

The Triad of Zeus Soter, Artemis Soteira and Megalopolis at Megalopolis

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The sanctuary of Zeus the Saviour at Megalopolis was probably established in 371 B.C. The three cult statues, depicting Zeus Soter, Artemis Soteira and Megalopolis, are described by Pausanias, who attributes them to the sculptors Kephisodotos and Xenophon. This Kephisodotos must have been the elder one. The configurations of these three statues seem to be represented on Megalopolitan coinage. Zeus was seated frontally on a throne, holding a sceptre in his raised right hand with a himation over his left shoulder. Artemis was standing to the left, dressed in a short chiton, with a spear in her raised right hand and the hem of her mantle in her left. The head of Artemis at Pavia may derive from this Artemis. The figure of Megalopolis was draped, her right arm brought down and her forearm brought forward, in order to extend an attribute, perhaps a phiale. She wore a mural crown.

The sanctuary of Zeus the Saviour at Megalopolis was probably established in 371 B.C.,¹ the probable date for the foundation of the Great City itself. As one of the city's key sanctuaries, the establishment of cult and altar must have played an important role in the city's foundation, even if the final monumentalization of the shrine took place in the 340s B.C.²

The three cult statues, depicting Zeus Soter, Artemis Soteira and Megalopolis, must have been commissioned very soon after the foundation of the city. Pausanias gives a clear description of the images: Zeus was seated on a throne with Megalopolis on his right hand and Artemis on his left. Pausanias also notes that the images were carved of Pentelic marble and that they were the work of two Athenians: Kephisodotos and Xenophon.³

This must have been the elder Kephisodotos, rather than the younger

1. Hornblower 1990.

2. Spyropoulos, Lauter and Lauter-Bufe 1995, 121-2.

3. Paus. 8.30.10.

sculptor of this name. To start, Pausanias mentions Kephisodotos the Elder as Kephisodotos *sic et simpliciter*, without further specification, as the master of the Peace with Ploutos.⁴ When Pausanias refers to Kephisodotos the Younger, along with his brother Timarchos, he always uses the expression “the sons of Praxiteles”.⁵ It is also worth noting that Xenophon, together with Kallistonikos, a native sculptor, made an image of Fortune (Tyche) carrying the child Wealth (Ploutos) for Thebes. This is clearly an imitation of Kephisodotos’ Peace with Ploutos.⁶ (Fig. 1) This statue suggests that Xenophon collaborated with the master of the Eirene, *i.e.* with Kephisodotos the Elder, and that he repeated the composition of the Athenian masterpiece for his piece in Thebes.

Given the historical circumstances that surrounded the foundation of Megalopolis, it is quite likely that the Megalopolitans were attracted by Athens as a model of urban life and that Kephisodotos’ art, after the Eirene, as well as the Pentelic marble were seen as important reflections of Athenian culture. This, together with the observations that the probable teacher of Kephisodotos, Strongylion, had already made a statue of Artemis Soteira (Saviour) for Megara,⁷ and that Kephisodotos, after setting up the Eirene,⁸ probably specialized in personifications, helps to understand why the Megalopolitans charged Kephisodotos with this triad.

Strongylion must also have worked together with Kephisodotos the Elder and Olympiosthenes for his group of Muses set up on Mount Helicon, when he was old and needed help from pupils. In the same way Kephisodotos the Elder, at the end of his career, might have associated with a younger pupil such as Xenophon.

Kephisodotos had already carved two marble groups of Muses set up in the sanctuary on Mount Helicon, *i.e.* the group made by him together with Strongylion and Olympiosthenes, and the one made entirely by himself,⁹ and this workshop seems to have specialized in marble sculpture: only a few years earlier, in 375, Praxiteles, probably the son of Kephisodotos the Elder, had signed a monument in Pentelic marble set up in Delphi.¹⁰

4. Paus. 9.16.2.

5. Paus. 1.8.4 and 9.12.4.

6. See *supra* n. 4.

7. Paus. 1.40.2 and 44.4. On this statue: Corso 2000a, 134. That Kephisodotos the Elder had studied under Strongylion is argued by Pausanias 9.30.1, who reports on a group of Muses on Mount Helicon made by Strongylion, Kephisodotos and a certain Olympiosthenes. This group may have been made only when Strongylion was old and Kephisodotos the Elder was still young. This collaboration makes it likely that Kephisodotos the Elder, when he was young, had worked under the direction of Strongylion.

8. On the Eirene carrying Ploutos: Weber 2001.

9. Paus. 9.30.1 and Zos. 5.24.6.

10. This monument is the acanthus column at Delphi: see for the inscriptions *SEG* 33,

It is also worth noting that the triad at Megalopolis, which symbolized the foundation of this key city, probably coincides with the peak of Kephisodotos' career, dated by Pliny (*HN* 34.50) in the 102. Olympiad, *i.e.* 372-369 B.C. That the peak of Kephisodotos' activity falls exactly in the years of foundation of Megalopolis is probably no simple coincidence.

The configurations of the three statues seem to be known, in general terms, from their representations on Megalopolitan coinage. (Fig. 2)

Zeus was seated frontally on a throne, holding a sceptre in his raised right hand with a himation over his left shoulder.¹¹ The statue was a variation of the Zeus at Olympia.¹² Clearly, the Megalopolitans wanted a Zeus similar to the most famous statue of this god, a statue that was, in fact, to be seen not far from their city.

Artemis was standing to the left, dressed in a short chiton, with a spear in her raised right hand and the hem of her mantle in her left.¹³ The representation of the Saviour Artemis in a short chiton seems to coincide with the analogous representation of the Saviour Artemis at Megara by Strongylion (Fig. 3),¹⁴ and suggests that probably Kephisodotos' Artemis might also be represented as a fresh and gracious teenager. This goddess, derived from Strongylion's model, foreshadows the definition of the sister of Apollo suggested by Praxiteles.¹⁵

1983, 131-2 no. 440 (440 B, the signature); Corso 1988, 15-7 and 43-6. Only the faintest traces of the inscriptions on the base of this monument survive. I could detect them only with difficulty and after long examination during the days 25-27 September, 1988. Nevertheless, the inscriptions exist, as I have ascertained on that occasion. The general scepticism concerning their existence is thus groundless. The acanthus stem of this monument is characterized by long leaves, still in the tradition of acanthus decoration of the early 4th century B.C. and before the vogue for short acanthus leaves was established with the Corinthian capitals of the temple of Athena Alea at Tegea, which dates in my opinion around 360-340 B.C. The statues of dancing girls placed each between two legs of the tripod located upon the acanthus stem, are consistent with the Eirene made by Kephisodotos the Elder in the same years, as well as with other carved young, draped females created by Praxiteles during his youth, such as the Victories of the choregic monument at Athens, National Museum, no. 1463, for general conception of the figures, for the style, for the rendering of female anatomy and for the drapery; see Corso 1998, in particular 393-401. On the acanthus column monument, see Martinez 1997.

11. Imhoof-Blumer, Gardner and Oikonomides 1964, 103-4; Leventi 1997, 343, no. 235; and Kremnydi-Sikilianou 1997, 367, no. 527.

12. On the influence of the Zeus of Olympia on late classical statues of Zeus, see Vlivos 1999.

13. See Imhoof-Blumer, Gardner and Oikonomides 1964, 104, and Kahil 1984, 702, no. 1049.

14. See *supra* n. 7.

15. Especially the Artemis of Dresden (Rolley 1999, 255-6), whose iconography seems to coincide with the figure of Artemis in the triad with Apollo and Leto made by Praxiteles for

Moreover, the slightly incurved style of this figure suggests that it has been conceived in the workshop where experiments were made with sinuous configurations of figures, such as those made by Kephisodotos the Elder and Praxiteles.

The sceptre in her raised right arm links the Eirene, the Saviour Zeus and the Saviour Artemis; it is a recurring feature of Kephisodotos' art. The reasons for this pattern are two-fold. First, the sceptre closes the composition laterally; and second, the sceptre indicates the status of the deities as rulers and protectors of the city, an iconographic concern that reflects the growing need of security, protection and salvation in late classical societies.

The end of the mantle falling from the left arm also appears on the Mantinean Muses, which derive probably from the Muses by Kephisodotos the Elder.¹⁶ This pattern had been used already by Myron, especially in his Zeus on Samos.¹⁷ This vertical element also serves to close the composition laterally.

The head of Artemis at Pavia (Fig. 4)¹⁸ may derive from Kephisodotos' Artemis, because of the general conception of the face and the anatomical features. These features are very close, as Macchioro has demonstrated, to the heads of Eirene and 'Sardanapallus',¹⁹ and they suggest an attribution of the original statue to the same master who had created these two works.

This suggestion is tentatively confirmed by the vibrant surfaces which can be traced back to the Artemis by Strongylion and point forward to the Artemis-figures by Praxiteles. The teen-age appearance of the goddess also seems in keeping with the Artemis on the Megalopolitan coin, as well as the small chignon on her nape, and her head suggest the same caring, protective and sweet expression which characterizes the Eirene and the 'Sardanapallus'. It seems at least possible that the Pavia head was derived from the Artemis at Megalopolis.

The figure of Megalopolis²⁰ has also been recognized on coins of the Great City.²¹ She was draped and characterized by a sinuous configuration: her right

Megara (Paus. 1.44.2) and is represented on Megarian coins (Imhoof-Blumer, Gardner and Oikonomides 1964, 6-7). Moreover, Artemis in the Dodektheon made by Praxiteles at Megara (Paus. 1.40.3), recognized in the Dodektheon of Ostia (Corso 1998, 404-5 and 429, pl. 11, fig. 31), and Praxiteles' Artemis Brauronia (Paus. 1. 23. 7), recognized in the Gabii type (Corso 2000b). Finally, Praxiteles' Artemis set up at Anticyra, seen by Paus. 10.37.1 and recognized on coins of this town (Imhoof-Blumer, Gardner and Oikonomides 1964, 124-5).

16. Corso 1998, 392; 411-2; 435, pl. 17, figs. 53 a, b and c; and 446.

17. Strabo 14.637 b, and Berger 1969, 66-92.

18. Macchioro 1909, and Schifone 1992, 50-2, fig. 24.

19. Corso 2000c, especially 29-30.

20. Svoronos 1909-10, 274-8, and *id.* 1912.

21. On the iconography of Megalopolis: Machaira 1992, 402, no. 1.

arm was brought down and her forearm brought forward in order to extend an attribute, perhaps a phiale. Her left arm was also brought down, but with her left forearm brought further forward more than her right, in order to hold a cornucopia disposed vertically, in analogy with the corresponding position of the cornucopia on the left side of the Eirene. This flank corresponded to the opposite side of the entire composition as outlined by the sceptre of Artemis; the vertical elements thus provided a rhythmical frame for the triad as a whole. The end of the mantle falls from her left arm, similar to the analogous pattern adopted for Artemis. The diagonal line of the drapery, which divides the figure in two parts vertically, also seems similar to the one adopted for the Eirene. A similar comparison could be made with the vertical folds on the lower part of the drapery. The lower border of the mantle disposed on a diagonal line, just above the lowest part of the chiton, characterizes the mourning ladies of the sarcophagus from Sidon, created about 360 B.C.,²² the Dionysos and the two Nike-figures on the tripod base in the National Museum of Athens, no. 1463, produced in the workshop of Praxiteles,²³ as well as the Mantinean Muses²⁴ and the so-called 'Urania'.²⁵

This feature is thus typical of the Attic sculpture of the second quarter of the 4th century B.C. and, in particular, of the production from the workshop which was inherited by Praxiteles.

The appearance of the head of the city-goddess can be suggested by the Theban coins representing the head of Tyche made for Thebes by the same Xenophon, if Xenophon imitated the city personification made by him and his prestigious master.²⁶ (Fig. 5) The general configuration of the face as well as the anatomical features are typical of the Kephisodotan creations noted above. This statement applies also to the wavy hair combed backwards and held together with a small chignon, in analogy with the Artemis of this triad. Megalopolis was crowned by a *corona muralis*. Mural crowns characterize protectresses of the state from the 13th century B.C. on in the Hittite imagery, then in the Assyrian world, and later in the Persian empire.²⁷ During the first decades of the 4th century B.C., Tychai of various cities in the eastern part of the Greek world begin to be characterized by mural crowns.²⁸

The growing importance of Asia Minor in late classical Greek imagery, as

22. Fleischer 1983, pls. 1-7.

23. Corso 2000c, 33.

24. See *supra* n. 16.

25. Baumer 1997, 31-43, 96-105, and pls. 8-14; and Filges 1997, 13-288, figs. 1-222.

26. Svoronos 1909-10, 276, figs. 41-3.

27. Metzler 1994.

28. Papageorgiou 1997, 65-110.

well as the political preeminence of the Great King of Persia in Greece after the Antalkidas peace of 387 B.C., may have suggested the adoption of this attribute typical of an Asia Minor tradition also for protectresses of states in the Greek mainland.

Kephisodotos the Elder, given his role in creating personifications of the welfare of communities, as revealed by his Eirene with Ploutos, may have had a similar pioneering function in the diffusion of mural crowns on the heads of city personifications in mainland Greece.

Needless to say, such personifications as the Eirene and Megalopolis must be considered as parts of the same intellectual atmosphere which promoted the investigation of ideal constitutions of cities in contemporary philosophy, particularly in Plato's school. Such concerns are to be seen as parts of those ties which probably connected Kephisodotos with the world of the Academy.

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Fig. 1. Kephisodotos the Elder's Eirene with Ploutos: reconstruction at Dresden, Staatliche Skulpturensammlung. (Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.)



Fig. 2. Zeus, Artemis and Megalopolis on coins struck at Megalopolis during the reign of Septimius Severus. (Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome.)



Fig. 3. Strongylion's Saviour Artemis at Megara represented on a coin struck at Pagae, in the territory of Megara, during the empire of Commodus. (Photo: Münzkabinett und Antikensammlung der Stadt, Winterthur.)



Fig. 4. Head of Artemis, in the Archaeological Museum, Pavia. (Photo: Musei Civici del Castello Visconteo, Museo Archeologico. Pavia.)



Fig. 5. Head of Tyche of Thebes, on coins struck by this city in the early imperial period. (Photo: National Museum, Copenhagen.)