

An example of one of these owners is Marcus Seius, an aedile of 74, who is widely accepted as the possible founder of the *horrea Seiana*. Not much is known about him. As the only well-known Seius in Rome from the time, it is assumed that he owned the storehouse because it bears his name. He clearly had plenty of supplies — during his aedileship he handed out grain and olive oil incredibly cheaply, despite a severe shortage only a year previously. Seius, or his son, probably owned a productive villa at Ostia. He entered Roman politics as a relatively new citizen: epigraphic evidence suggests his family originated in Volsinii, which had recently been granted Roman citizenship, and he was elected despite a setback involving a disgraceful loss in the courts. Seius' handouts of food made him so popular that he received a public funeral of sorts. When Seius appears in Cicero's letters it is as a friend of Varro and Atticus. Cicero introduces him to the governor of Asia on Atticus' request and later mentions visiting him for dinner.

What might this collection of details reveal about Seius' role in Rome's food supply? First, given the timing of his election and benefaction immediately after a severe shortage, it appears his granary gave him a political advantage going into an election. I am also investigating whether this could mean an ongoing relationship with the state. A law passed the year after his aedileship meant large amounts of grain would be imported into Rome from 73 onwards using state funds. It is entirely possible Seius would have benefited from contracts to store public grain in his warehouse as he was one of the few to possess the space. Finally, while little else is known of Seius' political career, the Seian family immediately rose within the ranks of the principate — a later descendant of Seius was the famous Sejanus. Seius' story shares common ground with the history of many of Rome's early granary owners, as private ownership of something critical to the state brought wealth and political opportunity.

I would like to convey my appreciation to the BSR for providing such a stimulating and welcoming environment. Additionally, I want to thank both Suzy Coleman and Jeffrey Hilton for their kindness in providing me with this fantastic opportunity.

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SOCIETY FOR RENAISSANCE STUDIES — BSR AWARD

doi: 10.1017/S0068246223000375

Rubens, van Dyck, and women's dress in Genoese portraiture, 1604–1627

My project at the BSR investigated elite women, dress and representation in early modern Genoa through portraits executed by Flemish painters Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck. Situating Genoa's fashion system within a global framework, I explored the sartorial vocabulary used by women, their relationship with a materialized world, and the dynamics of these interactions as they appear in elite portraiture.

While a study of Genoa undertaken in Rome might seem unusual, Rome was an important site for my research. I was particularly interested in probate inventories, account books and wills housed in the Archivio Doria-Pamphilj that pertain to the Genoese Doria clan, and aimed to trace the connections between these sources and the portraits of the Doria painted by Rubens and van Dyck. Further, I was broadly interested

in practices of sartorial display, processes of making and the affective valences of material culture, as well as the human implications of material consumption. In particular, the Genoese hand in the Mediterranean and transatlantic slave trades during the early modern period, I argued, was visible through the representation of Black servants in Genoese portraits. In a happy coincidence, one of the BSR's artists-in-residence held similar interests, and I enjoyed many conversations with her about the representation of Black Africans in early modern art. Unfortunately, research sometimes does not go to plan. It was incredibly challenging to gain access to the Archivio during my three months in Rome and consequently most of my research activities took place elsewhere.

As portraiture and material culture lay at the centre of my work, I took advantage of Rome's excellent collections. Of prime importance was the Scuderie del Quirinale's *Superb Baroque: Art in Genoa, 1600–1750* exhibition. This show contained numerous Genoese portraits by Rubens and van Dyck. The experience of viewing an over-life-size portrait in person is incomparable. I felt particularly lucky to view works normally located in North America that I had not been able to access during the pandemic. Van Dyck's portrait of Agostino Pallavicini engulfs the sitter in a sea of crimson, cochineal-dyed pile velvet, which evokes both Genoa's role in the global movement of this costly and important dye as well as the excellence of the city's silk industry. Furthermore, van Dyck's portrait of Elena Grimaldi Cattaneo pictures the sitter alongside a Black servant. I was able to extensively study this enigmatic, yet powerful figure, which took my questions about Black Africans in Italy in new directions. Consequently, I visited the Archivio di Stato di Roma to find documents pertaining to the presence of Africans in early modern Rome. The results of this research will form the basis of my next project.

Alongside exhibitions, I also used Rome's library collections, particularly the Biblioteca Hertziana, for further study. Most enriching, however, was a visit to Villa d'Este in Tivoli. One chapter of my doctoral thesis investigates villa gardens as spaces of display in early modern Genoa. Unfortunately, Genoese gardens, if open to the public, are often eighteenth- and nineteenth-century updates of original spaces, rendering it challenging to excavate sixteenth- and seventeenth-century features. The gardens at Villa d'Este served as an excellent stand-in for the material bodily, and affective atmospheres that were likely experienced in Genoa. Inhabiting this space and witnessing the waterworks in action greatly deepened my understanding of their effect on garden visitors.

Although my original research plan was not entirely carried out, I was pleased with my achievements in Rome. I was honoured to participate in activities and discussions facilitated by the BSR, as well as the broader cultural and intellectual life in Rome. My research aims to contribute to the rich field of early modern material culture studies, and my time at the BSR, generously funded by the SRS/BSR Residential Doctoral Research Scholarship, truly aided my advancements in this work.

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