

Grave Circumstances for Women in Ancient Macedonia

This presentation examines Macedonian grave stelae found in Myrina Kalaitzi's (2016) catalog as a means for understanding women's roles between the fifth and third centuries BCE. The figured grave marker's purpose is to preserve the dead's memory in a manner that reflects the cultural values of the society. Thus, these stelae may offer a glimpse into Macedonian women's lives through their portrayal in death. An analysis of single gendered, mixed gendered, and age-specific grave stelae will identify whether images of Macedonian women are limited to the home or if civic and other public roles are also commemorated. Further, the investigation will determine whether there is a preservation of gender separation like that found in Greece. Comparisons to funerary images of Greek women will be drawn to further this discussion.

Except for Elizabeth Carney (2010; 2000), Macedonian women have received little attention. Although evidence is minimal, Carney (2010) believes Macedonian women would have participated outside the home more and may have had greater freedoms than Greek women. Carney's studies, however, have focused mostly on the Monarchy, and her evidence is pulled from grave goods, not grave markers. Grave markers, however, seem to be the only place in both Macedonia and Greece where women's names are written. Sometimes, specific details about these women is available, making grave stelae an overlooked source of information.

Women on Greek tombstones have received slightly more attention. Ruth Leader's (1997) investigation of gender relationships on Athenian tombstones and Angeliki Kosmopoulou (2001) conclusion that a "public persona" for some respectable Greek women existed and was honored on tombstones, creates a basis for comparison. The limited studies conducted reflects the problem that published textual or material evidence is lacking making it difficult to study

female roles, particularly in Macedonia. Kalaitzi's publication creates a window of opportunity in gender studies which has yet to be explored.

Bibliography

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