

THE SARCOPHAGUS OF SIDAMARA

A consistent interpretation of the scenes on the sarcophagus of Sidamara has not been given. Even the figures on its front have not been considered a thoughtfully composed group. The seated man and the standing woman at the center are usually described as a poet and Muse, while the female figure behind the poet is a girl in the dress of Artemis. The prevailing theory that the figures are purely decorative ignores the fact that the earliest columnar sarcophagus, that of the Mourning Women, from which all Graeco-Roman columnar sarcophagi are ultimately derived, reveals a significant use of the human figure. The mourning women from whom the sarcophagus takes its name express restrained grief. Since never more than nine of these mourners can be seen at one time, the sculptor had in mind not a large number of female relatives of the deceased but rather the nine Muses who weep for a departed warrior as once they wept for Achilles:

Μούσαι δ' ἐννέα πᾶσαι ἀμειβόμεναι φοπὶ καλῇ | θρήνεον.¹

The Muses were popular in art at the time the sarcophagus was carved at Athens.² That the Athenian sculptor realized that one long side and one short side of a sarcophagus could be seen at one time is indicated by the continuation of a scene from the one into the other. One “read” the pictures from left to right starting at the front as in the case of the sarcophagus of Alexander. Hence the nine mourning figures could have been intended as one group and suggestive of the Muses, although the types are reminiscent of the draped women of the stelae of the Ceramicus. The artist would then be a more worthy contemporary of the master of the sarcophagus of Alexander. The latter was acutely mindful of historical fact when he represented Alexander fighting the Persians in one scene and hunting with them in another, for so soon as Alexander had destroyed the Persians as a nation, he cultivated their friendship for his empire. The figures of these two sarcophagi are typical but combined in significant groups. The typical figure and the significant group are not mutually exclusive.

In the third century after Christ it is conceivable that the sculptors of some sarcophagi were unaware of the meaning and the appropriateness of the figures which they copied or adapted, but the Muses and Apollo on the Borghese sarcophagus are

¹ *Odyssey*, XXIV, 61.

² Bie, *Die Musen in der antiken Kunst*, p. 22; for Muses without attributes see Bie, *op. cit.*, p. 69. Early Athenian tradition as illustrated by the François vase gives an attribute to Calliope only. For a chorus of nine Muses on each of the three walls of a tomb at Ruvo see Weege, *Der Tanz*, figs. 172-3. The youth with the lyre suggests Apollo. The date is *ca.* 400 B.C.

certainly not mere decoration. Several sarcophagi with such figures¹ appeared in Rome in the third century, i. e. at the very place and time of the celebrated philosopher Plotinus, whose death was commemorated in verse in which Apollo invokes the Muses:

κλήζω καὶ Μούσας ξυνὴν ὅπα γηρύσασθαι

ἀλλ' ἄγε Μουσάων ἱερὸς χορὸς ἀπύσωμεν

εἰς ἐν ἐπιπνέοντες ἀοιδῆς τέρματα πάσης

ὑμμι καὶ ἐν μέσσαισιν ἐγὼ Φοῖβος βαρυχαίτης.²

Apollo is here in the midst of the Muses as he is on the sarcophagus.

The sarcophagus of Sidamara is another of the third century sarcophagi with significant figure decoration (Fig. 1). Comparison of it with the sarcophagus of Selefkeh (Fig. 2) shows that the two are related and suggests that they are derived from a common original. Their provenance in southern Lycaonia and Cilicia may mean that they were carved in Cilicia and possibly at Tarsus.³ The sarcophagus of Sidamara is the more elaborate and closer to the original, but the two give evidence of Athenian tradition. The sarcophagus of Sidamara, like that of Selefkeh, has the same relation of length to width as the great Athenian sarcophagi of Alexander and the "Mourning Women." All four are approximately twice as long as wide, as the following measurements show:

Sarcophagus	Length in meters	Width in meters
Mourning Women	2.653 at lower plinth	1.383
	2.591 at architrave	1.308
Alexander	3.18 at base	1.67
	3.02 at upper edge	1.51
Sidamara	3.81	1.93
Selefkeh	2.63	1.30

Since the sarcophagus of "the Mourning Women" is an Ionic temple in miniature,⁴ the Athenian sculptor naturally copied the proportions of the finest temple of that order which he knew, the unsurpassed Erechtheum.⁵ It measures 22.507×11.634 m.

¹ Cf. Morey, *The Sarcophagus of Claudia Antonia Sabina*, fig. 52 (= Fig. 8 below; 250 A.D.), figs. 56-57 (Apollo and Muses, 200-225 A.D.), fig. 80 (250-300; Morey, p. 46), figs. 87 and 90 (250-300). Cf. for dating *ibid.*, p. 89.

² Pierre Boyancé, *Le Culte des Muses chez les Philosophes Grecs* (1937), p. 290. He cites a sarcophagus with figures of the Muses, *op. cit.*, p. 279, n. 3. Plato built a shrine to the Muses in the Academy.

³ Cf. A. M. Ramsay, *J.H.S.*, 1904, pp. 274-5. For a map showing the distribution of monuments of the Dioscuri in Pisidia and adjacent regions see Chapouthier, *Les Dioscures au Service d'une Déesse* (1935), p. 100.

⁴ Cf. Euripides, *Troiaides*, 96: τύμβους θ' ἱερὰ τῶν κεκμηκότων.

⁵ Vitruvius, IV, 4, 1 states that the width of a temple should be half its length.



Fig. 1. The Sarcophagus of Sidamara. Front

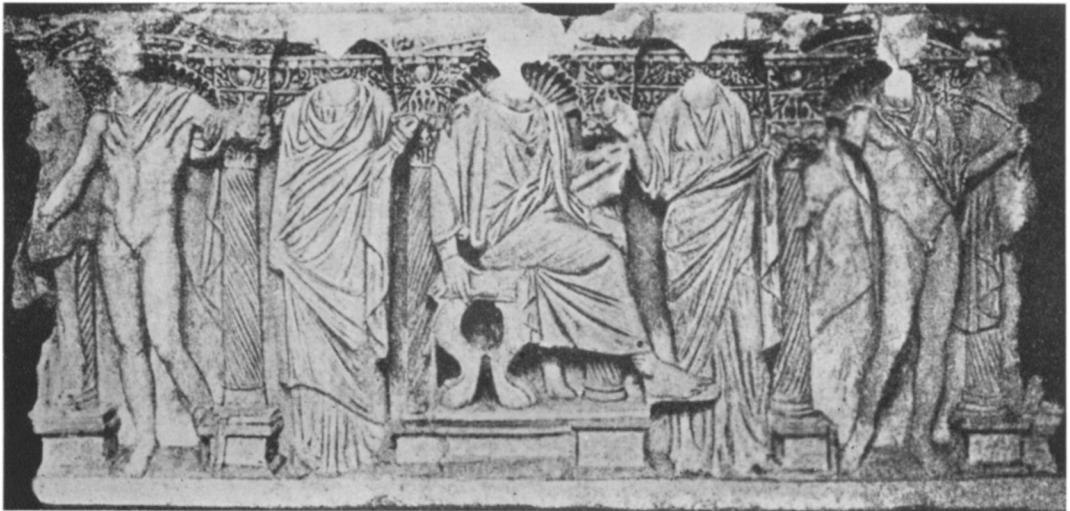


Fig. 2. Sarcophagus of Selefkeh. Front

Quite apart from the Greek heroization of the dead, the choice of the Erechtheum as a model was appropriate because it contained the tomb of Cecrops. The sarcophagus seems to have borrowed its attached colonnade from the west façade of the temple. Both colonnades have pilasters at the ends.¹

The sarcophagus of Sidamara has further the same number of friezes as the sarcophagus of "the Mourning Women," and in the same positions. Both have attached colonnades with single figures in the intercolumniations above and below which is a smaller frieze except on the front of the former.² Another inheritance from the fourth century is the balance of subject in the principal frieze. One long side and one short side of the Sidamara sarcophagus are decorated with a scene of hunting as on the sarcophagus of Alexander; the other long side and short side are occupied with figures at rest, a poet with parchment roll in each group. Finally some of the male figures are Lysippean types. The sarcophagus, then, in proportions, in the number and position of its friezes, and in the even division of subject of the principal frieze attests the persistence of Athenian tradition from the fourth century. The ateliers of Athens which in that century sent the sarcophagi of Alexander and of "the Mourning Women" to Sidon in Phoenicia, and which affected the sepulchral art of Sardis³ and Alexandria⁴ continued to exercise that influence in the succeeding centuries.

But in architectural detail the sarcophagus of Sidamara has departed far from its prototype. The human figures and the ideas expressed by them counted for more than their architectural frame. The stage façade has displaced the temple colonnade, although the door keeps the position it had in the temple. From the stage façade came the gable and the arch in place of the continuous Ionic architrave, a change which necessitated an odd number of intercolumniations without however affecting the proportions of the sarcophagus. The six intercolumniations of the sarcophagus of "the Mourning Women" were reduced to five on the sarcophagus of Sidamara. The statues which adorned the stage front in early Hellenistic times could be of life size without overlapping the architrave; but when this front was

¹ The Ionic temple of Athena at Priene, which is of the time of Alexander, took the proportions of its plan, which measures 122 × 64 ft. (Robertson, *Greek and Roman Architecture*, pp. 147-149), apparently from the Erechtheum. The cult image was a small copy of the Phidian Parthenos, another close link with the Athenian acropolis (Wiegand, *Priene*, pp. 86 and 110). The influence of the sarcophagus of "the Mourning Women" in Asia Minor is indicated by its resemblance to the altar of Athena before her temple at Priene (cf. Wiegand, *ibid.*, p. 124). Athenian proportions are again in evidence in the sarcophagus of Claudia Antonia Sabina, which was discovered at Sardis. It measures 2.325 m. × 1.16 m.

² Complete views of the sarcophagus are given by Schede, *Meisterwerke der Türkischen Museen zu Konstantinopel*, I, pls. XXXVIII-XLI; cf. Mendel, *Catalogue des Sculptures*, I, pp. 293 ff.

³ Cf. *A.J.A.*, XXXVII, 1933, p. 387. The friezes of the Heroön of Trysa and of the Mausoleum mark the beginning of mainland influence in the sepulchral art of Asia Minor, but these tombs did not derive their architecture from the same source as the friezes.

⁴ Cf. Pfuhl, *Ath. Mitt.*, 1901, p. 265.

reduced in height, the statues apparently were not correspondingly reduced, and a disagreeable overlapping resulted.

Perhaps the substitution of the stage façade for the temple colonnade of the sarcophagus was due to the statues. The temple of Zeus at Olympia shows that statues were sometimes placed between the columns of a *pteron*, but at Athens as early as Lycurgus statues of the great Athenian tragic poets were set up in the theatre of Dionysus. These seem to have been standing figures for the most part. That of Menander was seated. The seated poet of the Sidamara sarcophagus may have been inspired ultimately by the position of this Menander. That the Sidamara



Fig. 3. The Sarcophagus of Sidamara. Back

poet is a copy of a statue is shown by the base. It is not assumed that the artist of the Sidamara sarcophagus was directly influenced by the Athenian stage and its statues, but that some Athenian sculptor sitting in the theatre first conceived the idea of substituting a stage front for the temple colonnade. Once this substitution was made, the character of the *scaenae frons* could be modified with reference to the stage with which the sculptor of a sarcophagus was familiar. The resultant excessive ornamentation produces an unpleasant contrast like that of the Etruscan urn with its Greek relief on the sides and Etruscan realistic portraiture on the lid. A sarcophagus carved for a dramatic poet in the Hellenistic period could quite logically have given him his proper setting by placing his figure against the stage rather than in a meaningless temple colonnade. Such *contaminatio* would be fully justified for the Hellenistic artist by his growing interest in true environment. The influence of the theatre would further account for the strange appearance of a hunting expedition before a colonnade on the other long side of the sarcophagus of Sidamara (Fig. 3).

This colonnade is not a mere extension of that of the principal scene but is the logical setting for those encounters with wild animals which were "staged" in the later theatres and painted on the walls of their orchestras.¹

The problem as to where the sarcophagus of Sidamara and its congener from Selefkeh were carved is solved by two items of evidence. The first is the popularity of the central gable and flanking arches on sepulchral reliefs in the region where the sarcophagus of Sidamara was found. Several examples are published by A. M. Ramsay.² Some of these seem to be pagan, but in any case they attest the vogue of the arch and gable in sepulchral art of the early Christian period. In sharp contrast to these reliefs with their preference for the tripartite colonnade stand the grave reliefs in the museum at Brusa which have only a single intercolumniation.³ A number of these came from the valley of Altıntaş, where Asiatic sarcophagi have been found. The tripartite façade in relief was apparently more popular in the sepulchral art of southern Asia Minor than in the north. This façade has been derived from "some typical form of the Lycaonian Church,"⁴ but some of the tripartite reliefs have a shell in the gable as have the Sidamara sarcophagus and that from Selefkeh.

The second and far more significant item of evidence is the prominence of the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux, on these two sarcophagi. The cult of these heroes, which was especially popular in their native Laconia, followed Spartan colonies into Pisidia and spread into adjacent regions. The evidence has been assembled by Perdrizet.⁵ He notes that the Spartan reliefs in which appear Castor and Pollux with their sister Helen are of the second century; the Pisidian of the first. An example of uncertain provenance in the museum at Constantinople (Fig. 4) represents Helen fully draped and with clear indication of a veil. It is easy to believe that the cult of the Spartan triad spread into western Lycaonia, where the sarcophagus of Sidamara was found. It certainly spread into Cilicia, where at Seleucia (Selefkeh) there is a rock-hewn sarcophagus of a priestess of the Dioscuri according to its inscription of the third century after Christ.⁶ This is the first evidence of the cult at Selefkeh, but to the north of it Keil and Wilhelm report a "stark verbreitete Dioskurenkult." Since the sarcophagus of the Cilician priestess of the Dioscuri is of the same place and date as that of Selefkeh, it is quite clear that these heroes were significant rather

¹ For such painting see Shear, *A.J.A.*, XXIX, 1925, pp. 384-5, figs. 3 and 4; XXX, 1926, p. 452, fig. 7.

² *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces*, figs. 1, 2, 3, 11, 22. Cf. Ramsay, *J.H.S.*, 1904, p. 274.

³ *B.C.H.*, 1909, pp. 286 ff., figs. 17 ff.

⁴ Cf. Ramsay, *Anatolian Studies* (1923), p. 327.

⁵ *B.S.A.*, 1896-97, p. 162. His plate XIII b = Figure 4 below. On the Spartan reliefs with Helen and the Dioscuri see Tod and Wace, *Catalogue of the Sparta Museum*, pp. 18, 113 ff., 135 f., 158.

⁶ Keil und Wilhelm, *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, III, p. 17.

than purely decorative types, and so much the more so since the cult of the Dioscuri and Helen was sepulchral. Perdrizet calls them "the patron saints of the dead." A Spartan devoted to these chthonic heroes could very appropriately represent them on his sarcophagus.

The presence of Castor and Pollux with their horses on the Sidamara sarcophagus encourages one to seek among the five figures of their group for Helen, the

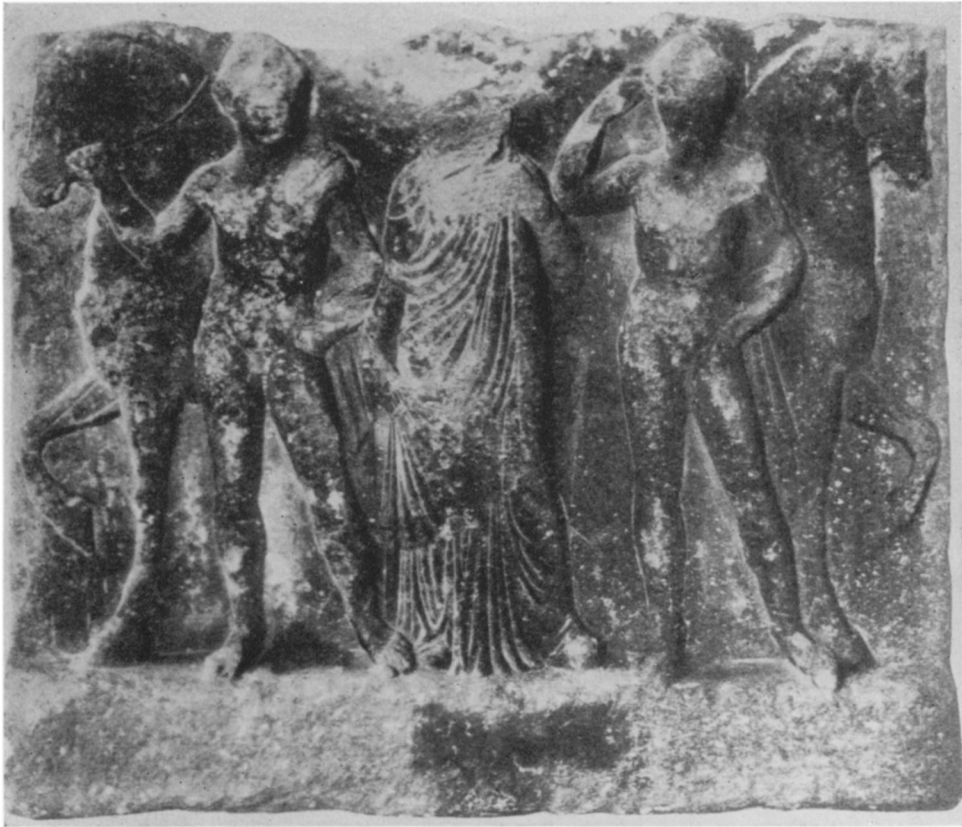


Fig. 4. Helen and the Dioscuri. Relief in Constantinople

third member of the triad (Fig. 1). Of the two female figures available one wears a short skirt which definitely identifies her as Artemis, who was an important deity at Sparta and closely associated with the Spartan triad. With Artemis and the Dioscuri identified, the second female figure must be Helen rather than one of the Muses, who at this period seem not to be veiled. Helen faces a dignified man, who is seated at the center of the group, and listens attentively as he concludes the reading of a manuscript roll. One may compare the relief by Archelaus of the deification of Homer who is seated before a colonnaded stage front.¹ The presence of the Spartan

¹ Cf. *A.J.A.*, XL, 1936, pp. 496 ff.

triad in the company of a poet is particularly appropriate because of the tradition that Helen appeared before Homer to bid him write the story of Troy,¹ while her brothers Castor and Pollux were accounted protectors of poets.² It is possible that the poet has been reading a poem about "the three patron saints of the dead." The group of five thus ceases to be a medley of types without any significant interrelation and becomes a well conceived unity.

If the principal relief of the sarcophagus glorifies the Spartan heroes, then the other reliefs may well elaborate the same theme. The second scene is one of hunting. For this the Dioscuri were famous, as their participation in the Calydonian hunt shows. The name of Castor was given to certain hounds which were called Castoriae or Castorides.³ Pausanias in describing the throne of the Amyclaeon Apollo says: "At the upper extremities of the throne at either side are the sons of Tyndareus on horseback, and there are sphinxes under the horses and wild beasts running upward, on the side of Castor a leopard and on the side of Pollux a lioness."⁴ This may serve to identify the horseman above the lion on the Sidamara sarcophagus as Pollux and that above the leopard as Castor. The Dioscuri would then be the terminal figures in the two larger groups. Of course hunting scenes are common in sepulchral art, but that does not exclude the possibility of a definite one. The lion-hunt on the sarcophagus of Alexander shows him in company with the Persians, a sequel to the battle on the front. The hunting scene on the sarcophagus of Sidamara may be one which the seated poet commemorated in his poem. In this scene the juxtaposition of the lion and the deer is old. It occurs on the Alexander sarcophagus where the hunters have come upon the lion as it was about to attack a deer.⁵

Each of the two major reliefs of the Sidamara sarcophagus is continued into a short side (Fig. 5). The continuation of the hunting scene calls for no comment, but the other is remarkable (Fig. 5 A). Two figures flank a portal in which is set a table of offerings which seem to have been placed there by the woman at the left. She holds a patera from which she is about to put more of the same fruit, grapes and pomegranates, upon the table. The sepulchral significance of this fruit in the cult of the dead at Sparta is shown by the grave-stelae in which the seated figures of the chthonic deities hold one a pomegranate and the other a wine-cup. The portal is the entrance to a temple-tomb. The veiled woman who makes the offering and the bearded man with the rotulus are again Helen and the poet. The tomb is that of the

¹ Isocrates, *Helen*, 65.

² Theocritus, XXII, 215.

³ Xenophon, *Cyn.*, III, 1; *Anth. Pal.*, VI, 167; Pollux, V, 39.

⁴ Pausanias, III, 18, 14.

⁵ Cf. Euripides, *Ion*, 1162: ἐλάφῳ, λέοντων τ' ἀγρίων θηράματα. With the lion's head on the throne of the seated poet on the Sidamara sarcophagus compare that in the same position on the throne of Zeus in an Athenian B. F. vase painting (Baumeister, *Denkmäler*, I, p. 218, fig. 171). The detail may be Athenian.

Dioscuri who appear in the first scene. Helen raised them from death to godhood. Isocrates the Athenian orator of the fourth century said that "not only did Helen obtain immortality herself but on acquiring divine power she brought up to godhood her brothers who had been overpowered by fate."¹ Such then was the tradition at Athens about the Spartan triad when the sarcophagi of "the Mourning Women" and of Alexander were carved there, to be sent beyond Cilicia to Phoenicia. It is possible that the original of the sarcophagi of Sidamara and Selefkeh was carved at



Fig. 5 A-B. The Sarcophagus of Sidamara. The Reliefs on the Sides

Athens about the same time and shipped to the Cilician coast. This theory would account for their "Athenian reminiscences." Those who ordered the original sarcophagus were perhaps of Spartan descent and wished a monument decorated with scenes of the Spartan saints of the dead. Helen who raised her brothers from death to glory would confer the same destiny upon her devotees. Greek mysteries which reenacted the story of deities of salvation for the benefit of their initiates could promote this end not only by dramatic performance but also by plastic representation.

The small friezes on the base and cover of the sarcophagus of Sidamara with scenes of contest and hunting are further chapters in the story of the Dioscuri. The

¹ Isocrates, *Helen*, 61; cf. Euripides, *Orestes*, 1631.

hunting scenes in which putti and Erotes participate are the pastime of the deified twins continued in the other world. The Eros was a symbol of the soul beyond death.¹ There are two contest scenes. The one on the rear of the sarcophagus is boxing. At the center are two boxers who have just concluded their bout. One is about to be crowned while the vanquished puts his hand to his face in sign of dejection. Two draped figures beside them are the umpires. On either side of the central group is a pair of boxers who balance each other in typical Greek symmetry. In these contests there is allusion to the fame of Pollux as a boxer who was known to Homer as "good at the fist."² Adjoining this frieze around the corner is another of a chariot-race. The start of the race from the stalls is shown, but the frieze was too short to permit the inclusion of the *metae*. This curtailment could hardly have been true of the original. The allusion is to Castor who excelled in the control of horses according to Homer. Tertullian says that the exhibition of horses at the games was dedicated to Castor and Pollux.³

The cover of the sarcophagus of Sidamara with its reclining figures of the deceased has now to be discussed.⁴ It has become a couch. The earliest example of the couch-sarcophagus, on which the deceased recline as at a banquet, is found in Etruria. The banquet is the funeral-banquet which was celebrated by the Etruscans, Greeks and Romans and at which the deceased were present as a condition of their subsistence in the Elysian fields.⁵ The reclining male figure of the Sidamara sarcophagus with a rotulus in hand is secondary. The symposium has become literary and perhaps indicates that the deceased was a poet. A mystic character for the reclining group would have facilitated the *contaminatio* of the temple type of sarcophagus with the couch type. This hybrid was unknown to the early Hellenistic sculptor who would have considered it illogical for the simple and sufficient reason that no one reclined upon a temple. The fusion of the two types must have been late when the sarcophagus was no longer so clearly regarded as a temple in miniature. The substitution of the stage colonnade for that of a temple was an earlier disregard for the original conception of the columnar sarcophagus.

The sarcophagus of Sidamara was not an original monument but rather one derived from a splendid Athenian work, the parent and grandparent of many sarcophagi which modified its decorative sculpture with less or more freedom. Of one of

¹ S. Angus, *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*, p. 294.

² *Iliad*, III, 237.

³ *de Spec.* IX. Cf. a fragmentary relief from a sarcophagus of the third century after Christ representing a *tensa* on its way to the Circus during the games. The temple-like box has in a panel on the long side the Dioscuri and their horses of the familiar type. (This *tensa* is figured in Daremberg et Saglio, *s. v. tensa*.)

⁴ Illustrated in *Mon. Piot*, X, p. 92; Schede, *Meisterwerke*, I, pl. XXXIX; Mendel, *Catalogue des Sculptures*, I, p. 301.

⁵ Cumont, *After Life in Roman Paganism*, pp. 53 ff., 200.

these mention has already been made, the sarcophagus of Selefkeh (Fig. 2). Comparison of it with the sarcophagus of Sidamara shows that the sculptor has carved in the frontal group in the place of Artemis a duplicate of Helen, thus getting a balanced composition but impairing a consistently Spartan theme. He may have been led to do this by the balanced pair of the Dioscuri. His interest in monotonously balanced groups is seen again in the two female figures on the other long side of the sarcophagus, where they occupy the same positions as the "Helens" on the front. The hunting scene has been confined to one end and represents an encounter with a boar, probably the Calydonian boar-hunt in which the Dioscuri took part. The other end is decorated with three male figures instead of a portal with a poet and a woman with patera.

A third sarcophagus, which was discovered at Synnada in southern Phrygia,¹ reveals much wider divergence from that of Sidamara. Though the Dioscuri are retained in their traditional places at the ends of a group of five intercolumnar figures, their horses have been omitted. Synnada lay on the road from Ephesus to Cilicia, for Cicero passed through the town in making that journey. The inspiration of the Synnada sarcophagus probably travelled the same road from Cilicia. Yet other derivatives of the Athenian original are fragments of sarcophagi at Athens² which admit of close comparison with that of Sidamara and again with that of Selefkeh. The provenance of the fragments is not known, but the marble is Pentelic. Two of the figures which stood at the side of a tomb-portal are to be compared with those in the same position on the Sidamara sarcophagus. There can be no question as to their kinship. The sacrificial ox brought to the portal as on the sarcophagus of Synnada is another illustration of the variations in derivatives from a great original (Fig. 6).³ The same phenomenon may be observed in the Athenian grave reliefs which modify the motif of the stele of Hegeso. On a second fragment of the Athenian sarcophagus are a mounted hunter and attendant who so obviously resemble the hunters of a boar on the Selefkeh sarcophagus that the missing beast may be restored as a boar (Fig. 7). A fragment of another derivative in the British Museum substitutes a Muse with a mask for the Helen of the original, thus defining the poet as dramatic (Fig. 8). It is easy to see how this change came about. When Helen commanded Homer to tell the story of Troy, she encroached upon the function of the Muse.

A sixth variant of the original is in the Palazzo Riccardi at Florence (Fig. 9). The Dioscuri remain as terminal figures of the group, but the poet in the central bay has been displaced by the deceased pair.⁴ The fully draped and veiled sister of

¹ Buckler, Calder and Guthrie, *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua*, IV, pls. 23-25.

² The fragments are now in the Byzantine Museum.

³ The offering of an ox at the grave, apparently of Mycenaean origin, was forbidden by the laws of Solon. On the right end of the Riccardi sarcophagus a sacrificial ox is again seen.

⁴ The present cover does not belong to the sarcophagus. Cf. Rodenwaldt, *Röm. Mitt.*, 1923-4, p. 11. He denies the sarcophagus any dependence on Greek prototypes (pp. 12-13).

the Dioscuri stands behind the woman, while behind the man is the husband of Helen, Menelaus, who wears armor in allusion to his participation in the siege of Troy.¹ Tradition said that Menelaus was made immortal by Hera and went to the Elysian fields with Helen.² The close association of the deceased pair with Helen and Menelaus probably means that they are to share in the happy destiny of the Spartan heroes.



Fig. 6. Fragment of a Sarcophagus at Athens



Fig. 7. Fragment of a Sarcophagus in Athens

The representation of the deceased pair on the front of the sarcophagus led to the innovation of placing two figures in a single intercolumniation instead of the traditional one. Husband and wife were so closely united that they could not be placed in adjacent bays. This innovation was followed by the multiplication of figures in a single intercolumniation as in the sarcophagi of Tipasa and Pisa.³ The

¹ Euripides, *Troïades*, 213, calls Menelaus the sacker of Troy. The cuirass of Menelaus resembles that of a warrior in an Athenian stele (Diepolder, *Die Attischen Grabreliefs*, pl. 50).

² Apollodorus, *Epitome*, VI, 29. Cf. *Odyssey*, IV, 561-4.

³ Illustrated in Morey, *The Sarcophagus of Claudia Antonia Sabina*, figs. 104, 103.



Fig. 8. Portion of a Sarcophagus in London. Front

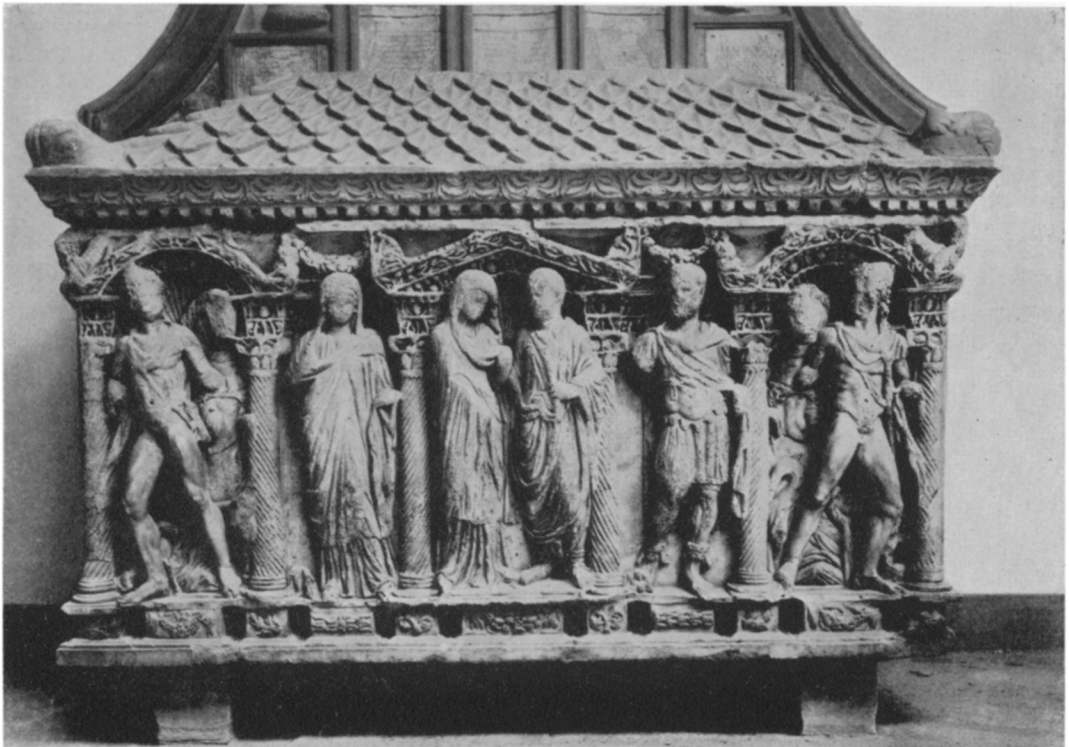


Fig. 9. The Riccardi Sarcophagus. Front

presence of the deceased on the front of the sarcophagus necessitated the transfer of the portal of the temple-tomb from its position at the short end, as in the Sidamara sarcophagus, to the middle of the front. The conception of the sarcophagus as a temple had so faded that it was easy to make this change. Another development was to replace the deceased pair with the entrance by which they passed to the other world. The tomb has become the dwelling of departed spirits; its door is the gate of Hades.¹ Hence it is not surprising to find Hermes *psychopompos* emerging from the partly opened door on a sarcophagus at Petrograd.² He is returning from Hades whither he has conducted souls of the dead. The draped figure to the left of the portal is in origin Helen, while her counterpart on the right of the portal is the armed Menelaus. Behind them hangs what may be the "Athenian" stage curtain.³ The presence of Hermes recalls the inscription at Alifaradin which associates him with the Dioscuri.⁴ The rectangular frames of the flanking figures may derive from the *pinakes* of the stage front. This sarcophagus is of Pentelic marble, which probably means that it was carved at Athens.

These sarcophagi which resemble one another in various respects are modified versions of a fine original with carefully elaborated unity of theme. It was probably carved at Athens in the late fourth century, when the city was unrivalled as a center of sepulchral art. This preëminence, which could not have been permanently impaired by the sumptuary laws of Demetrius of Phalerum, was felt in the widely separated ateliers of Asia Minor, Italy and Roman Africa. From Athens were radiated schemes of decoration for sarcophagi accompanied by occasional pieces. Provincial sculptors enjoyed in this respect the same advantages as provincial painters and mosaicists. This of course does not preclude a direct derivation of some sarcophagi in the west from ateliers in Asia Minor. Athens produced sculpture throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods. The capital of Juba, Caesaria (Cherchel), contained many statues of Pentelic marble which Graindor believes were acquired in Athens during Juba's visit there. Athens was the center from which the neo-Attic sculptors exported their works to the ancient world.⁵ That Athens at a later period produced sarcophagi is confirmed by the appearance, on two widely separated monuments, of figures copied directly from the frieze of an Athenian temple. A seated youth on a sarcophagus known as Torre Nova A from the place of its discovery is a close copy of the seated youth in the frieze of the Ionic temple on the Ilissus, as observed by Hauser.⁶ The sarcophagus is of Pentelic marble, reveals reminiscences of Attic art

¹ Cf. Cumont, *After Life in Roman Paganism*, p. 70.

² Morey, *ibid.*, fig. 98.

³ *Ath. Mitt.*, 1901, pl. VI.

⁴ Petersen und Luschan, *Reisen im Südwestlichen Kleinasien*, II, p. 168, fig. 78.

⁵ Graindor, *Athènes sous Auguste*, p. 86: Cicero, *ad. Att.*, I, 3, 2; I, 10, 3. Cf. Graindor, *op. cit.*, pp. 163, 200, 204.

⁶ Morey, *op. cit.*, figs. 77, 136 and p. 46. Studniczka, *Jahrbuch*, 1916, p. 174.

and is approximately twice as long as wide (1.30 m. \times 0.63 m.). The second piece, a relief from Smyrna, represents a kneeling figure clasping a colonnette. The same motif is found in the frieze of the temple on the Ilissus.¹ These two close copies of details of the decorative frieze of an Athenian temple can only mean that they were carved at Athens as was the sarcophagus of "the Mourning Women." It is inconceivable that a block of Pentelic marble was shipped to Italy, there to be decorated with a figure which closely copies one on an Athenian temple.

G. W. ELDERKIN

¹ Morey, *op. cit.*, fig. 137.