


41

Statue of a Mourning Woman

300-275 BC

[Expand All](#)

Object Details

Catalogue Number	41
Inventory Number	85.AD.76.4 
Typology	Statue
Location	Canosa
Dimensions	H: 95.5 cm; W: 32.1 cm; H (Face): 12.2 cm; thickness of walls: 2.1-8.4 cm

Fabric

Beige in color (Munsell 2.5 yr 8/4–5yr 7/6 at the core); white slip and polychromy are as the previous piece. Polychromy: vertical organic pink band on the proper right side, back, and front of the chiton; iron-based red pigment on the hair and feet, and minor traces in the mouth; white pigment ground layer.

Condition

Broken and repaired, abraded terracotta surface. The middle, ring, and pinky fingers of the right hand are broken and repaired. The figure is covered in a heavy layer of burial accretion over the white ground.

Provenance

– 1985, Galerie Hydra (Geneva, Switzerland), sold to the J. Paul Getty Museum, 1985.

Bibliography

ACQUISITIONS 1986; M. Mazzei, "L'ipogeo Monterisi Rossignoli di Canosa," *AION* 12 (1990), pp. 123–67, esp. pp. 138–39; M. Mazzei, "Ipogeo Barbarossa," In R. Cassano, ed., *Principi imperatori vescovi: Duemila anni di storia a Canosa* (Venice, 1992), pp. 197–202, esp. pp. 199–201; M. L. Ferruzza, "Quattro statue in terracotta provenienti da Canosa," *Studia Varia from the J. Paul Getty Museum* 1 (1993), pp. 71–82; F. van der Wielen–van Ommeren, "Orantes canosines," *Genève et l'Italie: Mélanges de la Société genevoise d'études italiennes* 3 (Geneva, 1999), pp. 43–65, nos. 14–17; JEAMMET 2003a, pp. 271 and 291, nos. 43–46.

Description

The figure is similar in its general characteristics to [cat. 40](#), though the leg is not drawn as far back; in both the slight hollow and undulation in the fold of the drapery over the right breast is evident. There are two marks incised into the himation: two parallel lines on the proper left, and a mark like a *lambda* on the proper right. There is a circular hole on the lower edge of the chiton in the figure's back.

Group Discussion

Four Statues of Mourning Women from Canosa (cat. 38–41)

This discussion is reproduced on each of the individual object pages

This group of mourning women, often understood as orantes (female figures in prayer), likely comes from a chamber tomb in the Canosa area, as is attested by comparable examples in various collections. A technical examination of some statues from Canosa conducted by the Louvre conservation laboratories has made it possible to identify certain details of the fabrication. The figures were made not with molds, as was initially conjectured (considering, among other things, the lack of joint lines and the overall resemblance among the various pieces), but rather through a modeling process over a hollow, conical, and fairly thick structure. Working from the bottom up, clay pieces were laid over this structure to define the anatomy and iconographic details of the figure. The forearms, created separately, and the head, made with a bivalve mold, were inserted in holes specially made by the craftsman. The tubular structure was then modeled from within to establish the round shapes of knees and breasts, and from the exterior, through the application of clay parts, to depict in three dimensions the details of the chiton and himation, such as the circular folds and the hem of

the himation on the figures' torsos and the lateral folds of the chiton. On the inside bent knee of one figure (cat. 38), there are vertical strokes in the clay, made by fingers pulling downward. The structure is in any case well smoothed and finished on the interior: there is a slight ridge at the waist in two of the statues. The coroplast attempted to smooth the surface, probably using a throwing stick, from the opening in the base, as can be seen by the circular traces left on the interior surface. A spatula and other sharp tools were used to define the hair, eyes, and various details of clothing.

The facial features, in a clearly local style, are made with a type of mold also utilized for other pieces from Canosa.¹ As in other statues, there are circular holes in the lower extremities into which wooden pins would have been inserted to fasten the statue onto a base.² The symbols, carved directly into the fresh clay, can be interpreted as alphabetical markers to aid in the practical requirements of the factory process; given the nature of these signs, which suggest haste, it is impossible to interpret them with any certainty.³

The colors were applied after the firing over a preparatory layer of white slip, which has been preserved in several areas. The slip is heavily applied in large "swipes" as though done with a tool. It is possible to see some striations in the swipes but not fingerprints.⁴ The palette shows little variety, consisting of pink, red, white, possibly dark brown, and black, although the latter two pigments cannot be confirmed. This limited palette is found in other examples and corresponds to a chromatic taste also attested in the Canosan vases.

The most pertinent comparison for these statues can be found in the type called "orantes with the long himation." This group, according to a recently proposed classification, shows affinities in the treatment of the clothing and in the weighting and position of the arms. The comparison is especially good with the group of such orantes, which have heads showing harsh and marked facial features and hair pulled back into a point on the back.⁵ Relative to these other pieces, the Getty statues are characterized by a general lack of plasticity and by sketchy modeling, underscored by a certain compositional naïveté, an excessively rigid pose, and a general lack of compactness in the structure.⁶ The same stylistic tendency can be found in other coroplastic products such as full-relief statuettes in the round, depicting female figures, Nikai, and Erotes, that decorate *askoi*; these are characterized by a superabundance of decoration. The similarity attests to the close collaboration that existed among potters, painters, and coroplasts in creating a substantially unified expressive language.⁷ Among the numerous examples are the orantes that decorate an *askos* in the Museo Nazionale Archeologico di Taranto, with the same type of clothing and raised arms, and an *askos* from the Varrese hypogeum (rock-cut funerary complex) of Canosa, with similar statuettes, equine protomes, and a head of Medusa datable to the third century BC.⁸ Likewise, the figures painted on the wall of the chamber tomb in the Sant'Aloia area of Canosa, dating from the

first half of the third century BC, are characterized by facial features and a general compositional structure reminiscent of the Getty statues; they also seem to point to models from the Campanian area, such as the figure from “Tomb X” of Paestum.⁹

The statues, which were intended to be placed around a funerary *kline*, constituted an especially costly funerary offering and were thus probably intended for a fairly prestigious client who, in the context of Romanization in the area, aspired to underscore his economic prosperity, personal identity, and native traditions, in part through emphasis on funerary rituals.¹⁰ In Canosa between the second half of the fourth century and the first half of the third century BC, there was a culturally advanced aristocracy that was anxious to affirm its status and more open to the influence of the Greek regions of Magna Graecia and Macedonia, in part due to the political and military relations established with Alexander I of Molossia (r. 362–330/329 BC). Links with and influences from the Macedonian world can be identified, for instance, in the funerary architectural models that were absorbed and adapted to local cultural traditions.¹¹ Although it is possible to note considerable differences among the various examples of statues, both in terms of clothing and in poses and hairstyles, the statues do seem to depict one type of youthful female figure, probably envisioned as one of the female mourners who, during funeral ceremonies, and especially during the *prothesis* (laying out of the body), expressed their grief at the loss of the deceased.¹²

The archaeological context of the orantes from Canosa has been extensively debated and mostly remains unresolved. The pieces have been dispersed among various museum collections, both public and private, due to the massive diffusion of Canosan grave goods into the antiquities market.¹³

Recent studies have examined four hypogea about whose discovery more is known. Scanty though these accounts of discovery are, they seem to attest that the statues must have been placed inside the tombs in pairs or in any case in multiples of two. In particular, eight pieces are thought to originate from Scocchera B hypogeum in Canosa. Of these, two are currently in the Musée de la Ville de Rouen (inv. 1965) and in the National Museum of Copenhagen (inv. 4995); one is in the Worcester Art Museum (inv. 2008.50); another pair, from the description provided by Cozzi of the actual discovery of the hypogeum, may be those now in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow (inv. II 1° 634 and 635). The solitary figure in the Museo Castromediano in Lecce might belong to this same context; great uncertainty persists concerning the identification of the eighth piece.¹⁴

A number of statues must have come from the Barbarossa hypogeum, and of these, three may now be in the collection of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples.¹⁵ An orant generally attributed to the Barbarossa hypogeum might actually have come from the Lagrasta I

hypogeum, which was excavated between 1843 and 1845.¹⁶ Finally, the Tomb of the Gold Ornaments (Tomba degli Ori) was the source of three or four statues of orantes: the pieces now in the Museo Civico Archeologico in Canosa and the Museo Archeologico di Santa Scolastica in Bari might have come from this context.¹⁷

The problem of dating the Getty figures is bound up with the reexamination of funerary deposits belonging to the Canosa hypogea. For the Scocchera B tomb, dates have been suggested between the end of the third century and the second century centuries BC; but the statues are thought to date from the first half of the third century BC, since the hypogeum remained in use for about a century following its construction, as attested, among other things, by the presence of glass vases.¹⁸ For the Barbarossa hypogeum, the same chronological discrepancy exists, given the presence—alongside red-figure vases from the end of the fourth century BC and the statues of orantes—of glass pieces and goldwork as well that can be dated to the second century BC; once again, these discrepancies are due to the continued use of the hypogeum over several generations.¹⁹ In the Lagrasta hypogeum, too, alongside the red-figured vases, there have been finds of glass pieces and a Latin inscription from 67 BC.²⁰ For the Tomb of the Gold Ornaments, on the other hand, the end of the third century BC seems to be a date widely accepted by scholars.²¹ In the absence of reliable excavation contexts, it seems advisable to date the group of orantes to the early third century BC.

Notes

1. For the technical working of the statue and the hypothetical use of bivalve molds, see JEAMMET AND NADALINI 1997; for a review of the problem, JEAMMET 2003a. This study, which explores the problems linked to Canosan statues in the Louvre and surveys all the pieces in the various public and private museum collections, proposes a classification according to technical and iconographic criteria. According to this scheme, the Getty orantes have been included in the group characterized by a “long himation and a conical structure that tends to widen at the height of the shoulders.” The bivalve mold for the heads, catalogued as m5, seems to have been used for the pieces in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen as well.
2. The circular holes can also be found on the majority of statues, including the examples in Rouen, Copenhagen, and Bari, and on the statues in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples: see LEVI 1926, pl. II, no.1.
3. See also G. Siebert, “Signatures d’artistes, d’artisans et des fabricants dans l’antiquité classique,” *Ktema* 3 (1978), pp. 111–31, esp. p. 124; and V. Casolo, “Marchi di fabbrica su terrecotte campane,” *Acme* 40 (1987), pp. 57–64.
4. A chemical analysis of the slip taken from four *askoi* from Canosa showed that milk of lime was used as well as a white kaolinite slip; in this connection, see A. Ruiny and F. Schweizer, “Analyse de l’engobe blanc et des traces d’adhésifs anciens prélevés sur des vases de Canosa,” *Genava*, n.s. 28 (1978), pp. 162–69; see also P. Aureli, “Il restauro,” in Cassano 1992, p. 333; C. Meucci, “Analisi dei vasi sovraddipinti,” in Cassano 1992.
5. In particular, two orantes from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen (inv. HIN 422 and 419), a pair of orantes from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples (inv. 22246 and 22247), and the orant from the Musée du Louvre (inv. 7500);

respectively: FISCHER-HANSEN 1992, pp. 101–3; LEVI 1926, no. 235, pl. II, no. 3, inv. 22246–47; see also JEAMMET 2003a, Group 3, head m5, pp. 288–92.

5. In particular, two orantes from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen (inv. HIN 422 and 419), a pair of orantes from the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples (inv. 22246 and 22247), and the orant from the Musée du Louvre (inv. 7500); respectively: FISCHER-HANSEN 1992, pp. 101–3; LEVI 1926, no. 235, pl. II, no. 3, inv. 22246–47; see also JEAMMET 2003a, Group 3, head m5, pp. 288–92.
6. For this issue, see MOREL 2002; A. Giuliano, “L’influenza greca nell’arte italica,” in PUGLIESE CARRATELLI 1996, pp. 591–606.
7. See n. 1 above. For the *askoi* of Canosa, see also F. van der Wielen, “Ceramica a decorazione plastica e policroma,” pp. 310–26 in Cassano 1992, nos. 50–76; A. Rinuy, F. van der Wielen, P. Hartmann, and F. Schweizer, “Céramique insolite de l’Italie du Sud: Les vases hellénistiques de Canosa,” *Genava* n.s. 26 (1978), pp. 141–69, pp. 317–18; for the plastic oinochoai, see A. Riccardi, “Vasi configurati a testa umana di provenienza o produzione canosina,” in A. Riccardi, A. Sciancio, M. Chelotti, L. Rossi, and F. van der Wielen-van Ommeren, *Canosa I*, Studi sull’antico 3 (Bari, 1980), nos. 7–8, pp. 7–21; F. Rossi, s.v. “Vasi canosini,” *EAA suppl.* 2 (1994), pp. 848–49. For the type of clothing, see the figures painted by the Patera Painter or by the Baltimore Painter: A. D. Trendall and A. Cambitoglou, *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia* (Oxford and New York, 1982), vol. 2, pp. 723–24 and 856–60. See also M. Dewailly, “Les femmes des guerriers indigènes dans les scènes de libation représentées sur les vases à figures rouges d’Italie du Sud au IV^e siècle,” *MÉFRA* 94 (1982), pp. 581–623.
8. M. Borda, *Ceramiche apule* (Bergamo, 1966), p. 60, fig. 49. For the *askos* from the Varrese hypogeum, see L. Todisco et al., *Introduzione all’artigianato della Puglia antica dall’età coloniale all’età romana* (Bari, 1992), fig. 77. See also the *askos* from Canosa at the Louvre, decorated with figures of *orantes*, in BESQUES 1986, pls. 135–37.
9. For the tombs of Paestum, see PONTRANDOLFO AND ROUVERET 1992, p. 221; for Apulian painting, see E. M. De Juliis, “Nuovi documenti di pittura figurata in Apulia,” *Ricerche di pittura ellenistica*, Quaderni dei Dialoghi di archeologia 10 (Rome, 1985), pp. 163–68; on the paintings in the Sant’Aloia tomb, see also L. De Lachenal, “Il rilievo frammentario con cavaliere reimpiegato a Castel del Monte,” *RivIstArch* 14–15 (1991–92), pp. 131–51. See also R. Benassai, *La pittura dei Campani e dei Sanniti* (Rome, 2001), fig. 248, pp. 236–37. In particular, we can also draw a comparison between these *orantes* and the female figure from a tomb in Isernia that also seems reminiscent of the figure of Calypso in a painted tomb in Kerch, Ukraine. For comparisons also between the statues of *orantes* and the painting from northern Greece, see M. Mazzei, “La Daunia e la Grecia settentrionale: Riflessioni sulle esperienze pittoriche del primo ellenismo,” in PONTRANDOLFO 2002, pp. 67–77.
10. For the presence of statues around the funerary *kline*, see the painting from the north plaque of Tomb 53 in the necropolis of Andriuolo, depicting a scene of pathos, in PONTRANDOLFO AND ROUVERET 1992, pp. 140–41, fig. 546. For the funerary ritual, see E. M. De Juliis, *L’ipogeo dei Vimini di Canosa* (Bari, 1990), pp. 129–33; and DE JULIIS 1984, pp. 19–21.
11. On aspects of Hellenization in indigenous centers, see n. 7 above and J. L. Lamboley, “Les hypogées indigènes apuliens,” *MÉFRA* 94, no. 1 (1982), pp. 91–148; L. Todisco, *Introduzione all’artigianato della Puglia antica: Dall’età coloniale all’età romana* (Bari, 1992), pp. 32–37; M. Torelli, “Principi, indigeni e classi dirigenti italiote: Per una storia della committenza dei vasi apuli,” in G. Sena Chiesa and E. A. Arslan, eds., *Miti Greci: Archeologia e pittura dalla Magna Grecia al collezionismo*, exh. cat. (Milan, Palazzo Reale, 2004), pp. 190–92; and M. Torelli, “Aspetti materiali e ideologici della romanizzazione della Daunia,” *Dialoghi di archeologia* 10 (1992), pp. 47–64.
12. It has been proposed that the iconographic differentiations among the statues may point not only to differences in age, but also to different roles played by women in funerary rites: MAZZEI 1992. See also DE JULIIS 1992, pp. 231–32. On reexamination of the funerary deposits of the hypogea of Canosa, see JEAMMET 2003A, pp. 276–81.
13. The dispersal of material from Canosa is documented, in part, by the numerous pieces that have appeared on the antiquities market, i.e., the statue of an *orante* in *Antiquities*, Bonhams Knightbridge, sale cat., November 26, 1997, lot 316 (current

location unknown). The orant, very similar to the Getty ones, in *Classical, Egyptian and Western Asiatic Antiquities and Islamic Works of Art*, Sotheby's New York, Sale 6717, June 1, 1995, lot 113, is now in the San Antonio Museum of Art (inv. 95.18.2).

14. The most recent study of the context of the Scocchera B tomb is in JEAMMET 2003A, pp. 276–77. A different reconstruction of the grave goods is presented in OLIVER 1968, p. 15. For a description of the tomb at the time of its discovery, see S. Cozzi, “Gruppo di camere sepolcrali appartenenti alla necropoli canosina,” *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità* (1896), p. 495. For an analysis of the hypogeum and the corresponding grave goods, see also De Juliis 1992. The Rouen piece is also published in *Hommes, dieux et héros de la Grèce*, exh. cat. (Rouen, Musée des Antiquités, 1982), p. 153, no. 66; for the Copenhagen orant, see BREITENSTEIN 1941, fig. 80. A second orante in the Worcester Art Museum was acquired in 1927 (inv. 1927.45). A preliminary list of statues from Canosa was drawn up in W. Deonna, *Les statues de terre cuite dans l'antiquité* (Paris, 1908), pp. 72–77.
15. According to the hypothesis set forth by Jeammet, it was instead the Barbarossa hypogeum that might have been the source of four orantes: the two now in the Louvre, the one in London, and the one in the Sant'Angelo collection of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples: JEAMMET 2003A, pp. 278–7; see, also, MAZZEI 1992, nos. 6–8. For the statues in Naples, see also LEVI 1926, pl. II, 1–3, nos. 233–37, pp. 55–56.
16. JEAMMET 2003A, p. 279; also R. Cassano, “Gli ipogei Lagrasta,” in CASSANO 1992, p. 204; OLIVER 1968, p. 22.
17. For the Tomb of the Gold Ornaments, see JEAMMET 2003A, pp. 277–78; M. Corrente, “La tomba degli Ori,” in CASSANO 1992, pp. 337–45, no. 58; R. Bartoccini, “La tomba degli Ori a Canosa,” *Japigia* 6 (1935), pp. 225–62; E. Lippolis, in DE JULIIS 1984, pp. 450–51.
18. DE JULIIS 1992, p. 236; DE JULIIS 1984, p. 454.
19. See MAZZEI 1992, pp. 197–202; M. Mazzei and E. Lippolis, “Dall'ellenizzazione all'età tardo repubblica,” in *La Daunia antica: Dalla preistoria all'altomedioevo* (Milan, 1984), pp. 191–92. The dating is also discussed in A. Ciancio, “I vetri alessandrini rinvenuti a Canosa,” pp. 31–66 in Riccardi et al., *Canosa I* (cited in n. 7 above), p. 46, n. 74.
20. R. Cassano, “Gli ipogei Lagrasta,” in CASSANO 1992, pp. 203–24.
21. E. Lippolis, in DE JULIIS 1984, pp. 450–52.