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Archaeological Discoveries from Tenea

Tenea was a city in the vicinity of Corinth [2, pp. 125–128; 9, pp. 465–580; 17; 18, pp. 159–160; 27]. The city of Tenea is mentioned by Strabo (8.6.21–22) and Pausanias (2.5.4)¹. It is Pausanias, who gives us information about the origin of the people in Tenea. They were considered, according to mythology, Trojan war-prisoners, who were brought over after the fall of Troy and were allowed by Agamemnon to settle in the region of Tenea. During the Roman period this belief was still very much alive and thus Tenea was not destroyed, as the inhabitants were considered to have a common background with the Romans also coming, according to myth, from Troy.

Before starting the Tenea systematic research program at Chiliomodi, only sporadic finds of the city had been recorded. The magnificent kouros of Tenea was found near Chiliomodi, but unfortunately in the 19th century it was removed from Greece and transferred to Munich [23, pp. 54–70]. Other objects from Tenea exist in Berlin [7, pp. 20–26]. The high artistic quality of these first finds attests to the elevated standard of the city.

In 2010, Greek policemen confiscated two impressive archaic kouroi nearby Chiliomodi, ready to be sold and sent abroad. They now adorn along with an archaic sarcophagus from Chiliomodi the refurbished halls of the Museum of Ancient Corinth. The sarcophagus was excavated in 1984 in the area of Faneromeni-Kamareta at Chiliomodi. The lid of the sarcophagus bears a monumental painting of two magnificent lions with an antefix between them in the form of a palmette (Ill. 1). It is a unique find dating to the Archaic period [10, pp. 305–311 and 11, pp. 549–556]. In the strata above the sarcophagus a unique Roman plastic-form lantern of Corinthian clay with the shape of a fire-bearing Silenus was found. Perhaps it indicates that the place had significance even in the Roman times [12].

During the systematic excavations, which started in 2013, a well-organized cemetery of 5 burials was brought to light near the first sarcophagus, dating from the first half of the 6th to the 3rd century B.C. [12] Tenea was very prosperous during the Archaic period since with Corinth it colonized Syracuse (Strabo 8.6.21–22 (380)).

Among the graves most outstanding is a child burial, which had 53 vases in its interior and exterior including two bronze pouring bowls (phialai) (Fig. 1). From all these worthy of special attention is the double askos with rope handle and trefoil strained spout discovered at the exterior of this sarcophagus. Until now, no parallels of this vase have been found. Likewise from the same grave special are two closed unhandled vases, the form of which also seems to

¹ Other testimonia are Xen., *Hellenica* 4. 4. 19; Cic., *Ad Atticum* 6. 2. 3 and Step. Byz., s. v. Tenea.



Fig. 1. Kiliomodi, ancient Tenea, necropolis, child burial



Fig. 2. Kiliomodi, ancient Tenea, trench no. 1



Fig. 3. Kiliomodi, ancient Tenea, trench no. 3

have no parallels in Greek archaeological literature. The anthropological material indicates that these graves belong to a prominent part of the city society.

In the following years a main ancient road was excavated (Fig. 2), the unearthed part of which reaches 37 m in length. Finds here date from the late Mycenaean period to the late Roman times.

Furthermore, a large scale surface and geophysical survey is conducted in large regions in order to map the topography of ancient Tenea. It is evident that the necropolis zone existing to the east of the village, dating from Geometric to Roman times, covers an area of almost 2,5 km in a north-south axis (Fig. 3).

At the west end of the ancient cemeteries and south of Chiliomodi excavation revealed a magnificent two-room aboveground funerary monument of the Roman times (Fig. 4). The mausoleum of Tenea [13] is unique in its layout in the Corinthia and comparable to monuments of similar typology from Patra [6, pp. 163–210], Nicopolis [28, pp. 109–119], Ostia [25, pp. 5–230], Pompeii [19, pp. 7–49] and Asia Minor [26, pp. 5–11].

From the interior of the main chamber (which had been ravaged by looters) mainly copper coins, lamps, a zinc earring, cosmetic utensils and other objects were found. These remaining offerings bare evidence of rich burial goods, which would have existed in the past.

In the antechamber, remains of a jar-burial and three infant burials were found. Outside the monument and around it, 35 burials were discovered: jar-burials, kalivites and sarcophagoi. The grave offerings are very rich, mostly of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Part of an extensive building with individual rooms was also discovered to the west of the monument, with very impressive finds. Further to the north and closer to the village of Chiliomodi, an extensive compound of elaborate Roman date domestic structures started to come to light in the excavation of 2018.

All the above points to elaborate architecture and art, which must have existed in Tenea, especially in public areas of the city throughout the centuries. The coins of Tenea during the period of Septimius Severus [14, pp. 199–211] show the depiction of a triple archway with statues of the emperor, which must have existed in the city, they also indicate the importance of Tenea and its monuments.

In order to further increase our knowledge of the site, our study has included artifacts which at times were handed over by the inhabitants of Chiliomodi. Among them is a very interesting relief of the god Hermes (Ill. 2), which was given in 1997 to the Antiquities Ephorate of the Corinthia by an individual from Chiliomodi in order to receive a reward. A three-member Committee, which was set up by the Ministry of Culture with prominent members of the Archaeological Service, documented that the object is authentic dating to the Roman imperial times and the sum which must be offered to the individual, should be 3.500.000 Drachmas. The sum was given and the relief is today in the storeroom of the Museum of Ancient Corinth. The Committee stated that this important relief must have come from the adornment of a building of luxury, either a villa or great altar or monumental precinct.

This relief panel of Hermes is published for the first time.

The relief block (0,90×0,50×0,25 m) is made from a local marble and its elaboration is worked with a tooth and point chisel. The partial use of a tongue chisel indicates a Roman date



Fig. 4. Kiliomodi, ancient Tenea, monumental tomb

[1, pp. 26–39]. It is endowed with a frame in the shape of a swastika meander which defines the central relief rectangle from left, right and above. The frame is slightly tapering from below to top. At the viewer's right side of the panel, there is a semi-pillar which displays from below to top a short plinth, flat tori and scotiae, in its lower part it bears 6 flat flutes, in its top section there are 3 flat flutes. The pillar is topped by a Corinthian capital with the canonic three rows of leafs and the tall leafs at the corners. This type of capital is typical of standard Corinthian capitals of pillars in the Augustan period [20, pp. 75–97] and thus strengthens the date of the architectural complex of Tenea in this period.

At the right side of the marble block, a rectangular pilaster is incorporated into the relief. At this pilaster, the non-fluted part reaches the height of 0,60 m. This geometric datum informs us about the exact eye level of the people passing in front of the initial monument to which the relief belonged.

At the section of the block, at the sides, there is a rectangular-shaped thrust joint, negative at the left side and positive at the right side. The side faces of this relief had identical thrust joints, dimensions, and architectural characteristics (meander band and incorporated pilaster) in order to create an entire structural zone, an ensemble. The blocks have neither other types of joints for the structural connection with the back wall no joints between them.

At the back face of the block an unfinished quarry band indicates that the block probably belongs to a reused quantity of marbles from a big scale marble monument. Normally, during

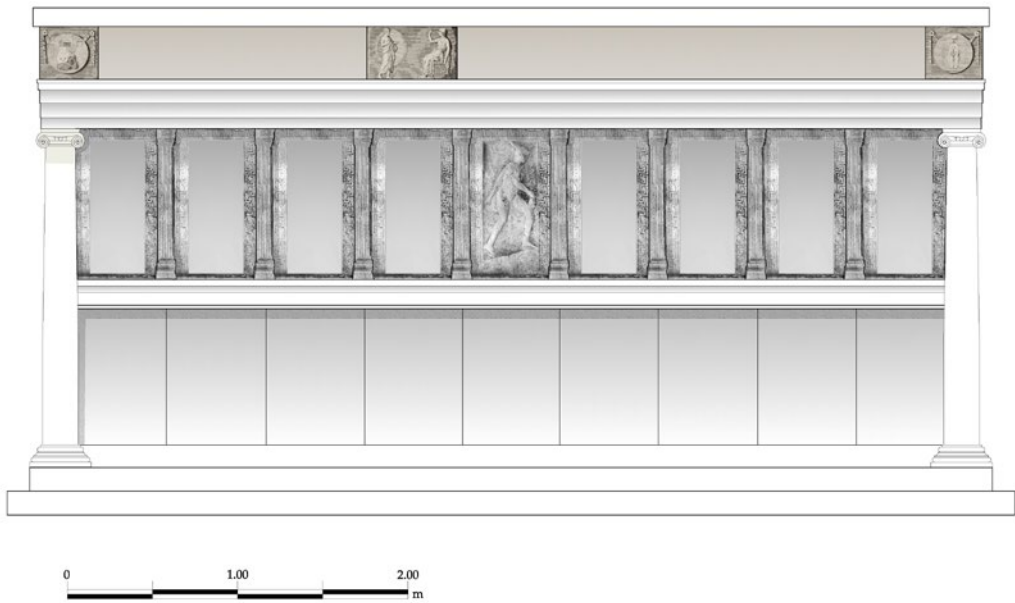


Fig. 5. Reconstruction drawing of the sekos with relief of Hermes, made by Architect Michalis Lefantzis

the construction of these monuments, 30 % of the material was not usable, because of technical failure. The material of this relief probably belongs to that 30 %.

The relief with its side blocks (still unknown) was probably attached to a preexisting wall, determining the positioning of figures between pilasters as the representation suggests, up to a series of orthostates, if we follow the architectural typology and rhythm of the period.

The details of the elaboration of the relief give evidence about the technical failure of the material. At the lower left corner, there is a deeper carving because of this material deficiency. The meander band at this part becomes wider, as the technician followed an exact carved geometrical pattern. The incision of this pattern at the deeper lower left part of the relief is the reason for the distortion of the meander band. The initial material failure can also be seen at the area of the Hermes's face.

As comparanda for the use of this type of reliefs, the most exceptional example is the Ara Pacis in Rome [4; 16] (Ill. 3). The Ara Pacis is one of the most important altars of the Roman period, a central civic monument placed at the most crucial urban crossroad of the capital. It is comparable to the Tenea Hermes block in many aspects. It uses the same type of meander bands [4, fig. 157] and the same deep carving at the inner surface of the block's front to create a vivid, almost three-dimensional relief, always inserted between decorated pilasters. Of course, the artistic and architectural quality of the Ara Pacis is beyond any comparison. There even the orthostates are decorated.

Thus, we might posit that the Hermes relief belonged to a similar decorated precinct wall of an altar of smaller proportion. The entire monument, judging by the dimensions of this single block, was not more than 5,00×5,00 m with the height of maximum 3,20 m. It could have stood on a podium. Finally, a small altar was placed in the area enclosed by this perimeter wall. This structure was erected at the central crossroad of the urban district of Tenea, and should be dated in the period of Augustus.

Let us turn now to the analysis of the representation of the god Hermes. He occupies the center of the relief panel. He is shown in profile, striding toward the viewer's right. This implies that the center of the monument was in this direction. From this detail we might conjecture that the panel must have been located in the viewer's left side of the monument.

Hermes's body is almost completely nude, with a chlamis disposed across his right shoulder. This mantel reveals few folds which are rather flattened. He also wears the typical petasos on his head. His face looks young and beardless. The anatomic patterns are still indebted to the Late Classical anatomic grammar: oval face, triangular forehead with upper borders curved, narrow and elongated eye, short and sinuous mouth, slightly protruding chin. The hair is made of short and curly locks. The remote model of this head is the head of the Andros type of Hermes, to be attributed to the Praxitelean environment around 340–330 B.C. [8, pp. 143–157].

The god wears boots, and is about to walk uphill. He holds a sakkos for coins in his right hand, the caduceus in his left hand. The general schema of the figure is taken from the Cambridge-Vatican type of Hermes, known from reliefs in these museums and dated in the late Hellenistic times [21, p. 320, nos. 377–378 a–b]. The presence of the sakkos for coins identifies the god as Mercurius [22, pp. 500–501] rather than Hermes.

The Hermes relief, however, was probably not the only sculpted panel decorating this important civic monument. By collating information about previous finds from the area, we might propose several other elements to enrich our reconstruction (Fig. 5).

A fragment of panel preserved once in the local Church of Agios Nikolaos Clenias but now lost bears the same swastika meander of the panel with Hermes and thus probably pertained to the same monument. It depicted in the middle Dionysos as a young beardless god, standing in full prospect, wearing a himation and holding the thyrsus in his left hand [9, p. 576, fig. 23]. Clearly this Dionysos is the Hope type of god conceived in the Praxitelean environment in Late Classical times and known thanks to contemporary vase paintings and reliefs as well as several Roman copies [3, pp. 26–29].

Above this series of panels, perhaps there was a relief frieze. A rectangular relief slab was copied with a drawing by Stuart and Revett when they travelled through the fields of Corinth [24, pp. 37, 46]. At that time, this piece stood in the same Church of Agios Nikolaos Teneas in which the Dionysos panel was seen but later it also disappeared. The circumstance that it once stood in the same place of the Dionysos panel suggests that it pertained to the same monument. If it is so, then this metope could be part of the upper freeze of the altar, as we can see at the hypothetical reconstruction (Fig. 5). The slab displayed an enthroned goddess with helmet and spear, a bearded man is walking toward her. We suggest that the goddess is Roma [5, pp. 1057–1058, nos. 127–140], while the bearded man looks very similar to Aeneas or Numa Pompilius in the Ara Pacis [16, p. 231, fig. 1]. Perhaps this would be the interpretation to give also to this slab from Tenea.

The monument may celebrate a triumph in Augustan times: perhaps Augustus' victory at Actium? In that case, the inspiration from the Ara Pacis would be perfectly understandable. The date should be around 10–5 B.C.

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Title. Archaeological Discoveries from Tenea.

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Annotation. This article focuses on the identification and excavation of important artworks of the ancient city of Tenea, south of Corinth, where the modern villages Chiliomodi and Clenia are located. In the past, three kouroi were found in the broader area, one is now in Munich, and the other two are in the Archaeological Museum of Corinth. In the excavation a large section of the necropolis has been found. In particular an archaic sarcophagus bearing the painting of two lions in heraldic position is particularly impressive, a large mausoleum also found on the site is noteworthy. A relief slab with Hermes, a now lost fragment of another slab with Dionysos and finally a relief panel also lost but copied in a drawing by Stuart in the late 18th century may have been pertinent to a sekos which may have existed in the city in celebration of the victory of Octavian at Actium dating in the middle Augustan times.

Keywords: Tenea; Corinth; Troy; Strabo; Pausanias; lions; Hermes; Dionysos; Augustus.

Название статьи. Археологические находки в Тенее.

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Аннотация. Статья сообщает о результатах раскопок древней Тенеи, идентифицированной вблизи современных поселений Хилиомоди и Кления. В этих краях раньше уже были найдены три курiosa (один ныне находится в Мюнхене, два — в Археологическом музее Коринфа). В ходе недавних раскопок была открыта часть некрополя. Особого внимания заслуживают архаический расписной саркофаг (с «геральдическим» изображением двух львов) и большой мавзолей. В статье впервые публикуется рельефное панно с Гермесом. Наряду с изображением Диониса (известным по источникам, но ныне утерянным) и фризом, сохранным в рисунках Стюарта конца XVIII в., этот рельеф украшал монументальный алтарь — по всей вероятности, победное посвящение в честь битвы при Акции, созданное в середине августовского периода.

Ключевые слова: Теней; Коринф; Троя; Страбон; Павсаний; львы; Гермес; Дионис, Август.