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ASPECTS OF THE FEMALE PRESENCE IN ATTIC FUNERARY RELIEFS OF  
THE IMPERIAL PERIOD

In this paper we re-examine and comment two iconographic types of female figure found in Attic reliefs of the imperial period. In the first, known to research as the Hüftbausch–Typus, the figure wears a long tunic, belted high, and a mantle, its turned-back edge held by one hand at hip level, leaving most of the tunic visible. In the second, known as the Puteal Albani group, a young woman, lightly clad, is portrayed turning to and resting her crossed arms on the shoulder of a second, forward-facing figure.

The evolution of these types is shaped by echoes of classicism and influences from the Hellenistic idiom, neo-Attic compositions and Roman iconography. These elements crystallized in the early imperial period in two creations that form part of the repertory of the Attic sculptural workshops.

One interesting aspect of this group is its iconographic differentiation from the other types of depiction of female figures in Attic sculptural production, that is, the Heracliotissa and Pudicitia types. The decorous female has given way to a vigorous presence, beautiful, elegant, graceful, a woman to fall in love with. Our multiple-level study of the material led us to the conclusion that the Attic sculptors of funerary reliefs demonstrated an adaptiveness to new social orientations – or desires – and created an independent iconographic idiom that recorded social currents.