



Statue of Aphrodite. Roman copy (2nd century AD) of a Greek Hellenistic original (left) and the same one but with the portrait of an aged woman (right), 1st century AD. Naples, National Archaeological Museum (Farnese Collection, inventory nrs. 6283 and 6291)

The two statues offer an interesting example of the use of idealized bodies in Roman portraiture. This type of statue of Aphrodite (left), covering herself, was very popular across the Roman empire. It embodied modesty, one of the key expected features of the personality of a respectable Roman woman. It is therefore not surprising to find the same body type in a statue (right) that portrays an aged woman whose modesty ended up being celebrated by her family, likely after her death.

MY RESEARCH

How far did Roman morality affected the way in which women were represented in the visual arts?