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Cover: vase with lotus and dragon. Ming dynasty (1368–1644).
Porcelain painted with cobalt blue under transparent glaze.
© National Palace Museum, Taipei (page 38).
This page: head of a statue of Aphrodite (Knidos type).
Hellenistic period, c. 300 BC. Marble.
Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com> (page 7).



Portraits of Olympian Goddesses

Michael Svetbird

When we look at sculptural images of ancient Greek goddesses carved in Attica and elsewhere or later Roman interpretations of them, what initially grabs our attention? There are several ‘clichés’ that have arisen from our perception of these works, and these often prevent individual sculptures from being perceived as individualistic in character, but rather as a more generic ‘pantheon’.

We should first consider the latter term, which automatically implies the separation of a certain group of beings united by similar characteristics, which is really a metaphysical generalisation. The concept of ‘classical proportions’ is also curious, derived from a certain canon (‘standard’), where facial proportions of sculptures are concerned, and is an aesthetic generalisation (accepted, for instance, in arts and architecture). There is also a similar ‘anaemia’ both in poses and in seemingly emotionless facial expressions, which was determined or dictated by the purpose of these representations, originally located in temples and other public buildings and, hence, were supposed to look coldly and proudly at mere mortals, without expressing ‘earthly’ emotions. Such ‘anaemia’ should rather be defined as ‘detachment’, a religiously emotional generalisation. If we talk about sculptural images in general, then the differences between

the gods per se and their identification by humans may be determined by obvious signs, from differences in gender proportions to those in certain attributes or details of clothing and accessories. However, in museums we routinely see only fragments of ancient sculptures – busts, heads, statues – that have been preserved in isolation from their original locations. How, therefore, do we understand who is who? Do they have individual features and characteristics that we fail to recognise? These questions are considered in more detail below, as are several prominent goddesses of the Graeco-Roman pantheon (below, left and right), a prelude to a future article on their male counterparts.

It is interesting to observe that the canons of facial proportions – 1/3 from the frontal hairline to the nasal bridge, 1/3 from the nasal bridge to the base of the nose, and 1/3 from the base of the nose to the bottom of the chin – the corners of the lips are all on the same vertical line with the inner corners of the eyes. However, individualistic elements of faces and heads are still present. For example, the width of a face, the structure of cheekbones and lower jaw, the angle and size of eyes, the tilt and turn of heads.

I have always been interested, as mentioned in previous editions of the magazine, in the extent to



Head of a statue of Aphrodite (Knidos type).
Hellenistic period, c. 300 BC. Marble.

Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München,
inv. 275a. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



Head of a statue of Aphrodite, the Kaufmann head
(Knidos type) found at Tralleis, Turkey in 1885.
Hellenistic period, c. 150 BC. Thasian marble.

The Louvre, inv. MA 3518. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

which sculpted faces may resemble those of a real person. We know that ancient sculptors used human models for marbles, and studied and debated human anatomy, but the ‘high end’ faces (and statues generally) of deities imply some kind of ‘bottom-up’ attitude, reverence, and admiration. So, the question of the projection of human traits (‘earthly’ emotions) on to the representation of deities in the medium of sculpture is fundamental. Many post-classical restorations of facial details (noses, lips, chins, and other areas), logically defaulted to the guidelines of the classical canon, as did sculptures commissioned from the Renaissance onwards. Do we now behold a large group of stereotypical representations which mask the more individualistic portraits of real people in antiquity?

My brief journey into the ancient sculptural world of Graeco-Roman deities begins with Aphrodite (Roman counterpart Venus), the most famous and revered female religious personality, goddess of love, lust, beauty, pleasure, passion, and procreation. Her depictions derive from several cultural contexts, such as an interesting Etruscan terracotta head (also identified as Artemis), from Scasato Temple, Falerii Village, near Rome, dating to the end of the fourth century BC; currently housed in the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, Rome (above right).

Aphrodite or Artemis from Scasato Temple, Falerii.
Etruscan, late fourth century BC. Terracotta.
Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



Another fine head, possibly that of Aphrodite, dated to the late first century BC, adorns the Archaeological Museum of Fira on Santorini (below left). Well known (if not the most famous) is the Hellenistic marble head of Aphrodite from the Louvre in Paris, also referred to as the Kaufmann head (page 7, right and page 9, left). Some years ago, when enrolling at architecture college, I was tasked with drawing it among other classical heads and my interest in the classical canon and its facial proportions stemmed from this time. This over life-size head, a Hellenistic copy of a statue known as the Knidos type, derived from a famous statue of the goddess by the Attic sculptor Praxiteles (395–330 BC) at Knidos in south-western Asia Minor (Turkey). This type, known as the Aphrodite Pudica (‘modest Aphrodite’), because the goddess was in a pose covering her genitals and breasts with her hands, was one of the first portrayals of a female nude, and was widely copied. Descriptions of the Kaufmann head by academic sources, such as the Chicago and Tufts Universities, have described the ‘gentle countenance that is characterised by the soft gaze of the eyes’, ‘heart-shaped face’, ‘coiffure type’ and ‘position on the neck’. The cult of Aphrodite was so widespread across the Greek world that the individual traits inherent in local communities were most likely transmitted to the works of local artists and sculptors. According to Herodotus (*Histories* I.105), the Egyptians, for example, believed that all Greek gods were either directly or indirectly, through names, borrowed from Egypt, and the ‘precursor’ of Aphrodite was considered to be the Phoenician Goddess Astarte (eastern Semitic Ishtar).



Female head, possibly Aphrodite, from Santorini (Thera).
Hellenistic–Roman period, late first century BC. Marble with traces of pigment. Archaeological Museum of Fira, Greece.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

What may be termed ‘portrait impersonation’ is interesting, particularly in the case of Aphrodite and Ptolemaic queens, as demonstrated in a bust in the Musei Reali Torino, Museo di Antichità, Galleria delle Sculture in Turin. This is referred to as ‘Cleopatra or Aphrodite’, identified as such because of its Isis knot which was fashionable on clothing in Ptolemaic Egypt; although the portrait seems too early to be Cleopatra VII (r. 51–30 BC), and is more likely a predecessor (right). Its influence is thought to derive from the Attic tradition of Praxiteles or the Capua type, based on a lost bronze statue made by Lysippos of Sicyon (c. 390–300 BC), while its facial characteristics are also similar to Ptolemaic queens, which were close to that of Aphrodite, and this bust may well come from Egypt. If we assume that this is a portrait, then the question arises: are the ‘canonised’ features of the head inspired by the Knidian or Capuan model of Aphrodite, or were the queen’s features applied to it?

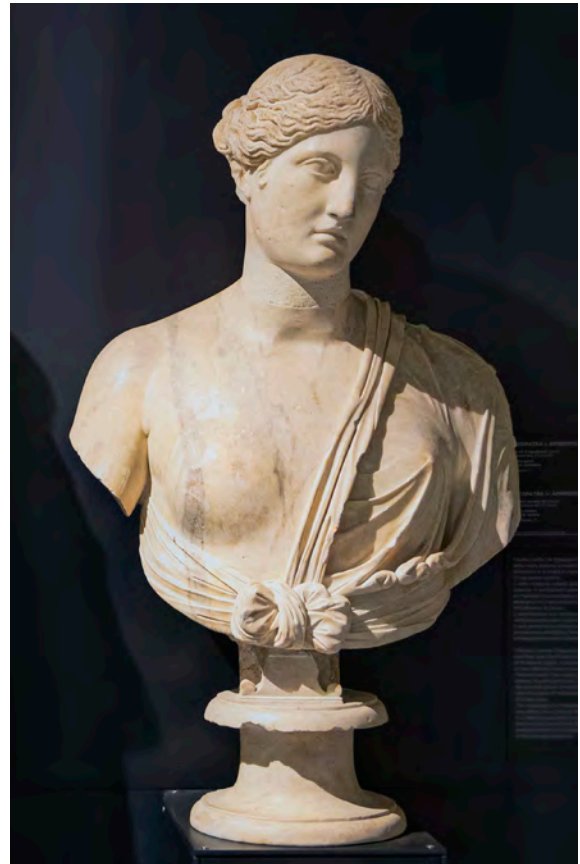
From my perspective, the most interesting sculpture of Aphrodite is a head in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, again of the Knidos type, dating to c. 300 BC (page 7, left and page, 10 left). However, its difference with the Kaufmann head in the Louvre is considerable regarding the shape of the eyes, facial expression, hairstyle (not as smooth), tilt of the head, and the state of preservation; a break on the top of the head adds additional charm and character to the work. The facial expression seems more ironic and condescending. She appears to grin at the viewer, looking down from her pedestal.

While studying these heads I was bound to consider the ‘classical profile’, and in this context, the head from Tralles in Turkey housed in the Kunsthistorisches



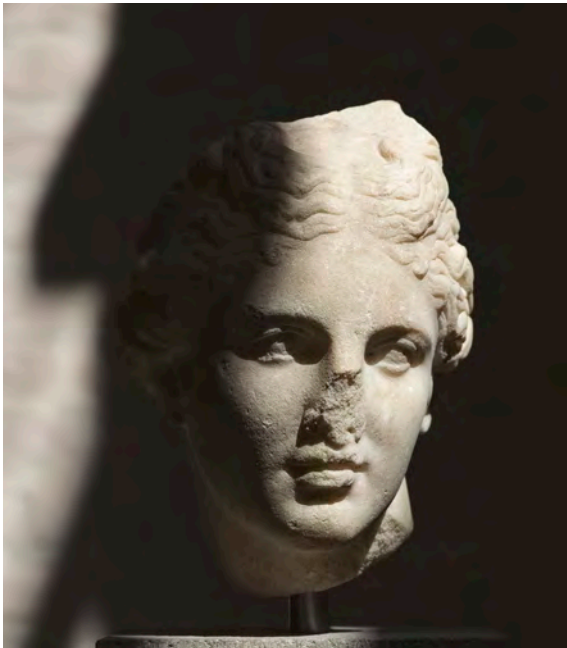
‘The Kaufmann Head’ in the Louvre.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

Cleopatra or Aphrodite of the Knidos or Capua type, perhaps from Egypt. Hellenistic period, late second century BC (head); second century AD (bust).
 Musei Reali Torino, Museo di Antichità,
 Galleria delle Sculture, inv. 153.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



Museum Wien (Vienna), dated to the Hellenistic period, c. 120 BC, is revealing (page 10, right). Identified as that of Artemis, the engraving on the pedestal also states that it may be a head of Aphrodite. From my own perception, based on observation, I would rather classify this as a representation of Aphrodite, since sculptures of Artemis are usually not as soft, with the oval face appearing to be more ‘framed’ with a more determined expression. Although the museum’s ‘formal’ description classifies this model as a replica of the Knidos type, the difference with the Kaufmann head in the Louvre is obvious, especially when viewed frontally: the face appears more relaxed, the shape and lines of the lips have a stronger mocking emphasis, and the eyes are narrower. In any case, I found the profile of this head more interesting than its frontal perspective, since the shape of the eyes and lips do not seem as malicious, and the visible gouge on the nose gives this work additional charm. In sum, the Aphrodites above – the Etruscan and ‘Tralles’ sculptures – have more pronounced and characteristic facial features, and a less distant expression.

Head of a statue of Aphrodite (Knidos type).
Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



Artemis (Roman counterpart Diana), goddess of the hunt, wild animals, and nature, vegetation, childbirth, and chastity, is for me perhaps the most interesting deity in the pantheon of Greek gods. This perception is based not only on the origins of Artemis (daughter of Zeus and Leto, and the twin sister of Apollo) and the intriguing mythological stories associated with her (Aphrodite and Hera had no power over her) but, to a large extent, on the visual sensation of her sculptures. These are more dynamic, purposeful, lively, and characterised by interesting elaboration of details, such as the folds of clothing, diadem, and hairstyle. When we consider facial expressions or features, it seems that they are more alive and fluid. As in the case of Aphrodite, one of the most widely circulated and famous images of Artemis is her statue in the Louvre, known as the Diana of Versailles. This is a Roman marble copy after a type produced c. 330 BC by the Attic sculptor Leochares (active in the fourth century BC); probably from Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, brought to France in the first half of the sixteenth century where it was restored with the original head preserved (page 11, left). The turn of the head and gaze perfectly convey Artemis' intent – focusing on her quarry. Despite the classical canons of her facial proportions, she does not appear detached; on the contrary, she conveys concentration and determination.

Unlike this Artemis, her other two portraits presented below, convey a feeling of some uncertainty and mystery; yet, again, they seem to be more expressive than the portraits of Artemis' 'companions' in the pantheon: Artemis of the Rospigliosi type in the Louvre, a Roman copy of a Greek original from Pergamon in north-west Turkey (named after

a family of Italian aristocrats of the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries) (page 11, above right); and an Artemis of the Naples type in the archaizing style from Palazzo Massimo, Museo Nazionale Romano (Rome), carved in white fine-grained Greek marble during the Augustan period (early first century AD), from a private building in Caserta, Campania (page 11, below right). Both works express a more personal, less 'reverent' attitude, perhaps due to the meticulous detail of the representations and the apparent manifestation of human emotions on the faces: what do a somewhat tense facial expression and parted lips imply in the first case; and a cheerfully ironic or mysterious facial expression in the second? The angle and lighting, of course, could play a role, but still individuality and a noticeable difference from, for instance, the Kaufmann head of Aphrodite, are clearly present in both cases.

It is interesting that – with obvious differences, as I see it – both sculptures are attributed to the Rospigliosi type. However, the Artemis of the Naples type repeats numerous Archaic models, as in the case of the Artemis from Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia (Venice) of the mid-first century AD – all Roman replicas termed the 'Naples type' after a sculpture found in Pompeii (not presented in this article).

Mention should be made of the statue head of Artemis housed in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München (Munich) known as the Artemis Braschi (named after the Italian aristocratic Braschi family



Head of Artemis or Aphrodite, perhaps from Tralles in Turkey. Hellenistic period, c. 120 BC. Marble.
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, inv. I 26.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

(known since the twelfth century), after whom the Palazzo Braschi in Rome is named (page 12, left). This is a unique Roman work (mid-first century AD), and does not appear to be a copy of an earlier Greek work but seems to borrow from earlier sculptures of different periods. According to the description in the museum:

‘The Roman sculptor cited here the styles of different periods of Greek art and thus consciously produced an antiquated impression: the decoration of the head and the upright body posture with the straight knees are reminiscent of Archaic art of the sixth century BC. The hair style with the stiff curls falling to the chest recall works of the late Archaic–early Classical period. The head itself with its slight incline to the right is similar to depictions of the fifth century BC. Similar motifs of light robes with many folds flowing in the wind and simultaneously pressed on the body by a gust are to be found in Classical sculptures of about 400 BC.’



Artemis, known as the ‘Diana of Versailles’.
Roman, second-century AD copy after the original of
Leochares c. 330 BC. Marble.
The Louvre, MR 152.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

Artemis of the Rospigliosi type. Roman, second-century AD copy of a Greek original dating to c. 200 BC. Marble. The Louvre, inv. MR 156. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



A rounded, if not full, face, a crown, a complex hairstyle (Archaic in style but more intricate and complicated) and a veil distinguish this model from the ‘commonly known’ or ‘usual’ images of Artemis and, it seems that in this work the classical canons of facial proportions and an expression are somewhat different (the oval of the lower face and chin are larger, the lips fuller, and the eyes are wider (the latter presumably echoes the Archaic style). Perhaps this is someone’s portrait framed by the eclecticism of styles modelled by the Roman sculptor as they imagined or replicated it, borrowing details from different periods?



Artemis of the Naples type (detail). Augustan period,
early first century AD in the Archaising style.
White fine-grained Greek marble. Palazzo Massimo,
Museo Nazionale Romano, inv. 568647.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

Artemis Braschi statue. Roman, mid-first century AD. Marble.
Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München,
inv. 214. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



The cult of Artemis was one of the most widespread in the ancient world, with significant places of worship on the island of Delos, where she was born, and other important centres in Sparta and Attica. The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus in Turkey is well known as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Athena (Roman counterpart Minerva), Goddess of wisdom, warfare, and handicraft, patroness of Athens and its namesake, was generally regarded as a protectress. For me she is the most unambiguous goddess, clearly defined by her characteristic accessories, such as a helmet, weapons or gorgoneions (gorgon heads to ward off evil) but, also in a metaphysical way with a defined sphere of responsibility. This consistency extends to her representations as selected below. They all more or less repeat replicas of the same model, and the only obvious visible difference are the elements of decoration on the head, which are often later restorations, as in the helmet.

She is always calm and looks down from above. An interesting and original head of Athena is that of a herm (statue with a squared lower section) from Musei Vaticani, Chiaramonti Museum (Vatican City), a fragment of a giant statue found along with an arm and a foot at Tor Paterno, south-west of Rome, by Robert Fagan (1761–1816), British diplomat, archaeologist, and artist. The head belonged to a

statue dating to the reign of the emperor Hadrian (117–138), inspired by a Greek original from the Athenian circle of Phidias (c. 390–430), with inset ceramic painted eyes that make this portrait so unusual (below). The helmet and pedestal are later restoration additions from the Renaissance. Interestingly, the absence or presence of inserted eyes seems to be found particularly in sculptural portraits of Athena, a topic revisited below.

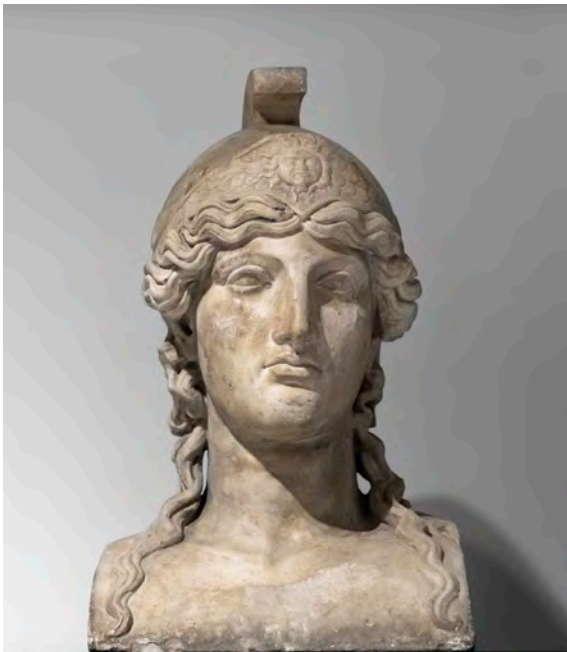
Imagining that Graeco-Roman sculptures were generally painted, the emphasis on the eyes, where this occurs in preserved sculptures is intriguing, provoking thoughts about other possible colours of the palette. Were there certain sculptural images of deities maintained in the same colour range, which could be referred to as a ‘colour line of design’ in the modern era (what in later fine art came to be called ‘Royal Colours’ and assigned to Madonna and the Saints), or were they polychrome, bright or painted simply in the natural colours attributed to ordinary people and things?

This portrait is similar to a herm of Athena housed in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (Naples) in so far as it does not seem deliberately ‘strict’ and is not ‘overweighted’ by the size, shape, and decorative elements of the helmet



The Herma of Athena (a fragment of a statue) from Tor Paterno. Roman, Hadrianic period, AD 117–138, inspired by the circle of Phidias in the fourth century BC. Marble.
Musei Vaticani, Chiaramonti Museum, inv. 1434.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

Athena from the Villa of the Papyri, Herculaneum, Late first century BC–early first century AD, Roman copy of a Greek original (the circle of Phidias). Marble. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. 6322. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



(above). Like the last sculpture, it is a Roman marble copy of a Greek original (produced by the circle of Phidias), from the Rectangular Peristyle in the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, dated to the late first century BC or the early first century AD (above). Interestingly, in both cases the helmets are ‘open’ variants of the Attic-type helmet without cheek guards and visors, unlike the other representations with Corinthian-type helmets, which seem to be more ‘archetypal’ for depictions of Athena. Three other sculptures of Athena in this article include busts from Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München (right); the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia (page 14, left); and the Musei Reali Torino, Museo di Antichità, Galleria delle Sculture (Turin) (page 14, right). All three Roman portraits are replicas of the same Greek model, and the modelling of the eyes attract attention. On the first, the eyes were originally made of a different material and inlaid (not preserved). It would be interesting to know what eye colour the unknown Roman sculptor chose for this copy. With the second, the eyes are not so obvious, but if this portrait is examined closely, it appears that one can follow the direction of the gaze. As for the third, the eyes of the portrait are clearly drawn, and it seems that the facial expression is somewhat benign compared with the other two marbles. The ‘fantasy-like’ helmet is a little confusing, made during the Renaissance along with the bust, but the turn and tilt of the head refer to the original canonical model. By the time of its

manufacture, the Romans had begun to start equating Minerva with Athena. As patron goddess of Athens, Athena transcended the city to become widespread elsewhere, as at Argos, Pergamon, and Sparta, and may generally be considered as a panhellenic cult.

Demeter, goddess of the harvest, agriculture and food (the fertility of the earth), also known as a deity of marriage and birth, as in the case of her Olympian predecessors, has a commanding presence. For me the deity is one of the most mysterious or mystical in the pantheon, despite her seemingly simple and understandable ‘earthly’ associations with fertility and the harvest. She in some way correlates with the concepts of eternity, space, life, and death, being the daughter of the Titans Cronus and Rhea (derived, in turn, from Gaia (‘Mother Earth’) and Uranus (‘Father Sky’), sister of Zeus and Hades (which refers to the concepts of ‘eternity’, ‘immortality’ and, at the same time, to the afterlife or the end of life, given that in classical mythology one of the subjects of her patronage is directly related to the Underworld through her daughter Persephone).



Head of Athena (remains of a statue). Roman copy, early first century AD, based on a Greek original, attributed to Kresilas, c. 5 BC. Marble. Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, inv. 213. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

Bust of Athena. Roman, early first century AD (head and helmet), c. sixteenth century (bust); copy of a Greek bronze original attributed to Kresilas, 5 BC. Marble. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. 227. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

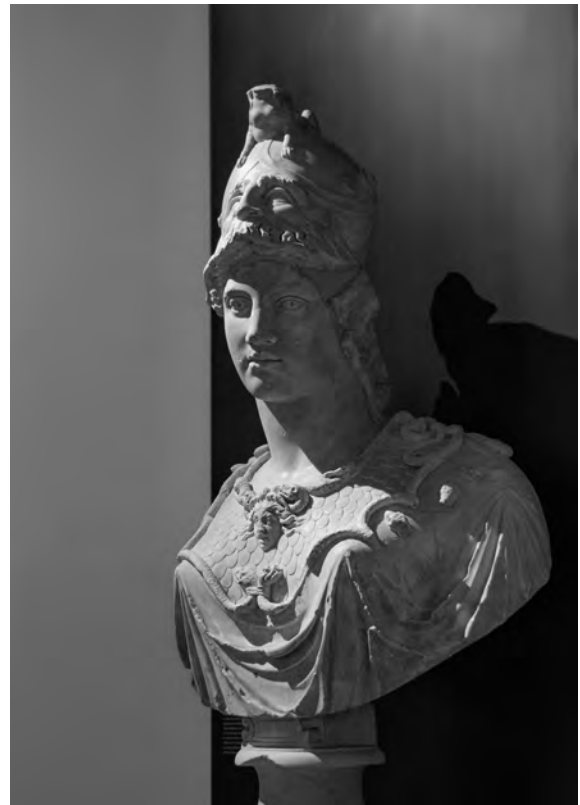


All this, in sum, brings a fairly strong mystical or metaphysical feeling to the perception of Demeter's image, despite the fact that the deity's appearances and cult were not as widespread as, for instance, the images and cult of Artemis. The face of the goddess is usually calm, impassive, and distant. A distinctive feature of her portraits is the tiara (often unornamented and in most cases with a veil). I have chosen to present a close-up of in Le Gallerie Degli Uffizi (Florence), a Roman interpretation of the early first century AD inspired by a Greek original of the fourth century BC, carved in Greek marble (the neck and head are restorations). It was brought to Florence in 1569 as a gift to Francesco I de' Medici from Pope Pius V (page 15, left). I wonder how much later restorations have affected the rather cold facial expression of this representation? Unlike the last sculpture, the Demeter from Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia looks softer, more benevolent, and warmer (page 15, right). I photographed her in bright light shed through a window, so the statue's perception seems, by contrast, life-affirming and bright. This model is a mid-fourth-century BC Attic variant of a type by the Greek sculptor Cephisodotus (active around 400–360 BC).

Goddess of woman, family, and marriage, Hera (Roman counterpart Juno) is the wife of Zeus ('Queen of Heaven and the Gods'), and sister of Demeter. She has a significant

role in the pantheon of the Olympians yet is not represented in the Graeco-Roman sculptural tradition as extensively and diversely based on surviving sculptures of the deity. A prominent type is housed in the Musei Vaticani (the so-called 'Barberini Hera'), the Altes Museum in Berlin, the Louvre, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (the 'Hera Farnese'), and in Palazzo Altemps, Museo Nazionale Romano. It is this last, over-life-size sculpture that I have chosen to present here, known as the Juno Ludovisi (or Hera Ludovisi) (page 16, left).

According to mythical tradition, she was self-sufficient and independent in marriage, had constant quarrels with Zeus, venting jealousy, anger, and justice in the prosecution of Zeus' extramarital affairs in following the legal marriage principles of a monogamous family, and was reputedly distinguished by a beauty comparable to that of Aphrodite. However, the portraits of Hera could conceivably be more varied and interesting, and this is something of a mystery to me. Hera's sculptural representations are typically characterised by a 'canonical' static-stately or 'monumental' pose with her raised right hand clutching a royal sceptre (or lotus-tipped staff), the other lowered holding a votive plate or sometimes empty. The head is adorned with a crown or diadem usually with floral patterns.

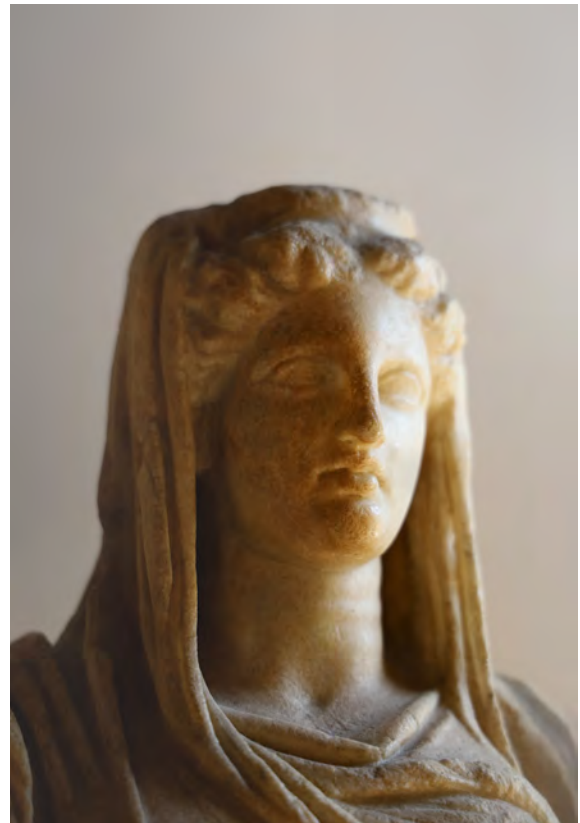


Bust of Minerva. Roman copy based on a Greek original, mid-second century BC (head); pre-1566 (bust and helmet), attributed to sculptor Tommaso Della Porta the Elder. Parian and Pentelic marble. Musei Reali Torino, Museo di Antichità, Galleria delle Sculture, inv. 165. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

Juno, although the Roman ‘analogue’ of Hera, her definition (or perception), more as a protectress and patroness, somewhat shifts the emphasis away from familial duties. Curiously, the statue of ‘Juno Sospita’ (the ‘Saviour’) in the Musei Vaticani, dated to the second century AD, replaces the sceptre and plate of Hera with a spear and shield, although these are post-classical additions, and allude more to Athena.

I thought it would be interesting to present a portrait of Hera – the Juno Ludovisi – in profile as an illustration of what we define as a ‘classical profile’, and in contrast with images of other goddesses, and it seems to me that this angle perfectly conveys the essence of the character of the deity. The head, dated to the first century AD, was once part of a colossal statue of the goddess. Its description in the Museo Nazionale Romano mentions that the female portrait head, crowned with a diadem, is a symbol of royalty and sanctity on the model of the Hera of Ephesus, and was reproduced in sixteenth-century paintings. In the following century it was regarded as one of the most beautiful sculptures in

Figure of Demeter. Attic variant of a type by Cephisodotus, mid-fourth century BC. Greek Marble. Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. 21. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



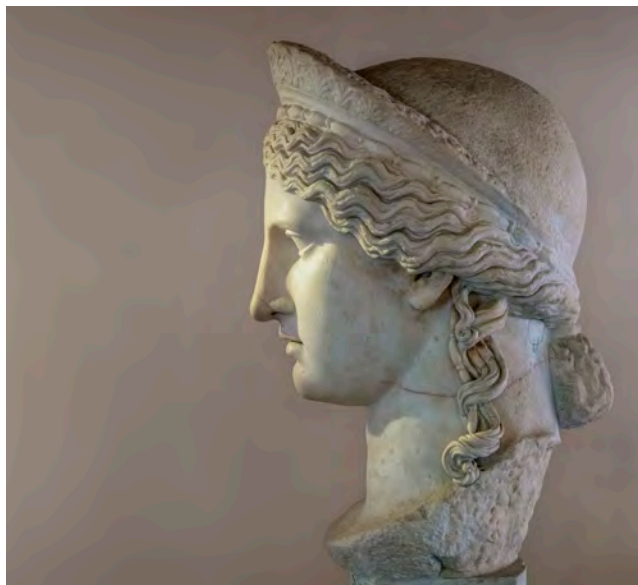
Statue of Demeter (head and neck partially restored). Roman, early first century AD, copy of a Greek original of c. 400–300 BC. Marble. Le Gallerie Degli Uffizi, inv. 1914, no.231. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

the Ludovisi Collection. We are also informed that most critical studies have identified this head as the young and idealised portrait of Antonia Minor, the emperor Claudius’ mother, deified after her death in AD 37. The most relevant iconographic comparison is the portrayal of Antonia on the Ara Pacis. Other theorists identify the sculpture as Livia, wife of the emperor Augustus. This, of course, supports the idea that deities were often modelled on imperial and royal personalities.

The veneration of Hera was widespread, especially in Greece, where the best-known temples of her cult were established at Argos, Mycenae, and Samos, as well as at Corinth, Olympia, Perachora, Tiryns, and Delos in the Aegean. Probably the best-known sanctuary in the Roman Empire was in the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill, where Juno was worshipped alongside the supreme god with Minerva.

Nike, the goddess of victory (Roman counterpart Victoria), was an important emblem of military and athletic success in the Graeco-Roman world. The most famous sculptural image of Nike is the colossal statue housed in the Louvre known as the Winged Victory of Samothrace, discovered by the French archaeologist and diplomat Charles Champoiseau (1830–1909) in 1862 on Samothrace

Juno Ludovisi, part of a colossal statue. Roman, early first century AD. Medium-grained marble. Palazzo Altemps, Museo Nazionale Romano, Ludovisi Collection, inv. 8631. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



originally winged and is represented after her moment of landing (right, and page 17, left). The head was inserted and worked separately, as was common practice in the Roman period. This was done with great skill, since the proportions of the head, its tilt, and facial expression as she gazes downwards, are fully consistent with the perception of the goddess, descending from the sky, as the original model apparently suggested. Her face seems calm and serene, patronising and, probably, confident in victory – a ‘top-down’ look; although, according to my perception, she is somewhat questioning – as if asking ‘are you worthy of me and do you deserve victory?’, echoing what I have said above, referring to the ‘liveness’ of her portraits. Curiously, her hairstyle, which combines two knots and a headband, distinguishes this representation, as far as I am aware, from other goddesses and those of Nike herself.

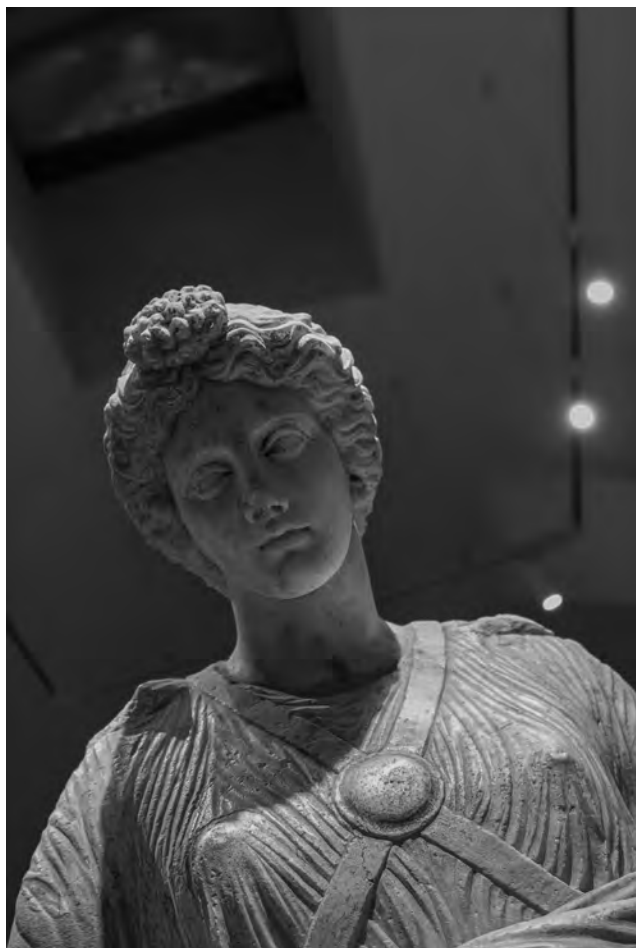
Persephone (Roman counterpart Proserpina), goddess of spring, crops, and nature, also known as Kore (‘the Maiden’), daughter of Demeter who, after her abduction by Hades, also became a goddess of occult phenomena

in the northern Aegean. Unfortunately, the head is not preserved, but it is a Hellenistic sculpture that is unparalleled, dated to the second century BC. Mention should also be made of the Winged Victory of Brescia, a Roman bronze work of the first century AD, housed in the Santa Giulia Archaeological Museum in Brescia, northern Italy (not presented in this article).

According to the Greek geographer Pausanias (fl. second century AD), the Temple of Athena Nike on the Acropolis in Athens was dedicated to Nike Apteros (‘Wingless Nike’). Lacking wings, he concluded that the deity in the temple (completed c. 420 BC), was created in this way so that the goddess could not fly away from Athens and leave the city without protection (*Description of Greece* I, 22.4; III, 15.5). Around ten years after its completion, a marble parapet was added with reliefs depicting Athena seated in triumph beholding winged Nikes leading bulls to sacrifice, brandishing weapons, and decorating victory trophies with armour.

As with Hera, surviving portraits of Nike are preserved. One of the best-known representations is housed in the Agora Museum, Athens, where a Greek marble copy is housed dated to c. 438 BC, after the Athenian sculptor Phidias. Mention should also be made of a splendid bust of Nike in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, a Roman copy of the second century AD, modelled on a Greek original of the 430s BC.

In this article I present a close-up portrait photo of Nike, which I took in the Antiquarium at Parco Archeologico di Pompei from the Villa Poppaea (Villa A), Oplontis/Torre Annunziata, dated to the first half of the first century AD (found in 1978). It is acknowledged that the statue was



Statue of Nike from the Villa Poppaea (Villa A), Oplontis, Torre Annunziata, Campania. Roman, first half of the first century AD. Marble. Antiquarium at Parco Archeologico di Pompei, inv. 72798. <https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>



and the underworld. In this case, it probably makes sense to deviate from the general concept of this article, built around a review of Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman sculptural portraits of goddesses, and briefly turn to marble sculptures of the Archaic period (c. 650–480 BC), which populated cemeteries and religious sanctuaries known today as korai (singular: kore), which are linked to Persephone, and also associated with Athena and Artemis. Their male counterparts, called kouroi (singular: kouros) derive from the same contexts. Both are free-standing sculptures characterised by a rigid posture, the males are nude, while the females are clothed in long robes. They either functioned as grave markers or were dedicated to the gods in religious sanctuaries.

Returning to Persephone/Kore specifically, she was distinguished by a gentle nature, kindness, and cheerfulness essentialised by the so-called ‘Archaic smile’, a characteristic also of korai (and indeed kouroi), at least before she was abducted by Hades, god of the underworld, where she became his wife and there was transformed into an imperious, strong, tough, and generally quite gloomy personality. According to mythical tradition a compromise was reached by Zeus whereby she dwelled there for six months (autumn and winter) to return to her mother on Mt Olympus for

the other six months of the year (spring and summer), which represented the blossoming of new life.

The sculpture that I have chosen to present is a rather modest figure known as the ‘Kore from Chios’, resembling other sculptures found on the northern Aegean island, and is housed in the Acropolis Museum, Athens. This is an Attic work of about 510 BC, its head found in 1886 and body fragments in 1888 near the Parthenon (below). The figure was originally painted with pale pink (for the skin), brown (eyebrows and eyelashes), and red (lips), blue and red (diadem), and white (spirals and blossoms). The later classical proportions of the face (in three thirds) have not yet developed, and the size and shape of the eyes are typical for the Archaic period, with a strong Persian and Egyptian influence.

This is how my ‘portrait gallery’ of goddesses turned out – a selection of ‘portrait’ photographs of sculptural representations intended to identify visual differences – whether inspired by the visual likenesses of authoritarian personalities or vice versa – and show different characters in a seemingly ‘standardised’ classical tradition.



Figure of ‘Kore from Chios’. Archaic, c. 510 BC.
Parian marble. Acropolis Museum, inv. Ακρ. 675.
<https://www.michaelsvetbird.com>

Michael Svetbird is a British artistic photographer based in Milan (www.instagram.com/michael_svetbird).