

especially to its latter half. Figurative representations as well as myths are also most commonly found in this period, though mythical scenes do occur inside tombs as early as the late first century B.C., i.e., more than one hundred years before they began to appear on sarcophagi and marble urns. It is also interesting to note with F-G that the majority of the subjects represented (mythical figures, allegories, etc.) are also well known outside the funerary context. In fact, it was the dominant practice to decorate tombs with motifs deriving from private houses and villas, even public buildings. It was only later, from the second century A.D., that the domestic context as a source for funerary decorations, including altars and urns, was replaced by sarcophagi which then assumed the role of iconographic and thematic models. Whatever was represented, it served to evoke the idea of serene existence and life without turbulence; scenes from everyday life were either completely avoided or they were displayed in an abstract context. This was the way preferred by the *humiliores*. Representations of domesticity and peace, wrapped in allegory and myth, are not likely to be encountered in the tombs of upper-class Romans (in the extant evidence, there seems to be only one case where the funerary monument of a senator is decorated inside, that is, the pyramid of C. Cestius with a painted inner chamber, see pp. 135 ff.).

The reader is pleased to find out that not only the inner decoration of the tombs is treated with admirable competence; questions concerning the names and status of those recorded in the *tituli, tabellae* and other inscriptions are also generally discussed with great expertise. While in a number of cases, something more could have been said on the epitaphs and their contents, one may note that a thorough discussion of such matters with a full documentation of the epigraphic evidence is forthcoming: see the preliminary observations by F-G, "Sepulkrale 'Selbstdarstellung' von Unterschichten. Beobachtungen zu Inschriften in stadtrömischen Grabmonumenten der Kaiserzeit", in: G. Alföldy – S. Panciera (eds), *Inschriftliche Denkmäler als Medien der Selbstdarstellung in der römischen Welt* (HABES 36), 2001, pp. 121 ff. Moreover, I should mention F-G's contribution "Grabinschriften im archäologischen Kontext. Komplementarität von Schrift und Bild?", in: M. Heinzelmann & al. (eds), *Römischer Bestattungsbrauch und Beigabensitten in Rom, Norditalien und den Nordwestprovinzen von der späten Republik bis in die Kaiserzeit, Kolloquium Rom 1998* (Palilia 8), 2001, 203 ff.

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GAETANO MESSINEO: *La tomba dei Nasonii*. Studia archaeologica 104. "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, Roma 2000. ISBN 88-8265-067-7. 88 pp., 83 figs. EUR 62.

The Tomb of the Nasonii (thus called from inscription *CIL* VI 22882, now in Perugia), was discovered on the Via Flaminia in 1675. Regrettably, the structures and the unique frescoes with mythological themes suffered considerably before the restoration of the complex began in 1982. The repairs, and the study of the frescoes in particular, have benefited from the engravings made by Pietro Santi Bartoli in the seventeenth century. Messineo's book well illustrates the whole story surrounding the Tomb from the time of its discovery. An interesting detail (pp. 17 f.) is that some of the frescoes have been reproduced among the decorations of the Palazzo del Drago alle Quattro Fontane in

Rome. The edifice itself is from the sixteenth century, but it was acquired in 1664 by Cardinal Camillo Massimo who also commissioned Bartoli to make the engravings. Some decades later, another cardinal, Alessandro Albani, seems to have also been inspired by the work of Bartoli, for it was probably during his residence in the Palazzo that a further series of paintings copying the themes of the ancient frescoes was added (note also that similar themes recur in the Villa Albani on the Via Salaria and in the Casino di Castelgandolfo).

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