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# THE GREEK AND ROMAN TROPHY

FROM BATTLEFIELD MARKER TO ICON OF POWER

Lauren Kinnee



# The Greek and Roman Trophy

“In this volume Kinnee offers a comprehensive account of the development of the trophy in Greek and Roman culture. Combining study of the literary and archaeological evidence with insights from anthropology and the history of religions, she offers a provocative new interpretation of the Greek trophy, radically different from the icon of power it later became.”

Zahra Newby, *University of Warwick, UK*

In *The Greek and Roman Trophy: From Battlefield Marker to Icon of Power*, Kinnee presents the first monographic treatment of ancient trophies in sixty years. The study spans Archaic Greece through the Augustan Principate. Kinnee aims to create a holistic view of this complex monument-type by breaking down boundaries between the study of art history, philology, the history of warfare, and the anthropology of religion and magic. Ultimately, the kaleidoscopic picture that emerges is of an *ad hoc* anthropomorphic Greek talisman that gradually developed into a sophisticated, Augustan sculptural or architectural statement of power. The former, a product of the hoplite phalanx, disappeared from battlefields as the Macedonian cavalry grew in importance, shifting instead onto coins and into rhetoric, where it became a statement of military might. For their part, the Romans seem to have encountered the trophy as an icon on Syracusan coinage. Recognizing its value as a statement of territorial ownership, the Romans spent two centuries honing the trophy-concept into an empire-building tool, planted at key locations around the Mediterranean to assert Roman presence and dominance.

This volume covers a ubiquitous but poorly understood phenomenon and will therefore be instructive to upper-level undergraduates, graduate students, and scholars in all fields of Classical Studies.

**Lauren Kinnee** is the Director of Art History and Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, USA.

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# **The Greek and Roman Trophy**

From Battlefield Marker to Icon  
of Power

**Lauren Kinnee**

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**I dedicate this book to Zeus Tropaios**



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# Abbreviations for standard resources and journals

<i>AA</i>	Archäologischer Anzeiger
<i>AdI</i>	Annali dell'Istituto di corrispondenza archeologica
<i>AJA</i>	American Journal of Archaeology
<i>AJAH</i>	American Journal of Ancient History
<i>AJP</i>	American Journal of Philology
<i>AM</i>	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung
<i>AntCl</i>	L'Antiquité classique
<i>AntJ</i>	Antiquaires Journal
<i>AnzAW</i>	Anzeiger für die Altertumswissenschaft
<i>Aquitania</i>	Aquitania: revue inter-régionale d'archéologie: Aquitaine, Limousin, Midi-Pyrénées, Poitou-Charentes. Talence: Éd. de la Fédération Aquitania
<i>Archaeology</i>	Archaeology Magazine
<i>ArchCl</i>	Archeologia classica
<i>ArcheologiaWar</i>	Archeologia: Rocznik Instytutu historii kultury materialnej Polskiej akademii nauk (Warsaw)
<i>ArtHist</i>	Art History
<i>ARV<sup>2</sup></i>	J.D. Beazley, <i>Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters</i> . 2nd edition. Oxford, 1963
<i>ASCL</i>	Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania. Roma: Associazione Nazionale per gli Interessi del Mezzogiorno d'Italia
<i>Athenaeum</i>	Athenaeum: Studi periodici di letteratura e storia dell'antichità, Università di Pavia
<i>AttiPontAcc</i>	Atti della Pontificia Accademia romana di archeologia
<i>BAM</i>	Bulletin d'archéologie marocaine. Rabat: Ministère des affaires culturelles, Institut national des sciences de l'archéologie et du patrimoine
<i>BCH</i>	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
<i>BCSSA</i>	Bollettino del Centro di studi per la storia dell'architettura
<i>Berytus</i>	Berytus: Archaeological Studies
<i>BullCom</i>	Bollettino della Commissione archeologica Comunale di Roma

<i>Byzantion</i>	Byzantion: Revue internationale des études byzantines
<i>CAH</i>	Cambridge Ancient History
<i>CB</i>	L.D. Caskey and J.D. Beazley, <i>Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston</i> . Oxford, 1931–1963
<i>CÉFR</i>	Collection de l'École française de Rome
<i>Chiron</i>	Chiron: Mitteilungen der Kommission für alte Geschichte und Epigraphik des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts
<i>CP</i>	Classical Philology
<i>CR</i>	Classical Review
<i>CRAI</i>	Comptes rendus / Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. Paris: de Boccard
<i>DialArch</i>	Dialoghi di archeologia
<i>DossPar</i>	Histoire et archéologie: Les dossiers (Paris)
<i>EcAntNîmes</i>	Ecole antique de Nîmes. Bulletin annuel
<i>Ephesos</i>	Forschungen in Ephesos veröffentlicht vom Österreichischen Archäologischen Institut in Wien
<i>Gallia</i>	Gallia: Fouilles et monuments archéologiques en France métropolitaine
<i>Gallia Suppl.</i>	Gallia Supplement
<i>GRBS</i>	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
<i>Gymnasium</i>	Gymnasium: Zeitschrift für Kultur der Antike und humanistische Bildung
<i>Habis</i>	Habis: filología clásica, historia antigua, arqueología clásica. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, Secretariado de Publicaciones.
<i>Hesperia</i>	Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens
<i>Historia</i>	Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte
<i>HSCP</i>	Harvard Studies in Classical Philology
<i>IG</i>	M. Fraenkel, <i>Inscriptiones graecae</i> (Berlin 1895–)
<i>JAH</i>	Journal of Ancient History
<i>JMA</i>	Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology
<i>JRA</i>	Journal of Roman Archaeology
<i>JRGZM</i>	Jahrbuch des Römisch-germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz
<i>JRS</i>	Journal of Roman Studies
<i>Klio</i>	Klio: Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte. Berlin: Akademie Verl
<i>Latomus</i>	Latomus: revue d'études latines. Bruxelles: Latomus
<i>LSJ<sup>9</sup></i>	H.G. Liddell et al., <i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th edition. Oxford, 1940
<i>LTUR</i>	E.M. Steinby, editor. <i>Lexicon topographicum urbis romae</i> . Rome, 1993
<i>LTURS</i>	A. La Regina, editor. <i>Lexicon topographicum urbis Romae: Suburbium</i> . Rome, 2001–2008
<i>MAAR</i>	Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome
<i>MÉFRA</i>	Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Antiquité
<i>Mnemosyne Suppl.</i>	Mnemosyne: Bibliotheca classica batava. Supplement

<i>NHeidJB</i>	Neue Heidelberger Jahrbücher
<i>NNUM</i>	Nordisk numismatisk unions medlemsblad
<i>NTDAR</i>	L. Richardson. <i>A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome</i> . Baltimore, 1992
<i>OCD</i>	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i>
<i>ÖJh</i>	Jahreshefte des Österreichischen archäologischen Instituts in Wien
<i>PAPS</i>	Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society
<i>PastPres</i>	Past and Present
<i>PBSR</i>	Papers of the British School at Rome
<i>Phoenix</i>	Phoenix: The Classical Association of Canada
<i>Pontica</i>	Pontica: Studii si materiale de istorie, arheologie si muzeografie, Constanta
<i>Popul Stud</i>	Population Studies
<i>Prakt</i>	Praktika tes en Athenais Archaialogikes Etaireias
<i>ProcPhilAs</i>	Proceedings of the American Philological Association
<i>Prospettiva</i>	Prospettiva: Rivista d'arte antica e moderna
<i>RA</i>	Revue archéologique
<i>RE</i>	A. Pauly and G. Wissowa. <i>Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , 1893–1978
<i>RÉG</i>	Revue des études grecques
<i>RLouvre</i>	La revue du Louvre et des musées de France
<i>RStLig</i>	Rivista di studi liguri
<i>SciMon</i>	The Scientific Monthly
<i>ScAnt</i>	Scienze dell'Antichità: Storia, archeologia, antropologia (Rome)
<i>StRom</i>	Studi romani
<i>StudRomagn</i>	Studi romagnoli. Cesena: Società di Studi Romagnoli
<i>TAPS</i>	Transactions of the American Philosophical Society
<i>WorldArch</i>	World Archaeology
<i>WürzJbb</i>	Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft
<i>Xenia</i>	Xenia: Semestrale di antichità



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# 1 Introduction

Previous studies have focused on the trophy through either a philological or an art historical lens. Here I attempt to combine both approaches and to augment these with, for example, an anthropological view of ancient religion and magic, new views on the sociology of ancient warfare, and a semiotic examination of the term and its relation to contemporary history and culture. This book will therefore be interdisciplinary in nature, revealing the complexity of its subject matter. The ancient trophy was not only a statement of victory: it was also a magical talisman, a metaphor for power, and a tool for empire-building. To suit these different roles, it developed myriad forms. The trophy was truly a complex and fascinating aspect of the Greco-Roman visual landscape.

## Questions and methodology

The trophy phenomenon, an ancient Mediterranean mode of victory commemoration that encompassed a variety of visual forms, was first a Greek and then a Roman convention. Its use in these two cultures is often misunderstood. In its simplest form – the so-called ‘mannequin trophy’ – it consisted of a tree stump dressed in arms and armour stripped from the battlefield dead (see Figure 1.1). The image of the mannequin is ubiquitous in both Greek and Roman art and even literature. This shared iconography has resulted in three problematic interpretations: 1) the Greeks and Romans used the trophy to identical ends; 2) the Roman trophy is completely derivative of its Greek antecedent; or 3) the trophy was a rare object in Greece and is primarily a Roman phenomenon. This last interpretation is the result of a higher survival rate for Roman trophies, which tended to be carved in stone, while the Greek trophy was usually a perishable object left to rot on the battlefield.

I argue that none of these interpretations captures the true nature of either the Greek or the Roman trophy, and that the interpretations leave unanswered several crucial questions. Namely, what is the difference between these cultures’ trophies and why did the Greek and Roman monuments ultimately diverge? In order to fully address these questions, an in-depth examination of the trophy phenomenon is necessary: that is the purpose of this book. We will here glimpse some of the basic answers.

The Greek trophy originated simultaneously with the hoplite phalanx. The victors placed a mannequin at the location where the tide of battle turned in their favour. The





*Figure 1.1* Name vase of the Trophy Painter, 450–440 B.C.E., Boston, MFA 20.187.

trophy was, however, far more than this. It was also a necromantic talisman that might have removed the bloodstain from the battlefield, an apotropaic territorial marker, and a bold statement of political power. Following the decline of phalanx tactics, the Greek trophy became primarily an icon of power on coinage and in literature.

While other scholars have touched upon some of these ideas, their research often has fallen into a single genre of Classical Studies, be it philology, art history, history or anthropology. This has produced a fractured perspective on the trophy, which has prevented a true understanding of the object's complexity. I fuse these perspectives and draw on recent, as yet unaddressed material crucial to any re-evaluation of the trophy. Kagan and Viggiano's (2013) landmark study of hoplite warfare, and Ogden's (2009) long-overdue examination of necromancy have particularly influenced my effort to reveal the complexities of the underappreciated Greek trophy.

Meanwhile, I seek to answer the question of what is truly Roman about the Roman trophy. In so doing, this work engages again with burgeoning trends in

scholarship: Hölscher's (1987) *semantisches System* in general; and, regarding warfare in Roman visual culture, Polito (1998) and Dillon and Welch (2006). My study reveals that, though the Roman trophy lacked many of the religious aspects of its Greek counterpart, its use as a tool for personal advancement and empire-building were no less fascinating. Soon after they adopted the trophy from the Greeks, the Romans began to make striking innovations by introducing a diverse repertoire of new forms, meanings and uses that are without Greek precedent. The Roman trophy is stark testimony to originality in the Roman visual arts, particularly with respect to expressions of military might.

In order to illuminate the Roman changes to the trophy I present two in-depth case studies of Roman innovations that date to the republican period and reach maturity under the Augustan Principate. The first subject of discussion is the tableau monument, a sculptural ensemble depicting a mannequin accompanied by bound captives in a scene 'frozen in time', hence the term tableau. This genre of trophy is apparently entirely absent from the Greek repertoire. It most likely derives from the real Roman practice of parading actual captives beneath trophies in triumphal processions. I argue that it was the great and prescient general C. Marius who, in the later 2nd century B.C.E., monumentalized this practice in art. Marius' tableau led to a proliferation of the type, which soon became a convention across media, including coins minted under Marius, Sulla, Brutus and Julius Caesar; the sculptural trophy-relief on the Tomb of Caecilia Metella (see Figure 1.2) on the Via Appia outside of Rome; and on the sculpted friezes from the Temple of Apollo in Circo (Figure 1.3) and the Sant'Omobono victory reliefs (Figure 1.4).

The second major innovation discussed here is a reinvention of the Greek tradition of placing a trophy at the turning point of a battle. The Romans also constructed extramural trophies, but placed them at other geographically significant locations in order to declare Roman imperial presence. Monuments of this type include Octavian's campsite memorial at Nikopolis, his new 'Victory City' located near the battle site of Actium, in Epiros in western Greece (see Figure 1.5). This monument includes stunning reliefs depicting the Actium triumphal procession, which have yet to be formally published.<sup>1</sup>

The question of why the trophy's nature shifted so dramatically remains. I believe that the trophy was never limited to a single meaning in Greece or in Rome. The Greek version could be a temporary, religious object, or – on rare occasions – it could take the form of a permanent stone marker atop a column. Moreover, its association with the hoplite phalanx, an ultimately outdated approach to battle, forced it to evolve in the Hellenistic period from a battlefield marker to a symbol of military prowess. It was as this icon of power that the Romans first encountered the trophy, and it was an easy shift from small, symbolic coinage to large, symbolic monuments. The highly competitive Republic fuelled the development of increasingly ostentatious trophy monuments that appeared and functioned less and less like their Greek antecedents. Ultimately, what had been a small-scale practice in Greece became a large-scale approach to communicating with peoples across the Roman Empire, from 'civilized' Greeks to 'barbaric' Alpine tribes.