



Ancient Greek Portrait Sculpture: Contexts, Subjects, and Styles

Sheila Dillon

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This book offers a new approach to the history of Greek portraiture by focusing on portraits without names. Sheila Dillon considers the few original bronze and marble portrait statues preserved from the Classical and Hellenistic periods together with the large number of Greek portraits known only through Roman copies. This study calls into question two basic tenets of Greek portraiture: first, that it was only in the late Hellenistic period, under Roman influence, that Greek portraits exhibited a wide range of styles, including descriptive realism; and second, that in most cases, one can easily tell a subject's public role from the visual traits used in this portrait. The sculptures studied here instead show that the proliferation of portrait styles takes place much earlier, in the late Classical period, and that the identity expressed by these portraits is much more complex and layered than has previously been realized.

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