

THE FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS OF ANCIENT GREEK HOUSES AND TOMBS

In this book, Dimitra Andrianou analyzes the furniture and furnishings found in late Classical and Hellenistic houses, tombs, and inscriptions of ancient Greece. Questioning the wealth of images of furniture as portrayed on vases, she focuses on the actual remains of furniture found in houses; analyzes the symbolic nature of elaborate furniture used every day and in the afterlife; discusses their types and uses in houses, tombs, and sanctuaries; and assembles their ancient vocabulary. The material evidence has been gathered from sites throughout the entire area of Greece that was ruled by the Macedonian kings and is supported by material and literary *comparanda* from contemporary neighboring sites.

Dimitra Andrianou is Researcher in Hellenistic History and Archaeology at the National Hellenic Research Foundation in Athens. A recipient of fellowships from the Fulbright Foundation, the Leventis Foundation, and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, she has excavated extensively in Greece, Cyprus, and Asia Minor.

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Dimitra Andrianou

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

To Angelos

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	page xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiii
<i>Introduction to the Subject</i>	xv
1 HISTORIOGRAPHY	1
Urban Studies	1
Furniture Studies	5
Why Study Ancient Furniture?	10
Overview of Evidence	12
Epigraphic and Literary Sources	12
Visual Representations	16
Excavated Objects	17
2 FURNITURE	22
Seats	22
Literary Evidence	22
Archaeological Evidence: Domestic	22
Catalogue 1–4	23
Archaeological Evidence: Funerary	25
Catalogue 5–12	28
Bed-couches	31
Literary Evidence	31
Archaeological Evidence: Domestic	34
Catalogue 13–20	35

Archaeological Evidence: Funerary	39
Catalogue 21–46	43
Tables	50
Literary Evidence	50
Archaeological Evidence: Domestic	51
Catalogue 47–51	52
Archaeological Evidence: Funerary	55
Catalogue 52–58	55
Discussion	59
Storage Furniture	63
Containers	63
Literary Evidence	64
Archaeological Evidence: Domestic	65
Catalogue 59–62	66
Archaeological Evidence: Funerary	67
Catalogue 63–89	71
Open Cupboards	82
Literary Evidence	82
Visual Evidence	83
Shelves	83
Domestic Context	83
Funerary Context	84
Discussion	85
3 FURNISHINGS	90
Textiles: Overview	90
Literary Evidence	90
Materials	91
Visual Evidence	92
Funerary Context	92
Catalogue 90–96	92
Bedclothes	96
Visual Evidence	96
Literary Evidence	97
Archaeological Evidence:	
Funerary	98
Valances	99
Visual Evidence	99
Curtains	99
Visual Evidence	99
Literary Evidence	99

CONTENTS

ix

Rugs and Mats	100
Literary Evidence	100
Weaving Furniture: Looms, Loom Weights, Spindle Whorls, and Spools	101
Domestic Context	101
Visual Evidence	105
Literary Evidence	105
Discussion	106
4 SACRED FURNITURE IN TREASURE LISTS	107
Vocabulary of Furniture and Furnishings	109
Containers	110
Chairs and Footstools	113
Bed-couches and Tables	113
Tableaux	114
Washbasins and Troughs	115
Rugs, Cushions, and Pillows	115
The Significance of Furniture Dedications	115
<i>Mobilier du culte</i>	116
Safekeeping and Storage	119
Display	121
Discussion	121
5 FURNITURE, LUXURY, AND FUNERARY SYMBOLISM IN MACEDONIA	123
APPENDIX I: ACROPOLIS OF ATHENS	131
Temple of Athena on the Acropolis of Athens	131
Opisthodomos (405–386 B.C.)	131
Pronaos (434/3 to 408/7 B.C.)	132
Parthenon	132
Hekatompedon	133
Erechtheion	136
Chalkotheke (369/368 B.C.)	136
Artemis Brauronia	136
Athenian Asklepieion	137
APPENDIX II: MAJOR AND MINOR TREASURES OF DELOS	139
Delian Inventories of the Major Treasures	139
Delian Inventories of the Minor Treasures	142
Non-precious Delian Treasures	147

APPENDIX III: SMALLER SHRINES AND HEROA	151
APPENDIX IV: DELIAN CHRONOLOGIES	153
<i>Notes</i>	155
<i>Bibliography</i>	191
<i>Index</i>	209

FIGURES

1a	Map of sites mentioned in the catalogues of excavated objects from domestic context	<i>page</i> 20
1b	Map of sites mentioned in the catalogues of excavated objects from funerary context	21
2	Marble armchair, Delos	24
3	Set of marble legs from a seat or a bench, Delos	25
4a	Miniature seat, Stageira	26
4b	Miniature seat (reverse), Stageira	26
5a	Miniature seat, Stageira	26
5b	Miniature seat (reverse), Stageira	26
6a	Silver <i>diphros</i> , Stavroupolis	29
6b	Silver <i>diphros</i> , Stavroupolis (reconstruction in the Museum of Thessaloniki)	29
7	Bell-shaped hollow “tubes” of bronze, Delos	36
8a, b	Bronze bed-foot from the House of the Seals, Delos	37
9 a–d	Clay molds, Pella	39
10	Ivory satyr from <i>fulcrum</i> , Athens	40
11	Wooden stretcher (reconstructed), Veroia	43
12	Frit bed-leg, Pella	48
13	Table-tops and table-legs, Delos	53
14a, b	Marble table from the House of Hermes, Delos	54
15a	Marble table-top, Vergina	56
15b	Marble table-top (reverse), Vergina	57
16a	Table-top, Pella	58

16b	Table-top, Pella (reconstruction in the Museum of Pella)	59
17	Marble table-top from the House of the Mosaics, Eretria	60
18a–d	Box revetments, Kallion	68, 69
19	Bronze box from House IV, Eretria	70
20a	Wooden box (reconstruction), Elis	74
20b,c	Box revetments, Elis	75
21	Marble box (θήκη) from the Macedonian tomb B, Pella	77
22	Wooden box, Stavroupolis	81
23	Cloth from the “Tomb of Philip,” Vergina	94
24	Gold threads from the Macedonian tomb B, Pella	95

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT

In the last two decades, studies on domestic complexes and household οἰκονομία have attracted scholars who have turned their attention to the domestic environment and daily life. Domestic architecture, space identification, and gender areas are all subjects of interest in current scholarship. One facet of the domestic sphere that has been noticeably neglected, however, is the material record of furniture and furnishings found inside the house. The body of evidence that physically constitutes the ancient household has been confined to primary publications and is rarely used to elucidate the primary context of domestic pottery, architecture, or sculpture.

The main aim of the present study is to bridge this gap by presenting and analyzing movable domestic objects in their primary context as well as new archaeological evidence concerning the interior layout of ancient Greek houses. Since the study of houses has advanced considerably in the past two decades, and thus the context in which we find furniture is now better understood, there is no better time to examine the existing evidence for objects that increase comfort and the organization of living or are used to perform certain household tasks. In addition, valuable new material unearthed in the last two and a half decades of excavations in northern Greece now sheds more light on aspects of both daily life and the afterlife. Here, for the first time, visual, material, and literary evidence on the subject is gathered for scholarly review.

To advance the discussion in an organized manner, the presentation will fall into two major categories: (1) *furniture*, to be understood in the prevailing modern sense of movable, useful, or ornamental domestic objects, and

(2) *furnishings*, namely textiles that cover furniture (e.g., bedding) to increase comfort and materials that “metaphorically” drape the house interior (e.g., curtains). To provide a sense of continuity, this work begins with the late Classical period in the fourth century B.C. and spans the Hellenistic era until the Roman invasions of the first century B.C. It incorporates the material evidence excavated in the whole area of Greece ruled by the Macedonian kings with material and literary *comparanda* from contemporary sites in Cyprus, Asia Minor, and Egypt.

This study is intended as a window into ancient house interiors, daily life, house management, house decoration, luxury, and wealth. To make this window of analysis wider, literary and visual evidence will be discussed where and when available. A brief review of the scholarship on houses, the main context in which furniture is found, will serve as both an introductory account of the progress on the subject and a summary of the state of publication of the so-called minor objects, in which furniture pieces often belong.