

Theodosia Stefanidou-Tiveriou, **Die lokalen Sarkophage aus Thessaloniki**. Mit epigraphischen Beiträgen von Pantelis Nigdelis und einem Anhang von Yannis Maniatis und Dimitris Tambakopoulos. Sarkophag-Studien, volume 8. Publisher Franz Philipp Rutzen, Ruhpolding, in commission at publisher Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2014. XVIII and 302 pages, 10 supplementary plates, 100 plates.

The latest addition to the series of Sarcophagus-Studies by the German Archaeological Institute is the monograph by Theodosia Stefanidou-Tiveriou on the local sarcophagi and ostothekei (ossuaries) in the museums and collections at Salonica. A prominent group of Attic sarcophagi from the city is already known – a well-known example is displayed in the Louvre Museum (accession no. LP 2584) –, but no previous volume had been dedicated to the local examples. The new volume defines and categorizes the sepulchral material, contextualizes it within the broader funerary art production in the Greek East, and reinforces its arguments by epigraphic and scientific research. The main author, Theodosia Stefanidou-Tiveriou, is already quite reputable with her previous work on the funerary monuments of Thessalonike, especially how they illuminate social history (e. g. in: L. Nasrallah / Ch. Bakirtzis / S. J. Friesen [eds.], *From Roman to Early Christian Thessalonikē. Studies in Religion and Archaeology* [Cambridge/Mass. 2010] 151–188). The value of the present study is no doubt increased with the contributions of additional specialists: Pantelis Nigdelis, who studied the inscriptions, as well as Yannis Maniatis and Dimitris Tambakopoulos, who analyzed the marble source of the sarcophagi with scientific tests.

At first sight, the material presented in this book seems non-appealing to the average museum visitor. In general, the fully or partially preserved local examples do not have the narrative or technical mastery of the Attic sarcophagi, nor the decorative skills of the Asiatic ones, which form the main group (Hauptgruppe). However, as one reads along the text, one sees the meticulous apprehension of the material, the comprehensive methodology embracing multiple disciplines, and brilliant observations that illuminate not only local history, but also the broader social history of death in the Greek East. Therefore, the relative visual dullness of the material is more than compensated by the relevance of the arguments to the broader Empire.

As becomes apparent at the end of the book, these local sarcophagi and ossuaries are worthy of scrutiny because, other than their obvious contribution to the present knowledge of imperial funerary monuments, they are preserved with a good record of inscriptions that allows historical analysis, and demonstrate links between the various cities of the Greek East. In fact, the author emphasizes this latter aspect throughout the book by exploring stylistic and thematic connec-

tion of the Thessalonike material with the sarcophagi of other centres such as Proconnessos, Aphrodisias, Ephesus, Attica and even the Asiatic main group (Hauptgruppe).

A few words about the methods used in this book, which are in essence typical for many other archaeological monographs on a particular body of material: taxonomic and structuralist. Structuralist methods allow the reader to see the available material, artistic types and modes in a well-organized way. On the other hand, the applicability of the categories of the sarcophagi presented in this book, which are only distinguishable by the expert eye, to the reality of antiquity is quite disputable. Still, the epigraphic and scientific research, as well as the astute commentary and historical contextualization, mitigate the inescapable formalism of the taxonomic discourse.

The book is divided into two parts, the main text and a catalogue, followed by the supplements and plates. The main text itself is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 5 and 9 were written by the aforementioned specialists. After a brief introductory chapter that summarizes the aims of the book and the importance of the material, chapter 2 establishes the original archaeological context and layout of the necropolis areas. The author here makes several fascinating observations on the manner of use and reuse of the sarcophagus chests. One example is the vertical division of the internal space of the chest with a marble plate into two superimposed stories (p. 16). This practice is done so that the bodies could be placed below and above the divider plate, therefore allowing the inhumation of multiple bodies in an orderly fashion. Interestingly, the similar practice is observable on the Bithynian sarcophagi in Chalcedon and the sarcophagi of Aphrodisias.

Chapter 3 is devoted to taxonomy and definition of the sarcophagi and the ossuaries. The author examines the material in mainly six categories: (1) profiled sarcophagi and ossuaries (cat. 1–108); (2) plain sarcophagi (cat. 109–136); (3) pedestal sarcophagi (Postamentsarkophage, cat. 137–142); (4) garland sarcophagi and ossuaries (cat. 143–174); (5) independent pieces after Attic models (cat. 175–178); and (6) sarcophagus lids (cat. 210–241). The difference between the first three groups is very subtle and only meaningful to the trained eye, which this book aims to address in the first place. The profiled sarcophagi have a moulding framing the front side of the chest on all four edges, while the plain sarcophagi have undecorated straight surfaces. The so-called pedestal sarcophagi have a profiled moulding on the upper and lower edges of the chest. The category of 'independent pieces after Attic models' includes extremely original examples, for instance the sarcophagus of *Annia Tryphaena* (cat. 177), which was securely dated to A. D. 134/135. This sarcophagus, which also decorates the cover of the book, demonstrates a frieze of five standing ideal figures and portrait busts projecting out from the corners on the front side of the chest.

My one reservation about the typology of funerary monuments, beside it relying heavily on modern perceptions, is the suggestion that some of the local sarcophagi were modelled after patterns from Aphrodisias (pp. 39 f.). These combine garlands and columns on the same chest; for instance one example has a horizontal garland placed above two column shafts (cat. 147). Another one shows a fragmentary female figure between two columns (cat. 163). As confessed by Stefanidou-Tiveriou herself (p. 40), the proposition that the Aphrodisian sarcophagus workshop, which remained predominantly local, influenced the artistic production of Thessalonike is problematic. Moreover, some of the Aphrodisian garland sarcophagi (see F. Işık, *Girlanden-Sarkophage aus Aphrodisias* [Mayence 2007]) that look like prototypes can actually be later in date than the sarcophagi of Thessalonike. However, it is further clarified by the author, rightly so, that such a possible influence could not be explained only by the direct impact of style and technique, but rather the eclectic use in Thessalonike of various motifs characteristic for other workshops.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the use and meaning of relief decoration. While many sarcophagi are plain except for a moulding on the upper and lower edges of the chest, many others have decorative motifs in relief either on the chests or on the acroteria of the lids. These could be portrait images of citizens, representation of professions, heroes and theomorphic images, symbolic motifs such as garlands or *Erotes*, and decorative patterns such as shields and *gorgoneia*. Citizen portraits are useful beyond their assistance in the dating of the sarcophagi; they demonstrate the culturally acceptable demeanour and public self-display. Professional reliefs, albeit few in number in the Greek East, are particularly informative to analyze the social standing of their patrons. For instance, a ship owner's sarcophagus features a small sketch of a ship underneath the *tabula* (cat. 117), and a dolphin underneath the inscription on the left. The sarcophagus of a *secundarudis* (cat. 133) presents the man in the centre of the chest in a small niche. A wagon driver (cat. 15) stands proudly holding a palm leaf and a racing whip.

Chapter 5, written by Nigdelis, discusses the dating, terminology, and social history stemming from funerary inscriptions. The majority of the funerary monuments, 145 sarcophagi and twelve ossuaries out of a total of 240, are inscribed. The discussion includes funerary terminology, nomenclature and identity of grave owners, curses, and legislation and fines to protect the graves from desecration. Many different conclusions arise from this query, for instance, the majority of the sarcophagus owners were Roman citizens either because they were of Greek origins and received citizenship in A. D. 212 by Caracalla's *Constitutio Antoniniana*, or because they were Italian settlers who occupied the region starting from the second century B. C. Some of the owners, such as *archontes* and priests, belonged to the social elite. But many others

were athletes, soldiers, freed people, and even slaves. Nigdelis concludes that many of the sarcophagus owners come from a level of the society that today we would call the middle class. This is by itself a significant suggestion, as a similar conclusion has been reached from parallel material in the Greek East, for instance at Aphrodisias (R. R. R. Smith in: id. / C. Ratté (eds.) *Aphrodisias Papers 4. New Research on the City and its Monuments* [Portsmouth 2008] 347–395). Further conclusions of this query, if supported by data from elsewhere in the Empire, would be that the stone sarcophagi were used as a means of funerary, personal and social expression by the »middling-levels« of the society in the Greek East.

Chapter 6 is a discussion on the dating of the monuments based on stylistic and epigraphic grounds. Accordingly, the production of the local sarcophagi seems to have started in the late Hadrianic times and stayed quite stable in the second half of the second and first half of the third centuries. The production began to diminish in the second half of the third century. This chronological distribution corresponds to the broader trend of sarcophagus production in the Greek East, as demonstrated with the sarcophagi from Aphrodisias (E. Ögüç, *Phoenix* 68, 2014, 137–156).

Chapter 7 is about the production of the Thessalonike workshops, and their connection with the Thasos quarries. Apparently, the majority of the sarcophagi were manufactured from Thasian marble, a fact confirmed by the scientific tests explained in Chapter 9. Thessalonike was the biggest purchaser of the Thasian products in Macedonia and the Empire. The chapter further clarifies the nature of the connectivity between Thessalonike and the quarries on Thasos by arguing that the workshops commissioned quarry-state blank chests from the quarries and worked on them locally to satisfy specific demands of the home market. The chapter closes with a prospective research question of whether similar links between Thasos and other cities existed.

Chapter 8 makes final remarks about the usefulness of the material and the contribution of its scrutiny to scholarship. Chapter 9 includes marble provenance investigation by Maniatis and Tambakopoulos, and provides scientific proof that the majority of the local sarcophagi are made of marble from the aforementioned north-Aegean Island of Thasos. The analysis elucidates that out of a sample of twenty-three sarcophagi, two are of Pentelic and one of Proconnesian marble. The remaining twenty are of Thasian marble (nine of them from white dolomitic marble from Thasos Vathy or Saliara, and eleven from calcitic Thasian quarries). This study provides solid evidence for the reconstruction of the postulated marble-trade routes.

The catalogue at the end of the narrative is divided into the aforementioned categories of sarcophagi and ossuaries. In addition, it includes a section on frag-

ments of indeterminate sarcophagi (cat. 179–241). Since many of these fragments are inscribed, and several are lost today, it is significant to record their presence for future use. Catalogue entries were meticulously prepared and are accompanied by inscriptions, if there are any. An asterisk in front of a particular number differentiates the ossuaries from sarcophagi. When a sarcophagus has a securely datable inscription or a portrait head, specific dates are proposed. When this is not possible, a broad dating such as the »mid-third century« is suggested. The catalogue is ensued by a supplement, which includes ten pages on sarcophagi from Assos, which were made of red volcanic stone typical for Assos.

The book includes a useful index in German and Greek at the end, the German one is divided into one on the place names, and one on the private names and concepts. The index is followed by ten pages of appendix (Beilagen) that provide the findspot plan of the local sarcophagi; various notebook entries of inscriptions and squeezes; a sketch of the types of sarcophagi; and bar charts of the chronological distribution of the sarcophagi.

The plates that follow are well-produced and printed on glossy paper. Both right and left short sides of the sarcophagus chests were printed, even if they are plain and have no peculiar feature to pay attention to. It is disputable whether that was necessary, or whether it merely adds to the bulk of the volume, which in turn increases the price. But this practice conforms to the broader principles of the *Sarcophagus-Studies* monographs, which is essentially the precise documentation of a body of material. Details of certain images (reliefs and portraits) are also printed when and where relevant and necessary. The publisher must be praised for the quality of the images.

On the whole, the volume introduces new questions and directions in the study of funerary monuments, especially those to illuminate the social history of the Greek East. Rather than being a purely taxonomic study, it synthesizes the available material to elucidate aspects of social identity, funerary habits, meaning of motifs in social context, and connections between cities. This is no doubt a much valuable addition to the sarcophagus corpus, and will be a coveted read not only for the sarcophagus buff, but also social historians specializing on the Greek East. The comprehensive methods employed to examine a local group are strikingly effective, and show that the collaboration of the image, text and scientific methods is pregnant with broadly applicable and interdisciplinary results. While it is not everybody's piece of cake to achieve such a brilliant outcome from the material at hand, it is in everybody's interest to read this book.

Munich

Esen Ögüç