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Sobhi Ashour

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A Table-Leg Decorated with a Statue of a Boxer in Cairo

SOBHI ASHOUR

This article is handling an unpublished sculpture of a Roman boxer, kept at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo[1], which is a rare subject from Egypt.[2] The statue's support column suggests that it was used as table leg, or *monopodium*, that comes from a private house. It is a unique example from Egypt, although there is one other parallel in the Roman Empire.

The Cairo statue (Basement Register Number N. 967), which is carved in black basalt and reaches 46 cm in height, has an unknown provenance. The diameter of the column-support is 13,7 cm at the base and 12 cm at the top (fig. 1). The statue is carved in a frontal posture, with torsion of the chest to the left. The figure's weight is depending on the right leg, while

1 I am grateful to the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo for a one-month travel grant to Berlin within July 2013, which was very fruitful for the compilation of this article. I am also grateful to the anonymous Ifao referee and to Hans Rupprecht Goette and Sascha Kansteiner for useful notes concerning this sculpture.

2 Few boxer figures are known from Egypt: a terracotta mould in the British Museum, from Naukratis, probably from Hellenistic date: Walters 1903, p. 439. A Hadrianic-early Antonine limestone head in Allard Pierson Museum shows a winner of the Isthmian games: Moormann 2000, cat. 69. The ears were regarded as schematic, but the cauliflower shape, which was an insignia of boxer (Kohne, Ewiglebe 2000. p. 83, fig. 93) is suspected. A bronze statue, perhaps comes from Alexandria, and dates between 50 BC-50 AD, is one authenticated figure of boxer, but its Egyptian provenance is based on a technical and stylistic basis: Kozloff 1988, no. 24, p. 147 ff. A statue of a child boxer in Walters Art Gallery, most likely represents Herakles as infant: see Poliakoff 1987, p. 78, fig. 80; Reeder 1988, no. 52, p. 137. A terracotta bust from Canopus, in Alexandria, depicts a muscled boxer with remains of the *caesti* on his arms, and a lion skin around his neck and chest: it may represent Herakles as well (Breccia 1934, no. 321, p. 54, pl. LXXII, p. 366). A late Roman funerary stele from Thebes in the British Museum, represents a muscled, athletic victor: Parlasca 2003, p. 241 ff. This may represent a boxer, wrestler or pankratiast too. Papyri and inscriptions sometimes show boxers participating and winning in wrestling or pankration contests and vice-versa: see Peremans, Vant Dack 1968, nos. 17234, 17237, 17241; Perpillou-Thomas 1995, no. 351, p. 247; Remijsen 2009, p. 256. On the paucity of athletic figures from Egypt, see Ashour 2012, p. 18, p. 23 ff.

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the left one is relaxed with a bent knee: its three quarter axis to the torso is detectable. The head of the figure is missing, together with the left arm and the right forearm. Both legs are broken, the left one just beneath the waist, while the right is broken at knee level and the *membrum virilis* is missing as well. An irregular horizontal breakage runs across the chest and is still visible on the back as well (fig. 4).

The right shoulder is lower than the left, and the right arm is bent from the elbow, showing the remains of a round object with pressing strap and two woolly borders, most likely the Roman *caestus* used by boxers. A large attaching point is still visible on the right waist just above the right buttock, for the support of the right arm (fig. 2). The left arm was most likely raised —as can be detected from the stretching of the left breast. It is reasonable that the left arm with a portion of the armpit were carved separately, before being joined to the statue, since there are three holes still visible on that side (fig. 3). The lower one of these holes still retains a metal bar, most likely to fix the lost arm.

The statue appears to be standing against a large circular support, which is cut from the same piece of stone (fig. 4). The remains of the collar bone and neck muscles indicate that the head was turning upwards and towards the left. The body is muscled and well modeled: it has a strong chest, round shoulders, athletic belly. The waist confirms the body torsion to the left and so do the iliac lines, where the left one is longer and shallow, while the right is overlapped by protruding flesh; the pubes are absent.

Subject

The nudity of the sculpture suggests an athletic or heroic subject and the muscled appearance favors the former profession. The object on the right arm is very recognizable, it is the sleeve of a long boxing glove, perhaps the Roman *caestus*, and therefore the Cairo statue represents a young boxer. The remaining portion of that glove shows the richly carved woollen pad usually worn on the forearm. The Greek glove of this kind, the *himantes oxeis*, was equipped with metal studs on the hand, but was worn on the forearm, as appears on a prize Panathenaic amphora from 336 BC.[3] The Roman *caestus* had these metal studs sewn on the knuckles as well,[4] but it was firstly worn on the forearm,[5] and then began to be worn below the shoulder in the second

3 See Gardiner 1930, p. 198-199; Scanlon 1983, p. 31-33; Poliakoff 1986, p. 54 ff; Poliakoff 1987, p. 68 ff, this type was the most vicious and brutal, showing the last stage of development for Greek boxing gloves, characterized by a sharp-edged leather ring wound around the knuckles leaving the thumb free. Under this ring a glove is worn on the forearm, fastened with a series of thin leather thongs terminating in one or two thick strips of fleece. This leather thong was shifted to the upper arm in later imperial times, which meant that the *caestus* itself became longer and covered the whole arm. This glove was perhaps called in the imperial period a *murèkes*, after its shape which resembles an ant and the effect it had on the face —like ant-holes in the ground—, see Scanlon 1983, p. 39; Poliakoff 1986, p. 54 ff, for the Panathenaic amphora, see Zanker 2005, p. 36, fig. 7.

4 Scanlon 1983, p. 35, n. 16.

5 Best shown in the famous Terme Boxer from a Hellenistic date (La Regina 2004, cat. 12; Zanker 2005, p. 36, fig. 6), and the Sorrento boxer from second century AD (La Regina 2004, cat. 48).

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century AD.[6] The *caestus* of the Cairo sculpture belongs to this type, which appears in many sculptures, sarcophagi and mosaics from the second and third centuries AD.[7]

Greek boxing quickly gained wide popularity in Ptolemaic Egypt: the kings had trained boxers and other athletes to win Olympic victories in their names.[8] The earliest known olive-wreathed boxer from Egypt is Kleoxenos, a winner in the 135th Olympiad, 240 BC[9] and in other Hellenic games. This victory was not challenged until the time of Photion, son of Karpion, who won many Olympic crowns after 166 AD, and other games in Hermopolis.[10] Sometimes athletes with outstanding careers are known from Roman Egypt, like Markos Aurelius Demestratos Damas: a boxer, and winner in the Olympic games; he had other victories in the Delphic, Isthmian and Nemean games.[11] Damas enjoyed the citizenship of many *poleis* and was granted honorific membership of the Alexandrian Museion, which reflects the prestigious status of remarkable victorious boxers in Roman Egypt.[12]

The Cairo statue represents a boy or young boxer; such a category is attested as early as the 267 BC *Basileia*, where Chrusermos won the contest for *paides*.[13] The *Ptolemaikoi*, contest was won by Demetrios from Naukratis.[14] The *ageneios* boxing category is recorded for Stratippos, the Macedonian who won the Panktration as well.[15] Photion, son of Karpion, the aforementioned Olympic victor after 166 AD, won the boxing crown in the Epinikia of Ephesus for boys in 165-166 AD.[16] Young Egyptian boxers won Hellenic games as well: Ptolemaios from Alexandria, won the boxing and Pankration in the Amphiareia of Oropos, around 86 BC, in the *ageneios* category.[17] The ephebic games are well attested, and some *poleis* and many *metropoleis* in Roman Egypt had their own games. Alexandria and Antinopolis, may have had their games earlier, but Oxyrhynchus, Hermopolis, Leontopolis, Panoopolis and Memphis began their ephebic games by the early third century AD.[18] Many visitor boxers are recorded as

6 Poliakoff 1987, p. 75 ff.

7 For sarcophagi, see Amedick 1991, cat. 118-119, 275, 288; Huskinson 1996, p. 22, cat. I.22. pl. V.3; La Regina 2004, cat. 56. For an interesting relief in the Vatican, see Gardiner 1930, fig. 177; White 1985, p. 40, fig. 17. There is also a statuette in Athens National Museum, see Gardiner 1930, fig. 178. For the statue of the boxer Candidianus from Aphrodisias and another anonymous boxer from the same city, see Newby 2005, p. 258 f., fig. 4.14-15. For mosaics from the Caracalla baths, see Gardiner 1930, fig. 74; White 1985, fig. 13; Dunbabin 1999, p. 69 f, fig. 71; Newby 2005. p. 67 ff.

8 Polybius relates the much quoted story of Aristonikos and Kleithomachus, where the first was trained specially under Ptolemaic royal patronage to challenge the famous Theban Boxer. Scholars debate if the Ptolemy concerned was Philopator or his son Epiphanes, see Peremans, Vant Dack 1968, no. 17196; Remijsen 2009, p. 255; Ashour 2012, p. 25, n. 65, p. 37, n. 198.

9 Perpillou-Thomas 1995, p. 245, no. 296; Peremans, Vant Dack 1968, no. 17216; Remijsen 2009, p. 255.

10 Perpillou-Thomas 1995, p. 248, no. 364.

11 Perpillou-Thomas 1995, p. 248, no. 319.

12 Drew-Bear 1991, p. 208, among which is Alexandria and Antinopolis in Egypt, Pergamon, Athens, Ephesus, Smyrna, Nicomedia, and Tralleis in the Greek east.

13 Peremans, Vant Dack 1968, no. 17245, the *paides* category was for boys under 13 years.

14 Peremans, Vant Dack 1968, no. 17202; Perpillou-Thomas 1995, p. 243, no. 252, *Ptolemaikoi* were 13-17 years old.

15 Peremans, Vant Dack 1968, no. 17237; Perpillou-Thomas 1995, p. 247, no. 351, *agenei* were 17-20 years old.

16 Perpillou-Thomas 1995, p. 248, no. 364.

17 Peremans, Vant Dack 1968, no. 17234.

18 Whitehorne 1982, p. 179 ff; for an updated list of these games, see Ashour 2012, p. 27, n. 91. The ephebic games held in Leontopolis within the reign of Elagabalus did not include boxing, and it is puzzling to decide if boxing was occasionally excluded or if that was the custom in these games: see Tod 1951, p. 92.

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winners of local games in Roman Egypt, which indicates its importance.[19] Such games, based on *gymnasia* exercises, were the cultural environment that produced athletes and boxers, who are honestly represented in the Cairo statue.

Material, Function and Archaeological Context

The particular support of the small Cairo statue is the key point for speculation regarding its archaeological context. The round form should differentiate it from the Egyptian back pillar, as some Greek style sculptures from Egypt show traditional and sometimes, schematic back pillars.[20] The shape needless to say, is different from any support type in Roman sculptures.[21] It is easily differentiated as well, in type and conception, from square figured pillars decorated in relief with mythological and captive figures from the Roman East and West[22] and from Egypt as well.[23] The Cairo sculpture shows a statue sprung from the column shaft; therefore it is easily linked to a wide group of figured column and pillars with sculptures in the round.[24]

With its missing neck, head, calves and presumed base, the Cairo torso reaches 46 cm in height; an original height of 70-75 cm therefore seems reasonable. The column shaft should have been larger: with its 12 cm upper and 13,7 cm lower diameter, it perhaps reached around 100 cm in height. Most interestingly observed is its narrowness upwards, which may suggest an architectural setting. This height is too small for either a traditional Greek façade, or a decorative one. It is very small as well when compared to the street colonnades like those in Palmyra,[25] Perge [26] and Tomis for example.[27]

19 Claudious Roufos, the pankratiast and boxer, from Smyrna, won two contests in the Fayum by 11 AD: Perpillou-Thomas 1995, p. 245, no. 295. Tourbon, son of Apollonios, won two times in the sacred games of the great Antonieia of 212 AD in Antinopolis: Perpillou-Thomas 1995, p. 247, no. 357. Bastakilas the Thraix won the boxing contest for men in the *Basileia* held in 267 BC: Peremans, Vant Dack 1968, no. 17198; Perpillou-Thomas 1995, p. 243, no. 247.

20 A *palliatus* figure: Edgar 1903. p. 24, no. 27483, pl. XIII; unpublished statue in Luxor storerooms, see Ashour 2007, cat. 225; a statue in situ on the modern path to the Horus Temple at Edfu, and the Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum boxer head is reported to have traces of a back pillar, see Moormann 2000, cat. 69; a statue of a marching farmer shows a support that runs over the back, but its shape does not suggest an architectural context, see Bonacasa 1960, p. 170 ff, pl. L-LI.

21 Reused column shafts are turned into sepulchral monuments with very high relief, one example being from the third century Alexandria: Schmidt 2003, cat. 109; Ashour 2007, cat. 193. Another example from Athens: Von Moock 1999, no. 85, pl. 3 c. A third example from Athens depicts an athlete from the second century AD: Moreno 1995, p. 77, cat. 4.10.7, many Attic examples are known from Roman times: Conze 1922.

22 Reianch 1908, p. 197, nos. 3-4; Stillwell 1941, p. 55 ff, fig. 40, p. 73-74, nos. 21-27, fig. 50-51; Hommel 1954, p. 68, no. 10; Guerinni 1961, p. 62-63; Squarciapino 1974, p. 159 ff.

23 Standing statues against slab supports are rarely known from Egypt. A colossal marble statue found by the French expedition in the Alexandrian eastern necropolis, before it was moved to England, stands against a slab support: Bailey 2003, p. 254 ff, pl. XXIV-XXV. Another unpublished headless statue of 170 cm in height, with similar slab support, kept in the Alexandria Graeco-Roman Museum (inv. 24203). A barbarian figure tied against fragmentary slab support, in the British Museum, dated to Lucius Verus age: Kiss 1984, p. 76, fig. 191-192. I have seen an identical figure in the garden of the Graeco-Roman Museum at Alexandria in 2004. It most likely comes from the same monument.

24 I prefer to use the terms *Säulenfiguren* and *Pfeilerfiguren* after Hommel 1954. p. 68, n. 10.

25 Collart, Vicari 1969, pl. XXXIII-XXXIV; Assa'd, Ruprechtsberger 1987, p. 93 ff, fig. 68-70, p. 96, fig. 74; Laubscher 1999, p. 221, n. 69, fig. 15.

26 Bordnache 1969, fig. 6; Goette 1986, p. 146 f, fig. 14; Goette 1989, p. 61, cat. D.14; Laubscher 1999, p. 221, n. 68; Kreilinger 2001, p. 98, n. 21.

27 Bordenache 1969, p. 79 ff.

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The small scale finds its best parallel among many table-legs with similar shape and dimensions.[28] These marble tables of Roman era show many decorative themes, but athletic figures are very rare.[29] One single example of a table-leg in Kos Museum shows a unique figure of a boxer[30] (fig. 5) that should decide the function of the Cairo sculpture as a *monopodium*.[31] The Cairo *monopodium* therefore is the second assured known example of this rare motif on Roman *monopodia*.[32]

Many *monopodia* are known from Egypt, varying in material between marble, local hard stones and wood.[33] Some examples show the common type of a panther,[34] or lion,[35] hind legs and heads. Figured *monopodia* are known as well in other examples; an Eros carrying a butterfly in Alexandria is remarkable for its fine finishing and treatment, with another similar example in green stone formerly in the Nahman collection at Cairo.[36] Another *monpodium* in Alexandria shows Bellerophon riding Pegasus.[37] Two later examples present the subject of the good shepherd: one in Alexandria,[38] and the other in Freiburg.[39] A second century *monopodium* was found in Abu Mina, showing Dionysus leaning on a satyr; characterized by its high quality, and it has already been attributed to Attic workshops.[40]

It is noticeable that *monopodia* from Egypt were found in Hellenic *poleis* or *metropoleis*, which conforms to their luxurious and elite use. One example comes from the Fayyum,[41] a nome that is well known for its Hellenized population in Roman times. The Bellerophon example comes from Alexandria's eastern necropolis.[42] It perhaps symbolizes victory over death and finds a functional parallel in the lion shaped table-leg from a tomb in Gabbari,[43] which was most likely used for funerary ceremonies. The good shepherd *monopodia* come from Marsa Matruh and from Fustat, both examples being from an early Byzantine context, but Marsa Matruh was a *polis* by Roman times, while Fustat is close to the Babylon fort. The Abu Mina example was found in a pottery oven there, within a ninth century AD context, but it most likely belongs to an earlier date. The Cairo *monopodium* with unknown provenance perhaps comes from an elite Roman house, rather than a *gymnasion*.[44]

28 Reinach 1908, p. 489, 7; Lehmann 1924, p. 275, nos. 35-38; Hommel 1954, p. 68, no. 3, n. 10.

29 Moss 1988, partic. p. 873 ff: index of motifs; Feuser 2013, cat. 6, pl, 3.1.

30 Laurenzi 1932, p. 151 ff, fig. 37; Feuser 2013, cat. 19. I am very grateful to the Ifao anonymous referee who guided me to this important and decisive evidence. A marble table-leg in Berlin perhaps represents a boxer too: Feuser 2013, cat. 7, pl. 3.3.

31 *Monopodia* are one legged tables, well documented in the Hellenistic Greek east, and began to be popular in Rome within the second century BC, after the Antiochus wars: Moss 1988, p. 354 ff; Smith 1890, *s. v.* "Mensa", p. 157; Craillot 1919, p. 420 ff. It was the most expensive and luxurious type of table.

32 The boxer subject appears in an upper bust format on a tripod folding vessel stand from Ephesus: Vetters 1972, p. 19, pl. 21; Feuser 2013, p. 136, n. 768.

33 A well preserved three legged table from Egypt in Brussels Museum carved in wood, shows legs decorated with water birds above canine legs: Deonna 1938, p. 40, fig. 53; Vermeule 1981, p. 182, no. 28b, fig. 16.

34 Edgar 1903, p. 65, nos. 27592, 27593, 27594, 27602.

35 Edgar 1903, p. 65, no. 27591. A lion table-leg was found in a tomb in Gabbari: Banoub 1942. p. 109 ff.

36 Adriani 1961, no. 112, pl. 62, fig. 196-197.

37 Bonacasa 1960, p. 179 ff, pl. LVI.1-2; Feuser 2013, cat. 9, p. 199, pl. 3.5.

38 Bonacasa 1960, p. 183, pl. LVII.4; Feuser 2013, cat. 133, pl. 29.4.

39 Feuser 2013, cat. 140, pl. 30.5, sold in Cairo Art Market in 1928, said to come from Old Cairo, Fustat.

40 Engmann 1998, p. 169 ff, pl. 1.

41 Edgar 1903, p. 65-66, no. 27602, pl. XXX.

42 Bonacasa 1960, p. 179, n. 2.

43 Banoub 1942, p. 109 ff.

44 The *gymnasia* and *palaistra* furniture does not show specific athletic decorative motifs, but rather normal supports: Gardiner 1930, *passim*; Miller 2004, *passim*; within Roman mosaics, see Newby 2005, fig. 3.3, 3.4.

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The material, black basalt should increase the probability of local carving of the object; where basalt was very common in Greek style sculptures within many subjects.[45] Basalt on the other hand, was rarely used for columns in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, where some examples from Alexandria are marked "smaller and rarer".[46] This rarity is noticeable as well for *monopodia* and table-legs, so much so that, beside the Cairo *monopodium,* I was able to trace only one other example—a basin support in Naples.[47]

Type

The typological analysis of the boxer figure on the Cairo *monopodium*, is problematic: it is apparently different from the frontally standing figures with hands dressed in *caesti* and extending gently beside the body, best illustrated in the Sorrento Boxer.[48] The figure is closer to statues of boxers with twisted bodies and strong action most likely in defense-parrying attack poses, but no typical parallel is attestable. The Dresden boxer, where the legs are widely open and both arms directed to the left,[49] shows a different body construction. The so-called Pollux in the Louvre, with a movement to the right, upraised left arm and lowered right arm,[50] shows a mirror figure of the body and more violent action.

45 The basalt veiled head in Boston from a third century BC funerary relief, see Vermeule, Newman 1990, p. 41, fig. 3-4. A basalt head of Arsinoe II, or Berenike II: Thompson 1955, p. 199 ff; Kyrieleis 1975, pl. 82.5-6. Another Basalt head of a queen in Brussels: Smith 1991, p. 209, fig. 240. A black basalt standing statue of Ptolemaic queen in Cairo: Edgar 1903, p. 19, no. 27473, pl. IX. A Green basalt bust of Marcus Antonius from near Canopus: Vermeule, Newman 1990, p. 41 ff, fig. 5-6. Many torso and pillar herms from Hermopolis and Alexandria are known in dark grey and black basalt: Keith 1975, no. 2, pl. 2, no. 6, pl. 5, no. 7, pl. 6. A black basalt bust of Augustus in Boston: Vermeule, Newman 1990. p. 39 ff, fig. 1. A green basalt cuirassed bust of Germanicus in London: Vermeule, Newman 1990, p. 44, n. 14. A small black basalt cuirassed figure in Cairo: Edgar 1903, no. 27496, p. 27, pl. XIII. A green basalt *palliatus* statue from Ermant in Cairo: Edgar 1903, p. 24, pl. XIII, no. 27483. For more details: Ashour 2012, p. 39.

46 Lacroix, Daressy 1922, p. 17: "*Quelques-unes mais beaucoup plus rares et de moindres dimensions, sont en granite noire, dit basalte.*" See comments by McKenzie 2007, p. 9, n. 4, p. 258, n. 187. Basalt was used for capitals as found in the "Khartoum monument" from the third century BC: McKenzie 2007, p. 86, fig. 128, p. 89-90. The Augustus temple at Philae Island: Pensabene 1993, p. 6 ff, fig. 1-7; McKenzie 2007, p. 166-167, fig. 286-289. An elaborated black basalt Corinthian capital from Ermant: Edgar 1903, p. 67, pl. XXXI, no. 27597.

47 Vermeule 1981, p. 181, 188, no. 42, fig. 10, found in the Palatine hill at Rome. For *monopodia* in Italy, see Moss 1985, *passim*. For *monopodia* from Asia Minor, see Feuser 2013, *passim*. For tables and tables supports from Delos, see Deonna 1938, p. 15 ff. esp. p. 53 ff.

48 La Regina 2004, cat. 48; Reggiani, Ragni 2006, cat. 28. See as well the Villa Gentili boxer in Howard 1993, p. 241, 243, pl. 34e; La Regina 2004, cat. 15; Reggiani, Ragni 2006, cat. 34. For another statue in the Louvre, see Howard 1993, pl. 36b. A mosaic in Naples shows a boxer with hands beside the body and short *caesti*: La Regina 2004, p. 111. For two stucco reliefs from Stabia: La Regina 2004, cat. 49. A similarly composed figure appears on the mosaics from the exedra in the *palaistra* at Caracalla baths in Rome: Dunbabin 1999, p. 69, fig. 71; Newby 2005. p. 67.

49 The Dresden statue is a boxer after the *caesti* bag on the support, despite the modern restoration of arms. The pose is very reasonable, and attested on gems (Howard 1993, pl. 34a, b, c, f) which gives credibility to the reconstruction of that sculpture.

50 Reinach 1920, p. 166, no. 4; Picard 1935, p. 116-118, fig. 54; Howard 1993, p. 242, pl. 35b. A similar torso from Hadrian's villa represents the same type: see Newby (2005, p. 111, fig. 4.12) who as well suggests discoboulos.

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It seems of considerable importance to reconstruct the original appearance of the statue: the body *ponderation* was depending on the right leg with relaxing left leg, most likely touching the ground with its toes. The right arm was bent from the elbow and extending inwards, while the left arm was upraised as recognized by the stretching of the left breast. The body construction and the movement conform to the subject of a boxer, since it was most likely presenting a defense-parrying attack pose. The head was turning left, perhaps slightly upwards after the neck breakage. The strong action is emphasized by the torsion of the chest and the upraised missing left arm with presumed *caestus*.

Most likely, the left arm was carved separately, not only according to the well known Alexandrian tradition, but also because of its particular pose and movement. It is noticeable that the three holes were not intended to receive just the arm, but another portion of the armpit and the extending dorsal muscles, which are lacking on the left side. The two upper holes are distanced from the lower one (fig. 3), and if the upraised arm pose is accepted on that side, the third hole would be far from the shoulder attaching point. This technical remark may suggest that the left side was deeply muscled in execution with a grooved armpit.

The characteristic pose of the left arm could be traced up to fifth century BC, where it appears on the Parthenon frieze with close body *ponderation* but raised bent right arm.[51] A small bronze statuette in Berlin comes from Sparta, supposedly representing Diadoumenos, and it shows a similar arm pose.[52] The full round metal fillet on his head, casts doubts about such a subject, but the absence of boxing gloves is remarkable as well. The statuette is dated to 460 BC, which may support the fifth century BC context of such a pose. An outstretched arm is recorded for a statue from the fifth century of the victorious boxer Akousilaos: it is supposed to have been holding a long supple bundle of boxing thongs.[53] There is also a small Greek bronze from fourth century BC in the Acropolis Museum,[54] with a less vibrant body but still however showing similar *ponderation*, upraised left arm and bent right arm extending inwards.[55] It is important to remark that these sculptures do not show the strong torsion and vibrating surface of the Cairo statue.

Closer to the third century AD, stands a very problematic sculpture: the ex-Lansdowne small boxer (fig. 6).[56] The torso is dated to the late Hadrianic-early Antonine periods and shows similar body *ponderation* and chest torsion. This torso is associated repeatedly with another torso in Kassel. Both were restored as boxers in the Bartolomeo Cavaceppi studio in Rome *ca.* 1775, and were connected to the Diadoumenos.[57] The two sculptures are dismantled now

51 Ridgway 1995, p. 183, fig. 10.4; Jenkins 2006, p. 98, fig. 87.

52 Neugebauer 1951, p. 19 f, no. 11, pl. 13, Thomas 1981, p. 91 ff, pl. XLVI-IL; Thomas 1992, p. 27, fig. 15.

53 Poliakoff 1987, p. 70, n. 5, p. 120, p. 173.

54 Furtwängler 1895,p. 246, n. 1.

55 De Ridder 1896, p. 272, no. 746, pl. I,3; Thomas 1981, p. 91ff, pl. XLVII,2, XLVIII,1, IL,1; Thomas 1992, p. 27, fig. 16.

56 Bol 1990, p. 159 ff, fig. 17; Kreikenbom 1990a, p. 557, cat. 71; Kreikenbom 1990b, p. 197, V35, pl. 304-305; Gercke, Zimmermann-ElSeify 2007, p. 71.

57 For designs of the ex-Lansdowne statue, see Clarac 1851, no. 2180A, pl. 851; Reinach 1920, p. 517, no. 1; with restoration, see Howard 1993, pl. 39c. For the Cassel statue, see Reinach 1909, p. 548, no. 6, with restoration, see Furtwängler 1895, p. 245, fig. 99; Howard 1993, p. 251, pl. 39d; Gercke, Zimmermann-ElSeify 2007, p. 70, cat. 10, fig. 10.5.

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and many differences between them have already been noticed;[58] the Polykleitan inspiration[59] has been suspected or reduced.[60] The Cairo sculpture is closer in terms of balance and movement to the ex-Lansdowne statue, where both show a chest which stretches more diagonally, with apparent tilting body and belly lines to the right.

The two statues do not show the same head direction, and the ex-Lansdowne statue shows a more compact body. The two sculptures cannot be copies or even reproductions after the same type, but such confrontation puts the Cairo sculpture within a trend of young athletic figures in Roman times,[61] perhaps still connectable to the repertoire of the Diadoumenos. Moreover it still arouses the reasonability of an unknown type, or at least a freer later copy, still perhaps inspired by sculptures like the ex-Lansdowne statue and the Diadoumenos (fig. 6). This later copy perhaps could be contextualized with a decorative boxer figure on a capital from the Alexander Severus Baths,[62] with a similar vibrant and dynamic body and an apparent twist to the right side. These athletic sculptures may reflect the freer copies of provincial workshops in response to Roman elite demands for such decorative themes.

Date

The style of execution of the *caestus* is a very important chronological criterion: the *caestus* worn just below the shoulder began to appear in the middle Antonine period.[63] This long *caestus* shows two fashions: the fleecy pad worn on the arm with fixing strap, as it appears on the Cairo statue. The other fashion shows the upper twisted edge with straps modeled in X-shaped wraps.[64] *Palaistra* scenes began to appear on sarcophagi after the middle Antonine

58 P. Gercke had noticed that the construction of the *contrapposto* is less emphasized in the Cassel statue and its appearance is more erect than the twisted body in the ex-Lansdowne statue. The axis of the statue does not follow the Polykleitan conceptions. He refers to a note of D. Kreikenbom that the exact body axis as judged from the pubic hair line, is placed inorganically between the two balanced hips. P. Gercke argued as well that the Cassel statue is closer to athletic forms than the ex-Lansdowne statue, because of its slighter breasts, their positions and the elongated body lines which emphasize the youthful age of the subject (Gercke, Zimmermann-ElSeify 2007, p. 70-71).

59 D. Furtwängler remarked on the typological correspondence to the statue in Cassel and connected both to the Diadoumenos of Polykleitos (Furtwängler 1895, p. 245, n. 3). A. Mahler (1902, p. 74, no. 16) classified the statue as a reproduction of the Diadoumenos as well. P. Zanker linked the two statues in Cassel and ex-Lansdowne to the Farnese Diadoumenos, and marked the Diadoumenos taste as "*Geschmack*", regarding the Polykleitan *inscriptiones* (Zanker 1974, p. 14, pl. 8; Bol 1990, p. 157, fig. 17); supported the Polykleitan type (Kreikenbom 1990a, p. 557, cat. 71; 1990b, p. 197, V35, pl. 304-305) thought about variation of the Diadoumenos.

60 M. Bieber remarked on the young age of the subject of the Cassel and ex-Lansdowne statues after the soft treatment of the surface and the lack of Diadoumenos strong muscled execution. She noticed as well the absence of any veins finishing and the smooth transition between body parts (Bieber 1914, p. 20 ff; Bieber 1915, p. 11 ff). P. Gercke and N. Zimmermann-ElSeify (2007, p. 71), raised again the M. Bieber suspicions regarding whether the Cassel statue was an *umbildung* adaptation of the Diadoumenos on a smaller scale, or, perhaps depended on another Polykleitan type, but did not come up with a decisive answer.

61 Zanker 1974, p. 11 ff; Newby 2005, p. 82, p. 132, fig. 4.19-20, p. 144.

62 Mercklin 1962. p. 157, no. 384, fig. 737.

63 Gardiner 1930, p. 198-199, fig. 74.177; Amedick 1991, p. 86 f; La Regina 2004. p. 162, p. 284; Zanker 2005, p. 36 f.

64 A boxer statue from Aphrodisias shows this fashion: it dates to 225-250 AD. See Newby 2005, p. 257, fig. 8.13.

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age and continued into the middle third century,[65] or Tetrarch age.[66] The fleecy woolen pad appears on two sarcophagi in the Louvre from the middle Antonine period,[67] with a similar rich style of execution.[68] A sarcophagus in Villa Torlonia with a boxing scene shows the twisted upper edge of the *caestus*, from the middle Severian period.[69] The same fashion appears on the mosaics from the *palaistra* in the baths of Caracalla.[70]

Another sarcophagus in the Vatican Museums shows the twisted edge and rich execution of the fleecy pad, dating between 200-225 AD.[71] A twisted edge with crossed straps pattern appearing on another sarcophagus dates between 225-250 AD,[72] and it is also present on the Candidatus statue, the boxer from Aphrodisias, dating to the middle third century AD.[73] The boxer figure from the Alexander Severus Baths in Rome shows the earlier fashion of the *caesti* and similarly treated fleeces on the glove's pad.[74] These data show clearly the interlacing chronological limits between the different fashions of *caesti* modeling from the Antonine period onwards.

The Kos Museum *monopodium* with a similar figure of a boxer is another interesting chronological criterion: it dates to the third century AD, which may secure a date in the third century AD for the Cairo piece.[75] The *caesti* on the Kos sculpture shows a less stylized execution and rough rolls of the gloves (fig. 5). The fresher treatment of the glove of the Cairo boxer may suggest an earlier date in the first half of that century, especially when compared to the Alexander Severus Baths boxer figure.

65 Huskinson 1996. p. 18.
66 Amedick 1991, p. 92.
67 Amedick 1991, p. 141, cat. 119, pl. 90.1.
68 Louvre Museum MA 329, dated to the late second or early third century by Huskinson 1996, p. 22, cat. I.22, and to the late Antonine period by Amedick 1991, p. 141, cat. 118, pl. 81.1-4.
69 Amedick 1991, cat. 200, pl. 84,4.
70 Dunbabin 1999, p. 69 f, fig. 71; Newby 2005, p. 67 ff.
71 Amedick 1991, cat. 288, p. 168, pl. 91.1-3, 5; La Regina 2004, p. 314-315, cat. 56; Newby 2005, p. 42, fig. 2.5.
72 Amedick 1991, cat. 275, pl. 84.1, pl. 85.1-6.
73 Newby 2005, p. 257, fig. 4.15.
74 Mercklin 1962, p. 157, no. 384, fig. 737.
75 Feuser 2013, cat. 19, p. 135-136.

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FIG. 1. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, Basement Register N. 967.
Courtesy of the Cairo Egyptian Museum.

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FIG. 2. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, Basement Register N. 967.
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FIG. 3. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, Basement Register N. 967.
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FIG. 4. Cairo, Egyptian Museum, Basement Register N. 967.
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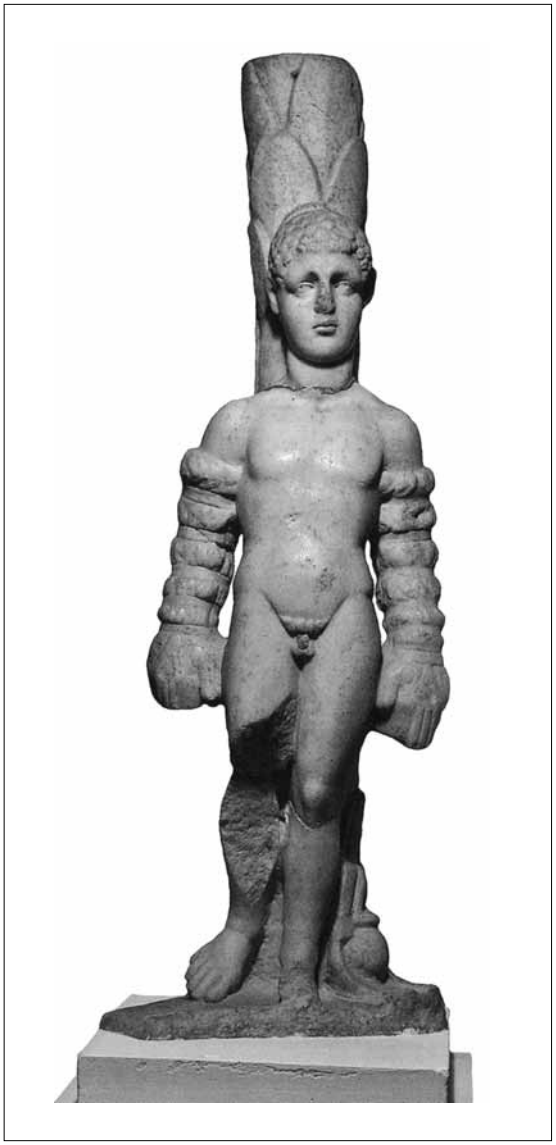


FIG. 5. Kos Archaeological Museum, inv. 106, after Feuser 2013, cat. 19, pl. 6.2.



FIG. 6. The Ex-Lansdowne small boxer statue, after Bol 1990, fig. 17.

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