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ELENI S. BANOU - LEONIDAS K. BOURNIAS

KERAMEIKOS



John S. Latsis
Public Benefit Foundation

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TODAY THE KERAMEIKOS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE is marked off by Ermou, Piraeus, and Asomaton Streets. Thanks to new research, its current area will be expanded and its loamy soil will give rise to new testimony regarding both its elaborate necropolis and the notable art of pottery which once flourished in this area of the *Asty* situated along the banks of the Eridanos.

But Kerameikos, this once-great Attic deme on the northwest outskirts of Athens, was not only the location of the most important historical cemetery between Prehistoric and Byzantine times and the major production site for Attica's renowned vases. It is also the place that confirms and conveys whatever is loftiest and whatever basest, the apogee and simultaneously the waning of Athens' golden age.

Pericles delivered his Funeral Oration, which encapsulates in unparalleled fashion the preeminence of the Athenian democracy, in the Kerameikos, on "an elevated platform in order to be heard by as many of the crowd as possible" along the road leading from the Dipylon to the Academy.

There in the Kerameikos, in "the city's most beautiful suburb" as acknowledged by Thucydides himself—who it may be noted makes reference at no other point to the natural beauty of a place—near the Dipylon in front of the Pompeion was the starting-point for the festival of the Great Panathenaea, in which the goddess Athena's new peplos was transported to the Acropolis. This procession acquired eternal youth on the Parthenon frieze, part of an unsurpassed age of artistic creativity and an era in which man succeeded in giving the most faithful possible substantive form to his soul's beauty.

However, the soil of the Kerameikos once concealed—though no longer—the underside of Athens political and religious greatness, the main cause of its decline, the tool of slander and defamation: thousands of *ostraka* bearing the name of Themistocles, whom his political opponents, the Aeacids and the Alcmaeonids, ostracized in 471 BC. German archaeologists found around 9500 *ostraka* in the Kerameikos; many bore the name of Themistocles, fewer that of Cimon...



According to the great Swiss philosopher of history Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897), it was calumny, infamous slander, that all-powerful weapon in the hands of demagogues which inter alia brought about Athens' decline: "The degeneration of Athens stemmed from the attempt by a democratic state to establish an imperium, and from the exploitation of this attempt by demagogues. This was the source of all ills and all misfortunes".

Even Themistocles, a ruler who demonstrably knew how to measure the resistance of the human material he was called upon to govern—he evolved like a virtuoso when he had first to conquer the misapprehensions within the minds of the Athenians before defeating the Persians at sea—was defeated by the bottomless pit of abuse.

The Kerameikos thus sums up all that was important about Athens: "the praises of the Demos and the Sophists, the difficult, invaluable 'well done'" as well as "the mean observances, littlenesses, and indifference" that brought men like Cleon to power.

This is the Kerameikos revealed in this high-quality edition, the fruitful partnership of two distinguished public servants-archaeologists and the John S. Latsis Foundation, which in continuing its valuable series "The Museums Cycle" is now offering Greece a valuable legacy of history and knowledge.

I extend my warm thanks and congratulations to the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation for this continuous and excellent offering, as well as to the volume's authors, archaeologists Eleni Banou, Director of the 3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, and Leonidas Bournias of the same ephorate.

KONSTANTINOS AN. TASOULAS

Minister of Culture and Sports



THE JOURNEY of "The Museums Cycle" within historic spaces that showcase the civilization of Ancient Greece has continued steadfastly for fourteen years. This year, our sojourn will be in Kerameikos. A perennial, vibrant nexus, Kerameikos, in addition to containing the cemetery of ancient Athens, was the starting point for the Panathenaic procession, the glorious celebration of Athens in antiquity, while the place name was to become synonymous with an entire art form, that of ceramics. The museum and the archaeological site of Kerameikos are not particularly well known to the general public. The John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation is endeavoring through this publication to illuminate its history and encourage numerous visits, both physical and digital, to a place that radiates the grandeur and timelessness of ancient Greek civilization.

Cemeteries have always been a precious source of knowledge for scholars concerning the culture and daily life in times past. But Kerameikos is not just this: it is an *alfresco* art gallery, a veritable garden in the alcoves and bowers of which, amidst flourishing olive, laurel, and cypress trees, carved masterpieces stand. Here beneath the Attic sky, mourning and grief gave way to high art, while the souls of eminent men and women, heroes and famed athletes, gave rise to marble sculptures recounting their exploits, feats, and dramas. Each monument and stone echo unique moments in the city's past and the prominent denizens who passed through it.

Strolling through the center of Athens, it is truly worthwhile to spend some time in Kerameikos, treating it not simply as an archaeological site, but as a living and venerable part of the city. It is an unexpected cultural and historical interlude amidst the rush of our daily lives where one can stand beside the tombstones, themselves works of art, feel the breeze and fragrances of each passing season, walk amongst the traces of ancient roads and discover one's own corner that will provide peace and tranquility.

On behalf of the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, I would like to thank both estimable writers, the archaeologists Eleni Banou and Leonidas Bournias, whose impeccable text conveys profound knowledge and love for these historic places and their past. I also extend my thanks to all the Kerameikos employees, who made every effort towards creating this publication. Our thanks also go to the Ministry of Culture and Sports for the constant support and trust that pervades each new tome of "The Museums Cycle", as well as to all the contributors of the volume for their tireless work.

MARIANNA J. LATSIS

The famous Deme of Kerameis, Kerameikos, extended over the small Eridanos River valley in Athens, in Thucydides' "most beautiful suburb". Here many generations from Prehistoric times down to Late Antiquity buried prominent citizens, honored warriors, vigorous young athletes, beautiful aristocratic women and venerable priestesses, erecting tomb monuments of great beauty which for centuries imposed remembrance on oblivion, until they too were buried in Attic soil before coming to life once more thanks to archaeological excavations. Along the Dromos and at the Demosion Sema, the Athenian state honored its dead with funerary orations and games, and its gods with brilliant celebrations, particularly the city's patron goddess Athena, who was honored in the costly procession of the Great Panathenaia, which set out from the Pompeion in the Inner Kerameikos. Here too, the newly-created Athenian democracy in the fifth century BC left testimonials to one of its powerful "weapons": ostracism. All the ideals, values, the spirit of ancient Athens—of all of ancient Greece, we could say—as these are revealed to us through the renowned funerary sculptures and epigrams, as well as by exquisite Attic vases, are concentrated in the Kerameikos.

In structuring the chapters in this volume, we considered one important element: the wall of ancient Athens, which defined and shaped the character of the site and its uses. Until the Persian Wars, the Eridanos valley was a large, quiet cemetery containing some humble pottery workshops that have left no traces. After the building of the wall and its two most important gates—the Sacred Gate and the Dipylon—at this location, the city was secured and acquired an imposing "face" towards the West, urban planning components sporting impressive structures, and its most formal cemetery. Parallel with the description of the monuments, we endeavor to integrate them into the broader context of the city's history. The experience of the archaeological site is complemented by exhibits in the small archaeological museum, which contains masterpieces of sculpture and the potter's art.

When the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation kindly proposed that we undertake to write the volume that would describe this important archaeological site, we felt both great pleasure and a great sense of responsibility. Our heartfelt thanks go to the Foundation, particularly Mrs. Marianna Latsis, who seeks to promote Greece's cultural heritage. We also thank Mrs. Eirini Louvrou for her solicitude, Mr. Dimitris Kalokyris, who received the texts and photographs and turned them into this elegant book, and naturally, the artist-photographer Mr. Sokratis Mavromatis, whose lens gave full expression to the Kerameikos' masterpieces.

ELENI S. BANOÛ, PhD

LEONIDAS K. BOURNIAS, MPhil (Oxon)



“THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SUBURB”

The enclosed archaeological site of the Kerameikos (~3.8 hectares) is situated northwest of the major archaeological sites of the Ancient Agora and Acropolis. Today it includes only a small portion of the ancient deme of Kerameis. Epigraphic evidence indicates that until at least the Roman period, the name “Kerameikos” referred to the ancient road leading from the Agora to the Academy of Plato, together with nearby areas. This road passed through the deme called Kerameis (Κεραμεῖς), from which it appears to have taken its name. While its exact boundaries are unclear, many ancient sources from as early as the Archaic period identified the Kerameikos as continuing from the northwest extremes of the Athenian Agora, while references by later authors (including Arrian, Athenaeus, Lucian, Philostratus, and Pausanias) also called the area inside the walls “Kerameikos” and frequently confused or conflated the two sites. According to Pausanias, the name “Kerameikos” originated from that of the hero Keramos, the son of Dionysus and Ariadne: “The district of the Kerameikos has its name from the hero Keramos, he too being the reputed son of Dionysus and Ariadne (τὸ δὲ χωρίον ὁ Κεραμεικὸς τὸ μὲν ὄνομα ἔχει ἀπὸ ἥρωος Κεράμου, Διονύσου τε εἶναι καὶ Ἀριάδνης καὶ τούτου λεγομένου. Paus. 1.3.1). Harpocration, however, preferred the more obvious explanation to the mythological version for the name: “...it took its name from the potter’s art and from sacrifices to a hero named Keramos” (εἰληφέναι τούτους τοῦνομα ἀπὸ τῆς κεραμικῆς τέχνης καὶ τοῦ θύειν Κεράμῳ τινὶ ἥρωι. Harpocration s.v. *Kerameis*).

TERRAIN

The geomorphology of the Kerameikos determined its use from early times. The ground level lay below that of adjacent areas, creating a valley. Mount Lykabettos overlooked the site on the east; the Ancient Agora rose towards the Acropolis to the southeast, and the low hills of the Nymphs, the Pnyx and the Muses rose to the south. It was only towards the north and west that the horizon opened up, with Mt Aigaleo in the distance; the small river Eridanos which flowed from the southeast alongside the archaeological site found its outlet in this direction. Until the construction of the Themistoclean wall the river flowed randomly in serpentine paths, in the winter becoming a torrent that flooded the Kerameikos valley. The loose soil deposited by flooding and the marshy and thus unhealthy environment hindered efforts to settle or otherwise build up the area, but it became clear quite early that the soft rock and easily-dug loam around the river were especially suited

The burial enclosure of Koroibos with the famous stele of Hegeso on the Street of Tombs.

to two uses: burial of the dead, and obtaining raw material for pottery-making. Thus the site began to be used as a cemetery even in prehistoric times, and its funerary character was crystallized in the 10th century BC. Water formed the only unambiguous boundary of the ancient cemetery towards the west. Excavations for the Athens Metro at the site of the now-defunct “Kerameikos” station (at the junction of the Sacred Way [*Iera Odos*] and Piraeus Street) revealed a marshland extending over about three hectares, which at least in the Archaic and Classical periods (if not earlier) prevented further westward growth of the cemetery. The marsh waters retreated considerably in the 4th century BC, giving way to workshops and an elongated enclosure wall that now established the cemetery’s western border. At the same time, the Kerameikos—outside but not far from the area inhabited by the first settlements north of the Acropolis and the Pnyx—was suitable for the installation of potters’ kilns and related workshop activities. We do not know exactly when activity involving furnaces and kilns began in the Kerameikos, but we know that it continued intermittently down to the present, in witness to the persistent presence of Hephaistos and Athena Ergane for more than 2,500 years at this site.

THE ERIDANOS – A MARSHLANDS HABITAT

The Eridanos, one of Athens’ three rivers, was a compound word formed from two elements: the Indo-European root *-danos* (*-δανος*) found in the name of the proto-Greek Danaans, meaning “moisture, dew, river”, and the Homeric Indo-European word *ērion* (*ηρίον*), meaning “funerary mound, tomb.” The river, which started from the south slopes of Mt Lykabettos (Lykavitos), flowed underground to Syntagma and Monastiraki, where its encased Roman bed may be seen preserved today, before being channeled with the aid of pumps to the archaeological site through Adrianou and Ermou Streets. The built retaining walls of the Eridanos river bed reflect the efforts over time to accommodate and shape its course. Within the Kerameikos itself, part of the torrent (now a brook) rises to ground level. Thanks to it a precious ecosystem is preserved in the heart of Athens, with around 180 different species of trees and plants where about ten bird species nest. During the warmest months of the year the site is filled with water-loving insects which provide sustenance for the characteristic green toads and marginated tortoises (*Testudo marginata*) during breeding season; at night, hedgehogs appear in search of food. It presents an idyllic image, and visitors may still feel they are truly in “the most beautiful suburb”.

The Eridanos River in the Kerameikos seen from the East.



EXCAVATION HISTORY

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY AT ATHENS

Until the spring of 1863, the Kerameikos was known only through the sources, i.e. from written evidence and the ancient texts, chiefly Thucydides and Pausanias. A dense pine grove extended westward from Athens to Mt Aigaleo, and the appearance of the archaeological site with its small church of the Holy Trinity (Agia Triada) was totally different from its current appearance. The Austrian antiquarian and architect Alois Hauser (1841–1896) characteristically described his excursion from Athens to Eleusis on 16 March 1862 thus: “... the olive grove through which one exits Athens forms lovely clusters of trees. Their trunks are quite thick and belong mostly to aged trees. The ground surrounding them and in much of the forest is verdant with thyme. Here and there grow pretty little flowers, including a marvelous species of anemone and others. The grove is watered by the river Cephissus.”



The Kerameikos excavations. Early 20th-century photo.

The entire ancient cemetery was covered by fill to a height of more than nine metres, atop which private dwellings, small craftsmen's quarters and kilns and forges had been built, together with a soap factory and its waste products, the so-called "ash-tray." Construction of the French Gasworks Company known as "Gazi" had only recently begun. The low hills of Kerameikos and Agia Triada formed a field convenient for sand extraction. Ancient finds had already begun coming to light in December 1861 during the construction of Piraeus Street. These included among others the funerary monument (*naïskos*) of Aristonantes (today in the National Archaeological Museum).

The chance discovery in 1863 of the tall marble palmette stele of Agathon, a metic from Herakleia in Pontus, augured well for the identification of the ancient cemetery. The discovery was recorded in that year's *Archaeological Gazette* (*Archaiologiki Efimeris*) by Ath. Roussopoulos, Professor of archaeology at the University of Athens and consultant to the Archaeological Society. Roussopoulos immediately deduced the importance of the discovery, which was lent further support in the same year with the discovery of the funerary monument/ grave stele of Dexileos, permitting the professor to state with assurance that "indeed, here we are in the Kerameikos!" In support of his claim and to dispel any doubts, an inscribed boundary stone with the inscription ΟΡΟΣ ΚΕΡΑΜΕΙΚΟΥ came to light in 1872, standing *in situ* right beside the wall.



The area of the Tritopatreion during the 1910 excavations. As a result of the discovery of the built porous chest (*θήκη*) visible at lower left, the area was considered to belong to the Tritopatreion. At lower right, a Late Antique built conduit. The Street of Tombs is visible in the background, as well as the French Gasworks Company (Gazi). To the right, the first church of Agia Triada.



The burial enclosure of Lysimachides. Early 20th c.

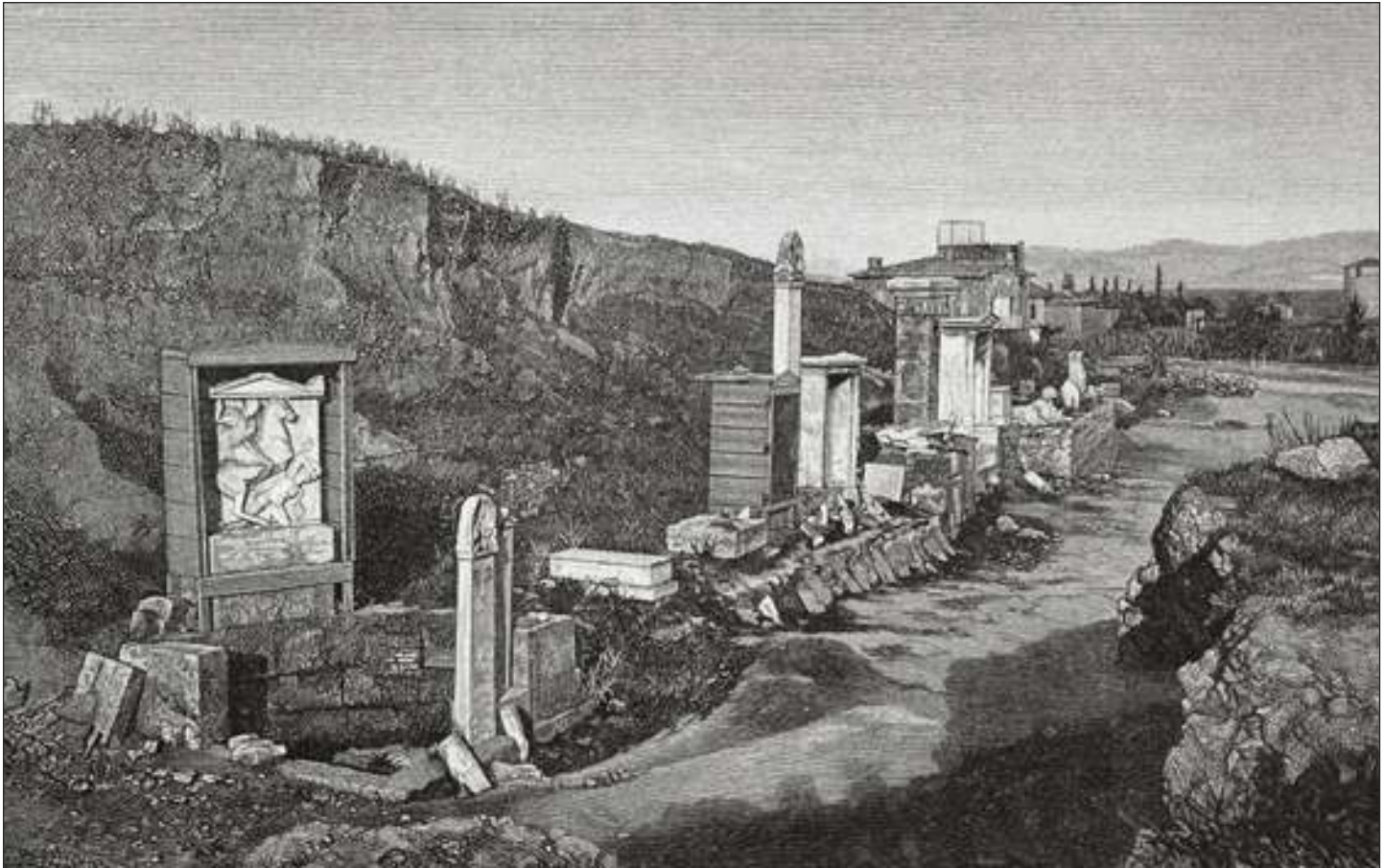
Systematic excavations in the Kerameikos by the Archaeological Society under the direction of St. Koumanoudis, K.D. Mylonas, V. Stais and G. Oikonomou continued from 1870 to 1913, revealing a significant portion of the ancient cemetery, a number of imposing funerary monuments (today housed in the National Archaeological Museum and the Epigraphic Museum), and the walls, gates, and the Pompeion. The Society saw to the expropriation, fencing and securing of the site, as well as the conservation and restoration of monuments, employing scholars like A. Brueckner, A. Struck, F. Noack, N. Balanos, A. Orlandos, E. Ziller and the Fytalis brothers, both of whom were sculptors.

Information about the archaeological site during the early years of excavations is offered by a number of 19th century gravures and watercolours including those of Ch. Barbant and A. Giallinas, as well as another by an anonymous artist in the December 1886 issue of *Hesperos*, a magazine published in Leipzig. Numerous postcards with views of the excavations circulated both in Greece and abroad, and the cemetery's ancient funerary sculptures inspired contemporary sculptors to create tomb monuments in Athens' First Cemetery and in cemeteries outside Greece. One final indication of the emotion over the discovery of the ancestral cemetery of the Athenians –the “cemetery of Agia Triada” as the site was then known– and of the international impact



The burial enclosure of Dionysios from the deme of Kollytos on the Street of Tombs. Early 20th c.

it had at the time was the site's selection for the official reception of eighteen-year-old King George I and for the ceremony of delivering the keys of the city to the young monarch, whose landing at Piraeus on 30 October 1863 was an event recorded in the weekly *Illustrated London News*.



THE GERMAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

In 1913, the Greek Government, acting through its Ministry of Education, entrusted the “Imperial German Archaeological Institute at Athens” with the responsibility for excavating the Kerameikos. The Institute simultaneously assumed the obligation to protect, restore, and study the finds. The first Directors of excavations were A. Brueckner and H. Knackfuss, who by the outbreak of World War I had uncovered the Dromos and the Tomb of the Lacedaemonians (Spartans) on its southern rim, though the latter was not identified until 1930. Following the inevitable interruption caused by the war, excavations resumed in 1926 with the help of donations by the German-American industrialist Dr. Gustav Oberländer. Brueckner and K. Kübler uncovered the Pompeion in its entirety. A few years later, Kübler and B. Kraiker excavated the Sub-Mycenaean necropolis lying beneath the Pompeion. During the 1930s, Kübler carried out a thorough investigation of the elevation lying beneath the small church of Agia Triada, which was demolished in 1931 and later replaced by a new and larger church.

Following World War II, in 1955 the new Director D. Ohly concentrated on exploration of the *Dromos*, in an area expropriated for this purpose with funds from the German Bundestag, and on research along the Street of Tombs, the so-called South Road and in the area west of the Pompeion. Ohly’s successor F. Willemsen,

The Street of Tombs seen from the East. The grave stele of Dexileos and other monuments are encased in wooden crates. 1863. Engraving by Ch. Barbant.

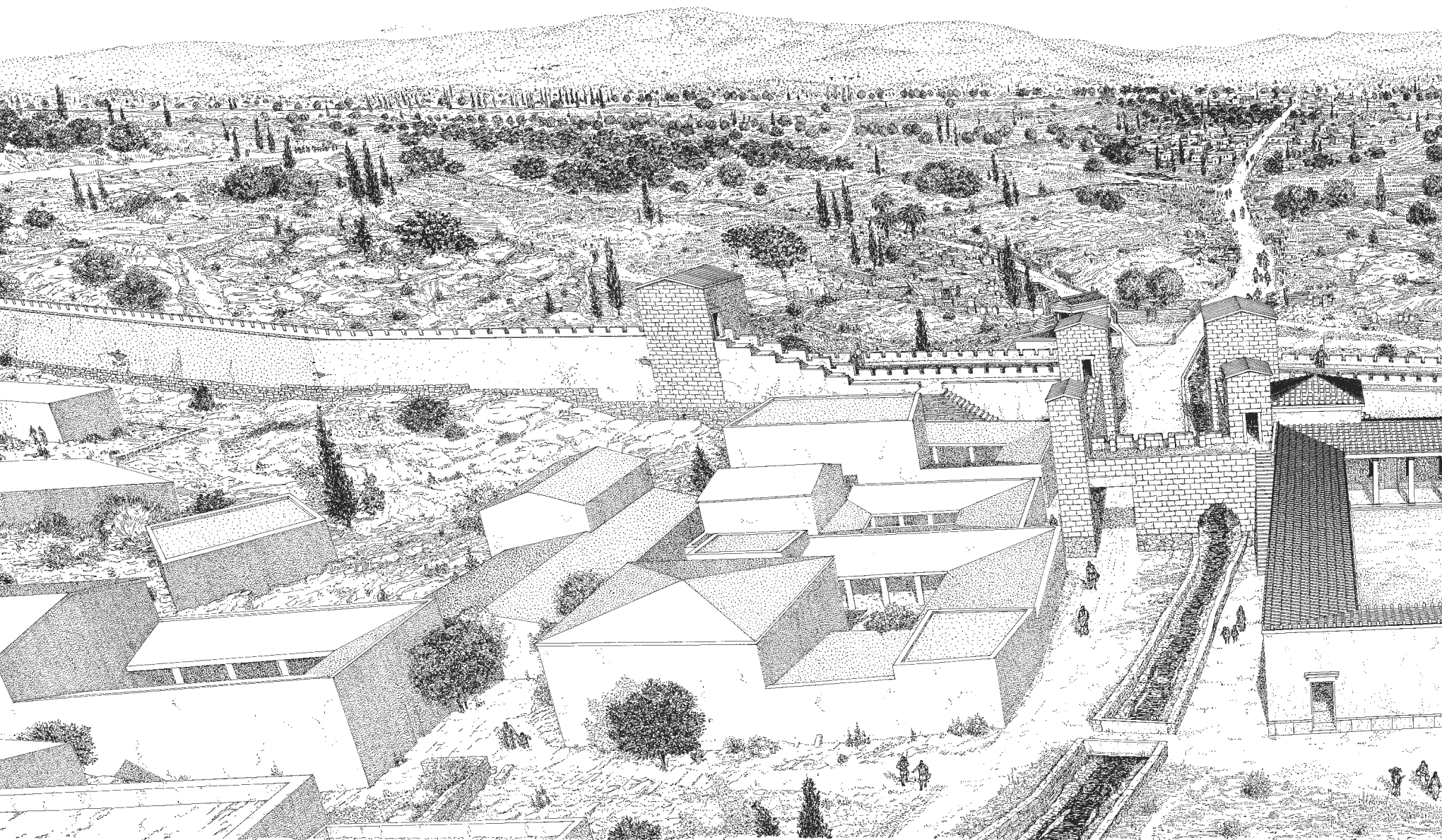
who served as Director from 1961 to 1975, excavated west of the Sacred Way as far as Piraeus Street, the necropolis on the so-called South Hill, the area in front of the walls where thousands of ostracism ostraka were found between the *Dromos* and the Sacred Way, in addition to the foundations of two of the Dipylon Gate towers, which yielded important archaic monument bases. U. Knigge, who assumed the position of excavation Director for twenty years starting from 1975, explored the section of the Sacred Way in the direction of the city, where old buildings were expropriated for the purpose with funding from the Volkswagen Foundation. Under Director W.-D. Niemeyer, in spring 2002 exceptionally fine archaic sculptures came to light in front of the Sacred Gate. And as late as 2013, the unexpected discovery of two Roman female portrait busts at the bottom of a well by new excavation Director Dr. J. Stroszeck crowned the achievements of a century of exploration by the German Archaeological Institute in the Kerameikos, showing that excavation of a famous cemetery remains full of surprises.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM

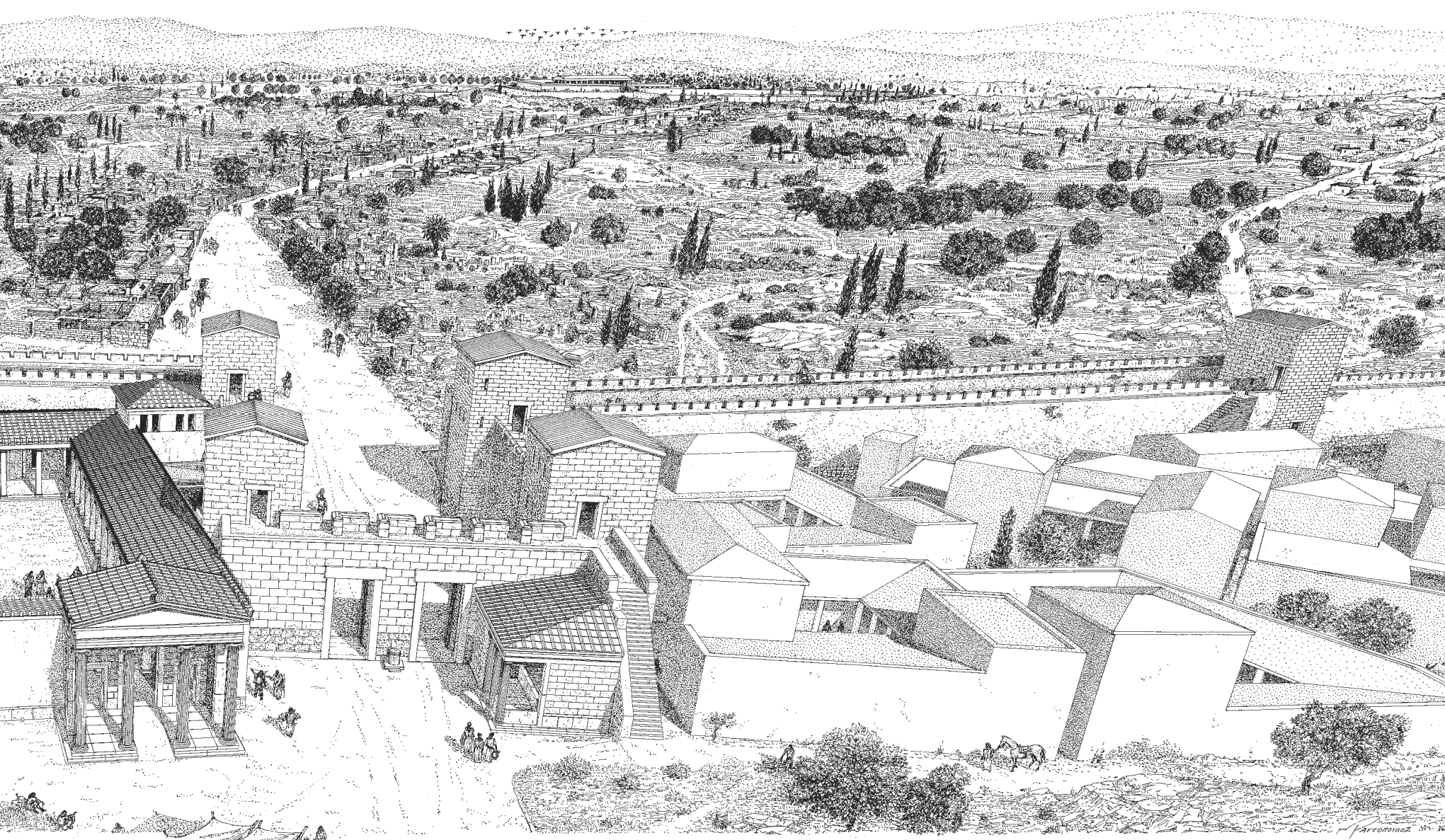
The Kerameikos Museum was built in 1938 thanks to a gift from Gustav Oberländer in accordance with the design of excavation architect H. Johannes. In 1963 new auxiliary spaces were added with support from the Boehringer brothers' foundation. The original exhibition was arranged by K. Kübler around grave groups into teaching modules, presented in chronological succession. This same logic was also respected in the new exhibition organized by the 3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, which was inaugurated on 9 August 2004. The new exhibition extends in five sections around a well-lit atrium, in the center of which stands an imposing marble bull which originally decorated the grave of Dionysios from the Deme of Kollytos.

THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS – 3rd EPHORATE OF PREHISTORIC AND CLASSICAL ANTIQUITIES

Coordination and supervision of the activity of the German Archaeological Institute in the Kerameikos and overall responsibility for the security and sound management of the archaeological site and museum are exercised by the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports through the 3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities. In parallel, the Ephorate promotes educational and informational activities, particularly to draw closer to and attract the interest of the young, and to facilitate access to all those interested (whether specialists or not) in the museum's cultural wealth. In collaboration with the German Archaeological Institute, the Ephorate's first and foremost concern is to conserve and restore those monuments at the site which have suffered the greatest depredations of time: the outer wall (*proteichisma*), the retaining walls of the river Eridanos, the plaster of the funerary precincts, the mortuary shrine (*naiskos*) of Agathon, and the mosaic floors in the dining rooms of the Pompeion.



Artist's reconstruction of the Kerameikos as it appeared from the East during the Late Classical and Hellenistic period. (Drawing by K. Raftopoulos.) In the foreground, the Inner Kerameikos, the wall, and its gates. The Pompeion dominates the center. To its right, the monumental Dipylon or Thriasian Gates through which passed the *Dromos*, the Straight Road, for the Academy. To the left of the Pompeion, the Sacred Gate through which passed the Eridanos' new bed and the road leading to the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis. On either side of the gates, luxurious residences belonging to wealthy Athenians.



In the midground, the Outer Kerameikos, the Classical cemetery par excellence, with its burial tumuli, funerary precincts, and the sanctuary of the Tritopatores in a straight line just in front of the Sacred Gate. There, the Sacred Way forked and its southern part, the Street of Tombs, led to Piraeus. Beautiful grave monuments rose up on either side of these roads, while the *Demosion Sema* extended along the length of the *Dromos*.



THE KERAMEIKOS DOWN TO THE PERSIAN WARS

FACING WEST

All scholars today agree that around 1900 BC the bearers of the first Greek culture settled in mainland Greece (and thus in Attica). They spoke an early form of Greek and presented the intellectual/spiritual traits, habits, and customs of the later Greeks. The tremendous subsequent growth of Athens and the historical buildings associated with this development were responsible for the disappearance of nearly all Middle Helladic remains from the Athenian acropolis and its environs.

An age-old belief shared by many Mediterranean peoples held that cemeteries extend towards the west, given that death was considered as the “twilight (setting) of life.” The earliest burials in the Kerameikos, a western suburb of the city, were isolated and date back to the turn of the second millennium BC, the Middle Helladic period. It was then that there appeared the legendary Minyans, an extremely ancient Greek tribe with enviable capabilities in technology and ceramics. The two pottery styles, matt-painted and gray or Minyan ware recalling metal prototypes are characteristic of this culture. Two graves were found on the uphill southern bank of the Eridanos. One of them, below the South Hill, was a rectangular built tomb with a small passageway (*dro-mos*) leading to the burial chamber, a form which may be considered a predecessor of later Mycenaean chamber tombs. The other, found slightly further west was a simple pit grave belonging to a young child, with various handmade vases as grave goods.

MYCENAEAN PERIOD

In the thirteenth century BC, the strong “Pelasgian” wall surrounded the rocky outcrop of the Acropolis and protected the palace of the Athenian *wanax* (“lord”) Menestheus, who had taken part with 50 ships in the Trojan expedition, as Homer narrates in the “Catalogue of Ships” (*Iliad* 2. 487-760). However, Mycenaean remains are meager, worn by later use and in no way worthy of the glory of the Mycenaean age. Traces of Mycenaean presence in the Kerameikos include a small amount of pottery and stirrup jars decorated with stylized vegetal motifs, evidence for the presence of a chamber tomb destroyed by the builders of the later Dipylon. It was similar to tombs excavated in the important cemetery on the northwest limits of the later Athenian Agora.

Marble sphinx, a finial for a grave stele. From the lining of the bank of the Eridanos in the Sacred Gate area. Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. P 1050.

THE SYNÆCISM

Around 120 tombs, very different in form than those of the earlier period, were excavated on the north bank of the Eridanos in the area where the Sacred Gate and the Dipylon Gate were subsequently built and beneath the later Pompeion. These would suggest that they belonged to an 11th century BC settlement that must have been located somewhere north of the Acropolis. Burials were either in simple pits (rarely lined with slabs) and covered with small earthen mounds (*ēria*, Gk. *ἕρῳα*) or in pit-graves with free-standing walls lined with slabs. The dead lay fully-extended, their hands folded over their chest and their head turned south towards the road linking Athens with Eleusis.

The custom of cremation and the use of cinerary urns made their first tentative appearance, a burial method that would prevail in the following period (the Proto-Geometric), above all for adults. In any case, continuing the Mycenaean tradition, the deceased's relatives placed a large number of grave goods in burials, chiefly open and closed vases (more rarely objects made of bronze). These served the needs of the funerary banquet that followed the burial, and they did not deviate in any respect from Mycenaean models, with the most typical representative being the stirrup jar of the knobbed type, which would soon



One-handed monochrome cup with added white decoration now barely discernible, strongly influenced by Minoan prototypes. From a child's grave north of the Street of Tombs. Ca. 2000 BC. Inv. no. 645.

be replaced by the lekythos. Other common vases accompanying the deceased included amphorae with vertical handles or with horizontal handles decorated by simple wavy bands or concentric semi-circles, lekythoi (a shape which essentially appeared in the Late Mycenaean period and featured a decoration of cross-hatched triangles and diamonds), oinochoai, cups, and skyphoi. While Mycenaean influence remains clear, potters were beginning to experiment with new methods to achieve even better aesthetic results.

They were also using a faster wheel, and thus closed vases acquired a harmonious ovoid shape. To achieve enhanced accuracy for circular decorative motifs, the compass with multiple brushes fitted to its second arm proved an Athenian innovation that would be wholly adopted in the Proto-Geometric period. Some unusual shapes for Greece including the bird askos, the cylindrical amphora (“bottle”), and the model of a tripod lebes, all of which belonged to the Cypriot pottery repertoire of 1050 BC and were found in graves in the Kerameikos, provide indisputable evidence of the influence of the Cypro-Geometric style on the early Proto-Geometric Attic style being created at this time. Contact with Cyprus served not only to introduce new pottery shapes and decorative motifs, but also to introduce iron-working technology to Athenian metal-workers in the 11th century BC. Small chests provide an echo of the large Mycenaean larnakes.



Stirrup jar with globular body and stylized floral motifs. A very common grave offering in Mycenaean tombs, it contained perfumed oil. Early 13th c. BC. Inv. no. 534.



Monochrome Sub-Mycenaean skyphos. Mid-11th c. BC. Inv. no. 499.

It was no accident that the graves of the final half-century of the second millennium are impressive for their wealth of bronze and less commonly, iron jewellery, including rings, fibulae and pins.

The large number of systematically arranged graves demonstrates that this society had some form of social organisation, though it lacked any provision for the separation of graves in relation to the social status of the dead. We are therefore probably speaking of a simple, egalitarian community. This conclusion may be supported by the fact that funerary vases were sparingly decorated intentionally because they were designed to serve as simple grave goods rather than as status symbols for the deceased. The number of graves shows that population had increased, but the grave goods are poorer vis-à-vis those of the Mycenaean period. Excavations in the Kerameikos as well as the nearby Agora and at other points in Athens show clusters of graves that would have corresponded to an equal number of residential units.

Ancient authors relate that the creation of the residential model in small communities (ancient Greek *komē*, κώμη) was owed to the mythical king Kekrops, who united those residing throughout Attica and originally dispersed among twelve cities. One of these was Kekropia (or *Athene*, a name also mentioned by Homer), to which the great hero of the Attic mythic cycle and last mythical king of Athens Theseus subjected the other eleven cities (thus the plural Athenai), creating the renowned “synoecism” of Athens. While it is difficult to determine when this occurred, the archaeological evidence appears to argue in favor of the period extending from the mid-11th to the 10th century BC.

After the abolition of the Mycenaean feudal system and the fall of the *wanax* (*Fanax* on the Linear B tablets) who controlled Attica from the fortified Acropolis, the local rulers, the *basileis* (*pa-si-re-u* in the Mycenaean archives) assumed rule of the settlements. Despite the administrative division, there was nonetheless an unbroken unity of the tribal demographics of Attica, from the Achaeans and proto-Ionians of Mycenaean times down to the purebred Ionians who from this era already formed a tribal state divided into *phratries* (~“brotherhoods”) in turn composed of a number of *gene* (~“clans”). The leading gene of nobles relocated from the outskirts of Attica, e.g. the Skambonidai (from the Thriasian plain) and the Kepholidai (from Thorikos). Below we describe the latter clan’s funerary precinct in connection with the famous tomb of the warrior Dexileos. These clans brought their respective cults with them and founded an equal number of sanctuaries on the Acropolis and thereabouts.



Sub-Mycenaean stirrup jar with knob on false spout and foliate band on body. Mid. 11th c. BC. Inv. No 3890.



Clumsily-fashioned lekythos with concentric, asymmetrical semi-circles on its shoulder. Late 11th c. BC. Inv. no. 3896.



Stirrup jar with knob on its false spout. According to one interpretation, the vertical wavy lines that comprise a characteristic ornament on Mycenaean larnakes denote the cut-off braids of women with which larnakes and funerary vases were probably decorated. 11th c. BC. Inv. no. 508.

Sub-Mycenaean bottle-shaped amphora inspired by Cypriote pottery workshops. Mid-11th c.BC. Inv. no. 507.

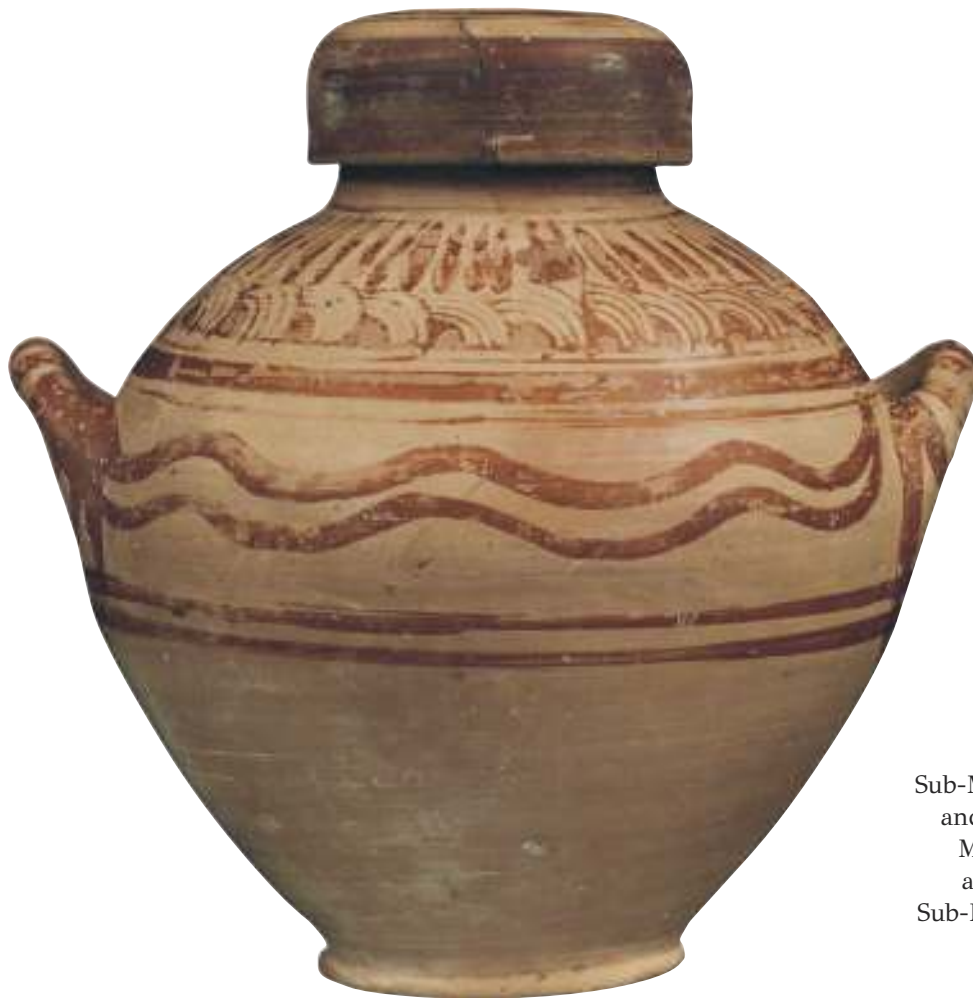


Model of a tripod lebes with the “triglyph-metope” decoration known from wall paintings in Mycenaean palaces. This vase type comes from the Late Cypriot IIIB ceramic tradition. Late 11th c. BC. Inv. no. 554.





Bird askos decorated with concentric semi-circles. This type also belongs to the Cypriot ceramic tradition.
Mid-11th c. BC. Inv. no. 535.



Sub-Mycenaean amphora with round body and lid. The decoration combines typical Mycenaean motifs in the shoulder zone and the characteristic wavy lines of the Sub-Mycenaean period in the handle zone.
Mid-11th c. BC. Inv. no. 420.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE DEMOS

The residents of the settlement living on the north slopes of the Acropolis, who had buried their dead on the north bank of the Eridanos during the Proto-Geometric period (late 11th - late 10th c.) began to employ the river's level south bank as a burial site. This period witnessed a historic change in burial customs, a change reflected in the Homeric texts, as cremation replaced interment. Fifty graves have been found that belong to this age. Analysis of the skeletal material has shown that for the first time there was a conscious separation of the sexes, with the placement of an amphora with vertical handles as a grave marker for men, and one with horizontal handles for women.

The entire burial trench was covered with a small earthen mound (*ērion*, ἤριον), as in the Sub-Mycenaean period. During the second half of the 10th century BC the mound was replaced by a stone stele and a sizable funerary vase (an amphora or krater) over the cinerary urn, and these large vases now served as grave markers. Some graves had no cinerary urn; there were only a few cases of adults not being cremated. Infants were not cremated; rather, they were buried in amphorae, while children were buried in pits, often within settlements. Graves were generally rich in burial offerings that included pottery and metal jewellery (pins, fibulae, bracelets, rings).

The overwhelming majority of grave goods consisted of wheel-made pottery on which a new style, the Proto-Geometric, was being created. The Proto-Geometric style was characterised by the adaptation of old shapes and the creation of new ones that complied with Geometric principles. In the initial stages of this style, artists turned their backs on the Cypriot models which had entered the Athenian market in the late 11th century, and thus shapes like the bird-form askos, bottle, and ring vases were abandoned. Although the Sub-Mycenaean tradition was initially retained, the stirrup jar and amphoriskos became shapes of the past. The new shapes were simple but well-built and well-fired. Types such as the amphora, oinochoe, pyxis, hydria, lekythos, and kalathos predominated, and these shapes would continue in ensuing centuries because they served practical needs.



ABOVE: Proto-Geometric ring vase decorated with a herringbone pattern. The type dates back to the Mycenaean tradition. 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 2033. CENTER: Proto-Geometric flask decorated with concentric circles, dental motif and a cross. This shape also comes from the Mycenaean world, where it was created under Eastern influence. 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 2034. BELOW: One-handed monochrome cup with raised foot and zigzags on its offset rim. 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 1085.

Advances in ceramic technology allowed the harmonious coexistence of shape and decoration on nearly every vase type. Initially, vase painters left a large part of the vase undecorated and without any color at all. As time passed, aesthetics were modified slightly and numerous parts of the vase were covered by a stunning glossy black glaze, foreshadowing the black glaze employed on Classical Athenian black-figure vases.

A characteristic Proto-Geometric motif that continued in Geometric pottery was that of concentric circles and semi-circles. These were drawn with great precision with the compass, whose second arm carried multiple brushes (the number depended on how many circles the painter wanted to draw); the compass itself had been invented a few decades earlier. Characteristic motifs include cross-hatched triangles, zigzags, wavy and diagonal lines, meanders, and battlement and herringbone patterns developed over the surface of the vase, preferably in the shoulder zone and below the rim, either in vertical and horizontal combinations or in isolation. The appearance of a living creature, the horse, on an amphora with horizontal handles below the vase's predominant ornament of horizontal wavy lines and that of two male figures flanking a horse are considered the earliest examples of figurative art in the very early historical period.

Living forms were of interest not only to vase painters but also to potters (usually the same person), as appears from the discovery of the plastic (wheel-made and modelled) figure of a clay deer. The deer found in a Proto-Geometric female tomb and a little horse on wheels from a child's tomb are replete with networks of Geometric straight-line patterns (checkerboards, zigzags, network), rather than curvilinear designs.

The little horse was surely one of the deceased child's favorite toys, but the deer, whose conceptual relation with the female burial in which it was found is hard to discern, could probably be interpreted if we assume that the deceased or her family had some connection with the cult of the goddess Artemis Brauronia. Below we discuss the relationship of horses and men, which is the commonest Geometric figural representation.

Proto-Geometric model of a stylized deer painted with Geometric rectilinear designs. From a female grave. Last quarter of the 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 641.



Proto-Geometric model of a horse on wheels. Monochrome with a clay-colored zone on the muzzle and mane. Found in a child's grave, it was doubtless one of the young deceased's favorite toys. Ca. 900 BC. Inv. no. 642.

Apart from pottery, the dead were also accompanied by metal objects of bronze and iron in equal numbers, and types such as those of the Sub-Mycenaean period. However, armor appears now as it had in the glorious Mycenaean past.

From the Kerameikos finds and the archaeological evidence, we gather that the society which buried its dead here at the Eridanos, on both its north (the later site of the Pompeion) and south banks, and which did not differentiate between men and women in terms of the spatial distribution of their graves, was endeavoring to lay the foundations for strict –one might say “Geometric”– rules both in its art (where this is manifest) and its social structure. And in this it succeeded, at least to a degree.



Handmade, stylized human figurines (dolls) decorated with impressed concentric circles and incisions. Such figurines belong to a category of handmade pottery that appeared in the Proto-Geometric period, characterized by pure clay, incised geometric designs, and shapes such as “dolls” and *plangones* (with movable limbs), beads and shallow bowls (*phialai*).



This pottery has been found only in the graves of women and children, and it could be argued that it was made as household production, by poor women or slaves, or even by foreign women who were the spoils of war. This idiosyncratic production continued until the early 9th century and then disappeared. 10th c. BC. Inv. nos. 2035, 1075, 962.



Proto-Geometric kalathos decorated with wavy lines and dental motif. 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 612.



Lekythos with monochrome body and concentric semi-circles on the shoulder. 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 2099.

Proto-Geometric small lidded box of the type of Mycenaean larnakes, decorated primarily with concentric circles and semi-circles that probably refer to astral symbols (sun-moon). 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 924.



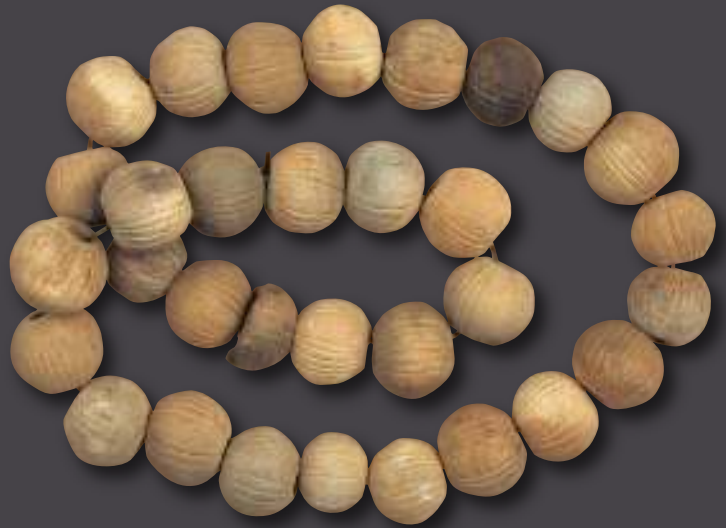
The comingling of the sexes does not demonstrate disarray, but rather the organisation of graves by families and *gene* (~clans). At the same time, there is a systematic effort via the grave marker (i.e. the amphora) to make the distinction of the deceased's gender discernible, and there is an even clearer distinction of age with the burial (as opposed to cremation) of children and infants in a different location. One striking aspect both of the Kerameikos tombs as well as those in other cemeteries in Athens and Eleusis is the wealth and variety of grave goods in female burials. Was this perhaps an indication of the creation of the social class of priestesses?

Following a period of experimentation and disciplined imagination in art and style and led by the workshops of the Kerameikos, Athens established the standards for Geometric art for nearly every region of mainland Greece. But we know little about society in this period. To date we have no written sources, at least for the 10th and 9th centuries BC, only indirect references by later authors and of course, the reflections of myths. According to Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution*, in the early 10th century BC the institution of an elected archon was introduced. This official originally governed the federation for life and after the 8th century, for a decade. These elected archons were called "Medontidai" and the name probably indicates a title involving authority (*medo* [μέδω] = "rule, govern") rather than the name of the founder of a *clan* (*genos*). There are ancient traditions concerning skirmishes between the Attic Ionians and Dorian invaders from the Peloponnese, with victory crowning the former and securing their ancestral lands. It may have been at that time that the need to create a fourth Ionian phyle, that of the Hoplites with its 30 clans, presented itself. As a result, the custom of placing weapons in warriors' graves reappeared, exemplifying both their courage and their role in ensuring social peace.

The professions of potter, tanner, carter and metal-worker as we knew them in the Mycenaean world continued in existence but the social status of these artisans changed. Among all groups of artisans, it was mostly potters-vase painters (*kerameis*) who advanced from being paid by or subject to Mycenaean rulers to the status of free-lance professional craftsman who exercised exceptional influence and enjoyed great recognition in the society of Athens, Attica and surrounding regions.

It was thus no accident that from the 10th century BC, one of ancient Athens' most important demes, that called *Kerameis*, developed. The only deme belonging to a professional class, it grew up in an area incorporating land on either side of the Eridanos and along the road to Eleusis, north and northwest of the Acropolis. It was there these artisans lived and fashioned their superb creations, and it was there they buried their dead.

ABOVE: Thin gold foil band with a hole at each end and a triangular projecting tip in the center. Used as a funerary diadem. Early 9th c. BC. Inv. no. M 111. CENTER: Gold hair ornaments of thick double wire. Ca. 900 BC. Inv. no. M117. Necklace of clay beads decorated with vertical incisions. 10th c. BC. Inv. nos. 2090/4961. BELOW: Short gold band with a central member ending in a loop. It may have served as a diadem for a newborn infant; the protruding element was probably a cover for the nose while the loop held the lower jaw in place. Ca. 900 BC. Inv. no. M70/4804.





High-footed skyphos decorated with metopes in which concentric circles are separated by vertical lozenges. The decoration recalls metal prototypes of the Geometric period. Mid-10th c. BC. Inv. no. 2103.



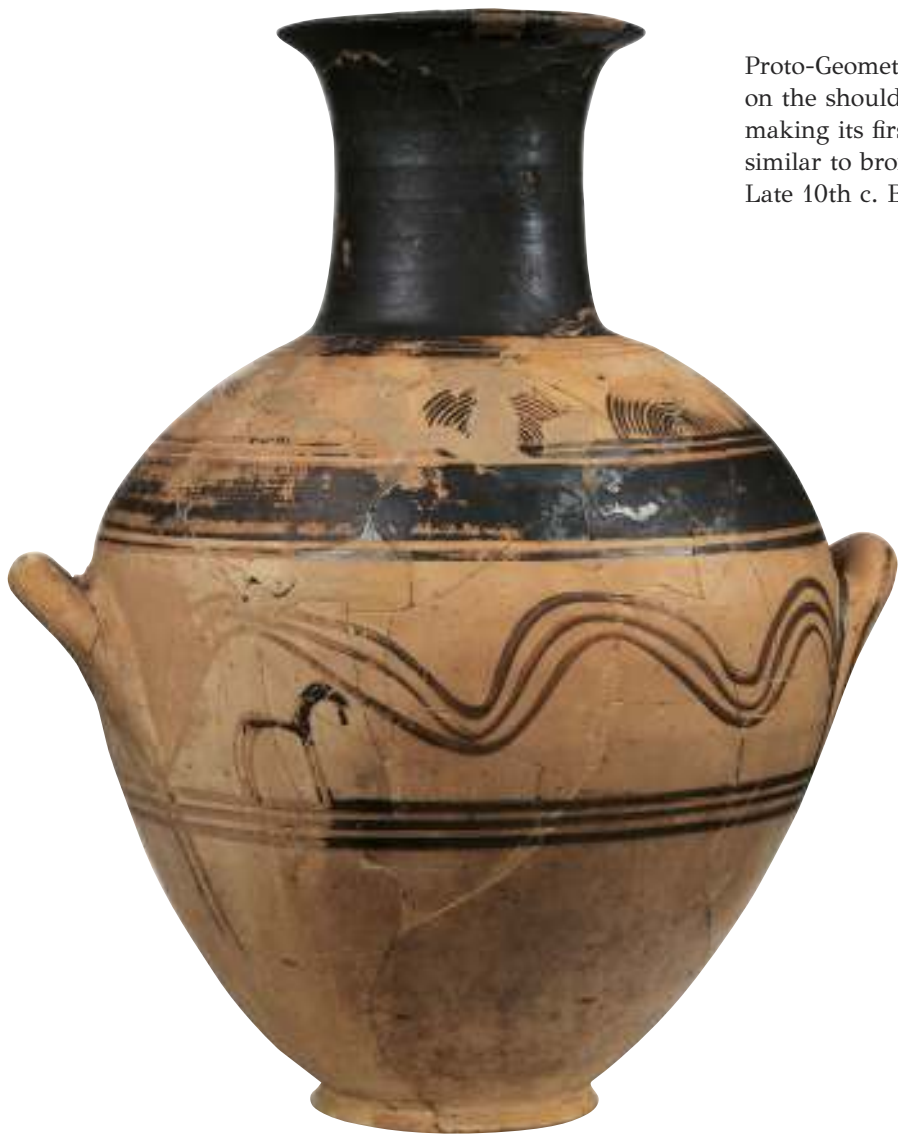
Proto-Geometric amphora with vertical handles from rim to shoulder, decorated with concentric semi-circles and a dogtooth ornament. Late 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 523.



Proto-Geometric amphora with vertical handles, decorated with semi-circles with the "hourglass" as central motif. 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 2008.

Late Proto-Geometric amphora with handles on the shoulders and a lid. The decoration creates a pleasing aesthetic effect, with the upper half of the vase covered by a “net” of designs, balanced by the lower half with its glossy black varnish. Late 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 2131.





Proto-Geometric ovoid amphora with handles on the belly. Concentric semi-circles on the shoulder and three horizontal wavy lines on the belly. The horse is here making its first appearance as a filler motif in Attic vase painting. The figure is similar to bronze models of horses dedicated as votives at Panhellenic sanctuaries. Late 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 560.



Proto-Geometric amphora with globular body and horizontal handles. A cremation urn with a small embossed shield as lid – a type of armor unknown in the Greek region whose provenance is probably to be sought in Cyprus. Late 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 920.



High-footed skyphos with a reserve section, decorated with a dense horizontal zigzag line. Mid-10th c. BC. Inv. no. 499.

Proto-Geometric oinochoe with a “basketry” motif. Ca. 900 BC. Inv. no. 2010.



The total simplicity of the glossy black glaze covering this Early Geometric amphora with handles on its shoulder is interrupted by two thin bands, one on the neck with a battlement motif, and one on the belly with the “basketry” motif. Early 9th c. BC. Inv. no. 898.



Models of “granaries” decorated with meanders and dentils. This type, which appeared in the Proto-Geometric period and continued into the Geometric, probably indicates that its owners were connected with the class of aristocratic land-owners.
9th c. BC. Inv. nos. 5264, 5260.



Proto-Geometric pyxis with “basketry” motif.
Late 10th c. BC. Inv. no. 2066.



Pyxis with linear decoration. Ca. 900 BC.
Inv. no. 950.



Late Proto-Geometric kernos (a vase for offerings) with six inter-connected amphoriskoi.
9th c. BC. Inv. no. 1145.



Model of a Proto-Geometric tripod stand decorated with severe linear designs like those on the bronze supports and lebetes of the Geometric period from Panhellenic sanctuaries.
Ca. 900 BC. Inv. no. 416.



THE CREATION OF A UNIQUE TECTONIC STYLE

The synoecism continued to flourish, as documented by the larger number of 9th and 8th century burials that developed near the Proto-Geometric necropolis on the south bank of the Eridanos. What today we call the pure Geometric style, which many scholars distinguish into “Early”, “Middle”, and “Late”, belongs to these two centuries, their grave goods, and in particular to the pottery from the graves near the Eridanos. As we shall see below, on the basis of iconography the division of the Geometric age may be bipartite, with the pure tectonic Geometric style incorporated into the first part (down to the early 8th c. BC), and the figural style that continued down to 700 BC comprising the second. This second style was a unique and unparalleled innovation by Kerameikos vase-painters on the one hand, and on the other it comprised a conscious connection with the glorious Mycenaean past. To take things now in chronological order:

Only a few burials were found north of the Eridanos. The tomb type created prior to 900 BC, the “quadrangular trench with pit” for the cremation of the dead continued until the first quarter of the eighth century (775 BC), when it was effectively abandoned. The cinerary urn was no longer buried entirely in the pit dug to receive it, and the various offerings were gathered in a small mound atop the grave. A bronze or pottery cup was very often employed to cover the cinerary urn. Vases, which had already been set on graves from the Proto-Geometric age, gradually became very large and monumental, coming to resemble archaic funerary





monuments rather than mere vases. The inheritance bequeathed by tenth-century potters was infused with new elements and inspiration to reach the pinnacle of this style with the great achievement of Geometric pottery-making: monumental funerary vases so large and imposing that they acquired human dimensions, and we attribute the names used for the human body to their parts (neck, body, foot, etc.). In the early 8th century BC these vases received abundant figural decoration, primarily consisting of funerary scenes, forming both innovation and landmark in the evolution of Greek art. Of these we will have more to say below. In any case, the graves of the Kerameikos –above and beyond the other known cemeteries of Athens like those of the Agora and Cynosarges or that at Anavyssos in Attica– provide the best evidence for the study of the Geometric style as the highest art form created in the 9th and 8th centuries BC, an era of social upheavals and the formation of the polis as a distinct entity.

From the twelve rich 9th century graves on the south bank of the Eridanos, it would seem that cremation remained the dominant method of burial for adults, with children continuing to be inhumed inside pots. However, we have a new element: large funerary vases-tomb markers, normally kraters (beside a simple upright stele-marker) with an opening at the junction of the vase’s base and foot so that libations would end up in the cinerary vase lying directly below. The site’s German excavators have interpreted this practice as the beginning of the *Totenkult*, the worship of the dead (hero cult?) which may have begun

Oblong gold band-diadem with two holes at each end. It bears embossed decoration consisting of a “frieze” of roaring lions ready to devour deer grazing in carefree fashion. Late 8th c. BC. Inv. no. M 792.



during this era under the influence of heroic poetry and the creation of the clans as constituent social units. There is some documentation for this assumption, as excavations have shown that the bases of Geometric kraters-grave markers remained in situ and intact, even when a new funerary monument was built on the same site at a later date. And this was no accident: in two cases, this reverence for the ancestors led later generations to render posthumous honours to the dead.

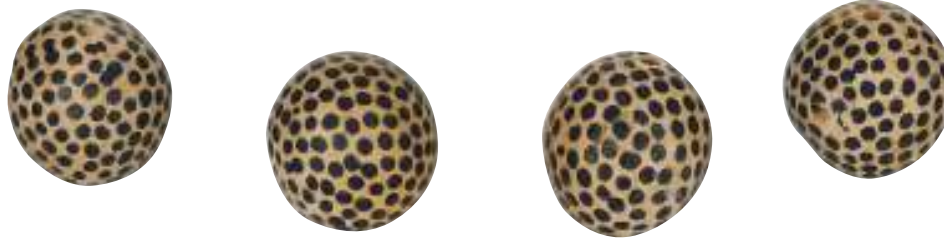
As in earlier ages, in this period too grave offerings included various wheel-made shapes, weapons, and jewellery in addition to exotic objects imported from the East. The enigmatic handmade pottery of pure clay decorated with incised designs found in 10th century BC female graves continued for about fifty years and then disappeared forever. From the early ninth to early eighth century (ca. 770 BC) the purely Geometric style was characterised by primarily non-representational (aniconic) art with the exception of a few isolated figures of humans and horses as we shall see below. The imaginative and talented potters of the deme of Kerameis attained total harmony of shape and decoration, the finest achieved by Greek art throughout its entire history. Most of the vase surface was covered by a superb black glaze, with a number of its parts –depending of course on shape– emphasised by reserved panels. For example, on amphorae the neck and the handle zone were singled out for special attention. The system of “panel decoration” was extremely popular during the early years of the implementation of this pure Geometric style. Curvilinear motifs like the circle with an hour-glass on its interior and straight lines in vertical alignment –i.e. creating “triglyph-metope decoration”– were combined with great success. This arrangement directly recalls the architectural rhythmicity of the triglyph and metope as we know it from the subsequent archaic period.

A few years later, i.e. from the mid-9th century BC until near the end of the century, artists transformed the metope into a zone (a frieze) to embrace the entire perimeter of the vase. On large kraters that served as markers for male graves, the decoration encircles the entire vase like a network, of course with emphasis on the zone between the handles, as an example in the National Archaeological Museum makes clear. While kraters marked male graves, the large amphorae with handles on their belly adorned female graves as markers; in other words, the distinction between sexes was retained. Four graves on the south bank of the Eridanos marked by an equal number of monumental kraters (above the cinerary urns) had been respected by later occupants of the gravesite, because the men buried there most likely were aristocrats. We thus presume that this area of the cemetery was dedicated to one of the up-and-coming ninth-century Athenian clans. The fourth grave, in which his relatives had deposited a sword, belonged to a young warrior. In accordance with a new funerary practice, this grave had been divided by an upright slab into two parts, one for the cinerary vase and those grave goods that remained unburnt, and the other for the remains from the pyre.

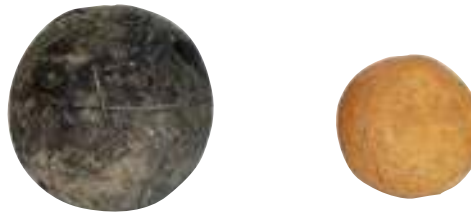
It has been argued that the luxuriousness of a number of burials and depictions of ships and naval battles on vases, were connected with the appearance of the Athenian navy, the expeditions of the Athenians –above all to the East– and the creation of the merchant class, even though the whole of the 9th century BC found the Athenians more devoted to the development of their agricultural economy. They received the

Early Geometric amphora (a marker for a woman's tomb) decorated in the metope system. Mid-9th c. BC. Inv. no. 2146.





Handmade clay beads of pure clay with incised or painted (dotted) decoration, used as grave goods in children's graves by analogy with the necklace on p. 41. Early 9th c. BC. Inv. nos. 954-958.



Bronze pins, both with a decorative bead. This type, which initially appeared in the Sub-Mycenaean period and continued in use until the Late Geometric, has been linked with a major social change in the way women dressed: the appearance of the peplos. Late 10th c. BC.

A unique find from the Geometric period, the bronze bowl that covered the cremation urn of a grave became the cause of our creating an imaginary story about artisans from the Near East. The phiale presents an embossed scene involving six young women and an equal number of animals, moving in pairs in procession: woman+bull, woman+lion, woman+ram in duplicate. In their left hand, the women hold a lotus flower and smell it, while in their right they hold the tail of the animal preceding them. The scene is not entirely comprehensible, but is probably connected with some ritual of rebirth. The phiale's iconography and style leave no doubt that it was the work of a Phoenician artisan from North Syria. Mid-9th c. BC. Inv. no. M 5.



first exotic objects from Phoenician traders or artists temporarily settled in Attica; generally it would appear that these exchanges occurred in the Aegean region rather than in Syro-Palestinian ports.

Towards the end of the 9th century BC a new shape made a strong initial appearance in wealthy graves. This was the pyxis, with a wide base and lid featuring a handle formed into a likeness of anywhere between one and four horses. Another shape was the kantharos with high-swung handles, an early form of the well-known Classical kantharos.

Models of granaries from graves in the Kerameikos as well as other contemporary Athenian tombs symbolised the class of *Pentakosiomedimnoi* (those whose lands produced “500 bushels”) to which the deceased belonged, and also indicated that a preoccupation with the earth and the cult of the fertility goddess continued uninterrupted in Attica from the Mycenaean age onward.







The pyxis with broad base and small lid with handle in the shape of a horse in the round was a common grave good in wealthy burials during the Middle and Late Geometric periods. The horse has been linked with Poseidon Hippios. The god in his chthonian manifestation made the powers of the earth and the Underworld perceptible with his horses. In addition, the horse was also a symbol of social class and prestige. A very clear allusion to the Underworld is provided by the pyxis, which in addition to four horses has two snakes on its lid. 8th c. BC. Inv. nos. 1310, 775, 1312, 1313, 776, 257.



Early Geometric oinochoe with decoration in a metope.
Second quarter of the 9th c. BC. Inv. no. 1253.



Early Geometric amphora with handles on its shoulder, decorated with
rectilinear geometric motifs in a band around the neck and with zigzags
and a dogtooth pattern in the metope on the shoulder.
Second quarter of the 9th c. BC. Inv. no. 412.

Short mug with bulbous body. In the tall rim zone a horse
standing between two warriors and swastikas. Third
quarter of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 2159.





Middle Geometric amphora with vertical handles, decorated with a meander and horizontal bands in black glaze. First half of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 255.



Middle Geometric amphora, a marker for a woman's tomb. Late 9th c. BC. Inv. no. NAM 216.

RENAISSANCE

Most scholars of the Geometric age point out that around 770 BC an unprecedented artistic renaissance was observed. This involved a combination of inspired artists and stable yet vibrant social conditions. The characteristic achievement of this art down to the late eighth century in ceramics was the monumental funerary vases decorated with figures and coming from the area that would later become the Dipylon Gate. For this reason, their painter is known as the “Dipylon Painter”. It is to this painter and his workshop as well as the “Horses Painter”, the “Painter of Kerameikos Amphora 1306”, the “Burly Workshop”, and the “Hirschfeld Painter and Workshop” to name only the best known, that we owe the creation of the unique Attic Geometric style which also influenced neighbouring pottery workshops outside Attica. The stunning amphora no. 804, today in Athens’ National Archaeological Museum, which once stood as proudly as a small statue over the tomb of a noble in the Kerameikos, has a metope with a funerary scene of the “prothesis” and mourning in its handle zone. On another monumental funerary vase that adorned the tomb of a man, a splendid krater also in the National Archaeological Museum, an “ekphora” scene of the deceased and chariot race unfold on the upper body. These vases as well as others in museums abroad share many elements both in themes (funerary scenes, chariot races) and style (human figures with robust lower limbs and an inverted triangular body, horses with slender legs and long necks, hoplites with figure-8 shields). These common features are sufficient to attribute them to the so-called “Dipylon Painter”, who is considered the first painter of this re-born figural style in Greek art and whose “hand” is recognizable from his signature personal style. Amphorae, large oinochoai, and one-handled cups recalling the “depas” type carry figural scenes of funereal character as well as successive zones in rhythmic escalation, creating through well known geometric motifs or birds a “mesh” that covers the entire surface of these large vases with enviable and unprecedented harmony. It has been asserted that scenes of chariot races featuring armed men represent the “*apobatikos agon*”, i.e. the contest in which fully-armed athletes were obliged to dismount and mount a moving chariot. As clearly shown by an amphora-situla, a skyphos from a child’s tomb, numerous round pyxides with lids bearing plastic decoration in the form of horses, and terracotta figurines, this proud and intelligent mammal, either alone or in tandem with a male tamer or warrior, held a special place in 8th century Athenian social life, and surely attests not only to the class of Hippeis (“Horsemen”) and their social recognition in accordance with the Homeric ideal, but to a host of elements.

Depictions of mythological scenes are of special interest for reconstructing the spiritual dimension of the Geometric world. The view that the battle between a man and lion depicted on a four-legged stand from a grave in the Kerameikos or that the scene of a warrior taming two horses on a kantharos depict well known labors of Hercules is very attractive.

Communication with ports in the East, while diminished, did not cease. Raw materials like gold and ivory resulted from this trade. The most beautiful ivory object dating to this period comes from a grave near Piraeus Street. It is a figurine of a nude female wearing a tall headdress (*polos*) decorated with a meander pattern.

During this period, and particularly as the 8th century came to a close, the custom of burying the dead won out over cremation. The wealthy graves on the south bank of the Eridanos and near Piraeus Street provided evidence for the existence of wooden stretchers. Grave goods were set around the body, chiefly near the feet or atop the cover slab. The remains from the funerary banquet were tossed in the grave together with burnt offerings. Children were now buried (always in pots) for the first time in large graves, which suggests the strengthening of family bonds and the clans. It is considered quite likely that the graves that now came to occupy a larger and more prominent space, which were grouped into burial precincts, represented the first great clans-families which would later dominate Athenian life, e.g. the Medontidai, the Neleidai, and the Alkmeonidai.

On the basis of the decoration of the large kraters, from which scenes of naval battles and ships are almost entirely absent, it is presumed that Athenian society shifted towards a ruraly-based agricultural economy. It has been rightly noted that the Athenians colonised Attica itself. Occupation with the cultivation of the land and the acquisition of estates, with the distribution of labor and professions, was an economic model described in the Homeric texts. Outside this rural economy, a resident was practically condemned to becoming a *thetes*, i.e. to hiring out his labor to earn his daily bread. In the developing rural society of 8th century BC Athens, the gene (clans) took Homeric society as their model, and traced their ancestry back to Homeric heroes and gods.

We should keep in mind that intellectually and spiritually, the 8th century BC was the age of cultivation of heroic and didactic poetry, with Homer as the major representative of the former genre and Hesiod, of the latter. The epic (above all the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*) was consolidated and acquired definitive form, chiefly for the formation of 8th century societies, while the didactic epic (*Works and Days* and the *Theogony*) with its preeminently peaceful character helped to solidify and maintain them.



Large ivory figurine of a nude female figure. The frontality, immobility, and nudity as well as the large, deep-set eyes reinforced by an inlaid material (glass paste?) and the polos are recognized as characteristics of an Eastern workshop based in Hama in Northern Syria which employed them to depict Astarte, the goddess of fertility. However, the supple curves, small waist, and pronouncedly triangular trunk-in accordance with Geometric canons – and the use of the meander on the polos in place of Eastern floral motifs leave no doubt about the artist's provenance: he was a Greek familiar with Phoenician prototypes, but surpassed them in creating a Greek model for the well-known Daedalic maidens of the 7th c. BC. Late 8th c. BC. Inv. no. NAM 776.

This was also the age in which the official lists of Olympic victors (since 776 BC) and the Spartan Ephors (to 756 BC) were recorded. The invention of alphabetic writing, the Greeks' most important contribution to European intellectual culture, also dates to this era. The oldest writing in the Greek alphabet known to date was incised –after firing– on an oinochoe from the Kerameikos, the so-called “Dipylon Oinochoe” (early third quarter of the 8th century BC).

Study of the 8th century Kerameikos graves reveals the strengthening of the power of the *genos* (clan) and family through recognition of the contribution by every member of the phratry or family, even young children –an early form of isonomia– which would inevitably lead to the creation of the archaic city-state.



Trefoil oinochoe. On the neck, a scene of a horse and series of wild goats with large horns extending backward. Astral symbols and zigzags are employed as filler motifs. Mid-8th c. BC. Inv. no. 369.

Late Geometric jug with high, two-paneled handle, adorned with geometric designs extending over the vase in successive horizontal bands. The meander motif predominates. The covering of nearly the entire body of the vase in designs is considered an example of the mature Geometric style. Last quarter of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 785.

Massive amphora (1.60 m.), a marker for a woman's tomb, the loveliest vase by the Dipylon Painter and that which established the most important style in 8th c. BC. Athens. In the "metope" of the central handle zone, a prothesis scene is depicted. The dead woman is laid out on a high couch as her relatives mourn around her. For the first time, the decoration extends like a fabric over the entire surface of this large vase. 760-750 BC. Inv. no. NAM 804.







Massive (1.50 m.) krater, a marker for a man's tomb, by the Hirschfeld Painter. On the upper half of the vase in two wide zones there unfolds in narrative fashion the entire burial ritual for a man from an aristocratic genos who perhaps lost his life in some war, recalling Homeric narratives. In the center of the handle zone is a depiction of an ekphora scene, i.e. the removal of the deceased from his residence on a cart/wagon, accompanied by mourners. In the zone directly below this is a scene of a chariot race, apparently of the contest held in honor of the deceased that followed the burial. Mid-8th c. BC. Inv. no. NAM 990.



Basket-shaped amphora with a quatrefoil on the neck and in the shoulder zone, a depiction of a man. Covering the vase with multiple successive lines is characteristic of the second half of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 1306.



A kantharos, one of the earliest of its type, with a representation of a warrior with tall helmet and a dagger at his waist who is taming two wild horses. Late 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 268.



Oinochoe with a large ovoid body and plastic “knobs” on the shoulder. It was found in a female burial, north of the Eridanos, together with the vases depicted in the following page. It belongs to the mature Geometric style. Last quarter of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 4217.



Jugs with decoration in “metopes” and zones. The birds are no longer ideograms; they have acquired volume and feathering, while the tongue motifs with “racket” (hatched loop) decoration and pseudo-spirals are typical of late 8th c. BC. Athenian vase painting. Inv. nos. 4226, 4219, 1305, 4220.









Skyphoid cup of the mature Geometric style with “metope” and “triglyph” decoration. Birds in an array with distinctive feathering rendered in outline. “Metopes” on either side of the handle with representations of a warrior with figure-eight shield. The central “metope” carries a rare scene of figures dancing (?), probably within the context of ritual activities. (Detail on p. 68). Late 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 812.



Model of a donkey carrying a load of 4 amphoriskoi (miniature amphorae). The holes at the ends of its legs indicate that there were little wheels, and that the figurine was the toy of the young child in whose grave it was found. Third quarter of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 1311.



Kylikes with raised perforated foot.
Late 8th c. BC. Inv. nos. 360, 660.



Basket-shaped vase entirely painted with geometric
patterns and quatrefoils. Late 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 1307.



Geometric kantharos with vertical relief ribs decorated with
herringbone motif. Third quarter of the 8th c. BC.
Inv. no. 1251.



Sizable amphora decorated with a variety of geometric rectilinear patterns. Wide "metope" with does in a row grazing.
Late 8th c BC. Inv. no. 385.



Late Geometric oinochoe, called the "Dipylon oinochoe. It has a post-firing inscription (graffito), perhaps the earliest in the Greek alphabet, which reads from right to left: "Whoever among all the dancers dances most nimbly will now receive me as a prize". The sideways \triangleright is temporally very close to the Phoenician alphabet of the 9th c. BC. Third quarter of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. NAM 192.



Skyphos with does. Third quarter of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 1319.



Four-legged stand. In the zone below the rim, warriors with round and figure-8 shields. One leg has a representation of a man killing a lion (Hercules and the Nemean Lion?). Last quarter of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 407.



TOWARDS THE GREEK MIRACLE

Attica and its Ionian residents continued to form a tribal state divided into four tribes (the “Aigikoreis”, “Arkadeis”, “Geleontes” and “Hoplites”, phratries, and clans (*gene*). The evolution of the Athenian state into an aristocratic “polis” nullified all citizens not of noble rank, even those who had amassed considerable wealth. According to Aristotle’s *Athenian Constitution*, the earliest archons of Athens remained in power ten years, at least prior to 683 BC. This social structure appears in high relief from the Kerameikos finds, especially the discovery of large tumuli connected with major clans, as we shall see below.

In order to interpret 7th century BC burial practices in the Kerameikos, we need to keep in mind prevailing social conditions of this age. The Athenian aristocracy—like most others of its type—granted political rights only to adult nobles. Thus, the aristocratic regime experienced not only the reactions of non-nobles but conflicts among and between nobles as well. Non-nobles who remained “outside the state”, for example the hoplites, resorted to violence and demanded the right to civic involvement, above all the administration of justice, whose absence Hesiod had already censured. And it was not only the absence of equality before the law (*isonomia*) that created friction in 7th century BC Athenian society. The city also lost its economic and artistic pride of place to Corinth, which in turn brought about a contraction in the economy.

One consequence of this instability was the historical event of the nobleman Cylon’s attempt to install a tyranny, resulting in the “Cylonian Affair”, for which a member of the Alkmeonidai was accused. The temporary loss of social influence by this clan towards the end of the 7th century appears to be reflected in the west tumulus of the Kerameikos as well (see below), where no wealthy burial has been identified from the turn of the century. Under the pressure of social unrest, Draco probably granted political rights to the “Hoplites”, while his celebrated laws were truly harsh as to the property of guildsmen. Subsequently, the “conciliator” law-giver and poet Solon included in the Athenian constitution/state all adult males dwelling in Attica who belonged to tribes, phratries, and clans. However, he did not interfere with the pre-existing differentiation of Athenians into four “income groups”, the “Pentakosiomedimnoi” and the “Hippeis” from the nobles, and the “Zeugites” and “Thetes” from the non-noble category. In other words, he did not touch the system of government itself, which remained timocratic. Solon’s legislative and social reforms are multi-faceted and well known. Those laws relating to the economy are especially interesting. For example, Solon banned the export and encouraged the import of all agricultural products apart from olive oil, of which there was excess

Detail from the base Inv. no. NAM 3476. A game involving a ball.



production as shown by the large vases used for oil storage/shipping (pithoi, amphorae, lekythoi). Among other measures, Solon attempted to curtail outlays for luxurious funerals (prothesis, ekphora and burial, which judging from the archaeological finds throughout Attica had assumed outside proportions). Examples of such wasted luxury include the famous kouros of the Sacred Gate, which was discovered only in 2002, the head of a second kouros known from the initial excavations as the “head from Tower D of the Dipylon Gate”, in addition to columns surmounted by sphinxes and the bases of statues-grave markers. The latter sometimes bore inscriptions and sometimes were decorated with scenes of daily life or public rituals carved in low relief. All the monuments mentioned here were found built in (but not scraped off/abraded) to the later Themistoclean defensive wall.

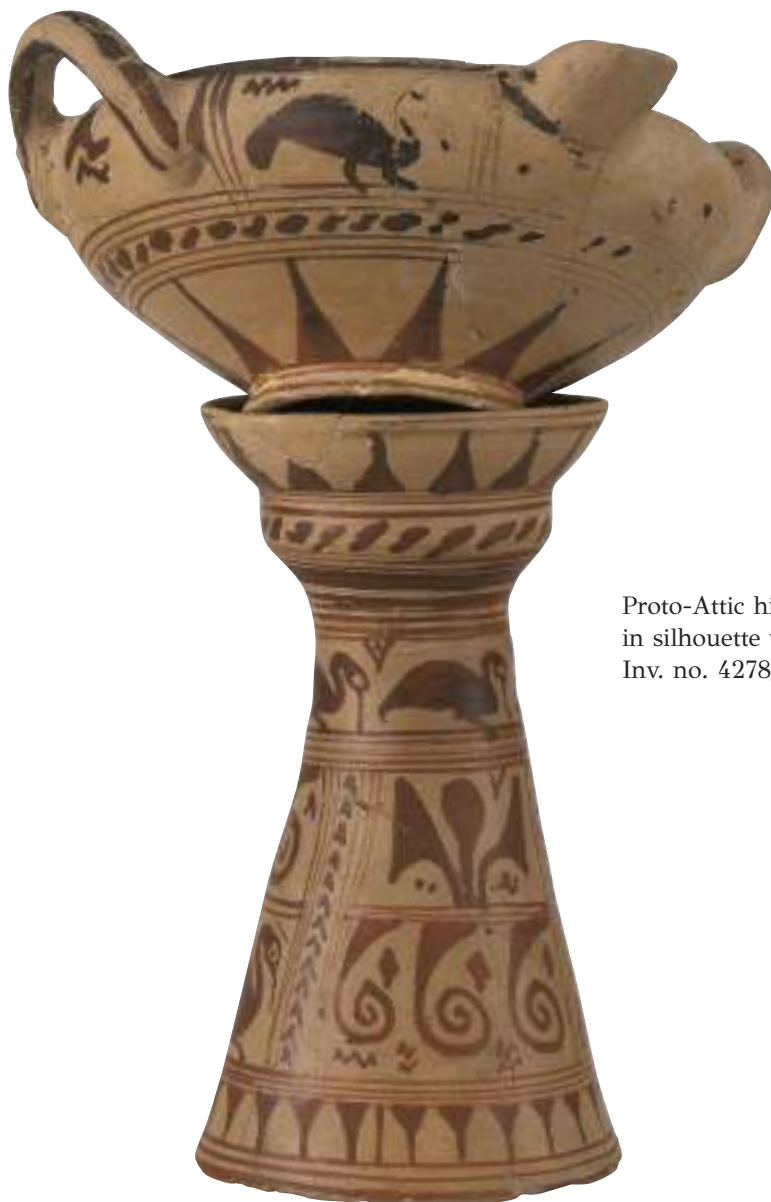
The new element found in 7th century BC grave goods, both in the tombs of the Kerameikos and throughout Attica down to 580 BC was the penetration of Corinthian vase painting, which Athenian vase painters soon adapted to the tastes of their Athenian clients. The first major artist of the new, Black Figure style recognised in the late 7th century vase painting was the Nessos Painter, conventionally named for a scene depicting the battle of Hercules and the centaur Nessos on the neck of a tall (1.22 m.) amphora.

Another characteristic of this century reflected in the cemetery’s grave goods were the artistic winds of change blowing in from the East, whose passage literally swept away the severe Geometric style and established the 7th century BC as the “Orientalizing” period. Indeed around 700/690 BC, Attica and the entire Greek world came under the pronounced influence of Eastern elements: the animal and plant kingdom, teeming with life, unfolds over the surface of calyx-shaped vases, displacing geometric designs, the vertical and horizontal axes that had contributed to the creation of a completely structured art, and perhaps a structured society as well. Now, in addition to the actual natural world, other animals—the lion, the cock (“Persian bird”)—and plants, including the lotus flower and others enter Greek art. But it would be unfair to Greek artists to consider this imitation slavish. The above elements were soon incorporated into well-known Greek forms and transformed so as to acquire a Greek quality, as happened in Attica with Proto-Attic vase painting.

Attic amphora by the Nessos Painter. One of the finest and earliest specimens of Attic black-figure vase painting. On the neck, Heracles slaying the centaur Nessos, which had earlier attacked Deianeira. On the body, Perseus pursued by Medusa and her sisters. The names are identified by inscriptions. Ca. 610 BC. Inv. no. NAM 1002.



Skyphos with a black figure representation of comasts-musicians.
First quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 2869.



Proto-Attic high-footed stand and louterion. Decoration consists of birds
in silhouette with plump bodies and stylized floral motifs. Mid-7th c. BC.
Inv. no. 4278/4279.







Skyphos of the early black-figure style with a representation of a man and a panther on one side and of comas on the other. Ca. 600 BC. Inv. no. 2868.



Kotyle whose body is covered with successive lines and a calyx motif on its base. The decoration imitates the Proto-Corinthian style. Ca. 700 BC. Inv. no. 1268.



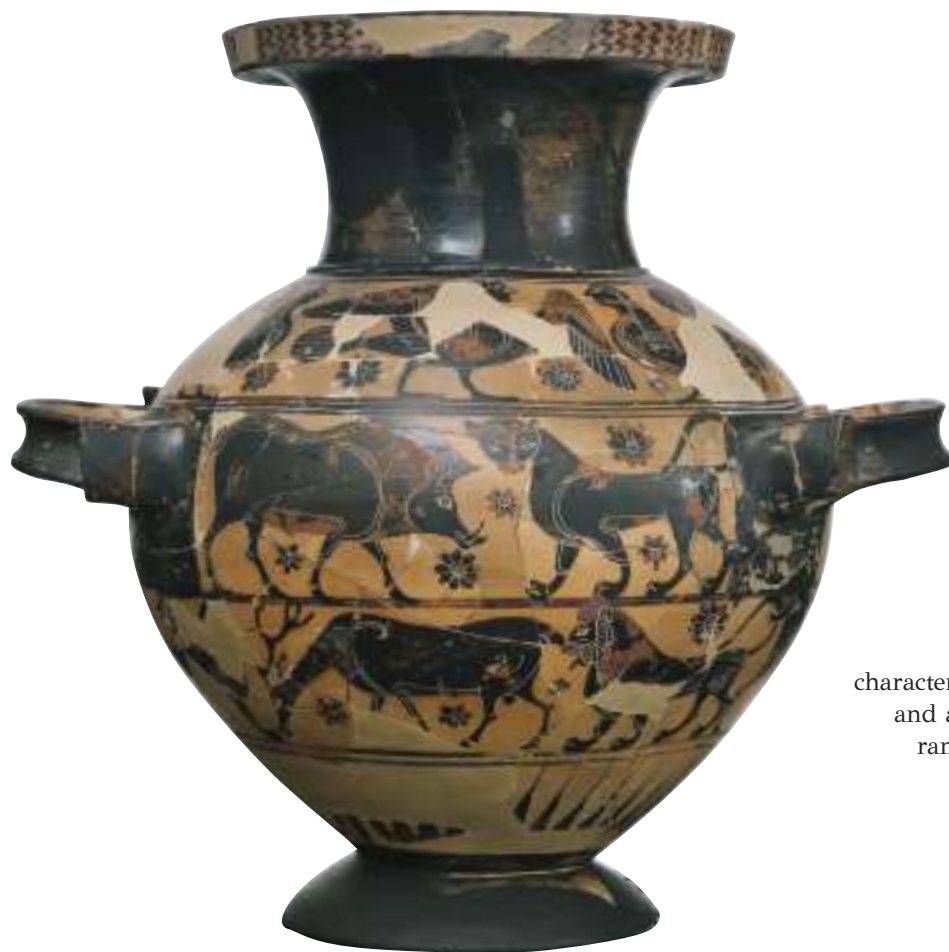
Proto-Attic kotyle of the early black-figure style with a sphinx and a lion. Mid-7th c. BC. Inv. no. 134.



Proto-Attic oinochoe with a representation of does on the neck and a calyx motif on the base. First half of the 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 6111.



Black-figure mug with sphinxes and lions on the upper part and panthers with boars in the lower zone. Sphinxes and lions were tomb guardians par excellence. First quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 42.



Early black-figure hydria with characteristic decorative zones of sirens and animals (panthers, lions, boars, rams, and deer). Early 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 2867.



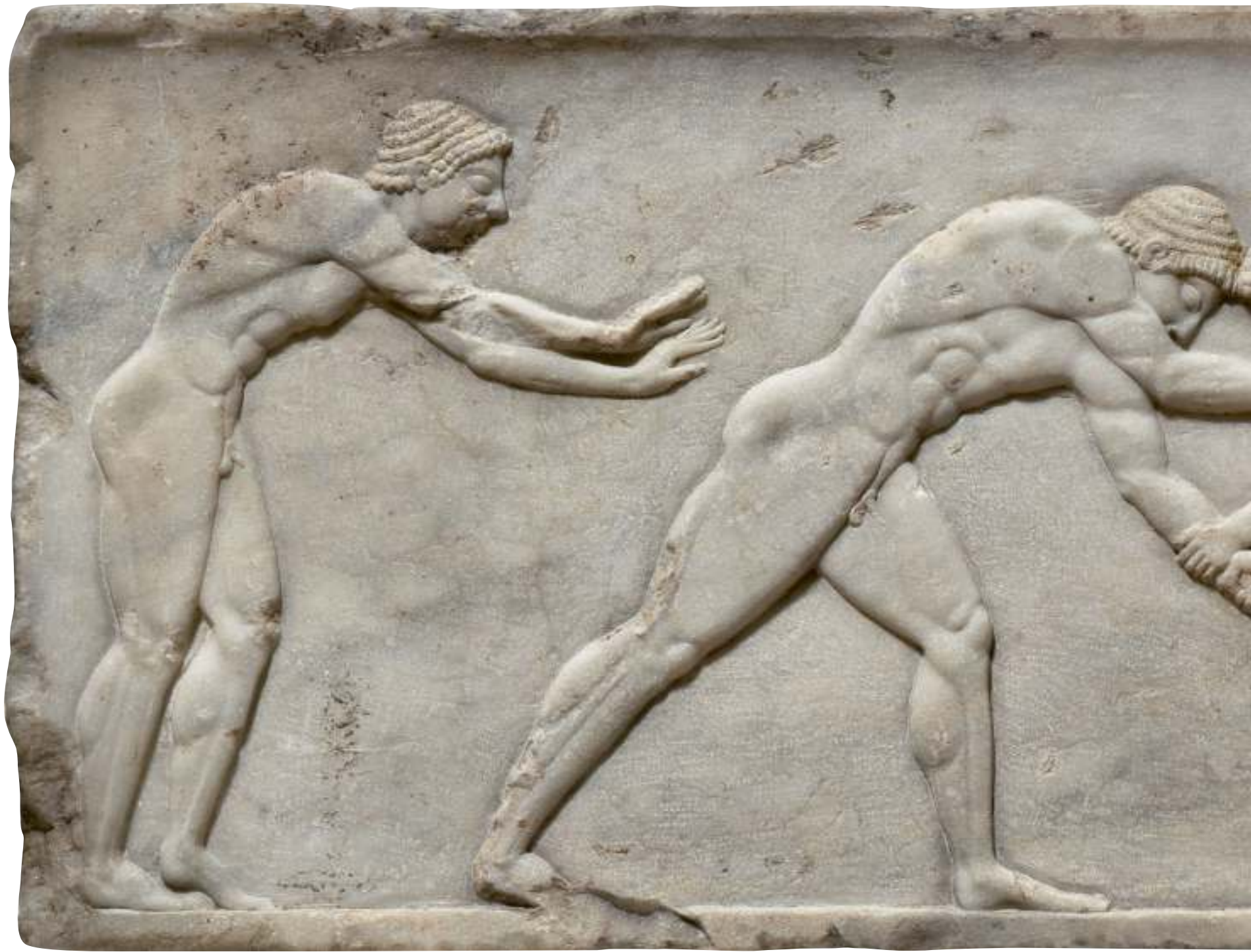
Black-figure alabastron with a cock.
Early 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 3703.



Black-figure pyxis. Scene of panthers and
rams on the lid, and of a duck and hens on
the body. Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. 687.

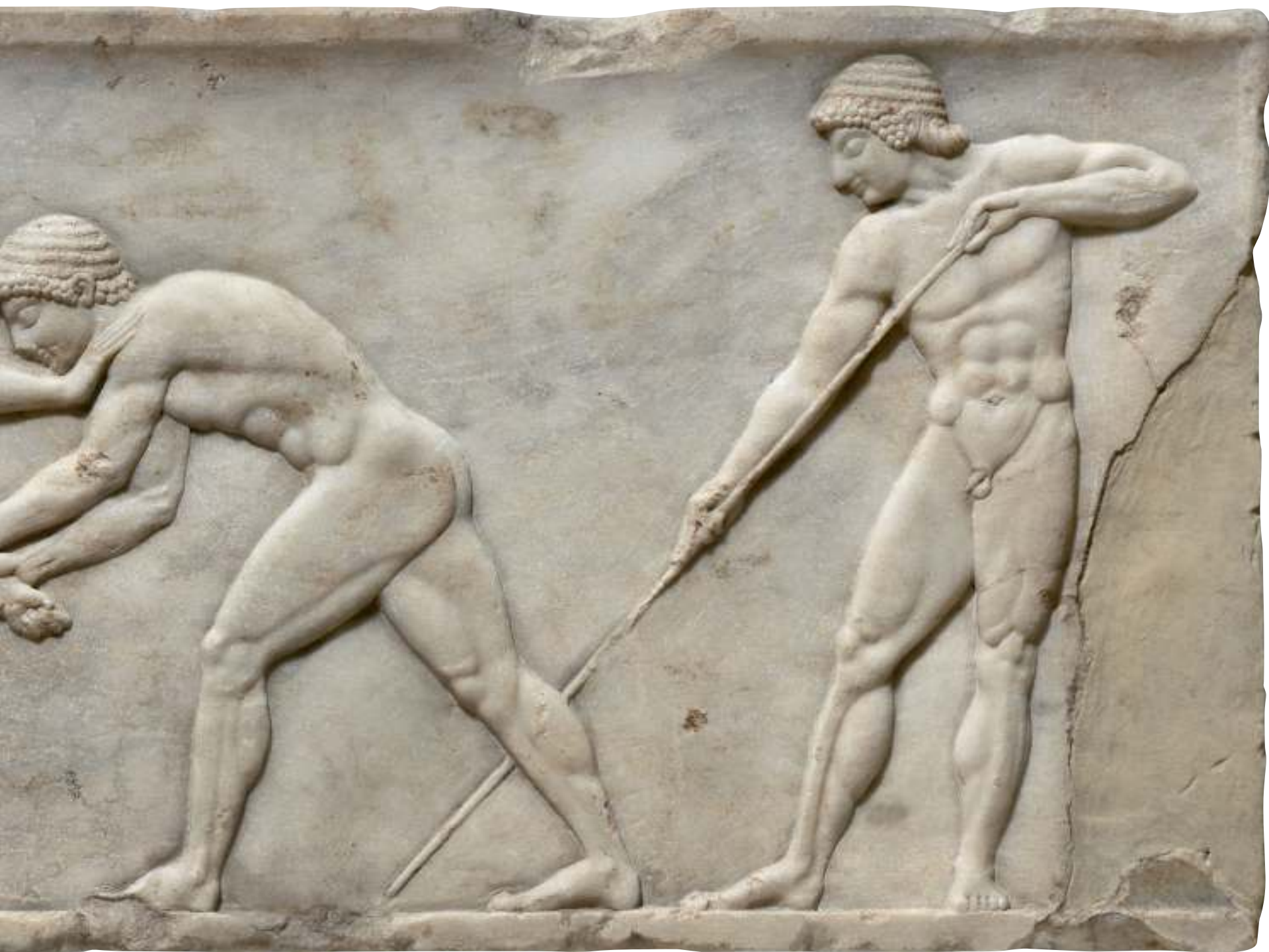


Early black-figure tripod pyxis.
Representation of a siren, a creature
with the body of a bird and a human
—normally, a woman's— head.
First quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 44.



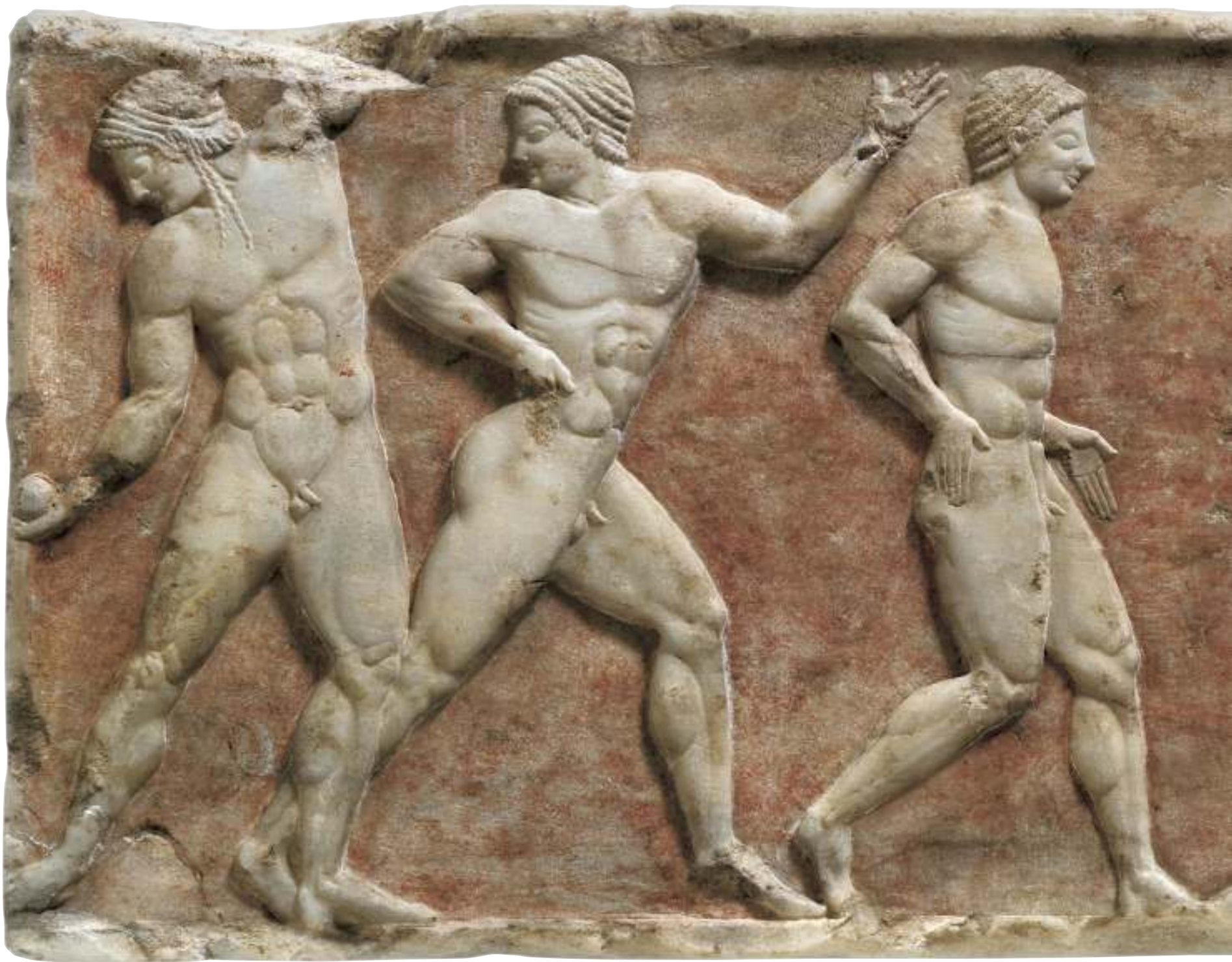
Statue base with relief scenes on three sides. Found built into the Themistoclean wall.

SIDE A: Palaistra scene, probably in one of the three gymnasia that had been built in Athens in the 6th c. BC. In the center, a wrestling scene. Ca. 525-500 BC. Inv. no. NAM 3476.









SIDE B of the base. Palaistra scene: six athletes playing a tnam “ball game” (*episkyros sphairas*).
The figures stand out against the background, which retains its original red.







SIDE C of the base. Scene from daily life: four young men, probably idlers, are responsible for a tough and premeditated dog-and-cat fight. Here too the red background lends emphasis to the semi-nude figures. The artist (the same for all three sides) was especially adept at the precise rendering of nude bodies and the rich drapery folds of garments.







Base of a grave stele with a relief procession of horsemen moving to the left, probably connected with the celebration of the Panathenaic festival or with funerary games. The different stance of each horse and rider lends vitality to the representation. Found in tower A of the Dipylon. Ca. 560 BC. Inv. no. P 1001.



Upper section of a grave stele depicting a pugilist preserving the head in profile looking right and part of the right hand wearing boxing gloves (*himantes*). 560-550 BC. Inv. no. P 1054.



Upper section of a grave stele depicting a young discus-thrower preserving the face in profile, part of the hair, the left hand and the discus. Found in 1873 built into the Themistoclean wall. It has been connected with the base on pp. 94-95. Ca. 560 BC. Inv. no. NAM 38.





Marble statue of a horseman from a funerary monument; it may have belonged to the base pictured below or a similar one.



Marble base of a funerary sculpture, perhaps of a horseman with the votive inscription: [Σ]ΕΜΑ ΤΟΔΕ, ΧΣΕΝΟΦΑΝΤΕ ΠΑΤΕΡ ΣΟ <Ι> ΘΕΚΕ ΘΑΝΟΝΤΙ ΣΟΦΙΛΟΣ, ΗΟΙ ΠΕΝΘΟΣ ΘΕΚΑΣ ΑΠΟΦΘΙΜΕΝΟΣ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΚΛΕΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΣΕΝ, by which his father addresses him: "This monument, Xenophantos, your father Sophilos erected for the deep mourning you caused by your loss (death). It was made by Aristokles". Last quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. I 389. (Page 99 UPPER RIGHT: the inscription on the base.)



Marble inscribed base of a funerary statue-kouros; traces of the soles of the feet are discernible on the smaller inlaid plinth. According to the inscription, ΑΙΣΧΡΟ ΤΟ ΖΩΙΛΟ ΣΑΜΙΟ, the monument was dedicated to Aischros, son of Zoilos from Samos. From the Piraeus Gate area. Last quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. I 189.



Marble statue base preserving three of its sides. Found together with the previous base built into the Themistoclean wall. On one side (the front) are six youths from prominent clans practicing a game involving a ball and curved sticks (like modern-day hockey). On the two side faces are depictions of a chariot and charioteer and a series of hoplites, where the first has dismounted in the apobates agon, a contest connected with the mythical King Erichthonios and performed at the Panathenaia. Ca. 500 BC. Inv. no. NAM 3477.







The late Daedalic marble kouros from the Sacred Gate area (found in 2002). It probably belonged to the workshop that made the contemporary kouros today in the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the kouros head on p. 106 in the National Archaeological Museum. Inv. no. P 1700.









Head of a late Daedalic colossal kouros, from the area of the south tower of the Dipylon.
It belonged to the workshop of the Dipylon sculptor, who possibly also sculpted the kouros shown on the previous pages.
Ca. 610-600 BC. Inv. no. NAM 3372.









Reclining marble lion from the Sacred Gate area. Found with the kouros on p. 102 and the sphinx on p. 114 just below the surface of the pavement of the Sacred Way, and apparently used shortly before the construction of the Themistoclean wall (478 BC.) as material for filling and configuring the bed of the Eridanos and the pavement of the Sacred Way. Traces of carriage wheels are visible, primarily on the lion's body and its plinth. The artist has created in a humorous vein a tame, harmless lion, practically a lion-dog, who does not at all resemble other ancient lions, the tomb guardians of noble Athens we are familiar with. Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. P 1699.









Crouching marble sphinx, the finial of a grave column, from the Sacred Gate area. Found in 2002 together with the kouros and lion shown on the previous pages. Here, the sculptor has carved a sweet, luscious face full of vitality and a taut, leonine body with small wings, doubtless wishing to indicate a youthful sphinx, which probably “signified” the tomb of an Athenian aristocrat who died young. Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. P 1697.



THE MONUMENTS

The south bank of the Eridanos was once more inundated with graves. Cremations and burials regularly coexisted; for a short time slightly after 700 BC, cremations actually outnumbered burials. However, the cremation process was now differentiated, since the dead were burned inside rather than outside their tombs. Thus the pit, the cinerary amphora inside the pit, and the large funeral vase—the tomb marker—fell into disuse. Grave goods included vases (but not weapons) or jewellery placed around the deceased or in offering trenches or pits, which were always outside the tomb. Offering trenches often extended to a length of 12 metres, perhaps so that many offerings could be made simultaneously, while they were no wider than 0.60 metres. On top of the trenches, wooden grills served for the placement of vases and offerings. There were also influences from the Ionian coast in the configuration of graves: tombs and offering trenches were covered by a tumulus of ever-increasing size, atop which was often set a small rectangular structure, while a krater or stone monument set in a base always surmounted the mound. The vase with a polychrome sphinx and the two monumental Proto-Archaic kouroi from the gates area mentioned above may have served such a purpose. From the early 6th century BC the human being appears with special emphasis not only as an idealised form, but with a marked presence and actual perfect proportions, as an overarching value in a divinely-inspired world.

In addition to the numerous tombs belonging to the settlement of citizens, at least three large stand-alone tumuli represented the class of aristocrats and distinguished personages. The earliest of these, which belongs to the seventh century BC, is the circular burial precinct on the north shore of the Eridanos near the Sacred Gate, on a height created by the silting of the river in the third millennium BC. Beneath the tumulus were successive layers of tombs of the 7th, 6th and 5th centuries BC, while in the 4th century it was filled in once more and demarcated by a stone enclosure wall. According to scholars the tumulus was connected with the burial site of an old Athenian aristocratic family identified with the *genos* of the Kerykes. To identify the precinct, information was drawn from the traveler Pausanias (I.36.3), who relates that he saw the tomb of Anthemokritos just outside the Sacred Gate on the road to Piraeus. Anthemokritos was the herald at the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries and lived shortly before the Peloponnesian War. Pericles sent Anthemokritos to Megara in 431 BC, to accuse the Megarians of impiety for cultivating fields belonging to the Eleusinian sanctuary. Anthemokritos however was slain, and his assassination was attributed to the Megarians. Assuming that Anthemokritos was buried beside his ancestors, the circular precinct was identified as the burial site of the aristocratic family of the Kerykes.

At the point where the Sacred Way branches out a few metres west of the sanctuary of the Tritopatores (the “ancestors”), there was another tumulus (the West tumulus) with a diameter of around thirty metres and height of five metres created in the mid-6th century BC after a succession of burials inside funerary precincts. Here excavations revealed that below a large 6th century BC tumulus and exactly at its center, a large and unique burial structure had been constructed in the 7th century. Of unbaked brick, it measured 6 x 3 metres, had a level roof, and red-plastered walls. It contained a cremation grave deep in the ground. The large offering trench belonging to the structure (length: 10 m.) produced a great amount of very lovely and well-fired

pottery, a particularly new style and genre characterised by vases with exclusively funereal function, distinguished for their multiple plastic compositions. An incense-burner in the form of a seated sphinx in the round represents a unique find in the Kerameikos.

As was to be expected, Solon did not satisfy the demands of everyone, and irregularities became apparent almost immediately after his departure from Athens. Following a short period of anarchy around 570 BC, three “*staseis*”, i.e. parties were formed: the *Paralioi* (the party of the coast), the *Pedieis* (the party of the plains), and the *Diakrioi* (the mountaineers’ party). The leader of the mountaineers was Peisistratos, who was connected with the extremely old clan of the Medontidai, which had its seat at Brauron. With the help of the lower classes, the noble and energetic Peisistratos succeeded in taking power in 561 BC, and despite difficulties and fluctuations, he continued in power until his death in 527 BC when his son Hippias (mentioned as “a politician by nature and sensible man”) assumed power with his brother Hipparchos (known as “immature, amorous, and fond of the Muses”) until the latter’s murder in 514 BC by Harmodios and Aristogeiton and Hippias’ own flight to Persia. According to Aristotle, in contrast to other tyrants Peisistratos ruled with moderation, more like an elected archon than as a tyrant, and Attica experienced tremendous prosperity during his years in power. He promoted and boosted the production of olive oil and wine. And in fact, vessels for these liquid products found in the Kerameikos are quite numerous. He renewed the laws of Solon on the prohibition of costly funerals, which had apparently fallen into disuse. It was chiefly Peisistratos who was linked directly or indirectly with important reforms in the worship of the gods and in ritual, with public works projects (an aqueduct and fountains) and contributed decisively to the transmission and recording of the Homeric epics. He built the “Hekatompedon” on the Acropolis, planned a second temple, and enhanced the celebration of the Great Panathenaia, which had begun at an earlier date (566 BC) with musical, poetry, and athletic contests. Handsome examples of the so-called Panathenaic amphorae, filled with oil and awarded as prizes to the victors in the Panathenaic Games, have been found in tombs in the Kerameikos. He introduced the cult of Zeus Eleuthereus/Eleutherios from the settlement of this name in Attica with the help of a priest of the god, Pegasos. There was a temple dedicated to the god on the *Dromos*, the road leading to the Academy of Plato. There are a good number of scenes of the Dionysian *thiasos* and of Dionysus holding a kantharos on vases dating to the second half of the 6th century BC.

In an offering pit belonging to a 6th century BC cist grave beneath the West tumulus (see above), a lekane (ritual basin) by the painter Lydos feature a male mourning dance which gradually came to influence the dramaturgy of Dionysian encounters. The figures are rendered in black and all the details of faces and clothing are incised. We cannot exclude the possibility that the tall poros grave stele of 560 BC depicting in profile a youthful nude male with long hair, carrying a sword and club (found built into the defensive wall) stood as a grave marker atop the above-mentioned cist grave. This is one of the oldest Greek stelai with a relief representation of a human being. As a form of grave marker, carved stelai date back (at least in the Greek region) to early Mycenaean times, with the famous grave stelai of Grave Circle B at Mycenae. The stele mentioned above could be hinting at the fact that around 560/550 BC Aristion, a friend of Peisistratos, managed to extract a resolution by the *Ekklesia tou Demou* (the Assembly) calling for Peisistratos to be protected by a body



of “club-bearers” (i.e., a bodyguard) drawn mostly from the lower class of *thetes*.

In the 6th and 5th centuries BC, a cemetery extended over the West tumulus and the neighbouring hill to the south with in excess of 100 graves, probably belonging to well-off citizens. A significant percentage of these belonged to children.

The German excavators of the west tumulus believed that it was the burial site of the well known clan of the Alkmeonidai from a monument connected to this clan, viz. the brick funerary building found on the southwest slope of the tumulus, which admittedly presents very unusual architectural features and contained rich, interesting grave goods. The structure is large (15 x 15 m., 3.5 m. in height) with a stone façade of poros blocks and the other sides of unbaked brick preserved in places in fairly good condition. This building contained many tombs among which may be singled out a sarcophagus, a place for the consignment of a bronze lebes with delicate incised decoration, containing the remains of the deceased wrapped in silk cloth. Beside it was a pit containing abundant pottery offerings of the late 5th century BC. An inscribed marble trapeza (table) of the late 4th century BC bearing the inscription “Hipparete, daughter of Alcibiades, from the deme of Skambonidai” (ΙΠΠΑΡΕΤΗ ΑΛΚΙΒΙΑΔΟΥ ΣΚΑΜΒΩΝΙΔΟΥ) was also discovered there. The excavators believed Hipparete was the granddaughter of the famous general and politician Alcibiades, who was murdered in Phrygia, and in all probability the bronze lebes inside the large brick structure contained his transferred relics. It may be recalled that Alcibiades belonged on his mother’s side to the great clan of the Alkmeonidai, and thus there is a strong probability that by virtue of its direct proximity, the tumulus belonged to this same clan.

Large porous grave stele depicting a nude man holding a sword and cane. This stele was previously called the “stele of Solon” because it was believed to depict the well-known Athenian lawgiver and poet. Ca. 560 BC. Inv. no. P 1133.

The South Hill was nothing more than a tumulus (diameter ~ 30 m., height ~ 5 m.) comparable to the previous one, which was built near the end of the 6th century BC to cover two large cist graves. It incorporated a rocky slope rising on the south. One of the graves had been looted in antiquity, but the second held the skeleton of a man nearly two meters tall who in place of a coffin had a beautiful *kline* (couch) of ivory and electron, parts of which have survived. Its form of decoration is known from Corinthian and Attic vase painting. The exotic grave goods for the deceased led to the supposition that the grave was that of a non-Athenian, probably a (foreign) ambassador. It seems no accident that later stelai for ambassadors were erected on the northern periphery of this hill in adherence to the tradition that from the time of Peisistratos heralds and ambassadors were buried at this site. Nor have scholars considered the location of the neighbouring circular burial precinct coincidental, if in fact the precinct was the family tomb for the clan of the Kerykes (“Heralds”).

It was largely practical reasons (i.e. lack of space) and less the laws of Solon and Peisistratos that were responsible for the limitation on the size of tumuli in the 6th century BC and the creation of individual tombs. Offering trenches rarely appear. Cremations were rare, and burials once more predominated, with run-of-the-mill, practically mass-production grave goods. The commonest grave gifts are now lekythoi and Panathenaic amphorae with black-figure scenes derived from mythology and athletic-martial life.

The oldest funerary monument connected with the *Dromos* was a 6th century tumulus (diameter 8 m.) which is today poorly preserved. It had been constructed to cover a cist grave about which we know little since it remains unpublished. The grave was later reused for the burial in a bronze ballot box, apparently of an Athenian who died at some distance from Athens, perhaps in the naval battle of Salamis.



Imported Corinthian trefoil oinochoe with a representation of large tripod cauldrons on its body and a calyx-form motif on its base. Bronze lebetes were the commonest prize for victories in games and votives at the newly-founded Panhellenic sanctuaries. Early 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 1267.





Two views of a skyphoid krater painted in the “Proto-Attic style” with Orientalizing elements. It was used as a grave marker. The central panel is dominated by a large sphinx with colorful feathers and incised details; in the other metopes are characteristic designs used in the new style, the step-pattern and spiralforn triangles. Third quarter of the 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 801.



Corinthian olpe with foliate decoration and “friezes” of bulls and lions, the two most powerful animals admired by Athenians in the Archaic period and chosen as their tomb guardians. Third quarter of the 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 68. (Detail on following page.)

Corinthian olpe featuring successive “friezes” of animals and birds. Third quarter of the 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 2789. (Detail on following page.)







Clay incense-burner shaped like a sphinx in the round. The slender body, thin legs and peculiar Daedalic features of the face betray clear Egyptian influence and an imitation of metal prototypes. But at the same time they also reveal the persistence of Geometric prototypes. From an offering trench which yielded a large number of vases broken during the ritual of the *triakostia* (i.e., that which took place thirty days after burial). In accordance with burial practices, the vases offered were broken in the offering trenches, so that –now “useless”– they might accompany the dead to the Underworld. Second quarter of the 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 144.



Black figure lekanis with plastic decoration consisting of two mourners seated on the handles. Siren and animals. First quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 41.



Sizable trefoil jug with unusual plastic decoration: three female figures are holding the spout; the vertical band handle concludes in a large flower, and two snakes are emerging from the interior of the vase. The entire vase is covered in white, atop which may be discerned on the neck a red, roaring, twisting lion and on the body (now just discernible) a prothesis scene and mourners. Mid-7th c. BC. Inv. no. 149.



Proto-Attic jug. The handle is surrounded along its height by a plastic snake and surmounted by a small mourner modeled in the round. The lower body is decorated by spiral tendrils, spiraliform triangles and step-pattern; the upper body shows a battle scene around the body of a fallen warrior. Second quarter of the 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 73.

Black-figure plate depicting the mythical duel between Achilles and Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons. The battle is initially undecided, but at the last moment when the Homeric hero succeeds in dealing the fatal blow, Eros is lurking nearby, and Achilles falls in love with the queen in dramatic fashion. Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. 1690.





Large Proto-Attic lebetes with high perforated feet; lotus flowers (left) and griffin protomes (right) on their rims. Second quarter of the 7th c. BC. Inv. nos. 147, 148.



Proto-Attic high-footed kylix with plastic lotus flowers on its rim. Second quarter of the 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 138.



Proto-Attic high-footed censer with lotus leaves on its rim. Second quarter of the 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 141.



Large Proto-Attic lebes with high perforated foot and plastic protomes of cocks on its rim. The red coloring is preserved atop the white coating. Second quarter of the 7th c. BC. Inv. no. 150.

Black-figure lekanis with a representation of two groups of mourners, primarily mature men but also young ones, probably professionals (“leaders of the lament”), moving in opposite directions to meet in the center near the couch of the deceased. His close relatives are beside the dead man. The simple paratactic disposition of figures stresses the dramatic import of the moment.

Mature work by the vase painter Lydos, an Asian metic in Athens.

Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. 1687.





Black-figure lekythos with the god Dionysos and Satyrs dancing.
Ca. 500-490 BC. Inv. no. 667.







Attic black-figure amphora of the Panathenaic type, with a highly burnished black glaze. Also used for the burial of a toddler. On one side a fully-armed warrior is shown ready to ride. The superb drawing, precise incisions and monumental simplicity of the figures make this vase one of the masterpieces of Attic black-figure vase painting. On the other side of the amphora a flute-girl leads a troupe of dancers (?). Last quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 48.



Terracotta head in the round from a figurine of a mourner. Mid-6th c. BC.
Inv. no. T 831 - 1985.

Figurine of a seated female figure wearing a necklace.
Third quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. T 832/682.



Clumsily-fashioned terracotta figurine of a woman baking bread
on which the colors are strikingly well-preserved. A rare depiction
of daily life that probably indicates the profession of the dead
woman when she was alive. Last quarter of the 6th c. BC.
Inv. no. T 835/683.



Detail (microscopic) of a piece of the fabrics found in the bronze cinerary urn. The fabric is very delicate and simply woven, with the weft threads covering the warp. The weft threads were dyed with porphyra from shellfish.



Large bronze lebes decorated with finely-executed engraved tongue and guilloche decoration; it held the remains of the deceased wrapped in silk. Found in a sarcophagus in a mortuary building that contained many graves. Nearby was found a marble inscribed "table" with the inscription $\text{ΙΠΠΑΡΕΤΗ ΑΛΚΙΒΙΑΔΟΥ ΣΚΑΜΒΩΝΙΔΟΥ}$ (Hipparete, daughter of Alcibiades from the deme of Skambonidai). Hipparete has been identified as the granddaughter of the famous general and politician Alcibiades, who belonged on his mother's side to the great clan of the Alkmeonidai, and who was murdered in Phrygia at the instigation of the Thirty Tyrants. It is thus very probable that the bronze lebes within the large brick building contained his relics. Late 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 1845.



Red-figure askos depicting a youth and a beautiful (inscription “KAAH”, i.e. “fair”) young slave girl engaged in love-making. Last quarter of the 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 1063.





Black-figure kylix with a scene of a miniature winged female figure in the zone below the rim that could be interpreted as an *eidolon*. First quarter of the 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 705.

Red-figure cup depicting a youth at a symposium. First quarter of the 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 4003.





Foldout of alabastron 2713: an ephebe approaches a seated young woman who is spinning to offer her an erotic gift, in this case a hare (as sample of his hunting prowess); on the other side, a slightly older youth is tenderly hugging a girl.



Red-figure alabastron with scenes of youths in love.
490 BC. Inv. no. 2713.

Alabastron with black decoration consisting of a delicate checkerboard pattern alternating with palmettes.
Ca. 500 BC. Inv. no. 11260.



Alabaster perfume containers with natural veining. This unusual material gave its name to an entire category of pottery and stone vases. 5th c. BC.
Inv. nos. 1586, 10478.



Ivory couch, elaborately decorated with inlaid elements. Its legs are configured as antithetical / facing palmettes, while their upper parts end in Aeolic column capitals. The influence of Eastern Ionian elements is obvious both in the couch as well as in the contents of the tomb in which it was found. Third quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. HW87.





Black-figure lekythos with a warrior's farewell scene.
Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. 1700.

Red-figure wedding lebes with a representation of an
aristocratic Athenian woman with her handmaids
in the women's quarters. First half of the 5th c. BC.
Inv. no. 1060.





Red-figure lebes with a representation of a Nike and a slave girl. First half of the 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 1014.



Black-figure psykter (a vase for cooling wine) with a komast scene. From the excavations in the Kerameikos area during construction of the Athens Metro. Early 5th c. BC. Inv. no. A 15242.



Red-figure lekythos with a farewell scene, by the Klugmann Painter. Third quarter of the 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 15281.





Red-figure cylindrical pyxis with a representation of Nereids dancing lightly. A Nereid, a dolphin and a phoenix flank an altar. Ca. 480 BC. Inv. no. 1008.



Black-figure alabastron. On the white background there unfolds a scene of Peleus' abduction of the nymph Thetis, in the presence of the centaur Cheiron. Small lions and phoenixes lend further support to the mythological scene. Ca. 500 BC. Inv. no. 1531.







Black-figure plate. On the interior, a representation of a priestess (?) holding a plemochoe, a cult vase; she has left her heavy himation on a stool and is moving rapidly towards the right. Ca. 510 BC. Inv. no. 692.



Black-figure plate. On the interior, a large apotropaic head of a male Medusa, surrounded by a mythological scene. Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. 3128.

Black-figure lekythos with a representation of wrestlers. Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. 1472.





Small stylized figurine of a woman grinding nuts in a mortar. Black paint covers the figure and the utensil; the nuts are rendered in added white. Ca. 500 BC. Inv. no. T 815.



Black-figure lekythos with tall cylindrical body. Representation of a flute-player with cheerful dolphins carrying armed hoplites on their backs. An unusual scene referring to a theatrical event in which the chorus of hoplites sang atop dolphins. Ca. 490 BC. Inv. no. 1486.



Bichrome mesomphalic phiale. Ca. 500 BC. Inv. no. 1419.







Black-figure lekythos with a scene of Theseus and the Minotaur.
Last quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 3129.



Black-figure lekythos with a scene of a race with
athletes and the man who will present the prize.
Last quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 707.



Black-figure lekythos with a scene of runners and a horseman.
Last quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 1552.



Red-figure lekythos with a representation of maidservants making the necessary preparations for the wedding ceremony in the women's quarters. Last quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 995.







Black-figure tripod pyxis with the well-known mythological scene of the birth of Athena. The representations on the other two sides are faded. Ca. 510 BC. Inv. no. 1590.



Black-figure tripod pyxis with mythological scenes. On p. 159: Above, the Dioskouroi (?). Center: the abduction of Thetis by Peleus. Below: spinning wool. Ca. 510 BC. Inv. no. 1591.







Black-figure pelike with a mythological scene from the *Odyssey*. In order to escape from Polyphemos, Odysseus hid under the belly of a ram. Ca. 510 BC. Inv. no. 4049.



Black-figure hydria with a scene of a chariot race complete with four-horse chariot, charioteer, and rider. Very fine drawing with incisions and violet color which depicts with precision the details on the figures, particularly the horses. By the workshop of Lysippides. Ca. 510 BC. Inv. no. 2987.



Red-figure hydria with a scene in the women's quarters. A beautiful Athenian aristocrat receives advice from a youthful Eros. Mid-5th c. BC. Inv. no. 3729.



Red-figure hydria with a scene in the women's quarters: in the company of her maidservants, an Athenian noblewoman prepares for her wedding ceremony. Mid-5th c. BC. Inv. no. 2875.



THE TRITOPATREION SANCTUARY

Near the entrance to the city when coming from the west and exactly at the fork of the Sacred Way and the road leading to the harbor of Mounichia in Piraeus, otherwise known as the “Street of Tombs”, was the so-called Tritopatreion, a sacred precinct founded in the 6th century BC for the worship of the *Tritopatores*. The identity of this trapezoidal-shaped structure, the foundations of which are today preserved to a maximum height of 1.30 metres, has been passed down to us thanks to the stone boundary markers built in to its walls: on an archaic inscription in the center of the south wall we read “Tritopatreion Sanctuary” (HIEPON TPITOPATPEON), meaning that it was founded as a sanctuary (or at least as an open-air sacred precinct) in the 6th century BC. At the north and south corners there were late 5th century marble boundary stones bearing the inscription “Boundary stone of the Tritopatreion Sanctuary Abaton” (HOPOS HIEPO TPITOPATPEON ABATON). A third stone also datable to the 5th century BC whose upper part containing the inscription has been worn down by wheels is sunken in the ground about twenty meters further east, at the point where the two roads meet. The word [AB]ATON can just barely be made out. Before dealing with the cult of the *Tritopatores*, we should stress the following: the sacred precinct was officially established in the mid-6th century BC (though there may have been an earlier 7th century sanctuary in the same place) at a site that was “pure” (undefiled), had never been employed for burial or other uses, and was originally marked by the poros boundary stone, the direction of whose writing indicates that it was originally freestanding and set vertically in the ground. In addition, the sanctuary overlooked the western entrance to the city and was the center around which the archaic tumuli developed, and it largely determined the course of the two roads, the Sacred Way and the so-called “Street of Tombs”. Excavation has shown that it was organised and became a building in the late 5th century BC, incorporating into the stone crepis for its brick walls the epigraphic evidence mentioned above. The sanctuary was also an abaton, i.e. no one except for priests could enter it.

The Tritopatreion sanctuary at the intersection of the Sacred Way, seen from the Southeast.



The earliest of the boundary stones that was incorporated in the south wall of the Tritopatreion. It stands as the first testimony to the cult of the *Tritopatores* in Athens. End of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. I 294.



Red-figure chous with a representation of a small boy crawling towards a prochous. Ca. 450 BC. Inv. no. 11384.



Red-figure chous with a representation of a Nike-maiden leading a four-horse chariot; probably a ritual activity of the Anthesteria festival. Ca. 430 BC. Inv. no. 2711.

But who were the *Tritopatores* or *Tritopatreis*? One view holds that they were worshipped as *Fanakes* (the plural of *Fanax*), who in Athens were the twin brothers of Helen, Kastor and Polydeukes. According to Pausanias there was a sanctuary dedicated to the Dioskouroi, the *Anakeion*, on the north slope of the Acropolis. It is noteworthy that from the offering trench of a Classical burial structure of the late 5th century BC contemporary with the building of the Tritopatreion, situated far to the west at the modern-day boundary of the archaeological site, we can admire in the Kerameikos Museum a red-figure hydria with a superbly-done scene of Helen in the arms of Eros and her brothers by the painter Meidias (see below p. 321). In ancient Greek literature, two groups of three beings are mentioned as “Tritopatores”: Kottos, Briareus and Gyges, and Alalkeides, Protokreon and Protokles (with particular emphasis on the prefix *proto-*, i.e. “beginning, birth”). These names appear in Hesiod’s *Theogony* and are identified as the Hekatonkheires, the children of Heaven and Earth, mythical beings with fifty heads and a hundred arms. The association with mythical beings or heroes signifies no more than the persistent effort by 6th century BC Athenians to confirm the age-old belief that they were indigenous. This is why the worship of the “fathers of the third generation” (i.e. great-grandfathers), the ancestral cult of the forefather-founders and their souls, was an indispensable component and cohesive element for the gene and for Solonian and above all, Peisistratean society. And so the founding of a *temenos-abaton* to symbolise eternity, the everlasting cycle of life with the beginning of the world (Gaia, the Hekatonkheires), birth, light (the Dioskouri, Apollo), death and invocation of the gods of earth and light for a new beginning through sacrifices, libations, and offerings to the dead would certainly have been crucial for a cemetery like the Kerameikos.

The Athenian Phanodemos (3rd century BC) relates that the Athenians prayed to the *Tritopatores*: “May the child born to me on the third (twenty-third) day of the month be male and not female”. In other words, they wished to have sons, not daughters. Keeping in mind this testimony and the archaeological finds from the east wall of the sanctuary, which included miniature vases of the chous type (a vase exclusively for young children with child-appropriate scenes) and kantharoi (symposium vases), a number of scholars believe that there were invocations at the sanctuary to the forefathers and offerings for the begetting of male offspring. That the sanctuary was an *abaton* means that believers avoided entering lest they suffer harm from its mysterious power. This would support the assumption that in ancient Athen’s official cemetery there was a sanctuary-*abaton* for the cult of the *Tritopatores*, so that the living descendents of those buried there could invoke them to ensure the favor of the ancestral spirits.

THE PERIOD OF DEMOCRACY

Brief history of the ancient city's fortifications

Of all the surviving sections of the walls of ancient Athens in the modern city, visitors can admire the best-preserved and most instructive segment of the fortifications at the archaeological site of the Kerameikos. Inspection and study not only provide information about ancient military practices, siege and defensive techniques, they also teach us history, given that the wall is a monumental “palimpsest” preserving all the marks of the city’s fortunes through history.

The first phase of the wall section preserved in the Kerameikos dates to 478 BC, but this was not the ancient city’s earliest fortification wall. Shortly before the end of the 13th century BC, the naturally fortified rock of the Acropolis where the Mycenaean “palace” had been built was protected by the Cyclopean or “Pelargic” wall well known from the sources (Herodotus 6.137.1; Aristophanes *Birds* 832). A short time later, a second wall in the form of a half-ellipse, the “Pelargic [wall] below the Acropolis” or *Enneapylon* enclosed the western foothills of the rock (Thucydides 2.17.1). Some scholars infer from what Thucydides (1.89.3) and Herodotus (9.13.2) relate that the next fortification wall encompassed the entire city, and was built during the Archaic period as part of the building program of the Tyrants (some attribute its construction to Solon). In their view, this would have been the wall destroyed in the Persian invasion.

After the battle of Plataea in 479 BC and the Persian retreat from mainland Greece, Themistocles, a far-sighted general and talented politician, pressed the Athenians to quickly fortify their city in haste. He simultaneously made use of a diplomatic ploy to deceive the Spartans, who reacted strongly to the prospect of a well-fortified Athens. The decision to construct the new fortification enclosure had probably already been taken in the age of Cleisthenes within the context of more general changes. According to Thucydides, Athens was fortified “with a new wall that included and expanded the city in all directions” (1.93.2). Thucydides also informs us that “the Athenians walled their city in a short time” (only one year). To this day the building shows signs of the haste of its execution; the foundations are laid of stones of all kinds, and in some places not wrought or fitted, but placed just in the order in which they were brought by the different hands; and many grave stelai, too, from tombs and sculptured stones were put in with the rest”. The haste of construction has also been confirmed through excavations.

Detail of the grave stele of Hegeso, daughter of Proxenos.







Marble base of a kouros statue with relief representations on three sides. Here, the right side, showing a fight between a boar and lion. Ca. 510 BC. Found in 1962 together with a number of other archaic bases in the foundations of one of the Dipylon Gate's two south towers. Inv. no. P 1002.

With the rebuilding of the greater Themistoclean wall, the previously-unified deme of *Kerameis*, which had lain outside the walls, was separated into two, the “Inner” and “Outer” Kerameikos. Within the expanded boundaries of the city proper (the *asty*) the new fortifications enclosed many graves which had originally been outside the earlier walls, thus depriving the dead of “that which was lawfully theirs”, i.e. the traditional worship that was their due. Themistocles, as the inspiration for the accelerated construction of Athens’ fortifications, must have drawn the wrath of many of his compatriots whose family tombs and deceased relatives found themselves suddenly inside the limits of the new residential area. Perhaps a majority of the ostracism *ostraka* bearing the name of this Athenian politician and found in large numbers in the fill of the Eridanos river bed reflect just this “wrath” on the part of Themistocles’ fellow-citizens.

Towards the end of the 5th century or early in the 4th, a deep moat was opened in front of the Themistoclean wall, in front of which a wooden enclosure wall was erected, thus completing the fortifications. A number of scholars believe that in the first decade of the Peloponnesian War, the main wall was reinforced by a *proteichisma*, i.e. a lower enclosure wall between 9 and 11 meters in front of the main wall. However, it is more likely that this first outer line of defense only became necessary in the 4th century BC when the Macedonian threat became particularly marked in the city and the requirement to confront new long-range siege machinery became pressing. When the Spartans won the Peloponnesian War in 404 BC and put an end to Athens’ hegemonic ambitions, all the defensive constructions that protected the *asty* proved worthless. The Athenians were forced to destroy these constructions – to the music of flutes, no less (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.2.16-23).

In 394 BC, when the Spartans had finally been expelled from Attica and democracy was restored, Conon used Persian funds to rebuild the walls. The threat from the continually-increasing power of the Macedonians and the new siege methods they employed forced the Athenians to undertake extensive repairs to the walls after Philip II captured Olynthus in 348 BC, and even more so after the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC. Repairs to the wall as well as the rebuilding of the Dipylon and outer wall (*proteichisma*) were undertaken by Demetrius I Poliorcetes in 307-304 BC. Just a few decades later, the walls of Athens were again in need of repairs, probably during the Chremonidean War in 267 BC. This was the final intervention before the siege and destruction of the city in 86 BC by the Roman general Sulla, who managed to invade the *asty* after breaching the walls south of the Kerameikos archaeological site.

The city’s expansion toward the southeast, especially during the reign of the emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD), made it necessary to build a new fortification enclosure that was linked with the Themistoclean wall, but which encompassed the newly-inhabited areas. During subsequent years, Athens’ decline resulted in the abandoning of systematic repairs to the fortification wall. It was only with the rise of the threat of invasions by German tribes that the emperor Valerian (253-260 AD) proceeded to restore the old wall, though to no particular purpose since in 267 AD the Heruli were not hindered by the fortifications from occupying –and ravaging– the city. The few Athenians who remained protected themselves behind a significantly smaller enclosure, the “Herulian Wall”, while the entire surrounding area was abandoned.

During the Early Christian era, Athens began to recover, trading once more on her fame as a major center of education. During the reign of the emperor Justinian the fortifications had nearly returned to their old limits. It may have been this wall the Franks besieged when they occupied Athens in 1204.

The ruins of the ancient wall, which are preserved at many points in the modern city, confirm that its construction technique remained exactly the same for centuries. Its total length was 43 stades (6,450 m.), and along its course opened 15 gates, most of which have been identified through excavation. The position of the gates was determined by the course of roads in use for centuries, long before the construction of the wall; several of these continue to serve modern communication/transportation needs. The entire construction rested on a stone socle (the crepidoma), which had an average width of 2.50 meters and a height of 1 meter. This base consisted of two faces (inner and outer) of finished stone blocks, with an interior fill of earth and smaller stones. The wall's superstructure, composed of mud brick plastered on its outer face, rested on this stable and presumably waterproof construction. The entire system culminated in battlements or a parapet at a final height that ranged between three and eight meters depending on the terrain. Staircases built at intervals in contact with the inner side (i.e., the one facing the city) facilitated climbing the wall, atop which guards could circulate freely.

Painted marble palmette grave stele depicting a nude youth holding a wreath and flower. Ca. 510 BC. Inv. no. P 747.





THE KERAMEIKOS SECTION OF THE WALL AND ITS HISTORY

The best preserved part of this defensive system survives today at the Kerameikos archaeological site, which the wall traverses in a general north-south direction. About 200 meters have been revealed, along the course of which opened two gates: the Thriasian Gates or the Dipylon, and the Sacred Gate. Together with the ancient roads that passed through these, they provide us with the best preserved picture of the topography of ancient Athens.

The building phases of the wall are more clearly distinguishable in the area of the Sacred Gate, because the ground level was lower here and the continual silting of the Eridanos river protected structures from being looted for stone and readily-available building material.

What we see today are the superimposed remains of the stone bases built as a sub-foundation for the mud brick part of the wall during successive renovations. Before each repair, the brick superstructure was normally removed, followed by the consolidation and raising of the older stone socle with new stone blocks to the desired height. The line where superimposed crepidae joined corresponds to successive levels of the road that passed outside and in contact with the wall, the Ring Road. The brick superstructure was rebuilt or repaired. A large section survives behind the stone outer face of the wall, but today this is not easily accessible or visible.

The crepidoma of the Themistoclean era (478 BC) survives in the section of the wall lying south of the Sacred Gate (between the two towers) to a height of three to four courses, of which only the upper two are visible today, and follows an uphill course (towards modern-day Ermou Street) adapting to the natural bedrock. The buried sub-foundation consists of stones obviously gathered in haste, confirming Thucydides' description (1.93.2).

On top of the preserved part of the Themistoclean crepidoma, the subsequent stone base of the Cononian era was built (394 BC). Only one row of exceptionally well-fitted, large polygonal blocks survives from it. The

Tall marble grave stele with a representation of a young man holding a sword and a Gorgon in the "kneeling/running" pose on the lower panel. The relief surface has been hewn off so the stele could be reused as building material for the wall. Ca. 560 BC. Inv. no. NAM 2687.

Cononian section of the crepidoma did not join the south tower of the Sacred Gate; rather, it left a small opening called a *pylis* (postern gate) to facilitate pedestrians and relieve traffic around the apparently over-congested Sacred Gate. These small openings –the *pylides*– were extremely functional and served Athenians’ daily circulation needs. A significant number of such posterns have been detected at various key points along the wall’s course.

Extensive repairs and additions were made to the fortifications after the battle of Chaeronea and in 307-304 BC under Demetrius I Poliorcetes to protect the city from new siege techniques (catapults). Today there survive two courses from this wall with squared limestone blocks and smaller stones in the interstices.

The repair of the wall under the emperor Valerian (252-260 AD) shortly before the disastrous invasion of the Heruli has left a few remnants beside the postern gate. Rectangular conglomerate blocks were used for this repair phase.

The remains of the final Justinian (?) renovation are preserved in the southernmost visible section of the area between the towers, and rest partly on bedrock gradually rising towards Ermou Street. While this wall followed the Themistoclean route, its construction technique was different from the ancient one: it is a solid structure of stones bonded together and plastered on their outer face.

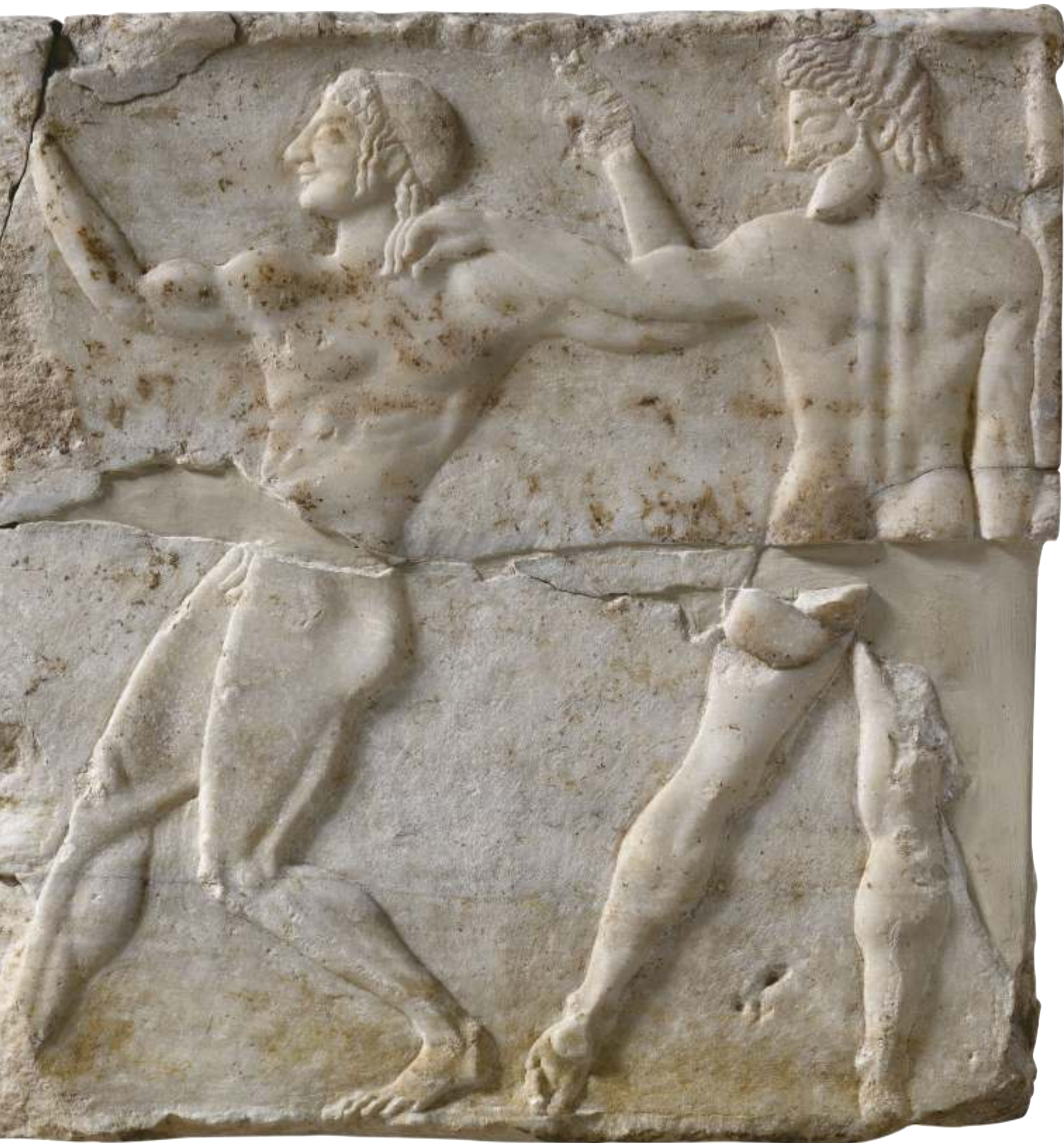
Outside the main wall there were gradually built in the 5th and 4th centuries BC first the Ring Road and then the moat and the *proteichisma* (outer wall). One of the most instructive examples of this outwork is preserved at the Kerameikos archaeological site and in the basement of the neighbouring Benaki Museum of Islamic Art. Socrates frequently took the Ring Road as a short-cut from the Academy to the Lyceum, as Plato tells us in the *Lysis* (203a: “I was making my way straight from the Academy to the Lyceum by the road outside the town wall – walking just under the wall”).



The left side of the base on p. 171 showing a procession of riders. Inv. no. P 1002.



The front of the base on p. 171. It depicts athletic activities, perhaps a game involving a ball. A large part of the relief's surface was hewn off and destroyed so that the base could be reused in the foundations of the Dipylon. Inv. no. P 1002.





Marble head from the statue of a young man in the “Severe style”. Found south of the Sacred Gate in the area of Building Z. It is the only example of large-scale sculpture from the Kerameikos that dates to the years around 480 BC.. Inv. no. P 1455.



Marble statue of a clothed male figure sitting on a stool. Discovered in 1933/34 in the Themistoclean crepis of the Eridanos; for this reason the statue’s entire right side has been hewn off. Traces of the details of its painted decoration are still visible on the piece of furniture and the elaborately-decorated ends of the himation. Ca. 530 BC. Inv. no. P 1052.



Inscribed marble bases found in the fortifications as reused building material.

LEFT: The base carries an inscription in Greek and Carian, and informs us that it belonged to the tomb of "Tyr..." from Caria. The monument was erected by the deceased's father Skylax, and was made by Aristocles. Ca. 520-500 BC. Inv. no. I 190.



The base belonged to the grave monument of the Naxian metic Anaxilas, "whom the Athenians especially honored for his wisdom and virtue". Last quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. I 388.

Base from a funerary monument with a stele between two columns. Half of the inscription is preserved, testifying that it was erected in honor of an Olympic victor and his deceased son by the wife and mother they left behind. Ca. 550-525 BC. Inv. no. I 332.



FOLLOWING PAGES: View of the wall and the architectural remains of the Inner Kerameikos and the Pompeion from the summit of the South Hill.





CONSTRUCTION PHASES OF THE GATES

The most vulnerable points of any fortification wall are its entrance and exit points. To counterbalance that vulnerability, centuries-long practice from as early as the prehistoric period as well as common sense led to a search for more advantageous positions for those defending the gates. The most appropriate strategy was considered to be the construction of an enclosed “courtyard” in front of each gate. The attackers, given that they were obliged to enter this “stranglehold”, exposed themselves to the weapons of the guards manning the high walls and towers of the gate’s “courtyard”. The two gates in that part of the wall preserved in the Kerameikos –the Dipylon and the Sacred Gate– were built according to this logic. Both functional and religious reasons determined the location of these two gates: long before the building of the Themistoclean wall, the Panathenaic procession and the “Iakchos” headed for Eleusis were organised in this area; the former began from the area of the later Dipylon, the latter from that of the Sacred Gate.

THE DIPYLON

The Dipylon (“double gate, double entrance”), in the northernmost section of the wall within the Kerameikos, was the largest gate in the ancient world, with a total area of 1800 square meters and the most monumental entranceway in the city. The name Dipylon was mentioned for the first time in an inscription dating to 278/277 BC and probably reflected the particular shape the gate acquired in its late 4th century BC repair. Until then it was known as the Thriasian Gate(s) and the Kerameikos Gates. Through it passed the main street of Athens, known as the Dromos or Kerameikos Street, which led to the suburb of Akademeia, Thria (the deme of Eleusis, which also gave its name to the gate), the Thriasian Plain, and beyond this to the Peloponnese. It also linked the city with roads leading to the northwest part of Attica.

The original plan of the gate, which was built in the Themistoclean age immediately following the Persian Wars (479/478 BC), remained almost unchanged during its rebuilding in 307-304 BC. What is preserved today indicates that two entrances, one beside the other, were opened in a wall far recessed from the fortification wall, and joined with the main enclosure wall via two strong arms culminating in battlements. This system created in front of the two doorways an enormous rectangular court open to the West, which was protected by two pairs of square towers at the ends of the arms. The towers were probably roofed, and on the battlements between the towers there were small windows (*thyrides*) for the use of archers. The south outer tower projected considerably further out than the corresponding tower on the north side, thus allowing those defending the gates to aim from on high at the attackers’ right side, which was left unprotected by their shields. Staircases secured ascent into the towers and the gate’s side arms.



View from the Southwest of the Sacred Gate where successive phases of repairs to the fortifications may be clearly discerned.



View of the *proteichisma* from the North.

The enormous court of the Dipylon and the *Dromos* in front of it offered ample room for crowds to assemble on official occasions: at the yearly ceremonies in honour of the dead, at contests, for the delivery of funerary orations in honor of those fallen in war and being buried in the *Demosion Sema*, and for the gathering of the Panathenaic procession before construction of the Pompeion. It is also probable that meat from the *hecatomb* in honor of Athena was distributed and consumed here. A large number of openings found in the Dipylon court have been attributed either to holes for the tents the Athenians set up during the Panathenaea, or to supports for wooden stands (=bleachers) to seat the audience at the contests during the yearly celebrations in honor of the dead. It is easy to imagine how bustling this area was, what with the daily movement to and from the city, the voices of merchants, the draft animals, idlers, and even love-struck young men, who as Lucian informs us (*Dialogi meretricii* 4) carved lovers' confessions on the court's long walls.

Not until the Late Hellenistic period (probably during the reinforcement of the fortifications before the Roman attack under Sulla in 86 BC) was a wall built with two arched doorways to block the western (outer) side of the Dipylon, thus creating an enclosed space. A rectangular marble base dating to the age of the emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) is embedded in the outer side of the enormous pillar separating the two doorways. The base probably carried a portrait stature of an emperor or general. The Dipylon was destroyed in the Herulian invasion of 267 AD.

THE SACRED GATE – ERIDANOS RIVER

Just short of 70 meters south of the Dipylon at a lower point in the city where the Eridanos river emerged from the wall was the *Sacred Gate*, a name that appears for the first time in Plutarch (*Life of Sulla* 14.5), but which must have been much older. It was from here that the so-called “Sacred Way” began. This was the road followed by the procession of the Eleusinian mysteries to reach the sanctuary of Demeter in Eleusis 21 kilometers from Athens. Like the Dipylon, the Sacred Gate ended in the Thriasian Plain, and it is possible that its older name was also the “Thriasian Gate”.

The Sacred Gate was planned from the age of Themistocles as a gated building with court, similar to the Dipylon. However, it was unique in that not only pedestrians, riders, and wheeled vehicles but also the river Eridanos passed through it. The latter flowed into the Cephissus not far from the gate. The two arms that surrounded the court concluded on the side of the Outer Kerameikos in two square towers, of which the southern one projected further, as was the case with the Dipylon, at least during the gate's first two construction phases (478 and 394 BC, respectively). The wall blocking the court on the side of the asty presents many more unique features. Simplifying a bit, we could say that the court's long arms concluded on the side of the city in two rectangular pillars, with a third nearly square and enormous pillar between the others.



Drawing by A. Hess depicting the fortification wall, the Pompeion, and part of the Outer Kerameikos with archaic burial mounds.

The central and two side pillars demarcated the two openings in the Sacred Gate, that for people to pass through (on the south) and that for the river bed (on the north). The piers supported the passageway that ensured the unity of the path running atop the wall. The unusual construction required to serve the gate's double purpose was modified many times from the Themistoclean age down to Early Byzantine times, when a one-of-a-kind monolithic marble arch was set above the Eridanos exit, equipped with holes for a metal railing that we still admire today. Repairs to the Sacred Gate went hand in hand with those to the wall, and one can identify traces of them on the southern arm of the court and on the banks of the river, whose width fluctuated in accordance with the city's requirements.

Near the end of the 6th century AD the Eridanos' bed was filled in, the area around the Sacred Gate became deserted and was lost beneath the earth, and the road leading from the West to Athens passed only over the Dipylon, which also lay buried.

THE EXTRAMURAL AREA [OUTER KERAMEIKOS]

The area of the ancient deme of Kerameis excavated on the side outside the walls, known as the “suburb”, covers about twice as much as the excavated section lying on the inner side of the enclosure, the one within the city. The gates at the Kerameikos archaeological site were crossed by two major roads lying parallel to each other: the *Dromos*, which passed through the Thriasian Gates (Dipylon) and led to the lovely suburb of Hekademos (Academos) where Plato founded his renowned school, and a second road 70 meters further south, the Sacred or Eleusinian Way, which passed through the Sacred Gate before heading for Eleusis.

The Dromos, or simply “Kerameikos” as the major road that passed through the Dipylon was called, had probably assumed special importance considerably before the Themistoclean wall was built, perhaps in the mid-6th century BC when Peisistratus reorganised the Panathenaea, whose procession was assembled and prepared “in the Kerameikos” according to the written sources. The procession then followed this road through the Agora as far as the Acropolis. Inside the city proper (the *asty*), it was known as the “Panathenaic Way”. Today only a section of the *Dromos* is visible in front of the Dipylon. In the 4th century BC, its width at this point reached 29 meters, as indicated by two marble *horoi* (ancient boundary stones or markers) still standing beside the gate’s two outer towers. A little further, towards Piraeus Street, two more marble boundary stones demark the southern verge of the *Dromos*; one of them rests by the Tomb of the Lacedaemonians, and the other beside the circular monument “at the 3rd marker”, at the fringes of the excavated area. It appears that similar marble boundary stones with the inscription “Horos of the Kerameikos” were set along the entire route of the Dromos: another was found near the ancient Agora, and still another at some distance near the *Akademeia*.

The Eleusinian Way was older than the *Dromos*. It was a processional road that began from the Eleusinion in the north part of the ancient Agora, crossed the Sacred Gate, and then led to the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore. Its use goes back to at least the 7th century BC and it continued in operation until Late Antiquity. At the original and widest point (8.3 m.) of this road just outside the gate, those taking part in the Great Mysteries gathered each autumn to form the “Procession” (also called the “Iakchos”) to Eleusis. Observation of the inscriptions on two of the four boundary stones found in the area of the ancient cemetery and along the course of this ancient road has established that the first and earliest name was (the) “Sacred” (road), and that not until about 420 BC was its name officially changed to “Eleusinia(n)”, the name which remained until at least the early 4th century BC.

View of the Sacred Gate from the South. In the foreground, the foundations of a tower and in the midground, the marble arch of Roman Imperial times.



The entire length of the Sacred Way was flanked by funerary monuments and clusters of graves in roadside burial family plots (*periboloi*) dating from the early Archaic down to the Roman period, and along its route there have also been identified superimposed sections of ancient road pavements, workshops, bridges, and sanctuaries. Aside from its point of origin in the Kerameikos, its width has not been found to exceed 5.8 meters.

In front of the archaic open-air sacred precinct of the Tritopatreion, the Sacred Way forked, creating a second road leading to Mounichia. Today this second road is called by convention the “Street of Tombs” since along its sides were revealed family burial precincts dating to the High and Late Classical age, with the best-preserved and most luxurious funerary monuments found at the entire archaeological site. In the late 5th century BC, a new road was built at the height of the Tritopatreion, the “Cross Road” (*Ἐγκάρσια Ὁδός*) which ran north-south and connected the Sacred Way and the Street of Tombs with the Dromos. At the point where it encountered the Eridanos, a small bridge was built in the late 4th century BC. On its stone surface the traces of carriage/cart wheels can still be made out. This road definitely continued in use until the Roman period. Another carriage/cart road dating to the late 5th century BC, conventionally called the “South Road”, hugged the western slopes of the South Hill on its way to the Piraeus Gate further south. In the 3rd century BC, the South Road ceased to exist, since it was covered with piles of earth and new graves were opened in the fill that had been created.

THE CEMETERY

The “undying fame” procured for the Athenians by the Persian Wars was dearly bought through the total destruction of Athens and a drop in population. The gradual increase in population after the conflict ended led to a parallel increase in tombs in the large urban cemeteries outside the walls, of which the Kerameikos was the most important. The tombs of the first half of the 5th century BC are no longer visible today because their underground part is now buried, and the part above ground was extremely simple in accordance with the dictates of the newly-established democratic regime, which discouraged private displays of wealth. The tombs in the Kerameikos were set very close to one another throughout the cemetery’s history, but the 5th century BC tombs revealed primarily atop the South Hill and the tumulus at the junction of the Street of Tombs and the Sacred Way were particularly crowded.

A stately aboveground structure made its appearance in the mid-5th, and its use was stepped up in the 4th century BC. These were quadrilateral funerary precincts (*periboloi*), whose carefully-finished façades arose along the roadsides, lending them an imposing appearance and creating more or less the image of the site we have today. The funerary precincts in the Kerameikos are crammed together chock-a-block fashion with their sides overlapping; their rear sides, not visible from the road, were normally much less carefully-constructed.

Detail of a bearded man from a white-ground lekythos.





White-ground lekythos, an exceptionally fine work of the high Classical period which has been attributed to the circle of the “Group R” workshop. The dead warrior is shown seated in front of his grave stele, which is decorated with ribbons. He holds a spear in his left hand and a circular shield in his right. Opposite him stands a female figure extending her right hand in farewell. This is an impressive vase standing about half a meter in height. Inv. no. 3146.

The tombs enclosed in each of these precincts belonged to a single family and they were underground, while the *sema* (grave marker) was not placed above the grave to which it belonged, but rather on the wall of the precinct’s façade. Boundary markers established the limits of precincts, and potted plants and shrubs probably rounded out a beautiful image. Visitors to the site walking along the Street of Tombs or the Sacred Way may admire on either side the incomparable art of these funerary monuments, which have preserved through the centuries the idealised figures of the residents of Athens and Attica. Above all they can admire the bonds of love that linked these residents together, the perpetual communication between living and dead.

However, the requirements of the living always took precedence, and thus the need to rebuild the city’s fortification wall immediately following the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BC led to the destruction of a significant part of these grave monuments, exactly as had been the case with the Archaic tombs during the construction of the Themistoclean wall.

As regards burial practices, burial now predominated over cremation, while the wealth of grave goods continued to be impressive, at least in the 5th century BC. The appearance of white-ground lekythoi as the *par excellence* burial offering shortly before the mid-5th century BC and onward has given us the chance to admire some of the finest works by the masters of ancient painting, since the moving scenes that adorn these vases were created with the use of additional colours on a white background, as in contemporary painting. During the 4th century, however, and in stark contrast to the lavish burial precincts or frequently very costly grave stelai, the funeral gifts offered the dead –both the wealthier and more prominent as well as simple folk– were impressively simple: a few perfume-vases, chiefly alabastra or small lekythoi, and perhaps a pyxis or strigil. Rich offerings to the dead were now rare.

From the white-ground lekythoi depicting the farewell of living and deceased beside the burial monument, we learn the form that grave markers must have had until around 440 BC, since very few comparable stone monuments survived down to the present, and again only as stelai for the illustrious deceased who were buried at public expense (e.g. the *proxenos* Pythagoras from Selymbria in Thrace, the herald Anthemokritos, and the ambassadors from Kerkyra). Per-

haps the simple rectangular oblong stelai depicted on the lekythoi were made of perishable materials (wood?). But even if we presume they were stone, their shape made them ideal ready-made building material, which explains why almost none have come down to us.

It was only from the second half of the 5th century BC –indeed, during its final thirty years– that graves once again began to be marked with magnificent sculptures. Scholars are not in agreement about the reasons that led to the explicit (or more likely, implicit) repeal of the decrees of the late 6th or early 5th century BC which had prohibited the construction of luxurious private burial monuments. But it remains a fact that at around the start of the Peloponnesian War, the democratic simplicity and uniformity in tomb monuments gave way –at first with some hesitation, followed by growing enthusiasm– to exquisite grave stelai featuring outstanding sculptural decoration, as well as to the building of luxurious roadside burial precincts (*periboloi*). Besides, circumstances were particularly favourable: the completion of the major building projects on the Acropolis had left many very fine sculptors without any prospects of immediate employment, so this artistic workforce was now free to turn to serving private needs. The series of Attic funerary sculptures, chiefly marble relief stelai and marble vases and even in some cases sculpture in the round, continued without interruption until 318/17 BC (some scholars propose this date be lowered to 308/07 BC), when Demetrius of Phaleron (Phalerum), the famous politician and Peripatetic philosopher who ruled Athens for a decade as the “overseer” (administrator) of King Cassander of Macedonia, once more prohibited by law luxurious funerary monuments. This decision meant the definitive end of the high art form of Attic funerary sculpture. From that time and until the Roman Imperial age, the dead were buried with a single marker over their grave: one of the simple marble *columellae* (colonettes) densely arrayed beneath the pines at the rear of the museum. The only information written on these were the name, patronymic, and deme name (or ethnic origin) of the deceased.



White-ground lekythos from the burial enclosure of Koroibos. It carries a representation of a young woman visiting and attending to a grave. Ca. 430 BC. Inv. no. 1439.



White-ground lekythoi with typical scenes of a visit to a tomb. Apart from their artistic value, they are interesting for the information they provide about the typology and decoration of grave monuments (largely lost today) as well as the diversity in the rendering of details, as for example their crowning element – volutes, palmettes, or pediments. Ca. 430-420 BC. Inv. no. 3278 (left) and Inv. no. 11239



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White-ground lekythos and foldout of the same representation, showing a typical scene of a visit to a tomb. Two opposing figures are depicted: a seated woman and a standing man in front of a grave stele with a characteristic finial in the form of a pediment. The black ribbons protruding from the flat basket the woman is holding out were to decorate the stele. One is impressed by the vitality of the two colors that stand out against a white background: red and deep blue. Ca. 430 BC. Inv. no. 1057.



THE PLAGUE: In an excavation carried out for the Athens Metro outside the Kerameikos archaeological site at the corner of the Sacred Way and Piraeus Street, a mass grave in a circular trench (diameter 6.50 m.) came to light, in which more than 150 people had been buried in parallel layers. The large number of dead, the hasty method of burial as well as the dating of the finds that accompanied them to around 430-420 BC connect this mass grave to the devastating plague that broke out in Athens in 430/29 and 427/6 BC and decimated much of the population. From the mass grave, a red-figure trefoil chous, which was a common grave good for young children during the Peloponnesian War, was chosen for presentation here. It has a charming scene of two children provoking their Maltese puppies (*"melitaia kynaria"*) to jump up and fetch the ball they have bound to the end of a belt. Inv. no. A 15272.



Unusual red-figure aryballos found in a single burial of an adolescent during the same excavation. It is the work of Douris, dated to ca. 490-480 BC, and depicts a wrestling match between two youths, Thodis and Chairippos, who are characterized as *"καλοί"* (handsome). Inv. no. A 15535.





THE MOST IMPORTANT 5TH AND 4TH CENTURY BC BURIAL MONUMENTS

*On marble Hymettan, on Pentelic stone
half-effaced carving and noble figures,
hewn blossoms, pale writings, white sea-nymphs,
simple samples, pure marks of sorrow and love.*

K. Palamas, “The Graves of Kerameikos” from *The Eyes of My Soul* (1892)

The Sacred Way

As one leaves behind the Sacred Gate with the Eridanos river on their right, before arriving at the Tritopatreion fork in the road, they will see on their right—on the north bank of the river—a circular burial precinct whose perimeter was fixed in the 4th century BC with a low stone surrounding wall. As we saw above, this tumulus has been identified as the family tomb of the clan of the Kerykes (heralds), where the herald Anthemokritos mentioned by Pausanias (1.36.3) was buried. It covered tombs dating from the early 7th century BC to the Classical period without interruption. West of the circular precinct of the Kerykes and abutting it was another tumulus covering three marble sarcophagi dating to the third quarter of the 5th century BC, but it was buried in 394 BC when the river bed of the Eridanos was regularised. A lovely stele with a loutrophoros, two lekythoi and sphinxes, in the Kerameikos Museum, probably belonged to this tumulus.

On the south side of the Sacred Way after the Tritopatreion, there is a series of well-preserved burial precincts built after the dismantling of the older funerary constructions and the use of their material in the repair of the city wall in 338 BC. Among those precincts lost at that time was that of the grandmother Ampharete, whose magnificent funerary sculpture (last quarter of the 5th century BC) had fallen behind the façade of her family burial plot, which was by then buried.

On the opposite (north) side of the street, at the edge of the archaeological site, are preserved the lower poros limestone courses of a precinct dating to the final quarter of the 5th century BC, one of the oldest such constructions in the Kerameikos. Its façade was 13 meters long, and its original height is estimated at 2.50 meters. Although the stelai that adorned it have not been preserved (if we suppose that such stelai existed), a large quantity of vases including two red-figure wedding lebetes (*lebetes gamikoi* cf. the figures on pages 252-253) and two hydriai—one of the latter by the greatest red-figure painter of the age, the Meidias Painter—were collected from two offering trenches found inside it (cf. the figures on pages 314 ff.).

Detail of the funerary relief of Ampharete.

Following the left fork of the Sacred Way at the height of the Tritopatreion, at the foot of the South Hill one encounters two tall, undecorated marble stelai, the stelai of the Ambassadors. The first, which rests on its tall stepped base, is that of the proxenos Pythagoras from Selymbria in Thrace, who died in Athens and was buried at public expense, as was Anthemokritos, in return for services rendered to the Athenians. This is the earliest burial monument visible today in the Kerameikos (mid-5th c. BC), and its simple form reflects the sumptuary law concerning monuments and the simple stelai discussed above. Beside it stands the stele crowned with a pediment belonging to the Ambassadors Thersandros and Simylos from Corcyra, who died in Athens in the third quarter of the 5th century BC and were also buried at public expense. They may have been part of the Corcyran embassy that came to Athens in 433/32 BC to conclude an alliance against the Corinthians. This event was chronicled by Thucydides, and he considered it one of the causes of the Peloponnesian War (1.31 ff.). The monument we see today (ca. 375 BC) replaced the original stele that once stood between the two men's graves.

The South Hill, i.e. the large tumulus rising behind the stelai of the Ambassadors, as well as the West tumulus opposite the Tritopatreion, which as we have seen were built in the 6th century BC to cover the luxurious tombs of distinguished dead of the Archaic period, were used throughout the 5th century BC for the burial of ordinary people, both adults and children, in normally simple graves.

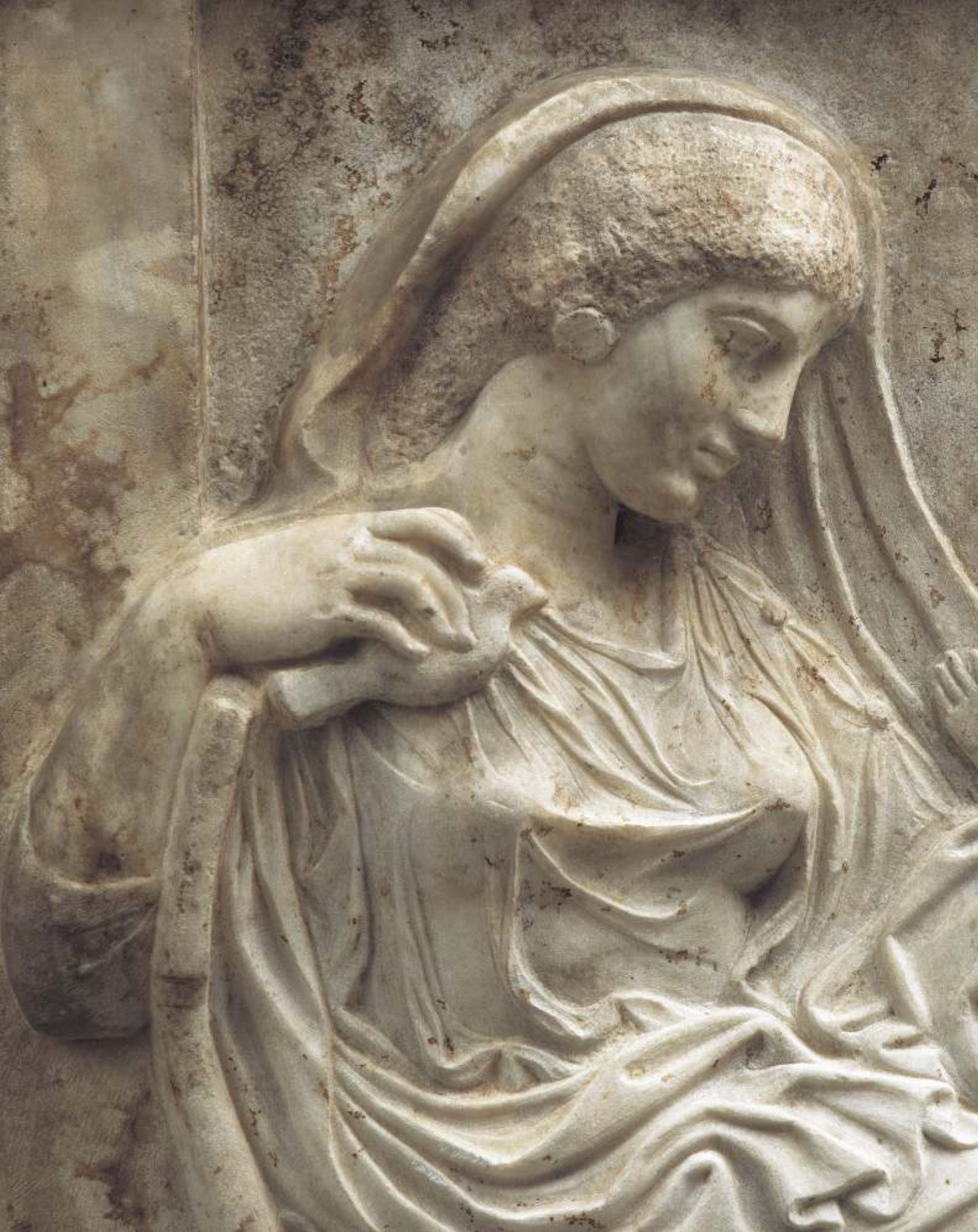
Continuing westward along the Street of Tombs, shortly after its intersection with the South Road, one finds the precinct of Lysanias from the deme of Thorikos. It has the unusual shape –for a burial precinct– of a quadrant, on the perimeter of which stands the outstanding relief of Dexileos, son of Lysanias, who is shown as a mounted warrior lancing his opponent like another Saint George slaying the dragon. The young horseman was killed in 394/93 at the age of twenty fighting against the Corinthians.

But the youthful deceased's body did not rest in his family burial plot. Instead, he was buried with his comrades near the Demosion Sema and his name was carved on the palmette finial of the war memorial erected over their common grave, now in the National Archaeological Museum (cf. the plate on page 247).

Adjacent to and west of the precinct of the Thoricans is that of two brothers, Agathon and Sosikrates from Herakleia on the Black Sea. Their names are written on a tall, slender stele culminating in a full palmette which stands approximately in the center of the precinct's façade. One day in 1863, the wheel of a cart that was extracting sand from the area collided with this stele's palmette, and this resulted in the identification of the site of the ancient Kerameikos. A *naïskos* with a painted scene of a nude male figure and the pedimental relief stele of Korallion, wife of Agathon, complete the adornment of this precinct's façade.

Marble funerary relief of the grandmother Ampharete and her grandchild. The stele-*naïskos* is crowned by a pediment. Probably a work of the sculptor Agorakritos. Ca. 430-420 BC. Inv. no. P 695/I 221.







Ampharete is shown seated on a chair facing right. The bird figurine in her right hand, which is supported on the backrest, was for her little grandchild, whom she holds on her knees in her left arm. The moving epigram of lament, written in three lines on the epistyle of the funerary *naïskos*, tells us about their relationship and their simultaneous death, placing the scene in Hades.

The “Parthenonian” head appears on her clothing. During the period in which the grave monument was found (1933), the original red of the hair and decoration of her circular earring were still preserved.



West of the precinct of the men from Herakleia lay that of Dionysios from the deme of Kollytos, which was near the Kerameikos. At about the center of the precinct, on a tall pedestal concealed behind a *naïskos*, stood one of the cemetery's most famous monuments: a bull sculpted in the round with his head lowered and ready to charge. On the marble slab at the back of the *naïskos*, two facing figures were painted. Statues of archers and lions (today in the National Archaeological Museum) have been associated with the precinct of Dionysios, who must have died sometime between 345 and 338 BC.

On the other side of the Street of Tombs and nearly opposite the precinct of Dionysios was the precinct of Koroibos from the deme of Melite, which is dated to the mid-4th century BC. The memory of Koroibos and the other male members of his family is perpetuated by the tall palmette stele in the center of the precinct's façade. The stele to its right was set up in memory of Kleidemos, grandson of Koroibos, who died unmarried. To the left of the central palmette stele stands perhaps the most famous funerary monument of ancient Athens: the stele-*naïskos* of Hegeso, daughter of Proxenos (the original is now in the National Archaeological Museum). The young maiden has selected a piece of jewellery from the small open box her maid proffers, and is admiring it in melancholy. Again, quoting Palamas:

*Bowed over my ornaments and jewellery
I spent long hours, lost in thought
to find the piece most suitable, the loveliest of all
for my white dress, for my pale face.*

“The Graves of the Kerameikos: Hegeso” (from *The Eyes of My Soul*, 1892)

The funerary stele is dated to the late 5th century BC. Its connection with the later funerary precinct of Koroibos is difficult to establish. The “ethos” of the figures, the restrained grief which the monument's great unknown sculptor renders in incomparable fashion, has touched generations of viewers, some of whom have recorded their feelings in new and frequently, great works of literature, sculpture, or painting.

On the west, Koroibos' precinct bordered that of a family from the deme of Potamos that appears to have been built after 338 BC, thus escaping destruction and salvaging almost intact the picture of an ancient funerary family plot: even the covering of the polygonal wall of its façade with large tiles was found *in situ*. The stele and column (which probably supported a marble vase) which stand a little further in from the façade wall are not particularly noteworthy.

The stele-*naïskos* of Hegeso, daughter (or wife) of Proxenos. The deceased's name is written on the epistyle of the *naïskos*. The image of Hegeso with her elaborate coiffure held in place by three bands, her chiton with its abundant pleats and the sandals on her feet, which are resting on a footstool, reflect the ideal female figure of a daughter or wife, as a counterpoint to the standing figure of her slave-girl on her left, who has her hair in a “*sakkos*” (a coarse hair-cloth), and wears a sleeved garment and closed shoes. Late 5th c. BC. Inv. no. NAM 3624. Details on the following pages.



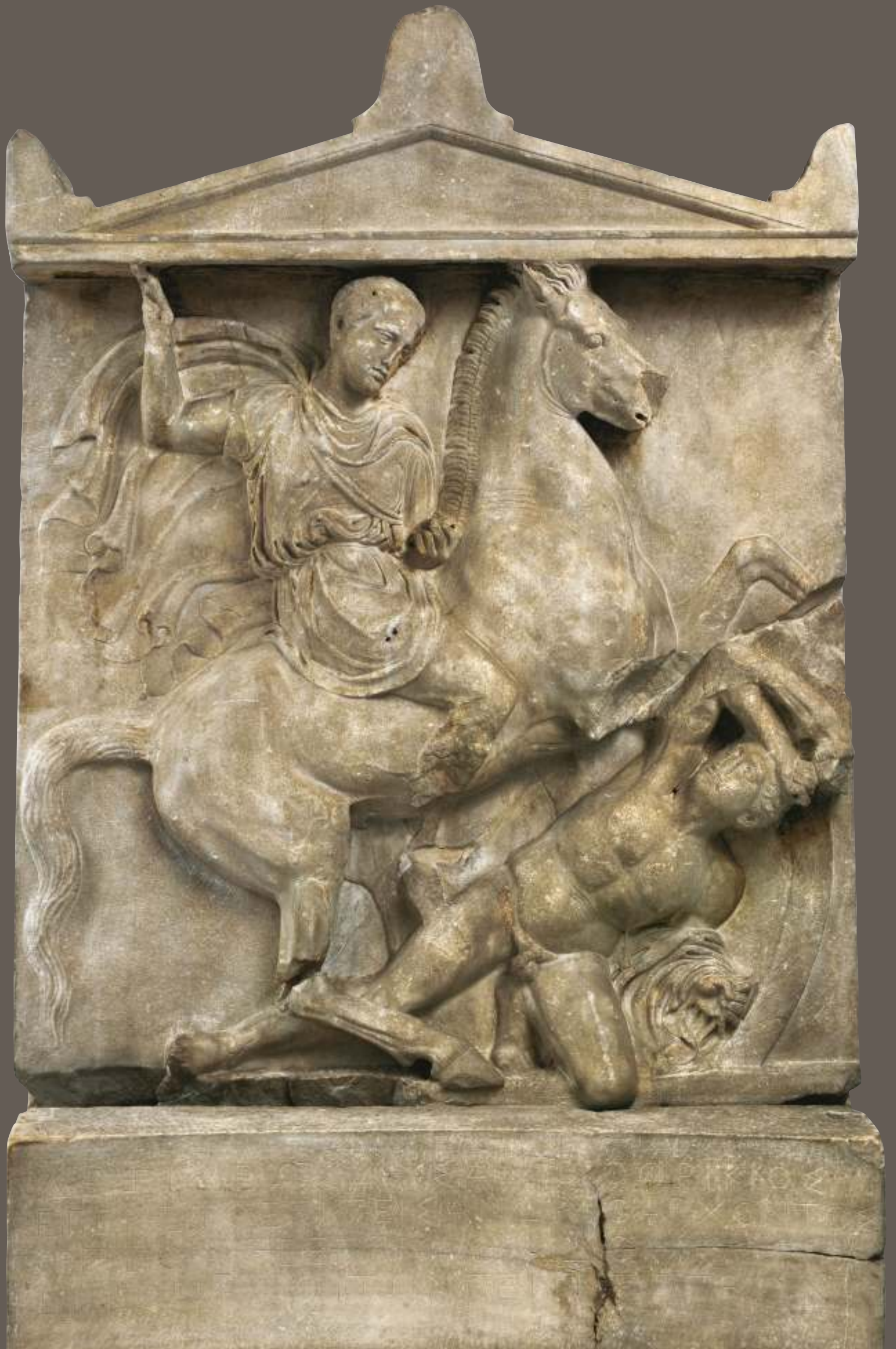


*Time flies, earth changes, peoples and worlds pass by
and fall, withering like autumn leaves.
And here stand I, unmoving and undying,
my fatherland's enemies at my feet.
O Grace, O life's victory, O joy unprecedented
in Elysian Fields of marble, Elysian Fields of Art!*

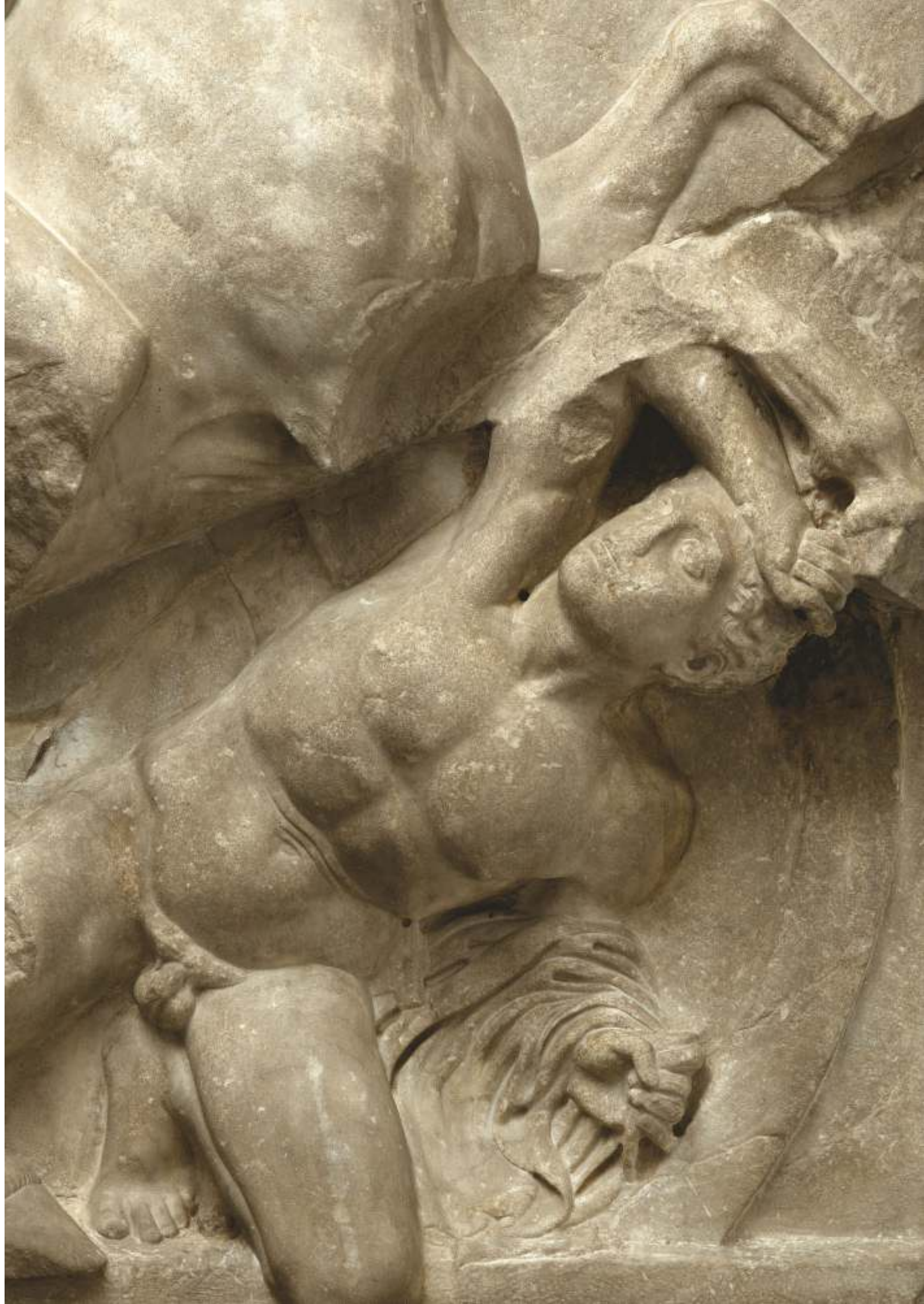
K. Palamas "The Graves of the Kerameikos: Dexileos"
(*The Eyes of My Soul*, 1892)

Dexileos, son of Lysanias from the deme of Thorikos, was one of the five Athenian horsemen who died fighting the Spartans and their allies near Corinth in 394/3 BC. The young man died at the age of 20, and his ashes were buried in the *Demosion Sema* together with those of his other fallen comrades. In the family burial plot of the Thorikans at the beginning of the Street of Tombs, the beautiful and prominent monument –a stele-*naïskos*– was erected on which Dexileos, though defeated, was shown mounted, wearing a short chiton and chlamys, and lancing his nude fallen opponent, who attempts to defend himself with his sword, leaning on his shield for support. Accessories such as the horseman's bridle and spear and his opponent's sword were of metal and attached to the Pentelic marble of the stele; these are now lost. Next to the grave monument-cenotaph of Dexileos, the grave stelai of his brother Lysias and his sister Melitte were erected around the mid-4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 1130/I 220.

Details on the following pages.





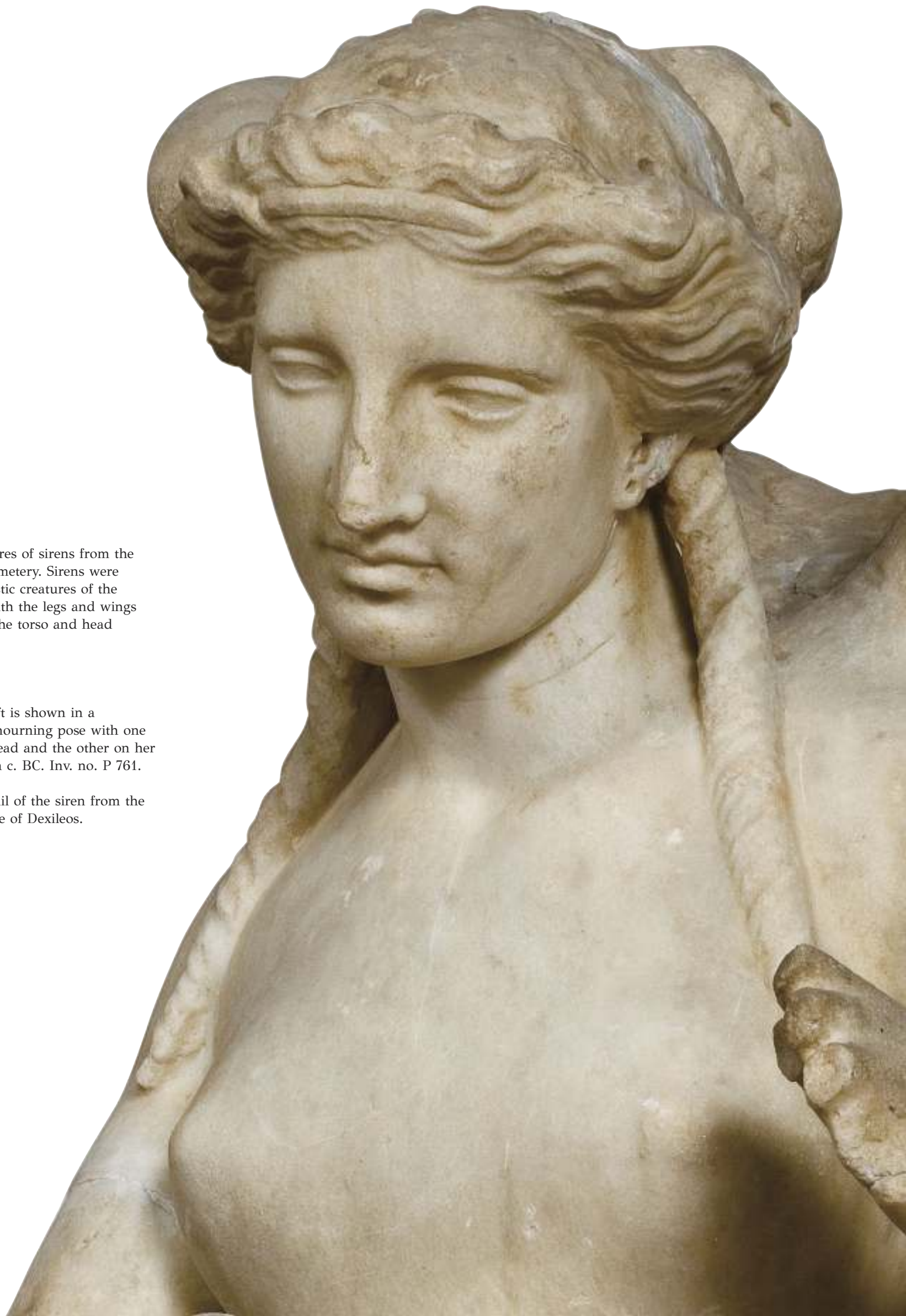


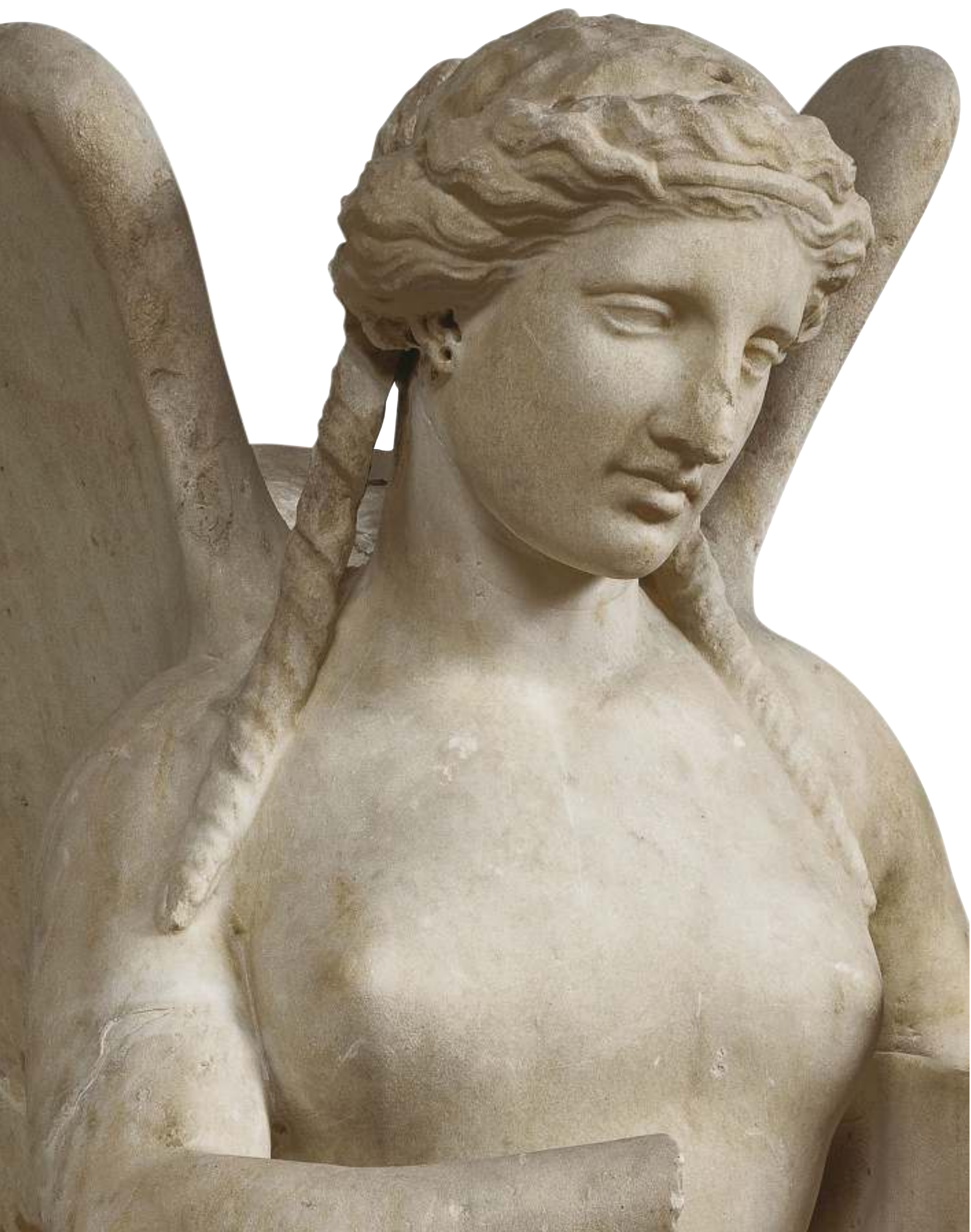


Marble sculptures of sirens from the Kerameikos cemetery. Sirens were mythical fantastic creatures of the Underworld with the legs and wings of a bird and the torso and head of a woman.

The siren at left is shown in a characteristic mourning pose with one hand on her head and the other on her breast. Mid-4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 761.

At right, a detail of the siren from the burial enclosure of Dexileos.







A siren holding a tortoise-shell lyre.
From about the end of the 5th c. BC,
sirens frequently surmounted tomb
monuments. First half of the 4th c. BC.
Inv. no. NAM 774.



Relief grave stele of Eupheros. The young man's name is carved on the horizontal cornice of the pediment crowning this slender stele. Eupheros is shown standing and facing right, wrapped in a many-pleated himation, his gaze fixed on the strigil he holds in his left hand. This accessory identifies him as an athlete; the art of 430 BC depicts him with idealised features which would have been intensified by the vivid colors preserved by the stele until it was found in 1964 a little to the south of the enclosures facing the south verge of the Sacred Way.

Eupheros' actual bronze strigil was among the other grave goods in his tomb, and is on display today in the Kerameikos Museum. However, in contradistinction with the adolescent figure on the stele, both the grave goods as well as the skeletal remains suggest that a child was buried in the tomb, one who apparently did not live long enough to attain the longed-for prowess of the figure depicted on the stele. Inv. no. P 797/ I 417.

Marble grave stele with relief of a nude young athlete accompanied by his devoted little slave holding a strigil, the distinguishing attribute of an athlete. There is "depth" in the gaze of the youth who died an untimely death, and perplexity and hopeless expectation in the upturned head of the little boy. The stele was crowned by a siren with half-closed wings in the characteristic stance of one hand on her head and the other (the right) on her heart, in a show of mental distress. In the Classical age the siren, a creature of destruction and enchantment, emerged as a mourner and compassionate spirit. Second quarter of the 4th c. BC. Inv. no. NAM 4487.





One of the two Hymettus marble Molossians who presided as tomb guardians at the corner of the funerary enclosure of Lysimachides from Acharnae, who was the eponymous archon of Athens in 339/38 BC. Second half of the 4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 670.



The monumental marble bull from the burial plot of Dionysios from Kollytos. This imposing Pentelic marble sculpture rose on a tall pedestal placed behind a marble *naïskos* with painted decoration, approximately in the center of the enclosure. The two preserved epigrams concerning Dionysios tell us that he died unmarried and caused his mother, sisters, and friends immense grief. We also are told that he lived both in the deme of Kollytos adjacent to the Kerameikos, as well as on the island of Samos. From a written source found on this island, we learn that Dionysios held the office of treasurer of the Heraion during the year 346/45 BC. The marble sculpture, which was revealed at the start of excavations in 1863, was apparently deemed the most appropriate symbol of Dionysios' office and position. At the same time, it was from a very early date the hallmark of the ancient cemetery. Third quarter of the 4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 689.



Marble lion in the round, ready to pounce, its head turned towards visitors to this archaic tomb. 6th c. BC.
Inv. no. P 1053.



Lion in a similar pose. Found south of the Street of Tombs, it probably belonged to one of the burial enclosures there.
4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 691.

The lion, king of beasts, had already become the dread guardian of the tombs of the “blessed heroes” in the Archaic period. As an earthly Cerberus, he ensured the “fame imperishable” of death and the tomb’s integrity.

Marble bifacial grave stele with a lion ready to pounce done in low relief on its upper part. 440-430 BC.
Inv. no. NAM 3709.





Marble relief grave stele-*naiskos*, found in 1870. The stele belonged to Eukoline, daughter of Onesimos from Lesbos, and it depicts her bidding farewell to her relatives and small dog. The little girl's name is written on the epistyle, and the names of her relatives are written on the pediment, cornice, and epistyle. After 338 BC. Inv. no. P 694/I 281.



The funerary relief of Korallion from the burial plot of the Herakleiot was one of the first grave monuments uncovered in the Kerameikos in 1863. The dead woman (Korallion) is shown with covered head, seated on a stool and bidding farewell to her standing husband Agathon. Another standing man, shown frontally –possibly Agathon’s brother Sosikrates– is looking on. Third quarter of the 4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 688/I 246.

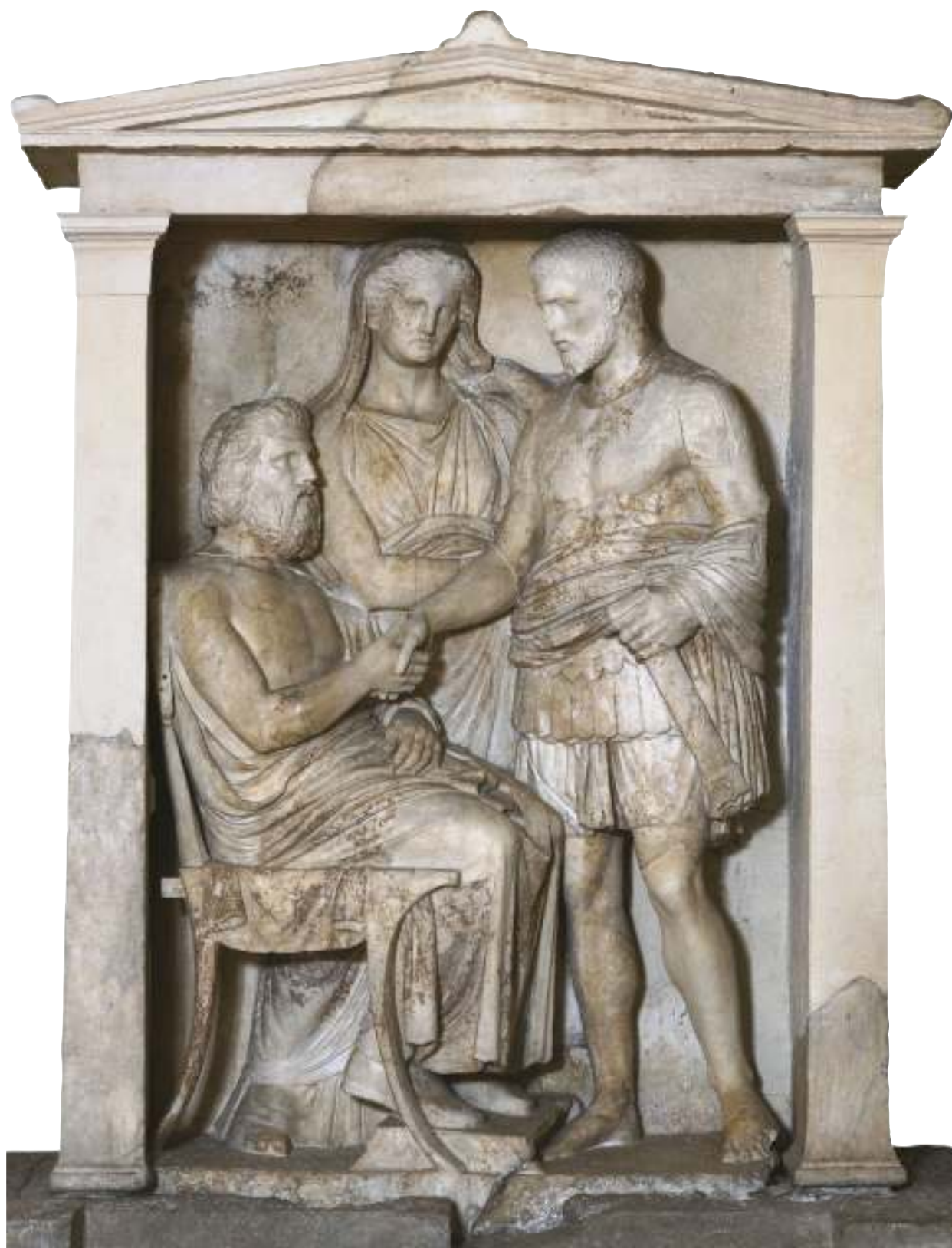


A multi-figure marble relief, the so-called "Charoneion". This unusual sculpture depicts two elderly bearded men flanked by two women, around a table with *popana* and *plakountes* (small breads and sweets), perhaps a representation of a funeral banquet. From the left, a boat is approaching with a clothed, bearded figure, perhaps the boatman Charon who will take the diners across the waters of the Acheron. In another interpretation, the monument belonged to a family of prosperous metics-shipowners from the Black Sea region. Found in the burial enclosure of Lysimachides. Ca. 340 BC. Inv. no. P 692.

A marble relief grave stele found near the Dipylon with a representation of a *dexiosis* between two men, a young one at left with his dog, and an elderly man at right who is bidding him farewell. Late 5th c. BC. Inf. no. NAM 2894.







Funerary *naiskos* of Prokles and Prokleides, which was found during construction of Piraeus Street in the 19th century. The young polemarch is shown standing at right with military gear and sword, bidding farewell to his seated father, Prokleides son of Pamphilos. In the background, a standing woman –perhaps the deceased’s mother Archippe– is looking on in sorrow. Ca. 340-330. Inv. no. NAM 737.

Grave stele with a relief loutrophoros, lekythoi and sphinxes, from the built linking of the Eridanos river. It preserves the final letters of the name of its owner: "...jos" from the deme of Skambonidai. Ca. 420-410 BC. Inv. no. P 280 / I 192.





Funerary *naïskos* of Aristonauates, found during the construction of Piraeus Street in 1861. The inscription on the epistyle mentions the deceased's name, patronymic, and origin: Aristonauates, son of Archenauates from the deme of Halai. Aristonauates, with a striking expression of *pathos* on his face, is shown fully-armed with breastplate, helmet, and shield in his left hand, emerging nearly in the round on his relief chlamys in the background of the *naïskos*. He wears a helmet and in his (lost) right hand he would have held a sword. The rocky battle terrain is indicated beneath the warrior's naked feet. The monument dates to shortly before Demetrios of Phaleron's banning of luxurious funerary monuments, 317/07 BC. Inv. no. NAM 738.





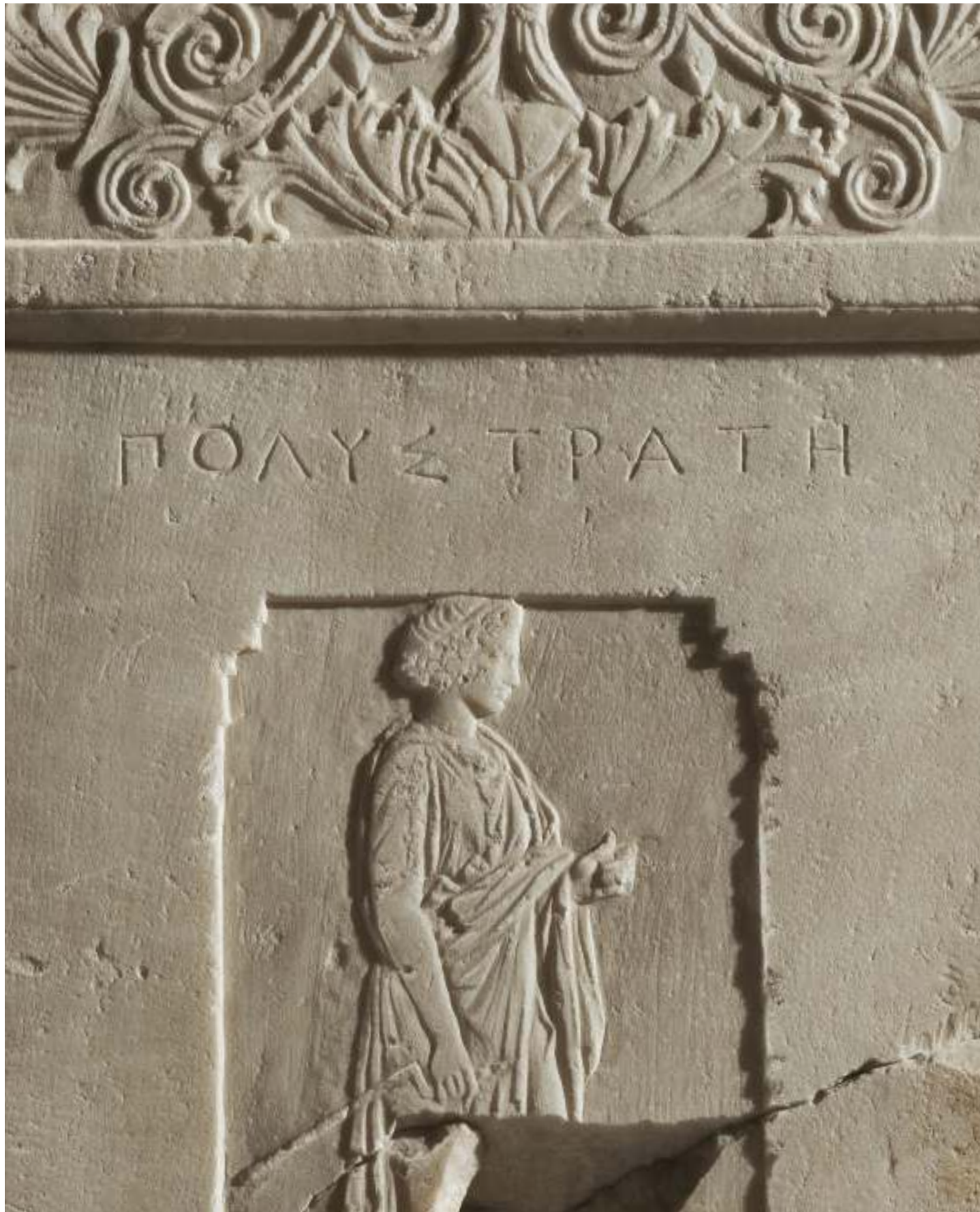
Page 232: Marble funerary relief of a maiden and her parents, found during the initial years of excavation. She is shown seated on a stool with her feet on a footstool, bidding farewell to her mother with the typical dexiosis gesture. Her father stands in the background, filled with melancholy. The relief was framed by a naiskos, now lost. Second quarter of the 4th c. BC. Inv. no. NAM 717.



Marble funerary relief of Eukoline, daughter of Antiphanes. Found reused on the Sacred Way. The young woman is scrutinizing with bowed head a piece of jewelry, which had originally been painted and is now lost. The figure is flanked on the two pilasters by an epigram: “for the fate that was allotted her” (i.e., death). Ca. 380-370 BC. Inv. no. P 1136 / I 422.



Marble funerary stelai of women. Found during the sixties near the burial enclosure of Ampharete. On the left stele, the figure's gazing in the mirror encapsulates in ideal and simple fashion the epitome of womanhood, just as Eupheros' strigil or Dexileos' spear epitomize manhood. Last quarter of the 5th c. BC. Inv. no. P 685.

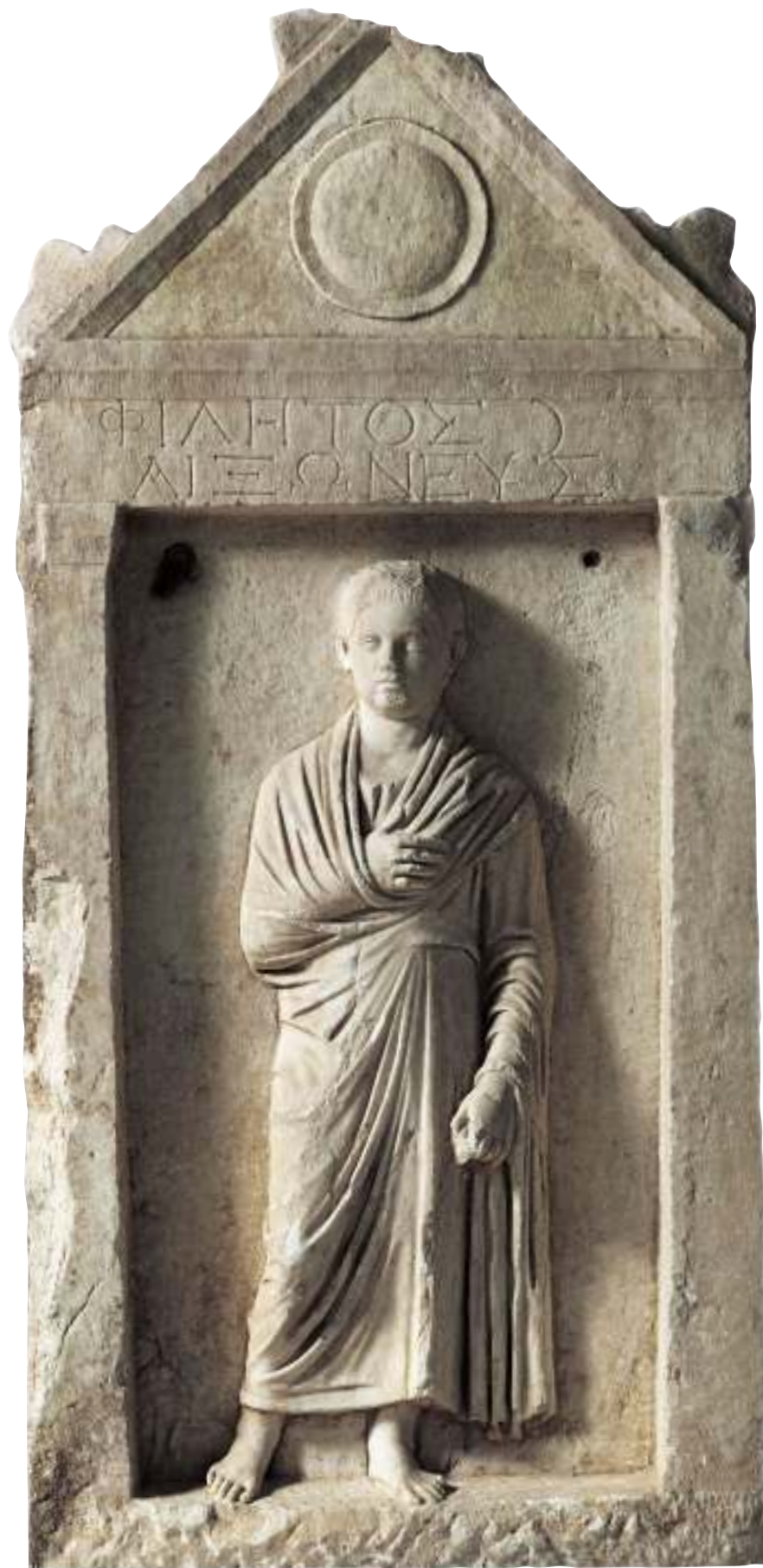


On the preceding page, the right-hand stele with palmette finial depicts a woman named Polystrate. The woman carved in the rectangular frame is identified as a priestess by the key to the temple she holds in her right hand. This is the earliest depiction of a priestess and dates to the early 4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 1142 / I 430.



Funerary relief of Philoumene and detail. Found in the burial enclosure of the Messenians. Philoumene, the wife of Philoxenos son of Dion from Messene, is shown seated on a stool covered by a cloth. The other three members of this family of metics had marble *trapezes* (tables) as tomb markers, surmounted by small marble *loutrophoroi*. Mid-4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 1551 / I 517.





Grave stele of Philetos from the deme of Aixone. Construction of funerary reliefs, which had been interrupted in Attica with the decree of the politician-philosopher Demetrios of Phaleron in 317/07 BC, began once more during the Early Roman period, in the characteristic style of the age. 1st c. AD. Inv. no. P 1557 / I 535.



Grave stele of Zosimos and Blaste. Found reused as the cover for a conduit near the Sacred Gate.
1st c. AD. Inv. no. P 1389 / I 494.

Atop the slope created at the intersection of the Street of Tombs and the South Road and conventionally called the “edge terrace”, a series of burial precincts was built in the first quarter of the 4th century BC. On the polygonal wall of the first precinct’s façade stood the poorly-preserved grave monument of the young actor and poet Makareus, whose epigram tells us of the hopes to which his talent gave rise, and which were dashed by his untimely death. The dead youth must have been buried in one of the many sarcophagi discovered behind the precinct’s façade, probably in that which contained two small pyxides and a Corinthian lidded lekane, filled with face paints in pellet form (*psimythia*), which were indispensable tools of the actor’s trade.

Continuing along the road and in direct proximity to Makareus’ precinct was that of two sisters, Demetria and Pamphile, who proved deserving of two separate monuments featuring their images. A cast of the later monument, done shortly before the ban imposed by Demetrius of Phaleron, has been set on the precinct’s façade (the original is in the Kerameikos Museum). Pamphile, seated on a luxurious chair, is deceased; her sister Demetria, who stands in the background of the relief, was also deceased by the time the funerary monument was erected. Demetria had died earlier in the mid-4th century BC, and a second outstanding funerary relief honouring her memory (today in the National Archaeological Museum) depicts the two sisters tenderly bidding farewell to one another. Here, only the seated Demetria is deceased. Unfortunately, the heads from this exceptionally fine relief have not survived.

The greater part of the “South Terrace” behind the burial precincts we considered above was occupied by simple graves of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, most of them marked by plain *columellae*.



Corinthian cylindrical pyxis and lidded lekane with pellets of *psimythion* (white lead paint). Found as grave goods in the porous sarcophagus of the actor and poet Makareus, who died young, they were used as cosmetics. Physico-chemical analysis of the pellets has shown that they had a lead base, and that they came from a specific production center having a strictly calibrated size and weight, apparently to be sold as standardised products. Mid-4th c. BC. Inv. nos. 10537 and 10539.



Marble stele-*naïskos* of Demetria and Pamphile. The names on the epistyle identify Pamphile, seated on an elaborately-decorated throne at right, and her sister Demetria at left. The two women wear richly-pleated chitons and himatia that cover their heads. The monument was found at the western end of the South Road. This funerary monument replaced an earlier mid-4th c. BC relief depicting the deceased Demetria bidding farewell to her sister Pamphile, who was still living at the time. Last quarter of the 4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 687 / I 257.



The sources frequently make mention of the monuments that adorned either side of the *Dromos*, ancient Athens' most important road. Today we know the location of some of these, including the Tomb of the Lacedaemonians killed at Piraeus in 403 BC (Xenophon *Hellenica* 22.4.33) and the monument of the herald Anthemokritos discussed above. Inscribed funerary monuments belonging to family members of the orator and politician Lycurgus (4th c. BC) were found at the junction of the modern-day 56 Vasilikon and Kratylou streets near the Academy.

Following the left side of the *Dromos* westward, after the circular bath (see below) and the intersection with the Cross Road, we arrive at an elongated enclosure of rectangular stone blocks. At the west end of its façade wall is preserved part of a cover slab (original length: 11 m.) that bears the names of Chairon and Thibrachos carved from right to left, and beneath these in larger letters, an LA (ΛΑ) (the first two letters of "Lacedaemonians"). A marble *Horos Kerameikou* ("boundary stone of the Kerameikos") still stands *in situ* in front of the precinct's west corner. The skeletons of thirteen men were found within it, the traces of their mortal wounds still detectable. Identification of the precinct as that where the Lacedaemonians killed in a battle with Athenian democrats in 403 BC were buried is certain, thanks to the description provided us by Xenophon in his *Hellenica* (2.4.28-33): after the Peloponnesian War, the tyranny of the "Thirty" which was followed by that of the "three thousand" became ever more insufferable for the democratic Athenians, who rose up under Thrasybulus and attacked their despotic rulers in Piraeus. Their Lacedaemonian protectors hastened to come to the aid of the Athenian oligarchs, and in the ensuing conflict both sides incurred heavy losses. According to Xenophon, "[in this attack] Chairon and Thibrachos, both *polemarchs*, were slain, and Lakrates, the Olympic victor, and other Lacedaemonians who lie buried before the gates of Athens in the Kerameikos".

A series of precincts continues westward from the monument of the Lacedaemonians. These were public graves where those who had died in war (unidentified today) were buried.

At the end of the archaeological site, half-buried beneath today's Piraeus Street and beside another marble boundary stone is one of the most imposing of the cemetery's funerary plots, conventionally called the "funerary building at the third boundary stone". The precinct's enclosure wall (length: 13 m.) concludes in two pilasters atop which sat two marble Molossian dogs (modern-day mastiffs). A circular stepped structure with conical roof surmounted by an enormous marble Panathenaic amphora stands in the center of the precinct. Only one grave was found in the eastern part of the enclosure, dated by its funerary gifts to the late 5th or early 4th century BC. There is no question that this was a public grave, like all the preceding ones on the south verge of the *Dromos*, but we are not sure to whom it belonged. It has sometimes been attributed to the Athenian general Chabrias, the Spartan Olympic victor Lakrates, or to the best known of the Thirty Tyrants, Kritias son of Kallaischros. A recent proposal employs the argument of the "barking symbol" of the two marble Molossians guarding the monument and argues that it should be attributed to Molossus, an Athenian general of the third quarter of the 4th century BC whose grave Pausanias saw in this area.

Detail of the throne from the relief of Demetria and Pamphile.

FOLLOWING PAGES: View of the South Road and the cast of the naïskos of Demetria and Pamphile.









Demosion Sema

The *Dromos*, the straight road about 1.6 kilometers long that took Athenians from the city to the suburb of Hecademus (the Academy) where Plato founded his renowned school, passed from the so-called Inner Kerameikos through the Dipylon. Today a small part of the *Dromos* falls inside the fenced site of the Kerameikos, while the remainder as far as the Academy lies beneath the contemporary city. Distinguished Athenians who had lost their lives in war for their homeland were buried along the length of the *Dromos* in what Thucydides called the “most beautiful suburb” (2.34) in the so-called *Demosion Sema* (public cemetery), *Polyandrion* (common grave), “Tomb Monument”, “Outer Kerameikos” or “Outer *Dromos*”. We do not know exactly when the institution of the *Demosion Sema* was inaugurated. If the tombs of Solon, the Tyrannicides and Cleisthenes were not mere cenotaphs dating to a later age (Pausanias 1.29.6 and 1.29.15), then the *Dromos* and the *Demosion Sema* had already acquired particular importance from the late 6th century BC. Pausanias at any rate mentions (1.29.2-4) that there were also monuments for all the Athenians killed in land and sea battles, in addition to those who fought in the battle of Marathon. Modern finds have shown that the Athenian state had built a marble cenotaph in the *Demosion Sema* for those fallen at Marathon. The monument consisted of an oblong base that carried stelai on which were written the names of the dead by tribes. In addition, recent excavations by the 3rd Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities outside the fenced area of the Kerameikos archaeological site at the junction of Salaminos and Leonidou Streets in Metaxourgeio have found sections of a *polyandrion*, that is a public burial structure attributed to the Athenians who fell in one of the early battles of the Peloponnesian War during the decade 430-420 BC. It contained a large number of grave goods, primarily white-ground lekythoi of exceptionally fine quality.

Pausanias mentions that along the *Dromos* following the tombs of the war dead were the tombs of Pericles, Chabrias, and Phormio, who had been victorious over the Spartans at Naupactus (Nafpaktos) in the year of Pericles’ death (429 BC). Those who had fallen near Corinth (Pausanias 1.29.10-12) were also buried here.

ABOVE: Marble palmette finial for a funerary stele with the names of those Athenians who fell in battle near Corinth in 394/3 BC, the battle in which Dexileos and his comrades lost their lives. It was set up by the city as an honorary grave marker for this particular *polyandrion* in the *Demosion Sema*. Inv. no. NAM 754.

Columellae on the northwest side of the Museum.

Many of the humble graves on the South Terrace were destroyed when a sacred precinct was founded on their location. Previously, researchers had believed that this was a sanctuary of Hecate and had dated it to Roman times. A large well has been found in the southern part of the precinct, as well as a small square altar into whose front was built a small reused votive relief with a scene of sacrifice. On the back side of the altar, a fallen marble slab was found which had in all likelihood been the top of an offering table. It bore a 2nd century BC votive inscription for someone named Maron, the son of Maron, who dedicated it to Artemis Soteira. Other inscriptions found in the precinct which mention this particular invocation of the goddess and the “association (*koinon*) of the Soteiriasts” (her followers) lead to the assumption that the precinct was probably dedicated to Artemis Soteira rather than Hecate, to whom it had been attributed in the 1890s on the basis of inscriptions mentioning her name and above all because of a three-sided base for a statue of the goddess found *in situ*. Hecate’s presence here on the boundaries of an ancient cemetery had been considered reasonable. The cult at the sanctuary of Artemis Soteira lasted from the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD. The much earlier (mid-4th century BC) magnificent funerary relief of a woman holding a hydria was found built into the precinct’s enclosure wall.

In the area between the Dipylon and the Sacred Gate, just outside the outer wall (*proteichisma*) and moat, a small temple (*naïskos*) entered from the north was built towards the last quarter of the 4th century BC. It preserves remains from its foundation and part of a wall that probably belonged to the precinct enclosure. The small temple was likely connected with the worship of Athena, who had given her name to the neighbouring marsh north of the site, according to a boundary stone inscription (*Horos telmatos Athenas*), “boundary stone of the marsh of Athena” found between the north outer tower of the Dipylon and the moat. The water that filled the adjacent moat probably came from the “marsh of Athena”.

At the entrance to the Sacred Gate in front of its southwest tower, a small sacred precinct with a marble altar on a marble base had been founded in the 5th century BC. During the construction of the outer wall (*proteichisma*), the altar was removed from its original position and after being shifted about on numerous occasions ended up above the outer wall’s southwest corner, but at the Sacred Way’s Roman ground level, when the outer wall itself was no longer visible. In 2004 it was reinstalled in its original position and provided with a covering. While we can only speculate about the divinity to which the altar was dedicated, it has been argued that it belonged to Demeter by virtue of its location at the start of the road to Eleusis and the characteristic ritual vessels (*keranoi*) excavated in this area and associated with her cult. At any rate, the altar’s long survival shows how important it was for the Athenians.

Marble relief of a *hydriaphoros* (hydria-carrier). Configured as a funerary *naïskos*, it depicts a woman carrying a hydria within the context of a ritual procession, probably the Great Panathenaea. It was found reused, built into the enclosure wall of the precinct of Hecate/Artemis Soteira. Mid-4th c. BC. Inv. no. P 1131.





On the northeast rim of the South Hill, across from the Triopatreion and very near the stelai of the Ambassadors are the preserved foundations of a small temple entered from the southeast which occupied one corner of a triangular-shaped sacred precinct dedicated to an as-yet unidentified deity. The remains of the temple and precinct visible today should be dated to before the mid-4th century BC, and an earlier mid-5th century BC phase (not visible today) is represented by a number of rectangular rooms along the north side of the precinct facing the Sacred Way.

Circular bath house

Continuing west along the *Dromos* and shortly before arriving at the intersection with the Cross Road, there is a circular construction (diameter ca. 5.80 m.) identified as the mid-5th century BC bath house mentioned by Aristophanes in the *Knights* and by the orator Isaeus (Harpocration, s.v. Anthemokritos), who notes that it stood near the tumulus of Anthemokritos. In contrast with their Roman descendants, Greek public baths were quite simple and lacked any strictly-defined succession or use of spaces. The *tholos*, a circular chamber for hot baths was its most recognizable architectural feature. Individual basins for full submersion and hip-baths were installed in a row or along the wall perimeter.

In the case of the Kerameikos bath house, a circular depression in the center of the tholos may have served for the placement of the *banos* that supported its roof, or for the installation of a *loutērion* (*perirrhanterion*). The floor, which inclined towards the circle's perimeter so as to direct water into a channel running around the circumference and thence to drains, has had several coverings,



Terracotta figurines from a child's tomb north of the Sacred Way. They depict Apollo *kitharodos* (kithara-player) and a woman with a little girl on her shoulder. Late 5th c. BC. Inv. nos. T 40 and T 166.

the final one a pebble mosaic. A series of rooms around the circular building most likely belonged with it, and these have been interpreted as changing rooms. If we accept that the rooms on the northwest that were coated in red plaster (which were cut off from the rest of the complex after the construction of the Tomb of the Lacedaemonians and the Cross Road in the late 5th century BC) formed part of the original baths, then the Kerameikos bath house was one of the largest in Classical Athens of those mentioned by the written sources as having stood outside the gates. The circular bath was supplied with water by a system of interconnected underground water reservoirs found nearby, and it was heated by a furnace located to the south.

The tholos continued in use following the construction of the Cross Road, but ancillary rooms now developed towards the south and parallel to the road. After a third series of alterations in the Hellenistic period, the bath house shrank significantly, but it continued to operate until the city was destroyed by Sulla, when it was permanently abandoned.

Large *lebes gamikos* (wedding lebes) from an offering site on the Sacred Way. Such vases were used in wedding ceremonies for the bathing of the bride as well as in burial ceremonies. They carry decoration related to the preparations for the wedding. Late 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 3102.





Lebetes gamikoi from an offering trench on the Sacred Way, by the Washing Painter. They came from the tomb of a young unmarried woman. Ca. 430 BC. Inv. nos. 2694 and 2695.





Large red-figure chous/oinochoe by the painter Aison with a representation of the Danaid Amyclone among satyrs. Found in an Offering trench that belonged to a warrior's tomb, north of the Sacred Way. One of the loveliest works of Attic vase painting of the decade 440-430 BC. Inv. no. 4290.

Detail of the figure of Amyclone. According to myth, while searching for water in the region of "thirsty" Argos, she met a deer which she hunted with her bow. However, the arrow she shot missed and awakened the satyrs, who attacked her.







Details of the satyrs.
The theatricality of
movement is impressive
and recalls Aeschylus'
lost satyr play *Amymone*.







Red-figure hydria from an offering trench on the Sacred Way. Found in the same trench as the two *lebetes gamikoi* mentioned above, it carries a wedding scene in the center of which is a young Eros-flute player. Ca. 430 BC. Inv. no. 2698.





Red-figure lidded lekane and pyxis with wedding preparation scenes. From an offering trench on the Sacred Way.
Early 4th c. BC. Inv. nos. 3103, 3104.







Red-figure tripod pyxis from an offering trench on the Sacred Way. Found in the same trench as the two lebetes gamikoi and the hydria on the preceding pages. The decorative zone on the pyxis' body similarly depicts a wedding scene. Ca. 430 BC. Inv. no. 2697.



Marble calyx krateriskos-pyxis of Parian marble.
Ca. 430-420 BC. Inv. no. 1608.

Marble ossuary from a 4th c. BC tomb.
Inv. no. 1843.



Bronze hydria from a tomb in the area of Agia Triada. Last quarter of the 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 2185.

As strange as it would seem for a site that has linked its name with the potter's art, to date excavations in the Kerameikos have not brought to light remains of pottery workshops earlier than the Classical age. Despite this difficulty, long years of well-documented excavations in the ancient cemetery and neighbouring Agora have allowed us to identify ceramic workshops in the greater Kerameikos area.

The earliest pottery workshop kiln nearest the Kerameikos dates to the Late Geometric / early Archaic period and stood in what would later become the ancient Agora, near the Classical *Tholos*. From this same area, and primarily from inside wells came many workshop wasters (discards) encompassing the period from the Proto-Geometric to the late Archaic period. These finds, which are unquestionably associated with ceramic activity, led some scholars to hypothesize that the location of the subsequent Agora was the potters' "head-quarters" until the Archaic age, before the latter moved further west after the Persian Wars.

From the second half of the 6th century BC down to the end of antiquity, a larger number of workshops have survived in the Kerameikos and its environs and we have more secure evidence concerning their operation. The fortification of the city created new circumstances, driving potters outside the walls and around their perimeter. Remains of potters' installations of the late 5th and 4th centuries BC (no longer visible) have been identified outside the Dipylon on the southwest edge of the *Dromos* and beneath the museum. The ruins of kilns that remain visible at the archaeological site date from Late Hellenistic to Late Roman times, but mainly following the sack of the city by Sulla and later by the Heruli. For this reason, nearly all were built over the ruins of their precursor buildings, for example in the Pompeion and on the ruins of houses X, Y, and Z (see below). Between the 3rd and 5th centuries AD we note a significant production/sale of lamps in the Kerameikos, with products signed by nearly all the known lamp-makers of Late Antiquity. Among them were lamps produced by Eutyichis, Soter, and Chione. Many bore the symbol of the cross on their disc; such lamps were apparently very popular among followers of the new religion.

Directly outside the western enclosure of the ancient cemetery, outside the archaeological site, at the junction of Piraeus Street and the Sacred Way, excavations for the Athens Metro revealed the remains of pottery workshops to a length of 65 meters. Several more workshops have been identified along the ancient road leading from the Dipylon to Plato's Academy in the greater Academy area, and in the area between the Dipylon and the so-called Eriiae Gates (to the north) and between the Sacred Gate and the Piraeus Gate (to the south). The study of these workshops from 1853 to the present has identified installations that housed the creative inspiration of important black- and red-figure artists, including the Brygos Painter and his circle and the painters known by the conventional names "Jena Painter" and "Dinos Painter".

There are far fewer foundries for bronze artifacts (perhaps also statues) in this area in relation to ceramic kilns. A bronze foundry pit opened over the ruins of the first building X dates to the Classical period, while in the Early Hellenistic age there was a foundry installed that has recently been identified in the Outer Kerameikos on Voutadon Street behind Technopolis (Gazi).



Miniature terracotta game table with figurines of mourners and a die. Found in an offering trench near the city walls. It is one of two intact examples of its type, and consequently it belongs to a group of very rare objects. The same pottery workshops that produced vases with attached figurines or protomes –frequently of mourners– from the early 7th to the early 6th c. BC throughout Attica also produced game tables on an occasional basis –again, with the characteristic mourner figures– for the funerary ritual. Its interpretation as a game is owed to its connection with a small clay die found in the same excavation group. The game was synonymous with the touch-and-go struggle with fate, especially during the moment of battle, and ultimately, with the “weighing” of life and death. From an Attic workshop. Ca. 580-570 BC. Inv. nos. 45 and 47.



The workshops normally developed in artisan production clusters in sparsely-populated areas and often near cemeteries, to whose visitors they made available a host of artifacts and vases exclusively associated with mourning and bidding farewell to the dead, such as funerary plaques and phormiskoi (small pear-shaped vases) with *prothesis* scenes, game tables with mourners as attachments, and later a wide variety of white-ground lekythoi, normally painted with funerary subjects. Indeed, it would appear that particular workshops and potters specialized in specific genres and types of production.





Black-figure funerary plaque with a *prothesis* scene. Funerary plaques, either in series or individually, were the exclusive products of Attic workshops. They appear to have served the needs of both the Kerameikos and of Athens' smaller cemeteries, as well as a number of cemeteries in the Mesogeia region. The four holes at their corners were for attaching them to some funerary monument. The iconography of these plaques was confined in an almost monotonous fashion to the representation of the prothesis, with the deceased man or woman lying on the couch and the grieving relatives –more commonly, women–surrounding them. When shown, men are depicted as arriving from the left of the scene, normally with their arm raised in a gesture of final farewell. The names of major vase painters including Sophilos, Lydos, Exekias and the Sappho Painter have been linked with the decoration of funerary plaques. Ca. 510 BC or slightly later. Inv. no. 690.

Black-figure phormiskos (a vase shaped like a small gourd) with a *prothesis* scene. Its cylindrical neck, which narrows above, has two suspension holes for hanging the vase, perhaps from the grave stele. The decoration –always with funerary motifs–occupies a figural frieze surrounding the entire vase, and would have been visible from all its faces. From an Attic workshop. Ca. 510 BC. Inv. no. 1657.

FOLLOWING PAGES: Phormiskos, detail. The deceased woman lies on a couch with her head on a pillow. Three standing women dressed in peplos and himation are lamenting in front of her. They are depicted in the classical gesture of lament, tearing at their hair. Beneath the funeral couch is a low, oblong stool with lion's legs.





THE AREA INSIDE THE WALLS [INNER KERAMEIKOS]

For the Athenians just as for all Greeks, whatever concerned the world of the dead was traditionally consecrated and inviolable, but at the same time, defiled. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why the part of the Inner Kerameikos near the wall that apparently lay atop or beside earlier graves continued unbuilt for many years after the construction of the new fortifications in 479/478 BC. This was also true of other areas of the ancient city near the walls. It was only in the third quarter of the 5th century BC that the building which is known by the name “Z” was built south of the Sacred Way, while the Pompeion, the building where preparations for the procession of the Panathenaea took place, was only built in the early 4th century BC on what had previously been an empty space between the Dipylon and the Sacred Gate.

POMPEION

Squeezed into the empty space between the Dipylon and the Sacred Gate was a large public building that presented the layout of an ancient gymnasium. It has been identified with certainty as the Pompeion, a name mentioned for the first time by Demosthenes (34.39).

The area of the Inner Kerameikos between the two gates had been a cemetery at the end of the Mycenaean age, but from that time until the late 5th century BC it had remained unused. A large number of openings comparable to those found in the court of the Dipylon may have come from the stakes with which the Athenians anchored canopies or tents when they gathered in this open space to prepare for the celebration of the Panathenaea. Shortly after the fall of the Thirty Tyrants (403 BC) and before Conon’s renovation of the walls (394 BC), an oblong building was built there. It featured a monumental propylon, peristyle inner court, and a series of square banquet rooms on its west and north sides. Thirteen unfluted porous limestone columns of the Ionic order ran around the courtyard’s long sides and six along its narrow ones, supporting a sloping tile roof and creating a stoa around its circumference. Many of their shafts still survive *in situ*. The stoa’s outer walls consisted of marble orthostates on which the mudbrick superstructure rested. A stone bench, remains of which are preserved only on the east (narrow) side of the stoa, ran along the base of the walls on the interior, and a shallow channel dug in the courtyard’s floor just in front of the colonnade collected rainwater.

The peristyle courtyard was entered on the east through a monumental propylon. Its floor, paved in Hymettus marble, remains preserved. Its marble roof, which is restored as pitched and equipped with lion-head spouts, was supported by four fluted marble columns, also Ionic. An access ramp with deep wheel tracks,

apparently for chariots and carts, led through the central double doorway to the peristyle court; the propylon's two side doors, also double, served pedestrians.

On the rear wall of the stoa, west and north of the peristyle court, doors opened onto six nearly square rooms of different sizes. Five had white pebble floors and the sixth had a lovely pebble mosaic depicting a fight between carnivorous and herbivorous animals. In all six, the pebble floor stopped about a meter in front of the side walls. This arrangement indicates that there were symposium couches set along the walls (the total number is estimated at sixty-six), and therefore these spaces could have functioned as dining rooms. A large paved courtyard complete with well intervenes between two of the dining rooms/*hestiatoria* on the north side, and the smallest room on this side may have served as a kitchen.

The length and width of the Pompeion's courtyard were sufficient to accommodate the ship for the procession of the Great Panathenaea. The Athenians hung on its mast –originally every year, but after the reorganisation of the celebration (566 BC), every fourth year in mid-August during the Great Panathenaea– Athena's new peplos, woven by the *ergastines* (young aristocratic women responsible for weaving the goddess' peplos). The peplos, later transferred in procession to the Acropolis, clothed the goddess's *xoanon*. According to inscriptions, the distribution of meat from the hecatomb in honor of Athena must have taken place in the Kerameikos. However, only the city's notables appear to have enjoyed their portion in the Pompeion's dining rooms. The common people would have had to make do in the open-air area of the Dipylon and the courtyard of the Pompeion. A thick layer of bovine bones and waste that filled the adjacent moat provide irrefutable witness to the meals eaten by both commoners and rulers in this area.

The Pompeion, however, also operated as a gymnasium, as we know not only from its architectural plan but from inscriptions containing the names of epebes characterising themselves as “friends” (*φίλοι*) which were carved on the interior courtyard beside a small door on the wall of the east stoa. Entrance to the gymnasium was apparently free; according to the late antique author Diogenes Laertius (6.22), the philosopher Diogenes frequently appeared there. We learn from the same source (2.43) that a bronze statue of Socrates by the sculptor Lysippus adorned the space. The stoa's wall must have been decorated with wall paintings of orators and writers of comedy (Plutarch, *Moralia* 839 γ), including Menander, whose name was carved on the orthostate beside the small door mentioned above.

The building was almost entirely destroyed by the Romans under Sulla (86 BC). Later, when Pausanias arrived in Athens from Piraeus, he described the building where the preparations for processions took place (1.2.4), but he saw a new construction of cast masonry that dated to the age of the emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD) and not the Classical Pompeion. This structure is called by modern research the “Building of the Warehouses”. The building of Pausanias' age was three-aisled and two-storied, with its entrance on the side facing the city. It had approximately the same width as the Classical Pompeion, but it was considerably shorter, so it is possible the eastern part of the courtyard of the original Pompeion served as a forecourt together with its monumental propylon, which was still standing in Pausanias' time.

FOLLOWING PAGES: View of the Pompeion from the East. In the foreground, the floor of its marble propylon.





Its west wall stood on the city's enclosure, which by then lay in ruins. The warehouse building was completely destroyed in the Herulian invasion, and potters once more settled among its ruins, as shown by remains of potters' kilns preserved in the courtyard. Much later, in the second half of the 4th or possibly the 5th century AD, its site was taken up by two parallel facing stoas with a shared entrance.

FOUNTAIN HOUSE

A large fountain in contact with the inner (city) side of the Dipylon refreshed wayfarers and their animals and supplied part of the city with water. The remains still standing today are contemporary with the large-scale repairs to this gate in 307-304 BC, though there must have been a fountain building in the same location and with about the same arrangement from the age of Themistocles. Floor traces allow us to restore its form to that of a covered rectangular structure with a built Γ -shaped basin along one long and one narrow side. Water was transported to this reservoir through a stone channel that passed below the staircase that ascended to the Dipylon's battlements. In front of the reservoir, the fountain building's roof was supported by three Ionic columns whose bases are preserved in situ, thus forming a small stoa.

ALTAR

Directly in front of the central pillar separating the Dipylon's two doors (and again, facing the Inner Kerameikos, i.e. towards the city), there are preserved the remains of a square base that supported a cylindrical marble altar carrying a 3rd century BC inscription: "(to) Zeus Herkeios, Hermes, Akamas". Zeus Herkeios was the protector of the courtyard as well as of the *herkos* (the enclosure wall), Hermes was the patron of merchants and travelers, and Akamas was the eponymous hero of the Akamantis tribe, to which the deme of Kerameis belonged. Traces of foundations a short distance from the cylindrical altar (not visible today) may have belonged to the base of an earlier altar dedicated to these same deities.

BUILDING Z

A few years before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (431 BC), in the Inner Kerameikos on a corner formed by the city wall and the Sacred Gate, a large structure measuring 500 square meters was built. It functioned as a private residence and has been conventionally named "Building Z". A number of its walls have survived, as has a mosaic from the floor of its andron (the room where men gathered and dined). The residence also included women's quarters, a kitchen, and storerooms, and it had at least fifteen rooms arranged around two courtyards, each with its own well; it must have belonged to a very wealthy individual, because

it recalls nothing of the small, spare residences of most Athenians of this era. This first structure (Z1) was apparently leveled by an earthquake between 427 and 420 BC, which covered its rich household gear with earth.

In the final quarter of the 5th century BC a new building (Z2) was built atop the ruins of Z1, with the same area but a different ground plan, and it probably had two floors. It was destroyed at the end of the Peloponnesian War when the Lacedaemonians demolished the walls of defeated Athens. Beneath the floor of Z2, a pit was found containing offerings of terracotta figurines and small vases.

After the mid-4th century BC, building Z3 was built on the foundations of Z2. For the most part it retained the same floor plan, but it was now one-storied and had a different use. The finds (a large number of lamps, enormous underground water reservoirs) indicate that it was probably a textile workshop-production facility. The numerous cups and eating utensils that came to light may indicate a second function as a hostel/inn. Certain finds (e.g. amulets) suggest that some of the women who lived in Z3 were slaves or courtesans who not only worked the looms but also “serviced” the hostelry’s visitors. This building was in use for about thirty years before being destroyed in an earthquake in the late 4th century BC.

In the first half of the 3rd century BC, building Z3 was replaced by Z4, a structure of the same size which was then succeeded in the same century by building Z5. We do not know the exact functions of these last two buildings. Judging from the water reservoirs that were in use until the early 1st century BC, it is likely that both functioned as artisanal production establishments. They were destroyed in the Sullan invasion of 86 BC, when their reservoirs were also filled in. It appears that a building with a peristyle courtyard was subsequently built on the site, but we know almost nothing about this structure.



Marble *naiskos* and figurine of an enthroned Cybele from building Z3. The goddess is shown with a small lion at her feet and a drum in her right hand. Traces of gold on the diadem on her head. Last quarter of the 4th c. BC. Inv. nos. P 1452-P 1453.



BUILDINGS Y AND X

A narrow street separated building Z from the adjacent building Y, where excavations began in 1985. As in the case of building Z, here too we have a succession of buildings on the same site and with approximately the same ground plan, dating from the final quarter of the 4th century BC to the Early Hellenistic period. The Late Classical building Y was buried after its collapse by a thick layer of sand in order to create the foundations for the following Early Hellenistic building. Many household effects belonging to the Late Classical residence (vases, terracottas, coins) were found in the sand layer and date the successor building to around 300 BC. The cause of the destruction of the Late Classical house Y might be attributable to one of the many military confrontations during this period (Demetrius Poliorcetes? Cassander?).

A series of rooms a little further east and facing the south verge of the Sacred Way may have belonged to a larger building complex (building X). Here too, excavations (not yet completed) have brought to light at least three phases of a building dating from the last quarter of the 5th century BC to Early Hellenistic times.

From Roman Imperial times until Late Antiquity, the entire neighbourhood that included buildings X, Y, and Z was turned into an area with pottery workshops and bronze-working foundries, which appear to have been rebuilt time and again in the wake of each destruction Athens suffered. Casting pits for bronze objects and significant pottery-making establishments are preserved, the latter complete with reservoirs for cleaning clay and with firing kilns.

Terracotta figurine of a sharply-turned, himation-clad seated woman with one leg crossed over the other. The figurine preserves its vibrant colors, including traces of gold on the headband and earring. From building Z3. Last quarter of the 4th c. BC. Inv. no. T 604.



The symposium "apparatus" found in building Z1.

Kylix depicting a lovers' conversation and a kantharos.
Third quarter of the 5th c. BC. Inv. nos. 5882, 5894.







Silver amulet (pendant) from building Z3 with an embossed depiction of Aphrodite as the Evening Star. The goddess is shown on a goat with two kids, Selene (the Moon) and the stars, doves, and two winged youths, Hesperus and Phosphorus. Ca. 380-379 BC. Inv. no. M 374.



Basalt (?) seal with a handle in the shape of a dog following a scent and the inscription "APOLLODORO" from building Z3. Probably late 5th c. BC. Inv. no. P 1521.





Gilded bronze mirror depicting three figures in an idyllic landscape. 150 AD. Inv. no. M 824.



Gold jewelry (earrings, ring, armlet) from graves of the early Roman Imperial age. Inv. nos. M 825-M 828.



Bronze protome-balance weight of the Roman period. Found in a tomb of the late 2nd-3rd c. AD near the Dipylon. Inv. no. P 1397.



KERAMEIKOS: THE OFFICIAL CEMETERY

Ostracism

As Aristotle tells us in the *Athenian Constitution*, one of Cleisthenes' most important measures was the institution of ostracism, which offered a very great service to the newly-minted Athenian democracy. Athenian citizens (that is, those whose parents both came from Attica) could write the name of the politician whom they believed had endangered the constitution/state through his actions, words, or ideas on an ostrakon (a broken tile or vase fragment). Thus a vote was taken by ostraka, and the politician who gathered the most with his own name was exiled from Athens for a decade in the wake of popular verdict. Ostracism was not a punishment; rather, it was a preventive measure taken to ensure social normalcy.

In 478 BC, when a permanent bed for the River Eridanos was formed during construction of the Themistoclean wall, the original north bed, which had remained open, was turned into a dump site for thousands of ostraka, products of the institution of ostracism. In addition, a fair number were also found on the east side of the Tritopatreion. The first ostracism was implemented in 488 BC, the last in 415 BC. Ostraka constitute a valuable source of information about the functioning of democracy in ancient Athens. We read on them more than one hundred names of Athenian citizens including those of some well-known 5th-century politicians such as Themistocles, Kimon, and even from semi-literate citizens the names MITIADO (Miltiades), Aristeides, and Pericles. Other names recorded include those of Menon from the deme of Gargettos, Kallias, Megakles, and Phaiax.

CELEBRATIONS FOR THE LIVING

Celebration of the Great Panathenaea

On the night of 28 Hekatombaion (the goddess' birthday) towards the end of our month of July, there was an all-night celebration accompanied by a torch-race and dancing by youths and maidens. The prize for the contents was a Panathenaic amphora that had a representation of the goddess Athena fully-armed on one side accompanied by the inscription "[FROM] THE GAMES AT ATHENS" (ΤΩΝ ΑΘΗΝΕΩΝ ΑΘΛΩΝ) and on the other, representations of various contents as well as an olive wreath. The amphora was filled with oil from the goddess' sacred olive trees, the moieties from her sanctuary in Akademeia. This lasted throughout the night. At sunrise on the same day, the brilliant procession started from the Dipylon, and in particular from the Pompeion. Young Athenian horsemen from good families, maidens-*kanephoroi* (carrying baskets on their heads), elders holding olive branches (*thallophoroi*), and metics (foreign residents in Athens) carrying troughs

Ostracism *ostrakon* bearing the name "Megacles [son of] Hippocrates". Inv. no. 4611.



Ostraka from the ostracism procedure bearing the names of prominent Athenians. Found as fill in the old bed of the Eridanos. 5th c. BC.
 Inv. nos. O 849, O 1077/O 7219, O 1112, O 1113, O 1116, O 3358, O 4116, O 4610, O 5274, O 5432/O 3480, O 6118, O 6725, O 6742/O 3390, O 8500.

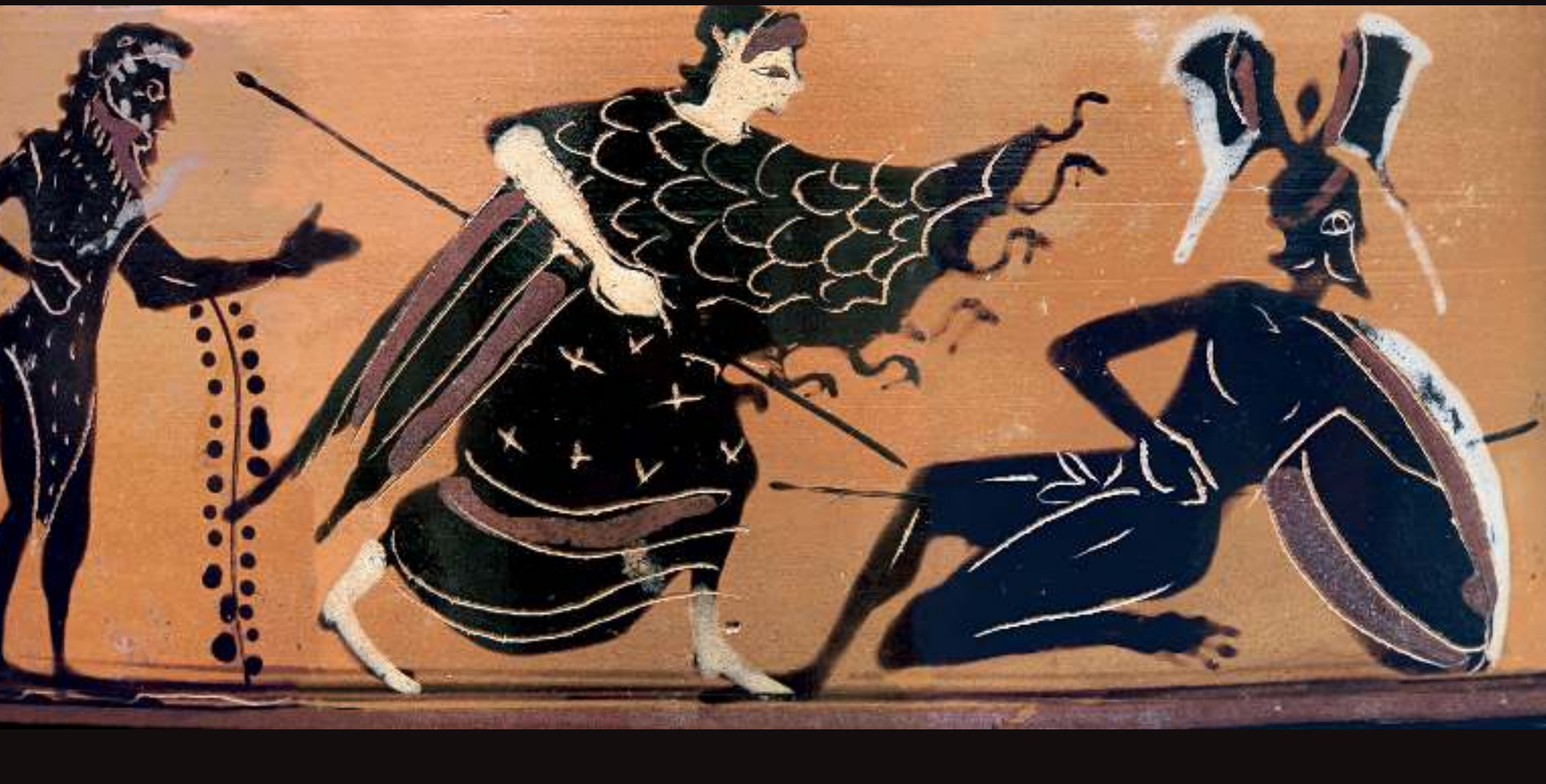




and hydriai (*skaphephoroi*, *hydriaphoroi*) all took part in the procession bringing sacrificial animals, baskets and vases containing offerings, and above all the beautifully-woven new peplos for the statue of the goddess that stood in her temple on the Acropolis. The peplos had been fashioned with great skill by the *ergastinai*, young virgins and married aristocratic women of Athens, because everyone would see it: it would be spread out as a horizontal sail on the wheeled ship –probably the same one used in the Anthesteria– and everyone had to admire the subject of the representation, which was none other than the Gigantomachy in which the city’s patron goddess had distinguished herself. According to tradition, the establishment of the celebration, which was initially not as magnificent as it became during the Classical Age, was owed to the mythical King Erichonius. When the synoecism was achieved, a joint sacrifice was organized by all the clans and the celebration acquired the name “Panathenaea”. It was probably Peisistratus as leader of the party of the “Mountaineers” (*Diakrioi*) who proposed the Great Panathenaea to the Athenians as a quinquennial celebration parallel to the yearly Panathenaea around 565 BC (before he assumed power). It is in any case true that since Peisistratus considered Athena the protectress of his regime, he enriched the Panathenaea with athletic, musical, and poetry competitions (it is possible that the evolution of the latter resulted in the creation of ancient tragedy). The renowned Parthenon frieze “narrates” this magnificent procession in honor of the goddess Athena, a procession which theoretically could be seen as symbolizing the rebirth of nature and the eternal cycle of life. Since it started from the place beside the most important of Athens’ cemeteries, one could say –metaphorically– that it began from the kingdom of Hades, moving upward to “emerge” on the goddess’ hill, in the divine world. The goddess’ brilliant celebration not only united social classes and clans; it also contributed to the creation of a unified tribal identity for the Ionian Athenians and their dominance over the other Greeks. This dominance, reinforced after the battle of Marathon, essentially served as the cornerstone for the Athenian miracle in the 5th century BC.

Large shard from a Panathenaic amphora depicting three male figures in a scene where the victor is being proclaimed following a competition. In the center, the figure of a young athlete in a pose of sculptural type, holding a palm branch in his right hand which he has received from the judge standing beside him; at left is a folded cloth. This rare scene of the awarding of a prize rather than of a contest belongs to a revived iconographic tendency inaugurated in the Late Classical period by vase painters of Panathenaic amphorae. Stylistically connected with the painter of Athens 12592. Third quarter of the 4th c. BC. Inv. no. PA 156.





Black-figure lekythos with a depiction of a gigantomachy. Athena in full armor is subduing a Giant as Heracles looks on. Ca. 500 BC. Inv. no. 666.



Black figure lekythos with a depiction of riders. Ca. 500 BC. Inv. no. 10449.



Front of a Panathenaic amphora with a scene of the armed Athena Promachos and the typical inscription "ΤΩΝ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΩΝ ΑΘΛΩΝ" ("From the games at Athens"). On either side of the goddess are two slender columns crowned by cocks. Second half of the 5th c. BC. Inv. no. PA 700.



CELEBRATIONS FOR THE DEAD

According to Homer, the “Games for Patroclus” were the contests held to honor the corpse of Achilles’ beloved friend. In the 6th century, Solon established in the Athenian cycle of feasts the “Geneseia”, a celebration that honored the anniversary of the death of the deceased to be held in the month of Boedromion (September). The unusually great width of the *Dromos* in front of the Dipylon (39 metres) can be explained only if one considers the rites that were held at this spot in honor of the dead, above all the “funerary contest”, which was in all likelihood a chariot race. Aristophanes and Pausanias inform us that each year a torch-race was held along the *Dromos*, that it started from the altar of Prometheus in the Academy area, and that the best location for viewing it was from above, atop the towers of the Dipylon.

The Anthesteria

The Anthesteria, an old celebration for Dionysus, was directly related to chthonian Hermes and the souls of the dead. It was held in the month of this name, which coincided with today’s months of February-March, and lasted three days. The first day was called the *Pithoigia*, because the pithoi (large jars) containing the new wine were opened, though according to another, less-widely held view it was thus called because the pithoi were opened not for wine but to release the souls of infants who were traditionally buried in such jars. The following day was called “Choes” and was a celebration of the “day of fruitfulness”. We know that the chous was the principle vase used on the Choes. The shape was connected with children, and this was why all these vases carry only representations appropriate for children. The chthonian character of this celebration



was particularly extolled on the third day, which was called “Chytroi” after the *chytrai* (cooking pots) in which wheat, nuts, and *lathyroi* (a legume) and served up to the souls of the dead (as Greeks today serve *kollyva*). Souls and evil spirits of the Underworld such as the Keres were banished on the following day with the phrase “depart spirits, the Anthesteria are over”.

The Skirophoria

According to the traveller Pausanias, there was a place called Skiron near the tomb of Anthemokritos on the Sacred Way. It was there that the “sacred ploughings”, rites aimed at gaining the gods’ favor, were held. The ancient sources inform us that in Athens and Attica, the Tritopatreis were worshipped in the month of Skirophorion (June/July) during the celebration of the Skiriophoria. Animal sacrifices were conducted, and *melikerton* (a drink of milk and honey) and first fruits were offered to the gods. A procession in which the priests of Apollo and the Sun (deities of light and life) and the priestess of Athena took part set out from the Acropolis and made its way to the site of Skiron. The items used in the festival were called “Skira”, and Athena as goddess of the earth’s fertility bore the epithet “Skiras”. Since the Tritopatores were worshipped during the month of Skirophorion, it would not be unreasonable to argue that the open space in front of the Tritopatreion might have been the field where the “sacred ploughings” took place, which was not far from the small sacred precinct.

Scene of a chariot race, a funerary game following the burial of some *aristos*. Detail from the Geometric krater on p. 63.

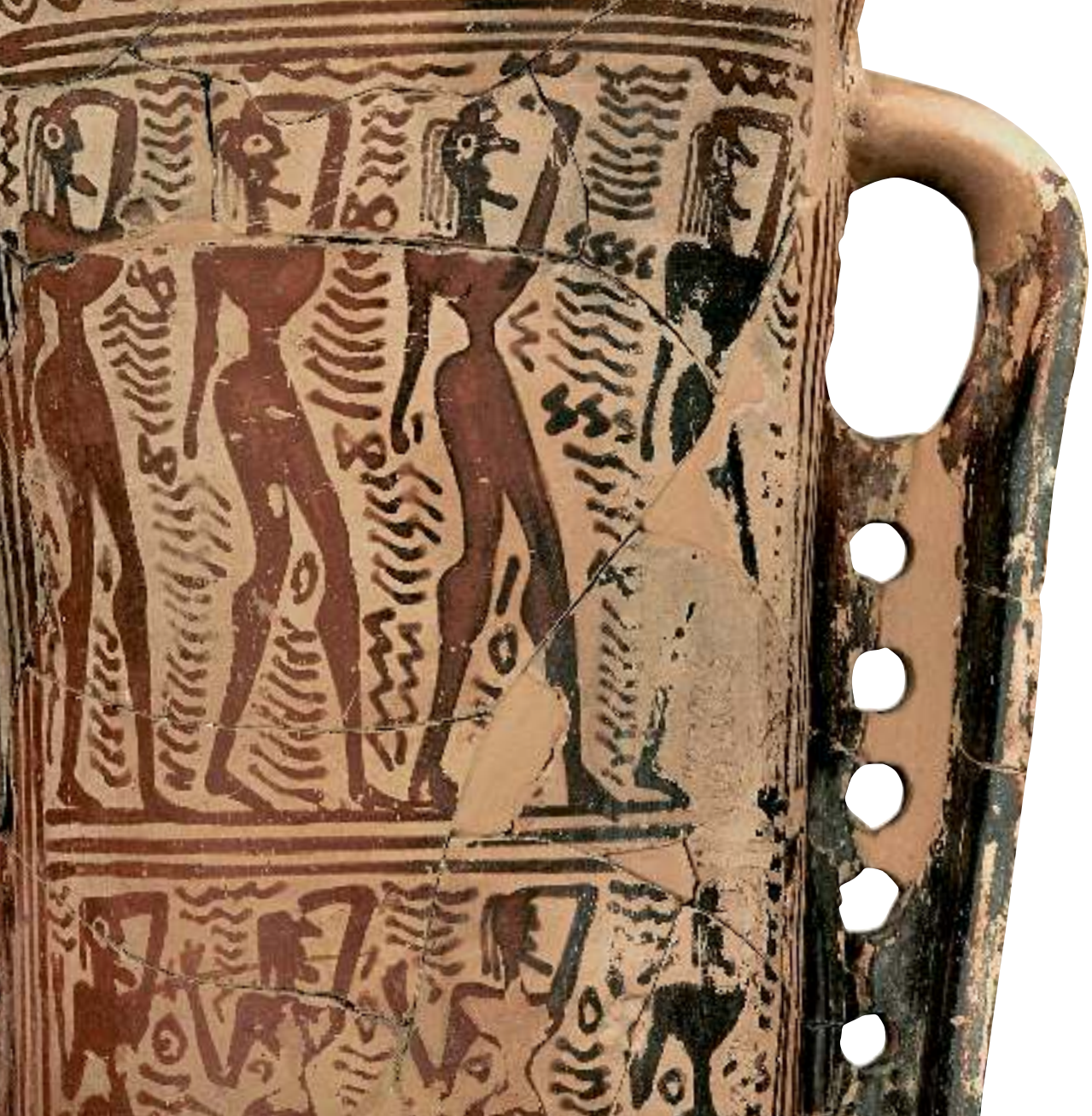


Katadesmos (curse) consisting of a lead case containing a small doll, also of lead. An unusual form of punishment and personal justice in Classical Athens were the so-called *katadesmoi*, that is, lead tablets and small dolls on which the envious incised curses against their living opponents or rivals. These would be activated only upon an invocation of Persephone and Hermes Psychopompos, and the lead objects were introduced into tombs for the dead to carry to the rulers of Hades and achieve the desired result. Last quarter of the 5th c. BC. Inv. nos. IB12-SA40.

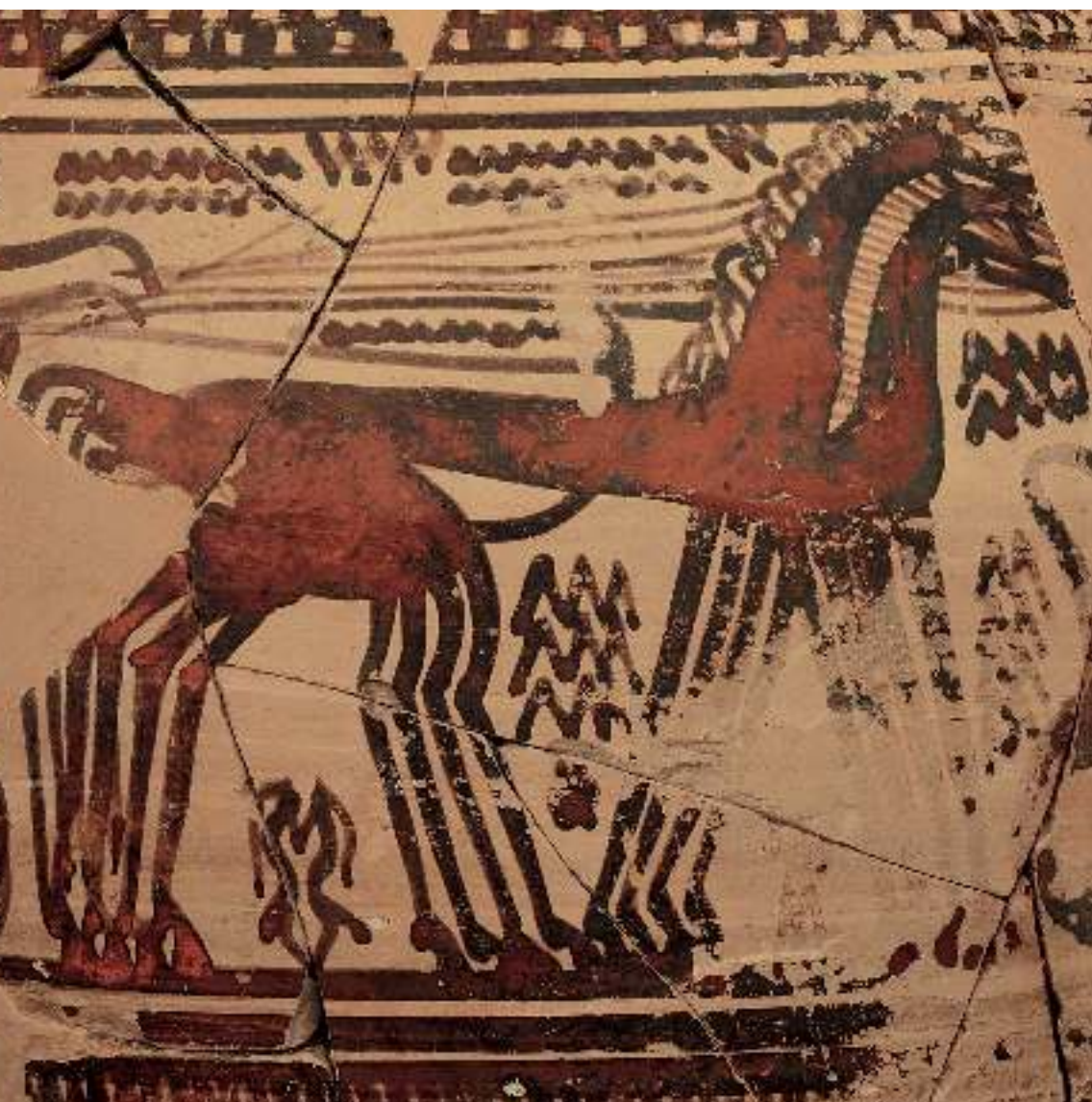
The process of transition from “this world to the other one” as Socrates notes in the *Phaedrus* included three discrete stages: death, the unburied corpse, and the buried corpse. After death, the women bathed the deceased in water and perfumes and placed the body –now wrapped in a shroud– on a high couch with mattress and pillow (the *prothesis*, laying-out). The relatives of the dead expressed their feelings through violent movements, pulling out their cropped hair (*tillesthai*), beating their breasts, and tearing at their cheeks until they brought blood (*koptontai*). From among the burial hymns, the *threnos* (dirge), the *ialemos* (lament), and the *goos* (wailing song) may be singled out. The coffin was transported to the grave (*ekphora*) either on a horse-drawn hearse or more commonly on a litter carried by relatives on their shoulders, or by special transport personnel, the bier-bearers (*klimakophoroi*), corpse-carriers (*ne-krophoroi*), or corpse-buriers (*nekrothaptai*). In the course of the *ekphora*, a hymn in Carian mode was heard. While the body remained in the grave, the soul escaped from it (*psychorragema*, “the soul’s breaking loose”) and flew like a bird to the Underworld, the “dynasty of Hades”, the vast, barren, dank (*euoeis*) and shadowy community of the dead. There was a pervasive belief that those initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries and correspondingly into Pythagorean and Orphic teachings would have a happy end and likely be guided to rebirth. Mystical teachings, however, waned in the late 5th century BC and for another century the Athenians’ love for the things of this world and the beautiful funerary monuments of Athena near the marsh (moat) held sway.



Black figure lekythos with a depiction of a warrior's departure.
Mid-6th c. BC. Inv. no. 2.



Early Proto-Attic loutrophoros
preserving its high neck and
perforated handles. The mourners
extend over two zones on the neck,
with men above and women below.
First quarter of the 7th c. BC.
Inv. no. 1370.



The surviving part of the spherical belly
of the same vase with a chariot race,
a contest held in honor of the deceased.
Inv. no. 1371a.

Shard from a Geometric amphora with a scene of hoplites and chariots in a funerary contest. Late 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 2989.



Red-figure dinos with a scene of satyrs carrying torches for the festival of the *Lampadephoria* (torch-race). The movement of the robust figures aptly conveys the highly festive atmosphere. Early 4th c. BC. Inv. no. 2852.





Red-figure psykter (a container for keeping wine cold) with a scene of satyrs wearing fawnskins and carrying pointed-toe amphorae. This scene is probably connected with the festival of the Anthesteria, specifically its first day, the *Pithoigia*. First half of the 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 2710.





Prothesis scene from amphora NAM no. 804.



Black-figure plaque with a *prothesis* depiction. The carved couch on which the dead woman lies is surrounded by three female relatives (one is bending over to kiss her, while the others are beating their breasts); two men are bidding her farewell with the characteristic gesture of raised right arms. The incisions on the black bodies flawlessly render the necessary details, while the women's skin is indicated with added white. This is one of the best-preserved archaic plaques with a *prothesis* scene, and may be from the same workshop (though not by the hand of the same painter) that produced the plaque on p. 69 (Inv. no. 690). This plaque was unfortunately stolen from the Kerameikos Museum in 1941. Inv. no. 677.

Modeled figurine of a mourner. Early 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 4070.



Late Geometric terracotta model of a pomegranate, its decoration in imitation of the interior of the fruit. Fourth quarter of the 8th c. BC. Inv. no. 1304.



Archaic tile with plastic female protomes wearing a polos and displaying the so-called “Archaic smile”. The use of red and white underscores the details and decorates the figures. These funerary tiles are rare in other cemeteries. In terms of meaning, they were probably connected with the Fates; in iconographical terms, the forgotten funerary mask of Mycenaean times was reintroduced with these tiles. The extended plastically-modeled hand remains difficult to interpret; perhaps it indicates a gesture of farewell. The openings in the back of the tile indicate that it was suspended. Late 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 685.



Early Proto-Attic cup with high perforated foot featuring a scene of mourners. 700-680 BC. Inv. no. 1153.



Early black-figure loutrophoros (a vase for the wedding bath).
A slender vase with plastic decoration consisting of two female protomes on the rim. A series of female mourners occupies the tall neck. There are four successive zones with animals (lions, waterfowl, sirens) on the lower body. The vase painter, possessed by a "fear of the void", has packed every free surface of the vase with filler motifs. Early 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 2865.







Black-figure phormiskos. It features a *prothesis* scene of a young girl whom her closest relatives are lamenting. Inscriptions beside the figures show that her name was “Myrrhine” and that her mother burst into sobs (a strictly-personal form of lament) at the untimely death of her daughter, who will soon meet the “glorious tribes of the dead” (*Odyssey* 10.526). The name “Myrte (ē)” refers to the young woman on the right who is lamenting, most likely Myrrhine’s sister. There are men lamenting outside the house. Last quarter of the 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 691.

Phormiskos, detail: The mother holds her daughter’s head, as in “with a shrill cry she grasped the head of her [son]” (*Iliad* 18.71).



Phormiskos, detail: four elderly male mourners, the father of the dead girl and close relatives, move towards the right and enter the house, indicated by the column. The inscription "Woe, my daughter" shows the relationship of the first man with the dead girl, and the inscription "*oim[oli]*" (woe) on the white column expresses the lament of the entire household.



Phormiskos, detail: five women including the dead girl's mother smite themselves around the funeral couch.



Black-figure miniature plate with an illegible scene, probably a funeral: in a square is inscribed a flute-player playing a dirge on a double flute, as the deceased receives his due. The bird below is interpreted as the soul of the deceased, which is still nearby and has not yet taken flight for the realms of Hades. Late 6th c. BC. Inv. no. 712.



Terracotta model of a cock, the so-called “Persian bird”. Young children had birds as pets, and for this reason grave goods in the form of models of birds were frequently deposited in children’s tombs.

In addition, terracotta models of birds have often been considered substitutes for the corresponding live animals during the ritual of the “established [sacrifices]”.

Ca. 740 BC. Inv. no. 1309.

Bird askos (libation vase). Last quarter of the 8th c. BC.
Inv. no. 1351.



Eggs. The one below has a scene of clothed men, moving in a row towards the right, within the context of some mystic ritual. The one above has a decorative chain of alternating lotus flowers. The *oon*, (egg) whose meaning is interpreted as “cosmic egg”, was the creation of Chronos and Aithera and the primal symbol of Orpheus and Phanes. According to Orphic teachings, the ultimate goal of human existence was union with the divine through ecstasy. However, since the soul must pass through the cycle of birth through reincarnation, the egg ultimately symbolizes rebirth and creation. Orphism, as a redemptive religion or heresy, did not have priests but rather, heralds, who were authorized to establish *thiasoi* (religious guilds, confraternities) and perform unknown rites. Late 6th c. BC. Inv. nos. 1589, 1647.





Undying fame (aphthiton kleos)

The idea of fame, of bravery in battle and of “defending one’s homeland” was the supreme good in Homeric society. The state encouraged young men to acts of bravery in exchange for everlasting social recognition. Ancient poets, particularly those writing in the 7th century BC, considered that men fashioned statues or stelai or simple epigrams in order to preserve undying fame, memory, and “aphthiton kleos”. Artistic creation thus became a magic potion against oblivion and death: beauty was undying, incorruptible. The location of a hero’s tomb was sacred. Heroes like Achilles, Theseus, Echetlos, and Ajax were considered to have determined the outcome of decisive battles. As was mentioned above, atop a single base on the polyandreion of the Demosion Sema, ten stelai had been set up corresponding to the ten tribes, on which were written the names of the dead from each tribe. Pericles’ Funeral Oration in front of the Dipylon for the fallen during the first year of the Peloponnesian War, the games held for the war dead there at state expense, as well as Hyperides’ oration following the Lamian war in the late 4th century BC all illustrate what was by that time the well-established view that the defenders of divine order and the state in this world will find “kindness and tender divine embraces” in the life to come. The spirited warrior prepared his gear to enter the battlefield impetuously and nobly, like the brave Aristonautes from Halai, and at some fateful moment to subdue an equally brave but less fortunate opponent, like the horseman Dexileos who drives his lance through a young fallen enemy in a dramatic, tension-filled scene.

In life as well as art, men and horses were inseparable. The figure of a horse surrounded by or coexisting with men, very common in the Geometric period as well as later as the grave gifts from the Kerameikos make clear, has been interpreted in two ways: either as a divine figure related to Poseidon Hippios, “tamer of horses”, with a chthonian substrate, or as a simple human figure. The logic of a reality that would have the horse as ally and companion to warriors, as for example here in the case of Dexileos, or which was employed to carry his master by cart/chariot to his final dwelling-place, as we saw in ekphora scenes, or which simply provided a measure of wealth and social status appears to have prevailed.

Men’s bravery was not all expended in war. Hunting lions and wild boar, the most commanding members of the animal kingdom, was a prerogative of kings or aristocrats which gradually became transformed to acquire purely symbolic significance. Greek art is semiotic rather than abstract and hypothetical. He who conquered the king of animals was a brave man, and was rightly elevated to the sphere of the demi-gods, like Hercules who had subdued the Nemean lion. He who was strongest won, and deserved the best. Thus the most powerful animal—the lion—became a formidable tomb guardian, either in large-scale sculpture in the round or in relief form on stelai. But he always appeared on the tomb of a brave man; otherwise the ancient epigram would not have asked the related question:

Detail from the hydria by the Meidias Painter. One of Helen’s sisters (Clytemnestra?).

*Tell me, lion, you who dismember oxen, whose tomb are you guarding
between your rugged legs who is deserving of such (a great) honor?*

Honor and glory were suitable not only for heroes but for athletes as well. From the burial precinct of Aristion from Ephesus comes the very lovely grave stele of the athlete Aristion, son of Ariston. The handsome nude youth with his Lysippan build gazes at his young brother or slave (also nude), who holds the strigil (an indispensable accessory for athletes to scrape off oil and dust from their body) and in adoration and sorrow gazes at the youth who is “departing”. The semi-nude athlete Eupheros, who lived in the 5th century B.C., reminisces in marble on his stele about the moments of glory given him by athletics.

There were also noblewomen, mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters buried in the beautiful Kerameikos. The grave stele of Korallion, wife of Agathon the son of Agathokles from Herakleia on the Black Sea –they had lived in Athens as foreign residents– was found in the burial precinct of Agathon. The stele presents the dead woman seated in a typical “Dexiosis” scene, shaking hands with her relatives, i.e. in a gesture of both farewell and unity, as a manifestation of family ties for when they will all be together in Hades’ dark realms.

The two sisters Demetria and Pamphile narrate their tragic story in two admirable reliefs, one in the National Archaeological Museum and the other in the first gallery of the on-site Kerameikos Museum. Beloved of one another, alone, and otherworldly on their tomb monument in the Kerameikos, they stare out at the world blankly now that both belong to the “nations of the dead”.

The most beautiful relief from the ancient Greek world, the famous stele of Hegeso, daughter of Proxenos, comes from the burial precinct of Koroibos from the deme of Melitte. Seated on a chair and dressed in a sheer chiton and himation, with the help of a young servant girl she is removing from her jewellery box her most beautiful ornament, in order to meet Hades as beautiful, adorned, and as one who “died before her time”. Her noble, aristocratic face is furrowed by the contraction of her sorrowful lips over her “fated day” (of death).

If viewers feel restrained pain for Hegeso, tears fall at the sight of the most moving scene in the Kerameikos: the tombstone of the grandmother Ampharete, who tenderly holds her infant grandchild in her arms – both dead, both in the embrace of the Underworld. On the pediment’s cornice is her name: AMPHARETE. On the epistyle of the *naïskos*-shaped stele, Ampharete briefly and concisely narrates her sad story:

*I hold the darling child of my daughter, whom I rocked on my knees,
when we were (both) living and gazed at the sunlight;
now I hold it dead, I who too am dead.*

Detail from the hydria by the Meidias Painter.







The grandmother holds the pet dove in her right hand for the infant's pure little soul and in her left she holds the precious little one, who extends its arm to connect with its grandmother in the chambers of Persephone. Like an ancient Madonna she can exclaim – and we with her “O my sweet spring, where is your beauty sunken!”

The sight of the multi-figured funerary stele of the ten-year-old Eukoline, daughter of Onesimos from Lesbos, whom her close relatives are bidding farewell to calls forth only sadness. Her name was written first on the pediment's cornice, followed by those of her parents and grandmother (?). On the pediment is the name of the father, Onesimos son of Onetor the Lesbian, and on the epistyle are the names Protonoe and Nikostrate. The mother is bidding farewell to the little girl, caressing her cheek. One day they will meet again....

Another relief from the burial precinct of Aristomache for another, slightly older unmarried girl, Eukoline the daughter of Antiphanes, has the following sad story to relate as if speaking in its own voice:

*She who lies here had as her name the name of “Easiness” (Eukolia).
But now she is “living” her allotted fate beneath the earth.*

The young girl with unspeakable melancholy accented by the fact that her head is tilted far to the right, held some ornament she probably wanted to accompany her in her tomb.

Polystrate, who was perhaps a priestess of the goddess Demeter, held an important position in 4th century BC. Athenian society.

The stories of women do not end with blue-blooded noblewomen. Divine and mythical beings like Helen and her sisters, and wild, aggressive, unforgettable women like the Maenads, painted with unique mastery by the so-called “Meidias Painter” on the hydria of this name remind us of their twofold power in life and death.

Lives passed but not lost, leaving behind traces of their beauty and souls, which flutter like birds in nature's midst.



Red-figure hydria covered by a glossy glaze and scenes unfolding in two zones separated by a wide horizontal palmette band. The upper zone depicts Helen, daughter of Zeus and Leda, together with her siblings and a young Eros. In the lower zone, one may just make out Maenads dismembering Pentheus, king of Thebes, who fell victim to the enraged women because he opposed the cult of Dionysus. The composition of the figures, the grace of movement in the upper zone and the ecstasy in the lower, the accurate rendering of facial features, and above all the exceptionally fine drapery of the garments reflecting artistic trends of the so-called "Rich Style" make this vase one of the Meidias Painter's masterpieces. Late 5th c. BC. Inv. no. 2712.

FOLLOWING PAGES: Maenad in ecstasy. Detail from the hydria by the Meidias Painter.





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