

Marsyas in the garden?

Small-scale sculptures referring to the Marsyas in the forum

Abstract

While studying a small-scale sculpture in the collections of the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, I noticed that it belongs to a previously unrecognized sculpture type. The type depicts a paunchy, bearded satyr who stands with one arm raised. To my knowledge, four replicas exist. By means of stylistic comparison, they can be dated to the late second to early third centuries AD. Due to their scale and rendering they are likely to have been freestanding decorative elements in Roman villas or gardens. The iconography of the satyrs of the type discussed is closely related to that of a group of fountain figures. These fountain figures are believed to refer to a motif well known in Roman times: the Marsyas in the forum.¹ In this article I argue that the satyrs of the type discussed refer as well to this once famous depiction of Marsyas.

A previously unrecognized sculpture type*

When studies are made of the sculptures in some of the largest collections of antiquities in the world, it is understandable that the small-scale, fragmentary and heavily restored pieces do not receive much attention. This must also be the reason why a sculpture type showing a paunchy, bearded satyr has previously not been given scholarly attention in its own right.² Four replicas and a series of variants and adaptations have come to my knowledge (Figs. 1–8). Three of the replicas are kept in very prominent museums: the Musée du Louvre in Paris, the Museo Nazionale Romano in Rome and the Musei Vaticani. I came across the sculpture type when studying the fourth replica, which is instead part of a comparatively little known collection of

antiquities bought in Rome in the eighteenth century by the Swedish king Gustav III. This collection belongs today to the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. It is currently being thoroughly published and a number of articles on the collection have previously appeared in *Opuscula Romana* and *Opuscula*.³

A second reason why the sculpture type has not previously been noted is most likely that two of the replicas have been restored in a highly interpretive manner. The replica in Paris has been inserted into a sculpture group together with the torso of a statuette originally representing Apollo Saurochthonos. In their restored state these two fragments have been reinterpreted as Bacchus supported by Silenus (Fig. 6).⁴ The replica in Stockholm, on the other hand, has been restored as caught in vivid movement, playing cymbals. Most likely the famous “dancing faun” in the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence served as the role model for the 18th century restorer (Fig. 7).⁵

Small-scale sculptures often show great variety of detail, even where the same general iconography is rendered. Therefore, such sculptures cannot always be studied according to the principles of *Stilforschung*, focusing

³ Boschung & Davies 2005; Bosso 2005; Grassinger 2010; Lang 2006–2007; Leander Touati 1998; Leander Touati 2005; Leander Touati forthcoming; Marcks 2008. The author of this article is responsible for the publication of the satyr of the type discussed in the Nationalmuseum, which is to appear in Leander Touati forthcoming.

⁴ The restorations are believed to have been made before 1609, while the sculptures belonged to the Della Porta collection. Thereafter the sculpture group was part of the Borghese collection before it came to the Louvre. Giroire & Roger 2007, cat. no. 82, Kalveram 1995, cat. no. 140.

⁵ The sculpture was restored while it still belonged to the collection of Giovanni Battista Piranesi. In an inventory written in 1792, Francesco Piranesi, the son of Giovanni Battista, mentions that the sculpture was restored by Alessandro Lippi. The inventory is published in Kjellberg 1920, 156–169. The satyr of the type discussed is listed as no. 3 in the inventory. On the satyr in Florence: Andreae 2001, 184–185; Haskell & Penny 1981, cat. no. 34.

* I wish to thank prof. Anne-Marie Leander Touati who has been of great help during the writing of this article.

¹ When discussing this motif in general, I will henceforth refer to it as the motif of “the Marsyas in the forum”.

² The term “satyr” is used in this article for paunchy and bearded satyrs who would traditionally be described as “silens”. This is to avoid confusion between the two mythological figures of Marsyas and Silenus.



Fig. 1. The satyr in the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, belonging to the Museo Nazionale Romano in Rome, is the best preserved replica of the Palazzo Massimo-type and the only one with a certain provenance. © Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.

on aspects such as models, replicas and stylistic evolution.⁶ But despite their small size, the satyrs of the sculpture type discussed in this article show great similarity, even regarding details. It is therefore clear that they refer to a common motif and that care was taken to make this visible. I will refer to the sculptures as satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type, after the location of the best preserved replica, the one belonging to the Museo Nazionale Romano, which is actually housed in the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme. The figures considered to be replicas within this sculpture type are rendered in the same manner as



Fig. 2. The right-hand side of the satyr of the Palazzo Massimo-type in Rome. © Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.

far as pose, physique, hair and attributes are concerned.⁷ There are also a number of variants of the type. Among these, which will be discussed below, five functioned as fountain figures. But first each replica will be presented in turn, starting with the best preserved sculpture, describing the traits characteristic for the sculpture type.⁸

⁷ See the appendix and *Figs. 1–8* for details on each sculpture.

⁸ Unfortunately I have been able to study only the sculpture in Stockholm first hand. The other replicas have been studied with the aid of photographs and the published descriptions listed in the appendix.

⁶ Moss 1988, 2.



Fig. 3. The satyr of the Palazzo Massimo-type in Rome seen from the back. © Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.



Fig. 4. The left-hand side of the satyr of the Palazzo Massimo-type in Rome. © Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.

The sculpture in Rome shows the head, torso and most of the right thigh of the paunchy satyr (Figs. 1–4). The head is tilted to the left. The right arm, of which the armpit is preserved, was stretched straight up, while the left shoulder shows that the left arm must have been held lower. The weight was placed on the right leg. The satyr is bald, with short, curly hair on the back of the neck and over the temples. He wears an ivy wreath with leaves and berries over the temples and a ribbon over the forehead and the neck. The ears are elongated, pointed and tilted forwards. The face is dominated by the full beard with corkscrew locks reaching down over the clavicles. Curly body hair covers the torso and the preserved thigh.

The satyr wears the skin of a small cloven-hoofed animal slung over the shoulder of the left arm and tied around the torso. This animal skin is henceforth referred to as a *nebris*, even though it is not clearly shown what kind of animal it comes from on any of the four replicas.

The replica in the Vatican consists of the satyr's torso and legs, the right one down to the knee and the left down to the ankle (Fig. 5). There are remains of the support attached to the *nebris* where it hangs over the left thigh. Besides the position of the support, this replica also gives a better idea of the pose of the figure. As we have seen on the sculpture in Rome, the satyr had its weight placed on the right leg. From the replica in the Vatican we can tell that



Fig. 5. The satyr of the Palazzo Massimo-type in the collections of the Musei Vaticani. © Deutsches archäologisches Institut–Rom. Neg. D-DAI-Rom 1989 Vat. 0576.

the left leg was placed quite far from the right, though the left foot cannot have been lifted much. The curly body hair covers the leg all the way down to the ankle.⁹

As previously mentioned, the replica in Paris has been restored as part of a sculpture group (Fig. 6). Of the original satyr the head, torso, the greater parts of both thighs, and parts of the left arm and the support remain. Unique for this replica is that parts of the lowered, left arm are preserved. The elbow rests on the support, shaped like a tree trunk. As must also have been the case for the satyr in the Vatican, the support is placed on the left hand side of the figure. Though in this case the support is attached to the

⁹ Amelung 1903, cat. no. 583; Andreae 1995, cat. no. 583.

figure both through the *nebris* at the height of the hip and separately to the upper thigh.¹⁰

As we have seen, the satyr in Stockholm has also been restored and supplemented with modern parts (Fig. 7). Of the ancient sculpture the head, torso and left thigh down to the knee are original. The head has been reattached, which explains the different tilt of the head as compared to the sculptures in Paris and Rome. Unlike the other three replicas, this sculpture shows a mirror image of the satyr: thus, this satyr had its left arm raised and its weight placed on the left leg. As the version with a raised right arm is more frequent, I will consider it as representing the pose of the original subject. We can only guess why a mirror image was made. Perhaps it was used as a pendant to a more canonical replica of the original kind.¹¹

At a first glance one might note that the replica in Stockholm also has a different rendering of the ivy wreath, of the ears and the beard. These deviations are, however, the work of the restorer, as also the preserved parts of the original sculpture have been heavily overworked. Damaged parts must in some instances have been cut away and repaired. For instance, the leaves and berries of the ivy wreath are later additions (Fig. 8). Only the ribbons of the original wreath are preserved at the back of the satyr's head. In other places the surface of the sculpture has been retouched without adding new marble. Obvious examples of this are the beard and the ears, which have a coarser surface than the parts of the sculpture that are better preserved. The sculpture in Stockholm also differs in that its pupils and irises are rendered (Fig. 8). Neither of these have been marked on the sculptures in Paris and Rome (Figs. 1, 4, 6). Judging from the surface of the sculpture, these details in the Stockholm replica seem to be ancient and not additions made by the restorer.

On the whole the pose and rendering of the satyr in Stockholm still shows that it must be a replica of the Palazzo Massimo-type. It is not the only one in the group of four that displays minor differences. The satyr in Paris lacks the body hair on the thighs represented on the other replicas (Figs. 1–3, 5–7). But this could again perhaps be explained by the intervention of a restorer. Another differing aspect is the knot of the *nebris* tied around the torso. On the

¹⁰ Fröhner 1870, cat. no. 234; Giroire & Roger 2007, cat. no. 82.

¹¹ Several mirror image pairs of small-scale sculptures with the same provenance are known. For instance the two small-scale sculptures representing a pair of mirror image, kneeling satyrs, which were found in the Villa dei Quintili, see Neudecker 1988, cat. no. 39.4. In Copenhagen there is a pair of monopod table supports assumed to be from the same provenance, showing mirror images of a standing satyr, see Stubbe Østergaard 1996, cat. nos. 113 & 114. On the use of pendants within Roman sculpture in general, see Bartman 1988.



Fig. 6. The replica of the Palazzo Massimo-type in the Musée du Louvre has been heavily restored and inserted in a sculpture group representing Bacchus and Silenus. © 2006 Musée du Louvre, D. Lebée and C. Déambrosis.



Fig. 7. The satyr of the Palazzo Massimo-type in the collections of the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. © Hans Thorwid/Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

satyr in Rome it is placed over the shoulder (Fig. 1), but on the other three sculptures it is placed over the chest (Figs. 5–7). Unfortunately I have not been able to study the back of the sculpture in Paris, but the backs of the three sculptures in Stockholm, Rome and the Vatican are all schematically worked. However some differences should be noted. On the satyr in Stockholm the back of the figure is either very damaged or left almost completely raw: not even the continuation of the *nebris* is rendered on the ancient fragment. Some folds of the animal skin have been added by the restorer. The back sides of the replicas in Rome and the Vatican are rather flat, but the satyr's body hair and the *nebris* are shown (For the replica in Rome, see Figs. 2–4).¹²

¹² Andreae 1995, cat. no. 583; Hartswick 2004, 115.

In sum, in a comparison of the four replicas, the following traits can be singled out as distinctive of the sculpture type: the satyr stands with his right arm raised straight up and his left one held lower. The elbow of the lowered, bent arm rests on a support, shaped like a tree trunk, which is also attached to the left side of the satyr, at the hip and/or the upper thigh. The weight is placed on the right leg. The left leg is placed quite far from the right, although the foot cannot have been lifted much. Further, the satyr is bald, with short, curly hair on the back of his neck and over his temples. He wears an ivy wreath with leaves and berries over the temples and a ribbon over the neck and the forehead. His ears are elongated, pointed and tilted forwards and his face is dominated by the full beard with corkscrew locks reaching down over the clavicles. Curly body hair covers torso and limbs and the satyr wears the skin of a small cloven-hoofed animal hung over the right shoulder and tied around the torso. As demonstrated by the replica in Stockholm there were also mirror images of the same type.

The sculptures are all small scale, but they vary somewhat in size. The satyrs in Paris and in the Vatican are similar in size, and notably smaller than the two in Rome and Stockholm.¹³ There is no detailed information on the provenance of the replicas in Paris and the Vatican, but the post-antique history of these two replicas, as far as we know, begins in Rome. The sculpture in Paris previously belonged to the Della Porta collection assembled in Rome in the sixteenth century and the other replica is housed in the collections of the Vatican.¹⁴ According to Francesco Piranesi, the sculpture in Stockholm was found around 1772 in the vicinity of the Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome.¹⁵ The provenance of the satyr in Rome suggests that the sculpture was originally part of the sculptural decoration of a garden. It was found in 1908, as construction work was carried out in the area of the Via Flavia and the Via Aureliana, in the valley between the Pincian and the Quirinal Hills. Thus, the satyr was found in the area of the Roman gardens of Sallust. Together with a marble relief pinax it lay in a cavity which appeared to have been made to protect the two sculptures. The pinax is decorated with Dionysian subjects on both sides: one shows the masks of

¹³ The largest replica, the one in Rome, is 0.65 m high from the crown to the middle of the right thigh. In comparison, the unrestored sculpture among the two smaller replicas, the one in the Vatican, is 0.46 m high from the neck and down to the ankle. Amelung 1903, cat. no. 583; Vagliari 1908, 347. See appendix for further measurements.

¹⁴ Amelung 1903, cat. no. 583; Kalveram 1995, cat. no. 140.

¹⁵ As stated in the inventory of 1792: Kjellberg 1920, 156. However, the information provided by Francesco Piranesi is not always reliable, as discussed in Leander Touati 1998, 51–55; Leander Touati 2005, 22–24.

a bearded satyr and a maenad, the other depicts two satyrs.¹⁶ Relief pinakes of this kind are known to have been placed on slender pillars in the peristyle gardens of Roman villas.¹⁷ Several such pinakes have been found in Pompeii, for instance in the peristyle of the Casa degli Amorini Dorati.¹⁸

Small-scale sculptures displaying Bacchic subjects, such as the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type, were placed mostly in the gardens of Roman villas. They are generally interpreted as tokens of a pastoral, sacred atmosphere, of happiness and prosperity.¹⁹ Sculptures of this scale could be used in different ways. For instance, monopod table supports sometimes included figures approximately the same size as our satyrs.²⁰ One could suggest that the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type supported the table leaf with their raised arm. There are several examples of monopod table stands where the table top is supported by a satyr.²¹ However, a common feature of monopod table stands including a telamon figure is that the support of the construction is placed behind the sculpted figure.²² As has been noted above, the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type had a support on the side, attached to the hip and/or the upper thigh and the arm. Therefore these satyrs are more likely to have belonged to some other context.

Another possibility is that the satyrs were used as fountain figures. There are, as previously mentioned, five fountain figures which are very similar to the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type. These will be discussed below.²³ Still, as none of the four replicas of the Palazzo Massimo-type show signs of channels for water pipes or of having been worn down by running water, we cannot know for certain if they were used as fountain figures. The satyrs might just as well have served as decorative elements in their own right. Though, as the backs of at least three of the replicas are rather flat and/or somewhat schematically rendered (see for instance the replica in Rome, *Figs. 2–4*) it is likely that they were not clearly visible from behind: perhaps they were placed in niches, against walls or somewhere similar.

The four satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type can be dated only by means of stylistic comparison. Judging from the assiduous use of the drill in the rendering of the body

¹⁶ Gatti 1908, 284–287; Hartswick 2004, 112–113 & 115; Vagliari 1908, 347–350.

¹⁷ Cain 1988, 189–190; Hundsalz 1987, 89.

¹⁸ Seiler 1992, 116–135, cat. nos. 3, 7, 10, 13, 37, 39, 41 & 42.

¹⁹ Cain 1988, 184–185; Dwyer 1982, 123–124; Neudecker 1988, 47–54.

²⁰ Moss 1988, 2.

²¹ Moss 1988, cat. nos. A 17–19, A 25 & A 37 (there is also a table stand depicting the hanging Marsyas: cat. no. A 40); Neudecker 1988, 52.

²² Moss 1988, 16.

²³ Kapossy 1969, 31 (Type “Marsyas”).



Fig. 8. Detail of the satyr of the Palazzo Massimo-type in Stockholm showing the restorations and the retouched areas of the head. © Hans Thorwid/Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

hair and the beard, all four replicas are likely to have been made during the late second to early third centuries AD. A paunchy satyr of Late Hellenistic date and possibly of Delian craftsmanship standing in a similar pose shows a marked difference in rendering: here the use of the drill is not as clearly visible on the sculpture’s surface. The sculpture was found in the Republican Villa di Fianello Sabino.²⁴

One way to gain a more specific reading of the sculptures is to propose a reconstruction of their original appearance and an understanding of their semantic context. Previously such suggestions, based on scientific reasoning, have been made for two of the replicas. Both see the sculptures as Roman adaptations of Classical Greek masterpieces. Walther Amelung saw the replica in the Vatican as a transformation of the sculpture type known as Apollo Lykeios. In Roman times this particular pose of Apollo’s also came to be used for representations of Bacchus. As

²⁴ Vorster 1998, 27–30, cat. no. 3.



Fig. 9. The fountain figure found in the Villa dei Quintili is restored: the larger part of the left arm, the legs from the thighs and downwards, and the lower part of the support and the plinth are later additions, as are parts of both wineskin and nebris. © Musei Vaticani, neg. no. XXXII.53.2.

the pose of the fragmentary satyr in the Vatican clearly resembles that of Apollo Lykeios, Amelung suggested that the subject had been transformed a second time, to be used on a member of the wine god's *thiasos*.²⁵ The most con-

²⁵ Amelung 1903, cat. no. 583.

spicuous aspect of Apollo Lykeios' pose is that the deity rests his right hand on his head.²⁶ The head is missing on the satyr of the Palazzo Massimo-type in the Vatican, the one Amelung published. But on the other three replicas, where the head of the satyr is preserved, there are no traces of a hand resting on its head. Thus this reconstruction cannot be valid.

Another suggestion made for the replica in Rome is that the satyr is an adaptation of Praxiteles' pouring satyr.²⁷ This satyr stands with his right arm raised and his weight placed on his left leg. The well balanced pose gives an impression of the controlled movement connected with the act of pouring.²⁸ This stands in contrast to the unbalanced pose shown by the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type. These latter are standing with their weight placed on the right leg and with the right arm lifted, or in the Stockholm case, in a reversed position. This gives an impression of instability, one perhaps better suited to the burlesque features of the paunchy satyr. Therefore I would argue that the different poses of the two sculpture types show that they represented two fundamentally different iconographies.

Instead, I would like to point out the iconographical similarity between the Palazzo Massimo-satyrs and a fountain figure kept in the Galleria dei Candelabri of the Musei Vaticani (*Fig. 9*). This sculpture is the best preserved of a group of four fountain figures that seem to have represented the same iconography. As two of these are very fragmentary and the third is known only from a drawing, I will base the iconographic comparison between these fountain figures and the Palazzo Massimo-satyrs on the best preserved of the fountain figures: the one in the Galleria dei Candelabri.²⁹ This fountain figure was found in the Villa dei Quintili near Rome and has been dated to the second century AD.³⁰ It shows a paunchy satyr standing in the same pose as the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type. The sculpture represents the reversed pose, the one where the satyr has his left arm raised. Here one should mention that the other three fountain figures within the group had their right

²⁶ Schröder 1989.

²⁷ Soprintendenza Speciale 2010 (19 March 2010).

²⁸ Gercke 1968, 1–21.

²⁹ Kapossy 1969, 31. The four sculptures are the following: Germany, Bonn, Akademisches Kunstmuseum (?), see Jordan 1883, 8, Taf. 3C, and Loeschke 1891, 14–15; Germany, Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, inv. no. 1917, 192, see Hoffmann 1961, cat. no. 29; Vatican, Musei Vaticani, Galleria dei Candelabri, VI 13, see Lippold 1956, 419–420, no. 13, and Neudecker 1988, cat. no. 39.3; Vatican, Musei Vaticani, depository, inv. no. 4494, published by Kapossy 1969, 31, fig. 18.

³⁰ Neudecker 1988, cat. no. 39.3.

arm raised.³¹ Most details of the rendering are also shared between the Palazzo Massimo-satyr and the sculpture in the Galleria dei Candelabri: the satyr has the same kind of beard and ears; he wears the same type of wreath and his torso is covered with body hair; the tree-shaped support is attached to the satyr's hip and arm in a manner similar to that seen on the Palazzo Massimo-satyr. However, two differing traits should be noted. Like the Palazzo Massimo-satyr, the fountain figure has an animal skin placed over the raised arm's shoulder, but on the fountain figure this animal skin is not tied around the torso. The second divergence is more important. Unlike the Palazzo Massimo-satyr, the fountain figure carries a wineskin over his right shoulder, with his lowered right hand around its opening. Originally water spurted out of the orifice.³² Despite these differences, the similarities are such that I would argue that these sculptures may well refer to a common motif. And, as Balázs Kapossy has already noted for the fountain figures, these sculptures do seem to refer to a motif well known in Roman times: that of the Marsyas in the forum.³³

The iconography of the Marsyas in the forum

Marsyas is best known from the mythological narrative where he learns to play the pipes invented by Athena. He does so with such virtuosity that he ventures to engage in a music competition with Apollo. After a bitterly disputed contest Apollo is proclaimed the winner and subsequently the god has Marsyas bound and flayed alive. The iconography of Marsyas in Roman art is often connected to the different stages of this mythological narrative. One famous sculpture group, ascribed to Myron, shows Marsyas and Athena.³⁴ Another depicts Marsyas alone, playing the pipes.³⁵ A third renders the preparations of the flaying of Marsyas.³⁶ In these depictions Marsyas is shown as a slender, bearded satyr. But there were also instances where Marsyas was bulkier: for example, the sculptures of Marsyas placed

in *fora* in Rome and in the provinces. However, the evidence relating to this motif is scant.³⁷

We know that one such sculpture representing Marsyas stood in the Forum Romanum. Horace provides the earliest surviving literary reference to this sculpture, written in the 30s BC.³⁸ Seneca and Pliny, writing in the 50s and 70s AD, respectively, mention the sculpture in relation to Julia's nocturnal revels.³⁹ In AD 86 Martial describes the sculpture as a meeting place for moneylenders and lawyers.⁴⁰ This last function of the sculpture is again stated in the commentaries of Horace's text written by Acron and Porphyron in the second and third centuries AD. These two writers also note that Marsyas held one hand raised.⁴¹ But in order to gain more information concerning the iconography of the sculpture, one has to turn to the depictions of it that have been preserved.

On *denarii* minted by L. Marcius Censorinus in Rome in 82 BC, the head of Apollo is depicted on the obverse. The god is paired with a paunchy satyr on the reverse, who stands with his right arm raised (Fig. 10). The coin legend mentions the minter's cognomen, Censorinus, but the identity of the satyr is believed to be connected not only to Apollo, but also to the minter's nomen, Marcius, as it is similar to the name Marsyas.⁴² The same image as depicted on the reverse of these coins also recurs on a cameo in the British Museum.⁴³ A similar, paunchy satyr is shown twice on the reliefs usually referred to as the *Anaglypha Traiani*, dated to the reign of Trajan (AD 98–117). These reliefs were found on the west end of the Forum Romanum in 1872. One relief depicts an *ad locutio*-scene and the other a burning of debt records. The two scenes are set in the Forum Romanum and the sculpture of Marsyas is included in both, standing on a pedestal under a fig tree (Fig. 11).⁴⁴

The general iconography of the Marsyas in the Forum Romanum can thus be reconstructed from these depictions of the sculpture. On the coins of L. Marcius Censorinus and the cameo the whole sculpture is shown, but on the reliefs of the *Anaglypha Traiani* the head, as well as the right arm and leg, are missing in both representations. On the

³¹ Hoffmann 1961, cat. no. 29; Jordan 1883, 8, Taf. 3C; Kapossy 1969, 31, fig. 18; Lippold 1956, 419–420, no. 13.

³² Lippold 1956, 419–420, no. 13; Neudecker 1988, cat. no. 39.3.

³³ Kapossy 1969, 31.

³⁴ Junker 2002.

³⁵ Andreas 2001, 101–103.

³⁶ Weis 1992.

³⁷ J.P. Small has collected the ancient texts, inscriptions and depictions relating to the Marsyas on the forum: Small 1982, appendix 3. Four depictions should be added: a cameo in the British Museum and three fountain sculptures. Kapossy 1969, 31 (Type "Marsyas"); Walters 1926, cat. no. 1566.

³⁸ Hor. *Sat.* 1.6.120–121.

³⁹ Sen. *Ben.* 6.32.1; Plin. *HN* 21.6 (8–9).

⁴⁰ Mart. *Epigrams* 2.64.7–8.

⁴¹ Acron, *ad Hor., Satires* 1.6.120–121; Porphyron, *ad Hor., Satires* 1.6.120–121.

⁴² Crawford 1974, cat. no. 363.

⁴³ Walters 1926, cat. no. 1566.

⁴⁴ Also known as the "Anaglypha Hadriani". Torelli 1982, 89–118.



Fig. 10. One of the coins minted by L. Marcius Censorinus in Rome in 82 BC. The obverse shows the head of Apollo and the reverse the sculpture of Marsyas which stood in the Forum Romanum. © Trustees of the British Museum.

reliefs the satyr stands with his weight placed on the right leg while the left is placed more farther forward than the right one (Fig. 11). The coins and the cameo differ to this point: here the right leg is placed before the left (Fig. 10). This may however be an alteration made so that the legs would not overlap. Another possibility is that different versions of the sculpture are rendered: after all, the sculpture might have been replaced during the two hundred years that separate the two depictions. For instance, the sculpture may have been damaged during the Neronian fire of AD 64. The position of the legs aside, the iconography is the same in the depictions mentioned above, at least as far as one can tell. Marsyas is rendered as a paunchy satyr who holds a wineskin on his left shoulder with his left hand. He is naked except for a set of boots. On the coins Marsyas holds his right arm raised and he appears to be wearing something on his head which could be understood as a cap, a fillet or a wreath.

As mentioned above, sculptures of Marsyas were also placed in *fora* of other Roman cities. The practice of placing such sculptures there is mentioned by Charax of Pergamon writing in the second century AD, Servius and Macrobius both writing in the late fourth century AD and in the Medieval *Mythographi Vaticani*.⁴⁵ It is also attested in inscribed sculpture bases that seem to have carried such sculptures. These bases have been found in North Africa.⁴⁶ Furthermore, sculptures of Marsyas in the forum were depicted on coins primarily minted in North Africa and Asia Minor. Chronologically these coins occur from the reign of Hadrian (AD 117–138) to that of Aurelian (AD 270–275). The coins show Marsyas as a thickly built satyr standing with his right arm raised in a gesture similar to the *ad locutio*.

⁴⁵ Serv. *Ad Aenidem* 3.20 & 4.58; Macr. *Sat.* 3.12; Myth. Vat. 3.9.13 & 3.12.1. Charax of Pergamon, *Etymologicon magnum* is published in Veyne 1961, 88–92.

⁴⁶ Small 1982, appendix 3D.

Thus, the hand is raised, not straight up, but approximately to the height of the head. The satyr is naked except for a set of boots and he carries a wineskin over his left shoulder.⁴⁷

As for the actual sculptures of Marsyas placed in *fora*, only one is preserved: a bronze sculpture found near the forum of Paestum (Fig. 12). The arms of the figure are missing, but one can still tell that Marsyas stood with his right arm raised. Both knees are a little bent and the left foot is placed slightly in front of the right. Unlike the depictions of sculptures of Marsyas presented above, this sculpture shows no trace of a wineskin. While all other evidence of the Marsyas placed in *fora* other than the Forum Romanum can be dated to the Imperial era, this bronze is believed to be of an early date: the third to first centuries BC.⁴⁸

As we have seen, there is evidence relating to the motif of the Marsyas in the forum from the Republican era to Late Antiquity. The geographical spread is equally wide, as the motif was used on the Italian peninsula and in the Southern and Eastern provinces. It is difficult to assess which iconographical traits were distinctive of the motif as these may have changed over time. Besides, there might also have been local variations. However, we can note the most clearly marked, recurring features within the iconography outlined above. These are the bulky build of the satyr, his raised right arm and the fact that he has a beard and wears a set of boots. In all instances but one he also carries a wineskin over the left shoulder.

When returning to the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type and the closely related fountain figure one should of course have their date and provenance in mind when comparing their iconography to that of the Marsyas in the forum. As they all seem to be from Rome and to have been made during the second to early third centuries AD they should primarily be compared to the depictions of the Marsyas which stood in the Forum Romanum. Among the depictions of this sculpture, those on the Anaglypha Traiani are chronologically most closely related. Therefore it is unfortunate that the presumably raised right arm and the head of Marsyas have not been preserved on this relief. In the same manner it is regrettable that the feet are not preserved on either the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type or the fountain figure. This makes it impossible to determine whether these satyrs wore the boots that seem to be characteristic for the Marsyas in the forum. But as far as the legs are concerned, the pose is the same, as is the build of

⁴⁷ Small 1982, 82–83, and appendix 3C.

⁴⁸ Bianchi Bandinelli & Giuliano 1973, 412, no. 283; Sestieri 1953, 177. Sestieri claims that the head is of Greek manufacture and dates it to the fifth century BC. The body is seen as a product of local craftsmanship of the second to first centuries BC.



Fig. 11. The burning of debt records on the Forum Romanum depicted on the so-called *Anaglypha Traiani*. The sculpture of Marsyas is depicted on the far left, under the fig tree. © Deutsches archäologisches Institut–Rom. Felbermeyer, Neg. D-DAI-Rom 1968.2785.

the satyr (Figs. 1, 5–7, 11).⁴⁹ The fountain figure also shows the wineskin seen on the *Anaglypha Traiani*.

The fact that the wineskin carried by Marsyas is not represented on the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type is the most remarkable deviation from the iconography of the Marsyas in the forum. But here one is tempted to note that the only preserved original sculpture actually placed in a forum, the one from Paestum, does not show any signs of having carried a wineskin (Fig. 12).⁵⁰ Perhaps the wineskin was not as crucial for the iconography as one might think? Instead the physical features of Marsyas, the raised arm and the boots might have been considered essential, or at least sufficient, for the iconography of the Marsyas in the forum. For a fountain figure of the kind represented by the satyr in the Galleria dei Candelabri, the wineskin was an important feature, as the water originally spurted out of its opening, which Marsyas held in his lowered hand. But perhaps the subject of the Marsyas in the forum was also altered into a variant less influenced by the fountain function, a variant represented by the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type, where the wineskin was simply left out.

If the motif of the Marsyas in the forum was still recognizable as long as the general iconography of the satyr was clearly rendered, one can link other sculptures to this motif as well. There are at least three other small-scale sculptures representing bearded satyrs standing in the same pose as the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type, sculptures where there are again no traces of wineskins. One of the three is a fountain figure from Capua, now in the Musée de Mariemont, which shows a slender satyr with no body hair.⁵¹ The different physique is more related to, and may well refer to, Marsyas as shown in the more widespread sculpture types representing Marsyas, such as the Marsyas of Myron, the Satyr Borghese and the hanging Marsyas.⁵² The other two satyrs are paunchy. One of them is housed in the Museo arqueológico nacional (Fig. 13). This satyr is very similar to those of the Palazzo Massimo-type. A differing detail is that the *nebris* is tied around the satyr's belly and not hung over his shoulder.⁵³ The third sculpture is now in Denmark, in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. Like the fountain sculpture in the Musée de Mariemont, this satyr lacks body hair, but he is wearing a wreath similar to

⁴⁹ Lippold 1956, Taf. 178; Small 1982, figs. 22–23.

⁵⁰ Bianchi Bandinelli & Giuliano 1973, 412, no. 283; Sestieri 1953, 177.

⁵¹ Belgium, Moranwelz, Musée de Mariemont, see Faider-Feytmans 1952, cat. no. G. 28.

⁵² Andreae 2001, 101–103; Junker 2002; Rawson 1987; Weis 1992.

⁵³ Spain, Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, see García y Bellido 1949, cat. no. 89.



Fig. 12. A bronze sculpture representing Marsyas was found in the vicinity of the forum of Paestum. © Valletta Francesco and Grippo Giovanni, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Paestum.

those shown in the type discussed. His right arm is not lifted straight up, as that of the other satyrs, but held out in a 90-degree angle from the torso.⁵⁴ The raised arm in this case is similar to the iconography of Marsyas in the forum as shown on the provincial coins, where the raised arm is similar to the gesture of the *ad locutio*.⁵⁵ Like the satyr in the Galleria dei Candelabri he has an animal skin slung over the shoulder of the raised arm, but it is not tied around the torso.⁵⁶

Leaving the question of iconography aside, one still has to ask why the motif of the Marsyas in the forum would



Fig. 13. A small-scale sculpture in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid is closely related to the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type and to the motif of the Marsyas in the forum. © Photo Archive National Archaeology Museum, Madrid.

have been used in contexts other than in *fora*. As has been argued above, the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type are likely to have been used as decorative elements in the gardens of Roman villas. Here one should also note that the fountain figure in the Galleria dei Candelabri was found in a secluded, not to say private, residential setting: the Villa dei Quintili near Rome. But to approach the question of why the motif came to be used in other settings, it is also necessary to discuss the meaning attributed to the motif of the Marsyas in the forum.

Marsyas in the garden?

The meaning attributed to the Marsyas in the forum has been discussed at length by several scholars without

⁵⁴ Denmark, Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. no. 1846, see Moltesen 2005, cat. no. 125.

⁵⁵ Small 1982, 73–74.

⁵⁶ Moltesen 2005, cat. no. 125.

reaching a consensus.⁵⁷ One interpretation emphasizes the position of the statue in the Forum Romanum under the fig tree. This tree is seen as related to the *Nonae Caprolinae*, the days of the wild fig tree. This was a feast of pre-Roman origin, related to fertility. By analogy, then, the sculpture of Marsyas placed under this tree is seen as closely related to fertility.⁵⁸ Another interpretation sees the sculpture as a symbol of liberty, as hinted at in texts of the second century AD and later,⁵⁹ for instance by Servius:

"but in free cities there was an image of Marsyas, who is under the protection of father Liber."⁶⁰

"Marsyas, his minister, placed by cities in the forum, is perhaps a sign of liberty, who by his raised hand calls to witness that nothing is lacking in a city."

"FATHER LYAEUS who, as we said above, is rightly the god of liberty; whence also Marsyas, his minister, is a sign of liberty in cities."⁶¹

Those who argue in favour of this interpretation also note that the sculpture in the Forum Romanum stood near the court of the *praetor peregrinus*. This was the tribunal for inhabitants of Roman colonies who enjoyed the civic rights and privileges of the *Ius Coloniae* and, from the second century onwards, the *Ius Italicum*. Thus, the statue of Marsyas is seen as a symbol of civic liberty and the statues of Marsyas in provincial fora have therefore been interpreted as indicators of the colonial status of the city where they were placed, or that the citizens of the city had been granted the privileges of the *Ius Italicum*. Another aspect that speaks in favour of such an interpretation is that many of the

⁵⁷ The suggested interpretations have been summarized by Klimowsky 1982. One should add Small 1982, 68–92; Torelli 1982, 89–118; Wiseman 2004, 68–69.

⁵⁸ Klimowsky 1982, 92–93.

⁵⁹ Serv. *Ad Aenidem* 3.20 & 4.58; Macr. *Sat.* 3.12; Myth. Vat. 3.9.13 & 3.12.1. Charax of Pergamon wrote a witty (?) reversal of the use of Marsyas as a sign of liberty: Charax of Pergamon, *Etymologicon magnum* published in Veyne 1961, 88–92.

⁶⁰ Serv. *Ad Aenidem* 3.20: "sed in liberis civitatibus simulacrum Marsyae erat, qui in tutela Liberi patris est". Transl. Small 1982, 72.

⁶¹ Serv. *Ad Aenidem* 4.58: "Marsyas, minister eius, per civitates in foro positus vel libertatis indicium est, qui erecta manu testator nihil urbi deesse." "PATRIQUE LYAEO qui, ut supra diximus, apte urbibus libertatis est deus; unde etiam Marsyas, eius minister, est in civitatibus libertatis indicium." Transl. Small 1982, 72–73.

provincial coins with depictions of this Marsyas were minted during the Severan era, a time when the number of cities that enjoyed the *Ius Italicum* was greatly increased.⁶²

The last mentioned interpretation of the motif links it closely to the forum as a civic place. But this does not exclude the possibility that the presumably well known motif of the Marsyas in the forum was hinted at in other contexts as well. For instance, in his description of the extravagant meal of Trimalchio, Petronius mentions small Marsyas figures with sauce coming out of wineskins that they were carrying.⁶³ These containers are most likely meant to refer to the motif of the Marsyas in the forum. The reference may not imply that such sauce containers were actually produced, but it shows that this motif could be hinted at in a playful manner in a completely different context.

The repetitiveness of Roman art clearly shows its predilection for well known motifs, and there is no reason to believe that the motif of the Marsyas in the forum would not have been referred to in contexts other than *fora*. The fact that Marsyas was a satyr undisputedly ties him to the Bacchic sphere. It is most likely this aspect that made the motif a suitable subject for garden displays, in the shape of small scale sculptures such as the fountain figure in the Galleria dei Candelabri and the satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type. And one should not forget that the Marsyas in the Forum Romanum was placed under a fig tree. Together the two most likely constituted a small, but significant bucolic feature in the bustling civic centre of Rome.

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Appendix: Satyrs of the Palazzo Massimo-type

France, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. MA 489

Condition: Restored and inserted in a group also including the torso of a sculpture originally representing Apollo

⁶² Klimowsky 1982, 93–100; Veyne 1961; Small 1982, 82–83; Wiseman 2004, 68–69.

⁶³ Petron. *Sat.* 36.

Saurochthonos. Of the satyr the head, torso, parts of the thighs, the left arm and the support are preserved.

Material: Marble.

Measurements: Height of the restored sculpture group: 0.89 m.

Context: Previously in the Della Porta collection and the Borghese collection.

Bibliography: Lamberti 1796, parte seconda, stanza 4, no. 8; Clarac 1850, pl. 274, no. 1569; Fröhner 1870, cat. no. 234; Reinach 1897, 138, fig. 7; Levi 1919, 62–63, n. 6; Pochmarski 1990, cat. no. P 50; Kalveram 1995, cat. no. 140; Giroire & Roger 2007, cat. no. 82.

Italy, Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, inv. no. 78204

Condition: No restorations. The head, torso and a part of the right thigh are preserved.

Material: Marble.

Measurements: Height: 0.65 m; width: 0.25 m.

Context: Said to have been found in 1908 during construction work carried out between the Via Flavia and the Via Aureliana, in the valley between the Pincian and Quirinal hills in Rome.

Bibliography: Gatti 1908, 284–287; Vagliari 1908, 347–350; Reinach 1913, 32, fig. 5; *Carta archeologica di Roma* 1964, 83–85, no. 3b; Hartswick 2004, 112 & 115.

Sweden, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, inv. no. NM Sk 23

Condition: Restored as playing cymbals. The head, torso and the left thigh are preserved. The head has been reattached and the surface of the ancient fragment has been partly retouched.

Material: Marble.

Measurements: Height: 0.97 m.

Context: Said to have been found around 1772 in the vicinity of the Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano in Rome and restored by Alessandro Lippi. Previously in the collection of Giovanni Battista Piranesi.

Bibliography: Clarac 1850, pl. 738, no. 1777; Gerhard 1853, 395; Heydemann 1865, 153; Wieseler 1868, 223; Geffroy 1896, 30–31; Reinach 1897, 425, fig. 6; Kjellberg 1920, 139 & 156; Kjellberg & Kjellberg 1947, no. 4974; Cavalli-Björkman 1999, 395.

Vatican, Musei Vaticani, Galleria Chiaramonti, inv. nr. 1780

Condition: No restorations. The front surface has been retouched. The torso, the right thigh and the left leg down to the ankle are preserved.

Material: Marble.

Measurements: Height: 0.46 m.

Context: Unknown.

Bibliography: Platner et al. 1834, 76, no. 581; Amelung 1903, cat. no. 583; Reinach 1904, 231, fig. 1; Andreae 1995, cat. no. 583.

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