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Invitation to Look Twice. Mythological Images on Campana Reliefs

Abstract While Greek architectural decoration such as the Parthenon frieze or temple pediments have always been carefully studied and their elaborate meanings analyzed, modern scholars have often not considered Roman architectural terracottas – the so-called Campana reliefs – to be art. These terracottas were made and used in series, and each one is not a unique piece. They functioned according to specific rules, shaped by the habits and expectations of artists, commissioners and viewers. Their repetition was a strategy to attract the viewer’s attention, otherwise their meaning would go unnoticed. The combination and repetition of plaques reworked familiar mythological motifs, and made the images more legible. In some cases, narrative scenes ‘hide’ behind the repeated compositions which becomes understandable only when having a second gaze. These strategies are most evident in the analysis of mythological images, which usually have a strong connection to the patrons who commissioned them to decorate their homes or public buildings.

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The Campana reliefs have suffered from considerable neglect both in modern research and from the start in antiquity. As will become apparent, they deserve a second, closer examination not only with regard to their mythological images, but in their entirety as a type. Contrary to what might be expected, such an examination reveals unusual and surprising images.

The term “Campana relief” is completely modern and subsumes the category of Roman architectural terracotta reliefs¹. They borrow their name from the Italian collector and scholar Giovanni Pietro Campana (1808–1880) who, in 1842, issued the first richly illustrated monograph dealing mainly with the pieces in his own collection, now located at the Louvre in Paris².

The reliefs offer a stunning and surprising variety of subjects, motifs, and compositions: heroes such as Hercules and Theseus, deities such as Dionysus or Athena, satyrs and maenads, idyllic Nilotic landscapes or heraldically flanked sacred objects. After Campana’s publication, a monumental attempt to categorize the images was undertaken by Hermann von Rohden and Hermann Winnefeld in 1911³, resulting in the publication of a series of monographs concerning the different types⁴ and collections housing examples⁵.

The geographic scope of the area in which the reliefs have been recovered spans from Latium to Etruria, from Italy to Greece and Spain⁶, with examples associated primarily with villas, but also with sanctuaries and other public buildings⁷. The reliefs seem to appear around 50 BC and disappear a century later around 50 AD, but some reliefs may have been used or reused later. In fact, we have located most of our examples as fragments in secondary locations (levelling layers, walls, floors etc.) – not a single relief comes from its primary context *in situ*. There are some cases in which more or less intact reliefs are found in clusters containing the same image types, most of all in

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1 Reinhardt 2024b.

2 Campana 1842; recently on the Campana collection: Gaultier et al. 2018.

3 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911.

4 Borbein 1968; Rauch 1999; Möller-Titel 2019.

5 Mielsch 1971; Perry 1997; Tortorella 2008; Siebert 2011; Pensabene – Roghi 2013; Lejsgaard Christensen – Bøggild Johannsen 2015.

6 The most recent conference volumes on Campana reliefs are Angle – Germano 2007; Reinhardt 2024a.

7 Rizzo 1976–77; Tortorella 2007; Bøggild Johannsen 2008; Bøggild Johannsen 2010; Tortorella 2019.

peristyles. As the find contexts suggest, the reliefs were repeatedly placed on walls or roof edges of houses and temples⁸.

This placement creates an urgent problem for the images on the reliefs: How to attract the viewers' attention and invite them to take a closer look? They may be architectural reliefs, but they have a high potential to be more than mere decoration: by this I mean proper *decorum*, appropriate for its context. The large variety of different images all serve the representation of the Roman upper class within their homes and in public spaces, such as sanctuaries and other public buildings. Thus, the reliefs are in communication with their context or the people who view them, by embodying abstract concepts such as values, distinguishing features, or atmospheres.

Campana reliefs may be considered background noise, an embellishment that successfully attracts the gaze – with its layout and imaging or through the choice of topics and motifs. Therefore, I argue that these reliefs were understood in part as architectural decoration when they were created; despite some modern scholars wondering if one should consider the ancient viewer – or even if one can do so⁹.

Prejudices and contradictions concerning form...

When archaeologists have dealt with Campana reliefs so far, they usually considered them as cheap mass-products of low artistic value for the lower classes. Even in the 1960s, Erika Simon identified them as representative of the “average taste of their era”¹⁰. In fact, Campana reliefs are usually classified as mere copies of ‘proper’ art in other media:

What the wealthy builder ordered in marble, large in size, his budget-minded counterpart could purchase in terracotta (the so-called Campana reliefs) for setting as friezes in houses of wood and plaster¹¹.

8 Borbein 1968, 14 f.; Bøggild Johannsen 2008, 26; Siebert 2011, 25; Tortorella 2018, 203. Examples of reconstructions: Salvadori – Girotto 2015, 171f. figs. 8.9; Mar – Pensabene 2015, 33 fig. 2.

9 See for example Schmidt 1969, 152; Giuliani 2003, 284 who both refuse the possibility to investigate either the potential that images had on viewers or what the producer had in mind when creating the image.

10 E. Simon in Helbig – Speier 1963, 603: “Durchschnittsgeschmack ihres Zeitalters”. Borbein 1968, esp. 33. 103 shares the same attitude.

11 Vermeule 1977, 12 (quote); Tortorella 1981, 63.

While terracotta as a material was (and usually still is) considered inferior to marble, terracotta images still aroused some attention. In order to find ancient illustrations of myths known from our written sources, scholars have often published some of the Campana reliefs with special and unique depictions.

A good example is this relief (fig. 1): An elderly, bearded man leans forward and offers a bowl to a seated young man. A woman stands behind them. What we can see here is a representation of the Athenian king Aegeus standing in front of his son Theseus when returning to Athens. He had not been raised by his father in Athens, but by his mother in Troizen, where he found some signs of his destiny that had been hidden by Aegeus beneath a rock. What is important in this moment is that Aegeus does not yet know and recognize his son while Medea, who had been a guest at Aegeus' court, immediately understands that Theseus might be a threat to her position. She convinces Aegeus to poison the stranger – this is the crucial moment



Fig. 1: A unique scene in ancient art: Aegeus tries to poison his son Theseus when he returns to Athens. Medea, who is responsible for this attempt, stands behind the king. Berlin, Antikensammlung TC 5890.

Berlin, Antikensammlung of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Foto: Johannes Kramer

that we see on the relief¹². What we do not see is the happy ending when Aegeus recognizes his son (or rather the sword he had hidden for him) just a moment before it would have been too late. Surprisingly, we can find this scene depicted in this manner only on Campana reliefs. It neither appeared in earlier Greek art, nor was it adopted in later Roman art. For this reason, the scene was already the focus of scholarly attention in the 19th century, and only the discovery of this relief together with reliefs depicting other labors of Theseus proved this interpretation (see p. 232)¹³. Until that time, the scene was too unique to understand.

Adolf Borbein undertook a major investigation of Campana reliefs in the course of his dissertation that was published in 1968. He mainly dealt with images that were designed after Greek models and can mainly be traced back to neo-Attic art. His premise is that the people who designed the reliefs are craftsmen rather than artists. He considers their products as copies of previous art that the coroplasts did not always fully understand. Thus, Borbein believes that the reliefs show the true nature of Roman art, which he describes as simple and of a decorative character¹⁴. For example, he points out the symmetry that is a basic composition of the images on Campana reliefs and that can be seen in many examples. On the one hand, the image itself can be symmetrical as satyrs harvesting and pressing wine show. The image is not precisely symmetrical, but the composition is mirrored on the central axis¹⁵. On the other hand, the images of two plaques can be arranged symmetrically as two Nikes¹⁶ or chariots that face each other on the different reliefs (fig. 7, p. 237).

Another group displays general symmetry but with different figures, for example Apollo and Hercules struggling for the tripod¹⁷. Hercules tries to steal the tripod from Delphi in which the Pythia sits and offers her oracles (fig. 2).

12 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 100–102; Strazzulla 1999, 566–572; Möller-Titel 2019, 221–246.

13 E.g. Campana 1842, pl. 68; another relief (now Berlin, Antikensammlung, see note 42) was discussed in 1862 at the Instituto di Corrispondeza Archeologica (the processor of the German Archaeological Institute) in Rome: Brunn 1862, 287*; BDI 1862, 8.

14 Borbein 1968, esp. 103. 175 f.

15 Harvesting wine ('Weinlese'): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 60–65; Rauch 1999, 101–105. cat. nos. 456–628. pls. 14, 2–16, 2. – Pressing wine ('Kelterung'): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 65–69; Rauch 1999, 106–113. cat. nos. 629–811 pls. 17, 1–19, 2.

16 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 82–89; Borbein 1968, 43–115.

17 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 19. 266 pl. 54; Borbein 1968, 176–177; Möller-Titel 2019, 20–45.



Fig. 2: Apollo and Herakles fight over the tripod. From the Campana Collection, Louvre Cp 4180/S 784
Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, pl. 54, 1

This case is particularly interesting, for the image on Campana reliefs contrasts the well-established image type in Greek art. From the Archaic period on, Hercules is usually shown carrying the tripod on his shoulder, running to one side while fighting Apollo, who remains behind him. Apollo usually seems inferior as he chases after Hercules¹⁸. This mode of presentation is also seen in the so-called neo-Attic art, which is more or less contemporary to our terracotta reliefs¹⁹. Borbein understands this as a subordination of the subject, the narration, to overall criteria of layout and composition. He understands this as a decorative character of the images on Campana reliefs. Therefore, the content of the image is reduced²⁰.

18 See for example: Berlin, *Antikensammlung F 2159*; Knauer 1965, esp. 12–18; W.-D. Heilmeyer in: Schwarzmaier et al. 2012, 98–100 cat. no. 49. – Further examples: Brinkmann 2003; Möller-Titel 2019, 33.

19 Fuchs 1959, 126–127; Borbein 1968, 176 f.; Ritter 1995, 130; Ambrogio 2012.

20 Borbein 1968, 176–178; Borbein 1976, 506; Sporleder 2017, 66–69; Möller-Titel 2019, 32–34.

Of course, these observations are not false, but surely framed poorly. We will have a closer look at that after focusing on the most dramatic shift that the modern reception of Campana reliefs underwent.

... and function

In 1968, – so Borbein did not know about them yet – the most elaborate Campana reliefs were found on the Palatine Hill in Rome. These are probably the most iconic Campana reliefs. Their size and preservation, paired with the vivid color, makes them wonderful masterpieces. Dozens of these reliefs were found, so we can be sure about their repeated installation within a context.

They were immediately attributed to the sanctuary of Apollo that Octavian began constructing after the battle of Actium²¹. Therefore, modern scholars understood them as a representation of Octavian's/Augustus' ideology and imagery. The struggle for the tripod was thus understood as a metaphor for the latest civil war. Apollo should represent Octavian, his favorite god, while Hercules stands for Mark Antony, who considered the son of Zeus his own ancestor. At that time, scholars thought that the reason why the image on Campana reliefs looks quite different from archaic or neo-Attic images was not a compositional simplification, as Borbein stated, but explained in terms of content: It was considered inappropriate to show Apollo *id est* Octavian chasing after Mark Antony²². In keeping with this, the representation of Perseus and Athena with the head of Medusa was understood as Octavian killing Cleopatra²³, while the other images with flanked sacred objects were understood as proofs of Augustus' *pietas* and his promise of an *aurea aetas*.

Even if doubts about these theories within the context of the sanctuary might be valid, discussions about it are unnecessary. For ten years now, the

21 Carettoni 1971/72, 123f. 137f.; Carettoni 1973, 75; Zanker 1983, 34f.; Kellum 1985, 169; Schneider 1986, 61. 69. 72. 96; Simon 1986, 128f.; Carettoni 1988, 267f.; Lefèvre 1989, 20; Strazzulla 1990, passim; Strazzulla 1991, 242–244; Reeder 1995, 35–42; Ritter 1995, 129–131; Tomei 1997, 49; Strazzulla 1999, 559f. 589; Simon 2009, 75f.; Zanker 2009, 94f. 246f.; Gasparri – Tomei 2014, 150–167; Hölscher 2016, 62; Newby 2016, 54–56; Möller-Titel 2019, esp. 7–9. 21–24. 42–45. 304–307 cat. no. 1–9.

22 Zanker 1983, 34f.; Kellum 1985, 170f.; Schneider 1986, 61. 69. 72. 96; Lefèvre 1989, 20; Strazzulla 1990, 17f.; Strazzulla 1991, 242; Ritter 1995, 131f.; Möller-Titel 2019, esp. 42–45.

23 Kellum 1985, 172; Lefèvre 1989, 20f.; Strazzulla 1990, 34–38; Strazzulla 1991, 242.

reliefs have not been attributed to the temple of Apollo anymore, but rather to a late Republican *domus* underneath, as updated stratigraphic research by Carandini and Bruno has proved. Consequently, the images cannot be related to the battle of Actium, for they had been made when the battle had not yet taken place²⁴. Unfortunately, the old interpretation now can be found in any compendium, and some scholars even try to argue against stratigraphy²⁵.

New methods of image studies: Different agents

The traditional methods for understanding the images on Campana reliefs come to an impasse. Therefore, I wish to apply some new ideas. My approach towards the reliefs is influenced by recent studies concerning images within their contexts, such as mosaics, wall paintings, or architectural sculpture²⁶. What I find most helpful for understanding the images is a model in which three agents have influence on the images: the producers, who follow distinct artistic traditions; the clients, who want the images to suit their demands; and the viewers, who in the end see, receive and understand all this. I was most inspired by Dominik Maschek's approach to analyzing marble slabs with tendrils and the reciprocal influences the different agents have on it²⁷.

These three groups influence each other, because the images are adjusted either to the mode of viewing in different contexts, to the meaning, or to the artistic tradition.

Distributing the questions and opinions on Campana reliefs according to this model, we notice that they only touch the role of the producers and clients: so I will use this model modified as following (fig. 3).

In my brief summary, some contradictions become apparent. On the one hand, Campana reliefs are valued as having low artistic quality, on the other hand, as depicting unique scenes. On the one hand, they display the average taste, on the other hand, the imperial imagery. It is easy to hide all these contradictions when only discussing a small selection of reliefs. Suitable examples are found for every opinion.

24 Carandini – Bruno 2008, XII–XIII. 37. 45; La Rocca 2008, 230f.; Coarelli 2012, 365–367; Mar – Pensabene 2015, 34–37; Pensabene 2017, 118f.; Sporleder 2017, 28–30.

25 Hallett 2018, 181–185.

26 For example: Muth 1998; Lorenz 2008; Haug 2020.

27 Maschek 2010, 80–87.

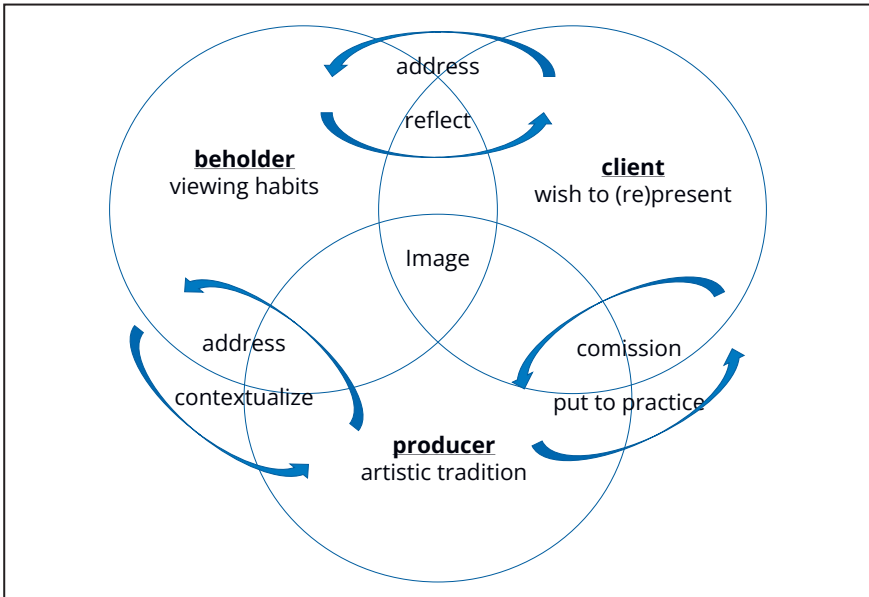


Fig. 3: Scheme of the interaction between clients, producers and beholders
R. Sporleder

So, my aim is to give, above all, a general overview, dispel any contradictions, and most importantly, focus on the influence of the viewer. How were reliefs perceived and received, and how was this taken into account when creating the images?

Production and contexts: Serial friezes in villas and sanctuaries

Trying to answer these questions, we are confronted with a severe problem: Campana reliefs have never been found *in situ* in their primary context so far – at roof edges or walls. Both ways of fixing and arranging them are possible and seem to have been common practice²⁸. What is clear, however, is that the plaques were arranged in friezes in which one or more images were repeated. So far, scholars have usually considered the reliefs as single pieces of art – what will change if we consider the reliefs as part of a repeated

28 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 46^{*}; Borbein 1968, 14–17; Bøggild Johannsen 2008, 26; Känel 2010, 267 f. fig. 9; Siebert 2011, 24 f.; Tortorella 2018, 198 f. fig. 1; 203 f.; Känel 2024.



Fig. 4: Satyrs harvesting and pressing grapes. Reliefs from the villa of C. Voconius Pollio. Rome, Palazzo Colonna. Carinci et al. 1990, 74 fig. 11

frieze? This question is crucial, for friezes are the context in which the ancient beholder saw, received, and perceived them.

For the most part, Roman villas – aside from sanctuaries – give evidence that supports this assumption. The reliefs found in the peristyle of a Villa in Marino located within the Alban Hills near Rome²⁹ depict (among other scenes) satyrs harvesting and pressing wine (fig. 4)³⁰. Usually, their repetition is explained with their mold-made production: for a room – presumably the peristyle –, two matrices are needed from which the dozens of reliefs derive. Again, we can trace the prejudice that terracotta products should be cheap. If the patron would have spent more money, there would be a greater variety of images. Or even better: marble reliefs (see p. 221)! The common modern idea is that this was done to keep decoration simple and cheap within a context. Some scholars even consider mass production as possible to meet economical requirements.

What we can actually understand from this kind of economical production is that the same image types appear in more than one context. Harvesting and pressing grapes for wine are among the most preferred images. But as I analyzed different find spots and reliefs in museum collections, I noticed that

29 Rizzo 1976–77, 7; Neudecker 1988, 168; Aglietti – Rose 2008, 83–87; Aglietti 2012, 144.

30 Four reliefs of harvesting wine ('Weinlese'), one of them Rome, MNR 4375 and three Rome, Palazzo Colonna: Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 14*.17*. 30*. 41*. 52*. 61 fig. 116; Rizzo 1976–77, 12 no. 3 with note 34a; Carinci et al. 1990, 74–75 nos. 11a. 11c. 92 no. 36b; Rauch 1999, cat. nos. 467. 469–471; Bøggild Johannsen 2008, 24. – Eight reliefs of pressing wine ('Kelterung'); five of them Rome, Palazzo Colonna and three said to be sold to America (probably USA): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 14*.17*. 30*. 41*. 52*. 66 fig. 130; Rizzo 1976–77, 12 no. 4 with note 35a; Carinci et al. 1990, 74 f. nos. 11b. 11d; 92 nos. 36a. 36c–d; Rauch 1999, cat. nos. 654–661; Bøggild Johannsen 2008, 24.

there are no reliefs from the same mold in different contexts. Minor but crucial details are usually altered which leads to the conclusion that the molds were newly made after a common example that may be physical or idealized. The reliefs themselves prove that they were not mechanically reproduced. Differences are noticeable, for example, in the depictions of a striding satyr from the Villa at Marino and the Palatine whose cloak is designed differently, and the distances between the figure and the edge of the plaque vary³¹.

In other words: for each building project new matrices were made. We can see that they are so similar that they were probably made at the same workshop. But they do not derive from a mechanical and ‘thoughtless’ reproduction – as Borbein calls it³². The major differences between the reliefs cannot be explained within such a mechanical process: apparently, the molds are more than overworked. In contrast to the general assumption, I am convinced that the reliefs were not mass-produced, but serially produced. The potential to lower costs that modern economists might argue for was not the goal. Besides, their contexts, luxurious Roman villas and representative sanctuaries, would not have been fitting for these low-cost associations.

Images in repetition: In search of the viewer

Hence, we have to find other explanations for their repetition than a desire to save money. What if repetition was actually considered something positive?

In order to do so, we have to change our perspective from the producers to the viewers. It is they who are confronted with this repetition – so what kind of friezes did they see? Reconstructing the viewer is laborious and time-consuming. This is due to the actions of the Romans themselves, for they ‘reused’ Campana reliefs once they ran out of fashion. If they were used, for example, as drain covers, at least the plaques are preserved, but usually they were smashed to pieces and used as levelling and building material.

Imagining the reliefs as friezes is difficult because it does not meet our expectations – mostly, this is due to modern collectors and museum curators.

31 Rome, MNR 11110: Rizzo 1976–77, 13 fig. 7; Rauch 1999, cat. no. 761. From the same mold (and thus from Marino) are two fragments in Dresden, Skulpturensammlung ZV 761.110 and ZV 761.111: Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 67 fig. 134; Rauch 1999, cat. nos. 753f.

32 Borbein 1968, 33: “Die einzelnen Typen wurden in der Regel in ihrer Grundform nur einmal geprägt und dann je nach Bedarf reproduziert. [...] da man stets dieselben Typen gedankenlos und mechanisch wiederholt, läßt die Sorgfalt in der Ausführung der Details nach.”

If ten reliefs were found in a construction site in modern Rome, they are probably on display in ten museums today³³. Modern scholars were not interested in replicas and duplicates³⁴. They treated the images as single pieces of art, and this affects how we usually think about the tradition from which certain motifs derive, or the story to which the images are related. We think about the buildings on which the images were displayed, and the function they had – but not about what their repetition does to the images.

How does one reconstruct friezes that are separated today? This is sometimes possible because of their so-called “Werkgruppe” – a term Marion Rauch introduced in her dissertation in 1999, and that may be translated as ‘work group’ or ‘factory group’³⁵. We can attribute reliefs to the same work group if they have the same measurements and – most importantly – the same ornamental strips. At the upper and sometimes lower edge, there are a large variety of rows of palmettes, egg-and-darts, ram head, gorgoneia etc., so the material can be divided into smaller and larger groups. We can be sure that this approach is correct because there are find spots such as the villa at Marino (fig. 4) or the Palatine Hill where exact ‘copies’ that come from the same mold have been found.

This method had not yet been undertaken systematically. Since 1911, when Hermann von Rohden und Hermann Winnefeld published their substantial catalogue of images on Campana reliefs, an order according to the

33 An impressive example are the reliefs with palaestra (‘Hallen der Palästra’) that were found in 1902 in the horti Sualustiani in Rome, see Sporleder in preparation; Sporleder 2024: previous lists (none of them complete): Hartwig 1903, 16; Hartwig 1904, 209; Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 145. 147–149 fig. 274. pls. 82. 83; Ritter 1995, 217f. with note 698; Perry 1997, 43; Reinhardt 2016, 251 with note 55. – A complete set was acquired by Edward Perry Warren, now in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts: *typus Winner*: Boston, MFA 03.882 <<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/181414>> (05/09/2024): Hartwig 1903, 16 fig. 11; Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 148f. fig. 274; Bendinelli 1956, 563–567 fig. 2; Bacchetta 2006, 102. pl. III 1. – *Typus Hermes*: Boston, MFA 03.885 <<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/181408>> (05/09/2024): Hartwig 1903, pl. III; Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 147; Bendinelli 1956, 563–567 fig. 3; Vermeule 1967, 179–181 fig. 5; Herrmann – Kondoleon 2004, 141f. (with figure). 183 cat. no. 96. – *Typus Herakles*: Boston, MFA 03.883 <<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/181410>> (05/09/2024): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 145; Chase 1950, 166 fig. 225 right; Bendinelli 1956, 563–567. fig. 2; Vermeule 1967, 180. 182 fig. 7; Chase et al. 1972, 234f. 273 fig. 276b; Vermeule 1977, 29. 40 no. 5. fig. 19; Herrmann – Kondoleon 2004, 140 (with figure). 142. 183 cat. no. 97; Herrmann 2016, 12 fig. 11.

34 Sporleder in preparation, esp. on the Sermoneta collection that was acquired in 1842.

35 Rauch 1999, 119. 124–134; previously: Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 31*–42*; Borbein 1968, 32f.

images' content was common: namely the mythological sphere, the real world, and decorative images³⁶. Unfortunately, this division does not exactly match the friezes themselves. Broadly speaking, we usually find similar compositions within friezes, an aesthetic category, in other words, while similarities with regard to content were not determinative, they can often be found.

New categories according to the images' compositions

In the following section, I point out some new categories, and find new explanations for the intention behind certain friezes.

One distinct group is composed of compositions with three or more figures. These images usually appear in pairs of counterparts with a strong connection in terms of content and topic, so we might assume they were designed together (even if sometimes used isolated from each other). For example, there are Dionysian rituals and scenes (fig. 5)³⁷. Furthermore, two images of races at the circus can be understood as complementary because they show winning a race and an accident, in other words good luck and bad luck, success and failure³⁸. Aside from these rather generic scenes, some images are inspired by the Odyssey, namely the return of Odysseus whose feet are washed by his nurse while Penelope is sitting in grief on a chair³⁹. As described later (see p. 244), these two images together offer more of an interpretation and meaning than mere complementary elements of a story – they offer a link to the patron and matron in whose house they might have been displayed.

36 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, IX–X.

37 Dionysian initiation ('Bacchische Weihe'): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 56–58; Heidinger 1987, 73 f. 84; Rauch 1999, 94–97. cat. nos. 404–448. – Adornment of a herm ('Hermenschmückung'): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 50–52; Rauch 1999, 90–94. cat. nos. 367–403. – Dionysian sacrifice ('Bacchisches Opfer'): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 54–56; Rauch 1999, 86–90. cat. nos. 315–366. – Unveiling of the phallus ('Ent-hüllung des Phallos'): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 52–54; Rauch 1999, 83–86. cat. nos. 265–314.

38 Horse race with quadriga ('Wettfahrt von Viergespann'): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 136 f.; Tortorella 1981, 74 with note 79; Perry 1997, 46; Braitto 2016, 467–470; Grosser 2021, 27–29. 183–185 cat. nos. Cp1–Cp14. – Race accident ('Unfall beim Wagenrennen'): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 137 f. 281 f. pl. 84; Tortorella 1981, 75 with note 87; Braitto 2016, 471–473; Grosser 2021, 27–29. 185–187 cat. nos. Cp15–Cp23.

39 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 109–111; Stilp 2005.



Fig. 5: Unveiling of the Phallus. Paris, Louvre Cp 4052.

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<<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010288174>> (05/09/2024)

Compositions with two figures in movement can largely be summarized as representations of heroes in combat, such as Theseus, Hercules or Jason, or Greeks in combat with Amazons. The main subject is *virtus* and strength in different constellations. For both Hercules and Theseus, a cycle of three images has been attested: Hercules fighting the Nemean Lion, the Hydra or the Bull⁴⁰; and Theseus fighting Skiron, arriving at Athens, and saying goodbye to Ariadne⁴¹. Nevertheless, other constellations and arrangements are possible, so that these images are unlikely to have been designed to only appear

40 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 93–96; Borbein 1968, 161–175; Ritter 1995, 166–168. pl. 11, 4; Möller-Titel 2019, 49–69.

41 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 99–104; Strazzulla 1999, 566–576; Möller-Titel 2019, 206–265. – Reliefs of all three types were found near San Giovanni dei Fiorentini in Rome: Rutgers 1863, 459. Three of the reliefs were acquired by Heinrich Brunn for the Berlin museums, Antikensammlung TC 5888–TC 5890. Ariadne (TC 5888, in Russia since WW II): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 103. 293. pl. 110, 1; Möller-Titel 2019, cat. no. 208. – Skiron (TC 5889): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 100. 293. pl. 110, 2; Möller-Titel 2019, cat. no. 156. – Aegeus (TC 5890): Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 101. 293; Möller-Titel 2019, cat. no. 173



Fig. 6 a–f: Reliefs from Cosa. Different scenes such as Apollo and Hercules with the tripod, Apollo and winged Nike, Perseus with Athena and Gorgoneion, Dionysus with different satyrs, maenads etc. American Academy in Rome, Photographic Archive (AAR_COSA_1951_23, _25, _31, _33, _36 and AAR_COSAIII_CPL_23)

together with specific other scenes. Theseus was also shown fighting the Bull⁴², or connected with a mysterious image called the bird oracle⁴³. I would call this potential to arrange the images within a set, or variety of different likely images as a ‘type case’ (“Setzkasten”).

This is also true for compositions with two figures statically placed next to each other. An exemplary context for such images is the temple of the arx in Cosa in Etruria that was renovated under Augustus⁴⁴. The plaques show gods, heroes and the Dionysian thiasus. We already saw how Apollo’s and Hercules’ struggle over the tripod was transformed from neo-Attic art, and the same happens to Perseus, Athena and the head of Medusa (fig. 6). There is no movement, the figures seem static, and even Perseus fails to avoid the gaze of the still-dangerous Gorgon as he does in other depictions⁴⁵. While we can relate these two images to narrative myths, the other images are more or less random constellations of maenads, satyrs and Dionysus himself. There is hardly any story to tell about them – and so the whole context, the frieze, gives modern scholars quite a headache when trying to identify a program behind all these different images⁴⁶. We have mythological characters whom we can clearly identify, but the narration is limited to them facing and meeting each other. Yet the content is mixed: heroic *negotium* does not seem to match with Dionysian *otium*.

This assumption is not only supported by the images themselves, but also by the find contexts. As listed in table 1, there is no standardized grouping of images. Sometimes, Apollo is connected with Perseus, sometimes with Dionysus. Just like in a ‘type case’, the repertoire holds different opportunities that are flexible.

How to interpret a frieze like this? First of all, the single image becomes part of a bigger picture. The vertical figures structure the horizontal line of the frieze; their differences offer some rhythm to this rather homogenous appearance from the first glance. On second glance though, the differences between the figures become more apparent, as with the case of the identification of Apollo and Hercules fighting among other figures, as they appear at the frieze from the Palatine hill. All in all, these two groups do not consist

42 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 104; Möller-Titel 2019, 188–205.

43 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 20 f.; Möller-Titel 2019, 231. cat. nos. 199–201.

44 Brown et al. 1960, 296–300; Borbein 1968, 19 with note 65; Rizzo 1976–77, 51–55; Strazzulla 1991, 245; Ritter 1995, 163 f.; Sporleder 2017, 39–42; Möller-Titel 2019, 28 f. 44.

45 See for example a metope from Selinunt, Palermo, Museo Nazionale Archeologico: Giuliani 1979, 15–22 cat. no. C1.

46 Ritter 1995, 163 f.; Möller-Titel 2019, 44.

Tab. 1: Chart with the different motifs from left to right and the find spots from top to bottom

	Athena and Perseus with the Gorgoneion	Apollo and Hercules at the Tripod	Woman striding aside from a Baitylos	Kitharode reliefs	Dionysus leaning on a Satyr and Maenad	Dionysus and Satyr with Amphora	Silen and Eros and Maenad	Dionysus Child in a swing	Bearded Dionysus and Maenad
Palatine	x	x	x						
Cosa	x	x		x		x	x		x
Gabii ¹	x				x				
Lavinium ²	x				x	x			
Cumae ³					x	x	x		
Ansedonia ⁴				x		x			
Bassano del Grappa ⁵				x					x
Rome, Columbarium in Villa Wolkonsky ⁶					x				
Rome, between Porta Salaria and Pinciana ⁷					x		x		
Scrofrano near Veji ⁸					x	x	x	x	

¹ Aubet 1980, 111–115; Dupré 1982, 154–158. pl. VI; Strazzulla 1993, 303–305; ² Fenelli – Jaia 2007; ³ Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 13*; Gabrici 1913; Pellino 2006, 9–17 cat. no. I.1–9; Nuzzo 2008; ⁴ Rendini 1995, 26 f. figs. 8, 9; Rauch 1999, cat. no. 76; ⁵ Strazzulla 1987, 94–98. 301–317; Rauch 1999, 119. cat. no. 129; ⁶ Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 15*. 46*; Rizzo 1976–77, 35 f.; ⁷ Seroux d'Agincourt 1814, 19–21. pl. VII 2. 3; Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 39. 42; Borbein 1968, 35. pl. 4.3; Rizzo 1976–77, 36. 82 note 217; Micheli 1985–86, 223. 286 f. cat. nos. III 29a–b. figs. 78. 79; Rauch 1999, cat. nos. 105. 196; ⁸ de Caylus 1762, 200 f. pl. 1; Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 37*. 47*.

of images that are similar in terms of content, but in terms of motifs and compositions. The mixture of both groups at the Palatine proves that the mythological story is not the primary focus of the images⁴⁷. The intention was rather to create a seemingly homogenous frieze in that some images hold a deeper content that the viewer can discover.

All in all, in changing our perspective, we learn that the struggle over the tripod is not brought into a symmetrical composition because the artists could not do any better, but because it offers a surprise for the beholders. What other researchers would consider a helpless attempt to subordinate the narrative under a certain ‘decorative’ strategy, I consider as a good mode of playing with the viewers’ expectation – who would have expected such a scene in the frieze? This hidden story encourages the beholders to take a second look.

This is also true for the group of symmetrical compositions that include peopled scrolls, winged genii, composite creatures, cupids, garlands, flanked sacred objects, sphinxes, gorgoneia, people dressed in non-Greek manner etc. Rohden and Winnefeld list all these different images as ‘decorative’⁴⁸. Their compositional simplicity is contrasted by the huge variety of motifs, objects and styles – for we find archaistic, classical or even Egyptian styles in this group alone. They are usually considered a main characteristic of all Campana reliefs, but in fact are limited to this group – just like tendrils that are absent in all other compositional groups. This huge variety of images overwhelms the beholder, and thus attracts and stimulates their attention.

Even though there are some more groups⁴⁹, this brief selection demonstrates that there is always a different approach towards the balance between variation and repetition concerning content, motifs, and styles within the different friezes.

Simplicity and second layers of meaning

As I suggested, this is due to the role of the ancient viewer. To my mind, the manner of viewing the reliefs has always been considered in the design of the images. In general, architectural sculpture was to be seen *en passant*,

47 Compare Strazzulla 1990, 20 f.; Möller-Titel 2019, 32–34, 44 f. who deny that overall stylistic criteria are the primary reason for choosing certain compositions for any depiction of a myth.

48 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 161–238.

49 Sporleder 2023.

by a peripatetic beholder⁵⁰. This bypassing perception leads to two characteristics: On the one hand, compositions are clear and open, so you can understand them at first glance. On the other hand, however, the images sometimes bear a second layer in terms of content, so you are invited to look twice – just as the hidden struggle between Apollo und Hercules in the midst of rather generic scenes.

How to simplify an image: The scene called ‘unveiling of the phallus’ offers a good example for an open layout: the ithyphallic satyr on the left is the reason why Aidos, the personification of modesty on the right, cannot bear him and seeks refuge (fig. 5; see note 37). But if we compare the scene with representations in other media, we notice that usually Aidos turns away from something laying in the basket or cloth that the kneeling figure next to her unveils⁵¹. This detail suits images that you would take under scrutiny, like a ring, but not an image on Campana reliefs. In order to clarify the situation, the artist decided to add the satyr⁵². On a gem stone, a different satyr is depicted who has nothing to do with Aidos’ flight – he carries a basket that underlines the Dionysian atmosphere rather than adding anything that would be helpful for understanding the image.

Yet there is also deceptive clarity. Returning to these two chariots, they apparently depict a horse race (fig. 7)⁵³. Taking a closer look, however, you may recognize the apobats, sportsmen or warriors, jumping out of the car during the race – just as shown also on the Parthenon frieze. Taking an even closer look, you will recognize the woman in one of the cars. Therefore, this image resembles abduction scenes that are quite common. The bearded warrior is accompanied by a man – this constellation of abduction and sport does not seem to be taken from real life.

50 Stähli 2022, 116 f.; similar: Haug 2020, 424–427; Tortorella 2018, 216. On the relation between ornament and figure: Haug 2020, 415–422; Hölscher 2018, esp. 39. 42.

51 Paris, BNF *camée.63* <<http://medaillesetantiques.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/c33gb1csc5>> (05/09/2024): Rauch 1999, 85 with note 619e; Turcan 2003, 132 f. no. 43a. fig. 99.

52 Compare Rauch 1999, 85 f. who considers the adding of the satyr a helpless attempt to put an image that was designed for a squarish image onto a rectangular relief plaque.

53 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 117–120; Borbein 1968, 137–141. See for example the reliefs in New York, MET 26.30.31 <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/252498>> (05/09/2024) and 26.30.32 <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/252499>> (05/09/2024); Richter 1926, 283 f. figs. 3, 4; Borbein 1968, 137 f. pl. 23, 1. 2; Zanker 2020, 123–126 cat. no. 40.



Fig. 7a–b: Race between Pelops (left) and Oenomaus (right). New York, Metropolitan Museum. Fletcher Fund, 1926. 26.60.31 and 26.60.32
 Museum <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/252498>> and
 <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/252499>> (05/09/2024)

It must be a myth, and only the race between Pelops and Oenomaus for the hand of his daughter Hippodamia seems the appropriate interpretation of this scene⁵⁴. Pelops bribed the driver Myrtilus who manipulated Oenomaus' car so that he died. Again, the dramatic end is not illustrated in the image, and the beholder has to know it by heart.

The subject as such is not uncommon, but its depiction is unique. Usually, artists like to focus on the brutal end of the race – Oenomaus' car crash on Etruscan urns⁵⁵. Ancient written sources like Apollonius' description of Jason's cloak also focus on this aspect:

And therein were fashioned two chariots, racing, and the one in front Pelops was guiding, as he shook the reins, and with him was Hippodameia at his side, and in pursuit Myrtilus urged his steeds, and with him Oenomaus had grasped his couchèd spear, but fell as the axle swerved and broke in the nave, while he was eager to pierce the back of Pelops⁵⁶.

Again, within the images on Campana reliefs, there is no tension at first glance. Only the second gaze reveals the myth behind the image. All in all, these images are a good example of an image that seems clear at first glance,

54 Kekulé von Stradonitz 1905, esp. 6–8. 18; Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 120; Borbein 1968, 128–131.

55 Berlin, Antikensammlung Sk 1275 <arachne.dainst.org/entity/1188426> (05/09/2024); Hoffer 2010, 63 f. fig. 5.8.

56 Apoll. Rhod. I, 752–758. Translated by R. C. Seaton

but a second gaze offers a more complex content. This possibility is neither hazardous nor a thoughtless subordination of the content under the symmetrical composition. On the contrary, the artist succeeds at creating a multi layered image. To my mind, it is crucial that the image also works just at first glance: then it is just a random horse race, the chariots are repeated constantly, and focusing on just one image seems difficult.

Only the display of both scenes allows an interpretation as Pelops and Oenomaus. The images alone might be labeled as apobats or an abduction. Thus, it is not surprising that the car with Oenomaus and Myrtilos was also interpreted as another couple, namely Paris and Helen⁵⁷. In any case, uncovering the layers of meaning is just an invitation to look twice. The producers did not primarily seek to display a certain myth with all its facets.

For the viewer: Invitation to look twice

In more general terms, these images are at the border between narrative and descriptive images, as described by Luca Giuliani⁵⁸. The ‘problem’ is that we can unveil a specific myth with hardly any narrative elements – though these are the core of Giuliani’s mythological images⁵⁹. Borbein concludes:

The Greek type loses its primary context/meaning connection and is subordinated to a Roman schema of composition; in favor of the principle of symmetrical accordance (as in our case) the image relinquishes its logical consistency. The abstract idea becomes the link of artistic unity, not anymore the content of the myth⁶⁰.

On the one hand, I can agree that the composition is apparent at first glance (primarily) and that there is an overall link between the images, but on the other hand, I have to disagree that the narrative is unnecessary. I would like to frame it differently: The coroplasts did not try to illustrate a specific myth,

57 Refuse this interpretation: Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 120.

58 Giuliani 2003, 54–56. 229.

59 Giuliani 2003, 284 f.

60 Borbein 1968, 142: “[D]er griechische Typus wird aus seinem ursprünglichen Sinnzusammenhang gelöst und einem römischen Kompositionsschema untergeordnet; zugunsten des Prinzips der symmetrischen Entsprechung wird (wie in unserem Falle) auf die logische Folgerichtigkeit der Darstellung verzichtet. Es ist eine abstrakte Idee, die die künstlerische Einheit schafft, nicht mehr der konkrete Inhalt des Mythos.”



Fig. 8: Theseus and Ariadne. Formerly Berlin, Antikensammlung TC 5888, since WW II in Russia.
Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, pl. 110, 1

but they wanted to attract the viewers' attention by hiding a myth under a symmetrical composition. This is the crucial shift between the 'Greek models' and the Roman images on Campana reliefs. Ultimately, I disagree with Borbein's idea that this subordination and decorative character is the essence of Roman imagery. It is a specific characteristic of Campana reliefs.

I would consider the images that we have already seen from Cosa as counterparts for Pelops and Oenomaus. Although we can easily identify the mythological characters, there is hardly any story to tell about them. The hidden allusions to narrative scenes such as the tripod between Hercules and Apollo, or the gorgoneion between Perseus and Athena spice up the variety so that beholders are again invited to look twice. Again, this attitude forbids over-interpreting the images and their meaning.

Similarly inviting are the images depicting Theseus. While Hercules' duties are clear, Theseus is not only depicted slaying enemies. Yet they are stereotypical: a young hero stands in front of a whipping woman while his ship is ready for departure (fig. 8); a young hero kills a bearded and uncivilized enemy (fig. 9); a young hero sits on a throne and someone kneels before



Fig. 9: Theseus and Skiron. Berlin, Antikensammlung TC 5889.
 Berlin, Antikensammlung of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Photo: Johannes Kramer

him. Only when taking a closer look do these images gain some precision, because they are unusual illustrations of their subjects. We might call this an alienation.

The depiction of Theseus' return to Athens and Aegeus' attempt to kill him is unique (fig. 1). It resembles the well-established iconography for Priam begging Achilles for Hector's corpse, as one of the contemporary Hoby cups shows⁶¹. It is a clear allusion, but the roles are inverted: the old man (Aegeus) is not begging, but trying to kill the young man (Theseus) here. Only when having a second look, will you understand that this common iconography has been altered, and enjoy the satisfaction of uncovering the image's meaning.

Though Theseus' farewell to Ariadne on the island Naxos is well known, again, here it is shown in an unusual manner. Usually, she is asleep while

61 Copenhagen, DNM 10/20 <<https://samlinger.natmus.dk/DO/asset/4541>> (05/09/2024); Künzl 1988, 569–571 cat. no.397; Strazzulla 1999, 571f.; Möller-Titel 2019, 235–237.

Theseus leaves⁶². Showing Ariadne awake links Theseus' departure with Ariadne's grief. Theseus seems to hesitate. There are hardly any other images with Theseus stopping in thought – this highlights that he is torn between his personal luck and his responsibilities. Theseus is a male role model who chooses *negotium* in Roman terms⁶³. But Ariadne, crying but awake, also seems to accept her destiny: she can restrain her feelings.

Therefore, on the one hand, the image is altered and attracts attention; on the other hand, the scene is generalized. For the iconography is not clear anymore, it could be any young hero deciding to leave behind his love and fulfill his god-given duties. It might also be Jason and Medea or Aeneas and Dido.

It becomes apparent that the images on Campana reliefs may illustrate Roman exempla by allusions to myths. We can see another such comparison in the written sources, in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, for example, in which Jason tries to convince Medea to follow him to Athens when referring to Theseus and Ariadne⁶⁴. The Cretan princess also followed a stranger-hero whom she had helped. Of course, Jason does not mention that Ariadne was left at Naxos. What is interesting for us, however, is that for Apollonius, this comparison was so important that he gets into trouble with the relative dating of ancient myths: for Jason cannot know about Theseus and Ariadne yet – Theseus is a younger generation⁶⁵. Apparently, the author wanted to offer an impressive comparison for Medea's story to his readers. Although the image on our Campana relief seems clear, it enables multiple references.

Returning to the cycle of three images, we must bear in mind that they do not stand alone but repeatedly. This circumstance is usually explained with their low production costs. But I would say it also attracts attention – imagine a whole frieze within our room. Wherever you look, you will see the reliefs. You cannot ignore them. They are omnipresent.

By the producers: Repetition and meaning

Moreover, their constant repetition influences the images. The mythological images especially differ from representations of the same subjects in other

62 Strazzulla 1999, 575 f. See for example a sarcophagus in New York, MET 90.12a, b <<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/245585>> (05/09/2024).

63 Lorenz 2008, 98.

64 Apoll. Rhod. 3, 997–1001.

65 Dräger 2019, 504 f.



Fig. 10: Daedalus working on the wing for Icarus. Location unknown, found at Lake Nemi.

Ucelli 1950, 146 fig. 150

media because ‘fruitful moments’ are not shown. Theseus is still with Ariadne, he is still fighting against Skiron, and he is being offered the poisonous drink.

This phenomenon is not limited to Theseus. We notice the same concerning Daedalus and Icarus (fig. 10)⁶⁶. While Icarus’ death is a common subject on wall paintings⁶⁷, Campana reliefs do not allude to his tragic end. Daedalos is depicted working on the wings for his son, and Icarus is standing next to him waiting for his father to adjust the wings.

We might consider this as an invitation to look and consider his end on our own. But there is another reason: If Icarus died on one relief, it would be senseless to depict him dying again two plaques further down from this image. Campana reliefs seem to be unable to show completed actions. Their

66 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 113f.

67 Lorenz 2008, 241f.

tense is the progressive tense for the images repeat themselves continuously, and nothing arranges their order. It is unclear what image to look at first. So mythological images that demand narratives need to find new modes of presentation such as those that we have just discovered. The plot is subordinate to the rules of the medium Campana relief.

Comparing the image of Daedalus and Icarus in the workshop on Campana reliefs with *oscilla*, the situation in the workshop is the same, but there is a wider distance between the figures⁶⁸. This seems appropriate to its context and parapictoriality (a term Adrian Stähli coins⁶⁹), and thus in accordance with the viewers' behavior and expectations. The image is easier to understand at first glance. Until now, the producers had been considered lousy and thoughtless artisans. The opposite is true: they create images without forgetting those who will view them.

For the commissioner: Roman exempla

Of course, these images do not attract attention for their own sake, but on behalf of the clients who have different intentions. In the case of the images showing Theseus, the merits they refer to are Theseus' strength when fighting Skiron; Theseus' sense of duty and selflessness when abandoning Ariadne; and finally, his superior descent that becomes apparent when recognized by his father. These mythological images function as exempla that the beholders associate with the family exhibiting them at home⁷⁰.

Consequently, some images are modified in order to serve as true exempla. A wonderful example are Odysseus and Penelope who already are perfect role models for a fearless patron and a faithful and confident *matrona*. Yet the image is enriched by symbols that stress these aspects, such as the hound with Odysseus or the *kalathos* underneath Penelope's *klismos*. Though they are narrative objects within the story of Odysseus and Penelope – the dog

68 Bacchetta 2006, 263f; with examples from Persaro (Castelli-Baldassini collection): 505 cat. no. T 278. pl. 13, 4; and Pompeji (Casa della Fortuna, Naples, MANN 120325): 566 cat. no. R 34. pl. 52, 2. – Comparable marble reliefs: Rome, Villa Albani 164; Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 113f.; Neudecker in: Bol 1992, 125–127 cat. no. 296. pl. 84; Froning 1981, 166 with note 48 notes that the wings are probably restored wrong – Icarus was likely not to wear them on his bag yet.

69 Stähli 2022.

70 Compare Strazzulla 1982–83, 484–486; Pensabene – Gallochio 2017, 171; D'Alessio 2017, 349; Pensabene 2017, 122; Möller-Titel 2019, 301.

recognizes Odysseus, and Penelope creates a garment for his father-in-law – they most of all are gender specific attributes⁷¹.

In the Roman house, the image of Korybantés dancing around the infant Zeus (the Korybantés try to drown out the baby’s yelling so that Kronos cannot find him)⁷² – in the Roman house, this image becomes an allusion to Roman birth rites. On the one hand, three men would knock on the threshold in order to expel evil demons⁷³; on the other hand, the baby is put on the floor and picked up by the parents, probably the father, in order to performatively show that the baby is a legitimate descendant⁷⁴. The image combines these two actions. Yet it is also possible that such images were shown in a sanctuary, and in this case, it refers to sacred practices such as dances⁷⁵. Thus the context determines the image’s interpretation.

The topic is also displayed on other media such as candelabrum bases, coins or mirrors and thus holds an important place within the representation of the Roman upper class⁷⁶. These images serve not only as a self-assurance of the Roman elite, but they also exhibit the elite’s merits to beholders.

Conclusion

As we have seen, many aspects of Campana reliefs cannot be explained with one reason alone, but they are rooted in the interplay of producers, clients and beholders framing their parapictoriality. Campana reliefs prove to be a highly sophisticated genre – something rather unexpected, considering the broad neglect that modern scholars regard them with. They can be placed alongside many other objects that Romans decorated in late republican and early imperial time.

Nevertheless, the mythological images are unique. Unlike wall paintings, the images on Campana reliefs are not to be taken under close scrutiny by ancient beholders. There are no other mythological images that are presented to the beholders to be seen *en passant*. For example, mythological images on

71 Parisi Presicce 1996, 391; Stilp 2005, 371f.; Siebert 2011, 42.

72 Rohden – Winnefeld 1911, 8f.; Borbein 1968, 143–157.

73 Köves-Zulauf 1990, 1–11 refers to Varro ant. rer. div. 14 fr. 111.

74 Köves-Zulauf 1990, 1–11.

75 Habetzeder 2012, 31.

76 Habetzeder 2012, 29–33. See for example Grassinger 1991, 115–118. For example Paris, Louvre MA 442 <<https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/clo10278007>> (05/09/2024); Grassinger 1991, 183–185 cat. no. 25 with fig. 16–21; Touchette 1995, 15f. 37–39. 44. 82 no. 49. pls. 33a–d; Habetzeder 2012, 24 fig. 20. 42 no. 1.

Roman wall paintings are much more highlighted first by their location in rooms where people spend a longer amount of time, perhaps while seated, and secondly by their placement in the center of a wall⁷⁷. Despite the rather out of the way location of the reliefs, this disadvantage leads to a strong desire to attract the viewer's gaze.

In the end, we can dissolve the prejudices and contradictions that could not be resolved by previous research: The reliefs served the Roman elite as a mode of representation, and not the lower classes or the emperor himself. They only *appear* to be clear and easy, but attract the viewers' attention by unexpected hidden narratives, unusual iconography or connotations that depend on the reliefs' context. We have seen that some myths are hidden behind what appears to be a normal horse race, while other myths that seem familiar on first glance, turn out on closer inspection to be far more complex.

All in all, Campana reliefs are highly undervalued, and turn out to be highly sophisticated carriers of meaning in terms of their images, compositions, and meanings.

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77 Haug 2020, esp. 444–447. 545. Stähli 2022, 117 expects a “‘locked’ or ‘fixed’ gaze” for these images.

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