

Art Institute of Chicago

Roman Art

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Source: *Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Ancient Art at The Art Institute of Chicago (1994), pp. 62-77

Published by: [Art Institute of Chicago](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4112952>

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CORNELIUS C. VERMEULE III

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In the year 31 B.C., the young Octavian defeated his Roman rival Mark Antony and Queen Cleopatra of Egypt in a sea battle off Western Greece. With Antony's and Cleopatra's suicides at Alexandria in Egypt, Octavian became ruler of the Roman world. Named Augustus in 27 B.C. by the Roman Senate, he was recognized as the first Roman emperor. His world, and that of his successors, extended from the British Isles to the Tigris River, the area of modern Iraq. The Romans were soldiers, builders, and merchants. They knew what they liked in art, but they were first to admit that their Greek citizens and subjects could create the sculptures and jewelry that Romans desired and could buy.

Roman art is a story of Roman taste. The Romans loved portraits of themselves. They embellished their public spaces with statues and busts of their emperors, like Hadrian (reigned A.D. 117–38), who loved Greek art and traveled the Empire at the height of its prosperity. The coins of ancient Rome feature very factual, precise portraits of the famous leaders of the last decades of the Republic and of the emperors on one side (the obverse), and divinities, historical events such as visits to the provinces, famous buildings from temples to aqueducts, and even exotic animals imported to Rome for the games and circuses on the second side (the reverse). Because the coins give the emperors' full titles and offices, we can often date new issues of coins to the month in which they appeared.

FACING PAGE: *Statue of Meleager*, c. 50 B.C.
(detail of cat. no. 41).

Roman respect for the Greek past led to the prodigious copying of famous Greek statues and reliefs made centuries earlier by popular Greek sculptors. This mechanical copying, usually in marble from plaster casts, was done in workshops all over the Roman Empire in order that many Roman cities and the country villas of the rich could exhibit masterpieces otherwise only seen in dimly lit shrines in Greece and Asia Minor. The famous Greek statues were usually in bronze, but many were melted down in the barbarian onslaughts of the Middle Ages. The marble copies that have survived in ruins, however, give us visual insight into lost works of art celebrated by ancient writers. Without these copies, often carved by talented craftsmen who respected the originals, great sculptors of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., notably Phidias, Praxiteles, Skopas, and Lysippos, would not be understood as fully as they are today.

In the decorative arts, the Romans adapted Greek designs to their terracotta architectural panels, their bronze mirrors, their jewelry, and, above all, their sarcophagi (coffins). Indeed, carved marble funerary chests gave the Romans a marvelous opportunity to narrate Greek myths and heroic scenes such as episodes from the Trojan Wars. The mighty hunter Meleager was popular as a statue identified with Skopas, but his deeds could be told in full on the four sides of a large marble sarcophagus. As the Roman world passed toward the Middle Ages, especially after Constantine the Great's edict of religious toleration in A.D. 315, biblical subjects came to dominate the arts where once the Olympian divinities, the mythological heroes, and the imperial Romans had held the stage.









41. Statue of Meleager

Roman copy of a fourth-century B.C.
Greek original attributed to Skopas
c. 50 B.C.

Marble; h. 173 cm (68 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene A. Davidson,
1972-935

References: Steven Lattimore, "Meleager:
New Replicas, Old Problems," *Opuscula
Romana* 9, 18 (1973), pp. 158 and 166;
Vermeule, *Greek and Roman Sculpture
in America*, p. 21.

42. Coin Showing Consul Marcellus

Obverse: around, MARCELLINVS and
triskeles

Reverse: Consul Marcellus consecrating
trophy; MARCELLVS/COS QVINQ

Roman Republic

50 B.C. (Claudia gens), Rome mint

Silver denarius; diam. 1.9 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.)

Gift of Martin A. Ryerson, 1922.4846A



41. Statue of Meleager

Meleager was a young hunter who led a band of men and his beloved Atalanta against a great wild boar that was ravaging the countryside of Calydon. Meleager killed the beast, but a quarrel over the spoils ensued and the youthful hero killed his mother's brothers. His mother, Althaea, proceeded to engineer her son's death by burning a branch that had been his means to immortality.

This statue is an impressive, early copy of an original attributed to the sculptor Skopas that belongs to the decade before the middle of the fourth century B.C. The original was probably made in hollow-cast bronze, meaning the ungainly tree trunk seen here would not have been necessary to support the statue. On the other hand, the pediment was in marble, and some copies of this Meleager in marble manage this stance without such a large tree. In the original version of the statue, Meleager was leaning on his spear, and the head of the slain boar was on a tree stump near his left leg. The cloak thrown over the left arm adds a touch of restlessness to the composition. Indeed, restlessness in repose was a characteristic of the work of Skopas, who was one of the first sculptors to superimpose emotion on the timeless ideal of Greek representations of young gods, heroes, and athletes. The emotional roller coaster of Meleager's career was the perfect vehicle for Skopas, whether as a caster in bronze or a carver in marble. (CCV)

42. Coin Showing Consul Marcellus

According to legend, Romulus defeated an enemy commander in hand-to-hand combat; to celebrate this event, he built a temple to Jupiter and dedicated to the god the spoils of the battle. It became customary for any Roman general who emulated Romulus to dedicate similarly the resulting special trophy (*spolia opima*, "spoils of honor"). The triumph of Marcus Claudius Marcellus over the Gaul Viridomarus in 222 B.C. is one of the earliest known of such single-handed victories, and his proud descendant Marcellinus commemorated this milestone on the coinage for which he was responsible. Marcellinus also took this occasion to boast of his ancestor's five consulates (thus the inscription "COS QVINQ," literally "consul for the fifth time," on the coin's reverse) and his capture of Syracuse (the triskeles on the obverse).

It is noteworthy that the superb, "realistic" portrait on the obverse is of the stern old republican Marcellus, not his politically ambitious scion. The detailed, naturalistic "likeness" is therefore wholly imaginary, the subject of the portrait being nearly two centuries in the tomb. Roman republican law and custom forbade the representation of any living person on its coinage. It was

not until Julius Caesar evoked long-dormant royalist thoughts among some of his supporters that the Senate bestowed this telling privilege on the oft-appointed dictator, shortly after this coin was minted. Others followed suit: Pompey the Great, Octavian, even the tyrannicide Brutus left us their own portraits; and no subsequent ruler, regent, or would-be usurper of Rome failed to have his or her visage immortalized on a coin. (TGD)

43. Architectural Relief Panel

The Romans of the early Empire loved to decorate the wooden moldings or plaster walls of their houses and villas, such as those at Pompeii and Herculaneum, with relief panels fired to the color red from high-grade clay.



43. Architectural Relief Panel

Roman, said to have been found in Italy in the 19th century

1st century A.D.

Molded terracotta; h. 58.8 cm (23¼ in.)

Katherine K. Adler Fund; restricted gift of Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Bro, the Classical Art Society, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Alexander, 1990.87



44. Statuette of an Enthroned Figure

Roman

1st century A.D.

Bronze, with eyes inlaid in silver;

h. 15.5 cm (6 $\frac{1}{8}$ in.)

Wirt D. Walker Fund, 1965.402

Scenes such as the one shown here were prepared with a mold that could be used to repeat the same composition as a frieze extending the length of the wall or alternating with related subjects from different molds. The designs were often in an older style, from the rich heritage of the Greek past. Such is the case with the rare scene presented here. Two female temple-attendants, servants of a goddess such as Artemis, are kneeling with an elaborate altar between them. The altar takes the form of a tall candlestick (or candelabrum) with offerings burning on the top and a stand with large floral scrolls at the bottom. The costumes of the attendants, as well as their hairstyles, are designed to recall the Greeks of southern Italy (at Locri under the toe of Italy) and Sicily (at Catania just across the Straits of Messina) in the period around 200 B.C. The egg-and-dart molding above and the interlaced waterleaves below provided a continuum with the panels on either side of this one, panels in which the main decoration may have been different, modeled from other molds. The four nail-holes in the background were for tacking this panel to its architectural setting. (CCV)

44. Statuette of an Enthroned Figure

Seated on her elaborate, high-backed throne, this goddess or personified virtue wears a long chiton tied above her waist and an ample himation, which is draped over her left shoulder, falls down her back, around her lap, and ends in folds across either side of her legs. Her right hand is extended, palm upwards. Her missing left arm was raised. A cap culminating in a large diadem is set above her hair, the latter tied in a long braid behind her shoulders. The Romans placed small statues such as this in their household shrines. Depending on details of cos-



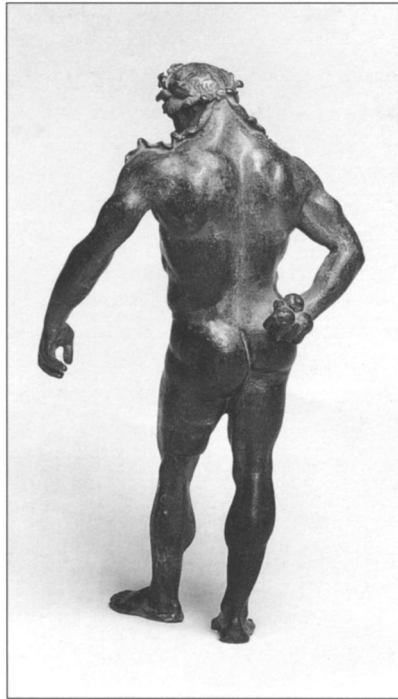
45. Bracelet

Roman, probably
from Italy

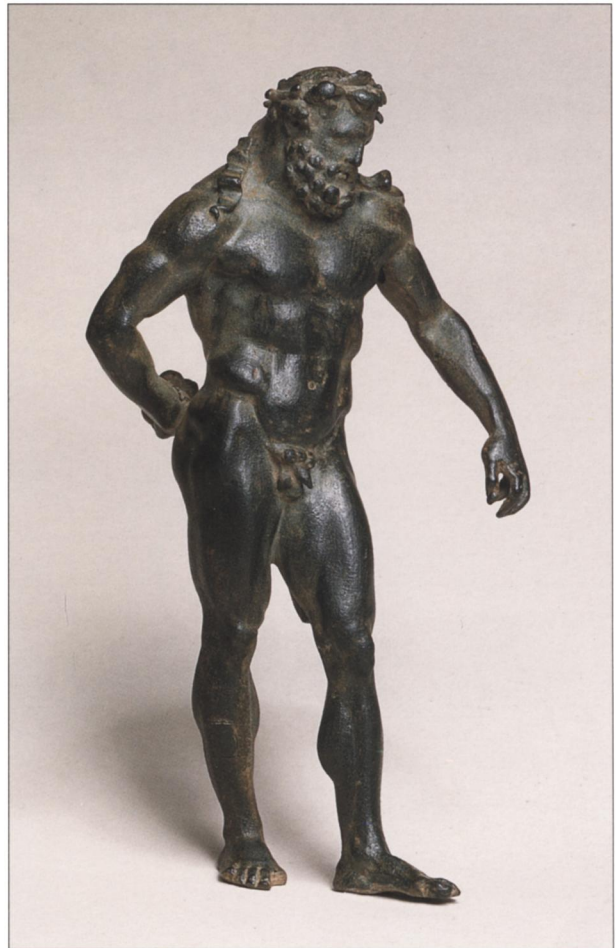
1st/2nd century A.D.

Gold; l. 22.3 cm (8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

RX18051.1



46. **Statuette of Hercules**
 Roman copy of the fourth-century B.C.
 Greek original by Lysippos
 2nd century A.D.
 Bronze; h. 22 cm (8¹/₆ in.)
 Katherine K. Adler Fund, 1978.308



tume and the attributes in each hand, they could represent major divinities such as Juno and Ceres or personifications such as Fortuna, Pietas, or Concordia. Because this impressive figure probably held a *patera* (libation dish) on her right hand and a large cornucopia (horn of plenty) in her left arm, she is probably Concordia, symbol of family harmony and one of the four cardinal virtues of the Roman Empire. In A.D. 15, the second Roman emperor, Tiberius (reigned A.D. 14–37), dedicated a large temple to Concordia just below the Capitoline Hill and overlooking the Roman Forum, the most important location in the Roman world. This bronze is a version in miniature of the colossal gold and ivory cult-image of Concordia placed in that temple and now known chiefly from Roman coins. (ccv)

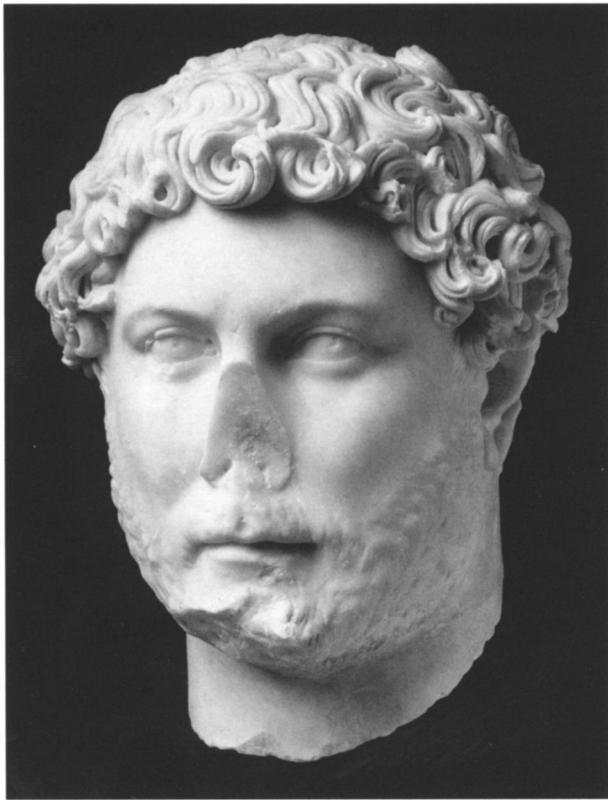
45. **Bracelet**

The Romans loved heavy, showy, and complex jewelry. While the Aphrodite of Knidos might wear one bracelet on her left upper arm, the small marble and bronze

Aphrodites found in the houses of Pompeii and Herculaneum are very much in keeping with Roman taste, which might favor vulgar, heavy bracelets on both upper and lower arms and similar, elaborate objects around the ankles. Nothing could be more Roman than a bracelet formed of golden hemispheres, almost like grapes, set with and set off by rosettes and with complex links and clasps. Touches of granulation hint at the Etruscan or native Italic traditions which lie behind Roman jewelry. This bracelet could have been found in the ruins of Pompeii or Herculaneum, for there are similar ensembles in the museums of Italy and elsewhere in Europe from the cities overwhelmed by the lava and pumice of Vesuvius on that fateful August day in the year A.D. 79. An identical bracelet in the National Museum at Naples does indeed come from Pompeii. The taste for such jewelry, bracelets, and necklaces, was carried to the eastern end of the Mediterranean in the second century A.D. and, eventually, along the caravan and shipping routes to the Indian subcontinent and beyond to the Far East. (ccv)

46. Statuette of Hercules

This small bronze statue of superior workmanship and in excellent condition gives us a splendid insight into the appearance of a lost masterpiece in bronze by Lysippos, a famous sculptor working around 335 B.C. Lysippos made many statues in bronze, and a favorite theme, which he probably portrayed more than once during his long career, was the weary Herakles (the Roman Hercules). The hero is shown resting from his Twelve Labors while holding the three golden apples of the Hesperides against his lower back with his right hand. With his left hand he grasps a club for support. The skin of the Nemean lion is often shown wrapped around this arm or hanging from the club. The most famous version of this statue was probably made by Lysippos for the Gymnasium of his



47. Portrait Head of the Emperor Hadrian

Roman

2nd century A.D.

Marble; h. 36 cm (14¼ in.)

Katherine K. Adler Fund, 1979.350

References: Vermeule, *Greek and Roman Sculpture in America*, p. 309.

native city of Sikyon, along the Gulf of Corinth, on the northern coast of the Peloponnese. This small bronze shows a wreath of vine leaves and fruit (grapes?) around the forehead, suggesting the pleasures of the banquet that await the hero on completion of his labors. This may be a Roman Imperial addition to the hero's attributes. On sarcophagi and in mosaics of the decades from A.D. 150 to 230, the drinking contest between Dionysos (the Roman Bacchus, god of wine) and Herakles was a popular theme, for it pitted experience and toleration against rashness and force. The weary Herakles always succumbed in these encounters and had to stagger off to bed with the aid of Dionysos's followers, the satyrs and maenads. (ccv)

47. Portrait Head of the Emperor Hadrian

Of all the Roman emperors, Hadrian (reigned A.D. 117–38) is the one whose portrait is most frequently found, all over the Empire from Britain to Persia, from Asia Minor to Egypt. The grateful Greek cities dedicated 125 statues to Hadrian around the precinct of the Temple of the Olympian Zeus at Athens, a colossal structure that Hadrian (honored there as the Thirteenth Olympian, or god of Mount Olympus) paid to have completed. And, among all his portraits, few are the equal of this likeness in conveying the complex, neurotic character of the emperor who inherited the Roman world at its greatest extent from his fellow Spaniard Trajan (reigned 98–117) and who consolidated the Empire by backing away from the military quicksands of Mesopotamia and the mountains beyond in Parthia or Persia (modern Iran). Hadrian spent much of his reign traveling from city to city, from outpost to oasis. Hadrian was also the first emperor to grow a beard; it is said that he grew it to conceal a scar from a hunting accident and to resemble the Greek philosophers whom he respected. Most of his successors continued the fashion until Constantine the Great (reigned 306–37), who modeled his appearance on Helios (god of the sun) and on Christ. Hadrian's memory was so cherished in the East and West in the Middle Ages that both the Roman and Orthodox churches have a saint named Hadrian or Adriano(s). (ccv)

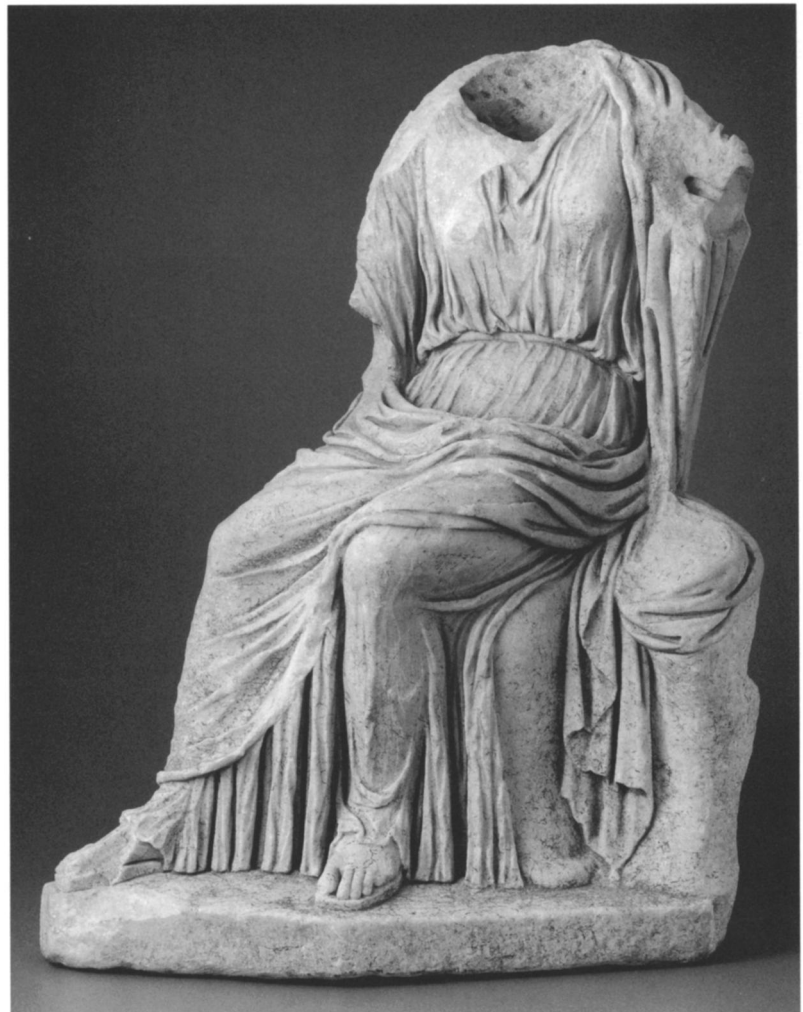
48. Relief of a Fallen Warrior from the Shield of the Athena Parthenos

Around 435 B.C., the sculptor Phidias enriched the front of the shield at the side of his gold and ivory Athena in the Parthenon with scenes of Greeks and Amazons battling in the Trojan Wars, or, perhaps more likely, fighting around the Athenian Acropolis in the kingship of Theseus. In Roman times, certain figures from this complex struggle were lifted out of context and enlarged to



49. **Statue of a Seated Woman**
 Roman copy of a fifth-century B.C.
 Greek original in the style of the
 Parthenon sculptures
 2nd century A.D.
 Marble; h. 82 cm (32½ in.)
 Katherine K. Adler Fund, 1986.1060
References: Louise Berge, "A Lady
 Seated on a Rock. . ." Now in The Art
 Institute of Chicago," *The Ancient World*
 15 (1987), p. 50, nos. 3 and 4.

48. **Relief of a Fallen
 Warrior from the Shield of the
 Athena Parthenos**
 Roman copy of the fifth-century B.C.
 Greek original by Phidias, found in the
 harbor of Piraeus
 2nd century A.D.
 Marble; h. 48.1 cm (19 in.)
 Gift of Alfred E. Hamill, 1928.257
References: A. D. Fraser, "The
 'Capaneus' Reliefs of the Villa Albani
 and The Art Institute of Chicago,"
American Journal of Archaeology 43
 (1939), p. 449, fig. 2; Vermeule, *Greek
 and Roman Sculpture in America*, pp. 21
 and 44, fig. 18, pl. 4; Helen Comstock,
 "Five Centuries of Greek Sculpture,"
International Studio 84 (June 1926), pp.
 33–35 (ill.); D. von Bothmer, *Amazons in
 Greek Art* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 209–14,
 pl. 87.





50. **Statue of the Aphrodite of Knidos**
 Roman copy of the fourth-century B.C.
 Greek original by Praxiteles
 2nd century A.D.
 Marble; h. 168 cm (66 $\frac{5}{16}$ in.)
 Katherine K. Adler, Harold L. Stuart,
 and Wirt D. Walker funds, 1981.11

become decorative relief-panels for the walls of a colonnade or courtyard. When this relief was first discovered, this figure of a wounded Greek sinking to the ground with cloak and shield was misnamed "Kapaneus" after one of the Seven Heroes who died trying to capture the city of Thebes in Greece in mythological times. The dying warrior's noble countenance, the fillet or ribbon tied around his forehead, and the figure's powerful, athletic body sum up what Phidias and his pupils sought to project as the ideal of mature male dignity in the decade when Athens was at the height of its power in the eastern Mediterranean world. This Phidian style, translated from a circular golden shield to a rectangular marble relief, was exactly what collectors such as the emperor Hadrian sought to decorate their palaces and villas. Athenian sculptors of the Roman Empire made a good living creating and exporting such memories of past glories. This relief and a number of others were found in Piraeus Harbor, where they had been lost in some disaster while awaiting shipment. (ccv)

49. **Statue of a Seated Woman**

Throughout the Roman Imperial Period, the sculptures of Athens in the Golden Age of chief magistrate Perikles and his master sculptor Pheidias impressed institutions and citizens all over the ancient world, especially around Rome and the Bay of Naples. The seated, draped goddesses in the pediments of the Parthenon on the Acropolis were adapted for use as individual statues of divinities and of empresses or other notable women. In this statue, the heavy, crinkled folds of drapery in the long undergarment tied with a rope at the waist and the heavy cloak hanging from the left shoulder and thrown across the lap have been made the salient characteristics of a heavy figure full of dignity. The head, neck, and forearms were carved separately and attached with cement and dowels. Since the figure sits on a large rock rather than a throne, a goddess seems to have been intended, perhaps a major deity such as Hera (known in ancient Rome as Juno), who was the consort of Zeus (the Roman Jupiter), the ruler of the divinities who lived on Mount Olympus in northern Greece. There is, however, the strong possibility that this statue commemorated a Roman empress or even that it was intended as a memorial statue of a private citizen of renown. An empress such as Faustina the Elder, wife of Antoninus Pius, who was made a goddess and equated with Juno after her death in A.D. 141, or her daughter Faustina II, wife of Marcus Aurelius, who was accorded similar status by the Roman Senate in 175, seem likely candidates for the subject of this statue. (ccv)



51. Portrait Head of a Young Woman

Roman, said to have been found in Athens

2nd century A.D.

Marble; h. 22.5 cm (8 $\frac{7}{8}$ in.)

Edward A. Ayer Fund, 1960.64

References: Cornelius C. Vermeule, "Two Masterpieces of Athenian Sculpture," *The Art Institute of Chicago Quarterly* 54, 4 (Dec. 1960), pp. 8–10; Cornelius C. Vermeule, *Roman Imperial Art in Greece and Asia Minor* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 364–65, fig. 179; George M. A. Hanfmann, *Roman Art* (New York, 1975), no. 98; Helga von Heintze, "Ein spätantikes Mädchenporträt in Bonn: Zur stilistischen Entwicklung des Frauenbildnisses im 4. und 5. Jahrhundert," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 14 (1971), p. 78, no. 4, and pp. 80–81, pl. 13d and 15a; Kurt Weitzman, ed., *Age of Spirituality: Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century*, exh. cat. (New York, 1979), pp. 289–90, no. 268; Evelyn B. Harrison, "The Constantinian Portrait," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1967), pp. 87–89, fig. 31; Vermeule, *Greek and Roman Sculpture in America*, pp. 372–73.



52. Hand Mirror

Roman

2nd century A.D.

Gilded bronze; diam. 11.8 cm (4 $\frac{1}{16}$ in.)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James W. Alsdorf,

1985.1042

References: W. Hornbostel, *Aus Gräbern und Heiligtümern* (Mainz, 1980), pp. 271–73 (ill.).

50. Statue of the Aphrodite of Knidos

Around the middle of the fourth century B.C., working in his studio in the shadow of the Athenian Acropolis, Praxiteles made a statue of Aphrodite fully clothed and, daringly for his times, a second statue of the goddess emerging from her bath and wearing only a bracelet on her upper arm. Praxiteles offered the choice of his two marble sculptures to the city of Kos on the island of the same name. Beset with modesty, the good burghers bought the draped statue, which was promptly forgotten by the later peoples of the ancient world. The city of Knidos, on a peninsula of Asia Minor not far southeast of Kos, bought the nude Aphrodite, and both statue and city enjoyed great fame ever after. So popular was the Knidian Aphrodite that many copies were made in later times and sold everywhere. The statue seen here is one of them. Bereft of head, hands, and draped *kalpis* (water jug) by her left leg, it is hard to appreciate the rhythmic composition of the original statue. With the surfaces of the marble so weathered and worn, it is hard to grasp the soft, translucent beauty of the Knidia, as this Aphrodite was called. At Knidos, the original sculpture stood in a circular Doric tempietto, the small building open to the sky. Hadrian so admired the ensemble that he had the little temple and the statue copied for a knoll near the modern entrance to his villa at Tivoli. It seems very likely that the Art Institute's copy was placed in a similar setting, in an area where the climate was not kind to the statue. (CCV)

51. Portrait Head of a Young Woman

This elegant young lady with her hair wrapped in braids around her head to form a kind of turban is something of an enigma. Did she live around A.D. 140 or did she belong to the early years of Constantine the Great,



53. Coin Showing Empress Julia Domna

Obverse: around, IVLIA AVGVSTA
("Augusta" means "Revered" or "Venerable")

Reverse: "Piety" offers incense at altar;
around, PIETAS AVGG (Piety
Augustorum; "Proper attitude among the
imperial family")

Roman Empire

c. A.D. 199–207, Rome mint

Gold aureus; diam. 2 cm (3/4 in.)

Gift of Martin A. Ryerson, 1922.4883

around 315 when these hairstyles were revived? Lovers of Roman portraiture have been split down the middle on this question over the past thirty-five years. Whenever she lived and sat for her portrait—and the better guess is around 140—she summed up all that was forthright as well as elegant in Roman portraiture. The white marble of the face has been given a cameo-like polish, something just becoming fashionable in portrait sculpture after 130, and the carving and incising of the pupils of her eyes give her a lifelike intellect that reflects the highest quality in Roman portraiture. (CCV)

52. Hand Mirror

Artemis (the Roman Diana), or a Roman lady with divine fantasies, after her bath in a rustic, woodland setting, is the subject of the tondo in relief on the back of this Roman hand mirror. Her cloak is draped over the rocks on which she sits, and she holds the end wrapped around a small hand mirror in her raised left hand, a divine celebration of the uses of the mirror in a Roman household. The landscape in front of her, to the right, recalls the paintings and reliefs from houses around the Bay of Naples before the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. The quiver of the goddess leans against the base of a garlanded altar with a small herm on top. A second terminal figure, Priapos, the god of gardens and fertility, tilts back while facing to the right on the ledge at the right. The bovine skull in the right foreground suggests the sacrifice after a successful hunt. The spreading tree in the background is a device to unite the whole composition. As a result of these details and artistic devices, the composition as a whole is both elegant and precise, with a touch of the erotic in the details that befits the vanities and personal qualities of just such a domestic work of art. (CCV)

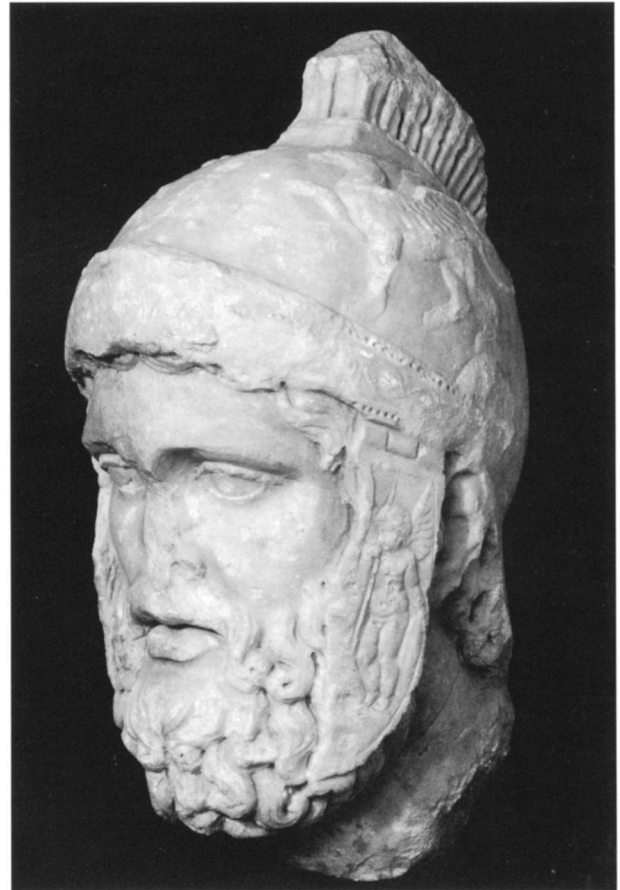
53. Coin Showing Empress Julia Domna

Julia Domna is usually referred to either as the wife of the Emperor Septimius Severus or as the mother of Caracalla and Geta. This coin, in fact, was issued during the joint reign of Severus and his elder son, but by their authority, not her own. Yet Julia was no mere relative to power; as the self-assured portrait on this coin suggests, her influence was openly recognized by contemporaries. Intellectual, ambitious, and steel-willed, the Syrian-born Julia was called “the philosopher” and was famous for her circle of learned friends; at the same time, she could successfully vie with courtiers to influence imperial policy, and could accommodate herself to Caracalla’s murder of her younger son Geta. The empress Julia would remain a guiding force in Caracalla’s reign, taking her own life after his assassination in A.D. 217.

The figure of Piety on the reverse is a standard type, invoking the traditional Roman attitude of respect and duty toward one’s family, country, and gods. As such, it would appear a singularly inappropriate choice of values to grace a coin of the ruthless Severan dynasty. But the suspicious death of Severus, the near-breakup of the Empire, and the murder of Geta were, at the time of this minting, still in the future; and Julia “Augusta” might well have hoped that her strong presence might maintain proper *pietas* (respect) among the august members of her family. (TGD)

54. Head of Mars

In about 345 B.C., a sculptor named Leochares, who later worked in Athens, was commissioned to fashion a colossal, standing statue of Ares (the Roman Mars) for the god’s Temple at Halikarnassos on the peninsula just east of Kos and north of Knidos. The god was portrayed, wearing a helmet and a cuirass, and holding his shield and his spear. The city of Halikarnassos was somewhat isolated in terms of the main centers of the Greek and Roman world, but its tomb of King Mosollus, a vast ensemble of sculpture and architecture on which Leochares had worked, was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, giving its very name (mausoleum) to an elaborate tomb anywhere in any age. The Mausoleum of Halikarnassos brought touring Roman magistrates and generals to the city. Admiration for the statue of Ares in the temple overlooking the city and for the very military qualities of the Mausoleum of Helikarnassos led to free copies of these works being made for shrines elsewhere. This head captures the grandeur of the original statue, and at the same time includes something of the softness of form for which such fourth-century sculptors as Praxiteles became



54. Head of Mars

Roman

2nd century A.D.

Marble; h. 59.2 cm (23½ in.)

Katherine K. Adler Fund, 1984.1

References: Louise Berge, “A War God in Chicago,” *The Ancient World* 10, 3–4 (1984), p. 66.

famous. These qualities were later reflected in the work of copyists and adapters in Roman times. (CCV)

55. Fragment of a Sarcophagus

This fragment or secondary section of a large sarcophagus, made in Athens around the years A.D. 240 to 250 and exported to the eastern Mediterranean, appears to show the heroes grouped around Meleager at the time of the hunt for the Calydonian boar. Atalanta sits at the right, and Herakles is seated with his club at the left.

Meleager, standing with his foot on a rock between two other companions, has been made to resemble the heroic or divine Macedonian king, Alexander the Great. Perhaps this is because the scene on the sarcophagus was based on a painting of the period around 300 to 200 B.C. in which Meleager's hunt and tragic death were equated with Alexander the Great's conquests and his own untimely demise at Babylon in 323 B.C. Alexander was a great hunter as well as a great general, and his life ended by decree of the Fates, the same three sisters who had doomed Meleager to die by hitching his thread of life to a firebrand. The reliefs of sarcophagi were fraught with the symbolism of death and tragedy, since they were bought by grief-stricken relatives as well as patrons of the arts. This poetic presentation of the young hunter Meleager amid other young heroes whose features resemble those of the companions of Alexander the Great stands in contrast to the solid statue of Meleager identified with Skopas in the years before the middle of the fourth century B.C. (see cat. no. 41). (CCV)

56. Coin Showing Emperor Caracalla

Caracalla was only ten years old when his father Septimius Severus granted him the title of co-Augustus and Pontifex (priest) and bestowed on him the Tribunitian power. The young emperor, however, aged quickly. This portrait shows a sixteen-year-old who knows he will soon control most of the civilized world. By all accounts a mild and charming youth, Caracalla's nature was corrupted by power—or else power allowed his true nature to reveal itself. The coin portraits of this emperor chronicle, year by year, the toll that time and Empire took on Caracalla's once pleasant and boyish face. It is a horrific and fascinating spectacle; not least remarkable is that the engravers were allowed to portray the cruelty and debauchery reflected in the emperor's visage in the later coinage. In this coin portrait, the attempts against his father's life, the murder of his younger brother Geta, the massacres of Roman citizens, and the brutality of the circus games were still in the future, masked by the dis-



55. Fragment of a Sarcophagus

Roman, said to have been found near Antioch, Syria, probably made in Athens A.D. 240/250

Marble; 96 cm (37 $\frac{7}{16}$ in.)

Gift of the Alsdorf Foundation, 1983.584

References: Guntram Koch, "Zu einem Relief in der Alsdorf Collection," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (Berlin, 1978), pp. 116–35; Cornelius C. Vermeule, "Dated Monuments of Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman Popular Art in Asia Minor: Pontus through Mysia," in *Studies Presented to George M. A. Hanfmann* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 176 (old no. 57.1968); Vermeule, *Greek and Roman Sculpture in America*, p. 246 (old no. 57.1968); Cornelius C. Vermeule, in *The Search for Alexander*, (Boston, 1980), p. 119, no. 40.





56. Coin Showing Emperor Caracalla

Obverse: around, ANTON.P.AVG.PON TR P VII (Anton[inus] P[ius] Aug[ustus] Pon[tifex] Tr[ibunitia] P[otestas] VII: “Antoninus Pius Augustus, Priest [or Pontif], holding Tribunician Power for Seventh Time”)

Reverse: Victory with wreath and palm; around, VICT PART MAX (Vict[oria] Part[hica] Max[ima]; “Great Parthian Victory”)

Roman Empire

A.D. 204, Rome mint

Gold aureus; diam. 2 cm (¾ in.)

Gift of Martin A. Ryerson, 1922.4884

57. Coin Showing Emperor Constantine the Great

Obverse: around, CONSTANTINVS PF AVG (Constantinus P[ius] F[elix] Aug[ustus]; “Constantine, Dutiful and Fortunate August One”)

Reverse: Constantine on horseback; around, ADVENTVS AVGVSTI N (Adventus Augusti N[ostri]; “The coming of our lord [Constantine]”)

Roman Empire

A.D. 324–25, Antioch mint

Gold solidus; diam. 1.9 cm (¾ in.)

Gift of Martin A. Ryerson, 1922.4903



arming, somewhat enigmatic smile of the youthful emperor.

The figure of Victory and the title on the reverse refer to the successful campaigns against the Parthians, waged by Severus, in which Caracalla took part, despite his tender years. His real name was Marcus Aurelius Antoninus; he received his nickname for affecting to wear a Gaulish cape called a “caracalla.” (TGD)

57. Coin Showing Emperor Constantine the Great

Constantine’s coinage is as complex as the age that produced it. The Empire was undergoing radical changes, among them the short-lived experiment in shared government called the Tetrarchy, in which pairs of senior and junior emperors were to divide the burden of running the sprawling and unruly Empire. Self-effacing cooperative spirit was not, however, a highly developed concept among aspiring emperors, and by A.D. 313 Constantine the Great emerged as sole ruler. In order to concen-

trate his energies where the chances of Roman greatness remained the strongest, Constantine moved the seat of the government to the Thracian city of Byzantium, engaged on an ambitious building program, and renamed the “New Rome” in honor of himself: Constantinople.

The portrait of Constantine on the obverse of this coin is among the last in the history of Roman coinage, for increasingly the emphasis lay not on the individual person of the emperor but on the office. Luxurious robes and diadems, elaborate court ceremony and a nearly mystic atmosphere of awe surrounded the emperor, and transformed the human ruler into a quasi-divine being in the eyes of the ruled: true portraiture gave way to symbolic representations. Constantine’s luminous eyes in this coin portrait were said by his contemporaries to reflect his divine inspiration, whether that inspiration ultimately came from Sol or from the Christian God, to whose religion Constantine officially converted the Empire, though his grasp of the underlying concepts remains doubtful. (TGD)