A Satyr for Midas: The Barberini Faun and Hellenistic Royal Patronage

The canonical statue known as the Barberini Faun is roundly viewed as a mysterious anomaly. The challenge to interpret it is intensified not only by uncertainties about its date and origin but also by the persistent idea that it represents a generic satyr.

This paper tackles this assumption and identifies the statue with the satyr that King Midas captured in the well-known myth. Iconographic analysis of the statue’s pose supports this view. In particular, the arm bent above the head, the twist of the torso, and the splay of the legs are paralleled in many well-understood figures and furnish keys to interpreting the Barberini Faun as an extraordinary sleeping beast, intoxicated and fit for capture. The paper then explores the links between kings and satyrs in the Hellenistic age and finds grounds for understanding the statue within the context of royal patronage before the mid-second century BC.

The Barberini Faun is one of the most celebrated and best beloved statues to survive from classical antiquity, but it is nevertheless a baffling monument (Figs. 1–6). Nothing is known of its patron or artist, and its date too is uncertain;

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Unless otherwise noted, texts and translations of all Greek and Latin authors are taken from the editions of the Loeb Classical Library, published by Harvard University Press.

1. The term faun derives from the Latin “faunus,” a later designation for the rustic hybrid creature earlier called σμηνός or σάτυρος in Greek. Some scholars therefore refer to the Barberini Faun as the Barberini Satyr or simply the Sleeping Satyr. While respecting the greater precision
its archaeological context is obscure and its function difficult to discern. Most puzzling of all, perhaps, is the strange incompatibility between the style and the iconography of the statue. The figure depicted has a tail and is therefore a satyr, a hybrid creature whose ribaldry and mischievousness are amply attested elsewhere and particularly in scenes on painted pots. Yet the light-hearted and comical atmosphere that colors these images is absent from the Barberini statue. Instead, its complex design, heroic physique, and monumental size command awe and curiosity, while its solitude and sleeping state further distance it from the typical run of satyrs. Compared with images in vase-painting, the statue is an anomaly, larger, grander, less active, and more seductive than any other satyr represented.

Despite the dissimilarities, it is commonly assumed that the Barberini Faun represents an ordinary satyr, so intoxicated that he has withdrawn from his band in uncharacteristic slumber. This explanation rightly emphasizes the themes of sleep and drunkenness, but it fails to account for the gravity of the style employed and gives scant consideration to the statue’s inflated scale, compositional sophistication, and iconographic uniqueness. This essay takes the position that these features in fact express the statue’s meaning more than has been recognized and thus deserve fresh consideration. The formal distinctiveness of the Barberini Faun strongly suggests that it represents not a typical satyr of purely ornamental interest but rather a satyr of special significance within a specific narrative.

A sleeping satyr is a major player in the well-known myth of Midas, and this paper argues that the Barberini Faun was conceived as a sculptural expression of the myth. Three types of evidence are adduced to support this conclusion. First, the form of the statue itself is examined with particular attention to the gesture of the right arm, the torsion of the body, and the position of the legs. The frequency of these features elsewhere in Greek art opens up a large group of works suitable for comparison with the Barberini Faun; each of these elements also helps articulate the meaning and identity of the statue. Second, the mythology of Midas is reviewed for indications of the satyr’s character and appearance. Although the sources vary considerably, several present the satyr as a wise and portentous creature whose capture demonstrates the king’s own talent and good fortune. This characterization differs sharply from most images in vase-painting but tallies nicely with the powerful impact of the Barberini Faun. If indeed the statue was intended to depict the satyr that Midas caught, it cast the patron in the role of the legendary king, and this consideration leads to the third body of evidence treated here. Though best known today as a figure of ridicule, Midas was often regarded in antiquity as a fortunate and venerable king with a stature that a Hellenistic patron might have liked to claim, and literary sources supply the names of historical figures who seem to have invited comparison with him.

of these titles, I prefer the name by which the statue is traditionally and most commonly known. We remain of course completely ignorant of the designation attached to it in antiquity.
These examples demonstrate the political value of the captive satyr and suggest the motives that prompted the patron of the Barberini Faun.

The three types of material analyzed in this study supply a historical and iconographic context far broader than that usually used to explain the statue. The integrated approach adopted here thus leads to a new interpretation that accounts not only for the statue’s form and subject but also for its genesis in an act of patronage. Interpreted as the satyr caught by Midas, the Barberini Faun ceases to be an inscrutable exception and becomes an expression of the artistic traditions that flourished in the Hellenistic world and a witness to the modes of panegyric that served its rulers and patrons.

THE SATYR DESCRIBED

Before exploring the meaning of the Barberini Faun, it is helpful to review what is known of its provenance and to consider the form of the statue as it survives. According to a note written by the antiquarian Cassiano del Pozzo between 1631 and 1655, it was one of two statues found in trenches dug around the Castel Sant’Angelo in Rome and brought to the gardens of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII.2 It is thought that these discoveries were made in the course of enlargements to the fortifications carried out under Pope Urban between 1624 and 1628.3 Cassiano describes the statue as “un torso di Fauno, non inferiore al torso di Belvedere,” which indicates that the figure was incomplete, although enough was preserved for him to call it a faun, a satyr by a Latin name.4 In judging the Faun no less than the Torso Belvedere, he may have had in mind the fragmentary state and over-life-sized scale of both works—the Barberini statue measures 2.15 meters—as well as their high quality.5

Unlike the Torso Belvedere, the “torso di Fauno” that entered the Barberini collection retained its ancient head but was restored to become a full figure by the time it arrived at the Glyptothek in Munich in 1820 (Fig. 1).6 The right leg and portions of the left, as well as the lower left arm, the head of the lion skin draped

4. On the identity of the terms satyr and faun, see LIMC 8: 1 (1997) 1108, s.v. Silenoi (E. Simon). It is also possible that Cassiano viewed the statue not simply as a faun but as the rustic divinity Faunus himself, perhaps in recognition of its size and magnificence. Recent research has detected no representations of Faunus, however, and it is therefore unlikely that the Barberini statue portrays him. See LIMC 8: 1 (1997) 582, s.v. Faunus (P. Pouthier and P. Rouillard).
6. The statue was bought by Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria with the help of his agent, Martin von Wagner, but the transaction was not easily achieved, since many luminaries of the early-nineteenth century art world actively opposed the sale and export of the statue. On the saga of the acquisition, see Bulle 1901: 5–7; Walter 1986: 91–94.
over it, and the base beneath the figure, were added after the statue was excavated. The modern pieces were removed in the course of renovations to the Glyptothek in the 1960s, but the stumps that were exposed did not contradict the pose as restored. As it is now displayed, the ancient core of the statue is thus fitted with a less conspicuous base and new reconstructions of the missing parts that essentially mimic those of the old restoration (Figs. 2–4). Although some indications suggest that the figure might lie flatter on the ground, the carving of the back (Fig. 5) confirms the partially-upright attitude that it now assumes. It has been rightly noted that when the right foot is placed farther from the torso than it is in the current display, the figure becomes more stable and perhaps more successful. Although the exact position of the right foot and leg remain in dispute, in other regards the current pose is accepted as original and authentic.

The statue represents an unusually muscular satyr asleep on a rocky support. The right arm is raised and bent above the head in a gesture whose connotations will be explored below, and the muscles and tendons of the chest are stretched in accord with the pose. The head rests on the raised left shoulder, the eyes are closed, the jaw relaxed, and the lips soft (Fig. 6). Locks of wavy hair well

7. Walter 1986: 97–108 has shown that these parts were in fact replaced differently in successive restorations undertaken before the statue was acquired for the Glyptothek in the early nineteenth century. The restorations documented in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century prints as well as the restored pieces removed from the original statue during post-war renovations to the Glyptothek have been attributed to a number of different artists. There is consensus that Giovanni Pacetti (1746–1820) was responsible for the marble limbs removed by 1972, but there is some debate about the stucco pedestal beneath the figure, which has been associated with Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680). The tradition that Bernini worked on the statue is persistent, although Montagu (see Paul 1972: 90–93) finds it spurious, and Haskell and Penny 1981: 202–204 doubt its validity. Walter 1986 thoughtfully assesses indications to the contrary, including a bozzetto from the workshop of Bernini, now in a Florida private collection.

8. Ridgway 1990: 314–15. The removal of the restored parts of the Barberini Faun as well as the Archaic sculpture from Aegina caused a general reappraisal of restoration and “de-restoration” of ancient statuary when the Glyptothek reopened after renovation in 1972. See Paul 1972 and Knell and Kruft 1972, both of which include photographs of the Barberini Faun in its undisguised fragmentary state and its fully restored condition. The statue is currently displayed without the stucco base and eighteenth-century marble limbs, and a plaster cast of the right leg as earlier restored fills out the ancient original.

9. Ridgway 1990: 315. One bit of evidence in favor of a more horizontal arrangement is a plate in Hieronymus Tetius’ description of the Barberini Palace, Aedes Barberinæ ad Quirinalem, published in 1642; see Walter 1986: 99, fig. 5, and 1993: 15, fig. 3. Walter 1986: 98–100 elegantly dismisses this as an indication of an early restoration by noting the similarity between the statue as completed in the print and Michelangelo’s drawing of the punishment of Tityos, now in the Royal Library at Windsor.

10. Walter and E. Luttner made a plaster reconstruction of the statue with the foot in this alternative position in 1959–1960. The change effectively increases the figure’s air of repose while maintaining its torsion and energy. For photographs of the plaster, see Walter 1986: 109–11, figs. 17–19, and Walter 1993: 25–27, figs. 10–12. Another reconstruction meant to give the statue a more Classical appearance was proposed by Bulle 1901: 13–17, figs. 7 and 8.

11. On the arm bent above the head as a marker of sleep, see McNally 1985: 156–57, 167, 172. For further analysis of the gesture, see Milleker 1986: 58–69.
out from the forehead and temples, concealing the ears. Grapes and ivy tucked into a band worn around the head indicate the figure’s affiliation with the world of wine. Unlike many earlier images of satyrs, this one lacks shaggy hair and horse’s legs, but the inconspicuous tail lying to the proper left discretely confirms its identity. Beneath the figure is spread the skin of a feline (a paw is visible near the proper left foot), whose slack folds and fringed edge contrast with the figure’s firm physique and smooth skin. The pelt is draped over a rough and irregular surface, of which the section nearest to the figure is ancient.

In terms of style, the statue possesses several traits commonly associated with the school of sculpture that flourished at Pergamon in the late third and early second centuries BC.\textsuperscript{12} The massive physique and impressive muscularity, for example, are paralleled in the Ludovisi and Capitoline Gauls, Roman marbles linked to a bronze group regarded as a Pergamene royal commission and known as the Greater Attalid dedication.\textsuperscript{13} The Barberini statue also shares with these figures an irregular profile and a many-sided composition that lacks a single optimal point of view. The implicit sense of tension is another hallmark of Pergamene style: contracted abdominal muscles, bulging inner thighs, and stretched tendons in the upper chest are found in the giants from the Great Altar of Zeus as well as the Barberini Faun.\textsuperscript{14} The presence of so many Pergamene features may give cause to date the statue to the period between 230 and 200 BC, when the prototypes of the Ludovisi and Capitoline Gauls are thought to have been made, or to the second quarter of the second century BC, when the Great Altar was carved.\textsuperscript{15} There is also the possibility that the statue was produced in a workshop specializing in revival styles, in which case it could have been carved in the first century BC, or even after by an artist schooled in the Pergamene manner of the high Hellenistic age.\textsuperscript{16} There is continuing disagreement about whether the Barberini Faun is an actual Hellenistic work, a copy of such an original, or a post-Hellenistic creation that incorporates Pergamene features.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} On the Pergamene school of sculpture, see Bieber 1955: 106–22; Stewart 1990: 209–14; De Grummond and Ridgway 2000.


\textsuperscript{14} On the Altar of Zeus, see Simon 1975; also, Stewart 2000.

\textsuperscript{15} Stewart 1990: 676 gives the date as ca. 230–200 BC. Ohly 1977: 20 and Walter 1993: 9 propose the earlier end of the range, ca. 220 BC, while Pollitt 1986: 137 and Smith 1991: 150 tend toward the later, ca. 200 BC.

\textsuperscript{16} Ridgway 1990: 315–21 prefers a later date for the Barberini Faun and defends the view that the statue was created in a Roman milieu to suit a Roman sensibility.

\textsuperscript{17} Walter 1986: 91 emphatically identifies the statue as a Greek original: “Dass er in der zweiten Hälfte des dritten Jahrhunderts v. Chr. von einem griechischen Bildhauer geschaffen wurde, ist unbestritten.” Ohly 1977: 20 concurs with this view. Stewart 1990: 676 and Pollitt 1986: 137 illustrate the Barberini Faun without designating it as a replica, but Smith 1991: 150 treats it as a copy. Ridgway 1990: 383–84 interprets it as a Roman creation in a style reminiscent of early Hellenistic work; she excludes it from her lists of works “accepted as early Hellenistic” or “possibly Hellenistic.”
Stylistic analysis cannot fix the date more precisely, but technical indications furnish no better evidence. Peter Rockwell confirms that the restorations to the statue have obliterated its ancient surface and effaced signs of workmanship that might otherwise help to pinpoint its date or place of origin. The material is described as Asian marble, but scientific tests have not been performed and could not determine the date of the design whatever the results: even if the marble were traced to a quarry that was not exploited before the Roman period, the statue’s possible status as a copy of a Hellenistic monument could not be ruled out. Finally, the archaeological context of the statue is quite obscure. The exact circumstances of its discovery in the seventeenth century were not recorded, and the topography of the region surrounding the Castel Sant’Angelo in antiquity is incompletely known. The likelihood that the statue was transported from elsewhere is also considerable. Winckelmann imagined it among the statues that Procopius says the Romans hurled at barbarian invaders in late antiquity, but less romantic scenarios are still easier to envision. Many monuments of foreign extraction are known to have been displayed in Rome and moved within Rome, and the Barberini Faun could well have been among them. These considerations lead one to doubt whether there is any link between the purported Roman findspot and the statue’s origin, and the well-known Roman taste for copies of earlier creations engenders still further skepticism. Since the date and circumstances of the statue’s creation cannot be securely determined on the basis of current evidence, it is not the aim of this paper to fix them more precisely. On the other hand, the formal integrity of the statue is a precious store of information that repays careful examination.

Visual analysis provides a means to probe the meaning of the statue, however obscure its context and function remain. Despite persistent doubts about its date and origin, the significance of formal features is manifest and indeed has furnished grounds for several current interpretations. Stewart, for example, judges the Barberini Faun “a ruthlessly objective study of drink-sodden sleep” on account of the remarkable naturalism with which the figure and his condition are rendered. The idea of intoxication and the satyr’s status as a rustic alien creature are also integral to Pollitt’s appraisal: “The ominous, potent, natural force, temporarily subdued by wine, that the Faun represents was a subject of considerable curiosity and anxiety to the Greeks.”

18. I thank Peter Rockwell for sharing this judgment with me in a conversation in Rome on May 22, 2003.
19. See Haskell and Penny 1981: 204. Procopius De bello gothico 1.19, 22, refers to an incident during the siege of Rome in AD 537, when the defenders of Hadrian’s Mausoleum are supposed to have thrown statues from the fortress down on their Gothic opponents.
designed to produce,” and he thus treats it as a cautionary image, meant to remind viewers of conduct to be avoided. Moreno similarly finds a moral message in the striking combination of superb physique and undignified position; he views the indecent display of the genitals as indicating lack of self-control and interprets the image of drunken inanition as the key to an allegory on human dignity abandoned to base bestiality. Each of these assessments is squarely grounded in the visual properties of the statue, but in each case, it is the same formal features that are emphasized, namely, the body type, the pose, and the portrayal of a creature with both human and animal qualities.

Without question, these are major factors of the statue’s meaning, but they are not the only features worthy of close consideration. In particular, the figure’s pose rewards analysis, for it combines several elements whose significance is well established in pre-Hellenistic Greek iconography. Like other pastiches in ancient sculpture, the Barberini Faun integrates elements drawn from disparate sources and compounds their connotations in its own meaning. The discussion that follows gives special consideration to the bent right arm, the semi-recumbent disposition of hips and torso, and the wide spreading of the legs. Each of these elements has a long and fertile tradition in Greek iconography, and each is thus invested with a range of interrelated meanings. The significance of the Barberini Faun may be read as the sum of its richly allusive components.

At the pinnacle of the composition is the right elbow, which is bent above the head in a position commonly associated with sleep in Greek art. The gesture is standard in representations of Ariadne, Endymion, and other figures whose mythology involves slumber, and in the Barberini statue, it confirms that the satyr is either dozing or sound asleep and snoring. The ancestry and evolution of the gesture are more complex, however. In Archaic vase-painting, it sometimes distinguishes dead figures, especially warriors fallen in the midst of violent scenes, so that its original purpose may have been as a marker for death rather than sleep. By the last quarter of the sixth century BC, early red-figure cup painters represented the giant Alkyoneus with one arm bent above the head in scenes where he is not yet dead but only asleep. Since this sleep leaves him vulnerable to fatal attack,

25. This point is elegantly argued by Connor 1984: 390–93.
26. For examples, see Connor 1984: 390–93 and also the following in LIMC 1: 1 (1981) 558–64, s.v. Alkyoneus (Richard Olmos and Luis J. Balmaseda): no. 4, Munich 2590, red-figure cup signed by Phintias as potter and Deiniades as painter, ca. 520 BC; no. 11, Melbourne, Victoria Gallery 1730/4, red-figure cup by the Nikosthenes Painter, ca. 510 BC.
the gesture may be meant to signal not only the slumber of the giant but also the result that it precipitates, namely death.  

By the fifth century BC, figures with no apparent connection to death or sleep appear with the arm bent above the head, and new meanings seem to be added to the old ones. For example, a red-figure cup by the Colmar Painter, dated around 490 BC and now in the Louvre, represents a symposium scene in which a female figure plays the double flute beside a couch where a bearded man reclines with his left arm slack at his side and his right arm bent above his head (Fig. 7). The situation precludes the possibility that the symposiast is asleep or dead, but the gesture may suggest that he will soon drift off to sleep, or that wine and music have so overpowered him that he is effectively dead to his usual self. Such metaphorical meanings for the gesture are implied throughout the later fifth and fourth centuries BC. For example, the Apollo Lykeios, a bronze work by Praxiteles that adorned the Lyceum in Athens, depicted the god with “his right arm bent back above his head,” according to Lucian; he says this “indicates that the god is resting, as after long exertion” in athletic exercise. Elizabeth Milleker associates the gesture alternatively with musical activities such as the song that the Colmar Painter’s symposiast may be hearing or singing. Since the Apollo Lykeios also held a bow, the arm bent above the head could also be a sign of rest from shooting, as seems to be at least partially the case in an Amazon type of the mid-fifth century BC known in several marble replicas (Fig. 8). Like the Apollo, this Amazon leans on a pillar, as though too tired to support her own weight, but the gesture of the resting arm indicates more than simple fatigue, for it reveals a bleeding wound in the proper right side that seems certain to be fatal. Here the arm bent above the head seems to reclaim its early associations with violent death as well as with athletic exertion and exhaustion on the field of battle. Finally, the god Dionysus is depicted with the right arm resting on his head on the Derveni Krater, an important work of the mid-fourth century BC (Fig. 9). Like the Colmar Painter’s symposiast, this figure occurs in a languid scene involving wine, women, and a sensuous atmosphere; music and future slumber may also be implied. In addition, the old association between the arm gesture and death may help to define Dionysus’ character as a divinity who brings release and transformation. Indeed, by the fourth century

28. Louvre G 135. See ARV² 355, 45; Pottier 1929: 970.
29. Καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἄρας, τὸν ἐπὶ τῇ στῆλῃ κεκλιμένον, τῇ ἀριστερᾷ μὲν τὸ τόξον ἔχοντα, ἡ δεξιὰ δὲ ὑπὲρ τῆς κεφαλῆς ἀνακεκλαμμένη ὑπὲρ ἐκ καμάτου μακροῦ ἀνακεκλαμμένον δείκνυσι τὸν θεόν (Lucian Anacharsis 7, trans. A. M. Harmon, Loeb edition, 1925, 4: 7–9). The statue is frequently associated with Praxiteles on the basis of several marbles allegedly based on the bronze in the Lyceum; on the attribution, see Ajootian 1996: 126–27. For a complete study of the several copies and the figure itself, see Milleker 1986.
31. For interpretation of this Amazon, see Harrison 1982: 76–87 and Ridgway 1974.
32. On the Derveni krater, see Giouri 1978.
33. A similar explanation is offered by McNally 1985: 167.
and certainly by the Hellenistic period, it seems that the arm resting on the head could carry a rich combination of meanings, all of which have to do with altered states of consciousness such as those brought on by provocative music, sleep, drink, or death.

In the Barberini Faun, the arm resting on the head may carry several of the meanings established in earlier iconography. It emphasizes that the satyr is asleep, and it insinuates that this slumber results from excessive consumption of wine. In addition, the old tendency to depict figures about to suffer violence with the arm bent above the head may be revived here, although the attack implied need not be envisioned as a murderous one.

The posture of the satyr, with a slightly obtuse angle between legs and torso and a pronounced twist in the upper chest, is a significant determinant of its formal impact as well as a bearer of meaning. The position gives the figure a powerful presence in three-dimensional space and a stronger suggestion of animation than a more supine position would; the sense is that slumber itself is here a dynamic state. The pose indicates a combination of relaxation and inanition suited to the depiction of restless sleep, and so it is used in such works as the Ariadne type known in several copies of which the best known is in the Vatican (Fig. 10). In both statues, the torsion and relatively upright position of the torso prevent the viewer from understanding the figure as a corpse, while the horizontal axis of the hips in both statues indicates a degree of comfort incompatible with a dying figure. In marked contrast, the fallen warriors from the pediments of the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina and the dying trumpeter portrayed in the Capitoline Gaul all have their hips turned so that they are perpendicular rather than parallel to the ground, as though they were straining to remain upright. Unlike them, the Barberini statue displays torsion sufficient to indicate that the satyr is alive and also a firm seat that marks his state of repose.

The partly erect attitude that the figure now assumes is a matter of restoration, but the angle between the hips and torso is original, and the degree of elevation very probably so. This posture may be related to the customs of the symposium as well as the state of slumber. In unambiguous representations of the distinctively Greek all-male drinking party, the figure reclining with his chest upright is ubiquitous; the Colmar Painter’s kylix, discussed above (Fig. 7), is but one example. The symposiast’s characteristic posture is also used for divine figures, for instance, Figure D from the east pediment of the Parthenon, who may be identified as Dionysus or Heracles, and Dionysus as he appears on the Derveni krater (Fig. 9). Since these figures do not hold wine cups, neither is actually involved in

34. On the Vatican Ariadne and other replicas of the type, see Wolf 2002.
35. For photographs of these well-known statues, see Stewart 1990: plates 245–46 and 667–70.
36. Ridgway 1990: 314–15 reviews other possibilities but concludes that the careful carving of the back seems to confirm the current angle of inclination.
37. On Figure D, see Palagia 1993: 19–20, and 60.
a symposium, but the posture alone associates each with the institution in a more general sense. Both the pose and the cup sometimes appear in depictions of satyrs and seem to qualify them as primordial symposiasts or fantastic partakers in the forms of polite society. A group of small Archaic bronzes from Olympia portray satyrs reclining with cups in their hands that seem to present a parody of human behavior and a humorous reflection on the bestial transformations that wine may cause (Fig. 11). Comparable to them is the sleeping satyr that perches on the shoulder of the Derveni krater (Fig. 12). Like the Barberini Faun, this figure bends his right arm above his head and rests in a mostly upright posture, but the significant differences between the two in fact make the Derveni satyr closer kin to the Archaic examples in Olympia, for like them, he is a miniature with a caricatured face, and like them, he holds a drinking vessel, the wineskin in his left hand.

The Barberini statue takes the symposiast’s posture but not his characteristic cup, couch, and clothing. The pose thus suggests intoxication beyond the pale of social convention. Nude, withdrawn in sleep, and resting on a rock draped with a skin, the satyr is presented as alien to sanctioned behavior, subject only to the most primitive and unstructured sort of drinking. It may be meaningful that in the midst of unconventional indulgence, the satyr has nevertheless assumed the pose of the symposiast, as though anticipating the forms of human social ritual. The posture of the Barberini Faun may thus be associated with traits ranging from troubled sleep and heavy drinking to social intuition and prophetic potential.

The third major component of the statue’s pose, the widely-splayed legs, also has meaningful precedents in pre-Hellenistic Greek art. With the knees bent and both legs turned out from the hip, the genitals are left emphatically exposed, and this may allude to the satyr’s erotic proclivities, as many commentators have suggested. A similar arrangement of the lower limbs is found in the well-known bronze statue of Eros asleep, where eroticism is part and parcel of the figure depicted, although the baby god cannot himself be intended as a seducer or sex object (Fig. 13). In many images, however, spread legs seem to imply languid sensuality rather than prurient intent. So, for instance, Dionysus on the Derveni Krater rests with his legs apart, the right one draped over Ariadne’s lap, in a state of nudity but not of apparent arousal (Fig. 9). In these cases, the spread legs hint at sexuality as though suggesting a certain readiness, yet the pose is not quite the same as that of the Barberini Faun, for Eros and Dionysus both are shown with legs relaxed and the knees pointed upward, not turned out, tensed, and placed with the feet near each other in a diamond-shaped arrangement.

38. On the Olympia bronzes, see Herfort-Koch 1986; on the example illustrated here, 119–20.
40. The primary publication of the New York statue is Richter 1943. For a thorough assessment of the type, one of the most widespread in the Greco-Roman sculptural repertory, see Söldner 1986.
In the Barberini statue, the placement of the feet is again a result of restoration, and some scholars question it.\textsuperscript{41} Ridgway, however, accepts it and also interprets it with useful insight: rather than finding eroticism in the pose, she connects it with the uninhibited animal that the satyr is, “sprawled out like a starfish, knees and elbows pointing in opposite directions, without modesty or reservation.”\textsuperscript{42} The notion that the spread legs may express the bestial nature and even the special physiology of the satyr is an attractive one supported by much else in Greek iconography. Several satyrs painted on black-figure vessels assume a squatting posture with legs spread wide and inner thighs tensed to hold the trunk between them.\textsuperscript{43} Exhibitionistic as the pose seems to be, it is also remarkable for displaying flexibility and muscular capabilities unusual in a human male. The satyr’s leg strength and flexibility are also suggested in a famous tetradrachm type from Sicilian Naxos, which bears on the reverse a satyr seated on the ground with his legs tensed, spread wide, and sharply bent while he gazes fixedly at the cup that he holds above his shoulder (Fig. 14).\textsuperscript{44} Another satyr, painted by Onesimos, balances on an amphora with his legs splayed and turned out in a position similar to that of the Barberini Faun (Fig. 15).\textsuperscript{45} Unlike the Naxos satyr, this one has an erection and a more antic demeanor. There is no necessary link between the spread-legged posture and sexual arousal, however. It would seem that loose inner thighs are simply part of the imagined natural history of satyrs, one of the features that distinguishes them from men.

As the foregoing analysis confirms, the pose of the Barberini Faun combines a set of gestures with meaningful traditions in Greek iconography. The arm above the head associates the figure with sleep, intoxication, and vulnerability of some kind. The angle between legs and torso suggests animation, liveliness, tension, and perhaps also the mythic antecedents of the symposium. Finally, the parted thighs imply freedom from social restraints as well as an imaginary animal physiology. The Barberini statue is thus an archaizing pastiche of elements whose form and meaning derive from earlier imagery. The combination of these features in a single figure is new, however, and so is the choice to portray a satyr in a style as heroic as it is naturalistic. The Faun is remarkable precisely because it depicts a marvelous yet real-seeming creature asleep, exposed, and apparently ripe for capture.

The audience for which the statue was originally intended may or may not have considered the full range of meanings discernible in its features. The design of the

\textsuperscript{41} E.g. Stewart 1990: pl. 676; Pollitt 1986: 134; Bulle 1901: 10–18.
\textsuperscript{42} Ridgway 1990: 316.
\textsuperscript{43} E.g. Metropolitan Museum of Art 26.49, black-figure aryballos by Nearchos, ca. 550 BC; Berlin Antikensammlung 1671, black-figure amphora, ca. 560 BC. On these examples, see Lissarague 1990: 56–57, and figs. 2.4, 2.5, 2.6. See also Würzburg, Martin von Wagner Museum L796, Caeretan black-figure neck-amphora by the Micali Painter, ca. 510 BC, in \textit{LIMC} 8: 1 (1997) 1113, no. 28b, s.v. Silenoi (E. Simon).
\textsuperscript{44} The basic study of this type is Cahn 1944: 42–49.
\textsuperscript{45} Beazley and Caskey 1954: 25–26, no. 74.
statue, however, seems intended to make the viewer experience its composition sequentially, angle by angle and trait by trait. This type of interaction is implicit in much Hellenistic statuary and is also paralleled in the structure of literary ecphrases, as Graham Zanker has recently shown.46 The Barberini Faun’s current setting makes it the centerpiece of a specially-designed domed room and the endpoint of a splendid enfilade, but the sense of arrival engendered by the museum installation contrasts with the feeling of gradual discovery that the statue itself seems contrived to promote. The jagged-edged composition intersects with the viewer’s space and distributes interesting features across several points of view. The one in line with the direction pointed by the left knee, for instance, displays the intersecting angular forms of the composition to best advantage (Fig. 1), but the view from a few steps to the right offers a glimpse into the recess framed by the left arm and leg, which shelters the satyr’s small but telltale tail (Fig. 2). The angle from still farther to the right obscures the animal traits and highlights the system of muscles in the abdomen and legs (Fig. 3). A more overt eroticism characterizes the perspective from between the legs (Fig. 4), and the view from the back hides the provocative allure of the front, but displays the tail as well as the fine carving of the shoulder muscles and an inviting gap between the satyr’s head and raised right arm (Fig. 5). Each point of view discloses another detail of the sleeping creature. Rather than steering observers to a single perspective, the composition keeps them in circling motion and permits a succession of different views.

When discovered in sequence, the several features of the Barberini Faun suggest a narrative, in which drunkenness, slumber, exposure, and the animal appeal of the satyr each plays a role. It has been assumed that the story cannot be further specified, that the Barberini statue is best identified simply as a satyr. But the depiction is so unusual as to certify that this is no typical satyr. A glance at the traditional iconography and mythology of satyrs points up the ways in which the Barberini Faun is surprising and discovers a narrative context for its distinctiveness.

LORE OF THE SATYR: TRADITION AND MYTHOLOGY

The satyr is a special creation of the Greek imagination, a primordial nature spirit with close links to the divine that is also a hybrid of man and beast and a

46. Zanker 2004. On viewing from several perspectives, see esp. 27–71; on the Barberini Faun, 45–46. I agree with Zanker that the statue encouraged the viewer to examine it from several angles, but I do not agree that the primary point of focus need be “the genitals between the provocatively spread legs.” An ecphrastic text that bears interesting comparison with the Barberini statue is Philostratus’ response to a painting of Comus, personified as a dozing, intoxicated youth (Imagines 1.2). Although the body type of Comus is different from that of the Faun, the ecphrasis moves methodically from one feature to the next, drawing conclusions in response to specific details within the whole.
device for exploring the animal aspects of human nature. The satyrs’ outlines are essentially human, but their bestial nature is nevertheless apparent, for they are usually depicted with tails and pointed ears; sometimes they also have horse’s legs and shaggy body hair. Images of satyrs are found in art and literature from the early Archaic period into late antiquity, but scholarly studies usually focus on Attic vase-painting of the sixth and fifth centuries BC. The evidence is most abundant here, but it is also somewhat one-sided, for it tends to stress the mischievous and lascivious side over the numinous aspect. Often in an ithyphallic state, the satyrs painted on pottery dance, perform acrobatics, engage in wild antics, and pursue animals, maenads, or nymphs with sexual intent. Satyrs occasionally appear clothed and otherwise obedient to social conventions, but more often than not, they flout every rule of polite behavior, socializing with naked abandon in an atmosphere heady with wine. As upholders of a society turned upside down, the satyrs of vase-painting have considerable comic potential; on some vessels, they ape human behavior, and on others, human actors dress up as satyrs by donning distinctive masks and shorts embellished with tails and huge phalli. These figures are identified as participants in the choruses of satyr plays, another body of evidence where the character of satyrs has been sought.

All of these qualities may be implicit in the Barberini Faun, but it is important to note the significant ways in which it is manifestly unlike the satyrs of vase-painting and the Athenian theater. First, its animal nature, indicated only by the small tail, is not emphasized, and its face is devoid of mask-like or caricatured traits. Second, it is alone and thus removed from interaction with humans and satyrs alike. Although some scholars envision the statue as part of a group, it is uncertain who the other player or players would be, and no other extant statue type has been identified as the companion piece. It is more likely that the Barberini Faun was meant to stand alone, like the statues of satyrs associated with named masters of the fourth century BC. Lysippos, for example, is linked with types that assume complex standing poses, and Praxiteles is credited with statues known in replicas that represent satyrs as lissome adolescents with an air of pastoral.

47. The dual character of the satyrs and wine in general is explored in Bérard et al. 1989: 121–49. The satyrs’ value as counterexamples for human behavior is elegantly argued by Lissarague 1990 and Frontisi-Ducroux 1995. Of course, this function nicely complements the satyrs’ role as followers and companions of Dionysus.
49. On satyr plays, see Sutton 1980; Seidensticker 2003.
50. The suggestion that the Faun formed part of a group is offered by Pollitt 1986: 134 and discussed by Ridgway 1990: 321.
The Barberini Faun shares these figures’ solitary three-dimensionality, but its body type is more heroic than any of theirs, its age is less clearly indicated, and it is represented on a much larger scale. Indeed, its large size and splendid physique make it seem alien to the joyous exuberance of the scenes on painted vessels and unsuited to the idyllic atmosphere implied by satyrs in sculpture.

The heroic presentation and elevated style of the Barberini Faun align it more closely with the image of the satyr as a quasi-divine being charged with primordial wisdom. Though painted vases infrequently reveal this side of the satyr’s nature, literary sources and depictions outside vase-painting demonstrate it clearly. For instance, the satyr on the Naxos tetradrachm (Fig. 14) has been seen as a worthy pendant for Dionysus on the obverse, like him a god of fruitfulness and mystery. Like the Naxos satyr, the Barberini Faun has a powerful body, a complex but quiet posture, and a deliberately described impenetrable expression.

Another key to the identity of the Barberini Faun is the fact that the satyr depicted is asleep. Although satyrs in vase-painting frequently appear in various states of drunkenness, they seem to remain in perpetual arousal and activity, never subject to ordinary slumber. It has been suggested that the sleep of the Barberini Faun presents the satyr as sexually vulnerable, contradicting his usual role as sexual aggressor. A particular contrast has been detected between the Barberini statue and scenes in vase-painting where wakeful satyrs confront others who sleep, specifically, female figures partly exposed. An example like Makron’s kylix in Boston, painted around 490 BC, displays a scenario that is easily deciphered (Fig. 16): a maenad holding a thyrsos has fallen asleep out of doors, and two satyrs with erect phalli approach her, one poised above her head and touching the arm bent around it, the other, spreading her legs and reaching beneath her skirt. If the sculptor of the Barberini Faun meant to reverse this scenario, it is strange that he gave the satyr such a mature and mighty physique. An adolescent body type would have marked the figure as a homoerotic love-object, but unlike the pliant satyr types linked with Praxiteles and the youthful sleeping satyr from the villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum (Fig. 17), the Barberini Faun has heavy musculature suited to a hero in full manhood. A heterosexual situation may be easier for audiences today to envision, but viewers in antiquity probably responded otherwise, for ancient sources seldom characterize satyrs as attractive to women: images in vase-painting and sculpture alike represent numerous scenes of maenads

52. Cahn 1944: 43–44.
55. On the young satyr from the Villa of the Papyri, see Wojcik 1986: 114–16, where the prototype is dated to the second quarter of the third century BC. Moreno 1994: 235 associates it with Antigonus Gonatas and therefore accepts the early date, although he identifies the statue as a sleeping Pan. See also Mattusch 2005: 318–20.
or nymphs repelling their advances. Moreover, in mythology, sleeping satyrs pose threats to women rather than arousing desire in them: the Danaid Amymone, who accidentally shot and awakened a satyr, thus inflamed his passion and roused him to chase after her.\footnote{Apollodorus 2.1.4.}

If the Barberini Faun is to be identified with this satyr, the choice to depict him asleep is unusual, for the turning point in the narrative comes with the satyr’s arousal, not his slumber. In short, the statue’s erotic impact need not be linked to the theme of sleep, which must be interpreted otherwise.

Since the idea of sleep contains the implication of wakefulness before and after, it furnishes the kernel of a narrative and indeed figures prominently in several mythological stories.\footnote{On the significance of sleep in ancient Greek mythology and thought, see Wührle 1995. On the mythology of sleep and representations of it, see Knoll 1980. For a general investigation of sleep in Greco-Roman art, see Sorabella 2000. For theoretical consideration of the role of sleep in relation to the Barberini Faun, see Spengler 1993: 160–66.}

The great majority of satyrs in vase-painting and sculpture cannot be associated with specific myths, but the Barberini Faun possesses a monumentality and uniqueness that suggest mythic stature.\footnote{Hedreen 1992: 4 notes, however, that several images of satyrs supposed to lack narrative content may in fact illustrate mythological stories unknown today.}

If the statue represents one of the satyrs distinguished in mythology, a narrow range of identifications is possible. One candidate is Marsyas, who is celebrated for his musical talents, the contest that he lost to Apollo, and the grisly punishment that he suffered as a result. He is represented in several replicas of a statue type often associated, like the Barberini Faun, with Pergamene origins and a High Hellenistic date; he is depicted hanging from a tree with his arms bound above his head and his body stretched in painful anticipation of the flaying that he is about to suffer.\footnote{On the Hellenistic Marsyas type, see Weis 1992.}

Although this type shares stylistic similarities with the Barberini Faun, the latter has a thicker layer of flesh over the muscles and lacks the heavy beard that Marsyas wears. The differences in age and body type make it improbable that both figures represent Marsyas. Moreover, the myth has nothing to do with sleep. The Barberini Faun does not relate to any part of the story and could only be Marsyas asleep before his ordeal, without the dramatic clarity of the hanging type.

Another mythologically significant satyr and possible identification for the Barberini statue is Silenos, a distinct individual within the class of silenoi, a term to be discussed below.\footnote{The distinction between Silenos and the silenoi is drawn in LIMC 8: 1 (1997) 1108, s.v. Silenoi (E. Simon).} In poetry and art, Silenos is shown taking care of the infant Dionysus and sharing his primordial wisdom with those who capture him when overcome with drink. A fountain sculpture from Carthage represents such a scene of capture, in which four small satyrs struggle to bear Silenos, who lies naked on a cloth with his legs spread and his head lolling to one side (Fig. 18). The pose bears comparison with that of the Barberini Faun, and both figures represent
satyrs asleep, but the Barberini statue does not have the pot belly and bearded, snub-nosed face that distinguish Silenos here and in other representations. Indeed, Silenos is characterized in literary as well as visual sources as elderly, bearded, and bald-headed, whether he is construed as a wise old man or a figure of fun. Since none of these characteristics apply to the Barberini Faun, the statue could only offer an exceptional portrayal and more likely was not meant to depict Silenos at all.

A recent proposal identifies the Barberini Faun with Maron, a minor deity with Dionysiac associations. The suggestion is based on a line of Propertius (El. 2.14) that refers to a sleeping figure from which water flows through the portico of Pompey; if Maron were depicted as a satyr, the Barberini Faun might be the statue described. There is no evidence that Maron was ever shown as a satyr, however, for his iconography is wholly unknown. The interpretation nevertheless has the merit of accounting for the distinctiveness of the Barberini statue: the idea that the figure is not merely a satyr but rather a god explains its large size and splendid physique. On the other hand, satyrs themselves are imbued with the divinity of nature, despite their caricatured appearance on painted pots; there is therefore no need for the Barberini Faun to represent a deity. The best identification for the statue would account not only for the satyr’s heroic form and sense of intrigue but also for his slumber, which is so carefully and distinctively rendered.

The short list of satyrs distinguished in myth includes only one for whom sleep is an essential feature, and this is the satyr that King Midas is supposed to have captured. Numerous references to Midas occur throughout classical literature, and despite variations in the tradition, the essence of the story is well known. Midas had in his realm a spring, where a satyr often came to drink. The king decided to entrap it, and to do this, he mixed wine with the water of the spring, so that when the satyr drank it fell into inebriated slumber. The consequences of catching the satyr vary in different versions of the myth, some of which make Midas appear wise and others foolish. Perhaps the most negative characterization is that offered by Ovid, who denies Midas any credit for the capture and makes him request the ill-advised gift of the golden touch; Midas learns nothing from this episode but instead persists as a bumbling rustic and grows the ears of an ass (Met. 11.90–193). Other authors paint a more positive picture. Philostratus the Elder and Theopompus of Chios both give Midas credit for devising the ruse used to catch the satyr, and Xenophon suggests that the capture was a significant

61. See especially Ovid Metamorphoses 4.26 and 11.90.
63. References to the story in Greek literature rarely narrate it in full but rather refer to it in ways that suggest it was common knowledge. Mention of Midas, often in proverbial references, occurs from the seventh century BC into late antiquity in the writings of such diverse authors as Tyrtaeus fr. 12.6; Herodotus 8.138; Aristophanes Ploutos 286–87; Plato Republic 408b, Laws 660e; Plutarch On Superstition 8; Pausanias 1.4.5; Philostratus Life of Apollonius of Tyana 6.27; Hyginus Fables 191; Libanius Orationes 25.25. For a thorough evaluation of the Midas myth as well as the evidence for Midas’ identity as an historical personage, see Roller 1983. For more on variant versions of the Midas myth, see LIMC 8: 1 (1997) 846, s.v. Midas (M. C. Miller).
achievement. Konon, a Greek historian of the Augustan period, presents Midas as a responsible king who led his people to new territory when food supplies in his original domain turned to gold just after the satyr was taken, and Aristotle describes Midas as a seeker of wisdom who presses the satyr to reveal dark truths about human life. Despite the considerable differences in construing Midas’ character, recorded versions of the myth seem to agree that the encounter with the satyr marked a turning point in his fortunes.

There are many good reasons to interpret the Barberini Faun as a depiction of the satyr that Midas caught. First, the figure’s large size and heroic body type are out of place in a creature of pastoral fantasy; the statue seems alien to the generalized locus amoenus but well suited to the realm of myth. Second, the story of Midas provides a compelling explanation for the sleep of the satyr. The usual assumption that this slumber is the result of ordinary drunkenness does not follow nicely from iconographic indications, for sleeping satyrs are as rare in Greek art as reveling and intoxicated satyrs are numerous. In the portrayal of a common satyr, sleep might be a novelty, but for Midas’ satyr, slumber marks a significant twist in the narrative. Finally, the meaning of the satyr’s pose tallies perfectly with the demands of the Midas story. As analyzed above, the arm bent above the head suggests slumber and vulnerability to attack; the torsion and elevation of the trunk imply animation and anticipate the symposium; the open legs and discrete tail point to the satyr’s animal nature. In addition, the many-sided composition involves the viewer in the act of discovery, and the unusual subject engenders curiosity. Like a sophisticated pantomime, the form of the statue thus integrates the themes of drunken slumber, imminent capture, and fantastic confrontation with a non-human creature.

The magnificent physique and heroic presence of the Barberini Faun suggest an august and venerable satyr. Some written versions of the story match this description, although the characterization is often ambiguous. In Virgil’s sixth eclogue, a rustic but wise sleeper yields his captors a song about the creation of the world and its earliest myths, and Servius’ commentary on the passage invokes Theopompus’ mention of the creature that Midas caught and questioned about nature and the past. These authors call the captive a silenos, as Herodotus, Bion, and Pausanias also do; Ovid makes him Silenos himself, Dionysus’ jolly, pot-bellied foster-father. The word silenos is traditionally applied to elderly roly-poly satyrs like the one carried in the group from Carthage (Fig. 18) and not to younger figures like the Barberini Faun. Recent research, however, has shown that “silenos” and “satyr” are essentially interchangeable terms without

64. Philostratus Life of Apollonius of Tyana 6.27; Theopompus FGrHist 115 fr. 75; Xenophon Anabasis 1.2.13.
65. Konon FGrHist 26 fr. 1; Aristotle fr. 44 Rose (= Plutarch Consolatio ad Apollonium 27).
67. Herodotus 8.138; Bion FGrHist 332 fr. 3; Pausanias 1.4.5; Ovid Metamorphoses 11.90.
restriction to particular iconographic types.\(^68\) The use of the word silenos thus gives no reason to suppose that Midas’ captive was envisioned as pot-bellied or grotesque; indeed, Xenophon and Philostratus call the creature a satyr.\(^69\) Greek-speakers in antiquity might have called the Barberini Faun by either name. The youthful and vigorous body type does not preclude the association with Midas and may in fact reinforce it.

Other illustrations of the myth confirm that Midas’ satyr was depicted as neither aged nor obese. For instance, a black-figure pelike of about 510 BC portrays the satyr drinking from a stream that issues from a lion-head spout while Midas’ hunters look on (Fig. 19).\(^70\) The satyr’s bearded, snub-nosed face shows him to be neither older nor younger than satyrs in other Archaic representations, while his legs and stomach are in fact better toned than those of the athletes painted on the reverse side of the vessel.\(^71\) The angular positions of the satyr’s elbows and the spreading of his legs are paralleled not only in other Archaic images but also in the Barberini Faun. On a red-figure stamnos painted around 440 BC and now in the British Museum, the satyr assumes an air of greater gravity as he stands before Midas in another scene favored by Attic vase-painters (Fig. 20).\(^72\) The nude satyr with his athletic physique is closer to the Greek ideal than the other figures in their Persian garments, and quite as human as Midas, whose ass’s ears are more prominent than the satyr’s own. Finally, a painting described by Philostratus the Elder purportedly depicted Midas with the satyr asleep beside the adulterated spring (Imagines 1.22). Although the picture may never have existed, the ecphrasis specifies the satyr’s appearance in vivid terms:

> They [satyrs] are represented in paintings as hardy, hot-blooded beings, with prominent ears, lean about the loins, altogether mischievous, and having the tails of horses. The satyr caught by Midas is here depicted as satyrs in general are, but he is asleep as a result of the wine, breathing heavily like a drunken man.\(^73\)

\(^68\) On the interchangeability of the words silenos and satyros, see OCD\(^3\) 1361, s.v. Satyrs and silenos (R. A. S. Seaford); LIMC 8: 1 (1997) 1108, s.v. Sileni (E. Simon); Hedreen 1992: 162–63. Jeanmaire 1978: 279 suggested that the two words developed in different regions as names for the same being. Alcibiades uses both terms to describe Socrates in Plato’s Symposium 215b, 216c.

\(^69\) Xenophon Anabasis 1.2.13; Philostratus Imagines 1.22.

\(^70\) On the pelike, see Von Bothmer 1951; ABV 384, no. 19. For other images of the capture of the satyr in vase-painting, see Roller 1983; LIMC 8: 1 (1997) 847–48, nos. 7–17, s.v. Midas (M. C. Miller).

\(^71\) For the reverse side of the pelike, see Von Bothmer 1951: 41, fig. 2.

\(^72\) On the stamnos, see ARV2 1035, no. 3; Miller 1988: 81–83. For other images of the satyr brought before Midas, see Roller 1983; LIMC 8: 1 (1997) 849, nos. 35–41, s.v. Midas (M. C. Miller).

Philostratus spells out the usual features of satyrs in art and identifies this one as typical in all respects but one, namely, its sleeping state. As in earlier images, Midas’ satyr was not apparently shown as older, fatter, or more susceptible to drunkenness than any other. What makes this satyr distinctive is the fact that he appears asleep, and the same might be said of the Barberini Faun. In the painting described by Philostratus, the anomaly is due to the link with Midas, and the same myth is the likeliest explanation for the slumber of the Barberini Faun.

If the statue was in fact intended to represent a prize fit for Midas, its original context might have reinforced the connection. The statue was outfitted as a fountain figure at some point in its history, as cuttings for pipes visible beneath the figure’s left arm demonstrate (see Figs. 2 and 5). Although these cuttings may not be coeval with the carving of the statue, it could have been conceived for display near a stream whether or not it was expressly intended for a fountain. The rock on which it rests suggests an outdoor setting, for example, in a sanctuary, gymnasium, or park. Any of these environments would have surrounded the satyr with man-made structures and made it seem an interloper in human affairs, like a stranger in Midas’ garden rather than at home in its native wilderness. If the extant statue is in fact a copy, the first version was likely made of bronze, as were the originals of the Pergamene Gauls, now known only in marble replicas; in bronze, the Barberini Faun would have been golden-colored like so much else associated with Midas. Whether original or replica, the current statue has the potential to generate a superb mythological tableau when displayed, as it most probably was, out of doors near a fountain. Such an environment emphasized the identity of the intoxicated satyr, asleep by human guile and ripe for royal capture. Treated to a glimpse of the creature that Midas caught, the viewer is invited to think of the king himself.

In summary, the differences between the Barberini Faun and other depictions of satyrs have made it seem up to now a bizarre exception, too large, too powerfully built, too inert, and too boldly sculpted to make sense in terms of established tradition. But sources outside vase-painting demonstrate that satyrs were sometimes conceived as august and impressive beings; moreover, the satyr

74. Ridgway 1990: 318 suggests that the statue might have functioned as a fountain figure from the start, while Walter 1986: 120 argues against the possibility. Although I think it unlikely that the Barberini Faun was expressly designed to conduct water, its connection with a fountain even from the beginning would not exclude a date in the second century bc; Bakalakis 1966 presents persuasive arguments for the existence of fountain statuary depicting satyrs before the Roman Empire, in the Hellenistic age.

75. Pollitt 1986: 134 hypothesizes that the statue was meant as an offering in a sanctuary, perhaps of Dionysus; Walter 1986: 119–20 suggests a similar context in the Hellenistic East. Onians 1999: 140 envisions the Barberini Faun instead in the orbit of a gymnasium, perhaps one of those supported by the Attalid kings of Pergamon. As Stewart 1990: 207 notes, “It is a measure of our ignorance of Hellenistic art that its intended context is a mystery: it could have served equally as an ornament in a park, or as a dedication to Dionysus.”

76. On the satyr’s wild habitat, see Walter 1993: 33–73.

77. I thank the anonymous reader for raising the possibility that the original was a bronze.
asleep has a specific role in mythology. The scale, style, and slumber of the Barberini Faun suggest that it should be identified not as a common satyr but as the portentous creature that Midas captured. If it is, the statue’s very anomalies turn out to be meaningful: it is an extraordinary representation of an extraordinary satyr, whose closest counterparts are not to be found in Attic vase-painting but rather in Hellenistic mythological statuary.

MIDAS AND THE SATYR IN HELLENISTIC HISTORY

Up to now, this essay has approached the Barberini Faun primarily in terms of iconography, that is, by seeking a context for it in images that are comparable. As discussed above, this evidence gives grounds for recognizing the statue as a portrayal of the satyr that Midas captured in the well-known myth. The identification is compelling, but one would still like to understand the Barberini Faun in historical context, that is, to know its date and place of origin and its intended function. Iconographic reassessment cannot resolve these issues, but it does provide one means of reconstructing historical circumstance: a statue of Midas’ satyr implies the presence of Midas, and there is therefore reason to surmise that the Barberini Faun was a royal commission. Although hard evidence is lacking, disciplined speculation yields valuable insights into the statue’s historical purpose and meaning. The discussion that follows does not purport to find certainties but rather to seek potentialities that follow from the idea that the Barberini Faun represents Midas’ satyr. Fundamental to this reasoning is the premise that such a figure was produced because a patron had cause to commission it. By asking who would want such an image and why, it is possible to probe the motives that engendered it and so to consider its message in historical terms.

Although the identity of the patron cannot be surely known, there are good reasons to imagine that a monarch was responsible. The myth of Midas has only two major players, and if the statue depicts the satyr, one begins to consider the king. It is unlikely that he was portrayed in another statue, for Hellenistic sculpture quite often depicts the conqueror and the captive without those who have subdued them. In just this way, the Barberini Faun portrays the satyr overcome by drink; Midas is not depicted but rather implied in the result that he has apparently caused, namely, the sleep of the satyr. In the case of the statue, the patron is a natural stand-in for Midas, whose mythological role involves ordering others to execute his plans. The high quality and large size of the Barberini Faun indicate substantial cost and ambition and are certainly consonant with what one would expect of a royal commission.

By obtaining a statue of a sleeping satyr, the patron appeared to have captured a fantastic creature. In ancient stories that relate such a feat, the captor is always a

78. On the representation of defeated and abandoned types without those who have brought them low, see Hölscher 1985.
ruler; the pattern supports the assumption that the patron was a king. In a tale apparently based on that of Midas, the Roman king Numa ensnared the satyr-like divinities Picus and Faunus by setting wine beside a stream. Alexander the Great is said to have dreamed of chasing and catching a satyr during his seven-month siege of Tyre in 332 BC, and in the famous procession staged by Ptolemy II Philadelphus around 275 BC, attendants dressed as satyrs appeared like captives from fabled lands. These traditions present the satyr not as a pastoral merrymaker but as a political symbol. Subject only to royal capture, these satyrs demonstrate the charisma of their captors, and in the cases of Alexander and Ptolemy, they herald military success in particular. Thus Alexander’s dream was interpreted as a sign that he would triumph over Tyre, and Ptolemy’s procession reflects the international scope of his campaigns as well as the vastness of his resources. The captive satyrs in each of these episodes help inflate the deeds of kings to otherworldly proportions; they thus seem to constitute a theme in the praise of Hellenistic rulers.

An anecdote reported by Plutarch gives further witness to the panegyric role of the satyr in a tale that again seems intended to mythologize a victor. The protagonist here is Sulla and the incident alleged to have occurred near Apollonia in Greece:

Here, they say, a satyr was caught asleep, such an one as sculptors and painters represent, and brought to Sulla, where he was asked through many interpreters who he was. And when at last he uttered nothing intelligible, but with difficulty a hoarse cry that was something between the neighing of a horse and the bleating of a goat, Sulla was horrified, and ordered him out of his sight.

79. Ovid Fasti 3.285–308. Numa’s capture of Picus and Faunus is one of many variants on the same pattern, which are analyzed in Schröder 1968. Among his examples is one relating to King Solomon, who mixes wine with a cistern in Jerusalem in order to capture a dragon; this tale is recorded in the twelfth-century German Lob Salomonis 51–116, where the Hellenistic historian Hieronymus (of Cardia) is mentioned as a source. In a modern variation on the theme, Lenin, disguised as a bear, is cast as the beast and his habitat, the forests of Chechnya; when baited with vodka by a local Czarist general, Lenin is captured and paraded through the marketplace, but there he resumes his human shape, kills his captor, and vows revenge on all other generals. On this legend, see Schröder 1968: 331–32.


81. The interpretation of the dream was based on the word “satyros,” which, when divided in two, was found to yield the message “sa Tyros,” or “Tyre is yours,” as reported in Plutarch Alexander 24.5 and Artemidorus 4.24. On the scope of Ptolemy’s martial ambitions, see Theocritus 17.85–94.

The tale, which inserts mythic happenings into a straightforward biography, may stem from Sulla’s own memoirs, which are known to have emphasized dreams, portents, and other marvelous events and also to have furnished Plutarch with material. In context, the episode has political connotations, for it is supposed to have occurred in 83 BC, when Sulla was preparing to lead his army into Italy, worried about his future there, and attentive to propitious omens. Unlike Midas, he is not involved in making the satyr sleep, and yet the men bring it to him as though knowing that it is his prize rather than theirs. Sulla then questions it with the help of interpreters, treating it as a sign whose utterance will be significant. The satyr’s uncanny cry is proof of its animal nature; rather than telling the future in human speech, it simply proclaims that it is an authentic omen. In Plutarch’s narrative, the encounter is shown to have portended success, for Sulla soon returns to Italy, where he defeats his enemies, celebrates his triumph, and gains regal supremacy as dictator of Rome. The relationship between Sulla and the satyr is ultimately comparable to that ascribed to Midas, Alexander, Ptolemy, and Numa: to contain it even for a while shows that he is destined for victory, wealth, and royal power.

Plutarch’s description of the satyr as one like those that “sculptors and painters represent” points back to the Barberini Faun. As a depiction of a would-be captive, it implies a captor; the analogy with Midas and other legendary leaders suggests that it credits him with military glory and royal good fortune. Like Ptolemy’s procession and the story of Alexander’s dream, the statue carried a message very flattering to a king. By commissioning it, the patron embraced the conceit that he could catch a satyr. Whether he then displayed it near his own residence or dedicated it in a sanctuary, it broadcast his power, prestige, and parity with Midas.

Who in the classical world would have wished to style himself the captor of a satyr and therefore a latter-day Midas? The nature of kingship and the number of leaders contending for power in the Hellenistic age created many patrons pleased to claim links with mythological figures in the interests of self-promotion, and the Barberini Faun would have suited such purposes admirably. In a manner suited to a theatrical taste, the statue could trumpet the wealth and flatter the hopes of a prince with martial ambitions. In order for the conceit to work, however, the patron had to have cause to identify with Midas. Because his reputation in antiquity varied with history and geography, certain periods and places favored the comparison more readily. Midas is supposed to have ruled in the Near East, and his image therefore depends on the shifting perceptions of that region among the Greeks and Romans at different times. In a fragmentary text written by the Spartan Tyrtaeus in the seventh century BC, for instance, Midas is associated with vast wealth and royal power, features of Near Eastern culture that particularly impressed the Greeks.

83. On Sulla’s memoirs, see Ramage 1991: 95–102; on supernatural elements, esp. 96–99.
84. Plutarch Sulla 27.3–4.
in the Orientalizing period. In the wake of the Persian wars, however, Midas suffered ridicule along with other Near Eastern figures. The red-figure stamnos considered above, for example, displays the attitudes of the mid-fifth century BC, for it presents him as a parody of the Great King, enthroned in profile, arrayed in Persian garb, and endowed with animal ears even larger than those of the satyr before him (Fig. 20).

In the fourth century BC, as the Near East became increasingly accessible to the Greeks, Midas garnered attention as a person of local legend within an exotic landscape. Xenophon mentions him when his march through Anatolia takes him to the spot where Midas is supposed to have lived: near the Phrygian city of Thymbrium, he reports, “there, alongside the road, was the so-called spring of Midas, the king of the Phrygians, at which Midas, according to the story, caught the satyr by mixing wine with the water of the spring.” The place is one of many that Xenophon connects with well-known legends; to him, Midas and the satyr belong to the fabled heritage of the East. The wisdom of the satyr seems to have been a matter of particular interest to authors of the late fourth century BC, when Alexander took possession of the East and all its lore. Aristotle, as quoted by Plutarch, presents the satyr as a sage at first unwilling to share his secrets but later coaxed to yield the bleak intelligence that the best human life is one not lived at all, and the second best, one that ends quickly. Theopompus recounts the satyr’s wisdom differently, and in greater detail: in his version, the satyr rehearses a long allegory about faraway places like the juxtaposed city-states of Warlike and Pious and rivers named Pleasure and Grief. This version, like Aristotle’s, stresses the satyr’s grasp of esoteric knowledge and credits Midas not only with philosophic curiosity but also with the talent to extract the satyr’s secrets.

The positive qualities ascribed to Midas would seem to fulfill the wishes of many a Hellenistic prince. On the whole, the Hellenistic monarchs were richer and more powerful than any earlier Greek leaders and therefore likely to identify, wishfully or actually, with a king of proverbial wealth and natural authority. Midas’ interest in alien wisdom also matches the inclinations of Hellenistic monarchs, especially those who governed non-Greek peoples. In particular, however, the model of Midas should have appealed to rulers of lands where his own exploits were supposed to have occurred. By most accounts, Midas controlled the Anatolian region of Phrygia, a territory formerly subject to the

86. On the London stamnos and related works as distorted reflections of a Persian model, see Miller 1988.
88. Aristotle fr. 44 (Rose) = Plutarch Consolatio ad Apollonium 27.
89. FrGHist 115 F 75c = Aelian VH 3.18.
Persian Empire and before that, a formidable kingdom rich in legend and in fact.\textsuperscript{90} The sources locate the capture of the satyr in various spots within Phrygia and elsewhere. As mentioned above, Xenophon places the episode near Thymbrium, but Pausanias situates it in Ankyra.\textsuperscript{91} According to Konon, Midas’s original realm was located near Mount Bermios in Macedonia; he caught the satyr there and then led his people into Phrygia.\textsuperscript{92} This geography is anticipated by Herodotus, who relates that the ancestors of the Macedonian ruling house “settled near the place called the garden of Midas son of Gordias, wherein roses grow of themselves, each bearing sixty blossoms and of surpassing fragrance; in which garden, by the Macedonian story, the silenos was taken captive.”\textsuperscript{93} Yet another tradition associates Midas’ feat with a Thracian spring called Inna.\textsuperscript{94} Macedonian and Thracian origins nevertheless lead back to Phrygia, for the Greeks believed that the peoples of the three regions were all of one stock.\textsuperscript{95} The locations linked with the capture of the satyr also share further affinities. First, each is characterized as a desirable place favored with a spring or unusually productive vegetation. Second, each is located in territory much contested in the Hellenistic age. Conflict in Asia Minor was particularly long-lived and involved the rival ambitions of several princes. The political implications of claiming Midas’ legacy—that is, his wealth, his wisdom, and his land—strengthen the case for identifying the Barberini Faun as a depiction of Midas’ satyr and a royal commission.

Since the tales about Midas point repeatedly to Phrygia, the patron of the Barberini Faun might be found there also. In the course of the Hellenistic age, the region changed hands several times, for it lay between powerful states. Antigonus the One-Eyed, founder of the Hellenistic dynasty in Macedonia, controlled Phrygia before and after the death of Alexander, but lost it to Seleucus I in 301 BC. By the middle of the third century BC, the rising power of Pergamon had wrested it from the Seleucids, but they regained possession in the late third century BC as a result of Antiochus III’s military successes. These were short-lived, however, and an alliance between Rome and Pergamon forced Antiochus and his heirs from Asia Minor altogether as of 190 BC. Roman activity in Anatolia increased throughout the second century BC, and the bequest of the Pergamene kingdom in 133 BC led to the creation of a Roman province. Formidable enemies of Rome continued to flourish around Phrygia throughout the first century BC, however. Most notable of these was Mithridates VI of Pontus, who gained power in the face

\textsuperscript{90} On the landscape and history of Phrygia, see Ramsay 1895 and Haspels 1971.
\textsuperscript{91} Xenophon Anabasis 1.2.13; Pausanias 1.4.5.
\textsuperscript{92} FrGHist 26, fr. 1.
\textsuperscript{94} Bion FrGHist 332, fr. 3.
\textsuperscript{95} Encyclopedia Britannica 21 (1911) 541, s.v. Phrygia (W. M. Ramsay).
of Roman threats until he was finally defeated in 63 BC. Of all the extant versions of Midas and his legend, the most negative and the most positive belong to the late first century BC, the former being Ovid’s in Latin and the latter Konon’s in Greek. The divergence may reflect tensions between Rome and Pontus even after the conclusion of hostilities. Just as the Greeks continued to ridicule Midas after the defeat of the Persians, so Ovid in the employ of Augustus presented Midas as a fool fit to foreshadow the hubristic princes of latter-day Asia Minor. Konon represents the opposite point of view, for he worked for Archelaus of Cappadocia, an ally of Mithridates and a king himself.\(^{96}\)

The history of conflicting claims to Asia Minor furnished political motives for any one of several leaders to insist upon affinities with Midas. There is insufficient evidence to identify the patron of the Barberini Faun securely, but indications in literature nevertheless raise the name of a candidate worth considering. In particular, a reference in Athenaeus identifies the Seleucid prince Antiochus IV Epihanes with elements of the Midas story and thus raises the possibility that he commissioned the original statue. Tenuous as the connection is, a closer look at his career and aims shows how well the statue, construed as a royal captive, would have suited his tastes and flattered his hopes.

According to the text, Antiochus IV resorted to the ruse that Midas used to trap the satyr: “Heliodorus says that Antiochus Epiphanes, whom Polybius calls Epimanes on account of his crazy doings, mixed wine in the well of Antioch; the same thing was done by the Phrygian Midas, according to Theopompos, when he desired to catch the silenus by making him drunk.”\(^{97}\) The anecdote may derive from a hostile assessment of Antiochus as decadent and mad, but it could reflect instead an aspect of his own propaganda, in which case the comparison with Midas would have been meant to flatter.\(^{98}\) The latter possibility tallies with the traditions associated with Alexander, Ptolemy, and Sulla, discussed above, and also with what is known of Antiochus’ own career. The youngest son of Antiochus III, he ruled from 175 to 164 BC over a diminished Seleucid kingdom; among other humiliations, it had recently been stripped of Asia Minor and barred from further involvement in the region. Antiochus IV came to power after several years as a hostage in Rome and then displayed his ambition in propagandistic

\(^{96}\) On the career of Konon, see Smith 1867, 1: 826, s.v. Conon.


\(^{98}\) The most hostile critic of Antiochus is Polybius; personal animosity probably explains the portrayal of the king as a crazed eccentric, for his policies display a shrewdness incompatible with the characterization. For this judgment, see CAH\(^2\) 8.1: 341–53. Heliodorus, on the other hand, has been identified with an Athenian author known for his description of paintings and sculpture; see Smith 1867, 2: 373, s.v. Heliodorus III, Historian. If the identification is correct, he might have characterized Antiochus in very favorable terms and even spoken of Midas in reference to a statue that he commissioned.
spectacles as well as diplomatic and military activities.\footnote{99} He led a campaign to the eastern reaches of his kingdom, staged an invasion of Egypt, and cultivated allies in Greece and Asia Minor. As part of this last policy, he dispensed generous donations to the cities and sanctuaries of the old Greek world: in addition to building a theater at Tegea and walls for Megalopolis, he sponsored the redesign and construction of the Olympeion at Athens, and he may also have funded restoration of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia after an earthquake in 175 BC.\footnote{100} Antiochus was also an energetic patron of the arts in his own kingdom, where he embellished the city of Antioch in grand style and staged extraordinary spectacles there.\footnote{101} The most memorable of these, which took place near Antioch at Daphne in 166 BC, involved not only a military parade and splendid display of gold and silver plate but also a gilded pantheon of gods and lesser divinities and representations of all the myths that pertained to them.\footnote{102} Antiochus’ apparent love of political theatrics suggests that he might have liked to pose as Midas, as a statue of the king’s satyr would have allowed him to do. In addition to demonstrating his cultural sophistication, the image of a sleeping satyr would have credited him with victory in battle and claim to rule in Asia Minor, goals that he pursued throughout his reign. His motives were thus well served by the Barberini Faun or a bronze prototype of the design, which Antiochus could have commissioned a Pergamene sculptor to make in the first half of the second century BC, around the time when the Altar of Zeus was carved.

Unverifiable as this conclusion is, the case of Antiochus demonstrates that Hellenistic leaders were compared with Midas and indeed had cause to identify with him. In the context of royal competition for prestige and territory, a statue of a satyr fit for taking would logically have flattered a king. As I have argued above, the majesty and scale of the Barberini Faun suggest a political purpose, and many other indications point to the special relationship between rulers and satyrs in Hellenistic culture. As a symbol of good fortune, effective cunning, and certain victory, the captive satyr has a role in Hellenistic panegyric. The legend of Midas may be the root of this tradition, and the Barberini Faun a visual extension of the compliment.

\footnote{99. On Antiochus’ political showmanship, see Diodorus Siculus 31.16. On the theatrical character of his kingship and the celebrations at Daphne in particular, see Edmondson 1999: 84–88 and 94 n.76.}
\footnote{100. On Antiochus’ benefactions in Greece, see Pollitt 1986: 248–49, 283–84.}
\footnote{101. On Antiochus’ activities as a patron in Antioch and Syria on the whole, see Pollitt 1986: 284 and Downey 1961: 95–106.}
\footnote{102. On the procession, see Athenaeus \textit{Deipnosophistae} 5.195a; Polybius 30.25. The festivities at Daphne were likely contrived with a view to outdoing the Roman general Aemilius Paullus, who had staged triumphal games at Amphipolis less than a year before. On the competitive spirit in which these two celebrations were mounted, see Edmondson 1999. On the spectacle in comparison to other Hellenistic examples, see Köhler 1996: 107–108.}
CONCLUSION

The sleeping satyr portrayed in the Barberini statue is more than the denizen of a pastoral fantasia. It is instead an elusive creature, captive or subject to capture, a trophy that suggests the captor’s outstanding favor and charisma. The formal elements of the statue demonstrate that it is no ordinary satyr, and the beguiling portrayal of its sleep indicates its peculiar distinctiveness. Slumber is the hallmark of one satyr only, and this is the one that Midas ensnared by making it drunk in his garden. The heroic appearance and oversized proportions of the Barberini Faun give it a dignity suited to the myth and to its royal protagonist. The statue may thus be identified as the satyr that Midas captured.

A new identification of the Barberini Faun points to the realization that the satyr is more complex than it seems, a creature that belongs not only to rustic diversions and Dionysus’ band but also to the ends of royal panegyric. The Barberini Faun makes sense in terms of the motives that stirred ancient monarchs to take interest in art and literature. The sophisticated design and peculiar subject of the statue suggest a distinctive purpose, and historical evidence shows that the captive satyr was a theme that might flatter a prince and also express his politics. Commissioning the Barberini Faun allowed an ambitious patron to harness the Midas tradition and so to claim splendor, land, success, and a place in legend.

The study of Hellenistic art is littered with monuments that like the Barberini Faun are of uncertain purpose, date, and origin. In cases where the archaeological context is so poorly known, understanding depends on the search for other interpretive frameworks. The approach taken in this essay relies on formal analysis and iconographic assessment as well as mythology, history, and a model of patronage. These five tools constitute an interdisciplinary method that could well be applied to other Hellenistic works. By widening the scope of material that is relevant to these monuments, it may be possible to find them a rich conceptual context that presses interpretation in fresh and important directions.

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Fig. 2: Barberini Faun, marble, as currently displayed. Munich, Glyptothek. Photo: Hans R. Goette

Fig. 3: Barberini Faun. Photo: Hans R. Goette
Fig. 4: Barberini Faun. Photo: Hans R. Goette

Fig. 5: Barberini Faun, back view. Photo: Hans R. Goette
Fig. 6: Barberini Faun, detail of the face. Photo: Hans R. Goette

Fig. 7: Symposium scene. Colmar Painter, Attic red-figure kylix, from Vulci, ca. 490 BC. Paris, Louvre G 135. Photo: Réunion des Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, New York
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Fig. 13: Eros asleep, bronze. Third or second century BC. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 43.11.4. Rogers Fund, 1943. Photo: Museum. Copyright The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fig. 14: Satyr and wine cup, silver. Reverse, tetradrachm of Sicilian Naxos, after 461 BC. New York, American Numismatic Society 1944.100.10049. Photo: Museum

Fig. 15: Satyr balancing on an amphora. Onesimos, Attic red-figure kylix, ca. 500 BC. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 10.179. James Fund and museum purchase with funds donated by contribution. Photo: Museum. Copyright 2007 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
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Fig. 17: Young satyr falling asleep, bronze. From the Villa of the Papyri, Herculaneum. Naples, National Archaeological Museum 5624. Photo: Schwanke, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome, neg. 1979.0514

Fig. 18: Old sleeping satyr carried by younger satyrs, marble. From Byrsa Hill, Carthage, second century AD. Carthage, Archaeological Museum. Photo: Author
Fig. 19: Satyr in the garden of Midas. Acheloos Painter, Attic black-figure pelike, ca. 510 BC. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 49.11.1. Rogers Fund, 1949. Photo: Museum. Copyright The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Fig. 20: Satyr before Midas. Midas Painter, Attic red-figure stamnos, from Chiusi, ca. 440 BC. London, British Museum 51.4–16.9 (E 447). Photo: Museum. Copyright the Trustees of the British Museum