Preface

This volume stems from ten years of field research on the sarcophagus material and expands upon my PhD dissertation (Harvard University, History of Art and Architecture, 2010).

My affiliation with Aphrodisias began as a PhD student in 2005, when I participated in a fieldwork team to document, photograph and study sarcophagus pieces in the Aphrodisias Museum depots and in the outlying cemeteries. I began my doctoral research on the columnar sarcophagi in 2006. After the completion of my dissertation, my involvement with the Aphrodisias excavations continued first as Field Director (2010–2011), then as Assistant Director (2012– ). I have continued to study newly discovered pieces of sarcophagi, added them to the project’s sarcophagus database, and refined my views on the iconography, meaning and dating of the sarcophagus pieces till the publication of this volume.

I would like to first acknowledge and warmly thank the Director of Aphrodisias excavations and my dissertation advisor R. R. R. Smith, who generously welcomed me at Aphrodisias, provided me with the necessary training, and guided this project from the beginning. I would also like to thank other dissertation advisors, Rabun M. Taylor, Kathleen M. Coleman and Ruth Bielfeldt. The Institute of Fine Arts of New York University has been the main sponsor of Aphrodisias excavations since 1961. I would like to acknowledge the support of the deputy director of the excavations, Katherine Welch, and the director of the Institute of Fine Arts, Patricia Rubin. The Republic of Turkey, its Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and General Directorate of Cultural Resources and Museums (T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, Kültür Varlıklar ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü) provided the fundamental permissions to conduct research on an annual basis.

I thank the following institutions, grants and fellowships for the financial support for this project: the Alexander-von-Humboldt fellowship, Carl Siemens Foundation, The Loeb Classical Library Foundation Publication Grant of Harvard University, and the American Research Institute in Turkey Kress Traveling Fellowship. I thank Rolf M. Schneider and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich for hosting me with a Humboldt postdoctoral Fellowship.

Several colleagues and experts provided vital help in the completion of my dissertation and preparing it for publication. I would like to thank Angelos Chaniotis for epigraphic help, Harry Mark for drawings and technical support, Julia Lenaghan for her sculpture expertise, Ian Cartwright and Guido Petruccioli for photography and Ersin Öğüş for statistical analysis. Several other colleagues, mentors and friends provided various forms of intellectual and technical support; I am thankful to each of them: Guntram Koch, Christopher Hallett, Philip Stinson, Kenan Eren, Umut Doğan, Alexander Sokolicek, Ulrike Outschar, Thomas Kaeffer, Gerhard Paul, Andrew Leung, Ursula Quatemberger, Özgür Orttürk, Ferhat Çevik, Cem Günay, Anastasia Meintani, Heather Turnbow, Adam Rizzo, Joshua J. Thomas, Christian Niederhuber, and Kirsten Lee. I also thank my family, Ersin Öğüş, Alaattin Ali Öğüş and Güven Öğüş for endless support in all aspects. I dedicate this book to the memory of my grandparents, Leman and Feyzullah Yüce.