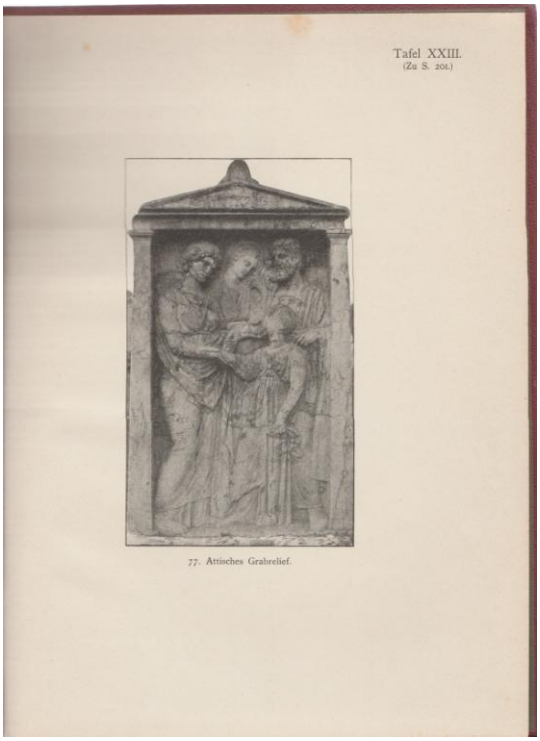
‘Attic Grave Stelae’[1]

Julius Lange (trans. Karl Johns)



Julius Lange, *Ausgewählte Schriften (1886-1897)*, II, Strassburg: J. H. ED Heitz (Heitz & Mündel) 1912, Plate 23.

An important line in the development of Greek art was crossed around the year 400 BC. One of the most important features of the transition consisted in the fact that art opened its eyes more to family life, the intimate and cordial life of the emotions that thrives in private homes among those bound by blood ties and the contacts of daily life. Until then they had viewed humanity in terms of official roles, emphasizing characteristics valued by society in general. This is apparent in many ways, but most clearly in the development of grave monuments.

Since a far earlier time, graves had been marked by a monument in stone, the stele, showing a figure carved in relief on the front side. A man would be shown as a warrior or farmer, a youth as an athlete; the woman was seen as seated inside of the house with a jewellery box, originally a sign of prosperity. Since it was limited to a single figure, never accompanied by more than a pet or slave in small size, they did not distinguish themselves essentially from other representations of the human

[1] [Originally published as ‘Attiske Gravmæler,’ *Nordisk Tidskrift for vetenskap, konst och industri*, 1896, pp. 27-45, reprinted: *Udvalgte skrifter af Julius Lange*, udgivne af Georg Brandes og Peter Købke, Andet bind, København: Det nordiske forlag, 1901, pp. 385-400.]

form in the art of the time. Even when numerous figures were combined into a larger composition, the primary goal was still to present each individual as a model and ideal human being, as we see it in the frieze of the cella on the Parthenon. It did not occur until around the year 400 to express an exclusively emotional or intellectual contact or interaction among the figures. Beginning in the first half of the following century, a completely different sort of grave relief appears including numerous figures depicting the deceased and their immediate family within one and the same image and in such a way that each of them in their own manner relates to the central action. The composition is richer in drama and simpler.[2]

We might say a few words about these family scenes. It is necessary to admit that they present particular difficulties that have been a bone of contention in archaeology. This is a discipline similar to the church with its *ecclesia militans* and *ecclesia triumphans*. In fact, archaeology might more often be *militans* than *triumphans*. In this instance, the difficulties for interpretation are apparently related to the historical phase of development in the art harbouring the entire phenomenon. Around the year 400, new modes of expression arose for emotional life, but the artistic means temporarily remained as they were, an art whose psychological aspect played only in a single key and was only accustomed to expressing a single placid and solemn mood. Now that the goal had become an expression of individual emotions, only small incremental steps were taken, striking us today as monotonous. Only later in the course of the fourth century did the arts, particularly painting with Aristides of Thebes, develop a more nuanced mimic expression able to render dramatic scenes with ease and certainty. We know the results of this development primarily from the remains of ancient painting. It only slowly entered into the grave stelae, but this must not be seen as an imperfection. When the earlier Greek culture showed itself to be so timid with emotional expression, the reason was its conviction that the spirit always prefers its rational and peaceful emotional state over the passionate, more turbulent aspect (the word of Plato, *The Republic*, X). In comparison to the distinct and alternating expressions of modern art, what strikes us today as particularly uniform is its facial expression. The facial surfaces are still smooth with none of the folds and strong shadows of the passions. Usually there is

[2] For readers familiar with Greek art, I would like to note that I by no means agree with the general opinion surrounding the Leukothea relief in the Villa Albani [recent bibliography: Wolfgang Helbig et al., *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom*, vol. 4, Tübingen Wasmuth, 1972, no. 3262, pp. 237-239, illustrated: Lange, *Menneskefiguren*, 1899, p. 25, fig. 10, Lange, *Menschliche Gestalt*, 1903, plate VIII fig. 10, A. W. Lawrence, *Greek and Roman Sculpture*, New York: Harper & Row, 1972, plate 23 fig. a], the style of which suggests a date around 500 BC. It is taken to be a grave monument in honor of a human mother or the child of such. I do not doubt that it is a grave marker, but cannot believe that it depicts a family scene. The enthroned female is a goddess. What has been interpreted as a working basket is the monumental support of her throne. The goddess is receiving the spirit of the deceased in the form of a very small figure, very similar to the way it appears in the Harpy Tomb in Lycia, itself related stylistically to the relief in the Villa Albani.

only a slight distinction between the more vivid sparkle of the eye and the more wistful, subdued facial expression. In the ancient and Mediterranean way, emotional movement is expressed more through the pose and movements of the whole body and gestures of the limbs than the countenance.

We are facing a predominantly idealizing art. The deceased and their family are not depicted as actual individuals, but instead rendered as society imagined its perfect ideal. On the basis of these idealizing traditions, simple Athenian citizens inscribed with their ordinary names appeared within the relief carvings like the gods of Olympus who themselves were shown according to the general Greek ideal. This leads to uniformity and with it also to a lack of clarity. Here as wherever the idealist conception holds sway, the preference is for youthful forms and figures. This brings a further lack of clarity, particularly among the females. According to the bodily characteristics at least, the viewer has difficulty distinguishing women of differing ages, such as mothers and daughters. Among the men, the age differences are slightly more discernible with their beards, but art very rarely embraced the subject of old age.

Precisely these qualities impinging on the clarity of the grave stelae account for their unique beauty. What a pride we see in this idealistic way of thinking, this intense demand to never yield in the slightest and never lose the self-assured ethical bearing befitting a free Hellene! Of course, these relief compositions were made in relationship to death, as we should expect it on a grave, yet the only aspect of death to be made apparent here is its power to awaken and strengthen the love of the survivors. For this reason, the grave stelae reveal an emotional intimacy, a 'feeling' (*et 'Gemyt'*) not considered typical of ancient art. By contrast to this, the bitterness of death, its suffering, its eeriness or its horror never appear more than here or there before the very last monuments of the group dating around the year 300 BC. Beyond that, we do not see a trace of disease or sense the whiff of a corpse. The feelings include neither any outburst or noise, nor strong or unusual gestures. Indeed, the mode of expression is so subdued and placid as to occasionally be difficult to even discern. The strongest expressions of mourning are not seen in the free Greeks and the members of their family, but rather among the poor diminutive slaves mourning their noble lords. Our overall impression is closer to a soothing speech of admonishment, more like the Christian funeral hymn '*iam moesta quiesce querela* (despair not O heart in thy sorrow).'[3] Lamentation and suffering are intended to be kept within the four walls of the domestic abode, yet these address the public since they were erected along an open road.

There are some who will not be inclined to admit this to be a serious matter. Undeniably, the seriousness here is not so harsh as not to allow a veil or the illusion of a mask, not the seriousness in northern Europe we might call Nordic. We refer here to the tendency we see in recent northern poetry and art to wallow in pain and

[3] [Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 'Hymnus circa exequias defuncti,' 117, *Prudentius*, trans. H. J. Thompson, vol. 1, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1949, p. 92.]

omit nothing of its ferocity. It is a Greek seriousness, euphemistic, very careful to avoid awakening the dormant wild animal by mourning. This is exactly how the Greeks reveal what a dangerous force it indeed is, and to avoid drawing incorrect conclusions about these art works we must always bear the Greek tendency to euphemism in mind. The evidence of these grave sculptures suggests that in fourth century Greece, the role of the woman in the family, the mother of the house, must have been enormous. They are always a figure of dignity and nobility, recalling to us Penelope and Alcestis. Their husbands and children are always showing them love and deference. In this context, the sexes seem to have an equal status within marriage, if the woman is not in fact the favoured one. We must admit that the image appears all-too perfect to be interpreted as reflections of reality – as such excellent scholars as Adolf Michaelis and Johan Ludvig Heiberg have done. We should prefer to view these representations of marriage and family life as nothing other than a purely aesthetic phenomenon, an echo of the heroic age of Greece as we know it from Homer and the tragic poets. Like heroic and tragic poetry, the gravestones belong to the category of art works characterized by Aristotle as presenting humanity better than they are. Has this not always been the case of tomb sculpture and funerary oratory?

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Another difficulty inhibiting explanations lies in the fact that the material was not known in its complete state from the outset, but was only being gradually unearthed over a long period of time. This is not only true of the grave sculpture, but of archaeological material in all fields, and means that scholarship is forced to constantly deal with obsolete theories. We begin with a survey of monuments of a single type as they are extant. We cannot know whether more of the same sort might later turn up, and this forces us to construct a theory surrounding what is already known. In the meantime we might be fortunate and make new discoveries calling for adjustments to the previous theory in aligning it with the facts. This then is the pace of things with new discoveries and new readjustments. We reach a point when the strong desire seizes us to draw a line under all of the earlier explanations and begin again. This though is not an easy matter because experience teaches us that theories are among the most tenacious things in the world. Every scholar begins as a student and absorbs the views of their predecessors. They can later attain other insights, but to gain a place in the self-contained society of scholarship (*Plads i Vedenskabens gode sluttede Selskab*) must reach many compromises, and if they are not a member they might as well remain completely silent. It might be a sign of the progress of civilization that scholars have developed these virtues, but it does not always contribute to our learning the truth.

As far as the grave carvings are concerned, we are close to the point when all of the known material can be surveyed in excellent reproductions, approximately 2000 examples from Attica alone in collections all around Europe, and scholarship can begin anew in the hope of reaching solid conclusions. Since 1890, we have been incrementally graced with the large folio publication of *Die attischen Grabreliefs*,

directed by the erudite and rigorously methodical archaeologist Alexander Conze, general secretary of the Kaiserlich Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, with the collaboration of other estimable archaeologists, particularly Adolf Michaelis in Strassburg. This grand and sumptuous project was originally funded by the Akademie der Wissenschaften, later the Deutsches Reichsinstitut with an interim report by Michaelis in the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, 1893.[4] The primary factor in this enormous undertaking are the illustrations which thoroughly satisfy the demands of our time, while the role of the text is to identify the material as completely and precisely as possible, strictly avoiding the endorsement of any particular theory.

When those of the rest of us at the current stage of research indulge in expressing views about the whole or larger parts of the material, we must remain aware of the fact that this can only be a tentative conjecture if not already obsolete, and rules can only be stated when the project by Conze is completed.

The family imagery in these grave carvings very often includes a characteristic that is apparently quite important for a correct reading, but in the course of time has been interpreted in very divergent ways. This is the clasping of hands. Men and women clasp one another's hands, as do old friends or parents with grown children. In ancient art, a hand shake seems to have been reserved for grown people among themselves. Antiquity did not depict children being artificially groomed to imitate the manners of the grownups as we today consider it to be a sign of a good education. Shaking hands includes a conscious element which is only appropriate to those responsible for themselves and not for children.

It was customary in the past to interpret the hand clasp on Greek grave stelae as a sign that the two figures were parting from one another, the one being commemorated leaving this life. In this view, the relief presents a metaphorical image of the death of the individual buried beneath, as a willing departure and spontaneous action on the part of a strong, healthy human being inserted in place of what death actually is – our most extreme affliction and powerlessness. Scholars and artists have been influenced by this interpretation over the last century. For instance, it inspired individual works by Thorvaldsen. In the relief for a tomb he interpreted the handshake as a farewell, though emphasizing an expression of sorrow more clearly in both than we find in the Greek reliefs. In his large tomb for the Duke Eugen von Leuchtenberg in the church of St. Michael in Munich he also conjured death as a completely willing departure from life. In the guise of an ancient hero, the duke hands his laurel wreath off to the Muse Clio before turning to enter the open door to the grave.

In the figure of Alcestis, Greek mythology had a brilliant example of a person leaving life of their own free will as a sacrifice in favour of another, for that of her husband Admetus. This was a heroic exception however, and it was viewed

[4] [Adolf Michaelis 'Attische Grabreliefs,' *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, vol. 28 new ser., 4, 1893, pp. 193-204, 230-237.]

as such. However great their idealization and euphemism might have been, it would surely be necessary before making such an assumption to search further to find at least some small proof that the Greeks otherwise rather astonishingly should have interpreted death generally as a spontaneous action by an individual in a perfect world. When the imagination faces an unknown subject such as conditions after death, all options are available. However, death itself has an actual profile known from experience, and the question is whether it can be so easily ignored and replaced. With our knowledge of the idealizing tendency of the Greeks, we certainly cannot deny that possibility, but must be permitted to remain hesitant and protest that such a quid pro quo might have seemed simple and natural. The Greeks were otherwise quite aware that we are not happy to die. Even the dissipating spirits of the great heroes lament 'taking leave of youth and boldness.' On the relief carvings of the stelae showing the deceased, their departure into the realm of the shades does not involve any sign of grief.

It has been argued on the other hand that among the Greeks, the hand clasp was not a sign of farewell, but simply one of welcoming or more generally, an expression of love and trust. On the basis of literary documentation, it has however been very recently shown that the handshake can actually also signify a farewell, by Karl Sittl, and more emphatically and convincingly by the Danish scholar Johan Ludvig Heiberg.[5] The latter has completely revived and defended the traditional farewell theory. He even claims that if it were customary at the time these grave stelae were made to shake hands when parting, then 'no Athenian could ever have seen anything other than a final farewell in such a grave scene.' Yet this claim seems to be more despotic (*mere despotisk*) than logical. If we can consider it definite that in real life, shaking hands could also denote welcome, and had a more comprehensive connotation (something like the imperative '*chaire*' that can mean hello and good-bye, and occasionally appears in grave-inscriptions), this does not help us any more than confirming a certain possibility that it might mean farewell in this context.

The gesture of shaking hands seems most likely to have been similar to a word in language, like its gloss, and we can easily understand how philologists tend to treat it as such. Yet there is an essential difference between the expressive tools available to the visual arts and respectively to language. It is not possible to define the artistic expression as precisely as those of language, and we cannot presume that the representation means the same thing. We cannot categorically exclude the possibility that the hand clasp means one thing in one relief, and another in the next. There is also no reason to draw too sharp a distinction between those reliefs including the hand clasp and those without it. The visual arts must always be approached as such, and appeal more to our emotions than to the realm of thought. To correctly understand what the ancient artists were expressing in each case, it is

[5] Karl Sittl, *Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1890, p. 26. [Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Attiske Gravmæler*, Copenhagen: Philipsens, 1895.]

imperative to understand the peculiar language of art unencumbered by any preconceptions.

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To achieve a solid foundation we should consider an example not exposed to any serious doubts, the so-called grave stone from Illissos.[6] In this instance, the clarity is partially due to its excellent artistic quality. I obviously disagree with Heiberg's assumption that it is a replica of a more famous work, and see no evidence of such a repetition. It is what is sometimes called a 'workshop piece,' an original from the studio of a great artist, and we have some reason to believe that that artist might have been Skopas. The clarity of this example is also due to the fact that it is one of the later, distinguished works of this entire genre of monuments, made in a time when facial expression had been completely mastered. How eloquent the father's expression of sorrow! It is also among the largest of these relief carvings with the figures nearly life-size.

The main figures are a father and his son with a small slave and hunting dog accompanying the latter. Of course the son is the deceased. As Heiberg tells it, he is shown 'in the training area or resting after physical exercise'. Facing him we see the aged father staring blankly. They are separated by less than two meters, yet the gaze and mien of the father show that they are a whole world apart. An essential and decisive barrier lies between the two, apparent when we recognize the meaning but invisible to the superficial view, namely that dividing our actual lives where the old man remains from the realm of memory now inhabited by the youth. We see the son only through the eyes of the father, aged, aggrieved, tear stained, unable to forget what he has lost or to suppress the surge of immeasurable memories. It is along with the father that we see the son as a nearly heroic figure, a young Herakles or Melagros, brimming with strength and beauty. Heiberg aptly notes that 'we are not able to place the actual location of the two figures in relation to one another. It is as if we see a reflection of the father's mood in thinking back to the final time he saw his son in the full vigour of his youth, so beautiful and strong, and I shall never see him again!'[7]

It is the image of a memory as vivid to our imagination as if it were a reality with the survivor lost in contemplation. What were these figures on graves from earlier times other than images of memories of the deceased, Aristion, Lyscas, Philis and the rest? Somebody dies and on the basis of memories, the survivors install their portrait on the grave in perpetual memory of them. The difference between the

[6] Lange, *Menneskefiguren*, 1899, p. 16, fig. 4, Lange, *Udvalgte skrifter af Julius Lange*, vol. 2, note 1, p. 392, Fig. 134 [Julius Lange, *Menneskefiguren i Kunstens Historie fra den Graeske Kunsts anden Blomstringstid indtil vort Aarhundrede*, Copenhagen: Det Nordiske Forlag, 1899, p. 16, fig. 4, Lange, *Die menschliche Gestalt in der Geschichte der Kunst: Von der zweiten Blütezeit der griechischen Kunst bis zum XIX. Jahrhundert*, Strasbourg: Heitz, 1903, plate II, fig. 4, Lawrence, 1972, plate 58, fig. a, Gisela Richter, *A Handbook of Greek Art*, 7th ed., London: Phaidon, 1974, p. 163, fig. 218.]

[7] [Heiberg, pp. 71-75.]

earlier and the later custom is that those who previously erected the monument were content in seeing the object of their memories, the single figure of the deceased, while the later period included the subject, the one bearing the memory. It betrays a more active self-awareness, also testifying to how deeply the deceased was beloved and is being missed. There was a desire to include the loving care surrounding the figure of the deceased. In our example it would be possible to divide the relief by a vertical line through the centre separating the figure of the son from the father. We can imagine the father completely absent and being left with the son alone – in a way that would have been common in the earlier period, although the style here is later.

This motif tellingly depicts the deceased only as an object of contemplation, himself staring at the sky unaware of being seen, while the surviving family member is completely consumed with their contemplation. This is true not merely of our motif which is varied on other stelae, but the family scenes in general include the deceased as an object of reflection. Occasionally they do look at one of the others, and if the group is limited to two figures it can cause an ambivalence. With more figures, it is the deceased drawing the attention, and this is a reliable indication for properly understanding the monument. Heiberg was also completely correct to stress that.

As a sort of companion piece to the Illissos relief where the deceased is a young son, we might choose another where a young daughter is being mourned, just as she was reaching maturity.[8] The relief is unusually animated, lovingly composed, but far less well carved than the other.

The girl stands surrounded by her grown relatives. In her hands, she holds the living bird, the usual plaything included here to show that she is still a child. She looks up at her mother who is standing facing her with a loving expression, touching the chin with her one hand and the arm with the other. Another grown female relative is standing behind the mother and looking down at the girl with a sparklingly affectionate gaze, while a man, presumably the father, appears behind her due to the crowded composition, unable to see her face. Another figure is present however, and might more clearly show how we are to understand the whole, and this is the dog who cheerfully and eagerly jumps up to the girl with a welcome.

We say welcome rather than farewell. This is as clear as day and completely agrees with the expression of the figures. They are welcoming a visit from the beloved deceased. It is the source of their sorrow since they know that she belongs to another world and must soon return there. This also causes their greater joy, the intimate pleasure of the reunion so beautifully expressed in the young woman standing in the rear.

[8] [Alexander Conze et al., *Die attischen Grabreliefs*, vol. 2, Berlin: Spemann, 1900, p. 245, plate CCXXXVIII, Heiberg, pp. 101, 108-111, Lange, *Udvalgte skrifter af Julius Lange*, note 1, vol. 2, p. 395, fig. 135, Lange, 1903, plate XXIII fig. 77.]

As on the Ilissos gravestone, the motif is again a memorial image. The idea has only been taken one small step further. It no longer observes the borderline between the deceased being memorialized and the surviving relatives. Although only for a moment, the gap disappears due to the very natural, burning desire not merely for a reunion, but also a loving communion. In the popular language of our own time it might be expressed as 'imagine if we had our dear little Eukoline among us again!' then in seeing the faithful comrade, the dog, one could add 'and think of how happy Rex (Fido or any typical dog's name) would be!' We cannot apply the term 'ghost' to an innocent and very natural notion of a sorrowful imagination, and not even the word 'vision' is apt. Significant and well-known passages from their greatest poets remind us that the Greeks entertained ideas about ghosts or spirits. In the relief carvings on graves, they did not however intend to express anything supernatural, with uncomfortable, dreadful associations, or a sickly, subjective hallucination on the part of the surviving relatives. It is all a melancholy fantasy, a poetic dream indulged in by those nearest to the lost one in the hope of alleviating their sorrow. Can that not be excused?

We have another example of the frequent subject of married couples and of the handshake.[9] None familiar with these monuments could doubt that the woman representing the deceased is seated and directly documented by the inscription 'Korallion, the wife of Agathon.' Her husband stands before her extending his hand which she holds while touching him amicably on the arm with her other hand. An older relative and a female slave are standing to the rear. I would interpret this similarly to Heiberg, but he does not admit it to be an exception to the farewell-theory. If the handshake is intended as a farewell in this instance, then the beholder could only believe that the man is the one taking leave. Since the standing pose can immediately precede leaving, but being seated would require another intermediate phase, rising from the chair, and there is no sign of such a thing, we must conceive the standing figure as the one preparing to leave and the seated figure as the one intending the stay.[10] What could this be other than a scene of farewell? Without doubt another image of a memory, a dream of reunion for just a fleeting moment, 'imagine if mother were again seated on the sofa how dearly we would welcome her!' Since the thought seems to be based on death yielding its booty for just a short moment, the concept of a simple living image of private family life arises naturally with no reference to death. We might assume that this is how it was among the

[9] [Conze, *Die attischen Grabreiefs*, vol. 1, Berlin: Spemann, 1893, p. 95, plate XCVIII, Heiberg, p. 105, Lange, *Menneskefiguren*, 1899, p. 13, fig. 1, Lange, *Udvalgte skrifter af Julius Lange*, note 1, vol. 2, p. 396, fig. 136, Lange, *Menschliche Gestalt*, 1903, plate I, fig. 1.]

[10] There is a grave relief depicting a man and a woman, both seated but holding hands. This strikes me as not incorrectly used as an argument against the farewell-theory. Heiberg responds, 'it is still possible for one or the other to rise and leave.' This is indeed possible, there are in fact endless possibilities. We are here speaking not of real life, but of art, what cannot be seen in an art work, not even as an allusion, must be rejected as something beyond the idea being presented by the artist.

Greeks. To insist that the handshake in the grave stelae exclusively evokes a loving and intimate relationship in life might be correct in many cases. Those less refined reliefs carved by the less gifted artists would probably not have gone beyond simple, well-known domestic life. It becomes clear however in the more original and brilliant examples that these works of art convey the idea of a friendly but passing meeting after death and an intensified sense of a poetic fusion of sorrow and joy that follows from such an idea. It must have originated with a very ingenious artist and the idea fell on fertile soil, became very popular and was varied in multiple ways.

The well-known and beautiful relief composition of Orpheus, Eurydice and Hermes is known through numerous ancient examples, in Naples, Rome and Paris, and is now, certainly correctly, considered to be a grave marker.[11] What is unique in this work in terms of emotions is precisely the intimate conflation of the joy of reunion and the sorrow of departure. After a long separation, Orpheus pulls the veil away from Eurydice's face. For a moment, the loving pair are able to look into one another's eyes, but then must immediately leave again. I find something of the same mood in many of the most beautiful family scenes on the Attic grave stelae. One of them shows a young daughter standing before her parents, extending a hand to her seated mother. The expression of the mother is predominantly one of joy, a pleasure in the reunion, while the father standing further away expresses more sorrow. His head is sunken and he reflectively holds his beard. The composition in another large relief, one of the most beautiful and unique of all surviving tomb sculpture, is more dramatic.[12] The mother in her parlour is moved by the sight of her dear departed daughter who has consistently filled her thoughts and feelings, lovingly returned from the grave and now stands before her. She suddenly bends deeply and extends her arms as if to embrace her. This mother has yearned and grieved, but now upon seeing her again is animated by a glowing, intimate satisfaction in her features. Yet the daughter may not remain. She tenderly touches the maternal hand from below the arm, and with the fingers of her other hand approaches the chin. She must leave. On the other hand, the mother should not be too sad since the place she comes from and will return to is not so bad. This consolation includes an expression of a firm awareness indicating that she is not disappearing into the unknown, but rather to a place she has already seen. We see the small girl behind the mother's chair with precisely the expression we would imagine of a young girl beholding a benign and loving revelation. We cannot claim that the Greeks did not have a heart!

What we have said should be adequate. I have already admitted that I by no means believe that one and the same attitude can be applied everywhere. There are certainly grave stelae that do not fit into our scheme (*udenfor den Betragtning, jeg her har fremsat*). The time has not yet arrived for drawing the proper distinctions in these matters. That might only come when the grand edition by Alexander Conze is

[11] [Lange, *Menneskefiguren*, 1899, p. 103, fig. 33, Gisela Richter, *A Handbook of Greek Art*, 7th ed., London: Phaidon, 1974, p. 133, fig. 174.]

[12] Lange, *Udvalgte skrifter af Julius Lange*, note 1, vol. 2, p. 398, fig. 137, Lange, *Menneskefiguren*, 1899, p. 14, fig. 2, Lange, *Menschliche Gestalt*, 1903, plate I, fig. 2.

complete. We have only been isolating and elucidating a single thought that seems to inform many of the grave stelae. It is clear that our conception is somewhat at variance with the usual approach, and also that it is extraordinarily difficult to win others over to a less common idea. From what I have seen though, none of the previous interpretations are completely satisfying, with too much of the one and too little of the other to completely fit. I must also stress that my idea is not entirely original, at least to the extent that these relief carvings can be interpreted as showing a reunion. The same has been observed by Felix Ravaisson, saying that 'the handshake and other gestures relate the pleasure of the people in seeing one another again.'[13] However, Ravaisson made the mistake of locating the reunion in the Elysian fields, which raises a number of impossibilities to explain. This is the reason that his interpretation has not been accepted. I also do not wish to defend my own reading with references to one or another archaeologist. I have not been weighing or comparing their publications, but simply studying the monuments themselves.

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[13] Felix Ravaisson, 'Vase funéraire attique,' *Gazette archéologique*, vol. 1, 1875, pp. 21-25.