



An Unnoticed Copy of Praxiteles' Eros at Parion From Salamis on Cyprus

Kıbrıs'ta Salamis'ten Praxiteles'in Parion'daki
Eros'unun Dikkate Alınmayan Bir Kopyası

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ABSTRACT

The marble statue of Eros at Parion, a work by Praxiteles, is known thanks to Pliny 36.22. This Latin writer reports that a Rhodian man, Alketas, physically loved the statue. This image is reproduced on coins of this town from the reign of Antonine Pius until that of Aemilian, that is from around AD 140 to 253. This article provides a new catalogue of these coin types and a description of the Eros figure represented on coins. Statues derived from this masterpiece have been recognized, but they are variations rather than copies because they do not coincide entirely with the image of Eros represented on coins. This study provides also an updated catalogue of these variations, disposed in a chronological order, from the late classical times to the Antonine period, that is from around 340 BC to around AD 160. However, a marble statue entirely in keeping with the figure on coins does exist at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. It originates from the gymnasium of Salamis in Cyprus. The statue dates to Hadrianic times, a period when Praxitelean statues were often copied. This copy allows us to appreciate Praxiteles' treatment of the surfaces of this important creation for the first time. The torso reveals a good balance between the body's structure and sense of skin, suggesting that the original statue was pertinent to the Praxitelean production of the early maturity of the sculptor (around 350 BC) because the prevalence of a velvety epidermis upon bones and muscles characterizes the late production of this Athenian sculptor.

Keywords: Parion, Eros, Praxiteles, Variations, Copies.



KIBRIS'TA SALAMIS'TEN PRAXITELES'İN PARION'DAKİ EROS'UNUN DİKKATE ALINMAYAN BİR KOPYASI

ÖZ

Praxiteles'in bir eseri olan Parion'daki mermer Eros heykeli, Plinius 36.22 sayesinde bilinmektedir. Bu Latin yazar, Alketas olarak bilinen Rodoslu bir kişinin heykelle fiziksel olarak aşk yaşadığını bildirmektedir. Bu sahne, Antoninus Pius döneminden Aemilianus dönemine kadar, yani MS 140 ile 253 yılları arasında kent sikkeleri üzerinde görülmektedir. Bu makale, sikke tiplerinin bir kataloğunu ve sikkelerde temsil edilen Eros figürünün bir tasvirini sunmaktadır. Bu başyapıttan türetilen heykeller tanınmıştır, ancak sikkelerde temsil edilen Eros imgesiyle tamamen örtüşmediğinden dolayı bunlar kopyadan ziyade varyasyonlar olarak ele alın-

maktadır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda Geç Klasik Çağlardan Antoninler Dönemi'ne, yani MÖ 340'lı yıllarından MS 160'lı yıllara kadar bu varyasyonların kronolojik olarak düzenlenmiş ve güncellenmiş bir katalogunu da sunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, Cambridge Fitzwilliam Müzesi'nde yer alan sikkelerdeki figürle tamamen uyumlu mermer bir heykel bulunmaktadır. Bu heykel Kıbrıs'taki Salamis gymnasiumundan gelmektedir. Heykel, Praxiteles heykellerinin sıklıkla kopyalandığı bir dönem olan Hadrianus Dönemi'ne tarihlenmektedir. Bu kopya, Praksiteles'in bu önemli eserin görünüşünün nasıl işlediğinin ilk kez değerlendirilmesini sağlamaktadır. Torso, vücudun yapısı ile deri hissi arasında iyi bir denge ortaya koymaktadır; bu da orijinal heykelin heykeltıraşın erken olgunluk dönemindeki (MÖ 350 civarı) Praxiteles üretimiyle ilgili olduğunu düşündürmektedir çünkü kemik ve kaslar üzerinde kadifemsi bir epidermisin yaygınlığı bu Atinalı heykeltıraşın geç dönem üretimini karakterize etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Parion, Eros, Praksiteles, Varyasyonlar, Kopyalar.



INTRODUCTION

Praxiteles' Eros statue set up in this god's sanctuary at Parion¹ is known first of all thanks to Pliny 36. 22: "eiusdem [Praxitelis] et alter nudus in Pario colonia Propon-tidis, par Veneri Cnidiae nobilitate et iniuria; adamavit enim Alcetas Rhodius atque in eo quoque simile amoris vestigium reliquit."² "To him [Praxiteles] belongs, moreover, another Cupid, which is naked, at Parium, a colony on the Propontis, a work that matches the Venus of Cnidus in its renown, as well as in the outrageous treatment which it suffered. For Alcetas, a man from Rhodes, fell in love with it and left a similar mark of his passion upon it." (translation taken from the Loeb edition).

Since Pliny includes this statue in his treatment of marbles, we know that the statue was marble. The importance of the statue, regarded by Pliny as equal to that of the Knidia, also matched that of the cult of Eros at Parion, testified by Pausanias (9. 27. 1). The mythical *aition* of this cult was the legend that Paris – the hero labelled "mad for women" (*gynaikomanes*) – spent his childhood at Parion, where he was honoured with a bronze statue and a tomb in the *agora* and to whom the Parians paid tribute through sacrifices and festivities³. Pliny specifies that this Eros had been the object of

1 On Parion, please see Frisch 1983; Kasapoğlu 2007, 481-520; Tavukçu 2007, 383-399; Başaran – Keleş 2015; Başaran et al. 2015; Keleş 2016, 25-31; Başaran – Ergürer 2018; Yılmaz 2018a, 199-208; Yılmaz 2018b, 209-219; Başaran et al. 2019; Corso 2019, 75-80; Katsonopoulou 2020, 495-502; Keleş – Yılmaz 2020, 229-246; Kasapoğlu – Başaran 2021, 245-268; Keleş – Oyarçin 2021, 391-422; Keleş – Yılmaz 2021, 381-391; Yılmaz – Tuğrul 2021, 393-408; Keleş – Oyarçin 2022.

2 On Praxiteles' Eros at Parion, see Kansteiner 2014, no. 1939-1941, with complete bibliography until 2009 and Corso 2021, 342.

3 Athenagoras, *Legatio pro Christianis* 26.3. This bronze statue of Paris should be identified with the bronze statue of Paris by Euphranor: see Corso 2020, 355-360.

an episode of *agalmatophilia*, not differently from the Knidia⁴. The lover of the statue was a Rhodian man named Alketas, who left a mark of his semen on the Eros. He has been identified with a prominent man from Kamiros, on the island of Rhodes, who lived in the early 2nd c. BC⁵. The configuration of this Eros is known thanks to Roman imperial coin types of Parion, which bear the image of the statue on their reverses⁶ (Fig. 1). I am aware of the following coins struck by Parion, which represent Praxiteles' Eros on their reverses:

- 1 and 2. AE struck by Parion under Antoninus Pius, reverses;
3. AE struck by Parion under Commodus, reverse;
4. AE struck by Parion under Alexander Severus, reverse;
5. AE struck by Parion under Otacilia Severa, reverse;
6. AE struck by Parion under Philip the Arab, reverse;
- and 7. AE struck by Parion under Aemilian, reverse.



Fig. 1. AE struck by Parion during the empire of Commodus, London, The British Museum, Department of Coins.

The god bears a sinuous body. The right leg rests on the ground with the entire sole, whilst the left leg is bent on the knee, and the corresponding foot rests on the ground with the tip of his toes. The left arm is lowered with the forearm brought forward for holding an attribute which is not specified on any of the coins. The right arm is also lowered and brought to the side, probably holding an object that cannot be detected on coins. The god is naked, but a mantel is thrown on the left shoulder, held on the left arm, and runs down from the corresponding forearm.

4 On the *agalmatophilia* see Robert 1992, 373-438.

5 See Corso 2023, 5.

6 For a list of coins of Parion representing our Eros, see *addendum 1*.

He has large wings. The head turns to the viewer's right: probably the profile rendering of the head is a simplification of a three/quarters position of the same. The face is oval. The hair is brought behind and collected with a *chignon*. Below the right arm of the god, there is a small crude idol probably representing the original cult statue of Eros, which may have been similar to the *argos lithos* worshipped as the original cult statue of Eros at Thespieae according to Pausanias (9. 27. 1).

Echoes and variations close to the above-described figure on coins and thus probably derived from this statue have been identified⁷. However, none of these examples coincides entirely with the statue of Eros as represented on the coins of Parion. Thus, until now, no entirely faithful copy of this masterpiece has been retrieved.

Perhaps we should take into consideration the marble torso dated in the second quarter of the AD 2nd c. from the baths of the gymnasium of Salamis of Cyprus kept at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, no. GR 2. 1891 (Figs. 2, 3 and 4)⁸. Although this sculpture has been identified as Dionysos, two details suggest that it represented Eros: 1) the strap across the chest in the frontal view of the torso, which implies the existence of a quiver on the back of the god, and 2) the attachment of the right wing on the back of the torso, just below the neck, which is clearly visible in fig. 3.



Figs. 2, 3 and 4. Marble torso from the gymnasium of Salamis on Cyprus at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, no. GR 2. 1891.

The torso, whose surviving height is 1.04 m., is sinuous and perfectly fits the image of Eros on the above-mentioned coins of Parion. The right hip of the god projects on its side and bears the attachment of the right hand (see Fig. 4), which implies that the right arm was lowered, as on these coins. Below this feature, the right thigh bears a strut (see Fig. 4), which implies that something was attached

⁷ For a list of these variations, see *addendum 2*.

⁸ See Karageorghis 1999, 100-101, no. 165. On antiquities from Cyprus in the Fitzwilliam Museum, see also Christophilopoulou 2016, 13-19.

to this figure on this side. This is also in keeping with the image on coins, which shows an idol near the right leg of the god. The torso is leaning toward its left side as on the coins. The left arm is lowered, the corresponding elbow is bent, and the forearm is brought forward as on the coins. Finally, the mantel is thrown on the left shoulder, falls from behind and is held on the left forearm from which it falls again: even this pattern coincides with the corresponding feature of our Eros on coins. Based on these observations, I suggest that the sculpture in Cambridge is a genuine copy of Praxiteles' Eros at Parion, not just a variation.

The treatment of the surfaces reveals a good balance between the body structure (bones and muscles) and the skin. Thus, the style of this copy, if it reflects that of the Praxitelean original, suggests a date of around 350 BC, before the endowment of marble statues with velvety surfaces, which characterizes the late Praxitelean production⁹. Unfortunately, it is impossible to go beyond these considerations because the quality of this copy is very coarse, as is revealed by the low-quality carving of the drapery.

Addenda

1. Catalogue of coins of Parion displaying Praxiteles' Eros on their reverses

1. Antonine Pius, AD 138-161, *AE* unit. Obverse: Bust of Antoninus Pius. Reverse: Eros (above described). Legend: DEO CVPIDINI COL(onia) GEM(ella) IV-L(ia) HAD(riana) PA(riana). See Wolters 1913, 27-28, 1-7; Lacroix 1949, 295-326; Hermary 1986, 856, no. 7; Corso 2013, 112-113, note 531, no. 8-9.

2. Antonine Pius, AD 138-161, *AE* unit. Obverse: Bust of Antoninus Pius. Reverse: Eros (above described). Legend: C(olonia) G(emella) I(ulia) H(adriana) P(ariana). See Wolters 1913, 27-28, 1-7; Lacroix 1949, 295-326; Hermary 1986, 856, no. 7; Corso 2013, 112-113, note 531, no. 8-9.

3. Commodus, AD 177-192, *AE* unit. Obverse: Bust of Commodus. Reverse: Eros (above described). Legend: DEO CVPIDINI COL(onia) IVL(ia) HAD(riana) PA(riana). See Wolters 1913, 28, no. 8-9; Lacroix 1949, 295-326; Corso 2013, 112-113, note 531, no. 10.

4. Alexander Severus, AD 222-235, *AE* unit. Obverse: Bust of Alexander. Reverse: Eros (above described). Legend: DEO CVPIDIN(i) C(olonia) I(ulia) G(emella) H(adriana) PAR(iana). See Wolters 1913, 29, no. 10-12; Lacroix 1949, 295-326; Corso 2013, 112-113, note 531, no. 11.

⁹ On the late phase of the art of Praxiteles, see Corso 2021, 333-366.

5. Otacilia Severa, AD 244-249, AE unit. Obverse: Bust of Otacilia. Reverse: Eros (above described). Legend: DEO CVPIDINI C(olonia) G(emella) I(ulia) H(adriana) PAR(iana). See Wolters 1913, 29-30, no. 13-17; Lacroix 1949, 295-326; Corso 2013, 112-113, note 531, no. 12.

6. Philippus, AD 244-249, AE unit. Obverse: Bust of Philippus. Reverse: Eros (above described). Legend: DEO CVPIDINI C(olonia) G(emella) I(ulia) H(adriana) PA(riana). See Wolters 1913, 30, no. 18; Lacroix 1949, 295-326; Hermary 1986, 856, no. 7; Corso 2013, 112-113, note 531, no. 13.

7. Aemilian, AD 253. AE unit. Obverse: Bust of Aemilian. Reverse: Eros (above described). Legend: C(olonia) G(emella) I(ulia) H(adriana) P(ariana). See Amandry 2007, 54, no. 7; Touratsoglou 2007, 72, no. 4; Corso 2013, 112-113, note 531, no. 14.

2. Catalogue of variations derived from Praxiteles' Eros of Parion

1. Eros on a red-figured *askos* probably made at Tarentum in the Gnathia style near the Matera Painter, dated around 340 BC, from a tomb at Rubi in Daunia and kept at Ruvo, Jatta Museum, no. 1290. Variation: he holds a *trochos* in his left hand and a *thymiaterion* in his right. See Lanza Catti 2008, 183-184, no. 108.

2. Statuette in Parian marble from the necropolis of Rhodes at Rhodes, Archaeological Museum, no. E 498, to be dated in the early 2nd c. BC. Head, most of the arms, legs below the knees and wings are missing. See Machaira 1998, 139, fig. 5.

3. Marble statuette from the large peristyle of the Roman House at Kos, to be dated in the 1st century BC and kept at Kos, Archaeological Museum, no. 54. Head, most of the left arm, right leg below the knee, left foot and wings are missing. Variation: no drapery. See Mposnakis 2007, 140-141, no. 36.

4. Marble torso probably from Rome, once in the collection of King of Spain Philip 5th, then in San Ildefonso, Palacio Real, then at Madrid, Museo del Prado, no. 12 E. Head, most of the arms, legs below the knees and wings are missing. Probably late Republican or Augustan. See Schroeder 2004, 277-280, no. 155.

5. The head and torso of a marble statue probably from Rome, once in the Borghese collection, perhaps found on Mt. Quirinal near Rospigliosi Palace and once decorating the Baths of Constantine, then at Paris, Musée du Louvre, Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, no. MR 140 = Ma 545. Most of the arms, legs and wings are missing. Probably early Roman Imperial. See Minozzi, Fabrega-Dubert and Martinez 2011, 368.

6. Lower part of marble statuette from Gortys at Hiraklion, National Archaeological Museum, no. H 448. Probably Hadrianic. See Romeo 1998, 179-182, no. 50.

7. Bronze statuette from Old Paphos, found in the temple of Aphrodite, once in the Peretie collection, then in the de Janze one, then at Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Departement des Monnaies, Medailles et Antiques, no. Br 306. The wings are missing. Probably Hadrianic. See Martinez 2007, 352-353, fig. 247.

8. Statue in Pentelic marble from the *Agora* of Nikopolis *ad Istrum* at Sofia, National Archaeological Museum, no. 8410. Head and hands are missing. Probably Antonine. See Ivanov - von Bülow 2008, 56-57, fig. 51.

Conflict of Interest

Within the scope of the study, there is no personal or financial conflict of interest between the authors.

Ethics

Regarding the Ethics Committee authorisation; the authors and reviewers of this study have declared that there is no need for Ethics Committee authorisation.

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