



**SELF-PRESENTATION IN THE PTOLEMAIC–EARLY ROMAN PERIOD:  
LOOKING AT NON-ROYAL PORTRAITURE**

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**ABSTRACT**

In the Ptolemaic–Early Roman Period, the Egyptian elite still managed to play an important ideological role and to keep itself culturally relevant by being represented in texts and images. They continued to be depicted in statues produced according to the traditional Egyptian style, but they also decided to be represented through portraits characterized by realistic facial features.

In the past decades, only few scholars have focused their research on non-royal Ptolemaic–Early Roman portraiture. They usually explained this phenomenon as the development of local Egyptian traditions and excluded any foreign influence on the rendering of realistic facial features. The results of research on Ptolemaic–Early Roman private portraits highlight instead a multifaceted and composite phenomenon.

The aim of this article is to present the results of the research on Ptolemaic–Early Roman private portraiture thanks to a specific case study, that is, the statue of Hor son of Tutu (Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum, Inv. no. 2271).

**KEYWORDS**

Ptolemaic sculpture, non-royal portraiture, Ptolemaic elite, art history.

In Egyptian history, the Ptolemaic Period is a time rich in innovations and marked by the interaction between heterogeneous traditions. The coexistence and, at times, the fusion of elements belonging to different cultures is clearly visible in many aspects of the political, social, and cultural life of the period, but this phenomenon of cultural mixing is yet to be thoroughly examined. As a matter of fact, in recent years, scholars have paid growing attention to the economic and bureaucratic structures<sup>1</sup> of the Lagid State, while the heterogeneous cultural and artistic creativity of the period has been overlooked.<sup>2</sup> My doctoral research at the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, was aimed at partially bridging this gap through the detailed analysis of an important and

meaningful artistic manifestation, which developed in Egypt at the end of the Ptolemaic/beginning of the Roman Period: private portrait sculpture.<sup>3</sup>

Starting from the 1980s, sculptures portraying members of the Ptolemaic royal family have been the subject of detailed analysis by various scholars.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, the iconographic and stylistic choices adopted by the local elite in their statues have yet to be analyzed systematically. To date, the catalogue of the exhibition *Egyptian Sculpture of the Late Period, 700 B.C. to A.D. 100*, curated by Bernard V. Bothmer in 1960 for the Brooklyn Museum, remains the most thorough and valuable study of private Ptolemaic sculptures, sixty-three years after its publication.<sup>5</sup> The volume, however, does not focus

solely on private Ptolemaic sculptures, but covers a wider chronological range and also includes royal sculptures. By the author's own admission, the catalogue was not intended as an art historical study aimed at tracing the chronological development of Late Period art;<sup>6</sup> it is rather a detailed analysis of the exhibits, presented in chronological order. A monograph dedicated to the statues commissioned by private individuals in this period is still lacking, although it represents the indispensable premise to the iconographic and textual investigation of self-presentation by the Egyptian elite in the Ptolemaic Period.<sup>7</sup> The Egyptian elite, although removed from its dominant position in the administration, still managed to play an important ideological role and to keep itself culturally relevant by maintaining ancient traditions and by being represented in texts and images,<sup>8</sup> despite interacting with, and on occasion conforming to, the culture of the new rulers. Did they reject or embrace the new style<sup>9</sup> that was beginning to emerge so prominently from the statuary of the Macedonian rulers? Only the detailed analysis of the complete corpus of Ptolemaic private sculpture can answer this question.

In recent years, following the scientific community's growing interest in Ptolemaic Egypt, specific groups of Ptolemaic sculptures, categorized geographically or typologically, have been systematically and thoroughly investigated. For example, Sabine Albersmeier has focused her attention on female Ptolemaic sculptures,<sup>10</sup> and Olivier Perdu has studied the private sculptures created between 1069 BCE and 395 CE and now held in the Louvre Museum.<sup>11</sup> Barbara Mendoza has described the main attributes of bronze statues, mostly votive, portraying priests,<sup>12</sup> Emma Libonati has studied the large-scale sculptures found in Aboukir Bay,<sup>13</sup> Sanda Heinz has looked at small-scale votive sculptures from Thonis-Heracleion,<sup>14</sup> and Alexandra Warda has re-examined the striding draped male figures which had previously been investigated by Robert Bianchi.<sup>15</sup>

Notably absent from this brief excursus is a study solely dedicated to the significant group of the so-called private portraits<sup>16</sup> or realistic statues.<sup>17</sup>

However rare, a few studies do exist which are devoted to male private sculptures of the Ptolemaic Period characterized by the presence of realistic facial features. The first work on the subject dates to 1950 and was written by Heinrich Drerup.<sup>18</sup> Drerup concentrated his efforts on portraits that

once belonged to statues with a back pillar and his analysis focused only on the stylistic evaluation of the heads. The aim of his work was not to create a complete corpus of Ptolemaic portraits, but to achieve a classification on stylistic grounds covering the most representative types. From the onset, Drerup is aware of the precarious nature of the results achieved, and he does not try to trace the development of the portraits through time. He believed that portraiture was not a phenomenon with a linear evolution but was instead the outcome of the superimposition of foreign elements that simply overlapped with the local tradition without merging. Therefore, he never speaks of a "development" and does not place the sculptures in a continuous series, arranging them in groups instead.

The scholar who has had the greater influence on the study of Ptolemaic portraiture is undoubtedly Bernard V. Bothmer.<sup>19</sup> Although he never wrote a monograph solely dedicated to the analysis of private portraits produced in Egypt in the Ptolemaic Period, the development of his thoughts on the subject can be traced through his published work and through two unpublished documents entirely dedicated to private Ptolemaic portraiture now housed at the University of Milan.<sup>20</sup>

Bothmer produced at least five papers on private Ptolemaic portraiture: *The Signs of Age* (1951);<sup>21</sup> *Roman Republican and Late Egyptian Portraiture* (1953);<sup>22</sup> *'Alexandrian' Portraits of the First Century BC* (1959, unpublished);<sup>23</sup> *The Egyptian Origin of Veristic Portraiture* (1966, unpublished);<sup>24</sup> and *Egyptian Antecedents of the Roman Republican Verism* (1988).<sup>25</sup>

The analysis of Bothmer's published and unpublished documents reveals a complex picture and a theory that did not evolve in a straightforward manner, reflecting the complexity of the subject. The main themes under study remained unchanged for more than thirty years: namely, the origin and development of Egyptian realism and its relationship with the portraits of Late Roman Republic. Except for his 1959 unpublished lecture at the Sixty-First General Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America, held in New York,<sup>26</sup> in all his papers the scholar traces the origin of Ptolemaic portraiture back to the portraits of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. However, the 1959 paper should be considered Bothmer's most original and methodologically significant contribution on the subject.<sup>27</sup> Reading between the lines, it is clear that Bothmer

acknowledges the limitations that Egyptologists face when dealing with these sculptures and advocates that they should be studied by classically trained archaeologists. Possibly the strength and novelty of these ideas persuaded the scholar never to publish the paper; instead he seems to focus on his own methodology, trying to improve his own keen sense of observation. Bothmer never again supported the idea that somebody else should study the Ptolemaic portraits, deciding instead to overcome his own limitations and to acquire the methodologies used by classical archaeologists, as his students and colleagues still testify.<sup>28</sup>

The other major point of interest in Bothmer's thinking is the analysis of the relationship between Ptolemaic portraiture and the portraits created in Rome during the Late Republic. He already advocates a connection between the two in 1951,<sup>29</sup> however, in the early 1950s this idea is not substantiated, and it is completely omitted in the 1959 speech.<sup>30</sup> It is possible to speculate that he, in reality, principally devoted himself to the analysis of the relationship between Ptolemaic and Roman portraiture in the 1960s, after the exhibition on Late Period sculpture curated by him at the Brooklyn Museum, and that this process culminated with the lecture *The Egyptian Origin of Veristic Portraiture* delivered at the Fifty-fourth Annual Meeting of the College Art Association of America in 1966,<sup>31</sup> which is completely dedicated to this topic.<sup>32</sup> In this paper, Bothmer's convictions are devoid of doubts and the Egyptian origin of Roman portraits is supported, in dispute with Gisela Richter, without openings or alternatives.<sup>33</sup> The same ideas are revisited in his last article on portraiture<sup>34</sup> but they are expressed in a less rigid way. At the end of his career, Bothmer still supported an Egyptian origin, or at least an influence, on Roman portraiture, but he was forced to admit that "to be sure, a realistic Roman portrait of the first century BCE is Roman, not Egyptian, and many elements have come together to render it Roman to such a degree that it cannot be taken for a late Hellenistic likeness."<sup>35</sup>

Bothmer's career-long interest in private Ptolemaic portraiture did not lead to the publication of a detailed and systematic piece of work focused on all sculptures characterized by realistic facial features. This gap is clearly and ironically highlighted in 1970 by the historian of classical art Achille Adriani, in his renowned article *Ritratti dell'Egitto Greco-Romano*.<sup>36</sup>

In his article, Adriani collates and analyzes, through what he called seven key-notes, a group of portraits, not all published and known to the wider public, which he explicitly considered the result of the transposition of classical art to Egypt.<sup>37</sup> The scholar, starting from the analysis of a marble statue with back pillar in a private German collection,<sup>38</sup> tries to compare statues which he defines as Greco-Egyptian with some Roman sculptures and to offer dating remarks. Adriani does not shy away from the difficulties encountered in dating some of the statues, but always tries to pinpoint the individual characteristics of each portrait, such as the Egyptian component or influence, the Hellenistic flavor, the transposition into classical forms of hard stone Greco-Egyptian heads, Greco-Egyptian eclecticism, the Hellenistic sculptural style characterized by the presence of Egyptian ideas and formulae, or the union of Egyptian elements with Hellenistic and Roman traits.

In the seventh and last key-note, the Neapolitan scholar presents the conclusions of his investigation. He considers the portraits under examination, both the Roman ones and the ones he calls Greco-Egyptian, as examples of Greco-Roman art in Egypt, the obvious result of the influence of Greek art during the transitional period between the Ptolemaic and the Roman Period. According to Adriani, the contact with Greek art creates in Egypt on the one hand sculptures conforming to the Hellenic tradition, and on the other sculptures characterized by a Greco-Egyptian eclecticism that does not always result in hybrid and inferior artefacts.<sup>39</sup> The stylistic and qualitative heterogeneity of the sculptures discussed by Adriani and the very small number of statues that could be closely dated, force him to admit the many difficulties faced when creating typologies and seriations, and the impossibility to reconstruct a reliable evolutionary sequence.

Adriani, aware of the differences of opinion on the relationship between Egyptian and Republican Roman portraiture, and also of the contemporary academic debate on the origin of Roman portraiture, supports the idea of an Egyptian influence on Roman portraits, confirmed by unspecified "reliable evidence."<sup>40</sup> However, he explicitly says that he does not consider Late Republican Roman portraiture as a product solely derived from Egyptian-Alexandrian culture, but admits the presence of traditional Italiote influences, of Hellenistic traits, and also possibly Greco-Alexandrian and Greco-Egyptian

influences. Adriani excludes the possibility that Republican Roman portraiture influenced Egyptian portraiture of the Ptolemaic Period, which he considers strongly rooted in local traditions.

The most recent work on Ptolemaic portraiture dates to 1999 and was written by the German Egyptologist Werner Kaiser.<sup>41</sup> In his article, the scholar investigates the portraits produced in the Greek and Roman Period, which he considers a single chronological entity, and for this reason he also discusses sculptures that are clearly much later in date than the beginning of the Roman conquest. Kaiser places the bulk of the portraits under study between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd century BCE and in the 1st century BCE, the periods which, according to him, saw a peak in production.

Like Bothmer before him, Kaiser presents the main stages of the evolution of Egyptian portraiture, recognizing the presence of realistic currents from the Fourth Dynasty onward and throughout Egyptian history, even if there were breaks in continuity. His analysis centers only on the later phase of realistic production, that is, on Greco-Roman sculptures characterized by detailed facial features, and he is acutely aware of the difficulties in dating the material. Following the work of Bernard V. Bothmer and Herman De Meulenaere,<sup>42</sup> Kaiser tries to pinpoint some reliable chronological markers, which could overcome the limitation of the stylistic and epigraphical criteria. To reach his aim, he further narrows the field of investigation and focuses his attention mainly on draped figures,<sup>43</sup> describing them and trying to date them precisely. Among the portraits analyzed by Kaiser, the sculptures that could be attributed to the 3rd or early 2nd century BCE are considered direct descendants of Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasty portraiture, while the portraits dated after 125 BCE are characterized by heterogeneity, fluctuating quality, and variable details. Despite the inconsistencies, Kaiser finds links with contemporary Greek sculpture in the slight tilting of the head, the wrinkles crossing the forehead, and the location of the inscriptions on the base as opposed to the dorsal support. He does not date precisely the moment that marks the end of the traditional stylistic trends and the appearance of the first sculptures in the Greco-Egyptian style,<sup>44</sup> but he suggests, on the basis of the numerous attestations, of the high quality of some of the statues, and the decrease in the number of sculptures in pure

pharaonic style, that the appearance of Ptolemaic portraiture is not limited, at least at a regional level, to the later phases of the Ptolemaic Period.

This overview of the previous literature dedicated to Ptolemaic private portraiture highlights the academic community's lack of interest in the subject and the bias of the existing studies, predominantly dedicated to the stylistic analysis of a limited number of sculptures subjectively viewed as significant.

The investigation of the complete corpus of Ptolemaic private portraits has revealed that sculptures with realistic facial features are attested in Egypt mainly between the end of the Ptolemaic and the beginning of the Roman Period and are thus the creation of a society characterized by ever closer and constant contacts between heterogeneous cultures. Consequently, Ptolemaic private portraiture should not be seen in isolation: as an artistic phenomenon it represents, on the one hand, the latest stage in the development of Egyptian private sculpture and, on the other, the Egyptian expression of a trend characteristic of the contemporary Mediterranean world in which similar portraits were produced.<sup>45</sup>

The analysis of the statue of Hor son of Tutu<sup>46</sup> clearly exemplifies this phenomenon (FIGS. 1–3).

This sculpture was discovered in Alexandria in 1856, probably during building works. In 1859, the sculpture was listed in the Molem Mohamet collection<sup>47</sup> and was later acquired by Heinrich Brugsch for the Berlin Ägyptisches Museum, where it is currently displayed.<sup>48</sup>

The statue is made of black granite and depicts a striding male figure wearing the draped costume. It is preserved from the top of the head to the hips and the fragment preserved is 113 cm in height.<sup>49</sup> The head (FIG. 2) is large and square. The hair has the shape of a traditional Egyptian cap wig in relief, but with locks individually carved. The strands on the forehead are wavy and the middle parting is highlighted by a change in the curls' orientation. Above the inner corner of the left eye, the locks create two small pincers. Comma-shaped locks are carved on the back, on the nape, and above the temples. Traces of the removal of an attribute, identified by Bothmer and Warda as a rosette diadem,<sup>50</sup> are clearly visible above the temples. One of the extremities of the diadem is carved on the right side of the dorsal support. The left side shows traces of reworking. The forehead is wide and wrinkled. Frown lines are carved above and between the brow ridges. The



FIGURE 1: Berlin Ägyptisches Museum inv. no. 2271 ©Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Die Antikensammlung. Altes Museum, inv. no. ÄM 2271.

eyes are deeply set, with pupils slightly in relief, and are marked by bags. Wrinkles run from each inner side of the eyes to the strongly marked cheekbones. The ears are characterized by long lobes rendered in detail. On the left earlobe, the hole for the earring is represented by an incision. The nose is missing, and the nasolabial folds start from its sides. Traces of the *philtrum* are still visible between the nose and the mouth. The latter has small lips and is characterized by labiomental folds. The labiomental groove is deep and the chin is pointed. The neck is thick and has a noticeable Adam's apple.

The garment is composed of a shirt with a round neck, a tunic with a V-neck, and a pleated cloak draped around the torso but leaving the right shoulder and right pectoral exposed. The clothes barely cover the body, and the pectorals, the left arm, and the contour of the torso are visible under the garments. A necklace with an amulet, possibly of a different material and inserted into the rectangular hole still



FIGURE 2: Berlin Ägyptisches Museum inv. no. 2271, detail of the head ©Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Die Antikensammlung. Altes Museum, inv. no. ÄM 2271.



FIGURE 3: Berlin Ägyptisches Museum inv. no. 2271, back ©Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Die Antikensammlung. Altes Museum, inv. no. ÄM 2271.

visible just below the sternum, was removed.<sup>51</sup> The surface of the statue is polished, with the exception of the hair. Traces of reworking can be seen in the hair, the torso, and the dorsal support. Bothmer linked the erased attributes to a title and proposed that the person portrayed was demoted during his life.<sup>52</sup> Lembke and Vittmann instead linked the reworking with the usurpation and relocation of the statue.<sup>53</sup> These hypotheses are both plausible but far from certain.<sup>54</sup> The dorsal support (FIG. 3) has a trapezoidal overall shape but rounded upper end. It is carved with a pictorial scene and an inscription comprising one horizontal row and three vertical columns of hieroglyphs facing right, well-spaced and proportioned. The signs in the horizontal row were carved more carefully and skillfully and show internal details. The upper end of the support is decorated with two squatting figures facing each other and surmounted by a *p.t* sign. The figures are characterized by a *w3s* scepter and a crown.<sup>55</sup> They are identified with Neith (right)<sup>56</sup> and Osiris (left)<sup>57</sup> through the inscription and their attributes. The inscription is poorly preserved.<sup>58</sup> It reads:

0. The one honored, praised by and loyal to Osiris, Neith and the Gods of Sais
1. the prince, noble, the sole companion ... the one experienced with his men, the one who strengthens the weak with what he says, the one successful of deed,<sup>59</sup> the one whose soldiers are numerous ... behind his lord in ... bringing to him the opponents [...]
2. the one of good ..., loyal, the one who listens to the petitioners, ... free from weakness, ... he is the protector and there are no evildoers against him among them, the beloved...upon the two lands [...]
3. the *strategos* of Lower Egypt, the nobleman, the great one of the people, the priest of Neith, the great, the mother of God, Hor the son of Tutu, born to the mistress of the house ... says: "Hail lady Neith the great [...]"

Hor son of Tutu held religious, military, and honorific titles: he was prince, noble, sole companion, priest of the goddess Neith, and *strategos* of Lower Egypt. The latter title seems to be the most prominent: in the inscription, Hor is described as a courageous soldier, commander of many brave men, and committed to the defense of king and country.<sup>60</sup>

Traces of reworking, together with the mention of Neith and the gods of Sais, led Lembke and Vittmann to propose that the statue was originally erected in Sais and only later moved to Alexandria and modified.<sup>61</sup> The inscription and the face of the statue do not show signs of reworking,<sup>62</sup> therefore, the name and titles mentioned in the text refer to the person originally portrayed in the statue. He is Hor son of Tutu, brave soldier and commander.

Scholars have discussed at length the date of the statue of Hor and reached different conclusions, based mostly on epigraphic or stylistic considerations. Many difficulties and questions arise from the analysis of this sculpture. The clear signs of reworking are an obvious indication of two phases of use for the statue and, as mentioned above, the direct examination of the statue has ascertained the absence of alterations on the face and the inscription, which can, therefore, be confidently attributed to the first phase.

The study of the inscription failed to provide clear chronological clues, and its epigraphic characteristics have been variously dated to the end of the 4th/beginning of the 3rd century BCE by Herman De Meulenaere<sup>63</sup> and to ca. 150–50 BCE by Günter Vittmann.<sup>64</sup>

Stylistic analysis has also failed to yield conclusive evidence, with scholars aiming instead at corroborating the dates suggested on epigraphic grounds by De Meulenaere<sup>65</sup> or Vittmann.<sup>66</sup>

Klaus Fittschen is the only exception to this *modus operandi*. In the 1980s, he suggested two different dates for the sculpture: the beginning of the 1st century BCE or the reign of Trajan.<sup>67</sup> He never published his ideas, but generously shared his thoughts with Katja Lembke and Günter Vittmann, authors of the sculpture's *editio princeps*.<sup>68</sup>

The dating to the reign of Trajan proposed by Fittschen is not without foundation because the statue bears many similarities, in the hair and facial features, with the portraits of this emperor.<sup>69</sup> However, the general expression of the face is realistic and recalls the Roman portraits of the Late Republic:<sup>70</sup> the expressive features, the wrinkles, and the signs of age convey the image of a man strong and vigorous, with high military titles, feared and respected by contemporary society.

The systematic use of a multidisciplinary approach has confirmed the dating of the statue of Hor son of Tutu to the second half of the 1st century BCE. In fact, its facial features have strong



FIGURE 4: Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo inv. no. 121991. Courtesy of the Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo - Museo Nazionale Romano.

similarities with a Roman portrait generally attributed to Octavian's father, Gaius Octavius (FIG. 4).<sup>71</sup> The head represents an aging man, emanating vigor, and with a decisive and strong-willed expression. It was initially interpreted as a portrait of Trajan or of a private individual who lived during the reign of this emperor.<sup>72</sup> Already in the 1970s, however, Poulsen suggested a date to the 1st century BCE and identified the man with Octavian's father, who died in 58 BCE. This suggestion is based not only on the stylistic analysis of the statue, which can be undoubtedly ascribed to the Late Republican portraiture and has similarities with the portraits of the young Augustus created in the years immediately after the battle of Actium, but also on considerations related to the acquisition and provenance of the three heads,<sup>73</sup> which were found or acquired together with other images portraying members of Augustus' family. The identification with Gaius Octavius, albeit plausible, remains uncertain. The dating of the sculpture to 40–25 BCE is widely accepted.<sup>74</sup>



FIGURE 5: New York, Brooklyn Museum, inv. no. 86.226.14. Photograph courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum.

The comparison between the portrait of Hor and the sculpture of the Roman citizen who lived during the Late Republic (FIGS. 2, 4) does not show simply a passing resemblance but the kind of similarities that can only be explained by the use of a common model.<sup>75</sup> The sculptures share a forehead lined by two horizontal wrinkles, distinctly arched eyebrows, small eyes which are close together, gaunt and sunken cheeks, similar modelling of the facial planes, of the large mouth with a thinner upper lip, and of the chin, which is square and very pronounced.

This comparison not only supports the dating of the statue to the second half of the 1st century BCE in accordance with Vittmann's interpretation of the inscription, but it also confirms that Ptolemaic private portraiture had strong links with Roman private portraiture of the Late Republic.

Hor's main facial features, although presented without the same expressive power and realistic emphasis, can also be found in a head in the Brooklyn Museum (FIG. 5).<sup>76</sup> This sculpture portrays

a man with short, wavy hair, and locks neatly framing the forehead. In line with the root of the nose, the locks create a pincer while the remaining are worked sparsely. The forehead is high and lined by wrinkles. Deep frown lines mark the areas above the eyebrows and the root of the nose. The eyes, not too large and deeply set, are marked by bags. From the inner corner of the bags, two barely visible lines stretch out to reach the pronounced cheeks, further emphasizing them. The long nose is almost completely missing. The ears are large and reproduced in detail, including a piercing on each lobe. Two deep nasolabial folds start from the wings of the nose. The *philtrum* is visible in the area between the nose and the mouth. The mouth, not too big, has a very thin upper lip while the lower lip is more pronounced. The chin is small.

The head, whose provenance is unknown, has no clear chronological indicators and is dated by scholars to a time span ranging from the 2nd century BCE to the beginning of the Roman Period.<sup>77</sup> There is no doubt, however, that it shows close similarities with the statue of Hor in the shape and placement of eyes, wrinkles, mouth, and chin. Therefore, they must have been produced in the same time frame and possibly recall the same model.<sup>78</sup>

The statue of Hor son of Tutu is not a *unicum*. The facial features of the statue depicting Hor son of Hor<sup>79</sup> bears striking similarities to the portraits of a well-known Roman individual during the Late Republic, possibly the most eminent: Julius Caesar.<sup>80</sup>

Caesar's features are known from the many images engraved on coins and, notably, on the denarius minted by M. Mettius in 44 BCE, which is commonly regarded as his truest portrait. All the sculptures identified with Caesar are copies in marble of originals, either in bronze or in marble, now lost.<sup>81</sup> Portrait sculptures of Julius Caesar have been extensively analyzed by scholars and are usually divided into two groups: Tusculum and Chiaramonti-Pisa.

The first group is named after a portrait sculpture found in 1825 by Luciano Bonaparte in Tusculum<sup>82</sup> and regarded by Maurizio Borda in 1943 as equivalent to the image on the Mettius denarius. Indeed, the head features an unusually elongated skull, deeply receding hair on the forehead, but then brushed forward in the middle, wide eyes, straight nose, hollowed cheeks marked by nasolabial folds, small but pronounced chin, long wrinkled neck, and resolute expression. The second group is best

represented by a portrait previously held in the Chiaramonti Museum and now in the *Sala dei Busti* in the Vatican Museums.<sup>83</sup> In this statue, the head is slightly turned to the left and shows signs of age. The forehead is lined by wrinkles and the face is framed by a fringe consisting of curved locks of hair, the eyebrows are frowning, the gaze is resolute, the cheekbones are high, the cheeks hollow, two deep nasolabial folds line the face, and the mouth has long thin lips. The portrait conveys a strong intellectual tension and a determined attitude. This image is however more idealized than the Tusculum portrait, and this feature and other stylistic traits, such as the positioning of the locks on the forehead, which recalls Octavian's portraits of the "Alcudia" or "Actium" type that developed during the Second Triumvirate, have led scholars to date the second type of Caesar's portraits to the period following 42 BCE, the year in which Caesar became *divus*.<sup>84</sup>

A further element to consider in the reconstruction of the link between the statue of Hor and Caesar's portraiture is the so-called Green Caesar in Berlin.<sup>85</sup> This portrait, whose identity has long been debated, has often been identified with Julius Caesar,<sup>86</sup> mostly on the basis of the comparison with the image reproduced on the Mettius coins. The Berlin bust is made of greywacke from the Wadi Hammamat, in the Egyptian eastern desert and, although qualitatively different, bears many similarities with the portraits of Hor. The face is thin and elongated, the forehead is wide, the cheeks are high and protruding, the chin is pointy and prominent. The nose, long and straight, the thin lips and Adam's apple accentuate the lean appearance. The hairline recedes at the temples and the locks of hair framing the forehead are untidily arranged. Wrinkles lining the face and neck are particularly evident in the forehead, around the eyes, on the cheeks, and at the corners of the mouth. The identification with Caesar has been abandoned since Paul Zanker's recent re-evaluation, but the sculpture is still considered a product of the Late Republic.<sup>87</sup> In this period, for the first time, many portraits recall, more or less explicitly, the principal characteristics of Caesar's portraiture. The phenomenon of assimilating private portraiture with the representation of the most eminent individuals of the times, in particular the faces of the emperors, and called by Zanker *Zeitgesicht*,<sup>88</sup> the face of the period, started with the imitation of Caesar's portraits in 40–30 BCE.<sup>89</sup> While the stylistic features suggest that the Berlin



bust dates to the Late Republic, the material and the resemblance with the statue of Hor son of Hor do not exclude a provenance from Egypt. Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace the place of origin of the Green Caesar<sup>90</sup> but its strong similarities to Caesar's portraiture support a date to the second half of the 1st century BCE. The clear affinities between the Green Caesar and Hor's sculpture suggest a similar date for this statue. The possibility of a link between the statue of Hor son of Hor and the portraits of Caesar is also confirmed by classical sources and by the archaeological data. Classical authors attest to the existence in Alexandria of sculptures portraying Julius Caesar and Mark Antony,<sup>91</sup> and from Egypt originate statues—among which are a "Roman" bust in marble from Ashmunein and now held in the Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum, Hildesheim,<sup>92</sup> a Roman portrait now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,<sup>93</sup> and possibly the Green Caesar in Berlin—all of which, although not representing Caesar himself, have been linked to his portraiture by scholars (*Zeitgesicht*).

On the basis of the above framework, it is evident that between the end of the Ptolemaic Period and the beginning of the Roman Era we encounter in Egypt something similar to the Roman phenomenon of *Zeitgesicht*: eminent members of the Egyptian elite decided to be represented in an innovative way, embracing the realistic style widely attested in Rome and around the Mediterranean at the time and using the iconography of the most illustrious men of the period. The motives that led members of the Egyptian elite to adopt in their statuary the facial features of famous Romans were most certainly varied and only a more profound knowledge of the social and political dynamics of Egypt at the end of the Ptolemaic / beginning of the Roman Period will offer a full understanding of this phenomenon. They could possibly relate to the desire to show loyalty and proximity to the new Roman ruling elite, but the motives behind this choice could be broader and more complex. At present, we can only emphasize the existence of this phenomenon, which has been previously overlooked by scholars.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See for example: Bauschatz 2013; Fischer-Bovet 2014; Manning 2003; Manning 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Some cultural changes in Egypt during the 4th century BCE are described in McKechnie and Cromwell 2018.

<sup>3</sup> This paper is based on my PhD Thesis "Egyptian Elite as Roman Citizens. Looking at non-royal Ptolemaic portraiture" and on my

- current research at Verona University as part of the ERC RESP Project (The Roman Emperor Seen From The Provinces, GA 101001763). I would like to thank Prof. Gianfranco Adornato (Scuola Normale Superiore) and Prof. Marilina Betrò (Università di Pisa), for their continuous support and invaluable assistance. I am also grateful to the RESP research team members (Prof. Dario Calomino and Dr Julia Lenaghan) for their comments on the themes discussed here.
- <sup>4</sup> Ashton 2001; Brophy 2015; Josephson 1997; Smith 1988; Stanwick 2002.
- <sup>5</sup> Bothmer and De Meulenaere 1960.
- <sup>6</sup> Bothmer and De Meulenaere 1960, ix. The term “Late Period” refers here to the same chronological range as the one considered by Bothmer in the exhibition, that is 700 BCE–100 CE.
- <sup>7</sup> As already advocated by John Baines in 2004 (Baines 2004, 34–36).
- <sup>8</sup> For the local elite see, among others: Clarysse 2000; Lloyd 2002; Dunand and Zivie-Coche 2003; Gorre 2003; Baines 2004; Moyer 2011; Monson 2012; Thompson 2018, 19–20.
- <sup>9</sup> Royal sculptures well illustrate the coexistence and, at times, the fusion of elements belonging to different cultures which characterise the artistic production of the period. When the Ptolemies arrived in Egypt they already held an idea of royal representation, consistent with the contemporary Hellenistic tradition and radically different from its pharaonic counterpart in its basic principles of shape, iconography and style (Smith 1988, 15–31, 86–98; Smith 1991, 205–209). However, they chose to be depicted in both styles, the pure Greek and the traditional pharaonic. They also promoted the gradual fusion between Greek and Egyptian art, a process that did not follow a linear evolution but happened through a complex and still largely unknown progression, which resulted in the composite style that is characteristic of the Egyptian statuary of the Ptolemaic Period (Smith 1988, 87; Ashton 2001, 25–32; Stanwick 2002, 86–89).
- <sup>10</sup> Albersmeier 2002.
- <sup>11</sup> Perdu 2012.
- <sup>12</sup> Mendoza 2008. The book does not represent, however, a detail study of every single sculpture, but aims at giving a general overview of this specific type of sculpture and covers a wide chronological range, from the Middle Kingdom to the Ptolemaic and Roman Period. There are also cursory mentions of earlier examples and an outline of its chronological development. The statues are normally small, ranging between 5 and 15 cm. Cf. Mendoza 2008, 119.
- <sup>13</sup> Libonati 2010.
- <sup>14</sup> Heinz 2015.
- <sup>15</sup> Bianchi 1977; Warda 2012.
- <sup>16</sup> Adriani 1970.
- <sup>17</sup> Kaiser 1999.
- <sup>18</sup> Drerup 1950.
- <sup>19</sup> On Bothmer’s life and education, see Eaton-Krauss 2019.
- <sup>20</sup> For a detailed analysis on Bothmer’s thinking on non-royal Ptolemaic portraiture, see Cafici 2017. I wish to thank Dr. Patrizia Piacentini, Professor of Egyptology at the University of Milan, for granting permission to study Bothmer’s unpublished archives.
- <sup>21</sup> Bothmer 1951.
- <sup>22</sup> Bothmer 1954.
- <sup>23</sup> Bothmer 1959; Bothmer 1960.
- <sup>24</sup> Bothmer 1966.
- <sup>25</sup> Bothmer 1988.
- <sup>26</sup> Bothmer 1959.
- <sup>27</sup> Cafici 2017.
- <sup>28</sup> Bergman 2013, 55; James 2004, xvii.
- <sup>29</sup> Bothmer 1951, 73.
- <sup>30</sup> In his 1953 lecture, Bothmer focuses again on the relationship between the different portrait traditions, but the content of the speech is now lost.
- <sup>31</sup> Bothmer 1966.
- <sup>32</sup> Bothmer 1966.
- <sup>33</sup> In this paper Bothmer asserts that Roman portraiture had “Egyptian origin and of Egyptian origin alone” (Bothmer 1966, 7).
- <sup>34</sup> Bothmer 1988.
- <sup>35</sup> Bothmer 1988, 48.
- <sup>36</sup> Adriani 1970.
- <sup>37</sup> Adriani 1970, 72.
- <sup>38</sup> Adriani states that he had seen the head “in a private collection many years ago” (Adriani 1970, 72). The present location of the head is unknown.
- <sup>39</sup> Adriani 1970, 95.
- <sup>40</sup> Adriani 1970, 99.
- <sup>41</sup> Kaiser 1999.

- <sup>42</sup> Kaiser 1999, 239. He clearly refers to Bothmer and De Meulenaere 1960.
- <sup>43</sup> Kaiser refers here to the “striding draped male figures” studied by Bianchi (Bianchi 1977).
- <sup>44</sup> Kaiser (1999, 251) openly speaks of “griechisch-ägyptischen Mischstils.”
- <sup>45</sup> Cafici 2021.
- <sup>46</sup> Berlin Ägyptisches Museum inv. no. 2271: Bianchi 1977, 151–158, cat. XIII A, pls. 52–53, figs. 71–72; Lembke and Vittmann 1999; Lembke and Vittmann 2000, 9–13; Gorre 2009, 364–367, cat. 71; Warda 2012 II, 57–68, cat. 5, pls. 19–21.
- <sup>47</sup> *Harris Mss XII*, 48 currently held in Griffith Institute, Oxford (Lembke and Vittmann 1999, 305–306, nn. 42–43).
- <sup>48</sup> Information mentioned in the internal register of the museum and reported in Lembke and Vittmann 2000, 11, n. 11. According to *Harris Mss XII*, the statue was still in the Molem Mohamet collection in 1859.
- <sup>49</sup> Lembke and Vittmann 2000, 9.
- <sup>50</sup> Bothmer 1996, 219; Warda 2012 II, 58.
- <sup>51</sup> Lembke and Vittmann 2000, 11.
- <sup>52</sup> Bothmer 1996, 219.
- <sup>53</sup> Lembke and Vittmann 1999, 306.
- <sup>54</sup> On the removal and/or reworking of attributes and facial features in ancient Egyptian sculpture, see for example Connor 2018.
- <sup>55</sup> The crown of the figure on the right is in lacuna. The figure on the left wears the White Crown.
- <sup>56</sup> Lembke and Vittmann 1999, 308.
- <sup>57</sup> Warda 2012 II, 63.
- <sup>58</sup> In 1999 Günter Vittmann published his “attempt” at translation, as he had to admit (Lembke and Vittmann 1999, 306).
- <sup>59</sup> The hieroglyph is difficult to read, but the reading *m<sup>c</sup>r* is likely because of the following word *spw*.
- <sup>60</sup> Gorre states that the title of *strategos* followed by a geographical name is not attested anywhere else (Gorre 2009, 365–367). However, in a recent study of the Egyptian army in the Lagid period, Fischer-Bovet identifies beside the title of military *strategos* also the title of *strategos* of one or more nomes (Thebaid and Arsinoite nome). Nevertheless, this title is not necessarily connected to military functions (Fischer-Bovet 2014, 157–158). The office of *strategos* of Lower Egypt is attested only on Hor’s statue but it is possible that it could have had similar responsibilities to the *strategos* of the Thebaid or of the Arsinoite nome but held a greater prestige.
- <sup>61</sup> Lembke and Vittmann 1999, 301, 306. The provenance from Sais is plausible but it is far from certain. This hypothesis is also mentioned by Warda (Warda 2012 I, 160).
- <sup>62</sup> Katja Lembke claims instead that the head was reworked (Lembke and Vittmann 1999, 302). However, the facial features do not show signs of reworking.
- <sup>63</sup> In Bianchi 1978, 101.
- <sup>64</sup> Lembke and Vittmann 1999, 307.
- <sup>65</sup> Bianchi 1977, 151–152; Bianchi 1988, 125; Bothmer 1996, 219.
- <sup>66</sup> Lembke and Vittmann 1999; Warda 2012 II, 57.
- <sup>67</sup> Lembke and Vittmann 1999, 302.
- <sup>68</sup> Lembke and Vittmann 1999. Lembke mentions Fittschen’s ideas in her work but does not accept them. She dates the sculpture to the end of the Ptolemaic Period (second half of the 1st century BCE) on the basis of comparisons with other Ptolemaic statues, with Roman gravestones and sculptures, and also of the date suggested by Vittmann. The parallels suggested by Lembke, albeit pertinent, are not conclusive.
- <sup>69</sup> See for example Rome, Musei Capitolini inv. no. S 1432 (Fittschen and Zanker 1985, 40, pl. 43).
- <sup>70</sup> This resemblance was already noticed in 1948 by Bernhard Schweitzer (“seine stilistische Abhängigkeit vom römischen Porträt spätsullanischer Zeit,” Schweitzer 1948, 126).
- <sup>71</sup> The portrait attributed to Gaius Octavius is known through three copies: Rome, MNR, Palazzo Massimo, inv. 121991 (Felletti Maj 1953, 92; Giuliano 1987 n. 168, 220–222; Gentili 2008, 169); Copenhagen, NY Carlsberg Glyptotek inv. no. 1777 (Poulsen 1973, 41–42; Johansen 1994, 26–27); and Munich, Munich Glyptothek inv. no. 537 (Grimm 1989 pl. 86).
- <sup>72</sup> Felletti Maj 1953, 92.
- <sup>73</sup> Poulsen 1973, 41–42; Giuliano 1987, 221; Gentili 2008, 169.
- <sup>74</sup> Poulsen 1973, 42; Giuliano 1987, 222; Gentili 2008, 169.
- <sup>75</sup> It is likely that sculptors’ models of Roman Republican portraits were available in Egyptian workshops at the end of the Ptolemaic Period/beginning of the Roman Era. The gypsum head London, British Museum 1926,0415.12 ([http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId)

- =1342014&partId=1&material=18572&page=1, accessed 7th June 2019) may have been one of these models.
- <sup>76</sup> Brooklyn Museum 86.226.14 (Bianchi 1988, 134; <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/open-collection/objects/4243>, accessed 5th October 2020).
- <sup>77</sup> Bianchi dates New York, Brooklyn Museum inv. no. 86.226.14 to the end of the 2nd–1st century BCE (Bianchi 1988, 134). In the database of the Brooklyn Museum the sculpture is dated to the beginning of the 2nd century BCE.
- <sup>78</sup> The statue New York, Brooklyn Museum inv. no. 86.226.14 is much smaller than the statue of Hor (H: 17.3 cm). It seems that the same model could be reproduced, with slight variations, in sculptures of different sizes.
- <sup>79</sup> Cairo, Egyptian Museum inv. no. CG 697 (Jansen-Winkel 1998; Cafici 2013).
- <sup>80</sup> Cafici 2013.
- <sup>81</sup> For Caesar's portraiture, see: Johansen 1967, 7–68; Zanker 2009, 288–314.
- <sup>82</sup> Turin, Museo di Antichità 2098 (Borda 1943, 20–23).
- <sup>83</sup> Vatican City, Vatican Museums inv. no. 713 (Johansen 1967, 25, fig. 1; Bianchi 1988, 190–191, Cat. 79; Zanker 2009, 309–310, fig. 21.16; La Rocca, Parisi Presicce and Lo Monaco 2011, 253, fig. 4.1).
- <sup>84</sup> Bianchi 1988, 190; Zanker 2009, 310; La Rocca, Parisi Presicce, and Lo Monaco 2011, 253, fig. 4.1.
- <sup>85</sup> Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin inv. no. Sk 342 (Bothmer 1988, 47–65; Belli Pasqua 1995, 65–67, n. 1; Walker and Higgs 2000, 159–160, n. III. 5; La Rocca, Parisi Presicce, and Lo Monaco 2011, 141, n. 2.5).
- <sup>86</sup> See, for example, La Rocca, Parisi Presicce, and Lo Monaco 2011, 141, n. 2.5.
- <sup>87</sup> Zanker 2009, 306–308. However, some scholars continue to identify the sculpture with Caesar (see, for example, Spier 2018).
- <sup>88</sup> Zanker 1981, 349–361.
- <sup>89</sup> Zanker 2009, 306.
- <sup>90</sup> This sculpture shows similarities with the Roman portrait from Ashmunein, Hildesheim, RPM 1075 (Roeder 1921, 159, pl. 66). <https://www.rpmuseum.de/museum/sammlungen/aegypten/highlights.html>, accessed 7th October 2020. Roman sculptures with facial features similar to the Berlin Green Caesar are thus attested in Egypt.
- <sup>91</sup> Cassius Dio: *Historiae Romanae* 51.12.1; Cassius Dio: *Historiae Romanae* 51.12.3; Svet. *Aug.* 17, 5; Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 86, 5.
- <sup>92</sup> Hildesheim RPM 1075 (Roeder 1921, 158–159, pl. 66). <https://www.rpmuseum.de/museum/sammlungen/aegypten/highlights.html>, accessed 7th October 2020.
- <sup>93</sup> Metropolitan Museum of Art 21.88.14 (Zanker 2016, 116–117).