



Civic landscape of Anatolia: in search of heroes

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ABSTRACT: Anatolia is considered one of the most diverse areas of settled Greek communities by topography, climate or history, as a place where multiple language and ethnic groups moved around, being influenced by and influencing each other. Many Greek poleis in Anatolia continued to flourish and prosper in the Hellenistic period. Some of them had to come to terms with a new position of subordination to a king, but the majority of them had been familiar with such rule before. Awareness of citizenship can be seen as a formal symbol of autonomy and independence. The individual character of the ruler or city-state representative appeared in a prominent place, standing, in iconography, between the divine and human sphere. Numerous Anatolian poleis awarded euergetai during their lifetime and legitimized declining state power in this manner. There are also signs of social transformations, if gradual ones. The huge increase in numbers of inscriptions is one of most striking features of the surviving epigraphic evidence. Written sources indicate that honors as well as memorials for citizens emphasized city-state autonomy, too. A similar tendency is traceable by a process traditionally defined as private hero cult, related to the religious life as much as to the political statements and social classification.

KEY-WORDS: dynast, heros, polis, Karia, Lykia

Cultural interaction between Greeks and local ethnics is attested from as far back as the Late Bronze Age, as strong links between them are not merely limited to the political context, but also emphasized by archaeological sources. After the

collapse of the Late Bronze Age civilization on the Greek mainland, more Greek tribes, traditionally referred to as Ionians, Dorians and Aiolians, settled on Anatolian littorals from the road to Pamphylia. For a better understanding of these settlements, the ethnical complexity of the Greek tribes who populated the region needs to be stressed, together with the cultural interaction between Greeks and native Anatolians, almost constantly ongoing, even if an increase in cultural and linguistic homogeneity took place in a much later period. Living in close symbiosis and creating mixed, autochthonous and Greek communities, Anatolian Greeks markedly contributed to the forming of classical civilization, while the Greek way of life was promoted with national programs and self-awareness of natives in the Classical period. The term “*hērōs*”, attested by epigraphic evidence, was initially reserved for the social elite, but soon appeared within the broader population. The tradition of dynastic monuments in Anatolia seems to be especially significant for the acceleration of this process. Whether heroic nomenclature was seen formally as an appellation of the dead, or whether it indicates that the deceased was a recipient of cultic activities, is a matter for discussion. Broader extension of this phenomenon eventually resulted in the decline of its public importance.

Numerous grandiose and ostentatious funeral monuments, constructed for nobles and persons of wealth, persist in the form of archaeological remains in western Anatolia. These tombs represent powerful symbolic memorials, built to glorify a deceased person and were inspired by various architectural structures. Local communities lived in close cultural symbiosis with neighboring Greek centres in southern Ionia, the Doric Hexapolis and the Dodecanese, developing distinctive concepts and styles in their funerary architecture. Cultural interaction between Karians and Ionian Greeks is attested by archaeological finds, until cultural diversification began to fade in the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Nevertheless, modified older Greek and renewed local Anatolian traditions were still in use for the sepulchral monuments, continuing in the following period and making identification of owners of these tombs more difficult. A tendency to highlight a deceased individual in the form of a supernatural figure, resembling the idea of *hērōs*, may be seen as a result of both, a traditional way of life in polis and local customs.

Native dynasts tried to legitimize their power basing on divinized ancestors and family members. Both, Greek and local, customs resulted in the uprising of so called temple tombs, predecessors of which can be found within monuments of the Karian and the Lykian dynasties, deliberately referring to monumental profane and sacral architecture as well. Cities of dead were formed by ideology and reflected community organization, where a prominent position and a noticeable form of tomb were reserved for people of power and wealthy citizens. Importance of public life was irreplaceable, as is attested by plenty of epigraphic evidence. Some of the best examples are numerous poleis in the south-western Anatolia, where a large number of Greek and Hellenized cities existed next to each other. Seleucids, regarding themselves as successors of Alexander, had adopted his policy, according to which liberty of the cities depended on the will of the governing king. Consequently, the bestowal of freedom and other privileges was an act which was unilateral and revocable, and which had to be confirmed by every new king upon his accession.

Generous epigraphic material includes decrees, copies of previous decrees or honorific inscriptions referring not only to members of a ruling dynasty, but also notables, politicians or other civic euergetai. The significance of traditional ideas of polis and life in a community continued, manifested by an increase of individual family orientation within the society. Weak control of detached provinces permitted

the growth of several minor dynasties in the area. Co-existence of multiple social groups with various legal rights was traditional in Anatolia. The hero cult focusing on the individual was in part introduced by euegetai and wealthy citizens using a model of dynasty and was spread step by step through society. Archaeological evidence associates such beliefs and practices with the cult of the dead or tomb cult, while it is hard to distinguish between them. Sometimes it is not even desired. Ancestor worship and hero cult have much in common, as reflecting ideas and perception concerning the past of ancient humans. It is usually accepted that the ancestor cult had an important role within the ruling class and social elite in the Classical Karia and Lykia.

The hero cult can be understood as a modification of the older ancestor cult, which, considering developed social organization and turbulent events in the Hellenistic period, obtained more ideological character. It is expected that the resumption of older practices was allowed by constitutional changes in the polis, the tradition of establishing heroes, praising certain members of the Greek society and local customs at the same time. Funerary inscriptions from the south-western Anatolia provide various terms designating deceased. One of them is *hērōs*, used by Greek speaking societies in the sense of deceased since the Classical period. Heroic honors were obtained by persons of significance in public life first and a similar pattern was soon followed by other citizens. Citizens may claim supernatural character for their ancestors or simply stress excellence and venerability of their family members. The emphasized need to praise the role of the individual started to develop in parallel with the loss of political and cultural orientation to the traditional polis. Life in the community, however, played an irreplaceable role. At this time, a change in the understanding of the tomb may be seen in western Anatolia, as the abode of the decedent also became a place designed for official worship in a wider role.

Scholars have tried to sort Greek heroes into categories according to different criteria, such as nature, function, narrative pattern or location of cult. The need to dissect heroes may not be expected in antiquity, since the meaning of this term had changed over time. Development of the hero cult in western Anatolia suggests that the concept of the heroes in the Archaic period was more secular in this area than in mainland Greece.¹ A similar trend continued in the following period, apparent by emphasizing particular members of the community, even during their lifetime. Historical information indicates that public behavior was under increasing control of the polis and burials could actually be governed by laws and public rules. This legislation survived in a miscellaneous set of literary sources and epigraphic texts. It is a very heterogeneous type of evidence, including *thesmoi* (Delphi), *nomoi* (Ioulis), *nomima* (Gambreion), civic decrees, regulations pertaining to civic or religious groups inside the polis (Ioulis, Thasos, Gambreion, Nisyros).² Variability of funerary behavior also implies that citizenship was not only expressed in rational and legal terms, but also in sharing practices. Regulations scribed for individual polis by literary sources could be seen as ancestral religious and ritual norms that each polis held and underlined its own identity.

The hero cult involved different social, cultural, and political levels, reflecting beliefs and attitude towards death and the dead. Political and constitutional changes of post- Classical poleis are well attested by numerous epigraphic finds especially in cities of western Anatolia, where honorific decrees and inscriptions mentioned members of the ruling dynasts and local politicians, who possessed substantial power

¹ Bravo 2009, 10-29.

² Frisone 2011, 179-201.

and financial resources. Adoration of city-state representatives took place at several levels as ruler cult slowly emerged. Poleis legitimized state power by rewarding euergetai and demonstrated their seeming autonomy at the same time. Citizens used religion to construct their cultural identities and political experiences, while many features of traditional civic religion survived. Political movements emerging in the fourth century B.C. enhanced, nevertheless polis remained an important unit of Greek society. Origin and emergence of the ruler cult is a specific issue, depending on the regional and chronological frame. If understood as a partial contribution of Greek city-states, served as legitimacy of official authority, serving as representative of the Hellenistic poleis. In some cases it may be closely related to hero cult.

Since Hellenistic times, the heroization of the average person actually became a widespread custom, including the transfer of the heroic iconography. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the urban landscape of the Greek city was the number of honorific statues and inscriptions. Numerous monuments that commemorated achievements of local heroes, as priests, athletes, magistrates or euergetai were erected in public places. An important contribution of the Hellenistic polis may be seen in new kinds of social and political organizations, which has become known as regimes of the notables. A fundamental change in political culture can be recognized in the previous period, since the position of the elite in the Late Hellenistic period did not differ essentially from the Late Classical one. Epigraphic documentation indicates that boule and demos were still deciding on the kind of issues that had been on the agenda centuries earlier.³ However, the spirit of isonomia had been replaced by an emphasis on rank and hierarchy, attested by portrait statues and numerous inscriptions that recorded names and deeds of notable families, civic elite.

The change in honorific and more generally civic culture started in the second half of the second century B.C., with modification of the honorific statue custom. These modifications included an increase in the number of statues granted by the cities, a shift of royal-style honours (cult or super eminent monuments such as honorific columns or pilasters) onto great euergetai, the granting of multiple portraits to individual honorands, the payment of honorific statues by the honorands themselves or their families.⁴ Political structure and institutions of the Classical polis continued into the following period, but the political culture, in which they were embedded, had been transformed. For a better understanding of such a trend, the meaning of hero cult in society should be understood with the help of written and archaeological sources. Some understand that the hero cult already existed at the time that early poetry was developed. However, literary evidence that explicitly attaches cult practice to the word *hērōs*, is found only in such later genres as elegiac, iambic, and epinician poetry.⁵

Moreover, the interpretations of the motivation for these early instances of hero cult are varied as well. Close connection with city-state development can be generally recognizable. Many Archaic and Classical heroes were considered to be the legendary ancestors of particular clans and families. A burial in the centre of a town, attested by archaeological evidence since the eighth century B.C. onwards⁶, was the customary way of honouring a person whose deeds were perceived as being especially important for society. Graves of city founders, royal maussoleia or memorial

³ Van Nijf and Alston 2011, 1-27.

⁴ Ma 2013, 195-209.

⁵ Bravo 2009, 10-29.

⁶ Herda 2013, 67-122.

buildings of euergetai were placed in various, but always especially visible positions. Since heroon is defined more in terms of function and significance than as a building type, the location of the monument became one of its distinctive features. Maussolleion of Halikarnassos and Late Classical heroa became a prototype of later tombs with typical characteristics, located mostly in a prominent position within cities. The erection of such monuments can be considered as part of a wider cultural phenomenon, specifically marking the transformation of the burial space into an area dedicated to the memory of the heroised person. Taking a place in the whole western Anatolia, Greek speaking communities were equally substantial in this process as mixed or native settlements.

For a more accurate origin of such transformation, it is necessary to rely on the findings of archaeology. While some still search for the origins of hero cult in the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age, others are willing to consider hero cult as a much later phenomenon commencing even as late as the seventh century B.C. Close connection between ancestor cult and hero cult seems highly probable. Intra-mural graves of city founders, as well as that of other kinds of heroes, were exempted from the idea of ritual pollution. Certainty about the origins of hero cult in the archaeological record proves elusive however, as no early example of hero cult is free of dispute.⁷ Identifying a site of a hero cult is usually based on three kinds of criteria: epigraphical, literary and archaeological. In addition to the archaeological record, historical information survives in a miscellaneous set of literary sources. Recent investigations based on archaeological evidence have increasingly paid attention to the material remains of funerary behaviours. To receive a funeral did not mean merely to be buried and to be honoured with a tomb, as an essential part of any appropriate Greek funeral consisted of immaterial elements that formed rituals.

Sacrificing to heroes in the Hellenistic period could have a simple form, like offering a barley cake, burning an incense or libation of wine, as well as ostentatious acts like sacrificing hundreds of animals during long lasting memorial festivities and celebrations of the honour of deceased members of ruling dynasties. Sacrificing to the deity was most often named as *thysia* (θύσια), in the sense of a sacrificial act, ceremony, offering and celebration, or *thysiasterion* (θυσιαστήριον), designating an altar of sacrifice or offer itself. A sacrifice dedicated to heroes was usually called *enagisma* (ἐνάγισμα, ἐναγισμός or ἐναγιστήριον) and, according to the written testimonies, usually took place at a low or sunken altar or pit. However, archaeological evidence shows that the predominant ritual in the cults of the heroes was the *thysia* type sacrifice, followed by dining, and, since this ritual cannot be found in the cult of the dead, the separation of the two is further attested.⁸ What is more, bringing the sacrificial offerings for heroes was designated as *thysia* in some cases of epigraphic evidence.⁹

Differences between archaeological finds and written testimonies might be explained by a chronological gap. The most detailed information concerning Greek hero rituals often comes from literary sources that are Roman or even later (Byzantine lexicographers and scholia).¹⁰ Since sacrifices to heroes from the Archaic to the early Hellenistic period were mainly of the *thysia* type, a ritual intimately connected with the social structure of society, the heroes could fulfill a similar role as the gods within

⁷ Bravo 2009, 18-24.

⁸ Ekroth 2003, 238-41.

⁹ Laum 1914, 43-7.

¹⁰ Ekroth, 1998, 117-130.

the Greek religious system. The fact that the heroes were dead seems to have been of little significance for the sacrificial rituals and some even question whether the rituals of hero cults originated from the cult of the dead.¹¹ In the Hellenistic period several changes in burial cult appeared, which are traceable in material culture and attested by written sources. The precise identity of the recipients of the cult, venerated as heroes, development and transformation of this process has been debated, while the term *hērōs* in itself poses a complex task of definition. Veneration and heroization of dead family members seems to be closely connected with ascribed social rank and prestige.

The hero cult was generally oriented towards the grave of the deceased and the area surrounding the tomb. Sacrifices and their consumption were performed in a restricted area, which was part of almost every type of monumental tomb. In the case of so called temple tombs with a high platform, it could be naos itself, andrones, or, more generally, burial precincts of various forms. Parts of the burial precincts rarely survived, except for altars, which are important for the reconstruction of sepulchral rites. In literary sources the distinction between *eschara* (ἐσχάρα, ἐσχάρη) and *bomos* (βωμός), as two types of altars, one for the Olympian gods and one for the heroes, is not reflected.¹² In the Hellenistic period, these originally low elements had risen from the ground and often created a higher point of burial precincts in Anatolia. A connection with the elevated burial chambers can be seen. On most of the Hellenistic grave altars of south-western Anatolia, no traces of burnt offerings were preserved.¹³ However the term *eschara* could refer to the upper part of an altar, perhaps the top surface of the *bomos*, which was made of metal in order to protect the stone from the heat.¹⁴ The altars could be replaced by sacrificial pits called *bothroi* (βόθροι). Almost solely in the epigraphic finds are attested burial gardens, where trees and other plants were planted and the yield was subsequently used for sacrifice. Such burial gardens were typical of Roman necropoleis as well.¹⁵

The manifestation of notable and prominent, and later also ordinary individuals, came into prominence in a wide range of activities, which correspond with mainstream propaganda in post-Classical art and culture. Changes of perception and customs, concerning funerary habits, are visible by strong emphasis on the ritual dining and pointing to a higher social status. Direct connection of banqueting and burial space is possible to prove in the case of the so called Built tomb in Labraunda, where banqueting and consumption took place.¹⁶ Extensive rebuilding activity corresponds to the changes within burial rites, which are also attested by other types of similar shape buildings (Teke Kale, Ancinköy).¹⁷ A diverse character of sepulchral buildings is based on their location, incorporation of features related to previous building types or answering the needs of a customer. It is important to point out the assorted meaning of tombs, connected not so much with religious life as with social classification, even if epigraphic finds attesting the term *hērōs* in a funeral context are abundant. In later periods, especially during Roman times, gods and heroes may have drifted apart, which can be related to a broader extension and decline of religious significance of the hero cult at the same time.

¹¹ Ekroth 2002, 91-104.

¹² Ekroth 2002, 41.

¹³ Berges 1986, 19.

¹⁴ Ekroth 2002, 54.

¹⁵ Kubińska 1968, 72-4.

¹⁶ Henry 2013, 71-85

¹⁷ Henry 2011, 150-9.

Close mutual interference between Greek and non-Greek settlements in Anatolia are strongly supposed. The oldest graves within the city in western Anatolia are indicated in non-Greek settlements of local origin, as Pisidia, Lykia or Karia. They assumed this Greek phenomenon of honouring a prominent citizen with the great privilege of burial in the city centre. The earliest examples of heroa may not have been actual tombs, but rather hero-cult centres. High elevated monuments were step by step located within the populated areas. Such tendencies are visible in the case of numerous Lykian necropoleis. Applying the Greek model of tomb memorials in the Classical period onwards, elevated elements of various tomb types might indicate changed (heroized or in the case of local ethnics even deified) status of the deceased member of society. In this case the belief, that the divine souls interacted with the living people by protecting them and ensuring prosperity, becomes clearer. The Lykian terrace or podium tombs together with grave temenoi were characteristic for the Classical and post-Classical period. Similar types of burials are attested in neighbouring Karia. One of the earliest examples of intramural burials in the south-western Anatolia is documented by the Pisidian tomb on the agora at Termessos.¹⁸

Likewise in Lykia, the origin of heroa can be viewed in the local as well as in the Greek environment. One can seek a connection with the temple-like tombs of Chettite or Urartian background. The cult of the ancestors should not be separated from the cult of the heroes, as both are probably aspects of the same phenomenon.¹⁹ Since heroon is understood more in terms of function than building type, it can be distinguished by the location of the tomb. The beginning of the intra-urban burial phenomenon in ancient Greece went back to the Early Archaic period, when poleis were becoming established in their essential elements. The reason for allowing the tomb within the polis was very broad and changed during the centuries. First of all, the burial place on the agora was reserved for the founder of the polis. Besides that other personalities could be honoured for their life-time achievement, such as athletes, authors, statesmen or generals. Burial of Orsippos in Megara is the oldest known intra-urban interment, testified by both written sources (Paus. 1.44.1) and epigraphic evidence. During the Hellenistic times euergetism played a big role inside cities, and the intra-urban grave was part of the honours from the polis to the euergetes. Presumably, there did not exist a great difference between the communities from late Classical mainland Greece and those from western Anatolia.

Agora or another great square were the preferred places for the intra-urban tomb. Public buildings were frequently erected in a former burial ground, incorporating the graves of local heroes. Burials in bouleuteria, gymnasia and other public buildings were a rare honour, comparable to a grave in the agora, which was often reserved only for city founders. The reason for integrating the hero graves into civic buildings was not only a matter of lacking space in the course of progressing urbanization or out of pure respect for the dead. Such a location of a tomb was one of the highest honours polis could grant and was given to very few people, exceptional members of society. Graves as well as cenotaphs of the city's heroes were discovered across the whole Greek speaking world. Bouleuteria are well known as places for heroic cults, organized by local burial and cult associations. Such associations, called temenitai (τεμενεῖται) or temenizontes (τεμενίζοντες), were attested in several inscriptions from the necropoleis of Miletos as well as from the city itself (SEG

¹⁸ Schörner 2011, 223-230.

¹⁹ Herda 2013, 67-122.

30.1339-1342). Equally as with the tomb buildings, the number of honorific monuments within the city-centre has increased.

The creation of identity within the city took place through a common act of worship and remembrance of the honoured dead, otherwise it was about the drawing of a distinction between one polis and its neighbours. Since the late Classical times the grave building could possess an architectural connection with a building of another primary function. A number of hybrid constructions combined a variety of features related more to the public monument than a sepulchral building.²⁰ Elevated high above the ground, the superstructure, often double-storey, could not be accessed directly and it was therefore impossible to use this building as a space for rituals memorizing the deceased. The tomb was presumably understood as a symbol in the sense of a memorial and not a cult place. However, numerous written sources still attest regular commemorative ceremonies and cult activities at the monuments. Thus, in this case the understanding of the tomb in the sense of previous funerary tradition seems reasonable. An attempt to separate the burial chamber and other parts of the building has become clearly visible when the importance of the upper structure was attested. The elevated burial chamber might symbolize the transition of the deceased into a higher sphere, emerging as a result of both, foreign and local burial customs.

Several types of inscriptions, which concerned the deceased, method of burial and honours post mortem, can be defined in the Hellenistic Anatolia. Among them are funerary inscriptions (*tituli sepulchrales*), honorary inscriptions (*tituli honorarii*), consolation decrees (*tituli memoriales*) or *varia*, as e.g. sacral calendars. Tributes mentioned in official honorary inscriptions were widely similar to the private activities of the commemorative rites, as crowning (the grave), positing the altar, giving offerings or organizing funeral banquets etc. Some honours were more special and designated for members of the ruling dynasts, such as to have an altar or statue in the agora was an honour appropriate to a hellenistic monarch (SEG 58.1220).²¹ The practice of setting up statues to commemorate deeds by humans already appeared in the Archaic period, however honorific statues emerged as widespread genre in the late fifth and the early fourth centuries B.C. Towards the end of the third century B.C. and the early second century B.C., statuary honours grew more common, especially for civic euergetai, some of whom accumulated statues given by numerous of cities across the Hellenistic world. Scholars have begun to agree that public life in poleis was vibrant, at least until the advent of Rome.²²

Despite the weakening position of cities in mainland Greece, the western shores of Anatolia continued to flourish economically and culturally. Economic centres were places where the phenomenon of benefaction thrived and members of city representatives were established. More information on the procedures was given in the inscriptions that recorded aspects of the foundation of a particular festival in individual cities. Intra-mural burials were closely related to the honorific monuments built in public spaces, the number of which significantly increased. Deserving individuals were recipients of public honours attested by written sources, such as crowning or establishing commemorative games. Statues usually took the form of a standing representation, but could also be a sitting, or even an equestrian image. Group sculptures with a *dexiosis* gesture or crowning individual by personified Polis were not uncommon.

²⁰ Berns 2013, 231-242.

²¹ Isager and Karlsson 2008, 39-52.

²² Van Nijf 2012, 47-95.

The agalma, a marble honorific statue for a human being, often with a cultic connotation, or in the context of cultic honours for a euergetes, was gradually used from the late Hellenistic period onwards.²³ Numerous marble statues can be identified as honorific due to their association with inscribed bases and specific area of placement. Private honorific monuments and inscriptions emerged in an intense way, too.

Some epigraphic and literary testimonies confirmed the segregation of the agora into the male and female.²⁴ In the late Hellenistic period a female religious society applied for permission to erect a statue in honour of the priestess Kleidike in the male agora, so she could stand next to the statues of her father and brother, well-known local politicians (CIG 3657- 1828).²⁵ Over time, some honours were mutually spread within certain members of society in many Greco-Roman cities. In parallel, and in the absence of royal masters over the Hellenistic cities, statuary honours continued to be used for Roman officials, often statuefied alongside family members. This impression might be further supported by the situation during the first century B.C., that is the late Hellenistic, and the first years of the Early imperial period. Under the Roman rule there was not the same impression of difference between poleis. Yet each polis wished to express its urban identity in contra distinction to the Roman imperium by demonstrations of its own antiquity. Similar tendencies towards emphasizing uniqueness were visible in the previous period.

The intra-urban grave, a cult-place honoured for many centuries in the middle of the agora, offered several possibilities for self-expression by the poleis: there could be a new burial within an old grave, or making a copy of an old inscription.²⁶ The prominent tombs of this time may at first sight simply reflect a traditional habit of honouring euergetai, being in line with the retrospective cultural atmosphere that is often attributed to the Greek cities under Roman rule. Further architectural changes in western Anatolia came about in the Early Imperial period, reflecting the major political transformation of the empire. New structures followed the Hellenistic tradition while communicating Roman ideas through orientation and the organization of space. A similar system of public honours that Greek cities bestowed upon their citizens and foreign benefactors in previous periods (praise, crown, statue, prohedria, tafe demosia) was maintained. The intra-urban burial was a special honour given by the polis, but the importance in relation to the creation of identity for the city changed.²⁷ The honorary decree for Adrastos of Aphrodisias dated to the third quarter of the first century A.D. refers to heroon, public burial and burial rites within the city (SEG 51.1490).²⁸ The inscription, though dated to the Roman period, reflected the older burial tradition attested to in the Hellenistic times.

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²³ Ma 2013, 20-25.

²⁴ Mantas 2009, 203-212.

²⁵ Habicht 2005, 93-100.

²⁶ Schörner 2014, 151-162.

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²⁸ Reynolds 1996, 124.

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