

129. It is not true that Ursus had to be 50 years old to be elected as a *curio*. This age requirement was observed in much more ancient times. Consequentially, Kleiner's observations concerning Ursus' age are unnecessary, but she could have noted that a *curio* was often of equestrian rank.

130. The inscription has been published in *Epigraphica* 5-6 (1943-44) 6, nr. 71.

*Mika Kajava*

*Friederike Sinn: Stadtrömische Marmorurnen. Beiträge zur Erschließung hellenistischer und kaiserzeitlicher Skulptur und Architektur 8. Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein 1987. 315 S., 3 Tabellen, 104 Tafeln. DEM 198.*

The “workshop” under the guidance of Paul Zanker and Klaus Fittschen seems to be specialized in producing volumes apparently as equally luxurious as are many of the objects studied. The most recent of these “luxurious Hellenistic studies” is Friederike Sinn's work about Roman funerary marble urns. In the introduction she deals with the rather scarce former studies made on this subject. The author states that her own work – of which a short summary was published in 1982 in Koch & Sichtermann's work on sarcophagi – is not intended to be a complete corpus, but a collection of material to study stylistic and iconographical development. Therefore poorly decorated urns lacking criteria for dating are excluded (being included only if they can be dated by other, mainly epigraphical criteria). The 685 excluded (and the 38 uncertain) urns are carefully listed according to their provenance (a list is given on pp. 267-280). This together with the catalogue of 714 urns arranged according to a chronological order proposed by the author shows the collecting of material to have been diligently carried out. As far as I can judge no relevant material seems to be ignored.

In Chapter I “Zum Bestattungsbrauch – allgemeines zu Urnen” (pp. 4-16) the general features relevant for this group of material considered as a “stadtrömische Gattung” are briefly discussed. Also its relation to other groups of urns (and cinerary altars), as well as the question of local workshops is treated here. Applying stylistic criteria Sinn suggests that some urns are of local production. Their number is indeed not very high, but why could not more qualified and “stadtrömisch-looking” urns from Sicily or Etruria also have been produced by local workshops? The question of local workshops, or the question of how local the “stadtrömische” workshops in fact were remains open. Be this as it may, it would not relevantly change the content of Chapter II “Die chronologische Ordnung der stadtrömischen Marmorurnen und ihre

stilistische Entwicklung" (pp. 17-53), which together with the catalogue (pp. 88-265) can be regarded as the essential result of the work.

This does not mean that Chapter III "Bildschmuck – zu Herkunft und Bedeutung" (pp. 54-83), would not be important, but because of the great number of various single subjects of the many urns and the still greater number of potential parallels the treatment, of course, cannot be exhaustive. A considerable amount of epigraphical discussion is "unavoidable" in a work on such material which will interest those orientated towards social history as does also the brief Chapter IV "Zur gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Bestatteten" (pp. 84-88). Here the author has limited the discussion to general and preliminary results, leaving a more detailed analysis for specialists of epigraphy and social history (this makes one wonder even more at the accuracy of the percentages given in the list on p. 84, which for me seem out of proportion). Neither is the present reviewer competent to judge the epigraphical content, which in fact H. Solin intends to do on another occasion. One remark to be expected from Solin is already mentioned here: Sinn dates the urn N. 695 around 200 A.D, based on an erroneous epigraphical interpretation of the inscription CIL X 1743, which according to Solin must be about a century earlier. According to the description in the catalogue (a photograph is lacking) the decoration of this urn is too poor to allow a close stylistic dating. The example shows, however, how carefully both epigraphical and stylistic criteria are to be used.

Sinn has wisely not given all urns a precise date, but has instead separated off the urns in which the decoration does not offer sufficient criteria for a closer (stylistic) dating. When the dating is based on other than stylistic criteria this is mentioned in the catalogue, and the "Datierungsgrundlagen" as well as the "Reliefstil" and "Schmuckrepertoire" of the urns of each period are clearly presented in Chapter II. However, even after reading this Chapter and consulting the catalogue, I did not feel trained enough to see all the differences on which the stylistic dating proposals are based. I am not able to show any concrete errors and though in every work there is room for improvements, we must be very grateful to the author for the enormous work which the collection and stylistic analysis of this vast material must have entailed.

One can hardly exaggerate the usefulness of such a collection. It could, however, have been even greater with a more exhaustive index. Now many "Sachwörter" are missing (pp. 313-315), and above all, the index does not refer to the catalogue, but to the discussion. An index to the catalogue would have been a great help for those interested in certain subjects and details, especially as the 104 plates, though numerous and of good quality, do not show a photograph of every catalogued urn. Neither are the "synoptic" tables (1-4) giving a rapid overall impression of the numbers of various

subjects in various periods of any help in this respect. The idea is a good one, but its execution is not very successful; the tables are not illustrative enough. Furthermore, they are too laborious to be checked without an index to the catalogue. Its printing would, of course, have been expensive, especially in such a quality series as this. In this computer age this serious omission of an index could, however, be easily remedied (if not by printing, perhaps by selling the complete indexes on diskettes).

At present the brevity of the index reflects the selective character of the discussion. Though much of the material in the footnotes to the discussion is listed according to various topics or subjects, it cannot be complete. It has already been mentioned why an exhaustive discussion of all the various subjects and their parallels is not possible, but depending on the special interests and wishes of each reader, the discussion could be extended in many ways. For example, the present reviewer, interested especially in bird motifs, missed a discussion of such subjects as birds at their nests. Particularly interesting is the urn N. 119 where this subject is combined with another motif, an eagle fighting with a snake. This latter motif is briefly discussed on p. 71 (where the urn n. 119 is ignored). The symbolic content of the subject of passerines picking up insects is denied, but the question is perhaps not as simple as that. This would have been clear if a discussion of the motif of birds picking up (or fighting with) lizards and/or snakes had not also been omitted. On p. 25 the subject of birds on a vase (Vogelschale) is mentioned as "emblematischer Dekor", but in Chapter III it is not discussed under this title, but as part of vegetal decoration, the symbolic aspects again being denied (pp. 56-57).

In general Chapter III, though concise, is an illuminating discussion of the most relevant aspects. One further remark must be made. For the various vegetal decoration – garlands, scrolls and branches – which dominate the urns in the 1st c. A.D., Sinn (p. 56) assumes "eine einheitliche Grundbedeutung", which she sees as a "bescheidene Verwirklichung von der Idee der naturumgebenen Wohnstatt des Toten.". Indeed the funerary epigrams express the wish that the grave would be surrounded by green plants and flowers, and wealthy Romans are known to have surrounded their graves with *cepotaphia*. But though the epigrams – the importance of which Sinn rightly emphasizes – only seldom point to a symbolic interpretation of such vegetal elements, this does not support Sinn's view that "...auch die spielerisch-neutralen Pflanzendekorationen der Urnen (sind) generell ohne Suche nach einer zweiten symbolischen Bedeutungsebene zu betrachten" (p. 56). The general background for the surrounding of graves and tombs with *cepotaphia*, and – *mutatis mutandis* – the wish that this should be so in an epigram – was the idea or conception of the ideal place, the *locus amoenus* in which green plants, trees

and flowers were essential elements. The well-known literary convention of the *locus amoenus* had from Homer onwards connections with religious and eschatological beliefs. Such a symbolic value is in the various "green references" (scrolls, garlands, branches) evidently pointing to the idealized abundance of nature and/or to its *amoenitas*, so to say, "built-in".

In such a large work small errors always remain. For example, in urn N. 18 there are in total four birds in the front instead of three as Sinn (p. 95) states, or the bird picking up an insect below the garland on the right side of the urn N. 53 is a heron rather than a pelican as Sinn (p. 105) identifies it. Needless to say that despite the above remarks – or as the lack of more serious criticisms shows – we should be very grateful for the author for providing the basis for future studies through her painstaking work.

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*Harald Mielsch - Henner von Hesberg: Die heidnische Nekropole unter St. Peter in Rom. Die Mausoleen A-D. Bauaufnahme von Kai Gaertner. Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia, ser. III: Memorie, vol. XVI, 1. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Roma 1986. 66 S. 9 Taf. ITL 150.000.*

The excavations of the pagan necropolis under the basilica of St. Peter were started in 1939, but it was not until 1951 that the studies concerning the western part of the necropolis were published by B.M. Apolloni Ghetti and others. In 1979 the Reverenda Fabbrica di S. Pietro, the Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia and the Deutsches archäologisches Institut decided upon a documentation campaign of the eastern part of the necropolis. The publication under review is the first of four volumes, which will present the results of the said campaign. The first three volumes will describe the architecture as well as the pictorial and sculptural decoration of the tombs, whereas the inscriptions as well as the sarcophagi, urns and altars will be dealt with in the fourth volume.

In the present volume H. v. Hesberg describes the architecture and H. Mielsch the pictorial decoration of four tombs (abbreviated A-D). Only a small part of the facade (the entrance) of tomb A (of C. Popilius Heracla) is preserved and in tomb D little is left of its paintings and, consequently, the mausoleum of Fannia (B) and that of Tullius Zethus (C) with their rich paintings occupy the largest part of the work (27 and 20 respectively of the total of 66 pages). The descriptions are clear and compact, a more general discussion of major problems being left to the concluding parts of the series. The number of good observations, even if limited to single details, inspire confidence and seem to