

Weapon reliefs from Patara: commemoration of the Battle of Actium and representational evidence for swords and scabbards from the Republic-to-Principate transition period

Reliefi s prikazi orožja iz Patare: obeležitev bitke pri Akciju in upodobitev mečev v nožnicah iz obdobja prehoda iz republike v principat

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Izvleček

Članek obravnava ponovno uporabljeni kamniti bloki z reliefnimi prikazi orožja, ki sta vgrajena v rimsko gledališče v Patari (JZ Turčija). Izsledki preučevanja kažejo, da sta bila kamniti bloki prej del spomenika ali stavbe, ki je obeleževala Oktavijanovo zmago pri Akciju (31 pr. n. št.). Reliefsa poleg običajnih elementov avgustejske vizualne govorce vsebujejo doslej nezabeležen motiv: upodobitev sfinge, ki aludira na egipčansko kraljico Kleopatro.

Reliefi so pomembni za preučevanje rimskih mečev in nožnic v času prehoda iz republike v principat. Upodobljena meča v nožnicah sta namreč zelo podobna edinstvenemu meču v nožnici iz reke Ljubljanice (Slovenija), ki je bil zaradi svojih tipoloških značilnosti in dejstva, da so okovi nožnice narejeni iz čiste rimske medenine, datiran v obdobje 60–30/15 pr. n. št. Reliefi iz Patare omogočajo natančnejše datiranje in prikazujejo podrobnosti, ki se na meču in pripadajoči nožnici iz reke Ljubljanice niso ohranile.

Ključne besede: reliefni prikazi orožja; obeležitev zmage; bitka pri Akciju; meč v nožnici; Patara; reka Ljubljanica

Abstract

The paper analyses two reused stone blocks with weapon reliefs now built in the Roman theatre at Patara (SW Turkey) and argues that they had been previously part of a monument or building commemorating Octavian's victory at Actium (31 BC). The reliefs offer new insights into the commemoration of this battle. In addition to the usual elements of the Early Augustan visual language, they feature an interesting and formerly unrecorded motif, namely a depiction of a sphinx alluding to the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra.

The discussed weapon reliefs are also important for studying Roman swords and scabbards during the Republic-to-Principate transition. The depicted sheathed swords closely resemble the unique sword in a scabbard from the River Ljubljanica (Slovenia), dated to 60–30/15 BC based on typo-chronology and the use of brass. The reliefs from Patara allow us to enhance the accuracy of this dating and depict details which do not survive in the archaeological find.

Key words: weapon reliefs; victory commemoration; Battle of Actium; sheathed sword; Patara; River Ljubljanica

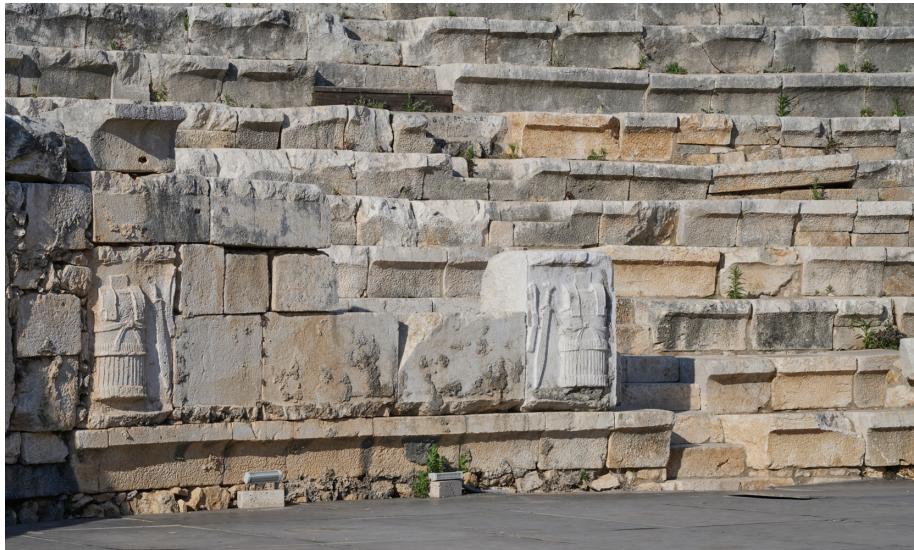


Fig. 1: Theatre in Patara. Location of Blocks A and B.

Sl. 1: Gledališče v Patari. Lokacija blokov A in B.

The 2012 study of the theatre in Patara (Lycia, south-west Turkey)¹ includes two stone blocks with weapons depicted in relief.² The front side of each block shows a Hellenistic-type armour and next to it a sword in a scabbard with net-like decoration, attached to a military belt.³ The two scabbards are remarkably similar to the Roman scabbard with a brass net-like fitting recovered from the River Ljubljanica (Slovenia), which has no parallels among archaeological finds and is important for our knowledge of Roman weapons in use just before the standardisation of Roman weaponry in the Middle Augustan period.⁴ We anticipated that a detailed analysis of the depictions on the two blocks from Patara would shed light on the parts of the artefact from the Ljubljanica that did not survive, such as the sword hilt and scabbard suspension. Furthermore, we expected it would provide significant new insights into its dating, which has thus far been set between c. 60 and 30/15 BC.⁵ In doing so, we aimed to advance our understanding of the development of swords during the transition from the Late Republican to the Augustan period.

¹ Piesker, Ganzert 2012.

² Peschlow 2012, 204, Cat. Nos 1, 2, Pls 41a–c, 42b, 46c.

³ Peschlow 2012, 204, Cat. Nos 1, 2, Pls 40c, 41a.

⁴ Istenič 2000a; Istenič 2000b; Istenič 2019, 264–267, Figs A1.1–A1.9, Pl. 1: A1.

⁵ Istenič 2000a; Istenič 2000b; Istenič 2019, 34, 36, 38, 40; Istenič, Šmit 2007; Bishop and Coulston (2006, 81–82, Fig. 41: 1) ascribed the scabbard from the Ljubljanica to the earliest examples of the Mainz type.

BLOCKS A AND B FROM THE THEATRE AT PATARA: DESCRIPTION AND COMPARISON

The limestone blocks bearing weapon reliefs were not originally intended for the theatre, but a different monument. Stylistic criteria of the reliefs suggest they were created in the second half of the 1st century BC or the early 1st century AD. The blocks were then reused in the theatre between the 3rd and the 5th century. Initially, they stood at the left and right corners of a free-standing tribune constructed at the bottom of the seating area (*koilon/cavea*), between the central and the adjacent east stairway (bottom of *kerkis* 4). Later, the tribune was incorporated into the podium wall.⁶

Block A (Figs 1–6, 9: A)

Limestone, 105 cm high, 82 cm wide, and 66 cm deep.

During the research of the theatre between 2003 and 2008, the block was located on the fourth step of the seating area so that all but the standing surface were visible.⁷ Later, the block had been returned to where it was positioned in the 3rd to 5th century, on the level of the second step in the

⁶ Peschlow 2012, 195, 198–204, Cat. Nos 1, 2, Fig. 208, Pls 40a–c, 41a–c, 42b, 42d.

⁷ Peschlow 2012, 198, 204, Cat. Nos 1, 2, Pls 40a, 40c, 41a–c, 42b, 42d.



Fig. 2: Theatre in Patara. Block A, front side.
Sl. 2: Gledališče v Patari. Blok A, sprednja stranica.

north-west corner of the podium wall, beside the central staircase of the seating area where it still stands today (Fig. 1).

Front side (Figs 2, 9: A)

There is a moulded border above and below. Between the mouldings are relief depictions on a finely dressed background surface. The middle and right thirds depict an armour, while the left third shows a sword in its scabbard and a military belt at the left edge.

The armour is shown frontally and in high relief, several centimetres from the right edge. The neckline is curved at the front and has a rather

high rectangular neckguard. The shoulderguards do not appear to be decorated, only bearing a poorly preserved circular feature in the lower part, symmetrically on both guards. Between them is a rectangular plate showing a *gorgoneion* in low relief. Roughly at mid-height of the armour is a belt tied at the waistline with a knot and its fringed ends fall over the upper row of *pteryges*. The *pteryges* are in two rows, a shorter upper and a longer lower row, both fringed.

The sword and scabbard are shown in frontal view, in low relief. Together they measure c. 69.4 cm in length, the pommel is c. 5 cm wide and the scabbard has a maximum width of c. 3 cm.



Fig. 3: Theatre in Patara. Block A, right side.
Sl. 3: Gledališče v Patari. Blok A, desna stranica.

Only the hilt is visible of the sword. It has a trilobate pommel,⁸ a handgrip with four finger grooves, and a sloping handguard with a concave underside.

The scabbard is slightly waisted and widest in the lower third before tapering to the tip. The mouth is roughly semicircular. The guttering begins some 5 cm below the mouth and runs to the tip. Its two sides are connected at the top with a straight crossband. Shown above the centre of this crossband is a palmette-shaped fitting. Below

it begins a net-like fitting consisting of a central spine and four crossbars; their joints are variously shaped. At the upper end, the spine splits into two arms; only the right one survives and arches to the guttering. The scabbard has a long point. It is unclear whether the scabbard has a shape with a V-shaped tip, or whether the guttering and spine reach to the tip and are connected by diagonal bars below the lowest crossband.

The scabbard has two rings in the upper left part, positioned at the junctions of the guttering with the missing left arm of the split spine, and with the uppermost crossband of the net-like fitting, respectively. Inserted into each of the suspension

⁸ The names for individual parts of the sword and scabbard are taken from Istenič 2019, 32, Fig. 12.

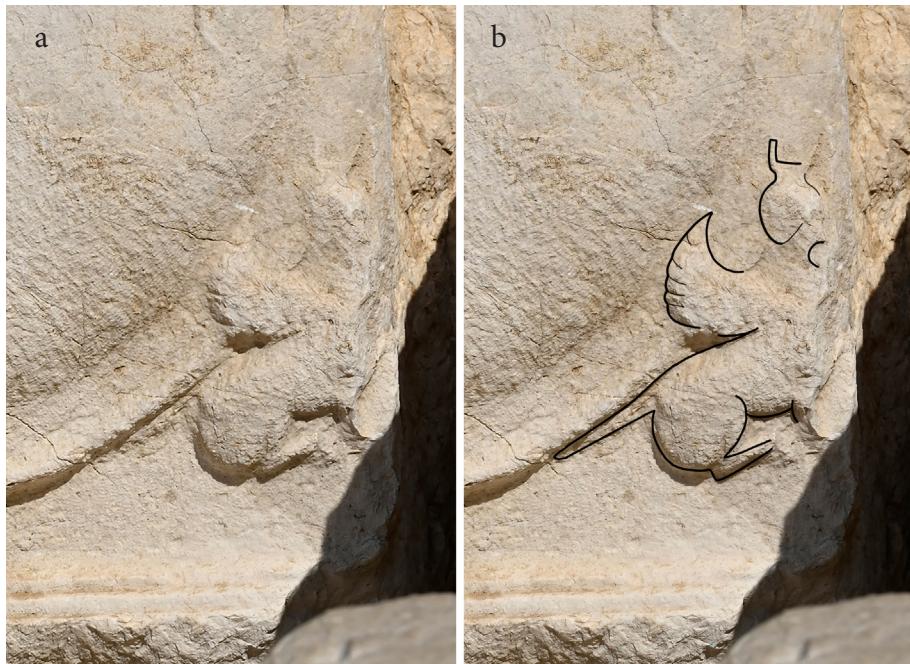


Fig. 4: Theatre in Patara. Block A, right side, detail (sphinx): a – photograph; b – interpretation.

Sl. 4: Gledališče v Patari. Blok A, desna stranica, detail: a – fotografija, b – fotografija z interpretacijo.

rings is a strap that secured the scabbard to the military belt.

The 21.6-cm-long belt is shown in a vertical position, flush with the left edge of the block. It is stylised, with less details than the sheathed sword. In the upper part is the folded strap of the belt, followed downwards by a rectangular frame and a rectangular section with a fringed terminal.

Right side (Figs 3–4)

There is a moulded border above and below. Between them are relief depictions, while the background surface is finely dressed. Occupying the lower two thirds and the entire width is a convex round shield in relatively high relief. It has an anchor, executed in low relief and positioned diagonally (bottom left to top right) across the shield; its upper part (with shank, ring and stock) is clearly visible, while the lower part is missing. Also in low relief and poorly preserved, there is a creature shown in profile in the lower right corner, partly covering the shield (Fig. 4). We can discern an animal (e.g. lion) torso, hind legs, a wing growing from the shoulder area and a tail lining the edge of the shield and perhaps disappearing under it. The chest and front legs are missing due to surface damage. The head is shown in profile and poorly discernible. It does, however, appear to be a female head, perhaps with the hair tied at

the nape. She seems to wear a crown or headdress with a flat lower part and roughly vertical elements above (the right side is missing).

Above the shield is a helmet with pronounced cheek-pieces, depicted in frontal view. It has a (horsehair?) plume visible at the left, but the part that would depict how it was attached to the helmet bowl does not survive. The part of the relief where the right half of the plume would be expected is completely lost due to surface damage.

The surface in the upper right and lower left corners, where the potential reliefs are not discernible, is also damaged. We were unable to identify the rudder that Peschlow mentioned (with question mark)⁹ to the right of the helmet.

Rear side (Fig. 5a, b)

The lower and right edges of this side were originally raised (in the width of c. 25 cm) and later levelled except in the right bottom corner. Within this raised frame is a c. 40-cm-wide rectangular and finely dressed surface that holds, in the left half, the depiction of a laurel wreath (diam. c. 29.5 cm) in low relief.¹⁰ The wreath is tied together in the centre of the lower part, which is also the only part

⁹ Peschlow 2012, 204, Cat. No. 1.

¹⁰ We cannot agree with Peschlow (2012, 204, Cat. No. 1), who writes that the wreath is incised (*gerizter Blattkranz*).

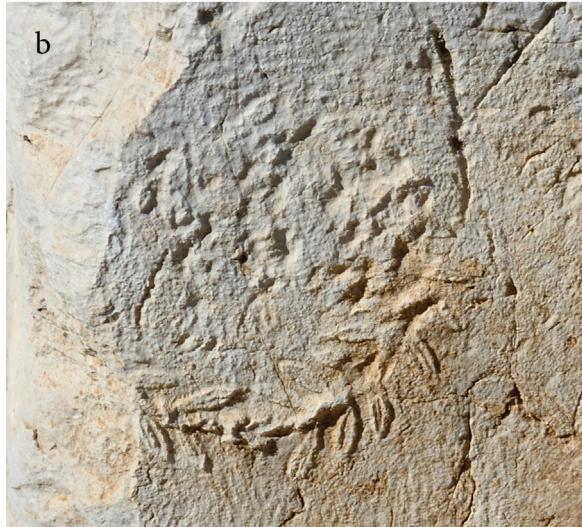


Fig. 5: Theatre in Patara. Block A: **a** – rear side and bedding surface; **b** – rear side, detail.

Sl. 5: Gledališče v Patari. Blok A: **a** – hrbtna in zgornja stranica; **b** – hrbtna stranica, detalj.

that survives; the upper half was carved away and the leftmost part is not preserved due to damage.

Left side (Fig. 6)

It is finely dressed in a 6–11 cm band at the edge with the front side, elsewhere it is left coarse. The lower part towards the rear is raised.

Bedding surface (Fig. 5a)

It is coarsely dressed. It has a dowel hole (diameter c. 5.5 cm, depth 2.5 cm) in the centre that is

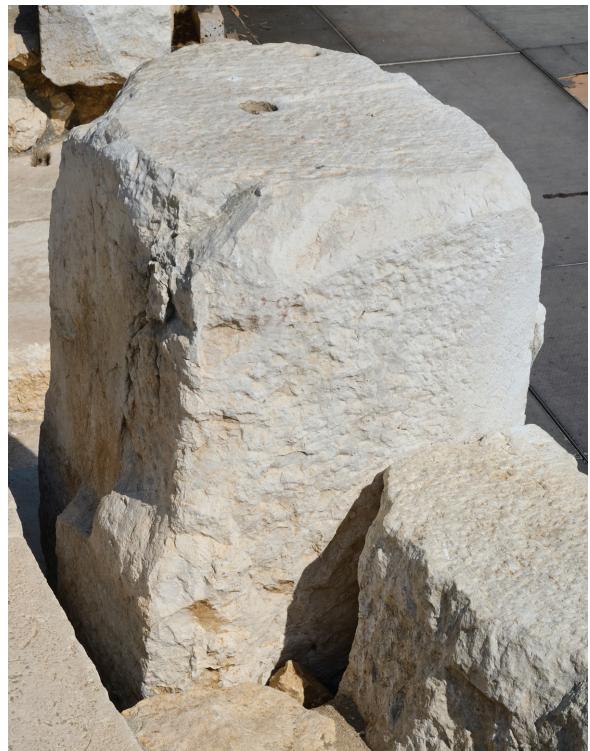


Fig. 6: Theatre in Patara. Block A, left and rear side.
Sl. 6: Gledališče v Patari. Blok A, leva in hrbtna stranica.

connected with a pour channel leading from the front side; another, but smaller hole is located at the corner of the front and right sides. There are no traces of cramp holes.

Block B (Figs 1, 7, 9: B)

Limestone, 105 cm high, and 65.5 cm wide.

It is built into the podium wall and only the front is visible. The relief is roughly mirror symmetrical to that on the front side of Block A.

Front side (Figs 1, 7, 9: B)

There is a moulded border above and below. Between the mouldings are relief depictions, while the background surface is finely dressed. The depicted armour is almost identical to that on Block A. The round features on the lower ends of the shoulder straps are better visible, whereas the *gorgoneion* is not as well-preserved. It is carved only a few centimetres from the left edge, as opposed to the greater distance between the armour and the edge of the relief on Block A.

The sword and scabbard together measure c. 68.6 cm in length, the scabbard c. 7 cm in maximum width.



Fig. 7: Theatre in Patara. Block B, front side.
Sl. 7: Gledališče v Patari. Blok B, sprednja stranica.

The sword hilt survives only in outline. The scabbard is of the same type as that on Block A, but differs in details. It is markedly waisted, with the maximum width nearer the tip, making the point shorter. There are also differences in the details of the net-like fitting, particularly at the junctions of the central spine and crossbars. The depiction of the point is clearer than on Block A, showing that the central spine reaches to the

tip where it is inserted between the ends of the guttering.

The military belt is positioned slightly higher above the hilt than on Block A and is *c.* 1.5 cm shorter (length = *c.* 21.6 cm). It also differs in proportions: the part above the buckle is longer, the part under it shorter and wider. Parts of the belt strap and fringed terminal at the right edge are missing.

To summarise. The two blocks are both made of limestone and share the same height, but differ in width by 17 cm. Block A is positioned so that it is well visible from all sides, except for a part of the rear and left sides; it is the right corner block that survives in its original width of the secondary use, i.e., the phase that included weapon reliefs on both exterior sides (cf. the section 'Blocks A and B from the theatre at Patara: analysis and interpretation'). Block B, built in so that only its front is visible, may originally have been wider.

The front sides show the same array and disposition of objects, namely armour, sword in its scabbard and belt, rendered in the same style and quality of workmanship, but depicted as mirror images and differing in several details. This suggests Block B may have been the left-hand corner block.

BLOCKS A AND B FROM THE THEATRE AT PATARA: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The front and right sides of Block A feature the same border above and below, as well as reliefs crafted in the same style, leaving no doubt they were created simultaneously. In contrast, this is not at all clear for the wreath depicted on the rear side of the block. The position of the wreath at the very edge of the finely dressed surface and the same distance from the raised band at the bottom and right edges (possibly the remains of a frame) suggests this motif was part of a decorated surface predating the relief depictions on the front and right sides. This would indicate that the block showing weapon reliefs on the front and right sides was not carved from freshly quarried stone, but rather reused a decorated stone piece of an earlier date.

The closely similar depictions on the front of Blocks A and B indicate they were parts of the same monument/building. Block A was located at the right corner, with visible front and right sides. Block B was most likely positioned symmetrically, at the left corner.

Apart from the armours and shield, the depictions on Blocks A and B from Patara are in low relief. They are shown *en face* with the exception of the winged creature on Block A, which is shown in profile.

All but one or two objects are depicted on a neutral background separately, without overlap. This arrangement is indicative of the Hellenistic

tradition.¹¹ Among the best-preserved reliefs of this type from the Roman period are parts of the altar of black limestone from the first half of the 1st century BC that were found at the foot of the Capitol Hill in Rome.¹²

The armours (Figs 2, 7) are of the *linothorax* type, which was commonly depicted on Hellenistic and Late Republican reliefs, and still occurred on those from the Augustan period, but became very rare in later periods.¹³ This type of armour denoted high military rank, particularly in the cavalry,¹⁴ and can be seen, for instance, in the *tropaeum* that forms part of the Early Augustan relief from Rome, celebrating Octavian's victory at Actium in 31 BC.¹⁵

The combination of an obliquely positioned sheathed sword and a band or belt in vertical position finds parallels in Hellenistic reliefs and paintings showing a sheathed sword suspended from a belt, itself hanging on a nail.¹⁶ The belts are relatively broad, giving the impression of being made of textile, and are suspended at midpoint so that the two halves hanging from the nail are of equal length. In all depictions, fringes are visible at both ends. Close parallels are shown on six limestone slabs from Side (southern Turkey; Fig. 8),¹⁷ which are part of a Middle to Late Hellenistic weapon frieze, presumably originally from a tomb or heroon.¹⁸ The slabs include nine surviving depictions of belts hanging from a nail, with fringes at both ends. Each half of the belt holds a rectangular element approximately at the level of the junction with the sword sheath,¹⁹ except in one or perhaps two instances where this element appears to be depicted as if on the scabbard itself.²⁰ Mansel considered the rectangular frames to represent loops on the sheath through which ran the strap by which the sheath was suspended;²¹ this, however, is not in agreement with the reliefs from Patara (see below).

¹¹ Bertoldi 1968, 49.

¹² Cf. Bertoldi 1968; Reusser 1993.

¹³ Hölscher 1984, 190; Polito 1998, 35, 37, 47.

¹⁴ Polito 1998, 35, 47.

¹⁵ Hölscher 1984, 186–194, Fig. 1; Hölscher 1988, 370, Cat. No. 202; Polito 1998, 35, 37, 47.

¹⁶ Cf. Polito 1998, Figs 2–4, 19, 39–40; Trinkl 2025, 150–151.

¹⁷ Mansel 1968, 262–269, Figs 34, 36, 39, 42, 43, 45, 46, 48/49: 1,4,7,8,10,11.

¹⁸ Lohner-Urban 2020, 259; Trinkl 2025.

¹⁹ Mansel 1968, Figs 36, 39, 42, 43, 45, 46, 48/49: 1,7,10,11.

²⁰ Mansel 1968, Figs 39, 43, 48/49: 4,8.

²¹ Mansel 1968, 272; Trinkl 2025, 150–151.

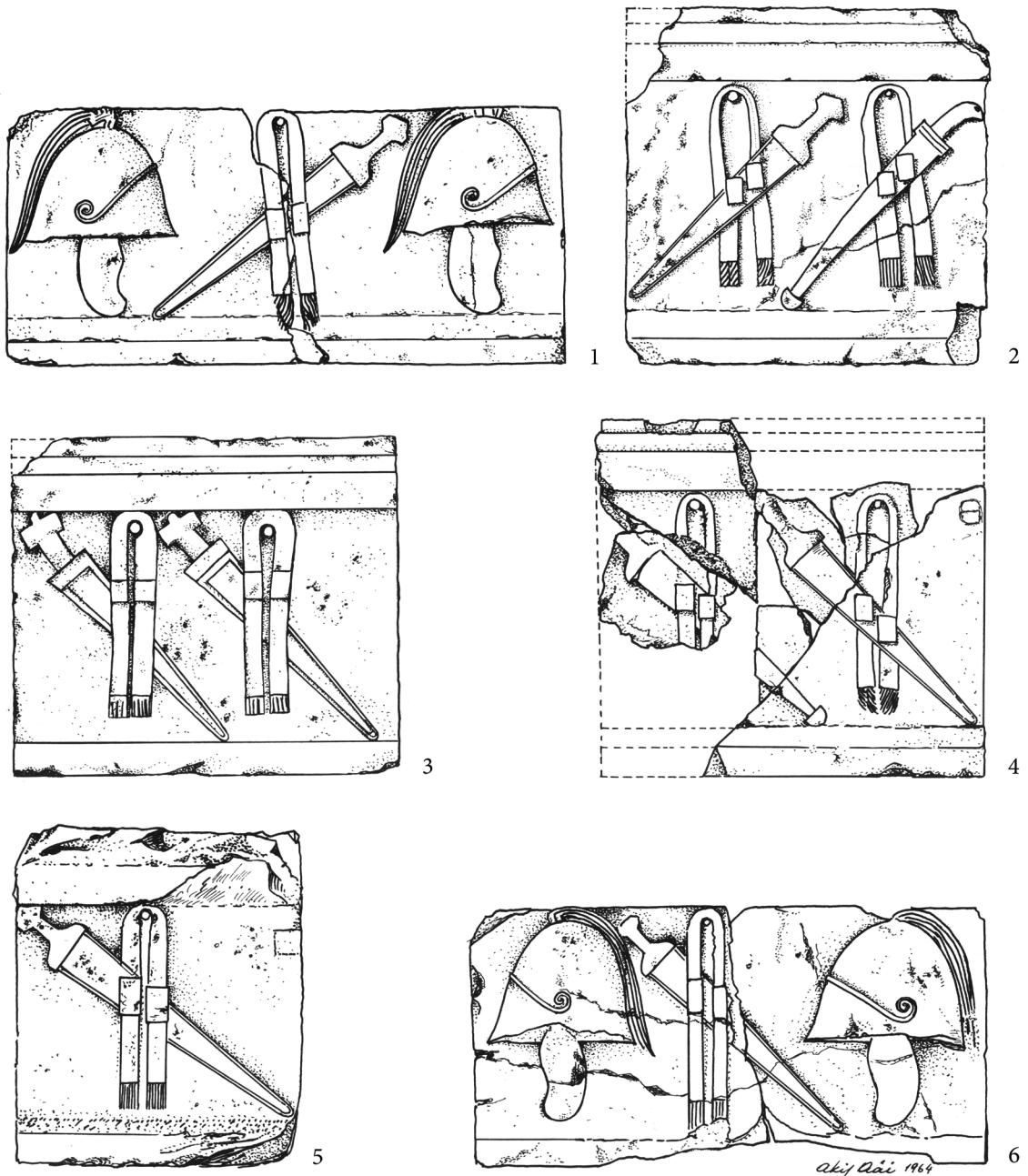


Fig. 8: Weapon frieze from Side, slabs depicting belts and sheathed swords. Scale = 1:20. (from Mansel 1968, 264–267, Figs 48–49: 1,4,7,8,10,11).

Sl. 8: Side, friz, ki prikazuje orožje: plošče z reliefnimi upodobitvami pasov in mečev v nožnicah. M. = 1 : 20 (po: Mansel 1968, 264–267, sl. 48–49: 1,4,7,8,10,11).

Although depicted from a somewhat different perspective, the belts on the reliefs from Patara correspond to the type familiar from Hellenistic representations. They indicate that the rectangular elements form part of the belts. The function of these elements, as well as the method of fastening the belts depicted on the reliefs from Side and Patara, remains unclear.

The belts depicted on the reliefs from Patara differ from Hellenistic representations in that they show how they were attached to the scabbard, namely by means of two straps fastened to the scabbard through (metal) rings, while the details of how the straps were fixed to the belt are not visible.

The depicted sheathed swords with a net-like fitment (Figs 2, 7, 9) have no close parallels in

either Hellenistic or Roman representations; they are discussed in detail in the next section.

For the helmet (Fig. 3), the type is unclear. It presumably had a horsetail plume divided into two halves falling symmetrically to the left and right sides. Helmets bearing single- and double-sided plumes are common in Hellenistic depictions and remain present on the earliest Roman monuments, but disappear at the beginning of the Principate.²²

The armours and the helmets with a two-sided plume depicted on the Patara blocks have parallels in one of the reliefs on the above-mentioned altar of black limestone from the first half of the 1st century BC, which originally stood at the Capitol in Rome.²³

The shield corresponds to the most common form of shields in Classical Greek, Hellenistic and Roman depictions.²⁴ The same form is used, among others, in the Augustan depictions of the *clipeus virtutis*, the golden shield placed in the Curia in Rome at the beginning of Augustus' reign, alongside the statue of Victoria.²⁵ It is also used for the shield in the *tropaeum* depicted in relief on the Temple of Apollo rebuilt around 25 BC by C. Sosius.²⁶

The depiction of an anchor on the shield (Fig. 3) led Kuzmin to relate Block A from Patara with the short rule of the Seleucids in Lycia, in the early 2nd century BC.²⁷ In our opinion, much more convincing associations can be found in Hellenistic and especially Roman iconography. In the latter, naval trophies (combined with various armour pieces) are only encountered on Late Republican and Early Imperial monuments and represent domination on land and sea, or hint at a specific naval victory. The last significant Roman naval battles were Octavian's victories over Sextus Pompey at Naulochos (36 BC), and over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium (31 BC).²⁸ Indeed, the anchor – often combined with other warship symbols such as the rudder, ship's bow (*prora*), and its ornamental appendage (*aplustre*) – occurs

²² Polito 1998, 52, 74, 124, Figs 3, 51; cf. the altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus: Bishop, Coulston 2006, 49, Fig. 19.

²³ Hölscher 1988, 384–387, Fig. 178, Cat. No. 214; Polito 1998, 121–127, Fig. 51; Bertoldi 1968, 46–48, Figs 9–11; Reusser 1993, 126, Fig. 58.

²⁴ Polito 1998, 39.

²⁵ Hölscher 1988, 394–396, Cat. No. 223; Zanker 2002, 95–97, Figs 79, 80.

²⁶ Zanker 2002, 68–70, Fig. 55.

²⁷ Kuzmin 2018.

²⁸ Hölscher 1984, 188.

in depictions commemorating both victories, at Naulochos²⁹ and at Actium.³⁰

In our opinion, the creature in the bottom right corner of Block A's right side is not a siren as Peschlow suggests.³¹ It is more consistent with Greek and Roman depictions of a seated sphinx (winged lioness with a woman's head).³² The faintly visible feature above her head is, in our opinion, a cow horn crown or perhaps a cumbersome depiction of a crescent moon headdress.

In addition to being a key figure of Theban myth and having many other symbolic meanings,³³ the sphinx was closely linked to the prophetess Sybil (lat. *Sibylla*) as her heraldic animal.³⁴ Likely related to this meaning of the sphinx, and to the association of sibyls with the oracles of Apollo,³⁵ is the symbolic significance of the sphinx in the language of images launched by Octavian: the sphinx was an oracular creature connected to Apollo as the prophetic god. It was to Apollo that Octavian ascribed his victory at Actium (31 BC) and to him and his sister Diana the victory at Naulochos (36 BC).³⁶ Octavian began displaying his connection to Apollo after the Battle of Philippi

²⁹ Cf. the depiction of the *tropaion* commemorating the victory over Sextus Pompey (36 BC) on Octavian's *aurei* (presumably dated c. 29/28 BC; Trillmich 1988, 507–508, Cat. No. 324) and *denarii* minted in c. 29/27 BC (Zanker 2002, 54–55, Fig. 43a; Sutherland 1984, 60, No. 265A, Pl. 5: 265A).

³⁰ Cf. the Augustan frieze from Rome showing naval trophies, various sacrificial implements, and priestly attributes (Hölscher 1984, 204–210, Figs 5–10; Hölscher 1988, 364–369, Cat. No. 200, Fig. 166) and the barely visible anchor in the right hand of the figure at the right side of the roof of Curia Iulia depicted on a series of Octavian's *denarii* probably minted in c. 29/28 BC (Zanker 2002, 79, 81, Fig. 62a; Trillmich 1988, 510–511, Cat. No. 322).

³¹ Cf. Peschlow 2012, 204, Cat. No. 1; the question mark suggests he was uncertain of this identification.

³² Cf. Bäbler 2001; Krauskopf 1994, 3–6, Figs Oidipous 10–12, 26, 33, 35, 41, 44; Herbig 1929, 1740–1744, 1749; Augustan period: Zanker 2002, 48, 50, 270–272, Figs 36b, 38, 211, 212, 213.

³³ Bäbler 2001; Herbig 1929.

³⁴ Instinsky 1962, 27, Figs 1, 2.

³⁵ From the late 4th century BC, the number of sibyls was multiplied; they were localized traditionally at all the famous oracle centres and elsewhere, and were distinguished by individual names, 'sibyl' being treated as a title (Encyclopaedia Britannica s. v. Sybil, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sibyl-Greek-legendary-figure>; id. s. v. Oracle, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/oracle-religion>).

³⁶ Zanker 2002, 49–53, Figs 36b, 38; cf. Trillmich 1988, 483.

(42 BC).³⁷ He perhaps began to use the sphinx as his seal in the late 40s BC.³⁸ His silver and gold coins minted in the province of Asia soon after 27 BC and in c. 19/18 BC, respectively, showing a seated winged sphinx in side view on the reverse, also demonstrate Octavian's close connection to Apollo.³⁹

A different interpretation is possible if we presume that the sphinx was still associated with Egyptian kings and queens at the time the monument was erected.⁴⁰ Such a symbolic significance of the sphinx may explain the feature above its head that resembles cow horns from the crown shown on Hellenistic depictions of the goddess Isis, who was closely associated with the Ptolemaic queens.⁴¹ In Greek interpretation during the Hellenistic era, Isis became equated with Luna/Selene, and the Hathor crown peculiar to Isis (cow horns and solar orb) was gradually transformed: the solar orb was shrinking, only to disappear and the cow horns to be interpreted as the moon crescent.⁴² The combination of the sphinx as the animal of Egyptian rulers and the Isis crown would allude to a Ptolemaic queen.

On the other hand, the feature on the sphinx' head might be explained as a cumbersome depiction of a crescent moon that would allude to Diana.⁴³ Octavian credited Diana and her brother Apollo with his victory at Naupactus (see above). Therefore, the sphinx, symbolising Octavian's association with Apollo, and the headdress resembling a crescent moon, representing Diana, would suggest that the reliefs from Patara commemorate the Battle of Naupactus.

From what has been said, it follows that the discussed weapon reliefs from Patara likely com-

³⁷ Zanker 2002, 49–53.

³⁸ Ancient texts reveal that Octavian used the image of the sphinx on his seal in the winter of 31/30 BC and possibly even earlier, but rarely after 30 BC (Instinsky 1962, 24–27).

³⁹ Zanker 2002, 48–53, Fig. 36b.

⁴⁰ This is the opinion of Instinsky (1962, 29), though without providing arguments; Jones (1990, 295) mentions that the sphinx was perhaps associated with Egypt and Cleopatra. The sphinx on the Patara relief corresponds to the Greek type (with wings) that was distinct from the Egyptian one, with the main difference being the presence/absence of wings (Herbig 1929).

⁴¹ Plantzos 2011.

⁴² Delia 1998, 542–543; Plantzos 2011, Figs 1: a,g,m–p, 3, 5: a,c,e,f, 9.

⁴³ Kahil 1984, 689–690, Figs Artemis 903, 906, 907, 909; Simon 1984, 822–823, 826–827, Figs Diana 176, 231, 238.

memorate a Late Republican or Early Imperial military victory. Moreover, the anchor and the posited rudder⁴⁴ indicate a naval battle. This leads us to two possibilities: Octavian's victory at Naupactus (36 BC) or at Actium (31 BC).

Considering the geopolitical situation of Patara, commemorating a military victory of Octavian in the eastern part of the Roman state, which was under the control of Antony after the Battle of Philippi (42 BC), seems unlikely. This indicates the reliefs cannot be related to the Battle of Naupactus. In contrast, following his victory over Antony in 31 BC, Octavian became the sole ruler and his victory at Actium was celebrated throughout the Roman state.⁴⁵

The interpretation of the sphinx (wearing the Isis crown) as alluding to the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra VII corresponds well with Octavian's propaganda. This portrayed the last Egyptian ruler as the only military opponent in the Battle of Actium, disregarding the fact the battle was primarily a decisive clash in the civil war between Octavian and Antony.⁴⁶

THE SWORDS AND SCABBARDS DEPICTED ON BLOCKS A AND B FROM THE THEATRE IN PATARA COMPARED TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The sword sheaths depicted on the blocks from Patara (Figs 2, 7, 9) are strikingly similar to the Roman scabbard with a brass net-like fitting found in the River Ljubljanica in Slovenia (Fig. 10).⁴⁷ The upper chronological limit of this scabbard is indicated by the beginning of the Roman use of brass around 60 BC,⁴⁸ while the typological arguments presented up to now set the lower limit before the beginning of the Middle Augustan period.⁴⁹ Possibly belonging to the same type of scabbard is the brass scabbard tip (featuring guttering and terminal knob) from the site complex Grad near Reka (Slovenia), which is associated with

⁴⁴ Cf. the section 'Blocks A and B from the theatre at Patara: analysis and interpretation'.

⁴⁵ Cf. Hölscher 1984, 210–214; Hölscher 1988, 353–354.

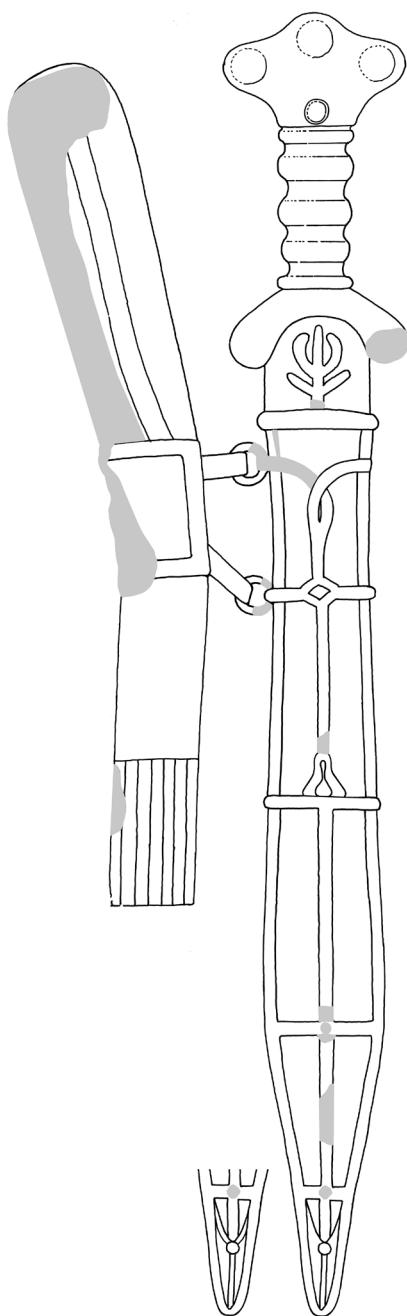
⁴⁶ Trillmich 1988, 481–482.

⁴⁷ Istenič 2000a; Istenič 2000b; Istenič 2019, 264–267, Figs A1.1–A1.9, Pl. 1: A1.

⁴⁸ Istenič, Šmit 2007.

⁴⁹ Cf. note 5.

A



B

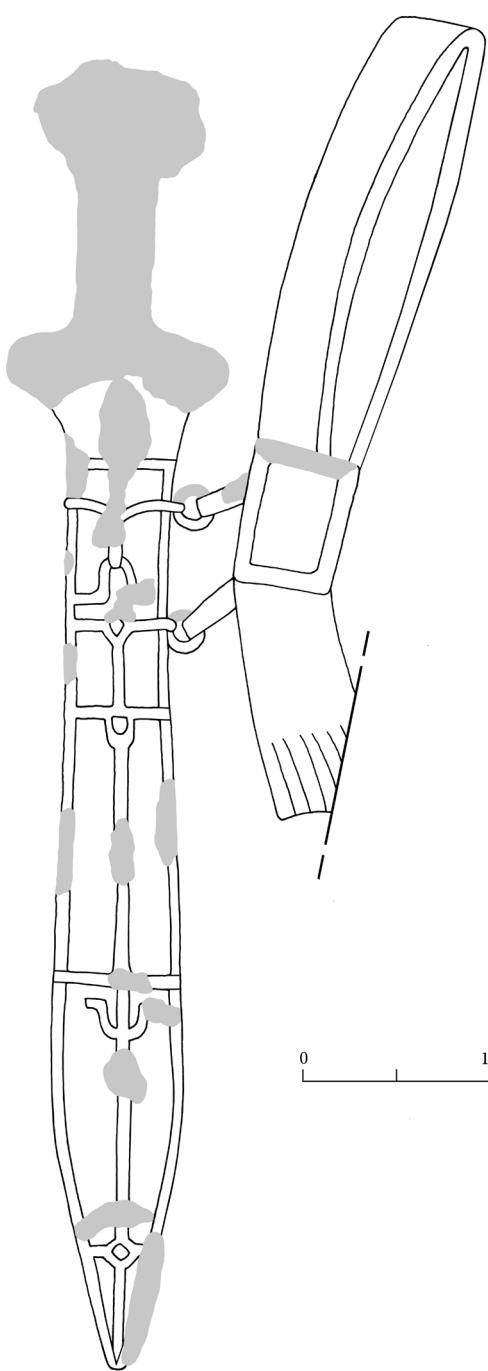


Fig. 9: Theatre in Patara. Blocks A and B, front side: swords in scabbards and associated military belts.
Sl. 9: Gledališče v Patari. Bloka A in B, sprednja stranica: meča v nožnicah in vojaška pasova.

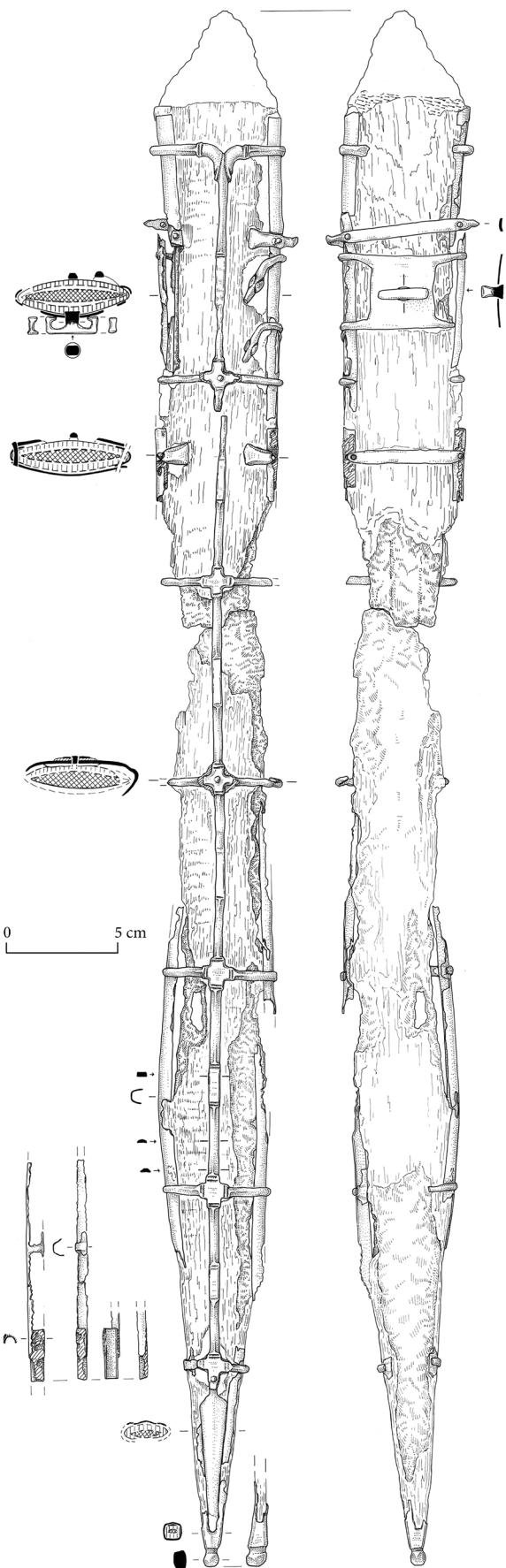
a Roman military attack on the local population during Octavian's Illyrian Wars (35–33 BC).⁵⁰

In short, the reliefs from Patara depict the same type of scabbard as the archaeological find from the Ljubljanica. This allows us to correlate

the archaeological and pictorial evidence to gain further insight into the appearance and construction of the scabbards with net-like fittings and the associated swords.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Istenič 2025, 117–122, Fig. 4: 22.

⁵¹ Little is known on the sword inserted in the scabbard from the River Ljubljanica, as the blade is corroded into



Comparing the reliefs from Patara with the scabbard from the Ljubljanica revealed that the reliefs offer a simplified picture; the structure of the depicted scabbards can only be understood by observing the scabbard from the Ljubljanica.

The reliefs and the scabbard from the Ljubljanica share the basic form and structure, i.e. guttering combined with a net-like fitting on the front, folded over the guttering to the back of the scabbard; however, there are many differences in the details.

The shape of the handguard depicted on Block A suggests that the mouth of the scabbard (covered by the handguard and hence not visible) was rounded, while the outline of the mouth on the scabbard from the Ljubljanica is unclear. The photographs of this scabbard taken before conservation show the upper end covered with corrosion products on the front and back. The complex conservation process revealed that the wooden scabbard seemed to have had a flat edge on the front, whereas the wood of the scabbard at the back was found to survive some 2 mm higher than on the front and perhaps continued under the corrosion layer the conservators decided to preserve.⁵² This raises the question of the shape of the scabbard mouth as seen on the front after the conservation procedure. In the archaeological record, a rounded mouth can be seen on the Roman scabbard from Grave 108 at Giubiasco (Italy), dated from the final decades of the Republic to the Early Augustan period.⁵³ The pictorial record shows such a scabbard mouth on the stone statue from Vachères (south-eastern France), dated to the middle or second half of the 1st century BC and representing a man who served in the Roman cavalry and was likely of Celtic origin.⁵⁴

An important feature on the reliefs from Patara is that both scabbards are portrayed suspended from a military belt via a pair of suspension rings. The rings are only shown on one side of the scabbard;

the scabbard and the hilt did not survive (Istenič 2000a, 175; Istenič 2019, 264, Figs A1.1a-c, A1.7b).

⁵² Istenič 2000a, 176, Figs 11-12; Istenič 2019, 264, 267, Figs A1.1a-b, A1.7, A1.9; Perovšek, Milić 2000, 190, 192, Figs 1, 3, 7.

⁵³ Pernet 2006, 48-49, 76, 303, Fig. 2.15, Pl. Tombe 108: 1.

⁵⁴ Beck, Chew 1991, Cat. Nos 15, 35, 46, Fig. 9; Barruol 1996; Bishop, Coulston 2006, 16, Fig. 16; Cavalier 2008; Pernet 2006, 47-51, 303, Figs 2.13, 2.15; Pernet 2010, 104.



Fig. 10: The sword in its scabbard from the River Ljubljanica.
Sl. 10: Meč v nožnici iz reke Ljubljanice.

it is unclear whether the scabbard actually only had these two rings or whether there was another pair that is not visible because it would have been pulled to the back of the scabbard by two straps fastening the rings to the belt. The suspension method of the scabbard from the Ljubljana find is uncertain, as it features a pair of suspension rings on each side, but also a rectangular fitting on the back, which was perhaps intended for suspension from a belt.

In addition to the above, the scabbards from the Patara reliefs differ from the Ljubljana find in that: i) they do not have a terminal knob; ii) they do not have upper and lower suspension bands, but rather the suspension ring is shown at the junction of the net-like fitting and guttering; iii) they do not appear to have a rectangular fitting with the corners terminating in crossbands folded over the guttering and ending in animal-head terminals on the front of the scabbard; iv) their guttering ends considerably lower than the upper end of the scabbard; v) the net-like fitting has four crossbars (the Ljubljana scabbard has seven); vi) there is a crossbar below the mouth that does not seem to be part of the net-like fitting; vii) the joints between the central spine and the crossbars are more pronounced; and viii) they have a palmette decoration at the top of the scabbard (only surviving on the scabbard on Block A).⁵⁵

The trilobate pommel of the sword on Block A finds a close parallel carved on the tombstone for centurion Minucius Lorarius (Padua, Italy), from the second half of the 1st century BC.⁵⁶ It is perhaps also shown on the hilt of the dagger depicted on the *denarii* commemorating the assassination of Caesar that were minted in 43/42 BC in the Greek East for M. Iunius Brutus,⁵⁷ and on the *denarii* of Augustus minted by the provincial governor of Hispania Ulterior in *colonia Augusta Emerita*, in c. 25/23 BC (Mérida, Spain).⁵⁸ There are no swords with similar pommels among the archaeological finds. This is not surprising, as the pommels were usually made of organic materials and only exceptionally metal-plated; the relatively

few surviving pommels predominantly have simple spherical or ovoid shapes.⁵⁹

The central part of the hilt (Figs 2, 9: A) has four finger grooves, which corresponds to both the anatomy of the human hand and the archaeological evidence.⁶⁰

As opposed to the straight underside of the handguard (presumably including the handguard plate) on the sword of Minucius Lorarius, this part of the handguard on Block A from Patara (Figs 2, 9: A) is roughly semicircular or bell-shaped. This is a characteristic of the La Tène swords, whereas among the Roman swords only that in the above-mentioned scabbard from Grave 108 at Giubiasco has such a handguard.⁶¹ The roughly semicircular or bell-shaped handguard indicates sloping sword shoulders, which are (in contrast to the straight ones characteristic of the Mainz-type gladii of the Early Imperial period) common on the Late Republican and perhaps also Early Augustan swords.⁶²

The archaeological and iconographic evidence (disregarding the dating, cf. above in this section) shows that the type of scabbards and sword hilts depicted on the Patara blocks was used in the final decades of the Republican and in the Early Augustan period.

CONCLUSIONS

Limestone Blocks A and B with weapon reliefs from the theatre at Patara were previously parts of another monument. Their analysis has revealed links with the Hellenistic tradition and showed that sheathed swords of a type used in the time this monument was constructed were portrayed alongside Hellenistic types of weapons.⁶³

The reliefs depict a soldier's panoply consisting of a sheathed sword suspended from a belt, a suit of armour, a helmet, and a shield, which could suggest the blocks originated from a funerary monument. In this case, the armour would indicate

⁵⁵ Cf. Istenič 2000a; Istenič 2019, 264–267, Figs A1.1–A1.2, A1.6, A1.9.

⁵⁶ Franzoni 1987, 46–48, No. 26, Pls 13: 1; 14: 1; Mackensen 2001, 351–352, Fig. 4.

⁵⁷ Crawford 1974, 100, 518, No. 508/3; 741, Pl. 61: 508/3; Mackensen 2001, 352–353, Fig. 5: 1.

⁵⁸ Sutherland 1984, 41, Nos 7–8, Pl. 1: 7, 8; Mackensen 2001, 353, Fig. 5: 2.

⁵⁹ Cf. Miks 2007, 157–161, Pl. 156.

⁶⁰ E.g. Miks 2007, Pls 152–154, Pl. 155: B328, 13–

B335, 4, Pl. 156: A609, Pl. 160: A482, A133, A590, Pls 161,

163: A179, A483.

⁶¹ Pernet 2006, 45–49, 76, 303, Fig. 2: 13, Pl. Tombe 108.

⁶² Pernet 2006, 45–46, 76, 302, Pl. Tombe 108, 1; Pernet

2010, 55–62, Figs 18–21; Istenič 2019, 32, 34–37, Figs 14–17.

⁶³ The complex relationship between the depictions of weapons and the actual weaponry in the Hellenistic and Roman periods is discussed in Polito 1998, 33–35.

the monument was erected for a person of high military rank, presumably in the cavalry.

The depicted motifs further include an anchor, a likely sphinx, and a rudder presumed but no longer surviving; these suggest the blocks formed part of a monument or building commemorating or alluding to Octavian's victory over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 BC. Marking this victory, which laid the foundation for Octavian's independent rule, in Patara, an important city in the Roman protectorate in south-west Asia Minor (the Lycian league), would have been politically opportune. We can assume that wealthy and influential notables rushed to express their loyalty to the new ruler in an area that, before the Battle of Actium, had been under the control of Mark Antony.⁶⁴

In our opinion, the discussed weapon reliefs may represent an important piece of evidence regarding the commemoration of the Battle of Actium in the eastern part of the Roman state. Even though we know this victory was celebrated with both public and private buildings and monuments across the Roman state,⁶⁵ the published evidence from its eastern part is modest, except for the remains of the grandiose monument erected 29/27 BC at the site of Octavian's headquarters during the Battle of Actium.⁶⁶ In addition to the usual elements

of the Augustan visual language, the depictions from Patara presumably include an element not known previously, namely a sphinx alluding to the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra.

The weapon reliefs from Patara offer a valuable insight into the Roman swords and scabbards at the transition from the Late Republic to the Augustan period. They show features that are not clear from the archaeological record, e.g. how the scabbards were suspended from the belts and what were the shapes of the hilts of the associated swords. Even more importantly, they contribute to the dating of Roman scabbards with net-like fittings and swords with a trilobate pommel and a sloping handguard with a concave underside, indicating that such weapons were in use around 31 BC and/or the Early Augustan period. This falls within the framework of c. 60–30/15 BC proposed for the only known archaeological evidence of such artefacts, i.e. the scabbard from the River Ljubljanica. The dating to around 31 BC and/or the Early Augustan period corresponds well with what is possibly a fragment of a scabbard with a net-like fitting from Grad near Reka, a site complex associated with Roman military aggression against indigenous population during Octavian's Illyrian Wars (35–33 BC).

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Reliefi s prikazi orožja iz Patare: obeležitev bitke pri Akciju in upodobitev mečev v nožnicah iz obdobja prehoda iz republike v principat

Povzetek

Apnenčasta bloka A in B z reliefnimi prikazi orožja (sl. 1–7, 9) so med 3. in 5. st. n. št. ponovno uporabili, ko so ju vzidali v gledališče v Patari.¹ Izrazita podobnost in zrcalna simetričnost upodobitev na sprednji strani blokov A in B kažeta, da sta bila bloka pred tem del istega spomenika oziroma stavbe. Blok A je bil umeščen v desni kot, z vidnima sprednjo in desno stranico, blok B pa je bil najverjetneje postavljen simetrično, v levi kot.

Reliefi prikazujejo vojaško opremo, sestavljeno iz meča v nožnici, ki je pripeta na pas, oklepa, čelade in ščita, kar bi lahko nakazovalo, da sta bloka pred vgraditvijo v gledališče pripadala na grobnemu spomeniku.

Skoraj vsi predmeti so upodobljeni ločeno na nevtralnem ozadju, brez prekrivanja, kar je značilnost helenistične tradicije.² Med najbolje ohranjenimi reliefi tega tipa iz rimske dobe so v prvo polovico 1. st. pr. n. št. datirani deli oltarja iz črnega apnanca, ki so jih odkrili ob vznožju Kapitolskega griča v Rimu.³

Upodobljena oklepa (sl. 2, 7) ustrezata tipu *linothorax*, ki je pogost na helenističnih in pozorepublikanskih reliefih ter se še pojavlja na avgustejskih reliefih, pozneje pa je zelo redek.⁴ Ta tip oklepa je označeval visok vojaški položaj, zlasti v konjenici,⁵ in ga je mogoče videti, na primer, na *tropaeumu*, ki je del zgodnjeavgustejskega reliefsa iz Rima, posvečenega Oktavijanovi zmagi pri Akciju leta 31 pr. n. št.⁶

Kombinacija poševno nameščenega meča v nožnici in navpično postavljenega pasu (sl. 2, 7) ima vzporednice v helenističnih reliefih in slikah, ki prikazujejo meč v nožnici, obešen na pas, ki visi na žeblju. Pasovi so razmeroma široki in dajejo vtip, da so izdelani iz tekstila ter se na obeh koncih zaključujejo z resicami.⁷ Tesne vzporednice naj-

demo na reliefnih upodobitvah šestih apnenčastih plošč iz mesta Side (južna Turčija; sl. 8),⁸ ki so del srednje- do poznohelenističnega friza s prikazom orožja.⁹ Ohranjenih je devet upodobitev pasov, ki visijo z žeblja in imajo resice na obeh koncih. Na vsaki polovici pasu je približno na stiku z nožnico meča viden pravokoten element,¹⁰ razen v enem ali morda dveh primerih, pri katerih se zdi, da je ta element prikazan, kot da bi bil na sami nožnici.¹¹ Mansel je pravokotne okvirje razumel kot zanke na nožnicah, skozi katere je tekel pas, na katerega je bila nožnica obešena.¹²

Na reliefih iz Patare je pravokoten element nedvomno del pasov, ki se od helenističnih prikazov jasno razlikujeta po tem, da kažeta povezavo z nožnico, in sicer z dvema trakovoma preko (kovinskih) obročev, medtem ko podrobnosti pritrditve trakov na sam pas niso vidne.

Tip čelade (sl. 3) ni jasen. Med drugim je ohranjen del leve polovice čopa, ki je bil verjetno pritrjen na vrh čelade. Enostranski in dvostranski čopi na vrhu čelad so pogosti v helenističnih upodobitvah, pojavljajo se še na najzgodnejših rimskih spomenikih in izginejo na začetku principata.¹³

Na blokih iz Patare upodobljena oklepa in čelada z dvostranskim čopom na vrhu imajo vzporednice na reliefu iz prve polovice 1. st. pr. n. št., ki so ga našli pod Kapitolem v Rimu.¹⁴

Ščit, ki je upodobljen na bloku A iz Patare (sl. 3), ustreza najpogosteji obliki ščitov v klasičnih grških, helenističnih in rimskih upodobitvah.¹⁵

Na ščitu je prikazano sidro. V rimski ikonografiji se morske trofeje (v kombinaciji z različnimi

⁸ Mansel 1968, 262–269, sl. 34, 36, 39, 42, 43, 45, 46, 48/49: 1,4,7,8,10,11.

⁹ Lohner-Urban 2020, 259; Trinkl 2025.

¹⁰ Mansel 1968, sl. 36, 39, 42, 43, 45, 46, 48/49: 1,7,10,11.

¹¹ Mansel 1968, sl. 39, 43, 48/49: 4,8.

¹² Mansel 1968, 272; Trinkl 2025, 150–151.

¹³ Polito 1998, 52, 74, 124, sl. 3, 51; oltar Domicija Ahenobarba: Bishop, Coulston 2006, 49, sl. 19.

¹⁴ Hölscher 1988, 384–387, sl. 178, kat. št. 214; Polito 1998, 121–127, sl. 51; Bertoldi 1968, 46–48, sl. 9–11; Reusser 1993, 126, sl. 58.

¹⁵ Polito 1998, 39; Hölscher 1988, 394–396, kat. št. 223; Zanker 2002, 68–70, 95–97, sl. 55, 79, 80.

¹ Peschlow 2012, 204, kat. št. 1, 2, t. 40c, 41a–c, 42b, 46c.

² Bertoldi 1968, 49.

³ Cf. Bertoldi 1968; Reusser 1993.

⁴ Hölscher 1984, 190; Polito 1998, 35, 37, 47.

⁵ Polito 1998, 35, 47.

⁶ Hölscher 1984, 186–194, sl. 1; Hölscher 1988, 370, kat. št. 202; Polito 1998, 35, 37, 47.

⁷ Cf. Polito 1998, sl. 2–4, 19, 39–40; Trinkl 2025, 150–151.

kosi orožja) pojavljajo le na poznorepublikanskih in zgodnjecesarjskih spomenikih ter simbolizirajo prevlado na kopnem in morju oziroma namigujejo na zmago v pomorskem spopadu. Zadnji pomembni rimske pomorski bitki sta bili Oktavijanovi zmagi nad Sekstom Pompejem pri Naulochu (36 pr. n. št.) ter nad Markom Antonijem in Kleopatrom pri Akciju (31 pr. n. št.).¹⁶ Sidro – pogosto v kombinaciji z drugimi simboli vojnih ladij, kot so krmilo, premec (*prora*) in njegov okrasni dodatek (*aplustre*) – se pojavlja v upodobitvah, ki obeležujejo obe zmagi, pri Naulochu¹⁷ in pri Akciju.¹⁸

Bitje v spodnjem desnem kotu desne stranice bloka A (sl. 4) po najinem mnenju ni sirena, kot je menil Peschlow,¹⁹ ampak sfinga (krilata levinja z žensko glavo).²⁰ Slabo vidna stvar nad njeno glavo spominja na kravje rogove ali okorno upodobljen lunin krajec.

V jeziku podob, ki ga je uveljavil Oktavijan, je sfinga simbolizirala Oktavijanovo povezavo z Apolonom, ki mu je Oktavijan pripisoval zasluge za zmagi pri Naulochu (skupaj z njegovo sestro, boginjo Luno) in Akciju.²¹

Drugačna interpretacija je mogoča, če predpostavimo, da so v času nastanka reliefov iz Patare sfingo še povezovali z egiptanskimi vladarji oziroma vladaricami,²² in upoštevamo, da rogovi oziroma polmesec nad glavo sfinge na reliefu iz Patare spominjajo na krone na helenističnih upodobitvah boginje Izide, ki je bila tesno povezana s ptolemajskimi kraljicami.²³ V grški interpretaciji helenističnega obdobja je bila Izida izenačena z

Luno/Seleno, pri čemer se je Hathorina krona, značilna za Izido (kravji rogovi in sončna krogla), postopoma preoblikovala: sončna krogla se je manjšala in nato izginila, rogova pa sta se spremenila v lunin krajec.²⁴ Kombinacija sfinge in Izidine krone bi tako aludirala na ptolemajsko kraljico.

Po drugi strani pa je predmet na glavi sfinge mogoče razložiti kot okorno upodobitev luninega krajca, ki bi namigovala na boginjo Diano,²⁵ njej in njenemu bratu Apolonom je Oktavijan pripisoval zmago pri Naulochu (glej zgoraj). Kombinacija sfinge, ki simbolizira Oktavijanovo povezavo z Apolonom, in naglavnega okrasa, ki je tesno povezan z boginjo Diano, bi torej nakazovala, da reliefi iz Patare slavijo bitko pri Naulochu.

Iz povedanega sledi, da obravnavani reliefi iz Patare najverjetneje obeležujejo poznorepublikansko vojaško zmago. Sidro in domnevno krmilo nakazujeta pomorsko bitko. To nas vodi k dvema možnostma, tj. Oktavijanovi zmagi pri Naulochu (36 pr. n. št.) ali pri Akciju (31 pr. n. št.). Glede na geopolitični položaj Patare se zdi malo verjetno, da gre za slavljenje bitke pri Naulochu, saj je bila Mala Azija takrat pod Antonijevim nadzorom. To se je bistveno spremenilo po Oktavijanovi zmagi nad Antonijem leta 31 pr. n. št. pri Akciju, po kateri je Oktavijan postal edini vladar rimske države.²⁶

Razlaga sfinge s krono boginje Izide kot namiga na egiptansko kraljico Kleopatro VII. se ujema z Oktavijanovo propagando, ki je zadnjo egiptansko vladarico prikazovala kot edino vojaško nasprotnico v bitki pri Akciju, čeprav je bila bitka v prvi vrsti odločilni spopad v državljanški vojni med Oktavijanom in Antonijem.²⁷

Na blokih iz Patare upodobljeni motivi torej vključujejo sidro, verjetno sfingo in morda krmilo, ki ni več ohranjeno. Ti motivi nakazujejo, da so bloki tvorili del spomenika ali stavbe, ki je obeleževala Oktavijanovo zmago nad Antonijem in Kleopatrom pri Akciju leta 31 pr. n. št. ali je nanjo aludirala. Spominjanje na to zmago, ki je bila temelj Oktavijanove samostojne vladavine, je bilo v Patari – pomembnem mestu rimskega protektorata v jugozahodni Mali Aziji (Likijska zveza) – politično oportuno. To še posebej velja,

¹⁶ Hölscher 1984, 188.

¹⁷ Cf. upodobitev tropajona, ki slavi zmago nad Sekstom Pompejem (36 pr. n. št.) na Oktavijanovih zlatnikih (domnevna datacija okoli 29/28 pr. n. št.; Trillmich 1988, 507–508, kat. št. 324) in denarijih, kovanih okoli 29/27 pr. n. št. (Zanker 2002, 54–55, sl. 43a; Sutherland 1984, 60, št. 265A, t. 5: 265A).

¹⁸ Cf. avgustejski friz iz Rima (Hölscher 1984, 204–210, sl. 5–10; Hölscher 1988, 364–369, kat. št. 200, sl. 166) in komajda vidno sidro na Oktavijanovih denarijih, kovanih okoli 29/28 pr. n. št. (Zanker 2002, 79, 81, sl. 62a; Trillmich 1988, 510–511, kat. št. 322).

¹⁹ Cf. Peschlow 2012, 204, kat. št. 1.

²⁰ Cf. Bäbler 2001; Krauskopf 1994, 3–6, sl. Oidipous 10–12, 26, 33, 35, 41, 44; Herbig 1929, 1740–1744, 1749; avgustejska doba: Zanker 2002, 48, 50, 270–272, sl. 36b, 38, 211, 212, 213.

²¹ Zanker 2002, 49–53, sl. 36b, 38; cf. Trillmich 1988, 483.

²² Instinsky 1962, 29; Jones 1990, 295. Sfinga na reliefu iz Patare ustrezza grškemu tipu, ki se od egiptanskega razlikuje po odsotnosti kril (Herbig 1929).

²³ Plantzos 2011.

²⁴ Delia 1998, 542–543; Plantzos 2011, sl. 1: a,g,m–p, 3, 5: a,c,e,f, 9.

²⁵ Kahil 1984, 689–690, sl. Artemis 903, 906, 907, 909; Simon 1984, 822–823, 826–827, sl. Diana 176, 231, 238.

²⁶ Cf. Hölscher 1984, 210–214; Hölscher 1988, 353–354.

²⁷ Trillmich 1988, 481–482.

ker je bila Mala Azija neposredno pred bitko pri Akciju pod nadzorom Antonija.

Menimo, da so reliefi s prikazom orožja iz Patare pomemben primer obeležitve bitke pri Akciju. Poleg običajnih elementov avgustejskega vizualnega jezika namreč verjetno vključujejo doslej neznan element, in sicer sfingo, ki namiguje na egiptansko kraljico Kleopatro. Poleg tega so iz vzhodnega dela rimske države zaenkrat poznane le redke upodobitve, ki aludirajo na bitko pri Akciju, čeprav vemo, da so to zmago slavili tako z javnimi kot zasebnimi stavbami in spomeniki po celi rimske državi. Med njimi izstopa veličasten spomenik, postavljen med letoma 29 in 27 pr. n. št. na mestu Oktavijanovega poveljstva med bitko pri Akciju.

Reliefi z upodobitvami orožja iz Patare ponujajo dragocen vpogled v rimske meče in nožnice na prehodu iz republikanske v avgustejsko dobo. Med drugim namreč prikazujejo dva meča v nožnicah z mrežastim okovjem na sprednji strani, ki sta zelo podobna edinstvenemu meču v nožnici z mrežastim okovjem iz reke Ljubljanice.²⁸ Ta je bil

²⁸ Istenič 2000a; Istenič 2000b; Istenič 2019, 34, 36, 38, 40, 264–267, sl. A1.1–A1.9, t. 1: A1; Istenič, Šmit 2007.

zaradi svojih tipoloških značilnostih in dejstva, da so okovi nožnice iz čiste rimske medenine, datiran v obdobje približno med letoma 60 in 30/15 pr. n. št.²⁹ Reliefi iz Patare so povečali zanesljivost in natančnost te datacije, saj kažejo, da so nožnice z mrežastim okovjem uporabljali okoli leta 31 pr. n. št. in/ali v zgodnjeavgustejski dobi. Poleg tega reliefi iz Patare prikazujejo, kakšni so (lahko) bili ročaji mečev, ki so jih nosili v nožnicah z mrežastim okovjem, in kako je bila nožnica pritrjena na pas; pri meču iz reke Ljubljanice se namreč ročaj ni ohranil, način pritrditve nožnice na pas pa ni jasen.

Navedeno datacijo nožnic z mrežastim medenastim okrasom utrjuje zaključek nožnice meča iz čiste medenine, ki je zelo podoben zaključku nožnice z mrežastim okrasom iz reke Ljubljanice; izvira iz najdiščnega kompleksa Grad pri Reki, ki ga povezujemo z rimsko vojaško agresijo proti staroselskemu prebivalstvu med Oktavijanovimi ilirskimi vojnami (35–33 pr. n. št.).³⁰

²⁹ Poleg citatov v prejšnji opombi glej Bishop, Coulston 2006, 81–82, sl. 41: 1.

³⁰ Istenič 2025, 117–122, sl. 4: 22.

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