

Marble Funerary Vases from Sinope¹



Hazar KABA²

Keywords: Funerary marble vases, grave marker, lekythos, Attic, hydria

Marble vessels of various forms and types had an essential role within the life of ancient people. However, the tedious obtaining process and the long-lasting lifetime of marble made the vessels produced from it valuable and scantily obtainable objects for everyone's domestic life. On the other hand, due to its durability, marble vessels were highly preferred, especially by the elite for ritual but mostly for funerary oriented areas. Two marble vases kept within the storages of the Sinop Archaeological Museum supply us with some good examples of marble vessels produced and used for funerary oriented purposes. The two vases, carved in the shape of a lekythos and a hydria, are important finds for a better understanding of the funerary beliefs, cultural interactions and, even at some point, the demographic structure of ancient Sinop. In the scope of this paper, continuous evaluation will be conducted, firstly for an in detail interpreting and understanding of the two vases. Full or partial comparisons will be drawn with other various vases for establishing a more definite identification and a secure dating. Last but not least, the vases will be tried to be placed within the context of the use of marble vases for funerary purposes.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mermer cenaze kapları, mezar belirteci, lekythos, Attik, hydria

Çeşitli form ve tiplerde mermer kaplar antik dönem insanının hayatında önemli rollere sahip olmuştur. Ancak meşakkatli elde etme süreci ve uzun ömürlü oluşu gibi unsurlar mermerden üretilmiş kapları herkesin gündelik hayatı için değerli ve az miktarda temin edilebilir bir hale sokmuştur. Diğer yandan dayanıklılığı sayesinde mermerden üretilen kaplar özellikle elit kesim tarafından ritüel ancak daha çok ölü gömme odaklı kullanılmak üzere tercih edilmiştir. Sinop Arkeoloji Müzesi depolarında muhafaza altında tutulan iki adet mermer kap, bu maddeden üretilip özellikle ölü gömmede kullanılan formlar için güzel örneklemeler sunmaktadır. Biri lekythos diğeri ise hydria formunda olacak şekilde üretilmiş bu iki kap, antik Sinop'taki ölü gömme inançları, kültürel etkileşimler hatta bir noktada demografik yapı hakkında değerli verilere ulaşmada kıymetli birer eserdir. Bu çalışma bünyesinde olarak her iki kabın da detaylı ve kapsamlı bir incelemesi gerçekleştirilecektir.

¹Hakeme Gönderilme Tarihi: 17.05.2019 Kabul Tarihi: 12.06.2019

²Hazar KABA, Sinop University Faculty of Science and Letters, Department of Archaeology, Osmaniye Köyü, Nasuhbaşoğlu Mevki, 57000/Sinop. E-mail: hazarkaba@sinop.edu.tr, Orcid No: 0000-0002-3369-3363

I would like to express my gratitude to Hüseyin VURAL, the director of the Sinop Museum for granting me the necessary permissions to study the vases. Also I would like to thank to Museum archaeologist Eray AKSOY for his valuable contributions to the work done in the storerooms of the Museum. Photographs within the study are thanks to Kadir KABA, whereas Yusuf S. SEFA undertakes the merit for the drawings.

Marble vessels occupied an acceptable place in ancient people's lives and were of considerable importance during the whole of the ancient period, though not as much as pottery did. The domestic use of marble vessels was known to be limited, whereas we can say that they had occupied a more frequent use in religious and funerary areas. Undoubtedly, the primary reason behind this choice is the durability of marble as well as the fact that it's earning of a bright and appealing look, especially after polishing.

The repertory of various marble vessels in numerous forms for Classical Archaeology is constituted by examples both from the Greek mainland and other ancient geographies. While some of these examples are for domestic use only (L.D.C. 1939; Beazley 1940; Runnels 1988; Devetzi 2000; Picón *et al.* 2007: 416, nos. 42, ill. 57); the others that offer the main parallels to the examples in this paper are solely funerary oriented (Proukakis 1971; Venuti 1991; Valavanis 2000; Valavanis 2001; Arkhipov 2005; Poupaki 2009; Ghisellini 2013; Κυριάκου 2013). However, when Anatolia is into consideration, it is observed that studies examining marble vessels of both areas of use are quite rare (Stupperich 1990; Korkut 2002; Takaoğlu 2004; Tombul 2006; Kaplan 2007).

This paper, which had shaped within this context, was carried out to make a partial contribution to this deficiency in question in general for Anatolia and the Black Sea in particular. This contribution will be provided by an in-detail presenting of two remarkable marble vases that are kept within the inventory of the Sinop Archaeological Museum.

While one of the relevant vases that constitute the subject of this paper is in an excellent state of preservation, the other is partial and has a quite damaged state of preservation. Both vases were not brought to the museum through excavations, but they were either purchased or located during surveys. This situation, as it will also be discussed in the upcoming parts of this paper, will lead to the emergence of certain deficiencies, especially within the scope of "context" and "the area of use".

Both vases will be first examined through their forms; then they will be compared with various parallels that will consequently lead us to the dating. Finally, the intended uses of the vases will be examined, and it will be attempted to find out where, how, and for what purpose they could have been used.



Fig. 1: *The marble funerary lekythos from Sinop (Photograph by Kadir Kaba).*

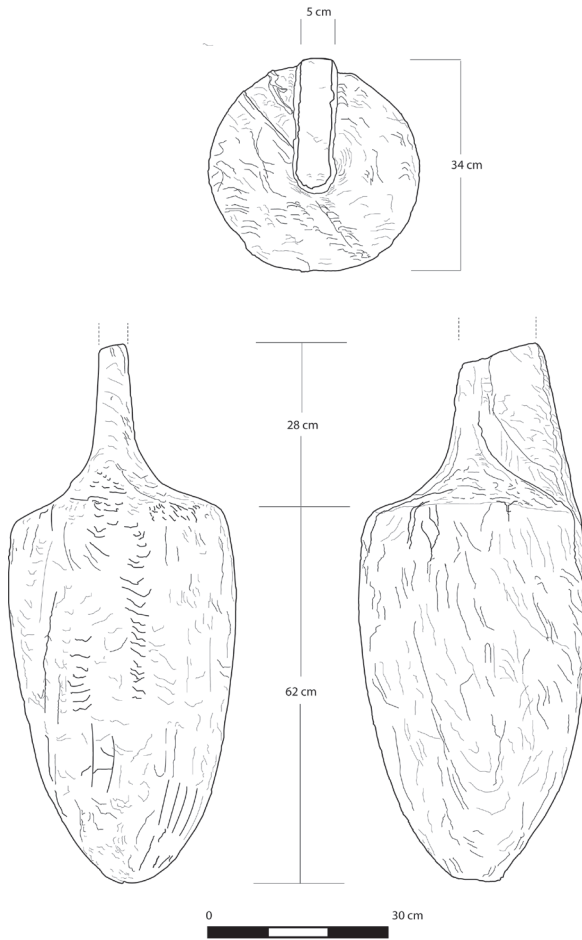


Fig. 2: Drawing of the funerary lekythos from Sinop (Yusuf S. Sefa).

impossible to determine any original decoration and even an inscription that once could have existed on it.

The preserved height of the vase measures 90 cm. While the 62 cm portion of this height is constituted by the body alone, the preserved parts of the neck and the vertical handle comprise the remaining 28 cm (Fig. 2). The circular and thin neck leans to an unfinished single vertical handle which is known to be a characteristic feature of the marble funerary *lekythoi*. The vertical handle has a thickness of 3 cm and a width of 14 cm. Only the 28 cm-high portion of the handle has been preserved. The thin neck extends as its line continues below and gives way to a broad shoulder. The shoulder-body transition at this point continues without any interruption and is highlighted with a soft angle. The

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Both vases that were found in or around Sinop¹ and constitute the subject of this paper exemplify different forms from the repertory of the Greek pottery. Apart from their shapes, the vases have differences in artistry, detailing and areas of use.

The first marble vase to be discussed in this paper is a surface find from the Bostancılı Village that is situated nearly 13 km away from the city itself.² This vase has been preserved only as body, shoulder, and lower neck whereas the upper neck, mouth and the base which constitute the one-third of it are absent (Fig. 1). Seriously exposed to external factors for a long time the vase, is quite heavily damaged and entirely weathered. Nevertheless, based on its observable shape, the vessel can be identified as a funerary *lekythos*. Despite the chance to identify its shape, the loss of texture makes it

¹ Throughout the text “Sinop” will be used to define the modern city whereas “Sinope” will be used to refer to the ancient city.

² Sinop Museum Cat. No. 16-1-99.



Fig. 3: *The marble hydria as one piece (Photograph by Kadir Kaba).*

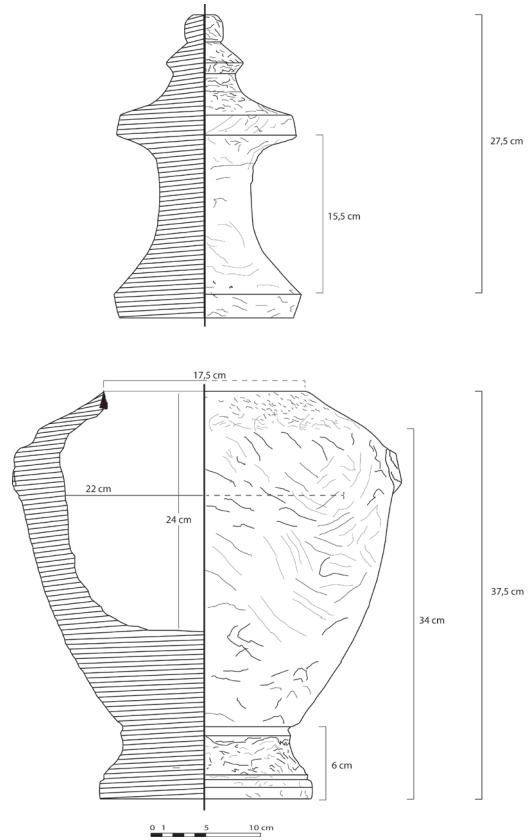


Fig. 4: *Drawing of the marble hydria (Yusuf S. Sefa).*



Fig. 5: *Top view of the bottom part of the hydria (Photograph by Kadir Kaba).*



Fig. 6. Detail from the handle of the hydria (Photography by Kadir Kaba).



Fig. 7: Detail from the base of the hydria (Photography by Kadir Kaba).

body constitutes the most substantial part of the vase with a width of 34 cm. It ends into a torpedo-shaped form with a slow tapering that starts right after its mid-portion. As it was stated previously, the base is absent, and neither any fragment belonging to it is also present. This situation makes it impossible to state any inference or make a hypothetical restoration about the base of the vase.

The second marble vase was brought to the museum through purchasing.³ It is not known exactly where and under which conditions the relevant vase was found since there is no information about its find location in the Museum's inventory register and records. Based on its general structural characteristics, this artefact can be defined as a *hydria* (Fig. 3).

The vase is complete except for a partial crack on the body. The total height of the *hydria*, which appears to be carved from white veinless marble, is 65 cm. The general artistry can be considered successful yet superficially finalized. The success of the artistry lies on the softness observed in the angular transitions between the particular portions of the body. On the other hand, the artistry reflects a character that avoids extreme and attentive detailing only enough to allow the form to be attributed to a distinct type within the *hydria* typology. No further polishing of the surfaces had been preferred throughout the whole vase. Another point that helps to define the superficial character of the artistry is the visibility of the chisel marks on the whole of the vessel.

The *hydria* is conjoined as two separate pieces, each of which was carved from the same marble, for being integrated to form the whole of the vessel (Fig. 4). Both parts were processed independently of each other. The main portion of the vase is 37,5 cm high and consists of a single piece that embodies the shoulder, body, horizontal handles and the base. The inner side of this portion was chiseled in relatively rough workmanship and

³ Sinop Museum Cat. No. 20-1-80.



Fig. 8. *Parallels from the Copenhagen Carlsberg Glyptotek and Pireo - Museo Archeologico (after Schmaltz 1970: A-98 pl. 27; Polojiorghi 1984: pl. 28).*

turned into a “container” (Fig. 5). The total depth of this portion measures 24 cm. The containers chiseling done accordingly to the outlines of the vessel made it reflect different inner measurements, especially in its width. Thus, its upper part starts as a 17,5 cm opening that widens to 22 cm at the belly of the vessel and ends at a width of 19 cm towards the base.

The second portion is made to be placed on the first one for obtaining the integrated form of the vessel. Additionally, it also functions as a “lid” that closes and secures the container. This portion involves the neck, rim and the lid of the vessel. The height of this portion measures 27.5 cm. The outward curving rim of the vase is topped by a 10 cm high pseudo lid that ends with a small node. Although the rim is deprived of details, it is evident that it intends to imitate the well-known sharp profiled hanging rims of certain ceramic and metal vessels. The cylindrical neck gets thinner just below the rim, and after following a continuous concave profile, it joins to the shoulder that expands to the width of the upper body.

The shoulder-body transition is highlighted by a soft but distinct profile. Two horizontal handles were worked just below this transition, on both sides of the body. The handles are indicated in low relief and remain relatively small compared to the rest of the

body with a width of only 10 cm (Fig. 6). The concern behind this rendering of the handles in low relief without any further detailing is merely visually oriented than anything else. The characteristic third vertical handle that is unique to the *hydria* family is not present on the vessel. The absence of any trace or fracture that would constitute evidence for the presence of a now lost third handle indicates that the handle was never worked. The incompleteness of the vertical handle should be evaluated from a functional point of view rather than aesthetical. This incompleteness is because a third handle that naturally exists in a typical *hydria* and is attached from the neck to the shoulder will prevent the closing and opening of this vase designed as two pieces. If it was the opposite and the third handle had to be worked on the vessel, then the vase would have been required to be divided into two from a different point, most possibly right under the shoulder to ensure its desired functionality. Then as a result of this the opening/closing function will become difficult since this process would naturally increase the weight of the upper part. It will further cause the vertical handle to be broken. Therefore, these problems surrounding the functional choice caused the artist to compromise on the characteristic features of the form by never working the vertical handle on the vase.

The body, which rapidly tapers downwards from just above the section with the horizontal handles, gets a nearly ovoid form towards the base. The widest section of the body is the part at the level of the handles with a diameter of 30,5 cm. The tapering observed on the body ends up suddenly at the base. Therefore, the lower body suddenly ends with a flat profile without earning a fully ovoid structure. The separation between this portion of the body and the base was made explicit with a horizontal groove of 1 cm high.

The base with a wide torus reflects a concave profile and measures 6 cm in height and 20 cm in diameter (Fig. 7). The base structurally accords with the general form of the vase, supplies the viewer with a subsidiary image and additionally fulfils proper functionality for carrying the weight of the whole *hydria*.

Parallels, Dating and Area of Use

Both marble vases have parallels that either supplies us with partial or complete analogies. Analogies that will be drawn within this chapter will be followed through various artefacts from a vast repertory ranging from marble vases, ceramics and even toreutic vessels.

The marble funerary *lekythos* exemplifies, a well-known vessel form happened to be very popular, especially in the Classical Period (Schmaltz 1970; Proukakis 1971). Analogies to this vase can be drawn only upon form similarities or familiarities as a result of the absence of the possible elements of decoration (relief scenes or paintings). In this context, many equivalents, the whole of which originate from the region of Attica, can be mentioned especially for the comparisons to be performed through form analysis (Schmaltz 1970: A-98, pl. 27; Proukakis 1971: 27, no. 52, pl. XXIV, 87-88, no. 323, pl. XV, 109, no. 83, pl. VIII, 124, no. 107, pl. IX, no. 137, pl. XLIV, no. 199, pl. XXXVIII, no. 333, pl.

XLIV; Polojiorghi 1984: pl. 28). The rapidly tapering body that ends in a torpedo shape is the leading criteria for the establishment of a strong analogy. Among many Attic examples that are listed up with similar body traits, two *lekythoi* one of which exhibited in Copenhagen Carlsberg Glyptotek (Schmaltz 1970: A-98, pl. 27) and other in Pireo - Museo Archeologico (Polojiorghi 1984: pl. 28) represent the closest equivalents to the Sinopean exemplar. Their torpedo-shaped bodies, soft-lined shoulder transitions and necks, which can be considered thin compared to the rest of the body are the main factors that bond them to the Sinopean exemplar (Fig. 8a&b).

Despite the presence of all these parallels, it is challenging to reach precise conclusions with narrow spans of date for the precise dating of the Sinopean exemplar. Especially the wearing of the surface and the loss of the outermost texture must have removed the painted or relief decorations that are characteristic for this type of vases and are both valuable mediums of dating. However, an in-detail examination clearly shows that the wearing is not so dramatic to completely remove any relief scene that occupied the surface of the vase. Therefore, we can suggest that the Sinopean marble *lekythos* had never been decorated with any relief scene. As none of the known examples is plain, then it is revealed that the Sinopean marble *lekythos* must have been solely adorned with painted decorations. This trait of the Sinopean exemplar is very vital for dating and will be discoursed in the upcoming lines.

Let us now return to the establishment of an analogy through shape. We know that marble funerary *lekythoi* remained in use during a period that could be regarded as relatively short. The date proposed for the primal productions is the last quarter of the 5th century BC mainly concentrating between the years 430-420 (Schmaltz 1970; Proukakis 1971: 12; Grossman 2001: 71). The last productions that can be dated securely are from the end of the 4th century BC (Proukakis 1971: 19). Within this lifetime which slightly exceeds a hundred years, marble funerary *lekythoi* did not undergo significant changes and continued to be produced without gaining many distinctive additional features.

When an evaluation is made upon the form, it should be remembered that the first examples of marble funerary *lekythoi* replicated the sharp-angled form of the white ground exemplars. However, it is observed that from the second quarter of the 4th century BC prominent rounding was applied to the contours, the shoulder was widened, and the neck was thinned and stretched (Grossman 2001: 71). By incorporating all these characteristics, the Sinopean exemplar can be easily included in the second group of the Attic productions. Based on the formal features that it gained, the Sinopean exemplar can be given a *terminus post quem* around the years 375-350 BC. The probability that the Sinopean exemplar is produced without a relief scene enables us to move this date further. The clear statement of Proukakis (1971: 29) expressed with the words “...and to the lack of relief composition in many of the latest examples. These late *lekythoi*, with painted ornament only...” able us to place the Sinopean exemplar amongst the last productions. Thus, in light of this possibility, a reasonable final date within the third quarter of the 4th century BC seems to

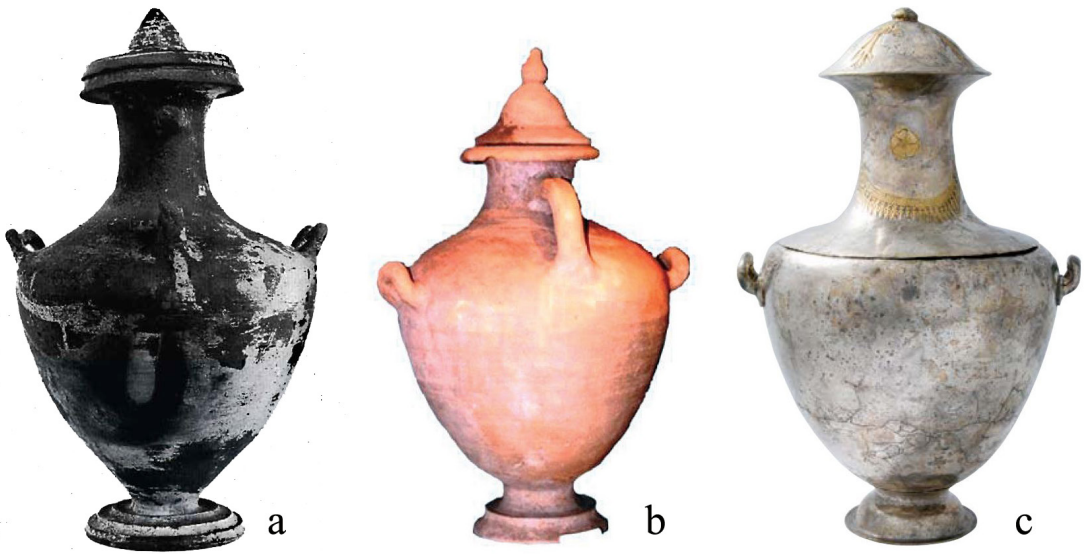


Fig. 9. Parallels from Kelenderis, Tarsus and Bojkov Collection (after Zoroğlu 2004: pl. 112b; Buora - Laflı 2016: fig. 1.6; Mapazov 2011: 146, no. 111).

fit well to our marble *lekythos* from Sinop.

For the *hydria*, certain similars can be mentioned from a variety of other materials that offer both partial and complete analogies. However, it should also be stated that no other marble *hydriai* showing exact or close similarities to the Sinopean exemplar has been found yet (Δρούγου - Σαατσόγλου-Παλιαδέλη 2005: 307; Κυριάκου 2013: 240, fig. 19). Thus for similarities, it is necessary to mainly look at the pottery and also the toreutic art only to be limited with specific samples.

A group of pottery vessels from the *hydria* family known as “Hadra Vases” supplies us with the closest similarities in the case of the marble *hydria* from Sinop (Cook 1966; Enklaar 1985; Enklaar 1986; Guerrini 1964). When similars from the repertoire of the so-called Hadra Vases are examined, it will be observed that an exemplar from Kelenderis represents the closest parallelism for the possible source of inspiration of the mouth-neck and body portions of the Sinopean *hydria* (Zoroğlu 2000: 132; Zoroğlu 2004: 305, pl. 112b) (Fig. 9a). The flaring mouth, hanging rim, thin and cylindrical concave neck and ovoid body of the Kelenderis *hydria* contain all features that constitute the basis of the Sinopean marble *hydria*. Another analogy that can be established with pottery is obtained from another Hadra Vase of Tarsus origin (Buora - Laflı 2016: 321, no. 4, fig. 1.6)(Fig. 9b). Especially due to the similarities in the form of the body Tarsus exemplar also confirms the idea that the general form of the Sinopean *hydria* might have been inspired through Hadra Vases.

Among the artefacts that show analogy, a silver *hydria* exhibited in the Vassil Bojkov Collection in Bulgaria should also be mentioned (Mapazov 2011: 146-147, no. 111)(Fig. 9c). With its general body structure, relatively shallow handles and neck, this vessel is the

unique toreutic artefact showing similarities to the Sinopean exemplar. This analogy also indicates the possible presence of metal samples within the repertory of inspiration of the artist who had shaped the Sinopean marble *hydria*. Furthermore, at this point, the well-known and widely accepted aspect that the Hadra Vases are pottery imitations of toreutic vessels should also be taken into account (Merriam 1885; Pagenstecher 1909: 387-388; Cook 1966: 7; Buora - Lafli 2016: 316). When taken into consideration this fact will let one to strongly indicate that apart from parallels in clay, a toreutic vessel might have also been a source of inspiration for the Sinopean marble *hydria*.

However, this might be the real source of inspiration, equivalents in clay should be examined since they provide more accurate information on dating. The Kelenderis and Tarsus exemplars showing the closest analogy to the Sinopean marble *hydria* are dated to the second half of the 3rd century BC, like the majority of the other known Hadra Vases (Merriam 1885; Pagenstecher 1909: 387-388; Duman 2002). The fact that the *hydria* from the Bojkov Collection is also dated to the 3rd century BC further strengthens this interpretation (Мапазов 2011: 146). Primarily based on the data provided by pottery and toreutics, the most reasonable date of production to be proposed for the marble *hydria* is the second half of the 3rd century BC.

The area of use of both vases and how they were used within that concept are the two other issues that should be addressed within this paper. The fact that both vases are marble, and also their formal and structural features indicate that they had been produced for funerary purposes only.

Among the two vases, especially the marble funerary *lekythos* exemplifies a popular type of a “grave marker” that was almost entirely used in Attica and its surrounding regions, especially in the Classical Period (Proukakis 1971: 16-17). Based on the well-known fact that the marble funerary *lekythoi* were generally used in two different ways within the funerary context, the same can also be applied to the Sinopean exemplar. The first possible form of usage is actualised by the erecting of the marble vase on the top of a single burial to fulfil the duty of a simple “grave marker.” The second possibility is that the Sinopean exemplar, along with another equivalent of it, might have been assigned as a “plot marker” by being erected at the corners of a grave plot (Proukakis 1971:17)(Fig. 10). However, the fact that the relevant marble *lekythos* was found singly indicates that this artefact was high possibly produced to be erected as a grave marker on the top of a single burial.

So, to whom did the grave crowned with this *lekythos* belong and where was it? While it is possible to give precise answers to the first of these questions, it is only possible to generate probabilities about the second question due to the lack of archaeological evidence related to its find location. Marble funerary *lekythoi* are grave markers that were associated with single geography and a single community. Such grave markers that were predominantly used in the region of Attica are considered as objects that were preferred only by the Athenians. This situation is especially evident with the existence of the marble funerary *loutrophoroi* all around the ancient Greek world whereas marble funerary *lekythoi* are

found only at the region of Attica (Kurtz - Boardman 1970: 241). Thus, in correlation to this, we can strongly argue that the Sinopean marble *lekythos* once certainly decorated the grave of an Athenian. This is not an unusual case when Sinop is in consideration. Apart from the fact that Sinop was a busy port visited by many foreigners of whom some might have lost their lives during their visits, it had a particular organic bond with Athens and Athenians through its history. This organic bond is due to the choosing of the city in Classical times for being the main Athenian *cleruchy* of the Black Sea. The *cleruchy* that was established in the city with the attempts of Pericles happened to be the home of at least 600 Athenians for some years (Plutarchos Pericles 20.1-2; Fedoseev 2002; French 2004: 9 no.7, 14 no.9, 33 no.54, 35 no.1). The creation of such grave markers, as can be guessed, takes a specific time and effort.

Additionally, apart from its production, the antecessor phase of deciding and financing such a grave marker is also a process that needs special attention all by itself. Thus, the production of such a lavish grave marker and the decision of its making cannot be thought to take shape on random. All this, in the end, points to the place attachment of its owner to the city itself. As a result, it can be easily stated that the marble *lekythos* examined within the scope of this paper must have decorated the grave of an Athenian who once habituated Sinope for a reasonable time.

However, it is quite unlikely that this Athenian whose name is not known, was buried in a necropolis near Bostancılı Village where the artefact was initially found. The fact that the Bostancılı region is located approximately 14 km away from the city further strengthens this inference and indicates that the relevant artefact was brought there later by being moved from its original location. The state-of-the-art knowledge concerning the burial grounds of the city does not allow us to realise which part of the city, the grave that once decorated by this marble *lekythos* was located.

In order to understand the intended use of the marble *hydria* within the frame of the funerary customs, it is first necessary to examine its form again. Based on the style formed by the body which was shaped into a container and by the upper part placed on it like a lid, it is understood that the vase was certainly shaped to serve for preservation. However, the fact that this two-piece structure does not provide adequate tightness usual for such vessels (L.D.C. 1939: fig.2,7,9) and that the rough quality of its inner portion indicates that the intended use was to serve an area other than liquid preservation. Additionally, the total weight of the vase (25 kg) clearly shows that the marble *hydria* from Sinop was produced for a purpose rather than its intended use of transporting and preserving water.⁴ The most common area of use of the *hydria* other than these purposes is its usage as a cinerary urn especially within the context of the Greek burial customs (Berger-Prottsch 1974; Sowder 2004: 398; Kasapoğlu 2015: 121-123). This inference is further strengthened by

⁴ The word *hydria* derives from the Greek word “ὕδωρ” for water as its main purpose was to carry or preserve this vital liquid for everyday life.

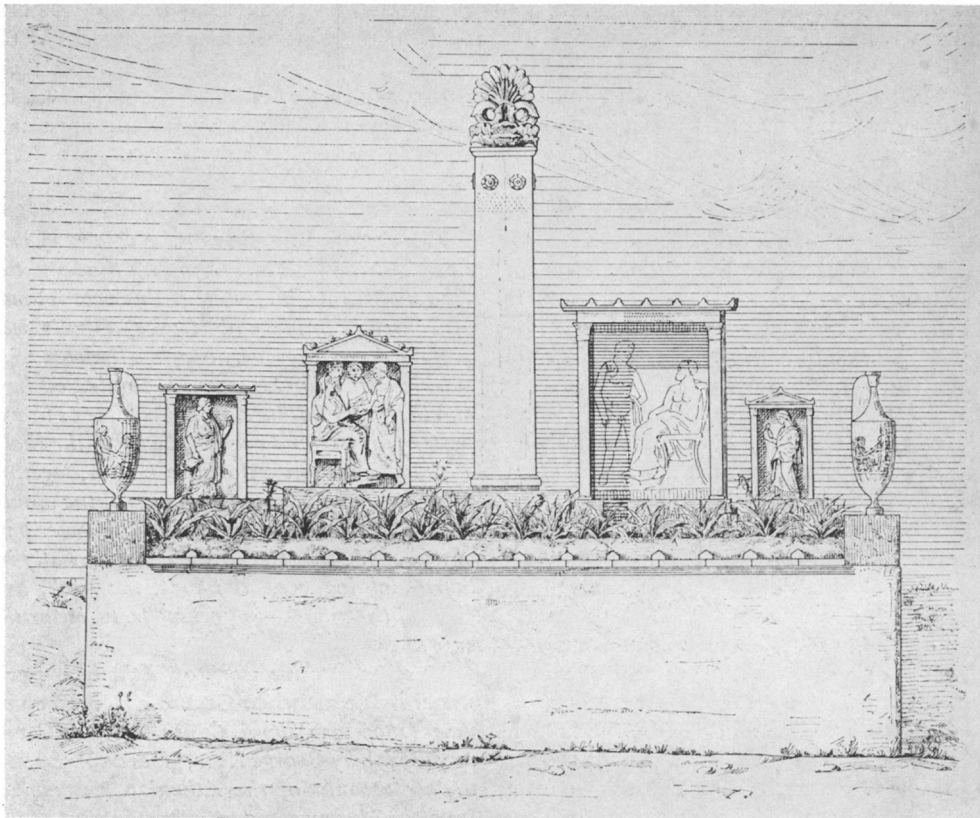


Fig. 10. Reconstruction illustration showing the use of funerary lekythoi as plot markers (after Brueckner 1909: 71).

the fact that the Sinopean marble *hydria* was produced by imitating Hadra Vases, which are known to be used as cinerary urns too.

The fact that the vase is devoid of a third handle also makes it possible to associate it with the tradition of cinerary urns. At this point, the inventory of Greek metal vessels should also be taken into account as the cinerary *hydriai* that are devoid of the third handle are commonly observed within the periphery of Greek toreutics. This trait of the Sinopean marble *hydria* finds itself a good parallel in the silver Bojkov *hydria* dated to the 3rd century BC (Мапазов 2011: 146-147, no. 111). Another and better-known exemplification of this can also be traced in the silver cinerary *hydria* from the Tomb III (so-called Prince's Tomb) of the Grand Tumulus in Vergina dated to the late 4th century BC (Andronikos 1987: 212, fig.183). Both *hydriai* provide an excellent sampling for the Sinopean exemplar in terms of being divided into two, as well as being devoid of the vertical handle. The number of *hydriai* which do not have the third handle and were produced/rearranged to be used as a cinerary urns can be further increased with a series of toreutic vessels from Alykes (Besios 1986: 57 fig. 5), Veroia (Touratsoglou 1986: 628-632 fig. 5) and Piraeus near Pydna (Diehl 1964: B102 pl. 7.3.).

Workes from marble, the Sinopean *hydria* must have been used in the burial of a wealthy individual within the community of Sinope. However, at this point a question comes into mind if this specific vase was produced to be placed inside the grave just as in the case of the exemplars as mentioned earlier or else? While the placement of ceramic or metal examples of cinerary *hydriai* inside the graves was a common custom, it is understood that all of the marble equivalents were preferred to be used in outdoors (Kurtz - Boardman 1971: 241). In this aspect it will be more reasonable to think that the Sinopean *hydria* was also used as in the latter by being exhibited outside of the burial rather than being placed in it. This way of usage may be in the form of its placement on a podium-like grave structure as exemplified well by exemplars from Vergina and Pydna (Δρούγου - Σαατσόγλου-Παλιαδέλη 2005: 307; Κυριάκου 2013: 240 fig. 19). Another and perhaps more probable form of usage could be achieved by the exhibition of the vase on a column erected on or next to the grave (Kurtz - Boardman 1971: 241; Valavanis 2001: taf. 43.3, 44.1; Κυριάκου 2013: fig. 18). If we assume that the marble *hydria* from Sinop was used in this manner as a *sema*, then it would not only be a cinerary urn but also would have functioned as a grave marker.

Concluding Remarks

The evaluation of these two marble vases from Sinope provides valuable information firstly about the use of marble vases as well as the sociocultural structure and even intercultural interactions together with funerary traditions of the ancient city.

The *lekythos* stands out as one of the latest pieces of evidence that confirm our knowledge of the presence of the Athenians that habituated Sinope. The vase also constitutes the sole and most natural representation of a deep-rooted Attic tradition outside the homeland. This grave marker, which was produced to beautify the grave of an Athenian who had died thousands of kilometres away from his homeland, is one of the best representatives of the Athenian spirit and pride. The presence of such a vase also brings to mind the probability of a particular Athenians quarter within the city's necropoleis, as well as the question of whether other equivalents are waiting to be found in or around the modern city. However, the limited archaeological data that we have at this moment leave these questions unanswered, at least for the time being.

The presence of ceramic and metal exemplars that supply an analogy to the Sinopean marble *hydria* make the artefact unique in many aspects. Although the similarity of this vase to the so-called Hadra Vases concerning the overall shape is remarkable, from this point of view, it is necessary to cautiously approach the idea that the artefact directly imitated this *hydria* type. Instead, the fact that the Sinopean marble *hydria* could have been inspired not only formally but also functionally from a toreutic artefact should be further taken into account.

The use of metal *hydriai* in Sinope as cinerary urns is known to exist mainly for the

Archaic and Classical Periods (Sideris 2019; Kaba 2019). However, at this point, this certain *hydria* steps forward not just by continuing this custom into the Hellenistic period but also varying it into marble.

This paper shows that the use of marble vases within the context of funerary traditions spread over time in Sinope, extending up until the Hellenistic Period. Both vases are strong exemplifiers of a tradition that was preferred to be used mainly in outdoor spaces and emphasises visuality.

Although much information is revealed within this paper about the funerary-oriented usages of marble vases in Sinope, it has brought along some unanswered questions as well. The questions regarding this issue that mainly come to the forefront are what other forms were used for this practice and surely whether there was a special section within the necropoleis of the city where there were privileged graves decorated with such vases.

It is hoped that the increase in the number of scientific studies as well as archaeological excavations and surveys will reduce the amount of the unanswered questions regarding these issues and will hopefully improve our knowledge on the funerary use of marble vases in Sinope.

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