

# THE STATUE FROM AMPURIAS/EMPORION, RECONSIDERED

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## Abstract

*This article does not deal with the identification of the statue from Ampurias/Emporion, as this subject has already been widely discussed by various scholars, who suggested that it could be identified either as Asklepios or Sarapis/Serapis, or else Agathos Daimon/Serapis. As a matter of fact, the aim of this article is to re-examine the question of whether the two parts of the statue from Ampurias/Emporion, composed of two different marbles (Pentelic and Parian), belong to one sculptural work or to two different statues and dates. The comparative study presented hereby permits to suggest that these are two separate sculptural parts. The lower, draped part can be dated to the late fourth-third century BCE, whereas the upper, nude part and head can be attributed to the second century CE.*

The statue from Ampurias/Emporion comprises two separate parts, composed of two different marbles – Pentelic and Parian<sup>1</sup>. The two parts were found within a difference of a few days, in two neighbouring locations, during the excavations at the site in 1909<sup>2</sup>. The larger, dressed part of the body, identified as that of Asklepios<sup>3</sup>, had been dumped into a large cistern in front of a shrine<sup>4</sup>, the so-called temple “M”<sup>5</sup> where the statue may have been placed. The upper part of the statue – the nude chest and bearded head – was found in another cistern situated east of two small temples *in antis*. These sacred buildings were within the so-called “sanctuary of Asklepios”<sup>6</sup>. Based on this discovery the excavators assumed the existence of a sanctuary dedicated to the god, although its identification is still uncertain and debatable. This possible sanctuary of Asklepios would appear to have been built after the remodeling of the city walls at the begin-

ning of the fourth century BCE<sup>7</sup>. By assembling the two marble sculptural parts, a larger than life-sized statue was created. Although partially hidden by the rich folds of the garment, the curvilinear fracture from the left shoulder to the right waist is visible, suggesting the figure as one entity formed by these two parts (Tavv. IX-XI, XII b-c, XIII a).

The aim of this article is to re-examine the question of whether the two parts belong to one statue or to two different statues and dates, accidentally and artificially assembled so as to create a “new” sculptural work for immediate cultic needs, as well as providing a convenient technical solution. The interesting departure point for this reconsideration is the unusual fact that this statue is composed of two different types of marble, as mentioned above<sup>8</sup>. It seems unlikely, however, that two different kinds of marble would have been used in one statue<sup>9</sup>. If the two parts of the Ampurias statue indeed present one

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<sup>1</sup> AQUILUÉ, CASTANYER, SANTOS, TREMOLEDA 2000, p. 32; SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 228, n. 43.

<sup>2</sup> SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 223 and n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> AQUILUÉ, CASTANYER, SANTOS, TREMOLEDA 2000, p. 34 (upper photo); SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 226 and n. 30.

<sup>5</sup> SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 226, 233 and nn. 30, 85.

<sup>6</sup> SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 233; he also suggested that the original location of the statue was in the sanctuary of Sarapis/Serapis (pp. 233-234).

<sup>7</sup> AQUILUÉ, CASTANYER, SANTOS, TREMOLEDA 2000, pp. 31-34. The statue is displayed in the Museum of Archaeology of Catalunya, in Barcelona.

<sup>8</sup> See above, n. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Even though one can find in Renaissance sculpture some statues, especially busts, made of more than one type of marble – a phenomenon that to the best of our knowledge did not exist in Greek and Roman sculpture.

original sculpture, as most scholars have surmised<sup>10</sup>, these would surely have been of the same marble, either Pentelic or Parian<sup>11</sup>. Doubt thus arises as to the sculptural unity of the statue, i.e. whether these two parts did originally belong to one and the same statue<sup>12</sup>. The present re-examination of the iconography and style of the two parts of the statue may throw light on this problematic issue; it will not deal with the question of its identification, whether as Asklepios or Sarapis/Serapis, as suggested by I. Rodà<sup>13</sup>, or *Agathos Daimon*/Serapis, as proposed by S. F. Schröder<sup>14</sup>.

The statue, as reconstructed, is standing in a frontal posture, its right forearm and hand broken. The left hand is covered by a garment, probably a *himation*<sup>15</sup>, and might originally have held a staff or a *cornucopia* (Tavv. IX-X)<sup>16</sup>. Close observation of the lower part of the statue reveals the transparency of the garment, emphasizing the shape of the right thigh and foreleg, as if they were nude beneath the garment, which excels in rich and deep folds, creating light and shade. The drapery over the left arm and right thigh and leg, as well as over the buttocks, gives an impression of transparency (Tavv. IX-XI). This type of drapery resembles that of the incomplete colossal marble statue of Asklepios found in the Roman *thermae* of Faustina in Miletus, currently in the Archaeological Museums of Istanbul<sup>17</sup>. A similar arrangement of drapery, especially the vertical and curvilinear folds on the lower body, as well as the transparency of the cloth emphasizing the right leg, can also be observed on a

headless marble statuette of Asklepios of unknown provenance, on display in the Museo Nazionale Romano delle Terme in Rome<sup>18</sup>. The curvilinear folds, falling from the left shoulder, separating the dressed lower body from the nude chest, as well as the covered left arm, and U-shaped fold around the navel, and the transparency of the *himation*, all these elements can be observed in all three statues. The garment of the statue from Ampurias is arranged across the back in diagonal folds, showing less plasticity than the folds on the front (Tavv. IX-XI), thus suggesting that the statue had been placed in front of a wall.

The *contrapposto* stance of the statue resembles that of Classical and Hellenistic sculptural works, such as the Lateran type of Sophocles, a marble copy of a bronze original of the fourth century BCE<sup>19</sup>, the statue of Demosthenes, a Roman copy of an original of c. 280 BCE<sup>20</sup>, the colossal marble statue of Asklepios from Miletus<sup>21</sup> and the headless marble statuette of Asklepios in the Museo Nazionale delle Terme, Rome<sup>22</sup>. In these four examples, as in the Ampurias statue, the garment does not reach the ground, but leaves part of the legs and feet bare (Tavv. IX-X). The design of the sandals (Tavv. IX-X, XIII b) is very similar to that of the seated Apollo on a relief from Epidauros, now in the National Museum (Inv. No. 174) in Athens<sup>23</sup>, as well as to the sandals of a seated male figure on a carved column drum from the Classical Artemision at Ephesus, now in the British Museum (No. 1206), London<sup>24</sup>. In addition, these also re-

<sup>10</sup> SCHRÖDER 1996, pp. 226-227 and n. 32.

<sup>11</sup> The examples of sculptures of the Greek and Roman periods that Schröder mentions are composed of various parts, but are all of the same marble (SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 227).

<sup>12</sup> Schröder claims that there are scholars who consider that the upper part of the statue is of a later period, but he does not name them (SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 226 and n. 30).

<sup>13</sup> RODÀ 2008, pp. 65-72.

<sup>14</sup> SCHRÖDER 1996, pp. 228-234; SCHRÖDER 2008, pp. 73-78.

<sup>15</sup> For the iconography of the garment with comparisons from statues and reliefs of the second century BCE, see SCHRÖDER 1996, pp. 225-226.

<sup>16</sup> SCHRÖDER 1996, pp. 230-231.

<sup>17</sup> MENDEL 1966, pp. 330-331, No. 124; *LIMC* II, p. 885, No. 294 (Asklepios) (the statue is attributed to the second century CE. According to the drapery it seems to be a Roman copy of a Greek original, that is, of the Late Classical-Hellenistic period).

<sup>18</sup> GIULIANO 1981, pp. 324-325 (Inv. No. 320). The dating of the statuette is difficult to establish, although it seems to be a Roman copy of a Greek original of the Late Classical-Hellenistic period.

<sup>19</sup> RIDGWAY 1984, Pl. 40.

<sup>20</sup> HAVELOCK 1971, Ill. 25.

<sup>21</sup> See above, n. 17.

<sup>22</sup> See above, n. 18.

<sup>23</sup> See MORROW 1985, p. 86, Pl. 63 (on p. 81) (dated to the second half of the fourth century BCE).

<sup>24</sup> See MORROW 1985, p. 86, Pl. 64 (on p. 81) (dated to the second half of the fourth century BCE).

semble the footwear of Mausolos from the Mausoleum at Halikarnassos, now in the British Museum (No. 26), London<sup>25</sup>. This may argue for a Late Classical-Hellenistic date for the lower, draped, part of the Ampurias statue and, more specifically, the late fourth-early third century BCE. In other words, the lower part of the statue would appear to be an original Greek work of art.

The upper part of the body in the statue under discussion is nude. Its chest is delicately sculpted with a smooth and soft surface, without emphasizing the muscles; nor are the collarbones emphasized, and although the shoulders and the broken right arm are massive, rounded and muscular, the overall treatment appears to be natural and delicate. The sinews of the rather thick, broad neck are clearly shown (Tavv. IX-X, XII). A similar anatomical rendering appears in the marble statue of Asklepios from Miletus mentioned above<sup>26</sup>. A general similarity can also be noted with the seated marble statue of Zeus from Gaza of the second century CE<sup>27</sup>, which is frontally presented with a nude chest and belly, despite the rigidity, stylization and schematization of some of its anatomical details.

The facial features of the Ampurias statue are characterized by a low forehead, small shallow, almond-shaped eyes, with emphasized eyelids, and a broken nose (Tavv. IX, XII). Indeed, the head of the statue resembles the thick curly hair and bearded head of Zeus, Poseidon, Sarapis/Serapis, Hades/Pluto and Asklepios<sup>28</sup>. Despite the general similarity to the head of Zeus from Gaza<sup>29</sup>, the treatment of the hair of the statue from Ampurias is orderly, with the curls organized and concentric around the top of the skull, giving it a cap-like shape (Tavv. XI, XII c, XIII a). This conservative manner differs from the “baroque” trend of the hairstyle observed on the head of Zeus from Gaza. The long bushy,

inverted U-shaped moustache falls over the slightly open mouth, covering the upper lip, while the lower, fleshy lip is visible (Tavv. IX, XII). A general resemblance can be observed between the beard of the statue from Ampurias and the one from Gaza, despite some slight differences. While the beard of the former has an angular shape and is neatly ordered like the hair, that of the latter presents a rounded, free and dishevelled appearance, also resembling its hair. Furthermore, there is a textural contrast between the beard and the skin of the cheeks in both statues.

Based on the above-mentioned characteristics it can be assumed that the two parts of the Ampurias statue are of two different dates: the upper part and the head, in comparison with the colossal statue of Gaza, can be considered to be a Roman work of art by an anonymous sculptor, dated to the second century CE; whereas the lower, draped, part can be dated to the late fourth third century BCE. This suggestion diverges from the various dates proposed by other scholars, who have attributed it to being from the second half of the fifth century BCE up to the Roman Imperial period<sup>30</sup>, or to the second half of the second century BCE, but not after 100 BCE<sup>31</sup>. One scholar has suggested that the draped lower part belongs to the fourth century BCE and the upper part and the head to the Roman Imperial period<sup>32</sup>.

It is important to note that the break clearly visible on the left shoulder blade near the neck offers additional evidence that strengthens our suggestion that the two parts of the statue belong to two different sculptural works of art. Close observation reveals that this break does not match up well with the fold of the drapery, which is significantly lower than the shoulder blade, and thus the join is artificial and forced (Tavv. XI, XII b, XIII a).

<sup>25</sup> See MORROW 1985, pp. 84-85, Pl. 60 a-b (on p. 80) (dated to the 351-349 BCE).

<sup>26</sup> See above, n. 17.

<sup>27</sup> OVADIAH - MUCZNIK 1997, pp. 5-12.

<sup>28</sup> SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 230.

<sup>29</sup> OVADIAH - MUCZNIK 1997, pp. 6-7, 10.

<sup>30</sup> See SCHRÖDER 1996, pp. 223-224 and nn. 3-7.

<sup>31</sup> See SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 228.

<sup>32</sup> See SCHRÖDER 1996, p. 224 and nn. 4, 7.

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The marble statue - frontal view

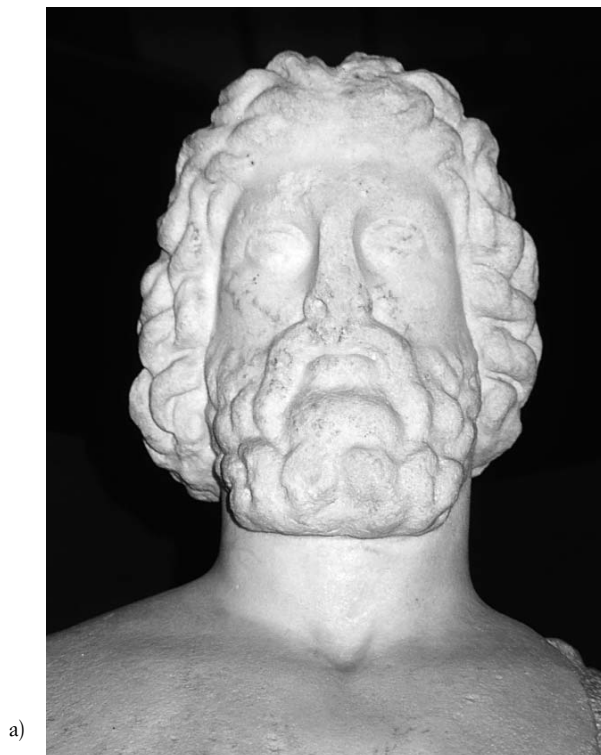


The marble statue - three-quarters view



The marble statue - back view





a)



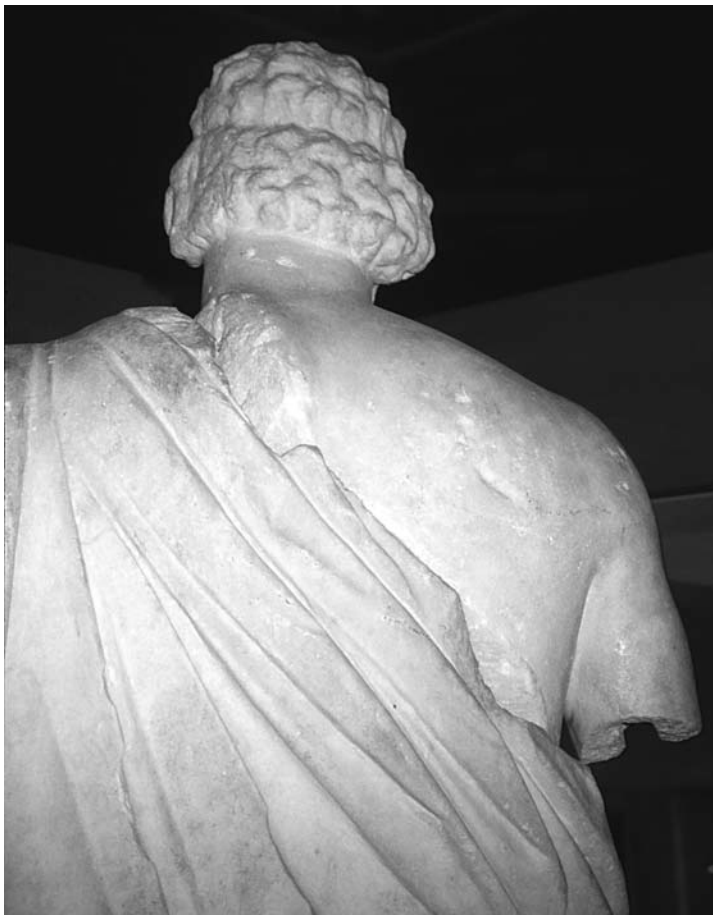
b)



c)

a) Head, frontal view; b) upper body, frontal view; c) upper body, three-quarters view





a)



b)

a) Upper body, back view; b) the sandals of the statue