

Ships on Funerary Monuments in the Hellenistic World

This paper presents preliminary results from an extensive study entitled »Funerary Monuments of Sailors and Shipwreck Victims«¹ that encompasses 212 monuments, most of which have inscriptions in Greek. Of these, 88 depict ships. On 60 monuments a single merchant ship appears and two ships on a sarcophagus in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum (inv. no. 4252²), while 27 depict warships (in one case two on the stele³). Most of the funerary monuments that have a depiction of a ship are known and have already been studied and published. Consequently, the observations which follow focus on the use of depictions of ships on tombs in order to understand the intentions and wishes of family members in choosing this particular subject.

Warships in the sources and their basic characteristics

The earliest literary reference to a trireme is found in the work of the Ephesian poet Hipponax in the 6th century BC, while later references appear in Herodotus and Thucydides during the 5th century BC⁴. Representations of warships on funerary monuments are fewer in number, but have earlier dates than those of merchant ships⁵. Warships are distinguished from merchant ships by two very recognizable technical features: by the ram (ἔμβολον / *embolon*) on their prows (three-pronged in the Hellenistic period, from the 4th century BC onward), which was never abandoned as a naval weapon since it appears even in the 6th century AD⁶, and the impressive sternpost (ἄφλαστον / *aphlaston*), also referred to as the *akrostolion* (figurehead) or *akroterion* at the stern⁷.

The ram's military use is well known. It is almost certain that after manoeuvring into position the ship would first strike the enemy vessel with the subsidiary ram (προεμβόλιον / *proembolion*), destroying protruding parts such as the oar boxes and rendering it immobile and would then aim at a less

prominent area such as the stern, strike with the main ram (*embolon*), thus causing it to sink⁸.

The second element, the sternpost (*aphlaston*), can essentially be thought of as taking the form of an abstract bird's head with multiple beaks inclined inwards. Appearing in its developed form in the 5th century BC, it subsequently became the trademark of warships in the Classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods.

The depiction of ships on grave monuments

No scene in the monuments under discussion can be assigned to the sphere of myth. Nor is there any depiction of a »vessel with a pilot« that could be associated iconographically with anything referring to Charon, that is a boat which the ferryman of the dead would propel with a pole over the River Acheron and in the Lake Acherousia. A few epigrams which refer to the deceased's final journey to Hades are connected with his profession as a sailor⁹.

Funerary memorials with the first representations of ships

The earliest depictions of ships appear on twelve monuments of the 4th and 3rd centuries BC. Warships appear on ten of them, while two depict merchant ships.

Memorials with warships

The first grave monument to bear a representation of a warship, and the only one dated to the Classical period (ca. 380-370 BC¹⁰), is the well-known stele of Demokleidēs (fig. 1)¹¹. Demokleidēs, an Athenian marine (ἐπιβάτης / *epibatēs*), sits in mourning on the prow of the trireme on which he battled with

1 The study is being published by the Society of Messenian Archaeological Studies. I thank Professor Petros Themelis for his continuing support.

2 For types of ships, see Pfuhl/Möbius, OG no. 218 pl. 43; no. 218c.

3 Pfuhl/Möbius, OG no. 1277 fig. 79.

4 Morrison/Williams, Ships 119 (Hipponax). 128 (Herodotus). 157 (Thucydides).

5 In the Archaic tombstones studied, which start at the beginning of the 6th century BC, ships are not depicted, but only inscribed poems or prose texts, in contrast with archaic vases, on which ships often appear.

6 Basch, Notes 48.

7 Casson, Seamanship 86 no. 49.

8 Höckmann, Seefahrt 109.

9 See Peek, GV 1833. – Engelmann/Merkelbach, Erythrai 398 no. 304. – Adak/Atvur, Eudemos 11-31 pls 5-7. – Pfuhl/Möbius, OG nos 1183. 1183a. 1183b pl. 178.

10 Palagia, Grave Stele.

11 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Γ 752.



Fig. 1 Stele of Dēmokleidēs. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Γ 752. – (Photo National Archaeological Museum).

the enemy, his weapons lying next to him. The elements of his ship which were plastically rendered are visible – the *proembo-lion* and *embolon*¹² – while it cannot be excluded that the remainder was completed in paint. The entire image is redolent of sorrow and an elegiac sensibility because of the pose of the deceased young man, while the depiction of the ship denotes the manner of his death (that he lost his life in a sea battle). Also at Athens was found the next depiction of a warship¹³, chronologically speaking (**fig. 2**). It is the prow of a trireme facing right, carved on a lekythos of Pentelic marble, together with a standing hoplite who may have perished in one of the naval battles of 322 BC¹⁴. The young man's aggressive motion, in complete antithesis to Demokleidēs's immobility, provides an appropriate context for the detailed rendition of the sculpted ship complete with a highly decorated sternpost, ram,

12 Three-pronged (or two-pronged, so Casson, *Seamanship* 85 no. 41).
 13 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 9167.
 14 Perhaps he was killed in one of the battles off Abydos or Amorgos (according to Tzahos, *Lekythos*).
 15 Munich, Glyptothek, inv. no. 522.
 16 Clairmont, *Gravestone* 236: 330-320 BC: »Demetrios fell most likely in 322 BC in the naval combat near Abydos«. – Pfuhl/Möbius, *OG* 309: first half of the 3rd century BC. – Schwertheim, *Kyzikos* 62: 3rd century BC. – Höckmann, *Seefahrt* 109: 270 BC. – Basch, *Musée* 301: 370 BC.

subsidiary ram, outrigger (*παρεξειρεσία / parexeiresia*), forward face of the outrigger (*ἐπωτίς / epōtis*), eye (*ὄφθαλμός / ophthalmos*) and three oars, the remaining details being completed in paint. The ship here is exceptional in playing a prominent role since it forms the base on which the marine stands, just as a hoplite stands on earth to fight the enemy in a land war. Here too, then, the ship is depicted in order to indicate that the scene concerns a naval battle.

The next stele comes from Kyzikos¹⁵. The representation on the grave marker of the young hoplite Dēmētrios¹⁶ is slightly different from the previous one, since the deceased is depicted fighting on the prow of a warship not in an upright position, but with his right knee resting on the deck. Of the ship the following can be made out: the outward-curving bow decoration (*στόλος / stolos*), the (three-pronged?) ram, the subsidiary ram and the seat of the boatswain (*κελευστής / keleustēs*). It is difficult to associate the young man's death with a specific battle, because the stele has been dated to various years from 370 to 270 BC¹⁷.

One group of grave monuments is characterized by the depiction of a single ship by itself; the deceased is not present. This image is first encountered on a marble lekythos from

Fig. 2 Lekythos. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 9167. – (Photo National Archaeological Museum).





Fig. 3 Stele of Makartos. Pella, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. ΕΠ 14. – (Photo IZ' Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities).

Koropi in Attica (4th century BC)¹⁸, on which is depicted a ship of a completely unique design, combining a merchant vessel's broad keel with the sternpost and ram of a warship, as well as having an unusually long projecting prow. Perhaps it is a ship which its owner intended for a particular purpose¹⁹. On the small limestone pillar (*pessiskos*) of [Ap]ellas (4th or 3rd century BC)²⁰, is the incised stern of a trireme with a sternpost in four parts, a wooden pole (*στυλῖς* / *stylis*), and four (?) discernible oars. On the stele of Adeima[ntos] (end of the 4th or beginning of the 3rd century BC)²¹, only a warship in bas-relief can be distinguished²². The artist may have painted in the rest of the scene in order to complete the composition. On the stele of Makartos the Delian (first half of the 3rd century BC)²³, which was set up on his grave at Pella, the relief of a trireme prow takes pride of place (fig. 3). The *stolos* curves outwards, the ram is in three sections and the *epōtis* is clearly visible, along with the ship's deck and wales (*ζωστήρες* / *zōstēres*).

On the funerary monument of Hērios (3rd century BC) from Byzantion²⁴, the prow of a warship is depicted together with the dead man's weapons hanging from a peg, which occupy

the centre of the scene (fig. 4). The vessel here appears heavy, with a bulky inward curving *stolos*, a three-part ram, and a subsidiary ram.

Finally, the stele from Erythrai²⁵ constitutes an instance of the secondary use of a memorial. This memorial with a warship's prow, carved in the 3rd century BC for an unknown individual, was reused in the 2nd century AD for Eutychedēs, a hoplite killed in a naval battle. Here too, the ship is very massive and its *stolos* is again inward curving. The vessel has a subsidiary ram, a bulky one-piece main ram that curves downward and one of its two *ophthalmoi* visible.

Fig. 4 Stele of Hērios. Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 4205. – (After Pfuhl/Möbius, OG 2269 pl. 320).



18 Brauron, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. BE 1601.

19 Tzalas, Representations.

20 Chios, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 659.

21 Epidaurus, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1137.

22 Píteros, Παραστάσεις.

23 Pella, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. ΕΠ 14.

24 Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 4205.

25 Warsaw, National Museum, inv. no. 198818.

Memorials with merchant ships

Ships are depicted on only two memorials for sailors. The first is on a marble stele from Piraeus²⁶ (360-350 BC; fig. 5). Carved onto this stele is a loutrophoros with a father-son reception scene (δεξιῶσις / *dexiōsis*) in which the mother is present, while behind the youthful son is the stern of a merchant ship. Both the steering oar/rudder (πηδάλιον / *pēdalion*) and the backstay rope (ἐπίτονος / *epitonos*) are visible, which make this the earliest evidence for a sailing ship among our monuments.

A broad marble stele²⁷ from about 330-320 BC that adorned a grave in the Dipylon cemetery at Athens became known as the »Charon relief« in the 19th century²⁸. It depicts two couples – two reclining middle-aged men, each accompanied by a young seated woman – partly concealed behind a vessel occupying almost half the stele's width that holds a seated man, who converses with the reclining men. The *pēdalion* and four oars are visible, while underneath the ship is a suggestion of the waves of the sea. According to Scholl, the undistinguished appearance of this oared ship was intended to signify the profession of the men: they were metics, shipowners from the Black Sea region active in the bulk trade, chiefly in grain²⁹, and of course made use of large sailing ships (ὀλκάδες σιταγωγοί / *holkades sitagōgoi*) for that purpose.

Ships on funerary monuments from the 2nd century BC to the end of the Hellenistic period

In the subsequent centuries, memorials with scenes of merchant ships increase in number and from then on become common, as warships were formerly. However, the latter continue to be depicted throughout the 2nd century BC and down to the final years of the Hellenistic period. These will be examined and described first.

Memorials with warships

To the decades around 200 BC can be dated a stele from Kios in Bithynia³⁰, which was originally made for a man named Nikasiōn, with a scene of a funerary banquet, and was later also used for his homonymous son with the addition of a new scene and inscription³¹. It is one of two memorials that have depictions of two ships, and the only one on which an incident in a naval battle is represented. Standing on the prow of his warship, Nikasiōn *fi*ls fights against a hoplite, who stands



Fig. 5 Stele. Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Γ887. – (Photo National Archaeological Museum).

on the enemy ship opposite. The deceased, a few years after his father's death, was buried in the same plot, certainly with many honours as befitted the deed of valour depicted on the stele. His ship is portrayed as a heavy vessel. The *stolos* on its prow curves inwards; the marine stands upright on the *epōtis*; the subsidiary ram is visible, as is the solid ram with its upward curve. On the enemy ship to the right, an *aphlaston* in four parts and two large *pedalia* are depicted.

Four funerary monuments come from the region of the eastern Aegean. In the middle of the 2nd century BC, a large horizontal stele of *lithos lartios* (a grey limestone from Rhodes) was erected on the island of Cos³². The scene on the stele is unique in that the artist has placed a reclining man, a figure familiar from funerary banquets, on the deck of a warship instead of the usual couch (κλίνη / *klinē*). The stern of a sturdily built ship with a five-part *aphlaston*, distinct wales, an *epōtis* and a huge steering oar are depicted. On its deck lies the deceased, resting comfortably on cushions. His panoply

26 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Γ 887.

27 Athens, Kerameikos Museum, inv. no. P 692.

28 I am very grateful to Dr. Jutta Stroszcek, who photographed the relief for me, along with the kioniskos in the Kerameikos Museum in Athens (inv. no. Co 172).

29 Scholl, Charonrelief 372f.

30 Pfuhl/Möbius, OG no. 1277 fig. 79 (now lost).

31 Corsten, Kios 126-128 no. 58, doubts whether the scene of a naval battle is later.

32 Cos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. unknown: Basch, Musée 366, 5 figs 789-790.

can be seen hanging on the far left, useless now, like that of Dēmokleidēs the Athenian. Two additional representations on funerary monuments are inspired by the same idea – one stele with a funerary banquet complemented by a lyre and a warship’s prow³³ and another with a funeral banquet as the main image, with armour, weapons, a shield and a warship prow on the left, all pictured on a shelf³⁴.

A stele from Kyzikos³⁵ bears another depiction of a funerary banquet, but beneath it is a ship without oars or other fittings. The prow decoration ends horizontally and that on the stern is blunt. Four protrusions are visible for securing the mast to the prow, as well as four pegs in the middle for the awnings (*παραβλήματα* / *parablēmata*). What type of ship this could be is disputed, because the discernible features do not aid in its determination. Cremer, who has studied the monument, thinks it is a warship and conjectures that Dionysodōros was the owner of a large warship-building operation³⁶. Nakas, in contrast, believes that the ship is a merchant vessel³⁷. The general impression of the grave monument compared with similar ones from the same area points more toward it being a merchant ship. If this hypothesis is correct, then we are dealing with a memorial for a *naucleros* (ναύκληρος), a wealthy shipowner or charterer of ships.

A single standing marine (*ἐπιβάτης* / *epibatēs*), along with a warship and a woman, appears on two monuments. One is the stele of -Jenēs, son of Apollōnios found at Kyzikos (end of the 2nd century BC)³⁸. The other is a stele from Rheneia (early 1st century BC; **fig. 6**)³⁹. The artist’s aim and the relatives’ wishes seem to have coincided in the choice of an interesting subject, that of presenting the character of the deceased. The type of ship on the first stele – the clearly delineated shape of its prow with an incurved *stolos*, *epōtis*, subsidiary ram and three-part main ram – plainly recalls that on the stele of Hērīos⁴⁰. On the other hand, the preserved central part of the ship on the second stele, with part of the steering oar and stern visible, from which the dead youth fought, does not provide enough details to allow us to identify its type.

A group of seven grave monuments featuring warships from the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st century BC found on Delos and Rheneia depict the standing fighting *epibatēs* motif already seen on memorials in Athens, Kyzikos and on the naval battle stele from Kios. The dead are Nikēphoros, Timokratēs Raikios, Antiochos and four other youths⁴¹. On all of them, a hoplite standing on a warship attacks an unseen enemy, but the stonecutter took no particular pains with the ship, being content to sketch a simple sort of vessel that recalls a warship.



Fig. 6 Stele. Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 136. – (Photo KA’ Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities).

In the next two monuments from the same region, the image is different, highlighting the theatricality dominant in the period. On the first stele the warrior’s vigour has been lost: Hermias appears in a frontal pose, placid and motionless, accompanied by his slave⁴². On the second⁴³, two youths, Aulus Granius Antiochos and Ptolemaios, do battle on a merchant vessel (not a warship), probably against pirates. One standing, the other half-hidden on the ship, they gaze out at the viewer, as does a youth seated on a rock behind them⁴⁴.

33 Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 5046.

34 Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Albertinum, inv. no. Z.V. 15.

35 London, British Museum, inv. no. 736.

36 Cremer, *Mysien* 42.

37 I thank Yannis Nakas for his readiness to look at and to discuss the scenes of ships with me.

38 Izmir, Basmahane Museum, inv. no. 382.

39 Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 136.

40 See **fig. 4**.

41 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1294. – Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. A 07245; inv. no. unknown: Couilloud, *Rhénée* no. 356 pl. 69; inv. no. 3229; inv. no. unknown: Couilloud, *Rhénée* no. 353 pl. 70; inv. no. A 46; and inv. no. 136.

42 Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 60.

43 Budapest, Szépművészeti Museum, Classical Collection: Goette/Nagy, *Rheneia* 178 fig. 21.

44 Martin Schäfer, Director of the Archaeological Society’s Library, informed me about this stele, for which I thank him.



Fig. 7 Stele of Diphilos. Paros, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. A. 1. – (Photo KA' Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities).

Memorials of warships have also been found in Athens (the kioniskos of Agathoklēs⁴⁵) and on Paros (the stele of

Diphilos⁴⁶) (fig. 7). On the Diphilos stele, the following epigram was inscribed:

Διφίλου οὔτος ὄδ' ἐστὶ / τύπος τοῦ Διφίλου υἱοῦ, / ὃς καὶ ἐπισ<τ>ρατῆς δόξαν / ἔχεν μεγάλην

Translation: »This is the likeness of Diphilos, son of Diphilos, who gained great renown on campaign«.

The text provides an interpretation of the scene and shows that these memorials were erected for young men killed in sea battles. As regards the type of the ships, the prow of Agathoklēs's ship recalls those of warships of the later Hellenistic period⁴⁷, as does the *stolos*, which inclines inwards and not towards the ship's exterior, as occurs on older monuments⁴⁸, while on Diphilos's stele, on which the hoplite stands upright to fight, the ship serves to indicate the circumstances of his death rather than to represent a real vessel. The stonecutter demonstrably gave the vessel its form freehand. Even if he had wanted to depict a trireme with a three-part ram and subsidiary ram, he did not focus his efforts on drawing a ship with the correct proportions and details.

Three monuments bear images of warships of the same type. On the first⁴⁹, a prow carved in the round adorns a cylindrical funerary altar from Rhodes⁵⁰. A small aperture low on the front end shows that a bronze ram was attached there, while two notches on the upper surface of the ship were perhaps intended to receive a figurine, as with the marble prow *in situ* in Cyrene⁵¹ and on the base of the Nike

45 Athens, Kerameikos Museum, inv. no. Co 172.

46 Paros, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. A 1.

47 Basch, Musée 388 fig. 812B. Cf. the following monuments: (a) Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 4205 β; (b) Warsaw, National Museum, inv. no. 198818; (c) Pfuhl/Möbius, OG no. 1277 fig. 79.

48 Cf. the following monuments: Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. nos Γ 752. 1137; Pella, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. ΕΠ 14.

49 Rhodes, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Ε 6563.

50 Basch, Musée 362 figs 775-778.

51 Basch, Musée 391 fig. 816.

Fig. 8 Prow carved in the round. Nisyros, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 303. – (Photo Philēmonos Tsopotou, Prow 353. 355 no. 26).



of Samothrace⁵². The ship on the altar can be regarded as a miniature copy of the Nike's ship-base, a *tetrērēs* (τετρήρης) according to Basch and Casson. The second monument is from Nisyros (fig. 8)⁵³, a large prow carved in the round that forms the base of a grave marker for an officer⁵⁴. The lower part of the ship's keel is submerged in the attached base. Relief bands represent the lower wale which ends in the ram and, higher, the upper surface of the outrigger with *epōtides*. A small portion of a thin band below the *epōtis* ending in the subsidiary ram represents the higher wale; from the upper end of the *epōtis*, a thin double relief band runs to the *stolos*. A relief of the head of a water bird in profile facing left is depicted on the rear part of a moulding. The upper surface of the base is flat, without any trace of tenons to support a statue or other sort of monument. It resembles a prow-shaped base on the terrace of the Temple of Athena at Lindos⁵⁵, as well as that of the Nike of Samothrace, and represents, in Philēmonos Tsopotou's opinion, a type of Rhodian vessel called a *τριημιολία* (*triēmolia*).

The third prow⁵⁶ is part of a larger monument. It is a crudely worked fragment, probably of an unfinished stele. The upper portion of the prow and the *stolos* are broken; from the surviving pieces the unworked marble would have fitted into the main body of the funerary monument, while the front part of the prow is formed by the sculpted stone narrowing to the base of the ram, which is slightly rounded.

Monuments with merchant vessels

Merchant ships are depicted on monuments in fairly large numbers from the 2nd century BC to the end of the Hellenistic age.

Ships can be seen on three stelai of the 2nd century BC: one from Panticapaeum⁵⁷ and two from Rheneia (deposited at Zakynthos and Mykonos)⁵⁸. On the stele from Mykonos, a naked young man standing in a boat of undetermined type prepares to cast anchor⁵⁹.

The famous stelai with mourning youths seated on rocks, sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied by a boat, make their first appearance in the mid-2nd century BC, principally at Delos and Rheneia, but later on other islands in the Cyclades. A group of seven monuments belongs to the second type⁶⁰. It is impossible to identify any of these ships, because none of the carvers was interested in portraying a particular vessel type. This subject also appears on other



Fig. 9 Stele of Glykōn. Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 61. – (Photo Couilloud, *Rhénée* 339 pl. 66).

islands in the 1st century BC. On stelai from Kythnos⁶¹ and Chios⁶² youths, named Zēnon and [L]eōn respectively, sit on rocks, with only their ships as company.

52 Paris, Louvre Museum: Basch, *Musée* 354-358 figs 747-766. – Casson, *Seaman-ship* 102.

53 Nisyros, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 303.

54 Philēmonos Tsopotou, *Prow*.

55 Basch, *Musée* 362 figs 780-781.

56 Rheneia, *in situ*: Göttlicher, *Schiffsmodelle* 69 no. 368a pl. 28.

57 Kertsch, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. unknown: von Kieseritzky/Watzinger, *Südrussland* no. 550 pl. XXXVII.

58 Zakynthos, Roma Collection, inv. no. unknown: Couilloud, *Rhénée* no. 347 pl. 68. – Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 71.

59 I thank Elena Marangoudakē for having the kindness to look at the monument and to confirm what exactly the man is doing.

60 Corfu, Archaeological Museum, inv. nos 187. 197. – Mykonos, Archaeological Museum: Couilloud, *Rhénée* no. 339 pl. 66 (fig. 9) and inv. nos 59. 68+115. – Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 999. – Avignon, Musée Calvet, inv. no. E13.

61 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 2106.

62 Chios, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 575.



Fig. 10 Stele of Kerdōn. Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. A 1297. – (Photo KA' Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities).

A variation of this category of monuments is represented by three stelai from Delos on which, apart from the image of a ship, human heads appear to be sticking out of the sea⁶³. Here too, the particular type of ship is not easy to identify, except perhaps in the case of the stele in Athens. It bears a pointed prow like a war ram, an incurved prow decoration, and a compact stern decoration, thick and vertical. The ship is of a known later type of merchant vessel, the end of whose prow was constructed like a ram in an attempt to resemble

that of a warship⁶⁴. The same type of vessel occurs on another six monuments⁶⁵.

The three memorials with human heads referred to above, together with three others in the Mykonos Archaeological Museum⁶⁶ (fig. 10), comprise a single iconographic category: depictions of shipwrecks. Also belonging to this group is the stele belonging to Rhouphiōn and the women Philēmation and Ma from Athens and that of Gaius and Hortensius, which will be described in the next section.

Monuments with sailing ships

Funerary monuments which depict sailing ships are classified into a single group and receive particular mention.

As already stated, the first attempt to depict a sailing vessel can be identified on a 4th-century stele in Athens⁶⁷. A line starting at the stern and continuing diagonally upwards is intended to signify the backstay, which fastens the rectangular sail to the stern part of the ship. The same allusion is also encountered in six other stelai, of which one comes from Kallatis⁶⁸ and the rest from the Cyclades⁶⁹.

Two stelai have a principal scene with a sailing ship above it. The first also makes reference to shipwrecks (1st century BC or 1st century AD)⁷⁰: an upturned ship denoting the shipwreck of the brothers Gaios and Ortēsios (*sic*; cf. Hortensius) is part of the whole composition⁷¹. Its type is that of a merchant vessel with an imitation ram. Interestingly, its mainmast is depicted as broken, so as to show the end of the voyage for the two young men and for the ship itself. The second is a Roman-era stele from Corinth⁷².

On six funerary monuments, the sailing ship is depicted below the principal scene. One is on the large horizontal stele of Meidias⁷³ from the 2nd or 1st century BC (Karacabey [anc. Miletoupolis], Turkey [once in the building which housed the Kaimakamis]). The other five are on Roman-era monuments from Tomi⁷⁴, Dion⁷⁵, Sinope⁷⁶, Aidēpsos⁷⁷ and Byzantion⁷⁸. The last is the well-known sarcophagus of Peisōn, »where two ships are depicted: one small and one large sprit-rigged vessel with two sails travelling »wing and wing«⁷⁹.

Eight monuments bear a sailing ship as the principal image. On a stele fragment from Thasos⁸⁰ of the 2nd century BC is a representation of a small naked sailor who is attempting to

63 Zakynthos, Byzantine Museum, inv. no. 912. – Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1313. – Verona, Museo Maffeiiano, inv. no. 20.
 64 Basch, Musée 487-489.
 65 Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. nos 59. 220. – Dion, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 429 (7511/7830). – Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 2587. – Volos, Archaeological Museum, inv. nos A 420. A 451.
 66 Mykonos, Archaeological Museum inv. nos 55. 220. A 1297.
 67 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Γ 887.
 68 Mangalia, Museum, inv. no. unknown: Pfuhl/Möbius, OG no. 1186 fig. 180.
 69 Zakynthos, Byzantine Museum, inv. no. 912. – Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 55. – Verona, Museo Maffeiiano, inv. no. 20. – Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 2106. – Avignon, Musée Calvet, inv. no. E13.
 70 Dion, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 429 (7511/7830).

71 Romiopolou, Καρύτσα.
 72 Nauplion, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 2060.
 73 Cremer, Mysien 41 no. KN 4 fig. 3 notes 180-181. 183.
 74 Stele: Bucharest, National Museum, inv. no. L 590.
 75 Stele: Dion, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 430.
 76 Stele: Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. unknown; Pfuhl/Möbius, OG nos 1183. 1183a-b fig. 178.
 77 Stele: Aidēpsos, Archaeological Collection, inv. no. 180.
 78 Sarcophagus: Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 4252.
 79 Casson, Seamanship fig. 175.
 80 Thasos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. A 81.



Fig. 11 Stele. Thasos Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Α 81. – (Photo IH' Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities).

hold up the sloping mast of the spritsail. Behind him someone is giving directions (**fig. 11**). The motif of naked sailors who are setting up masts and sails appears very frequently later on, in Roman funerary monuments on the Italian peninsula and in Sicily. The second, from the shipwreck group, is the late Hellenistic stele of Rhouphiōn, Philēmation and Ma found in Athens (**fig. 12**)⁸¹. A young man and two young women are shown on a half-submerged sailing ship attempting to cling to life, while a fourth victim, who has already fallen into the water, stretches out both arms in a final attempt to save himself from the raging waves. According to Damianidēs, the ship has a sail of the spritsail type⁸².

The remaining six monuments that have a sailing ship as the principal image date from the Roman Imperial period. Three are stelai from Thessaloniki and Eleusis, the other three are two stelai and a base from Bithynia⁸³.

Ships on monuments of the Roman period

Of the 101 funerary monuments of the Roman period which are contained in this study, 31 bear a representation of a ship. At this period, depictions of merchant vessels clearly indicate the maritime profession of the deceased; in particular, a steering oar stood for a helmsman (κυβερνήτης / *kubernētēs*). Small boats and large sailing ships adorn the monuments to show plainly that the deceased made his living and/or became wealthy from seaborne commercial activities.

Conclusions

The information gathered in the course of this study of funerary monuments leads to several interesting conclusions. At the beginning of the 4th century BC, a trireme was depicted for the first time⁸⁴. Portrayals of warships, which start out

Fig. 12 Stele of Rhouphiōn, Philēmation and Ma. Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. no. 230. – (After Conze, *Grabreliefs* 2123a pl. CCCCLI).



81 Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. no. 230.

82 I thank Kostas Damianides, author of the treatise *Ελληνική Παραδοσιακή Ναυπηγική* (Traditional Greek Shipbuilding) (Athens 21998) and other books and articles on related topics, for kindly sharing his views with me on the types of ships represented here.

83 Thessaloniki, Archaeological Museum, inv. nos 917. 6172. – A copy in Ankara(?): Pfuhl/Möbius, OG no. 1184 fig. 178. – Piraeus, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. ΜΠ 3597. – *In situ*, Karamanli Camii Bithynia: Dörner, *Bithynien* 104 no. 120 fig. 11. – Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 4251.

84 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Γ 752.

with numerous details to show their magnificence, end up as quite schematic, apart from the monuments executed in the round noted on Nisyros and Rheneia, which signify fame and of course wealth.

One group of monuments⁸⁵ refer to men about whom it is believed that their participation in battles at sea was posthumously shown by the symbolism of a warship depicted on their tombs, which at the same time functioned as an allusion to the heroisation of the deceased, a phenomenon well underway in that period.

On two funerary monuments⁸⁶ it appears that the relatives had the same idea: to memorialize a specific act of their dead kinsmen, either when they respected the non-combatant populace of a city they captured or when they protected the civilians of their own city.

Scenes of fighting marines ceased in the 1st century BC. The Wars of the Successors had ended by then, as also the Romans' war with Mithridates, King of Pontus, and Egypt, the last Hellenistic kingdom, submitted to Rome in 31 BC. Merchant ships could now sail in security at last, because the seas were clear of pirates thanks to the Roman Peace (*pacis Augustae gratia*).

Although merchant ships were at first depicted in a very schematic, conventional manner, observable in two monuments in Athens⁸⁷, some of them came to boast unfurled sails by the 2nd century AD. As a motif, the ship also played an important role in depicting shipwrecks and their victims. Depictions of these stopped at the beginning of the 1st century BC, either because shipwrecks became fewer or because the subject ceased to excite the interest of artists.

In concluding, it is appropriate to answer the question at hand. What impelled the dead men's relatives to choose that a ship be depicted on their grave monuments?

For the young men lost in naval battles, there is no doubt that the relatives wanted to catch the attention of passers-by in order to give the glorious death of their scions greater visibility, as the event affected their own lives both positively and negatively. All the memorials erected on tombs of marines depict a ship, something which does not occur on those of ordinary sailors or shipwreck victims. In other words, adorning the tombs of young *epibatai* who had fought and died for their country with an image of their ship or of them on board their ship constituted a homage to the lost flower of every city which the living had an obligation to render. The image of the fearless, intrepid, valiant hoplite bestowed honour not only upon the deceased himself, but also on his relatives, who earned it forever by constructing a memorial which reflected with clarity the deceased's heroic deed and which would recall it to the minds of many generations to come.

For shipwreck victims, the addition of a ship next to the youth who sits in mourning on a rock characterizes a large group of funerary monuments devoted to them, while at the same time some artists ventured to depict a capsized ship or the victim's last moments, in order to elicit the pity of the passer-by (ὄδοιπóρος, ξένος, φίλος, ὀδείτης, παροδείτης or πάροδος, according to the individual funerary inscription), making him a partaker in the inexhaustible pain which their unjust loss caused those who survived.

Finally, in the case of sailors, ships were intended to identify their line of work, allusively at the beginning, but in the end explicitly, almost provocatively, in order to display the wealth they had acquired in the meantime thanks to their particular profession. At the same time, sometimes with the help of an inscription accompanying the image, they also signified the end of the owner's own journey through life, with his ship represented either with its mast down or without the tackle necessary for sailing. The choice made by the relatives or the deceased while still alive (ζῶν ἑαυτῶ..., as we read in some inscriptions) that ships be depicted on grave monuments of seafarers shows us the special relationships that they had developed with the tools of their work. They had lived the greater part of their lives on them; on them they had spent moments of joy and elation or fear, agony and terror during sudden tempests. They had prayed to ask the gods for a favourable wind (on Delos to Poseidōn Naukarios, Ναυκάριος, to Isis Pelagia, Πελαγία, and to Aphroditē Eurloia, Εὐπλοία; on Cos to Aphroditē Astartē, Ἀστάρτη; in Alexandria to the Dioscuri) or for a good voyage and great profit (in Thessaloniki to Aphroditē Epiteuxidia, Ἐπιτευξιδία), or to thank them for all these prayers being granted or because they had been saved from a shipwreck. As they passed away, leaving tangible goods behind, they took with them their favourite companion in life, their ship, portrayed on their funerary monument. It cannot be ruled out that some of the images represent their actual ships, but this, unfortunately, is something we will never know.

85 Cos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. unknown: Basch, Musée 366, 5 figs 789-790. – Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 5046. – Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Albertinum, inv. no. Z.V. 15.

86 Smyrna, Basmahane Museum, inv. no. 382. – Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 136.

87 Kerameikos Museum, inv. no. P 692, of 360-350 BC; National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Γ 887.

Appendix:

Concordance of the monuments' museum inventory numbers with the catalogue numbers in my forthcoming study (*italic*)

Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Γ 752 = 7
Brauron, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. BE 1601 = 11
Athens, Kerameikos Museum, inv. no. P 692 = 12
Chios, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 659 = 13
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Γ 887 = 14
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 9167 = 15
Munich, Glyptothek, inv. no. 522 = 18
Epidaurus, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1137 = 19
Pella, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. ΕΠ 14 = 22
Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 4205 = 24
Warsaw, National Museum, inv. no. 198818 = 27
Location unknown: Pfuhl/Möbius, OG no. 1277 fig. 79 = 28
Kertsch, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. unknown: von Kieseritzky/Watzinger, Südrussland no. 550 fig. XXXVII = 29
Cos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. unknown: Basch, Musée 366, 5 figs 789-790 = 31
Corfu, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 197 = 34
Izmir, Basmahane Museum, inv. no. 382 = 36
Location unknown: Peek, GV 1833 = 38
Erythrai (mod. Idilri), Turkey (once in the house of Demetris Galatianos): Engelmann/Merkelbach, Erythrai 398 no. 304 = 40
Zakynthos, Roma Collection (not located): Couilloud, Rhénée no. 347 fig. 68 = 41
Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 5046 = 42
Thasos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Λ 81 = 43
Mangalia, Museum: Pfuhl/Möbius, OG no. 1186 fig. 180 = 44
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 61 = 46
Zakynthos, Byzantine Museum, inv. no. 912 = 47
Rhodes, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. E 6563 = 49
Nisyros, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 303 = 49α
Rheneia, *in situ*: Göttlicher, Schiffsmodelle 69 inv. no. 368α fig. 28 (Cockerell's sketch) = 49β
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1294 = 50
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, inv. no. 230 = 52
Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Albertinum, inv. no. Z.V. 15 = 55
London, British Museum, inv. no. 736 = 56
Athens, Kerameikos Museum, inv. no. Co 172 = 58
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 220 = 59
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 55 = 60
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. A 1297 = 61
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 1313 = 62
Verona, Museo Maffei, inv. no. 20 = 63
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 68+115 = 64
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. A 07245 = 70
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum: Couilloud, Rhénée no. 356 fig. 69 = 71
Paros, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. A. 1 = 72
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 999 = 75
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 2106 = 76

Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 71 = 80
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 3229 = 81
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum: Couilloud, Rhénée no. 353 fig. 70 = 82
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. A 46 = 83
Karacabey, Turkey (once in the building which housed the Kaimakamis): Cremer, Mysien 41 no. KN 4 fig. 3 notes 180-181. 183 = 84α
Corfu, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 187 = 85
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 136 = 86
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 59 = 87
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 97 = 88
Mykonos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 60 = 89
Budapest, Szépművészeti Museum (Classical Collection): Goette/Nagy, Rheneia 178 fig. 21 = 89α
Chios, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 575 = 91
Avignon, Musée Calvet, inv. no. E 13 = 93
Dion, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 429 (7511/7830) = 94α
Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 2587 = 99
Volos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Λ 420 = 105
Volos, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. Λ 451 = 106
Thessaloniki, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 917 = 109
Bucharest, National Museum, inv. no. L 590 = 121
Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 4252 = 122
Ankara(?) (copy): Pfuhl/Möbius, OG no. 1184 fig. 178 = 127
Dion, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 430 = 128
Piraeus, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. ΜΠ 3597 = 131
Karamanli Camii Bithynia: Dörner, Bithynien 104 no. 120 fig. 11 = 132
Nauplion, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 2060 = 133
Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 4251 = 137
Olympos, Lycia (mod. Antalya), *in situ*: Adak/Atvur, Eudemos 11-31 figs 5-7 = 148
Istanbul, Archaeological Museum: Pfuhl/Möbius, OG nos 1183. 1183a. 1183b fig. 178 = 150
Thessaloniki, Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 6172 = 156
Aidēpsos, Archaeological Collection, inv. no. 180 = 164

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Zusammenfassung / Summary

Schiffe auf Grabmonumenten in der hellenistischen Welt

Auf 61 Monumenten erscheint ein einzelnes Handelsschiff, während 27 ein Kriegsschiff darstellen. Bilder von Kriegsschiffen kommen seltener vor, dafür jedoch früher als diejenigen der Handelsschiffe (380/370 v. Chr. bis zum Ende des Hellenismus). Monumente mit Handelsschiffen treten um 360/350 v. Chr. auf; ihre Zahl nimmt im Hellenismus zu, und 31 weitere kommen auf Gräbern der römischen Zeit vor.

Was veranlasste die Angehörigen, ein Schiff als Abbildung für ein Grabmonument zu wählen? Für junge Männer, die ihr Leben in Seeschlachten verloren hatten, wurde deren ehrenvollem Tod eine größere Sichtbarkeit verliehen. Für Opfer von Schiffsunglücken wurde ein gekentertes Schiff oder die letzten Momente des Opfers dargestellt, um einem Vorbeigehenden Mitleid zu entlocken. Für Seefahrer sollten Schiffe dazu beitragen, ihren Beruf darzustellen, und manchmal bezeichneten sie mithilfe einer Inschrift das Ende des Lebenswegs des Besitzers.

Übersetzung: Th. Schmidts

Ships on Funerary Monuments in the Hellenistic World

On 61 monuments a single merchant ship appears, while 27 depict a warship. Representations of warships are fewer in number, but have earlier dates than those of merchant ships (380/370 B.C. to the end of the Hellenistic era). Monuments with merchant ships appear in 360/350 B.C.; their number increases in the Hellenistic period and 31 more are depicted on tombs of the Roman Imperial period.

What prompted the relatives to choose a ship to be depicted on grave monuments? For the young men lost in naval battles, their glorious deaths were given greater visibility. For shipwreck victims, a capsized ship or the victim's last moments are displayed in order to elicit the pity of a passer-by. For sailors ships were intended to identify their line of work and sometimes with the help of an inscription they also signified the end of the owner's journey through life.