

**Prof. Dr. Ulrich Schmitzer**  
**General Secretary of the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the FIEC**  
**Institut für Klassische Philologie**  
**Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin**  
**Unter den Linden 6**  
**D-10099 Berlin**  
**E-mail: [ulrich.schmitzer@staff.hu-berlin.de](mailto:ulrich.schmitzer@staff.hu-berlin.de)**

**Contributor:**  
Dr. Ersilia Lopes  
Via Antonio Labranca 20  
I- 00123 Rome  
Telephone: 0039 338 3399029; 0030 6944919229  
E-mail: [eros.e@tiscali.it](mailto:eros.e@tiscali.it)

**Preferred panel:** Cultural Encounters and Fusions in the Roman Empire  
**Title:** Provincial versus Metropolitan: an eclectic Zeus at Rome

The starting point of my contribute is a sculpture representing a standing Zeus in the Massimo Lancellotti collection at Rome: the head, the left arm and part of the right one are lost. The god wears *tunica* and the mantle: the diagonally draped mantle covers the body till the left shoulder; on the right, there is the Eagle, dear to the god<sup>1</sup>.

This sculpture is similar to the image of *Syrgastes*, an ancient Thraco-bytinian god, depicted on the coins of Tios in the southern coast of Pontus, from Domitianus (81-96 A.D.) to Gallienus (253-268 A. D.); afterwards, the *Syrgastes* was assimilated to Zeus: this is the reason why the composition of the coin type recalls our statue<sup>2</sup>; some issues show the same situation as our sculpture: the Eagle on the right like in our case<sup>3</sup>.

Our Zeus wears fine sandals, *lingula* type: it's the sculpture of Zeus (159-138 B.C.), found near the temple of Hera at Pergamum, that wears the first example of this kind of footwear<sup>4</sup>. On his right, there is the Eagle.

In the aforementioned Zeus at Pergamum, Margarete Bieber justly singled out the suggestion of chthonian Zeus by Agorakritous<sup>5</sup>, as further Georghios Despinis and Barbara Vierneisel-Schlörb developed<sup>6</sup>.

The piece of this Roman collection is plausibly a "quotation" of the Zeus by Agorakritos, scholar of Phidias: the artist created it together with the Athena *Ithonia* at the sanctuary of Coronea (about 450 B. C.). The structure evokes the Zeus at Dresden Museum, deriving from Agorakritos's famous bronze. Even this work was inspired by a syncretistic spirit: in fact, Pausanias (IX, 34, 1) terms it Zeus and Strabo (IX, 2, 29) defines it Hades.

In our case, the artist “quotes” the statue of Zeus together with Athina Itonia in the sanctuary of Coronea by Agorakritos, who was Phidias’ protégé. The overall arrangement of the sculpture recalls the Zeus at Dresden Museum, descending from the bronze creation of the master of Paros<sup>7</sup>.

In Rome, Attic tradition mingles with Asian eclecticism: near Hadrian’s Library at Athens the recent discovery of an analogous sculpture confirms the present analysis.

The most persuasive *comparanda* are a series of reliefs held in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul.

A standing Zeus wears the mantle; in his right hand he holds the *phiale* and in his left the spear: that’s why the epiclesis *Dorios*<sup>8</sup>. The frontal configuration of the figure and the folds of the drapery correspond to our sculpture except for the balance.

Moreover, the relief of Zeus *Chalazios sozon* (saver from the hails) enriches our investigation of further clues: a *phiale* and a sceptre conspicuously identify the figure (in the identical order of our statue); the mantle falls down from the shoulder and the balance is different<sup>9</sup>.

The resemblance of the Zeus Massimo Lancellotti to the Zeus *Kersoullos* - depicted in an Asian relief at the Museum of Istanbul- is significant for the determination of his attributes: this latter Zeus wears a short sleeved *tunica*, his mantle crosses the bust; the lapel of this sculpture is similar to the our Zeus<sup>10</sup>: in his left hand, the god holds the sceptre; in the right one, the *phiale*.

Interestingly, there is an amazing similarity with the stem *Kersoullos* (in Asia Minor context) and the word *Axiokersos* (in Thracian *koiné*): in mysterious language of the initiates at Samothrace the latter word corresponds to Hades/Zeus in the classical pantheon. In ancient Norwegian language the stem *hjarsi*, *hjassi*-close to *\*kersnos*- means “crown of head”; this definition fits perfectly with the Zeus *Kersoullos*<sup>11</sup>!

The Zeus Massimo Lancellotti, too, can be read in a chthonian key<sup>12</sup>: a like statuette of Serapis at the Museum of Hiraklion substantiates the present hypothesis. As a sign of the mutual iconographical exchanges between heavenly and inferior worlds the comparison with a statuette of Serapis clarifies the interpretation of Zeus Massimo Lancellotti<sup>13</sup>, so that our statue now assumes polyvalent iconographical and cultic aspects<sup>14</sup>. The cult of Serapis in Rome is well attested from the first half of the I c. BC.

Thus, our sculpture represents the convergence between two stratified cultures in Rome: successfully, the elements of Attic tradition are revised by Asian eclecticism.

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<sup>1</sup> Matz Fr. (von), Duhn Fr., *Antike Bildwerke in Rom*, I, Leipzig 1881, p. 3, n. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Kleiner G., *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum, Sammlung Aulock*, Berlin 1957, tav. 28, n. 934.

<sup>3</sup> Waddington W. H., Babelon E. and Reinach Th., *Recueil Générale de monnaies de l’Asie Mineure*, I, Paris 1910, p. 106, n. 24-26, p. 107, n. 12-14; p. 109, n. 21; Kleiner 1957, cit., n. 962, n. 996: n. 962, n. 996.

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- <sup>4</sup> Morrow K. D., *Greek footwear and the dating of sculpture*, Madison 1985, p. 118-120, tav. 106; Goldman N., *Roman Footwear*, in *The World of Roman Costume*, eds. J. L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante, Madison 1994, p. 101-129, p. 101-129, in part. 102, r.
- <sup>5</sup> Bieber M., *The Sculpture of Hellenistic Age*, New York 1961, p. 118, fig. 472; p. 180-182, fig. 779-782.
- <sup>6</sup> Despiniis 1971, cit., p. 216, n. 130, cit.
- <sup>7</sup> Despiniis G., *Συμβολή στη μελέτη του έργου του Αγορακρίτου*, Athína 1971, p. 133-142, tav. 106-110; Vierneisel-Schlörb B., *Klassische Skulpturen des 5. und 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr., Gliptothek*, II, München 1979, p. 147-152; Karanastassi P., *Zeus*, «LIMC», VII, Zürich-Düsseldorf 1997, p. 350-356, esp. p. 351, n. 293; Canciani F., *Zeus/Iuppiter*, «LIMC», VIII, Zürich-Düsseldorf 1997, p. 421-470, esp. p. 433, n. 122.
- <sup>8</sup> Vollkommer R., *Zeus (in periphèria orientali)*, «LIMC», VIII, 1997, p. 374-384; Mendel G., *Catalogue des Sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantines*, III, Constantinople 1914, p. 42-43, n. 838; Robert L., *Documents D'Asie Mineure*, 2. *Zeus des Chênes Jumeaux*, in *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*, 107, 1983, p. 515-548; Id., *Documents d'Asie Mineure*, in *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*, 109, 1985, p. 467-484.
- <sup>9</sup> Mendel 1914, cit., p. 41-42, n. 837.
- <sup>10</sup> Mendel 1914, cit., p. 44, n. 839.
- <sup>11</sup> Stuart Mann E., *An Indo-European Comparative Dictionary*, Hamburg 1984, cc. 492-493.
- <sup>12</sup> Clarac C., *Musée de sculpture antique et moderne*, III, Paris 1832-1834, p. 37, n. 678 C, tav. 396.
- <sup>13</sup> Woodford S. and Spier J., *Kerberos*, «LIMC», VI, 1992, p. 29, n. 66, tav. 15.
- <sup>14</sup> Bäbler B., *Zeus*, «DNP», 12, 2, 2003, c. 782-791, esp. c. 790.