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Perge'den Bir Septimius Severus Heykelinde Nehir Tanrısı Propagandası


Ahmet ÇELİK *

Abstract: Lucius Septimius Severus was the Roman emperor from 193 to 211 AD. His portraits have an important place in the propaganda activities of Septimius Severus. It is evident that the initial portrait type may have served to propagandise the notion of the subject's strength and agility as a soldier. The subsequent portrait may have been used to promote the subject's affiliation with the House of Antonines. The third portrait, on the other hand, may have been employed to suggest that the subject was the deity Serapis or an individual bearing a similar resemblance. Finally, the final portrait may have been utilised to convey the image of a more mature and experienced statesman. It is also known that Septimius Severus propagandised Hercules (Heracles). However, the armoured statue portrait found in the F2 Fountain (Nymphaeum) of Perge in 1968 may indicate that he was making a new kind of propaganda. Because here the emperor has a very different beard structure. His beard is divided into sections with a deep drill. This beard, which is quite dissolved and compartmentalised, essentially resembles the beard of river gods. With this armoured statue, which basically shows 'Adoption' type hair and facial features, both Adoptive and the emperor must have been propagandised as a strong soldier. However, with this extremely unique beard in the statue belonging to Fountain F2, Septimius Severus resembles a river god, and therefore, it may have been propagandised that he was a river god who brought water to the city or someone who resembled a river god.

Keywords: Septimius Severus, Rome, Portrait, Propaganda, Perge, F2 Fountain, River God

Öz: Lucius Septimius Severus MS 193-211 yılları arasında Roma imparatorudur. Septimius Severus'un propaganda faaliyetlerinde portrelerinin önemli bir yeri vardır. Nitekim ilk portre tipi ile güçlü ve çevik bir asker, ikinci portre ile Antoninler Hanedanı mensubu olduğu, üçüncü portresi tanrı Serapis veya ona benzeyen biri olduğu ve son tipi ile daha olgun ve tecrübeli bir devlet adamı olduğu propagandası yapılmış olabilir. Ayrıca Septimius Severus'un Hercules (Herakles) propagandası yaptığı da bilinmektedir. Bununla birlikte 1968 yılında Perge F2 Çeşmesi'nde bulunan zırlı heykel portresi onun yeni bir tür propaganda yaptığını gösteriyor olabilir. Çünkü burada imparator çok farklı bir sakal yapısına sahiptir. Derin kullanılan matkapla sakalları bölüklere ayrılmıştır. Oldukça çözülmüş ve bölüklerine ayrılmış bu sakal özünde nehir tanrılarının sakalını andırmaktadır. Temel olarak 'Adoption' tipi saç ve yüz özellikleri görülen bu zırlı heykel ile hem Adoptiv hem de imparatorun güçlü bir asker olduğu propagandası yapılmış olmalıdır. Ancak F2 Çeşmesi'ne ait heykeldeki son derece ünik bu sakal ile Septimius Severus adeta bir nehir tanrısını andırmaktadır ve dolayısıyla şehre su getiren bir nehir tanrısı veya nehir tanrısına benzeyen biri olduğu propagandası yapılmış olabilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Septimius Severus, Roma, Portre, Propaganda, Perge, F2 Çeşmesi, Nehir Tanrısı

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Prologue

The main subject of this article is the beard of the statue of Septimius Severus wearing armour, found in the Septimius Severus (F2) Fountain during the 1968 excavations at Perge, Antalya Museum current inventory number 2018/106 (Fig. 1-2)¹. Because, as mentioned below, this beard differs from the beard in the general portraits of the emperor and resembles a beard structure seen especially in river gods. It is possible to state that this beard difference is the result of the use of the emperor's statue in a water / fountain structure and a related propaganda.



Fig. 1. Statue of Septimius Severus Env. No. 2018/106) Akçay Güven 2022, 202, fig. 16



Fig. 2. Detail of Septimius Severus Statue Head. Perge F2 Fountain İnan & Rosenbaum 1979, taf. 57.2

Comparison of Septimius Severus Portrait and Propaganda Activities with the Case of Perge (2018/106)

The scientific publication of the statue of Septimius Severus was firstly made by our late teacher Jale İnan and introduced to the scientific world in the best way². Later, Jale İnan and Elisabeth Alföldi Rosenbaum revisited and published this sculpture together³. In the following process, Buket Akçay Güven addressed various aspects of sculpture in her doctoral thesis⁴. Ramazan Özgan also discussed the sculpture and made a stylistic evaluation and suggested a portrait type⁵. Buket Akçay Güven gave information about this sculpture in the article she prepared for the book published in honour of the 100th anniversary of the Antalya Museum⁶.

Septimius Severus, who was of African/Phoenician origin and Roman emperor between 193-211 AD, was a very powerful and interesting personality who fought various struggles during his reign⁷. This emperor successfully used propaganda both to gain advantage over his rivals during his

¹ The old inventory number of the statue in question is 3266 in Antalya Museum.

² İnan, 1974, 655-657.

³ İnan & Rosenbaum 1979, 114-116.

⁴ Akçay Güven, 2014, 63-67.

⁵ Özgan, 2015, 48.

⁶ Akçay Güven 2022, 198-203.

⁷ For detailed information on Lucius Septimius Severus, see. Hist. Aug. I. I-XXIV; Dio Cass. IX, LXXXIV-LXXV; Herod. II-III; Hasebroek 1921, 50-109; Birley 1999, 1; Kaya 2008, 81-304; Tahar Jerary 2008, 173-185; Okón 2012, 16-106; Chrysanthou 2022, 181-230.

struggles and to strengthen and perpetuate his dominance over Roman society⁸. In this direction, he effectively used his portraits, especially in the form of statues or busts, or portraits in profile on his coins, in line with his propaganda activities. In addition, it is necessary to briefly dwell on the emperor's portrait types and propaganda activities before focusing on whether the unic beard of the Perge statue of Septimius Severus with inventory number 2018/106 is related to the river god propaganda.

Portraits of Septimius Severus generally follow Antonine portraiture⁹. This is because the male portraits of the Antonine period show intense polish, and intensive drill is used on bushy hair and beards. The eyes are large with a slightly upward gaze. Beards are shown with thin noticed lines on the cheek and neck line¹⁰. The publications by J. J. Bernoulli and J. Balty on the portraits of Septimius Severus are important¹¹. In addition, A. M. McCann analysed the portraits of Septimius Severus under 10 types¹². Considering D. Soechting, who made a very successful classification, it is possible to classify the portraits of Septimius Severus into 4 main types as 'Early', 'Adoption', 'Serapis' and 'Decennalia' respectively¹³. It should also be noted that Soechting's portrait classification is generally accepted¹⁴. For this reason, Soechting's portrait classification was preferred and the article was written accordingly.

In the first portrait type of Septimius Severus, also called 'Early' or 'Accession' or 'Advent' or 'Premier' or 'Regierungsantritt', the headline is recognisable. His hair has curly bangs. He has an open and angular forehead. The upper eyelids are heavy in his big eyes. He has a straight nose, but there is a depression in the nose at the junction with the eyebrows. He has an angular and fleshy face. His moustache is voluminous and his short beard with bangs is holistic¹⁶. The first type may have been used to propagandise the emperor as an agile, energetic and strong soldier (fig. 3).

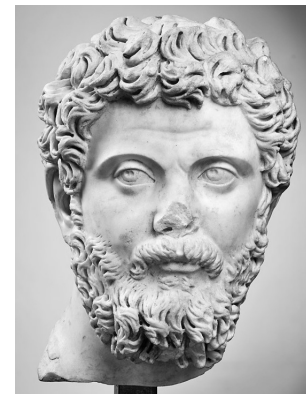


Fig. 3. Septimius Severus Type 1 (Advent Type). (193-195)

The Chiragan Villa Musée Saint-Raymond Toulouse Archaeology Museum¹⁵

Compared to the first portrait types of Septimius Severus, the hair on Perge 2018/106 is more lush and voluminous. In addition, in the first portraits of the emperor, the beard is short, around a tuft, and although there are small curl separations, the beard is holistic and there is no or very vague bifurcation in the centre of the beard. However, the beard of Perge 2018/106 is longer than that of the first type specimens, and unlike the first type specimens, it is not a dense integral beard, but has softer, dissolved and 's'-moving fringes. In addition, the Perge specimen has a distinct central beard dividing point. Nevertheless, as in the first

⁸ On the use of Septimius Severus' portraits in propaganda activities, see. McCann 1968, 103, 110; Frel 1981, 80-81; Takács 1995, 116; Özgan 2015, 40-44; Beldianu 2017, 136-146; On the propaganda activity of Septimius Severus in the Roman Arch, see. Durugönül 2021, 207-218.

⁹ Kleiner 1992, 319; Ayrıca bkz. Hekler 1912, 37-38; Heintze 1961, 12; Frel 1981, 80-81; Baharal 1989, 579.

¹⁰ Vermeule 1961, 8-9.

¹¹ Bernoulli 1894, 21-35; Balty 1961a, 101-113; Balty 1961b, 72-78; Balty 1964, 56-63.

¹² McCann 1968.

¹³ Soechting 1972.

¹⁴ Kleiner 1992, 319.

¹⁵ <https://villachiragan.saintraymond.toulouse.fr/en/partie-02-galerie-des-portraits/ra-120-a-septime-severe> (Open Licence). (Access Date: 13.09.2024)

¹⁶ Soechting 1972, 31-39, taf. 1a-2d; On the first portrait type of Septimius Severus, see also. Balty 1964, 53-64; Fra 1972, 9, fig. 1; Kiss 1984, 72; Fittschen – Zanker 1985, 94-95, taf. 101-102, nr. 82; Kleiner 1992, 319; Özgan 2015, 42-43; Pury Gysel 2017, 56.

type examples, the armoured Perge statue must have been used to propagandise that the emperor was a mighty soldier (Fig. 1-3).

Emperor Septimius Severus started 'Adoptiv' propaganda from 195 onwards and wanted to show himself as the Adoptiv son of Marcus Aurelius. As a matter of fact, some coins minted in 195 with the legend 'IMP VII' bear the phrase 'divi M. Pii filius'¹⁸. In 'Adoption' type portraits organised for this purpose, the hair is dense, the curls are dishevelled and directed backwards. Their large eyes have heavy eyelids. The main difference of the Adoption portrait type compared to the first one is the beard, which is longer and separated from the centre. It should also be noted that the Adoption type of Septimius Severus is very similar to the last portrait type of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (Fig. 4)¹⁹.

Although he wears a fruit wreath on his head, the Perge 2018/106 example shows that the emperor has bushy hair and large bangs, similar to the Adoption (Adotive) portrait types. However, these bangs do not fall in distinct curls on the forehead and therefore follow a horizontal course parallel to the forehead line. The Perge example has heavy eyelids over rather large eyes in accordance with the Antonine tradition. The beard is longer than a tuft, in keeping with other portraits of the emperor in the Adoption tradition. In addition, one of the main characteristics of the second type, the separation point in the beard, which diverges from the centre to the sides, is also found in the Perge sculpture portrait. The main difference in Perge 2018/106, which basically reflects the characteristics of the Adoption type, is the beard structure. As a matter of fact, although the beards of the emperor's second types were also drilled, they have a more massive, holistic, bushy and self-supporting dense beard, while in the Perge example, although the beard is long, it draws soft 's' movements as if it were wet and descends in a more horizontal course. In this context, it can be said that this interesting beard is the main feature that distinguishes the Perge example from the other portraits (Figs. 1-2, 4). With the Perge example dressed in armour, the emperor is not only a strong soldier, but also a member of the Antonine dynasty, especially with features similar to Marcus Aurelius. The beard difference here may be related to a propaganda originating from the Perge fountain/water structure to which it belongs.

Septimius Severus visited Egypt with his family in 199 or 200 AD. The third portrait type, the 'Serapis' type, may have emerged after this trip to Egypt²⁰. In the Egyptian type of Serapis, the god of the underworld, the emperor's hair and beard are dense, fluffy and rich. However, the main difference of this type is the three or four spiralling curls on the forehead²¹. Thus, it has been suggested that the emperor had himself depicted with hair and beard similar to the god Serapis and was making propaganda²². But does Septimius Severus portray himself directly as the god Serapis

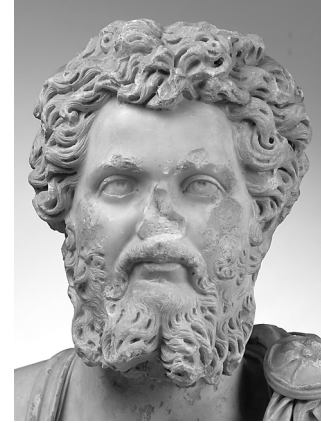


Fig. 4. Septimius Severus Type 2 (Adoption Type). (195-203) The Chiragan Villa Musée Saint-Raymond Toulouse Archaeology Museum¹⁷

¹⁷ <https://villachiragan.saintraymond.toulouse.fr/en/partie-02-galerie-des-portraits/ra-66-a-septime-severe> (Open Licence). (Son Erişim Tarihi: 13.09.2024)

¹⁸ Kaya 2008, 189.

¹⁹ Soechting 1972, 41-48, 51, 4a-7b; Özgan 2015, 46; Pury Gysel 2017, 56.

²⁰ Özgan 2015, 50; Also see. Eck *et al.* 1986, 82; Fejfer 2008, 408; Kleiner 2016, 265-266.

²¹ Soechting 1972, 49, 57, 63, taf. 7c-11b; 2015, 51-52; Pury Gysel 2017, 55, 57.

²² Beldianu 2017, 136-146.

with this type of portraits? Or is he an emulator of Serapis? This is a controversial issue²⁵. In both cases, however, the Serapis type may have been used as propaganda to create a perfect image for Roman society and to show how important it was to society (Fig. 5).

The main difference of the Perge example from the emperor's Serapis types is the absence of three or four curls of hair descending over the forehead. Apart from this, the Perge find is similar to other Serapis portraits in terms of the bushy structure and length of the hair and beard, and the central distinction in the beard. In addition, in some Serapis-type portraits, Septimius Severus has a longer and more clearly divided beard. However, the beard on the Perge statue is different from these. As a matter of fact, in some of the Serapis-type portraits mentioned, the emperor's beard sections do not go straight down in a long 's' movement like the Perge sculpture, but are in the form of long beard sections forming twisted curls (Fig. 2, 5).

The fourth type of Septimius Severus, the 'Decennalia' type, must have appeared around 202/203 to commemorate the 10th year of his empire. In these portraits, which are like a mixture of the previous three types, his hair is in a bun. The half bangs of hair rest on the upper border of the forehead. The beard, clearly divided in the centre, is long enough to reach the chest line in some examples²⁶. The last portrait type may be a more mature, experienced and wise statesman propaganda (Fig. 6).

The hair and beard structure of Perge 2018/106 differs from the Decennalia type portraits of the emperor in some aspects. Because in the Decennalia portraits of the emperor, the hair is more collective and there is a more flattened forelock structure. In the Decennalia type, the central beard distinction is clear, but in some portraits the full and bushy beard extends to the chest line in long twisted sections. Therefore, the beard of the Perge specimen differs from the beard of the Decennalia type, which has long 's'-moving segments (Fig. 2, 6).

A propaganda of the Emperor Septimius Severus in which he appears as Hercules is also known. The emperor may have been propagandising the values represented by Hercules, or Septimius Severus may have wanted to portray himself as Hercules. As a matter of fact, his portrait found in

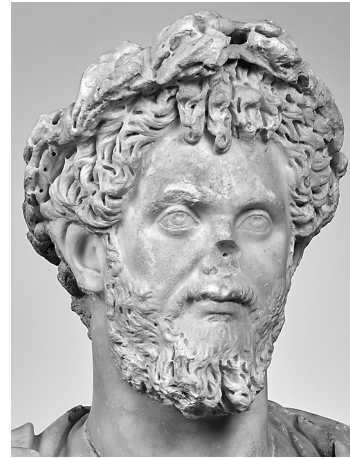


Fig. 5. Septimius Severus Type 3 (Serapis Type). (199/200-211) The Chiragan Villa Musée Saint-Raymond Toulouse Archaeology Museum²⁴

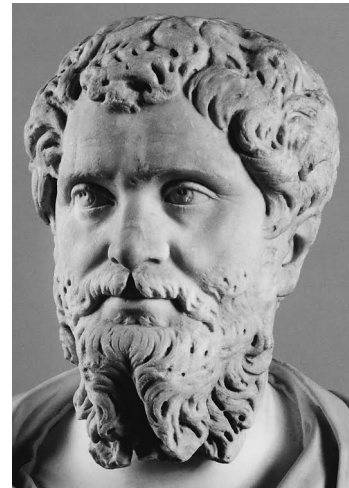


Fig. 6. Septimius Severus Type 4 (Decennalia Type). (202/203-211) Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli²³

²³ <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/ritratto-di-settimio-severo-su-busto-moderno/jwECVVU4sYVgcQ> (Son Erişim Tarihi: 01.07.2024).

²⁴ <https://villachiragan.saintraymond.toulouse.fr/en/partie-02-galerie-des-portraits/ra-66-b-septime-severe> (Open Licence). (Son Erişim Tarihi: 13.09.2024).

²⁵ Fejfer 2008, 409; The Septimius-Serapis combination may have been used in the divine propaganda of the 'world ruler' Septimius Severus. In other words, he may have deified himself as a deity with the depiction of Serapis. Takács 1995, 116.

²⁶ Soechting 1972, 59-64, taf. 11c-11d.

the Perge theatre in 1992, wearing the 'Lion of Nemea' pelt on his head just like Commodus, is an example of this (Fig. 7)²⁷.

In this portrait of Septimius Severus, Antalya Museum inventory number 33.23.93, he is wearing a lion (Lion of Nemea) skin. The emperor primarily shows himself as Hercules (Heracles) and propagandises that he is a hero who overcomes difficulties like him. In addition, with his large eyes, heavy eyelids, bushy hair, and beard, which is not very long but parted from the centre, he basically shows an Adoption-type portrait. As a matter of fact, Commodus, whom he sees as his Adoptiv brother, is also known with a similar lion-skin portrait. In this context, the emperor makes both Heracles and Adoptiv

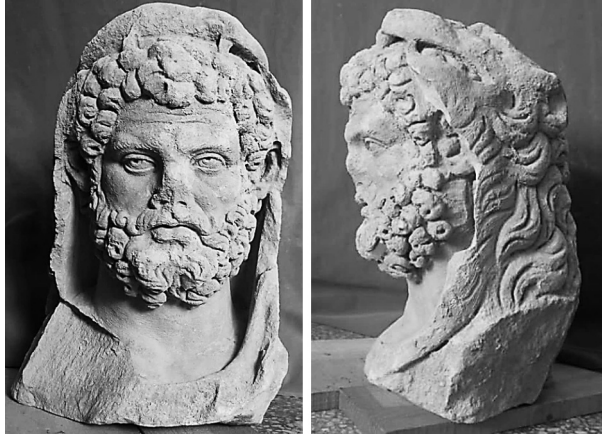


Fig. 7. Septimius Severus in Heracles/Hercules Type (Perge) Akçay Güven 2014, lev. 22, res. 73, 76

propaganda in this example. As a matter of fact, the two prominent horizontal forehead lines on the forehead should be attributed to the forehead lines of Heracles rather than old age. Therefore, in the Perge 2018/106 example, as in the 33.23.93 example, it should be considered natural for the emperor to make several propaganda together.

As briefly mentioned above, the armoured statue of Septimius Severus was discovered in 1968 at the F2 Fountain of Perge (Septimius Severus Nymphaeum of Perge) (Fig. 1-2)²⁸. Considering both the structure of this armoured statue and the extremely interesting beard, it may indicate a new propaganda implemented by Septimius Severus. However, before addressing this issue, it would be more appropriate to examine the suggestions regarding the statue and make an evaluation accordingly.

Issues Regarding the Perge Sample (2018/106) in Previous Publications

As noted by the late Jale İnan and Elisabeth Alföldi Rosenbaum, in this portrait of the armoured statue of Septimius Severus, the emperor has an idealised wrinkle-free face and appears young. Eyebrow details are given in curved incised lines. The pupils of his large eyes are formed with two drill strokes. There are slight swellings under the eyes. The drill was preferred less on the hair and much more intensely on the beard and deep grooves were made. There are curls surrounding the face on the head of the sculpture²⁹. İnan also states that the portrait on the statue is very similar to the portrait type on the Laodicea ad Mare coins of Septimius Severus, as the profile, the arrangement of the bangs and the upward gaze clearly show this similarity. It has also been suggested that this sculptured head is close to the Brasci type and McCann's type IIa, but differs from them in the depth of the curls, the absence of wrinkles on the forehead and the hair and beard structure³⁰. İnan and Rosenbaum also noted that the beard on the head of the statue with the oak wreath is roughly similar to McCann's type VIII and D. Soechting's 'Adoption' type. It has also been suggested that this portrait is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable depictions of the emperor and that the sculptor must have been very skilful to have made it without following an 'established'

²⁷ Akçay Güven 2014, 68-69.

²⁸ İnan 1974, 655; İnan & Rosenbaum 1979, 114.

²⁹ İnan, 1974, 656; İnan & Rosenbaum 1979, 116.

³⁰ İnan, 1974, 656-657.

prototype³¹. In addition, Jale İnan noted that although this sculptural portrait resembles the relief depiction of the emperor in the 'dextrarum iunctio' scene in Leptis Magna, this example does not exactly fit a specific portrait type of the emperor³².

With this the type and dating of the emperor's portrait in the Leptis Magna 'dextrarum iunctio' scene is controversial (Fig. 8). For example, here the emperor has a dull facial expression and a long beard, the beard is divided into three parts on each side after separating from the centre, L'Orange calls this the 'Leptis Type', Balty considers this to be the original image of the emperor and suggests a date between 202-204 AD, but McCann suggests that the emperor type here may be a later version, and that it can be placed between 207-209 based on the coin example bearing the Late Severus type. However, in the relief in the Leptis Magna 'dextrarum iunctio' scene, the

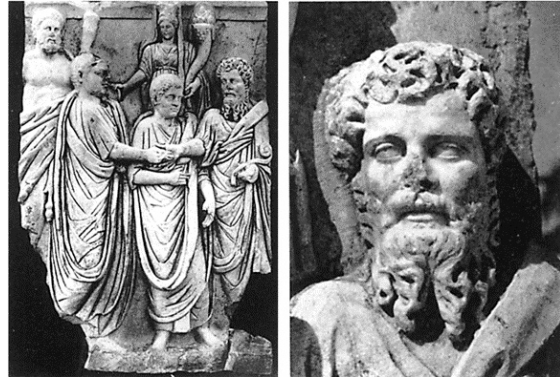


Fig. 8. Septimius Severus. 'dextrarum iunctio' scene at the Arch of Leptis Magna McCann 1968, Pl. XVIII, fig. 1-2 (p 76-77)

emperor's hair is more compact and has a more reclined fringe. Here the beard extends in long twisted sections up to the chest line. Therefore, it can be said that the type in the Leptis Magna relief fits the 4th type in Soechting's classification, namely the Decennalia type (Figs. 1-2, 6, 8). However, it would not be a correct approach to expect the Leptis Magna relief to be detailed as in the independent Perge sculpture portrait. In this context, the stylistic comparison of the Leptis Magna relief with the Perge example should not be very healthy. Therefore, although there are similarities with the Leptis Magna relief, it can be said that the Perge example has a different beard structure than the Decennalia type and therefore has a unic beard.

In Buket Akçay Güven's doctoral study, it was suggested that the curls on the forehead of the sculpture portrait of Septimius Severus are reminiscent of the 'Serapis' type, so it must have been created after the emergence of the 'Serapis' type, and that the beard in the Perge example does not match any portrait of the emperor. However, it was noted that the beard of the two different types has some common features, and that in the Perge portrait, the beard curls after the dividing line do not open to the side, but go straight down. It has also been suggested that this head should be considered as an original creation of the sculptor blending various types of the emperor, unless there is a clue to another plastic portrait of this type, and thus the Perge statue of Septimius Severus and the portrait on his head should be dated to 200-211³³. On the other hand, it was suggested by Ramazan Özgan that the wide, fleshy, heavy eyelids, rounded carving of the pupils and the intensive use of drills at the beginning of this sculpture portrait are a repetition of the style of the Late Antonine Period and therefore this work is of the 'Adoption' type³⁴. Indeed, the absence of three or four prominent Serapis-type spiral curls, especially on the forehead, and the presence of a prominent central beard parting on the sufficiently long beard of the Perge armoured statue portrait should indicate that this head is basically of the 'Adoption' type (Fig 2, 4-5).

In Buket Akçay Güven's publication on the statue in 2022, it is stated that this statue is located

³¹ İnan, 1974, 655-657; İnan & Rosenbaum 1979, 114-116.

³² İnan, 1974, 656-657.

³³ Akçay Güven, 2014, 68-69.

³⁴ Özgan, 2015, 48, res. 27.

in the 'aedicula' in the south of the vaulted space of the Fountain F2, because this statue was planned to stand in the niche with its side part being carved, and the statue of the emperor is larger than normal, It is stated that the statue of Septimius Severus with Julia Domna and the statue of a woman with a khimation can be dated 200-205 with its portrait type and stylistic features, and that this date is compatible with the date 195-204 determined by the votive inscription in the building, and that this date range is essentially narrowed to the 200-204 date range, thus proving that the fountain was planned together with the north wing. Güven also stated that the statue of Septimius Severus in question is similar to the two armoured statues/pieces in the Afyon Museum in terms of type, posture, motifs on clothing and armour reliefs and style, that this similarity is so intense that it can be attributed to the same workshop and perhaps even the same master, and that various data in this armoured statue group point to the Dokimeion workshop, it is stated that this workshop produced a group of armoured statues in the form of stock bodies due to the increase in demand, especially during the Severan period, and sold them to various cities without engraving their heads; in this context, the statue of Septimius Severus in question can also be connected to the Dokimeion workshop, and that both of the fountain wings F2, to which this statue belongs, and F4 on the immediate axis were dedicated/built by Aurelia Paulina or her family, the priestess of Artemis Pergaia, the protector of water resources³⁵.

Inventory No. 2018/106 Statue of Septimius Sevrus and Propaganda of the River God?

As mentioned above, what makes the Perge Septimius Severus armoured statue portrait example different is the beard structure (Fig. 1-2). Here, the beard is divided into distinct sections using a deep drill. Sufficiently long beard segments exhibit curved soft 's' movements, as if water was flowing through them or they were wet. Thus, the beard is well dissolved and differs from the beards in general portraits of the emperor. However, this type of beard may be associated with the Perge F2 fountain structure, that is, with water. Because here the beard is reminiscent of the beard structure of the gods associated with water, i.e. river/river gods.

River gods are rarely depicted as animals in Roman art, but usually in human form. There are examples of standing river gods especially on coins of the Roman period. For example, on the coins of the ancient city of Plotinopolis in Thracia, minted in the name of Marcus Aurelius, the river god Hebros (Meriç) is standing. Also, the coins of Antiocheia of Menderes show the standing river god Morsynos. In addition, for example, there are standing river gods with or without beards on the coins of Alexandria. Seated river gods are also found in the Roman period. In Asia Minor, the river personifications of Hermos, Maiandros, Halys and Iris are shown in a sitting position. The most common type of river god in the Roman Period is the reclining or floating river god. In this composition, the river god is lying slightly half-way to the right or left. He usually rests his elbow or arm on an amphora through which water flows. The upper part of his body is usually naked, and from the waist down he is covered with a himation. These river gods sometimes wear a wreath of reeds on their heads, and while some are beardless, others have thick and bushy beards. The attributes of Roman river gods include reeds, palm branches, horns of fertility, ears of wheat, corn, poppies, flowers, rudders, harpoons and fish. However, a river god with his own unique attribute is also known. For example, on the coins minted in the name of Domitianus in Ephessos, the river god Marnas is depicted with a helmet and shield, and this type of representation is related to Marnas' warriorism. In addition, river personifications were used for mythological, cult and propaganda purposes in the Roman Period. Rivers were used as propaganda tools by the emperors in military and economic events. For example, the personification of the Tiber river in Ostia was used as a propaganda tool by Emperor Nero. In addition, in the third scene of the Column of Trajan, the

³⁵ Akçay Güven 2022, 195-203.

Danuvian personification is in the form of a bearded male figure. The Tiber river personification, which follows the Roman army across the bridge, was used for the propaganda of Rome's Dac victory³⁶.

The river god Kaystros, found in Ephesus and dated to the Late Antonine period in the second century AD, wears a flowery-leaved wreath on his head. On his still face, his majestic, lush and rich beard is divided into sections, as if water were flowing through it, and makes curved movements. The beard sections of Kaystros' beard are tapered and veined at the end, as if to convey the water to the god's chest (Fig. 9)³⁷.

However, it should be noted that the beards of the gods associated with water/river/river in antiquity were not of a single type, but varied within themselves and could take various forms. For example, the beards of the river god on the Gigantomachie frieze of the Perge theatre are shorter and simpler than the Ephesus example (Fig. 9-10). For reasons of place, time, commissioner, master's preference, or any other reason, the beards of water-related deities may have long-short or rich-plain curly beard sections. However, the common feature of the beards of such deities is the appearance of water flowing through the long beard segments, as if water was flowing or wet, and a soft 's' shaped movement in the unravelled beard.

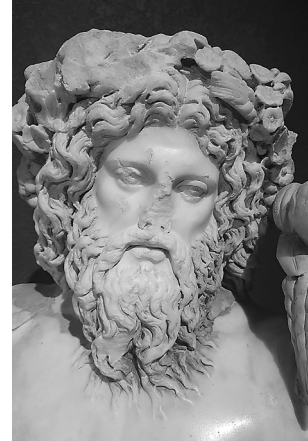


Fig. 9. River God Kaystros (Late Antonine Period). İzmir History and Art Museum Photograph Archive.

Considering that the Perge sculpture with the inventory number 2018/106 was found in the F2 Fountain structure, it can be said that this beard resemblance is not a result of coincidence, and that it was made for the purpose of propaganda that Septimius Severus was perhaps like the river god or someone who emulated him (Fig. 2, 9 – 10). In this context, it can be suggested that the beard was deliberately made like this by the choice of the artist or the builder of the fountain. Apparently, the emperor is both in the pose of an imposing and armoured soldier standing in a standing position, and in the 'Adoptiv' appearance of the Antonine dynasty, and also like a river god bringing water with his famous beard structure. Therefore, the beard on the statue of Septimius Severus used in the F2 Fountain of Perge must have been the result of a propaganda that the emperor was like a river god who brought water to the city and granted water to the people, or someone who emulated him, in accordance with his title of 'restitutor urbis' (restorer of the city). Indeed, an example of a coin of Septimius Severus with the river god Istros on the reverse is known (Fig. 11)³⁸. There is also an example depicting the river god Kestros on the reverse of a Septimius Severus Period coin from Perge. Here Kestros is lying to his left and holding a horn of fertility. His left arm rests on an amphora from which water flows³⁹.

³⁶ Altınoluk 2005, 16-21.

³⁷ For the 2 river gods dating to the Late Antonine period, exhibited at the İzmir Museum of History and Art and the İstanbul Archaeological Museum, see. Aurenhammer 1990, 105-107, taf. 61-62, nr. 86a-b-87a; Peçen 2018, 95-96; Hollaender 2022, 168-174, Abb. 89-90; On the river gods, see also. Altınoluk 2005, 4-233; Dağlı 2011, 7-199; Kaya 2020, 497-503.

³⁸ In addition, in the Roman Empire, various river gods were shown as a propaganda element next to various emperors representing conquered territories or victories. Ostrowski 1990, 309-316.

³⁹ Altınoluk 2005, 94-95, 267.



Fig. 10. River God. Gigantomachie Frieze from the Perge Theatre Hollaender 2022, 212, Abb. 117



Fig. 11. Septimius Severus and the River God Istros (201-203) Tetrassarion. Moesia Inferior. Nicopolis ad Istrum. (CNG)⁴⁰

Conclusion

In the light of the information given above, it should be considered natural for Septimius Severus to be shown with a beard similar to a river god and to make propaganda. Moreover, whether by the choice of the fountain builder or the artist, in any case, this portrait, which resembles or emulates the river god, was made in accordance with the fountain structure. Therefore, this sculpture must not have been transported from any place or structure in Perge, but must have been made on an order especially for the F2 Fountain structure. However, the fountain and the armoured statue may have been made to honour the emperor when he was in the eastern provinces or on campaign.

Perhaps this is why he is shown standing in the pose of a strong soldier, not lying/sitting on the ground like a river god, and an emperor in armour cannot be expected to be shown lying/sitting on the ground. In addition, the two inscriptions associated with this fountain suggest that the F2 Fountain of Perge (Septimius Severus Nymphaeum of Perge) was built between 195-204⁴¹. Considering this proposed date for the fountain and the fact that it essentially fits the 'Adoption' type, it is possible to date the statue-portrait head of Septimius Severus, inventory number 2018/106 of the Antalya Museum, specifically between 195-204. As a matter of fact, the construction of this sculpture may have started with the construction of the fountain, and it is not possible to determine at least at this stage at which stage or towards the end of the fountain the sculpture was made, so the 195-204 date range is appropriate for this sculpture. The statue with the inventory number 2018/106 may have been used for propaganda purposes to show that Septimius Severus was both military and 'Adoptiv', as well as a river god who bestowed water, or someone who emulated a river god.

⁴⁰ <https://auctions.cngcoins.com/lots/view/4-BIYOZC/roman-provincial-lot-of-five-5-river-god-themed-provincial-coins-septimius-severus-from-nicopolis-ad-istrum> (Son Erişim Tarihi: 13.09.2024).

⁴¹ Akçay Güven 2014, 241-243.

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