

TYPES AND VERSIONS IN ROMAN-PERIOD STATUARY: SOME CONTEXTS AND PURPOSES

The phenomenon of types and versions pervaded Roman visual culture. The paper will briefly review the now-fossilized debate around ‘copies’ and ‘originals’ and its defective modern vocabulary. It will then look at the employment of inherited types and authorised models as parts of an interlocking system of making and understanding statuary, of achieving particular effects and recognising subjects. It will also consider the relevant ancient terminology for these phenomena. Roman-period craftsmen drew on a huge visual repertoire in the form of all previous and contemporary image-bearing artefacts, and the varieties of re-working and re-performing given schemes and types were hardly for their own sake or the sake of originality. They depended on making images that best suited their budget, purpose, and context. Several different kinds of measurable engagement with given types will be described.

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