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THE TOMB AS A NODE OF PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

Intramural burials in Roman imperial Asia Minor

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Abstract

This contribution focuses on the practice of intramural burial in Anatolia during the Roman Imperial period. The prominent tombs of this time may at first sight simply reflect a traditional habit of honouring benefactors, being in line with the retrospective cultural atmosphere that is often attributed to the Greek cities under Roman rule. However, a contextual analysis of the respective structures of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, considering their design, inscriptions, and urban setting, reveals a new and significant pattern. This is the linking of the tomb with important public donations of the deceased. As a result, the monuments were turned into hybrid spaces that answered the specific demands of elite representation in their time.

In the ancient Greek city, a burial in the centre of a town was the customary way of singling out a person whose life and deeds were perceived as being especially important for the formation of local society. Its meaning was in fact intimately connected to the process of urbanization itself, when together with a spatial reorganization the average tombs were restricted to cemeteries outside the settlement areas¹. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that together with the transformation of society, the circumstances of laying out intra-urban burials also changed over the course of time. This holds true for both the group of persons that would receive such a privilege and the exact location and design of the tomb. To get an idea of this development, we may think of the rather simple graves of the early *oikistai*, situated on the agora, the royal *mausolea* in the Greek periphery, or the lavishly decorated memorial buildings of the late

¹ Morris 1987, 62-71; Polignac 1996, 151-176.

Hellenistic *euergetai*, that were placed in various, but always especially visible positions².

In the following I would like to focus on tombs *intra-muros* of the Greek cities of Asia Minor during the middle imperial period, or roughly the time between the last quarter of the 1st and the end of the 2nd century AD. In this period, a number of hybrid constructions left their mark on the development of intra-urban burials, combining a variety of in part complementary, in part also contradictory features, of which the tomb proper was only one aspect. Although most of the single monuments I shall deal with have long been known, and are also included in two recent publications on intra-urban tombs³, they have for different reasons not been seen as a discrete group, sharing characteristics that defined their similar relation to the public.

Thus, in the general survey of such burials in the Greek world by Hadwiga Schörner, findings from the geometric to the late imperial period are interpreted as a more or less coherent body of material. Thereby, the relation between the tombs' remarkable design variations and their changing messages seems to be underestimated⁴. In contrast to this, Sarah Cormack's study on *The Space of Death in Roman Asia Minor* convincingly put to the foreground the particular cultural density of the respective monuments from the imperial period⁵. But her *a priori* idea of the tombs as spheres separated from the surrounding space as well as from the continuous flow of time, adopted from Michel Foucault's concept of *hétérotopies*⁶, partly obscured their rather open structure, which might have become even more obvious when chronologically structuring the still ample span of time covered in her work. Focussing on the examples from the middle imperial period, one could in fact stress their explicit blurring of traditional boundaries. These monuments often seem to merge different modes of representation and thereby, rather than reflecting past lives and their values, appear active in a current debate; forming a kind of node in the network of overlapping means of public representation that seems typical for members of the local elites of that

time. In the following, I shall try to demonstrate this with some examples.

At Rhodiapolis in Lycia, such an intra-urban tomb was commissioned around the middle of the 2nd century AD by a famous local benefactor named Opramoas, son of Apollonios⁷. The building was designed as a small temple *in antis* on a low podium. We do not know what the *cella* of this monument looked like, but it is probably safe to imagine it being equipped with a sarcophagus and maybe also statues of Opramoas and members of his family. Both the architecture and its dimensions (ca. 7 x 8 m) follow a standard pattern of imperial period tombs in Asia Minor⁸. As for the location, Gerhard Huber's plan of Rhodiapolis shows the monument in the centre of the small town with a number of public buildings clustered in the form of a half-circle (fig. 1)⁹. According to his section of the terrain (fig. 2), it stood in the middle of a terrace in front of the theatre. In recent years, an *anastilosis* of the building has been made using the numerous stone blocks that were scattered over the place. A tentative reconstruction, however, had already been published by Eugen Petersen and Felix von Luschan in the late nineteenth century (figs. 3-4)¹⁰. Although their drawings can of course not replace a thorough architectural study, they highlight a most striking feature; that is the long inscriptions that almost completely covered the walls of the building¹¹.

These texts were also referred to by Cormack¹². Her statement that they "constituted an ambitious biographical programme" is however misleading, as none of these inscriptions gives any explicit and coherent biographical information, which can only be extracted from the texts by reading them against the grain. Moreover, they do not even allude to the fact that the building was the tomb of Opramoas. Although he is mentioned in every single one of the texts, he is never called *hero*, nor is there any other indication of his death, which in fact will have occurred some years after the tomb

2 Cp. the catalogue of intra-urban tombs from the Greek world by Schörner 2007.

3 Cormack 2004; Schörner 2007.

4 Schörner 2007.

5 Cormack 2004; Ewald 2008.

6 Foucault 2005. Cp. also Ewald 2008.

7 Petersen/von Luschan 1889, 76-133; Kokkinia 2000; Cormack 2004, 36-40, 274-276.

8 Cp. Berns 2003, 144-145, 160-161.

9 Huber 2006.

10 Petersen/von Luschan 1889, 76-133, esp. 76-81 with fig. 54-63.

11 Petersen/von Luschan 1889, 76-133; Heberdey 1897; Kalinka 1944, 327-350 no. 905. The inscriptions were republished together with additions, a German translation and an extensive commentary by Kokkinia 2000.

12 Cormack 2004, 36.

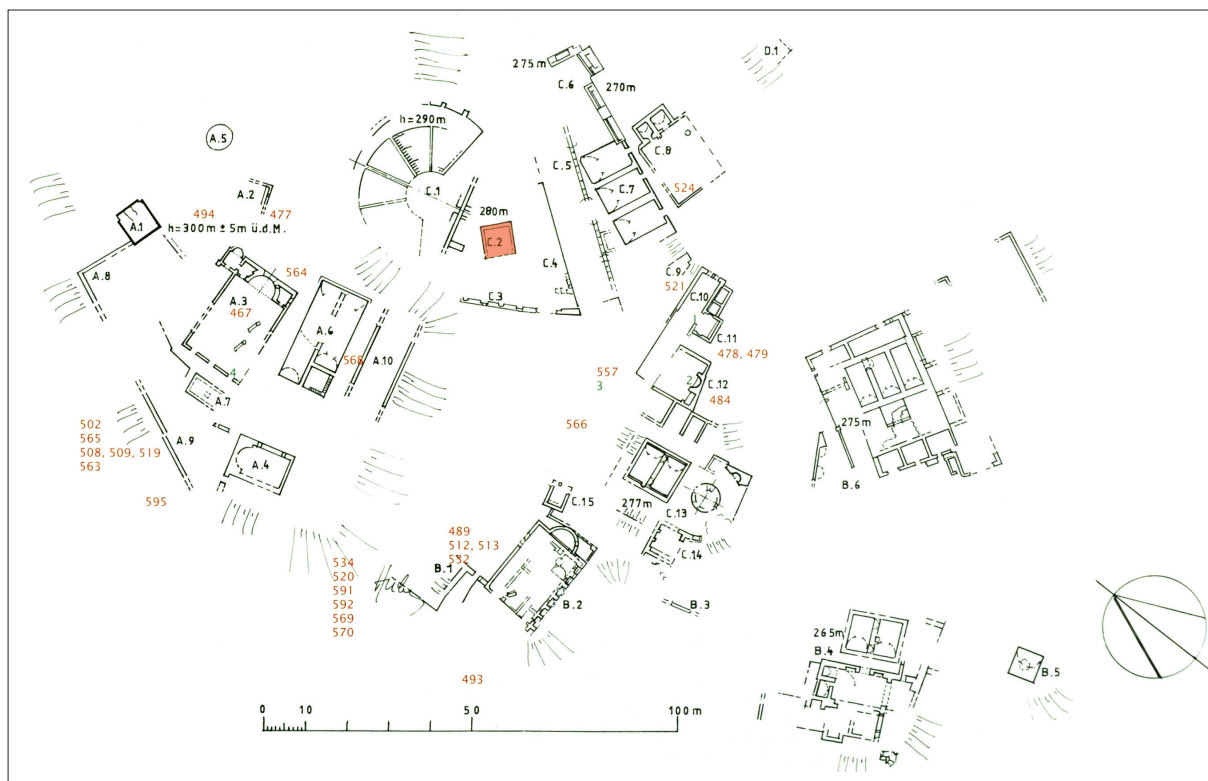


Fig. 1 : Rhodiapolis, plan of the urban centre with tomb of Opramoas in front of the theatre (Huber 2006, after p. 16).



Fig. 2 : Rhodiapolis, section of the urban centre with tomb of Opramoas marked in front of the theatre (Huber 2006, fig. 3).

had been erected and the inscriptions engraved¹³. Instead, the message is mainly constricted to

¹³ Cormack 2004, 276 is certainly wrong in assuming that the date of the last inscription (152 AD) marks the dead of Opramoas and the building of his tomb, as some of his later donations are attested in two inscriptions from the Letoon of Xanthos: Balland 1981, 173-224; Kokkinia 2000, 233-235.

Opramoas' benefactions and his good relations to Roman authorities. In part, we are dealing with copies of honorific decrees adopted by the Lycian Council and meticulously listing donations, before stipulating the honours the *euergetes* was granted. They refer, for example, to the enormous donation made by Opramoas to various Lycian cities after an earthquake that seems to have damaged

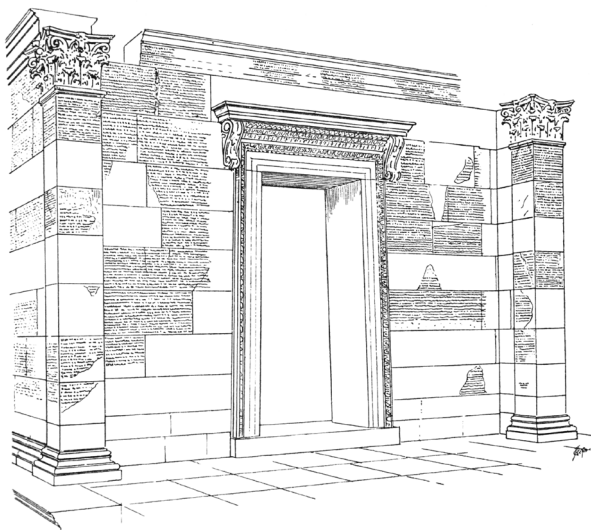


Fig. 3 : Rhodiapolis, tomb of Opramoas, south façade (Petersen/von Luschan 1889, fig. 54).

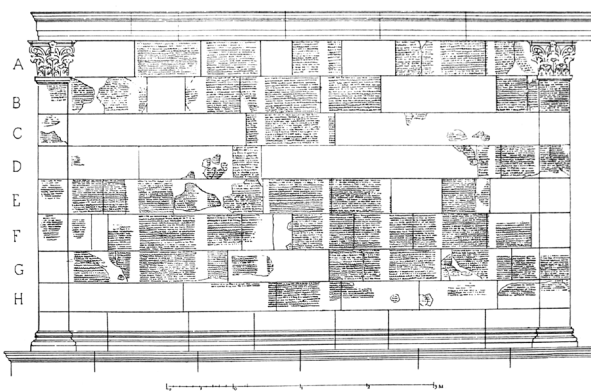


Fig. 4 : Rhodiapolis, tomb of Opramoas, west façade (Petersen/von Luschan 1889, fig. 53).

many buildings, listing the amount of money, the receiving city, and the purpose it was meant for¹⁴. Other documents are copies of letters addressed to various cities of Lycia or the Lycian Council in general, written by Roman officials, such as the provincial governor¹⁵, or the emperor Antoninus Pius himself¹⁶. These texts, being shorter and as a rule not mentioning single donations, represent letters of recommendation, recalling in a general way Opramoas' offices and benefactions.

¹⁴ Kokkinia 2000, no. 64 (XVIII F-XIX D).

¹⁵ Kokkinia 2000, no. 1-12 (I B-III D).

¹⁶ Kokkinia 2000, no. 39-52 (X H-XII G).

Publishing these documents on the walls of the tomb was obviously aimed at showing Opramoas as an important member of the local society. However, this was not done through vague formulas of exuberant praise, but by precisely recalling all the places where he had acted as a benefactor. The collection of names produces an impressive list of cities, which more or less cover the whole of Lycia¹⁷. Such a list tells us that instead of focusing his efforts on his hometown or a few important places, Opramoas spread his wealth all over the country with donations ranging from 5.000 to 100.000 *denarii*. Because all of these benefactions must have been publicly documented by inscriptions on the buildings he had sponsored, Opramoas created in fact a wide and visually conceivable network of public activities, that continued to exist beyond the actual event of spending money. The fact that he had inscribed the official documents related to his benefactions on the walls of his tomb turned this monument into part of this network and in fact into its central node.

This also becomes clear within the local context at Rhodiapolis. Here the tomb did not only occupy the midpoint of the town, but the centre of Opramoas' local benefactions, a number of small structures that had been placed at the edges of the central square (fig. 1)¹⁸. For Cormack this was an indication that the same square had been transformed into a "*cult temenos* for Rhodiapolis' most famous citizen and his family"¹⁹. While she is certainly right in underlining the perfect position of Opramoas' tomb within the inclining terrain, where it dominates the city's lower areas and at the same time had a close connection to the theatre (fig. 2), her interpretation seems to oversimplify the monument's complex relationship with the square in question. This is situated on a lower level compared to the tomb and clearly separated from it by a substantial terrace wall. At the same time, the various buildings assembled here indicate that it maintained the character of an open plaza serving a

¹⁷ Akalissos, Antiphellos, Aperlai, Arneai, Arykanda, Balbura, Bubon, Choma, Gagai, Kadyanda, Kalynda, Korydalla, Krya, Kyaneai, Limyra, Myra, Nisa, Oinoanda, Olympos, Patara, Phaselis, Phellos, Pinara, Podalia, Rhodiapolis, Sidyma, Symbra, Telmessos, Tlos, and Xanthos.

¹⁸ Cp. Kalinka 1944 no. 907, 908; Huber 2006.

¹⁹ Cormack 2004, 36-37. Cormack's assumption that the tombs of Opramoas' father and mother are located in one of the porticoes remains speculative judging from the honorific inscriptions referred to as well as from the architectural evidence: Kalinka 1944, no. 915 and 916; Huber 2006, 12-14.

variety of public functions, rather than having been transformed into an exclusive space for the veneration of a prominent citizen. The visual connection between the tomb and Opramoas' donations would instead stress his important contributions to the embellishment of Rhodiapolis and indeed, if we take the documents published on the walls of the building itself into account, of the entire Lycia. This direct link between the intramural tomb and the benefactions its owner made is a new and, I believe, significant feature of the Roman imperial cities in the Greek east.

This impression may be further supported by a comparison with the situation during the 1st century BC, that is the late Hellenistic and the first years of the Early imperial period. Then, a famous pattern in designing intramural tombs was the hermetic monument combining diverse and often contradictory elements to create an image of sumptuousness²⁰. An example from Sagalassos, the so-called North-west Heroon, comprises a stepped roof podium supporting a temple-like building, seated above a frieze with reliefs of dancers (fig. 5). Elevated high above the ground, the superstructure could not be accessed and it was therefore impossible to use this building as a space for rituals memorizing the deceased²¹. A similar phenomenon can be observed at the so-called Octagon in Ephesos, which Hilke Thür believes to be the tomb of the Ptolemaic princess Arsinoë IV, though the evidence for this assumption seems rather weak²². While the function of these monuments must have been purely symbolic, they do not refer to specific deeds of their owners that might have granted them the privilege of a burial within an urban centre. Neither

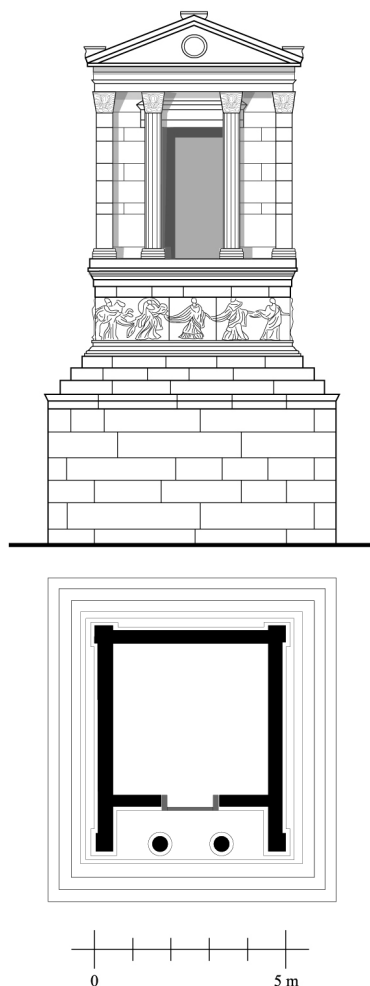


Fig. 5 : Sagalassos, northwest-Heroon (Berns 2003, fig. 47).

at Sagalassos nor at Ephesos do we know of any inscription that might have informed us about the owner of the respective memorial structures or his benefactions. The message of these and similar monuments was obviously restricted to the spectacular architecture itself. This architecture was at the same time costly, because of the amount of material and working power that was needed to build it, and useless in the practical sense of the word, as one could only look at, but not enter it. Therefore these monuments appeared as a kind of conspicuous consumption, and thereby as evidence of the owner's high social status²³.

In contrast to this, the effect of the intramural tombs of the Roman imperial period was rather indirectly mediated, as the architecture proper remained conventional. In many cases we are dealing with more or less standard temple-forms, such as examples from Miletos²⁴, Knidos²⁵, Aizanoi²⁶, and perhaps also at Sidyma²⁷ can prove. This basic pattern was probably intended to create a sacral overtone that was suited to the occasional perception of the benefactors as heroes or receiving *timai isotheoi*²⁸. However,

²³ Berns 2003, 50-52.

²⁴ 'Heroon II': Weber 2004, 3-100. Further: Cormack 2004, 39. 243-245; Schörner 2007, 253-254 cat. A 26. – Cormack's assumption that the tomb was transformed into a temple during the later imperial period contradicts the evidence, meticulously documented by Weber *loc. cit.*

²⁵ Mert 2002. The conventional designation of this monument as a 'Corinthian temple', applied also by Mert, is misleading. The relief depicting four honorific wreaths, prominently placed over the entrance, as well as the shield in the tympanon, clearly speak for the connection with a benefactor whose tomb the monument must have been.

²⁶ Naumann 1973/74; Cormack 2004, 35. 166-168; Schörner 2007, 256-257 cat. A 28.

²⁷ Berns 2003, 254-255 cat. 37A1; Cormack 2004, 39-40. 302-303 The position of the tomb may have been intra-urban, but evidence is difficult as structure and extension of the urban nucleus are unclear: Benndorf/Niemann 1884, 78 fig. 40 (III) pl. 22.

²⁸ Cormack 2004, 110-112.

²⁰ Berns 2003, 29-35.

²¹ Waelkens *et al.* 2000.

²² Thür 1990; Berns 2003, 45-46 with n. 247. 197 cat. 11A5; Cormack 2004, 41-42. 222; Schörner 2007, 240-242 cat. A 18.

the architectural type was in no way exclusive for outstanding personalities, and was also widely used in Roman imperial Asia Minor for monumental tombs in the context of necropoleis²⁹.

The sacral shape of the buildings must also not be misunderstood as indicating a primary connection with ritual. Significantly, the various monuments do not seem to have been complemented with an altar³⁰. Moreover, they miss all elements of proper *heroa*, especially a number of different rooms providing banqueting space for collective veneration. Such structures are known from the Hellenistic period, where they constituted a second pattern for sumptuous tombs, in addition to the hermetic monuments cited before³¹. An example is the so-called Heroon I at Miletus, where a kind of *tumulus* was placed in a courtyard limited on one or two sides by a *stoa* with a set of chambers³². In a somewhat simplified form this type of monument also appeared in the necropoleis of the Roman imperial period³³. The typical intramural tomb of the middle imperial period would instead not even have a walled *peribolos* demarcating it as a sphere different from the urban surroundings³⁴. Only in the late imperial period, that is again after a significant shift in the structure of public space, does the first tomb with a *peribolos* appear within an urban centre after the Hellenistic predecessors³⁵.

The lack of any delimitation meant that the tombs became part of the continuous space of the urban landscape, which is further underlined by their design being derived from public architecture. Also the long inscriptions of official letters and other documents on walls as at the tomb of Opramoas at Rhodiapolis is a pattern an observer would be

confronted with in many places of a town centre³⁶. Therefore, the respective monuments appear not as separated, but as hybrid spaces integrating a number of otherwise differentiated functions with the aim of coherently representing their owner.

This becomes especially obvious in a number of at first sight bizarre tombs that are immediately enclosed in public buildings. One such tomb has emerged during the excavations of the public library in the centre of Nysa, a structure that mainly consisted of a rectangular hall where the papyrus-scrolls would have been kept in bookcases³⁷. Under the floor of the colonnade that decorated the monument's facade, Volker Michael Strocka found a marble sarcophagus with the skeletons of a middle aged woman and a young man. As Strocka has proven in his recent study of the sarcophagus, it had been worked in the same time as the building itself, that is in the Hadrianic period, and therefore will have been buried at this unusual place in connection with a donation, probably of the whole monument, even if no inscriptions survive to tell us anything about the identity of the corpses or the origin of the building³⁸.

This is not the only example from Roman imperial Asia Minor combining a public library with a tomb. Apart from the famous *bibliothèque* of Celsus at Ephesus that will be studied below, a similar case is known from one of the letters that Pliny the younger wrote to emperor Trajan when he was governor of the Roman province of Pontus Bithynia probably around 110 AD. Here, in the city of Prusa ad Olympeum, the writer Dio Chrysostom controlled and most probably also commissioned the building of a library, which at the same time seems to have served as a tomb monument for his wife and son, leading to criticism from his competitors in local politics³⁹.

The laying out of the graves in the library may well have referred to the traditional habit of burying great minds within the *gymnasium*, where they served as a constant example for the youth exercising their intellectual as well as their physical skills⁴⁰. At the same time, however, the combination of a substantial donation to the public with a tomb

29 Berns 2003, 144-145, 160-161. A prominent example at Hierapolis, the so-called *tomba bella*, had in fact been built *extra muros*, before it happened to become *intra-urban* in the course of an extension of the urban perimeter: Romeo 2011.

30 The altar conventionally attributed to the Agora tomb at Aizanoi (Naumann 1973/74; Cormack 2004, 35, 166-168) cannot have belonged to the building, as Schörner 2007, 257 has proven.

31 Kader 1995.

32 Müller Wiener 1985; Kader 1995, 209-211; Schörner 2007, 237-238.

33 Cormack 2004, 29-35.

34 The opposite impression in Cormack 2004, 29-49 and, following her, Ewald 2008, 625-626, is based on an intermingling of examples from different periods as well as *extra-* and *intra-urban* tombs. In some cases also the relevant features are misinterpreted. The "peribolos wall" of 'Heroon II' at Miletus (Cormack 2004, 243) belongs to a Turkish cemetery (Weber 2004, 2, 4). A tomb at Priene, cited by Cormack 2004, 43, was not "built into the upper gymnasium", but directly situated on one of the main streets: Rumscheid 1998, 177-180; Schörner 2005.

35 'Heroon III' at Miletus, see below.

36 Cp. for example Oberleitner *et al.* 1978, 118-119 no. 172 fig. 1000; Hesberg 2009.

37 Hoepfner 2002, 73-78; Hiesel/Strocka 2006.

38 Strocka 2011.

39 Plin. *epist.* 10, 81; cp. Sherwin-White 1966, 675-679.

40 Neudecker 2004, 303-304. Cp. Delorme 1960, 337-361.

will have guaranteed the perpetual effect of the benefaction, because the building could not easily be knocked down without risking the sacrilege of destroying the graves. The lavish architecture in combination with the library it housed was thus a constant reminder of the reasons for the privilege that a public burial always meant.

Consequently, there are also examples of tombs in other types of buildings, like a bath in the city of Argos in Greece, where three undecorated sarcophagi have been found in a subterranean chamber under the apse of a hall opposite the bathing wing. Again, we can only assume that the burial was allowed in connection with a donation, perhaps for the rebuilding of the complex⁴¹. At Aphrodisias a member of a prominent local family named Adrastus seems to have been buried in his *ergasteria*, probably a kind of *stoa* with workshops, in the third quarter of the 1st century AD⁴². The source for this event is a decree from Aphrodisias that is difficult to understand exactly due to its fragmentation. However, the public *ergasteria*, which according to the inscription were originally offered for the burial, must be identical with the substantial *stoa* behind the *bouleuterion* in the centre of the town, where Peter Rockwell was able to identify a sculptor's workshop⁴³. Therefore the structure of Adrastus will probably have been a similar building, rather than the temporary stalls that Jocelyn Reynolds imagined to have been removed for the creation of a separate tomb monument⁴⁴. The stone block on which the inscription was engraved may have easily belonged to such a *stoa*, where after his death the local benefactor would have been buried.

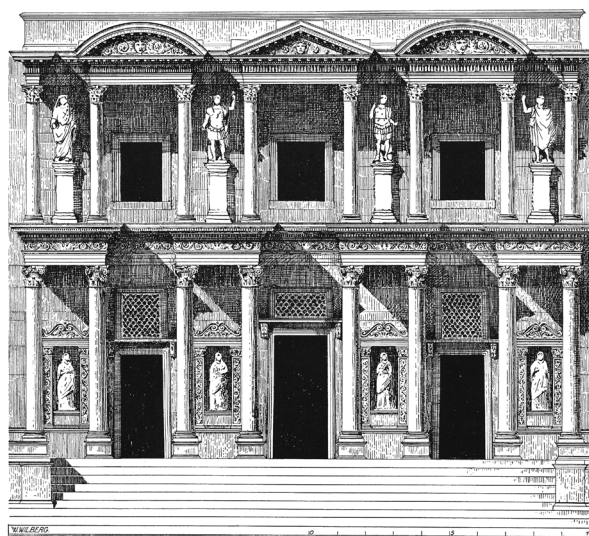


Fig. 6 : Ephesos, Library of Celsus, façade (Wilberg et al. 1953, pl. 1).



Fig. 7 : Ephesos, Library of Celsus, section (Wilberg et al. 1953, fig. 78).

The diversity of overlapping roles a prominent citizen might fulfill, as well as their integration in one central monument, is best demonstrated by the well-known library at Ephesus from around 115 AD, which I shall look at in some detail in the following (figs. 6-7). The library was founded by the former consul, Tib. Iulius Aquila Polemeanus, honouring his father, the *proconsul Asiae*, Tib. Iulius Celsus Polemeanus. The construction was completed by another citizen of Ephesus, Tib. Claudius Aristion. The whole monument is a good example of the

⁴¹ The situation is roughly described in Aupert 1986, where the sarcophagi are thought to be an addition made in late antiquity. In contrast, the assumption by Strocka 2009, 254-255 with n. 66, that they are contemporary with the rebuilding of the complex, seems more plausible. Strocka *loc. cit.* gives also a comprehensive bibliography of the numerous reports that up to now are the only documentation of the respective excavations.

⁴² Reynolds 1996.

⁴³ Rockwell 1991, fig. 1. Comparison with the actual state of the excavation shows that the row of simple shops Rockwell published belonged to a more complex structure which is convincingly reconstructed as a π -shaped *stoa* on the recent plan of Aphrodisias' city centre: Ratté 2008, fig. 8-9 no. 3.

⁴⁴ Reynolds 1996, 125. At Knidos, a monument honouring members of a family of benefactors was set up in one of the shops of the *stoa* they had restored during the Hadrianic period, on what seems at that time to have served as a market place near the harbour: Bruns-Özgan 2009, 121-126 fig. 4.

self-representation of a member of the provincial elite during the late 1st to 2nd century AD, as Volker Michael Strocka and Bert Smith have demonstrated, on whose observations most of the following remarks are based⁴⁵.

Again the honoured person, Celsus Polemeanus, was buried inside the building his son had so generously donated to the public. However, this fact influenced the layout and decoration of the monument to only a very limited extent. For instance, Celsus' sarcophagus is hidden in a subterranean chamber and was not immediately visible from the outside (fig. 7)⁴⁶. Also, among the many inscriptions engraved on different parts of the building, none refers to Celsus' death⁴⁷. At the most, one may point to certain sepulchral symbols almost hidden within the rich architectural decoration, like the eagle depicted on the scrolled frieze of the upper storey. The animal may have been perceived as a symbol of *apotheosis*, but also as a hint to the name of the library's founder, Aquila⁴⁸.

The building had been erected in a most prominent position, bordering the long side of a small square in front of the southern entrance of the lower agora. At this place, an observer could compare it to a number of nearby memorial structures from the late Hellenistic period, lining the lower section of the *Embolos*, or main street, of Ephesus⁴⁹. As this street makes a sharp turn in front of the square, the library was (and after its modern *anastylosis* is again) the focal point of the road between the upper and the lower part of the city. The building's outer appearance was striking by its lavish facade, a two storied composition of richly ornamented *aediculae* made from white marble that framed a number of marble statues (fig. 6)⁵⁰. This facade with its ample display of costly material was a perfect image of Aquila's generosity and corresponded well to the standard of luxurious public architecture adorning the civic centre of Ephesus during the middle imperial period, when a number of similar facades were built along the

principle axis in combination with buildings of very different functions⁵¹.

Only when approaching the building and studying it in detail would the observer have realized a third subject of the monument's complex message, that is the image of Celsus as an educated man. This was expressed by four female statues on display in niches on the facade's ground floor, portraying personifications of Hellenic cultural virtues including knowledge or wisdom (*episteme* and *sophia*), which are identified and attributed to Celsus by their inscriptions⁵². At the same time, the statues' subject may be seen as a prelude for the theme of the inner hall that was accessible through three wide doors framed by the same niches. Here, papyrus scrolls must have been kept in bookcases that were integrated into the niches of the ground floor, while on the upper floor further statues and perhaps also paintings may have been on display, as Richard Neudecker has suggested *contra* the reconstruction of this room by its excavators⁵³. However, the possession of knowledge demonstrated by the library itself and its iconographic programme did not describe some specific personal preferences of Celsus, nor were they simply a reflection of the current intellectual fashion. As Thomas Schmitz has proved in his detailed study on "Bildung und Macht", education was one of the means of distinction by which members of the local elites, especially during the 2nd century AD, justified their oligarchic position to the extent that obtaining *paideia* and belonging to the political elite appeared as congruent⁵⁴.

Finally, a fourth aspect of the library's decoration was connected to a genuine Roman pattern of personal representation. These are the twelve *fasces* that were integrated into the scrolled pilasters of the facade's ground floor. Symbolizing the administrative and military power of Celsus during his consulship at Rome and later as a *proconsul* of the province of Asia, they referred to his brilliant career as a Roman official⁵⁵. Celsus' *cursus honorum* is further documented in detail on the sides of two bases for equestrian statues that

45 Wilberg et al. 1953; Meriç et al. 1981, no. 5101-5115; Smith 1998, 73-75; Strocka 2009 (with references to his earlier articles on the subject). –The monument was also referred to in Cormack 2004, 40-49, 222-223, and Schörner 2007, 250-252 cat. A 24.

46 Wilberg et al. 1953, 40-41. 43-46; Strocka 2009, 247-249.

47 Wilberg et al. 1953, 61-80; Meriç et al. 1981, no. 5101-5115.

48 Strocka 2009, 249-250 fig. 2.

49 Berns 2003, 39-50.

50 Wilberg et al. 1953, 4-35.

51 Berns 2002, 159 fig. 2.

52 Wilberg et al. 1953, 47-57. 71-72; Meriç et al. 1981, no. 5108-5111; Smith 1998, 74; Strocka 2009, 247-248.

53 Wilberg et al. 1953, 35-41; Neudecker 2004, 302-304.

54 Schmitz 1997, 44-50.

55 Wilberg et al. 1953, 17 fig. 18, 29, 32; Schäfer 1989, 209-215, 374 B 2 pl. 84,7; Smith 1998, 75 pl. 8,2; Strocka 2009, 248.

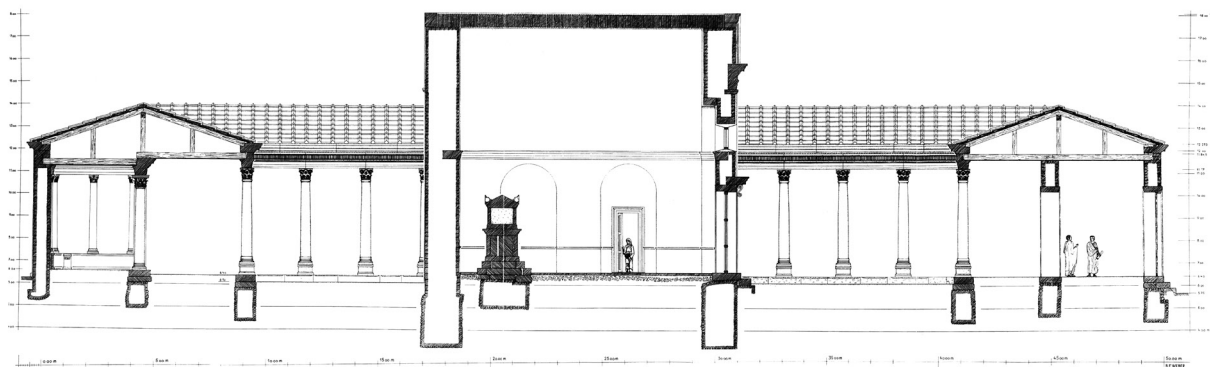


Fig. 8 : Miletos, Heroon III, section (Weber 2004, fig. 79).

framed the stairs in front of the library⁵⁶. This part of Celsus' public life was completed by a statue of him wearing a Roman cuirass. It was originally on display in the façade's upper storey, where further statues, attested by their inscribed pedestals, would have shown him most probably wearing the Greek *himation* and the Roman *toga*, while the two equestrian statues must have been similar counterparts⁵⁷.

Taken as a whole, the library of Celsus was a highly differentiated monument, showing the prominent man in a variety of roles each of which referred to a specific field of public representation. While the lavishness of the building proper was a rather unspecific way of demonstrating one's power by financial generosity, the allusions to Celsus' Greek education represented the values of a small group of elite citizens. The burial of a prominent benefactor in the urban centre had a long tradition in the Greek East and was well conceivable by local people as evidence of his (or her) special prestige, whereas images of the specific symbols of Roman power are extremely rare in the same realm and might not even have been understood by every observer⁵⁸. On the other hand, the wide range of topics addressed by the library's decoration illustrates well the diverse expectations a member of the political elite in a Greek city of the Roman imperial period had to meet in conceiving his public image. In this respect the person of Celsus, with his imperial career, certainly counts as an extreme example. However, judging from the other intra-

urban tombs discussed here, similar attempts to balance the various roles, and to call the personal contribution of the owner to public life to mind with a central monument, are also attested among primarily local political elites.

It is probably no coincidence that this specific kind of monumental tomb in an urban context is so far known only from the first two centuries AD. During this period, innumerable inscriptions on pedestals of honorific statues, public documents written on stone or dedications of buildings donated by members of the local elites, illustrate well the prevailing paradigm of representation transgressing the temporal limits of the single act of donating for a public project. Only during the 3rd century can we observe a decline of this pattern, when performative ways of public self-display have gained more importance⁵⁹.

This general impression is confirmed by the significant architectural structure of an intra-urban tomb from Miletus that, according to the comprehensive study by Berthold Weber, was built in the beginning of the 3rd century AD⁶⁰. Like its predecessors, this so-called Heroon III was placed near the political centre of the city, just three *insulae* southwest of the *bouleuterion* and the presumed *agora*, and almost next to the 'baths of Faustina'. Most probably, we are dealing with the tomb of an important local family⁶¹. However, its design followed a pattern completely different from the monuments presented so far (fig. 8). In

⁵⁶ Wilberg et al. 1953, 62-66; Meriç et al. 1981, no. 5102-5103.

⁵⁷ Wilberg et al. 1953, 57-59, 66-71 fig. 101; Meriç et al. 1981, no. 5104-5107; Smith 1998, 73-74 pl. 5,2; Strocka 2009, 248.

⁵⁸ Cp. catalogue and appendices in Schäfer 1989.

⁵⁹ Borg/Witschel 2001.

⁶⁰ Weber 2004, 101-150. Cp. also Cormack 2004, 30, 244-245, and Schörner 2007, 258-259 cat. A 29.

⁶¹ According to Weber 2004, 131, fragments of at least two sarcophagi had been found during the excavation of the complex.

spite of its prominent location, the tomb itself was hidden behind the wall of the peristyle enclosing it. This wall is partly preserved and does not show any kind of architectural decoration⁶². The whole structure's outer appearance was therefore rather frugal and could in no way compete with the lavish architecture of the earlier examples, as neither would do the simple chapel within the complex.

On the other hand, the layout provided ample space for performances memorializing the dead, as it covered a complete *insula* within Miletos' regular grid of streets. Gatherings of a greater number of people might have taken place in the halls of the *peristyle*, where there was also a special *exedra* in the middle axis. The dead bodies had effectively been set on stage as the midpoint of a three level structure. First, the whole complex would have been entered through a door in the south wall that allowed control of access. From there, the visitor would have proceeded and crossed the peristyle to enter the chapel at its centre, whose door opened to the north. Finally, inside the chapel, a substantial podium is preserved, obviously meant to elevate the main sarcophagus, while additional sarcophagi might have stood in a number of wall niches⁶³. The spatial structure of 'Heroon III' produced a characteristic ambiguity between attraction and withdrawal that made the dead appear as totally different from the visitors of their tomb. This *habitus* is further underlined by the absence of any testimony of the venerated persons' achievements that would have granted them the privilege of an intra-urban burial. Despite the monument's relatively good preservation, we have no indications that any inscriptions listing specific benefactions or symbols of offices held or honours obtained had once decorated the walls of the tomb. All this will have contributed to making the *heroon* a sphere separated from the urban space, where the dead were perceived through categories different from the ones applied during their lifetime.

This approach was obviously specific to the developments in the late imperial period, as it had in a certain way already been applied during the late Hellenistic period. During the first two centuries AD, intra-urban tombs expressed a different paradigm for singling out extremely prominent people by generating hybrid spaces that permanently

represented the variety of roles an *euergetes* of that time had to play when he wanted to distinguish himself from his fellow citizens.

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⁶² Weber 2004, 110-112.

⁶³ Weber 2004, 128-131.

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