Abstract: This paper explores the framing of portraits of women in the second century CE through three examples of the so-called Small Herculaneum Woman statue type. Relevant juxtapositions include head and body, image and text, sculpture and setting, singularity and replication. Over the long histories of these portraits, their viewing frames have also changed drastically, reshaped by re-use, spolia, damage or abandonment, colonialist archaeologies, and museum practices that now privilege a very modern, contemplative viewing of “art”.

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Roman portraiture is famously veristic. Its sculpted faces depict wrinkles, lines, bumpy noses, compressed lips and other idiosyncratic features, creating a vivid impression of individual physiognomies and characters. However, this impression is constructed by the anachronistic frames through which we look at Roman portraits. Modern accidents of discovery and collection mean Roman portrait heads are often presented alone, without the bodies to which most were originally attached. They are displayed in the contemplative, analytical setting of a museum gallery, or in detailed, closeup photographs viewed in a university class, textbook or research library. These modern frames and viewing technologies produce an individualism and identity far removed from the portraits’ ancient settings, contexts and effects.

In fact, Roman portraits normally combined a more or less individualized head with a stock body; the whole was bracketed by a formulaic inscription within a conventional architectural setting. Seen in their original totality, Roman portraits

Framing Portraits and Persons:
the Small Herculaneum Woman statue type and the construction of identity
Jennifer Trimble

Written for Verity Platt and Michael Squire, eds. Framing the Visual in Greek and Roman Art (forthcoming).

1 Frequently employed abbreviations:

2 The different roles of head and body are discussed by Peter Stewart in Statues in Roman Society: Representation and Response (Oxford, 2003), Chapter 2. Material, size,
appear less intensely individual than surprisingly generic. These visual constructions undermine the individual essence for which Roman portraiture has been so widely admired. This calls for explanation—not as a paradox to be resolved, but as the crux of the way in which these portraits worked. Recent scholarship has helpfully commented on the characteristic division between individualized heads and formulaic bodies in Roman portraiture, but has not fully explored the ways in which this division worked, or the characteristic interactions and cumulative impact of head, body, inscription and setting.

In this paper, I re-examine constructions of individuality and identity in Roman portraiture by looking at three images of women made in the second century CE and installed in cities in Turkey, Libya and Tunisia. All employed the same stock body, the so-called Small Herculaneum Woman type, a repetition that usefully highlights the interactions of the different parts of these portraits. All three were honorific in design, and stood in public, urban spaces, making them the object of a historically specific viewing and reception. The heads, bodies, inscriptions, associated sculpture and spatial settings were constitutive elements of these portraits. Their assemblage illuminates a portraiture that worked in terms of dynamic tensions between individual and collective, specific and generic.

In these three statues, any concept of an essential individuality or unified meaning was radically undermined by the extensive use of visual convention and formula. Every aspect of the statues was relational, continually pointing to visual, social and spatial connections. These portraits depict the boundaries of identity as visually permeable, diluted and expandable. This permeability operated in a specific social and spatial context, and at different levels of time. Indeed, assessing the statues’ modern histories and changing frames of value and meaning over time underscores this historically specific conception of portraiture and its significance within second century urban culture.

1. Head and body

I begin with a portrait statue from Cyrene, now in the British Museum, that testifies to changing frames of value and interest over time (fig. 1).³ Most recently, it has been part of the detailed publication of corpora of statues in individual museums or regions of the ancient world, but it was found in 1861 in Cyrene, then part of Ottoman-controlled Libya, during an exploratory expedition mounted by two officers of, respectively, the British Royal Engineers and Royal Navy.⁴ Their published account is explicitly imperialist, be it in their undisguised contempt for the indigenous people and equally obvious respect for imperial administrations, or in the value placed on their own initiative and hard work in extracting antiquities from the ground and
shipping them to England, or in the pervasive conception of a direct and legitimizing historical connection between the authors and the classical Mediterranean past, a connection the local populations are considered not to share. The volume is also, for its time, a well-documented archaeological report. Also typical for its time: Captain Smith and Commander Porcher did not distinguish much between ideal and portrait sculptures, prizing figures of gods over portraits, and placing great value on large and complete statues of whatever kind.

The portrait statue itself testifies to a history of changing valuations in ancient Cyrene. A fall from a pedestal may have caused the blows to the bridge and tip of the nose and left eyebrow, but they are in exactly those places typically targeted in antiquity as the result of a damnatio memoriae or other attack on a portrait standing in for a person. By contrast, dowel holes along the right forearm mark an ancient repair, suggesting the opposite impulse of care and preservation. The portrait was one of 59 pieces of sculpture excavated inside the cella of the “Temple of Venus,” which stood along one of Cyrene’s main streets in the immediate vicinity of the Agora, the Caesareum, and several other temples and public buildings; this building, and the sculptures within it, belonged firmly within the monumental core of the city. The sculptures included numerous statuettes, heads without bodies and fragments of portraits, deities and ideal sculpture. Only three were life-size or larger, the Small Herculaneum Woman portrait and two figures of youthful male hunters or hunter gods. Within this context, our portrait statue was undoubtedly honorific. It may have represented a benefactress of the temple, or a member of a family of benefactors.

Within these changing frames of meaning over time, I will focus on how the statue looked when it was first set up. Its different parts worked in very different ways. The head represents a youngish adult woman; there are slight hollows in the smooth cheeks, light wrinkles outside the corner of the eye, and faint lines outside the nostr and mouth, but no signs of middle age or beyond (fig. 2). Details in the way the face is carved create an individualized effect. The face is oval, with a low forehead and deeply set eyes under low, feathered brows. The eyes, with incised iris outlines and pupils, are large and widely spaced; the upper lid is thick and sharply defined, but the lower lid blends smoothly into the cheeks. The nose is small and slightly dished; below it, the upper lip is fairly long, with a clearly articulated philtrum. At the mouth, the upper lip is narrow and protrudes slightly while the lower is full. The mouth’s left corner is lower and differently angled than the right, adding veristic detail. Hollows at the corners of the mouth help animate the face, but the expression is calm and neutral, with no particular movement in the brows, eyes, mouth or cheeks.

The elaborate hairstyle identifies its subject in a very different way (fig. 2). The wavy hair is combed directly back from the forehead and temples, disappearing under five braids wound around the crown of the head and stacked like a pillbox hat. This hairstyle, together with the incised pupils and iris edges and stylistic details of the drapery, date this statue to the middle of the second century CE, during the early

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6 Porcher and Smith as in n. 3, pp. 76ff. A plan of the temple is on pl. 57, opposite p. 76; a list of sculptures from it is on pp. 102-104, nos. 46 – 104. One of the two statues of hunters is in London (Huskinson cat. 97 on p. 55 and plate 38); the other is in Istanbul (G. Mendel, *Musées Impériaux Ottomans: Catalogue des Sculptures Grecques, Romaines et Byzantines*, III, Constantinople, 1914, no 1111 (120), pp. 348ff.)
years of the reign of Antoninus Pius. On the face, then, the features make personal reference to the subject portrayed, visually claiming that only she has these particular features, and that this face represents one woman only. This hairstyle, by contrast, was widely employed and externally determined, and the point was almost certainly not to make it unique. In this way, the head relates both to different modern perceptions of value, in the sculptural quality of the face against the scholarly value of the datable hair, and to ancient conceptions of time, in the face’s depiction of a given woman’s age and the hairstyle’s depiction of a given social period.

The body portrays this woman in a very different way (fig. 1). She stands on her left leg, with the right slightly bent. From neck to shins, her body is elegantly wrapped in a voluminous mantle over a fine, crinkly, floor-length tunic. Her gestures are fully involved in the configuration of the drapery: the left arm, wrapped round and round with the mantle, is held by her left side and slightly in front of the hip, and extra mantle material hangs down behind it. Her right arm tucks the mantle into the right side of her body and her right hand drapes a triangular section of the mantle over her left shoulder, or perhaps lifts it off—the gesture is ambiguous. This body replicates a figure widely employed in Roman portraits of women. Known to scholars as the Small Herculaneum Woman after a replica excavated at Herculaneum in the first years of the eighteenth century, this statue type consisted of dozens of exemplars of the same, elaborately draped female body.

Modern conceptual frames have strongly shaped interpretations of these replicated bodies. The Small Herculaneum Woman type’s classicizing style and large number of replicas—172 at last count—were long interpreted as evidence that these were all copies of a single Greek masterpiece carved at the end of the fourth century BCE. Interpretation generally stopped there, ignoring the question of the statues’ meaning or significance in their Roman contexts. This approach cannot explain the

7 Kruse pp. 314-315.
9 The most complete published list of replicas, updating Kruse’s, is in Annetta Alexandridis, Die Frauen des Römischen Kaiserhauses: Eine Untersuchung ihrer Bildlichen Darstellung von Livia bis Iulia Domna (Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern, 2004), pp. 243-247. Several additional replicas are listed in Jens Daehner, ed., The Herculaneum Women: History, Context, Identities (J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007). To these should also be added replicas in the Detroit Institute of Art; the Gortyn Museum, Inv. 243; Belgrade, National Museum, Inv. 3022/III; and one in the Argos Museum garden.
10 The attempt to reconstruct lost Greek originals from Roman replica series, and the typological analysis of Roman replicas in terms of their assumed prototype, characterize the scholarly approach known as Kopienkritik. Its assumptions and methods have come under severe criticism; an important historiographic critique is E. Gazda, ‘Beyond Copying: Artistic Originality and Tradition’ in E. Gazda (ed.), The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 1-24. See also Jennifer Trimble and Jas’ Elsner, eds., Art and Replication: Greece, Rome and Beyond. Art History 29.2 (2006), and Jennifer Trimble,
material. Evaluating these statues only as copies of a Greek original performs a double erasure: it shifts attention away from the Roman present to a very different past, and away from the multiplicity of the replicas to a single work. In short, it requires separating these bodies from the ways in which they were actually employed and seen.

In fact, replicas of the Small Herculaneum Woman type were employed for portraits of high-status women. Given more or less individualized heads, these statue bodies were especially common in Asia Minor, Greece and Italy, and most were carved in the second century CE. They were installed in the public spaces of cities and major sanctuaries; only five or six are funerary, and none come from private, domestic contexts. This was one of several types used in female honorific portraiture, including the so-called Large Herculaneum Woman, the Ceres type and others, all of them heavily draped and more or less classicizing in form. Formulaic body types were also employed for men; these included the Greek himation, the toga, and others. And, as in the case of other civic statue types, replicas of the Small Herculaneum Woman stopped being made in the early third century CE, part of a larger transformation in civic culture and urban display forms. In short, Small Herculaneum Woman replicas were employed and seen within a particular visual context: a stock body was a fundamental and expected building block of public portraiture. This background makes it highly unlikely that the viewers of Small Herculaneum Woman portrait statues saw these bodies as copies of a late classical masterpiece, or even a particularly “Greek” body. Rather, this was one of several appropriate, prestigious ways to portray women in honorific terms in public. Its value lay in its generic classicism and built-in multiplicity.

This context framed the relationship of head and body on the Cyrene portrait (fig. 1). The face claimed visually to refer to a specific person and to that person alone. The body did the opposite. This was not a “costume,” implying clothes and attributes put on over a person’s own body, but something more sweeping—this statue’s visual claim was not to represent the body of this particular woman at all. Indeed, the convention of employing a typed body was so widespread that most viewers will have expected a formulaic and generic body even if they did not recognize this particular type. Excluding the subject’s actual body was part of depicting high social status. Representations of bodies undergoing lived, physical experiences—in battle, in the arena, at work—were associated with soldiers, slaves,
and barbarians; honorific statues took pains to do the opposite. The use of a well-known body type added to the prestige. The Small Herculaneum Woman was an authoritative cliché; it connected an individual woman to a larger world of social and cultural values and in turn attributed those collective values to her. The individualized head required the social framework connoted by the associated body—the portrait was radically incomplete without it. Conversely, a replicated body was meaningless until associated with a specific person. The head and body were interdependent parts of the portrait.

These different operations within a single portrait can be traced in the visual operations of time. The face represented a given age or phase in this particular woman’s life—in this case, adulthood. The hairstyle is that of an adult woman, but it does not exclusively characterize this particular one, linking her instead to current fashions and a time period defined more broadly. The body does something else again, depicting a generic age range within a developing life cycle. The contextual information of both statuary and relief representations indicates that the Small Herculaneum Woman type could be employed both for married adults or younger, unmarried individuals. The replicated body also laid claim to a timeless aspect, linking this woman to the permanent monumentality of an unchanging form. Each of these aspects of time can also be complicated and inverted. The carving of the face relied on widespread techniques and contemporaneous conventions in portraiture; the hairstyle may have represented a personal choice as well as wider trends; the use of this unchanging body type was strongly dictated by fashions that were particularly characteristic of civic culture in the second century CE.

This interdependence can be explored in social terms as well, for example, by considering how this statue communicated the gender of the person portrayed. Nothing in the face itself is particularly feminine, except perhaps for the softness of the modeling and the lack of facial hair. By contrast, the hairstyle—and, more generally, long hair neatly bound up into an elaborate coiffure—was employed for women only, suggesting that gender was here portrayed as a collective, shared value, not part of the specific individuality of the person represented. In the statue’s replicated body, too, femininity was primarily social and collective, not biological or individual. There is no indication of breasts or other marker of biological femininity. The stance is not particularly feminine either: the hips are not curved and the contrapposto is subdued. The restrained, enclosed position of the arms might well evoke modesty and other appropriate feminine virtues—except that the standard honorific type for male portraits in the Greek East (including Cyrenaica), with the right arm often slung in a fold of the himation, was equally restrained and enclosed. The bright colors of female clothing will have provided perhaps the most immediate

13 For example, on the Haterii reliefs, the Column of Trajan, or battle sarcophagi like the Ludovisi sarcophagus. Funerary portraits depicting the deceased with a formulaic god’s body, or integrated into a mythological scene on a sarcophagus front, make use of the same structural phenomenon for different ends.

visual indication of gender, as did the floor-length clothing; men’s tunics and cloaks were shorter, leaving the ankles bare. Height played a small role, if any. Male statues normally stood slightly taller than female, but this difference will have been offset by the very tall inscribed bases on which honorific statues were often set. These statues seem primarily concerned with a display of social status and exclusivity; gender was secondary.

This way of assembling a portrait has immediate implications for the meaning of its constituent parts. A replicated or formulaic body had meaning in different ways from the other parts of any given portrait; different rules and valences were in play. For example, replicas of this type are depicted in mid-performance of a gesture that is self-referential and self-contained but also trivial and ambiguous in intent. Its primary purpose is not to provide a distinct iconographic meaning but to provide visual organization, clarity and recognizability within a larger visual landscape of typed statuary. Small Herculanenum Woman replicas were fundamentally generic and multiple; they accordingly did not carry a single, essential meaning, either visual or social, but instead worked in terms of associations and visual relationships to the forms around them. This does not mean that typed portrait bodies like these were empty of meaning or should be dismissed as purely decorative, but that they worked in other ways. The head and body interacted in a complex relationship of individual and societal, specific and generic.

2. Replicated heads, replicated bodies

These interactions extended well beyond the individualized head and stock body. The heads as well as the bodies of honorific portraits could be replicated—although in different directions. If the person portrayed were important enough, the individualized head itself could become multiple, usually appearing with different typed bodies in each new portrait statue. This level of replication is most fully understood in the case of imperial portraiture, but it also applied to elite private individuals. The woman portrayed at Cyrene may have been this important; her head seems to appear on two additional statues. One was found in Cyrene’s nearby Agora complex, in a building just east of the Prytaneum (fig. 3). It shares with the first portrait the hairstyle, the oval face (although here rounder and wider at the jaw, and with a more triangular forehead), the small and slightly dished nose, large and widely spaced eyes (though here with slightly higher eyebrows carved more sharply), small mouth with curvy upper lip and full lower lip, and well-defined chin. By contrast, the body is of a different type, with a different classicizing configuration of the standard floor-length tunic and

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15 Honorific portrait heights are often around 2.30m or so for male statues and within ten or so centimeters of 2m for female. For example, the portrait of Minia Procula from Bulla Regia, discussed below, stood 1.94m tall (just over 6’ 4”). It was placed on top of a 0.95m tall base, meaning that the complete portrait stood almost nine and a half feet high, and towered over viewers. This Cyrene portrait statue stands somewhat smaller at 1.75m, or about 5’ 9”, which is fairly typical for the Small Herculanenum Woman type.

16 Elizabeth Rosenbaum identified the similarity: see her discussion at Rosenbaum nos. 39, 40 and 41. More broadly, the bibliography on imperial portrait head types is vast. On the replication of a portrait head type for an elite private individual, see Sheila Dillon, “The Portraits of a Civic Benefactor of 2nd-c. Ephesos,” JRA 9 (1996) 261-274.

The mantle forms an open rectangle on the upper torso; one edge runs straight up the left side of the chest, over the head, and down the right, where it wraps outside the right forearm—bent up to create a “corner” of this rectangle—and then flows horizontally across the chest and over the left forearm—also bent up—before falling down along the left hip and leg. Here again, the configuration and gesture do not seem to convey any particular meaning or identity, but rather to be one way among several to provide a visually distinctive yet self-sufficient honorific figure.

The other possible portrait of the same woman was found at Beida, not too far from Cyrene (fig. 4). Interestingly, this head was found with a Small Herculaneum Woman body. The hairstyle is the same, and the delicate nose seems to match the other two portraits, although the thin lower lip and wide upper lip do not. The widely set, almost-shaped eyes also recall the other two, although the eyebrows are higher and the cheekbones are more pronounced, making this face more diamond-shaped. Assessing whether these three portraits represent the same woman depends on how we think practices of resemblance operated at Cyrene at that time. These practices can be difficult to determine, not least because the portraits may have been carved at different times and in different workshops, with inevitable variations. Still, it seems likely that Rosenbaum is right and that at least the first two candidates, and perhaps also the third, portrayed the same woman.

This woman’s social identity becomes clearer accordingly; her public, civic importance was such that she had at least two honorific statues at Cyrene and perhaps one in Beida as well. This kind of public portraiture was normally the reward for euergetism, the system of voluntary civic benefactions paid for by wealthy local aristocratic families. Women were visible participants in this interplay of status, wealth and urban activity, though on a lesser scale than men; representing women in this way seems to have been valuable in adding to the public visibility and prestige of a given family. In honorific portraits of the same person, key facial features and the hairstyle seem to have been replicated, but the heads were combined with various formulaic bodies. In short, the replication of portrait heads added status and extended social identity, but in a different direction than the replication of typed bodies.

By contrast, replicated bodies generally associated many different women with the same figural connotations. The same statue body could be replicated multiple times within the same city or sanctuary. There were at least four Small Herculaneum Woman replicas at Cyrene, all dating to the Trajanic and Antonine periods; given this time spread within the second century, they probably did not all

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18 Traversari calls this a “tipo offerente” and discusses three additional examples (Traversari nos. 15, 16 and 17).
19 Cyrene Museum C 17127a. The exact findspot is not known. Rosenbaum no. 40, Rosenbaum p. 54 and pl. 30. 3-4. Traversari no. 36, pp. 78 and pl. 19.1.
20 On how to assess resemblance, Dillon as in n. 16.
22 Besides for the statue from the “Temple of Venus,” no specific findspots are known for the other three:
  - Cyrene, Museum of Antiquities, Inv. C17065; Kruse, pp. 303-304, cat. C4; Rosenbaum p. 94, no. 162; Traversari p. xx, no. 35.
depict the same person. Such repetitions could be coincidental; since honorific portraiture was conservative and relied on established connotations, the repetition of well-known forms was inevitable. They could also be quite deliberate. At Cyrene, the evidence is not detailed enough to say, but a good example comes from Aulis in Greece, where two statues of the Small Herculaneum Woman type were found in the cella of the Temple of Artemis. One, dating perhaps to the middle decades of the first century CE, is headless and lacks an identifying inscription.23 The second is datable to the last decade of the second century CE and is identified on the base as a portrait of Zopureina, priestess of Artemis Aulideia.24 It is likely that the earlier statue also portrayed a priestess of the temple and that the repeated body type linked these portraits conceptually as well as visually.25 Repeating a single type was valuable in such a context: it pointed to the unchanging nature of this priesthood, to its continuity over time, and to the association of a particular person and her family with a much longer span of religious involvement at Aulis. An outstanding example of this kind of careful conjunctions of portrait statue types is the Nymphaeum of Herodes Atticus at Olympia.26

Reiterations of the same head combined with different bodies, and reiterations of the same body combined with different heads, thus extended visual and social identity in two different directions. Each of a portrait statue’s elements could be recombined in other portraits, although with different constraints. The same facial features (and perhaps also hairstyle) were employed in additional portraits of the same person. A hairstyle was applicable to other women in that time period, or who wanted to refer to that time period. A given body type remained available and desirable over a much longer time and for many more people. This expansion in multiple directions was useful in creating visual clarity and social prestige. The more iterations of the same person’s portrait the better, and the more repetitions of a single body type, with increasingly strong connotations that a new portrait could draw on, the better. These portraits did not rely on a bounded, singular, or essential depiction of individuality. They worked in terms of a permeable and expandable public identity assembled from changeable, formulaic parts and dependent, in various ways, on replicative connotations.

23 Thebes Museum, Inv. BE64; Arch. Ephem. 1963, pl. 1y.
As such, these portraits were deeply relational. They asked the viewer not only to consider the interplay of head, hairstyle and body, but also the relationship of these elements to other portraits of the same person, and to portraits of different people employing the same body type. They connected the intensely local domain of who received what honors, and who was associated with what hairstyle, benefactions, or statue types, with an empire-wide culture of portrait conventions, stylish hairdos, formulaic bodies, and elite civic activities. They connected all these over time as well: not only across the time span of a single portrait subject’s life and perhaps other honors, but also against the time span of statues long since installed and of any new statues set up in the future. Finally, they underlined the distinction between the people honored in this way and the majority of people, lacking the needed money and connections, who were not. In all of this, the visual and the social were deeply intertwined.

3. Image and text

Similar interactions can be followed into the interplay of image and text. A portrait statue from Ephesus in Asia Minor brings its associated inscription into this discussion (fig. 5).

The portrait’s body was found inside the south gate of the lower Agora in 1903, just eight years into the long-term Austrian excavations at Ephesus. The head was found in a debris layer near the same gate and was joined to the body in 1934. Here, as is characteristic of late nineteenth and early twentieth century classical archaeology, excavations focused on the city’s monumental core.

Along with the other sculptures excavated there between 1895 and 1906, this statue was taken to Vienna and now stands in the Ephesus Museum there. In antiquity, the statue also saw shifting frames of perception and value. Water damage to the right foot, left hand and shoulders, as well as to the lower mantle hem on the back, suggests that it stood for years in an open air location.

At some point, the face was damaged by a fall or other blows to the eyes, brow, nose, lips and chin (the cheeks remain smooth)—locations suggesting a deliberate attack on the face, and a very different kind of response to the representation of social identity.

Here again, a relatively individualized head is combined with a Small Herculaneum Woman body. The face is not intensely veristic: the skin is smooth, without visible wrinkles; the eyes, cheeks and what remains of the nose are symmetrical and regular in shape. Still, distinctive features create the impression of a recognizable individual. The face is oval, with high cheekbones and cheeks whose fullness becomes slightly heavy and pouty outside the mouth and continues down to a slightly receding chin. The lower lip is fuller than the upper; the corners of the mouth turn down more sharply on the right side than the left. Above, the eyebrows are low over small, widely spaced eyes. The forehead is also low, and smoothly rounded by the hairstyle. This consists of three tiers of hair piled up over the forehead, each

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28 The south and west gates of the lower Agora were cleared in 1903. G. Wiplinger, Ephesus: 100 Years of Austrian Research (Vienna: Böhlau, 1996) p. 29.

29 Eichler as in n. 27, p. 50.
incised with regularly spaced, parenthesis-shaped incisions indicating a wavy texture. There are no stray wisps or extra curls to ease the sharp division between face and hair. Behind these tiers, no additional details are carved; this portrait was sculpted to be seen from the front. The hairstyle dates the statue to the late Trajanic period.30

The body replicates the Small Herculaneum Woman type in a way typical of the Trajanic period. The proportions are naturalistic and attention is given to an illusionistic rendering of the drapery lines—but only when seen from a distance. The folds of the mantle at the crook of the right elbow and across the groin, for example, are thick and strongly shadowed, but they are cut into the marble without the detailed, illusionistic effects of fabric overlying body volumes that characterize some very high quality replicas of the earlier Imperial period.31 Overall, many of the second century replicas give an effect of visual cliché, in which the sculptural priority is on recognizability and accuracy of the major lines, not on virtuoso details or innovative renderings of the given form. The body was normally less fully carved on the back, as is the case here. And, the tunic over the feet and shins was normally not replicated from one statue to the next with the same attention to sameness as is so striking on the front of the mantle. Comparing the Cyrene and Ephesos statues, for example, shows that this area is left largely columnar on both, with plentiful drillwork and ad hoc variations carved in so as to depict a fine, crinkly texture and animate the surface of the stone (figures 1 and 5). This use of the running drill required less skill and time than did the careful sculpting of the mantle, let alone the carving of the face. Different specialists and work teams worked on these statues, and detailed replication did not apply evenly to the entire body.

An inscribed base found in the same zone may well have belonged to this statue, adding another dimension to its workings. The portrait originally stood in or very near the south gateway of the lower Agora, a nodal position in the traffic flow around the city and and one that enjoyed prime visibility. Only one inscription found nearby is a possible match, although it was re-used as building material and so its original location is not known.32 The block comprises the middle section of a statue base; even in this incomplete state, it stands 1m in height by 0.71m wide, suggesting that it was originally quite tall and narrow, so that the statue placed on top of it towered over passersby.33 The inscription honors Antia Julia Polla:

30 Kruse 304-305.
31 Examples of this are discussed in Trimble 2000.
32 Eichler as in n. 27; Forschungen in Ephesos III, p. 122, n. 34. This inscription is IE 3034 and Dessau 8819a. The translation is mine, but benefited from enormous help by Maud Gleason and Deborah Beck, whom I gratefully thank. A review of the inscriptions from the lower Agora, collected in IE 7.1, 3001-3085, shows that the other inscriptions honoring women are too early or too late, or they come from the wrong location, e.g. the quite distant area of the west gate. This inscription was at some point built into the back wall of the Agora.
someone’s wife, so that Walton has argued that the inscription is passim. On Quadrat 2, J 691; she may have married Iulius Fronto (PIR 2, J 436) and C. Iulius Fronto (PIR 2, J 326). On Quadratus, see also Werner Eck, Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian. Moreover, the overall structure of the inscription is equally formulaic, with the honorand placed at or near the beginning, the patrons at the end, and honorific information in between (in this case, the extensive titles of her brother). Antia Julia Polla herself is described only in terms of Quadratus; there is no mention of a husband, priesthoods held, or any formulaic terms of praise for her, which may mean that she was young and unmarried. As is standard in honorific inscriptions, the language is formal and

34 PIR 2, J 507. Julia Polla is at PIR 2, J 691; she may have married Iulius Fronto (PIR 2, J 323) and certainly had two sons, Iulius Nabus (PIR 2, J 436) and C. Iulius Fronto (PIR 2, J 326). On Quadratus, see also Werner Eck, Senatoren von Vespasian bis Hadrian. Proopographische Untersuchungen mit Einschluss der Jahres- u. Provinzialfasten der Statthalter (Beck, München 1970), passim; he was governor of Asia in 109/110 (p. 171).

35 The provinces he governed are named with unnecessary and unofficial subdivisions, as in the listing of Syria, Phoenicia, Commagene, and Tyre instead of simply Syria (II. 16-17). This is not unusual in such inscriptions: Elias J. Bickerman, AJP 68.4 (1947), p. 355, n. 13.

36 This depends on how much of the beginning of the inscription has been lost. C.S. Walton has argued that the clause in the first surviving line doesn’t make sense unless she is also someone’s wife, so that her husband would already have been named by then, but others have
public; what is expressed is not sentimental, personal or domestic in nature. Nor is it particularly feminine. Julia Polla is female by the form of her name and the word endings used, and implicitly by her lack of administrative titles and offices, but there is no explicit mention of her femininity and she is not praised for particularly feminine qualities like modesty, chastity or the like. Like the sculpted head and body, this text does not depict a universal or essential conception of Roman femininity. Instead, it is part of a formal, public representation of elite status and family connections, and of the patrons’ honorific ties to that family. This is an exclusive notion of femininity that had a certain role in public life.

Image and text worked in complementary ways. Both statue and inscription were unique assemblages of highly conventional elements. The individualized facial features find a parallel in Antia Julia Polla’s name and family connections, while the formulaic content and organization of the inscription are analogous to the stock body type. The conventional ordering and list-like names, titles and formulae of the inscription do not contain difficult or erudite language and allusions; similarly, the statue did not call on sophisticated visual knowledge for comprehension. Both image and text relied instead on tried and true forms and widely known connotations. At the same time, they did different kinds of work. For all their similarities, they extended the portrait subject’s identity in different directions. The facial features claimed to represent one individual and one alone, who might or might not be recognized at sight by the statue’s viewers. By contrast, the inscribed name and family ties linked this individual to other individuals in specific legal and social relationships. The hairstyle and replicated body connected this portrait to others more generically in a broader visual culture of elite social standing and values, at Ephesus and beyond.

By contrast, the text’s patronage information tied those elite social values to a specific act of installation; they displayed a particular relationship between the portrait’s subject and patrons.

In this way, the inscription of an honorific statue added another axis along which social identity could be multiplied and extended—again through repetition and formula. The repeated appearance of Antia Julia Polla’s brother vividly illustrates this function. A pendant inscription from the lower Agora honored Quadratus directly.

39 Two other Small Herculaneum Woman replicas have been found at Ephesus; one was re-used as part of the paving in front of the theater, and so its original context is lost, but the other stood in the marble hall of the Baths of Vedius and may have represented Flavia Papiane, who co-dedicated the baths with her husband, Publius Vedius Antoninus, or another member of the patrons’ family. The statue from the Baths of Vedius is in Izmir’s Basmane Müzesi, Inv. 587. Kruse, pp. 317-318, cat. C33; Dillon as in n. 16; Atalay as in n. 27, p. 26, cat. 16; J. Keil, Öjh. 24 (1929) BeiBl. 40, #4 and 43, fig. 21; Hubertus Manderscheid, Die Skulpturenausstattung der Kaiserzeitlichen Thermenanlagen (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1981), p. 90, cat. 187. On the statue that was re-used as paving, Kruse p. 305, C7; Atalay as in n. 27, p. 27, cat. 17.
40 IE 3033. It, too, was found in the lower Agora, but no closer findspot is mentioned; the description of a partially surviving block suggests that it was re-used as building material.
It describes him in exactly the same way as on Antia Julia Polla’s base, with an identical list of titles expressed in the same words, phrasings and order. The patrons are the same, and the two inscriptions even include the same error: ὑοῦ rather than ὑἱοῦ in Flavius Pythio’s filiation. This was a paired dedication. Both inscriptions may even have been carved from a single exemplar, which contained this error. Unfortunately, the form of his statue is not known; it may have employed a togate body, in keeping with his exceptionally high Roman official status, or a himation, the default civic garb for male honorific statues in the Greek East. In this way, portraying Antia Julia Polla offered an additional opportunity to honor Quadratus through his family ties, and this doubled honor relied on a mix of visual repetition (of his honors) and visual difference (in his and her portrait statues). This extension of identity through epigraphic repetition was open-ended; her own name, or her brother’s name, or portraits of one or both could be repeated in the city, increasing their visibility and prestige over time.

Both image and text were intensely relational. Both took visual meaning from the interrelationships of their parts and social meaning from their connections between subject and patron as well as between a given portrait assemblage and others. This is underscored by the patronage of this twin dedication. Both Quadratus’ and his sister’s statues were dedicated by Titus Flavius Pythio, as asiarch, and his immediate family. This is a Roman citizen’s name, and asiarch was the peak of the local hierarchy of offices. This is a family dedication rather than a single official’s—Pythio’s wife and four children are named—in a characteristic emphasis on elite family prominence and power within honorific civic culture. With this twin dedication, a family at the peak of local administrative power linked itself to a family at the peak of imperial administrative power in a very public display of honorific connection and analogy. These statues and their inscriptions provided visibility and prestige to the Pythio family as well as to Quadratus and his sister. Any further offices held, benefactions made, or honorific dedications awarded will have extended the Pythio family’s own visual and social prestige in the city, each one testifying to their ability to shape space and direct public activities. Indeed, this twin dedication underlines the dependence of honorific portrait subjects on external acts of installation. A portrait’s subject might far outrank its patron, but, in an honorific system in which a statue was never set up by its own subject, even the empire’s highest elites were dependent on others for their public visibility in portraiture.

4. Sculpture and setting

Similar dynamics can be followed into the interplay of a given portrait statue with the other figures around it. A third example of a Small Herculaneum Woman

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41 This is Maud Gleason’s suggestion (pers. comm.). The only differences are the cases (Quadratus is in the accusative here, as the honorand, but in the genitive on his sister’s inscription); different line breaks, and differences in the name abbreviations: Ti. Flavius Pythio on Julia Polla’s inscription is Titus Flavius Pythio here, and his wife Flavia Myrton is Fla. Myrton here. On the genitive absolute construction of the patronage formula employed in both inscriptions, compare Aphrodisias II, pp. 26 and 27.
42 The specific occasion is not known; nor is any additional connection between these two families.
43 IE VII.1, p. 63, provides a six-generation stemma of Pythio’s family with inscription references.
portrait statue from Bulla Regia in the province of Africa Proconsularis shows this at work (fig. 9). Here again, modern framings of Roman sculpture have produced the figure we have. The statue was found in the Temple of Apollo, cleared in 1906 while Tunisia was under French colonial control. As at Cyrene, the excavators were not trained archaeologists but European imperial officials who had access to the site accordingly. And, as at Cyrene, a strong ideological connection links the foreigners with the classical past, entirely bypassing the area’s more recent inhabitants. An initial find in 1902 of a colossal head of Vespasian, an honorific base, and a pedestal with relief decoration was made by a conducteur of the Corps des Ponts et Chaussées; motivated by this find, in 1906 the entire temple was excavated under a captain of the French third Africa battalion. Unlike the removal of objects from Cyrene to the British Museum, these statues and inscriptions went directly to the Bardo Museum in Tunis, where they remain today.

The Temple of Apollo lies on the Forum of Bulla Regia; here again, we are dealing with a monumental, urban setting. Inscriptions indicate that it was built in 34 or 35 CE, and there were subsequent additions and restorations through the fourth century. The temple consisted of a large, central courtyard surrounded on three sides by a portico (fig. 8). On the far side, opposite the entrance, a more highly decorated cella was flanked by smaller side rooms. The room adjoining it on the left was empty, but the rooms on the right had been used as a storeroom for inscribed wall plaques that commemorated not only dedications to Apollo but also civic building activities elsewhere in the city. In other words, this temple was an important locus for commemorative civic display.

Within the temple, the statues and inscriptions were installed and seen in characteristic locations. In the cella stood a 3m tall statue of Apollo on a 1.78m tall base at rear center, while two over-life-size (2.40m) statues lay fallen from niches in the center of the side walls, a figure of Ceres with a portrait head to the left, and Aesculapius to the right. A fragmentary inscription in large letters had fallen from the façade of the cella entrance (CIL VIII.25513 and 25511f.):

[Deo patrio Apollini et Diis Auug(ustis) [sacrum]. [M. Livineius, C(aii) f(ilius), Quirina, De[xt]er sua pecu[nia fecit].

Sacred to Apollo of the city and to the deified emperors. Marcus Livineius Dexter, son of Gaius, Quirina tribe, built it with his own money.

This inscription usefully contextualizes euergetism and local elite display. As is typical of such benefactions, it ties together an urban space, the gods and the

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45 On the excavation and the finds, Merlin. “M. le capitaine Benet, du 3e bataillon d’Afrique, étant venu tenir garnison à Souk-el-Arba vers la fin de 1905, eut l’heureuse idée de reprendre l’an dernier l’exploration des ruines qui avaient fourni ces intéressants vestiges et, avec le concours de la Direction des Antiquités et Arts, il a pu y faire de nouvelles et importantes découvertes” (Merlin, p. 5).
47 Merlin, pp. 20-22.
48 Merlin pl. III.1-3; for the locations of the statues, see his pl. I as well as the text.
emperors, and identifies a member of the local elite as the essential mediator of those relationships. Pendant figures of Saturn and Minerva-Fortuna-Victoria as protective city gods, both wearing mural crowns and bearing cornucopiae, were found in the left wing of the portico. Elsewhere in the portico were found another Minerva and several portrait statues. More honorific statues and bases stood in front of the columns bounding the courtyard, and these showed re-use over time: inscriptions dating to the fourth century CE are found on bases under second century statues. In this temple, sculptural categories and display modes seem to have remained stable over time, through changes in specific statues and groups and even re-use.

Four of the statues found in the portico seem originally to have been installed together as a single portrait group; they match in height, marble, plinth shape, and carving style.\(^49\) The group consists of three female figures and a togate male. One of them is a Small Herculaneum Woman (fig. 9). Another is carved in a “hip mantle” formula, with a roll of the mantle wrapped around the waist and otherwise covering only the hips and legs; the tunic on the upper torso is belted underneath the breasts (fig. 9). The third female statue survives complete with its head and an inscribed base identifying her as Minia Procula (fig. 9). Her body is a variation on the “Kore” type, in which the woman stands on her left leg with the right slightly bent; the mantle is wrapped tightly around the body and tucked in under the arms, with long, diagonal folds sweeping up from the left shin to the right hip. A broad, flat fold of mantle normally crosses twisting over the breasts from under the right arm to the left shoulder. The difference here is Minia Procula’s right forearm, wrapped in the mantle and bent straight up with the palm facing the viewer.\(^50\) Her statue stood against the portico wall between the cella entrance and the doorway into the room to the left (no. 6 on fig. 4); this is the only statue in the group found in situ. The togate male lay close by Minia Procula’s statue, but without its head or inscribed base; the other two female statues, also lacking heads and bases, were found heaped up in the rear right corner of the portico with fragments of other female statues. All four may have once stood at key points in the portico, like Minia Procula’s statue, and all may have belonged to the same family of patrons of the temple.\(^51\)

Minia Procula’s portrait statue provides a useful point of departure in assessing this group.\(^52\) Her hairstyle dates to the late Trajanic or early Hadrianic period, with two flat, wide braids crossing the top of her head and the rest of the hairstyle concealed by a fold of the mantle that covers the back of her head. She is depicted in middle adulthood, with slightly hollow cheeks. Sharp, low brows show the beginnings of a bunching frown over small, widely set eyes, the pupils unincised. Strong, clear carving characterizes the lines outside the nose and the tension in the muscles around the mouth’s corners. The upper lip is long and somewhat convex; it

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\(^{49}\) Kruse pp. 351-354, cat. D49-51. Another, over-lifesize togatus and a bearded male head seem to match in date, but it is not clear if they were part of the same group (Kruse, pp. 351-52).

\(^{50}\) Cf. Aphrodisias II, cat. 89. More ‘canonical’ Kore-type replicas are known from the pronaos of the Heraion at Olympia and from Herodes Atticus’ Nymphaeum at Olympia.

\(^{51}\) Kruse 354. On the findspots of the heaped up female statues, Merlin, p. 15.

\(^{52}\) Tunis, Bardo Museum C 1020. Merlin pl. V.1 and VII.1. White marble, 1.94m tall. Kruse, pp. 351, 353-54.
is compressed and narrow at the mouth over a full but firm lower lip. The statue’s base was inscribed as follows:

Miniae C(aii) f(iliae) Proculae,
C(aii) Sallusti(i) Dextri, f(laminicae) p(erpetuae),
C(aius) Sallustius Prae[n]estinus matri
[opti]mae de suo po[suit]
d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)

Gaius Sallustius Praenestinus erected [this statue] with his own funds, by decree of the decurions, for his excellent mother, Minia Procula, daughter of Gaius, wife of Gaius Sallustius Dexter, perpetual priestess.

As in Antia Julia Polla’s inscription at Ephesus, honorific conventions apply, with the same blend of formulaic and specific. Latin rather than Greek was the rule in western North Africa, but here again the subject is identified at the start with her formal, legal name, including filiation. Here again, she is defined in terms of her family connections, including her husband and son. In this case, the woman honored held a prestigious title, that of *flaminica perpetua*, and that is listed as part of her formal, public identity. Here again, there is no strongly marked femininity or emphasis on particularly womanly virtues, though these were presumably part of the background makeup of any respectable Roman woman. As a word of praise, “optima” is striking for its gender neutrality. This statue’s patronage has a more familial aspect than Antia Julia Polla’s, in being paid for and carried out by her son, but it is equally public, since it was approved by a decree of the decurions and erected in a public, civic space. Here again, and like Marcus Livineius Dexter’s dedicatory inscription seen above, the epigraphic emphasis is on a local elite family and its financial and ideological ties to the urban fabric.

Minia Procula thus sets the tone for her group, and comparison of her portrait with the two other female statues is illuminating. All three are over life-size, as was standard for honorific portraiture, although the Small Herculaneum replica is about twenty centimeters shorter than the other two. All three stand on the left leg, with the right slightly bent and the right foot turned out. Each wears a floor-length tunic with a voluminous mantle elaborately draped over it, although in a different configuration. The drapery over the legs is very similar on all three statues: the mantle swings in strong, diagonal lines downward from the left hip to the right knee and below, with extra material from the mantle hanging straight down along the left side. By contrast, the upper halves are quite different. The long vertical lines of the body and drapery are interrupted by a strong, transverse band across the torso, but this is done very differently on each statue: a diagonal roll of the mantle across the hips on the hip mantle figure, a wide band of twisting pleats across Minia Procula’s chest, and a flat, triangular fold across the chest of the Small Herculaneum Woman. Each

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53 Merlin p. 14; CIL VIII.25530.
54 Minia Procula stood 1.94m tall without her inscribed base, and the hip-mantle statue, at 1.70m even without the head, will have been very close; this height was typical for honorific portraits of adult women. This Small Herculaneum Woman was 1.64m tall without its head, meaning that it may have stood 1.85m or more with it. Replicas of this type were slightly smaller than the norm, typically standing between 1.70 and 1.80m tall.
statue’s gesture is also different, even as each is closely tied into the drapery configuration. On all three, the left arm keeps the mantle closely pressed to the body, but the right arm varies: it escapes the mantle, is partly bound by it, or does something with it. The Small Herculaneum figure makes a closed movement with her right hand holding a large fold at the left shoulder. Minia Procula’s right arm is bent straight upward within a fold with the palm turned outward. The hip mantle figure’s left forearm extends so as to allow the mantle to drape over it, while her right probably also extended outward, perhaps in a libation gesture.

In other words, these three female statues together mix sameness and difference, generic and specific, in a way that is by now familiar. Their bodies are all made up of formulaic drapery and gesture configurations, while their specific gestures differ in how much they close in on the body or reach out to the space around; none seriously impinges on the surrounding world. The primary effect is therefore not one of a strong iconographic meaning for the bodies or gestures represented; rather, they serve the useful purpose of providing visual clarity and variety within a highly conservative visual system. This kind of combination was useful for its ability to collate different figures into the same symbolic field: the public, formal representation of wealthy civic benefactors. Some viewers may also have noted the shared stance and similar lower halves of the figures, fostering a sense of visual unity and rhythm within the group. In such a context, the female drapery configurations were the counterparts of the male statue’s toga; they were appropriate civic garb. In this respect, these drapery types cannot be taken as expressing a universal Roman ideal of femininity—quite the opposite. Honorific statuary was an exclusive domain of representation, intended to portray the exceptional status and civic value of its subjects in contrast to everyone else. At the same time, each portrait was dependent for meaning and effect on its sculptural context and setting, as on its combination of head and body, its interaction of image and text, and its pieces’ various repetitions in different directions.

5. Viewing and reception

All of the above implies viewers and viewing. These interactions—among the different parts of a statue, image and text, associated sculptures, statues and space—existed only in the context of being seen and experienced by people. Reconstructing the circumstances and nature of these portraits’ viewing is therefore also constitutive of meaning and effect. Who saw these portraits and under what circumstances? What did they see when (and if) they looked? What was the physical and spatial experience of these statues, and how did people interact with them? In short, how did people live with these portrait statues and experience them? Viewing and reception, too, will prove to be constitutive parts of these portraits, and they, too, will prove to be deeply relational.

The modern viewing of these portraits could hardly be more different from the ancient. In museums and textbook photographs, these statues can be looked at in peace and quiet. And, by virtue of how these portraits survive, they are often seen as isolated fragments: just a portrait head, or a replicated body, or an inscription transcribed so that even the materiality of the base is not longer part of the viewing. Moreover, improvements in photography and imaging mean that these fragments can be seen better and better, through the increasing ease of travel to a range of sites and museums, through the excellent, closeup photographs in catalogues, through new...
technologies of three-dimensional and interactive digital viewing. These same technologies, in their vehicles of the postcard or book or laptop, allow Roman portraits to be looked at in a dizzying variety of contexts: on an archaeological site, in a museum, in a classroom, or in a book or computer gazed at in a library, study, bedroom, moving vehicle or almost anywhere else.

By contrast, in their ancient contexts, portraits were seen only in their specific settings. Replicas of the Small Herculaneum Woman, for example, come overwhelmingly from public, civic spaces. They stood in temple precincts and sanctuaries (as at Bulla Regia, Cyrene, Corinth, Pergamon, Samos and Olympia); on the display façades of monumental fountains (Olympia, Gortyn); in frigidaria and marble halls of monumental bath buildings (Ostia and Ephesus); in agorai (Thessaloniki, Ephesus, Magnesia on the Maeander and Palmyra); and within other civic buildings like Building M at Side, the Praetorium at Gortyn, and the Basilica Julia and Atrium Vestae in Rome. Others are also from monumental civic spaces, though exact findspots are not known (e.g. in Apollonia, Ephesus, Cuicul, Rome). Another example comes from the Horrea of Hortensius at Ostia, and an exception to the rule stood within Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli. In these spaces, the statues normally stood on tall pedestals or even display façades; they were not available for a detailed look but were separated by height from their viewers. They were seen complete with head, body, colorful paint, inscribed base, associated sculpture (if any) and the immediate architectural setting. Finally, in these public settings, often busy and dedicated to collective activities other than the contemplation of sculpture, these portraits did not receive the contemplative, solitary viewing so characteristic of modern museums.

This difference can be developed more fully with reference to the three case studies already discussed. In each case—Cyrene, Ephesus and Bulla Regia—the viewers included the subjects, patrons and sculptors. These responded to expectations about how the portrait would be seen, by whom and with what effect, so I will consider the latter first. The Small Herculaneum Woman portraits from Cyrene and Bulla Regia (figs. 1 and 9) were seen only by people who entered the “Temple of Venus” or the Temple of Apollo in those cities; we do not know who circulated in these spaces and why, beyond to say that both were clearly important for the dedication and display of sculpture in a central civic location. At Bulla Regia, the portico surrounding the precinct’s courtyard perhaps received more visitors than the cella of the Cyrene temple, although we do not know whether people moved casually through this space or only on marked occasions such as religious festivals. The presence of commemorative plaques and honorific statuary within the complex, with statues changed and even re-used over time, does suggest that this was considered an important display site within the city. In both buildings, these two statues situated the women portrayed in terms of high social status, financial generosity and civic importance, and were necessarily encountered on those terms. In their specific

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56 In the second century CE, only two replicas are certainly funerary, one from Palatianon in northern Greece (Kilkis Museum; Ph. Zapheiropoulou, "Τὸ Ἡρῶο τοῦ Κιλκίς," Κέρνος: Τιμητική προσφορά στὸν Γεώργιο Μπακάλακη, Thessalonike, 1972, pp. 43-52, pls. 17-19) and one from Rome (Rome, Vatican Museums, Gall. dei Can., #IV 20, Inv. 168; Kruse pp. 302-303, cat. C3). Both are early Trajanic. Many replicas’ findspots are not recorded, but this evidence still suggests a very strong pattern for the use of this type in the second century.
settings, the portraits wove these women into the architectural fabric of the city, and hence into the lived experience of its inhabitants, on these terms.

The portrait from Ephesus (figs. 5 and 6), perhaps depicting Antia Julia Polla, is more revealing. It could hardly have stood in a more visible position. The discovery of the body within the south gate to the lower agora, and of the head in a pile of rubble nearby, indicates that the portrait stood in or next to the gate. This was an important passageway and a nodal point within the city; the gate provided access into the agora for all traffic from the upper city and must have been extremely busy at times (fig. 7). People of all kinds passed by this statue: elite and poor, free and slave, locals and visitors. They were not there to look at the statue, but came through on a variety of errands and business of their own. Nor were most people in this gateway as solitary individuals; they moved through in dense or dispersed crowds, in small groups or alone, moving fast or loitering, or anything in between. In other words, this portrait was primarily experienced in terms of movement and distraction; like other honorific statues, it formed a backdrop to civic life rather than its focus.

This viewing, in other words, was not normally a focused, analytical contemplation. Three other characteristics stand out instead. First, although loiterers in the south gate of the lower agora and other interested people may have looked closely at the statue, a momentary glance—or none—must have been far more typical. Second, repetition was important. In Ephesus, many people had occasion to pass through this gate again and again. What the statue missed in attentive viewing, it gained in repeated encounters—an experiential analogy to the repetition of body types in the statuary itself. This in turn suggests that viewers had little time or attention for specific carving details but were attuned to changes over time—a new statue, an added inscription, a change in the built space. Accretive, cumulative effects over time may have been an important dimension of these statues. Third, this portrait was seen by visually and socially knowledgeable viewers, people conditioned in particular ways by the environment in which they lived. In a city filled with formulaic works of sculpture and honorific statues, the visual landscape encouraged a typological viewing. Even a glimpse will have been enough for many people to recognize immediately what kind of sculpture this was and what kind of person it portrayed, even if they did not pause to take in more detail. In all of this, there is a strong and asymmetrical relationship between an unscripted viewing characterized by different kinds of people present for various reasons and with different levels of attention to their surroundings, and a highly formulaic, predictable, and conservative form of imagery that constrained interpretation along a few, well-trodden lines.

In other words, the viewing of this statuary was relational. The way in which such a portrait was put together interacted closely with who saw it, how, and under what circumstances. Thinking in terms of visual literacy helps amplify these viewing characteristics. The most knowledgeable and attentive viewers of this statue may have recognized Antia Julia Polla (if that is who this statue depicted), understood the choice of statue type, been able to read the inscription, and perhaps also known a great deal about the various parties to this honorific transaction. But that level of knowledge was by no means required to understand this statue as a high-status honor. People with partial or no textual literacy may still have known what type of information was included, the more so if a literate person read out the inscription to a group of bystanders or a friend or relative commented on the statue.\footnote{On different levels of literacy and collective reading, see the papers collected in John Humphrey, ed., \textit{Literacy in the Roman World}. JRA suppl. 3, 1991. The papers respond to}
exposure to honorific portraiture in Ephesus will have conditioned the city’s inhabitants to expect an individualized head on top of a formulaic body, even if they did not recognize this particular woman or this particular body type. This was a deeply typological visual system; it allowed a basic categorical recognition that this was a portrait of a woman of high status even if the viewer had very little visual literacy indeed. Formula and repetition thus fostered a broad level of cultural literacy.

This has implications for the decision-making of a portrait’s sculptors, patrons and subjects. They were also viewers, but with a particular agency in regard to the portrait. These statues were surely made under the assumption of a distracted and widely diverse audience, and their creation and installation took form accordingly. A replicated body had particular value in such circumstances. A Small Herculaneum Woman body, like other well-known statue types, made the most of even the swiftest look; a mere glance was often enough for recognition of the statue type and hence the kind of woman portrayed—that is, someone of high status and high civic value. The frontal installation of many of these statues helped; a single aspect of a given body type was repeated again and again. A replicated body offered fixity of meaning and connotations; this was an authoritative cliché. It did not require lengthy visual analysis to be understood, and its formulaic use constrained meaning and interpretation along well-traveled channels—a valuable aspect within the conservatism of honorific portraiture. More broadly, with the repeated juxtaposition of an individualized head, typed body and formulaic inscription, each new portrait installation participated in a formulaic system that could draw on a broad, basic knowledge in the viewing audience. Groups of sculptures and inscriptions relied on the same typological mixing and matching, and the same broad visual literacy in its viewers. The choice of a central location, and the permanence of the statue’s installation there, meant that the semantic import of a statue like this could build up over time, contributing to its honorific function. In these ways, a given portrait’s layers of specificity and individuality interacted with viewers’ different levels of visual and textual literacy.

Finally, in the viewing of these statues as in all else, visual and social aspects were intertwined. Representing high social status was again more important than other categories, such as age or gender; the latter were present, but as secondary characteristics. The public placement and promiscuous viewing of the Ephesus portrait in the south gate to the lower Agora, for example, contradicts what we know about the public behaviour of respectable women. In this, the visual conventions of portraiture served a useful social purpose. The displayed body was not hers, and honorific portraiture in many ways assimilated male and female portraits; it could apparently keep a high status woman in the public eye without contradiction. The statues themselves mark a fundamental social asymmetry between exclusive portraiture and inclusive viewing; only elite benefactors were represented in this way, but everyone could see their honorific portraits. These portraits did a certain kind of work: they represented and reinforced social relationships within the civic landscape, creating a visual hierarchy of representation that turned on the power to shape the urban fabric.

Conclusions: Framing portraits and persons

In this paper I have explored the ancient framing of Roman portraiture, focusing on honorific portraits of women in the second century CE. These statues survive in the present as the result of shifting frames for Roman portraits over time. In antiquity, these can include their original installation, evolving effects within a developing visual fabric, re-use, possible deliberate damage, and abandonment. In modern times, they can include imperialistic adventures, colonial archaeology, and the large-scale excavation of monumental city centers—the big dig—yoke with the priorities and methods these entailed. Each of these historical frames is illuminating in itself; in each period, a Roman portrait’s meaning and even appearance grew out of the relationship between the ancient object and its current frame, and that is no less true here. These portraits, by virtue of their long histories, are layered and relational artifacts within changing presents as well as different pasts.

One of those pasts is the civic culture of the second century CE. In their initial installation and reception, these statues were unique assemblages of highly conventional elements. Each portrait was individualized not through a depiction of the subject’s actual bodily appearance, physical experience, or unchanging internal essence, but through its unique combination of head, typed body, accompanying inscription, and particular sculptural, architectural and human setting. All of these were constitutive elements of the portrait, and they interacted with particular effects and implications. These statues do not conform to expectations that a portrait should depict a given individual’s unique and integral essence. Rather, they draw explicitly on the visual articulation of specific and generic, individual and formulaic in the representation of social identity.

In this portraiture, individual representation was powerfully swept up into collective frames of reference and meaning. These frames and this individuality were permeable; the identity on display was not sealed or bounded, but extended well beyond the individual depicted. It was situation-specific but also adaptable to a changing visual landscape. Sculpture, epigraphic formulae, and modular architecture were all extendable and expandable in their meaning and effects, through repetition, accretion and planned or unplanned cumulative effect. These repetitions moved across different media in different directions, as for example in the repeated portrait heads of a single, prominent individual, or the repetition of a typed body for many different people, or the repetition of a name or honorific formula across multiple inscriptions and spaces. They also moved across time, drawing effect from additional sculptures, inscriptions or buildings.

At every level, this operated relationally. The individualized head had meaning in conjunction with a typed body; the connotations of that body were activated in associated with a specific head. Honorific inscriptions relied on the interplay of conventional language and individuals specificity. This mix of statue and inscription was seen and took effect within a particular location, in conjunction with specific other sculptures or none. Social relationships were implicit parts of this visual structuring; viewers were conditioned by their environments and long experience to expect the combination of individualized head and typed body, and to understand what this image was accordingly; every honorific inscription and statue testified to an interaction between the subject of the honor and its patron; honorific portraits were set up in public space, in physical relationship to human experience within that space. The peculiar permeability and expandability of public identity worked within these social relationships and helped to constitute them. These relationships were asymmetrical but interdependent.
The faces of these portraits are vividly carved, sometimes with extraordinary sensitivity. In their own time, they were part of a web of convention, expectation, meaning and effect. In ours, they stimulate a reconsideration of essential categories of identity and an appreciation of the social value of visual permeability and extension through analogy, formula and repetition.
Figure 1. Portrait of a woman from the “Temple of Venus” at Cyrene. (Here reproduced from Rosenbaum pl. LXXIII.2; photo and permission to be requested from the British Museum.)
Figure 2. Detail views of the portrait from Cyrene illustrated in figure 1. (Here reproduced from Rosenbaum pl. XXXI.2-3; photo and permission to be requested from the museum.)

Figure 3. Portrait statue of a woman from Cyrene, perhaps the same woman as in figure 1. (Here reproduced from Rosenbaum pl. XXX.1-2; photo and permission to be requested from the museum.)
Figure 4. Head of a portrait statue of a woman from Beida, perhaps the same woman as in figure 1. (Here reproduced from Rosenbaum pl. XXX.3-4; photo and permission to be requested from the museum.)
Figure 5. Portrait statue from the south gate of the lower Agora in Ephesus, which may well depict Antia Julia Polla, sister of the consul C. Antius Aulus Julius Quadratus. (Here reproduced from Atalay fig. 34; photo and permission to be requested from the museum.)
Figure 6. Detail of the portrait from Ephesus illustrated in figure 2. (Here reproduced from Atalay fig. 33; photo and permission to be requested from the museum.)
Figure 7. Plan of the lower agora of Ephesus (upper left) and the lower Embolos (lower right) leading to the upper part of the city. The south gate of the agora lies between numbers 56 and 57. (Here reproduced from Peter Scherrer, ed., Ephesus: The New Guide, Ege Yayinlari, 2000, p. 129; permission to be requested from the publisher.)
Figure 8. Plan of the Temple of Apollo at Bulla Regia in Africa Proconsularis, showing the central courtyard, surrounding portico, and cella at the top. The numbers mark the findspots of the four statues discussed in the text: 1 is Minia Procula (the only portrait in this group found in situ); 2 is the headless togatus; 3 and 4 are the “hip mantle” and Small Herculaneum Woman statues. (Reproduced from Merlin, plate 1; no permission required because the volume was published in 1908.)
Figure 9. Three statues of women found in the Temple of Apollo at Bulla Regia and originally belonging to a single group. From left to right: Minia Procula, the hip mantle statue, and the Small Herculaneum Woman. A togate male also belonged to this group. (Here reproduced from Merlin, plates V.1, VI.1 and VI.3; photos and permissions to be requested from the Bardo Museum.)