ON AN UNUSUAL FEMALE HEAD FROM *ITALICA* (SANTIPONCE, SEVILLE)

Una peculiar cabeza femenina procedente de Italica (Santiponce, Sevilla)

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ABSTRACT: A previously unpublished female head, which decorated the residential area of the Hadrianic extension of *Italica*, was found in excavations carried out by A. Parladé in 1929/1930 in the proximity of the House of the Neptune Mosaic. Its most particular characteristic is that the upper part was formed by a separately worked segment of hair. This head is the first to be documented in Hispania made with this technique, in which a tenon is located in the back of the head. As it is an unusual technique, other examples in the Empire of similar characteristics are detailed in a list. Finally, a series of arguments are given to date the object in the second quarter of the 2nd century AD and include it in the group of ideal heads made during that time in *Italica*.

Key words: Hispania; Roman Portrait; Ideal Sculpture; Assemblage; Hair Segments.

RESUMEN: El objetivo de este trabajo es presentar una cabeza femenina inédita, que decoró la zona residencial de la ampliación adrianea de *Italica*. Fue hallada en las excavaciones realizadas en 1929/1930 por A. Parladé en las inmediaciones de la Casa del Mosaico de Neptuno. Su característica más destacada es que su parte superior fue realizada mediante un segmento de pelo trabajado por separado. La cabeza italicense permite documentar por primera vez en Hispania una pieza realizada por medio de esta técnica, en la que la espiga está labrada en la parte trasera de la cabeza. Dado que el sistema es poco habitual, se han buscado otros paralelos en el Imperio con características similares. Finalmente, se plantean una serie de argumentos que permiten datar la pieza en el segundo cuarto del s. II d. C. e incluirla dentro del grupo de las cabezas ideales italicenses realizadas en ese intervalo cronológico.

Palabras clave: Hispania; retrato romano; escultura ideal; ensamblaje; segmentos de pelo.

1. Introduction[1]

A female head in the Archaeological Museum of Seville –Inv. no. CE 4727– has remained unstudied although it was found nearly 100 years

ago[2]. According to the museum registry books, it entered the museum in 1931. Its provenance is not given but I thought that it might have been found in Italica in that year. Bearing in mind

[1] I would like to thank J. Ch. Balty, D. Boschung, M. Cadario, K. Fittschen, and E. Rosso for their valuable help. Thanks to the kindness of Archaeological Museum of Seville, it was possible to perform the autopsy and offer the photographs of this female head.

[2] The case of the female head studied here is not unique. Numerous unstudied sculptures are held in the stores of Seville Archaeological Museum. Others have been published in recent years, such as those made known by Peña (2004: 63-102, figs. 1-10; 2005: 137-162, figs. 6 and 8-9) and Ojeda (2019: 852-854, fig. 3).
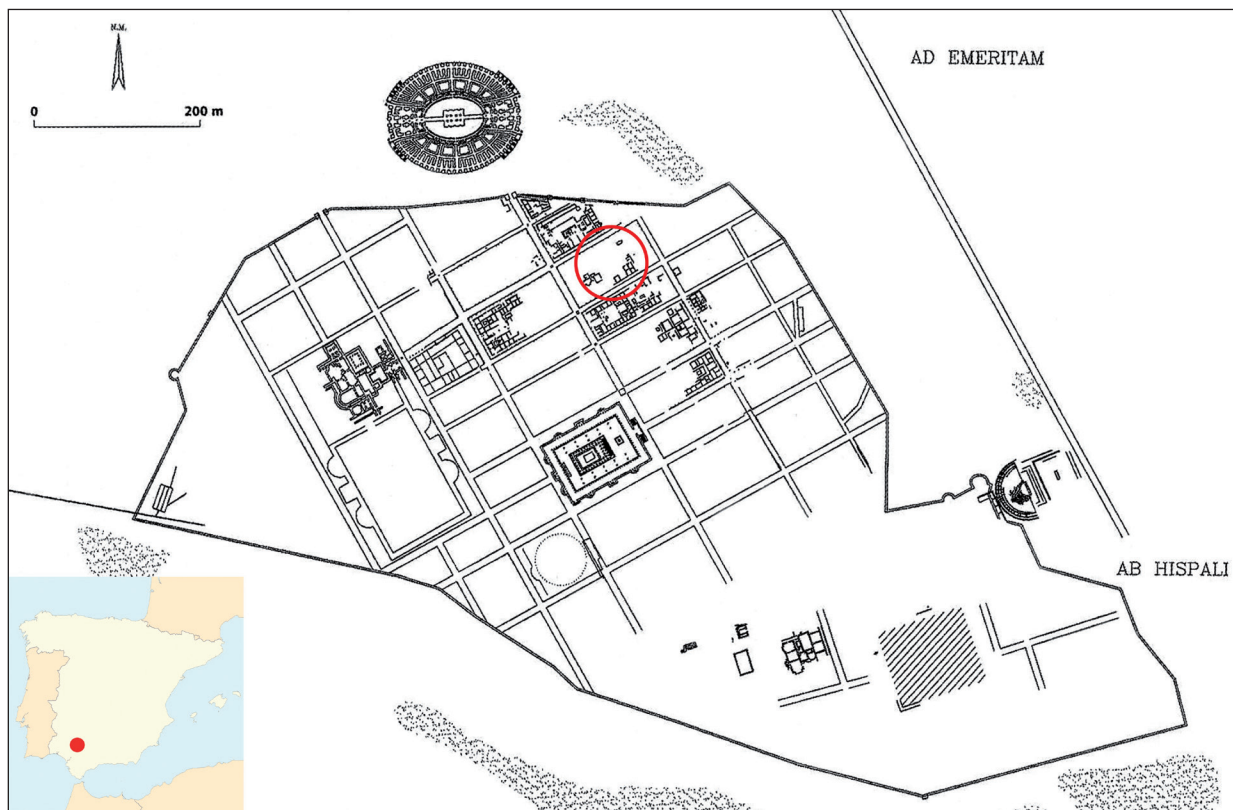
FIG. 1. *Location of* Italica *in the Iberian Peninsula and plan of the Nova Urbs; the circle marks the findspot of the female head.*

that the director of the excavations at Italica from 1919 to 1933 was A. Parladé[3], it seemed possible to find the head in his reports.

Consulting Parladé's reports on his excavations in *Italica* showed that it was found in the archaeological works in 1929/1930. He describes the place and time of the discovery in the following way:

> … I am now excavating a very large public building, apparently other baths, very near to the last house to be described –no. 3. Few objects of little value have been found: two capitals of white marble, four shafts of marble columns, including a large one of fine marble that might have belonged to a public building that is perhaps hidden in the surroundings; a lovely head of a woman (Minerva?) with a tenon of the same block of marble in the upper part of the head that may have held a helmet of bronze or

another metal when it was separated from the bust. Four glass dies, three of them with busts of men and one with adornments; some pottery jars, pieces of Numantine clay, marble mouldings and architectural fragments; some glass lachrymatories and many copper coins of different periods, etc., etc…

(Parladé, 1934: 12)

Therefore, the head was found in a building in *Italica* (Fig. 1), which Parladé situates near House no. 3. The plans in the report allow identifying this Roman *domus*[4], which is now known as the House of the Neptune Mosaic. It is a large *domus* occupying a block about 6,000 m² in size and that still today is only partially excavated. Despite this, it has been shown to contain rooms that are richly paved with mosaics (Mañas, 2011: 28-29) and remains of baths (García-Entero, 2005: 718-719)

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[3]   For this aristocrat, the third Count of Aguiar, from Málaga: Caballos *et al.*, 1999: 48.

[4]   Parladé (1934): "Plano A. Plano de los descubrimientos efectuados en la ciudad de Itálica. Durante el año 1930".

with the Neptune mosaic that gives its name to the house.

This information demonstrates that the head came from the urban enlargement of *Italica* in the time of Hadrian, corresponding to the so-called *Nova Urbs*[5]. Unfortunately, no more precise data about the archaeological context is available, as Parladé did not draw plans of the building where the head was found or provide more precise details about the location of the find. Therefore, it can only be said that it was discovered in the proximity of the House of the Neptune Mosaic. As this was a residential part of *Italica*, it is likely to have formed part of the decoration of one of the *domus* in the area[6].
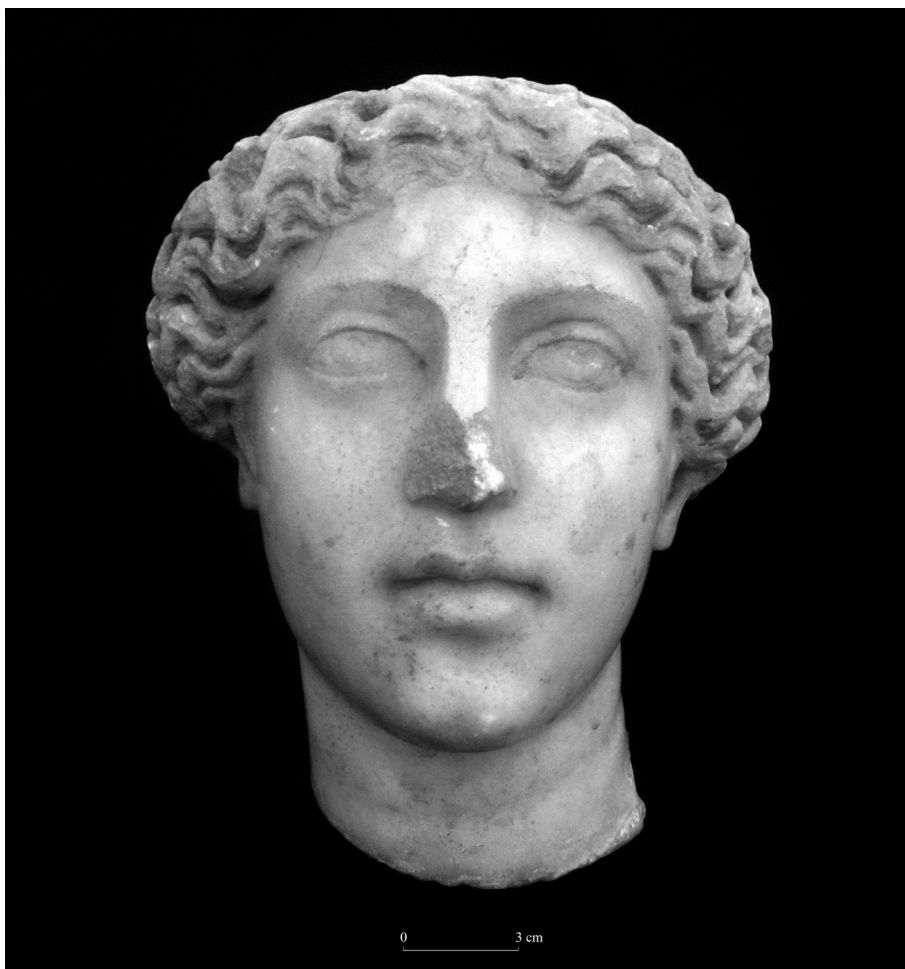

Fig. 2. *Frontal view of the female head from* Italica*; height 18 cm, distance from chin to cranium 14 cm; Archaeological Museum of Seville 4727.*

2. Description and comparative analysis of the head

The maximum height conserved of the head is 18 cm, with a distance from chin to skull of 14 cm,

and its most noticeable flaw is the fracture of the nose (Figs. 2-5). The back of the head is not broken but prepared to receive a separately worked segment of hair[7]. With this aim, the sculptor shaped a rounded surface with incisions and a circular tenon of the same piece of marble at the back. The circular surface of the back of the head is 15 cm in diameter and the tenon is 5 cm in diameter. The

[5] This term was coined by García y Bellido (1960: 73-74). On the Hadrianic extension of *Italica* see the study of León (1992).

[6] It is not totally certain, but it cannot be ruled out that the head belonged to the decoration in the House of the Neptune Mosaic. Parladé describes the building where the head was found as a space used for baths. It has later been documented that this *domus* possessed an area of about 500 m² on its western side that was used for baths. This implies that perhaps it was in that area where Parladé found the head.

[7] It is not known why the workshops used this technique and the sources do not provide any information that might help. For possible reasons for its use: Schäfer, 2015: 757-761. For heads made in separate parts, the first systematic and still essential study is that of Crawford, 1917; for this problem, see most recently Papini, 2019: 168-177, no. 8.

Fig. 3. *Back of the female head from* Italica.

This head from *Italica* cannot be included in the group of Roman portraits with a wig[10], or in the group of portraits with '*Perücken*'[11]. Instead, it belongs to the Roman heads with separately worked segments of hair. The three types of figures are similar, which may cause some confusion when identifying them. They can be differentiated by the following criteria:

– Roman portraits with a wig are made from a single piece and the wig is placed directly on the natural hair of the portrayed person. They are easily recognisable because the locks of natural hair extend below the false hair. This system has so far only been documented in female portraits[12].

– Roman portraits with '*Perücken*' are made with two pieces: one that corresponds to the lower part of the head and one that is a separately carved piece that forms the whole of the hair. Although most of the known cases are female figures[13], a male one is also known[14].

attachment to be inserted in the back has not been found, but it must have possessed a circular socket in its lower part to be fitted on the tenon. Some type of adhesive would probably have been used to fasten the two pieces more securely[8]. To facilitate the adhesion, the sculptor made small incisions in the smooth and rounded surface of the head[9].

[8]   On the use of adhesives in Antiquity, see the works of Adam (1966: 80-82), Stern (1985: 407-408), Claridge (1990: 153-154) and Schäfer (1996: 56).
[9]   For the combination of adhesives and tenons in Greco-Roman heads: Ojeda, 2018a: 200-201.

[10]   See most recently, Ackers, 2019.
[11]   Fittschen and Zanker, 1983: 105-106. Fittschen, 2005 with previous bibliography.
[12]   For an example of a female portrait with a wig: Fittschen and Zanker (1983: 96-97, no. 140, figs. 165-167).
[13]   For an example of a female portrait with a '*Perücke*': Fittschen and Zanker (1983: 83, no. 113, fig. 143). The most complete list of portraits with '*Perücken*' is in Fittschen and Zanker (1983: 105-106, n. 4), whose list can be completed with Fittschen (2005: 90, n. 23). Previous literature on this topic can be found in both works.
[14]   Museum of Fine Arts de Boston –Inv. no. 2004.2232–. It has not been published but appears in the museum's on-line catalogues.

– Roman heads with separately worked segments of hair are usually made with two pieces, although there are examples where it can be seen that a large number of attachments was employed[15]. In these cases, a portion, or several portions, of hair were made separately to be fitted later and thus complete the figure's hair. This technique has been documented in female portraits[16], male portraits[17] and in ideal heads[18].

Of the Hispanic heads with separately worked segments of hair, no other example is known with a tenon at the back made from the same piece of marble. These heads are not common in other provinces of the Empire either[19].

[15] Inan and Rosenbaum (1979: 341-343, no. 342, fig. 250). A more recent study can be found in Hirst and Salapata (2004: 114, figs. 11-14).

[16] See *supra* n. 15.

[17] For an example of a male portrait with a separately worked segment of hair: Gauckler, 1910: 402, fig. 8; see most recently Papini (2019: 174) with previous literature.

[18] See for example Despinis (1975: 30-31, figs. 27-28), Scholl (1995: 44-45, f7, fig. 26), De Angelis (2002: 298-299) and Knoll and Vorster (2011: 232-237, no. 28).

[19] In addition to the technique seen in the head from *Italica*, Roman heads with separate hair segments were made in other ways. The four most usual techniques were: a) both parts smooth and without tenons (see for example Koppel, 1985: 14-15, no. 2, fig. 2; Sande, 1991: 32-34, no. 19, fig. 19; Despinis *et al.*, 2003: 178-180, no. 285, figs. 878-883; Garriguet, 2006: 152, fig. 3; Zanker, 2016: 214-216, no. 80); b) both parts smooth with metal tenons (see for example Imdahl and Kunisch, 1979: 54-65; Fittschen and Zanker, 1983: 24-25, no. 24, fig. 33; 81, no. 109, fig. 137; Bonanno, 1997: 59-61, fig. 18; Smith, 2006: 286, no. 200, figs. 134-135; Márquez, 2012: 206-211, no. 1, figs. 1-5; Schäfer, 2015: 721-727, nos. 2-3, figs. 2a-f and 3a-d); c) the opposite way to the case study, i.e., tenon in the hair segment and socket in the back part of the head (see for example Gauckler, 1910: 394, no. 2, figs. 4 and 5; Sensi, 1984/1985: 237-238, no. 5, fig. 21; Fittschen and Zanker, 1985: 3-6, no. 3, fig. 6; Koppel, 1985: 81, no. 106, figs. 41-42; Hirst and Salapata, 2004: 147, figs. 8-10; Smith, 2006: 179-180, no. 51,

Fig. 4. *Female head from* Italica: *left side.*

Fig. 5. *Female head from* Italica: *right side.*

	Chronology	Type of portrait	Location	References
a	Julio-Claudian	Imperial portrait of Augustus	Vicenza, Museo Civico (Inv. no. E I-44)	Galliazzo, 1976: 100-103; Boschung, 1993: 191-192, no. 203, fig. 125.
b	Antonine	Imperial portrait of Trajan	Avignon, Musée Calvet (Inv. no. G. 167 A)	Rosso, 2006: 394-396, no. 162, fig. 127a-b.
c		Imperial portrait of Antinous	Rome, Auditorium di Mecenate, Magazzino (without Inv. no.)	Meyer, 1991: 51, fig. 31, 2, 4-5.
d		Imperial portrait of Antinous (Fig. 7)	Rome, Villa Adriana, Cento Camerelle (Inv. no. 598 and 45323)	Ojeda, 2018b: 304, no. 316.
e		Private portrait	Private collection (without Inv. no.)	See *supra* n. 15.
f		Imperial portrait of Marcus Aurelius	Bloomington, Indiana Univ. Museum of Art (Inv. no. 74.145)	Albertson, 2004: 270, figs. 18-19.
g		Imperial portrait of Crispina	Missouri, Museum of Art and Archaeology, Univ. of Missouri-Columbia (Inv. no. 74.145)	Soren, 1975: 21-24, figs. 1-3; Fittschen, 1982: 85, no. 5, fig. 51, 2.
h	Severan	Private portrait of a Vestal	Rome, Antiquario Forense (Inv. no. 424491)	Mekacher, 2006: 220-221, p10, figs. 76-77, 80-81.
i		Imperial portrait of Septimius Severus	Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano (Inv. no. 193)	See *supra* n. 17.
j		Private portrait	Munich, Antiquarium (Inv. no. P. I 107)	Weski and Frosien-Leinz, 1987: 171-172, no. 49, fig. 89; 101, fig. 31.

Fig. 6. *Table with compilation of Roman heads prepared to receive socketed segments of hair.*

I only know of some examples, which I present in chronological order in a table (Fig. 6)[20].

From the table it can be inferred that the heads prepared to receive these socketed segments of hair do not display a uniform sculpting technique.

figs. 46-47; Gercke and Zimmermann-Elseify, 2007: 266-268, no. 86; Knoll and Vorster, 2013: 275-284, no. 63 and 435-439, no. 101; Zanker, 2016: 84-85, no. 26); and d) joint with an elongated horizontal tenon for a hair segment possibly of wood or marble (Despinis, 1975: 53; Goette, 2018: 77-81; see for example Rosenbaum, 1960: 68, no. 79, fig. 49, 3-4; Despinis, 1975: 30-31, figs. 27-28 and 32, figs. 32-35; Chamay *et al.*, 1982: 154-157).

[20] The list does not include a female portrait from Béziers (Balty and Cazes, 1995: 104-111, no. 9, figs. 99, 102 and 105-106; Boschung, 2002: 59, no. 13.9; Rosso, 2006: 357-359, no. 128, fig. 102) because it cannot be ruled out that the tenon at the back was made in modern times to hold the restorations of the lost parts. Nor does it include heads made from two pieces, when they have been conserved together and I do not know of any descriptions or photographs of how they were assembled. See for example Sande, 1991: 74-75, no. 60, fig. 59; De Angelis, 2002: 298-299. Of all the sculptures in the list only Case i) conserves the two pieces that formed the portrait. There are similar tenons and sockets in the *'halbierte Köpfe'* (see the examples in Fittschen, 2019: 8-9, fig. 8, no. 1 and fig. 10, no. 3) and in the Roman portraits with *'Perücken'* (see *supra* nn. 13-14. Fittschen, 2005: 87-88, n. 13).

Although they nearly all possess a square or rectangular tenon or socket, the head from *Italica* and the one in the Museo Nazionale Romano have a round tenon. Similarly, the cross-sections are not identical. In some instances, they are vertical or nearly-vertically diagonal, as in Cases a-e, g, h and j. However, in Case f and the head from *Italica*, they are totally diagonal, while in Case i it is practically horizontal.

The long chronological spread of the heads in the table, from the Julio-Claudian age to the Severan dynasty, does not allow the female head from Italica to be dated solely by its use of the separate hair segment technique[21]. However, four reasons can be put forward to support a date in the second quarter of the 2nd century AD.

The first is that the hairstyle and the way of sculpting it find very close parallelisms in the iconography of the *Haupttypus* of Vibia Sabina[22]. This type was in use from AD 128 to 138 (Fittschen and Zanker, 1983: 11). An example where this similarity

[21] The opposite occurs in the case of portraits with *'Perücken'*, because they were all made between AD 160 and 220; see Fittschen, 2005: 90.

[22] On the types of portraits of Sabina, see the works of Fittschen and Zanker (1983: 10-12) and Fittschen (2000: 507, n. 6; 2004: 112, n. 5).
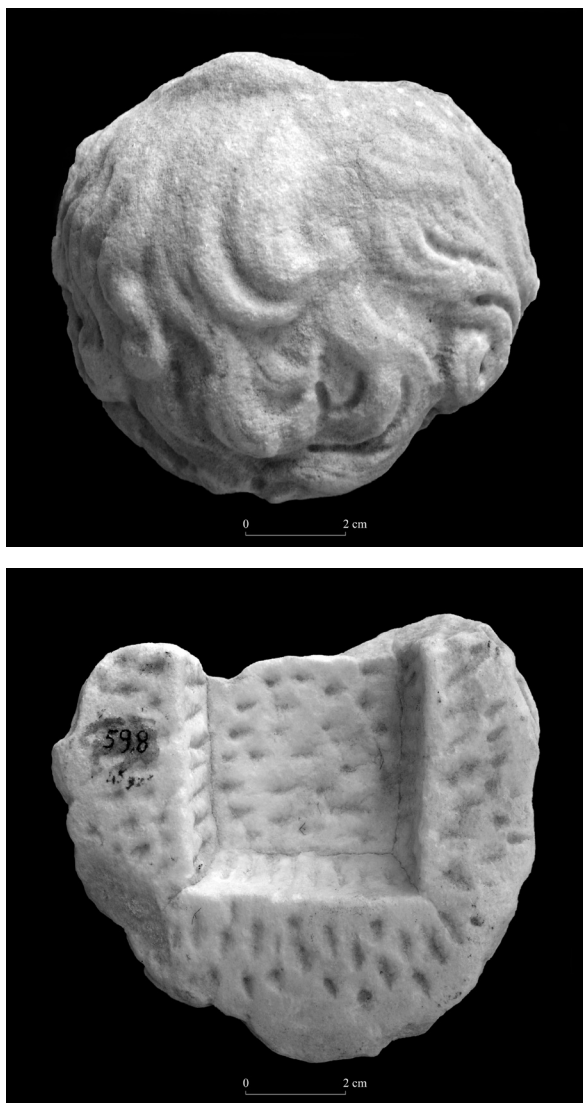
Fig. 7. *Segment of hair from a portrait of Antinous: top and underside; height 10 cm; Hadrian's villa, Cento Camerelle 598/45323 (courtesy T. Nogales and P. León).*

can easily be observed is a portrait of the empress in the Musei Vaticani[23].

The second is that the sculptor marked the iris with an incision, indicated the pupil by a trepanation in the form of a pelte and represented large,

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[23]   Carandini, 1969: 189-191, no. 55, figs. 235-236; Fittschen and Zanker, 1983: 10, no. 10, replica 7. See for another parallel Wegner, 1956: 129, figs. 45a and 47a.

almost bulging eyes. A very similar way to represent eyes is used in the Type I portraits of Marcus Aurelius[24], whose prototype must have been made in around AD 138 (Fittschen, 1999: 20).

The third is that the *Italica* head closely resembles the representation of *Hispania* found in the *Hadrianeum* in Rome[25], securely dated in AD 140[26].

The fourth reason is that another head from *Italica* used a similar technique. This is a portrait of Marcus Aurelius which was also prepared at the back to receive a separately worked hair segment (Figs. 8-9). In this case, the sculptor did not carve a tenon, but a square socket surrounded by a series of incisions to improve the adherence of the missing attachment (León, 2001: 316-319, no. 97). This portrait was also made in the second quarter of the 2nd century AD. It corresponds to the Type II, variant d, of the Marcus Aurelius portraits, which can be dated between AD 147 and 151 (Fittschen, 1999: 24-25). The use of a similar attachment and the chronological coincidence support the proposed date for the ideal female head from *Italica*. It even suggests that both sculptures may have been carved in the same workshop[27].

3. Final remarks

It is possible that some researchers might be tempted to identify the head from *Italica* as a highly idealised portrait of Sabina, as has occurred in other cases[28]. The resemblance to the empress and the provenance of the head in *Italica* are powerful

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[24]   See for example Fittschen, 1999: 13, A1, fig. 1; 13, A5, fig. 8b; 13, A7, fig. 5; 14, A10, fig. 8a; 14, A14, fig. 11; 14, A16, fig. 13a-b; 15, A26, fig. 19c-d.

[25]   Sapelli, 1999: 64-65, no. 19.

[26]   CAPITOL. Ver. 3.

[27]   A third sculpture from *Italica* of similar chronology may have had a separately worked hair segment (León, 1995: 138-139, no. 45). Unfortunately I have not been able to examine the back of the object and do not know of any photographs of that detail.

[28]   Examples of similar cases are cited by Fittschen and Zanker (1983: 12, n. 4).

arguments, but not determinant[29]. Bearing in mind that the features of the head are very impersonal and the hairstyle lacks typical elements of a fashion characteristic of a particular time[30], it is more likely to be an ideal head[31].

Should this hypothesis be correct, the head would form part of the ensemble of ideal female heads from *Italica* made in the second quarter of the 2nd century AD[32]. Its inclusion in this group is important in two ways. First, it attests the presence of ideal statues in the residential district of *Italica*, and second, it shows that the workshop, or workshops, that supplied the *Nova Urbs* with ideal sculptures employed the technique based on separate hair segments. This may seem an insignificant detail, but it is not. Only to the extent that we are able to detect these small characteristics of the workshops will it be possible to determine one day how many workshops functioned in *Italica*[33], what their sculptural production was like, how long they were in operation and their area of influence[34]. We still known very little about these points, but a systematic study of separately worked segments of hair in Hispania may in the future cast some light on these questions.

[29]   Although all the examples in the present list with the same technique for joining the head –a socket in the attachment and tenon in the head– are portraits, separately worked hair segments have also been documented in ideal statues (see *supra* n. 18).

[30]   The conserved hair can also be found relatively frequently in heads of goddesses. Some examples also from *Italica* in León, 1995: 126-129, no. 40 and 146-149, no. 48; Rodríguez Oliva, 2009: 88, fig. 78.

[31]   The problem is not exclusive to this sculpture. There are other female heads where it is not possible to determine whether they are portraits or ideal statues. For some examples and their correct methodological treatment: Fittschen, 1982: 79-80, n. 43; Fittschen and Zanker, 1983: 12, n. 4; Fittschen, 2000: 508, n. 10.

[32]   See *supra* n. 30.

[33]   On the workshops in *Italica*: León, 1995: 25-29; Ojeda, 2013: 375.

[34]   On the possibility that workshops in *Italica* supplied *Munigua*: Hertel, 1993: 100-101 and Ojeda, 2018c: 695.
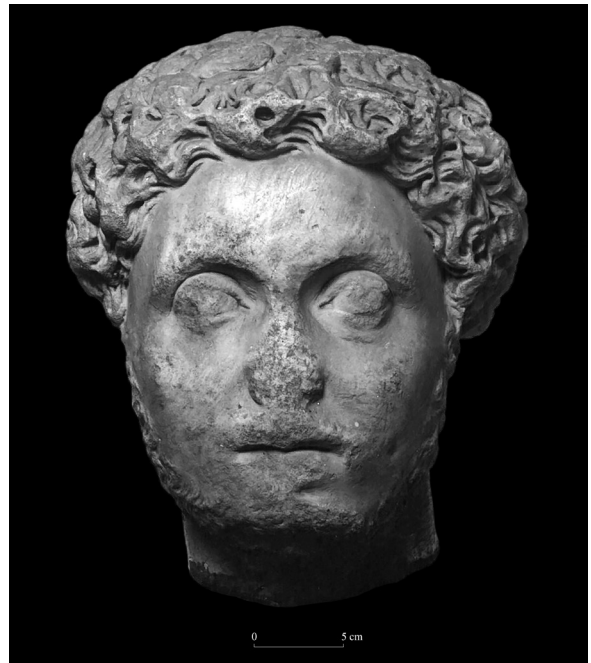

Fig. 8. *Portrait of Marcus Aurelius from* Italica*: front; height 30 cm; distance from chin to cranium 28 cm; Archaeological Museum of Seville 143-1 (courtesy P. León).*
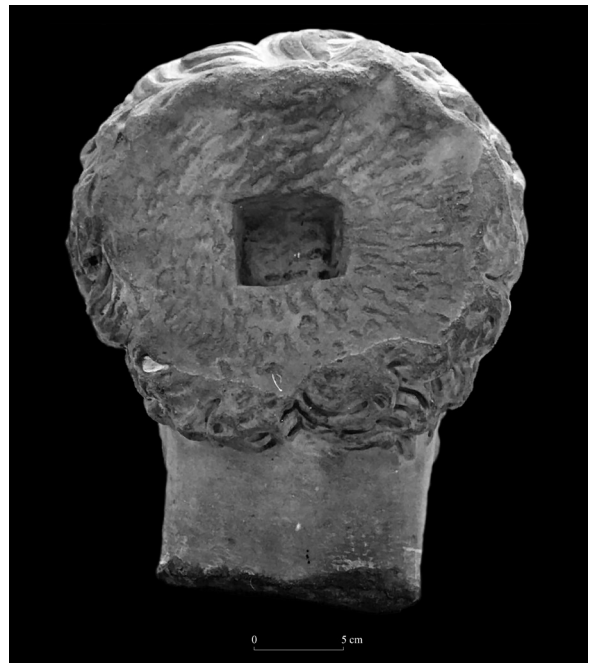

Fig. 9. *Back of the portrait of Marcus Aurelius from* Italica *(courtesy P. León).*

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