



Type: Woman funerary portrait from Noricum
 Chronology: Early 1st century AD
 Findspot: Lendorf/Klagenfurt (Austria)
 Actual location: Lendorf/Klagenfurt (Austria)
 Website: <http://lupa.at/851>

This is a portrait of a deceased woman who died in the Roman province of Noricum. Formerly a federation of Celtic tribes that included most of modern Austria and part of Slovenia, Noricum became a kingdom ally of Rome, until it was finally incorporated in the Roman empire in 16 BC. Noricum was an important provider of iron and weapons for Rome and it had strong commercial connections with the important Roman city of Aquileia, in Northern Italy.

The portrait is framed in a circular medallion, following the Roman custom to represent the deceased on round shields (*imagines clipeatae*). She is portrayed holding the stola (a mantle used by Roman women to cover themselves when they were in a public space) over her head, a sign of modesty and a common iconography for Roman female funerary portraits. However, interestingly she also displays a large parure of jewels and features a large hat under the stola, unknown to Roman Italian funerary portraiture and likely disclosing her native origins.

The relief offers an excellent example of how cultural identity in the Roman period was negotiated in a variety of ways, in particular in the funerary context, as not only people made particular choices when it came to visualizing identity, but viewers were also able to understand and make sense of them according to their own social and cultural background.

MY RESEARCH

How far can visual culture offer an understanding of cultural identity in the Roman empire?