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## **The Knowledge of Classical Greek Sculptors at Constantinople During The Middle Byzantine Times**

Orta Bizans Döneminde Konstantinopolis'teki Klasik  
Yunan Heykeltıraşlarının Bilgisi

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## THE KNOWLEDGE OF CLASSICAL GREEK SCULPTORS AT CONSTANTINOPLE DURING THE MIDDLE BYZANTINE TIMES

### ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the degree of knowledge of the most important sculptors of classical Greece in the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire in the period from the beginning of the rule of the Empire by the Macedonian dynasty – 867 – to the sack of the city by the Crusaders in 1204. Although this period has often been studied in excellent essays in the last decades<sup>1</sup>, this particular issue has not been a specific research focus. This observation hopefully justifies this article. The Byzantine Empire enjoyed for most of this long period a large territory, which included a strong economy and most of the Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor, part of Crimea, the northern Syrian coast and all the most important islands of the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Constantinople became the best city of Christianity, with an estimated population of around four hundred thousand. The vitality of the Byzantine society can be seen also in the fields of theology, philosophy, literature, architecture, painting, and other arts. The interest in classical antiquity was on the rise already at the time of the Patriarch Photius and culminated with the so-called ‘Komnenian Renaissance’ in the late 11th and 12th centuries when the study of the ancient Greek world became a salient feature of the period. This period keeps several antiquarians busy. This interest was fueled by numerous ancient literary works that had survived in the renown libraries of the capital at the time (especially the Patriarchal Library of Saint Sophia, the Imperial Library and monastic libraries) but often perished afterwards<sup>2</sup>, as well as by several ancient statues. Some of these sculptures are attributed to renowned classical masters who adorned the *Nova Roma*<sup>3</sup>. This study examines the fame possessed in this period by the four most famous sculptors of Classical Greece: Pheidias, Polykleitos, Praxiteles and Lysippos.

**Keywords:** Pheidias, Polykleitos, Praxiteles, Lysippos, Istanbul.



<sup>1</sup> The bibliography on these topics is extensive, and here I only mention a few contributions that had a significant impact on my research: Geanakoplos 1976; Lemerle 1977; Skoulatos 1980; Skawran 1982; Bádenas de la Peña 1993; Brubaker – Ousterhout 1995; Evans – Wixom 1997; Pevny 2000; Ball 2005; Bel – Gatier 2012; Herrin 2013; Ödekan et al. 2013; Eger 2015; Graf 2015; Zlatar 2015; Nikolaou 2016; Zlatar 2016; Gaul et al. 2018; Sághy – Ousterhout 2019; Betancourt 2020; Dunn – McLaughlin 2023; Preiser-Kapeller 2023; Vroom 2023; Zarras 2023; Stewart 2024.

<sup>2</sup> The bibliography on this topics is extensive. Here I cite only Mullett – Scott 1981; Wilson 1983; Kaldellis 2007; Grünbart 2012; Kaldellis 2015.

<sup>3</sup> There have also been many important contributions on this matter. Here I cite only Bassett 2004; Pitarakis 2010; Bravi 2014, 237-299.

## ORTA BİZANS DÖNEMİNDE KONSTANTİNOPOLİS'TEKİ KLASİK YUNAN HEYKELTIRAŞLARININ BİLGİSİ

### ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Doğu Roma İmparatorluğu'nun başkentinde, imparatorluğun Makedon Hanedanlığı'nın (867) egemenliğine başlamasından itibaren 1204 yılında Haçlılar tarafından şehrin yağmalanmasına kadar geçen dönemde, klasik Yunanistan'ın en önemli heykeltıraşlarının bilgi düzeylerini anlamaya çalışmaktır. Her ne kadar bu dönem son yıllardaki mükemmel makalelerde sıklıkla çalışılsa da bu özel konu araştırmaların spesifik bir odağı olmamıştır. Bu gözlem umarım bu makaleyi haklı çıkarır. Bizans İmparatorluğu, bu uzun dönemin büyük bölümünde, Balkan yarımadasının ve Küçük Asya'nın çoğunu, Kırım'ın bir kısmını, kuzey Suriye kıyılarını ve Doğu Akdeniz'in en önemli adalarını kapsayan geniş bir bölgeye ve güçlü bir ekonomiye sahip olmuştur. Konstantinopolis, yaklaşık dört yüz bin nüfusuyla Hıristiyanlığın en iyi şehri haline gelmiştir. Bizans toplumunun canlılığı teoloji, felsefe, edebiyat, mimari, resim ve diğer sanat alanlarında da görülmektedir. Klasik antik çağa olan ilgi, Patrik Photius zamanında zaten yükseliş göstermiş ve antik Yunan dünyasının incelenmesinin, dönemin göze çarpan bir özelliği haline geldiği 11. yüzyılın sonları ve 12. yüzyılda "Komnenos Rönesansı" olarak adlandırılan dönemle doruğa ulaşmıştır. Bu dönem birçok antik dönem çalışmasını meşgul etmektedir. Bu ilgi, hem o zamanlar başkentten zengin kütüphanelerinde (özellikle Ayasofya Patrik Kütüphanesi, İmparatorluk kütüphanesi ve manastır kütüphaneleri) hayatta kalan, ancak daha sonra çoğu zaman yok olan birçok antik edebiyat eserinin yanı sıra birçok antik heykelle beslenmiştir. Bunlardan bazıları nova Roma'yı süsleyen ünlü klasik ustalara atfedilmektedir. Bu dönemde klasik Yunan'ın en ünlü dört heykeltıraşının sahip olduğu serveti ele alacağım: Pheidias, Polykleitos, Praxiteles ve Lysippos.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Pheidias, Polykleitos, Praxiteles, Lysippos, İstanbul.



### PHEIDIAS

The most admired sculptor of early classical Athens is very much in the minds of middle Byzantine antiquarians who wrote about him quite often.

A list of these passages in chronological sequence is reported below:

1. Photius, *Lexikon* 34, probably 850s: he reports that Pheidias inscribed on a finger of his Zeus at Olympia the acclamation to his beloved boy Pantarkes.

2. Photius, *Bibliotheca* 234, probably 850s: he refers to the oil basin set up before the Zeus of Olympia by the decision of Pheidias.
3. Photius, *Bibliotheca* 243, probably 850s: he regards Pheidias as a wise soul who was able to translate the greatness of Zeus to his chryselephantine statue.
4. Photius, *Homelia* 10. 2. 433, in 864: he mentions Pheidias and other artists as terms of comparison for the mosaics of the Church of Our Lady of the Pharos at Konstantinople.
5. *Septem mira*, *Codex Vaticanus Latinus* 4929, *folium* 149, around 850: Pheidias' chryselephantine Zeus at Olympia is included among the marvels of the world.
6. Arethas, schol. to Aristides, *Orationes* 34. 28, dated in 907: a bronze Athena by Pheidias once on the Akropolis of Athens, probably the Promachos, now in Konstantinople, in the Forum of Konstantine, at the west side of the *propylon* to the palace of the Senate.
7. Arethas, schol. to Clement Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* 4. 53. 4-5, dated in 913/914: he reports the assertions of Clement that Pheidias inscribed the acclamation to his beloved boy Pantarkes on a finger of the Zeus of Olympia, of Gregorius the Theologian that this inscription was carved on a finger of the Athena Parthenos and of Libanius that it was written on a finger of his Aphrodite (that at Elis?). He also claims that Pheidias used his female lover as a model when he made his Aphrodite.
8. Symeon Logothetes, *Chronographia* 87, around 950s: Pheidias made the statue brought from Athens to the top of the column of Konstantine in the Forum of him at Konstantinople.
9. *Appendix Proverbiorum* 1. 68, probably of late 10<sup>th</sup> c.: Pheidias is regarded as an excellent artist of living beings.
10. Suda, A 135, late 10<sup>th</sup> c.: Pheidias is in a list of *ἀγαματοποιοί*.
11. Suda, E 3511, late 10<sup>th</sup> c.: Pheidias is recorded as the author of the Athena Parthenos, whose expenses were administered by Perikles.
12. Suda I 13, late 10<sup>th</sup> c.: Pheidias was fond of his pursuit in life.
13. Suda P 33, late 10<sup>th</sup> c.: the Nemesis of Rhamnus was originally an Aphrodite who held an apple branch. Pheidias allowed his lover Agorakritos to sign the statue. He also inscribed the name of his other lover, Autarches (misspelling for Pantarkes), on a finger of his Zeus.

14. Suda  $\Phi$  246, late 10<sup>th</sup> c.: Pheidias is considered for his Athena Parthenos. Perikles started the Peloponnesian War not to give accounts on the expenses for the statue.
15. Suda X 266, late 10<sup>th</sup> c.: *Pheidias* is in a list of the best handicraftsmen.
16. Schol. to Aristides, *Orationes* 3. 336, probably of the period of the Macedonian dynasty: the Athena Parthenos and the Athena Promachos are recorded.
17. Schol. to Demosthenes, *Contra Androktionem* 13, dated around 1000: the bronze Athena Promachos and the chryselephantine Athena Parthenos by Pheidias are mentioned as once standing in the Akropolis of Athens, and it is specified that the first was decided for the victory at Marathon, the second after the victory at Salamis, set up in the Parthenon.
18. Schol. to Demosthenes, *Olynthiaka* 3, probably around 1000: he reports on the bronze and chryselephantine statue of Athena on the Akropolis of Athens.
19. Psellos, *Chronographia* 3. 14, around 1060: he compares Pheidias and other ancient artists to the makers of the Basilica of the Theometor by Romanos III, around 1030.
20. Psellos, *Logos pros Pothon* 9, around 1060: he specifies that Pheidias' gold Aphrodite – probably that at Elis – had black stones in the places of the eyes.
21. Psellos, *Opuscula theologica* 32, around 1060: the statues of Pheidias reveal beauty and *rhythmos*.
22. Psellos, *Opuscula theologica* 79, around 1060: he refers to the hammered leaves of gold of Pheidias' Zeus at Olympia.
23. Psellos, *Oratio* 25, around 1060: he refers to Pheidias as a renowned bronze sculptor.
24. Kedrenos, *Compendium historiarum* 1. 518, around 1080-1090: the bronze statue on top of the column of Kanstantinos in the Forum of him at Konstantinople was the work of Pheidias and came from Athens.
25. Kedrenos, *Compendium historiarum* 1. 564, around 1080-1090: the ivory Zeus of Pheidias had been dedicated at Olympia by Perikles and was moved to the Lauseion in Konstantinople.
26. Kedrenos, *Compendium historiarum* 1. 567, around 1080-1090: a seated Zeus in white marble at Konstantinople in the Amastrianum quarter, near the temple of Helios and Selene, was the work of Pheidias.

27. Eustratius, *In Analyticorum Posteriorum librum secundum commentarium* 164, 15-18, around 1100: he records an Athena of Pheidias, probably the Parthenos.
28. Eustratius, *In Ethicae Nicomacheiae VI commentaria* 7. 318, around 1100: Pheidias was wise as a stone carver.
29. Eustratius, *In Ethicae Nicomacheiae VI commentaria* 7. 319, around 1100: Pheidias was a stone carver who excelled in imitating living beings and plants.
30. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 3. 2. 4, around 1150: Pheidias is celebrated as an artist capable of expressing female beauty (with reference to his Aphrodites?).
31. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 12. 4. 5, around 1150: Pheidias is regarded as the sculptor of the bronze statue of Apollo on the column of Konstantinos in the Forum of Konstantinos at Konstantinople, which fell down and crashed in 1106.
32. Konstantinos Manasses, *Descriptio imaginum* 1. 75, around 1150: Pheidias is still renowned for his works of bronze sculpture.
33. Heliodorus, *In Aristotelis Ethicae Nicomacheiae Paraphrasis* 121. 17-21, of the same period, regards Pheidias as a wise marble sculptor.
34. Tzetzes, scholium to Aristophanes, *Ranae* 501, to be dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century: Hageladas was the teacher of Pheidias.
35. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 7. 921-928, to be dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century: he reports on the studentship of Pheidias under Hageladas, on his love with Agorakritos and that he allowed this lover to sign the statue of Nemesis.
36. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. 317-332, to be dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century: he mentions the Athena Parthenos, the Zeus of Olympia, the Athena Promachos, a Hera, the Apollo on the column of Konstantinos and a Herakles clearing out the manure of Augeias as works of Pheidias.
37. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. 333-362, to be dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century: he reports on the love of solitude by Pheidias and his competition with Alkamenes for a female statue made for the Athenians. Pheidias prevailed because he took into account the optic corrections for a statue to be seen from below.
38. Tzetzes, *Epistle* 21, to be dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century: he reports on the gift of statues of Zeus and Nemesis at Rhamnus by Pheidias to his lover Agorakritos.
39. Tzetzes, *Epistles* 42, to be dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century: he includes Pheidias in his kanon of the 10 renowned artists of antiquity.

40. Tzetzes, *Epistles* 77, to be dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century: he reports on the competition between Pheidias and Alkamenes for a statue destined to be seen from below.
41. Eustathius, *Iliados* 1. 528-530, dated around 1170: Pheidias was inspired by Homer in his concept of Zeus. The statue almost touched the roof of the temple at Olympia.
42. Eustathius, *Iliados* 2. 546-548, around 1170: the Nemesis of Rhamnus is attributed to Pheidias and regarded as noteworthy for its size and beauty.
43. Eustathius, *Odysseiae* 11. 613-614, around 1170: Pheidias' Zeus is recorded.
44. Schol. to Aristides, *Orationes* 1. 354, probably of the late 12<sup>th</sup> century: Pheidias' gold and ivory statue of Athena Parthenos is recorded, and its superlative quality is specified.
45. Anonymus Paradoxographus, *De incredibilibus*, around 1200: a list of marvels includes the Zeus of Pheidias, whose given measure is 36 cubits, and a standing Athena at Athens, probably the Parthenos.
46. Anonymus Taurinensis, *De VII miraculis* 1, perhaps around 1200: a list of marvels includes the Zeus of Pheidias, whose given measure is 16 cubits, made of hammered gold, and the chryselephantine Athena at Athens, whose Pheidian authorship is specified.
47. Anonymus Taurinensis, *De VII miraculis* 2, perhaps around 1200: a list of marvels includes the enthroned chryselephantine Zeus of Pheidias, whose size would have been 100 cubits, and an Athena at Athens, probably the Parthenos.
48. *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 989, fol. 110, perhaps around 1200: in a list of 30 ancient marvels, the Zeus of Olympia, the Asklepios at Epidauros and a chryselephantine Zeus at Berytos are listed, with the attribution of these statues to Pheidias.

The above listed sequence of passages demonstrates that the Byzantine antiquarians of the period knew the salient moments of the life of Pheidias: that he was an Athenian, became the pupil of Hageladas of Argos, collaborated with Perikles as a political sponsor and made in this context the chryselephantine Athena set up in the Parthenon and the bronze Athena Promachos. They were also aware of the allegations of the theft of gold and ivory which took place at Athens against Pheidias. They were well informed on the Zeus of Olympia, even from a technical point of view (the leaves of gold are mentioned), its large size, the oil basin made in front of the statue, and that the temple of Zeus looked small for such a large statue. They knew the love of Pheidias with young Pantarkes and that he inscribed

his name on a finger of the Zeus. Moreover, they were aware of an important Aphrodite of Pheidias, probably that of Elis. Finally, they asserted that our sculptor became the lover of the Parian Agorakritos and gave the statue of Nemesis as a gift to his young *eromenos*. They had learned that this statue had been originally an Aphrodite and knew its configuration even in detail (the apple branch held by the goddess). Most of this information must derive from ancient antiquarian and art critical literature which is now lost but was still available in Konstantinopolitan libraries. The information on statues by Pheidias set up at Attica may have been taken from *Atthis* by Philoch., which was read often during the middle Byzantine times<sup>4</sup>. Pheidias' statues outside Attica may have been known especially through Pausanias<sup>5</sup>, Plutarch<sup>6</sup> and Strabo<sup>7</sup>. Later literary sources include Clement Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* 4. 53. 4, Gregorius of Nazianzus, *Carmen* 1. 2. 10. 863-864 and the now lost Libanius, Περὶ εὐφυσίας.

Moreover, four statues of Pheidias may have been brought to Constantinople.

The Zeus of Olympia had been brought to the Lauseion in Konstantinople probably toward the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as it is asserted by Kedrenos 1. 564. Although the statues of the Lauseion perished by fire in 476, according to the same Kedrenos I. 616 as well as to Zonaras 3. 131<sup>8</sup>, the memory of this masterpiece lasted in the Byzantine world for a very long time.

The Promachos Athena may also have found its way to Konstantinople because Arethas, scholium to Aristides, *Orationes* 34. 28, asserts explicitly that the statue stood in his day in the Forum of Konstantine, at the west side of the *propylon* of the Palace of the Senate. Moreover, the detailed description of this statue by Niketas Choniates, *Diegesis. De Isaacio Angelo et Alexio* 738 B, who reports on its destruction in 1203, would be in keeping with the standard image of the Promachos on Athenian coins<sup>9</sup>. Finally, Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. 317-332, refers to statues of Pheidias in the Forum – to be identified with the most important square of Konstantinople, that of Konstantine – which should also include our Athena. A statue of Athena is represented on top of a column in a miniature of a late 11<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine manuscript, which was once in the Evangelic School of Smyrna but probably perished

<sup>4</sup> See the following middle Byzantine citations of Philochorus: FGrHist 3. 328, testimonia, nos. 1 and 8; frgg. 1; 2b; 8-9; 11-12; 19; 30; 34 a-b - 35 a; 42; 48; 57; 61; 64b; 74-75; 77-78; 80; 85-91; 93; 95; 100-101; 104 a-b - 106; 108; 114-115; 117-125; 127-135 a; 138-143; 148; 166; 177-178 a-b; 183; 186; 188-194; 199-204; 207-209; 211-213; 218; 220; 223 and 230. On Philochorus, see Costa 2007.

<sup>5</sup> With particular reference to Pausanias 5. 10. 2-15. 1; 6. 25. 1; 7. 27. 2 and 9. 4. 1 and 10. 2. On the frequent reading of Pausanias in middle Byzantine times, see Diller 1956, 84-97.

<sup>6</sup> With particular reference to Plutarch., *Praecepta coniugalia* 32; *De Iside et Osiride* 71-75; Aristides 20. 3; Aemilius Paulus 28. 5 and Sulla 17. 4. On the Byzantine fortune of Plutarch, see Mewaldt 1906, 824-834.

<sup>7</sup> With particular reference to Strabo 8. 3. 30. See e. g. Kaldellis 2009, 13.

<sup>8</sup> On the statues of the Lauseion, see Bassett 2000, 6-25.

<sup>9</sup> See Ribaudo 2023, 158.



with the fire which destroyed this institution in 1922 (fig. 1)<sup>10</sup>: the configuration of this figure is basically the same of the Athena Promachos on Athenian coins. This fact proves that this iconography was enshrined in the visual culture of the middle Byzantine society.

It is true that Konstantinos Rhodios, *Ekphrasis* 153-162 claims that this statue comes from Lindos, followed by Kedrenos, *Compendium historiarum* 1. 565; however, the Rhodian poet may have extended to this Athena the provenance from Rhodes of the statue of the sea goddess set up at the east side of the *propylon* of the same palace. Moreover, he may have attributed this statue to his homeland for patriotic reasons.

The concordance of the Athenian coin image of the Promachos with the literary descriptions of the Athena of the Senate Palace in Constantinople and with the painted Athena in the Smyrna manuscript is a strong argument in favor of the identification of the Pheidias' colossus with this statue<sup>11</sup>.

The bronze statue of Apollo set up on top of the column of Konstantine in the Forum of the same emperor in Constantinople in 328, which crashed to the ground in 1106, may also have been a work of Pheidias. The association of the Athenian sculptor with this statue is found in Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* 12. 4. 5. Moreover, Symeon Logothetes, *Chronographia* 87, asserts that this statue was erected by Pheidias and brought from Athens. The same information is forwarded by Kedrenos, *Compendium historiarum* 1. 518 and Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. 326. However, Malalas, *Chronographia* 13. 320E claims that the statue was brought from Ilion, and the *Chronicon Paschale* 1. 528 asserts that the image came from Phrygia. The provenance from Ilion is given also by Zonaras, *Epitome Istorion* 13. 3. 25-27. This statue is also mentioned by Hesychius, *Patria Konstantinoupoleos* 41, the *Great Chronographer* 8, John Skylitzes, *Breviarius Historicus* 742, and Nikephoros Kallistos, *Ecclasiastica Historia* 7. 49, who do not give details on the provenance of the statue<sup>12</sup>. Finally, a miniature representation of the statue is found in the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, segment 8 (fig. 2)<sup>13</sup>. Since Ilion was along the sea route from Athens to Constantinople, I suggest that the bronze Apollo was brought from Athens but with a stopover at Ilion: that may have been due both to the importance of the myth of Troia, which was at the mythical basis of both Rome and of the second Rome, Constantinople<sup>14</sup> as well as to the need to pick up a bronze statue of Apollo Smintheus, from the sanctuary of the god with this epiklesis near Ilion. The latter statue had

<sup>10</sup> See Jenkins 1947, 31-33.

<sup>11</sup> On these issues, see Cullen 2009, 680-683; 822; 829-830; 865-866 and 988-991, with previous bibliography.

<sup>12</sup> See Cullen 2009, 719-720; 790; 816; 826-828; 855-856; 976; 988-991 and 996 with previous bibliography.

<sup>13</sup> See Drakoulis 2016, 109-156.

<sup>14</sup> See Bravi 2023, 661-682.

also been brought to Konstantinople<sup>15</sup>. Concerning the authorship of the statue from Athens, the testimony of Anne Komnene is crucial since she was the daughter of an emperor, and thus she probably had access to the imperial archives, which likely included reports on the statues brought to the capital: thus the sculptor must have been Pheidias. The vignette of the statue in the *Tabula Peutingeriana* suggests that the statue brought was the original of the copyist series of the Kassel type of Apollo<sup>16</sup>. Thus, the statue re-used at Konstantinople may have been Pheidias' bronze statue of Apollo Parnopios seen on the Akropolis of Athens near the Parthenon by Pausanias 1. 24. 8 and regarded the original of the Kassel copyist type.

The fourth statue is the seating Zeus in white marble set up near the temple of Helios and Selene in the Amastrinum quarter of Konstantinople, mentioned by Kedrenos, *Compendium historiarum* 1. 567: it may have been the seating Zeus in Pentelic marble from the middle of the east pediment of the Parthenon<sup>17</sup>. The drawing of the east pediment by Jacques Carrey of 1674<sup>18</sup> clarifies that the statue of Zeus in the middle had been removed prior to this date, and this detail makes it possible that this statue had been brought to Konstantinople. It is possible that an image of Zeus was regarded as necessary in a place devoted to celestial bodies because the god personified the sky and a planet<sup>19</sup>.

## POLYKLEITOS

This renowned bronze sculptor from Argos is mentioned in the following middle Byzantine *testimonia*:

1. Suda, A 135, late 10<sup>th</sup> c.: Polykleitos is in a list of ἀγαλματοποιοί.
2. Suda, X 266, late 10<sup>th</sup> c.: Polykleitos is in a list of the best handicraftsmen.
3. Psellos, *Opuscula Theologica* 19, around 1060, praises the ἀγαλματοποιία of Polykleitos.
4. Psellos, *Opuscula Theologica* 32, around 1060, exalts the art of making very beautiful statues by Polykleitos.
5. Eustratios, *In Ethicae Nicomacheiae VI Commentaria* 7. 319: Polykleitos was a wise carver of bronze statues of male subjects.
6. Anna Komnene, *Alexias* 13. 10. 4. 1-18, around 1150, describes in detail the kanon of Polykleitos.

<sup>15</sup> See Eusebius, *Vita Konstantini* 54. 2.

<sup>16</sup> See Mortellaro 2023, 149-152 with previous bibliography.

<sup>17</sup> On the seating Zeus in the middle of the east pediment of the Parthenon, see e. g. Jenkins 2006, 86-90.

<sup>18</sup> See Bowie 1971.

<sup>19</sup> For the cosmic interpretation of Zeus in late antiquity, see Procl., in John Lydius, *On the Months* 2. 6.

7. Heliodorus, *In Aristelis Ethicae Nicomacheiae Paraphrasis* 121. 17-21, of the same period, regards Polykleitos as a wise bronze sculptor of male statues.
8. Tzetzes, *Chiliades*. 8. 319-324, dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, informs that Polykleitos was from Argos, who was both a bronze sculptor and a painter. He made many works; a painting was the kanon for painting, and a bronze male statue was the kanon for bronze sculpture.
9. Tzetzes, *Epistle* 42, to be dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> c.: Polykleitos is the first in the kanon of the 10 most important artists.
10. Codex Vaticanus Graecus 989, 110, around 1200: the Hera of Argos is included among the most beautiful creations in the world, specifying that it is the work of Polykleitos.

Scholars of the middle Byzantine period knew that Polykleitos was from Argos and that he was one of the most important artists of the period, which is the classical one for us. They were also aware of the Hera of Argos as his masterpiece<sup>20</sup>. They knew his depiction of an ideal male figure called Kanon<sup>21</sup>. The specification that this statue was bronze is also in keeping with the information on this sculptor handed down from ancient *testimonia*. However, the claim that he was also a painter and made a kanon even for this art is not supported by ancient authorities. This fact does not exclude that Polykleitos, besides being first of all a bronze sculptor, exercised sometime even in painting and that this detail has not been reported by the few surviving ancient writers on visual arts. Finally, the detailed description of the human figure represented with the Polykleitan kanon by Anne Komnene suggests that the book entitled 'Kanon' by this Argive sculptor<sup>22</sup> was still available in Konstantinopolitan libraries.

In conclusion, while Pheidias was known not only from literary *testimonia* but also from the presence of his works in Konstantinople, Polykleitos seems to have been known at Konstantinople only from written sources and first of all from his treatise Kanon, which probably survived until the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

## PRAXITELES

This Athenian sculptor was very much in the minds of middle Byzantine antiquarians, as argued by the following passages.

<sup>20</sup> On the Hera of Polykleitos see Ervin 1957, 414-425.

<sup>21</sup> On the Kanon of Polykleitos, see Sonntagbauer 2002, 123-130.

<sup>22</sup> On the Kanon as book, see Stewart 1998, 273-275.

1. Photius, *Homelia* 10. 2. 433, in 864, mentions Praxiteles as a term of excellence for the high quality of the mosaic of the Church of Our Lady of the Pharos in the imperial palace.
2. Schol. to Lucian, *Iuppiter Tragoedus* 10, probably of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, regards Praxiteles as an excellent carver of statues of deities and mentions the Knidian Aphrodite.
3. Schol. to Theocritus 5. 105, perhaps of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, asserts that there were two sculptors named Praxiteles, the first being a sculptor of human subjects and the second one of divine ones. The name of Praxiteles implies excellence.
4. Schol. to Aristides, *Orationes* 1. 354, probably of the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, attributes a bronze Athena on the Akropolis of Athens to Praxiteles.
5. Arethas, *scholium* to Clement Alexandrinus, *Protrepticus* 4. 47, in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, mentions the Knidia.
6. Arethas, *scholiast* to Lucian, *Amores* 11-12, in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, cites the Knidia.
7. Konstantinos Porphyrogenitos, *De thematibus* 1. 14, probably written in the 930s, praises the Knidian Aphrodite as an unsurpassable masterpiece of Praxiteles, which once was set up in the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Knidos.
8. Kedrenos, *Historiarum compendium* 1. 564. 10-12, around 1080-1090, informs that the Knidia had been brought to the Lauseion at Konstantinople, toward the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, describes the statue – naked, but shielding her pubes with a hand – and regards Praxiteles a Knidian.
9. Kedrenos, *Historiarum compendium* 1. 616, around 1080-1090, informs that the Knidian Aphrodite was destroyed by fire in the Lauseion in 476.
10. Zonar., *Epitome Historiarum* 14. 24. 2. 52 d, around 1130, asserts that the Knidia perished in a fire in the Lauseion in 476.
11. Konstantinos Manasses, *Descriptio Imaginum* 1. 75, around 1150, asserts that Praxiteles was famous even in his own time.
12. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. 375-387, probably in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, declares Praxiteles an excellent carver of marble statues whose masterpiece was the Knidia, specifying that she was naked and made in Pentelic marble. He narrates the story of Makareus of Perinthos, who fell in love with the statue and specifies that his source is the *Nova Historia* of Ptolemaeus Chennus, clearly still available in the late 12<sup>th</sup> c. but now lost.

13. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 5. 500-509, probably dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, illustrates an iconography of Eros which may derive from Praxiteles' Eros at Parion.
14. Tzetzes, *Epistle* 42, to be dated in the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> c., includes Praxiteles in his catalogue of the best 10 artists.
15. Eustathius, *Iliados* 2. 498, around 1170, claims that the Eros of Thespieae was a gift by Praxiteles to the courtesan Glykera and informs that many went to this Boeotian town to see the statue.
16. Scholiast to Theocritus 5. 105, *Codex Parisinus* 2832, perhaps of the late 12<sup>th</sup> c., regards Praxiteles as an excellent sculptor.
17. *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 989, fol. 110, perhaps around 1200: in a list of 30 ancient marvels, the Knidian Aphrodite and a Leto at Myra are included, with specifications that both are works by Praxiteles.

All these writers agree that Praxiteles was one of the best sculptors of marble statues and divine subjects. He is regarded as Knidian by Kedrenos, and it is not impossible that the Knidians, grateful to this Athenian sculptor because he made their city famous thanks to the Knidian Aphrodite, awarded him with citizenship<sup>23</sup>.

The most frequently mentioned statue made by Praxiteles is the Knidian Aphrodite. They were still aware of the general configuration of the statue – naked with a hand shielding her pubes – specified by Kedrenos. They also knew that lovers tried to copulate with the goddess. They depended both on *testimonia* that are still available, such as Lucian and Clement, and on writers who have not survived but could still be read at the time, such as the *Nova Historia* by Ptol. Chennus, mentioned by Tzetzes as a source of an episode of *agalmatophilia* with the Knidia and also read by Photios, who summarized the content of this work (Photius, *Bibliotheca* 190)<sup>24</sup>. Tzetzes claims that the statue was in Pentelic marble and mentions a sacred prostitute – Ischas – who was having intercourse with the lovers of the statue.

The other important Praxitelean statue mentioned in this period is the Eros of Thespieae: Eust. believes that it was a gift by the sculptor to the courtesan Glykera, no doubt depending on Strabo 9. 2. 25. 410 who handed down this story<sup>25</sup>.

A statuette of Leto at Myra is also attributed to Praxiteles in a catalogue of *mirabilia*: even this information may have been found in the antiquarian literature on Lykia, which has not survived<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> See Corso 2007, 39. On the Knidia, see Corso 2007, 9-191.

<sup>24</sup> See Corso 2022, 99.

<sup>25</sup> On the Eros of Thespieae, see Corso 2004, 257-281.

<sup>26</sup> On the Leto of Myra, see Corso 2021, 363.

Finally, a bronze Athena on the Akropolis of Athens is attributed to this sculptor by a scholiast: it may have been a statue in keeping with the Praxitelean Arretium/Vescovali types<sup>27</sup>.

The Knidian Aphrodite had been brought to the Lauseion in Konstantinople in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, and although she perished in a fire in 476, her memory and the knowledge of her configuration became enshrined in the antiquarian culture of the new Rome for a very long time.

The Eros of Thespieae may or may not have been moved to Konstantinople: the statue is celebrated in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century at Konstantinople by Julian the Egyptian, *Anthologia Planudea* 16. 203. In this epigram, Eros' statue speaks in the first person and may suggest that this poet composed the poem for the arrival of the statue. However, this is far from certain.

The Eros of Parion by Praxiteles is probably described by Palladas, *Anthologia Planudea* 16. 207, in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century, and this epigram may have been occasioned by a new set up of this statue in the new Rome. Moreover, the same iconography of Eros is again illustrated by Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 5. 500-509, and it may have been based on a surviving visual example<sup>28</sup>. Although all of this is possible, the available evidence is inconclusive.

Thus, Praxiteles was known in middle Byzantine times especially or perhaps only from previous literary sources. However, the configuration of the Knidia was still known, and the description of an episode of *agalmatophilia* affecting the statue suggests that the erotic appeal was regarded as the main feature of his art. Finally, the specification by Eust. that the Eros of Thespieae was a gift to a courtesan implies the notion of the Praxitelean art as an expression of the life of the *hetaerae*.

## LYSIPPOS

This Sikyonian master was certainly the most popular ancient sculptor after Pheidias during the middle Byzantine times. He is considered in the following *testimonia*.

1. Konstantinos Porphyrogenitos, *De thematibus* 1. 160, probably in the 930s: he describes the seating Herakles of Lysippos set up in the Hippodromos of Konstantinople without specifying the author.
2. Suda, A 135, late 10<sup>th</sup> c., Lysippos is in a list of the best *ἀγαλματοποιοί*.

<sup>27</sup> On the Arretium/Vescovali types of Athena, see Cygielman 2010.

<sup>28</sup> On the Eros of Parion, see Corso 2024, 27-34.

3. *Suda*, B 157, late 10<sup>th</sup> c., the seating Herakles came from Rome to Konstantinople during the consulate of Julian. It was set up first of all in the Basilica. Then, since it received sacrifices in that place, it was moved to the Hippodromos.
4. *Suda*, Π 1949, late 10<sup>th</sup> c., mentions the statue of Polydamas at Olympia.
5. *Suda*, Σ 202, late 10<sup>th</sup> c., informs that the statue of Seleukos Nikanor was endowed with horns on his head.
6. *Suda*, X 266, late 10<sup>th</sup> c., Lysippos is considered one of the best handicraftsmen.
7. Schol. to Strabo 6. 278, probably early 11<sup>th</sup> century: the colossal Herakles of Lysippos was once on the Capitolium and is now in the Hippodromos of Byzantium.
8. Schol. to Lucian, *Icaromenippus* 12, probably early 11<sup>th</sup> century: the bronze colossal Helios of Rhodes is attributed to Lysippos, while it was, in fact, made by Lysippos' pupil Chares.
9. Theophylact, *Lexikon* 58, probably in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, refers to the Kairos.
10. Kedrenos, *Historiarum compendium* 1. 564, around 1080-1090, informs that the Eros of Mindos and the Kairos/Chronos of Lysippos were among the statues brought to Konstantinople into the Lauseion toward the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.
11. Theodoros Prodromos, *To an image of Life*, around 1140, attributes to Life the iconography of the Kairos.
12. Konstantinos Manasses, *Descriptio imaginum* 1. 75, around 1150, includes Lysippos among the best bronze sculptors with reference to the seating Herakles.
13. Tzetzes, *Epistle* 42, probably third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, includes Lysippos among the 10 most important ancient artists.
14. Tzetzes, *Epistle* 70, probably third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, narrates how Lysippos created to statue of Kairos/Chronos for Alexander the Great.
15. Tzetzes, *Epistle* 76, probably the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, refers to the portraits of Alexander the Great by Lysippos.
16. Tzetzes, *Epistle* 95, probably the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, refers to the Kairos by Lysippos, interpreting him as Chronos.
17. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. 409-427, probably third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, informs on the portraits of Alexander by Lysippos and on his Kairos, regarded Chronos, also made for Alexander.

18. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 10. 257-287, probably the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, reports on the Kairos of Lysippos, regarded Chronos and made for Alexander the Great.
19. Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 11. 90-101, probably the third quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, regards the portraits of Alexander by Lysippos as entirely realistic.
20. Scholiast to Tzetzes, *Epistle* 95, probably late 12<sup>th</sup> century, specifies that Lysippos was a bronze sculptor of human subjects.
21. Niketas Choniates, *Diegesis. De Isaacio Angelo et Alexio* 687, early 13<sup>th</sup> century, writes on the bronze Herakles in the Hippodromos, attributing him to a sculptor named Lysimachos, probably a graphic variation of Lysippos.
22. Niketas Choniates, *De statuís* 5, early 13<sup>th</sup> century, narrates the throwing down of the bronze Herakles attributed to Lysimachos, probably a graphic variation of Lysippos, operated by the Latins in 1204.

Middle Byzantine antiquarians regarded Lysippos among the best bronze sculptors of ancient Greece; they knew he was a Sikyonian, lived in the age of Alexander the Great and became the beloved bronze portraitist of this king.

They regard his best works as the seating Herakles, the Kairos and portraits of Alexander, whose configuration is described in detail by Tzetzes. The Eros of Myndos is mentioned only once by Kedrenos. Among the surviving writers, his portraits of Alexander may have been known from Plutarch<sup>29</sup>, Arrian<sup>30</sup>, Himerius<sup>31</sup> and Choricus<sup>32</sup>. However, the availability of the early Hellenistic treatises of Xenokrates and Duris on bronze sculpture<sup>33</sup> at Konstantinople cannot be excluded.

His statue of Polydamas at Olympia may have been known from Pausanias<sup>34</sup>.

His portrait of Seleukos was also enshrined in the middle Byzantine culture<sup>35</sup>.

Moreover, at least three original statues of this Sikyonian master had been brought to Konstantinople.

The Eros of Myndos had been brought to the Lauseion in Konstantinople probably toward the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, as we know from Kedrenos<sup>36</sup>. The statue

<sup>29</sup> See Plutarch, *De Alexandri Fortuna* 2. 2-3; *De Iside et Osiride* 24d and *Alexander* 4. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis* 1164-5.

<sup>31</sup> Himerius, *Meletai kai logoi* 31. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Choricus, *Dialexeis* 34. 1-3.

<sup>33</sup> See Linfert 1978, 23-28.

<sup>34</sup> See Pausanias 6. 5. 1-9.

<sup>35</sup> See Moreno 2017, 174-175.

<sup>36</sup> See Moreno 2017, 139-143.



appears in a niche of a palace on the north side of the *mese* road in Konstantinople in a Renaissance drawing<sup>37</sup> which probably copies a section of the relief of the demolished column of Theodosius, finished in 396 (fig. 3)<sup>38</sup>. This palace may be identified with the Lauseion, and thus this drawing would show the presence of this statue there at the latest in 396. The statue must have perished in the fire which destroyed much of the Lauseion in 476.

The Kairos of Lysippos is a well-known masterpiece<sup>39</sup>, also brought to the Lauseion in Konstantinople in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century and probably destroyed in the fire of 476. However, the memory of this masterpiece continued strong for a long time. A relief representation of Bios, inspired by the Lysippan Kairos, was carved in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (fig. 4)<sup>40</sup>.

Finally, the seating Herakles from Tarentum, brought to Rome, was moved to Byzantium when Julian was consul – probably the consul with this name of 325 – first of all to the Basilica, then to the central *spina* of the Hippodromos<sup>41</sup>. Here, several of the above-listed Byzantine writers admired him as the only surviving evidence of the style of the great Sikyonian master. He was also imitated with reliefs and paintings (figs. 5 and 6)<sup>42</sup> but was knocked down by the conquerors Latins in 1204, as we know from Niketas Choniates.

The statues of Pheidias, Praxiteles and Lysippos brought to Konstantinople were just a minimal section of the huge amount of works of art brought to the new capital of the Roman empire. The most complete catalogue of these re-locations, published by S. Guberti Bassett in 2004, includes more than 170 statues or reliefs. Even important creations by other renowned masters, such as the Athena Lindia by Dipoinos and Skyllis and the Hera Samia by Boupalos (Kedrenos, *Historiarum compendium* 1. 564 and 616 and Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum* 3. 131), both re-displayed in the Lauseion, adorned the *secunda Roma*. The huge presence of ancient masterpieces in the city of Konstantine determined a notable survival of ancient art in the context of its visual environment.

<sup>37</sup> Paris, Louvre, Accard drawing, no. 4951. See Cittadini 1995, 168, no. 4. 20. 4.

<sup>38</sup> On this column, see Sande 1981, 1-78.

<sup>39</sup> See Moreno 2017, 107-115.

<sup>40</sup> This relief decorates the ambon of the cathedral of Torcellum: see Moreno 1995, 195, no. 4. 28. 5.

<sup>41</sup> See Bassett 1991, 90-91 and Moreno 2017, 270-289.

<sup>42</sup> See Moreno 2017, 285, fig. 445; 286, fig. 447; 287, fig. 448 and 288, figs. 449-451. The middle Byzantine examples of reuse of the iconography of the Lysippan Herakles are: a. an ivory relief at Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum (Moreno 2017, 285, fig. 445) (fig. 5); b. an ivory relief at Xanten, Landesmuseum (Moreno 2017, 286, fig. 447); c. an ivory relief at Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery (Moreno 2017, 287, fig. 448) (fig. 6); d. a painting in the Church of Hagios Nikolaos Orphanos at Thessalonica (Moreno 2017, 288, fig. 449); e. a marble relief at the door of the Basilica of Saint Zeno at Verona (Moreno 2017, 288, fig. 450), and f. a picture at Athens, Byzantine Museum (Moreno 2017, 288, fig. 451).

## Few Concluding Words

The above listed data lead to the following conclusions.

The best middle Byzantine scholars had a good general notion of the lives of the four most famous masters of ancient Greece: they were aware of the engagement of Pheidias in the Perikles' monumental program at Athens, his trial and his subsequent stay at Olympia for the Olympian Zeus, his love with Pantarkes as well as that Agorakritos was his pupil and lover. They also knew the close link of Praxiteles with courtesans and Lysippos' status as the portraitist of Alexander the Great. They knew the configurations of the Zeus of Olympia, the bronze Athena Promachos, a bronze Pheidian Apollo, a marble seating Zeus, which perhaps had been the central figure of the east pediment of the Parthenon, the Nemesis of Rhamnus, the Kanon of Polykleitos, the Knidian Aphrodite, the Lysippan portraits of Alexander, the Eros of Myndos, the Kairos and the seating Herakles.

Finally, they could still admire the Pheidian Apollo until 1106, the seating Zeus, the Promachos until 1203, and the seating Herakles of Lysippos at least until 1204.

They even sometimes knew the historical, social and artistic contexts of some statues. The statues of Athens by Pheidias and Zeus at Olympia are associated with the historical figure of Perikles, the Knidian Aphrodite is considered in the context of the phenomenon of *agalmatophilia*, and the Lysippan portraits of Alexander are regarded as evidence of the efforts to deliver realistic portraits.

These clever and erudite antiquarians reached a knowledge of the biographies of ancient artists as well as of the iconographies of the most important masterpieces of ancient Greece, which was much greater than the confused notion of them, which characterizes Western Renaissance, at least until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

For example, the configuration of the Knidian Aphrodite, known to Kedrenos, was recovered again only in 1671 by Spanheim<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> See Spanhemius 1671, 629.

## 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 authorization, the author of this study has declared that there is no need for Ethics Committee authorization.

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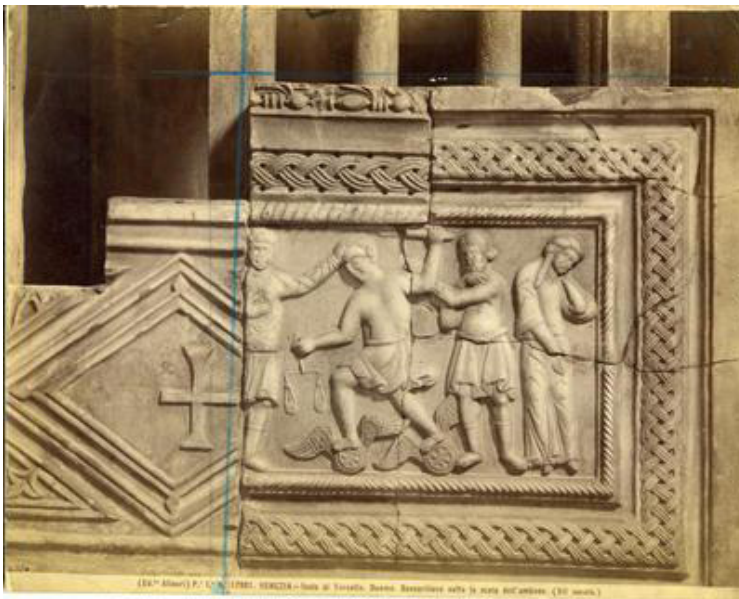
**Fig. 1.** Miniature in manuscript of the Physiologus, once in the Museum of the Evangeliki Scholi at Smyrna, it perished in the fire which destroyed that institution in 1922.



**Fig. 2.** Konstantinople in the Tabula Peutingeriana, section 8, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex Vindobonensis, no. 324.



**Fig. 3.** Building along the Mese road at Konstantinople with statues in niches, Accard Drawings, Paris, Louvre, no. 9451.



**Fig. 4.** Kairós inspired by the statue by Lysippos, a relief on the ambon of the cathedral of Torcellum.



Fig. 5. Ivory relief, Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum.



Fig. 6. Ivory relief, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery.