

**Κλίνας σφιγγόποδες, *LECTI DELIACA SPECIE* AND *CENAE SERAPIACAE*:  
MATERIAL AND EPIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE FOR HELLENISTIC BED-COUCHES ON DELOS**

Furniture is an indispensable tool in the study of domestic architecture. Furniture and furnishings organised house interiors in ways that are still largely unexplored. In 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century scholarship, furniture belonged to the category of so-called minor objects and has only recently started to gain some ground in the discussion of domestic issues. Furniture made from non-perishable materials that has survived in the archaeological record not only helps to paint a picture of interior organisation and design but also informs us about the types of furniture used in the ancient household and the multiple activities performed in these same rooms. What is more, funerary furniture, such as the pieces found in Macedonian tombs, might give us an idea of how furniture was used and arranged in houses even though funerary assemblages are vested with various degrees of symbolism. Visual and textual evidence completes the picture initiated with furniture and raises additional sets of questions and methodological problems<sup>1</sup>.

What makes Delos an exceptional case in the study of houses and furniture in the Hellenistic world is the preservation degree of its architectural remains and the detailed lists of the various items preserved in the temple inventories. The combination of these two sources, along with the excavated furniture itself make the island a valuable case-study for various issues within Hellenistic archaeology in general and furniture in particular. It is this unique combination that lays the framework on which my interpretation and prospective reconstruction of beds is based.

The island of Delos is one of the few sites in Greece that has produced material evidence for bed-couches in the Hellenistic period, either in the form of the bed-feet or in the form of *fulcra*, the arm- or headrests for the beds<sup>2</sup>. Excavations on the island have, so far, produced only fragments that could be attributed to beds, items such as a set of bell-shaped, hollow ›tubes‹ of bronze, found in an unspecified area of the island. These tubes, as I have argued elsewhere, might have belonged to bed legs<sup>3</sup> (fig. 1). The only certain, published example of a section of bronze leg comes from the House of the Seals (Maison des Sceaux), room ξ on the upper floor<sup>4</sup> (fig. 2). The piece was so well preserved that traces of wood were still attached to it. Similar pieces of bronze legs were found in the House of the Dagger (Maison de l' Épée, west of the Maison des Sceaux)<sup>5</sup>. Two or three *fulcra* from beds were also unearthed in the quarter of Skardhana, dated on archaeological grounds to no earlier than the second quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC (fig. 3)<sup>6</sup>. Thus, what remains of beds on the island of Delos consists only of fragments of legs or arms-/headrests made of bronze. Clearly, the vast majority of the now lost pieces of furniture on Delos and the rest of Greece must have been made from perishable materials.

<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the issues raised by the study of furniture and furnishings in the ancient Greek world see ANDRIANOU 2006a.

<sup>2</sup> ANDRIANOU 2006a, 235–239.

<sup>3</sup> DÉONNA 1938, 2 f. figs. 1, 2, pl. 4, 43; 5; 50. 51. Their heights range from 0.03 to 0.10m. For a thorough discussion of bed-couches in late Classical and Hellenistic Greece see ANDRIANOU 2006a, 232–247.

<sup>4</sup> Délos 38, 91 pl. 42, 4; G. SIEBERT, Délos: Le quartier de Skardhana, BCH 100, 1976, 799–821 esp. 813 figs. 24. 25.

<sup>5</sup> The contents of the house are currently under examination.

<sup>6</sup> G. SIEBERT, Mobilier délien en bronze, Études déliennes, BCH Suppl. 1 (Paris 1973) 554–587 esp. 559–561; B. BARR-SHARRAR, The Hellenistic and Early Imperial Decorative Bust (Mainz 1987) 26 on the suggested date.

The literary evidence for beds is, in general, extremely rich<sup>7</sup>. Literary evidence concerning Delian beds, in particular, comes from both texts and inscriptions. Pliny the Younger, in an often cited passage, refers to the ›Delian pattern‹ of beds as follows:

*Lectos vero iam pridem mulierum totos operiri argento, pridem et triclinia. Quibus argentum addidisse primus traditur Carvilius Pollio eques Romanus, non ut operiret aut Deliaca specie faceret, sed Punicana; eadem et aureos fecit, nec multo post argentei Deliacos imitati sunt*<sup>8</sup>.

»While we know that beds for women have for a long time been entirely covered with silver, the same is true for couches used for dining. It is recorded that Carvilius Pollio, Eques of Rome, was the first to have silver added on them [the dining couches], though not according to the Delian type, but the Punic. In this latter style he also had gold beds made, and not long afterwards he had silver beds made in imitation of the Delian«<sup>9</sup>.

Pliny introduces us to the Delian model of beds, a type unknown from any other source, or at least that has not yet been identified in the typology of beds as it has been organised based on visual sources<sup>10</sup>. Whether this type refers to a ›fine style‹ due to its materials (Delian bronze is highly esteemed by Pliny)<sup>11</sup> or to a ›particular style‹ due to its construction or decoration can only be conjectured. As Ph. Bruneau asserted, by Pliny's time this phrase had acquired a purely geographical denomination<sup>12</sup>, but at the time of Carvilius Pollio it must have meant something more than this. The question that arises from Pliny's passage is why Delian beds were renowned in antiquity or whether they brought together decorative or structural aspects that made them stand out. In the epigraphic record, geographical adjectives exist for other kinds of beds, such as the often-mentioned κλῖναι Χιοργεῖς and κλῖναι Μιλεσιοργεῖς<sup>13</sup> and one reference to the κλῖναι Σικελικαί<sup>14</sup>. Conversely, κλῖναι Δηλιακαί are nowhere mentioned as such. This leads me to believe that Pliny's evidence might indeed refer to a stylistic or structural particularity and not simply to the actual location where they were manufactured<sup>15</sup>.

Bearing this in mind, I turn to the epigraphic evidence for beds on Delos, and more specifically to Delian inscriptions that record furniture stored in the Delian sanctuaries. A careful study of the Delian inscriptions provides the following descriptions of beds:

Κλῖναι μικραί (small)<sup>16</sup>, καιναί (new)<sup>17</sup>, ὕγιεῖς (without flaws)<sup>18</sup>, παλαιαί (old)<sup>19</sup>, σανιδωταί (planked)<sup>20</sup>, πτυξινόποδες (with feet made of box-wood) ἔχουσαι ζωιδάρια ἐν τοῖς ποσίν (with feet decorated with figures)<sup>21</sup>, σφιγγόποδες (with sphinx-feet)<sup>22</sup>.

What is interesting, though, is that all these epithets refer to wooden beds; metal is nowhere mentioned<sup>23</sup>. The κλῖναι σανιδωταί, in particular, refer to simple wooden, planked beds, possibly of the type reconstructed

<sup>7</sup> ANDRIANOU 2006a, 233 f.

<sup>8</sup> Plin. nat. 33, 144.

<sup>9</sup> Translation of the author.

<sup>10</sup> G. M. A. RICHTER, Furniture of the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans (New York 1966).

<sup>11</sup> Plin. nat. 34, 9.

<sup>12</sup> BRUNEAU 1976, 15–45.

<sup>13</sup> Kritias: M. L. WEST (ed.), Iambi et elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantata II: Callinus, Mimnermus, Semonides, Solon, Tyrtaeus. Minora adespota (Oxford 1972) 52, fragm. B2; Athen. deipn. 1, 28b; 11, 486e (Chian and Milesian beds); Attic Stelai: IG I<sup>3</sup> 421 line 202. 206; 422 line 295 (Milesian beds); Parthenon inventories for Chian and Milesian beds: IG I<sup>3</sup> 343 line 13; 344 line 28; 345 lines 45–46; 351 line 13; 357 lines 66–67; IG II<sup>2</sup> 1425 line 277.

<sup>14</sup> Athen. deipn. 2, 47 f.

<sup>15</sup> BRUNEAU 1976, 44 supplies an equivalent using, as a modern example, ›Camembert cheese‹.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. ID 104 line 143.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. ID 104 line 143.

<sup>18</sup> E.g. ID 104 line 144.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. IG XI<sup>2</sup> 147B line 12.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. ID 1403 BbII, line 29.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. ID 1416AI line 19; 1417BI line 17.

<sup>22</sup> ID 1416AI, line 38; 1417BI, line 38; 1442A, line 18.

<sup>23</sup> One doubtful exception is noted in ID 1423B line 14 where the word [--- κλῖνα?]ς is restored before λιθῖνας.

at Veroia (fig. 4)<sup>24</sup>. However, the rubric κλῖναι σφιγγόποδες deserves further discussion, as this is the only description from the inscriptions that is specific to the type of bed decoration. These beds are not simply old or new, made of a certain type of wood, or decorated with unidentified figures. They are decorated specifically with sphinxes on their feet. What is more interesting is that the phrase κλῖναι σφιγγόποδες is as rare as Pliny's description of the ›Delian type‹, since only three inscriptions in the ancient Greek epigraphic record (all from the Delian Sarapieion) record them. In the literary record, only Athenaios refers to such beds when describing Ptolemy Philadelphos' procession in Alexandria<sup>25</sup>. Κλῖναι σφιγγόποδες are not mentioned in Attica or any other part of Greece; they are a type of bed that is, at least in the textual evidence, closely connected to the island of Delos and always recorded as made of wood.

The usual translation of the phrase is ›beds with feet shaped like sphinxes‹ and often visualised as beds that end in sphinx-feet or with whole sphinxes as supports, possibly influenced by Roman counterparts<sup>26</sup>. However, the first translation (beds that end in sphinx-feet) is not satisfactory since the Delian scribe, as any sacred scribe, would have wished to be brief but specific when describing the objects kept in the sanctuary. Since the mythical sphinx was a creature with of a lion's body and the upper torso of a woman, the descriptive adjective referring to the bottom part of the beds' feet should have been λεοντόπους. The scribe, therefore, was most probably looking at whole sphinxes serving as the feet of these beds. How then should one visualise them?

In the Classical and Hellenistic periods entire sphinxes commonly appear in small parts or sections of furniture, such as the sphinxes that support throne armrests<sup>27</sup> or sit above them<sup>28</sup>. Entire sphinx bodies serving as the whole foot of beds are not attested, however, in the material or visual evidence from Greece<sup>29</sup>. On the contrary, a certain type of Etruscan cinerary urn, dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, is probably the closest visual equivalent to the epigraphic attestation at hand (fig. 5)<sup>30</sup>.

The example from Chiusi, illustrated here, is made of terracotta and consists of feet that are composed of what seem to be many different turned parts. Amongst these pieces, we can see the preserved bodies of sphinxes, enough to show the characteristic wings and the bare female torso. The sphinxes are placed high up on the legs, a few centimetres under the frame of the bed. The connection of the Chiusi urn with the κλῖναι σφιγγόποδες was first made by C. Ransom in 1905 in a footnote, but since then has not garnered any further interest and the translation of these inscriptions remains vague<sup>31</sup>.

Another example can now be added to the rare iconography of crouching sphinxes on furniture legs, this time on a seat: a tomb stele exhibited in the Greek and Roman Galleries of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, quite appropriately in the city hosting this conference, preserves a woman seated on a throne that is decorated with crouching sphinxes on its front legs (fig. 6a)<sup>32</sup>. The stele is made of Thasian marble and

<sup>24</sup> S. DROUGOU – I. TOURATSOGLU, *Ἑλληνιστικοὶ λαξευτοὶ τάφοι Βέροιας* (Athens 1980) 174 f. fig. 46.

<sup>25</sup> Athen. deipn. 5, 197a.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. KOUROU et al. 1997.

<sup>27</sup> ANDRIANOU 2006a, 232, cat. no. 10 (Vergina, throne in ›Rhomaïos tomb‹, with bibliography); S. DROUGOU – C. SAATSOGLOU-PALIADELI, *Βεργίνα: Ο τόπος και η ιστορία του* (Athens 2005) 188, top photo for a snapshot of the sphinx supporting the armrest of the throne; H. DIEPOLDER, *Attische Grabreliefs des 5. und 4. Jh. v. Chr.* (Berlin 1931) 53 pl. 51, 1 (4<sup>th</sup> c. BC); KOUROU et al. 1997.

<sup>28</sup> J. D. BEAZLEY, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford 1963) 220 no. 1: from Vulci, by Nikoxenos painter, 480 BC.

<sup>29</sup> Entire sphinxes serving as the entire foot for a bed are rarely attested in the ancient material culture as a whole. One exception is the partially published marble funerary bed from the Harta tumulus (northwest Lycia), dated to around 500 BC, where two entire seated sphinxes serve as feet and the horizontal bed slab rests of their backs; cf. I. ÖZGEN – J. ÖZTÜRK, *The Lydian Treasure: Heritage Recovered* (Istanbul 1996) 37 cat. no. 1.

<sup>30</sup> S. STEINGRÄBER, *Etruskische Möbel* (Rome 1979) 84–87, type 2B.

<sup>31</sup> RANSOM 1905, 30. 112 note 27. The Etruscan example is the clearest of the three mentioned by Ransom, since the decoration of the other two is vague or known only through drawings (fig. 30: terracotta from Asia Minor; fig. 50: terracotta cinerary urn from Palermo). The terracotta from Myrina (E. POTTIER – S. REINACH, *La nécropole de Myrina: recherches archéologiques exécutées au nom et aux frais de l'École française d'Athènes* [Paris 1887] no. 268, pl. 40, 4) might be decorated with sphinxes on the feet of the bed, but for a more secure attribution one should see the actual piece.

<sup>32</sup> Inv. Nr. I 1553, H. 1.405 m. Only the left front and back legs of the throne are shown on the relief and only the front left leg is decorated with the crouching sphinx. The stele was published by C. PICARD in 1954 and thought to be an Alexandrian motif; cf. C. PICARD, *Sur trois grandes stèles hellénistiques de Délos et de Thasos*, BCH 78, 1954, 258–281 esp. 276 note 1. The relief follows the type of 5<sup>th</sup>- and 4<sup>th</sup>-c. funerary stelai, but the almost three-dimensional rendering of the theme must set it later, possibly

is provisionally dated to 250 BC, a little earlier than the Etruscan urn. The seated woman is placed almost diagonally on the relief frame and her feet rest on a footstool. A smaller figure carrying a *pyxis*, usually interpreted as a maid, is accompanying her. The rendering of the throne's foot provides a clear image of the term σφιγγόπους (fig. 6b). Thus, κλῖναι σφιγγόποδες are beds with clearly defined sphinxes along the legs, in the tradition of »Stützfiguren« mentioned by H. Kyrieleis<sup>33</sup>. By analogy with our Etruscan and Greek examples, we might suppose that the sphinxes were depicted in their entirety, with their upper torsos bare and feet and wings rendered almost three-dimensionally. The artist chose to show the most characteristic parts of the mythical creature's body, leaving no doubt as to what is actually portrayed.

The κλῖναι σφιγγόποδες of the Delian inscriptions were all recorded as being made of wood, possibly manufactured on a rigid wood-turning lathe. The sculpted section of the sphinx would have required additional work with a variety of chisels and flint knives. Actual evidence has been lost due to the perishable nature of both the tools and the furniture products, but Egyptian parallels from much earlier periods and finds from later periods in Bulgaria offer useful *comparanda*<sup>34</sup>. A Bulgarian bed, which was found in a tomb inside a stone sarcophagus, dates to 490/80 BC and consists of four turned legs made of wood with remains of a mortise and tenon joints on top to receive the bed frame (also preserved) (fig. 7a). The legs themselves are formed from four undecorated pieces inserted into one another<sup>35</sup>. Furthermore, the Bulgarian bed preserves the holes in the bed frame where the mattress cords passed through and stretched (fig. 7b). This brings to mind the adjective ἀνέντατος that follows the κλίνη σφιγγόπους on the Delian inscriptions: The Delian beds described on the stone were not yet stretched (κλίνη σφιγγόπους ἀνέντατος). The Bulgarian bed is understood as a wooden example of a form originally conceived in metal (Type A)<sup>36</sup>. Since there are no preserved examples of wooden beds with decorated legs, we can only assume that a σφιγγόπους leg would have been manufactured in the same way as our Bulgarian example (i.e. in four or more pieces) with one of these pieces carved in the form of a crouching sphinx. Unfortunately, no such example with carved decoration is known from Greece or the rest of the eastern Mediterranean. The bronze bed-feet found on Delos and mentioned above were constructed in pieces and inserted into one another<sup>37</sup>. Whether the decorative motif of the crouching sphinx was also first conceived in metal can only be surmised.

The visual pairing of the simple wooden foot of the Bulgarian bed and the reconstruction of the epigraphically attested κλίνη σφιγγόπους introduces a variety of structural questions that can hardly be answered with certainty at the moment<sup>38</sup>. At the same time, these examples are the meager surviving evidence of what was originally a large body of Greek furniture which we tend to ignore in the study of domestic issues.

The fact that all three inscriptions mentioning the rubric σφιγγόποδες were found in the Sarapieion and the only other literary reference to such comes from Alexandria is worth analysing a little further, in light of the periodic research on the establishment and evolution of Oriental cults on the island since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. and especially since even newer material has now come to light<sup>39</sup>. The three inscriptions that record our beds are said to come »from the *dromos*«, possibly *dromos* D which leads to Temple C in

late Hellenistic; cf. K. SCHEFOLD, *Die Griechen und ihre Nachbarn* (Berlin 1967) 196 nr. 123. I would like to thank the curator A. Bernhard-Walcher for providing me with published information concerning this piece.

<sup>33</sup> KYRIELEIS 1969, 65. As Kyrieleis points out, the tradition of animals as support-figures on furniture goes back to Mesopotamia, later appears in both Hittite and Egyptian furniture (65 notes 278–280). Already in the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC, traces of this tradition emerge in Phoenicia and in the 9<sup>th</sup> c. BC the first animal supports appear on furniture in Syria. Sphinxes used as supports most probably originate in Syria, where they follow the Caryatid-type (67 note 290; 71).

<sup>34</sup> Egypt: H. S. BAKER, *Furniture in the Ancient Greek World: Origins and Evolution 3100–475 B. C.* (London 1966) 303 f. for furniture tools; Bulgaria: FILOW 1934, 119–126 bed from Losarskata Mogila, dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC.

<sup>35</sup> As depicted in KYRIELEIS 1969, 128 fig. 23.

<sup>36</sup> KYRIELEIS 1969, 128.

<sup>37</sup> For a reconstruction of a bronze leg made from several pieces cf. C. BAUDOIN, *Une cargaison de bronzes hellénistiques, L'épave Fourmigue C à Golfe-Juan, Archæonautica* 12 (Paris 1994).

<sup>38</sup> For example, what is the possible size of a carved wooden figure? Are we justified in reconstructing carved wooden sphinxes on small sections on bed-legs instead of whole sphinxes as the Harta example? How far has wood carving evolved by the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC? The lack of examples on any material following the Harta type is currently the only evidence for our reconstruction.

<sup>39</sup> SIARD 2003a, with earlier bibliography.

the precinct of Sarapieion C (fig. 8)<sup>40</sup>. ID 1416 (or ›Inventory of Anthesterios‹) is dated to 157/6 BC and ID 1417 (or ›Inventory of Kallistratos‹) is dated to 156/5 BC. According to ID 2087 and 2088 the *dromos* was paved and decorated with altars, sphinxes and an *horologium* in the first ten or fifteen years of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC. Consequently, the record of the κλίνας σφιγγόποδες should be dated to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC. Since they are the property of the sanctuary, we should study them in association with that particular cult.

The Oriental residents of Delos have been estimated to be the largest component of the population after 167/6 BC and are thought to have played a significant role in the economy of the island<sup>41</sup>. Based on epigraphic evidence, this population consisted of members of the Memphite priesthood, indigenous Egyptians and numerous Alexandrians (Greeks)<sup>42</sup>. The official establishment of the Egyptian cults, in particular, is dated to the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, although dedications to Egyptian gods are traced as far back as the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, and survived until Imperial times. The cult of Sarapis was introduced privately in the last quarter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. or the early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC by the grandfather of the priest Apollonius<sup>43</sup>. The cult became official under the auspices of Apollonius himself (i.e. with state/ official support and recognition) in 220 or 180 BC. What is now certain, and so eloquently explained by P. M. Fraser, is that the introduction of the official cult in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC was not part of Ptolemaic propaganda or influence, as previously thought<sup>44</sup>. The complete absence of Alexandrian dedications before 116 BC is also significant. In contrast, the Athenians, dedicated a sanctuary (Temple I) in 135/4 BC and until 116 BC all dedications are made by Athenians, Delians and Italians. Similarly, the cult of Sarapis in Alexandria expanded only minimally in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC and only among Greeks, but gained ground towards the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC<sup>45</sup>. As noted by L. Vidman, a notable Egyptianising movement took place in Delos alongside an equivalent development in Alexandria, but we do not know why<sup>46</sup>. M.-F. Baslez has argued that the cult of Sarapis co-existed with the worship of other gods and that the regrouping of these religious triads or diads proves to be more fluid and complex than previously thought<sup>47</sup>. Isis, on the other hand, was clearly popular in the Greek world before the introduction of Sarapis, as is evident by the appearance of theophoric names from Isis already in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC<sup>48</sup>. Apparently Temple C, to which *dromos* D leads, was dedicated to Isis<sup>49</sup>. Although our κλίνας σφιγγόποδες άνέντατοι are not specified as a dedication on our inscriptions, based on the evidence presented above, we might suppose that they were either dedicated by a pious, yet unnamed, worshipper, if they are to be understood as dedications of a certain person (Delian, Athenian, Italian or, less likely according to the evidence presented

<sup>40</sup> BRUNEAU 1980, 161–188 for a thorough study of the temple and the *dromos*. Temple C has been identified with a Metroon (R. Vallois), a temple of Isis (Ph. Bruneau) and a Hydreion (H. Siard). For a brief overview of the literature see most recently BRUNEAU – DUCAT 2005, 277–279 fig. 89. For the earlier Sarapieion A (the private precinct) see BRUNEAU – DUCAT 2005, 267–269. For the new excavated material from Temple C and new interpretation of the topography see H. SIARD, *Travaux de l'École française d'Athènes en 2001: Délos. Le Sarapieion C*, BCH 126, 2002, 537–545; SIARD 2003; H. SIARD, *Travaux de l'École française d'Athènes en 2002: Délos. Le Sarapieion C*, BCH 127, 2003, 504–515. The *dromos* is thought to have been used for processions.

<sup>41</sup> BASLEZ 1977, 11. By ›oriental‹ residents we mean newcomers from Egypt, Syria, Phoenike, Palestine, Arabia and Anatolia.

<sup>42</sup> BASLEZ 1977, 36 with earlier bibliography.

<sup>43</sup> For more information on the introduction of the cult of Sarapis in Egypt see FRASER 1960, 18 f.; for the cult and its paraphernalia in Egypt see H. C. YOUTIE, *The Kline of Sarapis*, HThR 41/1, 1948, 9–29; for the introduction of the cult in Delos see FRASER 1960, 22–24 with earlier bibliography.

<sup>44</sup> FRASER 1960, 22 f.

<sup>45</sup> FRASER 1960, 9.

<sup>46</sup> L. VIDMAN, *Quelques remarques sur les inventaires des Sérapées de Délos*, Acta of the Fifth International Congress of the Greek and Latin Epigraphy, Cambridge 1967 (Oxford 1971) 93–99 esp. 98.

<sup>47</sup> For a different opinion see ROUSSEL 1916, 250 f. – BASLEZ 1977, 35–43 convincingly demonstrates, through the study of the epigraphical material, that the ›diffusion‹ of the Egyptian cults in the Ptolemaic or Pharaonic form is overstated. She interprets the Egyptian cult on Delos more like an association and assimilation with the Greek Pantheon and erases any ›national‹ character from the various religious nuances.

<sup>48</sup> FRASER 1960, 14, note 3.

<sup>49</sup> BRUNEAU 1980, 171–176. For a different opinion see R. VALLOIS, *L'architecture hellénique et hellénistique à Délos jusqu'à l'éviction des Déliens* (166 av. J.C.), BEFAR 157 (Paris 1944) 85–96, who identifies the temple with the Metroon. New material evidence has now come to light by SIARD 2003a, 195. By means of a new sondage on the site, Siard dates Temple C to the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC. If this date is correct, then Temple C is not an old temple, as has previously been thought, but might be contemporary to the refurbishing of the *dromos* with the sphinxes, the *horologium* and the altars. Until a new topographical and material study is available by Siard, I follow Bruneau's interpretation and reasoning.

above, Egyptian), or, they might have served as *mobilier du culte* (manufactured by the temple for temple use), as were many of the pieces of furniture recorded in treasury lists of other sanctuaries in the Greek world<sup>50</sup>. Delian associations of devotees connected to Sarapis which met on certain days of the month are known from the epigraphic evidence from the island and date between 220 and 166 BC, thus making them contemporary to our inscriptions.

Although the exact ritual that the cult of Sarapis on Delos followed is still vague<sup>51</sup>, certain rooms of the temple were most probably devoted to feasting, as the benches in Sarapieion B suggest<sup>52</sup>. Beds are common *mobilier du culte* and the evidence of beds associated with Sarapis and his cult has a special place (and name) in later literature (2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> c.) AD. Tertullian speaks of the *cenae Serapiacae* and such *klinae* are also known from the Oxyrhynchos Papyri of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD and another papyrus from Oslo<sup>53</sup>. The Oxyrhynchos papyrus informs us that Sarapis' κλῖναι are used in private banquets within private houses or temples<sup>54</sup>. The invitation to the «κλῖνη of Sarapis» is a metaphor to a secular and/or religious banquet, where Sarapis becomes both an ἐστιάτωρ and an ὁμόσπονδος<sup>55</sup>. In the material record Sarapis is often depicted reclining on a bed<sup>56</sup>. These beds, according to the papyri and Tertullian's evidence, are used for cultic feasting in a symbolic way: the *klinae* are understood as a symbol of ritual dining dedicated to the God. In cults, such as Sarapis', the ritual banquet is the means to assure the cohesion of the participants, requesting at the same time divine guaranty and protection, as M.-F. Baslez concludes<sup>57</sup>. Whatever the case, κλῖναι become an indispensable part of the ritual banquet, since the time of the Greek θεοξένιον<sup>58</sup>.

Undeniably, the cult of Sarapis enjoyed gatherings and ritual meals. It is not one word far fetched to assume, therefore, that the κλῖναι σφιγγόποδες recorded in the *dromos* of Sarapis' precinct (perhaps the same renowned Delian beds of Pliny) were used in such settings and were decorated quite appropriately with an Oriental motif: the sphinx. In archaeology, it is often hard to locate the exact place and time where a decorative motif is born. What we usually come across is the assimilation and translation of motifs from one culture to another. I cannot claim to have achieved the former but I think that I have been able to move somewhat further than the latter by demonstrating here the unique nature of the κλῖναι σφιγγόποδες, their cultic use in the Sarapieion and their possible typological or structural association with the renowned beds mentioned by Pliny.

<sup>50</sup> ANDRIANOU 2006b.

<sup>51</sup> ROUSSEL 1915, 253–255. 284–289.

<sup>52</sup> ROUSSEL 1915, 285, notes 5–6; MILNE 1925, 9 for the words διπνητήριον, κλῖναρχοι and οἶκος; an inscription from Thessaloniki mentions the συνθροισκευτὰ κλεινῆς θεοῦ Μεγάλου Σαράπιδος (IG X<sup>2</sup> 192; REG 1907, 70); also RE XI 1 (1921) 846–861 s. v. Kline (K. ZIEBARTH) esp. 861.

<sup>53</sup> CASTIGLIONE 1961. For the organisation of the cult of Sarapis on Delos see ROUSSEL 1915, 266–271.

<sup>54</sup> MILNE 1925, 6 see table of 16 invitations. In P. Oxy. VIII, 1144, 6 of the late 1<sup>st</sup>–early 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD the κλῖνη was dedicated by the sanctuary. For a different opinion on the religious character of these invitations in the P. Oxy. see MILNE 1925, where the author is in favor of secular dining clubs, classed with the better-known σῖνοδοι. I do not see that one interpretation necessarily rules out the other: both secular and religious connotations might have been linked under Sarapis and a restaurant might have been part of the rather large precinct of Sarapieion C. But until more evidence from Delos is available we should remain. All the abovementioned evidence dates between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD.

<sup>55</sup> Aristeid. or. 55, 26–28; cf. W. S. FERGUSON and A. D. NOCK, The Attic Orgeones and the Cult of Heroes, HThR 37/2, 1944, 61–174 esp. 150.

<sup>56</sup> PH. LEDERER, Aegyptisches Theoxenion des Jahres 167 auf einer bisher unbekanntenen Münze des Marcus Aurelius, Deutsche Münzblätter 408, 1937, 201–211; CASTIGLIONE 1961, 293–303. From the evidence presented by Lederer and Castiglione there is no depiction of beds with sphinxes on their feet in the form of κλῖναι σφιγγόποδες. However, it is interesting to follow the authors' reasoning on the interpretation of the boxes, usually depicted with these scenes, as the θησαυροί, often mentioned on inscriptions referring to the cult of Sarapis.

<sup>57</sup> BASLEZ 1977, 279.

<sup>58</sup> RE V A 2 (1934) 2256–2258 s. v. Theoxenia (F. PFISTER).

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### Sources of Illustrations

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Fig. 1: Bronze bell-shaped hollow tubes, possibly from bed legs, Delos

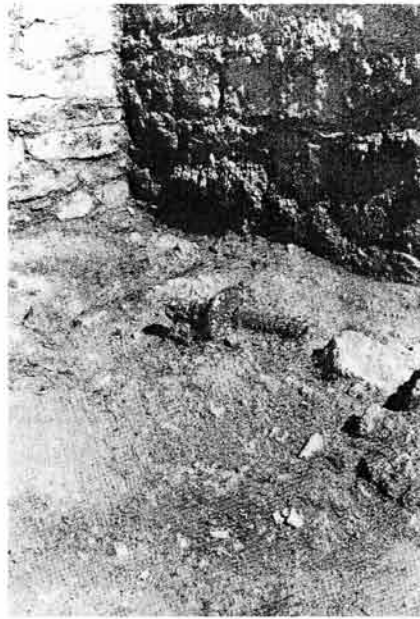


Fig. 2: Bronze bed foot, House of the Seals, Delos



Fig. 3: Possible reconstruction of a fulcrum, Quarter of Skardhana, Delos

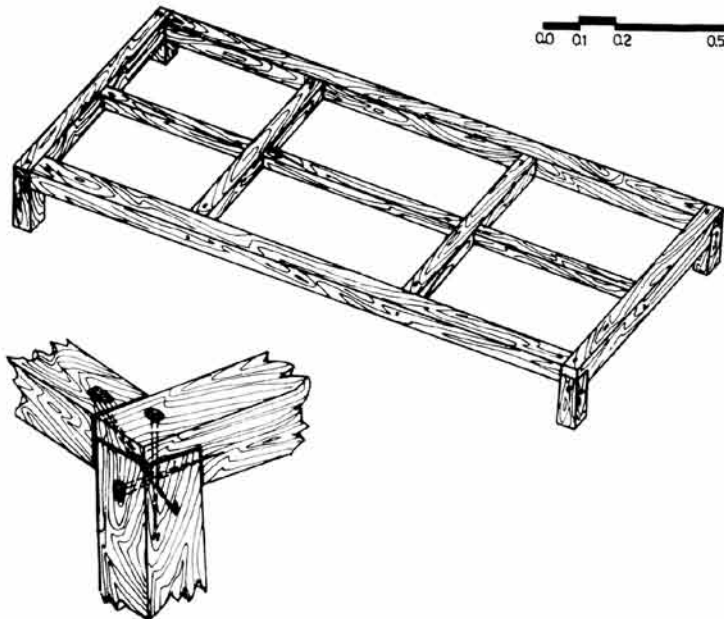


Fig. 4: Reconstruction of a wooden stretcher, Veroia





Fig. 5: Etruscan terracotta cinerary urn, Museo Kircheriano, Rome



Fig. 6a: Tomb stele, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



Fig. 6b: Detail of fig. 6a

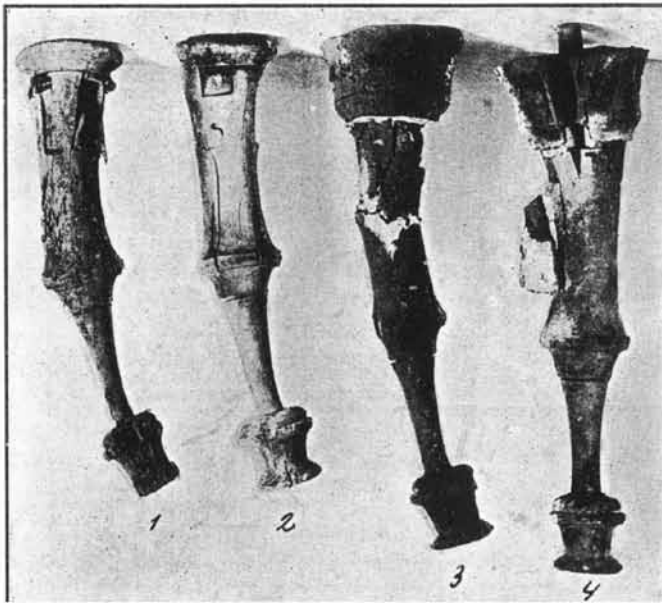


Fig. 7a: Wooden bed legs, Losarskata Mogila, Bulgaria

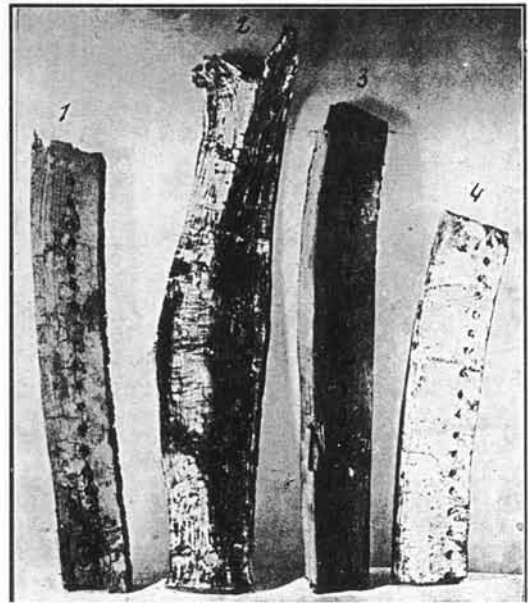
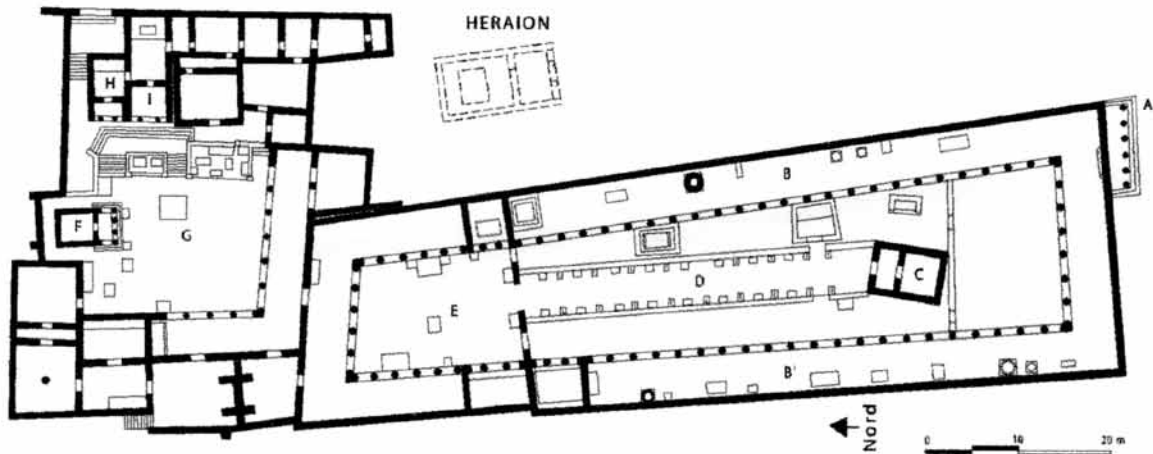


Fig. 7b: Bed frame, Losarskata Mogila, Bulgaria



ÉCOLE FRANÇAISE D'ATHÈNES

N° : 30671		Légende : Sarapeion C
N° inv. :		
Site : Délos		Type de dessin : Plan restitution
Secteur : Sarapeion C		Échelle : 1000
Auteurs de la fouille : de l'étude : du dessin : <i>Fz-Fz. Muller</i> des modifications : B. Sagnier	Année :	Environnement : Mac <input type="checkbox"/> PC
	2003	Logiciel : Adobe Illustrator
		Version : 8
Remarques : d'après 4120. Guide de Délos, p. 279, fig. 89		Format d'enregistrement :
		Copie PDF, échelle :

Fig. 8: Sarapeion C precinct, Delos