

ARTH 420/599
Roman Sculpture: Imperial Monuments and Portraiture
Professor Christopher Gregg

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Robinson Hall B, room 373A

Office hours: Mondays 12:30-1:20 or by appointment

Sculpture was a significant and ubiquitous element of Roman visual culture, manifesting in both lavish public and private displays. This seminar will begin by exploring the connections between Greek sculptural style and Roman adaptation, as well as delving into some of the technical aspects of quarrying and sculpting. We will then focus our attention on the ideological and political function of sculpture in the public sphere, primarily in the Imperial period spanning 31 BCE to 300 CE. In the Imperial period, portraits of the *principes* (emperors) and the imperial family were significant conveyors of meaning that communicated both to the Roman people and modern scholars much of the “propagandistic” intent of the emperor and his programs. We will also analyze major sculptural monuments associated with these emperors, such as the Ara Pacis, the Arch of Titus, and the Column of Trajan, which taken in conjunction with imperial portraiture elucidate the programmatic nature of Roman public sculpture. Course requirements will include weekly writing assignments, at least two oral presentations, and an extended scholarly research paper. Research topics will include both public and private/decorative sculpture as potential subjects. Attendance and participation will also impact the final grade. This course fulfills all or in part the writing-intensive requirement for the Art History major.

Course Goals

- To learn the basic elements of style and technique in Roman sculpture
- To understand the variety of functions that sculptural artifacts fulfilled within Roman visual culture
- To become familiar with the scholarly approaches to sculptural topics as well as leading voices in the scholarship
- To practice essential academic skills such as research and the effective communication of ideas both in written and oral formats

Required texts

Diana Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture* (1994).

Eve d'Ambra, *Roman Art in Context* (1993).

These texts will be supplemented by JSTOR articles and pdf readings on Blackboard or Reserve material.

Assignments and Assessment

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|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Weekly Response Papers | 40% |
| Research Progress Check | 5% |
| Research Oral Presentation | 10% |
| Research Paper | 30% December 12 th |
| Attendance and Participation | 15% |

The grading model is as follows:

A+ (100-97) A (96-93) A- (92-90) B+ (89-87) B (86-83) B- (82-80)
C+ (79-77) C (76-73) C- (72-70) D (69-60) F (59 and below)

Weekly Assignments

Discussion and Reading Presentations

Everyone in the seminar must read all of the assigned material and be prepared to actively participate in a discussion of that material.

For each major reading, a Discussion Leader will be assigned. The Discussion Leader will be expected to present an oral assessment of that reading in which she/he summarizes one or two of the more important ideas of the reading for about 10 minutes. After this, the Discussion leader will then direct the class' discussion of that reading, involving other people and their ideas regarding that reading or other relevant material previously discussed in the seminar. The Discussion leader should be prepared to encourage discussion by bringing in at least 5 topics of discussion (ideas, quotes, comparisons with other material discussed in class).

The Discussion Leader should also distribute to everyone in the class a typed/printed list of their discussion points, quotations, etc.

Weekly Response Papers

These papers should follow a 3-part format: you may want to think of each section as, roughly, a paragraph.

Part 1: Articulate in your own words the major idea of the article or chapter. In some cases there may be multiple "big ideas": if so, choose one of these. Explain what is significant about the idea (e.g. how does it alter our understanding of the sculpture, monument, historical period, etc.). If possible, express how this is different from the traditional reading of the question.

Part 2: Discuss the types of evidence used by the author. Is the evidence internal (style, iconography, typology, technique) or external (comparisons to other works, archaeological context)? Does the scholar use *primary* sources (ancient Latin or Greek literary documentation or archaeological excavation)? You do not have to repeat the full array of evidence and you do not have to account for all the evidence used: select *significant* elements to comment on.

Part 3: Critique the argument and state whether you are convinced by the scholar's efforts. Note that a critique can be either positive or negative, but it is not simply about "liking" or "not liking" an idea. Express substantive reasons for accepting or rejecting the idea in question. Also be aware that simply asserting something does not make it true: there needs to be evidence supporting the argumentation, regarding either the scholar's idea or your critique.

Format: 400-500 words, standard margins and font size. If you use a direct quote or need to cite a specific idea, using parenthetical expressions, e.g. (Kleiner, p. 51).

Include word count on printed, hard copies. Emailed submissions will not be accepted: you must be in class to turn the assignment in, and there will be no make up assignments without written documentation of an excused absence. I will count the highest 8 scores for a maximum of 40% of your course grade.

NB: some weeks (e.g. Week 4) may have a slightly different approach to the writing assignment. These will be noted in the guidelines for that week and should take precedence over this general format. It is your responsibility to follow the syllabus instructions.

Weekly Reading Quizzes

It is my preference **not** to have weekly quizzes. If, however, I find that the class is not reading the assignments with adequate attention to detail and memory, I will institute brief weekly quizzes. They will be counted in the participation category of the grades. I will not announce the beginning of quizzes.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are not the same thing: you must be in class, but that is not sufficient to receive the full percentage points in this category. You must be interactive:

respond to questions, ask questions, generate discussion. You will also be required to orally present one reading to the class, and your presentation will be graded and counted under this category.

Research Presentation and Paper

There is a list of paper topics at the end of the syllabus. I suggest that you look at a number of these (most are in one or more of the textbooks) and see what seems most interesting.

Choosing a topic: at our September 6th class meeting, you will need to hand in your top **three** (3) preferences for paper topics, ranked in terms of desirability. I will do my best to accommodate everyone's preferences.

Preliminary Bibliography and Thesis: a typed, properly formatted preliminary bibliography is due in class on October 25th. This should include a minimum of four sources (6 for Graduate students in the class), not including the textbooks for the class. There should be no more than two web-based resources in this initial bibliography. On the whole, I strongly advise caution when consulting web-based sources for scholarly information (images are a different matter).

Wikipedia is **NOT** a scholarly source!! Make certain that you evaluate the academic integrity of your on-line sources; for the most part, .edu extensions are trustworthy, but do not take even that at face value.

It is very important from a scholarly perspective that you include primary (ancient) sources, even if only in translation. There are a number of translations available, including the Loeb Classical Library series available in Library and arranged, for the most part, according to author. There are also web-based translations: the Perseus site (www.perseus.tufts.edu) is one of the most reliable. Do be aware that older translations are common so a translation done in the last 20-30 years is preferable.

Your thesis is not the same as your topic. Topics are general; a thesis is your specific avenue of investigation into your topic. Your thesis should be a specific line of inquiry into your topic with an idea of what you want to prove or disprove.

Presentation: the last several weeks of our meetings this semester will be devoted to oral and visual presentations of your research. You will need to provide a handout that outlines your topic and research approach as well as visual illustrations of the topic. These presentations will run approximately 20 minutes each with another 5-10 minutes for questions and discussion: I will set the order once topics have been selected. This should be both a general introduction to your subject matter and a detailed discussion of the thesis you are exploring in your paper.

Paper: In addition to the research report outlined above, you will need to write your research into a paper: the paper itself will be due at the beginning of exam week, specific time to be announced later. The paper must be 5-7 pages and have at least 7 bibliographical sources. No more than three of those sources should be web-based. At least one source must be an ancient source, not taken indirectly from a secondary modern source: in other words, look up the citation in a translation of its original source. Clarity of argument, structure, grammatical and syntactical issues will all be factored into the final grade of the paper along with the quality of research. Proofreading errors will be detrimental to the grade.

Graduate Students:

Your weekly assignments are the same as the students enrolled at the 400 level: the expectation, however, is that your synthesis of the material in the response papers and in class discussion will be at a more refined level.

Graduate final papers must be a minimum of 12 pages and have at least 10 bibliographical sources. All of the above statements concerning the papers also apply.

Be aware that all University policies are in effect in this class, including those governing definitions and responses to plagiarism or other academic offenses. It is your responsibility to know, understand, and adhere to these policies.

Week 1, August 30th: Introduction

Greek Sculpture Review

Kleiner: 23-31

Sheldon Nodelman, "How to Read a Roman Portrait," in *Roman Art in Context*, 10-26

Peter Rockwell, "The History of Stoneworking Technology," in *The Art of Stoneworking* (1993), 198-206 [Blackboard pdf]

Kirk Savage, "History, Memory, and Monuments" at
<http://www.nps.gov/history/history/reesedu/savage.htm>

This is a review of scholarly research on monument studies. You do not need to write a response paper for this, but do consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss them:

What is collective memory? How is it distinct from "history"?

What is the relationship between a monument and the historical narrative?

Why—broadly speaking—are monuments built and by whom?

What is the relationship between a monument and its viewer? Is this a static relationship over time?

What are the potential benefits and pitfalls of applying these ideas to ancient Roman monuments?

Week 2, September 6th: Republican Sculpture

Portraiture and Historical Reliefs

Kleiner: 31-50 (read through "Paris-Munich Reliefs" section)

Jane Fejfer, "The Material of Roman Portraits," in *Roman Portraits in Context* (2008), 152-180 [Blackboard pdf]

Harriet Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford, 1996): 32-35, 53-59 [Blackboard pdf]

Miranda Marvin, "Copying in Roman Sculpture: The Replica Series," in *Roman Art in Context*, 161-188

[Write a response paper to Marvin's article](#)

[Turn in top three preferences \(ranked 1, 2, 3\) for Research paper topic](#)

Week 3, September 13th: The Augustan Age

Portraiture Typology

Kleiner: 59-69 (stop at "Gemma Augustea")

Ara Pacis

Kleiner: 90-102 (stop at "Belvedere Altar")

Diana Kleiner, "The Great Friezes of the Ara Pacis Augustae. Greek Sources, Roman Derivatives, and Augustan Social Policy," in *Roman Art in Context*, 27-52

Diane Conlin, excerpt from *The Artists of the Ara Pacis*, 57-64. [Blackboard pdf]

Henry T. Rowell, "The Forum and Funeral *Imagines* of Augustus" in *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 1940: 131-143. [JSTOR]

[Write a response paper to Kleiner's article in Roman Art in Context](#)

Week 4, September 20th: The Julio-Claudian Successors

Portraiture

Kleiner: 123-139 (stop at "Portraits of women...")

Ara Pietatis and Vicomagistri reliefs

Kleiner: 145-148

Sebasteion

Kleiner: 158-161

John Pollini, "Damnatio Memoriae in Stone: Two Portraits of Nero Recut to Vespasian in American Museums" in the *American Journal of Archaeology (AJA)* 88 (1984): 547-555 [JSTOR]

John Pollini, Reviewed work(s): *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture* by Eric Varner
The Art Bulletin, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Sep., 2006), pp. 590-597 [JSTOR]

Cynthia Damon

Reviewed work(s): *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture* by Harriet I. Flower *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 128, No. 4 (Winter, 2007), pp. 599-604 [Blackboard pdf]

Based on Damon's review of Flower's *The Art of Forgetting*, respond to these questions in a one page narrative: briefly describe four chronological changes in the process of *damnatio memoriae*; why might a community outside of Rome choose not to follow a *damnatio*?; what is the case in which an emperor does not "damn" his predecessor's memory and why might this be a good choice politically? Finally, do you perceive a major difference between Flower's views on *damnatio memoriae* and those expressed by Varner (as seen through Pollini's review)?

Week 5, September 27th: The Flavian Period

Portraiture

Kleiner: 171-179

Arch of Titus

Kleiner: 183-191

Eric Varner, "Portraits, Plots and Politics: 'Damnatio Memoriae' and the Images of Imperial Women," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome (MAAR)* 46 (2001): 41-93. Responsible only for pages 41-57. [JSTOR]

Eve D'Ambra, "The Cult of Virtues and the Funerary Relief of Ulpia Epigone," in *Roman Art in Context*, 104-114.

Natalie Boymel Kampen, "Social Status and Gender: The Case of the Saleswoman," in *Roman Art in Context*, 115-132.

[Write a response to Varner's MAAR article.](#)

Week 6, October 4th: The Era of Trajan

Portraiture

Kleiner: 208-212

Forum of Trajan

Kleiner: 212-220

Tropaeum at Adamkissi

Kleiner: 230-232

Elizabeth Wolfram Thill, "Civilization Under Construction: Depictions of Architecture on the Column of Trajan," in *AJA* 114 (2010): 27-43. [JSTOR]

Penelope Davies, "The politics of perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration," in *AJA* 101 (1997): 41-65. [JSTOR]

Mary T. Boatwright, "The City Gate of Plancia Magna in Perge," in *Roman Art in Context*, 189-207.

[Write a response to Davies' article](#)

Week 7, October 11th: Tuesday classes do not meet. Academic Monday

Week 8, October 18th: Hadrianic Classicism and Portraiture

Kleiner: 137-244

Apotheosis of Sabina (cf Attic grave reliefs)

Kleiner: 253-254 ("Arco di Portogallo")

Iliad/Odyssey personification from Athens

Kleiner: 259-260 (general discussion on Hadrianic art in Athens)

Richard Gergel, "The Tel Shalem Hadrian Reconsidered," *AJA* 91 (1995): 231-251. [JSTOR]

Amanda Claridge, "Hadrian's Column of Trajan," in *Journal of Roman Archaeology (JRA)* 6 (1993): 5-22. [Blackboard pdf]

Caroline Vout, "Antonine, Archaeology and History," in *Journal of Roman Studies (JRS)* 95 (2005): 80-96. [JSTOR]

[Write a response to Claridge's article](#)

Week 9, October 25th: The Antonine Period

Portraiture

Kleiner: 267-280 (stop at "Private Portraiture...")

Column Base of Antoninus Pius

Kleiner: 285-288

The Great Antonine Altar at Ephesus

Kleiner: 309-312

Sarcophagi

Kleiner: 256-259, 301-308

Inez Scott Ryberg, "Rites of the State Religion in Roman Art," *MAAR* 22

(1955). [JSTOR] This is a seminal scholarly work on Roman historical reliefs: review the table of contents since it may include information useful to your research. Read Chapter XIV 'Modes of Thought and Expression' 203-211.

[For this week's writing assignment, define briefly but clearly the two "modes" of historical relief as defined by Ryberg and the two "styles" she cites, providing at least one example for each.](#)

Helmut Nickel, "The Emperor's New Saddle Cloth: The Ehippium of the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 24 (1989): 17-24. [JSTOR]

Jane Fejfer on the dissemination of imperial portraits, *Roman Portraits in Context*, 418-429 [Blackboard pdf]

Turn in preliminary bibliography and thesis proposal.

Week 10, November 1st: The Severan Dynasty and the Beginning of Change

Portraiture

Kleiner: 317-329

Severan Arch in the Forum Romanum

Kleiner: 329-332

Arch of Septimius Severus at Leptis Magna

Kleiner: 340-343

Baths of Caracalla

Kleiner: 338-339

Overview of Severan Art:

Kleiner: 351-353

Miranda Marvin, "Freestanding Sculpture from the Baths of Caracalla," *AJA* 87 (1983): 347-384. Responsible for 347-355 (stop at "Main Building") and 377-384. [JSTOR]

Susann Lusnia, "Urban Planning and Sculptural Display in Severan Rome: Reconstructing the Septizodium and Its Role in Dynastic Politics," *AJA* 108 (2004): 517-544. Responsible for 517-534 (stop at "Dynastic Policy") and the Conclusion 541-542. [JSTOR]

[Write a response to Lusnia's article](#)

Week 11, November 8th: The Late Empire, 3rd-4th Centuries

Trends in Portraiture

Kleiner: 357-363; 368 (Philip the Arab); 373-375 (Gallienus)

Ludovisi Sarcophagus

Kleiner: 389-390

Imperial Portraiture under the Tetrarchs

Kleiner: 400-405
Five Column Decennalia Base, Rome
Kleiner: 413-417
Susan Wood, "A Too Successful Damnatio Memoriae: Problems in Third Century Roman Portraiture," *AJA* 87 (1983): 489-496. [JSTOR]
Constantinian Portraiture
Kleiner: 433-441
Arch of Constantine, Rome
Kleiner: 444-454
Lee Ann Riccardi, "Uncononical Imperial Portraits from the Eastern Roman Provinces: The Case of the Kanellopoulus Emperor," *Hesperia* 69 (2000): 105- 132. [JSTOR]
[Write a response to Riccardi's article](#)

Week 12, November 15th
[Student Research Presentations](#)

Week 13, November 22nd
[Student Research Presentations](#)

Week 14, November 29th
[Student Research Presentations](#)

Week 15, December 10th
[Student Research Presentations](#)
Final Research Papers due no later than 6pm December 12th.

Research Topics

Pompeii/Herculaneum portraits
Cartoceto bronze group (see Fejner)
Female portraiture from any period (choose a single figure or do comparative work)
Augustan period freedmen portraits
Sperlonga Grotto sculpture
Nero/Colossus
Domitian
Cancellaria Reliefs
Haterii Reliefs
Arch of Trajan at Beneventum
Anaglypha Traiani/Hadriani
Lucius Verus
Column of Marcus Aurelius
Marcus Aurelius Panels
Julia Domna
Arch of the Argentarii
Galienus
Theodosius obelisk base in Constantinople
Sarcophagus topic
Gold glass portraits (see Fejfer)
Fayum portraits
Roman Bronze topic

Student Reports

* Reserved for Graduate students

Week 1: none

Week 2:

Harriet Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford, 1996): 32-35, 53-59

*Miranda Marvin, "Copying in Roman Sculpture: The Replica Series," in *Roman Art in Context*

Week 3:

*Diana Kleiner, "The Great Friezes of the Ara Pacis Augustae. Greek Sources, Roman Derivatives, and Augustan Social Policy," in *Roman Art in Context*

Henry T. Rowell, "The Forum and Funeral Imagines of Augustus" in *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 1940: 131-143. JSTOR

Week 4:

John Pollini, "Damnatio Memoriae in Stone: Two Portraits of Nero Recut to Vespasian in American Museums" in the *American Journal of Archaeology* 88 (1984): 547-555. JSTOR

_____. Reviewed work(s): *Mutilation and Transformation: Damnatio Memoriae and Roman Imperial Portraiture* by Eric Varner *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Sep., 2006), pp. 590-597. JSTOR

[The Pollini pieces are a single presentation, although they may be discussed separately.](#)

*Cynthia Damon Reviewed work(s): *The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture* by [Harriet I. Flower](#) *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 128, No. 4 (Winter, 2007), pp. 599-604 [Blackboard pdf]

Week 5:

*Eric Varner, "Portraits, Plots and Politics: 'Damnatio Memoriae' and the Images of Imperial Women," *MAAR* 46 (2001): 41-93. Responsible only for pages 41-57. JSTOR

Eve D'Ambra, "The Cult of Virtues and the Funerary Relief of Ulpia Epigone," in *Roman Art in Context*.

Natalie Boymel Kampen, "Social Status and Gender: The Case of the Saleswoman," in *Roman Art in Context*, 115-132

Week 6:

Penelope Davies, "The politics of perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration," in *AJA* 101 (1997): 41-65. JSTOR

Elizabeth Wolfram Thill, "Civilization Under Construction: Depictions of Architecture on the Column of Trajan," in *AJA* 114 (2010): 27-43. JSTOR

Mary T. Boatwright, "The City Gate of Plancia Magna in Perge," in *Roman Art in Context*.

Week 8:

Richard Gergel, "The Tel Shalem Hadrian Reconsidered," *AJA* 91 (1995): 231-251 [JSTOR]

Amanda Claridge, "Hadrian's Column of Trajan," in *JRA* 6 (1993): 5-22. [Blackboard pdf]

*Caroline Vout, "Antinous, Archaeology and History," in *JRS* 95 (2005): 80-96. JSTOR

Week 9:

Helmut Nickel, "The Emperor's New Saddle Cloth: The Ephippium of the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 24 (1989): 17-24. JSTOR. The student is also responsible for introducing the statue itself using the material in Kleiner.
Jane Fejfer on the dissemination of imperial portraits, *Roman Portraits in Context*, 418-429 [Blackboard pdf]

Week 10:

*Miranda Marvin, "Freestanding Sculpture from the Baths of Caracalla," *AJA* 87 (1983): 347-384. Responsible for 347-355 (stop at "Main Building") and 377-384. JSTOR
*Susann Lusnia, "Urban Planning and Sculptural Display in Severan Rome: Reconstructing the Septizodium and Its Role in Dynastic Politics," *AJA* 108 (2004): 517-544. Responsible only for 517-534 (stop at "Dynastic Policy") and the Conclusion 541-542. JSTOR

Week 11:

Susan Wood, "A Too Successful Damnatio Memoriae: Problems in Third Century Roman Portraiture," *AJA* 87 (1983): 489-496. JSTOR
Lee Ann Riccardi, "Uncononical Imperial Portraits from the Eastern Roman Provinces: The Case of the Kanellopoulus Emperor," *Hesperia* 69 (2000): 105- 132. JSTOR