

THE ART OF PRAXITELES IV

The Late Phase of his Activity

ANTONIO CORSO

«L'ERMA» di BRETSCHNEIDER

STUDIA
ARCHAEOLOGICA

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to Hector Catling, *in memoriam*

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SEVENTH CHAPTER

FROM AROUND 355 TO AROUND 350 BC

We have seen that Praxiteles' authority and fame in the satrapy of Caria, ruled by Mausolus, became established already in the late 360s, when our sculptor carved the Cnidian Aphrodite and this statue was set up in the sanctuary of Aphrodite Euploia at Cnidus: in fact this town was included in the satrapy of Mausolus.¹ This fact explains why Praxiteles was probably invited to contribute marble statues to the Mausoleum – or tomb of the satrap Mausolus – set up at Halicarnassus.

35. PRAXITELES' STATUES SET UP IN THE MAUSOLEUM OF HALICARNASSUS

Mausolus must have decided to set up his monumental tomb, named after him Mausoleum, in the centre of his newly built capital – Halicarnassus – towards the last years of his life: he died in 353.² After his death, some writers who were renowned in the oratory, which at the time was in fashion (Theopompus, Theodectes, Naucrates and less certainly Isocrates), went to the Hecatomnid court at Halicarnassus and took part in the competition held in the capital of Caria in order to deliver the most convincing funerary oration on the death of Mausolus: the *agon* was won by Theopompus.³ Poets had also been invited on the same occasion.⁴ After the death of this satrap, the Mausoleum was continued by his wife and successor Artemisia (353-351 BC) and finished after her death,⁵ thus during the rule of Idrieus (351-344 BC).

The shape of the building is known only generically thanks to the detailed description of the monument given by Pliny 36.30-31, as well as to surviving elements of the tomb.

The Mausoleum was composed of a rectangular podium containing the tomb of the satrap, above which there was a temple like structure provided with a peristasis, which was topped by a pyramidal roof, made of steps and supporting a marble quadriga (fig. 1).

The architects who had been responsible of the Mausoleum were Satyrus and Pytheus who also wrote a treatise "About the Mausoleum".⁶ Satyrus was a Parian and is known also thanks to his signature on the base of bronze statues of Idrieus and Ada offered by the Milesians to Apollo Pythius at Delphi.⁷ Thus he was both architect and bronze sculptor, closely linked to the Hecatomnid court and worked for Ionian patrons.⁸

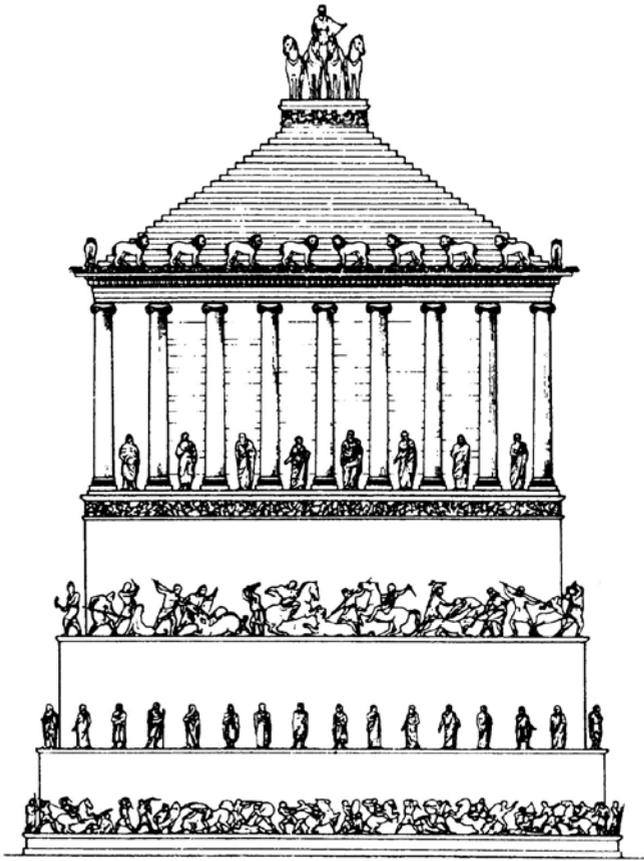


Fig. 1. The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus according to the hypothetical reconstruction of Waywell.

Pytheus was an Ionian architect who after the Mausoleum became the responsible architect of the temple of Athena at Priene:⁹ he wrote a treatise also about this temple.¹⁰ Moreover probably he was the sculptor of the quadriga on top of the monument.¹¹

The general concept of the architecture was rooted in the building tradition of Asia Minor: the emphasis given to the tomb of the dynast and its conception as a vertical succession, from bottom to top, of podium with the real tomb and temple-like structure with a peristasis was also not unknown to the early 4th c. architectural experience of this region, especially of Lycia.¹²

However the novelty of this monument consisted in its unusually great dimensions, probably in the rational, homogeneous and modular design of the architectural complex,¹³ which transformed it into a typically Ionian creation, as well as in its extremely lavish sculptural decoration. In fact, both Vitruvius 2. 8. 11 and 7. *praefatio* 12-13 and Pliny 36. 30-31 insist that the high quality of the sculptures was the most salient feature of the building.

There were both free standing statues¹⁴ and reliefs.¹⁵

The sets of free standing statues consisted of:

- a. the chariot group on top of the building;
- b. the lions, probably set up on the lowest step of the pyramidal roof;
- c. colossal standing figures. These statues are divided among: 1. dynastic portraits; 2. a sacrificial group, and 3. a hunting group.
- d. Heroic standing figures: probably both gods and human draped figures.
- e. Life-size statues: probably fighting groups.¹⁶

The placement of these series in the building is a *vexata quaestio*. Certainly colossal figures – probably dynastic portraits – stood in the inter-columns of the *peristasis*, in continuity with the previous adoption of the same display in the Nereids' monument at Xanthus in Lycia around 375 BC.¹⁷

The architectural sculpture consisted of:

- a. a frieze with an Amazonomachy;
- b. a frieze with a Centauromachy;
- c. carved coffers;
- d. a chariot frieze.

Vitruvius and Pliny provide lists of sculptors who were responsible for the sculptures of the Mausoleum.

Vitruvius 7. *praefatio* 12-13 gives the following account:

“Satyrus and Pytheus published a book on the Mausoleum. And on these last, good fortune conferred the greatest and highest boon. For their works are adjudged to have a merit which is famous throughout the ages and of unfading freshness and they employed distinguished artists on their undertakings. For on the single sides, different rival artists took their share in decorations wherein they competed: Leochares, Bryaxis, Scopas, Praxiteles, and some add Timotheus. The outstanding excellence of their work caused the fame of the Mausoleum to be included in the seven wonders of the world” (transl. Loeb with amendments).

The Roman writer on architecture specifies that he depends on the treatise written by Satyrus and Pytheus on the Mausoleum. Treatises of architects of archaic and classical periods about buildings designed by them probably provided an analytic description of the main features of these monuments, technical details, a justification of the budget used on purpose and names of craftsmen and artists employed: these treatises may have been addressed first of all to the patrons or authorities who hired them. However, since they survived until the age of Vitruvius and came to be known by him, probably these books targeted also a broader public and copies of them were kept at the time of this writer at least in a library of Rome.¹⁸ Thus Vitruvius’ information taken from this treatise is reliable because it is hardly believable that Satyrus and Pytheus could convey inaccurate data to their patrons (Mausolus, Artemisia and Idrieus) and to their public.

The writer informs that each side was given out - probably on contract - to a renowned artist. The works of these artists aimed at two goals:

1. *ad ornandum*: probably this expression means the beautifying activity undertaken by each artist on his own side;¹⁹
2. *ad probandum*: this specification may refer to the circumstance that their works won the general approval for the monument.²⁰

Then Vitruvius mentions the artists who worked on the single sides. These artists are four, thus corresponding to the four sides of the monument. They are Leochares, Bryaxis, Scopas and Praxiteles. A fifth artist is mentioned: Timotheus.

Since all of these five artists were sculptors, thus their activity on the sides of the monument must have consisted of making sculptures to be set up on the building.

Leochares was an Athenian master beloved by Plato.²¹ Mausolus was subjected to the influence of the philosopher Eudoxus of Cnidus, a former pupil of Plato.²² Thus it is hardly surprising that a sculptor who was close to the Platonic environment was hired for the Mausoleum. The same sculptor was also asked a colossal acrolithic statue of Ares for the sanctuary of this god in the same Halicarnassus.²³ Of course this detail confirms that he worked for the Hecatomnids.

Bryaxis was also a sculptor: his name has been thought to reveal that he was of Carian descent, although he was an Athenian:²⁴ he carved a marble Dionysus set up on Cnidus²⁵ - a city which was under the Hecatomnid rule - and moreover he made statues of gods also for Rhodes²⁶ which also became a Hecatomnid possession,²⁷ and of Zeus and Apollo for the Lycian city of Patara.²⁸ Thus his activity for Halicarnassus fits his strong links with patrons of south-western Asia Minor quite well.

Scopas was Parian as Satyrus, thus it is not impossible that it was Satyrus who invited his fellow countryman. Moreo-

ver around 355 he was probably already rather well established because very likely he had already carved his Hestia for the Pritaneum of Parus.²⁹

Finally Scopas also worked for Cnidus, where his statues of Athena and Dionysus had been set up,³⁰ as well as for other important monuments of Asia Minor.³¹ His link with the Hecatomnid dynasty is argued also by the fact that Scopas, after the completion of the Mausoleum – at around 345 BC - designed the temple of Athena Alea at Tegea in eastern Arcadia³² and that a relief representing the Carian rulers Ada and Idrieus has been found at Tegea,³³ perhaps dedicated by Carian craftsmen who moved from Halicarnassus to Tegea in order to build the new temple:³⁴ thus it is possible that the Scopas' temple was achieved with the support of the satrap of Caria, Idrieus.

Finally the collaboration of Praxiteles to the enterprise of the Mausoleum does not need a justification: towards 350 BC our sculptor was famous and in particular the setting of the Cnidian Aphrodite at Cnidus must have established his positive fame in Caria in the fields of marble sculpture and of young female statues.

The first four masters mentioned by Vitruvius must be related to the most important sculptures which adorned the monumental tomb, *i. e.* to the free standing statues.

The name of Timotheus is added to the series of the four masters related to the four sides of the building: towards the middle of the 4th c. he must have been in the late phase of his activity.³⁵ The presence of his works at Halicarnassus is confirmed by the information, handed down by Vitruvius 2. 8. 11, that he may have worked on the colossal acrolithic statue of Ares set up in the sanctuary of this god at Halicarnassus.

Since his fame was mainly due to his acroteries and *typoi* carved around 375 BC for the temple of Asclepius near Epidaurus³⁶, it is likely that he was hired because of his specialization in the specific field of architectural sculpture.

Pliny 36. 30-31 is more detailed about the carving of Mausoleum sculptures by famous masters:

"The contemporaries and rivals of Scopas were Bryaxis, Timotheus and Leochares, whom we must discuss along with him because together with him they worked on the carvings (*caelavere*) of the Mausoleum. This is the tomb that was built by Artemisia for her husband Mausolus, the viceroy of Caria, who died in the second year of the 107th Olympiad. These artists were chiefly responsible for making the structure one of the seven wonders of the world. On the north and south sides it extends for 63 feet, but the length of the facades is less, the total length of the facades and sides being 440 feet. The building rises to a height of 25 cubits and is enclosed by 36 columns. The Greek word for the surrounding colonnade is 'pteron', 'a wing'. The east side was carved (*caelavit*) by Scopas, the north by Bryaxis, the south by Timotheus and the west by Leochares; and before they completed their task, the queen died. However, they refused to abandon the work without finishing it, since they were already of the opinion that it would be a memorial to their own glory and that of their profession; and even today they are considered to rival each other in skill. With them was associated a fifth artist. For above the colonnade there is a pyramid as high as the lower structure and tapering in 24 stages to the top of its peak. At the summit there is a four-horse chariot of marble, and this is made by Pythis. The addition of this chariot rounds off the whole work and brings it to a height of 140 feet" (transl. Loeb).

This passage of Pliny lends support to the fact that Scopas, Bryaxis, Timotheus and Leochares, competed each other in order to carve the sculptures of the Mausoleum. From his exposition it appears clearly that Scopas was regarded the most important of the four masters. In fact he carved the eastern side, which of course was the privileged one – the “front” of the tomb – looking towards the palace of the satrap. The second most important side was probably the southern one, which could be admired from the sea: probably not by chance it was given to the second most important sculptor of the four mentioned by Pliny: Timotheus, who was already well established because of his activity at Epidaurus. The third side in order of importance was probably the western one, which could be seen from the boats entering the harbour: it was given to Leochares, already appreciated by Plato. The less important side was the northern one, looking towards the upper part of the city, and was assigned to Bryaxis: perhaps this sculptor was not yet well established.

Pliny determined the activity of these sculptors with the verb *caelo*, used twice. This verb is more appropriate to the reliefs of the building than to the free standing sculpture.³⁷ The context in which this verb is used also lends support to this interpretation: in fact Pliny 36. 30 specified that the four sculptors “carved” (*caelavere*) the Mausoleum – *i. e.* the building itself – not statues to be set up on the building. In 36. 31 he details that the four sculptors “carved” (*caelavit*) from east, north, south and west: of course the understood object of the verb is again the Mausoleum. This phrase conveys the image of the sculptor who carves the building directly from one side, not of the sculptor who carves statues which will be erected on the building. The conclusion

of this reasoning is that it seems clear that Pliny with his report informs about the sculptors who made the reliefs on the Mausoleum.

Thus the problem arises about the writers who are the sources of this section of Pliny’s encyclopedia: he does not use Satyrus’ and Pytheus’ treatise because he does not mention it in the bibliography used for the 36th book, given in his first book. Among the writers included in this bibliography, good candidates to have been used by Pliny for his information about the Mausoleum are Duris, Praxiteles, Varro and Mucianus: it is difficult to choose among them.

There is another question which arises: why Pliny mentions the less important reliefs of the building and not the most praised free standing statues? Were the latter damaged by the fire and the sack of the city caused by Alexander the Great in 334 or plundered by Verres in 80-79 BC or by the pirates in 62-58 BC?³⁸ The circumstance that the excavations on the site led to the recovery of very few statues or fragments of them pertaining to the Mausoleum would lend support to this hypothesis.³⁹

In any case, the combination of the testimonies of Vitruvius and Pliny leads to the conclusion that Scopas, Leochares and Bryaxis made both statues and reliefs, Timotheus especially reliefs and perhaps also statues, Praxiteles only statues. It is likely that the specialization of Praxiteles’ workshop in carving statues led to the request by Satyrus and Pytheus to this atelier only of free standing sculptures.

Prior to examining the surviving sculptures of the Mausoleum in search for evidence of the styles of the masters mentioned by the two Latin writers, it is necessary to point out two observations:

1. During the late classical times, some of the best established

workshops began producing works at an industrial pace: of course not any work made in these ateliers was by the hands of the main masters, but often assistants did much of these products, while in other cases not all their parts were properly finished. For example Praxiteles in the late phase of his production used to leave unfinished parts of statues which were destined not to be visible.⁴⁰ Lysippus is known to have made 1500 works.⁴¹ Of course a lot of them must have been made not by himself but by his assistants. Finally the painter Nicomachus invented a particularly fast painting technique: the so called *pictura compendiaris*.⁴² Of course his fast technique was exactly what was needed by the contemporary increasingly industrial pace of production of works of art.

He trained in the art of painting Philoxenus of Eretria, who continued the research of his master by devising an even faster painting technique which of course met the never ending demands for paintings of the new royal courts.⁴³ Thus the fact that sculptures set up in the Mausoleum were delivered by the workshops of the above mentioned sculptors does not necessarily mean that they were all made by the hands of these famous masters: these sculptors may have sent their assistants to carve them!

2. Specifically concerning the reliefs of the Mausoleum, it is necessary to underline that during the classical period the most important masters used not to carve architectural sculptures with their own hands but made small size models which were

transformed by assistants into the real sculpture. For example Schweitzer demonstrated that Phidias made the models of the Parthenon sculptures. Nevertheless several sculptors used these models in order to carve the sculptures of the metopes, of the frieze and of the pediments.⁴⁴

Equally Timotheus is recorded to have made the *typoi* for the temple of Asclepius at Epidaurus:⁴⁵ although the meaning of this technical word is controversial,⁴⁶ its interpretation as model is the most probable because it is in keeping with the most widespread meanings of the word in late classical times.⁴⁷ Thus Timotheus would have delivered the small size models of the architectural sculptures of the Asclepius' temple at Epidaurus and other less famous craftsmen would have used these models as basis for their sculptures set up on the temple.

By analogy we can suppose that Scopas, Timotheus, Bryaxis and Leochares carved the models of the friezes of the Mausoleum and that large workshops of Ionian craftsmen took inspiration from these models in order to carve the reliefs.

This suggestion would explain:

- α. the homogeneous style of the Mausoleum's reliefs, which implies their actual carving by workshops sharing style and rendering technique⁴⁸; and
- β. the circumstance that nevertheless stylistic patterns of the four masters can be detected on these slabs.⁴⁹

Concerning the free standing statues of the Mausoleum, the following materials may be attributed to the workshops of the masters mentioned by Vitruvius.

The male bearded head at London, The British Museum, no. 1054, pertaining to the above mentioned heroic stat-

ues, reveals the seal of the workshop of Scopas in its rectangular concept, in its depiction of beard and hair with short curved locks which adhere rather closely to the skull, in its square forehead, in the deeply cut eye-sockets and in the concept of the mouth made by a long centrally curved upper lip and by a short outward lower lip.⁵⁰

Equally the young male head at London, The British Museum, no. 1056, pertaining to the life – size statues, with an energetic pose, a pathetic expression and a Scopadic anatomic grammar, also may be attributed to the same atelier.⁵¹

Concerning the draped seated man, pertaining to the colossal figures, at London, The British Museum, no. 1047,⁵² the general concept of this seating figure and of its drapery with its folds are so closely related to corresponding features of sculptures from the temple of Asclepius at Epidaurus, that it is tempting to attribute it to the workshop of Timotheus and to argue that, in keeping with the report of Vitruvius, he may have worked also for the statues of the tomb.

The bearded male head, perhaps pertaining to the life size statues, at London, The British Museum, no. 1055, could be ascribed to the workshop of Timotheus, because of the preservation of a concept of head which is still typical of the post – Phidian tradition.⁵³

Leochares' art can be recognized in the colossal Persian rider at London, The British Museum, no. 1045,⁵⁴ because of the wavy rendering of drapery's folds which is one of the most peculiar features of the art of this master.

Moreover the colossal head of a Carian noble lady at London, The British Museum, no. 1051,⁵⁵ responds well to the general concept of face and to its anatomic grammar which have been recognized to be typical of the atelier of this sculptor.

Especially the head of Apollo at London, The British Museum, no. 1058, perhaps to be included in the series of heroic size statues, is so close to the head of the Belvedere type of Apollo to eloquently confirm that the master of the latter did work for statues of the Mausoleum.⁵⁶

This head should be given to Leochares and not to his assistants, because of its very high quality and since it reveals clearly the art of this master.

Bryaxis is recognized in the colossal statues of Carian dignitaries at London, The British Museum, nos 1001 and 1000⁵⁷, because they reveal a heavy, static and frontal concept of figures which would suggest the name of the only sculptor who worked for the Mausoleum and had Carian and not Hellenic roots. The very high quality of these two statues – and especially of the face of the male aristocrat no. 1000, which is itself a masterpiece of psychological rendering – would suggest their attribution to the master and not to his assistants.

The problem of recognizing Praxiteles' art in the Mausoleum is suggested by the colossal female head at London, The British Museum, no. 1052 (fig. 2).⁵⁸ This head was inserted into a draped statue: the upper edge of a himation was pulled over the head from the left side. The face is oval, the forehead's upper border was curved, eyes and eyes – sockets were narrow and elongated, the surface is fleshed out with the typically Praxitelean light – and – shade rendering, the curving of the neck is similar to that of the Cnidian Aphrodite. This head must have conveyed the appeal and freshness of a young lady and is graciously tilted and inclined to her right. I recognize in this work the concept of young female beauty of Praxiteles.

Comparison with the heads of Hecatomnid women at London, The British Museum, nos. 1001 and 1051 clarifies



Fig. 2. Marble head from the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus at London, The British Museum, no. 1052.

that probably this head portrayed a young lady of the Carian court: probably her statue was one of the colossal images disposed in the inter-columns of the peristasis.

The marble used in order to flesh out this head looks Pentelic: this type of marble was often carved in Praxiteles' workshop.⁵⁹

Unfortunately the re-use of this head into the chimney of the Imam's house near the Mausoleum does not allow the



Fig. 3. Marble foot on sandal from the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus at London, The British Museum, no. 1972.4 - 2.172 (261).

determination of the side of the Mausoleum in which this colossal statue was set up.

Another fragment which should be considered here is the left foot on sandal of a female figure pertaining to the heroic standing statues: this foot is at London, The British Museum, no. 1972.4-2. 172 (261) (fig. 3).⁶⁰

The shape of the sandal, which bears an indentation between the big toe and the second toe, and its relation with the toes, find comparison in the feet with sandals of the Gabii type of Artemis – which in my opinion is the copyist tradition of Praxiteles' Artemis Brauronia – as well as of the Hermes of Olympia.⁶¹

It is possible that Praxiteles adopted for his statues of young females this type of sandal because it was curvaceous and graceful, thus in keeping with the appeal and female seduction spreading from these dreamy figures.

The marble of the foot looks Pentelic. Again, the re-use of the fragment in a Turkish house does not guarantee its coming from a specific side of the building.

The two considered fragments of free standing statues would lend support to the conclusion that Praxiteles was hired in order to carve statues of young female subjects for the two series of colossal and heroic statues.

Clearly the Cnidian Aphrodite must have established in Caria the renown of Praxiteles especially as a great interpreter of girlish beauty.

Finally a few lions in Pentelic marble which probably stood at the basis of the pyramidal roof of the building may be relevant to the problem of Praxiteles' activity in the Mausoleum.⁶² The general style of the lions is a standard one and is adopted for all the wild animals set up on the roof. The lions were carved for a

profile view. They were standing but represented in the moment when they were about to walk. Thus their left legs are more advanced when compared with their right legs. Their manes are made of short sinuous locks. Their tails are also long and sinuous. Non doubt the iconography of the lions was provided by the designers of the whole building and the sculptors had to abide by that.

However except for that the detailed rendering of patterns of these lions differs greatly in this series and thus it is possible to distinct the animals in different groups according to their specific styles.⁶³

The rear sides of these lions were marched with Greek letters.

A lion coming from the north – eastern corner of the building – the fragment at London, The British Museum, no. 1085 - ⁶⁴ bears the letter *Alpha* on its back: since the master of the eastern side of the Mausoleum was Scopas, it is possible that A is the initial of the father of this Parian sculptor: Aristander of Parus. Aristander is known for having made a bronze statue of Sparta under a tripod dedicated by the Lacedaemonians at Amyclae after their victory at Aegospotami, thus towards the end of the 5th c. BC.⁶⁵

According to Pliny 34. 52, the supposed father of Aristander – Scopas the Elder – peaked at 420-417 BC: thus it is possible that Aristander was still young just a few years after the flourishing of his father and that towards the middle of the 4th c. he was old but still alive. For example, if towards 400 BC he was 20 - 25 y. o., towards 350 BC he may have been 70 – 75: probably no longer active but still the legal owner of his workshop, which is why his initial letter would mark lions set up on the eastern side. In fact Scopas – the son of Aristander – must have directed all the work delivered from his

workshop to the Mausoleum, which is why ancient writers mentioned him as the master of this side of the monument. The lions must have been made by assistants because they were second rate sculptures, destined to be seen from far away and their quality is not outstanding.

Despite that, features of the style which is typical of Scopas' workshop may be detected on this lion, as well as on the lion at London, The British Museum, no. 1082,⁶⁶ whose rear part – presumably bearing the letter mark – does not survive: both these lions have been made by the same craftsman, who in Waywell's terminology is the "sculptor no. 6".⁶⁷ This sculptor gives emphasis to the wildness of the lion by endowing him with a triple row of locks. Moreover he renders the terribleness of the lion by giving to him a protruding tongue and open, spirited eyes. These features are in keeping with the fire and the expression of extreme attitudes which are typical of the style of Scopas and thus it would not be surprising if this craftsman worked in Scopas' workshop.

The presence of letter marks suggests that the lions were carved in the workshops of the masters charged of them and shipped to Halicarnassus where the letters clarified where they should be set up in the Mausoleum.

Other lions bear the letter *Pi* on their backs: these lions are at London, The British Museum, nos. 1075, 1081, 1084 and 1086. Other lions, whose backs do not survive and thus no longer bear letter marks, are stylistically related to this series: these are the lions at London, The British Museum, nos. 1076, 1083 and MRG 116 Reg. 1857. 12-20. 244. 283.⁶⁸ These lions have been carved by three sculptors – nos. 1, 2 and 3 in Waywell's catalogue – and nevertheless are closely linked: probably these three craftsmen worked in the same workshop.⁶⁹