



Summary :

Sculptor of the early 1st century BC from Ephesus. One of the most important representatives of the Late Hellenistic figurative sculpture. The only works that can be attributed to him come from Delos and Tenos.

Date and Place of Birth

Beginning of the 1st century BC, Ephesus

Main Role

Sculptor

1. Origins

The sculptor Agasias, son of Menophelos, came from a family of important Ephesian sculptors. His father, son of Agasias, played a vital role in the development of figurative sculpture in [Delos](#) during the second half of the 2nd century BC,¹ whereas one of his relatives (maybe his cousin), also named Agasias from [Ephesus](#), son of Dositheos, was the creator of the famous “Gladiator” of the Borghese collection in the Louvre (c. 100 BC).²

2. Agasias in Delos

Although none of Agasias’ works have been safely identified, judging from the inscriptions on the bases of statues at Delos, it is inferred that he is one of the most important representatives of the Late Hellenistic figurative sculpture. Like his father, his career flourished at Delos in the early 1st century BC, where he worked for the island’s Italian community.³ He also created bronze statues, but in Delos he mostly worked as a marble sculptor and created at least 14 statues of Roman dignitaries and Italian merchants.⁴ Four of these sculptures were damaged in 88 BC, during the sack of Delos by the generals of [Mithridates VI Eupator](#), Archelaus and Metrofanos, and were repaired by Aristandros from [Paros](#), a distant relative of the famous 4th century BC sculptor [Skopas](#).

Agasias was one of the main creators of the sculptural decoration of the Italian [Agora](#), a place where the Italian community of Delos would gather,⁵ which, apart from statues of Roman dignitaries -on horse or on foot-, it also contained sculptures of Gauls according to the models of the [School of Pergamon](#).⁶ The famous marble statue of the “Dying Gaul” of the early 1st century BC, now housed in the Athens’ National Archaeological Museum,⁷ as well as a Gaul’s head in the Delos’ museum are attributed to Agasias.⁸ These figures greatly remind us of the Gaulic compositions of the School of Pergamon and help us appreciate the sculptor’s style. The celebrated bronze male head from Delos’ “Old Gymnasium”, which is characterized by a profound realism,⁹ three marble heads from statues of Romans¹⁰ and a headless statue of a Roman dignitary with a corselet, also from Delos are also attributed to Agasias.¹¹ Agasias collaborated with the sculptor [Eutyichides](#) from Athens for the construction of the statues of the great podium SE of the [Antigonos](#)’ portico in Delos, as well as with the sculptors Dionysius and Timarchides from Athens, for the statues of the Italian Agora.¹²

3. Agasias in Tenos

After Delos, Agasias worked in another important sanctuary of the Hellenistic period, [Poseidon](#)’s and Amphitrite’s sanctuary in [Tenos](#),¹³ where he created two similar compositions of bronze statues that adorned the base of the great altar.¹⁴ Only the huge marble bases are still preserved today *in situ*, bearing the signature of the sculptor and the votive inscriptions.¹⁵ These sculptures represented two different scenes from the quarrel of [Eros](#) and Anteros with Nike waiting for the result of the quarrel or preparing to crown the victorious Eros with the victory wreath.¹⁶ We cannot, however, determine the exact scenes pictured in Agasias’ compositions, that is whether it was a proper hand-to-hand fight with Eros winning, a scene common in the iconography of Asia Minor during the 1st



century BC,¹⁷ or whether this was a scene of the claiming of the palm tree, as pictured in Roman reliefs: Anteros is trying to detach the palm tree bearing the insignia of Nike from Eros, who is holding the tree already.¹⁸ These sculptures, also damaged by Mithridates VI Eupator's generals in 88/87 BC and repaired in 46-44 BC by the proconsul of Asia P. Servilius Isauricus, were dedicated at the sanctuary of Tenos in the beginning of the 1st century BC by the Italian merchantman Gaius Pandysinus. The choice of Agasias by an Italian is not surprising, since his clientele in Delos was mostly Italian. On the other hand, these sculptures demonstrate that the sculptor's repertoire was not limited solely to statues.

4. Style

From the works attributed to Agasias it is inferred that his style is greatly influenced by the School of Pergamon in the selection of themes, as well as in the rendering of movement and the anatomy of the figures.¹⁹ Nevertheless, this is not a mere imitation but an original renegotiation of the Gaulic themes with powerful realistic elements. With his father Menophelos and Agasias, son of Dositheos, they are the main representatives of the school of [Hellenistic plastic of Ephesus](#), distinguished for its realism and knowledge of anatomy.²⁰ Agasias' workshop played a major role in the adaptation of the Greek sculpture art to the Roman taste with the preservation and renovation of the Pergamon Gaulic themes and with the elaboration of a new type of portrait.

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1. For the sculptor Menophelos, son of Agasias, see Marcadé, J., *Recueil des signatures de sculpteurs grecs 2* (Paris 1957), no. 73-74; Marcade, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), p. 371; EAA 4 (1961), p. 1027, "Menophilos (1)"; Moreno, P., *Scultura ellenistica 2* (Roma 1994), p.686. Some also believe that Menophelos was the son and not the father of Agasias.
 2. Moreno, P., *Scultura ellenistica 2* (Roma 1994), p. 683-685; Bourgeois, B. – Pasquier, A., *Le Gladiateur Borghèse et sa restauration* (Paris 1997). Some scholars believe that Agasias, son of Dositheos, is Menophelos' father, therefore the grandfather of the aforementioned Agasias. See Moreno, P., op.cit., p.686. The relationship between the two homonymous sculptors from Ephesus has been questioned. See Ridgway, B.S., *Hellenistic Sculpture 1* (Princeton 1990), p. 297.
 3. Delos' particular economic prosperity during late Hellenistic times had attracted sculptors from various areas to the island, amongst which many from Asia Minor, such as: Voithios from Chalkidona, Menodoros from Mallo, Sopatros from Soloi. Marcadé, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), p. 80-82.
 4. Picard, Ch., "Le sculpteur Agasias d'Ephèse a Délos", *BCH* 34 (1910), p. 538-548; Marcade, J., *Recueil des signatures de sculpteurs grecs 2* (Paris 1957), no. 4-1 ; Marcadé, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), p. 80-82.
 5. Lapalus, E., *L'Agora des Italiens* (EAD 19, Paris 1939).
 6. For the Gaulic compositions at Delos see J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), p. 119-127, 363-366, 371-374.
 7. On the wounded Gaul from the Agora of the Italians in Delos (Athens, National Archaeological Museum cat.no.247) see mainly Reinach, S., "Monuments figurés de Délos (2)", *BCH* 8 (1884), p. 178-181, no. 14; Reinach, S., "Le Guerrier de Délos et le Gaulois blessé du Louvre", *BCH* 13 (1889), p. 112-130 ; Leroux, G., "Le Guerrier de Délos", *BCH* 34 (1910), p. 478-500; Picard, Ch., "Le guerrier blessé de l'Agora des Italiens a Délos", *BCH* 56 (1932), p. 491-530, fig. 24-26; Marcadé, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), p. 119-127, 363-364, 371-373; Bruneau, Ph. – Ducat, J., *Guide de Délos 3* (Paris 1983), p. 75-76, fig. 12; Ridgway, B.S., *Hellenistic Sculpture 1* (Madison Wisconsin 1990), p. 297-298; Moreno, P., *Scultura ellenistica 1* (Roma 1994), p. 302-305, fig. 376, 386; Marcadé, J. (ed.), *Sculptures Deliennes* (Athènes – Paris 1996), p. 204-205, no. 92.
 8. Cat. No. A 4195; Marcadé, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), tab. 79.
 9. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, Cat. No. 14.612. Michalowski, C., *Les Portraits Hellenistiques et Romains* (EAD 13, Paris 1932), p. 1-5, fig. 1-2, tab. 1-6; Kleiner, G., *MuJb 3, 1* (1950) p. 9-22; Hafner, G., *Spathellenistische Bildnisplastik. Versuch einer*



landschaftlichen Gliederung (Berlin 1954), p. 30-31, no. 2; Marcadé, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), p. 88-89; Stewart, A., *Greek Sculpture. An Exploration* (New Haven – London 1990), p. 228, fig. 842; Moreno, P., *Scultura ellenistica 2* (Roma 1994), p. 685. Marcadé, J. (ed.), *Sculptures Deliennes* (Athènes – Paris 1996), p. 220-221, no. 100.

10. Delos Museum, Cat. No. A 4188, A 2912 and A 4189 (the last two are the most unlikely attributions). Michalowski, C., *Les Portraits Hellenistiques et Romains* (EAD 13, Paris 1932), p. 11, 14, fig. 6, 9, tab. 10-13; Hafner, G., *Spathellenistische Bildnisplastik. Versuch einer landschaftlichen Gliederung* (Berlin 1954), p. 32-33, no. 4-6; Marcadé, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969) p. 371-373.

11. Statue of Gaius Bilenus from the portico of Antigonos in Delos. Marcadé, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), p. 119, 333; Marcadé, J. (ed.), *Sculptures Deliennes* (Athènes – Paris 1996), p. 196-197, no. 88.

12. Marcadé, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), p. 483, 494.

13. Some also believe that Agasias worked in Tenos before going to Delos. Marcadé, J., *Recueil des signatures de sculpteurs grecs 2* (Paris 1957), no. 9.

14. Etienne, R., *Tenos I: Le sanctuaire de Poseidon et d'Amphitrite* (BEFAR 263, Paris 1986), p. 107, 121, 125, 195, 272, 316-317, ap. 84-85; Etienne, R., *Tenos II: Tenos et les Cyclades du milieu du IVe siècle av. J.-C. au milieu du IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.* (BEFAR 263 bis, Paris 1990), p. 140, 185.

15. IG 12.5, no. 917; Marcadé, J., *Recueil des signatures de sculpteurs grecs 2* (Paris 1957), no. 9.

16. For representations of the quarrel between Eros and Anteros see Schauenburg, K., "Erotenspiele", *AW 7.3* (1976), p. 39-52; Schauenburg, K., "Erotenspiele", *AW 7.4* (1976), p. 28-85; Carinci, F., "Eros e Anteros, Alcune osservazioni a proposito di un rilievo della Galleria Collona", *RIA 3*, 8-9 (1985-1986), p. 63-109, mainly p. 82-83, fig. 8; Moreno, P., *Scultura ellenistica 2* (Roma 1994), p. 686-687, fig. 831-833.




17. See the terracota compositions from Myrina, Mollard-Besques, S., *Catalogue Raisonné des figurines et reliefs en terre cuite grecs et romains 2, Myrina* (Paris 1963), p. 58, no. 72 a, c, e, tab. 72 a, c, e. For more dedications of Eros statues from Asia Minor see Robert, L., "Les Inscriptions", στο Des Gagniers, J. – Devambez, P. – Kahil, L. – Ginouvès, R. (eds.), *Laodicée du Lycos, Le Nymphée* (Quebec – Paris 1969), p. 247-364, mainly p. 254-261. Particularly for representations of Eros on altars see Robert, J. – Robert, L., in *Mélanges I. Levy* (1953), p. 571-572.

18. See a bas-relief in Naples from Ischia, Moreno, P., *Scultura ellenistica 2* (Roma 1994), fig. 832 and the description of Pausanias 6.23.5 of a bronze composition from the gymnasium of Helis.

19. For Agasias' style see Marcadé, J., *Au Musée de Délos* (BEFAR 215, Paris 1969), p. 371-374.

20. For Agasias' workshop and the Ephesus school of Hellenistic sculpture see Hafner, G., *Spathellenistische Bildnisplastik. Versuch einer landschaftlichen Gliederung* (Berlin 1954), p. 29-44; Moreno, P., *Scultura ellenistica 2* (Roma 1994), p. 683-687.

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	Amorelli M.T. , "Agasias 2", <i>EAA 1</i> , 1958, 132
	Etienne R. , <i>Ténos I. Le sanctuaire de Poseidon et d'Amphitrite</i> , Paris 1986, BEFAR 263



	Hafner G. , <i>Späthellenistische Bildnisplastik. Versuch einer landschaftlichen Gliederung</i> , Berlin 1954
	Homolle Th. , "De quelques signatures d'artistes: Eutychides, Agasias d'Ephèse, Aristandros de Paros, Démotratos d'Athènes, Théon, Sarpédon de Délos", <i>BCH</i> , 5, 1881, 461-468
	Marcadé J. , <i>Recueil des signatures de sculpteurs grecs, II</i> , Paris 1957
	Marcadé J. , <i>Au Musée de Délos</i> , Paris 1969, BEFAR 215
	Marcadé, J. (ed.) , <i>Sculptures Déliennes</i> , Athènes-Paris 1996, Sites et Monuments XVII
	Neudecker R. , "Agasias", <i>NPauily 1</i> , 1996, 232
	Picard C. , "Le guerrier blessé de l'Agora des Italiens à Délos", <i>BCH</i> , 56, 1932, 491-530
	Picard Ch. , "Le sculpteur Agasias d'Ephèse à Délos", <i>BCH</i> , 39, 1910, 538-548
	Robert C. , "Agasias", <i>RE 1</i> , 1894, 736-737
	Robert C. , "Agasias", <i>RE Suppl. 1</i> , 1903, 21
	Lippold G. , "Agasias", <i>RE Suppl. 3</i> , 1918, 37

Glossary :

	agora, the
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The term initially meant the gathering of the people. During historical times this gathering was called ecclesia and the word agora meant the public space where citizens gathered. The agora consists of commercial and religious buildings as well as constructions of political character.

Auxiliary Catalogs

A. Agasias' lost works known only from inscriptions on statue bases

1. Bronze statue of Aropos, son of Leon, from Azenia of Attica. Delos, Agora. 100-90 BC.
2. Marble statue of the Roman general Marius on horse. Delos, Agora of the Italians. 99 BC.
3. Statue of the Roman banker M. Gerillanus. Delos, Agora. Early 1st century BC.
4. Bronze statue of Satyros, son of Titus, from Herakleia. Delos, "Great Exedra" SE of the Stoa of Antigonos. Ca. 100 BC. On the same exedra, the signature of Eutychides from Athens is preserved.
5. Marble statue of Leucius Orbius son of Marcus. Delos, Hall of the Poseidoniasts of Berytos. Early 1st century BC.
6. Marble statue of Gaius Villienus, Roman ambassador to Delos. Delos, Agora of the Italians. 110-100 BC. It was repaired by the Parian sculptor Aristandros, relative of Skopas, after 88 BC. Marble base at Leyden Museum.
7. Marble statue of L. Munatius Plancus. Delos, Agora of the Italians. Early 1st century BC. It was repaired by Aristandros after 88 BC.
8. Marble statue of the Roman general Gaius Cluius, son of Leucius. Delos, Agora of the Italians. Before 88 BC. It was repaired by



Aristandros after 88 BC.

9. Marble statue of the Roman general Cointus Pompey Rufus. Delos, Agora of the Italians. Before 88 BC. It was probably repaired by Aristandros after 88 BC.

10. Two similar bronze groups of Eros, Anteros and Nike. Tenos, Sanctuary of Poseidon and Amphitrite, Great Altar. Early 1st century BC. Repaired in 46-44 BC.

B. Preserved works attributed to Agasias

1. Marble statue of a "Dying Gaul" from the Italian Agora at Delos. The head was found at Mykonos. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 247. Early 1st century BC. Height 93 cm.

2. Marble head of a Gaul from Delos. Delos Museum, inv. no. A 4195. Early 1st century BC.

3. Bronze male head from the "Old Palaestra" at Delos. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 14.612. Second half of the 2nd century BC. Height 32.5 cm.

4. Three marble heads from statues of Romans. Delos Museum, inv. nos. A 4188, A 2912 και A 4189. Early 1st century BC.

5. Headless statue of the Roman ambassador and later praetor Gaius Villienus. Delos, Stoa of Antigonos. Early 1st century BC.