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## Judith Barringer The Changing Image of Zeus in Olympia

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## The Changing Image of Zeus in Olympia

From the Archaic period on, Olympia was the foremost sanctuary in honour of Zeus in the ancient world, and the god was worshipped and portrayed in several guises at the site. Athletes and trainers took their oath of fair play in front of a statue of Zeus Horkios, the Oath Zeus (Paus. 5, 24, 911), who stands, holding a thunderbolt in each hand and is known from literature and objects elsewhere (e. g., Iliad 7, 411); this statue (it no longer survives) was located in the Bouleuterion (fig. 1). When this oath was broken, the cheaters were required to fund bronze statues of Zeus erected on inscribed bases lining the path to the Stadion<sup>1</sup>. These ›Zanes‹ statues – the earliest extant examples date from the fourth century B.C. – once recorded the occasion and the name of the cheater and served as a public warning to those athletes about to compete. None of these statues survive either, but some of their bases do (fig. 2), and we have Pausanias' testimony. These images emphasized the god's concern with adjudication and oaths. In addition, Zeus as divine lover, that is, bestowing divine favour, is exemplified by the well-known terracotta group of the god and Ganymede that once served as an akroterion to a now, unidentified structure (fig. 3). Yet at Olympia, Zeus was associated, above all, with warfare in his guise as Zeus Keraunios (figs. 4–5). Indeed, Pindar's tenth Olympian ode describes how Herakles laid out the Altis at Olympia using war booty to fund the enterprise (10, 43–45).

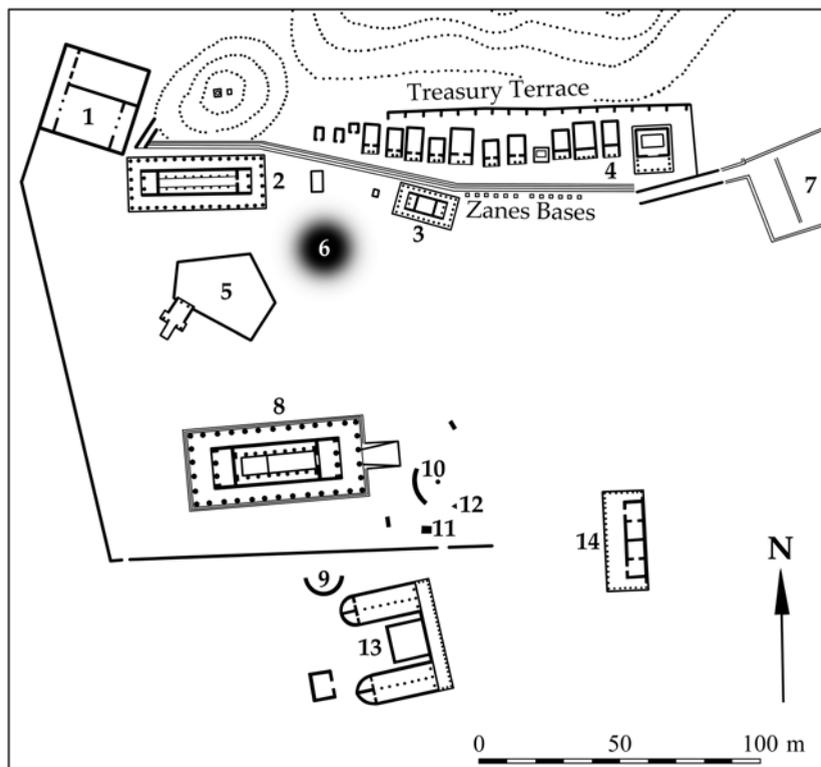
Military matters figured heavily at some sanctuaries, but the emphasis upon warfare – weapons, victories, trophies, spoils – and its close association with athletics is particularly pronounced at Olympia, where Zeus was the chief god and the primary recipient of military thank offerings. Zeus was portrayed not just as passively receiving the honours, but as fighting himself. I hasten to add that this is true of many images of Zeus outside Olympia, both in sculpture and in vase painting, but at Olympia, Zeus Keraunios was apparently the *dominant* format for depicting the god – at least until the middle of the fifth century B.C. Then, images of Zeus at Olympia change. In part, one can attribute the iconographical change to the influence of the regal seated Olympian Zeus created by Pheidias for the Temple of Zeus in ca. 438–432 B.C. (fig. 6)<sup>2</sup>. Its size, ca. 12.50 m high, and material, ivory and gold, guaranteed its fame, and it became an influential image of the god on coinage and in other media (and not just at Olympia) thenceforth. But at Olympia a change in iconography is already evident some forty years before the Pheidian Zeus. What prompted the new image of the god? I wish to suggest that political and historical events of the second quarter of the fifth century shaped a new concept of Zeus at Olympia, which had a lasting influence on later monuments at the site.

I have discussed elsewhere the issue of when Zeus began to be worshipped at Olympia and the early terracotta and bronze images of warriors dedicated

I have delivered this material as a lecture in numerous places, where questions from the audience greatly helped me in the development of this work. Comments from the anonymous reader for AA improved the final product. I am very grateful to Karsten Dahmen, Hans Rupprecht Goette, and Joachim Heiden for providing illustrations and to Klaus Hallof for epigraphical counsel.

<sup>1</sup> Paus. 5, 21, 2–4.

<sup>2</sup> The date is approximate and based on events in Pheidias' career. See, e. g., LIMC VIII (1997) 354 no. 327 s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios); Herrmann 1972, 154 f.



Olympia

Fig. 1 Plan, ca. 400 B.C.

Fig. 2 Zanes bases

there (figs. 7, 8)<sup>3</sup>. Suffice it to say here that from the time of the earliest votive figurines ca. 900 B.C., Olympia was clearly associated with warfare.

The earliest identifiable images of Zeus found at the site also exhibit this bellicose quality. In the Archaic and early Classical periods, numerous bronze figurines of a thunderbolt/lightning-wielding Zeus (*Zeus Keraunios*) appear at Olympia and elsewhere in Greece – Dodona, for example<sup>4</sup> – and Elean coins beginning ca. 470 employed this type as an image on their reverses (an eagle decorates the obverses) until ca. 400 B.C. when Elis rejoined the

<sup>3</sup> Barringer 2010, 158–162.

<sup>4</sup> See LIMC VIII (1997) 324 nos. 62 a–j s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios); Kunze 1940/1941, 134–136 pls. 51, 52; Schwabacher 1962, 9–17. For a more recent treatment of Zeus imagery, see Themelis 2004. I thank Monika Trümper-Ritter for bringing this to my attention.

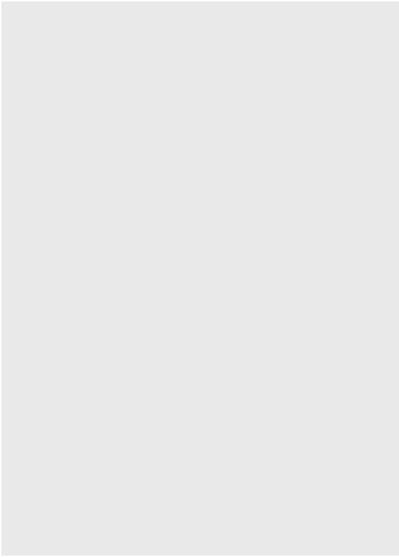


Fig. 3 Olympia, Museum inv. T2. Zeus and Ganymede, H 109.7 cm

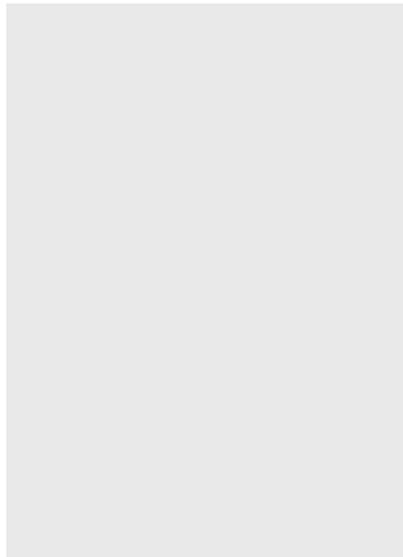


Fig. 4 Athens, National Museum inv. X6195. Zeus, bronze from Olympia. H 11 cm

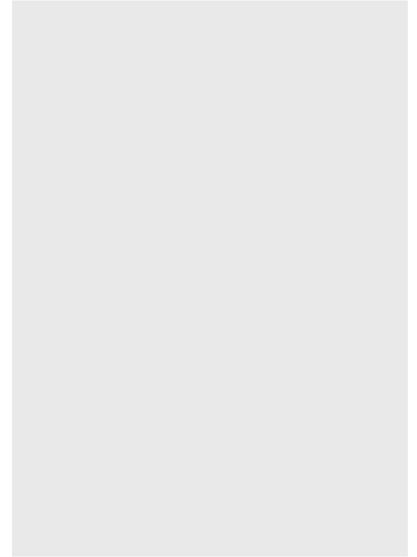


Fig. 5 Athens, National Museum inv. X16546. Zeus, bronze from Dodona. H 12 cm

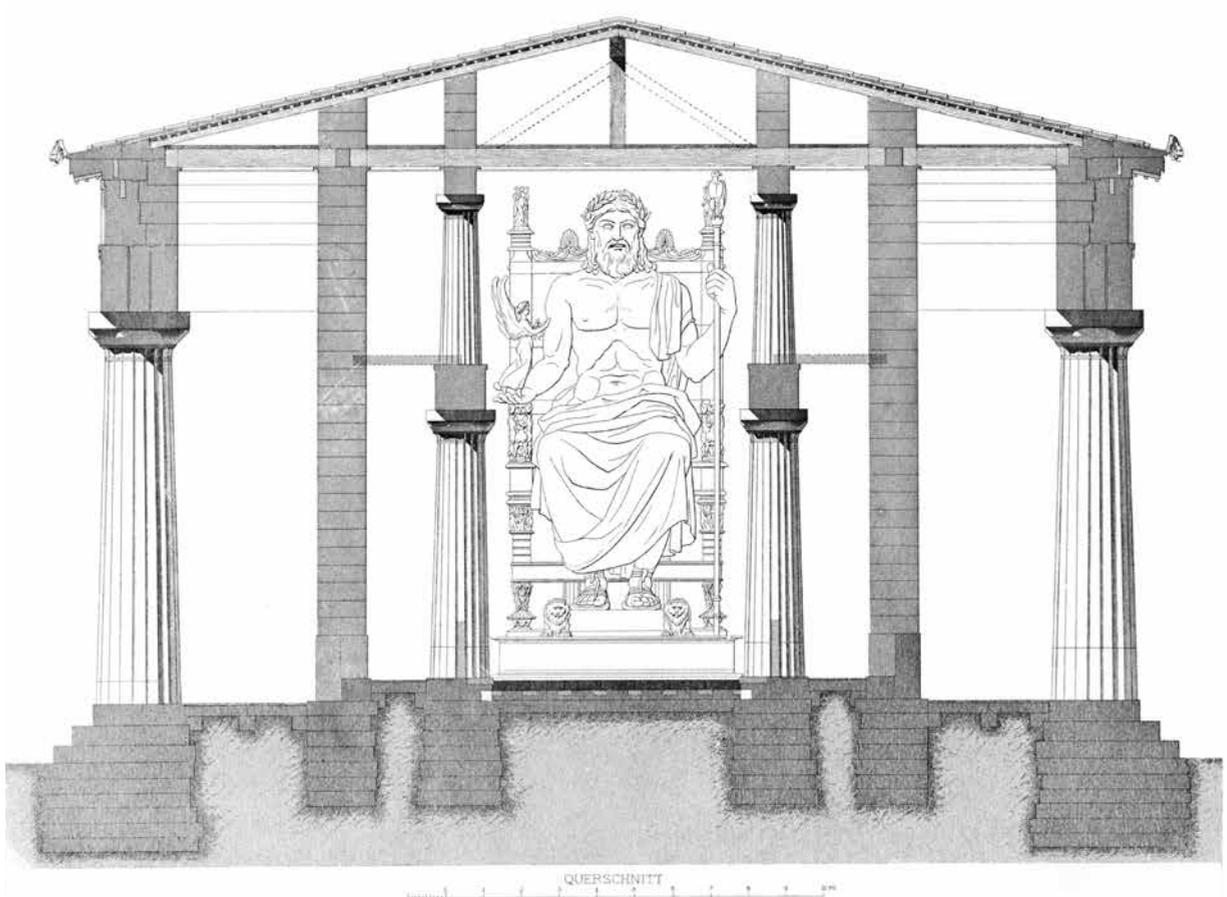
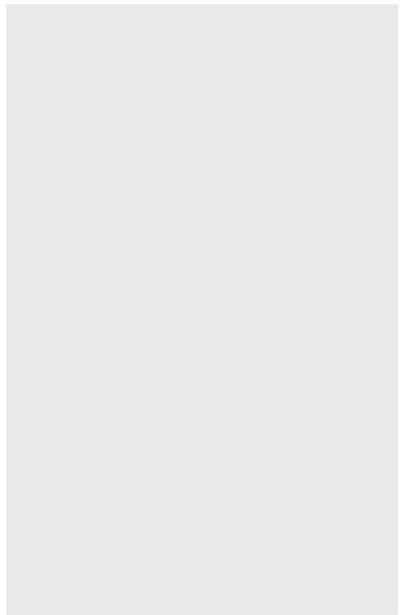
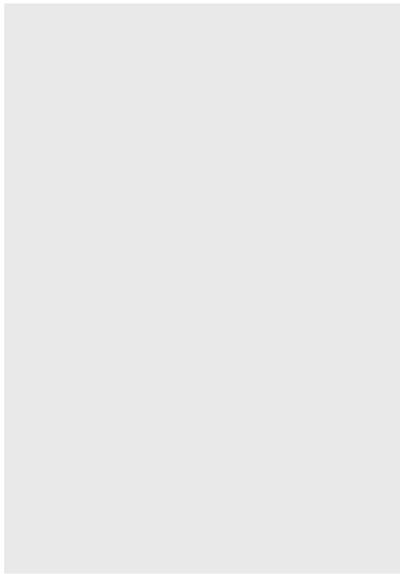
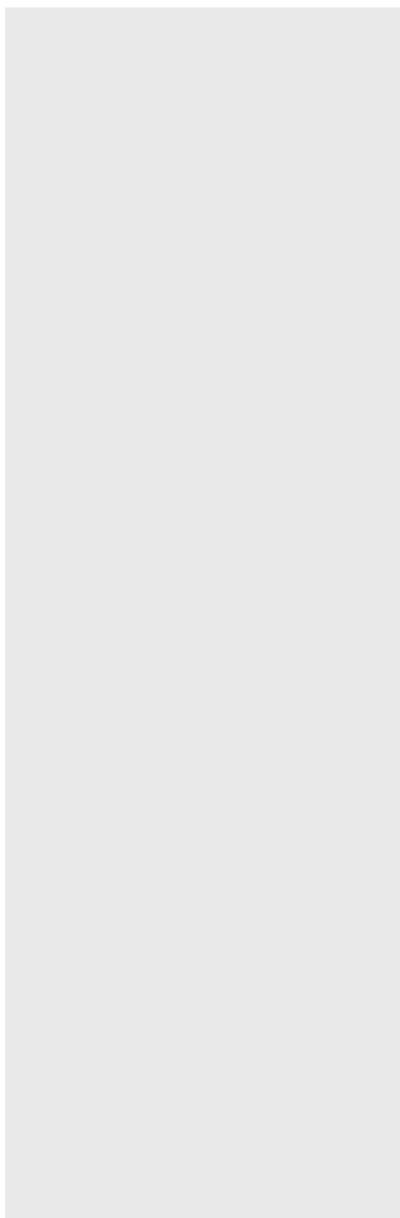


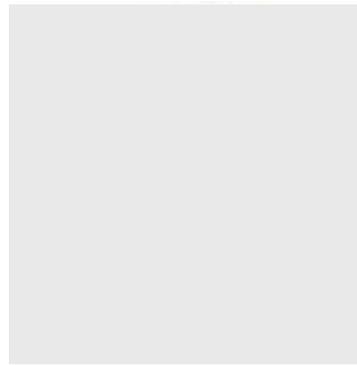
Fig. 6 Olympia, reconstruction of Pheidias Zeus by F. Adler (scale 1 : 200)



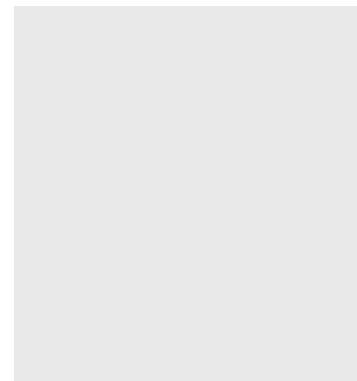
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8



9



10

Fig. 7 Olympia, Museum inv. Tc 531.  
Warrior, terracotta. H 8.3 cm

Fig. 8 Olympia, Museum inv. Br. 2000.  
Warrior, bronze. H 21 cm

Fig. 9. 10 Berlin, Münzkabinett, Staatliche  
Museen zu Berlin inv. 18229090. Silver stater  
from Elis, ca. 452–432 B.C. Diameter 2,3 cm

Peloponnesian League, as well as much later (figs. 9. 10)<sup>5</sup>. While Zeus' weapon is not conventional, its power is devastating, and writers and artists offer evidence that thunderbolt and spear were interchangeable for the god. Pindar likens Zeus' lightning bolt to a spear (O. 13, 77), and Zeus' thunderbolt often was used as a weapon (for example, in depictions of the Gigantomachy, as on vases and on the pediment of the Megarian Treasury of ca. 500 B.C. at Olympia [figs. 11 a. b]). Indeed, it has been argued that images of Zeus Keraunios are images of Zeus Areios<sup>6</sup>, who was honoured at Olympia by an altar (Paus. 5, 14, 6 f.).

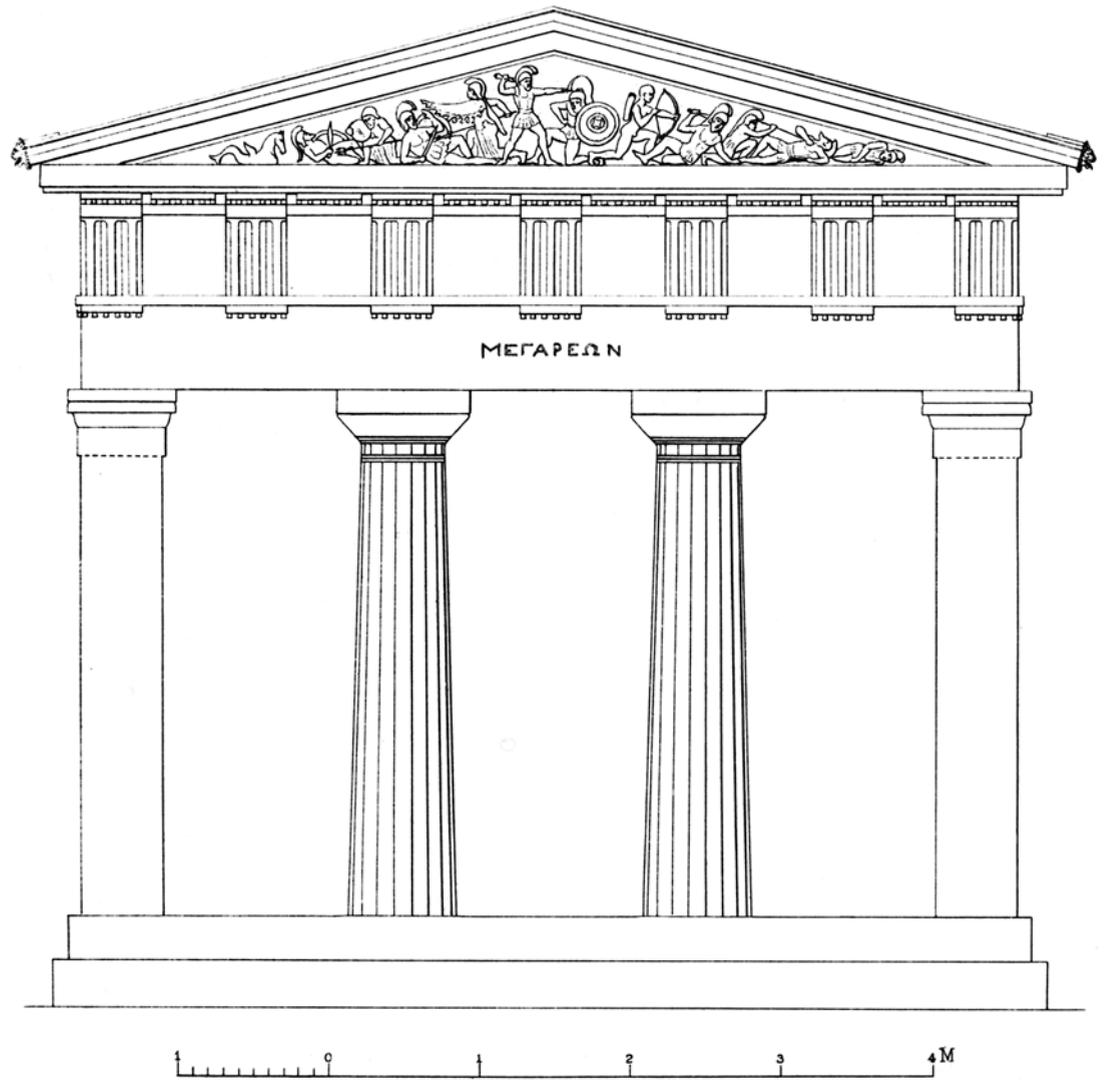
There is further, ample evidence of the Olympic festival's association with warfare<sup>7</sup>: Pindar describes how Herakles established the festival with war booty: Olympian 2, 3 f. speaks of ἀκρόθινα πολέμου and Olympian 10, 55–59 says πολέμοιο δόσιν<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, this military association is specifically linked to Zeus. The ὄπλιτοδρόμος was added to the roster of athletic events at the

5 Schwabacher 1962; Franke 1984.  
On the early coinage of Elis, see  
Patay-Horváth 2013a.

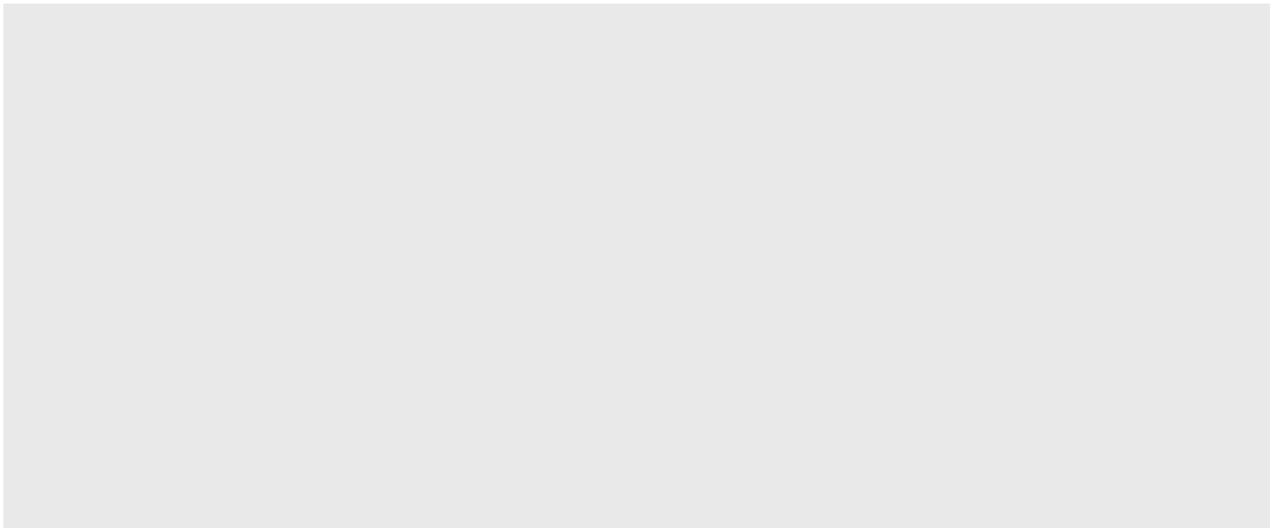
6 Kardara 1970, 13.

7 See Barringer 2010.

8 Cf. Philipp 2004, 153, who makes  
the same observation.



11 a



11 b

Fig. 11 a. b Olympia, Megarian Treasury, reconstruction by F. Adler (scale 1 : 50) and view

games in honour of Zeus Olympia in ca. 520 (fig. 12)<sup>9</sup>, and twenty-five bronze shields used by the hoplitodromos participants, presumably of equal weight and size, were kept in the Temple of Zeus, according to Pausanias (5, 12, 8). We can also point to the oracle of Zeus at Olympia, founded by Apollo, which was regularly consulted on military matters at Olympia in the fifth and fourth centuries and may have existed far earlier<sup>10</sup>. Among the earliest extant inscriptions from Olympia is one of ca. 600 B.C. that may, in fact, refer to the oracle<sup>11</sup>, whose signs were evident in the flames on the top of Zeus' ash altar.

The most abundant evidence for Zeus' association with warfare (and its success) at Olympia are the many military votives offered to him, either thank offerings funded by spoils of war or propitiatory dedications. The practice of a victorious polis dedicating a tenth part of the spoils of war at Olympia began already in the late eighth century B.C., according to Holger Baitinger<sup>12</sup>. These dedications include *tropaia*, as well as monumental military dedications<sup>13</sup>. As examples of the latter, Pausanias 6, 19, 13 relates that the Megarian Treasury was built from spoils of war taken from Corinth, as indicated by an inscribed shield on the gable<sup>14</sup>, and spoils of war financed the Temple of Zeus in ca. 470–456 (Paus. 5, 10, 2).

Other military victory monuments consisted of life-sized sculptures of Zeus or sculptural groups or pillars, created of stone or bronze. Nearly all of the bronze monuments are known now only from their inscribed bases, the detailed account of Pausanias, or both, and only a relatively small number of these sculpted monuments in either medium can be confirmed as standing in their original positions<sup>15</sup>. An image of Zeus Keraunios, the striding Zeus, stood on many of the military victory bases, especially from the sixth and early fifth centuries B.C., to judge by the shape and size of the base, the attachment holes for the statues' feet<sup>16</sup>, and, of course, the written testimony. As one example, Herodotos (9, 81, 1) and Pausanias (5, 23, 1–3) describe the colossus of Zeus (ca. 4.5 m high) made by Anaxagoras of Aigina, erected by numerous Greek poleis in honour of the victory over the Persians at Plataia in 479<sup>17</sup>. The poros base foundation, ca. 4.51 m × 2.70 m, and one course of the marble stepped monument are still in situ 5 m north of the southern Altis wall, and the oblong shape of the base and its orientation indicates a striding statue facing eastward (fig. 13)<sup>18</sup>. Thus, we should imagine the early fifth-century B.C. Altis as heavily populated with *tropaia*, as well as free-standing images of Zeus, ranging in size from small-scale figurines to over life-size, broadcasting the military success of victorious cities and thanking the god for bestowing the

<sup>9</sup> Paus. 5, 8, 10 claims that it was added to further military training. See Barringer 2005, 228 n. 49, 50.

<sup>10</sup> Barringer 2010, 165 f.

<sup>11</sup> The bronze document, B1292, mentioned in a tantalizingly brief aside, has not yet received full publication. See Siewert 1992, 114. On the oracle, see the recent discussion in Taita 2007, 93–97.

<sup>12</sup> Baitinger 1999, 125.

<sup>13</sup> Barringer 2010, 166–171.

<sup>14</sup> Baitinger 2001, 84.

<sup>15</sup> Barringer 2009; Barringer in preparation.

<sup>16</sup> A notable exception may be the Spartan dedication (Olympia V, 367–370

no. 252), which is dated to the late sixth or early fifth century on the basis of its letter forms and would, therefore, be the earliest free-standing monumental Zeus statue in the sanctuary, according to Kyrieleis. The round base held a statue ca. 3.60 m, according to Pausanias, and Kyrieleis (2011, 103 f.) speculates that it once supported a quiet, standing image of Zeus, perhaps wearing a mantle because the base diameter is ca. 1.27–1.28 m. The occasion for the dedication is unknown for certain but LIMC VIII (1997) 322 no. 56 s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios) proposes that it commemorated the quashing of a Messenian revolt prior to 464 B.C.

<sup>17</sup> DNO II, 446–448 nos. 522–525; LIMC VIII (1997) 331 no. 129 s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios); Gauer 1968, 96–98. Contra: Simon 1978, 1433, who thinks the size prohibited a striding position.

<sup>18</sup> Eckstein 1969, 23–26; Olympia I, 86; Olympia II, 78. Cf. Paus. 5, 22, 5, who describes another statue of Zeus, this one – a wreathed example – by Aristonoos of Aigina. This, too, may have been striding as a Zeus Keraunios figure. See DNO II, 453 f. no. 532, which gives the sculptors dates as sometime between 530 and 450 B.C.; LIMC VIII (1997) 322 no. 60 s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios).

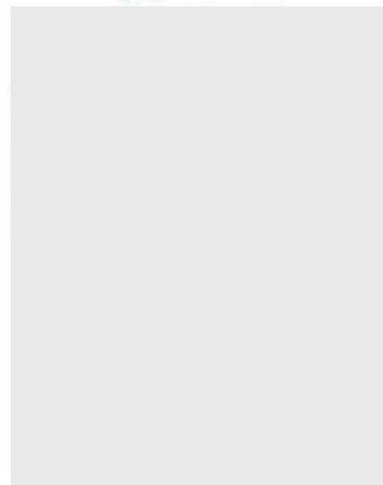
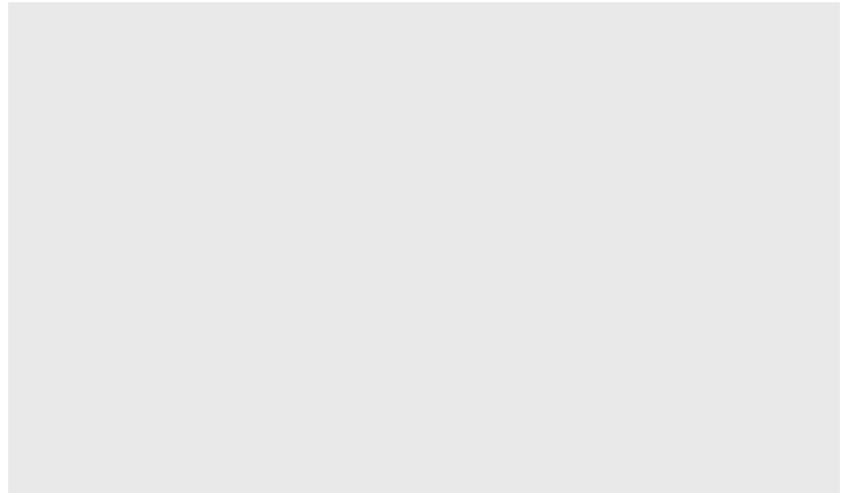
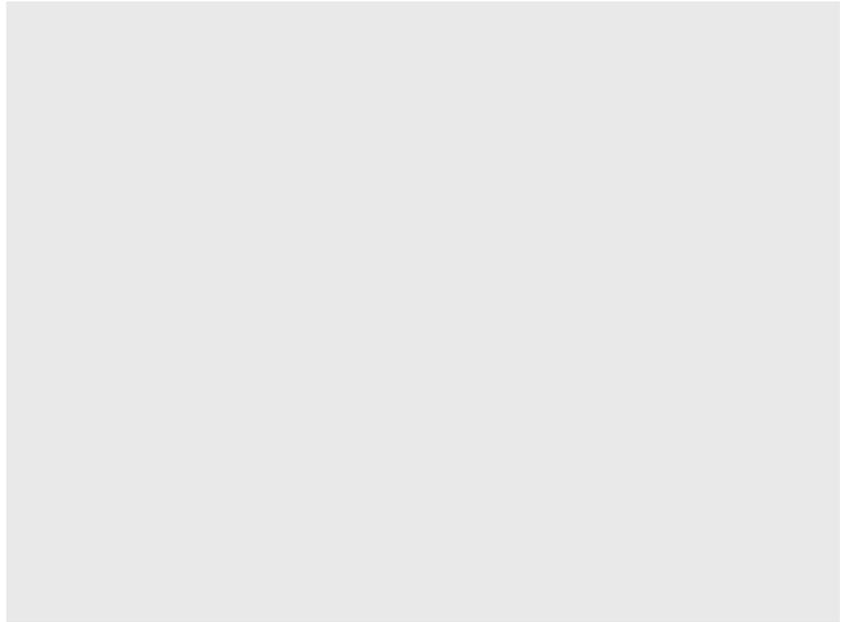


Fig. 12 Pyrgos Museum, Olympia inv. Π 1674. Red-figure lekythos fragment from Olympia, hoplitodromos participant

Fig. 13 Olympia, Plataian base

Fig. 14 Olympia, Apollonian monument



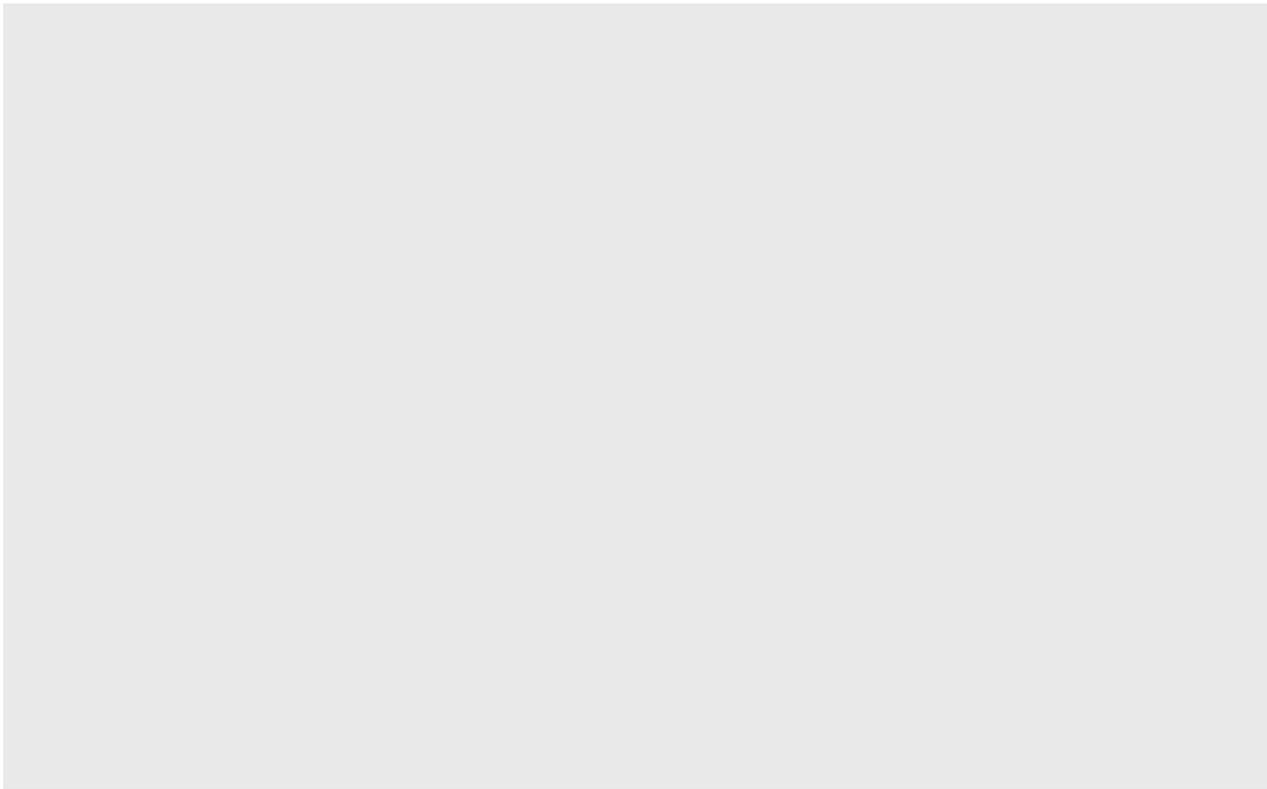
victory by showing the god actively involved in the military victory<sup>19</sup>. Some scholars also propose that a statue of Zeus Keraunios originally stood in the Temple of Zeus and was replaced by Pheidias' colossus in the 430s<sup>20</sup>, but this is pure speculation: we do not know what stood in the Zeus temple though surely there was some image.

Thus far, we have been talking about Zeus' military associations and have noted his appearance in those military victory monuments where the god actively participates in the fray. But something changes in the iconography of Zeus at Olympia in the 470s. Victory monuments continue to be erected but instead of the striding Zeus Keraunios, the god's portrayal is now different. This is clear from the Apollonian monument of ca. 475–460<sup>21</sup>, a dedication to Zeus by the people of Apollonia, a colony from Corinth and Corcyra, in Illyria (modern-day Albania) that was erected with a title of military spoils. Pausanias' description, together with the extant base and dedicatory inscription, yield the following composition (figs. 1. 14): thirteen over life-sized bronze statues on a curving base with Zeus placed between Thetis and Himera, as their sons

**19** One can add statues of Athena and Nike offered as military victory monuments at a smaller scale. See Paus. 5, 26, 6 f.

**20** See Themelis 2004, 151 f., who proposes that a portable Zeus Keraunios not only preceded the Pheidias Zeus but also continued to be used in processions after the installation of the colossus; Schwabacher 1962, 13; Gauer 1968, 97.

**21** Barringer 2009, 235.



(Achilles and Memnon) – and other Greeks and Trojans confront each other. Zeus is not participating in the fighting now but instead adjudicates and awards victory. And this is not a unique instance.

Pausanias reports that both the temple of Zeus of ca. 470–456 B.C. and the statue within were funded by spoils from Elis' victory over Pisa (fig. 15). This account has been challenged with scholars objecting that Pisa's riches, whatever they were, could not have funded the temple<sup>22</sup>, and that the funds either came from another polis<sup>23</sup>, or were produced by melting down earlier votive offerings in the sanctuary to raise the funds<sup>24</sup>. Whatever the case, all scholars agree that the building was a celebration of military victory. The sculptural group in the temple's east pediment portrays the moment just before the chariot race between the Elean hero Pelops and king Oinomaos of Pisa<sup>25</sup>, a mythological analogy for an actual political dispute that funded the structure (figs. 16 a. b). The central group depicts Zeus flanked by the protagonists. The military aspects of this monument and its sculptures should not be overlooked. Pelops and Oinomaos both wear helmets, and both originally held spears planted on the ground<sup>26</sup>. Pelops also held a shield as indicated by

Fig. 15 Olympia, Temple of Zeus

**22** Philipp 1994, 90; Patay-Horváth 2004, 26 f.; Hennemeyer 2012, 121. They do not believe that the spoils from Pisa could have financed such a splendid structure. Instead, Hennemeyer thinks that the Eleans propagated this fiction to demonstrate their regional power and that the money derived from the regional synoikismos under Elis while Philipp suggests that the building might

have been funded with Peloponnesian or west Greek support. Patay-Horváth 2012 argues that the temple was constructed by the Spartans with funds garnered from the Persian Wars. There is no evidence in favour of this claim, and the lack of Spartan commissions of structures in any other Panhellenic sanctuary are decisive arguments against this.

**23** Patay-Horváth 2013b.

**24** Kyrieleis 2011, 37 f.

**25** This view has recently been challenged (Patay-Horváth 2008b) but I find the counter-proposal, the confrontation between Achilles and Agamemnon over Briseis, implausible in this context and with this iconography. See Kyrieleis 2012/2013; Barringer 2005.

**26** Contra: Stampolidis 2004, 38 n. 38, who reconstructs the protagonists

16 a

16 b



17

Olympia, Temple of Zeus

Fig. 16 a: east pediment; b: reconstruction

Fig. 17 East pediment, central figures

holding the reins of their horses from their outstretched arms, an awkward and highly implausible scenario.

<sup>27</sup> Some scholars believe that Pelops' cuirass was a later addition to the original statue. See Barringer 2005, 226 n. 44.

<sup>28</sup> See Barringer 2005.

the shield band remaining on his left forearm and once wore a bronze or metal cuirass as evidenced by the holes for attachment on his torso (fig. 17)<sup>27</sup>. Such armour is peculiar equipment for a chariot race but written sources attest that Oinomaos, son of Ares, carried a spear with which to kill the unsuccessful suitors in the chariot race (e. g., Pind. O. 1, 77), and what's more, the armour makes sense in the context of Olympia, where Zeus was honoured for the success he awarded in warfare and in athletics. Here, then, warfare and athletics are linked together in the founding myth of the Olympic games and on the chief temple to Zeus at Olympia. Yet Zeus does not take part in this athletic/military drama, that is, we do not see him wielding his thunderbolt. He stands quietly, his left hand grasping an object, most probably his thunderbolt. Scholars think that Zeus turns his head toward the victor in the east pediment: there are advocates for Zeus turning his head in either direction and for the placement of the two protagonists, Oinomaos and Pelops, on his left or right or his right or left, respectively<sup>28</sup>. Thus, Zeus waits to acknowledge the victor but does

not intervene in this strife, and it is noteworthy that written descriptions of the myth give him no role in the outcome of the contest. By contrast, the west pediment depicts Apollo giving directions as Lapiths fight centaurs around him; his presence on the temple is explicable by his role in the oracle at the sanctuary, which is presided over by the Iamidai, descended from his son, Iamos, as Pindar and other writers tell us (O. 6, 8). In both of the above examples – the Apollonian monument and the east pediment of the temple of Zeus – it is noteworthy that the narrative contexts themselves are those that give Zeus a role as judge or mediator, and these differ from the (admittedly limited) narrative contexts at Olympia in which the god previously appeared: as the divine avenger in the Gigantomachy on the Megarian Treasury ca. 510–500 B.C.<sup>29</sup> (figs. 11 a. b) and as the divine lover of Ganymede in the terracotta akroterion group of ca. 470 B.C.<sup>30</sup> (fig. 3).

We can add a third example, the cult statue of Zeus by Pheidias, which was placed in the temple ca. 430 B.C. (fig. 6). Known now only from literary descriptions and reflections in other media, the Pheidian statue of Zeus depicted the god seated on an elaborately decorated throne, a Nike held in his outstretched right hand, a sceptre propped on the base and supported by his raised left arm. An eagle perched atop the sceptre, and the god's pose was regal and supremely relaxed<sup>31</sup>. The iconography of a seated Zeus is not new in Greek art – one sees this on archaic and classical vase paintings, e. g., the birth of Athena, the introduction of Herakles to Olympos<sup>32</sup>, as well as in figurines, such as a bronze from Mt. Lykaion of ca. 530–520 B.C.<sup>33</sup> (fig. 18). This motif also exists on four cups found at Olympia: the seated Zeus, twice shown with Hera, is approached by a figure or figures; two examples, Lakonian cups, bear a dedicatory inscription to the god<sup>34</sup>. But it is important to think of *this* image of Zeus at Olympia as a military victory monument. As if to underscore this quality, combats once raged on his throne and footstool: Theseus and Herakles fighting against the Amazons, and Apollo and Artemis shooting down the Niobids. The Pheidian Zeus sat – aloof, non-interventionist – to award Nike personified in his outstretched right hand.

One might ask if this was not the case with portrayals of gods everywhere? Was this change part of a more general trend towards more tranquil images of deities? Himmelmann argued that images of deities changed with the transition from the Archaic to the Classical period from formal, aggressive depictions to »Daseinsbilder«, as he termed them<sup>35</sup> but this is only partially true. The use of *contrapposto* in the Classical period made energetic figures look more elastic and standing figures more relaxed, regardless of any other factors, including narrative context. In addition, Himmelmann draws most of his examples from vase painting, which does, indeed, show more *Daseins-*

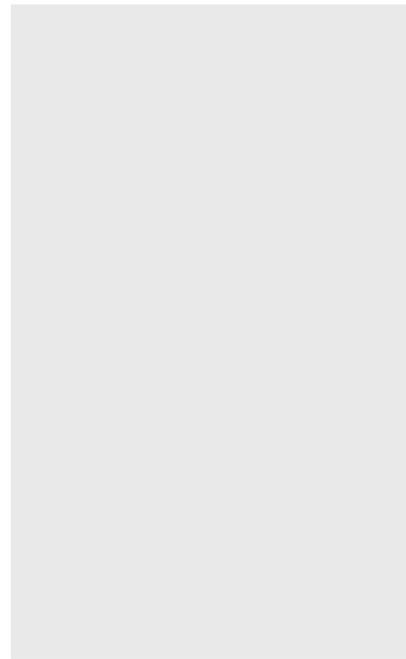


Fig. 18 Athens, National Museum inv. X13209. Zeus, bronze from Mt. Lykaion. H 10 cm

29 Bol 1974, 73 f.; Herrmann 1976, 348; Heiden 1995, 25.

30 Moustaka 1993, 44.

31 For a recent collection and discussion of the written sources, see DNO II, 221–284.

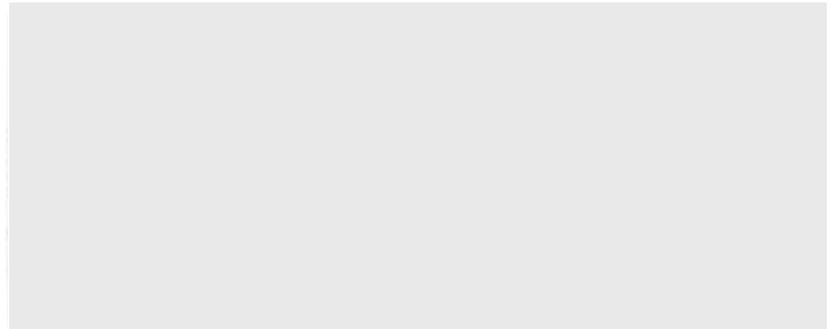
32 Cook 1925, 735–737; LIMC II (1984) 986–989 nos. 334. 335. 337–340. 343. 345–353. 355–358. 366–370 s. v. Athena (H. Cassimatis); LIMC V (1990) 122–124 nos. 2847–2849. 2851. 2854. 2855. 2857–2860. 2867–2869 s. v. Herakles (J. Boardman); LIMC VIII (1997) 321 nos. 43–45. 92 s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios).

33 Athens, National Museum inv. 13209. See LIMC VIII (1997) 320 no. 37 s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios). Cf. Athens, National Museum inv. 6163 of the late sixth century B.C. from Olympia, which probably also shows Zeus in a similar garment and grasping two objects (now lost) in his outstretched hands (probably a staff in his right hand to judge from its position), but in this case, the god is standing with his legs slightly apart (not striding). See LIMC VIII (1997) 321 no. 42 s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios).

34 Kunze–Götte et al. 2000, 29–32 no. 11 (Lakonian). 63 f. no. 36 (Lakonian). 64–72 no. 37 (Lakonian). 216 no. 12 (Attic black-figure). For comparanda to the Lakonian examples and discussion of the iconography of the seated male deity on Lakonian cups found in sanctuaries, see Pipili 1987, 60–63. Pipili points to Lakonian votive reliefs to heroes as close relatives to the vase painting compositions but also notes significant differences (60).

35 Himmelmann 1959.

Fig. 19 Olympia, Museum inv. Br. 6362.  
Inscription, bronze. H 8 cm



- 36 LIMC II (1984) 966 no. 76. 971 f. s. v. Athena (P. Demargne).  
 37 e. g., LIMC II (1984) 727 nos. 1347–1353 s. v. Artemis (L. Kahil).  
 38 e. g., LIMC II (1984) 639 nos. 171–176. 651 nos. 355–366. 653 nos. 392 and 396 f. 700 no. 1034 s. v. Artemis (L. Kahil).  
 39 See LIMC VIII (1997) 323 f. s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios).  
 40 From Dodona and Pherai. See LIMC VIII (1997) 324 nos. 62 i–j (cf. nos. 62 a–d) s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios). He also appears on a silver sheet from Dodona of ca. 450 B.C. See LIMC VIII (1997) 324 no. 66 s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios).  
 41 Of ca. 455–450 B.C. DNO I, 371 f. no. 465; Moreno 2001, 278; LIMC VIII (1997) 324 no. 63. 332 f. s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios). Gross 1963, 14 f. follows Lacroix 1949, 228–230 in seeing the statue mirrored in coins of the Messenians; see LIMC VIII (1997) 362 no. 431 s. v. Zeus (S. Kremydi-Sicilianou).  
 42 LIMC VIII (1997) 324 no. 71. 329 nos. 107. 112 s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios).  
 43 Coins from Messene, Zankle, Ambrakia, Thuria, Olosson, and the Bruttian League. See LIMC VIII (1997) 362 f. nos. 427. 428. 431–433. 440. 447 s. v. Zeus (S. Kremydi-Sicilianou). He also appears on coins from Corinth of the first century B.C. See LIMC VIII (1997) 363 no. 441 s. v. Zeus (S. Kremydi-Sicilianou).  
 44 LIMC VIII (1997) 324 nos. 62 g. h s. v. Zeus (M. Tiverios).  
 45 Siewert 1981; Kyrieleis 2011, 110; Siewert – Taeuber 2013, 31 f. no. 5.  
 46 Cf. Bäbler 2000, 217; Sinn 2004, 80.

bilder in the Classical period than previously: Daseinsbilder are most at home on painted vases because of the non-civic nature of vase painting and the ease of creating narrative scenes in this medium. But there are plenty of images of gods fighting and moving energetically in Classical vase paintings, as well, e. g., in scenes of the Gigantomachy, or Athena Promachos in images of the birth of Athena. Athena Promachos continues to stride forward on Panathenaic amphorae and other vase painting and on coins<sup>36</sup>; Artemis and Apollo continue to hunt down the Niobids in vase painting and sculpture, including on the throne of the Pheidian Zeus mentioned above<sup>37</sup>; and Artemis is portrayed as a swiftly moving hunter whether prey is portrayed or not in vase painting<sup>38</sup>. Even in large-scale sculpture, one continues to see energetically moving gods: one can site, for example, the depictions of Poseidon and Athena in the contest between the two deities on the west pediment of the Parthenon, or the Gigantomachy in the east metopes of the Parthenon. The Artemision god, whom most scholars believe is Zeus, is a superb example of an early Classical statue of a divinity in dynamic motion (and see the discussion of the Zeus by Ageladas below). Himmelmann is correct that we see *more* Daseinsbilder in the Classical period, but other types of images were employed, as well.

Similarly, one might question whether the iconographical change for Zeus images at Olympia as described here was unique to Olympia. How did Zeus appear elsewhere before ca. 470, and did such depictions change afterwards? Archaic images of Zeus outside of Olympia were more varied than at Olympia: they were seated or more commonly standing; the Zeus Keraunios format dominated standing types while some narratives and large-scale sculpture employed the seated motif (in contrast to Olympia, e. g., the Plataian monument)<sup>39</sup>. Again, contrary to the situation at Olympia, Zeus Keraunios is the favoured format for representations of the god outside of Olympia for several decades after ca. 480: on fifth-century B.C. bronzes<sup>40</sup>, such as the lost Zeus of Ithome by Ageladas of Argos (Paus. 4, 33, 1 f.)<sup>41</sup>, and vase paintings<sup>42</sup>; and later on coins of the fourth and third centuries B.C.<sup>43</sup>. And again unlike the situation at Olympia, only from the 440s B.C. onward does one see an increase in the number of calm, seated Zeus images outside of Olympia. Two bronze figurines from Olympia of mid-fifth century date (dated on the basis of style) portray Zeus Keraunios<sup>44</sup>, but these are exceptional.

What might explain the change in Zeus' portrayal at Olympia? Inscriptions attest to a historical-political development at Olympia that signals a new role for the god at the site. An inscribed bronze tablet (Olympia Museum inv. Br. 6362), a re-used cauldron handle, dated to the first half of the fifth century on the basis of its letter forms, and more precisely between 476 and 472 on historical grounds<sup>45</sup>, demonstrates that Olympia was established as a place of arbitration after the Persian Wars<sup>46</sup> (fig. 19). Just after 479, the Boiotians and

Thessalians were punished for breaking the Olympic truce of 480 because they participated in the Persian sack of Athens and Thespiiai. The bronze document reviews and revokes an earlier decision regarding this conflict between Boeotia and Thessaly, on the one hand, and Athens and Thespiiai, on the other hand<sup>47</sup>. The text of the decision begins Ἄγαλμα Διός, which Peter Siewert interprets as indicating that the decision is made by Zeus himself<sup>48</sup>. Scholars explain that the implementation of arbitration at Olympia was a direct consequence of the Persian Wars: that the victory at Plataia achieved by the unity of Greeks inspired the implementation of arbitration to avoid ›internal‹ strife among Greeks<sup>49</sup>. The experiences of the Persian Wars seem a likely explanation for the new practice at Olympia, and one might point to the numerous poleis named on the Plataian monument at Olympia and on the serpent column at Delphi as indicative of a new sense of unity<sup>50</sup>. However, this posited sense of newfound togetherness did not prevent the Athenians from erecting their own dedication at Delphi: shields affixed to the north and east metopes of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, together with an inscription indicating that these were Plataian spoils from the Medes and the Thebans, who collaborated with them, another reference to the events that prompted the Olympian arbitration mentioned on the inscribed cauldron handle<sup>51</sup>.

Some seventy-one inscribed bronze and stone documents from the sixth century B.C. continuing into the Roman period at Olympia detail laws, treaties, proxeny and citizenship decrees, rules concerning the Olympic festival and games, rules concerning the privileges accorded to various visitors to the sanctuary, as well as victors' lists<sup>52</sup>, and at least some of these texts may have been stored or displayed in the Bouleuterion. There are four other arbitration decrees from the site, all considerably later – the second century B.C.<sup>53</sup> – than the re-used cauldron handle but this is hardly surprising: in fact, it is remarkable that we have any bronze documents at all from the site considering the fate of metal, especially small (the cauldron handle measures W 23,0 cm × H 8,0 cm × D 0.6–1.22 mm)<sup>54</sup>, sometimes flattened sheets of thin metal, in the post-antique period. But Pausanias (5, 6, 6) provides additional evidence for Olympia arbitrating a conflict: the Olympian Boule settled a land dispute concerning Xenophon in the fourth century B.C.

I wish to suggest then that Olympia's and, by extension, Zeus' role as arbitrator may lie behind the change in imagery. Perhaps the ›new‹ image of Zeus was decided by religious officials and/or Elean officials, or by patrons together with sculptors of monuments, who wished to reflect Zeus' and Olympia's new role. In any case, it is instructive to return to the Apollonian monument, where the mothers of Achilles and Memnon appeal to the god. Here, Zeus arbitrates, persuaded by Thetis' arguments to spare the life of her son, and perhaps it is no accident that the Apollonian monument backs up to the Bouleuterion, where the Boule from Elis met and voted (fig. 1). The monument's psychostasia image has a long history in literature and visual depictions though usually Hermes holds the scales, weighing the souls of the warriors. Here, the monument is more metaphorical as the two mothers beseech the god, and Hermes is omitted. The monument's theme together with the evolution of Olympia into a site for arbitration makes me wonder if the unusual practice of dedicating weights – presumably those used for weighing amounts of food sold at the festival – to Zeus at Olympia might be not only thank offerings for good profits, but also efforts to persuade Zeus to balance his scales in favour of the devotee (fig. 20). Weights appear as occasional dedications at other sites, but elsewhere their numbers are nowhere near as great (480 at Olympia)<sup>55</sup>. Furthermore, the vast numbers of votive weapons and armour dwindle at

47 Siewert 1981, 245–248.

48 Siewert 1981, 241 f. goes on to discuss a third-century B.C. inscription from Epidauros that also empowers the Hellanodikai in Epidauros to review and revoke a past decision, and as in the case of the text from Olympia, they do this in the name of the god. In private correspondence, however, Klaus Hallof disagrees with this interpretation and sees these words as indicating a dedication to Zeus.

49 Sinn 2004, 80 is the chief proponent of this view, but the same opinion is echoed in Kyrieleis 2011, 110.

50 On the serpent column, see, e. g., DNO I, 546–550 nos. 639–642; Gauer 1968, 75–96.

51 Paus. 10, 19, 4; Gauer 1968, 26. 75. These shields were ›renewed‹ in the fourth century B.C., as we know from Aischin. Ctes. 116.

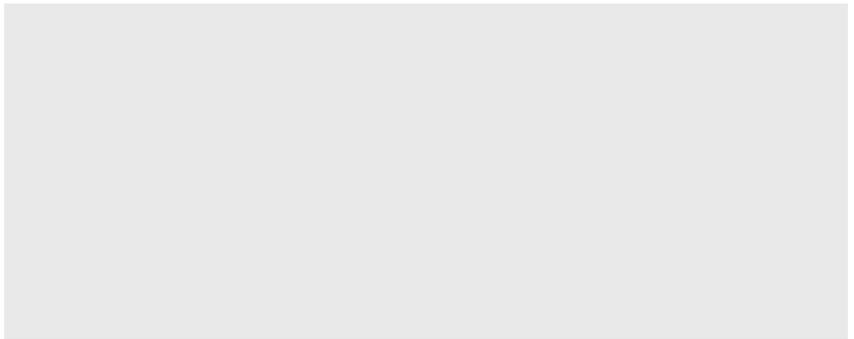
52 Siewert – Taeuber 2013, nos. 1–15; Olympia V, nos. 1–43.

53 Siewert – Taeuber 2013, nos. 14. 15; Olympia V, nos. 47. 52.

54 Siewert 1981, 228.

55 Hitzl 1996, 42 n. 321 notes that there are three additional objects, which may be weights. As comparative numbers, Hitzl 1996, 38 states that 123 bronze and iron weights dating over a five-hundred year period were recovered from the Athenian Agora, and Olynthos produced 122 examples. These are the largest numbers outside Olympia. Beyond these two locations, the numbers drop sharply, e. g., twenty-four from Delphi, three from Corinth.

Fig. 20 Olympia, Museum inv. Br. 5754 and Br. 12122. Weights, bronze



Olympia and elsewhere after ca. 440 B.C. Some scholars explain this phenomenon as reflecting a new policy that prohibited or limited commemorating victory between rival Greek cities with *tropaia*<sup>56</sup>, but I find this improbable since at least two later, spectacularly large monuments at Olympia commemorated victories of one Greek polis over another (see below)<sup>57</sup>. We simultaneously see an increase in the dedication of bronze bars with stamped weights on them, and Siewert suggests that these weights were made of weapons that were melted down, then dedicated<sup>58</sup>. If this were so, we would have transformed dedications, which perhaps were intended to weight Zeus' scales in military matters. But I am dubious about this proposal, as well, since votive armour and weapons continue to be offered at Olympia into the fourth century B.C., no evidence exists at Olympia for this process in the Classical period<sup>59</sup>, and the motivation for such a laborious process is puzzling.

In any case, the Trojan conflict of the Apollonian votive offers a parallel to the recent conquest of a great foreign enemy by an assembly of Hellenes from various poleis, and was intended to liken contemporary Hellenes fighting against foreigners – whomever they may be – to the noble Achaians of the distant Homeric past<sup>60</sup>. Poetic fragments of ca. 479 B.C. by Simonides specifically associate recent battles of the Persian Wars – particularly the Battle of Plataia – with Trojan War heroes, especially Achilles<sup>61</sup>. While the poem itself may not have been a direct inspiration for the Olympia monuments, it does attest to the contemporary analogy between the Trojan War and the Persian Wars.

Perhaps a measure of how the new image of Zeus with regard to warfare, the non-bellicose Zeus, began to take hold are the military victory monuments at Olympia erected after the Temple of Zeus. Shortly after the completion of the Temple of Zeus' cult statue, the Messenians and Naupaktians dedicated a winged Nike 30 m to the east of the façade of the Temple of Zeus (figs. 21 a–d). The Nike, 2.16 m from the plinth to the top of the head, flies through the air and extends her left leg forward in preparation to alight atop an 8.45 m high, triangular marble base (fig. 21 d)<sup>62</sup>. Flying beneath her feet from an amorphous cloud is an eagle (his wings were added separately) that raises her off the base (fig. 21 c), which, together with her outspread wings (now largely missing), created the illusion of the figure in mid-air<sup>63</sup>. The triangular-shaped base bore an inscription on its east or front side, which states that the monument is a dedication from the Messenians and Naupaktians and names Paionios of Mende as the sculptor<sup>64</sup>. On the basis of historical and stylistic grounds, the statue is usually dated ca. 420 B.C.<sup>65</sup>. Shields were attached to the base on its three sides as we can see by cuttings and the 'ghosts' that they have left behind so the offering was another *tropaion*, though not a conventional one. The size and position of the monument, together with the over life-sized marble statue,

56 Siewert 1996, 147.

57 Cf. Frielinghaus 2011, 230 f.

58 Siewert 1996, 146–148.

59 Frielinghaus 2011, 82–92. 231.

Moreover, Frielinghaus points out the some of the bronze weights contain lead, which would not have been present in the original weapons.

60 Cf. Ajootian 2003, 139.

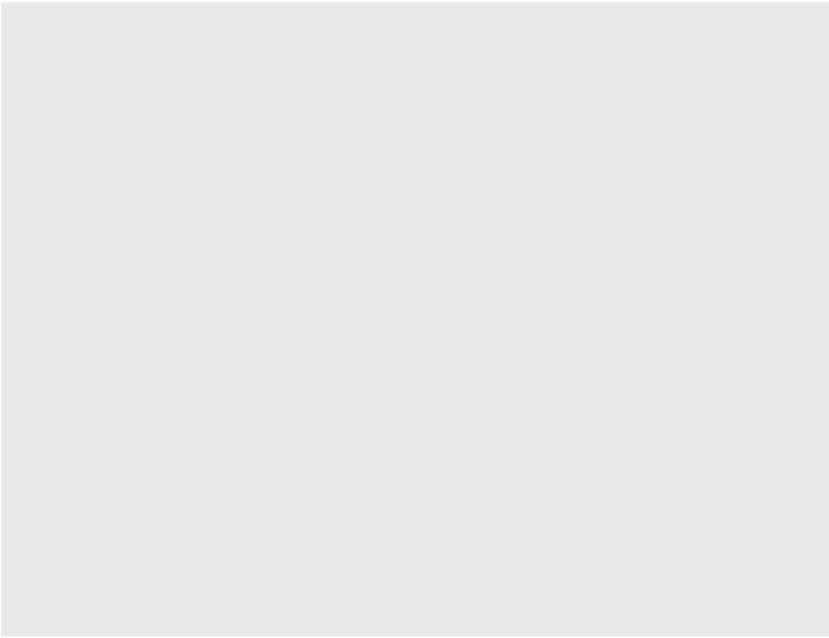
61 See Barringer 2009, 243.

62 On the pillar and its reconstruction, see Herrmann 1972.

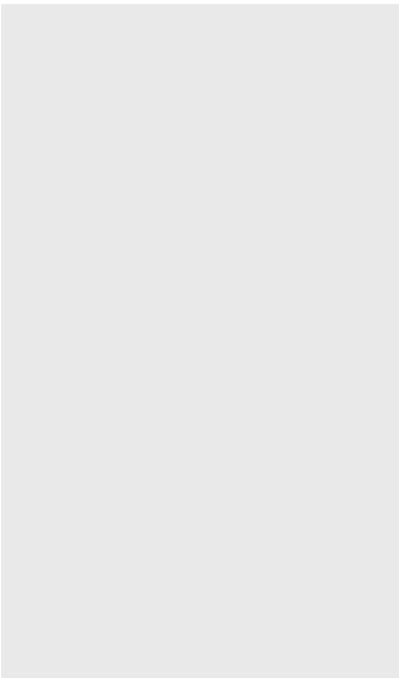
63 On the use of Parian marble at Olympia, see Herrmann 2000.

64 DNO II, 635–638 no. 1431; Olympia V, no. 259.

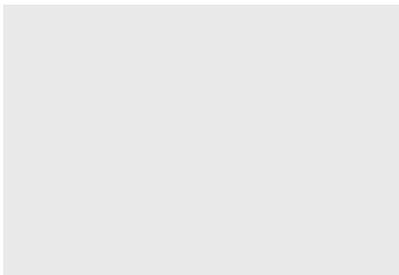
65 Kreikenbom 2004, 198.



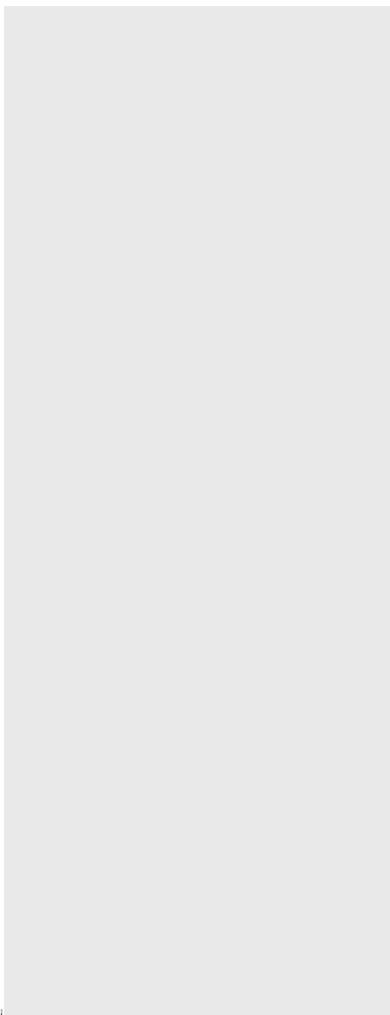
21 a



21 b



21 c



21 d

Fig. 21 Nike of Paionios, a: Olympia, pillar;  
b: Olympia, Museum inv. 46–48, Nike;  
c: detail of eagle; d: reconstruction

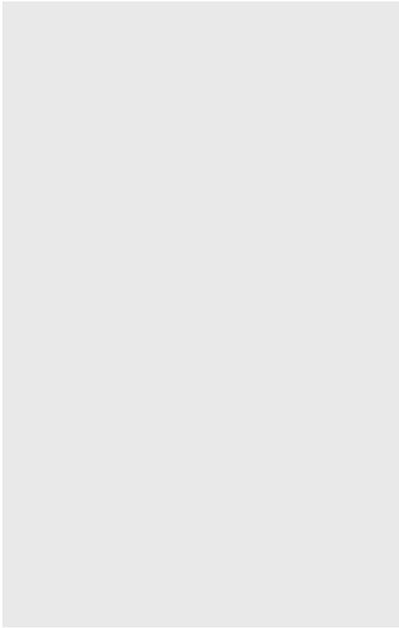


Fig. 22 Olympia, Elean victory base

set this monument apart and made it immediately visible to anyone within the Altis. Yet, Zeus is nowhere to be seen, except as the eagle accompanying the awarding of victory<sup>66</sup>.

He performs this task in the east pediment of the temple of Zeus, as well. Vinzenz Brinkmann's study of traces of paint on the sculpture reveals that Zeus once held a tainia, stretching from one hand to the other, across his body, prepared to award it to the victor<sup>67</sup>.

In the late fifth century B.C. Olympic victors receiving their crowns in front of the temple faced the crowd in the theatron to the east<sup>68</sup> (figs. 1. 15), while the Nike of Paionios loomed above (figs. 21 a–d), and Nikai crowned the temple pediments (Paus. 5, 10, 4; fig. 16 b). Standing in the east pediment was Zeus, who acknowledges the victor in the chariot race within the pediment, as well as that of the athletes standing below, prepared to award victory to both (figs. 16. 17)<sup>69</sup>. On the throne of the Pheidian Zeus directly across from the entrance to the cella (fig. 6), a boy athlete tied a ribbon around his head, echoing the actual crowning of athletes occurring outside the temple (Paus. 5, 11, 3). These are only two instances of images and reality mirroring each other at Olympia – there are others<sup>70</sup>.

Zeus appears on a military victory monument once more at Olympia: Pausanias (5, 24, 4) describes an 8 m high Zeus from booty taken from a triumphant victory over the Arcadians ca. 365–363 B.C. Once again, the inscribed conglomerate base survives in part, although the statue does not<sup>71</sup>; unfortunately, the surviving slab gives no indication as to Zeus' pose<sup>72</sup> (fig. 22). But even if he were Keraunios, we must keep in mind that he was dedicated by the Eleans, those who had regained control of the site, and perhaps they, and they alone, had Zeus fighting on their side. This same logic might also explain Elis' continued use of Zeus Keraunios on their coinage of ca. 470 to 400 B.C.: Olympia may have become a site of arbitration but Elis received special dispensation from the god.

**66** A hammered bronze sheet (Olympia inv. 7061) with a relief of Zeus holding a thunderbolt in his lowered right hand, his eagle in his left from the second half of the fifth century B.C. mirrors this less aggressive image of Zeus: he has his weapons at hand but does not use them. See Olympia IV, 106 no. 713 a; pl. 37, 713 a.

**67** Brinkmann 2003, 79. What Zeus held in his left hand is a matter of dispute: a spear, sceptre, and lightning bolt are candidates. For a summary, see Patay-Horváth 2008a, 167 f.

**68** Barringer 2009, 238 f.

**69** Sinn 2004, 79 f. also describes the Centauromachy in the west pediment of the temple of Zeus as strife between neighbours and its »Schlichtung« and

connects it to the Persian Wars, specifically the Greek united stand against the Plataians. As argued elsewhere (Barringer 2005), I don't perceive a connection to the Persian Wars but certainly the west pediment mirrors events of the east pediment – Elis and Pisa were warring neighbours. But the central gods' role in these two compositions is different: Apollo actively encourages the Lapiths while Zeus stands quietly.

**70** e. g., Barringer 2009, 239. And see Barringer in preparation.

**71** Kyrieleis 2011, 102 f. fig. 108; Olympia V, 383–386 no. 260 (inv. 90). It was found north of the Temple of Zeus and the statue would, according to Kyrieleis, have overlooked the ash altar. This assumes, of course, that the base was

discovered in situ. The cuttings on the top of the base appear to be secondary since one would expect a profile of some kind above the inscribed block.

**72** Simon 1978, 1433 again believes that the figure could not be striding because of its size. According to Olympia V, 383–385 (no. 260), the inscribed base, H 1.33 m, W 0.71 m, D 0.41 m, was flanked on both sides by additional blocks. The depth would still be a problem for a statue facing toward the inscription, but if the statue were turned 90 degrees, it is possible. Moreover, one might imagine the depth of the base formed not of a single block but two or three blocks, which would yield a considerably greater depth.

**Abstract**

Judith Barringer, *The Changing Image of Zeus in Olympia*

Images of Zeus Keraunios dominate the visual representations of Zeus at Olympia throughout the archaic period and down to the 470s B.C., and this is especially true for military victory monuments erected in the Altis. In the 470s B.C., however, such images cease to appear, and military votives thereafter employ a serene and regal standing or seated image of the god. The change can be explained by a new role for Zeus and Olympia in the aftermath of the Persian Wars: as arbitrator of disputes between Greek poleis, as evidenced by a previously published inscription ca. 476–472 B.C. In accordance with this development, Zeus now acts as arbitrator in his visual manifestations at Olympia.

**Keywords**

Olympia • Elis • Zeus •  
Keraunios • votive

**Sources of illustrations**

Figs. 1. 2. 4. 5. 8. 11 b. 14. 15. 16 a. 17. 21 a–c: H. R. Goette • Figs. 3. 12. 13. 20 a. b. 22: J. Barringer • Figs. 6. 11 a: F. Adler • Fig. 7: D-DAI-ATH-1970-0826. -0791 • Figs. 9. 10: Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (R. Saczewski) • Fig. 16 b: reconstruction A. F. Stewart, drawing C. H. Smith • Fig. 18: National Archaeological Museum, Athens (G. Patrikianos) © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund • Fig. 19: DAI Berlin (P. Grunwald) • Fig. 21 d: K. Herrmann

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