

## Marsyas of the Forum and in the Provinces

Beginning under Hadrian, an image of the satyr Marsyas became a common design on Roman provincial coins, particularly in cities with colonial status in Asia Minor and the Near East. At least 25 cities minted coins drawing from the iconography established by the Marsyas of the Forum statue that stood on the Roman forum near the tribunal for the foreign praetor (*praetor peregrinus*) from at least the first century BCE (Reinach 1915). The statue is no longer extant, but its likeness is known its depiction on Republican and provincial coins and the Anaglypha Traiani (Torelli 1982, 90-109). Small (1982, 72-83) argued that the statue originally expressed Marsyas' connection to augury via the statue's raised hand and thrown back head. However, by the time the provincial coins appeared the meaning attached to the statue had shifted, apparently because of Marsyas' proximity to the tribunal of the foreign praetors, and the similarity between the Marsyan gesture and the imperial *adlocutio* (Small 1982, 72-92). By the fourth century CE Servius (*ad Aeneidem* 3.20, 4.58) reported that the Marsyas of the Forum symbolized *libertas* and imperial approval of foreign communities, and that copies were set up in provincial cities. This point is underscored by inscriptions explicitly mentioning copies of the statue from North Africa (Small 1982, 138-142).

In its numismatic context, the Marsyas of the Forum motif was one of several coin designs that appear with great frequency in the local coinages of Roman colonies, a category which include depictions of an emperor ploughing, Aeneas, the Lupa Romana, and military standards (Hill 1899, 92-95). The Marsyas design is taken today as an indication that a city enjoyed an even more specific political status, usually the *ius Italicum* (Paoli 1938; Paoli 1945; Klimowsky 1982-1983; Walbank 1989; but cf. Veyne 1962). Analyses of the meaning of the

type beyond signifying a political status include the establishment of the geographic and chronological ranges for the design in the provinces (Small 1982, 132-138) and the meaning of individual occurrences (e.g. Walbank 1989; Kaizer 2007). No significant work has been done on the iconography within its local context, the meaningful variations within the Marsyas of the Forum designs, and how the Marsyas type fits within the messages expressed by the other colonial types.

Based on evidence from 25 cities (those identified by Small plus four additional examples), I argue in this paper that the Marsyas of the Forum design appears in a greater variety of ways, and in more places, than previously discussed. It also was used in significantly different ways from other colonial types. In particular, I show that Marsyas was often integrated into designs alongside Tyche and other significant civic deities, and sometimes depicted on a pedestal or base, suggesting a (possible) connection with a physical statue within the city. The variety in designs suggests a greater flexibility in the use (and perhaps the range of meanings) attached to the Marsyas of the Forum. When contextualized with the epigraphic evidence for copies of the statue set up in public spaces in North African, it appears that the Marsyas type communicated a broader message than simply marking the *ius Italicum*. Instead, as Servius reported, the Marsyas of the Forum was a visual expression of the connection between imperial capital, administration, and local communities and power. Other colonial types stressed the origin or foundations of cities through distinctly Roman terms, such as the symbolic ploughing of a pomerium, or the foundation of the city reimagined as the foundation of Rome. In the Marsyas type however, Rome was situated within a distinctly local context, represented by civic deities and heroes.

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