1-1-2012

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'THANATOSEPOESEN'
CHANGING ATTITUDES IN ATHENIAN MOURNING:
A STUDY OF FUNERARY VASE PAINTING, 900–404 BC

by

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THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

2012

MAJOR: ART HISTORY

Approved by:

_____
Advisor   Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family
who gave me their unwavering support, and the confidence to achieve
more than I would have imagined possible; particularly my husband, Jeffrey, who
handled my rants, raves and episodic lunacy with unbelievable grace.
I would like to thank the Unseen Hand for giving a manic grad student a much needed
outlet, and for their incredible humor, which kept me going ("...but they change color!").
Foremost, this work is dedicated to my father, Rickie J. Jacobs, with whom, as a child, I
spent many evenings looking at the stars, contemplating the gods, and dreaming of lives
lived so long ago. Thank you for pushing me to believe in myself,
and for giving me the desire to dream extraordinary dreams.
8-10-9-9

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Though it is only my name which appears on the title page of this thesis, it could not have been achieved without the guidance of two *very* patient and incredible scholars. Therefore, I would like to use this page as an opportunity to thank them both.

First my advisor, Dr. Brian Madigan, who, without realizing it, made me stop denying my love of the ancient and renewed my interest in all things Greek and Roman. In fact, his courses inspired me so much that it was incredibly difficult to choose ONE topic to research for this thesis. The ease with which he teaches is a testament to his passion and vast knowledge of his field of research. I consider myself very lucky to have had his guidance through the entire process of working on this degree.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to my second reader, Dr. Catherine McCurrach, who is one of the most passionate Medievalists I could have ever hoped to work with. Her knowledge of medieval art and architecture is second to none, and her enthusiasm for art history cannot be contained. Also, her ability to read through a terrible draft and *kindly* comment on how to save it from disaster is a true gift.

I have learned more from Drs. Madigan and McCurrach than this short acknowledgment can possibly express. Thank you for a terrific experience at Wayne State University.

PREFACE

For centuries scholars have discussed and debated what life and death meant to the ancient Athenian. Although substantive literature exists as a valuable resource for understanding what the ancients *thought* about death it was not until archaeology began to uncover physical evidence that we know what they *did* about death; pottery played an important role in the funeral rituals of these people, which is the basis for this thesis. The images rendered give insight to the importance placed on the different stages of burial, as dictated by the people of that time. This study will focus on the Athenian burial ritual and produce a chronology, from the Geometric period through the Classical, revealing which aspects of laying a body to rest warranted illustration from era to era. It argues that as Athens struggled for independence, evolving culturally, economically and socio-politically from the other city-states, the Athenian concept of death and mourning evolved as well.

The art which emerged from the cemeteries of Athens, the best known and most published of the cemeteries in all of Attica. The sites on which this study focuses include, but are not limited to, the Kerameikos, *demosion sema* (graveyard of the State), and the Classical Themistoklean Wall gravesites.[1] These and other Athenian cemeteries have provided a substantive body of material that bears witness to how the ancient Athenian's view of burial changed over the centuries. The material consists of painted vases, yet other funerary arts, such as plaques, statuary, mosaic, and stelae are included.

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[1] A protective Athenian wall built ca. 478 during the Archonship of Themistikles after the second Persian invasion of Greece, 480–479.

Scholars Donna Kurtz, John Boardman, and Martin Robertson have focused on this evidence, and have contributed to scholarly discourse on Greek burial practices. Boardman's 1955 publication, "Painted Funerary Plaques and Some Remarks on Prothesis," a work on Attic black figure funerary plaques, clearly defines the prothesis, or the laying out and mourning of the dead. He argues that these plaques were used to decorate the common mud-brick tomb in the Archaic period (600–480 B.C.).[2] Boardman's suggestion centers on the development, function and decline of these funerary monuments, and less on the *subject* depicted on the plaque. In 1971, he collaborated with Donna Kurtz and the two published *Greek Burial Customs,* an important text on the details of the ancient Greek funeral. This book, which incorporated literary evidence and the archaeological material excavated over the last two centuries, was an important contribution to the field and the understanding of Greek funerary practices. However, Kurtz and Boardman do not consider how the artistic rendering of the visual evidence has contributed to the understanding of these practices.[3] The authors detail how the modes of burial differed over time based on findings from within Attic tombs. We can date these discovered items scientifically within a relatively small window of time, and organize them chronologically with some certainty.

Ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες[4]

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[2] It should be noted that all years given refer to B.C. unless otherwise stated.

[3] In the preface of their book the authors explicitly state that their work is a survey of burial practices and not an art historical account of tomb offerings or monuments, and their goal was that their work would guide the historian to better understand the Greek view of death. See Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 18.

[4] *Hklt.*, LXVII. "Immortals are mortal, mortals immortal, living in their death and dying in their life."

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This introduction will set up the structure of this thesis by outlining each chapter's intention. Chapter II will serve as an extremely brief introduction to the ancient Greek history which occurred during the six centuries discussed in this paper. It will give an overview of the types of vases which have been catalogued in the Beazley Archive so that it may serve as a reference to the different shapes and uses covered by this study.[5] A short history of the scholarship concerning the Beazley vases and how contemporary knowledge came to exist will be included.

Chapter III will discuss the Greek idea of death and what was considered a 'good death' according to the pillars of Athenian society and what happened to the soul after death. A discussion of p*sychê* and the belief in immortality will shape a better understanding of why the burial customs were so important to these people. This chapter will explain what the living determined as the 'needs' of the dead and why it was a necessary duty to appease their ancestors and the chthonic gods to whom the dead were beholden.

Chapter III discusses four aspects of burial; prothesis (lying in state), ekphora (procession of the body), the deposition and ritual lamentation. While Kurtz and Boardman used archaeological and literary evidence to determine these processes this study is concerned with the visual evidence which indicates these practices.

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[5] The Beazley Archive Pottery Database (www.beazley.ox.ac.uk). Sir John Beazley (1885-1970), was an Oxford educated Classical archaeologist who created a major index of Greek black-figure and red-figure pottery based on artistic styles. His work contributed to the premier reference concerning Greek pottery, and since 1979 it has amassed over 200,000 photographs, the largest archive of this type in the world.

Chapter IV provides a background of the cemeteries in Athens. Many burial plots have been excavated in the ancient city uncovering many of the funerary goods cited in this study. Placement of burial plots and how they are grouped has allowed for a fairly clear chronology of when each cemetery was established, and for whom. The monuments and wares discovered among human remains depict ideals held most important to those burying their dead. It is through these archaeological finds that we better understand what roles were ascribed to the dead and how the life they lived on earth determined the type and place of their burial. The chapter then turns to the difference in burial according to class and how what occurred at a burial depended on whether a person belonged to the private, public or military sphere of ancient Athens. A discussion of the *demosion sema*, or State burial ground is appropriate in this chapter as is the internment of the war-hero in the polyandria, or mass grave. Each of these three categories had a different kind of patron purchasing the burial goods, indicating varying conditions of burial among the classes.

Lastly, this chapter will look at the Kerameikos as an important workspace for the Athenian painter and potter. A history of the area as workshop contributes to our knowledge of the symbiotic relationship between the needs of the dead and the pottery trade. Here a more in-depth look at vase shapes and funerary themes is offered, in addition to more information regarding other funerary objects the craftsmen produced.

The last three chapters, V through VII discuss the heart of this thesis: how funerary art changed with regard to the importance each era placed on specific aspects of the Athenian burial. The periods discussed begin with the pre-Archaic (Geometric and

Orientalizing), moves to the Archaic black and red figure, and ends with the Classical red figure and white ground methods. As Kurtz and Boardman stated in their work, it is not that the periods before the Geometric (Bronze and Iron) were uninteresting, but the findings of those periods are a subject all their own. Additionally, Hellenism is omitted because the influence of Macedonian and Roman customs muddy the water, and since this paper aims to focus solely on the *Greek* tradition of the burial and lament of the dead, it should be evidenced only in *their* art. Therefore, the Hellenistic period will not be included in this thesis.

CHAPTER II
A SHORT HISTORY OF VASE PAINTING TECHNIQUES AND SHAPES

This chapter will give a short background on Greek civilization, beginning with the pre-Archaic, which, for purposes of art and culture has been divided into two periods: Geometric and Orientalizing. The era following is termed the Archaic, and with regard to pottery, includes black and red figure techniques.[6] Following the Archaic is the Classical, which is defined by the maturation of the red figure and development of the poplar white–ground technique.

Geometric

Geometric art was produced from about 900 to 700, though the dates may be somewhat imprecise as they are founded on what little pottery survives from the thriving colonies of the time. Typically the Early Geometric dates from 900–850, the Middle from 850–760, and the Late from 760–700.[7] By the mid-eighth century, Athens took part in the cultural shifts occurring in Greece brought about by exchanges with the Near East, a dispelling of illiteracy due to the adoption of alphabetic writing, mastery of artistic techniques, and flourishing of figured art which established a trade market.[8] Archaic Greece was taking shape and written records began passing down information from generation to generation, which include writings by Hesiod.[9]

The development of the Geometric style occurred primarily in the form of painted pots at which point we see the return of the human figure. This artistic style has been

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[6] The red figure technique is considered late Archaic but defines the early Classical period as well.

[7] Boardman 1998, 14. These dates are used by John Boardman for his discussion concerning the Geometric Period.

[8] Coldstream 2003, 17–8.

[9] Hesiod is the only writer known to have left a contemporary account of life in Geometric Greece. Coldstream mentions in particular Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

termed 'geometric' because of the designs painted on the pottery, i.e., zigzags, cross-hatched triangles, wavy lines, swastikas, concentric circles and semicircles, all used at the outset of the period (Fig. 1).[10] The painted shapes were used to accentuate the potted shape of the vase, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

In Early Geometric Athens, the favored patterns were the zigzags, battlement (simple key), and meander (Greek key) painted on a mainly black surface. By Middle Geometric, patterns became simpler such as narrow bands of lines, linked circles, and dotted triangles. The more elaborate pattern-work was reserved to mark graves. Late Geometric is when trade in pottery began to flourish for Athens and with it came prosperity and a growing awareness of art. No names were left behind by the artists. Rather, their identification is left in the style they employed, and because of this, we have been able to identify painters and potters, attributing pieces to specific artists or workshops. For purposes of this discussion, the most important Athenian Geometric painter is the Dipylon Painter, so called because his wares have been excavated out of the cemetery near the Dipylon Gate. His work is the standard by which Geometric vase painting has been set.

What appear to be repeated motifs on Geometric vases are actually human and animal figures placed in repetitive form (Fig. 2). By the close of the Late Geometric the figures are rendered in a more fluid design, still not as an attempt at realism, but perhaps to better indicate the use of the pots upon which they are painted.

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[10] Boardman 1998, 14.

Orientalizing

The years 700–600 are known as the Orientalizing period. The socio-political climate was adjusting to the newly established idea of city-states, many of which by the end of the seventh century were ruled by tyrants, using minted coins, and enacting law codes.

Boardman breaks the Orientalizing period into three sub-periods as he did with the Geometric: Early Protoattic 700–675, Middle Protoattic 675–650, and the Late Protoattic 650–600, which runs into Archaic black figure.[11] Seventh-century Athens was less active in pottery production than that which had occurred prior. Though the numbers of Orientalizing vases excavated are fewer in number than other periods, those found indicate that the Late Protoattic silhouette figures were still in fashion and were gaining more definition. The term Orientalizing refers not to new designs, as those used were still following the Geometric era, but to the subject matter incorporated into them. Native Greek animals were appearing next to exotic ones, such as lions coupled with panthers, and fantastical creatures like the siren and sphinx (Fig. 3). The Orientalizing Protoattic is also a period of monumentality. The slim vases of times past gave way to larger pieces rendering characters with real faces and bodily proportions.[12] In moving away from plain black surface color the Middle Protoattic introduces white, which becomes a characteristic style of this sub-period until it begins to mingle with the black figure technique which will eventually define the sixth century.

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[11] Boardman 1998, 88.
[12] Boardman 1998, 89.

Archaic

The black figure, developed in Corinth in the eighth century, was not fully accepted by Athenian painters until the late 600s. The Athenian artisan embraced the new style and in doing so, made the technique so popular that it encompassed the entire sixth and part of the fifth century for certain shapes, approximately 625–490. This is the last period to belong fully to the Archaic in terms of pottery.

The first phase of black figure painting is found on large vases typically used as grave markers. This technique soon found its way onto many types of vases by the early sixth century; the pale black of the old Geometric and Orientalizing pots developed into a rich glossy black. This black was set in contrast to deep orange backgrounds with white and red details, creating more complex images than had been seen before (Fig. 4).[13]

Martin Robertson posits that the time during which potters were experimenting with a wider variety of vase shapes, 600–575, there was a decrease in artistry among the painters.[14] These twenty-five years are characterized by a marked decline in ingenuity; repetitive animal motifs were being regurgitated so much that the style was on the verge of mass-production.[15] In the years following, there was an apparent revival where the black figure technique is not only refined, but the potter's touch became more finely tuned. The focus of the sixth-century black figure style was on action and not individualization of the characters involved.[16] The influence of the East was still evident, but overall black figure is representative of a completely Greek tradition, and it is the

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[13] Robertson 1992, 3.
[14] Robertson 1992, 2.
[15] Robertson 1992, 2.
[16] Folsom 1976, 3.

mode of art which leads to the Classical Revolution beginning in 480 with the continuation of the red figure technique first used by the Andokides Painter in 525.[17]

Classical

The pottery technique employed at the dawn of the Classical period is red figure.[18] Its break into the pottery market can be attributed to the new use of foreshortening, and to more realistic rendering of the human form which was made possible by the use of black to create lines, as opposed to the red used on black figure (Fig. 5). The mastery of the new red figure technique occurred in the last two decades of the sixth century when the Pioneer Group dominated the Athenian market.[19] This new technique allowed for softer lines and more natural poses than black figure. As the Classical period continued, idealization of the painted faces and bodies became the goal. The fourth-century scenes of everyday life and the mythological world became renderings of the "idealized concepts of life,"[20] a large part of which were burial customs.

A technique specifically designed for burial vases is white-ground. The white-ground technique means that the vessel, before an image was painted upon it, received a slip of *kaolinite*[21] giving it a pale or white appearance (Fig. 6).[22] Because the images

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[17] Boardman 1998, 178. Boardman defines the Classical Revolution as occurring just after the Persian invasion of 480–79 which is when the popularity of black figure gives way to red figure.

[18] All red figure pieces will from here out be abbreviated as ARV (Attic red figure vase). Any other region discussed in relation to red-figure will be fully named, i.e., Corinthian red-figure vase.

[19] This name was coined by Beazley regarding those who adopted the red figure technique practiced by their forerunners who worked from 550–25 B.C. The Pioneers employed both the red figure and bilingual methods, working from examples made by early red figure painters, such as Psiax and the Andokides Painter. The Pioneer Group has primarily been assigned the years 525-500 B.C. though it may stretch back or ahead by a few years.

[20] Folsom 1976, 4.

[21] *Kaolinite* is a clay deposit prevalent throughout Greece. In Attica it was mined in Lavrion and Megara. For centuries, the Chinese were the only people who understood how to use it to make porcelain.

[22] Kurtz 1975, 11.

painted on the pots were less durable than on the black or red type, white-ground vases were primarily used as votives and grave offering vases. The popularity of the white-ground held strong from its advent throughout Hellenism.

Vase Shapes

Vase shapes are referred to quite often when discussing the topic of Greek funerals. For they were not only used when honoring the dead, but included pictorial narratives concerning the burial ritual, giving the modern observer a sense of how the rites were conducted. Most importantly, these pictures indicate changing attitudes toward the Athenian burial from the tenth through fifth centuries.

Often times shapes used in a domestic context, such as cups and pitchers, were used for ritualistic purposes at sanctuaries and funerals. When used at burials, they might be laid in the tomb of the deceased or used to perform rites with sacred materials held within. Those vases which were buried sometimes contained items the living thought the dead would need in the afterlife.

The most common shape used in a funerary capacity included the amphora, which came in a variety of styles (neck, belly-handled and shoulder-handled) and was used for the storage of wet goods (Fig. 7).[23] In daily use, the two handles were used for carriage and pouring. For burial rites, these vases may have held the bones or ashes of the deceased and were then placed in a proper grave. The krater is also two-handled and was used for storage but its use also included the mixing of wine which was ladled out with an oinochoe. The hydria and broad, shallow cup were staples in any household. The

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[23] See Figure 7 for a table of images of the most common vases mentioned in this thesis.

lekythos was used for pouring liquid like hydriai. More slender and taller than other vessels, it gained in popularity in burial rituals above any other type of pottery, particularly with the advent of the white ground method. The lekythos had a small opening which gave it the ability to be sealed and was held by a single handle. They were often used for storing oil. The loutrophoros held ceremonial water used for ritual cleansing and at funerals would have been used to clean the corpse of an unmarried woman before her burial. The pyxis was predominantly used as a storage unit for goods buried with the deceased, typically a woman as it was used for the storage of cosmetics in daily life. It is shallow and bowl–like and had a cover. Though all the shapes discussed above have been found in or associated with graves, the primary vase shapes used for funerals were the amphora, loutrophoros, lekythos, and krater.

CHAPTER III
***CHRESTOS THANATOS*, 'AN EXCELLENT DEATH'**

The process of preparing oneself for eventual demise was multi-faceted and each person would have been instructed throughout their life on the most important aspects; any deviation from these processes could lead to the eternal unrest of one's soul. The preparation of a departing soul did not rest entirely on the shoulders of the one whom Death would visit, but also upon the living left behind. The ancient Greek was instructed to live a good and decent life, working hard and honestly, striving for integrity and comfort; this was how one prepared one's own soul. However, once a person reached his life's end, the care for his soul was in the hands of his loved ones.

Psychê

The *psychê, o*r soul, was regarded as something airy in the body, intangible. Therefore, when a person met Death, their *psychê* would leave through the mouth, or an open wound.[24] What moved out of the body was considered a shade or shadow in the Underworld. Homer refers to this passage in *The Odyssey* when Odysseus' mother speaks to him in Hades:

> For the sinews no longer hold the flesh and the bones together, but the strong might of blazing fire destroys these, as soon as the life leaves the white bones, and the spirit, like a dream, flits away, and hovers to and fro.
> ἀλλὰ τὰ μέν τε πυρὸς κρατερὸν μένος αἰθομένοιο
> δαμνᾷ, ἐπεί κε πρῶτα λίπῃ λεύκ᾽ ὀστέα θυμός,
> ψυχὴ δ᾽ ἠΰτ᾽ ὄνειρος ἀποπταμένη πεπότηται.[25]

The soul is a completely separate entity from the corporeal body though soul and body are not mutually exclusive as one cannot exist without the other. The body cannot

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[24] Garland 2001, 18.
[25] Hom. *Od.* 11.220-2.

experience perception or feelings without the *psychê*, yet once it leaves the body, the *psychê* cannot do these things on its own. This is why they are referred to as ethereal mists which may resemble the person within whom it once dwelled, but no further than appearance. This is the Homeric belief that man is two-fold, seen (his body) and unseen (a non–visible image), and can only gain release from the body through death.

The process of leaving the world began with a 'good death,' one with quietude and controlled emotion. Sokrates is said to have sent his wife away before committing suicide by hemlock as she was carrying on, and it was important for him to have a calm death so his soul did not need to struggle to break free from this world to the next.[26] There were several possible hindrances for a soul to move on to the next phase of being, and although the Greeks believed that the soul did leave a body instantly, it was in a suspended state for some time afterward, making the moments just after death crucial. Some precarious situations that could threaten the soul's journey included the neglect to fulfill promises or finalize unfinished family business. The inability to deal with these issues would mean the soul could not depart with ease.[27] The soul of one who had sinned grievously in their lifetime would try to hang on to the present world due to its ignorance of the correct order of things. Richard Garland uses literary evidence to summarize the final six canonical events a person engages in so as to prepare for death. These include:

(i)   A ritualistic cleansing,
(ii)   Passing one's children into the safeguard of a trusted person,
(iii)   Finalizing any outstanding affairs,

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[26] Alexiou 2002, 5.
[27] Alexiou 2002, 5.

(iv)   Sending a prayer to Hestia for their family (particularly if the one dying was young),

(v)   Asking for a swift and safe journey to Hades

(vi)   Saying goodbye to loved ones.[28]

Many of Homer's epics give us an understanding of how the ancient Greek viewed the dead. They are regarded as separated from the living by their difference in *menos*, or lack of strength. It is because of *menos* that the dead are unable to have any direct influence over the living; however, the desire to please the gods ensured a good burial even if retribution could not be performed by the dead himself. Regardless of whom a person was while alive, special procedures were in place to safeguard the living against the dead. For instance, on the second day post-burial, called the *Anthesteria*, it was custom to smear pitch on the door of one's home to keep the shade of the newly buried away, as it was on this day that they were believed to leave their graves and wander about. It was also suggested that the living pass by graves very carefully as the dead were capable of intuitively knowing what kind of soul was nearby. It was practice that one move by quietly so as not to give the dead any reason to ask the chthonic deities to take up a cause against the passerby.[29]

This idea that the dead can contact the gods to satisfy wishes of retribution and punishment led to a special burial for people who suffered an offensive death, such as the murdered.[30] Folded lead tablets listing curses and cursed names aimed at one's murderer or other enemies were placed in the victim's grave. These *katadesmoi* were meant to get the attention of the gods, in particular Persephone and Hermes, and are known to have

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[28] Garland 2001, 16.
[29] Garland 2001, 4.
[30] Garland 2001, 4.

been used as early as the fifth century. In addition to these lead tablets, small figurines with hands bound have been discovered in these graves, as yet another means of cursing. We know these were typically graves of people who were victims of some evil or perhaps someone who died well before their time. It was custom in Attica to leave their attackers unburied and possibly dismembered somewhere outside the city, perhaps at a crossroads as suggested by Plato in *Laws*.[31]

Preparation of the Dead

The dying had but one task—to die. The movement of the *psychê* from this world to the next was dependant on the living left behind. The living understood the importance placed upon proper burial and grievous mourning, as demonstrated in *The Odyssey* during a dialogue between Odysseus and a comrade named Elpenor. The hero is visiting the Underworld and Elpenor, who died while at Circe's home in Aeaea, speaks to the still living Odysseus and charges him with giving a proper burial to the dead man:

> Leave me not behind thee unwept and unburied as thou goest thence,
>
> and turn not away from me, lest haply I bring the wrath of the gods upon thee."
>
> μή μ᾽ ἄκλαυτον ἄθαπτον ἰὼν ὄπιθεν καταλείπειν,
>
> νοσφισθείς, μή τοί τι θεῶν μήνιμα γένωμαι.[32]

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[31] Pl. *Leg.* 9.873. "[If] any one should be incited by some fatality to deprive…of life voluntarily and of purpose, for him the earthly lawgiver legislates as follows…the servants of the judges and the magistrates shall slay him at an appointed place without the city where three ways meet, and there expose his body naked, and each of the magistrates on behalf of the whole city shall take a stone and cast it upon the head of the dead man, and so deliver the city from pollution; after that, they shall bear him to the borders of the land, and cast him forth unburied."

[32] Hom. *Od.* 11.72-3.

Of course, in good form, Odysseus returns to where the death had occurred and initiates the proper ritual for Elpenor's soul:

> …[they] cut billets of wood and gave him burial where the headland runs furthest out to sea, sorrowing and shedding big tears.
>
> φιτροὺς δ᾽ αἶψα ταμόντες, ὅθ᾽ ἀκροτάτη πρόεχ᾽ ἀκτή,
>
> θάπτομεν ἀχνύμενοι θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες.[33]

There were aspects which needed to be observed in addition to a proper funeral. One must be buried in their land of birth, all proper rituals for burial must be observed, and the family or person legally responsible must adhere to all funerary rituals as practiced by the ancestors. These rituals were outlined in various documents by Homer, Demosthenes, Plato, Cicero, and Plutarch.[34] This literature, spanning eight centuries, points to the changes that occurred in these rituals. In later chapters, the ways in which attitudes changed regarding these rituals, as evidenced in funerary art, will be addressed. The essentials remained the same in what Robert Garland calls a "three act drama:" prothesis, ekphora and interment; that is to say, the laying out of the body, the transport of the body to its resting place, and burial or cremation,[35] this all followed by long periods of post-internment rituals.[36]

Before prothesis could occur, the body of the deceased had to be prepared. This procedure of washing, anointing and dressing was conducted by the matriarch of the

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[33] Hom. *Od.* 12.1-20.

[34] See Hom. *Il.* 19, 23, and 24. Dem. M*ak.* 43. Pl. *Leg.* 12. Cic. *Leg.* 2. Plut. *Sol.*

[35] Only an overview of each aspect will be defined in this chapter as chapters IV-IX will warrant a more in depth discussion so as to understand the images used later in this paper to argue the distinct changes in funerary practice.

[36] Garland 2001, 21.

oikos, or family. If a close next of kin was not available, the task went to the oldest female in the *genos,* or clan. The prothesis was meant to confirm that the body lying in state was truly dead and for the family and friends of the deceased to take part in the tradition of lament.[37] The length of time a body laid in state changed over time but it was anywhere from one to five days. Regardless of length, cypress branches were placed on the door of the house where the dead lie within, alerting others that there was a corpse inside.[38]

Once this time for lament had passed, the body was taken to its final resting place during the ekphora. Again, the way in which this occurred varied over the years, but essentially, the bier upon which the body had been placed during prothesis was taken to the cemetery by way of a drawn carriage. In addition to family and friends, particular tradesmen accompanied the procession: *nekrothaptai* (corpse buriers), *nekrophoroi* (corpse carriers), *klimakophoroi* (ladder carriers), and *tapheis* (grave diggers). The extravagance of this procession depended on the ability of the person's estate to pay for it. In the sixth century, under the archonship of Solon,[39] Athenians had a cap on how much could be spent.

After the body had arrived to its gravesite, the ritual began with mourners performing sacrifice, praying out to the gods, and offering various items to the burial site.

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[37] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 144.

[38] Rhode 1987, 164.

[39] Solon (638–558) was an aristocrat who believed some Athenians suffered from social and economic inequities. As archon, or chief magistrate (594–3), he instituted laws which would place the social classes on a more even ground; reorganizing the political and militaristic structure of the city according to wealth. In addition, he limited the amount of showmanship one could engage in so as to curtail individual bragging. This spilled over into funeral rites and limited various aspects of the burial ritual in order to make it more intimate, deterring families from using it as a means to display wealth and status. His laws regarding funerals will be discussed further in Chapter VI.

Mythological beings associated with death are many, and many appear in funerary art. The deity most associated with dying is Death himself, known as Thanatos; he received one's *psychê* when his allotted time had run its course. He cut a lock of hair and dedicated it to Hades before escorting the deceased away. Rather than acting as the recipient of prayer, he was simply acknowledged as the porter of souls to the next destination. The next postmortem phase involved two gods to whom prayers were regularly offered, Hermes and Persephone. Hermes, son of Zeus, was the protector of travelers, and as such, was the soul's escort to the Underworld where Persephone, daughter of Zeus and Demeter and queen of Hades, reigned. The living would offer graveside prayers to Hermes for the soul's swift travel to their afterlife. To Persephone, the prayers were in the hope that her return to her father's side would one day mean the resurrection of the souls of the dead.[40] Other gods who might receive prayers from the grieving were chthonic deities who were important to the cult of souls. These deities were earth gods and maintained healthy soil for farming, promising bounty in return for their acknowledgement. The reason these gods, such as Demeter, Hecate, and Gaia[41] were associated with death was because the interred were placed into *their* soil where they received the souls of the dead.[42] When prayers commenced, various goods were placed in the grave for the *psychê's* use in the Underworld.

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[40] Grant and Hazel 1993, 265.
[41] These gods are in addition to the aforementioned, excluding Hermes, and also included Erinhes, Dionysus, Melinoe, Triptolemus, and Trophonius. Personifications of these deities are observed on many funerary pots in Beazley's collection, and will be referred to throughout the following chapters.
[42] Rohde 1987, 157.

Items for the Underworld

The needs of the dead were not unlike those of the living. Excavations have proven beneficial to the understanding of the process of the deposition of goods for use in the afterlife. Sets of clothing, household items, vases, which probably contained scented water or oil, containers for food, jewelry, and of course, coins for Charos[43], ferryman of Styx reflect the type of items 'sent' with the dead. For children, clay figurines and tiles with painted scenes have been discovered. Adults might have figurines of gods interred with them as well, though more often it was children who had what were presumably toys buried with them.[44] Typically, these offerings were placed beside the interred body. In cases of cremation, items were placed around the ash urns, though some items, such as jewelry, might be placed inside the urn. It is possible that these items were placed in the burial sites to satisfy the living's need to deny total separation from the dead and not so much out of a belief that the dead had an actual need for these things.[45] Kurtz and Boardman note that there were some ancient scholars, such as Lucian, who regarded the practice of burying the dead with these items absurd.[46] In *de Luctu* Lucian he mentions that the ancients believed that the dead would starve if food was not buried with them. In his way, he makes fun of this:

> Since if any man has not friend or kinsman left behind on earth, he dwells among them a corpse unfed and hungering.[47]

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[43] This boat-fare is called *naulon* or *danakê*, first used in literature by Aristophanes in *Frogs*. See Garland 2001, 23.

[44] See Brooklyn 1982, 46, Rohde 1987, 166, Kurtz and Boardman 1972, 204.

[45] Kurtz and Boardman 1972, 206.

[46] Kurtz and Boardman 1972, 206.

[47] Heitland 1885, 140.

There are four everyday objects commonly found in graves. One is the standard oil flask which had many shapes and sizes. The aryballos and lekythos are the two which tend to be decoratively painted. Another form is the unguentaria; these small containers have been found in graves in heaps. These flasks were particularly popular in Athens as it was Athena who gave an unguentarium of oil to the city during her contest with Poseidon to decide who would reign as patron. In addition to serving as a food staple, oil was used medicinally, whether to aid the body during exercise or as a topical treatment for wounds. The meaning behind the water vase is two-fold. For one, the ancients believed that the dead had need of food and drink which is why hydriai, oinochoai and cups were included. The second meaning is spiritual and was uncovered in an inscription found inside a fourth-century hydria found in Pharsalos:

> In the halls of Hades you will find on the right a spring with a white cypress standing beside it. Go nowhere near this spring, but farther on you will find cold water running from the lake of Memory. Above it are guards who will ask you what you want. You tell them the whole truth, and say 'I am a child of Earth and starry Heaven; my name is Asterios. I am dry with thirst; allow me to drink from the spring'.[48]

The water implements were a necessity, like the coins for Charos, and not merely for comfort, such as extra sets of clothing or shoes. The dead were instructed to drink from the river Lethe if they did not want to remember their past lives when reincarnated or from Mnemosyne if they were initiates of the Orphism.[49] These jugs have been found lying open end toward the deceased's mouth, encouraging the drinking of the river water.

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[48] Kurtz and Boardman 1972, 210.
[49] Kurtz and Boardman 1972, 210.

After the preparation of the body, its prothesis, ekphora, corporal and gift internment, and *perideipnon,*[50] next of kin began a lifelong process of honoring the dead through remembrance. The belief that the soul of the deceased does not enter the spirit world immediately after death but only when the flesh began to decay is an idea held among many people; the Athenians are no exception.[51] During this transition, rites known as *trita* and *enata* held on the third and ninth days, respectively, were performed and consisted of meals prepared tomb–side by the kinsfolk. On the thirtieth day postmortem, those responsible for mourning and honoring the dead return to the grave in a simple ceremony known as *triekostia.*[52] At this time, those closest to the deceased ended their period of mourning by celebrating the *kathedra*, a seated instead of reclined participation in a meal, and brought symbolic items to the gravesite.[53] This included sweepings from the floor of the deceased's home, and offerings of food brought by women of the family. The ritual was known as 'Hekate's supper,'[54] an old practice possibly meant to deter evil spirits from trifling with the *psychê* of both the living and the dead. Margaret Alexiou posits that this was a way to purge the deceased's home of pollution, such as food bits and human waste.[55] The *triekostia* occurred each month and every anniversary of the date of death until the passing of those responsible for honoring the dead, at which time the cycle began anew for their own soul, presided over by those closest to them.

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[50] The post-burial communal meal at which the dead was thought to host.

[51] Garland 2001, 38-9.

[52] Literally, 'thirtieth-day rites.'

[53] Garland 2001, 40.

[54] A chthonic goddess associated with death, the disputed daughter of Demeter and Zeus whose name translates as 'she who has power far off'.

[55] Alexiou 2002, 16.

Sumptuary laws and their effect on Athenian burials

Certain legislation regarding burial practices, and their effect on how the typical Athenian buried their dead, demonstrates that laws did in fact dictate how one was buried, mourned and honored. Some changes were simply due to evolving burial rites as Athenian society changed. However, we know that laws set in place by the ruling elite forced some of these customs into their evolution more quickly than they might have otherwise.

It is believed that since the development of Athens, and until the sixth century, there was abundant grandeur involved in the burying of the dead, a custom later scholars, such as Cicero, would critique due to the fact that not all men could afford to honor the dead in the same way:

> The next legal maxim commands us to cultivate piety, and to banish costliness from our temples. It signifies that piety is grateful to God, and all conceit of worldly wealth is displeasing to him. For if in our social relations we desire that distinctions of wealth and poverty should not induce us to forget the fraternal equality of men; why should we throw a stumbling block in the approaches of mortals to their Maker, by requiring costly sacrifices and offerings. Especially since nothing is more agreeable to the deity than to see the gates of worship flung open to all who would adore him, and serve him in his temples.[56]

The earliest dated law regarding funerary practice was under the sixth-century archonship of Solon (638–558) who, according to Plutarch, was chosen to govern because of his wisdom and just behavior.[57] Regarding burial customs, Solon stated that

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[56] Cic. *Leg*. 2.25.63. "Quod autem 'pietatem adhiberi, opes amoueri' iubet, significat probitatem gratam esse deo, sumptum esse remouendum. Quid enim? paupertatem cum diuitiis etiam inter homines esse aequalem uelimus, cur eam sumptu ad sacra addito deorum aditu arceamus? Praesertim cum ipsi deo nihil minus gratum futurum sit, quam non omnibus patere ad se placandum et colendum uiam. Quod autem non iudex, sed deus ipse uindex constituitur, praesentis poenae metu religio confirmari uidetur."

[57] Plut. *Sol*. 14.3. "τὸ ἴσον ἕξειν προσδοκώντων· ὅθεν ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδος μεγάλης ἑκατέρων γενομένων οἱ προϊστάμενοι προσέκειντο τῷ Σόλωνι τυραννίδα προξενοῦντες καὶ ἀναπείθοντες εὐτολμότερον ἅψασθαι τῆς πόλεως ἐγκρατῆ γενόμενον."

he wanted all economic classes to be equally represented. In order to do this, he eliminated excessive mourning and the amount of goods which could be displayed graveside. This not only kept individual families from boasting about their wealth, but also prohibited the burial site from becoming a kind of centre for worship. Cicero tells us that the laws were quite specific, and the forbidding of many norms came to pass.[58] For instance, tombs of a size that required ten men more than three days to construct were prohibited. The excessive display of grief and mourning in the streets during ekphora was banned. The number of people allowed to be involved in the burial process was limited to the closest of relatives, all of whom were now expected to make the journey on foot only. This also meant restricting female participation to the bare essentials in order to keep the funeral from becoming an emotive spectacle.[59] The hiring of professional mourners, *threnon exarchoi*, was disallowed, and limitations were placed on grave goods, such as garments, food and drink, and money for Charon.

The laws enacted under Solon are thought to have been aimed at the rich, a means to move the importance of relation from the *genos*, which extends throughout blood and non–blood relation, to the *oikos*, to restrict female participation because of their tendency to be too loud and self-violent, creating public spectacle. Lastly, this legislation meant to draw less attention to funerals in public, therefore inhibiting sentiment from other Athenians. [60] The reduction of pomp and restriction of graveside mourners to the

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[58] Cic. *Leg.* 2.26.64.
[59] Cic. *De Leg.* 2.26.64-5.
[60] Alexious 2002, 18-9.

homestioi,[61] or 'those at the same hearth,' would cause less attention to be paid to the event by keeping it intimate, moving the mourning process to a private home and out of the public sphere. Solon's legislation lived on in other parts of Greece well after his archonship, and even his life, ended.

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[61] This term was considered new at the time the legislation occurred and was coined specifically for this law. See Alexiou 2002, 16.

CHAPTER 4
A PLACE OF WORK AND REST: *ATHENIAN CEMETERIES AND THE*
POTTERY TRADE

Archaeology has uncovered an abundance of information regarding the Athenian cemetery. Above any other Greek city, Athens has the largest number of discovered cemeteries, and knowledge of funerary practices relies on the analysis of these Athenian sites. In addition to its abundance of cemeteries, Athens also contains the largest pottery workshop housed within a cemetery. These factors make the city the most obvious place to research depictions of burial practices on pots.

The Kerameikos as Resting Place

The earliest burials discovered in Athens date to the Early Bronze Age (2700–2000) and were found to the west of the Agora in the Pompeion Cemetery, which, by the twelfth century became the main area for burials during this sub–Mycenaean era. In the eleventh-century Protogeometric period people began placing the dead mostly to the northwest, inside the Agora about 100 meters west of the Pompeion burials; this occurred regularly by the Geometric period (Map 1).[62] The pre-Archaic graves were marked by small mounds of earth, stone slabs, undecorated gravestones and clay vases.[63] Placement of the dead within the Agora waned dramatically during the Archaic, and burials moved to the land outside the Agora (Map 2). *Stelae* and grave plaques became a popular means to denote individual burials. Classical era graves were exclusively outside the Agora as no one was burying within the city proper, demarcated in the fifth century by the Themistoklean Wall (Map 3). This wall cut through many older graves which are now

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[62] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 31.
[63] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 57.

known as 'Themistoklean graves' (Fig. 8). Not only did the existing cemeteries grow outward from the wall, but new ones sprang up beyond as well.[64] Funerary plaques and markers of graves already in existence at the site of construction were incorporated into the wall at the demand of Themostikles so as not to disrupt the memory of those buried.

The property outside the Athenian Agora is located on either side of the River Eridanos and is known as the Kerameikos (Fig. 9). Athens' oldest cemetery was also the potters' quarter. It was named for the word *keramos*, 'potting clay,' and is the term used for 'a patron of potters' (and for the word 'ceramic'). The potters' quarter was within the 'inner Kerameikos,' and the cemeteries occupied the 'outer.' It is thought they chose this area for their workshops because of the amount of clay mud brought into this city quarter by the Eridanos River.[65] Parts of the Kerameikos were consistently damaged by overflowing water from the nearby stream and were therefore converted into burial spaces.

Burials began in the area as far as back as early twenty-first century and continued throughout the Christian burials of the sixth century A.D.[66] Both private and public burials occurred in this area. Private burials were conducted by any social class if the family could afford it. The term 'public burial' is basically synonymous with 'military or state burial.' State graves for military personnel and city leaders were placed within the *demosion sema* (Fig. 10) beginning in the fifth century. This area, found along 1500 meters of Akademy Road, spans the distance between the northwest Dipylon Gate and the Akademy (Map 4), and is the site of an abundance of funerary plaque finds (Fig. 11).

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[64] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 92.
[65] Hellenic Ministry of Culture. http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/eh351.jsp?obj_id=2392
[66] Knigge 1991, 32.

A third street, the Street of Tombs, stretched though the Kerameikos. These roads were incorporated into the burial space during the reconstruction of the city which occurred after the Persian attack of 480 (Map 5). Once the area had been rebuilt, the wealthiest Athenian families began to construct large mausolea along the Sacred Way and Street of Tombs. In 317, the construction of family tombs was banned, and until Roman occupation allowed for their return, only markers could be used.[67]

For those lost beyond Athens and never recovered, cenotaphs (*kenotaphion*) marked symbolic burials.[68] There are about forty-five known mass graves (*polyandria*) in the *demosion sema* which date as early as the mid fifth century. These mass internments were for soldiers who died in war and whose bodies were brought home from the battlefield.[69] Monuments inscribed with names and/or units mark these graves (Fig. 12). The honor bestowed to these fallen heroes not only included burial in this prestigious cemetery, but included a several day long ritual called a *patrios nomos*.[70] Thukydides describes this ritual:

> Having set up a tent, they put into it the bones of the dead three days before the funeral; and everyone bringeth whatsoever he thinks good to his own. When the day comes of carrying them to their burial, certain cypress coffins are carried along in carts, for every tribe one, in which are the bones of the men of every tribe

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[67] Goette 2001, 59.
[68] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 110.
[69] Clairmont 1983, 33.
[70] Thuc. *The Peloponnesian War*, 2.34.2–6. τὰ μὲν ὀστᾶ προτίθενται τῶν ἀπογενομένων πρότριτα σκηνὴν ποιήσαντες, καὶ ἐπιφέρει τῷ αὐτοῦ ἕκαστος ἤν τι βούληται: ἐπειδὰν δὲ ἡ ἐκφορὰ ᾖ, λάρνακας κυπαρισσίνας ἄγουσιν ἄμαξαι, φυλῆς ἑκάστης μίαν: ἔνεστι δὲ τὰ ὀστᾶ ἧς ἕκαστος ἦν φυλῆς. μία δὲ κλίνη κενὴ φέρεται ἐστρωμένη τῶν ἀφανῶν, οἳ ἂν μὴ εὑρεθῶσιν ἐς ἀναίρεσιν. ξυνεκφέρει δὲ ὁ βουλόμενος καὶ ἀστῶν καὶ ξένων, καὶ γυναῖκες πάρεισιν αἱ προσήκουσαι ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον ὀλοφυρόμεναι. τιθέασιν οὖν ἐς τὸ δημόσιον σῆμα, ὅ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοῦ καλλίστου προαστείου τῆς πόλεως, καὶ αἰεὶ ἐν αὐτῷ θάπτουσι τοὺς ἐκ τῶν πολέμων, πλήν γε τοὺς ἐν Μαραθῶνι: ἐκείνων δὲ διαπρεπῆ τὴν ἀρετὴν κρίναντες αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν τάφον ἐποίησαν. τιθέασιν οὖν ἐς τὸ δημόσιον σῆμα, ὅ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τοῦ καλλίστου προαστείου τῆς πόλεως, καὶ αἰεὶ ἐν αὐτῷ θάπτουσι τοὺς ἐκ τῶν πολέμων, πλήν γε τοὺς ἐν Μαραθῶνι: ἐκείνων δὲ διαπρεπῆ τὴν ἀρετὴν κρίναντες αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν τάφον ἐποίησαν.

by themselves. There is likewise borne an empty hearse covered over for such as appear not nor were found amongst the rest when they were taken up. The funeral is accompanied by any that will, whether citizen or stranger; and the women of their kindred are also by at the burial lamenting and mourning. Then they put them into a public monument which standeth in the fairest suburbs of the city, in which place they have ever interred all that died in the wars except those that were slain in the field of Marathon, who, because their virtue was thought extraordinary, and therefore were buried on the spot. And when the earth is thrown over them, someone thought to exceed the rest in wisdom and dignity, chosen by the city, maketh an oration [*epitaphios logos*] wherein he giveth them such praises as are fit; which done, the company depart.

The impressive pomp of these public burials dates to the Peloponnesian War, when Perikles delivered the *epitaphios logos,*[71] or formal funerary oration, given during the first military burial in 431. Thukydides gives the most complete example when he recounted the speech which "offers the most clearly articulated expression of Periklean ideals preserved from antiquity."[72]

Private burials taking place in areas other than the *demosion sema* were more intimate and family oriented. Depending on one's wealth, or lack of it, their grave could be marked with anything from simple earthen mounds, funerary vases, small monuments, or large stelae and statuary. Of course, the pomp of gravesites changed in the seventh century when the sumptuary laws of Solon went into effect, but the separation of classes was still evident. Scholars know varying classes of Athenians were laid to rest in the same area due to the archaeological evidence provided by vases. For example, when an Orientalizing vase sherd is found amongst black figure pieces within an area which stratigraphic dating proves that the burials occurred during the same period, it is safe to

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[71] See Pl. *Menex.* 236e. The three aspects it must include are: the eulogy for the dead and the city, an exhortation to the relatives so as to heroicize the deceased's war efforts, and a consolation to the bereaved.
[72] Oakley 2005, 13.

assume that the former was found in the grave of one who could not afford the latest style.[73]

There was a symbiotic relationship between the Kerameikos as cemetery and the Kerameikos as production space; burials needed grave markers, and potters needed the revenue which death provided.

Kerameikos as Workshop

Pottery production within the Kerameikos began in the eleventh century. Although it is believed that the name of this area was derived from 'keramos', the name 'Ker' belongs to the female spirit of death who wears a blood-stained cloak, has long, clawed fingers, and is depicted dragging the dead to the Underworld, tying this area of pottery production to the mystery of death.[74]

The Kerameikos is understood to have been a bustling area of the city with painters moving from shop to shop, employed by various potters with orders to fulfill.[75] It is possible that about a dozen family-owned workshops resided in the area for several generations, each employing up to twelve craftsmen.[76] From the early seventh century on, the number of men working in the Kerameikos increased greatly. By the time red figure was en vogue, around the year 525, there were an estimated 91 painters and 23 potters, up from just 75 years prior.[77] The number of painters and potters in this area continued to expand well into the fourth century.

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[73] Morris 1987, 16.
[74] Grant and Hazel 2003, 197.
[75] Webster 1972, xiv.
[76] Webster 1972, xiv.
[77] Webster 1972, 2.

Due to the efforts of men like John Beazley, particular styles and modes of execution can be attributed to individual artists. This can be done by comparing very subtle differences in individual form, grouping vases by subject matter which was known to have been favored by certain painters, and by identifying the real names of the artists whose work had been identified by a *kalos* inscription.[78] *Kalos* names might appear on pottery for a few reasons. A patron may have been trying to express celebrity by having his name appear on the piece, the painter may have wanted to show reverence to the person being depicted (such as the Euaion Painter who depicted the "beautiful" and athletic Euaion, son of the famous playwright Aeschylus), or because the painter or potter wanted to draw attention to his own skill and therefore would sign his own name. One of the men who perfected black figure, Exekias, was known to sign his vases, his name preceding the word *epoiesen* which is meant to identify the artist made that vessel 'with his hands.' [79] (Fig. 13).

Vases that have been signed guide scholars through the chronology of styles. The vases found in the Kerameikos were meant for permanence, honoring the dead for years to come, and it is these lasting grave goods that have given art historians a better understanding of the Greek funeral. Not only do these works illustrate the separate rituals which occurred during burial, but they also show which of those rituals were most important from era to era. The next few chapters will demonstrate how the importance

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[78] A *Kalos* inscription is an epigraph found mainly on Attic pottery, particularly in the Classical period. The formula is usually the nominative singular form of a person's name followed by 'kalos,' which means 'beautiful.' It could also be used generically if the vessel was for no one particular patron, such as 'the boy is beautiful' (ὄ παῖς καλός).
[79] Robertson 1992, 4.

placed on prothesis and ekphora during the Geometric shifted to scenes of mourning during the Archaic, and finally to grave visitation and the lament in the Classical period.

CHAPTER V
PRE-ARCHAIC FUNERARY ART

Geometric, 900–700

Gravesite finds provide the most material evidence for the study of vases in the Geometric period, particularly from the Late Geometric when greater attention was given to burial rituals which required pottery.[80] Prior to the Geometric era, a pottery style termed the 'Protogeometric,' subsequent to the fall of the Myceanean-Minoan Palace culture of the 11th century and ending around 900 (these years are the so-called 'Greek Dark Ages) flourished. This pottery was at the most basic form, encompassing fewer shapes and even fewer designs than the eras to follow. However, this is not to say that the catalogue of vase shapes was diminutive by any stretch. Boardman attributes at least 25 different shapes to the Protogeometric, encompassing all the necessary vessels which will be used throughout Greece for centuries after.[81] In fact, this period of pottery production is considered a great expression of an emerging culture (Fig. 14).

Though Protogeometric is quite important to the advent of a more developed style, it differed from the Early Geometric style which emerged around 900. The Early Geometric is distinguished from its predecessor in a number of ways: new patterns of repeating motifs, such as zig-zag, meander, key and battlement patterns, some new shapes, and non-base vases meant for suspension from walls and wrists.[82] New approaches to pottery occur again in the Middle Geometric, especially where design is concerned. Not only are new geometric shapes painted on the vases, but human figures

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[80] Boardman 1998, 25.
[81] Boardman 1998, 14-5.
[82] Boardman 1998, 24.

begin to play a more pronounced role. The addition of human figures on pottery meant a patron could use illustration to convey the vase's purpose, something abstract shapes could not do. In addition, new vessel shapes emerged, particularly where grave markers were concerned. Oversized standing kraters and neck amphorae were produced for male burials and belly-handled amphorae were produced for female burials. Nearly 30 funerary vases have been excavated from Athenian graves, half of them coming from the Kerameikos.[83]

With the Late Geometric, Athens, like the rest of Attica, experienced a growth in population and wealth, resulting in a boom for all sorts of production.[84] This resulted in a socially stratified market, with several types of artisan production now appealing to the elite. As new pottery shapes emerged from workshops, the elite being the target consumer of the new product, the old shapes moved down to the next social standing (Fig. 15).[85] With regard to grave markings, only pottery production could satisfy a demonstration of this new wealth and status.

Cremation and inhumation have always been accepted methods of burial for Greeks, but cremation was the most popular means of disposing the dead during the Geometric era. Dishes from funeral feasts were sometimes smashed on the pyre upon which the body was burning. Other items from the ceremony may have been added as well. All the ashes were then placed in an urn which was set in a deep hole and buried

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[83] Coldstream 2003, 30.
[84] Boardman 1998, 25.
[85] "While the social hierarchy remains constant, the process of emulation provides a dynamic force producing continual change in material items." By the time the last stage has adopted the item, the highest group has already moved on to a new product. See Morris 1987, 16.

about half its height at the end of an oblong grave (Fig. 16).[86] Personal belongings of the deceased were added to the other part of the trench, i.e. jewelry and kitchen goods for women, 'killed' weapons for military burials.[87]

The painted vases of the Middle Geometric started appealing to patrons with money once artists began including human figures and depicting great battle and hunting scenes; some of these pots show the human as hunter, while others picture fantastical creatures hunting humans. This Late Geometric pottery began to have an appeal to a broader audience, and the new use of the human figure meant families were able to represent loved ones who had died.

Of the many parts of a lengthy funeral, the prothesis must have held great importance to the Athenians of the eighth century as it is depicted many times on vases of the period. The painted prothesis had a standard formula: a bier with the deceased lying upon it flanked by several mourners. Often times the mourners are in positions which appear to be underneath the bier but should be interpreted as being in the foreground of the scene, kneeling in front, not below.[88] A standard formula is not to say the scene is a generic one on all vases, but that in varying combinations, the dead, the bier and the mourners are always present. The corpse is typically shown head toward the right, lying on what appears to be a tall couch as opposed to the *kline*, or bed, of reality. The Late

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[86] Coldstream 2003, 30.

[87] A 'killed' item is something has been deliberately broken so it is of no use to the living, but may still be used by the dead in the afterlife. Warriors often had their swords bent in half and added to the grave. Coldstream suggests that an item such as a warrior's weapon may have been too personal to pass along to kin, the dead being better served by the item. See Coldstream 2003, 30.

[88] Ahlberg describes these mourners as 'under' the bier. This should be contested as nothing would have been below the bier but possibly a cauldron containing personal effects of the deceased, heated water for bathing the body, or food offerings. See Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 59.

Geometric artist depicted the head as supported by a standard headrest accompanied by a chin strap, or *othonai* (Fig. 17).[89] Most often the corpse's size is exaggerated when compared to attendees, and he or she is shown in a frontal position as opposed to profile view, legs somewhat apart, arms down at the side of the body, hands touching both body and bier (Fig. 18).[90]

During the early phase of Late Geometric painting, scenes of prothesis do not clearly indicate the gender of any of the figures. The bodies of both the deceased and mourning group are comprised of nothing more than triangular wedges with filled in circles for heads, long uniform lines for arms and lines descending in thickness, thigh to ankle, for legs. The Dipylon Painter's funerary krater, a vessel which demarcates the Late from the earlier Middle Geometric, is a clear example of this rendering of form (See Fig. 2).[91] The lack of definition between genders inhibits the ability to fully comprehend the role each attendee played in a real prothesis. Ahlberg posits that the lack of accuracy in the male versus female form is an outcome of the constrained means of expression in the formulaic character of the period.[92]

By 720, painters of funeral vases begin distinguishing between the genders by showing the female dead with long and 'flowing;' the male dead wear a short hairstyle. If a man was shown with longer hair at this time he was a special participant in the ceremony, such as a dancer or charioteer, as the typical Athenian man wore his hair

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[89] These straps were used to keep the jaw from falling open when the body was lying in-state. Their use disappears from vases of the Archaic and Classical periods. See Garland 2001, 23–4.

[90] As the body is shown in profile view (as if standing if the vessel were placed on its side) the top hand touches the body and the bottom the bier-an effort to indicate lifelessness, as they may be seen drooping toward either.

[91] Dated to ca. 760.

[92] Ahlberg 1971, 32.

short.[93]   If the entire vase has vague figures (indistinguishable from one another), and has a martial theme which includes weapons, ship scenes and/or horses, this indicates that it is a dead man being honored (Fig. 19).

There are standard poses used by mourners which are reflected on every prothesis scene during the Geometric, and (if one understands the poses) can tell a little about what role they played in the deceased's life. The placement of the mourners relative to the bier, and thus the corpse, reflects how close his or her relationship was with the dead when he was alive. For instance, a common image is that of a seated attendee who has a tiny figure upon his or her lap; it has been suggested that this seated person is the spouse of the deceased and the tiny figure is his or her child (Fig. 20).[94] It is safe to assume that pots with this specific an image were painted to represent a particular person and that this is not a generic prothesis scene, for there are many which do not have the tiny figure/seated attendant combination. The stances of the people nearest the bier are performing *real* actions, activities which one would have witnessed at a prothesis.[95] These actions include intense mourning and handling objects used in the ceremony, such as an offering of flowers or herbs (i.e. wild marjoram and celery) being strewn over the body to ward off evil.[96]

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[93] Ahlberg 1971, 32.
[94] It should be noted that while both male and female mourners can be shown standing, only the women will appear seated or kneeling in a Geometric vase scene. Therefore, a seated figure with child on lap should be understood to be the wife and child of a man. A further note on small figures: if seated on a lap or standing holding hands with a taller figure, it is a child. A small figure standing on, over or under the bier, is not necessarily a child; the artist may have been trying to show them in the distance. See Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 59.
[95] Ahlberg 1971, 87.
[96] Alexiou 2002, 5.

There are two basic gestures used by funeral attendants, and knowledge of these can guide the observer in distinguishing the men from the women in Geometric scenes: one hand above the head, reserved for men, and two hands above, used by women.[97] The men use this gesture of respect on most Geometric vases as they enter the scene from the right (Fig. 21). The principle mourner stands at the head of the bier with both hands upon the head of the deceased while women behind her (kin and professional mourners) try to touch the body. These mourners are often shown clutching at their heads, indicating they are pulling at their hair or beating/lacerating their faces.[98] This self-violent activity at the prothesis dates to the Mycenaeans; *larnakes* (coffins) have been excavated with painted images indicating as much (Fig. 22).[99]

Images of prothesis are very common on Geometric vessels, particularly, in order of commonality, on amphorae, kraters, pitchers and oinochoai.[100] A scene used on funeral vases, but not as often as the prothesis, is the ekphora, or procession to the burial site. Several well-preserved Geometric vessels representing funeral scenes have been excavated, but of these vases, less than ten per cent depict the ekphora. These ekphora-scene vases show the deceased, still on his bier, being taken to the burial site by hearse; they may even render the actual burial. Though burial is rare on Geometric pottery, it did occur; one of the best preserved examples dates 750–35 and shows a large-scale ekphora occurring, which includes a several horse procession with mourners following behind the

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[97] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 59.
[98] Alexiou 2002, 6.
[99] Vermeule 1965, 149.
[100] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 60.

chariot (Fig. 23). These vase paintings not only detail important historic rituals for the modern researcher, but they also indicate a development toward narrative art.[101]

Orientalizing 700–600

Funerary vases with scenes of burial rituals are practically non-existent in the Orientalizing period, particularly in Athens where the style was adopted the least (Corinth, East Greece and Crete played a larger role in Orientalizing art).[102] This is not to say that funeral vases were not produced at this time, or that the burial ritual was not important to the people of the seventh century. Rather, it indicates that the new design motifs of the period overshadowed human narrative. The typical Orientalizing vase integrated motifs from the East, incorporating their monsters to fit Greek myth. A popular creature used in Orientalizing art which was borrowed from the East is the chimaera; a demon with a lion's head, open jaw and lolling tongue (Fig. 24).[103]

The fantastical creatures and hero/myth narratives of the Orientalizing period did not hold as much interest to the Geometric painter as scenes of life and death seemed to. When Orientalizing artists did paint funerary scenes they continued with the depiction of prothesis, but reserved it only for smaller vases.[104] Patrons of the Geometric chose the personal and emotional prothesis to represent their concern with death more than any other part of the funeral ritual; however, this changes with the Archaic. The seventh-century people of Athens decided that the tragedy of dying was best expressed in the grave-side lament.

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[101] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 61.
[102] Boardman 1998, 84.
[103] Boardman 1998, 115.
[104] Boardman 1998, 90.

CHAPTER VI
ARCHAIC

Black Figure

The innovative black figure style was developed in Corinth and made popular in Athens by 600 through a variety of workshops, each with their own favored shapes and decoration. Many of the artists in these workshops left signatures which might state that a particular painter or potter worked on the object, such as ʽSOPHILOSMEGRAPHSENʼ ("Sophilos drew me") or ʽEXSEKIASMEPOIESEʼ ("Exekias made me") for the painter Sophilos and potter Exekias (Figs. 25, 26).[105] These signatures have been identified, and the vases attributed to artists with some certainty, by scholars like Beazley; artist signatures continue to be uncovered by historians, piecing the workshop puzzle together with each one.

The Painter of Berlin A_{34} is considered the pioneer of black figure painting and it is in his work we see the Orientalizing style wane, incorporating new elements of the 'modern' style with the old (Fig. 27). The first true painter of the black figure, meaning he worked only in that style, has been given the sobriquet, the Nessos Painter, based on one of his vases upon which a scene of Herakles fighting Nessos was painted (Fig. 28). Many of the Nessos Painter's works have been found in cemeteries though funerary scenes were not a part of his catalogue of subjects.

Black figure is noted for its effort toward realism in Athenian painting; a rich and glossy black set in contrast to deep orange backgrounds with white and red details,

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[105] Exekias is most notable for his work as painter but evidence such as this inscription has shown that he made some of the vessels upon which he painted. Working in both capacities was not uncommon for these workshops though there is more reason to believe a vase was made by one hand and painted by another.

creating more complex images than had been see before.[106]   Black figure took vase painting into a more humanizing art than the Geometric had; images on black figure vases appeal to the viewer's emotional side. Some areas of Greece ignored the black figure technique altogether forcing customers to rely on imports for vases which were not plain.[107]   Though Corinth developed this style, it was Athens which applied subjects of religion on the vases.

In addition to the complexity of images was a complexity of vessel shapes. This meant that by the middle of the sixth century, the catalogue began to include large amphorae and kraters, small jugs and cups, and a transition from large lekythoi to grave plaques used to face tombs. All of these new shapes were a major part of the potter's repertoire by the end of the sixth century.[108] Vases in the Geometric, some of which were monumental in size, were used as grave markers in addition to being buried in the grave as offerings. This was the most expressive marker one could use more so than the common stone slabs which were set vertically over low-rising earthen mounds that covered the inhumed body or urn of ashes (Fig. 29). The vases within graves were usually in the form of neck and shoulder-handled amphorae, pitchers, jugs and pedestalled kraters though only the latter and belly-handled amphorae were used as markers above ground. In order to have some sort of permanence, these vases were often partially buried in the grave with the main part above ground. Of the vases that survived, most showcase the mournful lament. The prothesis and ekphora are found on these vases, but the rituals are second place to the emotion elicited during their enactment.

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[106] Robertson 1992, 3.
[107] Boardman 1998, 177.
[108] Beazley and Kurtz 1989, 4.

Until late in the first half of the sixth century, painted funerary scenes included the prothesis, and to a lesser extent, the ekphora; and though black figure painting is already a more developed style than its predecessor, the figures are still ambiguous and the designs simple. However, the sixth century was witness to an output of more diverse mediums for the rendering of burial images. For instance, the clay figure which could be mounted on the top of a vase or meant as a standalone object became popular for a short time and almost always focused on aspects of mourning (Fig. 30).

Funerary Plaques and Other Goods

By the middle of the sixth century, the painted plaque, which focused on the lament (Fig. 31), became a popular grave marker and the pottery workshops began fulfilling requests for them. The reason for the movement from vase as marker to plaque or stele may have simply been because the built tomb of the first half of the sixth century was larger and constructed more impressively than in the later half. As time passed, the free-standing built tombs of the Kerameikos began to encroach on one another, becoming a massive unit with no individuality among them. With the walls of each tomb starting to butt up against the next, space for vases became less available.[109] In order to distinguish one tomb from the other (and fortify the tomb), plaques applied to the exterior became the best choice for grave markers. Another attempt to distinguish one tomb from another was to use a stele which would most certainly name the deceased on the shaft, and just as important, name the mourners left behind.[110]

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[109] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 82.
[110] It is suggested that a stele of this sort would have stood over a family grave and not an individual one; No one has stated that this is the rule, however, just the more common practice. See Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 86.

The plaques, often made of coarse clay mixed with rough materials, stood anywhere from 14.5 to 21.65 inches in height and about 19.6 inches wide.[111] The plaques of higher quality, such as those from workshops of artists like Exekias, Lydos and Sophilos, were faced with a layer of fine potting clay in order to hold the paint better.[112] A difference in the quality of plaques may have been the result of wealthier classes asking for a product that was a cut above the standard issue plaques. A series of these higher quality plaques was excavated in the Kerameikos and are thought to have been affixed to run like a frieze, particularly since they had plain upper borders like a metope; in addition, the painted scenes ran to the edges as though they were used like triglyphs in a Doric frieze.[113] It has since been proposed that these plaques were not hung, but supported from below in order to decorate the walls of mud-brick tombs.

The plaques are grouped into two categories: single, with a stand-alone subject, and series. The subject of the most fully preserved series of plaques (painted by Exekias), is mourning (Fig. 32). A scene of prothesis and ekphora are rendered on two within the series with the many others showing mourners in either a long procession or within the home of the deceased (Fig. 33). Of the single plaques upon which the prothesis is rendered, the scene has been scaled down to show the deceased upon a bier, surrounded only by the chief mourners who take center stage in the image.[114] A few marble slabs showing Hermes *psychopompos* with the deceased and mourners were incorporated into the Themostiklean Wall near where many sherds of grave vases were

[111] Boardman 1955, 52.
[112] Boardman 1955, 51.
[113] Boardman 1955, 52.
[114] Boardman 1955, 53.

excavated, all depicting mourning.[115]   In the Kerameikos many graves were 'crowned'
with vases by the end of the sixth century, and many of the rims of these vases held
modeled female mourners.

The elevation of mourning to a higher status than prothesis may have occurred
because of a Homeric-like sentiment, "tears are a gift of honor for the dead" (γέρας
θανόντων),[116]which brought emotion to the forefront of the burial ritual.[117]   Some
scholars argue that the passage of sumptuary laws by Solon reduced the extent of
allowable pomp permitted at funerals, stripping the burial ritual to only respectful
displays of sorrow. [118]   Athenians who used the funeral to showcase their wealth before
Solon's *thesmoi*[119] were enacted were left with only the demonstration of mourning, and
therefore only that aspect was rendered on grave goods. This explanation is not entirely
satisfactory, for if this were the reason for the slow disappearance of the prothesis, one
would see the depiction of the lament on grave goods wane as well. Solon's laws not
only affected mourning but other aspects of the funeral as well, and these laws remained
in place for years to come. Not only did he eliminate elaborate statements of wealth,
such as massive chariot processions, monumental grave goods left at the burial site and
the building of large-scale tombs, he also prohibited the exhibition of theatrical mourning
by reducing the number of mourners (and therefore women) present at a funeral and the
volume at which lamentation could occur. [120, 121]

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[115] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 83.
[116] See Homer, *Il*. 23.9.
[117] Baumgarten 2009, 85.
[118] Hypothesized in G. Richter 1942, 1:80–92 and J. Boardman 1955, 50:51–66.
[119] Rules set in place by an authority.
[120] Cic. *Leg*. 2:62–9.

With the scale of funerary lavishness being reduced, the vessels illustrating mourning represent only the closest relatives. The sixth-century funeral called for solemnity, and images of the period reveal this emphasis. A plaque dated to the early sixth century shows women standing very near the corpse in what could be considered a scaled-down prothesis scene, though the act of mourning is at the forefront of the image as the bier and the body are barely shown (see Fig. 31). The deceased is wrapped tightly in an *endyma*, or shroud, while she receives the formal mourning gestures from women whose relationship to her is inscribed on the plaque.

Though prothesis did carry on during the black figure phase of the Archaic, mourning took priority in vase scenes and especially funerary plaques. In fact, some of the black figure plaques were so dependent on mourning as a theme that the artist actually painted the names of all those in mourning on them (Fig. 34). This subject gained momentum in the late sixth century with the red figure technique.

Red Figure

The change from black to red figure occurred around 530 when we see an experimental vase from the Andokodies Painter upon which he painted the same scene (not funerary) twice; once in black and once in red (Fig. 35a ,b). Essentially the red figure style is an inversion of the black where the subjects once painted in black on a red background became red subjects on a black ground. More importantly, the technique of how paint was applied changed; the use of a grave to incise details inside figures gave

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[121] See Plut. *Sol.* 21.4–5 and Dem. *Speeches* 43.62.

way to the use of a brush for this purpose.[122] The differentiation between gender and subtle details in garments and the human form meant the artist could render fully developed figures, especially where showing emotion is concerned. This shift allowed artists to give sorrowful expressions to painted mourners which were far more natural than ever before.

The prothesis was still taking place on these vases, but the viewer's eye is drawn to the varying forms of mourning rather than the dead upon his bier as we saw on vases of earlier periods. Pre-Archaic renderings of this ritual placed the bier at the top of the scale of hierarchy; by the end of the Archaic, in both black and red figure, a more realistic attempt at scale is achieved, and with it, a greater focus on emotion rather than death. People are in direct contact, face-to-face, with the deceased (Fig. 36). Instead of hands placed on heads in simple geometric forms to indicate mourning, mourners now clearly tear at hair, pulling it from their heads (Fig. 37a, b).

Not all graves were equal; mourning took backseat in the second half of the sixth century when memorializing the war dead was necessary. According to ancestral custom, *patrios nomos,*[123] ancient Greeks did not bury their fallen in the field where they died; therefore, state graves were established on Akademy Road, an area which had 'sanctuaries of the gods and graves of heroes and men'.[124] The *demosion sema* (see Fig. 10), built into the Kerameikos, was another public burial ground of the same magnitude

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[122] Boardman 2007, 103.

[123] A seven-day ceremony detailed by Thukydides. See Thuc. 2.34.1.

[124] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 108. This quote is attributed to Pausanias. See Paus. 1.29.2. "Outside the city of Athens in the country districts and beside the roads there are sanctuaries of gods and of heroes and the tombs of men....There is a memorial to all the Athenians who died in battles at sea or on the land except for those who fought at Marathon. Their tomb is in that place, in honor of their courage, but the rest lie beside the road to the Academy; tombstones stand on the graves to tell you each man's name and district"

as the Akademy Road state graves. The monuments of the *demosion sema* were not meant to show familial mourning, but were a means to heroicize the efforts of those who died for Athens.

Depending on the wealth of the family, a grave might receive stelae, statuary or simply recognition on the kenotaph of a mass grave[125]. The state held itself responsible for the burial of these men, therefore, whether or not a soldier's *oikos* had wealth or not, he would have been commemorated—the State takes the place of the family for the dead.[126] If a family did in fact have money, a stele representing the war dead as a heroic nude or in his military dress could be situated on the grave.[127] This is a very common image in this area of the Kerameikos (Fig. 38); statues of nude young men (*kouroi*) have been excavated near the *polyandria*.[128] However, *Kouroi* were not common in Attic cemeteries, and have rarely been found *in situ*; only one statue and a few fragments of two others have been found in the Kerameikos.[129] Statues which did exist would have stood above the grave of a fallen soldier (Fig. 39). He would have no sense of mourning upon his face; the statue's graveside location was meant to stand as proof that the young man lived in and died for Athens.[130] A more favored dedication to the war dead is the equestrian statue or stelae with the painted or carved image of a horseman. These have been found frequently in Kerameikos excavations.

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[125] Kenotaphs in this sense might state something like '*Athenaion hoide apethanon*' (of the Athenians, these died…) followed by a list of those known to have died in battle. See Mackay 2008, 157.

[126] Jacoby 1944, 38.

[127] Shapiro 632.

[128] A mass grave.

[129] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 89.

[130] This kouros stood at a grave in Anavysos (near Athens), honoring a young man named Kroisos, who was recognized in an epigram ("Stand and pity beside the grave monument of dead Kroisos, whom, at one time, while fighting in the front ranks of battle, raging Ares destroyed ") carved on the pedestal as having died in battle. (http://www.namuseum.gr/collections/sculpture/archaic/archaic16-en.html)

Mourning was far and away the most common image found on funeral goods of the Archaic. In addition to the graves of regular citizens, a greater emphasis was placed on those who died in war. The use of black figure painting gave the artist more freedom to depict his human subjects and allowed him to create a vase which would memorialize a family's loss more profoundly than ever before. Scenes of mourning continued into the fifth century but will shift from the funeral-side lament to the lament of visitation in the Classical era.

CHAPTER VII
CLASSICAL

The era known as Classical in Greek art began ca. 480, after the defeat of the Persians, and lasted until Hellenism swept in with the death of Alexander the Great in 323. This was a time for the Athenian to look back on his city's past and narrow escape from Asian rule, and look ahead to the future; not only the future of the living, but what the afterlife had in store for those in the Underworld. The funeral vase shifted from scenes of mourning to enduring lament and images of the living's duty to those already gone.

Once a body was interred, it was important for family members to visit the grave or tomb on the third, ninth, and thirtieth days, annually (*eniausia*) and on holidays after interment.[131] In fact, this was so important that a person without children might adopt an heir to perform rites (*ta nomizomena*) for them once they died.[132] Once the body was buried, mourning rites were performed and oil anointed items were left at the tomb. Lekythoi were already in use by the Classical period but become increasingly more important. Most often these flasks were filled with oil and left at the grave. The most popular image rendered on the vessel was the visitation during which the vase was left. This scene might show gifts of food being laid out, such as honey cakes, pomegranates and eggs, wreaths being placed on the grave, and most importantly, the visitor doing her part for the dead, lamenting.

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[131] Tombs could be one of three kinds: *peribolos*, *polyandrion* and the *heroon*; family plot, mass grave, or tomb for an important citizen or hero, respectively. See Garland 2001, 39.
[132] Garland 2001, 104.

Mourning in Classical Red Figure

In Athens, scenes of prothesis on vases had waned by 500, becoming common only in Italy. When the white-ground lekythos became the premier funerary vase shape in Athens, the prothesis ended and cannot be found on vases dating past ca. 400. This does not suggest that the prothesis stopped being an important part of funeral rites, but that it was less important than it had been in Greece before the mid-sixth century.[133] At the forefront of the Greek funeral is the woman. Those females closest to the deceased—mother, sister, wife, daughter—carry the lament with wailing, sobbing and crying out to the dead.[134]

A standard example of a female mourning scene is on a loutrophoros from ca. 480 which has been attributed to the Kleophrades Painter (Fig. 40a). The image is of a dead man lying upon a *kline*, his chin is bound to keep his mouth shut, head resting on a pillow, and he is covered with an *epiblema*, a woman's shawl (Fig. 40b). The mourners, a wife holding his head (Fig. 40c) and other primary women of his family, wail and tear at their hair (Fig. 40d). One of the women on the neck even holds the offertory loutrophoros upon which this scene is depicted (Fig. 40e). This is classic Greek mourning on a typical fifth-century grave vase, a picture of the impossible task of overcoming the separation which death has introduced—the deceased permanently in a foreign land (*sta xena*).[135]

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[133] Evidence left by some orators of the time reference the prothesis as still existing; they wrote about undignified attempts of a body's removal from the house where the rite was occurring. It is implied that the prothesis was used only as a way for people to stake their claim as legitimate heirs of the deceased by the sixth century. See Garland 2001, 28.

[134] Robben 2004, 156.

[135] Robben 2004, 159.

With the Late Archaic the deceased became more of a background image on the vessel, with acts of mourning at the forefront. Gone are the pre-Archaic images of the entire ekphora or prothesis in session; now, up-close images of emotion take center-stage. Gone too are the Geometric scenes of the entire *genos* in attendance, the close-knit *oikos* is the subject, particularly by the advent of red figure in the last quarter of the sixth century. The mourners pictured on red figure become the primary subject of the white-ground when they dominate scenes of graveside lament, long after the burial rites had taken place.

Shapes of Athenian vases employed for funerary purposes became more limited as time passed. The loutrophoros dominated the Classical period when red figure was painted on black slip vases, but when the white-ground method was used for funerary purposes, it was painted almost exclusively on the lekythos.[136] Perhaps the lekythos was simply a better fit for the important graveside ritual of pouring drink offerings, known as *choai*.[137]

The early white-ground funeral lekythoi had one of two scenes painted on it: the representation of Death in the form of a mythological allegory and the ritual lament. As the images attached will show, the Classical white-ground was a highly developed method of painting and the expressive nature of death is fully rendered in Greek art from here out.

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[136] White-ground could be painted in the black or red figure. This simply states what color the slip has taken on.

[137] *Choai* were poured either into a tube inserted into the grave, or more often, directly onto the grave. The offering could be a variety of fluids including honey, milk, wine or oil, and is a ritual scene not unfamiliar scene on grave vases.

The Mythology of Death in Grave Images

When Death was represented allegorically he could take the form of a few different mythological beings: Thanatos, Hypnos,[138] Hermes, and Charon.[139] Charon was always shown with his boat, transporting the dead to Hades and he may or may not approach the dead. If Charon did not approach, Hermes was depicted delivering the dead to him (Figs. 41a, b).   Hermes has been represented many times in his role as *psychopompos*, intervening between the dead and Death himself.[140] Hermes may also be depicted waiting for Thanatos and Hypnos to pluck the dead from where they died so that he may then deliver the shade to Charon (Figs.42a, b). The Sabouroff Painter is the first known painter to rely on images of Charon to depict the mystery of dying, adding the ferryman to the usual images of Thanatos and Hypnos, thus creating his own three-figured mythological composition.[141]

Another painter of the mythology of death was the Thanatos Painter who began painting toward the end of the Sabouroff Painter's career, mid-fifth century.[142] Unlike his competition, the Thanatos Painter rendered Death and his fellows in a more frightening way, possibly in an effort to represent what Oakley calls a folk tradition of the terrifying aspects concerning death.[143] In a lekythos dated to about 440, Charon is shown

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[138] Thanatos, son of Night (Nyx) is Death and Hypnos, his brother, is Sleep. The two were often depicted holding an item. For Thanatos it was usually a torch, symbolizing a life extinguished. Hypnos may be shown with an inverted torch or stick with water dripping from it (symbolizing the water from the river Lethe (forgetfulness).

[139] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 103.

[140] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 104.

[141] Oakley 2004, 116.

[142] The first time Thanatos and Hypnos appear on a vase is around 520 when Euphronios painted them in red figure with the body of Sarpedon. See Oakley 2004, 125.

[143] Oakley 2004, 117.

as short and ugly deity, awaiting a hesitant woman whom Hermes grasps and pulls toward the boat (Fig. 43).

The Thanatos Painter makes a clear distinction between the brothers Hypnos and Thanatos and gives the deceased heroic attributes when painting a vase for a fallen warrior (Fig. 44). Thanatos is rendered homely, unkempt and pale, while his brother is shown youthful and peaceful and has been painted with a reddish pigment to give life to his skin. The warrior is given a helmet and appears before his grave stele, which would have been situated in the *demosion sema*. Images of these deities are often shown tomb-side, following the same pattern as those of mourning relatives visiting the grave. Where the chthonic deities are supposed to appear at the moment of death, the lament ritual is shown well after Thanatos has taken his prize.

Commemoration on White-ground Lekythoi

Though other facets of the funeral ritual were rendered on Classical vases, it was the graveside lament that was far and away the most depicted image when representing real life images of the burial. It has been suggested that the reason for this is the transformation of the burial mounds of old into permanent tombs (Fig. 45).[144] The grave transformation began occurring during the Archaic, and by the fifth century building tombs was common practice, giving the people a more substantial place to lament.

The image of mourning at the site of burial is assumed to have begun with the Beldam Painter, ca. 480; by 460, many polychrome versions of this scene occurred.[145] In the Geometric we were uncertain of which gender was in the prothesis scene and had to

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[144] Morris 1987, 130-1.
[145] Oakley attributes this to the Vouni Painter and Painter of Athens 1826.

rely on knowledge of the rituals to make our conclusions. With the Archaic, women were the primary subject as they were the chief mourners; if men were shown, they were few and at the sides of the primary image (unless he was the deceased). This carried on into the Classical until the mid-fifth century lekythoi began clearly showing both men and women participating in the graveside lament (Fig. 46).

In the second half of the fifth century, the emotion occurring on grave vases could range from deep sorrow to dutiful diligence of performing rites, but they almost always showed the living at the tomb of the dead. An example of deep sorrow was found in Athens and has been attributed to the Inscription Painter (who worked in the Beldam Painter's workshop).[146] This scene is a rare one of crying, showing the visitor wiping at her eyes while looking on at a stele bearing marks that look like a real life inscription, reading out details of the dead (Fig. 47).

Some of these graveside scenes are ambiguous in that the observer cannot distinguish between who is living and who is dead. The presence of the dead at the site of their burial is a theme which occurs on vases and grave plaques throughout the white-ground era. This is the artist's attempt to bring the dead back to the living for one passing moment, following the idea that the dead are still among their loved ones if only in a nearby realm. Lekythoi of this nature leave the viewer questioning the corporeality of the grave visitors; only the person for whom it was created knew, but scholars have made some good progress toward determining which ones are showing a real person and

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[146] Oakley 2004, 146.

which the shade at the tomb; Oakley has put forward some convincing examples of these lekythoi concerning warriors, athletes and homemakers (Figs. 48, 49, 50).

The first vase is attributed to the Group R workshop[147] and dates 420–10.[148] It depicts a warrior sitting in three-quarter position on the steps leading to his tomb stele which is visited by a fellow soldier and (presumably) the deceased's wife. The visitors' presence is unknown to the dead man and vice versa. The visitors gesture toward the tomb stele in an offering of prayers, or it is indicating that they are talking to the dead man's spirit by way of his tomb. Considering that both a comrade and wife have shown up, it is more likely they are performing one of the many rites dictated by Greek custom than it is they are just visiting, particularly since the woman has shown up with the dead warrior's armor in hand.

In the second vase a nude athlete is pictured visiting his own tomb while a female guest stands on the other side looking back toward the man (it is unclear if the two see each other). The man can be definitively identified as deceased because of his lack of clothes; an athlete would not have visited a tomb in the state of undress, but the nudity helps identify him as such. If nudity was not enough to identify the man as an athlete, the Thanatos Painter placed a *strigil* in his hand, a sure symbol of a man who exercised.[149] Oakley suggests that this man was not a professional, but an aristocrat and his

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[147] The work attributed to Group R comes from a workshop that is considered one of the most influential of the late fifth century as many white-ground lekythoi of that period have been assigned to painters known to have worked together. See Kurtz 1975, 58.

[148] Oakley 2004, 167.

[149] A *strigil* is a metal scrapper used to remove dirt and sweat from the body after exercise. The term *ephebe* refers to a young man who is coming of age, receiving education in the fine arts of aristocracy (music, literature, athleticism, etc.).

identification as athletic is a means to show he was an educated *ephebe*.[150] His stance is in the contrapposto position in which statues of athletes would have been shown at the time.[151] The late fifth century was a time when artists were trying to perfect statuary, many of which were sculptured for the gymnasium and other important places for socialization (Fig. 51).

The last vase, attributed to the Achilles Painter who made it ca. 445, depicts a man visiting his wife's tomb who is identified, through symbols,[152] as an expert woolworker who kept a good home for her family.[153] Two things indicate that a woman is the subject of the vase: the symbolic items at the tomb and the figure of a woman wrapped in a mantle. This combination indicates that the woman shown (in her shade form) is indeed the one who is dead and the man attaching a ribbon to her tomb a close relative (most probably her husband). The two seem to stare at each other, unlike the oblivious warrior from Fig. 48. It is uncertain if they are supposed to see one another, but the ancient Greek did have a belief in visits from beyond the grave, so we are unsure what the Achilles Painter was trying to convey here.

By the end of the fifth century painters had abandoned the white-ground technique. The emergence of free painting on walls and panels took over the painter's market, and white-ground seemed more in line with free painting than the strong

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[150] Oakley 2004, 169.

[151] Refer to Polykleitos' piece, *Doryphoros* of ca. 440. This is the hallmark of statuary the High Classical and the example set forth for other artists to follow well into Hellenism and Graeco-Roman arts.

[152] The padded *diphros*, *kalathose* (both on top of the tomb) and *exaleiptron* (at base) are symbols only used with women. These items are a backless chair, a basket for fruit (also a sign of fertility), and a small box used for storing items such as cosmetics.

[153] Oakley 2004, 173.

decorative basis that silhouette gave to black figure and red figure.[154] By the end of the fifth century, painters of pots were able to treat every aspect of their figures with great care, giving a sculptural quality to garments and the close-fitting drapery, revealing the figure beneath. The constant advancement of artistic skill is what defines the artistic period to come, Hellenism.[155] With the close of the High Classical, painted funerary art slowly waned and so too did the ingenuity in funeral art.

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[154] Robertson 1992, 267.
[155] Boardman 2001, 275

CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION

The specific reason attitudes toward funeral art changed in ancient Athens may never be completely clear. Solon's laws of the sixth century had an impact on funerals which would otherwise have been grandiose, but this does little to explain why different eras (before and after Solon) chose varying aspects of the ritual for their grave art. The only evidence in art that these 'sumptuary' laws had any effect on the Athenian funeral is the rendering of processions which appear to be of smaller scale. Perhaps it was the maturation of the artisan's skill and his ability to render more complex images that changed grave images from century to century. However, this explanation is too weak to work; yes, artistic skill got better as time passed, but this would not impact what patrons bought to memorialize their dead. If an artist is talented enough to render a prothesis scene, he is talented enough to render an ekphora, and so forth. No, the scenes changed because the Athenian's view of grieving changed.

We may not understand why images of the ekphora were more important to the ninth-century Athenian than his fifth-century descendant but evidence proves this was so. Kurtz and Boardman propose that it was not the attitude toward death which shifted in the Athenian mind but their attitude toward life.[156] The Geometric period's emphasis of the dead man upon his bier did not speak to the grief of those mourning in the Archaic period; patrons wanted an illustration of the impact his death had on *them*.

Though scenes of ekphora and prothesis still existed in the Archaic era, capturing the essence of death was better explained by the grieving who were left behind. The

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[156] Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 329.

funeral ritual was now the backdrop instead of the subject. The focus was on the small group of mourners present instead of the large-scale pomp of the ninth-century funeral. Shapiro highlighted this part of Athenian art history in *The Iconography of Mourning in Athenian Art*. Like this thesis, he argued that images of mourning prevailed over any other scene in funerary art of the Archaic period.[157] Though Shapiro begins his argument with the High Archaic (540–490), this paper produced evidence that the trend began occurring even earlier in Athens, after the Orientalizing artists grew tired of their Near Eastern motifs and fantastical creatures.

It is no coincidence that burial images on funerary goods changed after the Persian armies swept through Greece; they failed in their conquest, but left Greece with lengthy casualty lists (literally, as seen on fifth-century kenotaphs). Changes were made to funerary vases when Athens was forced to bury so many of their men in what were large-scale commemorations of the war dead; mourners wanted their painted images alongside the 'shades' of their loved ones who had fallen in battle defending their city. This new aspect f grave art helps define the Classical period of Athens.

Images of the graveside lament overtook the black and red figure technique of the Late Archaic, especially on white-ground vases. That is not to say past themes of funerary goods did not continue into the Classical era, but archaeological evidence has proven that the postmortem, ritual lament was more widely used in the fifth and fourth centuries than any other scene.

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[157] Shapiro 1991, 629.

The history of art, particularly ancient art, has very few absolutes. The best any scholar can do is make an educated guess based on what proof survives in the archaeological record. The burial ritual itself is more understood as bodies and grave goods can be found in situ; one can estimate the behavior of a society based on those findings, as they are physical proof of what was *done* with the dead. Trying to determine how a society *felt* about death, especially during periods lacking written records, is near impossible. Often, the only non-literary evidence left to serve as a society's narrative is the painted picture. For Greece, and more specifically Athens, this is how their pottery functions for us today; fortunately, a good deal was buried for safe-keeping. These vases are an invaluably important source for our understanding of the mourning Athenian.

APPENDIX A
FIGURES

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5
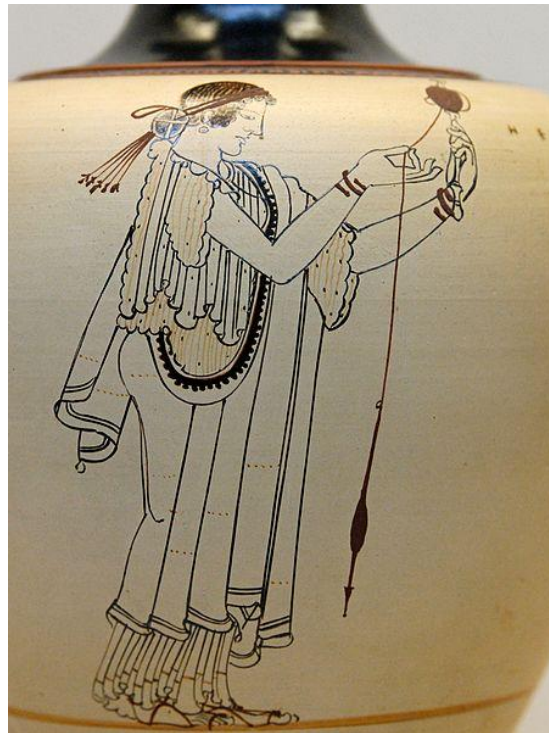
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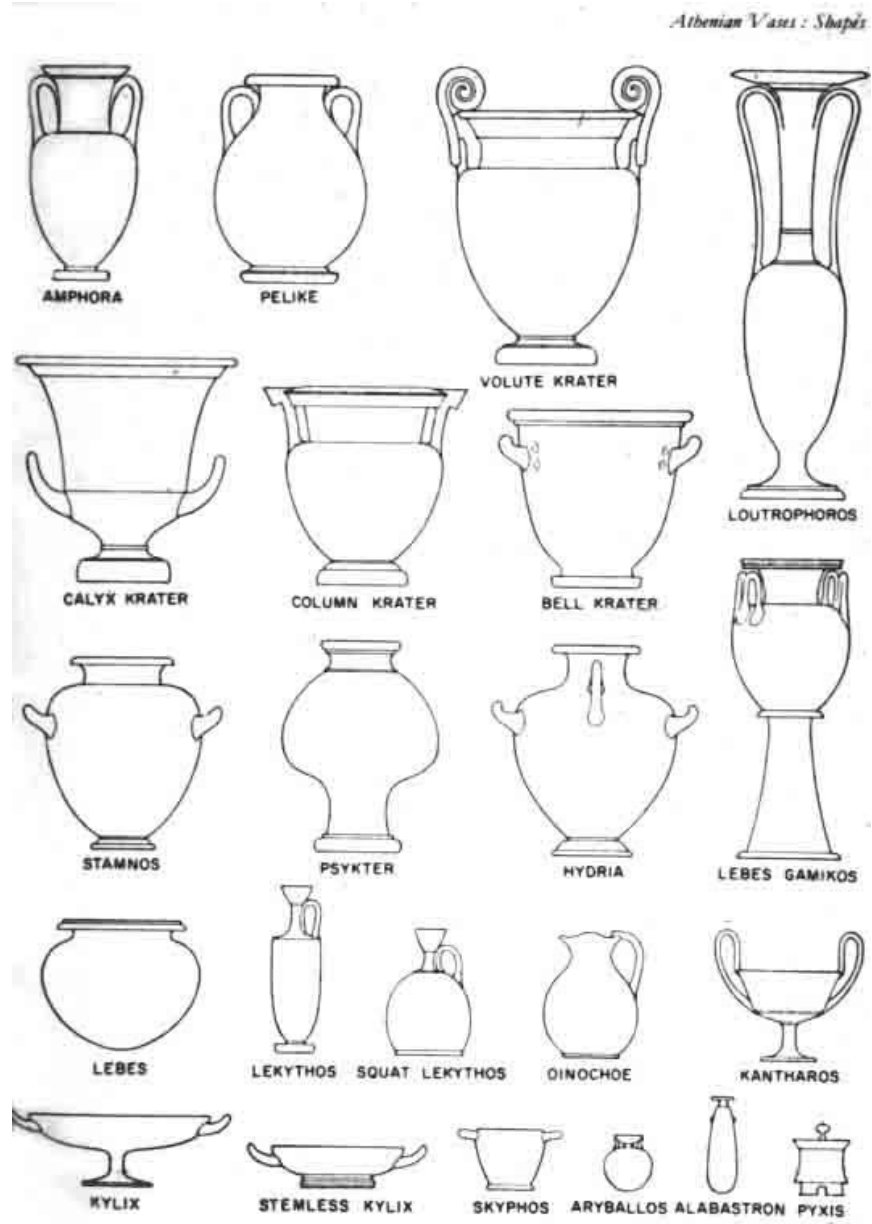
Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11
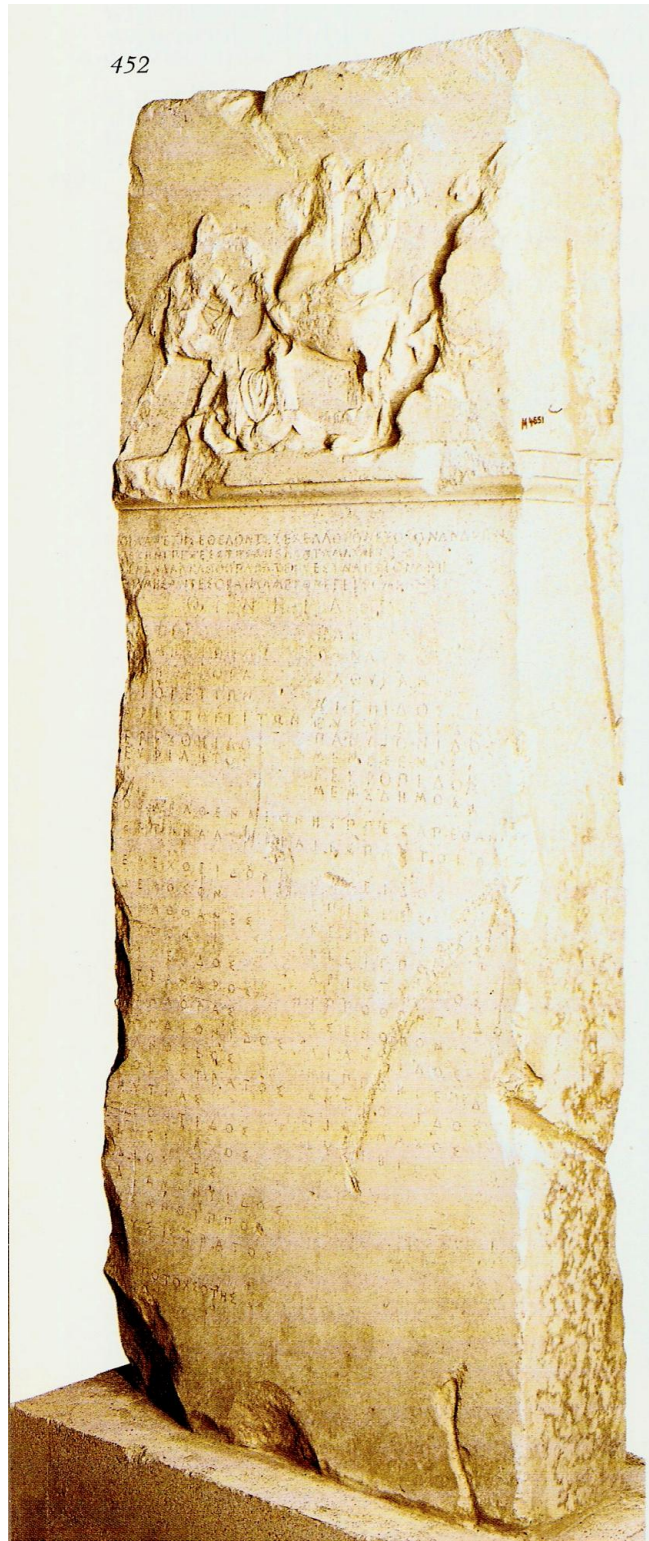
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Figure 13
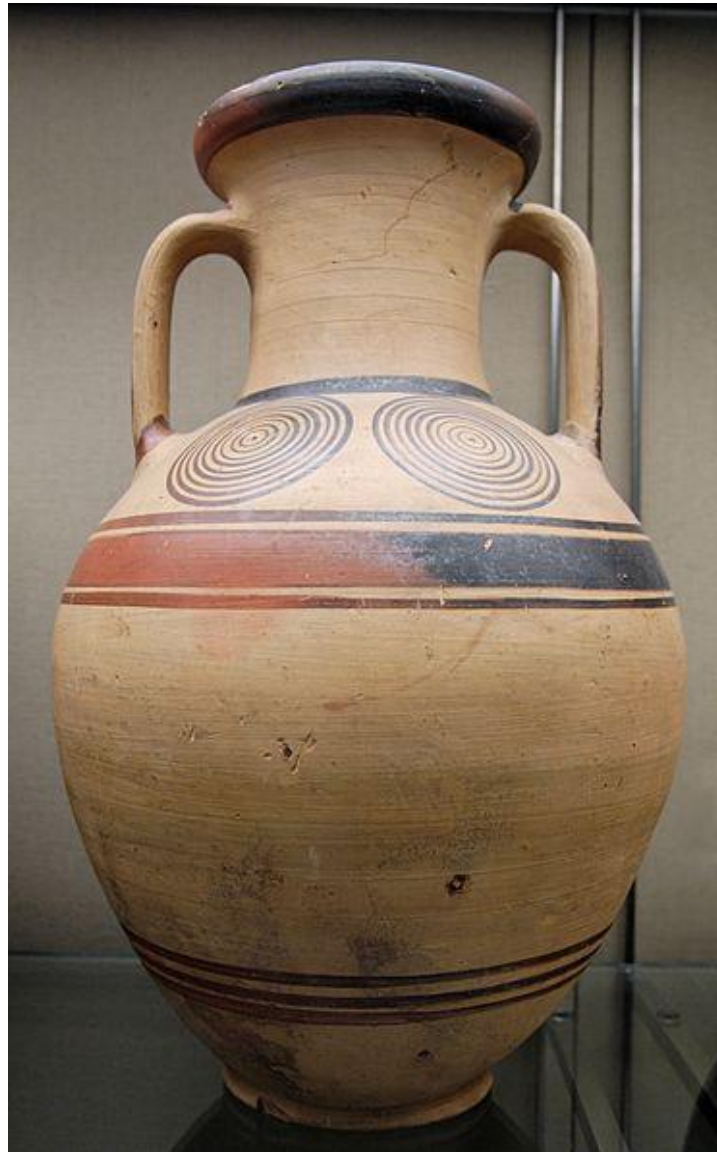
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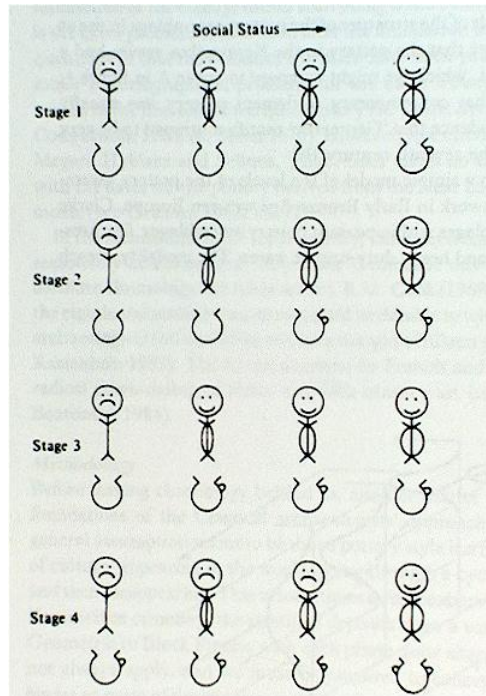
Figure 15

Figure 16
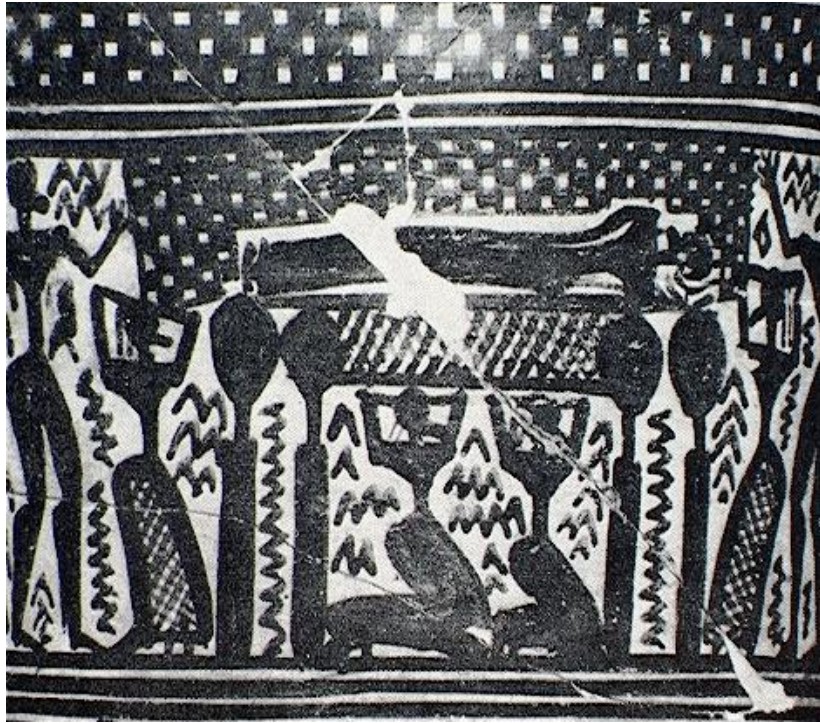
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Figure 18
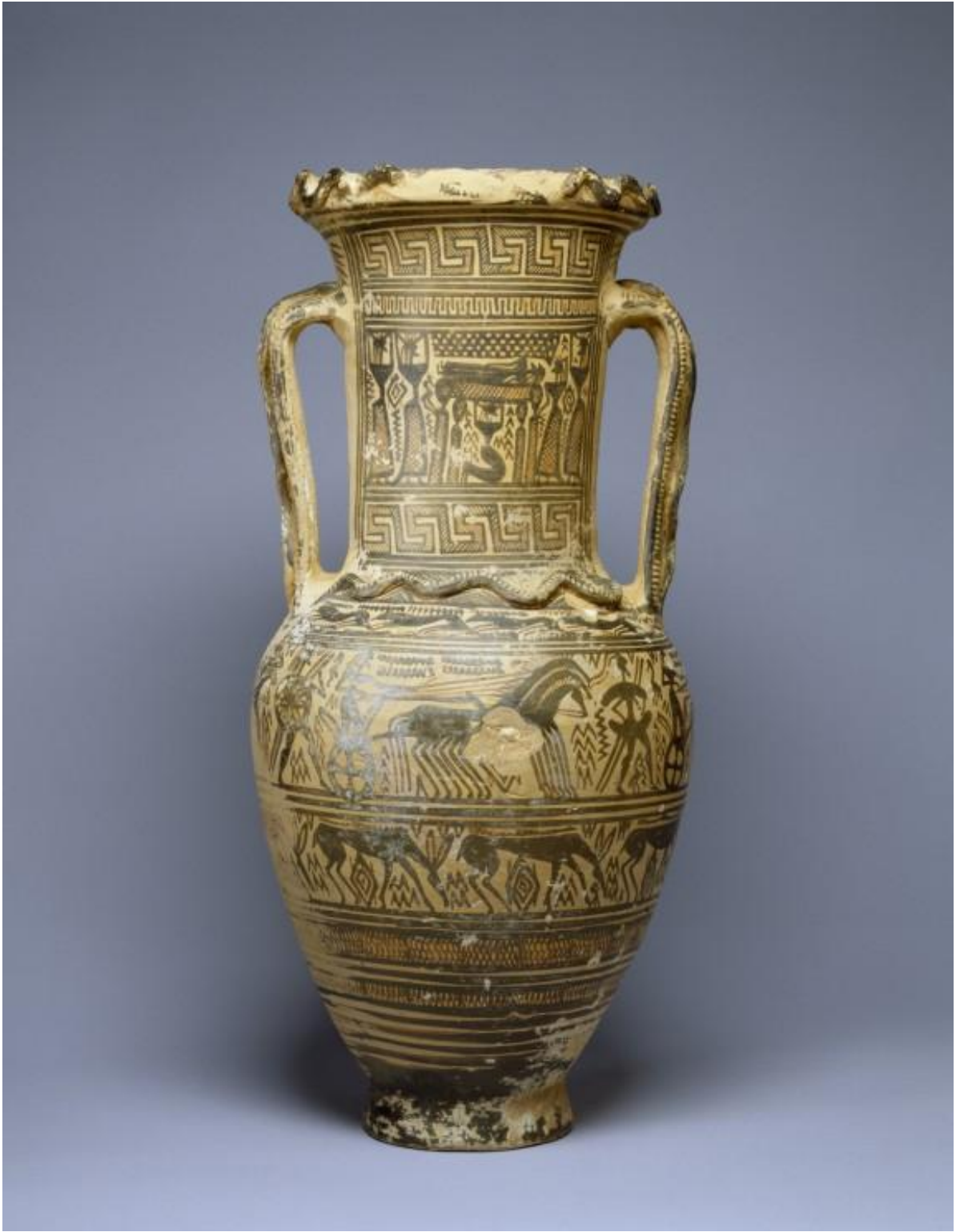
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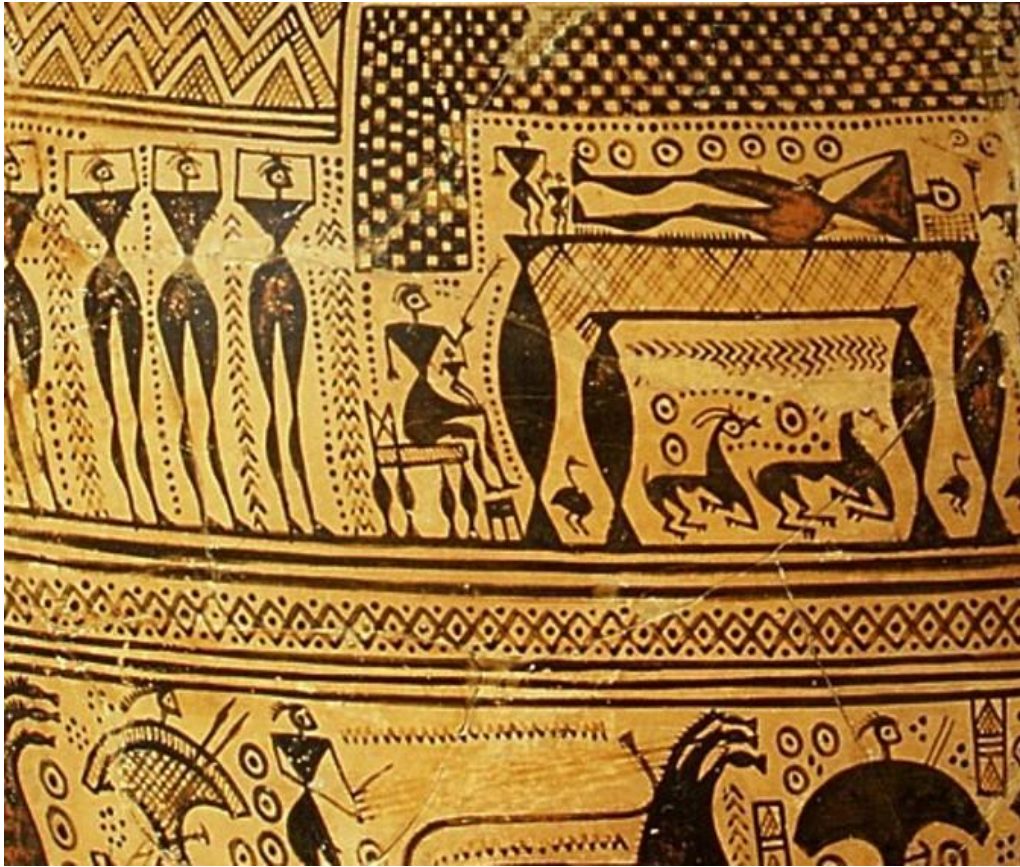
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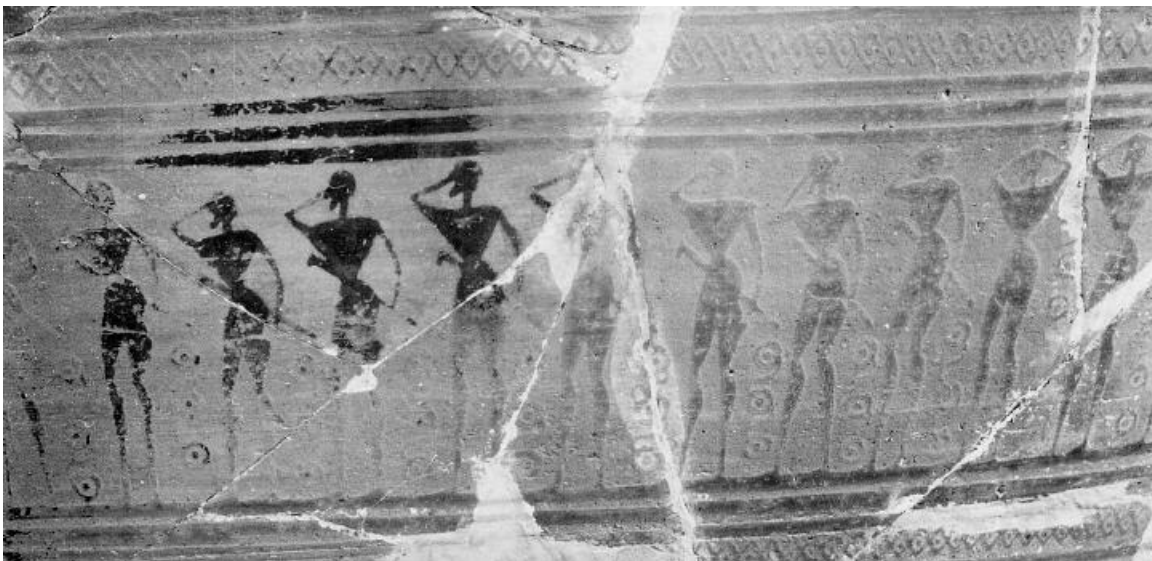
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Figure 22

Figure 23

Figure 24

Figure 25

Figure 26
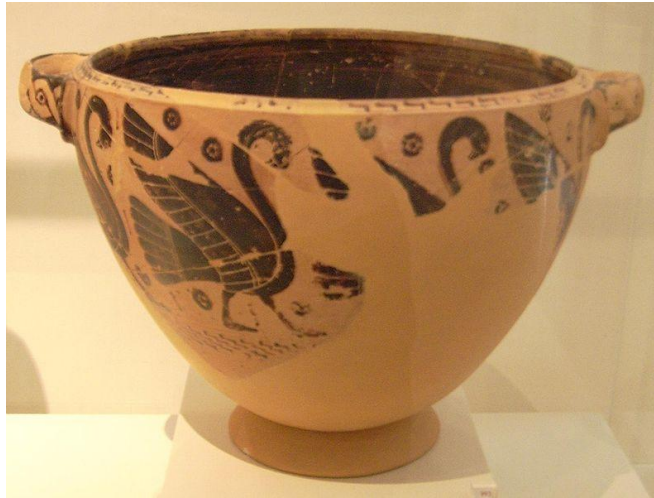
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Figure 28
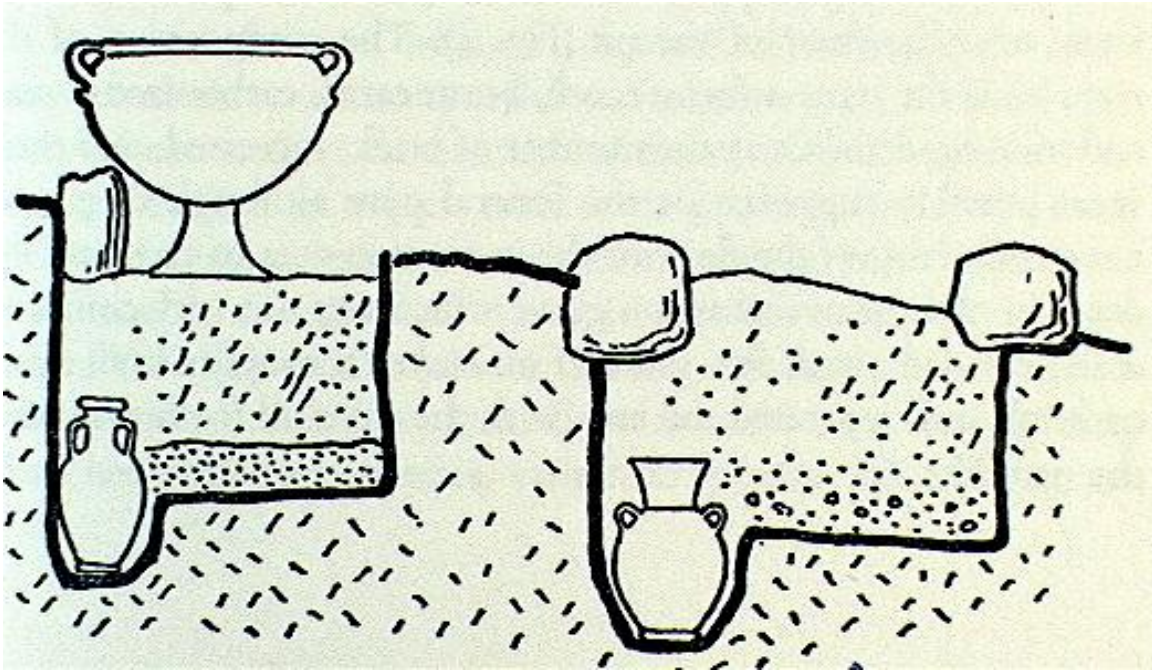
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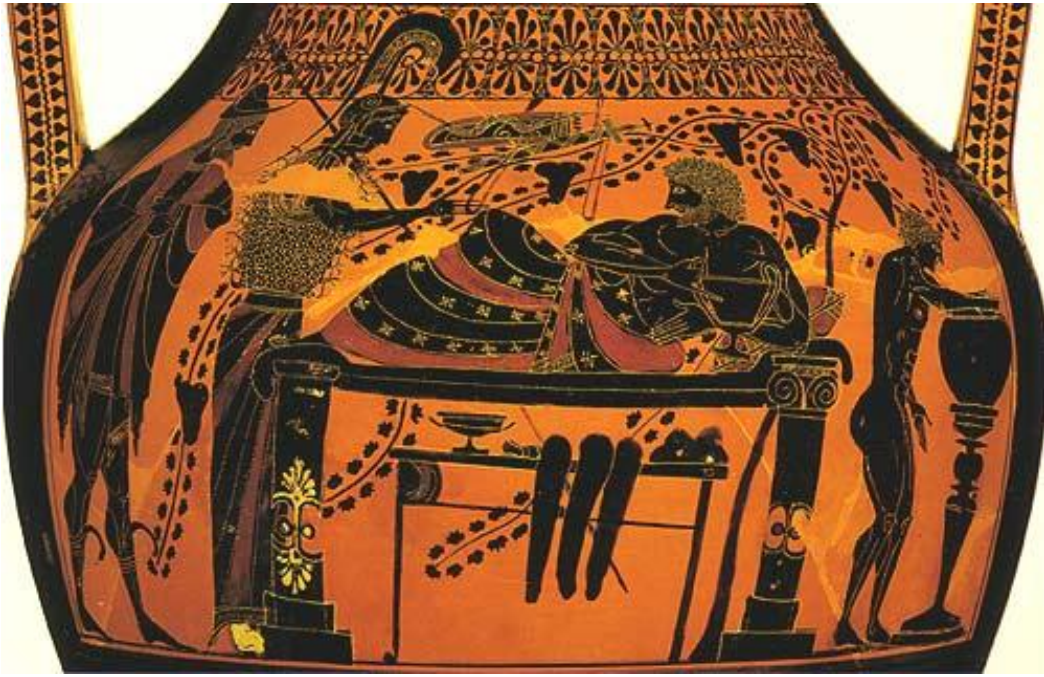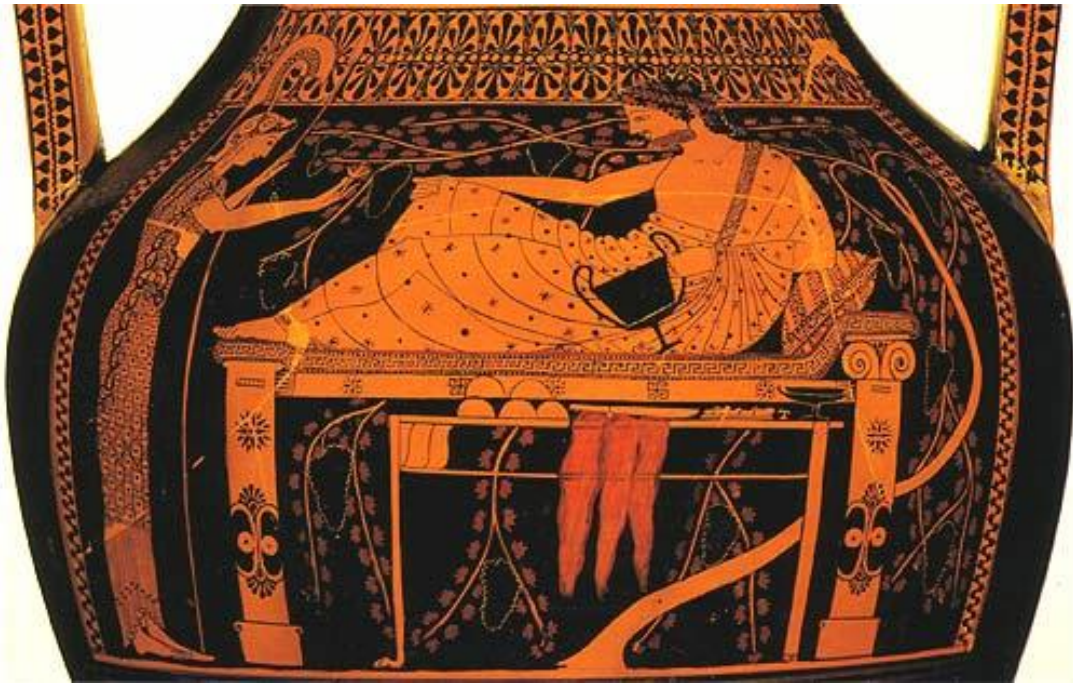Figure 30
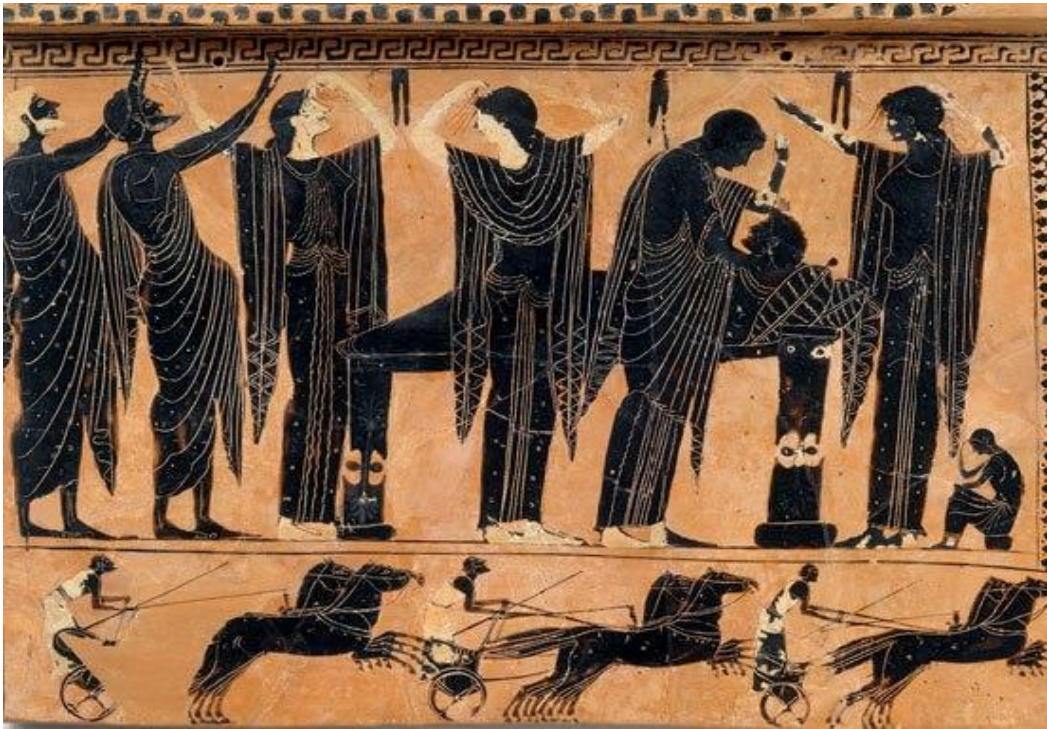
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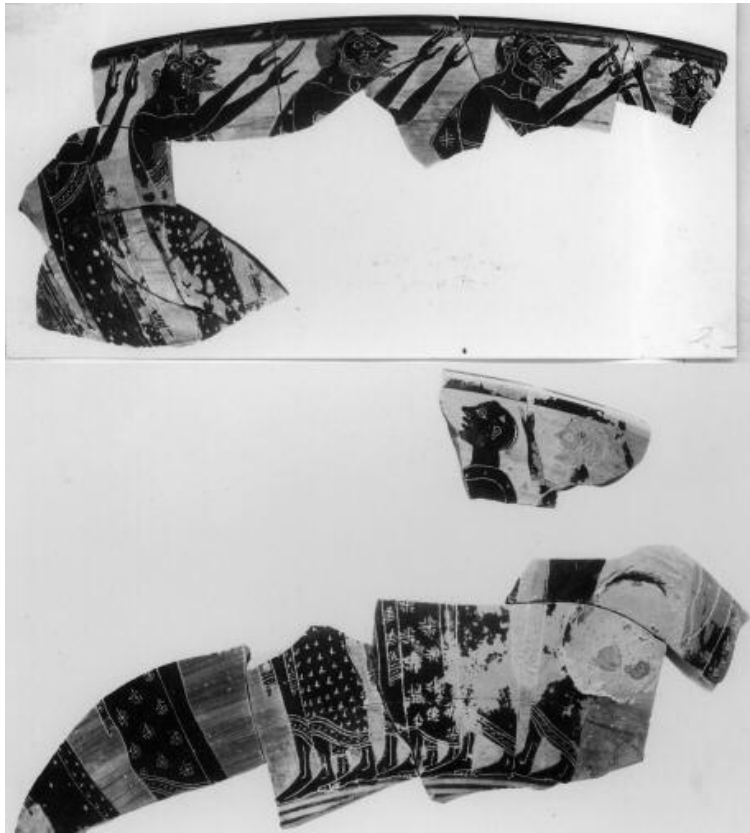

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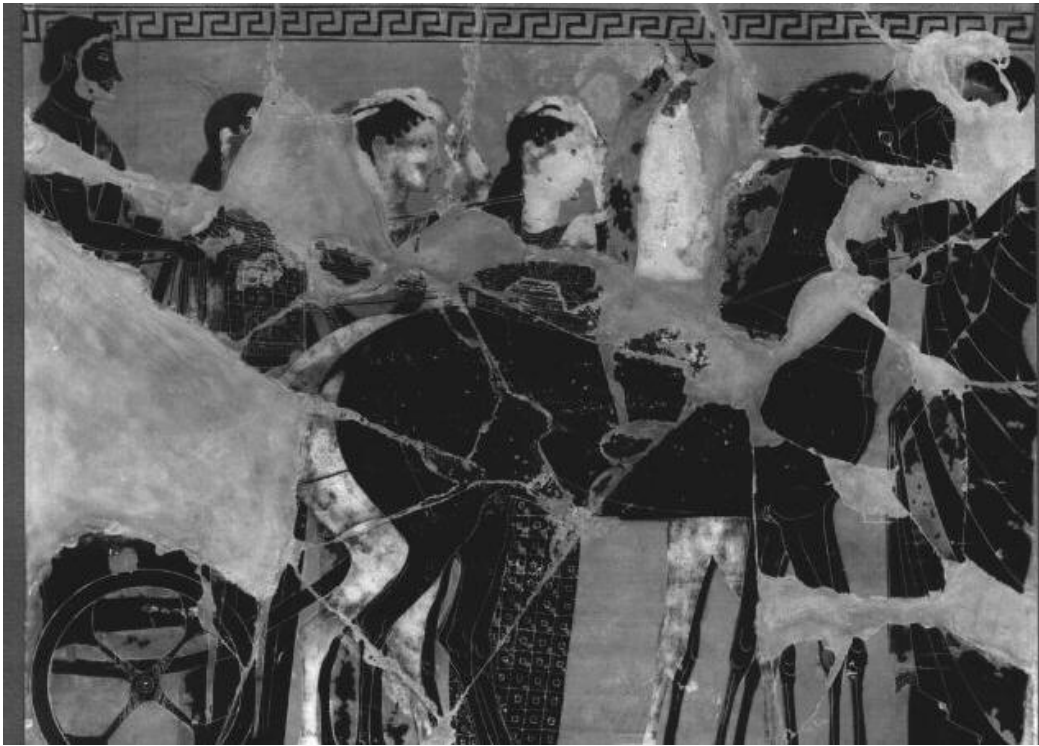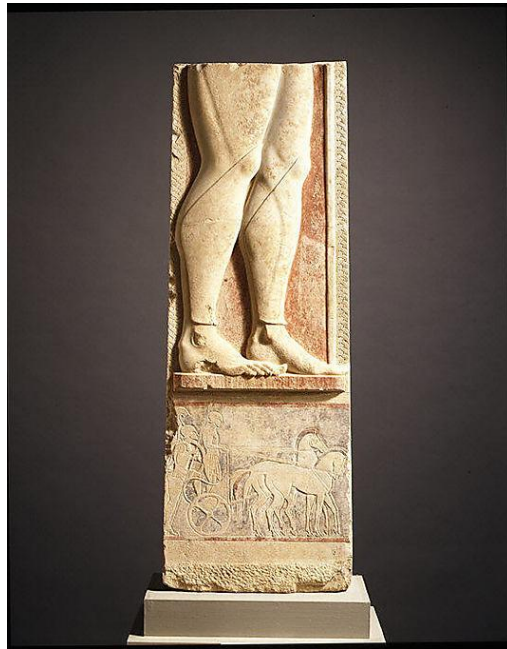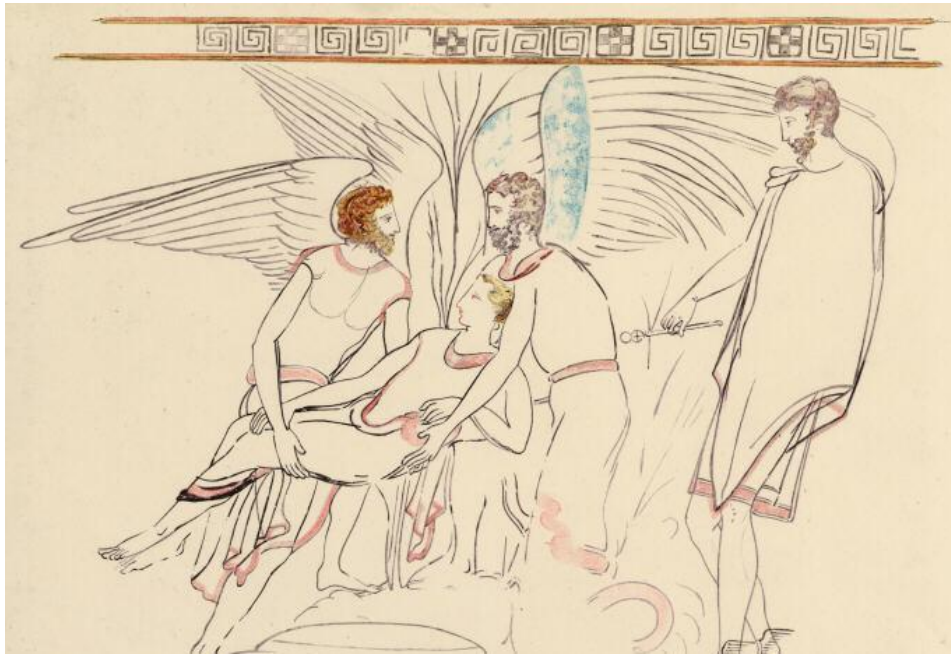
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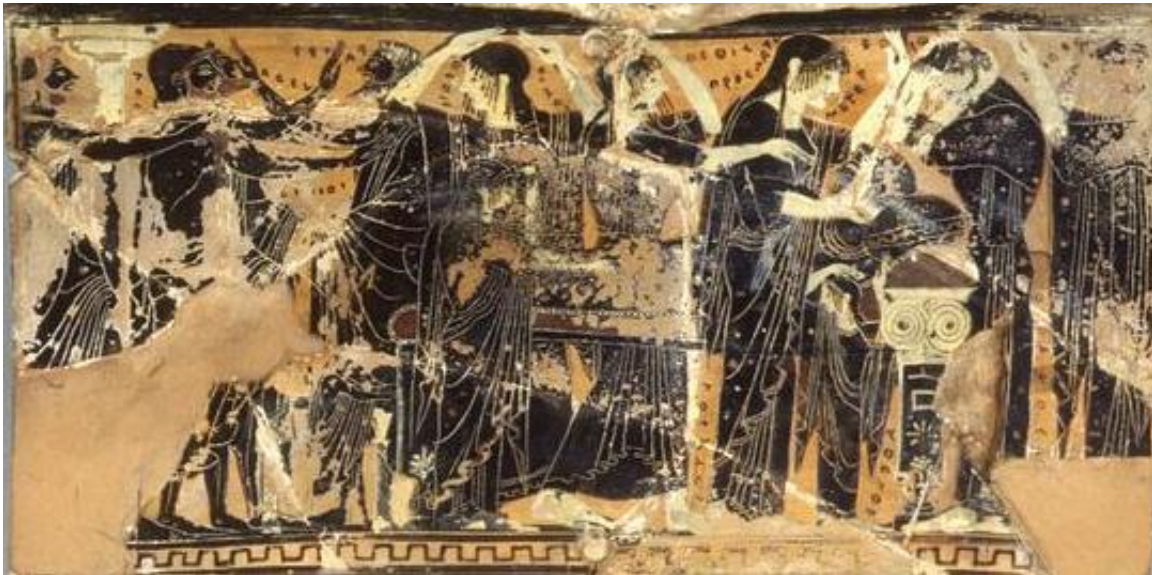
Figure 34

Figure 35a

Figure 35b

Figure 36

Figure 37a

Figure 37b

Figure 38

Figure 39

Figure 40a

Figure 40b

Figure 40c
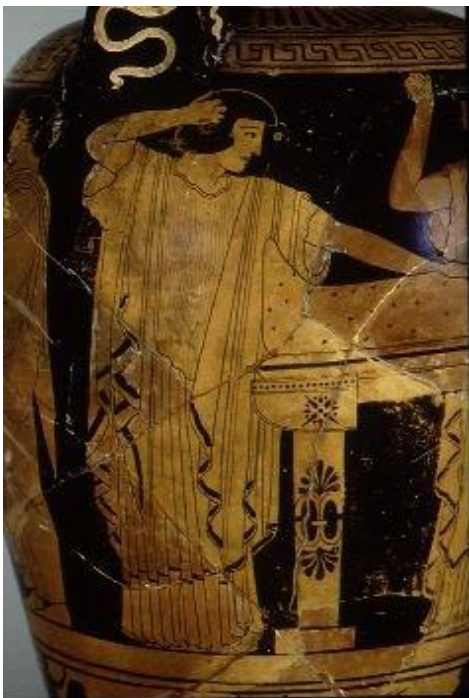
Figure 40d

Figure 40e

Figure 41a

Figure 41b

Figure 42a

Figure 42b

Figure 43

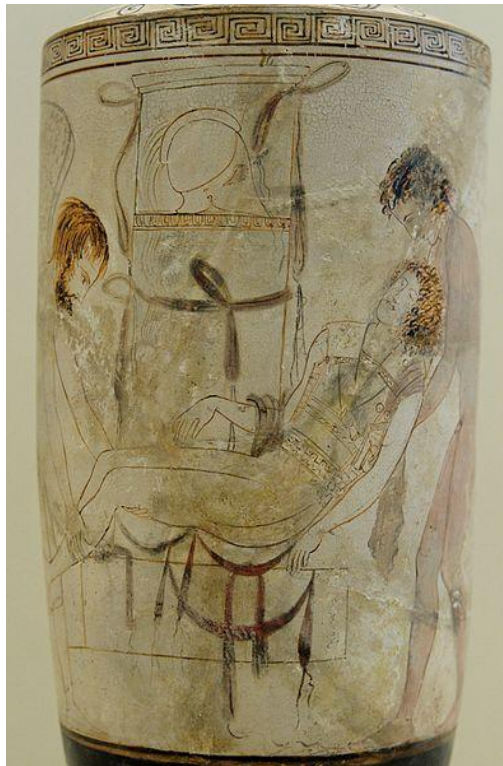Figure 44

Figure 45

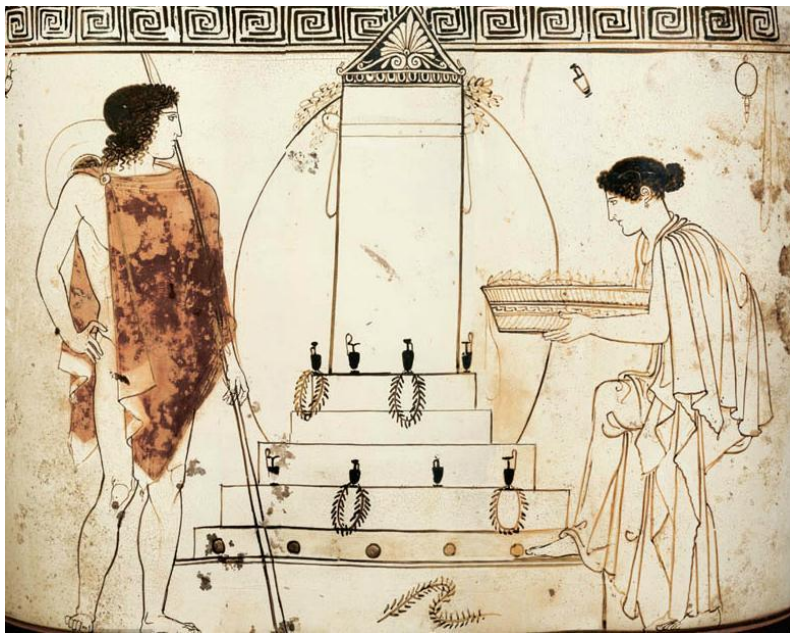

Figure 46

Figure 47

Figure 48
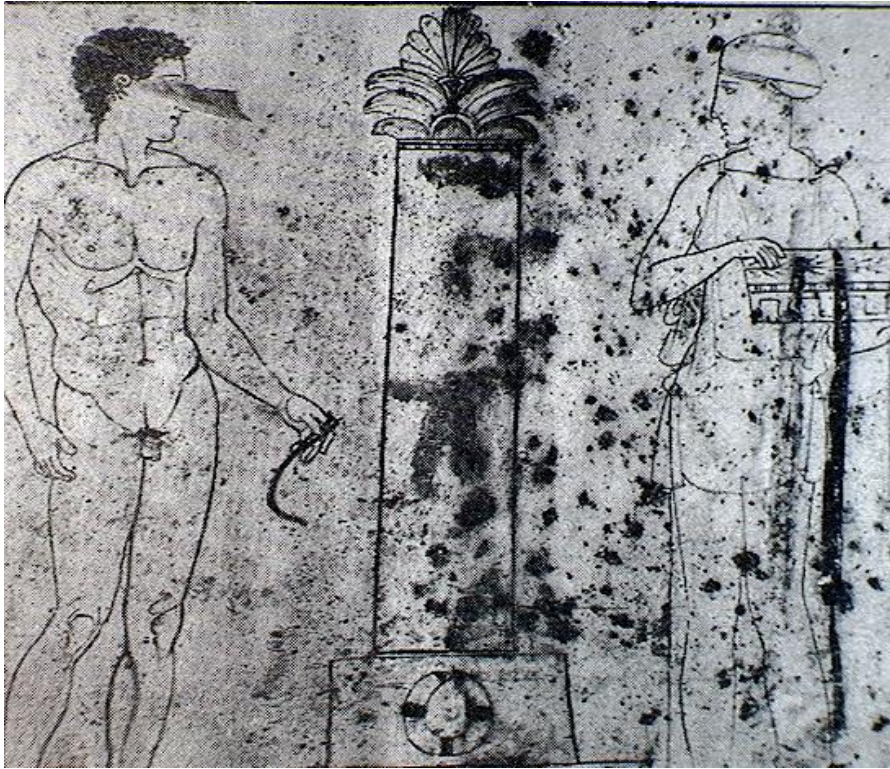
Figure 49

Figure 50

Figure 51

APPENDIX B
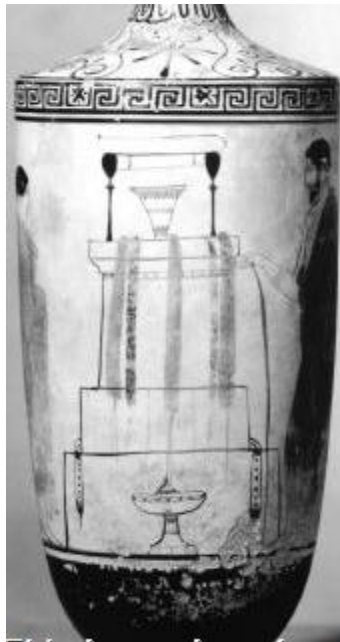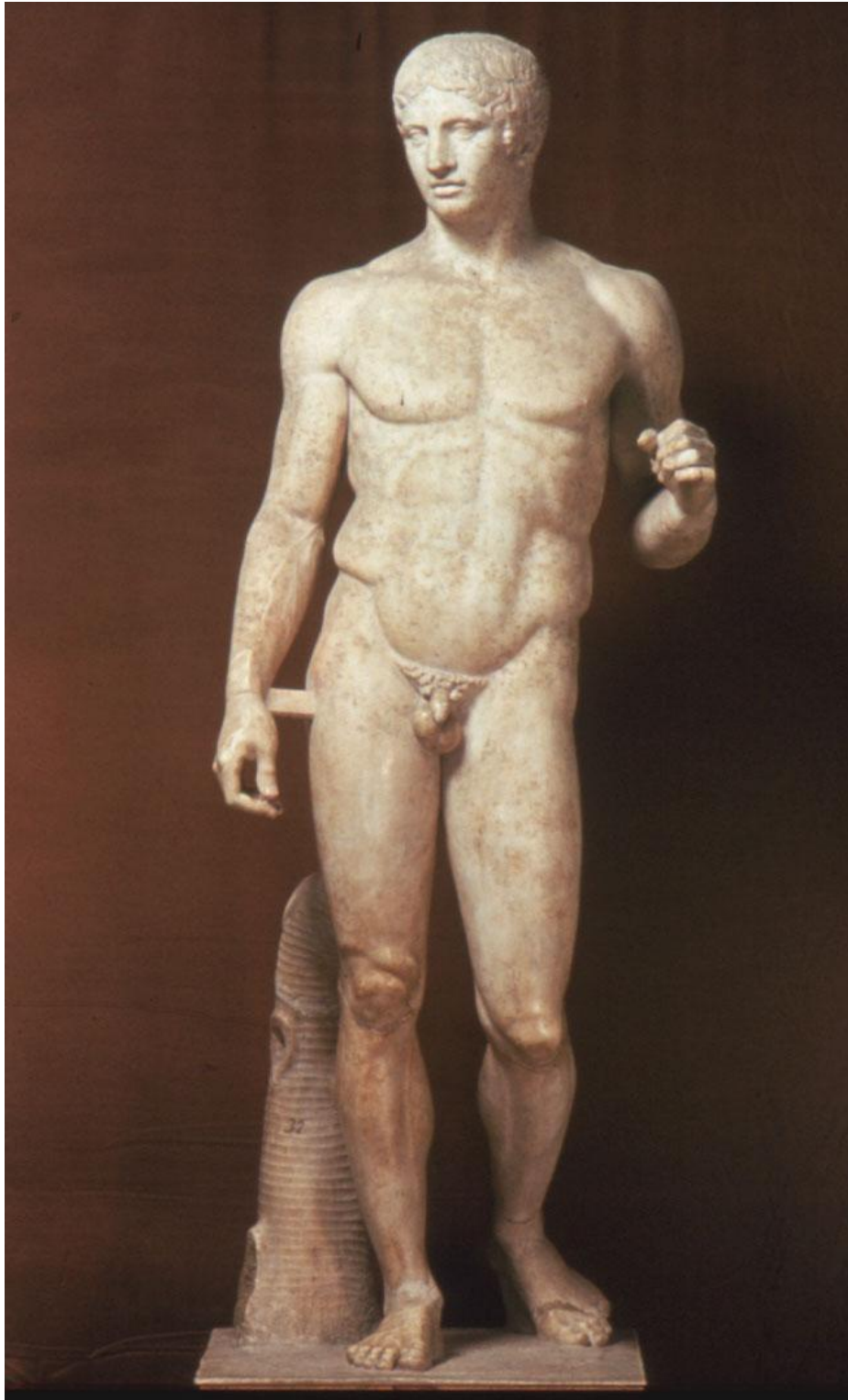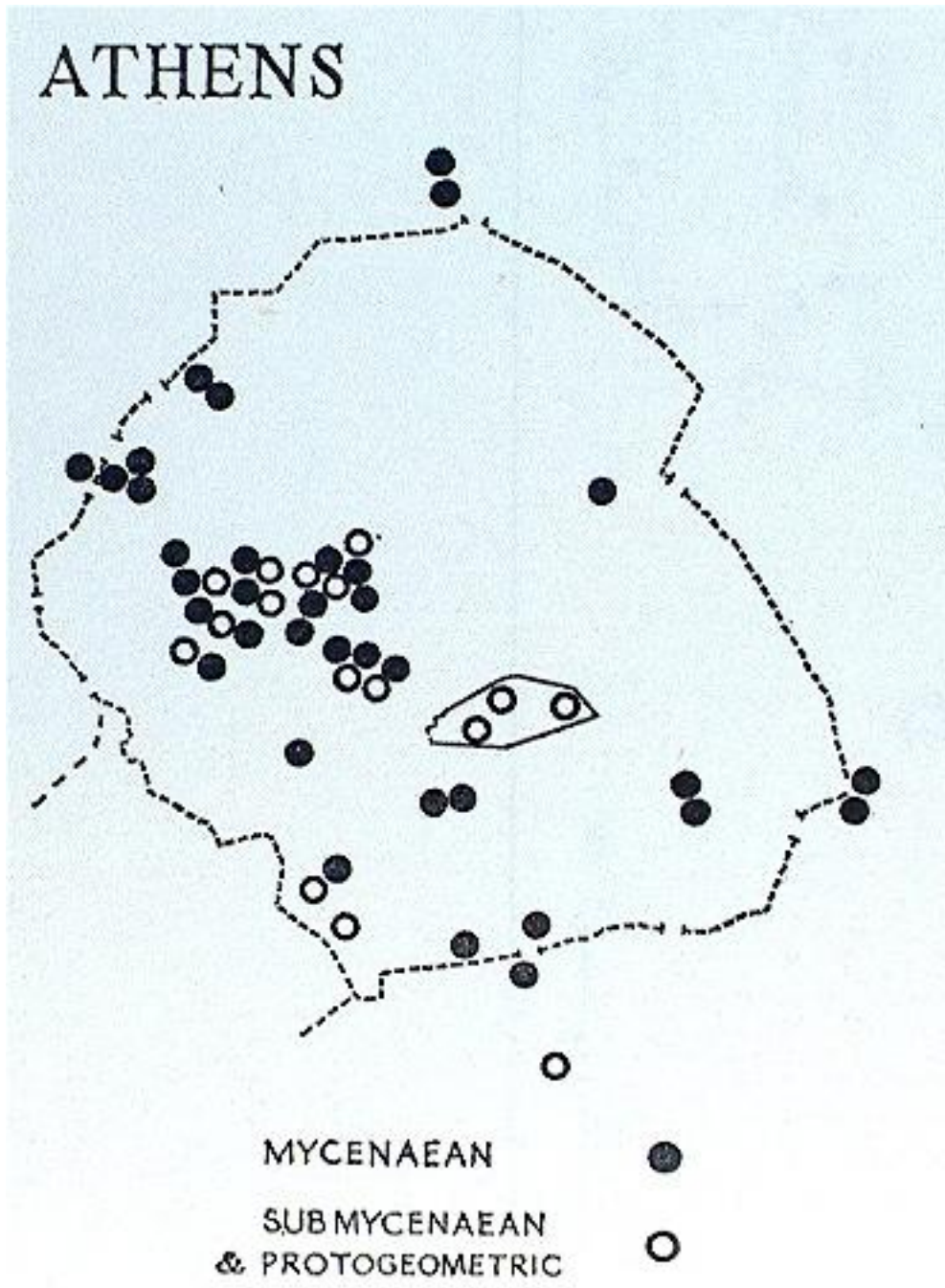**MAPS**

Map 1

Map 2

Map 3

Map 4

1   'Chabrias' Tomb' (horos 3)
2   Tomb of the Lacedaimonians (horos 2)
3   State Graves
4   Eukoline's Mound   7   Tritopatreion
5   'Precinct XX'   8   Ambassadors' Graves
6   Dexileos' Grave   9   'Querweg' Cemetery
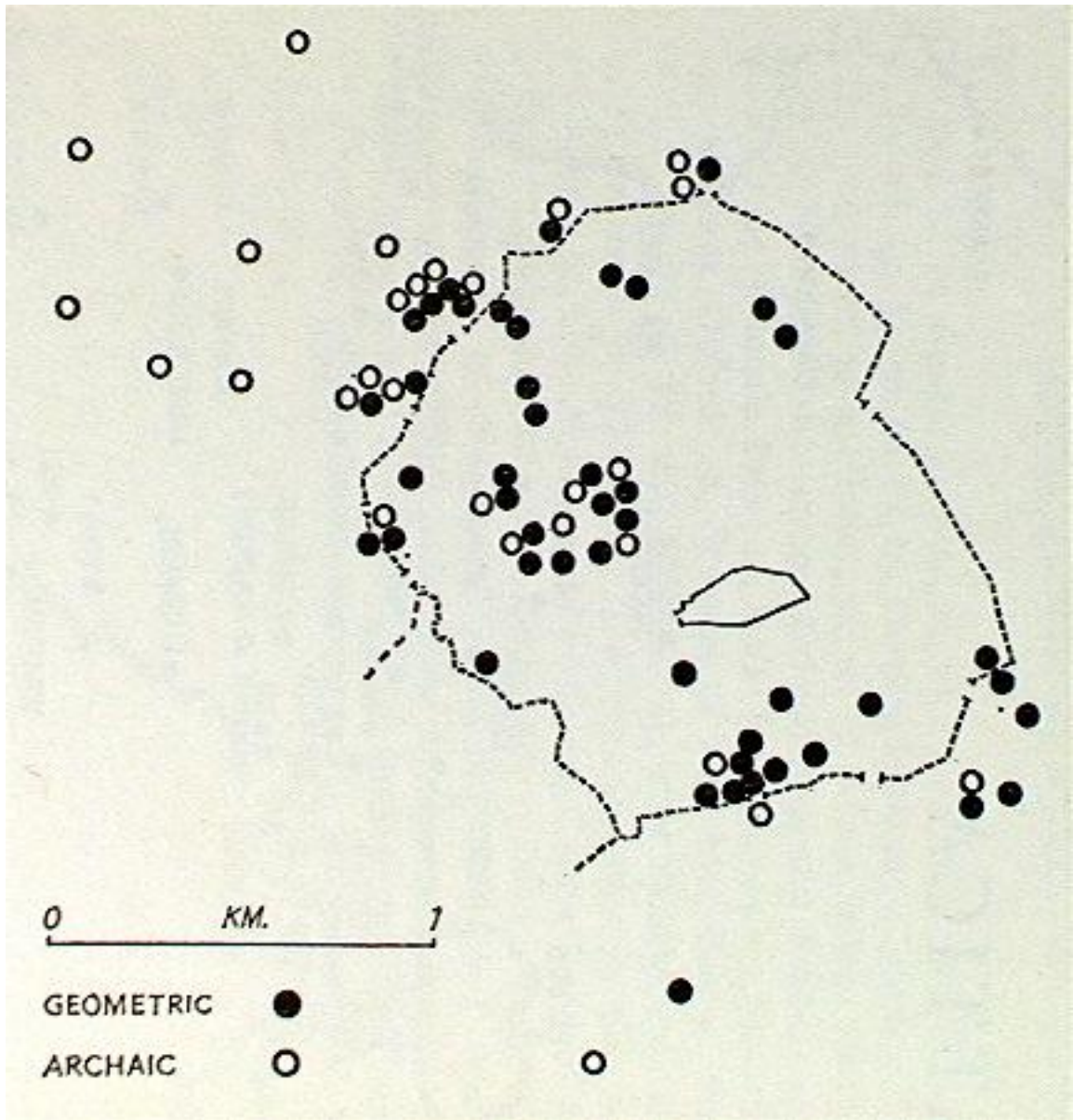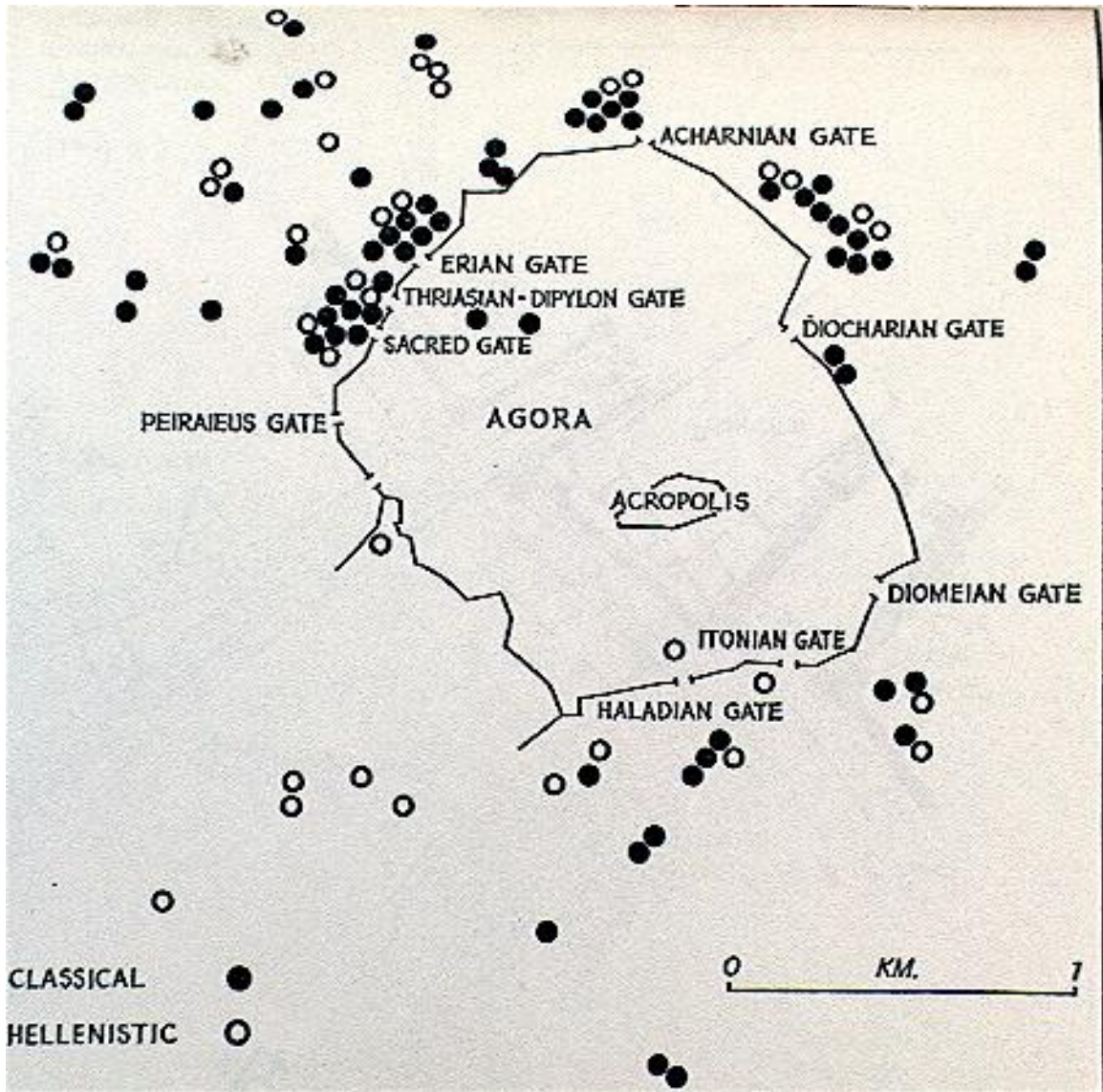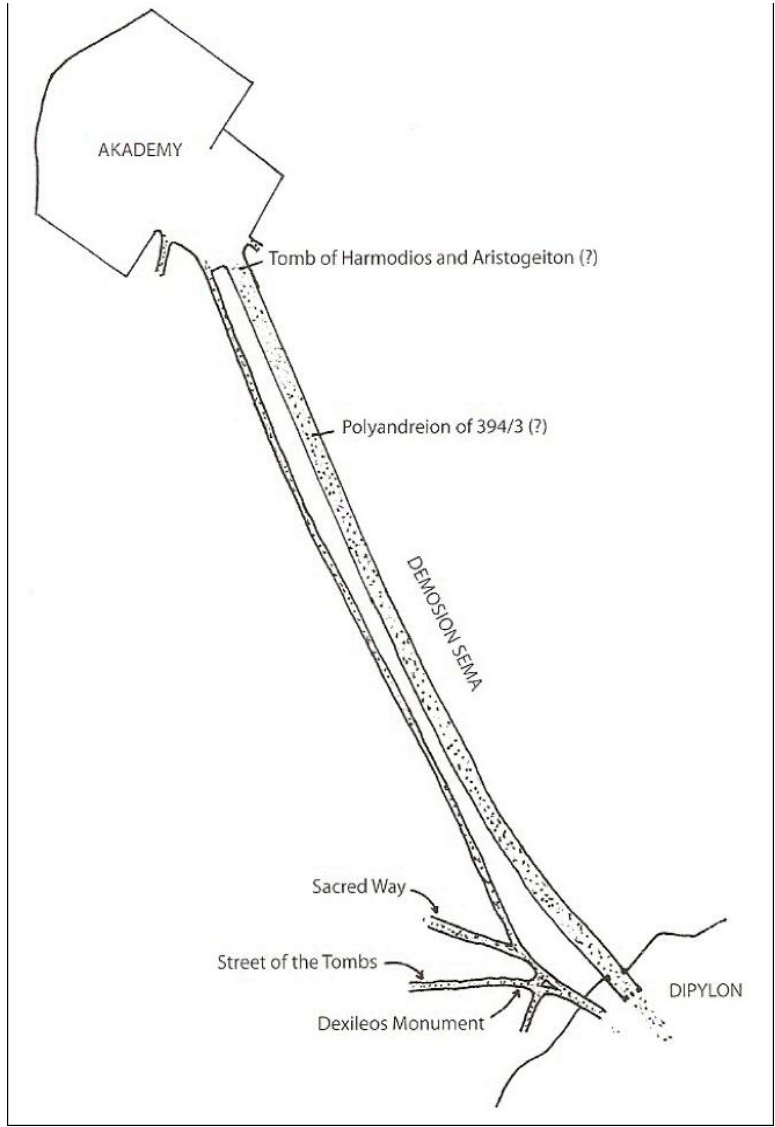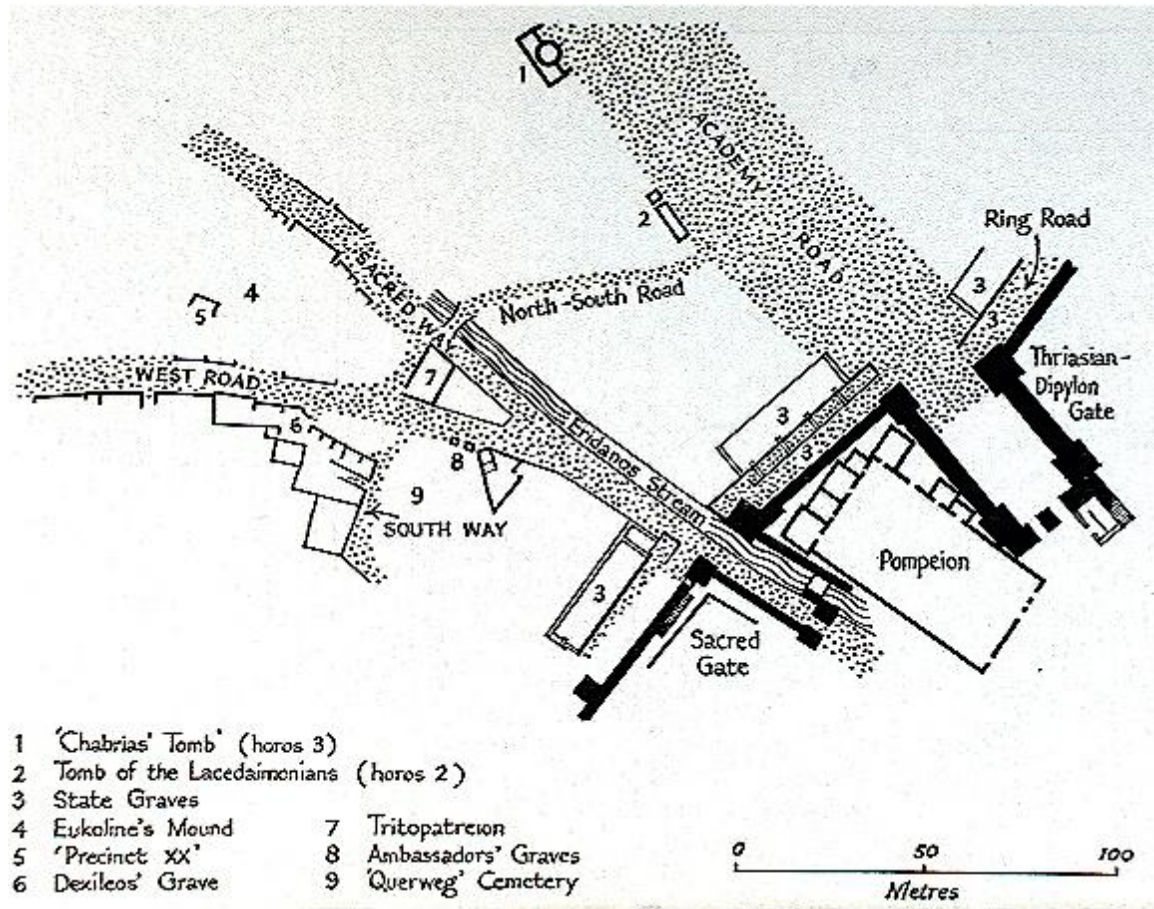
Map 5

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ABSTRACT

'THANATOSEPOESEN'
CHANGING ATTITUDES IN ATHENIAN MOURNING:
A STUDY OF FUNERARY VASE PAINTING, 900–404 BC

by

HEATHER QUINN ELIZABETH DEASON

August 2012

Advisor: Dr. Brian C. Madigan

Major: Art History

Degree: Master of Arts

Literature and archaeological findings have been valuable resources for understanding how the ancient Athenian buried the dead. Grave excavations tell historians a great deal about burial practices. However, so much more can be learned about these practices through the art found in graves. The painted image not only tells us what occurred on the day a person died and his subsequent burial, but it even illustrates the years of mourning which followed for the living. These vessels chronicle the importance people placed on the varying aspects of death and the funeral ritual. From the Geometric period of the tenth century through the fifth century Classical era, we know burial rituals remained the same, but what people memorialized on funeral goods changed from generation to generation. Athenian cemeteries have provided a substantive body of material that bears witness to how the ancient Athenian's view of death changed over the centuries–and with this change, the pottery market thrived.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I was born and raised in Owosso, Michigan where I graduated high school in 1994. In 2003, I returned to school and received a bachelor of art in history from Michigan State University in 2006. My coursework focused on the Middle Ages, particularly English history; Latin and archaeology were chosen as my cognates in order to support future research in the field. I decided to return to Michigan State in 2007 where I completed a second bachelor of art in 2009, this time in art history with a concentration on medieval art. At Wayne State University, my path changed course as I moved away from the Middle Ages and reached further back into the centuries. I have an incredible passion for medieval English architecture, but found myself unable to resist the art of ancient Greece and Rome. Upon finishing this thesis, I plan to continue graduate coursework beyond Wayne State. I will work toward a doctorate so that ultimately I may obtain a professorship, here or abroad, teaching art and architecture to students with a passion for learning, like myself.