

Abstract

Etruscan rock-cut tombs with decorated façades are studied by relatively few, almost exclusively Italian archaeologists. They stand somewhat in the background behind, out of the spotlight behind other Etruscan tombs, which gained attention because of their wall paintings or grave goods. In the Hellenistic period, between the 2nd half of the 4th century BC and the 1st half of the 2nd century BC, a group of approximately 30 tombs was created in the inland area of southern Etruria, in the necropolises of two Etruscan cities, Sovana and Norchia, whose façades, all cut into the bedrock, elaborately imitate elements of real architecture and are decorated with figural reliefs. Ever since the discovery of these tombs in the 19th century until today, researches have thought about their similarity with the architecture of Greek temples and architectural styles, with the tombs of Macedonian rulers, rock tombs outside Etruria, mainly in the eastern Mediterranean. The debate about foreign influences and the search for analogies is still alive, and continues even today with new discoveries.

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to this discussion about foreign artistic influences on the architecture and decoration of these Etruscan tombs, to try to answer these main questions – to what extent did the creators of the façades draw from local tradition and whether, and if so, what were they inspired by other cultures? I will try to achieve this goal by my own detailed examination of individual decorative motifs, as well as the overall form of façades and the search for relevant analogies within the archaeology of ancient Etruria, the rest of ancient Italy and especially the territory of Magna Graecia, and the Eastern Mediterranean. From the group of 30 rock-cut tombs, I chose 22 on the basis that they are sufficiently preserved, have an elaborate façade imitating elements of real architecture and figurative decoration, which are not known from previous periods. On their façades, I identified 11 individual decorative motifs – the deceased on a *kliné*, a water demon, protomes within a floral motif, Corinthian capitals of columns with anthropomorphic protomes, the so-called "Rankengöttin", scenes from Greek myths, demons Vanth, Charu and winged demons, lions, winged lions and sphinxes, procession of magistrates, weapon frieze, frieze with griffins and floral motif. As the twelfth theme, I included the imitation of architecture in the overall form of the façade.

Motifs based on the Etruscan pre-Hellenistic tradition are: the deceased on *kliné*, water demon, demons Vanth, Charu and winged demons, statues of lions and sphinxes in front

of the tomb and procession of magistrates. Motifs that came from Magna Graecia at the end of the classical period and at the beginning of Hellenism are protomes within floral motif, Corinthian capitals of columns with anthropomorphic protomes, scenes of the sacrifice of Trojan captives, Amazonomachy etc. Motifs that originate outside of Etruria are also so-called "Rankengöttin", frieze with equipment and weapons, frieze with griffins and floral motif. They were imported in the Hellenistic period from southern Italy, but their analogies are also found in the eastern Mediterranean and in Macedonian tombs, where artistic elements from Magna Graecia were used. These movements of artistic influences were not unidirectional and the result is the Hellenistic *koiné* in art. The same difficult distinguishability of influences and their combinations is evident in the overall form of the façades, which imitate elements of real architecture. Etruscan rock tombs with decorated façades were not copies of rock tombs in the eastern Mediterranean, nor were they directly influenced by them. Their similarity results from the common sources of rapidly spreading and rapidly adapted inspiration of Hellenistic architecture, tendencies towards monumentalization of tombs after examples from western Anatolia mausoleums and heroons, and the use of elements of temple architecture for various other types of buildings.

Keywords: Hellenism, Etruscan, rock-cut tombs, façades, architecture, iconography, eschatology, influences, Italia, Greece, Magna Graecia, Apulia, Western Anatolia, Eastern Mediterranean