ENSLAVED AFTERLIVES: THE ANCIENT GREEK GRAVE STELE OF HEGESO (410 – 400 B.C.E) AND ITS CONTEMPORARY MUSEUM DISPLAY

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ALEXIS LAUREN GARCIA

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Student: Alexis Lauren Garcia

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the History of Art and Architecture by:

Kristen Seaman	Chairperson
Simone Ciglia	Member
Kevin Dicus	Member

and

Krista Chronister	Vice Provost for Graduate Studies

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Division of Graduate Studies.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Alexis Lauren Garcia

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Title: Enslaved Afterlives: The Ancient Greek Grave Stele of Hegeso (410 – 400 B.C.E) and Its Contemporary Museum Display.

The Grave Stele of Hegeso (410 – 400 B.C.E) is an ancient Greek mistress-maid type funerary stele from Athens that depicts an elite woman attended to by an enslaved attendant. This thesis centers the analysis on the enslaved woman who has been overshadowed in the scholarship and seeks to excavate enslaved experiences. By analyzing the iconography of the grave stele, its placement in the highly traveled Kerameikos Cemetery, and representations of the enslaved in theater, I argue that the enslaved figure draws upon the theatrical trope of the Good Slave to communicate ideology to both enslaved and free viewers. And I argue that modern conceptions of the Grave Stele of Hegeso and the role of slavery in antiquity are shaped by the stele's display in the modern Greek museum that situates it within the context of the continued absence of slavery in the academic and museological tradition.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Alexis Lauren Garcia

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Greece (Summer Seminar II: Northern Aegean, Macedon, and Thrace)

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Arts, Art History, University of Oregon
Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Arts, Art History & Cultural Anthropology, University of Oregon

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Ancient Mediterranean Art
Race, Ethnicity, and Status
Ancient Slavery

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Educator, University of Oregon, 2022-2023

Preparator Intern, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, 2022-2023

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Lawler Scholarship, American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Summer 2022

Sponenburgh Research Award in Art History, University of Oregon, 2021-2022

Ross Book Prize in Architectural History, University of Oregon, 2021-2022

Oregon Six, Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society, 2020-2021

Marian C. Donnelly Book Prize for Best Honors Thesis, University of Oregon, 2021-2021

Joe and Alona Fischer Scholarship, University of Oregon, 2021-2021

Apex Scholarship, University of Oregon, 2017-2021

CONFERENCE PAPERS:

Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, January 8th, 2023, "Enslaved Iconography and Elite Ideology of the Enslaved Figure on the Grave Stele of Hegeso (410 – 400 B.C.E)."

Classical Association of the Pacific Northwest 53rd Annual Meeting, Virtual Conference, March 19th, 2021, "Silent Slaves: Reconstructing Slave Perspectives on the Grave Stele of Hegeso."

Undergraduate Research Symposium, University of Oregon, May 21st, 2020 "Silent Slaves: Reconstructing Slave Perspectives on the Grave Stele of Hegeso."

PUBLICATIONS:

Garcia, Alexis "Silent Slaves: Reconstructing Slave Perspectives on the Grave Stele of Hegeso." *Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal,* Winter 2021.

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This thesis follows the style guidelines of the AJA Guide for Authors (https://www.ajaonline.org/submissions) and uses AJA abbreviations for periodicals and OCD abbreviations for ancient sources. (https://oxfordre.com/classics/page/3993).

To my parents, for their unyielding support.

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I. Introduction

What does one picture when asked to think of 'Ancient Greece'? For some, their first thoughts are figures of myth and ancient history. Others recall the famous philosophers, tragedians, and poets of the classical age. Some are first exposed to the ancient world through museum collections, represented by elaborate sculpture and painted pottery, while others picture the famous architectural structures and archaeological remains which proliferate travel postcards.

It is rare that one first thinks of ancient slavery when one thinks of Greece, which is problematic because the famous achievements of the ancient world were made possible by the enslavement of others. To use the word of the many other scholars who have written on the subject, slavery was 'ubiquitous' in the ancient world.[1] The enslaved not only served the private interests of the elite—working as agricultural laborers, as assistants in workshops and in other skilled trades, as miners, and as domestic attendants—but also served the public sector, with a number of publicly owned enslaved persons working as public records keepers, coin minters, and laborers in city upkeep and policing.[2]

The prominence of ancient slavery in ancient society contrasts with its separation from the academic tradition and its frequent absence from introductory courses and museum spaces. This is not to say that there is a dearth of scholarship, indeed there has been a rather robust interest in ancient slavery followed by the recent revival of critical modern and contemporary scholarship. Yet analyses of ancient slavery have been slower to integrate into mainstream academia, receive less attention in introductory textbooks and coursework, and feature less frequently in museum education.

[1] duBois 2003, 6; Hunt 2011, 23; Forsdyke 2021, 100, 189, 194, 227.
[2] For a comprehensive overlook of the types of slaves in Athens and their typical responsibilities, see Forsdyke 2021, 101-159.

Contemporary scholarship has made strides to reexamine comprehensively both older academic scholarship and ancient material culture through more recent theoretical frameworks and methodologies dedicated to ancient enslavement. To illustrate the value of this approach, in this thesis I reexamine a particularly famous funerary stele known as the Grave Stele of Hegeso (Fig. 1), which depicts a deceased elite woman with an enslaved attendant. Originally excavated in March 1870 in the Kerameikos Cemetery in Athens, Greece, the stele has been analyzed for more than a century of shifting academic trends in classical scholarship. While the stele has been cited in scholarship focused on gender, the role of elite women, and the construction of female identity in the public sphere, previous scholars have rarely engaged in-depth with the figure of the enslaved woman, focusing instead on the elite figure of Hegeso. As an artwork with an extensive history of scholarship and extended display in the museum, the stele is indicative of not only how ancient Greeks conceived of ancient slavery, but also how ancient slavery is contextualized in contemporary consciousness through museum display.

Using the Grave Stele of Hegeso as a case study, this thesis explores why an enslaved woman was depicted on the grave stele of an elite woman. To do so, it looks beyond the interpretation that the figure only functions as an object that communicates wealth and aims to engage with her presence on a more critical level. How does the depiction of the enslaved woman contribute to the constructed Athenian ideal of elite and enslaved? What kind of rhetoric was communicated by the 'mistress-maid' iconography? And how was this iconography received by both elite and enslaved audiences? To answer these questions, I synthesize evidence from the archaeological context, iconography, and comparative depictions of the enslaved in literary and theatrical traditions. Yet the legacy of ancient slavery continues beyond the ancient world. Therefore, I also ask: How is the Grave Stele of Hegeso displayed in the National Archaeological

Museum of Athens? Is slavery discussed transparently in the modern museum? And how do contemporary movements and developments in museology influence how ancient material and ancient slavery are discussed and contextualized?

This thesis is split into the following chapters. Chapter II covers the extensive historiography of the Grave Stele of Hegeso and how scholarship was shaped by the introduction of feminist and enslaved centric theory into the field. Chapter III details archaeological and viewing contexts of the stele in the Kerameikos Cemetery and dissects the iconography of the grave stele. Chapter IV introduces comparative examples of enslaved characters in literature and theater, exploring character tropes, stereotypes, and archaeological context, and presenting possible interpretations of the Grave Stele of Hegeso by enslaved and elite viewers. Finally, Chapter V considers the modern viewer, analyzing the contexts of the stele's display at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens and how ancient slavery is shaped by evolving trends in scholarship and museology.

II. Historiography

Over one-hundred and fifty years of published material is associated with the Grave Stele of Hegeso. Excavated in 1870, a short description of the stele was first published in the August 1870 edition of the *Bullettino dell'Instituto di corrispondenza archeologica*.[3] Part of the Grave Stele of Hegeso's prominence in the field has been its continued republication in catalogs and textbooks. For example, twenty-three years after its excavation, the stele notably was included in Alexander Conze's *Die attischen Grabreliefs*, published in 1893. Early twentieth and twenty-first century publications continued to examine the stele. It has also been included in a series of introductory textbooks on Greek art, notably Andrew Stewart's *Classical Greece and the Birth of Western Art* (2008).[4] When presented through the context of an introductory textbook, the Grave Stele of Hegeso is most often discussed as the example par excellence of classical Athenian funerary stelae and as an artwork that contextualizes women's lives in ancient Greece.

Outside of introductory material about Greek art, scholarship on the Grave Stele of Hegeso has shifted dramatically in tandem with developments in classical academia, particularly the slow introduction of feminist perspectives and frameworks. Barbara McManus, in her 1997 monograph *Classics & Feminism: Gendering the Classics*, retraces the historiography of feminism in the field. She splits the scholarship into two distinct eras: that which was published before 1970 and that which followed after. McManus notes that women were never completely absent from classical scholarship, but the manner in which women were discussed prior to 1970 was defined by the complete isolation of women "from work on every other aspect of the ancient

[3] Schoell 1870, 149-150.
[4] For the main bibliography on the stele (and previous scholarship) see especially Conze 1893, 68; Rodenwalt 1923, 65; Diepolder 1931, 27; Lippold 1950, 196; Johansen 1951, 18; Karouzou 1968, 77; Ridgway 1978, 167; Schmaltz 1983, 2; Stewart 1990, 172; Salta 1991, 15; Clairmont 1993; Stewart 1997, 124-129, 143; Kaltsas 2002, 157; Stewart 2008, 159-160.

world," resulting in an analytical scope that was inherently fragmented.[5] Furthermore, McManus characterizes this isolationist scholarship of the early 20th-century as overly concerned with using the study of ancient women as a vehicle for ideological debate that was grounded in moralistic evaluations that overtly or implicitly responded to 20th-century women's suffrage and rights movements.[6] While there were some scholars who avoided this academic pitfall and attempted to present a study of women integrated with the rest of classical scholarship, notably Grace Harriet McCurdy's *Hellenistic Queens* (1932), a systemic shift did not occur until the 1970s.

McManus identifies a number of women-focused movements in classics that indicate a wider shift in academia, namely a growing number of women-themed college courses, the founding of the Women's Classical Caucus in 1972 and the 1973 edition of *Arethusa*, titled "Women in Antiquity".[7] However, she identifies the true catalyst for systemic change as the high impact publication of Sarah Pomeroy's *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Antiquity* in 1973. Unlike prior publications on women in the ancient world, Pomeroy's work was a firm methodological break with the scholarship of the past. She proposed, quite boldly, an approach to studying women that was firmly rooted in context. Pomeroy's work proved to be pivotal for the induction of feminist scholarship into the field, but what made her scholarship so successful was the way in which it was presented. McManus argues that Pomeroy's success and welcome reception is partially owed to the manner in which she presented both "her unconventional subject matter and conclusions within the rubric of scholarly conventions long accepted in the discipline" and did not "explicitly emphasize the rhetoric of contemporary theory

[5] McManus 1997, 5.
[6] McManus 1997, 5-14.
[7] McManus 1997, 15.

or feminism."[8] Despite her bold approach, Pomeroy presented her material in a palatable way to a field that had been historically resistant to critical theoretical frameworks.

A plate of the Grave Stele of Hegeso is included in *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves*, but Pomeroy does not discuss the stele at extensive length nor identifies it by name, using the imagery to illustrate the importance of dress and adornment of elite women in conveying the wealth of their family.[9] However, Pomeroy's publication paved the way for a methodological shift that would directly impact the study of the Grave Stele of Hegeso, championing the view that women must be studied "in the specific context of socioeconomic class, culture, and time period."[10] A bloom of new scholarship in the following decades that analyzed women, their role in both public and private spheres, and the material culture associated with their deaths would prove fruitful and transformative for study of funerary stelae and the Grave Stele of Hegeso.

Similar to scholarship on women in antiquity, early academic work focused on ancient slavery is characterized by an isolation from other fields and is used as a vehicle to communicate moralistic judgements and ideological discourses.[11] This is particularly prevalent in the early and mid-19th century, when scholars used ancient slavery to communicate their stance in the debate on abolition and modern slavery in the Americas. For example, Henri Wallon's impressive three-volume *Histoire de l'esclauage dans l'antiquité* (1847) made explicit calls for the abolition of modern slavery and included a preface entirely dedicated to colonial slavery.[12]

Perhaps as a side effect of its association with moralistic arguments, the study of ancient slavery was kept in isolation from the wider body of scholarship. This is illustrated perhaps most

[8] McManus 1997, 17.
[9] Pomeroy 1973, 84.
[10] McManus 1997, 18.
[11] For a detailed analysis of the historiography of slavery from the 17th to 20th centuries, including an overview of economic and Marxist engagement with ancient slavery, see Finley 1980, 11-66.
[12] Finley 1980, 12-13.

clearly by the work of Edward Gibbon and John Gilles, who wrote the first 'modern' histories of Rome and Greece respectively. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776) avoids mentioning slaves and slavery unless it is absolutely necessary for the sake of Gibbon's historical narrative, while the *History of Ancient Greece* (1786) only discusses the Spartan helots in the context of the exciting Messenian Wars, while more mundane instances of slavery throughout Greece are left unmentioned.[13] Despite the ubiquitous nature of ancient slavery, it was set apart from the rest of ancient history and study in early scholarship.

Despite this academic isolation, there was a rigorous tradition of antiquarianism that produced an immense number of monographs dedicated to ancient slavery during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, although overwhelmingly this content was focused on ancient Roman slavery.[14] By all accounts, it could be assumed that slavery has enjoyed a continuous presence in classical scholarship, albeit one that was somewhat set apart from critical integration with the rest of ancient history and context. However, as Moses I. Finley notes in his monograph *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (1980), ancient slavery suddenly becomes absent in the scholarship during the 1950s. Finley attributes this to the gradual revival of classical humanism in the early 20th century, which culminated in a "glorification of the eternal, universal validity of Hellenism and its identification of the Hellenic and German spirits."[15] The scholars who subscribed to this brand of ideology sidelined slavery in favor of a glorifying narrative of the ancient world. Much of the following work of scholars who engaged explicitly with slavery, such as the extensive monograph series and research projects on ancient slavery begun by Joseph

[13] Finley 1980, 21-22.
[14] Finley 1980, 23-25.
[15] Finley 1980, 56.

Vogt for the Mainz Academy of Sciences in 1951, are condemned by Finley for continuing the moralization of slavery in an attempt to rescue classical humanism.[16]

In a manner that is evocative of Pomeroy, Finley ends the first chapter of *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* with a call to action, stating that "slavery cannot be abstracted from its context" and that a "genuine 'synthesis' of the history of ancient slavery can only be a history of Graeco-Roman society."[17] In the forty years since Finley's publication, ancient slavery has been subject to a renaissance of scholarship that has adopted an interdisciplinary mindset and is increasingly informed by critical frameworks that have long defined study of slavery in the United States, Caribbean, and Latin America. As a byproduct of increasingly intersectional scholarship, the study of ancient women and the study of ancient slavery have overlapped, producing a bloom of scholarship about gender, slavery, and status rooted in its context.

One motif related to the stele's iconography has received most attention. Joan Reilly, Donna Kurtz, and Eva Rystedt have analyzed the 'mistress and maid' motif on white-ground *lekythoi,* arguing against status differentiation between the two figures, while John Oakley argues for clearly definable markers that identify enslaved figures and expands the motif to include funerary stelae.[18] Scholars such as Stewart construct analyses informed by the figure's enslaved status, but general scholarship tends to discuss the enslaved woman as an object that marks Hegeso's elite status or as the opposite to the figure of the idealized citizen wife.[19] What is still lacking in the scholarship is a detailed analysis of the iconography of the enslaved figure and an exploration of how both elite and enslaved viewers interpreted the 'mistress-maid' iconography. It is at this intersection of slavery and gender on funerary stelae where this thesis is situated.

[16] Finley 1980, 60.
[17] Finley 1980, 65-66.
[18] Kurtz 1988, 142-44; Reilly 1989, 416; Rystedt 1994, 76-77; Oakley 2000, 231-238.
[19] Stewart 1997, 124-129.

III. Archaeological Context & Formal Analysis

The Grave Stele of Hegeso was excavated in the Kerameikos Cemetery in 1870, as part of a 5th-to 4th-century B.C.E *peribolos* plot labeled in Figure 2 as plot A20. As part of a family plot, the Hegeso stele was found *in situ* with two other grave stelae in what has been referred to as the Koroibos group. The largest monument of the group is an anthemion rosette stele (Fig. 3) inscribed with the names of three members of the Melite-based Kleidemides-Koroibos family and two names from father-son duo Sosikles and Euthydemos, both of Eitaia.[20] The stele measures 3.2 meters tall, making it the tallest monument of the peribolos.[21] The second monument is a loutrophoros stele (Fig. 4) dedicated to Kleidemos, son of Kleidemides.[22] Owing to the dating of each stele, it is widely accepted that Hegeso was married to the first Koroibos, son of Kleidemides, whose passing resulted in the erection of the anthemion rosette stele.[23]

The three stelae were arranged in the following manner (Fig. 5): the Grave Stele of Hegeso was placed on the left, the anthemion rosette stele was placed centrally, and the loutrophoros stele of Kleidemos was placed on the right. As Stewart suggests, this visual arrangement functioned "as a symbolic portrait of this citizen family, together in death as they were in life."[24] The patriarchal lineage of the family was placed centrally and foregrounded as the most important stele in the family plot. Hegeso, representing all the women of the Greek household—mothers, wives, daughters—was placed to the periphery but oriented such that Hegeso was visually closer to the men and the enslaved woman was visually on the outskirts of the arrangement. The Stele of Kleidemos, bearing an inscription that implied death in battle,

[20] Garland 1982, 142; Stewart 1997, 124.
[21] Garland 1982, 142.
[22] Garland 1982, 142.
[23] Stewart 1997, 125-6.
[24] Stewart 1997, 124.

represented a youth who nobly fell in battle, uplifting and supporting the reputation of the family.[25] As was common with street adjacent tombs, the entire *peribolos* was enclosed by a retaining wall and elevated ten feet above the road.[26] I have observed that, in the current Kerameikos Cemetery archaeological site, plaster casts of each stele have been placed *in situ* (Fig. 6).

As was customary for ancient cemeteries, the Kerameikos Cemetery was located outside the city walls of Athens, although surviving boundary stones indicate that the ancient Kerameikos district may have ranged from half a kilometer outside the walls to as far as the Agora.[27] Other cemeteries existed outside of the many other gates of Athens. Yet the Kerameikos Cemetery enjoyed particular prestige, identified by Robert Wycherley as "the burial place of those whom the city wished to honor most highly."[28] The *periboloi* and standing funerary monuments speak to the wealth of those buried there, but the prestige of the site also derived from the sheer number of significant monuments nearby. The Dipylon Gate, the main gateway to the city, opened into the Kerameikos Cemetery, and the road that led to the Academy intersected the site and was lined with tombs. Further along this road was the Demosion Sema, the site of Pericles' famous funerary oration and where the honored dead of the state were buried.[29] Located a short distance to the south of the Dipylon Gate, the Sacred Gate connected the city of Athens with the Kerameikos Cemetery, and it was through this gate the Eridanos River flowed out of Athens.[30] The Sacred Gate also provided the origin point for the Sacred Way, the road which led

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[25] Stewart 1997, 125.
[26] Stewart 1997, 124.
[27] Camp 2001, 262-3.
[28] Wycherley 1978, 254.
[29] Wycherley 1978, 254; Camp 2001, 263; Burton 2003, 21. See Arrington 2015 for a comprehensive look at the role of commemorating the war dead in 5th-century Athens and pp. 55-90 for the role of the public cemetery.
[30] Knigge 1988, 56.

to the sacred site of Eleusis.[31] By the beginning of the 4th century B.C.E, the Pompeion was constructed in the space separating the Dipylon Gate and the Sacred Gate, hosted events for the Panathenaic festival, and served along with the Dipylon Gate as the assembly point for the Panathenaic procession.[32]

Among the important landmarks in the Kerameikos Cemetery, the Grave Stele of Hegeso is located closest to the Sacred Gate, situated in a *peribolos* that borders the northern edge of the Street of Tombs, an ancient road that branched off the Sacred Way. While the destination of this road remains debated, Wycherley suggests that it joined with the road that led south to Piraeus.[33] It must be briefly noted that the Kerameikos district was also regarded as a potter's quarter and during the classical period there were a variety of workshops and shops placed around the cemetery site. Notably, the southern side of the Street of Tombs, opposite to the Grave Stele of Hegeso, was used for pottery kilns until it was converted to cemetery space in the 4th century, suggesting that albeit briefly, pottery workshops and the Hegeso stele occupied the same visual space.[34]

Despite being located outside of the city walls, the Kerameikos Cemetery was an integral public space for Athens, where the public realm intersected with the private sphere. Civic politics, religious cult, and trade collided with private burial, ritual, and mourning. Grave stelae, particularly those placed in tall terraces that towered over the roads, appear to be specifically designed and intended for this dynamic context.

[31] Knigge 1988, 95.
[32] Knigge 1988, 68, 79.
[33] Wycherley 1978, 256; Garland 1982, 135.
[34] Garland 1982, 135.

Formal Analysis

Dating to 410-400 B.C.E, the Grave Stele of Hegeso is an exemplary example of 5th-century funerary sculpture, indicative of the early stages of a frenzied production output that would reach its peak in the 4th century before the sumptuary laws of Demetrios of Phaleron prohibited overly lavish tombstones and *periboloi*.[35] The monument was carved from Pentellic marble in the style of a pedimental *naiskos*, measuring 1.49 by 0.92 meters.[36] As is typical with a *naiskos* style stele, the carved relief is framed by two columns and a pediment, mimicking the form of a classical Doric temple. The inscription, carved onto the epistyle, identifies the dedicatee as Ἡγησω Προξενο, or Hegeso, daughter of Proxenos. A small depression is marked on the current base of the stele, which may have held a small funerary vessel or a spot to offer libations to the deceased during cult ritual.[37] Semni Karouzou attributed the stele in the 1968 sculpture catalog of the National Archaeological Museum to the sculptor Kallimachos, a late 5th-century sculptor credited with several reliefs on the Acropolis.[38] This attribution has been maintained in the National Archaeological Museum's sculpture catalog published in 2003, but scholars such as Stewart and Martin Robertson suggest merely that the carver of the grave stele was mimicking the style popularized on the Parthenon frieze and the Temple of Athena Nike.[39]

The relief consists of two figures, the mistress and the so-called maid. Hegeso (Fig 7) is identified as the figure on the right half of the stele, seated on a stool. Carved in profile, she faces left with one hand loosely cradling the side of a *pyxis* as the other pulls out a piece of jewelry. It

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[35] Garland 1982, 127; Stewart 1990, 125.
[36] Kaltsas 2002, 156.
[37] Garland 1982, 142; Stewart 1990, 124; Kaltsas 2002, 156. Stewart notes that this base is not original, but a replacement procured after the sack of Athens by Cassandros in 304 B.C.E. This is not noted in other sources, such as the official catalog of the National Museum of Athens. While the nature of the base is not particularly crucial to the scope of this argument, it bears comment regardless.
[38] Karouzou 1968, 77-78.
[39] Robertson 1975, 367; Stewart 1990, 124; Kaltsas 2002, 156.

is no longer possible to identify what type of jewelry was painted onto the relief owing to faded polychromy, but it has been widely theorized to be a necklace or type of brooch.[40] Even with the absence of the jewelry, other aspects of Hegeso's iconography firmly denote her elite status. The hair is meticulously rendered and partially gathered beneath a veil, which has been visually compared to the headdresses of brides.[41] Particular attention has been given to the diaphanous folds of her *chiton* and *himation*, garments that convey her wealth and luxury through its cumbersome unsuitability for strenuous work.[42] The sole of a shoe, most likely a sandal, can be seen on her feet (Fig. 8). As was common with relief sculpture, straps for sandals were most commonly rendered in paint.[43] Owing to the presence of the sole and the bareness of the feet, it is likely that the sandal straps have faded since antiquity.

The enslaved figure (Fig. 9) takes up the left plane of the relief. Standing in mirrored profile to Hegeso, the enslaved attendant holds the *pyxis* for her master's perusal, holding the lid open with her left hand. Many formal qualities of the enslaved woman's rendering are in direct contrast with the figure of Hegeso. Instead of displaying meticulously carved and gathered hair, the enslaved woman's head is covered by a *sakkos*. A small amount of hair peeks out from beneath the covering. This is best seen in the outdoor lighting of the plaster cast replica at the Kerameikos Cemetery Archaeological Site (Fig. 10). The hair that is visible appears to be cropped short. The woman is depicted wearing a *chiton cheirodotos*, distinguished by a traditional *chiton* with the addition of constructed sleeves.[44] When compared to the elaborate

[40] Wycherley 1978, 260; Garland 1982, 142; Stewart 1990, 124; Leader 1997, 689; Burton 2003 suggests that it was a ring.
[41] Stewart 1997, 127.
[42] Lee 2015, 110.
[43] Lee 2015, 161.
[44] Lee 2015, 122.

carved detail of Hegeso's garb, the drapery of the enslaved woman's garment is less detailed. Mireille Lee identifies the enslaved woman's footwear as soft, ankle-high boots called *persikai*.[45]

Some scholars maintain that the 'mistress-maid' iconography does not always indicate two women of differing status. However, in the case of the Grave Stele of Hegeso, the iconography of the second figure clearly marks her status as an enslaved person. Oakley briefly summarized standard indicators for both vase painting and sculpture that mark that a figure is a slave: short, cropped hair, small stature, foreign features, and the performance of acts of servitude or physical labor.[46] The woman on the Grave Stele of Hegeso meets all of these criteria. Perhaps the most decisive evidence is that she is depicted performing an act of domestic labor for Hegeso through the presentation of the *pyxis*. While not as physically grueling as working in mines or mills, it is still labor. Status is also conveyed through the dramatic difference in size. Although the enslaved attendant is standing, Hegeso is still the largest figure on the stele, with her seated body as large as the standing figure of her enslaved attendant.

Most compelling for detailed analysis is the presence of non-Greek features. There is a noticeable lack of physiognomic differences that mark the enslaved woman as a non-Greek, with the facial features of both Hegeso and the enslaved woman being similar. Rather, dress is what marks the enslaved figure as a foreigner, particularly the *chiton cheirodotos* and the *persikai*. Lee argues that the presence of constructed sleeves suggests that the *chiton cheirodotos* may have origins in Persia, although it was widely adopted for a Greek context, with several scholars, such as Margaret Miller, having argued that the garment superseded any "negative, barbarian connotations" from its origin.[47] Despite some discourse, Lee categorizes the garment as

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[45] Lee 2015, 162.
[46] Oakley 2000, 246; the same list of indicators is listed by Lee 2015, 49; and height and hair is mentioned in Forsdyke 2021, 166.
[47] Miller 1997, 161; Lee 2015, 123.

barbarian dress, and a number of other scholars claim that the *chiton cheirodotos* was a garment frequently associated with enslaved foreigners.[48] *Persikai* also share an origin in the Near East and have a complex interpretation. Lee notes that *persikai* were regarded as a type of "luxury footwear worn by Greek women" in the work of Aristophanes.[49] As a result, it seems natural to question why an enslaved woman would be wearing an article of clothing associated with luxury. I would like to propose that the garment is meant to visually invoke the luxury, decadence, and excess that Greek rhetoric associated with the non-Greek Other and further underscores her foreign status.

As a funerary monument, the Grave Stele of Hegeso draws on the ancient Greek iconographic tradition for depicting mourning.[50] Earlier archaic depictions of female mourners in vase painting typically occur at the *prothesis*, where women are shown with their hands raised to tear at their hair and wailing in strong emotion.[51] By the classical period, depictions of female mourning become less violently emotional and rather are characterized by "detachment, introspection, and quiet dignity."[52] The *prothesis* also becomes a less common motif in the classical period, supplanted by an increasing interest in domestic scenes or the *deixosis* between the living and deceased.[53] Both figures on the Grave Stele of Hegeso follow this iconographic trend, with neither woman appearing upset at Hegeso's death. Stewart suggests that this absence of emotional grief also contributes to the construction of Hegeso's elite and wealthy status,

[48] Lee 2015, 121. See also Barker 1924, 290; Oakley 2000, 237; Kosmopoulou 2001, 287.
[49] Lee 2015, 163.
[50] For an overview of mourning iconography from the archaic to classical period, see Shapiro 1991. See Oakley 2004 for an overview of mourning scenes and funerals on white-ground lekythoi. For more detail on gestures of mourning for unmarried girls, see Margariti 2018. For an overview of Greek gestures, see Neumann 1965.
[51] Shapiro 1991, 634.
[52] Shapiro 1991, 650.
[53] Oakley 2012, 494; Margariti 2018, 168.

portrayed as “perfectly self-controlled, the epitome of feminine sophrosyne” and underscoring her virtue beyond the grave.[54]

Viewers and Ideology

In the highly public and well-travelled district of the Kerameikos, the iconographic markers of the Grave Stele of Hegeso must have quickly and effectively communicated differentiation of status to those passing along the roads. This likely was achieved by constructing the iconography of each of the stele’s figures in opposition to one another. The short hair, small stature, foreign dress, and performance of labor of the enslaved woman contrasts the elaborately carved hair, dominating figure, luxurious Greek-style dress, and leisure of Hegeso.

The Kerameikos Cemetery was an ambivalent space where the domestic, private realm penetrated the public sphere. Grave stelae that operated in this context, particularly those placed in high-profile plots that were placed and elevated above main roads, appear deliberately intended for public consumption, “elicit[ing] a response from a wider cross-section of the community than the deceased’s family and friends.”[55] The dramatic contrast of the iconography of both figures on the Grave Stele of Hegeso would have succinctly conveyed wealth, class, and status to a passerby. In this thesis, I argue that the iconography of the stele aimed to communicate information to a wide-cross section of viewers, ranging from mourning members of the Koroibos family to passing strangers, rich and poor Athenian citizens, resident metics, visiting foreigners, and—of particular concern for this thesis—the enslaved.

What did the Grave Stele of Hegeso attempt to communicate to a passing viewer? Several scholars of Greek art have established that ancient sculpture and vase painting rarely depicted

[54] Stewart 1997, 127.
[55] Burton 2003, 21.

literal occurrences in daily Greek life.[56] This is also applicable to funerary art, which rarely attempts to present a faithful portrait of the deceased and seems to lack individualizing features. Rather, what are memorialized are stereotypes which reproduced what have been called the "prescriptive social norms or ideals" of Athenian society.[57] Through the purchase or commission of funerary stelae, living family members leveraged idealized civic stereotypes present in funerary iconography to enhance not only the personal reputation of the deceased but also that of the household, regardless of reality.[58]

Operating within the context of Athenian stereotypes, the figure of Hegeso and the enslaved woman embody the idealized civic stereotype of wife and slave. In the following chapter, I will discuss how the ideal wife and slave were constructed, along with what these idealized stereotypes communicated and how they were understood by those viewing them in the Kerameikos Cemetery.

[56] For example, Stewart 1990, 78-81; Leader 1997, 699; Burton 2003, 28-30; Stewart 2008, 16.
[57] Leader 1997, 686.
[58] Bergemann 1997, 7-33; Leader 1997, 690; Burton 2003, 22; Closterman 2007, 640-646.

IV. The ‘Good’ Slave and the ‘Bad’ Slave: Motives for Depiction and Reception on the Grave Stele of Hegeso

Despite their exclusion from the Athenian democracy, women were still crucial members of the family, ensuring the continuation of the household by producing children and upholding the family reputation through their labor and behavior. This duty continued after their death when they were immortalized as embodying the ideal civic standard. With its depiction of two women of opposing social statuses, the Grave Stele of Hegeso contributes to the rhetorical discourse about civic ideals, social roles, and class in Athens. This chapter defines the ideal Athenian social role of the enslaved and the elite and presents several potential interpretations of this iconography by the viewer.

The Ideal Wife

Communicated by the iconography of Hegeso, the idealized stereotype of an Athenian wife is one that is wealthy, free, and contained within the domestic space. The Grave Stele of Hegeso’s location in the public space of the Kerameikos Cemetery situated it near workshops and masculine spheres such as the Academy. Yet the *naiskos* form of the grave stele preserves Hegeso within the domestic realm, containing her within an imagined interior space. This interior setting is additionally conveyed by the presence of the chair that she sits upon, signifying the feminine interior and feminine leisure.[59] While women who worked to support their household were often frowned upon, the stele’s iconography takes steps to ensure that Hegeso is not depicted as lazy or wasteful.[60] The presence of the enslaved figure reminded the viewer of the responsibilities of a wife, including supervising the household and household slaves.[61]

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[59] Leader 1997, 689.
[60] See Kosmopoulou 2001, 281-285 for a brief summary on how elite Athenians regarded labor and the circumstances that forced women to resort to work outside of the domestic space.
[61] Stewart 1990, 118.

Wealth was depicted on the stele through the presence of the now absent jewelry, which communicated the financial status of Hegeso's household. While wealth and income were typically the purview of a husband, Ruth Leader convincingly argues that the presence of jewelry in the iconography of classical grave stelae may have been a reference to the bridal dowry, which acknowledges the wife's economic contribution to the household "through visual terms that respect the ideology of the passive secluded, citizen woman."[62] The enslaved figure again has a role to play in communicating wealth, functioning analogously to the jewelry. The average price to purchase an enslaved person was typically equal to around 100 to 150 days of work for a skilled craftsman, and so the presence of an enslaved woman on the Grave Stele of Hegeso denoted the wealth of the household.[63]

Additionally, the depiction of the presumably living enslaved figure attending to the deceased Hegeso is worth discussion. Alan Shapiro suggests that some occurrences of the mistress and maid motif on white-ground lekythoi may depict a woman preparing to visit the grave of a loved one.[64] Under this interpretation, Hegeso is depicted being prepared for her own grave. It is impossible to tell if this is the intended reading of the relief, as the domestic scene is relatively generic and white-ground lekythoi are a different medium and context than funerary stelae. However, the depiction of a living enslaved attendant taking care of her deceased mistress could have contributed to Hegeso's status, implying that her identity as an elite, wealthy wife would continue into the afterlife.

Contributing to and embodying the wealth of the household, capable of leisure but not laziness, representative of the family but completely removed from public affairs, the figure of

[62] Leader 1997, 692.
[63] Forsdyke 2021, 81.
[64] Shapiro 1991, 651.

Hegeso is the "male ideal of an Athenian woman," fulfilling her duty to the household in perpetuity.[65]

The Ideal Slave

If Hegeso is meant to be understood as the ideal Athenian wife, it can be assumed that the enslaved figure on the Grave Stele of Hegeso similarly represents the idealized Athenian slave. What qualities defined this idealized stereotype? How was the rhetoric surrounding slavery communicated and constructed through the iconography of the Grave Stele of Hegeso?

Visual culture did not operate in isolation from the rest of ancient Greek society, and it is fruitful to reconstruct ancient slavery through an examination of the wider historical record. While material evidence of the enslaved is minimal, enslaved characters appear frequently in classical literary sources, particularly Homeric epic and 5th- century Athenian theater. Turning to theater is particularly helpful, as—similarly to grave stelae—ancient theater employed popular stereotypes in the construction of characters and stock types. Extant plays that are contemporary with the erection of the Grave Stele of Hegeso can shed light on the understanding and role of the enslaved in the Athenian consciousness.

There are two issues that first must be discussed here: determining accuracy and negotiating bias. With the absence of an extensive archaeological record for enslaved material culture, it is difficult to separate theatrical distortion or exaggeration to uncover reality, particularly in comedy.[66] While slave characters "speak" in these sources, they are a mouthpiece for the playwright. Rob Tordoff evocatively illustrates this relationship: "servile voices on the comic stage can never be more than the hollow ventriloquism of an elite exploiting the slave in

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[65] Leader 1997, 690.
[66] Tordoff 2013, 24.

literature as in life."[67] While plays such as Aristophanes's *Frogs* (405 B.C.E) and Euripides's *Trojan Women* (415 B.C.E) respectively feature characters that foreground ideas of status subversion and presented a sympathetic—if occasionally critical—view of the plight and humiliation of the newly enslaved, any subversive rhetoric is neutralized by the status of the playwright, whose creative endeavor was supported by the labor of the enslaved. Some playwrights, such as Euripides, likely owned slaves, and their commentary and depiction of enslaved characters must be understood with this bias in mind.[68]

Negotiating bias and issues of validity make the reconstruction of enslaved experiences difficult, but they do effectively illustrate the perspective of the ruling class. The actions and characteristics of enslaved characters reflect the beliefs and anxieties of the elite, which in turn would influence the construction of enslaved stereotypes and the concept of the ideal enslaved person. Through the examination of enslaved characters in both literature and theater, two distinct character archetypes immediately emerge: the 'Good' Slave and the 'Bad' Slave.[69]

The 'Bad' Slave

As the name implies, the 'bad' slave embodies the qualities that Athenian elite found to be the most undesirable. The character archetype is often characterized as being "untrustworthy, sex-starved, bibulous, gluttonous, and weak-willed."[70] Such characters tend to suffer from a reverse *kalokagathia*, in which the ugliness of their body and moral character is interlinked. Their relationship to their master was typically negative, depicted as undermining the household through their disloyal and traitorous behavior. The 'Bad' Slave often played a particular role in 5th-century Old Comedy, where physical punishment for their disobedience was part of a

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[67] Tordoff 2013, 2.
[68] See Hunt 2017, 175. For an analysis of Euripidean critiques of ancient slavery, see Hunt 2011, 32-36.
[69] Tordoff 2013, 59-61.
[70] Oakley 2000, 289.

slapstick comedic routine. Physical abuse or execution, which was used in more serious situations, was a common way to ‘deal’ with these so-called ‘bad’ slaves, as the enactment of violence upon them reinforced the “physical power of masters over the bodies of slaves.”[71]

The function of the ‘Bad’ Slave trope was likely a direct response to assuage the anxieties of the slave-owning elite. Tordoff identifies three primary sources of anxiety for a slave-owning audience: insecurities on the differentiation between enslaved and free, fear of slave hostility and revolt, and frustration stemming from enslaved disobedience.[72] The negative characteristics of the ‘Bad’ Slave, particularly those tied to excess and an inability to control oneself, crystalized the difference between enslaved and free, at least in a theatrical context. While identifying the difference between an enslaved and free person was more difficult when walking through the streets of Athens, the theatrical trope clearly delineated the difference between the two and served as an active strategy “to justify the enslavement of certain people by ‘Othering’ them, typically through the attribution of characteristics which were considered non-ideal.”[73]

There are an ample number of enslaved characters who embody the ‘Bad’ Slave archetype, although they rarely feature in prominent enough roles to warrant a name. Some examples from Aristophanic comedy of the late 5th-century B.C.E include the unnamed pair of enslaved men, complaining extensively about their assigned tasks, and the disobedient Uproar in Aristophanes’s *Peace* (421 B.C.E); the lazy duo of Xanthias and Sosias from *Wasps* (422 B.C.E); and the Paphlagonian, the treacherous slave who usurps control of the household by manipulating his aged master in *Knights* (424 B.C.E).[74]

[71] Hunt 2011, 30.
[72] Tordoff 2013, 41.
[73] Wrenhaven 2012, 3.
[74] Ar. *Peace* 1-19, 255-7, 259-60, 262, 283; Ar. *Vesp.* 3, 5-10; Ar. *Eq.* 44-72, 103-4, 716-18, 1217-23, Wrenhaven 2012, 129; Olson 2013, 66-72.

These examples of slaves from Aristophanic comedy—while disobedient, treacherous, or gifted with intelligence—never act directly in rebellion against their enslaver nor seek their own freedom, which maintained an illusion of unquestioned control and authority of the enslaver for the elite audience.[75] Similar to its counterpart, the opposite trope of the Good Slave also functions to address and legitimize the authority of the anxious slave owning audience and will be discussed in the following section.

The 'Good' Slave

In contrast, the character archetype of the 'Good' Slave embodies more positive qualities. These enslaved characters are hardworking, loyal, obedient, and devoted to their oppressor, and, unlike the 'bad' slaves, they do not impede the efficiency of the household through their incompetence or failure.[76] The enslaved person is a valued member of the *oikos*, but with a degree of separation from the elite family, constantly aware of the status differentiation between free and enslaved.[77] Very affectionate, even loving, relationships were often formed between 'good' slaves and their enslavers, as was particularly common with freeborn children and their enslaved nurses and tutors.[78]

Despite their devotion and often noble character, even 'good' enslaved characters demonstrate qualities that indicate their lower status and differentiate them from the freeborn elite. They may often offer inaccurate or bad advice to their enslaver, despite their good intentions, or jump to extreme solutions in the face of seemingly unsolvable problems. This type of behavior is modeled by Eurycleia in Homer's *Odyssey*—an 8th- century prototype of what would later evolve into the 5th- century trope of the Good Slave—who laughs in impious triumph

[75] Akrigg 2013, 123.
[76] Wrenhaven 2012, 112; Tordoff 2013, 59.
[77] Golden 2011, 135-137.
[78] Wrenhaven 2012, 92.

upon the death of the suitors in Book 22.[79] Creusa's tutor in Euripides's *Ion* (420 – 410 B.C.E) suggests in rapid succession that she burn the Temple to Apollo and murder her husband and her son.[80] In Euripides's *Hippolytus* (428 B.C.E), Phaedra's nurse sets into motion the tragic climax of the play by attempting to save her mistress, leading to the death of Phaedra and Hippolytus.[81]

The positive traits of the 'Good Slave' have been identified by Kelly Wrenhaven to be "most useful in the context of slavery," and insidiously perpetuate dynamics of systemic oppression and enslavement.[82] The representation of a loyal, devoted, and obedient slave that would never stoop to rebellion or violence likely provided much comfort to a society of elite enslavers.[83] Similar to the trope of the 'Bad Slave', the 'Good Slave' trope aids an elite audience in rationalizing the institution of slavery through the construction of a validating narrative where enslavers were adored and loyally served by those whom they enslaved.[84]

'Good' Slaves appear extensively in Greek theater in a variety of different forms. The most common speaking roles are tutors and nurses, with examples such as Phaedra's nurse in Euripides's *Hippolytus* (428 B.C.E), the nurse in Euripides's *Medea* (431 B.C.E), Creusa's tutor in Euripides's *Ion* (420 – 410 B.C.E), and Cilissa in Aeschylus's *Libation Bearers* (458 B.C.E).[85] The trope also appears very frequently in comedy but conveyed through mute background enslaved characters. As Douglas Olson argues, the enslaved characters in Aristophanes's *Archanians* (425 B.C.E) silently support their masters, functioning as "effective and efficient

[79] Hom. *Od.* 22.407-413; Trans. Wilson 2017, 490.
[80] Eur. *Ion* 884-915, 948; Trans. Burian and Shapiro 2009, 306, 310-12.
[81] Eur. *Hipp.* 775-802; Trans. Burian and Shapiro 2009, 40-1.
[82] Wrenhaven 2012, 90.
[83] Tordoff 2013, 42.
[84] Tordoff 2013, 59-60.
[85] Eur. *Hipp.* 259-289, 297-556, 661-807, 1161-1197; Eur. *Ion* 700-1020; Eur. *Med.* 1-212; Aesch. *Cho.* 734-783. See Wrenhaven 2012, 112-119 for an overview of prominent Good Slave characters in Athenian tragedy.

extensions of their masters' desires and will, and as legitimate members of the household, whose interests they support and protect."[86]

Reading the Stele: Enslaved and the Elite Interpretations

The presence of enslaved characters in 5th-century comedy and tragedy suggests that Athenian audiences were familiar with the tropes of the 'Good' Slave and 'Bad' Slave. In the context of theater, the deployment of these character tropes responded to anxieties about elite control and enslaved agency. We can contextualize the relationship between the depiction of Hegeso and that of the enslaved figure by situating the grave stele in conversation with the contemporary theatrical tradition of the late 5th century. If Hegeso is meant to be understood as the ideal wife, then her enslaved attendant must similarly represent the idealized Athenian slave—the 'Good' Slave. Through identifying the enslaved woman as a 'Good' Slave, her depiction on the Grave Stele of Hegeso can be analyzed to reveal motivations and interpretations of the elite and enslaved audience.

Elite Intentions: Paternalism and Status in Ancient Greek Slavery

For the elite, there were a number of benefits to portraying oneself as an owner of a 'Good Slave.' In the same way that Hegeso's presentation as a wealthy, virtuous, idealized wife would have spoken to her husband's ability to provide for his household, the presentation of a 'good' slave would further reinforce the positive reputation of the family. Wrenhaven argues that 'good' slaves reflected well upon their masters and household in the same way that "well-behaved children reflect positively on their parents."[87] A household with disobedient and poorly mannered enslaved staff indicated an enslaver's poor character and inability to enforce his authority, while the enslaved who were virtuous, obedient, and loyal were considered the

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[86] Ar. *Ach.* 805-6, 887-8, 1040-1, 1043, 1047, 1067, 1096-1104, 1118-25; Olson 2013, 65.
[87] Wrenhaven 2012, 90.

byproduct of an equally virtuous master, who modelled such behavior. As such, the presumed temperament of the enslaved played a key role in determining the social status of the enslaver. This was particularly relevant for domestic slaves, who were more likely to interact with those outside of their household.[88] Portraying the enslaved woman on the Grave Stele of Hegeso in accordance with the trope of the 'Good' Slave benefited not only Hegeso's status but also that of her husband and household.

The representation of a 'good' slave additionally enhanced one's reputation by referencing the paternalistic relationship of ancient slavery, in which the enslaver was portrayed as a gracious benefactor. Ancient slavery and paternalism share a connection that stretched back to Homeric epic and continued to shape conceptions of the master-slave relationship in 5th-century Athens. Peter Hunt identifies a paternalistic social contract as a defining feature of Homeric slavery, which was "marked by loyal service on one side and benevolent care on the other."[89] Both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* feature a number of enslaved characters that embody this paternalistic relationship, but they play particularly prominent speaking roles in the *Odyssey*, intrinsically linked with the conflict that consumes Odysseus' household and property.

Odysseus' enslaved swineherd Eumaeus, an example of the loyal and devoted 'Good' Slave, repeatedly expresses the paternalistic dynamic of ancient slavery. In Book 14 of the *Odyssey,* he sums up the benefits that a loyal slave can earn from years of service, remarking: "[Odysseus] would have taken care of me, and given / what kindly owners give to loyal slaves: / a house with land, and a wife whom many men / would want—as recompense for years of labor…"[90] Land ownership, private residence, and marriage were the rights of the free elite and,

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[88] Wrenhaven 2012, 87.
[89] Hunt 2017, 27.
[90] Hom. *Od.* 14.63-5; Trans. Wilson 2018, 334.

as Eumaeus recounts, the facsimile of these privileges were granted to those who proved loyal to their enslaver. It bears mention that land ownership and marriage for a Greek youth were often inherited from or arranged by their parents, thus an enslaver providing such privileges to their slaves once again mirrors a paternalistic relationship. Notably, Eumaeus later reveals in Book 15 that he was raised by Odysseus' mother, Anticleia, who "loved me [Eumaeus] with all her heart."[91] Two lines in Book 14 imply that Odysseus mirrors his mother by also stepping into a paternal role for Eumaeus, who laments in Book 14 that no other master would be kinder nor able to provide for him as well, "not even if I go back to the home of my own parents who gave me birth and brought me up," demonstrating that the master-enslaved relationship superseded familial ones.[92]

While Homeric depictions of slavery predate the classical period, this sense of paternalism is deeply embedded in the Good Slave trope and persists in the consciousness of 5th-century Athens. In *Against Evergus and Mnesibulus,* a 4th-century speech attributed to Demosthenes, the defendant speaks on taking in his formerly enslaved childhood nurse after she had been widowed. Described as "a devoted soul and faithful," she had been set free by the speaker's father, but, upon her widowhood and old age, he could "not suffer my old nurse, or the slave who attended me as a boy, to live in want," demonstrating that this paternalistic relationship persisted even after a slave had been manumitted.[93] While this unidentified speaker may have deeply cared for his childhood nurse, Wrenhaven argues that the speaker deliberately mentioned taking in his formerly enslaved nurse as a deliberate ploy to highlight his moral

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[91] Hom. *Od.* 15.371; Trans. Wilson 2018, 362.
[92] Hom. *Od* 14.138-40; Trans. Wilson 2018, 336.
[93] Dem. 47. 55-56; Trans. Murray 1939, 311

character for the jury, illustrating the importance of perceived positive relationships between enslaver and enslaved.[94]

In summary, the depiction of the enslaved woman on the Grave Stele of Hegeso may have leveraged the associations between paternalism and the 'Good' Slave to communicate to other elite viewers the virtue of Hegeso and her family. The idealized stereotype of the 'Good' Slave, characterized as obedient, well-mannered, and devoted, portrayed Hegeso as a benevolent master to the domestic slaves of the household, modelling virtuous behavior to those under her supervision and inspiring their loyalty.

Potential Enslaved Interpretations

While the elite benefitted from using the depiction of the 'Good' Slave to communicate social status and reputation to other elite viewers, the iconography of the Grave Stele of Hegeso also sought to communicate ideology to the enslaved. At its prominent position along the roads in the Kerameikos Cemetery, the Grave Stele of Hegeso could have been encountered by a wide scope of enslaved viewers, which may have included agricultural workers; those working or being transferred to mill or mining sites; those with domestic positions travelling with their enslaver; those trusted to conduct business on their master's behalf outside the city or within the potter's quarter. This vast sample is further diversified by considering non-Greek and Greek enslaved viewers and by considering gender. While elite woman such as Hegeso were ideally kept separate from the public sphere, complete domestic seclusion was attainable for elite, wealthy women who owned an ample number of enslaved persons to conduct chores and errands on their behalf.[95] Enslaved women assigned to a domestic household, those working at

[94] Wrenhaven 2012, 93.
[95] Leader 1997, 695; Kosmopoulou 2001, 283.

agricultural sites, those as craftswomen, and those as sex workers navigated the public streets of the city and could have viewed the iconography of the Grave Stele of Hegeso.

We therefore may ask: What did elites wish to communicate to an enslaved audience? And how did the enslaved audience receive that ideology? In order to understand how the enslaved interpreted the iconography of the Hegeso stele, we first must investigate what the elites intended to communicate through the iconography of the 'Good' Slave trope.

Elite Intentions: Propagandistic Messages

The prominent position of the Grave Stele of Hegeso above the Street of Tombs invites comparison with a contemporary billboard overlooking a modern highway, 'advertising' the virtues of the deceased, the reputation and status of the family, and actively reproducing ideology and idealized stereotypes about status and gender in 5th-century Athens. Within this context, I would like to argue that the iconography of the 'Good' Slave attempted to extoll the qualities and benefits of being a loyal, obedient, and 'good' to the enslaved population.

Promoting the characteristics of the 'Good' Slave to an enslaved audience would benefit the enslaver above all else, as it would promote behavior that prevented conflict between the two parties and encourage compliance and loyalty in the subjugated population. Enslaved persons who embodied the ideals of the Good Slave archetype were the type of people whom "their masters most wanted to have and would want other slaves to emulate."[96] Considered in this light, the Good Slave trope, along with the enslaved woman on the Grave Stele of Hegeso, may have been intended to present a 'role model', implying that obedience, loyalty, and devotion could bring rewards.

[96] Oakley 2000, 246.

There were a number of potential rewards that could have been used to coerce the enslaved into obedience. The depiction of a domestic slave on the Grave Stele of Hegeso is interesting in this context, as those with domestic positions typically endured less intense physical labor than those with agricultural positions or those condemned to work in the nightmarish conditions of mills or mines. Outside of material rewards, the most desirable gift for an enslaved person would have been their manumission. Manumission, in which a person either purchased or was granted their freedom from slavery, was exceptionally rare in classical Athens, with the practice being far more common in Rome.[97] Purchasing one's freedom was exceptionally difficult—and likely impossible for those who were working in mines or mills—but for the enslaved who managed shops, practiced craft or earned income through sex work eventually could earn enough profit to afford manumission.[98] More frequently, the gift of freedom was granted by 'benevolent' slave owners as reward for years of loyal service after years of extended enslavement.[99] Domestic slaves, owing to their closer proximity to slave owners, had greater opportunity to demonstrate the quality of their service and to cultivate affectionate, positive relationships.[100]

It must be noted that even manumission was a manifestation of paternalism, and after attaining freedom, one often remained beholden to their former enslaver. Manumitted slaves could not own property, lacked political rights, and were typically bound by continued obligation to their enslaver.[101] Thus, a paternalistic relationship still existed though a type of sponsorship,

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[97] Wrenhaven 2012, 91.
[98] Zelnick-Abramovitz 2005, 181. For an overview of economic status and occupations of manumitted slaves, see Zelnick-Abramovitz 2005, 180-183.
[99] Hunt 2017, 122.
[100] Wrenhaven 2012, 92.
[101] Zelnick-Abramovitz 2005, 184-272, 308-319.

or—as demonstrated by *Against Evergus and Mnesibulus*—manumitted persons often returned to the household of their enslaver to be cared for.

The potential for manumission, a reprieve from hard labor, and other material rewards may have been appealing for enslaved viewers passing through the Kerameikos Cemetery, particularly those who worked as laborers and did not have domestic positions within the household. The enslaved woman on the Grave Stele of Hegeso—and other grave stelae that featured 'mistress-maid' iconography—may have functioned as a visual representation of the 'benefits' that came with obedience and submission. This interpretation, most likely the intended one by the free elite, further propagates a narrative that encouraged enslaved obedience and powerlessness and minimized the chance of revolt against slave owners.[102]

There are no documented large scale enslaved revolts in ancient Greece, but through an analysis of the prominent literary and theatrical themes of the time, we see that it clearly was a concern of the slave-owning population. With the population of enslaved persons in Athens being estimated as high as thirty percent, it would have been beneficial and reassuring for the smaller population of wealthy citizens to promote the Good Slave archetype.[103]

Enslaved Interpretations: A Subversive Turn

The prior section explored the motives and propagandistic messages that elites sought to convey to the enslaved population and the potential avenues in which such ideology was received by the enslaved as a role-model or motivator for obedient behavior and submission. This section seeks to explore more subversive and critical interpretations by the enslaved.

[102] Hunt 2017, 121.
[103] Estimates for the enslaved population of Athens is notoriously debated. Sara Forsdyke estimates the population to be around 30%; Forsdyke 2021, 91.

To do so, it is fruitful to return once more to Athenian theater. Several plays explore, albeit in non-confrontational and surface-level ways, themes of enslaved resistance and critiques of slavery. For example, Euripides's *Trojan Women* (415 B.C.E) details the tragic subjugation of the women of Troy into slavery, although the text focuses more on the humiliation of elite women and their loss of status rather than on the everyday suffering of the non-Greek individuals who were forcibly removed from their homeland and brought to Athens.[104] It is another play of Euripides that is of interest here, titled *Alexandros.* It is the first play of Euripides's 415 B.C.E theatrical cycle that centered on the Trojan War, followed by *Palamedes*, *Trojan Women*, and the satyr play *Sisyphus*.[105] The narrative follows the story of Alexander, most commonly known as Paris, and his return to the royal family of Troy after being exposed as an infant.[106] This play is not extant, but surviving fragments suggest that the conflict centers around the misrecognition of Alexander as a slave.[107] His triumph and success at the funerary games generate fear over the supplantation of Priam's elite sons with someone of lower status, resulting in his brother Deiphobos and Hecuba plotting to execute Alexander.[108] The revelation of Alexander's true identity resolves the conflict as he returns to his family and elite status, setting the stage for the tragedy of the Trojan War.[109]

The surviving fragments reveal tantalizing glimpses into how slavery was conceptualized by the free elite, through both the characters of the play and the perspective of the playwright. While the play is full of value judgements about 'bad' slaves who attempt to rise above their station, Fragment 8 is of particular interest. It reads: "Slaves who are fond of their master's class

[104] Hunt 2011. See Forsdyke 2021, 51-101 for a detailed and nuanced exploration of the events and rituals that marked the beginning of one's enslavement.
[105] Karamanou 2017, 31.
[106] Karamanou 2017, 1.
[107] Eur. *Alexandros*, Frr. 12, 16, 18a, 18b, 22, 23 (Karamanou).
[108] Karamanou 2017, 20.
[109] Karamanou 2017, 24.

arouse much hostility from their own kind."[110] This fragment provokes a subversive interpretation in which the enslaved may have resisted and recognized the propagandistic sentiment that promoted obedient and loyal behavior. While written by a slave-owning playwright, the line still addresses concerns about enslaved resistance and suggests that solidarity and conflict existed among the enslaved who sought favor from their enslavers and those who did not.[111]

If some level of enslaved conflict and resistance existed, there is the possibility that the enslaved attendant on the Grave Stele of Hegeso may have been recognized as a type of 'class traitor' who abandoned other household slaves to willingly serve those who enslaved them. This interpretation suggests that the elite messaging communicated by the stele was received negatively. A lack of material or literary evidence has made it difficult to reconstruct theoretical frameworks of household slave dynamics and resistance, but a number of scholars have employed comparative evidence from slavery of the American South in their analyses of Greek slavery.[112] Rather compelling here is the comparative analysis of the tension between the enslaved assigned to domestic positions within the house and those who lived in separate quarters and primarily worked in agricultural fields. Those who lived in the house "experienced greater pressure to conform to their master's expectations," while those who lived apart "were allowed far more autonomy in their demeanor, way of life, and customs."[113]

While comparative evidence from the context of the American South cannot be applied across the board to examples in ancient Greece, it is likely that the iconography of the Grave

[110] Eur. *Alexandros*, Fr. 8 (Karamanou); Trans. Karamanou 2017, 85.
[111] Hunt 2011, 33.
[112] See Wrenhaven 2012, 123-127 and Forsdyke 2021 for extensive use of comparative evidence from the Americas and the Caribbean.
[113] Hunt 2011 summarizing work of Genovese 1976.

Stele of Hegeso was received in different ways by enslaved people according to their degrees of autonomy and labor statuses. It is tempting to speculate that domestic attendants accompanying their masters through the Kerameikos Cemetery were reminded of their role through the stele's iconography of the 'mistress-maid' motif or that enslaved people, who were being sent to a mill or mine out of punishment for disobedience, felt vindicated upon seeing the image of the obedient, domestic enslaved attendant on the stele. Despite the absence of full-scale enslaved revolts in classical Athens, enslaved resistance surely existed, perhaps through reception of the stele's imagery by the enslaved and their rejection of its elite ideology. These speculations are based on literary and material evidence left behind by the elite, yet, as I have sought illustrate through this thesis, inclusive and subversive interpretations can be developed using elite material evidence that consider a more nuanced experience of ancient slavery. The Grave Stele of Hegeso, when considered under an approach that actively searches for the experience of the enslaved, transforms from an object exclusively shaped by the forces of elite ideology to one that can also speak to enslaved perspectives.

V. Ancient Slavery in the Modern Museum: Methods and Motives for Display

An average 5th-century viewer walking through the Kerameikos Cemetery was immersed in the context of ancient Greek society, familiar with the iconography, ideology, and nature of ancient slavery that shaped the relief on the Grave Stele of Hegeso. The modern viewer, who is over two thousand years removed from the 5th century, must rely on contextual information provided by educational and academic sources to understand the iconography and function of grave stelae in classical Athenian society. Some might find this information through academic research and scholarship, while others will have their first encounter with ancient material in the context of the museum. One of the responsibilities of the modern museum is to provide contextual and educational information to a visitor through labels and accompanying exhibition materials. Yet the modern museum, similar to classical scholarship, has struggled to contextualize the reality of ancient slavery with its collection.

In the introduction to *Slaves and Other Objects,* Page duBois identifies two problematic frameworks that influenced the field of classics and the museum world. The first framework attempts to connect the ancient Greeks with the modern Greek population through dubious ethnographic strategies, constructing a narrative of a primitive, pure Greek culture that has endured from ancient to contemporary times. The second framework elects to ignore the modern population and employs a neoconservative view that "preserve[s] a fetishized, frozen ancient Greece without slaves or women," and other so-called undesirables.[114] Both of these frameworks have combined to influence the presentation and discussion of classical antiquity within the museum. As an artwork that has been on display in the museum for an extended period of time, depicts an enslaved figure, and is shaped by conceptions of elite and enslaved social roles, the

[114] duBois 2003, 12.

Grave Stele of Hegeso is uniquely situated to help us explore the absence of slavery in the museum.

The Language of Slavery: Labels, Translations, and Catalogs

The Grave Stele of Hegeso is currently housed and displayed in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, the oldest national museum and first archaeological museum founded after Greece's independence.[115] As of June 29, 2022, the Grave Stele of Hegeso is located in Room 18 (Fig. 11), where I observed that it is part of a larger collection of Greek funerary sculpture that stretches among Rooms 17, 18, 22, and 23. The museum is arranged chronologically, so that a visitor may pass through Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods, with brief detours into Mycenean and Cycladic Art.[116] The Grave Stele of Hegeso is grouped with other grave stelae from the classical period in Rooms 17 and 18.

For a visitor from the general public who has had no prior exposure to the artwork on display, museum labels and accompanying exhibition material are important for conveying contextual information about the object and the ancient world. I observed that upon entering Room 17, a visitor can locate a placard mounted on the wall that presents classical Attic funerary monuments. The full text can be found in Figure 12. The information included is a brief but relatively comprehensive overview of the historical context in which funerary monuments were outlawed by Kleisthenes; the impact of the plague and the revival of the practice; typical

[115] National Archaeological Museum of Athens, 2023, 2 May.

[116] The presumed movement of a visitor through the National Archaeological Museum is a bit ambiguous, as the Archaic-Roman chronological path through the galleries is interrupted by the Mycenean and Cycladic wing and the wing containing Egyptian antiquities. Many visitors will also be immediately guided forward into the central hallways containing the Mycenean objects, rather than left into the Archaic galleries that flank entrance space. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the museum placed arrows on the ground guiding a visitor through the central Mycenean and Cycladic halls, into a central room which connects the Mycenean, Classical, Hellenistic galleries and the stairs to the second floor. The viewer is subsequently guided right into the Hellenistic and Roman portion of the museum, where the visitor would once again cross into the entrance atrium to enter the Archaic and Classical sections of the museum.

iconography associated with the gender, the status, and the nationality of the deceased; and the sumptuary law that put an end to this era of elaborate funerary sculpture. Despite the fact that numerous slaves are depicted on the stelae in the rooms, slaves are mentioned only once in order to explain differences in epigraphic practice: unlike citizens or metics, "slaves provide only their personal name [in inscriptions]."

Apart from a terracotta reproduction of a comic slave mask, this might be the most explicit reference to the lives of the enslaved in the museum. Absence defines much of the remaining labels and wall text. Most notably, neither the English nor the Modern Greek label of the Grave Stele of Hegeso (Fig. 13) explicitly mentions slavery. The English translation elects to describe the enslaved figure as a "sorrowful standing attendant," while the word chosen for the Modern Greek label is θεραπαινίδα (*therapainida*), which translates as "attendant."[117] The Modern Greek label also describes the enslaved attendant's expression with the word θλίψις (*thlipsis*), meaning "sorrow" or "mourning."[118] The descriptor of sorrowful in both translations once again reiterates the status of the enslaved figure as a 'good' slave, bereaved at the loss of their enslaver, and softens the harsh reality of ancient slavery for the modern audience.

DuBois notes that the labels of similar 'mistress-maid' type stelae that feature an enslaved figure in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens refer to the enslaved women as "servants, or [these enslaved women are] omitted altogether from the descriptions of the objects."[119] During my visit to the museum in July 2022, I noted that the label texts have not been updated since duBois' assessment of the museum. A number of other 'mistress-maid' type grave stelae with enslaved figures are shown alongside the Grave Stele of Hegeso in Rooms 17

[117] duBois 2003, 76.
[118] Pring 1965, s.v. θλίψις.
[119] duBois 2003, 75.

and 18, such as the Grave Stele of Ameinokleia (Fig. 14), the Grave Stele of Polyxene (Fig. 15), and a fragmented stele found in Athens that depicts a standing enslaved figure (Fig. 16).[120] The labels of these three stelae will also be analyzed.

These three stelae represent female figures with iconographic similarities to the enslaved woman on the Grave Stele of Hegeso. Several of the women are depicted as the smallest figure on the stele, wearing a *chiton cheirodotos* and *sakkos* and performing an act of domestic labor, probably indicating that these figures are also likely enslaved women. The labels for these stelae (Figs. 17-19) respectively refer to the enslaved figures as a "kneeling attendant," a "maiden," and a "young attendant clad in a barbarian sleeved *chiton.*" This vagueness similarly can be found in Kaltsas's 2002 sculpture catalog for the National Archaeological Museum. It describes the respective figures on each stele as "a woman," "a young servant girl…who is helping her mistress," and "a young maidservant."[121] The enslaved woman on the Grave Stele of Hegeso is discussed with similar language in the catalog, described as "[Hegeso's] maidservant, wearing the characteristic barbarian dress and snood on her head."[122]

Referring to these enslaved figures with vague terminology further obscures the discussion of slavery in the ancient world and prevents the possibility for contemporary museum visitors to consider enslaved perspectives while viewing artwork such as the Grave Stele of Hegeso. This problem with terminology is not limited to the sculpture collection and can also be found pervading the museum's sizeable ceramic galleries on the second floor. DuBois notes that vases that depict slaves are often missing descriptions of slavery in their labels, finding it particularly noticeable in representations of the symposium, where we know from other evidence

[120] Athens, National Archaeological Museum 718, 723, 1993, acq. date n/a; Kaltsas 2002, 167, 184, 187-8.
[121] Kaltsas 2002, 367-8, 363, 167.
[122] Kaltsas 2002, 309.

that the enslaved were hired as entertainers and sex workers.[123] Yet this issue is not unique to the National Archaeological Museum, nor to only museums in Greece. In a comparative analysis of display practices in international museums, duBois comments on a similar absence of the mention of ancient slavery in both the Getty Villa and the British Museum, which she argues prioritize aesthetic aspirations over an in-depth contextualization of the material within the societies that produced it.[124] The absence of slavery that duBois observes is a symptom of a wider curatorial issue where contextualization clashes with aesthetic experience and a lingering idealization of the classical past. Because this thesis lacks the space to analyze a global sample size, I would like to focus on Greek museums, exploring the influence of nationalist aspirations upon the presence of slavery in museum collections. How are museums used as tools within nationalist agendas? Where does ancient slavery fit into the nationalist narrative? How does nationalism impact artworks in the museum collection? And how do these factors affect the interpretation of the Grave Stele of Hegeso?

Constructing the Nation-State: Museums and Greek Nationalism

Other museums around the world have tackled the issue of slavery in their collections, although most focus on the Transatlantic slave trade. Paralleling the history of slavery-centered scholarship, discussions of slavery had virtually no presence in the museum world prior to 1950.[125] Fath Davis Ruffins argues that this absence was born from the misconception that modern slavery was a regional issue of the American South, not a national or international issue.[126] Therefore, the preeminent museums did not have a place for slavery in the shared national narratives constructed by the museum. The turning-point, as identified by Ruffins, was

[123] duBois 2003, 76.
[124] duBois 2003, 63-68.
[125] Ruffins 2006, 394.
[126] Ruffins 2006, 397.

the establishment of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which demonstrated effectively to African Americans and the American public that their experiences, tragedies, and history could also "be memorialized as part of national or world historical memory."[127]

Ruffins identifies a number of significant slavery focused exhibitions in America and Europe throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, but particularly notable was "Mining the Museum" at the Maryland Historical Society in 1992.[128] The exhibition, curated by artist Fred Wilson, confronted the absence of slavery in the museum by bringing the material objects of slaves out from the collection and placing them alongside the objects of the elite.[129] In recent years, museums have been founded that are dedicated entirely to slavery, such as the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, which presents slavery rooted in both its local and international contexts. Despite a movement for integrating slavery in the museum, different sociopolitical factors have prevented the integration of ancient slavery into the Greek museum.

To understand the nationalist forces that impact the Grave Stele of Hegeso and its display inside the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, it is important to first examine the sociopolitical events which shaped the Greek museum institution. Upon the conclusion of a bloody war for independence in 1829, Greece was formally recognized as a sovereign nation by the Treaty of Constantinople in 1832, ending four centuries of Ottoman rule. The ideals that had garnered the sympathy and support from the Neoclassicists and Romantics throughout Europe, most importantly Greece's fervent desire to "rejoin the European family of nations" and "regain their true identity," would continue to define the early years of the new regime.[130] In order to realize these aspirations, the art, artifacts, and cultural products of Greek antiquity became a

[127] Ruffins 2006, 399.
[128] See Ruffins 2006, 396- 410 for an overview of a history of slavery in the American museum.
[129] See Wilson and Halle 1993 for photos and introduction to "Mining the Museum."
[130] Koliopoulos and Thanos 2009, 16-17.

linchpin in the construction of modern Greek national identity. Museums became the most important tool in the arsenal of the state in their long-term project to link the heritage of modern Greece with that of the ancient past, with a number of new museum institutions founded in the first years of the nation-state. The National Archaeological Museum, founded in 1829 immediately upon the conclusion of the War for Independence, is particularly rooted in this nationalist context, aiding in the construction of a national narrative of heritage and identity.[131] I argue that, as an artwork within the collection of the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, the Grave Stele of Hegeso became incorporated into a wider national narrative that employed the objects of antiquity as part of the fabric of the modern Greek heritage.

Scholars have argued that the link between nationalism and the museum can be traced back as early as the founding of the Louvre in Paris following the first French revolution in 1793.[132] The Louvre's presentation as a revolutionary emblem of a new French Republic set a standard for a number of subsequent national museums founded in the 18th and 19th centuries in regard to nation-building and the production of identity, and the concept of the national museum has been studied in detail. For example, the introduction to *National Museums and Nation Building in Europe 1750-2010,* co-written by editors Peter Aronsson and Gabriella Elgenius, defines the role of the national museum as "an international standard of nation-claiming and nation branding…with corresponding collections and displays that ultimately claim, articulate, and represent dominant national values and myths."[133] In the same edited volume, Stefan Berger expands on this definition, writing that the national museum "attempts to establish authenticity, deep origins and historicity for their respective nations and thereby make 'their' nation a

[131] Avgouli 1994, 246-253.
[132] See Schubert 2009, 17-24 for a detailed history of the founding of the Louvre and its ties to nationalist sentiment.
[133] Aronsson and Elgenius 2015, 1.

respected equal among the European community of nations," championing a sense of progress and modernity.[134] The national museum proved a useful tool for both long-established and burgeoning nation-states of Europe with its ability to claim cultural heritage, construct national narratives, educate the nation state's citizens, and communicate political, social, and cultural ideology to the public.[135] The museum became a stage for a nation to perform narratives of power, progress, and collective unity, both through what is included and what is deliberately chosen to be excluded.[136]

Several scholars argue that, within the specific context of Greece, the nationalist agenda of the early post-revolution museum was defined by a desire to construct a shared national and cultural identity for the newly independent citizens of the new nation-state, to reclaim the cultural heritage of antiquity for the modern age, and to leverage the material culture of antiquity as "evidence of the continuity of an ancient tradition and identity" that endured despite several centuries of Ottoman occupation.[137] Perhaps most importantly, the Greek state sought to separate itself swiftly from Ottoman associations and to decisively reassociate Greece with the sociocultural and political hegemony of Western Europe, seeking to employ museums and material culture as tools for this process. Subsequently, the foundation of new museums and other heritage sites—particularly the famous archaeological sites such as the Acropolis or the Agora—therefore became part of a "Hellenic national imagination" that communicates a desire for stability and identity in the aftermath of the revolutionary war and the rapid political transformations that arose from Greece's rapid transition into European modernity after the

[134] Berger 2015, 29.
[135] Berger 2015, 19.
[136] Elgenius 2015, 148.
[137] Avgouli 1994, 246-250; Berger 2015, 14; Elgenius 2015, 156. Direct quotation from Garezou and Keramidas 2017, 5.

removal of Ottoman power.[138] As Greece's first national museum, the National Archaeological Museum was founded in 1829 to respond to these 19th- century aspirations for Greek modernity and international power, which deeply influenced the display of its collection.[139]

Scholars have argued that the 'Hellenic national imagination' and the nationalist narratives that influence the operation of Greek museums have little place for ancient slavery. DuBois, for example, suggests in *Slaves and Other Objects* that the discussion of slavery directly opposes the mission of Greek nationalist narratives because "to call attention to the slaves of antiquity might erode the narrative of freedom, of continuity between past and present."[140] A number of factors may have discouraged museum authorities from directly addressing ancient slavery, such as the discussion of ancient Greek slavery in the abolitionist movement, but another observation from duBois presents an interesting suggestion. She argues that Greek museums take particular care to construct their national identity "as distinct from Asian, Ottoman conquerors of the more recent past."[141] There may have been anxiety over highlighting a similarity among the ancient Greeks, modern Greeks, and the Ottoman empire, as Ottoman slavery was not formally ended until 1909.[142] This sentiment persists today and is particularly noticeable on the Acropolis. As Yiannis Hamilakis notes, the staff of the Acropolis Museum have decided not to display a remarkable fragment of the Erechtheion that features an Ottoman inscription.[143] In addition, the Parthenon Restoration Project reconstructs the Parthenon as it existed as a Greek temple in the 5th century B.C.E rather than as a mosque during its later Ottoman history.[144]

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[138] Hamilakis 2011, 625.
[139] National Archaeological Museum of Athens, 2023, 10 April.
[140] duBois 2003, 77.
[141] duBois 2003, 77.
[142] Erdem 1996,150
[143] Hamilakis 2011, 626.
[144] Venieri, 2023 10 April.

This prioritization of the ‘classical’ past influences how modern Greece is perceived by constructing an idealized image of both the ancient and contemporary world. It has also influenced the 21st- century Greek museum, which struggles to balance contextual information about the ancient world with the idealization of the past.[145] The next section will discuss how this idealization of the past and evolving definitions of modern museum practice have impacted the contextualization of ancient slavery within the museum.

Two Museums: Evolving Definitions of Modernity

As we have just seen, the National Archaeological Museum of Athens was founded after Greek Independence to shape national identity and represent Greece’s modernity to the rest of Europe, and this aspiration has been carried forward by subsequent museums that have been founded. It was noted in the previous section that the desire to preserve an idealized view of antiquity discouraged contextualization of slavery in the museum. Yet shifting trends in museology from the 19th to 21st centuries have also shaped how museums choose to contextualize artworks in their collection. In this section, I examine how museum practices have developed in Greece and how they have influenced the contextualization of slavery and the ancient world. The National Archaeological Museum and the Acropolis Museum, as the first two modern Greek museums ever built, are useful examples to analyze and compare here.[146] The two institutions were founded in the 19th century and have been or are in the process of being updated to match 21st-century definitions of modernity.

Officially opening doors in 1874, the Old Acropolis Museum was founded with similar intentions as the National Archaeological Museum but its mission was to house and display the extensive, rapidly increasing, and nationalistically symbolic body of material excavated from the

[145] Plantzos 2011, 620.
[146] Avgouli 1994, 252.

Acropolis.[147] The museum was notably located atop the Acropolis, which had been declared a national heritage site in 1834 and was a "national symbol of the new state."[148] Kalliopi Fouseki argues that both the Acropolis Hill and the material excavated from the site became imbued with a sacred quality defined by "feelings of respect, national pride and the admiration for the superiority of its aesthetics."[149] It was imperative that the Acropolis Museum kept these objects connected to their archaeological context through the museum's location, aiming to preserve an "integral part of the site's cultural heritage, enriching the visitor's experience with multifaceted spatial and historical relationships."[150]

The sheer bulk of recovered material quickly overwhelmed the available space at the museum, and the building, integrated with the archaeological site, could not be expanded without negatively impacting the excavations and the visual character of the Acropolis Hill. By 1976, the Greek governmental authorities decided that the museum should be relocated off-site, but it took until 2009 for the New Acropolis Museum to open a short distance away from the slope of the Acropolis, transformed into a museum that aggressively embraced the signifiers of modernity.[151]

The New Acropolis Museum, setting the standard for the movement to modernize Greek museums, was shaped by particular sociopolitical and economic contexts. The New Acropolis Museum opened in 2009, the same year as the devastating sovereign debt crisis that alienated Greece from Western Europe, leaving 19th-century Greek aspirations for reintegration into the 'West' still unrealized. Yiannis Mylonas analyzes the rhetoric in European press covering the financial crisis, noting a rise in "Greek-bashing" defined by racist, classicist, misleading and

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[147] Avgouli 1994, 253. To preserve clarity, I will refer to the Acropolis Museum located atop the Acropolis as the Old Acropolis Museum, while the 2009 construction is referred to as the New Acropolis Museum. Despite the terms 'old' and 'new' and different buildings, it is still the same institution.
[148] Fouseki 2006, 534.
[149] Fouseki 2006, 541.
[150] Filippopoulou 2017, 24.
[151] Filippopoulou 2017, 25-27.

negative stereotypes that cast the Greek people as "guilty of cheating a supposedly benevolent European Union."[152] He argues that, in the wake of the debt crisis, subsequent government bailouts crystalized the status of Greece as a periphery state, rendering Greece as "Europe's 'Other'."[153] In the face of strict government austerity measures, economic strife, and the precarious position of Greece in the eyes of the European Union, the New Acropolis Museum needed to justify its 130 million Euro price to the Greek people and the museum's co-financer, the European Regional Development Fund.[154] Dimitris Plantzos argues that the New Acropolis Museum became crucial for constructing and reinforcing nationalist agendas in the face of social and economic turmoil, employing architecture and methods of display to reinforce Greece's commitment to modernity and the role of ancient material culture in the shared national narrative.[155]

The New Acropolis Museum carries forward 19th-century aspirations to "escape from the 'dark ages' of the recent past and to achieve modernity and progress at an international level," to the point where the motto that advertised the construction of the new building was "Greece belongs to the West."[156] While the modern architectural façade, the glamorous gift shops and restaurant, and the New Acropolis Museum's status as the first museum to be run independently from the Ministry of Sports and Culture provide signifiers for Greece's modernity, what is particularly relevant to this thesis is how the New Acropolis Museum approaches exhibition. As I will discuss shortly, the museum's approach to exhibit contextualization is indicative of a wider

[152] Mylonas 2019, 2.
[153] Mylonas 2019, 2.
[154] Tschumi 2010, 77.
[155] Plantzos 2011, 617.
[156] Fouseki 2006, 535-6.

trend of decontextualization that continues to impact the public's recognition of ancient slavery and its interpretation of the Grave Stele of Hegeso.

Whereas duBois noted that the National Archaeological Museum just about omits slavery from its labels, Plantzos discusses the New Acropolis Museum's reluctance to provide any information on the historical context and function of the artwork. He highlights the lack of comprehensive contextual information in the labels, which typically provide little information other than a descriptive title, a date, and the occasional artistic attribution, prioritizing the aesthetic experience of the viewer.[157] As Plantzos critiques in his analysis of the displays, the Acropolis Museum prefers a minimal approach to wall text, "as if contextualisation [sic.] might belittle the 'glory' that was Greece."[158] He additionally notes that several English label texts are incomprehensible, phonetic translations of the Modern Greek into English.[159]

Why choose to prioritize aesthetic experience over immersing the viewer within the context of the artwork? Historically, Greek archaeological museums were characterized by "limited appeal to the public, established primarily as depositories…and aiming mainly to advance scholarly research."[160] While ancient slavery is absent from the labels of the Grave Stele of Hegeso and other similar grave stelae, the National Archaeological Museum actively chose to engage the visitor through comprehensive overviews of contextual information as seen in the wall text in Figure 12. The New Acropolis Museum instead creates a space where the material of classical antiquity and classicism becomes "timeless and supra-historical, not to be studied but revered."[161] Even the winding path that guides the visitor up to the top floor, where the

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[157] Plantzos 2011, 621.
[158] Plantzos 2011, 620.
[159] Plantzos 2011, 620. Plantzos does not indicate which objects had these labels, and as such I was not able to verify if this was still the case during my visit in June 2022.
[160] Filippopoulou 2017, 25.
[161] Plantzos 2011, 620.

Parthenon marbles are exhibited with sweeping views of the Acropolis, was deliberately designed to recall the act of ascending the Acropolis, perhaps evoking the ritual Panathenaic procession.[162] Owing to the Acropolis's status as a national symbol of modern Greece, the material excavated from the Acropolis similarly is imbued with this symbolic power. As Plantzos argues, the New Acropolis Museum seems concerned with the collection "[losing its] Classicist allure" and pseudo-sacred status through contextualizing it with the non-idealized reality of ancient Greece.[163] This climate of contemporary nationalism and its concern with preserving the image of modernity, progress, and a continuity between the people of the ancient and contemporary world has contributed to the continued absence of ancient slavery in the contemporary Greek museum.

During the writing of this thesis, the National Archaeological Museum of Athens closed during the week of February 13th, 2023 owing to protests over a forthcoming renovation to the museum. The 20,000 square meter expansion would add a "new auditorium, restaurant, public entrance, and ticketing facilities," along with outdoor exhibition spaces and an expansive garden.[164] Yet it was not only the new facilities that prompted the demonstration, but a law approved in the beginning of February that would emancipate the National Archaeological Museum and four other Greek museums from the control of the Ministry of Sports and Culture.[165] These five institutions would be run by government approved boards, displacing the archaeologists who have run the institutions for decades and are experts on the objects in the

[162] Tschumi 2010, 1.
[163] Plantzos 2011, 622.
[164] Greenberger 2023.
[165] Greenberger 2023.

collection. In defense of the proposed changes, Lina Mendoni, the Minister of Culture, stated that "the changes constitute a necessary modernization."[166]

Design mock-ups for the proposed renovations feature some of the planned new exhibition spaces, which evoke the flowing, bright galleries of the New Acropolis Museum. If the National Archaeological Museum plans to modernize to match its sister institution, one must wonder if the museum will also adopt the context-free archaeology of the New Acropolis Museum that has been criticized and how this would affect artworks like the Grave Stele of Hegeso. Prioritizing aesthetic experience over engagement with the object rooted in the context of its creation would not only continue the separation of ancient slavery, but further remove the grave stele from its broader context relating to gender, status, and death in 5th-century Athens.

It remains to be seen what the National Archaeological Museum will look like after the proposed renovations have been completed, or if the display of the Grave Stele of Hegeso will be impacted by these changes. Yet the absence of ancient slavery remains an issue in the current form of the museum. At the present moment, a visitor to the museum with no knowledge about ancient slavery is unlikely to recognize the standing figure on the Grave Stele of Hegeso as an enslaved woman. The lack of contextualization on the stele's label prevents the visitor from engaging with the perspective of both elite and enslaved, further displacing the discussion of ancient slavery from contemporary discourse. While the complex relationship of nationalism, modernity, and the idealization of the classical past continues to shape modern Greek museums and their discussion of ancient slavery, the displacement of ancient slavery can only be combated by discussing it in both scholarship and the museum space.

[166] Greenberger 2023; Heathcote 2023.

VI. Conclusion

As an artwork with an extended legacy that spans from the classical period to the contemporary one, the Grave Stele of Hegeso is uniquely situated to help us understand the role of slavery in the ancient world and the contemporary consciousness of it. In the 5th century B.C.E, the grave stele was located in a prominent public space that was easily accessible and well-traveled. It sought to communicate information to a wide cross-section of the population of Athens, including rich and poor citizens, foreigners and metics, and the enslaved. The iconography of the stele therefore communicated different messages and information to different groups of people. In accordance with the general practice of portraying idealizations of Greek life rather than everyday realities on funerary stelae, the figure of Hegeso has been identified as the figure of ideal wife. The question that naturally arises is: what is the enslaved figure meant to represent?

In this thesis, I have connected the iconography of the Grave Stele of Hegeso with the well-studied and documented theatrical trope of the 'Good' Slave, suggesting that the figure on the Grave Stele of Hegeso and other 'good' slave types represented the elite ideal of the Athenian slave. For an elite, free viewer, the idealized wife represented the virtue of the citizen wife, memorializing the wealth and status of her, her husband, and her husband's household. The idealized slave may have been recognized by this audience as an example of the 'Good' Slave, soothing anxieties over slave revolt and reinforcing a narrative of elite superiority and benevolence.

I have also taken deliberate steps to highlight enslaved receptions, some critical and some less so. An enslaved viewer may have regarded the iconography of the enslaved woman in the manner that an elite enslaver would have desired, internalizing obedience and loyalty in

exchange for rewards such as manumission or 'kinder' treatment. An alternate interpretation can be found by examining fragments from Euripides's *Alexandros*, which suggest a more critical interpretation that implies tension between these 'good' slaves and those who continued to resist despite the circumstances.

Today the Grave Stele of Hegeso continues to be shaped by classical scholarship and its display in the museum. I examined the display of the Grave Stele of Hegeso in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, analyzing the labels of the stele and other comparable representations of 'mistress-maid' scenes to illustrate how slavery is obscured from the layman viewer. To explore potential explanations for this absence in the museum space, I analyzed the role of nationalism in the 19th- and 21st-century Greek museum, focusing on the National Archaeological Museum and the New Acropolis Museum. Situating the foundation and operation of these museums in the wake of national instability and strife, I argued that ancient slavery has been obscured owing to a nationalist desire to present a context-free, idealized picture of the ancient world.

Perhaps one question still remains: why is it so important to recover the experience of the enslaved of antiquity? A similar question was asked by Saidiya Hartman as she examined the archives of American slavery and the Middle Passage. Hartman's concern, on both a personal and academic level, was how to grapple with the violence inherent in the archive of slavery, which "determines, regulates and organizes the kinds of statements that can be made about slavery and as well it creates subjects and objects of power."[167] Her solution was to employ fabulated narratives based on and opposed to the archive, not with the intention of reconstructing a complete and accurate record of enslaved experiences, but rather "laboring to paint as full a

[167] Hartman 2008, 10.

picture of the lives of the captives as possible…straining against the limits of the archive to write a cultural history of the captive."[168]

I have not employed the narrative aspect of Hartman's approach to critical fabulation that is informed by the field of comparative literature, but I have sought to speculate and attempt to reconstruct the experiences of the enslaved in ancient Greece through mining the archive of the slave-owning elite. While exposing the limits of the existing archive, I have also aimed to expand the definition of archive itself, as the archive of ancient slavery is also the archive of literature, medicine, theater, archaeology, and history, and it has long been kept from being fully integrated into the narrative of the ancient world. Despite biased perspectives and the absence of concrete evidence to reconstruct a complete picture of ancient slavery and the enslaved, the archive can be pushed beyond its limits, particularly through reexamining well-published artworks such as Grave Stele of Hegeso.

There cannot be a holistic understanding of the ancient world that does not explicitly acknowledge the role of ancient slavery. While a lack of surviving material from the hands of slaves has made the reconstruction of their perspectives and experiences difficult, it is not impossible. Artworks such as the Grave Stele of Hegeso have the potential to reveal insights about the ancient world beyond the elite perspective, and a plethora of other ancient objects have the potential to be equally illuminating. By constructing frameworks that focus on the enslaved, art historical and classical scholarship is further enriched not only by highlighting the experiences and role of the enslaved but also by further expanding our understanding of the elite and how they conceptualized the order of their world.

[168] Hartman 2008, 11.

Appendix

Figure 1: The Grave Stele of Hegeso, 410-400 B.C.E, National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. Photo: Author.

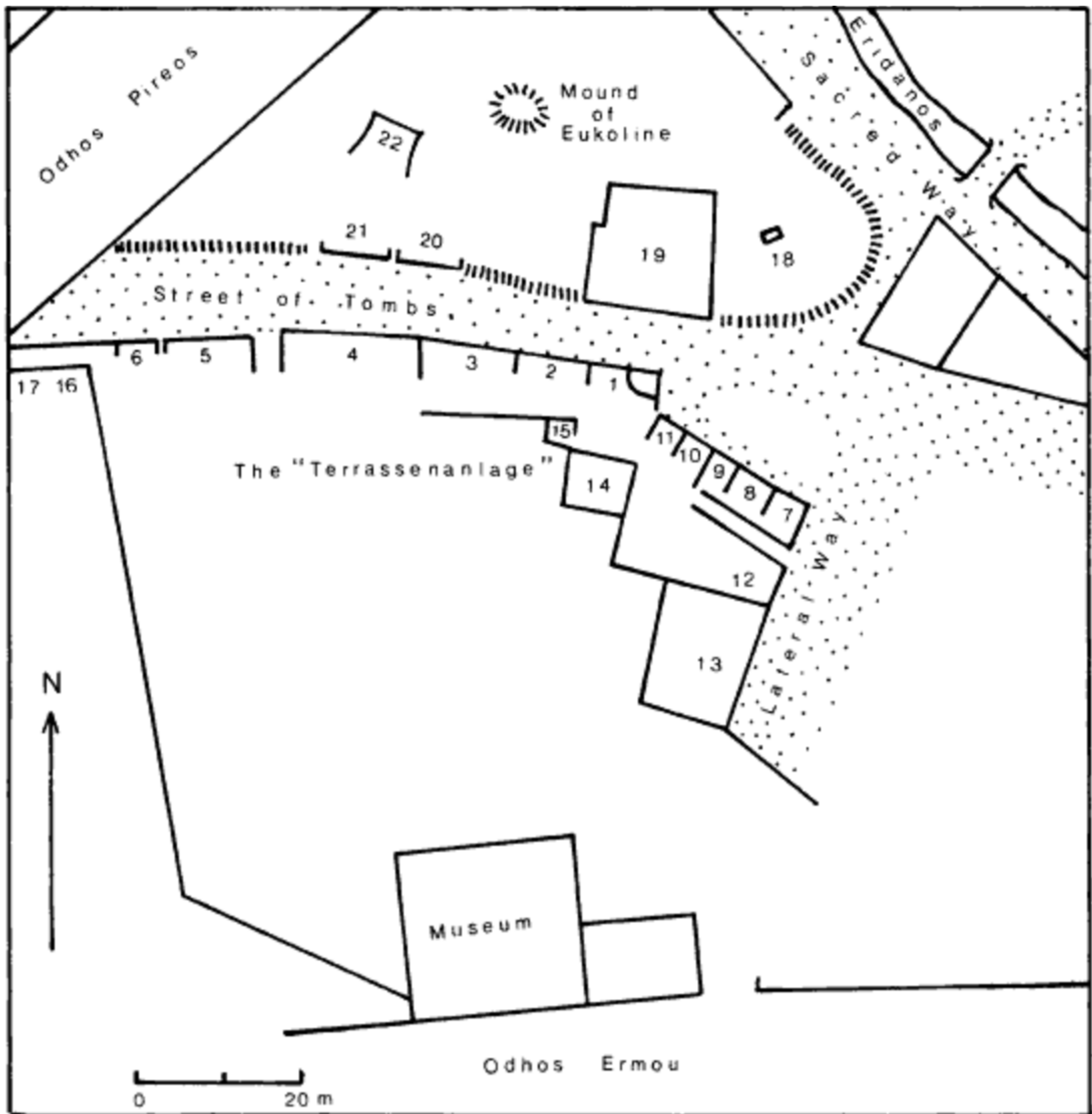


FIG. 2 Periboloi in Section A

Figure 2: Cross-Section of the Western portion of the Kerameikos Site. Plan: Garland 1982, fig. 2, 137.

Figure 3: Detail of the Grave Stele of Koroibos. Photo: Author.

Figure 4: Grave Stele of Kleidemes. Photo: Author

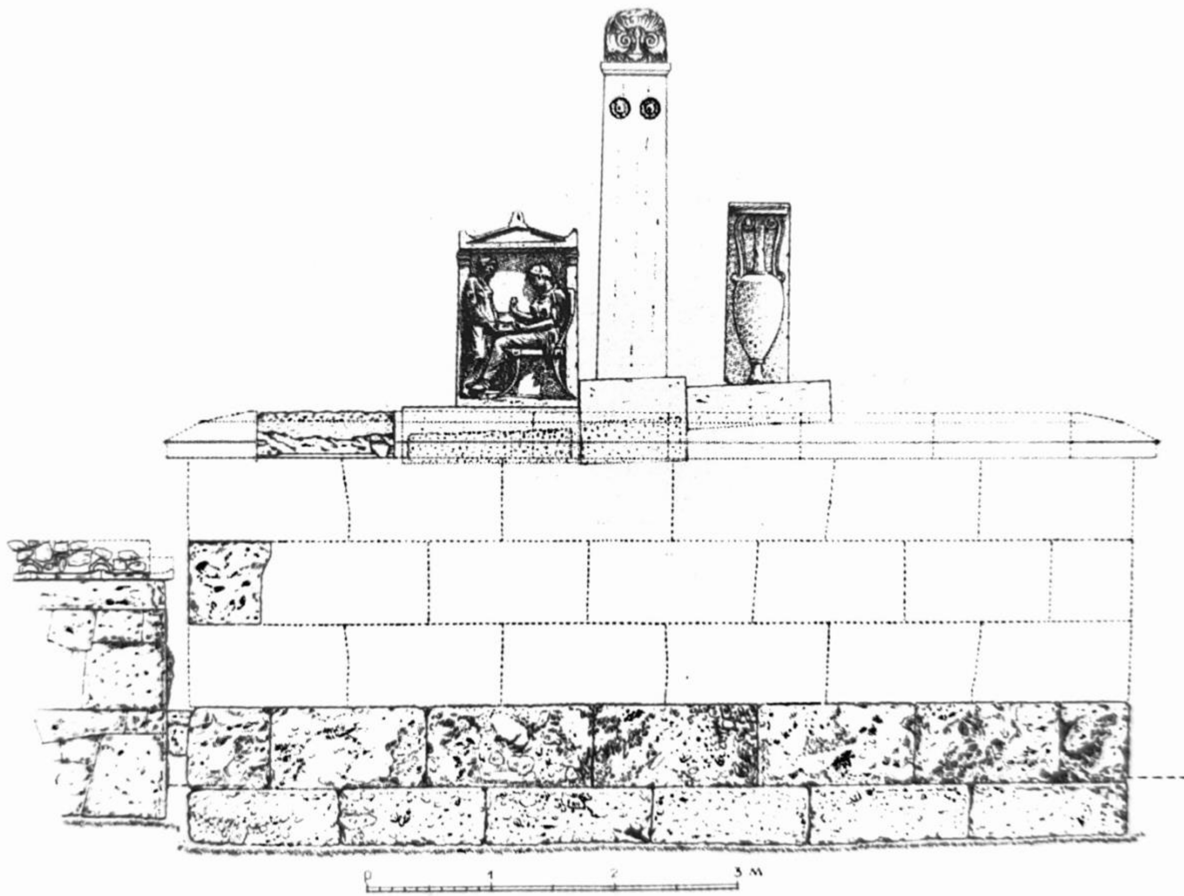


Figure 5: Reconstruction of the peribolos with retaining wall. Reconstruction: *Neue deutsche Ausgrabungen im Mittelmeergebiet und im vorderen Orient* (Berlin 1959): fig. 7.

Figure 6: Plaster Casts *in situ* at the Kerameikos Cemetery Archaeological Site. Photo: Author.

Figure 7: Detail of Hegeso. Photo: Author.

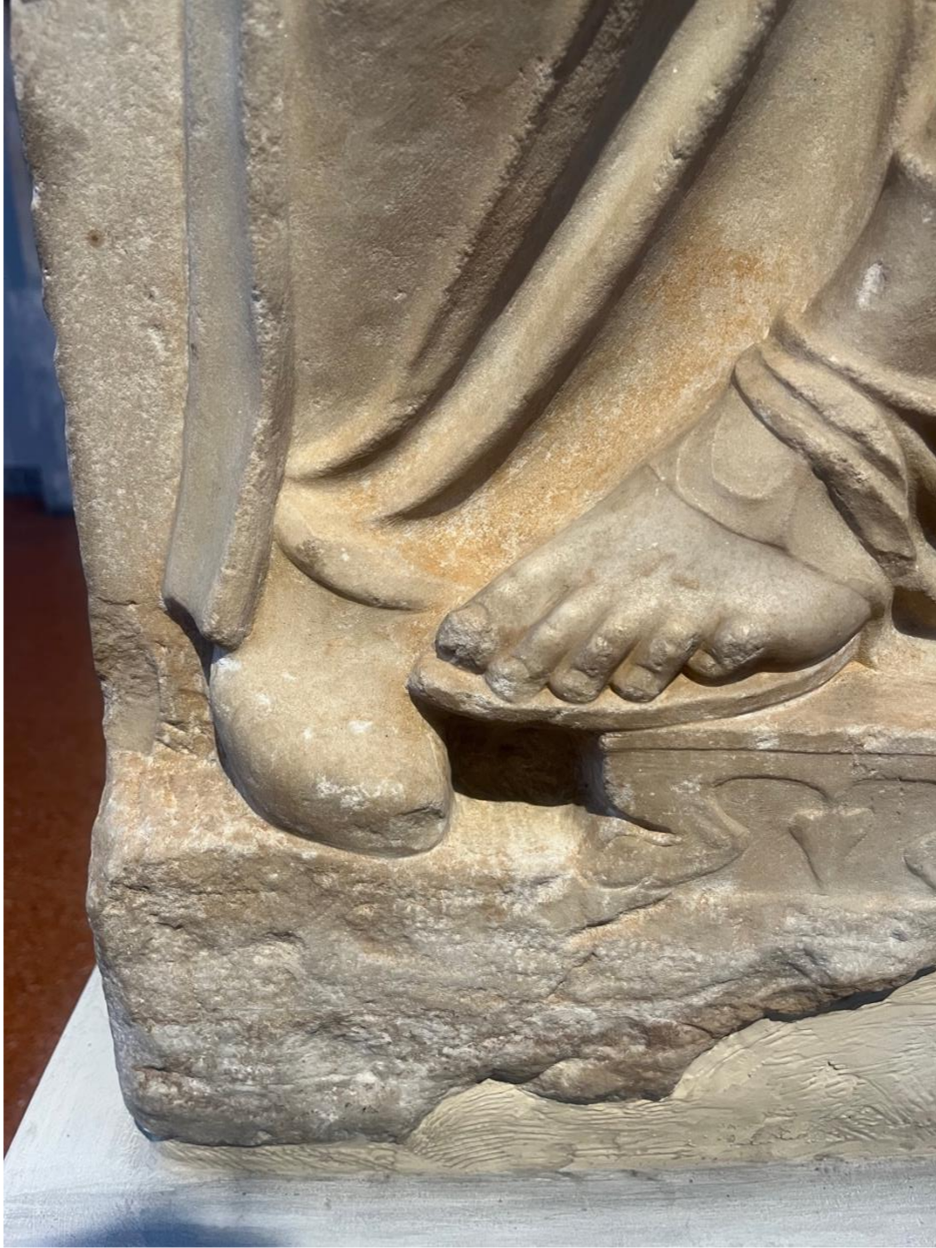


Figure 8: Detail of Feet on Grave Stele of Hegeso. Photo: Author.

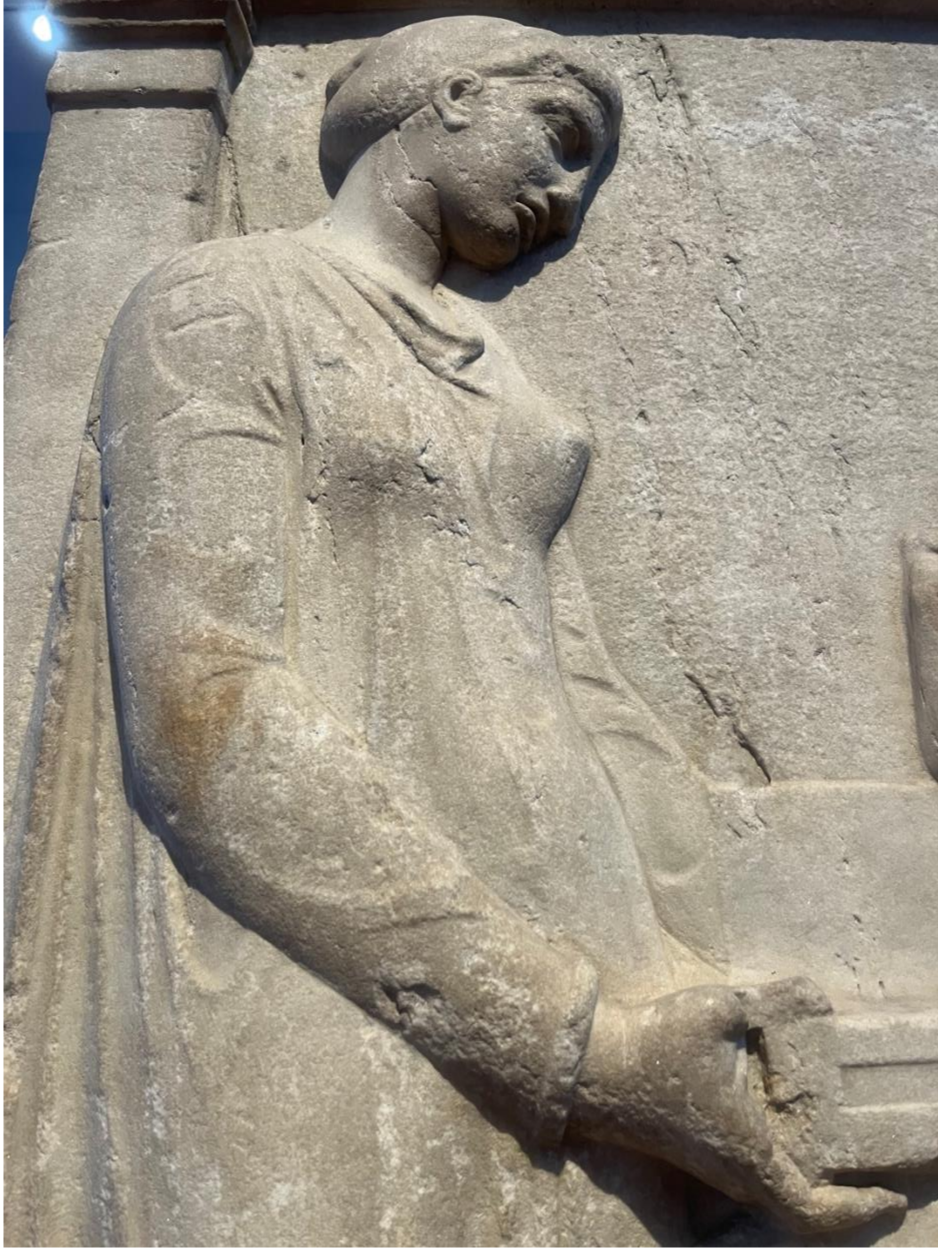


Figure 9: Detail of Enslaved Figure. Photo: Author

Figure 10: Plaster Cast of Hegeso Stele at Kerameikos Cemetery Archaeological Site. Photo: Author

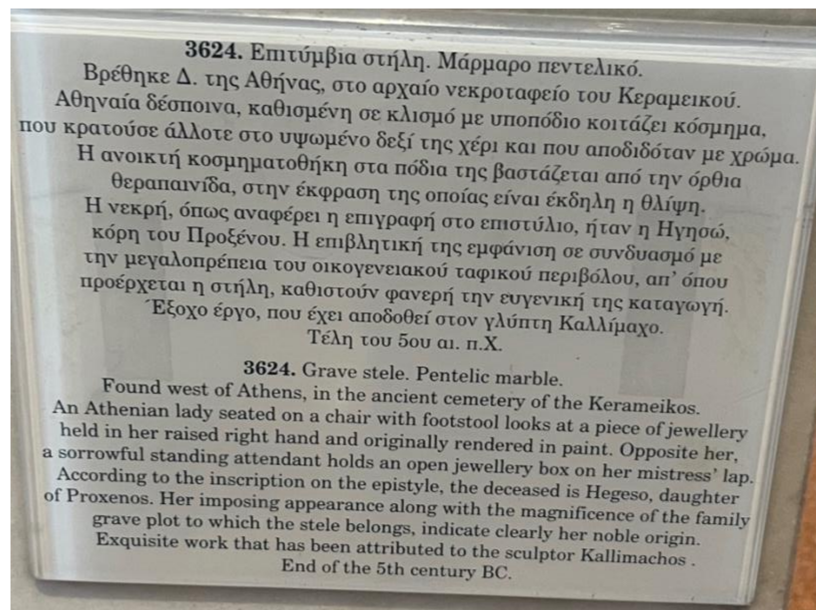
Figure 11: Map of the Ground Floor of the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece.
Map: National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece.
https://www.namuseum.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/EAM_KATOPSEIS.pdf

...για γυναίκα με τη θεραπ
...από τα αγαπημένα τους ζώα και παιχνίδια. Με μία μαρμάρινη επιτάφια λουτροφόρο οι Αθηνα
ους που πέθαναν πριν το γάμο, προσφέροντάς τους συμβολικά το γαμήλιο λουτρό.
Χαρακτηριστική είναι η ιδεαλιστική απόδοση των μορφών με τη συγκρατημένη θλίψη και η αποφυγή της θ
νάτου στην παράσταση. Από τον κανόνα αυτό εξαιρούνται οι πεσόντες στους πολέμους, οι γυναίκες που πέθαναν
αι τα μνημεία των ξένων. Διαφορετική αντίληψη παρατηρείται επίσης στην εικονογραφία των μαρμάρινων αγγεί
πιρροές από ταφικά θέματα των λευκών ληκύθων.

ATTIC FUNERARY MONUMENTS

The reappearance of private funerary monuments in Attica in the first decade of the Peloponnesian War (431-
ong hiatus that began with the prohibitive law of Kleisthenes, is associated with the destructive effect of the plague t
Athens in the beginning of the great war with Sparta. Full of fear and sorrow, the Athenians cremated their dead i
attempt to limit the fast spreading of the plague that lasted until 425 BC. Perikles himself was among the victims of the
The political and economic upheaval brought about by the war and the concomitant changes in the populati
religious beliefs as a result of the plague strengthened the conservative powers, which succeeded in restoring the an
erecting private memorials. This practice lasted until 317 or 307 BC, when the erection of luxurious funerary mon
again, after a law issued by Demetrius of Phaleron.
In contrast to the Archaic period, in the Classical period statues are uncommon as funerary monuments. Their pla
grave stelai and marble funerary vases. The form and decoration of funerary monuments varies according to the sex, a
and origin of the dead.
Towards the end of the fifth century BC, grave reliefs adorn primarily the graves of women, youths and children. On
memorials for male citizens are mostly plain; they give emphasis on the personal name of the dead, the name of their fat
that of their deme of origin, which indicates their civil rights. Memorials for foreigners record their personal and e
whereas those for slaves provide only their personal name.
In the numerous cemeteries of the city and the coastal and inland demes of Attica, the large grave plots of promin
point to the importance acquired in this period by the family –a fact also indicated by contemporary drama.
The center of the plot is occupied by a tall stele crowned by an anthemion and decorated only with rosettes. The st
names of the family dead in succession and is framed by other monuments –stelai, gravestones in the shape of naiskoi,
funerary vases decorated in relief or in paint.
The commonest theme is the so-called dexiosis, where the dead is shown in handshake with his or her kin. Another typic
the representation of the dead man with his young attendant, or the dead woman with her maid. Children are depicted with
and toys. The Athenians selected a marble funerary loutrophoros for youthful, unmarried dead, symbolically offering them a nu
Characteristic of Classical funerary imagery are the idealistic rendering of the dead with controlled emotions, and the
of immediate references to death. An exception is formed by the dead in war, women who died in childbed, as well as t
Differences are observed in the imagery of marble vases, which are influenced by the sepulchral themes of white-ground lek

Figure 12: Wall Plaque in Room 17, National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. Photo: Author.



3624. Επιτύμβια στήλη. Μάρμαρο πεντελικό.
Βρέθηκε Δ. της Αθήνας, στο αρχαίο νεκροταφείο του Κεραμεικού.
Αθηναία δέσποινα, καθισμένη σε κλισμό με υποπόδιο κοιτάζει κόσμημα,
που κρατούσε άλλοτε στο υψωμένο δεξί της χέρι και που αποδιδόταν με χρώμα.
Η ανοικτή κοσμηματοθήκη στα πόδια της βαστάζεται από την όρθια
θεραπαινίδα, στην έκφραση της οποίας είναι έκδηλη η θλίψη.
Η νεκρή, όπως αναφέρει η επιγραφή στο επιστύλιο, ήταν η Ηγησώ,
κόρη του Προξένου. Η επιβλητική της εμφάνιση σε συνδυασμό με
την μεγαλοπρέπεια του οικογενειακού ταφικού περιβόλου, απ' όπου
προέρχεται η στήλη, καθιστούν φανερή την ευγενική της καταγωγή.
Έξοχο έργο, που έχει αποδοθεί στον γλύπτη Καλλίμαχο.
Τέλη του 5ου αι. π.Χ.

3624. Grave stele. Pentelic marble.
Found west of Athens, in the ancient cemetery of the Kerameikos.
An Athenian lady seated on a chair with footstool looks at a piece of jewellery
held in her raised right hand and originally rendered in paint. Opposite her,
a sorrowful standing attendant holds an open jewellery box on her mistress' lap.
According to the inscription on the epistyle, the deceased is Hegeso, daughter
of Proxenos. Her imposing appearance along with the magnificence of the family
grave plot to which the stele belongs, indicate clearly her noble origin.
Exquisite work that has been attributed to the sculptor Kallimachos .
End of the 5th century BC.

Figure 13: Label of the Grave Stele of Hegeso, National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. Photo: Author.

Figure 14: Stele of Ameinokleia, Late 4nd c. B.C.E,
National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. Photo: Author

Figure 15: Stele of Polyxene, Late 4th c. B.C.E,
National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. Photo: Author.

Figure 16: Fragmented Stele with Enslaved Figure, Early 4th c. B.C.E,
National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. Photo: Author.

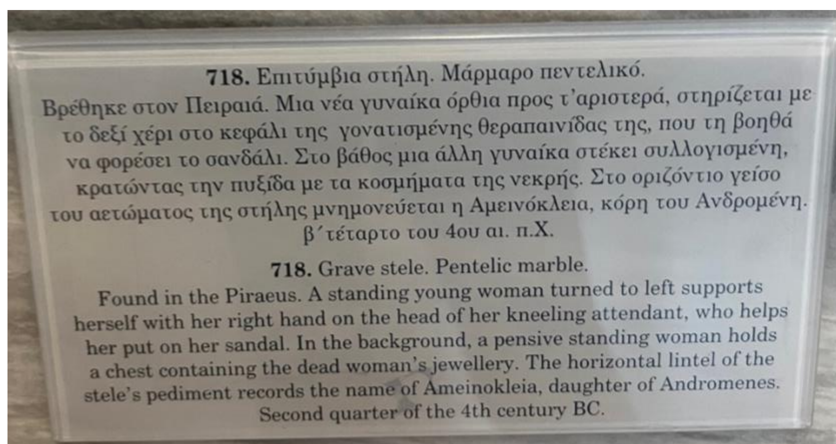


Figure 17: Label of the Stele of Ameinokleia,
National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. Photo: Author.

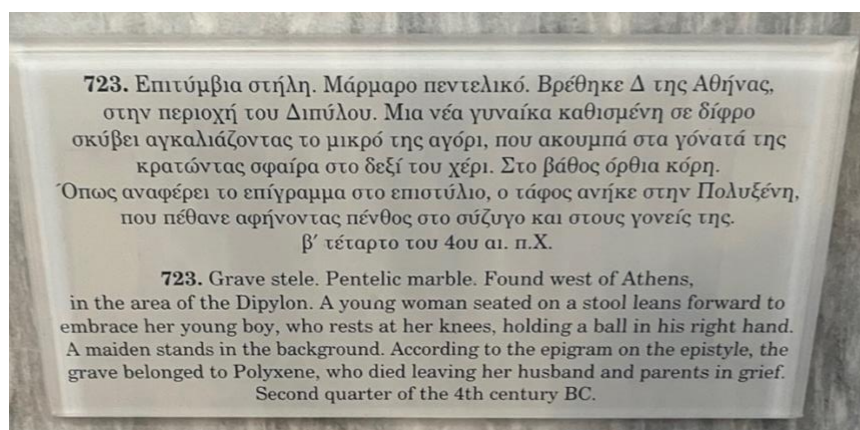


Figure 18: Label of Stele of Polyxene,
National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. Photo: Author.

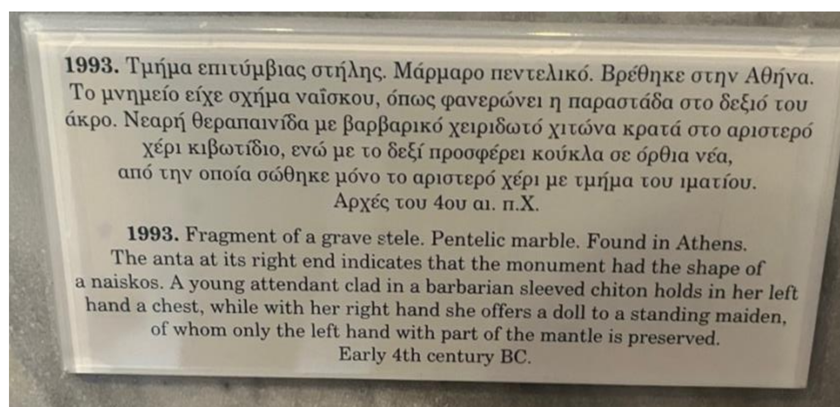


Figure 19: Label of Fragmented Stele with Enslaved Figure,
National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece. Photo: Author.

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