

The Value of Making and the Materiality of Funerary Monuments in Archaic Greece¹

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The process of making transforms raw material into an artefact. Normally, this aspect remains secondary to its messages and functions. But could this making also be part of the intended reception of the object, especially in terms of its appearance and presence? Was there a special meaning and value based on the creation of a material² artefact – and if so, why? These questions are addressed in what follows with regard to funerary monuments in Archaic Greece (mainly from Attica).

Making is the meaningful relation between the maker and the artefact made.³ However, it is not only the finished work that bears witness to this, but also the inscriptions on it. One example is the so-called signatures of artists, as documented on the 6th century grave stele of Archias and his sister from Kalyvia in Attica.⁴

τόδ' Ἀρχίο 'στι σῆμα : κά-
δελφῆς φίλες : / Εὐκο-
σμίδες : δὲ τοῦτ' ἐποί-
εσεν καλόν : / στέλε-
ν : δ' ἐπ' αὐτῶι : θῆκε Φ-
αίδιμοσοφός.

This is the *sêma* of Archias and his dear sister / and Eukosmides made this fine *sêma*, and / the wise Phaidimos set up a *stêlê* on it.⁵

The known artist, Phaidimos,⁶ is called *sophos*⁷ and he set up the stele on the grave. The attribute *sophos* recalls the 6th century dedication of Mikkiades and Archermos at Delos, who made their votive for Apollo *with skills* (σο[φ]ίεισιν).⁸ The use of *sophos* bears witness to the value of making.

The example of the artist in the epigram for Archias is one of many signatures on sculptural works in Archaic times; this is the case for funerary as well as votive monuments.⁹ In total, Archaic grave monuments in Attica preserve 19 signatures.¹⁰ There are many convincing reasons why the sculptors (or commissioners) could have decided to place the name on the monument. For one, 'signing' an artefact could be seen as an expression of the pride of the artist and an opportunity to advertise their own craftsmanship.¹¹ Others have emphasized the interrelation between craftsman and commissioner. The signatures of famous artists could have been important for displaying the social status of the commissioner by showing the economic value of the monument.¹² Both aspects are important, but we should not forget another aspect: they explicitly communicate the making of the monument to the viewer. The 'thing-ness' of the monu-

ment becomes part of its reception; by reading the inscription but also by viewing, the signature is always conspicuous and is mostly set apart from the grave inscription. The epigram of Archias is an exception,¹³ because it includes the artist's name in the verse to which it is visibly connected (fig. 1). In other examples, the writers¹⁴ used different visual modes to separate the signature and the inscription, and in these the signature appears more autonomous. The grave monument of the Samian Leanax¹⁵ (fig. 2) exemplifies the visual effect of this separation. The letters of the epigram are in two lines, with uniform sizes and spaces that take up the whole width of the base; however,

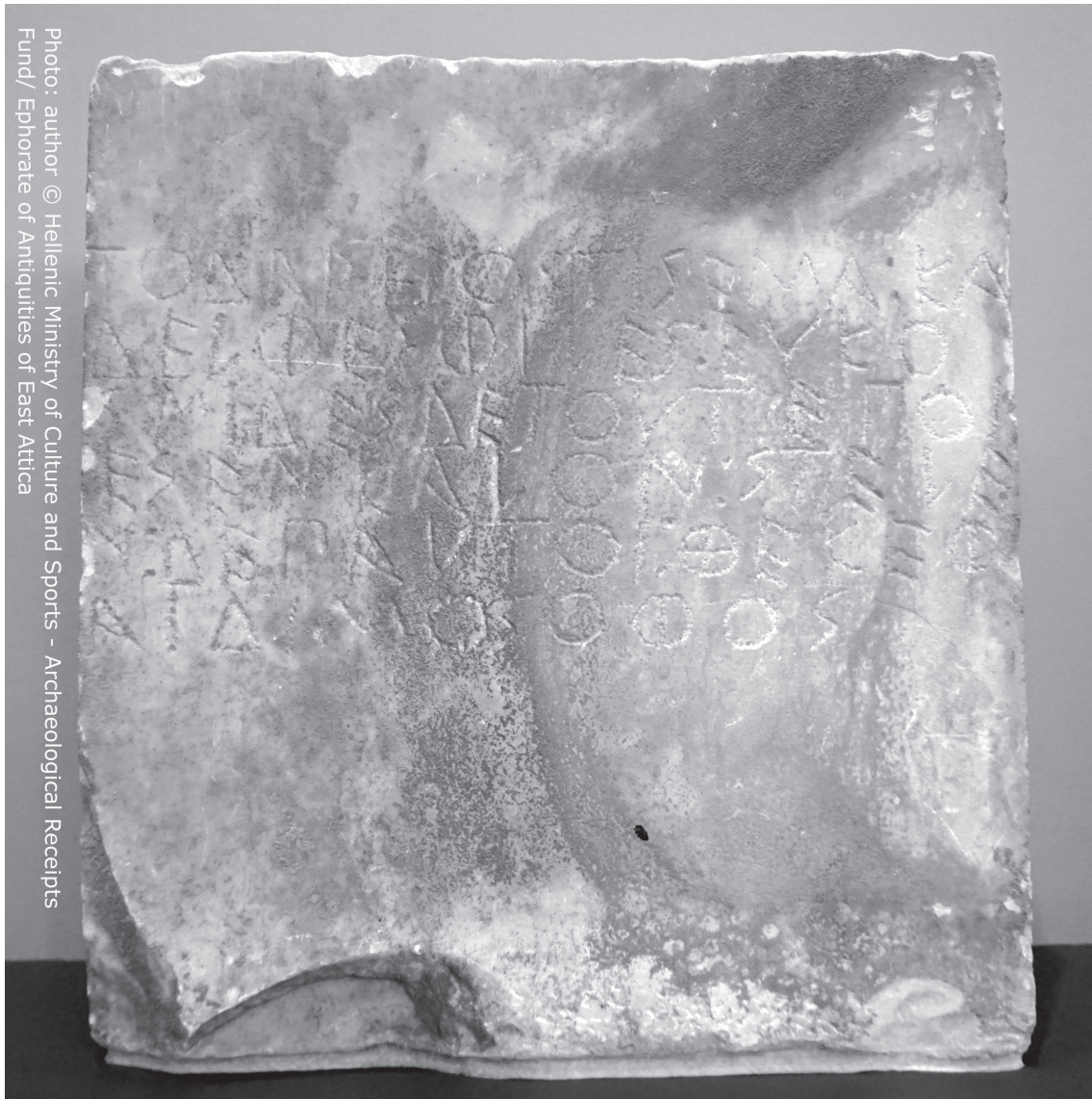


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Fig. 1: Lower part of the grave stele for Archias and his sister from Kalyvia/Attica: Brauron, Archaeological Museum BE 838, around 540 BC.

the signature is written in a significantly larger script and with more irregular spaces between its letters. The first larger space is placed between the words Φίλεργος and ἐποίησεν. In the word ἐποίησεν, the spaces between the letters are enlarged from left to right. Other examples have the artist's signature separated from the main text by using different letter sizes,¹⁶ by using a space between them,¹⁷ starting a new line,¹⁸ or by placing the signature on another part of the monument.¹⁹ Although a few examples do emphasize the artist in relation to the grave inscription (as in the case of Leanax), the visual separation makes it clear that the viewer should see the making as an individual part of the monument.²⁰

However, in the epigram for Archias we find a second 'maker': Eukosmides, who made this *sêma* fine or beautiful. The chosen word for his part is ποεῖν, which we find usually in signatures.²¹ It must not be the case that Eukosmides is another artist who worked with Phaidimos, as Löschhorn has suggested.²² Hallof and Kansteiner convincingly explained ποεῖν as referring to the installation of the grave.²³ There are, moreover, other examples for the use of ποιεῖν in Archaic grave inscriptions beside the signatures.²⁴ As the grave inscription of –erylides tells,²⁵ his children made (ἐποίησαν) the *sêma*. Most likely they commissioned it. Although we cannot be sure about Eukosmides' role in the grave of Archias, he and Phaidimos represent a good example of the dualism involved in making a grave monument. Making includes both the role of the commissioners as well as the artist. In addition to ποεῖν, the writers used a variety of words to refer to the production or installation. This includes the making of the artists and the 'making' of the commissioners. They set up, erected or worked the *sêma* for the deceased – using the verbs τιθέναι,²⁶ ιστάναι,²⁷ or ἐργάζεσθαι.²⁸ A further example comes from the epigram for Praxiteles from Troizen.²⁹ This gives a detailed description of the work, mentioning the erection of the tumulus (here called *sêma*) by using the term χεῖν:³⁰

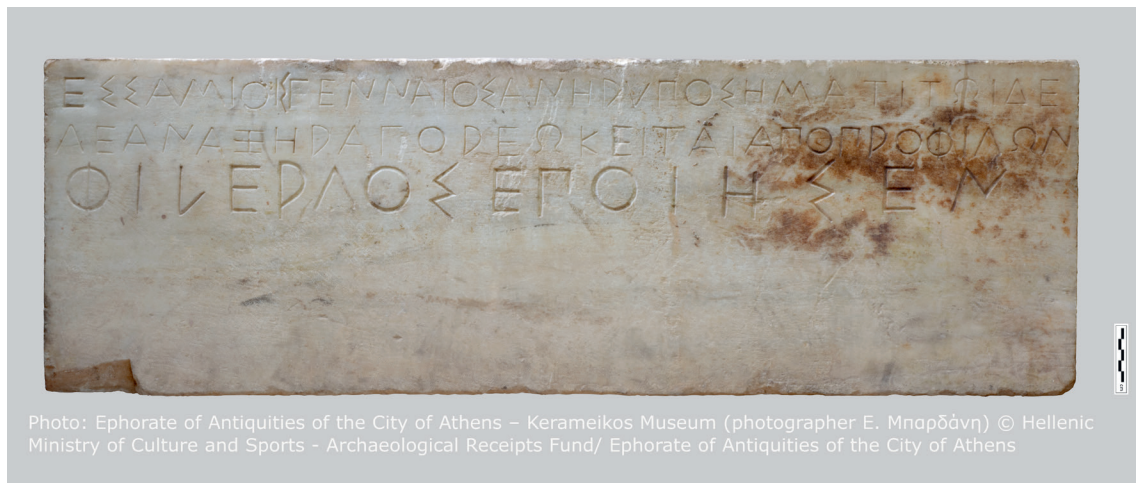


Photo: Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens – Kerameikos Museum (photographer E. Μπαρδάνη) © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports - Archaeological Receipts Fund/ Ephorate of Antiquities of the City of Athens

Fig. 2: Base of the grave statue for the Samian Leanax from Athens: Athens, Museum of the Kerameikos M 662, ca. 525–500 BC.

Πραξιτέλει τόδε μνᾶμα φίσον ποίφεσε θανό[ντι· | τ]οῦτο δ' ἔταῖροι
 σᾶμα χέαν, βαρέα στενάχοντες, | φέργον ἀντ' ἀγ[α]θῶν, κέπάμερον
 ἐξετέλεσ(σ)α[ν].

Vison made this memorial for Praxiteles who died,
 and his companions heaped up this mound, with heavy groaning,
 for his good deeds. And they finished it in one day.³¹

Of course, these verbs refer to the commissioners in a figurative sense. Nevertheless, the writers obviously placed special emphasis on the description of making and erecting the man-made and materially present *sêma*. This information is crucial because it refers to its artificial character, and not directly to the deceased. Also, the deictic form of the inscriptions and the tense of the verbs underline the reference to the material *sêma*. The inscriptions often mention τόδε σῆμα – *this (is the) sêma* – to give a direct nod to the monument. As Bakker argued, the use of the aorist in verbs of erecting not only refers to an action in the past but signifies that the past action *has produced* the *sêma*. He speaks therefore of a “monumental aorist”.³²

Thus, the signatures and grave inscriptions both focus on the physical presence of the monument. But why? An answer could come from those grave inscriptions in which the presence of the *sêma* serves as a starting point for the actions of the viewer. For example, the epigram for Thrason³³ invites the viewer to stop when he sees the *sêma* and to mourn. Others, such as the epigram for Stesias,³⁴ speak of the *sêma* explicitly as something to behold. The connection between the material sign of the deceased and the enduring remembrance becomes obvious.

What about the visual appearance of the grave monuments? Does it maintain the same focus on the man-made and material *sêma*? If we consider this question with Attic grave monuments in mind, their elaborate substructures are of interest.³⁵ They are characterized in a range of ways. Firstly, by their general design: besides the simple block base,³⁶ multi-stepped bases³⁷ are used more often. The base of the monument for a kore from Vourva in Attica³⁸ (fig. 3) shows the original condition of four steps (the lower three are made of limestone, the upper of marble) and it preserves a hole for the plinth of a statue. The upper step also preserves a fragmentary inscription,³⁹ informing the reader that this *sêma* was for a deceased female and was beautiful to look at. In the last two lines, the work of the artist is mentioned – the same Phaidimos who worked the *sêma* for Archias. The steps of the base are carefully stratified above each other. Others have focused on the fact that this method puts the statues on a higher level, so that height was an element for competition between the monuments.⁴⁰ This is surely also true for the fewer grave monuments which include a pillar or a column as a support for the statue,⁴¹ as we know from many dedications in Attica and elsewhere.⁴² But these substructures all have in common that they remind the viewer of architecture, since the blocks are arranged as if for a building, while the pillars and columns are regular



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Fig. 3: Base of a grave kore from Vourva/Attica: Athens, National Archaeological Museum 81, around 550/540 BC.

elements of architecture. This carries a specific semantic value: architecture means material stability and durability based on stone. The *sêma* is the *permanent* physical marker for the deceased. The chosen design of the substructures supports this interpretation.

The inscriptions also visually emphasize the bases. Although the combination of base and inscription is common from the 5th century BC onwards and is already found in the 6th century, there was also the option to place inscriptions directly on the statues.⁴³ However, this is nowhere attested for Attic grave monuments, with their elaborate substructures.⁴⁴ The combination of inscriptions and bases gives attention to the base, but also to the formal arrangement of the inscriptions, which underlines the structure. Their

layout does not generally show a fixed form in the 6th century.⁴⁵ But on Archaic bases the inscriptions show a great regularity: they are written in straight lines, while their orientation follows the part bearing bears the inscriptions. Horizontal lines are used on rectangular bases, sometimes supported by incised lines.⁴⁶ However, if the space they wanted to write on is high and rectangular, the inscription is turned around. This type of orientation is typical for Archaic column-supports, which have inscriptions written in the flutes or for pillar monuments if the shaft bears the inscription. Thus, the formal arrangement of the inscription correlates with the formal structure of the base. The inscription uses the entire width of the block. Thus, the ornamental character of the inscription not only decorates the bases, but also helps to visualize its architectonic structure.

A third aspect is colour and its relation to the material. The grave statues were richly coloured, as we know from colour traces such as that of the Phrasikleia.⁴⁷ The stone is thereby transformed completely into a lifelike figure, negating the stone of which it is made. On the stelai, the background of the figure and images in the predella area also were coloured, in addition to the figures itself.⁴⁸ For the inscriptions on the bases, the picture is different:⁴⁹ in contrast to the red colour in the inscribed letters,⁵⁰ no additional background colour is preserved.⁵¹ Therefore, the viewer could see the marble in this part of the monument, when confronted with the red text on a light marble. This could be proven by the non-marble blocks, which are covered with light stucco to appear similar to marble.⁵²

Thus, the architectural appearance, the layout of the inscriptions, and the ‘colours’ of the substructures support the two characteristic aspects of the monument: material stability and durability.

The making of the grave monument and its visualized materiality are closely linked with each other. Visual markers focusing on stone and architecture, as well as the content of the grave inscriptions try to emphasize the status of the *sêma* as a man-made and permanent sign of the deceased.

Notes

¹ My thoughts on this topic derive from my participation in the sub-project A10 of the Collaborative Research Centre 933 ‘Material Text Cultures’ at the University of Heidelberg, which is funded by the DFG. For a more detailed study, see Reinhardt (forthcoming).

² For the concept of ‘materiality’ see e.g. Meskell 2005; Knappett 2012. For a critical view, see Ingold 2007.

³ For an anthropological view, see Ingold 2013.

⁴ Brauron, Arch. Mus. Inv. BE 838, around 540 BC: IG I³ 1265; CEG I 26; DNO I 360; Peek 1942, 85–87 nr. 140 pl. 3, 2; Jeffery 1961, 74. 78 nr. 31 pl. 4; Jeffery 1962, 139 f. nr. 48 pl. 38c; Richter 1961, 25 nr. 35; 157 f. (M. Guarducci) fig. 202; Ecker 1990, 144–149.

⁵ Translation: Casey 2004, 84 fn. 33.

⁶ Three preserved signatures: DNO I 358–360.

⁷ Löschhorn suggested – in order to explain the single Σ in the middle of $\Phi\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\mu\omicron\sigma\sigma\omicron\phi\acute{o}\varsigma$ – to read $\Phi\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\mu\omicron\varsigma\sigma\omicron\phi\acute{o}$; $\sigma\omicron\phi\acute{o}$ would be $\sigma\omicron\phi\acute{\omega}$ and written retrograde in the last line. The dual form would refer to Phaidimos and Eukosmides and mean that both are commissioners and artists: Löschhorn 2007, 272–274 n. 16. However, his explanation that the writer wrote $\sigma\omicron\phi\acute{o}$ retrograde by mistake after having written $\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\mu\omicron$ in the same line from left to right is not convincing, and not only because the precondition of using a template with three lines could not be confirmed. In my opinion, retrograde writing in Archaic inscriptions (when used only at the end of an inscription and combined with writing from left to right) is a visual marker to show that it belongs to the end of the previous line, and is used when only a few letters were missing after having reached the end of the line (cf. IG I³ 1251; IG I² 1227; IG I³ 1276).

⁸ Athens, Nat. Mus. 21α: I Délos 9; A. Moustaka, in: Despinēs – Kaltsas 2014, 41–43 fig. 70. 71; cf. Kansteiner et al. 2007, 1–4 nr. 1 (K. Hallof et al.) and DNO I 197 for the discussion of who made and who dedicated the votive (cf. Löschhorn 2007, 272–274 fn. 16 for IG I³ 1265). On the *sophiai* of artists: Hurwit 2015, 148–150. Cf. IG I² 522 (CEG I 291).

⁹ Keesling noticed 71 signatures on votive monuments from the Athenian acropolis in the 6th and 5th century BC: Keesling 2003, 33 f. 208 f. App. 2. Hochscheid stated the difference between the more frequent records between 525–475 BC and the less frequent records in the later 5th century (Hochscheid 2015, 186 with table 4.1). For signatures in general, see Viviers 2006; Muller-Dufeu 2011, 110–117; DNO I–IV; Hurwit 2015.

¹⁰ IG I³ 1196; 1208; 1211; 1214; 1218; 1218bis; 1222; 1229; 1229bis; 1232; 1251; 1256; 1261; 1265; 1269; 1344; 1365; 1380; SEG 42, 45. Uncertain: IG I³ 1242 (cf. fn. 24).

¹¹ Viviers 2006, 149 f.; DNO I, XXXI; Hurwit 2015, 147–151.

¹² Muller-Dufeu 2011, 117; DNO I, XXXI; Hurwit 2015, 151 f.

¹³ Another case is IG I³ 1251 (CEG I 18).

¹⁴ Normally in the Archaic period, both inscriptions were engraved by the same person: cf. Raubitschek 1949, 436; Viviers 1992, 44–51. There are only a few exceptions.

¹⁵ Athens, Mus. of the Kerameikos M 662; ca. 525–500 BC: Knigge 1969, 79–86 pl. 36; 37,1; Kissas 2000, 61 f. A28; IG I³ 1365 (CEG I 52; DNO I 378).

¹⁶ Cf. the grave monument of Antidotus, worked by Kallonides: Kissas 2000, 63 f. A30 fig. 41; IG I³ 1232; DNO I 411. $\text{Καλλονίδες ἐποίη | ἡο Δεινίου}$ occupies more space than the grave inscription, which mentions only the name of Antidotus. But the latter is written in a larger size.

¹⁷ With a line spacing: IG I³ 1344 (DNO I 375; Kissas 2000, 70 f. A41 fig. 48. 49). Distance of one flute on the column: IG I³ 1269 (CEG I 36; DNO I 350; Kissas 2000, 79 A47; Raubitschek 1939, fig. 17).

¹⁸ IG I³ 1229 (CEG I 54; DNO I 377; Kissas 2000, 253 C12 fig. 339). The identification of IG I³ 1242 (DNO I 372; Kissas 2000, 46 A12 fig. 14. 15) as signature is uncertain (see n. 24); the starting of a new line could be an argument, but not a very striking one.

¹⁹ IG I³ 1261 (DNO I 348; Kissas 2000, 47 A14); IG I³ 1208 (DNO I 347; Kissas 2000, 51 A18 fig. 23–26); IG I³ 1211 (DNO I 349; Kissas 2000, 51–54 A19 fig. 27); IG I³ 1256 (DNO I 374; Richter 1961, 47 nr. 67; 170 [M. Guarducci] fig. 156); IG I³ 1229bis (Willemssen 1970, 36–38 pl. 15,2); SEG 42, 45 (Thomas 1988 with fig. XX). Cf. also IG I³ 1214 (DNO I 368; Kissas 2000, 71–73 A42) which shows both on the same side of the block, but in different parts which are separated by a painted figure.

²⁰ Raubitschek noticed the same for the 6th and 5th century BC dedications from the Athenian acropolis: Raubitschek 1949, 435 f.

²¹ Muller-Dufeu 2011, 234–236.

²² See fn. 7.

²³ DNO I p. 267 nr. 360 (K. Hallof – S. Kansteiner).

²⁴ Cf. outside Attica, the monument of Menekrates at Corfu: CEG I 143; Ecker 1990, 88–110; the monument of Praxiteles at Troizen: see below; an inscription from the Throni plateau near Methana (using *σᾶμα ποιήσας* towards *καταέθεκε* (...) *μνᾶμα*): CEG I 137; von Premerstein 1909; Häusle 1980, 2f.; the monument of Idameneus from Camirus/Rhodos: IG XII 1, 737; Friedländer – Hoffleit 1948, 36f. nr. 33; Gallavotti 1975/1976, 73–76. A grave monument from the Demos Aigilia in Attica (IG I³ 1242; CEG I 31) informs the reader (after the praise of the deceased): [...]*ιστέμον τὸδ' ἐπόε* *ἡποστ[ρ]*[[*ἄτ*]ο *σῆμα*. Is this [Ep]istemon a commissioner or an artist? Or is Hippostratos the artist? For possibilities interpreting this text, see DNO I 372 (K. Hallof).

²⁵ IG I³ 1226 (CEG I 61). For the base (Athens, Mus. of the Kerameikos, nr. unknown): Kissas 2000, 64 A31.

²⁶ E.g. IG I³ 1198; IG I³ 1206; IG I³ 1211; IG I³ 1257; IG I³ 1266; IG I³ 1276.

²⁷ E.g. IG I³ 1196; IG I³ 1197; IG I³ 1279; IG XII 8, 398; CEG I 167. For *ἰστάναι* in grave inscriptions, cf. Ecker 1990, 132f. with fn. 362; Peek 1955, 40–47.

²⁸ Most for the artist's work: IG I³ 1251 (CEG I 18) (integrated in the epigram). For other examples see DNO I, XXX with fn. 131, cf. Muller-Dufeu 2011, 236. But in the epigram for Damotimos from Troizen the verb is used for the mother who commissioned the *sêma*: IG IV 801; CEG I 138; Friedländer – Hoffleit 1948, 34 nr. 30; Peek 1955, 56 nr. 216; Bowie 2010, 357f.

²⁹ Troizen in situ?, ca. 500 BC?: IG IV 800; CEG I 139; Friedländer – Hoffleit 1948, 33f. nr. 29; Ecker 1990, 120–131; Bruss 2005, 33.

³⁰ E.g. Hom. Il. 24, 799. For an Attic inscription, see IG I³ 1205 (CEG I 38).

³¹ Translation: Bruss 2005, 33.

³² Bakker 2016, 203f. For the difference to the imperfect, which is sometimes chosen for the signature and refers to the act located in the past without special reference to the present, see Bakker 2007, 114–116.

³³ Athens, Epigraphic Mus. 10639, 540/530 BC?: IG I³ 1204; CEG I 28; Kissas 2000, 59 A24 fig. 37.

³⁴ Base, around 525–500 BC?, now lost: IG I³ 1215 (CEG I 46).

³⁵ See Kissas 2000, 37–80. 247–258 (catalogue). For a more detailed discussion of what follows, see Reinhardt (forthcoming).

³⁶ For examples: Kissas 2000, 37–42 A1–A7.

³⁷ See Kissas 2000, 42–69 A8–A39.

³⁸ Athens, Nat. Mus. 81, around 550/540 BC, cf. Kissas 2000, 46f. A13 fig. 16. 17; P. Karanastasē, in: Despinēs – Kaltsas 2014, 43–46 fig. 72–77 with bibliography.

³⁹ IG I³ 1251 (CEG I 18; DNO I 359).

⁴⁰ E.g. Kissas 2000, 15. 21; Donos 2008, 28f.

⁴¹ Kissas 2000, 70–80 A41–A48.

⁴² Raubitschek 1949, 3–60. 211–336; Jacob-Felsch 1969, 33–43; Kissas 2000, 108–246 B35–B222; Donos 2008.

⁴³ For writing on statues, see Hurwit 2015, 114; Dietrich 2017, 302–309.

⁴⁴ Hurwit 2015, 114 with fn. 37; Dietrich 2017, 310f. For the statuary dedications in Attica there are two exceptions from Sounion: Athens, Nat. Mus. 3449, 3450 (A. Moustaka, in Despinēs – Kaltsas 2014, 197f. fig. 648 = IG I³ 1024B; 198f. fig. 649 = IG I³ 1024A).

⁴⁵ Cf. Jeffery 1961.

⁴⁶ Kissas 2000, 39f. A4 fig. 7 (IG I³ 1200); 54f. A20 fig. 30 (IG I³ 1240); 59 A24 fig. 37 (IG I³ 1204); 70 A40 (IG I³ 1262); 70f. A41 fig. 48 (IG I³ 1344); 249 C3 fig. 336 (IG I³ 1202).

⁴⁷ Athens, Nat. Mus. 4889, around 540 BC; cf. N. Kaltsas, in Despinēs – Kaltsas 2014, 46–51 fig. 78–89 with bibliography. For the reconstruction see Brinkmann et al. 2010; Schmaltz 2016; Kantarelou et al. 2016.

⁴⁸ Cf. e.g. the marble stele of a hoplite in New York, Met. Mus. of Art 38.11.13, around 520 BC: Richter 1961, 32f. nr. 45 fig. 126. 128; Brinkmann 2003, cat. 312 fig. 312.6.

⁴⁹ For inscriptions on stelai we have no information about the background, since no colours are preserved. It is likely that, as on the bases, it was not coloured, because in the predella not everything was coloured as well (cf. the example in fn. 48).

⁵⁰ E.g. IG I³ 1203 (Kissas 2000, 250 C7; Jeffery 1962, 121 nr. 10); IG I³ 1205 (Kissas 2000, 56f. A22; Jeffery 1962, 121 nr. 12); IG I³ 1213 (Kissas 2000, 48–50 A16); IG I³ 1240 (Kissas 2000, 54f. A20; Jeffery 1962, 143f. nr. 57); IG I³ 1256 (Kissas 2000, 256 C17; Jeffery 1962, 141 nr. 52); IG I³ 1357 (Kissas 2000, 62f. A29). For coloured letters of Archaic dedications, see Day 2010, 49.

⁵¹ This seems not to be the case for bases with reliefs: e.g. the ball-player base (Athens, Nat. Mus. 3476, around 510 BC, N. Kaltsas, in Despinēs – Kaltsas 2014, 455–460 cat. I.1.393 fig. 1265–1270) with traces of blue and red. Brinkmann suggested an imitation of toreutic work because of traces of metal foil: Brinkmann 2003, cat. 164.

⁵² See the examples: Kissas 2000, 39f. A4; 40f. A5; 42f. A8 (cf. Jeffery 1962, 116 nr. 1); 56f. A22; 64 A31; 65 A33; 250 C7.

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