

= Harpy Tomb =

The Harpy Tomb is a marble chamber from a pillar tomb that stands in the abandoned city of Xanthos , capital of ancient Lycia , a region of southwestern Anatolia in what is now Turkey . Dating to approximately 480 ? 470 BC , the chamber topped a tall pillar and was decorated with marble panels carved in bas @-@ relief . It may be the tomb of Kybernis , a king of Xanthos .

The marble chamber is carved in the Greek Archaic style . Along with much other material in Xanthos it is heavily influenced by Greek art , but there are also indications of non @-@ Greek influence in the carvings . The monument takes its name from the four carved female winged figures , resembling Harpies . The identities of the carved figures and the meaning of the scenes depicted are uncertain , but it is generally now agreed that the winged creatures are not Harpies . The Lycians absorbed much of Greek mythology into their own culture and the scenes may represent Greek deities , but it is also possible they are unknown Lycian deities . An alternative interpretation is that they represent scenes of judgement in the afterlife and scenes of supplication to Lycian rulers .

The carvings were removed from the tomb in the 19th century by archaeologist Charles Fellows and taken to England . Fellows visited Lycia in 1838 and reported finding the remains of a culture that until then was virtually unknown to Europeans . After obtaining permission from the Turkish authorities to remove stone artefacts from the region , Fellows collected a large amount of material from Xanthos under commission from the British Museum in London , where the reliefs are now on display .

= = Lycian culture = =

Lycian culture was at one time viewed as a branch of Greek culture by scholars , especially from the Classical period onwards , when Lycian architecture and sculpture were very much in the Classical Greek style . But the Lycians had a distinct culture of their own , and their religious and funerary rites can be distinguished from the Greek . The Lycian language , although it is Indo @-@ European , is related to Hittite and most probably directly descended from the related Luwian language . Several groups speaking Hittite @-@ related languages continued to exist in Asia Minor for many centuries after the Hittite Empire had passed into history .

Lycia occupied a strategic position between Europe and the Near East . The Greek and Persian worlds met in Lycia , and the Lycians were heavily influenced by both . At one period Persian influence would dominate and at another , Greek , resulting in Lycian culture being an amalgam of both .

Greek influence is found in Lycia from an early date . The Lycian alphabet is derived from Rhodian Greek , with borrowings from other alphabets , possibly Phoenician . The country was conquered by Harpagus in 540 BC , who was acting for the Persians . Lycia 's culture was influenced by its annexation into the Persian Empire , but also by its neighbours , the Ionian Greeks . The influence of Greek culture increased after Xerxes ' army was defeated at the Battle of Plataea by Greek forces in 479 BC . Kybernis , for whom the Harpy Tomb is thought to have been built , may have died as a consequence of wounds he received in the defeat of Xerxes , either at Plataea or the naval battle of Salamis . He was succeeded by Kuprilli , and then Kheriga , who took an Iranian name and appeared to be pro @-@ Persian . After Alexander the Great 's conquest of the country rapid Hellenisation took place in Lycia , and its culture became subsumed in the Greek .

= = = Mythology = = =

Lycia features heavily in Greek mythology . The Titan goddess Leto fled to Lycia after giving birth , or in order to give birth , to Apollo and Artemis . The Lycians play a part in the Iliad , under their leader Sarpedon , as allies of Troy . Bellerophon killed the fire @-@ breathing monster Chimaera which was ravaging Lycia .

These stories may well not have originally been part of Lycian mythology , but may have been

borrowed from the Greek . The Greek goddess Leto , for example , may have been equated with the Lycian mother goddess . Having incorporated Leto into their pantheon , the rest of the Greek stories followed naturally . Certainly , the temple to Leto was of some importance in Xanthos . It would appear that the Lycians actively encouraged this synthesis in order to promote themselves as part of the Greek family .

Another story from Greek mythology concerns the origin of the name of the country . According to the myth , Lycia is named after Lycus , the son of Pandion , king of Athens . Prior to Lycus becoming their leader , the Lycians were known as Termilae . Lycus was later to help remove the usurper Metion from the throne of Athens . The real origin of the name , however , would appear to be a derivation of Lukka , the name of the country found in Hittite records .

= = = Lycian sculpture = = =

Lycian architecture and sculpture are on the same level as Greek , but to the Greeks , the Lycians , along with other non @-@ Greek peoples of S.W. Anatolia , were often viewed as barbarians . From c . 550 BC Greek pottery is found in quantity in Lycia ; the Lion Tomb , Pillar of the Wrestlers , and the pillars at Isinda and Trysa are all distinctly Greek in style with little eastern symbolism .

Pillar tombs are the earliest form of tomb found in Lycia and go back to the sixth century BC , first appearing c . 540 BC . The pillar tombs appear to be reserved for leading dynasts . House tombs and sarcophagi appear from the mid @-@ 5th century BC onwards . Xanthos has 43 monumental tombs of which 17 are sculptured and 35 are pillar tombs , usually to a high standard of workmanship .

The Harpy Tomb belongs to the Late Archaic Greek style . The Archaic Style introduced an element of realism that was developed to its fullest in the later Classical Style , but retained some of the formalism of the earlier Geometric Style in its rules of symmetry . Of the many tombs at Xanthos , the Harpy Tomb is unique in period and style . Other well @-@ known sculptures from Xanthos include the earlier Lion Tomb and the later Tomb of Payava and Nereid Monument .

= = Tomb = =

Xanthos lies in the Antalya Province of modern Turkey . The Harpy Tomb is in the Acropolis of Xanthos to the north of where the Roman theatre now stands and on its west side . It would have originally stood on the edge of the marketplace . The original pillar is still in place ; Fellows took only the sculptures , which have been replaced with cement casts of the originals .

The tomb is the only Late Archaic tomb in Xanthos to have survived the extensive redevelopment of the acropolis in the Roman period , and was left standing as an isolated historical artefact . Many other Lycian tombs survive in Xanthos , but there are no others from this particular period .

The space inside the tomb was later occupied by an early Christian hermit . Fellows noted that the backs of the reliefs still bore the remains of the hermit 's religious paintings and monograms . Fellows speculates that this man was a disciple of Simeon Stylites ( 390 ? 459 AD ) , one of the eponymously named Christian ascetics known as stylites , who lived on the top of tall columns .

= = = Construction = = =

The tomb is a large square of carved marble panels . Each side is 7 feet ( 2 @. @ 1 m ) in length and 3 feet 3 inches ( 1 @. @ 0 m ) in height . It was originally set upon a large oblong stone pedestal , 17 feet ( 5 @. @ 2 m ) high , making it an example of a pillar tomb . The top of the pillar has a hollowed out chamber creating a space inside the tomb 7 feet 6 inches ( 2 @. @ 3 m ) tall from the bottom of the hollow to the top of the reliefs . All four sides are carved with similar relief panels in one of which ( the south side ) is a small opening to allow a body to be placed in the tomb . This aperture may originally have been closed with a stele . The tomb is roofed with what appear to be three large slabs , one above the other . In fact , the capstone is one single piece , weighing 15 to 20 tons , carved to give the appearance of three layers . Each false slab overlaps the ones below to

form an entablature . All the parts , except the sculptured reliefs , are made from local grey @-@ blue limestone .

= = = Style = = =

The tomb , along with many other artefacts from Lycia of the period , is in the Greek Archaic style . If the dating is accurate ( 480 ? 470 BC ) the Archaic style continued in Lycia for some time after it had become unfashionable in Greece . The sculptures may have been carved by Ionian Greek craftsmen , if not they are heavily influenced by them . There are some features of the carvings that definitely suggest a non @-@ Greek origin . The female faces have a sensuous look with full lips and large eyes that are typically Lycian .

= = Reliefs = =

The reliefs show seated figures receiving gifts from standing figures . At the left and right edges on the north and south sides are winged female creatures with bird bodies ( the " Harpies " ) . The winged creatures are carrying away small childlike figures .

Between the winged creatures on the north side is a seated figure receiving a helmet from a standing warrior ; under the chair is a bear . Under the winged creature on the right is a kneeling female suppliant . Between the winged creatures on the south side is a seated figure of uncertain sex receiving a dove from a standing female . The seated figure is holding a pomegranate in the left hand and an unidentified object ( possibly fruit or an egg ) in the right hand .

On the west side are two females seated on thrones and facing each other . Their breasts are large and the nipples and areolae can be seen through their thin clothing . The one on the right holds in her right hand a flower and in her left a pomegranate . The one on the left holds in her right hand a phiale . The opening for insertion of the body is in front of this figure . Above the opening is a cow suckling its calf . This design is also seen on coins from the reign of Sppndaza ( 475 to 469 BC ) . On the right of the opening three female figures advance towards the seated figures . The second advancing female holds in her right hand a fruit and in her left a pomegranate flower . The third holds in her raised right hand an object , possibly an egg .

On the east side is a male figure seated on a throne , holding in his right hand a pomegranate flower and being offered a cock by a smaller standing figure . Behind the small standing figure is a male holding in his left hand a staff and advancing with a dog . Behind the seated figure are two advancing females , the first holding in her left hand a pomegranate .

It is thought the carvings on the monument were originally brightly painted . At the time of Fellows ' discovery of the monument , the remains of blue paint were found in the backgrounds of the reliefs . Traces of red paint have also been found on other parts .

= = Interpretations = =

The seated figures are thought to be Lycian gods or deified ancestors . Among the possible identities for the seated figures on the north and south sides are Harpagus , the Median general who became the founder of the Lycian dynasty , and Kybernis , a later king of Lycia . Kybernis is proposed as a possible identity of the occupant of the tomb . Another view is that they are generalised scenes of judgement in Hades rather than earthly rulers . Consistent with this view is the interpretation of the south figure as Persephone , the Queen of the Underworld . The figures to the left and right of the opening may be the goddesses Demeter and Persephone respectively .

The repeated use of the pomegranate in the symbolism is not accidental . Not just in Lycia , but throughout Asia Minor , the Greek world , and Palestine , the pomegranate was widely recognised as a symbol of fructification and procreation . Conversely , it is also a symbol of change and death . This symbolism can be helpful in identifying the deities in the reliefs . The pomegranate is a suitable gift for a goddess of sexuality such as Aphrodite who herself planted the original pomegranate on Cyprus . It is not a suitable gift for an intellectual goddess such as Athena . The pomegranate can

have an overtly sexual meaning ; Demeter complains that her daughter Persophone was " forced to eat the seed of a pomegranate " in the underworld , by which it is understood that she was raped .

The winged creatures are likely not Harpies , but this misidentification has stuck in the name of the monument . A better match is to the Sirens but many sources doubt either of these claims . The small figures they are carrying away may represent the souls of the dead . Another suggestion for the small figures are that they are the daughters of the hero Pandareus who were carried away to become the Furies .

= = Removal of the sculptures = =

The sculpted reliefs were taken to England by Charles Fellows , who had been commissioned by the British Museum to bring back artefacts after they learned of his 1838 exploration of the region . Until then , Lycian culture was virtually unknown in Western Europe . The tomb was ( and still is , minus its reliefs ) located in the Acropolis of Xanthos .

Fellows received permission in October 1841 from the Ottoman Sultan to remove stone artefacts from the region . A Royal Navy ship , HMS Beacon commanded by Captain Graves , was tasked with recovering and transporting the items identified by Fellows . The ship sailed from Malta on 30 October but did not arrive on site until 26 December , delayed largely by unanticipated and protracted negotiations with the Turkish authorities . Fellows ' documents did not give him the permissions he thought they did ( he had not had them translated ) , and some of the British Government 's requests were seen as unreasonable , such as removing stones from the walls of operational military fortresses .

A further delay was caused by a disagreement with Graves . It transpired that the ship had not brought suitable tackle for lifting the heavier pieces . Fellows wanted Graves to return to Malta immediately to fetch the necessary equipment , but Graves requested further orders from his superiors before doing so , which took some time to arrive . The Beacon did not finally return until March 1842 .

To remove the sculptures of the Harpy Tomb the capstone , which may have weighed as much as twenty tons and was resting on the sculptured sides , had to be lifted off , causing the sides of the tomb to fall in . Fellows , who had left the sailors to carry out this task in their own way , remarked " but the sculptured parts did not receive more injury than they probably would have done from a more scientific operation " . The sculptures of another monument at Xanthos , the Horse Tomb , were left in situ because they were so large that they could only be handled if first sawn into pieces . This Fellows would have done , but the stone @-@ sawyers arrived from Malta with Graves so late in the season that they immediately succumbed to malaria and the task was abandoned . Nevertheless , 80 tons of material were put on board .