



Pliny's Wife

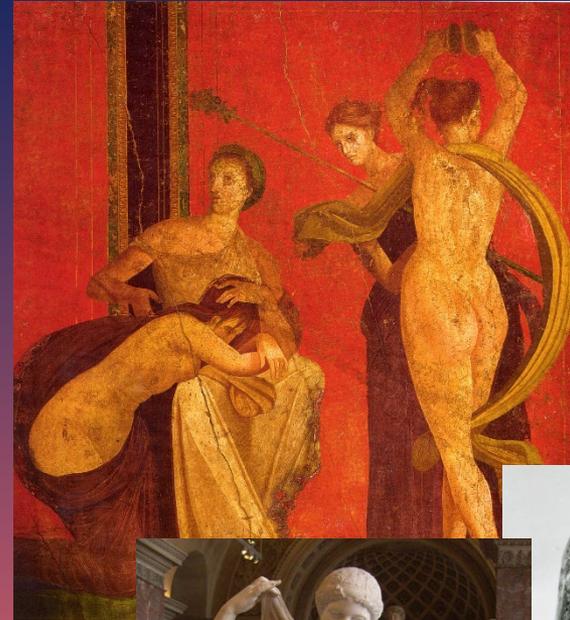
A Manufactured Roman Woman

Images of Respectability



- Problems
 - How do we understand how Romans loved?
 - How do we understand Roman relationships?
 - How do we understand the basis of Roman marriage?
- Concepts
 - Manufacture of the person
 - Who does the manufacturing?
 - Display of who we are or how we are supposed to be
 - Who decides who we are and how are supposed to be?

Problems and Concepts



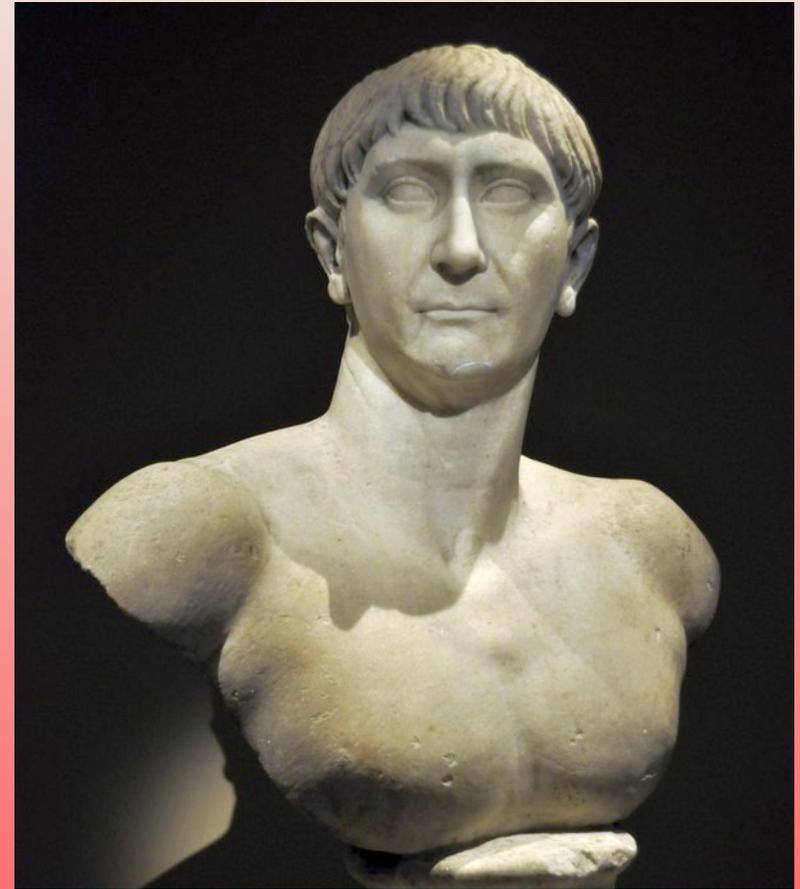
Assume nothing

- Texts and Images are there to send messages
 - Cultural specific messages
 - Complicated messages
 - Messages many people can read
 - What message do you get?

React



- Pliny: Consul in 100 CE
- Author
 - Ten Books of Letters
 - Insight into social life and social attitudes
 - Pliny present himself and his friends as near perfect
 - Letters are designed
 - Speech in Favour of Trajan



Reading Between lines: Pliny the Younger's Letters (*Epistles*)

Ep. VII 5 To his wife Calpurnia

You cannot believe how much I miss you. I love you so much, and we are not used to separations. So I stay awake most of the night thinking of you, and by day I find my feet carrying me (a true word carrying) to your room at the times I usually visited you; then finding it empty I depart, as sick and sorrowful as a lover locked out. The only time I am free from this misery is when I am in court and wearing myself out with my friends' lawsuits. You can judge then what a life I am leading, when I find rest in work and distraction in troubles and anxiety.

- React
 - What do you feel about the letter?
 - What might you feel if you were Calpurnia?
 - Why do you think Pliny publishes his letter?

Pliny in Love

When I was reading the books of Gallus in which he dared
to give
to his father the palm and glory won from Cicero
I found the wanton games of Cicero and
saw that talent with which he laid aside serious matters and
in which he showed human tastes and much varied charm
such as pleased the minds of great men
For he complains that Tiro by wicked tricks defrauding his
lover
of the kisses owed to him for a little dinner,
has drawn away the hours of darkness. I, reading these,
I say ‘Why after this do we hide our loves
and fear to speak out and talk of
the other Tiro’s guile and our Tiro’s shy seduction
and the intrigues by which he adds new passions?’

- Core information
 - Tiro is the former slave of Pliny
 - Cicero also had a freedman named Tiro of whom he was very fond
- React

Pliny’s other love poem: VII 4

IV 19. To Calpurnia Hispulla

You are a model of family affection, and loved your excellent and devoted brother as dearly as he loved you; you love his daughter as if she was your own, and, by filling the place of the father she lost, you are more than an aunt to her. **I know then how glad you will be to hear that she has proved herself worthy of her father, her grandfather and you.** She is highly intelligent and a careful housewife, and her devotion to me is a sure indication of her virtue. **In addition, this love has given her an interest in literature: she keeps copies of my works to read again and again and even learn by heart.** She is so anxious when she knows that I am going to plead in court, and so happy when all is over! (She arranges to be kept informed of the sort of reception and applause I receive, and what verdict I win in the case.) If I am giving a reading, she sits behind a curtain near by and greedily drinks in every word of appreciation. She has even set my verses to music and sings them, to the accompaniment of her lyre with no musician to teach her but the best of masters, love.

All this gives me the highest reason to hope that our mutual happiness will last for ever and go on increasing day by day, **for she does not love me for my present age nor my person, which will gradually grow old and decay, but for my aspirations to fame; nor would any other feelings be suitable for one brought up by your hands and trained in your precepts, who has seen only what was pure and moral in your company and learned to love me on your recommendation.** For you respected my mother like a daughter, and have given me guidance and encouragement since my boyhood; you always foretold that I should become the man I am now in the eyes of my wife. Please accept our united thanks for having given her to me and me to her as if chosen for each other.

Manufacturing Calpurnia

- Bk IV of the letters probably c. 104 (Pliny is born 61-2)
- Calpurnia's aunt a younger friend of Pliny's mother and a friend to Pliny
- Calpurnia in Bk VIII miscarries as 'too young to know what is happening'.
 - Bk VIII written c. 107 (how old is she then: 16/17?)

Pliny's Marriage and Age

Ep. VII 5

You cannot believe how much I miss you. I love you so much, and we are not used to separations. So I stay awake most of the night thinking of you, and by day I find my feet carrying me (a true word carrying) to your room at the times I usually visited you; then finding it empty I depart, as sick and sorrowful as a lover locked out. The only time I am free from this misery is when I am in court and wearing myself out with my friends' lawsuits. You can judge then what a life I am leading, when I find rest in work and distraction in troubles and anxiety.

- React

- Who is in charge?
- Is this a game?
- Who is showing off what?

Return to Lovers



Love Non-Manufactured
