

# Female bodies and dynastic legitimacy in the Nereid Monument at Xanthos

Patricia Eunji Kim

New York University, USA  
pek237@nyu.edu

## Abstract

This article reassesses the so-called Nereid Monument (ca 380 BCE) at Xanthos in Lycia by focusing on the narrative and symbolic role of female figures within its sculptural programme. Constructed as the tomb for the Lycian dynast Erbbina, the monument has been noted for its over-human-size sculpture of Nereids, its historicising city-siege reliefs, as well as its spectacular fusion of visual and architectural styles, motifs and themes from various contexts throughout the Aegean and Anatolia. Building on this scholarship, I turn specifically to the monument's innovative representations of non-mythological women in prominent areas of its visual programme: Erbbina's dynastic consort and a distressed woman who is caught in the throes of military violence. By focusing on the role of female bodies in Erbbina's funerary *qua* triumphal monument, I argue for the important narrative function of female bodies in articulating dynastic legitimacy and continuity. Finally, this article comments on the importance of femininity in addition to masculinity in dynastic expressions in the fourth century, thus anticipating major art-historical changes in the art of power at the beginning of the Hellenistic period.

## Özet

Bu makale, Lykia'nın Xanthos kentindeki Nereidler Anıtı olarak adlandırılan yapıyı (yaklaşık MÖ 380), heykel yapımındaki kadın figürlerinin anlatsal ve sembolik rolüne odaklanarak yeniden değerlendirmektedir. Lykia hükümdarı Erbbina'nın mezarı olarak inşa edilen anıt, insan boyunu aşan Nereid heykelleri, tarihi kent kuşatma kabartmalarının yanı sıra Ege ve Anadolu'nun çeşitli bağlamlarından görsel ve mimari üslupları, motifleri ve temaları muhteşem bir şekilde bir araya getirmesiyle dikkat çekmektedir. Bu araştırma, özellikle anıtın görsel planının öne çıkan alanlarında mitolojik olmayan kadınların yenilikçi temsillerini incelemektedir: Erbbina'nın hanedana mensup eşi ve askeri şiddetin pençesindeki acılı bir kadın figürü. Bu çalışma, Erbbina'nın zafer anıtı niteliğindeki mezar anıtında kadın bedenlerinin rolüne odaklanarak, bunların hanedan meşruiyeti ve sürekliliğinin ifade edilmesindeki önemli anlatı işlevini savunmaktadır. Son olarak, bu makale dördüncü yüzyılda hanedan anlatımlarında erkekliğin yanı sıra kadınlığın da önemine değinerek, Hellenistik dönemin başında iktidar sanatındaki önemli sanatsal-tarihsel değişimleri öngörmektedir.

The Nereid Monument is a funerary *qua* triumphal monument that was originally constructed at the ancient city of Xanthos (near present-day Kınık in Türkiye) for the Lycian dynast Erbbina around 390–380 BCE (for a discussion and bibliography on dating the monument, see Childs 1973). Praised for its beautiful complexity and profusion of sculpture in relief and in-the-round, the monument resembles an Ionic temple that sits

atop a high podium. The monument's modern name stems from the 11 preserved over-human-size sculptures of female bodies that resemble Nereids, or the daughters of the sea god Nereus in Greek myth, that originally encircled the ledges of the high podium. Other notable features include the bands of sculptural relief that wrap around the top of the podium: the upper frieze depicts city-sieges that seem to document Erbbina's military victories, while

discrete scenes of hand-to-hand combat among men dressed in Greek, Lycian and Persian costume decorate the lower frieze. Other sculptural features include acroteria of mythological abduction, images of hunting and banqueting, and an audience scene. Given the iconographic eclecticism of its sculptural programme, scholars have included the Nereid Monument in discussions about the ways that cross-cultural contact shaped sculptural practices in western Anatolia (Demargne 1976; Childs 1978; Ridgway 1997), while others have described the monument's place within the context of the development of dynastic art in early fourth-century Lycia (Robinson 1995; Jenkins 2006; Şare 2013).

Building on the extant scholarship on the Nereid Monument, this article examines, contextualises and interprets the narrative roles of the non-mythological female figures and women's bodies within Erbbina's monumental expression of dynastic identity. I argue that female figures, which illustrated complex notions of femininity, were symbolically and politically useful to visual articulations of dynastic power and dynastic masculinity. Although the subject of the Nereids has been discussed at length, the narrative and symbolic roles of non-mythological women within the sculptural programme deserve further attention. Female figures, identifiable by their feminine sex characteristics and their gendered costumes, are represented throughout the monument, though they are much fewer in number relative to male figures. Although I will offer brief discussions of the so-called Nereids and acroterial sculptures of mythological abductions for a richer, more nuanced analysis of how concepts of femininity operate across the monument, I will focus on the two non-mythological women in the sculptural programme. First is the representation of Erbbina's wife in the east pediment frieze. Second is the image of a distressed woman in the city-siege frieze that wraps around the very top of the podium base. By reassessing the Nereid Monument with a focus on these two figures, this article explores how Erbbina's sculptural programme reflected a dynastic world in which complex ideas about femininity were central to the articulation of political legitimacy and power at Xanthos in the early fourth century. But before delving further into the monument's representation of non-mythological femininities, descriptions of the Nereid Monument and its historical context are necessary.

### **Erbbina's funerary-triumphal monument and its dynastic contexts**

Erbbina was one of many dynasts who governed in Lycia during the so-called 'Dynastic Period', or the timeframe between the beginning of Persian rule (ca 540) and Alexander the Great's conquests in the third quarter of the fourth century. This historical period is characterised by the

'petty tyrants' and ruling families who controlled cities in the region (Bryce 1982; 1983; Keen 1998). Thought to be born around 449 BCE (Thonemann 2009: 186 n. 33), Erbbina was a member of the Harpagid dynasty, named for the mid-fifth-century ruler Harpagos who actively ruled central and/or western Lycia from the Lycian city of Phellos/Wehnti; Erbbina's immediate kin relations and dynastic ties are preserved for us by the so-called Inscribed Pillar (also known as the Xanthos Stele, ca 400 BCE), a monument that continues to stand *in situ* in the northeast corner of the Roman agora at Xanthos (Bousquet 1992: 172; Thonemann 2009: 168–69; see *CEG* 1 177.5; Demargne 1958: 79–105). According to this colossal stone monument, Harpagos was the father of Kheriga, and Kheriga the father of Erbbina; the Persian names of these Lycian rulers reflect the pro-Persian sentiments among Lycian dynasts during the late fifth and early fourth centuries (Keen 1998: 139; Benda-Weber 2005: 40; Thonemann 2009; Hüllden 2020: 81–82). Further, Kheriga's maternal grandfather was Kuprlli, an important and notable dynast in the early to mid-fifth centuries. Kheriga's reign was long, spanning around 440–400 BCE, and as Peter Thonemann's reading (2009) of the Inscribed Pillar suggests, Harpagid dynastic rule was essentially collaborative; or, as Antony Keen has described, (1998: 40–41, 52) a hierarchical system of nobility in which several dynasts exerted authority and control throughout the land.

While Kheriga ruled supreme from Phellos, other family members like Kherei (perhaps Kheriga's brother?) and Erbbina (Kheriga's son) controlled neighbouring areas. By the beginning of the fourth century, Erbbina ruled from the city of Xanthos/Arfina – a politically important ancient city that is now famed for its extant monuments – over the Xanthos River Valley in western Lycia, with cities possibly including Patara, Pinara, Tlos, Telemessos, Kadyanda, Khakbi and Araxa (Keen 1998: 147 in reading numismatic evidence). Inscriptions evoking the voice of Erbbina (*SEG* 39 1414; *SEG* 28 1245) tell us that he captured Xanthos, Telemessos and Pinara by force sometime early in his career, suggesting that there was a period of strife in Lycia (Keen 1998: 144; Thonemann 2009: 170). Moreover, as many scholars agree (Bryce 1982; 1983; 1986; Zimmerman 1992; Keen 1998), the Harpagid dynasty's power had significantly waned by the early fourth century in eastern and central Lycia; indeed, Perikle and Trebennimi would soon after jointly rule from Limyra and over eastern and parts of central Lycia (Şare 2013; Hüllden 2020). Such a politically fraught context provides an important backdrop for the design and construction of Erbbina's dynastic monuments.

Erbbina's funerary and triumphal monument was built just outside the gates of Xanthos to the south of its 'acropolis' and within a walled enclosure on a natural

slope. (Fig. 1) Although dynasts before him built their monuments within the city gates on the ‘acropolis’, Erbbina chose an entirely new location (*FdX* 3: 27–30). Looming at least 13m in height, the monument assumed an elevated position – surely an aesthetic strategy that visually and spatially asserted Erbbina’s dynastic power, even after his death. Constructed out of local limestone

and marble, the monument resembles an Ionic tetrastyle, peripteral temple (*templon*), mounted on top of a high podium (approximately 6.8 x 10.17m, on the eastern and northern sides, respectively), with doors on the eastern and western sides of the tomb (see *FdX* 3: 31–41 for discussion of dimensions of the podium facades). Unfortunately, the original excavators did not record the precise find spots of



Figure 1. The Nereid Monument, or the funerary and triumphal monument of the dynast Erbbina, on display in the British Museum. Marble and limestone, ca. 390–380 BCE. Xanthos, Lycia. London: British Museum inv. 1848, 1020.81 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

each of the sculptural elements, and only Charles Fellows's field notes and Rhode Hawkins's and George Scharf's sketches offer clues for the monument's reassembly (*FdX* 3; *FdX* 8; Lethaby 1915) (Fig. 2). Some amount of certainty about the arrangement of the slabs comes from how they group together on either the longer south and north façades, or the shorter east and west façades, based

on their individual styles and sizes (*FdX* 8: 139–64, 170–81; Childs 1978: 22–31); the cardinal directions that I use reflect the current reconstruction of the monument. Overall, the sculptural programme emphasised physical strength, bravery and violence as characteristics of manhood and heroism. Such iconographies were common throughout the eastern Mediterranean and western Asia,

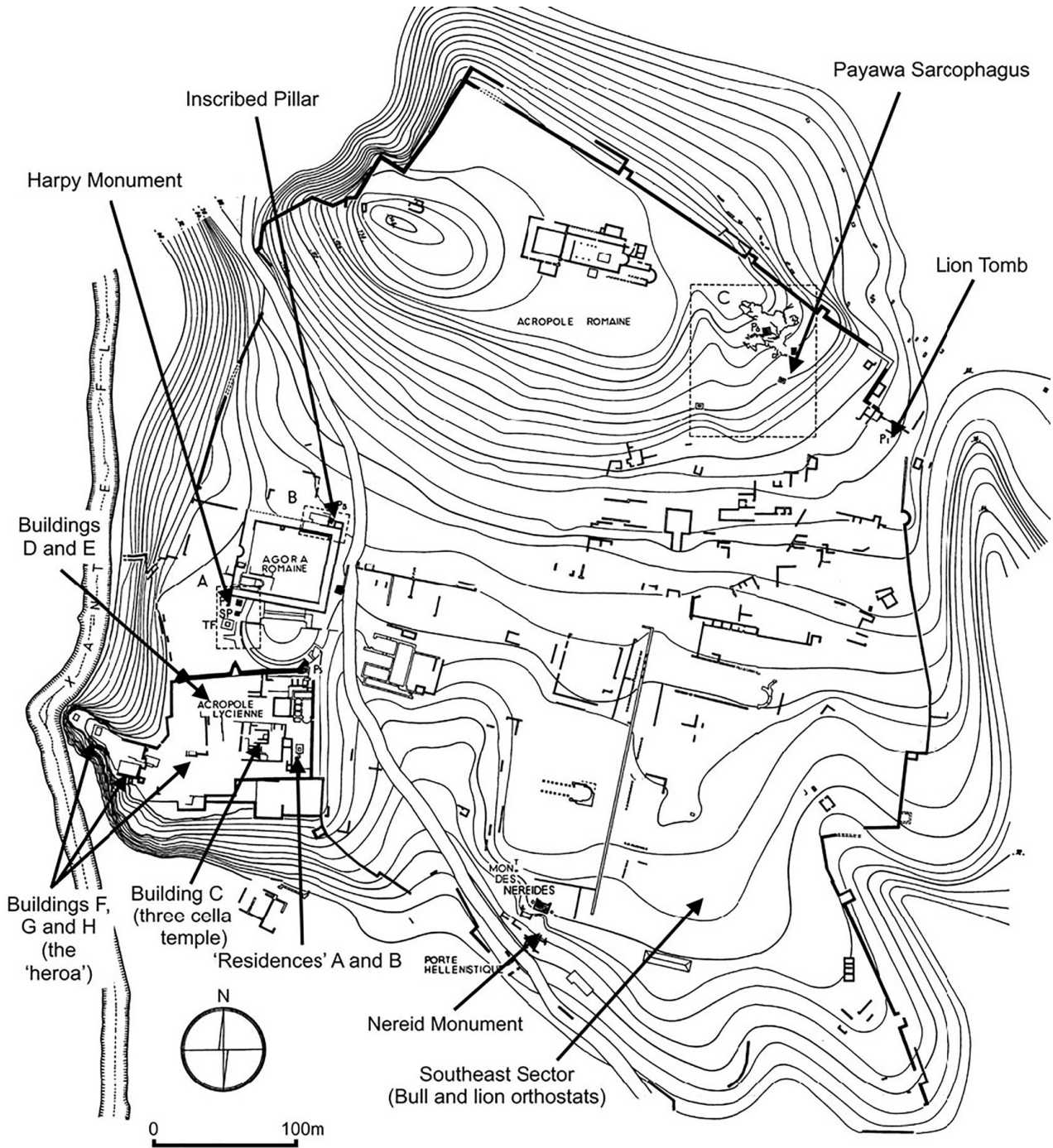


Figure 2. Site plan of Xanthos and its key monuments (after Demargne 1958: fig. 1). Enumerated by and adapted from Draycott 2015: 102, fig. 5 (Source: Mission archéologique française de Xanthos-Létôn. Reproduced with the permission of J. des Courtils and C. Draycott).

and Erbbina's monument evidently participated in the broader trends of combining the mythological with both the heroic and the biographical in order to create an ideologically entrenched marker of a person's memory.

Various kinds of sculpture in-the-round and in relief decorate the entirety of the monument: while the so-called Nereids encircle the podium, acroterial sculptures (at least two groups from the west and east sides of the monument) represent men abducting women (*FdX* 8: 223–30, 297–301). Beneath, the east pediment represents Erbbina and his wife at centre, surrounded by either their children or attendants; the fragmentary west pediment depicts a battle scene (*FdX* 8: 216–23, 291–97). Below the pediments, an architrave frieze includes a hunt (east), infantry and cavalry battle (south), and a procession of men bringing clothing and a horse in preparation for a banquet (north) (*FdX* 8: 187–202, 240–47, 279–83). The friezes on the *cella* wall and above the doorways to the chambers, which stylistically resonate with Greek architectural friezes (Ridgway 1997: 83), illustrate a banquet among male companions (north), a procession and sacrifice at an altar (west), and an assembly of draped men (south). While the east frieze is poorly maintained, a winged Nike appears on the left end, with a dancer on the right end (*FdX* 8: 202–16, 248–51, 283–91). Finally, two sculpted bands decorate the podium – the lesser (or upper) frieze depicts city-sieges, while the greater (or lower) frieze shows hand-to-hand combat, (*FdX* 8: 139–63, 257–70; Demargne 1976; Childs 1978). Such detailed city-siege scenes – which, most scholars agree, reference actual battles that were fought and won by the deceased dynast – make the tomb a triumphal monument that glorified Erbbina as a brilliant military and political ruler. Generic motifs of heroism paired with continuous friezes of the dynast's military victories blur distinctions between the ideal, mythical and historical.

The tomb's varied scenes construct a complex image of heroic, dynastic masculinity, and the profusion of female bodies within its programme make Erbbina's monument stand out from similar late fifth- and early fourth-century comparanda. Take, for instance, the most prominent features of the monument: the large-scale inter-columnar figures of rushing female bodies, the so-called Nereids, originally encircling the podium. (Fig. 3) Though their heads are not preserved, their skin and voluptuous forms are made visible through the deep sculptural drilling, emphasising the diaphanous, wet and wind-swept qualities of their dresses. Sculpted marine creatures, including crabs, fish, sea birds and dolphins, embellish their (preserved) feet; these sea creatures may or may not have been visible from below, even with paint (*FdX* 8: 123–33; Ridgway 1997: 79–81). These figures personify, or at least strongly gesture towards, the sea and its various sensations.

Rapidly moving of their own volition, these female figures are subversive, embodying dangerous and unpredictable rushing waters that cannot be controlled or walled by humans in the way that terrain can be claimed. Thus, they might reference Erbbina's claims to maritime and naval power as documented elsewhere (Keen 1993; 1998: 72). Or, as Ian Jenkins (2006: 197–98) suggests, the inclusion of Nereids might commemorate Erbbina's role in bringing clean water to Xanthos, rather than the actual sea itself. Although the precise interpretations for these watery bodies are still debated, they visually construct a microcosm that was ruled entirely by Erbbina: these aquatic figures are placed directly above scenes of land battles, which all decorate a monument erected high atop a hill, thus charting Lycia's geographic position between hinterland and sea, as well as the land and waters within his kingdom.

More specifically, these over-life-size female bodies seem to be marine goddesses; as such, scholars generally agree to identify them as Nereids (Demargne 1987; Stewart 1990; *FdX* 8: 270; for other theories, see Barringer 1995: 63–66), or nymph daughters of the sea god Nereus in Greek terms. Judith Barringer (1995) explains the significance of Nereids in Greek cultural contexts, especially their appeal to eschatological beliefs, precisely because they were understood as divine escorts who guided men and women through major transitions like marriage and the afterlife. Jenkins (2006: 197) cites the story of the water-nymph Thetis, who offers divinity to her husband Peleus after death, noting that the presence of many water-nymphs would confer similar divine, heroic status on the deceased Erbbina. Otherwise, in an attempt to resituate the monument in its Lycian context, Thurston Robinson (1995) argues for a consideration of the figures as '*Eliyāna*, who are equated with *Numphai* in a trilingual inscription from the Letoon (*FdX* 6; *FdX* 1; *SEG* 27 942 and N 320; no references to watery goddesses are preserved/made in the third Aramaic inscription), and were likewise liquid beings associated with the sources of water for the sanctuary. As Robinson notes (1995: 358), 'Greek style should not be mistaken for Greek content.' Perhaps, however, these female figures could be (and were meant to be) read as both '*Eliyāna* and *Numphai*.

The modern debates on whether to identify the mythological female figures as '*Eliyāna* or *Numphai* speak to the heterogeneity of the ancient sculptural and architectural programme, reflecting a wide variety of artistic sources and traditions from the eastern Mediterranean and western Asia; scholars have drawn comparisons with Greek, Achaemenid, Hittite and Neo-Assyrian visual cultures (Demargne 1976; Childs 1978; Benda-Weber 2005). For Demargne (1976), the sculptural reliefs on Erbbina's tomb resonate with Achaemenid royal iconographies because of



Figure 3. One of the so-called 'Nereids' from the Nereid Monument, marble, height: 1.37m, ca 390–380 BCE, Xanthus, Lycia. London: British Museum inv. 1848,1020.81 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

the ‘real’ and idealised scenes from dynastic life, as well as with Greek representational practices because of the mythological scenes. Decorative architectural details resemble east Greek traditions (Fedak 1990; *FdX* 3; Robinson 1999), the superimposition of friezes is non-Greek in its arrangement, and as Ridgway (1997: 79–88) has argued, the overall sculptural style and techniques of the monument suggest Greek influences. Clearly, the myriad forms, techniques and subject matter suggest that workshops regionally and extra-regionally (from Ionia and Lydia) carried out and painted the monument’s architectural design and sculptural programme (*FdX* 3: 157–58; *FdX* 8: 320–42, 370–76; Schuchhardt 1927; Childs 1978; Bruns-Özgan 1987: 35–36; Ridgway 1997 for the proposal of different ‘masters’ for the podium friezes). Such spectacular and variegated aesthetic tastes speak to the innovative approach to dynastic monument-making throughout Lycia in the early fourth century.

The Nereid Monument’s architectural programme, which Janos Fedak (1990: 68–69) has described as ‘heterogeneous’ by showcasing ‘a mixture of indigenous Lycian and imported Greek traditions’, shares structural affinities with other buildings of cultic and heroic significance at the Xanthian ‘acropolis’ (*FdX* 3). Catherine Draycott (2007; 2015) demonstrates how monumental architecture, including pillar and house tombs, for heroes and dynasts was a well-established practice within the city-walls for a century before the Nereid Monument was ever built. Given the similarities between Buildings F, G and H, and the fourth-century *heroa* of Lycian dynasts, such buildings on the ‘acropolis’ may have been important models for the latter (Childs 1978; Keen 1998; Draycott 2015). Some scholars, for instance, have speculated that Building G (ca 460) may have been a shrine for either the mythical Sarpedon or the early fifth-century Lycian dynast Kuprilli (*FdX* 2: 61; Keen 1992: 56; 1996; 1998: 182–83; Robinson 1999: 370–71; Draycott 2015 unpacks the ambiguity of these buildings and analyses their possible functions, placing them within a specific historical and architectural context). By the time of Erbbina’s rulership, his own funerary and triumphal monument drew from local as well as Greek models of heroic architecture (see *FdX* 3: 157–59 for a provisional discussion of architectural inspiration and comparisons).

In addition to his grand funerary monument, Erbbina made dedications at the Letoon along the Xanthos River (at modern-day Kumluova in Fethiye), a site that had been continuously sacred for centuries before and after the early fourth century (*FdX* 9). What’s left of Erbbina’s dedications are two statue bases with very fragmentary inscriptions in both Lycian and Greek. Here, for the sake of my argument, I reproduce only one of the inscriptions from a limestone statue base that was dedicated to the goddess

Leto. Excavated from the northwest sector of the Letoon, (*FdX* 9: 149–51; base 6121; Figs 4–5) the large, rectangular base originally measured approximately 1.29m long, 0.66m wide and 0.99m high. This statue base was inscribed with at least four inscriptions, all of which are too fragmentary to reconstruct in full; on one of the narrow and wide sides, it preserves two Greek inscriptions (*SEG* 39 1414; Bousquet 1975: 143–48; Bryce 1986: 95–96; *FdX* 9: 156–580) and on the other narrow and long faces, two Lycian inscriptions (Bousquet 1992: 181–87). The best-preserved Greek inscription is a patchy elegy composed by Symmachos of Pellana, and includes possible references to Erbbina’s funerary monument back at Xanthos, as first argued by Childs and Demargne (*FdX* 8: 268), while tying his expansion of territory and military conquests with themes of dynastic legitimacy and continuity:

- [.....Ἀρβ]ι[ν]ας παῖς Γέργ[ιος — U U — —]  
 [.....] ἀρετῆς ΟΓΝΕΙ [U U — —]  
 [....., εἰκόν] δὲ ἦδε ἔσται μνήμα θ[ε]ῶ[ν] εἰσθα[ί]ρα ?]  
 4 [“Ὀς λυκίοις ἄρ]ξας, συνέσει δυνάσει τε κ[ρ]άτιστος],  
 ἀρ[χ]ῆι ἐφ’ ἡλικίας πέρας ἐμ μνηί τρία ἄσ[τη],  
 Ξάνθον τε ἠδὲ Πίναρα καὶ εὐλίμενον Τελ[ε]μεσσόν],  
 πολλοῖσιν Λυκίοισι φόβον παρέχων ἐτυρά[ν]νει].  
 8 Τῶν μνημεῖα ἀνέθηκε θεοῦ φραδαῖ Ἀπόλλ[ωνος].  
 Πυθῶι ἐρωτήσας Λητῶι με ἀνέθηκεν ἑαυτοῦ]  
 εἰκόνα, τῶν δὲ ἔργων τὸ σχῆμα ἐπιδείκνυ[ται] ἀ[λ]κίην].  
 Κτείνας γὰρ πολλός, πατέρα εὐκλείσας τὸν ἐ[αυ]τουῦ],  
 12 πολλὰ μὲν ἄστεα ἔπρσε, καλὸν δὲ κλέος κ[ατὰ] πᾶ[σαν]  
 γῆν Ἀσίαν Ἀρβίνας ἑαυτῶι προγόνοις τε λέλοιπ[ε],  
 πάντα ἐμ πᾶσι πρέπων ὄσαπερ σοφοὶ ἄνδρες ἴ[σασιν],  
 τοξοσῶννη τε ἀρετῆι τε, ἵππων τε διώγματα εἰδ[ώσ].  
 16 Εἰς τέλος ἐξ ἀρχῆς, Ἀρβίνα, μεγάλα ἔργα τελε[έ]σσε]ας,  
 ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖς κεχαρι<σ>μένα δῶρα ἀ[νέ]θηκα[ς].

Σύμμαχος Εὐμήδεος Πελλανεύς μάντις ἀ[μύμων]  
 δῶρον ἔτευξε ἐλεγῆια Ἀρβίνας εὐσυνέ[τω]ς.

[Erbbin]a, son of Gerg[is], [dedicated me, having accomplished deeds worthy of the] valour [of his forefathers]. [Within the tomb chamber lies] (his) cor[pse]. But the stele [that one] s[ees] here commemorates (4) how he est[ablished] his rule over the Lycians] by his resourcefulness, his s[upreme] might and po[wer]. In his youth he conquered in one month three cities – Xanthos, Pinara and Tel[emessos] with its fine harbour – striking terror into many Lycians and becoming their mas[ter]. (8) A monument to these (achievements) he set up on the advice of the god Apoll[o]. Having sought counsel at Pytho, he dedicated me to Leto – his own image, whose *outward appearance* (??) expres[ses] the prowess?] of his achievements. Having slain many



Figure 4. The base of Erbinnā dedicated to the Letoon, inv. 6121, after FdX 9: pls 72–73. Top: Face A, with Greek epigram by poet Symmachos; bottom: Wide side, Face A and narrow side, Face D, inscribed with Lycian (Source: Mission archéologique française de Xanthos-Létôon. Reproduced with permission from J. des Courtils).



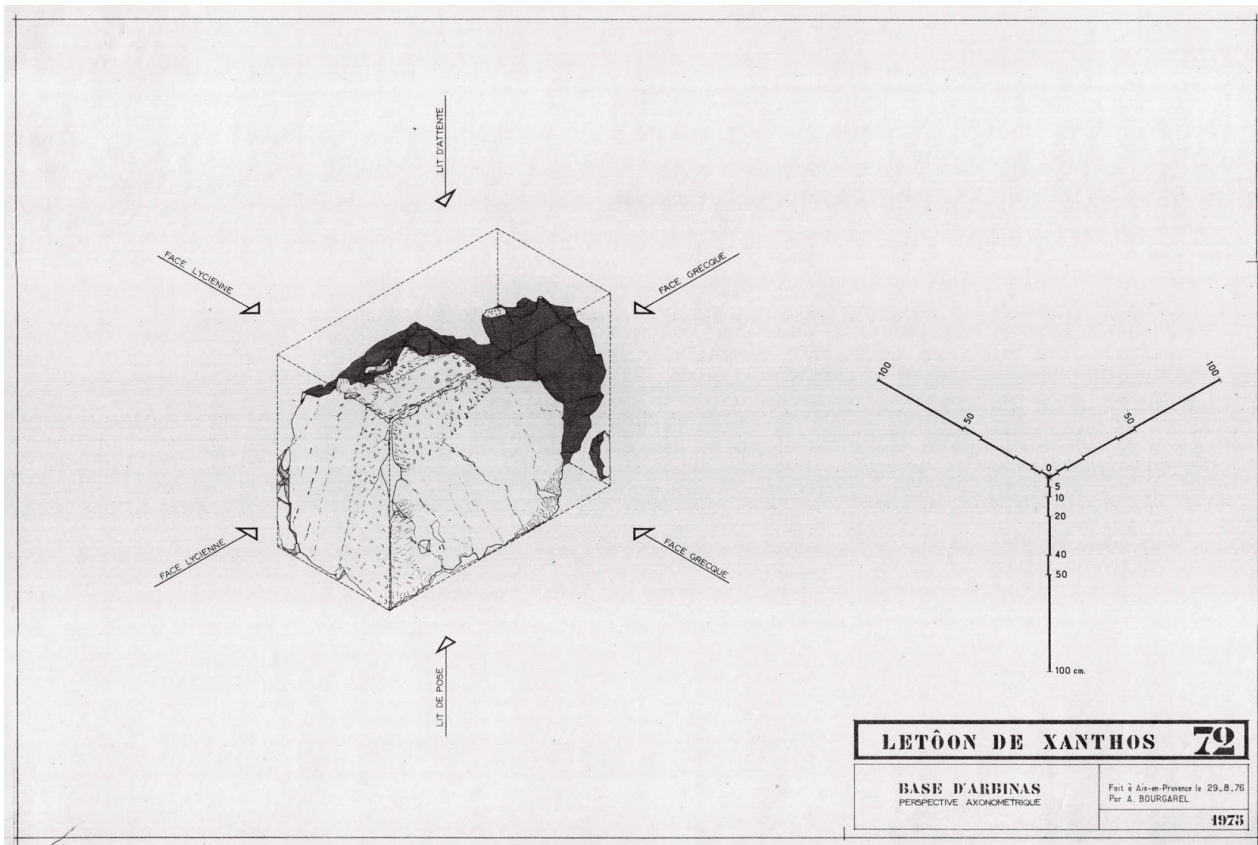


Figure 5. Axonometric drawing of the base 6121 by A. Bourgarel after FdX 9 (Source: *Mission archéologique française de Xanthos-Létôon*. Reproduced with permission from J. des Courtils).

people, having brought honour to his father Kh[er]gis], (12) having conquered many cities, Erbbina made his own and his forefathers' name renowned [through the whole] land of Asia. He was conspicuous amongst all in all human wisdom, in bowman ship, in courage, in horsemanship. (16) From beginning to end, Erbbina [you have] acc[omplished] great deeds, [you have presented] pleasing gifts to the immortal gods.

(18) Symmachos of Pellana, son of Eumedes, seer w[ithout reproach], skillfully produced (this) elegy as a gift for Erbbina.

SEG 39 1414, reconstructed and translated by Bryce 1986: 94–96.

Given that the epigram states Erbbina made the dedication, perhaps he also commissioned and oversaw the construction of his other monumental projects, like the Nereid Monument. The epigram articulates the ideological premise of Erbbina's dynastic rule through a biographical framework, and it seems to describe his portrait (*eikon*) as an expression of his dynastic and heroic qualities rather than a necessarily realistic likeness; moreover, another text

on that same base likens Erbbina to Greek mythological heroes like Achilles (IV.24–27), emphasising his heroic masculinity while further demonstrating the cultural entanglements within his monumental projects. Together, the portrait and epigram hyperbolised his family fame 'throughout Asia', invoking Erbbina's ancestors in order to stretch the memory of his power – understood through the framework of heroic and military conquest – into the future.

As both his funerary monument and dedication to Leto suggest, Erbbina participated in various activities that emphasised his political importance and projected his heroism, from building monuments to dedicating at important cults, thus crafting an aesthetically multivariate image of dynastic identity that would stretch into the future. As my description of the Nereids begins to demonstrate, the representation of female bodies was vital to his novel expressions of dynastic power. Non-mythological female bodies in particular communicated these ideological messages about dynastic legitimacy and continuity in ways that would have major consequences for and influence on dynastic and royal public monuments of the next generations.

**Erbbina’s wife and the representation of dynastic women in Lycia**

Let us now bring our attention to the Nereid Monument’s east pediment. Though the relief’s left corner is now lost, an enthroned couple takes centre stage, resting their feet on footstools (Figs 6–7). The relative size and central position of the seated couple suggest their social dominance compared to the other figures in the frieze, while their bodily postures and actions identify them as the dynast Erbbina with his wife. Erbbina – with his nude torso, long hair and thick beard – is seated to the viewer’s right and holds up a staff or sceptre with his right hand, while his left hand falls to his side. Beneath Erbbina’s chair, a sleeping dog curls up to rest, highlighting the theme of domesticity and alluding to the dynast’s pursuits in the outside world as a hunter. To the viewer’s left, a seated female figure is fully covered in a chiton and mantle that veils her head. With her left hand, she holds the edge of her mantle towards Erbbina in the bridal gesture of *anakalypsis*, thus visually

conveying her identity as the dynast’s wife. The sculptural frieze on the east pediment presents one of the earliest images of a dynastic couple on a public monument.

In between the dynastic couple stand two smaller female figures wearing chitons: the figure to the right rests one of her arms on Erbbina’s lap, while the figure to the left places both of her arms on the consort’s lap. Standing on either side of the couple are more male and female figures – five behind the consort and six behind Erbbina – who are also smaller in scale compared to the couple. These standing figures are either the couple’s children or attendants, as their diminutive scale may signal their social difference in either relative status and/or age. In the right corner, another sitting dog faces the centre of the pediment. The assembly of various male and female figures on the same horizontal picture plane create an image of a dynastic court or household, and possibly even an entire dynastic family (Ridgway 1997; Jenkins 2006: 199; *FdX* 8: 216–20).



Figure 6. Detail of the east pediment from the Nereid Monument, marble, height: 0.9m, ca 390–380 BCE, Xanthus, Lycia. London: British Museum inv. 1848,1020.125 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

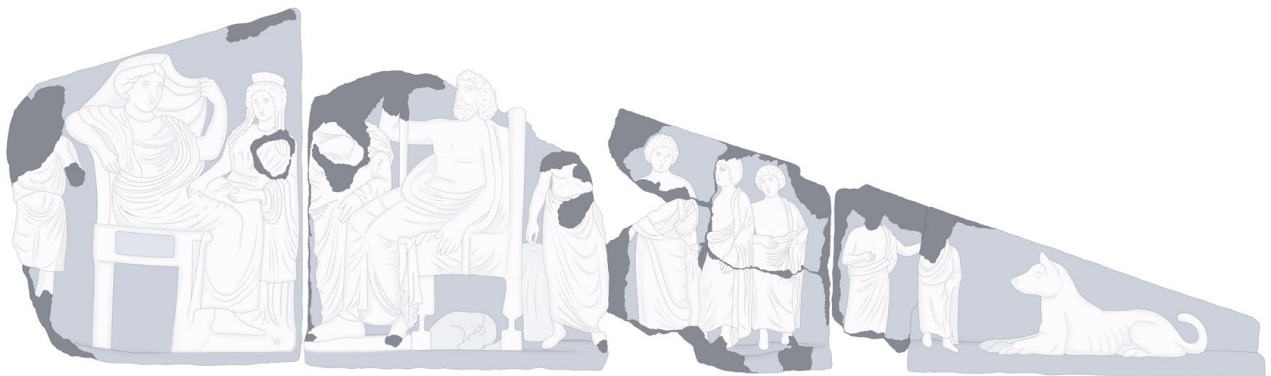


Figure 7. Drawing of the east pediment from the Nereid Monument (by M. Grimaldi. Rights belong to the author).

In addition to drawing comparisons between the Nereid Monument's east pediment with the pedimental friezes on the Athenian Parthenon, where the divine couple Zeus and Hera face each other (Demargne 1976: 84–86), Demargne (*FdX* 8: 293–95) likewise discussed this scene as a dynastic one. Reading the sculptural scene against the tomb chamber's architecture, which included four funerary beds, Demargne concluded that the seated couple and at least some of the standing figures represented a dynastic family unit. Demargne also remarked on the pediment's Persian and Lycian character, as well as its 'hellenising' images and Greek sculptural style (namely, the three-quarters frontal view of the figures in the 'manner of the frieze of Athena Nike'). However, Demargne neither explains nor analyses what makes the east pediment resonate with the 'Oriental arts', providing only a brief speculative comment about the possible influence of Hittite and Syro-Hittite representations of seated couples (*FdX* 8: 293 n. 198). Erbbina was not alone (nor was he the first) to include representations of mortal and dynastic women in his funerary monument. The broader art historical context for Erbbina's monument is rich, with several trends from which the designers of his tomb may have drawn meaningful inspiration in order to present an innovative iconographic programme that demonstrated the important roles that women played in monumental expressions of dynastic legitimacy and continuity.

*Art-historical contexts for Erbbina and his dynastic wife*  
Erbbina's tomb was not the first funerary monument at Xanthos to represent women. As Catherine Draycott (2007) has convincingly argued, the so-called Harpy Tomb (dateable to ca 485, or between 480 and 470), is the earliest extant example of what appears to be a dynastic pillar tomb to include representations of high-ranking women in Lycia (see Draycott 2008 for more on the identification of the bird-women as harpies) (Fig. 8). Towering 8.87m in height, the tomb was built in the northwest area of the 'acropolis' and was the most dominant and visible monument in the region at the time of its construction (Draycott 2007). Scholars agree that the monument may have honoured Kybernis, a Lycian dynast who fought as a helmsman on behalf of the Persians at Salamis in 480 (*FdX* 1: 44–45; Keen 1992; 1998; Jenkins 2006). At the top of the pillar, four marble panels wrap around a rectangular tomb; while women appear on the west panel, male figures dominate the other three panels. (Fig. 9) Depicted in profile, both male and female figures either receive audiences, offer objects, or in the case of the women, provide funerary libations. Several scholars have discussed the compositional resonances with imperial Achaemenid audience scenes (Tritsch 1942; Borchhardt 1990; Draycott

2008; Brosius 2010), while Draycott (2007) links the west panel specifically with 'family groups' of women in sixth- and fifth-century visual culture, from the Genelaos group at Samos to examples like the Polyxena sarcophagus from the Troad. The west panel divides into two sections: on the left-most end, a seated woman wearing a tiara over her long hair holds a *phiale* towards the opening of the tomb as if offering a libation for the deceased. She lifts her other hand toward a cow suckling her calf above the tomb's aperture. Direct conceptual links form between the woman and the cow, and between the liquid from the *phiale* and cow's milk as sources of nourishment, thematising solace, tenderness and care. To the right of the tomb's opening, three young female figures in long robes process toward or stand before a heavily draped, enthroned woman at the right end. All four women draw lotus flowers up to their noses, and hold different objects: eggs, a pomegranate, a flower. Draycott explains that the programme visualised gendered binaries, and in this way, the Harpy Tomb contrasted the earliest extant tombs for elite men at Xanthos that were decorated with images of masculine virility – violence among animals and men, warriors processing into battle, wrestlers, all-male banqueters. The Harpy Tomb thus may have underscored the symbolic importance of women to dynastic matters and its continuity, all while maintaining gendered hierarchies by dedicating three of the four panels to the spatial worlds of dynastic men.

Funerary art from beyond Lycia likewise included non-mythological female figures in its image programmes. Examples of sixth- and fifth-century stelae and sarcophagi from northwestern Anatolia represent banqueting men, who are sometimes accompanied by their wives, in *Totenmahl* scenes, as well as female servants and entertainers (Dusinberre 2013; Rose 2013; Draycott 2016). Perhaps the most relevant example of such a banqueting scene from a dynastic funerary context comes from Caria: the so-called Mylasa Sarcophagus, dating to the early fourth century, was excavated from under the Temple of Zeus at Milas (Rose 2013; Işık 2019). On the sarcophagus's dominant side, a high-relief panel probably depicts the reclining dynast Hecatomnus, who balances a *phiale* in his left hand, and his seated, veiled wife Aba, who makes the gesture of *anakalypsis*. Although the distance between Xanthos and Milas is more than 200km, the iconographic resonances between Hecatomnus's sarcophagus and the east pediment of Erbbina's monument speak to how motifs were shared across Anatolia and the Aegean world. However, Erbbina's tomb differs from these examples of Anatolian funerary art in three significant ways. First, fourth-century Lycian seated couples do not appear to drink or dine in death. Second, Erbbina and his wife are represented on the same picture plane, unlike the



Figure 8. View of the Harpy Tomb in situ, ca 480–470 BCE. Xanthos, Lycia (Courtesy of Robert A. Bridges, Jr).



Figure 9. West panel of the Harpy Tomb with female figures, marble, ca 480–470. Xanthos, Lycia. London: British Museum inv. 1848,1020.1 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

dynastic figures on the Harpy Tomb who are spatially separated. Finally, the sculptural programme of the Nereid Monument (as well as the Harpy Monument) was perpetually visible to broader audiences long after the dynasts were interred. Thus, the Nereid Monument, as well as other tombs from Lycia, must be studied for their role as public monuments, and, in particular, as public *dynastic* monuments that may have had varying effects on their viewing audiences; the remainder of this subsection will deal with this first point, and the next subsection will address the last two points.

The Nereid Monument's seated dynastic husband and wife is just one example of what scholars like Isabella Benda-Weber (2005) have categorised as the 'Lykischer Motiv', or the Lycian Motif. Documented throughout Lycia, this particular motif represents two seated individuals facing each other; from the gable of the Tomb of Pixre at Antiphellos to the tomb of Xudalije at Kyaneai, the seated male-female couple appears across various kinds of sepulchral Lycian arts. Yet the Lycian Motif not only includes the seated man and woman, but also other variations, like two seated men or two seated women. According to Benda-Weber (2005: 122), this particular motif of the couple, attested on non-dynastic tombs in Kyaneai, Trysa and Xanthos, seems to have originated in Lycia, perhaps as early as the early fifth century, and may draw on earlier Hittite models as well. However, the meanings that this motif generated range and differ depending on its gendered composition. Benda-Weber (2005: 122–24, pls 18–19) understands some of these motifs as representations of family scenes, as elite and

educated men engaged in conversation or debate, or as a group of women involved in funerary cult (see also Eichler 1950 for discussions of hero cults and Bruns-Özgan for comparisons with Attic reliefs). Jan Zahle (1979: 275) contextualises this motif more broadly, comparing it with other scenes of reclining men and seated women, suggesting that all such images in Lycian society were instrumental in conveying familial themes. Yet even in non-dynastic contexts, the male-female seated couple generates specific meanings that couples of strictly men or of women do not – especially as it relates to the theme of kinship and continuities of lineage.

At Xanthos, the sarcophagus monument of the high-ranking nobleman Payava is one such example of a non-dynastic tomb that represents the male-female couple. Located on a hill to the northeast of the Xanthian acropolis nearby a cluster of rock-cut tombs, the barrel-vaulted sarcophagus monument (ca 360s) rose to about 7.85m (*FdX* 5; for discussion of dating, see Bruns-Özgan 1987: 141–46). Thanks to an inscription (TL40), we know that the tomb probably belonged to a nobleman named Payava (*FdX* 5: 137–38). Famed for bringing together Greek and Persian visual elements (Dusinberre 2013: 196–97; Jacobs 1987), Payava's eclectic funerary monument includes relief panels depicting a seated figure in Persian dress receiving an audience (perhaps led by Payava to meet the Persian satrap Autophradates) (*FdX* 5: 86 and 139; Bruns-Özgan 1987: 142; Keen 1998: 171–72), an athlete and bearded companion, battle scenes and a hunt scene. Payava's funerary monument is also decorated with sculptural relief imagery of battles between cavalrymen and

infantrymen; William Childs has described these scenes as ‘generic rather than specific’, (1978: 92) perhaps contrasting with the historical quality of the Nereid Monument’s reliefs, as I will discuss further in the next section.

On Payava’s monument, the Lycian motif can be found on the south end of the gabled roof, which is divided into four quadrants: two sphinxes face each other in the upper quadrants, while the husband and wife face each other in the lower quadrants (*FdX* 5: 72–73). (Fig. 10) The seated

female figure holds up her mantle toward Payava, signifying her marital status while suggesting to the viewer that the couple is meant to be understood as occupying the same space. Given the identity of the tomb owner, the couple is probably Payava and his wife, and both are costumed and posed in the same way that Erbbina and his consort appear on the Nereid Monument. Only one figure who is much smaller in scale than the seated couple is depicted near Payava’s wife’s lap; Demargne (*FdX* 5) interprets this figure as her child. This image resonates



Figure 10. Drawing by G. Scharf of the south gable end of Payava’s sarcophagus monument with detail of the seated couple. Marble, ca 360. Xanthus, Lycia. London: British Museum inv. 2012,5034.84 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

with the Nereid Monument's east pediment, while demonstrating Payava's roles as a husband and, potentially, as a father; in other words, his wife and his child were central aspects of his identity.

*Dynastic women, dynastic households and public monuments*

In a dynastic context, the Lycian Motif was useful for conveying the importance of dynastic women in Lycian expressions of power by the first half of the fourth century. Furthermore, the Lycian Motif within dynastic contexts not only represented the dynastic couple, but also gestured toward an entire dynastic household with dependents. By depicting a dynastic couple and a dynastic household in one scene, the Nereid Monument's east pediment clearly emphasises the themes of domestic bonds and kinship within a politically charged setting. Viewers could visually enter elite residential spaces from which they may have been denied access in real life. Audiences could bear witness to Lycian dynastic worlds, consisting of dynastic rulers and figures who sit on elaborate furniture, surrounded by various objects and offerings made by alert attendants or perhaps even dynastic offspring, as well as domestic animals; such representations convey a sense of unity and stability. Given the monument's construction within a physically accessible space, it seems that the patrons intended for viewers to demonstrate their fealty through symbolic and psychic connection with the monument. This bond between viewer and image nuances the role of the Nereid Monument, as it both commemorated a specific individual and represented an entire household as a potent expression of dynastic identity.

Given the public contexts of these monuments, their sculptural programmes may have also modelled expectations for gendered, social decorum in both public and private life. For instance, Draycott (2007: 125–26) sees the public display of the family on the Harpy Tomb as a way for the dynast to claim status as the central figure. In this sense, such depictions of the dynastic household asserted gendered and political hierarchies 'at court'. However, important differences between the Harpy Tomb and the fourth-century funerary monuments emerge. While the Harpy Tomb organises each panel by gender to create distinctions between the spaces of men and of women, the east pediment of Erbbina's tomb, for instance, does the very opposite, bringing female and male figures together within a single picture. Such choices in visual design should not suggest, however, that Erbbina's wife and Lycian women of the early fourth century possessed any more political agency than Lycian women in the early fifth century. The rest of the sculptural programme, as I will discuss further in the next sections, clearly conveys that men wielded political power. Although these representa-

tions do not necessarily suggest anything about the individual political status of dynastic women, the Nereid Monument at least clearly charts out the critical role that they had in visualising legitimacy, power and continuity.

The monumental stakes of women to the dynastic household within the sculptural programme might be better understood when analysed alongside another bronze statue dedication to Artemis by Erbbina, also found at the Letoon. The extant statue base preserves two lines of Lycian and an eight-line Greek epigram (N 311 for the Lycian inscription, *SEG* 28 1245 for the Greek; Bousquet 1974: 141–42; Bryce 1986: 94–95; *FdX* 6: 149–54). The Greek inscription is extremely fragmentary, yet mentions Artemis the hunter (Ἄρτεμι θηροφόννα), and perhaps describes Erbbina's conquests of Xanthos, Telemessos and other cities. Here, the Lycian inscription was translated by Bryce (1986: 94) as follows:

Erbbina, son of Kheriga and Upēni, has dedicated it (as) an offering to Ertēmi (=Artemis)

N 311, translated by Bryce 1986: 94; see other similar translations by Neumann 1979 and Laroche in *FdX* 9: 159

Despite its brevity, the Lycian inscription lists the name of both his father, Khergis, and his mother, Upēni. In a Lycian context, this epigraphic formula reflects other extant inscriptions. For example, a statue base from Tlos (TL25) records in Lycian and Greek that statues of both Xssbeze and his wife Tikeukepre of Pinara were dedicated to Apollo (Bryce 1986: 90; Payne 2006: 125, 131). Yet this particular formula takes on new meaning in a dynastic context, for it charts out a *dynastic* lineage in which both father and mother are represented – just as the Lycian Motif generates new meanings within dynastic settings. In other words, the inscription preserves the name of the dynastic wife and mother, Upēni, contrasting with, for instance, the Inscribed Pillar (or the Xanthos Stela), whose genealogical section does not include the names of women (Childs 1979; Thonemann 2009).

Perhaps matrilineal descent was important for claims of dynastic continuity and legitimacy in Lycia – which would have been relatively unusual in the broader Mediterranean world. Greek sources tell us that Lycian women had active roles in society. Both Herodotus (1.173.4) and Plutarch (*Mor.* 248d) illuminate the Lycians' matrilineal culture by explaining how they inherited the names of their mothers rather than their fathers. Similarly, Nicolaus of Damascus (F 103k) notes that the Lycians left inheritances to their daughters, while Aristotle (Rose 1863; F 611.43) suggests that women ruled Lycian societies. The extant visual evidence is not as explicit, and thus does not allow

us to determine the veracity of ancient observations and claims regarding the Lycians and how their women fared in society. These sources, furthermore, do not tell us in any meaningful way *how* women had equal (or more) political, economic and cultural power compared to men – especially for the consorts of dynasts like Erbbina.

Here, it is worth noting the Heroon at Gölbası-Trysa (ca 370) in central Lycia, a dynastic Lycian monument that presents a twist on the Lycian Motif as if to enhance the political status of the seated dynastic couple and of the dynastic woman in particular; the heroon's occupant is unknown. Much like the Nereid Monument's sculptural programme, the heroon's programme juxtaposes the world of Greek mythology – an Amazonomachy, a Centauro-machy, the rape of the Leucippides, a Theseus cycle, Perseus and Medusa, Odysseus and the Suitors and a Caly-

donian bear hunt – with historicising, documentary friezes (Benndorf, Niemann 1889; Childs 1978: 13–14; Oberleitner 1990; 1994; Landskron 2016). The specific iconography that concerns me here can be found on the west wall: to the right of a scene in which warriors perform ritual animal sacrifices is a peculiar image of an enthroned dynastic couple and their two servants, and all four of these figures are depicted among or alongside armed soldiers running into battle (Figs 11–12). In the foreground of the relief, Lycian merlons emerge from the bottom edge of the panel, thus suggesting that the scene takes place behind city walls. The dynast is bearded and diademed, with a himation covering the lower half of his otherwise nude body. Holding a sceptre with one hand, he sits on an elaborately decorated throne with his feet on a footstool, and he is accompanied by a domesticated but fierce animal.



Figure 11. Detail of the dynastic couple from the west wall of the heroon of Gölbası-Trysa, ca 370. Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, I 462 (© KHM-Museumsverband).



Figure 12. Drawing of dynastic couple from the west wall of the heroon of Gölbası-Trysa (by M. Grimaldi. Rights belong with the author).



His wife wears a veil over her *polos*, and she too rests her feet on a stool. This dynastic couple is seated underneath parasols that are held above their heads by two different servants. As discussed by Alice Landskron (2016: 142–43), parasols had long symbolised power in western Asia. For example, at Persepolis, the Persian king is depicted receiving his audience while seated underneath an umbrella. While the soldiers and the seated couple are represented in three-quarters view, the figures of the two servants are carved into the background and face forward toward the viewer, as if sculptural and dimensional complexity could only be offered to representations of dynastic and military elite. As Landskron points out (2016: 144), the dynastic consort is not depicted in mourning, as one might expect of female figures in the context of funerary art. The consort appears as a keen observer of the battle that unfolds before her instead; this interpretation perhaps owes to the composition of the particular scene – in between the husband and wife, a pair of armed soldiers rush into battle, as if following the lead of another pair of soldiers who have already run past the consort and her servant. Such a scene certainly evokes the Lycian Motif on the Nereid Monument. But the Heroon at Trysa transports the couple from a courtly setting to a highly militarised one, signifying the social and political importance of the dynastic man and the dynastic woman in a world of many different actors.

Although the extant epigraphic, literary and art historical sources do not explain the nuances of gendered hierarchies in Lycia, they nevertheless demonstrate that the dynastic couple and the dynastic household were conceptualised to reflect what we might call in today's terms an idealised heteronormative family unit. This unit included the male head, his female spouse, and other kin members that included children, property and other non-familial dependents, including military units and servants. Whether the standing figures are Erbbina's family members or his attendants, each of them constitutes the dynastic household. In this sense, Erbbina's funerary and triumphal monument is innovative, not only for its unique combination of sculptural and architectural styles and motifs, but also for its subject matter. Erbbina and the designers of the Nereid Monument drew on existing funerary art, specifically appropriating the local 'Lycian Motif' and investing it with dynastic themes. The dynastic consort and the household – instead of the singular dynastic male and his loyal men – conveyed stability, legitimacy and dynastic continuity.

### **The city-siege scenes: Documenting history and dynastic ideologies of gender**

Moving from the Nereid Monument's east pediment to the podium frieze, I now discuss what would have been unusual iconography within the context of a triumphal

monument: a woman caught in the throes of battle. Here, I discuss the important ways in which this particular representation compares with other emotionally charged iconographies of women in visual culture. First, I consider how her depiction visually cites scenes in which women mourn death or loss. Then, I examine how her pose mirrors that of female victims within abduction scenes that are commonly found in heroic and mythological art, as well as in funerary contexts. These comparisons foreground my argument that the upper frieze's representation of the woman draws on iconographies of trauma, while ultimately emphasising the role that gender plays in experiences of violence.

The podium consists of two registers of sculptural frieze with 22 blocks each. Three blocks from the upper frieze (or the lesser podium frieze) and seven blocks from the lower frieze (or the greater podium frieze) are missing (*FdX* 8: 139–64, 170–81; Childs 1978: 22–31). On the upper podium frieze, city-siege scenes in shallow relief appear to narrate the dynast's military campaigns. Underneath this band, the lower frieze, whose blocks are larger in size, depicts at least three different political and cultural groups of male figures in hand-to-hand combat, as in the genre of heroic battle scenes: some of the male figures are armed with Greek military objects or costumed in heroic nudity; some of them are dressed in Persian costumes; other figures sport Lycian hairstyles (*FdX* 8: 259–63). These markers of cultural, political and ethnic difference are noteworthy, for they infuse scenes of heroic combat with historical and regional specificity. Marking ethnic differences, especially within the same visual programme, was an artistic practice that was common in dynastic art throughout Lycia, as the Heroon of Pericle at Limyra demonstrates (Şare 2013). But here, it is the upper frieze that interests me.

The upper frieze depicts a complex picture with historicizing elements in a configuration that creates a continuous narrative of violent city-sieges, combative encounters and dynastic military triumph (*FdX* 8: 263–70). The long relief is packed with several narrative moments, consisting of multiple events and discrete actions that are rendered in visual perspectives that convey a sense of spatial depth and an intensity in physical movement. Such events include soldiers engaging in hand-to-hand combat, marching on foot and on horseback, and attacking the large citadel walls while civilians and soldiers who are under attack hurl stones at their foes. These discrete scenes are punctuated with an arrangement of fortified city walls with Lycian merlons and leafless trees, conveying a sense of a place, or perhaps even multiple places, under siege. As Childs (1978: 90–97) argues, the scenes may in fact illustrate specific historical battles during the dynast's rule, for we know that Erbbina boasted of his triumphs over



Figure 13. Detail of the enthroned dynast Erbbina receiving an audience from the upper podium frieze of the Nereid Monument. London: British Museum inv. 1848,1020.62 (© The Trustees of the British Museum).



Figure 14. Detail from the city-siege reliefs of the upper podium frieze from the Nereid Monument, marble, length: 1.42m, ca 390–380 BCE. Xanthus, Lycia. London: British Museum inv 1848,1020.65 (869) (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

Telemessos, Pinara and Xanthos in the span of just one month; these siege scenes might in fact have an important historical function, for which there would be no comparanda further west in Greece prior to Roman conquest (Childs 1978: 93–94), though other examples of historical battle scenes can be found in Lycia; at Limyra, for example, the tomb of the elite nobleman Teburssele likewise boasts images of historical battles which seem to document his participation in war as an ally of Pericle, thanks to a preserved inscription (TL104).

The visual devices and passages within the sculptural band thus appear to constitute a historicising narrative that illustrates scenes from Erbbina's life in an idealised manner. And although these scenes may have been inspired by actual historical events, the relief functions as more than a historical record. For example, on the east side of the podium (one of its shorter façades), the dynast wears a tunic and a *bashlyk*, and sits on a lion-footed chair underneath a parasol (BM 879; while most scholars identify this figure as Erbbina, in contrast, Borchhardt [1980] sees him as Artaxerxes II). Behind him stands an entourage of military guards, while two elderly men dressed in heavy cloaks approach him. (Fig. 13) Perhaps such a scene records the moment *after* a victory, in which ceremonial meetings take place with the dynast. But this dynastic image also recalls the audience scenes that are typically found on monuments of Achaemenid Persian kings (e.g. the Apadana at Persepolis), which were likewise appropriated and adapted on all four sides of the Harpy Tomb. Though the podium's upper sculptural frieze appears as historical documentation, it is also an expression of dynastic ideology, and thus must be analysed as such.

Let us now turn more closely to the specific pictorial passage of interest, as it will allow us to think about the function of non-dynastic women within historicised and ideologically entrenched narratives of dynastic triumph. Reconstructed as part of the densely decorated south façade (*FdX* 8: 154–56), the frieze depicts an important city-siege scene, in which soldiers hurl stones from the walls toward Erbbina's troops of synchronised foot soldiers in defense (BM 869). Behind the walls and Lycian merlons, and among the stone-throwers stands a woman, with her smock visibly stretched over her breasts, raising her arms and tearing out her untamed, short-cropped hair in despair (Fig. 14). The appearance of this woman is art-historically important, for, as far as we know, it was the first example in the Aegean, Magna Graecia and mainland Greece to depict a woman at all in military-themed triumphal programmes about non-mythological wars. Indeed, her representation disrupts the compositional rhythm of the panel through the vertical extension of her body into negative space, contrasting further with horizontal rows of alternating merlons punctuated by the

profiles of disciplined men defending their city from the enemy. This sculptural arrangement draws the viewer's gaze toward her body, while various visual cues not only gender her body, but also cast it as abject and wild.

Unruly heads of hair like hers in Greek and Aegean visual culture typically marked girls and women with inferior status (Shapiro 1991; Levine 1995; Lee 2015). In this image, the woman's cropped hair possibly points to her social status, as well as her lamentation of the attack and the resulting loss of life. There are both visual and literary examples of women ritually tearing out or losing their own hair as a potent action of mourning. Euripides's *Electra* (239–41) shaves her head in the midst of her mourning, 'as if by a Scythian's razor,' emphasising her emotional state and gendered performance of sorrow. This is also the case in the famous black-figure *pinax* attributed to the Glea Painter, in which a deceased person is surrounded by mourners, most notably a group of women who tear out their hair as they lament their loss (Fig. 15). While the inclusion of such a grieving woman in Erbbina's funerary monument might seem appropriate, more specifically, she appears in the context of a city-siege scene, thus compelling one to consider the meaning that her specific action affords to the frieze. One could interpret her presence as an ominous narrative marker that informs the viewer that soldiers and residents have been killed, and that many more would soon die at the hands of Erbbina's men.

The physical pose of the woman begs further examination, especially for the ways in which the abrupt vertical extension of her body visually, and starkly, contrasts with the horizontal direction of the soldiers-in-profile facing their enemies. As her left arm extends upward and her right hand moves to tear out her hair, her entire torso, including the curved outline of her breasts, are immediately and fully visible. Such motions structurally resonate with images of women who (unsuccessfully) resist the violent force of abduction in visual culture throughout the Aegean, and in the context of Lycia more specifically.

Abduction scenes were common in funerary art throughout the Aegean world, and also have been understood as metaphors for marriage and powerful iconographies with eschatological stakes (Cumont 1942; Cohen 2010). Lycian funerary art commonly included abduction scenes in their sculptural programmes. The woman on the upper frieze recalls the monument's two central but very fragmentary acroteria that depict males costumed in heroic nudity grabbing female bodies in an abduction scene. One of the acroteria preserves the torso of a naked youth who grabs the right knee and left inner thigh of the victim (BM 926; Fig. 16), emphasising the figure's feminine corporeality. This acroterion was found in a cistern to the east of the monument (*FdX* 8: 223–24). The other acroterion



Figure 15. Black-figure pinax with funerary scene, attributed to the Gela Painter. Second half of the sixth century BCE, Attica. Terracotta. 9 x 16.8cm. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore inv. 48.225 (Reproduced with permissions from The Walters Art Museum).



Figure 16. Acroterion from the Nereid Monument, marble, height: 87.50cm, ca 390–380 BCE. Xanthus, Lycia. London: British Museum inv. 1848,1020.134 (926) (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

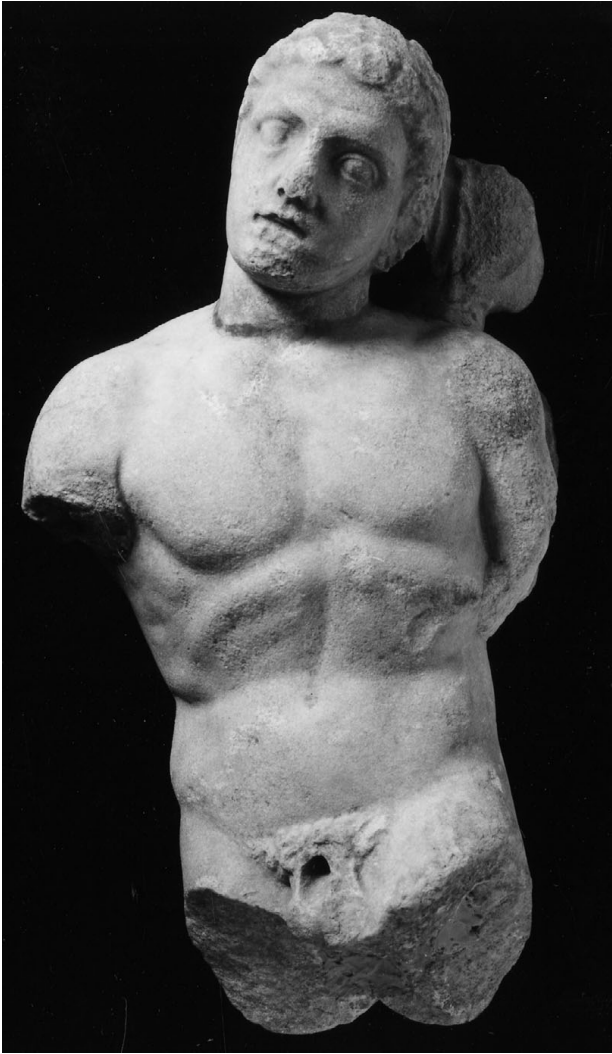


Figure 17. Acroterion from the Nereid Monument, marble, height: 86.36cm, ca 390–380 BCE. Xanthos, Lycia. London: British Museum inv.1848,1020.133 (927) (© The Trustees of the British Museum).

preserves the head and the torso of the youth, grabbing and dragging the closely cropped and ribboned hair of the victim (BM 927; Fig. 17) (*FdX* 8: 225–26). In addition to these two abduction groups, six extant fragments of draped females in motion may also have been corner acroteria (*FdX* 8: 227). The acroteria are weathered to the point where we cannot decipher the identities of the figures. Given the sculptural and architectural emphasis on what appear to be Nereids, some scholars identify the abduction scene as Peleus and Thetis the sea-nymph (Demargne 1987; *FdX* 8: 303–04; Barringer 1995: 59–66) In fact, Ridgway (1997: 84) sees these acroteria as referencing the wedding between Peleus and Thetis, as well as Achilles’s journey towards immortality on the island of Leuce, ‘creating an obvious parallelism between the Greek heroes and the dynastic successor’. It is uncertain if an individual familiar

with Greek myths distinguished the figures or not, but the sculptures representing males abducting females could still tell varied stories.

Elsewhere in Lycia, hybrid creatures seizing female figures appear on the Harpy Tomb, while a visually complex scene of the Leucippides’s abduction by the Dioscouri appears on the interior north wall of the Heroon at Trysa (Benndorf, Niemann 1889: 163–68; Oberleitner 1994: 44–46; Cohen 2010: 222–23) (Fig. 18). The abduction scene at Trysa takes place across two registers: groups of men chase after the Dioscouri’s chariots, from which the daughters of Leucippus twist their bodies against the force of motion, reaching with their arms into emptied, negative space as a plea for salvation. This particular abduction scene resonates with the painting of Hades swiftly making off with Persephone against her will on the wall of the Argead royal tomb chamber at Vergina, especially for the sense of desperation they both effectively communicate (Cohen 1996; 2010). It is this reaching back, or the women’s movements against the physically violent force of abduction, that visually conveys a sense of panic and despair over their capture and what the viewer knows comes next – sexual assault.

It is important to note that the Nereid Monument’s upper frieze does not present an abduction scene, but rather, a scene of conquest in which the body of a woman is posed in a way that mirrors representations of female victims of rape elsewhere. Such a visual link, I argue, was purposefully designed to intensify the violence of the war that is depicted on the podium’s frieze, as well as the way that gendered dynamics of dynastic power might physically manifest. Ada Cohen’s groundbreaking work on the relationship between sex, gender and war explores possible metaphorical readings between war and rape in visual culture. Cohen’s main contention is that rape and war were ‘non-reversible metaphors’, meaning that rape/abduction and war, although both paradigms of manhood, were not isometric. Such analysis directly responds to and nuances studies that have considered war as a metaphor for rape (Stewart 1993), bringing analytical clarity to the ways that images functioned in antiquity. For instance, Michael Nagler’s analyses (1967; 1974) of Homeric poetry argue for connections between the conquest of city walls and women, and in particular, the violent unveiling of women that symbolises the loss of sexual chastity. Yet as Cohen has shown, such leaps do not adequately explain the visual links, nor prove that ancient audiences would have necessarily made such metaphorical connections. However, literary and visual examples in which military victories and conquest readily lead to or ‘authorise’ rape abound in Greek art, thus forcing us to attend closely to ‘the direction of metaphorical transferral of meaning’ instead (Cohen 2010: 186).



Figure 18. Detail of the abduction/rape of the Leucippides by the Dioscuri, interior north wall of the heroon from Gjolbasi-Trysa, marble, ca 370. Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum, I 534 and 535 (© KHM-Mueumsverband).

Cohen's argument is of particular importance to the Nereid Monument's upper frieze and the ways its visual programme appeals to cultural attitudes regarding the relationship between war, sexuality and gender within Lycian contexts. I reiterate here that the frieze does not present us with an abduction scene, nor do I claim that the woman signifies the 'rape of the Lycian city', as a Naglerian reading might propose. Instead, through the specificity of her pose – which emphasises her lack or loss of status, the sense of heightened trauma while under siege and the state of mourning that emerges from death – the woman portends the victory of Erbbina's troops while anticipating what might happen in the aftermath of war: she too might eventually fall prey to sexual and physical assault. However disturbing or troubling such depictions might be to our own contemporary sensibilities, such visual allusions to grief and abduction not only amplified the violence of war, they likewise appealed to the heroic manhood of Erbbina and his soldiers as brave warriors. Statements of heroic masculinity abound throughout the Nereid Monument's sculptural programme, including scenes of sacrifice and hunt, of male banqueting, of Erbbina receiving audiences underneath a parasol and, finally, of mythological abductions. All such activities and iconographies functioned as a statement of male heroics.

This snapshot from the Nereid Monument's upper frieze stands out because of how the patron and his artists use the abject female body as a narrative device within 'documentary' images of military conflict; her presence tells the viewer that Erbbina's men have already penetrated the hard walls of heavy cities and surpassed the stony projectiles of their enemies. The identity of the traumatised woman is unclear – is she perhaps the consort or wife of the defeated city's leader? Although we will never know her identity, her body forms an important contrast with the depictions of the enthroned dynastic consort on the monument's east pediment. Here, the woman expresses

physical pain, emotional grief and wildness, while Erbbina's wife appears in a scene lacking threat. Erbbina's consort is contained, limited in her movement and, above all, modest in dress and in all aspects of her presentation. In this sense, the Nereid Monument's sculptural and programmatic innovation attends to dynastic visions of territorial conquest by illustrating a domain of ruin, symbolised in part by the representation of the unkempt woman.

#### The symbolic roles of women and dynastic legitimacy at Xanthos

At several points throughout this article, I have remarked on how the representation of non-mythological female bodies in a dynastic monument was an art-historical innovation in the Aegean world. Yet, for those of us scholars whose work is informed by feminist sensibilities, we'd be remiss to celebrate these 'women's representations' in the terms that contemporary feminist discourses around visibility provide (that is, the importance of representation and visibility within public and political spaces). Representation is not always commensurate with political power and agency, and the two depictions of non-mythological women in the Nereid Monument's sculptural programme emphasise this very point. These depictions of non-mythological female bodies – both of which also contrast with the Nereids – beg a nuanced account of Erbbina's monument that considers the complexity with which its programme includes different articulations of femininity in expressions of dynastic identity.

The designers of Erbbina's monument illustrate two women of different social and political status, thus offering completely different experiences of womanhood. The woman in the upper frieze communicates suffering in battle, drawing from other iconographies of female mourning and abduction in order to emphasise the heroism of Erbbina and his soldiers. In contrast, the dynastic consort is posed and dressed like other 'good matrons' who

perform their duties as faithful wives and attentive mothers. Despite their differences in social status, the wife and the wailing woman nevertheless inform each other while bolstering Erbbina's dynastic legitimacy. In both scenarios, these women are important symbols for the fortunes of the city, and the dynastic family's stability has direct implications for the health of a community.

Moreover, both of these women represent different kinds of idealised femininity – that is, the two women symbolise acceptable female behaviour on behalf of heroic manhood. Although Erbbina and his consort sit across from each other, at the same scale and on the same plane, the political and social hierarchy between them has precisely to do with their gendered difference, a difference upon which the upper frieze depends in constructing its narrative of heroic manhood. In contrast, the so-called Nereids represent the impossible: a mythologised account of femininity that knows no limits, that spills over boundaries and embodies transformation. These important resonances and contradictions are central to the monument's complex programme, suggesting the creativity that emerged from Erbbina's desperation to immortalise and memorialise his dynastic legacy into the future.

Although the evidence does not speak explicitly about dynastic women's political agency, it nevertheless demonstrates how they were central to the Lycian dynastic project; indeed, the image of Erbbina's consort thematises his dynastic continuity in compelling ways. Erbbina's wife exists in a multi-dimensional space in which she is at once oppositional to and organised on a horizontal and hierarchical scale with dynastic men (Dubois 1988). The pedimental frieze complicates this relationship of polar difference, whereby the dynastic household and specifically the dynastic female consort are presented as integral to the definition and actualisation of male dynastic identity. In other words, the consort offers a concrete sense of how women are politically *important* to the formations of dynastic identity in the fourth century. This concept I borrow from Jacquelyn Williamson's discussions of Nefertiti, whose representations in monumental, public visual culture in Amarna-period Egypt have often been interpreted as commensurate with political power and influence (Williamson 2015). Instead, Williamson has thoughtfully described the ways that the royal consort was carefully elevated in visual culture to augment Akhenaten's divine authority during a historical and political context that demanded stability and legitimacy. Williamson's point about political importance and the elevated status of the dynastic consort is useful for understanding Erbbina's monument as well.

The dynastic couple was a foundational image and concept for subsequent dynasties and kingdoms in the Hellenistic world (Bielman Sánchez 2019). As on the

Nereid Monument's east pediment, other expressions of dynastic power illustrate variations of the 'normative family' as a singular unit – that is, a wife and husband who become mother and father to their offspring. Such a concept informs not only the dynastic monuments in Lycia, but also other monuments in which the form of the family embodies the power and legitimacy of the king. The Xanthian monument and Lycian *heroa* more broadly anticipate the dynastic monuments that would be built in the mid-fourth century. The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus in Caria is one such important example of the ways in which visual representations of kinship, and family ties between husband and wife, were central to articulations of dynastic identity. Indeed, both archaeological and textual evidence confirm that the Mausoleum's programme included ancestor galleries with over-human-size sculptures of multiple generations of male and female kin-members from the Hecatomnid dynasty. While it is unclear if the Mausoleum's designers looked to earlier examples of monumental funerary art, it is certainly the case that the Nereid Monument was one of the first public monuments to develop such an important representation of the dynastic couple along with their attendants and children, or the dynastic household, within one picture. The sculptural programmes make clear that, to fully represent the dynastic household and convey dynastic identity, the female body of the dynast's wife had become an important and effective symbol in illustrating political stability on behalf of the ruling dynast.

At once a funerary and triumphal monument, the Nereid Monument is thus important for our understanding of dynastic monuments and the art of power throughout the long Hellenistic period. Although the Nereid Monument's iconography fits squarely within wholly Lycian traditions, while simultaneously appropriating iconographic and stylistic traditions from across the Aegean, its contributions to dynastic self-representation must not be overlooked. The Nereid Monument presents a different way to think about the narrative function of female bodies and the importance of femininity in articulating aspects of dynastic masculinity, legitimacy and continuity for viewing audiences in Lycia and beyond.

#### Abbreviations

*CEG* P.A. Hansen, *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca*, 2 vols. (1983–89)

*FdX 1 Fouilles de Xanthos I*, P. Demargne, *Les piliers funéraires*, Paris, 1958.

*FdX 2 Fouilles de Xanthos II*, H. Metzger, *l'acropole lycienne*, Paris, 1963

*FdX 3 Fouilles de Xanthos III*, P. Demargne, P. Coupel, *Le Monument des Néréides. L'architecture*. Paris, 1969

- FdX 5 *Fouilles de Xanthos V*, P. Demargne, *Tombes-maisons, tombes rupestres et sarcophages*, Paris, 1974
- FdX 6 *Fouilles de Xanthos VI*, H. Metzger, *La Stèle trilingue de Létöon*. Paris, 1979
- FdX 8 *Fouilles de Xanthos VIII*, W.A.P. Childs, P. Demargne, *Le décor sculpté due Monument des Néréides*, Paris, 1989
- FdX 9 *Fouilles de Xanthos IX*, H. Metzger, A. Bourgarel, J. Bousquet, *La region nord du santuaire et l'inscriptions gréco-lyciennes*, Paris, 1992
- N G. Neumann, 1979. *Neufunde Lykischer Inschriften seit 1901*, Vienna
- SEG *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, 1923–
- TL E. Kalinka, 1901. *Tituli Asiae Minoris*. Vienna

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