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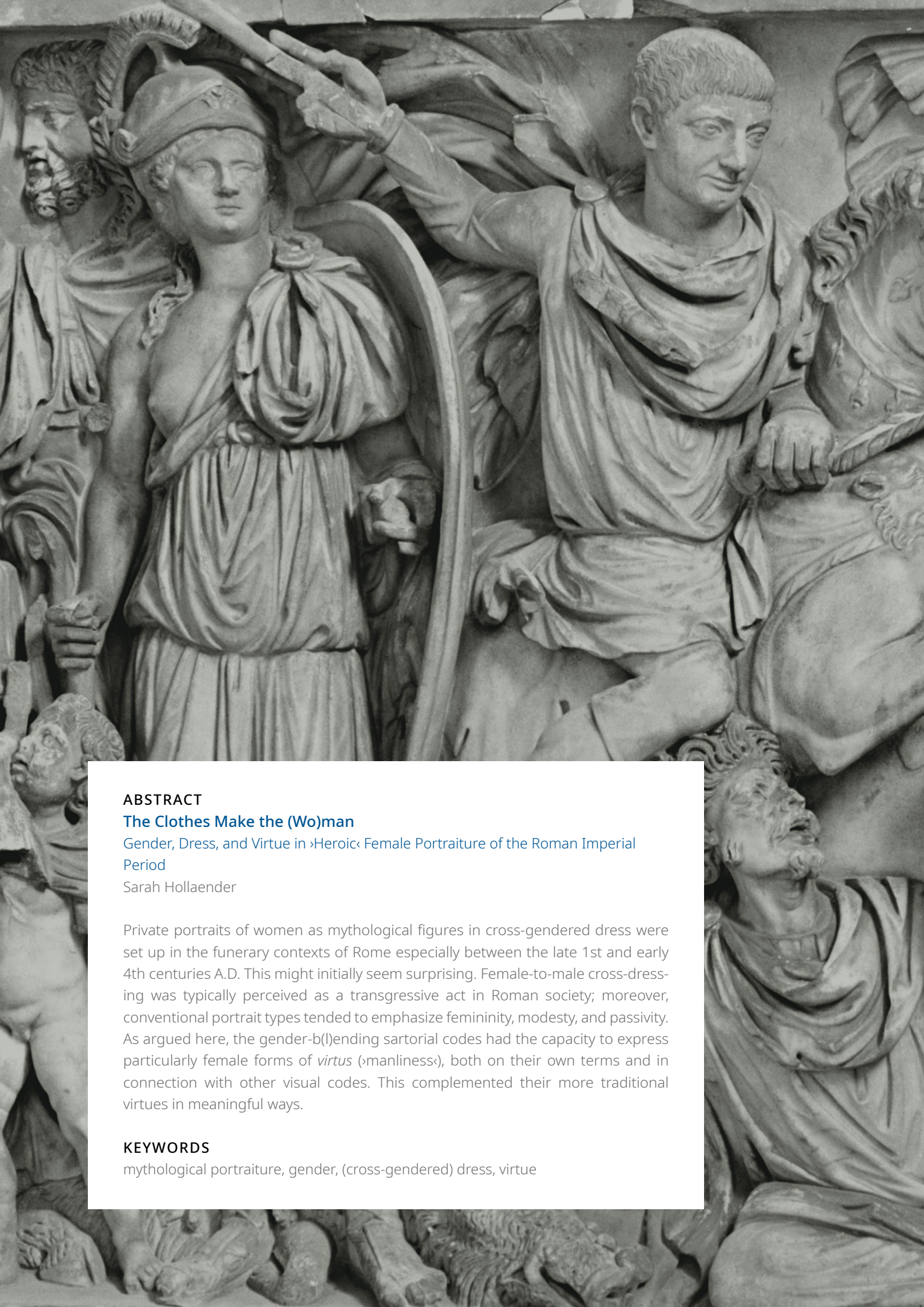
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ABSTRACT

The Clothes Make the (Wo)man

Gender, Dress, and Virtue in ›Heroic‹ Female Portraiture of the Roman Imperial Period

Sarah Hollaender

Private portraits of women as mythological figures in cross-gendered dress were set up in the funerary contexts of Rome especially between the late 1st and early 4th centuries A.D. This might initially seem surprising. Female-to-male cross-dressing was typically perceived as a transgressive act in Roman society; moreover, conventional portrait types tended to emphasize femininity, modesty, and passivity. As argued here, the gender-b(l)ending sartorial codes had the capacity to express particularly female forms of *virtus* (›manliness‹), both on their own terms and in connection with other visual codes. This complemented their more traditional virtues in meaningful ways.

KEYWORDS

mythological portraiture, gender, (cross-gendered) dress, virtue

The Clothes Make the (Wo)man

Gender, Dress, and Virtue in ›Heroic‹ Female Portraiture of the Roman Imperial Period

1 Women appropriating the dress of men in Roman society were perceived as aberrations, pointing to a disruption of the natural order¹. Moreover, conventional female portrait types tended to emphasize qualities like femininity, modesty, and passivity. It is therefore all the more fascinating that in private mythological portraiture, women occasionally appeared in the guise of goddesses and heroines with cross-gendered dress – that is, in dress typically ascribed to the opposite sex. They imitated male modes of (un)dress, by adopting items like the short *chiton*, *chlamys*, boots, weapons, or armour. For instance, one woman was transformed into Omphale, the mythical queen of Lydia, proudly wielding the club and lion skin of Hercules (Fig. 1)²; another woman took on the role of Virtus, the goddess of ›manliness‹, wearing a military outfit and bearing arms (Fig. 17)³. In addition, they often engaged in manly behaviour or appeared in heroic contexts. These portraits were primarily attested on funerary monuments, including statues, reliefs, altars, and sarcophagi, which were produced and/or set up in most cases at Rome and its (broader) environs between the late 1st and early 4th centuries A.D.

2 Earlier studies on portraits of women as Omphale, Penthesilea, Virtus, Diana and Atalante have produced valuable insights, especially in terms of evaluating their general appeal and significance, and to some extent their expression of gender and

1 The research presented in this article emerged in the context of writing my doctoral dissertation (›Portraits of Women as Goddesses and Heroines in Cross-Gendered Dress from the Roman Imperial Period«, University of Alberta) as a guest at the Institut für Klassische Archäologie LMU München and with the support of the Gerda Henkel Foundation. I would like to thank the editors and advisory board for accepting my article, the editorial team for their professional support, and the reviewers for their valuable advice. I am also grateful to several scholars, museums, and institutes for providing me with photos and/or photo reproduction rights at no profit, including Guntram Koch (Nachlass Gütschow), Forschungsarchiv für Antike Plastik, Institut für Klassische Archäologie LMU München (Mediathek), Musée du Louvre, Musei Civici di Belluno, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, and Photo Archive DAI Rom.

2 OMP1.

3 VIR1.

gender relations⁴. Most notably, these portraits conveyed qualities traditionally ascribed to men, such as strength, bravery, or even *virtus* (‘manliness’)⁵. However, there has been no attempt to connect all of these portrait types on the basis of their cross-gendered dress⁶ – encompassing body styling, garments and accessories – and to examine them from this intriguing perspective in particular⁷.

3 The following explores how portraits of women as mythological figures in cross-gendered dress became a praiseworthy form of commemoration. While there were undoubtedly several contributing factors, the focus here will lie on the most decisive one: the monuments aimed to confer *virtus* (‘manliness’) on these women but in a manner suited to their sex. The dress of their mythical role models had a gender-b(1)ending quality, which was valuable for expressing particularly female forms of *virtus*. Other visual codes (i. e. pose, activity, interactions, backdrop) reinforced this as well. As such, these monuments were certainly striking and exceptional but hardly challenged traditional gender roles, relations, and hierarchies.

4 This discussion will proceed in the following way: It begins by offering an introduction to dress studies, valuable for exploring images of dress in antiquity. It outlines the system of gendered dress that developed in ancient Greek city-states and eventually influenced Roman visual culture. It then provides an overview to the portraits of women under consideration, especially focused on their cross-gendered dress. Afterwards, the methodology for interpreting the portraiture is laid out. Ancient views on male-to-female cross-dressing in Roman society were typically not favourable; moreover, these monuments formed a stark contrast to conventional ones for women. This should not concern us too much though. In the portraits, the women wore their cross-gendered dress like a ‘costume’, a series of semiotic signs participating in the construction of identity on their own terms.

5 We then come to the heart of the examination, arguing that the portraiture visualizes women’s *virtus* in a manner particularly relevant to their own sex. It consists of three main sections. It starts by outlining the attributions of *virtus* to contemporary women in Roman society in order to set up the social background. Then it shows how in the portraiture, the sartorial codes especially, but also other visual codes, evoke ‘female *virtus*’. Finally, it assesses the social significance of the portraiture, weighing former scholarly reconstructions against new insights.

4 These portrait types have been primarily addressed on an individual basis, either in articles (Omphale: Cancik-Lindmaier 1985; Kampen 1996b; Zanker 1999; Penthesilea: Grassinger 1999a; Fendt 2005; see also the comments in Humphreys 1983, 48 f.; Diana: D’Ambra 2008; ‘Atalante’: Simon 1970) or in broader studies (e. g. Backe-Dahmen 2006, 94–96. 104 f. 112 f. 117. 161–163. 176. 187 f. 215 f.; Borg 2013, 170. 173. 179. 181; Dimas 1998, 118–130; Huskinson 2015, 148 f. 162. 174–176; Mander 2013, 55–59. 185 f.; Mols et al. 2016, 55 f.; Russenberger 2015, 383–420; Zanker – Ewald 2004, 200. 215. 226 f.; Wrede 1981, 71. 109. 137. 150. 156. 173). A few of these portrait types have been addressed in conjunction, Birk 2013, 137; Hansen 2007. Most of these studies focus on either a certain monument or a select few or else speak about a specific portrait type in a generalizing manner.

5 Fendt 2005; Hansen 2007; D’Ambra 2008; Birk 2013, 137; Borg 2013, 170. 173. 181; see also the comments in Humphreys 1983, 48 f. See also Huskinson 2002, 26–28.

6 For the portraits of women as Omphale, the cross-dressing is obvious since she takes over the club and lion skin directly from Hercules (see Kampen 1996b; Zanker 1999). However, for the portraits of women as mythical huntresses and warrioresses, the cross-dressing is rarely even acknowledged (see, however, Fendt 2005, 83 f. for PEN3).

7 For individual portraits or portrait types, the significance of the dress has been partially tackled, see Birk 2013, 137; D’Ambra 2008, 175–178; Fendt 2005, 83 f. 87. 89. 93; Hansen 2007, 110. 112 f.

Gender, Dress, and Cross-Gendered Dress

Gender and Dress

6 Research on ancient dress in textual sources, visual sources, and even the material record has flourished in recent years⁸. This trend is closely backed by methodological and theoretical advances in the field of dress studies⁹.

7 J. B. Eicher and M. E. Roach-Higgins define the dressed individual as »a *gestalt* that includes body, all direct modifications of the body itself, and all three-dimensional supplements added to it«¹⁰. For analyzing dress, they propose using a classification system that takes into consideration both body styling (e. g. changes to the musculoskeletal system, skin, hair, etc.) and body supplements (e. g. enclosures, attachments, handheld objects, etc.). In addition, they encourage a multisensory analysis, including various visual properties (i. e. colour, volume & proportion, shape & structure, surface design), as well as texture, odor, taste and sound¹¹.

8 These are the building blocks for treating dress as a semiotic system, that is, as a system of signs evoking particular messages¹². R. Barthes proposed that dress is not merely functional but also signifying¹³. It expressed the personal identity of its wearer, including their social roles, socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, and so on¹⁴. Unlike language, the main purpose of (visual) dress is not to continually produce new messages but to reproduce and strengthen already established messages in their social contexts¹⁵. This is by no means a point of weakness, considering that dress is capable of conveying messages about the wearer that language cannot, especially (conservative) messages requiring instant communication and constant reiteration, including constructions of gender. The nonverbal messages carried by dress are not only inexplicit but also naturalized through repetition, making them less open to controversy or protest.

9 The same principles can be applied to images of dress in antiquity. T. Hölscher has shown that Roman visual culture is a veritable »language of images«, whose communicative function is prioritized over aesthetic concerns¹⁶. By the 2nd century B.C., a myriad of Greek motifs and styles could be selected and adapted with the semantic needs of the Roman present in mind. The increasing alignment of form and meaning, and even style and subject matter, imbued Roman visual culture with the power to signify. Moreover, the static and repetitive character of the visual code ensured its universal intelligibility for centuries. As such, the tendency for the Romans to copy the Greeks was not a matter of mindless repetition but a creative engagement with their

8 For Greek/Roman dress, e. g. Cleland et al. 2005; Cleland et al. 2007; Gherchanoc – Huet 2012; Harlow 2012; Harlow et al. 2020; Harlow – Nosch 2014; Kühnel 1992. For Greek dress, e. g. Bieber 1928; Bieber 1967; Lee 2012; Lee 2015; Llewellyn-Jones 2002a. For Roman dress, e. g. Croom 2002; Edmondson – Keith 2008; Hallett 2005; Olson 2008; Olson 2017; Pausch 2003; Rothe 2019; Sebesta – Bonfante 1994; Scharf 1994; Tellenbach et al. 2013.

9 For an overview of contemporary dress theory (which is often linked to gender studies), valuable for examining ancient dress, Lee 2015, 19–32.

10 Eicher – Roach-Higgins 1992, 13.

11 Eicher – Roach-Higgins 1992, 23. Note that the term ›body styling‹ is preferred here to ›body modification‹, since this term is more neutral (›body modification‹ carries connotations of permanence, which cannot account for temporary choices).

12 For a concise overview of semiotics, Chandler 2002.

13 Barthes established the connection between dress and semiotics; moreover, he organizes dress into three categories (i. e. real dress, written dress, and visual dress), which are not interchangeable semiotic systems but follow different rules, Barthes 1967. For an overview of dress as a means of nonverbal communication in more recent scholarship, Lee 2015, 23–27.

14 Roach-Higgins – Eicher 1992.

15 McCracken 1987, 110–123.

16 Hölscher 1987; for further discussion, Hijmans 2009, 31–70.

visual codes for their own purposes. For portraiture in particular, the oft-replicated types – that is, costumes with particular types of body styling, garments, and accessories – could signify identities, roles, and virtues, which were effortlessly grasped by the ancient viewer in a single glance¹⁷.

10 Dress is but one means of expressing gender. According to J. Butler, there is no essential, stable gender based on sexual difference, but rather a »stylized repetition of acts« that constitutes gender categories in particular societies¹⁸. The concepts of man and woman are being (re)produced all the time. As such, the predominant binary concept of gender in most western societies is merely an illusion. An excellent example of this phenomenon is the construction of gender-symbolic dress codes, as a notable tool for the socialization of boys and girls from a young age¹⁹. In most cultures, gendered dress is assigned to children shortly after birth and serves as a visual shorthand to reinforce sexual difference. The gendered dress prompts others to attribute certain characteristics and roles to the child and ultimately to act on the basis of these notions when interacting with them. Over time, the child also learns the dress code, as well as how to act as one looks. In other words, »gendered dress encourages each individual to internalize as gendered roles a complex set of social expectations for behavior«²⁰. This process repeats over the course of the dressed individual's life, especially at particular milestones (e. g. coming-of-age ceremonies, weddings, funerals), practically as a self-reinforcing system.

11 It is possible to break away from these prescriptions though, by assuming dress normally designated for the opposite sex²¹. This occurs on a spectrum, ranging from the full impersonation of men or women to the select, mixed, or even subtle takeover of their body styling, garments, or accessories. Cross-dressing is typically perceived as a transgressive act²². As M. Garber proposed, the cross-dresser challenges the notion that the body provides a stable basis for gender identification and exposes the artificiality of binary gender categories by constituting a »third term« or a »space of possibility«²³. Moreover, the cross-dresser is subversive »by not only making us question what is real, and what has to be, but by showing us how contemporary notions of reality can be questioned, and new modes of reality instituted«²⁴. On the other hand, others have questioned the potential for transgression to serve as a liberating act of social protest: they point out that those adopting the dress of the opposite gender tend to closely conform to the prescriptions for feminine or masculine dress, which in their view ultimately reinforces a binary system of gender²⁵. Moreover, it is possible for societies to acknowledge perpetual friction between opposing groups by allowing them to exchange status at festivals; by rebelling against the normal order in a regulated manner, these participants reaffirm norms while easing social tensions.²⁶

12 The concepts presented here are modern but nevertheless relevant to the study of antiquity. The ancient mentality was dominated by a binary system of gender, in which one's gender is generally supposed to correspond to one's birth sex, but nevertheless open to manipulation or prone to slippage through performance (e.g., cross-dressing) from one category into the other or somewhere in-between²⁷.

17 Trimble 2011.

18 Butler 1990, 270 f.

19 Eicher – Roach-Higgins 1992, 16–20.

20 Eicher – Roach-Higgins 1992, 19.

21 This is also relevant for antiquity, see Cleland et al. 2007, 43.

22 See Hotchkiss 2012, 9 f.

23 Garber 1992, 1–17.

24 Butler 2004, 217.

25 See Hotchkiss 2012, 9 f.

26 Høiby 1995, 45 f.

27 Carlà-Uhink 2017, 3 f.

Gendered Dress

13 A system of gendered dress emerged in ancient Greek city-states, which had a lasting impact on Roman visual culture as well²⁸. Certain types of body styling, garments, and accessories are particularly associated with male figures but conspicuously out of place on female figures. Some of the most notable features include:

- agonal nudity: This term refers to the well-proportioned, muscular body of male figures, which is worn like a ›costume‹²⁹. Putting the imagined bodies of the athlete, warrior, or hunter on display, even in unrealistic ways, served to highlight the physical qualities necessary for contests (*agones*), like strength and fitness³⁰. It was also possible for agonal nudity to find connection with abstract characteristics, such as the virtues encompassed by *arete* (e. g. excellence, courage), even culminating in heroism³¹. Female figures are generally excluded from this visual convention, due to the cultural perception that female bodies were inferior, weaker³² and also erotic³³.
- short tunics: The short *chiton* is a tunic that can be fastened on both shoulders, reaching no lower than the knees³⁴. The *exomis*, in contrast, can only be fastened on one side³⁵. These garments are typically worn by male figures, but especially active male figures (e. g. warriors, hunters, labourers), due to their associations with freedom of movement³⁶. Female figures tend to wear long and voluminous garments: the standard items included the *peplos* and the *chiton* (in combination with the *himation*, at times doubling as a veil), which are more concealing and restrictive in nature³⁷.
- fastened cloaks: The *chlamys* is a relatively short cloak, typically fastened around the neck but occasionally bunched on the shoulder³⁸. This garment is particularly associated with active male figures: it offers some coverage and hence protection of the body (e. g. as a shield), yet is suitable for strenuous action, since it is not so cumbersome and also secure.
- boots: Boots suitable for physical exertion (e. g. *endromides*, *embades*) are also typically worn by active male figures³⁹.

28 For the numerous studies on Greek and Roman dress, see n. 8. Many of these studies already acknowledge the existence of gendered dress, see esp. Lee 2015.

29 T. Hölscher developed the concept of agonal nudity, Hölscher 1993, 525–527; see also Hallett's comments on ›heroic costume‹, i. e. nude but armed, Hallett 2005, 14–19. For further discussion on the concept of nudity as a ›costume‹, see Bonfante 1989.

30 Hölscher 1993, 525–527.

31 Hölscher 1993, 525–527.

32 Set in contrast to the normative, ideal, male body, the female body is conceived of as incomplete, misshapen and ultimately as the ›other‹; for an overview of this conception of male and female bodies in philosophical and medical treatises, see Bonnard 2013; Carson 1990.

33 Kaeser 2008b, 154; for further discussion on female undress, see Bonfante 1989, 558–562. 566–569; Lee 2015, 182–190; Moraw 2003. However, Vazaki 2003, 58. 86, entertains the possibility that agonal nudity is occasionally extended to girls on Attic pottery.

34 For discussion on the short *chiton* (also referred to as the *chitoniskos*), see Bieber 1928, 20 f.; Cleland et al. 2007, 33; Geddes 1987, 312; Kühnel 1992, 50 f.; Lee 2015, 110–112.

35 For discussion on the *exomis*, see Bieber 1928, 21; Cleland et al. 2007, 64; Geddes 1987, 312; Kühnel 1992, 72; Lee 2015, 112.

36 For discussion on the exceptions, see § 15–17.

37 Men could remove more clothing than women before being imprudent; in the visual record, the concern with concealing the female body is reflected by the types of garments for women (e. g. *peplos*, *chiton*, *himation*, veil) (notwithstanding the possibility to reveal the female body through the clothing in an unrealistic manner), Llewellyn-Jones 2012, 280 f.; see also Llewellyn-Jones 2002b.

38 For discussion on the *chlamys*, see Bieber 1928, 22 f.; Cleland et al. 2007, 34; Geddes 1987, 312; Hallett 2005, 45–52; Lee 2015, 116–118; Scharf 1994, 44–49.

39 For discussion on the *endromides* and *embades*, see Goette 1988, 423–444; Lee 2015, 163; Morrow 1985, 39–42. 64–68. This is not universally the case, though; for instance, the *kothornoi* were characteristic of women and effeminate foreigners, Cleland et al. 2007, 21; Lee 2015, 163.

- weapons/armour: Weapons and armour are typically limited to male figures, especially warriors and hunters. Some examples of weapons are swords, spears, battle axes, bows/arrows and hunting sticks; some examples of armour include helmets, cuirasses, greaves and shields⁴⁰.
- athletic accessories: Athletic accessories (e. g. cap, discus, javelin, pick axe, *aryballos*, *strigil*, *spongos*) are also typically limited to male figures⁴¹.

14 Whether this system for gendered dress attested in the visual culture actually corresponded to contemporary practices is a moot point. Semiotic systems are not synonymous, and so any repeating patterns of dress that developed in the imagery are meaningful and demand consideration in their own right.

Cross-Gendered Dress

15 This is not to say that female figures never wore dress like short tunics, fastened cloaks, and arms – quite the opposite, but this was generally a matter of appropriation, to point to a state of inversion. The takeover of dress traditionally associated with the opposite sex is broadly referred to here as ›cross-gendered dress‹.

16 Female figures in cross-gendered dress were occasionally found in the ›real world‹ (e. g. coming-of-age ceremonies, festive occasions)⁴². However, most were situated in the *mundus inversus*, where the transgression against norms – including sartorial norms – was more at home. These women were typically ›out-of-control‹ (e. g. maenads, murderesses, demonesses)⁴³ or ›manly‹ (e. g. female athletes, warrioresses, huntresses)⁴⁴ – these were all wild, untamed women, at times even set on the extermination of men⁴⁵. They conjured up the latent threat of disorder posed by women from within the household, thus necessitating and justifying their control by men⁴⁶. At the same time, they even threatened to call traditional patriarchal institutions into question: the idea that women shared the same capacities and qualities as men raised doubts about their inferior status in society⁴⁷. They nevertheless served as anti-models for female behaviour, ultimately reaffirming the established order. The arm-bearing beauties (e. g. Aphrodite, Omphale, Nereids) were a bit more complicated, considering that their takeover of arms was potentially subversive but nevertheless reinforced traditional gender norms. Aphrodite and Omphale disarmed Ares and Herakles respectively due to their outstanding beauty, which ascribed a certain power to women; however, the contrast between their physically weak bodies and heavy arms ultimately reaffirmed the traditional division of labour between the sexes⁴⁸. The Nereids instead played a role in arming Achilles, but their bodies and dress also created stark contrasts.

17 Mythical female figures in cross-gendered dress were united in several ways. While it was more likely for ›realistic‹ females of liminal, indeterminate, or non-ideal

40 See Cleland et al. 2007, 10.

41 For discussion on athletic accessories, see Miller 2004, 14–17.

42 The issue of ›realistic‹ cross-dressers in visual culture (which are primarily connected to ritual and festival events) will not be discussed here, due to the focus in this case on mythological imagery. For examples, see e. g. Lesky 2000; Miller 1999; Serwint 1993.

43 For some murderous maenads in masculine dress, see e. g. Bažant – Berger-Doer 1994, 308 nos. 8. 9; 314 nos. 66. 67; Gareizou 1994, 87 nos. 51. 60; 88 no. 67. Mortal women are armed to kill their own families, see Lorenz 2008. Demonesses often take on masculine dress, Parisinou 2002, 61–66.

44 E. Parisinou notes that female athletes share a similar dress code with huntresses and warrioresses, patterned after male dress, Parisinou 2002, 60; see also Veness 2002; Kaeser 2008a; Kottsieper 2008. Note that swift, winged goddesses occasionally take on masculine dress as well.

45 Veness 2002, 104–106 (for Amazons); Parisinou 2002, 55. 61. 66 f. (for huntresses).

46 It has been argued that images of wild, untamed women (e. g. Amazons, huntresses) were projected on Athenian women as well, Parisinou 2002, 66; Veness 2002, 105 f.

47 Veness 2002, 104 (for Amazons).

48 Flemberg 1995, 114 f.

status to imitate the dress codes of men⁴⁹, for mythical females, these prerequisites need not have applied. On the contrary, it was precisely their divine or heroic status that permitted them to transgress the normal bounds for womanly dress and behaviour. It was more likely for female figures in active roles to assume masculine dress⁵⁰. The practicality of the garments is not the only explanation for this though, considering that the same activities were also carried out in long, flowing robes⁵¹. Rather, female figures wearing short tunics, fastened cloaks, or bearing arms seem to have marked them as out of the ordinary⁵². It was a visual code – which became standard in some cases but merely optional in others – articulating patterns of behaviour that were set in opposition to their established roles in Greek society⁵³. On the other hand, many female figures assumed masculine dress without engaging in the active roles associated with those items. They prepared arms for heroes, played with them like trophies, or even used them as props for showing off their erotic beauty.

Gender-B(l)ending Dress

18 It is worth stressing another notable commonality here. On the one hand, these female figures fashioned themselves in gender-transgressive ways; on the other hand, this never entirely obscured their ›true‹ female nature, since their masculine dress drew attention back to their bodies and often underwent feminizations⁵⁴. The term ›gender-b(l)ending dress‹ encapsulates this ambiguity well.

19 This phenomenon can be briefly demonstrated by looking at Atalante in her role as an athlete⁵⁵. Her athletic outfits were patterned after masculine dress, yet differed from her male competitors. Most notably, she was excluded from the defining athletic costume, namely agonal nudity, which was hardly compatible with a fully developed female body⁵⁶. She instead wore outfits that obscured her physical and especially sexual features, albeit to varying degrees⁵⁷. Her most remarkable outfit was a *perizoma* (loincloth), occasionally combined with a *strophion* (breast-band). The *perizoma* was essentially a masculine garment but was gradually shifted to barbarian and female athletes, thus marking them as the ›other‹⁵⁸. The *strophion*, in contrast, was a highly feminine accessory with erotic connotations⁵⁹. This outfit characterized Atalante as somehow ›manly‹ without truly crossing over. Her breast-band and loincloth served to cover her sexual areas, partially suppressing her womanhood, while paradoxically drawing attention to it⁶⁰. At the same time, these articles of dress served to re-feminize

49 M. M. Lee observes this for females dressed in a short *chiton* or *chlamys*, Lee 2015, 111. 118. It seems, however, that these were merely prerequisites for their transgressive behaviour, not determining factors. Indeed, a system of gendered dress for female figures developed irrespective of age, class or ethnicity: it is true that certain dress codes existed for signifying differences between girls and women, mistresses and servants, or Greeks and barbarians, but without outweighing the need to indicate sexual difference between males and females.

50 M. M. Lee and R. Veness observe this for females in a short *chiton*, Lee 2015, 111; Veness 2002, 97.

51 Veness 2002, 97 (for Amazons).

52 Veness observes this for females in a short *chiton*, Veness 2002, 97.

53 Veness 2002, 97 (for Amazons); Parisinou 2002, 61. 66 f. (for huntresses).

54 For instance, R. Veness and especially B. Kaeser have addressed some of the feminine features of the Amazons, primarily in Attic ceramics, Veness 2002; Kaeser 2008b.

55 For the images of Atalante, see Boardman – Arrighi 1984.

56 Kottsieper 2008, 214 f.

57 She wears a short *chiton*, which likens her to men but reveals her white skin, Kottsieper 2008, 214 f.

58 As shown by A. Kossatz-Deißmann, the *perizoma* is an essentially masculine garment, insofar as it was initially worn by men in ancient Greek visual culture; later, it was particularly associated with foreign and female athletes, Kossatz-Deißmann 1982, 72–83.

59 For discussion on the *strophion* (as well as the erotic connotations), Stafford 2005.

60 The *strophion* usually functioned to constrict and flatten the breasts, rather than lifting and emphasizing them, Stafford 2005, 104 f. It nevertheless draws attention to their existence.



1

Fig. 1: Vatican City State, Mus. Vat., Mus. Greg. Prof. inv. 4385. Portrait statue of a woman as Omphale (OMP1)

her, perhaps even casting her – in the words of dress scholar Lee – as the »impossible female athlete«⁶¹. In the rare cases where Atalante completely undressed, this was for erotic effect, with the *palaestra* offering a mere pretext for presenting her body to the (male) gaze⁶².

20 In summary, a gendered dress code developed in ancient Greek visual culture, which need not have borne any relationship to reality. Certain types of body styling, garments, and accessories were particularly associated with male figures but conspicuously out of place on female figures. This dress code was transferred to Roman visual culture, also for formulating the iconography of new female figures, indicating that its connotations were still understood and valued⁶³.

Mythological Portraits of Women in Cross-Gendered Dress

21 It is clear that portraits of women as mythological figures from the Roman Imperial Period occasionally included masculine articles of dress (see Catalogue of Monuments: § 175). An overview of these portraits will be offered here, including overarching trends in commemoration, followed by brief descriptions of the different types, especially focused on their cross-gendered dress. The coming analysis will highlight key monuments and characteristics as part of their interpretation⁶⁴. The relevant catalogue numbers are listed in the footnotes.

22 As demonstrated by H. Wrede, private mythological portraits were primarily produced and set-up at Rome and its environs, especially funerary contexts, beginning in the Claudian-Neronian Period and declining around the middle of the 3rd century A.D.⁶⁵. The appearance of these monuments at this time was perhaps connected to a shift in the mentality of the upper classes, namely, an increasing appreciation of ›Greek lifestyles«⁶⁶. Mimicking the trends of the court, mythological portraits were particularly favoured by wealthy and aspirational freedpersons, especially to commemorate women and children⁶⁷. These trends are

valid for the portraiture under consideration here as well, but there are a few outliers. A few monuments come not from the heart of the Roman Empire but further afield (e. g. Belluno, Pentalophos)⁶⁸. The funerary setting was preferred, but other possible contexts are attested as well (e. g. sanctuary, domestic)⁶⁹. In terms of production, there was the option to produce a monument by commission, to choose a monument already in stock – with potential for »customerization« – or even to re-use an older monument⁷⁰. The pre-

61 Lee proposes that the breast-band casts her as the impossible female athlete, Lee 2015, 100.

62 Kottsieper 2008, 214 f.

63 For instance, Virtus (goddess of ›manliness‹) is essentially a »Roman Amazon«, Bol 1998, 149–159.

64 It is not possible to describe all of the monuments in a detailed manner here. These are briefly described in the catalogue below (see Catalogue of Monuments: § 175).

65 Wrede 1981, 159. 170.

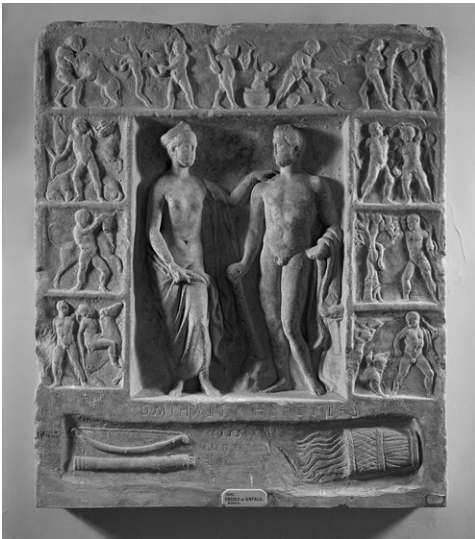
66 As M. Bergmann has shown, the appreciation of ›Greek lifestyles‹ (e. g. poetry, art, music, gymnastics), which was traditionally connected not to *negotium* but to *otium*, had grown progressively acceptable among the elites in Roman society. The imperial example set by Nero supported this shift; this was, however, by no means initiated by him or limited to his reign but part of a longer process of reception starting in the 2nd century B.C., Bergmann 1994, 27–30.

67 Wrede 1981, 159–170.

68 DIA14. 17.

69 DIA9. 13.

70 For discussion, see e. g. Huskinson 1996, 79 f.



2



3

Fig. 2: Naples, Mus. Arch. Naz. inv. 6683. Relief with a portrait of a man and a woman as Hercules and Omphale, surrounded by the Twelve Labours of Hercules (OMP2)

Fig. 3: Venice, Mus. Arch. Naz. inv. 123. Relief with Hercules and a portrait of a woman (as Omphale?) (OMP3)

Fig. 4: Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek inv. 2600. Statue of a child Omphale (OMP4)

cise identities of the patrons and portrait subjects often remain uncertain. To judge from the epigraphic evidence alone, the monuments for girls were dedicated by their parents⁷¹, whereas those for married couples were dedicated by either the husbands or wives⁷². Several of these monuments were in fact produced by freedpersons⁷³ but a few honoured members of the higher ranks as well, including equestrians⁷⁴ and perhaps even senators⁷⁵.

23 There are portraits of women as Omphale (Fig. 1. 2. 3), the mythical queen of Lydia⁷⁶. In this topsy-turvy kingdom, Hercules was enslaved to Omphale and traded dress and roles with her; as such, the hero wore the feminine gown of his mistress and carried out domestic tasks, while she wore his lion skin and club, emblems of his ultramasculine deeds. Women were commemorated as Omphale on their own terms⁷⁷. This is exemplified by a striking portrait, at first glance full of internal contradictions: she is largely modeled after the Knidian Aphrodite but with an uncharacteristically strong and upright stance, proudly bearing the club of Hercules while shielding her pudenda with his lion skin (Fig. 1)⁷⁸.

24 Men and women were also commemorated as Hercules and Omphale together⁷⁹. This is exemplified by a group portrait, where the man and woman are labelled as Hercules and Omphale, but the exchange of gendered dress is nevertheless minimized: the husband



a



b

4

71 DIA1-3.

72 DIA17; perhaps OMP2. In the following discussion, portraits of adult couples are referred to as husband and wife, but it is important to keep in mind that their marital status cannot be proven here.

73 DIA1. 3; perhaps OMP2 (see Cancik-Lindmaier 1985).

74 DIA17.

75 Possibly DIA16 (according to B. Andrae, *Roman Hunt Sarcophagi without military reference honoured senatorial families*, Andrae 1980, 30-32. 49-65. 136).

76 OMP1. 2; see also OMP3.

77 OMP1.

78 OMP1. P. Zanker notes that she is unusually upright, Zanker 1999, 125 f.

79 OMP2; see also OMP3.



5

Fig. 5: Rome, Palazzo Borghese. Roman Amazonomachy Sarcophagus with an (unfinished) portrait of a man and a woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (PEN1)



Fig. 6: Vatican City State, Mus. Vat., Cortile del Belvedere inv. 933. Roman Amazonomachy Sarcophagus with a portrait of a man and a woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (PEN3)

Fig. 7: Paris, Louvre inv. Ma 1633. Funerary altar with a portrait of a girl (Aelia Procula) as Diana (DIA1)

6



7

appears in the usual heroic guise of Hercules – nude with the club and lion skin – but with wool-working implements at his feet, whereas his wife is largely modelled after the Capuan Aphrodite, with the hero’s supplementary arms (i. e. bow/quiver) at her feet (Fig. 2. 3)⁸⁰.

25 It is possible that a young girl was commemorated as a ›child Omphale‹ (see Fig. 4 a. b)⁸¹. She stands firmly, wearing a high-girt *peplos* slipping off her shoulder; she has draped the lion skin over her scalp and probably once held his club.

80 OMP2. This unusual iconography is frequently noted, e. g. Wrede 1981, 244 cat. 131.

81 OMP4. This monument is frequently identified as a portrait of a girl as Omphale, e. g. Ghedini 1984, 157; Oehmke 2000, 148 n. 10. This is at least within the realm of possibility, due to the tendency to idealize children’s portrait features in this period, as well as the preference for portraits of girls with slipping drapery, as opposed to full nudity (e. g. as Venus); moreover, the production of portraits of boys as a young Hercules could be seen as a parallel phenomenon.



8



9



10

26 Equally striking are the portraits of women as warriorresses and huntresses who assume masculine dress and roles⁸². Men and women are commemorated as Achilles and Penthesilea (Fig. 5. 6), renowned for their tragic combat in the Trojan War: in a cruel twist of fate, the Greek warrior fell in love with this beautiful Amazon just after mortally wounding her. The portraits are closely modeled after the Pasquino Group, with the men holding up their dying wives⁸³. In all cases, the women are shown with traditionally masculine dress, including short *chitones*, *chlamydes*, boots, and arms (i. e. battle axe, *pelta*)⁸⁴. In a unique case, a woman is shown in a manner akin to Venus, with her garments slipping off her shoulder (Fig. 5)⁸⁵.

27 There are portraits of not only preadolescent girls but also (young) women in the guise of Diana, the chaste goddess of the hunt. They are typically modeled after conventional statuary types of Diana (e. g. Versailles-Leptis Magna Artemis, Seville-Palatine Laphria Artemis) hunting in traditionally masculine dress, including short *chitones*, boots, and arms (i. e. bow, arrow) (Fig. 7. 8. 9)⁸⁶.

28 It is possible that a woman is uniquely commemorated as Diana as a cosmic goddess, sweeping in to rescue Iphigenia (Fig. 10)⁸⁷. She wears a short dress and boots,

Fig. 8: Rome, Mus. Naz. Romano, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme inv. 108518. Portrait statue of a girl as Diana (DIA4)

Fig. 9: Paris, Louvre inv. Ma 247. Portrait statue of a (young) woman as Diana (DIA11)

Fig. 10: Rome, Mus. Cap., Centrale Montemartini inv. 9778. Statue group of Diana and Iphigenia (DIA13)

82 PEN1-9; DIA1-14; ATA1.

83 Achilles and Penthesilea were modelled after the Pasquino Group to recast them as comrades and therefore to minimize their former conflict as well, Grassinger 1999a.

84 PEN1-9. It seems that A. Fendt is the only one who has recognized the exchange of gendered dress (for PEN3), Fendt 2005, 83 f.

85 PEN1.

86 DIA1. 2. 4-14.

87 DIA13. This monument is frequently identified as a portrait of a woman as Diana, with features similar to Faustina Maior, e. g. Wrede 1981, 224 cat. 86. However, it is possible that Diana is merely represented with an updated, contemporary look, drawing on imperial portrait styles (for this phenomenon in general, see Hallett 2005, 242-247).



11

Fig. 11: Paris, Louvre inv. Ma 1331. Funerary altar with a portrait of a mother (Cornelia Tyche) and her daughter (Julia Secunda) (DIA3)

but the bow and quiver are removed⁸⁸. The cosmic nature of Diana – in association with Luna – is accentuated by adding a torch and mantle in *velificatio*.

29 In one case, a girl is merely associated with the bow/quiver of Diana (Fig. 11), without assuming the body and garments of the goddess⁸⁹.

30 While Diana was a far more popular role model, the huntress Atalante could serve as one as well⁹⁰. According to the mythical tradition, Meleager disregarded social protocols due to his consuming passion for Atalante: he not only invited a woman to participate in the Kalydonian Boar Hunt, but also awarded her the hide at the end, partially due to her exceptional hunting skill, partially due to his lust for her. A man and a woman are commemorated as Meleager and Atalante: they are shown performing a religious offering after the hunt – as suggested by their hunting dress and the dead boar – with the woman embracing him lovingly (Fig. 12)⁹¹.

31 There are fascinating dichotomies in these portraits. They commemorate real women, treated as essential but subordinate members of their families and communities. They are represented as strong, imaginary women, either sexually emancipated and ruling at their own court, or else fiercely virginal and operating outside the confines of the household. Even after reaching the age of maturity, they are averse to marriage, childbearing, or even coexisting with men.

32 Since ›realistic‹ Hunt Sarcophagi were ultimately inspired by mythical hunting themes (i. e. Meleager, Adonis, Hippolytus), the portraits of women on these monuments merit consideration as well⁹². Some women are portrayed as huntresses closely modeled after mythical huntresses but with no particular mythical identification⁹³. Most notably, the portraits of men as Hippolytus and women as Diana were gradually emptied of mythological content⁹⁴. The men initially appear as Hippolytus in heroic costume, hunting a boar (Fig. 13), but then in contemporary hunting dress and pursuing a lion (Fig. 14). The women are dressed like Diana but increasingly distanced from the goddess, by transforming them into lovers (i. e. embracing their husbands), by trading in their bows and quivers for spears, and by inserting them into non-mythological narratives (Fig. 13. 14)⁹⁵.

33 Quite similarly, a woman is modelled after Diana subduing a deer, but ultimately to fit her into the ›realistic‹ boar hunt of her husband (Fig. 15)⁹⁶.

34 A boy and a girl initially seem to take on the role of Meleager and Atalante in the Kalydonian Boar Hunt, but on closer inspection, their mythical identities have been deliberately broken down: the boy is clothed in contemporary hunting dress and placed on horseback; the girl is fitted with butterfly wings and a club, and also exhibits an uncharacteristic lack of unity with her companion (Fig. 16)⁹⁷.

88 This monument is similar to a statue group of Diana and Iphigenia from the Horti Sallustiani at Rome but also exhibits differences, see Hörig – Schwertheim 1987, 227 f. cat. 361.

89 DIA3.

90 ATA1.

91 ATA1. The hunting dress of Atalante is basically the same as that of Diana.

92 DIA 15–17; ATA2; VIR1–4.

93 DIA15–17; ATA2. For discussion on demythologization (i. e. the process of reinterpreting a subject so that it is partially or completely divested of mythical element), see § 105–108.

94 DIA15. 16; see DIA14. For discussion on the demythologization here, Andreae 1980, 17–32.

95 I. L. Hansen notes the unusual interaction and attributes for DIA15, Hansen 2007, 110–112.

96 DIA17; Gabelmann 1973, 74.

97 ATA2; Simon 1970.



12

Fig. 12: Wiltshire, Wilton House inv. 1963,25. Roman Meleager Sarcophagus with an (unfinished) portrait of a man and a woman as Meleager and Atalante (ATA1)



13

Fig. 13: Rome, Palazzo Lepri-Gallo. Roman Hunt Sarcophagus with a portrait of a man and a woman as a boar hunter and an Artemisian huntress (DIA15)



14

Fig. 14: Barcelona, Mus. de Arqueología de Cataluña inv. 870. Roman Hunt Sarcophagus with a portrait of a man and a woman as a lion hunter and an Artemisian huntress (DIA16)



a



b

Fig. 15: Belluno, Mus. Civici, Mus. Arch. inv. MBCL16445. Northern Italian sarcophagus of C. Flavius Hostilius Sertorianus and Domitia Severa (DIA17), a) front side: portraits of the man as a togate figure and the woman as a palliata figure; b and c) back and right sides: portraits of the man as a boar hunter; d) left side: portrait of the woman as an Artemisian huntress



c



d

15



16

Fig. 16: Basel, Antikenmus. Basel und Sammlung Ludwig inv. Lu 257. Roman Hunt Sarcophagus with a (partially unfinished) portrait of a boy and a girl as a boar hunter and an Atalantian huntress (ATA2)



17

Fig. 17: Reims, Mus. Saint-Remi inv. 932, 14. Roman Hunt Sarcophagus with a portrait of a man and a woman as a military commander/lion hunter and Virtus (VIR1)

35 Other women are portrayed as Virtus (Fig. 17. 18. 19), the Roman goddess of ›manliness‹⁹⁸. She is essentially a ›Roman Amazon‹: her outfit is patterned after these mythical warriorresses but divested of foreign elements (e. g. ›Phrygian‹ cap, battle axe, *pelta*⁹⁹) and supplemented by Roman military elements (e. g. *parazonium*, *paludamentum* bunched on the shoulder). She always escorts her husband as a lion hunter, but her precise actions and interactions with him vary considerably.

36 All of these portraits of women, incorporating dress traditionally assigned to the opposite sex, can be described as cross-gendered. Their outfits are in many respects gender-b(l)ending as well, but this is addressed in more detail below¹⁰⁰.

98 VIR1–4.

99 Devambeze – Kauffmann-Samaras 1981, 650.

100 See § 80–104.



Fig. 18: Rome, Catacombe di Pretestato, Mus. Roman Hunt Sarcophagus with a portrait of a woman as Virtus (and one or two men as lion hunters) (VIR2)

18



Fig. 19: Rome, Mus. Cap., Palazzo Nuovo inv. 221. Roman Hunt Sarcophagus with a (partially unfinished) portrait of a man and a woman as a lion hunter and Virtus (VIR3)

19

Methodological Considerations

Perspectives on Female-to-Male Cross-Dressing in Roman Society

37 The creation of such portraits seems, at first glance, surprising. Reports of people dressing in transgressive ways typically aimed to damage their reputation in Roman society¹⁰¹. Male cross-dressers were often ascribed ›womanish‹ vices like weakness and a lack of self-control¹⁰². Female cross-dressers were viewed as awe-inspiring aberrations at best but overambitious or ›monstrous‹ woman at worst¹⁰³. Cases of female-to-male cross-dressing generally fall into five categories¹⁰⁴:

- Women in elite circles were reported to cross-dress to highlight a disruption of the natural order: either the women themselves or their (powerful) male associates were ›out of control‹ (depending on whether the cross-dressing was voluntary or imposed on them)¹⁰⁵. There were certainly cases where cross-dressing was intended to have an elevating effect, such as the case of Claudius and Agrippina Minor wearing military cloaks and presiding over a *naumachia*¹⁰⁶; however, this strategy for constructing power was ultimately used against the empress, to characterize her as a *dux femina*, and was not normally pursued for female members of the imperial family¹⁰⁷.
- Female sex labourers and adulteresses were reported to don a *toga (muliebris)*¹⁰⁸ in order to distance them from ideal matrons¹⁰⁹. They »break the limits socially imposed on normative women, and signal this by a performative switch to the other gender, and thus to male clothes«¹¹⁰.
- Women participating in the gladiatorial games apparently dressed and armed themselves like men, thus exceeding the normal bounds of their sex¹¹¹. These ›manly‹ women were a source of fascination¹¹² but also unease¹¹³. It was

101 There were exceptions for some men in certain ritual and festive contexts, see e. g. Scullard 1981, 152 f. (Quinquatrus minusculae) and Dolansky 2011, 492. 500 (Saturnalia).

102 It is generally agreed that reports of male-to-female cross-dressing were intended to be viewed negatively (especially as a sign of faltering masculinity), e. g. Campanile 2017; Edmondson 2008, 36 f.; Harlow 2005, 145–149; Krenkel et al. 2006, 474–478; Rantala 2020, 120–123; Starbatty 2010, 170–179.

103 Perspectives on female-to-male cross-dressing in the literary sources of the late Republican and Roman Imperial Period will be considered in more detail by the author elsewhere.

104 Unlike in ancient Greece, Roman girls apparently did not participate in any special rites of passage (besides the wedding), let alone rites of passages involving ritual transvestitism. This could, however, use more research. For instance, G. Schörner has recently demonstrated that a series of grave stelae from Roman North Africa, previously thought to represent adults, actually represent girls taking part in a ritual offering, perhaps a rite of passage connected to the cult of Saturn, Schörner 2014.

105 e. g. Cass. Dio 48, 10, 3 (Fulvia); Iuv. 1, 58–62 (lover of »Automedon«); Iuv. 6, 445–446 (educated women); Suet. Cal. 25, 3 (Milonia Caesonia); Suet. Nero 6, 44, 1 (mistresses of Nero); SHA Comm. 11, 9 (Marcia); Tac. hist. 1, 48 (Cornelia); Tac. hist. 3, 77 (Triaria).

106 Her cloak is a *chlamys* (Cass. Dio 61, 33, 3; Tac. ann. 12, 56) or a *paludamentum* (Plin. nat. 33, 63).

107 For discussion on the characterization of Agrippina Minor as a *dux femina*, see Ginsburg 2006, 112–116. E. Varner shows that empresses are frequently assimilated to the emperor on coinage, by portraying them with similar physiognomies or even hairstyles, at times heavily masculinized, in order »to project expected imperial concepts of *similitudo*, and *concordia*, necessary to the stability of the dynasty and empire«; there is, however, little evidence for portraits of imperial women with masculine dress, Varner 2008, 189–193. 196–198. Moreover, A. Alexandridis shows that portraits of imperial women as military goddesses were uncommon, Alexandridis 2004, 91 f.

108 The *toga* is associated with both sex labourers (see Cic. Phil. 2, 44; Hor. sat. 1, 2, 62–63. 82–85; Tib. 3, 16, 3–5; Ps.-Acro ad Hor. sat. 1, 2, 63) and adulteresses (Mart. 2, 39, 1–2; 6, 64, 4; 10, 52, 1–2; Iuv. 2, 68–70; Porph. Hor. comm. 1, 263; Ps.-Acro ad Hor. sat. 1, 2, 63).

109 K. Olson shows that sex labourers and adulteresses did not wear the *toga* as a rule, but this was a literary device: »*togata* described in one word a woman whose morals were easy, just as *stolata* described in one word a woman who possessed a high degree of exemplary virtue«, Olson 2008, 50.

110 Carlà-Uhink 2017, 12.

111 For ancient perspectives on women in the arena, see Brunet 2014.

112 e. g. Mart. de spectaculis 6; 6 b; Stat. silv. 1, 6, 51–56.

113 e. g. Tac. ann. 15, 32, 3; Cass. Dio 67, 8, 4. See also Iuv. 1, 22–23; 6, 246–267.

generally less problematic for women of lower socio-economic standing to assume these roles¹¹⁴; however, women of all ranks were eventually banned from the gladiatorial games during the reign of Septimius Severus¹¹⁵.

- Warrior queens and high-ranking concubines at the fringes of the Roman Empire were characterized as cross-dressers¹¹⁶, in order to situate them in the *mundus inversus*¹¹⁷. They were not placed in a purely negative light, due to exhibiting qualities like strength and conjugal harmony; however, »ancient authors branded cross-dressing and related activities as essentially ›un-Roman‹, stressing that such practices had no place in a world where, ideally, men knew how to lead and women were happy to follow«¹¹⁸.
- Cross-dressing was repeatedly censured and prohibited in early Christian communities¹¹⁹. It nevertheless carried a positive symbolism for female ascetics in hagiographies, as a sign of progressing to a higher spiritual and moral state, with no apparent paradox¹²⁰. There were nevertheless literary strategies for neutralizing this transgressive act: women only dressed like men in extenuating circumstances, under the authority of male superiors, and with reminders of their essential difference from ›real‹ men¹²¹.

38 Considering all of these categories, the portrayal of women as cross-dressers – whether real or imagined – identified them as aberrations. In some cases, they were admired or tolerated, at least under certain conditions and for certain amounts of time. Their cross-gendered dress placed them in their own category, as neither masculine nor feminine, which was recognized as a legitimate place for that specific group. In other cases, they were openly rejected, either from the outset or over the course of time. It was possible to view them as ›monstrous‹ in their own right: their takeover of masculine dress was often seen to arise from their arrogation of masculine rights and privileges, which threatened to destabilize a traditional division of roles based on sexual difference. Otherwise, their characterization as cross-dressers aimed to damage the reputation of the men associated with them. Women in masculine dress and roles were seen to dominate their male relations, or serve as a foil for weak and effeminate rulers; moreover, men who forced women to cross-dress revealed their unrestrained behaviour and hence their lack of ›manliness‹. At the same time, these female cross-dressers ironically reaffirmed the *status quo* by serving as striking exceptions to the norm or even as the ›other‹.

39 It follows that there was no uniform view on female cross-dressers: they could be portrayed as exceptional women, threatening ›monsters‹, ambiguous beings, or even victims. In any case, one theme is consistent: women in cross-gendered dress were aberrations, pointing to a significant disruption of the natural order, which needed to be either carefully managed (e. g. relabeling women as ›honorary men‹, physically segregating women, socially marginalizing women) or restored as soon as possible (e. g. re-domesticating women, censuring their male associates).

114 Brunet 2014, 479. 482 f. 484. 486 f.

115 Cass. Dio 76, 16, 1.

116 Cass. Dio 62, 2, 4 (Boudicca); SHA trig. tyr. 30, 2. 14–15 (Zenobia); Val Max. 4, 6, ext. 2 (Hypsistrateia).

117 The fact that Boudicca assumes dress and roles reserved for men signals the topsy-turvy nature of her society; she is also set up as a foil to the reigning emperor Nero, in order to highlight his faltering masculinity, Icks 2017, 73 f. Zenobia is presented as the antithesis of Aurelian's predecessor, the emperor Gallienus, who was criticized for his effeminate behaviour, Icks 2017, 76 f. Hypsistrateia dresses up like a man to accompany Mithridates VI on his military campaigns, but the cross-dressing is treated as a feature of decadent eastern societies, Facella 2017, 116.

118 Icks 2017, 78.

119 Upson-Saia 2011, 14. 59–83. 104–107.

120 Tales of cross-dressing female ascetics are already attested in the Roman Imperial Period, e. g. Thecla (Acts of Paul 2, 25. 40), Eugenia (Acts of Saint Eugenia). See Upson-Saia 2011, 84–103.

121 Upson-Saia 2011, 84–103. 104–107.

Normative Portraiture for Women in Roman Society

40 Portraits of women in the Roman Imperial Period relied on constantly replicated statuary types, which were worn like ›costumes‹ – that is, sets of physical features, garments, attributes, and postures that convey identity in social and symbolic terms¹²². Despite the variety of statuary types (e. g. Pudicitia, Large Herculaneum, Ceres types)¹²³, as G. Davies observes, the most striking point is actually their notable similarities: the women were dressed in colourful, feminine garments that modestly covered the body, and frequently shown with a lowered gaze, as well as a narrower and less self-assured pose than men¹²⁴. The symbolic potential of replication was valuable, as highlighted by J. Trimble: ›casting certain ideas into recognizable, consistent and often repeated shapes made them visual touchstones, a means of tapping into certain ideas and connotations‹¹²⁵. The impression conveyed was that she is ›a woman who is beautiful and elegant, who shows off the expensive clothing and fancy hairdressing her family can afford her; she is a woman of leisure who does not meddle in things that are not her concern (that is, men’s public affairs); and she is modest, faithful and chaste [...] [and also feels] apprehension at being seen in public (where she does not really belong)‹¹²⁶. Following the notion that gender is not essential and stable but rather instituted through a ›stylized repetition of acts‹ that only appears natural and incontestable, these portraits were directly implicated in the construction and reassertion of gender roles¹²⁷. The portraits of women in cross-gendered dress apparently broke with these norms though.

The Signifying Power of ›Costume‹

41 We have seen that the female cross-dresser was an aberration; moreover, conventional portrait types for women tended to emphasize qualities like femininity, modesty, and passivity. As such, the production of portraits of women in cross-gendered dress would seem surprising, at least at first glance.

42 We cannot rule out the possibility that perspectives on female-to-male cross-dressing in Roman society influenced the viewer’s reception of the portraiture under consideration. As has been amply pointed out in studies on Roman portraiture though, it is necessary to draw a distinction between reality and imagery.

43 For instance, Ch. H. Hallett convincingly argues that the strong disapproval of public nudity in Roman society did not prevent the introduction of portraits of men in the nude¹²⁸. What was utterly taboo in real life was permissible in visual culture, since the nudity was worn like a ›costume‹ and never taken at face value¹²⁹. Heroic costume was adopted from the Greeks as a ready-made visual convention, answering a genuine need for self-representation that ›realistic‹ portrait types (e. g. magistrate, military commander, hunter) could not fulfill: these men, nude but armed, were elevated to the realm of heroes and therefore associated with paradigms of human excellence¹³⁰. The same line of reasoning is offered for portraits of women in the nude, typically perceived as expressions of beauty and fertility¹³¹. The fact that portraits of women were also

122 For discussion on conventional statuary types as a ›costume‹, see Trimble 2011, 157–181.

123 See Alexandridis 2004; Fejfer 2008.

124 Davies 2008. For discussion on the colour, see Brøns – Harlow 2020.

125 Trimble 2011, 4–6 (quote on p. 6).

126 Davies 2008, 217.

127 Butler 1990, 270 f. The usefulness of Butler’s theory for examining portraiture (including its statuary types) is often noted, Alexandridis 2005, 114 f.; Trimble 2011, 154–156.

128 Hallett 2005, 61–82. 102–158.

129 Hallett 2005, 100 f.; the influence of Bonfante 1989 on this examination is clear.

130 Hallett 2005, 217–222.

131 e. g. D’Ambra 1996, 219–221; Hallett 2005, 219. 221 f.; Zanker 1999, 125–128.

produced with cross-gendered dress has hardly been recognized let alone problematized¹³², but the first step in unraveling this ›paradox‹ is to acknowledge that this was but a costume.

44 On the other hand, simply writing off the cross-gendered dress as ›unreal‹ does not bring us any closer to understanding it. It is essential to perceive these costumes as a series of semiotic signs, participating in the construction of identity on their own terms. The starting point here is to deconstruct these costumes, especially to probe their gender-b(l)ending qualities for the purposes of commemoration. Afterwards, it is possible to turn to other factors (e. g. pose, activity, interactions, backdrop) to further nuance our understanding of these monuments.

45 The portraits of women in cross-gendered dress are ›out-of-the-ordinary‹, but the monuments participated in replication processes in their own ways. There are certainly unique monuments but also those produced in a series¹³³. Just like the portraits of women in the nude, the cross-gendered dress seemingly fulfilled a commemorative function that the normative monuments could not. The aim here is to point out how the visualization of women in cross-gendered dress apparently displays a reversal of normative gender roles in Roman society, yet this reversal served a purpose: it conveyed messages about women's powerful and productive roles during their lives, as daughters, wives, and mothers, which could only be positively interpreted when viewed in their proper social context.

›Heroic‹ Portraiture for Women – Gender and Virtue

46 P. Zanker and B. Ch. Ewald have persuasively argued that mythological imagery from funerary contexts aided in the self-representation of the living and the commemoration of the dead: it opened up an imaginary space for the expression of private feelings like love and loss, as well as the personal qualities of the deceased and their relatives¹³⁴. Furnishing deities and heroes with individualized portraits of particular individuals required adjustments to the myths and their iconographies, not only to authorize a more personalized reading of the myth but also to guard their decorum¹³⁵. In short, the deceased was not deified, but ascribed ›god-like‹ or ›heroic‹ sentiments and virtues, which needed to be formulated in a positive way. This is not to entirely exclude the possibility that the mythological imagery expressed vague hopes for a blissful after-life¹³⁶, but the essential point was to create memorials for the deceased, allowing them to live on in the memories of their families and friends, as well as within their broader societies¹³⁷.

47 The portraiture under consideration is traditionally interpreted in terms of conventional female virtues in patriarchal society¹³⁸, which ultimately reaffirms the prevailing sexual hierarchy and gender dichotomy of male–superior–active–self-con-

132 See n. 6.

133 The portraits of men and women as Hercules and Omphale are unique, suggesting that they were produced by special commission (see § 23–25). Other types appear on a series of sarcophagi; whether this was due to a production-to-stock model, or simply workshops responding to the orders of their customers cannot be resolved here, see Russell 2011.

134 Zanker – Ewald 2004, 179–245.

135 Newby 2011a; Borg 2013, 161–178.

136 e. g. Zanker – Ewald 2004, 173–177; Borg 2013, 161. 164; Newby 2011b, 302–304.

137 As noted by Ewald, »in a society without coherent eschatology, without common trust in rebirth or post-mortal existence, and with vastly diverging belief systems, the monument itself guaranteed the memory of the deceased. The principal function shared by funerary monuments was the preservation of an individual's memory and the fight against oblivion«, Ewald 2015, 391.

138 Omphale (beauty/modesty), Zanker 1999. Diana (virginity/delicacy), Matheson 1996, 189 f. Penthesilea (beauty/weakness), Ewald 2005, 62; Russenberger 2015, 384–388.

trolled vs. female–inferior–passive–emotional¹³⁹. This strict paradigm has been rightfully called into question – e. g. by A. Fendt, I. L. Hansen, E. D’Ambra, as well as S. Birk and B. Borg – by noting the capacity of certain portraits to convey qualities traditionally ascribed to men, such as strength, bravery, or even *virtus* (‘manliness’)¹⁴⁰. At the same time, this compelling hypothesis has not been fully explored. Here, these monuments will be treated as a group, in order to detect certain patterns and idiosyncrasies in (self-)representation. The main goal is to highlight the visual strategies for expressing the *virtus* of women in their proper social contexts. This will be achieved in three main sections:

- The discussion begins by exploring the attributions of *virtus* (‘manliness’) to contemporary women in Roman society, which is necessary for placing the monuments against their social background. Under which circumstances were women ascribed this traditionally masculine quality? What were the implications of this? What were the limitations? These questions will be explored by briefly surveying the literary and epigraphic sources, from the late Republican Period and into the Roman Imperial Period.
- Afterwards, it explores how the portraiture constructed an idealized vision of ›female *virtus*‹ in particular. It starts by considering the role of the dress. In previous studies on the monuments, the perfect harmonization of ›masculine‹ and ›feminine‹ dress codes has not received the attention it deserves, yet this trend is decisive for understanding how the monuments strike a careful balance between ›monstrous‹ women and truly exceptional women¹⁴¹. Afterwards, the role of other factors (e. g. pose, activity, interactions, backdrop), as well as their associated virtues, are considered as well¹⁴². How did all these visual codes interact with each other, to ensure that these unconventional monuments reinforced the social order?
- In previous studies on the monuments, the evocation of *virtus* has been treated in a general way (e. g. courage, ›virtue‹¹⁴³), or even in a potentially problematic or conflicting way, due to the focus on particular categories of evidence. It has been proposed that the evocation of *virtus* is suitable for children in general, to cast them as ›little adults‹¹⁴⁴; for girls in particular, due to their resistance to categories of mature sexuality and of gender¹⁴⁵; and even for (married) women, because of the endorsement or at least tolerance of fighting and hunting women in Roman society¹⁴⁶. These explanations are not entirely satisfactory though. In light of the foregoing analysis, how could these monuments have been viewed in their social context?

139 e. g. Zanker – Ewald 2004, 201–245; Ewald 2005.

140 Fendt 2005; Hansen 2007; D’Ambra 2008; Birk 2013, 137; Borg 2013, 170. 173. 181; see also the comments in Humphreys 1983, 48 f.

141 See n. 283.

142 See n. 276.

143 Birk 2013, 137; Borg 2013, 181; Hansen 2007, 107 f.

144 e. g. Backe-Dahmen 2006, 116–118; Birk 2013, 157–180; Dimas 1998, 118–162; Huskinson 1996, 92–94. 102. 105. 108; Mander 2013, 55–62; Simon 1970, 215–220.

145 D’Ambra 2008, 181.

146 Fendt 2005, 91 f. 93 (fighting); Wrede 1981, 137 (hunting).

Women and Virtus in the Textual Sources

48 It is necessary to start with a definition of *virtus*, as well as an overview of its attribution to contemporary women in Roman society, in order to understand how the observations on the monuments fit into their social context¹⁴⁷.

49 *Virtus* – derived from *vir* (man) – is broadly defined as »manliness, manhood, i. e. the sum of all the corporeal and mental excellences of man, *strength, vigor; bravery, courage; aptness, capacity; worth, excellence, virtue*, etc.«¹⁴⁸. It was an inherently masculine quality, allowing Roman men especially to acquire honour¹⁴⁹: »[...] a common theme in the ancient sources is that true Roman men, who possess *virtus* by birthright, rightfully exercise their dominion or *imperium* not only over women [...] but also over foreigners, themselves implicitly likened to women.«¹⁵⁰

50 It would initially seem inconceivable that *virtus* was relevant to women at all, but this is not the case due to two parallel processes occurring simultaneously: »on the one hand, the semantic broadening of the word *virtus*, and on the other, the social expansion of it«¹⁵¹. In Old Latin (pre-75 B.C.), *virtus* primarily referred to courage, especially in terms of exhibiting physical prowess and bravery in a military context¹⁵². It was an aggressive quality, attributed to men slaying opponents and conquering cities, but less often understood in terms of steadfastness and passive endurance in the face of danger¹⁵³. In Classical Latin (post-75 B.C.), *virtus* increasingly borrowed semantically from the Greek notion of *arete*¹⁵⁴, or »goodness, excellence, of any kind«¹⁵⁵. It was gradually detached from its military origins to evoke human excellence, embracing an array of martial and ethical, as well as physical and mental qualities¹⁵⁶. In the process, it was extended to women as well¹⁵⁷.

Attributions of Virtus to Women in the Past

51 It was possible for ancient authors to attribute *virtus* to (legendary) women in the past¹⁵⁸, also in their capacity as role models for contemporary women¹⁵⁹.

52 Women engaged in warfare in times of crisis¹⁶⁰, and exhibited physical strength and courage in related contexts as well¹⁶¹. For instance, Cloelia orchestrated the flight of

147 The Latin literary sources used here mostly date to the late Republican Period (specifically by the time of Cicero) and early Imperial Period (27 B.C. – A.D. 64), with fewer sources from the middle Imperial Period (A.D. 64–235), i. e. the date of production of the monuments under consideration. This is partly due to the fact that research on the term *virtus* tends to focus on these earlier periods, when the use of this term was still in flux (by the time of Apuleius, the term hardly developed any further, with the exception of notable shifts in Christian contexts, Eisenhut 1973, esp. 194). This is also partly due to the progressive decrease in extant literary sources relevant to the study of contemporary women's *virtus* (e. g. court cases, letters, consolations). The Latin inscriptions used here date from the late 1st century B.C. to the 3rd century A.D. Attributions of *andreia* are also considered here as an equivalent term used in treatises dedicated to the virtue of women (i. e. Musonius Rufus, Plutarch).

148 Lewis – Short 1879, 1997 (s. v. *virtus*). For the etymology of *virtus*, Eisenhut 1973, 12 f. For the significance of *virtus*, see e. g. Balmaceda 2017, 14–47; Eisenhut 1973; McDonnell 2006, 12–141; Milhous 1992, 48–79; Mutschler 2003; Van Houdt et al. 2004.

149 See Eisenhut 1973.

150 Williams 1999, 135.

151 Balmaceda 2017, 46.

152 McDonnell 2006, 12–71; Van Houdt et al. 2004, 3 f.

153 McDonnell 2006, 59–71.

154 McDonnell 2006, 72–104.

155 Liddell – Scott 1901, 216 (s. v. ἀρετή).

156 McDonnell 2006, 105–141.

157 For discussion, see e. g. Edwards 2007, 179–206; Hemelrijk 1999, 89–92; Hemelrijk 2004; McDonnell 2006, 161–165.

158 This refers to women living before the authors. This examination is limited to *virtus* (or *andreia*).

159 Seneca offers Lucretia, Cloelia and Cornelia as role models for Marcia, Sen. dial. 6, 16, 2–4.

160 e. g. Paus. 2, 20, 8–9; Plut. mor. 245B–F; 248E–249B.

161 Plut. mor. 258E–F; 259E–260D.

Roman maidens from the military camp of Lars Porsena, by fearlessly swimming across the Tiber and dodging the missiles of the enemy¹⁶².

53 Women committed suicide for noble reasons¹⁶³. For instance, Lucretia plunged a dagger into her heart after being raped by Tarquinius Superbus, to redeem her honour and to not serve as a precedent for women of dubious chastity¹⁶⁴. She is described in male terms¹⁶⁵: »The leader of Roman sexual honour is Lucretia, whose manly spirit by a perverse twist of fate was allotted to a woman's body.«¹⁶⁶

54 On a related note, women were commended for enduring physical pain¹⁶⁷. For instance, Porcia convinced her husband Brutus to involve her in his plot against Caesar by cutting her thigh, since it testified to her patient endurance in bearing physical pain and hence her control over her own emotions¹⁶⁸.

55 Women were likewise unflinching in the face of danger¹⁶⁹. For instance, the women following their husbands into exile and fleeing with their sons during the Year of the Four Emperors (A.D. 69) were treated as models of ›virtue‹¹⁷⁰.

56 Lastly, women bore distressing circumstances with grace. Cornelia, the mother of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, lost both of her sons, who were murdered and left unburied¹⁷¹. »Yet to those who tried to comfort her and called her unfortunate she said: ›Never shall I admit that I am not fortunate, I who have borne the Gracchi‹.«¹⁷² Rutilia followed her son into exile, only to lose him after his restoration¹⁷³.

Attributions of Virtus to Contemporary Women

57 It was also possible for male authors to attribute *virtus* to their female contemporaries, especially their daughters, wives, and mothers¹⁷⁴. The trend is first attested in Cicero¹⁷⁵. He claimed that *virtus* properly belonged to men:

58 »[...] though all right-minded states are called virtue [*virtutes*], the term is not appropriate to all virtues, but all have got the name from the single virtue which was found to outshine the rest, for it is from the word for ›man‹ [*vir*] that the word virtue [*virtus*] is derived; but man's peculiar virtue is fortitude [*fortitudo*], of which there are two main functions, namely scorn of death and scorn of pain. These then we must exercise if we wish to prove possessors of virtue, or rather, since the word for ›virtue‹ is borrowed from the word for ›man‹, if we wish to be men.«¹⁷⁶

59 Cicero nevertheless extended *virtus* to the female sex in isolated cases. He praised Caecilia Metella for the courage (*virtus*) she exhibited in providing sanctuary to her friend Sextus Roscius¹⁷⁷. He commended the courage (*virtus*) of his wife Terentia,

162 Liv. 2, 13, 6–11; Plut. mor. 250A–F; Polyain. 8, 31; Sen. dial. 6, 16, 2; Val. Max. 3, 2, 3. M. Roller argues that Cloelia exhibits *virtus* characteristic of a man (by crossing the river and leading the girls) but also of a woman (by deceiving the guards) and a child (by saving the virgins), Roller 2004, 38–43.

163 e. g. Plut. Cato minor 73, 4; Plut. mor. 244A–E; 257E–258C; Polyain. 8, 32; Val. Max. 3, 2, ext. 9; 6, 1, ext. 3.

164 For discussion on her suicide, Edwards 2007, 180–183.

165 Dion. Hal. ant. 4, 82, 3; Ov. fast. 2, 847; Val. Max. 6, 1, 1 (Edwards 2007, 187 f.).

166 Val. Max. 6, 1, 1 (transl. in Edwards 2007, 187).

167 e. g. Plut. mor. 251A–C; 252A–E; 256D; Tac. hist. 2, 3 (Hunink 2004, esp. 177).

168 Polyain. 8, 32.

169 e. g. Plut. mor. 246D–247F; 259A–D; 260E–261D.

170 Tac. hist. 1, 3 (Hunink 2004, esp. 177).

171 Sen. dial. 6, 16, 3.

172 Sen. dial. 6, 16, 3 (transl. in Basore 1932, 51); see also Sen. dial. 6, 16, 4.

173 Sen. dial. 12, 16, 7.

174 This refers to women living at the same time as the authors (who knew them personally or at least about them through social connections). This examination is limited to *virtus* (or *andrea*).

175 Eisenhut 1973, 42 n. 98; Hemelrijk 2004, 190 f.; McDonnell 2006, 162 f.; Tuomela 2014, 41.

176 Cic. Tusc. 2, 43 (transl. in King 1927, 195–197).

177 Cic. S. Rosc. 27. 147.

especially for labouring for him at great personal expense during his exile¹⁷⁸. Her fortitude was understood in both a physical and mental sense: »[...] you are not discouraged by hardships either of spirit or of body.«¹⁷⁹ It seems that he praised the general »virtue« of his wife as well, by linking her *virtus* to a series of ethical qualities, especially *fides* (loyalty), *probitas* (honesty) and *humanitas* (humanity)¹⁸⁰. His daughter Tullia also exhibited courage (*virtus*) by meeting her father in exile but especially by enduring their political opponents and private troubles during his absence¹⁸¹. For centuries to come¹⁸², women were occasionally praised for their *virtus* in both literary¹⁸³ and epigraphic sources¹⁸⁴.

60 Considering these sources as a whole, a few authors explicitly state that women's virtues are equal to men¹⁸⁵, but attributions of *virtus* to individual women were few and far between. Quite notably, the original meaning of *virtus* – that is, courage, basically synonymous with *fortitudo* – was never lost after its conferral on contemporary women¹⁸⁶. The virtue was merely transferred from the military camp to the civic and especially domestic contexts. It was, however, uncommon for contemporary women to receive praise for performing physical acts of courage¹⁸⁷. Instead, contemporary women exhibited mental courage, such as standing up for their families and friends, preserving their properties, or travelling to unknown places¹⁸⁸. In numerous cases, their fortitude referred to their capacity to endure physical pain and mental anguish in a passive way. Some women voluntarily put themselves at risk for a noble cause – they ended up suffering physical beatings, humiliation, or prosecution¹⁸⁹. Other women bore miserable circumstances with grace, such as illness or the exile/death of their loved ones¹⁹⁰. It is in this sense that Musonius Rufus encouraged women »to be high-minded and to think of death not as an evil and life not as a good, and likewise not to shun hardship and never for a moment to seek ease and indolence«¹⁹¹. It was also possible for the *virtus* (or *virtutes*) of women to refer to their »virtue« by shifting the focus to the sum of their ethical qualities, potentially still extending to their courage in particular¹⁹².

The Limitations on Attributing Virtus to Contemporary Women

61 It is evident that *virtus* was attributed to contemporary women in a restricted manner. Three trends in the sources stand out in particular.

178 Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1 (McDonnell 2006, 163 f.). See also Cic. fam. 14, 1–24.

179 Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1 (transl. in McDonnell 2006, 163 f.).

180 Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1 (McDonnell 2006, 164).

181 Cic. fam. 14, 11; Cic. Att. 10, 8, 9; McDonnell 2006, 163.

182 There is no room to outline the individual cases here. See n. 183, 184.

183 e. g. Apul. apol. 66; Ov. Pont. 3, 1, 94; Ov. trist. 1, 6, 15; Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis 10; Plin. epist. 7, 19, 3–8; 8, 5, 1; Plut. mor. 242F; 243D; Sen. dial. 6, 1, 1; 6, 16, 1; 12, 15, 4; 12, 16, 5; 12, 19, 5, 7; Stat. silv. 4, 8, 57–58; Stob. 2, 31, 126 = Musonius Rufus lecture 3 (Lutz 1947); Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947).

184 e. g. CIL VI 10230 lin. 29–30; CIL VI 29758; CIL VI 30105; CIL VI 31711; CIL VI 41062 col. 2 lin. 6, 20, 41; CIL XIV 3579 lin. 14.

185 Stob. 2, 31, 126 = Musonius Rufus lecture 3 (Lutz 1947) and Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947); Plut. mor. 242F; 243D.

186 In the Golden Age, *virtus* for women primarily refers to courage, McDonnell 2006, 165.

187 For a notable exception, see Sen. dial. 12, 19, 5, 7.

188 e. g. Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1; 14, 11; Cic. S. Rosc. 27, 147; Ov. trist. 1, 6, 15; Ov. Pont. 3, 1, 94; Plin. epist. 7, 19, 4–8; CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 3–9; col. 2 lin. 1–35.

189 e. g. Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1; Plin. epist. 7, 19, 4–8; CIL VI 41062 col. 2 lin. 22–32.

190 e. g. Cic. Att. 10, 8, 9; Cic. fam. 14, 11; Sen. dial. 6, 1, 1; 12, 15, 4; 12, 16, 5; Plin. epist. 7, 19, 3.

191 Stob. 2, 31, 126 = Musonius Rufus 3 (transl. in Lutz 1947, 43).

192 e. g. Apul. apol. 66; Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1; Ov. Pont. 3, 1, 115; Sen. dial. 6, 16, 1; 12, 16, 2–5; 12, 19, 5, 7; Plin. epist. 7, 19, 4–8; 8, 5, 1; Stat. silv. 4, 8, 57–58; CIL VI 41062 col. 2 lin. 41; CIL VI 31711; CIL XIV 3579 lin. 14. In the Silver Age, the *virtus* of women refers to either their courage or more feminine virtues, McDonnell 2006, 165.

62 First of all, *virtus* was an outstanding quality, whether in a male (who was expected to have it) or in a female (who could, exceptionally, attain to it)¹⁹³. It followed that women with *virtus* were typically seen to surpass the expectations of their sex, allowing them to earn the status of ›honorary men‹¹⁹⁴. As Cicero stated, Caecilia Metella proved her worth (*virtus*) in spite of being a woman¹⁹⁵. Seneca the Younger's consolations exhibited the same ambivalent attitude¹⁹⁶: he believed that *virtus* was antithetical to women's vices,¹⁹⁷ and so those rare women who did in fact exhibit bravery joined the ranks of great men¹⁹⁸. It is true that a few authors (e. g. Pliny the Younger, Musonius Rufus, Plutarch) treated *virtus* as a human rather than masculine quality¹⁹⁹, yet their proposition was undermined by the fact that the ›equivalency‹ of the sexes only found expression through gendered language.

63 Women aspiring to the level of men were often seen to fall short of this ideal²⁰⁰. In short, ›women who try [...] to appropriate or emulate male traits are usually seen as, at best, hybrid and puzzling creatures, or, at worst, creatures who have transgressed their bounds unsuccessfully without being able to become the other‹²⁰¹. For the contemporary women attributed *virtus* though, there was no trace of belittling remarks. They reached the level of men²⁰² or even exceeded it²⁰³, as a genuine form of praise. Pliny the Younger's comments on Fannia are particularly notable: ›Will there be anyone now whom we can hold up as a model to our wives, from whose courage even our own sex can take example [...]?‹²⁰⁴ Moreover, their *virtus* was seen to properly reflect that of their male relatives – without merely ›ventriloquizing‹ them – thus bringing them a shared sense of honour²⁰⁵.

64 The issue remains though that men tended to serve as the benchmark for *virtus*: indeed, ›the treatment of women who intruded into this field as if they were ›male‹ in mind and, therefore, not wholly feminine, maintains the *status quo* and, in a sense, even confirms it, since the exceptions are incorporated into the norm‹²⁰⁶. As such, the sex of contemporary women who were attributed *virtus* was never questioned; they were nevertheless seen to transcend gender categories, which brought them honour, by virtue of reaching the superior position in the hierarchy.

65 Secondly, the endorsement of *virtus* in contemporary women was ultimately directed towards the maintenance of the established social order. Women were permitted to take on active roles in times of crisis, even in a public setting, for the sake of preserving their own honour, their families, or their households²⁰⁷. The women praised for their *virtus* tended to act on behalf of their male relatives. The majority of cases dealt with women championing the causes of their husbands; their *virtus* was often seen to compensate for the temporary powerlessness of their husbands, in hopes of returning them to their rightful status²⁰⁸. During the Civil Wars, Terentia supported Cicero not

193 Williams 1999, 133.

194 Hemelrijk 1999, 89–92 (Hemelrijk 2004, 191).

195 Cic. S. Rosc. 147 (Hansen 2007, 108 n. 3).

196 For discussion, Edwards 2007, 189–191.

197 Sen. dial. 12, 16, 2. 5.

198 Sen. dial. 12, 16, 5.

199 See Langlands 2014; Tuomela 2014.

200 Hemelrijk 1999, 91 f. For instance, Seneca the Younger claims that the brave deeds of Cloelia filled men indulging in a life of softness with shame but still failed to qualify her for the list of heroes, Sen. dial. 16, 16, 2 (Edwards 2007, 190 f.).

201 Gold 2015, 483.

202 e. g. Cic. fam. 14, 7, 2; CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 7–9; Hemelrijk 2004, 181. 189 n. 25.

203 e. g. Cic. fam. 14, 7, 2; Plin. epist. 7, 19, 7–8.

204 Plin. epist. 7, 19, 7–8 (transl. in Radice 1969, 527) (Langlands 2014, 214–223).

205 See esp. Cic. S. Rosc. 147. See also Plin. epist. 7, 19, 3 (Langlands 2014, 223).

206 Hemelrijk 1999, 92 (this comment about learned women is equally relevant to women with *virtus*).

207 von Hesberg-Tonn 1983, 103 f.; Kunst 2007, 251–253.

208 Hemelrijk 2004, 189–191.

only by offering him financial and emotional support but also by working tirelessly and at great personal cost to have him recalled to Rome²⁰⁹. This theme was practically ubiquitous: ›Turia‹ did everything in her power to save the life of her husband²¹⁰; the wife of Ovid pleaded to have her husband recalled from exile²¹¹; the aunt of Seneca the Younger secured her husband's body for proper burial²¹²; and Fannia not only joined her husband in exile but also ensured his later ›immortalization‹ in text²¹³. It was also possible for daughters to exhibit *virtus* for the sake of their fathers²¹⁴, or mothers for their sons²¹⁵. Besides this, women prevented their households from being looted²¹⁶.

66 The philosophical views on ›female *virtus*‹ fit well into this general picture. Musonius Rufus claimed that the *virtus* of men and women was equal in principle, but that their courage ideally served gender-specific aims in practice²¹⁷. Women required fortitude from a young age to protect their chastity in the face of force or threats²¹⁸, as well as to not »submit to anything shameful because of fear of death or unwillingness to face hardship«²¹⁹. Wives who bravely contended with the vicissitudes of fortune proved not only strong and energetic enough to endure pain but even prepared to physically toil for their husbands and willing to perform tasks beneath their social rank²²⁰. Mothers required courage to defend their children from harmful forces, just like »hens and other female birds which fight with creatures much larger than themselves«²²¹, or even to nourish their children with their own breasts²²². The proposition that *virtus* was innate to females is certainly unconventional but never led to the breakdown of traditional gender roles – on the contrary, their possession of *virtus* allowed them to better fulfill their gender-specific expectations, as chaste daughters, loyal wives, or devoted mothers²²³.

67 Plutarch presented a similar view on ›female *virtus*‹ in his *Mulierum virtutes*²²⁴ but without concretely projecting these ideals on contemporary women. The *virtus* of women was confined to moments of crisis, treated as morally ambiguous, and frequently spurred their menfolk to take action instead; moreover, this virtue was often linked to traditional notions of female propriety and ultimately served to restore the social order²²⁵. The tale of Aretaphilia of Cyrene demonstrates these tendencies well²²⁶. She was praised for deposing tyrants but in an ambivalent way. She resorted to so-called women's weapons, like poisoning, seduction, and deception. She endured adversities, even torture, but capturing and slaying the tyrants was left to men. In the end, she retired to the loom in the women's quarters. As such, »lurking behind the novel figure of the brave and virtuous woman is a highly traditional, and restrictive, understanding of womanly virtue«²²⁷.

209 Cic. fam. 14, 1–4 (Hemelrijk 2004, 190 f.).

210 CIL VI 41062 col. 2 lin. 1–35 (Hemelrijk 2004, 189–191).

211 Ov. Pont. 3, 1, 94 (Hemelrijk 2004, 191).

212 Sen. dial. 12, 19, 5. 7.

213 Plin. epist. 7, 19, 4–8.

214 Cic. fam. 14, 11.

215 Sen. dial. 6, 16, 3; 12, 16, 6.

216 CIL VI 41062 col. 2 lin. 8–10 (Fendt 2005, 91 n. 82); see also Ov. trist. 1, 6, 15.

217 Caldwell 2015, 19–23; Nussbaum 2002.

218 Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947).

219 Stob. 2, 31, 126 = Musonius Rufus lecture 3 (Lutz 1947) (transl. in Lutz 1947, 43).

220 Stob. 2, 31, 126 = Musonius Rufus lecture 3 (Lutz 1947).

221 Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947) (transl. in Lutz 1947, 45).

222 Stob. 2, 31, 126 = Musonius Rufus lecture 3 (Lutz 1947).

223 Caldwell 2015, 19–23; Nussbaum 2002.

224 Chapman 2011, 93–132; McInerney 2003.

225 Chapman 2011, 93–132; McInerney 2003, 328–341.

226 Plut. mor. 255E–257E (McInerney 2003, 335).

227 McInerney 2003, 323.

68 Thirdly, the *virtus* of women was typically glossed by traditional feminine virtues²²⁸. The most common qualities were *pudicitia* (modesty)²²⁹, *fides* (loyalty)²³⁰, and *probitas* (uprightness)²³¹. It is possible to organize the virtues into six main categories:

- beauty and fertility (e. g. *pulchritudo*²³², *claritas*²³³, *fecunditas*²³⁴)
- chastity and modesty (e. g. *castitas*²³⁵, *sanctitas*²³⁶, *modestia*²³⁷)
- a loving and friendly nature (e. g. *caritas*²³⁸, *humanitas*²³⁹, *comitas*²⁴⁰)
- loyalty and compliance (e. g. *pietas*²⁴¹, *reverentia*²⁴², *obsequium*²⁴³)
- work ethic (e. g. *diligentia*²⁴⁴, *industria*²⁴⁵, *lanificium*²⁴⁶)
- moral integrity (e. g. *facilitas*²⁴⁷, *honestas*²⁴⁸, *probitas*²⁴⁹)

69 The sheer variation makes it difficult to discern any patterns. In fact, it does not seem to matter which feminine virtues were evoked in particular, just that these *were* evoked²⁵⁰. Their male relatives probably did not find it proper to pass over the conventional praise for women, even if these women led unconventional lives; perhaps their transgression of the boundaries of their sex demanded such accolades all the more²⁵¹. Overall, the women were treated as ›honorary men‹ but still as proper women – this allowed them to remain respectable daughters, wives and mothers, rather than appearing like raging viragos²⁵².

The Portraiture as an Expression of ›Female Virtus‹

›The Clothes Make the Man‹

70 It is widely accepted that portraits of men as mythical heroes, warriors, and hunters celebrated their *virtus*²⁵³. When it comes to portraits of women though, there is hardly any consensus on the matter. To get to the heart of the issue, it is necessary to recognize the signifying power of the dress, for men and women alike. If it is sufficient for a man to simply ›put on‹ the costume of a mythical hero, warrior, or hunter in order

228 Hemelrijk 1999, 89 f.; Hemelrijk 2004, 193–196.

229 Ov. Pont. 3, 1, 116; Sen. dial. 12, 16, 5; CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 30; CIL VI 10230 lin. 28.

230 Cic. S. Rosc. 27; Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1; CIL VI 10230 lin. 28; CIL VI 29758.

231 Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1; Ov. Pont. 3, 1, 94; CIL VI 10230 lin. 28.

232 Sen. dial. 12, 16, 5.

233 CIL VI 31711.

234 Sen. dial. 12, 16, 5; CIL VI 31711.

235 Plin. epist. 7, 19, 4.

236 Plin. epist. 7, 19, 4.

237 CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 31; CIL VI 10230 lin. 28.

238 CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 31–32.

239 Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1; 14, 11.

240 CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 30.

241 CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 32.

242 Plin. epist. 8, 5, 1.

243 CIL VI 10230 lin. 28.

244 Cic. S. Rosc. 27; CIL VI 10230 lin. 28.

245 CIL VI 30105.

246 CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 30; CIL VI 10230 lin. 28.

247 CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 30.

248 CIL VI 30105.

249 Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1; Ovid, Pont. 3, 1, 94; CIL VI 10230 lin. 28.

250 This is best exemplified by the eulogies for ›Turia‹ and Murdia, CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 30–36; col. 2 lin. 39–41; CIL VI 10230 lin. 27–30 (Hemelrijk 2004, 193–196).

251 Hemelrijk 2004, 193 f.

252 Hemelrijk 2004, 193–196.

253 For studies on the association of this iconography with *virtus*, Hallett 2005, 217–222; Bergemann 1990, 4 f. McDonnell 2006, 142–158; Tuck 2005.

to evoke his *virtus*, without necessarily performing heroic deeds, then why can't the same rule apply to women – especially considering that a social background did in fact exist, in which this quality was ascribed to women?

71 The portraits of women as Omphale are particularly complex in terms of evaluating their cross-gendered dress²⁵⁴. Zanker has argued that a portrait of a woman as Omphale, standing in the tradition of Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite with her characteristic pudica gesture, celebrated the traditional female virtues of beauty and modesty (Fig. 1)²⁵⁵. At the same time, her husband has surrendered his club and lion skin to her, just like Hercules, metaphorically evoking his love for her. While this interpretation is convincing, there is more to add to the picture.

72 Images of Hercules and Omphale are characterized by an exchange of gendered dress, but this was formulated in a variety of ways to produce different effects²⁵⁶. Looking at Omphale in particular, her interaction with the club and lion skin falls on a spectrum. At one end, she handles these arms in a ›fragile‹ way, subverting their heroic function, especially in images of her shown alone, where the viewer could focus on her pleasing body²⁵⁷. This produced a charming incongruity, giving an impression of sweetness, delicacy, and at times modesty. At the other end, she imitates the dress behaviour of Hercules, especially in images of her reveling in her triumph over the hero²⁵⁸. This highlighted the exceptional position of Omphale in finally conquering the unconquered hero. Imitating the dress behaviour of Hercules was valuable for transferring connotations of strength and capacity to an otherwise Venus-like woman. In other words, the iconography of Hercules was effectively resemanticized to express the power and victory of Omphale but in matters of love rather than war. The irony was that Hercules was presented as ›defeated‹ by a woman with virtues that were typically attributed to him but instead transferred to his female ›opponent‹. In rare cases, her imitation of Herculean dress behaviour could cast her as a doublet of Hercules²⁵⁹. Indeed, the imagery could take on connotations absent from the mythical tradition, such as ›manly‹ power and pugnacity, which effectively transformed her into a ›female Hercules‹.

73 The portrait of the woman as Omphale (Fig. 1) appears to transcend these categories in a unique but surprisingly harmonious way²⁶⁰. The physical figure of the woman was primarily modeled after Venus but partially masculinized through her self-confident gaze and comparatively upright stance²⁶¹. She closely imitates Hercules' dress behaviour by draping the lion skin over her scalp and holding up the club on her arm; on the other hand, she handles the lion skin in a characteristically feminine and modest manner, pulling it in front of her pudenda²⁶². As such, the portrait of a woman as Omphale entailed a complex negotiation of gendered (dress) features, taken over from Hercules and Venus respectively, with the aim of conferring all of the most praiseworthy qualities of her mythical role model on her at once: beauty, modesty, and strength²⁶³. It follows that she was celebrated for not only traditional feminine virtues but also for her *virtus*. This surely

254 The portraits of men and women as Hercules and Omphale will be considered in more detail by the author elsewhere.

255 OMP1; Zanker 1999.

256 For the images, see Boardman 1994.

257 See especially the images of Omphale on gems, e. g. Boardman 1994, 51 f. nos. 71–75 (as shown by S. Ritter, she exhibits elegance and modesty, Ritter 1995, 102. 107. 180).

258 e. g. Boardman 1994, 48 nos. 13. 29; 49 no. 36.

259 e. g. Boardman 1994, 51 no. 56; the magical gems (Dasen 2008).

260 OMP1.

261 This is noted by Zanker but is merely seen to reduce the erotic impression, Zanker 1999, 125 f.

262 Zanker 1999, 125.

263 S. T. A. M. Mols and E. M. Moorman come to a similar conclusion but only by re-identifying Omphale as ›Venus-Hercules‹, Mols et al. 2016, 55 f.; this interpretation is not supported by the iconography and also misses out on the affective nature of the monument.

reinforced the evocation of ›disarming love‹, but all the same – the general acceptance of *virtus* in women was conceivably a prerequisite for the production of this monument.

74 In contrast to the portraits of Omphale, the presence of cross-gendered dress in portraits of women as warrioresses (i. e. Penthesilea, *Virtus*) and huntresses (i. e. Diana, Atalante) has hardly even been recognized (Fig. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19)²⁶⁴. The moment this step is taken though, the monuments take on a whole new dimension.

75 This issue is epitomized by the scholarly debate about the portraits of married couples as Achilles and Penthesilea (Fig. 5. 6), with strongly diverging perspectives²⁶⁵. At one extreme, the portraits are interpreted in a traditional manner²⁶⁶. The battle raging around Achilles, supporting the dying Penthesilea, is seen to refer to his *virtus* alone, due to appearing in a central and superior position. While the tragedy of the situation is evident, this was primarily an opportunity to show off Achilles' physical strength; Penthesilea, on the other hand, is the epitome of female weakness, thus becoming merely an attribute of his manly perfection. Achilles' feelings of love and protector function are expressed as well, whereas Penthesilea is only left with qualities like beauty and desirability. More recently, this strict dichotomy has been rightfully called into question by noting the capacity for Penthesilea, as an Amazon, to exhibit ›manly‹ qualities as well²⁶⁷.

76 Fendt makes the most notable contribution to this debate. For a portrait of a woman as Penthesilea (Fig. 6), she correctly recognizes that the military cloak, shield, and fur boots came from a masculine context and signified qualities typically ascribed to men, namely strength and courage²⁶⁸. It follows that not only Achilles, in heroic costume (i. e. nude but armed), but also Penthesilea, were perceived as paragons of *virtus*, regardless of their obvious differences in bearing²⁶⁹.

77 This general approach is extremely valuable for evaluating the portraits of women as warrioresses (i. e. Penthesilea, *Virtus*) and huntresses (i. e. Diana, Atalante) as a whole (Fig. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19). These women wear short tunics, fastened cloaks, and bear arms, closely patterned after their male counterparts, in order to confer *virtus* on them²⁷⁰. It is necessary to recognize the signifying power of their dress, irrespective of their precise actions. Whether they are in a dynamic pose, embracing their husbands, or even dying makes no difference; what matters are the ›manly‹ identities produced by their dress, as well as all their connotations.

78 Women in cross-gendered dress were treated as aberrations in Roman society, but here, their costumes were a source of honour. The most compelling explanation for this ›paradox‹ is that just as the term *virtus* was etymologically connected to men, so too was the sartorial expression of this quality heavily inflected by the masculine principle, regardless of the sex of the honoured individual. *Virtus* found expression specifically in masculine outfits connected to heroism, warfare, and hunting. With the extension of *virtus* to women, the same rules for commemoration were more or less adhered to²⁷¹. This is also supported by the literary record, describing honours purportedly accorded

264 See, however, Fendt 2005, 83 f. (PEN3).

265 PEN1–9.

266 For this particular interpretation (which is fairly representative), Zanker – Ewald 2004, 215.

267 Fendt 2005, 89. 93; Hansen 2007, 112 f.; see also Birk 2013, 137; Borg 2013, 170; see also the comments in Humphreys 1983, 48 f.

268 PEN3; Fendt 2005, 83 f. 87. She also notes that the short tunic is an exchange of gendered dress (structurally similar to the prostitute in a toga), which demands further consideration, see § 82–88.

269 Fendt attributes Penthesilea qualities like strength and courage (not *virtus* in particular).

270 PEN1–9; VIR1–4; DIA1. 2. 4–17; ATA1. 2; see also DIA3.

271 See, however, the discussion below, § 82–88.

to legendary women for their brave deeds²⁷². Most notably, after Cloelia fled across the Tiber, she was awarded an equestrian statue to commemorate her courage²⁷³. This sort of honorific statue was reserved for men and, in this case as well, was perceived as a ›manly‹ honour. As such, it seems that cross-gendered dress for women only found acceptance in their portraiture – if not in real life – due to the overriding desire to honour their *virtus* in an unequivocal and instantly recognizable way²⁷⁴. The act of dressing up women like men on their commemorative monuments seemingly had the effect of treating them like ›honorary men‹, which ultimately reaffirmed the gender hierarchy.

79 There were, however, certain reservations about ascribing *virtus* to the female sex. As Hansen rightly observes, »women may be ennobled by reference to male characteristics, but a woman behaving like a man is a monster who overturns social order and stability, and undermines the proper masculinity of any man with whom she was associated«²⁷⁵. It was therefore necessary to come up with visual strategies for conveying a particularly ›female *virtus*‹ on the monuments in order to prevent calling traditional gender roles, relations and hierarchies into question²⁷⁶.

›Honorary Men‹? Bodies, Dress, and Gender Marking

80 This was achieved by the dress itself. All of these women were celebrated for their *virtus* with reference to female role models. The dress of Herculean women (i. e. Omphale), warrioresses (i. e. Penthesilea, *Virtus*), and huntresses (i. e. Diana, *Atalante*) was patterned after that of their male counterparts but without completely suppressing or obscuring their ›true‹ female nature²⁷⁷. There were four main reasons for this, taking on different forms and combinations.

Body Styling

81 Their body styling followed contemporary fashions for women. Most notably, their fashionable coiffures evoked not only beauty but also high-class femininity, due to the investment of considerable time and resources to create them²⁷⁸. For Omphale, her coiffure merely contributed to her desirability (Fig. 1)²⁷⁹. For the warrioresses and huntresses though, their elaborate coiffures stood in striking contrast to their active, manlike identities²⁸⁰. This is especially evident for the portraits of women as *Penthesilea*

272 e. g. Paus. 2, 20, 8; Plut. mor. 245F; Polyain. 8, 27. 33; 8, 53, 2; Tractatus de mulieribus 8. 13. The *Declamationes minores* (Quint. decl. 282) feature an inverse situation (where a male's *virtus* is seen to be inappropriately celebrated with a portrait of him in women's dress).

273 For equestrian statues, also as an expression of *virtus*, Bergemann 1990. The statue was usually seen to commemorate her courage (i. e. *virtus, audacia*), Liv. 2, 13, 11; Sen. dial. 16, 2; Serv. Aen. 8, 646. For discussion, Caldwell 2015, 38–43; Galinier 2012, 207; Roller 2004, 44–50.

274 There is no reason to exclude the possibility that a system of visual codes for ›womanly‹ *virtus* developed in its own right, quite independently of codes derived from the world of men, but this would demand further research. As proposed by Bielfeldt 2019, for instance, both men and women could anticipate death in a stoic fashion as a marker of *virtus* in their portraiture.

275 Hansen 2007, 108.

276 Hansen rightly recognizes that the group portraits of men and women on select monuments (i. e. VIR2; PEN3; DIA15) needed to be carefully formulated to prevent undermining the social order and especially the masculinity of the husbands; this is understood especially in terms of their roles and relationships on the monuments, Hansen 2007, 108. The following analysis builds on her compelling idea, by proposing that the portraits of women in cross-gendered dress as a whole have the capacity to express particularly female forms of *virtus*, in terms of their bodies/dress especially but also in terms of their actions, interactions, contexts etc.

277 OMP1. 4; PEN1–9; VIR1–4; DIA1–3. 5–7; ATA1. 2. It has been demonstrated that the dress of warrioresses/huntresses in ancient Greek visual culture (especially Attic pottery) is patterned after their male counterparts but exhibits feminine features as well, e. g. Kaeser 2008a; Kaeser 2008b; Kottsieper 2008, 207–213. 215 f.; Parisinou 2002; Veness 2002. These observations are an excellent starting point for considering the portraiture here.

278 Bartman 2001.

279 OMP1.

280 PEN1–9; VIR1–4; DIA1. 2. 4–17; ATA1. 2.

(Fig. 5. 6)²⁸¹. In images of Amazons as a whole, these warrioresses always have long hair, usually pinned up, similar to elite women²⁸². Without suggesting that the Amazons actually spent time and resources beautifying themselves, their imagery nevertheless gives the impression that they did. This was counterintuitive to the violent tasks at hand, as epitomized by the recurring motif of the Greeks pulling the Amazons by their hair. For obvious reasons, this motif was never selected for the portraits of married couples as Achilles and Penthesilea but was surely brought to mind by her battling female comrades.

Garments

82 Their garments harmonized masculine and feminine features. For warrioresses and huntresses, the garment types (e. g. *chiton*, *himation*) were essentially suitable for women²⁸³ but were worn like men, or at least in a manner suited to their manlike behaviour²⁸⁴. At the same time, their garments were feminized due to the addition of feminine sartorial features. These trends will be demonstrated based on portraits of women as Diana, since these exhibit all of the most notable features at once (Fig. 7. 8. 9. 13. 14. 15)²⁸⁵.

83 The huntress wears a *chiton*. She has belted the garment at the waist, pulling the fabric over the belt to produce a bulging and loosely hanging overfall²⁸⁶. These elaborate folds indicate that she initially put on a long tunic, appropriate for her sex, but then decided to hitch it up to suit her active, ›manly‹ pursuits²⁸⁷.

84 It is also worth pointing out that in the process of copying Greek statuary, the drapery of the goddess was not always properly understood and the overfall was often rendered as a thin layer of fabric²⁸⁸, billowing like a long overfold (Fig. 1. 15). This sartorial feature was particularly associated with female figures, due to its luxurious and modest connotations²⁸⁹. It was possible to arrange the excess fabric into complex folds for aesthetic effect, which also flaunted the wearer's wealth and status. Moreover, this feature simultaneously drew attention to the breasts and obscured them, thus signifying the containment of female sexuality.

85 It is also notable that Diana has girdled her short *chiton* directly under the breasts, thereby following a long-standing fashion for women²⁹⁰.

86 In some cases, Diana has placed a tightly rolled-up *himation* around her body (Fig. 9. 13. 14)²⁹¹. Since this feature is not attested among her male counterparts, it merits some discussion²⁹². The *himation* is a gender-neutral mantle, appropriate for men and women alike; the fabric is, however, generally voluminous and unpinned, and hence

281 PEN1–9.

282 Kaeser 2008b, 149 f.

283 Fendt rightly observes that for PEN3, the lower hem of the *chiton* is drawn up the side of the body and fastened on the hip, indicating that this tunic is actually long, Fendt 2005, 83 f. She claims that this outfit was unknown among the Amazons and introduced here to convey a matronly identity. This outfit is not as unique as claimed though. The *chitones* of Amazons are typically hitched up, and this arrangement of the drapery is attested on the Wounded Amazon Capitoline Type (see Devambez – Kauffmann-Samaras 1981, 625 no. 605) probably to express the disorder of the previous battle.

284 PEN1–9; VIR1–4; DIA1. 2. 4–11. 13–17; ATA1. 2.

285 DIA1. 2. 4–6. 8–11. 14–17.

286 DIA1. 2. 4–6. 8–11. 14–17. The overfall is often referred to as a *kolpos* by the scholarly discourse, see Lee 2004. In DIA12 she wears a long robe, which is the exception to the norm here.

287 M. Bieber recognizes that the *chiton* of Diana is shortened in such instances, Bieber 1977, 71 f.

288 DIA1. 2. 8. 17. The overfold is often referred to as an *apotygma* in the scholarly discourse, see Lee 2004. For discussion on this copying error (i. e. the pouch should be thick and loose), see Bieber 1977, 71 f. DIA13 (Fig. 10) also shows Diana in a *peplos* with an overfold, but it is not clear if this is a portrait of a woman as Diana or a statue of the goddess with a contemporary look, see n. 87.

289 Cleland et al. 2007, 133 f.; Lee 2005, 60–62; Lee 2015, 106.

290 DIA2. 4–6. 8. 9. 11. 14–17. The shift to high-girdling became common for women by the Hellenistic Period, Bieber 1967, 35.

291 DIA6. 11. 14–16.

292 This feature is rarely attested among men, with the dancing Lares constituting the exception to the norm; for examples, see Tinh 1992.

suitable for leisurely pursuits, not for strenuous action²⁹³. Active men overwhelmingly prefer to wear the less cumbersome, fastened *chlamys*²⁹⁴. Diana nevertheless wears the *himation* and successfully adapts the mantle to a hunting setting by fashioning it into a roll and tying it around her body.

87 Taken as a whole, the women as Diana manipulated their garments to produce an indeterminate dress, which was not clearly associated with either sex.

88 On marble monuments from this time, the paint from garments has practically disappeared, but specialized analyses of the pigments suggest that men were typically dressed in white, as well as purple hues, whereas women were dressed in all colours of the rainbow, especially pink, amethyst, and blue²⁹⁵. Moreover, an analysis of copies of the Wounded Amazons has provided valuable insight into their dress: all of the women wear a *chiton* with mostly red but also yellow hues, as well as decorative bands in various colours (i. e. red, green, blue)²⁹⁶. Quite notably, saffron-coloured fabrics were considered suitable for women but effeminate for men²⁹⁷. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to consider the colour and patterns of these garments, to see if there was a feminine touch here as well.

Weapons

89 The weapons of women frequently differed from those of ›proper‹ men. In the portrait of a woman as Omphale, she takes on the club and lion skin of Hercules and even imitates his dress behaviours²⁹⁸. This is no wonder, since divested of his characteristic attitude and arms, all that remains is a beautiful woman.

90 The portraits of women as warrioresses and huntresses appear with the standard arms of their role models. While the comrades of Achilles continue their fight against the Amazons with swords and round shields²⁹⁹, Penthesilea still grasps onto her battle axe and *pelta* (Fig. 5. 6).³⁰⁰ Quite notably, both of these arms served as markers of foreigners (e. g. Thracians, Skythians, Persians) in Greek visual culture³⁰¹ and also maintained this foreign quality in this period³⁰². While the Amazons' takeover of foreign dress has received a variety of explanations³⁰³, it is worth highlighting the role of intersectionality. Men in distant societies were often viewed as uncivilized or even effeminate³⁰⁴. The conflation of socially inferior categories – i. e. female, foreign – was hardly coincidental: the Amazons were dressed not only in Greek garments, but also foreign accessories, precisely to highlight their difference from Greek warriors as women, and therefore as intruders and inferiors in these masculine roles³⁰⁵. It was possible for women to excel in other matters (e. g. managing the household, raising children), but acts of war should be left to ›real‹ men³⁰⁶. Although the portraits of women as Penthesilea wield lethal arms, their preference for battle axes and *peltai* ironically feminized them.

293 For discussion on the *himation*, Lee 2015, 113–116.

294 See § 13.

295 Brøns – Harlow 2020.

296 Østergaard et al. 2014.

297 Olson 2017, 141.

298 OMP1. For discussion, see § 71–73.

299 This refers to the Greek warriors on the Amazonomachy Sarcophagi under consideration (from Group VI), see Grassinger 1999b, 179–187. 247–257 cat. 118–142.

300 PEN1. 3. 7–9.

301 See Veness 2002; Kaeser 2008a.

302 e. g. Helbig 1966, 43 no. 2144.

303 For discussion, see Kaeser 2008a, 70.

304 There was a longstanding association (in the Greek and Roman worlds) between the orient and luxury, which was also brought into association with their dress, Cleland et al. 2007, 16. 55 f. 155–157.

305 Similarly, Veness and Kaeser point out that the Amazon's takeover of foreign dress is a symbolic expression of their ›otherness‹ as women, Kaeser 2008a, 70; Veness 2002, 99.

306 The promotion of an equality of the sexes in different roles can be traced back to Xenophon and finds its echoes in the Roman world (for discussion, see § 116–127).

91 A similar situation is attested for women as Diana and Atalante. While Greek men impaled their prey with spears, these huntresses used bows and arrows³⁰⁷. Their preference for archery connected them back to foreign bowmen³⁰⁸. Once again, these arms served to mark them as barbarian or even feminized intruders in these roles, and hence as their inferiors. The diverse fighting styles of hunters and huntresses also served to differentiate them: men confronted their target directly, whereas women struck their prey from a safe distance, which also allowed them to take on a supportive role in the hunt (e. g. weakening the prey)³⁰⁹.

92 The portraits of women as Virtus – as a ›Roman Amazon‹ – stand out here, due to assuming the same arms as Roman men in an unqualified way³¹⁰. This is probably due to their role model's double function in visual culture, appearing as the (divine) source of *virtus* while conferring this virtue on her male companions³¹¹.

The Interactions between Body and Dress

93 The interaction between their bodies/dress underscored their ›true‹ nature. In a portrait of a woman as Omphale, she was shown like Hercules, fully undressed and wielding his arms (Fig. 1)³¹². Quite ironically though, her imitation of this hero reinforced her womanhood. Her state of undress had a completely different effect: this did not reveal the muscular physique of Hercules but rather the soft, sensual body of Venus. In addition, she wears the lion skin in a manner that drew attention back to her sexual parts. The paws of the lion skin partially cover her breasts, without concealing them; moreover, the sharp claws both accentuated her breasts and contrasted with her delicate skin³¹³. Most strikingly though, she pulls the lion skin in front of her pudenda, simultaneously hiding and drawing attention to this feature³¹⁴. As such, her fully undressed body, interacting with the animal pelt, ultimately highlighted her physical attractiveness and sexual desirability³¹⁵.

94 Turning to the portraits of women as warrioresses and huntresses³¹⁶, the situation is similar but also different. These women also imitate male undress, ultimately revealing their female bodies but to a more limited extent. Moreover, their garments retrace and even exaggerate their hour-glass figures. These trends will be demonstrated based on portraits of women as Penthesilea, since these monuments encompass all of the different possibilities (Fig. 5. 6)³¹⁷.

95 Greek warriors appeared in varying states of undress – e. g. full nudity, bare chests, bare legs – to put their powerful, muscular bodies on display. Amazons dressing up like Greeks presented the viewer with a striking paradox: » [...] the more the image of a mythical Amazon approximates that of a ›real‹, that is to say male warrior, the more her feminine body comes to the fore.«³¹⁸ As sexually developed women, these masculine outfits ultimately revealed their soft, sensual bodies.

96 It is striking that Greeks were primarily nude, whereas Amazons were as a rule clothed, thus excluding them from the defining costume of their male counter-

307 DIA1–12. 14–16. Kottsieper 2008, 216 (an exception is Herakles and the Stymphalian Birds).

308 Kottsieper 2008, 216.

309 Kaeser 2008a, 53 f.

310 VIR1–4. These arms were not particularly Roman: these were often inspired by Greek models, which could also be used by men in Roman visual culture (e. g. neo-Attic helmets).

311 For discussion, see § 131.

312 OMP1.

313 Zanker 1999, 128.

314 See Salomon 1997, 204.

315 Zanker 1999 also highlights the physical desirability of this portrait.

316 PEN1–9; VIR1–4; DIA1. 2. 4–17; ATA1. 2.

317 PEN1–9.

318 Kaeser 2008b, 156 (transl. by the author); also Veness 2002, 102.

parts³¹⁹. A full state of undress was apparently difficult to reconcile with their identity as strong, courageous fighters. The Amazons required an alternate dress to convincingly express their ›manly‹ qualities: the search landed on the short tunics of warriors, which nevertheless showed off more of their female bodies than usual.

97 In fact, the Amazons were only portrayed completely nude to express their vulnerability and sexual desirability. This is epitomized by the mortally wounded Amazons supported by their companions³²⁰. In these scenes, their full state of undress – or ›nakedness‹ – was in no sense related to the agonal nudity of Greek warriors. It was an unrealistic visual convention, drawing attention to the female nature of the combatant, suddenly rendered completely harmless. In the case of Achilles and Penthesilea especially, the nudity took on erotic connotations as well: the warriorress was primarily cast as a physically attractive woman, whose fierce and bellicose characteristics were almost completely suppressed.

98 In the portraits of women as Penthesilea though, the standard clothes of the Amazons were preferred: a short *chiton*, in most cases detached on one shoulder (Fig. 6)³²¹. It is therefore evident that the image of a ›manly‹ Amazon was favoured over a vulnerable and sexualized Amazon for their commemoration.

99 On the other hand, these garments still reveal parts of their physical bodies. Especially notable is the exposed breast, which is a highly polysemous sign³²². It could refer to the active and manlike role of the Amazons, whether purposely loosening their tunics for greater freedom of movement, or bravely fighting to the limit, with their tunics coming undone in the fray³²³. At the same time, it signaled the paradox of the fighting woman, since these masculine, chest-exposing garments ironically drew attention back to their female bodies, with all of their somatic connotations (weakness, eroticism, etc.)³²⁴. As such, the bare breast was a sign of ›manliness‹ but with the potential to become the object of the voyeuristic gaze.

100 Moreover, their garments were draped on the body in a way that drew attention back to their physical features. It was possible to place a belt directly under the breasts, thus accentuating their shapeliness³²⁵. The process of shortening the garment also resulted in a relatively thick and loose overfall around the hips. Combining these sartorial features exaggerated their hourglass figures.

101 Taken as a whole, the dress of women as Penthesilea served to strike a careful balance between their ›manly‹ identities and their beautiful female bodies.

102 All of these costumes were certainly inspired by the dress of Greek men but continued to establish sexual difference. The integration of heroic, foreign and feminine dress codes opened up a »third term« or a »space of possibility« for these unique, ›manly‹ women, which likened them to, but still rendered them distinct from heroes, foreigners, and women³²⁶. It follows that the women were never dressed precisely the same as their male counterparts, despite appropriating the same essential identities, for different effects. This phenomenon is known as ›gender marking‹: in this model, the Herculean men, warriors, and hunters are presented as the norm, whereas their female

319 Kaeser 2008a, 71; Kaeser 2008b, 155 f.; Veness 2002, 95–97.

320 e. g. Devambez – Kauffmann-Samaras 1981, 631 f. nos. 733–738; Berger 1994, 300 f. nos. 52–54.

321 PEN2–5. 7–9.

322 The bare breast is often perceived as merely a sign of beauty, e. g. Russenberger 2015, 385; Zanker – Ewald 2004, 89 f. 286.

323 B. Cohen interprets this as a sign of victimization (Cohen 1997, 79), but as Veness and Kaeser convincingly argue, this comes from the world of men, Kaeser 2008b, 158; Veness 2002, 105.

324 Hansen 2007, 112 f.

325 On PEN2. 4. 8. 9, the high girding is clearly detectable (due to the presence of a belt, a tightly rolled-up *himation*, or the drapery bunched around the breasts). In other cases, perhaps there was no high girding, or this was covered by the arm of Achilles.

326 For discussion, see § 11.

counterparts are presented as secondary by marking them off through gendered signs as the ›other‹.³²⁷ The implication is seemingly that women were capable of exhibiting *virtus* but still in some sense different from men.

103 Was this a sign of ›empowerment‹ for women? A way of allowing them to take on traditionally male roles without completely abandoning their femininity? In other words, could a portrait of a woman with a fashionable hairstyle, a short but high-girdled *chiton*, and exotic weapons have been a way of marking out a symbolic space for her to be both ›perfectly manly‹ and a woman? Or should we assume that in a society dominated by patriarchal ideals, that women intruding into traditionally masculine domains were deliberately set off with the markers of socially inferior categories (i. e. female, foreign) to hint at their implicit inferiority?

104 In any case, the benefit of conferring *virtus* on women through gender-b(l)ending dress is clear: it conveys their exceptional status through signs of gender transgression, but at the same time prevented entirely calling into question the prevailing belief that gender ought to be predicated on sexual difference. The dress was sufficiently masculine to cast these women as ›honorary men‹ but still drew attention back to their female nature and with it their traditional social status and roles. Their potential to exhibit *virtus* was inseparable from their womanhood, or even incorporated into it, and therefore most readily understood in these terms. As a rule of thumb, »the ideal performance for women seems to have been largely contradictory: the virtuous woman should strive to achieve masculine traits in a way that never troubled her firm identification with femininity«³²⁸.

The Impacts of Demythologization on Dress

105 Demythologization refers to the process of reinterpreting a subject so that it is partially or completely divested of mythical elements³²⁹. The impact of demythologization on the dress also aided in promoting a binary system of gender based on sexual difference. There were several reasons for this.

106 Mythical associations could be drawn in subtle ways, by using symbols to express broader identities and narratives. This is demonstrated by a portrait of a woman (Cornelia Tyche) and her daughter (Iulia Secunda), who tragically perished in a shipwreck at the ages of 39 and 11 respectively (Fig. 11)³³⁰. They are commemorated in bust format with conventional female dress (i. e. fashionable hairstyle, *tunica*, *palla*). They are nevertheless associated with goddesses, due to the placement of their divine attributes above them. The mother is shown with the cornucopia and rudder of Fortuna, surely because she had been named after the goddess of fortune, but the irony is evident in this case as well. Her daughter is shown with the bow and quiver of Diana. It is plausible that Diana was a popular role model for prematurely deceased girls, since her eternal virginity provoked feelings of sadness and loss³³¹. This raises the question: did Iulia Secunda's mere juxta-

327 This phenomenon is frequently attested for women taking on traditionally male roles during the 20th century: women entering into positions of authority within institutionalized political systems (e. g. military personnel, police officers, judges) were required to wear uniforms, which downplayed the sexual characteristics of the wearer due to their coverage of the body and their general conformity, but at the same time, these women tended to retain feminine body styling (e. g. cosmetics, hairstyles) and accessories (e. g. types of shoes), Eicher – Roach-Higgins 1992, 20 f. The potentially negative effects of gender marking are brought out in several studies, e. g. Young 1992; Eicher – Roach-Higgins 1992, 22 f.; Entwistle 2000, 342–344; Senne 2016, 5. 8 f.

328 Upson-Saia 2011, 104 f.

329 Demythologization refers to the simplification or adjustment of standardized mythological image types, but especially the loss of narrative and the alteration of essential details – the end result is the abbreviation, transformation or even distortion of the tale, Koortbojian 1995, 138. On a related note, standardized mythological image types with certain commonalities start to blend in the visual record, Turcan 1987; and there is an intrusion of ›real life‹ elements, Huskinson 2015, 179.

330 OMP3.

331 The portraits of girls as Diana are most commonly seen to reflect their virginal state, e. g. Backe-Dahmen 2006, 187 f. cat. F65; Granino Cecere 2001, 293; Wrede 1981, 59. 109.

position with the identifying attributes of Diana serve to connect her with this (virginal) goddess in general, while pushing her bolder, more intrepid qualities into the background?

107 Demythologization also aided in restoring the proper balance between men and women, by downplaying a mutual exchange of gendered dress. This is demonstrated by a portrait of a married couple as Hercules and Omphale: the husband retains his club and lion skin, which denies his beautiful wife these arms (Fig. 2)³³². The exchange of gendered dress was necessary for their identification as this mythical pair³³³; in this case though, it was limited to a few supplementary accessories, relegated to the lower field of the monument (i. e. bow/quiver below Omphale vs. spindle/wool basket below Hercules). This highly experimental iconography helped to distance the husband and wife from the dubious features of the narrative (i. e. dominant woman vs. emasculated, uxorious man)³³⁴. Moreover, Hercules holds the Apples of the Hesperides as his Twelve Labours are narrated around him, suggesting that his reward for *negotium* is *otium* – in this case, a life of love with a beautiful, modest woman. The challenges of commemorating married couples as Hercules and Omphale in a socially acceptable way, while still ensuring their recognizability, is perhaps attested by a similar monument (Fig. 3): could this have been an (failed) attempt to cast a husband and wife as these mythical lovers³³⁵?

108 Demythologization made it possible to celebrate the *virtus* of men and women in ›real life‹ contexts, without fully bridging the gap between myth and reality. This is demonstrated by the portraits of women on sarcophagi with ›realistic‹ hunting themes (Fig. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19)³³⁶. The men have been transformed from mythical heroes (e. g. Hippolytus, Meleager) into Roman commanders and hunters, by dressing them in contemporary outfits. Regardless of whether the women retained their mythical identities (e. g. Virtus)³³⁷ or renounced them (e. g. Diana, Atalante)³³⁸, their mythical costumes were hardly impacted by demythologization³³⁹. The portrayal of men in contemporary masculine dress (= iconic sign), but women in unrealistic gender-b(l)ending dress (= symbolic sign), seemingly influenced the perception of their *virtus*: it reinforced the fact that men were permitted to exhibit their courage in their traditional roles (i. e. warfare, hunting), while implying that women should exhibit *virtus* in other contexts, suitable to their own sex. As such, demythologization reinforced the traditional division of roles between the sexes.

›Virtuous‹ Behaviour

109 The dress of the girls and women ensured that their *virtus* was evoked in principle, regardless of their precise actions. It is nevertheless worthwhile inquiring whether their actions hinted at how their *virtus* should manifest itself in practice.

A Life Cut Short: Bold and Chaste Daughters

110 Girls were typically shown alone, primarily due to their unattachment to a husband³⁴⁰. They often appeared in autonomous and active roles; there were seemingly

332 OMP2; see also OMP3. In fact, the woman's *virtus* is eliminated in the process, see § 148.

333 Boardman 1994, 52.

334 Zanker 1999, 129 f.

335 OMP3.

336 DIA14–17.

337 VIR1–4; DIA14.

338 DIA15–17; ATA2.

339 This indicates that the sartorial code took on a life of its own: it had the power to signify *virtus* independently of its precise wearer or mythological context.

340 OMP4; DIA1. 2. 4–7; see, however, ATA2.

no reservations about putting their intrepid behaviour on display. Their actions were primarily selected to appeal to emotions and convey virtue.

111 In the portraits of girls, there is a tendency to juxtapose signs of innocence and fortitude. The ›child Omphale‹ (Fig. 4) is sweet but bold³⁴¹. The drapery slips off her shoulder, expressing her modest beauty; at the same time, she stands confidently, bearing the arms of Hercules. The portraits of girls as huntresses (i. e. Diana and ›Atalante‹) (Fig. 7. 8. 16) are youthful but aggressive, actively pursuing their prey³⁴². It seems that these contrasts served a double function for commemoration.

112 Most importantly, these contrasts elicited feelings of sadness in the face of premature death. This is particularly evident for a portrait of a girl as ›Atalante‹ (Fig. 16)³⁴³. She appears with the butterfly wings of Psyche, essentially a female cupid. She is cast as an eternal child but engaged in a hunting expedition, a pursuit typically reserved for (male) adults. The juxtaposition was not only endearing and whimsical, but also a heart-wrenching reminder of her unfulfilled potential³⁴⁴. It was a poignant commentary on how she had developed her personal qualities (e. g. *virtus*) in vain. She is essentially portrayed in an intermediate state: her childhood was recognized as an innocent and playful stage of life, with the hunt transformed into a sweet game, but also as preparation for adulthood and its social expectations³⁴⁵.

113 In addition, the juxtaposition of fortitude and innocence fits well into idealized conceptions of virtuous daughters³⁴⁶. Musonius Rufus uniquely proposed that women needed *virtus* from a young age to defend their chastity, in the face of force or threat³⁴⁷. In any case, his proposal was echoed by the legends of Lucretia, who committed suicide like a man to redeem her sexual honour³⁴⁸, as well as Cloelia, who courageously traversed the Tiber in order to safeguard the virginity of herself and others³⁴⁹. As L. Caldwell points out, ›in spite of the talk of manliness, [...] the reason that Romans want their girls to display *virtus* [...] is quite conventional: it emboldens them to preserve their modesty«³⁵⁰. Setting the portraiture against its mythological background, it is conceivable that these huntresses were understood as fierce defenders of their virginity as well³⁵¹. However, the endorsement of *virtus* in girls was not strictly directed towards the preservation of their chastity³⁵², so the portraiture was surely appreciated in other ways too.

114 Girls are as a rule shown alone³⁵³, with one notable exception: a portrait of a boy and a girl as ›Meleager‹ and ›Atalante‹ was presumably destined for the commemoration of siblings (Fig. 16)³⁵⁴. They are presented on relatively equal terms: both occupy the central position of the monument, wearing hunting dress and actively participating in the hunt. The boy is nevertheless the main actor, pursuing the boar on horseback, whereas his sister is primarily cast in a supportive role, directing him towards his goal. It is evident that girls were permitted to assume active, ›manly‹ roles, even in the pres-

341 OMP4. It is not clear if this monument served to commemorate a young girl, but this is within the realm of possibility, see n. 81.

342 DIA1. 2. 6 (striding); DIA4. 5 (in the midst of the hunt).

343 ATA2.

344 This is not to claim that *virtus* is conferred upon the children strictly in compensation for their unlived lives, see § 151–155.

345 For this view on childhood, Birk 2013, 166 f.

346 Caldwell 2015, 21 f.

347 Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947). He does not seriously propose that women should learn how to fight, see § 158–160.

348 Edwards 2007, 180–183.

349 Caldwell 2015, 38–43.

350 Caldwell 2015, 40 f.

351 DIA1. 2. 4–7; ATA2.

352 e. g. CIL VI 41062 col. 1 lin. 3–9; Cic. fam. 14, 1, 1; 14, 11; Cic. Att. 10, 8, 9; see also Plin. epist. 5, 16.

353 OMP4; DIA1. 2. 4–7.

354 ATA2.

ence of their brothers, but their valiant deeds are placed in a clear hierarchy – the immaturity of the deceased makes no difference. Moreover, it is notable that her *virtus* was ultimately directed towards familial concerns in this scene.

115 The cultural consensus held that *virtus* was innate to men but anomalous for women from a young age. This is reflected in Statius' advice to his friend Julius Menecrates. He encouraged him to show his three children – two boys, one girl – the path to »virtue« (*virtus*)³⁵⁵. The children were young but already revealing their promise: he mentioned the ›manly‹ strength of his sons and likened his daughter to Helen as a toddler, already worthy to enter the Spartan wrestling grounds³⁵⁶. Nevertheless, *virtus* was more suited to his sons, whereas his daughter would serve him best by providing him with grandchildren³⁵⁷. As such, to place equal weight on their *virtus* on these monuments would seem to violate societal norms.

Companionate Marriage: The ›Moral Equality‹ of Husbands and Wives

116 It seems that the actions of women were selected on a case-by-case basis to achieve two overarching aims:

- To assert that women have the same innate capacity for *virtus* as men – especially their own husbands – while reinforcing the traditional gender hierarchy (i. e. men/superior, women/inferior).
- To give expression to forms of *virtus* particularly relevant to their own sex, such as exhibiting physical and mental endurance, or directing their ›manly‹ qualities towards their roles as wives and mothers.

117 These trends only become evident by identifying patterns of behaviour on the monuments and situating them in their proper social context.

118 Women were rarely shown alone, without their husbands by their sides. This was limited to the portraits of women as Omphale (Fig. 1) and Diana (Fig. 9)³⁵⁸. It is clear that the image of an independent, courageous woman was hardly appreciated as a form of commemoration. Moreover, strenuous behaviour was avoided in these cases. Their difference from men in ›manly‹ roles was palpable, since Omphale repurposes Hercules' arms (i. e. using the lion skin to modestly shield herself)³⁵⁹, and Diana prepares to attack her prey from a distance (i. e. with bow/arrow)³⁶⁰.

119 These observations fit well into broader trends. Portraits of women celebrated for *virtus* on their own terms were exceedingly rare. They occasionally usurped the position of lion hunters on Roman Hunt Sarcophagi (Fig. 20)³⁶¹. Their own biological sex was apparently no hindrance to this,³⁶² and by drawing on well-established models for *virtus*, the evocation was completely unambiguous. However, the lion hunter was never destined for the addition of female portrait features, and therefore not originally conceived of as a celebration of their *virtus*. This is quite unlike the role models under consideration. In any case, the Roman Hunt Sarcophagi were clearly suitable: the fact that the portrait head of the female deceased was even carved onto the lion hunter, with a male body and dress, clearly demonstrates this³⁶³.

355 Stat. silv. 4, 8, 57–58.

356 Stat. silv. 4, 8, 25–29.

357 Stat. silv. 4, 8, 27.

358 OMP1; DIA8–13.

359 OMP1.

360 DIA8–13.

361 For the monuments, Andreae 1980, 99 f.; 169 f. cat. 150; Mikocki 1995, 118 f. cat. 58. This coneyed *virtus*, Backe-Dahmen 2006, 115. 117; Birk 2011, 248 f.; Huskinson 2002, 26–28; Sande 2009, 61–63.

362 Birk 2013, 138.

363 For discussion on the portrait of Bera (a Christian woman) as a lion hunter on a Roman Hunt Sarcophagus in San Sebastiano, see Hollaender 2022.



Fig. 20: Rome, San Sebastiano fuori le mura, Mus. Roman Hunt Sarcophagus with a portrait of a woman (Bera) as a lion hunter

20

120 In the majority of cases, the women are portrayed next to their husbands as heroes, warriors, or hunters³⁶⁴. Their actions generally fall into two categories:

- Women appear in scenes primarily focused on ›manly‹ deeds³⁶⁵. The women typically assume active roles in the hunt, even imitating their husbands to some extent³⁶⁶. On the Roman Hunt Sarcophagi, married couples are portrayed as a lion hunter and Virtus, the goddess of ›manliness‹ (Fig. 17. 18. 19)³⁶⁷. The men are cast as the main actors, placed centre stage and pursuing wild beasts on horseback; their wives are primarily cast in a supportive role, positioned behind them, without directly attacking their prey. The sarcophagus of C. Flavius Hostilius Sertorianus and Domitia Severa is slightly different (Fig. 15)³⁶⁸. The husband is portrayed as a contemporary boar hunter, whereas his wife is modelled after Diana, uniquely subduing a deer with her bare hands. The husband and wife are portrayed as independent actors, hunting in their own visual fields. However, the woman is presented in a secondary position, as the pendant to her husband. This impression was achieved in a variety of ways. The man has more room to hunt on the monument, in scenes grounded in reality, whereas his wife and her actions are marginalized and relegated to the mythical plane. He pursues a boar with weapons, whereas she is entirely disarmed, chasing a fleeing deer.
- Women appear in scenes of loving togetherness, with themes of heroism, battle, and the hunt merely serving as backdrops³⁶⁹. The husbands and wives are equally inactive and locked in a loving embrace (Fig. 5. 6. 12. 13. 14). It was probably easy to imagine that *both* partners had just performed ›manly‹ deeds – due to raging battle (Fig. 5. 6)³⁷⁰, or a dead boar on the ground (Fig. 12. 13)³⁷¹ – or

364 PEN1–9; VIR1–4; DIA15–17; ATA1. OMP2 is not considered here, since the evocation of *virtus* is eliminated, see § 107. 148.

365 VIR1–4; DIA17.

366 VIR2–4; DIA17; see, however, VIR1.

367 VIR1–4. For further discussion, see § 131.

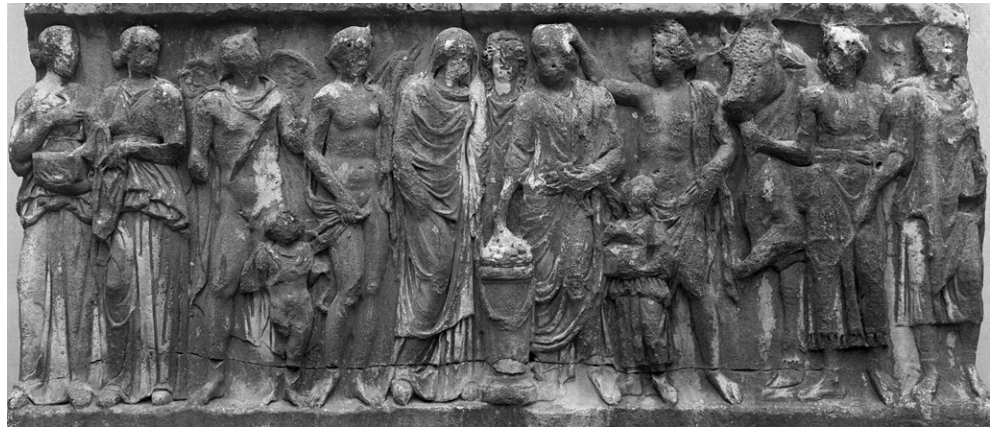
368 DIA17.

369 PEN1–9; DIA14–16; ATA1.

370 PEN1–9.

371 ATA1; see also DIA15.

Fig. 21: Vatican City State, Mus. Vat., Cortile del Belvedere inv. 1089. Vita Romana Sarcophagus (Sacrifice/Wedding Sarcophagus)



21

at least at some point in the past³⁷². However, the men's vigour and capacity for dynamic action was foregrounded in special ways³⁷³. In the case of Achilles and Penthesilea, the man redirects all his strength and energy towards supporting his dying wife, which fits well into the gender dichotomy of active/male and passive/female (Fig. 5. 6)³⁷⁴. In the case of ›Hippolytus‹ and ›Diana‹ (Fig. 13. 14), both wear hunting outfits and show affection in the ›hunting camp‹, but only the husband reappears in the hunting scene in the outside world; he was therefore permitted to assume an active role in another scene, whereas his wife was left at home³⁷⁵.

121 Considering the monuments for women as a whole, they are typically presented next to their husbands, either performing ›manly‹ acts of *virtus* or at least connected with heroism, war, and the hunt. It seems that the image of the strong and courageous woman was primarily appreciated in connection with their husbands.

122 It is possible to offer a few explanations for this trend in commemoration, which are by no means mutually exclusive. As Hansen observes, the visual interest in mythical couples on sarcophagi was significantly more pronounced during the 3rd century A.D.³⁷⁶. These monuments often include themes like heroism, war, and the hunt: it follows that »pictorially the association of *virtus* with Roman women is influenced and facilitated by the lively and well-developed iconographical system for depicting mythological pairs«³⁷⁷. However, this does not entirely explain the inclination to fit women into masculine roles that had been previously reserved for their husbands³⁷⁸. The extension of *virtus* to women was surely motivated by the penchant to express the symmetry between husbands and wives, at least in terms of their essential moral equality³⁷⁹. At the same time, the proper asymmetry between the sexes was never abolished.

123 The hypothesis presented here fits well into broader trends. It was common to highlight the mutual virtues of married couples on ›biographical‹ sarcophagi but in a highly gendered manner. Husbands and wives were praised for their shared *pietas* (piety): the man actually makes the offering, whereas his wife accompanies him in

372 DIA14–16.

373 See also OMP2 (with the Twelve Labours of Hercules in the background).

374 PEN1–9; Hansen 2007, 117.

375 DIA14–16.

376 Hansen 2007, 116 f. For further discussion, see § 145–148.

377 Hansen 2007, 117.

378 In the model provided by Hansen, there was an increasing interest in the couple in general (i. e. *concordia*), which ultimately brought women into association with *virtus*, Hansen 2007, 117. The issue with this model is that it mostly relies on the aspect of fortuity, which is not entirely convincing.

379 This phenomenon is evident on the Vita Romana Sarcophagi, Reinsberg 2006, 182–184.



Fig. 22: Vatican City State, Mus. Vat., Cortile del Belvedere. Roman Muse Sarcophagus

22

prayer (Fig. 21)³⁸⁰. It was also common to celebrate their shared *eruditio* (learnedness): the man typically holds a scroll and makes a gesture of speech, whereas his wife is often shown without a scroll, and instead plays a lyre or merely listens to her husband (Fig. 22)³⁸¹. The desire to evoke their mutual but still differentiated *virtus* is detectable in isolated cases as well. On the so-called Balbinus Sarcophagus (Fig. 23)³⁸², the man is dressed as a military commander, crowned by Victoria, and accompanied by Mars, all of which evoke his *virtus*. His wife is uniquely escorted by the goddess Virtus. This certainly mirrored the commemoration of her husband but also differed in several respects: she herself appears in the guise of Venus, and was praised with fewer, purely symbolic visual codes for *virtus*, which ultimately precluded her arrogation of a ›manly‹ identity³⁸³.

124 The evocation of shared *virtus* on other ›biographical‹ sarcophagi is far more ambivalent. In one case, the spouses are each accompanied by their own Victoria, reaching out to crown them (Fig. 24)³⁸⁴. Quite strikingly though, the man alone receives a wreath, whereas the hand reaching towards the woman is empty³⁸⁵. In another case, the husband is shown as a military commander granting clemency to barbarians³⁸⁶. To the left, his wife is shown as a learned woman in front of a curtain, held up by women approximating Virtus in appearance: they wear the short tunic and boots of the goddess of ›manliness‹ but are completely disarmed³⁸⁷. In both cases, the intention was to give

380 e. g. Reinsberg 2006, 196 f. cat. 15; 213 f. cat. 73; 218 cat. 87; for discussion, Reinsberg 2006, 73 f.

381 e. g. Ewald 1999, 173 cat. E 6; 196 cat. F 32; 203 f. cat. G 16; for discussion, Huskinson 1999. On the front side of DIA17, these gendered differences are also evident.

382 For the monument and discussion of the virtues, Reinsberg 2006, 107–109; 213 f. cat. 73.

383 The man is praised with three visual codes for *virtus* (i. e. military dress, accompanied by Mars, crowned by Victoria), whereas his wife is only accompanied by Virtus.

384 Reinsberg 2006, 228 f. cat. 123.

385 Reinsberg 2006, 228 f. cat. 123.

386 Reinsberg 2006, 201 cat. 31.

387 Their similarity to Virtus has been noted, Reinsberg 2006, 201 cat. 31.



Fig. 23: Rome, Catacombe di Pretestato, Mus. So-called Balbinus Sarcophagus

23

an impression of moral equality, but for the evocation of *virtus*, there was reluctance to fulfill these criteria for women.

125 The portraits of married couples as mythical warriors and warrioresses, or hunters and huntresses functioned in a similar way: the conferral of *virtus* on women was primarily driven by a desire to produce a sense of symmetry with their husbands, at least in terms of moral equality. In some cases, *virtus* was shown as their premier quality, by bringing their shared, equal strength and courage into focus (Fig. 15. 17. 18. 19)³⁸⁸. The fact that women are typically just as active as their husbands reinforced this. In other cases, their mutual *virtus* was merely a secondary consideration, evoked by their dress rather than their activities (Fig. 5. 6. 12. 13. 14)³⁸⁹. These instances are nevertheless revealing: there was often no narrative reason to dress up both the men and their wives as hunters, meaning that their matching outfits were introduced in a gratuitous way, to signify their mutual *virtus* in particular (Fig. 13. 14)³⁹⁰.

126 On the other hand, there was still a notable imbalance. The *virtus* of the men and women was equal in principle, but the manifestation of this quality in men was ultimately seen to ›surpass‹ that of their wives in practice, in order to prevent the complete breakdown of the traditional hierarchy. The ›manliness‹ of men was given a special place to shine in the visual universe, through their actions, especially compared to their wives. This was achieved by placing the men at the centre but pushing their wives to the side, behind them (Fig. 17. 18. 19)³⁹¹; by showing off the physical strength of men, while putting their wives in a compromised position and hence in need of

388 VIR1-4; DIA17.

389 PEN1-9; DIA14-17; ATA1.

390 In other words, for DIA14-17, the fact that both men and their wives wear hunting dress was not predetermined by any mythical narrative.

391 VIR1-4.

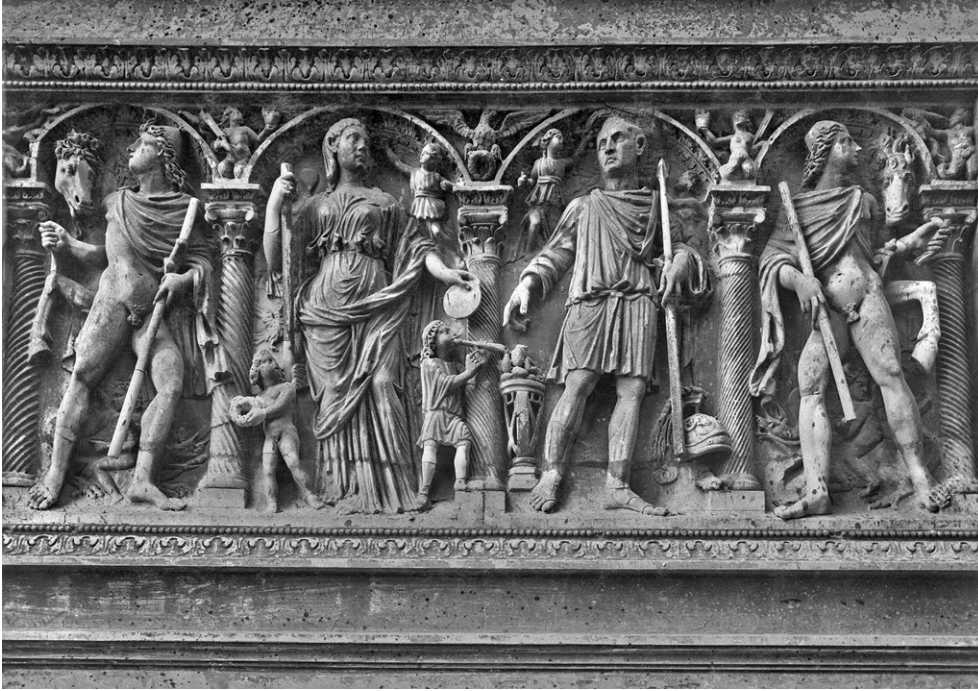


Fig. 24: Rome, Villa Albani inv. 435. Vita Romana Sarcophagus (Sacrifice/Wedding Sarcophagus)

24

assistance (Fig. 5. 6)³⁹²; or, in the most extreme cases, by permitting the men to perform their heroic deeds, but not their wives (Fig. 13. 14)³⁹³.

127 While portraits of married couples needed to strike a careful balance between symmetry and asymmetry in virtue, there was more room for manoeuvre when the husbands and wives were shown in different visual fields. On ›biographical‹ sarcophagi, it was possible to extol women for precisely the same qualities not only independently of their husbands but also in a manner similar to men, in another scene. Women were praised for their *pietas* by actually making an offering, not just by attending and praying³⁹⁴; or for their *eruditio* by actually holding a scroll, not just by playing an instrument or listening to their husbands³⁹⁵. Likewise, it seems that women had more freedom to show off their *virtus* through their actions in their own visual fields. On the sarcophagus for C. Flavius Hostilius Sertorianus and Domitia Severa (Fig. 15), the woman was permitted to hunt like a man and therefore to express her *virtus* like a man³⁹⁶. Here more than ever, she reflected her husband in terms of *virtus* to produce an image of a well-matched pair³⁹⁷.

A Small Consolation: Strong-Willed and Loyal Wives

128 Whether shown alone or with their husbands, the actions of women gave expression to forms of *virtus* particularly relevant to their own sex. In the rare cases where women were celebrated for their *virtus* alone, the iconography was in part formulated to direct this virtue towards the preservation of their modesty. The portrait of a woman as Omphale was a unique case, where her beauty, modesty, and strength were equally weighted (Fig. 1)³⁹⁸. As we have seen, these virtues intersected in various ways (i. e. beauty/

392 PEN1–9.

393 VIR1; DIA14–16.

394 e. g. Reinsberg 2006, 195 cat. 13; 212 cat. 67; 230 cat. 128; for discussion, Reinsberg 2006, 73 f.

395 e. g. Ewald 1999, 172 f. cat. E 2; 178 cat. E 17; 188 cat. F 4; for discussion, Huskinson 1999.

396 DIA17.

397 There are subtle differences as well, see § 120.

398 OMP1. For discussion, see § 71–73.

modesty, beauty/strength)³⁹⁹, allowing for a connection between strength and modesty as well. The portraits of women as Diana – as an icon of militant chastity – could have been viewed in this way as well but only against their mythological background (Fig. 9)⁴⁰⁰. There is, however, no reason to assume that their *virtus* was strictly directed towards this end⁴⁰¹.

129 Even if a portrait of a woman is detectable in the statue of Diana sweeping in to rescue Iphigenia⁴⁰², there would probably be no agreement on the significance of this iconography (Fig. 10). Quite unusually, the identity of Diana as a huntress was pushed into the background, whereas her identity as a cosmic saviouress was foregrounded⁴⁰³. It is notable that she rushes in to save the life of a desperate girl: this closely echoes the endorsement of mothers who summoned up their fortitude to prevent harm to their offspring⁴⁰⁴. Perhaps the monument represents a creative attempt to formulate a unique, sex-specific iconography for female *virtus*.

130 Married couples were celebrated for their moral equality, including their mutual *virtus*⁴⁰⁵. Besides this, it seems that women with *virtus* were primarily appreciated in connection with their husbands due to the social background in which this ›manly‹ quality allowed them to fulfill their roles as loyal wives. The women were typically placed in a supportive role by assisting them or touching them encouragingly⁴⁰⁶.

131 It was possible for women to actively share in their husbands' trials. This was especially true for the portraits of couples as lion hunters with Virtus (Fig. 17. 18. 19), with women presented as the very source of their husbands' strength. Virtus was not merely a personification but a goddess, and hence the divine force of *virtus*: the quality was one and the same with her⁴⁰⁷. Moreover, Virtus was the divine patroness of a certain man: she was the source of his *virtus*. This patron-protégé relationship was clearly expressed in the visual record (e. g. the goddess leading a man in a chariot, accompanying him into battle or the hunt, crowning him)⁴⁰⁸, and functioned in the same manner in the portraiture under consideration here.

132 This was true even for the portraits of couples as Achilles and Penthesilea (Fig. 5. 6)⁴⁰⁹, who were recast as comrades, especially in order to minimize their former conflict. This was in part achieved by the dress. The outfit of Penthesilea was partially inspired by Greek dress, including even the same *chlamys* as Achilles, thus giving an impression of equality and partnership. Even more importantly though, the Pasquino Group was taken as a model for their interactions: she was presented not as a mortally wounded enemy but rather as a tragically fallen companion dying in his arms, in order to persuasively express the hero's pain and suffering⁴¹⁰.

399 Zanker 1999, 71–73.

400 DIA8–11.

401 Qualities like strength, courage, and capacity – not to mention ›virtue‹ in general – were certainly appreciated in any social context relevant for women. The imagery itself offers no further insight, only the general social context in which it was produced.

402 DIA13. Whether this is a portrait is unclear, see n. 87.

403 Hörig – Schwertheim 1987, 227 f. cat. 361.

404 Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947) (transl. in Lutz 1947, 45). He does not seriously propose that women should learn how to fight, see § 158–160.

405 For discussion, see § 116–127.

406 VIR1–4; DIA14–16; ATA1. For PEN1–9, Achilles and Penthesilea are recast through the Pasquino motif as comrades, Grassinger 1999a.

407 Virtus is typically treated as a personification, signifying the *virtus* of her husband, e. g. Ewald 2005, 71; Milhous 1992, 210; Newby 2011a, 216 f.; Rodenwaldt 1944, 194 f.; Sande 2009, 62; Vaccaro Melucco 1966, 49; Wrede 1981, 150; Zanker – Ewald 2004, 226 f.; for a more ambivalent view on the matter, Hansen 2007, 109 f. 115 f. Virtus was a goddess though, see Eisenhut 1974; Milhous 1992, 1–17. The portraits of men and women as a lion hunter and Virtus on Roman Hunt Sarcophagi will be considered in more detail by the author elsewhere.

408 For the iconography of Virtus, see Ganschow 1997.

409 PEN1–9.

410 Grassinger 1999a.

133 These monuments recalled the contemporary women who exhibited *virtus* for the sake of their husbands, not on the battlefield or in the hunt but in contexts suitable to their sex, such as ensuring their safety and glory, joining them in unfamiliar territory, or preserving their property⁴¹¹. For the portraits of married couples as ›Hippolytus‹ and ›Diana‹ (Fig. 13. 14), the women do not leave with their husbands for the hunt; they are limited to showing their support in the ›hunting camp‹ consisting of hanging curtains, as a sort of provisional domestic setting⁴¹². This was surely intended to reinforce their proper place in Roman society.

134 Taken as a whole, these monuments demonstrate that men appreciated ›manly‹ qualities like strength and courage in their wives⁴¹³ but under two conditions: that the men remained the superior partners, and that their wives operated for their benefit. Although the *virtus* of contemporary women was often seen to compensate for the temporary powerlessness of their husbands in Roman society⁴¹⁴, on these monuments at least, there was no trace of this loss of control.

135 Women often take on active roles with their husbands, but passive roles are of interest as well. The portraits of married couples as Achilles and Penthesilea celebrate their moral equality and partnership but also shift the focus to the death of the warriorress (Fig. 5. 6). Quite notably, she exhibits fortitude, even in the face of death⁴¹⁵. She has not entirely lost control over her body, especially due to keeping her head upright and clutching her battle axe⁴¹⁶. This was physiologically impossible, a sign of mind over matter. There are still hints of the endurance she had exhibited to this point, such as placing her arm around her partner in a joint effort to keep herself upright. Moreover, she has not lost control over her emotions⁴¹⁷.

136 Her virtues come into focus by comparing her to other women placed in compromised positions (e. g. unwillingly dying, being abducted) on mythological sarcophagi: Creusa, Proserpina, and the Leukippides are portrayed with terrified expressions, trying to flee, or desperately flailing their arms. These piteous women not only provided an *exemplum mortalitatis*⁴¹⁸, but also invited direct identification with the female deceased⁴¹⁹, without even needing to downplay their weak and emotional state⁴²⁰. For instance, a woman uniquely takes on the role of Proserpina being abducted by Pluto (Fig. 25): she is shown with a limp body, being swept away with her arms thrown behind her⁴²¹. The women in the guise of Penthesilea, on the other hand, continue to prove their exceptional

411 For discussion, see § 57–69.

412 DIA14–16 (the curtain is visible on DIA14 and DIA16).

413 It has been proposed that the portrait of an active, strong, and courageous woman appealed to a female viewership, whereas the image of a sexually desirable but weak woman appealed to a male viewership, Fendt 2005, 93. The monuments examined here suggest the opposite.

414 Hemelrijk 2004, 189–191.

415 Her weakness at this moment is emphasized by others, e. g. Ewald 2005, 62; Russenberger 2015, 405 f. 460; Zanker – Ewald 2004, 215.

416 This is often noted but attributed to other reasons, e. g. clearly displaying her portrait head (Grassinger 1999a, 324); clearly showing off her beauty (Zanker 2019, 23); presenting the couple's bond in a dignified manner (Zanker – Ewald 2004, 287); intensifying the feeling of partnership, while downplaying the tragic and gruesome aspect of her death (Russenberger 2015, 389 f).

417 Ch. Russenberger claims that she exhibits ›ambivalent emotional behaviour‹, Russenberger 2015, 460. She has an impassive demeanor though (as dictated by the conventions of Roman portraiture).

418 Zanker – Ewald 2004, 63–115.

419 Russenberger rightly points out that only women and children are directly identified with dying or abducted mythological figures, Russenberger 2015, 403–406.

420 For one portrait of a woman as Penthesilea (Robert 1919, 477 f. cat. 392), she sits calmly in the chariot, as if accepting her fate (perhaps to produce a more hopeful image of death), Newby 2011a, 223. In the other three cases (Robert 1919, 471 cat. 380; 475 f. cat. 390; 482 f. cat. 399), she is shown in a vulnerable and often emotional state, see Newby 2011a, 219–224.

421 Robert 1919, 471 cat. 380; also highlighted in Russenberger 2015, 403–406. This sarcophagus is now lost; I would like to thank Guntram Koch for sharing this image with me.



Fig. 25: Lost (formerly Rome, Villa Gentili). Proserpina Sarcophagus with a portrait of a woman as Proserpina

25

virtus: they are not in the midst of battle (like men), nor lamenting their fate (like women), but rather bearing their miserable circumstances with fortitude (like ›masculine‹ women).

137 The possibility to praise women for their *virtus*, yet show them in a vulnerable state, is quite significant. The fortitude of women was often understood in terms of enduring physical pain and mental anguish; moreover, for the purposes of self-representation and commemoration, passive forms of *virtus* seem to have been valued among women in a way that found no clear parallel among men⁴²². This cannot be explained by a lack of models: Adonis offered a mythical paradigm for both an untimely death and ›manly‹ qualities, but, precisely due to his vulnerable state, (adult) men were never directly identified with the hero⁴²³. It was seemingly unthinkable to show men suffering a downfall, let alone a loss of control over their bodies and emotions⁴²⁴. For women though, passive forms of *virtus* – extending to the noble death – offered a perfectly dignified form of commemoration.

138 Perhaps other cases of passive *virtus* for women are detectable on these monuments as well. For instance, the wives in the guise of ›Diana‹ encourage their husbands but do not join them on the hunt; unlike women as Ariadne or Phaedra, lamenting the departure of Theseus or Hippolytus, these women graciously bear their loved ones' parting and the dangers awaiting them⁴²⁵.

Complementary Virtues – Pulchritudo, Pudicitia, Pietas, Concordia

139 Women were never praised for their *virtus* alone, since this was carefully balanced by traditional feminine qualities. This was true of the portraiture under con-

422 On the other hand, R. Bielfeldt suggests that men and women commissioned portraits of themselves in liminal situations (e. g. in front of their tomb, at the entrance to the underworld, etc.) expressing their lack of fear in the prospect of death (understood as *virtus*), Bielfeldt 2019.

423 Russenberger 2015, 406.

424 Russenberger 2015, 406.

425 DIA14–16. For portraits of women as Ariadne/Phaedra, Birk 2013, 305 cat. 592; 308 f. cat. 612.

sideration as well. The key virtues will be outlined here, starting with the portraiture itself and then moving onto the accompanying inscriptions on the monuments.

140 Women were frequently praised for their *pulchritudo* – beauty – in Roman society, which was understood in both an abstract and a concrete sense⁴²⁶. Moreover, they were commonly praised for their *virtus* and qualities related to beauty and fertility (e. g. *pulchritudo*, *claritas*, *fecunditas*) in the same breath⁴²⁷.

141 In the portraiture under consideration, women were celebrated for both their *virtus* and *pulchritudo*, but these qualities were weighted to varying degrees. Omphale was primarily praised for her beauty by patterning her after Venus herself (Fig. 1)⁴²⁸. She does not merely wield the club and lion skin of Hercules but in a manner similar to Hercules himself: the power of her beauty to disarm even the most powerful hero was therefore underpinned and intensified by specifically masculine codes for evoking strength and capacity⁴²⁹. The women as Penthesilea, Virtus, Diana, and Atalante were primarily praised for their *virtus*, by imitating the dress and behaviour of warriors and hunters (Fig. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19)⁴³⁰. At the same time, their beauty was evoked not merely due to their fashionable coiffures but also by their dress, which revealed and retraced their beautiful bodies⁴³¹. In only one case though was the beauty of a woman foregrounded: a woman as Penthesilea (Fig. 5) is shown with her drapery slipping off the shoulder, which was a conventional beauty code, almost completely foreign to these warrioresses⁴³². *Virtus* and *pulchritudo* balanced each other, to show that hyperfeminine women could aspire to masculine ideals, or, conversely, to show that ›honorary men‹ were never completely defeminized.

142 *Pudicitia* – chastity, modesty, purity – was the premier quality of women, expressed by concealing dress, restrained behaviour, and upholding a high standard of sexual ethics⁴³³. Moreover, women were commonly praised for both their *virtus* and qualities related to chastity/modesty (e. g. *castitas*, *sanctitas*, *modestia*)⁴³⁴.

143 Despite this, *pudicitia* is hardly relevant in the portraiture under consideration. Only Omphale exhibits signs of modesty, due to shielding her pudenda (Fig. 1)⁴³⁵. One woman as Penthesilea has a covered breast, which is at least unusual for an Amazon, suggesting that her modesty was taken into consideration here⁴³⁶. Otherwise, it is possible that girls and women as warrioresses and huntresses (Fig. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19) were viewed as particularly chaste but only in light of the mythological background⁴³⁷.

144 *Pietas* was the dutiful conduct towards the divine, as well as one's parents, relatives, benefactors, and homeland⁴³⁸. It was a praiseworthy quality for men and women alike⁴³⁹. The husband and wife as Meleager and Atalante (Fig. 12) are portrayed in a mutual act of devotion, which produced a sense of symmetry, but the visual code was highly gendered⁴⁴⁰. Her *pietas* counterbalanced her *virtus*: she was presented as a

426 Lewis – Short 1879, 1489 (s. v. *pulchritudo*); von Hesberg-Tonn 1983, 214.

427 For discussion, see § 68–69.

428 OMP1; Zanker 1999, 126–128.

429 For discussion, see § 71–73.

430 PEN1–9; VIR1–4; DIA1. 2. 4–17.

431 For discussion, see § 80–104.

432 PEN1; Grassinger 1999a, 328.

433 Lewis – Short 1879, 1486 (s. v. *pudicitia*); von Hesberg-Tonn 1983, 214.

434 For discussion, see § 68–69.

435 OMP1; Zanker 1999, 127 f.

436 PEN6; Russenberger 2015, 385–388.

437 For discussion, see § 113. 128.

438 Lewis – Short 1879, 3174 f. (s. v. *pietas*).

439 von Hesberg-Tonn 1983, 209 f. 212–214.

440 ATA1. For discussion, see § 123.

strong/courageous woman, devoted not only to the gods but also to her husband. As such, *pietas* was certainly uncommon on these monuments, but in this case, it intersected with other virtues of women in a meaningful way.

145 The emergence of companionate marriage in Roman society, based on ideals of lifelong partnership and mutual affection, brought about the idealization of *concordia*⁴⁴¹. There were irreconcilable but co-existing attitudes towards conjugal harmony⁴⁴². At one extreme, conjugal harmony was based on the equality and cooperation of husband and wife. At the other extreme, it rested on the subordination of the wife to her husband: she made him the centre of her universe and served his needs and benefit in a more or less unilateral manner.

146 The portraits of women in the company of their husbands share a notable commonality: these monuments conferred *concordia* on both the husbands and wives⁴⁴³. This was evoked with two visual codes:

- The standard *dextrarum iunctio* (i. e. clasped hands) was universally rejected in favour of a loving ›embrace‹ (Fig. 2. 3. 5. 6. 12. 13. 14. 18)⁴⁴⁴.
- The husbands and wives were celebrated for their shared virtue (Fig. 5. 6. 12. 13. 14. 15. 17. 18. 19)⁴⁴⁵.

147 These two visual codes for *concordia* were in most cases combined, also in emphatic ways (Fig. 18)⁴⁴⁶, presumably because the physical interaction of the couple was a far more conspicuous sign for conjugal harmony than just moral equality in itself.

148 Both men and women were celebrated for *concordia* on these monuments, but this was primarily founded on the headship of the husband and ultimately directed towards his needs and benefit. This virtue was especially relevant to women, who were seen to honour and cherish their husbands. Moreover, the manner in which *concordia* was formulated on these monuments effectively counterbalanced, neutralized, or even canceled out the unconventional attribution of *virtus* to women⁴⁴⁷. This effect was achieved in a variety of ways:

- First of all, the intimate relationship of the couples generally tempered the fierce, ›manlike‹ identities of the women⁴⁴⁸. By embracing their male partners (= *concordia*), these untamed women – notorious for rejecting the institution of marriage – were suddenly imbued with matronly qualities⁴⁴⁹. Furthermore, it is notable that women tend to embrace their husbands in a unilateral way to

441 For discussion on the emergence of companionate marriage (including the sense of conjugal harmony), Treggiari 1991, 83–261.

442 Conjugal harmony was ›the result of a balance of forces, and it took two to produce it [...] but] there may be some tendency to put more responsibility on the wife, for accommodating herself her husband‹, Treggiari 1991, 251 f. This is especially evident in philosophical treatises on marriage (see Nussbaum 2002; Tsouvola 2014), but less obvious in other more personal and ›down-to-earth‹ textual sources (e. g. letters, funerary epitaphs), see Treggiari 1991, 245 f. 252. 253–259.

443 OMP2. 3; PEN1–9; VIR1–4; DIA14–17; ATA1. For PEN3, VIR2 and DIA15, Hansen rightly identifies the connection between *concordia* and *virtus*, Hansen 2007; however, the visual codes for *concordia* in Roman visual culture are not precisely laid out.

444 OMP2 (see also OMP3); PEN1–9; VIR2; DIA14–16; ATA1. *Concordia* was initially evoked in the late Republican Period through the *dextrarum iunctio*; from the Claudian-Neronian Period and above all in the Flavian Period, further gestures were introduced to highlight the affective quality of marriage, such as lovingly touching or embracing each other, Alexandridis 2004, 95–98. See also Kousser 2007.

445 PEN1–9; VIR1–4; DIA14–16; ATA1. Expressions of moral equality (e. g. on coins) were tantamount to *concordia*, Hölscher 1990, 491 nos. 145. 146.

446 For instance, on VIR2, a woman embraces her husband as he hunts.

447 Hansen has identified and partially discussed this trend, Hansen 2007, 114–116.

448 Hansen 2007, 114 (VIR2; PEN3; DIA15).

449 Hansen 2007, 116 (DIA15). Also relevant for VIR2; PEN1–9; DIA14. 16; ATA1.

show their devotion and affection (Fig. 12. 13. 14. 18)⁴⁵⁰. In exceptional cases, the embrace is mutual, which was suggestive of reciprocity, but other visual cues ensured that the husbands did not seem too uxorious⁴⁵¹. As such, the *concordia* of these women was seemingly prioritized over their *virtus*, to stress their roles as proper wives.

- Secondly, the couples proved their moral equality by performing heroic deeds (= *concordia*), but the asymmetrical dynamic of the relationship was evident: the husbands assumed a leadership role, whereas their wives were cast in a supportive role (Fig. 15. 17. 18. 19)⁴⁵². In the process, the women accepted their husbands' cause as their shared cause. As such, their *concordia* perfectly aligned with their *virtus*, but in a manner that prevented destabilizing traditional gender relationships.
- In extreme cases, the celebration of *concordia* provoked a reorientation of the men and women's virtues along gendered lines, with *virtus* ascribed exclusively to the husbands but more traditional qualities to their wives. For Hercules and Omphale, the husband appears with the club and the lion skin (*virtus*), whereas the woman is modelled after Venus (*pulchritudo*, *pudicitia*), eliminating her aura of strength (Fig. 2. 3)⁴⁵³. It was thus possible for *concordia* to entirely substitute evocations of ›female *virtus*‹⁴⁵⁴.

149 In the accompanying inscriptions, the female portrait subjects were praised with varied but standard epithets: *dulcissima* (sweetest)⁴⁵⁵, *piissima* (dutiful)⁴⁵⁶, *incomparabilis* (incomparable)⁴⁵⁷, and *optima* (best)⁴⁵⁸. In fact, these were some of the most common laudatory adjectives for the female deceased on Roman funerary monuments, used regardless of rank and over the course of generations⁴⁵⁹. Only Iulia Secunda was praised in a more individualized way, for her unique beauty, dutiful habits, and even for her learning, which surpassed other girls of her age⁴⁶⁰. She is marked out as exceptional but still in a gender-specific manner. Since epigraphic formulae are stereotypical and standardized over the course of centuries, it seems that ›epigraphy was not a medium to challenge the gendered assignments of social norms and roles, but to make them firm, steadfast, even immobile‹⁴⁶¹.

450 OMP2; PEN1–9; VIR2; DIA14–16; ATA1. In portraits of married couples, it is not uncommon for women to turn more towards their husbands: for the man, this highlights his independence and public role but for the woman, the care and concern for her husband, as well as her domestic role and subordinate status to him, Russenberger 2015, 394 f.

451 PEN1–9; see also OMP3. In the portraits of married couples as Penthesilea and Achilles, the husband is shown as level-headed in a couple ways. The expression of raw emotion is avoided (there is also a staged appearance), Hansen 2007, 115. The ›manliness‹ of Achilles is never doubted, due to the possibility to show off his physical strength, Zanker – Ewald 2004, 54. 215. 287.

452 Hansen detects an active-male/passive-female dichotomy (Hansen 2007, 117), but this is not universally applicable, since men and women can assume equally active roles (VIR1–4; DIA17); rather, the decisive point is that women are cast in supportive or secondary roles.

453 OMP2; see also OMP3.

454 OMP2; see also OMP3.

455 DIA1.

456 DIA2. 3.

457 DIA17.

458 DIA2.

459 Riess 2012, 493; von Hesberg-Tonn 1983, 215.

460 DIA3; see Riess 2012, 493–495.

461 Riess 2012, 500.

The Portraiture in Its Social Context

150 In previous studies on these portrait types, the evocation of *virtus* has been treated in a general way (e. g. courage, ›virtue‹⁴⁶²), or even in a potentially problematic or conflicting way, due to the focus on particular categories of evidence⁴⁶³. The main lines of interpretation will be presented here. In order to contribute to this discussion, this analysis has systematically explored the interplay between attributions of *virtus* to contemporary women in Roman society and the visual (dress) codes in their portraiture. The main results will be presented here.

Children as ›Little Adults‹?

151 Children of both sexes were commemorated with *virtus* imagery on their funerary monuments⁴⁶⁴. In this portraiture, girls were directly identified with mythical paragons of strength, like Omphale, Diana and ›Atalante‹ (Fig. 4. 7. 8. 16)⁴⁶⁵.

152 The popularity of this theme for children has been explained in two ways. It has been argued that *virtus* was not exclusive to adult men, but achieved by their younger counterparts as well, by performing concrete acts of physical prowess as part of their education (e. g. athletics, riding, hunting)⁴⁶⁶. The opposite has been proposed as well, especially for younger children: the main interest in children was not their qualities as children, due to their relatively ›unformed‹ lives and lack of notable achievements⁴⁶⁷, but rather their potential qualities as adults⁴⁶⁸. In other words, children were not seen to possess qualities worthy of social recognition and were therefore endowed with *virtus* to cast them as ›little adults‹⁴⁶⁹. The association of children with adult virtues was fitting for their premature deaths: it put the lost potential of the child on display in a proleptic manner, serving to console grieving parents and give expression to their shattered hopes⁴⁷⁰.

153 This hypothesis certainly has its merits but demands more nuance. First of all, it is true that *virtus* was primarily ascribed to adult men and that the iconography selected to confer *virtus* on children tended to follow these same models⁴⁷¹. However, there is no need to label it as an ›adult virtue‹ in particular. Children of both sexes were praised for their *virtus* by their contemporaries⁴⁷². Whether these accounts offered an accurate version of events, or likewise an ideal construction, is irrelevant – the point is that these texts were produced for an audience that found it perfectly reasonable for children to show signs of strength, courage, or ›virtue‹, at least in a way suited to their life stage and experience. As such, there is no reason to assume that children praised for *virtus* on funerary monuments were ›elevated‹ completely out of relation to reality, that is, by attributing qualities to them that were still considered outside the reach of

462 e. g. Birk 2013, 137; Borg 2013, 181; Hansen 2007, 107 f.

463 See the following discussion, § 151–160.

464 For discussion on children commemorated for their *virtus* (as well as ›adult‹ qualities in general) on their funerary monuments, Backe-Dahmen 2006, 116–118; Birk 2013, 157–180; Dimas 1998, 118–162; Huskinson 1996, 92–94. 102. 105. 108; Mander 2013, 55–62; Simon 1970, 215–220.

465 OMP4; DIA1. 2. 4. 7; ATA2.

466 Huskinson 1996, 92 f.; Simon 1970, 216–219.

467 Wrede 1981, 108 f.

468 Backe-Dahmen 2006, 116; Dimas 1998, 241.

469 Birk 2013, 167.

470 Birk 2013, 180; Huskinson 1996, 93 f.; Mander 2013, 62.

471 Dimas 1998, 118–165.

472 For discussion on the attribution of *virtus* to boys, Simon 1970, 216–219. Girls are occasionally attributed *virtus* (or related qualities) as well, e. g. Cic. fam. 14, 11; Cic. Att. 10, 8, 9; Stat. silv. 4, 8, 57–58; Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947).

children⁴⁷³. Rather, their purpose was to mourn that these children had allegedly begun to exhibit *virtus* but never had the opportunity to develop this quality any further⁴⁷⁴.

154 Secondly, the portrayal of children partaking in adult activities (e. g. athletics, hunting, warfare) is striking, but there is a logical explanation for this: these were standard visual codes for *virtus*, ensuring its instant recognizability while permitting a symbolic viewing⁴⁷⁵. It is nevertheless clear that parents were not always satisfied with these purely adult forms of *virtus*, due to the tendency to modify existing models or even to invent new ones to suit the tender age of the child⁴⁷⁶. A portrait of a girl as ›Atalante‹ is a prime example of this: she takes part in boar hunt like a little adult but has been transformed into an eternal child (Fig. 16)⁴⁷⁷. Moreover, maidens in the guise of Omphale or Diana take on childlike qualities, combining signs of strength with playfulness (Fig. 4. 7. 8)⁴⁷⁸. Since the potential for these girls to develop their *virtus* would have extended into adulthood, the contrast between their childlike state and mature actions surely produced a bittersweet effect⁴⁷⁹.

155 In summary, imagery for *virtus* was common on children's funerary monuments because strength and courage – or even ›virtue‹ in general – were relevant to children of both sexes. It was a ›timeless‹ quality, not limited to certain periods of life, characterized by particular social roles and relationships⁴⁸⁰. In contrast, themes related to married life (e. g. *concordia*, mutual *pietas*) were virtually absent on children's funerary monuments⁴⁸¹. If the goal had been to cast girls as ›little women‹, then the absence of this defining social relationship would seem surprising. It follows that the portraits of girls in cross-gendered dress honoured their outstanding but not necessarily precocious *virtus*, thwarted by their untimely deaths. These monuments were viewed both retroactively, in terms of their short lives, as well as proleptically, in terms of their unfulfilled futures.

Girls and Gender Ambivalence?

156 It has been proposed that for girls in particular, the arrogation of ›heroic‹ identities in their portraiture, as well as the evocation of *virtus*, was permissible due to their resistance to categories of mature sexuality and of gender⁴⁸². Preadolescent girls appeared in the guise of Diana (Fig. 7. 8) not merely to reflect their virginal state but also to confer ›manly‹ qualities on them in compensation for their premature deaths: »Dying young, these girls lacked the traditional repertoire of feminine accomplishments (fidelity to a husband and tireless devotion to domestic tasks) that served to praise women in epitaphs; more importantly, the maidens lacked the defining characteristics of the female, that is, the sexual development that begins with marriage and culminates

473 Children are ›elevated‹ in a variety of ways on their monuments, e. g. mythological identifications, portraying them as older than their years (e. g. physically more developed, in adult roles) or by showing their portrait on the same level as adults, Mander 2013, 55–64.

474 For a similar take (i. e. showing the roots of virtue in general), Backe-Dahmen 2006, 116.

475 The *virtus* motifs were not viewed in a literal manner, e. g. there is no reason to assume that those buried in Roman Hunt Sarcophagi hunted during their lifetimes; for both children and adults, or males and females, it was primarily an allegory for their *virtus*, Backe-Dahmen 2006, 115. 117.

476 For discussion, Dimas 1998, 118–165.

477 ATA2; Birk 2013, 166 f. 179; Dimas 1998, 122–128.

478 OMP4; DIA1. 2. 4–7.

479 For the impact of substituting adults with children/cupids on sarcophagi, see Huskinson 1996, 108 f.

480 S. Dimas notes that tendency for »general values« (e. g. *virtus*, *eruditio*) to appear on children's sarcophagi, Dimas 1998, 206. See also Backe-Dahmen 2006, 115–118; Birk 2013, 162.

481 Dimas 1998, 206 f.; see also Backe-Dahmen 2006, 112.

482 K. Schade offers a similar explanation for a portrait of a girl as an athlete: since children were still »asexual« and not completely physically developed, there was more leeway to push the boundaries of gender on their monuments, Schade 2014, 342 f.

in motherhood. Precisely because they are without this experience, they can be seen as being more like the male [...].⁴⁸³

157 The main issue with this hypothesis is that women of all ages were honoured for *virtus* in their portraiture, with no notable differences in dress or action. Preadolescent girls and (married) women wore the same types of masculinizing outfits. Girls were invested with considerable freedom to act like they dress⁴⁸⁴. Women were admittedly a bit more restrained in their actions, but it was possible for women to take on extremely active roles as well⁴⁸⁵. As such, the precise stage in a female's life course played no substantial role in the suitability of these gender-transgressive role models. Rather, there was a greater degree of flexibility.

Fighting and Hunting Women?

158 It has been proposed that the portraits of women as mythical warrioresses and huntresses were viewed in an iconic manner. In other words, these found a referent in Roman society: women who actually fought and hunt. For instance, it has been argued that the portraits of women as Penthesilea were produced for a society in which fighting women were propagated in limited ways (e. g. in defense of their families or households), or at least tolerated in certain contexts (e. g. elite women in military costume, female gladiators) (Fig. 5. 6)⁴⁸⁶. Moreover, the portraits of women as Diana apparently expressed their passion for hunting (Fig. 9. 13. 14. 15)⁴⁸⁷.

159 There is, however, a notable issue with this hypothesis: the endorsement of fighting and hunting among contemporary women was rather limited. Musonius Rufus was seemingly unique in suggesting that his female contemporaries required courage to fight, at least defensively⁴⁸⁸. His proposition was certainly radical by Roman standards, but he made no attempt to facilitate it with concrete reforms to the upbringing and training of women⁴⁸⁹. The traditional division of roles was valid, despite the possibility for outliers (i. e. weaker men, stronger women)⁴⁹⁰. Moreover, he reverted to a passive meaning of courage once his recommendations to reform education came into focus: »And most of all the child who is trained properly [in philosophy], whether boy or girl, must be accustomed to endure hardship, not to fear death, not to be disheartened in the face of any misfortune; he must in short be accustomed to every situation which calls for courage [*andreia*].«⁴⁹¹

160 It is true that women were praised for their capacity to fight, especially in times of crisis, but the search tends to land on legendary cases, confined to the distant past⁴⁹². There is little evidence that women were praised by their male contemporaries in the same terms. »Turia« would initially seem to fit these criteria, since she defended her home from looters⁴⁹³, but the nature of her actions is not elucidated⁴⁹⁴. Ovid's wife was

483 D'Ambra 2008, 181; see also Mander 2013, 58.

484 e. g. DIA1. 2; ATA1.

485 e. g. DIA17; see also DIA12.

486 Fendt 2005, 91–93. Moreover, these monuments emerged precisely around the time that Septimius Severus banned the appearance of female gladiators in the arena; with the prohibition of a real identification with the Amazons, perhaps new possibilities to live out these wishes in the world of fantasy were sought out with the help of the sarcophagus imagery, Fendt 2005, 92.

487 Wrede 1981, 137.

488 Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947).

489 Nussbaum 2002, 288–293.

490 Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947); Nussbaum 2002, 288–293.

491 Stob. 2, 31, 123 = Musonius Rufus lecture 4 (Lutz 1947) (transl. in Lutz 1947, 49).

492 e. g. Paus. 10, 22, 5–6; Plut. mor. 245B–F; 248E–249B.

493 CIL VI 41062 col. 2 lin. 8–10; Fendt 2005, 91 n. 82.

494 She repels (*reicere*) the men from her home (CIL VI 41062 col. 2 lin. 11), which is seemingly employed as a military metaphor here; for discussion, Hemelrijk 2004, 189.

praised for repelling brigands from her household as well, but by beseeching the help of their powerful friends – there is no indication that she assisted in the confrontation directly⁴⁹⁵. Elite women dressing up in military costume were typically treated as monstrous aberrations and sexual deviants⁴⁹⁶. Moreover, female *gladiatores* and *venatores* were awe-inspiring at best – hence their appeal as a spectacle⁴⁹⁷ – but a threat to proper gender roles at worst⁴⁹⁸, which ultimately resulted in their ban from the arena⁴⁹⁹. There is also no indication that women were encouraged to hunt, even as an elite pastime⁵⁰⁰.

›Virtuous‹ Women

161 It is a basic semiotic principle that the relationship between the ›signifier‹ and the ›signified‹ is arbitrary. As maintained here, the portraits of both men and women as heroes, warriors, and hunters evoked their *virtus*⁵⁰¹. This agonal iconography at least had an indexical relationship to the original concept of *virtus*: indeed, men could exhibit their courage by performing physical feats, including subduing enemies and beasts. Whether praising men or women for their *virtus*, it was useful to employ instantly recognizable and continuously replicated visual codes.

162 For the portraits of women especially – as Herculean women, warrioresses, and huntresses – there was no need to take this agonal iconography at face value, since these monuments were produced for a society that discouraged women from arrogating ›manly‹ roles. It is important to keep in mind that the semantic range of *virtus* had greatly expanded: it no longer referred specifically to courage in a military context but to a whole range of corporeal and mental qualities. By the time women were commemorated in this way, it was natural for a major ›discrepancy‹ between the basic content of these images and their symbolic meanings to emerge.

163 The intention was to honour their strength and courage especially⁵⁰², but it is necessary to set this quality against its broader social background. Contemporary women were rarely praised for performing physical acts of courage. Instead, their fortitude was understood in terms of mastering their fears and stoically enduring every blow of fate, in the civic or domestic context. At the same time, it is conceivable that the intention was to honour their ›virtue‹ as a whole but potentially encompassing both traditional masculine and feminine qualities⁵⁰³.

164 As argued here, the portraits of women as Herculean women, warrioresses, and huntresses were deliberately set off from their male counterparts. The iconography was carefully formulated – i. e. the dress, as well as pose, activity, interactions, backdrop – in order to evoke a specifically ›female *virtus*‹, which corresponded well with the trends for ascribing this ›manly‹ quality to contemporary women.

165 The dress was sufficiently masculine to cast the women as ›honorary men‹, but through ›gender marking‹, still drew attention back to their female nature and with it their traditional social status and roles. The women were honoured for advancing to a higher state by transcending gender categories but without entirely renouncing their

495 Ov. trist. 1, 6, 15.

496 e. g. Cass. Dio 48, 10, 3; Iuv. 1, 58–62; Tac. hist. 1, 48; 3, 77; see also Cass. Dio 61, 33, 3; Tac. ann. 12, 56. Women in military camps were met with mixed reactions, see Debrunner-Hall 1996, 213–228.

497 e. g. Mart. de spectaculis 6; 6 b; Mann 2013, 64.

498 e. g. Iuv. 1, 22–23; Iuv. 6, 246–267; Tac. ann. 15, 32, 3; Mann 2013, 63.

499 Cass. Dio 76, 16, 1.

500 See Anderson 1985.

501 For discussion, see § 70–79.

502 Birk 2013, 137; Fendt 2005, 89; D'Ambra 2008, 181; Hansen 2007, 107 f.

503 Borg 2013, 181.

›natural‹, inferior position in the gender hierarchy; moreover, their potential to exhibit *virtus* was overtly bound up with their womanhood⁵⁰⁴.

166 There were hints that their *virtus* was directed towards their traditional roles as chaste daughters, loyal wives, and devoted mothers, which fit well into the social background in which this quality was promoted for women⁵⁰⁵. For girls especially, it was common to pair signs of innocence with fortitude, probably because their *virtus* was ideally directed towards the preservation of their chastity. For women especially, it was desirable for their dress and actions to exhibit similarities with their husbands: it expressed symmetry, at least in terms of their moral equality, but without completely abolishing the proper asymmetry between the sexes. The men were portrayed as the superior partners, with women in supportive roles.

167 It was possible to commemorate women for passive forms of *virtus*, such as exhibiting fortitude in the face of imminent death or the loss of a loved one. These modes of commemoration found no clear parallel for men⁵⁰⁶.

168 Their *virtus* was consistently balanced by traditional feminine qualities. The women were not just fearless and resilient individuals but also exhibited qualities like beauty, modesty, and good will towards their loved ones⁵⁰⁷.

169 Overall, these portrait types were certainly unconventional but managed to convey a specifically ›female *virtus*‹ for women in order to prevent calling traditional gender roles, relations, and hierarchies into question.

Conclusions

170 The portraits of women as goddesses and heroines in cross-gendered dress share a striking commonality: all of these women were honoured for their *virtus*⁵⁰⁸. Although this connection has been proposed by others⁵⁰⁹, a detailed consideration of this intriguing phenomenon, which systematically explores the interplay between the attributions of *virtus* to contemporary women in Roman society and the visual (dress) codes in their portraiture, has been lacking until this point.

171 The original significance of *virtus* was physical courage, especially in a military context, but its resemanticization allowed for its extension to the female sex⁵¹⁰. Women in the past were established as role models for *virtus*, even for taking up arms or leading armies. However, the attribution of *virtus* to contemporary women was fairly uncommon and set within fixed boundaries. It still referred to courage but primarily in terms of mental fortitude and endurance, in social contexts suitable for women. It could also refer to ›virtue‹ in general. Both meanings were relevant in the sepulchral setting. There were, moreover, rules for attributing *virtus* to contemporary women: they were treated like ›honorary men‹, but their *virtus* was ultimately bound up with traditional female roles and qualities.

172 In the portraiture under consideration, the primary means of conferring *virtus* on women was through their cross-gendered dress, with its connections to heroism, warfare, or the hunt⁵¹¹. The celebration of *virtus* was closely intertwined with masculine dress codes on commemorative monuments, regardless of the sex of the

504 For discussion, see § 80–104.

505 For discussion, see § 109–134.

506 For discussion, see § 135–138.

507 For discussion, see § 139–149.

508 For discussion, see § 70–79.

509 See n. 5.

510 For discussion, see § 48–69.

511 For discussion, see § 70–79.

honoured individual. As such, the ›paradox‹ of representing women in cross-gendered dress is probably attributable to the overriding desire to confer *virtus* on them. It is also essential to recognize the signifying power of the dress in its own right, irrespective of their precise deeds. By placing their cross-gendered dress in conjunction with other visual codes though, the *virtus* of these women was emphasized to varying degrees. In some cases, the evocation of *virtus* was prioritized; in other cases, the quality was relatively muted or pushed into the background. In rare cases, the evocation of *virtus* was even eliminated⁵¹².

173 In previous studies on certain portrait types, the fact that these monuments conferred *virtus* on females has received a variety of explanations. It has been proposed that children were endowed with *virtus* in order to cast them as ›little adults‹ worthy of social recognition⁵¹³, and that this ›manly‹ quality was extended to girls as well, due to their resistance to categories of mature sexuality and of gender⁵¹⁴. The monuments presented here do not support either of these hypotheses. Both preadolescent girls and (married) women were celebrated for their *virtus*, with no notable differences in either their dress or actions. Furthermore, it has been proposed that these portraits were produced for a society in which fighting and hunting were endorsed for the female sex in a limited manner, or at least tolerated⁵¹⁵. The evidence for this social background is insufficient.

174 It seems, rather, that the portraits of women as Herculean women, warrior-women, and huntresses – as a celebration of *virtus* – were purely symbolic⁵¹⁶. These mythical models stood for the fortitude of the female deceased, but in the sense that was endorsed for their sex: that is, mastering her fears and stoically enduring every blow of fate, for the sake of her honour, her loved ones, and her household. It could even stand for her ›virtue‹ in general. It initially seems paradoxical, but it was possible to set up (exaggerated) role models for ›female *virtus*‹ in Roman society, without demanding that women imitate them, or even wanting them to do so. As argued here, the dress of Herculean women, warrior-women, and huntresses had a gender-b(l)ending quality, which was valuable for expressing a specifically ›female *virtus*‹. Their dress was patterned after their male counterparts, which proved effective in casting these women as ›honorary men‹. On the other hand, the phenomenon of ›gender marking‹ still drew attention back to their female nature and with it their traditional social status and roles. As a result, these women were honoured for advancing to a higher state by transcending gender categories but without entirely renouncing their ›natural‹, inferior position in the gender hierarchy; moreover, their potential to exhibit *virtus* was overtly bound up with their womanhood. The gender-b(l)ending dress evoked ›female *virtus*‹ in its own right, but this was reinforced by other visual codes (i. e. pose, activity, interactions, backdrop). The women often behaved in a manner that fits well into the trends for ascribing *virtus* to contemporary women (e. g. exhibiting passive endurance, protecting their chastity, supporting their husbands). Moreover, their ›manly‹ qualities were carefully balanced by traditional feminine virtues.

512 In such cases though, the exchange of gendered dress is basically eliminated as well.

513 For discussion, see § 151–155.

514 For discussion, see § 156–157.

515 For discussion, see § 158–160.

516 For discussion, see § 161–169.

OMP1**Portrait of a Woman as Omphale (Statue)** – Fig. 1

Location: Vatican City State, Mus. Vat., Mus. Greg. Prof. inv. 4385

Date: beginning of the 3rd cent. A.D.

Provenience: unknown

Description: The portrait head of a woman is combined with Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite, with a lion skin over her head, knotted above the breasts, and drawn in front of the pudenda with the right hand, and holding a club in the crook of the left arm.

Literature: Kaschnitz-Weinberg 1936/1937, 295 f. cat. 727

OMP2**Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Hercules and Omphale (Relief)** – Fig. 2

Location: Naples (Italy), Mus. Arch. Naz. inv. 6683

Date: ca. A.D. 140

Provenience: Rome (Italy), Caelius mons, vineyards of the [Villa Casali](#)

Description: At the center is a portrait of a man (similar to the Chiaramonti Herakles) and a woman (similar to the Capuan Aphrodite) standing and looking at each other, with the woman putting her left hand on the right shoulder of the man. Beneath the woman is the label »Omphale«, a bow and a quiver. Beneath the man is the label »Hercules«, a wool basket and a spindle. Between these attributes is the dedicatory inscription (CIL VI *3473). In the frame are the Twelve Labours of Hercules.

Literature: Santolini Giordani 1989, 122 cat. 67

OMP3**Portrait of a Woman as an Unidentified Female (Omphale?) with Hercules (Relief)** – Fig. 3

Location: Venice (Italy), Mus. Arch. Naz. inv. 123

Date: Trajanic Period

Provenience: unknown

Description: The portrait head of a woman is combined with Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite (but clothed in a *chiton* slipping off the shoulder). She and Hercules embrace. Between them is a cupid looking at and touching the woman.

Literature: Sperti 1988, 126–128 cat. 39

OMP4**Child Omphale (Statue)** – Fig. 4

Location: Copenhagen (Denmark), Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek inv. 2600

Date: middle of the 1st cent. A.D. (or shortly thereafter)

Provenience: unknown

Description: The young, female figure turns her head sharply to the left and advances her left foot. She is dressed in a high-girt *peplos* slipping off the right shoulder. She wears a lion skin over her head and knotted at her chest. She probably holds a club on the ground with her right hand. The position of the left arm is uncertain.

Literature: Moltesen 2005, 214 f. cat. 101

PEN1**Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (Roman Sarcophagus)** – Fig. 5

Location: Rome (Italy), Palazzo Borghese, Courtyard

Date: early 3rd cent. A.D.

Provenience: unknown

Description: Amazonomachy (framed by two Amazons). The central focus is on a portrait of a man as Achilles supporting a woman as Penthesilea, modeled after the Pasquino Group. The portrait head of the man (unfinished) is placed on the Greek warrior (nude, Corinthian helmet, *chlamys*, spear). The portrait head of the woman (unfinished) is placed on the dying Amazon (short *chiton* slipping off the left shoulder, axe, *pelta*).

Literature: Grassinger 1999b, 247 cat. 119

PEN2**Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (Roman Sarcophagus)**

Location: Vatican City State, Mus. Vat., Cortile del Belvedere inv. 900

Date: A.D. 220–230

Provenience: unknown

Description: Like PEN1. The portrait head of the man is placed on Achilles (nude, Corinthian helmet, *chlamys*, round shield). The portrait head of the woman is placed on Penthesilea (short *chiton* exposing left breast, *chlamys*, perhaps an axe and/or *pelta*).

Literature: Grassinger 1999b, 250 cat. 125

PEN3**Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (Roman Sarcophagus)** – Fig. 6

Location: Vatican City State, Mus. Vat., Cortile del Belvedere inv. 933

Date: A.D. 230–240

Provenience: unknown

Description: Front side: Like PEN1. The portrait head of the man is placed on Achilles (nude, Corinthian helmet, *chlamys*, round shield). The portrait head of the woman is placed on Penthesilea (short *chiton* exposing left breast, *chlamys*, fur boots, *pelta*). – Left side: An Amazon stands with the right leg advanced and places her right hand on the head of someone kneeling, who touches her right leg with the left hand. To the left is an Amazon behind a wall. – Right side: An Amazon holds the reins of a rearing horse.

Literature: Grassinger 1999b, 250 f. cat. 127

PEN4

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (Roman Sarcophagus)

Location: Rome (Italy), Palazzo Rospigliosi, Casino Pallavicini

Date: A.D. 240–250

Provenience: unknown

Description: Like PEN1. The portrait head of the man (unfinished) is placed on Achilles (nude, perhaps a helmet, *chlamys*, baldric, round shield). The portrait head of the woman (unfinished) is placed on Penthesilea (short *chiton* exposing left breast, *chlamys*, fur boots).

Literature: Grassinger 1999b, 251 f. cat. 130

PEN5

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (Roman Sarcophagus)

Location: Rome (Italy), Antiquarium Comunale inv. 34095

Date: A.D. 250–260

Provenience: unknown

Description: Like PEN1. The portrait head of the man is placed on Achilles (nude, *chlamys*, spear, round shield). The portrait head of the woman is placed on Penthesilea (short *chiton*, *chlamys*, perhaps fur boots, perhaps an axe and/or *pelta*).

Literature: Grassinger 1999b, 252 cat. 131

PEN6

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (Campanian Sarcophagus)

Location: Benevento (Italy), Mus. del Sannio inv. 610

Date: A.D. 230–240

Provenience: unknown

Description: Similar to PEN1. The portrait head of the man is placed on Achilles (nude, Corinthian helmet,

chlamys, spear, round shield). The portrait head of the woman is placed on Penthesilea (short *chiton*, *chlamys*, fur boots, perhaps an axe and/or *pelta*).

Literature: Grassinger 1999b, 254 f. cat. 137

PEN7

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (Campanian Sarcophagus)

Location: Avellino (Italy), Convento di Montevergine

Date: A.D. 230–240

Provenience: unknown

Description: Like PEN1. The portrait head of the man is placed on Achilles (nude, Corinthian helmet, *chlamys*, baldric, spear, round shield). The portrait head of the woman is placed on Penthesilea (short *chiton* exposing right breast, *chlamys*, perhaps fur boots, *pelta*, perhaps axe).

Literature: Grassinger 1999b, 255 cat. 138

PEN8

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (Campanian Sarcophagus)

Location: Sorrento (Italy), Curia Archivescovile

Date: middle of the 3rd cent. A.D.

Provenience: unknown

Description: Like PEN1 but with a notable deviation: Achilles holds his right arm to the side and bent downwards, rather than using it to support Penthesilea. The portrait head of the man (unfinished) is placed on Achilles (nude, Corinthian helmet, *chlamys*, boots, baldric). The portrait head of the woman (unfinished) is placed on Penthesilea (short *chiton* exposing right breast, *chlamys*, fur boots, *pelta*).

Literature: Grassinger 1999b, 255 cat. 140

PEN9

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Achilles and Penthesilea (Campanian Sarcophagus)

Location: Sorrento (Italy), Curia Archivescovile

Date: middle of the 3rd cent. A.D.

Provenience: unknown

Description: Like PEN1. The portrait head of the man (unfinished) is placed on Achilles (Corinthian helmet, anatomical cuirass over a short *tunica*, *paludamentum*, boots, spear, round shield). The portrait head of the woman (unfinished) is placed on Penthesilea (short *chiton* exposing right breast, *chlamys*, fur boots, axe, *pelta*).

Literature: Grassinger 1999b, 255 f. cat. 141

VIR1

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as a Military Commander/Lion Hunter and Virtus (Roman Sarcophagus) – Fig. 17

Location: Reims (France), Mus. Saint-Remi inv. 932, 14

Date: middle of the 60s of the 3rd cent. A.D. (but the portrait heads of the military general and lion hunter date to ca. A.D. 320, whereas the date of the portrait head of Virtus is uncertain)

Provenience: unknown

Description: Front side: The relief is divided into two scenes. To the far left is a portrait of a man as a military general in a *profectio* scene, wearing contemporary military dress (scale cuirass with *pteryges* over a short *tunica*, *paludamentum*, knee-length *braccae*, fur boots). He probably holds a sword at his side with both hands. He is accompanied by male attendants, one of which presents him with a Neo-Attic helmet. Moreover, a cupid-like figure presents him with a Corinthian helmet. The remainder of the relief features the lion hunt. At the centre of the casket is a portrait of the same man as a lion hunter on horseback, holding up a spear in his right hand. He wears contemporary hunting dress (long-sleeved short *tunica*, *paludamentum*, knee-length *braccae*, presumably boots). Behind him stands a woman portrayed as Virtus, observing the lion hunter. She wears an Attic helmet, a short *chiton* (exposing right breast), a *chlamys*, knee-length *braccae* and fur boots. She is armed with a spear, a sword and a round shield. Male assistants participate in the hunt as well. – Left side: A male attendant offers a neo-Attic helmet to a military general as on the front side of the sarcophagus. – Right side: Two more hunting companions.

Literature: Andreae 1980, 157 f. cat. 75

VIR2

Portrait of a Woman as Virtus (and One or Two Men as Lion Hunters) (Roman Sarcophagus) – Fig. 18

Location: Rome (Italy), Catacombe di Pretestato, Mus.

Date: late Gallienic or Aurelian Period

Provenience: Rome (Italy), Catacombe di Pretestato

Description: Front side: Lion hunt, framed by the Dioscuri. At the centre of the relief is a lion hunter (possibly a portrait of a man) on horseback, holding up a spear in his right hand (perhaps wearing contemporary hunting dress). Directly behind him is another hunter (possibly a portrait of a man) striding forward and hurling a stone with his right hand. He is shown in heroic costume (nude, *chlamys*, baldric, perhaps a sword). Standing behind him is a portrait of a woman as Virtus. She touches the right hip of the hunter on foot with her right hand but faces in the opposite direction. She wears an Attic helmet, a short *chiton* (exposing right breast), a *chlamys*, a baldric, and fur

boots. She holds a double-spear in her left hand. Male assistants participate in the hunt as well. – Left side: Two more hunting assistants. – Right side: Two more hunting assistants.

Literature: Andreae 1980, 160 cat. 86

VIR3

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as a Lion Hunter and Virtus (Roman Sarcophagus) – Fig. 19

Location: Rome (Italy), Mus. Cap., Palazzo Nuovo inv. 221

Date: middle of the 3rd cent. A.D.

Provenience: Rome (Italy), Via Appia, near the vineyards of the Moroni

Description: Lion hunt, framed by two lion's heads. At the centre is a portrait of a man as a lion hunter on horseback, holding up a spear. He is depicted in contemporary military dress (scale cuirass with *pteryges* over a short *tunica*, ›surcoat‹, *paludamentum*, fur boots, sword on a baldric). Behind him stands a woman portrayed as Virtus (unfinished), observing the hunt. She wears an Attic helmet, a short *chiton* (exposing right breast), a *chlamys*, fur boots and a sword (on a baldric). Male assistants participate in the hunt as well.

Literature: Andreae 1980, 162 f. cat. 104

VIR4

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as a Lion Hunter and Virtus (Roman Sarcophagus)

Location: Vienna (Austria), KHM Wien, Coll. of Greek and Roman Antiquities inv. 1113

Date: A.D. 275–300

Provenience: unknown

Description: Front Side: Lion hunt framed by a lion attacking a boar (to the left) and a lion attacking a steinbock (to the right). At the centre is a portrait of a man as a lion hunter (unfinished) on horseback, holding up a spear. He wears contemporary hunting dress (long-sleeved short *tunica*, *paludamentum*, knee-high *braccae*, boots). Behind him stands a woman portrayed as Virtus (unfinished), throwing her right hand in the air. She wears an Attic helmet, a short *chiton* (exposing right breast), a *chlamys*, fur boots, and a sword. Male assistants participate in the hunt as well.

Literature: Andreae 1980, 184 f. cat. 247

DIA1

Portrait of a Girl (Aelia Procula) as Diana (Funerary Altar) – Fig. 7

Location: Paris (France), Louvre inv. Ma 1633

Date: ca. A.D. 140

Provenience: Rome (Italy), Via Appia, near San Sebastiano

Description: The front side features a portrait of a girl as Diana in an aedicula (in the upper-middle section). The portrait head of the girl is combined with the Versailles-Leptis Magna Artemis (but facing the viewer and with the right breast exposed). The dedicatory inscription (CIL VI 10958) fills the rest of the surface.

Literature: Wrede 1981, 226 cat. 91

DIA2

Portrait of a Girl (Aelia Tyche) as Diana (Funerary Altar)

Location: Nemi (Italy), Mus. delle Navi Romane

Date: A.D. 140–150

Provenience: Rome (Italy), Via Latina, Columbarium of the Freedmen of the Gens Allidia

Description: The front side has a portrait of a girl (Aelia Tyche) as Diana. The portrait head of the girl is combined with the Versailles-Leptis Magna Artemis (but facing the viewer and with the right breast exposed). The dedicatory inscription (CIL VI 6826) is on the base.

Literature: Granino Cecere 2001

DIA3

Portrait of a Woman (Cornelia Tyche) with the Attributes of Fortuna and a Girl (Iulia Secunda) with the Attributes of Diana (Funerary Altar) – Fig. 11

Location: Paris (France), Louvre inv. Ma 1331

Date: A.D. 160–170

Provenience: Rome (Italy), Campo Marzio

Description: Front side: Crowned by a curved pediment with rosettes at each end, filled with attributes: in the middle is the text »DM« with a *bisellium* (double-throne); to the left are a quiver and a bow; to the right are a cornucopia, a torch, a rudder on a globe and a wheel. In the architrave is an inscription (CIL VI 20674) indicating that the altar is dedicated to the daughter Iulia Secunda (left) and to the wife Cornelia Tyche (right). Beneath the entablature is an aedicula flanked by Corinthian columns, which contains the portrait busts of the girl (left) and the woman (right), both executed in high-relief and terminating in an acanthus calyx. Each wears a *tunica* and a *palla*. Beneath each portrait bust is an inscription (CIL VI 20674) extolling the virtues of the deceased. – Right side: An epigram about their tragic death at sea, as well as an image of a deer.

Literature: Wrede 1981, 227 cat. 93

DIA4

Portrait of a Girl as Diana (Statue) – Fig. 8

Location: Rome (Italy), Mus. Naz. Romano, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme inv. 108518

Date: Flavian Period

Provenience: Ostia Antica (Italy), in a limekiln in the Terme di Cisiari

Description: The portrait head of a girl is combined with a statue of Diana, copying a late Classical or early Hellenistic original.

Literature: Wrede 1981, 223 cat. 83

DIA5

Portrait of a Girl as Diana (Statue)

Location: Rome (Italy), Mus. Naz. Romano, Mus. delle Terme inv. 749

Date: late 1st cent. A.D.

Provenience: unknown

Description: The portrait head of a girl is combined with the Louvre-Ephesos Artemis (with *nebris*).

Literature: E. Paribeni in: Giuliano 1981, 328 f.

DIA6

Portrait of a Girl as Diana (Statue)

Location: Fondi (Italy), Comune di Fondi, Storage

Date: Trajanic Period

Provenience: Fondi (Italy), Via del Cardinale

Description: The portrait head of the girl is combined with the Versailles-Leptis Magna Artemis (but facing forward).

Literature: Wrede 1981, 223 cat. 84

DIA7

Portrait of a Girl as Diana (Bust)

Location: Rome (Italy), Coll. Torlonia inv. 103

Date: A.D. 130–140

Provenience: Rome (Italy), zona urbanistica di Centocelle

Description: The girl portrayed as Diana wears a *chiton* with a *himation* as well as a quiver (on a baldric). The bust terminates in an acanthus calyx.

Literature: Wrede 1981, 224 cat. 86

DIA8

Portrait of a Woman as Diana (Funerary Altar)*

Location: Paris (France), Louvre inv. Ma 2195

Date: A.D. 80–100

Provenience: unknown

Description: Front side: Portrait of a woman as Diana. The portrait head is placed on Diana (no particular statuary type). She stands and faces forward. She wears a short *chiton*, a quiver (on a baldric) and fur boots. She reaches for the quiver on her right shoulder and holds up the bow in the left hand. She is flanked by a dog (left) and a deer (right), which is characteristic of Artemis as Potnia Theron. – Right side: Sacrificial jug. – Left side: Rosette-shaped offering bowl.

Literature: Wrede 1981, 225 f. cat. 90

* Note that the authenticity of this object has been called into question by the staff of the museum; it has therefore not been discussed in detail here or used to draw broader conclusions on the material.

DIA9

Portrait of a Woman as Diana (Statue)

Location: Rome (Italy), Coll. Torlonia inv. 6

Date: A.D. 130–150

Provenience: Rome (Italy), [Villa dei Quintili](#)

Description: The portrait head of the woman is placed on a statue of Diana (the exact statuary type is unclear). She wears a short *chiton* and a quiver (on a baldric).

Literature: Wrede 1981, 224 cat. 85

DIA10

Portrait of a Woman as Diana (Statue)

Location: Munich (Germany), Residenzmus., Antiquarium inv. Res. Mün. P I 36

Date: middle of the 2nd cent. A.D. (or shortly thereafter)

Provenience: unknown

Description: The portrait head of the (young) woman is placed on a statue of Diana (the statuary type is not clear, but she reached for her quiver with her right hand). She wears a short *chiton* and a quiver (on a baldric).

Literature: Weski – Frosien-Leinz 1987, 164 f. cat. 42

DIA11

Portrait of a (Young) Woman as Diana (Statue) – Fig. 9

Location: Paris (France), Louvre inv. Ma 247

Date: A.D. 150–170

Provenience: [Cumae](#) (Italy)

Description: The portrait head of the woman is combined with the Seville-Palatine (Laphria) Artemis (Vatican-Paris Subgroup).

Literature: Wrede 1981, 225 cat. 88

DIA12

Portrait of a Woman as Diana (Statue)

Location: Athens (Greece), Nat. Arch. Mus. inv. 4019

Date: A.D. 150–175

Provenience: Pentalophos, Aetolia (Greece)

Description: The portrait head of the woman is combined with the Colonna Artemis.

Literature: Kaltsas 2002, 250 cat. 519

DIA13

Diana and Iphigenia (Statue Group) – Fig. 10

Location: Rome (Italy), Mus. Cap., Centrale Montemartini inv. 9778

Date: middle of the 2nd cent. A.D.

Provenience: Rome (Italy), sanctuary of Jupiter Dolichenus on the [Aventine](#)

Description: The statue group shows Diana (possibly a portrait of a woman) swooping in and saving Iphigenia from being sacrificed by exchanging her with a cervid. Diana wears a short *peplos*, a billowing *himation* and fur boots. She holds the cervid by the horns with the right hand and a torch in the left hand. Iphigenia cowers at her feet in an attitude of supplication.

Literature: Wrede 1981, 224 cat. 86

DIA14

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Hippolytus and Diana (Roman Sarcophagus)

Location: lost (last located in Rome [Italy], Mus. Naz. Romano, Mus. delle Terme inv. 1044)

Date: first few decades of the 3rd cent. A.D.

Provenience: [Tiber](#) River

Description: Portrait of a man and a woman standing and looking at each other (perhaps in front of a curtain), with the woman putting her left hand on his right shoulder. The man is dressed like Hippolytus (nude, *chlamys*, spear). The woman is dressed like Diana (short *chiton*, rolled-up *himation*, fur boots, bow, quiver on a baldric). In the background are the preparations for the hunt.

Literature: Robert 1904, 218 f. cat. 1791

DIA15

Portrait of a Man as a Boar Hunter and a Woman as an Artemisian Huntress (Roman Sarcophagus) – Fig. 13

Location: Rome (Italy), Palazzo Lepri-Gallo, Courtyard

Date: A.D. 220–230

Provenience: unknown

Description: Casket: Front side: The relief is divided into two scenes. To the left is a portrait of a man and a woman standing and facing each other, with the woman putting her left hand on the right shoulder of the man. The man is dressed as a *venator* (matador) in the Roman arena. The woman is dressed as a huntress (short *chiton*, rolled-up *himation*, fur boots, quiver, spear). On the ground is a dead boar. To the right is the boar hunt. At the centre of the relief is a portrait of the same man pursuing the boar on horseback with a raised spear, accompanied by *Virtus*. He is depicted in heroic costume (nude, *chlamys*, spear). Male assistants participate in the hunt. – Left side: A bull charges towards a straw hut. – Right side: A stag flees from a dog. – Lid: Portrait of a man and a woman reclining on a *kline*. The man is nude but for the *pallium*. The woman wears a *tunica calasis* slipping off the left shoulder, as well as a *palla*.

Literature: Andreae 1980, 171 cat. 164

DIA16

Portrait of a Man as a Lion Hunter and a Woman as an Artemisian Huntress (Roman Sarcophagus) – Fig. 14

Location: Barcelona (Spain), Mus. de Arqueologia de Catalunya inv. 870

Date: ca. A.D. 230

Provenience: unknown

Description: Front side: The relief is divided into two scenes. To the left is a portrait of a man and a woman standing and facing each other (in front of a curtain), with the woman putting her left hand on the right shoulder of the man. The man wears contemporary hunting dress (long-sleeved *tunica*, *sagum*, fur boots, spear). The woman is dressed as a huntress (short *chiton*, rolled-up *himation*, fur boots, a spear). Behind her is a cupid, perhaps holding her bow and quiver. To the right is the lion hunt. At the centre of the relief is a portrait of the same man pursuing a lion on horseback with a raised spear, followed by *Virtus*. He is depicted in the same contemporary hunting dress but with knee-length *braccae* and a sword (on a baldric) as well. Male assistants participate in the hunt. – Left side: A hunter adores a statue of *Diana* on a column. – Right side: The return from the hunt, with two assistants transporting a deer on a donkey.

Literature: Andreae 1980, 144 f. cat. 8

DIA17

Portraits of a Man (C. Flavius Hostilius Sertorianus) as a Boar Hunter and a Woman (Domitia Severa) as an Artemisian Huntress (Northern Italian Sarcophagus) – Fig. 15

Location: Belluno (Italy), Mus. Civici, Mus. Arch. inv. MBCL16445

Date: ca. A.D. 230

Provenience: Belluno (Italy), foundations of the choir of [San Stefano](#)

Description: Front side: At the centre is the dedicatory inscription (CIL V 2044) in an octagonal frame, flanked by *aediculae* with portraits of C. Flavius Hostilius Sertorianus (*togatus*) and Domitia Severa (*palliata*). – Right side: A hunter (surely a portrait of the same man) pursuing a boar on horseback with a raised spear. He wears contemporary hunting dress (short *tunica*, *sagum*, spear). – Back side: The return from the boar hunt, with the main hunter at the centre (surely a portrait of the same man) on horseback and in contemporary hunting dress. – Left side: The portrait head of Domitia Severa is placed on a statuary type of *Artemis* subduing a deer (unarmed and attacking the deer with her bare hands).

Literature: Rodenwaldt 1937

ATA1

Portrait of a Man and a Woman as Meleager and Atalante (Roman Sarcophagus) – Fig. 12

Location: Wiltshire (England), Wilton House, Inner Courtyard inv. 1963,25

Date: middle of the 3rd cent. A.D.

Provenience: Rome (Italy), Via Appia, Columbarium of the Freedmen of Livia

Description: Front side: The relief is divided into five sections. The middle section features a sacrifice scene. In the foreground is a portrait of a man as *Meleager* (unfinished), standing and making an offering with a *patra* over a small, circular altar. He is nude but for the *chlamys* and spear. Behind him stands a woman portrayed as *Atalante* (unfinished), resting her right hand on his right upper arm, and her left hand on his left shoulder. She wears a short *chiton* and a quiver (on a baldric). On the ground is the dead boar. To their left is a hunting companion. The middle section is flanked by sections with strigillated designs. The sections at each end feature *Castor* and *Pollux* respectively, standing and holding swords and spears. – Left and right sides: Two overlapping six-sided shields with volute-like ornaments diagonally crossed at the centre. Behind them are two crossed spears and a vertical axe.

Literature: Koch 1975, 131 f. cat. 147

ATA2

Portrait of a Boy as a Boar Hunter and a Girl as an Atalantian Huntress (Roman Sarcophagus) – Fig. 16

Location: Basel (Switzerland), Antikenmus. Basel und Sammlung Ludwig inv. Lu 257

Date: A.D. 275–300

Provenience: unknown

Description: Front side: A boar hunt performed by children. Left of the centre is a portrait of a boy as a boar hunter on horseback, holding up a spear in his right hand. He wears contemporary hunting dress (long-sleeved short *tunica*, *paludamentum*, knee-high *braccae*, boots). Right of the centre is a portrait of a girl as a huntress (unfinished) on foot, looking back at the hunter on horseback and pointing towards the boar. She wears a short *chiton* (exposing left breast), fur boots and holds a club. She also has butterfly wings. Other children participate in the hunt. – Left side: Another child strides towards the hunt. – Right side: A bearded hunter stands in front of a stag pursued by a dog as well as a fleeing hare.

Literature: Koch 1975, 106 cat. 72

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