing whose inscription is rendered in a similar manner is in the Dumbarton Oaks collection, inv. BZS.1951.31.5.920, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1951.31.5.920/view>.

[29] The ring was part of the bequest of Henry Walters (1848–1931) for the establishment of the museum. It was first published in 1947, when it was included in the catalog for the first major exhibition of Byzantine art in the United States, held at the Walters. In that catalog, the ring is described as being 'set with a blue stone'; Ross 1947: p. 107, no. 517. While the catalog does not include an image of the ring, the Walters preserves an undated black-and-white photograph that shows the ring in profile equipped with a small and ill-fitted stone that is clearly different in shape from the carnelian that it now holds; this may be the blue stone mentioned in the catalog. The only other publication of this ring was by Marvin Chauncey Ross (1954: 171), the first curator of Medieval and Subsequent Decorative Arts (1934–1952), in which he compares the ring to another one of similar style to correctly attribute it to the ninth or tenth century. Ross's brief note includes three images of the ring, each of which show it without a stone. The Walters's records document that it was cleaned in 1979, and in that report, the technician described it as possessing the same red carnelian we know today. The carnelian intaglio was actually part of a 1941 museum purchase that included a collection of ancient gems that were owned by Sarah Wharton Green Walters (1859–1943), Henry Walters' widow. Its accession number is 42.1119. Upon examination of the stone's fit within the ring, it is clear that this carnelian, like the blue stone, is also a poor fit and is thus not original to the ring. To summarize this brief history, the ring held a blue stone when it was first published in 1947. By 1954, that blue stone had been removed and the ring was left without any stone. At some point between 1954 and 1979, the ring was fitted with the carnelian intaglio. The reasons for these alterations, and who made them, are not documented in the Walters records. My thanks to Christine Sciacca, Curator of European Art, 300–1400 CE, and Angie Elliott, Terry Drayman-Weisser Head of Objects Conservation, for providing me with access to the ring and the curatorial files.

[30] London, British Museum, inv. AF.245, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_AF-245>. I



Figure 9. Ring for an unnamed man. London, British Museum, inv. AF.244. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

flat, oval-shaped bezel features a now empty cavity that would have held a sealing stone. Surrounding this space is a *boethei* inscription read clockwise, rather than in reverse: Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθει τὸν ἔχο(ν)τα (Lord help the one who has [this ring]). Our second ring at the British Museum is made of bronze, and features an unidentifiable form incised on its band (**Figure 9**).[31] The oval-shaped bezel, which features a shallow recessed area for a sealing stone, is outlined by a segmented incised border and an inscription, also written in the proper direction: Κ(ύρι)ε βο(ή)θ(ε)ι τῷ φορο(ῦντι) (Lord help the wearer).

Another object, a ninth- or tenth-century cone seal in the Menil Collection, can also be related to these rings (**Figures 10–11**).[32] The eight-sided silver seal includes a suspension ring at the top, allowing for it to be worn as a pendant.[33] The seal matrix includes a central receptacle that once held a sealing stone, surrounded by an inscription, read counter-clockwise:



Figure 10. Cone seal of Leontos. Houston, The Menil Collection, inv. X 490.798. Photo by Caroline Philippone and courtesy of The Menil Collection.



Figure 11. Cone seal of Leontos. Houston, The Menil Collection, inv. X 490.798. Photo by Caroline Philippone and courtesy of The Menil Collection.

have not been able to examine this ring in person. My description is based on that by Dalton (1901: no. 146, p. 24; 1912: no. 63, p. 12), and photographs accessible via the online catalog.

[31] London, British Museum, inv. AF.244, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_AF-244>. I have not been able to examine this ring in person. My description is based on that by Dalton (1901: no. 145, p. 24; 1912: no. 62, p. 12), and photographs accessible via the online catalog.

[32] Houston, Menil Collection, inv. X 490.798. For additional literature, see Vikan and Nesbitt (1980: 22; 1992: no. CS38, pp. 187–88).

[33] Vikan and Nesbitt 1980: 21. The eight-sided form may have served as a protective device for the owner; Maguire and Maguire and Duncan-Flowers 1989: 9.

+K(ύρι)ε βοήθ(ει) τῷ σῷ δ(ούλῳ) Λέω(ν)τος (Lord help thy servant, Leontos).[34]

These four rings and one cone seal all share a common format: a gem — or a space for one — surrounded by a *boethei* inscription incised in the metal.[35] If we widen our focus, we can include two rings with intaglio gems, but without framing inscriptions. One, a large ninth- or tenth-century gold ring at Dumbarton Oaks, is fitted with a first-century Roman amethyst intaglio featuring Thetis carrying the shield of Achilles and riding on the back of a Triton (**Figure 12**).[36] A second ring, now at the British Museum, dates to the tenth century (**Figure 13**).[37] The gold band is embossed with images of vine scrolls inhabited by birds. The bezel is set with a re-used red carnelian, perhaps dating to the sixth century, featuring an intaglio image of an enthroned figure in the orans pose flanked by two crosses.



Figure 12. Ring with Thetis carrying the shield of Achilles. Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, inv. BZ.1953.12.1. Photo © Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC.

In sum, there are seven known sealing implements that have been dated to the ninth and tenth centuries that were originally equipped with sealing stones. The iconography of, and inscriptions on, these objects suggest that the wearers knew of Roman signet rings and styles. I turn now to the why — why was the addition of gems on signet rings still desirable for some wearers?

A Taste for the Antique

The period to which these rings date has traditionally been referred to in scholarship as the 'Macedonian Renaissance,' named for the so-called revival of Classical culture during the nearly two-century reign of the Macedonian Dynasty (867–1056). Whether or not this period could be considered a true renaissance is not relevant here.[38] But what we *can* say is that there



Figure 13. Ring with seated figure. London, British Museum, inv. 1872,0604.313. Photo © The Trustees of the British Museum.

[34] Note the genitive name, but the dative form of 'thy servant.' See note 28.

[35] Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. Froehner.1252, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr/ws/catalogue/app/collection/record/7504> is another ring with a similar design as those described here. Its bezel features an inscription surrounding an empty space that could accommodate a gem. The inscription, written in reverse, reads: +O MANIKAITHC. If this is meant to refer to the name Μανικαΐτης, then the ring likely dates to the Late Byzantine period, when this family name appears in various documents; Trapp 2001: nos. 16632–39.

[36] Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, inv. BZ.1953.12.1, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://museum.doaks.org/objects-1/info/27254>. For additional literature, see Ross and Boyd and Zwirn (2005: no. 112) and Kirin (2005: no. 18, p. 71).

[37] London, British Museum, inv. 1872,0604.313, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1872-0604-313>. For additional literature, see Dalton (1901: no. 44, pp. 7–8; 1912: no. 37, p. 6) and Spier (2007, no. 522, p. 89, with bibliography).

[38] For a formulation of the Macedonian Renaissance, see Weitzmann (1971). More recent assessment and bibliography may be found in



Figure 14. The Grand Camée. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. Camée.264. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

is plenty of literary and material evidence that shows that the Byzantine elite — specifically Constantinopolitan — were conscious of their connections to Greco-Roman art and culture. In literature we see this with the production of new tenth-century manuscripts of Homer, and the publication of the *Greek Anthology* by the tenth-century poet Constantine Kephalas.[39] In art, we can point to the scroll-format manuscript of the mid-tenth-century Joshua Roll, the mythological subject matter on the tenth-century Veroli Casket, and the use of *spolia* at the Church of Panagia Skripou in Orchomenos, Greece (dated 873/4) as just three examples of artists drawing upon ancient Greek and Roman types, iconographies, and materials.[40] Let us take a closer look at gems.

While no one textual source describes the Byzantine emperor's gem collection, surviving pieces strongly suggest that it was extensive and impressive. As noted by Cyril and Marlia Mango, many of the most notable Roman cameos arrived in Europe in the years following the sack of Constantinople by the Latin armies of the Fourth Crusade in 1204.[41] Often we can trace these cameos from one imperial collection to another. One spectacular example is the Gemma Tiberiana, also known as the Grand Camée, the largest cameo to survive from ancient Rome (**Figure 14**).[42] Made for a member of the Julio-Claudian family, it later joined the imperial treasury of Constantinople before becoming part of the royal treasury of Sainte Chapelle after 1204. According to early modern inventory descriptions, the cameo was a piece of Christianized Roman *spolia* for the Byzantines, having served as a centerpiece for a large metal icon frame, or book cover, that included cloisonné enamel medallions of saints, that likely dated to the tenth century.[43] We also have other gems which indicate Constantinopolitan provenance via their preserved inscriptions. Those carved with portraits of emperors Augustus (r. 27 BC – AD 14), Caracalla (r. 192–217), and Honorios (r. 393–423) with Maria are each inscribed with Greek words, whose letterforms can be dated to the ninth and tenth centuries.[44] The agate cameo of Augustus, for example, bears the inscription, ἐκ τῶν ἁγίων μ' (from the holy forty), associating him as one of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (**Figure 15**).[45] Putting aside any re-interpretation of the imperial image that is activated by this inscription, we can see that this Byzantine alteration proves that this gem and the others like it were folded into the visual and material culture of the Constantinopolitan elite in ways that were distinctly meaningful to them.[46]

Hanson (2010) and Bollók (2016). For the Byzantine reception of antiquity, broadly, see Chatterjee 2021.

[39] Venetus A (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. Z. 454 [=822]), one of the best copies of the *Iliad*, was produced in tenth-century Constantinople; Dué 2009. On the *Greek Anthology*, see Cameron 1993.

[40] Joshua Roll: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. gr. 431. pt. B, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pal.gr.431.pt.B>. Veroli Casket: London, Victoria & Albert Museum, inv. 216-1865, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O70463/veroli-casket-casket-unknown/>. Church of Panagia Skripou: Papalexandrou 2003.

[41] Mango and Mango 1993: 59. It has been suggested that the Tazza Farnese (Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. 27611), a Hellenistic or Roman sardonyx agate bowl, whose iconography Dwyer (1992) expertly analyzed, may have been part of the imperial treasury of Constantinople until it was looted in 1204; Belozerskaya 2012: 47–70.

[42] Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. Camée.264, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr/ws/catalogue/app/collection/record/453>.

[43] For a reconstruction, see Mango and Mango (1993: p. 59, fig. 4.11).

[44] The Byzantine inscription on the Caracalla intaglio in Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. 58.2101, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr/ws/catalogue/app/collection/record/19583> identifies the emperor as ὁ [ἅγιος] Πέτρος (St. Peter), likely due to the resemblance of this image to those of the apostle. The inscriptions on the Rothschild cameo, depicting Honorios and Maria, identify them as ὁ ἅ(γιος) Σέργιος (St. Sergios) and ὁ ἅ(γιος) Βάκχος (St. Bakchos). See Mango and Mango 1993: 58–62.

[45] Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. Camée.233, viewed 3 March 2024, <https://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr/ws/catalogue/app/collection/record/462>.

[46] A similar type of inscriptional engagement can be seen with the *Ilias Picta*, a fifth- or sixth-century copy of the *Iliad* in Milan (Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Cod. F. 205 Inf.). The manuscript's illuminations were



Figure 15. Cameo of Augustus. Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. Camée.233. Photo courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

One object that shows the Byzantines seeing, and being inspired by, ancient gems is the tenth- or eleventh-century painted glass bowl in the Treasury of San Marco (**Figure 16**).[47] Made of a dark purple glass, and mounted with silver-gilt handles decorated with glass gem cabochons, the bowl is painted and gilded with a pseudo-Kufic inscription on the inner rim and classicizing figures enclosed in large and small roundels on the body.[48] It has been argued that these figures in monochromatic modeling with subtle highlights suggest that these roundels were based on compositions found on Hellenistic and Roman gems — specifically, cameos — in the imperial collection.[49] Made in Constantinople, this bowl bears witness to the ancient art collections available to the elite and the affinity for Byzantine-produced goods that drew inspiration from the past.

One of the most famous seal rings known from antiquity, about which Basil himself could have known, was that of Polykrates (r. *c.* 540–22 BC), the tyrant of Samos.[50] According to Herodotus, Polykrates's ring was gold and set with an emerald, or *smaragdos* (σμάραγδος), carved by the Samian artist Theodoros, son of Telekles. Herodotus says that the tyrant enjoyed many great successes. Fearing that his fortune would result in the gods becoming jealous and lead to an inevitable downfall, his ally, the Egyptian Pharaoh Amasis II (r. 570–26 BC), asked him to give up one of his most treasured possessions so as to avert greater loss. Polykrates chose his signet ring and threw it into the sea. Several days later, a fisherman gave, as an offering to Polykrates, his catch of the day. When the servants cut it open to prepare it for dinner, they found their master's ring inside. Herodotus says that Polykrates interpreted the miraculous recovery of the ring as a good omen from the gods, though his downfall would soon follow.[51]

This ring no longer exists, but it was known to the Byzantines. In addition to middle and late Byzantine authors copying and commenting upon Herodotus's *History*, the episode of Polykrates's ring, specifically, was documented in the *Souda*, a widely read tenth-century lexicon.[52] The short entry on *smaragdos* reads:

> It is a kind of valuable stone. The surest proof of the piety of Polykrates the Samian [was] the discovery of the emerald that had been thrown into the sea, and the capture of the fish that had swallowed this.[53]

The *Souda* reveals that for the Byzantines, Polykrates's ring was the primary point of reference to the gem known as *smaragdos*. The episode was positively interpreted as a sign of the tyrant's great piety, presumably because he discarded a valuable personal possession in order to appease the gods. Basil's gold ring, also set with an emerald stone, resembles the overall material composition of that worn by Polykrates. Could he have designed his ring with this episode in mind as a nod to this famous ring worn by a ruler from antiquity?

With these examples, we can better see the ways in which Basil the *parakoimomenos*'s high-ranking, unique position situated him in the Byzantine court culture that had a demonstrable visual and material

provided with scholia that can be dated by paleography to as early as the ninth or tenth centuries; De Wit 1932.

47 Venice, Tesoro di San Marco, inv. no. 83, viewed 31 March 2024, <http://www.meravigliedivenezia.it/en/virtual-objects/TSM_068.html>.

48 For a discussion of the relationship between the classicizing imagery and the pseudo-Kufic script, see Walker (2008), who proposes an eleventh- or twelfth-century date for the bowl.

49 Cutler 1974; Mango and Mango 1993: 58.

50 Herodotus, *History* 3.40.1–43.2.

51 Van der Veen 1993.

52 Rapp 2008; Kaldellis 2012.

53 Ἔστι δὲ εἶδος λίθου πολυτίμου. ἔλεγχος δὲ βεβαιότατος τῆς θεοσεβείας Πολυκράτους τοῦ Σαμίου ἡ τῆς σμαράγδου τῆς ἐμβληθείσης εἰς τὸ πέλαγος εὕρεσις, καὶ θηραθεὶς ὁ ἰχθὺς ὁ ταύτην καταπιών; *Souda*, sigma 729, translation from Shipley (2009).



Figure 16. Mythological Bowl. Venice, Tesoro di San Marco, inv. no. 83. Photo © courtesy of the Procuratoria di San Marco.

engagement with their Greek and Roman pasts.[54] As *parakoimomenos*, Basil had access to the imperial art collections, and to the imperial artists who were inspired by these older forms. What better way to flaunt these connections and to showcase his status than by creating a unique signet ring that resembled the type of ring worn eight centuries before?

Imperial Associations

Sealing stones on rings also signaled a wearer's association with the emperor.[55] Textual and visual sources provide ample evidence for the ways in which colorful gems frame the presentation of the imperial body. The Byzantine archetype for this practice was Constantine I (r. 306–37). He adopted the diadem, an official piece of imperial regalia that was first worn by Alexander the Great.[56] This headpiece began as a strip of cloth tied around the head. Constantine transformed this garment into one that was, for the first time, made of gold, precious stones, and pearls (**Figure 17**).[57]



Figure 17. Solidus of Constantine I (obverse). Washington, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, inv. BZC.1957.4.24. Photo © Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC.

[54] For Basil Lekapenos's suggested role in the Macedonian Renaissance, see Belting (1982: 52–57).
[55] Avgoloupi 2013; Buettner 2022.
[56] Canepa 2009: 198–99.
[57] According to the sixth-century chronicler John Malalas (*Chronographia* 13.8.10–13), Constantine was the first Roman emperor

Imperial vestments during this period also featured luxurious and radiant materials. Constantine's biographer, Eusebios of Caesarea, writes that when the emperor arrived at the assembly of bishops at the First Council of Nicaea in 325, Constantine

> walked along between them, like some heavenly angel of God, his bright mantle shedding lustre like beams of light, shining with the fiery radiance of a purple robe, and decorated with the dazzling brilliance of gold and precious stones. Such was his physical appearance.[58]

Eusebios describes Constantine's charismatic affect — one of divinely granted brilliance articulated by the variegated and lustrous materials and colors. Gems were instrumental in creating this heavenly public presentation.

The imperial vestments became increasingly encrusted with gold and gems in the centuries that followed.[59] They reached new heights — at least in art — during the Macedonian Dynasty, as seen in the early tenth-century mosaic of Alexander (r. 912–13) in the north gallery of Hagia Sophia (**Figure 18**).[60] In this idealized representation, the emperor is laden in pearls and gems of various colors attached to the crown, hanging as pendants, or *prependoulia*, beside his face, encrusting his robes and his slippers, and covering the *loros*. This long gemmed scarf that wraps the emperor's shoulder and waist evolved from the late antique *trabea triumphalis* and formed part of the official images of the emperor beginning in the ninth century.[61]

The close association between jewels and Macedonian regalia is made explicit in a depiction of Alexander's brother and predecessor, Leo VI (r. 886–912), on an ivory carving now in Berlin (**Figure 19**).[62] Variously identified as a comb or the top of a scepter, this three-dimensionally carved object features half-length figures within an architectural setting, meant to represent the interior of Hagia Sophia. On one side, Leo is shown next to Mary, who turns toward the emperor,



Figure 18. Mosaic of Alexander. Istanbul, Ayasofya-i Kebir Cami-i Şerifi (Hagia Sophia). Photo by Ernest Hawkins, Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks fieldwork records and papers, and courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, DC.

and reaches out with her right hand. She holds a pearl between her index finger and thumb, to insert into his crown.[63] This carving underscores the importance of gems in imperial regalia, and their role in conveying the wearer's pious legitimacy.

Certain gems and purple silks were restricted to imperial use.[64] According to a law issued by Leo I (r. 457–74), and preserved in the *Codex of Justinian*, it was forbidden that a private individual make or wear anything from gold or gems that were reserved for imperial dress, decoration, and other official uses. The wearing of finger-rings was the one exception offered in this law.[65] Control of gems associated with the emperor thus allowed for their diplomatic use: as a way to cultivate exclusive alliances, and to signify

to wear a diadem adorned with pearls and precious stones.

[58] Αὐτὸς δὴ λοιπὸν διέβαινε μέσος οἷα θεοῦ τις οὐράνιος ἄγγελος, λαμπρὰν μὲν ὥσπερ φωτὸς μαρμαρυγαῖς ἐξαστράπτων περιβολήν, ἁλουργίδος δὲ πυρωποῖς καταλαμπόμενος ἀκτῖσι, χρυσοῦ τε καὶ λίθων πολυτελῶν διαυγέσι φέγγεσι κοσμούμενος; Eusebios of Caesarea, *Life of Constantine* III.10.3, translation from Cameron and Hall (1999: 125).

[59] Roberts 1989: 66–121. See Parani (2023) for discussion of imperial dress in the twelfth century.

[60] Underwood and Hawkins 1961.

[61] Parani 2003: 18–20.

[62] Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. No. 2006, viewed 3 April 2024, <https://recherche.smb.museum/detail/1415193/>.

[63] Arnulf 1990.

[64] Bosselmann-Ruikbie 2017: 295–96.

[65] *Codex of Justinian* 11.XII.1.



Figure 19. Ivory of Leo VI. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. No. 2006. Photo courtesy of Marlise G. Brown.

the receiver's association with the emperor. Such a use of gems is described in a reception hosted by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (r. 945–59) for the caliph's ambassadors from Tarsos in the Magnaura Hall in the Great Palace of Constantinople in 946.[66] The *Book of Ceremonies*, the contemporary source that describes this event, says that one of Constantine's officials was ordered to wear a unique torque encrusted with pearls and precious stones. The text explains the significance of this piece of jewelry:

> It is not normal form for a non-eunuch to put on such a torque with either pearls or even precious stones, but they were ordered by the Christ-loving ruler Constantine to put these on for the purpose of display and only then.[67]

This gemmed torque announced the official's place in the world ruled by the Byzantine emperor — a message

[66] For analysis of this reception, see Jones 2019.

[67] Οὐκ ἔστιν δὲ τύπος βαρβάτον περιβάλλεσθαι τοιοῦτον μανιάκιον ἢ μετὰ μαργαριτῶν ἢ καὶ λίθων τιμίων, ἀλλὰ δι' ἔνδειξιν καὶ μόνον τότε ὡρίσθησαν παρὰ Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ φιλοχρίστου δεσπότου τοῦ ταῦτα περιβάλλεσθαι; Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, *Book of Ceremonies* 2.15.359–62, translation from Moffatt and Tall (2012: 584).

that was directed to both the Byzantine official wearing it as well as the caliph's ambassadors, who were meeting with the emperor.

In another account, recorded in the eleventh-century *Synopsis of Histories* of John Skylitzes, Theophilos (r. 829–42) used precious stones and gemmed objects to identify his own ambassadors traveling to a foreign court, in this case that of the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Maʾmūn (r. 813–33). In 829, soon after his accession to the throne, the emperor directed John the *synkellos*, one of his trusted advisors, to meet with the caliph. John took with him many gifts that were

> the wonder of the Roman empire and the astonishment of other people. ...For if an ambassador scattered gold at will, as though it were sand, he who sent him would so much the more gain the admiration which he deserved. In addition to this, the emperor also gave him two golden vessels set about with precious stones, commonly called *cherniboxestra*. In this way he made every effort to promote and enhance his ambassador.[68]

Here, Skylitzes makes clear the emperor's intent to stun. The precious stones served in an essential role in establishing that John the *skynkellos* was sent by, and speaks for, the emperor in his diplomatic mission.

The images and texts discussed above reveal the contexts in which gems were utilized by the emperor to cultivate exclusive relationships with those whom he favored. The ring of Basil the *parakoimomenos* speaks to this expression of imperial kinship. The *parakoimomenos* was the highest-ranking eunuch; he was the one who 'slept beside' the emperor's bedchamber.[69] Basil's inclusion of a gem on his signet ring publicly displays his knowledge of ancient Roman prototypes and communicates his close association with the imperial office.

I argue that he doubles-down on the idea of imperial kinship in two ways: his choice of image engraved on the emerald and the wording of the inscription. Solitary images of Christ are rare in seals. According to John Cotsonis, images of Christ are featured on only 8% of Byzantine lead seals that bear religious figural imagery, and of these, approximately three-quarters are associated with emperors.[70] This evidence indicates that Basil utilized an iconography that was generally perceived as a privilege of the imperial office. As for the inscription, Basil identifying himself only as the *parakoimomenos* would have been enough to convey his unique position in the court; but he goes one step further by naming himself the παρακοιμωμένῳ τοῦ δεσπότου (*parakoimomenos* of the emperor). The appended phrase, 'of the emperor,' is not typically used with the title of *parakoimomenos*. To my knowledge, it is inscribed on only one other object from this period: a lead sealing that belonged to Basil Lekapenos, one of the possible owners of this ring.[71] This rare styling of the *parakoimomenos* and his choice to use Christ's image as his signet emphasize Basil's privileged role in relationship to the emperor and thus his singular status within the court.

The Properties of Stones

Sealing stones also had long been associated with medical properties.[72] Greek and Latin authors, including Theophrastos (*c.* 372– *c.* 287 BC) and Pliny, describe their source locations, mining, color varieties, and associated healing powers.[73] Pliny is a particularly valuable source because of the many authors that he also cites for his information. In his discussion of amber, for example, he writes:

> Amber is found to have some use in pharmacy, although it is not for this reason that women like it. It is of benefit to babies when it is attached to them as an amulet. Callistratus says that it is good also for people of any age as a remedy for attacks of wild distraction and for strangury, both taken in liquid and worn as an amulet.[74]

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[68] Οἷς θαυμάζεται βασιλεία Ῥωμαίων καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀλλοεθνῶν γένος ἐκπλήσσεται. ...εἰ γὰρ ἄμμου δίκην ὁ ἀποσταλεὶς τὸ χρυσίον ἔχει σκεδάζειν, ὡς βούλεται, πολλῷ δήπουθεν μᾶλλον ὁ ἀποστείλας θαυμάζεσθαι ἄξιος. δέδωκε δὲ καὶ σκεύη πρὸς τούτοις δύο ἐκ χρυσοῦ τε καὶ λίθων πολυτελῶν κατεσκευασμένα, ἅπερ ἡ κοινολεξία καλεῖ χερνιβόξεστα, πάντοθεν ἐξαίρων τὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ κοσμῶν πρεσβευτήν; John Skylitzes, *Synopsis of Histories* 56.92–93, 56.1–5, translation from Wortley (2010: 58).

[69] Liddell and Scott and Jones 1996: 1313.

[70] Cotsonis 2013: 551.

[71] [Κ(ύρι)]ε βοήθει Βασιλ[είῳ ἐ]ν[δοξο]τάτῳ προέδρῳ τῆς συγκλήτου / [(καὶ) πα]ρακοιμ[ω]μέν(ῳ) τοῦ φιλοχρ(ίστου) δεσπότου (Lord, help Basil, most illustrious *proedros* of the Senate and *parakoimomenos* of the Christ-loving emperor); Washington, DC, Dumbarton Oaks, inv. BZS.1947.2.828, viewed 31 March 2024, <https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1947.2.828>. For this attribution, see Oikonomides (1986: p. 73, no. 69). Kurysheva (2013: 184) argues that the ring belonged to Basil Lekapenos due to the similarities in phrasing with this seal.

[72] The foundational study on magical amulets and gems is Bonner (1950).

[73] For an overview of sources see Schönauer (1996: 61–67) and Avgoloupi (2013: 15–43).

[74] Usus tamen aliquis sucinorum invenitur in medicina, sed non ob hoc feminis placent. infantibus adalligari amuleti ratione prodest. callistratus prodesse etiam cuicumque aetati contra lymphationes tradit et urinae difficultatibus potum adalligatumque; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 37.12, translation from Eichholz (1962: 203).

Late antique intellectuals viewed ancient lapidary knowledge through a Christian lens.[75] The commentary of Epiphanios of Salamis (*c.* 315–403) details the twelve different kinds of stones that adorned the breastplate of the high priest Aaron as described in Exodus 28:15–30.[76] Similarly, Andrew of Caesarea (563–614) provides a commentary on the stones that adorned the walls of the Heavenly Jerusalem as described in Revelation 21:15–21.[77]

Knowledge of these accumulated legends and properties of stones continued into the Byzantine era, as evident in the writings of the court intellectual, Michael Psellos (1018 – after 1081). In a short treatise, Psellos describes the curative powers of stones in a way similar to that of his ancient sources.[78] Of chrysoprasos, he writes: 'When worn around the wrists, it promotes keen vision, cures dyspeptic stomachs, and eases flatulence.'[79] As with Pliny and his description of the properties of amber, Psellos describes the efficacious power of chrysoprasos when worn as a piece of jewelry.

We do not know if any single piece of Byzantine jewelry was made with any of this lapidary knowledge in mind. As Antje Bosselmann-Ruickbie points out, the paucity of inscribed Byzantine gems makes it difficult to find examples that exhibit theoretical knowledge resulting in the use of a particular stone.[80] She also notes the inherent challenges in aligning ancient and medieval terminology to our own established nomenclature of gems.[81] She suggests that Byzantine knowledge of the stone's medical and magical properties is revealed through coordination of materiality and iconography, a concept known as 'sympathetic magic,' where 'like produces like.'[82]

She offers as an example a sixth- to seventh-century hematite amulet at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (**Figure 20**).[83] It is carved on both sides with images and inscriptions that relate to the woman with the issue of blood, as described in the gospels of Mark and Luke. One side features the woman kneeling at the feet of



Figure 20. Hematite amulet with the woman with the issue of blood. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 17.190.491. Photo courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Christ, in hopes that she can simply touch his garment, knowing that through this brief contact she will be healed. On the other side, the woman is shown again, in the orans pose, bearing witness to her miraculous cure. The inscriptions, which paraphrase Mark 5:25–34, explain the scenes:

> And the woman being in a state of flowing of blood came, having suffered and having spent much she benefited nothing, but rather, had known the source of her flow of blood was dried up in the name of her faith.[84]

Hematite was an appropriate material to pair with this iconography. All of the ancient authors that discuss hematite mention its blood-like appearance, which explains the source of its name: αἱματίτης

[75] Adams 2015: 154. On Byzantium's relationship to art and magic, see Walker (2015) and Tuerk-Stonberg (2021).
[76] Epiphanios, *De XII gemmis*.
[77] Andrew of Caesarea, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*.
[78] Baldwin 1995: 401–04.
[79] Οὗτος περὶ τοὺς καρποὺς φορούμενος παρέχει ὀξυδορκίαν, στομάχους τε ἰᾶται καρδιαλγοῦντας καὶ λύει ἐμπνευματώσεις; Michael Psellos, *On the Properties of Stones* 34.95–96, translation from Baldwin (1995: 399).
[80] Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2017: 296.
[81] Holmes 1934.
[82] Bosselmann-Ruickbie 2017: 300. See also Mastrocinque 2011.
[83] New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. 17.190.491, viewed on 3 March 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464456>.
[84] For the transcription and translation of the inscription, see Tuerk (1999: 25).

(blood-like).[85] Theophrastos says that 'in accordance with its name [it] seems to be made of blood that has become firm and dry.'[86] Psellos writes that hematite 'is so called because when steeped in water it gives off the color of blood.'[87] Pliny also comments on its blood-like appearance, and adds, among other cures, that 'it is extraordinarily good for bloodshot eyes, and checks excessive menstruation if it is taken as a draught.'[88] The Met hematite amulet thus suggests Byzantine knowledge of this stone's efficacious power to aid in bleeding disorders as it marries iconography, inscriptions, material, and the color of stone in order to bring about a specific cure for the wearer.

Of the rings in our group, only three preserve their stones. The re-used light purple gem on the Dumbarton Oaks ring has been identified as *amethyst*, a name (ἀμέθυστος, not drunken) that reveals its function to cure or prevent one's inebriation (**Figure 12**).[89] It is unclear whether the Byzantine wearer of this ring chose the stone for its Classical subject matter, its curative powers, or both. Garnet, the re-used gem on the ring in the British Museum, was praised by various writers for its bright red color and its seemingly internal source of light (**Figure 13**). As shown by Noël Adams, garnet, or *anthrax* (ἄνθραξ), had a variety of connotations in the Christian era, including as a symbol of Christ.[90] This may help explain the meaning of the unknown seated figure on the bezel. Enthroned with hands upraised and flanked by two crosses, the figure could be interpreted as a representation of Christ or a believer radiating with the light of Christ through the stone.

Emerald, or *smaragdos* (σμάραγδος), is the gem on the ring of Basil the *parakoimomenos*.[91] Ancient and medieval writers describe the stone's green color, and most praise its visual effects. Theophrastos, for example, says that *smaragdos* has the power to make water appear green when submerged.[92] Pliny observes that, from a distance, a *smaragdos* can appear larger than it actually is because of its ability to radiate color.[93] Epiphanios praises *smaragdos* for its mirror-like surface that had the power to reveal the future.[94]

These authors also document the healing properties of *smaragdos*. Both Theophrastos and Pliny claim that the green color was therapeutic to the eyes; if someone became fatigued from looking at an object, they could stare at the green gem and have their vision restored.[95] For this reason, Theophrastos explains, *smaragdos* was a popular choice of stone for personal seals, presumably because one could always expect to have their signet ring with them for a convenient, accessible form of vision therapy.[96] Psellos highlights other medicinal uses of *smaragdos*; he says that when mixed with water, it can treat elephantiasis and hemorrhages.[97]

These accounts confirm that color was critical to the properties of stones. As shown by Christel Meier, it was the primary quality by which stones were identified and discussed in the medieval era.[98] The relationship between color and the function of gems on rings, specifically, is suggested by the most widely read Byzantine book on the interpretation of dreams, the *Oneirokritikon* of Achmet Ben Sirin. Dated to the ninth or tenth century, this pseudonymous work compiles dream interpretations from various sources, some ancient, some medieval, and some fabricated.[99] One dream interpretation, attributed to an Indian source, references the colors of stones on rings as a way to predict the fates of the wearers:

> If someone dreams that he got a ring containing a red gem, he will have more brilliant wealth and joy in accordance with the gem's brightness; if the gem was green, he will have power and good faith in accordance with the purity of the gem's color; if gold colored, he will have honor and a sickly and sorrowful wife; if a blue gem with pearls, he will have wealth but less honor.[100]

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[85] Liddell and Scott and Jones 1996: 38.

[86] Καὶ κατὰ τοὔνομα ὡς αἵματος ξηροῦ πεπηγότος; Theophrastos, *On Stones* 37, translation from Caley and Richards (1956: 53).

[87] Ὀνομάζεται δὲ οὕτως ὅτι βρεχόμενος ὕδατι αἱματώδη χροιὰν ἀφίησιν; Michael Psellos, *On the Properties of Stones* 34.16–17, translation from Baldwin (1995: 397).

[88] Oculis cruore suffusis mire convenit. sistit profluvia mulierum potus; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 36.37, translation from Eichholz (1962: 117).

[89] Liddell and Scott and Jones 1996: 79. Michael Psellos, *On the Properties of Stones* 34.18–20.

[90] Adams 2015: 157.

[91] *Smaragdos* (σμάραγδος) is the ancient term that encompassed a wide variety of green stones, including emerald; see Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 37.17.

[92] Theophrastos, *On Stones* 23

[93] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 37.16.

[94] Epiphanios, *De XII gemmis* 1.3.14–16. Cf. Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 37.16), who claims that Nero used to watch gladiatorial games while looking into a *smaragdos*; see also Woods 2006.

[95] Theophrastos, *On Stones* 24; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 37.16.

[96] Theophrastos, *On Stones* 24.

[97] Michael Psellos, *On the Properties of Stones* 34.88–90.

[98] Meier 1977: 142.

[99] Mavroudi 2002: 5

[100] Εἰ δὲ ἴδῃ, ὅτι ἔλαβε δακτύλιον ἔχοντα λίθον ῥούσιον, εὑρήσει ἐξουσίαν λαμπροτέραν καὶ χαρὰν κατὰ τὴν λάμψιν αὐτοῦ· εἰ δέ ἐστιν πράσινος ὁ λίθος, εὑρήσει ἐξουσίαν καὶ πίστιν ἀγαθὴν κατὰ τὴν καθαρότητα τοῦ λίθου· εἰ δὲ χρυσίζων ἐστὶν ὁ λίθος, νοσώδη καὶ θλιβερὰν γυναῖκα καὶ ἀξίαν ἕξει· εἰ δέ ἐστι βένετος ὁ λίθος σὺν μαργαρίταις, εὑρήσει πλοῦτον καὶ ἀξίαν ἐλάσσονα; Achmet Ben Sirin, *Oneirokritikon* 257, translation from Oberhelman (1991: 226).

In this context we learn nothing about the types of stones that were used for these rings; this had no bearing on the interpretation of the dream. Instead, Achmet focuses only on the stone's color and how that would reveal the wearer's fortune. The *parakoimomenos* ring is adorned with a green stone, which, according to the dream, was an indicator that the wearer would have power and good faith. Maria Mavroudi notes that there are numerous references to the color green in the *Oneirokritikon*, and in all instances it serves as a symbol of strong faith.[101] The choice to depict Christ on a green stone may then reflect the *parakoimomenos*'s desire to manifest, strengthen, and advertise his own faith.[102] Basil's potential knowledge of the legend of Polykrates's ring, and the tyrant's demonstration of piety — according to the *Souda* — would have only reinforced this aspiration.

Conclusion

The signet ring of Basil the *parakoimomenos* is a remarkable object — not just because of who wore it, but also for why it looks the way it does. Basil's position within the inner circle of the court gave him access to the imperial art collections that included some impressive Roman objects, especially gems, that would have influenced his ring design. The style was particularly advantageous for the *parakoimomenos*, as it allowed him to use the stone as a signifier of his privileged, unique connection to the emperor. The medical and magical properties of stones, the knowledge of which was handed down from Greek and Roman sources, was continued in the Byzantine era, and this too could have influenced the development of his signet ring. Basil tied together these various Roman visual and material traditions in order to create a new ring design for his time that conveyed his personal desires and elite status.

It should be acknowledged that not all of the rings and cone seal that are related to the *parakoimomenos*'s ring came from the same cultural milieu. The *parakoimomenos* was part of the elite that could have driven the tastes of those outside the court. The two related anonymous rings at the British Museum were made of less expensive materials and lack personalization, suggesting a market for mass-produced, affordable rings that derive from this developing style (**Figures 8–9**).[103] An interest in rings fitted with sealing stones appears to have diminished in the eleventh century, only to re-emerge among a few examples in the thirteenth century as ring designs of western Europe exerted greater influence on those produced in Byzantium.[104] The ninth and tenth centuries were a time of heightened engagement with the Greco-Roman past. The signet rings discussed in this chapter offer us a glimpse into the ways in which the Byzantines looked at older Roman forms in order to create a new style that suited the time. And so despite the relatively small compass of its text and imagery, the ring of Basil the *parakoimomenos* bears witness to the Byzantine world, its wider culture, and the social practices that attended it.

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[101] Mavroudi 2002: 337–40.

[102] Green was also symbolic of Christ's Passion; see James (1996: 105).

[103] There are also other rings that resemble the sealing device of Basil's ring, but are engraved entirely in the metal and do not feature a sealing stone. One ninth-century ring recently discovered off the southern coast of Italy and one tenth- or eleventh-century ring in Paris each feature a bust-length image of Christ incised in metal and surrounded by a *boethei* inscription naming the respective wearers also incised in metal. For the first ring, see Arthur (2020); for the second ring, see Bosselmann-Ruickbie (2011: no. 181, p. 307); and Paris, Cabinet des Médailles, inv. Schlumberger.127, viewed 26 July 2024, <https://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr/ws/catalogue/app/collection/record/24207>.

[104] Spier 2013: 48–49; Albani 2015.

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The First Bourbon Publication of the Finds from Herculaneum and the Biography of a Long-lost Marble Satyr*

Carol C. Mattusch

Background, Discoveries

In 1734, the Spanish Bourbons peacefully took over Southern Italy and Sicily from the Austrian Hapsburgs; the first Bourbon king was Charles VII (r. 1734–59), the 22-year-old son of Philip V of Spain and Elisabeth Farnese of Parma. The immense Farnese collections of books, Roman sculptures, and paintings that had been collected since the Renaissance came to Charles VII from his mother. During the twenty-five years of his reign in Naples, Charles transformed the city into one of the most magnificent capitals of Europe, building several palaces, an opera house, and a gigantic poorhouse, its façade 354 meters (1161 feet) in length. He founded an Academy of Fine Arts, opened factories producing furniture, tapestries, porcelain, and other luxury arts; he instituted lavish royal festivals, and he circulated official newsletters about his court's activities.[1] His archaeological excavations at Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabia were unparalleled, adding immeasurably to what soon became one of the largest and certainly the most diverse collection of antiquities in 18th-century Europe.

In 1738, 13-year-old Maria Amalia (1724–60), daughter of Augustus III of Poland (1696–1763), married Charles by proxy in Dresden, with her 15-year-old brother Friederich Christian (1722–63), future Elector of Saxony, standing in for Charles. Brother and sister then departed for Naples. 1738 was also the year in which Charles appointed the Spanish military engineer Roque Joaquin de Alcubierre (*c.* 1702–80) first to survey the royal property at Portici for the construction of a palace, and then, as a result of extraordinarily promising finds, to direct an official excavation there.[2] From the bottoms of vertical shafts seventy or more feet in depth, tunnels (*cunicoli*) were dug outwards through solidified pyroclastic flow from earlier eruptions of Mt. Vesuvius. In the very first year of royal excavations, they found an inscription identifying the building they were exploring as the theater for the deeply buried ancient city of Herculaneum. In his diary, the first record of the finds, Alcubierre named a 'round temple,' a 'Basilica,' and private houses between the two public structures.[3] The theater yielded large-scale bronze and marble sculptures; and the interior walls of the 'Basilica' were adorned with very large frescoes of mythological subjects. In the area between the two large civic buildings, workers unearthed hundreds of artifacts relating to domestic life, from frescoes to bronze lamps and statuettes to marble garden décor. One of the largest of these statuettes is the figure of a bearded man (**Figures 1–4**) that forms the focus of this study.

The unprecedented finds of antiquities far beneath Portici and adjacent Resina significantly enhanced King Charles VII's international standing and his personal wealth. Charles claimed all the finds, and he quickly recognized the political and cultural value of publishing and exhibiting his collection. In 1738, construction had already begun on a summer palace at Portici, which would soon house the growing royal collections. The scholar Marcello Venuti (1700–55) of Cortona was attracted to Naples by all the activity there, and after he arrived, he was given the responsibility for 'ordering and disposing the copious Library, and celebrated Museum (known thro' all Europe, by the Name of the Farnesian Museum,) in the King's Palace.'[4] Venuti served from 1738 until 1740 as the first director of the Bourbon Museum, part of the palace in Portici, during which time he superintended the excavations in Herculaneum. He wrote that the King 'ordered that they [the finds] be published with engravings, so as to show their luster and to aid in the study of antiquity, so highly esteemed in this age, blessed by such

* I admit to having consulted Gene Dwyer himself, on the sly. I owe additional thanks to A. A. Donohue, Kenneth Lapatin, Christopher Parslow, to Kordelia Knoll in the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, to Andrea Milanese, Marialucia Giacco, and Maria Pizza in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, to the editors Sinclair Bell and Brad Hostetler, and especially to Richard S. Mason. All translations are mine.

1 See Rossen and Caroselli 1981; Moore 2013: 91–93.

2 For Alcubierre's background and for his role over the course of the excavations, see Parslow 1995: 19–44.

3 The 'round temple' was recognized by Marcello Venuti as the theater, of which Alcubierre drew a plan between 1738 and 1747. Thanks to Eric Moormann for this correction.

4 Venuti 1750: Part 1, 51.

illustrious and frequent discoveries.'[5] Montealegre and later Prime Minister Bernardo Tanucci did not allow outside publications of the antiquities, and he held the authority to grant permits to view the finds. The antiquities in the palace at Portici quickly became as great an attraction for visitors to the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily as were the frequent eruptions of Mt. Vesuvius. By 1759, when Charles was recalled to Madrid to serve as Charles III of Spain, Naples was one of the most sought-after destinations in Europe.

Publication

The first official publication of the Spanish Bourbon collection of antiquities found on the Bay of Naples was made by Giuseppe Gioacchino di Montealegre, Secretary of State from 1738 to 1746.[6] *Disegni intagliati in rame di pitture antiche ritrovate nelle scavazioni di Resina* ('Copper engravings of the ancient paintings discovered in the excavations of Resina')[7] consists of an unsigned ten-page text with 90 numbered entries and plates illustrating 95 antiquities from Herculaneum. Most of them are small, and all but one fresco seem to be from domestic contexts.[8] The over-life-size bronzes and marbles from the theater and the large painted scenes from the 'Basilica' were also found in the early years, but were not included in the *Disegni*: they must not yet have been fully restored in preparation for publication and eventual exhibition.

The king's printer, Francesco Ricciardi, prepared the book, a large folio volume (H. 47–48 cm) with a gold-bordered red Moroccan leather cover on which the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily is stamped. The coat of arms also appears on the title page and at the end of the volume.[9] A publication date of 1746 is printed on the title page.

Only three bound copies of the book are known today: one, as would be expected, is in the Royal Library in Madrid, Charles's capital from 1759 until his death in 1788; the second and third copies are in the National Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, but they were not acquired from the original owners, who are so far unidentified.[10] Forty individual prints of the plates are in Dresden, the ancestral home of Queen Maria Amalia, Charles VII's wife.[11] They are unbound and unnumbered, and some bear brief captions indicating that they were found 'sous terre à Portici.' Were the images sent to Friederich Christian as a memento of his months-long stay in Campania with his sister after her marriage? Finds from the excavations were not sent to Dresden.[12]

Curiously, the title of the bound copies gives the excavation site as 'Resina,' although the name of the ancient city of Herculaneum that lay beneath the modern town had been learned in 1738. Three access-shafts, however, were designated in the early records with their modern names of Resina, Portici, or the Vico di Mare: those place-names are also used in the eight volumes of the *Antichità di Ercolano*, published between 1757 and 1792.

The *Disegni* was the first official royal publication of the finds from Herculaneum, but it is very different from what we would expect to see today in a catalogue of a collection. The book has no introduction, just the ten pages of entries describing one or more of the features represented in the accompanying drawings. The author is unnamed; the engraver's name appears regularly, but rarely that of a designer. Besides the (forty-seven) paintings to which the title refers, there are thirty-four bronze statuettes, two marble statues, five marble reliefs, and three objects which appear to be enlarged renderings of gems. There is no discernible organization or standard format to the entries, nor any regular indication of medium, size, color, function, condition, date of discovery, or findspot. The condition as found is noted in the entry and is shown on the plate,

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5 Gori 1748: Letters to Quirinus: no. VII, Jan. 15, 1740, p. 13; and IX, Feb. 26, 1740, p. 17. My translation.

6 D'Iorio 2002: 167.

7 Published references to the *Disegni*: Mansi (2002: 18), Rodriguez (2008), Vázquez-Gestal (2009: 104–6), Burlot (2011), Mattusch (2013: 33–34), Sampaolo (2015: 52–53), D'Alconzo (2018: 56–57, 69), Mattusch (2019), and Vázquez-Gestal (2019).

8 A single fresco from the 'Basilica' made its way into the *Disegni*: Jupiter reclining in the clouds, attended by Cupid, MANN 9553, *c.* 82.5 x 168 cm.

9 The King's coat of arms includes the Golden Fleece, the Order of St. Januarius, the Constantinian Order of St. George, and the Order of the Holy Spirit. I am grateful to Liudmila Gavrilova for sending me information about the coat of arms. It was designed by Clemente Ruta and engraved by Bartolomeo de Grado, both of whose works appear in the later *Antichità*. Ruta also designed figs. 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, and 90 for the *Disegni*.

10 See Rodriguez 2008: 107.

11 Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden. 39 of these plates are also in the *Disegni*: nos. 1–7, 10, 11, 15, 17–21, 23, 24, 26–32, 34–41, 47, 48, 50, and 88–90. All but two of the plates in Dresden were engraved by Sesone, as well as an extra plate in Dresden that is not in the *Disegni*. Plates in Dresden that match *Disegni* nos. 5, 21, 26, 34, 36, and 39 have written across the bottom that the object was found underground at 'Portici.' I have not located any of the objects that appear on the Dresden plates.

One plate in Dresden, showing a flying winged figure, is not among those in the bound copies of the *Disegni*. The figure is of the same type and style as three plates that *are* in the *Disegni* (numbers 4, 5, and 43), all three reported to have been found in 1739, and all likely to be from a house near the theater.

12 I am grateful to Kordelia Knoll for her assistance in looking for objects from Herculaneum in the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden, in 2014, and ascertaining that there were none.

whereas in the later *Antichità*, artifacts are illustrated and described as if complete. And before being placed on display, the antiquities were fully restored, repairs concealed if possible.

Given the rapid rate at which finds were being made in Herculaneum over a relatively short period of time, it may be that the final decision about which objects to include in the *Disegni* was not completed nor were the illustrations engraved until just before printing. 1746, the date on the title-page, may refer simply to the date when that particular engraving was made, not to when it was actually printed, for two finds that are later recorded in the *Antichità* are noted there as having been found on 18 March 1747.[13] If those dates are correct, they suggest that the title-page was engraved in anticipation of the imminent completion of the book. Were only three full copies of the *Disegni* printed and bound? If so, why?

An Example

Let us trace the history of a single marble sculpture, number 11 in the *Disegni*.[14] The caption to the figure is characteristic in its brevity: that caption describes only the front of the statue, does not specify medium or size, and may have been based upon the illustration rather than upon observation of the object itself.

> Un busto d'uomo, al quale appare mancare dale ginocchia abbasso, la mano sinistra fino al gomito, e la mano destra fino sotto la spalla, con capelli, che gli girano intorno la testa, e barba, che divisa in 4. parti li casca a a punte, tre delle quali si vedono, tenendo la testa chinata. *Fig*. 11.
>
> A torso of a man, missing from the knees down, the left arm to the elbow, and the right arm to below the shoulder; with hair that is wound around the head, and a beard that divides into four parts that fall to points, three of which are visible; the head is inclined. *Fig*. 11.

Francesco Sesone (Rome 1705–Naples, after 1757) was the engraver. 'Fran.co Sesone Sculp. Nap.' is incised in the lower right corner of figure 11, the number inked by hand. Forty-five of the ninety plates in the *Disegni* were engraved by this individual. Only six of the plates name a designer at the lower left, either D. Antonio Sebastiano or Clemente Ruta.[15] Sesone's primary focus

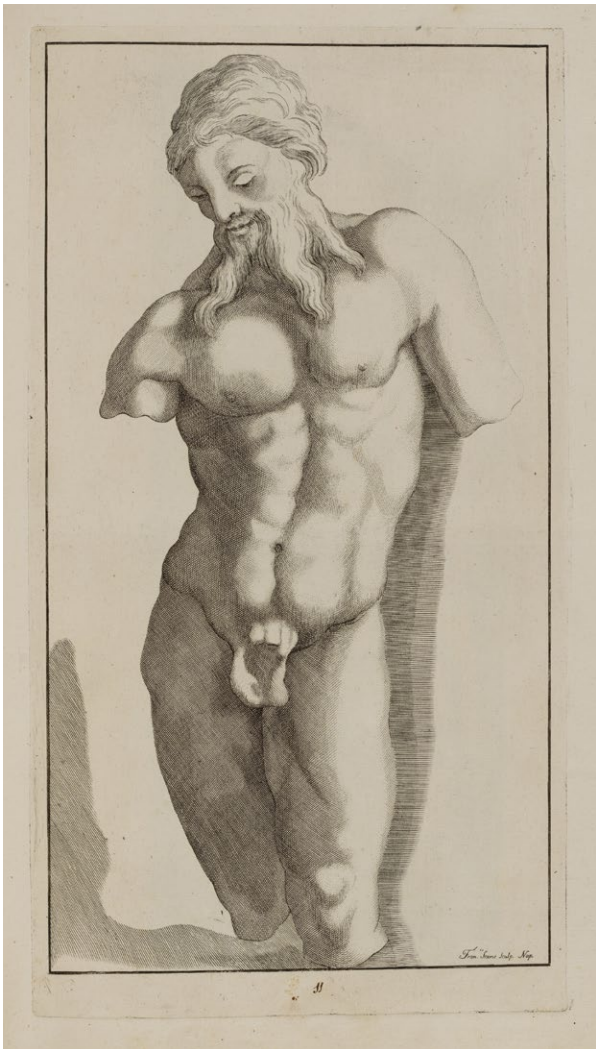


Figure 1. *Disegni Intagliati*, fig. 11: 'A torso of a man …'. Onassis Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. nr. 53.514.8. Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

in his career was to engrave architectural views, plans, and cartography, not objects.[16] His involvement with the Bourbon antiquities did not extend for long after the *Disegni*: he engraved three tailpieces, signed 'F. S.', that were used more than once in volume four of the *Antichità di Ercolano* (1765), although he had died before that volume was published.

Sesone's engraving for number 11 (**Figure 1**) shows a finely detailed anatomical rendering of what appears to be a monumental figure: it represents the bearded head, torso, upper arms, thighs, and knees of a mature

[13] Nos. 50 and 86: fresco fragments MANN 9075 and MANN 9170.
[14] MANN 6348. Marble, H. 114 cm.
[15] Nos. 23 and 24, 42 top and bottom: 'D. Anto. Sebastiano del.'; nos. 89 and 90: 'Clem. Ruta deli.'

[16] For images by Sesone, see <https://www.antiquarius.it> (viewed 4 September 2024), quoting *Notizie istoriche degli intagliatori di Giovanni Gori Gandellini*, 1771.

male, with irregular breaks at upper arms and below the knees. The entry does not mention that the penis too is missing, a lacuna which is evident from the shadowed gap in the image. The musculature is dramatically articulated, and the pose is graceful with the right hip thrust out, the left leg advanced. Thick long hair wraps around the head, which is inclined towards the figure's right. Dark pupils in downcast eyes are barely visible beneath heavy lids; a small full mouth wears a slight smile. Shadows surround a long wavy four-pointed beard that fans over a muscular chest. Deep shadows darken the right torso, hip, and thigh, and the inside of the left thigh to the break below the knee. A broad shadow outlines the figure's left side from the armpit to the breaks below the knees, continues across the bottom of the image, and rises amorphously along the lower left side of the print.

The statue is first recorded six years before the printed date of publication of the *Disegni*, when the earliest work at Herculaneum was being conducted in and around the city's theater and east of it in the direction of the so-called Basilica, a region that the finds suggest contained private houses. On 16 August 1740, Roque Joaquin de Alcubierre (*c.* 1702–80), in his second year as director of the Bourbon excavations at Herculaneum, recorded the discovery of 'a small marble statue with a most perfect base, which represents a nude old man with a very long beard, who has artificial glass eyes.'[17]

No legs and no base are shown in the *Disegni*, but Alcubierre's notation of 1740 might suggest that the work was found in pieces which were later joined to the portion of the sculpture that appeared in the *Disegni* six years later. In 1754/55 Ottavio Antonio Bayardi (1694–1764) published his *Catalogo degli antichi monumenti dissotterrati dalla discoperta città di Ercolano per ordine della Maestà di Carlo Re delle Due Sicilie*. 1750 copies were printed. Although the book is unillustrated, we learn a good deal from the text. In one of the 350 entries on marbles and bronzes, Bayardi describes what seems to be the same figure as number 11 in the *Disegni*: 'a naked old man in Greek marble with a long divided beard,' adding that he wears 'a cap (*barretta*) turned backwards on his head, and is resting on a trunk. H 2 palms 11 once (77.2 cm)'[18]; that is, under life-size. Besides giving the size of the statue, Bayardi is the first to mention that the statue is marble and that it represents an old man wearing a soft cap and leaning on a tree-trunk. The fact that he observes more about the statue than is revealed in the *Disegni* suggests that it had been put back together.

Several later publications that mention the work similarly do not illustrate it. When Thomas Martyn and John Lettice translated part of Bayardi's *Catalogo* as *The Antiquities of Herculaneum* (1773), copying images of paintings that had already been published in volume 1 of the *Antichità di Ercolano* (1757), they did not include sculptures, nor did the eight volumes of the *Antichità di Ercolano* published between 1757 and 1792 include marbles. More than 2000 copies of each of the first four volumes of the *Antichità* were printed,[19] a sizable number for a publication that was not intended to be sold, but rather to be distributed by the prime minister on behalf of the royal family.[20]

Lost but not Forgotten

The first seven volumes of the *Antichità di Ercolano* (1757–92) were about paintings (volumes 1–4, 7 = *Pitture* 1–5) and bronzes (volumes 5–6 = *Bronzi* 1–2); the eighth and last volume (1792) was devoted to lamps, lanterns, and candelabra. 437 engraved illustrations intended for the *Antichità* were never published; 133 of the illustrations depicted marbles. In 1799, *Le Antichità di Ercolano esposte: Rami inediti* were bound in two volumes. They came to be in the library of Caroline Bonaparte (1782–1839), sister of Napoleon and wife of Joseph Murat, King of Naples from 1808 to 1815. As Queen Consort, Caroline was a sponsor of the arts and had a great interest in the ongoing excavations. Those two volumes of the *Rami inediti* are still in Naples.

The *Rami inediti* housed in the library of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (Biblioteca XX A 19[21]) contains an illustration of a statue with a long wavy four-pointed beard and a hipshot pose, both of which resemble number 11 in the *Disegni* (**Figure 2**). But in this illustration the figure is whole: the slender muscular body is complete with arms and hands, penis, legs, feet, tree trunk, and rectangular base: many of these elements, except for the arms and hands, were mentioned by Alcubierre or shown in the *Disegni*.[22] The statue wears a tightly bound cloth head-covering. The eye sockets are blank; the mouth is slightly open, as if to

[17] Alcubierre mss. in the Biblioteca della Società napolitana di Storia Patria, published in Pannuti (1983: 192 [my translation]). He did not note the location of the find. Also, Pagano and Prisciandaro (2006: 1:185).

[18] Bayardi 1754/55: no. 52 148.

[19] Mansi 2002; Moore 2013: 119n124. I do not know how many copies of Martyn and Lettice's small-scale, popular work were published.

[20] Mansi 2008: 138–40.

[21] See also *Disegni originali dell'Ercolano*, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Biblioteca XX A 20. Scatozza Höricht 1989: 304; Esposito 2016: 162–67.

[22] Engraving dated after 1792 in Guzzo, Esposito, and Cavadini (2018: 216, no. 42); Pagano and Prisciandaro (2006: 1:343, no. 113).



Figure 2. *Rami inediti*, vol. 1, 185: fig. 113, MANN Library. Photo: Courtesy of Ufficio e Archivio fotografico MANN.

speak. The left arm is bent, forearm resting on the top of the tree-trunk. Hands have been added: long open fingers on the right hand are extended downwards as if to emphasize a point; the long fingers of the left hand hang loosely over the tree trunk. A small penis is in place. The statue's left bare foot is forward, right foot back, the right hip thrust out, the darkened tree-trunk attached by the stump of a thick branch to the left hip. Deep shadows model the left side of the body from armpit to foot, and also the underside of the right arm. A shadow is cast backwards from the neat rectangular base, which is set upon a large flat ledge. The ledge and base set the figure back to the middle ground of the picture, rather than in the immediate foreground, where it is shown in the *Disegni*.

In the *Rami inediti*, fine lines delineate the musculature, and the thighs appear somewhat longer than in the rendering of the statue for the *Disegni*. The scale at the bottom of the engraving suggests that the height of the complete figure with its base is approximately 3 palms 6 once (92.8 cm), whereas Bayardi had recorded a height of 2 palms 11 once (77.2 cm); he may have measured only the figure but not the height of the base.

The designer whose initials appear in the lower left corner was Vincenzo Campana (*c.* 1730–*c.* 1808); the engraver was [Nicola] Fiorillo (*c.* 1730–*c.* 1805), both of whom are among the artists and engravers whose work appears in the *Antichità di Ercolano*, but not in the *Disegni*. This graceful statue, complete in all respects, must be the same as the muscle-bound figure without arms, lower legs, or tree trunk that was included in the *Disegni* and reported by Alcubierre.

On and Off View

In the 1911 Ruesch guidebook to the Naples Archaeological Museum, number 1936 is a marble satyr(?) listed as being in a room on the top floor of the Museum, with several other *statuettes,* but which was otherwise devoted to approximately 2000 engraved gems.[23] The entry describes and interprets the figure in detail:

> Priapo con capelli lunghi, barba fluente a quattro ciocche e testa coperta da un kredemnon legato a guise di kekryphalos; nudo, si appoggia col gomito s. a un tronco. Pianta la gamba destra e protende un poco la s. Il torso serpeggiante e la testa abbassata danno alla figura un aspetto languido di abbandono e tristeza. Il membro però doveva essere di propozioni colossali ed eretto. Il motive è desunto dale figure prassiteliche appoggiate, come il *periboetos* (the notorious) [Pliny *NH* 34.69: a Satyr].
>
> Priapus with long hair, flowing beard with four locks and the head covered with a veil [Gk. κρήδεμνον] bound in the manner of a net [Gk. κεκρύφαλος]; nude, resting the left elbow on a trunk. Stands on the right leg, and extends the left one slightly. The twisting torso and inclined head give the figure the languid aspect of loneliness and sadness. But the member had to be of colossal proportions and erect. The motif is taken from the Praxitelean leaning figure, like the celebrated one [Gk. περιβοήτος; Pliny *NH* 34.69: a Satyr].

There is no mention of either the right arm or the left hand. Had they been removed? And where was the small ancient penis? The abbreviated entry in the 1911 English edition of the Ruesch *Guide* testifies that both

[23] This is the second edition, the first having been published in 1908.

hands are modern: 'Priapus. Both hands restored. The god wears a long flowing beard and his head is covered with a sort of hood. He leans with his left elbow on a tree trunk.'[24] This is the same statue that appeared in Bayardi's *Catalogo,* in Alcubierre's report, and in the *Disegni*.

Reappearance

In 2018, the under-life-size marble made public appearances in the two venues of an exhibition entitled *Ercolano e Pompei. Visioni di una scoperta/ Herculaneum and Pompeii. Visions of a Discovery* (**Figure 3**): first in Chiasso in southern Switzerland; and then in the Naples Archaeological Museum.[25] There it is identified as a satyr, of middle age, with a long forked beard, and soft Phrygian cap, features which allow for other possible identities, including Pan, Priapus, or possibly even Dionysos himself.[26] In the exhibition, the restored statue stood alongside the gracefully executed engraving in the *Rami inediti*. However badly and unevenly damaged the marble is by exposure to the elements and by cleaning, this is undeniably the same work as that represented in figure 11 of the *Disegni*. What we see today includes the figure represented in the *Disegni* (1746), joined with the base first mentioned by Alcubierre (1740), and the tree trunk first mentioned by Bayardi (1754/55). We can also see that the arms depicted in the *Rami inediti* (after 1792) have been joined, but not the hands, which are mentioned in the Ruesch *Guida* (1911) and described as being modern, for they have now been removed, leaving behind only plaster-filled dowel holes. We can also see that the head with the upper locks of the beard had been broken from the body, which is not shown in the *Disegni,* so they must have been rejoined by the time when that illustration was produced.



Figure 3. Figure of a man, probably a satyr. White marble. H. 1.14 m. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. nr. 6348. Photo: author.

The full height of the sculpture with the base is measured at 114 cm. Twelve pieces are in place, with uneven but joining breaks: the head and upper portion of the beard; the ends of the two outermost locks of the beard; torso and thighs; a small rectangular strut on the raised right hip joining the right arm just above the elbow; both arms; the penis; the legs from knees to ankles; the top of the tree trunk; and the bottom of the tree trunk with the feet and the base. The right arm is reattached just below the shoulder, and the hand is missing. The left arm, also missing the hand, is rejoined above the elbow and rests on a re-joined section of the tree trunk; a thick branch of the tree trunk has been rejoined to the thigh below the

[24] Ruesch 1911a: 460, no. 1936 (MANN 6348). The provenance of the figure is said to be the Farnese collection, but no mention is made of this in the English edition of the catalogue, Ruesch and de Petra *et al.* (1911b: 134). The 1911 Italian edition notes that the right arm, the left forearm, the lower legs are restored, and the virile member is repaired in modest proportion; the height is given as 0.76 m.

[25] MANN 6348. Guzzo, Esposito, and Cavadini 2018: 54–57 (Paola D'Alconzo), 216–17, nos. 42–43.

[26] Not suspecting my purpose, Gene Dwyer alerted me to a marble double herm in the British Museum with heads identified as Dionysos and a maenad, the former wearing a soft cap and having a divided beard (inv. no. 1805,0703.441; H. *c.* 19 cm). For this herm and for examples of the range of attributes related to rural and agricultural divinities, see Philipp *et al.* (2013: *passim*, especially 166, no. 64).

left hip. Apparently neither strut was in place when the illustration in the *Disegni* was made; but the thick branch joining the left leg appears in the *Rami inediti*. Both lower legs are reattached, as are the feet along with the base and the lowest section of the tree trunk. The differing surface conditions of the various parts give a disjointed impression of the statue as a whole. The head, torso, and thighs are mottled gray and dark brown, only partially cleaned. The deeply pitted head and torso are varying shades of gray; dark red-brown and black remains on the right thigh, the lower left thigh, and the left hip around the join with the thick branch of the tree; the arms, calves, tree trunk, and base are smooth and white to gray.

The head, inclined to the statue's right, is crowned by a drooping Phrygian cap, which is seen clearly from the side. The fact that it went unnoticed by both the *Disegni* illustrator and the *Disegni* author suggests that image and text were prepared from a single frontal viewpoint. The statue's mouth is slightly open; around it flows a thick moustache and a long wavy four-part beard, its ends distributed at regular intervals across the chest. The beard, and the mottled gray and white degraded surface may falsely age the face.

This is the statue discovered by Alcubierre in 1740 and illustrated — before it was fully repaired — in the *Disegni* about six years later. That illustration is far more appealing than the statue itself. Despite the close similarity of the breaks and the beard, which permit of an identification of the statue with the illustration, the gracefully inclined head, powerful musculature, and provocatively out-thrust hip in the *Disegni* are owed to the imagination of the anonymous designer of the plate, engraved by Sesone. Fully restored for the image in the *Rami inediti*, it could at first be mistaken for a different statue. Although the marble as it exists today has been cleaned and repaired, surely under different hands and at different times, in some ways it is easier to recognize it in the early illustration in the *Disegni* than in the one of some fifty years later in the *Rami inediti*. But today the *Disegni* is practically unknown, and there is no copy of that work in Naples.

All the pieces of the statue as it is now restored are evidently ancient, although portions of it vary in color, suggesting that the whiter pieces — locks of beard; lower arms, legs, tree trunk, and feet with base — were found and cleaned separately. The breaks are no longer as irregular as they appear in the *Disegni*, the surfaces probably having been smoothed to facilitate joins. The dark brown topmost layer of encrustation caused by the statue's exposure remains at the right thigh, the left knee, and the left hip next to the tree-trunk; the gray pocked surface of the left thigh, the torso, upper left arm, and head appear to have been degraded by cleaning to a sugary surface; lower legs, lower arms, feet with base, and trunk show different treatment, which seems to have caused far less damage to the surface but removing the darkest encrustation. At first glance, one might think that the arms, lower legs, feet, trunk, and base are modern. But a closer look belies that conclusion. Both struts, the thick branch of the trunk on the statue's left, and the small strut from right hip to elbow, make neat joins to the statue. Two bits of the outermost locks of the beard are repairs, and the penis has been reattached.[27] One can conclude from the accuracy of the rendering of breaks in the *Disegni* that all the repairs were made after both the illustration and text for the *Disegni* were completed. The hands depicted in the engraving included in the *Rami inediti* must be modern restorations that were removed at some later date, to judge from the plaster-filled dowel-holes at the wrists.

The statue's powerful torso is approximately as it appears in the *Rami inediti*. The extreme thrust of the right hip, however, more closely resembles the illustration in the *Disegni* than it does the less extreme rendering in the *Rami inediti*. The sculpture itself lacks the bulk and the lively grace and charm of the rendering in the *Disegni*, perhaps because of its degraded condition. The portion of the figure that matches the image in the *Disegni* is badly discolored, with blackened surface and pockmarks, with the result that the modeling of face, hair, beard, and torso is no longer sharp, but heavily worn, as if the figure has been subjected to long outdoor exposure. Furthermore, there is heavy brown accretion on the right thigh and left knee, though the upper left thigh is free of accretion except for an irregular area around the large strut at the left hip. What might pass as a grimace on the face of the statue, in part because of its condition, is rendered as a more angular face in the *Rami*, and, delicately, as if smiling slightly, in the *Disegni*.

Were the arms, the beard, the penis, and the lower legs cleaned separately from the torso? A single piece comprising the feet, the base of the trunk, and the rectangular base are perhaps a little yellowish, although Alcubierre reported in 1740 that the base was found at the same time as the statue. The white marble calves have slightly irregular breaks at the ankles where they join the feet. By 1754/55, the left

[27] That reattachment evidently occurred after the marble was published in the 1911 Ruesch *Guida*.

arm and the tree trunk were in place, judging from Bayardi's description. Today the tree-trunk appears more gray than white, suggesting that it too was cleaned, its upper and lower breaks possibly evened off for attachment. There has been no mention of the eyes since Alcubierre reported 'glass' eyes, which were probably inlaid stones, and for which there are slight hollows.

It takes an effort to reconcile the identity of the handsome figure shown in the *Disegni* with that of the heavily damaged statue, its discolored and abraded head and torso joining clean white arms, legs, and base, and to the two struts, the ends of the arms drilled for dowels that held the now-removed modern hands. The high quality of the rendering of this figure in the *Disegni* gives an inspired record of a majestic, monumental figure, without struts. But the slender neatly coiffed figure wearing a head-wrap in the *Rami inediti,* with its large expressive hands and a single tree-trunk strut, suggests a work that survived in excellent condition. The *Disegni*'s engraving, however, shows the actual condition of the damaged statue. Either the goal of completing a whole statue from a poorly preserved one for official publication and exhibition was not yet in practice, or all the pieces were not yet assembled when the drawing was made. Even so, the sinuous well-muscled image in the *Disegni* is a far more pleasing portrayal than the mended marble sculpture, suggesting that designer's representation of condition was but one of two goals, the other being to illustrate the marble in its best possible light.

Further Questions

In no previous work is the back of the statue described or illustrated. Over the years, scholarly attention to this marble has been focused largely upon the frontal view, as if this were a relief rather than a sculpture in the round. Bayardi noted the soft cap, a feature which is better seen from the side, and which is described in the Ruesch *Guida* as a veil bound up like a hairnet. But what does the back of the statue look like? A look at the back may resolve the question of identity (**Figure 4**). Is the musculature like that of the chest, or is the back not finished? Nowhere is it described. Does the statue have a tail?

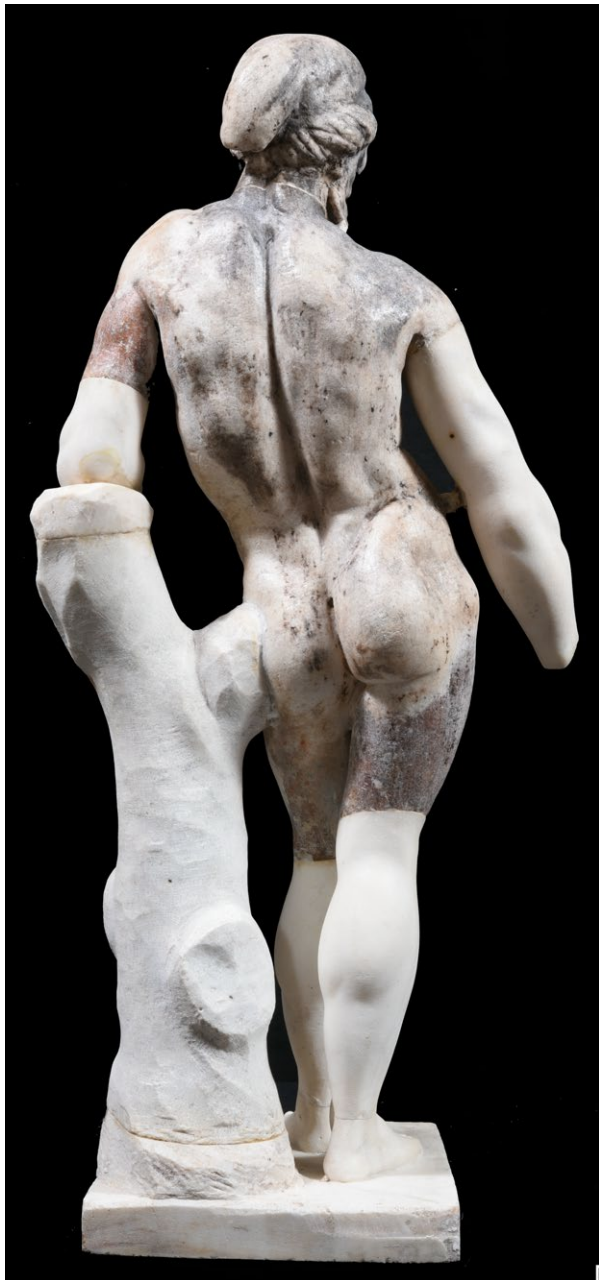


Figure 4. Figure of a man, back, probably a satyr. White marble. H. 1.14 m. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. nr. 6348. Photo: Courtesy of Ufficio e Archivio fotografico MANN.

The back is carefully rendered, the powerful shoulders, deeply modeled curved spine, and muscular buttocks accentuating the raised right hip and the forward thrust of the left leg, and imparting greater sensuality to the figure than is derived from the more degraded surface of the front.

Priapus or Pan he is not, but is he a satyr or a Silenos? Silenoi are older and fatter; satyrs may or may not have tails, beards, or pointed ears. Some have long hair, sometimes knotted up, some are balding; some wear wreaths. This statue combines a sinuous youthful body with a more mature bearded head of a long-

haired individual bound up in what may be a Phrygian cap. At the base of the muscular back is a hole for a tail, and the youthful power in the body suggests that this is indeed a satyr, in spite of the somewhat older appearance of the face. But where was the sculpture installed?

The finds illustrated in the *Disegni* show painted vignettes, small bronzes, marble garden décor, and apparently a few gems. Even without references to findspots in this early publication, it is reasonable to conclude that most of the finds came from private homes and gardens between the theater and the so-called Basilica of Herculaneum. This deduction is bolstered by the general locations given for some of the objects that are included in the later volumes of the *Antichità*.

Most of the finds in the *Disegni* are small, the monumentality and powerful musculature suggested in the illustration of this satyr being matched only by two engravings of a bronze statuette of Herakles, neither one naming an illustrator, but the first of which Sesone signed as engraver at the left, where the illustrator's name is usually found, perhaps only because there was not enough space at the lower right.[28] The text entries are incomplete, often inaccurate, and inconsistent. As we have seen, an illustration may be very difficult to pair with the actual antiquity. The artist who designed the image of the marble satyr used his imagination to create an image from a fragment which had just recently been found and had not yet been fully restored, let alone cleaned.

Why were so few copies of the *Disegni* printed? There is no record of official printing, so the three copies of the catalogue were probably bound for specific individuals, one of whom was King Charles. He did not take his artifacts with him in 1759, when he left Naples to return to Spain, where he would reign as Charles III. His prizes were the Farnese collection, from his mother, and the newly discovered sculptures from Herculaneum and Pompeii. Instead, plaster casts of a large number of statues and busts were sent to him in 1765.[29] The *Disegni* had been completed well before that and could serve to remind him of the earliest finds from the remarkable excavations that he had initiated at Herculaneum.

But that volume was not enough to satisfy the King, in light of the far more impressive finds that were being uncovered at a rapid pace during the 1740s and 1750s. When he left Naples in 1759, Charles had the *Antichità di Ercolano* well under way in the hands of a team of scholars, the first volume having been published in 1757. Nonetheless, the *Disegni* of 1746 is an important resource for what it reveals about the King's interest in publicizing the earliest discoveries on the Bay of Naples, how they were first viewed, understood, and represented. This marble Satyr is just one example of ninety artifacts, most of them from private homes in Herculaneum, some of which have had fascinating afterlives, others relegated to storage, a few untraceable today. This small marble sculpture is a tantalizing work for the history of its discovery, publication, restoration, exhibition, and identification. No less tantalizing is the *Disegni* itself, the first Bourbon publication of finds from Herculaneum — for its value as a resource for the earliest types of finds from Herculaneum, for its previously neglected history, and for its critical place in the narrative about the publication of modern collections.

[28] *Disegni*, figs. 1 and 2. Paris: Louvre, Department of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities, Br. 32. H. 62 cm. Denoyelle and Descamps-Lequime 2007: 94–96, no. 26.

[29] See Scatozza Höricht 1982: 504.

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English Country House Collections of Classical Sculpture and Roman Collecting Habits: A Methodological Comparison

Jane Fejfer

On January 2nd 1787, Henry Blundell wrote to his friend, fellow collector, and fellow Catholic Charles Townley: 'I am not pleased at yr saying I am now become fairly a collector; What I have done was only, as it were, ye sport of a day, as I w.d not be thought to be Idle while abroad.'[1] In this paper, I present a short introduction to the history of the Ince Blundell collection and then ask the following three questions: *Firstly*, why did Henry Blundell protest against being called a collector? I approach the question with outset in Sarah Macdonald's broad definition of collecting as a 'self-aware process of creating a set of objects conceived to be meaningful as a group.'[2] *Secondly*, how can Blundell's amassment of about 600 classical marble sculptures, the largest collection ever formed in private hands in Britain, be situated into the larger context of 18th-century British and European collecting habits? And, *lastly*, what is the modern significance of Blundell's sculpture collection and of English country house collections? That is, how might Blundell's sculpture collection, and English country house sculpture collections more generally, offer insights into *Roman-period* attitudes towards and collecting of sculptural art? Sometimes considered (archaeologically) worthless refashioned relics, I argue that these Roman sculptures form a unique and overlooked repository for understanding what Roman sculptural art 'is' and what may have motivated ancient Roman patrons into forming their own collections of sculpture.

A Brief History of the Ince Collection

Between 1777 and 1809, Henry Blundell (1724–1810) collected 530 Classical marble sculptures and fragments which he displayed at his ancestral home, Ince Blundell Hall in Lancashire.[3] (**Figures 1–2**) Quite uniquely, the collection remains basically intact not in its original setting at Ince but as part of the art and antiquities collections at the Walker Art Gallery and the World Museum, part of The National Museums in Liverpool. Also quite uniquely, the Ince collection is well documented despite the burning of the family archive in 1964.

During his lifetime, Henry Blundell had the collection documented in his *An Account of the Statues, Busts, Bass-Relieves, Cinerary Urns and other Ancient Marbles, and Paintings at Ince* from 1803 and his two folio volumes *Engravings and Etchings of the Principal Statues, Busts, Bass-Reliefs, Sepulchral Monuments, Cinerary Urns etc. In the Collection of Henry Blundell, esq., at Ince* from 1809–10. Even more importantly, Blundell had a vibrant correspondence with Charles Townley (1734–1805), who already had a renowned collection of sculpture in his London townhouse at the time when Blundell entered the antiquities market. These letters preserved in the so-called Townley Archive at the British Museum (*TY*) contain a goldmine of information about Blundell's sculptures, where they were found, where he bought them, who restored them, what they signified to him, and how Townley valued or disapproved of them.

Blundell was born into an old, landed gentry which during the 16th to 18th centuries suffered persecution for its Catholic faith. Although persecutions had stopped by the middle of the 18th century, being Catholic continued to have great impact on Henry Blundell's life, his education, adult career, and collecting activities because he, like other fellow Catholics, was barred from taking part in public life. Significantly Blundell never became a member of the typical Grand Tour societies, the Society of Dilettanti and Antiquaries, and the other clubs in their orbit.[4] Perhaps he would not have been able to attend their

[1] I am grateful to Chrissy Partheni, Keeper at the World Museum at National Museums Liverpool, for her comments on this paper.
British Museum Townley Archive TY 7/1316. On the Townley Archive, British Museum and an index of its content, see Hill 2002.
[2] Macdonald 2011: 81.
[3] By 'Classical' here, I mean ancient Greek and Roman. For a history of the Ince Blundell Collection, see Fejfer and Southworth (1991), and most recently Bartman (2017). Generally, on Blundell as a collector, his attitudes towards restorations and his relationship with Charles Townley, also Thompson (2016: 40–50).
[4] On these societies, Redford 2008.



Figure 1. Ince Blundell Hall with Cavaceppi's unfinished copy of Trajan's column. © Historic England Archive.



Figure 2. Garden Temple at Ince Blundell Hall. Frontispiece in Vol. 2 of Blundell 1809.

meetings from remote Liverpool, or perhaps as a devout Catholic he did not agree to the very close scrutiny of 'Venus' arse,' Priapus, hermaphrodite, and the statues of young nude boys.[5] The erotic appeal of statues was of course nothing new and Blundell also owned a famous 'arse,' the lower torso of a copy of the Capitoline Venus type which formerly belonged to the German antiquarian and alleged spy Baron Philipp von Stosch in Rome.[6] It figures from the back in a 1725 drawing by Pier Leoni Ghezzi being surrounded by caricatured connoisseurs.[7] However, when it came in Blundell's possession, it was described in elevated tones as having belonged 'formerly to that noble temple' (the Pantheon in Rome).

Blundell was educated in France in the Jesuit College of St. Omer and in Paris at St. Gregory's English Seminary where he may have first met Townley. Back in England, Blundell attended all the sports of the field, balls, parties, and races[8] and in 1761 he finally decided to marry, at the age of 36 and after the estate had been handed over to him.[9] His wife Elizabeth, daughter of Sir George Mostyn, a distant relative of Townley, brought a considerable fortune into the marriage and Blundell became one of the richest landowners in northern England. Elizabeth died in 1767 and left him with a son and two daughters. The following decade he concentrated on improving the estate and establishing a large walled landscaped park with an artificial lake and a number of hot houses.

At the age of 55, widowed and with the estate in excellent condition, he was probably looking for new challenges in life and left for his first trip to Italy. Blundell was not a typical Grand Tour tourist on his youth's education tour but, like many of his younger 'fellow travelers' (e.g. Thomas Talbot of Margam Park), he was in excellent company not with a professional governor or 'bear-leader' but with Townley.[10] Given his famous collection, he probably inspired or perhaps even persuaded Blundell to undertake a Grand Tour and to buy art works, mainly Roman sculpture but also modern paintings and sculpture in Italy. The two met in Rome in 1777 and Blundell made his first acquisitions including the statuette of the Greek philosopher Epicurus.[11]

The Roman antiquities market was booming in the 1770s! Ancient Roman sculptures floated into the market from two main sources: from the old aristocratic collections in Rome and from the numerous excavations in Rome or its vicinities. Apart from the papal state, which had the right to select what it wanted for the Vatican galleries, the British milordi dominated the market. The process of maneuvering amongst competing parties was not straight forward, however, including troubled Italian aristocrats eager to part with their collections, diggers, dealers, restorers, and fakers, not to mention obtaining the necessary export licenses. The system set up to satisfy the British 'marble mania' was centered around two English entrepreneuring personalities: the painter and dealer Gavin Hamilton and the dealer Thomas Jenkins.[12] Both resided in Rome and both acted as middlemen between the Italian aristocrats, the papal state, and dealers and restorers. Jenkins and Hamilton conducted their own excavations. The year in which Blundell first entered the market (1777) is also the year when most excavation permits were granted.[13] Jenkins possibly helped Blundell in securing the *en bloc* purchase of 80 sculptures from the Mattei Collection, and Hamilton was supplying him with sculptures from the old d'Este collection and from his own excavations at Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. Blundell also acquired sculptures from restorers in Rome, most notably Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Bartolomeo Cavaceppi, Antonio D'Este, and Carlo Albacini. He was also interested in contemporary art and sculpture and commissioned works from the most famous British and Italian sculptors including Antonio Canova, John Flaxman, and Carlo Albacini. He knew that in a booming market it was difficult not to be cheated with downright fakes or patched up ancient pieces or pastiches. He was aware of how restorers like Piranesi worked 'from small fragments, formed very elegant things,' he noted in his Accounts 507, an urn bought from and restored by Piranesi.[14] Blundell advised buyers that the best way to avoid buying fakes was 'to buy with their own eyes, or not to buy at all.'[15] Even so, he occasionally and inevitably became victim of what he called the 'puffs & tricks of all kinds of dealers.'[16] His

[5] On Classical marble and eroticism in the context of English Country House collections, see Coltman (2009: 171–90).
[6] World Museum, National Museums Liverpool, inv. 59.148.63; Bartman 2017: 43–45, cat. 9.
[7] Guilding 2014: 18, fig. 19.
[8] As he wrote in 'A letter intended for a Friend.'
[9] 'A letter intended for a Friend' (autobiographical memoir, 10 February 1808) private collection.
[10] Fejfer and Southworth 2013. On Blundell's relationship with Townley, see Coltman (2006: 66–67, 173–74) and Thompson (2016: 44–47, 133–35).
[11] World Museum, National Museums Liverpool, inv. 1959.148. 44; see Ashmole 1929: 26, cat. 44.
[12] Guilding 2001: 4–14.
[13] Bartman 2017: 7.
[14] Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool, inv. 6527; Morris and Hopkinson 1999: 328, pl. 497.
[15] *TY* 7/1318, 25 November 1787.
[16] Like the bust Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool, inv. 10333, in Fejfer (1998: 91–93, cat. 55).

much-admired statue of Diana consists of no less than 127 different pieces of marble, according to Elizabeth Bartman.[17] Back in Lancashire, Blundell often decided on whether or not to buy a sculpture from drawings sent to him from Rome. Drawings were important as collections of sculpture on paper for study purposes as Townley's *museo cartaceo* and as advertisement for sculptures available on the market as well. After purchase, the sculptures were usually restored in Rome before being shipped to England. However, breakages occurring during transport and repairs or more severe interventions including 'castrations' were sometimes needed on site. The statue of a sleeping hermaphrodite Blundell found 'unnatural and very disgusting to the sight; but by means of a little castration and cutting away the little brats it became a sleeping Venus....'[18]

For over 30 years (1777–*c*. 1807), Blundell was a regular buyer, continuously looking out for bargains rather than good quality pieces, as one dealer ironically said of him. On other occasions he had to calm down his son-in-law ensuring that he was not being too extravagant in his purchases. He was to return abroad in pursuit of sculptures on three other occasions, in 1782–83, 1786, and 1790. He wrote to Townley in 1801 when he was still buying but now from auctions in England that he feared that he may be called 'marble mad.'[19] During his tours to Italy, Blundell not only visited art collections, palaces, and excavations in Rome but also the excavations around the Gulf of Naples. By 1787, the number of sculptures that had already reached Ince was so overwhelming that it was impossible to display them in the rooms and staircases of the house. Blundell wrote to Townley on the 2nd of January, 'But I have now made my markets and have no room in my house for any more paintings or sculptures.' Later on 25th November, he likewise wrote, 'I do not aim at a collection nor will I ever build a Galleries.'[20]

In an inventory drawn up by Townley in 1792, there was a total of 325 marble sculptures at Ince with 28 in the hall, alone.[21] Blundell must have changed his mind because by 1792 the little Neo-Classical garden temple had been erected with the purpose of housing part of the collection (**Figure 2**). The frieze over the porch carries a quotation from Vergil, *Georgics* II. 149: *Hic ver assiduum atque alienis mensibus aestas* ('Here is eternal spring, and summer in months not her own'). This may be a reference to the display of classical sculpture inside the temple, recalling in some detail the design for the Museo Pio-Clementino in the Vatican Museums in Rome, and of bringing the atmosphere of the warm summers of Italy to Lancashire.[22] There is, however, more to it than that. The temple, which was originally connected to a set of now derelict hothouses is, technically, complex.[23] The vases that decorate the roof function as chimneys, the walls and floor are furnished with heating canals, and hot air is ventilated through the open mouths of the colossal ancient Roman masks.

From about 1800, when travelling on the continent was complicated due to the Napoleonic wars, Blundell bought mainly at auctions in Britain.[24] In 1801 we hear for the first time about his plans for erecting a further building, the 'Pantheon,' to house the best pieces in his collection. Seeking advice on which statues to display, Blundell writes to Townley:

> In your late letter, you say, you should judge better, what marbles out of Lord Bessborough collection would best suit if you knew the size, the plan and situation of my intended room: It is about 37 feet inside diameter, circular, lighted from the top as the Pantheon, placed as near the east end of my house as can well be; the walls 6feet thick, to get room for 4 large recesses, so as to be able to see round the principal statues.[25]

Work started in the following year but the building was only just finished by his death in 1810. A circular building with a domed roof and a central oculus as the only source for light had been considered ideal for the display of classical sculpture ever since the 16th century. Blundell's Pantheon was planned as a sculpture gallery which allowed full emphasis on the sculptures and their three-dimensionality and it was an innovation in country house gallery displays. Once again, its inspiration may have come from the Pio Clementino.

Disappointed with his son Charles, Henry Blundell reduced his inheritance. When Charles died in 1837, the estate went to a distant relative, Thomas Weld of Lulworth in Dorset. Charles Joseph Weld Blundell succeeded Thomas in 1887. The collection was now neglected to such an extent that the German

[17] World Museum, National Museums Liverpool, inv. 59.148.22; Bartman 2017: 56–57, cat. 17.
[18] World Museum, National Museums Liverpool, inv. 59.148.25; Bartman (2017: 35–38, cat. 6 with fig. 8) for the original uncastrated state.
[19] *TY* 7/1333.
[20] *TY* 7/1316 and 1318.
[21] Bartman 2017: 5.
[22] Vaughan 1989.
[23] Edmondson and Rutherford 2007.
[24] On the increasing importance of auctions in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars and how auctions made ancient sculpture available to a broader social make up, see Cochrane (2021: 280).
[25] *TY* 7/1330.

archaeologist Adolf Michaelis who visited Ince in 1873 and 1877 in connection with his publication of ancient marbles in Great Britain described the Pantheon as in 'motley confusion' and the Garden Temple as a 'lumber room.'[26] When the Danish archaeologist Frederik Poulsen visited Ince in 1912 and again in 1919 in order to study Greek and Roman portraits in English country houses, Charles Weld Blundell had lost both his sons. Poulsen has a more poetic description of the neglected collection as 'a sleeping beauty who has not yet found its prince.'[27] When the English archaeologist Bernard Ashmole catalogued the collection in 1929 it had undergone an 'admirable rearrangement.'[28]

Charles died in 1922, and with no male heirs he left the estate to his two daughters but only for their lifetime. In 1958 the house and estate therefore passed to colonel Joseph Weld of Lulworth who decided that he could not keep both houses. Ince Hall, with the majority of its collections and the rest of the estate, was offered to the National Trust. But no agreement could be reached. The collection of ancient sculptures was offered as a gift to the city of Liverpool and now forms the core in the antiquities collections at The World Museum and the sculpture collection at the Walker Art Gallery in the National Galleries on Merseyside. The hall was sold to a nursing order of nuns and was up until 2022 used as a convalescent home for retired priests. At the time of this essay's writing, the fate of the hall remains uncertain.

Blundell as Collector

And so to return to the opening question, why would Henry Blundell protest at being called a collector? Blundell's motto *age quod agis* ('keep going') was undoubtedly related to the way he handled his estate successfully and consistently but not, at least initially to acquiring ancient marble sculptures which he feared might be associated with madness.[29] Calling himself a dabbler, only doing the sports of a day, fulfilling what was expected of a gentleman of a certain standing, 'Every man, I apprehend, wishes to purchase, what is good, let it be in marble, Painting, a Horse, or a Dog,' he wrote to Townley. This suggests that he associated collecting with serious pursuit and connoisseurship, neither of which matched his own ambitions and intensions nor his knowledge.[30]

From his letters to Townley, we learn that Townley had encouraged him to undertake writing an account or catalogue of the marbles and call it *Blundelianum* — an idea that Blundell did not approve of; it is clear that Townley had severely criticized the text.[31] In Townley's opinion, Blundell was promiscuously mixing all subjects,[32] not including measurements, omitting proper descriptions, misspelling inscriptions, and following Montfaucon and not the new Enlightenment ideas of D'Hancarville whose mystical and global view of linking classical sculpture with India and China appealed to the learned society in London, particularly Townley. Blundell defends himself several times: that his catalogue is only intended for 'private friends and visitors' and only to be left in the house, that he follows Montfaucon's *L'Antiquité expliquée* (1719–24), and that he only bought what appealed to him.[33] This was only half the truth because in a letter to Townley, he admits that 'I scarcely know my self all that's bot. for me.'[34]

Object agency rather than human intentionality is not unique to Blundell's collection; in this case, sculptures were supplied by an agent or just came along with other purchases. We are reminded how already in Roman antiquity Cicero simply could not use the set of Bacchants supplied him by M. Fabius Gallus. Where should he place them in his property?[35] We do not know if the Bacchants after all were included in Cicero's collection but both episodes show how a collection may develop without clear human intentionality blurring taxonomy and interpretation.[36] Be that as it may, at some point Townley seems to have given up on Blundell when he wrote him in a draft letter (never sent?) that 'there are many opinions and that every person especially the owner may claim a right to give his own ideas upon them.'[37] Townley was absolutely right — Blundell went his own way, as collectors usually do.

When later Blundell had built his Pantheon, published the two folio volumes of *Engravings* of his principal statues, and had to restrict public access to Ince to once a week because of an overwhelming number of visitors, one wonders if he would still hesitate to call himself a collector? In my mind he was a true collector.

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[26] Michaelis 1882: 335.
[27] Poulsen 1950: 18. The portraits were published in Poulsen 1923.
[28] Ashmole 1950.
[29] *TY* 7/1333.
[30] *TY* 7/1317.
[31] *TY* 15/11/1.
[32] Townley in a draft letter to Blundell *TY* 7/1352 that may never have been sent and Blundell to Townley *TY* 7/1353.
[33] Catalogue: *TY* 7/1348, 1349, 1353; house: *TY* 7/1350; Montfaucon: *TY* 7/1349.
[34] *TY* 7/1333.
[35] Cic. *Fam.* 7.23.
[36] Fejfer 2020: 39–41. On Cicero and Vitruvius and the concept of *decorum*, see Marvin (1989; 2008: 234–36) and Haug (2021).
[37] *TY* 7/1350/2.

One of the most striking characteristics of collecting is that it is a social process involving a network of people like buyers, sellers, restorers, shippers, scholars, artists, architects, viewers, etc. The marbles were central in this social network, and they came to shape Blundell's life, as we have seen. It is hard to find a fixed narrative or 'program' in the Ince collection probably because the collection was never 'frozen' but always in flux: constantly on its way to become something new through the addition of objects, the restoration and the rearrangement and redefinition of existing objects into new narratives, etc. He also bought marbles *en bloc* and, as discussed, probably took what happened to come along.

What started out as 'a doing the sport of a day' gradually turned into becoming a desire or even obsession to create a didactic collection, which represented a cross-section of what in Blundell's opinion characterized ancient Roman sculptural imagery and beauty.[38] From decorating empty spaces in the house, sculptures were gradually given more and more prominence in new purpose-built galleries, which would epitomize the beauty of the individual sculpture and at the same time create an atmosphere that could substitute for going abroad. It served as models for artists — it epitomized the beauty of the human body, and it told stories about ancient peoples and their cultures. These stories and experiences were created by displacing the marbles, moving them from their ancient (or modern) Roman context to Lancashire, leading them into a new stage of life and giving them new meaning, creating new narratives together with other displaced objects. This was a more or less carefully orchestrated selection process conditioned by economic means, availability on the market, ideology, or purpose. Blundell's sculpture collection is a dialogue between absence and presence, between selected and rejected sculptures and related to memory between long gone periods and the present. For example, he was not as interested in Roman portraits as were the Earls of Pembroke and Blundell's portraits cannot match in quality and state of preservation the exquisite portraits in collection of the Earls of Carlisle at Castle Howard.[39] He was sometimes out with a shopping list but he also says in his defense that he bought what he liked. Vanity, concern about his legacy, and the destiny of the collection were no doubt also at play in the changes taking place at the very end of his life, including new displays that lived up to current ideas of the Enlightenment.

But shortly after Blundell's death, the collection morphed into a new stage of life. That afterlife is still ongoing, as seen by the *Return of the Gods* exhibit presently on show at the World Museum in Liverpool. There was, however one aspect in which his collecting approach seems to have remained static throughout his collecting career, i.e. in the hierarchy and taxonomy of the marbles. He did not approve of new taxonomies. He always valued the full-figure mythological statuary as most important, then followed by portrait busts, and so-called decorative objects (sarcophagus reliefs, cinerary urns and furniture, 'applied art') at the lower end. This hierarchy applied to Roman art seems to have been fully developed in the 18th-century country houses collections and it is one to which we are still partly in thrall.

Blundell lived up to the notion that collections were meant to be displayed and seen. During the 18th century, visiting country houses grew fast and Ince seems to have been a popular place to visit because it became necessary to limit access to one day a week. Similarly, by the late 18th century, 300 people visited Horace Walpole's newly built Strawberry Hill from May to September and at Wilton there had been 2324 persons during one season. 'My house is a torment not a comfort,' Walpole exclaimed. Ian Jenkins has strikingly stated: 'The paradox of connoisseurship in the late 18th century was that while it professed a mission to educate a greater public, it defined itself by its exclusivity.'[40] While visiting was still the prerogative of the governing classes, the nobility and the gentry, the practice must have begun to break down the boundary between the few and the rude public, which in the end the aristocracy found threatening and unsettling. This leads me to my second question.

18th-Century Sculpture Collecting

No other European country experienced anything similar to the English Grand Tour travelling and import of marble sculpture (**Figure 3**). The histogram shown here is based on entries in the database of ancient marbles in Britain at the 'Forschungsarchiv für antike Plastik' at Cologne University, Germany, and shows the general trends.[41] Sculpture collecting commences shortly after 1600 around the Stuart court, remains quite limited to the few landed Whigs during the early 18th century, and then increases drastically around the

[38] *TY* 7/1316.
[39] Stewart 2020 (Wilton House) and Borg *et al*. 2005 (Castle Howard).
[40] Jenkins 1997: 201.
[41] Of relevant 18th-century collections in which Hamilton and Jenkins played a role neither the Townley Collection nor the Ince Collection are included in the Cologne database as these collections are not part of that project.

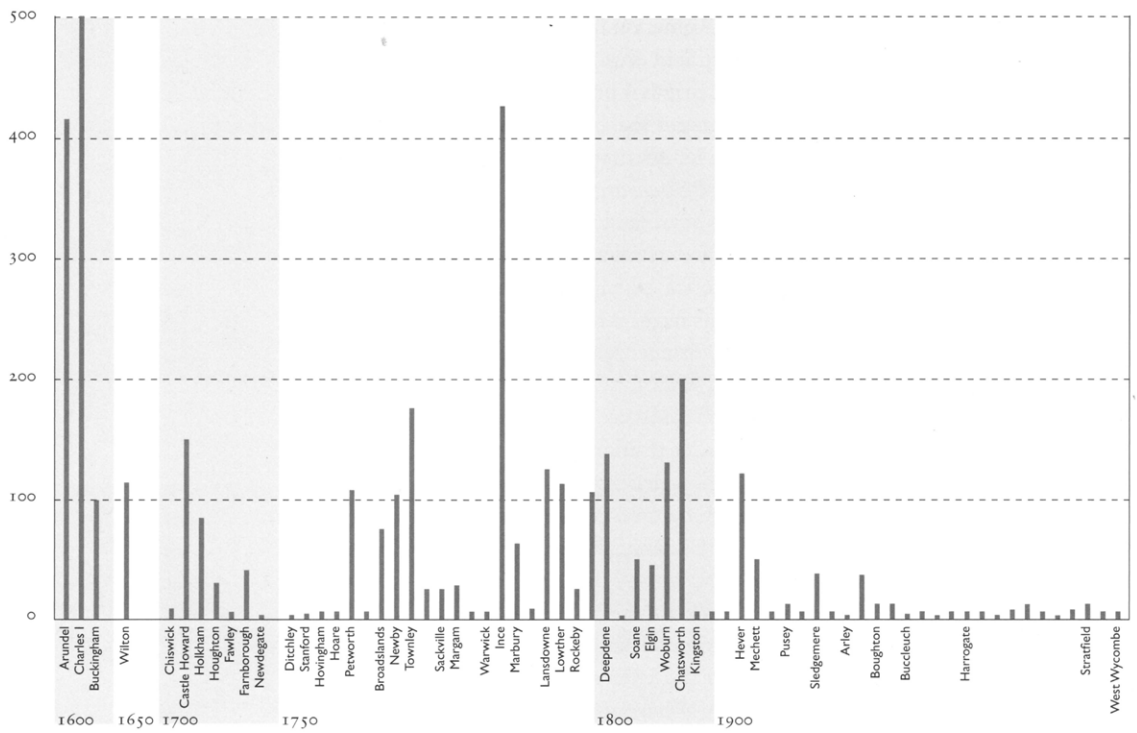


Figure 3. Histogram showing influx of Roman marble sculpture to Britain. Design: author

middle of that century. Not only is there an increase in the number of marbles imported but even more significant is the increase in the number of collections with sculpture. By the early 19th century, the 'marble mania' was basically over. It was no doubt the efficient enterprises and infrastructure set up by Hamilton and Jenkins that enabled the massive influx in the third quarter of the 18th century.

In addition, collecting was generally an important aspect of the Enlightenment movement among the upper class, with its core ideals of freedom and tolerance, and the importance of science and systems, connoisseurship and of foreign travel.[42] In Henry Peacham's *The Complete Gentleman* (1622), an important attribute of a true virtuoso connoisseur was being skilled in sculpture. It was part of a gentleman's education and to see and acquire good sculpture meant crossing the Alps. Studies 'such as poorer persons are not able to support' were encouraged. The fact that poorer persons were not able to do so was one of the things that distinguished the virtuoso as a member of the privileged elite. Connoisseurship was not for the vulgar, it was strongly class-conscious and protective. The non-productive and non-utilitarian way of employing one's time enchanted the dignity of a connoisseur, making him always respected and esteemed. Foreign travel and classical sculpture were the currency of the connoisseur. It is significant that from 1720 until 1800, almost all the marbles which entered Britain went to the furnishing of country houses. The country house was not peripheral but the basis for wealth and the frame of social as well as political decisions. At the same time, life in the countryside was the utmost expression of the leisured class. Classical sculpture — not unlike the horse — played an important role in the self-presentation of the English leisure class, and thus it became a symbol of connoisseurship and was exclusive. One collector preferred to be perceived through his classical marbles, another through his sporting activities, but the common denominator was life in the countryside. The English had a strong fascination for the classical past, whether sparked by reading ancient authors (as discussed by Viccy Coltman), or rooted in direct encounter with the material remains of the classical world. Whatever the origin of their fascination, they preferred an imaginary Italy to the actual one because

[42] According to Gerard Vaughan (2000: 22), there was no significant 18th-century collection to which Jenkins did not contribute a supply of sculptures.

it was a more malleable and thus effective mirror of their own preoccupations.[43] In his essay 'The theory of Painting' from 1715, Jonathan Richardson remarks, '... no nation under heaven so nearly resembles the ancient Greeks, and Romans than we. There is a haughty courage, an elevation of thought, a greatness of liberty, a simplicity and honesty among us, which we inherit from our ancestors, and which belong to us as Englishmen; and it is in these this resemblance consists.'[44] As Paula Findlen writes, to the English, Italy was both utopia and dystopia, a place of dreams offering endless opportunities to reinvent one's identity but Italy was also a place from where the traveler could return home in full appreciation of the superiority of one's own world that was not so defined and constrained by its past.[45]

When tours of country houses became more and more common, classical sculpture became available via auctions to non-aristocratic elite buyers. In addition, the writings of the German art theorist Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68), which found little interest among the English elite, opened up the understanding for classical art to a wider audience. Both aspects helped to create an environment in which the contemplation of art was no longer class conditioned.[46] By the end of the century, with the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars, the elite's custom of relying on classical culture to define themselves was already weakened. Instead, interest in what had previously been considered the most desirable sculptures, human figures (i.e., Roman mythological statues) faded in the light of the Elgin Marbles and the quest for the aura of the Greek original.[47] Blundell's collection performs well to the general trends in sculpture collecting but, having said that, no collection was the same. Differences in the makers' motives, religion, perception and interpretation, purpose, display, numbers and quality, etc., make every single sculptural collection unique.

The Modern Significance of the Ince Collection

Let me start a brief summary of the content of Blundell's sculpture collection by casting an eye on the cargo on board The Westmorland, or 'The English Prize,' a vessel en route from Livorno to London in 1779 loaded with art works purchased by English collectors.[48] The vessel never reached London but was captured by French warships, escorted to Malaga in Spain and its contents sold to King Carlos III. The 90 crates of artworks included books, prints, copies of Old Master paintings, contemporary (portrait) paintings by Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–79) and Pompeo Batoni (1708–87), and portrait busts in marble and terracotta by Christopher Hewetson (1737–98). There were also scaled-down copies of famous ancient statues, and modern antique-inspired works by Carlo Albacini (?1739–1807) and other sculptors, but very few ancient Roman marble sculptures.

The Westmorland seems to have carried only ancient marble sculpture that did not require export permits (i.e. so-called decorative pieces like the candelabras and cinerary urns in which Piranesi specialized).[49] Full-figure statuary and portrait busts in need of export permits were shipped via other channels. With information from the Westmorland cargo as a point of departure, Viccy Coltman has drawn attention to the fact that archaeologists often overlook the role of 18th-century copies in country house sculpture collections.[50] It is the material's appeal — the beauty and craftsmanship of the individual piece in combination with factors such as subject, pedigree, and size — that motivated buyers, and thus not only that a sculpture may be genuinely ancient. That may well be right, but importantly, archaeologists have also overlooked what these ancient sculptures — 'refashioned relics' as they are sometimes characterized — in English country house collections, may tell us about Roman art. Specifically, we might ask, how does the cargo in the Westmorland epitomize 18th-century aesthetic hierarchy and attitudes towards ancient art?

It appears from Blundell's writings that when he acquired an ancient sculpture, aesthetics and the rendering of the human body had priority: 'Indeed, no draped figures are, I think, equal to fine sculpture of human body'[51] **(Figure 4)**. However, the diversity in medium, style, age, and quality amongst the sculptures in the collection is striking. The collection holds well over 100 so-called Roman ideal sculptures, life-size human figures depicting deities and mythological figures, usually in a Greek style or in direct imitation of Greek works. There are numerous Roman-period portrait herms and busts either showing Greek

[43] Coltman 2006: 11–15, 28–37.
[44] Richardson 1725: 94.
[45] Findlen *et al.* 2009: 6–7.
[46] For the inclusive aspects of Winckelmann's writings and the disinterest towards them in Britain, see Fejfer 2003. As noted by Coltman (2006: 316–17) though, the new interest in the 'Greekness' of a sculpture among collectors indirectly came from Winckelmann through the dealers Hamilton and Jenkins and through Joseph Addison's writings.
[47] Prettejohn (2012) is essential for the relationship between the reception of classical art and trends in contemporary art.
[48] Sánchez-Jáuregui and Wilcox 2012.
[49] Scott 1975: 243.
[50] Coltman 2009: 144.
[51] *TY* 7/1320.



Figure 4. Statue of a young Bacchus allegedly found on the Via Prenestina. Formerly Ince Blundell Collection. World Museum, National Museums Liverpool inv. 59.148.32. Copyright: World Museum, National Museums Liverpool.

philosophers, Roman emperors or private individuals; a number of sarcophagi reliefs and cinerary urns; and there are some pieces of so-called 'decorative art,' including table legs, table tops, candelabras, vases, masks, funerary reliefs, and cinerary urns.[52] There are also some Egyptianizing statues of human figures and animals, like a baboon and falcon in colored hard stone. And there are a few Greek Archaic to Hellenistic sculptural reliefs, as Hamilton advised Townley when he wrote to him (1771): '... never forget that the most valuable acquisition a man of refined taste can make is a piece of fine Greek sculpture.'[53]

Even though each country house collection is different from one another, some collectors preferred portraits, others large sarcophagi reliefs, and most full figure ideal statuary. The Ince collection falls into a general pattern of country house collections, except in numbers and the presence of a larger number of 'decorative' pieces. We have heard that the greatest influx of marbles to Britain was during the third quarter of the 18th century and that Jenkins and Hamilton were the main sources. But what can be said about the sculptures' ancient Roman context? A review of the excavation licenses granted in the 18th century collected and analyzed by Ilaria Bignamini and Claire Hornsby reveals a clear pattern.[54] Few excavations were conducted in public spaces but excavators like Jenkins and Hamilton were targeting the undeveloped land around Rome where they would be sure to get the best results in finding sculpture in the hundreds of private and imperial villas, which dotted the landscape around Rome.[55] Most villas were not imperial but aristocratic properties. However, excavators did hit imperial villas: the Ince fragment of a portrait of the young Commodus 'clicks' with a fragment from Hadrian's villa by Tivoli.[56] The presence in Blundell's collection and English country house collections in general of many sculptures representing deities may seem odd to the modern viewer. However, in the ancient Roman world, such statues often populated sacred landscapes and interior spaces associated with the large luxuriously decorated villas around Rome, in Campania and Latium. Along that same line, in Richard Neudecker's wording, Egyptian or Egyptian-style animal sculptures

[52] A number of so-called decorative pieces from the Ince collection, an ancient monumental crater restored by Piranesi, a number of tabletops and table legs, are not in possession of Liverpool Museum or the Walker Art Gallery, but are in private collections. On decorative art defined as lavishly decorated items which usually served a practical purpose, see Sinn (2015: 301). For the ash chests, which take up about 10% of the collection, see Davies 2007.

[53] *TY* 7/638.

[54] Bignamini and Hornsby 2010.

[55] Bartman 2017: 15.

[56] First observed by Klaus Fittschen (1988); Fejfer 1998: 69, cat. 33.

should not be interpreted as an exotic animal farm but rather as imbedded into a religious sacred space in the villa: 'Der Fundzusammenhang ... verdeutlich, dass damit nicht primär ein exotischer Tierpark in der Villa übertragen wurde, sondern die Ausstattung eines ägyptischen Heiligtums.'[57]

Inevitably the 18th-century excavators also ran into the tombs outside the city or by an aristocratic villa site but that was also quite fine, because from here came the reliefs, urns, and portraits that many collectors favored. A number of the exquisite portraits from Castle Howard probably came either from a tomb or an important villa.[58] That we possess in the English country house collections a significant cache of Roman sculpture from private domestic contexts and to some extent funerary contexts can be demonstrated not just from the excavation licenses, but also from the sculptures themselves.[59] As argued by Bartman, we hardly find any of the typical public Roman sculpture in the English Country House collections: togate figures, cuirass statues, Large and Small Herculanean Women and Ceres types.[60] These are the most common types of public honorific statuary from Rome itself and from the municipal cities around Rome — they are almost entirely missing in the English country house collections. This pattern corresponds well with the excavation permits given during the later 18th century to the landscapes around Rome where the rich villas were located. Significantly, the 18th-century English country house collections published in the series *Monumenta Artis Romanae* series include so-called decorative pieces but in relatively small numbers while ideal statuary and busts and sarcophagi (as in the case of Woburn Abbey) dominate.[61]

Except for small cinerary urns, why then did only relatively few so-called decorative, non-figural sculptures, vases, candelabras, reliefs, which were often found in Roman villas and sometimes even signed by Greek artists (just as copies of famous Greek works of art, so-called *opera nobilia,* sometimes were) enter into the English collections?[62] Firstly, this sculptural medium was, as argued above, not considered prestigious in the 18th century, unlike statues and busts, which flagged the quality and prestige of a collector and his collection. Secondly, 'decorative sculpture' can be very difficult to keep track of, perhaps being displayed outside in the grounds, prone to disappear over time and therefore never catalogued.[63] As demonstrated by Eugene Dwyer, decorative sculpture abounded in the wealthy houses in the Vesuvian cities. Finds from Hadrian's villa at Tivoli confirm that this was not a phenomenon restricted in time to the first centuries BC and AD nor to so-called middle class properties.[64] Candelabras, vases, masks, etc. were also present at this imperial estate.

Roman aesthetics seem to have been different from the 18th-century neoclassical and modern prejudice against the 'decorative' or 'applied' art, as it did not work according to a hierarchy between genres. Even though Roman writers like Pliny the Elder praise individual Greek sculptors' works, also extensively copied by the Romans, the aura of the Greek original (and its copies) was only one criterion which guided Roman collectors. Another preference was the antiquity of an object and there was therefore a vivid trade with Greek sculptures, whether old or newly fabricated by Greek artists for Roman buyers.[65] A further element guiding buyers was *decorum* or appropriation: that an artwork was thematically appropriate for its physical context and setting, the reason why Cicero could not use the Bacchants. However, an overarching principle seems to bypass hierarchies between sculptural genres, between *opera nobilia,* full-figure mythological figures in human form, and so-called decorative art, such as vases and candelabras which often had no functional use. Instead, the sculptural genres were not divided into major or minor art but were all *ornamenta*, esteemed objects with an impact that was appreciated together as artworks. None held privilege over the other for all were seen in terms of their material visual impact, their

[57] Neudecker (1988: 58) discussing the Cassio villa by Tivoli. Schneider (2018: 204) on how early Roman elites enriched their villas with aegyptica as tokens of diplomatic gift-giving and 'memento for future generations' according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus *20.14.*

[58] Most particularly Borg *et al.* 2005: cats. 44–45.

[59] Essential is Bartman (2017: 1–23) on the sculptures as archaeological evidence.

[60] Bartman 2017: 14

[61] These include the collections at Broadlands, Castle Howard, Farnborough Hall, Woburn Abbey, Holkham Hall, Chatsworth, Petworth House and the collection of Hope and Lever at Port Sunlight. For the Wilton House collection see Stewart 2020.

[62] Vases signed in Grassinger (1991: 175–77, cat. 19; 183–85, cat. 25). On a rhyton (working as fountain) signed by the Greek artist Pontios, see Bertoletti *et al.* (1999: 97–99). Generally, on candelabras: Cain 1985. On so-called puteals: Golda 1997.

[63] For example, see a mask in Wilton House, which according to Stewart (2020: 233, cat. 144), is not mentioned in early publications of that collection and that it may have been quickly moved into the gardens.

[64] For Pompeii and the Vesuvian cities, see Dwyer (1982; 2012) and Carella *et al.* (2008). For imperial villas, see Slavazzi (2010: 8–19).

[65] Greek sculpture therefore entered English 18th-century collections via Rome but also through 17th-century Italian collections, like for example the D'Este/Gonzaga collection in Mantua or the Medici collection in Venice, which contained a number of Greek sculptures imported via Venice in the 17th century. For the influx of Greek art in Rome and Italy, see Cirucci (2010; 2020).

carving techniques, function, and decorative qualities in Roman villas and houses.[66] The exquisite quality which characterizes some works from Roman villa sites, in marble material, carving technique, and surface treatment, etc. was not genre-fixed but characterizes both mythological and 'decorative' sculpture. In the Roman period, 'decorative' sculpture did not just tail along with the A-list categories of sculptures, as we saw in the 18th century, but was itself commissioned from the best sculptural workshops. Artistic skills and economic outlays bridged equally between genres — that is, between mythological, decorative and portrait sculpture — suggesting that there was no art historical hierarchy between them. They all contributed to the decoration and ornamentation of a space, the building blocks of Roman aesthetics, operating in intricate networks of mutual ornamentation, as phrased by Nicola Barham. In short, they were all valued for what they did there with their affect and their presence.[67]

Conclusion

As I have argued here, a majority of the statues in the Ince collection and in English country house collections amassed with the aid of Hamilton and Jenkins during the second half of the 18th century must have come from Roman villas: some magnificent Imperial ones, others minor properties in Latium and Campania. The sculptures form a unique and, in many ways, overlooked repository for understanding what Roman decoration and sculptural art is. For instance, it would be easy to reduce the copies of well-known types as merely contributing to our knowledge of so-called *Kopienkritik*. However, in sheer quantity, the sculptures in country houses have more to offer to archaeology. For when compared to the 561 catalogue entries in Richard Neudecker's seminal publication on sculpture in Italian Roman villas, the English country house sculptures tally to more than 1400 works.[68] In addition, they offer scholars the possibility not only of supplementing already documented patterns of statuary types, genres, and themes, but also to provoke new questions.[69] We may identify other sets of criteria, proportions, material, rendering of details like plinths, and in human figures feet,[70] quality of carving, tool marks, etc. Through their sequence of appearance, we might in turn try to identify workshops, reconstruct how they executed the craft of carving, examine how specialized they were, speculate about the ways in which they contributed to Roman economy, and investigate how networks, human and material, might be identified. In short, these new lines of inquiry would not only give the sculptures in country houses a new voice, but also raise fresh questions about the significance, artistic and economic, of sculptural art in the Roman villa.

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[66] See the important 2018 article by Nicola Barham on ornamentum as a principle in Roman decoration. Also Hallett 2015 on the importance of viewing Roman artistic production, Roman visual culture, Roman copies of Greek work and other genres as belonging to one and the same larger cultural phenomenon. Significantly, vases were sometimes solid and therefore could not hold any liquid.

[67] Barham 2018: 294.

[68] Neudecker (1988) includes 78 villa sites with 561 catalogue entries. Browsing the Arachne database <https://arachne.dainst.org/> (viewed 11 April 2024) for the collections of the second half of the 18th century with which Hamilton and Jenkins were involved, Broadlands, Holkham (through Matthew Brettingham), Marbury Hall, Newby Hall, Petworth, and Woburn Abbey generates over 750 entries. Adding the collections at Ince Blundell Hall, Margam Park, as well as the Townley and Lansdown collections, totals more than 700 entries.

[69] Quoting Miranda Marvin's (1989: 38) conclusion on her thoughtful discussion on the factors that determined the success of a model to be copied again and again ('The moral to be drawn for Roman art from this digression into anomalies of fame in the twentieth century is that it is no easier to predict what factors made a work successful in the Roman art market than in the modern one') warns against too rigid interpretations and explanations.

[70] Typically, the same feet could be used for different models and could even migrate between genders, as Kyoko Sengoku-Haga (2010) has reasoned on the basis of scanning of the left foot of one of the so-called Dancing Maidens from the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum, which she compares to the left foot of the so-called Orestes (a copy of the so-called Stephanos athlete) of the Orestes and Electra group from the Macellum of Puteoli. She convincingly argues that the similarity between the two feet cannot be fortuitous and that a sculptor or a workshop probably used models of feet and other not eye-catching extremities across the individual types.

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From Kitsch to the Sublime: The Many Lives of Mt. Vesuvius

Nancy H. Ramage

Representations of Mt. Vesuvius by Andy Warhol are so ubiquitous that many of us, being used to mugs, mouse pads, and other trivia with this famous image, can easily forget what a grand painting the artist created (**Figure 1**).[1] In fact, not only is this a stupendously striking representation, but despite its modern color fields, it bears a strong resemblance to reality, as can be understood by comparing it to an Impressionist painting by Camille Corot from the same vantage point (**Figure 2**).[2] Here one understands that the sea, so prominent in the Corot, is shown also by Warhol, who also creates a wonderful sense of space by the layers of water, land, and mountain, with its two peaks: the main cone at right, and Monte Somma at left. Where Warhol stuns the viewer with his colors and design, he is the inheritor of a long history of artists whose studies of Mt. Vesuvius have reflected their own periods and styles.

Because of the fame of Pompeii and Herculaneum, augmented by the death of Pliny the Elder in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in AD 79,[3] the mountain has held a fascination in literature and art since antiquity. Early travelers to the region of Naples, such as the Englishman Fynes Moryson, who visited in 1594, and John Evelyn in 1645, record the difficulties of climbing the mountain, and describe the physical remains of the volcano that they witnessed.[4] Somewhat later, wealthy travelers on European journeys sought paintings that represented places they had visited, Naples among them. By the 17th century, if not earlier, it became fashionable for travelers to collect views to take home with them as *aides-mémoires* and to show their friends where they had been.[5] But it was in the later 18th century that this practice truly became popular for travelers on the Grand Tour, especially those visiting the region of Naples, with its spectacular scenery and, especially, the eruptions of Vesuvius, which became frequent in the 1770s.[6]

In the half century between 1775 and 1825, when Mt. Vesuvius erupted repeatedly, the great surge in interest in the volcano stimulated a burst in representations of the mountain in eruption. During this period, celebrated artists painted huge, dramatic paintings of the sites around Naples and Pompeii for their well-heeled clients. In contrast to such monumental works, modest and portable paintings were made for ordinary and less wealthy travelers seeking mementos of their own tours of the region (before the advent of the postcard in about 1870).[7] Most of these small paintings were made by artists whose names are no longer known to us, but who were skilled at capturing the famous places of which their clients wished to have a record. They tended to reflect the manner in which the artists of grand paintings presented Vesuvius to their wealthy clients, but these small works have a charming intimacy that contrasts strongly with the grand models on which they were based.

In examining the history of paintings of Mt. Vesuvius, and the ways in which the mountain was represented, it is clear that for most of human history there was a dearth of artistic renderings of the volcano. From Roman times, only one painting of Vesuvius survives: a small wall fresco preserved in a shrine in the House of the Centenary in Pompeii, showing the mountain in the background behind a grape-covered Bacchus, god of wine. He stands with a cup in his hand, from which the wine is dribbling (**Figure 3**), while his accompanying leopard is trying to lap up the drops of wine.[8] Vesuvius, covered with grape vines on its lower slopes, appears as a sharp cone, which is how it looked before the eruption of AD 79. That eruption completely

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[1] It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this offering to Gene Dwyer, a fine friend, and one whose work has inspired me over many years, ever since our first meeting 30 years ago in a National Endowment for the Humanities seminar in Rome. Special thanks are due to Simon Coleman and Ed Hirschland. The Warhol was painted in 1985. See Warhol 1985; 1988.

[2] Painted in 1828. Galassi 1991: 205–06.

[3] Pliny's letters to Tacitus, *Letters* 6.16 and 6.20. Seward 1986: 243–45; and Sigurdsson and Carey 2002: 37–64.

[4] On early travelers, Scarth 2009: 227–39.

[5] Blumin 2008: 5.

[6] Jenkins and Sloan 1996: 65–74.

[7] On the invention of the postcard, see Smithsonian Institution Archives, viewed 5 September 2024, <https://siarchives.si.edu/history/featured-topics/postcard/postcard-history>.

[8] Leopard or panther; the two are often confused. König 2022: 135–37.



Figure 1. Andy Warhol, *Mt. Vesuvius*, 1985. Silkscreen, acrylic, and ink on canvas. Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples. © foto Luciano Romano 2016.



Figure 2. Camille Corot, *Mt. Vesuvius*, 1828. Louvre, Paris. Public domain. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 3. Roman painting of Mt. Vesuvius, in the House of the Centenary, Pompeii. Photo: Carole Raddato, Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic license.

changed the shape of the mountain into two parts, the new main cone and a lesser one, Monte Somma.

For many centuries, the mountain simply stood near the ancient cities around the Bay of Naples, without anyone taking much notice of it except that it was well known that grape vines grew prolifically on the fertile soil on its slopes. (Note again the grape-covered Bacchus mentioned above.) It had been about 700 years since the mountain had last erupted;[9] the Romans of antiquity would certainly have recorded such an event had it occurred during a literate period. No one at that time would have thought of it as a danger, even after the earthquake of AD 62, which in retrospect was a warning of the cataclysmic eruption that was to come just 17 years later.

[9] Scarth 2009: 21–27.



Figure 4. Domenico Gargiulo, *Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 1631*, 1656–60. Private Collection. Public domain. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

From the first century AD until the 17th century, there are no surviving representations of the volcano, even though geologists tell us that approximately eight sizeable eruptions occurred over those centuries.[10] When the first paintings of Vesuvius were made in the 17th century, they were couched in religious terms, with an emphasis on St. Januarius [San Gennaro], patron saint of Naples, who was called upon as the savior to protect the populace from the terrors of the eruptions.[11] The catastrophic eruption of 1631 inspired Domenico Gargiulo to paint that event (**Figure 4**) as if St. Januarius had the power to protect the populace, thousands of whom were to die from the eruption. His painting shows the saint floating on a cupid-borne cloud above the horrified crowd, as if he were able, with his outstretched arms, to hold back the smoke, lava, and gases from the volcano, seen in the background.[12] (The artist has clearly been influenced by Michelangelo's 'Creation of Adam,' in the way the angels support the cloud as the saint performs his miracle, much as Michelangelo's God floats on cupid-borne clouds as he creates Adam.) Meanwhile, a procession is taking place in the foreground, where priests are carrying the image of the saint toward the mountain, so that he, through his relics, can perform the miracle of holding back the dangers from the mountain. This practice continued, and in fact continues to this day, for the locals believe the eruption to be a manifestation of the wrath of God, and think that only a religious solution can avert the risk to the area.

After the eruption of 1631 came another lull in visual representations of the mountain. People probably did not expect another eruption, and in any case, most believed that the power of the saint would protect them from any unpleasant events. However, from the middle of the 18th century, a renewed interest in the volcano arose. Under the influence of science and the increase

[10] Murphy 1978: 3.
[11] Rowland 2014: 26–29.
[12] Painted between 1656 *and* 1660, i.e. more than 25 years after the event. Sestieri and Daprà (1994), and for a review of this book: Schütze (1995: 624–25).



Figure 5. Pierre-Jacques Volaire, *Mt. Vesuvius*, 1779. Private Collection. Public domain. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

in knowledge from the Age of Enlightenment,[13] artists no longer portrayed Januarius in conjunction with Mt. Vesuvius, but turned instead to the beauty and majesty of the eruption, and to the increasing scientific knowledge of the period. The drama and magnificence of volcanic events fit perfectly with the contemporary fascination with the 'Sublime,' a belief in dramatic beauty that had first been described in the first century AD by Longinus and later by Edmund Burke, among others, in the 18th century.[14] The Sublime, in Burke's mind, had to do not only with beauty, but also with the fear of death from the powers of nature, and this idea fit well with the drama and risk of a volcanic eruption.[15]

One of the major artists of the period, Pierre-Jacques Volaire (1729–99), painted large renditions of the local sites that were frequented by northern European travelers. Only the wealthy could afford works by him, both because they were expensive, and because the enormous paintings required huge spaces to be hung on the wall in mansions or palaces. Volaire arrived in Naples shortly before the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 1771, an event that provided the stimulus for a whole series of paintings of this subject by the artist. One such example (**Figure 5**) from 1779 exhibits the dramatic effect of the flames and steam rising into an orange cloud from the lava flow coming down the side of Mt. Vesuvius, as a contrasting full moon hovers in the sky.[16] Not only did he record the natural wonder itself, but he also placed figures in the foreground, gesticulating wildly, to record the reaction of people to this phenomenal event. Note that some are silhouetted against the reflection of the flames in the bay, while others are reflected in the moon's effect

[13] Jenkins and Sloan 1996: 65–74.

[14] Longinus, *On the Sublime* (Rhys Roberts 1907); Burke 1757.

[15] See Doran 2015. For other studies of the Sublime, see also: Costelloe 2012, Porter 2016, Ibata 2018, and various studies at The Tate, including Llewellyn and Riding 2013.

[16] The painting was sold at auction in 2013: <https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/2-works--VESUVIUS-ERUPTING-BY-MOONLIGHT-/F8A350F57E242E8C> (viewed 5 September 2024). See Saiello 2010: 162–84



Figure 6. Joseph Wright of Derby, *A view of Vesuvius from Posillipo, Naples*, *c*. 1788–90. Art Gallery of South Australia. Public domain. Photo: © Bridgeman Images.



Figure 7. *The eruption of Mount Vesuvius, in April 1872*. After a photograph by German photographer Giorgio Sommer, 1834–1914. Photo: Penta Springs Limited / Alamy Stock Photo.



Figure 8. Joseph Wright of Derby, *Vesuvius in Eruption, with a View over the Islands in the Bay of Naples*, 1776–80. Oil on canvas. Tate, London. Public domain. Photo: © Tate.

on the water. Volaire essentially set the parameters of how to represent the eruption of Vesuvius, which many other painters were to follow. He established the idea (perhaps from his predecessor, Claude-Joseph Vernet)[17] of portraying a night scene with the moon providing the light, and the drama of reflections in the sea.

Another major artist of this period to record the eruptions of Vesuvius was Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–97),[18] whose paintings, like those of Volaire, tended to have certain repeated characteristics, namely the volcano in full eruption, a full moon, the Bay of Naples in the foreground, and frequently a few persons silhouetted against the dramatic scene. In one example (**Figure 6**), the mountain is seen from a distance, and would have looked relatively inconspicuous, except that Wright has tinted it a lurid pink color that makes it stand out from the rest of the scene. A photograph by Giorgio Sommer (*c.* 1900) from a similar point along the coast, near Posillipo, shows how far away and insignificant Vesuvius looks from that distant point (**Figure 7**), and emphasizes by contrast how Wright brought the mountain to our attention through color.[19]

Another of Wright's paintings shows the cone of Vesuvius covered in a bright orangey-red glow, as if the whole mountain were on fire, while the eruption burst into the sky (**Figure 8**), thus emphasizing its dramatic effect; this is the perfect example of nature representing the Sublime.[20] Clouds encircle this drama, while other clouds, off to the side, just manage to part

[17] See Claude-Joseph Vernet's *Mediterranean Coastline with Fishermen*, 1753 (Carmen Thyssen Collection); or *The Shipwreck in Stormy Seas*, 1777 (National Gallery, London).

[18] Nicholson 1968; and Wallis 1997: 166–75.

[19] Lyons *et al.* 2005: 196.

[20] Painted in 1776, viewed 5 September 2024, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/the-sublime/joseph-wright-of-derby-vesuvius-in-eruption-with-a-view-over-the-islands-in-the-bay-of-r1105581>. Egerton 1990: no. 102, 168–69; and Llewellyn and Riding 2013.



Figure 9. JMW Turner, *Mt. Vesuvius in Eruption*, 1817. Watercolor on paper. Yale Center for British Art. Public domain. Photo: Yale Center for British Art.

at the right place to reveal the full moon behind them. The moon is, as usual, reflected in the sea below.

James Mallord William Turner made a similarly dramatic treatment of Vesuvius (**Figure 9**), although in a much smaller work, painted in watercolor.[21] The fury of the volcano erupts from the mountain into a bright light that is, as so often, reflected in the bay below. A crescent moon hovers in the sky as people huddle on the shore, and ships are tossed on the restless sea. Meanwhile, reddish-brown clouds swirl around the amazing portrayal of this dramatic scene, in the true spirit of the Sublime.[22]

Pietro Fabris was one of the artists of the 18th century to fully realize the potential of the eruption of Vesuvius at night, and of the contrast between the glowing colors of the fiery lava and their reflection in the waters of the Bay of Naples. His hand-colored mezzotint of the eruption of 19 October 1767 (**Figure 10**),[23] which he witnessed from the mole (a large stone breakwater), shows the lava spitting into the air and flowing down the mountain against a dark sky. People and boats are silhouetted in the foreground. All of these features would be quickly adopted by other artists who painted the repeated eruptions of the 1770s and beyond. Fabris would later use the same ideas in his hand-colored engravings in the *Campi Phlegraei* for Sir William Hamilton, British envoy to the court of Naples, who was at the time conducting careful and accurate studies of Mt. Vesuvius that he described in letters to the Royal Society in London. Hamilton hired Fabris to make engravings of the eruptions, not as scenic beauties, but in order to record the details of the lava flow, the changes in the shape of the mountain, and the

[21] The sheet is 11 ¼ in. x 15 ½ in., thus much smaller than the grand paintings that have been discussed up to this point.
[22] Wilton 1979: nos. 698–99.

[23] Wellcome Collection, London. Copied as plate VI in the *Campi Phlegraei* of 1776.



Figure 10. Mount Vesuvius in eruption in 1767, from the mole at Naples. Coloured mezzotint by Pietro Fabris, 1776, after his painting, 1767. Wellcome Collection, London. Public domain. Photo: Wellcome Collection.

kinds of rock that were thrown up from the explosions (**Figure 11**).[24]

Another way in which Mt. Vesuvius was reproduced in the 18th century was by imitating the volcano in three dimensions. This was carried out by the German Prince Friedrich Franz of Anhalt-Dessau, owner of the villa at the Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Realm, and his architect, Friedrich Wilhelm of Erdmannsdorff. After visiting Naples together and witnessing an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, they created a kind of folly, with a fake but functioning volcano built out of rocks at the prince's home near Dessau. It would spit fire into the air rather like fireworks, and the dramatic conflagration would be reflected in the artificial lake that was built around it.[25]

In the 18th century, following the tradition established by Volaire and Wright, most artists were interested in the glory of the mountain as it spewed forth its lapilli (stone particles), ash, and fire, and there was little interest in portraying the historical destruction of ancient Pompeii and Herculaneum. Nevertheless, excavations were underway in those towns under the tutelage of the kings, first Charles VII of Naples (later Charles III of Spain) and Ferdinand IV, King of the Two Sicilies, in the later years of the century. By the early decades of the 19th century, artists like John Martin began to portray contemporary eruptions as if they represented the destruction of the ancient cities. Martin's painting, *Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum* of 1822 (**Figure 12**), depicts clouds that make a kind of canopy over the whole scene, at the same time showing Roman soldiers and citizens overwhelmed by the sea in the foreground and the force of the mountain in the background. The view is from Stabiae, across the bay from Vesuvius, and Herculaneum lies to the left. Specific destroyed buildings in Pompeii can be recognized in the painting. This interest in replicating the ancient destruction coincides with a literary outburst from such novels as *The Last Days of Pompeii* by Edward Bulwer-Lytton of 1834, which was itself inspired by a romanticized painting of the same title (*c.* 1830–33) by the Russian painter Karl Bryullov.[26]

Another artist to address the ancient Roman aspect of the story was the Swiss artist Angelika Kauffmann,

[24] Jenkins and Sloan 1996: 166.
[25] Jenkins and Sloan 1996: 132; and Quilitzsch 2005: 149 and 152.
[26] On Bryullov, Rowland 2014: 129–45 and fig. 8.1. See also Beard 2008: especially the Introduction, pp. 1–5, on the unsuccessful efforts of the inhabitants to flee from Pompeii; and Coates *et al.* 2012: 140–43.



Figure 11. Pietro Fabris, *Stones or Crystals from Mt. Vesuvius*, Coloured etching by Pietro Fabris, 1776. Published in Sir William Hamilton's *Campi Phlegraei*, 1776, vol. I, pl. LIIII. Wellcome Collection, London. Public domain. Photo: Wellcome Collection.



Figure 12. John Martin, *The Destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 1822. Tate, London. Public domain. Photo: Tate.



Figure 13. Angelika Kauffmann, *Pliny the Younger and His Mother at Misenum*, oil on canvas, 1785. Princeton University Art Museum. Public domain. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

whose painting, *Pliny the Younger and His Mother at Misenum* (**Figure 13**),[27] depicts an imaginary view of the historical moment when Pliny the Younger is urged by his tutor to escape as the volcano erupts in the distance. Pliny's famous letter describes the actual eruption of AD 79, in which his uncle, Pliny the Elder, dies.[28] Here it is the emotional drama of the figures that holds the viewer's attention, more than the distant volcano itself. In *Eruption of Vesuvius* by Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (**Figure 14**)[29] the crumbling classical buildings on the right, and the two younger figures trying to resuscitate an older person in the foreground, are set against the smoke and fires of the eruption in the background. A Roman ship is being wrecked in the middle distance as lapilli are flying through the air amidst the clouds. Such classicizing paintings supplied the hunger of 19th century collectors for reflections of Greek and Roman antiquity.

Somewhat in the spirit of these paintings that attempted to capture the disaster of the destruction of the ancient cities, but without the drama, is a photograph in the later 19th century, taken by the Fratelli Alinari (**Figure 15**).[30] It shows the state of the excavations at Pompeii, with the ancient houses exposed to the weather, protected only by cement covering the tops of the walls, leaving the painted

[27] Painted in 1785.
[28] See fn. 3.
[29] Galassi 1991: 44; and Almelek İşman 2019: 85–86.
[30] On the modern problems faced by the Alinari company: McGivern and Miliani 2019. And for the modern solution to save the archives: Korey 2021.



Figure 14. Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, *Eruption of Vesuvius, August 24, AD 79*, 1813. Musée des Augustins. Toulouse. Public domain. Photo: Didier Descouens, Wikimedia Commons, Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.



Figure 15. View of the excavations of Pompeii, dug around 1860. Photograph taken around 1890–1900 by Gustave Eugène Chauffourier, showing the excavated houses that had been exposed to the elements. Photo: Archivi Alinari, Firenze — Collezione: Archivi Alinari-archivio Chauffourier, Florence.



Figure 16. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius in April 1872. After a photograph by German photographer Giorgio Sommer, 1834–1914. Photo: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo.

walls exposed to the elements.[31] Vesuvius rises in the background. Thus, here is Pompeii, straight and simple, reminding the viewer of the state of affairs of the excavation, but also remembering by implication the disaster that buried the city.

By the later years of the 19th century, in the Impressionist period, the artist Giuseppe De Nittis became fascinated by Vesuvius, and painted several studies of it in and around 1872.[32] In that same year, a splendid photograph by the Fratelli Alinari magnificently captured the fearsome drama of the mountain (**Figure 16**). Twenty years later, in 1892, Edgar Degas (who owned a painting of Vesuvius by De Nittis) painted the mountain again (**Figure 17**), but in fact there is no drama to the picture at all, and the soft colors belie any sign of danger.

In contrast to the grandiose and dramatic paintings by the masters, many small versions of the eruption of Vesuvius were made by local artists of greater and lesser talent, who made endless copies of those larger paintings. It was the small works that ordinary travelers brought home to put on their walls and to show to their visitors, and that served as personal reminders of their travels. Whereas the grand pictures of the Bay of Naples and particularly the eruption of Vesuvius stood out as the favored topic for the wealthy, it was small mementos that seemed to satisfy the more modest tourist.[33]

Among the many small paintings of the region of Naples were those that showed Vesuvius in eruption. One shows how an unknown artist was influenced by

[31] On the decay of ancient buildings when exposed to the elements, Rowland 2014: 274–75.

[32] The Phillips Gallery in Washington, DC, held an exhibition of his work in 2023. See <https://www.phillipscollection.org/event/2022-11-12-de-nittis> (viewed 5 September 2024).

[33] On the spread of tourism, Rowland 2014: 146–48.



Figure 17. Edgar Degas, *Mt. Vesuvius*, 1892. Pastel. Kornfeld Collection, Bern, Switzerland. Public domain. Photo: Maltaper, Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license.



Figure 18. Unknown artist, the title painted on the lower edge: *Eruzione del Vesuvio di 29 Maggio 1833.* Private collection, Palmyra, New York. Used with permission. Photo: Tate.



Figure 19. Unknown artist. *Eruption of Vesuvius*. Late 18th century. Collection of the author.

the large and grandiose works shown above; here, in a small gouache study of Vesuvius erupting in 1833 (**Figure 18**), as the moon is reflected in the ship-filled Bay of Naples, the painter has caught the drama as well as the poetry of this famous scene, following in the tradition of Volaire.[34] Another good example was found by the fortunate writer of this article in an 18th century small-sized edition of Hamilton's letters to the Royal Society, mentioned above;[35] a tiny (2 ¾ in. x 4 in.) but highly effective study of Vesuvius in eruption was stuck into the book (**Figure 19**). The painter has made it seem as if the lava is flowing close to the viewer, as has another painter of a modest but stunning study of the eruption (**Figure 20**). This one shows people standing by a hut at left, gesticulating wildly, while another house is being enveloped by the lava at right, all very much in the tradition of Volaire.[36]

Finally, to return to our opening lines, considering versions of Vesuvius 'From Kitsch to the Sublime,' I include a small painting of the underworld of Naples: a vagabond roasting chestnuts, with Vesuvius in the background (**Figure 21**). (Note that the smoke rising from the chestnuts looks like the fumes from the volcano when it is erupting.) As any visitor to Naples knows, the underclass is very much in evidence in the region, and this is well captured in this charming caricature made for an early 19th century traveler. And from the early 20th century, to bring this study of Vesuvius into modern times, let us see how the volcano became the symbol of the Mosler spark plug, 'as powerful and as indestructible as the fires of Vesuvius' (**Figure 22**).

This brief look at the history of paintings of Mt. Vesuvius, from antiquity to modern times, will hopefully have given a sense of the grandiose to the miniature treatment of the volcano. From those paintings that invoked the power of the church, through St. Januarius, to the grandeur of the Sublime,

[34] Hand-labeled at the bottom: *Eruzione del Vesuvio di 29 Maggio 1833*. Size: 8 in. x 12 in. Compare Volaire, in Saiello 2010: 144 and 159.
[35] Hamilton 1774.
[36] Compare Volaire, in Saiello 2010: 146 and 176.



Figure 20. Unknown artist. *Eruption of Vesuvius*. Inscribed: Eruzione del 1834. Collection of the author.

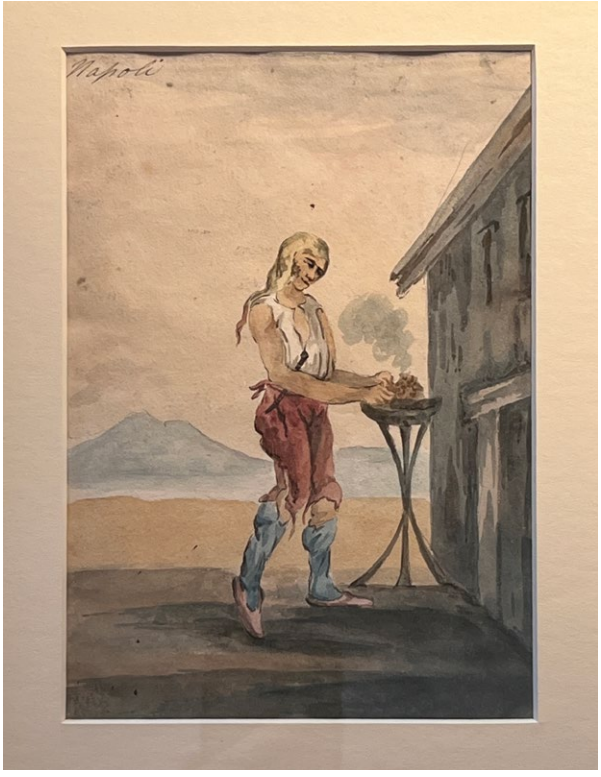


Figure 21. Unknown artist. *A Vagabond Roasting Chestnuts in Naples with Vesuvius in the Background*. Early 19th century. Collection of the author.



Figure 22. Advertisement for the A.R. Mosler & Co. spark plug: Mosler Vesuvius Plug. *c.* 1913. Collection of the author.

and from the everyday kitsch of reproductions to the grandeur of Andy Warhol, the mountain has continued to hold a grip on our imagination.

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Death and Resurrection in Pompeii. Gypsum Casts from Pompeii Eternized in Poetry from Campbell to Komunyakaa

Eric M. Moormann

> Sache que la tombe et le squelette sont de vaines apparences. Ne crois qu'à ton sourire, à ta chair fleurie, à la grâce de ta jeunesse. La Nature est vivante et belle éternellement.[1]

This remark made by the French author Hugues Rebell (1867–1905) came into my mind, when I received an invitation to contribute a paper to a Festschrift for you, dear Gene. Yet, I first thought, what an old-fashioned medium to honor a good friend and co-Pompeianist. But at the same time, it is still true that the texts collected in this book will remain a long-standing tribute to you. My second reflection was about the theme to address, immediately thinking about our first (intellectual or scientific) encounter, when I reviewed your still important monograph on sculpture ensembles in Pompeian contexts.[2] Having a lot of interests in common with you regarding this ancient town, I then thought of writing on the earliest gypsum casts which were made from 1863 onwards at the instigation, and in virtue, of a casting method developed by Giuseppe Fiorelli (1823–96).

Gypsum Casts Get a New Life

Eugene Dwyer's 2010 book about the earliest gypsum casts of the victims of the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 has made clear the impact these casts had on the imagination, among both scholars and wider audiences, of the death and disaster caused by this enormous catastrophe.[3] The monograph undoubtedly forms the (re)start of interest in these casts. Indeed, over the last years, they have been given various new displays within the walls of ancient Pompeii. Moreover, new research has shown that, luckily, the casts in the Antiquarium were not lost during one of the allied bomb attacks, in August and September 1943. Many of them have been retrieved and are on display again.[4] In 2015, the Superintendent of Pompeii at the time, Massimo Osanna, organized a large exhibition in the amphitheater of ancient Pompeii. 'Rapiti alla morte' included an arrangement made by the architect Francesco Venezia of several casts in a white pyramid-shaped tent. The casts were lying on a grey smooth floor or installed on thin metal poles upon the same floor (**Figure 1**).[5] Before — and in view of — this exhibition, the casts, partly from the time of Fiorelli, partly from later decades, underwent restoration and were cleaned. In the exhibition, they looked like brand-new objects, entirely out of place from their original context, and formed a dramatic tableau of human misery that happened in one moment at the same spot to these anonymous persons. By gathering and exposing these nameless people 'en famille' to the view of modern disaster tourists, did the makers of the exhibition evoke a form of Liebestod? Rather, I fear it was a mere kitschy demonstration of bad taste. The walls of the room were covered with scraps of old

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[1] Rebell 1894: 25–26. The Pompeii prose sketch is at p. 32. See on this author (pseudonym of George-Joseph Grassal, 1867–1905), David 2001: 155 [quotation prose text].

I thank my friend, the Dutch poet Theo van Os, for valuable suggestions to read Komunyakaa's poems (see below). The same is true for the help of colleagues and friends Maarten De Pourcq, David Rijser and Estelle Lazer. Estelle Lazer was so kind to give me the image of **Figure 2**. The editors helped me by editing my text and provide important references.

[2] Moormann 1984.

[3] Dwyer 2010. See also Dwyer 2011.

[4] Casts lost: Dwyer 2010: 69, 121. But see now Osanna 2016: 155, De Carolis and Patricelli 2018, and Osanna *et al.* 2021: 61. On the vicissitudes of Pompeii and its finds during and after the war, see also García y García 2006.

[5] In an email (9 June 2023), David Rijser has suggested that the tent might be a reference to the tents erected in 430 BC in Athens to accommodate the victims of the plague. See on the installation <https://www.amicaturistica.it/calchi-in-mostra-a-pompei/> [number of 30 casts] and <https://archeologiavocidalpassato.com/2015/06/06/rapiti-alla-morte-una-piramide-nellanfiteatro-per-i-calchi-di-pompei-parte-della-grande-mostra-pompei-e-leuropa-allarcheologico-di-napoli-che-racconta-la-sug/> [number of 20 casts] (viewed 29 August 2022); Osanna *et al.* 2021: 62–63. In tandem with the exhibition 'Pompei e l'Europa 1748–1943' in the Archaeological Museum of Naples, for which there is a catalogue with the same title (see Osanna *et al.* 2015), Osanna and his colleagues also organized a congress in 2015, the proceedings of which were edited in *Pompei e l'Europa. Atti del convegno* (2016). See in this volume Osanna (2016) on Fiorelli's discoveries. See also De Carolis and Patricelli 2018: 39–107, Lazer *et al.* 2021, and Osanna *et al.* 2021.



Figure 1. Gypsum Casts in the pyramid-shaped tent in Pompeii, Summer 2015. Photo: Gianfranco Vitolo, Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic license.

photographs cut out in the shape of pottery sherds as well as small prints of documentary photographs.

Superintendent Osanna had the casts later transported to the recently renewed and reopened Antiquarium near the ancient 'Villa Imperiale' and Porta Marina. This implies that these casts no longer enliven — if I may use this term — buildings in the excavations, such as the macellum and the deposit near the forum (empty as of Summer 2023), but they are now on display in the palaestra and presented with ample documentation (seen in fall 2025).[6] On the other hand, some casts were given a new musealization, e.g. in the House of Syricus. Certainly, even in those locations the casts are no longer *in situ*, but they give at least the suggestion that they belong to the excavated area and are not mere objects on display in a museum. The thirteen casts in the 'Orto dei fuggiaschi' (regio I, insula 21), found in the last year of Amedeo Maiuri's Superintendency, 1961, are among the few remains of victims still close to their original position.[7]

Osanna stimulated further research, and a huge volume edited in 2021 contains the stunning results of his efforts as well as a catalog of the registered casts, preserved and lost alike.[8] Nowadays, 106 casts are known, including various lost exemplars.[9] Like the 300 victims at the shore of Herculaneum who died during a pyroclastic surge of some 600 degrees Celsius, those in Pompeii died in a similar way, perishing in the surge's heat of around 250 degrees Celsius. Suffocation, as suggested by Pliny the Younger in one of his famous letters, therefore can be excluded as a cause of death.[10] The eruption would have taken place at 24 October, rather than the traditional date of 24 August, a chronological correction of the classical source proposed as early as the beginning of the 19th century and confirmed by many more data gleaned from modern archaeobotanical and other research.[11]

[6] See on the vicissitudes of the Antiquarium, finally reopened in 2016 and, with some extra rooms, in 2021: Toniolo 2021. On the casts and their restoration, see Osanna *et al.* 2021 and Toniolo 2021: 175. For new research on the human remains, see Lazer *et al.* 2021 and Osanna *et al.* 2021: 203–40. See also De Carolis and Patricelli 2018; 2019: 162–63.

[7] See extensively De Carolis and Patricelli 2019: 165n3, 196, no. 37, fig. 25 and Osanna *et al.* 2021: 87–91, figs. 31–37. Most recently, there have been made casts of victims found in the latest excavations in Regio IX, insula 10, which have remained in situ (seen in November 2025).

[8] Osanna *et al.* 2021.

[9] Osanna *et al.* 2021: 307–557, cat. nos. 1–93 (extant), A–H (lost). For recent research, see also Lazer *et al.* 2021 (number at p. 101). If added to this number the skeletons mentioned in various excavation reports, the total number of known victims would be almost eleven hundred (De Carolis and Patricelli 1998: 1.044; 2019: 145, 1.070). See also Moormann 2015: 178.

[10] G. Mastrolorenzo in Osanna *et al.* (2021: 10–16). On the victims in Herculaneum and Stabiae, see De Carolis and Patricelli 2013.

[11] M. Borgongino and G. Stefani in Osanna *et al.* (2021: 29–44, esp. 41). However, voices have raised to re-assess 24 August transmitted by Pliny the Younger, lately during a congress in Boscoreale, "Pompei 79 d.C. Questioni di metodo e di narrazione storica. Convegno

Let us now turn to my contribution to the study of the plaster casts: remembering casts in poetry. Over the years I have collected many poems with Pompeii as their main theme. Some of them have received some attention in my *Pompeii's Ashes*,[12] but since that book focuses on prose fiction, most slumber in a file and might at some moment get a reassessment. Most poets apparently were (and are) struck by the two faces that Pompeii shows: that is, the victims of the eruption of AD 79 and that of a living town, filled with visitors (like the poet or the ego speaking through the poem) who in a way are the new temporary inhabitants making the site come alive.[13] Looking through these texts, beginning with the year 1863, when Giuseppe Fiorelli produced the first cast, I was stupefied by the fact that the number of poems featuring a specific cast or the casts in general is extremely small, three in total. As a result of this brief search, I had, first, found among them one North-American poem only which covers the theme of my contribution in full: William Wilfred Campbell's *Out of Pompeii*. To that, there are two more examples, dating some hundred years later: *Body of a Woman (Cadavere di donna)* by Yusef Komunyakaa, which is mentioned by Dwyer, but not dealt with in detail. In the same volume the poet included *Body of a Dog (Cadavere di un cane)*.[14] Together, they form the topic of this tribute.

The Cast of a Kissed Girl

Wilfred Campbell (1860–1918) was a Canadian poet and literary critic. After a career as a clergyman he worked in public service and as a literary author.[15] The Pompeii poem discussed here features in Campbell's second collection of poetry in which, according to the Canadian Campbell expert Laurel Boone, the poems 'show the preoccupation with harmonizing religion, science, and social theory that had started while he was still a clergyman and would continue through his middle age.' Campbell republished *Out of Pompeii* in his large collective volume of poetry printed in 1905.

Campbell's poetry includes evocations of Canada's countryside, national *homines illustres*, the British Empire and Canada as a part of it, and — fewer in number — Biblical and Greco-Roman mythical themes. The Pompeii poem appears as an exception in respect to its topic. In the introduction to his 1905 poetry collection, Campbell argues that great poetry is about the human soul. The Pompeii poem stands in the section 'Poems of the Affections.' This section reflects the various aims a poet should follow, human soul, nature, etc., which corresponds with Boone's remark quoted above.

Out of Pompeii is the result of the contemplation of a gypsum cast of a female victim at Pompeii and reflects upon what the life of this girl might have been like if the catastrophe had not taken place. The poet introduces his ballad with the following lines:[16]

> The body of a young girl was found in Pompeii, lying face downward, with her head resting upon her arms, perhaps asleep; the scoria of the volcano had preserved a perfect mould of her form. She was clad in a single garment. No more beautiful form was ever imagined by a sculptor.

The poem consists of five stanzas of eight lines each, in a rhyme scheme A-B-A-B-C-D-C-D:

> She lay, face downward, on her bended arm,
> In this her new, sweet dream of human bliss,
> Her heart within her, fearful, fluttering, warm,
> Her lips yet painted with love's first timorous kiss.
> She did not note the darkening afternoon,
> She did not mark the lowering of the sky
> O'er that great city; earth had given its boon
> Unto her lips; Love touched her, and passed by.
>
> In one dread moment all the sky grew dark -
> The hideous rain, the panic, the red rout,
> Where love lost love, and all the world might mark
> The city overwhelmed, blotted out,
> Without one cry, so quick oblivion came,
> And life passed to the black where all forget;
> But she — we know not of her house or name, —
> In love's sweet musings doth lie dreaming yet.
>
> The dread hell passed, the ruined world grew still,
> And the great city passed to nothingness:
> The ages went, and mankind worked its will.
> Then men stood still amid the centuries' press,
> And in the ash-hid ruins opened bare,

internazionale intorno alla data dell'eruzione del Vesuvio. Pompei – Antiquario di Boscoreale 21 -22 novembre 2025", the proceedings of which will be edited by the organizers Helga Di Giuseppe and Mario Grimaldi.

[12] Moormann 2015: 204–6 (Gregorovius), 218–21 (Fairfield), 232 (Montfort), 288–89 (Levi), 308–10 (Norwid), 310–12 (Janovic), 355–56 (Citino), 391–412 (poems on Herculaneum).

[13] Or, to say it with De Carolis and Patricelli (2019: 162): 'Le vittime dell'eruzione, grazie a questo procedimento, sembrano rivivere attraverso il tempo, con il recupero del loro aspetto esterno, delle fattezze, in alcuni casi delle trame dei vestiti, e soprattutto nei loro ultimi gesti che testimoniano i momenti tragici della loro agonia.'

[14] Dwyer 2010: 140n35 refers to Komunyakaa (2000: 18 [Dog], 42 [Woman]). On the latter poem, see also Pucci 2015: 243.

[15] Brief biography by Boone 2003. His year of birth is reported differently, from 1858 to 1861, but we follow the indication given by Boone, here and in other studies.

[16] Campbell 1892. Later published without introduction in Campbell (1893: 87–89; 1905: 193). Also partly reproduced in David (2001: 152).

As she lay down in her shamed loveliness,
Sculptured and frozen, late they found her there,
Image of love, 'mid all that hideousness.

Her head, face downward, on her bended arm,
Her single robe that showed her shapely form,
Her wondrous fate love keeps divinely warm
Over the centuries, past the slaying storm.
The heart can read in writings time hath left,
That linger still through death's oblivion;
And in this waste of life and light bereft,
She brings again a beauty that had gone.

And if there be a day when all shall wake,
As dreams the hoping, doubting human heart,
The dim forgetfulness of death will break
For her as one who sleeps with lips apart;
And did God call her suddenly, I know
She'd wake as morning wakened by the thrush,
Feel that red kiss across the centuries glow.
And make all heaven rosier by her blush.

Campbell presents the cast as that of a young girl who had just experienced her first love by means of a chaste kiss. Still under the impression of this experience, she does not bother about the upcoming disaster and seems to sleep, dreaming of the kiss (or the kisser). This seems to imply that Love is the culprit, is her murderer, not the disaster as such. Due to the pouring rain, pomice, and other eruption consequences, Pompeii and she have suddenly vanished from the earth. Excavations only brought the town and her folk back to daylight. It is a finely-crafted image: she was found 'sculptured and frozen,' just like the casts described by Dwyer as 'living statues.' Her open mouth ('lips apart') also suggests a touch of life, of *enargeia*, like that represented in statues. Campbell describes the remains: attitude, dress, and suggests that the girl's memory has been preserved in her soul. He utters the hope that she will become alive again some day, when God brings life to all, perhaps at the moment of the Last Judgement, and that she will take the embraces of her lover as a pure young girl again. The poetic 'I' would have liked to be the person to awake her, but steps back for God.

One of the very few authors who paid attention to this poem is the literary historian Marie-France David who discussed it in the context of a series of wall paintings and other images conveying what she calls 'la fatalité' of Pompeii as well as its decadence. She underlines that the corpse of the girl still enjoys her first love despite her being dead and covered by the ashes of Pompeii. Death might even be the consequence of love.[17] Personally, I fail to recognize the connection with 'decadence,' one of the focus themes studied by David. The girl is rather presented in a sober and simple manner. Campbell does not try to enhance the effects which the corpse makes on the modern viewer.

As far as I could glean from Campbell's biography, the poet never visited Europe, let alone Italy, and will have known the figure only from a photograph, but I was not able to find the exact source that inspired Campbell. After all, in this era not many books on Pompeii were available on the American market; the famous *Pompeii. Its Life and Art* by August Mau (1840–1909) translated by Francis W. Kelsey (1858–1927) would only come out in 1899. Campbell's source might be a widely spread unillustrated Pompeii guidebook by Eustace Neville-Rolfe (1845–1908), quoted extensively by Dwyer, who described several casts in the Antiquarium as well as the process of making them.[18] A less likely candidate, yet containing an illustration, would be the 1890 fascicle of Niccolini's huge *Le Case ed i Monumenti di Pompei*, which I doubt was easily available outside Italy at the time.[19]

Of course, we should try to establish which cast was meant by Campbell. If the description quoted fits a single example, the most likely candidate is a cast found 23 April 1875 on the Via Stabiana at the north-eastern corner of Insula VI 14 (**Figure 2**). In Neville-Rolfe's guide, we see our figure described as exposed in a glass case in the Antiquarium: 'The next case stands over a staircase to allow of its being examined from below as well as from above. It is the figure of a young girl, and it is the most pathetic of all casts in the collection.'[20] Apparently, this particular display aimed at allowing to see the deceased person from below as well as from top. Most recently, this cast featured in the aforementioned exhibition and is now to be seen in the Palaestra.[21]

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[17] David 2001: 152–53.

[18] Neville-Rolfe 1888; Dwyer 2010: 91–92. See for this and other books by Neville-Rolfe <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Neville%20Rolfe%2C%20Eustace%2C%20 1845-1908> (viewed 11 September 2024).

[19] Niccolini and Niccolini 1890: 7–8, plate I, fig. 3. See now Niccolini and Niccolini 2016: 404–05, pl. I.3. In the same volume on this and other casts: 74–77 [S. Schütze], 262–63, plate 18 [from vol. II; cast of 1863], 404–09, pls. I–IV [from vol. III]. On this project, V. Kockel in Niccolini and Niccolini (2016: 22–25).

[20] Neville-Rolfe 1888: 83; Dwyer 2010: 91–92 (quotation). Other casts described: Neville-Rolfe 1888: 82–84; almost completely quoted, in the discussion of the singular casts, in Dwyer 2010: 59, 68, 81–82, 87, 89.

[21] De Carolis and Patricelli 2019: 169–71 no. 5, fig. 10, and Osanna *et al.* 2021: 63, no. 10.



Figure 2. Gypsum Cast no. 10, allegedly a girl, found in 1875 and now in the Antiquarium of Pompeii. Photo: FrDr, Wikimedia Commons, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

Following others, Campbell interprets the figure as a young girl. In contrast, at the time of discovery, the figure, cast under the direct supervision of Fiorelli's successor Michele Ruggiero (1811–1900), was interpreted as a woman, maybe even pregnant due to the thick mass of cloth under her belly.[22] Photos made by Giacomo Brogi (1822–81) and Giorgio Sommer (1834–1914) and others were instrumental in making the deceased girl famous.[23]

From the outset, the 1875 cast received attention in various studies as well as literary works thanks to its evocative nature.[24] One of Fiorelli's colleagues, Antonio Sogliano (1854–1945) compared her to the Aphrodite Kallipygos in the National Museum in Naples. In Norman Douglas' *Nerinda* the protagonist Donald tells in his diary how he visits the museum with Fiorelli's casts, characterized as a 'queer spot,' in the company of his friend Bertha. He is struck by 'one of a young woman, with eyes half closed as though in pain. It seemed to fascinate Bertha by its life-like grace and beauty.'[25] At later visits, the museum's custode Francesco tells about the cast and gradually Donald falls in love with her. She will become his fatal lover Nerinda.[26] Some more works of art inspired by this and other casts include modern sculptures, but they fall out of scope of this contribution.[27]

The remains have been the object of recent CT-scans and X-Ray analyses by the Australian anthropologist Estelle Lazer and her international team. This new research strongly suggests that the victim's sex is male

[22] Dwyer 2011: 51–52, fig. 3.4; Osanna *et al.* 2021: 55–56, no. 10, fig. 11.
[23] E.g., a fine photo by Michele Amodio (1817-20-1913) from 1878, showing the victim on a wooden plank *en plein air* (Miraglia and Osanna 2015: 106, no. 66; De Carolis and Patricelli 2019: 171, fig. 10). On these photographers: Miraglia and Osanna 2015: 36–44, and V. Kockel in Niccolini and Niccolini (2016: 25 [in connection to the Niccolini project]).
[24] García y García 2006: 191–92; Dwyer 2010: 91–96; A. Capurso in Osanna *et al.* 2015: 399, cat. 4.17; De Carolis and Patricelli 2018: 56–61; Lazer *et al.* 2021: 110–11; Osanna *et al.* 2021: 55–56.
[25] Douglas 1929: 26.
[26] Douglas 1929. See Moormann 2015: 317–20 (I had not recognized the cast but included it in fig. 13).
[27] E.g., see Lichtenstein 2012.

and that the person would be an adult rather than a young person.[28] Similar corrections to old assumptions have been made and they illustrate the vanity of the old interpretations and fantasies, more driven by the wish to recognize drama and to give an individual *vita* to each victim rather than rigorous scientific methods, which nowadays are being adopted to acquire a more or less precise physical identikit of the victims. As if the victims as they are have not yet suffered enough. We observe how the local archaeologists and, in their footsteps, other archaeologists as well as literary authors create a parallel world to that of the real world. As we know, this way of interpreting victims started early, with the find of skeletal remains and voids.[29]

Yusef Komunyakaa's Pompeian Casts

Two out of 132 poems collected in a slim, but omnifarious volume of poems, published in 2000 and entitled *Talking Dirty to the Gods,* might be relevant in our considerations. The book is Yusef Komunyakaa's eleventh collection within an extremely rich poetical oeuvre, started in 1979 with *Dedications and Other Dark Horses*. Komunyakaa, born in Bogalusa, Louisiana in 1941 or 1947, fought, among others, as a soldier in the Vietnam Wars and published poems about his recollections in *Dien Cai Dau* (1988).[30] He taught in various universities and was recognized with the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1994, among other awards. The topics addressed in the poetic oeuvre of this African-American author, whose birth name is James William Brown, are a multitude of what seems rarely fitting themes and show a vast reading, talent of associations, and a bewilderment of connections between heterogeneous arguments. They include themes like gender and race differences (or not?), jazz, nature, cities, art history, and ancient classical myth. A multitude of poems circles around violence and life and death.[31] He also produced a modern remake of the Gilgamesh Epic and contributed texts for operatic stage works. In sum, Komunyakaa's oeuvre is a 'volcanic outpouring,' as Michael Collins calls it in the introduction to a set of essays about the poet.[32] Komunyakaa's poetry is a 'rigorous, learned, and demanding art.'[33]

All of this is true of *Talking Dirty to the Gods*. All of the poems in this collection have the shape of four sets of four quatrains in free verse,[34] bear a title hinting at the content, and are full of allusions to sex. In a lengthy review, the poet and literary critic Adam Kirsch calls the book the best of Komunyakaa's ten volumes up to 2001. He alludes to the poet's fondness for and engagement with jazz music, for which reason he recognizes the improvisational style and, I would add, a bricolage of tightly composed verses. Kirsch observes aptly:

> Like Lowell, Komunyakaa meditates brokenly on violence, natural and human; esoteric details from his reading provide many of his subjects and images. The poems do not tell a story, but the repetition of form and the return to a few subjects and fields of reference make the book feel unified. Komunyakaa looks to Greek antiquity, to nature, and to contemporary America for his subjects, and he mixes the three to good effect.[35]

From my point of view as a classical scholar and Pompeii addict, I was surprised by the many allusions to classical myth and history throughout *Talking Dirty to the Gods*. The literary scholar Daniel Cross Turner defined the wealth of themes and approaches of the collection most clearly:

> In *Talking Dirty to the Gods*—the title itself is telling—images from Greek and Roman myths are interspersed with those from the African and Caribbean diaspora, crafting a poetic ethnography that speaks pointedly to the collisions and cohesions of modernity on a global scale. Science (from Lucretius to evolution to theories of chaos and complexity), philosophy (from classical to Eastern to existentialism), religion (from Christianity to Voodoo to Buddhism to animism to Hinduism), psychiatry (from Freudianism to Jungian archetypes to neuroscience and pharmapsychology), music (from blues to country to pop to jazz to rap), painting (from Renaissance art to impressionism to cubism to surrealism), sculpture (from primitive to

[28] Lazer *et al.* 2021: 110–11, figs. 2–3, and Osanna *et al.* 2021, 210, figs. 9–10, 339–41, no. 10. Estelle Lazer informed me that (1) the person was not pregnant, and (2) having found two bones of the forearm only, the sex could not be established with certainty, while (3) the volume rendered exterior does not present as particularly female but is not strong enough evidence for us to state that this victim was male (email 25 June 2023).

[29] See for many examples evocated in literature Moormann 2015: 178–89, Pucci 2015, and Osanna 2016: 151–52.

[30] For Komunyakaa's work up to 2000, see Salas 2003 (with a focus on his Vietnam poems); and the complete issue of *Callaloo* 28, no. 3 (Collins 2005). For a brief vita, see Turner 2009: 335. There are Wikipedia pages dedicated to him as well, where his year of birth is either 1941 or 1947. Turner's paper contains an interview with the poet that is highly instructive for understanding Komunyakaa's volume's genesis, composition, contents, poetics, and problems addressed.

[31] See on those matters Binghadeer 2022.

[32] Collins 2005: 467.

[33] Salas 2003: 35.

[34] On this form and its musical implication, see Salas 2005: 799–800.

[35] Kirsch 2001: 40. Lowell is the American poet Robert Lowell (1911–77). See on this volume called a 'brava performance': Salas (2003: 47 [quotation]–49), who notes the manifold content.

classical to modern), film (from *King Kong* to *Godzilla*), and, of course, poetry (from Ovid to Shakespeare to Rimbaud to Dickinson to Harry Crosby to Plath to Komunyakaa himself) are all fair game as foundations for formulating new cultural myths.[36]

In a similar vein, Komunyakaa scholar Angela M. Salas' characterization of the volume as a Renaissance or Baroque 'cabinet of curiosities' hits the mark perfectly.[37]

In what follows, I am confident that I cannot do full justice to the poet and the coherence that he has envisaged in *Talking Dirty to the Gods*. But with respect to our Pompeii theme, two poems stand out that I want to focus on. The objects evoked, two gypsum casts from Pompeii, are genuine items of a cabinet of historical and natural curiosities.[38] First, there is a poem about a dog.[39]

> Body of a Dog
> *(Cadavere di un Cane)*
>
> He's chasing a hare.
> In eleven or twelve countries
> The philosophy of the hourglass
> Has turned into weathered stone,
>
> But he races the same sun
> Through threadbare silhouettes.
> If there were human prayers
> Left, they wouldn't reach him
>
> In Vulcan's dream come true.
> Did he know when vicissitude
> Eased over hills like mist or scent
> Of a bitch? Given another month,
>
> He would have made the boy
> Into a very good master.
> He's treed his own ghost
> In a nearby poppy field.

The poem highlights a dog, which has formed a source of inspiration for modern artists as it was for older ones (**Figure 3**).[40] This is one of the most famous



Figure 3. Gypsum cast of a dog, found in the House of Vesonius Primus. Photo: Jebulon, Wikimedia Commons, Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

casts in Pompeii, but in the way in which the animal is described, he does not correspond to the dead dog who could not escape due to his being chained at the entrance of the House of Vesonius Primus or Orpheus (VI 14, 20). It was found in 1874 and is one of the best casts made in that era.[41]

The poet, or his spokesman or spokeswoman, does not stop at Pompeii, if we are in Pompeii at all! The eleven or twelve countries can be anywhere in the world. The hunt might even take place on the eternal hunting grounds, fields full of grey shadows. There is an allusion to time by means of the hourglass as a symbol of the connection between past and present. The sand belongs to the material that covered Pompeii and can turn into stone, like the dog's remains. He and the time reasoning ('philosophy') in the hourglass have changed into stone and dead objects. In the following the dog resumes his activities, although there is no way to communicate due to the volcano's activity (personified by the god Vulcan). Finally, the dog is not able to become an

[36] Turner 2012: 152n2. He does not mention the poems discussed here.
[37] Salas (2005: 801) with references to figures such as Ulisse Aldrovandi and Athanasius Kircher.
[38] Salas (2005: 805–8) discusses the 'Body of a Woman' (see below) in this respect.
[39] Komunyakaa 2000: 18.
[40] E.g., on Allan McCollum's compositions, see Gardner Coates *et al.* 2012: 232–33, cat. 88. See also De Carolis and Patricelli 2018: 62, fig. 44.
[41] Dwyer 2010: 87–89, figs. 25, 42; Osanna *et al.* 2021: 53, fig. 7, 216–17, fig. 22 (MIP images), 333–34, cat. 8.

obedient servant of his (future) master because of the sudden cataclysm. He has hunted (if I read correctly 'treed') himself away to a terrain with poppies, which, as such, form associations with sleep and death.

The image described in the first two quatrains recall a famous white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter in the British Museum on which a dog runs after a hare in front of a funerary stela and in the presence of two men, possibly the 'threadbare silhouettes' of line 6 (**Figure 4**). One of the depicted men might be the deceased honoured with this exquisite vase, the other his old friend who makes the dedication.[42] Being in a cemetery, the prayers of line 7 are relevant, although the adressees of line 8 have passed away and cannot hear them any longer. If the poet has used this object as a source of inspiration, it is in a certain way a striking parallel, since the white lekythoi were specifically made as gifts for the deceased, and in our case the dog was one of the 'persons' involved in the calamity and now honoured.

Of course, my associations to the dog from Pompeii and the lekythos in London are wild guesses. I do not know whether Komunyakaa had knowledge of these two objects — and, for that matter, of Pompeii and its gypsum casts — but relying on his vast knowledge of monuments and works of art I wonder if he indeed did know them. Moreover, the Italian subtitle is telling in this respect. I do not know whether the poet ever visited Pompeii, but, taking into account the vast amount of images available in publications and in the internet, this question is less urgent than in the case of Campbell more than hundred years before.

The second poem with an Italian subtitle is *Body of a Woman* which circles around a girl.[43]



Figure 4. Dog hunting a hare in front of a funerary stela and two naked hunters. Thanatos Painter (attributed), whiteground lekythos, around 435–425 BCE. London, British Museum, inv. nr. 1876,0328.2. Photo: ArchaiOptix, Wikimedia Commons, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

Body of a Woman
(Cadavere di Donna)

Here you are, still

Reposed behind glass
Like a work of art. Yes,
Body of precious aloneness,

There are times I desire you
In a lover's arms. Sometimes
I want you making fierce love,
With moans like thought bubbles

Of pleasure forever in Pompeii's
Lava & ash. Yet, other nights
As Miles Davis plays ballads
In the background, like tonight,

There's only irony: I see
You're gazing out toward
The house of the Faun
Waiting for someone.

[42] Inv. D 60, dated to 430–425 BC. Oakley 2004: 16–17, 173–74, 178–79, 230, figs. 136–37; Giudice 2015: 93–94, fig. 15, 292, cat. F41 with bibliography. Museum website, viewed 30 May 2023 <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/G_1876-0328-2>.

[43] Komunyakaa 2000: 42. On this poem, see Salas 2005: 805–8, Dwyer 2010: 140n35; 2011: 55, and Pucci 2015: 243. 'Body of a Woman' was first published in the *Kenyon Review*, Vol. 20, No. 3/4, Summer - Autumn 1998, viewed 5 July 2023 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i403933>. It offers an interesting link to Eugene Dwyer's own institution. I thank editor Brad Hostetler for pointing me to this connection.

The narrator or lyric 'I' sees a showcase in the Antiquarium or a house in Pompeii and encounters its contents, a cadaver; it is not explicitly called a cast, but it can barely be something else. The showcase has transformed the figure into an object, even into an art work. But he or she intimates spirit and life within the body which should be that of a female figure, who is imagined as a living person possessed of blood and passion. The exposition in a glass case recalls the fairytale of Snow White waiting for a lover who will bring her back to life again. While contemplating her, the narrator might feel attracted to her, although — in one suggestive enjambement in lines 5–6 and immediately after — he/she hopes that the cast's persona should be with her lover. In this respect the poem is similar to that of Campbell and to the motif of the love aroused in the onlooker in regard to the ancient victim we encounter in many novels. This onlooker is something of a voyeur.

Is Pompeii here depicted as the cliché town of Venus and sexual abundance? The volcanic debris (mistakenly lava as well as lapilli) has sealed off forever the woman and her passion. The bubbles make me think of the balloons in cartoons, which would bring her to modern times, as do 'other nights,' located elsewhere, possibly in the narrator's home. He or she — and the corpse — dance and make love on the tones of the trumpet of the great jazz musician Miles Davis (1926–91). Here one of Komunyakaa's familiar and beloved jazz references comes to the fore. Jazz transports us to a melancholical mood, in which the girl is no longer interested in the narrator's advances. Finally, she might be a prostitute walking the street in front of the grandest mansion in town, the House of the Faun, and waiting for a client.[44] And if she is a prostitute, does the reference to Davis hint at his 1971 album *Bitches Brew*, or is that too far-fetched? She is treading the trottoir which has the famous inscription of the Oscan era, *HAVE*, 'paving the way' and inviting people to the house.[45] Or is it her house, as Salas has suggested?[46] Finally, the motif of the always-sexually active faun or (more correctly) satyr exposed in the atrium's basin might be at work here. Does the combination of these two hidden details convey the sense of 'irony'?

Komunyakaa does not describe the figure in greater detail, so that we cannot be sure which cast he has had in mind. Let us guess that cast no. 10 (**Figure 2**) has been the object of possible desire, as it has been for more than a hundred years up to now.

Both casts are intermediates between living creatures and dead objects, with a clear agency towards the reader. Their 'thingness'[47] includes dead material as well as remains of the bodies, even if they are invisible. This mix stirs the narrator's emotion, especially in the case of the girl, whereas the dog gets a new life, as it were, maybe in the context of an ancient graveyard like that on the lekythos. The casts are hybrids — human remains and modern products at one time — like many more creatures in the volume, such as mythic centaurs and satyrs.[48]

Conclusion

In this tribute to Gene Dwyer, I have sought to explore the associations of Pompeii's gypsum casts with three North American poems, written in 1892 and before or in 2000. They are the rare immediate poetic responses to the casts of victims of the AD 79 cataclysm in Pompeii, whereas they have struck many people who have been in Pompeii or who have seen photographs of them. The corpses have become artifacts, yes, works of art, that arouse amorous feelings, while the dog recalls his activity as a hunter. Both poets try to resurrect the deceased and now cast-bound girl. Campbell implores God, while Komunyakaa hopes that a satyr will intervene. That science has possibly transformed her into a man should not disturb us: he can incite sentimental feelings as well.

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[44] A monument studied by Eugene Dwyer in a fine analysis of its layout (Dwyer 2001).

[45] See Hartnett (2017: 123–24) on the effect of inviting inscriptions. On prostitution in the street, Hartnett (2017: 61–62).

[46] Salas 2005: 805–08.

[47] See Turner (2012) for this concept applied to Komunyakaa's *Talking Dirty to the Gods*.

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Giacomo Boni e il mausoleo da Tor di Quinto a Villa Blanc: Questioni di metodo

Pier Giovanni Guzzo

Chi oggi a Roma percorra via Nomentana uscendo da porta Pia incontrerà ad una distanza di poco superiore ai due chilometri, poco dopo la basilica di Santa Agnese (**Figure 1**), sul lato destro della via un mausoleo di forma cilindrica (**Figure 2**). Allo scopo di evitare incidenti, possibili a causa del sostenuto traffico veicolare in quella zona, è consigliabile che, lasciata la vettura, il mausoleo venga guardato dal marciapiedi, sul quale sorge come incongruo spartitraffico. Ben presto, chi abbia un pur minimo di esperienza archeologica giungerà alla conclusione che si tratta di un'attenta ricostruzione, compiuta utilizzando anche materiali antichi, in un luogo diverso da quello sul quale il monumento funerario in origine sorgeva.

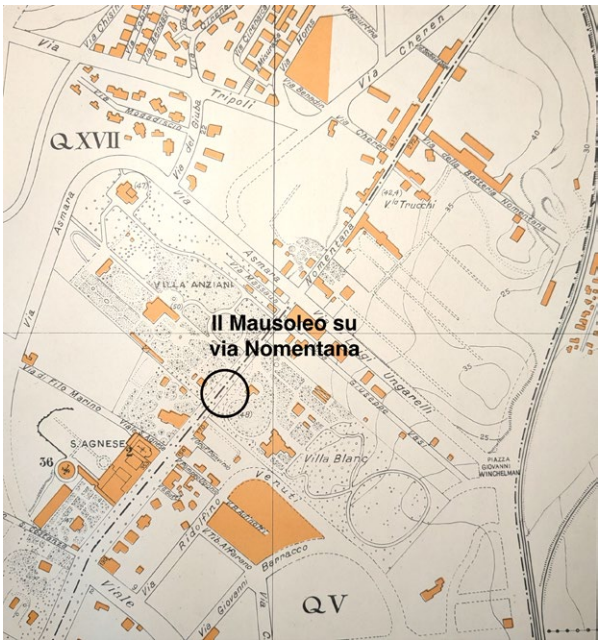


Figure 1. Roma, via Nomentana. Localizzazione attuale del mausoleo. Marino and Gigli 1934: tav. 8.

Sappiamo infatti che il barone Alberto Blanc[1] aveva incaricato l'ingegnere Francesco Mora[2] di progettare, nel 1895, l'adattamento e l'ingrandimento dei fabbricati siti allora fuori porta, lungo la via Nomentana, acquistati nel 1893 dalla famiglia Lezzani (**Figure 3**). In questo complessivo progetto era stata prevista la ricostruzione, su un basamento a pianta quadrata, di un mausoleo a forma cilindrica di epoca romana con altezza di tre filari oltre a quello di base e a quello superiore, decorato con girali a rilievo (**Figure 4**).[3]

All'ingegnere Mora il Blanc affiancò, nel progetto e in special modo nell'ideazione delle decorazioni, Giacomo Boni, con il quale aveva, e continuò ad avere, una consuetudine lunga nel tempo.[4] Così, tra il 1895 e il 1897, il Boni si impegnò in questo incarico, che rappresentò per lui 'delizia e tormento' (**Figure 5**).[5]

Nonostante che la baronessa Blanc temesse 'gli sperimenti archeologici di Boni,'[6] questi propose al Blanc 'di ricostruire nel suo giardino un monumento funerario già esistente sulla via Flaminia.'[7] La proposta venne accolta: tanto da figurare, come anticipato, nel progetto della villa.

In quegli anni Giacomo Boni (Venezia 1859–Roma 1925) ricopriva la carica di direttore dell'ufficio regionale dei monumenti di Roma; dal 1898 aveva iniziato scavi archeologici nel Foro Romano, ampliati poi nel 1907 al Palatino.[8] I suoi studi tecnici l'avevano portato all'attività di restauro dei monumenti, approfittando dei numerosi cantieri attivi a Venezia a tale scopo. In tale operare Boni studiò e poi seguì i metodi proposti e illustrati da John Ruskin. La sua attenzione agli elementi concreti da adoperare nei restauri per garantirne la fedeltà all'originale ne fece un precursore nell'uso

[1] Nato a Chambéry nel 1835 percorse la carriera diplomatica. Nominato senatore nel 1892, ricoprì la carica di ministro degli affari esteri dal 1893 al 1896. Morì a Torino nel 1904. Cfr. Mori 1968.
[2] Gli si deve l'opera 'Di un canale di derivazione dal Tevere abbozzo di progetto,' Roma 1873, scritto a seguito della catastrofica alluvione del 28 dicembre 1870.
[3] Campitelli 1994: 71–72.
[4] Cfr. Tea 1932, indice dei nomi s.v. Blanc.
[5] Tea 1932: 501.
[6] Tea 1932: 508.
[7] Tea 1932: 512.
[8] Cfr. Romanelli 1971. Dell'ampia bibliografia sul Nostro ci si limita a quanto apparso da ultimo: Russo *et al.* 2021; Guzzo 2022.



Figure 2. Roma, via Nomentana. Veduta attuale del mausoleo. Wikimedia Commons.

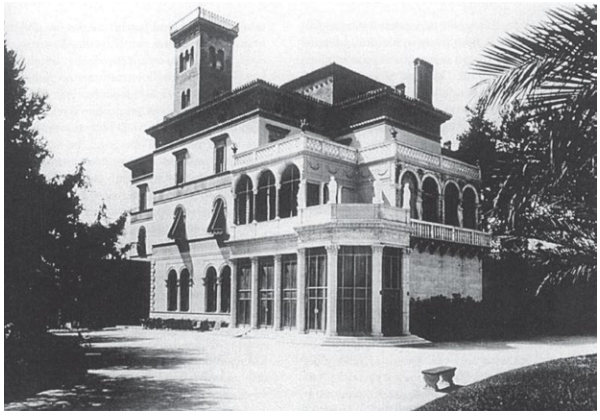


Figure 3. Veduta della villa su via Nomentana in Roma. Vistoli 2010: 68.

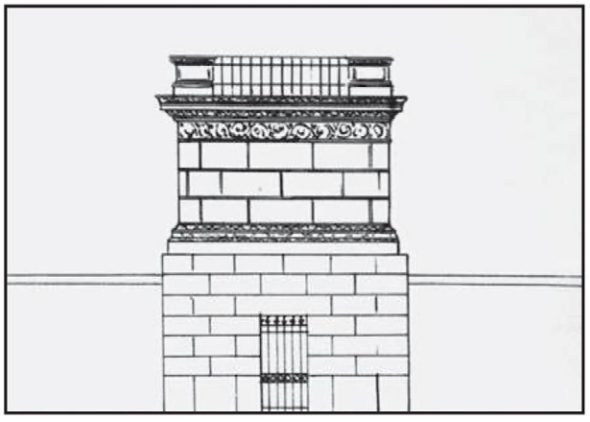


Figure 4. Progetto di restauro del mausoleo dell'arch. Mora. Vistoli 2010: 70.

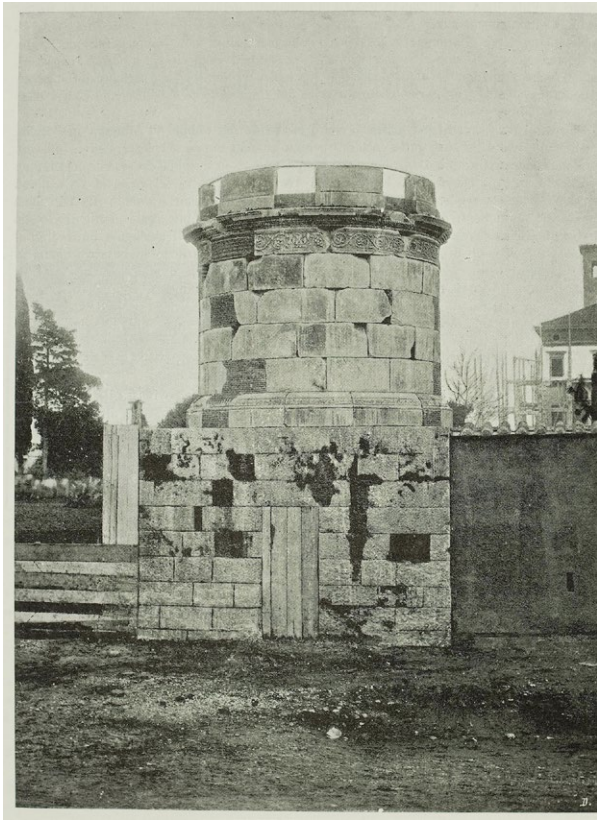


Figure 5. Veduta fotografica del mausoleo del 1897. Boni 1897: 57.

delle tecniche, come ad esempio la fotografia aerea (allora: da pallone aerostatico), quando fu chiamato ad incarichi di natura archeologica. In quest'ultima applicò un modo di scavo attento alla sovrapposizione di strati che si era depositata nel tempo; anche se non può essere considerato inventore del metodo di scavo stratigrafico. Accanto a questi comportamenti guidati da una concreta attenzione alla realtà dell'evidenza, Giacomo Boni progressivamente si rivolse ad un misticismo 'archeologico,' grazie al quale riteneva di

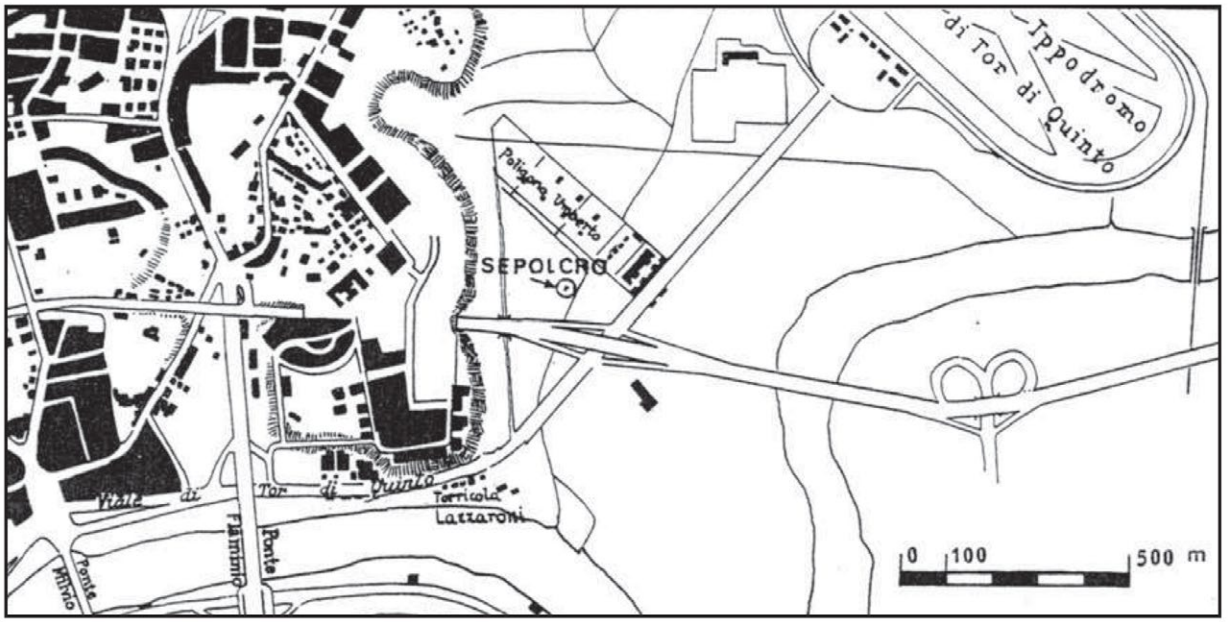


Figure 6. Roma, Tor di Quinto. Localizzazione del mausoleo gemino. Vistoli 2010: 75.

essere in grado di cogliere pienamente la storia e i modi di essere dei più antichi Latini, dai quali si sviluppò la potenza di Roma. Di quest'ultima Giacomo Boni vedeva la reincarnazione nel regime fascista, del quale è stato un riconosciuto fautore.

Come già è stato ampiamente illustrato da altri Autori il 'monumento funerario' che oggi vediamo su via Nomentana faceva parte di un ritrovamento effettuato, nella località di Tor di Quinto, tra il 1875 e l'anno seguente in proprietà di Adriano Ranucci[9] (**Figure 6**) a seguito di un accordo tra il proprietario e imprenditori interessati al ritrovamento, e al commercio, di antichità rappresentati da Giovanni Grilli.[10]

Boni aveva provveduto, grazie alla munificenza del Blanc, a recuperare quanto del mausoleo era stato, dopo diversi passaggi di mano, depositato a piazza del Popolo presso il pittore-antiquario Augusto Cecchi.[11] Rispetto a quanto in precedenza ritrovato mancavano, fra l'altro, una statua e un'iscrizione.[12] La recente ripresa degli scavi archeologici a Tor di Quinto, oltre a mettere in piena evidenza il nucleo cementizio del basamento del mausoleo, in origine composto da due torri merlate a pianta circolare in blocchi di marmo, ornate da un fregio di girali alla sommità, ha riportato alla luce due ulteriori frammenti iscritti.[13] Questi non appaiono essere congruenti con l'iscrizione, anch'essa lacunosa, ritrovata nel 1876.

Nella biografia di Giacomo Boni curata da Eva Tea sembra di cogliere una contraddizione tra il considerare singolo il monumento che si proponeva di ricostruire[14] e la consapevolezza che, invece, 'il basamento unisse i due tamburi cilindrici di un monumento gemino.'[15]

Lo scavo effettuato a Tor di Quinto da Grilli non aveva permesso, ed è da supporre che gli scavatori non ne avessero avuto alcuna cura, di distinguere, nel crollo, le parti componenti dell'uno e dell'altro tamburo posti sul comune basamento. Data la verosimilmente uguale dimensione di ognuno di questi due elementi sarebbe stato necessario mettere in atto accurati accorgimenti rivolti ad assegnare all'uno o all'altro di quelli i singoli blocchi superstiti.[16] Questi ultimi, inoltre, non si erano conservati, o non erano stati recuperati, in quantità tale da permettere la ricostruzione, ragionevolmente completa anche se sicuramente lacunosa, di ambedue i

[9] Marchesi (2012: 56) attribuisce, erroneamente, al Boni la scoperta di 'diversi reperti archeologici... a Tor di Quinto.'
[10] Boni 1897; Quilici 1965; Vistoli 2010.
[11] Tea (1932: 512) riferisce che l'insieme dei ritrovamenti era stato 'scomposto... e dimenticato nel cortile di un antiquario'; Vistoli 2010: 64.
[12] Fiorelli 1876: 12, 26, 44; Huelsen 1902: 3706, no. 36267.
[13] Messineo 1991–92, 160.
[14] Tea (1932: 512): 'un monumento funerario,' 'ricomporre l'antica tomba,' 'un antico monumento.'
[15] Tea 1932: 512; già in Boni 1897. Per la tipologia del monumento: Hesberg (1992: 41, 53, 123, fig. 55).
[16] Cfr. anche Vistoli 2010: 79.

tamburi. A proposito della ricomposizione dell'altezza del tamburo Boni lo ricostruisce di due filari, in quanto 'ho arguito che fossero due dalla quantità di massi disponibili.'[17] Tale constatazione sembra tenere conto della perdita di parte dell'originaria consistenza del monumento: perdita che non avrebbe dovuto essere ignorata dal Boni. Questi si trovò di fronte ad un dilemma: ricostruire, invece dei due tamburi originari, uno solo, oppure non procedere. Quest'ultima soluzione non avrebbe, a quel che sembra, convinto il Blanc a finanziare l'acquisto di quanto depositato presso il pittore-antiquario Cecchi, così da salvare dall'oblio i reperti di Tor di Quinto. La scelta sembra quindi essere stata obbligata. Nella realtà, i filari ricostruiti sono quattro, oltre a quello della base e a quello del fregio alla sommità: quantità che non corrisponde né a quanto 'arguito' dal Boni né a quanto progettato dal Mora.

Ci troviamo di fronte ad una situazione nella quale si evidenziano compromessi tra posizioni di metodo e necessità pratiche. La scuola di John Ruskin, della quale era seguace Giacomo Boni, raccomandava si eseguissero restauri rispettando al massimo tecnica costruttiva e decorazioni, oltre che integrare le lacune con materiali simili, se non uguali, a quelli originari. Con tali accorgimenti il monumento restaurato avrebbe fedelmente rispecchiato l'aspetto che gli aveva dato il costruttore. Riproporre con i blocchi originari pertinenti a due tamburi, diversi fra loro anche se delle medesime dimensioni e composizioni oltre che riuniti in uno stesso monumento su una medesima base, la ricostruzione di uno solo sembra progetto contrario ai dettami ruskiniani. Ma ad una rigida osservanza alle regole della scuola alla quale apparteneva,[18] Boni preferì il recupero, grazie alla munificenza del Blanc, dei blocchi malamente scavati a Tor di Quinto e peggio conservati a piazza del Popolo, altrimenti non possibile.

Quanto fin qui evidenziato costituisce un tratto del carattere, e del comportamento, del Boni che sembra richiedere una qualche attenzione. La ricostruzione di un monumento antico nel modo non filologico che abbiamo rapidamente evidenziato rientra nella cultura eclettica del periodo, della quale Boni è un rappresentante. E la complessiva decorazione di villa Blanc ne è splendida testimonianza. Il problema si pone a causa della consistenza materiale del monumento antico che si volle ricostruire: consistenza lacunosa in sé. Il ricorso a materiali che permettessero di assicurare stabilità e completezza alla ricostruzione, oltre alla somiglianza con quelli adoperati in antico, evidenzia lo scrupolo e l'attenzione posti dal Boni nella loro messa in opera. Al tufo di Villa Glori e ai laterizi si aggiunse la flora delle rovine, destinata ad 'antichizzare' la nuova forma del già vetusto monumento.[19] Quanto era definitivamente perduto, come la statua e l'iscrizione, non fu sostituito con realizzazioni moderne: pur avendone una sia pur minima menzione nei cursori resoconti pubblicati nella Notizie degli Scavi (cfr. *supra*, n. 12).

A questo rigido modo di procedere secondo i dettami ruskiniani fa plateale eccezione la riduzione ad uno dei due originari tamburi: aggravata dal probabile uso nell'unica ricostruzione di blocchi pertinenti in origine ad ambedue. Di questo modo di procedere, a quanto consta, non c'è traccia di commento nel saggio pubblicato dal Boni nel 1897 (cfr. *supra*, n. 10); né, tantomeno, nella sua biografia, tanto ricca di dettagli laudatori, tramandata dalla Tea. Sembra impossibile ipotizzare che il Boni non si sia reso conto del problema metodologico: ma l'esito della sua valutazione al proposito si concretizza in quanto possiamo ancora oggi vedere sul margine meridionale della odierna via Nomentana a Roma.

La costruita opportunità di recuperare quanto era superstite di un antico monumento, del quale già iniziava l'oblio dopo averlo riportato alla luce, ha preso il sopravvento sulle ipotizzabili perplessità metodologiche nutrite dal Boni.[20] Il mausoleo, sia pure singolo così come ricomposto, rappresentava comunque un simbolo di quell'evo antico del quale il Boni era divenuto cultore e custode. E di questa lontana età rimanevano lacunosi resti che non ne restituivano la completezza originaria. Non diversamente, dell'originario mausoleo gemino di Tor di Quinto un solo tamburo doveva essere sufficiente testimonio della dispersione dell'antica consistenza avvenuta nel trascorrere del tempo: in quanto, anche, la sua ricostruzione era avvenuta con il massimo scrupolo. Che, poi, la ricostruzione concreta impiegasse parti delle due torri, limitandosi a rappresentarne una sola, anche questo poteva considerarsi un simbolo.[21] Simbolo di come la rappresentazione di quanto di antico si sia parzialmente conservato possa essere rafforzata dall'essere costituita da elementi prossimi, per forma e per natura, a quelli che erano andati

[17] Boni 1897: 56. Tale ricostruzione non corrisponde al progetto Mora (cfr. *supra*, n. 3), che, come anticipato, prevedeva tre filari, oltre la base e la decorazione a girali superiore.

[18] Cfr. Fancelli (2008: 95–96) sulla tendenza del Boni di deviare dalle norme ruskiniane fino a seguire quelle, opposte, di Viollet-le-Duc.

[19] Boni 1897: *passim*.

[20] Al quale si riconosce attività pioneristica nel 'restauro filologico': Di Cristofaro (2016: 840).

[21] Cfr. Di Cristofaro 2016: 843.

perduti. Anzi, in tale opera di rappresentazione l'uso di materiali il più vicini possibile a quelli antichi non poteva di certo che essere superato da quello di materiali autenticamente antichi, anche se lacunosi rispetto all'originaria consistenza. E, per di più, in quanto componenti di un complesso originariamente composto da due elementi del tutto uguali fra loro, quindi del tutto intercambiabili fra loro.

Forse Boni riteneva che le motivazioni del proprio modo di procedere nella ricostruzione che si sono fin qui ipotizzate fossero evidenti: tanto da non farne parola, come anticipato, nello scritto che appositamente le dedica (cfr. *supra* n. 10). Ma anche la funzione della flora da aggiungere al nuovo monumento rientrava nelle dichiarate abitudini al proposito del Boni. Eppure egli elenca puntigliosamente le specie che addossa al monumento.[22]

Non è impossibile cogliere contraddizioni in questo operato di Boni: conseguenza, forse, della sua partecipazione al movimento neo-idealista anti-positivista,[23] all'interno del quale sono numerosi, e non sempre reciprocamente coerenti, gli elementi ispiratori.

Non sembra giustificato procedere oltre nel tentativo di identificare i ragionamenti elaborati dal Boni per la ricomposizione del mausoleo di villa Blanc. Oggi, che costituisce un negletto ingombro in uno spartitraffico veicolare, nessuno, o quasi, si pone problemi del genere nello sfiorarlo, ignorandone la complessità testimoniale che abbraccia l'antico, il moderno e il metodo che li comprende entrambi.

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[22] Boni 1897: 58.

[23] Sul quale, da ultimo: Peroni (2005: 28–29).

Roman Copies, Collecting, and Culture in the Bay of Naples and Beyond presents a celebration of the career, contributions, influence, and person of Eugene J. Dwyer, Professor of Art History Emeritus at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. While at Kenyon (1973–2018), Gene taught ancient art (with a special interest in the art and architecture of the Roman empire), the history of architecture, architectural design, and the history of collections.

The nine commissioned essays here are written by senior scholars in the fields of ancient Italic art history, architecture and archaeology, and focus on the visual and material culture of the Bay of Naples and Italy, from their points of creation in the late Republic and early Empire to their reception in the medieval, Early Modern, and Modern worlds. The essays are united in their engagement with topics of longstanding interest to their honorand: copies of famous marble statue types in antiquity (e.g., the Old Seneca in the Louvre, archaistic Athenas) and their later restorations and interpretation; the formation of collections of antiquities, from their original sites of display to their reconstitution in Early Modern venues (especially England); nineteenth and twentieth-century visual and poetic representations of Mount Vesuvius and of Giuseppe Fiorelli's gypsum casts of Pompeian victims; and case studies of a wide array of both well-known and previously overlooked objects, whose imagery is subject to fresh interpretation and contextualized within its wider social and cultural settings.

Sinclair W. Bell is a Professor of Art History and a Distinguished Teaching Professor at Northern Illinois University. His research focuses on the art and archaeology of the Etruscans; sport and spectacle in the Roman imperial period; and slavery and freedom in the Roman world, especially the archaeological traces and visual culture of slaves, freed persons, and ethnic foreigners.

Brad Hostetler is Associate Professor of Art History at Kenyon College (Gambier, Ohio). He specializes in the art and material culture of Late Antiquity and Byzantium, with a particular focus on text and image relationships.

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