

Portraits of Grief: Death, Mourning and the Expression
of Sorrow on White-Ground *Lêkythoi*

Molly Evangeline Allen

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ABSTRACT

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In Athens in the early 5th century BCE, a new genre of funerary vase, the white-ground *lêkythos*, appeared and quickly grew to be the most popular grave gift for nearly a century. These particular vases, along with their relatively delicate style of painting, ushered in a new funerary scene *par excellence*, which highlighted the sorrow of the living and the merits of the deceased by focusing on personal moments of grief in the presence of a grave. Earlier Attic funerary imagery tended to focus on crowded *prothesis* scenes where mourners announced their grief and honored the dead through exaggerated, violent and frenzied gestures. The scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi* accomplished the same ends through new means, namely by focusing on individual mourners and the emotional ways that mourners privately nourished the deceased and their memory. Such scenes combine ritual activity (i.e. dedicating gifts, decorating the grave, pouring libations) with emotional expressions of sadness, which make them more vivid and relatable. The nuances in the characteristics of the mourners indicate a new interest in adding an individual touch to the expression, which might “speak” to a particular moment or variety of sadness that might relate to a potential consumer. To facilitate a meaningful discussion of the range of ways that white-ground painters articulated grief and lament in their vases, the dissertation is divided into six chapters, each of which concentrates on a particular type of mourner: women, men, elderly men, infants, vocal visitors¹ and the deceased. Discussing the visual iconography across these different groups demonstrates that the shared and individual, public and private, intentional and candid aspects of grief and mourning can be shown simultaneously and that it was of interest to the Athenians to look at images that incorporated all of these aspects.

¹ This chapter is more thematic than the other five. It concentrates on the role of ephemeral sound and silent permanence in the context of the creation of memory of the dead.

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Figure Abbreviations

Antiken. – Antikensammlungen (Berlin and Munich)
BF – Black-figure
BM – British Museum, London
Kunst. – Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna)
MdeBA – Musée des Beaux Arts
MFA – Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
MMA – Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York
NM – National (Archaeological) Museum (Athens and Tarquinia)
P – Painter
RF – Red-figure
V&A – Victoria and Albert Museum, London
W – Workshop
WGL – White-ground *lêkythos*

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Abbreviations

- AA* – *Archäologischer Anzeiger*
ABSA – *The Annual of the British School in Athens*
AC – *L'Antiquité classique*
AIΩN(archeol) – *Annali del Seminario di studi del mondo classico: sezione di archeologia e storia antica*
AJA – *American Journal of Archaeology*
AJPh – *American Journal of Philology*
AQ – *Anthropological Quarterly*
BICS – *The Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies of the University of London*
BMMA – *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*
CB – *The Classical Bulletin*
ClAnt – *Classical Antiquity*
CJ – *The Classical Journal*
CPh – *Classical Philology*
G&R – *Greece & Rome*
GMusJ – *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*
HR – *History of Religions*
ICS – *Illinois Classical Studies*
JAAC – *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*
JAmFolk – *The Journal of American Folklore*
JAS – *Journal of Archaeological Science*
JDAI – *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*
JHS – *Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JbKHMWien – *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien*
MDAI(A) – *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*
MedArch – *Mediterranean Archaeology*
OJA – *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*
PAPHS – *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*
P&P – *Past and Present*
REA – *Revue des Études Anciennes*
RhM – *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*
SMEA – *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici*
TAPA – *Transactions of the American Philological Association*
ThesCRA – *Thesaurus cultus et rituum antiquorum*
ZPE – *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphi*

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Introduction²

Gertrude Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy veiled lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Hamlet Ay, madam, it is common.

Gertrude If it be,
Why seems it so particular with thee?

Hamlet Seems, madam! nay it is; I know not 'seems.'
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief,
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem,
For they are actions that a man might play:
But I have that within which passeth show;
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

Shakespeare. *Ham.* 1.2.270-89

From the moment that Hamlet appears in Shakespeare's tragedy, *Hamlet*, his grief, pain, and bitterness, connected with the suspect, untimely death of his father, is on full display. His exploration of the nature and depth of his feelings of bereavement plays out during the entirety of the drama. Given that only a brief time has passed since the elder Hamlet's murder, it is no surprise that the prince is upset and taken aback when his mother, Gertrude, suggests that he should get over his sorrow and stop mourning: death is a universal inevitability that everyone

² Throughout the dissertation, all dates are BCE unless otherwise specified. All translations of Greek and Latin are my own unless otherwise noted. In most instances, Classical Greek terms have been transcribed, not Latinized, but I have made exceptions for words that are widely used or known by their Latinized form, i.e. Aeschylus not Aiskhylos, Klytemnestra not Klytimestra. "*Lêkythos*" and "*lêkythoi*," when used without the qualifier "white-ground" refer to white-ground *lêkythoi* unless otherwise stated. Lists of sources in the body or footnotes have been placed in alphabetical order.

must learn to cope with. When Gertrude asks her son why it is that he “seems” so affected by his father’s death, he explains that he not only **seems** but truly **is** consumed by grief. Throughout the play he continuously struggles to make sense of the complexity of his thoughts and depressed state. We, as the audience, are privy to his inner dialog and emotional turmoil as he expresses it via soliloquies and brief asides, which allows us to witness the disconnect between how he displays his sadness to those around him and how deep his internal feelings of grief are. The inherent difficulty of expressing grief to others, let alone comprehending and coming to grips with one’s own feelings, is a problem that Hamlet obsessively grapples with from the time of his father’s death to his own demise. Since the plot is plagued with murders, nine in total, bereavement and woe are suffered by all characters. However, as the suffering of each is manifested differently, we are reminded that although experiencing grief is universal, the experience itself is entirely individual.

Although the following dissertation is concerned with the experience and visual presentation of grief in 5th century Athens, this brief conversation between Hamlet and his mother eloquently underscores some of the inherent difficulties of articulating or illustrating the character, gravity and intricacies of one’s emotional suffering. Three main points that come to light in this passage, which resonate with the discussion of mourning and emotion in the following pages, include the notions that: 1) grief is a universal experience but its effects and manifestations are idiosyncratic; 2) there is a difference between how one displays and deals with their grief in public versus private settings, and, perhaps most relevant to an art historical study; 3) that while one’s physical appearance may be altered spontaneously or purposefully as a result of suffering sadness or despair, these visible signs of woe are only capable of revealing a basic indication of the complex and mercurial internal feelings that triggered them.

The expression of emotions may take many forms so it follows that there is no dearth of ways in which they might appropriately be rendered in a visual context. That said, there are also normal ranges of expression for human emotions that are governed by biological and sociocultural factors.³ For an illustration to be correctly and effectively understood, an artist must be aware of details in the face and body that are locally perceived as intrinsic or specifically related to particular emotions or experiences. While context and the accouterments of mourning play a primary role in helping to identify scenes as “funerary,” the ability of an observant artist to capture the mood or emotion of individual figures acting within this context serves to create a more intimate and, potentially, more emotive or affecting scene. Since the face, and to some extent the body, is both a messenger and elicitor of emotion, it has the potential to inspire more empathy or sympathy than a mere image of a funeral or grave might.⁴ It is widely regarded that the artists of white-ground *lêkythoi*, in utilizing the potential of their genre to render finer details, directed their attention to depicting fewer figures in private moments of grief, rather than scenes of kinetic crowds of mourners at funerals. Thus, these vases present themselves as invaluable sources of evidence for the types of facial expressions, gestures, and activities that 5th century Athenians associated with appropriate mourning behavior.

³ I must admit that the literature on the current development and research on emotions and their expression in the fields of psychology, cognitive science, biology, anthropology, ethnography, etc. is vast and I have only engaged in a very small portion of the entire corpus. The selection of articles and sources that I have used over the course of researching this dissertation derive from my familiarity with the work of Paul Ekman.

⁴ The terms “elicitor of emotion” and “messenger of emotion” come from Ruys & Stapel 2008. The degree to which emotional expression and understanding is biological v. cultural or universal v. culturally specific will not be discussed within this dissertation. I assume a basic ability for a modern American viewer to comprehend at least the broad sweep of emotion as it was expressed in 5th century Athenian art. The key sources that I consulted regarding the study of how humans “read” and comprehend emotions include: Adolphs 2006; Ekman 1992, 1993; Ruys & Stapel 2008 and Stanley 2001. For a comparative study of reading, or “(mis)reading” emotion in Gothic art, and the potential difficulties in interpreting faces in art, see Gertsman 2010.

The particularly emotional and emotive qualities of the scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi* have been the subjects of interest and close study from the moment that the vases started emerging from burial contexts in the late 19th century, primarily from excavations of the Kerameikos and Eretria (see below page 7). However, the study of these vases and their iconography has not yet been exhausted and the present dissertation aims not to rehash the many quality studies that have come before but to direct a study of their iconography through a lens that has not yet been fully examined. I will focus on mourning at the graveside, since this is the most popular context in which white-ground imagery is set, and focus on the different types of people that participate in mourning and funerary rites at the grave. Each of the six chapters is devoted to a single category of Athenian mourner in order to extract which features were perceived to be unique to particular types of mourners and which were shared by many or all. The first four categories are divided simply by age and gender; 1) adult women, 2) adult men, 3) elderly men, and 4) infants and toddlers, while the final two are thematically organized thusly; 5) audible mourners and 6) the deceased. By using the mourner as the focus of analysis, a study of the iconography of mourning on these vases provides further insight into what type of public or private displays of emotion were typical or appropriate for some or all Athenians. It can also provide insight into who and what was involved in caring for the dead beyond the funeral. The categories are not exhaustive but meant to provide fodder to discuss the scope of the ways that white-ground artists were able to create naturalistic and relatable images of mourning that appealed to their contemporary audience.

Since this genre of vase is limited in its geographic and chronological scope, it was produced for a relatively localized market that shared the same burial practices and beliefs. The images consulted represent what was popular and what was exceptional amongst this market as a means

of displaying the range and potential that the genre provided in terms of capturing the character and emotion of mourning. Popular images should provide a sense of what was most effective and desirable to the consumer and, hence, what was regarded as typical or acceptable behavior for mourners. As for the exceptional vases, in as much as they were found in burials and were produced by some of the most popular and prolific artists of the time, it can be assumed that they provided images that were desirable but potentially not as broadly appealing.

In the face of the homogeneity of funerary imagery that existed up until this time, the diversity of scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi* should not be overlooked. Within each chapter the similarities and differences in articulations of ritual and emotional grief will be noted but so too will key similarities and differences between the characteristics of all categories of mourners be described and investigated. By looking at the fine details in facial expression and posture of individual mourning figures it will be possible to see how personal features could be inserted into stock images⁵ in order to make them more relatable, memorable or emotive. However, the images on these vases should not be thought to represent specific Athenian patrons, i.e. they are not portraits or snapshots of actual people or events, but their details, if rendered in a thoughtful, naturalistic manner, might “speak” to a moment or variety of sadness that a potential buyer might share or relate to. The aim is to dissect the way that mourners look as they carry out funerary rites to uncover the details that contribute to their noticeably sorrowful mood and demeanor.

At its core, this is an iconographic study in which the images are the driving force but contemporary literary and archaeological evidence will help to provide context and support. To the extent that the extravagant burial practices and discussion of the needs and experiences of souls of the dead in Homer may provide an early iteration of 5th century Athenian funerary

⁵ There are many images of two figures visiting the grave and from a distance they look similar but one often finds nuance in the finer details of the faces, clothing, posture, gifts, etc.

practice, they will be consulted. Since tragic texts deal frequently with death and burial, they provide many useful points of comparison, including references to the possible appearance and dress of mourners, the types of gifts for offering to and decorating the grave, the range of acceptable behavior at the grave and the themes and form of funerary song. Since both epic and tragedy run the risk of exaggerating or manufacturing facts for narrative or dramatic effect, they will be consulted conservatively. Athenian funerary imagery from the previous 250 years will be used to highlight the features of mourning that are conservatively clung to or obviously innovated upon in the visual tradition. The imagery of the late Classical and Hellenistic periods will be referenced only in the context of demonstrating which iconographic features of white-ground *lêkythoi* successfully transitioned into the imagery of grave *stélai* of the late 5th through 4th centuries. Broadly speaking, by comparing the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi* with other literary and pictorial media it will be possible to see what types of mourning and grief these vases were particularly well equipped to depict and demonstrate.

In looking more closely at the individual people who are depicted, it can be useful to consider contemporary social, political or traumatic events that may have had some impact on who and what was included in the decoration of grave gifts such as *lêkythoi*. Thus, the potential impact that 6th century sumptuary law(s) and the extended periods of war, devastating plague, burgeoning democratic pride and the introduction of the *dêmosion sêma* and public funeral in 5th century Athens each had upon these vases will be considered. In addition to providing some context and support for the evidence of funerary ritual that is demonstrated in the scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi*, archaeological and historical data may help to explain the popularity of these vases. Multiple factors must have contributed to the increase in the use of *lêkythoi* as grave goods as well as the novel imagery that appeared at the very onset of their production. Since their

imagery was almost exclusively funerary, it was possible for painters to experiment with various means of capturing both the sorrow of mourners and the glory of the deceased in a single image.

Before providing a bit more detail about each of the six chapters and what they contribute to the overall discussion of the attributes of white-ground imagery and their effectiveness in conveying emotional and emotive images, a few notes regarding the material, history of burial practice in Athens, and history of mourning and emotion in the ancient world is provided below.

The Material: Scholarship, Production and Usage

In order to better understand the imagery that forms the basis of the following discussion, a few notes should be made about the genre of white-ground *lêkythoi* more broadly and the history of its scholarship. Since a rather thorough overview of the archaeological, historical, technical and stylistic details of the genre can be found in the introduction to John Oakley's seminal study of funerary iconography on white-ground *lêkythoi*, *Picturing Death in Classical Athens*, I will only include a summary of the information most pertinent to the study in this dissertation.⁶

When a growing number of white-ground *lêkythoi* began to surface in excavations in the Kerameikos and Eretria in the late 19th and early 20th century, they attracted the immediate attention of both scholars and collectors alike due to their individuality and aesthetic appeal. Some of the earliest publications on the vases include those by O. M. Baron von Stackelberg (1870), Edmond Pottier (1883), Arthur Fairbanks (1907, 1914), Walter Riezler (1914) and John Beazley (1938).⁷ During the early 20th century, John Beazley, Ernst Buschor, Adolf

⁶ Oakley 2004: 1-18.

⁷ The earliest focused study of white-ground *lêkythoi* as a genre was conducted by von Stackelberg, who identified them as being specific to the Athenian funerary context. However, they constituted only a section of his study of Greek tombs, *Die Gräber der Hellenen*. The first monograph dedicated to the genre was Pottier's, *Étude sur les lécythes blancs attiques* and, although he misidentified some of the

Furtwängeler and Paul Hartwig made great strides in attributing a number of vases to a growing list of identifiable artists.⁸ Riezler's 1914 publication remains one of the best sources for high quality plates, although in the last few years the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* has published some extraordinary, high resolution images, which make viewing the most faint and fine details more possible than ever. Three monographs stand out as the best resources for content and interpretation of the production and iconography of the genre as a whole. These include Donna Kurtz's *Athenian White Lêkythoi* (1975), which focused on the style of decoration and imagery of the entire corpus of vases, Oakley's extremely important 2004 monograph on the iconography of death and mourning on white-ground *lêkythoi*, *Picturing Death in Classical Athens*, and Elvia Giudice's 2016 contribution, *Il Tymbos la Stêlê la Barca di Caronte*. The latter two works concentrate on the use of different scene types within the genre and how each engages with death, mourning and the afterlife. Each deals with the differences in the way that men and women appear in the context of the grave and my work is deeply indebted to their work and observations. I hope that this work is able to expand upon many of their observations and concentrate on some of the nuance and finer details that their expansive studies were not able to focus upon. Oakley has made other important contributions to the study of white-ground *lêkythoi*. His monographs on the Phiale (1990) and Achilles Painters (1997) provide an exceptional catalog of text and images of the oeuvre of these two prolific painters of red-figure

pieces as "Locrian," his work provided a useful catalog and description of the manufacture and stylistic elements of the vases, which provided a platform from which a number of 20th century studies of the vases, their iconography and their artists, could be conducted.

⁸ Many of their attributions remain today. Although some *lêkythoi* have been uncovered in the last few decades, many of them remain unpublished. Thus, there has been very little need for attributing many vases in the last few decades. That said, both Georgios Kavvadias and John Oakley continue to attribute or emend attributions to vases within the genre.

and white-ground vases. He has also contributed multiple articles and chapters on various other artists, scenes and figures that appear in the white-ground genre specifically.

Several artists and workshops have been identified as working in the white-ground style.⁹ Since many of the identified artists are also known to have worked in other styles,¹⁰ primarily red-figure, it has been possible to reconstruct a convincing chronology of artists and the development of decorative and iconographic styles. Differences in the shape of vases as well as their construction suggest that multiple workshops were simultaneously producing white-ground *lêkythoi*. Additionally, the shoulder decoration on the vases, usually vegetal motifs rendered with black glaze, has been used to associate distinct artists with common workshops.¹¹

While some artists seem to have favored particular characters or settings, there is quite a lot of diversity in the details and features overall. The best overall study of the various artists and their idiosyncrasies is Kurtz (1975). Focused studies on two of the most prolific artists, the Achilles and Sabouroff Painters, have shed light on individual development and innovations of style. The work of the Achilles Painter, recognized for his fine draftsmanship and minimalist approach, has received the most thorough study thus far, in part because the silence and subtlety of his scenes are so contrary to images of the previous century and also because, in obsessively painting only two basic scene types, i.e. two women in a domestic setting or two visitors to the grave, the importance and effect of nuance in conveying individual emotion can be observed. In

⁹ Oakley 2004: 13-8 provides a useful summary of the best-known or represented artists and he also provides a useful chronological chart of the “major” painters of the genre on page 14. For more on the white-ground style in general see Cohen 2006: 186-238 and Mertens 1997.

¹⁰ e.g. the Achilles, Bosanquet, Phiale, Sabouroff Painters.

¹¹ It seems that there was a division of labor between painters of the shoulder and border decorations and painters of funerary scenes. The most extensive study for the association of artists and workshops of the white-ground *lêkythos* tradition is Kurtz 1975. See also Kavvadias 2000: 50-4 and Oakley 1990: 47-54, 1997: 73-8, 92 (including chart 6), 2004: 13-8.

addition to Oakley's monograph, a more focused study of the collection of white-ground works attributed to him at the National Archaeological Museum, Athens was published by Olga Tzachou-Alexandri in 1998. In contrast, the Sabouroff Painter's work is less noteworthy for its fine details but incredibly innovative in the types of scenes that he attempted and the range of different gestures and activities he introduced to the standard graveside scene. His work has been meticulously studied and cataloged in the 2000 monograph of Georgios Kavvadias, *Ο Ζωγράφος του Sabouroff*.

In summarizing this very cursory description of literature on white-ground *lêkythoi* it should be noted that despite a fairly large corpus of articles and monographs devoted to the imagery of these vases, there remains a number of important artists and iconographical features that have yet to be fully studied.

The production and use of white-ground *lêkythoi* was largely confined to Athens and Attica during the 5th century (c. 470-410).¹² Vases of the *lêkythos* shape¹³ were first produced around the start of the 6th century and have been found throughout Magna Graecia, although the shape seems to have found its greatest popularity in Attica.¹⁴ Like an *aryballos* or *alabastron*, the

¹² The only other find spot with a significant amount of vases is Eretria, on the island of Euboea, which was allied with Athens during the Peloponnesian War and must have been heavily influenced by her; even if eventually Eretria rebelled against her overbearing league ally. According to van de Put 2011: 143, 162 during the period 480-450, 14% of white-ground *lêkythoi* were found in Euboea and for the period 450-400 nearly 22% of white-ground *lêkythoi* were found in Euboea/Aegina (cf. van de Put 2011: 37 for his explanation of the categories of his statistical analyses).

¹³ See Oakley 2004: 4-6. In antiquity the term "*lêkythos*" (λήκυθος) was used generally to refer to an oil or perfume vase. Its earliest known literary use is *Odyssey* 6.79 where Nausikaa receives olive oil in a golden *lêkythos* from her mother before heading out to do her washing. Richter 1935: 14 defines the *lêkythos* as a "one handled jug with narrow neck and deep mouth. Used for oil and unguents and as an offering for the dead." Thus, its handle marks it apart from *aryballoi* and *alabastra* and its contents mark it apart from somewhat similarly shaped *oinochoai*, which contained wine.

¹⁴ The best study of the function and popularity of *lêkythoi* of all sorts is van de Put 2011. He has traced the development and change in iconography of all types of *lêkythoi* and presents this as a means to combat the difficulties and lacunae in the archaeological record and to try and understand the use of

primary function of the *lêkythos* was storing and decanting oil and it could be used in domestic, athletic, ritual or funerary contexts. Although *lêkythoi*, broadly speaking, came in a variety of shapes and sizes, the white-ground sub-genre is almost exclusively of the cylindrical type and comes in a small range of sizes with general uniformity with regard to their aspect ratio.¹⁵ And, while *lêkythoi* were, in general, popular grave goods, becoming the most frequently deposited object in Athenian graves by about 560,¹⁶ only the white-ground variety was associated exclusively with a funerary context. The archaeological and iconographical evidence suggests that these vases were, from their inception, closely identified with death and funerary ritual.

Our modern understanding of the production and consumption of white-ground *lêkythoi* has many lacunae owing to the low standard of archaeological documentation associated with many of them.¹⁷ Adding to this, many of the highest quality vases quickly fell victim to eager collectors. Assemblages were broken up and vases lost. It is fortunate that the majority of vases that ended up in private collections are generally well intact, with few breaks and relatively well-preserved polychrome paint, because it indicates that many of them were originally found as funerary deposits.¹⁸ This assumption is further supported by the fact that, as of yet, the vast

these vessels and what may have impacted their popularity in Athens at various points. The distribution of provenanced vases from each category of *lêkythos*, divided by period and style, can be found in a series of tables, i.e. van de Put 2011: Figs. 5, 12, 18, 24, 28, 31, 41, 44, 47, 52 & 62.

¹⁵ Oakley 2004: 5 provides a useful visual comparison of the four main body types: Deianeira-shaped, shoulder, cylindrical and squat.

¹⁶ For more on the popularity of *lêkythoi* in graves see Garland 2001: 36-7, Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 101-5; Oakley 2004: 9; van de Put 2011: 143, 162 and Vlachou 2012: 375-6. This date has been proposed by Houby-Nielsen 1995: 155-6, 159, 166-8 and it coincides with the shift.

¹⁷ Oakley 2004: 9-11.

¹⁸ Van de Put 2011: 143. See also Arrington 2015: 240-1.

majority of provenanced, published white-ground *lêkythoi* come from burial contexts,¹⁹ and a very large proportion of the scenes can be categorized as funerary or funerary-adjacent.²⁰ Thus, even if there were alternate uses for these vases, they must have primarily functioned within and been associated with a funerary context. Whether they were used or displayed in the home during the *prothesis* or as part of funerary cult rituals conducted within the home has not been confirmed by archaeological evidence though this may be in part because there are so few undisturbed domestic contexts from which archaeological evidence can be extracted.²¹ Thus, we lack understanding as to whether some or all of the vases deposited in graves were also used during the funeral or for how long and by how many people they would have been viewed before being sealed below the earth.²²

Although no vases have been found within a domestic setting, the manner in which some vases are found in funerary contexts as well as the way they are shown in painted imagery gives us some sense of how they might have been used before being offered to the dead. *Lêkythoi*

¹⁹ Oakley 2004: 10, 10n81 cites two examples of white-ground *lêkythoi* found in ritual contexts: the Sacred Spring, Corinth and the Cross Roads Enclosure, Agora, Athens.

²⁰ By “funerary-adjacent” I am referring to domestic or otherwise contextually ambiguous scenes, which often have no obvious, visual link to the grave or funeral but likely represent the deceased in a manner that draws attention to their virtues as Athenian wives, mothers and masters of their domestic endeavors or as Athenian citizens, husbands, fathers and masters of their military, athletic or skillful endeavors.

²¹ Arrington 2015: 240-74. He has proposed a scenario (250-1) for how the vases might be used from the moment of purchase to the moment they were deposited. He suggests that the vases were used in the *prothesis*, as one occasionally sees in *prothesis* scenes, as well as displayed in the home of the bereaved for an indefinite time. He suggests that the *lêkythoi* that occasionally appear suspended from invisible walls beside the grave reflect how the vases would have been displayed in the home. See below for more on the discussion of the use of the vases in funerary cult.

²² It is likely that *lêkythoi* were used during the funeral for various rituals, however, given that these vases usually have a small false chamber and are decorated in a relatively fragile fashion, it is possible that the deposited vases were designed primarily for this function.

occasionally appear in *prothesis* scenes, suggesting that they may have been used to anoint the dead or to generally improve the smell of the space within which a corpse was being displayed.²³ While many of the vases found inside graves or offering ditches are found relatively intact, there are a handful of vases that have been found broken and/or burned. It is not generally clear if the shattered vases were ritually broken or if they broke as a consequence of being left outside on a grave. Since there are instances where burning of a vase took place after it was fragmented, it has been suggested that *lêkythoi* could have been purposefully offered to the funeral pyre in some circumstances.²⁴ Since many scenes of a visit to the grave show *lêkythoi* standing on the foot or steps of monumental grave markers or suspended in space to either side of them, it is logical to assume that in addition to depositing these vases at the time of interment they were also subsequently offered at the grave. Even though there is little archaeological evidence for grave *stélai* that resemble those found in 5th century imagery, there were presumably spaces in the Kerameikos and *dêmosion sêma* that could receive and display gifts so that they could be viewed by passersby (see below for more on contemporary burial practice).

²³ Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 103 claim that “in the *prothesis* scenes the vases [*lêkythoi*] stand about the bier, for after the body was washed it was anointed and then dressed for the formal lying-in-state,” and Garland 2001: 26 also claims that “*lêkythoi* of oil were placed around the bier” though he only cites one example, one of the Huge *Lêkythoi* from the end of the 5th century (Berlin, Antiken. F2684). There are in fact very few *prothesis* scenes that depict *lêkythoi* placed around the bier or in baskets of offerings. The only other example I know in which *lêkythoi* can obviously be seen in this context is from a vase by the Triglyph Painter now in Lyons (E288.3). There is no reason to deny the premise but the vases are much more likely to be shown being placed in baskets to bring to the grave or to be at the grave itself. Since most white-ground *lêkythoi* have a false chamber that is quite small, they were not likely the most practical distributor of oil to anoint the body of the corpse although if they contained scented oils, the smaller chamber might allow for the perfume to exit more easily by bringing it closer to the lip of the vase. Women are often shown waving branches in proximity to the corpse in Geometric *prothesis* scenes, which may have had the original purpose of swatting away flies or reducing foul smells by fanning the air with branches that may or may not have been fragrant themselves. Garland 2001: 26, 139-40 notes that some believe that the action eventually became purely ritual but that he finds this doubtful. See also Ahlberg 1971: 302.

²⁴ Oakley 2004: 11; Riezler 1914: 4-6; and, most recently, Walton et al. 2010.

The Greek Funeral

The imagery on white-ground *lékythoi* provides a wealth of information about funerary ritual at the grave, an aspect of Athenian funerary cult that is more enigmatic to modern scholars than the phases of the funeral, or *kêdeia* (κηδεία), proper. Understanding of the general features of a classical Athenian funeral will be assumed in the following discussion so a brief overview of the process and its rituals will be useful. There are a number of incredibly thorough and detailed studies of Greek funerary and burial customs, which will be frequently referenced, including: Garland (1989, 2001), Kurtz & Boardman (1971), Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) and Vlachou (2012).²⁵ These studies combine archaeological, literary and artistic sources in order to provide a good approximation of the general trends in funerary practice during various phases of ancient Greek history. Both cremation and inhumation were common throughout Greek history though their relative popularities fluctuated from time to time, presumably due to both social and practical circumstances.²⁶ In either case, burial was a necessary process for the soul to be allowed integration into the afterlife and many of the rites and rituals known from the Mycenaean and early Greek are preserved in the image and text of Classical Athens and later.

A typical Greek funeral would take place over a series of days. The corpse would immediately be washed and anointed and prepared for cremation or interment. Next it would be dressed and prepared for the first part of the funeral, the *prothesis* (πρόθεσις) or laying out of the

²⁵ Vlachou 2012: 363-4 provides a useful bibliography on the subject. This is also the best source for a summary of the history and features of the Greek funeral.

²⁶ e.g. it was important for Athenian soldier who died in combat abroad to be carried back to be honored and buried at the public funeral. The corpses would be cremated prior to transport back to Athens. Cf. Arrington 2015: 34-5. A mass grave of plague victims uncovered in the Kerameikos suggests that special circumstances necessitated a swift mass burial. Cf. Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 247-59 and Vlachou 2012: 378, 378n. 109.

corpse.²⁷ The importance of this portion of the funeral is indicated in the grandiose way that it is described in Homer as well as its prominence in figural funerary imagery of Geometric vase painting [Figs. 1-2].²⁸ Upon death the corpse would be collected so that it could be washed and anointed before much disfiguration from decomposition might take place. The body was then dressed and laid out on a bier. Great effort was taken to present the body in the most “beautiful” manner possible, perhaps to ensure that the lasting image of the deceased was one of calm, composure and serenity. The head was placed on a pillow, often shown decorated with geometric patterns, with the eyes closed and a chin strap, *othonai* (ὀθόνας), to prevent a gaping mouth.²⁹ At some point during the *prothesis* the body would be wrapped in a shroud, or *epiblema* (ἐπίβλημα), in which it would be wrapped during the *ekphora* and interment. While the body was laid out, kith and kin could perambulate the body while weeping, singing and taking final glances and embraces. The location and amount of time that a corpse might be laid out during this ritual seems not to have been fixed until it was restricted by sumptuary laws commonly attributed to Solon.³⁰ Given the large number of people that appear crowded around a bier in early

²⁷ For more on the rituals of the *prothesis* see especially Ahlberg 1971: passim; Boardman 1955; Garland 2001: 23-31; Hame 1999: 32-46; Honig 2009; Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 142-7; Oakley 2004: 76-9.; Shapiro 1991; Sourvinou-Inwood 2004; Stears 2008: esp. 140-3; Vermeule 1979: 13-7; Vlachou 2012: 364-6; van Wees 1998 and Zschietzschmann 1928.

²⁸ Hom. *Il.* 24. 784-7 indicates that Hektor was buried after nine days and Achilles was given a *prothesis* of sixteen days according to Hom. *Od.* 24. 63-5.

²⁹ In the Geometric period the shroud is often shown with a checkered pattern, which may indicate a decorative element of the bed and linens. Many of the pillows shown on black- and red-figure and white-ground *prothesis* scenes are shown with a geometric pattern, presumably a woven or embroidered detail on the pillow. For more on the use of the chin strap see Garland 2001: 23; Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 364 and Veremeule 1979: 15.

³⁰ Evidence for this law comes primarily from [Dem.] 43.62; Demosth. 20.104; Plut. *Sol.* 21.4 and Cic. *De leg.* 2.59. For an in depth discussion of the sources, authenticity and motivations for Solon’s funerary law, see especially Blok 2006. I will refer to the sumptuary laws ascribed to Solon by these later authors as “Solon’s law” for convenience.

illustrations and descriptions it is likely that the *prothesis* often took place out in the open. By the 5th century it seems that this stage of the funeral was restricted to the inner courtyard of a private home, presumably to curb the visibility of exceptional displays of extravagance traditionally associated with the funerals of the wealthy.

During the Classical period, participation in this stage of the funeral was comparatively restricted and only family members within the degree of second cousins were permitted at the event.³¹ Both male and female family members would attend this occasion but their positions and duties were divided along gender lines. It seems that women did much of the preparing of the corpse, likely because they were less susceptible to the pollution associated with the dead body, and they were responsible for singing dirges of formal and informal nature.³² Women would have been responsible for the formal and spontaneous songs dedicated to the dead and, according to pre-Classical imagery, the men stood orderly at some distance from the body to address visitors and the glory of the dead. Quite contrary to the controlled appearance of male attendants, women often set themselves apart as in a state of grieving by wearing dark clothing and inflicting violence upon their own bodies by ripping out or cutting their hair, lacerating their skin with sharp nails and beating their breasts [Figs. 1-9].

Following the *prothesis*, the body would be prepared to be carried to the grave during the *ekphora* (ἐκφορά).³³ This stage of the funeral was occasionally depicted in vase painting during the Geometric and Archaic periods [Fig. 10] but was never as an important context for funerary

³¹ Cf. [Dem.] 43.62.

³² For more on the *miasma* of death and women's susceptibility to it see Stears 2008: 143-4 and Sourvinou-Inwood 2004: 168-9.

³³ For more on the *ekphora* and its imagery see Ahlberg 1971; Kurtz & Boardman 1975 and Garland 2001: 31-4.

imagery as the *prothesis* was. Like the *prothesis* the ostentatiousness of the *ekphora* seems to have been greatly curbed under Solonian sumptuary law. Depending on the means of the family, a corpse would be conveyed by chariot or pallbearers to their grave where the family would then proceed to bury them. The corpse or urn would be buried in a simple grave and gifts of vases, jewelry, weapons or other personal affects would be placed in the grave before it was covered over. Depending on the place and context of burial, offering trenches or ditches might be available for further deposits of funerary gifts.

It is presumable that many of the rituals mentioned above were further removed from the control of private citizens while Athens attempted to deal with the large number of soldiers who died abroad in defense of their city, i.e. during the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, and while they began to instigate the practice of public funerals and use of the *dêmosion sêma*.³⁴

Mourning and the Study of Emotion in Ancient Greece

The investigation of the expressions of mourning presented here will, hopefully, contribute to a rich collection of iconographic studies of mourning in Athenian art and funerary imagery on white-ground *lêkythoi*. In terms of the publications dealing with white-ground mourning imagery specifically, there have been studies that have looked holistically at the general trends in iconography while others have focused on scene types or individual artists as catalysts to discuss the innovative and unique attributes of their imagery.³⁵ In contrast, the present study will use

³⁴ For more on the development and institution of the *dêmosion sêma* and public/communal burial amongst Athenians see, especially, Arrington 2010a: esp. 17-50; 2010b, 2011: passim, 2012 and 2015: esp. 55-90; Garland 2001: 89-93; Hölscher 2003; Loraux 1986 and Shapiro 1991: 644-5.

³⁵ See above section on vases and scholarship (pages 7-13) for the most important works of white-ground imagery. As Shapiro's 1991 study of mourning in Athenian art has shown, the images on white-ground *lêkythoi* were immediately unique in their context, mood and details. After nearly three hundred years

character types, independent of or despite the scenes in which they appear, as the focal point of study in an attempt to determine how one's gender, age or status dictated the manner in which they were shown to grieve and show honor for the dead. By focusing on individual categories of mourners I hope to offer a new perspective to a growing understanding of 5th century graveside ritual and expression of grief.³⁶ While there are commonalities between the ways that any Athenians grieve, there are trends in the manners in which more specific categories behave, suggesting that there is a conscious understanding of the range of acceptable behavior associated with individual reactions to death in this context.

Funerary mourning in the ancient Greek world has been studied quite extensively and from multiple perspectives.³⁷ The study of lament benefits from the fact that there is a substantial amount of literary evidence for the use and form of threnodies in epic and lyric poetry, tragedy, rhetoric and legal documents as well as visual evidence from Attic funerary art. In the first chapter (see below, especially pages 34-50), in the course of explaining the new ways in which women express grief in the 5th century, I describe a number of the key features of the funeral and mourning so I will not describe them here. However, it will be useful to briefly outline some of the key studies of Athenian mourning that have influenced and shaped my own work.

As an integral part of the funeral rites of ancient Greece, any study of burial customs necessarily discusses the role and importance of the ephemeral activities that would have been conducted before, during and after cremation and/or interment. What is known of the form of

of popularity in the funerary context, the *prothesis* scene was immediately absorbed by new scenes with the introduction of white-ground *lêkythoi*.

³⁶ A complete history of scholarship for white-ground *lêkythoi* can be found in Oakley 2004: 1-4.

³⁷ My meager summary below highlights some of the works that I have found most useful only, these lists are not comprehensive. For an overview of the history of the study of mourning and lament in the ancient Greek world see Dué 2006: 31-5.

funerary rituals has been pieced together from evidence in epic, lyric, tragedy along with the leftover physical artifacts used in said rituals. Trying to extract the precise form and content of actual lament from the traces left in lyric and tragedy is a daunting task but has been undertaken in a few studies of which I am most familiar with Elinor Wright's (1986). From epic we get a sense of how men and women reacted to the immediate news of death and how their mourning changed between this moment and the *prothesis*. Some of the most important recent contributions regarding lament in Homer include those by Sabine Föllinger (2009), Murnaghan (2002), Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood's (1981, 1983, 1995, 2004), Christos Tsagalis (2004), and Jean-Pierre Vernant (1991a).

Tragedy is an invaluable source of evidence for the form, function, performance and content of mourning. While remaining aware that there are potential pitfalls in relying too heavily on tragedy, the sentiment and behavior of tragic figures has definitely served to elucidate some of the actions and expressions that are found on white-ground *lèkythoi*. I have found the work of Helene Foley (1993, 1995, 2001, 2003), Edith Hall (1995), Katharine Hame (1999, 2004, 2008), Bonnie Honig (2009), Nicole Loraux (1986, 1998, 2002), Richard Seaford (1994, 2005), Ann Suter (2008, 2009) and Mark Toher (1991, 2001) useful in their critical examination of tragedy as a source for contemporary ideas related to politics, society and daily life. The work of these scholars has also provided important insight into the significance and details of the laments that appear in tragedy and how they relate to what we know of historical funerary ritual.

Given the ephemeral nature of lament, there have also been a number of cultural and anthropological studies, which turn to modern funerary rites in rural Greece as a means of reconstructing the practical and performative elements of funerary lament. The most important of

these works is Margaret Alexiou's *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, but similar work has been done by, most notably, Anna Caraveli (1980, 1982) and Gail Holst-Warhaft (1992).

Since the funerary rites and care for the dead seems to have been a context in which ancient Greek women were given a noticeable amount of control, the study of mourning has become a common catalyst for the study of the female experience in ancient Greece. Additionally, it is clear from even the earliest visual and literary examples that men and women had different roles to fulfill in caring for the dead. Thus, many studies focus precisely on the particularities of female lament vis-à-vis their male counterparts. Some of the most important studies in this regard include Wendy Closterman (2014), Casey Dué (2006), Christine Mitchell Havelock (1982) and Hans van Wees (1998). The work of John Boardman (1955, 1988), Elvia Giudice (2007, 2015), Georgios Kavvadias (2000, 2009), Erika Kunze-Götte (1984, 2009, 2010), Donna Kurtz (1971, 1975), Susan Matheson (2005, 2009, 2015), John Oakley (esp. 2003, 2004ab, 2005ab, 2008, 2009b, 2012), Alan Shapiro (1990, 1991, 2003) and Elena Walter-Karydi have been instrumental in my growing understanding of the broad study of funerary imagery in ancient Greece.

Although the present dissertation was inspired by a course on emotion in Greek art and text, visual analysis remains at the core of my own study. However, I cannot discount the influence that recent scholarship on the conceptions, perceptions and manifestations of emotion in the classical world have had upon my own work. The work of Olympia Bobou, Angelos Chaniotis and David Konstan have provided me with a better understanding of the ideas and terms that were used and circulated in antiquity, which I hope has allowed me to be more conscious of what vocabulary and concepts, to the best of our knowledge, are appropriately applied to a study of the visual expression of emotion in Classical Athens. Additionally, the work of Gerhard Neumann

(1961) and Timothy McNiven (1982) to catalog and categorize various common gestures of Greek vase painting has helped with keeping a vocabulary of the physical manifestation of emotions in the Greek world.

Finally, I have attempted to give myself at least a general background in current biological and psychological studies of emotion. My introduction to the notion of universal emotions was through reading the work of Paul Ekman and I have since branched out to some degree. I have since pursued some research into the studies of what makes the human face respond to particular emotive stimuli in “set” manners (namely the work of Kirsten Ruys & D. A. Stapel) and also in current ideas about how we are able to recognize these expressions (especially Ralph Adolphs (2006) and R. A. Stanley (2001)).

Description of Chapters

The following dissertation is divided into six chapters that focus on different categories of people that engage in mourning or funerary ritual on white-ground *lêkythoi*. The majority of the images studied fall into the category of graveside visits but the scene is secondary to the person in terms of the focus of the visual analysis. The first four chapters are divided according to the gender and age of mourners: adult women, adult men, the very old and the very young, and the final two chapters are thematically organized: vocal visitors and the deceased. Whereas the first four chapters take an in depth look at different types of people in order to track the activities, postures or mannerisms that are common, rare, or unique to them, the final two chapters have a slightly different aim: to see what role audible mourning has in visual media since we know it was a significant part of the expression of grief and funerary ritual in literature and drama (Chapter 5) and to look at the behavior of deceased individuals to determine whether they reveal

any clues that might indicate whether the Athenians perceived that the dead mourned their fate (Chapter 6). It is important to note that these designations were chosen because they include enough representation to identify them as categories and not one-off exceptions. Additionally, there is reason to believe that the way in which they are depicted may depend more on the fact that they are being vocal or are deceased than the mere fact of their gender and age. The simple fact that there is much variety in the facial expressions or manners for carrying out various funerary rituals indicates an interest on behalf of the artist to capture genuine, relatable characters and scenes. The variety may have helped an array of potential buyers find something that spoke to their particular situation or grief.

Chapter 1: The Changing Face of Female Grief, will provide an overview of how women were commonly depicted in white-ground mourning scenes, both in comparison with earlier Attic funerary imagery and in and of themselves. The majority of women depicted on these vases are generically young to middle-aged and, thus “woman” here refers to any adult female.³⁸ Since women made up a majority of the depicted mourners during all periods and genres of Athenian funerary art and a considerable amount of scholarship has been dedicated to female expressions of grief, they are a logical starting point from which a discussion about the intricacies of depicting emotion in 5th century Athens can embark. There is already a plethora of insightful scholarship on female expression of grief in the ancient world and this chapter will only rehash this material to the extent that it is necessary to explain and elaborate the particularities and nuances in the scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi*. This chapter seeks to investigate more carefully the manner that women conduct their rituals and express grief beside the grave, an aspect that is not discussed in much detail in the existing literature. Many studies simply point out that 1)

³⁸ In most instances the women are also presumably Greek and will be assumed thus unless there is a visual clue to suggest the contrary.

women tend not to partake in the gestures that were hallmark to mourning imagery in the previous centuries and 2) their behavior is almost inevitably more restrained regardless of the activity in which they are engaged. The chapter will pursue the issue of female restraint in the context of mourning in an attempt to define more clearly what women tend to do that is or at least appears to be more subdued and what the purpose or reason for such a switch may be.

In trying to further describe and define what female mourning looks like, I will address the matters that have been suggested as possible explanations for the abrupt shift in how women were depicted. Since the majority of funerary scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi* take place at the grave, one cannot dismiss the fact that the histrionic grief associated with earlier funerary imagery always took place in the context of a funeral. Images of women will be studied with respect to the fact that space and time have vital roles in informing what activities take place and what sort of decorum is expected. At the same time, the few *prothesis* scenes that do appear on *lêkythoi* are restrained compared to their antecedents, indicating that changes in the way that female mourners are shown is not only related to context. By not relying too heavily upon stock gestures of mourning artists invited their viewers to look more closely at details of physiognomy, glance and posture that might provide insight into the deeper feelings and thoughts of mourners. In addition, a closer study of how women behave at the grave, I will argue, shows that the attention and care that they had once directed toward the corpse at the *prothesis* was now directed toward the grave marker. The greater implications that this may have as to the significance of nurturing the dead, the ongoing relationship of the living and the dead, and the significance of the grave as a point of contact will be explored as well. To flesh out all the intricacies of the various possibilities for female expression of grief is beyond the scope of this

dissertation so the aim of the chapter is to identify some of the most common and emotive ways that women express their sadness and their attention to the dead.

Chapter 2: Male Mourners is meant to complement Chapter 1 by exploring what key differences or similarities exist between the ways that men and women behave beside the grave. Since in the following two chapters the aged and very young will be the focus of discussion, “men” in this particular chapter refers to young and middle-aged males. Comparatively little has been written about the role of the male mourner in Greek art but there are a significant number of them represented in Athenian funerary art, especially during the 5th century, so a closer study of how they express themselves is long due. Just as there was a clear division in the types of activities and manner of expressing emotion that men and women engaged in in pre-Classical Athenian funerary art, there are key differences in the way that men and women conduct themselves during a grave visit. This chapter will first look at the way in which men are depicted in the 5th century and how this compares with general trends in the imagery of male mourners in pre-Classical art. Like their female counterparts, male mourners from the Classical period are more restricted in their motions and the one activity with which they were most associated in *prothesis* scenes, providing salutation or valediction to the dead, is nearly absent. However, unlike their female counterparts, male mourners are less frequently shown making offerings at the grave and instead tend to be shown standing in still contemplation, admiration, or reverie; suggesting that they visit the grave not necessarily to bring offerings, although they occasionally do this too, but rather to communicate, remember, or simply pay respect to the dead. Special attention will be paid to how male mourners engage with the grave, both in terms of viewing it and touching it, and how their body language and dress suggest an acute awareness of their visibility in this particular public space. Quite the opposite from the freedom with which Priam

tears up on a red-figure vase by the Hector Painter (Vatican Museum 16570) or Odysseus and Achilles seem comfortable to openly weep and express sadness in epic poetry, mourning men as depicted on these *lékythoi* seem greatly inhibited and in general, the range of activities and postures associated with them is quite limited. This may suggest that more restrictions were placed on the way that they were allowed to express themselves in a public setting or, more simply, that they were perceived to have more emotional control, as was generally assumed in the Greek literary tradition.

In addition to being fairly limited in what they do beside the grave, men tend to hide their bodies within billowy *himatia* so that it is difficult to read their gestures. Not only is this in stark contrast with women who visit the grave, but it also differs with the way that deceased men are shown in the same context (see Chapter 6). Thus, unlike images of the deceased that tend to emphasize the heroic body and the physical and intellectual virtues it intimated in an ancient Athenian context, mourning men seem to be trying to disappear in their clothing, often exposing only their eyes so that they can view the grave. The emphasis is thus not on their own physical strength but their face and by extension the thought and memory directed toward the grave. Given that a disproportionate number of able-bodied men were the victims of the Peloponnesian Wars, which coincided with many of the vases discussed here, such images may convey the relative vulnerability of Athens' soldiers and the frequency with which they were confronted with death on an individual level. Their posture, it will be argued, points to a great sense of self-awareness and a general inhibition to exaggerate their grief. At the same time, their placid expressions and dispositions convey an air of sorrow and reverie in and of themselves, suggesting that artists used immobility in a deliberate manner.

Chapter 3: ‘Ολοός Γῆρας’³⁹ and Elderly Lament will look more closely at the handful of elderly mourners that appear in 5th century scenes of mourning. More specifically, the chapter will discuss the particularities of grief expressed by senescent men since no extant *lekkythos* portrays an aged female (mourning or otherwise). While there are not many older men in Athenian funerary scenes, they deserve a more deliberate examination because there are some important consistencies in their presentation, which suggest that as a group they were more prone to a particular expression of grief. In addition, they are the only category of mourners that occasionally cover their entire face, including their eyes, suggesting very acute vulnerability and perhaps a heightened sense of shame (αἰδώς) or humility. By obscuring their face, these elderly men not only obstruct their own view of the grave but they also hide any indication of their emotions from their viewers. By hiding in their garment they could avoid passing glances of pity while remaining in close proximity to the dead. That covering the face to obscure the horror of death is felt to be an act of elderly men in particular is supported by the fact that Timanthes was famous for his rendering of Agamemnon grieving for the eminent death of Iphigeneia, directly related to his actions, in which he consciously chose to obscure the older father’s face because he was unable to do justice to the degree of sorrow that he imagined Agamemnon felt.⁴⁰ It seems that the trope of the severe sadness felt by elderly fathers was comprehensible and appealing to many Athenians. Additionally, the obstruction of the face and the mourners’ vision calls into the discussion the importance of sight in the remembrance of the dead. Since images of the dead appear in many graveside scenes and all of those that include elderly men, the covered face

³⁹ Hes. *Theog.* 605.

⁴⁰ For more on Timanthes’ emotive painting of Agamemnon see Lydakakis 2004: 125-7; Moffitt 2005 and O’Sullivan 2008: 179n.20, 183.

brings to the forefront the question as to what we should imagine the visitors are able to see at the grave with regard to the souls or apparitions there.

Chapter 4: The Sorrow of Untimely Death looks to the opposite end of the spectrum and how the very young appear as mourners and objects of mourning in the 5th century. Here, participants of mourning scenes that range in age from 1-3 will be studied. The trope of untimely death is easily illustrated when the object of mourning is shown to be extremely young so it makes sense that one finds images of mothers and fathers weeping for their deceased infants. By emphasizing the young age of the mourned-for, the injustice and unparalleled sadness of dying young and/or losing a young child is particularly emphasized. In addition to exploring the ways in which infants appear in these scenes, I will look at the ways in which parental grief may differ from that of adults more generally.⁴¹ Thus, this chapter will explore whether the relationship of child and parent changes the way that Athenians are shown to grieve.

There are a few instances in which it seems that infants depicted on white-ground *lêkythoi* are in fact mourning for deceased adults. Since comprehension of death and bereavement is not something associated with infants and toddlers, their inclusion may be used to reference the particular type of grief associated with losing a parent. The young age of these mourners is thus used for emphasis rather than to imply that such young Athenians fully understood death and funerary ritual. The primary means of showing the “sadness” of these figures is to illustrate them with their arms outstretched toward an individual who cannot embrace them. These images underscore the ultimate separation between the worlds of the living and the dead and show that artists relied on the understood intimacy and dependency of infants and mothers to emphasize

⁴¹ As I will suggest, there is no reason to believe that the adults shown mourning for children are not their parents or at the very least close family members. For more on the debate of mothers versus nurses shown caring for infants see Rächle 2017.

this separation. I suggest that such images imply a specific type or gravity of grief that may have appealed to consumers either because they had lost a young child or simply because the image illustrates a particularly deep sorrow. Since children tend to use their arms or bodies to express their grief, this chapter creates a nice complement to Chapter 3, which is focused on the face and facial expression, or lack thereof, of older men. When considered together these two chapters demonstrate the potential for both face and body to convey emotion.

In Chapter 5: From Vocal Memorials to Silent Graves all attendants of the grave who appear to be making noise, vocal, instrumental or otherwise, will be examined more closely. Since the audible element of mourning seems to have been downplayed in the scenes of white-ground *lêkythoi*, as opposed to their predecessors, this chapter will look specifically at the scenes that attempt to incorporate an element of sound. The chapter is divided into two parts; the first is focused on mourners who appear to be singing or speaking and the second looks at the use of musical instruments in funerary scenes. There are very few images that explicitly suggest that a mourner is making noise but since we know that wailing and singing was an important part of the Greek funeral,⁴² and since there is dramatic, literary, and epigraphic evidence to suggest that the dead perceived addresses to them at the grave, some investigation into the perceived silence of white-ground scenes should be made.

Since the audible element of visiting the grave is all but gone and there is little evidence for any ritual song or recitation that needed to be spoken at the grave, as opposed to the funeral, it is noteworthy that there is little indication that sound played an important part in commemoration and the enactment of funerary rites at the grave. The importance of speaking appropriately when in proximity to the grave for fear of the dismay of the dead is told in the narrative of Aeschylus'

⁴² Cf. Alexiou 2002: esp. 4-23; Derderian 1999, 2001; Garland 2001: 29-34; Honig 2009; Loraux 2002; Shapiro 1991; Stears 2008; and Suter 2008, 2009.

Choephoroi (84-166) and *Persians* (623-93). In addition, since there are a number of Greek funerary epigrams that direct passersby to greet the dead and there is evidence that other offerings at the grave were somehow perceptible to the spirits of the deceased, it is reasonable to assume that oral communication with the dead was possible and perhaps practiced. This chapter seeks to find a place for the exceptionally “noisy” scenes that appear sporadically amongst the quiet scenes that typify white-ground imagery.

In the second half of the chapter, I will look at the way that musical instruments are used in graveside and domestic scenes. For the most part, stringed instruments that appear placed on or near the grave or in the hands of a musician are representative of gifts offered to the dead. Thus, they are not used to accompany mourning at the grave but instead they are shown to suggest a particular skill or fondness of the deceased. I hope to very briefly examine the ways in which these images suggest sound in otherwise static scenes. I would argue that by showing a deceased figure playing an instrument, the artist is trying to create a more vivid memory and hence a more relatable scene. By showing a figure playing an instrument rather than simply showing it dedicated upon the grave the scene becomes more personal and intimate and perhaps conjures memories of happy times and beautiful song. The exploration of the suggestion of sound in these images will provide some analog to the exploration of the importance of seeing the tomb and “viewing” the dead in the context of the grave, see especially Chapter 3.

Finally, in Chapter 6: Do the Deceased Mourn? I will turn from the living visitors at the grave to the individuals that represent the deceased. It is generally accepted that some of the people that are shown beside the grave are representations of the dead. After first discussing the various interpretations of these figures, i.e. are they ghosts, *eidola*, mental projections, etc., I will explain how the deceased are identified in the present study. I contend that at least a majority of

the deceased figures shown are meant to be seen as mental projections of mourners depicted in the same scenes. I will argue that depicting the deceased helps the artist to depict a more specific and potentially personal relationship between mourner and deceased. Whether these manifestations should be thought of as spirits that are narratively present at the tomb, either visibly or invisibly to the living bystanders, or if they are merely mental/visual projections of the artist or the mourner(s) as to who is being lamented and commemorated in the scene will be discussed. The implications of the possible interpretations of these images play an important role in how we perceive the relationship of living to dead and how we should understand their body language and visages.

Since the deceased appear essentially indistinguishable from living beings, a viewer can easily imagine that they may experience thought and emotion in the same way. The previous chapters show that many mourners express their sense of loss and devotion to the dead through the attention they pay at the grave and their emotion of grief and bereavement through their face and posture, so we might expect that the dead could do the same. As I will show, most projections of the deceased in the first three quarters of the 5th century have stoic expressions and appear in a manner as if to maximize the glorification of the dead. This trend changes quite starkly in the last quarter of the 5th century when the images of the deceased begin to express dismay, discomfort and perhaps sadness. It is noteworthy that the deceased are undeniably more affected and emotive in these later scenes but the precise nature of their feelings is a bit enigmatic. I hope to make more sense of what they express and what this says about Athenian perception and conception of the deceased being. In summary, I hope to show that the fact that these images appear at the end of the lifespan of the white-ground *lêkythoi*, when more

monumental and delicately carved grave *stélai* were becoming more popular, is significant and speaks to changing attitudes about funerary ritual and the afterlife.

Chapter 1: The Changing Face of Female Grief: From Funeral to Graveside

ιαλτὸς ἐκ δόμων ἔβαν χοῶς προπομπὸς ὀξὺχειρι σὺν κτύπῳ. πρέπει παρηγὸς φοινίους ἀμυγμοῦ ὄνυχος ἄλοκι νεοτόμῳ δι' αἰῶνος δ' ἰυγμοῖσι βόσκεται κέαρ. λινοφθόροι δ' ὑφασμάτων λακίδες ἔφλαδον ὑπ' ἄλγεσιν, προστέρνῳ στολμῷ πέπλων ἀγελάστοις ξυμφοραῖς πεπληγμένων. ... δακρῦν δ' ὑφ' εἰμάτων ματαίοισι δεσποτῶν τύχαις, κρυφαίοις πένθεσιν παχνομένη.	Sent forth from the house I have borne libations accompanied by the swift beating of my fists My cheeks are marked with furrows freshly cut by the bloody scratching of my nails, by painful shrieks my heart is endlessly nourished. The linen-spoiling rending of my clothes announces the great pains of lament, within the folds of the cloth upon my breast I am struck with terror of grave misfortunes. ... And so I weep below my himation for the grave misfortunes of my lord, chilled to the bone by clandestine griefs.
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Aeschylus, *Choephoroi*, 22-31, 82-4

As visitors to Agamemnon's grave in the opening scene of Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, "libation-bearers," Elektra and her retinue of elderly female attendants enact a number of the most theatrical elements of ritual lament while clinging quietly to internal pangs of personal loss. As they make their way to the grave with libations meant to soothe the potentially volatile soul of Agamemnon, which Klytemnestra particularly dreads after waking from an ominous dream (34-41), they describe in song the various ways in which they perform their lamentation. Since it was Klytemnestra who took control of the burial, and since she was quite explicit in her demand that no one in the household should weep for Agamemnon (Aesch. *Ag.* 1551-4),⁴³ this is likely the first time that the women have been able to openly mourn and provide funerary rites befitting

⁴³ In a state of shock and wonderment the chorus asks whether Klytemnestra intends to carry out the burial of her husband (1537-50). In response she announces that she will indeed bury Agamemnon, whom she has vilified and holds responsible for the untimely death of their daughter Iphigeneia, but warns that no tears should be shed in his honor (1554).

the late king of Mycenae.⁴⁴ Even though the circumstances that precipitated Elektra and the libation bearers visiting the grave were greatly distorted, the women's actions and reactions are genuine and conducted in earnest: they seek to rectify the unorthodox rites provided by Klytemnestra and, by all accounts, they speak sincerely when expressing their own sadness at the situation. We can infer that their actions, unlike the queen's, are respectful and appropriate because they provide no evidence to the contrary. Although the behavior of the *choephoroi* is likely an exaggerated form of what one might expect to find at a historical Classical Athenian cemetery, as one of the only extant narratives of women lamenting at the grave this scene helps to contextualize and enliven the many graveside scenes that appear in contemporary white-ground imagery and provide us with a sense of how the rites associated with cult of the dead were conducted.⁴⁵

Comparanda for the libation bearer's dark dress, morose demeanor, dramatic gestures and compulsion to sing laments are well-attested in contemporary visual and literary sources, but they appear as features of proper behavior at the funeral, per se, and not a subsequent visit to the

⁴⁴ Hame 2004 provides a thorough discussion of the ways and extent to which the funeral rites that Klytemnestra provided for Agamemnon diverge from and distort actual funerary practice as it has been reconstructed from historical evidence. In this particular study, the emphasis is on the proper fulfillment of funerary, i.e. pre-interment rituals, but since rites are conducted graveside in this particular play she also touches on what the historical evidence suggests about which rites should and/or were actually conducted graveside. In her 2008 article, she compares female control of funerary rites in a handful of tragic plays and the ways in which each of them differs in their treatment and manipulation of traditional rites. She has compiled the historical evidence for all aspects of private funerary rites and rituals and provided a discussion of their relevance and significance in her 1999 dissertation.

⁴⁵ It is safe to say that the events dramatized in Aeschylus are an exaggerated form because it is widely acknowledged that many features and elements in the dress, behavior, rituals and vocabulary of tragic plays are based in reality but that either these realities relate to a bygone era or are purposefully or conveniently manipulated to suit the needs of the poet and the plot. For more on the historicity of tragedy and the potential advantages and pitfalls of using it as a "historical" source see Hame 1999: 121-73 and Suter 2009: passim. The edited volume, *Greek Tragedy and the Historian* (C. Pelling, Ed.) provides a number of useful essays on the topic as well.

grave. In addition, their turbulent expression of grief is consistent with the image of female lament that existed up to the early 5th century but not with mourning imagery from the majority of the Classical period. Compared with contemporary imagery from white-ground *lêkythoi*, the behavior of the *choephoroi* appears immoderate; even barbaric. It should be noted that, while this and other tragic scenes of visitors to the grave tend to be more violent and ecstatic than contemporary visual representations, the goal of mourners remains the same: to visit the dead and provide gifts that nourish them and advance their memory, despite and independent of the ways that they choose to express their sadness in the process. Since there is little evidence outside of the iconography of these *lêkythoi*, regarding the types of mourning that took place post burial, dramatic scenes such as this are invaluable for our growing understanding of the character of continued funerary cult ritual conducted at the grave in Classical Athens. When studied in conjunction with archaeological evidence of deposited or successively dedicated goods and anecdotal comments in literature and drama, the ephemeral elements of funerary lament begin to take form.⁴⁶

Overview of Female Mourning in Greek Art (8th – 5th Centuries)

The female mourner of ancient Athens and the ways in which she articulated grief has received great attention in studies of 1) funerary practice and 2) the lives of women in the ancient Greek world. From the earliest literary and visual sources, it is evident that women had a unique and important role to play in the elaborately orchestrated rites and rituals associated with the

⁴⁶ Sourvinou-Inwood 2004 provides, to my mind, the best summary or synthesis of what we do know about the female role in lament in ancient Greece. The strength of her article is that it looks to the various sources of information with a discerning eye and without being too dismissive, she addresses the fact that she finds that the female role in funerary ritual is often misunderstood and misleading.

kêdeia.⁴⁷ There is a preponderance of women in scenes of mourning from the Geometric through Hellenistic periods and what is most obvious about the way in which they express grief, in general but also with reference to their male counterparts, is that they use big, violent gestures to exaggerate and exemplify the depth of their sadness and feeling of loss. Since women were perceived to lack the restraint and control typical of men, their histrionic behavior in the context of the funeral seems fitting.⁴⁸ As part of an accepted array of funerary rites, potentially dangerous actions, such as self-harm and freeform wailing, were kept in check so that mourners could dramatize their emotions without bringing real harm to themselves, their families or their communities. The rites and rituals associated with the funeral were so much a part of Athenian culture by the 5th century that their enactment also helped to reaffirm one's place within society and drew individuals together during particularly vulnerable and emotional times.⁴⁹

From a variety of written sources including epic poetry,⁵⁰ tragedy,⁵¹ legal documentation⁵²

⁴⁷ See Introduction: 14-7.

⁴⁸ For more on the perception of female control, or lack thereof, see McNiven 2000: 71-7; Osborne 1997: esp. 30-1; Shapiro 1991: 630-1; Sourvinou-Inwood 2004; Stears 2008 and Stewart 1995: 574-5.

⁴⁹ By sharing in the experience individuals could reaffirm their position as part of the greater society. For the assimilation of mourners see Seaford 1994: 86-94 and Sourvinou-Inwood 1983: 38-42.

⁵⁰ For more on the representation of women in Homer see Blundell 1995: 47-57; Foley 1995a: esp. 93-5, 2009; Lefkowitz 1987 and Murnaghan 2009.

⁵¹ For more on the depiction of mourning women in tragedy generally see Dué 2006; Foley 1995, Hall 1995; Honig 2008; Loraux 1998, 2002 and Seaford.

⁵² Any discussion of the details of Solon's sumptuary laws explain the types of restrictions that were placed on women and hence give a clue as to the types of duties and behaviors with which they were typically associated. A few sources that emphasize the particular impact of funerary law on Athenian women include Alexiou 2002: 14-6; Blok 2006; Garland 1989; Hame 2008; Seaford 1994: 74-86; Shapiro 1991: 630-1; van Wees 1998: passim.

and other literary anecdotes,⁵³ a general understanding of the role of women as participants of funerary ritual and mourners has taken shape.⁵⁴ The fact that the funeral was a space in which women seem to have been able to move about and interact more freely in public view has attracted a number of studies focused on the special role that women had in caring for the dead. It has been noted that women were better situated to deal with the miasma of death since they were already accustomed to dealing with the pollution of childbirth and female reproduction.⁵⁵ Women would have been heard and seen to a great degree during various stages of the funeral since they were responsible for singing threnodies and for acting out a number of ritualized gestures associated with the funerary context.⁵⁶ And, if as the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi* leads us to believe, women were also the primary visitors to the grave, they would have had

⁵³ E.g. Pl. *Leges* 800c-e (hired female singers), 947b-d (garments/cloth at *prothesis* and *ekphora*), 959a (*prothesis*); Thuc. 2.34 (lament at the tomb); and Aristoph. *Lysistrata* 607-15 (*prothesis*). See also Hame 1999 for a comprehensive list of all references (Homer to late Roman) regarding the rites and practice of Greek funerals.

⁵⁴ For more on the female role in Greek funerary ritual see Alexiou 2002: 4-23; Budin 2013; Cairns 2009: 50-4; Closterman 2014; Derderian 2001: passim; Dillon 2001: 268-92; Garland 1989: 1-15, 2001: 21-37; Goff 2004: 261-4; Golden 2004; Hame 1999: passim, 2004, 2008; Havelock 1982; Holst-Warhaft 1992: 98-126; Honig 2009; Humphreys 1993; Johnston 1999a: 39-41; Kurtz and Boardman 1971: 58-61, 201-17; Loraux 1998: esp. 10-24, 35-8, 2002: passim; Merthen 2005: passim.; Mirto 2012: 65-81; Oakley 2004: 11-3, 76-87, 145-62; Patterson 2002: passim, Shapiro 1991: passim; Sourvinou-Inwood 1983, 2004; Stears 2008: 147-55; Stevanovic 2009: passim; Toher 2001: 336-40; Tyrell & Bennett: 1999; Vermeule 1979: 11-23; Vlachou 2012: passim; Walter-Karydi 2015: esp. 327-30 and van Wees 1998.

⁵⁵ Stears 2008: 143-4 claims that, “like death, birth was regarded as a source of miasma, and women, because of their childbearing capacity, were therefore seen as latently both polluted and polluting. For this reason, the argument goes, they were allotted the role of dealing with the pollution of death.” Cf. Eur. *IT* 380-3 and Eur. *Hel.* 1429-35. See also Sourvinou-Inwood 2004: 168-9.

⁵⁶ In pre-Classical Greek literature *goos* (γῶος) generally refers to an informal or spontaneous dirge, characteristically female, while *thrênos* (θρῆνος) referred to a more formally composed song of lament. By the Classical period, the two terms could be used interchangeably. For more on the usage and possible historical distinctions between the two see Alexiou 2002: 13; Foley 2001: 26-31, esp. 31n.66; Tsagalis 2004: 1-7 and Wright 1986: 19-46. Men also sang dirges but all accounts suggest that the female voice was a large part of the funerary process. For more on male lament see Chapter 2.

indefinite opportunities to interact outside of the home when they procured and dedicated gifts. Thus, in maintaining the familial funerary cult, an Athenian woman may have had occasional opportunity to interact with other Athenians outside of the home.

Nearly all images of mourning women up until the early Classical period are staged at the *prothesis*, which was the first formal event of the funeral.⁵⁷ At this stage, the washed and dressed corpse was placed on a funerary bier so that male and female mourners could formally and informally express their grief in the presence of the deceased and his nearest and dearest bereaved. While unrehearsed, spontaneous expressions of grief surely erupted at this event, there were a number of ritualized activities that were meant to help the bereaved channel their grief, thereby giving a controlled appearance to potentially untethered emotions. Aside from presenting the corpse and allowing the bereaved to interact with them one last time before they were cremated or interred, the *prothesis* was a stage for singing praise and sorrow and the dramatizing of grief. Much of the work that women did to prepare the corpse for interment occurred before this moment so that by the time of the actual funeral their primary chore was memorializing and keening for the dead. As such, their hands were free to add expressive gesticulations to emphasize their sorrow and the sentiments of their dirges.

It is clear that one of the most important roles that women played in the Greek funeral was singer of lament. As the primary deliverers of funerary dirges, women were responsible for creating and communicating the legacy of the dead and articulating personal and collective grief in an orderly manner. Margaret Alexiou's *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, demonstrated that the song and behavior of female mourners in rural Greece, up to the modern era, owe much

⁵⁷ The earliest known graveside scene appears on an early 5th century black-figure *loutrophoros* by the Sappho Painter (Athens, NM 450).

to ancient traditions.⁵⁸ Thus, ritual behavior relating to the funeral was so important and distinct within Greek society that it remained largely unchanged for thousands of years. The significance of the form and function of female lament in Greek literature and society has been long recognized and studied in terms of its political, cultural, sexual, historical and dramatic significance. Depicting the verbal element of mourning in visual form was not necessarily easy, especially in the Geometric period but visual artists were able to effectively express the sad and frenzied mood surrounding the earliest stages of grief through posture and gesture.

It is presumable that many of the gestures that are shown as part of the female expression of lament were intimately related to precise stages of the funeral at which threnodies were sung; thereby indicating that song was likely taking place even if not explicitly shown. In the proto-Attic, black- and red-figure traditions, an open mouth was sometimes used to emphasize when a figure was singing but the absence of an open mouth would not necessarily imply that no sound was being made.⁵⁹ In Athenian funerary imagery overall, there are very few examples of mourning women with their mouths open, suggesting that either lamenting was so intrinsic to the characterization of the female mourner that it need not be explicitly shown, or that this aspect of their mourning role was seen as less important in the visual tradition and in this context the gestures of individuals were more important in conveying the mood and emotion of the business of burying loved ones and coping with loss. Very rarely, an image on a white-ground *lékythos*

⁵⁸ Other studies of the relationship between modern and ancient funerary song in Greece have been conducted by Caraveli-Chaves 1980, 1982 and Danforth 1982. Wright 1986 has collected the evidence of form and function of various aspects of funerary lament. Her introduction (1-18) provides a useful history of scholarship and in her introduction and first chapter she also demonstrates the importance of verbal communication of the dead in ancient Greece.

⁵⁹ E.g. images of musical lessons often show an open-mouthed musician (e.g. London, BM E267; Madison 1979.122; New York, MMA 56.171.38) and mourning men (e.g. Amsterdam 6280; Athens, Ker. 1687; Athens, NM 1170, BS512) are shown with their mouths agape. This will be discussed further in Chapter 5 as will the role of oral communication at the grave and its representation in art. Cf. McNiven 1992: 63-4 for an analysis of the thrown back head in Greek art.

emphasizes the oral expression of grief: these are dealt with separately in Chapter 5 and will not be discussed in great detail in the following pages.

The funerary threnodies of both male and female lamenters were accompanied by a set of gestures, many of which can be found in Athenian funerary imagery, meant to aid the bereaved as they honored the dead, communicated their pain, and dealt with their grief.⁶⁰ Men are often shown with a single hand to their head and/or with their right arm raised in a gesture of valediction, and although we know from text that they were prone to tears and might use dirt or excrement to defile themselves, these gestures were not an important part of visual iconography. In contrast, female gestures in this context are big, violent, histrionic. Women are often shown using both arms in tandem and there is never an idle hand in pre-5th century funerary images: women wave their arms, rip their hair, rend their clothing, lacerate their cheeks, beat their breasts, or simply throw their hands up in despair and emotional release. Like the *choephoroi*, women in these images dramatize their feelings before an audience of kinsmen; reaffirming their place within their society while sharing their pain and suffering. The ultimate aim of each of these acts is to simultaneously honor the dead and ease the process of coping with the loss of a loved one. Artists emphasize the pain of the bereaved through repetitive images. Geometric and Protoattic artists often fill every available space with women enacting the same or similar gestures to underscore the importance of their sentiment [Fig. 3]. They bring motion to women's grief and underscore the level of their pain by depicting open hands and spread fingers or by extending gesticulating hands beyond the figural frame into the border zone [Fig. 6].⁶¹

⁶⁰ Both Huber 2001 and Merthen 2005 include excellent catalogs of the various gestures that men and women were posed in in the context of funerary mourning.

⁶¹ One of the best examples of this comes from a black-figure *loutrophoros* now in New York (MMA, 27.228) [Fig. 6] where the raised hands of seven female mourners in a *prothesis* scene on the body of the vase, and an additional three mourners in a scene on the neck (a fourth woman holds a

At the same time, although ritualized funerary lament allowed women to “turn ‘thoughtless’ weeping into a thoughtful emotional response”⁶² by forcing them to channel their sadness into socially acceptable expressions of grief, one cannot overlook the fact that many of the gestures that they used were violent and lacked a sense of restraint. In the early stages of the funeral, when emotions were still raw and the pollution that accompanied death was still relatively potent, mourning was at its most heightened level. But, in time, through the enactment of the various stages of the funeral, the bereaved family and kinsmen were able to resume normalcy and eventually express their sense of loss and sadness not simply through announcing it but through the thought and care that they provided for their fallen kinsmen.⁶³ The juxtaposition between orderly music and disorderly appearance underscored the potential danger of letting grief run rampant without social control. Anxiety that, even in a ritualized context, such violent acts might lead to chaos must have served as a primary impetus behind restrictions on the

loutrophoros whose neck just obstructs the lower two lines of the upper border), extend into the meander border of their respective figural frames. In contrast, two lions in a frieze between the two sets of female mourners are neatly contained within their borders, as are three of the four horse riders in a frieze below the *prothesis* scene. Other *loutrophoroi* which have gesticulating hands that obstruct or are overlapped by the border above a *prothesis* scene include Amsterdam 06243; Copenhagen 9195; London, BM 1930.4-17.1; New York, MMA 54.11.5; Louvre CA2955). Figural scenes tend to stay within the bounds of a figural quadrant though there are plenty of examples of artists extending outside of this area. By not respecting the figural zone borders, an artist is able to draw emphasis to particular aspects of their image. This can be seen in a number of white-ground *lékythoi* scenes where a *stélê* or the ends of a warrior’s spears extend into the border/shoulder design of the vase.

⁶² Holst-Warhaft 1992: 34. Suter 2009 discusses the difference between ritualized and spontaneous tears in the context of tragedy and Derderian 1998 discusses this distinction in the context of epic and funerary epigram.

⁶³ Sourvinou-Inwood 1989: 140 has succinctly characterized the initial stages of the burial process as being “dominated by ritual disorder and pollution.” With each stage of the funeral the family comes closer to normalcy, the decedent transitions from a liminal stage to full integration into the afterlife and over time order is restored in the lives of those affected by the loss. On the pollution of death see also Garland 1989: 1, 7, 12.

behavior of women in Athenian sumptuary laws ascribed to Solon and the subsequent century.⁶⁴ These laws not only restricted the monetary cost of the funeral, grave, and gifts, but they also attempted to curb the visibility of the entire funerary affair. Since the actions of women were particularly curbed, some have presumed that this may be responsible for the obvious reduction in the number of women engaged in the most exaggerated gestures of grief and the near disappearance of images of women self-harming themselves in white-ground *lêkythoi*, which appeared subsequent to the passage of these laws. Cicero twice quotes in *de Legibus* a clause calling for an end to women scratching their cheeks and emphatically wailing (Cic. *De leg.* 2.59 and 64 “mulieres genas ne radunto neve lessum funeris ergo habento”) Plutarch (*Sol.* 21.5-7) notes that Solon put an end to the disorderly (ἄτακτος) and unbridled (ἀκόλαστος) appearance and behavior of mourning women, to self-inflicted violence (ἀμυγή κοπτομένων) and to performing threnodies (τὸ θρηνεῖν πεποημένα). If these later anecdotes of Solon’s law are credible, late 6th and early 5th century images of melodramatic mourning may harken to traditional practice, which was no longer acceptable but which still had relevance and significance to a contemporary audience.⁶⁵ Whether related to these laws or not, imagery in subsequent funerary contexts became more restrained and artists found creative, new methods of expressing grief in ways that did not rely on the drama and exaggeration of form, but rather on the ways that an individual could express their feelings of loss through care and moments of

⁶⁴ These laws are discussed in a number of sources. Blok 2006 has collated the various sources and provides a useful discussion of their reliability, implications and social impact. Other useful sources for the features of ancient Greek sumptuary laws and their authenticity include Alexiou 2002: 14-6; Arnaoutoglou 1988; Dillon 2001: 271-2; Garland 1982, 1989: 3-5; Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 121-2; Loraux 1998: 19-34; Morris 1989a, 1992a, 1992b; Patterson 2002; Ruschenbusch 1966; Shapiro 1991; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995; Toher 1991: 161-4; and Vlachou 2012.

⁶⁵ Such behavior appears in funerary scenes in tragedy so the average Athenian citizen, or resident, would be familiar with these gestures even if they had never actually witnessed or experienced them firsthand.

quiet contemplation. Although the early Attic female lamenter must have effectively conveyed the emotion and tenor of a funeral and related feelings of loss, 5th century Athenian vase painters discovered new, poignant ways of showing grief.

It is noteworthy that the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi* breaks immediately with traditional Athenian funerary imagery. The *prothesis* does appear in white-ground and red-figure funerary imagery, well into the first quarter of the 5th century, but painters of the white-ground tradition adopted new scenes as soon as they embraced their new genre of vase painting. The graveside scene appears immediately within the genre and becomes the scene *par excellence* by the middle of the 5th century. There is no practical reason that the *prothesis* did not continue as the most popular funerary image but the novel graveside setting provided new ways of expressing grief and of honoring the dead.⁶⁶ While expressing one's sadness continues to play a part in white-ground imagery, the focus of the majority of scenes suggests that artists and consumers began to favor images that suggested the undying devotion of the living rather than a simple expression of their sadness. Through care for the dead mourners could demonstrate that they felt loss and they directed their action and attention toward making sure that the dead were comfortable and knew that they were not forgotten.

Before delving into a discussion of the depiction of women in graveside scenes it is worth noting that old conventions of expression were integrated into the white-ground tradition. Despite the presumed restrictions on mourning behavior in 6th and 5th century Athens, there is

⁶⁶ See Chapter 5. I tend to believe that as Sourvinou-Inwood has demonstrated, there was great interest in the power and effectiveness of the grave as a vehicle for creating and continuing the memory of the deceased. Graveside images highlight precisely this. At the same time, other factors such as the development of the public burial and sumptuary law would have contributed to this changing attitude toward the significance and development of the grave marker in Athens. By the end of the 5th century the actual grave marker was once again monumentalized for individuals and there may have been less need for vases with repetitive imagery.

great consistency in the way that mourning appears in art from its Geometric inception to the early Classical period.⁶⁷ As Alan Shapiro has demonstrated, mourning in Athenian imagery remained largely unchanged over a span of nearly four hundred years and the *prothesis* was not only the by far the most popular funerary scene during this period, but it was also the most long-lasting and unchanged scene type in Athenian vase painting in general.⁶⁸ The profile of a mourning female is so distinct that it can be recognized in even the most schematic of Geometric images and it can be easily compared with its analogues in proto-Attic, black-figure, red-figure, and even, very occasionally, in white-ground scenes. The *prothesis* scene appears very rarely in the white-ground tradition, but it is not entirely absent. There are inevitably fewer mourners in these scenes but they act out the same gestures.

In *prothesis* scenes, women take a prominent role in the immediate care and attention of the corpse. This is what the ancient Greek visual repertoire shows us. Prior to the 5th century, it was most typical for women to surround the corpse, standing at the head and sides of the bier, and for the male attendants to congregate near the feet of the corpse, presumably to greet visitors, prepare for the *ekphora* and provide a proper send off to the corpse.⁶⁹ Women stood near the body because they were less likely to be adversely affected by its pollution, and they could more easily tend to the ritual cleansing and burial preparations. Notably, in the scenes in the Geometric

⁶⁷ Funerary scenes of the late Classical and Hellenistic period tend to appear on grave monuments, not in vase painting. Ecstatic behavior is not found in funerary relief and the more restrained image types of the white-ground genre seem to find favor in the following period while images of women lamenting at the funeral fall out of favor by 410.

⁶⁸ Shapiro 1991: 629.

⁶⁹ See Chapter 2 for more on the role of men in mourning ritual and the development of their mourning behavior in Athenian art. Typically when men do appear, they are shown at the head of the bier and in only two instances (Lyons E288.3 and Piraeus OM40) does a man appear at the foot of the bier, and in both instances they are shown mourning rather than in a gesture of valediction, as they had usually appeared in earlier art.

and Black-figure traditions, the number of attendants depicted at the *prothesis* seems primarily limited by the physical space within which the artists could paint. This changes drastically in the 5th century and as a general trend, images on white-ground *lêkythoi* tend to display a conservatism towards the number of figures shown, leaving a field of white-ground around the bier and throughout much of the back of the vessels. There continues to be a preponderance of women shown in this context, though male mourners appear in about one third of such scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi*.

Female Mourners on White-Ground Lêkythoi

There are no extant *prothesis* scenes by the earliest artists of white-ground *lêkythoi*, e.g. the Tymbos Painter, ATL Class, and Timokrates Painter, though the scene does appear in the genre sporadically from 450 to the end of its use, c. 410.⁷⁰ The earliest extant *prothesis* scenes in the white-ground style are attributed to the Sabouroff Painter⁷¹ and are consistent in their details with the majority of *prothesis* scenes. Typically, three rather composed mourners surround a corpse laid out on a bier. When identifiable, the corpse is most often male, but there seems to be no observable difference in the behavior of mourners depending on the gender or age of the deceased.⁷² Male and female attendants gesticulate with upraised arms; expressing valediction and sorrow. Although there are examples of females with two arms to their heads [e.g. Figs. 18

⁷⁰ Though there are no extant images of *prothesis* scenes from these artists, there are two that show a lone corpse on a bier before a tumulus attributed to the Tymbos Painter (Tübingen E63) and the ATL Class (London, BM D35).

⁷¹ *Prothesis* scenes attributed to the Sabouroff Painter include Amsterdam 567; Houston 37.8; London D62; Mannheim, 195; and New York 07.286.40.

⁷² Arrington 2015: 254n36. No recognizable difference was noted in discussions of *prothesis* imagery by Boardman 1955 or Zschietzschmann 1928.

and 37], which depending on their precise location indicate ripping of hair or scratching of the face, more often they are shown with a single hand to their forehead and the other outstretched to touch, behold or salute the deceased. Though their hair might be cut short in a sign of mourning, it is never shown strewn in disarray and their cheeks are always intact. Their mouths are inevitably shut and since there are never more than three mourners, the scene typically appears quiet and calm. That vocal accompaniment is meant to accompany these depictions of the *prothesis* is never overtly shown although it occasionally was in black- and red-figure renditions of the same event.⁷³

Although the image of ecstatic females attending the *prothesis* did not entirely die out until the end of the 5th century, it was all but eclipsed by scenes of more restrained mourning by 425. The vast majority of these new scenes focused on female mourners quietly bearing gifts to the grave; not to initial reactions to death nor the most theatrical ways that grief could be expressed amongst peers. The melodramatic funerary scenes of pre-Classical Athens create a striking background against which the relatively subdued imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi* is constantly compared. It is rather remarkable that what seems to have been long characteristic of Athenian funerary imagery (c. 750-470), the wildly gesticulating female mourner, becomes exceptional from the Classical period onward. A handful of examples prove that there was still a place for theatrical expressions of sorrow within the white-ground genre, but there are far more images that abandon gestures which merely signify one's dolor in favor of those that demonstrate it through action.⁷⁴ It should be noted, however, that women do not suddenly become idle in their

⁷³ See Chapter 5 for more on the audible elements of mourning in white-ground imagery.

⁷⁴ The more dramatic expressions of female grief are dealt with in Chapter 5 and will only be mentioned in passing here since they are rather exceptional within the overall corpus of female lament on white-ground *lêkythoi*. The ripping of hair is almost non-existent in white-ground *lêkythoi*. One exception is attributed to the Tymbos Painter and is now on display in Athens (NM 2851).

expressions; they simply direct their attention to a new purpose and a new way of demonstrating and dealing with their feeling of loss. An examination of the ways in which women are shown offering gifts at the grave shows how artists were able to exploit this scene as a catalyst for demonstrating the devotion of the living to the dead and, in turn, how they were able to capture the mood and emotion of the moment through nuances in the way that each mourner interacted in the presence of the grave.

Studies of female lament in ancient Athenian iconography often note the trend toward more muted expressions of grief in white-ground vase painting, and in turn in late Classical grave relief. Theories regarding the significance and impetus behind the full-fledged abandonment of the *prothesis* in favor of the grave as the choice locale for funerary imagery have received due attention, but,⁷⁵ aside from discussing who appears within this new context and, superficially, at the types of activities in which these characters engage, i.e. bringing gifts, pouring libations, greeting the dead, etc., there has been no comprehensive look into the range of ways that grief is expressed via the actions and gestures that appear at this stage of mourning.⁷⁶ In fact, visitors to the grave do not merely give gifts but reveal their sorrow through the way that they undertake their duties and interact with the grave, which was the primary recipient and focus of mourning after the corpse was no longer present. The ultimate function of gestures found beside the grave

⁷⁵ There is next to no *comparanda* from earlier periods. The one exception being the Sappho Painter's black-figure *loutrophoros* (Athens, NM 450). This makes it impossible to surmise how much of the subdued mood of white-ground images is a product of the context of the scene versus a more general interest in this type of imagery due to mitigating social, historical or political reasons.

⁷⁶ Since others have already described the various activities that mourners engage in at the grave I will not run through them here. Oakley 2004: 145-214 provides a wonderful overview of the broad range of things one finds in graveside. In her recent monograph Giudice 2016: 127-54 describes the various scene types that appear within the genre and she describes particularly female tendencies in her chapter "La Figura Femminile nel Rituale Funerario."

is typically not simply to signpost “grief” and the primary audience of these gestures are not fellow mourners but, instead, the deceased: their soul and their *mnêma* (μνήμα) or “memory.”

The emotion of Classical funerary imagery is not always as obvious as it had been in earlier periods because it is often hidden within the purposeful tasks in which mourners may be engaged. Since the majority of women bring a gift or basket of gifts to the grave, their hands are not always free to gesticulate grief in the traditional manner. So, it is through action and not merely pose that women come to express their grief and it is in the quality of their care, not the size and quantity of their signs of mourning, that they are able to convey the mood and tone of a grave visit.⁷⁷ It is in the love, tenderness and attentiveness of female mourners that we find clues that these women are affected by the death of a loved one and it seems only natural that in upholding the memory of the dead, feelings of sorrow and loss would be stirred up for the bereaved. Without an immediate audience these women do not need to dramatize their grief, but they often cannot help but reveal it in the particular ways that they engage with the stêlê and commemorate the dead. Thus, in characterizing these vases, Donna Kurtz has eloquently noted that, “grief is nobly, simply, and beautifully expressed; there is nothing unlovely or unpleasant. There are grander memorials to the dead, but few have the poignant human appeal of Athenian white *lêkythoi*.”⁷⁸ In their delicate and purposeful manner of depicting women lamenting and honoring the dead at the grave, artists of the white-ground tradition demonstrate that one need not dramatize emotion to make it potent; sometimes a candid, personal moment of contemplation is the best means of capturing the gravity and incomprehensibility of loss felt by the bereaved.

⁷⁷ The changing silhouette of female mourners can be easily seen in Huber’s catalog of images (2001: esp. 247-63) as well as in the images included in Shapiro 1991: passim and van Wees 1988: passim.

⁷⁸ Kurtz 1975: xxi.

Despite the shift in focus from pre- to post-burial scenes, there is no sense that female mourners became any less important and, in fact, they continued to outnumber their male counterparts in funerary imagery, although it is more common for the deceased, when represented, to be male. This suggests that it was not only typical for women to participate as mourners at the funeral but that they also played a crucial part in maintaining the graves of their family thereafter. Whether or not women actually outnumbered men as visitors to the cemetery, we may infer from popular imagery that it would not be unusual to find an Athenian woman bringing offerings to or mourning beside the grave.⁷⁹ Given the fact that Athens spent a considerable chunk of the 5th century engaged in war, and a large portion of the male population would have been called away to fight periodically, the job of maintaining the cult of the dead must have, more than ever, fell upon women. Thus, there is perhaps an added poignancy to images where just one or two women visit the grave because the departure of young male Athenians must have left a noticeable void in the city.⁸⁰ Whether or not soldiers returned from war dead or alive, their absence would have been felt by their household and the city as a whole. And, since dealing with death and tending to corpses and graves may have become relatively more commonplace as a result of 5th century wars and bouts of plague, the spectacle of a funeral fit for a hero may have lost some of the luster and appeal that it seems to have had in earlier periods.

While Athens fought abroad, proportionately fewer families would have been able to carry out a traditional funeral since fallen soldiers were often cremated before being returned to their home. It is conceivable that the care that would have traditionally been directed to the corpse

⁷⁹ We know from Cic. *De leg.* 2.66 and Plut. *Sol.* 21.5-7 that mourners were only permitted to mourn at the graves of their own family members.

⁸⁰ Cf. Arrington 2011, 2015: 19-54 for more on the impact of war on the social aspect of Athenian life.

during the funeral was redirected to the grave because, in lieu of the corpse, this was the only physical manifestation of the dead with which the bereaved would every have contact. The way in which women interact with *stélai* in white-ground imagery suggests that the grave was perceived as a medium through which love and care could be transferred from the living to the dead indefinitely. As the ones who would have prepared, cleaned and dressed the corpse during the funeral, it is fitting that it is primarily female mourners who touch and adorn the grave in Classical imagery. A closer look at the posture and behavior of some female visitors at the grave shows that there is much overlap in the way that women treated the corpse and the *stélai*. Thus, many of the expressions of grief known from earlier *prothesis* scenes could find relevance within this context and could be exploited in new ways. Since fewer characters enact rites and gestures at the grave, the overall tenor of the scene is more quiet and subdued but nonetheless potent or meaningful. At the same time, the primary task of women in scenes by the grave is not to simply sing the honor of the dead but to provide for the dead and ensure that they are not forgotten or lacking of any creature comforts. As such, they are not as free to merely signal their grief and we must look at and amongst their actions to see how they express their sadness.

Much of our understanding of ritual behavior at the grave comes from white-ground imagery but there are literary *comparanda* that support the notion that 5th century Athenians placed great importance upon the upkeep of the cult of the dead and their graves, even though, unlike the funeral, it seems not to have been highly regulated by the state. Sumptuary laws might have restricted the grandiosity of the grave marker and the ostentatiousness of the gifts provided upon it, but there is very little written testimony to what, if any, rites and duties were mandated or expected. Although one might be relatively free in terms of how they cared for the dead, it is clear that maintaining ones' family graves was socially, if not legally, obligatory. In a handful of

legal proceedings, one's recognition, or lack thereof, of their responsibility to conduct customary funerary rites, *ta nomizomena*,⁸¹ is important in matters of inheritance and character assessment.⁸² Thus, one might be criticized and defamed for neglecting, or simply failing, to fulfill their obligation to properly care for deceased family members.⁸³ Such references help to establish the significance that both the gift and the act of caring for the dead held during this period, and they provide us with some sense of why the grave visit scene may have been particularly appealing at this time.

Gift-Giving at the Grave

Our best evidence for the types of gifts that were offered at the grave comes primarily from white-ground imagery and references in contemporary drama. The evidence shows that there was a broad range of items that a mourner might choose to offer: libations (including water, wine and oil), food (including *melitoutta*, eggs and pomegranates), vases, locks of hair, textiles, *tainiai* (ribbons/fillets), wreaths, animals, weapons, instruments, toys, and other domestic objects. Not all items that are referenced in drama appear in *lêkythoi* scenes though this is likely because some objects translate better than others into a visual medium. Since many funerary gifts were impermanent, i.e. liquids were absorbed or evaporated, food would eventually decompose, and dedications of hair and other natural products would eventually succumb to the elements, there is a lack of archaeological evidence to show precisely what and how frequently different materials were offered as gifts. The archaeological record does show that when it came to ceramic gifts,

⁸¹ See Hame 1999: 6-8 for a description of the rites likely included within *ta nomizomena*.

⁸² Cf. Isaios *de Nicostrato* [4] 19-20, Dinarchos *in Aristogitonem* 1 [25] 54, 58. Hame 1999: esp. 10-13.

⁸³ Hame 1999: 5-31.

white-ground *lékythoi* were most popular and, thus, the types of gifts that appear on them must also have been particularly appealing. There are three primary incentives for providing gifts at the grave, which account for the various types of materials given: 1) to honor the dead, 2) to nourish or comfort the dead, and 3) to soothe restless, and thus potentially dangerous, souls. The intended recipient and audience of perishable items were the dead since they were the ones who were meant to consume these objects. Any gifts that served to decorate the grave, e.g. *tainiai*, wreaths, or decorative vases were also ultimately offered for the benefit of the dead but by being viewed by a broader Athenian audience they served to elevate the status and visibility of both the deceased and their steadfastly attendant family. Thus, the gifts that are capable of being viewed indefinitely by any passersby, known or unknown to the deceased and the bereaved, not only provide for the deceased and their memory but also communicate the feelings and thoughts of mourners. Through their dedications, mourners show that they bear the deceased in mind and that their death still impacts them. For the living, the act of providing such basic necessities could provide some sense of control and provided a means of demonstrating their lasting love for the deceased. The grave marker becomes a catalyst for communicating the feelings of the bereaved.

An image of persistent upkeep of a grave might soothe such anxieties by suggesting the vigilant attendance of mourners to the grave. The importance of providing continuous attention and gifts for the dead is attested in contemporary Athenian drama as well. Returning to the opening scene of the *Choephoroi*, it is clear that the main objective of Elektra and her attendants in visiting the grave is to pour a libation to Agamemnon that will soothe his agitated soul. In their delivering of the libation they demonstrate their grief in a theatrical fashion, which is appropriate given the overall tone and violent narrative of the *Oresteia*, but, they reveal in their

discussion with Elektra (84-166) that ultimately they are concerned with making sure that they deliver the funerary offering in the most effective, appropriate and well-received manner possible. In the *Choephoroi* as well as Sophokles' *Elektra* (442-3) and Euripides' *Orestes* (1321-3), there is great concern that gifts ordered by Klytemnestra, independent of their quality and the sincerity of those assigned to offering them, will not be well received because of the treacherous queen's involvement in their procurement. This presents the dead as seemingly omniscient of the gifts they were offered and suggests that mourners needed to be mindful of what they gave and how they provided it if they desired a particular outcome. In tragedy there may be dire repercussions if a grave offering was not properly received,⁸⁴ but most Athenians were likely motivated by a desire to maintain contact with the deceased and to, as much as they were able, assure their loved ones that they had not forgotten them nor a concern for their wellbeing. Since there is some evidence that during the 5th century there was a growing anxiety about the potential for the deceased to affect the living and create mayhem if they were upset, it is also possible that some actual gift-givers feared repercussions for not being vigilant or sincere in their upkeep of the grave.⁸⁵

In the vast majority of scenes, women come with at least one gift in hand, and those that are not carrying a gift are often identified as the dead, or are empty handed to accommodate the enactment of a gesture of grief that uses both arms. In a few examples, women are in the act of

⁸⁴ Klytemnestra fears the volatility of Agamemnon's soul (cf. Aesch. *Choeph.* 34-41) which precipitates her sending others to provide gifts at his grave despite her despising him. Atossa and her attendants are concerned with the efficacy of their libations as they conjure up the ghost of Darius in hopes of protecting Xerxes (Aesch. *Pers.* 623-93) and the king explicitly proclaims that he has kindly received the offering (685-6).

⁸⁵ The increase in curse tablets (*katadesmoi*) during the end of the 5th century and the focus on the grave in funerary imagery during this period are the main arguments. See Felton 1999: 8-12; Garland 2001: 6-12, 134; and Johnston 1999: esp. 71-80, 85-6 for more on the growing anxiety over the ability of the dead to affect the living.

placing a gift on a tomb (e.g. London D74), pouring a libation (e.g. Karlsruhe B1528 [Fig. 11]; New York 07.286.45, 34.22.2), or wrapping a ribbon around a *stêlê* (e.g. Louvre CA1846, MNB615, MNC199) [Figs. 12, 13], but more typically they simply display the gift to the grave marker, showing viewers what they intend to offer and emphasizing their concern for the dead. They may use one or both hands to extend a gift out toward the *stêlê*, handing it to the inanimate stone as though it were a living recipient. The manner in which they present their gifts is visually similar to the manner in which women and girls offer and exchange goods with one another in the so-called “domestic scenes” found on white-ground *lêkythoi*, as well as red-figure vases and, eventually, Classical funerary relief.⁸⁶ Since many of the “domestic scenes” likely represent a conflation of funerary and mundane scenes, whereby the Athenian female *aretê* of the deceased woman is demonstrated through her guise and accouterments, it is no surprise that women appear in similar poses in the two scene types. However, the fact that women may interact with *stêlai* as though they were living peers suggests that the tomb, or by extension the *eidôlon* that it represents, was indicative of what was done near and for it. Thus, women would not necessarily be performing gestures related to grief for a living audience but they would need to be mindful that their behavior and gifts were properly offered because the dead witnessed their actions. This is why Elektra and other tragic characters are so concerned about the way she goes about offering a libation at her father’s tomb.

One of the most popular grave offerings according to white-ground imagery was the *tainia* or “ribbon.”⁸⁷ *Tainiai*, along with other colorful wreaths and tubular fillets, bedecked *stêlai* and

⁸⁶ For a visual overview of white-ground domestic scenes see Kurtz 1988; Oakley 2000: *passim*, 2004: 19-75; Reilly 1989; and Tzachou-Alexandri 1995: *passim*.

⁸⁷ Vases, including *lêkythoi*, *alabastra* and *plêmochoes*, are also commonly shown as gifts in white-ground imagery.

their environs, beautifying the gravesite and announcing the attendance of mourners. While a range of colors was possible for these ribbons, they were most often a bright vermillion, providing a splash of color to simple grave markers. While no traces of cloth *tainiai* survive, a number of late Classical and Hellenistic stone markers are decorated with painted and/or low relief images of red ribbons.⁸⁸ Aside from the decorative aspect of these offerings, they may have had apotropaic properties or have symbolically elevated the object around which they were strewn or tied.⁸⁹ Their prevalence in visual imagery may owe largely to the fact that they easily translate into the visual language of this medium since they are easy to depict and, they are associated with ritual behavior and mourning so they easily represent a mourner's dutifulness and care. While all gifts that leave a lasting mark are capable of showing the devotion of the bereaved to the dead, it seems that the manner in which ribbons could be dedicated to the grave offered a level of versatility that allowed artists to explore the different ways in which a mourner could interact with the grave.

A few artists seem to have taken a particular fancy to the embellishment that such ribbons provided. The accumulation of many ribbons overtime, sun bleached at variable degrees, could easily indicate a long history of devotion at a single grave. The most extreme example of this comes from a vase by the Vouni Painter, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (35.11.5) [Fig. 14].⁹⁰ Here, a woman and youth approach a grave marked by a pair of slender, white, stone

⁸⁸ For more on ribbons depicted on grave markers see Andrianou 2012: 47-9; Dillon 2001: 283, 283n.67; Kurtz 1975: 50-1, 61-2 and Posamentir 2006, 2011. See Andrianou 2012: 44-9 for more on the use of textiles in funerary contexts.

⁸⁹ Garland 2001: 116, 170. *Tainia* were used in other ritual contexts and were often tied around animals about to be sacrificed.

⁹⁰ The accumulation of many ribbons at the grave is also emphasized in a scene by the Bird Painter (Athens, NM 19338). In this instance a tree stands in for the grave and numerous ribbons have been tied to its branches. On either side a female mourner is shown, confirming the trees function as a grave marker. See Giudice 2015: 10-2.

stélai, perched on black blocks, standing before a large burial mound. The blocks and the monuments that rise from them are of differing heights and are capped by unique, vegetal akroteria. The woman approaches from the left, bearing gifts to add to the leftmost *stêlê*, which already dons no fewer than twelve ribbons of various colors, lengths and widths. The Vouni Painter has arranged them naturalistically so that they overlap each other and are fastened with different knots and bows, giving the impression that a cast of different mourners has dedicated them over time. From the opposite side, a youth approaches with a ribbon and a small object, no longer identifiable, to dedicate upon the *stêlê* to the right. This is one of only a small handful of cases where a male figure is shown presenting a *tainia*.⁹¹ Neither the woman nor the youth display any outward signs of grief; but they reveal their devotion to the dead through their offering. They will certainly soon add their own ribbons to the assortment of others but they do not hold the ribbons as if they are about to tie them; instead, they present them to the grave the way one might present a gift to a living companion. In a scene such as this, where the presentation of gifts is emphasized, it is fitting that the male visitor should also present a gift, although in general the intimate act of offering a ribbon is often associated with female mourners.

It is far more common to find only one or two ribbons depicted in white-ground scenes, but what these images lack in sheer numbers of gifts, they make up in the care and attention with which their characters make offerings. Even when women are not in the act of tying a ribbon to the grave they are most frequently shown carrying ribbons with both hands. This is significant because, whereas it is common for women to carry relatively light ribbons in two hands, they are

⁹¹ Other examples include two vases by the Sabouloff Painter (Athens, NM 2018 and Berlin, Antiken. F2448). See Chapter 2 for more on the types of activities that men regularly engage in at the grave. It is far less common for men to come with a gift in hand.

often shown balancing large and unwieldy *plêmochoai* or baskets overladen with gifts in only one hand.⁹² This frees up the second hand to carry more gifts or express grief through gestures traditional to Greek funerary imagery and serves the scene by allowing two means of lament to be expressed by a single mourner. Since a ribbon is rather light, there is no practical reason that women would have to carry them in two hands; so the way that they may be arranged over open palms or daintily held in pinched forefingers serves a different purpose than necessity alone. The simple explanation is that it takes two hands to fasten a ribbon to a grave marker and so women carry them thus in preparation of tying them. However, there are so few images of mourners in the immediate act of making bows that this cannot be the only explanation for the frequency of this arrangement.

It seems that this configuration was favored because it allowed artists to depict women in a way that highlighted their desire to care for and nourish the dead. Vases that depict a woman in the act of offering a single *tainia* have the effect of presenting a moment of great intimacy and devotion between bereaved and deceased. In order to dedicate a ribbon or fillet, a mourner must come into close contact with the *stêlê* and this provided an excuse to touch the grave. Whether a ribbon was merely draped over a tumulus or carefully arranged around the pillar of a *stêlê*, the process of offering it was akin to the act of dressing someone. Dressing is closely associated with women and their role as caretakers of infants, children and, ultimately, the deceased. One of the important duties of women in preparing the corpse for the *prothesis* was to bathe it and then

⁹² Examples of a woman holding *plêmochoê* in one hand include: Adolphseck 44, 45; Athens 19341; Boston 00.359; Munich 2279. Examples of a woman holding basket in one hand include: Goteborg, 72.58; Louvre CA537; Mainz 18.30; Munich 2279; St. Petersburg 2409; and Tübingen S275367. In a black-figure *lêkythos* (Athens 1636) a woman holds a ribbon in both hands while she also carries a *plêmochoê* in her right hand. In a vase by the Inscription Painter (Berlin V.I. 3245) a small girl balances a basket, which is nearly as broad as she is tall, on her head, freeing her hands to offer a vase and a ribbon(?) toward a deceased warrior on the opposite side of the grave.

dress it in funerary raiment, and they were able to continuously enact this important aspect of their ritual behavior by lovingly enwrapping monuments to the dead with ribbons and other decorations. When both hands are integral to the action of the scene, as when women are in the act of tying a bow, artists must forego showing mourners gesticulating their sadness in traditional ways. However, by focusing their full attention to the dedication that they make at a grave, a mourner is able to demonstrate their emotion through their care rather than effusive gestures and so the potency of the image and its expression of emotion is not lessened but simply refocused.

There are only a handful of images that show women in the immediate act of tying a ribbon around a grave and they each underscore how this act allowed mourners to engage with the grave rather closely.⁹³ In one example by the Inscription Painter [**Fig. 12**], a woman stands to the left of a stone marker facing it head-on. Across the *stêlê*, a young man, clad in helmet and armor and holding a shield and spear, stands looking through the monument toward the woman. The woman holds the two ends of a fillet in each of her hands, which she has wrapped around the *stêlê*, as she prepares to tie it into a bow. She holds the ribbon in her hands like a charioteer might hold the ends of his horses' reins, suggesting the control and purposefulness with which she is about to fasten it.⁹⁴ Although she is posed to tie the sash, her gaze suggests that she is distracted from the task at hand. Her eyes look toward the warrior, presumably a visage of the deceased figure, to whom she makes her dedication. The stone memorial has helped to conjure a memory of the deceased and as the woman gifts her ribbon she bears him in mind.

⁹³ Four that clearly show a woman tying a sash include Athens, NM 1942, 12793; and Louvre CA1846, MNC199. See [**Figs. 16, 12, 13**].

⁹⁴ The woman fastening a ribbon in a scene by the Painter of Munich 2335 (Athens, NM 12793) holds her ribbon in a nearly identical manner. I have not reproduced this vase because the quality is so poor, however it can be viewed on the Beazley database (Beazley Archive Number 215489, ARV² 1168.136).

Though the lines and proportions of the people and objects of the scene are somewhat distorted, the composition and small details in the way that each of the figures interacts with the marker make this a particularly poignant piece. While the military attire of the male visitor gives away his status as deceased, the painter has linked this visual manifestation of the dead with his stone *mnêma* through a couple of clever visual clues. In his left hand he grasps a spear that stands parallel with the right side of the *stêlê*, which his knuckles just barely graze. He is further connected with the *stêlê* via a row of small black dots that frame the capstone of the marker and echo identical lines of dots that frame the crest of his helmet and decorate his belt and shield straps. Thus, the two visitors are united in part through the medium of the *stêlê* and their simultaneous contact with it. Although the woman makes physical contact with the grave, since the deceased warrior is one and the same with the *stêlê*, by extension she makes contact with him. And, while the deceased warrior is visually present to us as the audience of the vase, we understand that he is physically absent and the dichotomy that this creates highlights the sorrow of the occasion by reminding the viewer of the ultimate separation between the two characters. In this case, since the woman does not wear her emotions on her face or in her gestures, it is not so much her grief that is emphasized but rather the lasting impact that this man's death has had upon her life.

In a second example (Louvre MNC199) [**Fig. 13**], two women stand on either side of a stepped *stêlê*. To the left, a woman in a *peplos* and *sakkos* and holding a basket that is spilling over with ribbons, vases and wreaths, stands to the front of the grave marker. She extends the basket toward the grave in her right hand and holds a white-ground *lékythos* in her left hand, extended out in the opposite direction. On the opposite side of the *stêlê*, a second woman, with cropped hair, is tying a ribbon toward the top of the marker, above two previously dedicated

ribbons. She leans in toward the *stêlê* to facilitate her chore and her gaze is directed toward her handiwork. She draws herself in nearer to the stone marker as she pulls the two ends of the ribbon taut. She clasps the *stêlê* in both hands and stares directly toward her task as though beholding the face of a companion. Her posture is rather similar to an image of a woman embracing a departing warrior in a red-figure *kylix* by the Brygos Painter (Tarquinia RC 6846) [Fig. 15].⁹⁵ In this case the woman reaches toward the warrior in a pose of supplication, with her arms reaching toward the face of the young man, and the women in graveside images are not in a gesture of supplication.

In an example by the Thanatos Painter (Athens, NM 1942) [Fig. 16] we find yet another female mourner in the midst of tying a ribbon midway around a broad *stêlê*. A female companion carrying a basket accompanies her. The second woman has her foot placed on the first step of the grave and she is leaning in toward the monument, allowing her to more easily offer something from her basket. Her gaze is fixed upon the shadowy female form seated just before her. The presence of this enigmatic woman, which, if authentic, is the only image of the deceased of its kind, has drawn much attention.⁹⁶ Yet, aside from the unique *eidôlon*, this scene is noteworthy for the manner in which it shows a woman engaged with the *stêlê*. Since none of the *tainia*, which she holds in her two open hands, remains, it is difficult to be certain whether she is merely holding the ribbon against the grave or if she is poised to complete a bow. Unlike the previous example, the woman is not holding the ribbon in tight fists, but draped over open palms that reach forth as if to cradle the *stêlê*. As she lightly caresses the stone and draws the ribbon around its midst, she looks not at her handiwork, nor the *eidôlon* as her companion does, but rather

⁹⁵ See below for further analysis of comparison between departure and graveside scenes.

⁹⁶ For more on the discussion of this particular vase and the authenticity of the figure see Oakley 2004: 165-6, especially 165n.34.

straight ahead, seemingly in contemplation of the memory of the deceased. Unlike instances where a mourner at the *prothesis* is able to steal final glances of the deceased before they are interred, there is no trace of the dead to gaze upon. Her aimless gaze suggests that she is not focused on any object in her line of sight but rather on the memory of the deceased, and also emphasizes the distance that is now between them.

While the mourner in this grave scene just barely makes contact with the *stêlê*, the desire and importance of making contact with the deceased is made clear by the open position of her hands. It is far more common for mourners at the grave to be depicted reaching toward the grave without making actual contact with it so this scene emphasizes the desire for physical contact. Touching the corpse was an integral aspect of preparing and tending to the dead at the *prothesis*, so it makes sense that a mourner might still desire to make physical contact with the deceased, notwithstanding the absence of their corporeal body. The inability to touch the dead after their interment could make the desire feel all the more great, and by making contact with the grave the living were able to act out their desire. Since the stone of the *stêlê* would be rough and cold, touching it would draw attention to the distance between the living world and the underworld. Thus, the idea of touching the grave was perhaps more comforting than actually touching the grave so an image in which a woman reaches but does not touch the grave is equally potent as an image. And, the distance between mourner and *stêlê* parallels the void between the living and the dead more generally. Ultimately the mourner cannot touch the dead so this image strikes a rather sad tone. The permanence of the departure of the dead is underscored. The great care with which certain mourners touch the *stêlê* serves to add to the solemn tone of the image because their tender care cannot be acknowledged or requited.

The pain of being unable to embrace the dearly departed is described in two particularly poignant moments in Homeric epic: once when Achilles is met by the ghost of Patroklos and futilely attempts to enclasp his dear friend as they mourn together (*Il.* 23. 100-2) and again when Odysseus is overwhelmed with the desire to hug his mother only to find out, as she explains, that death removes the substance that allows living men to embrace (*Od.* 11. 204-24).⁹⁷ In both literary and visual media the permanence of the separation of the dead from the living world is emphatically underscored and, thus, one cannot help but be saddened by the futility of the love and attention that is invested at the grave, which cannot be returned in kind. The great care with which certain mourners touch the stele serves to add to the solemn tone of the image because their tender care cannot be acknowledged or requited.

The position of the woman's open hands at the edge of the *stêlē* is reminiscent of the way that mourners touch the corpse in many *prothesis* scenes. Often the woman, or rarely man, situated at the head or shoulder of a bier holds their arms out forth, letting each fall to the sides of the corpse's head, while beholding and cradling the fragile body. A demonstrative version of this composition, which reveals the similarity of this gesture to the posture of visitors to the grave, can be seen in the body decoration of a famous funerary *loutrophoros* by the Painter of Bologna 228 (Athens 1170) [Fig. 9]. In this instance an elderly Thracian woman, identified as such by her facial tattoos, leans over the head of a corpse. Her arms fall gently with open palms upon a decorative pillow on either side of the decedent's head. She gazes down toward the body as she embraces her one last time. Nearly the same posture is struck by bier attendants in black- and red-figure as well as a few white-ground scenes. Since this posture is easily and

⁹⁷ The desire of Admetos to touch his wife when she has returned, especially in light of the fact that he refuses to touch her before he is certain of her identity, also emphasizes the desire to embrace the dead. That she is not merely a ghost but flesh and blood is made clear by the fact that Admetos is able to actually touch her (1130-5).

appropriately applied to graveside visits it comes to be a popular way of showing women approach the grave, with or without goods in hand. In a few images a woman is shown simply cupping a *stêlê* (Kerameikos 6357) or its steps (New Orleans, Private)⁹⁸ in her arms.⁹⁹ In each of these instances, the mourner is not shown with any gifts and her full attention is focused upon where her hands lie upon the grave. Despite the simplicity of each of these vases, the body language of the two women and their intent focus on the grave before them suggests a sense of desperation. They do not merely reach out to touch the deceased but they lean their entire bodies in toward the grave as though they have thrown themselves upon it.¹⁰⁰

It is far more common to find women posturing as if they are about to clasp the *stêlê* when they are in the process of offering a gift. A ribbon could easily be draped over open hands, allowing for artists to combine gift-giving and embracing gestures into a single action. A few notable examples include Athens 12793, 1941 [**Fig. 17**]; Athens, Kerameikos 1965; Braunschweig 258; Louvre CA72; Munich 7709 and Oslo 10152. The comparison between women extending gifts and touching a corpse is most obvious when a woman uses both hands for her task but, in both *prothesis* and grave scenes, a mourner may also use only a single hand to cradle the object of their lament. For example, in a vase by the Sabouroff Painter (St. Petersburg 2409) a woman braces a large basket on her head with her left hand and reaches to touch the *stêlê* with her right. Although a single hand raised or extended to the grave may often signify a

⁹⁸ Shapiro 1981: no. 42.

⁹⁹ Both numbers are associated with the same vase from the Kerameikos. I have not seen either vase in person and I am not entirely sure of the authenticity of either. Their postures are so peculiar that they seem somewhat dubious though there is no overt detail that would emphatically suggest that they have been modified.

¹⁰⁰ Example of women throwing themselves on the bodies of corpses include Briseis upon the body of Patroklos (*Il.* 19. 282-6) and Hekabe upon the body of Hektor (*Il.* 24.710-2). When Odysseus begins to weep at Dêmodikos' speech in book 8 of the *Odyssey* he is compared to a woman that falls upon a fallen husband and weeps (8. 523-30).

salutation or valediction, in this instance it seems more likely that the woman means to touch the grave since her arm is extended out just above waist level, not up in the air. Additionally, her hand overlaps with the *stêlê* in a manner that suggests there is contact between the two. Her posture finds a close parallel in a *prothesis* scene by the Group of Hige Lêkythoi (Berlin F2684) [Fig. 18], and it can be found sporadically throughout similar images. In this particular case, a woman standing at the shoulder of the bier extends both arms toward the face of a corpse while an elderly man, standing behind the head of the corpse, uses his right hand to gesture upward in an expression of despair and grief and his left to gently caress the cheek of the deceased. In each of these instances the artist has heightened the emotion of the scene by engaging each hand in a separate expression of lament.

The manner with which women cast out their arms toward the grave also finds parallels in images where an individual desires greatly to embrace or be held by another. These include departure scenes, where women may be shown reaching out to embrace a warrior;¹⁰¹ scenes of pursuit, e.g. satyrs chasing maenads or Menelaos pursuing Helen;¹⁰² and scenes where children express their desire to be picked up or held by an adult.¹⁰³ In all of these instances, the yearning of the individual is dramatized through the stretching of their arms and the distance between the two figures is emphasized by the fact that the desired embrace is not yet realized. While we might imagine that a young child reaching for their parent will ultimately (hopefully soon) be

¹⁰¹ For more on departure scenes see Matheson 2005: 31-3; Neumann 1965: 48-72 (gestures related to departure and supplication); and Shapiro 1990: esp. 118-20. Shapiro 1990 explains the debate regarding whether it is determinable when a scene shows a departure versus an arrival.

¹⁰² For more on scenes of pursuit in Greek vase painting see Stansbury-O'Donnell 2012.

¹⁰³ See Chapter 4 for more on the imagery of children in white-ground *lêkythoi*. For more on the depiction of children and their gestures see Beaumont 2003b; Bobou 2015 (Hellenistic period specifically); Grossman 2007; Lawton 2007 and Oakley 2009b, 2013.

embraced, in images of departing warriors and mourners reaching toward the tomb we know that this desire may not or cannot be realized, further underscoring the separation of the living from the dead and the sadness associated with this distance.

In a few vases the visual similarity between a woman presenting an offering to the *stêlê* and a woman reaching out to touch a departing warrior is particularly noteworthy. Two clear examples can be found in the National Museum of Athens; one by the Painter of Munich 2335 and a second by an artist near the Bird Painter (1941) [Fig. 17]. In each case, a female visitor holds her forearms straight out toward the *stêlê*. Though completely washed out now, a ribbon was originally draped over the hands of each mourner. In the case of vase 1941, the woman is standing particularly far from the *stêlê* because it has an exceptionally broad base and a large basket, with *tainiai* spilling over its sides, is set upon it.¹⁰⁴ While some women will step upon the *stêlê* so that they can more easily tie a bow, here the basket stands in the way and she is forced to stretch her arms to bring the gift nearer to the *stêlê*. In a scene from a white ground *lêkythos* by the Timokrates Painter (Ashmolean V267) [Fig. 19] one sees nearly the same gesture of outstretched arms being directed toward the face of a youth.¹⁰⁵ Since there is no grave marker in this scene it is often described as a “farewell” or “departure” scene but given the fact that the youth does not react to the woman’s arms, which nearly brush his face, it is likely that he represents a dead warrior. In this instance, the young man, whom the woman rushes to embrace, is visually separated from her by the barrier created by his upright spears. The dividing line of the spears is further emphasized by the presence of the Kalos name, TIMOKPATEΣ, running

¹⁰⁴ Most of the ribbons are no longer visible because the paint has worn away but the string-like terminations that characterize many of the *tainiai* are still visible, showing that there once were many more ribbons in this scene.

¹⁰⁵ Oakley 2004: 62, Fig. 34.

parallel to them along the lower part of their shafts. While her right hand and foot cross this visual boundary, her hand just barely misses touching the bottom of his chin.¹⁰⁶ Her desire to touch the man is emphasized by the forward motion indicated by her forward right foot and the upraised heel of her left foot. She looks straight toward the man's face and her arms betray her desire to embrace him but she is met with no reciprocity and we are left to believe that he is only a figment of her imagination and that she is unable to actually touch him.

In the following century, when monumental grave reliefs were popularly used in Athens, the desire of the living and dead to connect with each other is expressed through the *dexiosis*, or handshake. Although this becomes a very popular motif in late-Classical funerary imagery, it is almost non-existent in white-ground *lékythoi* and the desire to make contact borrows postures from *prothesis*, departure and pursuit scenes.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the need and desire to touch remains consistent throughout Athenian funerary imagery, it simply adjusts according to the context and setting popularly used during a given period.

Although it may be said that the manner in which women engage their hands is less frenzied and undoubtedly less violent, they continue to use their hands actively to emphasize their grief. Whereas widespread arms served to emphasize and exaggerate the gestures of mourning in earlier periods, now this gesture was directed at extending a gift to the deceased. Since gift giving was such an important part of mourning and the cult of the dead, images tend to exaggerate the act of offering and the types of gifts being given rather than the relative intensity

¹⁰⁶ Her gesture is reminiscent of supplication but given the funerary context and the man's military garb it is likely that she is reaching to embrace him and is not seeking supplication, per se, from him. See McNiven 1982 for more on the similarity between the gestures found in some "departure/arrival" scenes and those of supplication.

¹⁰⁷ For more on the imagery of Late-Classical grave relief (including images with the *dexiosis*) see Bergemann 1997; Clairmont 1983, 1993; Johansen 1951 and Sojc 2005. For more on the *dexiosis* see Davies 1985 and Pemberton 1989.

of a woman's grief. By extension, the care and attention that a woman pays to the dead suggests that she is impacted by the death and that in order to cope with the loss she focuses on providing for the dead in the best way that she knows how. Arms cast forth emphasize the motion of giving but they also suggest the desire of women to reach and touch the dead. Women's gestures are less theatrical but more focused.

Despite the more restrained behavior of mourners in this genre, there are remarkably few images of women who hide in their garments or veil their faces. This is noteworthy because veiling is often associated with female modesty and ritual behavior.¹⁰⁸ It is also evident from literary evidence that veiling was a viable option for concealing grief for both men and women.¹⁰⁹ Many of the textual references of veiling to conceal sadness are associated with male mourners but this may be in part because it is less typical for men to veil and thus this gesture underscores the gravity of the sadness, or shame, that they feel.¹¹⁰ That said there are some explicit mentions of women veiling themselves in sadness from epic and drama. Thus, when Thetis is fetched by Iris in Book 24 of the *Iliad* (83-96), she insists on wearing a black veil, explaining that she feels shame to be amongst the gods when she is so upset and cannot hide the distress that the inevitable death of her son is causing (90-1). When Helen departs to the Trojan battlements to see Menelaos and Paris fight in her honor (*Il.* 3.139-44) she is described as veiling

¹⁰⁸ For more on the association of the veil and modesty, and/or more specifically αἰδώς, see Cairns 1996: esp. 80-1, 2002: 73-6. For more on the visibility of women in Classical Athens see Blundell 1995: 135-8; Lewis 2002: 13-58. For more on veiling in the context of mystery cult see Cairns 2009: 53-5; Clinton 1992: 137-8, 2003: 50, 65-6; and Edmonds 2006.

¹⁰⁹ The role of the veil in the funerary context, and not just the wedding context, has received greater attention more recently. For a discussion of veiling in the context of grief (spontaneous and ritualized) see Cairns 2002: 75-7, 2009: passim; Lee 2015: 225-8; and Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 298f-307.

¹¹⁰ For more on the particularities of male veiling and covering during mourning see Chapter 2: 95-8.

her tears.¹¹¹ The chorus of Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* are wrapped in black *pharoi* (10-2) as they approach Agamemnon's tomb and Hekabe conceals herself in her garments in response to Polyxena's fate in Euripides' *Hecuba* (486-7) and likely in the opening scene of *Troades* as well (36-8).¹¹² While Polyxena veils at her own eminent death (Eur. *Hec.* 432-4), and not in mourning for another, she suggests that it is her sorrow, not ritual imperative, which compels her to do so. Although women seem to have been allowed to outwardly and openly express their sorrow at a funeral, they might choose to conceal their grief for shame or a sense of vulnerability or when they desired having a private moment of sorrow.

Both Hekabe (*Il.* 22.405-7) and Andromachê (*Il.* 22. 467-70) cast off their veils when they react to the news of Hektor's death. By removing this symbol of feminine modesty and composure, their histrionic behavior is emphasized further separated from the norm and underscores how extreme their behavior is and thus how affected by the death of Hektor they truly are: they are so beside themselves that they cannot even feign proper behavior. Elinor Wright has noted that initial reactions to death tend to be the most chaotic, loud and violent. Gradually through the process of mourning lament becomes more orderly and controlled.¹¹³

Amongst the various stipulations mandated by Athenian sumptuary laws regarding female mourning was a restriction on the type of clothes that women could wear in the context of the funeral, suggesting that dress was particularly important to the expression of grief. Veils and

¹¹¹ The color of Helen's veil here is explicitly white (ἀργεννός), which is not the typical color for funerary mourning. Since neither of the men are yet dead and since the source of her sadness is more complex than simply the possibly imminent death of one of her lovers, the white veil may be more appropriate for the immediate context. Cf. Cairns 2002: 72-3. For more on the color of veils see Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 298-307.

¹¹² Cf. Cairns 2009: 46.

¹¹³ Wright 1986: 22-37.

veiling are not mentioned explicitly, which implies that there was no immediate need for the state to mandate this particular feature of mourning dress. This may be in part because women likely veiled themselves as a matter of course in most instances that they appeared in public. The laws did stipulate that women dress in dark or black clothes and not be excessive in the amount of clothes that they wore, in which they enwrapped the corpse, or which they brought to the grave as a gift.¹¹⁴ If women did wear veils at all times when they were outside of the home as some have supposed,¹¹⁵ this is not reflected in vase painting on the whole. Thus, the mere fact that women are not frequently shown veiled in the funerary context need not imply that they did not regularly veil in this context. It may also suggest that there was no particular expectation that they should shield their visible expressions of grief. Since histrionic grief is associated with women, there is no *faux pas* in them expressing themselves outwardly.¹¹⁶

While men are more inclined to enclose their bodies and heads in their cloaks, women more frequently imply veiling by lifting a corner of their *himation*, as if about to obscure their face, or are shown with the back of their head covered by a *himation* or *pharos*.¹¹⁷ With the exception of one or two examples where women are obviously wiping away tears with *himatia*, women who veil while mourning at the grave do so in a manner that is indistinguishable from women in scenes of marriage, ritual or departure. In other words, there is no indication that they are displaying anything other than modesty. Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones has suggested, that the frequent absence of the veil in Greek iconography is a consequence of not knowing how to depict veiling

¹¹⁴ E.g. Plut. *Sol.* 21.5.

¹¹⁵ See Llewellyn-Jones 2003: esp. 1-22 for more on the evidence of veiling practice in ancient Greece.

¹¹⁶ Or so image and text would suggest that this is the case. Cf. Shapiro 1991.

¹¹⁷ For more on the types of veils used in ancient Greece and the ways in which they are depicted in art see Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 41-59, 85-98.

in a suitable manner.¹¹⁸ Thus, when a veil is shown, the act of veiling is particularly meaningful because it must be very carefully designed. Since a number of women, especially toward the end of the 5th century, reveal their sadness through a slight frown, it would be disadvantageous to obscure the face of a female mourner. In line with the more refrained expressions of grief during this period, the inclusion of subtly furrowed brows or downturned lips added a solemn tone without disfiguring characters or creating excessive drama in the scene (see below).

Some of the veiled women on white-ground *lêkythoi* are representations of the deceased and not mourners. Thus, in a scene by the Sabouroff Painter (Athens 1926) [Fig. 20] Hermes is shown leading a deceased woman by the hand to Charon, who awaits her arrival in his skiff. The woman has covered the back of her head with a *pharos* or her *himation* so that her entire face is visible. She holds the edge of her veil her right hand near her right shoulder and with her left hand she reaches toward Hermes, who gestures with an outstretched left hand for her to take his hand. Since her veiling is not visually linked to any sign of mourning, it is more probable that she is shown veiling as a sign of her modesty and as an indication of female virtue.¹¹⁹ If one is to accept the notion that deceased maidens were thought to be wed to Hades, one might suggest that this woman veils as an indication of her betrothal to the infernal god. However, aside from the veil there are no wedding symbols or iconography, making such an interpretation possible but not probable.

On a vase by the Triglyph Painter (Berlin F2681) [Fig. 21] two women are veiled, one is presumably the deceased and the other a mourner. The scene combines an image of Charon in his skiff with a graveside scene. To the far left Charon stands at the bow of his Stygian boat. He

¹¹⁸ Llwellyn-Jones 2003: 10-1, 85-6.

¹¹⁹ Penelope is described as veiling each time that she emerges from her home in the *Odyssey* (1.333-4, 16.415-6, 18.209-10 and 21.64-5) and as a representation of female virtue at its best.

leans on his staff and reaches his left hand over his bow toward a woman who stands immediately before a rectangular funerary *stêlê*. The bottom half of the woman as well as her left arm are too faded to determine precisely their arrangement. With her right hand she pulls the corner of a veil away from her right shoulder. She looks downward demurely and appears to have a slight frown upon her face as she prepares to embark upon Charon's boat. That she is the deceased and not a mourner is suggested by her proximity to Charon and position directly in front of the *stêlê* (see Chapter 6). Behind her a second woman stands holding a veil stretched out behind her back. With her right hand she lifts the corner of it to veil her face while she holds the opposite corner in her other hand, stretching it away from her left hip. The image is rather fragmentary but it appears that this woman veils herself in a sign of grief for the departure of the woman before her. Presumably she stands beside the grave and mourns. The conflated Charon scene serves to show the source of the mourning woman's pain and sorrow.

The function of veiling for mourning women differs slightly from its function for deceased women. It remains an indicator of modesty in either context but in the case of mourning women it may also suggest that they wish to conceal their emotion or conceal themselves from the sight of others. The latter impetus is associated more closely with male mourners in both the literary and visual traditions. There are remarkably few images in which mourning women veil themselves and in the overall corpus of Athenian funerary art, less than twenty female mourners are explicitly veiling themselves, suggesting that when this convention was used it was done to accentuate the depth of the sadness felt by a particular character.¹²⁰ In three examples a mourning woman bearing gifts for the *stêlê* is simply shown with the back of her head covered by a mantle

¹²⁰ These include Athens, NM 2011; Berlin, Antiken. F2681, 3170; Brussels A124, A1022; Dresden ZV1410; Geneva 12399.1926; Honolulu 3595; Lidings 94; Madrid 11192, 19498; Louvre CA1745; Sakai, Oka 17; Tübingen 5494; Salonica (Beazley no.22307); and two sold at market (Beazley Database nos. 217783, 9028524).

(Dresden ZV1410; Louvre CA1745; and Tübingen 5494). In these instances the woman is not actively veiling herself but the presence of the veil may help to mark her out as grieving. As Douglas Cairns has recently argued, the veil suggests the sensitivity of the person veiled because it implies that they are aware of the appearance of their expression of grief and may wish to hide it from public view, particularly when the figure is visibly weeping (see below).¹²¹ And though it may help the mourner to conceal themselves and their actions, the very act of veiling had the potential to visually mark and separate a mourner from those in society not mourning.¹²² Though, if women regularly veiled this might not be particularly obvious unless the color or type of veil varied depending on the context. Since we know that wearing dark clothing was particularly important for women during the mourning period, it is not unlikely that their veil would also be of a dark color.¹²³ The extremely sorrowful Thetis' veil is described as being the darkest possible color in *Iliad* 24 (93-4), perhaps suggesting that the darkness of one's veil is symbolically representative of the depth of their despair.¹²⁴

Other mourning women simply lift the corner of their *himation* from their shoulder, which implies veiling without obscuring the face. This particular gesture is exploited in the imagery of grave relief from the late Classical period and is performed by women who are typically thought

¹²¹ Cairns 2009: esp. 37-8.

¹²² For more on the use of dark or black garments during mourning in the ancient Greek context see Alexiou 2002: 16-7; Cairns 2009; Lee 2015: 227-8; and Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 298-307.

¹²³ Since the dark color of the veil of mourning women is occasionally indicated in text and given the dark color of many of the veils shown on white-ground *lékythoi* it is possible that women would mark themselves as mourning by the color of their veil much in the same way that women continue to mark themselves as mourning or widowed with black clothing in certain societies today. For more on the relevance of the black veil see Llewellyn-Jones 2003: esp. 298-307.

¹²⁴ Cairns 2009: 51-2, esp. 51n.25 shows that death is frequently described as a dark/black cloud or garment. The cloud of sorrow that envelops the grievous Achilles, as well as the ashes, which he uses to defile himself in an act of mourning, are described as black (*Il.* 18. 22, 25).

to be idealized representations of the deceased. By veiling they embody the concept of *sophrosyne* and have proper regard for expressing female *aidôs*. At the same time, their veil may visually harken to behavior and dress associated with funerary rites.¹²⁵ Many veiled women who are shown visiting a grave also carry a gift or basket of gifts in their free hand, indicating that they are mourners, and not visualizations of the deceased. Occasionally a woman raises her garment behind her ear, allowing her to veil herself but not hinder the task at hand, namely delivering gifts.¹²⁶ In these instances, the veil does not fall between the mourner and the grave but rather between the mourner and potential passersby. Thus, it may demonstrate a woman's sensitivity to possible onlookers. However, since there are also numerous examples of women holding grave offerings in a similar fashion, raised near their ear or behind their head, it is possible that this position is chosen not because women were actually wont to raise objects behind their head but to allow for both hands to be easily seen. In other words, this was a useful, more legible, way for painters to display the gestures and gifts that mourners held within their two-dimensional medium.

In most instances, the veiled mourner stands toward the grave and holds her *himation* between her face and the *stêlê*, suggesting that she may desire to hide the monument from view. In cases where a woman only pulls her veil up a few centimeters, just to the lower part of her chin, we are able to see where she directs her gaze while still appreciating that she is compelled

¹²⁵ See Clairmont 1993 for a catalog of the Classical grave *stêlai*. If one merely flips through the pages of Clairmont's catalog of images the ubiquity of the lifted veil is easily observable. For more a further discussion of the role of the veil in the imagery see also Sojc 2005.

¹²⁶ This is most notably the case on a vase sold at Christie's London (Beazley no. 9028524). There are a number of images in which a woman holds her arm in the same position but no material seems to be held in her hand. In some instances the painted garment may simply be worn away. However, the position of the arm when veiling behind the head is identical with that of women who hold rolled fillets behind their head. It is possible that this is the most convenient way of showing what the woman is holding while allowing her to focus her attention toward the grave.

to cover herself. However, in a couple of examples where the woman raises a veil to the level of her eyes or more, one gets the impression that the woman is hiding the sight of the grave. Thus, one female mourner in a scene by the Triglyph Painter (Millesgarden 94) [Fig. 22] is shown extending a *tainia* toward a grave with her right hand while she raises the edge of her *himation* in her left hand. She draws the garment straight up from her shoulder so that her hand is level with her eyes. She is looking toward the *stêlê* but it must not be visible to her given the location of her veil. Her face is stoic and emotionless and she stares toward a man seated on the *stêlê*. Since this man is presumably a representation of the deceased, and therefore not physically present, the veiling of the woman's eyes underlines the fact that he is not visible to the grave visitors. She can "see" him to the same degree whether she veils herself or not because he is merely a figment of her imagination, a projected memory of the man whose grave she now stands before. The same phenomenon may be happening on a vase by the Reed Painter, now in a private collection,¹²⁷ where a mourning woman is raising her veil to the height of her forehead. Her eyes are directed upon a woman seated upon the grave in front of her but, like the man in the previous example, this visage likely represents the deceased and is not visible to the characters in the narrative of the scene. When women hold their veils between their face and the grave, one gets the impression that the mere sight of the *stêlê* stirs up memories and feelings of sadness. In such images on white-ground *lêkythoi*, one gets the sense that veiling was sometimes an involuntary act meant to hide the source of sorrow from view as well as conceal any overt effusion of emotion.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Beazley Archive 217783. Sold in Paris.

¹²⁸ Most women who offer gifts face the *stêlê* so this fact is not unique to these images.

While the use of the veil might suggest that a figure wishes to obscure uncomely or private ebullitions of grief, there are, as has been frequently emphasized, very few images of overt or unrestrained expressions of sadness in 5th century Athenian funerary imagery. That being said, artists do utilize the face to reveal the emotion of characters in white-ground *lékythoi*. With few figures in each scene there is more focus on the individual features and actions of each mourner. No individual artist seems to have incorporated lowering glances in all their compositions, but frowns appear throughout the 5th century and there is experimentation with using both mouths and eyes to render particularly sad expressions.¹²⁹ Since the generic facial expression of Classical Athenian art was rather stoic, and often frown-adjacent, it is not always easy to determine whether a figure is frowning or simply “expressionless.” To clarify particular expressions or perhaps dramatize them, artists may also indicate a furrowed brow by either distorting the brow line or making the eyelids heavier with extra wrinkles lines, or by drawing the eyebrow so that it sweeps down toward the nose toward the front of the face [**Fig. 23**].¹³⁰ Many figures bow their heads slightly in a gesture of respect and solemnity, which helps to underscore the sentiment of their expressions even further.

Because white-ground *lékythoi* were intimately related to a funerary context and often included explicitly mournful scenes, we are conditioned to read frowns on the faces of characters when provided any opening to do so, i.e. when there is even the smallest indication of a downward arc at the corner of the mouth. That the white-ground artists were aware of the

¹²⁹ It should be noted that frowning figures appear prior to this period and I do not mean to suggest that they are somehow related to white-ground *lékythoi* in particular except to the extent that the style of vase painting was conducive to showing a more carefully articulated frown.

¹³⁰ These details are most easily seen in the work of Group R. I have included closeups of the three faces from a vase in Athens (NM 1816) [**Fig. 80**] to demonstrate the heavy brows and eyelids but this can be seen in various vases.

potential to express emotion in the mouth is in part demonstrated through the range of facial expressions that might be found within a single composition. Thus, the pronounced frown of one of two female mourners (right side) on a vase attributed to the Beldam Class [Fig. 24],¹³¹ shows the typical manner of depicting a frown in early white-ground painting. Despite the relatively mediocre quality of the hand, the corner of her mouth turns down so dramatically that it is hard to mistake her expression for anything other than sorrow. Some mourners' frowns are rendered so steep and exaggerated that they lack any naturalism, but may have the advantage of making clear that a sad expression was truly intended by the artist. An excellent example of this can be seen on a vase by the Triglyph Painter (Berlin F2682) [Fig. 25] where a female mourner is shown with lips that sweep downward so near the front of her face that, in isolation, her mouth looks as though it belongs to a fish rather than a human. Her downcast brows further emphasize her gloomy demeanor. There can be no doubt that this woman is sorrowful and when one views the scene as a whole, her slightly ridiculous frown does its job without distracting from the overall composition.

Perhaps the most obvious examples of emotional faces can be seen in the work of the later artists of the genre, namely the Reed and Triglyph Painters and those affiliated with Group R. One demonstrative vase attributed to Group R, now in Athens (1816) [Fig. 23], shows three frowning figures beside a grave. Although they are all clearly upset, each face is rendered uniquely, making the entire composition seem more individual. A female mourner standing to the right of the grave has lips that fall almost parallel to the slope of her chin. Her male counterpart also frowns but his lips turn only at the corner of his mouth, giving the impression of a slightly less affected mood. The figure seated upon the grave is shown in three-quarter view so

¹³¹ London, BM D65, second quarter of the 5th century.

his lips are rendered in an entirely different manner. His depressed mood is revealed through his pouty lower lip, typical of many Group R figures that face forward. The eyebrows of all three figures draw in toward the bridge of their respective noses, adding a sense of concern and gravity to their miens. Women with particularly sad facial expressions can be seen mourning on a number of other vases, including Cleveland 28.859 [Fig. 26]; London D71 [Fig. 27], D72; New York 07.286.45 [Fig. 28], 41.162.12; and Vienna 143 [Fig. 29].

While the face became more and more a vehicle for sad expression within the white-ground genre and Athenian art more generally, tearful scenes are nearly non-existent. That said, a standalone white-ground image of a woman wiping away a tear on a vase by the Inscription Painter (Athens 1958) [Fig. 30] shows that even the act of crying could be transformed into a delicately poignant image by the artists of the white-ground genre.¹³² In this particular scene, two women stand on either side of a large rectilinear *stêlê*, crowned with a pediment and acroteria decorated with acanthus. The upper one third of the *stêlê* is marked by five parallel rows of vertical dashes, representing a stylized inscription. The elaborate grave marker is wrapped in a single ribbon and the two women each carry gifts and adornments to nourish the dead and decorate the grave. To the right of the *stêlê* a woman with cropped, pageboy, hair approaches with a basket filled with pomegranates and ribbons, which fall neatly behind the basket displaying their decorative quality. The front edge of the basket is flush with the edge of the *stêlê* so as to not obstruct the monument while still indicating the relationship between the two. The woman looks forward and slightly downward, casting her glance across the basket of offerings towards the grave marker. The basket of gifts indicates that there will soon be activity here, when

¹³² Since the crying face had the potential to greatly distort the idealized face, it was generally avoided in Classical iconography. A later image of a female mourner from a fragment attributed to Group R (Gottingen K746) may also display a woman dabbing away a tear, see below.

the various pieces are dedicated and displayed, but the moment captured here is quiet and still. The woman is motionless and seems to contemplate the grave as she looks downward and stands statuesquely. Although she will soon dedicate gifts, she has taken a moment to stand in quiet contemplation.

On the left side of the *stêlē*, a second woman stands with her feet planted firmly just in front of the stone steps of the monument. The woman's hair is long, pulled back into a chignon and she is dressed in a simple *chiton* and *himation*. Her right arm bends at the elbow so that she may lift a decorative sash before the grave. Though her elbow bends at a 90° angle, her arm is relaxed and her wrist limp, suggesting that she is lifting the cloth to keep it from touching the ground but that she is not going to immediately tie it around the marker. A corner of her *himation* is wrapped about her left hand, which she has raised to her eyes so as to dab away tears. Though similar to the aforementioned instances of veiling, it is clear that the woman not only intends to obscure her face but to use the cloth because of the way that the garment is wrapped entirely around her hand. She touches her hand to her face so that the garment makes contact with much of the front of her face.¹³³ Since she does not fully cover her face in the way that some male mourners do, she seems less ashamed of her action but rather compelled by the need to stifle her emotions and clear her face from salty tears.

The woman is calm and her face rather emotionless, yet the simple act of wiping a tear is unmistakable and adds to the solemn tone of the scene. That she does not appear to weep audibly and that she attempts to remove the tear suggests that she wishes not to advertise her sadness but rather to stifle it. Like the mourners of the *Choephoroi*, she simultaneously enacts a funerary

¹³³ For more on the gesture of veiling and its manifestation in visual and literary sources see Cairns 1996: esp. 81, 2002, 2009; Lee 2015: 225-9; Llewellyn-Jones 2003: esp. 85-120; and Massey 2006: *passim*.

ritual (by dedicating a *tainia*) while succumbing to her own feelings of grief, which she attempts to hide below her mantle.

While the aforementioned vase is generally considered to be the only example of a crying mourner on white-ground *lêkythoi*, two additional scenes might need to be added to this list. On a small body fragment of a *lêkythos* now in Gottingen (K746) [Fig. 31] the faint lines of the profile of a female figure and the outline of a grave *stêlê* can just be made out. The outline of the image is now a washed-out ruddy color so the finer details are lacking. The woman's head leans forward slightly and she appears to look forward toward the *stêlê* before her. Her right hand, which holds the edge of a garment, is placed just before her face. Her index finger rests on the bridge of her nose and the upper portion of her ring and little fingers appear below, wrapped around the cloth. Though her hand is not entirely covered in the garment, like that of the woman in Athens 1958, she does pull the garment near to her face in precisely the same place. Aside from this woman and the Inscription Painter's crying woman, no other mourner holds her veil to her face and it seems that this gesture is specifically related to the wiping away of tears or to obscure any evidence of them.

A final image that possibly shows a crying figure has been attributed to the Sounion Group [Fig. 32] and is now located in Berlin (F2446).¹³⁴ The authenticity of the details on this vase are somewhat doubtful because it has suffered damage from the elements and its terracotta body is exposed in areas; although the black outline and red detail is still quite vibrant. Two figures approach a *stêlê* that is wrapped in a handful of ribbons and holds other small gifts. On the right a woman raises her left arm toward the grave as she gazes toward it. On the left side, a figure,

¹³⁴ The shoulder detail and the shape of the stele's pediment are so similar to the work of the Inscription Painter, who painted the tearful mourner mentioned above, that the two are likely associated with the same workshop.

presumably female, in a long red garment is stepping upon the second step at the base of the grave so that her face comes close to the left edge of the grave stone.¹³⁵ Although the outline and details of the face are all but gone, it is clear that the figure holds both hands to her forehead, completely obscuring her visage. It is unclear whether the face is covered simply as a result of the way that the figure rips at her hair or if she is purposefully covering her face with open hands. Either way, this scene is completely unique and seems to combine elements of ecstatic lament with a more modest gesture of covering one's face. Although the mourner is not simply blotting a tear, as in the previous examples, her hands do come into contact with her face, which otherwise only happens in instances where tears are implied. Even though it seems that tears were never a popular means of showing grief in visual form, these few examples demonstrate that a few artists at least experimented with the potential of doing so. Tears are frequently mentioned as accompanying mourning in both public and private in literary and dramatic texts so it would not seem entirely out of place to find them depicted in contemporary visual art. Since the general trend is to show mourners in control and relatively unscathed by their grief, it is presumable that showing tears posed a number of aesthetic or practical dilemmas and were thus avoided. Since a number of the images implied sorrow through other means, a viewer could easily imagine tears if it seemed to fit the overall tone and tenor of a scene, and thus there may have been no immediate need to include such a detail.

The mourning female was such an integral part of funerary imagery in ancient Athens that it is difficult to do justice to the vast array of ways that their expressions and body language capture the mood, emotion and tenor of grieving the dead by looking at only a small handful of examples. It is clear from a general overview of the corpus of white-ground *lékythoi* that women

¹³⁵ The gender of the figures is indeterminate but it is more typical for women to engage with the grave and step upon it to ease wrapping ribbons around it or dedicating other gifts around its base.

continued to have an invaluable role to play in the carrying out of funerary ritual and the commemoration of the dead, although the context and manner in which they appeared changed starkly in the early 5th century. The new set of activities that women engage in, as well as the differences in how they exhibit their sadness, is likely the result of a number of different stimuli that altered what artists were able to depict and what consumers desired to view. These stimuli likely triggered and then fostered the major changes in iconography that appear in Classical Athens and help to explain the significance and appeal of imagery such as that discussed above. As suggested in the introduction, one cannot dismiss the advantages that the style of white-ground vase painting offered in terms of depicting greater detail in the small lines and features of individual faces. This provided artists the possibility to exploit the face, rather than the body, for expressing sadness. At the same time, a number of the iconographic changes might better be explained by a brief look at which contemporary policies and perspectives could have affected burial practice and funerary ritual and by extension the types of images that illustrated them. It would be impossible to fully appreciate the changes in the iconography of female lament without at least briefly considering the impact that sumptuary law and the institution of public burial had upon their form.

It is reasonable to assume that if sumptuary laws were being enforced to help curb erratic or ostentatious behavior during funeral ceremonies that eventually the most histrionic images of mourning might have had less appeal as they became more obscure and less relatable. However, since it is clear from tragic drama that such behavior was still being enacted on the stage in the 5th century, even if the Athenian consumers of these vases did not partake in such behavior themselves, the occasional image of a dramatic mourner would still be comprehensible and hearken to traditional funerary practice. Instead of simply relying on the longstanding

conventions of showing respect for the dead through images of many women repetitively communicating personal and collective grief through traditional gestures, we find that painters from the 5th century opted to exploit scenes in which a few, usually female, figures thoughtfully nourished the deceased and their memory by making offerings at the grave. In this context hands are used to bring gifts and are thus not free to gesticulate grief in the most obvious ways but it is clear that painters were able to find creative ways to communicate the emotion of such scenes through the manner in which they conveyed gifts and dedicated them at or on the grave.¹³⁶

At the same time that sumptuary laws likely began to have a greater impact on the carrying out of personal burial rites, the institution of a public funeral and burial for those who died valiantly while defending Athens was beginning to take hold. Thus, all aspects of the funeral, from its funding to its preparation and finally its execution, were being controlled by the state and as a result, individual families were offered less opportunity to express their grief in their own way. Funerary ritual at the grave appears to have been less strictly regulated and so it makes sense that eventually in place of the *prothesis*, the grave came to be seen as the space within which an Athenian could most easily express a personal form of grief and provide personalized attention and memorial to their own dearly departed. The grave was within a public space but unlike a funeral it did not necessarily include a captive audience. Thus, it is a space where both public and personal displays of mourning, *per se*, might likely be expressed and viewed. The grave scene had the added bonus of being timeless because it was seen as the ultimate point of contact between the living and the dead. An image of caring for the grave and its inhabitant might be seen as a reminder of the continued attention that the living paid to the deceased.

¹³⁶ This concept was most recently argued by Wendy Closterman (2014: 162) who asserts that from all accounts, it is clear that “women not only displayed their care but also maintained communication with the dead family members through...gifts.”

Female lament continued to be an important aspect of honoring and caring for the dead but it took on a new form when it was expressed subsequent to the funeral, at the grave. Independent of why there was a full-fledged shift in funerary imagery, away from ecstatic groups of women to melancholic moments between one or two mourners, artists found new modes of expressing emotions related to bereavement. Images of theatrical grief did continue to appear in red-figure *loutrophoroi* contemporaneous with white-ground *lêkythoi* that also occasionally had ecstatic mourners (see Chapter 5), which suggests that this type of expression still held some appeal for an Athenian audience into the 5th century. But, the overwhelming popularity of scenes that on the surface simply show one or two mourners bringing gifts to the grave, suggests that there was a growing interest in the afterlife and its effect on the living and the dead. Funerary ritual and care for the dead allowed the living to demonstrate their virtues as devoted, empathetic Athenians while simultaneously highlighting and remembering the virtues of Athenians who had died. These images were both emotional and glorifying and shifted the focus from mourner to the one mourned for, suggesting that their purpose was to honor the dead, not simply advertise the feelings of the dedicators.

Chapter 2: Male Mourning¹³⁷

ἰώ,
στυγναὶ πρόσοδοι, στυγναὶ δ' ὄψεις
χήρων μελάθρων.
ἰώ μοί μοι. αἰαῖ <αἰαῖ>.
ποῖ βῶ; ποῖ στῶ; τί λέγω; τί δὲ μή;
πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμην;
ἦ βαρυδαίμονα μήτηρ μ' ἔτεκεν. 865
ζηλῶ φθιμένους, κείνων ἔραμαι,
κεῖν' ἐπιθυμῶ δώματα ναίειν.
οὔτε γὰρ ἀγὰς χαίρω προσορῶν
οὔτ' ἐπὶ γαίης πόδα πεζεύων:
τοῖον ὄμηρόν μ' ἀποσυλήσας 870
Ἄϊδη Θάνατος παρέδωκεν.

Oh,
how hateful the approach, how hateful
the sight of the bereaved house.
Ah, woe is me! Where shall I go, where stay?
What shall I say, what conceal?
I wish I could die!
It was to an ill fate that my mother bore me.
I envy the dead, I long for their state,
I yearn to dwell in those halls below
For I take no joy in looking on the light
or in walking about on earth.
Such is the hostage Death took
from me and handed over to Hades.¹³⁸

Eur. *Alc.* 861-71

In trading places with his wife, Admetos quickly realizes how much worse a fate it is to evade death only to endure living with the sorrow of a lost love. As the impact of this decision plays out over the course of the drama, he goes through many “stages” of grief. Although there are many strange and unconventional aspects of this story, there is no reason to suppose that the sorrow that is felt and expressed by Admetos and his children is contrived since Alcestis has acted honorably and has earned the respect and lament that is given to her. Since Admetos has swapped places with his wife, Euripides plays with the idea that he has also acquired some of his wife’s feminine traits. And while his mourning behavior may be quite exaggerated, Herakles comforts Admetos by telling him that tears are an appropriate response for a lost love (1081)¹³⁹

¹³⁷ This chapter has not been fully developed. I hope to bolster the beginning part and add more ancient and modern references. This is the last chapter that I worked on and I would like to demonstrate that images, like tragedy, seem to favor female lament but there is space for men to mourn as well.

¹³⁸ Translation by David Kovacs 1994.

¹³⁹ τὸ γὰρ φιλησαι τὸν θανόντ' ἄγει δάκρυ.

and we are compelled to believe that despite his flaws, the tears shed for Alcestis and the creation of her memory, through constant praise of her virtue and bravery and lament for her brave death, is ultimately a fitting tribute to her.¹⁴⁰

In this particular passage we find Admetos returning home after burying his wife. Thus, the death of his wife is still fairly fresh and he continues to groan and lament as was typical for the period close to the time of death (see Chapter 5). Upon his return home, Admetos is immediately struck by a pang of sadness as he realizes that his home will always be devoid of his loving wife. The fact that the visual reminders of the dead, such as the grave marker or in this case the Thessalian palace that Alcestis once lived in, are difficult to view and may even provoke tears perhaps explains the desire of some men to hide their bodies and their faces in clothing. Admetos' hesitation to tell Herakles that it was his wife that he had just buried hints to a sense of shame on behalf of Admetos, which may relate to the fact that he had cowardly switched places with his wife, and shows that mourning men were particularly vulnerable to scrutiny of their emotional behavior. As we shall see in the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi*, in the context of the grave men also occasionally reveal their susceptibility to emotions and that despite an outward appearance of composure they may be suffering deeply.

Male Mourning in Epic and Tragedy

While the story of Admetos and Alcestis may not typify 5th century mourning, or even tragic mourning for that matter, this is not the only occasion in which a man has a large part to play in mourning for the dead. In fact, male grief and lament figure prominently in epic and tragedy on the whole and the impression that one gets from these descriptions is that men could and did

¹⁴⁰ Segal 1992: esp. 152-3. For more on the blurring of gender roles and Admetos' characters see also Murnaghan 2000.

express themselves in many and variable ways. Although the heroes of epic witnessed death on the battlefield regularly, they were not immune to the impact that the death of a loved one would have upon them and their emotions. Thus, we find that upon encountering the corpse of Patroklos, Achilles pulls his hair and scratches his face (*Il.* 18.23-4) and Laertes acts similarly when he gets news of Odysseus' (feigned) death (*Od.* 24.316-7). When Priam learns of Hektor's death (*Il.* 24. 160-8), he immediately coats himself in dirt and excrement.¹⁴¹ As these examples suggest, the immediate response of men when they learn of a death is to express their sadness, anger and frustration through physical actions rather than vocalization. Although male mourning is most often characterized as orderly and controlled, especially compared to women, these examples suggest that men were as vulnerable to the shock of learning of death as women were. Since these episodes are independent of a ritual context they capture private moments in which men are not necessarily concerned with how they appear to others or whether they are acting appropriately, they simply react. This shows that a distinction between how one mourns within private and public venues is clearly distinguished and that even the most noble, restrained man was liable to be deeply affected by death.

Although the initial reaction of sorrow of many heroes is unrestrained, by the time of the *prothesis* and burial they usually appear much calmer and in control of their behavior and speech. Thus, by the time Priam has prepared Hektor's funeral, he is cleaned up and has switched his focus from wallowing in his own grief to preparing the proper burial for his loved one. While women do much of the crying and rituals associated with the funeral, the organization of the funeral in epic seems to have fallen primarily to the men.¹⁴² Since men were

¹⁴¹ See beginning of Chapter 3 for a more in depth description of this episode and the significance of Priam's behavior.

¹⁴² See Hame 1999 and esp. 2008 for more on the duty of burial rites.

generally seen to be able to handle and temper their emotions more effectively they were in a good position to take care of the practical matters of a funeral. However, one finds that although women were often felt to be more susceptible to their emotions and quicker to tears than their male counterparts, there are many instances where men also become overcome by their emotions.

Men also openly weep in epic and tragedy. Occasionally a man's giving in to tears leads to his being compared to women and thus the issue of the significance of male lament and whether it is essentially a feminine act or not has been a matter of long debate.¹⁴³ Since a link between crying and female behavior is often stated, we should assume that crying was more typically associated with women. However, a more nuanced reading of this comparison shows that while crying could reveal weakness, vulnerability or a loss of control of one's emotions, it was not necessarily seen in a bad light. Most recently, Ann Suter has argued that gendering tragic lament simplifies the issue too much and that if we relied only on tragedy¹⁴⁴ our sense of the gendered roles in Greek lament would be quite different. In turn, she argues that male lament is not always so simply described as a female act and that there are in fact a number of situations in which "prime-of-life Greek males" lament openly in tragedy without criticism.¹⁴⁵ Suter's study is useful in that it provides a comparison of which male characters lament in tragedy and how their grief manifests itself and is perceived or viewed by companions. The notion that men might engage in different types of lament and might be more or less susceptible to the spontaneous ebullitions of

¹⁴³ For discussion of the gendering of lament and tears in epic see Cairns 2009; Föllinger 2009; Foley 1993; Muich 2010; Segal 1992; Suter 2008, 2009 and van Wees 1998.

¹⁴⁴ She does not suggest that this is what we should do, merely that if we consider it as a useful source amongst others that there is a lot of male influence.

¹⁴⁵ She cites, for example, Teucer in the *Ajax* (992-1039), Creon in *Antigone* (1261-1346) and Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex* (1307-66).

emotion is something that does not necessarily come across in earlier Greek funerary art but this becomes important in the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi*.

Male Mourning in Pre-Classical Attic Imagery

In the 8th-6th centuries men are included in mourning imagery though they make up a much smaller percentage than their female counterparts. They are typically segregated to the margins of *prothesis* scenes, usually being shown in a valediction¹⁴⁶ pose or raising one hand to their head¹⁴⁷ and presumably addressing the funeral attendants and corpse. It is somewhat difficult to distinguish some mourners in mid- to late 8th century vases because gender was not always explicitly indicated and arm position rather than physical attributes are often used to determine gender.¹⁴⁸ According to the few *ekphora* scenes and anecdotal evidence,¹⁴⁹ it seems that they played a much more active role in the actual transport and cremation and/or inhumation of the corpse. Since the latter two events are much less often described in text and illustrated in art by default men seem to have been represented less frequently. This being the case, while the image of the female mourner continued to expand and diversify, the image of the male mourner

¹⁴⁶ Here “valediction” is used as general as possible and I do not mean to imply that they are sending someone off as opposed to greeting or addressing anyone. Cf. Huber 2001: 255 and van Wees 1998: 15, Figs. d, e.

¹⁴⁷ Neumann 1961: 145-50 associates the gesture of one hand to the forehead with feelings of depression (*Versunkenheit*), sorrow or grief (*Gram* and *Trauer*) and resentment (*Groll*). McNiven 1992: 92-3 demonstrates that in black- and red-figure this is most often related to grief.

¹⁴⁸ For instance, it was conventional to show women wearing long dresses, which covered their legs to their ankles, and for men to be shown with each leg being depicted separately. However, there are many figures shown with both legs depicted, giving the sense of nudity, who also have breasts drawn as two small brushstrokes extending from their upper torsos. When a penis is not indicated by a single brushstroke from the groin, a male figure is often shown with at least a sword, if not a shield, suspended from their waist. Descriptions and images of male mourners from Geometric vases can be found in Ahlberg 1971; Huber 2001: 61-81, 250 and Zschietzschmann 1928: 17-20. 53: 17-47.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Blok ; Garland 2001; Stears 2008: 144-6; Shapiro 1991; Vlachou 2012 and van Wees 1998.

changed very little at least until the 5th century.¹⁵⁰ Given the limited range of expression amongst male mourners in Geometric through early Classical Attic art, they have understandably taken a backseat to women in the literature of mourning in Greek art.¹⁵¹

In Mycenaean mourning men are very rare but by the Geometric period they began to appear with a bit more frequency in images of the *prothesis* and *ekphora*.¹⁵² In general, female lamenters raise both hands to their head unless one of their hands is occupied with another object, e.g. waving a branch near the corpse or holding the hand of a child. Alternatively, most men hold only a single hand to their head and either raise their second in a gesture of valediction or simply hold it to their side.¹⁵³ In this period men are more likely to be shown in funerary scenes in friezes of chariots, perhaps alluding to funerary games associated with extravagant burials of legendary or earlier historical times, or near the horse and cart associated with the *ekphora*. Thus, from Geometric imagery alone, there is very little male presence in the depictions of the Greek funeral.

By the Archaic period, men often appear in small groups in *prothesis* scenes or in association with these scenes. They are typically grouped together behind the foot of the bier but at some

¹⁵⁰ van Wees 1998: 21.

¹⁵¹ This is not to suggest that men have been ignored in scholarship. Oakley 2004, Shapiro 1991 and Giudice 2015 all address the particular roles of men in ritual lament.

¹⁵² For more on Mycenaean mourning imagery and its relation to Greek funerary imagery see Finkenstaedt 1973; Iakovidis 1966; Kramer-Hajos 2015 and Vermeule 1965. Kramer-Hajos 2015: Table 1, nos. 7, 8, 9, 24, 25 notes five instances (nos. 7, 8, 9, 24, 25) in which men appear in the figural decoration of Bronze Age larnakes from Tanagra. In a few cases the gender is indeterminate so it is possible that men are included in a few more examples (e.g. nos. 13, 16, 38).

¹⁵³ To see the general schematic for the majority of female and male mourners from this period see Ahlberg 1971; Huber 2001: 247-52. and van Wees 1998: Figs. 1.1-8.

distance from the corpse, with or without a female mourner separating the two.¹⁵⁴ Whether it is simply because women were seen as more fit to tend to the corpse or more wont to be near the body or deal with the potential pollution of the deceased, it is clear that there was less physical contact between male mourners and the corpse at the *prothesis*.¹⁵⁵ Men would eventually come in contact with the corpse because they took a more active role in the *ekphora* and were responsible for transporting it to and placing it into the grave.¹⁵⁶ Men only occasionally appear at or near the head of the bier prior to the 5th century and it is usually assumed that the single male figure that occasionally stands in this important position is the father of the deceased and thus placed in this position to indicate their close relationship.¹⁵⁷

On a mid-6th century *pinax* by the Burgon Group (Louvre CA255) [Fig. 35] one finds a typical *prothesis* scene with four women tending the corpse on a bier. To the left of the central scene a group of five men (of different ages judging by their beards) stands with their arms outstretched toward the bier. A woman stands directly at the head of the bier with her hands to either side of the corpse. Just behind her stands a man with white hair and beard who raises his right hand in despair and just behind him stands a second woman with both of her hands lifted toward the body. Further to the right of the scene is a tree with ribbons (?) suspended from its

¹⁵⁴ The body is almost always shown with the feet facing the left side of the vase. The only exception to this rule in white-ground *lékythoi* is from a vase now in Stockholm. Cf. Burns 1994.

¹⁵⁵ This differs from the way that men interact with corpses in Homer. Since the *prothesis* was a formal event, it is presumable that men and women kept to their individual tasks and such division in the imagery serves to emphasize the formal capacities that men and women filled in his context.

¹⁵⁶ At this point the body should have been ritually purified by the bathing and rites performed by female mourners at the *prothesis*. For more on ritual purification of the corpse see Stears 2008: 143-6. The only extant image showing a body being placed in the grave is on a black-figure *loutrophoros* attributed to the Sappho Painter (Athens NM 450).

¹⁵⁷ Stears 2008: 142-3. Examples of men appearing at the head of the bier in black-figure scenes include Athens, Cycladic 6 and Louvre CA225. Those in red-figure scenes include Copenhagen 9195 and Munich, Antiken. 2369.

branches and a twelfth mourning figure who is wrapped up in her(?) cloak and not at all engaged in the activity. In the 5th century in both red-figure and white-ground images of the *prothesis* it is far more common to find men in this position and it suggests that artists were no longer only concerned with the ritual activity that took place in this venue but also how individuals might react to seeing the corpse upon the bier as they pay their final respect.

During the Archaic Period one also finds that groups of mourning men could be shown in their own panels or registers, i.e. not directly connected to a central *prothesis* scene but in a reverse body scene or above or below the main scene on the neck or lower body of the vase [cf. **Figs. 6, 7, 33**].¹⁵⁸ The image of a group of men in this repeated pose seems to have been so easily associated with the funerary context that in at least one instance they appear on a plate (Athens, Kerameikos 1687) [**Fig. 34**] with no explicit tie in to a *prothesis*.¹⁵⁹ Like women in ecstatic mourning poses the group of men in valediction pose came to represent grief associated with the funeral generally. The composition and gestures shown for male mourners is relatively consistent between black- and red-figure renditions of the *prothesis* and will be discussed further in the context of the innovations found in white-ground scenes.

Male Mourning on White-Ground Imagery

Although male mourners had traditionally only expressed their grief through a single hand held to the forehead or in a valedictory pose, they are shown in new ways in 5th century

¹⁵⁸ As is the case on many *loutrophoroi* including two in New York (MMA 27.228, 25.70.1) [**Figs. 6, 7**]. In both of these cases a group of mourning men fills that verso body scene and on one of them (25.70.1) mourning men fill both sides of the neck decoration. See also a bowl by the Lydos Painter (Athens, Kerameikos 1909) [**Fig. 33**].

¹⁵⁹ Granted, this plate is broken at the bottom. It does not seem as if there is enough room in the broken part to have depicted a bier or additional female figures.

mourning imagery. In white-ground *lêkythoi*, young men appear at the grave as both mourners and the deceased. When they appear as mourners they most frequently appear along with a female mourner or in the presence of a deceased youth, although they occasionally mourn for a woman.¹⁶⁰ Women make up a larger percentage of the mourners that appear beside the grave but there are enough examples of male visitors that display their grief and partake in funerary ritual beside the grave to suggest that they were also often participants in graveside lament.

While the most common means for male mourners to express their grief remained raising a single hand to the forehead, they also engaged in gift giving and quiet contemplation in the presence of the grave *stêlê* much like their female counterparts. Additionally, the valediction pose is almost entirely absent in white-ground imagery, not only in the newly adopted graveside scenes but also in the context of the *prothesis* where men are more likely to be shown grieving near the corpse than greeting attendants at the funeral. While there is evidence that visitors to the grave might want to greet and address the deceased, from the visual imagery it seems that it was not common or proper to address the deceased using this gesture. This was perhaps limited to the rituals associated with the *kêdeia*.¹⁶¹

While women continued to make up the greatest number of mourners present at the *prothesis*, men now frequently given a more prominent position at the head of the bier and their attention is focused on the corpse. Of the 34 published white-ground *prothesis* scenes,¹⁶² eleven

¹⁶⁰ This is the likely scenario on a vase by the Achilles Painter now in Vienna, Kunst. 3736.

¹⁶¹ For more on the role of vocal mourning of the dead at the grave see Chapter 5.

¹⁶² I did not include the 3 vases attributed to the Tymbos Painter/ATL Class (London BM D35, Munich 7683 and Tübingen E63), which show a corpse laid out on a bier in the context of a tumulus. While these likely represent a conflation of *prothesis* and graveside scenes they include no mourners and, thus, do not represent the ritual of this stage of the funeral. For the number of *prothesis* scenes found on white-ground *lêkythoi* I have been able to find information for 34 examples, Burns 1994: 40-1 has identified 31; Giudice 2016: 271-4 has identified 46 (including 5 related to biers shown in the context of the tomb); and Oakley 2004: 78-9 has identified 34.

of them show a male mourner at the head of the bed,¹⁶³ nine have women there, and the rest have no figure in that position or the preservation is too poor to determine the gender.¹⁶⁴ This is remarkable given the fact that men infrequently appear next to the bier in pre-Classical Athenian renditions of this scene and when they do appear in close proximity they are more frequently found at the foot of the bed or behind at least one female mourner.¹⁶⁵ The Sabouroff Painter seems to have been particularly fond of showing a male figure at the head of the bed and all five of the examples comfortably assigned to him have this feature.¹⁶⁶ In the works they are alternatively shown with a hand to their head in a sign of despair or wrapped up in their *himatia* so that only their face is exposed [Figs. 36, 37].

While it remains true that women likely continued to play a larger role in the preparation of the corpse and were responsible for the majority of lamenting and mournful gesticulating, these images suggest that men had a vital role to play in the conducting of the *prothesis* as well. It also suggests that in addition to the role they played in addressing attendants of the funeral, they desired to be near the corpse and to participate in the final moments before interment. We find

¹⁶³ I have identified 10 of these myself and there is an additional vase, which Burns 1994: 40n.8 cites. I include the vases Amsterdam, APM 567, New York MMA 07.286.40, 23.160.37; London BM D62; Mannheim 195; Berlin F2684; Houston MFA 37.8; Piraeus 6560; Louvre MNB 1147; Harvard 1925.75.

¹⁶⁴ See list compiled by Burns 1994: 40-1.

¹⁶⁵ There are of course exceptions to this rule. While gender determination is not always obvious in Geometric vases, men are less frequently shown in *prothesis* scenes than women and than they are found in *ekphora* scenes from the same period. In the following periods, men often stand toward the foot of the bed and if there is more than one in a scene they tend to be placed in a group. For example Munich SS60 (Red-figure *loutrophoros*) For more on the placement of men vis-à-vis the bier and mourning women see Alexiou 2002: 6; Boardman 1955: esp. 56-7; Garland 2001: 27-30; Oakley 2004: 76-7; Shapiro 1991: 635-7 and van Wees 1998: 34-6.

¹⁶⁶ There are two additional vases that Oakley 2004: 78 (List 7.6-7) claims are “probably by the Sabouroff Painter,” which Burns 1994: 40-1 attributes to the Sabouroff Painter. One of these (Boston MFA 95.46) has a female at the head of the bier and the second (once Broomhall, Elgin, cf. Jenkins 1989: 57:63(i)) is without any figure at the head.

confirmation of the notion that men, like women, desired to embrace and be near the deceased during the funeral in the opening scene of Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* (8-9) when Orestes proclaims how upset he is to not have been present at his father's funeral. He claims that he wishes he could have mourned beside Agamemnon and helped in laying him to rest.¹⁶⁷ He specifically uses the word *ekphora* so it is possible that he envisioned taking part in this stage of the funeral more than the *prothesis*. However, he explicitly mentions his hands and a desire to touch his father one last time before he was buried under the ground.

Orestes and his father had not seen or embraced each other in many years and the sight of Agamemnon's tumulus seems to have made Orestes' desire to touch his father all the more acute. As many of the images discussed in the previous chapter demonstrate, this notion, that the grave compels mourners to yearn for physical contact with the dead, is suggested in scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi* that show mourners with their arms cast forth toward the *stêlē* or touching the stone marker [e.g. **Figs. 13, 14, 16, 17**]. While Orestes will never touch or speak to Agamemnon again, he has invoked Hermes as *psychopomp* so we may suppose that his message will reach the late king and comfort him. We are reminded in this passage and a few lines later when Elektra arrives and contemplates her address to her father (84-105), that the dead were thought to be able to perceive what happened in the vicinity of their grave.¹⁶⁸

If communication with the dead was possible at the grave as the previous passage and other literary and visual evidence seems to suggest, one might expect to find mourners in a pose of address or valediction in the presence of the grave. However, this is very rarely the case.¹⁶⁹ There

¹⁶⁷ οὐ γὰρ παρὼν ὄμωξα σόν, πάτερ, μόρον / οὐδ' ἐξέτεινα χεῖρ' ἐπ' ἐκφορᾷ νεκροῦ.

¹⁶⁸ See Johnston 1999a: 39-46, 2014.

¹⁶⁹ For more on vocal communication and commemoration at the grave see Chapter 6. See also Wright 1986: 55n16.

are, however, a few vases that show male mourners with one or both arms outstretched toward the grave in a manner that suggests they are gesturing towards the *stêlê* and not necessarily trying to touch it. On one vase by the Tymbos Painter (Athens, Cycladic 6) [Fig. 38] a young man is shown standing in front of a grave marked by a low mound and simple *stêlê*. He stands upright, facing the grave but with a slight bend in his back so that he leans toward the grave. His upper body is bare and his garments are wrapped around his waist and left arm. He looks toward the grave with an expressionless countenance and reaches both arms toward it. His right arm is extended fully from his shoulder so that it is perpendicular to his body. The back of his right hand faces the viewer as his palm opens toward the monument. His left arm is also extended though it appears below his right arm, as it holds up his clothing. On a second vase by the Tymbos Painter (Private Collection)¹⁷⁰ [Fig. 39] a youth is shown similarly but he gestures with only a single arm that is raised above a 45° angle. The *stêlê* is just out of his reach and he could either be greeting it or reaching out to touch it. His mouth is not open as is often the case in black-figure valediction scenes and perhaps this gesture is being repurposed within this new context. This identical gesture is enacted by the young male mourner at the head of the bier in a *prothesis* scene by the Quadrate Painter (Louvre MNB1147) [Fig.40] and in this setting it recalls the men in valediction poses from earlier periods.

Aspects of the gestures of the two aforementioned youths are akin to those found in valediction poses but neither their arms nor their heads are lifted as high as we would normally expect if we compare them to earlier images. These do not necessarily seem to be prerequisites for a gesture of address if we are to interpret a scene on a slightly later vase by the Inscription Painter (Athens 1790) [Fig. 41] as showing a young man saluting the grave. In this particular

¹⁷⁰ Sold in Basel, May 1971, Lot 41, No. 54.

vase both a woman and man are shown visiting a grave. From the left a woman arrives carrying a basket with various gifts. On the right side a youth stands firmly with both of his feet planted and facing the *stêlê*. He wears his garment over his left shoulder and his right arm is extended straight out from his shoulder toward the grave. His fingers stop just before the far edge of the stone marker and his palm faces down to the ground. He looks straight forward across his arm in the direction of the grave and the woman beyond it. Since he seems to be extending his arm forward with no indication that he wants to touch the *stêlê* it is probable that he is merely greeting or gesturing toward the monument and its occupant.

A similar gesture is sometimes extended toward another mourner or the corpse on a bier, suggesting that it is the visual equivalent of “behold!” In other words, signaling one’s acknowledgment and attention toward another figure or object. In Archaic and Classical vase painting, *prothesis* scenes were most often populated with a majority of female lamenters.¹⁷¹ In a funerary context this seems to be a way of overtly indicating for whom honor and lament are being extended. In a vase by the Sabouroff Painter (Munich SS76) [Fig. 42] we find a male mourner extending his arm and open palm toward a fellow mourner, who has dropped to her knees to mourn on the opposite side of the ribbon bedecked *stêlê*. Her right arm extends upward and her left reaches toward the grave and nearly meets the man’s outstretched left hand. Her head is bowed slightly and her facial expression is neutral. Since their hands meet near the middle point of the stone marker, they draw our eyes directly to the grave.

There are many examples of male visitors to the grave reaching out to touch the *stêlê* so it is possible that these images are showing that men too wish to reach out and touch the deceased or

¹⁷¹ The women at the middle or foot of the bier in white-ground *prothesis* scenes often take this pose. Cf. London, BM D62 [Fig. 36]; Louvre MNB1147 [Fig. 40]; New York, MMA 07.286.40 [Fig. 37]; Piraeus OM40 and Vienna 1969, 3748.

their *sêma*. In the first of the Tymbos Painter's vases mentioned above [Fig. 38], since the man's arms and hands are open toward the *stêlê*, it is possible to read his gesture as expressing a desire to reach out to "embrace" the grave.¹⁷² As stated above, during this period men began to appear closer to the corpse in *prothesis* scenes and their desire to interact more closely with the dead is emphasized more than in the past.¹⁷³ It seems to have become of greater interest, or perhaps just more acceptable, to show men interacting more closely with the dead.

In a unique composition by the Painter of Athens 1826 (Athens, NM 13701) [Fig. 43] we find the only example of a youth cradling a *stêlê* in his open palms. Here a youth (identifiable by his shorter stature and lack of beard) and an adult man (bearded) stand on either side of a rectangular gravestone that is wrapped in a number of red ribbons. On the right the adult man stands still with his feet planted but right leg relaxed slightly. He holds a staff in his right hand and his left is hidden within his cloak. He bows his head so that his gaze is directed down toward the hands of the youth placed on the stone in front of him. His facial expression is neutral and it is difficult to tell whether he is representative of the living or the dead. Across from him the youth bows his head to look at the stone slab that he holds between his two hands, which are extended much as the figures at the head of a bier cradle the head of a corpse. He has pulled himself near to the grave to embrace the grave and look closely upon it. He seems unaware of the man standing across from him and we may perhaps imagine that he is picturing the deceased as he draws himself close to the human-sized *sêma*. If the man to the right of the grave is the deceased, this must be what the youth imagines in this moment of remembrance and reverie.

¹⁷² Similar to how women are shown doing this as well. See Chapter 1: 59-63.

¹⁷³ Cf. the old man leaning over the head of a corpse in the Group of Huge Lekythoi's *prothesis* image [Fig. 18].

In the previous example it seems that the mourner arrived at the grave simply to be near the dead and take pause to contemplate their memory. Although there are examples where men are showing bringing gifts to the grave (see below) they are most commonly shown simply standing beside the grave, wrapped up in a cloak and looking toward it.¹⁷⁴ The most common way that mourning men are depicted is standing still and solemn in front of the grave. This happens to be the way that the deceased, when depicted, are shown so there is some difficulty in determining the actual status of some male figures. It is possible that this ambiguity is meant to draw a parallel between the experience of separation felt by the living and felt to be experienced by the dead (see chapter 5).

On a well-preserved vase by the Sabouroff Painter (SS77) [Fig. 44], we find a fairly typical example of a cloaked youth standing beside the grave. To the right of the grave a woman holds a bright red *tainia* in each of her hands that she lifts up and away from her body, perhaps to display her gifts. She looks up and across the *stêlé* to the youth. Their gazes meet but their body language does not suggest that they are interacting with one another. The youth is entirely covered in a bright red cloak. The paint is well preserved so one can see how completely covered the body is. The youth's feet peek out from the bottom and his hands, which are also wrapped in the garment, extend out from his body slightly, presumably because he is holding a stick below. His head is entirely exposed and he looks toward the grave and the woman beyond it. Since the youth shows no impulse to interact with the grave or to dedicate a gift the way that the woman does, it is possible that he is an image of the deceased. However, male mourners are also known to appear in the same way. Thus, in a *prothesis* scene by the Sabouroff Painter now in New York

¹⁷⁴ In most cases, unlike a typical *himation* this cloak is worn over both shoulders and pulled up near the neck. It is large enough to cover the entire body, just leaving the feet from below the ankles and the head. Most men cover their hands and even hold their walking sticks below the cloak.

(07.286.40) [Fig. 37] a man standing at the head of the bier is entirely wrapped in his *himation* so that only his feet, the top of one hand, and his face appear. In this case he has also pulled the cloth up to cover the back of his head. Although this is often how women are shown veiling, the presence of his walking stick reveals that this is definitely a male figure. Two other mourners in this scene are female and appear much less covered.¹⁷⁵ While the women rip their hair and touch the corpse, the man stands completely still, his chin resting on his hand that is pulled up to keep his *himation* in place. He looks forward and has a slight frown.

By covering their bodies tightly in their large cloaks, these figures imply that they cannot or wish not to interact with the grave. In the case of *eidôla* that appear like this, their separation from the world of the living is underscored. In the case of living mourners, by covering the body fully we are drawn to the head and face of the figure. If they are frowning (above [Fig. 37]) this is a way to draw attention to their face. More generally, by covering their bodies, young men draw attention away from their own virtue and strength so that the focus of honor and admiration can be directed toward the deceased. In graveside images, while funerary rituals are enacted by the living, the focal point is the dead, not the lamenters, as had largely been the case previously. Since they are not outwardly reacting to the *stêlê* we are focused on what they might be thinking about. Simply put, this guise emphasizes how affected by death these figures are. Unlike women, they are more restrained when they grieve and they tend to pull in rather than express their feelings outward.

Covering the body suggests a sense of vulnerability or self-consciousness. This recalls Odysseus' spontaneous desire to cover himself when he began to visibly weep during Demodokos' recitation at the court of the Phaiakians (*Od.* 8.83-9, 521-31). This is a natural

¹⁷⁵ See Chapter 1 (especially pages 64-77) for more on veiling in the context of the funeral.

reaction when one wishes not to reveal a possible weakness or want to keep their private emotions private. They can hide from the sad image before them but also hide from public scrutiny. The most dramatic instance of this behavior can be seen in a vase by the Achilles Painter now at Cambridge University (Fitzwilliam GR36.1937) [Fig. 45]. In this instance the youth has pulled his himation up so far that only the tops of his eyes are seen barely peeking over his hem. This gesture is more often adopted by elderly men but here it suggests a strong desire to hide one's emotions.¹⁷⁶ And, as we shall see in the following chapter, it may also be a tactic used by artists when it seems impossible to capture the true depth of sadness and despair in a mere image.

Gift-Giving

As the previous chapter suggested, gift-giving at the grave was an important aspect of the upkeep of the funerary cult of the dead. Evidence from white-ground imagery and tragedy suggests that it was primarily the duty of women to provide for the deceased at periodic points after interment.¹⁷⁷ Only women are shown preparing baskets of gifts for the grave but there are examples of men bringing gifts to dedicate at and decorate *stélai* [Fig. 46].¹⁷⁸ In tragedy as well we find that women have the prominent role in terms of providing gifts and nourishment for the dead at the grave; and perhaps the only explicit exception to this is when Orestes dedicates a lock

¹⁷⁶ The significance of covering in a cloak is discussed in the following chapter.

¹⁷⁷ See especially Closterman 2014; Hame 1999; Sourvinou-Inwood 1994 and Stears 2008. Giudice 2016: 83-125 provides an overview of the rituals performed by men at the grave.

¹⁷⁸ For more on the role of women as gift-givers in the funerary context see Closterman 2014.

of his hair to his father's grave (Aesch. *Lib.* 6-7).¹⁷⁹ On white-ground *lêkythoi*, there are a few images of men bringing *tainiai* or vases to the grave, so even if it was not a common tradition for men to provide gifts, it was certainly not unheard of. In a few of these examples the man holding a gift is nude, which suggests that he is deceased and thus meant to show that he as the dedicatee has accepted the gift (see Chapter 6: 196-201).

Perhaps the best-preserved example of a man holding a *tainia* at the grave is on an unattributed vase now at the Louvre (CA1640) [Fig. 46]. In a typical scene with a *stêlê* placed between two mourners, we find a man and woman offering gifts.¹⁸⁰ From the left a woman approaches with a basket containing *lêkythoi*, wreaths and *tainiai*. She braces the basket in both hands and looks intently toward the grave and the *tainia* that her male companion is holding near the base of the high-stepped *stêlê*. The youthful man is covered in a black *himation* and he stands still to the side of the *stêlê* and behind its four steps. His left arm is hidden below his garment and he extends his right arm down toward the grave. A red *tainia* is draped over his hand and he is leaning over so that his head is angled down toward his hand and the gift that he is about to offer. Both of the mourners are intently looking at the grave and do not interact with each other, which serves to emphasize their offering. In this case, since both the man and woman appear to be living visitors, and since they appear to be engaged in much of the same activity we get the

¹⁷⁹ In Aeschylus' *Persians* (623-7) the male Persian chorus asks that Atossa pour libations as they call upon the chthonic deities though they may also partake in the rituals. Many men lament in tragedy but it is not part of a visit to a grave. For more on the male lament in tragedy see Suter 2008. For more on the importance of tomb ritual in the *Oresteia* and the *Elektra* plays see Kucharski 2004.

¹⁸⁰ There has perhaps been some modern touch up painting on this vase.

impression that the care of the grave was something that could be done by anyone that wished to offer a gift to the dead.¹⁸¹

Although male mourners continued to be outnumbered by their female counterparts, in 5th century imagery they appear more involved in the care and concern of the dead. Rather than be segregated from women and engaged only in a hand to the head or valediction pose, they also engage in gift giving and quiet contemplation of the memory of the dead in this scenario. This shows that even if there was less of an obligation for men than there was for women to maintain the grave, that there was something meaningful and likely cathartic to visit the dead and communicate to both the living and the dead that they contemplated the impact of the death of a loved one. The fact that men are shown as both mourners at the grave and that there are a few characteristics of the way that they reveal their sadness that differs from female mourners shows that artists were interested in the ways that a man might manifest his grief in this setting.

Unlike the predominant image of the mourning male that we get from epic and tragedy, where it was acceptable to openly weep and mutilate the body, on white-ground *lékythoi* we find men mourning in a rather composed and restricted manner. And, in fact, they are more wont to cover up and hide than to reveal their sadness or frustration. This does recall the moments when we hear of men desiring to hide themselves when they are struck by a particularly sad thought or feeling, e.g. Agamemnon and Iphigenia's sacrifice, Odysseus when listening to Demodokos' retelling of the Trojan War and Priam's covering at finding Hektor dead, so it may have been a particular desire of Greek men to avoid being seen in such a state. The desire to cover the body and subdue one's outward expression of emotions is also not necessarily at odds with how men

¹⁸¹ Men are also shown offering wreaths (e.g. Athens, NM 1825, 12747), vases (e.g. University, Mississippi 1977.3.83) and instruments to the grave (e.g. Glasgow D1970.28, Tampa 86.79). On a vase by the Inscription Painter now in Tampa, Florida, a man and woman approach a grave from either side.

were depicted in earlier imagery, since usually they simply put a hand to their head or took a valedictory pose. And, although women also typically act calm in graveside imagery, men show that in comparison they were more subdued in their mourning behavior or knew how to obscure and restrain their emotions by covering in a cloak, if they felt particularly susceptible to their sadness.

Chapter 3: “ὄλοός γῆρας”¹⁸² and Elderly Lament

Ἴξεν δ' ἐς Πριάμοιο, κίχεν δ' ἐνοπήν τε γόον τε.
παῖδες μὲν πατέρ' **ἀμφὶ** καθήμενοι **ἐνδοθεν** αὐλῆς
δάκρυσιν εἶματ' ἔφυρον, ὃ δ' **ἐν μέσσοισι** γεραῖος
ἐντυπᾶς ἐν χλαίνῃ κεκαλυμμένος: **ἀμφὶ** δὲ πολλὴ
κόπρος ἔην κεφαλῇ τε καὶ αὐχένι τοῖο γέροντος
τήν ῥα κυλινδόμενος καταμήσατο χερσὶν ἔησι.
θυγατέρες δ' ἀνά δώματ' ἰδὲ νυοὶ ᾠδύροντο
τῶν μνησκόμεναι οἳ δὴ πολέες τε καὶ ἔσθλοὶ
χερσὶν ὑπ' Ἀργείων κέατο ψυχὰς ὀλέσαντες.

[Iris] arrived at the house of Priam and met lament and wailing.
Children were seated within the halls around their father,
defiling their clothes with tears, and between them was the old
king wrapped ever so tight in his garments: all about the head
and neck of the old man was much filth, which,
rolling about, he gathered up in his hands.
And his daughters and daughters-in-law were mourning about
the palace as they remembered the many noble men
who lay dead, having perished by the hands of the Argives.

Hom. *Il.* 24. 160-8

When Iris alights in Troy to encourage Priam to ransom Hektor, she finds the palace paralyzed by grief. The male members of the family are crying in the shelter of their garments as they surround the inconsolable Trojan king, who has completely disguised himself in a cloak of cloth and excrement. The women of the house are not seen but their cries and threnodies can be heard reverberating through the halls. Although Hektor's entire family, and presumably all of Troy, shares in the great sorrow of his death, in this moment Priam is the focal point. The mourning that Iris has encountered radiates from Priam and his centrality to the scene is underscored by the repetitive use of words such as ἀμφί, μέσσοισι and ἐν.¹⁸³ Juxtaposed with the fact that he is the center of attention of both the passage and of the city of Troy, we find out that his facial expression (and presumably his sobs) is obscured by his cloak (ἐντυπᾶς ἐν χλαίνῃ κεκαλυμμένος). Thus, everyone's eyes are fixed upon him but it is impossible for them to see what his face might reveal. By covering completely, he is able to protect himself from pitiful

¹⁸² According to Hes. *Theog.* 605.

¹⁸³ These words appear in bold in the quote above. Although “ἐν” more properly means “in,” its repetition here seems to reiterate Priam's location within the mourners. He is immediately surrounded by his cloak, his sons form a ring around him and the sounds of his daughters enwrap the throng of lamenting men. Together they create a protective cocoon around the miserable king.

glances while simultaneously indicating that he is suffering. As Douglas Cairns has succinctly explained, the act of veiling is both “a form of self-segregation and self-protection” but also, “like weeping itself, a demonstrative action.”¹⁸⁴

Although Priam will later appear more composed as he ransoms Hektor’s body from Achilles and prepares for and carries out a public funeral for him, in this moment of the narrative we are granted, with the aid of boundless Iris, the unique opportunity to see how he grieves in the privacy of his home. Thus, we find the great king at his weakest as he submits to his overwhelming feelings of sadness and despair. By hiding himself, our epic narrator leaves the details of his grief to our imaginations, compelling us to wonder what depth of despair defies words or visible expression.

The perspective of elderly men is not often illustrated in the images or texts of ancient Greece but their treatment tends to be unique suggesting that there were different characteristics and behaviors acceptable and/or typical of the “senior citizens” of Athens.¹⁸⁵ There are only a few senescent male mourners in the iconography of white-ground *lêkythoi*, but similar to the manner in which Priam is singled out above, they are rendered so as to emphasize their feeble, pitiable state and their self-conscious desire to cover this up. One of the most emotive faces to

¹⁸⁴ Cairns 2009: 46. For more on the juxtaposed functions of the mourning veil as hiding and protecting the individual while visibly marking them outside of normal society see Cairns 2009: 41-54, 2016: passim and Llewellyn-Jones 2003: esp. 298-307. Although Cairns 2011 is focused on the use of veiling with regard to emotions of love and envy, it has a useful discussion of how a veil acts to hide and highlight an individual.

¹⁸⁵ This chapter looks only at old men because there are no images of elderly women in white-ground *lêkythoi*. Some identify the ecstatic Thracian maid on a vase by the Phiale Painter (Athens, NM 19355) [Fig. 64] as old because a few streaks appear on her face. While I do not completely deny that she may be “older,” her status of Thracian, shown by her three tattoos, seems to be more important to the manner in which she mourns. There is a vertical line running down her face, near her mouth which could be a wrinkle or a scratch from rending her face in an act of mourning, or less probably a tattoo (Cf. the Thracian mourner on the *loutrophoros* by the Painter of Bologna 228 (Athens, NM 1170 [Fig. 9]). Her hair is lighter than the other woman on the vase but is not necessarily white or gray and blond hair appears frequently on white-ground *lêkythoi*. See Chapter 5 for more discussion of this vase.

appear in white-ground imagery in fact belongs to an elderly male mourner by the Achilles Painter (Berlin, Antiken. 1983.1) [Fig. 50]. His tired posture and the deep creases in his visage underpin his sad demeanor and prove that a wrinkled face is particularly conducive for emphasizing the natural physiognomic markers of grief. At the same time, the only figures to entirely cover their faces in the context of mourning are also old men and perhaps the fact that their faces betray their emotions so clearly explains their particular desire to cover up. While the deep creases and tired features of old men help to enhance the weight and sadness of the occasion of burying a loved one, the effect of an entirely covered face is to enhance the despair of the moment and to represent the “unexpressable.” As we will see, the face, whether exposed or concealed, is the primary vehicle through which elderly mourners express their grief.

Taking a step back from their individual features, the image of an old man mourning for a much younger decedent immediately evokes a sense of sadness since this is not the natural order of things. Just as an artist can elicit a particular type of grief by showing a particularly young corpse or *eidōlon*, so too does the image of a particularly old mourner conjure up uniquely sorrowful feelings by emphasizing the youth of the deceased individual and the unnatural burden related to burying one’s own children. Thus, the mere image of an old man mourning a youthful soldier or athlete, as is the case for all examples from white-ground *lêkythoi*, has the effect of creating a highly emotive scene. By emphasizing the physical characteristics of the elderly figures in these images, the difference in ages between the two figures is emphasized and we can easily imagine that an old father and his adult son are being depicted. The visual dichotomy created between old mourner and youthful decedent further shows the importance that age plays in the narrative of mourning captured in these particular images. The examples of elderly mourners depicted in 5th century funerary imagery are few but they make up such a distinct

group that they warrant specific attention. The fact that there is consistency in the features that set them apart from other mourners points to the keen observation and perceptive sense of artists to notice and effectively depict the nuanced behavior of this category of mourner.

Before delving into a discussion of the features that typify the expressions of aged mourners and what this may imply about 5th century Athenian perceptions of the specific plight of the elderly bereaved, it is necessary to define precisely who will be included in the category “old.” Unlike the adult mourners discussed in the previous two chapters, the figures discussed here are more than mature adults and their advanced age is made clear through physical attributes such as white hair, balding pates, wrinkles that streak their faces and limbs, and a bent or diminutive frame. These men have features that show that they are quite feeble and likely to be at least 70, an age which was identified by ancient Athenians as particularly old.¹⁸⁶

Athenian men were expected to serve in the army through the age of 59, presumably because the average Athenian was esteemed able to endure the difficulties of a military campaign up until this age, but not much beyond it. If we assume that Solon’s *Elegy on the Ages of Men*¹⁸⁷ reflects contemporary views about various stages of life, including what constituted the age when a man would not meet an untimely death (...τῆς δεκάτης δ’ εἴ τις τελέσας κατὰ μέτρον ἵκοιτο, οὐκ ἄν

¹⁸⁶ For more on the discussion of old age in ancient Greece and Classical Athenian views of the elderly, see Finley 1981: esp. 156-; Garland 1987, 1998: 64-6, 2001: 78 and Richardson 1969. See Garland 1987: 12-3, 2001: 78 for more on the notion that 70 was the threshold of “old age” in ancient Athens.

¹⁸⁷ One must not overlook that Solon predates our period of inquiry by roughly 100 years (c. 638-558). My basis for using his elegy as a point of reference is simply that he is Athenian and we lack much literature about what constituted “old” in antiquity. Without an empirical number for what constitutes “old,” what a society perceives as “old” can be used as a means of relative measurement. Most modern works which discuss old age use 70 as the low end of “elderly” by using Solon’s comment and I see no reason to break with this seemingly reasonable assumption. See Garland 1987: 12-3; 1998: 64-5 and for a discussion related to the Roman world see Cockayne 2003: 1-3, 11-33.

ἄωρος ἐὼν μοῖραν ἔχοι θανάτου)¹⁸⁸ we might reasonably deem the age of 70 as a superficial cutoff for who was considered “elderly.” Solon divided a man’s life into 10 divisions of 7 years and, since achievement of the tenth stage was seen as a victory in and of itself, we might assume that any age beyond 77 was a bonus that was not expected, but was generally welcome.¹⁸⁹ The appearance of old age is used to make specifically clear that these men are at the point in their life at which their children, not they, should be ready for the burden of funerary preparations.

It is a difficult matter to assert whether the Athenians were overwhelmingly in awe or disdain of the elderly members of society and there is conflicting evidence about the regard in which men over the age of 60 were held in Classical Athens.¹⁹⁰ Modern Americans can likely relate to this inconsistency since it is generally assumed that the elderly should be addressed and regarded with respect but at the same time we are not immune from hoping our own old age does not come accompanied with the degeneration of our bodies and minds, which we may witness in others. Depictions of the elderly in Athenian art and text vacillated between the ridiculous and disrespectful to the reverent and admiring. Since an Athenian citizen’s status was intimately related to their perceived productivity and contribution to their community,¹⁹¹ when they were no

¹⁸⁸ Elegy 27 (Loeb edition). See also Garland 1990: 248-9 for explanations of the medical hardships encountered after the sixty-third year of a man’s life.

¹⁸⁹ A noteworthy exception is Mimnermus (Stob. 4.20.16) who describes old age as painful (ὀδυνηρός). Gerber 1999: 80-1.

¹⁹⁰ Richardson 1969: esp. 48-58. This source is outdated but the work cites much of the primary evidence for the demands placed on Athenians for the care of their parents and the conflicted views of the elderly. In the work as a whole there is too much of a focus on the Homeric epics as giving reasonable indications of how actual Athenians were treated in their old age but Agamemnon and Nestor are perhaps more exceptional than demonstrative.

¹⁹¹ For example, Garland 1990: 255-7 states that Greeks who achieved old age were likely to be “active and vigorous until their final illness...” and that it was perhaps a point of pride for old men to prove their ability to work and care for themselves up until their death. Thus, the Laertes might be seen as a model senior citizen for his active engagement in farming and cultivation (*Od.* 24. 205-8). See also Garland 1998: 43-5, 61 and Richardson 1969: 31-3.

longer able to make physical or intellectual contributions, they were susceptible to negative attention and representation. There was even a comedic term coined for a man that hung on to life beyond an appropriate allotment, *tymbogerôn* (τυμβογέρων) or “old man at the edge of the grave,”¹⁹² and the negative aspects of senility and the perceived shortcomings of old men and women provided fodder for the plots of Old and New Comedy. The ugliness and absurdity of the aged body was displayed in stage costumes and terracotta figurines of comic characters, i.e. pedagogues and nurses, and in a small number of vase-paintings of *Gêras* and elderly slaves.¹⁹³ In general, unless one’s old age was significant to their character, e.g. Nestor, Priam, *Gêras*, a vase painter did not typically focus on elderly attributes specifically.

That elderly parents were at times perceived as more of a burden than a blessing is indicated in part through the enactment of a law known as the “mistreatment of parents mandate” (γράφη γονέων κάκωσις) that required men to take care of their parents, grandparents and (when relevant) great-grandparents, as long as they were not guilty of prostituting or neglecting their children.¹⁹⁴ The law required that children not beat their parents, that they provide basic necessities for them as long as they lived, and that they gave them a proper burial and rites after death.¹⁹⁵ Unlike Spartans who garnered an esteemed place within the *Gerousia* after the age of 60, elder Athenians had very little official work with which they could occupy their time and

¹⁹² This term is known primarily from comedy and seems to have first appeared in the late 5th or early 4th century. Its known usages are Ar. Fr. 55 D, *Com. Adesp.* 1172, Thphr. ap. *Phot.* and Procop. *Arc.* 6.11.

¹⁹³ For a compilation of these (limited) images see Birchler Emery 1999: pls. 1-3 and Matheson 2009.

¹⁹⁴ There was a similar law in Delphi which mandated the proper care of elderly family members and the punishment seems to have been particularly harsh. See Garland 1990: 261-2, 1998: 66-7.

¹⁹⁵ Garland 1987: 16, 2001: 15-6.

provide a living for themselves.¹⁹⁶ Only fathers of sons who died in battle were eligible for state funds to provide for them in their old age, which undoubtedly left some old parents struggling to survive.

Despite the strict language of these laws, we should not presume that the average Athenian was dismissive or neglectful of their aging parents or other elderly members of the city.¹⁹⁷ There are also sources which suggest that particularly old men ought to be revered for the wisdom that accompanied many years of experience. Whether it is historically accurate or not, many great thinkers, philosophers, and writers were said to have lived into their 90s and older,¹⁹⁸ and the typical convention for depicting said wise men was elderly. Homer was always pictured as an old, blind man and statues and busts of Demosthenes, Aristotle, Plato and others are rendered with crow's feet, wrinkles and balding heads. And, while we perhaps should not think that the average elderly Athenian was regarded with the same awe and esteem as Nestor, Socrates, Hesiod, or any other historical or mythological elders, such illustrations indicate that some old men did garner great respect and that there was not an inherent conflict in the minds of Athenians that old men deserve appreciation despite the fact that it was acceptable to ridicule and laugh at their shortcomings in lyric poetry and comedy.

The images of old men on white-ground *lêkythoi* and in other funerary scenes appear to be neither revered nor despised and depict their age as a means of visually representing a scenario in

¹⁹⁶ The position of public judge was available to elderly men but this was not a long-term position. It was a position for older men, but it seems not to have been accompanied by the same prestige and honor as the Spartan *Gerousia*.

¹⁹⁷ “While old men in Sparta and other Greek cities were respected as important participants in their respective societies, the Athenians’ devotion to democracy and for Athenian citizens jointly pulling the weight of the work of the state, there was a sense that the elderly figures were less “valuable” to the running of the democracy.” Garland 1990: 277-84.

¹⁹⁸ Garland 2001: 13. For example, Solon, Thales, and Pittacus were said to have lived to 100 and Gorgias to 108.

which pity is elicited in part because of the dichotomy created between mourner and deceased. In other words, the old mourners may be marked by the physical traits of their advanced age but they are just as, or possibly more, susceptible to feelings of despair and sadness than other age groups depicted on these vases. Old men on white-ground *lêkythoi* are inevitably depicted as mourners, not deceased, and the object of their lament is always a youthful male, presumably their son. They are not shown in an unfavorable light that uses their frailty as a source of mockery, but it does create a greater visual incongruousness between the age of the mourner and the age of the deceased, potentially magnifying the distortion and the sadness of such a scene. Additionally, since they are already in the unfortunate position of grieving, their feebleness makes them seem all the more pitiable. Thus, the point is not to glorify or degrade but to illustrate a particular plight and its related reaction.

Elderly Mourners on White-Ground Lêkythoi

Amongst the roughly two thousand white-ground *lêkythoi* with funerary imagery, only about ten include decidedly elderly mourners.¹⁹⁹ And, aside from the obvious physical marks of their age, these vases stand out because they include not only some of the most detailed countenances but also the only examples of entirely covered faces. Despite the fact that two completely opposite strategies are used to convey a sense of sadness in these vases, they are both equally effective in revealing deep sorrow. On the one hand, in those cases where the face of an elderly griever is exposed, they clearly show how effectively a painter of this genre was able to captivate the emotional quality of lamentation through physiognomy and that a face could, with grace and

¹⁹⁹ I have identified eight vases with what I believe may be securely associated with elderly men: Athens, NM 2021; Athens, Dinopoulos 5; Athens, Kanellopoulos 725; Berlin 1983.1; Chicago 1907.2; London, BM D67; Louvre MNB804 and New Castle 206.

beauty, display an absolutely engrossing sense of sadness and despair. Yet, on the other hand, when the depth of emotion defies visual or verbal expression, there is perhaps no stronger indication of unfathomable grief than an entirely obscured mourning countenance.

Sorrowful Countenances

Three vases in particular (Athens, NM 2021; Berlin, Antiken. 1983.1 and London, BM D67) [Figs. 50-52] feature old men who clearly wear their despair on their faces and postures. In each of these instances the elderly mourner holds one hand to his forehead in a gesture that was associated with Greek male mourning since the Archaic Period.²⁰⁰ While the more popular gesture for men from the Archaic Period onward is that of valediction, with the right arm outstretched and the palm facing outward, a single hand raised to the head was a common and easily comprehensible gesture of grief. In earlier periods this gesture was rather schematic and served to simply signify men in mourning, but the three men here hold their hands in somewhat different positions, demonstrating how subtle shifts in posture can convey slightly different reactions to grief. Their variety shows that what may appear on the surface as a basic and relatively insignificant rendering of pose may contain important clues about the type of grief meant to be expressed in each scene.

The most intricately depicted elderly mourner appears on a vase by the Achilles Painter [Fig. 50]. The old man in this composition has arguably one of the most detailed faces in the corpus of mourning images on white-ground *lêkythoi*. The entirety of the scene is limited to the front portion of the vase, and unlike some compositions, can be appreciated from a single, head-on

²⁰⁰ As is explained in the previous Chapter 2. Cf. the diagrams in Huber 2001 and van Wees 1998: 21-3

vantage point, making the juxtaposition of its two subjects easily appreciated.²⁰¹ An old man and a young warrior stand on either side of a tall grave *stêlê* mounted on a two-tiered base. The *stêlê*'s white color and the fact that it reaches well into the floral shoulder decoration of the vase highlight the division between the two figures. On the left stands an old man. His age is indicated by his white hair and beard, rendered with added bright white paint, and the wrinkles that run along his arms, down his neck and across his face. In his left hand he holds a cane; his right hand is lifted up to his brow. On the right side, juxtaposed with the old man, stands a young, nude warrior.²⁰² He is positioned with his body facing forward, exposing his athletic body. His head, shown in profile, reveals his helmet and directs his gaze toward the *stêlê* and the old man on the other side of it.²⁰³

The old man's body is turned toward the *stêlê* and his left foot is situated slightly forward, suggesting that he has just approached the grave. Most of his body is covered by a long garment but his neck and arms are exposed, highlighting his frail, weatherworn body. The thin, creased arms and neck of the old man stand in stark contrast to the muscular frame of the warrior. His static, frontal pose is reminiscent of contemporary Athenian, heroic, nude statues, especially the Polykleitos' *Doryphoros*.²⁰⁴ It captures the essence of an idealized warrior the way funerary

²⁰¹ The most common number of figures in white-ground *lêkythoi* is two but depending on the spacing of the characters and the types interactions they engage in, the scene may wrap around the sides of the vase and onto its backside, where the handle is located. Scenes with three or four figures often take up more than the front quarter or third of the vase.

²⁰² The warrior has a beard which suggests that he is not a youthful warrior but a seasoned soldier in peak performance.

²⁰³ Cf. Oakley 1997 for images of other male heroic figures in the Achilles' Painter's repertoire.

²⁰⁴ Cf. the image of Achilles on the Achilles Painter's namesake vase now in the Vatican Museum (16571).

kouroi of the previous generation had done.²⁰⁵ Such a statue or image was meant to commemorate the deceased as someone of beauty and virtue, whether or not this reflected anything of reality. So too does this portrayal of a deceased warrior aim to capture a sense of the fallen man's valor, vitality, and beauty; perhaps not like a snapshot, genuine attributes of the warrior during his life. Both the warrior's static posture and his nudity contribute to his identification as the mourned-for figure in this scene, and thus merely a figment of the deceased "owner" of this grave *stêlē*.²⁰⁶

Though the old man's left foot is further forward, both of his feet are flat showing that he may have just arrived but he is no longer in motion. His own repose is echoed by the deceased youth's stately quality, giving the overall composition a sense of stillness and quiet. The man has brought no gifts so his purpose seems only to visit this grave and reflect. The overall effect is to give the entire composition an air of forlornness, as if there are no words to say, no gifts to give, no gestures to perform, that could ameliorate the sadness of the situation. Thus, much of the power of this piece to convey despair comes from the inaction, which translates to the inability to express or explain such deep feelings of sadness.

The old man's neck and shoulders hunch over ever so slightly so that he may cradle his wrinkled brow in the palm of his upraised hand. His tilted head just barely misses the top of the frame while the warrior's head touches the border and the crest of his helmet extends into the floral panel. Though the difference in their height is slight, the gap between the old man's head and the top of the figural panel, in relation to the warrior's height, helps to emphasize his bent

²⁰⁵ And in turn the same tactic that the Hellenistic producers of For more on the use of heroic nude statue and relief in ancient Greece see Boardman and Kurtz 1971; Morris 1989: passim; Shapiro 1991: 631-3.

²⁰⁶ The actual recipient of this vase may not have been a warrior or even a male. See Chapter 6 for more on the identification of *eidōla* on white-ground *lēkythoi*.

posture. Despite the crow's feet and grooves in his forehead and cheeks, the man's eye is open wide and we can see exactly where his gaze is set, namely through the *stêlê* to the warrior standing opposite to him. The placement of the pupil high within the white of the eye helps to emphasize that he is looking forward despite the slight downward lean of his neck. His downturned mouth is slightly agape, a feature not commonly found in figures on white-ground *lêkythoi*²⁰⁷ but one found often enough in male mourners on funerary vases and plaques of the late Archaic through early Classical Periods.²⁰⁸ This may merely be meant to emphasize his frowning expression or it may suggest that he is letting out a groan or singing a dirge.²⁰⁹

Our eyes are immediately drawn to the old man's face because his bright white hair stands out against the dull background of the vase. While the vase is detailed on the whole, in a manner not seen in the majority of white-ground vases, the elderly man's face has been rendered with the utmost attention and care. Neither the carefully articulated muscles on the warrior's abdomen nor the folds in the man's cloak show as many fine details. In a genre of vase painting where faces are left mostly free of detail, it is clear that in this instance, each line has been deliberately placed. And to make this point all the more apparent, the old man's face is shown in contrast to a face that is fully covered with a smooth, shiny helmet. On the most basic level, the wrinkles on the elderly man serve to show age and perhaps inspire pity from any viewer who is sympathetic to the plight of old age. However, they also effectively magnify the creases of sadness, which

²⁰⁷ Women who ecstatically mourn beside the grave occasionally open their mouth so as to suggest that they are wailing. The only other example from 5th century *lêkythoi* that I am aware of is a vase by the Phiale Painter (Athens NM 19355) [Fig. 64].

²⁰⁸ See Lydos Cup (Athens, Kerameikos 1687), the black figure funerary plaque at the (Louvre MNB 905) [Fig. 4] and a plaque by the Lysippides Painter (Athens, NM 2410, 2413).

²⁰⁹ Generally speaking, the lamenters with open mouths are those who are standing in pairs in the valediction pose. It has been suggested that they are performing a choral *thrênos* or formal dirge. Shapiro 1991: 636 and 636n41.

line his face. Like ripples emanating from the drop of a pebble into water, the wrinkles emphasize the ravages of old age, the curve of the man's frown, and the furrows made from the upward scrunching of his cheeks and his lowered eyelids; the characteristics of a frowning face.

One can read the emotion and interaction of the entire vase by looking to the old man's eye. It betrays the old man's inner sadness²¹⁰ and also reveals the source of the man's grief, because he looks directly at the things which concern him. The direction of his line of sight is clear, but it is cast at something that stands behind the stone pillar before him and it is additionally obstructed by the placement of his own hand. We should not understand the old man to actually be focusing on any tangible object before him but rather directing his attention towards the object that meets his gaze. If one draws a line straight out from the man's pupil, it will connect to that of the warrior, who we have already established represents the deceased recipient of the old man's lament. We can understand a relationship between these two characters because of this connection though we must not understand it as one of actual sight. In other words, the old man perhaps "sees" the fallen warrior by thinking of or remembering him, but he does not actually see him as a present companion. Sight is being used conventionally to reveal to the audience the concern of the mourning man. The warrior is shown on the vase to elucidate what the man has come to mourn and also to commemorate the fallen Athenian as an estimable character. We might also understand the connection made by their joined stares as the artist's way of providing a sense of acknowledgment that the thoughts and tears shed by a mourner are somehow discerned by the deceased.

It may seem strange that this man both obstructs his view but keeps his eyes wide open, but by presenting the old man in this way, the artist has been able to use the eye as the focal point of

²¹⁰ So, it is as Cicero says, "that the face is an image of the soul, the eyes its translators," (*Ut imago est animi voltus, oculi indices*).

the emotion of the scene while also describing and heightening the sense of grief by utilizing a traditional, recognizable posture of male mourning. The practicality of putting one's hand in front of their face while looking forward is moot because this conflation of gestures allows the audience to better read the scene. Ultimately the scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi* are meant to satisfy an audience's wants and expectations and the overall effect is much more important than the realism of its parts.

If an artist simply wanted to suggest that the mourner could not bear to behold the tragic event before him, it would be much simpler to depict the individual with their face covered (see below) or at the very least with their eyes fully covered or shut. In this case it is deliberate that he holds his hand in this manner and that his eye remains open. And while the hand-to-the-brow gesture is typical within funerary art, the hand is more often than not placed further up on the forehead or slightly off to the side, so as to not obstruct sight. For this reason, we should understand this gesture not simply a signpost for "grief"²¹¹ but also as a means for the old man to hide his eyes from the sad scene before him. To cover the eyes is to cover a feature of the face that has great ability to express emotion. The man's eye is open so that we can read his sorrow, his hand is placed before his eyes so he does not have to look at the grave before him. The Achilles Painter has used a gesture that at once recalls mourning men from the past while utilizing the ability of this particular medium to create subtle details of expression in this simple dichotomous gesture.

If we turn now to two examples of grieving old men on *lêkythoi*, we find scenes with old men visiting a grave in the company of a female mourner. On a vase by the Thanatos Painter

²¹¹ This schematic gesture is used to show *psychai* in a gesture of mourning. Since most *eidola* on white-ground *lêkythoi* are drawn simply as stick figures, akin to small children shown on Geometric vases, a very simple yet clear and legible gesture must be used.

(London, BM D67) [Fig. 52] the figures separated by a plain stone slab that bears only traces of the *taniai* that were once painted on it. A woman stands to the left of the *stêlê*. Most of her body is missing but the upper portion remains. She holds before her in her hands a decorated basket with a few sashes hanging over its rim. She looks forward. Her hair is tied up in a *sakkos*, typical of Athenian women, with a small lock falling around her ears. Her gaze is set straight before her and save for a line indicating her eyelid and another for her eyebrow, no creases mar her face or neck. Her lips are pulled back in a subtle downward facing crescent, hinting at the sadness she may be feeling and enhancing the gravity of the moment. Her role in this scene is narrative, indicating that this trip to the grave has the purpose of decorating the *stêlê*, and she acts as a companion and younger, less emotional foil to the old man.

On the opposite side of the *stêlê* an old man leans upon his walking stick. He stands in three-quarter view with his backside facing towards us. His hunched posture is exaggerated by the curve in the lines of his naked back. His vertebrae and scapulae are delineated and some smaller lines on his back and neck suggest the presence of wrinkles. The wrinkles do not extend to his face as they did in the aforementioned Achilles Painter vase, but his posture and white hair make his identification clear.

While the man leans on a cane with his left hand, he has his right hand placed horizontally on his forehead. His arm is off to the side of his face and it is clear that his vision is not at all obstructed by it. His eyes look straight forward towards the *stêlê* before him, the base of which the bottom of his cane just barely touches. His mouth is open slightly though it appears not at all to droop like a frown but rather to release a gasp of astonishment. The manner in which he holds his hand to his head would seem to second this notion. He appears dumbstruck, trying to take in the scene that stands before him and to grasp the gravity of the loss that it represents. Thus, we

might say that grief has yet to strike this old man and he is in a stage of taking the matter in and trying to synthesize its meaning.

His gaze does not meet anything more than a *stêlê* and a female companion so we do not have explicit insight into what he might be imagining. However, it is not difficult to put the pieces together and suggest that this frail old man has come to mourn a companion or child. Since he is an elderly man, we might additionally take his gesture of amazement to suggest his sorrow at the thought of being, like Rhesus' mother, childless on the threshold of old age, having buried the ones that should have more reasonably buried him. Compared with the previous image, there are fewer clues from which we may fully comprehend the entire narrative of the scene and an interpretation of this man's plight is a bit speculative.

In a vase now at the National Museum, Athens (2021) [Fig. 51], an old man mourning at a ribbon-adorned *stêlê* expresses his grief in part by bowing his head into his open palm. As in the Thanatos Painter's vase, a man stands to the right of a *stêlê* and a woman stands to the left of it. Much of the paint of the woman has been worn off and smudged so it is impossible to determine her facial expression and posture but it appears that she has one hand held to her head. Since she herself mourns, and the *stêlê* is decorated with a sword, we should not assume that she is deceased, but rather an attendant mourner. The elderly man does not even look in her direction, so she seems secondary to the main action.

The old man faces the *stêlê*, his feet flat upon the ground. He holds a cane in his left hand but he has picked it up and in this motion has gotten it partially hung up on his cloak. The detail of the drapery of the *himation* being lifted by the end of the cane is unmatched in the corpus of *lêkythoi* scenes and demonstrates the painter's attention to detail, even if this particular detail does not enhance the sorrow of the scene. The cloak that the man wears is long and dark and he

has it wrapped up over his head and covering his arms up to his wrists. Though he has draped the cloak over the back of his head, the entirety of his face is visible and it is easy to make out gray hair and a stubbly gray beard.

The man touches his forehead with the fingertips of his right hand, his palm a small distance from his nose. His cloak is drawn away from his neck and chest by the positioning of his arm upon his brow. The neck of the cloak is drawn out from his body in a manner that echoes the way that the cane uplifts and pulls the cloak away from his legs. In addition to this small detail, the painter has given the hand dimension by showing the outer side of the thumb and the inner palm near the pinky of the same hand. To create this gesture, the old man has leaned his head forward, and the arch of his back is easy to see in a dark cloak set off by a white background. Though there is the faintest downturn just at the corner of his mouth, the focus of the sorrow of the scene relies more on the circumstance and the overall body language of the mourner.

Though the position of his hand would surely obscure his sight as did the old man in the scene by the Achilles Painter, it matters little for this man because he is staring down at a 45° angle; his gaze would roughly meet with his female companion's toes. By looking in this direction, the gaze passes over the sword, helping to direct our own sight upon it, thereby suggesting that this tomb belongs to a valiant warrior. In light of there being an *eidōlon* present in the scene, this mourner looks toward the sword allowing us to suppose that he is recalling the owner of that weapon. Unlike the previous two figures, this man is not interacting visually with his counterpart and the overall effect is to make it seem that the man is staring off into space.

The man's hand is an extension of his up-pulled cloak so that he is essentially covered with respect to his entire body. The sides of his face are revealed to us, but the man looks forward, blocking out what is happening to either side of him. It is important that his face be apparent

because without it, the man would merely look like an amorphous, black, blob beside a *stêlê*. Since the degree to which he is covering is greater than that of the man in Figure 1, we might suppose that this man wishes not only to protect his own eyes from what lies before him, but also from the look of others. The desire to hide from people around him may be interpreted in a few different ways. It may merely suggest that the man wishes to be alone in his lamentation. Alternatively it may suggest that he feels a sense of shame either due to his own pitiable state as a helpless, old man or due to the toll tears and grief take on one's composure.²¹² He is in some ways a bridge between the old men whose faces express grief and those who fully cover their faces since he has blocked out others from his own view but has allowed us a profile view of his moment of mourning.

Hidden Emotions

As of yet, there are only three published examples of mourners who completely cloak their faces so that only the upper part of their head peaks from the folds and all three of these examples happen to be old men.²¹³ Many mourning figures appear in the context of a *prothesis* or visit to the grave wearing a cloak of some sort, as would be appropriate when partaking in an outdoor event. In a moment of sadness or shame such a garment could be pulled over the back of the head or pulled up in the front to comfort and protect its wearer. It also allows a figure to contain their own grief while sheltering themselves from the eyes of bystanders and passersby. In all other instances, when mourners wish to use their cloak as a cover, their eye can be seen

²¹² Tragedy reference to feeling pity about appearing old and frail.

²¹³ There is one instance in a vase by the Achilles Painter (Cambridge GR 36-1937) where a youth is shown with almost his entire face covered but with a close look one can make out the faint curve of an eye and brow.

peeking out from above the folds of their up-pulled garments. So, as a general rule, the covering of eyes is absolutely avoided. The wearing of a cloak to mourn and the desire to cover part of one's face are not of note in and of themselves, however the complete lack of ability to discern any sense of the emotion, or lack thereof, from the face of these three figures is striking and creates a very particular sense of forlornness.

While the gazes of the old man and youth in the Berlin *lêkythos* (Antiken. 1983.1) seem to cross paths, these old men cover their eyes so that they do not interact visually with the figures and objects within the same scene. And just how sad and pitiable mourners are can be more easily calculated when we are allowed to observe the eyes and face of the emotional figure. The living and the deceased may be connected through their meeting, yet unseeing, gazes; in these instances the interaction is not explicit. These are the only examples in which the viewer is not even invited to read the grief of a face or decipher the posture of a mourner. This does not, however, detract from the overall grievous effect of the scene, and in fact, goes about expressing the sadness with a different tactic altogether. By covering the face, the painter has invited the viewer to assign whatever mournful face they might imagine. Such a gesture may also imply that the grief that is being felt is so encompassing that it is impossible to depict upon a vase or even to fully imagine or at least express. The ineffable nature of such a loss is expounded through the covering of the mouth and the blocking of the eyes.

Covering the entire face was not a common way of expressing grief in the Greek imagination but it is used in a few instances on white-ground *lêkythoi* and elsewhere. Not every mourning figure reveals their grief through a facial expression and the magnitude of one's sorrow should never be assumed to be reflected through the face alone.²¹⁴ Many male and female mourners on

²¹⁴ And a figure is not only sad if they show a frown, I simply mean that being more expressive or devoid of expression set these figures aside as expressive in a particular way.

funerary *lêkythoi* cover part of their face in their cloak but the gesture of covering the entire face, from chin to forehead, is reserved for old men alone and it conveys a different message. We are invited by these characters to speculate about what is hidden beneath their cloaks but we are never invited to be privy to the depth of their hidden grief.

Though it was not a common convention in all Greek art, there is at least one other example of a grieving figure hiding his face at a time of great sadness. The example includes another older man, Agamemnon, at the death of his daughter Iphigeneia, at Aulis. This event is said to have been excellently captured in a painting by the 4th century painter Timanthes. Although his original work is long lost, a mural in the House of the Tragic Poet at Pompeii is believed to be a copy of the work.²¹⁵ The most notable feature of Timanthes' work was his choice to cover the face of Agamemnon rather than paint it. This feature is present in the Pompeiian wall painting and it was this feature in which Pliny, Cicero, Maximus Valerius, Quintilian and later authors were particularly interested. Pliny the Elder (*NH* 35.73) claims that Timanthes chose to cover rather than paint the face of Agamemnon in his famous painting because he could not do visual justice to the level of grief felt by a father.²¹⁶ To this, Quintilian added that there are times when no image can do due justice to a particular concept or idea so that there is no other option but to allow the imagination of the audience to fill in the details.²¹⁷

Though Timanthes is credited as the genius behind this convention, there is no reason that such a gesture could not have existed in the minor arts prior to the 4th century and we can understand the three men with covered faces on *lêkythoi* to be doing the same thing, emphasizing

²¹⁵ For more on this work see Lydakis 2004: 125-7; Moffitt 2005 and O'Sullivan 2008: esp. 179n.20, 183.

²¹⁶ "...patris ipsius voltum velavit, quem digne non poterat."

²¹⁷ Quintilian Inst.2.13.12-3. He is suggesting that just as it is in art, so it is in rhetoric that some things are meant to be or best left unsaid.

the sad nature of the scene by omitting the details. In the 5th century, the concept of Agamemnon feeling the urge to cover his face in despair was already suggested by Euripides in his staging of *Iphigenia in Aulis* (lines 1549-50).²¹⁸ Agamemnon moves his *peplos* to cover his face, suggesting that he wishes to hide the shame of shedding tears. Just as in a visual image, Euripides has avoided the need to describe in detail the expression on Agamemnon's face. Some of the most somber and horrific events of tragedy occurred off stage, away from the eyes of the audience, so it is not unreasonable that a character might cover their face when an appropriately sad or horrific expression could not be achieved through a mask alone. Neither the tragedian nor the stagers of the play risk "mis-portraying" Agamemnon's grief by covering what cannot otherwise be expressed. Although a grief-stricken face can be universally appreciated as something deeply sorrowful, the thought that there is no way to describe one's sorrow may be the ultimate expression of despair and equally appreciable as a marker of grief. Like Agamemnon, these men are probably dealing with the loss of a child, suggesting that it is perhaps this singular occasion, the bereavement of a parent, that warrants a gesture of shrouding one's entire face.

The three examples of shrouded male mourners were all painted by the Achilles Painter and share many details. All three men are draped in long red cloaks and hold a cane, which stands parallel to their bodies. Each man stands to one side of a lightly decorated *stêlê*. Across from the old man in each of the vases, stands a young man wearing a *chlamys*.²¹⁹ In Figure 55, the young man holds a spear in his left hand and the outline of what may be a petasos rises over his left shoulder. He is not entirely nude as the youth in the Berlin vase (Antiken. 1983.1), but his

²¹⁸ "...κάμπαλιν στρέψας κάρα / δάκρυε, πρόσθεν ὀμμάτων πέπλον προθείς."

²¹⁹ The young man in Figure 7 is difficult to make out from the image that is provided. Little aside from his gender and slight details of his feet and arms are legible from published images.

chlamys is scant. His semi-nudity and rigid posture, along with his military accouterments, indicate that he represents a deceased warrior. His feet face forward but he is turning his head toward the *stêlê* and his eyes look to the old man across from him. His left arm reaches out toward the *stêlê* at a 30° angle from his body. It does not quite reach the *stêlê* but it is clearly being extended towards the old man. It is through his gaze and his offering a hand that we can understand a connection between these two characters.

The placement of the man's hand on a vase by the Achilles Painter now at the Akropolis Museum (6473) [Fig. 53] is reminiscent of the old man from the Berlin vase except that here, the thumb and palm of the hand wrap further around the man's head in order to shield his eyes. To facilitate covering the mouth and nose, the Achilles Painter has shown all three men with their cloaks drawn up, level to the bottom of their ears. The men in two further vases by the same painter (Athens, Kanellopoulos 725 and Athens, Dinopoulos 5) [Figs. 54-55] hold the edge of their cloaks in their right hand, which has been placed on their foreheads, thereby covering the entire face with the woolen cloth. No more than the feet, a hand and the top of the head of these characters can be seen; in other words, just enough to relay to the audience that these are white-haired men.

The identification of the young man in the vase now in the Kanellopoulos collection is somewhat problematic because he is dressed like a typical youth and there are no other obvious indicators that he may be deceased.²²⁰ His face, like the other youths in the Achilles Painter's vases, is rendered with a rather neutral expression with a small straight mouth and a simple eye and brow. Unlike the other youths he stands facing the *stêlê* but similar to the youth in the Acropolis vase [Fig. 53] he extends forward his right hand towards the *stêlê* and the man beyond

²²⁰ Such as an *eidôlon*, see Chapter 6.

it. His arm is slightly bent at the shoulder and his hand extends perpendicular to the *stêlê*. If we should suppose that he is living we can view this gesture as a comforting hand, extended in support of a desperate, grief-stricken companion. However, if we assume, as seems more likely, that he is deceased we can identify this gesture as showing the connection between mourner and mourned-for just as was done in the Acropolis vase.

More generally, the act of covering oneself also implies that the figure wishes not to be seen by others. The shrouding of these elderly figures suggests that they wish not to be seen by passersby. Some elderly men might have little other to keep them occupied than to despair over the loss of loved ones since there were few jobs they might hold while in an advanced age. If these men are meant to be burying their own children, we might suppose that they are left without someone to help support them and ultimately look after the organizing of their own funeral. By covering their faces and suggesting their own helplessness, the scene takes on another layer of sadness. We not only feel sorrow for the loss of a young life but we feel sad for the person who mourns them and the despicable situation in which this event might leave them. The figures are no longer just covering their eyes to hide their own vision, but they are covering almost all of their body, which implies that they are trying to hide more than just their vision.

In an attempt to describe the details of three shrouded men, I am struck by the fact that there is very much less to comment upon compared to those figures which reveal their faces. The sadness that is supposed to be expressed here is also inexpressible, so it seems rather appropriate that there is little to say beyond speculation. In a way, each of these men has both the most and the least expressive countenance of any mourner. They can be simultaneously crying, frowning, singing, speechless, or displaying any other characteristic of a bereaved man since their expression becomes what we as a viewer imagine it to be. A mourner may see their own sadness

in these figures and allow them to be expressive of their own feelings, even if these feelings change over time as a mourner goes through various stages of the grieving process. In some sense, these vases acknowledge the fact that there is no single way to express grief. Rather than fail at making a convincing enough mourner, the Achilles Painter has provided a blank slate upon which the perfect mourner may be created by whoever views it.

Finally, we may turn to the broader concept of the old mourning the young. Since it was a family's duty to bury their own, we may reasonably assume that the men in these scenes are burying a son, if not another close relative. The despair and pathos that specifically follows in the wake of a parent's loss of a child is described by Rhesus' divine mother, *Mousa*, in Euripides' tragedy, *Rhesus*: "Oh unfortunate mothers, woes of mortals: / whoever thinks well / that you will live childless and by no children will you be buried."²²¹ *Mousa's* mournful plea culminates with the remark that woe is he who will not be buried by his children. Of course, it is extremely woeful to lose children, but the distress of knowing that if one dies childless there will be no one to bury him must have rung particularly true for elderly parents. These old men represent any Athenian who might face the unfortunate reality of burying a child or children and thus the more generic a figure was, i.e. not necessarily estimable or deplorable, the more relatable they could be for a potential audience. The way in which old men are shown in this genre of vase allows an audience to both revere and pity their grief as they relate to the common plights of old age.

Although it is not possible to quantify the degree of grief felt by any one person or any one type of bereavement, the loss of a child is arguably an incomparable event. A 2010 Op-Ed piece in the *New York Times* by Lisa Belkin attempts to explain the devastation of the loss of a child

²²¹ Eur. *Rhe.* 980-2. "ὃ παιδοποιοὶ συμφοραὶ, πόνοι βροτῶν: ὡς ὅστις ὑμᾶς μὴ κακῶς λογίζεται, ἅπαις διοίσει κοῦ τεκῶν θάψει τέκνα."

only to conclude that it defies all words, “There is no word in the English language for a parent who loses a child. When our parents die we are orphans. When our spouse dies, we are widowed. When a child dies we are speechless.”²²² This sentiment, though from a distinctly different, modern context, in its own way succinctly sums up the silence of the scenes described above.²²³ Her remark implies that not only do we avoid the thought of such an event to the extent that we do not label it, we also are left with no means of fully articulating the impact of it once it has occurred. The painters of the eight vases described here have explored different means of capturing this singular quality in a visual format. Like Belkin, it seems that the Achilles Painter concluded that some grief is simply ineffable and thus un-paintable; hence these figures covering their mouths and eyes.

When an older figure mourns a much younger figure, the idea of the death of one who is ἄωρος, “unseasonable or untimely,” comes most clearly to mind. Since we expect the very old to pass away, it is particularly noticeable when they appear on the living side of a grave and a youthful character appears below it. To feel particularly sad in the vases mentioned in this chapter, we need not assume a familial relationship between all characters because the mere thought of the older burying the younger conveys a strong enough sense of disorder. While it is unfathomably sad to view an adult parent burying an infant or child, there is at least hope for the parent that they may have more children, and, they have not invested as much time, care and

²²² Belkin, L. (2010, February 4). Life after a child dies. *The New York Times*.
<http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/04/when-a-child-dies/>

²²³ The Greeks of course did have a word for childless by adding an alpha privative to the word for child. Thus, a childless parent is ἄπαις. I also do not want to make a one-to-one comparison here, however, one gets a sense that the inexpressible quality of this particular event defies words in not only our own culture.

resources on a younger child.²²⁴ The image of a frail, old man burying anyone calls to mind an unnatural order of things. No graveside visit is ever pleasant, but there is a certain, added, uneasiness when dealing with the elderly burying the young and these vases have succeeded in capturing this essence.

Although old men make up a relatively small number of the mourners found on ancient Athenian funerary art, this brief survey of their appearance in white-ground *lêkythoi* shows that they were associated with a very particular type of mourning and provided artists a unique way of illustrating grief in the context of a grave visit. Given the predilection of artists to show elderly mourners in the act of covering their faces, to even a more extreme degree than younger adult males (Chapter 2), one has the impression that there was specific vulnerability or shame felt by this class of Athenian mourners. Rather than making the achievement of old age seem honorable or even appealing, these depictions capture the plight of a lonely existence potentially plagued with the loss of many friends, family members and colleagues.

²²⁴ This may not be factors that we consider important, but appear to have been relevant factors to 5th century Athenians, cf. Garland 2001: 78ff. The rates of infant mortality were so high, cf. Garland 1987, that babies were not named for at least one to three weeks because the likelihood of their survival during this period was quite low. Cf. Thuc. 2.43.

Chapter 4: Death and Mourning of the Very Young

Niobe.

By children's births, and death, I am become
So dry, that I am now mine own sad tomb.

John Donne

ἄπληστος ἄδε μ' ἐξάγει χάρις γόων
πολύπονος, ὡς ἐξ ἀλιβάτου πέτρας
ὕγρὰ ρέουσα σταγῶν
ἄπαστος αἰεὶ γόων,
τὸ γὰρ θανόντων τέκνων
ἐπίπονόν τι κατὰ γυναῖκας
ἐς γόους πέφυκε πάθος. ἔ. ἔ.
Θανοῦσα τῶνδ' ἀλγέων λαθοίμαν.

This insatiable, burdensome delight of
mourning compels me, just as drops of
water ever unceasingly flow
from a steep rock: I wail,
for to endure the death of children
brings a burden upon women
to lament. Woe! Woe! Would that I
in death forget such sufferings.²²⁵

Euripides, *Supplikes*, 80-6

The female suppliants in Euripides' tragedy of the same name succinctly describe the profound experience of mourning a deceased child and the seemingly impossible feat of overcoming the pain resulting from such a loss. The burden (ἐπίπονον, ἄλγος) as they describe it, is not only unceasing (ἄπαστος) and insatiable (ἄπληστος), but also, ultimately, unforgettable (λαθοίμαν).²²⁶ They assert that a mother's only hope of forgetting such a pain is her own death, but they make clear that they are not entirely sure that even in death they will receive respite from their pain. And as tragic and incomprehensible as parental bereavement may seem, it was a far too common part of the lives of Athenians, especially during the 5th century, which was

²²⁵ The suppliant women are grieving over adult children so the sentiment is not specific to the age group, which is discussed in the following chapter. However, there is no reason to think that the age of one's child makes much difference in terms of the degree to which a mother laments.

²²⁶ "Λαθοίμαν" is in the optative because it is expressing an unattainable wish.

hemmed in by war, and stained in its midst with outbreaks of plague.²²⁷ One need not lose their own infant to comprehend the gravity of such a situation and the murder and exposure of infants and young children in epic, myth, and drama often depict the death of a child as the most horrifying and depressing event that could affect gods, heroes, and mortals. Despite the prevalence of infant mortality, representation of burying and mourning for infants is almost non-existent until the 5th century, at which point it only occupies a handful of scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi*. What these few images are meant to convey and their means of expressing the grief felt by the loss of a young family member is a point of great interest, especially in light of the fact that children begin to appear with more frequency in funerary art in the century that follows.

It is widely acknowledged that the infant mortality rate was relatively high in Classical Athens but concrete numbers are difficult to determine since the Greeks rarely recorded the age of the deceased on their grave markers and the practice of burying children differed from that of adults and is not well documented in the archaeological record.²²⁸ By most recent assessments, up to 20-25%²²⁹ of infants died before the age of three.²³⁰ Additionally, it has been estimated that

²²⁷ The two outbreaks occurred in 430/429 (sometimes considered to be two separate outbreaks) and 427/426. The plague likely took the greatest toll on the weaker members of society, including the very old and the very young. For more on the plague and its impact see Demont 2013, Tritle 2010: 46-8 and Kallet 2009.

²²⁸ See Morris 1992: 181-5 for more on the difficulty of gathering evidence from child burials. For an anthropological study of the difficulties of demography in archaeology see Chamberlain 2006.

²²⁹ See Budin 2013: 2-5; Parkin 2013: 46-8; Blundell 1995: 110; Garland 1990: 108 for a discussion of the various estimates for mortality rates and the criteria by which these numbers were derived.

²³⁰ The term “infant” is used for anyone between the ages of 0 and 3. Though this term is often used of children one year and younger, here it is broadened slightly since it is impossible to determine the precise age and it is common in studies of ancient infant mortality, to use this age division. As the term implies, these are small children who are not able or are barely able to articulate themselves via speech. This chapter deals only with images of infants who are an estimated three years or younger. To decide if each child that appears on a *lêkythos* is of this age, I have used the guidelines and discussion of age classes of Brauronian girls in Sourvinou-Inwood 1988: esp. 31-8. While any character that is shorter than the other figures in a given scene is logically younger than an adult, there are a few other

the average Athenian family had five to six children and it is likely that most families would have had to bury at least one son or daughter in its infancy.²³¹ Sickness and malnutrition were the greatest contributors to the high mortality rate but intentional exposure likely added to the overall number as well. An infant might be exposed when it was not desired. Common reasons for exposure included: physical birth defects, illegitimacy, gender or if the family did not have the means to care for another mouth.²³² The precise number of exposed children is impossible to estimate because these infants were sometimes raised by surrogate families or not given a proper burial. Although infant exposure is central to a number of mythological and dramatic narratives, e.g. *Ion*, *Oedipus*,²³³ it was not a matter that was much discussed in the context of law and society until the Roman period. Aristotle's assertion that infants were at the greatest risk of death within their first ten days likely proved true and it seems that particular caution and attention was paid to infants during this time. Thus, it was typical for a newborn to not be accepted into the family until five days after its birth, at which point it was carried around the hearth by the parents or other relatives in a ritual known as the *Amphidromia*,²³⁴ and subsequently named up to ten days later (*dekate*). It was only after these first two rituals that the infant was safe from

characteristics that Sourvinou-Inwood suggests are meant to indicate that a figure is an infant including: when the head is $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{5}$ of the overall height of the figure, when they have a protruding belly resulting from the "convex profile of the torso" or have a perceptible "chubbiness" to their face, limbs and body. See also Beaumont 1994.

²³¹ See Blundell 1995: 110.

²³² For more on the practice of infant exposure in the Greco-Roman world and contemporary views on its acceptability see Blundell 1995: 130-1; Evans Grubbs 2013, Gallant 1991: 20-1; Garland 1989: 20-1, 1990: 84-93; Haentjens 2000; Harris 1994; Ingalls 2002; Liston & Rotroff 2013; Neils 2003: 144; Oakley 2003: 178-9 and Patterson 1985.

²³³ The "abandoned child" plot device is common in New Comedy, cf. Menander's *Epitrepontes*.

²³⁴ For more on this ceremony and its various sources see Beaumont 2012: 67-9, 68n.71, 91 and Hamilton 1984. The time of the event as well as the details of its rituals remain quite hazy.

intentional exposure though it was still vulnerable to disease and other maladies prevalent at the time.²³⁵

Unlike adults, children were rarely cremated but were often buried in terracotta vessels of various shapes and sizes with a marked lack of funerary gifts and without an aboveground marker.²³⁶ Although the death of an infant might have an utterly devastating impact on their family, it had less impact on the Athenian community as a whole and, thus, not much is known about any particular rituals associated with the burial of a child, or if the same arrangements, such as the *prothesis* and the *ekphora*, were carried out for them. Depending on the circumstances surrounding their death, they might have differing degrees of *miasma* associated with them, thereby affecting the manner in which they might be treated at the time of their burial. Funerary preparations were in large part designed to cleanse and prepare the corpse for inhumation or cremation and would have been adjusted accordingly when the circumstances of death warranted extra cleansing.²³⁷ Likewise, the funeral might have been adjusted due to the age of the infant and the degree to which they were integrated into society.

²³⁵ For more on these rituals see Budin 2013: 3 and Garland 2013: 207-10, 1989: 94.

²³⁶ See Garland 2013: 220-1, 1985: 78-81; Golden 2004: 153; Oakley 2003: 174-6; Morris 1992: 181-2; and Boardman & Kurtz 1971: 188-90, Chpts. 5-6 *passim* for more on the particular burial practices typical of children under the age of three from the Geometric through Roman periods. Plato (Rep.10.615b-c) calls young children (ὀλίγον χρόνον βιούντων) one of the categories of things unworthy of remembrance (οὐκ ἄξια μνήμης), Pliny (*NH* 7.72) tells us that cremation was rare before a child had teeth, and Plutarch (*mor.* 590f, 611e) gives us a similar sense, that children warranted less remembrance. Only male infants appear on white-ground *lékythoi*, but infant graves found in and about Athens contain both male and female bodies with no apparent skewing towards one gender or the other. For more information on specific Athenian child burials, especially those in wells, see Liston and Rotroff 2013: 62-3 and Lagia 2007. They also provide bibliography for works on the archaeology and osteology related to child burial in ancient Athens.

²³⁷ For more on pollution associated with infants see Dasen 2013: 26; Liston and Rotroff 2013: 66, 68, 77 and Garland 2013: 209, 218-9. Since some birth defects and ailments of infants were felt to be related to dark arts, extra care could have been taken to prepare them for burial. Remarkably no image of an infant laid on a bier or funerary cart has been found.

Despite the high infant mortality rate, the practice of exposure, and the less dramatic burials of children, it is wrong to assume that the death of an infant was not deeply felt by its surviving family.²³⁸ Additionally, one should not assume that the lack of imagery of infants in this context was related simply to a lack of interest or empathy toward these members of their family. Although it is not supported in the Greek literary and visual repertoire (see below), some have suggested that parents were in the habit of preparing themselves for losing their children and even cultivated a less personal relationship with their young children, compared to what we might expect in modern American society, to mitigate this potential event.²³⁹ The argument is that Athenians were somehow able to detach themselves from the loss of a young child because they had not yet invested much time and energy toward them and so their death was less remarkable and thus not warranting of the same expenditure of emotional energy and monetary resources.²⁴⁰ This suggestion would seem to be entirely counter to the biological bond created between parent and infant and relies heavily on speculation from the apparent lack of imagery of infant burial and of the number of visible graves. Perhaps it would be wrong to entirely discount the influence that culture must have upon the degree to which one expresses their grief and makes it public. It was probably less acceptable to publicly display such emotions and the law to which Cicero (*Leg.* 2.23.59-60) refers would support the notion that there was a desire to curb excessive, outward expression of emotion related to mourning. However, there is simply not

²³⁸ See Blundell 1995: 110-1 for the impact of child loss.

²³⁹ Garland 1990: 147 discusses the issue of the affection or lack thereof of parents toward their children as a theory brought forth by Pomeroy 1975: 101. See also Garland 1985: 80-1.

²⁴⁰ Hertz 1907: 84-5 suggested that there may be two reasons for this apparent lack of emotional response to the death of children: 1) funerary rites are not necessary for children and 2) this was a survival mechanism for families who had many mouths to feed and would likely lose at least one child during their parenthood.

enough evidence to suggest that there was a lack of interest in the death of young Athenians, and quite to the contrary, by the late 5th century there is evidence to show that Athenian parents could and did publicly display their grief for their deceased children via grave markers for them.²⁴¹

The vulnerability of infants was an issue that Athenians faced in their private lives but also in a public setting in the form of myths and epic narratives that permeated drama, vase paintings, and, presumably, oral story telling. So even if individual expression of sadness for a child was not permitted it could be diffused through the experience of viewing a similar, well-known scenario at the theater, agora or other public space. A brief review of some of the most commonly painted and performed myths shows that a large percentage of the most popular stories include infants and young children and more often than not these mythological characters come to lamentable ends. Most of the more graphic images of infanticide tended to be more popular in south Italy, where images of Medea and Herakles killing their children were exported,²⁴² but the macabre tales of the murders of, for example, Astyanax,²⁴³ Itys, the Niobids, and Atreus' nephews and the attempted exposures of Perseus and Oedipus, and even the ill-fated Athenian youths sent to feed the Minotaur every seven years, appear in various form in the written and visual record in Athens. Gods and heroes, like Athenian families, were victims of

²⁴¹ Golden 2004 has synthesized a few studies from other cultures (namely Cameroon and Brazil) that have sought to show that there are many factors that contribute to how a mother grieves for the death of one of her children. His ultimate conclusion is that there are many factors that must be taken into account but that we should not try to place ancient Athens into any one modern model.

²⁴² See Taplin 2007: esp. 166-219 for vases that likely relate to Euripides' plays.

²⁴³ Images of the murdered Astyanax date back to at least the 7th century (e.g. from a relief *pithos* from Mykonos, c. 670 BC, Mykonos Museum) and continue through to the 5th century. Many of the incidents mentioned here are depicted with more regularity in the Classical period but many have earlier precedents. Those that do not appear in Athens until the Classical period may have been circulated in the city in other forms that do not survive. The general impression is that many tales of child mortality were circulated in Greece throughout the historical period. Many of my examples are stories of the death of children, not necessarily infants, but the sentiment is comparable.

losing their children and witnessing the ways in which they coped with such tragedies provided a model with which writers and painters could explore this difficult issue and which could evoke a shared pathos amongst the audience.

Despite the prevalence of children in mythical narratives, the emphasis of these stories is rarely on the children themselves, particularly young children. When their death, or near death, is a component of the plot, it usually serves to punish or protect an adult: human, hero or god. Hence, the casting away of Perseus (Apollod. 2.4.1) and Oedipus (Soph. *OT*. 711-91), by their grandfather and father, respectively, was deemed necessary by each patriarch in order to protect their own lives. This could surely strike a chord amongst those who gave up or exposed their own children, whether or not they ultimately felt justified in their decision. Proknê and Mêdeia murdered their sons to punish their husbands and protect their own city, heritage, and pride.²⁴⁴ Proknê must protect her Athenian family and its reputation above all else and her son, Itys, is the ideal pawn for such an endeavor. Itys' death is simultaneously the worst punishment for his father, Tereus, but a small sacrifice for the entire city of Athens. Such sentiment respects and recognizes the fact that the death of a child is inexpressibly terrible for the family but ultimately not devastating to the larger community. While this may seem a rather pessimistic view, one can appreciate that during a time of war, any means to justify the great loss of life that a city such as Athens faced must have been welcome.

In the cases of the violent murders of the children of Niobe and of Herakles we learn that perhaps the most devastating punishments devised by the gods was to deprive a parent of their children. And if the men and women of myth could bear witness to such punishment it follows that the Athenian people could experience similar misfortune at the hands of the gods. It is

²⁴⁴ See Barringer 2005: 168-73 for more on Alkamenes' sculptural group and its significance on the akropolis.

noteworthy that none of the stories, which describe the death of an infant or young child, features their funeral or burial. Thus, the representation of child burial is not only absent from ancient Greek imagery and the historical record, but the infant children of heroes seem not to have merited mention or description of their burial. Although the death of a child is often a justifiable casualty for a greater good, there is rarely even mention of their burial. Instead, the focus shifts to the horror of the act of murdering children and the aghast reaction of their parents so that our lasting impression of them is the horrible way in which they were killed. One silver lining to this dismal impression of the role of children in myth are the stories and plays that lay great emphasis on the torment of bereaved mothers and the loving remembrances of their children.

In general, the impact of the death of infants and young children is demonstrated through the deep sorrow felt by parents and the ways in which they grieve, since a funeral was not often warranted. Andromache (e.g. Eur. *Andr.* 501-76, *Tro.* 740-79), Kreousa (Eur. *Ion.* 859-1047), and the Theban mothers of soldiers who died in the battle of the Seven Against Thebes (Eur. *Supp.* 80-6) are all absorbed by the grief at the loss of their sons throughout the entirety of their respective tragic plays and similar sentiments are expressed to varying degrees throughout the entire corpus of extant Athenian tragedy. These narratives, while marred by tragic episodes, focus on the love of the family, not the devastation of it, which shows a sympathetic side to some otherwise grisly tales.

As the following examination of images of infants on white-ground *lékythoi* unfolds, it will become apparent that there was a space, albeit small, for infants in the funerary imagery of 5th century Athens. The ways in which these young Athenians are shown to interact in the realm of the cemetery and Underworld reveals perceptions of the child's ability to perceive and react to the issue of death.

Representing the Deceased Infant

The Classical Period ushered in a new interest in the depiction of children and greater attention was paid to how their bodies and behaviors were presented in visual media. Small children were shown with body proportions more appropriate for babies their age: chubby bodies, large heads and stubby limbs. This new interest in naturalistically portraying the young child body can most notably be seen on the vast array of red-figure *choes*, which often appear in the graves of children but were vessels used by children during their lives. A *chous*, or small wine pitcher, was given to children who attended the *Anthesteria* for the first time (and possibly in following years), at the age of three, and received their first taste of wine.²⁴⁵ Some of the vessels commemorate the festival but for the most part they simply show small children partaking in activities appropriate and beloved by them, e.g. playing with toys or pets, crawling, and even sitting on potty-chairs.²⁴⁶ On a handful of roughly contemporary white-ground *lêkythoi* infants are occasionally shown partaking in the same sorts of activities and are rendered with similarly large heads and chubby frames.

Never before had the day-to-day activities of Athenian children been part of the decorative repertoire of Attic pottery, and although children were only sporadically depicted in imagery outside of the context of the *Anthesteria*.²⁴⁷ The infants that were painted on *choes* often appear

²⁴⁵ Or, rather, presumably received their first drops of wine. This feature of the festival is not attested but the giving of small wine pitchers to children has been used as evidence for children receiving wine at the festival cf. Garland 2013: 21 and Hamilton 1992: *passim*.

²⁴⁶ For more information on the *choes*, including images, and the *Anthesteria*, see Neils 2003: 145-7, Hame 1999; Hamilton 1992 and van Hoorn 1951 (out of date but nonetheless thorough). Given that *choes* come in a range of sizes and often the smallest vessels show infants and the larger older boys, male children were perhaps given a *chous* at each festival. The size of a vessel found in a grave may relate to the child's age at death.

²⁴⁷ Garland 1990: 153 has noted that the lack of children in the visual registry prior to the period is likely due to the lack of an appropriate genre on which to portray children. Mythological children might

to have been very quickly executed and do not show the same level of detail that was paid to adult figures on contemporary symposiastic and ritual wares. However, by the time that white-ground *lêkythoi* came to be made as funerary wares *en masse*, it seems that more concern was being paid to depicting infants more naturalistically. Given the fact that children will come to appear even more frequently in the carved imagery of grave stelai of the 4th century, it seems that they contributed to the and the decoration of vases in the latter category often appeared to have been quickly executed without the care and attention given to much of the contemporary symposiastic and ritual wares, it is obvious that a concerted effort was being made to show children more as they actually existed, and that Athenians were interested in purchasing goods that included infants as well as idealized men and women, a common feature of the period. By the time white-ground *lêkythoi* ceased to be produced *en masse* as funerary gifts, children had found a more stable place within the catalog of funeral related figures.²⁴⁸

Lêkythoi that depict deceased infants show them about to embark upon Charon's skiff or at the graveside. With one exception, there is at least one adult female present, presumably the mother or nurse, and the infant is always male.²⁴⁹ This pairing of mother and son is consistent with Greek tragedy as it is always a parent's (and most often a mother's) loss of a son that inspires moments of great suffering. The scarcity of such images and the pathos that they must have conjured suggest that they were reserved for special occasions, either to commemorate an

appear in scenes from epic or drama but ordinary children were not appropriate for symposiastic or ritual wares and were likely not as appealing as mythological scenes on other domestic wares.

²⁴⁸ See Burnett Grossman 2007: 309-11 and Oakley 2003: 179-81 for more on the prevalence and representation of children on Classical grave reliefs.

²⁴⁹ On a vase in Munich (Antiken. 2796), see below, only a small boy and Charon appear. I will refer to the female figures who hold and gaze directly at infants as mothers for the sake of simplicity. There is no way to determine whether these figures are in fact mothers as opposed to female nurses or even older siblings but they have a close relationship to the child. See R auchle 2017 for more on the role of motherhood in Greek imagery.

actual loss of a child or, more generally, to express an unfathomable level of grief that perhaps only a mother's loss of a young child could convey. In scenes where the infant prepares to board Charon's skiff we might presume that the mother has come to assist her son one last time before he leaves her forever. Such images imply that as long as the child remains in the liminal state between the earth and the Underworld, his mother remains as close as she can; even though it is clear that she is useless to help her child, she will stay vigilantly until he vanishes from her sight.

On a vase by the Painter of Munich 2335 at the Metropolitan Museum (09.221.44), we see the departure of a young boy, saying farewell to his mother as he prepares to sail with Charon to his afterlife [Fig. 56]. On the far left, the boy's mother stands facing toward the right. She is wrapped in a red *himation* and from what remains of her body and cloak it appears that she is holding her arms close to her chest, swaddled in her garment, in a manner similar to another bereaved mother in a vase by the Thanatos Painter (Emory 1999.11.1) [Fig. 57]. In the way that she is wrapped up she is unable to reach out toward her son, which is regardless a lost cause since he is already deceased. The desire of the living to embrace the dead or their spirit is a recurring theme in epic and tragedy, i.e. Achilles attempts to embrace the ghost of Patroklos (*Il.* 23.99-102) and Odysseus is luckless when he reaches for his mother, Antikleia, and appears again and again in the manner that mourners approach and interact with the grave in scenes on white-ground *lékythoi*. Although Odysseus is an adult, he is overcome by a desire to embrace his deceased mother during his journey to the Underworld (*Od.* 11.204-22). We come to find out that it was none other than the suffering caused by her son's absence and presumed death that killed Antikleia. Odysseus fails three times to give his mother a final embrace, and instead gropes only air. Like the suppliants in Euripides' play, Antikleia took her grief to the grave because she could not overcome or bear any longer to mourn for her lost son. The painter's choice to completely

cover the mother's hands in the aforementioned vase serves to underline the fact that there can be no tactile interaction between this mother and son. We can easily imagine that these figures may be suffering much like Odysseus and Antikleia did.

Returning to the vase [Fig. 56], we see that the woman's head tilts down toward the boy, her neck making a slight angle away from the straight line created by her legs and back. Her large eye is somewhat faded, but it is still possible to see that the position of her pupil makes clear that she is gazing directly at the young boy's head, though not his face. Her lips turn down at the corners and her lowered brow reveals a slight frown. The downward turn of her mouth is emphasized by its particularly angular shape: her lips first sweep up from the front of her face but then sharply turn downward at a 45° angle midway to the corner of her mouth. Her sad expression and rigid body give a sense of solemn calm as if she is completely absorbed by the memory of her lost son. Like Niobe, petrified by the thought of her dead children, this woman stands unable to outwardly express her deep sorrow, which evades any means of representative expression.

Moving to the right we find, standing upon a rock roughly the height of his mother's shins, an infant boy rolling along a pull-toy as he begins his descent to the Underworld. His feet point toward the right, where Charon is waiting aboard his skiff, but his upper torso and face are directed back toward his mother. His right foot is planted to the stone, his knee locked into place, while his left foot leans, with bended knee, toward the skiff. He has, for the moment, anchored himself to the rock, the threshold between life with his family and eternity below. From his hips, he is turned backward and he is reaching his arm as far as he can, up toward his mother, but he just barely misses her *himation*-draped hands. He teeters in his liminal state upon his anchored, right foot: fate pulls at his left knee, drawing him downward, while his right hand reaches up

drawn by an emotional bond to his mother and a desire to return to her. The position of his hand, in a typical suppliant gesture with palm upraised, adds to the sense that the boy is pleading to return to his mother's embrace. As an empathetic audience, we want his entreaty to be fulfilled but we know that the downward pull is ultimately going to succeed; fate is unavoidable. His helplessness in this situation adds to the overall emotional charge of the scene.

The mother looks toward the small boy but he does not meet her gaze since his sight is set somewhere near her chest. The lack of eye contact between the two figures calls attention to the fact that they are not present within the same narrative and that they only "see" each other as a figment of their memories. Their unmet gaze emphasizes that despite their proximity in this image, they are in two distant places, unable to interact with one another. The fact that the boy's gesture is not at all met with any movement or expression from his mother is particularly devastating and suggests a feeling of utter sadness and despair that must be felt by the young soul. He simultaneously shows sadness for leaving his mother but courage in approaching death.

In the case of the mother, what lies before her is perhaps a representation of what she hopes is happening or has happened to a beloved, lost son. In her mind she sees her son, brave and willing beyond his young age, going to meet his fate. He gestures back toward her, as he must miss her dearly, but he does not become consumed by his grief and aside from a slight frown maintains his composure as he readies himself to meet Charon, a notoriously gruff, old man.²⁵⁰ Since Charon is shown as a kind conveyer of spirits we might imagine that this could provide some reassurance for bereaved parents as they witness the death of their young children. Since an

²⁵⁰ Most detailed descriptions of Charon date to after the 5th century but he was often shown as a mature man with a beard and shaggy hair in Classical imagery. He was occasionally shown with a crooked nose and/or wrinkles (e.g. *LIMC* Charon I: 5, 11, 41) though he was never depicted as a terrifying figure in Greek art. The Etruscan version of the god, Charun, was particularly wrinkled and ugly, cf. the plastic vase of Charun's head from Munich (Antiken. 343). There is no sense in the corpus of white-ground *lékythoi* that Charon is meant to instill fear in his passengers.

Athenian's valor, *aretê* (ἀρετή), was highly prized, especially in the context of war, the thought of a brave young man facing his death with dignity would surely appeal to a Greek mother and reassure her that her child would, even in death, manifest Athenian virtue.

This sentiment is similarly conveyed on a *lekythos*, now in Munich (Antiken. 2796)²⁵¹, which depicts Charon awaiting a young boy walking towards him from the right. Unlike the previous image there are no attending adults to watch as the boy joins the ferryman. As before, the boy is pulling a rolling toy over a rocky outcropping that leads down to the River Styx and he shows no hesitation as he approaches his fate. His entire body faces Charon, who is offering his outstretched hand to help the boy aboard. His feet are spread apart at a distance that implies a relatively swift gait and he is reaching his arm out to meet Charon's. The toy is the only thing that is angled toward the right and the boy is leaning down towards the river. The lack of hesitation suggests that the boy does not fear or disagree with his fate and reveals that he has great courage and composure even in the face of death. Since there are no mourners present, the emphasis is on the boy and his merits rather than bitter sadness.

The aforementioned examples are two of only six depictions of young children about to board or on board Charon's skiff.²⁵² There are three further examples that include young children who are shown considerably shorter than their adult peers, who are not quite adolescents but are many years beyond infancy.²⁵³ Adults also appear in scenes with Charon with or without mourning bystanders.²⁵⁴ In the only extant version of a scene with an infant already boarded on

²⁵¹ Cf. CVA (Munich, Antikensammlungen 15, Pls. 75-77).

²⁵² The others are: Athens (NM 1814, 16463), Mainz (Univ. 21) and Munich (Antiken. 2796).

²⁵³ Athens NM 1758, Boston MFA 95.47 and New York MMA 75.2.6.

²⁵⁴ See Oakley 2004: list 11, 108-11 and Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 321-3. Oakley lists 90 vases that certainly depict Charon. Most of these include a deceased adult on their journey to the Underworld.

Charon's ship (Athens, NM 16463), the division between mother and son is emphasized by the mother's inability to board the ship. Additionally, the body of Charon stands as a boundary between the two but the mother reaches out toward her son all the same, trying to scoop him up in her arms. This motherly desire to embrace a child is beautifully summarized by Andromache in Euripides' *Trojan Women* (757-63). She claims that there is nothing more sweet or dear than the smell of a child and she yearns to hold her dear Astyanax again. The small boy also expresses his desire to be held by reaching his arms back toward his mother. As the boat pushes off and begins its departure the space between mother and infant, now only the width of Charon's body, will continue to grow.

In addition, there are a few images of deceased babies that appear in the physical vicinity of the grave rather than upon their journey to the Underworld. In these instances, the identity of the infant as deceased is made apparent by the fact that they appear seated or crawling upon the grave marker itself.²⁵⁵ In one example (Athens NM 17521) [**Fig. 58**],²⁵⁶ an infant boy is shown crawling up the steps of his grave with a youth standing behind him on the left and a woman standing to the right. With his knees resting on the second step and his palms resting on the top step, he has lifted his chest upward so that he can more easily look up toward his mother who is standing to the right of the stele. The boy's small size and crawling pose suggest that he is quite young, likely under a year old. He is nude but wears a *probaskanion*²⁵⁷ around his chest and

²⁵⁵ See Chapter 6 for identification of the dead.

²⁵⁶ ARV² *Non vidi*: The images that are available in the CVA (Athens, Musée National 2, 15, Pls. 97-98) are not ideal for close observation. The image of the overall scene is a drawing and a photograph of the vase shows that its decoration is very faint and the entire body was found broken in many pieces. My description is derived from the image and text provided in the CVA.

²⁵⁷ For more on the use of *probaskania*, see Garland 2013: 210, Beaumont 2012: 61-2, and Dasen 2011: 310-1. Children in scenes on *choes* are often depicted wearing these talismans.

perhaps his wrist as well. The *probaskanion* was worn by small children to protect them from dangerous forces and its presence alone underscores the perceived vulnerability of young children. However, despite the intended protection of this talisman, this infant passed away, a subtle reminder of the many dangers to which infants were particularly susceptible. Although *probaskania* are commonly worn by infants in Classical Greek imagery, in this specific context and on a deceased infant, one might surmise that they are intended to provide some protection in the afterlife just as they had, hopefully, done in life.

The boy's face appears to be relaxed and his eyes are focused on his mother. If we are able to trust the faded photographs and reconstruction drawing, the infant's eye is proportionately large, which allows a viewer to follow its line of sight and see that it is directed upward toward the woman's outwards stretched arm and face. The direction of his gaze seems to follow the direction of his body. He cannot speak to ask for her to come over and as an infant who cannot yet stand up and walk to get closer to her, he is unable to stretch his arms out to beckon her; he is left to lean as close to her as he possibly can. Although he seems to observe his mother and her grieving gesture (one hand held to her head), he cannot react in a manner that would show that he understands her grief. Though we can perhaps imagine that an infant who is striving for his parent's attention might be crying, there is never an indication of this in the visual repertoire. This is in part because tears were almost never depicted and, perhaps, because by showing the infant this way, they are shown as an idealized version of themselves.²⁵⁸

The homes of most Athenians must have been full of the sounds of infants and children crying, laughing and cooing so the silence of the white-ground scenes appear particularly unnerving when small children are present. The gesture of outstretched arms is often

²⁵⁸ See Chapter 1: 74-9. for more on crying in the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi*.

accompanied by a cry or mutter because these are the innate impulses that an infant has, before they are able to verbally articulate themselves, to express needs and desires. The voice and opinion of a child was not an important component of any given situation. Infants and children were victims in tragic myths and plays but they are rarely, if ever, given a voice to articulate the emotions they feel the way adults do.²⁵⁹ We can imagine the children might exclaim “E! E!” or “Ai! Ai!” as they are lunged at by a knife-wielding Proknê, Medeia, or Atreus just off stage, but this is the least they could do to show their reaction to being murdered.²⁶⁰ One does not expect a young child to be able to articulate complex feelings surrounding tragedy and the depth of their sadness can easily be expressed through inarticulate outbursts and outstretched arms. This is the most ‘realistic’ action for a child to perform but when it is shown with great composure, it fails to dramatize the horror of the situation.

Likewise, the mother has directed her right hand in his direction but she does so in a typical gesture of mourning rather than in any attempt to engage with the boy directly. Clearly both she and the youth are mourners come to lament the loss of the small boy. The youth mourns with a single arm raised to his head, while the woman touches her head with her left hand and extends the right hand down toward the boy. Her left arm is raised to the bun at the top of her hair, in a gesture of woe or in an attempt to rip at her hair or beat upon her head. Although the direction of her arm leads our eyes directly to the small infant on the steps, there is no indication that she is aware of him or his longing gaze. A very similar situation is depicted on a vase in Vienna (Univ.

²⁵⁹ I am thankful to Helene Foley for filling in my knowledge about some of the tragic plays that did include children to a greater degree. It seems, for instance, that Niobe’s children in Sophokles’ *Niobe* may have expressed their fear and despair as Apollo and Artemis attacked them with arrows.

²⁶⁰ One exception to this is Alcestis’ son who is able to speak to his mother and articulate his grief at the situation.

791),²⁶¹ though only a single woman has come to mourn in this instance. The child appears quite large but is proportioned like an infant with a very stout body and large head. He supports his body with his left hand on the upper step of his grave marker and his right hand is lifted near or upon the stele, which is ornamented with a number of sashes and ribbons. The poor preservation of the surface of the vase makes it hard to tell the precise position of his hand. A woman to the left of the grave has arrived bearing yet another sash to dedicate to the well-visited grave. She looks down toward the boy, and he looks toward her as if to observe her solemn lament of his departure, but neither shows any indication that they are attempting to interact directly with one another.

The Thanatos Painter (Emory 1999.11.1) [Fig. 57] produced a similar scene but rather than having the baby merely crawl up the shallow steps of a grave, he has placed him high atop the marker's summit. The boy is seated on his left leg and is leaning on both hands toward his left side, in one of the most original and naturalistic infant poses of the genre and period. His chest faces forward while his right arm crosses over his body and he turns his entire attention to his left side. The face of the child suggests that he is content on his perch and interested in the contents of a box that a servant girl is carrying on her head toward the grave. The girl is shown approaching the stele from the right side with a basket of ribbons on her head and an *alabastron* in her left hand. To the left of the stele stands a woman dressed in a *himation*, with her hands wrapped entirely in its folds, looking toward the infant who is seated roughly at her eye level. The woman, likely the mother, is frowning and lamenting her poor infant boy. As is true in all of the images of deceased children at their graves, but not of infants meeting Charon, this child does not gesture towards his mother. Atop his grave this child makes no fuss and no attempt to reach

²⁶¹ ARV² 1233.2. Cf. *CVA* Vienna, U41-U42, Fig.7, Pl.(221) 27.1-2 or Crelier 2008: Fig. L25.

out to his mother. He is at the mercy of his fate and his inability to react or even move from his stone pedestal is so. His placement atop the grave makes his status as the deceased clear and it also sets him apart and provides context for the mourning that is taking place.

These examples differ from a third scene on a *lêkythos* (Munich, Antiken. 7619) in which yet another infant boy is crawling on the steps of his ovoid grave mound [Fig. 59]. The boy is kneeling on the second step and his arms are placed upon the top step so that he can elevate his chest and head as high as possible. From this vantage point he is able to get a good look at his mother and her outstretched arms. Unlike the previously mentioned scene, the mother in this scene is engaged with the infant. If he were crawling on anything other than a tomb one could easily mistake this for any other domestic scene between a mother and child. They show no signs of sadness in their faces, nor are either of them engaged in a gesture that is related to this particular context. Since the two seem to be able to interact with each other, we might imagine that this tomb belongs to both of them and we are being offered a glimpse into how the bereaved might imagine they interact with one another in their shared afterlife. They are doing something that they would have done in life in order to demonstrate their close relationship,²⁶² but, by placing them beside the grave, we as an audience understand that they are only reflections of people who once lived.

Birth was treacherous for both mother and child and it must have been the case that sometimes a husband would have to bury both a wife and a newborn child in close proximity to one another.²⁶³ It is easy to imagine that a scene such as this was meant to commemorate just this

²⁶² Cf. an Attic red-figure *pelike* with a mother and father watching an infant crawl across the floor (London BM 1864.1007.189). Garland 1990: 123 fig.10.

²⁶³ There is some evidence that suggests that the clothing of women who died in childbirth might be dedicated at Brauron to Artemis in her capacity as the goddess of childbirth. See most recently Budin 2016: esp. 104-7.

event. On Classical grave *stélai*, we are sometimes told that the grave marked the plot for a (grand)mother, or other relative, and child.²⁶⁴ One of the most famous examples of shared tombs shows a grandmother and grandchild and includes an epigram that indicates the relationship of two. It also suggests that in death, just as in life, they are sharing in each other's company.²⁶⁵ This domestic scene becomes increasingly popular in stone relief and perhaps provides an idealized and charming image by which to remember a beloved family member. Sometimes there seems to be more of a blurring between the spheres of the living and the dead (see below) as if such images were meant to show that one can imagine lives continuing in the realm of death much as they did on earth. Like the figures shown approaching Charon, here is a chance to show the deceased content and in a 'nice' place which is reassuring to a bereaved mourner.

Why, if we can reasonably deem that the loss of a young child was as relatable as it was devastating, are there so few images that express the unique sadness associated with it? It was perhaps the specificity of such images that made them less versatile and thus less in demand. Since most children were not buried in a manner that would be ideal for accepting gifts such as *lêkythoi*, it is likely that there was not a large market for images specific to infants and children. Perhaps the more appropriate question is not why were there so few images of deceased children but rather why were there any at all? If one could be remembered after death as a warrior or an infant, the choice might be obvious for a Classical Athenian. The *lêkythoi* that were dedicated to an individual need not reflect the dedicatee's actual lot in life and the overall message and

²⁶⁴ For more regarding the depiction of children on funerary *stelai* from the Late Classical Period onward, see Burnett-Grossman 2007; Garland 1989: 86; Oakley 2003: 179-82 and Rühfel 1984: chapter 3. For a catalog of Attic funerary *stelai*, see Clairmont 1970, 1983 and 1993.

²⁶⁵ "Here I hold my daughter's child, the beloved one, which I used to hold on my knees when, living, we beheld the rays of the sun, and now, dead, I hold the dead child." Johansen 1951: 17).

emotional impact of an image seems to have been much more important than its accuracy to a given situation. Given the Athenian proclivity for depicting the idealized form of men and women rather than a more realistic one, it makes sense that in a funerary context, more than anywhere else, idealized images would be used as a means of honoring and remembering lost loved ones.

Representing the Infant Mourner

One might not think of small children when they imagine the active participants of formal Greek lamentation for the deceased but since the Geometric Period they were occasionally depicted amongst groups of mourners. Funerary traditions composed of elaborate songs and gestures would be taught over time. Young children would surely not understand the complexities of these rituals when they first saw them but through watching and mimicking their parents they would come to understand the importance of the songs and actions integral to funerary rituals. Girls would need to learn the activities at a fairly young age because funerary duties were an important part of female-designated tasks and we find young girls included in a number of black- and red-figure *prothesis* scenes.²⁶⁶ To show that mourning a family member was a burden shared by the entire family, scenes of the *prothesis* or *ekphora* included figures of various ages and statuses. A child's presence in these scenes showed that they were integral participants of the mourning process; it was a family affair shared by all its members.²⁶⁷ No distinction between what sorts of activities might more realistically be associated with children as opposed to adults was articulated in these early scenes and children might be shown with

²⁶⁶ Foley 2003: 131.

²⁶⁷ Children appear mourning beside the bier in a few Geometric scenes including those of Figs. 1 and 8. Small girls appear in many of the black-figure *pinakes* with *prothesis* scenes. Cf. Figs. 4-6.

hands drawn to their head or outstretched in recognizable gestures. In other words, indistinguishable from the adults. Children did bring depth and diversity to the throng of mourners present in particular scenes, but they did not offer a particularly “childish” element to those compositions.

Thus, the appearance of infants mourning on white-ground *lékythoi* is not completely without precedent. It is, on the other hand, the form in which they appear that is wholly unique to the period. No longer are infants and children shown as part of a crowd of mourners at the *prothesis* or *ekphora*; instead, they exclusively appear beside the grave in the company of one or two adults. Additionally, they are no longer simply depicted as echoing their parents’ postures but instead react to death the way we might suppose a toddler or infant might: spontaneously and emotionally but not at all methodically. Just as the elderly men discussed in the previous chapter, the small handful of images that show an infant in the role of “mourner” attempted to depict how this might actually manifest itself, demonstrating an awareness of different levels of understanding when it came to mourning.

It is important to remember that as much as child mortality was a grave and common occurrence in ancient Greece, so was the death of women due to complications of childbirth.²⁶⁸ Though an infant or young child could not immediately understand, and thus perceive feelings of sadness with the loss of a parent, the image of a child beside the grave of his mother immediately relates the pain of losing a parent and growing up without their care. The particular bond between mother and child is all the more apparent in the quaint white-ground scenes that are not overwhelmed by multiple characters and are quite sparing with their inclusion of mourners that are not simply middle-aged men or women. Since a young child is always shown in the presence

²⁶⁸ *Supra* n.188 and Garland 1989: 65f.

of an adult female, we find that perhaps the relationship between mother and child was the focus of these scenes, not either character independently. Thus, not only is the image of a deceased or mourning infant upsetting as a representation of a distortion of the natural order of things, i.e. it is not the duty of the old to bury the young, but by drawing attention to the recognizably strong bond between a mother and child an artist could also tap into the particular devastation that followed a disruption of it. Both mothers and young children were susceptible to the dangers of childbirth and sickness, which makes these scenes all the more poignant.²⁶⁹

One such vase which demonstrates a child's yearning for a lost mother is now located at the British Museum (1905.7-10.10) [Fig. 60]. A broad band from the body of the *lékythos* remains roughly three-quarters in circumference intact. On the far left of the fragment stands a woman holding an infant. She is facing toward the right and a woman seated on a stele, is facing toward the left. Behind the seated woman are a few remaining brushstrokes of what used to be a man leaning on a cane, facing toward the stele. Not much of this male figure remains though the shape of his knee can be seen outlined beneath a wash of red *chiton*. Nothing of his face remains and the primary focus of the scene is the interaction between infant and mother, which are conveniently well-preserved.

If one focuses their attention to the left side of the vase, they will come across the rigid body of a female figure holding a nude, infant boy. Her body, from breast to calves, is all that remains but we might suppose that she is a maid or close relative.²⁷⁰ Her drapery hangs vertically like a

²⁶⁹ In such scenes it is not so much the grief of the individual child that creates a notion of sadness in the overall image. An infant is incapable of expressing grief in the same manner as an adult so rather than rely on a sad facial expression to show that this is a grievous occasion, the concept in and of itself of a young child going to mourn their mother is powerful enough to express the emotional state of the scene.

²⁷⁰ For comparisons, see e.g. Oakley 2000: *passim*.

fluted column. Yet, out of the folds of her chiton, her left arm extends perpendicular to her still, straight body, holding the hip and legs of a small, male child. She holds the boy beneath his left armpit and hip, apparently in an effort to keep him steady should he squirm. Despite not being able to see if her face reveals any clues regarding her own feelings about the sad occasion, she plays an important part in the composition as a whole simply by carrying the boy who so emphatically portrays his yearning to embrace his mother. The boy, who appears no older than a year or two, is nude but for a *probaskanion* draped across his chest, right shoulder to left hip, a simple bracelet around his left wrist, and anklet around his right ankle.²⁷¹ While he reaches out toward the grave stele and the woman seated upon it, his feet point towards his maid as though she had been holding him cradled against her breast until he became aware of the significance of their outing and turned to get a better look. From his waist up he is twisted towards his left so that he faces the viewer. His arms are outstretched with open palms. With his left hand he reaches as far as he can manage toward his seated mother. His right leg is straight and falling in line with the still drapes of the *chiton*, his left jutting toward the maid to balance himself and offset the weight of his body leaning away from her at nearly a 45° angle. He cannot wait for his maid to reach the grave so he leans as far as he is able to get as close as possible. His urgency shows why the stable grip of his maid is necessary.

The boy's face above his lips has been lost so one cannot make out any facial indications of grief. It appears that his head is tilted in a way that suggests that his arm is an extension of the direction of his gaze, straight toward his mother. It is doubtful that the boy's expression would have added much to our sense of his sadness since, if one looks at the overall corpus of children in white-ground *lêkythoi* and Classical Attic art more broadly, they will find that it is through

²⁷¹ *Supra* n. x for more on the *probaskanion*.

body language and not facial expression that children most often express their grief and other emotions.²⁷² A similar posture to this young boy's may be seen in images of the infant Hyllos leaning towards his father Herakles, hoping that he will pick him up.²⁷³ Likewise, in a unique white-ground *lêkythos* (Copenhagen NM 6328) with the infant Achilles being handed over by Hermes to Chiron, the hero leans away from the body of Hermes to touch his future tutor.²⁷⁴ He has leaned so strongly that Hermes has had to extend his arms out to help brace the boy²⁷⁵ as he precariously thrusts his hands and upper body towards Chiron. One gets a sense in each of these images that Herakles and Chiron can and will ultimately appease the eager babies by holding them. The fact that the boy in this scene cannot and will never be able to be held by his mother again intensifies the emotionally charged scene. The boy's outspread hands fall at roughly the same height as his mother's face but even if his maid takes another step or two forward he will be no closer to actually touching her. The void between the two figures is emphasized by the rectangle of open space that divides the two of them.

The boy's great effort is met with no reaction from the object of his desire. The woman sits upon the steps of her grave with her legs crossed, left over right and her arms, right over left. In

²⁷² e.g. Copenhagen, NM 6328: CVA Kopenhagen 4, 170.1a-b (172); cf. *LIMC* Achilles 40 or Hermes 384 for image and further bibliography.

²⁷³ Cf. most notably, the *pelike* attributed to the Siren Painter (Paris, Louvre, no. G229) and the column krater by the Tyszkiewicz Painter (Padula, Museo, no. T.xliii), both in Shapiro 2003: 93. Cf. *LIMC* Herakles 1674-6, 1678 and 1679 (c. 380, postdates funerary *lêkythoi*). Other mythological babies that can be seen in the same gesture include Iphikles, though he reaches up from a bed not out from the grasp of an adult (cf. *LIMC* Herakles 1651, Iphikles 6, and Alkmene 8 and 11) and Astyanax (cf. *LIMC* Hektor 21 (later Apulian), *LIMC* Andromache I 21 (later Apulian), Perseus, and Dionysios (cf. *LIMC* Hermes 365a and 368a).

²⁷⁴ There are other black-figure *lêkythoi* with Chiron but this is the only white-ground red figure example. This moment when an eager young Achilles is handed over to Chiron is found on other vases as well. Cf. *LIMC* Achilles 20, 23, 29, and 40.

²⁷⁵ Compare this to the white-ground *lêkythos* with a woman holding a baby, who has leaned away from the body of his carrier in order to touch a deceased figure (Havana, Bellas Artes 202).

her right palm she rests her chin and gazes vacantly forward and slightly upward. Her posture is reminiscent of the vigilant Penelope awaiting the arrival of her beloved Odysseus.²⁷⁶ Perhaps similarly this mother will patiently wait in the Underworld for her young son to eventually join her. If we follow her pupil she is looking towards an object beyond or through the young boy. The path of her gaze meets his hand but there is no sense that she is looking at it *per se*. It is as if her eyesight is directing us towards the object of her contemplation and not of her real gaze. Unlike the boy who seems to see his mother or at least sense that they are near her grave, the woman seems to not be aware of what stands before her. Her lips are ever so slightly turned down at their corner though she seems not to be in great sorrow but rather in a moment of reflection.

Such a scene that emphasizes a child's desire to be picked up by a doting parent or maid reminds the viewer that children have a necessity for tactile interaction. And, without the ability to speak, they are forced to express their wants, desires, pains and angers through gestures or more simply the single gesture of an outstretched arm. The embrace of a mother is nearly a panacea for a young child so they are effective at asking for it from a very early age. Any other gesture made by this young boy would be a poor representation of how a baby would actually react to loss and desire. It is precisely because of this need for touch that Oakley²⁷⁷ explains the posture of a small child atop a shrouded bier of a large terracotta group from Vari (Athens NM 26747). The group is composed of a man riding horseback and a cart being pulled by horses (now lost), which conveys a shrouded bier, four mourning women, a driver, a young child, and a bird. The small child is laying upon the shroud, in a manner that allows him to be in as much

²⁷⁶ For a discussion of the meaning of this gesture in Greek vase painting see Neumann 1965.

²⁷⁷ Oakley 2003: 167.

contact with the deceased while leaving his arms free to be lifted in a gesture of grief. His laying on the bier must be intentional because other figures around the bier are standing up with upraised arms and so it would have been technically possible to show this boy seated or standing if this was a better way to portray him.

In two unique instances in the corpus of white-ground *lêkythoi*, there are scenes in which a living and a deceased character touch one another. In one (Zurich L545), a woman and a man seated on his *stêlê* extend their hands for the *dexiosis* [Fig. 61].²⁷⁸ This is a common scene type on the grave *stêlai* of the late Classical Period, but it appears only three times on extant, 5th century funerary vases, two of which include an infant or child.²⁷⁹ There is additionally a vase that shows a deceased man touching the arm of an infant, which is a motion that appears nowhere else in the corpus of funerary vases from the Classical Period.²⁸⁰ Thus, in three of the four examples in which living and deceased physically interact, a child is involved and their own desire to physically touch is echoed by the gesture of the *dexiosis*.²⁸¹

On the vase in Zurich, a woman with a baby in her arms is shown approaching a grave marker, with a man seated upon it. The woman stands with her weight on her left foot and her right knee slightly bent, lifting her right foot ever so slightly above the ground, as if she has just arrived at the stele. Her body is positioned rigidly upright but her head is tilted down so that she

²⁷⁸ On loan to the museum from a private collection from Winterthur, Switzerland.

²⁷⁹ Thus far, I am only able to locate 3 examples of the *dexiosis*. There is one with an infant present, one with a child partaking in the gesture (Kansas City 41.51) and one that occurs between two men (Athens Ker. 8954/1444). Oakley 2004: 222 claims that it is “virtually nonexistent” in this genre but does not give his own list of examples. See McNiven 2007: 95 for more on the *dexiosis* on grave stelai.

²⁸⁰ As of yet I have not seen this gesture elsewhere in Greek funerary art.

²⁸¹ On a vase by the Quadrate Painter (Paris, Musée du Petit Palais, no. 344) an older child is taking a wreath from the basket of a seated woman that is filled with funerary garlands and other funerary decorations. He appears to be the deceased figure in this scene and is receiving the gift from a living mourner.

may gaze at the face of the man with whom she is shaking hands. Her right arm appears somewhat limp and bends only slightly at the elbow to effortlessly meet the man's outstretched hand. Her fingers seem relaxed and the handshake appears in no way firm, perhaps suggesting that since the man is dead there is no way for the two to actually touch. Often in depictions of the *dexiosis* on grave *stélai* of the late 5th and early 4th centuries, hands are shown truly interlocked, thumb over thumb and/or with the fingertips of the back hand curling under the baby finger of the front hand but this is not at all the case here.²⁸²

The man is sitting with a staff in his hand and *petasos* hanging from a cord around his neck. He is wearing the short chiton and *chlamys* typical of a hunter or traveler, perhaps alluding to the journey he must make to the Underworld. His legs extend outward and his left foot appears to be lightly resting upon the woman's left foot. Overlapping feet of figures in departure and funerary scenes can be seen elsewhere, though the precise meaning of this gesture is unknown.²⁸³ The man looks up toward the woman's face and seems to gaze directly at her eyes though her eyes do not quite meet his. Perhaps we are meant to think that since he can see her as a living visitor to his grave he is able to focus on her eyes while for her, he is merely a figment of her imagination and thus she cannot meet his gaze precisely. This might also explain her not fully grasping his hand.

In the woman's left hand and crook of her elbow sits a small infant boy. He is holding on to his mother's left shoulder with his right hand to brace himself as he leans outward with his left hand in an attempt to touch the seated man, or perhaps request for him to pick him up. There is no indication that the boy is sorrowful and his face and body language only indicate that he is

²⁸² Cf. e.g. New York MMA 06.287, 59.11.27.

²⁸³ Cf. white-ground *lêkythos* by the Achilles Painter (Athens NM 1818) and the funerary stele of Agenor from Thessaloniki I.ΔA. 1.

eager to be held by the young man on the grave. The line created between the boy's outstretched arms echoes that of his mother's extended right arm, and their heads are positioned at the same angle and with a similar countenance, emphasizing the similar desires of the two living figures and their concerted effort to reach the deceased man. Though the young boy eagerly reaches out for the man, whom we as viewers can see, it is uncertain whether he can actually see him. There is little evidence that visitors to the grave "see" ghosts so when they look or gesture toward a deceased figure it is likely that they see the grave but imagine its deceased occupant. In this case, the boy may merely be copying his mother's gesture and reaching out as she does, understanding that they are reaching towards the grave of a beloved soul, presumably father of the infant.²⁸⁴ Since the gesture of reaching to touch the deceased is mimicked by both mourners, it draws emphasis to their desire to make physical contact. Just as dressing the stele allows visitors to interact tangibly with the *sēma* and show their lasting desire to touch the dead, so too does this composition demonstrate a need to make physical contact.

A vase now in the British Museum (1928.2-13.2) contains an anomalous scene in which three, apparently deceased, figures interact before a grave that is being visited by a woman cloaked in a red himation [Fig. 62]. The mourning woman has approached from the far left and she is carrying a tray in her left hand, though the contents can no longer be distinguished.²⁸⁵ Sitting before her on the steps of a grave marker is a woman wearing a *chiton*(?) and *sphendone* and holding an infant boy in her arms. A stele rises above the far left side of the steps upon which she sits. Usually the marker is situated in the middle of the grave platform so it is possible

²⁸⁴ He is shown as a young man perhaps as a means to show him as an idealized youth.

²⁸⁵ The vase has suffered some surface damage since being originally photographed. The images on the Beazley archive (Beazley Archive no. 215518) show the image best. The mourning woman's face has since been partially broken and the color is very faded.

that this unprecedented arrangement may have been created simply to accommodate the unusual interaction here. This arrangement is unprecedented and would look rather odd once the people had left. At the same time, it allows the grave marker to be situated before the woman's face rather than at her side, which is the way the stele appears in other images in which a figure is seated upon its steps.²⁸⁶

On the other side of the stele, facing the woman and child is a young man standing in military garb. He wears a helmet, a short chiton, and a *chlamys* and is holding a spear in his left hand. The spear is held at a diagonal so that its butt overlaps with the woman's left foot. Since the steps do not extend beyond the edge of the stele on the side approached by the man, he is able to walk up close to the woman and child. At the same time, the stele still stands as a marker between them. Often the stele acts as a marker that divides a living mourner from the deceased, emphasizing the physical boundary between the two. However, if we accept that only dead people sit or stand upon the grave and its steps,²⁸⁷ and that no living man would ever arrive at a grave in full military regalia,²⁸⁸ we have an occasion here where the *stèle* seems to divide (or connect?) three deceased figures.

The woman and man do not engage visually or physically, except for the slight overlap of her foot and his spear. He is looking down at her but she seems to stare forward vacantly, not even acknowledging the infant on her lap, nor the interaction he is having with the soldier. Her lips

²⁸⁶ Such as the aforementioned vase.

²⁸⁷ See chapter on *eidola* and shades. Also, Shapiro 1991: 652 asserts that one may "always" assume this is the case. I am open to the idea that this is in theory the case, although there are some examples that call this assertion into question and Oakley is not so quick to assume that figures seated or standing on graves are always the deceased. He notes (2004: 169) that the woman who kneels on a grave on a vase by the Woman Painter (Athens, National Archaeological Museum, no. 1955) must be a living mourner who is simply making contact with the grave, whether or not this was customary.

²⁸⁸ Oakley 2004: 165-6.

turn ever so slightly downward, as do the infant boy's, but not enough so to assert that she is frowning rather than simply looking with relaxed lips. Her gaze meets the man's breast, while the boy's gaze appears to be directed at the man's right hand, which is resting on the boy's outstretched left arm. Since the boy has extended his left arm, the *dexiosis* is not possible and may not have been appropriate for children at any rate, since children on Classical stelai never engage in this gesture.²⁸⁹

Alternatively, since this vase has unique features, it may not be too farfetched to imagine that this is an occasion where either a living mourner has decided to sit upon the steps of her deceased husband's grave and mourn for him there or, that a soldier has come to mourn beside the grave of his wife and son. In the latter scenario, the man's attire might indicate that he was away in battle when his wife and son died, an occasion to which the soldiers who survived the Persian or Peloponnesian war must have sometimes returned home. There are a few clues that make this suggestion viable despite its inconsistency with the remainder of the corpus of similar vases. Firstly, the woman's vacant gaze and lack of mourning gesture or activity is highly suggestive that she is deceased. The man has an ever so slight frown typical of mourning figures²⁹⁰ and he is not touching the grave. He is also the figure that is most actively participating in the scene, usually typical of living figures rather than deceased ones in this genre of scenes.

²⁸⁹ McNiven 2007: 95 states that the *dexiosis* was reserved for adults when they wished to express friendship, agreement and common interest. There is one example of the infant Dionysos clasping hands with a nurse (Paris, CdeM 440) and there is an even more unusual example of a boy shaking hands with his dog (Sotheby's 19.6.1990 but formerly in Fort Worth, Nelson Bunker Hunt 11).

²⁹⁰ The frowns of mourners on white-ground *lêkythoi* are always quite faint. Usually the mouth is shown sweeping up toward the cheekbones as it moves away from the front of the face and then midway through its length makes a sharp, 45° angle, turn downwards. This frown in the lips is usually accompanied by a downturn in the eyebrow or eyelid, also features of a frowning face.

Unlike the other scenes we have examined in which infants reach out to touch the deceased, this baby is hardly leaning away from his mother and has only limply raised his left arm. His hand is relaxed and the fingers fall lightly rather than tense to reach toward the man. Thus, the baby is not yearning to be picked up though he seems to be open to the potential of being touched by the man. If the boy was born while the soldier was absent, perhaps his apathetic gesture towards the soldier suggests that he does not recognize the man as his father. The man has extended his right hand and has laid it upon the boy's arm, though he does not clutch it; his hand is clearly not limp like the boy's.

Finally, there are two scenes, which appear to show a mundane moment between mother and baby with no obvious indicators as to who is alive and who, if anyone, is deceased, so their narratives are more difficult to fully disentangle. At the core, they show great intimacy between mother and child in a manner that suggests that they are meant to commemorate the great love between mother and child in an effort to show the depth of the sorrow created when mother and/or child perish. The first of the two examples is a vase recently sold at Sotheby's but previously at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (01.8130).²⁹¹ It shows a mother embracing an infant beside a grave stele [**Fig. 63**]. Unlike the previous examples, the mother and child gaze into each other's eyes and seem to be unaware of their surroundings although they are not alone. A youth stands on the opposite side of a grave marker. All that can be determined about his presence is that he stands somewhat rigidly and appears to be fully clothed and is more likely a visitor than the occupant of the grave.

²⁹¹ The vase was sold at auction in New York on 12.06.2001. Unfortunately, now that the vase is in a private collection, there is limited access to images of it and the entire composition is impossible to decipher. Compare the woman's interaction with this infant to the image of Ampharete and her grandchild on a grave stele now on display at the Kerameikos Museum, P695/I221.

Only the upper portion of the woman's body remains. She is standing with her cloak pulled over the back of her head so she and her child are enveloped in the covering of her garment and sheltered from what is occurring beyond them. She is embracing her baby in her draped arms so that their faces nearly touch. Her head is bent over to look at the boy's face. They both have idealized, neutral expressions, but the closeness of the embrace suggests a sweet moment between them. Additionally, the boy has raised his left arm towards his mother's cheek. He is not quite touching her face but he is looking at his hand as he raises it to touch her. Since these figures are absorbed by their own interaction and are not paying attention to the grave stele or the youth, it is quite reasonable that, much like the previously discussed vase, this is the image of a deceased mother and child. There would seem to be no sweeter and ideal way of remembering a mother and child who were taken away long before their time than an image that shows their great love for one another.

While the previous two vases show intimate moments in the presence of a grave marker, one final vase, now in the National Museum, Athens (1947)²⁹² for discussion takes place in a non-descript location. It might be placed into the category often set aside for "domestic scenes"²⁹³ that often allude to the funeral via incorporation of funerary décor and gifts displayed in baskets and the arms of women and servants. In this particular example a woman carries a basket with sashes, meant to decorate a grave, hanging over its sides so the reference to death and the funeral

²⁹² Cf. Crelier 2008: Fig. L42. Image too poor to reproduce here.

²⁹³ Oakley 2004: Chapter 2 discusses scenes in a domestic setting as a particular scene type within the corpus of white-ground *lêkythoi*. This scene type is one that continues with great popularity as stone relief *stélai* became again popular toward the end of the 5th century.

is explicit.²⁹⁴ Before the basket-bearing woman stands a small boy who appears to have been walking with her since they both face in the same direction. His left leg is bent at the knee and his foot is lifted from the floor, showing that he is walking forward. He has walked right up to the knees of a woman seated on a *kline*, holding a small bird on the back of her right hand. The woman's left foot has obscured most of the infant's feet, showing that he is nearly in her lap, standing between her legs. She sits with her left elbow rested on the back of the chair and her right hand resting on her knee so that the small boy can easily see the small bird. She looks down toward the bird and the little boy to whom she seems to be offering the small pet.

Children are often shown playing with or simply holding pets on *choes* and in Late Classical funerary relief. In grave imagery, birds and rabbits are most commonly depicted as pets. Since the attendant woman is carrying grave gifts toward the seated woman, it is reasonable to assume that she is deceased. Whether or not the child is dead as well is not entirely clear, though it perhaps does not matter and could and should be understood in both ways. Such a scene on a *lêkythos* could be used to commemorate a deceased mother and son, i.e. the image of a mother giving her child a nice gift is a lovely way to remember the two of them, or either of them separately. Though mothers likely did not leave real rabbits and birds at the graves of their children, gifts were regularly presented at graves so this is a thoughtful imagining of the giving of a particularly desirable gift in a context where mother and/or son has passed. If the image is meant to show a deceased mother, it is perhaps the case that son and servant are on a path to visit the grave and the seated woman is a projection of a memory of her.

²⁹⁴ Often collectively called "Mistress and Maid" scenes though this is now widely considered a misnomer and not useful for our understanding of the scenes. See Oakley 2000: *passim* and 2004: 30ff., Reilly 1989 and Kurtz 1988 for more on mistress-and-maid images.

From the few incidents in which we know the context and assemblage of particular *lêkythoi*, it has been shown that there might have been vases²⁹⁵ that were meant to be dedicated together and might have included imagery that related directly to the status or character of the decedent to whom it was dedicated, i.e. a vase with an idealized warrior might be found in a soldier's grave. At the same time, there might also be a number of vases that had no relation to their dedicatee, i.e. a "domestic" vase might also be found in an assemblage with martial accouterments.²⁹⁶ This suggests that the overall impression of the scenes and the sentiment of the scenario that they set forth was paramount to their precise features. So, it is less important to know who is deceased or living in scenes with mothers and young children because what is important is that the recognizably strong bond between mother and child is broken when either one of them passes away. Such scenes relies on an audiences ability to immediately empathize with the feeling of loss that both mother and child would feel in the event that one of them died.

The number of vases that show intimate moments between a mother and child are quite limited but the few that do exist reveal a sophisticated conceptualization of the way in which a child might deal with the loss of a parent and, more generally, of the difficult matter of expressing the immensity of the pain caused by the separation of mother and young child. It seems from the extant assemblage that scenes that showed men and women as idealized figures were preferable to a 'historic' scene, which is in keeping with the general trend of Classical artwork in general. The presentation of a child's grief was a challenge to any painter that wanted to take on the task since infants were not active members of mourning or of society in general

²⁹⁵ See Kavvadias 2009: passim.

²⁹⁶ As Oakley 2004: 9 points out, few *lêkythoi* "derive from controlled and carefully recorded excavations, so that the exact location of their burial and the grave goods found with them are unknown." Additionally, many of the instances where these vases were excavated with proper documentation have not yet been published.

and the conventions for showing the particularities of their grief and emotions had not been fully realized by this time. All the same, there was some market for images that strove to commemorate this particular type of grief and the extant examples show that it was possible to create infantine mourners who both expressed their grief and could do so effectively without abandoning their young behavior.

The Sadness of Separation: Parent and Child

In her comprehensive study, *The Social Regulation of Grief*, Martha R. Fowlkes astutely noted that “the endurance of the special sorrow associated with death of attachment²⁹⁷ has been the preoccupation of artists, writers, philosophers, musicians, and theologians for whom grief looms as ineffable, elusive, inchoate, and ultimately unknowable.”²⁹⁸ It was no different for the Greeks who grappled with the issue in their own myths and images, in part as a means to try to comprehend such a troubling issue and in part to rise to the challenge of expressing the inexpressible. An infant is both emotionally and physically attached to their mother so their absence creates a particularly special and deeply felt sorrow. As we have seen, all the difficulties of expressing a reaction to death, as Fowlkes has listed them, are all the more magnified in the case of children, whether they are shown deceased or acting as mourners, because they lack the sophistication and experience to fully grasp the concept of permanent departure or to know what the appropriate reaction to the loss of a close relative can or should be. This created particular difficulties for painters trying to honestly depict children in a funerary setting. The fact that

²⁹⁷ i.e. the death of a someone intimately close who may or may not be related to the griever.

²⁹⁸ Fowlkes 1990: 635.

Athenian painters chose to tackle such compositions suggests that there was a recognized beauty and power in the image of the bond between a mother and child.

It is clear that such images received praise and popularity because the percentage of images that depict children on figural grave relief, which replaced *lêkythoi* as the primary vehicle for funerary imagery in the period following the heyday of the white-ground, is quite large. Some have suggested that it took the ravages of war and plague and the diminishing population of the Athenian state for the Athenians to take a greater interest in the fates of the youngest members of their society.²⁹⁹ Whether or not this was the primary impetus behind the increase in child imagery the fact remains that the shift was sudden and ultimately successful.

Prior to the 5th century, the discrepancy between images depicting infants being killed and infants being given proper burial might give the impression that the loss of young children was seen as trivial to an Athenian audience. However, the images that emerge during the 5th century reveal a culture which recognizes the horror of losing infants, or broadly speaking, children, and desires to express this sadness and provide proper remembrance for them. As an epilogue to an edited volume on understanding and dealing with children and death,³⁰⁰ Byron Samios and Nassia Varveri-Sofra remark that they “...believe that what is expressed about death and children in Greek art...constitutes a valid way of discovering the status of the child ... Never was Greek society indifferent to, nor did it ever come to terms with the idea of children dying.”³⁰¹ And the words and sentiments of the Athenians via their heroes and their images of deceased children and mourning mothers *do* show that the experience of losing a child was universally

²⁹⁹ e.g. Oakley 2009: 207f.

³⁰⁰ Papadatou & Papadatos 1991. This work is not focused on the Greek tradition or experience but it finds great comparison in the expressions of the ancient Greeks regarding their children.

³⁰¹ Samios and Varveri-Sofra 1991: 333-4.

perceived as singularly tragic. Thus, even the brawny Herakles, (Eur. *Her.* 633-6), is compelled to assert that he enjoys fatherhood and that:³⁰²

...πάντα τὰνθρώπων ἴσα:
φιλοῦσι παῖδας οἱ τ' ἀμείνονες βροτῶν
οἱ τ' οὐδὲν ὄντες: χρήμασιν δὲ διάφοροι:
ἔχουσιν, οἱ δ' οὔ: πᾶν δὲ φιλότεκνον γένος.

...all men are the same:
those who are better off and those who are not,
love their children. With wealth there comes discrepancies,
some have it, others don't: but every being loves his child.

It is precisely this sentiment that substantiates the notion that images of deceased and mourning children would have tugged at the heartstrings of any viewer and suggest that the recollection of the loss of a child would have rang true and hit a nerve with anyone that saw such images as those that appear on white-ground *lékythoi*. As one can see, the loss and lament of an infant may not have been often portrayed, but were nonetheless moments warranting somber reflection and reciprocal mourning.

³⁰² Of course this sentiment is also the backdrop against which he then murders his sons by the compulsion of the gods.

Chapter 5: From Vocal Memorials to Silent Graves³⁰³

ὤς ἡδὺ δάκρυα τοῖς κακῶς πεπραγόσι
θρήνων τ' ὀδυρμοὶ μοῦσά θ' ἡ λύπας ἔχει.

What sweet relief to sufferers it is to weep, to mourn,
lament, and chant the dirge that tells of grief!

Eur. *Tro.* 608-9

Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.

Shakespeare. *Mac.* 4.3.245-6

The din of lament and songs of mourning would have filled the air in the days that followed the death of a beloved friend or family member in ancient Athens. Songs of praise and commemoration brought honor to the dead, helped in the creation of their lasting memory and provided a formal outlet through which grief-stricken relatives could channel their sorrow. Vocal expressions served as a safety valve through which intense emotions of grief might be relieved while simultaneously alerting the community of their loss. Depending on one's gender, status, and relation to the deceased, they might engage in various forms of lament at each stage of the funeral, from preparing the corpse to its interment, and ultimately the indefinite period of mourning that followed burial. We know details about the vocal elements of the funeral proper from written accounts but the majority of evidence for graveside mourning and ritual comes from

³⁰³ A quick note should be made about this chapter. Unlike the rest of the chapters that look at a particular “type” of person who mourns or shows their grief at the grave, this chapter considers the notion of sound and seeks to determine a bit more concretely what about scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi* makes them particularly “quiet” and what the reason behind this might be in terms of its particular way of showing sorrow and honoring the dead. I had been interested in the vocal women and musicians on the scenes and after studying them I realized that they help to draw out what makes most of the scenes in this genre so exceptionally quiet and still. I have struggled with precisely how to present this material. I am interested in the notion that the quiet somehow adds to the particular sorrow in these images.

art and archaeology, neither of which is able to provide much information about what was said, sung or cried in that setting. At the same time, the relative calm and composure of visitors to the grave on white-ground *lêkythoi* suggests that this was typically a quiet endeavor, unlike the events that took place closer in time to the death and funeral of someone, and a handful of images with a singer or musician seem to be the exceptions that make the rule.

The adoption of the white-ground *lêkythos* was accompanied by an abrupt abandonment of the types of images that had long been popular in Athens, namely scenes that focused on women in the throes of grief at the *prothesis*, dramatize the excitement and frenzy of mourning. In such images the focus is the performance; the effort that is expended in carrying out an extravagant funeral serves to emphasize the sorrow of death and the merits of the fallen. Although the tribute and memory created in this context was ephemeral, if it was done properly and grandly it served its purpose. In stark opposition, the images on white-ground *lêkythoi* show no inclination toward emphasizing the audible element of mourning. This is in part because of the inherent limits of a visual medium, but there is also evidence that this was a deliberate shift in focus from memory in the form of dramatic vocalization to passive permanence via a visual marker. As images shifted their focus to the grave they became quieter, presumably because funerary rituals in this context were conducted more silently. This new silence also allowed the focus to shift from the mourners to the monument that generated and preserved the memory of the dead. By considering what role vocal commemoration or communication had in the context of the grave and how sound is depicted in white-ground *lêkythoi* it will be possible to see how this shift occurred and allowed the images of the grave to display and communicate the sadness and honor associated with mourning.

Lament in the Greek Funeral

The audible element of mourning played an important role in allowing the bereaved to experience and work through their grief. As the Trojan women in Euripides' *Troades* (608-9) express (above), the process of vocalizing one's feelings, while simultaneously paying tribute to the dead, was a cathartic experience. It benefited both the deceased, by recalling their merits, and the living, by allowing them to channel strong emotions into ordered release. When one observes the overall arc of lament as it plays out in the narrative of a number of epic poems and tragic plays, it is seen that the form of both the gestures and vocal expressions became more calm and orderly. This is at least the sense that one gets from the language in Homer where immediate responses to learning of the death of loved ones inspires loud and violent reactions but by the time of the *prothesis* emotions appear calmer and cries and wails give way to more formalized songs of praise and grief.³⁰⁴ Thus, upon learning of Hektor's death (*Il.* 22. 405-515), Hekabe casts off her veil, rips her hair and wails (405-7), Priam groans and then covers himself in dirt and excrement (408, 414), Andromache is so overcome that she raves like a maenad before fainting (460, 466-7) and all of Troy erupts in response as though they were engulfed in flames (410-1). The reactions of Laertes to Odysseus' (feigned) death (*Od.* 24.316-7) and Achilles to Patroklos' death (*Il.* 18.23-4) are equally dramatic. Upon hearing of the death of a family member or comrade, most figures in epic react with spontaneous cries and self-inflicted violence.

Once the shock of death had set in and the bereaved began to prepare the corpse for burial, they seemingly engaged in continual singing of praise and pity. The two most widely used terms

³⁰⁴ Wright 1986: 22-37 makes the argument that the stages of grief become more ordered as mourners move through the various stages of discovering death and carrying out the funeral. She cites Homer as the primary source for our understanding of this notion and she provides numerous examples from both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

for the funerary lament were *goos* and *thrênos* (see Chapter 1). By the 5th century these terms seem to have been used interchangeably, though it is likely that they originally designated different types of dirges. The exact form of the various Greek funerary laments is not fully known though attempts have been made to piece together their form and development from tragedy and lyric. Unfortunately, the only extant lyric poetry that provides any insight into the form of lament is from two poets, Pindar and Simonides, and the evidence is quite tenuous.³⁰⁵ Tragedy provides the best evidence for the nature of lament but even it is influenced by the narrative and genre of tragic drama so it does not provide a snapshot of contemporary historical lament.³⁰⁶ Epic provides information on when, where and by whom various songs were sung in honor of the dead but the terminology used is not consistent or clear in terms of the actual form of the songs. That said, it provides a good sense of the overall use and importance of funerary lament more broadly speaking.³⁰⁷

In addition to its cathartic value, the singing of dirges was crucial to the creation of a lasting memory of the deceased. By expressing the various merits and virtues of the dead while simultaneously communicating how sorrowful the occasion was, mourners were able to establish and communicate a *mnêma* for the dead that would live on as it was recalled and discussed at later points. Since Greek lament was antiphonal, all attendants of a funeral would feel as if they

³⁰⁵ Wright 1986: 37-46 provides information on what can be gleaned from lyric. She is critical of Margaret Alexiou (2002) and A. E. Harvey (1955) for relying too heavily on lyric as she thinks that the links are tenuous at best.

³⁰⁶ For a list of all laments and partial laments included in the extant tragedies see Suter 2008: 171-2. She also provides a good overview of the function and features of many of the laments sung by men. Her bibliography is also useful for further study of the form of lament.

³⁰⁷ For more on lament in epic see especially Alexiou 2002: 1-15, Reiner 1938: passim, Suter 2008 and Wright 1986: 1-37.

contributed to the creation of a lasting memory of the dead.³⁰⁸ Although a lead singer or singers would be in control of composing the song (according to a particular pattern and form), in replying in kind and groans, the responders, usually the family members of the deceased, would acknowledge and approve of the sentiment. The *prothesis* was the primary venue for the recitation of dirges and given the emphasis placed on the *prothesis* in epic poetry and early Attic funerary art, it is clear that it had a crucial role in the proper tribute and commemoration of the dead. A large funeral appears to have been the ideal means of providing due honor according to Homer and 8th-6th century Attic funerary imagery and far less attention is paid to the *sêma* that would mark the eternal resting place of the dead (see below).

Unlike the moment of discovery of death and the funeral, there is far less information about the precise form of lament that took place subsequent to interment. There are references to particular occasions that would have specifically brought visitors to the grave during particular festivals (e.g. *Anthesteria*) and anniversaries,³⁰⁹ and the types of gifts and offerings that would have been dedicated at the grave have been pieced together from archaeological, visual and written testimony but there is very little known about the type of verbal commemoration or communication that would have taken place at the grave. This is largely because there is very little reference to visits to the grave in literature of any sort and given the ephemeral nature of lament, we are limited in what we know. In addition, if lament and conversation at the grave was primarily informal, there would be no reason to give it a name or describe it so we are left to collect pieces from a couple of main sources. There are a few minor clues in the language of the sumptuary laws; such as the mandate that there be no more than ten *auloi* players and that

³⁰⁸ Wright 1986: 25-6.

³⁰⁹ For more on the various festivals and occasions see Garland 2001: 104-10; Johnston 1999a: 38-46, 63-6 and Stears 2008: 143-6.

women should walk toward the back of the early morning *ekphora* procession,³¹⁰ and a few graveside scenes in tragedy, namely in the *Choephoroi* (1-166) and *Persians* (623-93). In addition to these sources, the use and language of epigram provides some insight as does the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi*.

There are two primary reasons to consider the possible use and significance of oral communication at the grave: vocalization of glory and sorrow was important during the *kêdeia* and there is evidence that the dead were felt to be able to hear and sense what happened in proximity to their grave, and thus people needed to be careful of what they said when visiting. As will be discussed below, the grave marker came to fulfil much of the role that audible lament had in the funeral so it is possible that verbal commemoration was not necessary once the grave had been established, at least according to 5th century custom. The *sêma* could communicate grief and glory via visual and/or epigraphic means, which the living displayed and cultivated upon it.

When graves included an epigram, a visitor to the grave could reenact the vocal aspect of the funeral by reading it aloud and thus the stone was in some sense able to passively fulfil the vocal aspect of commemoration. In addition, given the fact that epigram often uses imperatives to speak directly to its audience, it brings life to the inanimate stone monument upon which it was carved.³¹¹ Since a visit to the grave was not necessarily a group event, often only one or two visitors, the grave and the deceased would witness the rituals performed in that setting. There are

³¹⁰ Cic. *De Leg.* 2.59 – to limit the overall cost of the funeral, one of the stipulations is to have no more than 10 pipe players (...*extenuato igitur sumptu tribus reciniis ettunicula purpurea et decem tibicinibus, tollit nimiam lamentationem*...). According to regulations from Keos, the body was to be conveyed to the grave in silence. See Blok 2006: esp. 202-9.

³¹¹ Of course funerary epigram was a genre that need not actually be carved into gravestones. However, the sense is the same and when reading funerary epigram it is easy to imagine the stone imploring its reader to reply and vocalize the pity, esteem or sadness they feel with regard to the deceased.

a number of funerary epigrams, particularly from the Archaic and Classical periods, which implore passersby to stop and lament or greet the dead.³¹² Communication and interaction between speaker and reader/passersby is typical of the genre of epigram and so its use within the sepulchral context suggests that ancient Athenians perceived that oral communication was possible, or at least not ridiculous, between the living and the dead in this context.

As was discussed in the beginning of Chapter 1, the fact that Elektra is so concerned about what and how she speaks in the presence of her father's grave tells us that it is presumed that he will comprehend her words and the manner in which she says them (Aesch. *Lib.* 22-85). This notion is supported by the importance that the Persians place on raising the ghost of Darius directly at his grave and by the implication that Alcestis might be able to sense if Admetos does not stay true to his word to never take another wife.³¹³ If the dead were thought to be able to hear what happened in proximity to their grave, it follows that this could be a useful means of communicating with them at the grave. However, it seems from the imagery on white-ground *lêkythoi* that the preferred mode of communication was through the dedication of gifts and quiet contemplation.

Before discussing the relatively quiet images on white-ground *lêkythoi* and how their silence contributes to the solemnity of grave scenes, a brief note should be made about what made earlier images “noisy.” The white-ground images are quiet in and of themselves but also in comparison to the funerary images that came before them. It is, as Alan Shapiro has noted, for mourners in 5th century graveside scenes as if once the funeral is over and the immediate shock

³¹² Epigram from the 8th-5th centuries is collected in volume I of the *Carmina Epigraphica Graeca*. For more on the relationship of speaker and passersby in Archaic and Classical epigram see M. Baumbach et al. (Eds.) 2010; Schmitz 2010, Tueller 2010 and Vestrheim 2010.

³¹³ Aesch. *Pers.* And Eurip. *Alc.* 304-11.

of grief has passed that they are overcome “by a mood of detachment, introspection, and quiet dignity.”³¹⁴ And the images of white-ground *lêkythoi* show that strong feelings of sorrow could just as easily be rendered via tranquil moments of reflection and concern.

Audible Grief in Pre-Classical Funerary Art

There are a few ways in which Greek vase painters were able to convey the sense that their characters were in the act of singing, making music or otherwise making noise. During the Geometric Period, since figures were rendered in silhouette, painters were fairly limited in the ways that they could reference sound through body language. The primary ways that sound is implied is through the inclusion of musical instruments and the use of kinetic gestures that were associated with rituals known from other sources to include song or recitation. So, although there is no way to tell if mourners at the *prothesis* or *ekphora* in Geometric vases are open mouthed and wailing, their gestures refer to rituals that were accompanied by song.

One of the most obvious of these gestures associated with the *prothesis* and hence the lament that accompanied it is the raising of two hands to the head to lacerate the face or rip the hair. This is a common gesture for women to perform in Geometric, Protoattic, Black- and Red-Figure images but there are remarkably few examples of women ripping their hair in white-ground *lêkythoi* and only two of them appear beside a grave and not at the *prothesis*.³¹⁵ In Black- and Red-Figure *prothesis* scenes the frenetic gestures were also occasionally accompanied by figures with their mouths open [cf. e.g. **Figs. 4, 6, 9, 33, 34**]. Both men in valedictory poses and women in the aforementioned hair pulling and face scratching poses might be shown with an open

³¹⁴ Shapiro 1991: 650.

³¹⁵ Athens, NM 2851, 19355 (see below). Most graveside scenes are marked by decorum so perhaps such a gesture was not appropriate for this context.

mouth, so that lament was no longer just implied but also explicitly depicted. In one black-figure *pinax* by the Sappho Painter (Louvre MNB905) [Fig. 4] the phrase “OIMOI” shown between mourners surrounding a corpse as the bier gives the viewer a clear understanding of the wailing that is meant to be taking place.

A few musicians appear in vases found in funerary contexts, but very rarely are the musicians depicted shown in decidedly funerary contexts. Thus, on a mid-8th century *oinochoê* now in Tübingen (WK122657), a figure holding a lyre appears amongst a procession of male and female revelers dancing along the vase’s belly frieze. The lyrist is situated toward the front of the vase (opposite the handle) so that he is easily seen. The manner in which he reaches across his body with his exceptionally long right arm to pluck the strings of the instrument indicates that he is making music for the revelers. On a second, slightly later *oinochoê* now in Athens,³¹⁶ a frieze running around the upper belly/lower shoulder shows a number of musicians seated with lyres. Like the previous example there is no indication that the setting is funerary, but the ability to indicate the production of music is demonstrated. Since the vase was found in a grave, its image, whether it shows a musical lesson or a festive occasion for the recitation of poetry and music, may indicate a desire to provide the dead musical entertainment in the afterlife. There is a single image of an *auloi* player on a Corinthian *hydria-loutrophoros* and two Etruscan black-figure *kantharoi* depict men playing pipes in an *ekphora* procession but these are the only known images that may show musical accompaniment in a funerary context.³¹⁷ There is only one image

³¹⁶ Catalogue number not listed. Appears in Goulaki-Voutira 2012b: Fig. 23.

³¹⁷ The Analatos loutrophoros shows pipe player among women holding branches on what is believed to show a possible funerary procession (Bochum S1067). The two *kantharoi* are now in Paris (CdeM 353, 355). Cf. Shapiro 2000: passim.

of a stringed instrument in the context of a funeral. In a *prothesis* scene on a hydria by the Damon Painter a woman leaning over a corpse holds a lyre but does not play it.³¹⁸

Shifting Focus: Song to Stone

While the shift in setting for mourning imagery from funeral to post-funeral may explain the shift in “volume” witnessed in funerary art, one may still wonder why this traditional image was no longer wholly satisfactory and why a new image was so quickly accepted into the visual repertoire of funerary art. If one considers the work of Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood and her study of the evolution of the conception and use of the grave marker in Athens, from Homer to the late-Classical period, the shift in attention to the grave marker in 5th century art makes sense.³¹⁹ As she has convincingly argued, the evidence from Homeric epic and the visual imagery of the Geometric through Archaic periods supports the idea that there was nothing more honorable for the dead and their memory than an extravagant funeral.³²⁰ And, despite its ephemeral nature, when conducted properly, it had the ability to provide due honor to the dead and establish their memory among the community. This memory would endure as people recollected and spoke of the funeral for years to come. The people who organized the funeral and participated in its various rites would create a *mnêma* of the deceased through their performance and song. After the completion of the funeral, a *sêma* usually in the form of a mound, *stêlê* or vase, would mark the final resting place of the dead. Over time, more interest and attention was focused upon the *sêma* and it increasingly became the primary creator and promoter of the

³¹⁸ Louvre E643.

³¹⁹ Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: esp. 108-47 although concepts of the sign and memory of the dead and how it is expressed and transferred to a physical marker.

³²⁰ This concept is also expressed by Johnston 1999a: 39-43.

mnêma of the deceased. This development is partially tracked through the terminology since the terms *sêma* and *mnêma* became more conflated over time.³²¹ Thus, by the Archaic period, the importance of the grave monument is evident through the increase in monumental statues and which *stêlai* were being used in place of more simple slabs or vases.³²²

In the 5th century when monumental grave markers were no longer popular but appeared in the images of white-ground *lêkythoi*, their importance as a vehicle for communicating sorrow and a receptacle and generator of the honorific memory of the dead would have been well-established. Thus, the image of an extravagant grave marker could in theory intimate the same glory that a real monument of its stature would. In the previous four chapters, while there have been instances which suggest some vocal communication at the grave, in large part the scenes appear totally silent. While the reason that these images are quiet may be due to the fact that sound was no longer important at the grave, it may also serve to emphasize the monument over the mourner, thereby giving prominence to the deceased and their needs rather than the plight of the bereaved. By looking at the use of sound in a few instances on white-ground *lêkythoi* it is easier to see the way in which silence ultimately refocuses attention away from the wailing mourner to the voiceless deceased and their memory.

Sound in White-Ground Lêkythoi

The exception that makes the rule when it comes to the notion of silence in white-ground *lêkythoi* and an examination of some of the scenes that depict sound being made at the grave will

³²¹ Sourvinou-Inwood 1995; 140-7.

³²² The large Geometric kraters and amphora that marked graves also suggest the importance of the place of burial and Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 108-22 discusses that there was some importance placed on the *sêma* even in Homer but the size, material and decorative details (image and epigram) of the Archaic *stêlai* reveal their greater importance.

serve to demonstrate the way that the silence of graveside scenes helps to shift focus upon the grave and what it is able to communicate about the living and the dead. The most dramatic and “loud” scene, not only of white-ground *lêkythoi* but from all 5th century funerary imagery comes from a vase by the Phiale Painter (Athens, NM 19355) [Fig. 64]. It should be noted that the image on the vase is unique in a number of respects and, thus, it is likely that it represents a number of extremes that were meant to underscore the tragedy of the moment rather than represent typical mourning behavior of the time. However, this helps to draw out the ways that white-ground *lêkythoi* used silence and composure. The scene takes place at the grave, where a mourner and the deceased both appear. The grave consists of a tall slender mound,³²³ which stands upon two steps and is crowned by a large, stylized *loutrophoros* of the *hydria* variety, which makes it look very similar to a *lêkythos*, since it has one tall handle and two very small shoulder handles. The *loutrophoros*, which is acting as a grave marker, is roughly one-third the height of the female visitor and was once decorated with a red ribbon, tied about its neck, cascading down its body and onto the surface of the *tumulus*. The vase has a wide mouth and a tapering body that comes to a neat point close to its foot. Although *loutrophoroi* had traditionally been associated with ritual bathing before marriage, they seem to have occasionally been used as grave markers as well.³²⁴ Thus, there are a number of *loutrophoroi* that have funerary rather than wedding imagery and they may have been used to mark the graves of those who died before being married. Since this vase has only a single handle, it appears as a visual predecessor to the

³²³ Cf. Type C-II from Nakayama 1982: 279.

³²⁴ A *loutrophoros* crowns a mound on a vase by the Bosanquet Painter now in a private Swiss collection (Oakley 2004: 207, fig. 168). Cf. Black-Figure *loutrophoros* with mourners at grave mound surmounted by a *loutrophoros* (LIMC VIII, 568, Eidola 12).

marble *lêkythos* that were used as grave markers toward the end of the 5th century.³²⁵ There is only one example of a *lêkythos* serving as a grave marker in the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi* and it appears on a vase now at Cornell University (77.052).

To the left of the grave stands a woman holding a hare. She is dressed in a long red *himation* and her feet, clad in many-strapped sandals, peak out of its folds. Her long black hair falls in curling tendrils down her back and about her forehead and neck and is topped by a simple white crown. In her bent left arm she cradles the small hare whose nose she lovingly tickles with her right hand. She looks down toward the grave and beyond it to a second woman who has come to mourn beside the mound. Both her fine clothing and her lack of interaction in the scene mark her as deceased (see Chapter 6). She does not look as if she is about to dedicate the pet but rather enjoys its company as she observes the monument and mourning dedicated to her honor. She appears calm, her body is relaxed and her feet are firmly planted. Her placid demeanor creates the perfect foil for the frenzied behavior of her co-visitor. While hares, along with small birds, are known to be shown as gifts, presumably pets, on grave *stêlai* in this instance the quiet nature of the animal seems the perfect foil for the loud woman that also appears on this vase.³²⁶

To the right of the grave appears a woman ecstatically mourning. The woman is kneeling just before the stepped mound so that her body obstructs its lower right corner. She too wears a red garment but her feet are bare and her overall appearance is more disheveled. Though much of the added color is now worn away, it appears that the woman's hair is cut short in a recognizable sign of grief. Her left arm is raised to her head so that her fingers may grasp at her cropped hair.

³²⁵ Oakley 2004: 164, 2000: 242. For more on marble *lêkythoi*, their function, form and imagery, see Clairmont 1993 and Schmaltz 1970.

³²⁶ A woman holding a hare stands across from an *eidôlon* playing a kithara on a vase now in the Louvre (CA612) [Fig. 49].

The manner in which her fingers appear to curl into her scalp suggest that she is not merely holding her head in woe but is actually digging in with her nails to mar her skin. Small tattoos on the inside of each of her forearms suggest that she is Thracian.³²⁷

Although she is down on her knees, the woman's body is entirely upright as she reaches up toward the *lêkythos* atop the mound with her open, right hand. Her palm faces out toward the viewer as her fingers point toward the grave making her posture nearly identical to that of the men who appear in a pose of valediction in the black-figure *prothesis* scenes of the Archaic Period [cf. **Figs. 4-7**]. As discussed in Chapter 2, the valediction pose is only very rarely found in the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi* and this is particularly the case in vases from the latter half of the 5th century, which includes this vase (c. 435-430). There is an implied sense that the valediction pose was accompanied by a vocal address so this image immediately conveys a sense of sound that most others do not. In this instance, the artist has added further detail to underscore the volume of her plaint. Her neck is arched back so that the base of her chin is flush with the nearly vertical line of her raised arm and her lips are parted so that her voice can carry. Her gaping mouth is perhaps the most exceptional detail of this mourner because it is the only example of its kind in white-ground imagery.³²⁸ A curved wedge separates the woman's parted lips, emphasizing her open mouth and whatever utterance we can imagine emanating from it. The black glaze that the Phiale Painter used to outline his figures is well-preserved, making the mouth stand out all the more distinctly. In black-figure *prothesis* scenes it is not uncommon to

³²⁷ For more on the association of tattoos with Thracians see Lee 2015: 84-6; Mommsen 2001; Tsiafakis 2000; and Zimmermann 1980. See below for more on the possible implication of her being Thracian to her particular mourning behavior.

³²⁸ The old man in a vase by the Achilles Painter (Berlin, Antiken. 1983.1) [Fig. 50] has a very slightly open mouth. Other than these two there are no obvious examples where the mouth is shown open to such a degree.

find mourners with their mouths open. Men shown in a valediction pose often tilt their heads back a little bit but not to the same degree that we see here [cf. **Figs. 4-7, 33, 34**]. Like many mourners on white-ground *lekythoi*, this woman is frowning. In contrast to this woman's mouth, most mourners in 5th century graveside scenes are shown with their lips pressed together, either pursed in a neutral expression or a slight frown.

The Thracian's open mouth and arched neck are details commonly found in images of singers throughout Greek art. Such a posture allows for a more open and direct path for breath and song to leave the body. The woman's posture is reminiscent of, for example, the singing kitharode player from a vase by the Berlin Painter (New York, MMA 56.171.38), or the portrayal of the Thracian Orpheus singing and playing a lyre on the Orpheus Painter's namesake vase (Berlin VI 3172) [**Fig. 65**]. We can easily imagine that she is either singing a threnody or releasing a loud moan as she drops to the ground before the grave to lament for the deceased woman. Since Thracians were generally considered to be great musicians, it is particularly appropriate that it should be a Thracian maid who is poised as a singer, even though it was the Karians who Plato indicates were top choice among hired singers (*Laws* 800b4–e6).³²⁹

Since there are other instances in which multiple “funerary” scenes are conflated into a single image, e.g. images of Charon and the Styx next to the grave [e.g. **Fig. 56**], it is possible that this image is simply meant to show a combination of a woman from the *prothesis* and a scene from the grave since her posture and gesture are definitely taken from this context, cf. [**Figs. 3, 8**].³³⁰

³²⁹ This reference and another in *Iliad* 24.70 are the only references of hired mourners that I am aware of. Thus, it is impossible to know much about their character or the role that they played. It is not necessary to understand this woman as a hired singer and she is more likely a maid.

³³⁰ There are women shown kneeling to mourn before a bier as early as the Geometric period (e.g. Dipylon Vase) and there are examples from protoattic (e.g. Victoria, National Gallery D23) [**Fig. 3**] and red-figure (e.g. Berlin, Antiken. 31008) scenes as well.

At the same time, it is also possible that we should understand this woman as reacting spontaneously during a visit to the cemetery. Much as Hekabe and Andromache immediately react maniacally when they learn of Hektor's death (*Il.* 22. 405-7 and 466-7, respectively), of Troy, it is possible that in seeing the grave this woman has been struck with overwhelming sadness: her legs give out, she drops to her knees, lets out a wail and raises her arms in despair. The main problem with this interpretation is that such violent behavior is more often associated with the initial stages of grief, not the period post burial. Given the fact that it is not common for the histrionic gestures to be integrated into grave scenes, the exceptionally dramatic behavior of this woman seems pointed.

There are a handful (~15) of other images that show women kneeling beside the grave with their hands raised. In all of these cases a woman is shown dropped to her knees and she expresses her grief with one arm raised and the other touching her head, ripping her hair or gesticulating toward the sky.³³¹ In no example is there explicit reference to sound and their mouths are never shown open. However, since these arm positions had previously been associated with sound simply by association, they might still suggest or recall the *prothesis* and the threnodies that were associated with it. Even though the *prothesis* was no longer the favorite funerary scene, people continued to practice traditional funerals through this period so the image would still be relevant and comprehensible. Therefore, the image of a woman in this position might harken to the funeral that inevitably occurred before the *sêma* at which they mourn was erected. Again, this is likely a scenario where different funerary images are being conflated in order to make iconographical and semantically rich images.

³³¹ Athens, NM 1770, 1934, 1955, 1967, 12534, 19338; Karlsruhe, Landesmuseum B1510; Munich, Antiken. SS76 [Fig. 42], 7681, 7708; New York MMA 06.1021.133, 22.139.10.

Another manner in which sound is suggested in graveside imagery is through the image of instruments. Unlike the mourning women mentioned above, the only figures that are shown playing instruments in graveside scenes are male *eidôla*.³³² There are instances where mourners bring a lyre or kithara to dedicate upon the grave, but in this case it is clear that they are transporting the instrument rather than attempting to play it [Fig. 48]. One can imagine that an instrument might be placed upon the grave of an accomplished singer or poet but it could also be given as a means of providing some entertainment to the deceased in the afterlife. Admetus (Eur. *Alcestis* 343-7 and 430-1) vows never to play the lyre or auloi again at the time of his wife's death because he has no more joy in his life. If instrumental music was generally associated with joyful music, it was perhaps perceived to be out of place in a funerary context, which was not generally a place of revelry. At the same time, when it is associated with *eidôla* it may be that we are meant to imagine that the deceased is content and enjoying music in the afterlife.

The potential for a musical instrument to be used as a potent symbol of the greatness of the deceased is well demonstrated in a vase by the Sabouroff Painter (Berlin, Antiken. V.I. 3262) [Fig. 66]. In this particular instance, two figures approach a grave from either side. The grave marker consists of a rectangular block, roughly mid-thigh height, placed upon two steps. Upon the upper step a single row of five evenly spaced vases (*lêkythoi*, *oinochoe* and *exaleiptron*) decorates the grave and attests to the vigilant care of it. Atop the block stands both a stylized lyre, its strings stretched out so that it nearly touches the top of the scene, and a square *pyxis*. Its size and shape emphasize its importance and here the grave is communicating an aspect of the virtues of the deceased.

³³² A number of women in domestic scenes play music. I believe that women shown in domestic settings are typically representation of the deceased so it is likely that they are analogous to the deceased men that appear by the grave. (This is an idea that I would like to eventually expand upon).

While it is true that a majority of graveside images that show a figure holding a lyre or kithara do not suggest that the possessor is in the act of playing the instrument, there are a few examples in which it seems that we are meant to imagine that music is being produced. We should not imagine that in any of these instances the music is part of the actual funeral. However, the very fact that the production of music is suggested breaks the relative silence typical of the majority of white-ground images at the grave. It is clear that all of those who play the lyre at the grave are deceased because they are often seated and do not interact with the grave or the other people present. Additionally, despite the fact that their hands might be engaged with the strings of their instruments, unlike Orpheus (above) they never appear to be singing. Since they are not narratively present they cannot be heard by the visitors there and this is one way that the artist visually indicates the actual status of these figures [Figs. 29, 48].³³³

Conclusions

The relative silence that is seen in graveside scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi* reflect changes in the way that Athenians chose to honor and remember their dead. It shows a growing interest in the potential for the grave marker to be the preeminent vehicle for the continued remembrance of the deceased. Rather than focusing on the brief period of the funerary ritual in which the deceased was honored and remembered through oral and performative means, these images

³³³ This section is not complete. I became interested in the appearance of instruments in images of white-ground *lêkythoi* when I found that a number of deceased figures appeared not only to be holding a lyre or kithara but actually strumming the strings. I also sought to find further evidence for the use of instruments in the funeral to see if the images of musicians were ever confections of music from the *prothesis*. While it is possible that images of musicians are merely representations of the dead meant to provide a more detailed image from which we can construct a memory, I would like to compare these images to other instances of music. Depending on the musical accompaniment typical for Greek threnodies, we should probably not imagine that these musicians are playing lilting dirges and thus the sound coming from their lyres might be more cheerful and could potentially provide a more positive atmosphere for the image.

concentrate on the mourning that took place after the deceased had been integrated into the afterlife, when emotions were tempered and when the best thing to do for the *eidōlon* and its memory was to provide as much attention and care to it as could be afforded. While it is unclear whether an image at the grave was mutually exclusive with audible mourning, the fact of the matter is that quiet scenes were favored over those that suggested that cries, dirges or instrumental music was present.

The kinetic gestures of earlier Attic funerary images conveyed a sense of frenzy and noise as people sang, gesticulated and walked around the corpse stealing final moments with them before their interment. This type of mourning could not be maintained for long because despair eventually fades and in 5th century Athens families were unable to extend their raucous funerals beyond a three day period. The main action of mourners in this context is not merely announcing their own sadness and plight but upon conscious care of the dead and the visual manifestation of their grief. It seems that they quickly found appeal in images that were able to express sorrow and honor for the dead through “quiet dignity” rather than loud frenzy.³³⁴ In the few examples in which there is an attempt to integrate the traditional mourning female in this new context, the attention is drawn away from the grave.

The silence reflects the void that has been left by the departure of the dead. No vocal communication can be returned in kind for the mourners and if they visit a grave alone or small groups it likely was a quiet venture. At the same time, the silence invites reflection and draws the viewer in closer to see what the figures communicate in their facial expression and mannerisms. There are no distractions and the deceased is the focus of both the mourners in narrative and for the viewers of the vessels, whose eyes will be drawn to the grave, the visible vestige of the dead.

³³⁴ Shapiro 1991: 650.

Chapter 6: Do the Dead Mourn?

ἄσβεστον κλέος οἶδε φίλη περὶ πατρίδι θέντες
κυάνεον θανάτου ἀμπεβάλοντο νέφος.
οὐδὲ τεθνᾶσι θανόντες, ἐπεὶ σφ' ἀρετὴ καθύπερθε
κυδαίνουσ' ἀνάγει δώματος ἐξ Αἴδεω.

These men, having established inextinguishable glory
throughout their dear fatherland, are enshrouded in the
dark cloud of death. Yet, they are not dead, having died, since
glory-filled virtue, leads them up and out of the house of Hades

Sim. *Epig.* 9³³⁵

Just as Simonides' words of praise for the fallen warriors at Plataea were meant to announce and preserve the memory of the deceased, their *kleos*, and their *aretê*, so too did visual representations of the deceased on white-ground *lêkythoi* serve to commemorate the departed, promulgate an illustrious remembrance, and evoke pity and lament from viewers.³³⁶ In the mid-5th century when scenes showing a visit to a grave became particularly popular, the majority of visualizations of the deceased portrayed them as idealized and statuesque, giving them an air of calm, stoic, stillness. Such images played into the Classical Athenian notion that a carefully crafted human image could express virtues simply through beauty, proportion, and carefully conceived arrangement. On funerary *lêkythoi*, the image of the deceased is a personified representation of the glory-filled virtue that Simonides described as the vehicle for creating lasting commemorations of worthy figures. In this context, by including an image of the

³³⁵ For more on the occasion, authenticity, and history of Simonides' full elegy in commemoration of Plataea, see Aloni 1997, 2001; Boedeker 1995, 2001a, 2001b; and Shaw 2001.

³³⁶ In her most recent publication, Walter-Karydi 2015 writes about the relationship of grave epigram and imagery (101-11) and the "conscious dead" (127-34).

deceased, henceforth referred to as “*eidôlon*” (εἶδωλον),³³⁷ the relationship between mourner and mourned-for takes on a more personal touch by providing a representation of the object of lament and some of their presumed virtues. In so far as that is the case, this representation is never a physical presence or narrative entity in vase scenes but is rather emblematic of the persona of the deceased as it is imagined and manufactured by artisans and surviving family members. Thus, it is not seen by visitors to the grave but it is ‘seen’ by them to the extent that it is a projection of their minds’ eyes.

Although Simonides’ epigram does not explicitly implore its readers to either remember the fallen (it claims that virtue generates memory in and of itself) or to pity them, these were common features of funerary epigram more generally and in commemorating fallen heroes it must implicitly implore its readers to remember its expressed honorees. The beauty and virtue expressed in the idealized physical form of an *eidôlon* might also function to invoke pity and praise from its viewers. Although most images of the dead on white-ground *lêkythoi* passively solicited compassion simply through their being a visual manifestation of virtue, towards the end of the 5th century a radically different visualization of the soul utilized an emotive face and body language to evoke reverence and sorrow from its viewers. Whether this mode of inspiring pity reflects a shift in the perception of or attitude toward the dead or merely represents a new means of generating empathy merits investigation. Since the style of the most emotive *eidôla*, primarily associated with the Group R painters, has been linked to the work of the great painter Parrhasios, they perhaps show an artist’s ability to exploit nuances in the face and posture of individual

³³⁷ The *eidôlon* is more precisely the soul but it will here substitute as a term for the deceased. As will become clear, I believe that ghost is an inappropriate term because the figures on white-ground *lêkythoi* do not haunt the grave. For a discussion of the use of *eidôlon* see Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 56-9. She demonstrates that the interchangeable use of the terms *psychê* and *eidôlon*, suggest that they could each refer to various aspects of the deceased soul. Johnston 1999a: 1-20 explains the characteristics of the dead soul.

figures to display grief.³³⁸ Parrhasios famously claimed, according to Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.10.1-4), that emotion was written on the faces of everyone and that painters were capable of capturing its essence, so it follows that his work may have been an inspiration to white-ground painters. At the same time, one should not discredit the possibility that contemporary traumas, i.e. the plague and the Sicilian Disaster, may also be reflected in such dejected forms. The following discussion attempts to make sense of these images by looking at the role and function of the deceased in white-ground *lêkythoi* more broadly. An examination of a few key examples of the emotional *eidôla* of the final decade of the 5th century will help to flesh out details that may shed light on the particularities of these images and whether or not they mark a radical change from previous images or are simply the work of a masterful artist.

General Remarks

In 5th century tomb-visit scenes, there are three different forms which the deceased might take: a corpse, a grave marker, and a reflection or emblem of their former living self (*eidôlon* and/or *psychê*). These forms are not mutually exclusive and often *eidôla* appear beside their grave but a grave can stand on its own as a representation of the deceased.³³⁹ Small, winged figures that appear sporadically near images of the deceased must represent the *psychê* or the aspect of the soul that was described as escaping from the mouth of a corpse as soon as it drew its last breath.³⁴⁰ In grave scenes, the *eidôlon*, like a stone stêlê, became a vehicle for

³³⁸ For more on Parrhasios see Lydakis 2004: 120-30 and Rumpf 1951: 3-7.

³³⁹ Though I have not discussed it in the body of this dissertation, I believe that many of the women, and men, in domestic scenes should probably be considered *eidôla* in so much as they are representations of the deceased.

³⁴⁰ This chapter will not deal in depth with the use of the winged, silhouette images as the soul but rather will discuss these as they relate to the other manifestations of the deceased. For more on the use and

communicating a cultivated memory of the deceased. They can be seen as the canvas upon which a painter might add particular attributes or assets to heighten the glory of the dead and as a visual analog for the mourning behavior that appears and which would have been meant to be directed at a particular individual.

The way that the *eidôlon* fulfills its role as the subject of lament on white-ground *lêkythoi* changes somewhat throughout the 5th century. During the first 50 years, the deceased was represented statue-like, with little emotion and a rigid body. As we will see, this type of image inspired empathy by suggesting that the loss of such a model Athenian might have a great impact on everyone around them. Thus, they inspired empathy for the dead, empathy for the family and close friends, and empathy for the community that lost such a valued member. There is a correlation between how great the virtues of the fallen are, how great the void that they leave behind is, and how deserving they are of pity. In the last two decades of the 5th century, images of the deceased become less passive and express grief through their body and visage. Their presence in scenes with a tomb and mourners would preclude the idea that they represent unburied souls, one of the most recognizable categories of restless dead that might potentially haunt a grave,³⁴¹ but all the same they often look upset, disconcerted or frustrated, none of which is an adjective one might want to use of their dearly departed. Since one of the ultimate aims of funerary cult is to appease and nurture the deceased, and therefore provide comfort in the afterlife, it is somewhat perturbing to see an *eidôlon* physically expressing their dismay. Perhaps

representation of these figures see Díez 2001: 71-90; Garland 1985: 1-4, 17-20; Oakley 2004: 213-4; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 328-38; and Vermeule 1979: 7-11. For images and a discussion of the role of *psychopompoi* with the shades see Díez 1995: 25-60; Oakley 2004: 113-44; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 303-56; Vermeule 1979: 145-51; and Walter-Karydi 2015: 139-47, 369-72.

³⁴¹ The primary categories of restless dead are the unburied (*ataphoi*), untimely deceased (*aôroi*), and the violently murdered (*biaiothanatoi*). See Felton 1999: 5-10; Garland 1985: 77-80, 160; Johnston 1999a: 127-39 and Ogden 2002: 146-53 for more on the restless dead.

the best explanation for their particular countenances is that they reflect a new means of inciting pity from viewers by means of empathy rather than self-aggrandizement.

The Deceased as Corpse

Since the popularity of the white-ground *lêkythos* was accompanied by a shift away from *prothesis* scenes toward scenes independent from the funeral, there were far fewer instances in which a corpse, the most obvious representation of the deceased, would be shown. Images of the *prothesis* did not simply disappear at this time, but rather appeared sporadically throughout the 5th century, even showing up on a vase by the Painter of the Huge Lêkythoi (Berlin F2684) from c. 400. The switch in the preferred scene type does not reflect a change in attitude regarding the care of the corpse, since mourners direct similar devotion to grave *stélai*,³⁴² but it did provide a new means of displaying grief and mourning. Unlike the *prothesis*, which was heavily “scripted,” scenes beside the grave could be formal or candid and thus afforded greater opportunity to explore new means of expressing emotions. And, with the eventual inclusion of lifelike images of the deceased, artists were able to experiment with showing emotion in the faces of both mourner and mourned-for.

Between the 8th and early 5th century, the deceased appeared as a corpse and as such it provided an object toward which mourners could direct their attention and carry out the necessary rites associated with burial. Aspects of these rituals involved touching and embracing the dead, allowing the living to have their final physical moments with the deceased. From Odysseus’ *katabasis* (*Od.* 11), we know that the deceased lose their corporeal substance and

³⁴² See Chapter 1.

ability to speak once they have been integrated into the afterlife.³⁴³ The *prothesis* represented the last chance that the living had to make physical contact and “speak” with deceased before they descended to the underworld and removed all tangible trace of themselves. Through washing, anointing, and dressing the corpse women could be close to the body before its interment. The importance of touching the dead is suggested by the length of time that this stage of the funeral had legendarily taken, from the frequency with which mourners reach their hands toward the face of corpses in painted images on vases and *pinakes* from the 7th-5th centuries,³⁴⁴ and from various references in epic and tragedy where the desire to touch a shade and the clutching of corpses are explicitly stated.³⁴⁵ Both Achilles (*Il.* 23. 99-102) and Odysseus (*Od.* 11. 206-7) are overcome with a desire to embrace Patroklos and Antikleia, respectively, although such an effort is ultimately futile and underscores the ultimate separation of worlds of the living and the dead. Similarly, Andromache desired to cradle the lifeless Hektor in her arms (*Il.* 24. 724), and Creon holds Haimon in his hands after he finds him dead by his own hand (*Soph. Ant.* 1258, 1297).

When the deceased is depicted as a corpse, its primary function is to allow for the living to enact the proper rites. Little other than the gender and relative age can be determined so the dead does not serve as a means of communicating anything of their character or what honor may be their due; they simply fulfill a passive role to allow for the enactment of rites in their honor. The focus of these images is upon the living and their emotions, which in turn elevate the status of the dead and provide honor to them.

³⁴³ Antikleia explains that it is the way of the dead to lose their substance as soon as they are relaxed in death (11. 218-9). The elaborate ritual necessary for providing shades the ability to speak is told in lines 10. 504-40 and 11. 20-50.

³⁴⁴ See Boardman 1955: 56-8 for more on the touching of the corpse in *prothesis* scenes.

³⁴⁵ *Supra* note 26 for a sources that provide a description of the *prothesis*, its function, and sources.

The Deceased as Sêma

Although there is no immediate reciprocity for care directed toward a corpse, ritual lament and funerary cult were cathartic for suffering survivors. And although the corpse was inevitably buried, the performative elements of the funeral were able, in theory, to continue indefinitely by being directed toward the *sêma* that marked each grave. In images on white-ground *lêkythoi*, *stêlai* are tended to and provided with all manners of luxury: they were dressed in colorful *tainiai*, quenched with libations, anointed with oils, fed with cakes and fruit, and provided with gifts of various sorts.³⁴⁶ Through the extended observation of rites of funerary cult, a mourner could better cope with their loss, displace their emotional turmoil, and demonstrate their empathy for the dead, all while taking as much control over the comfort of the deceased as possible.³⁴⁷ Although many *lêkythoi* depict *stêlai* of various shapes, sizes, and quality, there is no contemporary archeological evidence to attest to the actual use of grave markers of this type in conjunction with the deposition of these vases. It is generally assumed that the images of cult activity, which appear in the scenes of white-ground *lêkythoi*, are representative of Classical Athenian funerary rituals, even if some of their features are imaginative or an exaggeration of actual practice.³⁴⁸ Even without evidence for the actual use of *stêlai* as they appear on *lêkythoi*

³⁴⁶ See Bremmer 1992: 7 and Garland 1985: 110-5 for a discussion regarding the Classical Greek concept of the status/presence of the deceased and their “ability” to receive gifts from the living.

³⁴⁷ Dodds 2004: 136-7 explains that providing sustenance and luxuries was done because men felt they should, not because they believed that the dead partook in these items in a real sense. In comparison, he states: “Man I take it, feeds his dead for the same reason a little girl feeds her doll...” Thus the instinct to provide for the dead needs no verification of its true efficacy, it simply is what one does. Ritual is often performed even when the origin ritual is particularly conservative because one does not tend to experiment when dealing with the care of the deceased and an eternal afterlife. Such ritual provides a sense of control over the ultimately intangible and uncontrollable.

³⁴⁸ Since the *Kerameikos* is the only cemetery in Athens that has been very well published and studied, the lack of archaeological evidence is potentially somewhat misleading. It is unlikely that grave *stêlai*

there is no reason to assume that these vases were not used in the manner that they appear in such scenes. They could have been similarly dedicated or deposited in designated areas of the *démotion sêma*, offering trenches, or upon less extravagant graves.³⁴⁹

From the Homeric period, graves were marked with a large vase or stone slab, generally referred to as a *sêma*, so that more important than the way that it looked was the fact that it marked the final resting place of the dead. In funerary imagery they provide context for the actions and gestures being performed in their vicinity. The erection of the *sêma* marked the final stage of the funeral and the “integration of the deceased amongst the ‘stable’ dead.”³⁵⁰ It ultimately indicated the place that could be returned to in order to gain proximity to the deceased so that lament and offerings would be efficiently transferred to the intended individual.

By the 5th century the *sêma* had become intimately related to the memory of the person(s) whose grave it marked. That the *sêma* had become somewhat synonymous with commemoration of the dead is reflected in the adoption and increased usage of the term *mnêma*, “memory” or “memorial” to refer to the grave.³⁵¹ Sourvinou-Inwood suggests that the use of *mnêma* in this context coincides with a shifting understanding of the grave as not only a tangible receptacle for offering gifts to the dead, but also as a lasting emblem of their life, virtues, and importance.³⁵²

as they appear on white-ground *lékythoi* were the norm but it is also the case that there is potentially more evidence in the other places of burial in Athens that could elucidate this matter more fully.

³⁴⁹ Garland 1985: 22.

³⁵⁰ Derderian 2001: 78. In other words the deceased had left the realm of the living and was completely separated from it, save for a grave marker and the memory of people it left behind.

³⁵¹ Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 140-7. Arrington 2015: 66-70, 76-8 discusses the use of *sêma* and *mnêma* by Thucydides, Pausanias, Plato, Demosthenes, and Lysias. See Derderian 2001: 63-113 for the use of *sêma* and *mnêma* in funerary epigram. From Soph. *Ant.* it seems that it could also be used to refer to a corpse since Creon uses this term as he clutches his dead son.

³⁵² Sourvinou-Inwood 1997: 144-5. She emphasizes that the function of the marker remains the same but there is an increased awareness or interest in its function as a visual reminder of the lost life.

Since the use of the term *mnêma* coincided with the period in which funerary epigram grew in popularity, cultural memory of the fallen was created and presented to the community through both visual and literary means. Although words are very rarely represented on depictions of grave markers,³⁵³ the types of gifts that appear on their steps or suspended in their vicinity provide visual clues about particular merits of the deceased, e.g. a lyre might be dedicated to the grave of a musician, arms or armor for a soldier, a *plemochoe* for an Athenian matron. Since the grave could be viewed by any passerby, it offered the living a way to communicate their grief as well as the things for which they hoped the dead would be remembered.³⁵⁴ As this marker became increasingly substantial it could also embody and communicate traits of the deceased that could serve to instigate, cultivate, and continue a more personalized memory of them. In other words, as Derderian has astutely noted, the “*sêma* or *tymbos* represent[ed] a diachronically durable memorial that bridge[d] the gap between immediate death ritual and cultural memory as well as between individual and collective relevance.”³⁵⁵ A simple stone slab erected as a *sêma* was a blank slate upon which a memory could be created and indefinitely honored and cultivated. The *stêlê* became a substitute body, *sôma*, for the deceased and inscribed epigrams and cenotaphs provided a voice through which virtues could be recalled, pity demanded,

³⁵³ Cf. a vase by the Inscription Painter (Athens, NM 1958) [Fig. 30], which has vertical dashes placed evenly across the upper one third of the *stêlê* representing a grave inscription. There are occasional *kalos* inscriptions, e.g. “Timokrates” (Oxford, Ashmolean V267) [Fig. 19], cf. Shapiro 1987.

³⁵⁴ Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 112-7 discusses that the deceased leaves behind a persona that is communicated via the living through the grave marker and cult. The “social persona,” as she refers to it, was constructed by the living and is a reflection of their memory of the deceased and the virtues and traits, which they hoped to preserve and express. She writes extensively about the role of the grave marker in both the Homeric and Archaic Periods, see especially pages 120-67 and 228-90.

³⁵⁵ Derderian 2001: 51-2.

evildoers warned, and humor supplied for the otherwise solemn occasion of visiting a cemetery.³⁵⁶

At the same time that the erection of a grave marker created a permanent location for indefinite “interaction” between the living and the dead it also created a monument that continually signified the ultimate separation of the deceased from the world of the living.³⁵⁷ That funerary cult and necromancy (e.g. Aesch. *Per.* 161-4) needed to take place at the *sêma* indicates that it was perceived as the closest or most direct point of contact between these two worlds.³⁵⁸ This is not to say that the grave represented a limen that could be crossed by the deceased at will and literary evidence is consistent in its certainty that once in Hades there was no possibility of exiting: exceptions are only the stuff of legends.³⁵⁹ For this reason, in addition to a lack of visual evidence, it is doubtful that the images of the deceased that appear beside the grave, toward the second half of the 5th century, or anywhere outside of Hades, ever represent a ghost in a narrative sense.³⁶⁰ As Nathan Arrington rightly points out, the tombs that appear in these scenes “need not

³⁵⁶ An assortment of funerary epigrams can be found in Paton 1953. For a discussion of the form and use of epigram see Day 1989; Derderian 2001; and Walter-Karydi 2015: 101-11, 335-43. *Supra* note 332 for sources on Simonides’ Epigram 9. For the expression of emotion in epigram more generally see Chaniotis 2012. See chapter 5 for more on the role of vocal commemoration at the grave.

³⁵⁷ Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 110-1. The idea that the *sêma* was a symbol of the ultimate separation of the dead from the living world is spelled out by the description of Patroklos’ funeral (*Il.* 23.45-6).

³⁵⁸ For more on grave as point of contact for the living and the dead see Garland 1985: 6-8, 134; Derderian 2001: 51-4; Kurtz & Boardman 1971: 200-7, 218-9; Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 324-5; and Walter-Karydi 2015: 156-60.

³⁵⁹ i.e. Odysseus’ and Orpheus’ premature descents into Hades and the necromancy of Darius in Aeschylus’ *Persians*.

³⁶⁰ In other words, the image is never “seen” by living figures in the narrative scenes but may be “projections” or “visions” of their thoughts or memories of the dead. Recently, Nathan Arrington 2015: 254-60, 256n.43 argued that there are instances in which a ghost is present. He argues that there are instances in which the living mourner seems to visually recognize the *eidôlon*, which suggests that they are narratively present and truly seen by the living. A shadowy image of a woman seated on the grave marker in a scene by the Thanatos Painter (Athens, NM 1942) has been discussed as possibly

exist anywhere other than in the mind's eye"³⁶¹ but they are crucial to their particular scenes because they establish the setting and the relationship between the depicted figures.³⁶² When there are only mourners in the presence of a grave *stêlê*, it takes on the same role that the corpse did in *prothesis* scenes. Since the deceased is still depicted as passive entity in these instances, the focus remains on the mourners and their actions and expressions. This is markedly different from Archaic and Late Classical grave *stêlai* or images that include life-like representations of the deceased, where the focus of the image is the deceased not the living.

The grave *stêlê* was a representation of the deceased but there were limitations to its ability to communicate cultural memory and invoke pity. Hence, scenes of the grave began to incorporate naturalistic representations of the dead to reflect or encapsulate an idealized vestige of them, which served as a means of visually informing the creation of a specific memory for the deceased and conjuring empathy for a specific situation. Like elegy and epigram in honor of the dead, these images were meant to simultaneously celebrate the dead and prompt pity and mourning. They relied on stock formulas but could be easily adapted to commemorate different scenarios related to the deceased. And while there is no evidence that vases were chosen for “accurately” depicting one’s personal experience, their variety allowed potential buyers to choose a vase with a scene to their personal preference. The point would be to find an image that “speaks” to one’s experience even if it did not reflect the reality of their situation. During a

representing a ghost by Oakley 2004: 166-7 but the way that she is rendered is completely unique and may not be original. I do not contend that it is impossible that these images are ghosts but it seems more likely that they are more akin to invisible souls than visible ghosts.

³⁶¹ Arrington 2015: 262.

³⁶² For the archaeological evidence of grave markers from this period see; Arrington 2015: 78-89; Kurtz & Boardman 1975: 121-30; Oakley 2004: 214; Vlouchou 2012: 375-80; and Walter-Karydi 2015. For the most recent discussion of the location and form of the *dêmosion sêma* see Arrington 2015: 55-90, 2011: 17-83, & 2010b; and Walter-Karydi 2015: 164-97.

period in which many were buried in mass public graves, the sense of individuality created by the variety in funerary imagery might have been particularly appealing.³⁶³

The Deceased as Eidôlon

Before providing a brief overview of the depiction of *eidôla* in scenes of mourning, it is important to note that the issues of when, where, and how the deceased can be identified in white-ground scenes has been a source of ongoing debate.³⁶⁴ To explain the particularities of emotive images of the deceased that appear towards the end of the 5th century, it is useful to show a few of the ways that earlier painters indicated the vital status of the different participants in grave visit scenes. Identification is made particularly difficult by the fact that *eidôla*, as their name³⁶⁵ and literary evidence imply,³⁶⁶ are identical to living humans in their outward appearance. Although there is no single indicator of vital status across the entire genre, artists do provide visual clues, depending on the organization and details of the scene, to help a viewer discern the various categories of people depicted. The assignment of deceased and living figures is at times based on rather tenuous arguments because the deceased were thought to look exactly like their former selves. However, this ambiguity allows the deceased to retain their human nature. Death and the afterlife are obscure to the living so making the dead look familiar may

³⁶³ See Arrington 2015: 266-74 and Oakley 2004: 165-75.

³⁶⁴ For the issue of identifying the dead in white-ground *lékythoi* generally see Arrington 2015; Bažant 1986: passim; Bérard 1988: 166; Kurtz 1971: 223-4; Oakley 2004: 164-73, 213-4; Schmidt 2003: 63-79, 2005: 63-5; and Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 324-5.

³⁶⁵ In addition to being the word for a ghost, phantom or image, *eidôlon* is also the word for “image or likeness.” Thus a ghost was in appearance alike to its former living self.

³⁶⁶ Patroklos appears identical to his living self (*Il.* 23. 65-8), as do the shades that Odysseus encounters during his *nekuia*. Atossa (Aesch. *Pers.*) recognizes the image of her son in her dreams (176-200) and she and her attendants are amazed at the image of Darius raised from the ground (681-99).

ease and facilitate coping with mortality. As I discuss the manner in which *eidôla* appear during the course of the development of the white-ground style, I will explain the various ways that their status as the deceased is made clear or suggested. I have divided the following discussion according to Norio Nakayama's division of periods of manufacture of the white-ground *lêkythoi* as a means of chronologically organizing the discussion of the representation and function of *eidôla* in graveside scenes.³⁶⁷

Phases I-II

Eidôla first appear in white-ground graveside scenes by the Tymbos Painter around 470. The Tymbos painter, so-called for his propensity for depicting tumuli, and the ATL (Associated with the Tymbos *Lêkythoi*) painters, often depicted one or two figures beside a grave. In many scenes it is obvious that we are simply dealing with mourners visiting the grave because one or both of the figures offer a gift, such as a wreath or *tainia*, or posture their arms in a position associated with ritual lament.³⁶⁸ However, in a number of these graveside scenes a "visitor" to the cemetery is shown seated on a *klismos* to one side of a *stêlê* or tumulus. Since *klismoi* are associated with the home, and there is no other evidence to suggest that they would have been used in the cemetery, they should be understood as indicating that the individuals seated upon them are not

³⁶⁷ Nakayama's 1982: 21. i.e. Phase I = 475-450, Phase II = 455-430, Phase III = 435-420 and Phase IV = 425-400.

³⁶⁸ e.g. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam GR113.1864; Copenhagen, NM 1945; Omaha, Joslyn Art Museum 1954.1; Paris, Lepine 2. The arrangement of a single figure bringing offerings to the *stêlê* was very common. For the rather extensive list of work by the Tymbos Painter and painters near him see Beazley *ARV* 753-62.

physically present but an imagined vestige of the deceased.³⁶⁹ The incongruous inclusion of items that are appropriate in a domestic setting but not beside the grave, helps to signpost the separation and otherness of the deceased.

Given the simplicity of these scenes, the status of the seated figures, usually women, as living or dead may never be unequivocally answered but an argument can be made for their being the deceased if one looks at a few images where a life-sized or miniature image of a seated figure appears immediately before or upon a tomb [Figs. 67-70] (see below for a discussion of these images). In all instances that a figure appears directly in front of a *stêlé* or tumulus [Fig. 67], their body and accouterments remain completely within the confines of the grave's outline. This is also true of three related images, which show a figure lying on a bier at the base of a tumulus.³⁷⁰ In these instances a scene from the funeral is being visually conflated with the *sêma*. There is no reason to imagine that the painter is showing us a cross section of the grave, as Emily Vermeule has suggested, or that the body and bier are relief decoration on a *stêlé*.³⁷¹ They remain within the confines of the marker simply because it is representative of the completion of their burial and the memory of the funeral is now attached to the grave. By surrounding the body, the outline of the grave is visually, symbolically embodying the memory of the deceased.

Seated females shown within the linear confines of *stêlai* should surely be seen as *eidôla* precisely because their presence in this context is out of the ordinary. Yet, there is a purpose

³⁶⁹ e.g. Oxford, Ashmolean 1956.14; Berlin Antiken. 3324, F2246; Munich Antiken. 2772, Tübingen S101499. There are over twenty vases attributed to the Tymbos Painter/ATL Class that have figures seated in the presence of the grave marker.

³⁷⁰ London, BM D35; Tübingen S101715; and Athens, NM 1886. For the latter, which I have not seen, cf. Oakley 2004: 150n.20.

³⁷¹ Vermeule 1979: 27, Fig. 20. For more on these images generally see Díez de Velasco 1995: 77-9; Kurtz 1971: 205 and Oakley 2004: 150.

behind showing them in this manner beside the grave since it can be argued that images of the domestic sphere act as visual representations of female *aretê*. This would help to explain the proliferation of domestic scenes on white-ground *lékythoi* and subsequently in Classical grave relief. The image of a woman engaged in typical domestic tasks, e.g. making wreaths, weaving, playing instruments, came to represent female virtue just as the idealized male nude came to represent male virtues. In other words, two types of scenes develop to more effectively acclaim traits and skills specific to each gender.

That seated figures are not visitors to but the idealized occupant of depicted tombs is made particularly explicit in two vases by the Tymbos Painter now in Berlin (Antiken. 3324) [Fig. 68] and the Louvre (MNB 3059) [Fig. 70]. On the Berlin vase, a woman is seated on a *diphros* that rests upon a rectangular platform, decorated with a mirror and ribbons. She holds a wreath in her outstretched arms, akin to those often found in domestic scenes. The platform rests upon three steps that make up the base of a tumulus/*stêlê* that comes to a sharp point on the shoulder of the vessel. The woman and her pedestal remain within the illustrated confines of the *sêma*. Given the fact that no relief *stêlai* from this period showed such elaborate decoration, nor did they include scenes of a domestic nature, it is more likely that we have a visual conflation of the *sêma* and a *mnêma* of the deceased. By being set upon a pedestal the woman is separated from the natural world and is indivisible from the semantics of the grave marker. The concept that Katharine Derderian has set forth that “the material σῆμα constructed by the mourner transmit[ed] the memory in its personified form and so represent[ed] a μνῆμα, a vehicle for memory” is precisely demonstrated by this image where the *sêma* is clearly represented and serves as a backdrop for

an actual personification of the deceased, which is not real but imagined, and which may assist in the creation of a memory of the deceased, real or imagined.³⁷²

On the second vase [Fig. 68], the representation of a seated Athenian matron is all the more obviously distinguished from the narrative of the scene, and integral to the physical *mnêma*, because it has been shrunken down to fit within the top one-third of a rectangular slab that rises three-quarters of the height of the body of the *lêkythos*. A female mourner approaches this marker from the left with a wreath to dedicate upon it. Though the diminutive woman could represent relief decoration, as suggested for the aforementioned vase, this is rather unlikely. Visually it plays with the idea of decorating the *stêlê* with an image of the deceased but like all *stêlai* depicted on white-ground *lêkythoi*, fantasy and reality are enmeshed to create meaningful images rather than ones that abide to a strict historical reality. Only a handful of later artists use miniature figures as emblems on the top of *stêlai*. Two vases attributed to the Sabouroff Painter (Athens, NM 1815 and Boston, MFA 10.220) [Figs. 71, 72] depict a seated woman on the top face of a pillar, visited by mourners. In the example from Boston, the seated woman holds her hand to her head in a recognizable gesture of grief. On the other example, the seated woman holds out a cluster of grapes for a small child that sits on the ground before her feet. This scene of mother and child may allude to the fact that the grave belonging to a mother and child or may simply recall an endearing memory of a tender moment familiar to women and children.³⁷³ In a scene by an artist near the Thanatos Painter (Boston, MFA 01.8080) [Fig. 73], two statuesque, nude males, holding a strigil and spear respectively, serving as akroteria on an architectural grave

³⁷² Derderian 2001: 78.

³⁷³ The image of an infant atop a steeply stepped grave marker in a vase by the Thanatos Painter [Fig. 57] must symbolize the deceased. Though in this case it is not necessarily their virtues that are emphasized but rather their life cut short at a young age (*aōros*).

marker, highlight the physical prowess and beauty of a youthful male. Further emphasizing the athletic ability of the deceased, four silhouetted males in a wrestling scene serve as pedimental decoration. These figures, along with a suspended shield and lyre, are visualized to communicate physical strength and skill. They represent an artist's inventive way of using a fantastical *stêlê* to broadcast the physical strengths of the deceased.

The primary way in which painters from Phases I and II articulated the presence of the deceased was by separating them from the narrative of the tomb scene. This could be done by showing them engaged in activities inappropriate for the cemetery, e.g. sitting down to create wreaths, and uninterested in the activities one expects to be carried out beside the grave, such as dedicating wreaths, or by making them a quasi-integrated part of the grave marker itself. While some images showed men or women actively adorning a grave, scenes in which figures sat, either simply or tending to a wreath, used the inaction and lack of mourning gesture to indicate that they were emblematic of the deceased. Although simplistic in their execution, these early painters were able to include an image of the deceased in order to provide a personified depiction of the memory associated with the grave *stêlê*. In the next Phase of painting, the seated figure was sometimes employed but changes in the organization and execution of scenes led to new ways of depicting *eidôla*.

Phase III

As tomb visit scenes increased in popularity around 450, artists such as the Achilles (active c. 460-425), Bosanquet (active c. 450-440), Inscription (active c. 460-450), Sabouroff (active c. 460-435), and Thanatos (active c. 445-430) Painters preferred to show figures standing beside the grave (not in front or on top like the previous Phases), irrespective of their status as living or

dead.³⁷⁴ Unlike earlier painters that often depicted a single visitor or *eidôlon*, the vast majority of vases by the aforementioned painters and their associates included two figures, either two living visitors or one mourner and one *eidôlon*. Men appear more frequently as the deceased in scenes beside the grave but it is possible that “domestic scenes” were favored for scenes that commemorated female *eidôla*.³⁷⁵ Since few painters from the middle of the 5th century depicted the deceased seated in front of or upon the *sêma*, a new set of visual devices for demarcating narratively absent figures were adopted and exploited: most obviously dress or lack thereof,³⁷⁶ statuesque postures that do not incorporate mourning gestures, the presence of small winged *psychai*,³⁷⁷ and/or proximity to the grave *stêlê*. Between 450 and 430 the image of the deceased seems to generally appear closer and closer to the side of the *stêlê*, perhaps visually drawing them progressively closer to the stone *sêma*, which became increasingly assimilated with the concept of *mnêma*.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁴ Oakley 1995: 66.

³⁷⁵ For other explanations for the popularity of these scenes and interpretations of them, see Kurtz 1988; Oakley 2000; Reilly 1989 and Rystedt 1994. I will not discuss these images here because they do not appear in the context of the tomb.

³⁷⁶ Nudity is only an option when showing deceased male figures. Many female mourners appear naked because the secondary paint that was used for their clothes has worn away and only the outline of their body remains, cf. Bosanquet Painter, Boston, MFA 00.359. These figures are occasionally misidentified as “naked” in the Beazley Database.

³⁷⁷ I use the term *psychê* to refer to the small, silhouetted representations of the soul. For a discussion of the use of this term and distinction between *eidôlon* and *psychê* see Sourvinou-Inwood 1995: 56-9.

³⁷⁸ It has been suggested that the image of the deceased is affiliated more and more with the marker as more and more families lost the ability to bury their own, who were likely during times of war and expansion to die in foreign lands or at sea. A hastily made mass grave found near the Kerameikos from c. 430 has been associated with victims of the plague and casualties of the Peloponnesian War and may indicate that even the deceased that were physically buried in the city were not always given over to families for burial. The impersonal aspect of such a burial and the inability to carry out a proper funeral must have in part influenced the increased use of human representations of the dead on burial scenes. For more on the *Kerameikos* mass burial see Baziotopoulou-Valavani 2002: 187-201 and Vlouchou 2012: 378.

Figures that are nude or wearing full or partial armor are designated “deceased” because it would have been utterly inappropriate to show visitors to a grave as such, and it is entirely unprecedented in Attic funerary art to show nude mourners. The heroic nude does appear elsewhere in counterintuitive places, such as the battlefield, but this is in an effort to demonstrate the beauty and strength of the Greek warrior. In a martial context nudity seems more impractical than profane. In a sepulchral setting it is simply out of place and inasmuch as it is, it becomes a means of distinguishing a non-narrative participant. In these scenes, the nude male attracts the attention of a viewer and in its perfection of strength and beauty creates a positive impression of the figure, which it is meant to symbolize, thereby leading to the creation of an admirable memory of them and evoking pity for the fact that they are now departed.

Fully naked *eidôla* appear on very few *lêkythoi* and are limited to the work of a few painters from the middle of the 5th century. The earliest examples appear seemingly at the same time between 450 and 445 in a handful of vases by the Achilles, Bosanquet, Sabouroff, and Thanatos Painters, and by 425 they cease to appear. It is perhaps not at all surprising that this efflorescence of images with heroic nude figures coincide with the date of Polykleitos’ canonical *Doryphoros*.³⁷⁹ The correlation of the well-proportioned body to virtues related to cultural, social, and philosophical ideas must have had an influence even in these funerary vessels. By creating visual reference to a piece that was known to manifest the very best qualities of an Athenian man, a vase painter could heighten the dignity and glory of their own images of fallen warriors, men, and boys. The Achilles Painter depicted unclad, or scantily clad, statuesque males more often than any other painter of this genre, with roughly twenty examples compared to less than five from the other painters. His work, in general, shows the influence of contemporary

³⁷⁹ For more on Polykleitos and his *Canon*, see Hurwit 1995: 3-18; Pollitt 1995: 19-24; and Stewart 1995: 246-61.

sculpture to a great degree and it seems that he adopted the nude form and/or a statuesque pose to simultaneously honor the dead recipient and make clear that we are dealing with an idealized form, not a narrative figure.³⁸⁰

One of the Achilles Painter's best known vases with a nude, statue-like *eidôlon* (Berlin, Antiken. 1983.1) [Fig. 50] is perhaps also the most illustrative example of the direct link between contemporary, idealized sculpture, and his articulation of a scene of mourning for a fallen warrior.³⁸¹ In this example, the warrior stands fully frontally so that his enviable body with impeccable proportion can be put on full display. He is not in a *contrapposto* pose, but there are slight hints of ponderation in the subtle relaxation in his left leg.³⁸² His face is covered by a helmet, so his body does the work of invoking pity: it is pitiable that such a perfect specimen should die fighting. This is completely the opposite from images of mourners who cover their entire body and only expose their face, the feature that is able to show their emotion. Here we are invited to marvel at the physical strength of the body and not about the emotion that his countenance might convey. In contrast, the elderly mourner to the other side of the *stêlê* shows his grief through his face and his right hand that he has raised to his brow. This scene demonstrates how the Achilles Painter used the face to show grief because although both mourner and mourned-for are emotive and affecting, only the mourner is emotional. Since the *eidôlon* need only represent the idealized departed, it need not be emotional, and this remains largely the case until the end of the 5th century (see below, Phase IV).

³⁸⁰ For more on the work of the Achilles Painter more generally see Oakley 1997a.

³⁸¹ This vase need not have been dedicated for a warrior but the image is one of mourning for a warrior.

³⁸² At least one of the Achilles Painter's *eidôla* appear in Polykleitan *contrapposto* pose, cf. Athens, BΣ 4 (Tzachou-Alexandri 1998: pls. 79-80). Figures in scenes by other painters mimic the pose as well in both nude, e.g. Bosanquet Painter, (Basel, Ludwig Kä 402 and Athens, NM 1932), and clothed figures, e.g. Quadrate Painter, Berlin, Antiken. 30219.47.

None of the Achilles Painter's other examples have such well-defined musculature and many of them appear walking toward the *stêlê*, and thus rendered obliquely, so that their abdominal muscles are no longer the focal point.³⁸³ In this case it seems that their physical beauty is hinted at, but that their nudity is being used to distinguish them as only metaphorically present. These figures look similar to a number of other figures that are clothed but likely represent the deceased as well. When clothed, these figures are more difficult to identify as *eidôla*, but on a case-by-case basis, their identity is marked by an attendant *psychê*, a statuesque or listless pose, or by their gently brushing the edge of a *stêlê* with the back of their hand.³⁸⁴ The Achilles Painter also used small, silhouetted *psychai* in a few of his graveside scenes to signpost a dead figure (New York, MMA 1989.281.72) [Fig. 86].³⁸⁵ These images are perhaps illustrating the two aspects of the deceased soul, which were also used independently or in conjunction with one another in literature to describe the deceased Patroklos and Hektor.³⁸⁶ Though this seems like an easy and obvious means of marking the deceased, this tactic never became widespread and was used only intermittently from the time of the Tymbos Painter to at least the beginning of Phase IV.

Three similar vases by the Bosanquet Painter (Athens, NM 1932; Basel, Ludwig Kâ 402; and New York, Met. 23.160.39) [Figs. 74-76] help to demonstrate the different ways that an *eidôlon* could be demarcated. These vases also demonstrate why it is difficult to determine whether a

³⁸³ cf. Athens, NM 20703; London, BM D54 and London, V&A C2491.1910.

³⁸⁴ It is possible that some figures that appear to point at the ground are subtly suggesting that they are in the soil below. Both male figures beside the grave (New York, MMA 1989.281.79) and female figures in domestic settings (Athens, NM 12743) are depicted in this manner.

³⁸⁵ See also London, BM D54; Marburg 1016 and a privately owned vase in Zurich (ARV² 999.177) (cf. Oakley 1997, pl. 126 B-C).

³⁸⁶ e.g. *Il.* 23.72, 104 and *Od.* 24.14.

ghost is ever truly present in a scene.³⁸⁷ The three vases each show a female mourner (left) and male *eidôlon* (right) on either side of a slab *stêlê*. In the vase from Athens (1932) [Fig. 74], a woman in a red *chiton* stands upright with the toes of her left foot just grazing the lowest step of the *stêlê*. She holds a large basket in both hands, which was once full of *tainiai* that can only be recognized from their stringy ends that appear floating below the basket and along the sides of the *stêlê*. Her head tips downward slightly so that she looks aimlessly toward the grave. To the other side of the stone slab stands a nude youth. A *petasos* is tied around his neck and falls along his back and a short *chlamys* is draped over the crook of his left arm, in which hand he holds a pair of upright spears. He stands with his left foot facing forward and his right pointing towards the tomb. His body is positioned frontally to display his muscular torso, but his head is rotated to “look” toward the female mourner as if to observe what she will do next. His right arm is straight but his right hand is lifted away from his right hip and halfway between his body and the *stêlê*. His hand is relaxed and its back faces the grave. Thus, he is not truly gesturing, but he is showing a subtle connection toward the grave. The faces of both figures are rather stoic with only a hint of a frown where the very corner of the mouth seems to turn down.

In the scene on New York, MMA 23.160.39 [Fig. 76], the female mourner approaches the *stêlê*, which displays four *lêkythoi* and two wreaths on its uppermost step, with a liquid libation. A ribbon is tied around the upper part of the rectangular slab. The woman stands facing toward the *stêlê*, holding a pitcher in her left hand, which just peaks out from behind her left hip, and a *phialê* in her right hand. She is extending the *phialê* out and toward the young man on the other

³⁸⁷ I discovered after looking at these three images on my own that Arrington 2014: 3-5 had written about them in a chapter from *Athenian Potters and Painters III*. He discusses them primarily in terms of how they indicate the lapse of time by showing the decay and disarray of gifts shown dedicated upon graves. In his recent publication (2015: 254-9) he discusses that some ghosts, which he calls *eidôla*, were in fact seen by visitors of the tomb.

side of the *stêlê*, suggesting that she is there to pour the libation to him or his memory. The surface of the vase is damaged just at her face so her precise expression cannot be discerned. The youth is nude and stands forward so that his musculature is on display. He looks toward the woman and it seems as if they are looking toward each other. He lifts his arm similarly to the male in the previous example but in this instance his palm faces upward and is angled so that it faces the *phialê* directly. His open hand indicates a gesture of acceptance and he is not simply lifting his arm toward the *stêlê* to touch it but is accepting this offering as it is about to be poured.

Since these two figures seem to look toward each other, and since the man seems ready to receive the offering, it appears as if they acknowledge each other. In scenes where the living and the dead seem to look at each other, some have argued that we are dealing with a ghost rather than an imagined memory of the deceased.³⁸⁸ So in this instance, as the woman approaches to pour a libation for the owner of the grave, its ghost has appeared and she now pours the offering directly to him. However, it is odd that a ghost would be shown nude and that a figure would pour an offering in the presence of a ghost. It is likely that their locked gaze indicates that the living mourner “sees” the deceased in her mind’s eye. He is shown nude because he represents the glorious memory of himself and it is to such a virtuous man that this libation is being poured. As an *eidôlon* he is present in the scene so that the viewer gets an idea of who it is that this woman is making an offering to. And he signals that he receives it simply so that the action is seen as being acknowledged, not because he is physically there to accept it. He is the personified *mnêma* to which this offering is being presented.

³⁸⁸ Cf. Arrington 2015.

The third vase, now in Basel (Kä 402) [Fig. 75], complicates the matter a bit because the *eidôlon* is shown clad in a short *chiton* and *chlamys* and is wearing a *petasos*. He carries two spears in his left hand, which reach from the ground to the upper border of the scene and are perfectly vertical. He stands forward but locks his gaze toward the woman, who like the mourner in the New York vase, offers a liquid libation. She looks toward the man, holding a pitcher in her left hand and a *phialê* in her right. She extends the *phialê* out so that it is in front of the *stêlê* and does not quite cross its right side. The sliver of space between the edge of the *phialê* and the side of the *stêlê* that faces the young man may suggest the distance between the two. Although the *stêlê* is meant to represent the person that has been buried horizontally below it, it serves to visually separate the living and the deceased by creating a vertical, physical barrier between them as they appear in these scenes. It ultimately shows the separation of life and death, a boundary that cannot be fully crossed. In this instance, the woman's libation will come as close as it can to the deceased but it cannot pass break through this boundary.

The man's hand is similarly raised from his right hip, and hovers midway between the *stêlê* and his hip but it faces down so that it is the back of his hand that faces the *stêlê*, as in the vase from Athens, i.e. he is not receiving the libation. This gesture is found throughout grave visit scenes in Phase III and visually ties the deceased to the grave without suggesting that they are actively gesticulating. He is not partaking in any mourning activity himself, and his still, upright posture suggests that he is merely an imagination of a man. His upright spears seem to anchor him in his position and visually connect him to the stone monument. As with the New York vase, there is no reason to assume that he is a ghost. He is simply a projection of the figure to whom this offering is being made. He provides a personal element so that we can feel a more directed pity for the person for whom this libation is being given.

Whether *eidôla* were shown clad or unclad, sad or stoic, with a *psychê* or not, that they are not ghosts but meant to be symbolic of the deceased is always underpinned by their statuesque posture and their lack of activity, especially lack of mourning activity.³⁸⁹ They do not participate in activities at the grave because they are meant to stand as a testament to their former life. The grave marker provides a visual and physical receptacle for the depicted mourners to place gifts and offerings and the image of the deceased is a visual representation to the viewer of the vase of the intended recipient of the gifts. They are a visual testament of the greatness of the dead. In these images, the deceased may carry spears and/or a shield,³⁹⁰ reach out toward the grave marker³⁹¹ or point at the ground,³⁹² but they do not show gestures of mourning or any attempt to leave a gift at the grave. Their accouterments and physique reveal their *kleos* and they are metaphorically risen from the dead to display it so that we as viewers can appreciate this, conceive a memory of them, and ultimately pity them and their survivors.

Phase IV

The brief overview of the appearance and role of *eidôla* in white-ground vases during the first three phases of the genre shows that there was a general desire to include naturalistic images of the deceased in conjunction with scenes of the grave. Female *eidôla* are usually set apart by

³⁸⁹ Their statue-like presence is emphasized by the platform upon which they stand in two vases by the Achilles Painter (Oxford, Ashmolean 1947.24 and St. Petersburg, Hermitage B4533) but I agree with Oakley 1997: 67 that these need not indicate that what we are looking at are actual statues in the narrative of the scene but they are symbolically placed on pedestals to elevate their implied virtues. They are ideal images of the deceased akin to but not a statue.

³⁹⁰ e.g. Athens, NM 12745; Athens, Agora 6473; Berlin, Antiken 1983.1; and London, BM D54.

³⁹¹ e.g. Athens, Kanellopoulos 476, 725; Basel L-62; London, V&A C2491.1910.

³⁹² e.g. Oxford, Ashmolean 1896.41; New York, MMA 1989.281.72

association with the domestic sphere or by taking a seat beside the grave rather than standing to present offerings or kneeling to emphatically mourn the deceased. Men too were indicated as deceased through their lack of narrative presence in scenes, either through sitting or appearing statue-like and disengaged from ambient activity. The deceased occasionally express a mild amount of sadness through a slight down turn in the corner of their mouths or by resting their head in their hand, but on the whole, mourners are shown emotional and emotive and the deceased are restrained in their expression; their faces and postures reminiscent of the Archaic smile and the stoic idealism of Classical sculpture. By Phase IV, the convention for showing the dead had seemingly come full circle and like the Tymbos Painter, the Quadrate (active 435-415), Reed (active 425-405) and Triglyph (active 415-405) Painters, along with the painters in and associated with Group R (active 425-405) visually set apart the deceased by simply seating them on a grave.³⁹³ Once it had become conventional to separate the living from the dead by position in the scene, the *eidolon* no longer needed to appear idealized and so artists could exploit their faces and body language as a means of conveying emotions and personal traits. This was not done in an effort to create portraits of specific individuals but to provide variations that might be particularly appealing to some consumers.

In early images of Phase IV the deceased is shown seated near the grave but not upon it but by the end of the 5th century the bodies of some *eidôla* can be said to truly possess the *sêma*. By filling the space and letting the weight of their bodies slump into the stone they take command of their grave. These same figures wear their emotions prominently on their faces and as they

³⁹³ All date ranges are from Oakley 2004: 14. The Group R painters are associated with the Reed Painter but their skills as draftsmen far exceed his and are easily distinguished. For general information on these painters see Kurtz 1975: 57-68; Oakley 2004: 14-8; Robertson 1992: 252-5 and Wehgartner 1983: 28-9. I do not include the Woman Painter (430-420/15) because his work is closer to the work of the Achilles Painter and other Phase III painters.

slouch with a brooding countenance they affect a feeling of dejection and pity. The precise nature of the emotion of both the mourners and the *eidōla*, which are largely the same, in these scenes has puzzled many. They have been described as “smoulder[ing], brooding, turned in on themselves,”³⁹⁴ “a more dejected and somber figure of the dead,”³⁹⁵ “brooding...with a troubled soul and a heavy heart,”³⁹⁶ and as consumed by “gloomy reverie,”³⁹⁷ and “deep sorrow.”³⁹⁸ Though these descriptions vary to some degree, the consensus is that there is a heightened expression of emotion and a self-consciousness that had only very rarely been employed in earlier vases.³⁹⁹ While these figures appear youthful and are well-dressed with the trappings of soldiers, athletes, matrons and musicians and must still represent a physical manifestation of *kleos*, their expressions are what ultimately conjure empathy from spectators.

Although there are a few examples where female figures are shown mourning while sitting or kneeling upon the grave,⁴⁰⁰ which bring into question the idea that figures that connect physically with the *stêlē* are the deceased, in the vast majority of images from this genre this

³⁹⁴ Robertson 1998: 253.

³⁹⁵ Oakley 2004: 167.

³⁹⁶ Kurtz 1971: 222. Kurtz does not believe that the figure in Athens, NM 1816 is deceased.

³⁹⁷ Walter-Karydi 2015: 157-8, “düsterer Versunkenheit.”

³⁹⁸ Rhomaios 1932: 12, “grande tristesse.”

³⁹⁹ e.g. Three vases, one each by the Bosanquet Painter (London, BM 1907.7-10.10), Phialê Painter (Munich, Antiken. 2798) and one by the Thanatos Painter (New York, MMA 11.212.8) show a woman with her chin resting on the back of her right hand. Neumann 1965: 128-31 associates this gesture with inner turmoil and uneasiness “Innerer Kampf” and “Banges Harren.” This particular gesture is not often found in Phase IV but can be observed in one vase by the Triglyph Painter (Athens, NM 1755).

⁴⁰⁰ Most obviously the expressively mourning woman kneeling on the steps of *stêlē* on a vase by the Woman Painter (Athens, NM 1955). However, her gesture and posture is comparable to many similar scenes in which the woman is shown slightly to one side of the *stêlē* and here the artist may simply have meant to place a third mourner in the scene and placed her in front of a *stêlē*.

holds true. Just as appearing nude, in full military gear, or seated in a *klismos* in a sepulchral scene was used as a means of demarcating the living from the dead by presenting a visual oddity, we may add to this category sitting upon the *stêlê*. The *sêma* was meant to be honored, nourished, and decorated. Its steps were meant to elevate it and display its gifts. While some have pointed to the handful of images of Elektra seated on Agamemnon's grave as evidence that *stêlê* steps could be used as a perch for lamentation, these images postdate the images discussed here and were produced for a south Italian market.⁴⁰¹ A vase now at the British Museum (D33), which is damaged and repainted, was believed to be an image of Elektra and Orestes at the tomb of their father but there is a third female figure behind "Elektra" which is ignored in this reading. In addition, the evidence that the names "Elektra" and "Orestes" were included are entirely spurious. It is more likely that this doctored vase, which was found in Eretria, belongs with other Group R vases found in the same context.⁴⁰² An image of Akrisios seated on a tomb (Geneva, HR 299) has narrative precedent so it need not reflect any sense of reality and one could argue that Elektra's presence on the tomb is related to a particular telling of her story, not to mention the fact that much of her behavior in general is viewed as out of the norm.

The close relationship between deceased and *stêlê* is also referenced in images with Hypnos and Thanatos or Charon when the physical grave is also depicted. The twin *psychopompoi* occasionally carry the corpse across the front of a *stêlê*, visually connecting the *sôma* and *sêma*

⁴⁰¹ The British Museum's online catalog entry claims this as a scene of Orestes and Elektra and suggests that their names were inscribed on the vase. However, after close examination of the vase during a trip to the British Museum in the summer of 2013, I was unable to find any trace of such inscriptions and as far as I can tell the claim is spurious.

⁴⁰² The excavation reports for Eretria include no useful information about the finds of white-ground *lêkythoi* and cannot shed light on this problem. I have viewed this vase in person and was able to confirm that the overall composition is consistent with other late 5th century *lêkythoi*. Kurtz 1975: 204 remarks of the convenience of this image looking like later vases and Melian reliefs with Orestes and Elektra.

of the dead.⁴⁰³ A few of these images belong to the Quadrate Painter and one each has been assigned to the Triglyph Painter (Athens, NM 1796) and Group R (Louvre CA1264). Similarly, images of the deceased are occasionally shown standing before their *sêma*, and in at least one case seated upon it (Athens, NM 1757), as they prepare to board Charon's skiff. Again, such a conflation in scenes is somewhat odd but ultimately logical because of the intimate relationship of *eidôlon* and *stêlê*. Such images also give further credence to the idea that a figure that covers the front of a *sêma* is deceased (*supra* Phases I-II).

Visually the vases of the Quadrate Painter bridge the gap between the iconography of Phase III and Phase IV painters since he often depicted figures seated near but not definitively upon the *stêlê* and they show little emotion in their faces. Both the Triglyph and Quadrate Painters' work is very similar to that of Group R, but their figures are generally not as emotive or detailed. They often show the deceased seated near the *stêlê*, stepping up onto it to accept an offering (Munich, Antiken. 8499) [Fig. 77] or perched on steps that extend awkwardly to one side of a grave simply to accommodate a sitting *eidôlon* (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam G141) [Fig. 78].

In one example by the Quadrate Painter (Munich, Antiken. 7709) [Fig. 79] a woman is shown tending the tomb of a young man. To the right of the *stêlê* the woman approaches with outstretched arms draped with a *tainia* that she is about to dedicate. Her neck bends slightly so that she can look across the *stêlê* toward the youth seated on a stone just beyond the grave. His left leg is crossed over the right and he rests his left foot on the lowest step of the *stêlê*. In his upraised left palm he rests his heavy head, bent downward at the neck, and his right arm lies lightly on his left knee. A faint frown can be made out and his gaze is set towards the ground. He appears entirely unaware or uninterested in the woman that approaches.

⁴⁰³ E.g. Athens, NM 17294, 16421, 1830 and London, BM D58, D59.

Neumann describes the youth as expressing “deep contemplation,” (Versunkenheit),⁴⁰⁴ and notes that this is a rare instance in which we see the deceased contemplating their own fate. From his inward expression we are invited to ponder what trouble he has faced and in so doing we may develop compassion and empathy for the sorrowful figure. This gesture is related to inner struggle, uneasy turmoil, sorrow, grief, resentment, and despondency, all of which are associated with the bringing of the hand to the head and utilizing an aimless gaze to show that the figure is not concerned with what is going on around them but is thinking inward.⁴⁰⁵ Here the physical gesture is related to emotions of deep thought and contemplation. Unlike earlier images of grief and mourning that are concerned with the outward display of ritualized lament, these figures are contemplative, not performative in their affectations. What is particularly interesting in the works of Group R is that they are able to convey the same emotions that Neumann has associated with gestures simply through the rendering of their facial features and their weighted posture. Faces rendered by painters other than those within Group R may have slight frowns, but their expressions of emotion are more connected with physical gestures shown within a sepulchral context.

The Emotive Group R

Though there are relatively few vases attributed to Group R,⁴⁰⁶ they are all well-published because both their style and imagery is relatively unique in Classical Greek vase painting. Two

⁴⁰⁴ Neumann 1965: 130 “Versunkenheit” is shown by the resting of the head in the hand and directing the gaze aimlessly down toward the ground. By looking downward the figure does not engage in the activity around them and appear as if they are lost in their own thoughts.

⁴⁰⁵ Neumann 1965: 128-51. “Innerer Kampf,” “Banges Harren,” “Gram,” “Groll,” “Versunkenheit,” “Trauer,” and “Mutlosigkeit.”

⁴⁰⁶ The Beazley archive attributes 37 vases to Group R/Manner of Group R.

visually similar vases from Eretria, now in the National Museum in Athens (1816, 1817) [**Figs. 80, 81**], each show a youthful male slouched upon a central *stêlē*. Vase 1816 is one of the most referenced white-ground *lekythoi*, rivaled only by a few of the Achilles Painter's "masterpieces." The composition shows a young male seated on a broad, yet basic, stepped *stêlē*, flanked by two mourners. He sits in three quarter view with his body and face turned slightly toward the left. His feet rest on the bottom step of the grave and his right wrist is relaxed on his right knee. His left arm is raised above and to the left of his head, grasping a pair of spears, which reach into the decorative frame of the vase body. His feet are roughly shoulder width apart and his knees bow outward slightly in a relaxed position so that his short garment falls between his thighs.⁴⁰⁷ His face, like his body, is rendered in three quarter view.

Like other images produced by this specific Group R painter, the eyes of the youth are depicted in detail. His nose and ears are shown in three quarter view and are carefully detailed so that the figure looks naturalistic, a feat that was not achieved by many painters, who often reserved such a vantage point for ridiculous satyrs and dangerous gorgons. His upper lip consists of a thinly painted, bow-like line and his lower lip is rendered as a full pout; only the outer two corners are rendered and a line midway through the edge of the upper lip emphasizes the fullness of his pout. The upper lip is very simply depicted but it turns ever so slightly down at its corner to indicate a subtle hint of dismay rather than a lighthearted expression. Though his head tilts downward, his pupils sit high in his eyes and create an irritated gaze. The openness of the eyes is emphasized by the luxurious lashes of both his upper and lower lids. The upper lashes are squeezed close to the eyebrow, creating an extra crease in his eyelid. The effect is to make his

⁴⁰⁷ No figure in the Group R corpus appears nude. In a vase from Cleveland (28.859) [**Fig. 83**] the central figure appears to be nude but a line through his left shin indicates that drapery used to cover at least a portion of his lower body. Since his genitalia are depicted it is possible that he was only partly covered.

eyes seem open but weighted down by a heavy brow; conveying a sense of solemnity and brooding. His eyes look vacantly forward and slightly downward and seem to be directed at no point in particular. Although this particular youth does not cast his eyes downward, his blank stare serves a similar purpose and indicates his despondency.

Although the young man holds spears and the mourner to his left carries a shield and helmet to leave at this grave, his body and posture do not display a typical heroic warrior's stature. Instead, the outlines of his body emphasize heaviness and sedentary posture, not that he carries extra weight on his bones but that he has sunk within himself and is slouched upon his perch. The ability to show such weight in the articulation of a line rather than through shading and light is associated with the painting style of Parrhasios, which is the primary reason that this artist has been associated with his work.⁴⁰⁸ Unlike the Achilles Painter who used watered down slip to create contours and lines in the surface of the body to create musculature and anatomical naturalism, this painter used only a continuous outline to show all features of the body. This "heaviness" can be seen also in the young male seated at the grave marker in Athens 1817 and the woman in British Museum D79 [Fig. 82], but it is rendered most emphatically in two vases where young men lean on their spears so dramatically that their neck is almost parallel with their shoulders (Cleveland 28.859 and New York, MMA 41.162.12) [Fig. 83].

The face of the *eidolon* on the vase in Cleveland is rather basically painted and yet the entire piece conveys a sense of despair and sadness. Like the youth in Athens 1816, this young man sits in three quarter view with his legs splayed in a manner that draws its closest parallel in the relaxed pose of the *Faun Barberini*. The figure on the *lékythos* is not blatantly sexual but its posture is nonetheless strange and languid. His pupils sit low in his teardrop shaped eyes,

⁴⁰⁸ For more on the style of Parrhasios and the similarity between descriptions of his use of lines and the work of the great master of Group R see Lydakis 2004: 120-30 and Rumpf 1951: 3-7.

directing his stare towards the ground. His gloomy attitude is underscored by the downward movement created by the parallel between his gaze, the tilt of his head, and the angle of the spears that he holds in his hand. A young male mourner to the left of the *stêlê* echoes his murky disposition as he leans his entire body on the *stêlê*. His head rests in his left hand while his left elbow rests on one of the upper surfaces of the *stêlê*. He turns his head down and directs his line of sight and attention toward the seated youth. Both the mourner and mourned in this scene share a similar expression and they both appear to be in lamentable states. The similarity in their expression and posture suggests that death affects the living and the dead in a similar manner because they each face loss and a viewer is invited by their emotional expressions to share in their sadness and feel pity for them.

Women also appear as *eidôla* in Group R vases and one of the most emotive example is in the British Museum (D71) [Fig. 84]. This particular female figure looks lost in her own thought as well, but her posture suggests irritation or grumpiness more than sorrow or grief. The overall composition includes two mourning figures, who stand on either side of a broad grave marker, with a third, female, figure seated on its steps. As with other vases by Group R, the figures are rather large and fill the decorative field of the vase body so that one must rotate the vase to appreciate all three of them; no single angle offers a view of the entire scene and the seated woman is positioned opposite the vessel's handle so she is prominently shown on the front. Since this particular grave marker is so broad, the woman seated before it seems almost a part of its decoration like the grave *stêlai* that began to appear around the same time as the production of this particular piece. It also recalls the women depicted on graves in Phase I. The offering here of a *loutrophoros*, most often associated with ritual matrimonial bathing, may at least suggest that the woman here died unwed, which could in part explain her dismay. Since the woman is well-

dressed and wears her hair long, she appears to be a woman of some status. Long curly locks fall on either side of her necklace-clad neck and the base of her *peplos* retains traces of its original blue color. Her sandaled feet emerge from luxurious folds. Just as a young man might appear in warrior or athletic garb to reference his *kleos*, this woman's clothing perhaps materially represents a well-born status.⁴⁰⁹ Unlike earlier representations of seated women, a *klismos* is never incorporated into the imagery of Group R graveside scenes and the domestic merit and female virtue is perhaps then referenced only through female clothing and the type of offerings on their tombs.

The depiction of the leftmost mourner is rather damaged and very little of its upper body remains intact. It is not possible to see where and how the head was originally painted, making analysis of their interaction in the scene rather difficult to determine. From what remains of the figure, its gender is indeterminate, though a staff that rests in the figure's left hand suggests a male visitor. The figure is seated upon an outcropping of rock, which is higher than the steps of the tomb, at a level roughly the height of the seated woman's lap. Bare feet, which peek out of an ankle length garment, rest upon what seems to be the lowest step of the grave's platform. The figure's right hand rests on his right knee and a bird, its size and shape suggestive of a dove, perches on his wrist. His left hand appears towards the top of the vase near a collection of dedicated vases and garlands. It rests atop a staff, his index finger pointing slightly toward an *aryballos* suspended from the upper border of the vase. The position of his hand atop this staff is reminiscent of the way other figures appear leaning on walking sticks. The staff appears above the thigh of the figure and behind the perched bird.

⁴⁰⁹ Since Athenian citizenship was by this time based on their lineage on both sides, the status and distinction of a female gained importance. While the female body in and of itself did not convey *kleos* and *aretê* as the heroic nude males' did, her wellborn Athenian status could be indicated by her dress and posture.

A third, female, mourner appears to the right of the grave. She is standing with her body turned toward the grave as she carries gifts to dedicate upon its steps. Her head is bowed so that her gaze meets the woman seated on the grave. Two rings on the right side of her neck exaggerate the bend so that it is clear that she is purposefully directing her attention toward the grave steps. Her curly hair is cropped short, presumably in honor of the dead. Her face reveals her sadness at the occasion; her pouty lips are turned down at their corners and her eyebrows pinch in towards the bridge of her nose, emphasizing her downcast expression. Her eyes are large, with heavy lids, which fall across the upper third of her pupil. Consistent with other Group R figures her lower eyelashes are individually articulated, helping to emphasize her open eyes and bringing attention to her mourning countenance.

In the crook of her bent left arm she carries a round basket overflowing with black and green garlands and ribbons to present to the grave. Her outstretched right hand grasps the lip of a large white-ground *lékythos* that rests on the second step of the grave. The sweep of her right arm from her shoulder down to the vase echoes her gaze and helps to lead a viewer's eye down toward the woman on the grave.⁴¹⁰

A fourth figure, a woman, sits with her body facing toward the right of the vase and the mourning female, but her head turns back over her right shoulder towards the seated male figure. Her large eyes look directly toward the bird perched on the man's wrist, perhaps indicating that she acknowledges the gift, which he has brought for her. Her head is angled slightly downward, emphasized by a ring on the right side of her neck, but her eyes are open wide and her eyebrows are raised, not suggestive of a scowl but rather that she is looking toward the bird. Her mouth seems to have a slight curl downward but she is not frowning to the degree that her mourning

⁴¹⁰ This is particularly true since biometrically this arm is too long for her body and would seemingly land somewhere near her knee were she to rest it against her body.

counterpart is. Her arms are folded on her lap in a manner rarely seen in Greek vase painting but which seems to suggest irritation or annoyance.⁴¹¹ Other deceased women that appear seated on their graves look as though they are in quiet contemplation or silently moping about their fate but no other folds her arms in quite the same fashion.⁴¹²

On a contemporary vase by the Triglyph Painter (Athens, NM 1755) [Fig. 85], another elegantly clad woman is shown seated upon her grave. Like the woman from the British Museum vase, this particular *eidôlon* is dressed in a fine gown, her hair flows abundantly over each of her shoulders, and she wears coiled bracelets on her wrists. Her left hand rests lightly on her lap and her right hand is lifted up to her face. She rests her right cheek and lips on the back of her right hand. Her right elbow is elevated above her lap, i.e. not resting on any particular surface.⁴¹³

Though this may seem like a strange posture, it is not singular, and in fact on a *pelikê* by the Tyszkiewicz Painter (Villa Giulia 50441), an image of seated Achilles presents him in the same precarious manner with his right elbow hovering above his lap so that he can rest his chin on the back of his right hand while Odysseus stands before him, appealing to him to forget his dismay at the loss of Briseis and to return to combat. From the mythological accounts we know that Achilles is quite upset about the matter and here his unhappy demeanor is expressed through the

⁴¹¹ I am unaware of any other examples of a male or female figures shown with their arms crossed in this manner. It is not a posture that either Gerhard Neumann (1965) or Timothy McNiven (1982) includes in their discussions of mourning figures.

⁴¹² A female *eidôlon* in a vase by Group R now in Athens (NM 17276) folds her arms slightly in her lap but the effect is not entirely the same.

⁴¹³ See notes 64-65 for Neumann's description of this gesture. The deceased woman seated on her grave in a vase by the Bosanquet Painter now in the British Museum (1905.7-10.1), see Chapter X: Women, rests her chin on the back of her right hand, her right elbow propped upon her left arm which rests in her lap.

slight downturn of his lips as well as his inability to make eye contact with Odysseus.⁴¹⁴ This gesture is one of contemplation, perhaps most obviously associated with the posture of Rodin's *Le Penseur*. Achilles locks himself in and contemplates the injury to his pride and he feels sorry for his loss, the loss of a concubine he had claimed as his own. We might imagine that this woman is also in contemplation of her loss.

From a brief dialog recorded by Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* (3.10.1-4) between Socrates and Parrhasios, we know that a) the idea that emotion was expressed through the face and perceived by others, and that b) at least Parrhasios believed that artists were capable of recreating these emotions in the faces of their characters. It is, thus, not farfetched to assume that each of the emotions shown on these vases was intentional and meant to reflect the mood and air of a sepulchral scene, even if as a modern audience we cannot pinpoint each expression. If these images are related to the work of Parrhasios, which seems quite likely, these particularly emotive faces may be exaggerated in a manner that shows off the ability of the painter to create, through a simple line, complex feelings.⁴¹⁵ The popularity of showing faces in three quarter or full view may reflect the fact that it is easier to show emotion when the whole face is being used. It is precisely the eyes that Socrates and Parrhasios discuss as being capable of showing emotion and moods. The eyes are often the most detailed feature of the characters of Group R and because many of the figures look forward toward the viewer, they are able to express their emotion through their eyes and their entire faces. Since the face was not exploited for its ability to convey

⁴¹⁴ From *Il.* 9. 162ff. we know that Achilles is in fact happy to see his Achaean companions despite his anger at Agamemnon since he greets them with open arms and gathers them in for a feast. This image combines the moment that - greets him with the moments earlier in which he sequestered himself in his tent and moodily refused to rejoin the battle, overcome with anger and dismay. Achilles' eyebrow is far from his eye showing an expression that seems not to be grief, but thought.

⁴¹⁵ Robertson 1992: 253 and Rumpf 1951: 3-12.

emotion during the classical period, one understands that these artists might be rather pleased by their accomplishment and dramatically showing how effective the eyes and mouth were in creating mood and emotion. Much as the work of great sculptors influenced the artwork of the Achilles Painter and his colleagues, it seems that at least the artists of Group R were influenced by this design. The fact that during the brief dialog between Socrates and Parrhasios the expression of emotion in art is discussed suggests that the artist was known for including this trait, or had some interest in it.

Explanations for the emotionality of Group R Eidôla

In such images where the deceased is shown saddened by their fate, one wonders if the restless dead are being depicted or if this is simply an obvious way to evoke pity. Since the deceased are shown seated on *stêlai* visited by mourners, they should, hypothetically be content with the care taken for their lasting memory. The concept that the dead would not be particularly happy about their position is understandable but it seems rather strange to present figures of such dismay on gifts that are meant to be presented to the deceased to appease them and convince both them, and any passersby, that they are still well within the thoughts of their living companions. Gifts provided to the deceased were meant to provide comforts from the living world and to sustain their needs, be they emotional or bodily.

In the case of the woman from the British Museum (D71) [Fig. 84] she does not appear to be in deep mourning but her body language and vacant stare clearly suggest that she is unhappy. One expects that she would be sad, especially if it is the case that she died unwed and thus unable to fulfill a basic aspect of her life but no matter what she might think about being deceased, it would not necessarily be desirable to show the deceased as such. One would expect

that above all else, the deceased would come to some understanding of their fate and such an image of a perturbed individual can create a sense of unease. In contemporary literature, only the unburied, murdered, and the very young express irritation about their death. Hence, the souls of both Patroklos and Hektor are described as bewailing their fate and wasted youth just as they leave their lifeless bodies (*Il.* 16.856-7, 22.362-3) but they have just died and the shock of the moment must create immediate sadness. When Patroklos appears to Achilles in a dream (23.68ff.) he also expresses sadness and discomfort and pleads with Achilles to bury his corpse. He is, at that precise moment, upset but he falls into the category of restless dead since he remains unburied. Nothing in his speech to Achilles would imply that he fears arrival in Hades or dreads eternity there. In fact, he sees a silver lining in that he and Achilles will be reunited there at one point. Thus, it is the fact that he is not buried that is the source of his discomfort; there is not even a slight implication that his displeasure arises from any thought of Hades and his being deceased, *per se*.

Similarly, Antikleia expresses sadness when she speaks with Odysseus (*Od.* 11. 35-333), but in her own words, her grief and dismay are not a product of her own misery as a result of being in the Underworld but rather because she is seeing her son there, a place that no mortal but Odysseus visits before death. She claims that her misery in not seeing her son for so long drove her to her death but she seems entirely neutral about her existence there thence. As more shades approach Odysseus, they too do not complain of their plight but rather seek information about the upper world.⁴¹⁶ She neither claims that there was relief from this misery in death nor does she seem to be more upset because of her presence there. And even Darius' shade seems unperturbed

⁴¹⁶ This may suggest that the great efforts of the mourners in images on white-lêkythoi are ultimately futile if even in a narrative which takes great care in sending Patroklos off gloriously the deceased are unable to delight or even be aware of the gifts that are dedicated to them.

by the fact that he has only been called up from the dead for a short period of time. The general consensus seems to be that the deceased are not necessarily happy about their position, but are not expressively disturbed by it.

Johnston claims that the types of gifts that are offered to the dead, as we see in the archaeological record and in images on *lêkythoi*, suggest that the dead “retained the emotions of living persons.”⁴¹⁷ Perhaps these images are visual justification for the continued care paid to the tomb. She also claims that, “there were some types of dead who were predisposed to be unhappy and vindictive, most often because of something that had happened while they were still alive, but even the kindest soul, if left unhonored would become angry and make that anger known.”⁴¹⁸ She claims that this helps to explain the use of curse tablets toward the end of the 5th century and notes that there is a general sense that the dead were perceived to be more active during this time and had the ability to impact the living world. Curse tablets and ominous and precautionary epigram both support the idea that there was an increased interest in making sure that the dead, especially those liable to cause trouble, were well looked after. If there was a greater sense that the deceased were potentially volatile and would cause trouble, the faces of Group R *eidôla* could reference this. In this case they might remind survivors of the importance of keeping the dead happy. While this argument might be too tenuous to fully explain the peculiarity of the images of Phase IV, it seems reasonable that a general shift in the understanding of the dead would be reflected in art either knowingly or subconsciously. Unfortunately, the funerary

⁴¹⁷ Johnston 1999: 38. She calls them “ghosts” but the sentiment stays the same for what I describe as *eidôla*.

⁴¹⁸ When Odysseus sees Ajax during his *katabasis*, he is moody from slights done to him in his life, not from conditions in the Underworld.

contexts of most Group R vases, perhaps the only certain way of proving that these figures reflect potentially irascible *eidōla*, are unavailable.

Still others have suggested that these faces, in as much as they are not only sorrowful but rather dismayed, show the impact of contemporary social events, namely the Sicilian Disaster (415-3), which hurt Athens on personal, political and social levels.⁴¹⁹ Since there had been little time after the Persian Wars to recover before the onslaught of the lengthy conflict with the Spartans, which coincided with multiple years of plague (430-28) that took, amongst many, the (by that time) beloved leader Perikles, it seems that the general mood in Athens may have been more than just sorrowful but dejected, exhausted and listless. Though there is no way to quantify the individual or collective impact that traumatic historical events had on the general attitude of the Athenians or how it affected their perception of the dead (and their potential emotions), it is not unreasonable that this influenced how artists believed an affected *eidōlon* might appear. It is impossible to say that any one of these figures are a response to a single event, but by 410 the Athenians were definitely at a low in terms of confidence, manpower, and resources and that there might be a cultural depression of sorts is not entirely unimaginable. The use of white-ground *lêkythoi* and their more personal iconography have been often linked with the use of public burials and the removal of the family from the immediate care and interment of bodies. If this truly was a major influence in their use and imagery, the idea that these figures represent the dead who died fighting afar and reflect their general fatigue and depression is a bit more convincing; of course, such an idea is intriguing but difficult to entirely endorse. In short, it is

⁴¹⁹ The main supporters of the idea that one or multiple historic events are at the cores of these moody images include Arrington 2015: 253-60; Oakley 2004: 167-8; and Robertson 1992: 253-4. Robertson, citing the work of Winfred van de Put (1988), claims that Athenian loss near Eretria in 411 can be used in helping to date the vases of Group R, which were found in Eretria. See also Bosworth 2009: 168-85 for more on Thucydides discussion of the Sicilian Disaster and plague.

possible that one or more particular artists do express a particular sadness or frustration in their artwork but this remains entirely speculative and does not provide a fully satisfying justification for these images.⁴²⁰

Since both the mourner and the mourned are shown in a similar fashion it is perhaps best to see the images as simply conjuring pity in a more heightened way by using all depicted figures to evoke sadness. Just as the *eidôlon* is not actually present, their guise may not reflect how the living really thought that the dead felt, but that the deceased, along with the mourning figures, began to be used as a vehicle for inducing pity through emotional cues. By presenting the departed as unhappy, the artist may truly pull on the heartstrings of any passersby and these images are effective at drawing in the viewer and overtly reminding them of what a sad occasion death and a burial are. It posits the idea that not only the living but also the dead could be affected by the tragedy of death.

The images of Group R fulfill the same function as earlier images of *eidôla* but they do so in a manner that relies more on the expression of emotion than the representation of virtues. While it is true that there are many examples from the earlier artists of white-ground *lêkythoi* that do show sadness through a simple turn in the mouth, heavy brow, or lowered eyelids, these details are often quite subtle and suggest rather than assert sadness. If one considers that these vases were being produced at the same time that the first Late Classical funerary reliefs were beginning to be produced and gaining popularity, it is conceivable that in order to remain relevant and appealing to the changing market, artists of white-ground *lêkythoi* exploited their potential for easily depicting emotive visages. While the delicate features of contemporary funerary relief were capable of showing deep sorrow, they typically employ stoic expressions and reverent

⁴²⁰ If this were the case one expects to find a general trend in vase painting towards more solemn or moody figures, which I do not see.

poses. Since lekythoi could have potentially remained popular grave gifts, despite the growing popularity of grave relief, it is reasonable that they might have been created to fill a different niche in the market and could provide a more personal or pity provoking image.

In the end, it seems that depicting the deceased as a lifelike human figure, rather than simply a corpse or grave *stêlē*, allowed artists to add to the overall sorrowful tenor of their images. The *eidôlon* was more relatable because it was nearly indistinguishable from living figures and it could express human emotion just as mourners did. Although its potential as a vehicle for sad expressions was not exploited until the end of the 5th century, it had provided a more personal touch to earlier images by providing viewers with an understanding of the relationship between mourners and those mourned. Since mourning was such an important aspect of the iconography of graveside images, the way in which artists were most clearly able to distinguish living from deceased visitors was precisely by showing *eidôla* disengaged from this activity.

Concluding Thoughts

στεῖθι : καὶ οἴκτιρον : Κροῖσο	Stand and take pity beside the
παρὰ σῆμα θανόντος : / ἠὸν	<i>sêma</i> of the dead Kroisos whom,
ποτ' ἐνὶ προμάχοις : ὄλεσε	while fighting in the front ranks,
θόρος : Ἄρεος ⁴²¹	assaulting Ares destroyed.

In one of the few instances in which an Archaic funerary *kouros* is still attached to its original inscribed base, we get a sense of the way that grave monuments interacted with mourners and were able to generate and communicate the glory of the dead and the sadness of their departure. Here, the monument (*sêma*) implores passersby to stop and consider the warrior that has been laid to rest in this place. There is no implication that a visitor needs to do more than pause and give a moment of quiet contemplation to the life of the departed warrior. Through text and image the *sêma* provides the information that allows any visitor to keep alive and communicate the memory of the dead through the time they take to recall the merits of the dead, think about the sadness of the occasion and express these ideas in song or conversation.

While the *Kroisos kouros* predates the imagery discussed throughout the dissertation, it shows the way in which, by the Archaic Period, the value of the grave monument as a generator and communicator of the memory of the dead was understood. No longer was an over the top funeral all that was needed or desired to provide a fitting tribute to the dead. The grave became an important space because of the way that it cultivated and communicated remembrance for the dead but also because it was the indefinite point of contact between the living and the dead. It was a place where the living could feel closer to their deceased kin and provide nourishment: this simultaneously allowed the dead to be more comfortable and the living to maintain some sense

⁴²¹ IG I³ 1240. From the base of the *Kroisos kouros* (Athens, NM 3851).

of control over the comfort of their loved ones and ensure that it was known how much they were affected by the loss.

At the time that the white-ground *lêkythos* appeared in Athens and became the most popular grave gift and the favored canvas for funerary imagery, the use of private monumental grave *stêlai* had greatly diminished. This was likely a result of multiple contributing factors including sumptuary laws, which curbed the ostentatiousness of funerals and graves as a means of further encouraging burgeoning democratic ideals and the growing importance of the *dêmosion sêma*. The delicate white-ground painting style was best restricted to smaller compositions but was conducive to showing greater detail in the finer details of faces and their expressions. Thus, one finds that the painters of this style focused their funerary compositions upon one or two figures, mourners and/or *eidôla*. While these figures often partook of important rites and rituals that demonstrated that they were fulfilling their duty to the dead and maintaining traditional customs of Athenian culture, they simultaneously expressed their private sadness and love for the dead through individual characteristics in the manner that they carried out their activities. Thus, artists found ways to make a private, solemn visit to the grave able to highlight both the love and devotion of the living and the glory and merits of the dead.

The imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi*, while taking many gestures and details from earlier Attic funerary art, also features a number of new elements. Most strikingly is the switch from scenes that take place during the *prothesis* to those that take place at an indefinite point of time thereafter at a grave. Male and female visitors are shown bringing offerings, interacting with the *stêlé* and expressing their sorrow through their faces and gestures. These images must reflect changing attitudes about the proper way to provide the most meaningful and fitting tribute to the dead. Since there is emphasis on the permanent resting place rather than the final, performative

celebration of the dead we find that there is an entirely new set of iconographic ways of expressing the sorrow and glory that are part and parcel to the most desirable and fitting funerary gifts. The graveside scene provided an ideal setting in which the virtue and memory of the dead and the sorrow of the mourners, deeply affected by the death, could simultaneously and harmoniously be displayed. While there are scattered examples of mourners simply announcing their grief through traditional gestures, in these scenes mourners are much more likely to be focusing their energy toward the active cultivation and upkeep of the grave and, by extension, the memory of the dead. Both men and women interact at the grave and unlike earlier periods there is not necessarily a division between the rituals in which they each engage. Women continue to play a more prominent role in carrying out funerary rituals but they are not necessarily segregated from their male peers and there are few ritual activities that only one or the other engages in, i.e. either might be shown offering vases and ribbons to the grave but only women are shown pouring libations and actually tying ribbons on the *stèle*.

While men and women shared in the same rituals at the grave, they did not necessarily express their sadness about the occasion in the same way and a close examination of four broad categories of mourners shows that when it came to the expression of emotion there was no one-size-fits-all facial expression or mourning gesture. The fact that there are shared and unique characteristics between these groups suggests that artists and consumers were acutely aware of the similarities and differences between the ways that different people would likely express themselves in this context. These differences are a product of the gender, age and status of mourners but also of the context in which they appear and the degree to which each figure might wish to display or obscure their feelings from potential viewers. We also find that the stillness and quiet of 5th century funerary imagery added to the solemn tone of the images. The way that

the representation of the deceased changed over time, from inanimate corpse, to *stêlê* to *eidôlon* and eventually emotive *eidôlon* allowed artists to show different aspects of the relationship between mourners and the dead.

This study first looked at the way that women expressed sadness at the grave because they make up the largest group of mourners in Attic art. By the 5th century there was already a large range of ways that women were known to express their sadness but in the 5th century, and with the introduction of the graveside mourning scene, this number was expanded even further. Women's typically histrionic gestures were tempered in this setting and their energy was spent on maintaining the grave and the cult of the dead rather than simply outwardly expressing their own plight. The way in which women interact with the grave, e.g. dressing or embracing it, is reminiscent of the way that they took care of the corpse in the time leading up to the funeral. Thus, the *sêma* of the dead allowed for women to continue to touch and interact with the dead and express their love and sadness through the actions that they directed toward it. We find that women occasionally show their sadness through a frown but they rarely veil themselves and in only a few instances is there any indication that they are crying.

An examination of male mourning in white-ground *lêkythoi* revealed that, while men might also desire to dedicate gifts to the dead and mourn in the presence of the grave, that they exposed their internal feelings of sadness in different ways from their female counterparts. Their sadness might be shown through a frown on their face but they also reveal a modesty and vulnerability in showing their grief and frequently hide in their cloaks and insulate themselves from potential onlookers. In earlier funerary imagery men had primarily been restricted to the sidelines, appearing in small processions and inevitably either engaged in a valedictory pose or lifting a hand to their forehead to express their grief. In 5th century imagery men, like women, express a

desire to touch the dead, either the corpse or the *sêma*, depending on the context and they express individual sadness rather than simply fulfilling their ritual function addressing the dead and singing lament at the funeral.

A small group of images that include elderly mourners shows that the vulnerability associated with male mourners became heightened in older age. This is the only category of mourner that occasionally will completely cover their face, including their eyes. The importance of seeing and being seen is brought to the fore. Such images suggest that there was something particularly pitiable about the image of an old man mourning. The covering of their faces suggests that they neither want their expressions to be seen nor to be forced to look upon the visual reminder of their departed kin. These images also remind us that some emotions defy articulation in image or word.

As an analog to this, an examination of how infants and toddlers behave in the context of the grave shows the sadness of untimely death. Small children are shown as both mourners and the deceased and what is striking about this group of images is that artists are aware that there would be limitations to the way that small children would articulate grief since they would not yet fully comprehend the gravity or permanence of it. Instead, the immediate sense of separation is dramatized by their outward stretching arms and desire to be held. These images remind us of the ultimate separation of the worlds of the living and the dead.

In the final two chapters, two further aspects of white-ground mourning imagery were considered to see how they added to the solemn tone of the images. In Chapter 5, the notion of “silence” and “dignity” were considered because these are two terms that are often used to describe the imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi*: in comparison to earlier Attic funerary imagery and in and of themselves. While the quiet may ultimately be a consequence of appropriate

behavior at the grave, it ultimately helps to draw focus away from lamenting mourners to the deceased and their memory. By drowning out the frenzy of the bereaved we are invited to look more closely at how sadness and honor can be conveyed through the way that mourners tend to the grave and honor the dead.

In the final chapter, the evolution of how the deceased was depicted was analyzed to see how this changes the relationship of mourner to the dead. One finds that the more “lifelike” the representation of the dead is, the better they are at being a vehicle for creating a visual memory of the dead. Prior to the 5th century the deceased were, with very few exceptions, shown as an inanimate corpse. Little about the character or merit of the deceased can be gleaned through such an image. A stone memorial could also represent the dead and as it acquired gifts and, perhaps, epigram it was able to communicate more about the deceased. Eventually, images of the souls of the dead appear regularly and over time they become more and more like the living mourners in the same scene. Since images of the deceased begin to show emotion in their face and body language, one wonders whether there was a sense that the dead felt sorrowful about their demise. These sad *eidôla* are able to both heighten the sorrow of a given scene while providing an accurate and fitting memorial to the deceased person they represent. These are the most emotive of all figures on white-ground *lêkythoi* and they show the true potential of the genre to convey emotion through details and nuance in facial expression and posture.

Ultimately a closer examination of the individual figures on white-ground *lêkythoi* reveals that grief could be expressed through action and facial expression. While histrionic lament that signposted grief and exaggerated the glory of the dead and the pain of the living might still be relevant to a 5th century Athenian audience, quiet, calm scenes of private lament came to be favored. Such images of private moments within a ritual context remind us that mourning and

grief are experienced by everyone but every experience of grief is unique and personal. The imagery of white-ground *lêkythoi* demonstrate that these two facets of mourning were observed and important when creating effectively meaningful images.

It is difficult to put one's finger on precisely what is so poignant about the mourning scenes on white-ground *lêkythoi*. There is so little movement in the images and there is nothing overwhelmingly remarkable about the stoic or subtly sad expressions of mourners at the grave. However, on the whole these images have the effect of creating a quiet moment of contemplation and the gravity of the moment is captured in the stillness. Actions that do appear are directed toward the *stêlê*, the only visible vestige of the deceased. And the focus is for caring for the dead and dealing with bereavement, not merely announcing that a person is sad. In essence these images are effective memorials to the dead because they both display and affect a sense of sadness while providing a beautiful memorial to a lost life.

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