

Issue XIV (2026)

Terracotta Cylindrical Sarcophagus with a Silenos Head Relief from the Necropolis of Attouda

Bilge YILMAZ KOLANCI

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2774-0829>

The entire contents of this journal, *CEDRUS: The Journal of Mediterranean Civilizations Studies*, is open to users and it is an 'open access' journal. Users are able to read the full texts, to download, to copy, print and distribute without obtaining the permission of the editor and author(s). However, all references to the articles published in the e-journal *Cedrus* are to indicate through reference the source of the citation from this journal.

CEDRUS: The Journal of Mediterranean Civilizations Studies is a peer-reviewed journal and the articles which have had their peer reviewing process completed will be published on the web-site (journal.phaselis.org) in the year of the journal's issue (e.g. Issue XIV: January-December 2026). At the end of December 2026 the year's issue is completed.

Responsibility for the articles published in this journal remains with the authors.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Citation Yılmaz Kolancı B. 2026, "Terracotta Cylindrical Sarcophagus with a Silenos Head Relief from the Necropolis of Attouda". *Cedrus* XIV, 309-322. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22305506>

Received Date: 25.04.2026 | Acceptance Date: 08.07.2026
Online Publication Date: 12.10.2026

Copyediting & Proofreading Editorial Board of Cedrus
<https://mediterrra.org/>

Terracotta Cylindrical Sarcophagus with a Silenos Head Relief from the Necropolis of Attouda

Attouda Nekropolis'inden Silenos Başı Kabartmalı Pişmiş Toprak Silindirik Lahit

Bilge YILMAZ KOLANCI *

Abstract: This study examines a relief depicting a Silenos head on the lid of a cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus identified during the 2023 surface surveys conducted at the ancient city of Attouda, located within the boundaries of Hisar Neighborhood in the Sarayköy district of Denizli Province. The sarcophagus was found in a disturbed context as a result of agricultural activities and had been detached from its original setting; therefore, its dating is based on typological and iconographic evaluations. Within the scope of the study, the tradition of cylindrical terracotta sarcophagi known from Anatolia and the Lykos Valley is reviewed, and the Attouda example is evaluated within the framework of regional production. The formal characteristics of the examined sarcophagus fragments indicate that they were produced in local workshops. However, the most distinctive feature of the piece is the high-relief depiction of a bearded Silenos head on the sarcophagus lid. The absence of comparable representations among known examples from Anatolia renders the piece unique. The iconographic analysis suggests that the figure represents Silenos associated with the Dionysian cult and that it served an apotropaic (protective) function within the funerary context. Although a precise dating cannot be established due to the absence of associated grave goods, it is proposed, based on parallels, that the sarcophagus was produced in the 1st–2nd centuries CE. This study offers a new and original contribution both to the necropolis tradition of Attouda and to the typology of terracotta sarcophagi in Anatolia.

Keywords: Attouda • Necropolis • Silenos • Cylindrical Terracotta Sarcophagus • Apotropaic • Roman Imperial Period

Öz: Bu çalışma, Denizli ili Sarayköy ilçesi Hisar Mahallesi sınırlarında yer alan Attouda antik kentinde 2023 yılı yüzey araştırmaları sırasında tespit edilen, pişmiş toprak silindirik bir lahdin kapağı üzerinde yer alan Silenos başı kabartmasını ele almaktadır. Söz konusu lahit, tarımsal faaliyetler sonucunda bozulmuş bir arkeolojik bağlamda bulunmuş ve özgün konumundan ayrılmıştır; bu nedenle tarihlendirmesi tipolojik ve ikonografik değerlendirmelere dayanmaktadır. Çalışma kapsamında, Anadolu ve Lykos Vadisi'nde bilinen pişmiş toprak silindirik lahit geleneği ele alınmakta ve Attouda örneği bölgesel üretim çerçevesinde değerlendirilmektedir. İncelenen lahit parçalarının biçimsel özellikleri, bunların yerel atölyelerde üretildiğine işaret etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, eserin en ayırt edici özelliğini lahit kapağı üzerinde yüksek kabartma tekniğinde betimlenen sakallı Silenos başı oluşturmaktadır. Anadolu'da bilinen örnekler arasında karşılaştırılabilir bir betimlemenin bulunmaması, bu eseri benzersiz kılmaktadır. İkonografik değerlendirme, figürün Dionysos kültüyle ilişkili Silenos'u temsil ettiğini ve mezar bağlamında apotropaik (koruyucu) bir işlev taşıdığını göstermektedir. İlişkili mezar buluntularının bulunmaması nedeniyle kesin bir tarihlendirme yapılamamakla birlikte, benzer örneklere dayanarak lahdin MS 1–2. yüzyıllarda üretildiği önerilmektedir. Bu çalışma, hem Attouda'nın nekropol geleneğine hem de Anadolu'daki pişmiş toprak lahitlerin tipolojisine yeni ve özgün bir katkı sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Attouda • Nekropolis • Silenos • Pişmiş Toprak Silindirik Lahit • Apotropaic • Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi

* Assoc. Prof., Pamukkale University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Archaeology, Denizli, Türkiye.  0000-0003-2774-0829 | bilgey@pau.edu.tr

Introduction

The city of Attouda is located within the boundaries of Hisar Neighborhood (Village) in the district of Sarayköy, Denizli Province. In antiquity, the city was a frontier settlement situated between the regions of Caria, Phrygia, and Lydia. It was established on a defensible hill, bounded on three sides by steep cliffs, to the north of the mountain range known as Salbakos (Babadağ)¹ (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 The ancient city of Attouda and the area where the cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus was discovered

Data obtained through archaeological surveys and excavations conducted at the site have demonstrated that the history of the settlement extends back to the 7th–6th centuries BCE and continued uninterrupted until the present day². The most prosperous period of Attouda in antiquity was the Roman Imperial Period. In addition to the identification of numerous architectural elements, inscriptions, and other remains belonging to this era at various points within the settlement, a variety of archaeological finds (such as sculptures and terracotta objects preserved in the Denizli Museum) also constitute evidence of this prosperity³. The fragments belonging to the cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus discussed in this study were identified during the survey carried out at the ancient city in 2023 and were delivered to the Directorate of

¹ For comprehensive information on Attouda and Hisar Köyü, see Ramsay 1895, 165-171; Şimşek 2002, 229-245; Özçelik 2006, 891-917, Söğüt 2007, 383-396; Şimşek 2016, 627-648; Şimşek & Okunak 2017, 181-220; Söğüt 2017; Aytekin 2017; Yılmaz-Kolancı 2023, 261-280; 2024, 345-363; 2025a, 217-232; 2025b, 1-34; Sayın 2025, 81-103; Ekmekci 2025a, 69-97; 2025b, 106.

² Yılmaz-Kolancı 2024, 347.

³ Söğüt 2007, 383-396; Şimşek 2016, 791-812; Söğüt 2017, 245; Yılmaz-Kolancı 2023, 263.

the Denizli Museum after being assigned inventory numbers⁴ (Figs. 2–7). The cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus represents one of the burial types used in the settlement during the Roman Imperial Period. The relief depicting the head of a Silenos, which appears on one of the terracotta sarcophagus lids and constitutes the principal subject of this study, is of particular importance as a unique and local example (Figs. 5–7). Since no comparable example of a lid decorated with a Silenos head relief is known among cylindrical terracotta burial types found either in Anatolia or in the region, the aim of this study is to present this object to the scholarly world and to introduce this depiction into the academic literature.

The first study concerning the necropolis areas and burial types of Attouda was published by C. Şimşek⁵ in 2002. In this work, tumuli associated with the city's necropolis tradition, rock-cut tombs, vaulted tombs, chest tombs, marble and terracotta sarcophagi, together with associated finds, were evaluated, and a general typology and chronology were established⁶. In another study published in 2017 by Şimşek and Okunak⁷, the terracotta finds recovered from the necropolis were examined. Following these studies, the first comprehensive and systematic archaeological survey in Attouda and its surrounding territory was conducted over three seasons between 2021 and 2023, with the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye⁸. Part of these investigations was carried out in the necropolis areas, where, in addition to the examples previously discussed in earlier publications, new burial types were identified⁹. However, all of the recorded examples had been subjected to destruction caused by illicit excavations and similar activities¹⁰. The cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus that constitutes the subject of this study had likewise been damaged as a result of agricultural fieldwork, its context disturbed, and it was found discarded at the edge of a field (Figs. 1–2). Investigations conducted in the area did not yield any additional evidence associated with the tomb. For this reason, the dating has been based on comparable cylindrical terracotta sarcophagi of similar typology, since no grave goods were recovered. The head of Silenos has also been evaluated iconographically, and its symbolic function within the funerary context has been considered.

⁴ Yılmaz-Kolancı 2025a, 219–220, Pic. 2.

⁵ Şimşek 2002.

⁶ Şimşek 2002, 229–245. See also Söğüt 2017, 256–257.

⁷ Şimşek & Okunak 2017, 181–220.

⁸ The surveys conducted in Attouda and its surrounding territory between 2021 and 2023 revealed highly significant findings for the settlement. We would like to express our gratitude to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, as well as Pamukkale University, Sarayköy Municipality, Turkish Historical Society, AKMED, Attouda Tourism and Solidarity Association, and the research team for their permission and support. For the related studies, see Yılmaz-Kolancı 2023, 261–280; 2024, 345–363; 2025a, 217–232; 2025b.

⁹ Yılmaz-Kolancı 2023, 263–264, Pic. 7; 2025b, 18–19.

¹⁰ Yılmaz-Kolancı 2025a, 219–220, Pic. 3.



Fig. 2 Fragments of cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus

The Tradition of Cylindrical Terracotta Sarcophagi in Anatolia and the Lykos Valley

Comparable circular-section sarcophagi made of terracotta and dating to the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods are known from various examples recovered at different centers in Anatolia. In this context, a study conducted by M. B. Akalın¹¹ in 1996 examined Roman-period terracotta sarcophagi found in Eskişehir and its environs through chemical analyses of selected examples, and their production techniques were discussed. Following this study, the first comprehensive work on terracotta sarcophagi was carried out by D. Kucur¹² in 2013 under the title *Circular-Section Earthen Sarcophagi in Anatolia* (*"Anadolu'daki Dairesel Kesitli Toprak Lahitler"*), in which a general evaluation and typology were established based on examples housed in different museums. In that study, circular-section terracotta sarcophagi were classified into four principal types according to their forms. These were examined under the headings of "cylindrical-form sarcophagi," "missile/torpedo-form sarcophagi," "cocoon/cone-form sarcophagi," and "partially circular-section sarcophagi"¹³. Comparable examples within the region in which Attouda is situated are represented by sarcophagi recovered from the necropoleis of its nearby neighboring cities

¹¹ Akalın 1996. In this study, it was determined that the sarcophagi were produced in separate sections and that the individual parts were subsequently joined together (see Akalın 1996, 28).

¹² Kucur 2013.

¹³ Kucur 2013, 38.

Trapezopolis¹⁴, Laodikeia¹⁵, Hierapolis¹⁶, and Gümüşler¹⁷, as well as by a sarcophagus of unknown provenance currently housed in the Hierapolis Museum¹⁸. According to the classification proposed by Kucur, these examples are included within the typology of “cylindrical-form sarcophagi¹⁹”.

The formal similarities between the examples from Attouda and the neighboring cities point to a regional production tradition. All of these examples consist of a chest and a lid. Another shared characteristic is the presence of thin or thick banded strips running transversely around the body on both the chest and the lid of the sarcophagi. It is possible to suggest that these bands increased the structural resistance of terracotta, a fragile material, during transportation, while also providing visual embellishment. Another common feature observed in these examples is the horizontal handles placed symmetrically at regular intervals on the lids. As also proposed by Kucur²⁰, since these sarcophagi would have been at risk of breakage during transport, they were most likely produced in local workshops, while the clay²¹ used for their manufacture must have been procured from nearby sources. The similarity in form among the examples recovered in the region supports this suggestion.

Cylindrical Terracotta Sarcophagus with a Silenos Head Relief Found at Attouda

During the survey conducted in 2023 at Attouda, two chest fragments and four lid fragments belonging to a cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus were identified in an agricultural field known as the “Musalla” locality, situated to the south of the settlement. It was observed that the fragments belonged to the same cylindrical sarcophagus²² (Figs. 1–7). The objects were assigned find numbers and delivered to the Denizli Museum Directorate²³. As a result of observations carried out in the area, it was determined that the sarcophagus had been broken apart and damaged during leveling works conducted in the field, and that the fragments were later deliberately moved to a

¹⁴ The sarcophagus was dated to the Early Roman Period by Baysal (see Baysal 2000, 32–34, 36, Fig. 17). In the study conducted by M. Ok and N. Uyar on the grave finds, the tomb was determined to have been in use during the 1st–2nd centuries CE (See Ok & Uyar 2022, 1616–1630).

¹⁵ The cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus found at Laodikeia has been dated to the Augustan period (see Şimşek 2013, 36–37, 440, Pic. 1a–c).

¹⁶ An example unearthed in the necropolis of Hierapolis has been dated to the 3rd century BCE on the basis of associated grave finds. The form of the sarcophagus recovered there is more slender in comparison with other examples belonging to the Roman Period (see Sevinç 2015, 59, Pic. 9–12).

¹⁷ Karabay 1999, 292, 296, Pic. 1.

¹⁸ Kucur 2013, 64, Kat. 10, Lev. XXIX, Pic. 49.

¹⁹ Kucur 2013, 38.

²⁰ Kucur 2013, 40.

²¹ For the manufacturing and firing techniques of this type of terracotta sarcophagus, see Akalın 1996, 35–42.

²² The lid with the Silenos head, inventory no. ATD23.010923.PT1.Y, measures 33 × 30.5 × 4 cm. The lid and chest fragments with inventory no. ATD23.010923.PT3.Y were designated with the letters A–E. Fragment A of the lid measures 29.5 × 38 × 3.5 cm, fragment B of the lid 34 × 40 × 4.5 cm, and fragment C of the lid 22.5 × 36 × 4 cm. Fragments D and E, belonging to the chest, measure 35 × 27 × 4 cm and 40 × 39 × 4 cm respectively.

²³ Inventory nos. ATD23.010923.PT1.Y (1 lid) and ATD23.010923.PT3.Y (2 body fragments and 3 lid fragments).

wooded area at the edge of the field, where they were left discarded. For this reason, a large portion of the sarcophagus is broken and missing. In addition, since the fragments had long been exposed to natural external factors (rain, snow, and sunlight), their surfaces have deteriorated, with lichen formation and calcareous encrustation visible (Figs. 3–5).



Fig. 3a-c Terracotta sarcophagus lids, inventory no. ATD23.010923.PT3.Y (A–C)



Fig. 4 Terracotta sarcophagus coffin fragments, inventory no. ATD23.010923.PT3.Y (D–E)

The sarcophagus was made of reddish clay containing abundant mica and lime inclusions. Since it is broken and incomplete, no information is available regarding the original length of the chest²⁴. However, calculations based on the preserved chest fragments suggest that the diameter of the cylindrical body was approximately 55–60 cm. From the lid fragments, it is understood that, except for the head and foot ends of the chest, an opening measuring between 33 and 38 cm in width was reserved for the lid along the entire length of the body. Both the chest and lid sections are encircled transversely by projecting banded strips placed at regular intervals. The edges of all lids are defined by a thick, outward-projecting framed border, within which are horizontally placed handles. Among the cylindrical sarcophagus fragments, only one lid bears a relief of a bearded male head, the principal subject of this study (Figs. 5–7). The remaining fragments are undecorated (Figs. 3–4). Based on the iconographic features of the bearded male head, the figure has been identified as Silenos, a mythological being associated with the retinue of Dionysos. This motif is particularly significant as a unique and local example among terracotta sarcophagi found in Anatolia.

Sarcophagus Lid with Silenos Head Relief and Its Iconography

The lid of the cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus bearing the Silenos head relief (inv. no. ATD23.010923.PT1.Y) is intact and complete, although abrasions and surface deterioration are present. Its slightly convex upper surface is nearly square, with a thick, outward-projecting frame along the edges. Within the frame are two horizontally aligned handles, arranged symmetrically one above the other, as indicated by surviving traces showing that they were applied separately. At the center is a stylized male head rendered in high relief and attached using the appliqué technique (Figs. 5–6). The relief measures 4.8 cm in height, 4.3 cm in width, and 2.5 cm in depth. The figure is bald, with large circular eyes and deeply incised lower contours that create a forceful, intense expression. Although the left eye is well preserved and the right is deformed, the left pupil, formed by a single deeply drilled hole and positioned toward the upper left, indicates that the gaze was directed to the left. The nose, continuing from the eyebrows, is flat and broad, while the mouth is wide, deeply incised, and upturned at the corners, creating a smiling expression; the lower lip is defined by a slightly projecting contour. Beneath the lip, the chin beard is rendered with shallow, parallel vertical incisions. The ears are schematically but distinctly rendered, with the helix turning outward and the antihelix curving inward. The facial expression, baldness, pronounced hollowness beneath the eyes, and beard indicate that the figure is depicted as an elderly male. On the left side of the head appears the letter “B” (Beta)²⁵, executed in shallow incised technique (Figs. 6–7). The letter measures 7 cm in height and 2 cm in width and should be associated with the workshop or craftsman who produced the object. No comparable letter has been identified on other lids; both the incised letter and relief head appear only on this particular lid. It is likely that the lid was positioned to correspond to the facial area of the individual interred within the chest.

²⁴ Comparable sarcophagi of this type generally measure approximately 1.80–2.00 m in length. In examples consisting of a chest and lid, the deceased was placed through the opening beneath the lid section, and the lids were closed after burial.

²⁵ Four letters “C” were identified on the lid of a cylindrical sarcophagus found at Laodikeia, and these were interpreted as workshop marks (see Şimşek et al. 2011, 36–37, 440, Fig. 33, Pic. 1a–c).



Fig. 5: Terracotta sarcophagus lid with Silenos head relief, inventory no. ATD23.010923.PT1.Y



Fig. 6 Silenos head and workshop mark, detail

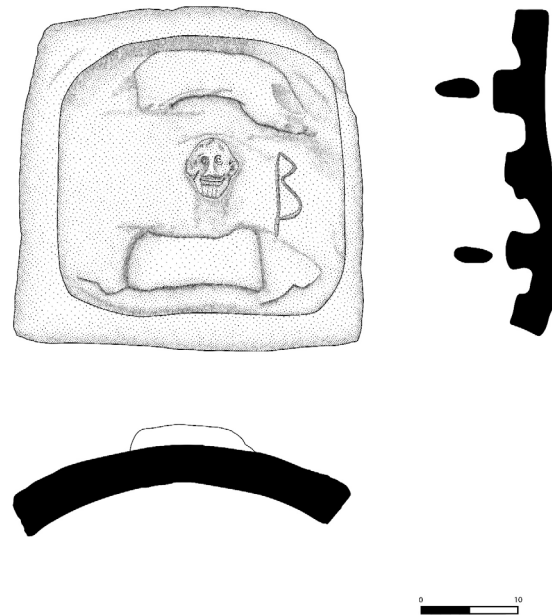


Fig. 7 Drawing of the lid, inventory no. ATD23.010923.PT1.Y²⁶

The exaggerated iconography expressed through the overall facial features of the elderly male head appearing on the cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus lid, inventory no. ATD23.010923.PT1.Y, from Attouda (particularly in the ears, eyes, nose, and mouth rendered with a grotesque expression²⁷) finds close parallels in Silenos masks associated with the cult of Dionysos²⁸ in ancient art. Silenos masks, known to have been widely employed in ancient funerary contexts, carried an apotropaic (ἀποτρέπειν/protective) function. Such figures were created in order to prevent evil spirits or supernatural beings (*daemones*) from disturbing the soul of the deceased during the transitional process of death²⁹. The purpose was to protect the soul of the dead and to ensure a safe passage to the afterlife. Harmful beings, upon seeing such depictions, would perceive them as one of their own kind and therefore refrain from approaching the deceased, thus providing protection both for the tomb and for the soul of the dead³⁰. It is thought that Silenos masks with grotesque expressions and apotropaic functions were used on funerary monuments such as sarcophagi because of the

²⁶ We would like to thank Dr. Pınar Taşpınar Yamantürk, Gül Tuğçe Toprak Söylemez, and “Kumpas Çizim” for the drawings of the cylindrical sarcophagus. We also extend our thanks to our team members who contributed to the identification of the find in the field in 2023.

²⁷ For grotesque masks and masks in general, see. Meyer 2016, 94-101.

²⁸ Depictions associated with Dionysos were among the themes frequently favored in ancient funerary contexts, see Koch 2001, 114-116.

²⁹ Boehlau 1898, 158; Burr 1934, 77; 152; Durugönül 2018, 152.

³⁰ Among the figures used for this purpose in funerary contexts, Medusa occupies a foremost place. In addition to this figure, various masks, hands, shields, and animal reliefs are also known to have been preferred for symbolic protective purposes. For Medusa, see Meyer 2016, 100; Pfühl & Möbius 1977, Taf. 93.593, Taf. 161.1070; Pfühl & Möbius 1979, Taf. 179.1193, Taf. 195.739, Taf. 239.1635; Koch 2001, 164-165, 246-247; Bol 2010, 212-213, Abb. 297; Dinç 2016, 39-42; Yılmaz-Kolancı 2020, 88-89.

connection of Dionysos with the realm of the dead³¹. In addition, it is known that such masks (tragedy/satyr/Silenos) were suspended on poles or attached within burial chambers in necropoleis in order to protect the deceased from malevolent spirits³². Three suspension holes for cords, opened for this purpose, were identified on Satyr³³ and Silenos masks dated to the 1st century CE and found in the necropolis of Tralleis³⁴. The head found at Attouda shows close stylistic similarity, in terms of its depiction, to the Silenos mask catalogued as no. K.108³⁵ among the examples recovered at Tralleis.



Fig. 8 Head fragment belonging to a Silenos figure from the necropolis of Attouda, preserved in the Denizli Museum

The head fragment belonging to a Silenos figure³⁶ previously found within a tomb structure in the necropolis of Attouda constitutes an important example demonstrating that Silenoi, the mythological companions of the Dionysiac retinue, were employed in funerary contexts for apotropaic purposes within the settlement's burial tradition (Fig. 8). Dionysos³⁷, who appears on the coinage and inscriptions of Attouda, occupied an important place among the cults attested in the settlement. In an inscription dated to the 2nd century BCE, information is provided concerning the resolution of a dispute related to agreements made by the Association of Dionysiac Artists³⁸. On coins minted between the 1st and 3rd

centuries CE, the god Dionysos is depicted holding a thyrsos and a kantharos, accompanied by a panther beside him³⁹. In an inscription dated to the 2nd century CE, it is stated that Carminios Claudianus, a member of the renowned Carminii family of Attouda and "High Priest of Asia," served as priest of the Temple of Dionysos Kathegemon at Ephesos⁴⁰. Undoubtedly, as excavations conducted at the settlement

³¹ Cain 1988, 181; Durukan & Durugönül 2009, 209. For examples of sarcophagi and sarcophagus lids bearing Satyr/Silenos heads, see Gasparri 1986, 495, Fig. 854; Koch 2001, 128, Pic. 24; Bol 2010, 283-284, Abb. 355-356; Özer 2013, 480. For the Silenos head relief found on a pithos dated to the Late Hellenistic Period and associated with the cult of Dionysos, identified during research conducted at Belkuyu, see Yıldızhan 2024, 124-125, 137, Lev. 4c.

³² Boehlau 1898, 158; Çekilmez 2017, 83.

³³ For Satyrs, see Grimal 1997, 725-726.

³⁴ Çekilmez 2017, 88. These masks associated with the cult of Dionysos were also hung in vineyards in antiquity as symbols of fertility and abundance (see Verg. *G. II.* 390).

³⁵ Çekilmez 2017, 87, Lev. 117, K. 108.

³⁶ The figurine head was recorded in the inventory register as a Satyr head. However, since the figure is bald and bearded, it should belong to a Silenos.

³⁷ Buckler & Calder 1939, 65.

³⁸ An inscription identified at Attouda records that a citizen named Metrodoros was victorious both as a comic actor and in the discipline of heralding (see Bilgiç-Kavak & Yılmaz-Kolancı 2022). Seating blocks thought to be associated with an odeon/theatre-like structure have also been identified during surveys and excavations conducted in the city.

³⁹ Türkoğlu 2020, 294-296, 301-302, 304, 306, 310, 326-327.

⁴⁰ Sheppard 1981, 25-26, no. 6; Öztürk 2010, 105-106.

progress, further evidence related to the cult of Dionysos will come to light. Nevertheless, the currently available data are sufficient to demonstrate the presence of the Dionysos cult at the settlement from the Hellenistic Period through the Roman Imperial Period.

General Evaluation and Conclusion

When the results of the archaeological surveys conducted at Attouda are evaluated together with previous investigations carried out in the city's necropoleis, it becomes evident that Attouda possessed a remarkably rich and diverse funerary tradition, particularly during the Roman Imperial Period. The coexistence of different burial types, including rock-cut tombs, vaulted tombs, marble sarcophagi, and terracotta sarcophagi, indicates that funerary practices were not standardized but instead reflected variations related to social status, economic capacity, and local traditions. Within this diversity, cylindrical terracotta sarcophagi stand out as distinctive burial types representing a regional production tradition. The present example, decorated with a Silenus-head relief, further demonstrates that a funerary tradition incorporating symbolic meaning was also adopted within the Attouda necropolis.

The elderly and bearded male head on the terracotta sarcophagus lid found at Attouda is far removed from possessing the characteristics of an individual portrait, particularly in view of its exaggerated manner of depiction and facial expression. For this reason, the principal purpose of the figure's representation must have been to convey a protective and symbolic meaning associated with the afterlife. Based on the exaggerated expression employed across the face and the iconographic representations attested in comparable examples, it is understood that the figure discussed in detail above should be identified as a depiction of Silenos⁴¹. In ancient art, Silenoi were represented as mythological beings with flat noses, bovine eyes, and thick lips⁴². As discussed above in detail, such mythological figures were especially employed in association with tombs in ancient art and carried an apotropaic function. The workshop operating at Attouda creatively placed the head of a Silenos on the terracotta sarcophagus lid, thereby endowing the tomb with a symbolic and apotropaic meaning. The Silenos figure previously recovered from a tomb in the city's necropolis is likewise significant in demonstrating that such figures were invested with apotropaic significance in beliefs concerning the afterlife at Attouda.

Previous studies have determined that bosses were the most frequently preferred motif on circular-section terracotta sarcophagi found in Anatolia. In addition, motifs such as horns/crescents, vegetal and geometric designs, or bucrania are known to have been used, albeit less frequently⁴³. When the cylindrical terracotta sarcophagi from the immediate surroundings of Attouda are examined, it becomes clear that such symbolic

⁴¹ The general designation for aged Satyrs is Silenos. At the same time, it is also the name of the legendary figure who reared the god Dionysos. See Grimal 1997, 734. For depictions of Silenos in ancient art, see Simon 1997, 1108–1133, 746–783. See also Çokay-Kepçe 2009, 88–107.

⁴² Grimal 1997, 734.

⁴³ Kucur 2013, 11, 39. On the chest of a sarcophagus preserved in the Tire Museum and dated to the Hellenistic Period (2nd century BCE), motifs such as a kerykeion, a bee, an eagle struggling with a serpent, and a six-pointed star are depicted within relief medallions; the symbols on this sarcophagus are unique. See Kucur 2013, 29.

motifs were not preferred in the regional examples. Instead, horizontally encircling banded strips around the body and horizontal handles were commonly employed, while no decorative motif other than workshop marks was used on either the chest or lid sections. Neither among the examples recovered in the vicinity of Attouda nor among other specimens produced at various centers in Anatolia has any depiction comparable to the Silenos head relief seen on the Attouda example been identified. As discussed above in detail, Silenos masks in antiquity were generally hung on walls within funerary architecture or carved onto burial monuments such as marble sarcophagi. For this reason, the Silenos head executed on a cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus at Attouda is significant as a local and unique example. The workshop that produced the lid with the Silenos head relief created an original and unconventional work by applying the Silenos head in high relief onto a terracotta sarcophagus lid, thus producing a creative and distinctive object (Figs. 5–7).

No grave goods or archaeological data that would allow the dating of the cylindrical terracotta sarcophagus were recovered during the course of the study. However, when comparable examples of similar form from the region are taken into consideration, it is thought that the cylindrical sarcophagus was produced and used between the 1st and 2nd centuries CE. Every new piece of evidence to be identified through future excavations, both in the region and at the settlement itself, will undoubtedly make it possible to establish a more comprehensive typology and chronology for the use of cylindrical terracotta sarcophagi. Within the context of all such studies, it may be stated that the sarcophagus lid with the Silenos head relief identified at Attouda constitutes a unique depiction among the examples known both in Anatolia and in the region, and represents an important piece of material that contributes a new example to the decorative repertoire of this type of sarcophagus in current scholarship.

Since the findspot lies within the Attouda necropolis, and a head fragment belonging to a Silenus figurine had previously been recovered from another tomb, the use of Silenus iconography cannot be regarded as coincidental. Rather, this evidence suggests that protective figures associated with the Dionysian cult were deliberately incorporated into the funerary architecture and burial decoration tradition of Attouda. The presence of the Dionysian cult, as documented by the city's coinage and inscriptions, further supports this interpretation. Accordingly, the sarcophagus lid decorated with a Silenus-head relief should be regarded not merely as an isolated decorative element, but as tangible evidence reflecting the relationship between Dionysian beliefs and funerary rituals within the Attouda necropolis.

In antiquity, the tomb was regarded not merely as the physical place of burial but as a sacred threshold through which the soul passed into the afterlife, requiring both sanctity and protection. Consequently, apotropaic figures employed in funerary contexts served a symbolic function aimed not only at safeguarding the tomb itself but also at protecting the soul of the deceased from malevolent spirits and harmful supernatural forces. In the case of Attouda, the placement of the Silenus head on the sarcophagus lid (most likely corresponding to the position of the deceased's head) further reinforces this protective function. Within the Dionysian cult, which is closely associated with concepts of death, rebirth, and immortality, the presence of Silenus on the sarcophagus should therefore be interpreted as that of a symbolic guardian ensuring the safe passage of the deceased into the afterlife.

BIBLIOGRAPHY*

- Akalın M. B. 1996, *Eskişehir Çevresi Roma Dönemi Pişmiş Toprak Lahitler ve Analizleri*. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Anadolu Üniversitesi. Eskişehir.
- Aytekin S. 2017, *Dağılan Köyün Hikayesi Attouda* (Hisar). Ed. E. Haytoğlu. Denizli.
- Baysal H. H. 2000, "Le antiche citta' della valle del Lykos". Eds. F. D'Andria & F. Silvestrelli, *Ricerche Archeologiche Turche Nella Valle Del Lykos* (Archeologia e Storia 6). Galatina/Lecce, 19-49.
- Bilgiç-Kavak E. & Yılmaz-Kolancı B. 2022, "Attouda Kentinden Yeni Bir Agonistik Yazıt". *Olba* XXX, 395-406.
- Boehlau J. 1898, *Aus ionischen und italischen, Nekropolen Ausgrabungen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der nachmykenischen griechischen Kunst*. Leipzig.
- Bol P. C. 2010, *Die Geschichtte Der Antiken Bildhauerkunst IV, Plastik der Römischen Kaiserzeit bis zum Tode Kaiser Hadrians*. Mainz am Rhein.
- Buckler W. H. & Calder W. M. 1939, *Monuments and Documents from Phrygia and Caria, Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua VI*. Manchester.
- Burr D. 1934, *Terra-Cottas from Myrina in the Museum of Fine Arts*. Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Bryn Mawr College. Pennsylvania.
- Cain H. U. 1988, "Chronologie, Ikonographie und Bedeutung der römischen Maskenreliefs". *Bonner Jahrbücher* 188, 107-221.
- Çekilmez M. 2017, *Tralleis Güney Nekropolü Terrakotta Figürinleri*. Aydın.
- Çokay-Kepçe S. 2009, "Satyros ve Silenos İkonografisi Üzerine Gözlemler". Ed. O. F. Akyol, *Navisalvia Sina Kabağağaç'ı Anma Toplantısı 2008 – Satyros*. İstanbul, 88-107.
- Dinç M. 2016, "Aizanoi Tiyatrosu'ndan Bir Medusa Başı". Ed. E. Özer, *Aizanoi II*. Ankara, 37-48.
- Durugönül S. 2018, *Heykeller Konuşabilseydi, Antik Yunan Heykeltıraşlık Sanatına Toplumsal Açıdan Bir Bakış*. Ankara.
- Durukan M. & Durugönül S. 2009, "A Relief of the god Men from Tarsus". *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 123, 199-213.
- Ekmekci M. 2025a, "Yeni Bulgular Işığında Hisarköy (Attouda) Camisi". *Sanat Tarihi Dergisi* 34/1, 69-97.
- Ekmekci M. 2025b, "Hisar Köyü (Attouda) Yukarı Mezarlıktaki Bir Grup Mezar Şahidesi". Ed. B. Yılmaz-Kolancı, *Disiplinlerarası Araştırmalarla Attouda Araştırmaları I*. İzmir, 105-133.
- Gasparri C. 1986, "Dionysos". Ed. L. Kahil, *LIMC III.1-III.2*. Zürich & Düsseldorf, 414-514, 296-506.
- Grimal P. 1997, *Mitoloji Sözlüğü Yunan ve Roma*. Çev. S. Tamgüç, İstanbul.
- Karabay N. 1999, "1997 Yılı Gümüşler Nekropolü Kurtarma Kazısı". *Müze Kurtarma Çalışmaları Semineri IX*, 291-300.
- Koch G. 2001, *Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi Lahitleri*. Çev. Z. Z. İlkelen, İstanbul.
- Kucur D. 2013, *Anadolu'da Dairesel Kesitli Pişmiş Toprak Lahitler*. Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, İstanbul Üniversitesi. İstanbul.
- Meyer F. S. 2016, *A Handbook of Ornament*. İstanbul.
- Ok M. & Uyar, N. 2022, "Kurtarma Kazısında Bulunan Silindirik Mezar ve Buluntularının Değerlendirilmesi: Trapezopolis Nekropolü". *Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi*

* Abbreviations of epigraphical editions and reference works follow the "Liste des abréviations des éditions et ouvrages de référence pour l'épigraphie grecque alphabétique (GrEpiAbbr – Version 03, Septembre 2024)" developed by the Association Internationale d'Épigraphie Grecque et Latine.

- Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 19/3, 1616-1630.
- Özçelik S. 2006, "Yerel Tarih Araştırmalarında Yeni Bir Kaynak (Evlenme Defterleri) Hisarköy Örneği – 200 Yıllık Gelenek". *XV. Türk Tarih Kongresi* IV, 891-917.
- Özer E. 2013, "Olympos Antik Kenti'nden Bir Grup Rölyefli Lahit". Ed. M. Tekocak, *K. Levent Zoroğlu'na Armağan*. İstanbul, 479-498.
- Öztürk B. 2010, *Roma İmparatorluk Çağı Küçükasyası'nda Dionysos Kültü*. İstanbul.
- Pfuhl E. & Möbius H. 1977, *Die ostgriechischen Grabreliefs*. Mainz am Rhein.
- Ramsay W. M. 1895, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*. Oxford.
- Sayın G. 2025, "Denizli Hisar Köyü (Attouda) Kırsal Mimari Mirasının Doku Analizi ve Koruma Sorunları". Ed. B. Yılmaz-Kolancı, *Disiplinlerarası Araştırmalarla Attouda Araştırmaları I*. İzmir, 81-103.
- Sevinç C. 2015, "Hierapolis Kuzey Nekropolü 2013 Yılı Kurtarma Kazısı". *Müze Kurtarma Kazıları Sempozyumu* 23, 55-68.
- Sheppard A. R. R. 1981, "R.E.C.A.M. Notes and Studies No. 7: Inscriptions from Uşak, Denizli and Hisar köy". *Anatolian Studies* 31, 19-27.
- Simon E. 1997, "Silenoi". Ed. L. Kahil, *LIMC VIII.1-VIII.2*. Zürich & Düsseldorf, 1108-1133, Pl. 746-783.
- Söğüt B. 2007, "Denizli-Hisarköy Müze Deposundaki Mimari Bloklar". *AST* 24/2, 383-396.
- Söğüt B. 2017, "Attouda (Hisar) Antik Kenti". *Cedrus* V, 241-260.
- Şimşek C. & M. Okunak & M. Bilgin 2011, "*Laodikeia Nekropolü (2004- 2010 Yılları), Laodikeia Çalışmaları 1.1-1.2*". Ed. C. Şimşek. İstanbul.
- Şimşek C. 2002, "Attouda Nekropolü". Ed. A. A. Öztürk, *Birinci Uluslararası Aşağı Büyük Menderes Havzası Tarih, Arkeoloji ve Sanat Tarihi Sempozyumu*. Söke, 15-16 Kasım 2001. İzmir, 229-245.
- Şimşek C. 2013, *Laodikeia (Laodicea ad Lycum), Laodikeia Çalışmaları 2*. İstanbul.
- Şimşek C. 2016, "Bir Salbakos Kenti: Attouda (Hisar) ve Heykeltıraşlığı". Eds. E. Dünder, Ş. Aktaş, M. Koçak & S. Erkoç, *Havva İşkan'a Armağan*. İstanbul, 791-812.
- Şimşek C. & Okunak M. 2017, "Attouda Nekropol Buluntuları ve Hisarköy Müze Deposu'ndan Çalınan Seramikler". Ed. I. A. Adıbelli, *Barış Salman Anı Kitabı*. İstanbul, 181-220.
- Türkoğlu İ. 2020, "Civic Coinage of Attouda in Caria". *Anadolu Araştırmaları/Anatolian Research* 23, 289-346.
- Vergilius Maro, *Georgica/Çiftçilik Sanatı*. Çev. Ç. Dürüşken, İstanbul, 2015.
- Yıldızhan H. 2024, "Yeni Arkeolojik Araştırmalar Işığında Avanos ve Çevresi: Geç Hellenistik Dönem'den Geç Antik Çağ'a". *Seleucia* XIV, 119-148.
- Yılmaz Kolancı B. 2020, "Anadolu'da Roma İmparatorluk Dönemi Mimari Bloklarında Medusa Bezemesi". *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 40, 81-104.
- Yılmaz-Kolancı B. 2023, "Attouda Araştırmaları 2021". *AST* 38/1, 261-280.
- Yılmaz-Kolancı B. 2024, "Attouda Araştırmaları 2022". *AST* 39/1, 345-363.
- Yılmaz-Kolancı B. 2025a, "Attouda Araştırmaları 2023". *AST* 40/1, 217-232.
- Yılmaz-Kolancı B. 2025b, "Attouda ve Çevresi Yüzey Araştırması Projesi, 2021 Yılı Çalışmaları". Ed. B. Yılmaz-Kolancı, *Disiplinlerarası Araştırmalarla Attouda Araştırmaları I*. İzmir, 1-34.