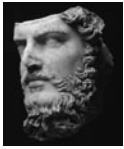


LESSON PLANS



LESSON PLAN

THE POWER IN PORTRAITS

Grade level: Upper elementary through high school

Objectives

- Students will look at and discuss Roman art through its portraiture, including how portraiture carried messages of power and authority.
- Students will compare portraiture on Roman imperial coins to the portraits and symbols on the currency of the United States, a country that, in its formative years, identified itself with Rome. They will further explore the legacy of Rome in U. S. architecture.

Images

- Image 1** Ring-stone with intaglio bust of Julius Caesar
- Image 2** Portrait of a man
- Image 3** Colossal portrait of Augustus
- Image 4** Cameo portrait of the emperor Augustus
- Image 5** Portrait bust of the emperor Gaius, known as Caligula
- Image 7** Aurei of the Twelve Caesars
- Image 9** Portrait of the co-emperor Lucius Verus
- Image 10** Portrait of the emperor Caracalla
- Image 11** Portrait of the emperor Caracalla
- Image 12** Portrait head of the emperor Constantine I

Materials

- Drawing paper
- Pencils
- Compasses
- Crayons or markers

Introduction

Read the Historical Overview and the following excerpted descriptions of images 1–5, 7, and 9–12. (For further information about these images, refer to the section, Power and Authority in Roman Portraiture.)

Image 1: Often in Rome, coin portraits were copied by being carved in relief on gems or sealing ring-stones, such as this one showing **Julius Caesar**. Julius Caesar was the first Roman to issue coins with his portrait.

Image 2: **Republican Romans** wanted portraits that expressed the individual's identity by stressing age and experience in a non-idealized manner. In contrast with the Greek taste in portraiture, in which portrayal of the body was important to the characterization of the person, for the Romans depiction of the facial features was sufficient.

Images 3 and 4: **Augustus**, the first Roman emperor, realized

that his public portrait image could serve as an instrument of propaganda. Prototypical portrait copies were dispersed throughout the Roman world and displayed in public places. Through these statues and busts, as well as through coins with the emperor's image, everyone in the empire was potentially made aware of what the emperor looked like and was reminded of his power and authority.

Stylistically, Augustus followed the Greek example and chose an idealized, classicizing image that, while capturing his individual features, never aged or changed during his fifty years in power.

In the public sphere, Augustus emphasized that he was the first citizen among many equals. He might be represented in any of his roles: in a toga, as a statesman and citizen; wearing armor, as commander of the army; or veiled, as chief priest and responsible overall for maintaining good relations with the gods on Rome's behalf. In the private sphere, it was not uncommon for the emperor to be shown with the attributes of the gods. After his death, Augustus was deified, and public representations of him sometimes showed him with divine characteristics.

Image 5: **Caligula's** portrait type clearly stresses his resemblance to his grandfather Augustus, yet he has characteristics that individualize him as well.

Image 7: Roman imperial coinage, dispersed throughout the empire, bore the image of the emperor and his inscribed name, so his subjects would learn what he looked like. The reverse of imperial coins sent a message from the emperor. It might picture a favored deity, personification, or family member; show an important building that the emperor had erected or commemorate a battle he had won; or advertise imperial virtues. The portrait types on the coins of the **Julio-Claudian emperors** resemble each other in order to emphasize the dynastic ties of the successors to Augustus. Later emperors favored a more realistic type if it suited their propagandistic purposes.

Image 9: Beginning with Hadrian in the early second century A.D., emperors began to wear beards. Hadrian made this choice to show his appreciation of Greek culture, since Greek philosophers, poets, and statesmen wore beards. His successors, such as **Lucius Verus** here, continued the fashion as a way of expressing their dynastic continu-

ity with the past. Also beginning in the second century, sculptors depicted the longer hairstyles by increasing their use of the drill to carve deeply textured locks of hair that created a dramatic contrast with the smoothness of carved flesh. They also began the practice of incising the pupils and irises of their subjects' eyes rather than simply indicating them through paint.

Images 10 and 11: After half a century of bearded emperors who followed the Hellenic model, the emperor **Caracalla** adopted a simple hairstyle. The marble portrait (image 10) shows short-cropped hair and stubby beard, with head turned dramatically and with furrowed brow. It gives us the impression that this is a man of quick and decisive action.

Image 12: This clean-shaven portrait type shows **Constantine**, the first Roman ruler officially to tolerate Christianity. With bangs brushed over his forehead and an unlined face, the portrait bears a marked resemblance to those of his deified predecessors, reminding viewers of earlier emperors, such as Augustus, and, by association, of their successful reigns. However, the huge, upward-looking eyes and the extreme simplification of the facial planes give the portrait an abstract and detached quality that projects power and belief rather than individuality.

Discussion

Show the students images 1–5, 7, and 9–12 (provided in digital format on the enclosed CD-ROM). Ask them to take two minutes to describe each one in three to four sentences. At least one of the sentences should compare and contrast a portrait to a previous one. After this exercise, show the images again, pausing to discuss each in depth and to draw out information from the students' descriptions. What similarities and differences do they see among the portraits over time? Discuss what these resemblances and changes might signify.

Activities

Have the students imagine that each of them is a Roman emperor or empress. Distribute the drawing supplies and have the student "emperors" design self-portraits by which their fellow students will get to know them, including indications of their status and authority. They should consider the following:

- Is the portrait to be public or private?
- Is it just a head (or bust) or a full-sized statue?
- If it is full-sized, what garments or attributes should be included to show the aspects and responsibilities of being an emperor or empress?
- Will it refer to ancient Greek styles?
- Will it show connections to the portraits being designed by other student "emperors"?

Arrange the portraits in succession around the classroom and have each student write a poem about a classmate's portrait, lauding that particular emperor or empress.

Next, ask each student "emperor" to design both the obverse and reverse of an imperial coin. In preparation for this activity, carefully observe images 1, 4, and especially 7, and read and discuss their accompanying descriptions. You might also look at images of imperial Roman coins online, such as on the Museum's *Timeline of Art History* (www.metmuseum.org/toah). Each student "emperor" should make a list of the features found on the imperial coins, as well as the reasons these features, and should embody these features in his/her own coin design.

Now, have the students make up a list of the features found in United States currency, both coin and paper, and the reasons for these features. They should investigate articles, books, and websites, such as those for the United States Mint (www.usmint.gov/kids/coinNews) and United States Treasury (www.ustreas.gov/education/faq/coins/portraits.shtml).

Compare the two lists and discuss their similarities and differences.

As an extension of this exercise, discuss how "Roman" the United States was at its founding, and how "Roman" it seems today. The section in this resource entitled *The Relevance of Rome* will provide useful background. Using online resources, books, or field trips, have the students explore the Roman elements (including dependence on ancient Greek culture) of certain local, state, and federal government buildings—whether it occurs in their art and architecture, the governmental concepts the structures embody, or the terminology used to describe them. One possible assignment might be to have each student pick a

state. The students could investigate the government and public buildings of their chosen state's capital to see how "Roman" they seem and report their findings to the class. Which states seem to have the more "Roman" buildings? Can any conclusions about the influence of Rome on the present-day United States be drawn from this data?

Meditations: Discussion for High School Students

Below are two excerpts from the *Meditations* by the Antonine emperor Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180 A.D.) to be used to stimulate discussion and/or debate in the high school classroom. (These excerpts are available as a pdf on the CD-ROM. Copies may be distributed to the students.)

Marcus Aurelius was educated by many famous teachers, including the orator Fronto. From the age of twelve, he showed an interest in philosophy, and eventually it became a key feature of his life. He was much influenced by a school of philosophy called Stoicism, but his writings draw from Platonism and Epicureanism as well. His philosophical musings on human life and the ways of the gods were recorded in Greek in a personal notebook, and they have come down to us as the *Meditations*. His legacy as a philosopher-ruler survives today.

Some possible questions to consider when discussing these excerpts: What do the quotations indicate about Roman life and culture? What do they say about the importance of history and art? About leadership? Are any of the concepts expressed relevant to your life or the modern world? What qualities does Marcus Aurelius admire in a person in the first quotation? In the second, what does he seem to be saying about the importance of earthly activities?

Book Three, 5

In your actions let there be a willing promptitude, yet a regard for the common interest; due deliberation, yet no irresolution; and in your sentiments no pretentious over-refinement. Avoid talkativeness, avoid officiousness. The god within you should preside over a being who is virile and mature, a statesman, a Roman, and a ruler; one who

has held his ground, like a soldier waiting for the signal to retire from life's battlefield and ready to welcome his relief; a man whose credit need neither be sworn to by himself nor avouched by others. Therein is the secret of cheerfulness, of depending on no help from without and needing to crave from no man the boon of tranquility. We have to stand upright ourselves, not be set up.

Book Four, 33

Expressions that were once current have gone out of use nowadays. Names, too, that were formerly household words are virtually archaisms today; Camillus, Caeso, Volesus, Dentatus; or a little later, Scipio and Cato; Augustus too, and even Hadrian and Antoninus. All things fade into the storied past, and in a little while are shrouded in oblivion. Even to men whose lives were a blaze of glory this comes to pass; as for the rest, the breath is hardly out of them before, in Homer's words, they are "lost to sight alike and hearsay." What, after all, is immortal fame? An empty, hollow thing. To what, then, must we aspire? This, and this alone: the just thought, the unselfish act, the tongue that utters no falsehood, the temper that greets each passing event as something predestined, expected, and emanating from the One source and origin.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121–180 A.D.), *Meditations*. Translated with an introduction by Maxwell Staniforth. (Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1969)



LESSON PLAN
ROMAN BELIEFS

Grade level: Middle and high school

Objectives

- Students will discuss the images and symbols the Romans used to depict their gods as well as how they honored them.
- Students will discuss Roman domestic gods.
- Students will discuss the Romans' burial customs.

Materials

Paper
 Pencils
 Crayons, markers, paints
 Clay

1. Honoring the Gods

Images

- Image 15** Statuette of Jupiter
Image 16 Relief fragment with the head of Mars
Image 17 Statue of Venus
Image 20 Camillus
Image 21 Statuette of Cybele on a cart drawn by lions

Introduction

The Romans believed that each deity had a particular function and areas of influence in the world. Initially, the Roman gods included a mixture of Italic, Etruscan, and Greek deities. As the Romans' territories expanded, they accepted non-Roman gods as well (image 21). It was essential to honor the gods by building temples with altars nearby, where priests and attendants (image 20) made sacrifices. If pleased, the gods would assure victory to Roman armies (image 16), grant the emperor great powers (image 15), and provide agricultural plenty to their people (image 21). For personal devotion and prayers, households might possess statuettes of the Roman gods (image 15).

Discussion

Show the students the images above and after reading the descriptions of these works, lead a discussion about how the Romans viewed their gods. Discuss what features the students think a powerful god of nature would need to protect people from floods, storms, fire, and other disasters. What features would a god of war need to display the

powers necessary for success in battle? What about a god who has the power to assure plenty of food? Or provide success in business? Or fame as a singer or artist?

Activities

Ask the students to depict a god of their own choice and creation. They may draw or paint them and should be sure to include symbols or attributes worn or held that convey their power. Alternately, they may write a detailed description of the god. The whole class—or a group of students—might produce a play about these modern gods describing what they do and how they get along.

2. Household Protection

Images

- Image 18** Statuette of a *lar* (see also one of the posters)

Introduction

Roman families kept paired statuettes of small but powerful deities called *lares* (image 18) in their homes to protect them and their households. *Lares* were guardian spirits that may have represented the ghosts of family ancestors. The family placed statuettes of the *lares* in shrines in the central courtyard of the house. There they could pray to them and make offerings when the family needed help. Often the family worshipped other household gods, such as the *penates*, who guarded the kitchen.

Discussion

Discuss with the students what the *lares* of their homes might look like. What features would show their powers to protect and bring health and happiness? What would a modern household god look like? What abilities would he/she need to guard your kitchen and provide good food?

Activity

When they have discussed and decided on their appearance, ask the students to make a painting or a drawing of their gods and describe the symbols they hold or wear to show their powers. Alternately, they could make three-dimensional forms out of clay.

3. With Your Family Forever: Art for the Tomb

Images

- Image 23** Cinerary urn with arms and war trophies
- Image 25** Sarcophagus with the Triumph of Dionysus and the Four Seasons
- Image 24** Funerary altar of Cominia Tyche
- Image 27** Portrait of a young woman with a gilded wreath
- Image 28** Portrait bust of a veiled woman
- Image 29** Portrait bust of a woman

Introduction

From the many ancient Roman tombs that archaeologists have uncovered, it seems that some Romans believed that the soul lived on after death. During the Republic and early empire, the Romans frequently cremated the bodies of the deceased, and the ashes were placed in carved urns (image 23). In later times, bodies were placed in sarcophagi (image 25). Often many generations in a family were buried together with portrait busts (images 28, 29), carved altars (image 24), or paintings of family members (image 27). In imperial times, tombs often were above ground and were large enough for living members of the family to gather in order to commemorate their ancestors.

Discussion

Discuss with the students the idea of ancestors and how they might be honored. Perhaps they remember their own ancestors or have heard stories about them. How would they portray their favorite ancestors and/or family members in a painting? What features of these people would they emphasize to show their character? What designs would they place on a funerary urn or sarcophagus to show their ancestors' accomplishments?

Activity

Ask the students to design their own funerary monuments to commemorate an ancestor. Let them choose the kind of monument they would like to make (portrait, ash urn, altar, sarcophagus). After they have completed their drawings, have them discuss why they chose their formats and the particular qualities of the individuals they illustrated.



LESSON PLAN

THE ROMAN HOUSEHOLD

Grade level: Middle and high school

Objectives

- Students will identify the members of one hypothetical Roman household.
- Students will explore the relationships within a Roman household.
- Students will research the role of the family and household in Roman society.

Materials

- Construction paper
- Paper and pencils
- Glue sticks

Images

- Image 2** Portrait of a man
- Image 20** Camillus
- Image 23** Cinerary urn with arms and war trophies
- Image 25** Sarcophagus with the Triumph of Dionysus and the Four Seasons
- Image 28** Portrait bust of a veiled woman
- Image 31** Portrait bust of an aristocratic boy
- Image 35** Beaker with chariot race
- Image 37** Inkwell
- Image 38** Ink pen
- Image 40 and 41** Frescoes from a villa at Boscoreale

Introduction

In the hierarchical Roman world, the word “status” described the legal and social position of an individual with respect both to that person’s household and to the broader civil community of Rome. The individual’s place in Roman society was determined by wealth, freedom, and Roman citizenship. The social hierarchy included the senatorial order, the equestrian order, and the rest of the free population. The first two had wealth requirements and were largely hereditary. The senatorial order consisted of wealthy landowners who were expected to devote themselves to unpaid public service. The equestrian order consisted of the officer corps, civil administrators, and businessmen. Below these two ranks was the vast mass of the free urban poor. The status of freedman was given to those who had been released from slavery by their former owners; many of these were economically successful. At

the bottom of the social order were slaves; although they were not free, some slaves rose to great positions of responsibility, managing the master's estates or tutoring his children, for example. Some earned enough money to buy their freedom and to become freedmen/women.

The family (*familia*) was the basic unit of Roman society. The eldest male (*paterfamilias*) was the head of household. He had the authority to control matters of marriage, divorce, property, and economics, and the line of descent passed through him. His wife, children, and other relatives lived with him. Slaves and servants were also part of the household in wealthy families.

The role of a woman in Roman society was to marry, bear children, and run the household. Women did not have the right to vote or own property. They could, however, attend social events or become priestesses; women of the lower orders worked outside the home. There is historical evidence for outstanding and influential women in Roman society.

Roman marriage was monogamous and was usually arranged by the fathers of the couple. Girls were married at around the age of twelve, while boys could be anywhere from a few years to much older. Marriage was undertaken for political or economic reasons rather than for romance; it was intended to produce heirs.

The extent of literacy in the Roman world is difficult to assess; however, it is likely that most children whose families could afford it received at least an elementary education. Higher levels of education were usually available only to boys, many of whom were schooled by private tutors.

Discussion

After reading the descriptions of the images listed above, discuss the works of art using the following questions as a guide:

- What does the image represent?
- Of what material is the object made?
- For what purpose was the object made?
- In the case of the portraits, how have the subjects been represented?
- How would *you* like to be represented?

Activities

Divide the class into groups of six. Have each group form a Roman household complete with name, age, and role of each household member and write a short description of each. For example:

- The *paterfamilias*, a wealthy equestrian who owns and runs a vineyard adjoining his farm-villa at Boscoreale (see images 2, 40, 41)
 - His wife, *matrona* of a household with three children (see image 28)
 - The older son, an army officer (see image 23)
 - The middle son, training to be a priestly attendant (see image 19 and the entry for image 20)
 - The youngest son, who is just learning to read (see image 31)
 - A slave who tutors the youngest son (see images 37, 38)
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- Ask each student to research a certain aspect of Roman daily life that would affect the family members. For example: the house and estate, education, art and music, dress, sports and games, military, and religious practices.
 - Create a visual family tree. (Look at images 2, 20, and 28 as examples of individuals who might be included.) Indicate a personal name for each individual. Students might research Roman names in the library or online and use as many first names as they can that are derived from Roman names but that we use today (Julian and Augustus, for example).
 - Draw a diagram of the family villa rustica at Boscoreale. Include images 40 and 41 in a written description of the rooms.
 - Describe an outing to the chariot races in the Circus Maximus. Include image 35 in the narrative.
 - The *paterfamilias* is in ill health. Describe the preparations that are being made for his burial. Include image 25.