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Ancient Portrait Busts of Marcus Aurelius in the National Museum in Poznań

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Abstract: The article addresses the collection of Roman portrait busts in the National Museum in Poznań, Poland. The paper focuses on three busts attributed to Marcus Aurelius as an example of durable adaptations and modifications of the originals. It aims to explain frequent misconceptions and interpretations of the sculptures by exploring history and conservation practices.

Keywords: Roman period, portrait sculpture, Marcus Aurelius, museum collection

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This paper takes into consideration two imperial portraits of Marcus Aurelius (inv. nos MNP A 599 and MNP A 603) and one bust attributed to Marcus Aurelius, originally depicting his son, Commodus (inv. no. MNP A 594), that are part of the exhibition in the Gallery of Ancient Art in the National Museum in Poznań. They represent three out of four types used for emperors' portraiture: the first type Kapitol, the third Dresden or Museo delle Terme 726 and the fourth Museo Capitolino, Imperatori 38, respectively (see also below). Portraits of Marcus Aurelius are characterised by strong realism, although despite the impression of individualism, such a portrait bust is, in fact, created through a system of signs and features demanded by the client.[1] Apart from the portrayed person's natural features, the Roman imperial portrait included signs of political value, evidence of the right of succession and family connections. All of these elements occur in the art of the Antonine dynasty, and therefore, in Poznań's busts.[2]

The Roman portrait consisted of the head, either sculpted from the same piece of stone with bust or a bust added separately. Busts have a shaped and modelled front, an always clothed chest and a back that is usually hollow, with the exception of a wide, raw piece of

[1] Boschung 2012: especially 294.
[2] Nodelman 2002: 39.

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stone that additionally supports them. The bust is mounted on a plinth that, similarly to a head, can be added later. On it located is a plaque that was often elaborately decorated and provided information on who was depicted, on what occasion or who ordered it.[3]

In the literature on Roman portraits, iconography and typology are the most often raised issues. At the same time, some scholars try to establish the value of the art piece based solely on its authenticity. This paper analyses the current appearance and revokes the problem of the attribution of sculptures and many historical changes through conservation, theft, destruction, and restoration. Furthermore, the aesthetics and *de facto* function which these sculptures had to perform is also raised.

THE STATE OF RESEARCH

The first mention of a portrait from the Poznań collection is made in the catalogue prepared by Ludwig Krüger. It inventories twenty-four sculptures with short information attached regarding expected attribution, place and type of material.[4] Two years later, Matthias Oesterreich published a significant arrangement of sculptures from the collection of the King of Prussia.[5] In his laconic descriptions the author calls bust MNP A 594 a portrait of Septimius Severus, not mentioning other sculptures of Marcus Aurelius. Over sixty years later, Eduard Gerhard presented his catalogue, in which once again short descriptions identifying new and original parts of the sculptures were provided. For the bust with the number MNP A 599, the author only stated that the portrait head is 'a common job'[6] and that the nose and bust had been added later. Later on, Gerhard attributes sculpture MNP A 594 to a representation of Commodus, marking its very poor condition, visible gluing of many parts and its placing on an antique base. The portrait of a youthful Marcus Aurelius (MNP A 603) is only mentioned.[7] In 1891, Alexander Conze created a new catalogue of ancient sculptures in the royal collection that contained longer descriptions, a short history of each piece and state of preservation. In one copy of the catalogue next to each of the sculptures sent to Poznań was a short hand-written note. The interpretation of the sculptures was once again changed. MNP A 594 was called Marcus Aurelius, and MNP A 603 was referred to as the bust of young Commodus.[8] Johan Jacob Bernoulli disagreed with Conze, and posited that all three busts were of Marcus Aurelius.[9] Piotr Bieńkowski prepared the first Polish and first complete catalogue of the Poznań collection in 1923. He found the collection at the Imperial Castle in the original number. Bieńkowski

[3] 'The name-plate is often elaborately moulded and may have a double volute at either end, referring to the pelta-shaped shield. In rare cases it is decorated with a figural relief scene, indicating that its function was aesthetic, or at least became so' (Fejfer 2008: 236).

[4] Krüger 1769; 1772. The bust MNP A 599 is presented on the 7th board of the 2nd volume, incorrectly signed as Lucius Annius Antoninus didus Aelius Commodus.

[5] Oesterreich 1774: 10, no. 85.

[6] Gerhard 1836: 118.

[7] Gerhard 1836: 111.

[8] '1908 ins Schlos zu Posen' (Conze 1891: 151).

[9] Bernoulli 1891: 162–187.

re-established the interpretation of MNP A 603 as a young Commodus. In 1939, Max Wegner compiled a catalogue of Roman busts belonging to the king. The author returned to the interpretation of Bernoulli and suggested that all three busts were of Marcus Aurelius, highlighting his uncertainty with MNP A 594: 'Bezeichnung oder die Echtheit des Stuckes in Frage zu stellen' and specifying the type of sculpture MNP A 599 as a type Museum delle Therme 726.[10] Kazimierz Majewski upheld this interpretation in his publication of 1955.[11] Anna Sadurska in 1972 definitively changed the name of MNP A 594 to Commodus,[12] and Jerzy Kubczak maintained this interpretation in the publication accompanying the exhibition of antiquities of ancient cultures in 1983.[13] Tomasz Wujewski in 1980 analysed busts in a new way and expandsed the list of modifications to include intentional-pastiche portraits, additions, and integration.[14]

After a long break from the last text, Marcin Żegnałek and Grzegorz Wiatr published two articles[15] in which, although they did not address the issues of the iconography and typology of the sculptures, they touched on the crucial issue of conservation and restoration of the pieces based on the bust of the Roman Lady and Hadrian. These highly specialised articles show the condition of the sculptures and how many parts they were made of before preparing them for the new exhibition.

In 2005, Monika Muszyńska, using selected examples verified the dating of sculptures from the collection based on their iconography, using a typology of busts.[16] Her analysis showed many differences with the datings of earlier scientists. In the same year, Martin Miller called MNP A 603 the 'juvenile' Commodus, and the remaining busts he attributed to Marcus Aurelius.[17]

The publication edited by Saskia Hüneke is so far the most complete study of sculptures, once belonging to Prussian rulers.[18] The exact history of the places the sculptures were exhibited is provided there. In the catalogue part, the discussed sculptures are attributed as they are today.[19]

HISTORY OF THE POZNAŃ COLLECTION

All of the sculptures can be attributed to the times of ancient Rome, but their precise provenience is unknown. First mentions of the works come only from the eighteenth century, a time characterised by a new approach to antiquity and the increasing practice of collecting artefacts. The written history of the Poznań busts starts with Cardinal Louis Héracle

[10] Wegner 1939: 189.
[11] Majewski 1955.
[12] Sadurska 1972.
[13] Kubczak 1983.
[14] Wujewski 1980: 91–92.
[15] Żegnałek 2001; Wiatr 2001.
[16] Muszyńska 2005: 89–128.
[17] Miller, Kästner 2005.
[18] Hüneke 2009.
[19] Short mentions of the collection one can also find in: Sadurska 2001; Mikocki 2005: especially 21–22.

Melchior Vicomte de Polignac, the French ambassador in Rome in the years 1724–1732, who, throughout his residence, gathered a vast collection of ancient sculptures.[20] After his service, he returned to Paris, taking with him the entire collection. The sculptures, soon after his death, became the property of his nephew Mathieu François Petit, who then sold the whole collection to King Frederick II.[21] The sculptures were ascribed to royal residences: the palace, garden and Temple of Antiquities in Sanssouci, and palaces in Potsdam and Charlottenburg and incorporated into earlier collections. According to Bieńkowski, as many as seventeen busts came from these collections. Three more statues had earlier been the property of Princess Wilhelmine of Prussia, the sister of Frederick II. She bought them *c*. 1750 and brought them back from Italy to her residence in Bayreuth. Following the death of the princess in 1758, the collection was incorporated into the official royal collection.[22]

In 1806, after the defeat of the Prussian army by Napoleon, the collection, meticulously amassed by Prussian monarchs, was taken to Paris. The occupation of Berlin ended in 1815, and the antiquities were returned. To boost morale and improve the recovered royal image in 1822, the then king, Friedrich Wilhelm III, ordered Karl Friedrich Schinkel to design the building of the Königliches Museum (now the Altes Museum). Responsible for the exhibition of antiquities, preserved and reconstructed artefacts of various origins and material, was Wilhelm von Humbolt, working among others with Christian Daniel Rauch, a Berlin restorer and sculptor. The latter was a known court sculptor and talented conservator who, although, similarly to late Bartolomeo Cavaceppi favoured maintaining the present state of sculptures, continued to work towards regaining the 'original' appearance.

As Prussia was expanding and regaining its earlier position, at the order of the new king – Wilhelm II – the building of the provincial residence – the Imperial Castle – was started in Poznań. Two years before its completion in 1908, the busts were still officially royal property and the king ordered their transfer to the castle.[23] At first, twenty-seven statues were chosen, as marked in the catalogue commonly called *Beschreibung*, used by employees of the Staatliche Museum zu Berlin.[24] For unknown reasons, seven sculptures were not sent from Berlin. The remaining twenty sculptures were finally transported to Poznań in 1914.

During and after the First World War, the collection stayed in the castle in museum rooms or corridors accessible to visitors. The Poznań University, which had its quarters in another part of the castle, became the new administrator of the antiquities collection.[25]

World War II brought many changes to collections of art across Europe, and Poznań was no different. From what is known, all twenty sculptures remained in the castle until 1940. In 1949 only seventeen sculptures were entered into the official registry of the National Museum. From 1944, the collection was at the disposal of the Greater Poland Museum.

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[20] Dostert, Polignac 2001.
[21] Winckelmann 1764: 383–384; Bieńkowski 1923: 9.
[22] Conze 1891: VIII, no. 356.
[23] Aronsson, Bentz 2011: especially 333.
[24] Sadurska 1976: 74.
[25] Gulczyński 2011: especially 67–68.

The subsequent extensive reorganisation of busts across different cities and buildings was carried out in 1962. Over the following years, the placement of busts changed only due to renovations and exhibitions.

The sculptures officially became the property of the National Museum in Poznań only in 1976. Portraits of Marcus Aurelius were displayed in the Hall of Greek Vases of the castle in Gołuchów in 1969–1972 and 1977–1980. MNP A 599 and MNP A 594 busts were presented in 1976–1983 in the Renaissance Hall of the Poznań Town Hall. It was not until 1983 that Szymkiewicz and Julian Olejniczak arranged the first systematised exhibition of the ancient collection under the direction of Kubczak. The latter edited the exhibition catalogue published the same year.[26] Two out of the three busts of Marcus Aurelius were shown in Poznań – only the youthful portrait remained in Gołuchów. The exhibition continued until 1984. After its conclusion, the sculptures were transported to various places and shown at different exhibitions. Busts MNP A 599 and MNP A 594 returned to the Renaissance Hall in the Town Hall. MNP A 603 was shown at two exhibitions in the museum building at Marcinkowski Avenue, then returned to Gołuchów Hall before finally being transfered to the exhibition in the Ethnographic Museum in Poznań. Busts of the mature Marcus Aurelius were on display at the Gołuchów Castle until 2000. The new conservation process began to clean and restore the sculptures in preparation for a permanent exhibition.[27]

PORTRAITS OF MARCUS AURELIUS

In order to signal subsequent deliberations, it is necessary to present visual guidelines of a typical Antonine portrait as present in the four typological types of Marcus Aurelius busts. The design of sculptures with the emperor's image indicates a consciously chosen system, where busts show the progression of time with some of the features highlighted as primary characteristics. Each type differs uniquely and expressively from the prior, with physiognomies left parallel to past and current, even if they are not factual, family members.[28]

The first representation type, created probably on the occasion of the adoption of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus by Antoninus Pius, is the type commonly called the Kapitol Type.[29] The young heir to the throne is presented as a boy with a serious expression. The smooth, delicate face reveals what will be distinctive in later busts – curly hair and eyes under heavy, half-closed eyelids. These portraits correspond with representations of his adoptive father, mainly in the aspect of a similar hairstyle and the fringe falling on the forehead.[30]

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[26] Not all of the sculptures presented today were exhibited – the busts of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius were missing. The most probable reason was the questionable authenticity of the sculptures; Kubczak 1983: 11–13.

[27] This information comes from inventory cards: MNP A 603, MNP A 594, MNP A 599 that were made available to the author by the National Museum in Poznań (see website: *KalendariumWystaw MNP*); for more detailed history of the collection, see: Sadurska 1976.

[28] Kleiner 1992: 267–315.

[29] Fittschen 1999: 13–21; Bergmann 1978: 22, 40.

[30] For example Busti 284; Stähli 1999.

The following type, Uffizi-Toulouse,[31] depicts the future emperor as a young man with a thin beard. The face is prolonged, and all of the earlier features are maintained – half-closed eyes, full lips and a trademark hairstyle. This type was designed before the half of second century AD when Marcus Aurelius was under thirty years old. The portrait was intended to introduce him to the population of Rome as an appointed successor, young and ready to act as emperor at the time of Antoninus' death.

The types that show him as a mature man come from the years after AD 161, in which Marcus Aurelius became emperor. The third portrait type – Dresden[32] – was seemingly distributed right after the death of Antoninus Pius. Marcus Aurelius, although still relatively young, has been significantly aged. The most distinctive feature is a long, curly beard. This type is represented by the most famous sculpture of the emperor – an equestrian statue from Campidoglio Square.[33] The portrait head contains all distinguishing features of the type: a vibrant hairstyle that creates the shape of a helmet, a long beard and a raised fringe-anástole, revealing the entire forehead.

The fourth type was formed after AD 169, after the death of Lucius Verus. It is represented by the portrait of Marcus Aurelius in the Capitoline Museums, Imperatori 387.[34] The sculpture features the same traits: oval face, almond eyes, aquiline nose, arched eyebrows, half-closed eyelids, hollow irises, a significant change of a long and full beard, divided into individual curls, as well as an anastole, the flipped up fringe.[35]

MNP A 603

Bust of young Marcus Aurelius; dimensions: total height: 57cm; depth of the face: 23cm; width of the face measured between temples: 16cm; width of the hair, measured above ears: 22cm; height of the added bust: 16cm; height of the plinth: 16cm; height of added nose: 5cm; fragment of added mouth: 2 x 3cm (**Figs 1–2**).

The head was reconstructed in the nineteenth century and possibly modified through additions. Lost areas of hair, ears, nose and mouth are supplemented. The surface has been sanded. The head and bust were made separately, where the head is primarily original, and the bust is a modern addition. A proportionally too large head indicates this to the somewhat narrow neck and naked bust and a different type of stone used in both parts.[36] However, both the head and torso are compatible with the boy's teenage silhouette.

The face is long, triangular, slightly widening upwards. Large, almond-shaped eyes gaze towards the left. The iris and pupils are marked with an engraved line. Eyebrow arches are sharply indicated and form an almost graphic line. The nose is long and straight, relatively broad at the root. Lips are small, narrow, with the upper lip gently protruding forward – the

[31] Fittschen 1999: 22–31.
[32] Wegner 1939: 188.
[33] Fittschen, Zanker 1985: 71–74, cat. nos 66–67.
[34] Wegner 1939: 188; Fittschen, Zanker 1985: 74–78, Pls 80–82; Bergmann 1978: 41.
[35] Kleiner 1992: 271.
[36] Hüneke 2009: 297.

corners of the lips raised in a slight smile. Facial skin is carefully shown, reflecting hollows under the eyes and cheeks. Ears are large, exposed. The hair is arranged irregularly in large curls, partly falling on the forehead, modelled with a chisel and a running drill. The portrait head is placed on a smoothly polished torso with delicately modelled clavicles. Its anterior surface is relatively plain and unadorned with rounded lateral edges. This glossy surface of the bust contrasts with a face devoid of such shine.

The sculpture was prepared to be installed in a niche, which is suggested with a high detailing of the front surface and a somewhat imprecise back. The bust is mounted on a simplistic plinth in attic style, made of white marble.

Conze in 1891 attributed this bust to Commodus and indicated that the eyes had been overworked.[37] The author pays special attention to the poorly made eyebrows and eyeballs due to subsequent interference in the sculpture. This is indicated by the fact that starting from the reign of Emperor Hadrian, not only the manner of presentation but also stylistic features change. There is a move away from the linear treatment of eyebrows in favour of depicting individual hair. The pupils are drilled rather than engraved, which gives the eyes more depth.[38]

Bieńkowski repeats the interpretation after Conze and adds his opinion, not so much about the sculpture as about the infamous emperor himself: he records the appearance of the young Commodus as 'pretentious, as usual, and thus an unsympathetic expression on his face'.[39] Miller supports this interpretation.[40]

This attribution is incorrect. The bust undoubtedly presents the young Marcus Aurelius in the first type. In total, about twenty-nine copies of this type are recognised.[41] A voluminous haircut characterises it together with falling bangs and a fixed arrangement of curls. Supplementing the emperor's image in this type is an expressionless and calm face. The portrait was intended to appropriately introduce the successor to Antoninus Pius, which is visually confirmed by the numismatic representation from the adoption year AD 138/139.[42]

Wujewski suggests that the provenance of all the sculptures, although certainly Roman, is not transparent. Imperial busts would, therefore, be made in Rome, though not in antiquity, but in the eighteenth century.[43] He points to Baroque elements of sculptures as a piece of evidence. As mentioned earlier, the busts were modified in the Rauch workshop for an exhibition in Berlin. Therefore, at King Frederick II's request, the sculptures were adjusted, i.e. modified, ground, carved in a style imitating the originals. Presumably, because of these practices, the bust of young Marcus Aurelius changed expression and lost some of the details characteristic of the period.

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[37] Conze 1891: 151.
[38] Boschung 1993: 297.
[39] Bieńkowski 1923: 17.
[40] Miller, Kästner 2005: 44.
[41] Fittschen 1999: 13–21.
[42] Börner 2012: especially 279.
[43] Wujewski 1980: 69.

1. Portrait of young Marcus Aurelius, MNP A 603, frontal and right side views (Courtesy of the National Museum in Poznań).

2. Portrait of young Marcus Aurelius, MNP A 603, back and left side views (Courtesy of the National Museum in Poznań).

The most obvious analogy is the eponymous bust from the Capitoline Museums, exhibited at Galeria 36, no. 279.[44] It resembles a Poznań bust, especially in the gentle movement of the head. In most copies of this type, eyebrows are carved meticulously, with each hair marked, which is typical of the sculptures of that time.[45] This kind of treatment significantly differs from the Poznań sculptures, where only a sharp contour indicates the eyebrows. Irises and pupils are also engraved quite crudely and crookedly, in contrast to the precisely modelled head. It is, hence, plausible that they were made later by the hand of another artist.

Based on preserved analogies, the bust dates to around AD 140.

MNP A 599

Bust of Marcus Aurelius; dimensions: height: 65cm; depth of the head, from tip of the nose to the back: 0.23cm; width of the face, between temples: 18cm; height of the added nose: 5cm; height of the plinth: 17cm (**Figs 3–4**).

The portrait head is preserved almost entirely except for the nose and upper lip, which were attached during baroque reconstructions. The broken-off fragments have been completed. The bust was added in modern times. The surface is shaped primarily with a chisel and the hair parting with a running drill. The face, despite much damage, has retained its original volume.

Marcus Aurelius in this portrait is already a middle-aged man. As generally in this type, he is pictured with his oblong face slightly puffed up. Half-lidded eyes are turned slightly to the right. The distinctive fold between the upper eyelid and the eyebrow arch is apparent. Irises are outlined with shoal lines, as are pupils carved in the shape of an overturned hourglass. Slightly raised semi-circular eyebrows form parallel wrinkles on the forehead. Under the long, straight nose, moustache ends curve towards a closed mouth. The beard is relatively short, shaped sumptuously with a drill. The hairstyle is sculpted similarly, with the forelocks slightly raised above the forehead.

The type in which the emperor was portrayed, i.e. the third type, is the most common representation type of Marcus Aurelius. The features seen in the other types also show the emperor's individuality. However, here he is brought to a different, metaphysical, level – this portrait type has been frequently called a psychological portrait.[46] Earlier in the history of Roman art one can notice portraits of the ruler that picture him in different stages of life – from a young age until his senility. One such emperor, whose objective was to be viewed as a man experienced in life but not from the ruling dynasty, was Vespasian.[47] Although the idea behind it was different, it proves that imperial portraits drew from the veristic tradition of Republican Rome, in each case with their own purpose. In Marcus

[44] Wegner 1939: 191, Pl. 15.
[45] Boschung 1993: 297.
[46] Zanker 1995: 242; Fittschen, Zanker 1985: 74, 78.
[47] Vasta 2007: especially 115.

Aurelius image, the appearance of the emperor was influenced by a deep concern for the country and society. Wegner expresses this as a wonderful maturity and equilibrium of the soul of an educated man distressed about the future.[48]

The sculpture has many analogies. Wegner firstly mentions the bust located in Dresden, inv. no. 386.[49] The third type features are also repeated by the Museo Nazionale delle Therme 726, Louvre 1159, Musei Vaticani, Sala dei Busti 285, the emperor's face of the equestrian statue on Campidoglio Square, portrait in Woburn Abbey.[50] Interesting are also statues produced outside the mainstream of Roman art, such as those held in the Archaeological Museum of Corfu with a Greek form character and a bust from El-Beida, which has Middle Eastern features.[51] Later variants of the type are represented, among others, through bust no. 688 at the Museo Nazionale delle Therme,[52] where the emperor's age is particularly emphasised by deeper than before wrinkles on his forehead and sunken cheeks.

Diane Kleiner claims that the specificity of the sculpture reflects almost senile features and indicates the last years of the emperor's life, i.e. shortly before AD 180,[53] although Astrid Dostert gives the years AD 160–170[54] and Kubczak dates Poznań head to years AD 161–175.[55] Dates set out on an information board in the National Museum in Poznań are AD 170–180.

MNP A 594

Bust of Commodus, later restored as Marcus Aurelius; height: 94cm (**Fig. 5**).[56] The bust was initially monolithic. The nose with moustaches and many smaller fragments are reconstructed: defects at the auricles, paludamentum folds, and fibula. Many minor defects and abrasions are visible on the entire surface of the sculpture.

The face is oval, elongated and slim. The shape of the head differs from the other representations of the emperor – the head seems to narrow upwards. The face has distinctly underlined cheekbones, under which the skin of the face gently collapses. Two longitudinal wrinkles are carved onto the forehead. Sharply outlined, large, deeply set eyes gaze upwards. Irises are marked with a single shallow line, while the small pupils are carved deep, leaving a semi-circular fragment of stone just under the eyelid, which gives the impression of light reflection. Eyebrows are sculpted in the manner of small waves. The nose is straight and long. Under it, a substantial, characteristic moustache surrounds the narrow

[48] Wegner 1939: 41.

[49] Wegner 1939: 41.

[50] Wegner 1939: 194, Pl. 20; Fittschen, Zanker 1985: cat. no. 65; Amelung 1908: cat. no. 325, Pl. 72; Kleiner 1992: 272, Fig. 236; Smith 1900: cat. no. 141; Angelicoussis 1992: 159, Figs 169–170.

[51] Wegner 1979: 177, Pl. 15, 2.

[52] Wegner 1939: 29.

[53] Kleiner 1992: 273.

[54] Hüneke 2009: 280.

[55] Kubczak 1983: 63.

[56] The detailed measurements of the bust as well as photographs of the objects from all sides are unavailable due to the ongoing conservation process of the sculpture.

3. Portrait bust of Marcus Aurelius, MNP A 599, frontal and right side views (Courtesy of the National Museum in Poznań).

4. Portrait bust of Marcus Aurelius, MNP A 599, back and left side views (Courtesy of the National Museum in Poznań).

5. Portrait bust of Commodus/ Marcus Aurelius, MNP A 594 (Courtesy of the National Museum in Poznań).

upper lip and connects with the chin. Hair and beard are composed of deep curls arranged unevenly on one plane. Hair is shaped similarly at the back and above the occiput, fally braided into a bun or wrapped in material.

The emperor is wearing a paludamentum over a tunic and armour, fastened with a plate fibula on his right shoulder. The armlet is exposed, unveiling the shoulder strap fringes.

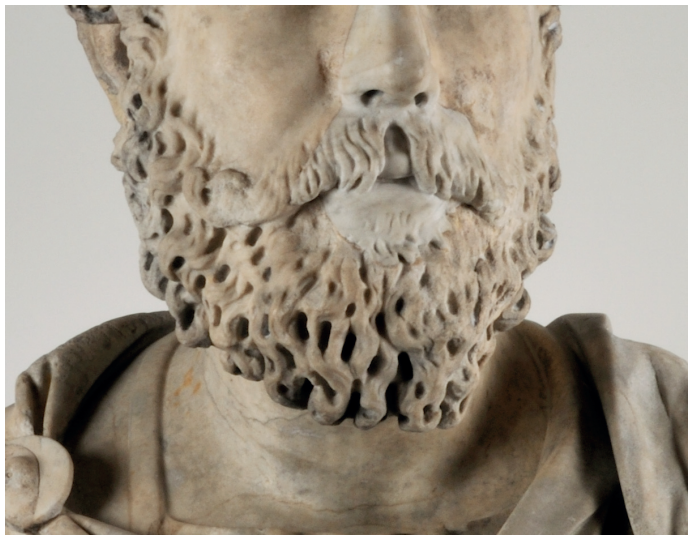
Some of the most intriguing elements are two fragments that can be (and have been) described as reflecting the insufficient skills of the sculptor. The first is the flat, short, braid-shaped detail wrapped in a string or material that combines a hairstyle with a paludamentum from the occiput. Dostert calls this fragment an element strengthening the neck structure, and Muszyńska calls it a rough marble block.[57] There is no doubt that the

[57] Dostert in: Hüneke 2009: 282; Muszyńska 2005: 105.

additional stone fragment was meant to support the over life-size head of the emperor. The neck support technique, or *Nackenstütze,* is known for many sculptures of inferior quality, especially from the Middle East – Asia Minor or North Africa – or from the western part of the empire. A great example of such sculptures comes from Side.[58] For most representations, the neck support is modelled in the shape imitating hair or clothing. The Poznań portrait is no different: the support is fashioned like a ribbon wrapped around a braid – similar to the bust of Marcus Aurelius, in the earlier, second type in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria.[59] The official imperial workshops did not leave the uncut stone, especially where it could be spotted – from the side or right next to folds of paludamentum. It is worth noting that the elements on both sculptures from Poznań and Alexandria have similar features. Thus, the procedure had to be the conscious choice of the sculptor, which subsequently indicates the origin of the bust from one of the Roman Middle East provinces. The second element is a line of plain marble left between the paludamentum and the index plate. As Muszyńska points out, this element must have been a sculptor's mistake that would not have been repeated in modern times and, together with the neck strengthening, directly points to the authenticity of the bust.[60]

Bieńkowski and Sadurska, as well as later Kubczak and Muszyńska, saw the depiction as emperor Commodus.[61] The characteristic head shape indicates this attribution, a voluminous beard and more expressive face features than usually apparent in Marcus Aurelius portraits. Generally, portrait busts of Commodus are divided into five main types, the first showing him as the successor to Marcus Aurelius, a portrait undoubtedly inspired by his father's youthful portraits.[62] The second type shows him as a teenager during his co-regency time. The third shows him as a young man, with light moustache; this type was introduced when Commodus started his reign.[63] The fourth type depicts him as an adult, as shown in the example from Musei Vaticani, and finally the fifth type portrays the emperor slightly more mature, and is characterised by S-shaped curl protruding over the forehead. The very last type is represented by one of the most famous portraits of ancient Rome, i.e. showing the emperor as Hercules.[64] However, the type of representation that most commonly repeats the above mentioned traits of MNP A 594 is so-called London-Palazzo Conservatori type.[65] This sculpture type is defined by showing a middle-aged emperor with a long beard, raised hair and heavy eyelids drooping over his eyes. What is unique for the images of Commodus is the contour of the eyebrows, which are not half-round as his father's, but more geometric, falling straight outwards and a relatively thin moustache. The peculiar way of shaping the head, narrowing upwards, is exact in type five, which

[58] Inan 1975: 13, 47, 65, 85, 98, 112, 151.
[59] Fittschen 1999: 26, Pl. 51, B 38.
[60] Muszyńska 2005: 104.
[61] Bieńkowski 1923: 17; Sadurska 1976: 83; Kubczak 1983: 63; Muszyńska 2005: 104–105.
[62] Fittschen 1999: 53–55.
[63] Bergmann 1998: 249.
[64] Kleiner 1992: 273–277.
[65] Fittschen, Zanker 1985: cat. no. 78.



6. Reconstructed moustache of bust of Commodus/Marcus Aurelius, MNP A 594 (Courtesy of the National Museum in Poznań).

represents the almost wholly preserved bust from the Louvre no. 1127 and Mantua-Vatican type, which is presumably a later transformation in the bust of Pupienus.[66] The Poznań bust has all these features except one. Modern alterations – supplementing the nose and parts of the beard and curls – have changed the character of the sculpture and thus the emperor's depicted. Especially the moustache, which was supposed to imitate Mark Aurelius's beard, was exaggerated. Its ends are rolled up where they connect with the cheeks. Modelling is, furthermore, noticeably different from the rest of the representation. It is softer, shallower and less detailed than the expressively chiselled chin.

The second interpretation of the bust and its official museum attribution suggest that this is the image of Marcus Aurelius. Preserved original parts imply that the sculpture belongs to either the third or fourth type. The emperor's figure does not have a characteristically divided chin as in the fourth type and lacks arched, circular eyebrows of the third type. The bangs are kept up and curl around the forehead, just like in the second type, depicting the emperor as a young man. A feature that characterises almost all portraits of Marcus Aurelius is a substantial moustache that covers the entire surface above the lips, joining the chin (**Fig. 6**). An illustration for the fourth type is also anastolé over the forehead and frowzy beard.[67] The shape of the sculpture resembles the fourth type, where attention is paid to detail, visible in slight wrinkles on the forehead and sunken cheeks.

The third portrait of Marcus Aurelius is, in a way, a modern construct. The essential analogies are two busts in Museo Nazionale delle Therme and Museo Capitolino.[68] It is possible that based on these works, the Poznań bust was reconstructed – the aforemen-

[66] Wegner 1939: 87; Varner 2004: 139.
[67] Hüneke 2009: 282.
[68] Fittschen, Zanker 1985: 74–79, cat. nos 68–70, Pls 78–83.

tioned specific curling of the moustache is evident. Some analogies also support the earlier attribution of the bust as Commodus. Regrettably, after his murder, the senate, by resolution of *damnatio memoriae*, ordered the destruction of many sculptures of the emperor.

Nevertheless, thanks to the deification of the emperor by Septimius Severus, a significant number of parallel portraits have survived. The shape of the head of the Poznań bust and the beard length mentioned before is particularly reminiscent of London-Palazzo Conservatori type and Munich Glyptothek 385. The emperor has emblematic bulging eyes under his eyelids halfway down his eyeball, parted lips and a thin moustache connected with the chin.

Assuming the authenticity of the sculpture, the bust can be dated to the second half of the second century, after Hüneke to AD 170–180[69] and after Kubczak for AD 185–192.[70] According to Muszyńska, the bust comes from the beginning of the Antonine dynasty.[71]

COMMENTARY

The aesthetics of busts and all works of ancient sculpture were more important to the patron than was authenticity. They were to perform a decorative function, which meant that damaged or incomplete sculptures were not authorised to be displayed. Therefore, the present state is very different from the state in which these marble heads of the emperors were viewed in antiquity. Besides, while the collection was transferred to new places, the sculptures were often more or less damaged. It is therefore vital to recount the history of the collection from the perspective of conservation work.

When at the beginning of the nineteenth century the sculptures from the Prussian royal collection returned from Paris, Aloys Hirt, an archaeologist and art historian, was selected to create a systematic exhibition of treasures of ancient art. The commission chaired by von Humboldt chose a collection of sculptures to be exhibited in the emerging Altes Museum from the royal collections. Hirt in a duet with Rauch created a list of monuments that were to be reconstructed and secured before their public display. As early as 1825, Rauch's workshop was filled with chosen works. With the support of Christian Friedrich Tieck, the task was completed in 1829.[72] The three described busts of Marcus Aurelius underwent quite specific processing before they arrived in Poznań as part of the Wilhelm II collection. All heads were supplemented, some were assembled from various fragments, and all faces were abraded. Most heads and busts are artificially juxtaposed, most often an ancient head on a modern bust or parts from different years of antiquity.[73] The busts in the Poznań collection have received new plinths and index plates.

The first sculpture, MNP A 603, is relatively well preserved – the most significant interference of modern restaurateurs was to place the portrait head on the bare chest

[69] Hüneke 2009: 282.
[70] Kubczak 1983: 63.
[71] Muszyńska 2005: 105.
[72] Scholl 2003: especially 241.
[73] Żegnałek 2001: 299.

shaped bust. The plinth, analogous to the rest, does not have an index plate. A chipped piece of mouth, nose, ears and other small fragments were added. Forehead grinding is visible. Also MNP A 599 was placed on a naked breast with a similar pattern. The nose and upper lip are entirely completed, as is the tip of the left ear. The last bust, MNP A 594, is monolithic, so the bust, despite numerous additions, is original. The defects were not significant – fragments of curls, paludamentum, fibula and nose with a moustache were supplemented.

The conservation works of discussed sculptures were finished only in the twentieth century, when they were prepared for the current exhibition. The bust of Marcus Aurelius, MNP A 603, was restored in 2000.[74] The sculpture was first cleaned with steam and then with glass fibre. After some time, the second portrait of Commodus/Marcus Aurelius (inv. no. MNP A 594) underwent conservation.[75] The scope of work included cleaning and securing the sculpture. The result of microscopic observations and chemical tests registered that the additions to the right ear, above the left eyebrow and in the hair were made simultaneously, mainly with gypsum mixed with chalk, and then covered with varnish. Stone fleeces stuck with rosin, which until conservation has remained a yellow, glassy substance. There is also a wax putty around the left shoulder, at the edge of the sculpture, consisting of chalk and lead white. The putty in the sculpture contains chalk, those under reconstruction of the folds of the coat with an admixture of plaster.

CONCLUSIONS

The busts presented in this paper are not only interesting for iconographic analysis, but also for analysis of the aesthetic changes that have taken place in recent centuries. Not only in the full-figure sculpture but in Roman portraits, alterations and 'improvements' were clearly made after the sculpture was excavated. These busts of Marcus Aurelius bear the hallmarks of this kind of action aimed at aesthetically raising their value. Two busts imitating the body of the emperor are inherently combined with a smoothed face. In the third bust, it was not necessary to add a bust. The sculpture is much more massive, different in style and different in the level of representation. Disturbances in proportion, strong carving with a drill, and the previously mentioned errors or flaws and additional elements indicate that, despite the fragments added, the sculpture is authentic. It should be emphasised that in the case of Poznań busts, the number of original fragments does not indicate their quality. For the collector's decorative purposes, complete works were preferred, which resulted in the reconstruction of the sculptures, regardless of the fact that it could disturb relatively persistent iconography. In the early eighteenth century, a fragment of the monument began to be appreciated, often destroyed, as a direct indicator of the path the sculpture took

[74] The results: 13.06.2000, Zlecenie na konserwację muzealiów, Pracownia Konserwacji Sztuk Użytkowych MNP, 10.05.2000.

[75] The results: 01.12.2000, Zlecenie na konserwację muzealiów 36/2000, Pracownia Konserwacji Sztuk Użytkowych MNP, 23.05.2000; microscopic examination was delivered 21.06.2000.

in history. Gustave Flaubert admired the corroded torso of the woman he saw in Athens in 1815,[76] and European antiquarians and archaeologists were delighted with the sight of Elgin's marbles.[77] Poznań's marbles, however, were not intended for museum exhibitions but decorations of royal residences.

All portrait heads were more or less modified, but their antique core remained the same. In the two sculptures discussed at the beginning, the sanded surface and the reconstruction are not visible, and it does not interfere with the reception of what can be called the iconographic original. In the case of the third bust of Marcus Aurelius, the problem is irregularities in the sculpture. As indicated above, the sculpture bears remnants of both images of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. It seems that this is a representation of Commodus dressed in a costume of typological features characteristic of Marcus Aurelius. Ironically, one can refer to the treatment of Commodus's portraits after his murder – modern restaurateurs themselves have laid their hand on the senatorial *damnatio memoriae*. Two special modifications have been preserved, in which Commodus' representations were turned into a portrait of Licinius and Pupienus.[78] Despite the resulting variations in the proportion and form of facial features, the volume of the head remains characteristic of Commodus. Therefore, the popular definition of the MNP A 594 sculpture as Commodus is as accurate as calling it Marcus Aurelius. Even though the features of the original, complete sculpture, especially facial features, are lost, the form of the head indicates the former. Modern additions transformed him into a portrait of Marcus Aurelius. These efforts let us see as a change in views in European science and aesthetics that allowed the busts of Marcus Aurelius to become a historical document.

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[76] Rossi Pinelli 2003: especially 69.

[77] Rossi Pinelli 2003: 68.

[78] Varner 2004: 139.

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