

Tombs, Images and Identities in Ancient Anatolia

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Abstract

Self-definition of ancient Greeks was created under the influence of socio-historical events, reflecting both, the relationship between Hellenes themselves and attitudes towards others. Greek wonder as a self-generated process yielded to a growing awareness that the drive towards advancement, observed in certain regions of Greece, was probably not possible without the external impetus of an extensively integrated Mediterranean world (Rollinger 2006, 197-226). The influencing factors for self-definition of ancient Greeks were a shared myth of descent, a shared territory, and a shared sense of history. Many scholars assume, that a sense of Greekness among Dorians, Ionians, Aiolians and others was finally crystallized throughout the number of military conflicts in which they were involved during the Classical period. It seems probable that Athens played a major role both in the invention of the barbarian concept and in the substitution of cultural for ethnic criteria in the self-definition of Greeks. In their self-definition, Greeks seem to be deliberately stylized as antinomy to what they considered to be typical for others. Similarly, as a response to the strong pressure from the Persians, the national awareness of the Anatolians was formed. Interestingly, in some cases local ethnic groups had chosen

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cultural elements that had been associated with Greeks or Persians for their self-definition.

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1. Introduction

Western Anatolia is a region which is not rich in textual sources, but is relatively rich in image-decorated tombs that can provide certain ideas about self-definition of the Anatolians and their counterparts. A sense of identity, defined both historically and territorially, evolved from a common historical experience and cultural tradition. At the same time as the depiction and stylization of non-Greeks was changing in Greek art, the ideas of the Anatolian artists and their clients on foreign ethnicities were also developing. All, archaeological, historical and epigraphic sources suggest that despite the fact that Karia and Lykia were open to foreign influences from an early stage, certain forms of indigenous culture persisted. Expressions demonstrating a sense of belonging to a social group encompasses a broad range of possible ways that an individual might relate to others in terms of commonalities. Both, Karian and Lykian landscapes, were organized into minor dynasties, each with a limited territory, determined by the natural conditions. It was not until the time of Persian conquest in 540 B.C. that these dynasties developed into more unified and politically coherent structures: the external stress exerted by Persian supremacy and the need for an organization to match this threat, may have produced a greater unity than existed before (Carstens 2008, 52-118). Similarly, Greeks united, first culturally and then in response to political threats from the Persian side through actual political collaboration.

While the Greeks used ideological motifs reflecting their socio-political relationships in the decoration of public buildings, Anatolians used their political program to decorate dynastic monuments, most often tombstones. Territorial claims and the making of alliances were in the Classical period partly based on the promulgation of aitiological myths and kinship stories of Greek cities. From this perspective parallels can be found of Anatolian heroes with other heroes, devoted to the mythical ancestors of established colonies in the Greek world. Lykian monuments, located within cities, were chosen to give an expression of urban monumentality and displays of power. Usually located on terraced burial plots, probably fulfilling

a religious purpose. Anatolians celebrated their distant past in a much later period. It is evidenced by the fact that when reconstructing the theatre at Xanthos, one pillar tomb was carefully moved to the side of the theatre, while the Harpy tomb was sat atop the *cavea*, along with the other fourth or third century B.C. *pseudo-pillar tomb* (Potter 2007, 81-8). It seems plausible that the Anatolians also constructed a discourse about Greek migration and colonization, developing a narrative about their past as part of an identity-making process of their own. East-West relations were first framed using inherited Near Eastern models, then turned into Greek-oriented migration stories in which Karians and Lykians, like the Greeks, were considered to have arrived in Anatolia from Crete or the Aegean islands (Bachvarova 2005, 117-55).

2. Image of the ideal ruler

The central figure in Anatolian funerary iconography was the ruler himself, who had himself portrayed through motifs known from the Near East or Greek environment. Typical of this was a combination of several, iconographically different scenes on one monument. The deceased depicted on the Karaburun II tomb wall paintings appears three times on three different walls dressed differently in each of the three different social contexts: in a procession, in battle and in a banquet scene. Local tradition played an indisputable role. The result is panegyric reliefs, representing the dynast as an invincible ruler according to the eastern pattern, an ideal representative of the ruling elite in the environment of his court, or a figure who can be credited with heroic qualities. Banqueting scenes modelled on the Greek *symposion*, the presence of musicians playing various musical instruments (*aulos*, *kithara*) highlighted the ideal setting of the dynastic court. The Wrestler's relief from Xanthos and the Isinda Pillar tomb depicted games and music associated with agonistic festivals. The procession can be interpreted as displays of public pomp and memorialise the deceased in terms of a harnessing of public resources. On the pillar tomb at Isinda, similar activities were shown to those on the so called Wrestler's relief from Xanthos: two massive wrestlers, a small figure (possible athlete) and two figures in long drapery, one of whom plays a *kithara* and another which may have been shown playing an *aulos* (Draycott 2007, 103-134). Sports competitions (Wrestler relief from Xanthos) or chariot

racing can be included among the public festivities celebrating the power and wealth of the ruler.

Thukidydes stressed that during his time, *“among some of the barbarians, especially in Asia, when prizes for boxing and wrestling are offered, belts are worn by the combatants. And there are many other points in which a likeness might be shown between the life of the Hellenic world of old and the barbarian of to-day.”* (Thuc. 1.6). In several cases, a connection with funeral habits (funerary games, banquet) is assumed. Scenes of chariot racing, which was a part of funeral games and an aristocratic form of the athletic ideal, were associated with hunting and warfare. Depictions may be interpreted as a sign of social status. Nevertheless, it does not seem that chariot racing played such an important role in the life of an Anatolian ruler in comparison with hunting, warfare and feasting (Cook 2005, 34-6). It is also necessary to emphasize that the aforementioned interpretations may not be mutually exclusive, rather to the contrary. As archetypal depictions, which the audience was accustomed to, they could have been complementary and mutually synergetic. In some cases, it is possible to contemplate the intention of combining the traditional Near Eastern motif of the hunt with the context of Greek mythology (Kalydonian boar hunt). On the relief with the hunter's motif, decorating the Nereid Monument in Xanthos, most hunters are dressed in Greek clothing and only one is in Persian clothing. Some Anatolian depictions reflected the ideal image of a Persian king, presented as a fine horseman and bowman. The manner with which the dynasts sometimes handled their drinking bowl, balancing it on three fingers, seems to have pre-history in the arts of Mesopotamia (Miller 2009, 98). It was described by Xenophon in the context of an imaginary discussion between the young Kyros the Great and his grandfather Astyages, king of the Medes: *“...they pour in the wine with neatness and then present the goblet, conveying it with three fingers, and offer it in such a way as to place it most conveniently in the grasp of the one who is to drink.”* (Xen. Cyrop. 1.3.8).

A dynast was commonly depicted, based on Persian, Greek and local models, as follows:

- a) in the fight against enemies (often riding, spearing a conquered opponent): e.g. Karaburun II, Payava sarcophagus.
- b) hunting for a wild animal (lion, bear, deer, wild boar): e.g. Lion tomb Xanthos, pillar tomb Isinda I, pillar tomb Gürses (Trebendai?), Nereid monument, Hekatomnos sarcophagus.

- c) in the presence of the Persian dignitary (audience, procession): e.g. Payava sarcophagus
- d) banqueting: in the presence of his wife and children (e.g. Karaburun II, Payava monument) or in men's company modelled on the Greek *symposion* (e.g. Nereid monument).
- e) in the form of a dynastic couple: (on a *quadriga* or a throne): e.g. Payava monument, Nereid monument, Maussoleion.
- f) as a figure stylized as a winning athlete or *heros*: e.g. pillar tomb of Xanthos, Isinda Payava sarcophagus, Nereid monument.

3. Architectural displays

All, Anatolian, Greek and Persian customs resulted in the uprising of so called *temple tombs*, the predecessors of which can be found within previous monuments of the Karian and the Lykian dynasties, deliberately referring to monumental profane and sacral architecture as well. In this way, native dynasts tried to legitimize their power basing on divinized ancestors and family members. The so called *temple tombs*, from an architectural point of view, combined the Eastern as well as domestic and Greek elements. They appeared in the environment of southwest Anatolia, in the regions of Karia and Lykia, which had been characterized by a deepening cultural link from the fourth century B.C. at the latest. The shift in the decoration of the dynastic monuments of this period is evident in the selection of decorative motifs, whether decorative architectural elements or themes in sculptural decoration. Attempts to resemble Persian rulers remain constantly present, but Greek artworks adapted to local traditions played a significant role. It is visible in the selection of motifs that refer to certain historical events or places, and they occur along with the stories of Greek mythology. These tombs are to be understood in the context of socio-historical events. They originated as a project of strong Lykian rulers, who, to some extent, gained autonomy in satrapies and managed to unify at least part of the territory of Lykia. In their building program they were inspired by the *Rich style* of High Classical Greek art. However, their power did not last long, and Lykia soon came under the administration of satraps from neighbouring Karia, who also used Greek cultural models to unite the territory and manifest their power.

Hekatomnids, particularly Mausollos, have managed to build up a sense of Karian identity by incorporating elements of Persia and Greece

into a Karian core element, both politically and culturally. Most of the monumental Anatolia tombs of the fourth century B.C. were decorated with depictions of *bashlyk* wearers. A number of figures wear the *anaxarides*, including the Heroon of Perikles at Limyra, the Heroon at Trysa, the Maussoleion at Halikarnassos, and the Nereid Monument. It is remarkable that most of the figures represented on the Nereid monument are in Greek rather than Persian dress. Erbbinna, the local ruler, on the other hand, was distinguished by his oriental appearance. He appears wearing a pointed *bashlyk*, a tight fitting sleeved tunic, and a loose mantle draped around his lower body, on the lesser podium frieze. He chose, however, to have himself represented in a hellenized ambience (Palagia 2016, 374-89). Some soldiers on Heroon of Perikles at Limyra wear the *petasos*, a wide-brimmed hat worn by Greeks when travelling, some wear the *pilos*, a close fitting felt headdress with a conical top, and others wear *bashlyks* in different configurations, enveloping the face or with the lappets tied at the back. These variations might imply the existence of ethnically mixed officials including the mercenary Greek soldiers in the army of Perikles (Şare 2013, 55-74).

Epigraphic evidence attests that it was common for a Lykian individual to have two names belonging to two different languages and societies, usually Anatolian and Greek, more rarely Persian. Sometimes the two names had correspondig meanings. The appearance of a name in two versions implies a level of bilingualism on behalf of the owner. Greek could have been used as a prestige language implying higher social or cultural status. The Maussoleion friezes, like sculpture, carried mixed oriental-Greek iconography, which involved similarly mixed types of dress: Persian figures appear alongside those wearing Greek garments or Karian tunics (Waywell 1994, 64-65). The style of the architectural sculpture was almost purely Greek, but the Karian aristocracy was portrayed as hellenized barbarians. The Maussoleion was not just a dynastic tomb, it was also staged as and became a sanctuary celebrating the Hekatomnid dynasty in an ancient Near Eastern tradition of divine kingship. The *quadriga* crowning the top of the Maussoleion is often related to the sun god Helios, as well as the coins depicting Maussollos with a helmet.

4. The role of Greek myths

The Lykian and Karian dynasts used the stories of Greek mythology to manifest their power, to legitimize it, or to emphasize their origins. The use of mythological scenes in funerary art seems to have a long tradition in south-western Anatolia. Depiction of the severing Medusa's head was shown in the paintings within the tomb chamber at Kızılbél in the Elmalı Plain (ca.530 B.C.) in the north of Lykia (Draycott 2008, 145-153). Mythological figures show how Anatolian rulers made use of both epichoric traditions and current Greek ideas. Chimaira, a mythological creature killed by Bellerophon in Lykia was shown on Lykian sarcophagi during the Classical period, and may be connected to local heroic tales with which tomb owners wanted to associate themselves. Acroteria depicting Perseus or Bellerofontes crowned Perikles' tomb decorated with military processions (Şare 2013, 55-74). For tomb decoration Anatolian rulers presumably referred to the foundation myths of Anatolian cities. Bargylia was named after a comrade of Bellerophon, who had been killed by Pegasus, and Hydisos had been founded by his homonymous son, as is also confirmed by the images of Bellerophon and Pegasus on its local coins (Bremmer 2013, 73). Pegasus frequently occurs on Karian coins, and from the fifth century B.C. onwards was already present on coins of the Halikarnassos (SEG 53.1194).

The mythological scenes used on the Mausoleion were derived from Greek mythology, but used in a new context: the purpose of the main decorative themes was to glorify Mausollos as a founder hero of the city, *heros ktistes* (Palagia 2016, 374-89). Having literally re-founded the city of Halikarnassos, as well as renovating other parts in Karia, Mausollos seems to have suggested a claim for the founder cult (Jeppesen 1994, 73-84). A marble faced wall following the upper pedestal was crowned on all four sides by relief friezes representing *Amazonomachy* and perhaps a *Kentauremachy* below. Common invocations of tomb protection and retribution in Lykia were made directly to a variety of deities of Lykian, Karian, and Greek origin. Greek deities adopted by Lykians later included Artemis, Aphrodite, and Apollo (Bryce 1986, 172-82). Panhellenic motifs (*Amazonomachy*, *Kentauremachy*, *Gigantomachy*, *Iliupersis*) as well as stories linked to individual heroes were used. Their appearance in the decoration of a sepulchral building would be rather exceptional in the Greek world, but Anatolian artists used them freely. Greek motifs were combined with

scenes that were likely to reflect specific historical events. On the classical buildings, the *Amazonomachy* topic often occurred in conjunction with *Kentauiromachy* and, since the fourth century B.C., they had a stable position within the sculptural repertoire (Šmotláková 2014, 104-5). Their selection for decoration of the Maussoleion in Halikarnassos could point to the notoriety and decorative quality of conventional symbols of the Greco-Persian Wars, or more generally the victory of prudence over foolish pride, *sophrosyne* over *hybris*.

The *Amazonomachy* possibly referred to the military successes of the Hekatomnids and the established political and cultural unity (Hüllden 2001, 83-105). There is another mythological connection between Karia and the Amazons. According to legend, the double-edged axe (*labrys*), a sacred symbol of Zeus Labrandeos, was taken by Herakles from Hippolyta and donated to the Lydian *omphalos* (Plut.Quaes.Gr.14). Lydian king Gyges gave it to the Karians as a reward for their help in the war (Hdt. 1.171). Arselis is said to have transferred it to the sanctuary of Zeus Labrandeos in Karia (Plut.Mor.301f). Some scholars interpret the symbolism of *Amazonomachy* on the Maussoleion as possibly referencing a similitude between Maussolos and Herakles. The aforementioned battle scenes on tomb structures could have symbolized the struggle with another enemy – death (Šmotláková 2014, 104-5). Or, they could form a local adaptation of myths, concerning the established world order, the struggle between order and chaos. The Hittite kingdom was divine, and the king held the office of high priest. He performed sacrifices and was the chief mediator between men and gods, becoming both, a political and sacred or even divine figure. When the king died, *kosmos* was threatened. In order to secure a satisfying transition and avoid chaos among the survivors, complicated royal funerary rituals, lasting several days, were carried out.

5. Conclusion

The iconography of Anatolian funerary art offers the best possible results in terms of the number of finds, but it is not always possible to distinguish the ethnicity of individual figures. While in the late Archaic and early Classical period the elements (clothing, hairstyles, accessories, armaments and equipment) can be - at least partially - understood as a badge of ethnic origin in Anatolian art, from the peak and particularly Late Classical period, the situation changed. Because of the socio-historical

events, the Persians and elements of their culture - in contrast to the Greeks and their attributes - were usually depicted in a more positive light. By the first half of the fifth century B.C. military identities were configured along different lines, which distanced Anatolians from Greek-related culture and defined their identity within a two tier system with the Persians at the top. This distinction can be understood as a symptom of affiliation and identification choices made in the context of the Persian War period (Draycott 2010, 7-23). Typically Persian pieces of clothing and its components such as *kandys*, *anaxyrides* and *bashlyk* were initially associated with the Persians, both in Anatolia and in homeland Greece. Gradually, however, direct contact with their ethnic origin was lost, and clothing and accessories became a new means of expression that must be understood in a different context.

While the Greeks used them to identify a non-Greek, barbarian, first in a neutral and then negative meaning, the Anatolians acquired them in the form of personal elements symbolizing the high standing of a person, as a symbol of authority and royal rank. Similarly, distinct Persia-oriented trends in fashion, eating habits, luxury goods of every kind, and even in architecture, was evident in the distinguished circles of high society in the Greek polis during the Late Archaic period (Miller 1997, 135- 258). At the same time, the importance of Greek paraphernalia, which became - especially in the cultural sphere - a symbol of wealth and prosperity, increased, corresponding to the desired ideal image of the dynastic court or aristocratic environment. It was similar with the language situation in Lykia during various periods. Greek language went from being the language of Athenian imperial rulers (in the mid-fifth century B.C.) to an elite language used by Lykian dynasts and aristocrats (at the end of the fifth and at the beginning of the fourth century B.C.) to the administrative language during Karian domination in Lykia until the second half of the fourth century B.C. (Rutherford 2002, 197-219). The use of Greek paraphernalia does not contradict the simultaneous image of the Greeks as subjected enemies. Numerous battles depicted in tombs show the enemy as Greek or Greek related (Draycott, 2010, 7-23). Sometimes, depictions of Greek hoplites could represent Anatolians rather than Greeks specifically, but it seems unavoidable that an overall generic opposition to Greeks or Greek-related people was intended.

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