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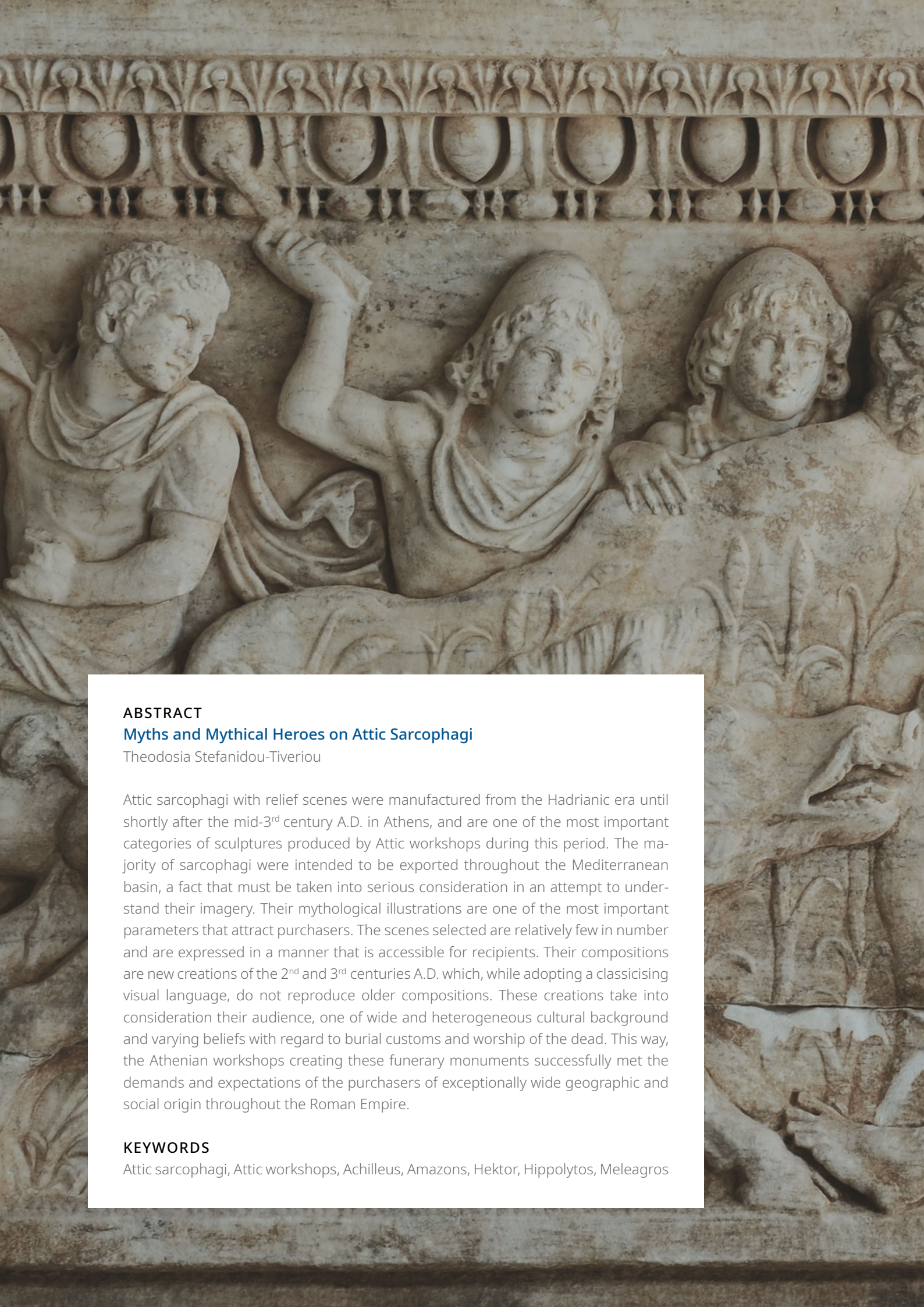
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ABSTRACT

Myths and Mythical Heroes on Attic Sarcophagi

Theodosia Stefanidou-Tiveriou

Attic sarcophagi with relief scenes were manufactured from the Hadrianic era until shortly after the mid-3rd century A.D. in Athens, and are one of the most important categories of sculptures produced by Attic workshops during this period. The majority of sarcophagi were intended to be exported throughout the Mediterranean basin, a fact that must be taken into serious consideration in an attempt to understand their imagery. Their mythological illustrations are one of the most important parameters that attract purchasers. The scenes selected are relatively few in number and are expressed in a manner that is accessible for recipients. Their compositions are new creations of the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. which, while adopting a classicising visual language, do not reproduce older compositions. These creations take into consideration their audience, one of wide and heterogeneous cultural background and varying beliefs with regard to burial customs and worship of the dead. This way, the Athenian workshops creating these funerary monuments successfully met the demands and expectations of the purchasers of exceptionally wide geographic and social origin throughout the Roman Empire.

KEYWORDS

Attic sarcophagi, Attic workshops, Achilleus, Amazons, Hektor, Hippolytos, Meleagros

Myths and Mythical Heroes on Attic Sarcophagi

Introduction

¹ Since the late 19th century, relief-decorated sarcophagi have been a significant research subject mainly for German archaeology and served as the namesake of the monumental series (Corpus) of the German Archaeological Institute in Berlin: »Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs« (ASR). More specifically, sarcophagi with mythological images were studied in their entirety, irrespective of the workshop where they originated, and were the subject of comprehensive commentary by Carl Robert in four volumes of the series published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries¹. The Corpus thenceforth served as an invaluable tool for the next generations of scholars, even to this day, as the material in question was presented exhaustively in the form of catalogues, classified typologically, dated and studied in terms of their iconography with the primary aim of identifying the models of mythological depictions and their meaning, in certain cases. Present-day criticism concerning the focus and course of the Corpus² may be partly justified, because funerary monuments such as sarcophagi were primarily regarded as carriers of relief depictions, i. e. as works of art³. However, one should consider that without this seminal work, it would have been impossible to have a general overview of the material or to obtain information of any kind or necessary statistical data⁴ – and discourse among scholars could not have proceeded in other directions without this basis. On the other hand, with respect to methodology, I believe that modern attempts to carry out an iconological interpretation of mythological depictions in the light of funerary and general

1 Robert 1890; Robert 1897; Robert 1904; Robert 1919. On the overall structure of the Corpus from its inception to 1993 and 1998, see Koch 1993, 205–209, and Koch 1998, 218–320, respectively. On the contribution of Robert, see H. Sichtermann in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 12 f.; Zanker – Ewald 2012, 18 f.

2 Zanker – Ewald 2012, 18 f.; cf. Koortbojian 1998, 557; Lorenz 2011, 309; Borg 2015c, 599. Robert's approach faced criticism early on, see H. Sichtermann in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 13; see also, Fittschen 1992, 1047 f. n. 6, who remarked that the (then) recent volumes of the Corpus often completely disregarded questions on the interpretation of depictions.

3 H. Sichtermann in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 12; Froning 1986, 202; Fittschen 1992, 1047 n. 7; Bielfeldt 2005b, 1067.

4 See, e. g. Ewald 2004, 233–240 figs. 1–3.

social beliefs⁵ or even from the perspective of broader historical considerations⁶ are far from removed from the method of iconographic analysis, which cannot but serve as the starting point for any interpretative endeavour.

² The almost exclusive interest in the monuments of the Western Empire was crucial for the orientation of research provided through later – after Robert – volumes of the Corpus until recently. In other words, the volumes published until the 1990s concern groups of sarcophagi that were created in Rome and the broader Italian region. By way of exception, a small section of the four-volume work of Friedrich Matz on Dionysiac sarcophagi – and, specifically, volume IV 1 (1968) – included, apart from the numerous sarcophagi of Rome, the hitherto few Attic sarcophagi belonging to this thematic group⁷. An additional number of updated volumes of the series (XII »Die mythologischen Sarkophage«) are also dedicated to the mythological sarcophagi of Rome, and half have been published to date⁸. The first volume, published in just 1975 (XII 6)⁹, includes not only the numerous Meleagros sarcophagi from Rome but also the far smaller group of corresponding Attic works. The volumes on the other thematic groups of Attic sarcophagi, i. e. the groups of sarcophagi depicting Achilleus, Hippolytos, various other myths and the groups depicting the Amazonomachy and all kinds of battles, were published much later and, as planned, were included in a separate set of volumes concerning Greek sarcophagi (IX 1–3: 1995, 2011, 2016). One exception was the group of sarcophagi depicting Erotes and garlands, which were separated from the Corpus (volume IX 4) and included in a newly founded series titled »Sarkophag-Studien« (volume 9, 2016).

³ If we consider that the sarcophagi Corpus serves as one strong pillar in the research of this major category of monuments, then a second pillar would undoubtedly be found in the handbook by Guntram Koch and Helmut Sichtermann on sarcophagi of the Roman Empire, published in the series of the »Handbuch der Archäologie« in 1982. The exceptionally broad overview of all the works in this category throughout the Roman world that this achievement offered and continues to offer enabled the identification of the individual workshops and the determination of their actual scale, both regarding each one individually and in comparison to one another. The workshop of Attic sarcophagi, in particular, which was analysed over no fewer than 110 pages of the volume, was acknowledged, even before its presentation in the corresponding volumes of the Corpus had proceeded significantly, as one of the most important of the category, second only to that of Rome. After the publication of the Corpus with regard to Attic sarcophagi was concluded, and after the publication of several collections, groups or isolated works of the category, which have markedly grown in number in recent years¹⁰, the large volume

⁵ On the types of questions posed by present-day scholars, see Zanker – Ewald 2012, 20 f.

⁶ See Ewald 2004, 231.

⁷ Certain other isolated examples of Attic and Asiatic sarcophagi are included in volumes I 4 (Amedick 1991, 94–96) and V 4 (Kranz 1984, 157–159).

⁸ One additional volume (XII 4) is currently being edited, see Piekarski 2016, 43.

⁹ Koch 1975a.

¹⁰ See Wiegartz 1975, 162–210 (Myra); Baratte – Metzger 1985, 251–275 (Louvre); Linant de Bellefonds 1985 (Tyre); Cambi 1988 (Split); Rudolf 1989 (Ephesos); Walker 1990 (London); Cambi 1993 (Dalmatia); Ciliberto 1996 (northern Italy); Ciliberto 1998 (northern Italy); KatMTh I 1997; KatMTh II 2003; KatMTh III 2010; KatMTh IV 2020 under the relevant entries (Thessaloniki); Gaggadis-Robin 2005, 61–106; Gaggadis-Robin 2007 (Arles); Cambi 2007 (Dalmatia); Ciliberto 2009 (Messene); Turak 2012 (Perge); Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015 (Nikopolis); Bitrakova-Grozdanova – Nikoloska 2015 (North Macedonia); Stroszeck 2016 (Athens); Kintrop 2017 (Ephesos); Katakis 2018 (Athens). On several new findings, see also Koch 2022, 330 n. 4. We can mention certain new finds or works unknown until recently that came to light within their context, i. e. funerary buildings, such as that of Perge: Yıldırım – Gates 2007, 312–314 figs. 14, 15; Turak 2012; Sparta: Eleftheriou – Skankos 2010–2013, 547–549; Cyrene: Fabbriotti 2016. The remarkable funerary monuments excavated over the course of the last decades in the northern cemetery of ancient Nikopolis (Epirus) have not been published yet, with the exception of certain sarcophagi that originated there and are included in Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, with relevant information on p. 4 f. The same holds true for the cemetery of Messene, with cumulative information on it provided in Flämig 2007, 175–181. The large kline-lid, which originates from a funerary structure in Ermioni, Argolis (see Piteros et al. 1991, 105 f. pl. 56), does not belong to Attic production, see Koch 2017, 327 n. 21.

of the material in question has now become accessible to experts¹¹. As such, this will now enable synthetic studies touching upon varied subjects relating to the dissemination and use of monuments, as well as issues concerning the interpretation of their depictions.

⁴ In this study, we will mainly focus on issues of iconography and iconological interpretation of mythological scenes on Attic sarcophagi, our ultimate objective being to explore their significance as carriers of information regarding perceptions of life and death, as well as the expectations of their recipients-purchasers during the difficult times they came faced the loss of loved ones or were preparing for the inevitable (*Sinngehalt/iconology*). Our effort will be based on a wide analysis of the iconographic material, particularly the mythological topics that dominate this Attic works and frequently survive in more than one example, in order to clearly grasp and interpret the changes that are known to occur over the approximately 130 years of their production (A.D. 130–260). Several studies so far have engaged with relevant matters and offered important remarks and interpretation proposals, mainly in the context of publishing material or on the occasion of re-examination of works of particular interest or presenting problematic interpretation. An important place is held among these by the interpretive proposals of Pascale Linant de Bellefonds in the context of the publication of the Attic sarcophagi of *Tyre*¹². However, there is a paucity of synthetic studies focusing on the entire range of mythological topics and their importance for the recipients of the monuments in question. This paucity is particularly felt when considering the corresponding yet clearly greater interest expressed far earlier, for historical and ideological reasons, in the corresponding issues pertaining to metropolitan sarcophagi, which has been seeing a great upsurge in recent years¹³. Of course, one might reasonably argue that, in terms of the general interpretative framework of mythological depictions, there is no absolute distinction between the metropolitan sarcophagi and those coming from Greek-speaking regions of the Empire. Indeed, this seems to hold true, broadly speaking¹⁴, since in some cases there are very close iconographic relations between these disparate groups¹⁵. Nevertheless, it is certain that Attic sarcophagi differ significantly from those of Rome, both in terms of selection of mythological topics and individual scenes and in terms of how the episodes are narrated¹⁶. Therefore, it is necessary to address Attic sarcophagi as the works of a self-contained group with completely discrete characteristics, both in terms of the selection and processing of myths and in terms of the conception and structure of relief compositions.

11 The fragmented mythological sarcophagi that remain unpublished at the National Archaeological Museum Athens are not particularly numerous and will be presented by Stelios Katakis in an upcoming volume of CSIR, see Katakis 2018, 19 n. 2.

12 Linant de Bellefonds 1985.

13 On older relevant research, see H. Sichtermann in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 6–20 (on the history of research in general); 581–617 (on iconology). With regard to the interpretation of mythological depictions and the history of the relevant research, in particular, see Zanker – Ewald 2012, 19–21. On interpretative approaches in recent decades, see, by way of indication: Fittschen 1992; Müller 1994; Gaggadis-Robin 1994; Koortbojian 1995; Amedick 1998; Zanker 1999; Zanker 2005; Bielfeldt 2005a; Bielfeldt 2005b; Grassinger 2007; Newby 2011, 190; Lorenz 2011, 309 n. 1. 2; Russenberger 2011; Balty 2013a; Linant de Bellefonds 2013; Grassinger 2013; Zanker 2014; Borg 2014; Russenberger 2015; Borg 2015a; Maderna 2015; Russenberger 2016; Newby 2016, 273–319; Strocka 2017a, 134 f.; Borg 2018, 169 n. 3. 4; 170 n. 5; 178 n. 45; Zanker 2019; De Angelis 2019; Coleman 2019; Bielfeldt 2019.

14 See, for example, Zanker 1999, 135. 138 f.; Ewald 2004, 232; Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017, esp. 615 f.; see also Borg 2018, e. g. 197 f. fig. 12, where, alongside Roman sarcophagi depicting Achilles at the court of Lykomedes, Attic sarcophagi on the same topic are examined. Moreover, texts concerning perceptions of death (epigrams, consolations, literary works) are studied by specialists without being distinguished into Greek and Latin; see, e. g. Müller 1994, 86–106. Similarly, Lorenz 2011, 311 f., addresses Meleagros sarcophagi as a single group, irrespective of the workshop where they were produced.

15 On certain types of figures common to both Attic and Roman sarcophagi in scenes of the Amazonomachy, see Russenberger 2015, 302. 336. See also below, § 84–86.

16 On differences of all kinds between the two groups in detail, see esp. Ewald 2018, 226–240.

5 It is therefore noteworthy that, over the last 25 years, Björn Ewald focused intensely on Attic sarcophagi and provided us with a series of remarkable studies thereon. His purpose was to interpret the phenomenon of their broad dissemination throughout the Roman Empire and to highlight their differences of all kinds from the corresponding works of Rome and, in particular, the different ideological background of their depictions and their intended objectives¹⁷. In this context, we will have the opportunity to discuss these views in detail.

Current Data and Questions

6 According to statistical data, the sarcophagi produced by Attic workshops are characterised by ›universality‹, as they circulated throughout the Mediterranean¹⁸ and became much sought-after by the social strata of the Roman Empire with the financial means to obtain them¹⁹. Despite the fact that genuine Attic sarcophagi were produced exclusively and in their final form by Athenian workshops²⁰, 65 % of them were intended to be traded, in contrast to sarcophagi produced in Rome and in *Dokimeion*/Phrygia, of which only 3 % and 13 %, respectively, were exported²¹. The broad dissemination of Attic sarcophagi raises two reasonable, closely linked questions: 1. The reasons for this phenomenon, when examined from the perspective of the recipients of the products, i. e. which features make them so attractive to purchasers; and 2. how Attic workshops, in turn, managed to win over prospective purchasers by dynamically penetrating the markets of so extensive a region, with cities characterised by a largely heterogeneous cultural background and varying beliefs with regards to burial customs and worship of the dead²². Similar questions concerning the high demand for corresponding products of Rome, in the capital itself, appear easier to answer. In other words, we can comprehend how the purchasing public would influence not only the development of products produced by workshops in the city and its broader region, but also, to a certain extent, the kind of sarcophagi imported there, i. e. with regard to the workshops of origin and the themes on the sarcophagi. Despite their diversity in terms of social status, Roman patrons-purchasers²³ would make – possibly due to the self-evident competitiveness developing in the specific context of the city – broadly common choices when obtaining these costly funerary monuments²⁴.

7 The questions we raised above are primarily answered by the reputation of Attic workshops and the indisputable value of Athenian sculptures, which include Attic

17 Ewald 2004; Ewald 2011; Ewald 2018.

18 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 461–470 fig. 7; Ward-Perkins 1992, 83 fig. 59; Koch 2012a, 2 n. 8; more extensively per regions: Koch 2012b, 45 f. See also Russell 2013, 172 n. 182; 174 figs. 5. 6; Ewald 2018, 211 n. 6. As is well known, the export of Attic sculptures to the Empire had begun much earlier, see e. g. Fittschen 2008b, 327.

19 There are very few inscriptions providing information on the identity of purchasers – see below, § 114–120.

20 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 366 f.; see also Russell 2013, 281–285, with detailed information on the older views. However, local workshops in numerous Mediterranean cities manufactured imitations of Attic sarcophagi, our knowledge of which has been steadily increasing in recent years, see, most recently, Koch 2022.

21 Koch 2012c, 37 pl. 5; 46 f.; Koch 2015, 14 fig. 9; cf. Ewald 2018, 21 n. 9.

22 On the dissemination of Attic sarcophagi, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 461–470 fig. 7; Koch 1993, 111 f.; Koch 2012a, 2 f. (with bibliography); Koch 2012c, 45 n. 36 (with bibliography); Koch 2015, 13. Meanwhile, new findings necessitate the supplementation of the relevant list of their dispersal, Koch 2022, 330 n. 4.

23 See below, § 114–120.

24 It is an indicative conclusion that certain graves containing sarcophagi in Rome present no differentiation corresponding to the social status of their owners (senators, equestrians and imperial freedmen), see Meinecke 2015. Similarly, other categories of marble funerary monuments in Rome are used by various social classes, Ewald 2015, 402 f.

sarcophagi. It is without question that purchasers wished to acquire these luxuriously crafted products, carved out of white Pentelic marble by highly skilled sculptors, possessing exquisite architectural form that was successfully underlined by their elaborate decorative elements²⁵. Moreover, one should consider that their relief decoration, particularly the figurative, along all four sides of the chest²⁶, constituted an equally important parameter of the value of the overall monument that accounted for a significant portion of the popularity of these works. Acknowledging the importance of relief depictions for purchasers, Ewald attributed the commercial success of these Attic products to what he calls the retrospective or »anachronistic« imagery of their themes, i. e. alluding to the past of Athens and constituting an »epiphenomenon« of the »Second Sophistic«. In other words, the myths they would depict would be mostly addressed to the members of the educated social elite of the era, who had espoused the ideas and values put forth by the »Second Sophistic«; more specifically, they would visualise the concept of »Greekness« in terms of cultural identity. Furthermore, according to Ewald, these products, like other expressions of Athenian culture, partook »in a broader marketing and selling of a Greek »cultural identity« that had become a profitable enterprise in the imperial period«²⁷. If the themes of these funerary monuments are indeed of an »anachronistic« nature and if, by extension, they allude to the Greek cultural identity, these are issues we will circle back to, after focusing on the difficult task of iconographic analysis and interpretation of the mythological scenes themselves.

8 How were the works widely promoted in markets along with the ideas they expressed? In other words, precisely which themes were selected and according to which criteria? Furthermore, how did the persons in charge of Attic workshops manage them during the production of the works? These are questions that force us to examine the iconography of these monuments in detail and specifically, studying each thematic group separately. As I will endeavour to illustrate below, the Attic workshops' emphasis on the selection and use of specific subjects of the mythical past and specific mythical heroes, combined with the narrative mode they adopted, cultivated over time and, to a point, established, most likely contributed to the tremendous appeal of their products in the markets of the Mediterranean. It can be no accident that the 1st half of the 3rd century A.D., in particular, was the most productive and most creative period in the history of Attic sarcophagi, with a corresponding boom in their demand²⁸, as will be shown below. Consequently, we can accept from the outset that the workshops succeeded in identifying those common denominators that handily and sufficiently expressed certain fundamental expectations of the buying public, irrespective of which part of the Empire they came from and the social stratum to which they belonged. If, as seems probable, financial factors also played a part in their dissemination, this is an issue that concerns each separate region or city, as the cost of transporting these massive products to their final destination significantly varied from location to location. Therefore, while the transport of Attic sarcophagi to Thessaloniki and other coastal cities was relatively simple, it was exceptionally difficult and costly in other cases, such as Bosra in southern Syria, Gadara and Philadelpheia in Jordan or, to give an extreme example, Palmyra²⁹.

25 Cf. Ewald 2018, 212. 214 n. 27. On the high purchasing value of Attic sarcophagi, see Koch 1988, 159. On the exploitation of the Penteli quarries during this era, which most likely belonged to Herodes Atticus, see e. g. Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 219–222.

26 On the few exceptions to this rule, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 369 n. 2; Rogge 2008, 590 n. 40.

27 Cf. Ewald 2004, 231–233. 267; esp. Ewald 2018, 209. 213 (quotation). 227 f. 235. 252.

28 See § 10.

29 On the difficulties involved in transporting sarcophagi and other works to regions at a distance from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, see Koch 2012c, 45 f.

9 Sarcophagi with sculptural decoration appeared in Athens in the late Hadrianic era, around A.D. 130 or possibly already by the A.D. 120–130 decade³⁰, under the influence of corresponding metropolitan products, as it is accepted³¹. The early production of this new category of funerary monuments is in line, in terms of its thematic, with the products of both the capital and Asian Minor cities, as the chest surfaces are decorated with garlands or Erotes³². During this early period, the products of Athenian workshops were already channelled outside Attica, reaching the Eastern Mediterranean, all the way to Antioch and Cyrenaica³³. Subsequently, around A.D. 150 at the latest, workshops would adopt mythological themes that would become greatly popular throughout Roman territory. It is most likely no accident that around the same time (approximately A.D. 160), along with the evolution of the architectural form of monuments, a change would take place to the type of sarcophagus lids: in other words, the gabled lid is replaced by a kline-lid adorned with the statues of the persons to be interred in the chest³⁴. Production of and demand for these products had already increased by the 2nd half of the 2nd century A.D., but saw a boom in the 1st half of the 3rd century A.D. and, in particular, the 2nd quarter of that century³⁵. Over time, the mode of recounting the myths changed, to the point where, during the 1st half of the 3rd century A.D., a particular narrative mode had, in a sense, been established and left its mark on the physiognomy of almost all the works in question. During this final period, the products of Attic workshops virtually dominated the markets of the Empire, until the end of their production, during the A.D. 250–260 decade³⁶. It should be noted that at no stage during their evolution did Attic sarcophagi adopt – possibly with very few exceptions – themes of contemporary life or clear allusions thereto, as was the case in Rome where, moreover, the phenomenon arose, mainly during the 3rd century A.D., to identify, in specific cases, the deceased persons with certain mythological figures by means of portraits³⁷. Also worthy of note is the fact that in a city such as Athens, the depictions of philosophers or philosophising

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- 30 On the more recent dating of the beginning of Attic sarcophagus production in the age of Hadrian that has become established, see Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2007, 263–265. 267–269 n. 57; Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 8 f., and E. Papagiannē in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 17 f. n. 93. 94. Papagianni 2016, 87–89 n. 885; 95. Cf. Koch 2012c, 36 n. 6; Koch 2015, 8 n. 7; Katakis 2018, 25 n. 42. See also Papagianni 2016, 85–97, for a broader discussion on the dating of Attic sarcophagi, the history of research and the relevant discourse, as well as a systematic effort to describe the stages of their evolution. This effort takes account of all the relevant parameters, i. e. the few existing external dating information, the stylistic features and the architectural structure, while the discourse utilises not only sarcophagi adorned with Erotes but also those depicting mythological themes. Recently, Strocka 2020 argues instead that the Attic garland sarcophagi had already gone into production by the time of Trajan. Without ruling out this possibility, the arguments put forward cannot be considered substantive.
- 31 See, most recently, Koch 2022, 329 f. The chronological distance between the beginning of production of Attic sarcophagi and that of metropolitan sarcophagi is no longer as significant as was thought on the basis of the earlier dating of this beginning to the early Antonine period (G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 456). As regards this issue, see Papagianni 2016, 95, who further stresses that the earliest metropolitan production of the 2nd century A.D. includes sarcophagi with garlands, while confirmed examples of mythological sarcophagi are found only from the age of Hadrian.
- 32 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 435–441, esp. 456. See recently Papagianni 2016, esp. 1 and 117. See also Katakis 2018, 25–28.
- 33 Papagianni 2016, 103–106, describing the gradual dispersal of these products.
- 34 On the early introduction of the kline-lid in Athens, see below, § 80 n. 252. 253. On the kline-lid in the three major sarcophagus production centres of the Empire, i. e. Rome, Athens and Asia Minor, and a discussion into their possible provenance, as well as the issue of prioritising its adoption, see, most recently, Strocka 2017a, 169 f.
- 35 See, most recently, Koch 2022, 330. On statistical data concerning the production and export of Attic sarcophagi throughout their history, see Koch 2012c, 37 pls. 3. 4.
- 36 Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1993a; Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 223–231, generally regarding the late production of ideal sculptures in Athens and its end. On the reasons for the discontinuation of this production, see also Koch 2012c, 38 n. 16; Koch 2015, 8 f.
- 37 See below, § 27.
-

citizens – which are encountered not only in Rome but, as of around A.D. 180, very frequently in the columnar sarcophagi of Dokimeion – are completely absent from sarcophagi³⁸.

¹⁰ Below, I will attempt to demonstrate how the change or, rather, the radical reformulation of mythological themes during the 3rd century A.D. corresponds to the gradual increase in the popularity and demand for these Athenian funerary monuments in markets and, at the same time, with the possible reorganisation of its workshops. There must certainly be an explanation as to why, out of the total number of extant Attic sarcophagi which, according to our current knowledge, were exported to the Empire, 305 belong to the 2nd century A.D., i. e. the period between A.D. 130 and 200, 200 to the far briefer period between A.D. 200 and 220/230, and 500 to the equally brief period between A.D. 220/230 and 250/260³⁹. One might postulate that these statistical data reflect a progressive increase in the wealth of the purchasers of such products, which may very well be true. We should also not disregard a parameter related to the shift of rich purchasers in the 3rd century A.D. to monuments related more to the private sphere (the residence and the cemetery) than to their self-promotion in public spaces⁴⁰. However, this raises a question as to why this financially robust clientèle, even in the eastern provinces, would so emphatically opt for sarcophagi produced by Attic workshops and far less for corresponding luxury products crafted by Asian Minor workshops, such as those of Dokimeion⁴¹. The latter, while more costly than Attic sarcophagi⁴², could have equally attracted clients who spared no expense or at least claim a better share of the external market than the one they apparently held. It may be considered almost certain that they fell short, compared to Athenian products, not only in terms of reputation but also in terms of how the workshops selected and handled the iconographic subjects of sarcophagi. It should also be noted that between A.D. 180 and the mid-3rd century A.D., the mythological subjects depicted on Dokimeion sarcophagi subsided drastically⁴³, giving the impression that their manufacturers gave up on this market segment, which was dominated by their competitors.

¹¹ The association between Attic sarcophagi and the phenomenon of the so-called Second Sophistic that has been emphatically proposed⁴⁴, as noted above, offers a framework for comprehending these classicistic works; however, this framework alone does not suffice, in my view, to answer the questions we have raised. In fact, it is noteworthy that the boom in demand and the corresponding increase in the production of Attic sarcophagi, and the extraordinary creativity displayed in these creations, are identified during the late stage of this phenomenon and not earlier, i. e. during the 2nd century A.D., as one might expect. Furthermore, it should be observed that one might

38 Strocka 2017a, 118–120. As has been pointed out, mythological depictions on this group of Asiatic sarcophagi do not play a significant role (Ewald 2018, 221 n. 44), although Strocka 2017a, 57 n. 212; 176, attempts to qualify this impression and demonstrates that this does not hold true for the earlier stages of production and that the depiction of myths subsides as of the late 2nd century A.D.

39 Koch 2012c, 37 pl. 4; Koch 2015, 12 fig. 28. These quantitative data most likely apply in broad strokes, albeit requiring minor corrections in certain cases.

40 Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 213 f.; Borg 2007. Such a shift can be understood in the context of the progressive change taking place at this time in the empire in the landscape of material culture; cf. e. g. Borg – Witschel 2001.

41 On this matter, see Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 222 f., with reference to the disadvantage at which Dokimeion quarries found themselves, being situated far from the sea, as opposed to Penteli quarries. See, more recently, Strocka 2017a, 2. – On the dissemination of Dokimeion sarcophagi, which is mostly limited to Asia Minor, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 507–509 fig. 18; Waelkens 1982, 9 fig. 7; 108 pl. 31; Strocka 2017a, 6–8 n. 37.

42 On the high price of white marble quarried at Dokimeion in Phrygia, see, most recently, Strocka 2017a, 1 f.

43 See Strocka 2017a, 109–111. 176.

44 The idea to connect the sarcophagus imagery to an educated elite in the time of the so-called Second Sophistic also has been suggested by previous scholars, see Borg 2014, 239 n. 17 (with bibliography).

also interpret the aforementioned Asian Minor products and, in fact, those depicting philosophers or philosophising citizens in the same framework, i. e. that of the ›Second Sophistic‹. It is, therefore, necessary to take different paths in search of answers to the questions we have raised.

The Myths

12 Firstly, I consider it important to study closely the themes most frequently encountered in Attic sarcophagi in order to describe as accurately as possible how their visual depiction gradually transformed from their appearance in the mid-2nd century A.D. to the end of their production around A.D. 260. It is particularly important to accept from the outset that the structure of the representations and the emphasis placed by the workshops – obviously a conscious decision and, to a point, possibly expressing the patrons’ desires – on specific points of the narration, e. g. how the main figures of the myth are portrayed, are the cornerstone of their iconological interpretation⁴⁵. This is particularly the case because we have no written testimonies at our disposal directly relating to these monuments. Furthermore, the few inscriptions found on Attic sarcophagi offer scant information on the deceased interred within them or on their purchasers⁴⁶, contrary to what is the case with other groups of this category, e. g. the sarcophagi of *Thessaloniki*⁴⁷. It is therefore necessary to consider the testimonies offered by funerary epigrams, funerary orations and consolations, as well as literary texts, which document ancient beliefs on the significance of heroes as exemplars of virtue and of mortality (*exempla virtutis* and *exempla mortalitatis*), praise the deceased and, at the same time, offer some consolation to the bereaved family⁴⁸. The iconological interpretation of funerary monuments is thus assisted by the beliefs expressed through these testimonies, provided the proposed interpretation predominantly begins from and is in harmony with the iconographic elements of each separate representation or at least each individual iconographic group. Therefore, a ›reading‹ as diligent and precise as possible of the elements which were selected by the creators of the compositions (i. e. sculptors, with the possible contribution of the patrons) is of the utmost importance in order for us to discover – to the extent that this is objectively possible – the links between them and propose possible interpretations⁴⁹. However, we must consider that this method has its limitations, particularly given that one cannot rule out that the sculptors of workshops repeating a specific archetype interpret it *ad libitum*, intervening to a smaller or greater extent in this model. On the other hand, we in the present cannot categorically contend that these iconographic elements are subject to just one single ›objective‹ interpretation.

Meleagros

13 I will begin with the myth of Meleagros, of which Attic artists mainly choose to recount the predominant episode of the Kalydonian boar hunt⁵⁰. This episode either takes up just the front (Koch 1975, cat. 161; Piraeus, Arch. Mus. inv. 3484) or also extends

45 Pittschen 1992, 1052; cf. e. g. Borg 2018, 183.

46 On the known inscriptions, certain of which may have come from a second use, see below, § 114–120.

47 Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a. See also below, § 116.

48 On these sources, see e. g. Müller 1994, 86–106 and, more recently, Strocka 2017a, 133–170, esp. 135–141. 177. Cf. Borg 2018, 173 n. 20, on the comparison of illustrations with funeral orations (i. e. visual rhetoric).

49 Cf. Borg 2018, 183. Some scholars favour a different method where an interpretative ›umbrella‹ is defined in advance for a number of themes it encompasses, e. g. Strocka 2017a, 141–152. However, in certain cases the interpretation of these themes may either be questionable or not unique.

50 Koch 1975a, 66–77. 138–148; G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 399–402; Koch 1983, 137–148; Papagiannē 2014.

to one of the small sides (Koch 1975, cat. 160. 166. 170); a further episode of the myth, obviously of a supplementary nature, can be added to the other small side (Koch 1975, cat. 166). We are presently aware of approximately 25 Attic sarcophagi depicting this theme in question, most of which in fragmentary preservation.

¹⁴ Of the four (or previously five) groups in which the surviving examples were classified⁵¹, I believe only three (groups I, II and III) can be considered certain at present. In my view, group IV, represented by a single example, the Split sarcophagus from *Salona* (Koch 1975, cat. 178) (Fig. 11), should be abrogated as will be analysed below. A fifth group, which had been hypothesised by Robert and initially accepted by Koch based on the small side of a sarcophagus in Chicago (Koch 1975, cat. 168)⁵², should also be excluded due to the testimony provided by the well-known local sarcophagus in Arles that cancels this proposal (Koch 1975, cat. 159)⁵³. Moreover, certain isolated examples display special features. The Delphi sarcophagus (Koch 1975, cat. 166) is a rare example of an Attic sarcophagus where the front depicts two scenes of the myth in which the main figures are repeated⁵⁴. Finally, the fragmentary Patras sarcophagus (Koch 1975, cat. 184), which appears to display certain special characteristics as regards the types of the figures, is awaiting its final publication and restoration of its composition⁵⁵.

¹⁵ Group I recently acquired a new example: the Piraeus sarcophagus⁵⁶, which is well-preserved, together with its gabled lid⁵⁷ (Fig. 1). It is clear that it adds a significant link to the iconographic ›chain‹ of the group, the oldest yet, as the work can be dated to around the mid-2nd century A.D.⁵⁸, possibly somewhat earlier, judging from the quite sparse positioning of the figures and its unadorned cymatia. The composition extending between two trees consists of just six human figures, in addition to the boar depicted on its right edge. The protagonists are positioned side by side on the left end. In my view, identifying the hero who is standing next to Atalante and is attacking with a spear while holding two further spears in his left hand as Meleagros, while not automatic, is most likely. The alternate proposal of identifying Meleagros as the chlamys-wearing man, who takes up approximately the middle of the composition and is positioned behind the fallen Ankaïos, is at odds with the fact that he is a bearded figure. The proposal of identifying Meleagros as the young hunter directly facing the boar and ready to cast a stone

⁵¹ Koch 1975a, 66; G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 399–401; Koch 1983, 142 f.; Papagiannē 2014, 494 n. 9.

⁵² Robert 1904, 285. See also G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 401; Koch 1983, 143 n. 36. According to this hypothesis, in addition to a number of hunters and Atalante on this small side, the front would have depicted a series of standing, placid hunters, as in the sarcophagi of Hippolytos.

⁵³ The Arles sarcophagus, currently in Autumn, Musée Rolin, repeats the Chicago composition on its small side; however, on the front occurs the Kalydonian boar in the clockwise variant of group II, as we know it from the Arethousa sarcophagus, Koch 1975a, 136 cat. 159 pls. 132 a; 133 b; Koch 1983, 143–145 pl. 33 c; LIMC VI (1992) 425 no. 113 s. v. Meleagros (S. Woodford).

⁵⁴ On this phenomenon, see below, § 57 n. 179. On this sarcophagus, see also § 107.

⁵⁵ Its fragments were recorded in the past by Koch 1975a, 147–149 cat. 184; Koch 1975b, 545–548 figs. 29. 30, but their study, with a view to formulating a proposal to restore the sarcophagus, has not been feasible to date.

⁵⁶ Piraeus, Arch. Mus. inv. 3484, from Nea Ionia (Attica): G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 399 n. 3; Stainchaouer 2001, 369. 384–387 figs. 499–501; see also Papagiannē 2008, 184 n. 28; Papagiannē 2014, 497 n. 30 (with additional references); E. Papagiannē in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 244 n. 10. 12; Katakis 2015, 127 n. 12.

⁵⁷ The themes on the other three sides are: antithetically posed goats on the left side, a crouching sphinx on the right side, antithetically posed griffins on the rear side, see also G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 399 n. 3; Giōrgos Stainchaouer's information (Stainchaouer 2001, 369) that it bears griffins and garlands on the other sides is incorrect.

⁵⁸ According to Eleni Papagianni, it is dated to the mid-2nd century A.D., earlier than the sarcophagus in Athens, NM inv. 1186 (Koch 1975a, cat. 160); see KatMTh III 2010, cat. 619 (E. Papagianni); Papagiannē 2014, 503 n. 76, and esp. E. Papagiannē in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 244 n. 12.



Fig. 1: Meleagros sarcophagus, front side. Piraeus, Arch. Mus. inv. 3484

1

at the animal is equally unlikely⁵⁹. It is obvious, in my opinion, that the designer of the composition intended to stress the proximity of the two predominant and emotionally connected heroes of the myth: Meleagros and Atalante.

¹⁶ This composition is then enriched with the figure of another hunter on the right end, behind the boar, as mainly portrayed in the well-preserved representation on the Patras sarcophagus kept in Athens (Koch 1975, cat. 160)⁶⁰ (Fig. 2). This youth is wielding a weapon in both hands, raised behind his head, and contributes towards balancing the overall scene, as he corresponds to the figure of Atalante on the left end. In all other respects, there are no significant changes, as the two protagonists, Meleagros and Atalante, retain the same positions they held in the left part of the composition. As demonstrated by the study of the individual types of figures, the workshop responsible for group I used as models works of the classical era, most likely Attic representations of the 5th century A.D.⁶¹. This composition, as indicated by the examples we have at our disposal today, is repeated identically, with no differences worthy of note. Its main feature is the symmetrical arrangement of figures, with little overlap between them, whereby the overall scene takes on an intensely classicistic character.

⁵⁹ G. Koch identifies Meleagros on the Athens National Museum sarcophagus discussed immediately below (Koch 1975a, 138 cat. 160) as the spear-wielding figure in the middle of the frieze, behind the fallen Ankaïos, which corresponds to the figure fighting by casting a stone on the Piraeus sarcophagus, see Papagiannē 2014, 497 n. 31.

⁶⁰ Athens, NM inv. 1186; see also G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 399 n. 3; Koch 1983, 142. 145 n. 64 pl. 35 a; LIMC VI (1992) 425 no. 112 (S. Woodford); Kaltsas 2002, 350 cat. 740 with fig.; Papagiannē 2014, 495 n. 13; 497 n. 29. 31 fig. 3; Katakis 2015, 126 n. 5. The dating proposed by Koch 1975a, 76. 138 cat. 160 and G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 402. 458, i. e. the end of the 3rd quarter of the 2nd century A.D., is late; Papagiannē 2014, 504 n. 77 and Papagianni 2016, 94 n. 923, proposes a somewhat earlier dating to A.D. 160–170.

⁶¹ G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 40 n. 33; see Papagiannē 2014, 497, esp. 500, who further stresses the sparing connotation of natural landscape elements and the absence of mounted hunters. On the classical models (possibly of the 3rd quarter of the 5th century B.C.) of these sarcophagi and the frieze from *Isthmia* with a similar composition, see also Sturgeon 1987, 96–98. The sarcophagus of Herakles in Rome at the *Santa Maria sopra Minerva* – unique in terms of his iconographic scheme – attests a high dependence on late Archaic or Early Classical models, according to Oakley 2011, cat. 21; Ewald 2018, 235 n. 86 fig. 3. See also the Bellerophon-Pegasus group in a number of lateral sides of Attic sarcophagi, Oakley 2011, 13 n. 3. According to Koch, the compositions of sarcophagi were created by liberally using older models and then functioned as archetypes at workshops for the carving of multiple works, see Koch 1983, 137–143.



Fig. 2: Meleagros sarcophagus, front side. Athens, NM inv. 1186

2

17 A completely new composition is adopted by group II, which introduces numerous landscape elements⁶² and was possibly designed at a different Attic workshop⁶³. This group consists of two versions: on one hand, a counterclockwise movement of the action with the boar heading towards the right, and on the other, a clockwise movement of the action with the boar heading towards the left. The most important difference between the two is that in the first case the principal figure, Meleagros, who is more clearly discernible than in group I, is rendered with his back to the viewer, as in the case of the best-preserved example in Eleusis (Koch 1975, cat. 170)⁶⁴ (Fig. 3). On the contrary, in the second case, the hero turns with his chest outwards, as is the case with the best-preserved example, the sarcophagus from *Arethousa*, Syria, in Damascus⁶⁵ (Fig. 4). One might suggest that the second version is the correct one and might therefore identify it as the original creation, as Koch had assumed⁶⁶. However, the new find from *Nikopolis*, unearthed in 2009⁶⁷ (Fig. 5), allows for a revised interpretation, particularly because this is an early sarcophagus dated to the 2nd century A.D. While it does not survive intact, its condition allows us to comprehend and complete the representation, which displays clear similarities with the much more recent Eleusis sarcophagus⁶⁸: Meleagros, from whom only part of the left bent leg survives, stepping on a small rock outcrop, was fighting while facing leftwards with his back to the viewer. The hero, wielding the spear in a horizontal position, was attacking the boar. The examples of this group with counterclockwise motion, which display great iconographic variety, con-

62 Koch 1975a, 66. 68–70 cat. 167–169. 200; G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 400 f.; Koch 1983, esp. 144 f., and, more recently and in detail, Papagiannē 2014; Katakis 2015, 131 figs. 11. 12. On landscape elements in Attic sarcophagi in general, see Katakis 2015.

63 Papagiannē 2014, 503, who speaks of a more innovative workshop than the one that created the pattern of group I.

64 Eleusis, Mus. See also Koch 1983, 143 f. pl. 34 c; Papagiannē 2014, 494 n. 11 (detailed bibliography); 495 fig. 2.

65 Damascus, NM inv. 25596; G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 400 fig. 430, esp. Koch 1983, figs. 33 a; 36. 37; Papagiannē 2014, 496 n. 23 (with bibliography).

66 Koch 1983, 144 f.

67 Nikopolis, Arch. Mus. inv. 3772; Papagiannē 2014; E. Papagiannē in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, cat. 216.

68 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 402. 458, gives a rather late dating, after A.D. 200, along with the *Arethousa* sarcophagus which, in my view, is clearly more advanced, judging from the manner the figures cover the relief field and the cornice.

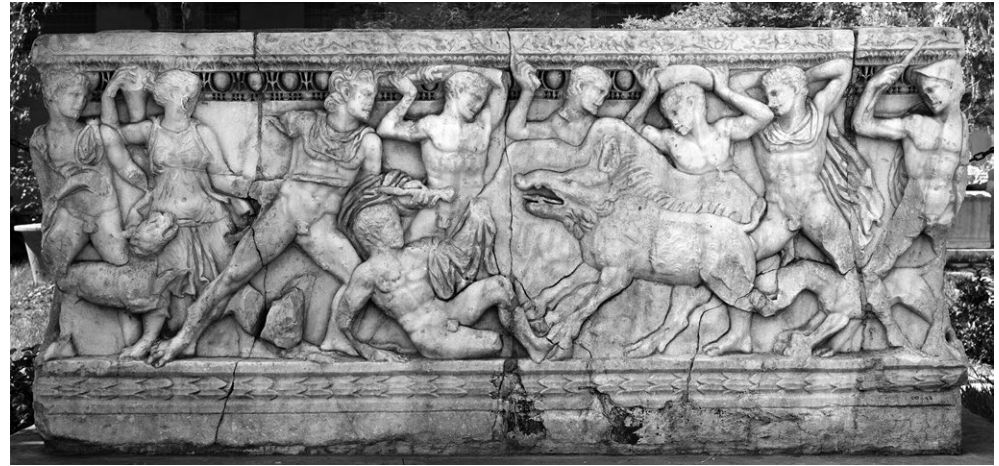
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Fig. 3: Meleagros sarcophagus,
front side. Eleusis, Mus.

3

Fig. 4: Meleagros sarcophagus,
front side. Damascus, NM
inv. 25596

4



tain several differences regarding the position and motifs of the individual figures and landscape elements, i. e. the plants and the rock. Particularly noteworthy is the effort to lend perspective to the composition, best achieved in the superior-quality Nikopolis sarcophagus, where figures are positioned in such a way as to create circular motion around the boar. This conclusion is also drawn from the way the landscape elements are used, particularly the rock behind which the Dioskouroi appear, as well as Meleagros' depiction with his back towards viewers. Therefore, the opinion that the archetype of this composition takes painting models into consideration appears convincing. In any event, the iconographic models of group II probably descend from the 4th century A.D., as also concluded from similarities observed with South Italian vase painting⁶⁹.

¹⁸ Therefore, if the composition with the figure of Meleagros viewed from behind is dated so early, i. e. around the mid-2nd century A.D., we conclude that the reverse, i. e. clockwise composition with the figure of the hero positioned with his chest towards the viewer, is a more recent version. The Arethousa sarcophagus (Fig. 4), which can be dated more assuredly than the other fragmentary examples of its group, most likely dates to the 1st quarter of the 3rd century A.D.⁷⁰. However, even if the date of the compo-

⁶⁹ Papagiannē 2014, 498–501; E. Papagiannē in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 243 n. 8.

⁷⁰ Koch 1983, 146: 1st quarter of the 3rd century A.D.; cf. Koch 1989, 188 fig. 34; see also n. 73.



Fig. 5: Meleagros sarcophagus, front side. Nikopolis, Mus. inv. 3772

5

sition in question were to be proven, based on newer finds, to be earlier than the early 3rd century, I believe that the course followed is from the composition of the Nikopolis-Eleusis sarcophagi to the Arethousa sarcophagus. Apparently, the composition with painting elements of the earlier examples was not considered absolutely suitable for the type of bearing surface, a rather narrow frieze that requires development mainly across one plane, as well as greater clarity in structure and clearer depiction of the protagonist. In other words, the latter, according to the rules of classical art, should have been placed at the first plane, presenting his naked torso in full deployment from the front. Moreover, it is a rule in the recounting of classical works for the victor to head from left to right⁷¹, exactly as is the case in the Arethousa sarcophagus. Additionally, we will see below that the particular promotion of the hero-protagonist is indeed a requirement in the recounting of Attic sarcophagi and was achieved increasingly over time.

19 As seen above, the Nikopolis sarcophagus (Fig. 5) helps us restore the correct chronological relationship between the two variations of group II, of which the more recent in a way significantly ›corrects‹ the initial creation. The transition from one variation to the other must have taken place at the same workshop. This way, the artists achieved a composition which is, admittedly, more successful in aesthetic terms and which could convey the intended message to the recipient of the work more convincingly. However, the Nikopolis sarcophagus also leads us to another interesting insight. The new composition of group II is marketed at an earlier time, while the slightly older composition of group I remains in use at the same time, given that the sarcophagus in Athens (Koch 1975, cat. 160) (Fig. 2), is clearly more recent than that of Nikopolis, while the Piraeus sarcophagus (Fig. 1), which also belongs to group I, is older than both aforementioned sarcophagi⁷². We therefore ascertain an overlap in the use of different compositions recounting the same mythological episode. If groups I and II are indeed due to two different workshops, as we concede, then we can claim an indirect but not negligible testimony of the existence of two contemporaneous competing workshops. The purchasing public would indicate, through their choices, the course that production workshops ought to follow. The search for new compositions or new, better solutions

71 See Luschey 2002.

72 On their dating, see above, § 15.

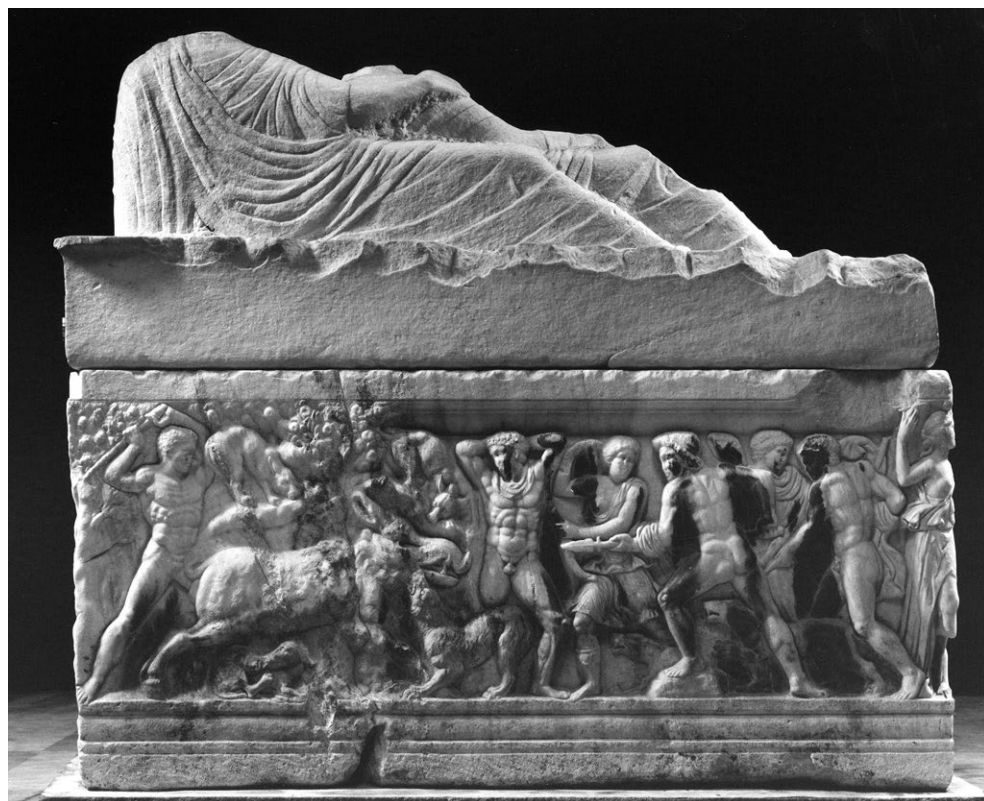


Fig. 6: Meleagros sarcophagus, rear side. Thessaloniki, Arch. Mus. inv. 1246

6

for existing compositions, particularly during the 2nd century A.D., can be interpreted in the context of the so-called experimental stage of production⁷³, during which also improvements to the architectural form of the sarcophagi were continuously being attempted. This is, more correctly, a natural and anticipated process in the course of the artistic production of workshops that gradually applied more advanced and sound forms, while having a view towards the preferences of their customers.

20 Over the course of the 3rd century A.D., the existing compositions recounting the Kalydonian boar hunt possibly became unsatisfactory. This is also concluded from the fact that, while the episode itself remained popular, as we will see below, the composition of group II with Meleagros viewed from the rear would be relegated, as indicated by the sarcophagus from Thessaloniki (Koch 1975, cat. 173) (Fig. 6), to the rear view, while a different mythological episode would take up the front. It is after all well known that »antiquated compositions« are often found on the rear views of sarcophagi⁷⁴, where they are executed summarily and in simplified form, with their carving left incomplete. Thus, over the course of the 3rd century, a new, completely original composition of the Kalydonian boar hunt appeared, one where Meleagros is depicted on horseback, heading towards the right and placed directly at the axis of the composition. To date, there are three relatively well-preserved examples (group III): one from Nikopolis, kept in Istanbul (Koch 1975, cat. 176), one from Thessaloniki (Koch 1975, cat. 175) (Fig. 7 a. b) and one in Liverpool (Koch 1975, cat. 177), in addition to a fragment in Sfax, Tunisia⁷⁵. Of the foregoing, the Istanbul sarcophagus must be the earliest one, as the cornice of the chest still retains its canonical form⁷⁶. Compared to the Arethousa sarcophagus (Fig. 4),

73 See Wiegartz 1975, 176. 181–184; G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 456 n. 6; Rogge 1996, 31 f.; Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 217 n. 63; Papagianni 2016, 91 n. 909.

74 Rogge 1995, 89 n. 101, with relevant examples. See also Rogge 2008, 586 f.

75 Koch 1983, 145 n. 6 pl. 35 d.

76 On its dating to the 1st quarter of the 3rd century A.D., see Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 13 f. Cf. G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 458 (at the end of the 200–220/230 period).



7

it is stylistically more advanced, though, in my view, it is probably dated no later than the 1st quarter of the 3rd century A.D. Nevertheless, as their chronological distance is short, we cannot rule out the co-existence of two different compositions, the older one (group II) and the more recent one (group III) in this case, as well, at least for a time⁷⁷. The Thessaloniki sarcophagus is clearly more recent than the Istanbul sarcophagus. It is an old find that was supplemented around the year 2000 with a new fragment from the right section of the chest that includes a significant part of the right end of the depiction⁷⁸ (Fig. 7 b). In addition to the body of the fallen Ankaïos, we now also have most of the boar rushing to the left, towards the mounted hunter, as well as a dog curling beneath the heavy body of the attacking beast, as well as traces of the figure on the angle of the chest, from which it arises that this was a naked hunter striding to the left, in contrast to the Istanbul sarcophagus depicting two female figures in a rocky landscape (Nymphs or personifications?)⁷⁹. At least, one more figure should be added in the space above the back of the boar, as indicated by the Istanbul sarcophagus. The same theme continues on the small right side, as evidenced by the preserved right limb of a hunter and the hindquarters of his accompanying hound, situated between the hunter's limbs.

Fig. 7: Meleagros sarcophagus, a) Front side. Thessaloniki, Arch. Mus. inv. 3329; b) Right side. Thessaloniki, Arch. Mus. inv. 22052

21 Another major innovation observed on group III sarcophagi is the relocation of Atalante from the left side of the composition, where she was found in the depictions of group I and clockwise group II, to a position in front of Meleagros' galloping horse. What is impressive is the fact that she is facing backwards, i. e. towards the hero, while she is moving to the right, as is the gesture of her right hand which she is not using to shoot arrows – although holding a bow in her left hand – but rather to point towards the boar. As for the remaining figures, while the three best preserved sarcophagi present several differences, both smaller or larger, in the motifs, these do not significantly change the overall appearance of the composition. However, it is obvious that the Thessaloniki sarcophagus, dated to the 2nd quarter of the 3rd century A.D., is superior in quality to the others. Its composition as a whole and the individual figures depicted are intensely monumental and impose themselves on viewers. Both the mounted Meleagros domi-

77 Cf. Papagiannē 2014, 504.

78 For the publication of the fragment, see Tsimpidou-Avloniti 2007.

79 Mendel 1914, cat. 1354, with a detailed description of these partially preserved figures. On this sarcophagus, see Koch 1975a, cat. 176.

Fig. 8: Hunt sarcophagus, front side. Budapest, Mus. of Fine Arts inv. 51. 31 + Split, Arch. Mus. inv. D 43



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nating the overall composition and the other quasi-statuary figures are highlighted in a manner unprecedented for sarcophagi depicting this mythological episode.

²² In iconographic terms, the new composition of group III with a mounted Meleagros is, at first glance, inexplicable. None of the preceding groups had adopted this motif for the main figure, according to the tradition of the theme, despite the fact that hunters chasing the Kalydonian boar on horseback appear in several cases either on the front side, such as the hunter behind Meleagros on the Eleusis sarcophagus (Fig. 3), or on secondary sides, such as the Damascus and Jerusalem sarcophagi⁸⁰. It is obvious that the talented creator of the composition introduced a new way to depict this scene that differs dramatically from the stereotypes known until that time. By abandoning the purely narrative approach to the episode, he isolated the central figure, bringing him to the foreground in a way that captivates the viewer. It is noteworthy that this creation differs significantly not just from the typology of the older Attic sarcophagi depicting Meleagros but also from that of metropolitan sarcophagi, where this hero also never appears mounted. On the contrary, one might trace a faint relationship with the metropolitan sarcophagi depicting a lion hunt, which are approximately contemporaneous to those of Attic group III in question, particularly since the mounted hunter is accompanied by a female figure similar to Atalante, albeit Virtus in this case. However, it is hard to accept that the Athenian artist was directly influenced by creations of the capital in which the general appearance is very different⁸¹. The evolution of Attic compositions indicates anything but approximation of Roman models; on the contrary, it reveals autonomy and creative imagination, but without abandoning the key principles of classicist art. On the other hand, the monumentality generally observed during the late phase of Attic production, as will be underlined below, should rather be understood in the context of a general trend of the era, which is identified in the creations of all three major workshops producing marble sarcophagi: those of Rome, Athens and Dokimeion. In fact, this trend concerns not only the representations but the sarcophagi themselves, which take on a considerable volume, grandiosity and, of course, space during the 3rd century A.D.⁸².

⁸⁰ Koch 1983, 145 pl. 34 b (small right side); 144 f. n. 55 pl. 33 b (rear side).

⁸¹ Papagiannē 2014, 505 f., where the change in the mode of the composition is interpreted as a transition »from ›classicist neo-Attic‹ style to a more ›romanized‹ artistic style associated with the effort by Attic workshops to adapt to market demands«. On the contrary, Ewald 2018, 244, emphasises the different character of the corresponding metropolitan images.

⁸² On Attic sarcophagi, see for instance Ewald 2018, 213. On the monumental local sarcophagi of Thessaloniki which functioned as family tombs, as well as those of *Thasos*, see Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 14–19. 121 f. 126. 138. 141. See also below, § 114 n. 382; § 120.



Fig. 9: Hunt sarcophagus, rear side. Budapest, Mus. of Fine Arts inv. 51. 31

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23 I believe the new composition depicting Meleagros on horseback (group III) was created in order to accentuate particularly his skill as a hunter. This view is confirmed if one seeks out parallels in contemporaneous works by the Attic workshops themselves. I am referring to the small group of Attic sarcophagi of the 3rd century A.D. formed around the well-known Budapest-Split example⁸³ (Fig. 8. 9) and depicting a hunt which, according to all indications, lacks any mythological content⁸⁴. The hunt scenes presented in these works feature the intense presence of hunters on horseback, both on the front and the secondary sides of the chest. Although they use types of figures found on mythological sarcophagi⁸⁵, they are designed as standalone, independent creations that cast aside – clearly consciously – any and all mythological references. As regards the few to date fragmentary examples which have a faint connection between them in terms of the composition, number and types of the figures⁸⁶, no particular emphasis appears to have been given, to our knowledge so far, to the middle of the composition, in contrast to the group III sarcophagi depicting Meleagros. One exception is the rear side of the Budapest-Split sarcophagus which portrays, roughly in the middle, a mounted hunter galloping to the right, surrounded by archers chasing deer⁸⁷ (Fig. 9). The relationship between this depiction and the above Meleagros sarcophagi, as well as some rear sides of Attic sarcophagi depicting Hippolytos hunting a boar⁸⁸, clearly influenced by the former, is obvious despite the numerous individual differences⁸⁹. Given our knowledge to date, we conclude that all these sarcophagi, whether or not mythological, originated from the same or very related workshops that influenced each other. The pioneering artist of group III most probably used the motif of the mounted hunter familiar from the above-mentioned hunt depictions who are bearing such motifs, but designed a

83 Budapest, Mus. of Fine Arts inv. 51. 31 and Split, Arch. Mus. inv. D 43. As regards this sarcophagus, the problem of its restoration and the group consisting of some more fragmentary examples, see the most recent bibliography: Marin 1992; Cambi 1988, cat. 1; Rogge 1996; Rogge 1998; Cambi 2007, 167 figs. 1. 2; see also KatMTh III 2010, cat. 627 n. 3 (E. Papagiannē). This group is markedly different from the corresponding one of the 2nd century, see below, § 25.

84 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 396 f. figs. 427. 428, arguing that Attic sarcophagi only depict mythological themes, as he concedes, does not rule out the possibility of this being another group of Hippolytos sarcophagi depicting hunt scenes on both their front and small sides. Cf. Koch 1993, 98; Rogge 1995, 87 n. 87. However, in her extensive study on this group, Rogge 1996, 20–22, concedes that these are scenes with no mythological content. See also Ewald 2018, 243–245.

85 Similarly in Rome, mythological sarcophagi served as models for sarcophagi depicting non-mythological hunts, Rogge 1996, 28 f.

86 Rogge 1996, 28.

87 Cambi 1988, pl. 2; as to the reconstruction of this side, Rogge 1996, 20 f. fig. 7.

88 Rogge 1995, 89 pls. 109, 1. 2; 110; 111, 1. 2. On the close relationship between the boar hunt on Hippolytos sarcophagi and the Kalydonian boar hunt on Meleagros sarcophagi, see Rogge 1995, 115 f.

89 Rogge 1996, 20 n. 29.

Fig. 10: Hunt sarcophagus,
front side. Split, Arch. Mus.
inv. AMS-D-121; AMS-A-1076



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completely original composition which, apparently, was favourably accepted by the demanding clientèle for Attic sarcophagi during the last and most productive period of these monumental works.

²⁴ In my view, the category of sarcophagi depicting hunts with non-mythological content should also include another relatively well-preserved example: the sarcophagus from Salona in Split (Koch 1975, cat. 178)⁹⁰ (Fig. 10). This mid-3rd-century A.D. kline-lid sarcophagus has much in common with the Budapest-Split group. At the same time, it enjoys a close relationship with the Meleagros sarcophagi, despite the differences, which is why it was included in a special group of Meleagros sarcophagi (group IV) as the sole extant example. The main figure, on foot roughly at the axis of the composition, depicts the well-known motif of a striding Meleagros, holding his spear at waist height, attacking the boar charging from the right. One might say that this is a developed version of the Arethousa sarcophagus (Fig. 4), with the addition of a companion on foot following the central figure closely, at a second plane, and two horsemen aiding the work of the hunter. The question of ›mythological or not‹ has been repeatedly raised with regard to this representation, and the answer has been affirmative. Not only Koch, who included the Split sarcophagus in type IV of the Meleagros sarcophagi⁹¹, but other scholars as well hold the same view, despite the absence of two emblematic figures of the episode, namely Ankaïos and Atalante⁹². While Atalante is invariably present in these representations of the Attic sarcophagi, Ankaïos is absent only once, i. e. from the roughly carved frieze on the rear side of the Thessaloniki sarcophagus (Koch 1975, cat. 173) (Fig. 6).

²⁵ The Split sarcophagus depicts hunt scenes on all four sides. It should be noted that the hunt on the rear side is assuredly non-mythological⁹³; furthermore, no figure definitively alluding to the myth of the Kalydonian boar has been identified on any of the other sides⁹⁴. The motif of the protagonist-hunter alone, as well as the prey-boar, would

⁹⁰ Split, Arch. Mus. inv. A 1076. Cambi 1988, 127–129 cat. 31; 186 pl. 18.

⁹¹ G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 401.

⁹² Cambi 1988, 186; Rogge 1996, 26 f.

⁹³ Cambi 1988, 186 pl. 19.

⁹⁴ Koch 1975a, 71. 141 cat. 178, identifies the chlamys-wearing hunter on the left side of the chest as Meleagros, but this is not necessarily acceptable.

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Fig. 11: Hunt sarcophagus, front side. Patras, Arch. Mus. inv. A 5530 (formerly Odeion)

not suffice, in my view, to automatically lead ancient viewers to definitively identify Meleagros hunting the Kalydonian boar⁹⁵. Besides, non-mythological hunt scenes are known to us on Attic sarcophagi (or their imitations) already by the 2nd century A.D.⁹⁶ (Fig. 11). Moreover, because workshops very often use available figure types, combining them eclectically in different contexts, it would be impossible for ancient viewers (as well as modern scholars) to unreservedly recognise behind the types specific mythological figures without the existence of characteristic iconographic elements (attributes). The similarities with the fragmentary Gotha sarcophagus depicting a hunt where a deer is the prey on the left small side, also cast serious doubts on whether the Split sarcophagus depicts a mythological hunt⁹⁷. The fact that narrative elements subsided in the 3rd century A.D., as we will see in the case of other mythological themes, does not mean that the scenes »lose their mythological nature«, i. e. undergo a »demythologization«⁹⁸. On the contrary, the fact that, in addition to mythological depictions, Attic workshops concurrently adopted – albeit at a very limited scale – depictions that demonstrably lack mythological content⁹⁹ indicates that the myth never lost its dominant role as a carrier of messages in Attic sarcophagi. Consequently, we cannot accept that mythological depictions intentionally lack emblematic elements of myths that the viewers themselves had to suggest.

²⁶ In depictions of non-mythological hunts, the interest obviously focuses on the hunt itself and, even more specifically, on the hunter. As is well known, the hunt is part of the education of youths, as well as a favourite pastime of mythical heroes-warriors¹⁰⁰. However, during the era in question, the particular importance and ideological content ascribed to the hunt – an old hegemonic habit – by Hadrian, the »hunter emperor« *par*

⁹⁵ See on the contrary Rogge 1996, 26 f.

⁹⁶ This early group consistently repeats a specific iconographic pattern, contrary to the variety typical of the corresponding examples of the 3rd century A.D., see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 379 f. figs. 406. 408, and esp. Rogge 1996, 30 f. 32 fig. 13; Rogge 1998, 204 n. 28; Koch 2012b, 100 pls. 46. 47; Papagiannē 2014, 502; Katakis 2015, 129. 131 n. 28 fig. 13; Papagianni 2016, 44 n. 422. 423; 100 n. 978; 108 pls. 31, 1; 59, 2.

⁹⁷ Rogge 1996, 26 f. fig. 12; Rogge 1998, 203 pl. 91, 3.

⁹⁸ Rogge 1996, 26–28; on the term and relevant discussion, see Borg 2014, 237 f., who thinks the move away from mythological narrative is part of a general change in visual rhetoric, aimed at the exceptional promotion of the protagonist, Borg 2014, 239–255.

⁹⁹ On certain non-mythological themes, including hunts, such as images of athletes or citizens, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 379–382. See more recently Ewald 2018, 226 f., esp. 242–245. Non-mythological hunting is also found in the Dokimeion sarcophagi, see Strocka 2017a, 156–158, who believes this shows the virtue of the deceased who is thus heroised.

¹⁰⁰ See below, § 106.

excellence, made involvement with it an indication of hunting virtue that is synonymous with military virtue¹⁰¹. Therefore, hunting is an activity appropriate for the elites of the era and, for the owner of the sarcophagus, proof of his aristocratic identity or, at the very least, a deliberate choice aiming at his social promotion. In this sense, we can speak of scenes of everyday life and concede that there is a somewhat clear dividing line from their mythological parallels: the hunter is not the mythical hero but the elite patron of the sarcophagus¹⁰².

27 Returning to Meleagros sarcophagi, what differentiates 3rd-century representations from preceding ones is not the elimination of recognisable elements of the myth but the shift of focus from the heroic episode as a story to the hero himself (or heroes, where applicable), i. e. a shift from the narration of the mythological episode to its own protagonist, who still unequivocally identifies as a figure of the myth. It is clear that this hero – Meleagros in this case – through his excessive promotion expresses more intensely than in the past certain general values regarding his predominant quality: his skills as a hunter and, therefore, his virtues in general. The phenomenon observed in Rome, i. e. personal promotion of the deceased by means of portrait identification with mythological figures, mainly in the 3rd century, is almost entirely absent in Athens¹⁰³. On the contrary, in Attic monuments the mythical sphere is clearly distinguished from real life¹⁰⁴, and the emphasis concerns the parallelism of the deceased with the qualities and virtues of the hero who is the protagonist of each mythological scene.

Hippolytos

28 Almost as popular as the myth of Meleagros on Attic sarcophagi is the myth of Hippolytos, which was favoured by purchasers, particularly during the 3rd century A.D., when it was exploited in a variety of ways. During the 2nd half of the 2nd century A.D., a single type of composition was used, depicted with relative uniformity across the extant examples (group I). Two of these present the complete composition, despite the damage they have suffered. These are the sarcophagi in Beirut from Tyre (Rogge 1995, cat. 56) (Fig. 12) and in Istanbul (Rogge 1995, cat. 59) (Fig. 13). The composition featuring Hippolytos takes up the front, while the themes on the other sides bear no relation whatsoever to the myth of this hero. A third sarcophagus from Sparta, currently lost and known to us from Jean-Baptiste Vietty's design (Rogge 1995, cat. 65) preserved only the lower part of the representation. However, this case concerns the rear side of the chest which, contrary to the two previous ones, is dated to the 3rd century A.D. Five more fragments of other sarcophagi have been assuredly identified as belonging to the same composition and offer relevant information that is useful in part¹⁰⁵.

29 In contrast to the purely narrative nature of the early groups of the Meleagros myth, in this case the visual depiction, while containing narrative elements, is allusive to a certain extent. As a result, its meaning is not immediately comprehended, at least not by modern viewers, despite the fact that most of the figures are recognisable. As has been observed by previous scholars, the representation consists of two discrete sections, focusing on the two protagonists of the myth: Phaidra on the one side and Hippolytos on

101 Gutsfeld 2000, esp. 85–88. Martini – Schernig 2000, esp. 138. Cf. Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2012a, 157–161.

102 Ewald 2018, 243–245, also accepts that these sarcophagi are not mythological, while pointing out that in the semantic sphere of male heroism, the boundaries between myth and *vita humana* become permeable.

103 See Ewald 2018, 239 f. n. 104. According to the prevailing view, replacing the 'general' characteristics of the protagonist hero with the individual features of the deceased person the desired message is emphatically highlighted. On this phenomenon and views on its interpretation, see recently Newby 2011, esp. 189 n. 1–3; see also Birk 2013; Zanker 2014, 192 f.; Maderna 2015; Zanker 2019; Allen 2019.

104 See G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 378, also concerning certain cases of Attic sarcophagi, depicting portraits in non-mythological figures; Sichtermann 1993; cf. Oakley 2011, 14 cat. 10.

105 Rogge 1995, 73–75 cat. 48. 51–53. 60.



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Fig. 12: Hippolytos sarcophagus, front side. Beirut, NM inv. 447



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Fig. 13: Hippolytos sarcophagus, front side. Istanbul, Arch. Mus. inv. 125

the other¹⁰⁶. Thus, the left section depicts, from the left, the goddess Aphrodite and Eros on a high pedestal, already shooting his arrow towards Phaidra. The heroine is seated, with her head covered and bent and her right arm to her chest, palm open, perhaps in a gesture of internal pain or despair. The Istanbul sarcophagus (Fig. 13) features an additional figure: a young handmaiden with a melon coiffure, positioned at a second level, is standing beside her mistress. In both examples, there is a standing female figure behind Phaidra, grabbing the heroine's left arm, clearly as a gesture of moral support to the lovestruck Phaidra; at the same time, the woman in question is raising her right arm above her head, dragging her garment along. It is noteworthy how her index finger is pointed, apparently towards the scene that follows. Her head, with a veil on her hair, is also turned in this direction. Could she be the nurse who gave Hippolytos Phaidra's letter, or could she be Peitho, Aphrodite's companion? Robert favoured the second view, noting that her physique is better suited to a young woman rather than an elderly nurse¹⁰⁷. Moreover, we cannot ignore the fact that, like this woman, Aphrodite herself

106 Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 127 f. 133; Rogge 1995, 112 f.; Ewald 2011, 283 fig. 8, 8.

107 Robert 1904, cat. 144; cf. Mendel 1914, cat. 21.

is extending her left arm, seen behind Eros, with her index finger pointed in the same direction. We should assume that both are pointing towards the right section of the frieze, where Hippolytos is the dominant figure.

30 This second section is dominated, from the right, by the seated Hippolytos, leaning on his hunting spear and, at the same time, turned backwards, towards the axis of the composition. This is precisely where a small, four-column temple with a conical roof and a podium decorated with a leaf-bearing branch is depicted. A small slave is trying to pin part of what is probably a deer, of which an antler survives, to the small temple. This is the prey that the hunter Hippolytos is offering to the goddess he worships, the huntress Artemis, at whose sanctuary the scene is obviously taking place. On the right side, another slave is unloading a large boar, yet more prey, from a mule. The Istanbul sarcophagus (Fig. 13) features another figure on the right edge: a naked, muscular man in a statuary, frontal pose, with his garment draped around his left arm, tumbling in folds to the ground. As is apparent from the remains on his hip and the mule's mane, he held a long object in his right hand which, considering how he held it, was probably a club¹⁰⁸ rather than a sheathed sword¹⁰⁹. The usual interpretation of this man as Hippolytos' companion does not appear convincing¹¹⁰. His clear separation from the other figures of the scene, his frontal, ›princely‹ stance and his richly folded, heavy garment, which does not resemble a hunter's chlamys, suggest that this is an important person of the myth, most likely Theseus¹¹¹. If this is true, the content of the image takes on a new dimension.

31 The composition in question is most likely a creation of the eclectic style of the 2nd century A.D. and, in fact, was produced by an Attic sarcophagus workshop, as there appear to be no parallels in earlier periods of Greek art that gives us the whole composition¹¹². However, this does not prevent us from reaching back to 5th-century dramatic poetry on the myth of Hippolytos. Elements found in the illustration indeed allude to the Euripides second play with this premiss – the only extant one – titled *Hippolytos stephanias* or *stephanephoros*. Robert, in the past, and Linant de Bellefonds, more recently, underlined the similarities between this poetic work and the later visual composition, despite the fact that this connection is lax, as they acknowledged¹¹³. This is to be expected, because, as we know, the visual arts portray myths without necessarily depicting certain literary models faithfully; instead, they set their own particular objectives in each case and follow their own rules¹¹⁴. The composition in question, as is the case with the play, features the two goddesses, Aphrodite and Artemis – one present in person and the other through her temple – who determine the action's development. An important element in both Euripides' play and our relief concerns Hippolytos' offerings to Artemis and, in fact, the garland: »[...] plaited garland I have made, gathered from an inviolate meadow, [...]« (E. Hipp. 73–74, Kovacs), which is most likely identified adorning the podium of the temple¹¹⁵. Even details, such as Phaedra's stance and her arm held by the woman beside her, are reminiscent of the heroine's words to her maids in the

108 Rogge 1996, cat. 66 (Keule).

109 Robert 1904, cat. 144; Mendel 1914, cat. 21.

110 Robert 1904, cat. 144; Mendel 1914, cat. 21; Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 128.

111 Rogge 1996, 113. Theseus appears as one of the main figures in the tripartite composition of late Roman sarcophagi depicting the theme; see, e. g., Zanker 1999, esp. 132 figs. 1–3; 11 b.

112 Rogge 1996, 112 f.; Ewald 2011, 283. However, Phaedra's group finds its iconographic parallels in burial monuments of the classical era, as convincingly shown by Linant de Bellefonds 2013.

113 Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 13. 171 f.

114 On this issue, see e. g. Zanker 1999, 132. 134; Zanker – Ewald 2012, e. g. 208. 212. On the myths being remade »to suit patrons' needs and desires«, see also Koortbojian 2015, esp. 294. This type of management of the myths is a principle attested in all categories of Roman art; see for instance De Angelis 2015, 578–580. See also below, n. 131.

115 Robert 1904, cat. 144; Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 131 f.

play: »Raise up my body, hold my head erect! My limbs are unstrung. Take my fair arms, servants!« (E. Hipp. 198–200, Kovacs). Shortly thereafter, the heroine asks the nurse to cover her head: »Nurse, cover my head up again« (E. Hipp. 243, Kovacs). Furthermore, we can support the identification of Theseus in the Istanbul sarcophagus on the basis of Euripides' tragedy. In the prologue to the play, Aphrodite plots her revenge against Hippolytos and announces his death following a request by his own father, Theseus, to Poseidon: »[...] and the young man who wars against me shall be killed by his father with the curses the sea-lord Poseidon granted as a gift to Theseus [...]« (E. Hipp. 43–45, Kovacs). Therefore, Theseus' presence at the right edge of the scene could be justified as an allusion to his son's impending death.

32 While the representation on the sarcophagi embodies narrative elements, as it arises from the foregoing, it is clear that it is not a purely narrative scene – much less episodes of a ›continuous narrative‹, one succeeding the other, i. e. as is the case with metropolitan sarcophagi depicting this theme¹¹⁶. It cannot be comprehended as a simple rendering of the content of the myth (»eine inhaltliche Zusammenschau des Mythos«) either, as Sabine Rogge assumes¹¹⁷. Other scholars have interpreted the composition by considering that its two sections are relatively independent. Thus, Robert asserted that the representation is a single scene distinguished into two separate groups, and that the goal is to capture the character and emotions of the two protagonists who are presented not at the real but at the ideal level¹¹⁸. Similarly, Linant de Bellefonds remarked that while the two main heroes, Hippolytos and Phaidra, are included in a single composition, they are positioned in two separate, juxtaposed ›panels‹ in order to contrast their character and emotions¹¹⁹. Ewald follows the same general direction but attributes a broader meaning to the conception, going beyond the specific figures of the myth and interpreting it as the presentation of »the opposing male and female universes of values«¹²⁰. However, in my view, it would be preferable, if we are to take into consideration the usual manner of narration of mythological episodes on Attic sarcophagi, as I believe is appropriate, to seek a common denominator that imparts unity to the picture, i. e. that conceptually connects the two ostensibly independent or juxtaposed parts of the representation. In other words, there must be a causal link between them, an issue we will re-examine below.

33 The two best-preserved sarcophagi we referred to have been dated by experts to the 2nd half of the 2nd century A.D., a somewhat late date. While Koch placed the Beirut sarcophagus (Fig. 12) to the 3rd quarter of the 2nd century and the Istanbul sarcophagus (Fig. 13) to the final quarter¹²¹, Rogge proposed even later dates, i. e. the final quarter for the first sarcophagus and the end of the century for the second¹²². However, based on the recent dating of Attic sarcophagi, I believe that these dates are no longer valid. Firstly, the Beirut sarcophagus, covered by a gabled lid, cannot be far away from the date of appearance of the kline-lid, which is around A.D. 160¹²³, on the basis of its stylistic features and how the figures are deployed in the field. The Istanbul sarcophagus, which probably featured a kline-lid, is stylistically more advanced. The relatively high proportions of the chest and figures, which, however, still display gaps between them and did not exceed the height of the field, would date this sarcophagus no later than

116 On metropolitan sarcophagi depicting the myth of Hippolytos, see H. Sichtermann in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 150–153 and, more recently, Zanker – Ewald 2012, 344–348 (with detailed bibliography); Borg 2018, 186.

117 Rogge 1996, 113.

118 Robert 1904, 173 cat. 144. Reference to two scenes is also made by G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 393.

119 Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 133. 161.

120 Ewald 2011, 283; cf. Zanker 1999, 138 f.

121 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 397 f. 458; Koch 1989, 193 (Beirut sarcophagus: A.D. 160).

122 Rogge 1995, 151. 153.

123 On this matter, see below, § 80 n. 252. 253.



Fig. 14: Hippolytos sarcophagus,
front side. St. Petersburg,
Ermitage inv. A 432

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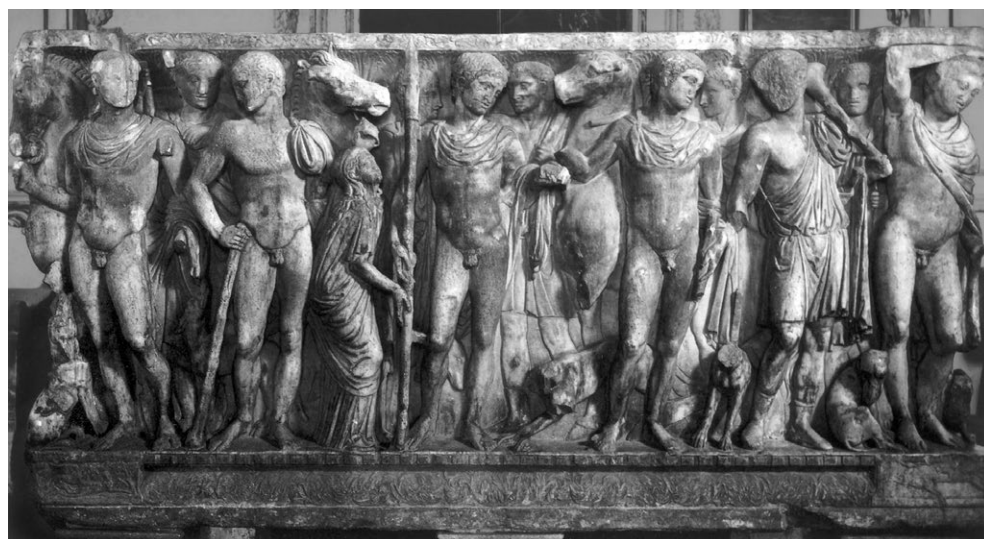


Fig. 15: Hippolytos sarcophagus,
front side. Agrigento, San Nicola

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A.D. 180. The extant fragments of this group should be delimited between A.D. 160 and 180, as indicated by the relationship between the figures and the cornice, small sections of which are preserved in most fragments. There is no indication at present that this composition remained in use in the 3rd century A.D., during which it was relocated, as indicated by the lost example of Sparta (Rogge 1995, cat. 65), to the rear side of sarcophagi that would be decorated with different themes on the remaining sides.

34 Considering the above-mentioned, there appears to be a chronological gap between the early group we discussed above and the newer creations of Attic workshops, carrying over into the 3rd century A.D. During the 1st half of this century, these workshops processed the myth of Hippolytos into new compositions that share no common ground with previous illustrations. While we can easily group them, the relationship between them is somewhat tenuous. The commonalities mainly include their general characteristics and, in certain cases, some of the individual types of figures, particularly the naked hunters, but who mostly differ from each other, as they exhibit a variety of stances and details. It is noteworthy that the small sides and rear side of the chest are now used to present episodes of the same myth that complement the illustration on the front.

35 The most substantial group is made up of three sarcophagi not significantly apart in chronological terms. These are, in chronological order, I believe, the chests in



Fig. 16: Hippolytos sarcophagus, front side. Tyre, Necropolis inv. 330

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St. Petersburg, Agrigento and the Tyre necropolis (Rogge 1995, cat. 64. 47. 70)¹²⁴ (Fig. 14. 15. 16). The central episode in these sarcophagi (group II) is the delivery of the fatal message by Phaidra's elderly nurse to Hippolytos. These two figures of the myth are positioned immediately left of the axis. However, it is surprising that the elderly nurse, small in stature and presented in side view, barely stands out among the frontal naked and slender figures making up a dense group of hunters on either side of Hippolytos: seven in the example of St. Petersburg, all save one positioned on a single plane, and three and thirteen positioned on two planes in the other two examples¹²⁵. Most of the hunters are wearing a chlamys and are carrying a spear or club, while some are leading a horse. An additional indication for the unity of this group is the fact that in all three cases the two small sides of the chest depict Phaidra with the nurse in the women's quarters (*gynaikonitis*) (Fig. 18) and Hippolytos falling from the chariot, while the rear side depicts a boar hunt¹²⁶. I believe these are the creations of a workshop following an archetype – with probably superficial changes – that had possibly already been invented during the 1st quarter of the 3rd century A.D.

36 A fourth sarcophagus in Tarragon (Rogge 1995, cat. 68) (Fig. 17), approximately contemporary to the two later sarcophagi of the aforesaid tripartite group, i. e. dating to the 2nd quarter of the 3rd century A.D., slightly deviates from the preceding sarcophagi. The axis of the relief frieze features an arched architectural construction supported on pilasters, beneath which Hippolytos has been placed, in a fully frontal pose, with two

124 According to Rogge 1996, they all date to the 2nd quarter of the 3rd century A.D.; cf. Papagianni 2016, 94. However, G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 398. 458, dated the Agrigento sarcophagus to A.D. 220–230 and the rest of the group to the 2nd quarter of the century. I consider the St. Petersburg sarcophagus to be the oldest, predating even that of Agrigento, as no hunters are depicted in the background, rendering the composition exceptionally dense in the other two examples; furthermore, the base mouldings are still rendered with plasticity – as is the case with the example from Agrigento – in contrast to the Tarragon sarcophagus, the base of which features very flat carved acanthus leaves. In my view, the group most likely dates from A.D. 220 to 240, with the Tyrus and Tarragon sarcophagi being the most recent (Rogge 1995, cat. 70. 68).

125 There is no reason, in my view, to dispute that the figures in the background are Hippolytos' companions and to accept that they are servants, as suggested by Ewald 2004, 242.

126 Rogge 1995, pls. 100, 1; 104, 2; 110, 1–3 (cat. 64); 100, 3; 104, 1; 109, 1 (cat. 47); 102, 1; 105, 1; 109, 2 (cat. 70).

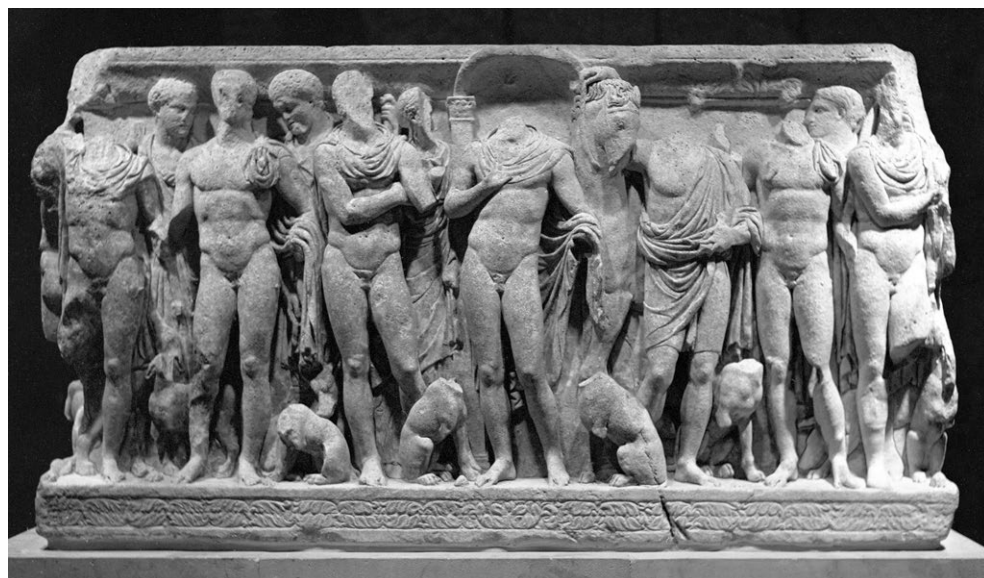


Fig. 17: Hippolytos sarcophagus, front side. Tarragon, Mus. d'Historia de Tarragona inv. 15.482

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Fig. 18: Hippolytos sarcophagus, right side. St. Petersburg, Ermitage inv. A 432

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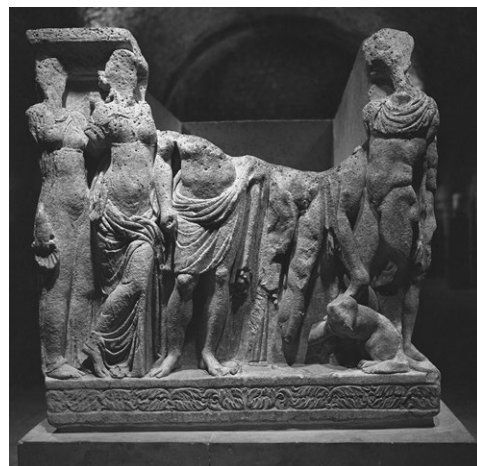


Fig. 19: Hippolytos sarcophagus, left side. Tarragon, Mus. d'Historia de Tarragona inv. 15.482

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dogs at his feet, symmetrically laid out and facing him. The nurse remains beside him, but has been relegated to the background, to the point where she is hardly discernible. The small sides and rear side of the chest partly differ from those of the three aforementioned sarcophagi: the fall of Hippolytos has been shifted to the rear side, while the hunt on the right small side has been replaced by the prey being carried¹²⁷. However, the scene depicted on the left small side differs significantly: instead of the scene in the women's quarters, Phaidra is depicted standing on the left, accompanied by a single handmaiden, possibly with Theseus on her right, while the young man with the chlamys on the right leading a horse and with a dog at his feet is clearly Hippolytos, accompanied by a fellow¹²⁸ (Fig. 19). If the three central figures of the myth indeed coexist in this scene, then this may be an allusion to the tragic end of the tale, i. e. Hippolytos' death.

³⁷ At approximately the same time as the appearance of group II, a different workshop, possibly a competitor to the aforesaid Attic workshop, adopted a composition that was different in terms of typology as well as meaning (group III). In this composition, Phaidra and her entourage appear on the front beside Hippolytos and the group of young hunters accompanying him. The examples of this group date from the 1st quarter

¹²⁷ Rogge 1995, pls. 108, 3 and 107, 1, respectively.

¹²⁸ Rogge 1995, pl. 107, 2 (cat. 68).



Fig. 20: Hippolytos sarcophagus, front side. Beirut, NM inv. 4229/4230

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to the middle of the 3rd century A.D.; therefore, one would conclude that groups II and III did not succeed one another but were used concurrently. In fact, group III consists of two variations: in one Phaidra's entourage is positioned on the right end of the frieze (Fig. 20), while in the other on the left (Fig. 21), without this being the sole difference, even between the examples of each of these two variations.

38 Thus, in the sarcophagi of group III, one gets the impression that the front of the chest ›conjoins‹ the two scenes of the front and small sides of group II into a single episode. In this way, the impression is given that the nurse's erotic proposal to Hippolytos takes place in Phaidra's presence¹²⁹. However, in the Beirut sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 57) (Fig. 20), which is the oldest of the group¹³⁰, Phaidra, who takes up the right section of the front side, performs a revealing gesture (*anakalypsis*), facing Hippolytos, who is standing to her right, holding the reins to his horse and turning his head towards Phaidra, as if conversing with her. A handmaiden positioned between the two protagonists holding a tablet above Phaidra's shoulder but – it should be noted – with her back turned to Hippolytos. The nurse left of Phaidra is raising the veil on the heroine's head while supporting her left arm. An Eros with a torch is standing next to the legs of the lovestruck woman. This is obviously not literally the scene depicting the delivery of the message. While we see the handmaiden holding the tablet, the impression given is that this is a wedding scene¹³¹.

129 See Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 162.

130 See Rogge 1995, 162, who dates it to the 1st quarter of the 3rd century; cf. Papagianni 2016, 94 n. 928. On the contrary, a later dating to the 2nd quarter of the 3rd century was proposed by G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 398. 458; see also Koch 1989, 197 (A.D. 250).

131 Cf. the similar observation in Ewald 2011, 284 n. 72. As Paul Zanker believes, only specific qualities and behaviours of mythical heroes are often transposed to the deceased person in sarcophagi. The same scholar made a remarkable contribution to the consolidation of the idea that certain aspects of the myth are promoted in sarcophagi while others are ignored, e. g. Zanker – Ewald 2012, 53 f. Thus, the relationship between Hippolytos and his stepmother, Phaidra, could be allegorically transformed into the relationship between a married couple or a mother and son; Zanker 1999, 132. 136–138. 141 f.; cf. Ewald 2011, 282. See also Linant de Bellefonds 2013, who comments that the image of Phaidra was, in the eyes of the ancients, charged with a positive value. For a detailed analysis of the free handling of the myth in metropolitan sarcophagi, see Maderna 2015, 112–115; see also n. 119.

Fig. 21: Hippolytos sarcophagus, front side. Arles, Mus. Lapidaire d'Art Païen inv. P 541



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39 The corresponding scene on the later Arles sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 50)¹³² (Fig. 21) is found on the left end of the frieze. However, the relationship between the three protagonists is different in this case, mainly because the maid, most likely the nurse, is now facing Hippolytos as if conversing with him. The viewer is left to assume that this is the moment of the fatal revelation, despite the fact that the old woman is not holding a tablet but is raising her hand in a gesture of declamation. Phaidra appears to be withdrawing while bringing her hands to her chest, in a – futile – effort to hide her feelings. As in the previous case, the small, winged Eros, here resting on her knees, is holding a torch. Hippolytos, standing opposite Phaidra, is raising his right arm, palm outwards, as if rebuffing the nurse's proposal, while his moving horse indicates that he is ready to depart for the hunt¹³³. Finally, the Apollonia sarcophagus, also of a later date (Rogge 1995, cat. 49), is conceptually closer to group II, as Hippolytos and the nurse are relocated to the axis of the frieze, while Phaidra surrounded by her handmaidens remains on the left end, with her head turned backwards, isolated from the figures of Hippolytos and the nurse.

40 The above analysis makes us believe that, contrary to the uniformity of group II, the examples of group III present greater freedom in the choice of certain important details, which lead to a different reading of the illustration in each case. There is also freedom in the scenes selected for the other sides of the chest. Of these, it is worth taking particular note of the scene with Hippolytos, possibly in a *palaestra*, on the right small side of the Apollonia sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 49)¹³⁴, and mainly of the scenes featuring Theseus on the three other small sides; the right side of the Beirut sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 57), and the left sides of the Apollonia sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 49) and the Arles sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 50) (Fig. 22)¹³⁵. While they

132 Arles, Mus. Lapidaire d'Art Païen inv. P 541. Both Koch and Rogge include this sarcophagus, as well as the Apollonia sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 49. 50) among the latest of Attic production, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 398. 458: A.D. 250–260; Rogge 1995, 149 f.: mid-3rd century (cat. 49), after the middle (cat. 50).

133 Despite the differences, the scene is comparable to metropolitan sarcophagi depicting Hippolytos, which are reminiscent of a *profectio* scene and are comparable to official Roman representations; see Ewald 2011, 275. 277 fig. 8.5a; Zanker – Ewald 2012, 346. 362.

134 Rogge 1995, pl. 108, 2. See also below, § 46.

135 Rogge 1995, pl. 106, 1; 103, 1. 2.

are not identical, they include, in addition to the seated Theseus, the standing figures of Hippolytos, Phaidra and, in two cases, the nurse. Conceptually, these scenes appear to be closer to the left side of the Tarragon sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 68), which, as we saw, depicts the three main figures: Theseus, Phaidra and Hippolytos¹³⁶ (Fig. 19).

41 As the compositions we have examined clearly present significant diversity, I believe that only an overall approach to them would allow us to comprehend their character and correctly interpret the differences appearing over time¹³⁷.

42 Firstly, returning to the earliest group I, it is worth asking the question of what ancient viewers mainly took away from this depiction of the myth. While, as noted above, this is not a simple narrative telling of the myth, its most substantive elements are documented in the representations in question. This is why we believe that the *myth* itself (in its entirety, in fact), as we know it from Euripides' *Hippolytos* play, is present and allows for the illustration to be interpreted. Firstly, the presence of the two goddesses, Aphrodite and Artemis, who create the framework in which the action will take place, similar to Euripides' tragedy, is directly or indirectly declared. Furthermore, there is a clear allusion to the close relationship between Hippolytos and Artemis through the connotation of her sanctuary and his prey-offerings to the goddess, on one hand, and to the hero's contempt for Aphrodite, who has already targeted Phaidra with Eros' arrows and putting her plan to destroy Hippolytos into action, on the other. Consequently, there is a causal relationship between the two ostensibly independent parts of the frieze. Finally, Theseus' possible presence in the Istanbul sarcophagus (Fig. 13) suggests the impending conclusion, i. e. the death of his son, which he himself caused by asking Poseidon to intercede. Thus, the artist who invented the composition created an eloquent backdrop on which to present the cause of the drama and its outcome to viewers. The cause is the hero's contempt for Aphrodite in contrast to his excessively close relationship with Artemis. This entails a harsh punishment, i. e. his death, as the goddess of love explains in the prologue to Euripides' play (E. Hipp. 1–57). Artemis herself, addressing Theseus below, refers to this decision of Aphrodite: »Aphrodite willed that things should happen thus« (E. Hipp. 1327, Kovacs), she is therefore responsible for Hippolytos' premature death. In a similar way, responsibility for the loss is attributed to gods or demons in epigrams and funerary orations, as in the case of Eteoneus of Cyzicus, the young student of Aelios Aristides (Or. 31, 13 and 11, 78)¹³⁸.

43 In the subsequent compositions, the interest shifts from the myth and its connotations to the *mythical protagonist* himself and his qualities. Thus, the front view, particularly in group II, shrinks the most emblematic elements of the myth, and focus is placed on the protagonist, who is the figure most promoted. In fact, one would say that he is emphasised through the repetition of the similar figures of his fellow hunters. Their number and frontal, almost statuary appearance make it clear that the creator of the composition intended to promote and honour the hunting heroes and, in particular, Hippolytos, the hunter *par excellence* and beloved of Artemis¹³⁹. The most eloquent example of this viewing of the scene can be found in the Tarragon sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 68) (Fig. 17). In this case, the intention to make the protagonist stand

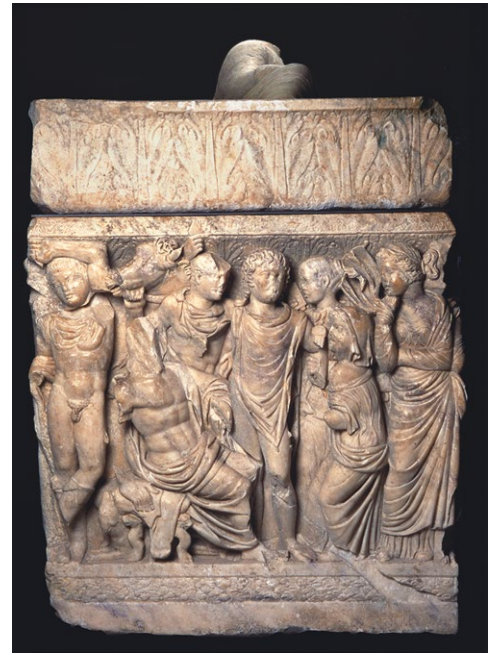


Fig. 22: Hippolytos sarcophagus, left side. Arles, Mus. Lapidaire d'Art Païen inv. P 541

136 Rogge 1995, pl. 107, 2.

137 Instead, the Agrigento sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 49) was the subject of a separate study, which is partly justified due to the history of the work in recent years, Ewald 2011. However, in this way, the interpretation of the scene lacks the framework provided by reference to its similar, contemporary examples.

138 Soffel 1974, 28, esp. 167 f.; cf. Strocka 2017a, 141.

139 Reference to Hippolytos' glory is made by Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 161.

out exceedingly among his peers is evident through the highly successful use of the arched architectural construction, which ensures promotion similar to an exaltation or *encomium* to beauty, bravery, fortitude, i. e. the virtues generally found in heroes but also to the youth of the elite¹⁴⁰. Moreover, Artemis herself characterises Hippolytos as right and pious (*dikaaios* and *eusebes*, E. Hipp. 1307. 1309).

⁴⁴ While the mythological context is repelled from the foreground, I believe that ancient viewers continued to perceive the figures as mythical/heroic persons and, certainly, recognise the hero-protagonist of the myth. The almost complete absence of themes of everyday life in Attic sarcophagi supports the view that the ancient viewer-patron sought and was absolutely familiar with the mythological context of the image. Thus, the nurse delivering the tablet and the movement of Hippolytos' right hand with the clearly negative gesture addressed to Phaidra's messenger could not have gone unnoticed; they equally perceived the attributes of the hero, i. e. the horse he is leading by the reins and the hunting dogs. Additionally, the scenes on the other sides reinforced the mythological framework, indicating that the protagonist operates and is highlighted solely through this framework. The patron in particular and the viewers of the monument in general would not find it hard to compare or even identify in some way the person interred in the sarcophagus¹⁴¹ – possibly but not necessarily young – with the heroes – hunters of the myth and, specifically, Hippolytos, who suffered a premature death.

⁴⁵ The fact that the mythological framework still retains its importance in the 3rd century A.D. is proven by group III, which is more or less contemporaneous to the aforesaid group (II). In group III, the gathering of hunters with Hippolytos at the centre continues to play a primary role and is depicted in a way exceptionally similar to that of group II. However, the scene with the women's quarters, focusing on Phaidra, whom the hero-hunter prepares to abandon, is now appended next to the hunters. Hippolytos will abandon her and will then perish, as will she. At present, we cannot know which of the two compositions, group II or group III, is older. If group II is older, then group III, to which the latest preserved examples belong, may have been created in order to ›correct‹ group II, rendering the mythological framework more eloquent. In any event, this is not of particular importance, as the two compositions co-existed in a period of time, as noted above.

⁴⁶ However, even if we were to accept that the mythological ›shell‹ of the representation has been somewhat weakened in terms of details, to the point where ancient viewers would not perceive all its aspects, the myth would nevertheless remain the means for the transmission of ideas, i. e. would serve as an example in a way far more powerful than contemporary reality. In other words, the hunt and, more specifically, the hunter himself and his qualities are taken in by the viewers through the myth and not through scenes alluding to modern life. Ewald puts forth a different view in a number of his studies. According to this scholar, the predominant theme of the representations in question is the beautiful, well-trained male body, which is depicted in various stances and could be considered to serve as a model for the *kalokagathia*, beauty and moral superiority of young men and adolescents in terms close to the ideas of the ›Second Sophistic‹; furthermore, Ewald posits that the theme suggests the heterosexual relationship

¹⁴⁰ Lucian makes reference to the training of youths, which renders them worthy of praise by those who come after, just as Hesiod and Homer sung of the glory of the heroes of the distant past (Luc. Anach. 21). See also D. Chr. Or. 79, 13, where the gifted and virtuous athlete who achieved excellence and died young is compared to Achilles, Patroklos, Hektor, Memnon and Sarpedon. Besides, the good athlete combines, as evidenced by epigraphic testimonies, all standard qualities of the elite, i. e. *kallos*, *sophrosyne*, *eugeneia*, *andreia*; see van Nijf 2003, esp. 276. According to Ewald 2011, 296 f., the well-trained body of mythical heroes on the representation found on the chest is indicative of the moral superiority of the deceased portrayed on the sarcophagus lid.

¹⁴¹ On the issue of the deceased person's actual age in relation to his depiction, see n. 417.

in the context of the gymnasium institution¹⁴². According to this view, we should accept that the myth is but a pretext¹⁴³ with no particular importance and, on the contrary, the depiction aims directly at modern reality and contemporary institutions. However, the image itself does not point to a need to refer to gatherings of athletes in order to discover ideas not elicited upon immediate perception of the image. In other words, nothing compels us to accept that ancient viewers, facing the array of hunters with chlamys around their chests, holding spears and clubs, accompanied by horses and hunting dogs, were directly and necessarily referencing *palaestra* scenes and the institution of *ephebeia*. It is certainly known and particularly stressed by Ewald that hunting is among the activities of adolescents attending gymnasia; furthermore, the educational importance of hunting in general in the classical world is also known¹⁴⁴. By following the aristocratic ideal of the age, an adolescent, e. g. Bacchon in Plutarch's *Amatorius* 2 and 10, spends his time in the *palaistra* and hunting¹⁴⁵. Hippolytos himself is not only a hunter but also a lover of sports, a quality attributed to both Hippolytos¹⁴⁶ and many other heroes¹⁴⁷. It is possible that the – iconographically unusual – small side of the Apollonia sarcophagus refers to this quality of Hippolytos (Rogge 1995, cat. 49), which quite possibly depicts a *palaestra* scene with Hippolytos apparently holding a discus. This secondary and, to date, unique representation may, similar to the hunt, allude to his aristocratic activities¹⁴⁸; however, it does not necessarily refer to the reality of *epheboi*.

⁴⁷ Therefore, nothing compels us to attribute to the creators of 3rd-century Attic sarcophagi the conscious intention to shift the viewer's interest from the mythical hunt, the predominant theme, to the *palaistra*, from the mythical hunter to the contemporary *ephebos*-athlete, even if such associations may be created at a secondary level. Furthermore, we should also contend that beautiful, well-trained bodies befit not only youths attending the *palaestra* and hunters but also mythical heroes who, as is well known, are praised in written texts for these gifts¹⁴⁹. Heroes serve as examples for mortals and are chosen as such throughout the period of 130 years of production of Attic sarcophagi in order to portray the beauty, bravery and moral superiority of mostly young men, as well as their tragic fate that befell them, i. e. premature death.

Achilleus

⁴⁸ Achilles is by far the most popular hero depicted on Attic sarcophagi, as proven by the large number of examples where he is the protagonist, as well as the extensive variety of episodes from the myth¹⁵⁰ not encountered in any other mythological theme depicted on these monuments¹⁵¹. This superiority is magnified if we assume that Amazonomachy sarcophagi, in whole or at least in part, depict the Trojan Amazonomachy where the central hero is once again Achilles. However, we will revisit this issue later. The preference for the great Greek hero, »the most godlike of all Greeks« as he is

¹⁴² Ewald 2004, 242 f.; Ewald 2011, 267; Ewald 2018, 236 no. 10; 241.

¹⁴³ A similar view was put forth by Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 161, but without denying the existence of the mythological framework.

¹⁴⁴ X. Cyn. 12. See also above, § 26, and below, § 106 n. 344. 345.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Ewald 2011, 295 f.

¹⁴⁶ See E. Hipp. 1016 f., where Hippolytos voices his desire to be first at the Greek games.

¹⁴⁷ See Philostr. Her. 698 (Protesilaos). 730 (Achilleus).

¹⁴⁸ See also Rogge 1995, 88.

¹⁴⁹ See, for example, Philostr. Her. 673. 680. 689. 698.730. On this subject, see also above, § 46, and below, § 106.

¹⁵⁰ G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 382; Rogge 2008, 592 f.

¹⁵¹ Ewald 2004, 248. 237 fig. 2, where a statistical graph presents the quantitative dissemination of themes in Attic sarcophagi.

Fig. 23: Hippolytos sarcophagus, front side. Adana, Arch. Mus. inv. 3843



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characterised by Philostratos (Her. 685), is particularly worthy of note, considering that the corresponding group of metropolitan sarcophagi is much smaller in comparison to other mythological groups encountered in sarcophagus workshops of the capital¹⁵².

The Ransom of Hektor

⁴⁹ Priamos' supplication to Achilleus, accompanied by the offer of a ransom in order for the Trojan king to collect the body of Hektor, is well established as a theme with a long history in Greek iconography¹⁵³. Its dependence on the Homeric narrative (Il. 24) can only be considered in a general sense, as the details of the narrative are chosen by the respective creators each time. In the 2nd century A.D., Attic sarcophagus workshops created their own composition, grasping the theme in an original manner, without employing, to our present-day knowledge, a specific older model, despite isolated figures being borrowed from the pre-existing tradition¹⁵⁴. Three complete and three fragmentary sarcophagi form a closed group with a common archetype which must have been created during the 3rd quarter of the 2nd century A.D. In my view, the dates proposed for the best-preserved examples from Tarsus in Adana, from Tyre in Beirut and from Ladochori, Igoumenitsa (Epirus) in Ioannina (Rogge 1995, cat. 1. 7. 12) (Fig. 23. 24. 25) are very late. In particular, the dates proposed by Rogge (at the last quarter of the 2nd century for the first – the earlier one – and for the second, and at the end of the 2nd century for the third)¹⁵⁵ cannot be accepted. Koch proposes approximately the same dates, placing the group between A.D. 170/180 and 200¹⁵⁶, while Papagianni dates it to A.D. 170¹⁵⁷. However, I believe, the oldest example of the three, that of Adana (Fig. 23), must be contemporaneous to the Hippolytos sarcophagus from Beirut (Rogge 1995, cat. 56) (Fig. 12), which we dated around A.D. 160¹⁵⁸. The Beirut sarcophagus, with its peculiar, flat lid, is certainly more recent (Rogge 1995, cat. 7)¹⁵⁹ (Fig. 24) and must be

¹⁵² Ewald 2004, 235 fig. 1; 248, with a corresponding graph on themes in metropolitan sarcophagi.

¹⁵³ On the sources and iconography of the theme, see LIMC I (1981) 147–161 s. v. Achilleus (A. Kossatz-Deissmann); Rogge 1995, 95 n. 36; Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2014b, 516 n. 28. For further bibliography and images of the theme, see LIMC Suppl. 1 (2009) 8 s. v. Achilleus (A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

¹⁵⁴ G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 388 f., containing the older discourse on the matter; Rogge 1995, 97.

¹⁵⁵ Rogge 1995, 35–37 cat. 1. 7. 12.

¹⁵⁶ G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 389. 458, who considers the sarcophagus of Beirut as the oldest example, earlier than that of Adana.

¹⁵⁷ Papagianni 2016, 93.

¹⁵⁸ See above, § 33.

¹⁵⁹ On the type of lid, see Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 22 n. 19; 145 f. n. 1. 2; 150 f. n. 1.

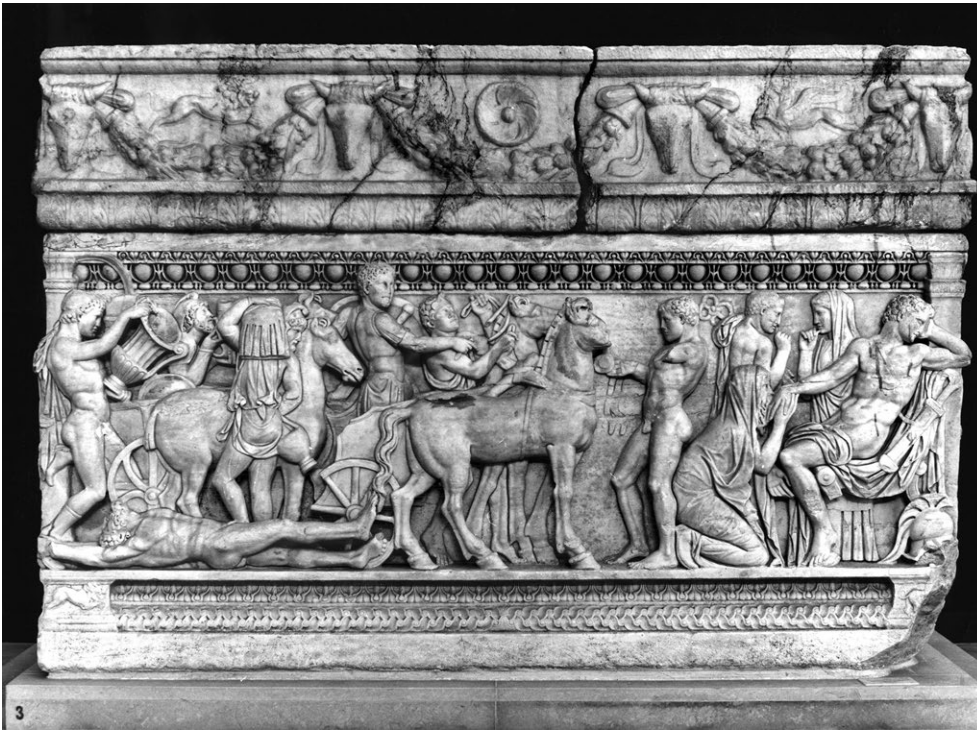


Fig. 24: Achilles sarcophagus, front side. Beirut, NM inv. 954/955

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closer to the Hippolytos sarcophagus in Istanbul (Rogge 1995, cat. 59)¹⁶⁰ (Fig. 13). The kline-lid sarcophagus of Ioannina could be dated a short while later, around A.D. 180 (Rogge 1995, cat. 56) (Fig. 25).

50 Despite their chronological differences, the three aforementioned sarcophagi (and the fragments related to them) can be considered as coming from a single workshop. This is evidenced by the close iconographic and stylistic similarities observed in the representations on their front sides on one hand, and the comparable themes depicted on the small and rear sides on the other. All three identically depict the mourning (*prothesis*) for Patroklos on one small side and groups of heraldically posed mythical creatures or animals on the rear side. They only differ on one small side, as the earlier example of Adana features a sphinx¹⁶¹, while the other two feature themes relevant to the episode on the front side: the murder of a Trojan in front of Achilles (rather than Neoptolemos)¹⁶² and the arming of Achilles in the presence of Thetis¹⁶³ (Fig. 26).

51 The representation on the front views of these sarcophagi depicts the two parts of the mythological episode in a logical sequence: on the left, taking up approximately one third of the frieze, is depicted the unloading of the ransom arriving on a mule-drawn carriage; on the right, a smaller part depicts the scene of Priamos' supplication, kneeling before a seated Achilles under the – understood as invisible – presence of Hermes and Thetis. The individual issues have been frequently analysed in the past¹⁶⁴, so we will mainly focus on the section interpolated between the two aforementioned parts, where a third scene, at least ostensibly independent from the two preceding ones, is deployed: a two-horse chariot facing the supplication scene, with Hektor's lifeless supine body lashed to its axle. It is being steered by a charioteer, an armoured warrior with a shield whose head, in three-quarter view facing the right, necessarily exceeds the field of the scene

¹⁶⁰ See above, § 33.

¹⁶¹ Rogge 1995, pl. 17, 2 (cat. 1).

¹⁶² According to Rogge 1995, 23 f. 127 f. cat. 7 pl. 22, 1, this is Neoptolemos, but the identification as Achilles seems more correct; see most recently Stročka 2017b, 278 f. n. 25.

¹⁶³ Rogge 1995, 23. 129 cat. 12 pl. 20; Rogge 2008, 584–586 pl. 74, 1.

¹⁶⁴ See more recently Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017, with the relevant discourse and bibliography.



Fig. 25: Achilleus sarcophagus, front side. Ioannina, Arch. Mus. inv. 6176

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and projects on the cornice. A young man wearing a sleeveless tunic (*exomis*), obviously a horse groom, standing behind the horses and a naked muscular man in front of them are unhitching the animals while the charioteer is still holding the reins loosely.

52 This unusual ›interpolation‹ of the chariot in the single episode of the ransom and the supplication caused intense debate among scholars, with emphasis placed on the identification of the charioteer-warrior. Although the chariot stands still, modern scholars are called back, at least at first blush, to the well-known scene of the dragging of Hektor's body. Thus, Linant de Bellefonds, basing her opinion on the prominent position of the charioteer and the Homeric narrative, whereby Achilles himself steered the chariot on this occasion, asserted that Achilles is also the rider in the composition in question¹⁶⁵. Rogge also adopted this view. If this were true, we would have to accept that this is the phenomenon of continuous narrative, well known from metropolitan sarcophagi¹⁶⁶. However, this scholar's explanation for the ›interpolation‹ of the chariot scene, i. e. that it intends to cover the gap between the two other scenes and, at the same time, serve as a reminder of the cause for Priamos' supplication¹⁶⁷, is not convincing. More recently, Volker Michael Strocka has also supported the dual depiction of Achilles, accepting that this hero appears in the middle of the representation »avenging the death of his friend, Patroklos, and dragging the body of Hektor, while on the right side he appears hesitant, showing compassion to Hektor's elderly father«¹⁶⁸.

53 However, I consider it impossible for the composition in question to be depicting the scene of the dragging of the body, which is transmitted to us as a separate episode in Attic sarcophagi¹⁶⁹ and is the principal means to express Achilles' vengeance. If we

165 Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 42 f.

166 Rogge 1995, 21 f. 49 f., who nevertheless accepts that Attic sarcophagi do not exhibit »eine echte kontinuierliche Darstellungsweise« but condense different aspects of the myth in a single image. On the rarity of the continuous narrative phenomenon in Attic sarcophagi, see also G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 377 n. 3; 387 n. 67; 400 n. 7. See also Rogge 1995, 22 n. 21 (with bibliography); Strocka 2017b, 277 f. n. 19. 20; Ewald 2011, 288; Ewald 2018, 240. See also above, § 32, and below, § 57.

167 Rogge 1995, 21.

168 Strocka 2017b, 277 f.

169 See the rear side of the 2nd-century sarcophagus in London, Rogge 1995, 32. 62 f. 110 f. 132 cat. 17 pl. 42, and the front side of the sarcophagus in the J. Paul Getty Mus., below, § 59 and n. 227.

assume that the chariot is standing still and the horses are being unhitched, this automatically suggests that this will be followed by Hektor's body being untied and transferred into the tent. It is also clear that the ransom will be transported as well and is, in fact, depicted in the field above the dead body. According to the Aischylean tradition, the hero's lifeless body will be weighed together with the invaluable ransom, a scene depicted a few decades later on the rear side of the Attic sarcophagus at Woburn Abbey¹⁷⁰. The problem may be resolved thanks to certain rear sides of other sarcophagi, mainly in Beirut and Rome (Rogge 1995, cat. 6. 24), where the depiction of the Ransom of Hektor omits Hektor's body along with other details¹⁷¹. It is impossible for the dragging to be depicted



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Fig. 26: Achilles sarcophagus, left side. Ioannina, Arch. Mus. inv. 6176

in these cases, as also proven by the fact that in one sarcophagus, that of Beirut (Rogge 1995, cat. 6), this scene is portrayed as a separate scene on the right small side of the chest. Therefore, at least in this case, the interpretation of the charioteer in the rear side as Achilles loses credence. Further assistance in comprehending the scene is offered by the metropolitan sarcophagus in the Louvre depicting the theme of the Ransom of Hektor¹⁷². A procession heads towards the supplication scene, headed by Trojans carrying the ransom in their arms, without the assistance of a mule, followed by servants who are also carrying Hektor's supine body in their arms, with the tail consisting of mourners, including Andromache and Astyanax. In other words, all the elements depicted in Attic sarcophagi in a different relationship with each other are presented here, in the same procession, with greater clarity. Therefore, we can assume that the contentious scene depicts the transport of Hektor's body to be delivered to Priamos.

54 Based on the foregoing, we consider the presence of the chariot in Attic monuments part of a single, inseparable narrative. The chariot is not a ›foreign element‹ and does not interrupt the sequence of the parts of the frieze but is connected to them. In other words, it is the one section of a dual procession heading towards the protagonist, who is undoubtedly Achilles seated on the right. The composition reaches its climax, in my view, with the impressive figure of the hero, his naked, brawny body framed by the rich garment cascading onto the seat. Consequently, the charioteer of the two-horse chariot cannot be Achilles, but a different person leading Hektor's body to its place of delivery. His position on the chariot does not make him taller or more imposing than the definitively identified figure of Achilles on the right end of the composition; Achilles is clearly represented at a larger scale and, if pictured standing, would far exceed the charioteer's figure. It is noted that, contrary to the narrative of the Iliad, whereby Achilles led the chariot with Hektor's body bound behind it, when this scene is depicted in artworks, his charioteer, identified as Automedon, is usually pictured riding the chariot, with or without Achilles¹⁷³. Therefore, the most likely solution as to the interpretation

170 It should also be noted that the sarcophagus that we will focus on below depicts both Priamos' supplication and the violent removal of Hektor's body from the chariot on the front side, see Rogge 1995, 49–51. 145 f. cat. 45; on the rear side depicting the weighing of his body, Rogge 1995, 67 f. pl. 60, 2. 3.

171 These omissions are also observed in other, fragmentary examples, Rogge 1995, 65 f.; Rogge 2008, 587 f.

172 LIMC I (1981) 155 no. 699 pl. 128 s. v. Achilles (A. Kossatz-Deissmann); Grassinger 1999, 57–63 and esp. on the Louvre sarcophagus 208–209 cat. 40; Baratte – Metzger 1985, cat. 14.

173 See LIMC III (1986) 58–60 no. 7–27 s. v. Automedon (A. Kossatz-Deissmann) and on the sarcophagi with the episode being discussed LIMC III (1986) 61 no. 37–47 s. v. Automedon (A. Kossatz-Deissmann); see also LIMC Suppl. 1 (2009) 8 f. s. v. Achilles (A. Kossatz-Deissmann). Several other scholars have also claimed that this charioteer is Automedon; on the relevant bibliography, see Rogge 1995, 21 n. 18; cf. Rudolf 1989, 19–24, who, while accepting that we are dealing with two separate scenes in terms of time and space, considers Automedon a more likely candidate for the charioteer than Achilles.

of the figure at hand is the identification of the charioteer of Achilles' chariot as the hero Automedon, as he is called in the *Iliad*. He and Alkimos took Patroklos' place beside Achilles (Hom. Il. 24, 573–575). The two men yoked the horses together to join Achilles in fighting Hektor (Hom. Il. 19, 392–395) and are the only persons present in Achilles' tent during Priamos' supplication for the body of Hektor (Hom. Il. 24, 474–575). Finally, the same two men once more unyoked the horses and mules and unloaded the gifts from the chariot (Hom. Il. 24, 578–580). Therefore, I consider it highly likely that these two heroes are included in the episode of the ransom depicted in the sarcophagi in question. Automedon is most likely the charioteer of the chariot carrying Hektor's body, and Alkimos is the robust naked Greek on the left end carrying a large *krater*, and is certainly not a slave¹⁷⁴. The other naked figure with a similar physique in front of the horses yoked to the chariot could be identified as Antilochos, son of Nestor, who had taken on hereinafter Patroklos' role towards Achilles in the *Aethiopis*¹⁷⁵.

55 It is without question that the key message transmitted by the above composition is Achilles' magnanimity. In fact, his averted head is most likely an indication of his effort to hide his feelings of compassion for the old king. He will doubtlessly follow the divine mandate to hand over the dead body which he received through his mother, as Thetis himself is standing beside him. Therefore, it is certain that Hektor's body will be handed over, which is why it is pictured there, at the left end of the frieze. The juxtaposition between the beautiful, firm body of the brave Achilles and the slim, rigid body of the deceased Hektor is striking, so that the contrast between life and death is automatically implied. Consequently, I believe we can claim that the reference to the mortals for whom these sarcophagi were intended was achieved in two ways: on one hand, through Achilles, an exemplar of bravery, beauty and, in this case in particular, magnanimity, and on the other, through Hektor, whose tragic fate led to the loss of this brave man who was cut down in his prime.

56 The composition of the Ransom of Hektor we discussed had an indisputably significant appeal among purchasers during the 2nd half of the 2nd century A.D., which, however, would significantly wane. Thus, during the 3rd century, it shifted with certain – often not insignificant – omissions to the rear sides of sarcophagi, as concluded from three examples where the front sides depict other themes that were more popular during this era: a battle on the Tyre sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 43; Kintrup 2016, cat. 260), the arming of Achilles in the Beirut sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 6) (Fig. 35), which we already discussed, and Achilles on Skyros in the sarcophagus in the Louvre (Rogge 1995, cat. 21)¹⁷⁶ (Fig. 33) – but we will discuss these themes below. Nevertheless, Priamos' supplication appears once again during the 1st third of the 3rd century A.D., yet in a new, completely different form that is so far attested in a single example: the sarcophagus in Woburn Abbey (Rogge 1995, cat. 45)¹⁷⁷ (Fig. 27). The frieze on the front side now contains but two scenes: the supplication on the right part and the delivery of Hektor's body which take up the majority of the frieze, while two warriors in motion are

174 This naked figure with the athletic physique has been identified as a Greek, in contrast to the other figures of Trojans carrying other ransom, see Rogge 1995, 20. 125 (cat. 1); 128 (cat. 7); 129 (cat. 12).

175 Antilochos is identified in the Ransom of Hektor in an Apulian krater in St. Petersburg on the basis of an inscription, LIMC I (1981) 833 f. no. 16 s. v. Antilochos I (A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

176 Rogge 1995, pls. 9, 1 (cat. 43); 10, 1 (cat. 6); 11 (cat. 21). The preserved fragment of the rear side of a sarcophagus in Side depicting the same theme on the front, i. e. Achilles on Skyros, must be added to these three examples; Rogge 2008, 586–588 pl. 72, 3.

177 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 458, dates it to A.D. 220–230, while Rogge 1995, 49–51. 145 f. cat. 45, dates it to the turning point between the 1st and 2nd quarters of the 3rd century A.D. Cf. Papagianni 2016, 94 n. 927. On the sarcophagus, see most recently Kintrup 2017, cat. 3 (with more recent bibliography), with a somewhat later dating (A.D. 240).



Fig. 27: Achilleus sarcophagus, front side. Woburn Abbey

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symmetrically positioned at the two ends. The delivery of the ransom no longer exists, thus contributing to the loss of the narrative character of the illustration and profoundly changing its goal.

57 In the case of the Woburn Abbey sarcophagus, we observe the intention of highlighting specific figures in particular, as ascertained above in the 3rd-century representations of Meleagros and Hippolytos. I believe few would deny that the figure primarily highlighted is the armoured warrior on the axis, greater in scale than all other figures. In rapid motion, he pulls on Hektor's left limb, who has obviously come loose from the chariot, with the charioteer, possible Automedon, preparing to alight from it. Therefore, the towering warrior is without question Achilles himself¹⁷⁸, who is also assuredly identified in the supplication scene on the right. This scene has now shrunk to just two figures: the elderly Priamos, appealing to his son's killer, fully covered by his garment, bent over and leaning on a staff, while Achilles stands in frontal view, armoured and making an averting gesture. Nevertheless, this figure cannot draw the viewer's attention as much as the warrior in the middle, who can therefore be only identified, as noted above, as Achilles¹⁷⁹. This identification of Achilles is corroborated by the representation on the small side of the Beirut sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 6), where Hektor being violently dragged by his leg is depicted as an independent scene¹⁸⁰. Therefore, the Woburn Abbey sarcophagus is a rare example of an Attic sarcophagus depicting different episodes in a single representation where the main figure is repeated¹⁸¹. These episodes are possibly not considered as having a strict temporal sequence between them, but are rather conceptually linked, as Hektor's death is a prerequisite for Priamos' supplication¹⁸². In my view, this is not the continuous narration known to us from Roman sarcophagi, where there is a temporal sequence of episodes and, therefore, repetition of the protagonist. In this case, we are probably viewing scenes

178 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 377. 387; Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 68–70; Angelicoussis 1992, 80. 82; Koortbojian 1998, 562 f. See also n. 179.

179 See Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2014b, 521 f. Cf. Strocka 2017b, 277 f., who also asserts that Achilles is depicted twice in the frieze; Rogge 1995, 51, accepts that the warrior in the middle is the main figure, yet refuses to identify him as Achilles, claiming that there are weaknesses in the design of the composition. On different proposals concerning the identification of the figure (Automedon, another companion of Achilles, or Achilles himself), see Rogge 1995, 49 n. 222. 223. Cf. Kintrup 2017, 53 f., who considers the Delphi sarcophagus as the sole case of an Attic sarcophagus depicting two different episodes in the same frieze, see above, § 14 n. 54, and below, § 107.

180 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 387 n. 65; see also Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2014b, 521 f. In this case, Rogge has no choice but to identify him as Achilles, Rogge 1995, 50; cf. Kintrup 2017, 53 f. n. 203. On relevant criticism, see Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2018, 453 f.

181 On this subject, see also § 56.

182 Cf. Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2014b, 522 n. 60.

Fig. 28: Achilles sarcophagus, front side. Malibu, J. Paul Getty Mus. inv. 95.AA 80



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with a symbolic character, through which emphasis is placed on violent death, on one hand, and courage and magnanimity, on the other¹⁸³.

58 This so far unique representation is a tightly structured, symmetrical composition that can be considered anything but »the failed choice of a sculptor«, as it has been called¹⁸⁴. The oversized figure of Achilles on its axis, together with the diagonally positioned warriors at the edges of the chest, create a closed set designed according to the principles followed by sarcophagus sculptors during the 3rd century A.D.¹⁸⁵. The creator's intention is once again in this case to draw the viewer's attention to the hero himself, while the mythological context makes up a necessary framework, but does not serve as a narrative object *per se*. The military supremacy of the burly Achilles over everyone and his violent behaviour towards the killer of Patroklos lying at his feet are most eloquently brought to the foreground. At a secondary level, the reception of Priamos expresses a different aspect of the hero's virtue, despite his initial hesitation: he shows mercy and magnanimity to the elderly king begging for his son's body. In this case, too, as in the 2nd-century composition portraying the Ransom of Hektor, the merits of the hero *par excellence* are praised, with greater emphasis placed on him through his dual presence; at the same time, there is clear reference to the violent, premature death of the no less virtuous Hektor.

59 In this context, we should also mention another sarcophagus from the mid-3rd century A.D., a recent acquisition of the J. Paul Getty Museum (Fig. 28). This is the first time a front side depicts a scene shortly before the procession of Hektor's body

183 The proposals of Rudolf 1989, 26–30, lie closer to our interpretation.

184 Rogge 1995, 51, who hypothesises that this is why the composition no longer appears.

185 This is a motif repeated in almost all Achilles sarcophagi of the 3rd century, Rogge 1995, 49 n. 17.

around the city of Troy¹⁸⁶. His body, lying supine and parallel to the ground, dominates the middle of the frieze, while the fully armoured Achilles, with one foot on the dead hero, is moving diagonally away from the axis of the frieze as he is mounting his chariot. I believe that this is another case of juxtaposition between the dashing, powerful warrior and the warrior lying dead, who, in this case, mainly appears to be the centre of attention.

Achilleus on Skyros

⁶⁰ In contrast to the Ransom of Hektor, the story of Achilles on Skyros is not only unknown from the Iliad but appears relatively late in written sources and iconography during the classical era¹⁸⁷. The depiction of the episode in Attic sarcophagi is attested, based on present-day data, during the decade of A.D. 170–180¹⁸⁸ and most likely does not adhere to an older model but is probably a creation of the Attic workshops of sarcophagi themselves¹⁸⁹. A number of examples, including two fully intact, offer us a good picture of the archetype followed, with certain variations, until the end of the 2nd century A.D. As regards the oldest extant sarcophagus in St. Petersburg (Rogge 1995, cat. 28) (Fig. 29), it seems more appropriate to follow the dating suggested by Koch to the decade of A.D. 170–180¹⁹⁰. While the heads of the figures cover part of the ovolo moulding of the cornice, its gabled lid is indicative of a somewhat early dating¹⁹¹. It displays the moment of Achilles' revelation by following a simple, narrative mode of recounting, with the episode culminating exactly at the middle of the frieze. That is precisely where Achilles, still in women's garb, is being revealed, with Deidameia kneeling at his feet and her nurse. Lykomedes' two seated daughters on either side of them, as well as two other standing daughters, demarcate the women's quarters of the palace where the scene is unfolding. Lykomedes himself is not portrayed. Members of the Achaian delegation appear at the left end. We are informed about these persons by the Scholion D to Il. 19, 326 and by Statius (Achilleis 1, 689–880). According to the former, the delegation consisted of Odysseus, Phoenix and Nestor, while according to the second, Odysseus, Diomedes and the trumpeter Agyrtes¹⁹². On the left section of the frieze on the St. Petersburg chest, it is easy to identify Odysseus as the bearded man with a cap (*pilos*), Agyrtes as the figure with the trumpet and most likely Diomedes as the man on the very left, who is beardless and is only wearing a garment wrapped around his hips. The very same composition was repeated in the fragmentary kline-lid chest, also in St. Petersburg (Rogge 1995, cat. 29), which can be dated to the end of the 3rd quarter or the early 4th quarter of the 2nd century¹⁹³. Certain other fragments¹⁹⁴ attest to the popularity of this composition during the 2nd half of the 2nd century A.D. These images primarily highlight the military nature and, by extension, the heroism of Achilles,

¹⁸⁶ Oakley 2016. The singular, far earlier example of the theme is the sarcophagus in London (Rogge 1995, cat. 17), see Oakley 2016, 105 n. 24 and above, § 53.

¹⁸⁷ On the written sources and the appearance of the myth in Greek art during the classical era, mainly in monumental painting, see LIMC I (1981) 55 f. 68 s. v. Achilles (A. Kossatz-Deissmann). Cf. Rogge 1995, 99 n. 76; 100; Grassinger 1999, 25 f.

¹⁸⁸ Metropolitan sarcophagi take priority on this theme, Rogge 1995, 100 f.

¹⁸⁹ Rogge 1995, 101. See also G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 384 n. 26, with past views on the subject.

¹⁹⁰ G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 385. 458, who gives a later date, i. e. during the final quarter, for the London sarcophagus, the second St. Petersburg sarcophagus depicting the same theme, while with regard to the Naples sarcophagus, he accepts a date after A.D. 200.

¹⁹¹ According to Rogge 1995, 37–39, all the extant examples belong to the 4th quarter of the 2nd century A.D. On the earlier one from St. Petersburg, see Papagianni 2016, 94, for a similar view.

¹⁹² LIMC I (1981) 56 s. v. Achilles (A. Kossatz-Deissmann); Rogge 1995, 26 n. 54. 55; 27 n. 66; 99 n. 76. Odysseus and Diomedes are referred to in Philostratos the Younger's *Imagines* 1, Amedick 1998, 5 f. 60. Diomedes is also attested in the fragmentary passage from Euripides' *Scyrioi*, TrGF 5 F 64.

¹⁹³ According to G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 385, this belongs to the decade of A.D. 180–190; cf. Rogge 1995, 38.

¹⁹⁴ Rogge 1995, 27 (cat. 4. 10. 16. 26).



Fig. 29: Achilles sarcophagus, front side. St. Petersburg, Ermitage inv. A 1026

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who spontaneously leaves the women's quarters and his beloved, choosing the fame and glorious death awaiting him in Troy. Therefore, the transition from peaceful life to glorious death is presented in light of the hero's choice as an example of a virtuous life¹⁹⁵.

⁶¹ The large (260 cm in length), likely kline-lid sarcophagus in Naples (Rogge 1995, cat. 19)¹⁹⁶ (Fig. 30) possibly belongs to the final quarter of the century and, as the sole exception, presents a slightly varied version of the above composition. The changes are seen firstly in the left section, where the pilaster, which in the St. Petersburg sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 28) (Fig. 29) formed part of the architectural structure of the chest, has been replaced by a door, which clearly delimits the space of the palace or, more specifically, the women's quarters. Agyrtes is no longer portrayed. Of the three male figures pictured here, only Diomedes repeats the corresponding figure from the previous composition. Odysseus' place has been taken by a different, elderly figure wearing a cap, possibly Phoinix, Achilles' teacher. Odysseus himself, a bearded man also wearing a cap, has been transformed into an impressive figure moving diagonally, depicted in three-quarters view from behind, in open stride. One might say that this is a figure almost equivalent to Achilles, as he is rushing towards him, clearly in order to lead him to the Achaian side. However, the main difference compared to the original composition concerns the figure of Deidameia, who is now standing and moving forcefully beside Achilles, grabbing his arm with her right hand in an effort to keep him near her¹⁹⁷. This motif obviously succeeds in depicting a tightly knit pair about to be abruptly separated. The changes we described are hardly of minor importance, and could be interpreted as a redesign of the older composition. This is probably a new, ›corrected‹ version rather than a wholly new creation of a different workshop, as the same structure of the composition and the same types for seven of the ten figures are basically repeated. In any case, it seems likely that the artist wished to emphasise the relationship between man and woman¹⁹⁸ in life as well as possibly death. Even if the inscription on the upper part of the field, with the name Metilia Torquata assiduously carved, came from a later use of the

¹⁹⁵ According to Zanker – Ewald 2012, 286 f. (with the previous relevant bibliography), the episode refers to the institution of *ephebeia*, i. e. signals the passage of *epheboi* into the world of adults.

¹⁹⁶ Naples, Mus. Naz. inv. 124325. The form of the chest indicates that it was bearing a kline-lid, Rogge 1995, 37. On its dating shortly after A.D. 200, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 385. 458.

¹⁹⁷ This motif is found in some later works of other categories, such as a mosaic from Zeugma and a silver plate from Augst, see Balty 2013a, 121–123 fig. 5. 7.

¹⁹⁸ Emotions are portrayed more intensely in metropolitan sarcophagi, see below, § 95.



Fig. 30: Achilleus sarcophagus, front side. Naples, Mus. Naz. inv. 124325

sarcophagus¹⁹⁹, which is not necessarily the case, it refers to a woman that was possibly interred in it. The woman or the purchaser, who would have been a relative, wanted, for the purposes of consolation, to draw a parallel between her and her beloved husband and the mythical couple of Deidameia and Achilleus²⁰⁰. At the same time, Metilia's musical education is paralleled with that of Achilleus who, together with Lykomedes' daughters, is engrossed in music on the scenes on the right small side of the chest²⁰¹.

62 The group of sarcophagi depicting this theme, as seen in both versions, probably reaches the end of the 2nd or the early 3rd century A.D., as indicated by the impressive, sadly fragmentary Attic sarcophagus from Rome in Copenhagen, to which also a number of fragments, now lost, belonged (Rogge 1995, cat. 15)²⁰² (Fig. 31). The kneeling motif of Deidameia, mainly, and the other figures confirm that the initial version of the composition was followed. However, in addition to the trumpeter wearing a crested helmet and with his shield hung on from his shoulder, two more figures have been added in the background: an old man with a long beard, possibly Phoinix²⁰³, and a young man, who fill out the remaining gap in the relief's field, as was common in Attic sarcophagi of this period. Additionally, the fragmentary frieze in Copenhagen attests to a carving quality that was uncommon in the 2nd century A.D., with intense plasticity of forms and masterfully crafted details. Certain typological elements that are uncommon in Attic sarcophagi possibly allude to metropolitan parallels, as noted by Rogge; however, in my view, they do not lead to the conclusion that the sarcophagus



Fig. 31: Achilleus sarcophagus, part of the front side. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek inv. 845

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199 Rogge 1995, 17 n. 19; 133 cat. 19.

200 Metilia Torquata was likely – as has been proposed – the daughter of a senator (*cos. ord.* in A.D. 157), CIL IX 658; Borg 2018, 197 n. 118 fig. 12, and Borg 2019, 43 f. n. 153 fig. 1.18 (with bibliography).

201 Rogge 1995, 133 cat. 19 pl. 38, 3. On this comparison, see also Borg 2019, 43 f.

202 Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek inv. 845. According to Rogge 1995, 29 cat. 15, it is dated to the late 2nd century A.D., while according to G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 458, it is dated to the early 3rd century A.D. Cf. Østergaard 1996, 140 f.

203 His identification as Lykomedes, Østergaard 1996, 140, is not at all likely, firstly because he is portrayed in the background and secondly because he is positioned among the figures of the Achaians.



Fig. 32: Achilleus sarcophagus, front side. London, Brit. Mus. inv. G_1861-0220-1

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was partially reworked after it was transported to Rome²⁰⁴. Moreover, influences from metropolitan workshops were not unknown in Attic workshops and specifically those making sarcophagi²⁰⁵. However, in this case, the most likely scenario is that the sculptor was familiar with the most modern techniques of the metropolitan sculpture, as indicated by the extensive use of a drill in the two new figures in the background in which the hair and beard offered this possibility. On the other hand, the drilled pupil of the eye, known for decades in Attica, is depicted in the particular manner – with a single deep drill-hole – known to us from Attic works²⁰⁶. These elements and the high quality of work can be interpreted if we assume that this artist had already been involved in the construction of large-scale, free-standing statues. This hypothesis grows even more likely if we consider the monumental sarcophagi of the 3rd century A.D., which we will discuss in detail below.

63 The sadly very worn London sarcophagus from *Ierapetra* (Rogge 1995, cat. 17) (Fig. 32)²⁰⁷ comes probably from a workshop different from the one that created the other sarcophagi depicting the theme. It belongs to the same period as the aforementioned ones and, despite the fact that it was found with a gabled lid, it had been designed as a kline-lid sarcophagus, as indicated by details on the chest²⁰⁸. However, its dating to the late 2nd century A.D.²⁰⁹ is quite late and it should probably be dated earlier, possibly around A.D. 180. It is surprising that the two protagonists of the episode, Achilles and Deidameia, are pictured seated, which, in my view, is intensely reminiscent of early Hippolytos sarcophagi (group I). Achilles, in particular, who is turning his head backwards, towards Deidameia in this case, appears to be more or less the reverse of Hip-

204 Rogge 1995, 28 f., who, however, does not indicate the existence of technical details that would convince us of the supposed modifications.

205 See, for instance, the group of sarcophagi with acanthus scrolls, Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2012c, esp. 157. On the issue of the dependence of Attic sarcophagi on metropolitan models, which are supported on insufficient evidence in certain cases, see Th. Stefanidou-Tiveriou in: Stefanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 135 n. 9; 147. On the reverse direction, i. e. Athenian influences on Rome, see below, § 84–86.

206 On the round shape of the pupil (»punktförmige Augenbohrung«) in Attic portraits, see mainly Fittschen 1999, 18 n. 133–135; Fittschen 2008a, 172 n. 16; 174 n. 31. On additional bibliography, see KatEAM IV 1 2020, cat. 18 n. 3 (Th. Stefanidou-Tiveriou).

207 London, Brit. Mus. inv. GR.1861.2-20.1. G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 383, placed this in a group separate to the previous one (Gruppe II). For this sarcophagus, see also Walker 1990, cat. 44A.

208 Rogge 1995, 38.

209 Rogge 1995, 38. 132 (cat. 17); cf. G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 458; Oakley 2016, 10; Walker 1990, 39, argues for an early dating instead.

polytos' figure (Fig. 12. 13); however, two more figures have been added to either side, one of which, wearing a cap, could be Phoinix. One might say that Deidameia's group with the nurse on the right section is a variation on the seated Phaidra in the same group and expresses a similar state: the psyche of a woman in great suffering, aided by her handmaidens. The left section bears a greater resemblance to the original composition: we identify Diomedes, this time leading a horse, Odysseus and the trumpeter Agyrtes, this time facing left. Another figure, difficult to identify, has been added between the last two, perhaps handing Achilles his helmet. The fact that Achilles, while seated, has already been armed – and is, in fact, holding a helmet in his right hand and has a shield at his feet – is incongruous with the episode. Once again, as was the case with the aforementioned Naples sarcophagus, we would say that the goal is to highlight both the hero and his female partner. In this case, the body posture of the woman and the movement of her head and arms are expressing her deep sorrow at the departure of her beloved, which is equivalent, both in terms of the myth and in actual life, to his death. Despite the poor condition of the relief, the atmosphere surrounding his impending death in fact permeates the scene.

64 Having analysed friezes depicting Meleagros and Hippolytos, it comes as no surprise that a radical change also occurred in the early 3rd century to the conception and execution of the compositions depicting Achilles on Skyros. We observe a dramatic shift to a completely novel way of depicting the myth, which may presuppose a new mode of organisation of workshops and reflects a new understanding as to the reception of the myths. As concluded from the extant Attic sarcophagi, the new conception of the Skyros theme elicited a great response from the purchasing public. It is mainly deployed on the front of the chest, but it often appears in shrunk form on the small sides as well²¹⁰. At the same time, the figures themselves take on monumental characteristics and intense plasticity, standing out from the ground of the relief to the point where they resemble works in the round²¹¹.

65 The relatively well-preserved sarcophagi depicting this theme on their front sides cover a period from the 1st and mainly 2nd quarters of the 3rd century to the mid-3rd century A.D.²¹². In contrast to what was the case during the 2nd century A.D., no one could now indicate two examples repeating somewhat accurately all or even part of the composition or even including the exact same figures. This is also the case, probably to a smaller extent, with Hippolytos sarcophagi, where the uniformity of the naked heroes does not permit one to perceive the differences between them to any particular extent. One is given the impression that a skilled artist who had the initiative at the workshop developed a design that did not serve as an archetype, a model in the narrow sense that was the case during the 2nd century A.D. Sculptors who undertook the task of completing orders used it as a general guide, with the freedom to further process it on their own. This leads me to think that the workforce of workshops was made up during this era of sculptors with skills that exceeded their predecessors, as I also assumed above commenting on the fragmentary Copenhagen sarcophagus (Fig. 31). As will be noted below, I consider it highly likely that the carving of relief sarcophagi became the task of artists who had specialised in the creation of ideal statues in Athens. This gave a new, qualitative impetus to these marble products that decisively contribute to their widespread distribution to the markets of the Roman empire.

66 A group of four sarcophagi corroborate what we assume about the working method of the workshops, since their differences are noteworthy, despite the identical synthesis in terms of basic principles. The earliest example of this series, a chest in

210 Rogge 1995, 53–55.

211 Cf. Rogge 1995, 48.

212 Rogge 1995, 52 f.

Fig. 33: Achilleus sarcophagus, front side. Paris, Louvre inv. Ma 2120



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Jerusalem (Rogge 1995, cat. 14), is preserved in a highly fragmented form, but confirms that the shift towards a monumental depiction of the theme had already begun by the 1st quarter of the 3rd century A.D.²¹³ The chronologically more advanced chest in Ptolemais of Cyrenaica (Rogge 1995, cat. 22) is also fragmentary²¹⁴. The two later, fully extant examples, dating to approximately the mid-3rd century (Rogge 1995, cat. 21. 24)²¹⁵ allow for more assured analysis. The Paris sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 21) (Fig. 33) presents a composition that could be called typical of this period. It is dominated by strict symmetry, with Achilleus, almost fully nude, taking up the axis of the frieze. Two naked warriors with horses on the ends, who are also encountered in other compositions, e. g. depicting the theme of Hippolytos, create a framework, as they are positioned so as to mirror each other. A similarly symmetrical positioning and movement can be observed in Lykomedes' two daughters framing Achilleus, of whom the left one could be identified as Deidameia. Each is followed by a warrior, with the left one leading his horse, as well as certain secondary figures, whose heads appear in the background. Finally, two seated bearded men interposed between the central figures and the warriors at the edges complete this symmetrical design, as they are turned towards the centre of the composition. Their identification will be discussed below; however, it should be noted in advance that only one, the man on the right, has a ribbon in his hair and is stepping on a footstool. The absolute symmetry is somewhat mitigated by the figure of Odysseus – easily identifiable thanks to the cap – who is bent over, apparently in conversation with the seated man on the left end. Save for Odysseus, all figures without exception, even including the horses' heads, are turned and face the predominant hero: Achilleus.

67

In the sarcophagus from Monte del Grano kept in Rome, Museo Capitolino (Rogge 1995, cat. 24) (Fig. 34), the symmetry of the composition has been somewhat disturbed, despite the fact that the frieze is made up of more or less the same figures. To focus on the main deviations from the previous representation on the Paris sarcophagus, the right side has acquired greater weight – and possibly importance – as the right figure of the warrior with the horse has been omitted and greater emphasis is placed on the seated bearded man, again appearing with a ribbon in his hair, in contrast to the man on the left, and he is seated on a throne with an armrest and footstool. The figure of Odysseus is now positioned next to the enthroned man, but he is not addressing him;

213 Rogge 1995, 41 f. 131, dates it to the early 3rd century, while G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 385. 458, dates it to the 1st quarter of the 3rd century A.D.

214 Rogge 1995, 44. 135, dates it before the middle or during the 2nd quarter of the 3rd century A.D.

215 Rome, Mus. Cap. inv. 218 and Paris, Louvre inv. Ma 2120. Rogge 1995, 45. 138 (cat. 24) and 43. 134 (cat. 21), dates them, on the basis of the portraits on the kline-lid of sarcophagus cat. 24, around the middle of the century, whereas G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 385. 458, dates them to the decade of A.D. 240–250.



Fig. 34: Achilleus sarcophagus, front side. Rome, Mus. Cap. inv. 218

34

on the contrary, he is turned towards Achilleus. An elderly man with a long beard and a helmet or a cap, with just his head depicted between Odysseus and the enthroned man, will be discussed along with the identification of the seated men. The most important change occurs in the middle. Achilleus, slightly shifted to the right of the axis, is in intense motion, with his garment revealing his entire body. He is in an opposing relationship, creating a V-shape, with an axially positioned daughter of Lykomedes, obviously Deidameia, who is turned towards him. She is virtually the only daughter of the king remaining in this scene. Only part of another daughter is depicted in the background.

68 A thorny problem concerning the iconography of the two aforementioned sarcophagi and the entire group they belong to is the identification of the two seated older men. The view prevailing in the bibliography is that the left man is Lykomedes and the right man is Agamemnon²¹⁶, despite the fact that the co-existence of these two kings is not attested anywhere. Furthermore, its acceptance leads to an odd, out of place interpolation of Agamemnon in this episode, which carries no meaning. However, are these two men indeed kings? In the Rome sarcophagus, the difference between the two heroes is glaring. The right man is seated on a throne, is stepping on a footstool, is wearing a ribbon around his head and is holding a sceptre. Furthermore, his height reaches the cornice. On the contrary, the man on the left is seated on a stool without back, has no footstool, is holding a sword in his left hand and is resting with his right hand on the seat. He is not wearing a ribbon and is significantly lacking in volume and, probably, importance. If the former were Agamemnon, we would have to accept that Lykomedes, in whose palace the episode is unfolding, appears far inferior to the commander-in-chief of the Achaians and exhibits no royal insignia. In the Paris sarcophagus, the difference is less obvious, as the two men, holding swords in their left hands, have the same height. Nevertheless, the man on the right once again stands out, as he is wearing a ribbon, is stepping on a footstool and is holding a sceptre in his right hand. For

216 Robert 1890, 37 f.; G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 383 n. 17; Rogge 1995, 41 n. 158; Giraud 2006; Rogge 2008, 583 n. 12.

all the above reasons, I believe the man on the right holds a higher hierarchical position in both examples. He is clearly the master of the palace, king Lykomedes²¹⁷. Of course, the identity of the second seated man on the opposite side remains a question. In my view, he belongs to the Achaian delegation which, if true, would contribute to the unity of time and place of the episode. Considering the information in the written sources regarding the persons participating in the Achaian delegation, we could propose his identification as Nestor, the most revered of all, whose participation is attested by the Scholion D to Il. 19, 326. The armed warrior with the horse in front of him could be identified as Diomedes²¹⁸, since Odysseus is in fact positioned behind him in the Paris sarcophagus. Finally, the old man in the Rome sarcophagus depicted in front of the enthroned king and beside Odysseus, who has been shifted to the right side in this case, could be Phoinix, whose participation in the delegation alongside Nestor and Odysseus is also attested by the same Homeric Scholion.

⁶⁹ Returning to the overall composition, we should admit that in both sarcophagi examined, the narrative elements have significantly receded in relation to the corresponding 2nd-century representations, but without disappearing to the extent where the mythological theme is unidentifiable. It is certainly clear that the women's entourage has significantly shrunk, particularly in the Rome sarcophagus, and that emphasis is placed on the young men, Achilles and the Achaians surrounding him²¹⁹. Their naked, athletic bodies could therefore be traced in a broad sense, similar to Hippolytos sarcophagi, to the ideals of Greek culture regarding male beauty and bravery. However, nothing compels us to go far beyond this general insight, considering »that these reliefs are about the naked male body as the object of the male gaze – that is, they are about male desire«, and that the motif of older men observing handsome young men recalls the homosexual ethos of classical Greece²²⁰. On the contrary, all the young men are armoured warriors wearing helmets, save Achilles himself, are frequently accompanied by horses and are portrayed in intense motion. I believe there can be no doubt that the atmosphere is martial and the heroic element is absolutely dominant. Their nudity – heroic nudity – is characteristic in the Greek world, as is well known, of mortals, who are praised and elevated through it, and of heroes and gods²²¹. The athletic ideal is of secondary importance to the artists creating Attic sarcophagi²²² and this is likely one reason why Herakles was not particularly popular in this category of works²²³.

⁷⁰ In my opinion, the climate that the creator of the composition in question wished to transmit by depicting Achilles with numerous armed heroes of the Trojan War is one of preparation for war and is under no circumstances erotic within the meaning noted above. Nevertheless, we must not overlook an iconographic aspect of the Rome sarcophagus, i. e. the fact that Achilles and Deidameia were positioned at the middle of the frieze and in a close relationship with each other. This does not occur in the Paris frieze, where the two daughters are shrinking away from Achilles in terror. This difference is obviously not by accident and may indicate a ›corrective‹ intervention

²¹⁷ The enthroned man on the right was identified as Lykomedes by Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 83, who accepts that the man on the left balances out this composition.

²¹⁸ On the occasion of a fragment from Nikopolis, I had proposed the identification of the seated man as Diomedes, because he is conversing face-to-face with Odysseus in the Paris sarcophagus, Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 223 f.

²¹⁹ Rogge 1995, 43.

²²⁰ Ewald 2011, 289–293, esp. 292; cf. Ewald 2004, 242–247; Ewald 2018, 236 (no. 10). On Ewald's view see Elsner 2019, 425–427, doubting on the general applicability of his conclusions.

²²¹ On ideal or heroic nudity, as the phenomenon is characterised, see Himmelmann 1989, 39–68; Himmelmann 1990. On the depiction of the body in ancient art and its meaning, see e. g. Tiverios 2015.

²²² See the representation of boxers on the Vatican sarcophagus, G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 381 n. 27 fig. 407; Ewald 2018, 242 n. 116 fig. 14.

²²³ See below, § 111–113.

in the context of the workshop. As was the case in the older Naples sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 19) (Fig. 30), it appears that in the Rome sarcophagus, a more specific meaning is given to the scene. Amidst the military climate and the turmoil, the separation of the mythical couple is presented as a tragic incident that is most likely referring to the spouses being depicted reposed on the sarcophagus lid or to close relatives of theirs²²⁴.

Other Scenes: Arming, Assembly of Achaïans

⁷¹ The innovation and creativity displayed by Attic workshops is also evident in other sarcophagi which, based on our knowledge to date, are unique in terms of their theme. The difficulty we currently face in interpreting the two friezes we will discuss below is not due, as has been argued, to the weaknesses of their actual compositions. That they emerged, to a certain extent, from a combination of types already known to us from other compositions does not mean that we should treat them as the products of a ›merging‹ that was, in fact, unsuccessful²²⁵; on the contrary, this involves a new integration of figure types already known in a different framework with new significance.

⁷² As regards the Beirut sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 6) (Fig. 35), dated to the mid-3rd century A.D.²²⁶, there can be no doubt that it depicts the arming of Achilles. This is the only Attic sarcophagus where this scene is attested on the front, while it is quite frequently found on the small sides²²⁷. As is the case with the frieze of Achilles on Skyros, the framework is made up of two warriors leading their horses in intense motion on the two ends. We also see – albeit only on the left side – a seated man, a figure very similar to the one seen in the Paris and Rome sarcophagi (Rogge 1995, cat. 21. 24) (Fig. 33. 34). It should be noted that now *he* is the one with a ribbon in his hair, while the corresponding seated figure on the right is completely absent. Moreover, his right hand, which held a sceptre, is now raised. This scene is dominated by tranquillity, in contrast to the Skyros episode. It should be noted that in this case the latter episode, predominantly unfolding in the women's quarters, has been shifted to the left small side of the chest²²⁸. On the contrary, the main frieze is absolutely dominated by the figures of warriors, two of whom are wearing cuirass.

⁷³ Achilles is without question the central figure, placed in frontal position on the axis of the frieze, in a ›princely‹ stance, leaning on his spear and holding a sword in his left hand. It is worth noting that Agamemnon appears in the same position and a similar stance in the so-called Polyxene sarcophagus in Madrid (Oakley 2011, cat. 62)²²⁹, which also depicts an assembly, this time between Achaïans and Trojans. In the Beirut sarcophagus, the figure of the slave tying the belt on Achilles' cuirass assures us that this is indeed a scene depicting his arming. Thetis is absent, despite being attested in other scenes during both the 2nd and the 3rd centuries A.D. where the arming of Achilles in Troy is recognised (Hom. Il. 18 and 19, 1–23)²³⁰. The possible presence of Phoinix in the

²²⁴ On the depiction of reclining spouses on sarcophagus lids, see below, § 114–120.

²²⁵ With regard to the Beirut sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 6), see Rogge 1995, 48, with a negative assessment concerning the uniformity of the composition. Cf. Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 88 f.

²²⁶ Beirut, NM inv. 607/608. On the dating of the sarcophagus based on the portraits on its lid, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 385 n. 31; 458. Rogge 1995, 49. 127, suggests a somewhat later dating, around A.D. 260, as the portraits were carved at a provincial rather than a metropolitan workshop. However, it is more likely, as the portraits were carved after the sarcophagus was sent to its place of use, that they constitute a *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the sarcophagus.

²²⁷ Rogge 1995, 23. 31. 55–59. 103–105. To these, we should add the left small side of the sarcophagus in the J. Paul Getty Mus., Oakley 2016, esp. 104 f. n. 20 pl. 116, 1.

²²⁸ Rogge 1995, 165 pl. 65, 1.

²²⁹ See below, § 102. 109.

²³⁰ Rogge 1995, 23 (cat. 12 pl. 20). 55–59 (cat. 12. 18. 20 pl. 20; 66, 1. 2). 103 f.; see also the fragment in Side, although no trace of the figure of Thetis has survived, Rogge 2008, 585 f. fig. 2 pl. 72, 1. See also LIMC I (1981) 66 nos. 177–181 s. v. Achilles (A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

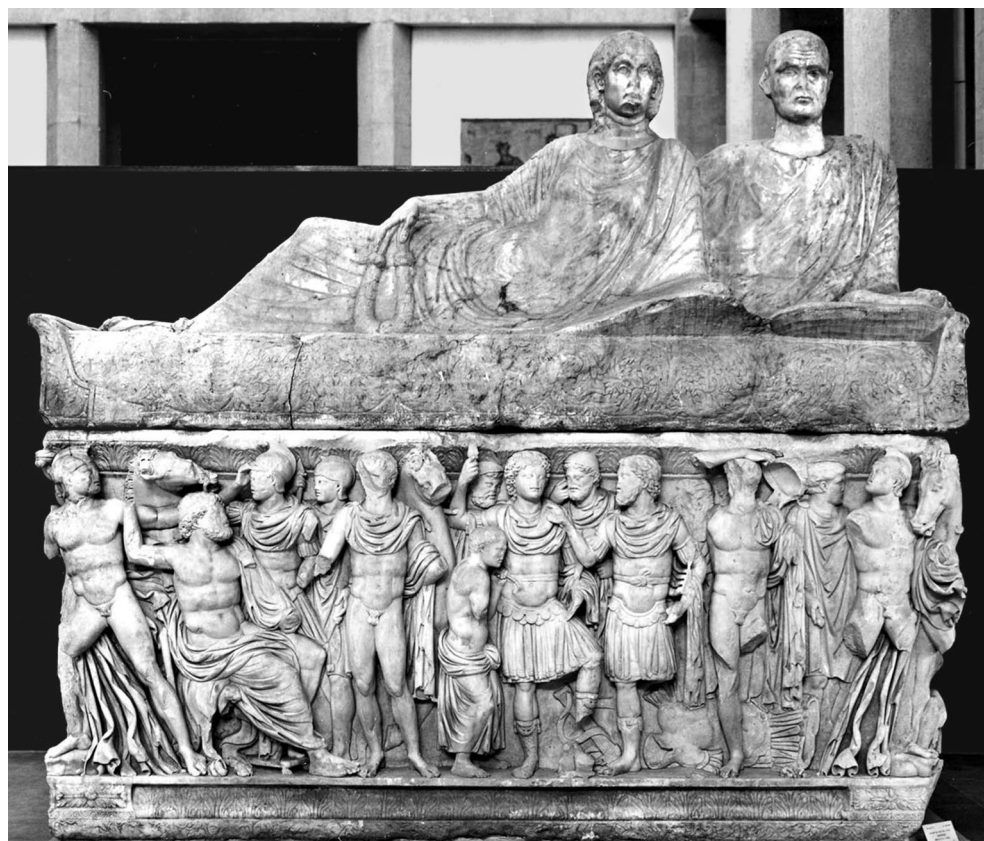


Fig. 35: Achilleus sarcophagus,
front side. Beirut, NM inv. 607/608

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relevant representations²³¹ does not, however, definitively solve the problem whether it is the arming in Troy or the one in Phthia²³².

74 One other group consists of representations, always on small sides, depicting the arming episode from which Thetis is absent²³³, and to which the frieze on the front side in question also belongs. However, it is uncertain whether this absence helps us determine the arming location. In these monuments, the only assuredly identifiable hero other than Achilles is Odysseus, therefore this is a difficult question to answer. The fact that the arming scene often coexists on the same sarcophagus with the discovery of Achilles on Skyros, whether on the front, as is the case with the Paris and Rome sarcophagi (Rogge 1995, cat. 21. 24) or on the small left side, as is the case at hand, and the use of certain common types of figures has apparently influenced the interpretation of the scene depicted on the Beirut sarcophagus. It was thus believed that this arming takes place on Skyros and that the seated bearded man is Lykomedes²³⁴. However, this seems highly unlikely, as the discovery episode itself, where Achilles grabs the weapons brought by the Achaïans and transforms into a warrior, means in itself the arming of the hero. Consequently, the scene on the front of the Beirut sarcophagus would, in a way, be repeating the one depicted on its small side. Therefore, I believe that here, as well as in all similar cases, we are viewing a later scene, which must be placed in Troy. In this case, the hero, having donned the new arms Thetis brought from Hephaistos, now appears before the Achaïans' entourage to announce, before Agamemnon and the other

231 Rogge 1995, 23 n. 34 f. pl. 20.

232 LIMC I (1985) 62–72 s. v. Achilleus (A. Kossatz-Deissmann); LIMC VIII (1997) 985 f. s. v. Phoenix II (A. Kaufmann-Samaras).

233 Rogge 1995, 23. 55 f. 104 n. 121.

234 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 385; Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 88. Rogge 1995, 47 f., believes that the scene resulted from a combination of arming scenes and part of the Skyros episode; however, her proposed interpretation remains exceptionally vague. See also LIMC I (1981) 68 f. s. v. Achilleus (A. Kossatz-Deissmann).



Fig. 36: Achilles sarcophagus, front side. Tyre, Necropolis

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warriors, his decision to rejoin the war. In the *Iliad* (Hom. Il. 19), these two episodes, i. e. the arming of Achilles and the gathering of the Achaians, are a precondition for each other. It should also be noted that in the depiction in question, the arming itself is not as prominent as one might expect, and the impression is thus given that the main theme of the frieze is the assembly of the Achaians²³⁵.

⁷⁵ If we have interpreted the depiction correctly, then the seated king on the left in this case is Agamemnon and not Lykomedes. However, the bearded, cuirassed warrior standing to the left of Achilles and facing him is also an important figure for interpreting the depiction. Save the beard, he is almost identical in appearance with him and quite imposing, to the point where we consider him his equal in terms of rank. The hypothesis that this is Agamemnon in the context of the Skyros episode (but who appears standing, in contrast to Lykomedes!)²³⁶ is unconvincing, irrespective of our own proposal. This is because he is not wearing a ribbon in his hair, contrary to the seated man. The gesture of his right hand, placed on Achilles' shoulder as if approving his presence or amicably welcoming him to the Achaian assembly, is characteristic²³⁷. The figure depicted may be Aias, whose close relationship to Achilles is well known²³⁸, while the two bearded men wearing caps and appearing on the background on either

²³⁵ Ernst Rudolf had proposed a similar interpretation in the past, albeit admittedly without strong evidence, see Rudolf 1989, 29 f., based on the depiction on a ›Megarian‹ bowl and the ambiguously interpreted scene on the small left side of the St. Petersburg sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 29 pl. 39, 3). This last depiction, which is difficult to interpret, depicts, according to Rogge 1995, 140, Lykomedes bidding Achilles farewell.

²³⁶ Rogge 1995, 48.

²³⁷ In the classical period, this precise gesture or other similar ones are usually attested in figures sharing close emotional bonds or friendship who are usually persons of the same importance; see the extensive, richly documented paper by Speier 1932, with a wealth of examples, e. g. pl. 7, 1–3. Cf. Tiverios 2020, 242 figs. 1–2, 7.

²³⁸ See e. g. LIMC I (1981) 312 s. v. Aias I (O. Touchefeu).

side of Achilles are Odysseus and, possibly, Diomedes²³⁹. Finally, the young warriors dominating the entire length of the frieze are certainly Achilles' Myrmidons.

76 Following the above proposed interpretation of the Beirut sarcophagus, the depiction of the contemporaneous Tyre sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 42) (Fig. 36) becomes easier to comprehend²⁴⁰. One forms the impression that the scene on the latter has resulted from a processing of the previous composition with a view to further highlighting the predominant theme, i. e. the gathering of the Achaeans, and to create an image that is more monumental and, at the same time, easier to grasp. The arming of Achilles is not even alluded to; instead, it has been relocated to the right small side of the chest²⁴¹ and only his arms lying on the ground are apparent, while the leading hero's helmet is being held by one of the warriors off to the right. The figures of the horsemen are absent at the two ends, which may be due to the length of the chest, which is smaller by approximately half a metre²⁴², thus contributing to a more cohesive result. The edges are now taken up by the two seated men adhering to the type encountered in the episode of Achilles on Skyros (Fig. 33. 34). The rest of the frieze is covered by an entourage of eight warriors, accompanied by two horses, who are mostly positioned in placid stances. Additionally, a trumpeter can be seen on the right edge, above the seated man. This type is known from the scene of Achilles on Skyros, yet his presence does not suffice for the identification of this theme²⁴³. None of the warriors presents attributes that would lead to his identification, without this being due to the poor condition of the monument. However, Achilles is unquestionably identifiable, as the themes depicted on all sides of the chest concern him. He is indubitably the central figure, duly displayed in front of a horse he is leading by the reins. He is depicted in almost frontal view, turning slightly to his right, where a young companion is standing, seen in three-quarters view from behind, fully facing Achilles. Both men, in contrast to all other warriors, are naked, as their chlamys is tumbling behind their left shoulders, fully revealing their bodies. It should be noted that Achilles' companion has placed his right hand on the protagonist's shoulder, exactly like his armoured companion on the Beirut sarcophagus²⁴⁴ (Fig. 35). This is certainly the same gesture of approval or friendship. These two men are clearly at the epicentre of the episode, and everyone's gaze is turned towards them. The sole exception is the warrior with the large shield on the left, who is dashing towards them, but with his head facing backwards, towards the seated man, while pointing with his right hand towards the middle of the scene, obviously at Achilles.

77 If we are ›reading‹ the composition correctly, this is Achilles amidst an entourage of Achaians²⁴⁵. The presence of the two seated bearded men – between whom, insofar as the condition of the monument allows us to discern, there is no differentiation – is

239 Apart from Odysseus, Diomedes is also depicted wearing a cap, see e. g. LIMC III (1986) 401 no. 30 s. v. Diomedes I (J. Boardmann – C. E. Vafopoulou-Richardson).

240 Tyre, Necropolis. G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 386. 458: mid-3rd century A.D.; Rogge 1995, 46. 144: 250–260 and mid-3rd century A.D., respectively.

241 Rogge 1995, 144 pl. 67, 2.

242 It is 203 cm long (Rogge 1995, 143), while the Beirut sarcophagus is 250 cm long (Rogge 1995, 126). The same interpretation is provided by Rogge 1995, 46.

243 On the contrary, Rogge 1995, 44, considers his presence as corroborating evidence for identifying Achilles on Skyros. However, it is surprising that she also identifies the discovery of the hero on Skyros on the rear side of the same sarcophagus, Rogge 1995, 68 f. 144 (cat. 42) pl. 74. This problematic scene has been interpreted in different ways, Rogge 1995, 66 n. 346–348, but its fragmentary condition and, more importantly, its uniqueness have not allowed for an assured interpretation to date. G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 386 n. 41, also linked the depiction on the Tyre sarcophagus to the Skyros episode, insisting on identifying the two seated men as Lykomedes and Agamemnon.

244 See above, § 75.

245 Rogge 1995, 45 f., accepts after some hesitation that this scene follows up on that of Achilles on Skyros. She attributes the absence of key figures of that composition, such as Lykomedes' daughters, to the fact that during the 3rd century A.D. smaller importance was placed on the accuracy of the content of the representations, which appear rather as »mood pictures« (»eher Stimmungsbilder«).

in this case more comprehensible than ever before. Therefore, the interpretation proposed by Linant de Bellefonds is highly likely, whereby this is the episode following the arming of Achilles, i. e. the reconciliation of Achilles and Agamemnon before all the Achaians, as recounted in the *Iliad* (Il. 19, 40–237)²⁴⁶. Therefore, one of the two seated men must be Agamemnon and the other another important leader of the Achaians, likely Nestor. The young companion who appears to be welcoming Achilles could be Antilochos, Nestor's son, who, according to the *Aethiopis*, took on Patroklos' role of bosom companion following his death; however, other close friends mentioned after this incident include Automedon and Alkimos²⁴⁷. Either could be identified as the warrior with the large shield beside Agamemnon, dashing towards Achilles and pointing at him, perhaps conveying a message from the leader of the Achaians. Finally, the figure of the trumpeter is a ›loan‹ from the Skyros episode (since the creation of that composition is likely older), but has been incorporated into a new context, as the seated figures have been. This is quite possibly a symbolic figure expressing the climate of the war about to break out, as Agamemnon himself says: »Nay, rouse thee for battle, and rouse withal the rest of thy people« (Hom. Il. 19, 139, Murray 1924/1925)²⁴⁸.

⁷⁸ Both representations – unique to date – we have analysed and interpreted promote Achilles and his heroic nature to a superlative degree, while insinuating in an ostensibly tranquil framework the tragic death that awaits him as he joins the war. He is simultaneously the exemplar of bravery and a heroic death (*exemplum virtutis* and *exemplum mortalitatis*). No doubt these scenes prove the inexhaustible creativity of Athenian artists during the late phase of the production of Attic sarcophagi.

Amazonomachy and Other Battles

⁷⁹ Following the representations where Achilles is the protagonist, we will turn our attention to the Amazonomachy scenes because, as we will see below, these probably concern the Trojan Amazonomachy²⁴⁹. This is the second most populous group of Attic sarcophagi after that of the Erotes and is significantly larger than the corresponding group of metropolitan sarcophagi, particularly when considering the total number of extant monuments from each workshop²⁵⁰. The friezes depicting battles are, due to their very nature, unsuitable for the creation of compositions that vary significantly from each other in terms of structure. Nevertheless, the recent detailed publication of the material in ASR IX 1, 2 allows us, on one hand, to make certain observations similar to those worded with regard to the previous groups and, on the other, to determine the different way they were perceived by purchasers in comparison to the other mythological groups.

⁸⁰ The earliest group of monuments (group I according to Carola Kintrup) most likely adheres faithfully to an archetype, as indicated by the relevant uniformity of the best-preserved examples in the types of figures and the way they are composed²⁵¹. The earliest example of the group to date, the Louvre sarcophagus from Thessaloniki

²⁴⁶ Linant de Bellefonds 1985, 66–88. The reconciliation of Achilles and Agamemnon is identified in »Megarian« bowls, see LIMC I (1985) 128 no. 541 b. c s. v. Achilles (A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

²⁴⁷ See above, § 54.

²⁴⁸ A similar figure named Kelados, signifying the din of battle, is attested several times in Hellenistic relief pottery from Macedonia, Akamatēs 1993, esp. 235–237.

²⁴⁹ On the relevant written sources, see Grassinger 1999, 136 f.; Kintrup 2016, 204 n. 1128 (bibliography).

²⁵⁰ See statistical data on both groups: Ewald 2004, 235 fig. 2; 237 fig. 1. On the metropolitan monuments, see Grassinger 1999, as well as Russenberger 2015; on the Attic monuments, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 390–392; Kintrup 2016. Fragments of an Attic Amazonomachy sarcophagus were recently presented by Stroszeck 2016, 118. 124 f. cat. 1.1. A new finding, a plaque from an Amazonomachy sarcophagus, was unearthed during the Thessaloniki METRO excavations but remains unpublished to date.

²⁵¹ Kintrup 2016, 49–56. 97–102; see esp. cat. 54. 156. According to the author, in the earlier groups, i. e. I and II, the examples, dating up to A.D. 200, follow specific types of figures and combinations thereof.

Fig. 37: Amazonomachy sarcophagus, front side. Paris, Louvre inv. Ma 2119



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(Kintrup 2016, cat. 156) (Fig. 37), has now been dated to the decade of A.D. 160–170²⁵², or even around A.D. 160²⁵³. Two of the scenes on the chest serve as evidence for identifying the Trojan Amazonomachy²⁵⁴ in this specific sarcophagus and, possibly, the group formed around it. The presence of Odysseus on the right edge of the front side and the pairing of Achilles and Penthesileia on the small left side (Fig. 38) allow us to safely assume that this is the Amazonomachy in question. However, the individual figures cannot be identified in the majority of Amazonomachy representations, irrespective of group, which does not allow us to assuredly rule on whether we are always dealing with the Trojan Amazonomachy or perhaps another of the Amazonomachies known. Furthermore, the fact that Kintrup's groups I, II and III (most examples of which are

252 Paris, Louvre inv. Ma 2119. On the dating of this sarcophagus based on the portraits on the kline-lid and the dating of the introduction of this type of lid consistent thereto, see KatMTh II 2003, 247–249 (cat. 329) (Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou), and esp. Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2007, 267–269; furthermore, Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 12. This dating is accepted by: Piekarski 2009, 618 f.; Koch 2012b, 38 n. 15; Koch 2015, 9 n. 21; Russenberger 2015, 320; Papagianni 2016, 86 n. 862; Kintrup 2016, 50; Strocka 2017a, 26 n. 97. With regard to the introduction of the kline-lid, Ahrens 2007, 39 n. 77, proposes a dating to the 160 decade based on indirect, unclarified information (!); cf. Ewald 2018, 213 n. 24.

253 Accepting the proposed dating to A.D. 160–170, Fittschen 2005, 162, stresses that this dating applies to the carving of the portraits (mainly arising from the hairstyle of the female head), while serving as the *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the sarcophagus itself. On the contrary, Russenberger 2015, 318–320, examines the case that the portraits were constructed long after the chest and proposes a dating of ca. A.D. 160 to 180–190 for the chest, accepting a later dating for the male portrait, Russenberger 2015, 318 f. (he overlooks in an unorthodox way the importance of the female portrait, which is the strongest dating evidence, as it depends on imperial portrait models). Nevertheless, he accepts that the introduction of the kline-lid can be dated, based on the Louvre sarcophagus, to A.D. 160–170, Russenberger 2015, 320. As regards the possibility of concurrent use of the gabled lid and the kline-lid (which does exist), he erroneously uses the example of the Tyre sarcophagus (Kintrup 2016, Cat. 259), the lid of which has been re-used.

254 Cf. Kintrup 2016, 204 f.

dated within the 2nd century A.D.²⁵⁵) differ significantly in terms of the types of figures and their compositions gives rise to the suspicion that, in certain cases, they could nevertheless depict the Athenian Amazonomachy²⁵⁶. While the use of individual types is, as is well known, frequently independent of the content of an image²⁵⁷, it is still worth noting that characteristic types of figures from the Attic Amazonomachy on the shield of Athena Parthenos are completely absent from Attic sarcophagi; on the contrary, they are found, albeit rarely, in fragments of Asiatic sarcophagi²⁵⁸. In any event, as regards the use of different compositions during the same period, we should bear in mind that other mythological themes, such as that of Meleagros, also present concurrent use of two compositions of the same mythological episode with marked typological differences, resulting from different



Fig. 38: Amazonomachy sarcophagus, left side. Paris, Louvre inv. Ma 2119

archetypes²⁵⁹. As in that case, we are once again dealing with at least two compositions dating to the 2nd century A.D. with different types of figures and different characteristics²⁶⁰: one, belonging to group I, is simpler and more symmetrical, with clean outlines and an intensely classicistic style (Fig. 37. 39); the other, belonging to group II (Fig. 40), is based on more complex shapes with hard-posed, foreshortened figures, frequently seen from behind. It cannot be ruled out that, once again, these are creations by different Athenian workshops depicting the same mythological theme.

81 A relatively recent find from a funerary monument in *Cyrene*, dated to the late 2nd century A.D.²⁶¹, reinforces the view that the workshops' intention was to depict the Trojan Amazonomachy. It also depicts Odysseus, recognised from the cap he is wearing and, in fact, positioned at approximately the same location on the frieze where he is found on the Louvre sarcophagus, despite the fact that this composition deviates significantly from that one. Apart from this evidence, the question of the identification of the specific episode on Attic sarcophagi should be raised on a broader basis, i. e. it should be viewed within the totality of mythological themes that the workshops creating Attic sarcophagi were preferring over the course of their history. However, this issue will be discussed later.

82 As is the case with all the mythological episodes of the 2nd century A.D. we examined above, in the case of the Amazonomachy, the narration does not display significant surges but is uniformly deployed from one end to the other. However, a number of individual sarcophagi dated to the 1st half of the 3rd century A.D. display groups that usually consist of two figures positioned on the axis of the frieze. Examples of group II

255 We have reservations as to the precise dating of the monuments that Kintrup classifies into groups I to III, especially those of groups II and III (which, in fact, she characterises as early examples), given that a large percentage are dated close to A.D. 200 (A.D. 180–190/200–210). For instance, the dating of cat. 60 and cat. 154 of group III to A.D. 190–210 and 190–200, respectively, is exceptionally late, in my view. Another issue is the inclusion of a large number of fragments in types, which will not be discussed here.

256 Cf. Kintrup 2016, 205, mainly referring to groups I and II.

257 Wiegartz 1975, 201; Rogge 1995, 26. 47 n. 206.

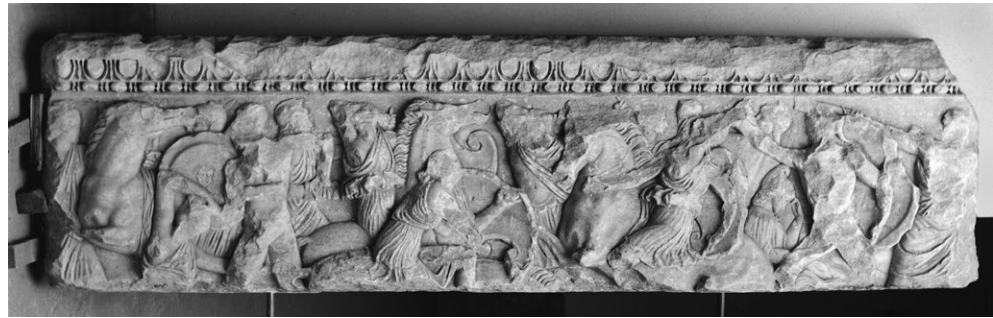
258 On the well-known fragments from sarcophagi found in Aphrodisias with figures originating from Athena Parthenos' shield, see, most recently, Russenberger 2015, 533 n. 201 (with bibliography); 616 n. 100; 620 n. 145; esp. Koch 2012a, 2 f. pl. 2, 1. 2, who attributes them to an Attic artist who came to this city and worked using local marble. A fragment from an Ephesian sarcophagus depicting an Amazon falling with her head facing downwards, i. e. a type also alluding to the shield of Athena Parthenos, also originates from a local work, Kintrup 2017, 141–143 pl. 78 figs. 319. 320.

259 See above, § 17–19.

260 On their co-existence, see Kintrup 2016, 100 f.

261 Fabbriotti 2016, 137–142; see also Russenberger 2015, 30 n. 13.

Fig. 39: Amazonomachy sarcophagus, front side. Athens, NM inv. 1147



39

Fig. 40: Amazonomachy sarcophagus, front side. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ. Art Mus. inv. 1899.9A-C. 1932.49A-B



40

(Kintrup 2016, cat. 82. 89) (Fig. 40) already portray on their axis a horse on its hind legs facing right and a warrior trying to tame it²⁶². The centre is stressed even more emphatically in a number of individual sarcophagi, which depict a pair of opponents at this position. This is virtually the only element linking these works which, in all other respects, constitute independent creations with no discernible archetype, as is usually the case in the 3rd century A.D. However, even this pair, which appears to play a leading role among the swarm of figures moving freely across the scene, differs from case to case. At times, we see a Greek warrior pulling a kneeling Amazon by the hair (group K II: Kintrup 2016, cat. 78. 245)²⁶³ (Fig. 41); at others, the Greek is pulling an Amazon on horseback by the hair (group K IV and K III: Kintrup 2016, cat. 141²⁶⁴; see also the Cyrene sarcophagus); in other cases, we see a figure on horseback, either a Greek or an Amazon, positioned precisely at the axis attacking his or her opponent (Kintrup 2016, cat. 130. 247); or two pairs, consisting of one opponent on horseback and the other on foot, in a centrifugal motion away from the axis (Kintrup 2016, cat. 112). Finally, there is a singular case of a group positioned at the axis, consisting of two naked Greek warriors, with one aiding his wounded companion (the so-called *Helfergruppe*, type H II: Kintrup 2016, cat. 259) (Fig. 42). It is worth noting that a similar pair (Kintrup type H III) appears on the left

262 Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Univ. Art Mus. inv. 1899.9A-C. 1932.49A-B. Kintrup 2016, 64–67. 100–102. On this group, also used on metropolitan sarcophagi of the late Antonine era, see Russenberger 2015, 350–354.

263 A similar motif is attested on a fragment of a sarcophagus in Thessaloniki, Arch. Mus. inv. 229 (Kintrup 2016, cat. 243), which according to Kintrup 2016, 283, belongs to the same sarcophagus as the fragment from Thessaloniki depicting an Amazonomachy in the same museum inv. 230. Her argument that these two share the same origin (Sarapis-Tempel [sic] [1939]) is not credible. They have been recorded in the museum inventory immediately after the Hekataion with inv. 228, which originates from the Sarapieion area, but no origin is inscribed for the sarcophagus pieces. See KatMTh III 2010, cat. 633. 635 (E. Papagiannē). The fact that the pieces were recorded one after the other does not necessarily mean nor rules out that they were found together.

264 According to Kintrup 2016, 55 f., this is a local work dated to the 3rd quarter of the 2nd century A.D. or shortly thereafter. See also Russenberger 2015, 309–311.



Fig. 41: Amazonomachy sarcophagus, front side. Thessaloniki, Arch. Mus. inv. 283

41

end of the Cyrene sarcophagus immediately after the trumpeter figure²⁶⁵. The warrior carrying his companion is a particularly impressive figure, standing out from the crowd and is reminiscent of Menelaos carrying the body of Patroklos in the so-called Pasquino group²⁶⁶. Achilles himself is the warrior on the axis of the frieze about to strike a blow against the Amazon on horseback by pulling her by the hair²⁶⁷.

83 While these last sarcophagi mostly belong to the 2nd quarter of and mid-3rd century A.D., the protagonist does not duly emerge from the din of battle, i. e. does not stand out as emphatically as in other mythological groups. This is clear mainly from a comparison to Meleagros sarcophagi, which are thematically closer to those of the Amazonomachy. This observation can be leveraged if combined with two additional facts: a) that artists rarely or exceptionally identified Amazonomachy protagonists; and b) that the group of Athenian Amazonomachy sarcophagi is, as noted above, particularly populous. Thus, the question arises as to if and how these facts correlate to each other.

84 Before further analysing the works, I would briefly focus on a somewhat important dating issue because it allows us to more correctly assess the relationship observed between early Athenian Amazonomachy sarcophagi and a group of also early metropolitan sarcophagi with the same theme. The similarities between the two groups raised a question about the priority of one workshop or the other regarding the creation of the fighting groups attested therein. Taking the older late dating of the beginning of the Attic kline-lid sarcophagi to around A.D. 180 into consideration, Dagmar Grassinger attributed precedence to the Roman workshop²⁶⁸. More recently, Christian Russenberger, who did ultimately accept the dating of the Attic kline-lid sarcophagus in the Louvre from Thessaloniki to A.D. 160–170, did not categorically attribute precedence regarding the above case to Athens. Nevertheless, he considered likely the existence of an older Attic model on which both the metropolitan monu-

265 Fabbricotti 2016, pls. 65, 1; 69.

266 See, for instance, Andreae 2001, 152–155 cat. 127–129.

267 Fabbricotti 2016, pls. 65, 1; 68, 2.

268 Grassinger 1999, 167–169. On criticism against her arguments, see Russenberger 2015, 303. 306.



Fig. 42: Amazonomachy sarcophagus, front side. Tyre, Excavations inv. 2772/2773

42



43

Fig. 43: Amazonomachy sarcophagus, fragment of the lid. Nikopolis, Mus. inv. 3557a

ments and the Louvre sarcophagus depend²⁶⁹. A more recent finding from Nikopolis has come to provide a definitive answer, in my view, to this problem. It belongs to a relatively rare type of a flat Attic sarcophagus lid and retains the left part of a relief frieze depicting an Amazonomachy²⁷⁰ (Fig. 43). The three surviving figures are repeating types known from the Louvre chest and, more specifically: a) group K I of the warrior with his rear to the viewer, pulling a kneeling Amazon by her hair; and b) the attacking Amazon from group K XIV, on her own, i. e. without the horse and the upper section of the warrior facing her on the Louvre sarcophagus²⁷¹ (Fig. 37). As a result, this last Amazon depicted on the Nikopolis lid is dashing towards group K I, clearly in aid of her fallen companion. Furthermore, another figure who, in the frieze of the Louvre, appears in the first level ahead of the figures of group K XIV, is absent: the Greek warrior G I, who is fallen on his knees, with his body almost horizontal. As a result of the above, the Nikopolis lid

depicts a concise composition of sparsely positioned figures deployed on only two (and not four) planes. If we consider the early – in relation to the kline-lid – form of the lid²⁷² and the frugal composition and style of the figures, rendered with clear outlines and in relatively flat relief, I believe we would easily conclude a dating certainly earlier than that of the Louvre sarcophagus from Thessaloniki, most possibly around A.D. 150²⁷³.

²⁶⁹ Russenberger 2015, 319–322.

²⁷⁰ Nikopolis, Mus. inv. 3557a. On its detailed publication, see Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, cat. 138, also referring to the type of this lid.

²⁷¹ The warrior on horseback was clearly added to the composition afterwards; consequently, the horse seen on the Louvre sarcophagus belongs to him and not to the kneeling Amazon of group K I, as contended by Russenberger 2015, 306.

²⁷² On lids with a flat form, see above, § 49 n. 159.

²⁷³ Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, cat. 138.



44

This dating is in line with the appearance of the other mythological subjects on Attic sarcophagi around the mid-2nd century A.D.

85 This conclusion leaves no room for doubt as to the precedence of the Athenian Amazonomachy sarcophagi over the metropolitan ones with regard to the types of early figural groups mentioned²⁷⁴. The extant metropolitan parallels, i. e. the sarcophagi of the Mantua-Paris and Berlin-Rome group²⁷⁵ (Fig. 44), attest that they took into consideration the composition known to us from the Thessaloniki sarcophagus in the Louvre and, therefore, that they depend on the same archetype. According to Russenberger, the Louvre sarcophagus and other examples related to it, i. e. those of Athens (Fig. 39), on one hand, and those of Rome, on the other, are part of an evolutionary series which the scholar ›constructs‹ on a complex method that requires continuous, mutual exchange of types between the two workshops²⁷⁶. However, I believe there is a simpler and safer way to interpret the relationship between Athenian and metropolitan works. In other words, it seems highly likely that the processing of the composition of the Louvre-Athens group 1147 (Kintrup 2016, cat. 54. 156) (Fig. 37. 39) resulted, shortly thereafter, in the representations on the metropolitan sarcophagi classified in the Mantua-Paris and Berlin-Rome groups (Fig. 44). Let us focus on the better-preserved sarcophagus of Mantua: the left section of the Athenian composition remained unchanged, even including the warrior of group K I depicted from the rear. Its middle section, i. e. the Amazon dismounting from her kneeling horse and her opponent (group K XI), were relocated and took up the right end of the new composition. In the Mantua frieze, between these two sections, two groups and one dead Amazon from other Attic compositions were added: a) group K V with the fallen horse and the Amazon in a defensive posture, her cuirassed opponent pressing on the horse's hindquarters with his knee, a motif from the composition of Attic group III (e. g. Kintrup 2016, cat. 60. 154); b) the mounted Amazon facing backwards (type S I) to help her companion while being attacked from the front by a Greek warrior with his rear towards the viewer (a variation of the Greek from group K I), also attested in the composition of group III (Kintrup 2016, cat. 60), next to group K V, precisely as is the case with the Mantua sarcophagus; c) the supine fallen Amazon (type G VI) attested in fragmentary Attic examples (Kintrup 2016, cat. 73. 265).

Fig. 44: Amazonomachy sarcophagus, front side. Mantua, Palazzo Ducale

274 The revision of the dating of Attic sarcophagi, concerning both the beginning of production (see above, § 9 n. 34) and the introduction of the kline-lid (see above, § 80 n. 252. 253) necessarily leads to a re-examination of several cases where precedence was until now considered to belong to Rome; on this matter see Papagianni 2016, 95–97.

275 Russenberger 2015, 302–336. 467 f. cat. 8. 9 pls. 13–16. See also Grassinger 1999, cat. 103 and 102, respectively.

276 Russenberger 2015, 302–336, esp. 317.

86 In the case at hand, it is clear, in my view, that this is not an exchange of types between the two workshops but the import of types from Athens to Rome – and, in fact, types originating from at least two different models²⁷⁷. It appears almost certain that one or more metropolitan workshops processed models that came from Athens. These were used to create new compositions wherein well-known Athenian motifs and groups were incorporated in a different way but without establishing a steadily repeating archetype²⁷⁸. Imported Attic sarcophagi may have been used as models, although it appears more likely that Athenian sculptors who joined the workforce of the capital's workshops contributed decisively to these creations. Such participation by Athenian sculptors in the creation of metropolitan sarcophagi is well documented in the mid-2nd century A.D. by the well-known *Ostia* sarcophagus in Berlin depicting the mourning (*prothesis*) for Patroklos²⁷⁹. Both the types of figures and the particular style of Attic sarcophagi are easily discernible in this case, which preserves the typical structure of metropolitan sarcophagi, as does the group we referred to.

87 We can safely conclude from the foregoing that, from the moment they began producing mythological sarcophagi, Attic workshops exhibited creativity and originality, as seen also from the study of other themes, drawing from their own rich tradition and following their own path, independent from the products of Rome; furthermore, they influence the corresponding metropolitan works to a certain extent, with Rome apparently attracting artists from Athens²⁸⁰.

88 What is of particular interest in the case of the Amazonomachy is the search for the content of these representations and the way ancient purchasers and viewers of the monuments perceived them. We previously referred to specific characteristics they display that differ from those of other Athenian mythological sarcophagi: the absence (or rarity) of identifiers of the figures and the lack of interest in particularly highlighting the figures of the protagonists. It is also noteworthy in cases when more emphasis is given to the axis, mainly in 3rd-century sarcophagi, usually by positioning groups of opponents, the warrior who prevails is at times a Greek and at others an Amazon. Therefore, we cannot rule as to whether the interest is focused on the side of the Greeks or that of the Amazons²⁸¹. In other words, it appears that the theme of these friezes is the battle itself and the bravery of the warriors on all sides, not the supremacy of the Greeks²⁸² or, as is the case in a group of metropolitan sarcophagi, the defeat of the Amazons²⁸³. Thus, in the case of the Attic sarcophagi, although the Trojan Amazonomachy is possibly depicted, it is not deemed expedient to state this more clearly, as this battle, being part of the Trojan cycle, is the Amazonomachy *par excellence* comprehended almost automatically by at least the Greek-speaking populations of the Empire. Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that Athenian purchasers understood these representations as depictions of their own battle, i. e. the Athenian Amazonomachy. In any case, the interest ultimately focuses on the fierce battle leading to the death of either the Greeks (men) or the Amazons (women). Thus, viewed from the perspective of the recipients of the sarcophagi,

277 In another case where the use of the same types by metropolitan and Athenian workshops is ascertained, it is harder to draw a conclusion on the precedence of either workshop, as these are isolated types used selectively in very different compositions, see Russenberger 2015, 351–354.

278 On an analysis of the differences in use of the motifs, see Russenberger 2015, 309–316.

279 See, most recently, Russenberger 2015, 322 f. and esp. Strocka 2017b, with a new, more likely interpretation of the relief frieze.

280 The course of influence, i. e. from Athens to Rome, is an issue that has started being studied in other categories of art made during the 2nd century A.D., such as portraits; see, for instance, Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014/2015. See also above, § 84–86.

281 The view recently put forward, i. e. that the Amazonomachies depicted on Attic sarcophagi promote the fight and superiority of the Greeks and, by extension, the ideological system of the ancient Greek city, will be discussed below, § 95–99.

282 On the opposite view, see Ewald 2004, 254 f.; Ewald 2018, 236; cf. Russenberger 2015, 326–328. 443 f.

283 Russenberger 2015, 190. 441.

this battle concerns mortals in general, irrespective of sex or age. Therefore, the fight is not characterised as a personal tragedy, as is the case, in contrast, in metropolitan sarcophagi and particularly a 3rd-century group where the main heroes of the episode, i. e. Achilles and Penthesileia, are, in fact, often bearing the portrait features of the owners of the tomb²⁸⁴. On the contrary, in the Attic monuments the theme has a broader symbolism: it conveys the inexorable struggle of man with his fate which cannot but lead to the end of life, to inescapable death, as was the case with all mythical heroes-exemplars used as consolation to the bereaved²⁸⁵. The concept of death is expressed very evocatively in the Tyre sarcophagus (Kintrup 2016, cat. 259) (Fig. 42) through the two warriors on the axis of the frieze, with one supporting the other – a unique motif in this position. It is reasonable that these compositions, conceptually general and appropriate for all circumstances, would find a response from purchasers throughout the Empire, possibly not just the social elites but broader social classes, provided they could afford them. One illustrative example is the aforementioned sarcophagus intended for a fisherman and a trader of porphyry, who grew rich from their profession²⁸⁶. It is no accident that the extant number of Amazonomachy representations, compared to those of other myths, in Attic sarcophagi is overwhelmingly higher even than representations of Achilles²⁸⁷.

89 In closing this section, it is also necessary to touch on a closely related group of Attic sarcophagi depicting battles between male opponents, whether mounted or on foot²⁸⁸. This is another populous group, only slightly smaller in number than the Amazonomachy group²⁸⁹. The examples known to us stretch from approximately A.D. 170 to 260, based on current data²⁹⁰. The identification of the images as mythical battles is hard to dispute, as the warriors are mostly nude and rarely wearing a cuirass. Moreover, we would not expect contemporary battles to be depicted in Athens, while the Battle of Marathon, attested in two examples (Kintrup 2016, cat. 77. 162) must certainly be understood as a mythical rather than a historical battle²⁹¹. An indirect indication of the mythical nature of the battles of this group, as noted by Koch, can be found in the rear sides of the Tyre sarcophagus (Kintrup 2016, cat. 260), depicting the Ransom of Hektor²⁹². These are most likely Trojan battles, although precisely which ones cannot

284 Grassinger 1999, 179–185: Gruppe VI; Borg 2014, 246–248 fig. 7.9; Russenberger 2015, 383–388. 445 f. See also Maderna 2015, 100–102 fig. 1; Zanker 2019, 20–23 figs. 27. 28. However, the personal parallel between the deceased person and an Amazon is encountered in other 2nd-century examples, such as in the case of the fifteen-year-old Arria Maximina, Russenberger 2015, 188–193. 441, who includes relevant examples on written sources.

285 See, for instance, Müller 1994, 86–106. See also below, § 95–102.

286 See also below, § 114–120.

287 Ewald 2004, 237 fig. 2.

288 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 405–410; Kintrup 2016, 104–151. 193–200.

289 Ewald 2004, 237 fig. 2, where the theme of the battle at the ships, presented here separately, is most likely included.

290 Kintrup 2016, 104. 142. Later dates had also been proposed by G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 407 f. 459, who placed the earliest known example of Ptolemais (Cyrenaica) shortly before A.D. 200, while Kintrup 2016, 268 (cat. 167). 143 pl. 54, 2, to around A.D. 170.

291 It suffices to recall that those who fell at the Battle of Marathon and were buried at the battlefield were being worshipped as heroes more than 350 years after their deaths, IG II² 1006, 26 and 69; see Ekroth 2007; Jones 2010, 27. G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 410–414, also examines the two extant examples together with the mythical battles near the ships. Kintrup 2016, 151 n. 681; 173. 176, believes that while these scenes are not mythological, an effort is nevertheless being made to elevate the historical event to the heroic sphere. Ewald's position on the matter is not particularly clear, see Ewald 2018, 227. 235 f. 242.

292 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 378. 405 f. On the sarcophagus, see Rogge 1995, 65. 144 f. cat. 43 pls. 9, 1; 12. Koch considers the Antalya sarcophagus (Kintrup 2016, cat. 5) as further evidence of the mythological nature of the group because, as he notes, it depicts a battle of men on foot and horseback on the front and one small side, and a battle at the ships on the left small side. However, according to Kintrup, the battle at the ships is found on the front of this sarcophagus, while sparse traces of a warrior survive on the small side. Battles between warriors are also depicted on the small sides of other sarcophagi adorned with the main theme of the battle at the ships (see Kintrup 2016, cat. 84. 248); therefore, in these cases they can be understood as following up on that battle.

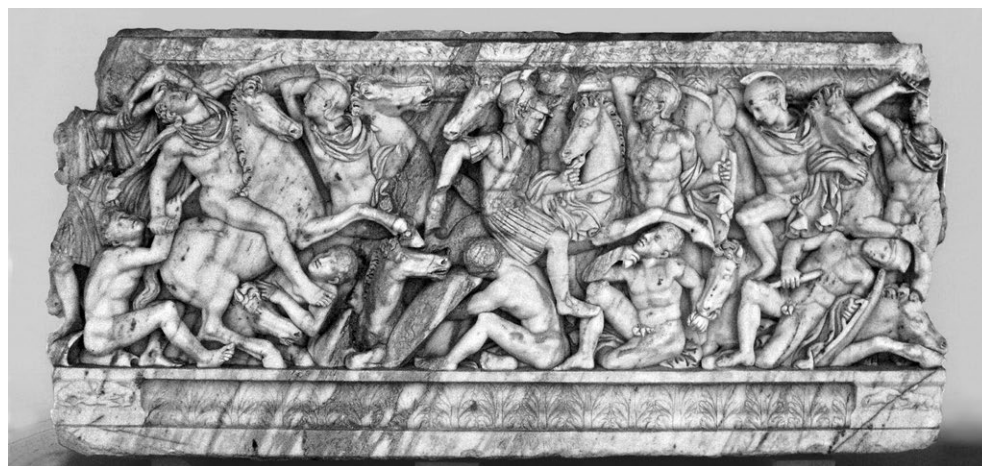


Fig. 45: Sarcophagus with battle between men, front side. Ashkelon Outdoor Mus.

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be determined²⁹³. In the episode of the battle at the ships, which we will discuss below, the depiction of the ships and the distinction of the two opposing sides is very clear and leaves no doubt that this is the battle recounted in Book 15 of the *Iliad*. As is the case with the examples depicting the Battle of Marathon (Kintrup 2016, cat. 77. 162), where the warriors on both sides are clearly iconographically distinguished. On the contrary, in the group in question, no effort is made to identify the warriors, not even through their clothing; this cannot be by accident. However, the fact that the two groups of warriors are not differentiated does not hinder their identification as Greeks and Trojans, as the opposing warriors in the episode of the battle beside the ships (*epi nausi mache*) are depicted with the same features. With regard to the structure of the above compositions, in few cases, we see a single figure more highlighted in the frieze, such as the mounted and only cuirassed warrior of the 3rd-century Ashkelon sarcophagus (Kintrup 2016, cat. 31) (Fig. 45). It is clear in these sarcophagi, as in the ones with the Amazonomachy, that the interest lies in the battle and its general symbolism: male (without ruling out female) virtue, on one hand, and inevitable death, on the other. These are messages with content so broad that they can appeal to all recipients of Attic sarcophagi, in both East and West, and among all social classes, whether or not they belong to the urban elites. The issue of age and even of sex was likely not a problem, as bravery is a virtue also attributed to women and girls, as indicated by the parallel drawn between women and Amazons or even Achilles himself²⁹⁴. In conclusion, we could claim that Athenian artists were able to elevate themselves, with regard to the choice of themes, to a level that exceeds preferences of a local or limited range²⁹⁵ and that promotes broader ideas addressed to the ecumenical space of the Empire.

293 On this matter, see also Ewald 2018, 227 f. n. 69.

294 See Müller 1994, 106, where reference is made, in this context, on one hand, to the sarcophagus of Metilia Torquata, illustrating Achilles on Skyros (see above, § 61) and, on the other, to the inscription on the funerary altar of Basilokleia from Thera (Peek 1960, no. 417), where a parallel is drawn between the fate of the woman who suffered a premature death and that of Achilles. See also Borg 2018, 195–200, with relevant examples from written sources and iconography. To these we can add a recent find from Perge, a columnar sarcophagus depicting a battle between Greeks and Trojans on its rear side. However, the monument was ordered by a woman, Aurelia Botiane Demetria, exclusively for herself. I owe the information on this find to my friend Guntram Koch.

295 It is possible that such specific preferences, e. g. local myths, may have played a role in certain cases, as in the case of the myth of Opheltes found on the Korinth sarcophagus (Oakley 2011, 39 f. 87 f. cat. 50), see Ewald 2018, 222 f.

Battle at the Ships: Hektor's aristeia

90 With the Homeric theme of the battle at the ships (*epi nausi mache*)²⁹⁶, we return to the heroic subjects where one or more identifiable heroes play a leading part. There are relatively few sarcophagi depicting this theme, and most of the surviving examples are fragmentary. According to the indications available to date, it appeared relatively late, i. e. during the final quarter of the 2nd century A.D. The earliest group (I), into which most examples have been classified, continues to be represented throughout the 1st half of the 3rd century A.D. The second group (II) appears later, possibly before the end of the 1st quarter of the 3rd century A.D., and apparently became popular during the 2nd quarter of the century. The two best-preserved examples of the first group, the sarcophagi in Tyre and Damascus from Arethousa (Kintrup 2016, cat. 261. 84) (Fig. 46. 47), are based on the same archetype and, despite their differences, repeat the same types of figures. The ships with figures of Achaians on them take up the left side of the composition, while the main group of the two opposing warriors is virtually placed on the axis. In the Tyre sarcophagus, which is the earliest and possibly dates to the 1st quarter of the 3rd century²⁹⁷, the elements of the landscape and personifications of the sea are shared between the two ends of the frieze. On the contrary, in the Damascus sarcophagus, all the marine elements are concentrated at the left end, as happens by analogy in its approximately contemporaneous Thessaloniki counterpart (Kintrup 2016, cat. 248) (Fig. 48), belonging to group II, in which there is a reverse array of all the figures and therefore the marine elements are placed on its right section. Consequently, the group portraying the warrior carrying his wounded companion, which in the sarcophagus in Tyre was on the left side of the frieze, is shifted in the sarcophagus in Damascus to the right side, in front of the horseman, part of which he covers. Another group of warriors is added to the right end of the frieze, consisting of one attacking warrior and his opponent kneeling in defence; a third fallen warrior appears between the attacker's legs. The composition thus becomes far denser than in the earlier example in Tyre. The Damascus sarcophagus, like the aforementioned Thessaloniki sarcophagus, most likely dated to the decade of A.D. 230–240²⁹⁸.

91 Despite their differences, the Tyre and Damascus sarcophagi have one key element in common: the intense motion of the figures almost always depicted in side or three-quarters view and moving diagonally so as to compose an exceptionally dramatic scene. The central group, where the attacker is bending over his fallen opponent while he plunges his sword in the fallen man's chest, draws particular attention. The composition is quite different in group II. In the Thessaloniki sarcophagus (Kintrup 2016, cat. 248) (Fig. 48) the group of the protagonists has become intensely theatrical, as both the attacker (who is, in fact, portrayed at a larger scale than the other figures) and the defender appear in frontal, statuary poses. Furthermore, the composition as a whole appears relatively calm, monumental, having obviously been impaired in intensity and narrativity compared to the previous ones. The same trend for frontal depiction is also observed in other figures of this frieze, even those standing on the ships. It is indicative that the two naked warriors of group I, one of whom is helping his possibly wounded companion board the ship, are depicted in an entirely different manner in group II. They are standing on the ship in frontal view and one is supporting from behind the other, his clearly wounded companion leaning on the ship's curved stern (*aphlaston*). On

296 G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 410–414; KatMTh I 1997, cat. 135 (Th. Stefanidou-Tiveriou); Kintrup 2016, 177–182. 191–193.

297 Tyros, Excavations inv. 4038/4039. G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 412. 459. The dating proposed by Kintrup 2016, 170. 294, to the decade of A.D. 250–260 cannot be accepted.

298 See G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 412. 459 (however, Koch 1989, 188: A.D. 240–250); KatMTh I 1997, cat. 135 (Th. Stefanidou-Tiveriou); Kintrup applies this dating solely to the Damascus example and not to that of Thessaloniki, Kintrup 2016, 240 cat. 84 (A.D. 230–240); 288 cat. 248 (mid-3rd century A.D.).

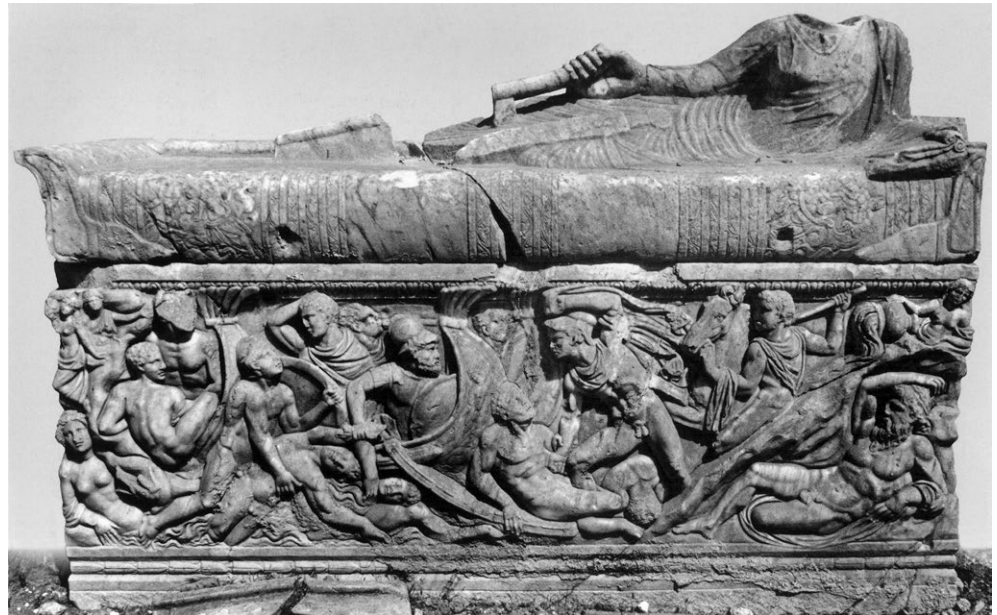


Fig. 46: Sarcophagus with battle at the ships, front side. Tyre, Excavations inv. 4038/4039

46

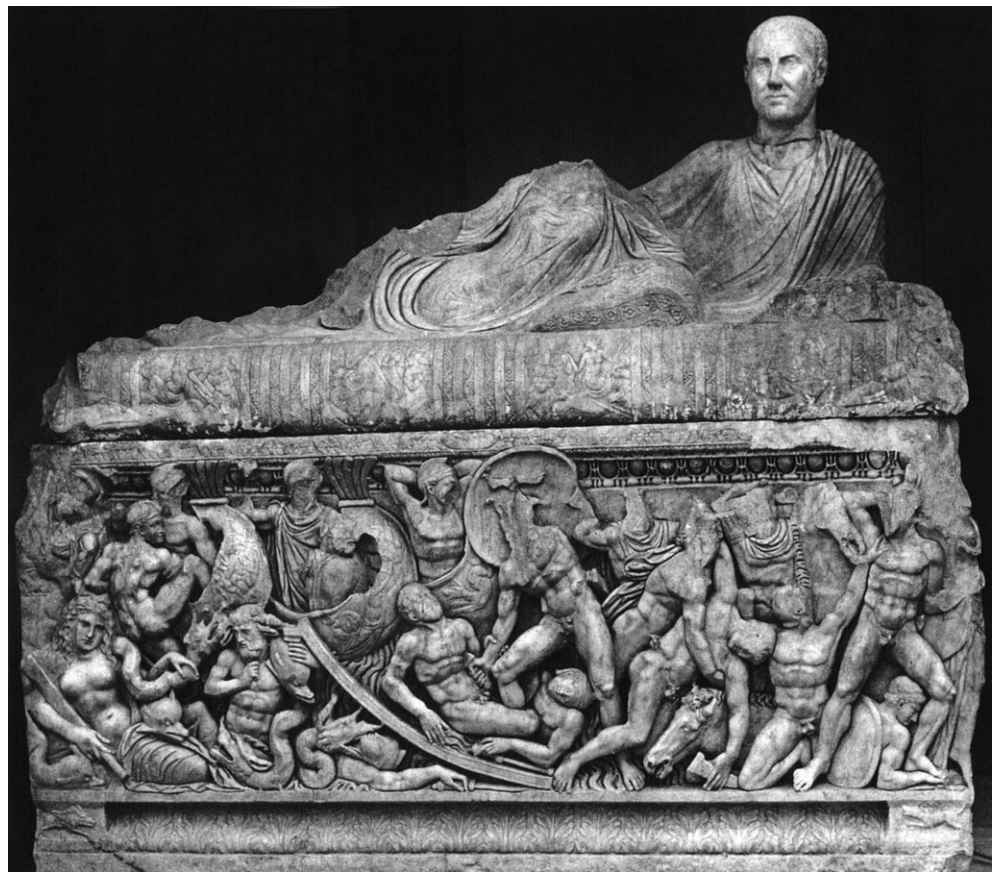


Fig. 47: Sarcophagus with battle at the ships, front side. Damascus, NM inv. 25662

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the left side, the only figure of a mounted warrior in three-quarter view is particularly highlighted among the warriors on foot. The corresponding mounted figure in the Tyre and Damascus sarcophagi is wearing a chlamys so as to be unquestionably identified as a man. The mounted figure in the Thessaloniki sarcophagus who is wearing a short chiton leaving one breast bare and boots must also be a man. Due to his attire, scholars identified this figure as a woman, i. e. an Amazon, leading to the conclusion that the frieze depicts not one but two different mythological episodes: the battle at the ships

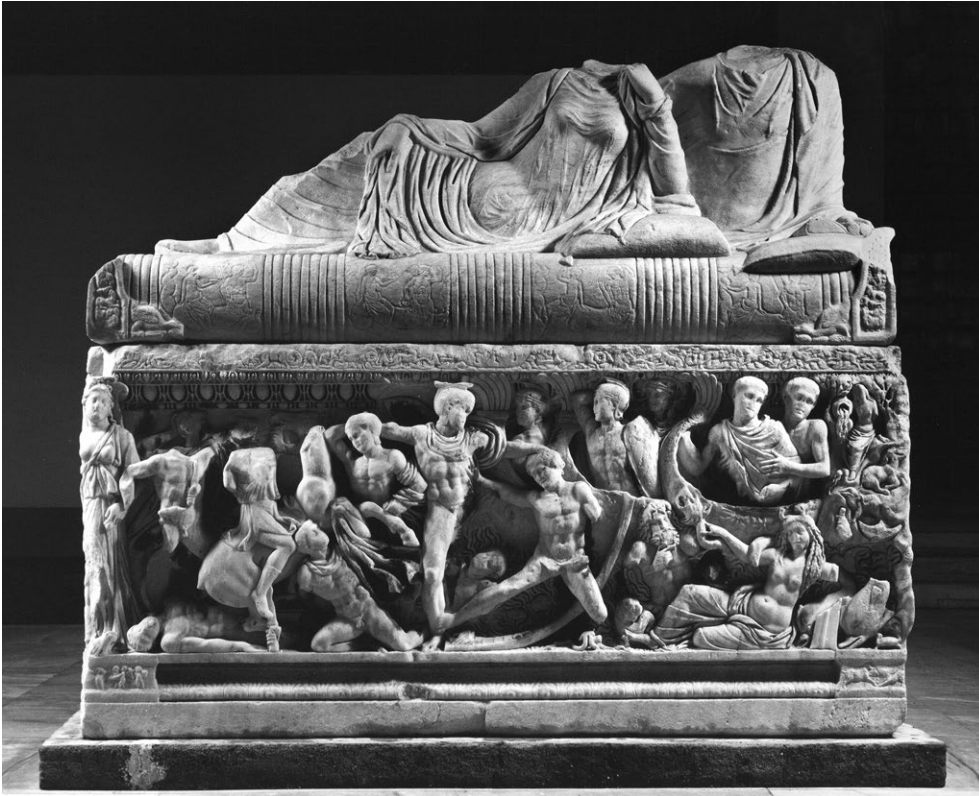


Fig. 48: Sarcophagus with battle at the ships, front side. Thessaloniki, Arch. Mus. inv. 1246

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and an Amazonomachy. In fact, the horseman, as I have also asserted elsewhere in the past, is a male figure, which arises from the well-preserved physique of the chest²⁹⁹. Its interpretation will take place immediately below.

92 The two aforementioned compositions recount the same mythological episode. They portray the battle beside the ships of the Achaians, according to the narrative in Book 15 of the *Iliad*. The central hero is Hektor, since this battle took place for his own glory, in accordance with the will of Zeus. There can be no doubt that he is the attacker at the middle of the frieze, near the ladder of the first ship (*apobathra*). As regards the Greek side, the fight was clearly an excellence (*aristeia*) of Aias, who was fighting on a ship. Thus, Aias is one of the attackers on board the ships³⁰⁰. The battle carries over beyond the ships, onto land. This cannot be disputed with regard to the examples of group I; therefore, there is but a single, uniform narrative in the Tyre and Damascus sarcophagi. It would be odd if the designer of composition II were to fundamentally subvert its meaning and break it into two different episodes. The reason why the position and direction of the ships were reversed concerns the structure of the composition and the layout of the elements comprising it, and not its content. Thus, Hektor, the central figure in the middle, is moving from left to right, according to the ›rule‹ of depicting the winner³⁰¹. Furthermore, were the figure on horseback an Amazon, this would depict an episode not recounted in the *Iliad*, since it is well known that the Amazons arrived to aid

299 On a comprehensive analysis of the representation, see KatMTh I 1997, cat. 135 (Th. Stefanidou-Tiveriou), with extensive reference to the views of scholars on this figure and general interpretation problems concerning this sarcophagus. Kintrup 2016 makes no reference whatsoever to interpretation issues, neither concerning this sarcophagus nor any of the monuments.

300 In the Tyre sarcophagus, he may be the helmeted warrior on the first ship, while in the Thessaloniki sarcophagus he may be the naked shield-bearing warrior on the middle ship.

301 Compare the change in the sarcophagi of Meleagros, see above, § 20.

the Trojans at a later stage³⁰². The garb of the figure on horseback who, as noted above, has been identified as male can be comprehended if we accept that he is one of the barbarian allies of the Trojans who fought on their side, e. g. the Thracians (Hom. Il. 2). We therefore reach the conclusion that nothing has changed with respect to the content of the composition at its reformulation. I believe that the objective was, in accordance with the desire of the creator as an expression of the requirements of the period, to highlight the principal hero of the episode far more than the other figures, in the way ascertained in other mythological compositions of the 3rd century A.D. This is another case where the narrative element of the mythical battle fades into the background in order to underline the figure of the protagonist hero, i. e. Hektor.

Conclusions and Further Thoughts

Mythological Themes

⁹³ We must admit from the outset that the issue of selecting mythological themes is one of the hardest to address in relation to understanding Attic sarcophagi. The classicism prevailing during the age of Hadrian and the Antonines is the context in which Athenian sculpture workshops began creating mythological scenes for these funerary monuments. It appears very likely that the idea of decorating chests with mythological images was adopted from the metropolitan workshops, regardless of whether this decoration adapted to the fact that Attic sarcophagi were seen from all sides. It is absolutely certain that Attic workshops forged their own path when selecting themes and scenes³⁰³, which reflects their different ideological background.

⁹⁴ We would expect, during a period when Athenian workshops placed emphasis on reproducing works of the past, in sculpture both in the round and in relief, that the persons in charge would select scenes from the wealth of classical tradition and relay them by repeating them on the friezes of sarcophagi. For instance, one would expect scenes from the Amazonomachy to be attested on the shield of Athena Parthenos, which apparently had a significant impact on the clientèle of the time, particularly in Rome, as concluded from their reproduction on the ›decorative‹ relief panels of Piraeus³⁰⁴. Moreover, there are clear indications that certain scenes or figures from the composition of the shield were used, albeit rarely, on sarcophagi made by workshops in Asia Minor³⁰⁵. This was not the case, to our knowledge to date, with Attic sarcophagi, where mythological images, save certain types of figures or groups, do not follow classical models as a rule, nor themes that directly allude to the city's classical monuments. Thus, for instance, the Amazonomachy scenes that adorn, as we saw above, a large number of sarcophagi neither copy nor freely reproduce older compositions depicting this theme, which were plentiful in Athens³⁰⁶ but constitute obviously new creations by contemporary workshops that were invented exclusively for these funerary monuments.

⁹⁵ Even more noteworthy is the fact that the myths attested on Attic sarcophagi do not include any local Athenian myths and local heroes whatsoever, not even The-

³⁰² On the relevant sources originating from the *Aethiopis*, see LIMC I (1981) 161 f. s. v. Achilleus (A. Kossatz-Deissmann). The identification of Achilleus and Patroklos on the ship is remiss, in my view, as that episode concerns a different rhapsody of the Iliad (Hom. Il. 11), see KatMTh I 1997, 171 cat. 135 (Th. Stefanidou-Tiveriou).

³⁰³ As clearly indicated by comparing Attic monuments to metropolitan ones, see Ewald 2018, 221–247.

³⁰⁴ Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1979.

³⁰⁵ See above, § 80 n. 258.

³⁰⁶ On monuments from classical Athens depicting an Amazonomachy, see, most recently, Russenberger 2015, 70–84.

seus, as has already been observed³⁰⁷. Bearing this observation in mind, it might not be hard to explain why scenes of the Athenian Amazonomachy are also absent, i. e. the fight of the Athenians, led by Theseus, to repel the Amazons' invasion of Attica. Had sarcophagus sculptors selected this myth, we could have perceived it as a reference to the high national achievements and the superiority of Athenians over their opponents, an idea that had already been established in Athens during the classical period³⁰⁸. In this case, though, there is no explicit allusion to this myth. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out that Athenian purchasers may, at times, have perceived the Amazonomachies depicted on sarcophagi as their own, local Amazonomachy. In any event, the compositions were not designed in a manner dictating such a viewing or interpretation, as not only are the relevant indications absent but, on the contrary and as noted above, there are clear indications, at least in several cases, that this depiction concerns the Trojan Amazonomachy involving Achilles³⁰⁹. Therefore, we should not conclude that the use of myths in Attic sarcophagi is ›Athenocentric‹³¹⁰, nor contend that their depictions are related to the ideas expressed by the grand monuments of the classical past. In my view, the explanation can be found in the fact that sarcophagi themselves are not public but private monuments. As such, one would not expect their representations to aim at preserving the collective memory of the Athenians³¹¹, as one might accept when discussing an era when the city was reminiscing about her past and, as in earlier times, continued referring to ancestral accomplishments³¹². It should be noted that other kinds of monuments were reminders of the glorious past of Athens, such as statues for great figures of classical Athens³¹³. On the contrary, sarcophagi are monuments that concern a different ideological sphere and their mythological images mainly reflect the anxiety of mortals faced with death. Therefore, the myths selected must be understood in the context of the funerary function of sarcophagi and aim, first and foremost, at honouring the deceased of each family and consoling the bereaved. At the same time, these costly monuments project the affluence and, in cases, status of the family in question. Thus, those able to bear the cost of such a monument were interested in its opulence, beauty and material value, as well as the ability to express their grief at the loss of a loved one and illustrate the qualities and values held by their deceased relative. It has been rightly remarked that Athenian sarcophagi do not express individual emotions as forcefully as metropolitan ones and, therefore, no particular emphasis is placed on the grief caused by the death of the loved one in question³¹⁴. On the other hand, though, the view that the

307 Ewald 2018, 223–225. See also below, § 100. Therefore, at first glance, the identification of the deceased on the stele of Paramonos, the *ephebos* from Marathon, as Theseus would appear hard to explain (von Moock 1998, 171 cat. 456; cf. Ewald 2018, 225). In the epigram in question, while he is not directly called a hero, we are told that he took up a place among the stars with Kastor and Polydeukes and, furthermore, calls himself the new Theseus. This is a traditional stele depicting the members of a family and, moreover, a rare example of heroisation for Attica (see § 130). However, as we will show below, we must distinguish between the heroised dead and the mythical heroes who serve, as in the illustrations on sarcophagi, as *exempla virtutis* for mortals.

308 On the Amazonomachy as a metaphor with political-ideological content for the supremacy of the Greeks and, in particular, Athenians over their external enemies, see, more recently, Russenberger 2015, 70 n. 10; 443, with extensive bibliography.

309 According to Ewald 2004, 254, it is irrelevant whether it is the Athenian or the Trojan Amazonomachy being depicted.

310 According to Ewald 2004, 262. 266 f., the Amazonomachy depicted on Attic sarcophagi, as well as the other battles, are regarded as Athenian and collective Greek history. While the scholar stresses the absence of local Athenian myths in their themes, in contrast to Athenian coinage, he does not offer a convincing interpretation of this phenomenon.

311 As Ewald 2004, 235 f., believes.

312 Cf. Russenberger 2015, 85.

313 Krumeich 2004; Krumeich 2008; Fittschen 2008b, 329–332.

314 Ewald 2004, 237–238. On the expression of emotions on Roman sarcophagi, see Russenberger 2011; Zanker – Ewald 2012, 285–287; Ewald 2018, 237 f.; De Angelis 2019; see also Borg 2015a, with references, in n. 4–6, to the relevant papers by Zanker and other scholars.

tomb in Greece »becomes the place where the commemoration of the dead is combined with praise of the superior Greek ethos and civilization«, particularly in relation to the age of Perikles and his funeral oration³¹⁵, is utopian. I believe such an interpretation of private funerary monuments that were not erected due to war or other collective actions of the *polis* to be excessive and unfounded. There is no testimony, epigram or other written text that would lead to the conclusion that what mattered in the mythological imagery of Athenian funerary monuments during the imperial era »is less distinction and ›individualism‹ than the expression of shared and coherent beliefs about Greek history and culture«³¹⁶.

96 The mere fact, as stressed above, that »the fight of Theseus against the Amazons, the first brave deed of the Athenians against foreigners« (Paus. 5, 11, 7, Jones – Ormerod 1926), which continued to be used during the imperial period as a political-ideological metaphor for the history of Athens³¹⁷, was not selected for Attic sarcophagi runs counter to the above proposed interpretation. On the contrary, it attests that there was no indication to elevate the iconographic theme of the Amazonomachy to a loftier sphere than the one expected of a private funerary monument and, as such, it cannot express a collective idea such as the supremacy of Greeks and Greek culture. I believe this is also the case with the Kentauromachy which, in addition to hunt scenes, is also attested on Greek sarcophagi as a battle between the Kentaurs and the Lapiths³¹⁸. However, while it frequently and consciously functions in combination with the Amazonomachy in classical monuments, holding a commensurate meaning³¹⁹, we cannot claim that the same occurs on Attic sarcophagi, particularly when the Kentauromachy with the Lapiths, a rare subject, is always portrayed on secondary sites of the chest³²⁰. We must, therefore, conclude that the myths depicted on Attic sarcophagi do not allude to the city's glorious historical past but recount heroic acts that are projected herein in order to externalise the needs of contemporary people³²¹.

97 One might reasonably consider the Battle of Marathon a theme that directly refers to Athenian history – which, as we saw, is rarely attested on Attic sarcophagi³²². However, this is also not a case where we should consider the theme a reference to the superiority of the Athenians over foreign invaders without associating it with the funerary function of these monuments and their owners. Given that this historical battle had taken on mythical dimensions in the minds of Athenians, it could well be a reference to the virtues of the deceased, precisely as was the case with other heroic battles. We can also not rule out the possibility that the selection of the theme was due to specific persons or families who intended this as an expression of their descent, whether real or presumed, from those glorious warriors at the Battle of Marathon in order to illustrate their relatives' courage in the face of death. Promoting the descent of persons or cities from the mythical past for reasons of prestige is a well-known phenomenon also at-

315 Ewald 2004, 262.

316 Ewald 2004, 236 f.

317 See Despinès 1974, 23 n. 55; Oakley 2004, 99 n. 12 f., with relevant bibliography; Russenberger 2015, 70–84 n. 10, with relevant bibliography, and on the meaning of the subject in Greek art during the imperial period, Oakley 2004, 85–95.

318 The relatively rare theme of the Kentaurs appears in Attic sarcophagi during the 2nd century A.D. in the context of a hunt and much later, during the 3rd century A.D., as a battle against the Lapiths, always on the rear or small sides of the chest; in one case the Kentaurs are fighting against griffins, Oakley 2011, 27–32.

319 On the co-existence of the two themes, Amazonomachy and Kentauromachy, in classical monuments, see, for instance, Bol 1998, 102 n. 539. 546. 551. See also Castriota 1992, e. g. 57. 152. 165.

320 On the opposite view, see Ewald 2018, 227 f. 236. 248. 252 f., who invokes the sole example of an Attic sarcophagus in London (Oakley 2011, cat. 38, and Kintrup 2016, cat. 130) with an Amazonomachy on three sides and a Kentauromachy on the rear side.

321 Certain writers of the ›Second Sophistic‹ use the mythical past in a similar way in order to refer to the present, such as Philostratos in the *Heroicus*, Mestre 2013, esp. 71–73.

322 On these sarcophagi, see above, § 89.

tested during the imperial era³²³. In any event, the interpretation of these isolated cases representing the Battle of Marathon cannot influence the interpretation of the large group of monuments adorned with Amazonomachy.

98 Following an iconographic analysis of Amazonomachy representations above, we concluded that there appears to be no intention of underlining the defeat of the Amazons and, respectively, exalting the victorious Greeks. What is mainly conveyed through the most frequently depicted mythological theme on the monuments at hand is the hard, unrelenting struggle, the battle itself and the courage of the warriors, both men and women – a battle which, nevertheless, cannot but lead to death. It should be reminded that the Amazonomachy was long a key theme in Greek funerary art and is attested in important monuments belonging to this category³²⁴. This meaning of the myth, which directly addresses the tragic fate of mortals, can be easily adapted to any case and explains, on one hand, the large number of Attic sarcophagi depicting an Amazonomachy and, on the other, their exceptionally broad geographic distribution. Any subject of the Empire, whether in the East or the West, could be the recipient of a sarcophagus depicting this theme, as the myth of the Amazons is widely known and accepted – particularly, as noted above, in funereal iconography.

99 Based on the above conclusions, we believe that the myths and mythical heroes preferred by sarcophagus workshops should not be viewed in the light of the Athenian past and the glorious history of the Athenians, which would not necessarily be of direct interest to every person in the Empire purchasing an Attic sarcophagus. Therefore, this is not »highly anachronistic imagery« in the sense of an outlook strictly oriented towards the past, the nostalgic shift understood within the climate prevailing during the »Second Sophistic«³²⁵. The phenomenon of the so-called Second Sophistic can be understood as a broad context in which not only are classical values and morphological means preserved or revived during the imperial era, but they also acquire new content³²⁶. It appears certain that at least in art – to focus on this area – the achievements of Athenian artists were not limited to »sterile« repetitions of works from the past. On the contrary, they developed important initiatives in the framework of the classicist, retrospective trend of the middle imperial period. Thus, in the field of private portraits, for instance, we see works that allude to models from the past, without faithfully reproducing them, in Athens and other cities of the Greek world. In other words, these are new, innovative creations by noteworthy artists, such as many of the portraits of *kosmetai* or the portrait of Herodes Atticus³²⁷. The contribution of Athenian artists to this field has not been sufficiently assessed to date, which is even less true in the case of the mythological friezes of sarcophagi. While dependence on the Greek artistic tradition of the past cannot be denied, the innovation concerns the way in which the models were used without being copied, as was the case with other categories of Attic ideal works, but transformed with great freedom and combinational imagination³²⁸. The individual iconographic patterns and, in particular, the mythological compositions display originality and variety, particularly during the 3rd century A.D., which also applies, by extension, to the ideas they convey. It is, therefore, in these fields that we identify the

323 The practice of prominent families tracing their descent to renowned historical figures has always been widespread in the Greek world; see Touloumakos 1971, 55–60; Quass 1993, 67–76; Clinton 2004, esp. 54–56; Jones 2010, 66–74; Ewald 2018, 253 n. 155.

324 See more recently Russenberger 2015, 231–297. On the Amazonomachy and other themes often attested on important funerary monuments of the Greek world, see Ewald 2018, 245–247.

325 To this view see above, § 7, and below, § 126 n. 429.

326 See also on the literary production of the time as a rich and dynamic expression of culture, Whitmarsh 2013.

327 On the portraits of *kosmetai*, see, for instance, Krumeich 2004, esp. 145–149, and on the portrait of Herodes, 148 n. 76. Lastly, on the portrait of Herodes as a creation of Attic sculpture, see Goette 2019, 232 n. 19.

328 On the models of Attic sarcophagi in terms of representations, as well as decorative mouldings and style, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 454 f.; Koch 1988, and previous chapters, as appropriate.

achievements of Attic sarcophagi, the creators of which succeeded in expressing the trends of their era in terms of funerary beliefs in their own way³²⁹. On one hand, they invented new, original compositions to adorn a type of monument with no tradition in Athens, and, on the other, they endeavoured to align them with the funerary function of this monument that greatly differs from that of well-known, traditional tombstone, i. e. the stele. Mythological images co-exist with – but are not semantically related to – depictions of family scenes on funerary stelae of smaller size and value that were intended exclusively for the domestic market³³⁰.

100 As shown from the foregoing, themes and heroes were selected taking into consideration the funerary nature of the monuments and the need to express specific ideas concerning death and the deceased. The theme of the Amazonomachy best met these requirements, with no need to identify the heroes portrayed. As Achilles, Penthesileia and other heroes of the Trojan War are rarely identified, it is clear that no particular effort is made to make the heroes recognisable. This means that the Amazonomachy could be comprehended depending on the identity of the recipient of the monument. It is possible that in these illustrations Athenians would recognise the Attic Amazonomachy, a subject familiar to them, while other purchasers would recognise the Trojan Amazonomachy, a larger-scale event in Greek ›history‹. However, this is not the case with other myths that are exclusively associated with certain specific heroes of Panhellenic range who must necessarily be recognisable. The preference of purchasers for these heroes obviously has nothing to do with Athenian history but with the attributes of the heroes themselves. This is why Theseus, the national hero of Athens, was not among the selected, appearing in certain mythological subjects only as a secondary figure³³¹. On the contrary, they preferred a hero not specifically associated with Athens, the hero *par excellence* of the Greek world, the one called »the most godlike of all Greeks«³³²: Achilles. In his dialogue *Heroicus*, Philostratos' reference to Achilles (729–752) is far longer than those to any other hero of the Trojan War³³³. He was given every gift: he stood out for his beauty and physique, the splendour of his arms and his hunting prowess; moreover, he had a surprising, almost divine figure. After all, Achilles was the son of a goddess and had received specific education from Cheiron in throwing the javelin, running, as well as music and singing. At the same time, he was a terrible warrior, as brave as a lion, courageous and determined, as well as the most just of heroes, scorning wealth; in fact, he used his divine traits to benefit his friends. When he died, he was mourned by both the Nereids and Thetis herself. After his death, he was honoured like no other in the Troad and the Black Sea, on the island Leuke. Arrian also extolled the hero's qualities, considering him the hero *par excellence* who left the life so young and was the subject of Homer's poetry (Arr. Peripl. M. Eux. 23, 4)³³⁴.

101 Thus, the son of Thetis and Peleus was one of the most popular heroes, whose birth and death encompass an extreme paradox: he was given birth by a goddess, yet

329 The creativity of Athenian artists and their contribution to the art of the Roman Empire is a much broader subject that transcends the category of sarcophagi and that scholars have started researching, e. g. Fittschen 2008b; Karanastasi 2012/2013, esp. 334. 336; Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014/2015; KatEAM IV 1 2020, cat. 57 n. 25–27 (Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou). The art of this era is obviously neither sterile academicism nor a nostalgic shift towards the past; on this matter see Kokkorou-Aleura 2001, 321 n. 9 f., and Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 210 n. 11, for relevant views. On the economic conditions driving production, see Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 210 n. 9.

330 von Moock 1998; Karapanagiōtou 2013.

331 See the Hippolytos sarcophagi, where Theseus is portrayed alongside Hippolytos himself, or, more rarely, the sarcophagi depicting the abandonment of Ariadne, Rogge 1995, 85 f. 88 f. 117. Theseus may also be depicted on sarcophagi portraying the Kalydonian boar hunt, see Rogge 1995, esp. 7. 81. 85 f. 88 f. 117. See also the figure interpreted as Theseus on Hippolytos sarcophagi (Rogge 1995, cat. 56. 59), above, § 30.

332 Philostr. Her. 685.

333 Zeitlin 2001, 258–262; Mestre 2015/2016, 151. 153 n. 32.

334 Zeitlin 2001, 262.

could not escape his mortal fate³³⁵, as we are told by the funerary epigram of Epigonos from Laodicea on the Lykos (Phrygia) dating to 1st century A.D.: »even Achilleus did not escape Moira, even though he was the son of Thetis« (Müller 1994, 90)³³⁶. In fact, the same epigram contains another earlier reference to Achilleus, where the hero is cited as the slayer of Hektor, clearly in order to emphasise his enormity: »for neither he who killed Hector, the son of Priam, Achilles, [escaped Moira ...]« (Müller 1994, 90). Therefore, the text contains both a clear reference to the implacable law of death that governs human nature, the only comfort being the certainty of its inescapability, and also praise for Achilleus' prudence and divine beauty.

102 All the foregoing explains why Achilleus is the most popular of subjects for Attic sarcophagus workshops which, as noted above, addressed clients spanning almost the entirety of the Greco-Roman world. There is another, no less important reason for this hero's popularity: his premature death (*mors immatura*), making his fate even more painful. Achilleus is the best loved of heroes whose fate was an untimely death, and his name is referred to repeatedly as a parallel to the deceased in consolations, elegies and epicedia on the subject of premature death³³⁷. Therefore, he is considered the hero *par excellence* who suffered an untimely end³³⁸. Nevertheless, it is worthy of note that Achilleus' death is depicted on an Attic sarcophagus but a single time: on the Polyxene sarcophagus in Madrid (Oakley 2011, cat. 62), on the right small side, in contrast to the scene depicted on the left small side, where Polyxene is being led as a »bride« to his tomb³³⁹.

103 The latter is part of the various episodes referring to Achilleus³⁴⁰; however, many play a secondary part and can be found on small (or rear) sides³⁴¹. Only three episodes play a key role and are usually placed on the front of the sarcophagus, holding a significant share in the total number of representations: the episode on Skyros, the Ransom of Hektor and the arming of Achilleus. The episode on Skyros, where Achilleus revealed his military nature, is the predominant episode and covers the entire range of production of mythological sarcophagi until the mid-3rd century A.D.³⁴². Its most substantial element is the arms, which transform Achilleus into a terrible warrior and foreshadow his future death. This is, in essence, the arming of Achilleus, a subject also depicted, as we saw, on secondary sides of the chest, whether with or without Thetis, as well as on the front side of the late Beirut sarcophagus amidst the assembly of the Achaians (Fig. 35). As noted with regard to the problematic interpretation of the sarcophagus of the Albani Collection inv. 131, the transport of Achilleus' new arms had already been included in a funereal context since the 5th century B.C.³⁴³ and suggests the hero's death. In the images we studied, Achilleus abandons the carefree, peaceful life among Lykomedes' daughters, such as playing music, and dons his arms to hurriedly join the Achaians to be led to Troy and, therefore, his death. At the same time, this episode underlines his youth, expressly alluding to his premature death.

104 The episode depicting the Ransom of Hektor appears almost at the same time as the episode on Skyros, during the 2nd century. In this case, the creator focuses on the

335 This idea had already been worded in the Iliad (Hom. Il. 21, 109 f., Murray 1924/1925): »A good man was my father, and a goddess the mother that bare me; yet over me too hang death and mighty fate.«

336 Peek 1960, no. 137. Cf. Griessmair 1966, 90 n. 371; Müller 1994, 90 n. 371. 372; 101.

337 Müller 1994, 102–105.

338 Müller 1994, 104 f.

339 See below, § 109.

340 E. g. from the period of his youth (education by the Kentaur Cheiron) and in Troy (mourning for Patroklos, execution of a Trojan, weighing of Hektor), see Rogge 1995.

341 Müller 1994, 102–105.

342 On the popularity of this theme on the sarcophagi of both Athens and Rome, see Borg 2018, 197 n. 119. On the meaning of the episodes depicting Achilleus on Attic sarcophagi, see Ewald 2004, 237 f.

343 Müller 1994, 87. On this sarcophagus and the problem concerning its interpretation, see C. Gasparri in: Bol 1992, cat. 260.

magnanimity of the victor before whom the begging king prostrates himself. Priamos will collect the body of Hektor who, in this case, is the one portrayed as an example of mortality (*exemplum mortalitatis*) and of premature death (*exemplum mortis immaturae*). The death of Hektor once again serves to laud Achilles, as was the case with the epigram of Epigonos above, because Achilles was the one who was able to slay him. The death of the Troy's most important hero therefore constitutes praise for the most prominent Greek hero. In the context of the imagery being examined, I believe that this dual reference to the two great heroes of the opposing sides is an achievement of the Attic art of the 2nd century A.D.

105 However, Hektor was the subject of another composition of Athenian creators: the battle beside the ships (*epi nausi mache*). He is among the heroes receiving excessive praise in Philostratos' *Heroicus* (682–683. 722), where it is stated that he alone could keep four horses under control, that he burned the ships of the Achaians, and that he fought them all at once in battle. His monumental, frontal figure on the Thessaloniki sarcophagus (Fig. 48), where he overpowers his enemy before the ships, seems to illustrate the superhuman abilities attributed to him in the sophist's text.

106 If military virtue is the predominant male virtue, hunting prowess is its prerequisite. As Xenophon tells us, »for among the ancients the companions of Cheiron to whom I referred learnt many noble lessons in their youth, beginning with hunting; from these lessons there sprang in them great virtue, for which they are admired even today« (X. Cyn. 12, 18, Marchant 1925). This treatise refers to a host of heroes whom Cheiron instructed in hunting, a practice of divine origin, as it was invented by Apollo and Artemis. Among these, a special place was certainly held by Achilles, but many others are also mentioned, such as Meleagros and Hippolytos (X. Cyn. 1, 2). A handful of women, including Atalante, also possessed this divine gift (X. Cyn. 13, 18). The warrior heroes »paraded« in Philostratos' *Heroicus* – including Achilles – often engaged in hunting, as is repeatedly reiterated³⁴⁴. In conclusion, hunting is an essential component of the education of heroes and is a practice that is characteristic of them, particularly of young heroes³⁴⁵. Therefore, it is no surprise that a number of Attic sarcophagi are adorned with themes of mythical hunts, where the protagonists obviously serve as *exempla virtutis* for mere mortals. On the other hand, it is obvious, as we saw, that a small number of sarcophagi also depicted non-mythical hunts, which also allude to the corresponding virtues of the deceased. As noted above, hunting had been part of the education of youths in ancient Greece, bestowing physical and mental virtues on them³⁴⁶. It is therefore easily understood that the theme would be included in funereal imagery, as it already had been since the 5th century B.C. in Ionia and Athens³⁴⁷, and would reappear during the 2nd century A.D. in the monuments in question.

107 Among the myths concerning hunting and hunters, there is no doubt that the premier place is held by the hunt of the Kalydonian boar. The assembly of such a large number of hero-hunters from various regions of Greece in Kalydon, Aitolia in order to aid Meleagros in exterminating the ravaging wild boar sent by the goddess Artemis to the region is a unique event, taking on the nature of a Panhellenic endeavour, albeit at a far smaller scale than the Trojan expedition. We know the names of the heroes and their places of origin from Pseudo-Apollodors' *Bibliotheca* and other sources³⁴⁸. The pro-

344 Philostr. Her. 680 (Rhesos). 686 (Achilleus). 698 (Antilochos). See Grossardt 2006, 35. On Philostratos' *Heroicus*, see recently Whitmarsh 2013, 101–122.

345 See Voutiras 2010, 99 f. n. 62–66, with relevant bibliography.

346 In addition to Xenophon's *Cynegeticus*, Plato also refers to the educational importance of hunting in *Leges* 7, 823d.

347 Oakley 2004, 173 f. 178 f. 246 n. 47 (with bibliography). On heroes-hunters as models for the education of the youths in ancient Greece, see in detail, more recently, Tiverios 2021, 155–159.

348 See LIMC VI (1992) 414 s. v. Meleagros (S. Woodford).

tagonist is Meleagros, who dealt the killing blow to the beast, but the huntress Atalante also played a key role, as she was drawn first blood with her arrows. The dominant episode on Attic sarcophagi, of course, is the hunt itself. However, the right small side of the Delphi sarcophagus (Koch 1975, cat. 166)³⁴⁹ depicts Althaia, Meleagros' mother, as she prepares to burn the brand to which, as we know, the hero's life was tied and which she had saved at the time of his birth. The presence of this episode assures us that this is not the Homeric version of the myth being recounted but a later one, possibly originating from Euripides' play *Meleagros*, which is preserved in fragments, as well as from Pseudo-Apollodoros' *Bibliotheca*³⁵⁰. We reach the same conclusion from the Delphi sarcophagus itself, the front side of which depicts, beside the hunt and for the sole time, the episode where Meleagros offers the boar's pelt to Atalante. This act would trigger Althaia's vengeance and, consequently, the hero's death, as foretold by the Fates immediately after his birth. Therefore, like Achilles, Meleagros is also a hero whose premature death had already been predetermined at the time of his birth. In the Euripidean version of the myth, a key role was played by the erotic relationship between Meleagros and Atalante, which the representation on the aforesaid Delphi sarcophagus suggests, and by the proximity at which the two heroes fight in the hunt scenes. Thus, the prominent role of the heroine may be another reason, in addition to the foregoing, as to why this mythical hunt was selected. Worthy of note is Ewald's apt remark that the kline-lid of the Delphi sarcophagus depicts only one figure in repose, which is female, leading to the reasonable conclusion that the sarcophagus was intended for a woman³⁵¹.

108 Hippolytos is also enumerated among the hunting heroes in ancient literature. He is a hunter which was always so close to Artemis, the goddess of the hunt *par excellence*, that, in the words of Aphrodite, he »has gained a companionship greater than mortal« (E. Hipp. 19, Kovacs). This is precisely what keeps him pure and celibate, particularly with regard to his step-mother, Phaidra. However, the purity of the hero anything but prevented his death, as stated in the epigram of Epigonos from Laodicea, Phrygia, who names both Achilles and Hippolytos as examples of a predetermined death: »nor he who fled from the marriage bed of his father, Hippolytos, [did not escape Moira]« (Müller 1994, 90)³⁵². We could assume that sarcophagi adorned with this theme were mainly intended for young men who remained unmarried, such as Eteoneus, whose premature death prior to his marriage is lamented in his *epicedium* by Aelios Aristides (Or. 31)³⁵³; in a way, this parallels the *loutrophoroi* of the classical era, intended as markets on the graves of unmarried youths or girls³⁵⁴. Naturally, this cannot be proven by the insufficient information currently at our disposal. Furthermore, these mythological scenes were not necessarily interpreted in a single way in antiquity. For example, in the representation on the Beirut sarcophagus (Rogge 1995, cat. 57) (Fig. 20), we saw that the two protagonists, Phaidra and Hippolytos, share an odd relationship, giving the impression of a conjugal relationship. In this case, greater emphasis may be placed on Phaidra and her vigorous but unfulfilled desire to win Hippolytos' affection³⁵⁵.

109 In addition to the subjects which we discussed at length and make up the bulk of Attic mythological sarcophagi, there is a number of monuments adorned with themes

349 Koch 1975a, 140 f. pl. 131 c; Ewald 2018, 219 fig. 3 c (where the interpretation is considered uncertain). On this sarcophagus, see also Flämig 2007, 141 pl. 30.

350 See LIMC VI (1992) 414 s. v. Meleagros (S. Woodford).

351 See Ewald 2018, 221. 249 n. 143.

352 See above, § 101.

353 Soffel 1974, 27 f.

354 Kokula 1984, esp. 13, 143–150; Himmelmann 1988; Sabetai 2009, 291 n. 2. 3, with more recent relevant bibliography.

355 In examining selected examples of Roman mythological sarcophagi, Zanker 2014 tries to show that certain iconographic variations in the depiction of a myth create different correlations and permit alternative »readings«.

or scenes far less popular than the foregoing, in light of the information currently at our disposal. Certain of these could be included in the epic cycle, such as the scenes on the so-called Polyxene sarcophagus in Madrid (Oakley 2011, cat. 62), recounting episodes leading to the death of Achilleus. The main subject is the common sacrifice of Achaians and Trojans who thus make a truce, at the exhortation of Achilleus, because of his love for Polyxene³⁵⁶. The scenes depicted on the other sides follow this time-line of this episode: the murder of Achilleus by Paris and the arrival of Polyxene as a ›bride‹ at his tomb on the small sides, as well as a Trojan battle on the rear side³⁵⁷. According to proposed interpretations, the same broad Trojan cycle could include the frieze on the Thessaloniki sarcophagus of the sacrifice of Iphigenia in Aulis (Oakley 2011, cat. 23)³⁵⁸, and the scene depicting the madness that seized Aias on the Beirut sarcophagus, the so-called Underworld sarcophagus (Oakley 2011, cat. 66)³⁵⁹. In all these examples, the central idea is, ultimately, the heroic death or the braveness/virtue of the protagonist, expressed from a different perspective each time. The representation of the Seven against Thebes on the Corinth sarcophagus is virtually unique (Oakley 2011, cat. 50). The presence of two women during their departure may allude to the motif of bidding warriors farewell, which was well known since the classical era³⁶⁰, but the interest unquestionably lies in the tragic outcome of this expedition: the death of the heroes.

¹¹⁰ The death, as a result of divine retribution, is depicted in certain images from other mythological cycles, such as the murder of Aigisthos and Klytaimnestra in the no longer extant La Gayole sarcophagus and certain other fragments (Oakley 2011, cat. 53–56)³⁶¹; even Odysseus' *mnesterophonia* (Oakley 2011, cat. 46–48) and the fall of Oinomaos from the chariot on the Pelops sarcophagus (Oakley 2011, cat. 61). In several other cases, one identifies the intention to display pairs of heroes who are linked in a way: the pairs of Pelops and Hippodameia (Oakley 2011, cat. 61), Polyxene being led, as noted above, to the tomb of Achilleus as a ›bride‹ (Oakley 2011, cat. 62), Theseus and Ariadne (Oakley 2011, cat. 65), Leda and the Swan-Zeus (Oakley 2011, cat. 42. 43). On the other hand, the warriors being bid farewell by their wives in the aforementioned Corinth sarcophagus (Oakley 2011, cat. 50) could also be cited as an example of conjugal devotion.

¹¹¹ We could consider a separate group the sarcophagi portraying the achievements of two heroes: Bellerophon and Herakles. In the first case, the Corinthian hero is shown taming Pegasos or watering him at Peirene; however, these episodes are of secondary importance, as they are attested either on the small sides or on the lid (Oakley

³⁵⁶ Schröder 1991, with the relevant sources.

³⁵⁷ On an interpretation of the mythological scenes, see Schröder 1991; Schröder 2004, cat. 216; cf. Oakley 2011, 49–52.

³⁵⁸ On the identification of the mythological scene, see Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1998; cf. Oakley 2011, 24–26. A different interpretation is put forward by Strocka 2016, 369–372, who identifies a scene from Euripides' late tragedy *Orestes*. He believes that this depicts a popular assembly in Argos to decide on a punishment befitting Orestes and Elektra, who are supposedly portrayed on the right end of the scene. Apart from the individual objections one might raise, e. g. with regard to Orestes' identification as the seated, richly dressed figure (10), who cannot but be a woman, such a scene was never depicted in ancient art. The author does not raise this issue at all. Furthermore, he sidesteps the questions concerning the identification of figures 1 to 8 and, in particular, the indisputably most important figure of the representation, the naked enthroned hero (4). Finally, as to the unequivocal objection concerning the two seated figures, 4 and 6, and their interpretation as Achilleus and Agamemnon, respectively, i. e. that »no one sits at sacrifices« (Strocka 2016, 371), we should keep in mind that art does not portray realistic space but aims at creating an appropriate atmosphere and promoting specific persons. Moreover, Hippolytos is depicted as being seated at the sanctuary of Artemis in the earliest group of Attic sarcophagi where he is offering the prey to the goddess; see above, § 30.

³⁵⁹ Its interpretation has been the subject of much debate since its discovery. On a detailed, documented proposal that it depicts the ›madness‹ of Aias due to the unfair decision of the Achaians, see Tiverios 2017. On a different, recent proposal that is mostly in line with older views, i. e. that this is a depiction of the trial of Orestes at the Areiopagos in the presence of Apollo, see Strocka 2016, 372–374.

³⁶⁰ See Oakley 2011, 53.

³⁶¹ On another fragment from a sarcophagus depicting this theme, see Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, cat. 127.

2011, cat. 1–10). On the contrary, the labours of Herakles are the main theme of sarcophagi. The fragmentary sarcophagus from Thespiiai in the Athens National Museum (Oakley 2011, cat. 12) (Fig. 49 a–c) possibly recounts just four labours on the front side³⁶² and one labour on each of the two small sides of the chest, while antithetically posed griffins are portrayed on the rear side. An imitation of an Attic sarcophagus from Nikopolis made by a local workshop (Fig. 50 a–d)³⁶³ adds to our incomplete knowledge of mostly fragmentary Attic sarcophagi depicting Herakles, numbering eleven in total³⁶⁴. In the case of the local work, the labours, twelve in total, cover not just the three sides, but also extend to the rear side. Firstly, I believe we should make two observations regarding this group of Herakles sarcophagi. The first concerns the fact that all extant fragments, save one from the 3rd century A.D. (Oakley 2011, cat. 17), date to the 2nd half of the 2nd century A.D.³⁶⁵. If this chronological distribution is not random, it would appear that the subject ceased to be popular after the reshuffling we observed taking place in Attic workshops³⁶⁶, possibly because this narrative deployment of the labours did not meet the latest requirements of monumental compositions that overemphasise the protagonist. The second observation is that the fragmentary state of the material, at least with regard to the 2nd century A.D., creates a misleading understanding of the frequency of sarcophagi depicting this theme. Suffice it to reiterate that the early Hippolytos group numbers just seven examples³⁶⁷. Nevertheless, if we take the total number of fragments of Herakles sarcophagi throughout production into consideration, we find that these monuments are indeed significantly fewer than those depicting the three heroes most preferred by workshops and purchasers, namely Achilleus, Meleagros and Hippolytos³⁶⁸.

112 As regards the episodes depicting Herakles-adjacent myths, these are exclusively limited to his labours. In fact, the labours are selected on a case-by-case basis, judging from the differences between the Thespiiai sarcophagus and the Nikopolis sarcophagus, with the latter apparently imitating an Attic model most likely exported to Nikopolis³⁶⁹. The actual selection of the hero is to be expected, as Herakles was the exemplar of physical strength and bravery for the Greek world and, from the 4th century B.C. onwards, also served as a model character, being praised for his prudence, dignity and justice. The path of Virtue that he followed during his life as he was trained »with toil and sweat« led to him gaining »the most blessed happiness« (X. Mem. 2, 1, 28. 33, Marchant 1923)³⁷⁰. The hero's labours being depicted clearly allude to the difficult path he chose, which led to true happiness. It is easy to comprehend the association intended during the design of a sarcophagus with this imagery for its deceased occupant. By analogy to the illustrations of these labours, in a Hadrianic decree concerning the pancratiast Kallikrates from Aphrodisias, Karia, the wording is such that an association with Herakles and his virtues is achieved, as it is stated that the athlete obtained »famous glory« through »labour and sweat«, as well as »taking care of his soul«³⁷¹. It should be noted that the motif of Herakles' immortality does not appear to play a role in the iconography of the

362 Athens, NM inv. 1182. Oakley 2011, 17; Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017, 610–613 figs. 9–11.

363 Nikopolis, Mus. inv. 3550. 3550a. Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017. See also Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, cat. 123.

364 Oakley 2011, cat. 12–22.

365 The fragment in the Louvre is dated to the 3rd century A.D., Oakley 2011, cat. 17. The dating of the Thessaloniki fragment (Oakley 2011, cat. 13) around A.D. 200 is quite late, in my view; for a more correct dating, see KatMTh III 2010, cat. 614 (E. Papagianni): mid-2nd century A.D. or shortly thereafter.

366 See immediately below, § 121–125.

367 Rogge 1995, 73, assembling the known examples.

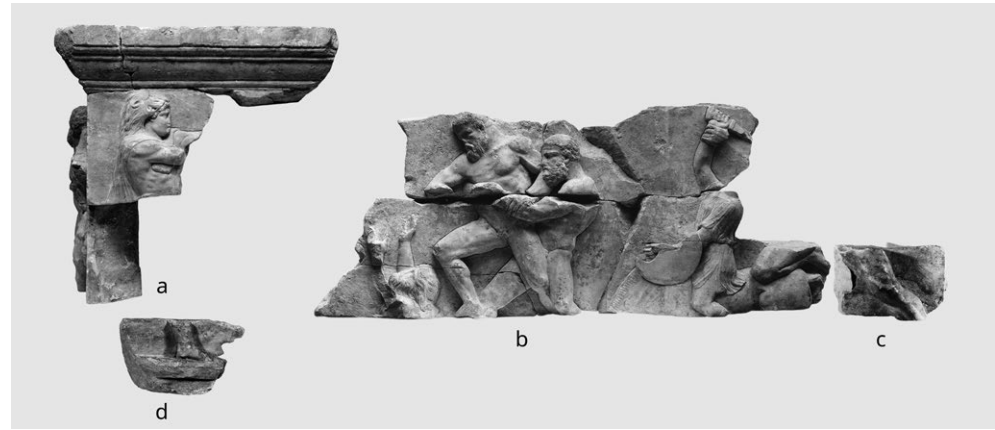
368 See Ewald 2004, 237 fig. 2.

369 Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017.

370 For further details on the subject, see Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017, 618, with relevant documentation.

371 Merkelbach 1970, 47–49; cf. Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017, 617 f. See also the interpretation of metropolitan sarcophagi depicting Herakles as an *encomium* for the deceased, Grassinger 2007; Borg 2018, 184.

Fig. 49: Herakles sarcophagus, reconstruction of the front side. Athens, NM inv. 1182



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sarcophagi. In the Nikopolis sarcophagus, the two labours concerning the hereafter, i. e. those of the Hesperides and Kerberos (Fig. 50), do not hold prominent positions, while in the Thespiiai sarcophagus, only the latter appears, on the small left side (Fig. 49)³⁷². Therefore, the meaning intended to be conveyed through these images is the laborious, virtuous path to glory, with no apparent allusion to the afterlife and immortality³⁷³.

113 Based on the foregoing, one would expect the figure of Herakles to hold a loftier place in the thematic repertory of Attic sarcophagi. In fact, his ageing, which is illustrated at least in the Nikopolis sarcophagus, portraying the evolution of the beardless young hero to the mature bearded man³⁷⁴, gives the impression that the theme could be adapted to all age groups. Therefore, it seems that the selection of the heroes dominating the iconography of these funerary monuments was spearheaded precisely by their young age and premature death³⁷⁵. Achilles, Hektor, Hippolytos or Meleagros were chosen by the relatives – commissioners of the monuments in order to praise their deceased loved ones through them and to mourn »those beloved by the gods who die young« (to use the phrase Dio Chrysostom employs in *Melankomas*) – ultimately to provide »consolation for the men« (D. Chr. Or. 79, 13).

The Purchasers of Sarcophagi: Elite and Non-Elite

114 Unfortunately, there is scant information from inscriptions on Attic sarcophagi themselves that could shed light on the identity and social status of the owners; as is well known, there was no special place on the sarcophagus intended for the carving of an inscription³⁷⁶. In fact, certain of the extant inscriptions on Attic sarcophagi³⁷⁷ may not

372 Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017, 618 with relevant documentation. Similarly, in metropolitan sarcophagi, these two themes hold secondary positions, leading one to conclude that purchasers were not interested in highlighting Herakles' relationship with death and immortality, Borg 2018, 184.

373 On the eschatological interpretation of sarcophagi, see below, § 132 n. 461.

374 Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017, 618 f. n. 67. A similar observation has been made with regard to metropolitan sarcophagi, see Grassinger 2007, 114; Zanker – Ewald 2012, 231 f. figs. 209. 210.

375 Similarly, in metropolitan sarcophagi, the protagonists of episodes are not mature or elderly men, but youths, Zanker – Ewald 2012, 232.

376 See Rogge 1993, 111; Rogge 1995, 16. In certain cases, it appears that a surface of the sarcophagus was suitably prepared after its purchase for the carving of the inscription, as was the case with the large Dionysiac sarcophagus of Thessaloniki (see n. 382 and § 116), KatMTh III 2010, 334 cat. 640 fig. 1797 (E. Papagianni). On similar cases where inscriptions are carved in different locations each time, see Rogge 1995, 16 f.

377 On a list of inscriptions on Attic sarcophagi, see Rogge 1993, 111 n. 4; Rogge 1995, 16 f.; cf. Ewald 2004, 234. 236.



50

Fig. 50: Herakles sarcophagus. Nikopolis, Mus. inv. 3550 + 3550a, a) Front side; b) Left side; c) Right side; d) Rear side

have been carved from the outset but during a subsequent use³⁷⁸, although this does not impair their value as evidence, at least regarding the second owners of the sarcophagi. It should also be stressed that these inscriptions are rarely found on sarcophagi originating from Attica, as is the case with the sarcophagus of Magnos Eryades³⁷⁹. On the contrary, they are often found carved on monuments from different regions, e. g. from Italy, bearing Latin inscriptions, such as the sarcophagus adorned with Erotes from Ostia, bearing the names of two siblings of different genders from a family of Roman citizens with the *gentilicium* Aulerii³⁸⁰, or the Naples sarcophagus of Metilia Torquata discussed above (Rogge 1995, cat. 19)³⁸¹ (Fig. 30). In a handful of cases, we have information concerning not just the name but also the legal and social status of the purchasers and their families, such as the large Dionysiac sarcophagus from Thessaloniki commissioned by Po(plia) Antia Damokratia, a relative of a governor of Thrace for her husband, a high-ranking official³⁸² (Fig. 51), and the sarcophagus of Aimilius Aristides, a *procurator Augustorum* from Ephesus, depicting a battle³⁸³. It is believed that Metilia Torquata, whose name was

378 Rogge 1995, 17 n. 19. In another example from Tyre, the name ΝΙΚΟΥΣΑΣ was carved between two crosses on the small side of the lid, Rogge 1995, 294 cat. 261 pl. 101, 5. Another Christian inscription was written in the place of the removed figures of the lid, Oakley 2011, 42 f. 89 cat. 53.

379 Matz 1968, cat. 7; Papagianni 2016, 90. 135 f. cat. 59; Katakis 2018, cat. 113 (with detailed bibliography).

380 Papagianni 2016, 94 n. 929; 156 f. cat. 128. In my view, the chronological value of the inscription as regards the sarcophagus itself, which is most likely dated to the period after the *Constitutio Antoniniana* (A.D. 212), is not undone by the fact that only one figure is depicted in repose on the lid rather than two. Mismatches between the inscription and the image are a common phenomenon. For instance, it has been observed in the funerary monuments of the imperial period in Macedon that the monument could have been erected following the death of a family member but served as a common monument for all family members who were living at the time of its erection; see Rizakēs – Touratsoglou 2000, 267 f.; Terzopoulou 2019, 441 f.; sarcophagi were family monuments, see above, n. 82, and below, § 120 n. 416.

381 See above, § 61 n. 199. 200.

382 Matz 1968, cat. 11; Castritius 1970, 93–98 (inscription commentary); KatMTh III 2010, cat. 640 (E. Papagianni) (with detailed bibliography); Oakley 2011, cat. 41. On an interpretation of the inscription, see Ewald 2018, 239 n. 102. See also § 116–117 n. 408.

383 See more recently Kintrup 2016, cat. 87, and esp. Kintrup 2017, 21–41 cat. 1. See also Ewald 2018, 252 n. 152. 153.



Fig. 51: Dionysiac sarcophagus, front side. Thessaloniki, Arch. Mus. inv. 1247

51

carved on the large Naples sarcophagus discussed above, was the daughter of senator M. Metilius Aquillius Torquatus³⁸⁴. Another Dionysiac sarcophagus in Istanbul, with a carved salute to the gymnasiarch Gyrostratos³⁸⁵ can be added to the above, as gymnasiarchs were members of the city elite by dint of their role and affluence³⁸⁶. Similarly, Magnos Eryades, whose sarcophagus was discussed above, belonged to a prominent family, if he was the father of Apollonios, who is included in the list of *prytaneis* of A.D. 190–200 (IG II² 1805)³⁸⁷. On the contrary, with regard to two other examples, one cannot claim that their occupants, both Roman citizens, belonged to a high social class. These concern the sarcophagus from Salona in Split, bearing a Latin inscription, carved during a subsequent use, referring to *Iul(ius) Sabjinus Pro[cu]l[le]ianus*, a Roman soldier and son of Roman parents³⁸⁸ (Fig. 10). The other sarcophagus, of which only the kline-lid survives, comes from the funerary monument of Ladochori, Igoumenitsa, kept in the Archaeological Museum of Ioannina³⁸⁹. It bears the name of the deceased, Antonios Euarestos, who died at the age of twenty-one, at the front of the mattress. The inscriptions carved on the gabled lid of an Amazonomachy sarcophagus in Beirut are much more articulate (Kintrup 2016, cat. 259)³⁹⁰ (Fig. 42). These tell us the names of the two occupants, Diodoros Veroka, a shellfish fisherman, and Hyperechios, a porphyry trader. In this case, of course, there can be no question as to the social status of the two men, despite the wealth they had obviously amassed³⁹¹.

115 The above examples lead us to cautiously reach universally applicable conclusions concerning the social status of purchasers of Attic sarcophagi, whether in Greek

384 See above, § 61 n. 200.

385 See Matz 1968, cat. 1; Katakis 2018, 115 f. n. 12 cat. 113.

386 See van Nijf 2004, 208.

387 On the inscription see Matz 1968, 104; see also Papagianni 2016, 90 n. 904; Katakis 2018, 115 f. n. 11 cat. 113.

388 Koch 1975a, cat. 178; Cambi 1988, 127–129 cat. 31; see above, § 24. The inscription belongs to the second phase of the sarcophagus, when two busts were carved after the flattening of the mattress.

389 Vokotopoulou 1983, 213 pl. 212 c; Catling 1983/1984, 39 fig. 63; Flämig 2007, 146 (d) pl. 44, 1–3.

390 Kintrup 2016, cat. 259.

391 See Rey-Coquais 1977, cat. 118 pl. 19, 4; Rey-Coquais 1979, 286. 289 pl. 1, 2.

territory or in the Roman Empire in general. In other words, in all likelihood and as was the case in Rome, the purchasers and users of these monuments were of varied social origin³⁹². The only thing we should consider a certainty is that, regardless of their social origin or place of residence, the buyers of these monuments were affluent people³⁹³ and had high standards as regards product quality, as they selected (whether for first or second use) Attic sarcophagi above others of lower aesthetic value³⁹⁴. This fact does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that they were educated elites of the cities or had literary knowledge that allowed them to comprehend the mythological scenes³⁹⁵. The view that purchasers of luxurious Attic sarcophagi in Greece were, contrary to what was the case in Rome, mostly members of the elite, highly cultured, and followed the values of the ›Second Sophistic‹, is rather simplistic. As indicated from the foregoing, a distinction between purchasers who belong to the elite and prefer Attic sarcophagi and purchasers who belong to other social classes and use simpler and more affordable monuments, such as stelae, would seem arbitrary³⁹⁶.

116 The information offered by the Thessaloniki sarcophagi is illuminating, as their inscriptions provide invaluable information concerning their owners. These are mainly locally produced marble sarcophagi where a prominent place was provided for an inscription to be carved, which thus played a key role in the appearance of the monument³⁹⁷. While Thessaloniki was one of the main recipients of Attic sarcophagi in Greece, accounting for 13 % of the total extant sarcophagi of the city³⁹⁸, one would be hard-pressed to claim that purchasers chose the type of their funerary monument depending on the social class to which they belonged. The well-known example of the large Attic Dionysiac sarcophagus in Thessaloniki which we discussed above was purchased, according to its inscription, by Po(plia) Antia Damokratia for her husband Vitalius Restitutus, who is described with the honorific *vir perfectissimus* (Fig. 51). She was most likely the sister or daughter of a governor of Thrace³⁹⁹. In this case, the owner unquestionably belonged to the highest social class of the Empire and, therefore, was probably highly educated. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that eminent figures of Thessaloniki society were interred in local rather than Attic sarcophagi. For instance, the councillor (*bouleutes*) Claudius Lykos, who commissioned a *heroon* featuring sarcophagi and statues, preferred a plain sarcophagus for himself depicting a heroic symposium (so-called funerary banquet) (Fig. 52), a popular subject in funerary monuments of the city in general⁴⁰⁰. Similarly, Annia Tryphaina, apparently a prominent Thessalonian woman and perhaps a priestess of Isis, ordered a sarcophagus for herself and her family adorned with a heroic rider, a highly popular theme in Thessaloniki⁴⁰¹. Also noteworthy is the case of the Thessalonian T. Aelius Geminios Olympos, who was

392 Koch 2018, 451. On metropolitan sarcophagi, see already Fittschen 1975, 17 f., with references to attestations regarding the varied social origin of patrons who, nevertheless, used the same costly monuments. See also recently Zanker – Ewald 2012, 23 f.; Borg 2013, esp. 202 f., with the interesting observation that mythological themes are largely restricted in the environment of the freedmen; and see Ewald 2015, 402 f.; Ewald 2018, 217 n. 37; Hallett 2019b.

393 See Rogge 1995, 16; Zanker 1999, 134; Koch 2018, 451; Ewald 2018, 212 f.

394 See Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 222 n. 114.

395 See also Zanker 1999, 134; Zanker 2014, 190; cf. Cameron 2019, 29 f.

396 Ewald 2004, 233 f.; Ewald 2018, 217, esp. 247. A similar opinion on the social origin of the purchasers of luxurious sarcophagi is put forward, on the basis of the scant information on Asiatic sarcophagi, by Stročka 2017a, 170–174; cf. Bielefeld 2018, 458. Instead, Koch 2018, 451, points out the many relevant possibilities.

397 Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 21.

398 Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2010, 155; Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2012b, 122 f.

399 See above, § 114 n. 382.

400 Thessaloniki, Arch. Mus. inv. 5703. Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 13. 220–222 cat. 109, and on the theme of the heroic banquet on these monuments 76 f. On the theme on the funerary monuments of Thessaloniki in general, see Terzopoulou 2019, 233–244.

401 Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 257 f. cat. 177, and on the theme of the heroic rider 71–75; see also Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2016; Terzopoulou 2019, 244–278. See below, § 131.



Fig. 52: Sarcophagus of Claudius Lykos, front side. Thessaloniki, Arch. Mus. inv. 5703

52

interred in a sarcophagus of the type most favoured by local workshops, i. e. the framed type, wherein the inscription was carved, as if on a large tabula⁴⁰². This man was one of the most distinguished and wealthiest Thessalonians of the 2nd half of the 2nd and the early 3rd centuries A.D., and, among other offices held, served as President of the Attic Panhellenion⁴⁰³. It is unlikely that a man (himself or including his family) holding such rank would be oblivious to the cultural climate of the era, which is why he was content with a simple, local sarcophagus adorned with just an inscription. In this and similar cases, we can unreservedly assume that purchasers were often steered in the selection of their funerary monument by other criteria not related to their educational level or social status. They could also have been influenced among other factors by the local traditions of the city, which was oriented towards Asia Minor and particularly the north-west, with the types of its funerary monuments shaped by this influence⁴⁰⁴. Apparently, taking a ›conservative‹ approach, they preferred artistic forms that were more familiar and iconographic themes with a long tradition in Macedonia which may have served as more authentic means of expression than imported luxury products. It must be noted that the same types of sarcophagi were chosen by persons belonging to lower social classes, the *plebs urbana*, even slaves⁴⁰⁵.

117 On the other hand, it seems quite likely that mythological and, generally speaking, pictorial images on Attic sarcophagi were understood not only by the members of an educated elite but also by people belonging to broader social classes. The only requirement for this would be to just know the myths, which would be expected, as even barbarians beyond the borders of the Roman Empire were familiar with Homer and worshipped Achilles⁴⁰⁶. Indeed, which resident of a Greek-speaking region would be unfamiliar with Achilles, Hektor and the other heroes of the Trojan War, when

402 Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 199 f. cat. 68.

403 P. Nigdelis in: Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 102, with reference to other members of the local elite of Thessaloniki who were interred in local sarcophagi.

404 Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, esp. 26–28. 40. 142. See also Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2010, esp. 158 f. 161. 182.

405 P. Nigdelis in: Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 103–105; Nigdelis 2012, 140–145.

406 See D. Chr. Or. 36, 9–14, referring to the hellenised inhabitants of Borysthene (ancient Olbia), on the north-western shores of the Black Sea; see Veyne 2005, 251 f.; Ewald 2004, 238; see also Zeitlin 2001, 263 f., on the issue of the penetration of Hellenism into the margins of the known world.

mythology was an important component of Greek religion⁴⁰⁷? Moreover, who would have never seen an Amazonomachy scene of the numerous in plain sight on the various public buildings in the cities⁴⁰⁸? Lastly, even if we were to assume that the customers of Attic sarcophagus workshops were indeed basically members of the social elite, it would be odd if the affluent throughout the Empire, regardless of their social class, would not wish to emulate the former.

118 Attic workshops addressed this wide audience consisting of all social classes, who certainly had the financial means, and made every effort throughout their production to adapt to their requirements as best as possible. This would render understandable the rather limited repertory and selective use of specific mythological scenes, as well as their depiction in a clear and accessible manner⁴⁰⁹. In fact, over time, workshops found it expedient to abandon the narrative depiction of mythological episodes, which at times required greater effort for the comprehension of details, and employed a different mode of conception in the 3rd century A.D.: they aimed at the essential components of the myth and, primarily, showcasing the protagonist, who took on an emblematic role and was immediately understood by viewers as the primary hero. But this is an issue that will concern us below.

119 Following what I stated above, the process of acquiring such a sarcophagus is a question that must be raised. It is hard to imagine that these mythological sarcophagi would be available at workshops for anyone interested⁴¹⁰. The high cost of these works, particularly a 3rd-century kline-lid sarcophagus⁴¹¹, would render their production-to-stock economically untenable. On the other hand, it is known that those interested often procured a sarcophagus while still alive⁴¹², while in cases of unexpected deaths, there were temporary solutions until the deceased could be placed in a marble sarcophagus⁴¹³. We therefore assume that these are products made to order. Of course, to our knowledge, the customers themselves mostly inhabited remote regions and direct contact with the workshops would normally be impossible. Therefore, they must have

407 See, for instance, Veyne 2005, 517.

408 On the relationship between myths and the everyday lives of people in antiquity, see Zanker – Ewald 2012, p. IX, as summarised in the book title: »Living with Myths«.

409 The opposite is observed with the metropolitan sarcophagi, which have a very wide repertoire but their dissemination is almost limited to Rome and Italy, while at the same time addressing an audience with specialised requirements in terms of subject-matter depending on their social class.

410 Today, the theory that the production-to-stock of these products was the norm is no longer accepted. See recently Russell 2011, who, in addressing the overall issue of sarcophagus production, believes that it is a complex process where »the stimulus appears to have come from the customer and the sculpting workshop; the quarry-based workshops responded to their requests«. See also Russell 2013, 269–271; Koortbojian 2012, 632–634; Strocka 2017a, 4, also rules out the possibility that sarcophagi in complete form remained in the workshop as stock products; however, he does accept that roughed-out sarcophagi may have been available.

411 On the long period required for the construction of a sarcophagus adorned with relief figures, see Wiegartz 1974, 364–366; cf. Koch 1993, 110; Russell 2011, 128.

412 There are plentiful inscribed attestations, most of which are of Eastern provenance, indicating that the sarcophagi were purchased while their prospective users were still alive; Russell 2013, 258 f., with relevant bibliography. In Thessaloniki sarcophagi, as well, the purchaser and other beneficiaries of the sarcophagi are referred to as living; P. Nigdelis in: Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 96 f. On this habit concerning metropolitan sarcophagi, see recently Bielfeldt 2019.

413 With regard to temporary burial in a clay sarcophagus and the subsequent transfer of remains to a marble sarcophagus, it is worth noting the attestation of inscription CIL VI 2120, dated to A.D. 164; see Müller 1994, 105 f., who believes that it is impossible for sarcophagi like those in the Villa Albani (see § 103) to be available from stock. See also Strocka 2017a, 6 n. 36. The argument of sudden death was often used to claim that there were prefabricated products available; see Russell 2011, 126 f. n. 32, who, on the contrary, accepts that such production would be expedient only under certain conditions. Galinier 2013 also discusses the issue in detail, who, regardless of the time of purchase of the sarcophagus (before death, immediately after or after a while), believes that the workshops had prefabricated sarcophagi in stock that would serve the usual requirements of customers, given, in his view, the standardisation of production. However, in my opinion, it would be difficult to characterize these luxury products, which present a great typological variety, as »produits de la série«.

come to arrangements with workshops possibly through traders who, as intermediaries, linked the places of production with the markets of major urban centres⁴¹⁴.

120 Nevertheless, the types of representations could not have been created *ad hoc* for specific commissioners but are probably due to workshops that were quite familiar with the desires of the purchasing public and realised them through the suitable handling of myths. I believe that myths afforded a general framework in which the virtues and tragic death of a young, beautiful and virtuous man – or, in certain cases, a woman in her family – would be matched with their parallels from the heroes' world. In the 3rd century A.D., Attic workshops leveraged the repertory of myths in a general and substantive way, without using descriptive details of the story. As we will discuss immediately below, they focus on the protagonist of the story in order to promote and praise him, elevate him into an example for the deceased person (or persons) to be interred in the sarcophagi. In contrast to these figures belonging to the mythical sphere, the persons depicted on the lid of a kline-sarcophagus are those transporting us to the sphere of actual reality⁴¹⁵. It is unknown whether the depictions of reclining men and women refer to the actual persons interred in the sarcophagus or (and) the living commissioners, who would possibly be later interred in the same monuments. However, since the conditions under which a sarcophagus was ordered and used are normally unknown, and yet we assume that these monuments usually served as family tombs⁴¹⁶, it is not necessary – but cannot be ruled out – that the persons on the lid are associated with the heroes of the mythological episode depicted on the chest. In other words, the persons interred in the sarcophagi could well have been relatives of the purchaser who died before him⁴¹⁷.

New Compositions, New Style and the Reorganisation of Workshops

121 As already clarified, a large part of compositions depicting mythological scenes on the front of Attic sarcophagi aim at recounting just one episode. Save few exceptions that require specific discussion, the frieze depicts a single scene, such as the Kalydonian boar hunt, the Ransom of Hektor, Achilles at the palace of Lykomedes on Skyros, the assembly of the Achaians in Troy, as well as Amazonomachy scenes, a battle between male warriors, possibly in Troy, and the battle beside the ships (*epi nausi mache*). Even the composition of Hippolytos and Phaidra, which uses a more suggestive visual language, particularly in the 2nd-century group, contains narrative elements that are closely, causally linked and make up a single episode. One interesting finding is that, mainly during the 2nd century A.D. and more rarely during the 3rd century A.D., in certain cases and with respect to the same mythological episode, there are two different compositions following a different archetype during the same period. The reproductions of each composition at our disposal indicate that the archetype is followed somewhat accurately, at least with regard to its principal features and, to a large extent, its details as well. This was made clear, as regards the 2nd century A.D., in groups I and II of the Kalydonian boar hunt (Fig. 1. 2. 3. 5) and in the early groups of Achilles on Skyros, although one of them, featuring the protagonists in seated form, is only attested once (Fig. 29. 30. 31. 32). The same holds true for the Amazonomachy scenes, with two or three different compositions discernible during the 2nd century A.D.; these clearly co-existed and each

414 On the marketing of the marble products of Athens, see Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 222. The same would also hold true for other regions, see Russell 2013, 285; Strocka 2017a, 5.

415 Ewald 2004, 248. 253; Ewald 2011, 285–287. 296; Ewald 2018, 213. 227. 231. 236.

416 Papagianni 2016, 99 f., with relevant documentation. Cf. with regard to corresponding large-scale Asiatic sarcophagi Strocka 2017a, 118 f.

417 According to Ewald 2018, 236 f. n. 91, the youthful heroes of the mythological representations may have reflected on the persons portrayed on the kline, despite the latter being usually depicted at an older age; however, he does not rule out the possibility that they might refer to a son of the family. Cf. also Ewald 2011, 297 n. 105.

followed a different archetype (Fig. 37. 39. 40). Such a case in the 3rd century A.D. can be found in the two groups of the battle beside the ships. Although one appeared first, both co-existed at least for a time during the 1st half of the 3rd century A.D. (Fig. 46. 47). As the differences between the various aforementioned compositions are striking, we conclude that the archetypes they followed were possibly the creations of different, rival workshops⁴¹⁸. This is also supported by the fact that, while contemporaneous, at times they exhibit clearly classical characteristics and at others more complex and stylistically more advanced patterns that, in one case, reveal painting models. In any case, a direct connection to classical models can rarely be discerned through the relief friezes of the sarcophagi⁴¹⁹, as they are usually limited to individual figures or groups of figures. Normally, these are new, eclectic creations that must be attributed to Attic sarcophagus workshops themselves.

122 However, in other cases, certain changes were made to the compositions, as discussed above, that intentionally altered individual elements. These are probably interventions aiming at improving or ›correcting‹ the archetype, possibly also in order to diversify – at least in certain cases – the significance of the image. Thus, in group II of Meleagros sarcophagi, we saw the composition being reversed from counterclockwise to clockwise, so that Meleagros is depicted from the front rather than the rear (Fig. 4). A different type of change was observed in the early group of Achilles on Skyros. In its similar sarcophagus in Naples (Fig. 30), the change to Deidameia's stance allowed for a new interpretation of the scene, as the heroine was linked to the figure of Achilles in a way that clearly displays the relationship between them. Similarly, the different arrangement of figures at the middle of the 3rd-century sarcophagi in Paris and Rome, also depicting Achilles on Skyros, highlights in the second example the closer relationship between the hero and Deidameia, almost the only female figure in the entire episode (Fig. 33. 34). In all these cases, we are likely not dealing with rival creations by different workshops but variations produced by the same workshop; moreover, it cannot be ruled out that they convey the desires of the commissioners.

123 A change of different magnitude, a truly great shift, occurred during the 1st quarter of the 3rd century A.D. with regard to the characteristics of relief friezes. This change concerns the conception and overall structure of the compositions, on one hand, and their execution, i. e. the style of the relief, on the other. One rarely discerns an archetype behind a number of representations during this period. While there are general similarities among depictions of the same theme, each one of them constitutes a self-contained work with its own personality and must be viewed separately. The way mythological scenes are conceived is radically different, divorced from the traditional narrative style and aiming at highlight specific persons and messages. It is noteworthy that means of monumental art are being employed: the axuality of the composition, the scale and frontal depiction of figures that exceed the relief field in height and are carved in high relief, so as to appear similar to statues. At the same time, references alluding to

418 The issue of sculpture workshops active in Athens itself, where various types of ›neo-Attic‹ works are constructed (see Kokkorou-Aleura 2001; Fittschen 2008b), and the organization of their production cannot be easily addressed at present, due to the lack of excavation data. On the problem of the sarcophagus workshops, see G. Koch in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 460 f., who believes that during the 2nd century A.D. there would have been other rival establishments beside the principal workshop (cf. Wiegartz 1975, 184), but from the late 2nd century A.D. there was only one large workshop (›Hauptwerkstatt‹) that enjoyed a monopoly. See also Koch 1982, 696. With regard to sculpture workshops in Athens in general, I had expressed the view in the past that increased demand for works intended for export from the Hadrianic era onwards would have led to the merger of smaller plants, leading to the creation of one or more large, extensively staffed workshops already by the 2nd century A.D.; Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 216–218. In my view, this possibility holds far more true for the 3rd century A.D., an era that saw, as we contend, a large-scale restructuring of workshops, which shifted their focus on the production of sarcophagi, thus increasing their exports.

419 See above, § 16.

the mythological framework, while still present, are kept to a minimum. This is without doubt a suggestive language that preserves some elements of the myth in order to create the conditions for identifying the scene rather than to recount the story being depicted in detail. The emphasis on the figure of the protagonist, placed at the axis in frontal pose, when permitted by the type of composition, and portrayed at a larger scale than the other figures at times, is particularly striking. Meleagros on horseback on the Thessaloniki sarcophagus (Fig. 7), Hippolytos beneath an arch on the Tarragon sarcophagus (Fig. 17), Achilles in the arming scene among the Achaians on the Beirut sarcophagus (Fig. 35) or Hektor during the battle beside the ships on the Thessaloniki sarcophagus (Fig. 48) are characteristic examples. In my view, there can be no doubt that the interest of artists and purchasers shifted during the 3rd century A.D. from the recounting of the story to its protagonist, from the episode of the myth to the mythical hero and his personality. The emblematic character he takes on strengthens the transmission of the message⁴²⁰.

¹²⁴ Furthermore, there is a clear qualitative difference in comparison to 2nd-century friezes. These are not merely skilled sculptors such as those who created the reliefs during the preceding period, but major artists who were obviously familiar with carving large-scale sculptures in the round. Since we can only make assumptions concerning the organisation of Attic sculpture workshops, as noted above⁴²¹, it is hard to interpret this shift. What can be considered a certainty is that 2nd-century Attic sarcophagi are very closely related to mythological (neo-Attic) reliefs, as supported by their similarities in terms of style and, frequently, the types of figures⁴²². These same workshops, which probably also created figural table supports and statuettes, could have also created larger-scale ideal works⁴²³. However, it is equally likely that large, high-quality idealistic sculptures were carved by other workshops addressed to a public with higher requirements. Whatever the case may be, artistic forces that had specialised during the 2nd century in large-scale, high-quality conspicuous sculptures to a great percentage now shifted to the carving of relief sarcophagi, giving new impetus to production and substantially increased the level of these works. It is probably no accident that during the reign of the Severans, the production of large-scale idealistic statues in Athens – as in the empire in general – decreased noticeably, a fact that must be attributed to the shift of the financially strong strata of society to new means of self-promotion⁴²⁴.

¹²⁵ Thus, the new, dynamic personnel now involved in the creation of relief sarcophagi elevated these workshops, through their creative imagination and high level of carving, to leaders of the marble product trade in the Roman Empire. Based on the foregoing, we can understand the preference for the array and frontal depiction of heroes on relief friezes so that they appear similar to statues, and also the freedom and variety in the design of compositions. Guided by a draft providing general instructions, each artist was able to create a special, unique composition and imbue it with the specific meaning that, in his view, would resonate with the purchasing public. We can therefore comprehend the enthusiastic response of the public to these new, ambitious products, with production spiking and climaxing during the 2nd quarter of the 3rd century A.D., and the subsequent

420 A similar development is observed in the metropolitan sarcophagi of the 3rd century A.D., where the protagonists were identified with the patrons of the sarcophagus directly by bearing their portrait features, see Borg 2014, 238–251; Zanker 2019.

421 See above, n. 418.

422 On this view, see Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 212. 216.

423 Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 211 n. 16.

424 On this subject, see Stephanidou-Tiveriou 1993b, 211 n. 19. 212–214, containing the discourse on the matter.

diffusion of these monuments throughout the Empire until the mid-3rd century or shortly thereafter⁴²⁵. It is self-evident that the choice of myths, which met the standards of public interested in narrated sarcophagi, had a decisive contribution to this development.

Mythical Heroes: Moral Exempla, Not a Means of Private Heroisation

126 The persons depicted in the mythological scenes on sarcophagi belong to the distant past of Greek ›history‹⁴²⁶ and represent the moral values that were preserved unchanged for centuries in the Greek world. These grand examples of the mythical past, with an educational value tracing back to epic poetry, were sustained throughout antiquity⁴²⁷. The Greek-speaking inhabitants of the East continued to look back at these values and examples during the Roman Empire, with special emphasis during the 2nd century A.D.⁴²⁸. During this period Athens began producing mythological and, generally speaking, relief sarcophagi using classical artistic forms that allowed the creation of works with a classical style, i. e. classicistic works, but also with a creative spirit in terms of their compositions and messages. Athenian sculptors handled mythological subjects in a way that met the contemporary social needs of broader populations of the Empire⁴²⁹.

127 The protagonists of episodes themselves appear and act in terms set by the sculptors and the purchasing public, but always in a way that highlights their main qualities and virtues to which the virtues of the mortal occupants of the funerary monuments are paralleled⁴³⁰. The reference to these moral exempla eulogises the deceased and consoles their surviving relatives. In this context, the mythical heroes are not the subjects of worship and cult practices. In other words, the mythical figures are not heroes (ἥρωες) in the religious sense of the term, and are not venerated at any level, whether private or public. Scholarship has clearly distinguished between the secular meaning of the term, as we understand it from the epics, and the religious meaning⁴³¹, i. e. between mythical heroes (»Helden«) and heroes associated with the religious phenomenon of heroisation (»Heroen«)⁴³². In other words, on one hand, we have the heroes who were raised through epic poetry and survived in collective memory until Late Antiquity, and on the other, the heroes of all categories, mythical but usually historical figures who, for various reasons, were venerated after their deaths in the Greek world⁴³³. The mythical heroes depicted on sarcophagi obviously belong to the first category (»Helden«) and there is no reason to assume their association with cult practices. Consequently, as we

425 There was a noticeable decline during the decade of A.D. 250–260, see Koch 2012c, 37 pls. 3, 4; Koch 2015, 12 figs. 7, 8. During this last phase, the number of figures decreases, while at the same time there appears some simplification and formalisation in terms of style, see Kintrup 2016, 103.

426 It becomes clear that the boundaries of history are shifted to the mythical past, e. g. from the biographies of Theseus and Romulus written by Plutarch, see Jones 2010, 66 f. See also the way Pausanias (Paus. 5, 11, 7) refers to the Athenian Amazonomachy, as the ultimate parallel to the history of Athens, above, § 96.

427 Marrou 1948, 36–40; see also Christes et al. 2006, 61; Boschung 2021, 207–210.

428 Of the extensive bibliography on the so-called Second Sophistic movement, see, by way of indication, Borg 2004; Whitmarsh 2005; Whitmarsh 2013; Richter – Johnson 2017; Ewald 2018, 209 n. 1; 241 n. 110 (bibliography).

429 As such, we cannot speak of »anachronistic imagery«, as has recently been stated; see above, § 7. Moreover, given that myths never ceased serving as a theme for the visual arts throughout antiquity and that mythological representations have a symbolic meaning in each case, i. e. they function as metaphors, there can be no issue of ›modern‹ or ›anachronistic‹.

430 It should be noted that the heroes of the past served as examples, as models of action for the benefactors of historical times and their actions, as presumed from the relevant references of Diodoros; see Hughes 1999, 173 n. 34 (with the relevant passages).

431 On the subject, see recently von Mangoldt 2013, 5 n. 27, with relevant bibliography.

432 Himmelmann 2010. On this distinction, see also Jones 2010.

433 Mythical heroes were also worshipped on several occasions and Philostratos makes extensive reference to them in his *Heroicus*, see Grossardt 2006, 34–46. On the heroes of the historical era, see, for instance, Hughes 1999; Carvalho 2014 (on Asia Minor).

will see below, the spaces where sarcophagi depicting mythical heroes were placed cannot be perceived unconditionally as *heroa*, i. e. places of worship, but must be primarily treated as luxurious funerary monuments.

128 Attic sarcophagi have been found in funerary buildings⁴³⁴ and outdoor spaces, such as burial enclosures, e. g. in Tyre and most likely in Thessaloniki and Athens⁴³⁵. As a rule, there are no indications of worship in such buildings or spaces. In other words, in order to associate them with heroised mortals, whether in a private or public context, we would require inscriptions or at least evidence of the existence of an altar or the performance of sacrifices, or to know that they were situated within cities (*intra muros*)⁴³⁶. The number of funerary buildings recently unearthed in Nikopolis, Epirus⁴³⁷, and, to a smaller extent, in Athenian *Kerameikos*⁴³⁸ and *Messene*⁴³⁹ shed light on the way relief-adorned sarcophagi functioned far more than the isolated funerary monuments known to date. The luxurious buildings in Nikopolis frame the grave road starting from the northern gateway of the city and heading towards the so-called Proasteion and Augustus' victory monument. In their sepulchral chamber, sarcophagi of varied provenance, mostly Attic, had been placed along the perimeter on a low podium and in certain cases co-existed with built tombs⁴⁴⁰. These are doubtlessly private tombs-mausolea of rich families, deployed along the most important extra-urban road of the city, thus displaying the wealth and status of their owners.

129 It is a fact that sarcophagi of Attic or other origin were, in certain cases, housed in buildings characterised by inscriptions as *heroa* (ἡρώα)⁴⁴¹. However, we do not know what the specific character of the monument was in each case and whether the occupant of the tomb enjoyed any particular honours. This last category may for example include the temple-shaped monument of Messene of disputed dating, which according to excavator Petros Themelis is the *heroon* of the Saithidai, while according to F. A. Cooper it is the tomb of Aristomenis⁴⁴². In any case, it appears certain that the fragmentary kline-lid

434 On sarcophagi originating from funerary monuments in Greece, see Flämig 2007, 81–84; Papagianni 2016, 85 n. 848–851. On recent findings in Nikopolis, see below, n. 437; in Ermioni (Argolis), see Piteros et al. 1991, 105 f. pl. 56; in *Laconia*, see Eleftheriou – Skankos 2010–2013. On the selection of similar examples from Greece and Asia Minor, see Ewald 2018, 217–220. 250–252. On a similar important example from Cyrene, see Fabbriotti 2016.

435 On Tyre, see de Jong 2010, esp. 604–610; Ewald 2018, 220 f. n. 43 (with bibliography) figs. 4 a. b. On data concerning Thessaloniki, where most sarcophagi (regardless of the construction workshop) were placed in outdoor spaces, despite certain indications of the existence of funerary structures as well, see Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 9–14. Both modes of placement, in funerary buildings or in outdoor enclosures, are also attested, according to all available indications, in Athens; see Stroszeck 2008, 303, and esp. Stroszeck 2016, 123. An excavation in Votanikos near the Sacred Road unearthed a Roman-era enclosure with a sealed Attic strigillated sarcophagus, see Lygourē-Tolia 1985, 28 f. pl. 12 a; Tsigotē-Drakōtou 2008, 315 n. 3 fig. 4, while other recent excavations unearthed Attic sarcophagi within funerary buildings, see n. 10.

436 E. g. the *heroon* in Palatiano, Kilkis, Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2009a, esp. 347 f. n. 6. 7, and on *heroa intra muros*, Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2009a, 348 n. 9. On the subject in detail, see Fröhlich 2013. On heroes and *heroa* in Greek cities, see Kader 1995 and recently Fabricius 2010, with relevant testimonies and bibliography. See also Jones 2010, 48–65, and esp. von Mangoldt 2013.

437 Georgiou 2007; Th. Stephanidou-Tiveriou in: Stephanidou-Tiveriou – Papagiannē 2015, 4–6; Zachos et al. 2008, 109–119 (with images of a total of 30 buildings); Georgiou 2017.

438 Stroszeck 2008, esp. 302, and mainly Stroszeck 2016, 123.

439 Flämig 2007, 175–181 cat. 76–78. 82, for the collected relevant bibliography; Ciliberto 2009, 230 f.

440 The sarcophagi within the funerary monuments framing the Arcadian Gate of Messene were apparently arranged in a different manner, as a sarcophagus podium is cited opposite the entrance on the axis of the space and niches on the sidewalls, Ciliberto 2009, 230 f.

441 See, for instance, the inscription on the Kerameikos funerary monument of Aurelius Rufus, whose mother made to *heroon kai ten soron*, Stroszeck 2008, 300 f. Furthermore, inscriptions from Thessaloniki refer to *heroa* containing one or four sarcophagi, while in one case, the inscription carved on the sarcophagus of the councillor Claudius Lykos, we are informed that it contained sarcophagi and statues, Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 13. 220–222 cat. 109. On the sarcophagus of Claudius Lykos, see above, § 116, and below, § 132.

442 Themelēs 2000, 102–113 (early imperial period); Cooper 1999 (1st or 2nd century A.D.); see also Flämig 2007, 175 f. cat. 76 pl. 86, 3, for both different views on the dating and identification of the *heroon*; see also von Mangoldt 2013, 113–115 no. C 16; Ewald 2018, 250–252.

sarcophagus which originates from the monument dates far later than its initial phase⁴⁴³. Who its owner was during the 2nd century A.D. is unknown to us, as is if he enjoyed heroic honours, which is not unlikely, given the prominent position of this temple-shaped monument. However, these questions remain unanswered, at least for the time being.

¹³⁰ Even if we were to assume that certain of the mortals interred in Attic sarcophagi had indeed been worshipped as heroes, it is not the themes of the mythological or other representations that determined or decisively contributed to the character of the tomb as a place of worship (*heroon*). It is difficult to accept Ewald's proposal that »the specific selection of mythological themes on Attic sarcophagi served to reinforce the specific spatial character of the tomb as a *heroon*«⁴⁴⁴. In other words, the repertory of mythological images cannot be considered to »correspond to the designation of tombs as *heroa*, and the ubiquitous use of the hero title in the Greek East«⁴⁴⁵. This would require the satisfaction of certain of the aforesaid conditions, which are encountered less or more frequently, depending on the region or city where the monument was located. As is well known, Athens itself, where a significant percentage of Attic sarcophagi were used, falls short in comparison to the rest of Greece and Asia Minor in the dissemination of the private heroisation of the dead. In other Greek cities, the terms *heros* (ἥρως) and *heroa* (ἥρῶα) are widely used⁴⁴⁶, while it is certain that the phenomenon of heroisation is subject to significant geographical variation⁴⁴⁷. According to Ewald, during the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D., when Attic sarcophagi were produced, the presence of private tomb-*heroa* in Athens appears to be commensurate to that in other Greek cities⁴⁴⁸. However, the funerary buildings in Athens where the term *heroon* is used number but two so far⁴⁴⁹, while Attic funerary stelae of the period where the deceased is called *heros*⁴⁵⁰ are exceptionally few. Nevertheless, under no circumstances do these examples allow us to compare the situation in Athens to those in other cities of the East, e. g. *Samos* or the cities of Macedonia and *Thessaly*⁴⁵¹, where there are numerous such attestations from funerary monuments. What is certain is that the cities of the Greek East cannot be treated on equal terms with regard to heroisation⁴⁵².

¹³¹ Scholars researching the imagery of heroisation in the Greek East are aware that the themes suggesting the relationship between the deceased and the chthonic/heroic world are not mythological themes. This role is played by the iconographic types – already widespread since the classical era – of the so-called funerary banquet reliefs (*Totenmahlreliefs*) and the so-called Heros equitans reliefs, accompanied by characteristic heroisation symbols, such as the snake or snake wrapped around a tree, the altar

443 This kline-lid sarcophagus bears Caryatids at the corners of the chest, but its relief frieze has not been preserved, see Themelès 2000, 107 fig. 92.

444 Ewald 2018, 209.

445 Ewald 2018, 248.

446 On the subject of heroisation during the Hellenistic and Roman era: Hughes 1999, esp. 170 n. 22 (on the rarity of the phenomenon in Attica); see also ThesCRA II (2004) 125–214 s. v. Heroisierung und Apotheose (P. Athanassiadi et al.); Ekroth 2007; Jones 2010, esp. 48–65; Mestre 2015/2016, esp. 145 n. 7. 8; Carvalho 2014; Ewald 2018, 248–250.

447 On variations between regions and cities, see esp. Hughes 1999. See also Fabricius 2010, 260 n. 13; 272 f. 279. 283 f.; von Mangoldt 2013, 9 n. 70; Wypustek 2013, 68. 90–92; Carvalho 2014; Fabricius 2016.

448 Ewald 2018, 250.

449 See Stroszeck 2008, 300–302. Cf. Ewald 2018, 250 n. 147. 148.

450 See von Moock 1998, 74 f., citing three examples. On the rarity of usage of the term in Attica, see Hughes 1999, 170 n. 22; Fabricius 2010, 272 n. 46 (Hellenistic era); 273 n. 50 (imperial era, on the low number of decrees concerning heroic honours). On the reluctance of Athenians towards heroisation of the dead since the classical era, see Jones 2010, 21. 27; Voutiras 2010, 103 n. 72; Wypustek 2013, 91 f.; Scholl 2018, esp. 231.

451 On these regions, see Fabricius 2010, 264–269; Wypustek 2013, 68. 74. 90–92; on Macedonia, see more recently Kalaitzi 2016, 102–114.

452 See above, § 130.

or the horse head/bust⁴⁵³. For example, in a city like Thessaloniki where a significant number of Attic sarcophagi were imported from A. D. 130 to approximately A.D. 260, as noted above, local sarcophagi adorned with these heroic themes were concurrently used; in fact, these are also used very frequently in the other types of its funerary monuments, such as altars, stelae and reliefs⁴⁵⁴. It is also worth stressing the fact that in the funerary monuments of Macedonian cities and other locations, these iconographic types are frequently accompanied by inscriptions where the deceased is characterised as *heros*⁴⁵⁵. This includes the remarkable inscribed stele from the region of Thessaloniki in the Museum of Byzantine Culture inv. BE 116 (AG 1629), depicting the deceased as a hunter on horseback and bearing the following epigram⁴⁵⁶: Ἴππευτὴν ἥρωα πατὴρ ἀπόδημον ἔθηκεν Γάιον ἐγγράψας εἰκόνι λαινέῃ, ὃς μετὰ τῶν Νυμφῶν οἰκεῖ κατὰ τέμπεα Κισσοῦ ἵπποισιν χαίρων [κ]αὶ κυσὶ καὶ δόρασιν. The deceased, having passed into the sphere of heroes, hunts in the idyllic environment of Mount Cissus accompanied by Nymphs. There is no reference here to a mythical hero-exemplar – as is the case, for instance, with the aforementioned inscription of Epigonos – but the deceased himself is elevated to the heroic sphere, enjoying a happy afterlife.

¹³² Also of interest is the simple, locally produced sarcophagus of councillor Claudius Lykos, also from Thessaloniki, which was discussed above⁴⁵⁷ (Fig. 52). As we are told from his inscription, this man, while living, constructed a *heroon* for himself and his family, which contained sarcophagi and statues. The owner is portrayed on the front of the chest in the motif of a banqueter, i. e. as a *heros*. Of course, it is unknown whether this distinguished Thessalonian enjoyed any particular honours after his death, but the selection of the iconographic motif, combined with the reference to a *heroon*, creates certain important associations. According to one opinion, the terms *heros* and *heroon* constituted hollow, formulaic phrases in the late Hellenistic and the imperial period, merely signifying the deceased and the tomb, respectively. However, this view, which was put forward by scholars in the past and widely accepted by epigraphical scholarship, has now been disputed with strong arguments⁴⁵⁸; on the contrary, it has been claimed more recently that the use of these terms reflects an ideological position that varies in frequency from region to region and mainly concerns premature deaths⁴⁵⁹. This is supported by the aforementioned fact that funerary inscriptions where the term *heros* is encountered are closely associated to a specific heroic iconography⁴⁶⁰. However, as regards Attic sarcophagi, a depiction of the myth of Meleagros or Hippolytos reflects a different perception of the deceased. In this case, the virtues of the mythical hero-hunter are projected into the reality of that time and serve as an example for the deceased, without identifying him with the hero or elevating him to the heroic sphere. We could not even claim that these conceal any suggestions as to the afterlife of the deceased. If, nevertheless, the connotations of the

⁴⁵³ In terms of recent bibliography, see, e. g., Fabricius 1999, esp. 58–68; Fabricius 2010, 283; Fabricius 2016, esp. 40 n. 29; Voutiras 2010, 86–89; Jones 2010, 53–59.

⁴⁵⁴ On sarcophagi: Stefanidou-Tiveriou 2014a, 71–77. On altars: Adam-Velenē 2002, 73–79. 86–91. On reliefs and stelae: KatMTh I 1997; KatMTh II 2003; KatMTh III 2010; KatMTh IV 2020; Terzopoulou 2019, 233–276.

⁴⁵⁵ Kalaitzi 2016, 106–108; Papagianni 2019, 335 n. 21. This phenomenon is widely attested, see Fabricius 2010, 283; Jones 2010, 59.

⁴⁵⁶ On this relief stele from the 2nd century A.D. found in Xirokrini, Thessaloniki, Mus. of Byzantine Culture inv. BE 116 (AG 1629), see Nigdelēs 2015, 40–45 cat. 4; IG X 2, 1 Suppl. 1, 1231; Papagianni 2019, 335 n. 20; 339; Terzopoulou 2019, 269 f. cat. 121 pl. 48.

⁴⁵⁷ See § 116 n. 400; § 129 n. 441.

⁴⁵⁸ On the relevant discourse and bibliography, see esp. Hughes 1999. For the issue, see also Jones 2010, 48–65; Fabricius 1999, 156 n. 196; Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2009b, 391 n. 13; Fabricius 2010, 266 n. 26; 283; von Mangoldt 2013, 9 f.; Wypustek 2013, 65–95, esp. 74–78. 90–95. On bibliography, see also Kalaitzi 2016, 109 n. 285; Mortensen 2018, 117 n. 15; 283.

⁴⁵⁹ Hughes 1999, esp. 170 f. 172. Cf. Ekroth 2007, 101; Wypustek 2013, 92–95; Ekroth 2015, 387. – On the use of the terms ἥρωας and ἥρωα in the sources, see Kubińska 1968; Mikkola 2008, 1–32; von Mangoldt 2013, 4–14.

⁴⁶⁰ See above, § 131.

myth allow in certain cases for the possibility of a prospective reading, this can certainly not be ruled out, but it is not clearly brought to the foreground⁴⁶¹.

133 The following conclusion arises from the foregoing: 1. the cities of the Greek East cannot be treated as similar with regard to their views concerning death and the heroisation of the deceased; 2. the iconography of Attic sarcophagi cannot be associated with the heroisation and heroic iconography of the Eastern cities, nor perceived as a parallel manifestation thereof. On the contrary, mythological images are rooted in the long tradition of the Greek world, where myths have a manifold function, being ubiquitous in the everyday lives of people, and heroes serve as moral examples for them. Athens, having adopted the new category of funerary monuments probably from Rome, also received its decoration at the same time with specific repertoire. The myth as a decorative theme of the chest is likely due to the capital, although in the Greek world and in Attica itself burial monuments of some size had long ago adopted it; the temple-shaped monument of *Kallithea*/Attica is a case in point⁴⁶². In any event, the selection and handling of mythological episodes are achievements of the Attic art of the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. These achievements, on one hand, connect Attic funerary art with its ancient tradition and, on the other, allow it to express in its own special way the demands of the time.

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461 On the discourse in scholarship regarding the eschatological (prospective) interpretation of myths, which mainly prevailed in past scholarship, and the retrospective interpretation that succeeded it in recent years, see H. Sichtermann in: Koch – Sichtermann 1982, 581–617, esp. 602 f. n. 149–153; Fittschen 1992, 1048 f. Sichtermann 1992, 40–53. See also more recently Grassinger 2007; Newby 2011, 190 n. 7; Zanker – Ewald 2012, 20; Borg 2015a, 77 n. 1–3; Stephanidou-Tiveriou 2017, 617–619, and Borg 2018, 178 n. 45, with extensive, relevant bibliography also including recent studies considering the interpretation of some myths in eschatological terms as one possibility. It does seem that this possibility of interpretation should no longer be ruled out. See also Zanker – Ewald 2012, e. g. 107–109. 160 f.; Zanker 2014, esp. 201–203, who claims that the two interpretations can co-exist. According to Tiverios 2017, 319 f., heroic myths are probably more appropriate for references to the earthly life, deeds and virtues of the deceased, while Dionysiac and Eros themes, on the contrary, are alluding to afterlife expectations; cf. Elsner 2019, 434. Extremely enlightening is the relevant analysis of Balty 2013b, who, starting from the interpretive method of François Cumont, provides a detailed and critical presentation of the wide variety of research views to date.

462 Stainchaouer 2001, 305–309. 348–352 figs. 458–461; Israel 2013.

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