

Gravestone with Warriors in Boston

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THE GRAVESTONE discussed in this article was recently acquired by the Department of Classical Art of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. It is a welcome addition to the museum's collection of gravestones from the archaic and the classical period.¹

I

The rectangular slab [PLATE 1] is carved in the uppermost section into a pediment with akroteria. The width of the horizontal geison is not indicated by a lower ridge but passes into a convex moulding; the geison is inscribed with the name of the deceased:

ΣΤΡΑΤΟΚΛΗΣ ΠΡΟΚΛΕΟΣ

Στρατοκλής Προκλέ(υ)ς

STRATOKLES SON OF PROKLES

The letters are fully preserved except for slight damage especially in the first Σ, the Η and the final Σ. They are fairly evenly spaced. Only between Α, Τ, Ο in Stratokles is the distance between the letters slightly increased. As usual, the *omikrons* tend to be somewhat smaller as compared with the other letters; identical letters show slight differences too, such as the Τ and Λ; in the final Σ the first stroke is

¹ The author wishes to thank Dr Cornelius C. Vermeule III for permission to publish the gravestone: Museum of Fine Arts 1971.129, J. H. & E. Payne Fund, March, 1971. Pentelic Marble. H:0.59m; W:0.405m; Th:0.114m (max., at top). Edges of stone slightly damaged. Some of right-hand akroterion and point of central akroterion missing. Chip off in left-hand akroterion. Lower part of relief shows an irregular break and has caused damage to the legs, feet and one hand of the warriors. The surface of the relief background shows chisel marks near the edges. Above the cloak of the attacking warrior splinters of stone are broken out and minor cavities appear in the surface. The marble has assumed a reddish patina. Formerly in the collection of Vicomte du Dresnay. P. Perdrizet, *Antiquités grecques de la Collection du Vicomte du Dresnay* (1918) pl.4. Sold on the Paris market, auction Hotel Drouot, Paris, 15 décembre 1969, lot 134. Exhibited in Basle, *Kunstwerke der Antike* 9–20 Oktober 1970, plate. Attributed to the Aristandros sculptor by J. Frel, in J. Frel and B. M. Kingsley, "Three Attic Sculpture Workshops of the Early Fourth Century B.C.," *GRBS* 11 (1970) 206 no.29, pl.15.1 [only upper half of relief (hereafter cited FREL)]. According to Dr Dietrich von Bothmer the relief is said to have been found in Attica.

rather horizontal than slanting as in the other two *sigmas*. All of the peculiarities noted are common in late fifth- and fourth-century B.C. inscriptions but they are absent from inscriptions incised by an experienced hand.

The relief shows two figures in a very compact composition. A bearded warrior, who is seen mainly from the front, stands behind but at the same time towers above his fallen foe. The triumphant warrior's stance is that of the attacker, the right leg thrust out to the left with the knee bent and the left leg fully stretched to the right. The left foot is missing; it is very likely that it stood firmly on some rocky terrain. With the left extremity forming as it were the right lower corner of a triangle and the body rendered in diagonal stance, the head comes to lie in the middle, forming together with the crested helmet the apex of the triangle. The warrior's right arm is raised and bent over the forehead, the hand clutching a short sword. The eyes glance at the foe. The left hand holds a round shield seen in three-quarter view; the shield which emphasizes with its diagonal position the basic stance of the figure protects part of the warrior's back and his body from the left shoulder to the left thigh. One end of the *chlamys* nestles against the inner curvature of the shield in a wavy pattern as does the other end which floats in mid-air above the defeated warrior. The attacker wears a *chiton* fastened on the left shoulder and reaching almost to the knees but leaving the right shoulder bare. The right leg, vehemently thrust out, pushes the *chiton* over the right thigh, a short section of which is seen, but the right leg disappears mostly behind the fallen foe. A strap for the attachment of the sheath runs diagonally from the right shoulder over the upper body and crosses the edge of the girt *chiton*, which describes an identical line running in the opposite direction.

The fallen warrior supports his body with his right hand, which is not preserved; it probably rested on elevated uneven terrain, which we take to have indicated the landscape ground found with some frequency in similar scenes. The warrior's head is seen in profile to the right; the glance of the right eye—the left being damaged—is turned to the right and slightly upward but it could not have met the eyes of the opponent. The second warrior is bearded too, and he wears a *pilos*-shaped helmet with the hair protruding from underneath the edge and combed back to the neck. His upper body is seen frontally; it is covered with a *chiton* which is made of a heavier

material as compared with the other warrior's chiton, and it must have covered both shoulders, to judge from the curvilinear folds below the collar bones. From the right shoulder over the breast runs a double strap at which the sword is attached. The warrior protects himself with a round shield, the upper edge of which touches his mouth and nose while the lower edge reaches as far as his left knee, thus protecting a great portion of the left side of the body. Judging from the folds and the scanty remains of the left leg, the lower body was represented in three-quarter to frontal view. The most likely attitude for the right lower leg was that it crossed underneath the left leg; or, less likely, that it was bent backward; a third possibility, namely that it hung down in front of the left leg is least likely, since this would demand more space than was probably available between the remainder of the chiton and the base which, in analogy with other gravestones, we suppose to have formed a projecting horizontal edge.

The defeated warrior is fairly neatly contained within the triangular composition, his right hand forming as it were the triangle's lower left corner. The floating mantle fills the empty space above his head; it is too obtrusive and heavy to satisfy from an artistic point of view, however, though it does carry the general movement expressed in the attacking warrior farther to the left.

II

The stele in Boston, which dates from about 390–380 B.C., has been attributed to the Aristandros sculptor. According to J. Frel the *oeuvre* of the Aristandros sculptor comprises seven memorials, nos. 26–32 in his list. The sculptor is said to be “directly related to the Dexileos master”; “he represents a reduced and simplified version of his taste for the dramatic tableau.” Criteria for the attribution of the reliefs to one artist are “the *pilos*-like shape of the helmets and the peculiar treatment of the drapery at the waist of the figures”; moreover, for nos. 29, 30 and 32 “in the hand holding the shield, the thumb laid across the fingers.”²

The attributions suggested by Frel pose some problems. With regard to style, quality and subject matter it is only with some difficulty that the seven memorials can be brought under one and the same hood.

² Frel 205–207; subsequent quotations are also from Frel's text.

Nos. 26–28 in Frel’s list are quiet, stationary scenes as on the great majority of gravestones: a farewell scene between two warriors (no. 26), another between wife and husband, Mika and Amphidemos (no. 27) [PLATE 2.1]; the fragmentary no.28 represents Aristandros, fully armed, standing to the right (the lower legs are missing); on analogy with nos. 26 and 27 it is not difficult to imagine the composition on this stele. That all three memorials are by one sculptor can hardly be doubted. There is nothing dramatic in these scenes; therefore, the connection with the Dexileos master is not so obvious as we are led to believe.

In contrast to nos. 26–28, our stele in Boston (no.29) and that in New York (no.30) [PLATE 2.2] are unusual among gravestones. With the subject of combat between two warriors, their relationship to the gravestone of Dexileos is evident. Dohrn noted³ the diaphanous chiton of the standing warrior in no.30 and attributed this characteristic to Ionian influence. That the rendering of drapery in both stelai is different can hardly be overlooked. The sweeping unbroken conduct of smaller and larger sickle-shaped folds above and below the waist in no.30 is fundamentally different from the broken-up and much less fluid appearance of the folds on no.29. Closer examination of the proportions of the figures and their bodily appearance reveals more differences than similarities. Finally, the physiognomy of the fallen warrior on no.30, with the strongly receding chin and the low shape of the head, has not much in common with contemporary Attic physiognomies and tends to support the Ionian influence noted by Dohrn. Therefore, we should like to propose that no.29 has to be distinguished from no.30 on stylistic grounds, even though from the point of view of subject matter both stelai are closely related.

No.31, the stele of Lisas from Tegea, in the Royal Greek collection at Tatoi, is called by Frel, an “extract from stele no.30 with some modifications.” That may be so. An alternative, however, is worth considering. Lisas is compositionally too different a figure as compared with the attacker on no.30. The latter is represented in a climactic pose. Lisas advances cautiously, his body in bent position, ducking behind the big round shield. He could be matched as the third figure with a two-figure group in combat, stealing up from behind and coming to the rescue of a friend. The repertory of figures from battle

³ T. Dohrn, *Attische Plastik* (Krefeld 1957) 133.

scenes is too vast to speak of Lisas in terms of a modified figure within the *oeuvre* of Aristandros. As an independent figure Lisas, too, is inspired from a model, just as nos. 29 and 30 are unthinkable without models.⁴

The general characterization which Frel gives the entire group of memorials is difficult to accept for Lisas.⁵ We rate the latter relief stylistically higher than both nos. 29 and 30 and, with Frel, chrono-

⁴ This has been recognized long ago for no.30 and another relief in the Metropolitan Museum by G. M. A. Richter, *Catalogue of Greek Sculptures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1954) no.82 (=Frel no.30) and no.81, relief of a battle scene. See also Richter p.49 for a list of "warrior monuments." The stele of Lisas (=Frel no.31) belongs to the "single soldiers," not the combat reliefs. The list of the latter comprises (adding to Richter's list [d] and [h]-[o]) the following:

- (a) Relief MMA, Richter, *op.cit.* no.81.
- (b) Relief MMA, Richter, *op.cit.* no.82 [PLATE 2.2].
- (c) Relief in Villa Albani, Rome [PLATE 3.2].
- (d) Relief in Berlin Museum [PLATE 4.2]. C. W. Clairmont, *Gravestone and Epigram* (Mainz 1970) no.28, pl.14.
- (e) Relief of Dexileos, Kerameikos Museum, Athens; Frel 200 no.3, pls. 9.2,3; 10.
- (f) Relief Athens, NM 2744 (see *infra* n.7 and PLATE 3.1).
- (g) Relief (votive) of Pythodoros in Eleusis, Museum (see *infra* n.8 and PLATE 4.1).
- (h) Athens, NM 3708. Base for stele; three sides of base decorated with two-figure combat scenes. Most recently Frel 200 no.4, pl.11.1.
- (i) Athens, NM. Loutrophoros. First published *AAA* 2 (1969) 331-33, fig.3 and cover of fascicule. Scene comprises five figures.
- (j) Athens, NM 3620a. Lekythos. Mentioned in n.10, *op.cit.* (*supra* i). Scene comprised less than five figures.
- (k) Relief Boston, MFA. Our relief, PLATE 1.
- (l) Athens, NM 947. Lekythos. Conze no.1147, pl.244.
- (m) Athens, NM 1674. Relief. Conze no.1154 (drawing p.252).
- (n) London, BM. Lost relief comprising combat scene, connected with the *polyandrion* erected for victims in the battle of Potidaea, 432 B.C. Conze no.1155, with quotation from Böckh, *CIG* I, p.906, Addenda n.170, who used drawings (now also lost) and described the relief after those.
- (o) Athens, NM. Relief, badly damaged, most likely comprising two figures, but only the shield of one of the figures is preserved. Conze no.1159 (photo p.255). The memorial of Alkias the Phocian, found in Corinth, now in Athens, NM 751, is not Attic, see *AthMitt* 11 (1886) 150-61, pl.5.

To be excluded from Richter's list of combat reliefs is Athens, NM 3730 (= Frel no. 28).

⁵ "The quality of the work is not outstanding, and there is progressive degeneration in the series. The figures resemble puppets. Their limbs are angular, schematic, without articulation. The transparency of the drapery is an empty schema; the attitudes do not correspond to the realities of human anatomy. In spite of all this, the sculptor is able to produce an appealing effect; it may be that the very low level of his work renders him more human in the same dramatic situations in which his master, the Dexileos sculptor, remains under the spell of his own rhetorical skill."

logically later. Therefore, the attribution of the Lisas stele to the *oeuvre* of the Aristandros sculptor remains uncertain. There is much that leaves oneself dissatisfied with the last work, no.32 [PLATE 2.3], again a quiet scene but different from nos. 26–28. The grin on the face of the youth at the left; the stooping stance of his body in which neither leg is what one would call the erect standing leg as compared with the free leg; the outstretched right hand, a gesture not answered by the seated youthful warrior except, perhaps, for the raising of his right hand to the *pilos*: all of these details are somewhat disturbing. The eyes of both figures are scarcely carved. If the lekythos is a late work by the Aristandros sculptor, the degeneration, noted by Frel, was abysmal.

Reviewing the *oeuvre* of the sculptor, we are confronted with conflicts arising from Frel's general characterization. The quiet figures on nos. 26–28 cannot be called "puppets," nor can Lisas. The figures on no.32 can be described thus. The verdict that the figures have "angular, schematic limbs without articulation" is too harsh for nos. 26–28 and 31, though some of this is obviously true for nos. 29, 30 and 32. Finally, what are we to do with all the battle scenes in Greek art, in sculpture and in vase-painting, if the stances of our warriors, which are derived from familiar models, "do not correspond to the realities of human anatomy?"

III

Attic grave monuments with single figures and family and farewell scenes now number well over three thousand from the archaic through the classical age. Battle scenes are attested only for a dozen or so memorials.⁶ Single figures of standing warriors are already a theme on archaic Attic gravestones. Warriors arranged in groups become more frequent during the classical period. The three memorials discussed earlier (nos. 26–28) may serve as typical examples beside which there are many variations in the composition of figures of different sex and age. Horses are also introduced walking beside their masters or led forward by some groom. There is in all these scenes some action, but it is restricted to the farewell gesture, and the emphasis is on mourning. Fiery action is encountered only in the battle scenes, properly speaking. Thus, while battle scenes are strictly taboo on the great majority of gravestones, they have been a favored subject

⁶ See *supra* n.4.

on monuments honoring the deceased warriors of a city, the so-called *polyandria*. Burial in common tombs is best attested for Athens and Attica. The evidence is literary and epigraphical; there is some architectural and archaeological evidence; we are here concerned with the sculptural evidence.

There is only one battle scene in frieze-like composition which definitely belonged to a *polyandria*. This is the fragmentary relief in the National Museum in Athens [PLATE 3.1].⁷ In its present state of preservation the relief comprises three figures. The relief continued on the left probably with two warriors, one of them on horseback as indicated by the remains of a tail belonging to a second horse; the other warrior was, maybe, on foot. The latter figure and the horse are to be placed above the lost first portion of the inscription, which refers to two battles fought by the Athenians in 394/3 B.C. Below the reference to the event follow the names of the deceased warriors, grouped according to their phylai.

Another relief in Eleusis [PLATE 4.1] is not a grave but a votive relief, as attested by the inscription.⁸ Pythodoros, the donor of the relief, celebrated a victory as choregos of the phyle Aigeis in 415/4 B.C.; he was strategos in 414/3 B.C.; moreover, his active rôle in Athenian politics extends to earlier years of the Peloponnesian War, to the Peace of Nikias. We have in the Eleusis relief clearly an allusion to the rôle of Pythodoros as strategos. The relief may be dated between 413 and 410 B.C.

Individual warriors in the Eleusis and the *polyandria* reliefs are derived from the large stock of fighting figures in classical Greek art. The warrior on horseback charging to the left is basically identical in both reliefs. An interesting feature of the Eleusis relief is the arrangement of the figures in two superimposed stripes with an uneven groundline for the upper stripe, also visible in the lower stripe but

⁷ See *supra* n.4, (f). H:0.60m; W:0.68m. In the H. is comprised what remains of the inscription; the H. of the relief alone is less than 0.60m. For the original dimensions of the memorial see A. Brueckner, "Kerameikos-Studien," *AthMitt* 35 (1910) 183–234, especially pp.223ff, where a total W. of ca. 1.03m and a H. of over 2m is suggested; see p.224 fig.6 showing the reconstruction of the stele. See also Frel 198 n.3; 209 no.39 (with bibl.; for pl. 11.2 read pls. 11, 12). For the inscription see IG II/III² 5221.

⁸ See *supra* no.4, (g). H:0.75m; W:0.37m; A. Brueckner, "Ein Reiterdenkmal aus dem peloponnesischen Kriege," *AthMitt* 14 (1889) 398–408, pl.12; Rumpf, *JdI* 40 (1925) 36. T. Dohrn, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) 18, pl.10a. For the inscription see IG I² 816: [Πυθόδωρο]ς Ἐπιζήλον ἱππαρχέ[σας τοῖν θεοῖν]. IG I² 770a: Αἰγιητὸς ἐνίκα. | Πυθόδωρος Ἐπιζήλο ἐχορήγηε. | Ἀρίσταρχος ἐδίδασκε, Χαρίαις ἤρχ[ε].

not so markedly, suggesting an open landscape terrain. The concept of the *mêlée* of the battle is enhanced by this composition. It is a relief which could very well have decorated a *polyandrion*, the multitude of warriors fitting particularly well this occasion.

The composition of battle scenes on some other reliefs is clearly derived from the sculptural decoration of *polyandria* no longer preserved. Some of the evidence was discussed recently.⁹ Whereas the figure composition on the relief in the Villa Albani in Rome [PLATE 3.2] is so far not paralleled in private tomb sculpture, the gravestone of Dexileos and two of the panels on a basis from the Academy in Athens use, with slight variations, the same prototype as a relief in Berlin which precedes in date the other two monuments by some twenty years.¹⁰ The longevity of the composition cannot be accidental. The sculptors of the three respective reliefs derived the composition from one and the same source, namely from a *polyandrion*, just as we surmise the relief in the Villa Albani to have been derived from a *polyandrion*, unless it formed part of the original *polyandrion* itself.

Previously I have suggested that the borrowing of a public theme for private gravestones was possible since the deceased, who was honored by the very memorial, fell as victim in his city's warfare. This fact becomes specifically clear from the inscription on the gravestones of Dexileos and the occurrence of the latter's name in the casualty list dating from 394/3 B.C.¹¹ With regard to the relief in Berlin [PLATE 4.2], the epigram which accompanies it is an eloquent testimony for the participation of the deceased in war (the Sicilian campaign?). As compared with the primary source for a *polyandrion*, so far available with certainty only in the relief discussed earlier (Athens, NM 2744), the private gravestones just discussed represent, we may say, *secondary* sources for *polyandria*, since we believe that their reliefs are derived from them. Only for a victim of war would the subject of a battle scene make proper sense. Moreover, a specific composition, created originally for the state memorial, could subsequently be adapted to a private gravestone, thus emphasizing

⁹ Clairmont, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.4) 100–02.

¹⁰ For the three reliefs see *supra* n.4, (d), (e) and (h). See also n.7 for the relief of Dexileos.

¹¹ See Athens, NM 754. The very finely carved lotus-palmette frieze with the inscriptions following below [L:2.25m; H:0.48–0.50m] was probably the only decoration of the *polyandrion*. Conze nos. 1157 and 1529, pl.317; T. Dohrn, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.8) 77 (with bibl.); Frel 208 n.12. For the inscription see IG II/III^a 5222.



GRAVE STELE OF STRATOKLES IN BOSTON

BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 1971, 129

(Photo D. Widmer, Basle)

PLATE 2 CLAIRMONT



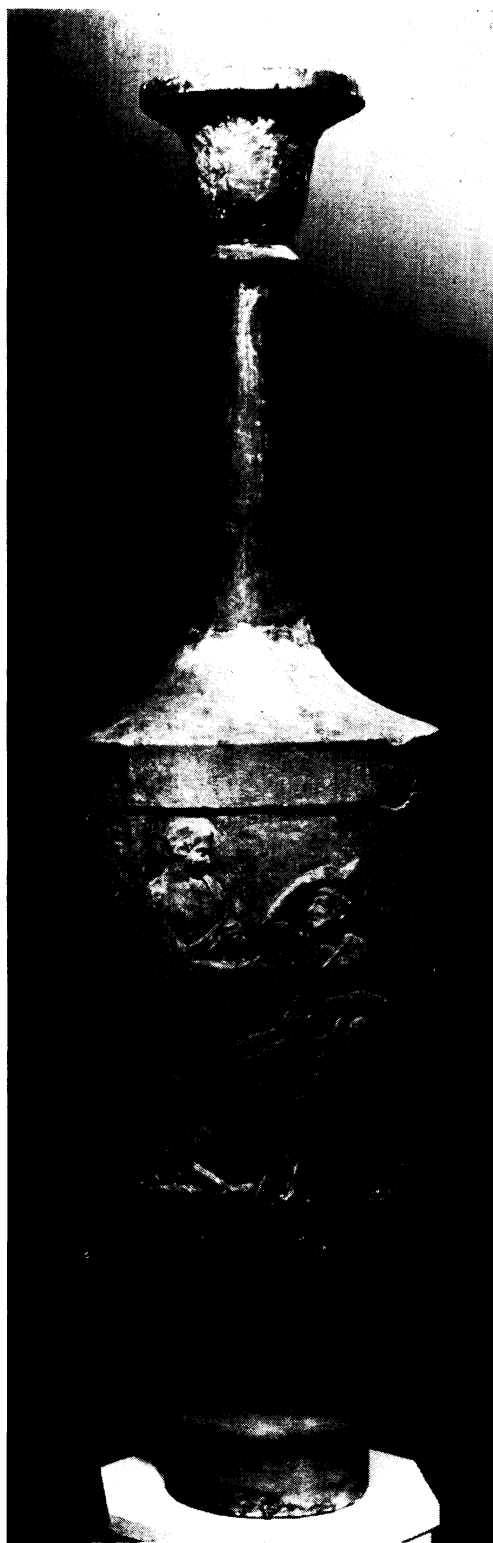
1 MIKA AND AMPHIDEMOS, ATHENS
NM 891

(Reproduced from Conze pl. 49)



2 TWO WARRIORS, NEW YORK MMA
40.11.23

(Photo courtesy Metropolitan Museum of Art)



3 LEKYTHOS, LEYDEN MUSEUM
(Photo courtesy Leyden Museum)



1 POLYANDRION RELIEF, ATHENS NM 2744

(Photo Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens, neg. NM 6196)



2 RELIEF IN THE VILLA ALBANI, ROME

(Photo Alinari, Rome, no.27708)



1 VOTIVE RELIEF OF PYTHODOROS, ELEUSIS MUSEUM

(Photo Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens,
neg. Eleus. 534)



2 RELIEF IN BERLIN, STAATLICHE MUSEEN K 30

(Photo Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, neg. 7390)

participation of the deceased in the very war in the wake of which he received also public honors.

On all reliefs which are our concern here, including the votive relief in Eleusis and on at least one new monument,¹² the horse plays a prominent rôle. The subject of cavalrymen fighting against hoplites is also attested for the *polyandrion* relief Athens, NM 2744. The principal two-figure group on the new loutrophoros is inspired by the Berlin and the Dexileos reliefs, except that the opponent plays a much more subordinate rôle; though he is placed under the belly of the horse and the forelegs of the latter arch over his head, the tightly knit composition of the model is abandoned. The remaining two figures to the left of Philon establish a link between the loutrophoros and the Eleusis relief insofar as the repertory of figures represented on both monuments derives from battle scenes in classical Greek art.

IV

There could be some doubt before the discovery of the Boston stele that the relief in New York (Frel n.30) was a memorial. Now, with the name of the deceased preserved in the former monument, the latter is automatically drawn into the category of gravestones. With regard to the subject matter we note in both stelai the absence of the horse as compared with all other monuments mentioned in the previous discussion. This difference is worth noting. The two-figure group, with the attacker and the defeated warrior, is an isolated group, extracted from a frieze comprising many figures of combatants. Since the sculptors responsible for carving the stelai were not creative sculptors, the process of merely copying probably best explains the schematic rendering and puppet-like appearance of the figures which Frel noted.

The problem of original and replica on the one hand and original and extract on the other relates to all monuments discussed in this essay. Not only can we now see various degrees of dependency, but we can also speak perhaps in terms of two principal types of *polyandrion* decoration: one a continuous frieze, the other comprising one or two slabs, each with a two figure composition. An important aspect in distinguishing two types is the size of the preserved memorials with

¹² The loutrophoros, *supra* n.4, (i). Two figures are represented with horses, the triumphant deceased himself, Philon son of Aristokles, from the deme Melite. The second rider on the left is mortally wounded and hangs on pitifully to his horse.

combat. The height of the *polyandrion* frieze Athens NM 2744 is less than 0.60m (see n.7). The height of the relief in Eleusis with a double row of figures measures 0.75m. The figures on the reliefs in Boston and New York range from 0.35 to 0.45m in height.¹³ Quite different are the measurements of the slabs. The relief in the Villa Albani measures H:1.80m, W:2.28m; the relief of Dexileos, H:1.75m, W:1.35m;¹⁴ the fragmentary relief in Berlin, H:0.68m, W:0.61.¹⁵ A *polyandrion* which was decorated with reliefs of the size of these last three slabs must have looked very different from a *polyandrion* the decoration of which consisted of a frieze with battle scene. The latter type of *polyandrion* was simple; we can grasp it essentially in the often cited public memorial Athens, NM 2744. The other type of *polyandrion* was more monumental and more impressive. That only one such *polyandrion* was ever made would not be surprising. The assumption is very tempting indeed that it was erected for and honored the warriors who succumbed in the first year of the Peloponnesian War. If the relief in the Villa Albani can be connected at all with this very *polyandrion* as an original part of it, we may conclude that through the relief we catch a glimpse of yet another outstanding achievement of the classical age for which Perikles seems to bear chief responsibility.

DOUGLASS COLLEGE, RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY
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¹³ With 0.99m as total H. of the vessel, the figures on the new loutrophoros (see n.12) come within a similar range. The H. of the relief with battle scene in New York (*supra* n.4, [a]) is 0.57m.

¹⁴ The composition of the Dexileos relief could, if necessary, be reduced considerably. Thus, the measurements of the base in Athens (*supra* n.4, [h]) are H:0.67m, W:0.61m, D:0.58m. For the possible influence of the Dexileos composition on painting see Brueckner, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.7) 232f, figs. 7–8, illustrating an Attic calyx-krater (not in ARV²).

¹⁵ Taking into account the fragmentary state of the Berlin relief, a reconstruction on paper shows that its original H. and W. were very close to that of the Dexileos relief.