

# TERRA DEI VOLSCI

## ANNALI

del

Museo Archeologico di Frosinone

1

nuova serie

2013

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 COMUNE DI FROSINONE  
ASSESSORATO ALLA CULTURA

*Terra dei Volsci. Annali del Museo Archeologico di Frosinone*

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*Registrazione*  
Tribunale di Frosinone, n. 267 del 21.12.1998

*Stampa*  
Tipografia Editrice Frusinate - Frosinone

ISSN 2284-1164

Questo volume ha beneficiato del contributo erogato ai sensi della L.R. 42/1997

*In copertina: gocciolatoio fittile configurato a testa leonina (da Frosinone, viale Roma - foto Jean Bruno Maccotta)*

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## Sommario

- 7 *Introduzione alla geologia di Frosinone*  
VALERIO COMERCI, PIO DI MANNA
- 25 *Eyes of a Queen: a Marble Head in Frosinone*  
MOLLY LINDNER
- 43 *Notizie archeologiche su Frosinone da una tesi di laurea degli anni Quaranta*  
ADRIANA VALCHERA
- 59 *Una statua di Marte a Frosinone*  
BRUNILDE MAZZOLENI
- 65 *Iconografia storica urbana di Frosinone tra XVIII e XIX secolo: i disegni del  
Monogrammista AB e di Edward Lear*  
PAOLA APREDA
- 91 *Abbreviazioni*
- 93 *Abstract*



# Eyes of a Queen: a Marble Head in Frosinone

MOLLY LINDNER

Recently, the Museo Archeologico di Frosinone acquired two marble female heads from the estate of Vittorio Valle, an attorney and citizen of the city<sup>1</sup>. The focus of this article is inv. 1894M, a one-third life-size female head with a much-damaged face. The second female head will be treated in a future study. The only documentation of their provenience is a notice by the previous owner that they were found in the 1920s in modern Frosinone or its environs and kept in his home through his lifetime<sup>2</sup>.

Despite severe erosion to the most prominent surfaces of the marble head, the eyes of the Frosinone woman are well preserved. In contrast, weather and repeated abrasions over a long time have left whitened areas over the worn-down nose, eyebrows, forehead, and mouth (Fig. 1). Such damage is typical when a marble portrait has become embedded in soil that is well-traveled by human and vehicular traffic. It is my estimation that inv. 1894M lay face up, close to the surface of the ground where natural and human forces wore down the most prominent facial features. The face also exhibits burns from fire, which are not inconsistent with destruction and abandonment of ancient structures.

Focusing on the eyes, the present condition of inv. 1894M gives the impression of heavy, drooping upper eyelids and lower lids that are indistinguishable from the cheeks below. The head's left eye seems almost completely closed, while the right eye is wider, despite the puffy lid and eyebrow that project above it (Fig. 24 a-b)<sup>3</sup>.

The head's small size indicates that it belonged to a statuette. The circular, concentric depressions in the top of the head secured a now-missing head ornament, most likely of a different material: wood, stucco, or gilded metal (Fig. 2). The hair, which is best preserved on the sides of the head (Figs. 3-4), is parted in the center of the forehead, although one must imagine the part because that area is very damaged, and gently pulled back in loose and thick strands partially covering the ears.

25

<sup>1</sup> I thank Dottoressa Maria Teresa Onorati, Direttore del Museo, for inviting me to research these two female portraits in the Museo Archeologico di Frosinone.

<sup>2</sup> «About the origin of the heads the only news we have are those given in the report here attached, namely that they were recovered in Frosinone in the early twenties of the last century by the lawyer Vittorio Valle, and then kept at his home and unpublished. Unfortunately we do not know where in the city or territory and how they were recovered». M. T. Onorati, personal communication, 1/6/2011. S. Gatti, *Le terme di Frosinone*, in R. Padovano (ed), *Sorgenti e terme della Valle del Sacco*, Padova 2009, 299-303 reports that post WWII construction in Frosinone led to destruction of ancient monuments as recently as the 1960s. Moreover, undocumented excavations in the territory during previous centuries account for the paucity of sculptural remains and the difficulty of envisioning sculptural displays in ancient Frosinone. M. Lindner, *The Woman from Frosinone*, in MAAR, 51-52, 2006-2007, 43-85 reconstructs the ancient forum of Frosinone as the original place of display for a statue in Detroit.

<sup>3</sup> References to the right and left are the sculpture's and not the viewer's right and left.

Frosinone, Museo Archeologico, inv. 1894M.  
Possible portrait of Berenike II  
(photos Figs. 1-5, courtesy of the museum).  
1. Frontal view.  
2. Cavities in the top of the head.



Secured in place with several fillets or ribbons, the loose hair is tightened and shaped at the back of the head into a large chignon, which appears to be made of unbraided hair divided into parallel rows that extend horizontally from the fillets holding them in place. The chignon's structure resembles a coronet turned on its side. In another portrait, such parallel segments might complement a coiffure of the melon style, so-called, but the hair elsewhere on inv. 1894M's is idealized. It is as though the woman wears two different hairstyles - one for the hair on the head and another for the chignon. The lack of sculpting on the back of the chignon (Fig. 5) and the more complete detailing of the proper right side of the head (Fig. 3) indicate that the portrait was meant to be seen from a right three-quarter view.

3. Right profile viewed above eye level.
4. Left profile viewed above eye level.
5. Back of head.

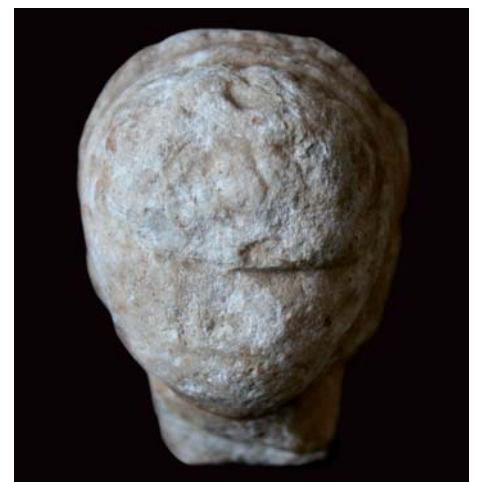


Moreover, the chignon is unfinished and suggests that the head (or statuette) was placed in a niche or against a wall.

From the break in the neck to the crown, the head of inv. 1894M measures 11.9 cm. If the head were one-fifth the height of the statuette, the complete figure would have been 59.5 cm or just under two feet tall. These dimensions are within the range of surviving statuettes of Ptolemaic queens, for example a statuette of Arsinoe II in New York made of limestone that was painted and gilded, giving a more life-like appearance<sup>4</sup>.

Inv. 1894M may have had similar polychromy and highlighting with gilding, and the photographs available for this study indicate remains of red pigment (or discoloration) on the Frosinone head<sup>5</sup>.

Small-scale heads of Ptolemaic queens provide excellent comparisons for inv. 1894M. In the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, a marble head called “Head of a Queen or Goddess?” measures 9.5 cm in height (Fig. 6)<sup>6</sup>. This head represents a Ptolemaic queen, whose identity is unknown, but whose face has distinctive features: an oblong shape, an off-center part, almond-shaped eyes, heavy upper eyelids, and flat cheeks. Except for the eyes, the



<sup>4</sup> Statuette of Arsinoe, N.Y. Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. no. 20.2.21.

<sup>5</sup> C. Havelock (1982) discusses red pigment on the Vassar portrait.

<sup>6</sup> Alexandria (Egypt), Bibliotheca Alexandrina Antiquities Museum Number 0239; Inv. (Greco-Roman Museum) 21235. Because of the civil unrest in Egypt in late January 2011, I was unable to contact the curators at the Antiquities Museum in Alexandria for further information about this sculpture.

6. Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Antiquities Museum, Head of a queen or goddess (?), inv. (Greco-Roman Museum) 21235.

7. "Kaufmann Head," c. 150 B.C.E., Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. MND 2027 (no. usuel Ma 3518).



28

head in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina most closely approximates what I think inv. 1894M originally looked like, and a difference in age could account for the much older-looking eyes of the Frosinone portrait. As a starting point for considering these possibilities, I would like to compare them to each other.

The portrait in Alexandria depicts a young and beautiful woman, whose softly waving strands of hair replicate the luxuriant coiffure of the goddess Aphrodite, known throughout the Hellenistic world in copies and variations of Praxiteles' Cnidian Aphrodite, for example, the Kaufmann Head in the Louvre, dated c. 150 B.C.E. (Fig. 7)<sup>7</sup>.

While the hair over the forehead of inv.1894M is all but obliterated, profile views confirm that it was composed of wavy strands of thick hair secured by a double fillet wrapped twice around the head behind what appears to be a diadem (Figs. 3-4). A third-century B.C.E. Hellenistic refinement of the fourth century Praxitelean style, the double fillet of Aphrodite's coiffure became standard iconography for portraits of mortal women<sup>8</sup>. Assuming for a moment that both the Alexandria and Frosinone portraits depict women closely related to each other, or possibly the same person, the petite marble head in Alexandria gives some idea of the appearance of inv. 1894M before the face was badly eroded. I reconstruct the front of the hairstyle of inv. 1894M as the same as the head in Alexandria<sup>9</sup>.

The most common hairstyle of Hellenistic women's portraiture is the melon or corn-row coiffure, called thus because the strands of hair on the

<sup>7</sup> Kaufmann Head, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. MND 2027 (no. usuel Ma 3518); Stewart 1990, II, figs. 506-07.

<sup>8</sup> Reeder 1988, cat. 17, 92.

<sup>9</sup> I have not been able to obtain photographs of the sides or back of the Alexandria head in order to compare those views to inv. 1894M.



8. Hellenistic maiden wearing corn row or “melon” coiffure with large, disc-shaped chignon, Walters Art Gallery, inv. 23.137.



9. Miniature portrait of Cleopatra I, II or III, Egyptian, Hellenistic Period (Ptolemaic dynasty), with metal dowel to support a head ornament still attached to the head, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, inv. 97.905.



10a. Head of Cleopatra I, II, or III wearing garland of flowers behind the uraeus and diadem in front of the kalathos.



10b. Statuette of Isis holding a cobra, 1st c. B.C.E.-2nd c. C.E., Walters Art Museum, inv. 54.2016.



head are divided into twisted rows that run back from the forehead imitating the rows of a melon fruit (Fig. 8)<sup>10</sup>. While both royal and non-royal Hellenistic women were portrayed wearing the melon hairstyle, the much less common Aphrodite-style coiffure takes on special meaning for a select group of women<sup>11</sup>. Mortal women who were portrayed wearing Aphrodite’s-style coiffure could only belong to the highest social rank, for example, a Ptolemaic queen, many of whom were assimilated with Aphrodite and Isis<sup>12</sup>.

#### *Garlands of leaves and flowers*

Not all parts of the portrait in Alexandria compare well to the Frosinone head. They differ, for example, in the age of the sitter and the choice of head ornaments. While the Alexandria portrait depicts a young woman wearing a crown of thick leaves like laurel that come together at the apex of the head, inv. 1894M represents what appears to be a much older woman wearing some kind of band or diadem<sup>13</sup>, which disappears beneath protrusions above the ears. The head’s condition makes it very difficult to interpret the lumpish areas. Are they hair or something else? If hair, they are incongruous with the delicately sculpted locks of hair visible in the profile views.

It is possible that a garland of flowers framed the face, extending perhaps to the forehead and secured with a fillet or ribbon. The bulging contours

<sup>10</sup> Reeder 1988, cat. 15, 89.

<sup>11</sup> The Hellenization of Ptolemaic portraiture is the subject of much research. In particular, Smith 1988; Ashton 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Stewart 1990, I, 203.

<sup>13</sup> I do not envision the Frosinone portrait as having a stephane because, as I discuss later, the hole in the top of the head suggests a tall head ornament, whereas a stephane is wide and sits low on the head.

11. Queen Tiye, Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty 18, c. 1355 B.C.E., Aegyptisches Museum, Berlin.



12. Inv. 1894M with Crown of Isis: horns of Hathor supporting solar disc and two palm branches (M. Lindner 2011).



30

above the ears of inv. 1894M may have served as a base for stucco and paint, which were commonly used in late Hellenistic portraits to build such details in the coiffure as delicate floral shapes<sup>14</sup>.

Unfortunately, comparisons of flower garlands among portraits of Hellenistic queens are few, because this kind of head adornment tends to be broken off. An example is the faience head of a Ptolemaic queen wearing a garland of gilded berries and leaves behind corn-rows of hair (Fig. 10a).

### *The Head Ornament*

This brings us to the circular cavities in the top of inv. 1894M (Fig. 2). They are three roughly concentric circular openings that become smaller and deeper. The base of the head ornament must have been cut in recessed steps to fit into such a complex opening.

<sup>14</sup> Hamiaux 1996, 149-150 discusses the tradition in Hellenistic art of completing marble portraits with painted and gilded stucco to make the portrait as lifelike as possible.

13. Dekadrachma of Arsinoe II struck by Ptolemy III.



14. Berenike II wearing the melon coiffure and disc knot, Gold dekadrachma, dated to 246-245 B.C.E.



15. Berenike II, Garnet intaglio ring, Walters Art Gallery, 42.1339. Artist: Nikandros.



Nothing suggests that the stepped opening was cut later than the portrait<sup>15</sup>.

A common method of attachment for a head ornament is visible in a miniature portrait of Cleopatra I, II or III, with the metal dowel to support a head ornament still attached to the head (Fig. 9)<sup>16</sup>. In the cavity on the top of Inv. 1894M, remains of a fixative for an iron dowel are visible (Fig. 2), which suggest that such a metal dowel was used here, too. As the sculptor of the Frosinone portrait felt that the object had to be secured by being set into the cavity as well as supported by a metal dowel, one must suppose that a very heavy or very tall object required such support.

Envisioning the head ornament of the head from Frosinone requires imagination and portraits of earlier Egyptian queens. As Ptolemaic queens were assimilated with Isis, the goddess' headdress appears as part of their portraiture. An early second-century B.C.E. portrait of a Ptolemaic queen illustrates a kalathos, or sacred basket of Isis (Fig. 10a)<sup>17</sup>. Based on other artistic representations, the kalathos was not worn alone but served as a base for Isis's tall headdress: a solar disc and two feathers between bulls' horns (Fig. 10b)<sup>18</sup>. The kalathos could also be eliminated, for example, in the New Kingdom portrait of Queen Tiye in Berlin (Fig. 11)<sup>19</sup>. When an Isis headdress (minus the kalathos) is "grafted" onto the head of inv. 1894M, the viewer has an idea of the way such a crown might have looked attached to the Frosinone head (Fig. 12).

#### *The mixed divine and mortal iconography of inv. 1894M*

The "disc knot" style of the chignon of inv. 1894M (Figs. 3-4) originates in Ptolemaic queen's portraiture. While the Praxitelean Aphrodite's chignon is loosely gathered hair, the chignon (*la crocchia*) of inv. 1894M,

<sup>15</sup> It is difficult to find comparisons for the opening in the head of inv. 1894M, but it appears original to the sculpture. Havelock 1982, 269-276 illustrates an opening in the head for a dowel which she suggests supported a diadem.

<sup>16</sup> Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inv. 97.905.

<sup>17</sup> Whether the uraeus was required for portraits of Ptolemaic queens seems related to the function and style of the portrait. Coin and faience portraits do not usually include the uraeus. Because of damage to the forehead, it is unclear if the head in Frosinone included an uraeus.

<sup>18</sup> Statuette of Isis holding a cobra, Walters Art Museum, inv. 54.2016. Dated by E. Reeder (1988) to 3rd-1st c. B.C.E., and more recently 1st c. B.C.E.-2nd c. C.E.

<sup>19</sup> Berlin, Aegyptisches Museum, inv. ÄM 21834, ÄM 17852.

16. Portrait of Berenike II (?), Venice, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. 238.



large and worn high on the back of the head, resembles glyptic portraits of Arsinoe II and Berenike II (Figs. 13-15). Dorothy Burr Thompson called this type of chignon a “disc knot” because of its flat, circular appearance on the oinochoai portraits that she studied<sup>20</sup>. On inv. 1894M, however, the chignon is plump and complementary to the luxurious locks of hair that frame the face (Figs. 3-4)<sup>21</sup>. A marble portrait has sufficient material for such a full chignon (or it could be pieced on to the back of the head), while glyptic and faience portraits were limited, presumably, to the space allotted for the chignon.

The left and right sides of the Frosinone portrait are well preserved, and the sculptor has conveyed the impression of femininity and youthful vitality in the abundantly thick hair and ropey strands secured by fillets (Figs. 3-4). The face of inv. 1894M, however, contradicts the youthfulness of the idealized coiffure. Despite the erosion of the face of inv. 1894M, its long oval shape and distorted eyes suggest a woman no longer young and vital rather than the immortal Aphrodite.

32 Moreover the Frosinone head has too many hallmarks of portraiture to be an ideal sculpture of the goddess. A long, almost oblong face characterizes the Frosinone head, while Aphrodite's face is always heart-shaped.

The sculptor accentuated the heaviness in the woman's face with the swollen upper right eyelid, the nearly closed left eye, the flat cheeks with no indication of muscle or bone structure beneath the flesh, and the ponderous lower face. An aging mortal woman is the dominant impression that inv. 1894M conveys to this viewer.

If inv. 1894M represents a mortal woman, then who was she? Studies of Ptolemaic portraiture, as well as museum catalogs of Egyptian art, provide comparisons to identify inv. 1894M as Berenike II and, despite the lamentable condition of the face, to comprehend the meaning of this portrait within her personal iconography.

Eyes of such unequal size and distorted appearance seem unflattering for a portrait that was meant to represent a royal woman, that is, unless the intention of the sculptor was to record the woman's face as realistically as possible. Thompson and Brunelle observed unflattering realism in the works that they include as portraits of Berenike II, and, using the distorted eyes of inv. 1894M as a starting point, I would like to test a hypothesis that the woman depicted in the Frosinone portrait was Berenike II and that either aging or disease accounts for the nearly closed eyes.

<sup>20</sup> Thompson 1973, cat. 129, pl. LXL. The word “knot” (nodo) implies a smaller chignon (una crocchia), which the double disc (doppio disco) arrangement of inv. 1894M is not.

<sup>21</sup> None of the marble portraits that Kyrieleis accepts as Berenike II (pl. 83-87) includes the disc knot, because the back of the head is either unfinished or broken off. But his series of Berenike II portraits all show the Aphrodite coiffure rather than the melon hairstyle of most of her coinage.

17. Coin portrait of Berenike II, with legend on reverse: Berenikes Basilisses.



18a. Oinochoe portrait of Berenike II offering a libation.

18b. Oinochoe of Berenike II pouring a libation into the ground, Malibu, Getty Museum, inv. 96. AL58.



### *Accepted portraits of Berenike II*

The older literature on Ptolemaic queens' portraiture bases identification of her life-size marble portraits on coin images. The difficulty with that approach is the degree of life-likeness of the coins. A marble portrait may closely resemble a coin profile, but they both may be idealized images. For example, in many surviving portraits, the faces of Arsinoe II and Berenike II resemble each other, although they were not mother and daughter. Nevertheless, Arsinoe was the half-sister of Berenike's father, which may explain a familial resemblance.

R. R. R. Smith characterizes the problem in identifying portraits of these women:

They are not so much portrait-like as newly created ideals. There are many sculptured heads that use one or a combination of these female royal ideals, but not many are certainly queens and even fewer that are sufficiently close to be securely identified as Arsinoe or Berenike. Within the "loose" portrait practice of the Hellenistic period, the identity of type of such highly idealised images, is hard to establish.<sup>22</sup>

The following lists show how few portraits of Berenike II can be verified by inscriptions and how many are identified based on their style and facial iconography.

<sup>22</sup> Smith 1988, 91.

## Portraits of Berenike II with inscriptions:

1. Berenike II, Garnet intaglio ring, Walters Art Gallery, 42.1339. Artist: Nikandros Reeder 1988, cat. (Fig. 15).
2. Oinochoai (Thompson 1973, Oinochoe type IIa, 149, cat. 75, pl. B, XXV-XXVII. From Xanthos; inscribed Theoi Euergetai on altar of two oinochoai (Figs. 18a-b).
3. Coins (Smith 1988, pl. 75, nos. 6 and 7) with disc knot. (Fig. 14) [Berenikes Basilisses [coin legend] (Fig. 17).

## Accepted portraits of Berenike II (no inscriptions)

1. Kyrieleis 1975, cat. K1-6, pl. 82-87.
2. Brunelle 1976, 30-41.
3. Thompson 1973, Oinochoai, Queen Figure, Type Ib, 146 ff. and Queen Figure, Type IIa, 149 ff. (Figs. 20-22).
4. Smith 1988, 91, 166, cat. 53 (Hirsch Queen) and cat. 54 (Kassel Queen). Smith accepts only two portraits as Berenike II.

34

## Possible portraits of Berenike II

1. Faience head, from Naukratis, identified by Thompson 1973, cat. 270, as Arsinoe II (Fig. 19).
2. Head, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Greco-Roman Museum, inv. 21235 (Fig. 6).
3. Head, Museo Archeologico di Frosinone, inv. 1894M (Figs. 1-5).
4. Head from the Temple of Apollo at Cyrene, London, British Museum<sup>23</sup>.

*Aging in Berenike II's portraits*

Berenike II was born in 273 B.C.E. in Cyrene to King Magas, and when he died, she became queen of Cyrene around age 16.

Berenike was 27 when she married Ptolemy III Euergetes and became queen of Egypt in 246 B.C.E. She lived until c. 222 B.C.E. when her son, Ptolemy IV Philopator, allegedly had her murdered<sup>24</sup>.

At the time of her death, she would have been around 51 years old, and, given the Ptolemaic penchant for realism, portraits of her during her 24-year reign might show considerable differences in age<sup>25</sup>.

19. Faience portrait of Berenike II (?), from the mid period. The bulging eyeballs could indicate Grave's disease, as illustrated in a late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph.



<sup>23</sup> Adams 2003, 115-128. I omit this portrait from my discussion because comparison of the Cyrene portrait to other images of Berenike II is not the focus of Adams' study.

<sup>24</sup> Thompson 1973, 5.

<sup>25</sup> Berenike II was the first Ptolemaic queen deified during her lifetime. Ptolemy III was deified with Berenike III shortly after he became king, around 243/2 B.C.E. (Fraser 1972, 219). Possible lifetime deification does not seem to have kept some of her portrait artists from depicting her at different ages.

20. Berenike II (?), portrait from a fragmentary oinochoe.

21. Berenike II (?), portrait from a fragmentary oinochoe compared to inv. 1894M (left).

22. Berenike II (?), portrait from a fragmentary Ptolemaic oinochoe.



Both Thompson and Brunelle discuss the evolution of Berenike II, newly married to Ptolemy III, into the older queen as recorded in her portraiture, and I agree with their characterization of the aging Berenike's physiognomy<sup>26</sup>. In discussing a marble head in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia (Fig. 16)<sup>27</sup>, Brunelle describes the woman as “aging” and dates the portrait to c. 233 for the following reasons<sup>28</sup>:

1. The full forms, which Brunelle later describes as «bloated with blurring contours».
2. The round chin with a double chin.
3. The small, high-sitting mouth.
4. The eyes, which Brunelle says are less typical of Berenike II, «narrow themselves into a smirk that the mouth also plays with». Brunelle also characterizes the facial expression as «petty and saccharine».
5. The lateral swelling of the orbital muscles.
6. A padded, lumpy ring or hoop, which partially conceals a diadem.

Assuming that the portrait in Venice is Berenike II, the face resembles inv. 1894M, except for the eyes, which bear none of the distortions of the Frosinone portrait<sup>29</sup>.

The two images, therefore, could represent Berenike II as much as ten to fifteen years apart in date<sup>30</sup>, the Venice portrait in the early 230s and the Frosinone portrait as late as 225.

My purpose here is to point out that Berenike II's monumental (life-size) portraiture might be more varied in its iconography and facial

<sup>26</sup> The portraits of Berenike II that Kyrieleis, 180-181, pl. 83-87, accepts depict her at the same age, presumably after she became queen of Egypt in 247.

<sup>27</sup> Venice, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Venezia, inv. 238; *Anti* 1930, 92, cat. 18; Traversari 1986, 35-36, cat. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Brunelle 1976, 36 and 153, n. 25.

<sup>29</sup> Notions of aging in portraiture depend on the age of the viewer. What one scholar calls “aging” might look to me as “no longer young”, but not yet “old.”

<sup>30</sup> Alternatively, is one an idealized portrait (Venice) and the other a realistic one (Frosinone), or could they be mother (Frosinone) and daughter (Venice)?

23. Arsinoe III (?), portrait from a fragmentary oinochoe, Walters Art Museum, inv. 48.309.



36

iconography than Kyrieleis or Smith thought. Thompson, for example, argued that small-scale faience portraits of Berenike II show aging, while her monumental portraits made for public display and coin imagery do not. They seem to capture the queen's face in one moment in time. The faience Queens' Vases bear out the hypothesis that Berenike's portraiture evolved over time, from the youthful queen to the aging diva.

#### *Third-century B.C.E. Queen's Vases*

Dorothy Burr Thompson's venerable study of Ptolemaic Queen's Vases, so-called, which were produced in Alexandria during the Ptolemaic time period, presents a series of faience portraits, which appear to show Berenike II at different ages during her long reign<sup>31</sup>. Separately molded portrait heads of Ptolemaic queens were also manufactured and «presumably served as votives, probably in house shrines» (Fig. 19)<sup>32</sup>. This is important for my identification of inv. 1894M as a cult object, either a statuette or a head, which was placed in a place of honor within a domestic context in Frosinone.

As 90% of the surviving faience oinochoai were excavated in funerary contexts, Thompson argues that they were highly prized possessions treasured during lifetime and carried to the grave<sup>33</sup>.

The faience vessels became valued memorials for the owners and disseminated the living queen's portrait to a larger population of Alexandria which appreciated their life-like qualities.

<sup>31</sup> Thompson 1973, 69.

<sup>32</sup> Thompson 1973, 77.

<sup>33</sup> Thompson 1973, 7-8.



The women visiting the palace at Alexandria and those attending the festival at Kos are described by Theokritos and Herodas as being delighted by the realism of the figures they saw in tapestry and stone.<sup>34</sup>

It seems likely that the function and production of the Queens' Vases affected the unusual verism in the portraits of Berenike II. Thompson theorized that the faience oinochoai were mold-made copies of the ceremonial silver vessels that Ptolemaic queens used in rites in honor of the deceased and deified queen<sup>35</sup>. What is noteworthy is that the ritual vessels depicted the living queen and not her mother-in-law, the deceased diva. Thus, Berenike II, using a silver oinochoai with her own portrait affixed on it, performed a libation every year at the site of her mother-in-law's cult in Alexandria (Figs. 18-19).

Elite women of Alexandria purchased the faience "knock-offs" to make their own libations to the deceased queen. They poured water and wine from the oinochoe into a phiale and then into the ground next to altars temporarily set up throughout the city. A new silver vessel would be created to celebrate such special occasions as, for example, the military triumph of Ptolemy III in the east in 243 B.C.E<sup>36</sup>. New titles bestowed on Berenike would be painted onto the faience copies. Thus, Berenike's image would be updated on the silver vessel and the mold-made faience copies. The presumed reason, therefore, that not all faience portraits of Berenike II resemble each other, for example, Figs. 18, 19, and 20, is the updating of her image on the silver prototypes.

Only some of Berenike's oinochoai portraits survive intact with inscriptions that identify the queen. Most are only fragments with the queen's image. Using stylistic analysis, Thompson divided Berenike II's faience portraiture into three periods, based upon the subject's age<sup>37</sup>.

1. A relatively young woman, c. 247-240. Thompson connects these oinochoai, with inscriptions, to military triumphs of her husband in the east after 243<sup>38</sup>(Figs. 18a-b).
2. No longer young, 230s. Thompson calls this the "mid-Berenike" period (Fig. 20).
3. Much later in her life, c. 230-222 B.C.E., the year of her death. These are characterized by the high stephane, signifying Berenike's assimilation with Aphrodite<sup>39</sup>(Figs. 21-22).
4. A posthumous series made under her son, Ptolemy IV Philopator, who promoted her cult as Berenike Euergetes during 211-210 B.C.E.

The early oinochoai portraits depict a young woman with large, wide eyes, graceful and mature. As the series progresses, however, Thompson notes changes in the facial features and expression.

<sup>34</sup> Thompson 1973, 79.

<sup>35</sup> Thompson 1973, 69. When a libation was poured into the ground, it was for a deceased hero, divinized royalty, or a chthonic deity. Only the Olympian gods were honored with liquid poured over the altar.

<sup>36</sup> Thompson 1973, 60.

<sup>37</sup> Thompson 1973, 85.

<sup>38</sup> Thompson 1973, 60.

<sup>39</sup> Thompson 1973, 61.

## 24a. Exophthalmus-Hyperthyroidism.

With number 75, which cannot date very far from c. 240-235 B.C., we must place certain heads that show fleshy faces, puffy eyes, and a touch of coarseness in the features. On no. 68, the mouth turns down into a weary and somewhat sour expression. A more genuinely middle-aged piece, which has the immediacy of a first-hand portrait, is no. 69 [here Fig. 21]. Its features are stodgy, its eyes almost closed, its chin dimples in the corpulent beauty that delights the Near East.<sup>40</sup>



And for catalog number 68 (Fig. 20), Thompson says: «Head is out of key with early style of body. It wears a low stephane and a shallow low knot. Face is fat, with eyes virtually closed by thick lids; small down-turned mouth is precursor of no. 22. This head places piece in mid-Berenike group»<sup>41</sup>.

Thompson's explanation for the portraits in which the queen's eyelids are swollen and her eyes nearly closed, that she is squinting from the glare of the bright sun, is not satisfactory<sup>42</sup>.

Thompson made no comment about the gross distortions in the eyes of a faience head from Naukratis that she identified as Arsinoe II, presumably because that queen's other portraits also represent her eyes as wide and staring (Fig. 19)<sup>43</sup>. The differences between the head from Naukratis and Arsinoe II's coin portraits are instructive (Fig. 13). In the petite faience head, the eyes almost pop out of their sockets. Moreover, none of Arsinoe's marble portraits exhibit such bulging eyes. I propose that the faience head depicts Berenike II in the acute stage of Graves' disease. «Early indications of Graves' disease, which is caused by an excess amount of thyroid hormone, include the appearance of staring or being 'wide-eyed...'. During the acute phase of Grave's-Exophthalmos-the eyeballs may begin to protrude or bulge... swelling pushes the eyeball forward»<sup>44</sup> (Fig. 24a).

If this is so, then figures 20, 21, and 22 show the queen in the stage of the condition where the eyelids have swollen so much that they cannot open completely. «The same type of inflammation and swelling can also involve eye muscles. ...Another effect of the swelling may be puffy or baggy eyelids»<sup>45</sup> (Fig. 24b). If the disease afflicted Berenike II, the symptoms were not depicted in either coin or marble life-size portraits, but the faience portraits appear to have recorded the progression of her disease.

Working with this hypothesis, it seems likely that inv. 1894M, the head in Frosinone, is based on portraits of Berenike II when she exhibited symptoms of Graves' disease: the unnaturally drooping upper lid (nearly covering her left eye) and a swollen upper lid of the right eyelid (Figs. 24 a-b). Whether the Frosinone portrait is a life-time or posthumous image remains uncertain. It seems likely, however, in her posthumous imagery, which could have been based on the faience oinochoai issued by her son,

<sup>40</sup> Thompson 1973, 86.

<sup>41</sup> Thompson 1973, 146.

<sup>42</sup> Thompson 1973, 89.

<sup>43</sup> Thompson 1973, 38, 198, cat. 270, pls. A, LXIV. London, British Museum inv. 66.6-1.38.

<sup>44</sup> «Thyroid-Related Eye Problems: Graves' Disease», Eye Care Notes, 1989. I thank Dr. Cheryl Huey of Ann Arbor Eye Care for this reference.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*.



artists made no attempt to downplay her deformities but, rather, represented the divine Berenike as life-like as possible in order to satisfy the prevailing taste for realism. This is why, I propose, the head in Frosinone has such unstinting realism.

#### *Cults of Arsinoe II and Berenike II*

The Ptolemaic queens, in particular Arsinoe II, were very popular in the late Hellenistic world, and art around the Mediterranean reflects their cults. As evidence that Arsinoe's cult lasted for two hundred years after her death, well into the first century C.E., Reeder cites Ptolemaic-style rings that were produced much later than the life time of Arsinoe, probably in Alexandria, «where they were made as a spontaneous expression of affection for the ruling house»<sup>46</sup>. Explaining how a portrait of Berenike II, albeit a statuette or head by itself, came to be in Frosinone depends on many factors, not the least of which is its place of manufacture. Small-scale portraits and statuettes were eminently portable, and depending on demand, could be made centuries after the queen died. To preserve the memory of these great Egyptian queens and the dynasty to which they belonged required cultic rituals and ceremonies paying tribute to these women. Further research into Berenike II's cult may affirm that her imagery, like that of Arsinoe II, proliferated beyond Egypt.

<sup>46</sup> Reeder 1988, 215.

Thompson theorized that the portrait features of Ptolemaic queens were transmitted not only through the faience oinochoai but also through miniature faience statuettes<sup>47</sup>. That some of the oinochoai were found as far away as Italy hints that they were carried with emigrating families or sold to ancient collectors or travelers in Egypt who were interested in the cult of the deified Egyptian queen.

Migration of art and religion carried imagery of Egyptian gods and rulers to Delos and other entry points into Italy. In an Egyptian sanctuary on Delos, for example, there was a temple of Arsinoe II<sup>48</sup>. Syncretism occurred in images of deities. For example, in Delian cult figures of the second to first centuries B.C.E., the local iconography of Isis is very similar to that of Aphrodite<sup>49</sup>. Such syncretism already operated in Egypt. As was true for Arsinoe II, Berenike II was assimilated with Isis during her lifetime and with Aphrodite after her death and deification<sup>50</sup>. As local Greek iconography of Aphrodite merged with that of Isis, a portrait of Arsinoe or Berenike produced in the Greek milieu could display the coiffure of the Greek Aphrodite, a disc knot, and a crown of Isis. This is the way I reconstruct inv. 1894M as having looked.

40

In areas of the western Mediterranean, which were under pressure for Romanization in the third through first centuries B.C.E., it is easy to explain the taste for Greek and Greco-Egyptian sculpture - an artistic resistance to assimilation. Moreover, in south-eastern Latium, a significant percentage of the population consisted of Greco-Oriental freedmen, some of whom would have brought their love of Egyptian divinities and rulers to their new homeland<sup>51</sup>.

### *Greek sculpture workshops in Italy*

Greek sculptural workshops were active in Italy throughout the Hellenistic period. The family of Polykles from Thorikos, for example, whose signatures are preserved in many sculptures in Italy, specialized in cult statues and acroliths for temples in Rome. Also attributed to this family of Greek sculptors is a head of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste<sup>52</sup>. As they were working for Roman patrons, their large-scale sculptures do not appear to have included Ptolemaic ruler portraits.

The scale of the Frosinone head, 11.9 cm, is appropriate for a small statuette<sup>53</sup>.

Taste for such statuettes is evidenced by thousands of terracotta figures manufactured at Hellenistic sites in Italy<sup>54</sup>.

These, however, were local products meant as votives in sanctuaries, and I envision a different scenario for inv. 1894M, that it was displayed in a private home, in a house shrine. It was more likely imported through trading centers like Delos with connections to Alexandria or brought

<sup>47</sup> Thompson 1973, 79.

<sup>48</sup> Thompson 1973, 51, n. 4.

<sup>49</sup> Walters 1988, 15.

<sup>50</sup> Thompson 1973, 61. Thompson argues that the stephane indicates Berenike II's assimilation with Aphrodite.

<sup>51</sup> Rizzello 1999, 79.

<sup>52</sup> Ridgway 2000, 242-244.

<sup>53</sup> Reeder 1988, 89, 92-93, argues that such decorative marble sculpture were under two feet in height; their heads would be between 11 and 14 cm in height depending on how much of the neck was preserved.

<sup>54</sup> Reggiani 1988.

with a migrating family to Italy. In ancient *Frusino*, importation of both practical and luxury goods of Hellenistic style began when the settlement grew from its Volscian foundations into a Roman center with good trade connections with other Hellenistic centers in and beyond Italy<sup>55</sup>.

Decorative marble sculptures, such as Greek maidens, were popular in Hellenistic domestic contexts. The penchant for displaying such objects within a household would have been extended to images of famous women, after the cult of Arsinoe II was established and paved the way for future veneration not only of her but also of her daughter and descendants. To judge from surviving statuettes of Ptolemaic queens, among which I include inv. 1894M, they were the objects of much private veneration.

Greek patrons with connections to Egypt were the more likely owners of inv. 1894M.

Kept as a family heirloom or memento or as an expression of an affection for the Ptolemaic ruling house, such a statuette, as I envision the head belonged to, would have been part of a house shrine, until it was discarded and suffered damage in its abandoned context. When inv. 1894M came to light in modern times, it was preserved in the condition in which it was found, which has helped this researcher to understand the head's condition, original appearance, iconography, and its history. As granddaughter of an American Navy captain during WWII, I offer this study of the head in Frosinone to the Valle family that protected it through the ravages of that same war.

<sup>55</sup> Museo Archeologico di Frosinone- Sala III- Età romana, [http://www.menteantica.it.museo\\_frsala3.htm](http://www.menteantica.it.museo_frsala3.htm). 1. Accessed 10/25/2005

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## Abbreviazioni

ASF	<i>Archivio di Stato di Frosinone</i>
ASR	<i>Archivio di Stato di Roma</i>
BLazioMerid	<i>Bollettino dell'Istituto di storia e di arte del Lazio meridionale</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
EAA	<i>Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica, Classica e Orientale</i>
Hesperia	<i>Hesperia. The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens</i>
MAAR	<i>Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome</i>
NSc	<i>Notizie degli scavi di antichità</i>
Orizzonti	<i>Orizzonti. Rassegna di archeologia</i>
QuadAEI	<i>Quaderni del Centro di studio per l'archeologia etrusco-italica</i>
RA	<i>Revue Archéologique</i>
TerVolA	<i>Terra dei Volsci. Annali del Museo Archeologico di Frosinone</i>
TerVolM	<i>Terra dei Volsci. Miscellanea</i>





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## Abstract

VALERIO COMERCI - PIO DI MANNA, *Introduzione alla geologia di Frosinone*

The aim of this note is to provide to the non-expert public some key elements useful to understanding the general outline of the geology of the municipal territory of Frosinone. The Frosinone territory, located in the wide tectonic depression of the Latina Valley, extends for about 47 square kilometers and shows a prevalently flat to hilly morphology. It is characterized by elevations between 137 and 316 m above sea level (more than 80% of the territory has altitudes between 130 and 200 m above sea level) and gradient below 5 degrees for more than 70% of its extent. The present day landscape is the result of a long and complex geological evolution, starting from the Lower Jurassic-Upper Cretaceous carbonate shelf sedimentation, passing through the Lower Miocene ramp and the Upper Miocene turbidite basin deposition: the related “*Frosinone flysch*” represents the bedrock of the municipal territory. An Upper Miocene-Lower Pliocene compressional phase deformed such deposits, structuring the hill on which the historical centre stands; conversely, the following Quaternary extensional phase downthrew the existing structures, and was responsible for the consequent volcanic activity (vulcanismo Ernico) and for the formation of the Lirino basin along the Latina Valley, successively filled up. During the Holocene the landscape has been shaped by erosional and depositional activities connected to the main streams (the current Cosa and Sacco rivers) dynamics. The landscape evolution is still active at present, influenced by weathering processes, alluvial and gravitative phenomena and human activities. The lithological distribution in the municipal territory is presented in a new geological scheme based on previously published geological maps at different scales.

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MOLLY LINDNER, *Eyes of a Queen: a Marble Head in Frosinone*

L'articolo analizza una testa in marmo inedita, pervenuta al Museo Archeologico Comunale di Frosinone nel 2010. Malgrado le superfici fortemente abrase, la testa rivela nel volto tratti peculiari e realistici, come le palpebre rigonfie e l'occhio sinistro praticamente chiuso, probabili indici di uno stato di sofferenza forse da malattia tiroidea (morbo di Graves). Mentre il volto sembra rappresentare un personaggio reale, la pettinatura riprende quella dell'Afrodite Cnidia di Prassitele e, sulla sommità del capo, un incasso attesta l'originaria presenza di un ornamento, forse sul tipo di quelli che caratterizzavano la dea Iside. La combinazione di questi elementi avvicina la testa di Frosinone ai ritratti ellenistici dell'Egitto tolemaico, dove le regine erano divinizzate e assimilate a molteplici divinità con iconografie che, nella diffusione del loro culto attraverso il Mediterraneo occidentale, assumevano caratteristiche proprie delle divinità greche. La testa di Frosinone, soprattutto per la resa degli occhi, appare identificabile con un ritratto divino della regina tolemaica Berenice II (ca. 273-222 a.C.), verso la fine della sua vita. La frattura alla base del collo e le piccole dimensioni suggeriscono che la testa doveva appartenere ad una statuetta, forse oggetto di culto domestico, la cui presenza nell'antica *Frusino* è collegabile al commercio di beni di lusso di importazione e alla diffusione del culto di divinità egizie che si sviluppano in Italia in epoca tardo-ellenistica.

94

ADRIANA VALCHERA, *Notizie archeologiche su Frosinone da una tesi di laurea degli anni Quaranta*

The paper analyzes the unpublished thesis of Prof.ssa Luigia Valle, who graduated at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan in 1947, with an archaeological research titled *The country of Ernici*, supervisor Prof. Roberto Paribeni. After a chapter with a detailed analysis of ancient sources about Ernici, the thesis discusses the question of viability, especially the ancient Via Latina from *Compitum Anagninum*, with a comprehensive study of Itineraries (*Itinerarium Antonini*, *Tabula Peutingeriana*), medieval sources, milestones published by Mommsen in *CIL* and extant remains. For this study a part of the thesis concerning Frosinone was considered, publishing the text and commenting on the information about the topography of the city. A comparison between the Gregorian Cadastre (first half of the nineteenth century) and the post-unification cadastre of Frosinone (early years of the twentieth century) has allowed to place the archaeological discoveries with good approximation.

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BRUNILDE MAZZOLENI, *Una statua di Marte a Frosinone*

The purpose of this research is to retrace the events connected to the purchase of an important marble sculpture portraying the Roman god Mars. The sculpture, first quoted by the historian A. Fortuna in 1927, was found in 1744 in Frosinone and it was given to Cardinal Alessandro Albani who was known for his devotion to collections. The exact location of the sculpture was discovered through an accurate reading of the cadastral maps since the location mentioned by Fortuna is different. Moreover the analysis of the all information we own and the reconstruction of the cultural fabric of that period allowed us to speculate upon the path followed by the work.

PAOLA APREDA, *Iconografia storica urbana di Frosinone tra XVIII e XIX secolo: i disegni del Monogrammista AB e di Edward Lear*

95

This contribution presents two unreleased urban views of Frosinone: two drawings carried out, respectively, in the first half of the XVIII century by the monogrammist AB and in 1838 by Edward Lear, today conserved in the British Museum. Both drawings allow a better knowledge of the historical iconography of the city, proposing two examples of real observation and of registration of a real element, even if each with its performing peculiarity. A brief observation of known figurative statements, the schematic view of 1776 and the one painted in 1854 by Vincenzo Vannozzi in the Bishop's Residence of Veroli (both proposed with unreleased information), precedes the drawings analysis and the topographic reading proposals. In the first half of the XVIII century, the first author, an anonymous Italian known by his monogram AB, realized a corpus of drawings portraying views of Rome and its surroundings. His approach, inspired by Gaspar Van Vittel, reveals a topographic aim together with hesitations typical of an amateur. His drawing, through a fast and little elaborated procedure, shows the city profile, maybe observed from south-east, but the identification of the exact point of view and of the buildings is problematic. Instead, the well known Edward Lear traced a suggestive portrait of the city consenting to grasp architectures and perspectives difficult to be identified. On the whole the proposed examples give back an image of the city whose morphological identity and architectonic aspect seem mostly forgotten nowadays.

Finito di stampare con i tipi della Editrice Frusinate srl  
nel mese di febbraio 2014

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