

# DRESSING THE DEAD

In Classical Antiquity

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*Front cover:* Lazarus, still wrapped for burial, is raised from the dead by Christ in this biblical miracle on an ivory diptych (Andrews diptych) of the early ninth century from Italy. Photo by Victoria and Albert Museum.

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# ETERNAL COMFORT: FUNERARY TEXTILES IN LATE CLASSICAL AND HELLENISTIC GREECE

DIMITRA ANDRIANO

Textiles were used widely in the ancient Greek world, particularly in funerary contexts, where they were draped over the deceased and served as covers, hangings, pillows and mattresses to adorn funerary furnishings. Real fabrics have not, on the whole, survived in the archaeological record, since they were made of perishable materials. However, funerary assemblages periodically bring to light a variety of preserved textiles: textiles used to wrap the bones of the deceased inside the funerary vessel or placed outside it; textiles deposited in the tomb as offerings; textiles that draped the deceased, decorated the funerary chamber, or even imitation textiles carved on funerary beds.<sup>1</sup> Visual representations of textiles on funerary furniture and architecture (inscribed grave *stelai* or wall paintings inside the tomb chamber) provide additional knowledge. Many of these examples have only been summarily published and remain overlooked in discussions on burial customs in late Classical and Hellenistic Greece. This gap in scholarship is detrimental to our understanding of Greek funerary practice because, whether looking at real fabrics or painted or carved imitations on funerary furniture and wall paintings, these remains offer valuable clues to decode funerary beliefs and the status of the deceased in the late Classical and Hellenistic periods in Greece.

Admiration of textiles is a well known *topos* in ancient literature, along with the admiration of statues and buildings (Rusnak 2001), as is sufficiently clear from the following three passages from three successive centuries, all extolling the artistry of woven textiles: a) the famous passage from Euripides' *Ion* (1132–1165; Potter 1938), where the attendant refers to the scenes depicted in the tapestries as 'marvellous for men to see' and then proceeds to describe them for the benefit of the audience of the play as active spectators (Zeitlin 1994, 155); b) a passage from Menander's *Cutty Locks or The Forced Bobbing* (333–348; Edmonds 1961, 1152–1154) where the characters discuss and try to identify the figures of animals in a tapestry-woven piece of cloth kept in a box and c) a passage from the fifteenth *Idyll* of Theocritus in which two women in Alexandria examine a tapestry-woven textile that hangs between pillars in the sanctuary of Adonis during a festival of the god (Theocritus, *Idyll* 15, 78–90; Edmonds 1919, 175–195).

Texts and inscriptions with an astonishingly rich list of words pertaining to furniture and furnishings further prove this admiration (Andrianou 2009). In the fifth century BC, Alcibiades' confiscated property is a good source of information, recording the words *proskephalaion* (προσκεφάλαιον) (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 422, line 257, restored) and *knephalon* (κνέφαλον), both meaning pillow (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 421, lines 190–191; 422, lines 259–260, restored). Timaeus preserves the word *tyle* (τύλη), 'mattress', in an interesting passage on the luxury of Akragas (Jacoby 1964, 3B,

566, F. 26a, 607) and the word *psiathos* (ψιαθος), rush-mat, is recorded in the *Attic Stelai* (IG I<sup>3</sup> 421, line 108 and 422, line 261) and in Pollux (X, 43). *Pleroma* (πλήρωμα), ‘flock of wool’, used for stuffing pillows, is recorded by Pollux (X, 41).

In the second century AD, Pollux also provides us with an extensive and diverse list of adjectives for bed covers, such as *lepte* (λεπτή), ‘fine, thin, delicate’, *eubhyphes* (εὐυφής), ‘well woven’, *euetrios* (εὐήτριος), ‘with good or fine thread’, *stilpne* (στιλπνή), ‘glittering’, *stillbousa* (στιλβουσα), ‘brilliant’, *euchros* (εὐχρως), ‘bright coloured’, *polymorphos* (πολύμορφος), ‘with many shapes’, *porphyra* (πορφυρά), ‘of purple’, *halourgis* (άλουργις), ‘of purple, sea-wrought’, *haliporphuros* (άλιπόρφυρος), ‘of purple’, *praseios*, (πρασειός), ‘light green’, *hysginobaphes*, (ὕσγινοβαφής), ‘dyed in a bright crimson or scarlet vegetable dye’, *ioeides* (ιοειδής), ‘of violet colour’, *krokoeides* (κροκοειδής), ‘of saffron colour’, *kokkobaphes* (κοκκοβαφής), ‘of scarlet colour’, *orphine* (ὀρφνίνη), ‘of brownish-grey colour’, *periporphuros* (περιπόρφυρος), ‘with purple border’, *epichrysos* (ἐπίχρυσος), ‘overlaid with gold’ (Pollux, X, 42). More information on words can be found in the lexicographers Hesychios, of the fifth century AD, and Suidas, of the tenth century AD.

Ancient authors also refer indirectly to renowned places of textile manufacture with phrases such as *stromata Milesia* (στρώματα Μιλήσια), Milesian bed covers (in Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 543), *Sardiane psilotapis* (Σαρδιανή ψιλοτάπις), Sardian flat-woven or tapestry-woven carpet, evidently a *kilim* (in Klearchos of Soloi, quoted by Athenaeus, *Deip.* 6, 255e),<sup>2</sup> and *aulaiiai phoinikinai* (αὐλαίαι φοινικιναι), Phoenician or red curtains (in Athenaeus, *Deip.* 5, 196c). Pliny places the invention of embroidery with a needle in Phrygia and specifically mentions that gold tapestry-weaving was invented in Asia by King Attalus (Pliny, VIII, 196; Greenewalt, Majewski 1980, 133–147; Wace 1948 for the correct translation of the words *pictus*, *intexere*, *acu facere*; Seiler-Baldinger 1994), a possible attestation of the survival or revival of the Lydian gold-weaving tradition. The fabric called damask (*polymita* in the Latin text) woven with a number of threads was introduced from Alexandria, according to Pliny.

Concerning the materials used to adorn furniture, wool and linen were employed, along with silk, leather and sheepskin. These fabrics were most probably made at home, one of the main tasks assigned to women. Men were also involved in the production though, as is attested by the description of Akesas and Helikon of Cyprus as ‘celebrated weavers’ (ἐντέχνων γενομένων) in the fourth or third century BC (Athenaeus, *Deip.* 2, 48b; for the Latin equivalent, *textor*, see Martial, *Ep.* 12, 59, 6 and Juvenal, *Sat.* 9, 30; for the weavers of Athena’s *peplos*, Mansfield 1985, 54–55 and 283–289; for male weavers, Thompson 1982). Michael Vickers makes an interesting point regarding the names ‘Akesas’ and ‘Helikon’: they are not random, in fact, their roots are the words for needle, *akis* (ἀκίς), and spinning thread, *helik-* (ἑλικ-), (Vickers 1999, 32).<sup>3</sup> Both men and women worked in the production of wool on an industrial scale, as noted by Xenophon (Xen., *Mem.* 2, 7, 6) and possibly implied by Aristophanes (Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1331–1365); but whether free citizens or slaves formed the majority of workers in this occupation is currently debated. *Talasiourgoi* (ταλασιουργοί), wool-workers, however, were clearly comprised of both female (Tod 1950, 10–11, for female slaves who became free or were freed in fifth and fourth century BC Attica) and male workers (Lewis 1959, 208–238; 1968, 369–374). Male workers are noted as professionals with a high degree of specialisation (for example, Aristophanes, *Thesmophoriazousae* 935: *hístiorbaphos* (ἱστοιορράφος); Pollux, VII, 28: *nakotiltes* (νακοτίλτης); Plato, *Politicus* 281, 8: *xantes* (ξάντης); Aeschylus, *Libation-Bearers* 760: *gnapheus* (γναφεύς).

In the funerary sector, and according to the existing excavated material, late Classical and Hellenistic textiles were used to dress the dead when inhumed; to wrap the bones of the deceased when cremated, before being placed in the funerary container, *larnax* (λάρναξ); to wrap the vessel that contained the bones of the deceased; to serve as decorative hangings from the walls and ceiling of the tomb (not without symbolic connotations); and to serve as offerings to the dead. Indirect evidence of textiles can be gleaned from imitation textiles carved on funerary beds (e.g. mattresses and pillows), painted or mosaic imitations on the walls and floors of certain tombs, and textiles depicted in funerary iconography (wall paintings and *stelai*, for example). Here we will limit our examples to the excavated textiles and their imitations, excluding the numerous decorative remains (such as gold discs), which are thought to have once adorned funerary textiles, and are often found among the funerary remains. Each of these categories will be visited in detail below.

## Textiles from funerary dress

Two examples of gold thread from a textile item were found lying over the remains of the deceased in Patras and Nea Orestias (Evros). More specifically, in a cist-grave of the third quarter of the second century BC in Patras, a group of gold threads was found on the chest and the legs of a woman (Papapostolou 1982, 323, no. 14, pl. 112). In Evros, the remains of the deceased's clothing were found in a pit, along with his sword and his shoes; the body of the deceased had been burnt in another pit nearby (primary cremation). The latter find is dated to the first century AD (Pantos 1980, 823).

Two further examples can be added with some degree of certainty. They were found attached to the grave-offerings rather than the remains of the deceased, but are nevertheless thought to be part of the funerary dress. The first example, a mineralised piece of a fine textile, was attached to a bronze mirror inside a tomb from Salamis, dated to the fifth century BC (Moulhérat, Spantidaki 2009, 8–9, fig. 9.) The second example, also from Salamis, was found in tomb 21 in Abelakia, attached to an iron *stlegis*, dated to the second century BC (Moulhérat, Spantidaki 2009, 13–14, fig. 20). The latter find consists of two textile pieces, one directly touching the *stlegis* on one side only (thus not wrapping the funerary offering), and the other found directly over this piece.

Literary references offer a measure of information regarding the material used in the textiles worn by the dead. Herodotus, in the second book of his *Histories*, talks about the Egyptian use of linen garments, and adds that for anyone initiated into Orphic and Bacchic rites, it is forbidden to be buried in wool (Herodotus, 2, 81), a detail that is not to be interpreted as a special burial rite, but as an indication of initiation (Graf, Johnston 2007, 160). According to literary references, white is the colour of textiles *worn* by the dead (*IG XII 5*, 593, 2 of the fifth century BC); according to visual evidence, red is the colour of textiles *offered* to the dead.<sup>4</sup>

## Textiles as funerary offerings

One example, only briefly noted, comes from the fourth-century BC cemetery of Trachones, in Attica, where among the offerings a piece of cloth with a border design was found

(Kalogeropoulou 1971, 224–225, note 61; Zissis 1954 for the scientific analysis). The scientific analysis proved that it is actually two pieces, one of hemp and one of cotton. More information regarding the conditions of the recovery of the textile is required before drawing any further conclusions.

## Textiles found inside the funerary vessel

One of the oldest extant examples of textiles is that from Koropi, where ten fragments of fine linen cloth were found under unknown circumstances (Beckwith 1954, 114–115). The piece, acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum, was discovered in a bronze *kalpis* together with bones and fragments of other textiles. The *kalpis* is said to have been disposed of privately and its whereabouts is unknown. The sample consists of ten fragments of fine linen cloth dyed in a delicate shade of green with occasional patches of brown, the result of impregnation of copper from the urn. Five of the fragments were originally tapestry-woven and five were plain. Three fragments bear the impression of the tapestry-woven pattern and one has a selvage (overall measurements: 54 cm by 18 cm to 5 cm by 9 cm). The design is an all-over diaper, each lozenge containing a lion walking with its tail lifted in the air and one forepaw raised in salutation. Spectroscopic analysis indicated the presence of silver and gold, which may have originally surrounded a fibre core of silk or linen.<sup>5</sup> This would make it the oldest precious-metal thread in the Greek world known to us so far. The piece is dated by ceramic evidence to the end of the fifth or fourth century BC.

The second example comes from the Athenian Kerameikos (tomb 35, HTR 73). It is a piece of textile found in a copper *lebes*, inside a sarcophagus (Kübler 1936, 188–190, fig. 16; Knigge 1988, 109–110, no. 17; Hundt 1969, 65–71; Margariti *et al.* 2011). The *lebes* was wrapped in straw and bound with wide, purple ribbons. The *lebes* was probably placed originally inside a wooden chest; it contained the remains of a fine fabric, decorated around its four corners with purple dye. It is not clear whether the fragments currently kept in storage by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture originate from the ribbons around the *lebes*, from the remains of the fabric inside it, or from both (Margariti *et al.* 2011, 523). The reliability of the past analyses that identified the fabric as silk is now also disputed, since recent analyses showed no proteinaceous fibres (Margariti *et al.* 2011, 526). The find is dated to between 430 and 400 BC.

A mineralised piece of linen found inside a bronze caldron from Marathon that housed the remains of a cremated child, also belongs to the fifth century BC. It was cursorily published as part of a rescue excavation (Spantidaki, Moulh erat 2004, 5–6, figs 1–5). The same holds true for three mineralised textile fragments found inside a bronze caldron from Marousi, dated to the fifth century BC (Spantidaki, Moulh erat 2004, 8, figs 11–14). Mineralised fragments of a textile (10 cm by 60 cm as preserved) were also found in a bronze *kalpis* of the fifth century BC in the Kamateros cemetery on Salamis (Moulh erat, Spantidaki 2009, 9, figs 12, 13, 14). Fragments of bone found between the threads of the cloth confirm that the bones had been placed inside the material. Scientific analysis has proved that the threads are wool, a material that is harder to work with than linen. This indicates that the cloth that wrapped the bones in this particular tomb was not simple, either in technique or, possibly, value. Working with wool was considered ‘art’ (τέχνη) and was not confined to the domestic sphere, as it comprised different degrees of specialisation (Spantidaki 2009, 72–75).

Yet another example is known from Eleusis, where a piece of cloth was found inside a bronze *kalpis*, which was placed inside a marble sarcophagus dated to the middle of the fifth century BC. The *kalpis* contained bones and ashes wrapped in a piece of linen cloth (Mylonas 1956, 81, fig. 9; Zisis 1954 scientific analysis) with preserved dimensions of 2.20 m by 0.50 m.

The well-known textile from Vergina is a good example from the fourth century BC (Andronikos 1984, 191–192; Drougou 1987; Flury-Lemberg 1988) (pl. 3). Found folded in several layers inside the golden *larnax* from the antechamber of the so-called Tomb of Philip II, it had tapestry-woven decoration with gold and blue-violet purple thread, possibly on a piece of woollen fabric not trapezoidal in shape, as originally thought by the excavator, but oblong, like a shawl, with estimated dimensions of 1 m by 0.60 m (Flury-Lemberg 1988, 235–236). It is woven using a tapestry technique, and the gold consists of cut strips with no indication that they were spun around a core. The running motif on the border is a meander, and the central design is a vivid, naturalistic synthesis of floral patterns (such as leaves and flowers) and two doves. The wool used for the warp and weft was dyed with genuine mollusc purple, which aided its preservation, since the stable protein structure of this dyestuff is slower to decay than wool fibre. The specific type of scroll decoration is associated with Apulian vase-painting by Asher Ovadiah (1980, 174; Valeva 2006); but the Vergina example securely places the pattern in the repertoire of textile design as well.

A purple fabric in animal fibre also covered the remains inside the *larnax* of the chamber of the so-called Tomb of Philip II (Andronikos 1984, 170). This fabric has disintegrated completely, except for a few traces of purple (Flury-Lemberg 1988). From the scientific analysis, it is evident that the chest was lined with the purple fabric before the bones and ashes were put in; the four corners of the material were then folded over them. It is assumed that this fabric was also of wool, because the alkaline ash of the cremated remains destroyed it.

A purple and gold piece of cloth dating to the same century was found in the chamber-tomb at Agios Athanasios, inside a silver-sheathed box (Tsimbidou-Avloniti 2000, 549) (Fig. 1). The textile is described as purple-gilded and a meander design is said to be just visible.

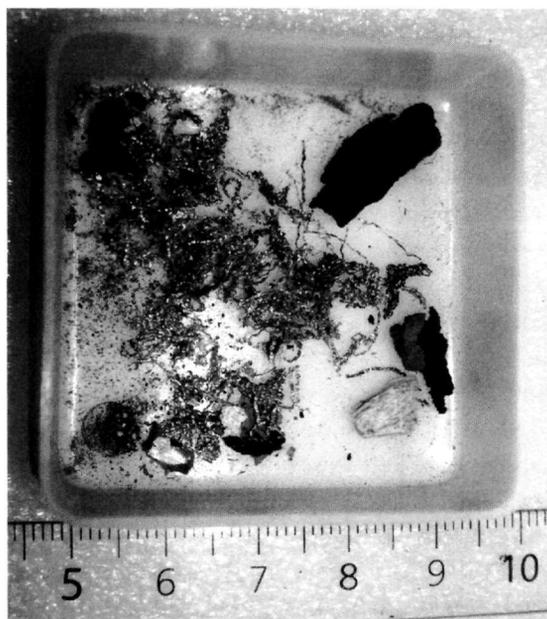


Fig. 1. Chamber-tomb of Agios Athanasios, textile (photo Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki).

A group of gold threads was uncovered in the early second-century BC Macedonian tomb B at Pella inside a wooden *larnax*, which had been placed in a marble sarcophagus (Chrysostomou 1998, 31, no. 6, fig. 15). It may have originally covered the remains of a woman.

At Tzayesi (Amphipolis) 'silver-gilded' threads are mentioned among the remains of the Macedonian tomb and 'gold-gilded' threads from a textile decorated with a large number of small gold beads (at least 190) are mentioned from a cist-tomb (Makaronas 1940). Both tombs are dated by the excavator to the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century BC.

Finally, a later-dated mineralised fragment, briefly published, was found inside the ceramic cover of a Roman inhumation burial at Glyphada. It has been dated to the third or fourth century AD (Spantidaki, Moulh erat 2004, 8–10, figs 16–17).

## Textiles found outside the funerary vessel

Textile fragments were found outside a ceramic urn that contained the remains of three people (a woman, a man and a child) in a fifth-century BC tomb in Phoinikia, at Kalyvia (Attica) (Spantidaki, Moulh erat 2003, 2–4, fig. 1; Moulh erat, Spantidaki 2007, 163–166). The ceramic urn was placed inside a marble *kalpis* and the textile covered the lid and the sides of the urn. A flower wreath rested on top of the bone remains. The analysis of the fabric indicated linen fibres, while the extreme delicacy and the lack of twist suggest silk and the chromatographic analysis indicates the presence of true purple dye. As one can see from the starting border, the piece was woven on a vertical loom. Moulh erat and Spantidaki have concluded that it is a rare vestige of the *arachnaia* clothes worn by classical statues (Moulh erat, Spantidaki 2007, 165).

Another example was found on the exterior of a bronze *hydria*, placed in a stone *kalpis*, which was uncovered in the fourth-century BC cemetery at Elliniko (Spantidaki, Moulh erat 2004, 6, figs 7–10). The mineralised fragments were found under the shoulders of the *hydria* and the scientific analysis proved that the cloth was linen, with twenty-four threads per centimetre. The cloth wrapped the central section of the *hydria* only, and no remains of cloth were found inside the vessel.

The custom of wrapping the funerary vessel in cloth, instead of the remains *inside* the vessel, is quite interesting. It is used with both clay and metal vessels (once wrapped in straw, in an example from the Kerameikos, mentioned above) and, although arguably less frequent than examples where the textile was placed inside the vase, it might indicate a different symbolic gesture than that intended by wrapping the remains directly in the cloth. It reminds us of the painted red ribbons (*tainiai*) that wrap the funerary *stelai* at Vergina, (Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 1984, cat. nos 26–31, 191–197, pls 50–51) dated to the second half of the fourth century BC, and Demetrias (Volos),<sup>6</sup> dated to the third century BC (Fig. 2). On vase paintings, *tainiai* are often shown being offered to the dead by the living, or are carried in baskets to be offered.<sup>7</sup> They are painted in bright blue, green, vermilion, black, purple or brown. One example in the corpus of *stelai* from Demetrias shows a man offering a ribbon to Hermes Chthonios on the Menophilos *Stele*, dated to the third quarter of the third century BC (Arvanitopoulos 1909, 180, no. 26), while in other cases the ribbon is shown around the head of Hermes Chthonios.<sup>8</sup> Such *tainiai* appear particularly in the work of the Achilles Painter – the painter of funerary *lekythoi par excellence* – where a round, tubular fillet can be seen, laid at the foot of the funerary *stela* or wound into a wreath and placed upright against the base of the *stela* (Kurtz 1975, 50–51).



Fig. 2. *Stele of Iason Antipatros, Demetrias* (photo by D. Andrianou).

Although the textile that contains the ashes of the deceased is easily explained as a gesture of care, so that the remains would not touch the vessel, the textile on the exterior of the funerary urn is clearly visible and consequently has a more decorative connotation. Concerning the use of ribbons (*tainiai*), Robert Garland has noted that ‘various explanations have been proposed to explain their meaning – that they possessed the power to ward off evil, elevated the object they adorned to a higher plane, or were a mark of homage – and it is probable that their durability and popularity owed something to each’ (Garland 1985, 116). Apostolos Arvanitopoulos, in describing the *stelai* from Demetrias, asserts that the ribbon might actually be a substitute for Hermes Chthonios, who is also often decorated with ribbons.<sup>9</sup> Whatever the case, the *tainia* indicates the care afforded the *stele*, the funerary *sema* (marker). It has general cult significance by setting apart the object it adorned and in its placement around the *stele*, as with the textile around the funerary vessel, symbolically ‘embraces’ the beloved dead.

## Textiles as decoration for the tomb

In the case of tomb Γ at Sedes (Thessalonica), dated to the late fourth century BC, it appears that a textile decorated with stars adorned the wooden ceiling of the tomb (Kotzias 1956, 869–875). The wooden roof of the tomb was probably entirely covered with a multicoloured piece of cloth (traces of yellow, deep blue and red still remain) consisting of cotton and silk threads (the same use of a textile is hypothesized in Bulgaria: Filow 1934, 103). Since the example from Sedes had either a purely decorative or symbolic function, if we interpret it as the remains of a baldachino, *kamara* (καμάρα) or *ouraniskos* (οὐρανίσκος) (Weber 1990, 36–39), albeit not one erected directly over the couch (*kline*),<sup>10</sup> it is especially intriguing. Painted imitations of textiles on the ceilings of tombs are known in literature in Greece (see below), Etruria (for instance, Holloway 1965), south Russia (Blisnitza), and Egypt (for instance, Adriani 1952,

112; Venit 2002). In Egypt in particular, the painted tapestry on the ceiling of Anfushy II, room 2, is supposed to be shown under a painted imitation of a trellis (Adriani 1952, 72–76). The find from Sedes is consequently of great importance, because it provides evidence for real textile decoration inside tombs in Greece (and thus dismisses any reservations raised by Tomlinson 1984) and, by extension, houses (see Alabe 2002 on the unique painted ceiling decoration of the House of the Seals and the House of the Sword, Delos). On the other hand, the combination of a wooden roof and a real textile is noteworthy, since this is often presumed only to be in paint.

Indirect evidence of textiles provided by the presence of nails – which could have been used to fix the suspended pieces of cloth in place – is equally valuable. A fortunate, yet questionable, example of such a case exists in the antechamber of the tomb of Eurydice at Vergina. Here, according to the excavator's report, iron nails were found set at regular intervals in the shape of the letter Π over the entire surface of the vault (Ginouvés 1993, 156). In addition to these, the remains of gold discs that once decorated a textile were found among the disintegrated organic material in the antechamber of the so-called Tomb of Philip II and, according to the excavator, might have belonged to a large piece of cloth that was originally hung 'high up', possibly on the wall or on the vault (Andronikos 1984, 179, note on the caption of figs 143–144).

## Funerary wall- and floor-decoration alluding to textiles

Wall-paintings in tombs depict the use of fabrics and certainly allude to their use in house interiors as well. One of the best examples is the wall-painting found in a chamber tomb at Dion (Soteriades 1932, 43–44; Boardman 1970, 143–144). The painting takes the form of a narrow frieze on the back wall above the funerary couch, on the base of the vault, and depicts an animal, possibly a lion. Only the lower part of the lion's feet is preserved, with two decorative bands – one above and one below its body. The size of the preserved frieze is not recorded in the original publication, but the date of the tomb is placed, on architectural grounds, in the second half of the third century BC. While the publication of the tomb is not yet complete and no published photographs of the wall-painting exist, it has been compared with textiles found in Pazyryk Mound 5 (Altai) (Boardman 1970, 143, figs 2–3), and its subject matter is comparable to the lion motif found at Koropi. In the same tomb at Dion, remains of nails are recorded over the *kline* on the frieze of the base of the vault (Soteriades 1932, 43). The nails were supposed by the excavator to have once fixed textiles or (less likely) vessels.

Another notable example is the ceiling decoration from the tomb of Lyson and Kallikles at Lefkadia (ancient Mieza), dated to the second century BC (Miller 1993) (pl. 4). The ceiling of the burial-chamber is painted in imitation of a woven fabric with a turreted motif (Miller 1993, 45). This particular motif is studied in the context of the *symposion* tent of Ptolemy II by Kallixenos of Rhodes (Athenaeus, *Deip.* 5, 196–197c), where the tent is described as having a roof draped with a red-and-white canopy, *ouraniskos* (οὐρανίσκος), patterned in a turreted motif, *pyrgaton* (πυργωτόν). (For a suggested visualisation of Ptolemy's tent see Pfrommer 1999, 69–75, fig. 102.)<sup>11</sup>

A second tomb from Lefkadia presents a very different decorative pattern for our corpus (pl. 5, pl. 6). Here, on the ceiling of the antechamber in the Tomb of the Palmettes, we see a distinctive floral motif as the main theme (Rhomipoulou 1973, 91; Rhomipoulou, Schmidt-

Dounas 2010, 76–77). Huge polychrome *anthemia*, aquatic flowers and plant motifs, possibly designed with the aid of a template and a compass, are depicted on a faded, water-like, blue background seemingly meant to recall water (on scroll decoration see Valeva 2006). The tomb is now dated to 320 to 300 BC. This kind of decoration might allude to textiles, but the floral theme is quite common in other arts as well.

The painted remains on the ceilings of two third-century BC tombs might indicate that they were decorated in imitation of simple canopies. The first comes from the one-room tomb at Malathria-Dion, dated by the excavator to the second half of the third century BC (Makaronas 1961, 135–137; Miller 1993, 45, footnote 57). The second belongs to the antechamber of the tomb at Drama, where remains of multicoloured *tainiai* and triangular designs in the corners are visible (Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 1984; Miller 1993, 45, footnote 57). The Drama tomb is dated to the third century BC, with continuous usage until the first century BC. If this imitation was indeed common in Macedonian tombs, then the monochrome ceilings in various other tombs might allude to the existence of simple, monochrome canopies as well (for examples of burial-chambers with painted ceilings outside Macedonia, see Miller 1993, 46, footnote 58).

It might be of some further significance that, in instances where the funerary monuments under discussion here consisted of two rooms (chamber and antechamber), the ceiling bearing the colourful imitation belongs to the antechamber (the entrance to the funerary environment). The only exception to this is in the tomb of Lyson and Kallikles, possibly because the main chamber was used for successive burials. This correspondence might not be entirely coincidental, but its implications are not easily explained by the evidence at hand. One might propose that the transition from the antechamber (the entrance) to the main chamber (the burial place) was underlined by the different styles of painted decoration, a method similar to what has been proposed for Pompeian houses, for example, where the decoration of the *fauces* 'leads' the visitor into the main house and makes the transition from exterior to interior significant (Downey-Verfenstein 1994). In such a way, the painted imitations of textiles play a transitional role, possibly from life (antechamber) to death (main chamber). Since the ancient beliefs about death considered the dead body polluted (Parker 1983), the antechamber was probably as far as any of the relatives and attendants would like to be. Moreover, the antechamber might have been the area associated with pre-burial ceremonies, such as the ritual cleansing of both the dead and the living upon entrance (see for instance the paintings in the antechamber of the Tomb of Lyson and Kallikles in Miller 1993, 38–39).

What dictates the use of a real textile versus a painted imitation of it in the tomb? As much as one would like to know the cost of both media, evidence at hand prevents any secure and straightforward answer, since our knowledge about the artists involved and the way they divided their work (i.e. masters and pupils), the cost of the materials used (paints versus metallic and dyed threads) and the structure of the textile workshops that produced expensive tapestry-woven pieces like those found in funerary environments, is still limited. Maria Nowicka, based on the information provided in the mid-third-century BC Zenon papyri, has argued for the use of '*cabiers de modèles*' for the painted decoration proposed to clients (Nowicka 1984, 257). If this were widely the case, the cost of the painted decoration might have been significantly reduced. On the other hand, not all designs could have easily been reproduced in both paint and tapestry: we still know very little about the possibilities of weaving in Hellenistic Greece.

In addition to the ceilings, there are two examples from tombs of floor-mosaics decorated with lozenges, creating the effect of carpeting (what Rostovtzeff has called 'stone carpets'). At Langada, the main chamber's floor is painted with a rectangle in the middle filled with lozenges in black, yellow and red (Macridy 1911, 211, pl. 2; Sismanidis 1985, fig. 6, dated to the beginning of the fourth century BC); but the deterioration of the stucco in the *prothamos* chamber does not allow the identification of any decorative motif. At Kastas-Amphipolis, both the main chamber and the antechamber are decorated with non-figural mosaics composed of coloured pebbles (Lazaridis 1966, 68–69, pl. 52a (mosaic); Salzman 1982, 31 and 83, no. 10, dated to the last quarter of the fourth century BC). Pebble mosaics that allude to carpeting are rather rare in the Greek world, so the Kastas-Amphipolis tomb floor represents a trend little seen elsewhere in Greece. It is also possible that some of the *stelai* from Demetrias depict carpets in painting.<sup>12</sup>

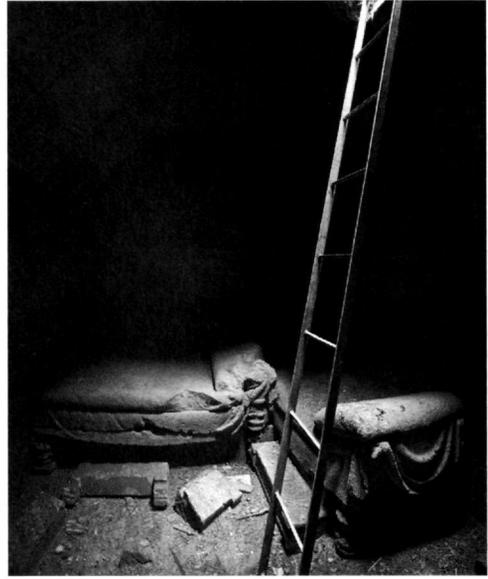
## Textiles carved on funerary furniture

Apart from the remains of actual textiles, Hellenistic tombs of the Macedonian type provide us with sculpted furnishings on funerary beds and thrones (Andrianou 2009). Such beds in Macedonian tombs were used for the placement of the body of the deceased or, in a few cases, the weapons of the deceased, when his body was cremated and placed in an urn. Sculpted versions of pillows are known from three Macedonian tombs in Eretria: a) the fourth- or third-century BC Macedonian tomb at Kotroni (Karapaschalidou 1989, 20), where the remains of a man were discovered on a stuccoed, stone-built bed with carved representations of two pillows; b) the third-century BC Macedonian tomb of Eroses (Vollmoeller 1901, 333–376; Huguenot 2008, 97–104), in which there are two limestone beds inscribed with male names and decorated with carved imitations of a mattress and pillows, and two marble throne-receptacles decorated with a carved cushion and inscribed with female names (Fig. 3); c) the third-century BC Macedonian tomb at Amarynthos, which contains two stone beds adorned with sculpted bedding that preserves painted stripes in pink, red, orange, yellow and blue (Huguenot 2008, 207–225) (Fig. 4). In addition to the Eretrian examples there are the sculpted furnishings from the fourth-century BC chamber tomb at Tekirdağ (Naip tumulus) on Ganos Mountain (Delemen 2006, 256–257; *idem*, 2004, 27–35), where carved pillows adorn the headrests of the bed.

The catalogue of furnished funerary interiors from Hellenistic Macedonia is quite rich (Andrianou 2009) and it may be assumed with a good degree of certainty that funerary furniture was also adorned with *real* bed covers and pillows. The only trace of furnishing directly associated with beds in Greece is 'the presence of a substance that gives an impression of wool or feathers' on the ground of the antechamber of the so-called Tomb of Philip II at Vergina, now stored at the Museum in Vergina (Andronikos 1977, 24–25). If they are really feathers, they might be the sole extant remains of a type of mattress mentioned by Pollux (6, 9–11; 10, 36–43). The same writer refers to the mattresses and headrests as *pterides* (πετερίδες), talks about the process of filling them (πιλοῖς τὰ κνέφαλα ἀνεπλήρου), and finally names them *proskaphalaia ptilota* (προσκεφάλαια πτιλωτά). These, then, are probably the remains of a mattress such as that described by Pollux (VI, 9–11; X, 36–43) or of a feather pillow, a *proskaphalaion ptiloton* (προσκεφάλαιον πτιλωτόν) (VI, 10; X, 38).



Above left: Fig. 3. Tomb of Erotes, Eretria (photo by Andreas F. Voegelin (AMB/ESAG)).



Above right: Fig. 4. Tomb of Amarynthos, Eretria (photo by Andreas F. Voegelin (AMB/ESAG)).

## Textiles on tombstones

Textiles depicted on painted *stelai* are quite informative and aid in the reconstruction of both funerary and domestic interiors. Here, the *stelai* from Demetrias (Volos) come into play; for they are a treasure-house for various types of textile on furniture and on the floor. A major drawback, however, is that the *stelai* were only briefly published in 1909, without photographs, and they are currently inaccessible to researchers. As a result, an accurate description is not yet possible. Nevertheless, a number of *stelai* depicting textile furnishings can be singled out from the corpus and presented here.

The *stèle* of Stratonikos, for example, depicts a young man seated on a wooden *klismos* furnished with a thick pillow, which is covered with a decorated cloth or has stitching applied directly to it. This decoration is picked out in blue and rose paint, a common method of portraying pillows in the area (Arvanitopoulos 1909, 124, no. 9, dated to the second half of the third century BC). The *stèle* of Onesimos depicts the deceased on a *kline* adorned with rose-tinted bedding and pillows, whereas the deceased is dressed in white and covered by what is possibly a white sheet.<sup>15</sup> The *stèle* of Kleon and Artemesia shows a blue-green mattress on the *kline*, in this example adorned with red and rose bedding (Arvanitopoulos 1909, 185, 223 addendum, no. 27, dated to around 250 BC). The *stèle* of Asklepiades may have belonged to a merchant from Sidon. It depicts an equally interesting type of bedding that appears to have been decorated with stitching (Arvanitopoulos 1909, 165, no. 21, dated around 200 BC). This *stèle* might also suggest a red carpet covering the floor of the scene. The *stèle* of Dionysius provides a different sort of information for here, on the *kline* of the *stèle*, the reclining Dionysius rests his feet on a pillow, possibly a custom of Thrace, the deceased's place of origin (Arvanitopoulos 1909, 235, no. 47, dated to around 225 BC). Another single pillow, this time on a *klismos*, is

depicted on the *stèle* of Peneis and Herodotos (Arvanitopoulos 1909, no. 29, 196, dated to the last quarter of the third century BC), whereas two pillows seem to be rendered on the *klismos* of the *stèle* of Choirile (Arvanitopoulos 1909, 258, no. 55, dated to the last quarter of the third century BC). Finally, the *stèle* of Aphrodeisia is described by Arvanitopoulos as a *stèle* with a unique depiction of a throne with a baldachino, formed by the two vertical beams of the throne attached to two horizontal beams, thus forming a ceiling over the seat, covered with a piece of yellow cloth (Fig. 5, pl. 7).<sup>14</sup>

Baldachinos (*ouraniskoi*) erected over funerary thrones (and beds)<sup>15</sup> are not unknown in Greek vase-painting<sup>16</sup> and in funerary interiors outside Greece.<sup>17</sup> In Macedonia their existence has been supposed in the tomb at Sedes (albeit not directly over the *kline*), the Soteriades tomb at Dion (see above) and over the well-known throne of Eurydice at Vergina. In the last case, spots of a dark-red colour in several places on the arms of the throne and in the main scene depicted on the throne (Hades and Persephone in the chariot) have been interpreted as stains from the deterioration of a purple piece of cloth that hung over the throne. If this postulation is true, the depiction of the baldachino over the throne on the Aphrodeisia *stèle* becomes stronger. Further details on the *stèle* show other uses of textiles: three red ribbons spill out of a box, placed on the table next to the figure. Aphrodeisia is seated on a pillow and rests her back on another pillow that projects over the top of the throne.

Textiles being offered to the dead are identified on three sculpted *stelai* where a standing female offers a wrapped piece of cloth to the seated dead: a *stèle* from Palaio Phaleron dated to 360–350 BC, a *stèle* from Porto Rafti dated after 330 BC (Kalogeropoulou 1971) and a *stèle* from Pallene (*stèle* no. 32 in the Museum of Marathon) also dated around 330 BC (Kalogeropoulou 1977) (Fig. 6). A fourth example has been mentioned by Kalogeropoulou but is not yet securely placed in this category (Kalogeropoulou 1971, 222, note 40). It is possible that a



Fig. 5. *Stèle* of Aphrodeisia, Demetrias (photo by D. Andrianou).

painted version of this iconography appears on a *stèle* from Pagasai (Arvanitopoulos 1909, 323, no. 104, *stèle* of three figures) dated possibly to the third century BC, but the *stèle* is not fully published. Five additional *stelai* depict wrapped pieces of cloth carved on their pediments; the *stèle* of Kallisto; the *stèle* 983 from the National Museum; the *stèle* of Pythodoros from Boeotia (Kalogeropoulou 1971, 227); the *stèle* of Diphilos and the Ephebic Oath from Acharnai (Kalogeropoulou 1977, 213, note 59a) and three more examples are found on painted *stelai*; the *stèle* of Euferos; the *stèle* of Paramythion from the Munich Glyptothek; and the *stèle* of Myttion from J. P. Getty (Kalogeropoulou 1971, 227).

The textiles depicted on these tombstones are symbols of offerings to the dead and were possibly meant to be burnt, if we trust the literary sources that support this custom (Kalogeropoulou 1971). Athena Kalogeropoulou, who has investigated the subject in depth, concludes that the offering of cloth in the tomb might be connected to the hope for *eugenism* and salvation in a greater sense, and is comparable to other similar symbols, such as eggs, wreaths, flowers, grapes, pomegranates, pigeons, etc. (Kalogeropoulou 1977, 224–225).

The frieze on the façade of the Agios Athanasios III tomb, which depicts a *symposion*, is an exceptional representation of colourful bedclothes and pillows (Tsimbidou-Avloniti 2005), and ending with it is the best way to wrap up a discussion on funerary bedding (pl. 8). The colour of the bedclothes in this frieze seems to match the colour of the pillows: purple, blue and red are the main hues chosen for this specific scene. They are strikingly vivid and allude to Homer's image of smooth white bedclothes beneath the body and 'fair robes of purple colour' over the body (*Odyssey* I, 130; X, 35.2, quoted in Athenaeus, 2, 48c).



Fig. 6. *Stèle* of Pallene, Museum of Marathon no. 32 (photo by D. Andrianou).

## Conclusions

The wide variety of uses for textiles in tombs makes us yet again regret the fact that climatic conditions do not allow for the preservation of textiles in Greece. One factor that is not completely understood, helps to slow down the deterioration of fabrics, and this is the presence of metal (Margariti *et al.* 2011). One can only imagine the colourful interiors of funerary chambers and houses in late Classical and Hellenistic Greece. There are actually only two excavated examples of domestic painted ceilings in Greece so far that evoke carpets spread out, and that are comparable to funerary ceilings: in the House of the Seals and the House of the Sword on Delos, dated to the first decades of the first century BC (Alabe 2002). Admiration of an interior domestic space is attested in literature: Bdelykleon, in Aristophanes' *Wasps*, orders his father Philokleon to admire the woven hangings of the court, part of his 'education' on how to behave in the sophisticated society (Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 1215)! Thus, even fleeting admiration of the funerary space might have been one of the factors that dictated the setting of a tomb. Comfort that alludes to a 'homely environment' might have been another, based on funerary beliefs that are not entirely comprehensible to us through archaeological finds. Late Classical and Hellenistic tomb-interiors were not meant to be revisited: they were sealed and opened only in a few cases for secondary burials. Funerary rites were performed over the tomb or the tumulus, around its *sema*.

As Zeitlin rightly notes, the scenes of discourse about images in ancient literature are an indication that images function as a cue for memory and a means of instruction (Zeitlin 1994, 153). This is especially true and important for funerary interiors, which encrypt certain beliefs and Orphic or Dionysiac initiation rites for the afterlife, and at the same time signify the personality and status of the owner of the tomb, sometimes a member of a secret cult. Visual imagery on the walls or on the textiles of the tomb, in addition to providing eternal comfort, may have played the same role as the Bacchic tablets; to answer questions about identity, give passwords and recall or repeat formulas (Cole 2003). Textiles in the antechamber of certain tombs might have played a symbolic, transitional role from life (antechamber) to death (chamber). Furthermore, light colours and especially white, might have stood out in the gloom of the underworld and alluded to ritual purity (Graf, Johnston 2007, 109). The fact that textiles help our understanding of funerary rites is also evident through the information we gather from the materials used: although one would think that only the best and most expensive offerings, such as gold textiles (Gleba 2008), accompanied the dead in the afterlife, this is not always true. An early example, from the end of the seventh or the beginning of the sixth century BC, provides evidence for a re-used piece of cloth being placed inside a bronze *kalpis* in an archaic tomb on Corfu (Metallinou *et al.* 2009, 34).

Care, comfort and symbolism through the use of textiles in tombs worked together and were mobilised in order to aid, give sense to, and diminish fear of the incomprehensible Otherworld and the trip thereto, since 'nothing is so welcome in death as the imitation and recollection of life' (Graf, Johnston, 2007, 120). A comprehensive statistical analysis of each cemetery from the period in question, combined with a study of the relevance of the funerary finds, will in the future assist us in understanding the hopes of the deceased and his or her relatives in a better way.

## Notes

1. On one occasion textiles were found in a foundation deposit, possibly as part of the ritual accompanying the construction of a building. The example comes from a fifth-century BC pyre deposit of miniature cooking pots underneath a building in the Agora of Athens (Unruh 2007, 170–171).
2. Sardian carpets were used in Persia (by the Persian king exclusively) according to the *Persika* of a Greek ethnohistorian who lived in the fourth century BC (Greenewalt, Majewski 1980, 134).
3. An *akestria* is mentioned in *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 1556, line 28.
4. See, for instance, the painted *stèle* (no. 119) from Demetrias depicting a *symposion*, where the sheet covering the body of the reclining man, who is dressed in a white *chiton*, is painted red (Arvanitopoulos 1909, 348). For the use of red in Greek tombs in general, see Kalogeropoulou 1977, 215–216, notes 74–75. For the interpretation of red as the colour of blood and consequently of the living, see Johansen 1951, 116. However, exceptions do occur: red is the colour of the *chiton*, interpreted as a shroud, worn on the Lyseas *stèle* from the end of the sixth century BC (Johansen 1951, fig. 53).
5. A recent unpublished study of the cloth has shown no linen in the X-ray analysis. Another woollen fabric with a gold tapestry-woven vine leaf and ivy design was found in a woman's grave at Kertch, dated to the third century BC (Beckwith 1954, 114).
6. Arvanitopoulos 1928, 135, fig. 162; *idem*, 1909, no. 6 (*stèle* of Diodotos), dated to the second quarter of the third century BC, depicts a *tainia* with colours that mimic the texture of the textile, and small threads are visible on the edges of the textile (see Kurtz 1975, pl. 33, 2); no. 24 (*stèle* of Antimachos), dated to the last quarter of the third century BC; no. 57 (*stèle* of Aristoboule), dated around 200 BC; no. 70 (*stèle* of Leon), dated around 225 BC; no. 72 (*stèle* of Xenarchos), dated a little before 300 BC; no. 81 (*stèle* of Glaphyra), dated to 250 BC; no. 101 (*stèle* of Dionysodoros), dated to the first quarter of the third century BC; no. 170 (*stèle* of Rodon), dated around 250 BC.
7. See for example Kurtz 1975 for several fifth-century BC examples which show different uses of the *tainiai*: pl. 19, 3 (*tainiai* around the shaft of the *stèle*); pl. 33, 2 (suspended from the *stèle*); pl. 26, 2 (*stèle* with several *tainiai*); pls 20, 1, 2, and 25, 2 (woman with basket full of *tainiai* to be placed on the *stèle*); pl. 33, 2 (*tainiai* with loose threads along their edges); pl. 29, 1 (dead adorned with *tainiai*); pl. 51, 3 (youth sitting on a funerary mound draped with *tainiai*). Another use of these *tainiai* has to do with what may be rolled scrolls, tied together with ribbons (*ARV* 1337, no. 12; *ARV* 1378, no. 44; *ARV* 1380, no. 80). See also Kurtz 1975, 61–62 for discussion of the Reed workshop. On Red Figure painting see, for example, *RVAp* I, p.195, 8/6.
8. Arvanitopoulos 1909, no. 84, p. 298, *stèle* of Artemidoros, dated around 250 BC. On the *stèle* the *tainia* is shown below the inscription, and Hermes, usually absent from the space below the *tainia*, is here depicted with a second *tainia* on his head. Hermes with a ribbon around his head also appears on nos 85, 100.
9. Arvanitopoulos 1909, 115. On the *stelai* from Demetrias, Hermes is often depicted below the main scene, except on the *stelai* with *tainiai*. In one case this Hermes is dressed with a red ribbon around his neck (Arvanitopoulos 1909, no. 15, p. 144, *stèle* of Charmides, dated to the first quarter of the third century BC) or around his head (see earlier note).

For depiction of Hermes below a *tainia* see earlier note. For a *tainia* with a painted scene on the same *stele* see the unique example no. 98, pp. 313–314, a *stele* with a *symposion* (?) scene.

10. Kotzias 1956, 874. According to Guimier-Sorbets 2001, the funerary chamber is the setting of an eternal *prothesis* for the heroicised deceased. Baldachinos became common in Egypt in the third millennium BC, and have been grouped into three types by Marga Weber 1900. In Egypt they are found in the cults of the gods as well as in funerary practice. Later, in Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia, they acquire significance as a sign of wealth and become a status symbol, but are not found in funerary practice. In Archaemenid art in particular, baldachinos are often found set up over thrones. In Greek art they are found in the sacred space for the commemoration of the deities, and with the emergence of temple architecture we find them inside monumental temples, in hypaethral areas. Later, baldachinos are more likely to be found in processions (*Prozessionsschrein*) or in other cultic areas in ephemeral structures. In Rome they are associated, from the very beginning of Imperial times, with the divination of rulers.
11. For a *chitonis* and a *chitoniskos pyrgatos* see also *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1514*, lines 26 and 46 respectively, from Brauron.
12. Arvanitopoulos 1909: the *stele* of Peneis and Herodotos (no. 29, p. 197); the *stele* of Hedeste (no. 1, addendum, p. 218), dated to the second half of the third century BC; the *stele* of two figures (no. 54, p. 256), dated to around 200 BC; the *stele* of a *symposion* (no. 144, p. 340). I have been able to see the *stele* of Hedeste myself: the carpet is just visible with the naked eye.
13. Arvanitopoulos 1909, no. 19, p. 153, *stele* of Onesimos, dated around 300 BC. This *stele* is particularly important, since it is said to depict a table covered by a piece of cloth of unknown colour; the floor of the scene is also said to be covered by a piece of cloth or carpet.
14. Arvanitopoulos 1909, no. 28, p. 190, *stele* of Aphrodeisia, dated around 225 BC. The *stele* is depicted in Arvanitopoulos 1908, pl. 4, 2, but in black and white, which does not render the details clearly. Personal observation of the *stele* at the Museum of Volos and the painted rendering of its iconography (by E. Zilliéron) at the Archaeological Society of Athens were not conclusive and showed no trace of horizontal beams. A semicircular line over the throne, however, might indicate the presence of a piece of cloth, but it is not clear whether the cloth is hanging from vertical posts, as described by Arvanitopoulos. Whatever the case, the *stele* should be investigated in greater detail under different lights.
15. Weber 1990, 38–39 for the proper use of the word; Guimier-Sorbets 2001 for a thorough study of baldachinos on funerary beds in Macedonian tombs.
16. For iconographic examples in vase-painting see also *CVA Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire* 2, pl. 74, 9 (a seated Dionysius on an *okladias diphros* under a baldachino supported by two beams, dated around 490 BC or later, from Selinunt); *CVA Musei Comunali Umbri* 1, pl. 15, 4 (three young males under a baldachino or tent, with no traces of supports, only part of the cloth (?) that would have formed the baldachino); Alfieri, Arias 1960, pl. 34 (volute krater with Dionysos Sabazios and Cybele under a baldachino supported by two Doric columns, with no trace of a cloth ceiling, dated to 440 BC, from Valle Trebba); Reho-Bumbalova 1990, pl. 13, 146 (four reclining figures under a baldachino, with no

trace of supports, only the cloth that covered the baldachino, from Sozopol (Apollonia), dated to 360–340 BC). Textile remains of a baldachino have been supposed over the dead in a burial pit on a Sarmatian site in Yuzhny Bug, Sokolova Mohyla (Ukraine), dated to the first century AD (mentioned in Gleba 2008, 67).

17. For instance Nowicka 1984, 259, note 25 for imitations of baldachinos in Alexandrian tombs and Weber 1990, for a thorough treatment of the subject.

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