

## THE DEATH OF MYTH ON ROMAN SARCOPHAGI

A strange thing happened to Roman sarcophagi in the third century: Their Greek mythic imagery vanished. Since the beginning of their production a century earlier, these beautifully carved coffins had featured bold mythological scenes. How, then, do we make sense of this imagery's own death on later sarcophagi, as mythological narratives were truncated, gods and heroes were excised, and genres featuring no mythic content whatsoever came to the fore? What does such a profound tectonic shift in the Roman funerary imagination mean for our understanding of Roman history and culture, for the development of its arts, for the passage from the High to the Late Empire and the coming of Christianity, but above all, for the individual Roman women and men who chose this imagery, and who took it with them to the grave? In this book, Mont Allen offers the clues that aid in resolving this mystery.

Mont Allen is Associate Professor of Classics and Art History at Southern Illinois University. A National Lecturer for the Archeological Institute of America, he is a recipient of the University's Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award as well as a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to create an interdisciplinary program on Ancient Practices.

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ROMAN SARCOPHAGI

ALLEGORY AND VISUAL NARRATIVE IN  
THE LATE EMPIRE

MONT ALLEN  
Southern Illinois University





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