

What do the artistic representations of Antinous reveal about his reception in the Roman period?

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Abstract

There are more portrait depictions of Antinous, a country boy from Asia Minor, than of most Roman emperors. Does the relationship between Emperor Hadrian and Antinous explain the high number of representations, or can it be explained by Antinous' deification and flexibility as a hero and god? In this article I have examined a variety of artistic representations of Antinous from different locations around the Roman Empire and discussed why these representations were made, and what they meant for those viewing them. In doing so I show that Antinous was more than just a favourite of Hadrian: in death, to the people who participated in his cult, he became a genuine focus of worship, who had the tangible powers and abilities of a deity.

Introduction

Portrait depictions of Antinous were not reserved to one type or location; instead, these depictions have been found in a variety of settings across the Roman Empire and range from colossal statues and busts, to smaller portable items such as coins and cameos (Opper 2008, 186). The variety of representations of Antinous perhaps explains why there is such a vast quantity of depictions of him from the Roman world. Antinous is most commonly depicted with attributes or poses usually associated with deities, alluding to his deification and subsequent worship in the years following his death in AD 130. The artistic representations of Antinous tell us more about his assimilation with multiple deities and his popularity across the Roman Empire than they do about the relationship between him and the Emperor Hadrian, explored below. Whilst the impetus by Hadrian to deify Antinous after the latter's death may have started the worship of Antinous as a hero or god, this cult was clearly adopted by individuals and groups across the Roman Empire independent of efforts by the Emperor. By discussing specific representations of Antinous, alongside architectural and epigraphic evidence, I will show that, in death, he was worshipped as a deity with tangible divine abilities.

Literary Sources - Antinous' life and relationship with Hadrian

Little is known about Antinous' life before he met Hadrian, and all sources date from after his death in AD 130. The literary sources agree on three facts about Antinous' life: first, he was from Bithynium in Bithynia, Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey);

43 second, he had a relationship with Hadrian; and third, he drowned in the Nile (although
44 the exact circumstances surrounding his death are not the subject of agreement).
45 Cassius Dio, who was writing at the start of the third century AD, some 80 years after
46 Antinous' death, is perhaps the most accurate as he is a near contemporary source for
47 a biography of his life (Vout 2007, 54). He states two reasons for Antinous' death in AD
48 130 - accidentally falling into the Nile or, as he himself believed to be true, being
49 offered for sacrifice by Hadrian and subsequently deliberately drowned in the Nile.
50 Accidental drowning is said to have been the reason given by Hadrian himself (Cassius
51 Dio, 69:11). Although there is very little known about Antinous' life, including his age
52 and how he met Hadrian, the artistic depictions of him reveal a lot about how he was
53 received by his contemporaries in the Roman period.

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55 Public Cult

56 The founding of a city in the years following the death of Antinous,
57 Antinoopolis, demonstrates the initial impetus by Hadrian for the subsequent
58 deification and worship of Antinous. The city was founded on the east bank of the Nile
59 close to the site where Antinous drowned, on the one hand facing the important
60 Egyptian city of Hermopolis, and on the other facing the ruins of the ancient Egyptian
61 city, Besa (Galimberti 2007, 106). Although little remains of Antinoopolis, there are a
62 number of monuments and artefacts that attest to the worship of Antinous in the city.
63 One such monument is the Pincio obelisk in Rome, which in hieroglyphic script states
64 the honours afforded to Antinous, is thought to have originally stood in front of the
65 *Antinoeion* (a temple to Antinous) at Hadrian's villa, and was moved to Rome in the
66 third century AD. The inscription seems to suggest that the obelisk served as a funerary
67 marker for Antinous' tomb, which indicates that he was buried at Tivoli, Italy, rather
68 than Antinoopolis. The obelisk dates to between AD 130-137, which means that it was
69 likely created under orders from Hadrian who wanted to honour Antinous with a
70 monumental sculpture for the main position of the *Antinoeion* at his villa in Tivoli. The
71 hieroglyphic inscription also describes, in detail, the original *Antinoeion* at
72 Antinoopolis, of which nothing remains. According to the inscription the temple was
73 built in high quality white marble, with numerous columns and with statues of a variety
74 of gods (Opper 2008, 178). However, the understanding that the obelisk was originally
75 displayed at Hadrian's villa, where it was unlikely to be seen by anyone who could
76 understand hieroglyphs, suggests that the monument itself was more impactful than
77 the inscription.

78 Inscriptions illustrating the strength of the cult of Antinous have been found
79 across the Roman world, and in a variety of settings and circumstances. From
80 Pausanias we are given an account of the beginnings of the worship of Antinous in
81 Mantinea, Greece, as Hadrian established his honours there with a festival and mystic
82 rites every year and games every four years. These were clearly celebrations and
83 honours which were intended to be regular and long-term events in the calendar of
84 Mantinea (Pausanias, 8.9.8). The only description of a statue and other representations
85 of Antinous in their original ancient context are also provided by the second century

86 writer Pausanias (Vout 2005, 83). He states that although he never saw Antinous alive
87 that he saw him 'in statues and in pictures', indicating that images of Antinous could
88 be found in a variety of settings across Greece (Pausanias 8.9.7). He states that the
89 portraits of Antinous from Mantinea resemble Dionysius - a resemblance and
90 assimilation which is often found in his portraiture (Pausanias, 8.9.8).

91 The Antinoeion in Mantinea has, I believe, one of the best examples of how the
92 cult of Antinous evolved from the implication by Hadrian to the worship of Antinous
93 as a divine being capable of divine acts. An evocative inscription from Mantinea
94 addressed to 'Antinous' is by a father asking that the god care for his son (Vout 2007,
95 64). This inscription indicates that the residents of the city had a fervent belief in
96 Antinous as a deity who was capable of divine protection. This demonstrates that in
97 the years following his death, Antinous had become more than simply the young and
98 beautiful lover of the emperor, and instead, was regarded as a powerful individual in
99 his own right. The connection between Mantinea and Antinous' birthplace, Bithynium,
100 no doubt strengthened his cult in this city, but it is also clear that the cult was
101 perpetuated by the residents of the city due to their genuine belief in Antinous as a
102 god. In Antinous' home city of Bithynium a small limestone altar indicates that he was
103 worshipped as a god: 'to the new god Antinous, Sosthenes (dedicated this) as a prayer'
104 (Smith 2018, 53). The formula of the inscription indicates that Antinous had answered
105 the prayer, confirming, that for Sosthenes, Antinous had tangible divine powers. At
106 Lanuvium, some 20 miles south of Rome, a burial club based around the worship of
107 Diana and Antinous is evidenced from an inscription (Beard, North and Price 1998,
108 272). The inscription, dated to June AD 136, was located on the wall of the Antinoeion
109 and sets out the rules for those in the burial association. Diana had a cult at nearby
110 Nemi, whilst Antinous was a new god with associations with the underworld - an
111 appropriate deity for a burial club. These examples show that Antinous was considered
112 by many to be a legitimate deity or hero with divine abilities.

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Figure 1:Antinous-Osiris. Villa Adriana, Tivoli. (Vatican Museums, Rome).

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117 Private Cult

118 Of the sculptures of Antinous that have been found, the number associated with
119 private or domestic settings is more than double that those found in public locations,
120 with the majority of the former category being found at Hadrian's villa in Tivoli (Vout
121 2007, 92). The depictions of Antinous from Hadrian's private residence suggest that
122 Hadrian himself had input in how Antinous was depicted in artistic representations,
123 thus having direct influence on how Antinous was received in his afterlife as an object
124 of worship and desire. The volume of statues and the possible presence of an
125 *Antinoeion* indicates that Hadrian privately participated in the cult of Antinous (Smith
126 2018, 86). The discovery and identification of the *Antinoeion* at Hadrian's villa was
127 through the remains of Egyptian style sculpture and sculpture from ancient Egypt itself
128 (Oppen 2008, 181).

129 One of the most striking depictions of Antinous is the statue of Antinous-Osiris also
130 believed to be from the aforementioned *Antinoeion* (Figure 1). The association of
131 Antinous and Egypt is significant as it not only connects him to his place of death and
132 conflation with Osiris, but it also adds a layer of mystique and exoticism. The
133 identification of this figure as Antinous does not rely on his signature hair which is
134 covered by the *nemes* (headdress), but rather on the physiognomy which is near
135 identical to the standard Antinous portrait face (Smith 2018, 86). The standardised
136 physiognomy suggests that portraiture of Antinous were organised and modelled
137 from an original portrait, perhaps authorised by Hadrian himself and modelled when
138 Antinous was still alive.

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Figure 2: Inscribed bust of Antinous. Syria. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

143 This bust (figure 2) is thought to be from the town of Balanea on the Syrian
144 coast (modern-day Baniyas). This bust is an important example of a representation of
145 Antinous as it combines the standard depiction of Antinous as a classical beautiful
146 youth with an inscription confirming his status as a hero and an object of worship. The
147 marble itself is from the Greek island of Thasos in the Aegean Sea - as were many
148 second century portraits (Smith 2018, 21). The foot of the bust is inscribed in Greek:
149 '*to (the) hero Antinous, Marcus Lucceius Flaccus (dedicated this)*'. The inscription is
150 interesting as the two lines of text differ in the size of letters and spacing, respectively
151 - the lines were carved at different times by different people. The first line, '*to (the)*
152 '*hero Antinous*', was likely carved at the marble workshop before it was shipped to Syria
153 (Smith 2018, 21). The second line, '*Marcus Lucceius Flaccus (dedicated this)*', was likely
154 carved when it arrived in Balanea and was in the ownership of Flaccus (Smith 2018, 21).
155 The presence of the second line suggests that this bust was not for a private, domestic
156 cult but rather for a public cult space where the dedication by Flaccus could be seen
157 by the community. As an inscription naming the individual dedicating the artefact does
158 not make sense for a bust which was displayed in Flaccus' house.

159 The only monument which depicts Hadrian and Antinous together is a bust of
160 Hadrian found at Loukou, Greece (Smith 2018, 65). Discovered in the villa of Herodes

161 Atticus, a known acquaintance of Hadrian, it depicts Hadrian in a cuirass on which the
162 Medusa head is replaced by that of Antinous. Antinous is represented with wings in
163 his hair, an assimilation with Apollo (Smith 2018, 65). Apollo, as a youthful and beautiful
164 god, shares attributes with which Antinous was synonymous. This representation of
165 both Hadrian and Antinous is important; not only because it is the only monument
166 that depicts them both, but because it is from a private space and was likely made
167 after the death of Hadrian. There are no depictions of Hadrian and Antinous together
168 from state monuments or even found at Hadrian's villa. Dating to around AD 140-160,
169 it shows that the worship of Antinous, and possibly of Hadrian and Antinous'
170 relationship, continued after the death of both men (Smith 2018, 65). Hadrian and
171 Antinous are not equally represented in this monument, although Antinous takes on
172 the role of Medusa and is represented as Antinous-Apollo, Hadrian is still the main
173 focus of the bust. As this is the only monument depicting the two together it indicates
174 that the cult of Antinous became separate from Hadrian as if the cult were intertwined
175 then we would expect to find depictions of the two together as well as statues of
176 Antinous near those of Hadrian. Thus Antinous, as a figure who was assimilated with
177 many deities, took on a new meaning from the worship that started with Hadrian in
178 AD 130.

179 In the same villa a seated statue of Antinous was found in a room which is
180 thought to have been a private shrine room to his cult (Smith 2018, 65). This is evidence
181 of a private cult space which may have been built under loyalty to Hadrian but
182 remained in use after his death. At Loukou the monumental statue of Antinous is
183 evidence of the worship of both his contemporary worship whilst Hadrian was alive,
184 but also continuing after the death of the emperor. This suggests that, as with the
185 evidence from elsewhere in the Empire, the worship of Antinous was initially connected
186 to Hadrian but soon became separate as Antinous became an idealised hero and god.

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188 Conclusion

189 I believe it is clear from the variety of depictions of Antinous from across the
190 Roman Empire that he became more than just the lover of Hadrian and, in death, to
191 the people who participated in his cult, he became a genuine object of worship, who
192 had the tangible powers and abilities of a deity. Through assimilation with familiar
193 deities such as Apollo and Dionysius he was given immediate recognition within the
194 guise of the Roman pantheon. The choice of representing Antinous as hero or god,
195 and the choice of which mythological figure or deity with which to assimilate him with,
196 was dependent on the context and needs of the community or individual who used
197 the representation of Antinous as a sacred object. By assimilating Antinous with deities
198 such as Apollo and Dionysus, he is portrayed as an idealised and beautiful youth whose
199 death warrants his deification and worship.

200 From studying depictions of Antinous it can be seen that his relationship and
201 connection with Hadrian became secondary to his mysterious death and subsequent
202 deification. So, whilst the genesis of the cult of Antinous can be traced, to a degree, to
203 Hadrian himself, Antinous soon became an important figure in his own right across

204 the Roman Empire. Thus, although Antinous' reception in the Roman period was likely
 205 framed by his relationship with Hadrian and untimely death, he was quickly received
 206 as a deity and hero by those who participated in his cult - a cult that does not seem to
 207 be reserved to one part of the Empire, nor to a specific group of people. His worship
 208 and reception was as varied as the artistic representations of him, of which I have
 209 discussed but a selection.

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212 **Figures**

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214 Figure 1: Antinous-Osiris. Villa Adriana, Tivoli. Vatican Museums, Rome. Accessed via
 215 [http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-](http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-egizio/sala-iii--ricostruzione-del-serapeo-del-canopo-di-villa-adriana/statua-di-osiri-antino.html#&gid=1&pid=1)
 216 [gregoriano-egizio/sala-iii--ricostruzione-del-serapeo-del-canopo-di-villa-](http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-egizio/sala-iii--ricostruzione-del-serapeo-del-canopo-di-villa-adriana/statua-di-osiri-antino.html#&gid=1&pid=1)
 217 [adriana/statua-di-osiri-antino.html#&gid=1&pid=1](http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-egizio/sala-iii--ricostruzione-del-serapeo-del-canopo-di-villa-adriana/statua-di-osiri-antino.html#&gid=1&pid=1)

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219 Figure 2: Inscribed bust of Antinous. Syria. Modern cast. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.
 220 Photograph authors own.

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223 **Primary Sources**

224

225 Cassius Dio. Roman History.

226 Pausanias. Description of Greece.

227

228 **Bibliography**

229

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 231 University Press.

232 Glimberti, A. (2017). POxy. 471: Hadrian, Alexandria and the Antinous cult. In Grijalvo, E,
 233 Cortes Copete, J & Lozano Gomez, F. *Empire and religion: religious change in Greek*
 234 *cities under Roman rule*. Leiden; Boston: Brill. 98-111.

235 Cooper, T. (2008). *Hadrian: empire and conflict*. London: British Museum.

236 Smith, R. (2018). *Antinous: boy made god*. Oxford: Ashmolean Museum.

237 Tut, C. (2005). Antinous, Archaeology and History. *The Journal of Roman Studies, Vol.95*, 80-
 238 96.

239 Tut, C. (2007). *Power and eroticism in Imperial Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University
 240 Press.

Reviews for ‘What do the artistic representations of Antinous reveal about his reception in the Roman period?’
by Emily Sherriff (STAAR 9 -2019)

Reviewer 1 - Blair Betik - Accept

1. Is the subject matter of the article suitable for an interdisciplinary audience?:

Sheriff’s choice to examine the representations of Antinous is highly suitable for interdisciplinary exploration. Just as Sheriff shows in her article, the discussion of Antinous is at the intricate crossroads of history, art history, archaeology, and classical literature.

2. Does the title reflect the subject matter of the article?: It is an effective title, but because Sheriff equally examines artistic representations as well as inscriptions, it may be fruitful to mention epigraphy concerning Antinous in the title. I also find the question form of the title to be effective.

3. Does the article make a contribution to the discussion in its field?:

This article does contribute a new voice to the decades long discussion over Antinous. I particularly find Sheriff’s reflections on Antinous as “more than just the lover of Hadrian,” but instead a powerful, meaningful deity in his own right to be important contributions, as so often scholars get hung up on the nature of Hadrian and Antinous’ relationship.

4. Is the article clearly written?:

Yes, the article is written with clear and accessible language.

5. Is the article well structured?:

Yes, the choice to divide examples of representations of Antinous into public and private examples helps with clarity and organization. Also, the literary background section clearly helps position Antinous in tapestry of the classical world so that readers without a classical background easily are supplied requisite information.

6. Are the references relevant and satisfactory?: Yes, the references, particularly the ancient literary references are well chosen, satisfactory, and not overused.

7. Do you feel the article appropriately uses figures, tables and appendices?: Because Sheriff equally uses epigraphic examples as well as artistic examples in her discussion, I think it would be more effective to also include an image of one of the inscriptions she mentions. Otherwise, use of figures is appropriate.

8. What is your recommendation?: Accept.

Reviewer's comments to the author (this will be made public on acceptance of the article): I think Sheriff raises some really interesting thoughts in this article, particularly in her discussion

of the belief in Antinous' seemingly "tangible" and effective capabilities as a powerful deity after death. One idea that I think could be pushed further to bolster her argument lies in her mentioning of Antinous on the cuirass instead of the Medusa head. The use of gorgon heads on shields and cuirasses tapped into gorgons' abilities to strike fear and thus protect. If the ancients are considering Antinous and the gorgon to be interchangeable in this instance, perhaps this is yet another example of deep belief in the "tangible" capability of Antinous to protect.

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Reviewer 2 – Lillian Sellati – Major Revision

1. Is the subject matter of the article suitable for an interdisciplinary audience?: The subject matter of the article is suitable for an interdisciplinary audience. It will be of particular interest to those interested in Classics, Archaeology, History of Art, History and Religious Studies.

2. Does the title reflect the subject matter of the article?: The title is related to the subject matter of the article but a more explicit discussion of reception would be necessary for it to truly reflect the main focus of the article. As it stands, the word "reception" is used without definition or elaboration and only in the last two sentences of the article.

3. Does the article make a contribution to the discussion in its field?: This article will contribute to the academic discussion on the cult of Antinous with the recommended elaborations.

4. Is the article clearly written?: The article is clearly written.

5. Is the article well structured?: The article is well structured.

6. Are the references relevant and satisfactory?: The current references are wonderful but not fully representative of the academic discussion on the cult of Antinous to date. There are some very basic sources such as Meyer's seminal book on the representation of Antinous, Grimm's commentary on the Pincian obelisk, or Zaccaria and Sgalambro's article on the Antinoeion at Tivoli that are conspicuously absent.

7. Do you feel the article appropriately uses figures, tables and appendices?: The article appropriately uses figures.

8. What is your recommendation?: Major revision

Reviewer's comments to the author (this will be made public on acceptance of the article): The thesis proposed here is intriguing and has the potential to contribute much to ongoing academic discussions on the cult of Antinous. The dedicatory inscriptions are particularly supportive of the author's assertion that Antinous was a genuine focus of worship. I

believe that further elaborating upon the archaeological and social context of the epigraphic and art historical evidence will greatly strengthen the article (ex. the Pincian obelisk and the Antinoeion at Tivoli).

The primary argument against Antinous' significance as a deity is that he was deified for his relationship with Hadrian and only honored by elites seeking favor with the emperor during his lifetime. Therefore, it is important to provide evidence for the cult that postdates the death of Hadrian. It would also help to define what type of cult Antinous received. I noticed that the contemporary popularity of soteriological mystery cults and the influence of the Second Sophistic movement on the perception of Antinous were not discussed despite their significance to the reception of his cult. Similarly, the characterization of the cult by Hadrian in the Pincian obelisk and at Tivoli is critical to the structure and legitimation of the cult of Antinous but receives little attention in the article.

I recommend looking at the sources below as a starting point for the necessary additions to this paper:

Burns, Bryan. "Sculpting Antinous." *Helios* 35.2 (2008): 121-42.

Delia, Diana. "The Refreshing Water of Osiris." *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 29 (1992): 181-90.

Evers, Cécile. "Images of a Divine Youth: The Brussels Antinous and Its Workshop." In *Hadrian: Art, Politics and Economy*, edited by Thorsten Opper, 89-102. London: The British Museum, 2013.

Grenier, J.-Cl. *L'Osiris Antinoos*, CENIMI, Montpellier, 2008.

Griffith, F.LL. "Herodotus li. 90. Apotheosis by Drowning." *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* (1909): 132-34.

Grimm, Alfred, Dieter Kessler, and Hugo Meyer. *Der Obelisk des Antinoos. Eine kommentierte Edition mit einer Einführung, Antinous and the Greek Renaissance*. Fink, München 1994.

Heinz Kähler, "Zur Herkunft des Antinousobelisken," *Acta ad Archaeologiam et Atrium Historiam Pertinentia* 6 (1975).

Kákosy, László. "The Nile, Euthenia, and the Nymphs." *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 68 (1982): 290-98.

Jones, Christopher. *New Heroes in Antiquity: From Achilles to Antinoos*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Mari, Zaccaria, and Sergio Sgalambro. "The Antinoeion of Hadrian's Villa: Interpretation and

Architectural Reconstruction." *American Journal of Archaeology* 111, no. 1 (2007): 83-104.

Meyer, Hugo. *Antinoos: die archäologischen Denkmäler unter Einbeziehung des numismatischen und epigraphischen Materials sowie der literarischen Nachrichten. Ein Beitrag zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte der hadrianisch-frühantoininischen Zeit.* Munich: Wilhem Fink, 1991.

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Reviewer 3 – Chiara Marabelli – Minor Revision

1. Is the subject matter of the article suitable for an interdisciplinary audience?: Yes, it is. The nature of the issues discussed in the article is rooted in the fields of ancient history, literature, Classical archaeology and art, and reception studies and, therefore, it may be of interest for an interdisciplinary audience.

2. Does the title reflect the subject matter of the article?: The title partly reflects the subject matter of the article.

The author aims to demonstrate the reception of the figure and role of Antinous, Emperor Hadrian's (76 - 138 CE) favorite and supposed lover, through the analysis of selected artistic representations of the boy found across the Roman Empire. However, the examination does not specifically focus on the art historic representations of Antinous, rather embracing other classes of materials - inscriptions, architectural spaces, etc., which are still pertinent to the general discussion, but perhaps less relevant to the stated purpose of the contribution. By reading such a title, I expect a selection of iconic artworks, together with other types of objects (e.g., coins?), which helped researchers reconstruct the influence Antinous - a very peculiar subject in his own right - had in Roman times.

3. Does the article make a contribution to the discussion in its field?: In my opinion, the article fails to make a contribution to an already existing inflated field of investigation.

The figure of Antinous is fascinating and peculiar for as many reasons. We know a little about his life (nothing is known about his life before Hadrian); the circumstances about his death are unclear; he was not a member of the imperial family, and yet he received divine honours; he was highly appreciated in the ancient and modern times, but also blamed by Christians writers; the number of his existing artistic representations is enormous, sometimes higher than the one of other legitimate imperial family members.

One of the most recent examinations of the influence Antinous had in ancient and modern times is 'Antinous: boy made god', a temporary exhibition held at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford between October 2018 and February 2019, curated by R.R.R. Smith and Milena Melfi. It is interesting because it shows the huge impact Antinous had over time and space on the artistic and religious fields, through a selection of varied classes of materials - statues, coins, gems, etc.

The author mentions the catalogue of the exhibition as a primary research tool for her article, but, in my view, she does not pick the innovative features offered. In her discussion, supposedly

based on artistic contributions, for instance, she does not mention the physical traits of Antinous - a boy from modern Turkey, yet depicted as an idealised, beautiful, divine Classical model - and does not investigate the rationale behind such choices. We know, from an existing reconstructed bust - an object that has an interesting story on its own, the so called Ludovisi-Chicago Antinous, the physiognomy of the Bithynian boy. Why was Antinous elevated to such symbol? Why was he venerated as god and/or hero? His assimilation to certain mythological figures corresponded to the fulfilment of specific needs - a common facet in the politicisation of ancient art.

Focusing more on these new aspects, agreeing or challenging such ideas, would not just provide a more updated theoretical framework, but it would also help the author to present an academically more robust piece of work.

4. Is the article clearly written?: The article needs to be reshaped, as the title, the abstract and the discussion reflect different intentions.

The author might want to consider, in the first place, the audience to which she is addressing the contribution. She takes for granted some ideas and aspects that may need clarification the first time they are mentioned (e.g., line 10: did Antinous become famous because he was “a country boy from Asia Minor”, or following his involvement with Emperor Hadrian? It is an essential information that needs to be stated at the very beginning of the article).

Secondly, more attention should be paid towards repetition (e.g., lines 104, 107 and 108, use of “inscription”), details (e.g., line 10-11, “of most Roman emperors”, I would be more cautious and change “most” to “many” or “some”, unless you have a reference to support your statement; line 80, you mention historian Pausanias for the first time without identifying his figure, and in line 85 you mention then “the second century writer” Pausanias), use of references supporting your statements and ideas (e.g., line 41, “the literary sources” - which ones?; lines 136 - 138, where are the references for this argument?), consistency (e.g., line 13, you define Antinous as “hero”, and you repeat it in line 112, but you never really discuss any direct associations with heroes; line 115, the caption of figure 1 refers to “Villa Adriana”, while in the text you talk about “Hadrian Villa”; lines 153 and 154, check referencing style and the use of *ibid.*), punctuation (e.g., line 165, ;); the use of the first person in academic pieces is acceptable, as long as it is justifiable, and in your case I would avoid it (e.g., line 91).

Finally, repetition of ideas and concepts needs also to be checked (e.g., lines 200 to the end, you are summing up your thoughts in order to conclude your work, which is fine, but, at the same time, you are not really supporting your arguments; in this way, the examination looks quite superficial and repetitive).

5. Is the article well structured?: The article has a clear structure - Introduction, Literary Sources, Public Cult, Private Cult, Conclusion.

However, the stated *fil rouge* of the piece, the artistic representations of Antinous and its reception in the Roman period, are not exhaustively analysed.

6. Are the references relevant and satisfactory?: The references listed reflect a good and decent selection, considering the length of the proposed piece. Perhaps, the author might want to consider checking more recent publications regarding religions in Rome (I refer to the use of

Beard et al., 1998).

However, I would suggest to use sources more carefully, and, for instance, to identify more recent elements about the figure of Antinous, which might constitute the core ideas to be investigated in the article.

7. Do you feel the article appropriately uses figures, tables and appendices?: The article would benefit from a more consistent use of pictures.

As the work is supposed to deal with a (reasonably selected) examination of the artistic representations of Antinous, I would expect to see more than two pictures, or, at least, to see two of his most iconic portraits.

The rationale behind the author's choice needs to be made more clear, too. The division "Public" and "Private" cults accompanied with the description of the Antinous-Osiris and the inscribed bust from Syria are appropriate, but, are those the most representative pieces to be discussed? Since what is demonstrated, in the conclusion of the article, is the independence of Antinous' fame from Hadrian, is a statue from Hadrian's Villa the most suitable example? About the bust from Syria, I agree with the author, as it deserves attention and proper examination. Regarding the pictures of the statues, figure 2 is not the plaster cast that belongs to the Ashmolean Museum's collection. It is the original marble from Syria, after the restoration of 2011, which belongs to a private collector. Lines 142, 219 and 220 need to be changed accordingly. The plaster cast the author refers to can be found at pp. 76-77 of the 'Antinous: boy made god' exhibition catalogue.

The author might want to double check the captions, too. The Vatican Museums are in the Vatican City, and not in Rome, so lines 115 and 214 need to be amended accordingly.

Finally, pictures of coins and cameos (line 25), the Pincio obelisk (line 63), and of Antinous depicted as Dionysus (lines 88-89), if added, might help the reader.

8. What is your recommendation?: Minor revision

Reviewer's comments to the author (this will be made public on acceptance of the article):

The article aims to shed new light about the reception in the Roman times of the figure of Antinous, Emperor Hadrian's supposed lover, through the art historical analysis of selected representations.

The topic is not new in the history of studies; however, it is still a fascinating subject, following the mysteries surrounding Antinous' character, a country boy from modern Turkey, become so popular and appreciated over time, to be assimilated with a divine being.

In support to the author's intentions, a recent temporary exhibition, 'Antinous: boy made god', held at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford (October 2018 - February 2019) presented a variety of materials (marble busts, plaster casts, gems, little bronzes, coins, etc.) in order to investigate such phenomenon. Being aware of the exhibition and related publication, the author might have wanted to pick two to four iconic pieces, and, through their iconographic and iconological significance, build her investigation.

In the exhibition, for instance, it was clear that the figure of Antinous, who appears in literary

records following his connection with Hadrian, after his unclear and premature death, powerfully resonates around the Roman Empire. Why did people love and venerate him so much?

The number of surviving sculptures of Antinous portray him as a beautiful idealised boy, as a deity (Dionysus, Apollo, Osiris, etc.), or hero. Which are the reasons underlying such choices? The physical traits of Antinous are clearly recognisable, yet artificially controlled, if we compare his official portraits with the so called Ludovisi-Chicago bust, a truly naturalistic image of the boy. What does this discrepancy tell us about the political, social and cultural relevance - or, in other words, reception - he acquired in the Roman times?

The article is well structured, with the division "Introduction", "Literary Sources", "Private Cult", "Public Cult" and "Conclusion".

I would suggest the author to keep such theoretical framework and analyse a few examples, which will transform her question into an argument. She demonstrates to know in depth the topic; I would encourage her to be more coherent in expressing her ideas. Focusing on a selected number of examples and analysing them from an art historical point of view, will enable her to identify specific patterns, which will help her to draw robust conclusions - that were quite superficial; I would like to hear her voice more.

The piece of work needs to be double-checked and refined, with respect to repetitions, clarity, use of references supporting arguments, consistency and relevance of figures within the main body of the text.

I appreciate the author's knowledge and genuine interest in the subject. I see that she would like to include as many pieces of information as possible. I would suggest her to stick to one path and to follow it - the artistic representations of Antinous, as she states in the title of her article -, giving less space to what is still important for the bigger, general picture, but perhaps less relevant to the discussion (e.g. the description of the Pincio obelisk, Hadrian's Villa Antinoeion, for instance). By doing so, the article would become more clear, and also more appealing to a wider audience.