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Egyptian elite as cives romani? Looking at non-royal Ptolemaic portraiture

The aim of this paper is to present some preliminary results of the on-going research I am currently pursuing on Ptolemaic private portraits thanks to a specific case study, namely the statue of Hor son of Tutu (Berlin, Ägyptische Museum, Inv. no. 2271) and its link to a Roman portrait attested in two exemplars (Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Inv. no.121991 and Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Inv. no. I. N. 1777).

In the past decades, only few scholars have focused their research on non-royal Ptolemaic portraiture. They usually explained this phenomenon as the development of local Egyptian traditions and excluded any foreign influence on the rendering of realistic facial features. First results of the research instead highlight a multifaceted and composite phenomenon and point out a close link between Ptolemaic private portraits and Late Roman Republican portraiture. Non-royal Ptolemaic portraits have thus to be analysed within the wider Mediterranean context using a methodological approach resulting from the adoption of two perspectives, the Classical and the Egyptian one. This methodology implies the use of heterogeneous sources and consists of the analysis of the stylistic features, inscriptions and historical backgrounds of the characters portrayed in order to fix more reliable chronological criteria for non-royal Ptolemaic portraiture.