

The Alcestis Sarcophagus and the Orestes Sarcophagus in the Vatican and Reliefs in Šempeter

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Izvleček

Sarkofag z zgodbo Alkestide v Vatikanu, Museo Chiaramonti 1195, in sarkofag z zgodbo Oresta v Vatikanu, Museo Gregoriano profano 10450, sta bila najdena že v prvih desetletjih prejšnjega stoletja. Kronološka datacija je nesporna. Sarkofag Alkestide je datiran z napisom v leta 160-170 n. š., sarkofag Oresta pa okoli tretjega konzulata (134 n. š.) Hadrijanovega svaka L. Iuniusa Ursusa Servianusa. Stil reliefov odgovarja v obeh primerih umetnostnemu stilu rimske plastike v času teh datacij. Niso še zadovoljivo razrešene posamezne podrobnosti prizorov na reliefih. Pomembno je, da je zgodba Alkestide povzeta po Evripidovi tragediji *Alkestis*, zgodba Oresta pa na čelni strani sarkofaga po Ajshilovi tragediji *Hoeforoi*, na čelni strani pokrova pa po Evripidovi tragediji *Ifigenija v deželi Tavrov*. Čeprav je sarkofag Oresta kamnoseško enotno delo, sta reliefa na skrinji in na pokrovu sarkofaga delo dveh umetnikov. Prizori na obeh sarkofagih interpretirajo stare mite v smislu neopitagorejske simbolike o zagrobnem življenju, ki sledi tragičnemu momentu človekove smrti.

Reliefi na grobnih kapelah v Šempetru pri Celje so v stilu noriško-panonske umetnosti drugega stoletja n. š. odraz velike rimske umetnosti mediteranskih središč na vzhodu imperija kot v Rimu, motive posnemajo prav tako po Evripidu in simbolno sporočilo upodobitev je tudi docela enako simboliki vatikanskih sarkofagov.

Reliefs of mythological content adorn three Roman tombs in Šempeter near Celje (Celeia). On the memorial for Iulia Ingenua, the wife of Gaius Vindonius Successus, aedile of Claudia Celeia, the frontal panel of the ossuary is ornamented with a relief depicting Alcestis and Hercules. The tomb of the Quintus Ennius Liberalis family is ornamented with two mythological reliefs: the frontal panel depicts the Rape of Europe, and the

Abstract

The sarcophagus illustrating the story of Alcestis, at the Vatican in the Museo Chiaramonti, inv. no. 1195, and the sarcophagus illustrating the story of Orestes, at the Vatican in the Museo Gregoriano profano, inv. no. 10450, were discovered already during the first decades of the previous century; their attributed chronological dates are indisputable. The Alcestis sarcophagus dates by the inscription to between the years 160-170 AD, while the Orestes sarcophagus dates approximately to the time that Hadrian's brother-in-law, L. Iulius Ursus Servianus, was the third time consul (134 AD). The styles of the reliefs correspond in both instances to the artistic style of Roman sculptures during these periods. Select details of the scenes portrayed on the reliefs have yet to be adequately clarified. It is highly significant that the Alcestis story is according to Euripides' drama, *Alkestis*, while the Orestes story on the frontal panel of the sarcophagus is according to Aeschylus' drama, *Choëphoroi*, and on the frontal panel of the cover according to Euripides' drama, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*. Despite that the Orestes sarcophagus is an integrate monumental work, the reliefs on the sarcophagus coffer and cover are the work of two artists. The scenes on both sarcophagi present interpretations of old myths according to Neopythagorean symbolism of life beyond the grave. The reliefs on the tombs in Šempeter near Celje portray, in the style of Norican-Pannonian artistry of the 2nd century AD, a reflection of the great Roman artistry in Mediterranean centers in the eastern part of the empire, as well as in Rome; the motifs are copied from Euripides and the symbolic message of the sculptures is also entirely analogous to the symbolism on the sarcophagi in the Vatican.

right panel depicts the Rape of Ganymede. Three highly decorative and figural plastic reliefs illustrating the story of Iphigeneia and Orestes adorn the tomb of the Priscianus family: the sacrifice of Iphigeneia in Aulis, the encountering of Iphigeneia and Orestes in Tauris, the flight of Iphigeneia and Orestes from Tauris. The reliefs are made of local Pohorje marble from the Hudinja quarry and were executed by one or more of the Norican and Pan-

nonian workshops during the 2nd century - "between the reigns of Traianus and through to Septimius Severus". In manner they relate to the Norican-Pannonian provincial style, yet they are executed under the influence of Neo-Atticism and Antonine baroque styles. The influences emanating from Asia Minor and ancient Greece via Dalmatia and Aquileia intermingle with the artistic mien of Rome and Italy. The reliefs created within the span of one century are the work of various sculptural and stonecutting workshops in the Norican-Pannonian world. Three contemporaneous reliefs on the family tomb of the Priscianus, erected by Gaius Spectatius Finitus, the father of Gaius Spectatius Priscianus, portray the work of two different sculptors. The scene of Iphigeneia in Aulis and the scene of the escape from Tauris - thus both reliefs on the side panels of the sepulchral *aedicula* - were carved by one sculptor. A second sculptor, with a more expressive personal style and greater aptness for expressing dramatic movement within a seemingly tranquil scene, carved the main relief, "Orestes", on the frontal panel of the Priscianus tomb: the shackled Orestes before a burning altar, Pylades writing a letter, and the Tauridian king Thoas and a guard observing the event.*¹

Two Roman sarcophagi illustrating Greek mythological themes that could elucidate certain problems concerning the reliefs on funerary monuments in Šempeter are preserved in the collections of the Musei Vaticani. These are the sarcophagus depicting the story of Alcestis and the sarcophagus depicting the story of Orestes and Iphigeneia. Other sarcophagi also relate these two stories, however these two examples stand as the most significant. This is especially true of the Alcestis sarcophagus, due to the accurately established date for the inscription on the front of the sarcophagus stating that the still living husband dedicated this monument to the deceased spouse - a priestess of the

Mother-goddess Cybele - and the symbolism of the depicted myth of Alcestis is all the more authentic because of the virtuous role of the deceased. The style of the sarcophagus depicting Orestes perhaps also enables it to be attributed to a relatively narrow chronological span, as the story of Orestes and Iphigeneia depicted in two scenes on the front panel corresponds to Aeschylus' account in the first part and Euripides' in the second.

The first Roman sarcophagi from the Principate, in fact already from the age of Traianus - to which the Caffarelli sarcophagus in Berlin is attributed, are ornamented with garlands; while sarcophagi with relief scenes emerge during the reign of Hadrian. Hadrian's enthusiasm for philhellenism accelerated this development in two ways: themes from Greek art were already gaining popularity merely on account of the general inclination for Greek culture in all fields, while the increased influence of Neopythagorean philosophy and the younger Stoa demanded a more explicit symbolic portrayal of mythological scenes on sarcophagi. The sarcophagus in Velletri depicting Hercules represents the finest example from the time of Hadrian and of philhellenism, and it portrays the philosophical symbolic climate of those decades.²

The second century marked the ascent of Roman sarcophagi, exceeding those produced in Asia Minor and elsewhere in the Hellenistic East as well as transcending beyond the notable production of Attic sarcophagi; and then their golden age transpired during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, Commodus and throughout the Severus dynasty, while sepulchral symbolism reached its culmination in expression. Aside from individual superior creations, the tide of artistic production ebbs during the third century, while the tendency to represent themes of a more substantial nature augments alongside the symbolic content of myths: portraits in the private sector, and histori-

* Abbreviations

J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*: J. Kastelic, *Simbolika mitov na rimskih nagrobnih spomenikih: Šempeter v Savinjski dolini* (1998).
G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*: G. M. Koeppel, Die historischen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit IV: Stadtrömische Denkmäler unbekannter Bauzugehörigkeit aus hadrianischer bis konstantinischer Zeit, *Bonner Jb.* 186, 1986, 1-90.
H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*: H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen auf römischen Sarkophagen. Unter Verwendung neuer Aufnahmen von G. Singer*, Bilderhefte des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Rom, 5-6 (1975).
D. Strong, *Roman Art*: D. Strong, *Roman Art*, Pelican History of Art. Prepared for press by J. M. C. Toynbee. Revised and annotated under the editorship of R. Ling (1995).

¹ J. Klemenc, *Rimske izkopenine v Šempetru*, Spomeniški vodniki 1 (1961); J. Klemenc, V. Kolšek, P. Petru, *Antične grobnice v Šempetru*, Kat. in monogr. 9 (1972); J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*; P. Kranz, Die Grabmonumente von Šempeter, Beobachtungen zur Entwicklung der Bildhauerkunst in Noricum während der mittleren und späten römischen Kaiserzeit, *Bonner Jb.* 186, 1986, 193-239.

² B. Andreae, Studien zur römischen Grabkunst, Römische Mitteilungen, Ergänzungsheft 9 (1963).



Fig. 1: Alcestis. The Metilia Acte sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Chiaramonti (drawing by G. Eichler).

Sl. 1: Alkestis. Sarkofag Metilije Akte, Vatikan, Museo Chiaramonti (risba G. Eichler).



Fig. 2: Alcestis. The Metilia Acte sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Chiaramonti.

Sl. 2: Alkestis. Sarkofag Metilije Akte, Vatikan, Museo Chiaramonti.

cal scenes and occasions from the lives of the officials who commissioned the sarcophagi in the public sphere. Christian sarcophagi begin to emerge at the beginning of the fourth century, they foretell the ascent of the art of Late Roman sarcophagi anew, this time through old Christian variants.

The Emona ager of the Regio Decima Italiae, Noricum and Pannonia, all imported sarcophagi; local production was also in effect, although it was never quite as bounteous or of such commendable

quality as to be equated with Rome or with European Greece or the Hellenistic East.³

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The sarcophagus illustrating the story of Alcestis was discovered in Ostia in 1826, today it is preserved at the Musei Vaticani in the Chiaramonti Museum, inv. no. 1195. First publication: E. Gerhard, *Antike Bildwerke*, 1827, pl. 28. Using

³ H. Gabelmann, *Die Werkstattgruppen der oberitalischen Sarkophage*, Beih. d. Bonner Jb. 34 (1973); N. Cambi, *Atički sarkofazi na istočnoj obali Jadrana* (1988); N. Cambi, *Sarkofag Dobroga pastira iz Salone i njegova grupa* (1994); B. Migotti, *Ranokršćanski grobni nalaz iz Velikih Bastaja kod Daruvara*, *Vjes. Arh. muz. Zag.* 28-29, 1996, 127-157.



Fig. 3: The death of Alcestis - "Metilia Acte". Sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Chiaramonti (detail).

Sl. 3: Smrt Alkestide - "Metilije Akte". Sarkofag, Vatikan, Museo Chiaramonti (detajl).

G. Eichler's drawing from the year 1876, Carl Robert published it under no. 26, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs* III,1, Berlin, 1897, 31-34, pl. 7: 26 and fig. 26 a,b on page 33 (fig. 1). Hermann Dessau published the inscription in 1887, *CIL* XIV 371. B. Andreae contributed the description for W. Helbig's catalogue, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom* I⁴ (H. Speier), Tübingen 1963, pg. 229, no. 291. The sarcophagus was published with a short passage and photographs by G. Singer, in substitution of Eichler's drawings in the edition of Carl Robert, H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, 20-21 (8. Alkestis, G. Koch), pl. 16; 17(2); 18 (fig. 2); M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus cultus Cybelae Attidisque (CCCA)* III, *Italia - Latium*, EPRO 50, Leiden 1977, p. 134-135, n. 423.⁴

The story of Alcestis is depicted in three scenes on the frontal panel of the sarcophagus with an inscription panel directly beneath the cover which has a frame supported by two winged Victoria's. The left scene illustrates Thanatos approaching

through the arched entrance of King Admetus' palace in Pherae. Thanatos holds a spear in his left hand and in his right hand the leash of a watchful dog sitting by his right leg. Thanatos is not portrayed as hideous. He is depicted as a mature man in the nude with only a chlamys draped around his neck and over the left side of his chest. This is why Carl Robert identified in the place of Thanatos his representative, Ianitor Orci.⁵ This is difficult to give countenance to. The interpretation of G. Koch, who sees "perhaps two hunters" in this individual and the one beside, is even less acceptable, and likewise can be said of B. Andreae's version that it is "a group of hunters, friends of Admetus".⁶ Apollo is portrayed directly to the right, moving toward the door and leaving the palace - according to Euripides:⁷

Ἐγγ' δ'Κ, μὲς μ'Φασμα μ * Μν δ'Πμοιῶ κ'Φχη/
λεΦπῶ μελ'Αθρων τῶανδε φιλ'τ'Ατην στ'Κγην.
!Ἡδη δ'Α τ'Πνδε Θ'Ανατον εἰσορῶ π'Κλαφῶ,
Ἡερῆ θαν'Πντων.

⁴ Another publication e.g. D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 198, fig. 130.

⁵ Horace, *Carmina* III 11, 16 f.: *ianitor aulae Cerberus*.

⁶ G. Koch in: H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, 20.

⁷ Euripides, *Alkestis*, 22-25.



Fig. 4: Admetus - "Gaius Iunius Euhodus" and Hercules shaking hands. The Metilia Acte sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Chiaramonti (detail).

Sl. 4: Admetos - "Caius Iunius Euhodus" in Herakles si segata v roko. Sarkofag Metilije Akte, Vatikan, Museo Chiaramonti (detajl).

That I do not get overtaken by profanation,
I must leave my beloved native soil.
Ha, there, I see, Death is coming near,
the sacrificer of the dead.

The central, dramatic and predominant, scene on the sarcophagus displays the death of Alcestis. The queen is raised partially on her bed, although her strength is abating, her gestures are feeble, her head is bowed over and her face is already turned aside to the other world (*fig. 3*). Admetus on the left side, portrayed in his heroic nakedness with only his chlamys around his neck, holds hands with his dying wife. The insipid debate over the most exalted sacrifice possible, the sacrifice of life itself, is resolved between the spouses at this hour of solemnity. Behind and to the left of Admetus is his father leaning on a long, knotty cane. C. Robert, G. Koch, B. Andreae and M. J. Vermaseren erroneously believe that this is the father of Alcestis, and beyond on the right, her mother as well. Only Pheres, the father of Admetus, appears in Euripides' tragedy, and Admetus speaks only of his mother, the wife of Pheres. In front of this

central scene of Alcestis, her daughter reaches out with both hands towards her mother, while to the right her son Eumelos bends over in tears; the sculptor has portrayed him younger than in Euripides' account. Admetus' attendant is also depicted in the far background to the left of Apollo and facing the entrance of the palace and the advancing Thanatos, as well as Alcestis' maid-servant in the background behind the dying queen.

The scene on the right is less dramatic although it is the primary bearer of the symbolic message - Alcestis' return to the living from Hades with the help of Hercules. Here the relief deviates entirely from Euripides' account of the drama, as well as from the majority of artistic representations. Usually Hercules is portrayed holding Alcestis by the hand and leading her into the world, as at Šempeter or in Poetovio, or even before Admetus himself - who deeply mourns the loss of his wife and who does not immediately recognize her as the approaching cloaked woman- as at Kiskajd, Hungary. Sometimes Hercules is depicted making a triumphant entrance through the door of Hades with a raised club in his right hand and a timid

Alcestis following behind, as on the sarcophagus of Hercules' deeds in Velletri.⁸ This sarcophagus from Ostia depicts Hercules extending his hand to Admetus as a friend who has implemented a service most unexpected and beyond human capacity (fig. 4). Alcestis, herself, follows Hercules. This hand shake is at the same time a bid farewell as Hercules is departing Pherae to go to Thrace to bring Diomedes' horses to the imperious King Eurystheus in Tiryns. The cloaked and revived Alcestis stands calmly behind Hercules. Admetus is dressed in a long chlamys in this scene, and the nude Hercules with a lion's hide thrown over his left forearm also holds a heavy club in his left hand. An entirely symbolic triple-headed dog, Cerberus, squats in altogether the wrong place between Admetus and Hercules. Three Moirai are symbolically present in the background, the first holds a scroll in her left hand which specifies the fate of Alcestis. Mounted on his throne, Pluto, at the far right, rules as a majestic, everlasting symbol of the nether world. His captive in times past and now also wife, Persephone, stands at his side bearing a lit torch - a symbol of Alcestis' life renewed. She has placed her right hand upon Pluto's shoulder in a gesture of persuasion and also certainty that everyone's wish for the return of Alcestis - which Persephone herself expresses - is granted. This is the epilogue carved by the skilled sculptor to the account of Euripides.

A large sea horse (hippocampus), a fantastic inhabitant of the sea, is carved on the right lateral wall of the sarcophagus, almost in the same style as the sea horse on the Priscianus tomb in Šempeter (fig. 5a,b).⁹ The sea horse is to symbolically represent a "sea" of atmosphere through which the departed soul is to travel, according to Neopythagorean theological theories, to get to the planet of its destiny for eternal domicile. The relief on the left panel of the sarcophagus was only just started upon and left unfinished.

The inscription panel above the large relief portraying the story of Alcestis is supported by two winged Victoria's. It discloses for which deceased

female individual this illustrious story is intended; for whom in this world it acts as a symbolic message and for whom it is a declaration of hope to continue - an even better life in the other world. The inscription reads:¹⁰

*D(is) M(anibus) / C. Iunius, Pal(atina tribu)
Euhodus
magister q(uin)q(uennalis) / collegi fabr(um)
tign(ariorum)
Osti(en)s(ium) lustr(i) XXI / fecit sibi et Metiliae
Acte sacerdo(ti)
m(atris) d(eum) m(agnae) colon(iae) Ost(iensis)
coniug(i) sanctissime.*

The sarcophagus can be dated to the middle of the Antonine period, to the first decade during the reign of Marcus Aurelius between the years 160 and 170. The composition is tranquil, and the individuals are so carefully situated that the heads are equally level and particularly emphasized. This is not a novelty or a particularity in Roman art, for instance the procession of the *familia Augusti* and of the *flamines* to the Ara Pacis Augustae are typical in this respect.¹¹ Nonetheless, a certain artificiality is sensed in the arrangement of the individuals, the dramatics of the age of Hadrian are no longer displayed. Apollo and Admetus, both in the nude, are set in contraposition on the left side, their gestures spread out reciprocally each in their opposite direction. The individuals are situated in numerous layers to emphasize depth in the scene, however the flatness is undeniably sensed. The legs of Apollo and Admetus cross in depth by covering each other. Alcestis is dying as if she were on a stage and wished for as many spectators as possible to behold her farewell. The sculptor of this sarcophagus did not rank in the high class of artists that received official orders from the court. A sample of more perfected and artistically convincing works are the almost contemporaneous high rectangular panels with scenes portraying the civilian and military activities of emperor Marcus Aurelius from two (or more) tri-

⁸ Hercules and Alcestis: J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 491-506, fig. 192-196; J. Kastelic, Herakles v Hadu. Relief Herakla s psom Kerberom v samostanu Stična, *Zbornik občin Grosuplje, Ivančna Gorica, Dobropolje* 20, 1998, 169-189. - Figures: J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, Šempeter: fig. 192; Poetovio: fig. 194; Kiskajd: fig. 195; Velletri: fig. 193. The popularity of the story of Alcestis is also born witness to in the Latin epyllion, probably dated to the 4th century, unknown author, on papyrus in Barcelona (*Papyri Barcinonenses* 158-161). An attempt at reconstructing the entire text: M. Marković, *Pietas novo otkrivene Alkeste, Živa ant.* 33, 1983, 119-128. I am grateful to prof. dr. Kajetan Gantar for the information and insight in his pleasurable translation of this text.

⁹ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 264-266, fig. 71.

¹⁰ *CIL* XIV 371 (1887) H. Dessau; M. J. Vermaseren, *CCCA* III, no. 423. I would like to thank dr. Marjeta Šašel Kos for mediating Vermaseren's publication.

¹¹ Th. Kraus, *Das römische Weltreich*, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 2 (1967) 225, pl. 183: a,b.

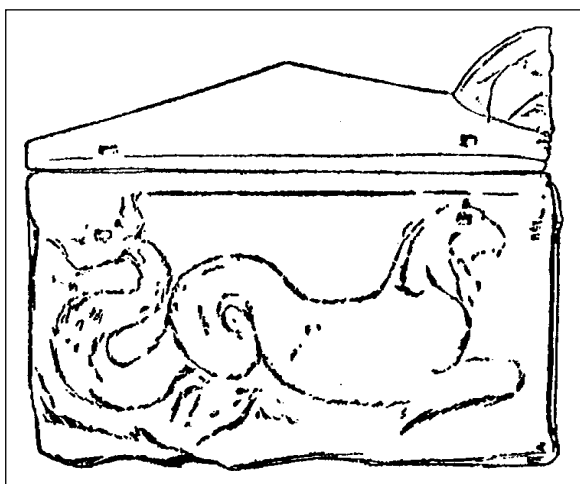


Fig. 5a: Sea horse (hippocampus). The right side of the Metilia Acte sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Chiaramonti (drawing by G. Eichler).

Sl. 5a: Hipokamp. Desna stranica sarkofaga Metilije Akte, Vatikan, Museo Chiaramonti (risba G. Eichler).

umphal arches erected in his honor. Three slabs, now preserved at the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome, are more “classical”, while the reliefs of eight slabs used secondarily for Constantine’s triumphal arch depict a more dynamic narrative.¹²

The workmanship of the pair, Pluto and Persephone, on the right side of the scenes on the sarcophagus of Metilia Acte is the most impressive - the eyes on all the figures have holes drilled to indicate pupils, the faces are Antonine. The style of the head of Hercules or of Admetus’ father resembles the portrait of Marcus Aurelius, the classic elegance being disquieted by the disheveled coiffures and beards, as on the emperor’s portrait from Leptis Magna.¹³ The twenty-first lustrum of the collegiate body of Ostian carpenters, headed by C. Iunius Euhodus, must be attributed to the years 160-165 or 165-170 AD. Namely, Ostian carpenters (*tignarii*) instituted their first lustrum approximately in the year 60 during the reign of Nero.

The coiffure of Metilia Acte is still that of Faustina ‘the Elder’, who died in 141. Faustina is portrayed upon coins with this hairstyle after her consecration and all through to approximately 160. Metilia Acte, who adheres to the latest fashion,



Fig. 5b: Sea horse (hippocampus). The Priscianus tomb, Šempeter.

Sl. 5b: Hipokamp. Grobnica Priskiana, Šempeter.

wears such a coiffure in her later years. Faustina ‘the Younger’, the wife of the successor to the throne Marcus Aurelius, who ascended the throne in 160, wears a different hairstyle and even later as *Augusta* she alters her hairstyle only slightly.¹⁴ The portrait of Metilia Acte is carefully and elegantly fashioned. Euhodus’ portrait, her husband, is also well fashioned and corresponding to the time - twice: in the scene next to Alcestis’ - Metilia Acte’s deathbed, and when Admetus - Euhodus shakes hands with Hercules.

Metilia Acte was a priestess for the goddess Cybele (Κυβέλη), the Great Mother-goddess, Mater Deum Magna.¹⁵ It is entirely understandable that Mater Magna was worshipped in Ostia, as well as the harbor, considering that all paths from the East would lead to there. Acte, the second name for the priestess Metilia, is Greek; likewise, her husband Euhodus, a true *civis Romanus*, is also Greek in origin.

Perhaps it is also significant that funerary symbols of Neopythagorean ideals were present in such syncretistic circles as to which Euhodus’ family was evidently allegiant. It is also palpable that the wife, the priestess, the conveyor of a ‘higher’ message was the more significant individual in this home, as opposed to the husband, a functionary of a profitable collegiate body of carpenters. Portrayed on this magnificent Ostian sarcophagus, Alcestis was not the only one from among the wider range of less visited and more remote mysterious realms.

¹² G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 47-75; D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 200-202, fig. 132-135.

¹³ Marcus Aurelius, Leptis Magna: Th. Kraus, *Das römische Weltreich* (1967) 259, pl. 313.

¹⁴ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 225-227 with further literature.

¹⁵ M. D. M.: the abbreviations on the inscription must be interpreted in this manner. Hermann Dessau in *CIL XIV 371* did not interpret the abbreviations. Carl Robert’s reading, *M(agnae) D(eum) M(atri)*, is less precise, as is the identical reading by Guntram Koch and H. Sichtermann. - Cybele: W. Fauth, Kybele, in: *Der kleine Pauly* 3 (1969) 383-389; E. Simon, Kybele, in: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC) VIII (Addenda)* (1997) 744-766, pl. 506-519, nos. 1-131; J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 43, 51.

Nor was the hypogeum on the Via Latina in Rome an ordinary vault from the third century. Pagans, Christians and possibly even Jews alike were all buried in this vault; and according to reputable researchers, burials of some esoteric sect are also discernible within the symbiosis of these groups. The fresco scenes of Hercules' heroics, including the story of how he rescued Alcestis from the abyss of death, depicted in the hypogeum on the Via Latina together with scenes of Adam and Eve, the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, and the arrival of Jacob and his sons in Egypt, would be incompatible outside the boundaries of a narrow religious group. Alcestis, as portrayed on the sarcophagus in Ostia and in the hypogeum on the Via Latina, is expressive of the surrounding environment.¹⁶

Considering the compositional structure of the container for ashes below and the actual altar built above, Alcestis and Hercules, perhaps the most artistically perfected relief in Šempeter, is carved on an Italian type funerary altar. The altar was erected by Gaius Vindonius Successus, an aedile of Claudia Celeia, for his wife Iulia Ingenua, *uxor fidelissima*, the daughter of Sextus.¹⁷ The Šempeter relief differs from the Ostian sarcophagus in every way except for its theme (*fig. 6*). Consequently, it is all the more essential to determine certain facts. The Ostian sarcophagus is aptly dated to the first decade during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, while the Šempeter relief is very difficult to evaluate chronologically. The epigraphic justifications posed by Jaro Šašel are merely of an indirect nature.¹⁸ According to his onomastic analysis, Vindonius was one of the first aedile of Claudia Celeia, certainly already in the first century. The funerary altar dedicated to his wife Ingenua would thus be attributed to the Flavian era. According to our analyses, the style of the monument could still pertain to the time of the Flavian dynasty or even already to the time of emperor Traianus. The prominently formed 'double-saddle' volutes of the Norican-Pannonian type at the top of the relief are also indicative of a relatively late chronology. Perhaps the relief and altar should really be attributed to the time of Hadrian's reign. Additional studies and comparisons are essential in order to establish a more reliable chronological classification for this monument.¹⁹



Fig. 6: Alcestis and Hercules. The tomb for Ingenua, the wife of Vindonius, Šempeter.

Sl. 6: Alkestis in Herakles. Grobnica Vindonijeve žene Ingenue, Šempeter.

Norican-Pannonian artistry followed the developmental trends of Roman artistry in the first centuries of the Empire which likewise, ensued from Hellenistic artistic traditions in the Mediterranean. Temporal delays are fathomable, yet they were by no means significant. The relief of Alcestis and Hercules in Šempeter is rather voluminous for this early stage at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century. This, in combination with the economically retained portrayal of the theme, foretells the style of later reliefs of Europe and Ganymede on the funerary monument of the Ennii family dating to the time of Marcus Aurelius and the triptych of Iphigeneia on the funerary monument of Spectatius Priscianus from the end of the second century. The Vindonius relief is truly the work of a great sculptor at the impetus of Norican-Pannonian artistry. Artistic expression in the center differs greatly from that in the provinces, while the tendency for strong expression and assertion of the spirit of the times are similar.

The Šempeter and Ostian reliefs of Alcestis vary in style also in that they are attributed to different periods in time. The style of the times is of even greater significance for classifying the artistry from Šempeter into the framework of the entire artistic process. The restriction to only two individuals, the extremely well considered contrast between

¹⁶ A. Ferrua, *Le pitture della nuova catacomba di Via Latina*, Monumenti di antichità cristiana, Serie II 8 (1960); A. Grabar, *Die Kunst des frühen Christentums*, Universum der Kunst (1967): Hercules and Alcestis, fig. 251; Adam and Eve, fig. 24; Cain and Abel, fig. 37; the arrival of Jacob and his sons in Egypt, fig. 36.

¹⁷ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 491-506, fig. 152: 28, Alcestis and Hercules.

¹⁸ J. Šašel, C. Vindonius Successus, *Živa ant.* 5, 1955, 127-139 = J. Šašel, *Opera selecta*, Situla 34 (1992) 44-53.

¹⁹ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 221-223.

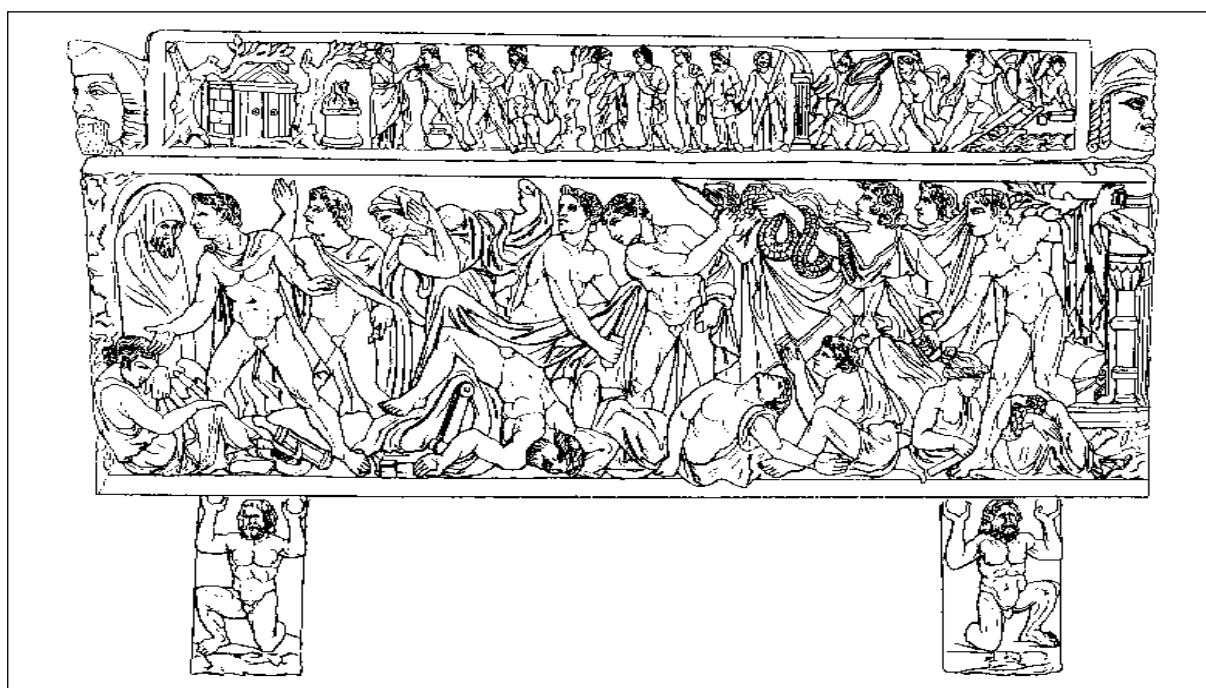


Fig. 7: The story of Orestes and Iphigeneia. Sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Gregoriano profano (drawing by G. Eichler).
Sl. 7: Zgodba Oresta in Ifigenije. Sarkofag, Vatikan, Museo Gregoriano profano (risba G. Eichler).

the naked male figure of Hercules and the dressed female figure of Alcestis, the perfected compositional placement of each figure within a frieze with 'saddle' volutes above and lowering inclines at the bottom, the energetic gestures and pose of Hercules, the psychologically imaginative poise of Alcestis who is awakening from a deep, deathly slumber - all these elements denote the Neo-Attic style. Sample books and possibly even the first artists, it seems, initially reached south-eastern Noricum and beyond to Pannonia via Aquileia from the eastern Mediterranean, Hellas and Asia Minor through Salona and other Dalmatian towns, and less so from Rome through to the Regio Decima of sub-alpine Italy; in other words, unlike during the late Republican and the Augustan eras, when the influence of Rome as the prevalent center would extend, more directly and more markedly, to Aquileia and from there beyond towards the North into the Norican region of Noreia and Virunum.²⁰

In view of these entirely apprehensible differences in the chronological span and in the regional origins of the artistic works, the symbolism of funerary

monuments throughout the entire empire during the Principate is, as it were, uniform. We believe, and numerous researchers accepted his contention, that Franz Cumont reliably established - in spite of the various substantial contradictions, though partial - that the symbolism of the Neopythagorean concept of human inhabitation at the transition from this life to life after death, and even beyond to the outermost eschatological limits of eternity, is convincingly expressed. The myth of Alcestis and Hercules is only one of many psychologically absorbing and perceptive legends contrived by Euripides and it is recurrently portrayed on funerary monuments, depicting from the most simplistic, rustic and provincial workmanship to the highest dramatic and poetic expression in relief on sarcophagi.²¹

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The sarcophagus portraying the story of Orestes is now preserved in the Musei Vaticani,

²⁰ The provenience of influences: G. Koch, H. Sichtermann, *Römische Sarkophage* (1982) passim; J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 151-157; M. Bonanno Aravantinos, Il mito di Ifigenia in Tauride sui sarcofagi attici di età romana, in: *Grabeskunst der römischen Kaiserzeit* (1993) 67-76.

²¹ F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains* (1942) reprint (1966); A. D. Nock, Sarcophagi and Symbolism, *Amer. Jour. Arch.* 50, 1946, 140-170 (a critical evaluation of Cumont's work); G. Koch, H. Sichtermann, *Römische Sarkophage* (1982) 581-617, *Sinngehalt* (H. Sichtermann); J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 108-113.



Fig. 8: The story of Orestes and Iphigeneia. Sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Gregoriano profano.
Sl. 8: Zgodba Oresta in Ifigenije. Sarkofag, Vatikan, Museo Gregoriano profano.

the Museo Gregoriano profano, inv. no. 10450 (previously in the Lateran). The sarcophagus was discovered in 1839 together with two other sarcophagi in the hypogeum in Rome by the porta Viminalis. First publication: Grifi, *Intorno ad un Sepolcro disotterrato nella vigna del Conte Lozano Argoli 1839*, Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di archeologia 10, 1842, pl. 1 A; C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs II*, Berlin 1890, n. 155, p. 168-171, pl. 54: 155, 155a, 155b with a drawing by G. Eichler from the year 1877 (fig. 7); W. Helbig, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom I*⁴ (H. Speier), Tübingen 1963, p. 808, n. 1127 (B. Andreae); H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, 53-54, pl. 133(2); 135-140, (n. 53: Orestes), photographs by G. Singer (fig. 8).²² The sarcophagus is positioned on two transverse plinths depicting two figures of Atlas squatting in front.

The sarcophagus portrays the story of Orestes and Iphigeneia. The story, according to Aeschylus' *The Sacrifice on the Grave (Choëphoroi)*, begins on the left side of the front panel: the spirit of the murdered King Agamemnon stands wrapped in a shroud at the entrance of the stone vault, or "thólos". Orestes stands in front of the entrance wanting to bid farewell and embrace his father, while Pylades stands there with his right arm raised in a gesture of honor. Both are portrayed in the nude with only a chlamys draped around the neck and over the shoulder. Below, a seemingly sleeping yet always watchful Erinys leans in

front of the entrance with the large axe that slay King Agamemnon.

The large, central, scene depicts the murder of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. The murder is in Aeschylus' tragedy only narrated, while it is actually executed in the palace and thus is not seen on stage. The mute Pylades utters a sound in the drama only once, and that is to warn Orestes of his duty to avenge his father's death. This is significant for clarifying the scene on the Vatican sarcophagus where Pylades plays an entirely passive role in the tragedy and thus cannot execute some decisive deed. The artist had to convey Aeschylus' story through a concrete example in sculpture. The actual murder, unseen in the tragedy, here becomes the main artistic theme. The left part of the scene depicts Orestes pulling Aegisthus from the throne and killing him. The other, right half of the scene depicts Orestes, in a similar pose as a naked athlete, having pushed his mother, who has exposed her right breast and extended her right hand in a pleading defense, on the floor. These are cruel scenes, appropriate for Roman eyes so accustomed to bloody battles in the arena. Carl Robert, regarding these maladroit illustrations on the Vatican sarcophagus, construed Pylades to have pushed Aegisthus on the floor and directly next to him on the right, the symmetrically positioned Orestes to have struck Clytemnestra. At first sight, it is rather infeasible to see the same individual, Orestes, in both figures. However, Aeschylus' text is unambiguous. Pylades is not an actor, he is not

²² Another publication e.g. D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 190, fig. 123.

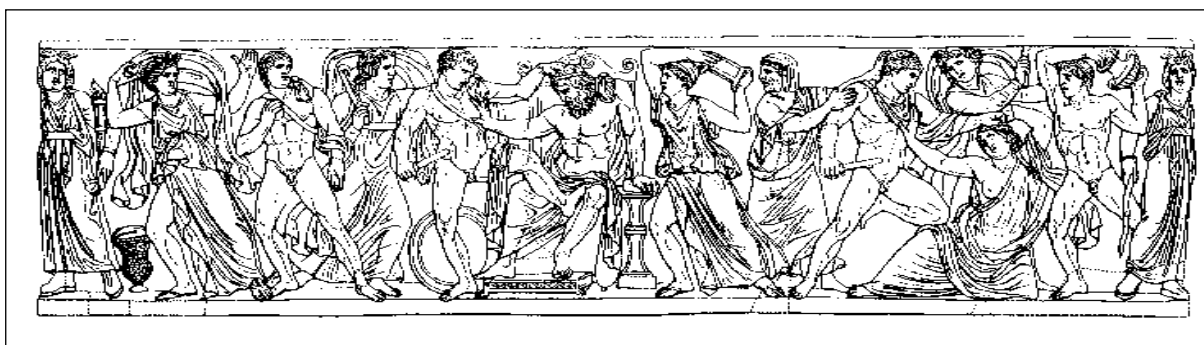


Fig. 9: Orestes murders Aegisthus and his own mother Clytemnestra. Sarcophagus, Saint Petersburg (drawing by G. Eichler).
Sl. 9: Orest umori Ajgista in mater Klytajmestro. Sarkofag, Sankt Peterburg (risba G. Eichler).

a man of action, but rather merely some sort of Orestes' embodied idea.

This unusual composition of the Vatican sarcophagus is better understood by virtue of a scene on the St. Petersburg sarcophagus (fig. 9) portraying this same motif of Aeschylus'. The St. Petersburg relief depicts Aegisthus sitting upon his throne, while from the right Orestes pushes him with his leg and Pylades merely observes from the left.²³

The Vatican sarcophagus depicts the "left" Orestes with a sword in his right hand, while with his left he clenches the King's robe that he tore from the body of Aegisthus. Carl Robert speculated that the artistic, perhaps Hellenistic portrayal of the scene from Aeschylus' drama is not so much an account of Aegisthus' robe, but rather of the cloth in which Aegisthus and Clytemnestra had entangled Agamemnon (fig. 10). Indeed, only the robe that Orestes tore from the murdered Aegisthus is shown. Aeschylus' famed "fine colored cloth" from the murder of Agamemnon is depicted on the right side. An Erinys with a large snake coiled around the left arm clasps, with the same hand, the edge of the cloth that the other, right Erinys in the foreground holds back. Thus, this is not a parapetasma as B. Andreae proposes in Helbig's *Führer*. Surpassing the cloth depicted on the St. Petersburg sarcophagus is the horrifying one depicted on the sarcophagus in the San Husillo abbey near Palencia in Spain (fig. 11), as well as on an all but duplicate of this sarcophagus, on the front panel of a poorly preserved sarcophagus in

the Palazzo Giustiniani in Rome. The relief on the San Husillo sarcophagus portrays the Erinyes lifting an extensive cloth toward Orestes, who is fearfully turned aside.²⁴ Orestes, in Aeschylus' tragedy, comprehends perfectly the significance of the fatal cloth and he also presents it thus to the assembly:²⁵ this cloth is

ἄγρευμα θηρός, ἢ νεκροῦ ποδένδυτον
δροίτης κατασκήνωμα; Δίκτυον μὲν οὖν
ἄρκυν τ' ἄν εἴποις καὶ ποδιστήρας πέδας.

...
νῦν αὐτὸν αἰνῶ, νῦν ἀποιμῶζω παρών,
πατροκτόνον θ' ὕφασμα προσφωνῶν τόδε
ἀλγῶ μὲν ἔργα καὶ πάθος γένος τε πᾶν,
ἄζηλα νίκης τῆσδ' ἔχων μιάσματα.

What to call it, to be precise?

A hunting device? A dress of the dead?

No! Speak rather of a web, a trap, a snare,
fettors that impede the feet -

...

and when I confront the death robe of my
father,

it pains me and torments all the family,
and the victory of my bleeding guilt falls
heavily on my heart.

The other figure immediately to the right of Orestes turns his head aside during the act of murder. Behind Orestes in the first scene with Aegisthus,

²³ C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs II* (1890) 166-168, pl. 54: 154. - Aegisthus and his throne are entirely in the Roman style, of the type "the ruler upon his throne", analogous to the bronze statuette of Jupiter from the 1st century in Pompei, Casa degli Amorini dorati, or similar to the statuette from Niš, *Antička bronza u Jugoslaviji* (1969) 85, pl. 71, catalogue of the exhibition no. 71 (M. Veličković), 1st century.

²⁴ The sarcophagus from San Husillo near Palencia (Spain): C. Robert, *ib.*, 173-174, pl. 55, cat. no. 157. The sarcophagus is a Roman work that probably reached Spain already by the establishment of the abbey in approximately 1488. - The sarcophagus in Palazzo Giustiniani in Rome: C. Robert, *ib.*, 171-173, pl. 55, cat. no. 156.

²⁵ Aeschylus, *Choëphoroi* 997-1000, 1015-1017.



Fig. 10: Orestes murders Aegisthus. Sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Gregoriano profano (detail).

Sl. 10: Orest umori Ajgista. Sarkofag, Vatikan, Museo Gregoriano profano (detajl).

and more to the left, Orestes' wet nurse also turns aside and covers her face with her hand. To the right of Clytemnestra a frightened servant takes cover near the ground and raises a small chair high above his head in defense. Orestes, behind him and

within himself, has already sensed the first of two Erinyes, a large snake coiled around his right arm and reaching out towards Orestes' head. The second Erinyes can be seen in back, emerging from behind the extended carpet - "the parapetasma".²⁶

²⁶ H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, 52.

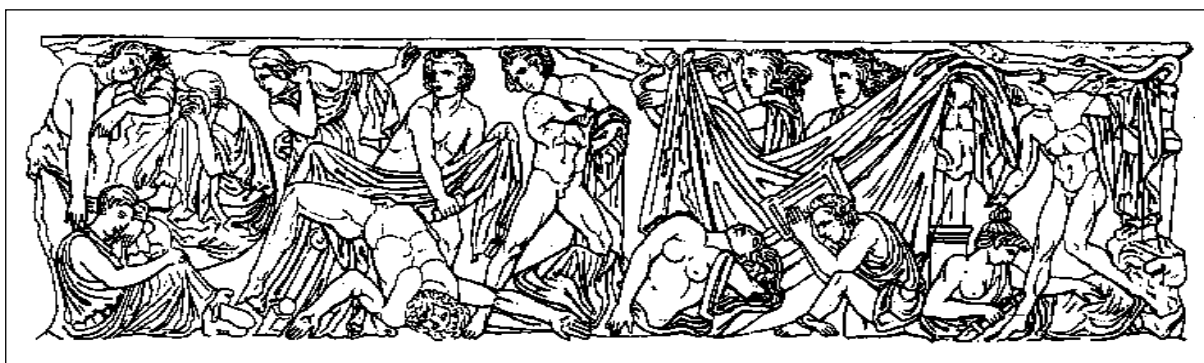


Fig. 11: The Orsetes sarcophagus. San Husillo (Palencia), Spain (drawing by G. Eichler).

Sl. 11: Sarkofag Oresta. San Husillo (Palencia), Španija. (risba G. Eichler).

The central scene proceeds directly into the third scene of Orestes in Delphi. The scene concludes to the far right with a tripod on a square base and with an omphalos, wrapped in a cloth, above the tripod. A bay-tree expands above this holy symbol of Delphi. The still half insane Orestes, who according to Aeschylus' version of the myth never entirely recuperated in Delphi, raises a sword in his right hand and holds the empty sheath of a sword in his left behind his head; he carefully steps over the sleeping Erinyes and sets forth from Delphi back to the left, unto the indeterminate continuation of his life. This third of Erinyes, in conjunction with the other two Erinyes who are eyewitnesses to the very murder of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra in Argos, acts as a connecting element. B. Andreae claims that this scene portrays Orestes leaving Delphi still prior to the events in Argos and that he is only now heading home. This account would chronologically establish the scene as the first of three scenes on the front of the sarcophagus and thus the events would continue on the left side with Orestes reaching the grave of his father.²⁷ However this hypothesis is difficult to substantiate. The resting Erinyes that Orestes carefully steps over and moves away from is composed entirely analogous to the resting Erinyes at the entrance to Agamemnon's vaulted tomb, only that the Erinyes in Delphi has a snake coiled around the left arm. Orestes' turn to the left was also an essential element for the sculptor considering that it is inconceivable, in terms of the composition, that the last individual on the right in the background of the spacious relief panel would be turning to face out and beyond the space.

Here the scene from Aeschylus' *Orestia* concludes. The arrival of Orestes in Athens, the mutation of Erinyes into Eumenides, the verdict on Areopagus, and the decisive assent of the goddess Athena - all this represents the highly idealistic and highly poetic narration of the conciliation in the Athenian polis in 458 BC, when Aeschylus received first prize for the performance of *Orestia*. This was a time of rapid ascent of Athenian political and cultural powers in the Attic-Delphic maritime alliance, with Pericles at the head. Democracy was newly on the rise and casting no shadows. This is the conclusion conceived by Aeschylus to the tragic circumstances of Orestes.

Perhaps this illustrious concept of the conciliative event in Athens, to where Orestes supposedly arrived according to Aeschylus, can be recognized in the abbreviation on the left side of the sarcophagus. The former Erinyes, now Eumenides, a serene sender of peace, sits beneath a large tree - this would be the sacred Erechtheum olive tree - with a large snake curled up nearby and a lit torch raised high in her right hand (fig. 12b). Even if this scene with Eumenides were interpreted as a symbolic conclusion to the entire story of Orestes, with the events in Tauris included, Athens - to where the calmed Eumenides finally settled according to these myths - would still be the most logical scene for these events.

The relief on the right side of the sarcophagus should be chronologically set between Aeschylus' narrative on the front panel and Euripides' continuation of the story on the front panel of the sarcophagus cover (fig. 12a). "*Guai a voi, anime prave!*"²⁸ - presently, Charon is seen in this Dan-

²⁷ B. Andreae in: Helbig, *Führer*, I4, 808 f.

²⁸ Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia*, *Inferno*, III, 84.

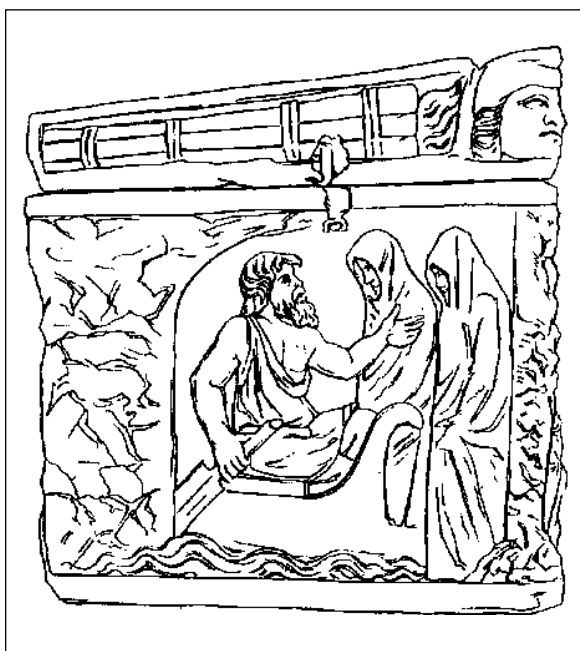


Fig. 12a: Aegisthus and Clytemnestra in Hades before Charon. The right side of the sarcophagus, the Vatican (drawing by G. Eichler).

Sl. 12a: Ajgist in Klytajmestra v Hadu pred Haronom. Desna stranica sarkofaga, Vatikan (risba G. Eichler).



Fig. 12b: Eumenis, the calmed Erinys, with a snake. The left side of the sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Gregoriano profano (drawing by G. Eichler).

Sl. 12b: Evmenida, pomirjena Erinija, s kačo. Leva stranica sarkofaga, Vatikan, Museo Gregoriano profano (risba G. Eichler).

tesque scene in a boat, approaching the shore to get Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, each wrapped in long hooded death robes. Beneath are the waves of Acheron, to the left are the rocks of the underground cave of Hades.

Now we can finally concentrate upon the upper relief on the front panel of the sarcophagus! Euripides' introducing tale of Iphigeneia in Aulis, which is present on the triptych on the funerary monument of the Priscianus in Šempeter, is absent here. It would be disturbing. Chronologically it dates long before Aeschylus' *Choëphoroi* and *Eumenides*, as well as before *Agamemnon*, yet the contents speak nothing of Orestes. Comparable to the lower relief that is divided into three scenes portraying the murder of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, the upper relief is also divided into three (fig. 13). Nevertheless, the difference in composition is considerable: all the scenes in Argos flow into one another below. The three scenes in Tauris - the meeting between Iphigeneia and Orestes in front of Artemis' temple, the scene portraying the transport of Artemis' statue to its washing in the sea and the scene depicting the Greeks fleeing from Tauris - are distinctly and visibly separated from each other on this relief.

A tree parts the first scene from the second, while an architectural structure parts the second

scene from the third. The first scene: a temple with folding, closed doors is depicted on the left side. The temple is simplistic and the proportions are too small, relative to the size of the portrayed individuals; it represents an abbreviation of the actual architectural structures situated within the space. The trees are only delineated. They are indubitably bay-trees, as Artemis is the sister of Apollo and bay-trees denote the sacred tree of these two gods. A fire is alight on a round altar in front of the temple before which four individuals stand: Iphigeneia handing a letter to the timorous Pylades, a *capsa* in the shape of a jug for letter scrolls is at his feet. Orestes stands behind Pylades, who holds him back, calms him and holds his hand. Behind Orestes is a Taurian guard. The relief on this sarcophagus differs greatly from that of Euripides' version of Iphigeneia where he explicitly wants the scene with the letter to transpire without the presence of the guard. This scene is parted from the next by a tree. Five individuals appear in this scene, as opposed to the four in the previous. Iphigeneia is again to the left, in a somewhat more ceremonious dress and with a diadem in her hair. She holds Artemis' wrapped *xoanon*, which she will carry to the sea under the pretence that she is washing it and thus the Greeks will be able to reach the sea shore undisturbed.

Orestes in front of Pylades, now stands before her. His hands are chained behind his back. A guard wearing a Scythian cap and trousers stands behind the two. All three individuals stand erect and almost motionless, while Pylades and Orestes lean more animatedly towards Iphigeneia in the first scene. The fifth individual follows: the Taurian King Thoas. A surprise awaits us here. Thoas is not armed with the classical military accouterment as on the relief in Šempeter, but rather he is clad in a garment reaching the ground and wrapped in a long cloak. He carries a long, strong stick of an entirely theatrical form in his left hand. He wears pointed, low shoes. His right hand is in a gesture of recitation. This individual is not the Thoas in the authentic scene in Tauris, but rather an actor on stage in Euripides' drama *Iphigeneia in Tauris*. He is clothed in an actor's costume and he stands in the pose of one reciting on stage. The scene is formed in its duality comparable to the scene with Dionysus and Ariadne on the large sarcophagus from the necropolis beneath St. Peters in the Vatican.²⁹ This sarcophagus depicts Bacchus triumphantly returning on a coach drawn by elephants from India, and with the loud and joyous escort of Satyrs before the coach. The central scene portrays Bacchus, this time according to Euripides, in front of the sleeping Ariadne and standing in an emphatic theatrical pose; he is clad in a long garment, soft, pointed shoes and with a large extinguished torch in his right hand. The staging of the scene with Thoas and the other individuals on the Orestes sarcophagus explicitly accentuates the architectural scenery by Thoas on the right: a fluted pilaster arching over Thoas' head. Thus the scene takes place in Thoas' palace by the exit, just as stage scenes in Hellenistic and Roman theater indeed were.

The third, and final, scene on the right depicts the Greeks fleeing from Tauris. The right side portrays the stern of a ship on billows and Iphigeneia safe behind the railing on board. Iphigeneia clutches Artemis' *xóanon* in her right hand. The gangway, upon which Pylades ascends with a raised sword, has yet to be drawn aboard. Orestes fights two Taurians rearward in the opposite direction. One Taurian with a long, oval shield has already fallen, while the other with a long, rhombus shaped shield is defending himself. It is actually inconclusive as to which of the two Greek heroes is still fighting the Taurian and which is on the gangway protect-



Fig. 13: Orestes and Iphigeneia in Tauris. Sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Gregoriano profano, the frontal panel on the sarcophagus cover.
Sl. 13: Orest in Ifigenija na Tavridi. Sarkofag, Vatikan, Museo Gregoriano profano, čelna ploskev pokrova sarkofaga.

²⁹ F. Matz, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs* IV, 2, pl. 174; J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 471 f. and fn. 11, fig. 184.



Fig. 14: The adlocutio of Traianus. The "anaglypha Traiani", Rome, Forum, Curia Iulia.

Sl. 14: Adlocutio cesarja Trajana. "Anaglypha Traiani", Rim, Forum, Curia Iulia.

ing Iphigeneia. In consideration of the dramatics of the event, a comparison of select details on the left individual who is fighting the two Taurians, with both Orestes and Pylades in the two previous scenes - the one before the temple and the scene of the washing of Artemis' statue - would enable us to presume that this individual is Orestes and the one on the gangway is Pylades. This would, in one way, be psychologically substantiated as it emphasizes the leading role of Orestes in the group with both Greeks. Similar can be asserted of the Šempeter scene depicting the Greeks fleeing back to the ship. Furthermore, both Taurian shields are of the Gallic type, imitations of weapons employed by barbaric Celts - Gauls and Galatians, as opposed to the short swords that Greek heroes used.

The style of the main scene on the sarcophagus, including the reliefs on both sides, differs greatly in style from that on the front of the sarcophagus cover. The figures on the lower relief are set in motion, three-dimensional and dynamic, and the composition is lively and full of various levels and forms of movement in all regards. The verticals of the figures are practically in pieces, while the horizontals of the arms alternate from the grave of Agamemnon at the left to Orestes in Delphi at the right. They are not rigidly horizontal, but rather just as animated. The individuals on the front of the sarcophagus cover are represented quite diversely. The fighting figures on the right side of the relief are indeed shifted from the vertical alignment to an inclined one, appropriate for depicting a fight, and yet a conventional pose is still sensed. The individuals at the sacrifice on the left side and the individuals on the central relief are merely placed in the scene. Hardly anything genuinely alive can

be appreciated in them. The artist failed to incorporate any of the dramatics in this scene that the two scenes portraying Euripides' drama possess. The actor playing the King on the right side of the relief and the architectural scenery, including the pilasters, bear witness to the conventional outline that the artist of this relief must have drawn in his sketch book. There is no doubt that that stoneworker's workshop commissioned the workmanship on this sarcophagus with different artists of varying talents and disparate stylistic orientations. Two different artists manifest the same profession on this sarcophagus as two distinctive artists carved the relief portraying the story of Iphigeneia on the Priscianus tomb in Šempeter.

The funerary vault at the Porta Viminalis, with the Orestes sarcophagus, the Niobe sarcophagus and the sarcophagus with garlands, is dated "subsequent to the year 132" on the basis of a stamp on the brick. A second brick is dated to the year 134, when Hadrian's brother-in-law, Lucius Iulius Ursus Servianus, was the third time consul.³⁰ The style itself is also reliably indicative of the sarcophagus' date. Disregarding that the relief on the cover of the sarcophagus is the work of a less significant artist, it is nevertheless a narrative. The schematic placement of the figures, which despite the rigidity is an attempt to introduce some dynamics in the processional rhythm, summons to mind a better model: the front relief of the so-called "anaglypha Traiani", now preserved in the Curia Iulia at the Forum, with the scene of the address given by Traianus from the rostra on the left and the seated figure of the emperor, Traianus or Nerva, and in the escort in front, the standing allegory of Italia on the right (fig. 14).³¹ The work dates to the era of

³⁰ CIL XV 1051 Dressel. This stamp is lost. Consul Servianus: RE X,1 (1917) 882-891, Iulius, no. 538 (Groag).

³¹ G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 17-20, fig. 1; D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 127, fig. 113.



Fig. 15: The sacrifice for Apollo. Hadrian's hunting relief, Rome, Constantine's triumphal arch.

Sl. 15: Žrtvovanje Apolonu. Hadrijanovi lovski reliefi, Rim, Konstantinov slavolok.



Fig. 16: The apotheosis of the empress Vibia Sabina. Rome, Musei Capitolini, Palazzo dei Conservatori.

Sl. 16: Apoteoza cesarice Vibije Sabine. Rim, Musei Capitolini, Palazzo dei Conservatori.

Hadrian. Donald Strong erroneously postulates that the sitting emperor portrayed on the right side of the front panel depicting the *adlocutio* of Traianus was Hadrian, being as how the relief dates to the time of Hadrian. The head of this sitting figure is poorly preserved and is insufficiently distinctive for a comparison of the well-known Traianus and Hadrian portraits so as to determine who is seated. A depiction of a still living emperor, Hadrian, seated and with an allegory of Italy by his side, while to the left his deceased predecessor is in the actual act of *adlocutio* to the individuals standing before him, would be illogical. Gerhard M. Koeppel more fittingly speculates that the seated individual on the right is also Traianus, perhaps even Nerva. This and other attributions are irrelevant for the purposes of our comparison with the relief on the Orestes sarcophagus. The workmanship of the anaglyph is dated to the late Traianus (Koeppel) or early Hadrian period (Strong); and the processional arrangement of the individuals depicted listening to the emperor's *adlocutio*, although truly of a higher quality make, can be paralleled with the Iphigeneia and Orestes relief on the cover of the Orestes sarcophagus.

The depiction of three trees in this relief on the cover and the tree in the relief on the left side with Eumenis finds its archetype in the portrayal of trees on Hadrian's round-panel hunting reliefs, placed secondarily on Constantine's triumphal arch. This would be two bay trees in the background next to Apollo's temple and altar on the slab portraying a sacrifice to Apollo (fig. 15), while on the slab depicting the lion hunt probably two sycamores.³²

Regarding the main relief on the front panel of the sarcophagus portraying Aeschylus' story of Orestes, both reliefs immured in the so-called Arco di Portogallo on the then Via Lata (later the Via Flaminia and currently the Via del Corso in Rome) are good demonstrations of diversity in dramatics and composition of scene. The reliefs are now preserved in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline hill.³³ The torch in the hand of Victoria on the relief portraying the apotheosis of the empress Vibia Sabina, deceased at the end of the year 136, corresponds with the form of King Thoas' scepter on the Orestes relief (fig. 16). The

³² Apollo: G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 32, fig. 13; D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 177, fig. 114. Lion: G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 30, fig. 11.

³³ G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 38-43, fig. 21; 22; D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 177, fig. 111; 112.



Fig 17a: Acroterion - the mask of a Taurian. The Orestes sarcophagus, the Vatican, Museo Gregoriano profano (detail).
Sl. 17a: Akroterij - maska Tavra. Sarkofag Oresta, Vatikan, Museo Gregoriano profano (detajl).

manner in which Victoria holds the torch is also similar to that in which Thoas holds the scepter. The sequence of two heads, a man's and a child's, on the slab from Arco di Portogallo depicting the *adlocutio* resembles the sequence of Pylades and Orestes before Agamemnon's grave or the two Erinyes and Orestes on the right side of the same relief.

Two expressive Taurian heads with long, wavy curls and Phrygian caps (fig. 17a) are carved on both front corners of the sarcophagus cover as two acroteria. Acroteria are already in the Hellenistic world a decorative finish to the architecture of sarcophagi. A symbolic interpretation defines the heads on the corners as an apotropaic symbol and at the same time as a symbol of the winds representing the tumultuous atmosphere above, through which departed souls journey to the planets. The two Taurian heads on the Orestes sarcophagus are excellently crafted and in style, they correspond entirely to the exalted artistry during the time of Hadrian. Gerhard M. Koepfel published the head of a bust in his review of second century Roman reliefs a head in high relief, that



Fig. 17b: Head with a helmet. Relief, Florence, Uffizi, (fragment).
Sl. 17b: Glava s čelado. Relief, Firenze, Uffizi, relief (fragment).

is, part of a figure carved sometime during the post-Hadrian or Antonine era and now preserved in Uffizi, Florence (fig. 17b). The force depicted in the carved relief and the similarity between the heads on the Orestes sarcophagus and the head in Uffizi is unmistakable, and the ascribed dates are indisputable.³⁴

The triptych with Iphigeneia and Orestes in Šempeter somewhat differs from the Orestes sarcophagus in Rome, yet it also manifests a few significant similarities (fig. 18). Firstly, the difference in chronological origins: the reliefs in Šempeter date to the end of the 2nd century,³⁵ while the Roman sarcophagus is attributed to the poetic and animated narrative artistry of Hadrian's era, which in turn followed the example set by the Hellenistic world. The era of Antonine artistry ensued, during the reigns of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus and

³⁴ The heads - acroterion on the sarcophagus: C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs* II, 171; H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, pl. 138. - The relief of the head in Florence, Uffizi, inv. 418: G. A. Mansuelli, *Galleria degli Uffizi, Le sculture* II (1961) 182, no. 170; G. M. Koepfel, *Reliefs*, 38 (no. 17), fig. 20: a, b.

³⁵ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 214 f., 219-239.

Septimius Severus: sculptures were unauthentic, they were inclined to the mannerisms and pathos of the baroque style, as well as to flatness. The artistry exhibited in Šempeter only partially followed the development in Rome, more so the influence of Neo-Atticism emanating from the eastern part of the empire - with its rigidity and tendency to simplify, it conformed better to the preceding domestic Norican-Pannonian trends. Thus there is little in common between the style of the Orestes sarcophagus in Rome and the style of the triptych in the Priscianus tomb in Šempeter.

This clarifies the similarity of select details, as is evident from various proposals in sampler books from stonecutting workshops, as well as through direct observation of individual sculptors from place to place, from the provinces to the distinguished Mediterranean style in cities and vice versa. Iphigeneia - on the third relief in Šempeter, on the relief at Dravinjski vrh, as well as on the relief in Sopiana - ascends the gangway to the ship with a stride and gestures resembling one of the two Greek heroes, either Pylades or Orestes, depicted on the sarcophagus in Rome. The temple of the Taurian Artemis, with its modest walls built of stone blocks and low, two-panelled roof and folding doors, closely resembles that depicted on the Roman sarcophagus, the relief at Dravinjski vrh and in Sopiana (the relief in Šempeter portrays no such architectural structure). The architecture of the funerary *aedicula* depicted on frescos in old Christian catacombs is also quite similar. This type of architecture is portrayed on the fresco relating the rise of Lazarus in the Santi Pietro e Marcellino catacomb, near the St. Helena mausoleum (Tor Pignatara) on the Via Labicana, dating to the end of the third century (fig. 19). Correspondingly, this type of funerary *aedicula* is perhaps illustrated even better in the Priscilla catacombs on the Via Salaria Nuova in the gallery before the Capella Greca.³⁶ Orestes standing before the altar on the relief in Šempeter is also depicted in a three-quarters profile from behind and turning left, thus resembling Orestes in the scene washing the statue on the sarcophagus in Rome; however, Orestes holds his tied hands in front of himself on the relief in Šempeter, while the Rome sarcophagus portrays Orestes with his hands tied behind his back.

Regardless of their chronological distance and despite the implications of their sculptural workmanship - a relief carved on a wide sarcophagus panel can develop its narrativity and express more detail



Fig. 18: Iphigeneia and Orestes in Tauris. Three reliefs on the Priscianus tomb, Šempeter.

Sl. 18: Ifigenija in Orest na Tavridi. Trije reliefi grobnice Priskiana, Šempeter.

with great ease, while an emasculated Norican-Pannonian relief on a container for the ashes of the dead in Šempeter has to technically forsake various details in the scene - both monuments,

³⁶ A. Grabar, *Die Kunst des frühen Christentums* (1967) fig. 22; O. Wulff, *Altchristliche und byzantinische Kunst I* (1914) fig. 53.



Fig 19: Christ revives Lazarus. Frescoe. The Santi Pietro Marcellino catacombe, Rome.

Sl. 19: Jezus obudi mrtvega Lazarja. Freska, Katakombe Santi Pietro e Marcellino, Rim.

the Orestes sarcophagus in Rome and the story of Iphigeneia and Orestes in Šempeter, nevertheless uniformly pertain to that larger group of funerary monuments that 'speak' the same language throughout the entire Roman ecumenicity of this time period. The language of the *acsensio* symbol for departed souls, the ones for whom the stone cases were intended. Variance depended upon the affluence of the consignee, the aptness of the artist, the technical and organizational competence of the stonecutting workshops, the local differences in style and in choice of topic, which in turn, did not alter the entirety of the image nor taint the

normative value. Stoic philosophers, Neopythagorean preachers, enthusiastic syncretist followers of various more or less distinctive eastern sects and erudite or less erudite mythographers, who advised the consignees and likewise also the creators of various gigantic monuments - all this was invariably extant during the Principate and it furnished the foundation for such potent development in this branch of art in relief sculpture, represented primarily by sarcophagi throughout the world and by sepulchral chapels, such as those preserved in Šempeter, in the provinces of Noricum and Pannonia and Gaul and Germania.

Examination of the Vatican sarcophagi of Alcestis and Orestes has ascertained that many details remain yet unsolved and undetermined, despite publications and studies dating from the middle of the previous century till today; in particular, the classic publications of Carl Robert with Eichler's drawings in the corpus *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs* from the year 1890 and 1897 and Hellmut Sichtermann and Guntram Koch's work with photographs by Gerhard Singer in *Griechische Mythen auf römischen Sarkophagen* from the year 1975, which with Singer's photographs were supposed to represent a supplement to Eichler's drawings in Robert's standard edition. The issues concerning the style of and the incorporation of these sarcophagi in the general development of second century Roman artistry are also still impending. The aim of our discussion was to contribute some additional observations and ascertainments. Comparison of the two discussed themes in Šempeter - Alcestis on the funerary monument of Iulia Ingenua and the triptych of Orestes with Iphigeneia on the monument of Gaius Spectatius Priscianus - clarified the variance in their design and simultaneously

the like fashion in which they were approached by significant sculptors in the Norican-Pannonian world. The well-known fact that Euripides' dramas were a decisive influence on the images and also on the very selection of symbolic themes in sepulchral artistry was once again substantiated. The portrayal of Orestes according to Aeschylus and Euripides on one monument - the sarcophagus by the porta Viminalis - demands more thorough consideration. The high artistic value of the reliefs at Šempeter was, in this respect, acknowledged anew.

Sources of illustrations:

Fig. 7; 9; 11; 12a,b: *Die Antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs*, II, Berlin 1890; fig. 1; 5a: *Die Antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs*, III 1, Berlin 1897; fig. 19: A. Grabar, *Die Kunst des frühen Christentums*, München 1967; fig. 5b; 6; 18: J. Kastelic, *Simbolika mitov na rimskih nagrobnih spomenikih: Šempeter v Savinjski dolini*, Ljubljana 1998; fig. 14-17b: G. M. Koeppel, *Die historischen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit IV: Stadtrömische Denkmäler unbekannter Bauzugehörigkeit aus hadrianischer bis konstantinischer Zeit*, *Bonner Jb.* 186, 1986; fig. 2-4; 8; 10; 13; 17a: H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen auf römischen Sarkophagen*, Tübingen 1975.

Sarkofag Alkestide in sarkofag Oresta v Vatikanu in reliefi v Šempetru

Reliefi mitološke vsebine krasi tri rimske grobnice v Šempetru pri Celju. Na spomeniku Julije Ingenuae, žene celejanskega edila Gaja Vindonija Sukkessa, je čelna stran osuarija okrašena z reliefom Alkestide in Herakla. Grobna kapela družine Kvinta Ennija Liberalisa je okrašena z dvema mitološkima reliefoma: na čelni strani je relief ugrabitve Evrope, na desni strani pa relief ugrabitve Ganimedea. Grobnico družine Gaja Spektatija Finita pa med bogato dekorativno in figuralno reliefno plastiko krasi trije reliefi zgodbe o Ifigeniji in Orestu: žrtvovanje Ifigenije v Avlidi, srečanje Ifigenije in Oresta na Tavridi, beg Ifigenije in Oresta s Tavride. Reliefi so izdelani iz lokalnega pohorskega marmorja iz kamnoloma v Hudinji v eni ali več noriških in panon-skih delavnicah tekom drugega stoletja - "od Trajana do Septimija Severa". Stilno pripadajo noriško-panonski provincialni umetnosti,

deloma pod vplivom neoatizma in antoninskega baroka. Vplivi iz Male Azije in Helade preko Dalmacije in Akvileje se mešajo z umetnostno prisotnostjo Rima in Italije. Reliefi v časovnem razponu enega stoletja so delo različnih kiparskih in kamnoseških ateljejev v noriško-panonskem svetu. Tudi na istočas-nih treh reliefih grobnice Spektatija Priskiana, ki jo je postavil Priskianov oče Finitus, sta vidni dve kiparski roki: prizor Ifigenije v Avlidi in prizor bega s Tavride - torej oba reliefa na stranicah grobne edikule - je izklesal en kipar, drugi kipar z izrazitejšo osebno noto in večjo sposobnostjo dramske razgibanosti v navidezno mirni sceni pa je izklesal glavni relief na čelni strani grobnice Priskiana - "Oresta": uklenjeni Orest pred gorečim žrtvenikom, Pylades piše pismo v navzočnosti Ifigenije, tavrski kralj Thoas in stražar opazujeta dogodek.*¹

* Okrajšave

J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*: J. Kastelic, *Simbolika mitov na rimskih nagrobnih spomenikih: Šempeter v Savinjski dolini* (1998).
G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*: G. M. Koeppel, *Die historischen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit IV: Stadtrömische Denkmäler unbekannter Bauzugehörigkeit aus hadrianischer bis konstantinischer Zeit*, *Bonner Jb.* 186, 1986, 1-90.
H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*: H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen auf römischen Sarkophagen. Unter Verwendung neuer Aufnahmen von G. Singer*, *Bilderhefte des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Rom*, 5-6 (1975).
D. Strong, *Roman Art*: D. Strong, *Roman Art*, Pelican History of Art. Prepared for press by J. M. C. Toynbee. Revised and annotated under the editorship of R. Ling (1995).

¹ J. Klemenc, *Rimske izkopanine v Šempetru*, *Spomeniški vodniki* 1 (1961); J. Klemenc, V. Kolšek, P. Petru, *Antične grobnice v Šempetru*, Kat. in monogr. 9 (1972); J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*; P. Kranz, *Die Grabmonumente von Šempeter, Beobachtungen zur Entwicklung der Bildhauerkunst in Noricum während der mittleren und späten römischen Kaiserzeit*, *Bonner Jb.* 186, 1986, 193-239.

V zbirkah vatikanskih muzejev se hranita dva rimska sarkofaga z grškima mitološkima temama, ki lahko z raznih vidikov osvetlita nekatere probleme v zvezi z reliefi nagrobnih spomenikov v Šempetru. To sta sarkofag z zgodbo o Alkestidi in sarkofag z zgodbo o Orestu in Ifigeniji. Tudi še drugi sarkofagi pripovedujejo ti dve zgodbi, vendar bi lahko trdili, da sta prav ta dva primerka najpomembnejša: Alkestidin sarkofag tudi zato, ker je v dobro datiranem napisu na čelu sarkofaga povedano, da ga še živi soprog namenja pokojni soprogi - duhovnici Velike Matere bogov Kybele, in je simbolika prikazanega Alkestidinega mita zaradi verske funkcije pokojnice toliko bolj zanesljiva, Orestov sarkofag pa, ker je v dveh prizorih sprednje strani zgodba o Orestu in Ifigeniji v prvem delu povzeta po Ajshilu, v drugem pa po Evripidu, po stilu pa je sarkofag tudi mogoče dokaj dobro datirati v razmeroma ozek kronološki razpon.

Prvi rimski sarkofagi iz dobe principata so pač sarkofagi, krašeni z girlandami, že iz Trajanovega časa, kamor uvrščamo sarkofag Caffarelli v Berlinu, sarkofagi z reliefnimi prizori pa se pojavijo v Hadrijanovi dobi. Hadrijanovo filhelensko navdušenje je tak razvoj pospeševalo iz dveh smeri: teme iz grške umetnosti so postajale priljubljene že zaradi splošne usmerjenosti h grški kulturi na vseh področjih, povečan vpliv neopitagorejske filozofije in mlajše stoe pa je zahteval izrazitejšo simbolno izpovednost mitoloških prizorov na sarkofagih. Sarkofag s Heraklovimi deli v Velletri bi bil najboljši primer za Hadrijanov čas in filhelensko ter filozofsko simbolno klimo teh desetletij.²

Tekom drugega stoletja se sarkofagi rimske izdelave ob maloazijski in drugi produkciji helenističnega vzhoda ter ob posebni produkciji atiških sarkofagov uveljavijo in v času vladavine Marka Avrelija ter Komoda in nato v dobi dinastije Severov doživijo svoj umetniški razcvet, funerarna simbolika pa svojo največjo izpovednost. V tretjem stoletju umetniška sila izdelkov kljub posameznim vrhunskim stvaritvam upada, ob simbolni vsebini mitov pa se veča tudi bolj prikazovanje konkretnosti: v zasebnem svetu portreti, v javni sferi pa zgodovinski prizori in prizori iz življenja funkcionarjev, ki so sarkofage naročali. Ob prehodu v četrto stoletje pa se že pojavljajo sarkofagi kristjanov, ki napovedujejo nov vzpon umetnosti poznoantičnih sarkofagov, to pot v starokrščanski varianti.

Emonske ager Desete italjske regije, Norik in Panonija poznajo importe sarkofagov, tudi lokalna produkcija obstaja, nikoli pa ni bila niti številčno in ne po kakovosti taka, da bi jo mogli vzporejati z Rimom ali z evropsko Grčijo ali s helenističnim vzhodom.³

*

Sarkofag z mitsko zgodbo o Alkestidi so našli leta 1826 v Ostiji, hrani pa se v Vatikanskih muzejih, v Museo Chiaramonti, inv. 1195. Prva objava: E. Gerhard, *Antike Bildwerke*, 1827, t. 28. Z risbo G. Eichlerja iz leta 1876 ga objavlja pod številko 26 Carl Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs* III,1, Berlin 1897, 31-34, t. 7: 26 in sl. 26: a,b na strani 33 (sl. 1). Napis je objavil 1887 Hermann Dessau, *CIL* XIV 371. Za katalog W. Helbig, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom* I⁴ (H. Speier), Tübingen 1963, 229 s, št. 291

je opis prispeval B. Andreae. Sarkofag sta objavila s kratkim tekstom in fotografijami G. Singerja, ki naj bi nadomestile Eichlerjeve risbe v ediciji Carla Roberta, H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, 20-21 (8. Alkestis, G. Koch), t. 16; 17(2); 18 (sl. 2); M. J. Vermaseren, *Corpus cultus Cybelae Attidisque (CCCA)* III, Italia - Latium, EPRO 50, Leiden 1977, p. 134-135, n. 423.⁴

Na čelni strani sarkofaga je pod vrhom z napisom v okviru, ki ga držita dve krilati Viktoriji, prikazana zgodba Alkestide v treh prizorih. Na levi prihaja skozi obokani vhod palače kralja Admeta v Ferah Thánatos, z velikim kopjem v levi roki, z desnico pa drži na vrvi psa, čuječega pogleda, ki mu sedi ob desni nogi. Thánatos ni prikazan grozljivo, ampak kot postava moškega zrelih let, sicer golega, le s hlamlido okoli vratu in na levo stran prsi. Zato je Carl Robert mislil, da je v tej osebi namesto Thánatosa predstavljen pač le njegov zastopnik, Ianitor Orci.⁵ Temu bi težko pritrdili, še manj bi se strinjali z G. Kochom, ki vidi v tej in zraven stoječi osebi "morda dva lovca", ali pa, kot misli B. Andreae, da je to "skupina lovcev, Admetovih prijateljev".⁶ Z desne se gotovo pomika k vratom Apolon, ki zapušča palačo - po Evripidu:⁷

Ἐγὼ δὲ Κ, μὲν Φασμα μ * Μν δὲ Πμοιὶ ΚΦΧη/
λεΦπω μελΑθρων τωενδε φιλτατην στΚηνη.
!Ηδη δὲ Λ τΠινδε ΘΑνατον εισορω πΚλαφῶ/
Ηερηθ θανΠιντων.

A jaz, da ne zateče me oskrumba,
pustiti moram ljubo to domovje.
Ha, tamle, vidim, že se bliža Smrt,
ta žrtvovalka mrtvih.

Osrednji, dramatični, prevladujoči prizor na sarkofagu je prizor smrti Alkestide. Kraljica je na ležišču napol dvignjena, toda moči ji popuščajo, kretneje rok slabijo, glavo nagiblje in obraz že obrača v stran, na drugi svet (sl. 3). Admet na levi strani, prikazan v herojski goloti, le s hlamlido okoli vratu, drži umirajočo soprogo za roko. Mučnih razprav o najvišji možni žrtvi, žrtvi življenja, je med soprogoma konec v tej uri slovesa. Za Admetom na levi se opira na grčavo dolgo palico njegov oče. C. Robert, G. Koch in B. Andreae pač zmotno mislijo, da je tu upodobljen Alkestidin oče in dalje na desni Alkestidina mati. V Evripidovi tragediji nastopa le Admetov oče Feres in Admet govori le o svoji materi, Feresovi soprogi. Spredaj pred kline z Alkestido izteza k materi obe roki obupana hčerka, na desni se je v joku sklonil sinček Évmeles, ki pa je pri Evripidu že bolj odrasel, kot ga je izklesal kipar tega sarkofaga. Tu sta še Admetov služabnik, precej oddaljen, že levo od Apolona, obrnjen proti vratom palače in k prihajajočemu Thánatosu, ter služabnica Alkestide v ozadju za umirajočo kraljico.

Na desni sledi prizor, ki ni tako dramatičen, ki pa je glavni nosilec simbolnega sporočila - vrnitev Alkestide iz krajev mrtvih v svet živih s pomočjo Herakla. Relief tu popolnoma odstopa od poteka Evripidove drame in tudi od večine likovnih upodobitev. Navadno je upodobljen Herakles, kako drži Alkestido za roko in jo vodi na svet, kakor v Šempetru ali na Ptuj, ali pa že pred Admeta samega, ki žaluje in v prihajajoči zagrneni ženski postavi ne spozna takoj svoje žene, kakor v Kiskajdu na

² B. Andreae, *Studien zur römischen Grabkunst*, Römische Mitteilungen, Ergänzungsheft 9 (1963).

³ H. Gabelmann, *Die Werkstattgruppen der oberitalischen Sarkophage*, Beih. d. Bonner Jb. 34 (1973); N. Cambi, *Atiški sarkofazi na istočnoj obali Jadrana* (1988); N. Cambi, *Sarkofag Dobroga pastira iz Salone i njegova grupa* (1994); B. Migotti, *Ranokrščanski grobni nalaz iz Velikih Bastaja kod Daruvara*, *Vjes. arh. muz. Zag.* 28-29, 1996, 127-157.

⁴ Objava še npr. D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 198, sl. 130.

⁵ Horacij, *Pesmi*, III 11, 16 s: *ianitor aulae Cerberus*.

⁶ G. Koch pri H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, 20.

⁷ Evripides, *Alkestis*, 22-25. Slovenski prevod: Anton Sovrè v: Euripides, *Bakhe, Alkestis, Feničanke* (1960) 103.

Madžarskem. Ali pa Herakles zmagovalno prihaja skozi vrata Hada z dvignjenim kijem v desnici na plano in za njim boječe sledi Alkestida, kot na sarkofagu Heraklovih del v Velletrih.⁸ Na tem ostijskem sarkofagu pa Herakles podaja roko Admetu kot prijatelju, kateremu je izpolnil nepričakovano in človeške moči presegajočo uslugo (sl. 4). Alkestis stopa sama za Heraklom. Ta stisk desnice pa je hkrati že tudi slovo, kajti Herakles odhaja iz Fer naprej v Trakijo po Diomedove konje za gospodovalnega kralja Evrystheusa v Tirysu. Zagrnjena, oživlje-na Alkestis mirno stoji za Heraklom. Admetos je v tem prizoru oblečen v dolgo hlamido, Herakles gol z levo kožo preko leve lakti in s težkim kijem, prav tako v levici. Med Admetom in Heraklom čepi docela na nepravem mestu in docela simbolno triglavi pes Kerber. V ozadju pa so simbolno navzoče tri Mojre, prva v levi roki z zvikom, na katerem je napisana vsa ta Alkestidina usoda. Čisto na desni stoluje kot veličastni, nespremenljivi simbol onstranskega sveta podzemlja na svojem prestolu Pluton. Ob njem stoji njegova nekoč ujetnica, zdaj tudi soproga Persefone s prižgano baklo - simbolom Alkestidinega ponovnega življenja. Roko je položila na Plutonovo desno ramo v gesti prigovarjanja in tudi gotovosti, da bo želja vseh za vrnitev Alkestide, ki jo tu izraža celo Persefone sama, uslišana. To je epilog umetnika kiparja, doklesan k Evripidu.

Na desni stranici sarkofaga je izklesan velik hipokamp, fantastični prebivalec morja, v stilu skoraj enak hipokampom Priskianove grobnice v Šempetru (sl. 5a,b).⁹ Hipokamp naj tu simbolno predstavlja "morje" atmosfere, skozi katero mora duša umrlega človeka po teoloških teorijah neopitagorejcev potovati na planet, ki ji je določen za večno prebivališče. Relief na levi stranici sarkofaga je bil komaj začet in je ostal nedodelan.

Nad velikim reliefom z zgodbo Alkestide napis, ki ga držita dve krilati Viktoriji, pove, komu, kateri pokojni ženski osebi je namenjena vsa ta slavna zgodba. Komu na tem svetu kot simbolno sporočilo in komu napoved upanja za nadaljevanje - celo še boljšega življenja na drugem svetu. Napis pravi:¹⁰

*D(is) M(anibus) / C. Iunius, Pal(atina tribu) Euhodus
magister q(uin)q(uennalis) / collegi fabr(um) tign(ariorum)
Osti(en)s(ium) lustrum XXI / fecit sibi et Metiliae Acte
sacerdo/ti
m(atris) d(eum) m(agnae) colon(iae) Ost(iensis) coniug(i)
sanctissime.*

Sarkofag je mogoče datirati v sredino antoninske umetnosti, v prvo desetletje vladavine Marka Avrelija, v leta med 160 in 170. Kompozicija je mirna, posebno skrbno so osebe tako postavljene, da je izokefalija zelo izražena. V rimski umetnosti sicer to ni bila nobena novost ali posebnost, saj sta na primer spreved Avgustove družine in spreved flaminov na Ara pacis Augustae

v tem oziru tipična.¹¹ Čuti pa se neka poza v razvrstitvah oseb, dramatičnosti hadrijanske dobe ni več. Goli Apolon in goli Admet na levi strani sta postavljena v kontrapost, njuni kretnji pa se simetrično iztezata vsaka v nasprotno smer. Globina prizora je umetno poudarjena s tem, da so posamezne osebe nameščene v več plasti, dejansko pa je ploskovitost zelo prisotna. Noge Apolona in Admeta se v globino križajo, prekrivajo med seboj. Alkestis umira, kakor da bi bila na odru in bi želela, da si njeno poslavljanje ogleda čim več gledalcev. Kipar, ki je izklesal ta sarkofag, ni spadal v tisti visoki razred umetnikov, ki so dobivali oficialna naročila dvora. Umetniško veliko bolj dovršene in prepričljive so skoraj istočasne velike pravokotne plošče s prizori iz civilnega in vojaškega delovanja cesarja Marka Avrelija z dveh (ali več?) slavolokov, postavljenih njemu v čast. Tri plošče, zdaj v Palazzo dei Conservatori v Rimu, so bolj "klasične", reliefi osmero plošč, sekundarno uporabljenih na Konstantinovem slavoloku, pa kažejo večjo razgibano narativnost, ki napoveduje pozno antoninsko umetnost.¹²

Še najbolj prepričljivo je izdelana na sarkofagu Metilije Akte dvojica Plutona in Persefone na desni strani prizorov. - Oči vseh figur imajo nakazane pupile s svedom, obrazi oseb so antoninski. Glava Herakla ali pa Admetovega očeta se po stilu približuje portretom Marka Avrelija, kjer se klasična eleganca že lomi z nemirnimi frizurami in bradami, kot na primer na cesarjevem portretu iz Leptis Magna.¹³ Enaindvajseti lustrum kolegija ostijskih tesarskih mojstrov, lustrum, ko načeljuje kolegiju Gaj Junij Euhodus, moramo postaviti v leta 160-165 ali 165-170 našega štetja. Ostijski tignariji so namreč začeli svoj prvi petletni lustrum okoli leta 60 v Neronovem času.

Frizura Metilije Akte je še frizura Favstine Starejše, umrle že leta 141. Na novcih je Favstina s to frizuro upodabljana po njeni konsekraciji vse do okoli 160. Taka frizura tudi dobro odgovarja Metiliji Akte kot starejši dami. V ostalem pa je ta frizura dober indikator za čas kmalu po oficialnem nastopu Favstine Iunior kot cesarice ob Marku Avreliju, ko se frizura zdaj živeče vladarice izpremeni.¹⁴ Portret Metilije Akte je skrbno in elegantno izdelan, dober in času odgovarjajoč je tudi portret moža Euhodusa - dvakrat, v prizoru ob smrtni postelji Alkestide-Metilije Akte in ob rokovanju Admeta-Euhodusa s Heraklom.

Metilija Akte je bila duhovnica boginje Kybele (Κυβέλη), Velike Matere Bogov, Matris Deum Magnae.¹⁵ Povsem razumljivo je, da je v Ostiji kot v pristanišču, kamor so se stekale vse poti z Vzhoda, Mater Magna imela svoje pomembno kulturno mesto. Akte, drugo ime duhovnice Metilije, je grško in tudi njen sopro, sicer pravi civis Romanus, je po izvoru Grk - Euhodus.

Morda tudi ni nepomembno, da se funerarni simboli neopitagorejske idejne usmeritve pojavljajo v takih sinkretističnih krogih, kakršnemu je očitno pripadala družina Euhodusa.

⁸ Herakles in Alkestis: J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 491-506, sl. 192-196; J. Kastelic, Herakles v Hadu. Relief Herakla s psom Kerberom v samostanu Stična, *Zbornik občin Grosuplje, Ivančna Gorica, Dobropolje* 20, 1998, 169-189. - Slike: J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, Šempeter: sl. 192; Ptuj: sl. 194; Kiskajd: sl. 195; Velletri: sl. 193. Priljubljenost zgodbe o Alkestidi priča tudi latinski epyllion, verjetno iz 4. stoletja, neznanega avtorja, na papyrusu v Barceloni (*Papyri Barcinonenses* 158-161). Poizkus rekonstrukcije celotnega teksta: M. Marković, Pietas novo odkrivene Alkestide, *Živa ant.* 33, 1983, 119-128. Zahvaljujem se prof. dr. Kajetanu Gantarju za opozorilo in vpogled v njegov odlični prevod tega teksta.

⁹ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 264-266, sl. 71.

¹⁰ CIL XIV 371 (1887) H. Dessau; M. J. Vermaseren, *CCCA* III, no. 423. Zahvaljujem se gospe dr. Marjeti Šašel za posredovanje Vermaserenove objave.

¹¹ Th. Kraus, *Das römische Weltreich*, Propyläen Kunstgeschichte 2 (1967) 225, t. 183: a,b.

¹² G. M. Koepfel, *Reliefs*, 47-75; D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 200-202, sl. 132-135.

¹³ Mark Avrelij, Leptis Magna: Th. Kraus, *Das römische Weltreich* (1967) 259, t. 313.

¹⁴ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 225-227 z literaturo.

¹⁵ M. D. M.: na napisu moramo abreviature tako razrešiti. Hermann Dessau v CIL XIV 371 teh abreviatur ni razreševal. Čitanje *M(agnae) D(eum) M(atris)* Carla Roberta je manj točno, prav tako enako čitanje Guntrama Kocha in H. Sichtermann. - Kybele: W. Fauth, Kybele, v: *Der kleine Pauly* 3 (1969) 383-389; E. Simon, Kybele, v: *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)* VIII (Addenda) (1997) 744-766, t. 506-519, nn. 1-131; J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 43, 51.

Docela jasno je nemara tudi, da je v tem domu bila važnejša oseba žena, duhovnica, nosilka nekega višjega sporočila ob možu, funkcionarju pridobitnega kolegija tesarskih mojstrov. Alkestis na tem odličnem ostijskem sarkofagu pa ni bila edino v teh, od velike javnosti manj obiskovanih in bolj oddaljenih misterijskih krogih. Tudi hipogej na Via Latina v Rimu iz tretjega stoletja ni bil grobnica neke običajne skupine. V njej so pokopavali tako pogane kot kristjane in morda Jude, v simbiozi teh skupin pa je po mnenju uglednih raziskovalcev prav tako videti pokope neke esoterične sekte. Hipogej na Via Latina s freskami prizorov Heraklovih junaštev, med njimi tudi z zgodbo o rešitvi Alkestide iz žrela smrti, in s freskami Adama in Eve, daritve Kajna in Abela, prihoda Jakoba in njegovih sinov v Egipt, so izven kroga neke ozke verske skupine nezdružljivi. Ta Alkestida na sarkofagu v Ostiji in na freski v hipogeu na Via Latina je zgovorna po svojem sosodstvu.¹⁶

Alkestis in Herakles, morda umetniško najbolj dovršeni relief v Šempetru, je izklesan na grobni ari italškega tipa po strukturi kompozicije pepelnice spodaj in nadgrajene prave are zgoraj. Postavil jo je celejanski edil Gaj Vindonij Suktessus *uxori fidelissimae*, soprogi Gaji Ingenui, Sektovi hčeri.¹⁷ Šempetrski relief je v vsem, razen po temi, pravo nasprotje ostijskemu sarkofagu (sl. 6). Zato je toliko bolj nujno ob tem ugotoviti nekaj dejstev. Ostijski sarkofag je dobro datiran v prvo desetletje vlad Marka Avrelija, šempetrski relief pa je, nasprotno, kronološko zelo težko uvrstiti. Argumenti epigrafske narave, ki jih je postavil Jaro Šašel, so le indirektni.¹⁸ Po njegovi onomastični analizi je bil Vindonij časovno med prvimi edili kolonije Celeia, vsekakor že v prvem stoletju. Nagrobni spomenik žene Ingenue bi v tem primeru pripadal pač flavijski dobi. Po naših analizah bi spomenik stilno lahko še pripadal pozni dobi dinastije Flavijcev ali pa tudi že dobi cesarja Trajana. Za relativno pozno kronologijo bi govorila tudi markantno izvedena dvojna sedlasta voluta noriško-panonskega tipa vrh reliefa. Morda pa bomo morali relief in aro res postaviti šele v Hadrijanov čas. Potrebne bodo še dodatne študije in dodatna primerjanja, da bi bila datacija tega reliefa bolj zanesljiva.¹⁹

Tudi noriško-panonska umetnost je sledila zakonitostim razvoja visoke rimske, na helenističnem izročilu sloneče umetnosti v Mediteranu. Časovne zamude so razumljive, nikakor pa niso bile zelo velike. Relief Alkestide in Herakla v Šempetru s svojo voluminoznostjo že v tem zgodnjem času na prehodu iz prvega v drugo stoletje in z ekonomično zadržanostjo upodobljene teme napoveduje stilno obdelavo kasnejših reliefov Evrope in Ganimeda na grobnici Ennijcev iz časa Marka Avrelija in triptiha Ifigenije grobnice Spektatija Priskiana iz konca drugega stoletja. Umetnost Vindonijevskega reliefa je res delo velikega kiparja v zagonu razvoja noriško-panonske umetnosti. Likovna govorica v centru in v provincah je različna, težnje po močni izraznosti in izpovednosti v duhu časa pa so si podobne.

Šempetrski in ostijski relief Alkestide se stilno razlikujeta med seboj že zato, ker pripadata različnim dobama. Še bolj

pomembno za umestitev šempetrske umetnosti v celotni likovni proces časa pa je stilna usmeritev. Omejitev samo na dve osebi, skrajno premišljeno nasprotje med golo moško postavo Herakla in oblečeno žensko postavo Alkestide, dovršena kompozicijska umestitev obeh figur v okvir sedlaste volute zgoraj in nižajočih se poševnih tal spodaj, energična kretnja in poza Herakla, psihološko domišljena drža Alkestide, ki se prebujajo iz globokega, smrtnega dremeža - vse to usmerja relief k neo-atiskim stilnim vzorom. Vzorčne knjige in morda tudi prvi umetniški - tako se zdi - prvenstveno prihajali preko Akvileje v jugovzhodni Norik in dalje v Panonijo iz vzhodnega Mediterana, Helade in Male Azije, skozi Salono in druga mesta Dalmacije in ne toliko iz Rima v Deseto regijo predalpske Italije - drugače torej, kakor v pozni republiki in v Avgustovi dobi, ko je vpliv Rima kot prevladujočega središča prihajal v Akvilejo in od tod proti severu in noriški prostor Noreje in Virunuma bolj neposredno in bolj izrazito.²⁰

Ob teh docela razumljivih razlikah v kronološkem razponu in izvoru umetniških del v različnih regijah pa je simbolna govorica funerarnih spomenikov po celotnem imperiju v principatu tako rekoč docela enotna. Kakor je po našem zanesljivo dokazal Franz Cumont in so njegove teze sprejeli številni kasnejši raziskovalci, moramo kljub raznim, sicer tehtnim, toda vendarle parcialnim ugovorom ugotavljati, da je simbolika neopitagorejske vizije človekovega bivanja ob prehodu iz tega življenja v onstranstvo in celo do skrajnih eshatoloških meja večnosti prepričljivo izražena. Mitos o Alkestidi in Heraklu je samo eden med mnogimi, zaradi svoje psihološke globine in občutenosti, ki jo je ustvaril že Evripides, pa je na funerarnih spomenikih tako pogostno oblikovan od najbolj preproste, najbolj rustikalne in provincialne izdelave do visoke dramske in poetske izpovednosti reliefov na sarkofagih.²¹

*

Sarkofag z O r e s t o v o zgodbo, zdaj v Vatikanskih muzejih, v Museo Gregoriano profano, inv. 10450 (prej v Lateranu). Sarkofag so našli v hipogeu v Rimu pri Viminalskih vratih skupaj še z dvema drugima sarkofagoma leta 1839. Prvo poročilo: Grifi, *Intorno ad un Sepolcro disotterrato nella vigna del Conte Lozano Argoli 1839*, Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di archeologia 10, 1842, t. 1: A; C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs* II, Berlin 1890, n. 155, 168-171, t. 54: 155, 155a, 155b z risbo G. Eichlerja iz leta 1877 (sl. 7); W. Helbig, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom I*⁴ (H. Speier), Tübingen 1963, 808 s, n. 1127 (B. Andreae); H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, 53-54, t. 133(2); 135-140, (n. 53: Orestes), fotografije G. Singer (sl. 8).²²

Sarkofag stoji na dveh prečnih podstavkih, ki sta spredaj oblikovana v figuri dveh čepečih Atlantov. Sarkofag pripoveduje zgodbo Oresta in Ifigenije. S pripovedovanjem pričanja na levi

¹⁶ A. Ferrua, *Le pitture della nuova catacomba di Via Latina* (1960) Monumenti di antichità cristiana, Serie II 8; A. Grabar, *Die Kunst des frühen Christentums*, Universum der Kunst (1967): Herakles in Alkestis, sl. 251; Adam in Eva, sl. 24; Kajn in Abel, sl. 37; prihod Jakoba in njegovih sinov v Egipt, sl. 36.

¹⁷ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 491-506, sl. 152: 28, Alkestis in Herakles.

¹⁸ J. Šašel, C. Vindonius Successus, *Živa ant.* 5, 1955, 127-139 = J. Šašel, *Opera selecta*, Situla 34 (1992) 44-53.

¹⁹ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 221-223.

²⁰ Provenience vplivov: G. Koch, H. Sichtermann, *Römische Sarkophage* (1982) passim; J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 151-157; M. Bonanno Aravantinos, Il mito di Ifigenia in Tauride sui sarcofagi attici di età romana, v: *Grabeskunst der römischen Kaiserzeit* (1993) 67-76.

²¹ F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains* (1942) ponatis (1966); A. D. Nock, Sarcophagi and Symbolism, *Amer. Jour. Arch.* 50, 1946, 140-170 (kritična ocena Cumontovega dela); G. Koch, H. Sichtermann, *Römische Sarkophage* (1982) 581-617, *Sinngehalt* (H. Sichtermann); J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 108-113.

²² Objava še npr. D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 190, sl. 123.

strani čelne ploskve po Ajshilu, *Žrtvovanje na grobu* (*Choëphoroi*): na vhodnih vratih v skalno votlino grobnice - "thólōsa" - stoji v mrtvaški prti zavita postava - duh umorjenega kralja Agamemnona. Pred vhod sta prišla Orest, ki očeta pozdravlja in ga hoče objeti, in Pylades z dvignjeno desnico v kretnji počastitve. Oba sta upodobljena gola, le s hlamido, ogrnje-no okoli vratu in ramena. Spodaj pred vhomom sloni navidezno speča, a vedno čuječa Erinija z veliko sekuro ob sebi, s katero je bil kralj Agamemnon umorjen.

Na srednji, veliki sceni je upodobljen umor Ajgista in Klytajmestre. V Ajshilovi tragediji je umor seveda samo pripovedovan, izvrši se v palači in ga na odru ne vidimo. Sicer nemi Pylades se oglasi v drami samo enkrat, ko opozori Oresta na njegovo dolžnost, da mora izvršiti krvno maščevanje za očeta. To je pomembno za razumevanje prizora na vatikanskem sarkofagu, ker je Pylades v tragediji popolnoma pasivna oseba in zato v prizoru ne more vršiti kekega pomembnega dejanja. Ajshilovo zgodbo je moral likovni umetnik prenesti v konkretno upodobitev. Dejanski umor, v tragediji neviden, je zdaj postal pravi osrednji likovni motiv. Na levem delu tega prizora je Orest sunil Ajgista s prestola in ga ubil. V drugi, neposredno priključni polovici prizora na desni strani pa je Orest v podobni pozi golega atleta zrušil na tla mater, ki je razgalila desno dojko in iztegnila desnico v proseči obrambi. - To so okrutni prizori, primerni za oči Rimljanov, ki so bili vajeni krvavih borb v areni. - Carl Robert je spričo te nespretne upodobitve za prizor na vatikanskem sarkofagu še mislil, da je Ajgista podrl na tla Pylades, tik poleg njega na desni simetrično postavljeni Orest pa Klytajmestro. Na prvi pogled je res nemogoče v obeh figurah videti isto osebo, samó Oresta. Toda Ajshilov tekst je nedvoumen. Pylades ni igravec, ni človek akcije, ampak le nekakšna Orestova, v figuro konkretizirana misel.

S pomočjo prizora na sarkofagu z istim ajshilejskim motivom v Sankt Peterburgu pa lahko bolje razumemo to nenavadno kompozicijo vatikanskega sarkofaga (sl. 9). Na peterburškem reliefu Ajgist sedi na svojem prestolu, Orest z desne ga z nogo peha z njega, Pylades z leve pa samo opazuje prizor.²³

Na vatikanskem sarkofagu drži "levi" Orest v desnici meč, z levico pa pridržuje kraljevske haljo, ki jo je strgal Ajgistu s telesa. Carl Robert je domneval, da je likovna, morda slikana helenistična predloga prizora Ajshilove drame prikazovala - ne Ajgistovo obleko, ampak tkanino, v katero sta Ajgist in Klytajmestra nekoč zapletla Agamemnona (sl. 10). V resnici pa je tu res prikazana samo halja, ki jo je Orest potegnil z ubitega Ajgista. Resnična znamenita ajshilejska "pisana tkanina" Agamemnonovega umora pa je upodobljena šele na desni strani. Erinija z veliko kačo, ovito okoli leve roke, drži z isto roko tudi rob tkanine, ki jo zadaj pridržuje druga, desna Erinija pred seboj. To torej ni parapéasma, kakor domneva pred-vsem B. Andreae v Helbigovem *Vodniku*. Tkanina je namreč še bolj kot na sarkofagu v Sankt Peterburgu prikazana naravnost grozljivo in strašče na sarkofagu v opatiji San Husillo pri Palenciji v Španiji (sl. 11) in skoraj kot dubleta tega sarkofaga na čelni ploskvi nekega sicer neohranjenega sarkofaga v Palazzo Giustiniani v Rimu. Na reliefu sarkofaga v San Husillo Erinije dvigujejo ogromno tkanino proti Orestu, ki je preplašeno obrača pogled v stran.²⁴ V

Ajshilovi tragediji Orest zelo dobro razume ves pomen usodne tkanine in jo tako tudi pred-stavi zboru:²⁵ ta tkanina je

α!γρευμα θηρΠΥ, η! νεκρουε ποδΚνδυτον
δροΦτηΥ κατασκΥνωμα; ΔΦκτυον μΛν ο!ϋν
α!ρκυν τ! * α!ν ει!ποιΥ καΓ ποδιστηραΥ πΚδαΥ.

...

νυεν αυ*την α!νωε, νυεν Χποιμαζω παραν,
πατροκτιΠνον θ! * φασμα προσφωνωεν τΠδε
Χλγωε μΛν Νργα καΓ παθοΥ γΚνοΥ τε παεν,
α!ζηλα νΦκηΥ τηεσδ * Νχων μιΛσματα.

Kako ji reči, da bo prav?

Je lovska sprava? Je mrtvaška srajca?

Ne! Reci raje mreža, progla, zanka,

lisice, ki zavirajo noge -

...

in ko ogovarjam smrtno haljo očeta,

bolé me dela in muke vsega roda,

in zmaga moje krvne krivde pada

težko mi na srce.

Drugi, neposredno na desni upodobljeni Orest med dejanjem uboja obrača glavo v stran. Zadaj za Orestom v prvem prizoru z Ajgistom se, bolj na levi, prav tako obrača v stran in si zakriva obraz z roko Orestova dojilija, na desni od Klitajmestre pa se skriva niže pri tleh in dviga nad glavo v obrambo nizek sedež preplašeni služabnik. Orest je v tem trenutku že začutil za seboj in v sebi prvo od dveh Erinij z velikansko kačo, ovito okoli desnice, ki jo izteza proti Orestovi glavi. Za njo vidimo drugo Erinijo, ki se prikazuje izza razgrnjene preproge - "parapéasma".²⁶

Osrednji prizor prehaja brez prostorskega premora v tretji prizor Oresta v Delfih. Čisto na desni se scena zaključuje s trinožnikom na štirikotni bazi in z ómfalosom, ovitim v tkano, nad trinožnikom. Nad tem svetim simbolom Delfov se širi lovorovo drevo. Še vedno na pol blazni Orest, ki po Ajshilovem oblikovanju mita ni v Delfih docela ozdravel, dviga v desni-ci meč, v levici za glavo pa drži prazno nožnico meča ter previdno stopa preko dremajoče Erinije in odhaja iz Delfov nazaj na levo, v negotovo nadaljevanje svojega življenja. Erinija je ob zgornjih dveh Erinijah, ki sta po prizoru očitno prisotni še v trenutku uboja Ajgista in Klitajmestre v Argosu, tukaj tretja, nekak vezni člen. B. Andreae misli, da Orest na tem prizoru odhaja iz Delfov že pred dogodki v Argosu in da se bo zdaj šele napotil domov. Sceno bi po tej razlagi morali postaviti časovno kot prvo med tremi scenami na čelu sarkofaga in bi se dogodki nadaljevali nato z leve strani z Orestovim prihodom na očetov grob.²⁷ Toda tej domnevi bi bilo le težko pritrčiti. Mirujoča Erinija, preko katere se Orest previdno oddaljuje, je popolnoma vzporedno oblikovana z mirujočo Erinijo ob vhomu Agamemnonove grobnice, le da ima Erinija v Delfih okoli leve roke ovito kačo. Orestov obrat na levo je bil tudi za kiparja nujen, saj si kompozicijsko ni mogoče predstavljati, da bi se zadnja desna oseba na širokem panoju reliefa kompozicijsko obračala izven prostora.

²³ C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs II* (1890) 166-168, t. 54: 154. Ajgist in njegov prestol sta docela po rimsko oblikovana, po tipu "vladarja na prestolu", kot na primer v bronasti statueti Jupitra iz 1. stoletja v Pompejih, Casa degli Amorini dorati, ali pa podobna statueta iz Niša, *Antička bronza u Jugoslaviji* (1969) 85, t. 71, katalog razstave št. 71 (M. Veličković), 1. stoletje.

²⁴ Sarkofag San Husillo pri Palenciji (Španija): C. Robert, prav tam, 173-174, t. 55, kat. št. 157. Sarkofag je rimsko delo, verjetno pa je prišel v Španijo že ob ustanovitvi opatije okoli 1488. - Sarkofag v Palazzo Giustiniani v Rimu: C. Robert, prav tam, 171-173, t. 55, kat. št. 156.

²⁵ Ajshil, *Choëphoroi* 997-1000, 1015-1017. Prevod Antona Sovreta: Aishilos, *Oresteia* (1963) 196-197.

²⁶ H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, 52.

²⁷ B. Andreae v Helbig, *Führer*, I4, 808 s.

Tu se prizor iz Ajshilove *Oresteje* zaključuje. Orestov prihod v Atene, izprememba Erinij v Evmenide, glasovanje na Areopagu, odločilni nastop boginje Atene, vse to je visoko idejno in visoko pesniško pripovedovanje o spravi v atenskem polisu leta 458 pr. Kr., ko je Ajshil ob praprizoritvi *Oresteje* prejel prvo nagrado. To je bil čas strmega dviga atenske politične in kulturne sile v atiško-delski pomorski zvezi s Periklejem na čelu. Demokracija se je vsa nova porajala in nobene sence ni bilo videti na njej. Tako si je zaključek tragičnih dogodkov *Oresteje* zamislil Ajshil.

Morda pa smemo v obratu od čelne strani sarkofaga na njegovo levo stranico v abreviaturi videti to visoko misel pravega dejanja v Atenah, kamor naj bi Orest po Ajshilu dospel. Pod velikim drevesom, v tem primeru bi bilo to oljčno drevo Ereththéjona, sedi - ne več Erinija, ampak pomirjena in mir oznanjajoča Evmenida, z mirujočo, v klobčič zvito veliko kačo ob sebi in z visoko dvignjeno prižgano baklo v desnici (sl. 12b). Tudi če bi ta prizor z Evmenido razlagali kot simbolni zaključek cele *Orestove* zgodbe z dogodki na Tavridi vred, bi najbolj logično prizorišče teh dogodkov bile še vedno Atene, tam, kjer so se pomirjene Evmenide po teh mitih končno naselile.

Tudi relief na desni stranici sarkofaga moramo časovno uvrstiti med ajshilejsko zgodbo na čelni stranici in med evripidejskim nadaljevanjem zgodbe na čelni plošči pokrova (sl. 12a). "*Guai a voi, anime prave!*"²⁸ - v taki danteski sceni zagledamo Harona v čolnu, ko prihaja na breg po obe osebi, Ajgista in Klitajmestro, obe zagrneni v dolgo mrtvaško haljo z oglavnico. Spodaj valovi Aherona, na levi skale podzemne jame Hada.

Zdaj se lahko usmerimo k zgornjemu reliefu čelne strani sarkofaga! Evripidove predzgodbe Ifigenije v Avlidi, s katero se začneja šempetrski triptih na Priskianovi grobnici, tu ne vidi-mo. Bila bi moteča. Časovno spada po mitu davno pred Ajshilove *Choëphóroi* in *Evmenide* in tudi pred *Agamemnona*, vsebinsko pa ne govori nič o Orestu. Kakor je spodnji relief uboja Ajgista in Klitajmestre razdeljen v tri prizore, tako se deli tudi zgornji relief na troje (sl. 13). Vendar je kompozicijska razlika precejšnja: vsi prizori v Argosu spodaj se zlivajo drug v drugega. Trije prizori na Tavridi - srečanje Ifigenije z Orestom pred Artemidinim svetiščem, prizor odnašanja Artemidinega kipa k umivanju v morju in prizor bega Grkov s Tavride - pa so na tem reliefu lepo in vidno oddeljeni med seboj.

Prvi prizor razmejuje od drugega drevo, drugi prizor od tretjega arhitektura. Prvi prizor: na levi strani je upodobljeno svetišče z dvokrilnimi, zaprtimi vrati. Svetišče je docela preprosto in je z ozirom na velikost nastopajočih oseb premajhnih proporcev in predstavlja čisto abreviaturo dejanske, v prostor postavljene arhitekture. Drevesa so samo nakazana resnič-na drevesa. Morajo pa biti zares lovorjeva drevesa, saj je Artemida Apolonova sestra in lovor je sveto drevo teh apoloničnih bogov. Pred svetiščem je prižgan ogenj na okroglem žrtveniku, pred njim pa stoje štiri osebe: Ifigenija, ki izroča pismo prestrašenemu Pyladu, pri njegovih nogah je capsa za pisemske zvitke v obliki vrča. Orest, ki ga Pylades zadržuje in miri ter drži za roko, stoji za njim, še za njim tavrski stražar. Tu se relief tega sarkofaga oddaljuje od Evripida, kjer Ifigenija izrecno želi, da se prizor s pismom odvija brez navzočnosti stražarja. Ta prizor je od naslednjega prizora oddeljen z drevesom. Tu zdaj nastopa pet oseb, ne več štiri, kakor v prvi sceni. Na levi spet Ifigenija, nekoliko bolj svečano oblečena, z diademom v lasih. V rokah drži zaviti Artemidin ksóanon, ki ga bo ponesla k morju s pretvezo, da ga umije in bi Grki tako nemoteno prišli k morski obali. Pred njo stoji zdaj Orest pred Pyladom. Roke ima vkleknjene na hrbtu. Za obema stoji stražar s skitsko kapo in skitskimi hlačami - anaksyridami. Vse

tri osebe stoje skoraj negibno v pokončni drži, medtem ko se Pylades in Orest na prvem prizoru bolj živahno nagibljeta proti Ifigeniji. Sledi peta oseba - tavrski kralj Thoas. Tu nas čaka presenečenje. Thoas ni oblečen v vojaško opravo po klasičnem vzoru kakor na reliefu v Šempetru, ampak nosi na sebi haljo do tal in je ogrnjen v dolg plašč. V levici nosi dolgo, močno palico, čisto teatarske oblike. Noge ima obute v koničaste, nizke čevlje. Desnica je izprožena v kretnji deklamacije. Ta oseba ni Thoas v resničnem prizoru na Tavridi, ampak igralec na odru v Evripidovi drami *Ifigenija v deželi Tavrov*. Oblečen je v kostum igralca in stoji v deklamatorski pozi osebe na odru. Prizor je oblikovan v svoji dvojnosti docela tako, kakor je oblikovan prizor z Dionizom in Ariadno na velikem sarkofagu iz nekropole pod Svetim Petrom v Vatikanu.²⁹ Na tem sarkofagu se vrača Bakhos v triumfu na vozu, ki ga vlečejo sloni, iz Indije, z ve-selim, glasnim spremstvom satirov pred vozom. Na osrednjem prizoru pa se je pred spečo Ariadno v izraziti igralski pozi postavil še enkrat, to pot Evripidov Bakhos, v dolgi halji, v mehkih, koničastih čevljih na nogah, z veliko, ob sebi spuščeno ugaslo baklo v desnici. Odrsko oblikovanje prizora Thoasa in ostalih oseb na Orestovem sarkofagu pa še bolj poudarja kulisa arhitekture ob Thoasu na desni: kaneliran pilaster z delom oboka, ki se boči nad Thoasovo glavo. Prizor naj se vrši torej v Thoasovi palači, ob izhodu na prosto, tako kot so bile zares oblikovane odrske scene helenističnega in rimskega gledališča.

V tretjem, zadnjem prizoru na desni je upodobljen beg Grkov s Tavride. Na desni strani je na morskih valovih videti krmo ladje in Ifigenijo v varnem zavetju izza ograje na krovu. Ifigenija drži v desnici Artemidin ksóanon. Mostič še ni potegnen na ladjo, po njem se vzpenja Pylades z dvignjenim mečem. V nasprotno smer nazaj pa je obrnjen Orest in se bori z dvema Tavroma. Eden od njiju, s podolgovatim, ovalnim ščitom, je že padel, drugi s podolgovatim ščitom rombične oblike pa se brani. Dejansko pa ni mogoče reči, kateri od obeh grških junakov se še bori s Tavroma in kateri na mostiču varuje Ifigenijo. Z ozirom na dramatičnost dogodka, bi morda, če primerjamo nekatere podrobnosti leve osebe, ki se bori s Tavroma, z dvojico Oresta in Pylada v obeh prejšnjih prizorih, pred svetiščem in ob nameri umivanja Artemidinega kipa, smeli domnevati, da je ta oseba Orest in oseba na mostiču Pylades. To bi bilo po svoje psihološko utemeljeno, da se poudari vodilna vloga Oresta v skupini obeh Grkov. Tako tudi v Šempetru v prizoru umika Grkov na ladjo. Omenimo še, da sta oba tavrski ščita tipična galska ščita, posneta torej po oborožitvi barbarskih Keltoev - Galcev in Galatov, v nasprotju s kratkimi meči, s katerimi se borita grška junaka.

Stil glavnega prizora na skrinji sarkofaga, vključno z reliefoma na obeh stranicah sarkofaga, se zelo razlikuje od stila prizora na čelu pokrova sarkofaga. Figure reliefov spodaj so razgibane, plastične, dinamične, kompozicija je živa in v vseh možnih ozirih polna raznih nivojev ter oblik gibanja. Vertikale postav so praktično razbite, horizontale rok pa se vrstijo od leve pred Agamemnonovim grobom do desne z Orestom v Delfih. Niso pa togo vodoravne, temveč prav tako razgibane. Popolnoma drugačna je obravnava oseb na čelu pokrova tega sarkofaga. Resda so figure borbe na desni strani reliefa premaknjene iz vertikale v poševne linije, kakor to zahteva borba, vendar pa je v njih čutiti konvencionalno pozo. Osebe pred žrtvovanjem na levi strani in osebe srednjega reliefa pa so kakor postavljene na sceno. Komajda je v njih kaj resničnega življenja. Umetnik ni znal v prizor vnesti niti malo tiste dramatike, ki jo oba prizora po Evripidovi drami v sebi nosita. Igralec kralja na desni strani reliefa in kulisa arhitekture s pilastrom ob njem najboljše pričata

²⁸ Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia, Inferno*, III, 84.

²⁹ F. Matz, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs*, IV, 2, t. 174; J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 471 s in op. 11, sl. 184.

o konvencionalni risbi, ki jo je umetnik tega reliefa imel v svoji vzorčni knjigi. Z gotovostjo lahko trdimo, da je klesarska delavnica tega sarkofaga naročala izdelke pri različnih umetnikih različnega talenta in različnih stilnih usmeritev. Dva različna umetnika na tem sarkofagu dokazujeta isto prakso kakor dva različna umetnika, ki sta izklesala reliefe zgodbe z Ifigenijo za Priskianovo grobnico v Šempetru.

Grobnica pri Viminalskih vratih s sarkofagom Oresta, sarkofagom Niobid in sarkofagom z girlandami je datirana z žigom na opeki "po letu 132". Druga opeka je datirana v leto 134, ko je bil Hadrijanov svak Lucius Iulius Ursus Servianus tretji konzul.³⁰ Dobro pa datira sarkofag tudi sam stil. Četudi je relief pokrova delo manj pomembnega umetnika, vendarle nekaj pove. Shematična razvrstitev figur, ki kljub togosti poskušajo v samem procesionalnem ritmu uvesti nekaj razgibanosti, spominja na boljši vzor - na sprednji relief tako imenovanih "anaglypha Traiani", zdaj v Curia Iulia na Forumu, s prizorom Trajanovega nagovora z roste na levi in sedečo postavo imperatorja, Trajana ali Nerve, v spremstvu pred njim stoječe alegorije dežele Italije na desni (sl. 14).³¹ Delo je iz Hadrijanove dobe. Donald Strong je mislil, da je na desni strani sprednje plošče, ki prikazuje Trajanovo adlocutio, sedeči imperator Hadrijan, ker da je relief pač iz Hadrijanove dobe. Glava te sedeče osebe pa ni zelo dobro ohranjena in ni tako izrazita, da bi lahko v primerjavi z znanimi Trajanovimi in Hadrijanovimi portreti ugotavljali, katera je ta sedeča oseba. Bilo bi pa nelogično, da bi bil na reliefu upodobljen živeči vladar, torej Hadrijan, na sedežu z alegorijo Italije ob sebi, na levi pa bi se pojavljala njegov že pokojni predhodnik Trajan v konkretni akciji adlokucije navzočim stoječim osebam pred seboj. Zato Gerhard M. Koeppel pravilneje domneva, da je sedeča oseba na desni prav tako Trajan, morda pa še celo Nerva. Za našo primerjavo z reliefom na sarkofagu Oresta takšna ali drugačna atribucija ni bistvena. Vsekakor je čas izdelave anaglypha pozno trajanski (Koeppel) ali zgodnje hadrijanski (Strong) in je mogoče procesionalno razvrstitev poslušalcev cesarjeve adlokucije na reliefu, sicer resda z višjo kakovostjo izdelave, vzporediti z reliefom Ifigenije in Oresta na pokrovu Orestovega sarkofaga.

Tudi upodobitve treh dreves na tem reliefu pokrova in drevesa na reliefu leve stranice z Evmenido najde svoj visoki vzor v upodobitvi dreves na Hadrijanovih lovskih tondih, sekundarno nameščenih na Konstantinovem slavoloku. Na plošči z žrtvovanjem Apolonu je to dvoje lovorovih dreves v ozadju ob Apolonovem svetišču in ari (sl. 15), na plošči z lovom na leva pa najbrže dve platani.³²

Za glavni relief čelne stranice sarkofaga z Orestovo zgodbo po Ajshilu, za dramatično razgibanost in kompozicijo prizora lahko prav tako pokažemo na oba reliefa, ki sta bila v pozni antiki vzdana na tako imenovanem Arco di Portogallo na tedanji Via Lata, kasneje Via Flaminia, zdaj Via del Corso v Rimu. Relief sta zdaj v Palazzo dei Conservatori na Kapitulu.³³ Bakla v roki Viktorije na reliefu z apoteozo cesarice Vibije Sabine, umrle konec leta 136, odgovarja po obliki žezlu kralja Thoasa na Orestovem reliefu (sl. 16). Tudi način, kako Viktorija drži baklo in Thoas žezlo, je podoben. Zaporedje dveh glav figur moža in otroka na plošči z (drugo) adlokucijo z Arco di Portogallo je podobno zaporedju Pylada in Oresta

pred Agamemnonovim grobom ali obeh Erinij in Oresta na desni strani istega reliefa.

Na obeh sprednjih vogalih pokrova sarkofaga sta izklesani kot dva akroterija dve markantni glavi Tavrov z dolgimi, valovitimi kodri in s frigijsko kapo (sl. 17a). Akroteriji dekorativno zaključujejo arhitekturo sarkofagov na robih pokrovov že v grškem svetu. V simbolni interpretaciji postanejo glave na vogalih hkrati apotropajski znak in hkrati simbol vetrov v nemirni zgornji atmosferi, skozi katero potujejo duše umrlih k planetom. Glavi Tavrov na Orestovem sarkofagu sta odlično izdelani in stilno popolnoma odgovarjata visokemu času Hadrijanove umetnosti. Gerhard M. Koeppel objavlja v svojem pregledu rimske reliefne plastike za drugo stoletje glavo v visokem reliefu, del neke reliefne figure iz posthadrijanskega, antoninskega časa, zdaj v Uffizih v Firencah (sl. 17b). Plastična moč in podobnost glav na Orestovem sarkofagu in glave v Uffizih je očitna in datacije niso sporne.³⁴

Triptih v Šempetru z Ifigenijo in Orestom se sicer dokaj razlikuje od Orestovega sarkofaga v Rimu, vsebuje pa tudi nekaj pomembnih podobnosti (sl. 18). Razlika v času nastanka - reliefi v Šempetru so iz konca 2. stoletja,³⁵ rimski sarkofag pa je del poetske, žive narativne umetnosti Hadrijanove dobe, ki se je zgledovala po helenističnih vzorih. Sedil je antoninski čas umetnosti v dobi cesarjev Antonina Pija, Marka Avrelija, Komoda in Septimija Severa, v plastiki bolj v sebi nezanesljiv, težek k manierizmu in baročnemu patosu in končno že k ploskovitosti. Umetnost v Šempetru je le deloma sledila temu razvoju v Rimu, celo bolj pa vplivom neoatiškega stila z vzhodnega dela imperija, ki je s svojo strogostjo in poenostavljenostjo bolje odgovarjal že prej prisotnim domačim težnjam noriško-panonske umetnosti. Tako stil Orestovega sarkofaga v Rimu in stil triptiha Priskianove grobnice v Šempetru nimata veliko skupnega.

Zato pa so si podobne nekatere podrobnosti, očitno po raznih predlogah v potujočih vzorčnih knjigah kamnoseških delavnic, pa tudi po neposrednem opazovanju posameznih kiparjev na potovanjih iz kraja v kraj, tudi iz provinc v mesta visokega stila Mediterana in obratno. Ifigenija na tretjem reliefu v Šempetru in na reliefu na Dravinjskem vrhu ter na reliefu v Sopianah se vzpenja po mostiču na ladjo s podobno hojo in kretnjami kakor eden od obeh grških junakov - ali Pylades ali Orest - na sarkofagu v Rimu. Svetišče tavrške Artemide je po svoji skromni arhitekturi, iz kvadrov grajenih stenah in nizki dvokapni strehi ter z dvokrilnimi vrati, skoraj enako na rimskem sarkofagu, na reliefu na Dravinjskem vrhu in v Sopianah (na reliefu v Šempetru te arhitekture ni). Ne le to - prav podobno je prikazana arhitektura grobne edikule na freskah v starokrščanskih katakombah. Taka arhitektura je upodobljena na freski z obujenjem Lazarja v katakombi Santi Pietro e Marcellino, blizu mavzoleja svete Helene (Tor Pignatara) na Via Labicana, iz konca tretjega stoletja (sl. 19). Podobno, morda še bolje je prikazana taka grobna edikula v prostoru pred Capella Greca v katakombah Priscille na Via Salaria Nuova.³⁶ Orest pred žrtvenikom na reliefu v Šempetru je prav tako prikazan v tričetrtinskem profilu od zadaj z obratom na levo kot Orest v prizoru umivanja kipa na sarkofagu v Rimu, le da drži Orest na šempetrskem reliefu zvezani roki pred seboj, rimski Orest pa ju ima zvezane zadaj.

³⁰ CIL XV 1051 Dressel. Ta žig je izgubljen. - Konzul Servianus: RE X,1 (1917) 882-891, Iulius, n. 538 (Groag).

³¹ G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 17-20, sl. 1; Strong, *Roman Art*, 127, sl. 113.

³² Apolon: G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 32, sl. 13; D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 177, sl. 114. Lev: G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 30, sl. 11.

³³ G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 38-43, sl. 21; 22; D. Strong, *Roman Art*, 177, sl. 111; 112.

³⁴ Glavi - akroterija na sarkofagu: C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs II*, 171; H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, *Griechische Mythen*, t. 138. - Relief glave v Firencah, Uffizi, inv. 418: G. A. Mansuelli, *Galleria degli Uffizi, Le sculture II* (1961) 182, n. 170; G. M. Koeppel, *Reliefs*, 38 (n. 17), sl. 20 a,b.

³⁵ J. Kastelic, *Simbolika Šempeter*, 214 s, 219-239.

³⁶ A. Grabar, *Die Kunst des frühen Christentums* (1967) sl. 22; O. Wulff, *Altchristliche und byzantinische Kunst I* (1914) sl. 53.

Oba pomembna spomenika, Orestov sarkofag v Rimu in zgodba Ifigenije in Oresta v Šempetru pa sta kljub časovni distanci in kljub pogojenosti kiparske obdelave - relief na široki ploskvi sarkofaga lažje razvija svojo narativnost in govori lahko bolj podrobno, relief noriško-panoske skoposti na pepelnici v Šempetru pa mora že tehnično opuščati razne podrobnosti sce-ne - vendarle docela enovito spadata v tisto veliko skupino funerarnih spomenikov, ki po vsem prostoru rimske ekumene v tem času govori z istim jezikom. Z jezikom simbola o *ascensio* duš pokojnikov, ki so jim bile te kamnite skrinje namenjene. Tu je bila razlika le v bogastvu naročnika, v sposobnosti umetnika, v tehnični in organizacijski spretnosti kamnoseške de-lavnice, v lokalnih razlikah v stilu in v izbiranju tem, ki pa celotne podobe ne izpreminjajo in ji ne jemljejo normativne vrednosti. Stoiški filozofi, neopitagorejski pridigarji, sinkre-tistično usmerjeni navdušeni pripadniki raznim bolj ali manj izrazitim vzhodnim sektam in učeni ali tudi manj učeni mitografi, pri katerih so se pustili poučiti tako naročniki kot izvajalci mogočnih spomenikov - vse to je bilo trajno prisotno v principatu in je bilo osnova za tako silovit razvoj te veje umetnosti reliefne plastike, ki jo zastopajo v velikem svetu predvsem sarkofa-gi, v provincah Norika in Panonije ter Galije in Germanije pa mogočne grobne kapele, kakršne so se ohranile v Šempetru.

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Z analizo vatikanskih sarkofagov Alkestide in Oresta smo ugotovili, da je kljub objavam in študijam od sredine prejšnjega stoletja do danes, posebej tudi kljub klasičnim objavam Carla Roberta z Eichlerjevimi risbami v korpusu *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs* iz let 1890 in 1897 in delu Hellmuta Sichtermanna in Guntrama Kocha s fotografijami Gerharda Singerja v delu *Griechische Mythen auf römischen Sarkophagen* iz leta 1975,

ki naj bi predvsem s Singerjevimi fotografijami predstavljalo dodatek k Eichlerjevimi risbam v standardnem Robertovem delu, ostalo nerazrešenih in neugotovljenih še dokaj podrobnosti. Tudi stilni problemi vključitve teh sarkofagov v splošni razvoj rimske umetnosti drugega stoletja še niso dokončni. Nekaj dodatnih opažanj in ugotovitev je poskušala prispevati naša razprava. Primerjava obeh obravnavanih tem v Šempetru - Alkestide na grobnem spomeniku Julije Ingenue in triptiha Oresta z Ifigenijo na spomeniku Gaja Spektatija Prskiana - je pokazala, kako so teme v zasnovi različno in hkrati podobno obravnavali pomembni kiparji v noriško-panonskem svetu. Pokazalo se je znova tudi že dolgo znano dejstvo, kako odločilen vpliv so na upodobitve in tudi na samo izbiro simbolnih mitov imele za funerarno umetnost Evripidove drame. Upodobitev Oresta po Ajshilu in Evripidu na enem samem spomeniku - sarkofagu pri Viminalskih vratih - pa zahteva še posebno pozornost. Tudi visoka umetniška vrednost reliefov v Šempetru je znova dobila v tej zvezi svojo potrditev.

Viri ilustracij

Sl. 7; 9; 11; 12a,b: Die Antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs, II, Berlin 1890; *sl. 1,5a: Die Antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs*, III 1, Berlin 1897; *sl. 19: A. Grabar, Die Kunst des frühen Christentums*, München 1967; *sl. 5b; 6; 18: J. Kastelic, Symbolika mitov na rimskih nagrobnih spomenikih: Šempeter v Savinjski dolini*, Ljubljana 1998; *sl. 14-17b: G. M. Koeppel, Die historischen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit IV: Stadtrömische Denkmäler unbekannter Bauzugehörigkeit aus hadrianischer bis konstantinischer Zeit*, *Bonner Jb.* 186, 1986; *sl. 2-4; 8; 10; 13; 17a: H. Sichtermann, G. Koch, Griechische Mythen auf römischen Sarkophagen*, Tübingen 1975.

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