Review: Roman Funerary Art

Reviewed Work(s):

Roman Funerary Monuments in the J. Paul Getty Museum by Marion True; Guntram Koch

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of individuals with a particular role in the society, perhaps relating to the economy, who were granted a particular space within the territory of the settlement.

As one would expect, S. Antonio appears directly comparable to Picentino at the same period, where for instance the pairing of tombs can also be found, though not always with the same burial rite as at S. Antonio. Unfortunately, it is unlikely that we shall ever know with certainty what significance, if any, such distinctions have. With the recent publication of Osteria dell'Osa in Lazio by A. M. Bietti-Sestieri, and, one hopes, the continuing publication of Pontecagnano and the eventual appearance of Pithecusae, the need for some kind of synthesis becomes more pressing. That the patterns of behaviour at burial reflect complex structures in society seems clear enough, but such basic questions as the proportion of society found in formal necropoleis, and the relationship between necropolis and habitation area, still require further investigation.

Bragantini's publication of finds from the Palazzo Corigliano in Naples contributes to the history of the city's urban development. The first section gives an overview of this complex site; it appears to have been just inside the western walls of defence, built in the 5th or 4th century B.C., but no systematic urban development took place until the Hellenistic period. This artisans' quarter was transformed in the 3rd or 2nd century B.C. by the construction of a major road and drain.

The catalogue presents the contents of one particular ditch, which appears to have been dug in order to contain the contents dumped there. It contains material from the 5th or 4th century (*ceramica a vernice nera*) down to the 1st century A.D.

It also contains a collection of fragments of painted plaster and architectural decoration. The painting is datable to the early years of the Empire through to the second half of the 1st century A.D. (late Pompeian II to IV). The fragments are extensively illustrated and described.

These indicate a rich habitation, probably built early in the 1st century A.D., and destroyed, or rendered unsafe, by the earthquake of 62. B. does admit the other possibility that the destruction may have been intentional, as part of a new building programme. Some of the pottery, including the amphorae, is contemporary and can perhaps be connected with the house. The changing use of the area sheds interesting light on the developing urbanisation of Naples, which in future could be brought into comparison with other sites in Campania and elsewhere.

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ROMAN FUNERARY ART

MARION TRUE, GUNTRAM KOCH (edd.): *Roman Funerary Monuments in the J. Paul Getty Museum, vol. 1.* (Occasional Papers on Antiquities, 6.) Pp. 144; 199 figures. Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1990. Paper.

Despite its title, this volume contains only one paper in English (six are in German, two in French) – a reflection of where interest in Roman funerary art is strongest. Most of the papers present a detailed study of one or two monuments in the Getty collection, some using this as a springboard to more wide-ranging analysis; three papers contain studies with little or no connection with the collection. 'Roman' is widely interpreted, including Phrygian and Palmyrene reliefs in a very local style.

Five papers present an analysis of a single monument. Spiliopoulou-Donderer's is

a straightforward account of a late hellenistic neo-attic grave stele representing a girl with a dove on a pillar, a high quality piece placed early in the series. The iconography and style look back to the late 4th century B.C. Eberle considers two reliefs in the Getty Museum in separate articles. A child's sarcophagus of early Hadrianic date has a portrait bust held by cupids flanked by cupids giving a drink to griffins, a motif clearly deriving from the public monuments of Trajan's reign. The other, very fragmentary, relief also has a portrait, in a shell being raised (it is deduced – only the hands remain) by sea-centaurs. The portrait is male, but was reworked from an originally female figure: the sacrophagus was either reused, or was old stock, as the chest dates to the late 3rd century, but the portrait to the early 4th. Both studies are marred by a lack of illustrations of the comparative material cited, and somewhat predictable analysis of the symbolism of the motifs. The shorter of Koch's two contributions concerns a sarcophagus in San Marino with the unusual representation of metal lattice screens instead of strigillated panels. The lattices separate figures: Autumn and Winter at the ends, a portrait statue in the centre, a female figure reworked as a man. K. concludes the sarcophagus must have been bought from stock (despite its unusual lattice motif and high quality), and comments that a surprisingly clumsy sculptor was employed to adapt the portrait. The sarcophagus discussed by Walker also appears to have been bought from stock and was not entirely suitable for the person buried inside it, Maconiana Severiana, who probably died young. On the front, roughly blocked out, is sleeping Ariadne, never completed with the girl's features, presumably because the subject was inappropriate for a young girl who died before reaching marriageable age.

The other four papers discuss larger groups of monuments. Wrede begins with a sarcophagus lid in the Getty Museum with the reclining figure of a girl. Dating to A.D. 110–20, it is the earliest known example of the motif on a lid (as opposed to free-standing *kline* monuments). Analysis of *kline* sarcophagi from metropolitan Roman workshops, Athens and Asia Minor suggests the type originated in Rome, with the Attic and Asiatic types appearing independently of one another shortly after the mid 2nd century. Wrede's detailed analysis of numerous examples from all three areas gives valuable insight into the development of the motif and its style. Herdejürgen similarly considers numerous garland sarcophagi from Ostia, tracing their stylistic development and suggesting convincing workshop groups. She argues for continuous production from the late Hadrianic period onwards, and puts forward the attractive proposition that the motifs derive not (as previously thought) from Asia Minor, but from the native Italian tradition. The final two papers deal with groups of reliefs from the fringes of the Roman world. K. analyses two unpublished grave reliefs from Phrygia: one with two figures, including a man (unusually for this region) in military dress, the other with a single figure, a man reworked to a woman in antiquity. A more general survey of stelai from the upper Tembris valley follows, placing them in one main workshop and a number of subsidiary groups: the two Getty reliefs are characteristic examples. Finally, Parlasca presents a catalogue with commentary of Palmyrene sculpture in American West Coast Museums: 15 pieces from six public collections and three in private collections. All are busts or heads in relief.

Inevitably papers on such a diverse range of topics cannot form a coherent account of Roman funerary sculpture, and the authors approach their subjects from different perspectives. But if one common theme does emerge it is that Romans surprisingly often failed to produce the exact image required, and frequently bought monuments from stock that were later adapted to fit their particular circumstances.

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