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## Statuette of Muse from the Basilica of St. Antony at Padua (North East Italy)

The subject of this note is a statuette in Parian marble (Ill. 12–14) [14] from the quarry of Lakkoi on the Cycladic island of Paros [14, p. 288, note 48]. This type of marble is usually called “Paros 2” in order to distinct it from the marble from the quarries of Marathi, also on Paros, which is called *Lychnites* or “Paros 1” and of superior quality [7].

This female figure wears a chiton and a himation, her left leg holds the weight of the figure, her right leg is bent. She wears sandals of a type which is used from the late 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. onwards [2; 4]. Her drapery is endowed with a proper weight and wraps the body, thus underlining also the corporeity and the three-dimensionality of the represented figure. The chiton is fastened with a girdle just below the breasts: a feature which is very trendy from late classical times throughout the Hellenistic ones [3, pp. 133–141]. The body of this figure turns to her left side from below to top. The wide neckline underlines the female appeal of the figure. Her head is relatively small when compared to the body: this feature corresponds with the Lysippan canon [6], which was adopted by a strong current throughout the Hellenistic period [12, pp. 17–20]. Her face is triangular, her mouth is sinuous, her eyes are narrow and elongated and her forehead is roughly triangular with its upper sides curved. Her hair was made of sinuous locks collected on the nape falling on the back.

The front of the figure was crafted with great care which meant to convey a sense of *venustas*. On the contrary, her flanks and even more her back do not look so successful. The unavoidable conclusion is that the statuette was made for the purpose of being seen only from the front. The gaze of the figure is addressed to the attribute she is holding in her left hand: a wax writing tablet (*tabula cerata*)<sup>1</sup>. Her hair is shaped with the use of a running drill.

Most of the right arm is missing as well as the probable attribute she held in the corresponding hand. A hole in the right flank clarifies that the right arm was lowered. The surfaces are worn and weathered and suggest that the statuette had been exposed in the open air for a long time.

The use of the running drill and the flat folding in the back and in its lower part suggest that the statuette dates from the epoch of Antonines [14]. As for the subject, the attribute of the wax writing tablet suggests that it is a Muse, either Klio or Kalliope, who are characterized with the attributes of the wax writing tablet in their left hands and of the *stilus* in their right hands [1; 8].

<sup>1</sup> About diptychs and scrolls as attributes of Muses, especially of Klio and Kalliope, see 1.

The style is Rhodian: the oval shape of the face, the soft and vaporous locks on the head, the narrow and elongated eyes, the sinuous mouth, the wide neckline, the girdle below the breasts, the wrapping disposition of the mantel around the body, the oblique folding and the fall of the himation on the feet are features typical of the Rhodian school [11, pp. 358–413]. In particular, this Muse could be linked to a series of Muses of Rhodian tradition which bear similar proportions, styles, as well as much of the above mentioned iconographic features [10; 11, pp. 409–413]. These figures of Muses, as it was demonstrated by Eugenio La Rocca, have derived from the Muses of Philiskos [9], which were brought to Rome and set up in the temple of Apollo *Medicus*, later called of Apollo *Sosianus* (see Pliny 36.34) [5; 13].

The statuette was brought to the north-east Italian city of Padua and set up on a water basin in the local Basilica of St. Antony, precisely in its north-west section, where it still stands.

The vicissitudes, which led to the re-use of this ancient statuette, probably are the following. The water basin, which is supporting the statuette, was made in 1513 by Giovanni Minello and Francesco Cola [14, p. 268]. In the same year, the Greek sculptor Johannis Georgos Laskaris Pyrgoteles set up a marble statuette of St. Justine above the water basin [14, pp. 268; 284]. In 1544, the statuette needed a restoration which was performed by Danese Cattaneo and Tiziano Aspetti [14, pp. 269; 285]. However, in 1556, the right arm was damaged and had to be re-joined to the body of the sculpture [14, pp. 269; 285]. Finally, the statuette by Pyrgoteles fell down, its head was destroyed [14, pp. 270; 286], and thus a new statuette of St. Justine was commissioned to the sculptor from Padua, Agostino Zoppo [14, pp. 269 285]. Zoppo, who had a collection of ancient marble sculptures [14, pp. 270; 286, note 28], probably set up an ancient statuette from his collection on the water basin of the church.

St. Justine was often represented with the book of Gospels in her left hand [14, p. 268], thus the writing tablet of the Muse may have been re-interpreted as the Gospel.

Since the surfaces of the Muse have been worn, the statuette was originally set up in the open air in a sanctuary on Rhodes or in another site subjected to Rhodian artistic influence. It may have been removed from the island and brought to Venice in the early Renaissance and thus it may have been collected by the Paduan sculptor Zoppo.

The statuette still preserves its ancient grace, which is outstanding. From a critical point of view, the Muse retains iconography and style of the series of Muses attributed to the Rhodian sculptor Philiskos.

**Title.** Statuette of Muse from the Basilica of St. Antony in Padua (North-East Italy).

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**Abstract:** This note focuses on a statuette of Muse in Parian marble from the Basilica of St. Antony in Padua (Northern-Eastern Italy). It aims to include this statuette in the series of statuettes of Muses derived from the famous group of Muses carved by Philiskos of Rhodes. The statuette dates from the epoch of Antonines and stylistically is indebted to the Rhodian tradition. The Muse found her way to Padua in Northern-Eastern Italy where it was set up above a water basin in the basilica of St. Antony. The note offers an attempt to recreate the probable history of the statuette's re-use as a depiction of St. Justine there.

**Keywords:** Muse; Philiskos; Rhodes; basilica of St. Antony in Padua; Agostino Zoppo.

**Название статьи.** Статуэтка Музы из базилики Св. Антония в Падуе.

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**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена статуэтке Музы из паросского мрамора, находящейся в базилике Св. Антония в Падуе (Северо-Восточная Италия). В ней следует видеть одну из скульптур из серии-повторения знаменитой группы Муз, созданной мастером эллинистического периода Филиском. Ее можно датировать эпохой Антонинов; в стилистическом отношении она восходит к родосской традиции. Эта Муза впоследствии очутилась в Падуе, где была установлена над чашей в базилике Св. Антония и, по всей видимости, должна была представлять св. Иустину. В статье предпринята попытка восстановить обстоятельства, в связи с которыми она оказалась там.

**Ключевые слова:** Муза; Филиск; Родос; базилика Св. Антония в Падуе; Агостино Цоппо.

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Ill. 10. Gravestone with bust of woman. Syria, probably from Palmyra. Limestone. New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Accession Number: 01.25.1  
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Ill. 11. Standing man. Parthian period, from southwestern Iran. Basalt. New York, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Accession Number: 51.72.1  
 (© The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, N.Y.)



Ill. 12. Marble statuette in Parian marble on a water basin. Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua



Ill. 13. Marble statuette in Parian marble on a water basin. Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua.



Ill. 14. Marble statuette in Parian marble on a water basin. Basilica of St. Anthony, Padua