Iconography and Female Church Leadership: Greco-Roman and Christian Art in the First to Fourth Centuries AD

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Studies in cognitive psychology consistently emphasize the power that external imagery and social representation have to influence individual behavior. As coauthors Piotr Winkielman and Yekaterina Gogolushko write, "Recent years have witnessed a growing consensus that affective and cognitive processes are tightly intertwined, in terms of both their psychological function and neural substrates. . . ."[1] In short, artistic stimuli provoke more than a purely visceral reaction. They have the potential to influence how we think.

Human beings naturally, regardless of their place in the power systems at work, seek to align their identity with what is deemed appropriate or acceptable. As psychologist David Marks states, "all conscious beings are constantly and quite routinely reconciling the discrepancies among their thoughts, behaviors, and feelings, and in the differences with those with whom they have social relationships."[2] Imagery and iconography work powerfully in defining one's ipseity, that is, one's perception of self and how that identity relates to the society around them. This in turn influences desires and reasoning. Thus, as much as artwork may reflect existing social structures and lifestyles, it also encourages conformity.

This article focuses on attitudes toward women as evidenced in Greco-Roman iconography in the first to fourth centuries AD to show how these may have influenced the roles of women in church leadership in this period—a time uniquely affected by the "Constantinian turn," when Christianity moved from being a persecuted sect to the favored religion of the Roman Empire.

Artwork 1: Statue of Eirene and Ploutos, plaster cast. Museum of Classical Archaeology, University of Cambridge, inv. no. 220. (Original: Glyptothek, Munich, inv. no. 219.) CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.

Goddesses in Greco-Roman Iconography

The representation of women in Greco-Roman art is not surprising considering the social dynamics and philosophical trends gaining traction as the Roman empire was Romanizing the lands it colonized. The empire expected women to be submissive in their allocated roles of virgin and mother, and to foster allegiance to the empire.[3] Even mythological women were kept in their place, and care was taken to ensure that no goddess ever reached the status of a male deity. In fact, many goddesses were not birthed by a female—the role of generating life, in each instance, was usurped by a male god.[4] Athena was said to have popped out of Zeus's head.[5] Aphrodite was born of Kronos's castrated testicles.[6] These motherless goddesses, though divinely powerful, were ultimately allegiant to, and indebted to, males.[7] Thus, by revoking even fictional autonomy, a woman's behavior reflected the social restrictions of Rome.

Iconography depicts women in these roles of virgin and mother. Though celebrated for their virginal status, female goddesses are frequently depicted nude. Often their purity is depicted as an erotic temptation. Typical representations of women include a goddess being surprised coming out of a bath, such as Aphrodite (Roman Venus); a virgin goddess being attacked or raped because of her overwhelming beauty, such as Persephone or Europa; a virgin goddess being wooed by a lover, such as Zeus's abduction and conquest of Aegina. If the female subject is clothed, she is typically a mother holding her child—a celebration of her fertility as in Artwork 1. Made of bronze, this statue is thought to be a copy of a much earlier work of art created for the cult of Eirene—a female goddess. The original was carved by Kephisodotus the Elder (fourth-century BC), who is known for his allegorical depictions of mythological characters. Eirene represents peace, and her child, Pluto, prosperity. Together they reinforce the responsibility of women for the harmony and prosperity of the empire.

Exceptions are made for the warrior goddess Athena, perhaps because in Greek mythology she is considered immune to romantic love.[8] Correspondingly, her features are distinctly more masculine with broad shoulders, strong arms, and a flat chest (Artwork 2), all of which starkly contrast with voluptuous figures such as Venus or Aphrodite (Artwork 3). The Athena sculpture is thought to be a small replica made in the third century AD of the original cult statue erected in the fifth century BC, and small replicas would have been sold to tourists visiting the Parthenon. Details of the original survive only in written records but describe a gold and ivory work by the master sculptor, Phidias (490–430 BC). Athena is armed with a shield depicting mythological battle scenes and is wearing a magical, snake-tasseled breastplate—an aegis—gifted to her by Zeus. Her sandals depict a battle between the Lapiths and the centaurs, which historically represents the victory of order over chaos.

In contrast are the erotic depictions of goddesses such as Venus or Aphrodite who were uniquely posed to give the impression of

modesty, while simultaneously—and tantalizingly!—emphasizing their nudity. In Lely's Venus, a second-century Roman copy of a much earlier depiction of Aphrodite by Praxiteles for her shrine at Knidos, Venus's crouched position and gesticulations only draw more attention to the areas she attempts to cover. This is intentional, prompting the viewer to sexualize and objectify the goddess.

Arguably, Greek mythology formed the intellectual and philosophical foundation of the Roman Empire, including the view and treatment of women. Women, according to Greek mythology, were descended from Pandora, the first woman created, who (albeit inadvertently) released into the world all its ills. Women were thus termed "a beautiful evil," and by design were thought to be "unmanageable for men."[9] Small wonder, then, that as replete as Greek mythology is with instances of matricide, so too is Roman history. Orestes at the instigation of the god Apollo, murdered his mother Clytemnestra. In real life, Emperor Nero (37–68 AD) murdered his mother, Agrippina the Younger (59 AD) and both his first wife, Octavia (62 AD) and second wife, Poppaea (65 AD, though there is some debate surrounding Poppaea). These are but only one set of examples among many showing how historical circumstances align with philosophy.[10]

This ideology of women as inferior was not original to Rome, but as Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers points out, Rome configured the "political 'ideologization' of female inferiority."[11] They went beyond demeaning the role of women in society to outright capitalizing on it. Prior to the advancement of the Roman Empire and the development of substantial cities, this formerly agrarian society relied heavily on birthing large families. However, in the Roman Empire, relegating women to domestic spheres was more than financially advantageous. It was deeply political, and marriages were often no more than the trading of a woman as one would with a commodity. Julius Caesar (100–44 BC), for example, traded his daughter in marriage to Pompey (106–48 BC) to ensure the latter's military support.[12] This was the mindset of a society that formed many early converts to Christianity.

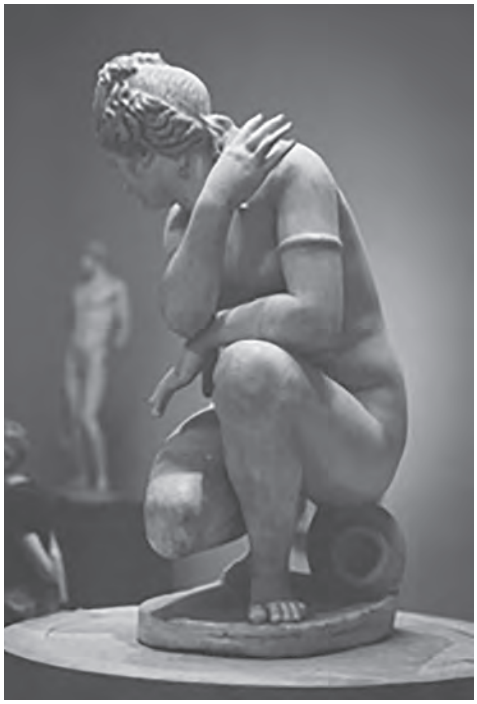
Women in Christian Art in the First Two Centuries

Through the first and second centuries, before the councils drew up the non-negotiables and irreducibles of Christian doctrine that drew lines between Christianity and other religions practiced in the Roman Empire, the early Christians had a much less socially appropriated view of women. The iconography we have retrieved affirms this feature of early Christianity.

The argument has been made that the early church was highly structured, with specific and submissive roles that women were relegated in subjection to males. Yet, in these early depictions, Mary is seen in liturgical poses and women shown in the roles of teacher and priest.[13]

The ancient subterranean cemeteries outside the walls of Rome called the catacombs were tunneled out and used by Christians largely in the period of state persecution before the Constantinian turn (second to fifth centuries AD). This allowed believers to freely use Christian symbols and iconography. One section of these subterranean burial grounds is the Catacombs of Priscilla, named after a Roman noblewoman and church benefactor who donated the land in the second century AD. It features some of the earliest

Artwork 2: The Varvakeion Athena, Roman copy of the Athena Parthenos by Phidias, ca. AD 200–250, after the original of 438 BC. Hellenic National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Archive. Photograph by Dr. Hans Rupprecht Goette. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture – Hellenic Organization of Cultural Resources Development (H.O.C.RE.D.).



Artwork 3: Lely's Venus, 1st–2nd century AD, British Museum, London. Photo by Paul Hudson from United Kingdom, CC BY 2.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>, via Wikimedia Commons.

Artwork 4: Mary in Orant Pose, 2nd–3rd century AD, Catacombs of Santa Priscilla, Photograph by Kristicak, CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>, via Wikimedia Commons.

Christian artwork. In Artwork 4, Mary's hands are raised in the posture of an orant. This is a pose seen in ancient Mediterranean artwork in which the subject is standing with arms raised and palms facing upward, indicating prayer and priestly activity. She is centered and foregrounded and is significantly larger than the seated figures, all of whom are focused on her—indications of her authority as leader. Though the woman's identity has not conclusively been established as Mary, most scholars reason that because Mary is consistently featured in other works inside the catacomb, including a depiction of Mary with the newborn Christ child, Mary is the most probable identification. Regardless, the figure is unquestionably female and is depicted in a leadership role.

In Artwork 5, above an altar tomb within the Capella Greca (Greek Chapel) of the Catacombs of Priscilla, Mary and Priscilla are featured as leaders giving instruction and even breaking bread at a Eucharistic banquet.[14] Interpreting this dinner scene has proved divisive, as some aspects of art are inherently subjective. However, all elements (table, bread, attire) are consistent with regional scenes of communion. The debate centers around whether the figures breaking bread and leading the Eucharist banquet are female, and whether the women featured are attending a funeral banquet. In support of considering the occasion a sacred ceremony is the attire of a woman dressed in dalmatic (a wide-sleeved outer garment) complete with alb (a foundational, full-length long-sleeved white robe), chasuble (an outer, sleeveless garment) and amice (a white linen rectangle worn on the shoulders under the ceremonial robes), while holding a gospel scroll. This type of formal dress is reserved for occasions like ordination ceremonies and sacred events, such as Eucharist. These garments are never worn by a layperson. The vestments themselves feature distinguishing marks much like the specific stoles or tassels worn by graduating classes and thus establish the figures as church leaders. Though some of the image has deteriorated or been damaged, most scholars agree that the figures are female.[15] The fact that this imagery is on a catacomb wall gives evidence of the position of the early church on women in leadership.

Another significant depiction[16] may be found on the walls of the world's oldest house church, part of the treasure trove of buildings discovered in 1920 and excavated in 1922 (Artwork 6). The site of the ancient town of Dura-Europos, buried in the sands of eastern Syria since its destruction in 256 AD and subsequent abandonment, continues to yield valuable archaeological discoveries.[17] Built by one of Alexander's successors, Seleucus Nicator (358–281 BC), it was strategically located between the two capital cities of the Seleucid empire. This, and its layered history of rule by the Greeks, Parthians, and Romans successively, accounts for its fascinating mix of religious structures. In addition to the oldest house church in the world, it has one of the earliest synagogues and Greco-Roman temples. The artwork of Dura is extensive and features many Old and New Testament scenes in distinctly Greco-Roman style.

The house church dates to around AD 241 and is remarkably well preserved, thanks in large part to its location adjacent to the embankment built by the Roman soldiers prior to the seige. It appears that the Christian population in Dura was not large and perhaps was under persecution. This could account for them gathering in a house. One of the rooms served as a baptistery, with walls decorated by frescoes. Of these, one shows a procession of women carrying torches and bowls—perhaps ten, of which two survive. The procession on the wall could have corresponded with real-life initiates into the Christian faith moving towards the baptismal font. The women in the wall art appear to be moving towards a depiction of Christ's empty tomb, as indicated by a pair of stars probably standing for the two angels at the sepulchre. The women are upright, dignified in dress, and veiled to indicate their honourable status. What is significant is that this house church uses these women as models for the new Christians about to be baptized.

These pieces of art reflect an early understanding of the gospel message that seems unconcerned with conforming to social constructs. This, however, changed in the post-Nicaea era. As the Christian community of Rome began to find new footing in the empire with the promise of peace, artistic representation became more politically palatable. As Norbert Zimmerman observes, "from the early third century onwards . . . members of the Christian community of Rome started to imitate the behavior of their surrounding society."[18] A vivid illustration in Christian artwork from this period is the casting of Christ as the god Orpheus. Much like the Romans did for the emperor in political propaganda, we see Christ painted unmistakably as a god. He is depicted holding a lyre and wearing a Phrygian cap, features associated with Orpheus, the bard and musician of legend (Artwork 7). One surviving example of this is featured in the Catacombs of Saint Peter and Marcellinus

Artwork 5: Fractio Panis, 2nd century AD, Catacombs of Santa Priscilla. Photographer/author unknown. Public Domain. Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Agape_feast_05.jpg

Artwork 6: Baptistry wall painting: Procession of women, AD 240–245, Dura-Europos baptistry, Syria. Photo courtesy of Yale University Art Gallery, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons.

in Rome, discovered in the early 2000s. Dating between the third- and fourth-century AD, the god Orpheus is symbolically chosen as, according to myth, he travels to Hades to rescue his beloved wife Eurydice, and is also commonly depicted as a good shepherd. Such depictions not only Romanize the Christian faith but also reinforce the narrative of Roman intellectual and philosophic superiority, as though their mythology anticipated the coming of Christ.

Christian Art in Comparison

In contrast to the iconography of Romanized Christianity are the depictions of the *kandake*, the ruling queens of the ancient empire of Nubia. Their realms covered modern-day Sudan and extended into southern Egypt. Though the artwork provided here is contemporaneous with the first-century artwork of the early church, these queens date back centuries earlier. The Romans viewed the *kandake* with deep disfavour, for they represented the opposite of Roman social expectations of women.[19] What is more, they suffered defeat by the *Kandake* Amanirenas (60–50 BC–10 BC) when she forced Emperor Augustus (63 BC–AD 14) into a peace treaty in 21 BC.[20]

While Greek and Roman artwork showcased women as either virgins or mothers, depictions of the *kandake* celebrated their prowess in battle. Queens such as Amantitere (25–41 BC) and Amanitore (AD 1–25) are depicted valorously slaying their enemies. Praised for their conquests in narratives preserved on stele and pyramid walls, these are powerful women who protect their people.

The relief of Amanitore on the Nubian Lion Temple in Sudan is a prime example (Artwork 8). Adequately taken into account by Western scholarship only in the nineteenth century, this temple is dated between AD 1 and 20, and its twin-sided monument stands thirty-six feet high. Prominent on this classic example of Kushite architecture, Queen Amanitore stands proudly over her enemy with spear drawn, associated in her victory with the war god, Apedemak. Although she is positioned opposite her husband, King Natakamani, no attempt is made to diminish her femininity or authority—even their heights are exactly parallel as they face each other. She is both distinctly woman, with wider hips and breasts, and equally as powerful as her male counterpart. Spencer comments: "These statues convey a royal air . . . rather than solely emphasizing their fertility."[21] In other words, these are not objectified or deified women, such as ancient Greece was known for (as in the example of Aphrodite/Venus in Artwork 3). Rather, these were figures of power. Indeed, their status was so elevated that they are frequently shown in company with venerated gods, wearing headdresses that prominently display cobras, signifying their supreme ruling authority as seen in other iconography in Sudan such as on the pylons of the Nubian Lion Temple, and on the Amanitore relief on the first-century pyramid at Meroe (Artwork 8, 9). In fact, unlike many Egyptian pharaohs depicted wearing a single cobra crown, the *kandake* are often depicted wearing a Kushite dual-cobra headdress, indicating the expanse of their kingdom as well as their independent ruling status. On the Stele of Amanishakheto from the first-century Temple of Amun, the queen is shown in a ceremonial version of the *atef*-type tall, feathered crown with a solar disc, such as would be attributed to the god Amun. In this stele the lunar goddess Amesemi, divine guardian of the royal house, touches the queen's

Artwork 7: Christ as Orpheus, 3rd–4th century AD, Catacombs of Saints Peter and Marcellin, Rome. Photographer/author unknown.Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Artwork 8: Pylon of the Nubian Lion Temple at Naga, AD 1–20, Sudan, Photo courtesty of Dr. Stuart Tyson Smith, "Pylon of the Nubian Lion Temple at Naga," in Smarthistory, February 8, 2023, accessed September 17, 2026, https://smarthistory.org/pylon-nubian-lion-temple-naga/.

Artwork 9: Amanitore Relief, 1st century, Egyptian Museum, Berlin, Photo by Sven-Steffen Arndt, CC BY-SA 2.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>, via Wikimedia Commons.

crown, symbolizing the granting of divine authority[23] (Artwork 10). Many Syrian[24] and Egyptian[25] depictions—like ancient Nubian artwork—avoid negatively subjugating women, but in the history of Christianity, such voices have been effectively marginalized. By the time the Holy Roman Empire emerged in the tenth century, it was rare to find depictions of women in dignified roles, other than the Virgin Mary.[26] Most featured women kneeling in reverence, whether receiving healing or in a posture of subjugation. Unlike the apostles, they rarely stand when in the presence of Christ. Some images, such as that of the woman with the issue of blood, necessarily depict women in a diminished position (Artwork 11). The woman reaching for the hem or fringe of Jesus's robe would have lowered herself in order to do so. However, women, other than the virgin mother, are most often depicted kneeling, as in the Trivulzio Panel now on display in the Museo d'Arte Antica in Milan. Carved into ivory sometime in the fourth-century AD, it is thought to depict the two Marys (the mother of Christ and Mary of Magdala) bowing before a risen Jesus.

A further indicator of Mary's unique and privileged status, one not shared by other women, is that after the Constantinian turn, Mary is never without a head-covering. This emphasizes her purity and virginity, especially in contrast to other vilified biblical figures such as Bathsheba or Eve. One notable example of the veil representing morality is a fourth-century depiction of the Samaritan woman in the Santa Restituta Cathedral, one of the oldest churches in Rome—a cathedral built by the emperor Constantine. She has no head covering and is being observed by suspicious onlookers.

In contrast is the fourth-century depiction of the Virgin Mary, *Mater Ecclesiae* ("Mother of the Church"), painted on a marble support column in old St. Peter's Basilica, which was also built by the emperor Constantine (Artwork 12). Mary is portrayed serenely, with her head tenderly tilted toward the Christ child she holds. Her head is generously covered not only by a veil, signifying marital fidelity, but also a vitta or headband. This secondary headband or coif was meant to keep the hair in place and was an added indication of modesty. This distinction is important as the veil emphasizes status and moral superiority, contrasting Mary's reputation with that of the Woman at the Well. It does not, however, indicate any type of leadership role but rather conforms to the social expectation of Roman women.[27] This pattern continually plays out as the Western church emerges. Mary is frequently showcased both for her purity and motherhood in contrast to morally inferior female characters in Scripture.[28]

Conclusion

Surviving artwork from the first- and second-century church poses a unique challenge for us as modern readers, particularly as the female figures depicted appear to challenge, or in the very least complicate, social norms for women in the pre- and early Christian centuries. Their location in catacombs and house churches—spaces that are largely private rather than overtly public—suggests that they should not be too readily dismissed as opportunistic propaganda.

It appears, however, that in the centuries following the Constantinian turn, Christian iconography in the empire served as the psychological priming for a Christian female's social self-definition and also a Christian male's social expectations. The effect of magnifying the narratives of temptation and lust—such as with Bathsheba or Delilah which are prominent subject matter in Christian imagery—coupled with the diminishing of women leaders such as Deborah, Priscilla, or Mary Magdalene, could have been that women subconsciously internalized the social expectation that their value was tied to their submission to men. The ideal Christian woman was characterized as nurturing wife and mother—not a leader—who was secondary, valued only in her affiliation to a man. This article contributes to a larger conversation on how these visual messages may have influenced Christian theology regarding the roles of women in ministry.

Artwork 10: Stele of Amanishakheto, 1st century AD, Khartoum National Museum, Sudan. Photo by Khruner, CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>, via Wikimedia Commons.

Artwork 11: The healing of a bleeding woman, Catacombs of Marcellino and Peter, 4th century AD, Rome. Photographer/author unknown. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Artwork 12: Mater Ecclesiae, 4th century AD, St Peter's Basilica, Vatican City Photo by Rojero Alegria, CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>, via Wikimedia Commons.

Notes

1. Piotr Winkielman and Yekaterina Gogolushko, "Influence of Suboptimally and Optimally Presented Affective Pictures and Words on Consumption-Related Behavior," *Frontiers in Psychology* 8 (Jan 2018).
2. David F. Marks, "I Am Conscious, Therefore, I Am: Imagery, Affect, Action, and a General Theory of Behavior," *Brain Sciences* 9/5 (May 2019).
3. Penelope M. Allison, "Mapping for Gender: Interpreting Artefact Distribution Inside 1st- and 2nd-Century A.D. Forts in Roman Germany," *Archaeological Dialogues* 13/1 (June 2006) 1.
4. John Peradotto and J. P. Sullivan, *Women in the Ancient World: The Arethusa Papers*, SUNY Series in Classical Studies (SUNY, 1984).
5. Literally a figment of his imagination. Edith Hamilton, *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes* (Grand Central, 1942) 24–25.
6. Hesiod, *The Poems of Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, and the Shield of Herakles* (University of California Press, 2017) 45, lines 145–59.
7. Aeschylus, "The Eumenides," in *The Oresteia,* trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin, 1975) 264. Athena herself declares her allegiance to be "always for the man" and sides with Orestes, though he is clearly guilty of matricide.
8. "Athena," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Dec 27, 2024), https://britannica.com/topic/Athena-Greek-mythology.
9. Kathryn McClymond, "Complex Goddesses: Athena, Aphrodite, Hera," *The Great Courses: Great Mythologies of the World*.
10. Elizabeth Kolbert, "Such a Stoic," *The New Yorker* (Jan 26, 2015).
11. Tatiana Tsakiropoulou-Summers and Katerina Kitsē-Mytakou, eds., *Women and the Ideology of Political Exclusion: From Classical Antiquity to the Modern Era* (Routledge, 2019).
12. Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. J. C. Rolfe (Dover, 2018).
13. Ally Kateusz, "Startling Discoveries of Ancient Christian Art Change Views of Women," *Early Christian Texts: The Bible and Beyond* (June 20, 2019), https://earlychristiantexts.com/ancient-christian-art-changes-views-of-women/.
14. Perhaps most compelling is the work of Dorothy Irvin who almost 50 years ago published, "The Ministry of Women in the Early Church: the Archeological Evidence" in the *Duke Divinity School Review* (1980), but more recent work like that of Carolyn Osiek builds on this. See Osiek, "The Oral World of Early Christian Women," *BTB* 32/1 (2002) 30–38. And her coauthored work with Kevin Madigan, *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A Documentary History* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).
15. Amanda Ruggeri, "The Secrets of the Santa Priscilla Catacombs," *BBC* (Feb 24, 2015).
16. Carly Silver, "Dura-Europos: Crossroad of Cultures," *Archaeology Archive* (Aug 11 2010), https://archive.archaeology.org/online/features/dura_europos/; Yale University Art Gallery, https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/34496.
17. UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Mari & Europos-Dura Sites of Euphrates Valley," UNESCO World Heritage Centre (June 23, 2011).
18. Norbert Zimmerman, "Christian Sarcophagi from Rome," in *The Routledge Handbook of Early Christian Art*, ed. Robin M. Jensen and Mark D. Ellison (Routledge, 2018).
19. Ali Hakem, Ahmed M, Ivan Hrbek, and Jean Vercoutter, "The Matriarchs of Meroe," *The UNESCO Courier* 32/8 (Aug 1, 1979). In terms of how matriarchal rulership influenced African theology, Steffan A. Spencer has written some fascinating work: Spencer, "Matrifocal Retentions in Ethiopian Orthodox Traditions: The Madonna as Ark and Queen Makeda as Prefiguration of Mary; with Egyptian Queen Tiye and Pharaoh Hatshepsut as Reference," *African Identities* (2021) 1–22.
20. Strabo, *Geographica*, Bk. XVII, Ch. 1, trans. Horace Leonard Jones, LCL 267 (Harvard University Press, 1932) 17.1.54. Strabo famously vulgarizes Amanirenas after her victory, calling her a "masculine sort of woman" and pointing out that she was "blind in one eye."
21. Spencer, "Matrifocal Retentions," 12. The author provides many notable examples of sculptures depicting dignified female rulers, now featured in museums worldwide, including the National Museum of Ethiopia and the The Neues Museum in Berlin, Germany. The statues themselves date as far back as 1470 BC.
22. Royal Collection Trust, "Aphrodite or 'Crouching Venus,' 199 AD," *Royal Collection Trust*.
23. Alberto A. Vela-Rodrigo, "The Sacred Treasure of Queen Amanishakheto," *Ancient Egypt Magazine* (2021) 21.
24. Fig. 5.1 Mary with priestly insignia hanging from her girdle. Unstamped silver chalice usually dated 500–650. Attarouthi Treasure, northern Syria. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. Purchase, Rogers Fund and Henry J. and Drue E. Heinz Foundation, Norbert Schimmel, and Lila Acheson Wallace Gifts, 1986. Accession no. 1986.3.7.
25. Ally Kateusz, *Mary and Early Christian Women: Hidden Leadership* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) ch. 1, "Background and Perspective"; Kateusz, "Introduction to Mary as High Priest in Early Christian Narratives and Iconography" in *Mary, the Apostles and the Last Judgment: Apocryphal Representations from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, eds. Stanislava Kuzmová and Andrea-Bianka Znorovszky (Trivent, 2020) 23–60.
26. Kateusz, *Mary and Early Christian Women: Hidden Leadership* (2019) 175-190. Kateusz makes clear that the transition was not without resistance, but also that it was a multifaceted approach, with figures such as Theodora moving from distinguished leadership position to becoming slandered as a prostitute.
27. Sally Waite and Emma Gooch, "Marginalising Maternity: Iconography as Evidence for Social Ideologies in Classical Athens," *Childhood in the Past* 16/2 (2023) 84–109.
28. Paul Marcus, *Psychoanalysis, Classic Social Psychology and Moral Living: Let the Conversation Begin* (Routledge, 2019) 182.

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