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portrait sculptures are among the most vibrant records of ancient greek and roman culture they represent people of all ages and social strata revered poets and philosophers emperors and their family members military heroes local dignitaries ordinary citizens and young children the met s distinguished collection of greek and roman portraits in stone and bronze is published in its entirety for the first time in this volume paul zanker a leading authority on roman sculpture today has brought his exceptional knowledge to the study of these portraits in presenting them he brings the ancient world to life for contemporary audiences each work is lavishly illustrated meticulously described and placed in its historical and cultural context the lives and achievement of significant figures are discussed in the framework of the political social and practical circumstances that influenced their portrait s forms and styles from the unvarnished realism of the late republican period to the idealizing and progressively abstract tendencies that followed analyses of marble portraits recarved into new likenesses after their original subjects were forgotten or officially repudiated provide especially compelling insights observations on fashions in hairstyling which typically originated with the imperial family and spread as fast as the rulers latest portraits could be distributed not only edify and amuse but also link the romans motives and appetite for imitation to our own more than a collection catalogue roman portraits is a thorough and multifaceted survey of ancient portraiture charting the evolution of this art from its origins in ancient greece it renews our appreciation of an connection to these imposing timeless works

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