

# MYTH & MARBLE

ANCIENT ROMAN SCULPTURE FROM THE TORLONIA COLLECTION

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## Myth & Marble Ancient Roman Sculpture from the Torlonia Collection

The Torlonia Collection is the most important private collection of Roman marble sculptures in the world. Comprising more than six hundred works and a wide range of sculptural types and subjects, its holdings rival those of major institutions, including the Capitoline and Vatican Museums. This veritable “collection of collections” was formed in the nineteenth century by Prince Giovanni Torlonia (1754–1829) and his son Prince Alessandro (1800–1886), primarily through the purchase of several groups of ancient sculpture assembled in early modern Rome, as well as through extensive archaeological excavations on Torlonia estates. In 1876, Alessandro opened the Museo Torlonia, a pioneering private museum in Rome dedicated to classical antiquity, where a significant portion of the collection was made accessible to scholars and select visitors. A number of its masterworks became world-famous—among them the craggy Portrait of a Man, known as the Old Man of Otricoli and the poignant Portrait of a Young Woman, known as the Maiden of Vulci. In the wake of World War II, Alessandro Torlonia’s museum closed, and the collection went unseen for generations.

Now, for the first time, this exhibition brings to North America fifty-eight masterpieces from Italy’s storied Torlonia Collection, from large-scale figures of gods and goddesses to portraits of emperors and magnificent funerary monuments. Half of these sculptures, which range in date from the 5th century BC to the early 4th century AD, have been newly conserved and studied specifically for this exhibition, offering a rare opportunity to experience these exceptional artworks and explore the fascinating stories they reveal about both their ancient pasts and their modern afterlives.

The exhibition is co-organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and Fondazione Torlonia, in collaboration with the Kimbell Art Museum, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and The Museum Box.

The works from the Torlonia Collection have been restored by Fondazione Torlonia with the contributions of Fondazione Bvlgari. Chiomenti supports the core institutional activities of Fondazione Torlonia.

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**In Rome, besides the Romans, there was also a population of statues . . .**

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (German, 1749–1832)

Ancient Romans lived in a visually saturated world. Images—especially sculptures—were everywhere throughout the empire, permeating public and private spaces in much the way mass media does today. Sculpture, both in marble and bronze, was so plentiful in the ancient city of Rome that scholars have described it as Rome’s second population. Valued by Romans as the highest form of art, sculpture was the primary medium used to communicate everything from overt political propaganda to subtle messages of power, authority, and identity.

Romans and non-Romans alike communicated through sculptures using a common visual vocabulary that could cut across the culturally and geographically vast empire. Certain costumes were reserved for the emperor; a hairstyle could transform a mortal woman into a goddess. Ancient viewers could interpret specific attributes and accessories: a cloth cap conveyed someone’s foreign identity, or a sheaf of wheat in a figure’s hand signaled that they were an agricultural deity. Today, we can look to these elements as clues to decipher the layered and complex visual language used across the ancient Mediterranean.

Quote by German writer and philosopher Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). Translation modified and excerpted from Goethe, Maxims and Reflections, trans. Elisabeth Stopp and Peter Hutchison (Penguin: 1998), p. 45.

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# The Torlonia Family

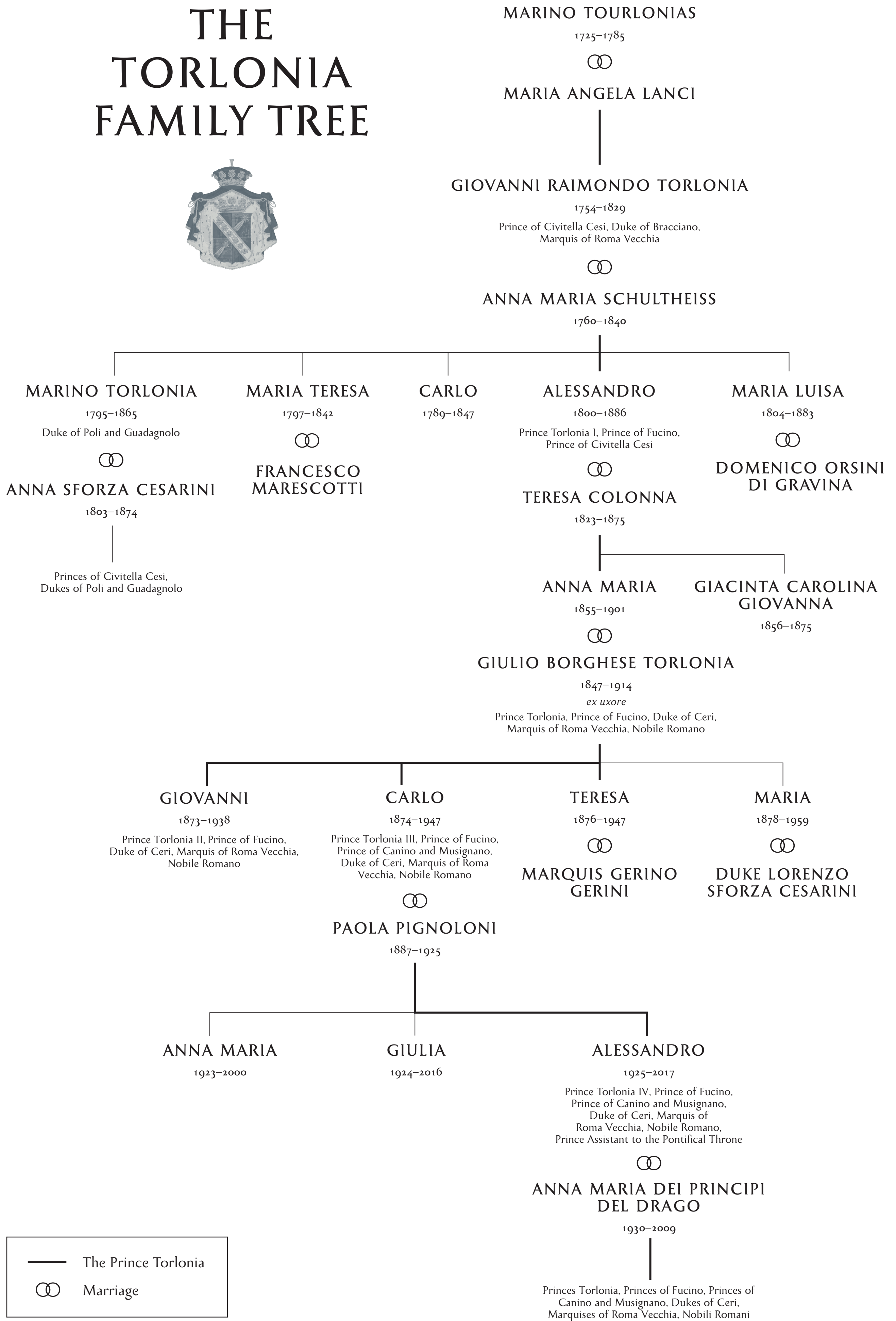
Marino Turlonias, patriarch of the Torlonia family, moved from a small town in France to Rome, where he opened a textile business, importing fine fabrics from France. In Italy, he became known as Marino Torlonia. His second son, Giovanni Torlonia, focused on banking—a move that would ultimately create the Torlonia fortune. Giovanni was a banker to both the Pope and the Bonaparte family, and his business acumen earned him noble titles. He spent the final years of the eighteenth century expanding his real estate holdings in and around Rome, purchasing a lavish palazzo (palace) in the heart of the city.

Giovanni strategically grew his collection of ancient Roman and Greek art. In 1800, he acquired all the sculptures from the studio of the renowned sculptor and restorer Bartolomeo Cavaceppi, thus saving them from dispersion. In 1825, two hundred and sixty works from the Giustiniani family entered Giovanni's collection through the settlement of a loan, ensuring their preservation within the expanding Torlonia collection.

When Giovanni died in 1829, his third son, Alessandro, became his primary heir. Alessandro significantly expanded the family's legacy. He developed the Torlonia family's international business interests and, in 1866, acquired Villa Albani, an extraordinary eighteenth-century estate renowned for its exceptional collection of antiquities. Deeply engaged with archaeology and committed to the preservation of cultural heritage, Alessandro promoted systematic excavations on Torlonia lands and consolidated the collection with scholarly rigor and curatorial vision. Guided by a profoundly enlightened spirit, remarkably ahead of his time, he conceived the idea of transforming the private collection into a museum accessible to scholars and the wider public. This pioneering vision materialized in 1876 with the creation of the Museo Torlonia, one of the earliest private institutions in Rome dedicated to classical antiquity.

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# THE TORLONIA FAMILY TREE



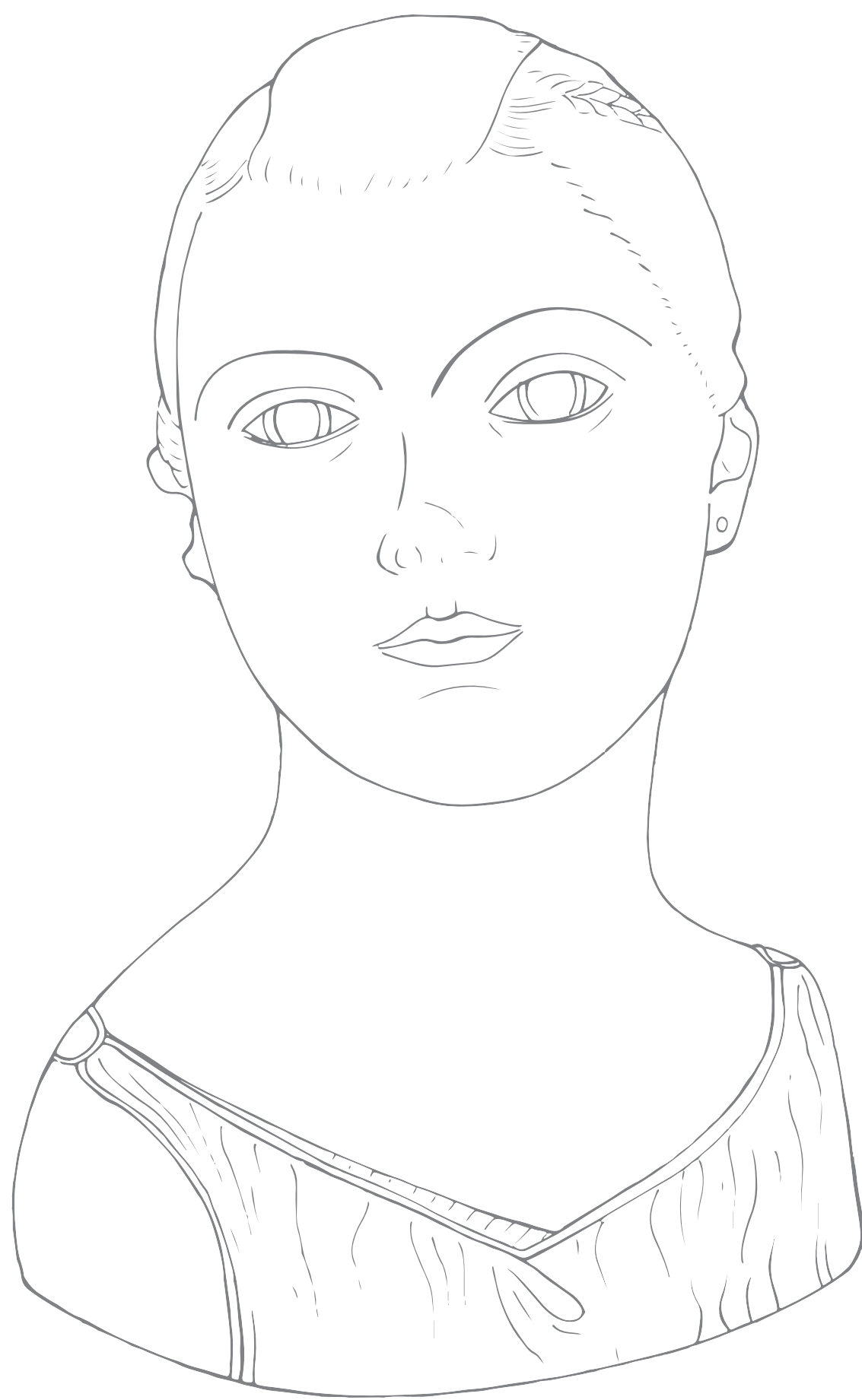
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## Afterlives

Not a single work in the Torlonia collection looks today as it did when it left the ancient artist's workshop. While many twenty-first-century viewers are conditioned to appreciate the fragmentary state of ancient Roman sculpture, collectors in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries favored complete works of art. At the time, artists regularly restored antiquities, adding limbs and heads to ancient torsos. Nearly all the artworks featured in this exhibition were restored in this way, most of them before they entered the Torlonia Collection. Restorations and other interventions carried out across the decades—in some instances by famed sculptors of the day—have impacted the sculptures' current appearances while also enriching their histories.

The color-coded conservation diagrams provided for each object show which portions of the sculpture are original and which were added or changed at a later time. Gray: original ancient marble; blue: modern restoration; pink: ancient marble, unrelated to the original.

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These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Portrait of a Young Woman, known as the Maiden of Vulci**

Mid-1st century BC

Roman, late Republican Period

Marble

Provenance: Possibly found in Vulci, Italy

Torlonia Collection, Rome

A wealthy, grieving family likely commissioned this striking portrait of a young woman to immortalize their love and affection for her. At the same time, this work put their own elite social standing on display. The portrait originally included other details to create a lifelike appearance, such as real earrings in the sculpture's pierced ears and a hair ornament embellished with gold leaf and gemstones. The eyes would have been enhanced with inlays of glass, ivory, bone, or rock crystal to create a more individualized likeness.

The skill and deft touch of the sculptor are evident in the subject's idealized facial features—wide, almond-shaped eyes and a small mouth with bow-shaped lips—and her finely woven, diaphanous garment, represented by intricate folds of fabric.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Portrait of a Man known as Euthydemus of Bactria**

Late 3rd–early 2nd century BC

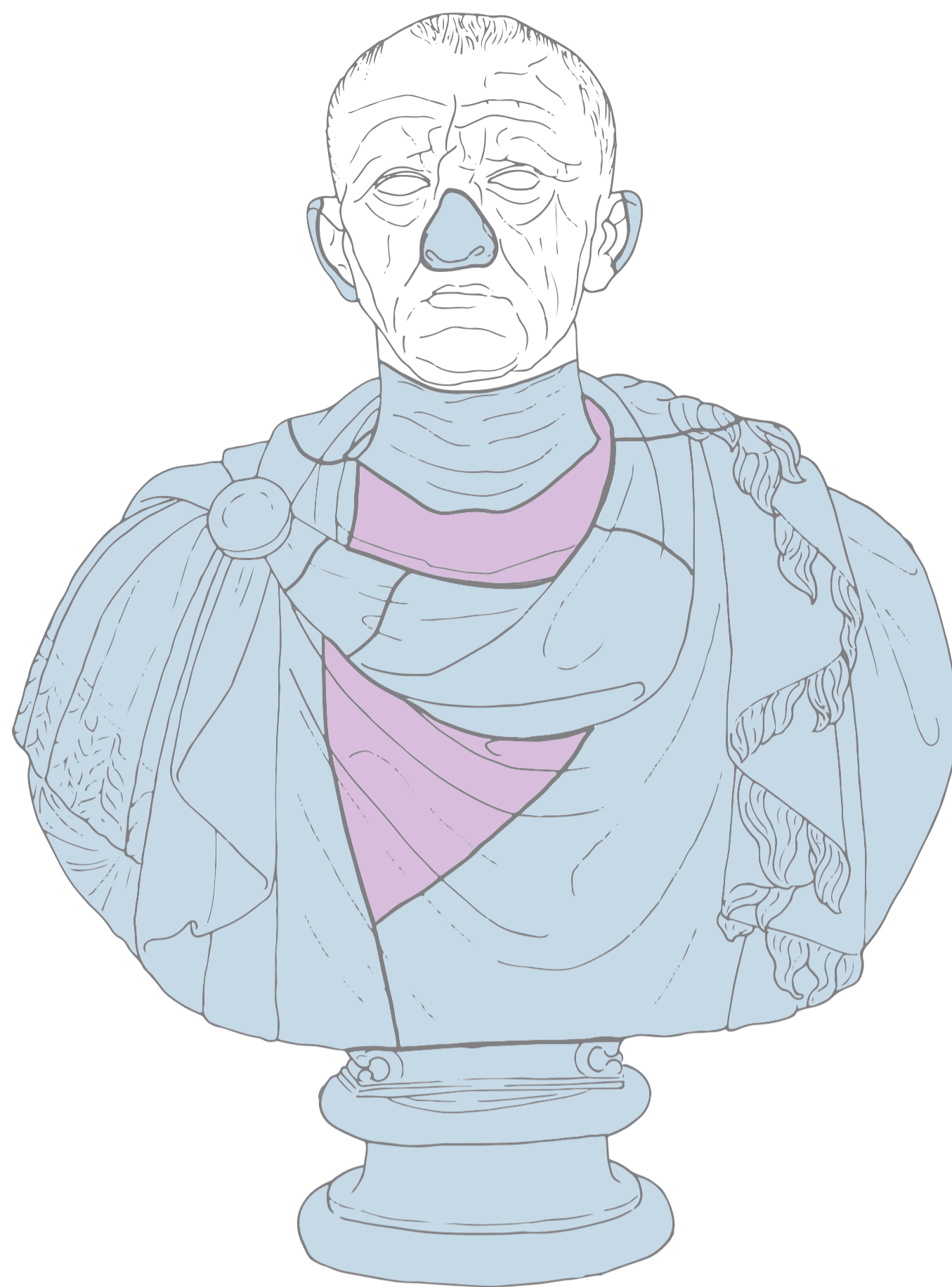
Greek, Hellenistic Period

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This figure wears a stern expression emphasized by deep creases around his eyes and brows. Features like these, along with his thick neck, are hallmarks of the Hellenistic Greek and Roman Republican portrait styles, which sought to capture a subject's unique appearance without idealizing it. This portrait may have represented a ruler or a military general, but his exact identity remains unknown. The wide, disk-shaped hat would typically signal his rank, status, or culture; however, it was added during a restoration centuries later and is not original to this work.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Portrait of a Man, known as the Old Man of Otricoli**

Mid-1st century BC

Roman, late Republican Period

Marble

Provenance: Possibly found in Otricoli, Italy

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This man has earned each of his wrinkles. His hollowed cheeks and weathered visage communicate his maturity and wisdom. The subject's aged appearance, representative of a style called verism, was the ideal look at the end of the Roman Republic, before the rise of the Roman Empire. Although portraits in the imperial period placed a value on perpetual youth, much as we do today, Roman republican portraits celebrated age and experience.

# Ideal Bodies & Model Behaviors

Have you ever wondered why the bodies of ancient Roman statues are so perfect? It certainly isn't because everyone had flawless physiques. Many sculptures modeled idealized appearances while also signaling a location's purpose. You might see a statue of Venus, goddess of love and beauty, at the public baths, or Hercules, the heroic demigod, in a gym. These "ideal" sculptures functioned in much the same way as modern advertisements that illustrate and reinforce social norms and standards.

Sculptures could also model appropriate—or inappropriate—behavior. Images of mortal children, for example, were typically associated with the formal and serious contexts of family or death, and thus these youths are often shown in somber, reflective poses. On the other hand, divine children and especially Cupids were often depicted making mischief: squeezing dogs, riding panthers, or causing a ruckus.

The Roman pantheon included many gods drawn from Greek mythology, known by different names. For example, Roman Jupiter is the equivalent of Greek Zeus. In this exhibition, we use the Roman names for gods except when the Greek names are significant to the sculpture's history.

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These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of a Goddess, known as the Hestia Giustiniani**

First half of the 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period, Hadrianic Era

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This statue would have looked old-fashioned to ancient Roman viewers. To produce this work, the artist copied a then-five-hundred-year-old Greek sculpture that likely represented a major Olympian goddess such as Hera, the goddess of marriage and family, or Demeter, the goddess of agriculture. She wears an ancient Greek peplos (a sleeveless outer garment), which hangs in folds resembling vertical columns. Both the figure's garment and style—how the drapery is rendered, the subject's unsmiling facial expression, and her front-facing pose—are hallmarks of the Greek "Severe" style dating to about 470 to 460 BC. Roman sculptors produced versions of Severe-style sculptures centuries later, possibly as a sober and dignified antidote to the often extravagant artistic styles of their own times.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Crouching Aphrodite**

1st century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble with gray veins

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

According to legend, Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love and beauty, was born from the foam of the sea. Here she crouches to bathe in a pose that recalls her marine birth. A sculpture like this would have been found in a domestic setting, like a bath or garden. This Aphrodite type is based on an earlier Greek sculpture and was frequently replicated by later Roman artists.

This work was later restored by Pietro Bernini (Italian, 1562–1629), the father of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, one of the most influential artists of the Baroque period. Restoring ancient sculptures was an essential part of an artist's training and served as an important source of income. Through restorations, artists and collectors aimed to enhance the artistic value of the sculptures.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Statue of Artemis**

Second half of the 2nd century

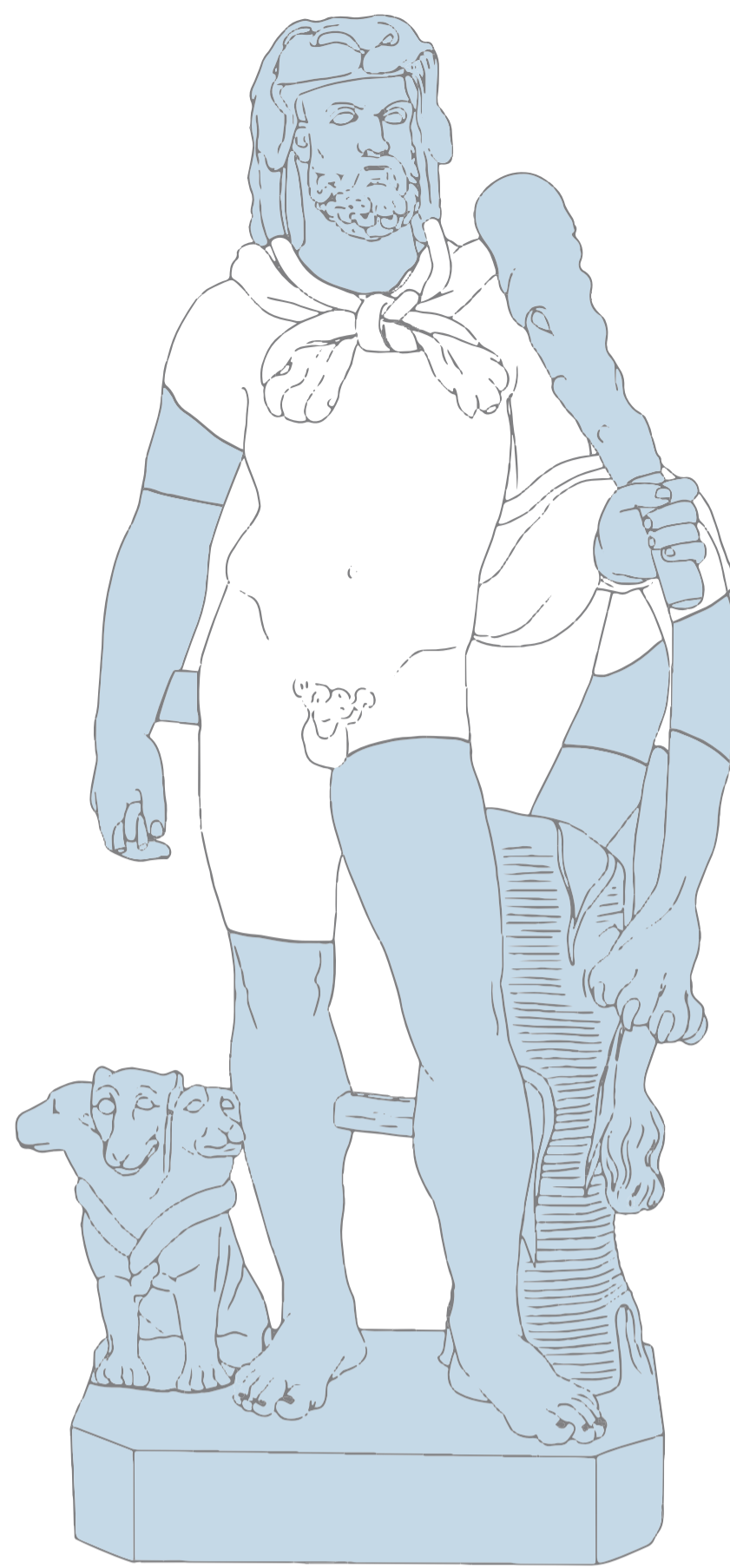
Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Artemis, known to the Romans as Diana, is the Greek goddess of the hunt and protector of wild animals. She wears a short chiton (tunic), appropriate to her role as goddess of the hunt, and sandals tied at the ankles. Her right arm reaches to grasp an arrow from a quiver slung across her back, while an attentive dog heels at her right foot.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Hercules**

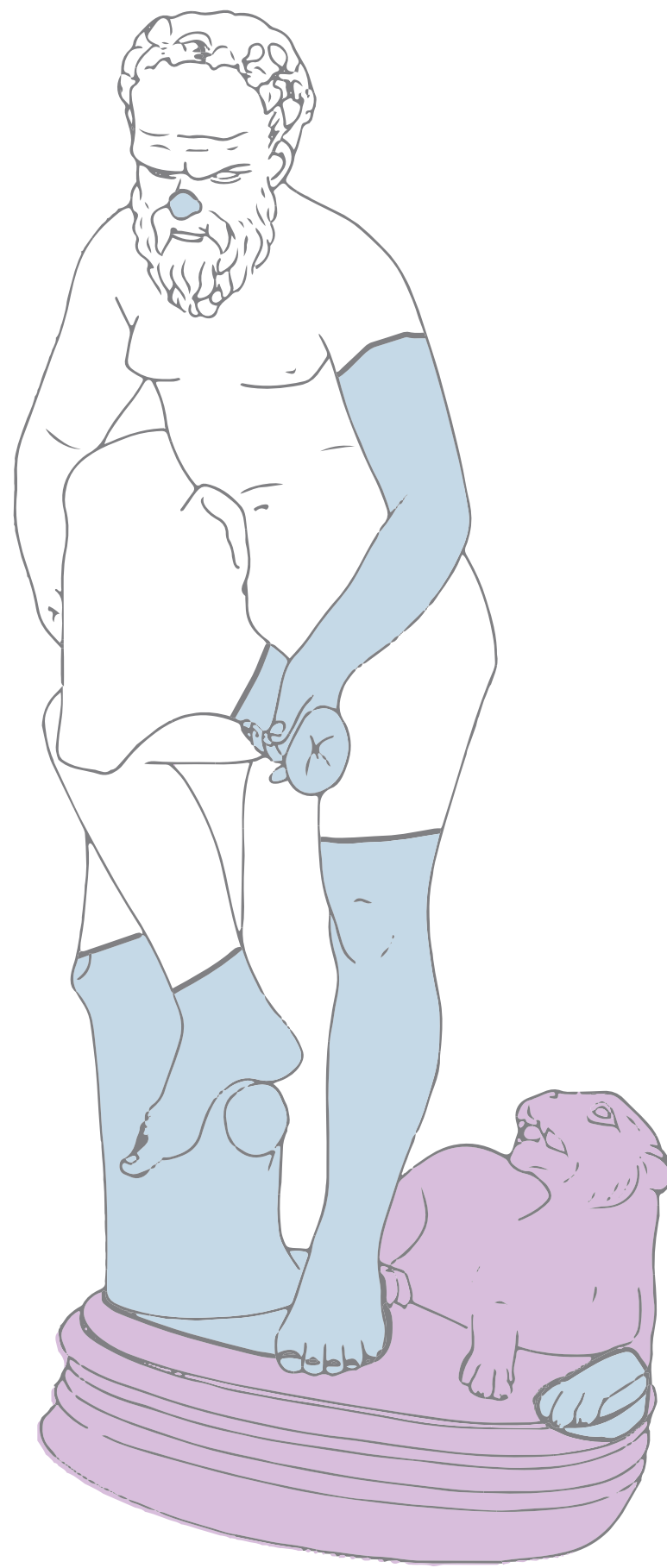
Late 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period, Antonine Era

Marble

Torlonia Collection, Rome

The Greek hero Hercules, son of the god Zeus and a mortal woman, is best known for the myth of the Twelve Labors, a series of twelve nearly impossible tasks he had to perform to atone for the murder of his family. In this statue, the lion skin draped over his head and around his arm and the club he holds in his left hand represent his first labor: killing the monstrous Nemean Lion, a beast with impenetrable skin. At Hercules's right foot is Cerberus, the three-headed dog who guards the entrance to the Underworld. Hercules had to bring him up from the Underworld alive to complete his final labor.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Statue of the Cesi-Type Silenus (Old Satyr)**

1st century

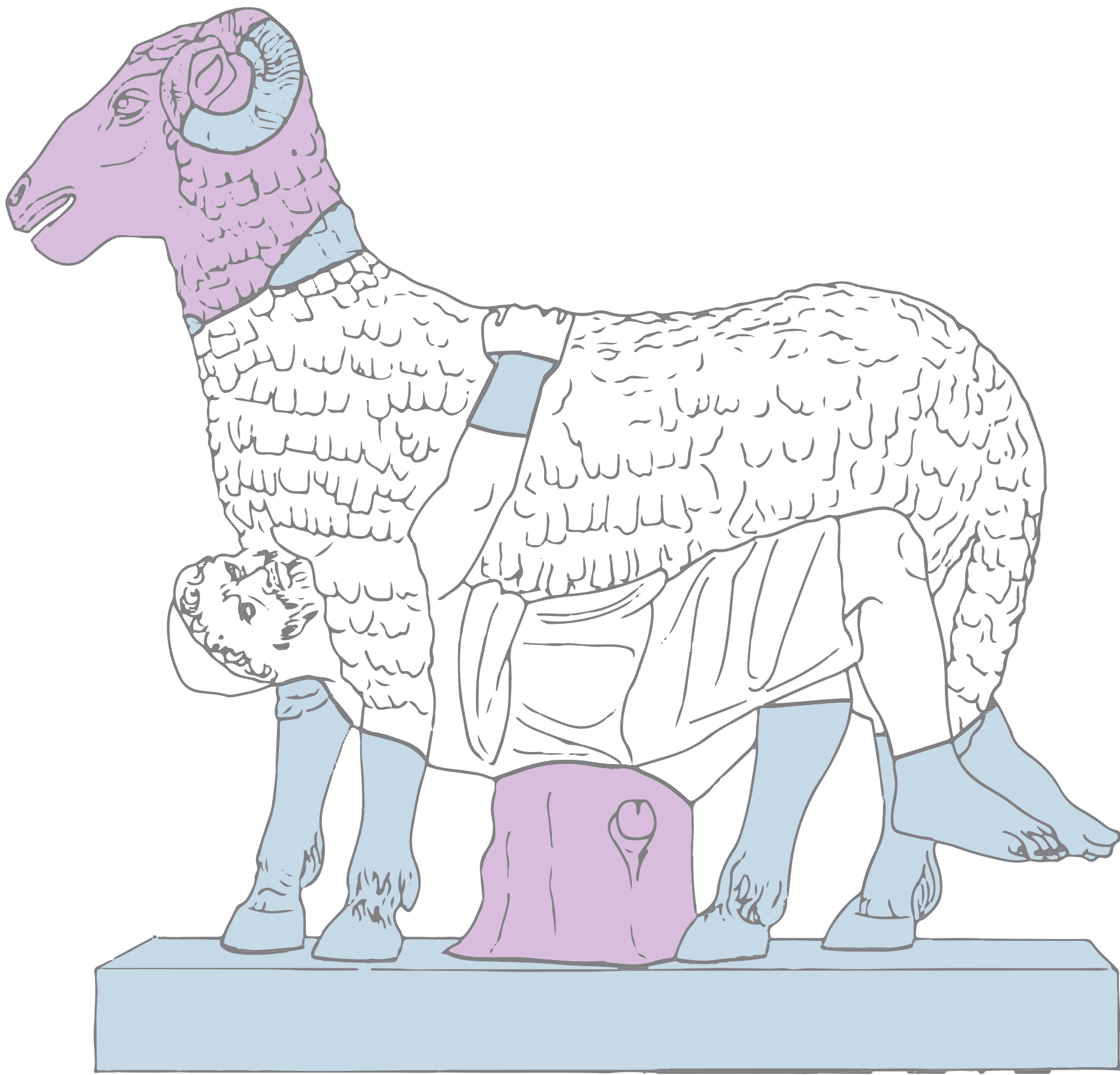
Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This statue depicts a satyr (part goat, part man) with a wineskin, a popular motif often found in gardens and other domestic settings. While more youthful satyrs were common, this sculpture illustrates a variation on the theme with an older satyr, called a silenus, who props up a wine skin with his raised right leg, covering his midsection. Satyrs were followers of Bacchus, the Roman god of wine and revelry, and known for their lustful and debaucherous behavior. The panther, a symbol associated with Bacchus, was added to the sculpture in the modern era.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Statue of Odysseus Beneath the Ram**

Late 1st century

Roman, Imperial Period, Flavian Era

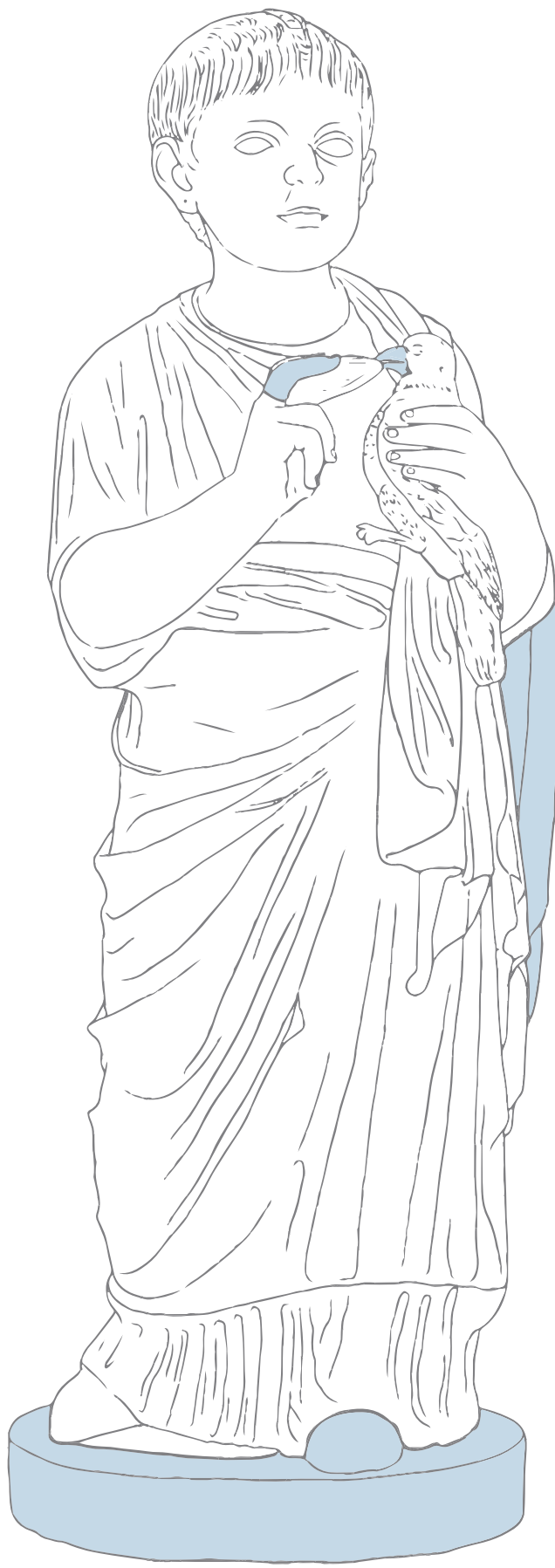
Marble

Provenance: Villa Albani, Rome

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Sheep were an important livestock for Romans and played a crucial role in Roman state religion as a common sacrifice to the gods. As such, ancient artists often used sheep in landscape paintings, poetry, and sculptures such as these.

This sheep has a stowaway: he is Odysseus, the hero of Homer's epic poem The Odyssey, making a daring escape from the lair of the monstrous Polyphemus, a Cyclops. In the poem, Odysseus blinds the Cyclops and then clings to the underside of a ram so that he can sneak away. Cyclops strokes the top of the ram's fleece and, sensing nothing out of the ordinary, allows the animal—and the hero—to leave the lair unscathed.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of a Girl Holding a Bird**

First half of 2nd century

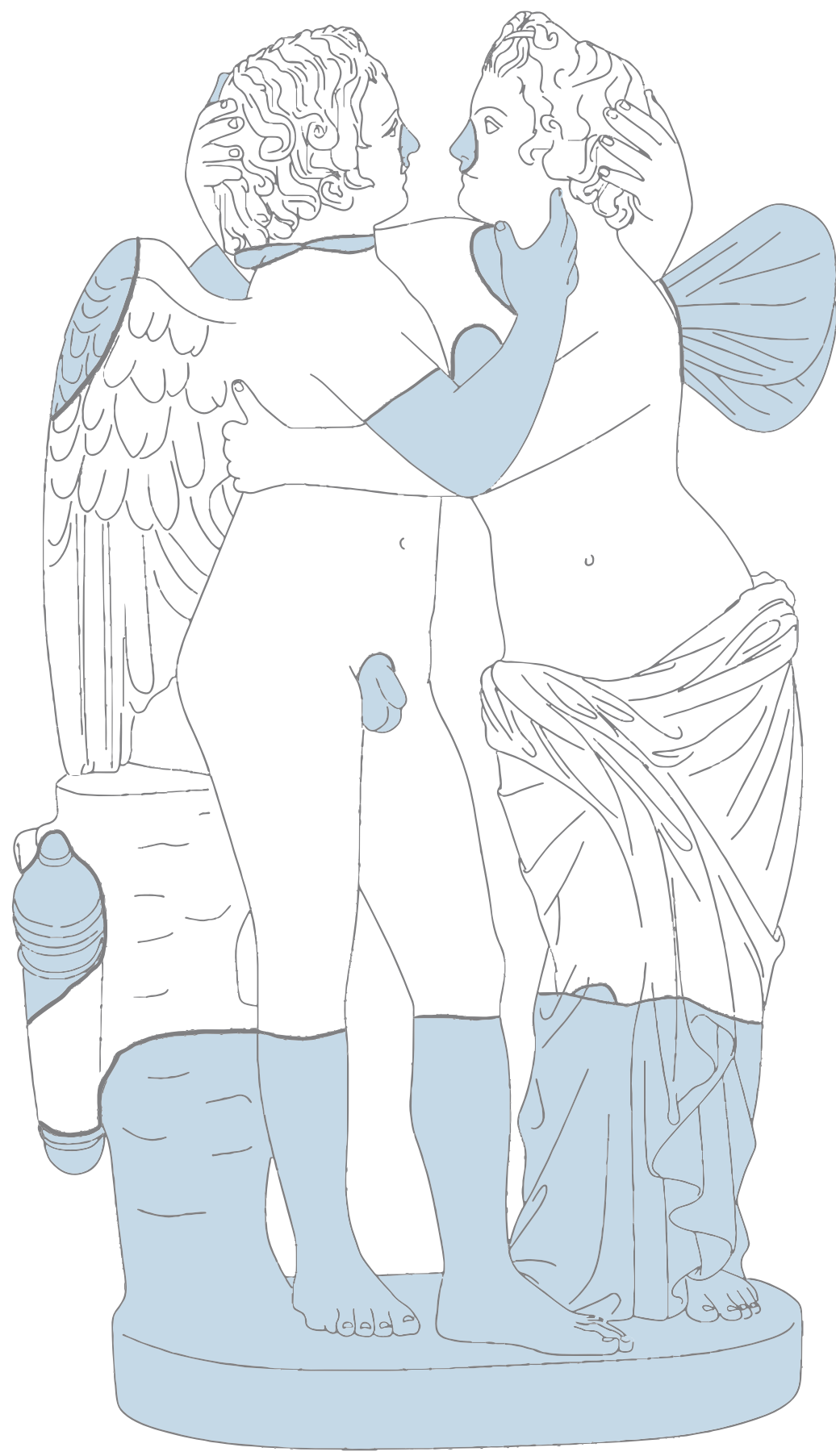
Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Found between Via Latina and Caffarella estate,  
Via Appia, Rome

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Our interpretations of statues change over time: this statue was identified in the nineteenth century as a little boy feeding a bird. Upon closer inspection, however, it appears to depict a young girl. One clue to support this reidentification is a hole on the right earlobe, where a real metal earring would have been attached. Both boys and girls wore this hairstyle, characterized by a braid down the middle of the head.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Cupid and Psyche**

Second half of 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Possibly found in Rome, near Castro Pretorio  
Torlonia Collection, Rome

As the Roman Empire grew, its leaders and people began to embrace a common history that claimed a Greek cultural past and ancestry for all Romans. Roman artists employed Greek styles and forms to promote Greco-Roman gods, their appearances, and their domains; in turn, these sculptures helped to codify and spread this new cultural identity across the empire.

The melding of Greek and Roman culture is given form in this Roman statue of Cupid and Psyche. Based on a late Hellenistic type, the charming couple features two petite figures—Cupid, the Roman god of love, with feathered wings; and Psyche, a maiden whose name is the Greek word for breath or soul, with butterfly wings—in an intimate embrace.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Statue of a Boy, restored as Harpocrates**

1st to 2nd century

Rome, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This statue depicts the Egyptian god Harpocrates. Based on Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris, the child god Harpocrates gained popularity in ancient Egypt, and his iconography spread to Rome. The gesture of holding his hand to his mouth, which comes from the Egyptian hieroglyph for child, was misinterpreted by Romans, who made him the god of secrecy and silence. Restorers in the seventeenth century transformed this ancient torso of a young boy into Harpocrates by adding a distinctive headpiece and the ancient but unrelated head of a young girl.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of the Infant Bacchus on a Ram**

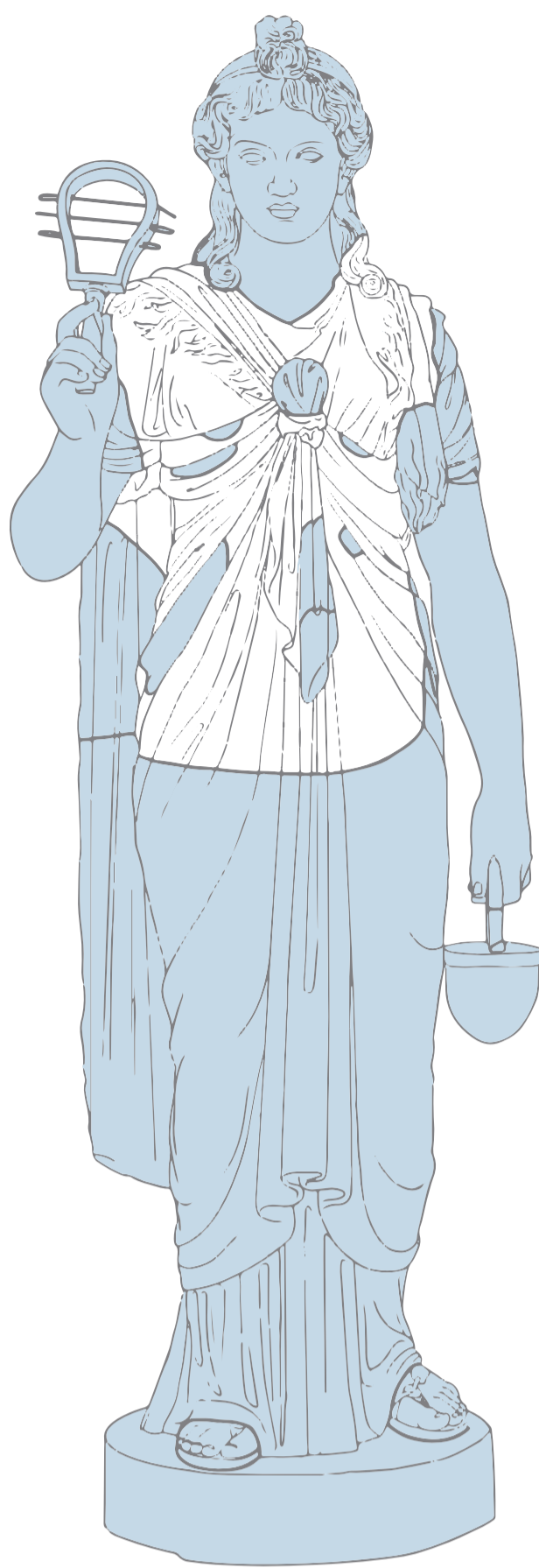
1st–2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Possibly 1878 Torlonia excavations at Caffarella estate, Via Appia, Rome

Torlonia Collection, Rome



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Isis**

2nd century

Rome, Imperial Period

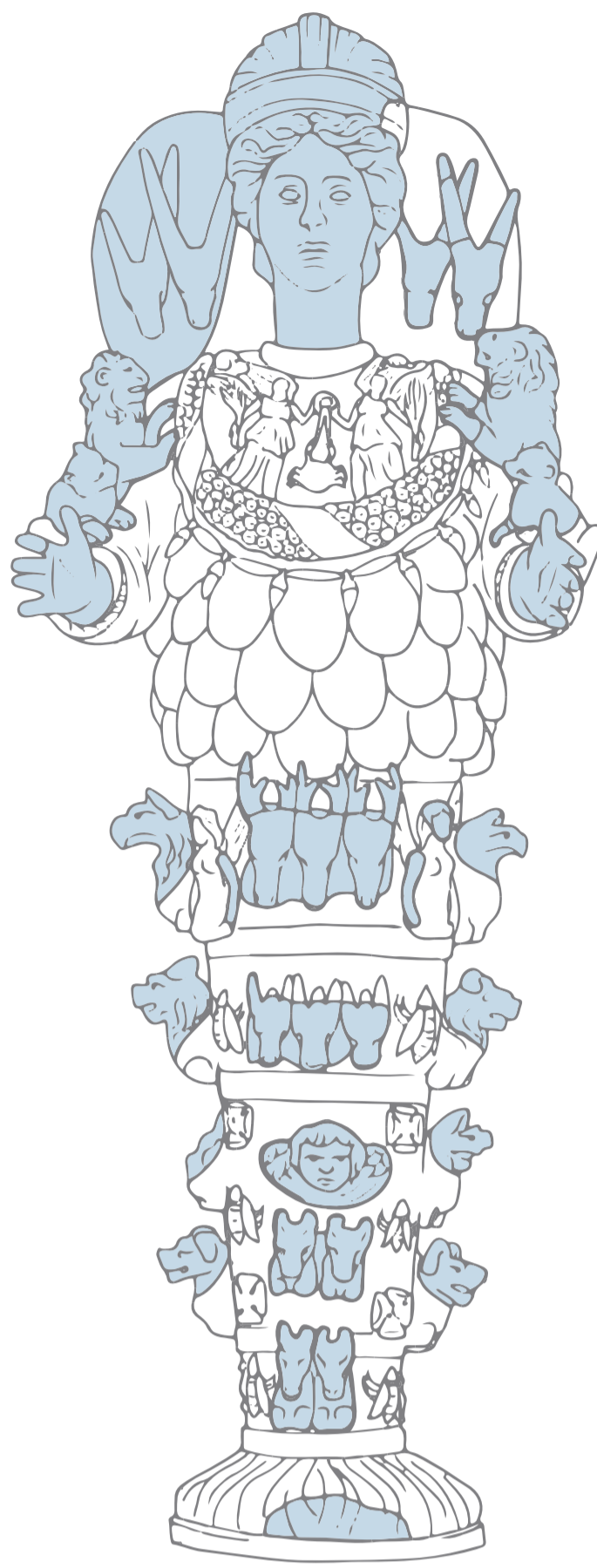
Gray and white marble

Provenance: Possibly Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

In 30 BC, Egypt became a Roman province. Partially as a result of this territorial expansion, a wave of Egyptomania—an enthusiastic embrace of Egyptian visual culture—spread across Rome and mainland Italy. This included establishing sanctuaries dedicated to Isis throughout Italy.

Only the torso of this sculpture is ancient. The fabric gathered into a knot at the chest—known as an Isis knot—indicates that it once depicted the Egyptian goddess. Unlike the nearby statue of Isis that was restored in the modern era as Ceres, this sculpture was correctly restored as Isis, with her characteristic attributes: the sistrum (rattle) and situla (pail).



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient ● Modern

## **Statue of Artemis Ephesia**

2nd century

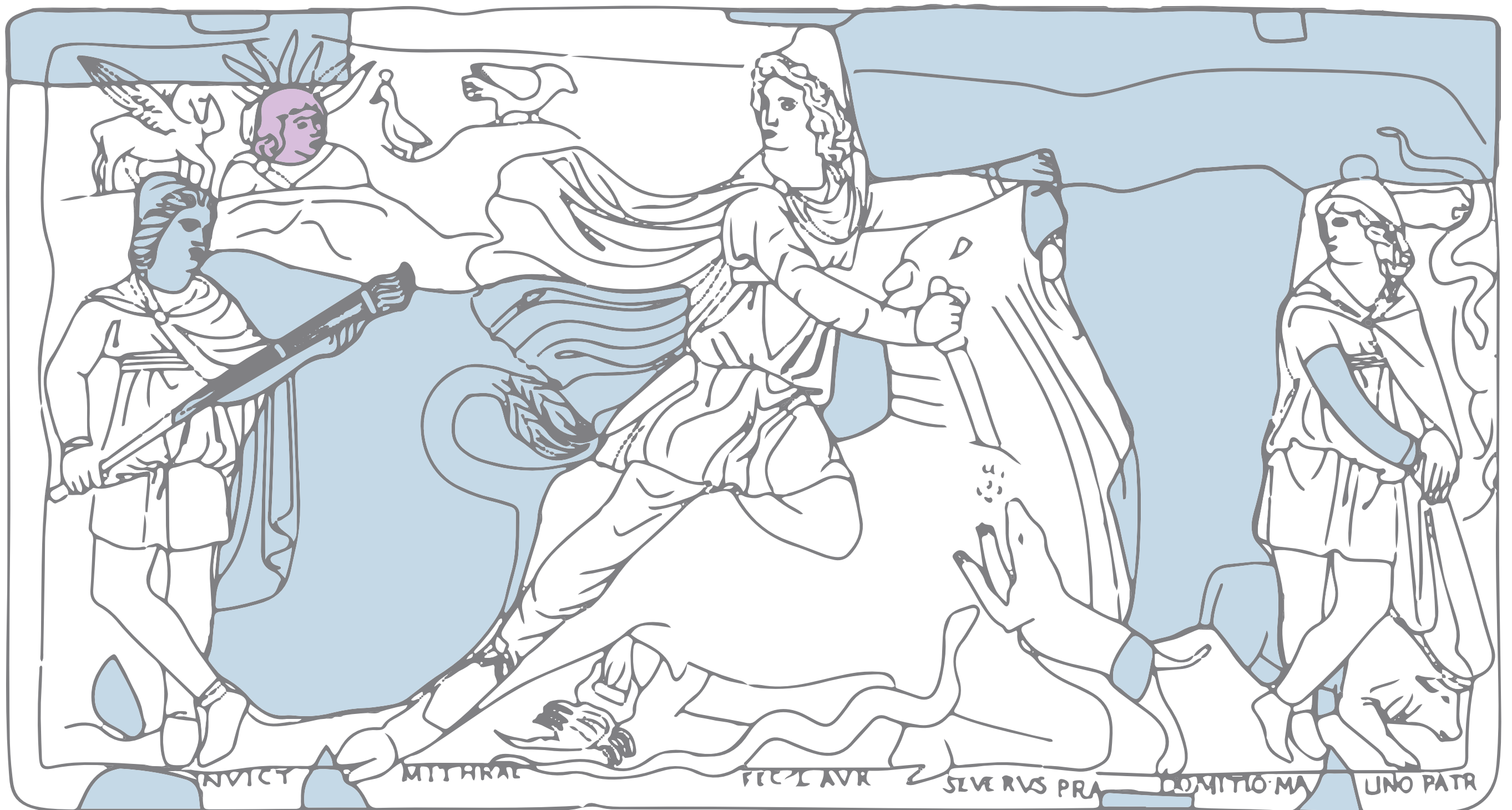
Roman, Imperial Period

Black and white marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This statue of Artemis (Roman Diana), the Greek goddess of the hunt, is adorned with animals and a breastplate with the zodiac symbols of Cancer, Scorpio, and Aries. Rows of pendulous breasts line her torso, symbolizing her roles as nurturer and protector. This version of Artemis was modeled after a cult statue that once stood in the sanctuary of Artemis of Ephesus on the west coast of Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). This enormous temple was one of the seven ancient wonders of the world, and the distinctive cult statue became famous throughout the diverse Roman Empire.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

## **Relief of Mithraic Sacrifice**

2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Found on the Quirinal Hill (Colonna Gardens), near Torre Mesa, Rome

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Mithras, the ancient Iranian god of light and justice, first gained popularity in the Roman Empire through members of the military. Soldiers stationed along the eastern borders of the empire were attracted to his associations with victory over death. His eastern origins are evident in his costume: his trousers and cap derive from ancient Persian dress. He is commonly depicted slaying a bull so that its blood can be used to fertilize the earth—a ritual his worshippers sometimes reenacted in his honor.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Statue of Isis, restored as Ceres**

2nd–early 3rd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Gray and white marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This sculpture underwent a transformation from its original form. The gray marble torso is ancient and originally would have represented the Egyptian goddess Isis, who was a powerful healer and protector, making her a model mother. Here, she is identifiable by the so-called Isis knot at her chest. Modern restorers, however, added new components, including the arms holding a stalk of grain, effectively changing the subject of the sculpture to Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture.

# Strategies of Succession

Blood is not thicker than water. The Roman Empire in the second century was held together by a series of strategic adoptions and marriages. Childless marriages and high rates of infant mortality left imperial families without male heirs for multiple generations. In the absence of a son, a reigning emperor would select a capable male candidate in his orbit to become his successor. Strategic marriages with imperial women also linked preferred adoptees to the reigning emperor's family. For these women, proximity to the emperor brought both power and peril: they often operated behind the scenes to shape the future of the family, but doing so risked incurring the emperor's wrath.

Images of emperors and their family members proliferated across the empire's provinces, deploying similar hairstyles and facial features to promote a sense of dynastic continuity and familial connection. Portraits of emperors were designed to be instantly recognizable to ancient viewers and are still easily identifiable today. Portraits of imperial women, on the other hand, often closely resemble those of private high-ranking women, making it difficult for scholars to distinguish between the two. New research has led a number of the Torlonia portraits displayed here to be reidentified as images of anonymous private women—indicating that there is yet more research to be done.

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# ROMAN IMPERIAL FAMILY TREE *of the* SECOND CENTURY



**AUGUSTUS**

The first emperor  
63 BC–AD 14; reigned 27 BC–AD 14



**TRAJAN**

53–117; reigned 98–117



**PLOTINA**

Before 70–122/123

**MARCIANA**

About 50–112  
Trajan's sister

**MATIDIA**

Before 68–119

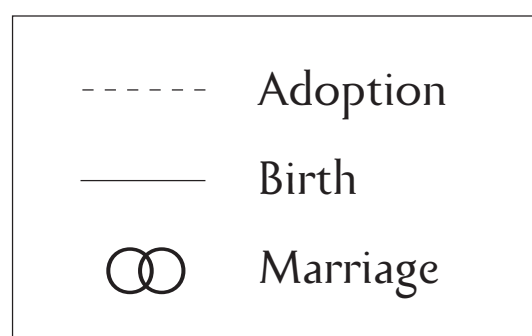


**HADRIAN**

76–138; reigned 117–138  
Adopted by Trajan

**SABINA**

Mid-80s–137



**ANTONINUS PIUS**

86–161; reigned 138–161  
Adopted by Hadrian

**FAUSTINA THE ELDER**

About 97–140



**MARCUS AURELIUS**

121–180; reigned 161–180  
Adopted by Antoninus Pius



**FAUSTINA THE YOUNGER**

About 130–175/176



**COMMODUS**

161–192; co-reign with  
Marcus Aurelius 177–180,  
solo reign 180–192

**CRISPINA**

Birth year unknown  
By 191/192



**LUCILLA**

148/150–182



**LUCIUS VERUS**

130–169; reigned 161–169  
Adopted by Antoninus Pius



**SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS**

145–211; reigned 193–211  
Retroactively adopts himself  
as the son of Marcus Aurelius



**JULIA DOMNA**

About 170–217

**CARACALLA**

188–217

**GETA**

189–211

**Back to Top**



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Emperor on Throne with Portrait of Augustus**

1st century

Roman, Imperial Period

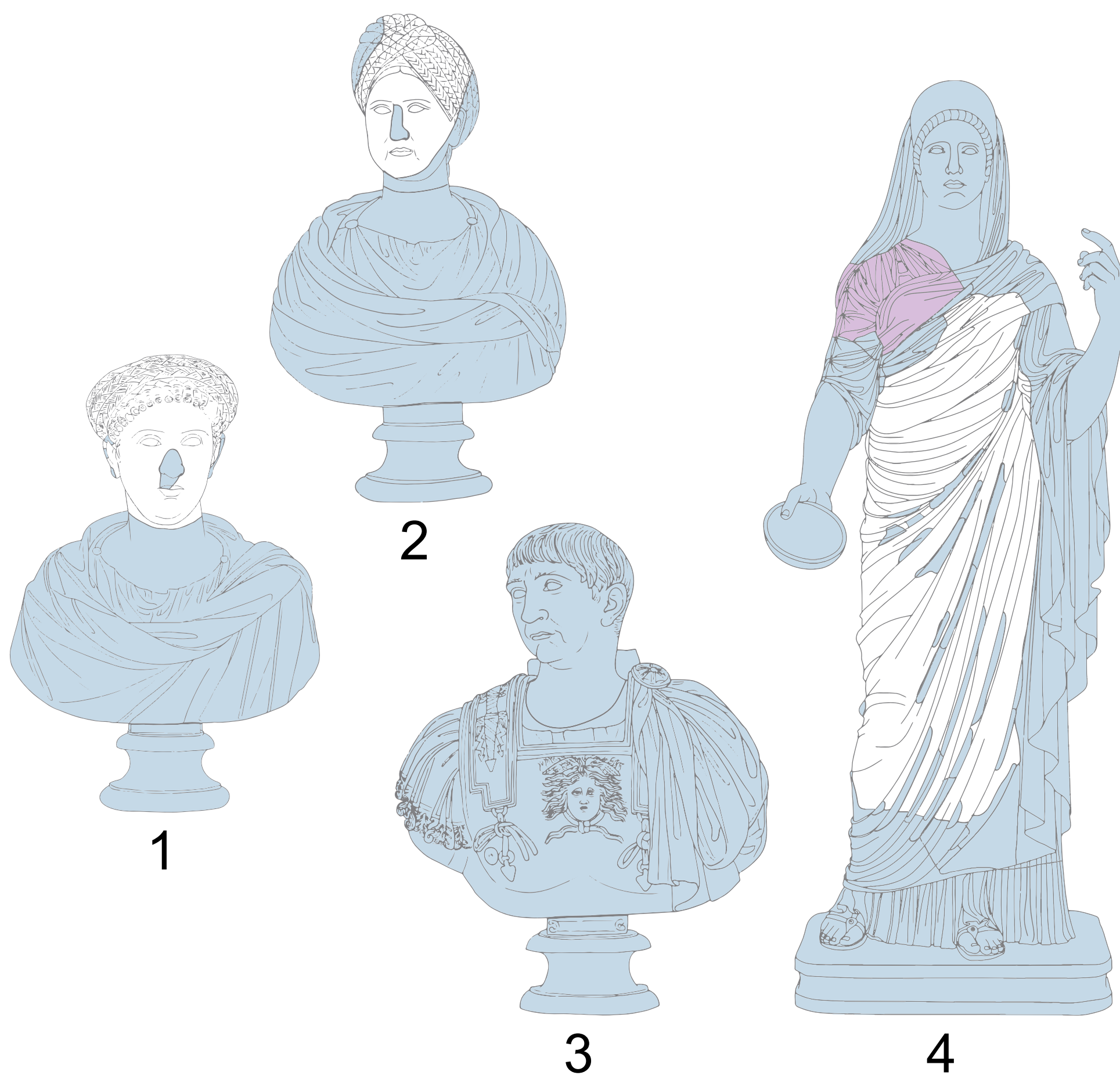
Marble

Provenance: Possibly found in Bovillae, Italy

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This statue could either represent an emperor or a god. Its pose refers to a fifth-century BC statue of the Greek god Zeus that once stood in the sanctuary of Olympia in Greece; the same pose and symbols were later employed in images of Jupiter, the supreme deity of the Roman pantheon. The head is a modern addition that transforms the work into a portrait of Augustus, the first emperor of Rome. During his reign, Augustus carefully crafted his image and persona, identifying himself not as an almighty ruler but as “first among equals.” After he died, however, Augustus was the first emperor to be shown in this costume and pose, which directly equated his rule over the empire to that of Jupiter over the cosmos.

In contrast to the earlier Republican style, which emphasized leaders’ aging features, Augustus’s portraits presented the emperor as unchanging and eternally youthful to convey the stability of his authority. Subsequent emperors from the first through early third centuries followed Augustus’s lead in their commissioned portraits.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient   ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

**1 Portrait of a Woman formerly known as Marciana**

120–30

Roman, Imperial Period, Trajanic Era

Marble

Provenance: Studio Cavaceppi

**2 Portrait of a Woman formerly known as Matidia**

First half of the 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: 1856 Torlonia excavations at Porto (ancient Portus)

**3 Portrait of Trajan**

17–18th century

Roman, Imperial Period, Severan Era

Marble

Provenance: Possibly Giustiniani Collection or Studio Cavaceppi

**4 Statue of a Woman restored as Plotina**

1st–2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

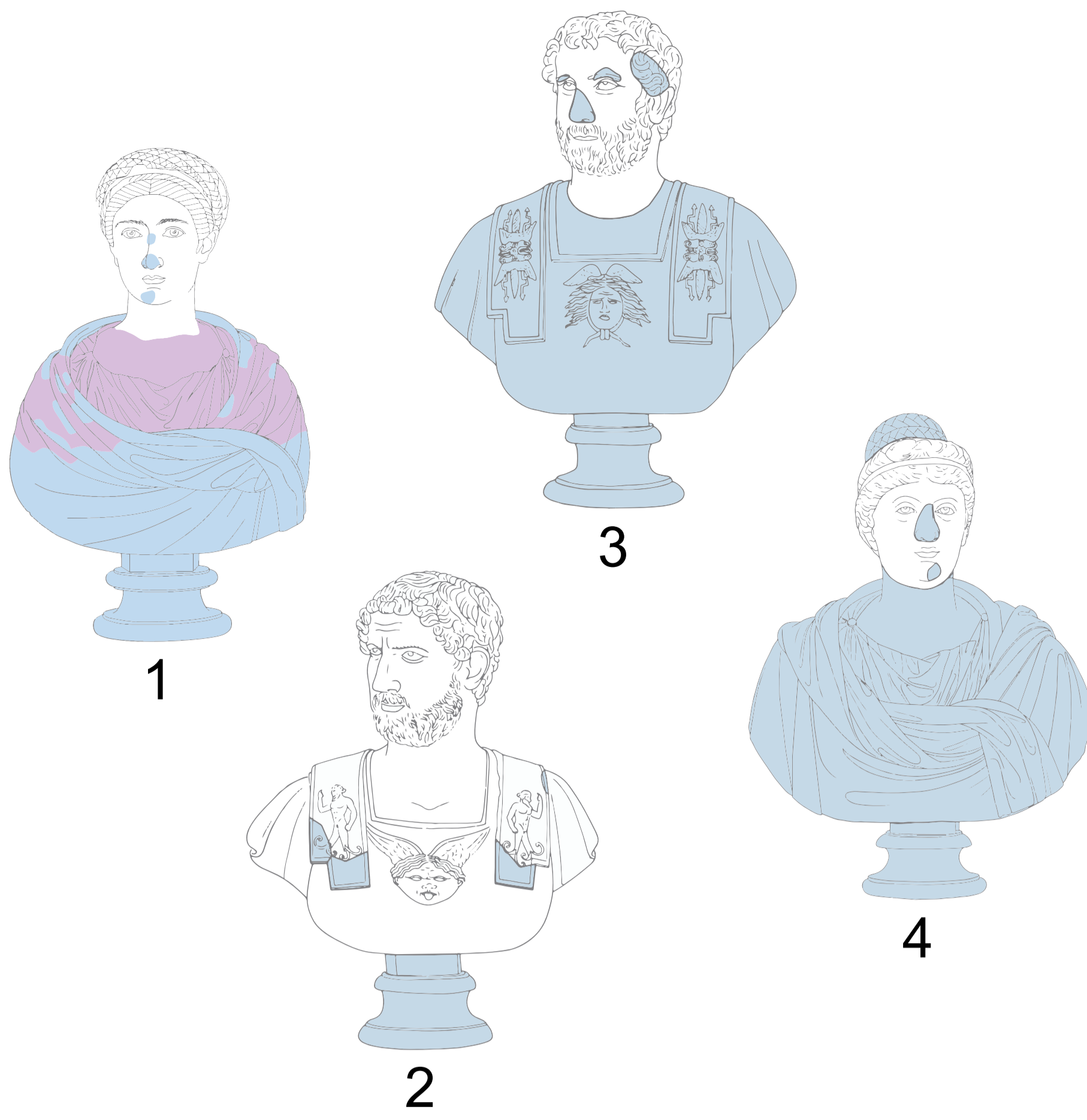
Marble

Provenance: Studio Cavaceppi

All works: Torlonia Collection, Rome

Trajan’s extraordinary career elevated him from his boyhood in Spain to ruler of the Roman Empire. He became emperor thanks to his military prowess and political acumen, and he would expand the empire to its greatest size. Trajan and his wife Plotina had no children of their own, requiring a creative approach to establishing a new imperial dynasty. Trajan elevated the status of Plotina and his female blood relatives, including his sister, Marciana, and her daughter, Matidia, by featuring them on coins, among other honors. These actions connected their prestige with his own reputation as emperor.

Despite Trajan’s efforts to highlight these women as key members of the imperial family, very few marble portraits of them survive. Two of the busts shown here were identified in the nineteenth century as depicting Marciana and Matidia, probably because their hairstyles resemble those worn by these women. In all likelihood, these portraits depict anonymous, elite women who fashioned themselves after their female imperial contemporaries.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### 1 **Portrait of a Woman formerly known as Sabina**

Second half of the 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

### 2 **Portrait of Hadrian**

c. 130

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Villa Albani, Rome

### 3 **Portrait of Antoninus Pius**

Mid-2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period, Antonine Era

Marble

Provenance: Possibly Giustiniani Collection

### 4 **Portrait of a Woman formerly known as Faustina the Elder**

Mid-2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

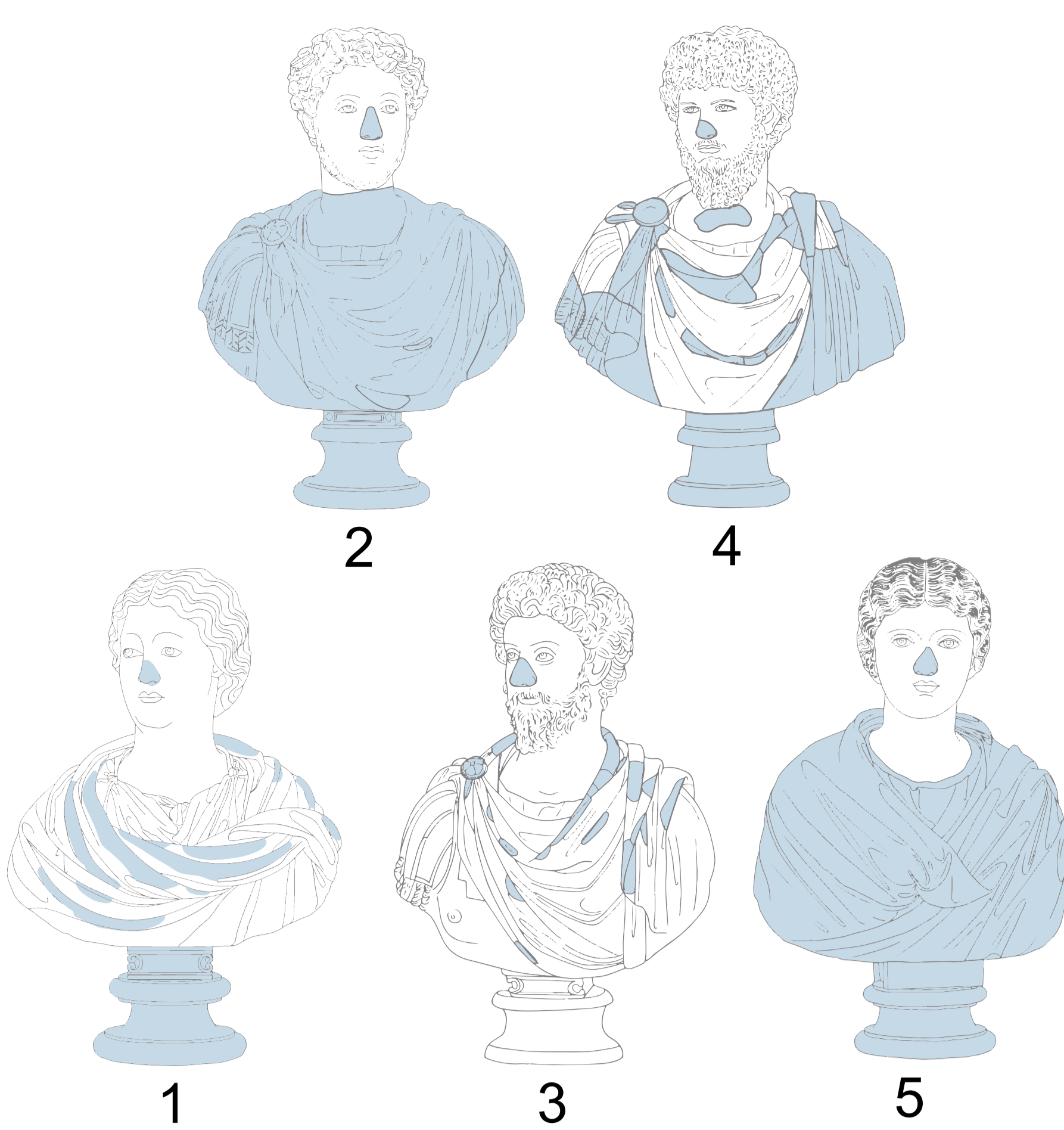
Marble

All works: Torlonia Collection, Rome

By all accounts, Hadrian and his wife Sabina had a contentious marriage. Hadrian needed Sabina, however, for her direct connection to her great uncle Trajan. During Hadrian's reign, Sabina was widely represented in portraits, likely as a visual demonstration of his connection to Trajan's prestigious family and to bolster his own legacy.

Without children of his own, Hadrian handpicked Antoninus Pius as his successor. Antoninus descended from a powerful family, but his wife, Faustina the Elder, had even more impressive connections and might have been Sabina's niece. In an effort to legitimize his newly attained power, Antoninus assumed a visual resemblance to his predecessor through portraiture: notice how both emperors wear short, cropped beards and tousled curls.

Faustina the Elder died early in her husband's reign, but her image loomed large in imperial propaganda long after her death. She was the first imperial wife in three generations to bear children, and her imagery celebrated her fertility. The portrait of an unknown woman seen here resembles portraits of Faustina and was once thought to represent her.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient ● Modern

1 **Portrait of a Woman formerly known as Faustina the Younger**

c. 160

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Possibly found in Acquatraversa, Italy

2 **Portrait of Young Marcus Aurelius**

144–47

Roman, Imperial Period, Antonine Era

Marble

Provenance: Campus Martius, Piazza Colonna; then possibly Scalabrini Collection

3 **Portrait of Marcus Aurelius**

Late 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period, Antonine Era

Marble

Provenance: Possibly found in Ardea, Italy

4 **Portrait of Lucius Verus**

Second half of the 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period, Antonine Era

Marble

Provenance: Possibly found in Acquatraversa, Italy

5 **Portrait of a Woman, formerly known as Lucilla**

150–80

Roman, Imperial Period, Antonine Era

Marble

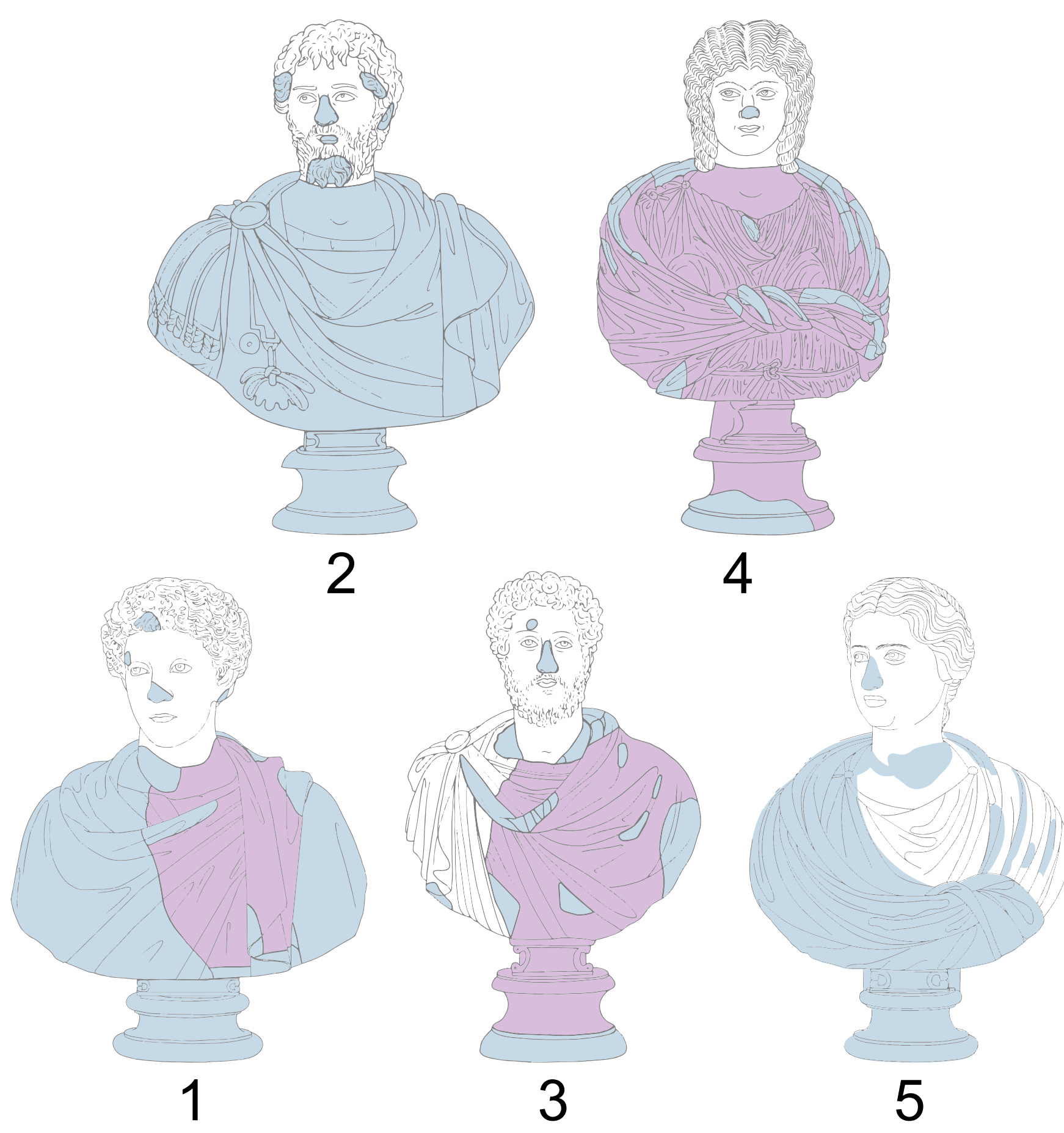
Provenance: Possibly found on Roma Vecchia estate, Rome

All works: Torlonia Collection, Rome

Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus were sixteen and seven, respectively, when they learned they would become co-emperors of Rome. Their ascension was the result of ongoing strategies to ensure dynastic continuity. Marcus, designated the primary heir, married Faustina the Younger, the daughter of the reigning emperor. Later, Lucius Verus, Marcus's adopted brother, married Faustina the Younger's daughter Lucilla, strengthening the bonds between the two rulers.

Fictive familial connections between the two men were reinforced through visual similarities in their portraiture, including thick, curly hairstyles and long beards. Individualized facial features, such as the distinctive shape of each man's eyes, helped to distinguish between them.

Marcus's wife, Faustina the Younger, occupied an unparalleled position as the daughter, wife, mother, and mother-in-law of four different emperors, as well as the mother of as many as fourteen children. Like Marcus, she was depicted in portraits from a fairly young age. In the example displayed here, she is likely in her early thirties, perhaps around the time of her husband's rise to power.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

- Ancient    ● Modern
- Ancient but not original to the sculpture

**1 Portrait of Young Commodus**

170–80  
 Roman, Imperial Period, Antonine Era  
 Marble

**2 Portrait of Septimius Severus**

Early 3rd century  
 Roman, Imperial Period, Severan Era  
 Marble  
 Provenance: Possibly Giustiniani Collection; or  
 Palazzo Torlonia in Piazza Venezia, Rome

**3 Portrait of Commodus**

Late 2nd century  
 Roman, Imperial Period, Antonine Era  
 Marble  
 Provenance: Possibly Studio Cavaceppi

**4 Portrait of Julia Domna**

Early 3rd century  
 Roman, Imperial Period, Severan Era  
 Marble  
 Provenance: Possibly found in Veio, Italy

**5 Portrait of a Woman formerly known as Crispina**

Second half of the 2nd century  
 Roman, Imperial Period  
 Marble  
 Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

All works: Torlonia Collection, Rome

After four generations of imperial adoptions, a male heir was finally born—yet this auspicious occasion led to the ruling dynasty’s downfall. Commodus, the eldest surviving son of Marcus Aurelius and Faustina the Younger, inherited an empire largely at peace but grew into an unhinged tyrant. He sentenced many who challenged his rule to death and executed his wife, Crispina, after the marriage failed to produce an heir. Commodus was assassinated in 192, throwing the empire into a state of disarray.

Out of the chaos, Septimius Severus seized power. The first emperor to hail from North Africa, Severus had no familial connection to the previous dynasty, but he retroactively adopted himself into it. Calling himself a son of Marcus Aurelius and a brother of Commodus, he justified his newfound authority through this invented lineage.

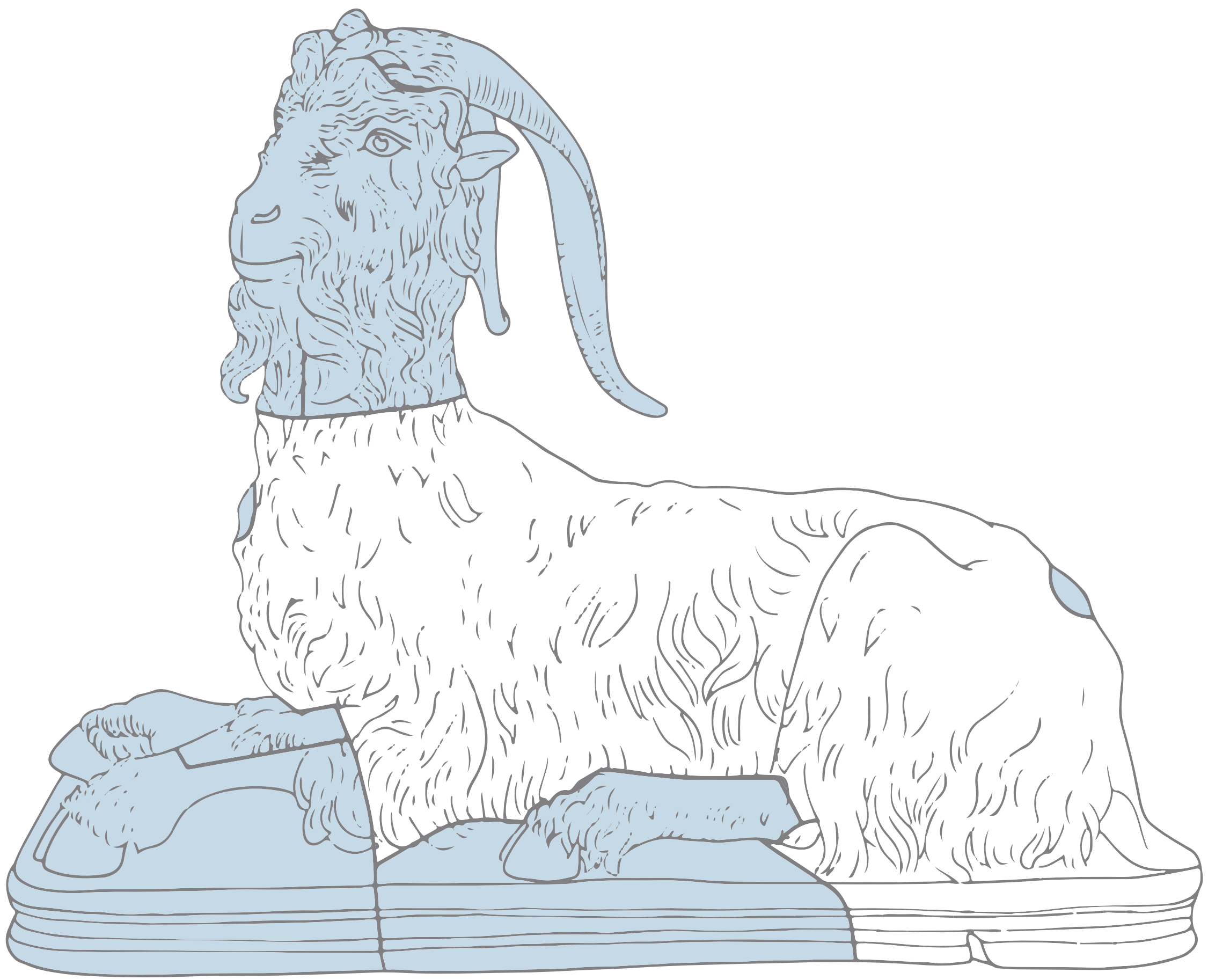
As Severan power solidified over time, portraits of Severus and his wife Julia Domna, who came from an elite family in Roman Syria, diverged from those of their predecessors. As seen here, Severus wore corkscrew curls over his forehead with a divided beard, and Julia wore an elaborate wig.

# Restoration & Reconstruction

Every work in the Torlonia Collection has lived multiple lives over the centuries. Their appearances and meanings inevitably change over time: pieces break off, paint wears away, and surfaces get scratched. Beginning in the 1500s, collectors who wanted complete artworks to adorn their villas and estates would hire artists to “restore” ancient objects to their own taste. Artists and professional restorers often recarved, added new components to, cleaned, or reworked ancient sculptures.

Today museums and collectors often prefer fragmentary objects for their presumed “authenticity.” This impulse emerged in part from institutional collecting in the 1800s, when museums eagerly sought out objects seemingly untouched by modern hands. However, time waits for no one; even unrestored objects have seen their surfaces change along with their contexts.

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These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of a Resting Goat**

Body: late 1st century; head: 17th century, attributed to Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680)

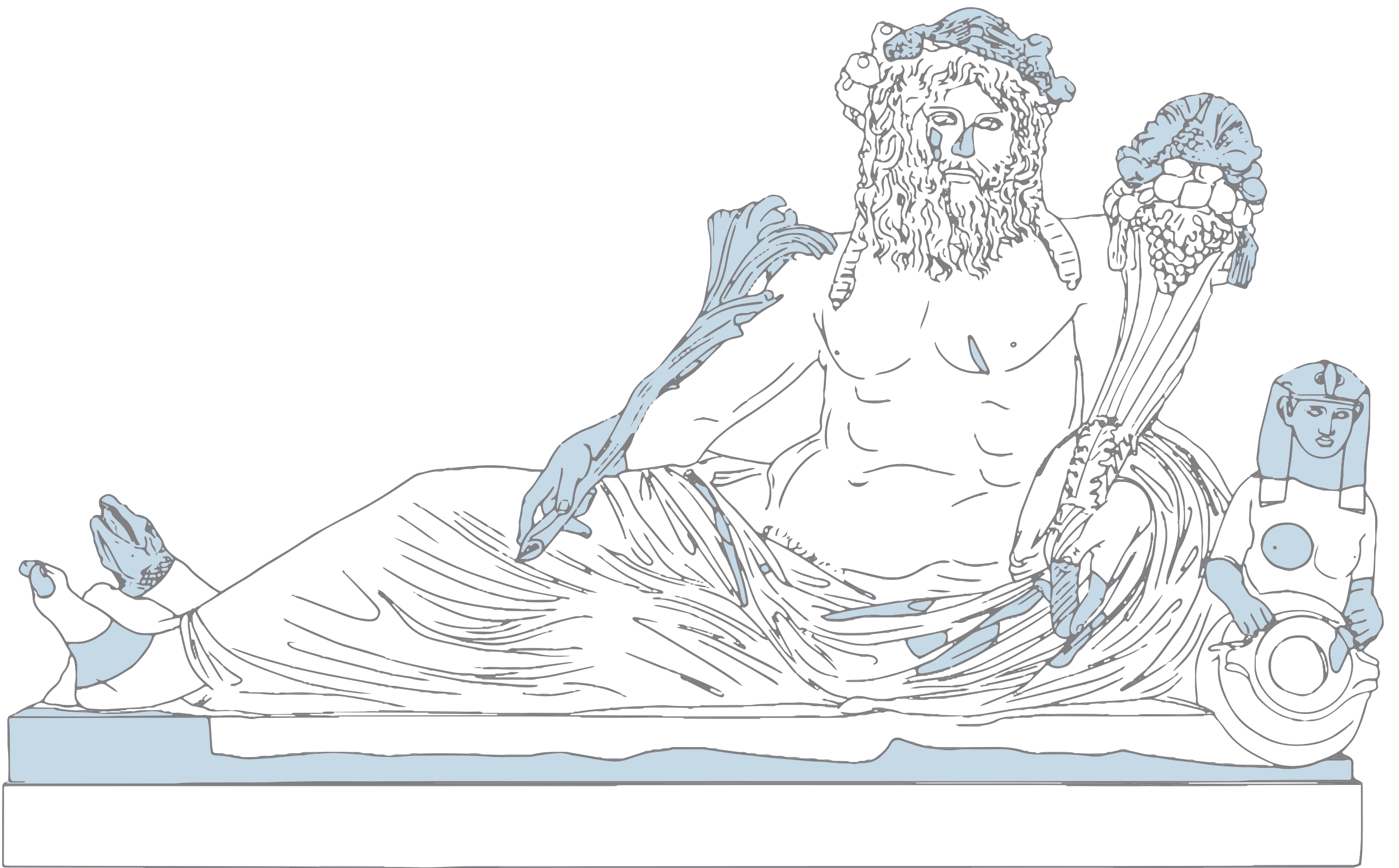
Roman, Imperial Period, Trajanic Era

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Just as bodies accrue scars, piercings, tattoos, wrinkles, and other changes over time, sculptures also bear the marks of their age. Their evolving appearances reflect the ways their meanings have shifted over the centuries. In the case of this statue of a goat, only the body is ancient. An Italian art collector commissioned the young Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who would go on to become one of the most renowned sculptors of the Baroque period, to restore the fragmentary work. Bernini carefully brought the fragment back to a whole, adding a jaunty head covered in luscious curls.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **The Torlonia Nile, formerly the Barberini-Albani Nile**

1st century

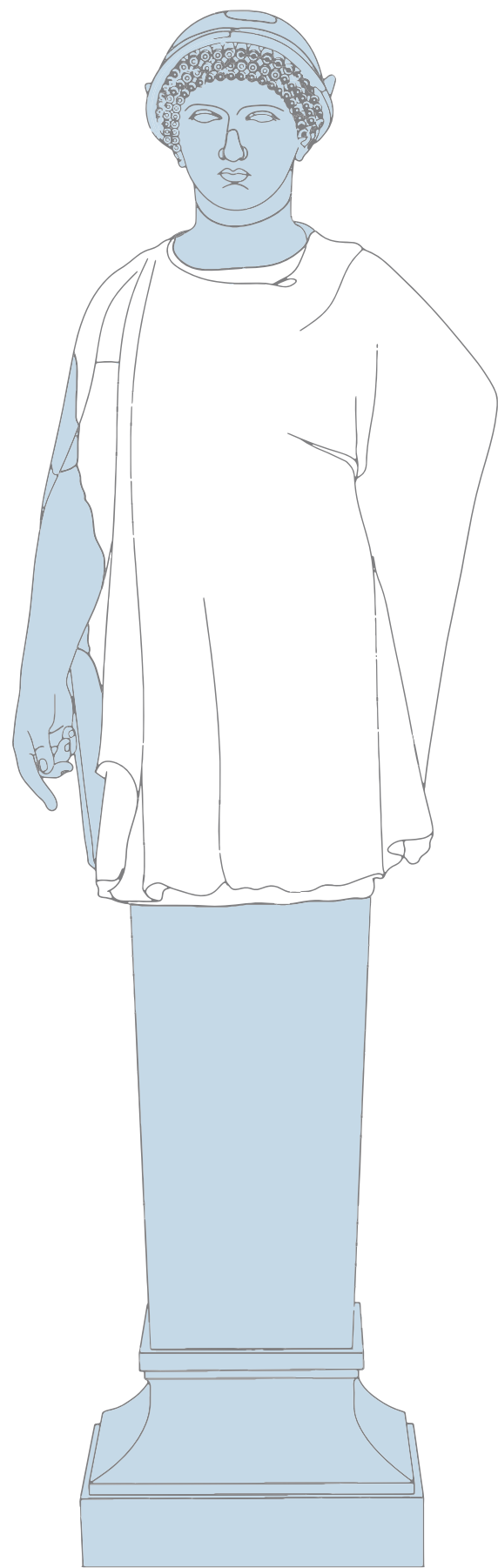
Roman, Imperial Period, Flavian Era

Gray marble

Provenance: Found in 1633 in the countryside north of Rome; Villa Barberini, Castel Gandolfo; Villa Albani, Rome

Torlonia Collection, Rome

To an ancient Roman viewer, elements of this sculpture would have immediately revealed its subject: the Nile River. Ancient Greeks and Romans often personified rivers by depicting them as reclining men. The cornucopia represents Egypt's role as the breadbasket of the Roman Empire, while the crocodile is native to the Nile ecosystem. The dark gray marble also serves as a visual cue, as the color could recall the layer of fertile silt that was deposited on the farmlands after the annual flooding of the Nile River.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Mercury in the Form of a Herm**

2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Excavated at Curi, Italy (ancient Cures)

Torlonia Collection, Rome

A herm is a sculpture with a head (and sometimes a body, as seen here) on top and a plain rectangular base on bottom. Herms were often used in antiquity to mark boundaries outdoors, much like a fence or a hedge. The type dates back to ancient Greece, where herms were placed at intersections or city borders, as they were thought to ward off danger. The name is derived from the Greek messenger god, Hermes (Roman Mercury), who was also the god of travelers.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Athena**

Late 1st century BC–early 1st century AD

Roman, Imperial Period, Augustan Era

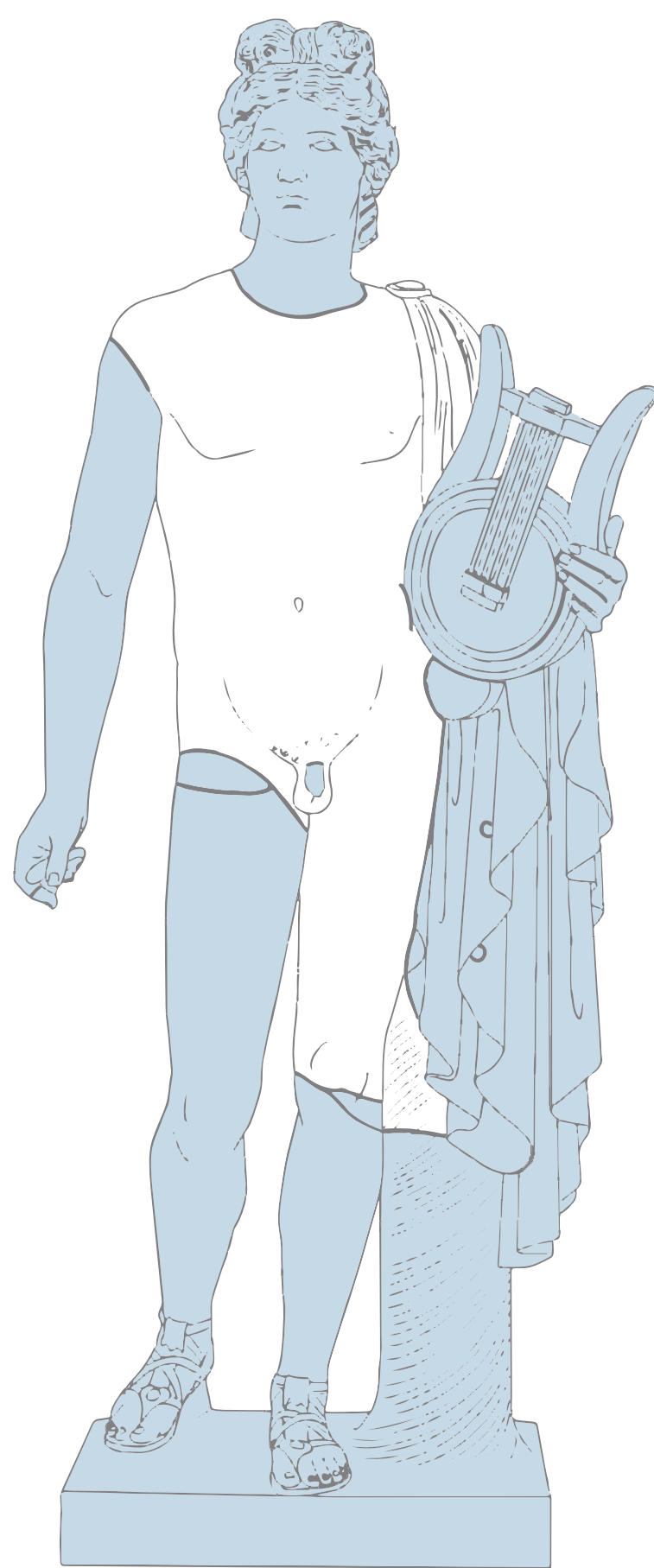
Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This Roman statue of Athena, the Greek the goddess of wisdom, is based on one of the most famous sculptures from ancient Greece: the monumental Athena Parthenos, housed in the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis. The original, made in the 5th century BC, was lost long ago but was described in Greek writings. This statue, made several centuries later, preserves Athena Parthenos's most iconic feature: the breastplate covered in snakes and adorned with the face of the gorgon Medusa, a figure from Greek mythology who has writhing, living serpents for hair.

The left arm holding an owl is a later modification, likely made after the statue entered the Torlonia collection. The owl is the symbol of both the city of Athens and the Torlonia family.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern



The Apollo Belvedere was unearthed in Rome in 1489.

Apollo Belvedere. Roman, 2nd century. Marble, 88 1/8 x 46 1/2 x 30 1/4 in. (224 × 118 × 77 cm). Vatican Museums, Rome. Inv. no. MV.1015.0.0.

### **Statue of Apollo**

2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Possibly found in Ostia, Italy

Torlonia Collection, Rome

An artist in the nineteenth century restored this sculpture with a clear inspiration in mind: the Apollo Belvedere, one of the most famous sculptures from antiquity. The restored head and sandaled feet of the Torlonia Apollo are a direct quotation of this famous statue, which has been housed at the Vatican in Rome since 1508.

In ancient Rome, sculptures adorned all types of public structures. Artworks were selected according to a building's function, following the Roman aesthetic principle of decorum, or appropriateness. As the god of music, poetry, and prophecy, this statue of Apollo holding a lyre could have been displayed in an amphitheater.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Head of Mars**

First half of 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period, Hadrian Era

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Mars, the Roman god of warfare and agriculture, was considered a divine ancestor and protector of the Roman people. This head of Mars wears a helmet that was once adorned with images reinforcing his association with war. The remains of what are likely griffin—a symbol of the god's vengeful nature—appear in relief on the raised cheek pieces. Across the visor, the fragmentary image of an eagle, later restored as a cupid, might have evoked the eagle emblems that crowned the military standards of Roman legions.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Statue of Aphrodite with Eros and Ketos**

First half of 2nd century

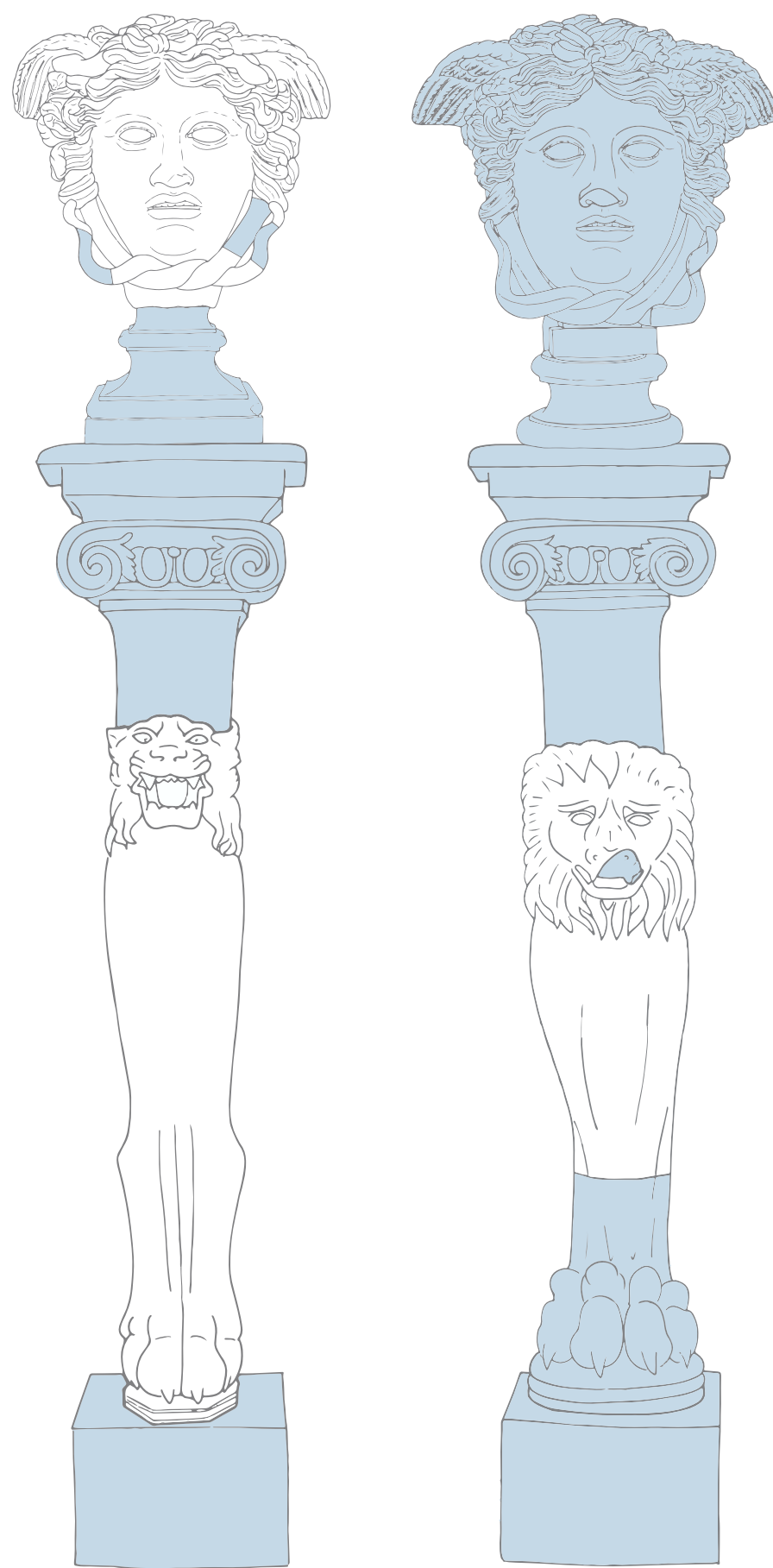
Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

The ketos, a serpentlike sea monster, at Aphrodite's feet has struck many a scholarly viewer as odd; typically, Aphrodite is accompanied by a dolphin. Representations of Aphrodite and a ketos are exceedingly rare in antiquity but not entirely unheard of. Look carefully: is this an issue of an ancient artist taking a bit of artistic license or a later restorer making an alternation? The sea creature, be it dolphin or ketos, is meant to recall the goddess's birth from the sea.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

Left: **Rondanini-Type Medusa on a Trapezophoros (Table Leg) with a Griffin's Head**

2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Right: **Rondanini-Type Medusa on a Trapezophoros (Table Leg) with a Lion's Head**

2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

These two decorative objects reflect a common practice of Renaissance and Baroque collectors: creating composite sculptures from both ancient and modern pieces. A sculptor attached the ancient Medusa head to another ancient but unrelated table leg, creating the work seen on the left. At some point, the collector of these objects desired another work of the same kind. They commissioned a replica Medusa head to sit atop another ancient table leg (at right), thus creating a matching pair.

# Torlonia Excavations

Remnants of the ancient past are everywhere in Italy—some mere inches below the soil. Driven by an interest in their collective history, people in Rome have, for centuries, searched below the ground for art and artifacts from antiquity.

As one of the largest landowners in Rome in the nineteenth century, Alessandro Torlonia was keen to explore his own properties, so he hired archaeologists to excavate some of his estates. This included two notable areas around Rome: a tract along the Via Appia Antica, a major ancient thoroughfare, and at Portus, the coastal city that was once the main harbor of ancient Rome. The lands along the Via Appia Antica were once sites of imperial and elite villas that were furnished with great numbers of statues, including some of those on exhibit here. At Portus, archaeologists discovered a relief with a detailed harbor scene, on view in the next gallery with an accompanying video.

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These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Germanicus**

1st century

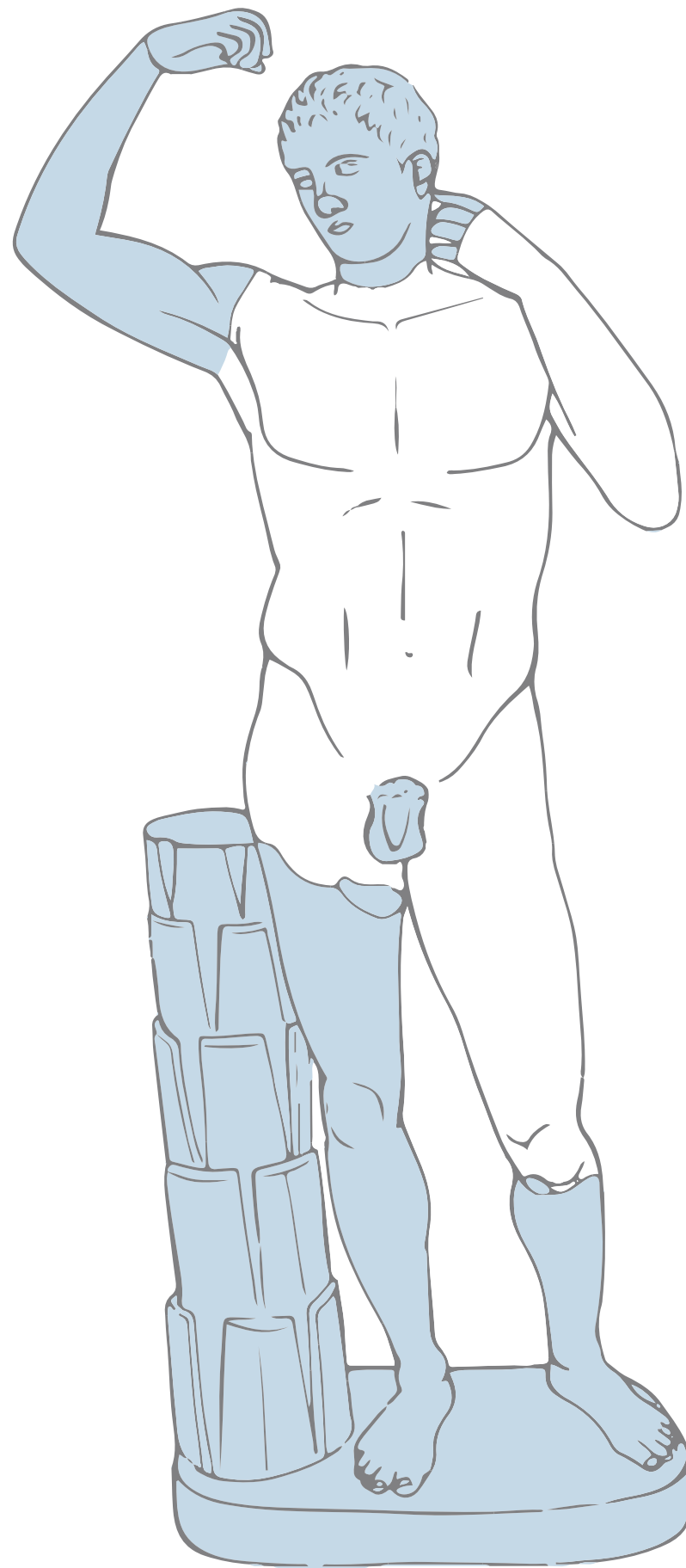
Roman, Imperial Period

Bronze

Provenance: 1874 Torlonia excavations at “degli Arci” estate in Sabina, Italy (ancient Cures)

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This idealized, nude, young man is the lone bronze in the Torlonia Collection. Large-scale bronze sculptures like this are rare because of the inherent value of the material; over time, bronzes were often melted down to reuse the precious metal. This larger-than-life statue was excavated in 1874. It likely survived from ancient times because it was concealed underground. The subject may be Germanicus (15 BC–AD 19), a Roman general and brother to Emperor Claudius. His untimely death at the age of thirty-four disrupted the succession plans of the imperial family.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of a Youth, known as the Amelung Athlete**

Late 1st–early 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period, Trajanic Era

Marble

Provenance: 1864 Torlonia excavations at the Palazzo Imperiale, Porto (ancient Portus)

Torlonia Collection, Rome



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Unfinished Statue of a Dacian Prisoner**

Early 2nd century

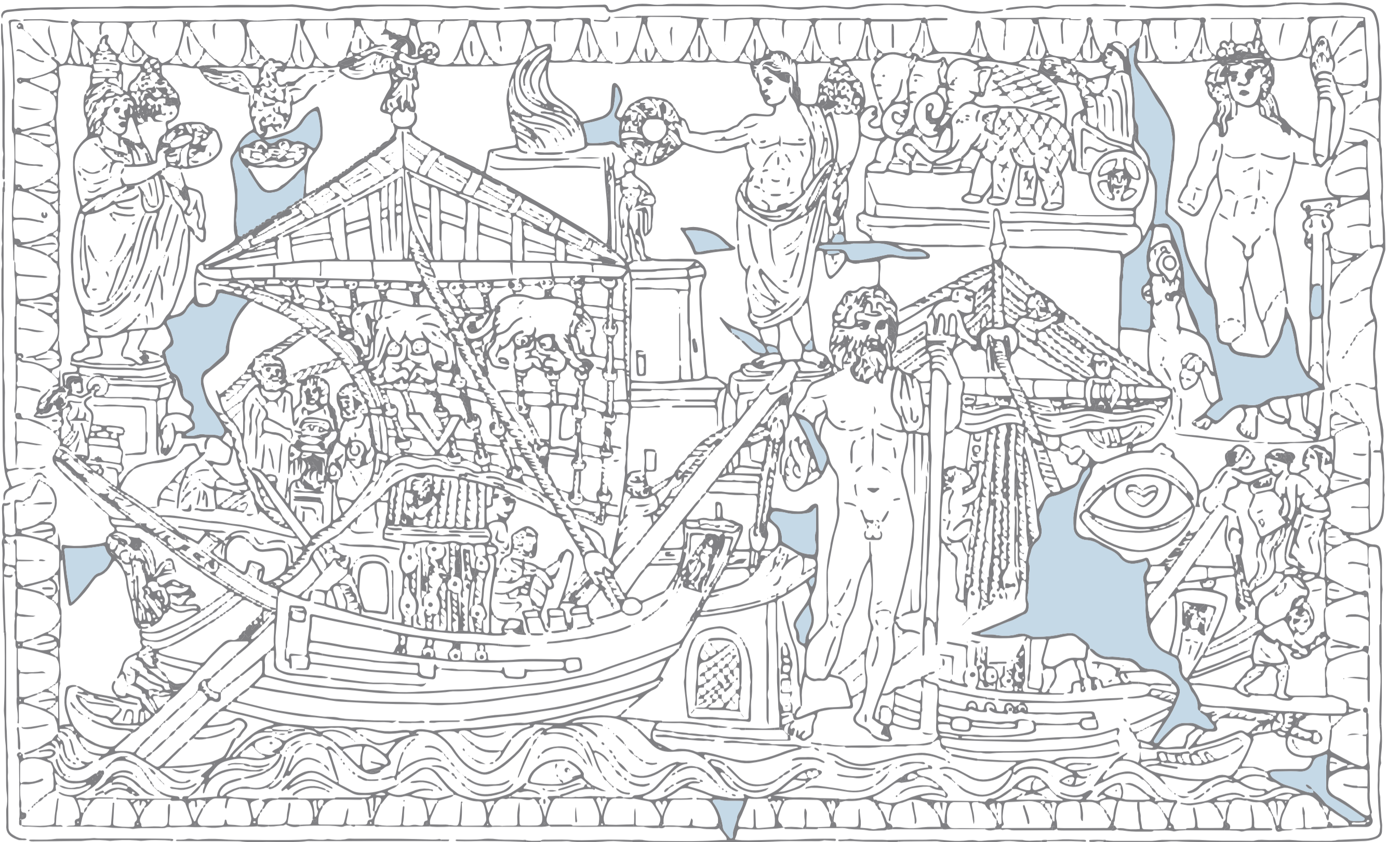
Roman, Imperial Period, Trajanic Era

Marble

Provenance: Excavated at Vannutelli House, 46 Via Del Governo Vecchio, Rome, Italy

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Emperor Trajan conquered the ancient region of Dacia (present-day Romania) in the early second century. He placed larger-than-life sculptures of Dacian male captives in his forum to commemorate Rome's military victory against a formidable enemy. This captive's pose, complete with a downward glance and (now-missing) hands crossed at the left hip, signals his defeat. His distinctive costume, including a long tunic with sleeves, a heavy cloak, loose-fitting pants, ankle boots, and a soft cap, would have marked him as an outsider to Roman viewers. The roughly carved surfaces of the figure's garments and the vertical slab still attached to his back indicate that this statue is unfinished.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient   ● Modern

### **Portus Relief**

Late 2nd–early 3rd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

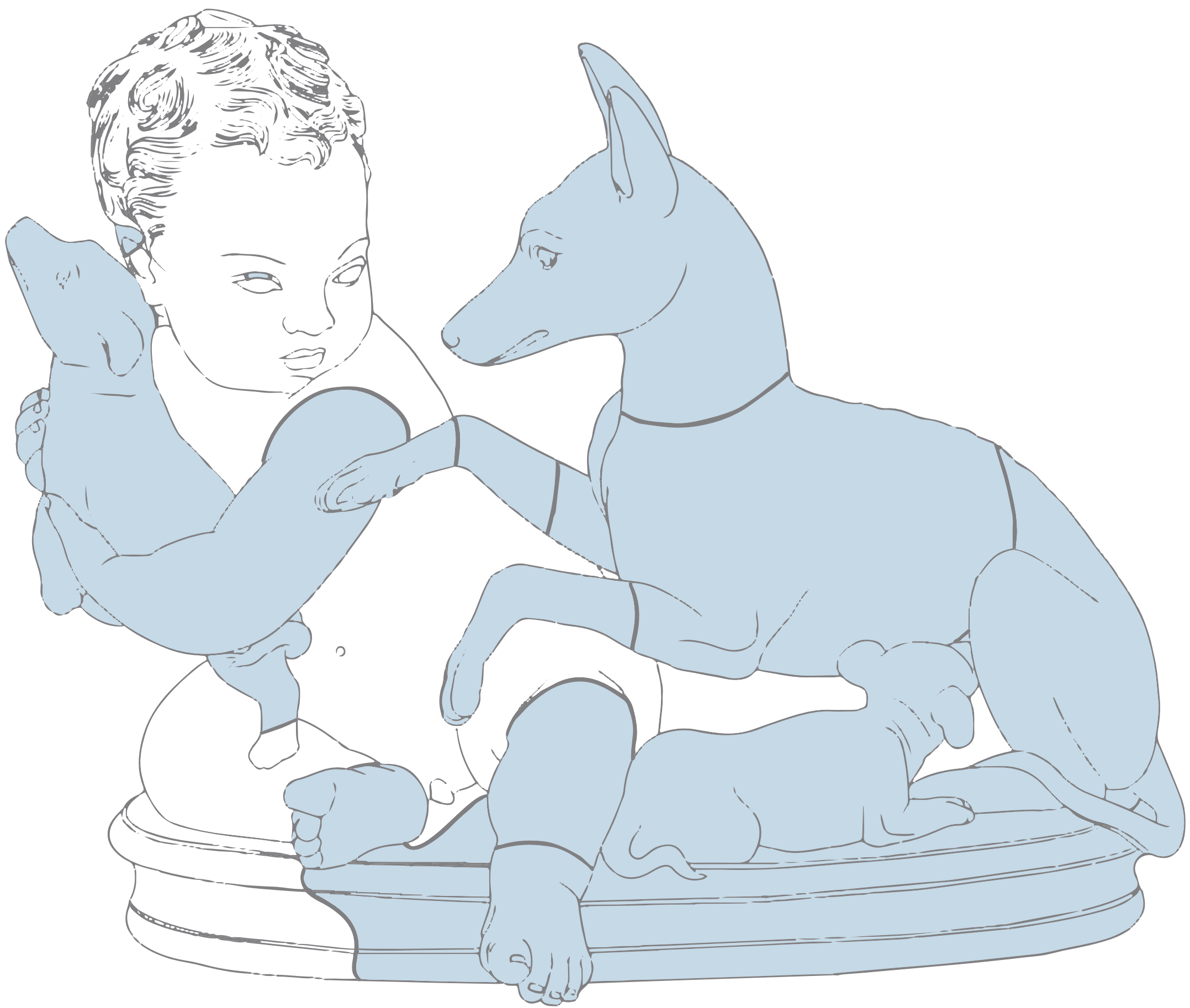
Provenance: 1864 Torlonia excavations at Porto (ancient Portus)

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This relief sculpture depicts the harbor of Portus, which served as the primary port of imperial Rome for more than four centuries. It combines elements of the architectural and commercial landscape—note the merchant ships, seafarers, monuments, and sculptures in the scene—with symbolic motifs and deities, offering unique insight into the visual culture of a vibrant city.

In antiquity, stone sculptures were often richly painted. Many ancient pigments and binders naturally degraded over time or were removed by caretakers, either purposefully or unintentionally, during cleaning and restoration processes. Some ancient colors can still be seen with the naked eye today. Traces of red pigment are visible on the flames of the lighthouse and parts of the merchant ships in this dazzling scene once enlivened with an array of colors.

Watch the video nearby to explore the relief in detail and travel back in time to the ancient city of Portus.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of a Boy with Dogs**

2nd century

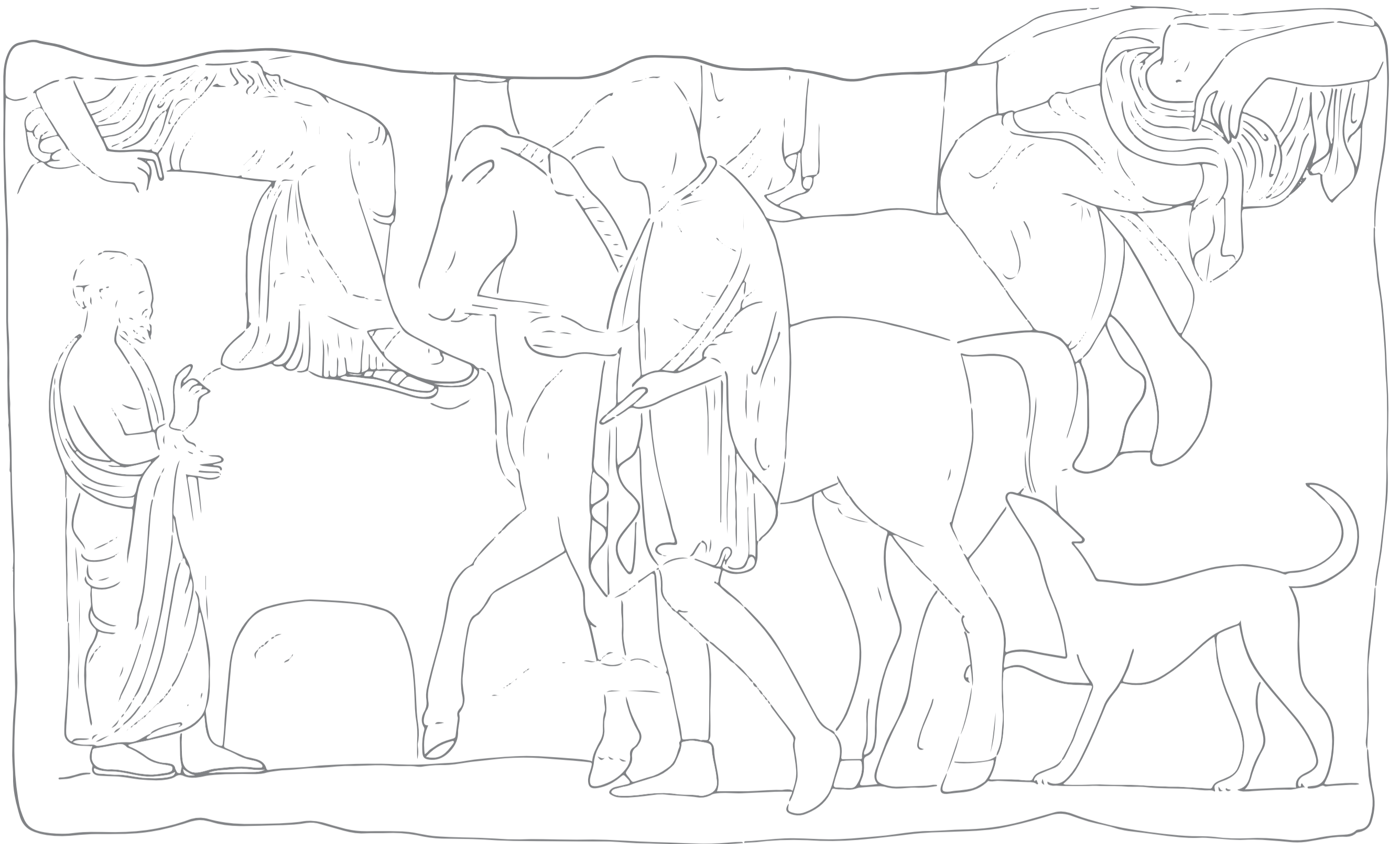
Roman, Imperial Period, Hadrianic or Antonine Era

Marble

Provenance: Excavated from the area of the Circus of Maxentius, Via Appia, Rome

Torlonia Collection, Rome

In February 1828, at the Circus of Maxentius along the Via Appia Antica in Rome, archaeologists discovered a sculpture of a naked boy with just the head, torso, and thighs preserved. Scholars had long speculated that this statue of a boy with three dogs might have been that sculpture, but a full examination of the work was necessary to determine this definitively. New research spurred by this exhibition revealed that the dogs are all modern restorations and that the intact ancient parts are indeed likely the same ones excavated at the Circus of Maxentius: they appear to match the sketch produced by the excavator, Antonio Nibby.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Attic Votive Relief**

Late 5th century BC

Greek, Classical Period

Marble

Provenance: Possibly found near the tomb of Caecilia Metella on the Via Appia, Rome, 1820s

Torlonia Collection, Rome

A wealthy Roman may have purchased this ancient Greek object to display in his home. By the time the relief arrived in Rome, possibly in the second century AD, it was already four or five hundred years old—roughly the same amount of time that separates us today from the Renaissance. Elite Romans avidly collected art from ancient Greece; to be able to import an ancient original like this one was a sign of great wealth and status. Although Roman sculptures modeled on earlier Greek works were readily available, originals like this one were quite rare. This Athenian relief is one of the only objects in the exhibition that was never restored in later centuries, making it a “true” ancient fragment.

Carlo Ludovico Visconti, Italian, 1828–1894

**Plates from I monumenti del Museo Torlonia di sculture antiche  
reprodotti con la fototipia**

1884–85

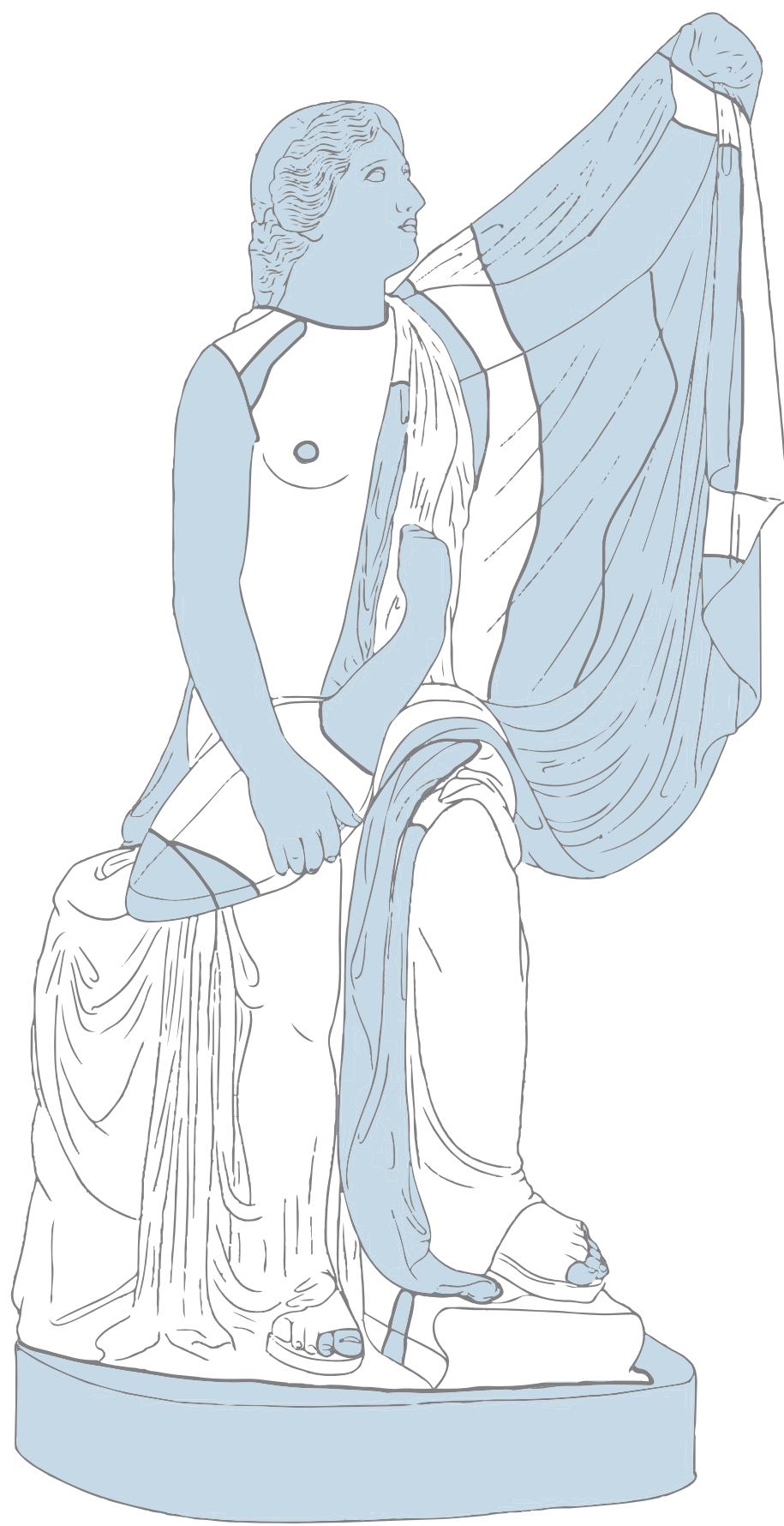
Reproduction prints; exhibition copies

Torlonia Collection, Rome

In 1876, Prince Alessandro Torlonia (1800–1886) established a private museum in Rome—the Museo Torlonia—to display his impressive collection of sculpture. The first curator of the museum, Pietro Ercoli Visconti (1803–1880), published a series of catalogues of the collection's holdings beginning in 1876. These publications celebrated the founding of the Museo while also guiding visitors through its many galleries.

Pietro Ercoli's nephew and successor, Carlo Ludovico Visconti (1828–1894), carried on this family tradition. In 1884–85, he published a catalogue of the Torlonia Collection that illustrated its entire holdings. Produced using a new lithographic technique known as phototype, the catalogue was groundbreaking in its extensive and high-quality reproductions—marking an early and visionary use of photographic technology in the service of classical archaeology. Visconti's pioneering approach placed the Torlonia Collection at the forefront of archaeological documentation and visual dissemination.

The Torlonia Collection went largely unseen by the public for decades after World War II, and this catalogue became the primary source of information about the collection. A digitized version is now freely accessible online through the Internet Archive. Reproductions of select plates are displayed here and feature many of the sculptures presented in this exhibition.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Leda and the Swan**

Late 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: 1864 Torlonia excavations at the Palazzo Imperiale, Porto (ancient Portus)

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This statue has only been partially cleaned to show how a marble sculpture's surface can change over time. Some nineteenth-century interventions are visible on its surface, such as a natural resin derived from pine trees that was used as an adhesive and a filler, which can be seen on the breaks at Leda's neck, right shoulder, and right wrist, and also on the swan's body. Atmospheric pollutants have also settled on and interacted with the marble, darkening the uncleaned areas on Leda's cloak and parts of her body and the swan.

In selected areas, Torlonia conservators aimed to remove surface alterations without interfering with the marble's natural patina, as seen on Leda's legs from the knee down and the cloak covering her lower body.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

### **Statue of Leda and the Swan**

First half of the 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Found in 1623 in Piazza di Mario, just south of Velletri, Italy; Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Leda, the Queen of Sparta, holds a swan in her lap. In both of these strikingly similar sculptures, she gently supports the bird with her right hand. But the swan is no mere animal: it is the supreme god Zeus (or Jupiter, to the Romans), who transformed himself in order to seduce the mortal woman. Both sculptors expertly rendered the sheer, diaphanous tunic clinging to Leda's left breast and the thicker, voluminous cloak she raises with her left hand.

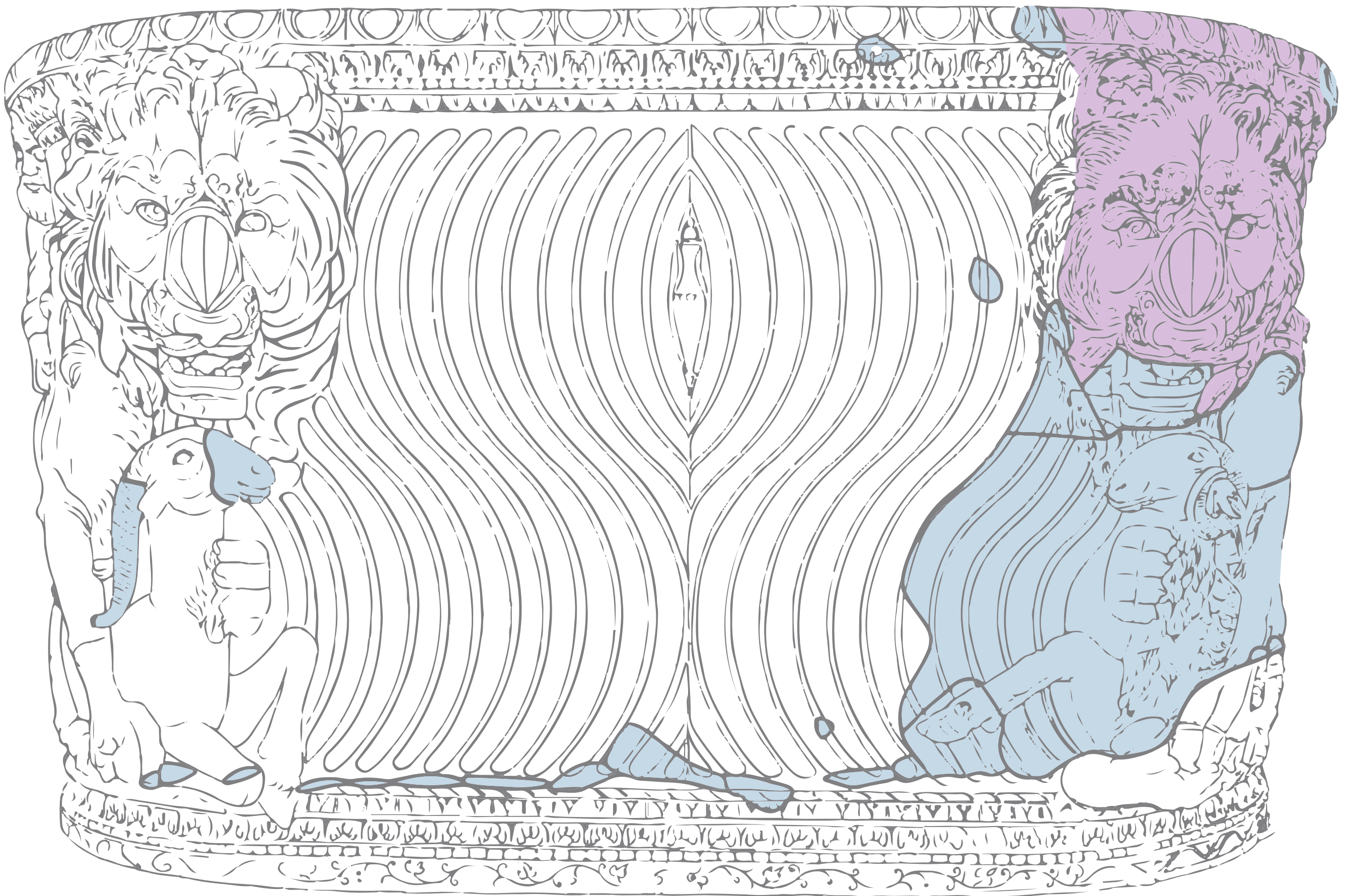
This composition, based on a Greek original from centuries earlier, was produced across the Roman Empire and shows remarkable consistency. Artists would have followed pattern books and used a measuring tool called a pointing machine to achieve this consistency across different versions. This pairing reminds us that, in antiquity, workshops produced large quantities of sculptures, including multiples of any given subject.

# Death & Remembrance

Romans commemorated their dead through monuments of many shapes and sizes. Some people spent their fortunes on magnificent containers for the remains of their loved ones; others opted for memorials in the form of portrait sculptures, inscriptions, or architectural structures. Roman tombs were regularly visited by family and loved ones, and some were even outfitted with dining couches so that the living could dine with or in honor of the deceased.

Lavish and large sarcophagi (coffins) like those seen here could function to both conspicuously signal a person's wealth and provide insights into the life and identity of the deceased. For example, Romans would decorate their resting places with images of stories from Greek mythology, conveying both their cultural sophistication and their hopes for the afterlife. A portrait of a couple might emphasize their marital harmony and familial pride, which could be especially resonant if a family was newly elevated in social status.

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These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Strigilated Sarcophagus with Lions**

c. 260–70

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Palazzo Savelli (later Orsini)

Torlonia Collection, Rome

Who are the men standing fearlessly behind these lions? They are animal tamers who would have coached the fierce beasts as part of entertainment held in the Flavian Amphitheater, now known as the Colosseum. Their presence on this sarcophagus might indicate that the deceased was a magistrate in charge of organizing such spectacles.

This sarcophagus is composed of ancient fragments of two different sarcophagi that each depict lions at the ends: Note the difference between the paler marble piece on the left and the gray-veined marble on the right.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Portrait Group of Husband and Wife**

2nd century

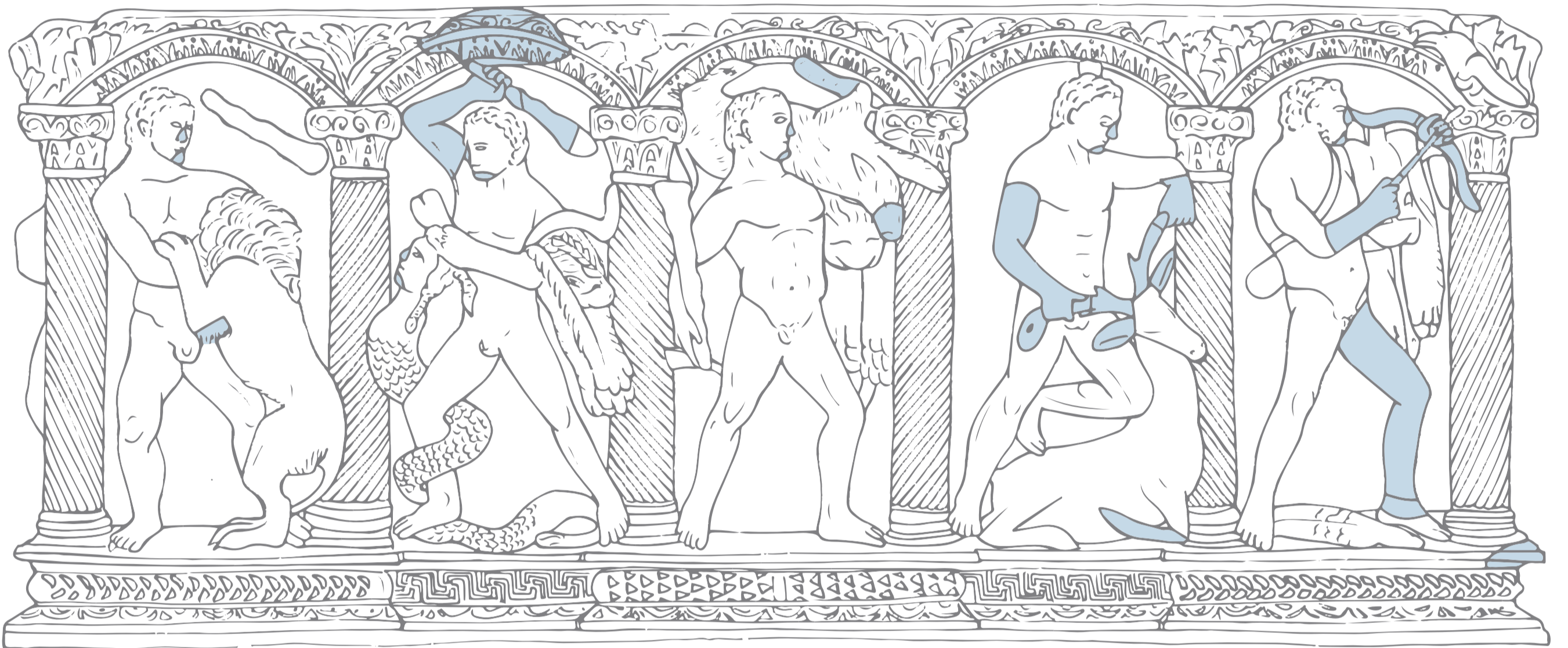
Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Giustiniani Collection

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This unnamed couple is likely a husband and wife. Their right hands are clasped in a gesture known as the dextrarum iunctio, “joining right hands.” This motif was thought to symbolize marital concord because the right hand was sacred to Fides, the Roman goddess of fidelity. Since this gesture commonly appears on funerary monuments, this portrait group probably honored a deceased couple, emphasizing the value they placed on harmony in their marriage.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

**Sarcophagus Depicting Labors of Hercules and Lid with Reclining Couple**

Second half of 2nd century

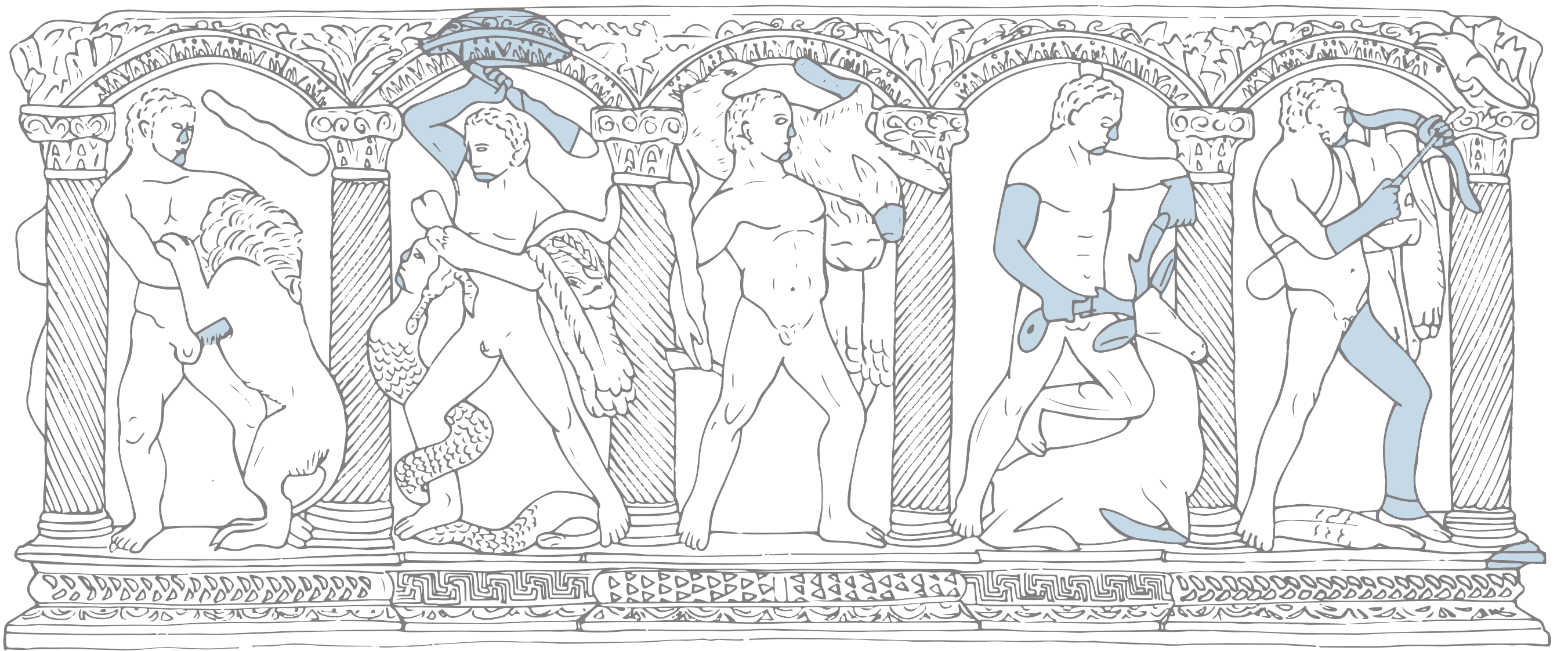
Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Palazzo Savelli (later Orsini)

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This enormous funerary monument attests to the status and aspirations of the couple who selected it as their final resting place. It would have been displayed publicly to show off the family's wealth. The deceased commissioned individualized portrait heads to be inserted onto partially carved bodies, which are reclining in the pose used for formal banquets. Their family members could have visited the monument and dined with their relatives in perpetuity.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

- Ancient    ● Modern
- Ancient but not original to the sculpture

### **Sarcophagus Depicting Labors of Hercules and Lid with Reclining Couple**

Second half of 2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

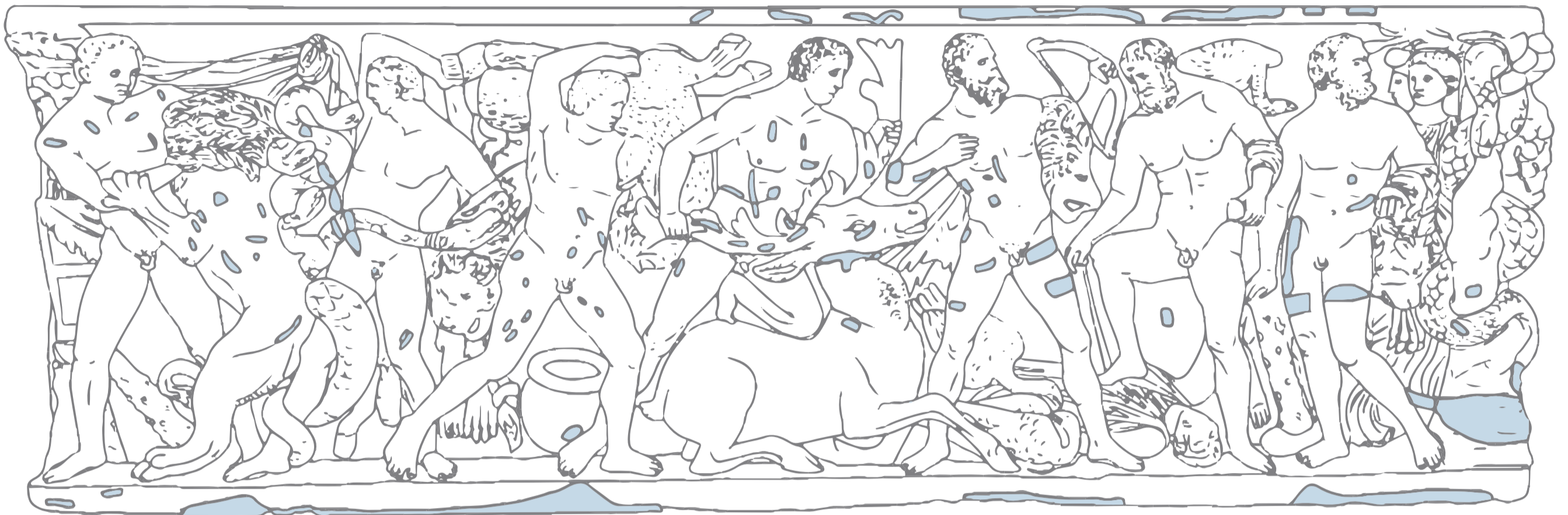
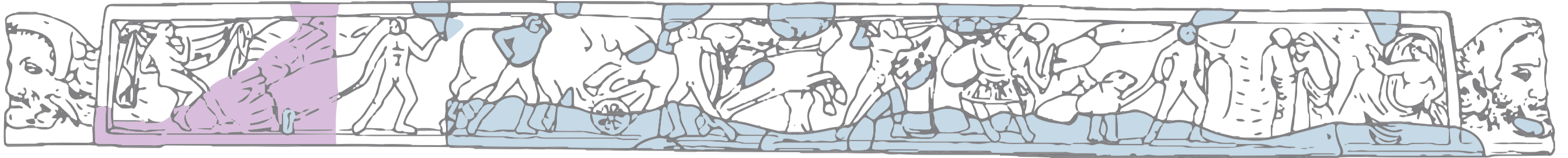
Marble

Provenance: Palazzo Savelli (later Orsini)

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This sarcophagus was paired with the lid featuring the reclining couple at left. The scenes carved on this sarcophagus's sides, which depict the myth of Hercules performing the Twelve Labors, might hint at the couple's hopes for the afterlife. After killing his family, Hercules used his strength and cleverness to complete twelve nearly impossible tasks and atone for his crimes; as a result, when he died, he became immortal.

An expensive luxury good, this sarcophagus would have been imported from Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), the manufacturing center for the largest sarcophagi in the Roman world. Even though both pieces are made of solid marble, the lid is so massive that it should not rest directly on top of the base for the safety and preservation of both objects.



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

○ Ancient    ● Modern

● Ancient but not original to the sculpture

## **Sarcophagus Depicting the Labors of Hercules**

c. 160–70

Roman, Imperial Period, Antonine Era

Marble

Provenance: Found on Torlonia Roma Vecchia estate on

Via Latina, Rome

Torlonia Collection, Rome



These diagrams show which portions of the sculptures are original and which were added or changed at a later time.

Ancient     Modern

### **Funerary Monument of a Boy, Gaius Marcius Crescens**

2nd century

Roman, Imperial Period

Marble

Provenance: Found in Porto (ancient Portus)

Torlonia Collection, Rome

This monument is a testament to parental love and loss.

The parents of Gaius Marcius Crescens dedicated it to their beloved boy, who died, according to the inscription, at the age of fourteen years and nine hours. Childhood mortality rates in antiquity were high. Grieving parents with the financial means erected funerary monuments like this one, to which they would return on significant occasions such as birthdays and feast days to honor their lost loved ones.

Inscription:

C. MARCIO CRESCENTI VIXIT ANNIS XIII HOR VIII FECERVNT PARENTES C  
 MARCIVS THREPTVS ET MARCIA CARPIME FILIO DVL CISSIMO ET SIBI ET LIBERTIS  
 LIBERTABVSQVE POSTE RISQVE EORVM HVIC MONIMENTO ITVS AMBITVS DEBETVR  
 H(OC) M(ONUMENTUM) H(EREDEM) N(ON) S(EQUETUR)

To Gaius Marcius Crescens. He lived fourteen years and nine hours. His parents Gaius Marcius Threptus and Marcia Carpime erected [this funerary monument] for their sweetest son, for themselves and for their freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. Access to this monument is due. This monument will not pass to the heir.

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