

**Winged Representations of the Soul in Ancient Greek Art from the Late  
Bronze Age through the Classical Period**

By

Tina Ross

B.A., Classics, Brock University, 2004

B.A., English Language and Literature, Brock University, 2004

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of the Arts

In the Department of Greek and Roman Studies, University of Victoria

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## Abstract

This thesis argues that the bird depicted in art found in funerary contexts of the Greek Bronze Age is a representation of the soul released from the body. This conclusion was reached by tracing the origins of the avian qualities of the winged *psyche* present in Classical funerary art. The soul begins as a bird in the Bronze Age in certain funerary contexts and this continues in the Geometric period. In the Archaic period, the soul takes on human characteristics and it is represented by a figure with human head and feet but a bird body with wings. In the Classical period, the soul is mostly human with only wings remaining as a vestige of the avian origin. These soul-birds appear in art found in funerary contexts that depict some stage of the funerary ritual.

The thesis begins by discussing the Greek concept of the soul and how it was first conceived as several different entities but then became unified under the term *psyche*.<sup>1</sup> The main evidence in this first chapter is the Homeric epics, which date to the eighth century BC, the mythic cycle of Orpheus, which was popular in the sixth century BC, and the philosophy of Plato from the fourth century BC. The progression of the soul toward a unitary model is important to this argument because it complements the increasing amount of human qualities that the bird in art acquires. Chapter Two outlines the funerary customs of the ancient Greeks in order to show how the Greeks treated the dead body and to show how they may have perceived the soul. Chapter Three details some of the scholarship on the birds including early theories about the soul as a bird. The most popular theory is that the bird represents a divine epiphany, meaning a manifestation of the divine in this world, but it is applied uncritically and it is not always appropriate for the bird in funerary art.<sup>2</sup> Chapters Four, Five, and Six discuss the art of the Bronze Age, Geometric period, and the Archaic and Classical periods, respectively. The overall conclusion of this thesis is that the bird in funerary art of the Bronze Age can represent the soul of the deceased in some funerary contexts and it is the antecedent of the winged souls of the art in the Classical period. The aim is not to disprove the theory of divine epiphany in bird form, but to assert and highlight another possible interpretation in order to open up other avenues of interpretation and to shed light on Greek conceptions of the soul.

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<sup>1</sup> The term *psyche* is used throughout this paper in reference to the Greek word ψυχή. It has been italicised to differentiate from the modern usage of the word psyche in philosophical and psychological terminology.

<sup>2</sup> Nilsson 1950, 340



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## Introduction

Burial customs and funeral rituals are varied in ancient Greece. One recurring symbol in funerary art, namely the bird, stands out in its consistency and significance. Birds are a common motif in the art and literature of ancient Greece in the Late Bronze Age through the early Classical period. Many scholars interpret birds in Bronze Age art as divine epiphanies, meaning a manifestation of the divine in this world. This interpretation, first discussed by Martin Nilsson, has much merit, but I believe that it is applied uncritically and that it does not always work for the bird in funerary art.<sup>1</sup> The bird is often conspicuously placed in funerary art alongside ritual implements or objects specifically used in the funeral, such as the bier. The bird is also often larger than life and is given a prominent role in the funerary iconography. This thesis argues that the bird in funerary art of the Bronze Age can represent the soul of the deceased in some contexts and it is the antecedent of the winged souls of the art in the Classical period.

The trend of endowing the soul with avian attributes began in the Bronze Age where birds are present at funerary rituals and are associated with ritual implements. This trend continues into the Geometric Period when birds are often depicted on pottery in close proximity to the bier of the deceased. During the Archaic Period we can identify a soul-bird developing human characteristics, and it is depicted in scenes of the *prothesis*, which is the formal laying out of the dead, or in scenes of death. In the Classical period, miniature human figures endowed with wings represent the soul, and they flutter around the heads of mourners in *prothesis* scenes, around the tomb, or around the entrance to the Underworld. The avian

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<sup>1</sup> Nilsson 1950, 340

attributes of the soul are always a part of the iconography of the soul but depictions of the soul develop more human qualities as time progresses.

This transformation of the bird having more human attributes mirrors a similar development of the concept of the soul in literature. The first chapter discusses the Greek concept of the soul in order to outline how the Greeks described the soul. In literature and philosophy, the concept of the soul begins in Homer in the eighth century BC, where several different terms for the soul exist, and the psychological attributes, such as emotions, memory, and thought, and the eschatological attributes, such as immortality and existence in the afterlife, are divided amongst these terms.<sup>2</sup> In later philosophical thought, the soul becomes unified under one term, *psyche*. The eschatological and psychological aspects merge resulting in a human immortal soul. Both art and philosophy reflect a desire to represent the immortal soul with human qualities. This chapter also includes some cross-cultural study concerning prehistoric and non-western concepts of the soul in order to show that it is common both to depict the soul as a bird and for the concept of the soul to be multiple and become unified.

The second chapter complements the first by discussing the burial customs and funeral rituals to show how the Greeks treated the deceased. This chapter also provides cultural context and history to help the reader understand the periods being discussed. The second part of the chapter gives an overview of the actual Greek funeral, which not does apply precisely to each period, but is meant to outline a general picture that was practised throughout Greek history.

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<sup>2</sup> All the translations provided in this thesis are my own.

Bringing the discussion back to the bird, the third chapter outlines some of the major scholarship on the bird in Greek art and literature. Many scholars interpret bird iconography, but few are convinced that the bird represents the soul.

The remaining chapters deal more specifically with birds in funerary art to show how they may represent the soul. The main evidence used for the iconography of the bird is vase-painting, painted panels on sarcophagi, terracotta sculpture, and some gold objects from c. fifteenth century to the fifth century BC that have been found in funerary contexts or that depict funerary scenes.

The fourth chapter looks at the Bronze Age where the major evidence for birds in art comes from painted sarcophagi and vase-painting. The fifth chapter deals with the Geometric period, which is the bridge between the Bronze Age and the later Archaic period. Although this period has the least evidence, the type of bird drawn on pottery is similar to Mycenaean types in the Bronze Age. The sixth chapter looks at the Archaic and Classical periods where it is clear that the winged aspect of the soul is important. In the Archaic period, the soul is a bird with human head and often human feet. In the Classical period, the soul is a smaller than life size human with wings.

This thesis endeavours to show that the conception of the soul of the dead changed in ancient Greece from one that had few human qualities to one that was endowed with all the faculties of human thought and emotion. I argue that this development is the key to understanding why the soul, which was depicted as a bird, began to develop human qualities resulting in a mostly human image, with only the wings remaining as a vestige of its avian origin.

The bird is a common motif, and the aim of this thesis is not to disprove the theory of divine epiphany in bird form, but to assert and highlight another possible interpretation. Previously, scholarship on the bird has been overpowered by the divine epiphany interpretation, and because of this, other possibilities have been overlooked. The idea of the bird representing the soul may open up other avenues of interpretation and shed light on Greek conceptions of the soul.

## Chapter One – Greek Concept of the Soul

In death, the Greeks made a distinction between human flesh that decayed and must be buried and the wind-breath *psyche* that left the body at the time life stopped. The soul is the immortal aspect of human life and mainly the Greek funeral rituals were performed in order to help the soul move on to the afterlife. Due to this prominent place of the soul in Greek funeral rituals, the soul is often depicted in funeral scenes in art. This thesis argues that the soul is depicted first as a bird in the Bronze Age and then it begins to develop human characteristics in later periods until it becomes a full human figure endowed with wings in the Classical period. Through time, the Greek concept of the soul also developed more aspects of the human personality, such as memory and thought, and the psychological aspects and eschatological aspects were combined. Originally, all of the aspects of personality are attributed to the body and die with it, while immortality and the life-giving source are attributed to the soul. But as Greek culture developed, these two ideas merge into one. Before tracing this development in Greek art and literature from the Bronze Age through the Classical period, a general outline of soul belief and the terminology used by modern philosophers will be summarized.

Dualism of the soul and body is common in prehistoric and non-Western cultures, as examined by Ernst Arbman, one of the first to work on this topic.<sup>1</sup> He was followed by his student Åke Hulthkrantz in the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> Arbman found that the Indo-European concept of the soul (*atman* or *purusa*) was unitary, but it was preceded by

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<sup>1</sup> Arbman 1922.

<sup>2</sup> Hulthkrantz (1953) investigates conceptions of the soul among the aboriginals of North America.

some sort of dualistic picture where the eschatological and psychological attributes had not yet merged.<sup>3</sup> The eschatological attributes are those that concern the fate of the soul and whether or not it is immortal and will reach an afterlife of some sort. The psychological attributes include thought, emotions, and memory. This dualistic division usually matches the division between the body and the soul. In other words, the body is the seat of the psychological attributes and the soul the seat of the eschatological. Human beings understandably think of the soul in this way since the body is a physical reminder of mortality. On the other hand, the fear of death and quest for immortality easily creates a belief in (or hope for) the existence of an entity that survives the body at death.

Every prehistoric culture has a word for man's reflected image and shadow; these concepts are closely related and represent the earliest concept of the soul.<sup>4</sup> The reflected image is "perfectly like man and yet incorporeal, visible yet intangible; it moves like man and shows all the changes which the body undergoes."<sup>5</sup> This concept of the reflected image is similar to the modern philosophical idea of the free-soul, which is represented by the term *psyche* in the Homeric epics. The free-soul is the invisible, life-giving, and immortal part of the soul. It is not linked to the physical world but continues on after death.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Macdonald 1999, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Láng 1973, 171-2.

<sup>5</sup> Láng 1973, 171. This is why the Greek *psychai* in the underworld and that appear in dreams often bear the wounds the deceased received in battle.

<sup>6</sup> These terms are specific to psychologists and philosophers, but they will be employed in this paper for ease of definition. Clarke (1999), who is wary of describing the soul in dualistic terms, does not use the terms free-soul and body-soul.

psychological aspects of the soul are grouped together and referred to by modern philosophers as the body-soul. The term body-soul arises because the psychological attributes are closely linked to the physical body of the individual and disappear when the body dies. The body-soul is the seat of emotions and thought.

Our best and earliest source for the Greek concept of the soul begins in the epics of Homer. There are problems applying concepts from Homer to earlier periods, and I am not arguing that the Homeric concept of the soul is identical to the Mycenaean one in the Late Bronze Age. However, by pairing a study of the art of ancient Greece with the soul as it is represented in Homer, it becomes clear that the Mycenaean concept of the soul is a part of the continuum of the development of the soul. Homer represents the body and soul as separate. The soul could not be a part of the body or else it would die along with it. The Homeric Greeks did not conceive of a unitary soul that contained all the aspects of this personality. Instead, multiple and distinct terms were applied to each of the different aspects of the soul. Often these words are used interchangeably, due to the necessity of meter, or due to the nature of the scene or characters being described. This does not, however, lessen the fact that in the Homeric epics there were many different terms for the soul that each had their own shades of meaning.

Four main terms characterize the various entities of the Homeric concept of the soul, the *thymos*, *menos*, *noos*, and *psyche*. For example, the *thymos* represents the seat of emotion, the *menos* represents passion or strength, the *noos* represents the mind, and the *psyche* represents the wind-breath that is the immortal source of life. At the moment of a particular death, the distinct nature of each of these terms becomes clear. Each term is used

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in a slightly different way and each adds a different nuance to the description of the soul at death. The importance of the moment of death is apparent in the descriptions of the appearance of the dead with wounds exactly as they had them before death.<sup>7</sup> The *psyche* is the free-soul and represents the eschatological beliefs held by a culture. The *thymos*, *menos*, and *noos* are all subcategories of the body-soul and all of the psychological aspects, such as emotion and thought, reside in these subcategories. Clearly, the Homeric Greeks had a complex concept of the soul that required the use of several words.

The *thymos* is the most frequently occurring body-soul in Homer, and above all others, it is the source of emotions. The *thymos* expresses a hope to act and is thought to reside in the chest or limbs. The *thymos* is only active during consciousness. The *thymos* is similar to the *psyche* in that when it is absent, the body is unconscious. For example, when a person faints the *psyche* leaves the body, and the *thymos* returns when consciousness is regained. The terms are similar, but they are used at different moments. The *psyche* represents life, but the *thymos* represents consciousness. In Homer the body cannot function without both of these entities. For example, Andromache faints when she sees that Hektor has been killed and her *psyche* departs; ἤριπε δ' ἐξοπίσω, ἀπὸ δὲ ψυχὴν ἐκάπυσσε, “and she fell backward, and breathed forth the *psyche* from her” (*Iliad* 22.467). Andromache’s *thymos* returns to revive her; ἦ δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ἔμπνυτο καὶ ἐς φρένα θυμὸς ἀγέρθη / ἀμβλήδην γοῶσα μετὰ Τρωῆσιν ἔειπεν, “and when she regained consciousness and the *thymos* was gathered

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<sup>7</sup> Bremmer (1983, 83) discusses the importance of the physical body to the soul of the deceased. Several examples from Greek literature illustrate this. For example, the *eidolon* of Klytemnestra displays her death wounds (*Eumenides* 103). See also Plato (*Gorgias* 524-25) who writes that the soul retains the scars of its former existence.

back to her chest, she, lifting her voice in mourning, spoke among the Trojan Women” (*Iliad* 22.475).<sup>8</sup>

When someone was killed, the *thymos* could leave the body.<sup>9</sup> For example, when Harpalion is killed by Meriones in Book Thirteen of the *Iliad*, he breathes forth his *thymos*; ἐζόμενος δὲ κατ’ αὔθι φίλων ἐν χερσὶν ἑταίρων / θυμὸν ἀποπνείων, “there sitting down in the arms of his companions / he breathed forth his *thymos*” (*Iliad* 13.654). At death, the *thymos* can leave the body of its own free will. For example, when Epikles, Sarpedon’s companion in arms, is struck with a large jagged stone, “the *thymos* [leaves] his bones,” λίπε δ’ ὅστέα θυμός (*Iliad* 12.386). At other times, the *thymos* is taken away: for example, Diomedes takes away the *thymos* of Xanthos and Thoön, φίλον δ’ ἐξαίνυτο θυμὸν (*Iliad* 5.155). Although the *thymos* leaves the body at death, it does not represent the eschatological beliefs of the Greeks since, unlike the *psyche*, it never reaches the afterlife. These two words are not entirely interchangeable, but their usage may depend on meter.

The *menos* is not a physical organ but a concept of strength that resides in the sinews and limbs or the *phrenes*. Ruth Padel describes the *phrenes* as containers that fill with *menos* or *thymos*.<sup>10</sup> They are the holding centre, which holds the heart and liver. A thunderbolt striking the *phrenes* is an image of annihilation. The *menos* is a body-soul, because it can be

<sup>8</sup> See also *Iliad* 5.696-8 when Sarpedon loses his *psyche* and regains his *thymos* τὸν δ’ ἔλιπε ψυχή, κατὰ δ’ ὀφθαλμῶν κέχυτ’ ἀγλῆς: / αὔτις δ’ ἐμπνύνθη, περὶ δὲ πνοιὴ Βορέας / ζώγρει ἐπιπνείουσα κακῶς κεκαφηότα θυμόν. ‘and the *psyche* left him, and a mist poured over his eyes but the north wind blew around him and he was revived breathing in the *thymos* that had been breathed forth painfully.’

<sup>9</sup> Bremmer 1983, 75.

<sup>10</sup> Padel 1992, 21.

found in one part of the body or another and it has psychological attributes. It is a momentary impulse of one, several or even all the mental and physical organs directed toward a specific activity, and it is often equated with passion or anger. A good example of the use of *menos* in Homer is found in Book One of the *Iliad* when Agamemnon is enraged by the seer Kalchas who tells him that Apollo is angry with the Achaians because Agamemnon did not return the daughter of Chryses nor did he accept the ransom;

τοῖσι δ' ἀνέστη  
 ἦρως Ἀτρεΐδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων  
 ἀχνύμενος: μένεος δὲ μέγα φρένες ἀμφιμέλαιναι  
 πίμπλαντ', ὅσσε δέ οἱ πυρὶ λαμπετόωντι εἴκτην

“and the warrior, the wide ruling Agamemnon, son of Atreus  
 stood up among them greatly troubled: and his heart was filled  
 with black *menos*, and his two eyes resembled blazing fire.  
*Iliad* 1.101-4.

The *menos* can also be breathed like the *thymos* and *psyche*, but the *menos* is always a small body-soul and it only leaves the body at death in conjunction with one of the larger aspects of the soul. For example, when Diomedes kills Pandaros, son of Lykaon, “[Pandaros’] *psyche* and *menos* are loosened,” τοῦ δ' αὖθι λύθη ψυχή τε μένος τε (*Iliad* 5.296). Athena combines *menos* and *thymos* when arguing with Hera about Hektor, καὶ λίην οὐτός γε μένος θυμόν τ' ὀλέσειε, “and even this man himself will have his *menos* and *thymos* destroyed” (*Iliad* 8.358). The *menos* adds more poignancy to the description of death. In other words, its use does not only express the loss of a vital part of the soul, but of the strength or passion of the person as well.

The *noos* is a more complicated concept but is considered a body-soul because it has both physical and psychological attributes and disappears at the moment of death. The *noos* is the mind, act of mind, thought, or purpose. It is more intellectual than the others, but not

exclusively. It is always located in the chest and never conceived of as material because it cannot be struck, pierced, or blown out. The *noos*, or the mind, is never expressed when death is discussed.

The *psyche* in Homer is the free-soul because it has no psychological aspects and is not the seat of emotions or thought. It leaves the body at death and lives on in Hades. The Homeric *psyche* is only active when the body is unconscious during sleep, trance, or death. During consciousness, the Homeric *psyche* simply represents a person's mortality.<sup>11</sup> The presence of the *psyche* in the body means life, its absence death.<sup>12</sup> Vitomir Mitevski argues that Homer introduced the term *psyche* as a way of unifying the power of living man and individuality of the dead man.<sup>13</sup> In his argument, the Homeric *psyche* is capable of being separate from the body, but the body cannot exist without the *psyche*.

Unlike the body-souls, the Homeric *psyche* does not die with the death of the body but it lives on. Once the *psyche* reaches the underworld, it remains there in some capacity, either with a firm remembrance of its former identity or as a wandering shade, often referred to as *skia*. The *psyche* may last forever in the underworld if its owner enters into myth, or it may be forgotten when that identity has faded from common memory. Clarke suggests that there are two types of *psyche*, the one that departs at death or during a swoon and the one that

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<sup>11</sup> Mitevski 2000, 163.

<sup>12</sup> Solmsen 1983, 355.

<sup>13</sup> Mitevski 2000, 165.

lives in Hades.<sup>14</sup> The *psyche* may lose its identity or individuality and can often be seen in massed crowds that fly around anonymously to welcome the newer dead. Although the *psyche* is the immortal aspect of the soul, its longevity depends on its place in the memory of the living. As a result, the funeral rites were extremely important and, in the late Archaic and Classical periods, they were practised long after the deceased had died.

At the time of death, the Homeric *psyche* leaves the body through the mouth or a small wound as a fragment of breath or wind that is barely noticeable. Mostly, it leaves the body of its own free will and then progresses to the underworld.<sup>15</sup> When the end of death closes in on Patroklos “his *psyche*, fluttering free of his limbs, [goes] down to Hades,” τέλος θανάτοιο κάλυψε: / ψυχὴ δ' ἐκ ῥεθέων πταμένη Ἄϊδος δὲ βεβήκει (*Iliad* 16.856). The exact same phrase is used at Hektor's death (*Iliad* 22. 362). The avian quality of the adjective πταμένη, fluttering, is strong evidence that the Homeric *psyche* was envisioned as a bird. Once the Homeric *psyche* leaves the body at death, it is separated from the *thymos*, *menos*, and *noos* and therefore lacks the faculties related to the living body, such as the ability to speak. When the *psyche* is summoned by the living, it often squeaks rather than speaks.<sup>16</sup> For example, the suitors scream like bats (τρίζουσαι νυκτερίδες) when Hermes leads their *psychai* to the place where souls (ψυχαί) live (*Odyssey* 24.5, 9). The dead also move differently and they are described as flitting; they have a surplus of movement while

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<sup>14</sup> Clarke 1999, 153.

<sup>15</sup> Vermeule 1979, 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Iliad* 23.10; *Odyssey* 24.5, 9; and Sophocles describes the sound as a humming in fragment 879 Radt.

the body of the dead no longer moves. When the *psychai* leave Patroklos and Hektor, they are described as fluttering their way to Hades. Hultkrantz argues it is not strange that a free-soul should assume the shape of a bird or other winged creature.<sup>17</sup>

Once the *psyche* goes down to the underworld, it is available to those who care to consult it provided they follow the correct procedure, which is similar to the actual funeral.<sup>18</sup> For these encounters, and also in dreams, the *psyche* appears in a different form: the *eidolon*. The word *eidolon* means image and it was employed in literary situations when there was a need for the soul to be more physical.<sup>19</sup> For example, Odysseus does not talk to wispy breath-like entities, birds, or shadows, in *Odyssey* 11 when he consults the dead to find the prophet Teiresias, but he addresses full-sized images of the dead; nor does the poet represent the dead suitors or the dead in Hades as birds in *Odyssey* 24. The poets and artists adjust the scale of the soul to the imagined scene and the dignity of the characters.<sup>20</sup> In these situations, they employ a more physical form of the soul, the *eidolon*.<sup>21</sup> The *eidolon* can leap,

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<sup>17</sup> Hultkrantz 1973, 267.

<sup>18</sup> Vermeule 1979, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Vermeule 1979, 31.

<sup>20</sup> Similarly to the debate about whether the gods actually appear as birds or if they are described with birdlike vocabulary, which is discussed below in Chapter Three, the souls take on this humanistic form to suit the literary needs. When the gods are described as birds in order to describe how they move, it doesn't mean the gods ARE birds.

<sup>21</sup> Vermeule 1979, 31-2.

gesticulate, and express pleasure – basically it can perform all of the bodily aspects of the *thymos*, *menos*, and *noos*.

In general, the *eidolon* is a being that looks exactly like a person; it also may be a winged image, like the *psyche*, and is so drawn in late Archaic times. In the Homeric epics, the word *eidolon* is used to describe an apparition of a person, the departed soul of the deceased, or a figure appearing in a dream. In other words, *eidolon* means an image or likeness of a person. For example, when Patroklos visits Achilles in a dream, his *eidolon* appears (*Iliad* 23.104-7). The existence of the *eidolon* shows that in the Homeric Age a concept of the soul endowed with human characteristics existed alongside the non-human avian concept of the soul. This is evidence that the Greeks had difficulty defining the soul. It was definitely human because it dwelled inside of human beings, but after death the soul could not be seen. This invisible aspect is what is expressed with bird imagery, it floats and flies and squeaks. The existence of the *eidolon* does not negate this but exemplifies the difficulty of understanding the soul. As time progressed the more human concept prevailed and the multiple picture of the Homeric Greek soul coalesced into one entity under the term *psyche*, but the avian qualities never disappeared in art. As Macdonald notes, the surviving occurrence of the word *psyche* in later philosophy as the only word for the soul is the one truly indispensable piece of evidence for this theory that the various aspects of the soul became unified.<sup>22</sup> Because of its prominent place among the different soul-words as the

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<sup>22</sup> Macdonald 2003, 12.

source of life, the word *psyche* advanced to hold the central place in reference to the inner life.<sup>23</sup>

The cult of Orpheus is also useful for understanding the soul. In the sixth century BC, this cult was popular in Greece, and it had much to do with the soul and the idea of the transmigration of the soul. The cult focused on Orpheus and his wife Eurydice, who died after being bitten by a snake, and whom Orpheus went to the underworld to retrieve.<sup>24</sup> Here, he learned the secrets of Hades, but was unsuccessful in retrieving his wife.<sup>25</sup> Afterward, Orpheus went to the Thracian mountains to mourn the loss of his wife. One version of the story describes how in the mountains Orpheus was torn apart by Maenads, who were in a frenzy performing the rites of Dionysus and mistook Orpheus for an animal.<sup>26</sup> In his cult, he could tell his followers what the fate of their souls would be and how to behave to best

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<sup>23</sup> Solmsen 1983, 357.

<sup>24</sup> The name of Orpheus' wife is debated, often she is unnamed, or called Agriope. See Guthrie 1993, 29-31.

<sup>25</sup> Some literature has Orpheus successfully retrieving his wife from the underworld (*Alcestis* 357), but most often in the literature he is not successful in retrieving his wife. Plato suggests that the gods presented Orpheus with a phantom of his wife (*Symposium* 179d). The most common belief is that Orpheus looked back while leaving, and thus failed in his pursuit. *Georgics* 4.454-527 recount the Orpheus & Eurydice story - their love, his loss when he fails at retrieving her from the underworld and spends his time playing the lyre in grief. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 10 tells the story of Orpheus, death of Eurydice, journey to the underworld and how inconsolable he is after he loses her that he only plays the lyre.

<sup>26</sup> Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 11.1ff tells how Ciconian women tore him to pieces, and 11.61 says that he joined her soul in the underworld.

achieve that fate. If one lived according to the precepts set down in the Orphic mystery cult, then that person's soul would be admitted to the Elysian Fields.

Orpheus was known as a skilled musician, and there are several texts, such as the Orphic Hymns, attributed to him by the ancient Greeks.<sup>27</sup> Orpheus is also mentioned alongside Hesiod as composing a Theogony, or history of the creation of the gods.<sup>28</sup> In this poem, Zeus made the child Dionysus ruler of the gods, but the Titans were jealous. Distracting the child with mirrors and toys, the Titans tore Dionysus apart. Apollo gathered his limbs and Athena took the heart in order for Dionysus to be reborn. Before Apollo was able to gather the limbs, the Titans tasted of Dionysus' flesh. Zeus struck the Titans with a thunderbolt and out of their smouldering remains the human race was born.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, the human race is made up of the wicked nature of the Titans (the human body) as well as the divine nature of Dionysus (the immortal soul). To the followers of Orpheus, the physical body is a prison or tomb to the soul. In the cult of Orpheus, the soul had to be freed from the contamination and pleasures of the body in order to truly live in the realm of the afterlife. If the soul represents the good and divine aspects of human nature, then it makes sense that the soul ought to possess the psychological aspects of man that make him a cognitive being. The

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<sup>27</sup> Vergil's *Eclogues* 4.55,57, and 6.30 all identify him and his reputation in song and music. Vergil's *Aeneid* 6.119 is a reference to his skill in the "lyre and tuneful strings"

<sup>28</sup> "The whole sum of the writing which has arisen among the ancient Greeks on the subject of the far-off origins of the world is attributed to many authors, but two names stand out, Orpheus and Hesiod" Rufinus, as quoted by Guthrie 1993, 69. Although the Theogony does not survive, there are several mentions of it in other authors such as Plato, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Empedocles, and Heracleitus.

<sup>29</sup> For a more detailed version of the story, see Guthrie 1993, 82-3.

cult of Orpheus was influential on later philosophical thought, and on the development of the soul toward the unitary model.

Modern scholarship on the Greek concept of the soul begins with Erwin Rohde, a friend of Nietzsche's.<sup>30</sup> Rohde's intention was to show that the Platonic description of the *psyche* developed in Greece after the Homeric age from an expansion of the cult of Orpheus and a combination with the philosophy of the Pythagoreans. This Platonic description of the soul influenced the modern concept of the soul, by which I mean the belief held by western cultures that the soul survives the body and is the seat of perceptions, sentiments, and mental functions.

This idea of the good soul versus the wicked body is continued in the philosophy of Plato. In Plato's view, since the immortal soul represented the good or the divine aspect of man, it must also entail all of the aspects of the individual personality including the emotions and memory. The multiple nature of the soul is unified under the term *psyche*. For example, in the *Phaedo*, Socrates tells his followers he is not really with them, since his body does not actually represent the real Socrates. Instead, the essence of Socrates exists in his soul. When Socrates drinks the hemlock, he comforts his followers by saying only his physical nature will vanish.<sup>31</sup>

If representations of the bird in funerary art refer to the soul, as I am arguing, we must take into account the Greek conception of the soul and the change from a multiple nature to a

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<sup>30</sup> See his essential volume on the soul *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks* (1890-4), Rohde 1950.

<sup>31</sup> See *Phaedo* XXIX –XXX. See Láng (1973, 190) for souls at the grave in Plato.

concept unified under the word *psyche*. Clearly, in literature, the soul is endowed with some avian characteristics, such as fluttering and squeaking. In the Homeric epics, the immortal soul is depicted as devoid of human characteristics and it is described with avian vocabulary, but there are also instances where the soul can be life-like and the term used is the *eidolon*. It is evident at this time that the concept of the soul is not clearly defined. In the literature of later philosophers such as Plato, the human version prevails. It will be shown below that in art, there is a similar tendency toward humanizing the soul, but the avian characteristics never fully vanish.

## **Chapter Two – Burial Customs and Funeral Rites from the Mycenaean Period to the Classical Period**

Studying ancient Greek burial customs through time shows that there was a belief among the ancient Greeks that the soul of the deceased did not reach its final destination immediately after burial, but that it remained for a time marginally between the two worlds. Once a person died, his or her body was treated reverently and buried with some ceremony. This shows the importance of the soul after death and how its presence could still be felt by the living.

Much archaeological evidence from ancient Greece is found in burials, because burials provide closed contexts that are often unspoiled before excavated by archaeologists. Studying this material reveals trends in burial customs that allow for a general reconstruction of the ancient Greek funeral. Although the burial customs are different in each period and region, there are similarities. The first part of this chapter outlines the archaeological remains of burials from the Bronze Age through the Classical period in order to give a general cultural history of the periods dealt with in this paper and to provide a brief introduction to the variety of burial customs practised throughout Greece. The second part of this chapter presents a general picture of the ancient Greek funeral by combining some of the trends found in the archaeological record and literary evidence for funeral practices.

During the early Bronze Age or Early Helladic period (ca. 3000-2000 BC) in Greece, before the Mycenaean period, simple rock cut chamber tombs with single inhumations were most commonly used on the mainland. Occasionally, built tombs and simple pit graves known as cist tombs were also used. The wealth of the grave goods varies, but it is usually fairly poor. The burials may not be impressive, but the dead were given a place to lay at rest.

In the Middle Helladic period (ca. 2000-1650 BC) the most common type of burial is the cist tomb with single inhumation. A special kind of extramural "cemetery" at this time is the tumulus, which is circular in plan and surrounded by a short wall that supports a low mound of earth into which cist and pithos burials are sunk.<sup>1</sup> Such tumuli used to be considered rare, but substantial numbers of them were found in the 1960s and early 1970s. Grave goods are rare in any form in the beginning of the Middle Helladic period, but they become more numerous as the period progresses and culminate in the rich shaft graves of the Grave Circles at Mycenae.<sup>2</sup>

The shaft graves at Mycenae date to ca. 1600-1500 BC for Grave Circle A and ca. 1650-1550 BC for Grave Circle B. The burials within the circles are extended inhumations and are accompanied by massive amounts of grave goods, which increase in wealth from Grave Circle B to Grave Circle A. Undecorated gravestones are known as early as the Middle Helladic period, and the shaft graves are marked with stone stelai, some carved in relief. The Mycenaean period is ushered in with these shaft graves and they contain the richest finds ever made in the Aegean area.<sup>3</sup> Extramural cemeteries, elaborate graves, more frequent re-use, and the provision of richer grave goods are all features which may be

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<sup>1</sup> A pithos burial refers to the placement the deceased into a clay vessel called a pithos.

<sup>2</sup> Dietz (1991) discusses the chronology of the shaft graves as well as cultural development during the Shaft Grave Period in the Argolid.

<sup>3</sup> See Rutter and Rutter 1976 for a discussion of the transition to the Mycenaean period. See also Crouwel 1989 for a discussion of the pictorial pottery during the time of the shaft graves.

associated with increasing differentiation of wealth and the emergence of an elite class.<sup>4</sup> The way these burials are treated also shows that there is great consideration for the deceased and that there is some degree to which the living thought that the dead person, or the soul, could benefit or receive pleasure from the grave goods and the elaboration of the grave.

In addition to the shaft graves, burial customs of the Mycenaean period are characterised by monumental tholoi and rock-cut chamber tombs that housed multiple burials representing the dead and his 'family.'<sup>5</sup> All of the tomb types of this period share the feature of an open *dromos*, or long entrance-way, and underground roofed chamber. The stone built tholos tomb had a high corbelled vault, was circular in plan, and was reserved for elite burials. The tholoi appear simultaneously with rock-cut chamber tombs that were cut to look like them, and the burials in the chamber tombs could often be as rich as those in the tholoi. Re-use of the tomb was normal. The tholos seems to be an elaboration of the chamber tomb rather than a derivation of the Cretan circular tombs, as is commonly argued.<sup>6</sup> The architecture of the tholoi seems to be built to accommodate the funeral rites. The evidence of conspicuous grooves found outside some tombs suggests that the body was brought into the tomb down the *dromos* by chariots, in what is known as the *ekphora*. The *ekphora*, or the conveying of the body to the grave by horse and chariot (or cart), is also known in later

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<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of the rise of an elite class based on mortuary practices see Wright 1987, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> For a lengthy discussion of the origin of the Late Bronze Age tholos tomb see Kanta 1997.

<sup>6</sup> One basis for this argument is the Minoan mason's marks found at the Mycenaean site of Peristeria in Messenia. The Cretan tombs cannot be proved to have vaulted roofs, nor are they built underground, and so it seems that the Mycenaean tholoi do not derive from these, but rather from the Mycenaean chamber tomb. The Minoan mason's marks at Peristeria are not evidence of Minoan builders necessarily, but of Minoan influence on the Mycenaean site.

periods and is depicted in the art of the Geometric period, discussed below. The wealth and elaboration of grave not only signifies a growing elite class, but also a growing desire to elaborate the funerals of those elites.

On the island of Crete, the home of the Minoan civilisation, burial customs are considerably more conservative than on the mainland. House tombs, cave burials, and rock shelters were all common on Crete, but the circular tombs were used much longer and have hundreds of burials in them suggesting that they were used for very long periods of time, even up to 1000 years. These round tombs were above ground and had annexes for the performance of rituals.<sup>7</sup> The conservative burial rites signify that the dead were an important aspect of society and they needed to be cared for in a ceremonious and traditional manner. Before the destruction of most of the Minoan palaces on Crete, the Minoan civilization flourished and there was trade and communication between the mainland, Crete, and the Cycladic islands.

In Mycenaean burial custom, the dead were laid out on the floor of the tholoi and chamber tombs in a simple pit. Less frequently they were laid on a bier, in a coffin of wood, or in a clay or stone sarcophagus, and examples of clay sarcophagi, known as *larnakes*, were found on the mainland in two cemeteries near the modern village of Tanagra in Boeotia in central Greece.<sup>8</sup> The multiple burials are the better known type of Mycenaean burial, but

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<sup>7</sup> Dickinson 1994, 218. See also Dickinson 1983 for further discussion of chamber tombs

<sup>8</sup> Stone sarcophagi were more common on Crete than on the mainland. See Preston 2004 for a discussion of the use of the *larnax* on Late Minoan Crete. See also Watrous 1991 for a discussion of the origin of the Minoan painted *larnax*.

single inhumation graves exist from the Middle Bronze Age down to 1200 BC. Also, cremation burial did exist, but it was not common. For example, the extensive Mycenaean cemetery at Perati in Attica has yielded both chamber tombs with inhumation burials and cremation graves.<sup>9</sup> Cremation is associated with the Near East and was introduced to Greece around this time.

Vases containing food and drink, jewellery, weapons, and lesser objects like ornaments, seal stones, lamps, and scales accompanied the dead in the Mycenaean period. At Mycenae, many tombs are rich in precious vessels and later in ivory goods. Some chamber tombs have frescoed doorways.<sup>10</sup> The poorest graves had one or more pots and sometimes some other small items. In the final phase of the Late Helladic period, figurines begin to appear with burials. The grave goods are not identical in every tomb, and they may not have been a part of the actual ritual of burial but rather were left over from a ritual consumption of food or drink on the occasion of burial.<sup>11</sup>

Evidence from Mycenaean cemeteries shows that funeral rites, such as drinking and feasting as well as formal mourning, were performed at the time of burial. Drinking vessel fragments, found especially in the *dromos*, are evidence for offering libations or toasting the

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<sup>9</sup> Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 25. Iakovides (1996) discusses the cemetery at Perati in his article about pottery found in the graves. The focus of the article is a *lekane* with a figure with its hands raised to its head that is attached to the rim.

<sup>10</sup> Dickinson 1994, 228.

<sup>11</sup> Dickinson 1994, 209. See Zerner 1990 for a discussion of the relationship between ceramics and ceremony at the grave.

dead. Human figures with their hands to their head in formal mourning gesture painted on the side panels of the *larnakes* from Tanagra suggest that a procession to the grave with ritual lament by female mourners took place during the Mycenaean funeral.<sup>12</sup> Cavanagh and Mee argue that the continuity of this gesture cannot be based on a continuation of the artistic tradition since the mourning scenes in Mycenaean art are rare besides the gesture exhibited by the figures on the Tanagra *larnakes*, but the continuation of the mourning gesture suggests the funerary practices themselves were similar.<sup>13</sup>

Several rituals did take place in cemeteries, such as animal offerings, and food and drink offerings. This is supported in the archaeological record by some animal bones, drinking vessels, and burnt food remains found in association with graves. These rituals may not indicate a true cult of the dead, but they are definitely evidence for a reverence of the dead at the time of burial.<sup>14</sup> Once the flesh decays, the bones are pushed aside to make way for a new burial after fires of fumigation and purification.<sup>15</sup> Burial may have been a two-stage process involving a secondary ritual once the bones were bare of flesh. Plausible

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<sup>12</sup> For further discussion of ritual lament see Burke (forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup> Cavanagh and Mee 1995, 55-8. Figurines found in Tomb 5 at Perati, Attica, which were used as attachments to the rim of a *lekane* also display this mourning gesture (for this and other similar figurines see Iakovides 1966).

<sup>14</sup> Dickinson 1994, 209 and Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 22.

<sup>15</sup> Any evidence linked directly to the cult of the dead, such as offerings made at the grave some time after the funeral, is associated with later Iron Age Greeks. Most often the offering is made in an attempt to make amends for disrupting the earlier grave (see Antonaccio 1995, 199-243).

evidence has been found in multiple burial tombs, where earlier burials were moved to a repository or heaped against a wall. Mylonas cites this reverence and delay of pushing aside the bones until the flesh has decayed as evidence for a cult of the dead that lasted during the marginal period before the soul had moved on to the afterlife.<sup>16</sup>

Mycenaean burial customs spread throughout the Aegean in the course of the late Bronze Age. The appearance of Aegean type chamber tombs in Cyprus in the Bronze Age may be associated with immigrations of Greek speakers. The tombs, however, rarely include more than two burials.

By the end of the thirteenth century BC most of the Mycenaean palace sites had been razed, although some, like Athens, were spared.<sup>17</sup> The Mycenaean culture lived on in refugee sites. Trade continued and some of these sites flourished, but the uniformity of the Mycenaean age and the prosperity had ended. Some time after the middle of the twelfth century BC, Mycenae suffered a fatal blow and there were no attempts to rebuild. The final destruction of the Mycenaean period is traditionally considered an end, or a collapse, because it is followed by a period of recession known as the "Dark Ages." Burial types change from the chamber tombs and tholoi to simple earth cut graves.<sup>18</sup> The burials become less elaborate, but the dead were still taken care of, which shows that the Greeks still had reverence for the dead and their souls.

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<sup>16</sup> Mylonas 1948, 98.

<sup>17</sup> See Desborough 1964 for a discussion of the last Mycenaean and their successors.

<sup>18</sup> Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 24.

Recent scholarship argues that there was no collapse of Greek civilization, but that there was a continuation from the late Bronze Age to the early Iron Age. Evidence for continuity exists in tablets that have been found at Knossos and other Mycenaean centres bearing a Mycenaean script, known as Linear B, which has been deciphered as an early form of Greek. These tablets show that the Greek pantheon existed already in Mycenaean times, because some of the names of later gods such as Athena are present.<sup>19</sup>

The first phase of the so-called “Dark Ages” is the sub-Mycenaean period. The term sub-Mycenaean is applied to a brief period in Attica (ca. 1100-1050 BC).<sup>20</sup> This term was coined because of pottery styles that were basically Mycenaean but inferior in quality and craftsmanship. Rutter disagrees with the use of the term sub-Mycenaean because it foregrounds the decline of Mycenaean society and does not allow for the proper study of the society that began to emerge out of the Mycenaean world.<sup>21</sup> The period may overlap with what is called Late Helladic III C in other regions.

From the middle of the eleventh century BC through the Protogeometric period (ca. 1050-900 BC) inhumation remains the norm, and the cist is the most common type of grave. The sub-Mycenaean cist is larger than the Middle Bronze Age type. Cremation, which was rarely used in the Mycenaean period, became better established. The cremated remains would be placed in an ash urn, and then in a burial shaft. Grave offerings were not numerous

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<sup>19</sup> see Chadwick 1976, Chapter 6.

<sup>20</sup> See Mountjoy (1999) for a discussion of regional styles of pottery in the “Dark Ages”

<sup>21</sup> See Rutter 1978.

or lavish, and some graves had none. When grave goods are present they consist of pottery and the occasional piece of simple bronze jewellery.<sup>22</sup>

Following the sub-Mycenaean period, the Protogeometric period (ca. 1050-900 BC) is characterised by a new style of pottery. Cremation burials are the most common in this period and they are placed in urns of the sub-Mycenaean style. Inhumations occur as well and are earlier. The inhumation burials are placed in cist tombs. The burials were marked with a small mound of earth, but a few were marked with amphorae at ground level. The marking of the tomb is important because it is evidence that the living wanted to remember the place where the deceased was buried for a long time after the person had died. Some Protogeometric graves are dug into Mycenaean levels of occupation. For example, one Protogeometric tomb lay in the collapsed roof of a Mycenaean chamber tomb under the Stoa of Attalos in the Athenian agora.<sup>23</sup> This re-use of Mycenaean chamber tombs may be of major importance for the reappearance of Bronze Age shapes in Geometric art of the ninth century BC and may signify the beginning of an Iron Age cult of the dead, or ancestor cult.<sup>24</sup>

Offerings were only slightly more varied than in the previous period, but they are more regular. Among other things, the funeral offerings include some figurines, mostly of horses. The most common vase shapes found in the graves are *lekythoi* (oil containers), bowls, cups, and jugs. Basket-like vases known as *kalathoi* are introduced and were used to

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<sup>22</sup> For a comprehensive study of the Protogeometric pottery see Desborough 1952.

<sup>23</sup> For excavation reports regarding the graves found in the Athenian Agora in the Bronze Age, see Immerwahr 1971.

<sup>24</sup> See Antonaccio 1995 and Lenz 1995

cover the top of the cinerary urn, and they continue into the Geometric period. Weapons begin to reappear for the first time since the Bronze Age. Offerings of food and drink were brought to the grave, and some were burned at the grave. Evidence for drink offering depends on the large number of cups and jugs found in proximity to the grave. Animal bones have been found associated with cremations and inhumations. Again, this type of material is evidence for funeral rites held at the grave.

The Geometric period (ca. 900-700 BC) is not a truly historical period, but a time when the Geometric style of pottery was predominate. The ninth century BC is a continuation of the previous Protogeometric period, but toward the end of the century, foreign communications improved and the standard of living rose. Most of the changes that led to the rise in the standard of living occurred in the eighth century BC. This century provided the ancient Greeks with the foundation for Archaic and Classical Greek society.<sup>25</sup>

During the course of the Geometric period, cremation ceased to be a preferred manner of burial in Attica, and cremation and inhumation were both practiced side by side. The preference for burial type ranged widely from region to region, but in general it seemed to have been a personal or family matter and this continues into the Archaic and Classical periods. Cremation burials were usually secondary, and the most common cremation grave was a pit in which the ash urn lay in a separate hole within the grave. The most common urns were clay neck- and shoulder-handled amphorae, the latter was eventually replaced by the belly-handled amphora. Metal cauldrons were also used for ash urns, but less frequently. The inhumation grave type of the Geometric period was a slab-lined, covered pit that

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<sup>25</sup> See I. Morris 1987.

resembled those of the sub-Mycenaean period. The bodies were extended supine with both arms at the side.

The grave goods are more numerous in the Geometric period, and for the first time since the Bronze Age, gold jewellery is present. The tomb of the rich Athenian lady found on the North slopes of the Areopagus in Athens, dating to ca. 850 BC, is the richest of the period. Finds from this tomb include granulated and filigreed gold jewellery, ivory stamp seals, faïence and glass beads, granaries, and various other small finds, which presents a picture of imported luxury and local technical accomplishment.<sup>26</sup> For the first time since the Mycenaean period, there is an interest in great elaboration of burial goods that reflects the wealth of the deceased.

Grave markers in the Geometric period are evidence that the site of the burial was remembered for a long time.<sup>27</sup> The most permanent marker is the slab of stone set vertically above the grave, but clay vases, which sometimes assumed monumental form, were also used. The only vase shapes known to be used as burial markers are the belly-handled amphora and the pedestalled krater. Usually, amphorae marked female graves and kraters marked male graves.

In the Geometric period, there is also some evidence for funeral rites that accompanied the burials. Food and drink offerings, as well as offerings of vases, jewellery, and weapons were made to the dead. Animal bones indicate also a custom of animal

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<sup>26</sup> The tomb was first published by E. L. Smithson in 1968. For a recent discussion of the tomb, see Coldstream 1995.

<sup>27</sup> Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 56.

offerings to the dead. Offering ditches begin to appear, and become standard in the Archaic period.<sup>28</sup> But drink offerings were presented more regularly, to judge from the amount of cups, bowls, and other drinking paraphernalia found with the burials.

The scenes depicted on Geometric pottery perhaps offer the most vivid evidence for funeral rites. Although scenes of combat and naval engagements are depicted, the *prothesis* is the most common theme. Mourning figures with hands raised to their heads in similar poses to the Mycenaean scenes are also prominent. These mourners are often depicted next to the bier in *prothesis* scenes and also in friezes around the vessel. The *ekphora* is also shown, but less frequently.

The Geometric period leads into the Orientalizing period (ca. 700-600 BC), marking a century of expansion and growth, in which Eastern ideas had their greatest impact on Greece.<sup>29</sup> The prosperity of the seventh century continued into the Archaic period (ca. 600 – 480 BC), as did an intensified interest in commerce and energetic expansion of the colonies that were already founded abroad. It is marked by newly accepted “Orientalizing” styles in art, and is ended by the Persian Wars. Burial customs of inhumation and cremation persist alongside each other.

The stone slab-lined, covered pit, is no longer common. Instead, the graves are a simple trench with a pit in it to hold the burial, which takes the form of either cremation or inhumation. A distinct type of cremation grave evolved in Attica at the beginning of the

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<sup>28</sup> Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 65.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of the Orientalising influence on Greece and its importance see Morris 1994 and Burkert 1992.

Archaic period. The dead were cremated in the grave itself. The body seems to have been laid on a bier before it was burned because a light ash layer of human remains is covered by a darker ash layer probably from the bier as it collapsed when it was burned.<sup>30</sup> Weapons, jewellery, and other metal objects are almost unknown as grave goods. Usually little more than a cup bowl, or pouring vessel accompanied the grave. Separate offering ditches that began in the Geometric period continue and although they are fairly common, they were optional and often marked a wealthy tomb.

The appearance of the tomb itself begins to be important, and it becomes more elaborate through time. Monumental earth mounds, built tombs, and funerary sculpture were often erected.

In the Classical period (ca. 480-300 BC), both inhumation and cremation were practiced as in the previous period. Primary cremation continues virtually unchanged, but simplified. Clay urns and metal urns were used and they were often placed in a protective box in the ground. The simplest inhumation grave was a shaft or pit cut into the ground, and the body was extended supine. Sarcophagi made of limestone or marble and clay tubs appear.

Offerings are found lying around the dead in no apparent order, and in the special offering ditches, which persist from the Archaic period. Standard grave furnishings are *lekythoi*, cups, bowls, jugs, and lidded containers. Apart from vases, the offerings seem to be

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<sup>30</sup> Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 74.

the cherished goods of the dead, such as strigils, mirrors, and toys.<sup>31</sup> Jewellery is not well represented. Clay figurines such as seated women, toys, dolls, and animals are common.

The white-ground *lekythos* is the most characteristic vase placed in Classical burials.<sup>32</sup> The *lekythos* is a vessel for holding oil, but at times, monumental stone *lekythoi* can be used as grave markers. The *lekythoi* can show mythological scenes, or be covered in simple patterns, but many are painted with funerary themes, such as the *prothesis*, or scenes including Charon, the ferryman, who carries the dead to the underworld.

There are also public state graves in the Classical period, which are erected by the state in honour of great men who died in battle. The elaboration of the grave itself continues and the appearance of the graves widely varies due to the many different ways that the grave can be marked, such as with slab stelai, vases, columns, bases, gravestones with figured relief, and sculpture in the round. Anti-sumptuary laws were put in place during the Classical period as well in order to curb extensive elaboration of the graves.

### **Funeral rites**

In the archaeological record, as described above, there are some funeral aspects that recur in Greece from the Bronze Age to the Classical period. When someone dies, the work to be done is the same. The corpse had to be purified and the relatives and home had to be cleansed of death in order to resume normal life in the community. Much of the information about the funeral comes from literature in the Archaic and Classical periods and depictions in art from the Geometric period on. Offered here is a general picture of the ancient Greek

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<sup>31</sup> Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 101.

<sup>32</sup> For a comprehensive study of all the white-ground lekythoi found in graves, see Oakley 2004.

funeral reconstructed from art, literature, and archaeological remains. Although not all of the aspects of this general picture apply completely to every period of Greek history or to each region, I agree with Kurtz and Boardman (1971) that the human attitude toward death is one of the most conservative, and the rites known to have been practiced in Attica are the standard socio-religious rites of veneration and purification observable in Greek societies separated by time and space. Thus, it is not a fruitless endeavour to investigate the Attic burial rites as a point of comparison for other periods and areas in the Greek world.<sup>33</sup> The funeral rites of the ancient Greeks show that the soul of the deceased was of primary importance.

The basic aspects of the funeral are the *prothesis*, the *ekphora*, the *perideipnon* or ritual dinner, and the interment.<sup>34</sup> Several other commemorative rites also take place at various intervals after the burial is finished, and there are some that are performed yearly.

The *prothesis*, or the formal lying-in-state of the dead, took place in the house of the deceased the day after the death. The *prothesis* is depicted in the art of each period: on the Mycenaean *larnakes* from Tanagra (5, 6), in Geometric vase-painting (24-28), Archaic funerary plaques (29), and on Classical white-ground *lekythoi*. It is not as popular in Greek art of the Archaic period when the dead were commemorated in heroic fashion with emphasis

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<sup>33</sup> Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 142. Danforth (1982) describes modern funeral practices in rural Greece, and many of the photographs and sentiments of the modern Greek funeral are surprisingly similar to the ancient Greek rites. It is a good example of how ageless the ancient practices are.

<sup>34</sup> For a specific and thorough discussion of the *prothesis* and *ekphora* in Geometric art see Ahlberg 1971.

on the individual. As a result, in the Archaic period, mythic themes were more popularly depicted on funerary objects. In the Classical period, after ca. 460 BC, the *prothesis* becomes more popular again in funerary art. Shapiro attributes the change in funerary iconography in the Classical period to the Persian Wars and the subsequent institution of state burials of war dead. This resulted in a much sharper demarcation between public and private commemoration, thus giving the semi-private *prothesis* a prominent place in art.<sup>35</sup>

The purpose of the *prothesis* was to confirm that the individual was in fact deceased, to allow the family members to mourn, and for friends and extended family to pay their last respects. The most elaborate mourning took place during the *prothesis*. The *goos* was a mourning dirge that was sung either by the female family members or by professional mourners. For the *prothesis*, the body would be bathed, anointed with oil, and dressed with flowers, ribbons, and jewellery. This process is similar to the ceremonial washing before a wedding, and should be thought of as a barrier to be passed when undergoing a rite of passage. In the earlier periods, the body was dressed in a simple long robe, but later, the body was wrapped in a shroud, *endyma*, and covered with a bier cloth, *epiblema*. The body would be arranged with its feet pointing toward the door on a couch or high table called a bier. There was a pillow beneath the head to avoid the jaw gaping open, and in the Classical period, chinstraps, *othônai*, were often used to hold the jaw in place. No physical evidence exists for the chinstrap since they were most likely made of linen, but several examples in art show the deceased entering Hades with the chinstrap still in place.<sup>36</sup> Gold lip bands found in

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<sup>35</sup> Shapiro (1991, 629)

<sup>36</sup> Such as appears on the woman who approaches Charon the ferryman on a calyx krater from New York by the Nekyia Painter (New York 08.258.21).

Mycenaean tombs may be early chinstraps, but no other evidence exists for chinstraps made of gold.<sup>37</sup>

The length of time for the *prothesis* varied. In the Homeric epics, seventeen days are devoted to the obsequies of Achilles, nine for Hektor, and two for Patroklos.<sup>38</sup> In the Classical period, the *prothesis* would last for three days, but this was after anti-sumptuary laws were enacted limiting the expense, noise, and period of mourning.

After the *prothesis*, the body was carried to the grave in a procession with the men leading and the women behind; this ceremony is referred to as the *ekphora*. The body was carried out on a cart pulled by a horse, or a horse and chariot. The *ekphora* is depicted in Greek art, but it is less common than the *prothesis*.<sup>39</sup> In the Homeric epics, however, the deceased was carried by pallbearers, as is the body of Patroklos at his funeral (*Iliad* 23.134). This is a rare and striking difference between the Geometric practices and the Homeric epics. No *ekphora* scenes are depicted in Mycenaean art, but there are numerous chariot kraters associated with graves. These chariot kraters show similar elements to the Geometric and later *ekphora* scenes in that they have processions of chariots followed by grooms and other

<sup>37</sup> Garland 1985, 23.

<sup>38</sup> For a discussion of the length of the *prothesis* in literature, see Garland 1985, 26. Most of the information about Greek funerary customs come from laws governing the funerary rites in historic Greece, see Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 200-205.

<sup>39</sup> Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 60. Only three *ekphora* scenes in Geometric Art are preserved compared to the fifty-two *prothesis* scenes (Ahlberg 1971).

people on foot, and these processions may be depicting Mycenaean *ekphorai*. The architecture of the tholoi also suggest that the *ekphora* was a part of the Mycenaean funeral.

Once at the grave, the body seems to have been lowered into the ground with little ceremony. At one time, it was common to sacrifice an animal while at the grave. Animal bones are found at graves in every period, and may have been part of a meal taken at the grave or evidence for the sacrifice of an animal. In Mycenaean art, the Ayia Triada sarcophagus depicts a bull sacrifice taking place during the funeral ritual. There are some offerings made at the grave at the time of burial, which is evident from offering pits in the Geometric and Archaic periods that are alongside the burial pit, or tomb. These offerings included pottery, which may have contained food and drink, jewellery, weapons, lamps, scales, and often coins for the ferryman. The ferryman, known as Charon, would carry the deceased across the river Styx to Hades. The coins are to pay for the transport.

The *perideipnon* is a ritual meal taken after the burial and it was a time for relatives to gather and discuss the deceased and give eulogies. Some believe that this ritual dinner was held at the grave, but most evidence shows that it was taken at home.<sup>40</sup> There probably was a feast for the dead at the grave, the *Totenmahl*, because much of the pottery in the graves is related to feasting and drinking. This was to give the deceased what he would need in the afterlife, and most of the objects were placed in the grave for this purpose. So, banqueting equipment in a burial context represents the deceased's *Totenteil*, the materials due to the dead by sacred law.

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<sup>40</sup> Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 146.

After the interment and *perideipnon*, several commemorative rites were carried out at different intervals both at the grave and in the home.<sup>41</sup> Three days and nine days later, family and friends gathered at the grave to perform the customary rites, *ta entata*, but little is known about these other than their mention in literary sources, and mostly in the law codes that detail the proper length of time between these rites. Another rite is mentioned as taking place on the thirtieth day, the *triaskonta*. Also, annually at home, there were further rites on behalf of ancestral objects. These post-burial rites show that there was a belief among the ancient Greeks that the soul of the deceased did not reach its final destination immediately after burial, but that it remained for a time marginally between the two worlds. This shows the importance of the soul after death and how its presence could still be felt by the living.

The funeral was a rite of passage for the soul to help it attain a place in the afterlife. The soul was an integral part of the funeral, and it was thought to linger in a marginal state until the funeral and other commemorative rites were properly completed. The dichotomy between the body and soul is always a concern for the ancient Greeks, and the soul is something special and sacred; a thing that deserves special attention and care. During funeral rituals, the body is regarded as lifeless, so the rituals are performed for the soul. Both the funeral rituals themselves as well as the archaeological evidence from burials show that the living treated the dead reverently. This reverence for the dead is evidence for the belief in the soul and the afterlife.

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<sup>41</sup> There is mention of several different rites held after the burial, both immediately and on a yearly basis, but little is known specifically about each, and they varied greatly from region to region. For a list of known occasions see Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 147-8 and Garland 1985, 38-47.

### Chapter Three –Modern Interpretations of the Bird in Greek Art and Literature

The bird is a common motif throughout every period of Greek art, and since it is a consistent feature, the stylistic changes the bird goes through are extremely useful to the modern discussion of the development of Greek art.<sup>1</sup> The most common interpretation of the bird in art and literature is that the bird marks the presence of the divine. This stems from a debate concerning avian vocabulary in the Homeric epics and its application to the gods. In Homer, do the gods actually *transform* into birds, *appear* in bird-form, or is it poetic language used to *compare* the gods to birds?<sup>2</sup> For example, when Apollo and Athena sit resembling (ἔοικότες) birds of prey on a tree branch above the Trojans and Achaeans as Hektor challenges one of the Greeks to single combat, does the word ἔοικότες mean “resemble” in the sense that they are birds so they look the same way that birds look, or do they “resemble” birds because they are sitting in a tree branch similar to how birds sit (*Iliad* 7.57-62, **App. 1.1**).?

Franz Dirlmeier argues that the poet only compares the deity to a bird and that no transformation actually took place because such theriomorphism is not found in Homer.<sup>3</sup> Herbert Bannert disagrees because not all of the events in the epics rely on rational thought, especially in the *Odyssey* (10.229-43) where man can be turned into swine. Instead, he

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<sup>1</sup> See Pollard 1977 for a general study on the occurrence of birds in Greek art and literature.

<sup>2</sup> The seven central passages of the debate are *Iliad* 7.57-62, *Iliad* 14. 286-291, *Odyssey* 1. 319-322, *Odyssey* 3.371-372, *Odyssey* 5.336-338, *Odyssey* 5.351-353, *Odyssey* 22. 239-240 (See **Appendix 1**).

<sup>3</sup> Dirlmeier 1967.

classifies the passages as miraculous events that were witnessed by all present (**App. 1. 4, 1.7**).<sup>4</sup> Bannert understands the desire in the poet to describe the sudden appearance and movements of the gods as those of birds (**App. 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7**). Hartmut Erbse believes that the gods actually did appear as birds, but that this does not mean that the god actually was a bird.<sup>5</sup> To Erbse, it is no different than the gods appearing in human form as a divine epiphany because the gods could take on any form they desired.

On the other hand, B.C. Dietrich (1989) argues that the poet portrays the gods as birds when they appear to mortals as a literary technique for describing divine inspiration and intervention, but that the gods themselves in actuality do not have to appear in any form at all because they do not need their physical form to communicate with mankind. The poet must manifest the presence of the divine in a tangible form for ease of literary description. Dietrich also asks an important question; are the transformations a part of literary convention or do they reflect the beliefs of Homer and his audience? The answer to this question is vital to the interpretation of the appearance and placement of birds in art. Did the Greeks consider the gods likely to appear as birds and were the gods capable of doing so? And as a corollary to this question, are the birds in art similar to the literary references, and do they represent a shorthand for an abstract concept, such as the soul?<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bannert 1978.

<sup>5</sup> Erbse 1980.

<sup>6</sup> Carter (1995, 287-90) argues that the gods appear to mortals in disguise and that the bird epiphany occurs in Bronze Age art.

Many scholars follow Martin Nilsson, who first suggests that the gods appear as birds and that the bird in Minoan and Mycenaean art is a form of the epiphany of the gods.<sup>7</sup> To put it simply, an epiphany is a manifestation or appearance of a deity. The sanctuary rhyton from Kato Zakro on Crete, dating to the sixteenth century BC (20), exemplifies his thesis. The bird flies above horns of consecration, which are known to be sacred objects. Nilsson interprets this bird as a god that has appeared in the form of a bird because it was summoned to a sacrifice. The bird is also commonly depicted alongside double axes, sacred boughs, at shrines, and in association with pillars.<sup>8</sup> Nilsson is not wrong, but he often overlooks the funerary context of several of the examples he cites as evidence for divine epiphany.<sup>9</sup> Nilsson does not agree that the bird may represent the soul.

Jane Carter investigates the occasion of Homeric performance in order to make a distinction between the bardic performances within the epics and the actual performances in

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<sup>7</sup> Especially Nilsson 1950, 330-40.

<sup>8</sup> See Harrison 1908. Harrison suggests that there was a bird and pillar cult in which the pillar, or tree, is a manifestation of the mother goddess while the bird is of the heaven. The bird perching on the pillar is a representation of the marriage between the earth mother and the sky father, from which sprang all life. Harrison's theory represents one of the few attempts to define the bird as more than just an epiphany of the gods come to partake in the sacrifice. Nilsson disagrees with her logic *MMR*<sup>2</sup> 1950, 338-9.

<sup>9</sup> Nilsson (*MMR*<sup>2</sup> 1950, 334) also foregrounds the amount of bird figurines that have been found in household shrines as further evidence that the bird is a symbol of the presence of the divine. But if the funeral context of several of the ritual scenes is remembered and the birds are thought of as the souls of the deceased, then the household shrine is exactly the place where one would find bird figurines. In the household shrine, the bird figurines would be a part of an ancestor cult, in which the birds are a link to the funeral rites where the soul of the deceased was thought to attend the funeral in bird form. For ancestor worship at Mycenaean tombs, see Antonaccio 1995, 245-68.

Late Geometric life.<sup>10</sup> Her arguments were mentioned above, but here they will be developed in more detail using more examples. She adheres to the divine epiphany interpretation of birds in art, stating, “whether the bird is to be understood as the actual presence of the goddess in bird form or as a sign that symbolises her presence, the very close link between the bird and the goddess in Minoan representations is clear.”<sup>11</sup> But she expands upon the divine epiphany theory and allows for the bird to also be a marker of the semi-divine presence of the ancestors because she sees similarities with the Near East and ancestor worship there.

Carter argues that in the Late Geometric period, the epic performances occurred exclusively in ritual contexts, whether at a funeral, or at a panegyric festival, and not in a chief’s house with the elites of the community in attendance, as some have speculated.<sup>12</sup> She further suggests that if epic recitals took place in connection with ancestor cult, then it may have been part of religious practices for a long time, and she posits that it began in the Mycenaean period. Since bards accompany themselves on lyres, Carter looks for lyre players in Late Bronze Age art, and she finds that birds are always represented alongside lyre

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<sup>10</sup> Carter (1995, 286) stresses the point that scholars do not equate the warfare employed in the *Iliad* with that practiced in the eighth century BC, and calls for the need not to make a similar oversight with bardic performance.

<sup>11</sup> Carter 1995, 290.

<sup>12</sup> Carter 1995, 286.

players, such as on the Chania Pyxis (19).<sup>13</sup> The bird and the lyre-player are the iconography of epic performance and the bird represents the semi-divine ancestors rather than a divinity. However, Carter does not address the possibility of the birds alongside lyre-players representing winged words. Clarke describes words that are winged as words that go directly to their goal, i.e. that reach the ears of the intended audience.<sup>14</sup> This is useful for the interpretation that the bird can represent the soul in funerary contexts because the soul's goal is the afterlife, and a soul that takes the form of a bird would be successful and reach its goal.

The idea that the bird represents the soul is not new. Georg Weicker was the first to suggest that the bird represented the soul of the deceased. In his cross-cultural study, Weicker hypothesizes that the siren and the *seelenvogel* (soul-bird) are one and the same by tracing the siren in art and literature from the Homeric epics and the Egyptian *ba* through Roman and Christian times.<sup>15</sup> Figure 23 shows a depiction of the *ba*-soul with human head and bird body from the Book of the Dead of Neferrhenpet, which dates to the thirteenth century BC. Weicker argues that harpies and nymphs are also soul-birds and that they represent a primitive conception of the soul as a bird. In art, Weicker argues that the winged

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<sup>13</sup> Chania is a site located on Crete in the modern Greek County of Chania. For an overview of the monuments in Chania from the Prehistoric period through the Hellenistic see Andreadaki-Vlaski 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Clarke 1999, 153.

<sup>15</sup> Weicker 1902. See Pollard 1965 for a study of the Sirens.

figures on the Zakro sealings, from Kato Zakro, Crete, such as an eagle-headed female figure (21), are the first Greek soul-birds.<sup>16</sup>

Rather than view the winged creatures on the Zakro sealings as soul-birds, scholars have interpreted them as goddesses, or priestesses. D. G. Hogarth denies that these winged monsters are fantastic gods nor does he think they represent priests or votaries of a theriomorphic god. Rather they are descendants of similar Egyptian Nilotic deities, that the Mycenaeans would have known little about and so they would have copied the Egyptian iconography without the significance behind it.<sup>17</sup> Weicker excludes alternative views and interpretations. Beyond his treatment of the Zakro sealings, Weicker's overall methodology is weak because everything that he brings into his argument is a departed soul and every allusion to the bird is associated with the bird form of the soul. His interpretation includes too many examples without enough explanation as to why the birds, or winged human creatures, would represent the soul.

Bernhard Schweitzer examines the bird in Minoan art and makes the blanket statement that all Minoan birds are images of souls released from the body.<sup>18</sup> Schweitzer makes the connection between the bird and soul based on Minoan sarcophagi that show wither birds alone or birds with chariots, but then he applies this interpretation also to bird

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<sup>16</sup> The word "monster" is applied by Hogarth (1902) to all the winged creatures depicted on the Zakro sealings.

<sup>17</sup> See Hogarth (1902, 90-93) for the Egyptian origins of the Mycenaean monster-type depicted on the sealings.

<sup>18</sup> Schweitzer 1922, 37.

metopes and amphorae with bird friezes, which are not connected to the dead or funerals. The problem with the approach of both Weicker and Schweitzer is that they suggest that the bird represents the soul, but they give no reason why this should happen. They begin with a small assertion and apply it too widely, and as a result, the works of these two scholars do not always appear in bibliographies of recent studies of the iconography of the bird.

One scholar who has looked at a connection between birds and funerals is J. L. Benson.<sup>19</sup> He focuses on the Geometric period, but draws heavily on the late pictorial pottery of the Mycenaean period because he proposes that the Geometric artists depended on Mycenaean prototypes for inspiration.<sup>20</sup> Benson notes in the preface to *Horse, Bird, and Man* (1970) that he began this study by focusing on iconographical matters involving griffins and birds, but the book's main focus became the development of the horse motif and the importance of the horse to funeral rituals and within elite burials.<sup>21</sup> Benson's discussion of the horse and the chariot in Mycenaean times is the foundation for his argument that Geometric artists developed their painting style through repeated contact with Mycenaean prototypes. The imagery of the Dipylon funerary vases showing *prothesis* and *ekphora* scenes are his main evidence.<sup>22</sup> Although the horse is the focus, the bird also plays an

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<sup>19</sup> Benson 1970, 60-74. For a more specific study on birds see Benson 1961a, 1961b.

<sup>20</sup> As does Dirk Lenz 1995. See also Karageorghis and Vermeule 1982 for a comprehensive iconographical study, including birds, and Furumark 1941 for stylistic analysis and development of the bird motif.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter One: "Funerary Tradition and its Symbolism" in Benson 1970, 20-6.

<sup>22</sup> See Ahlberg (1971) for a complete study of *prothesis* and *ekphora* scenes in Geometric Art.

important role in Benson's book and in his discussion of funerary symbolism and tradition. He argues that there are certain bird representations that have associations with the world of the dead, both directly and indirectly through a combination of symbols including the chariot.<sup>23</sup> Since the horse on its own can be a marker of elite status, the bird, through its associations with the horse and chariot, can also carry this association. No matter how the horse was introduced, Benson claims that it had an interesting affect on Mycenaean funerary practices. Horse skeletons are found in graves, and the horse and chariot may have been used during the funeral to bring the body into the tomb.<sup>24</sup> The chariot kraters that are so common to Cyprus, as well as numerous horse figurines found throughout the Greek world, are indications that the horse and chariot were symbols of exalted status.<sup>25</sup> Birds appear liberally on Mycenaean vases, including chariot kraters (12-14, 16),<sup>26</sup> and on Mycenaean *larnakes* (2a), but Benson does not agree that the bird represents an image of the soul released from the body.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Benson 1970, 29.

<sup>24</sup> For more about the relationship between the chariot and the dead, see Benson 1970, 20.

<sup>25</sup> Benson 1970, 22.

<sup>26</sup> See Karageorghis and Vermeule 1982 for all examples of birds found on Mycenaean pictorial vases.

<sup>27</sup> Benson 1970, 29.

The idea of the soul-bird reappears in the scholarship of Emily Vermeule.<sup>28</sup> She argues that the first soul-bird or *psyche* is found on a terracotta sarcophagus from the Boeotian cemetery at Tanagra dating to the Mycenaean period (3a).<sup>29</sup> She does not, however, give much explanation of the reason for the soul-bird. She treats “soul-bird” as a well known and agreed upon term for the winged apparitions that flutter near the grave or above the dead and dying in Archaic and early Classical art (33-35).<sup>30</sup> In an article about painted Mycenaean *larnakes* she states this theory more clearly, “It is also possible that the bird stands pictorially for the soul or *psyche* of the dead, like birds who perch on the biers in Geometric art.”<sup>31</sup>

Dirk Lenz’s dissertation is the most recent comprehensive study of birds in ancient Greek art.<sup>32</sup> It includes every bird representation known to Lenz from the Aegean and Cyprus dating between the twelfth and ninth centuries BC. He finds connections between the Bronze Age and the Geometric Period by analysing the development of the bird. Lenz does not argue a continuous development, but that there is a revival of styles and forms due to the re-use of Bronze Age chamber tombs in the late Geometric Period.

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<sup>28</sup> Especially Vermeule 1979, and Vermeule 1965.

<sup>29</sup> Vermeule 1979, 65.

<sup>30</sup> Vermeule 1979, 8.

<sup>31</sup> Vermeule 1965, 131.

<sup>32</sup> Lenz 1995.

The dissertation is divided into two sections. In the first section, Lenz analyses stylistically bird depictions on pottery of the so-called “Dark Ages” to show the strong resemblance of Late Mycenaean bird motifs to those of the Late Geometric Period. The second part discusses the meaning of the bird image in early Greek pictorial art. In this section, Lenz disputes the bird epiphany but his own interpretation is not very different. He argues that the gods do not appear in bird form, nor do the birds represent the gods. Instead, the birds are representative of the celestial ones or harbingers of their epiphany and that their behaviour during sacrifice was believed to indicate the gods’ wishes.<sup>33</sup> As a result, birds themselves played a role in sacrificial rituals and were often lured to the sacrifice through offerings or music. Similarly, Gudrun Ahlberg also argues that the birds played a role in the ritual and suggests that the birds in *prothesis* scenes on several Geometric amphorae (27c) may even be awaiting sacrifice.<sup>34</sup>

The current body of scholarship on the bird in Greek art and literature, as discussed here, focuses on the role that the bird plays in religion, on determining the species of the birds, or on the stylistic changes of the bird motif in art. The next three chapters discuss various examples of birds in art in order to offer a different interpretation of birds in ancient Greek art.

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<sup>33</sup> Lenz 1995, 5.

<sup>34</sup> Ahlberg 1971, 140.

## Chapter Four – Birds in Greek Funerary Art of the Bronze Age

In the Bronze Age, birds were a common motif in art and were depicted in various media such as painted sarcophagi, frescoes, terracotta sculpture, clay sealings, rings, and especially in vase painting. When found in funerary contexts some of these birds are the earliest representation of the soul and are the antecedents to the Archaic and Classical soul-birds. The two most common media in the Bronze Age that feature birds in funerary contexts are painted sarcophagi, mainly from Tanagra and Ayia Triada in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC, and Mycenaean pictorial vase painting, which was in use between 1400 BC and 1150 BC.<sup>1</sup> This pottery is found in almost all tombs, but primarily in the tombs of non-elites and mostly depicts non-soul-birds or fish.<sup>2</sup>

All of the bird depictions on vases occur in three general visual contexts: birds in friezes, birds interacting with other birds or objects, and birds in narrative scenes. Within these categories, the iconographic value of the birds can be determined based on their actions, the degree of participation they have in the scene, and the type of scene in which they appear.

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed chronology based on pictorial styles see **Appendix 2**, which has been taken from Karageorghis and Vermeule 1982.

<sup>2</sup> For the origins of Mycenaean pictorial vase painting, see Crouwel and Morris (1996). The most comprehensive study of Mycenaean pictorial vases, see Karageorghis and Vermeule 1982. For the most part, the examples used for this paper are from known tombs. Although some fragments have been found in houses, the majority of pictorial pottery is found in tombs and so the few vases that have no provenance are assumed to also be from funerary contexts. Furumark (1972) and Kling (1984) offer stylistic analysis of the motifs common to Mycenaean pictorial vase painting including the bird.

When birds appear alone, they are most often arranged in a frieze around the vessel and they are not actors in a scene. Little meaning beyond filler motifs or decorative bands can be gleaned from these depictions. In scenes where the birds interact with the other objects, a pastoral setting is often conveyed, such as on the three handled jar from Rhodes where a bird approaches a leafy decoration as if it were grazing.<sup>3</sup> The bird is performing an action and becomes more than a decorative motif. In scenes with other animals, the visual context is more defined, but the bird does not have a complex meaning. They do, however, have some iconographic value because they take part in these scenes and so their presence can be explained to a certain extent. For example, a bell krater from Enkomi, Cyprus, (12) shows a large charging bull with head lowered so that its horns are almost scraping the ground and a bird hovers above the bull with its long beak touching the bull's neck. Sylvia Benton identified this bull as a cattle egret.<sup>4</sup> Because of the bird's action, the species of this bird can easily be identified, and therefore it has more iconographic value than a simple bird on its own or in a frieze.

When birds are conspicuously placed in a narrative scene, an even more clear understanding of the iconographic value can be reached. Even if the interpretations vary, the birds have a larger role in the scene than as filler motifs. Narrative scenes depict human life, and although they do not always tell a specific story, a level of interaction between the birds and human figures takes place and allows for interpretation. Within these scenes, several

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<sup>3</sup> Three handled jar from Rhodes, Tomb XIX.6, Early Pictorial 1410 – 1360 BC (Karageorghis and Vermeule 1982).

<sup>4</sup> Benton 1961, 44.

possible meanings for the birds have been suggested. The most widely followed is divine epiphany argued by Martin Nilsson. Other possibilities include the embodiment of an abstract concept such as winged words, the presence of the divine, or as a signifier of some mythological setting. However, if the funerary context is foregrounded, the most logical conclusion is that the bird represents the soul of the deceased.

The divine epiphany occurs during religious ceremonies where those sacrificing seek to please the gods, attract their attention, and gain their presence at the sacrifice. The gods respond to the ceremony and the ritual summons and make their presence known by appearing in the form of a bird. The bird as an epiphany in art, therefore, would be depicted in ritual scenes and be associated with ritual implements. Birds very often occur alongside ritual or sacred objects, but the ritual need not always be performed for the gods only. When a vessel is found in a grave, the nature of the ritual depicted on it is most likely funerary in nature especially if the ritual is depicted on sarcophagi and *larnakes*. Since the ritual being performed is funerary, the birds present in these scenes can be equated with the realm of the dead.

The fresco panels on the painted sarcophagus from Tomb 4 at Ayia Triada (**18a-f**), dating to the fourteenth century BC, illustrate a Bronze Age funerary ritual.<sup>5</sup> Side A (**18a**) shows the pouring of libations and a presentation scene. The presentation scene shows three men walking right to the opposite end of Side A toward a robed figure, whose robe obscures the arms and feet and is white with a vertical pattern. This is almost certainly a representation of the deceased, and it stands in front of a small structure, possibly even Tomb

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<sup>5</sup> On how this Cretan object is connected to an emergent Mycenaean ideology see Burke 2005.

4 itself.<sup>6</sup> The three men carry what are thought to be two spotted animal figurines and a model boat.<sup>7</sup> Each of these figures, except the robed figure, has attachments that flow down on either side of them that seem to be attached to the shoulder. These “streamers” look like hair or animal tails, and are also worn by mourners on several *larnakes* from Tanagra (3a-c). I would argue that these streamers are wing-like. The libation scene on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus (18b) shows a woman pouring a libation into a krater flanked by two columns topped by double axes with birds atop each. Two other libation bearers follow the woman and one of them is playing a seven-stringed lyre with duck-head finials.

Side B (18c) shows a bull sacrifice and sacred enclosure. The bull is tied up lying on top of a sacrificial table, and a stag is positioned below the table. Three female figures approach the table from the left, and a musician stands behind the bull. The far right of Side B (18d) shows a woman washing her hands in a basin next to a pillar topped with a double axe with a bird perched upon it. Next to this pillar is an altar with four horns of consecration on top of which a branch is sticking out from between the horns, which has been identified by Nilsson as a sacred bough.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This figure has been identified as a deity, a mummy, the deceased, or the spirit of the dead, but I agree with Long (1974, 44-50) that it cannot be a deity because it depicts a funerary rite performed to speed the deceased ruler on his way. Nilsson (1950, 44-50) suggests that the figure is the deceased who is being deified.

<sup>7</sup> For interpretations of the boat as possibly representing the vehicle in which the deceased will be carried to the afterlife, and of the spotted animals representing cattle see Long 1974, 46-9.

<sup>8</sup> Nilsson 1950, 344.

The double axes upon which the birds perch, the horns of consecration, and the sacred bough near the bird on Side B are all sacred objects, and the proximity of the bird to these objects is the basis for identifying the birds as divine epiphany. Nilsson argues that the gods appear as birds to attend sacred rituals honouring the gods, or their own shrines.<sup>9</sup> For example, the small gold model of a shrine from the IV<sup>th</sup> shaft grave at Mycenae (9) depicts two large birds alighting atop the horns of consecration located on the lower roofs of the gold leaf shrine. A similar example from the Loom Weight Basement at the shrine of the Dove Goddess at Knossos includes a group of three columns on a common base supporting square capitals upon each of which sit two beams and a bird (17).<sup>10</sup> While the religious nature of these last two examples is undeniable, the specific ritual being performed is unclear. Given a larger context these examples may also depict a ritual of funerary nature, as on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus. On the sarcophagus, the birds are perched upon or in close proximity to sacred objects, such as the double axe, but they are witnesses to funeral rituals. The combination of the funerary nature of the sarcophagus and the robed figure on Side A, which represents the deceased, suggests that the birds are the soul of the deceased rather than divine epiphanies. More than one bird is in these scenes, but if the bird can represent the soul of the deceased, the soul of the previously deceased (i.e. the ancestors) could also be embodied in the form of the bird.

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<sup>9</sup> Nilsson 1950.

<sup>10</sup> There is a big difference between Minoan and Mycenaean world, and while the focus of this present study is the Mycenaean and Greek world, this Minoan example is included to illustrate Nilsson's theory. He himself uses this example (Nilsson 1950, 88).

The two short ends of the Ayia Triada sarcophagus each show variations of chariots with women drivers. The east end (18e) shows two female drivers in a griffin-drawn chariot with a bird overhead. This bird appears to be standing on the wings of the griffin and its own wings are outspread behind it. Because of the winged griffins, which are otherworldly, and the bird, these women have been identified as goddesses. The bird, however, is commonly associated with the chariot in the Bronze Age, and these women need not be goddesses, but rather women who are a part of the procession, or *ekphora*, leading toward the grave during the funeral. If these women are proceeding to the grave, then the bird may be the soul of the deceased accompanying them to the grave. The lower register of the west end (18f) shows another chariot with two female riders being pulled by two Cretan wild goats, known as *agrimia*. The upper poorly preserved register shows a procession of at least two men.<sup>11</sup>

There are several other procession scenes in Bronze Age art, and a few of them have birds in prominent places behind or above the chair of a seated figure receiving the procession. The bird is witnessing the ritual, similar to the birds on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus. The first example is a gold signet ring from the “treasure” of Tiryns dating to the fifteenth century BC (7). A “goddess” seated on a throne is approached by four Cretan daimons, known as Taweret, carrying libation jugs.<sup>12</sup> A large bird floats behind the chair of the seated woman. She holds a rhyton as if to receive a liquid libation. This scene is often interpreted as a procession to a goddess both because of the Taweret, which are Minoan

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<sup>11</sup> Birds appear with other sacred objects as well. For example, the bird that flies above the horns of consecration on the sanctuary rhyton from Kato Zakro (20).

<sup>12</sup> Higgins (1981, 188) notes that this is in typical Mycenaean taste, but the skill of the execution, suggests that it was made by an artist trained in the Cretan tradition.

deities that were inherited from the Egyptians, and also because of the bird behind the chair.<sup>13</sup> As an extension of the divine epiphany, the bird was also thought to be used to indicate which figure in the scene was a divinity. If the bird, however, can represent the soul, then it may also serve to indicate which figure is the deceased in the scene when the artists wants to show the deceased as a full-sized human.

The so-called Homage Krater (**16**) from Aradippo, Cyprus, dating to the fourteenth century BC shows two processions toward seated figures. Side A shows two scenes that are similar but not quite identical (**16a**). On the left, two robed “spearman” (each separated by fiery tongues) and a man holding a spear and a sword approach a seated figure (**16b**). I use the term “spearman” loosely since I am not convinced of the interpretation of the objects these robed figures carry. The other men on this krater carry longer objects that are also called spears, and the shorter objects held by the robed figures are swords at best. They do, however, seem similar to the “streamers” worn by the mourners on the sarcophagi discussed earlier, they are in the right position for them at least. Both the “swords” and “streamers” are wing-like. The seated figure is commonly identified as a goddess, but nothing suggests that this figure is even a woman let alone a goddess, and this figure is dressed in the same spotted robe as the “spearman,” so the dress does not suggest a higher stature for this figure.<sup>14</sup> This robe is also similar to that worn by the small robed figure on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus,

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the extent to which Minoans and Mycenaeans adopted the Egyptian beliefs surrounding the Taweret when the image was integrated into Minoan and Mycenaean art, see Weingarten 1991.

<sup>14</sup> Karageorghis (1958, 368 n.4) compares the enthroned figure to the Dove Goddess mentioned twice in Linear B tablets.

and it also obscures the arms and feet. This would suggest that the seated robed figure on the Homage Krater is also a representation of the deceased. A bird is perched on the back of the chair, and is in a similar position as the bird behind the chair on the Tiryns ring. The bird has dots on its body similar to those on the figure's robe. On the right, three men, similar to the swordsman, hold spears and approach a seated figure, but no bird perches on this chair. Dividers of chevrons surround these men. Side B (not pictured) is poorly preserved, but what remains shows two armed men approaching a vertical line of chevrons to the right and in the far right stands a robed figure with no head preserved.

Larger birds, often said to represent mythological themes, have been found on several chariot kraters. Chariot kraters are common in Mycenaean pictorial vase painting and although they can be found in other contexts, they are normally and consistently associated with tombs.<sup>15</sup> Chariot kraters are popular throughout the Mycenaean Period (mostly on Cyprus), and they have a fairly standard arrangement. Chariots, usually moving to the right, are featured on the body of the krater, and the amount of decoration in addition to the main chariot scene varies. The chariot kraters have funerary significance and Vermeule argues they may have functioned as less expressive substitutes for *larnakes*.<sup>16</sup>

Benson postulates that the appearance of birds may have some effect on the aristocratic ennoblement of the dead, in a similar way as the chariot motif. According to Benson, the chariot was an aristocratic motif that was used on funerary vessels or among

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<sup>15</sup> See Benson 1970, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Vermeule 1965, 131.

grave goods as a way to signal that the grave belonged to an aristocrat.<sup>17</sup> It was the elite that could afford horses and chariots, and so it made sense to depict chariots on aristocratic grave goods. In fact, even the horse itself, often shown on wheels, became a shorthand symbol of the chariot motif and, by extension, the elite funeral. In the same way, the bird, which is often associated with elite funeral scenes may have been a shorthand for an elite funeral. The presence of a chariot in funerary scenes persists into the Geometric Period where the chariot is present either in the *prothesis* scene itself, or on the vase in a different register (25, 26).

Some of the birds found on these chariot kraters are thought to be references to myths involving a fight between the pygmies and the cranes. On a chariot krater from Tomb 7 at Enkomi, Cyprus, one large chariot moves right on each side (13).<sup>18</sup> Behind each chariot a huge bird “attacks” with open beak and flailing wings.<sup>19</sup> The wings, however, are too small to actually support the birds in flight. The charioteers on Side A (13a) seem to flail their arms, but the scene on the back is not as well preserved (13b).<sup>20</sup> A similar magnificent bird is depicted on the so-called Ras Shamra krater from Ugarit (14).<sup>21</sup> The bird is chained to the ground in front of a chariot moving right in a place usually filled by grooms. Two figures are

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<sup>17</sup> Benson 1970, 61.

<sup>18</sup> For other vessels of the same painter, see Benson *AJA* 65 (1961: 340-1).

<sup>19</sup> Benton (1961, 48) suggests that this bird is an overweight bustard. She classifies this scene as a country scene where two people out for a chariot ride would see a bustard.

<sup>20</sup> This is the earliest chariot scene preserved on a krater.

<sup>21</sup> Benson (*AJA* 65: 345) attributes this vase to the Bamboula painter of Cyprus.

inside the chariot and a third is on a pole separate from the chariot car itself. The bird is almost completely beneath the handle. A chain, similar to those depicted in this period above the reins of a horse, seems to tie the bird to the ground.<sup>22</sup> Schaeffer used this vessel as an illustration of an old Ugaritic myth of the capture of a giant bird in the mountains that is chained and tamed.<sup>23</sup>

The size and prominent position of the birds in the previous two examples shows that they are not decorative motifs that have no connection with the main composition. The bird is essential, and Schaeffer argues it may be an allusion to a mythological subject.<sup>24</sup> Myths about large warlike birds circulated throughout the Levant, but no evidence of such a myth exists in Greece.<sup>25</sup> There is a slight allusion to a myth of large war-like cranes in the *Iliad*, but the myth most likely originates in Ethiopia, India, or Scythia.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Benton (1961, 44) suggests that this bird is a swan and the squiggle line (quirk) is really a reed stuck to the swan's neck.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted by Karageorghis (Karageorghis and Vermeule 1982 38), who also compares this large bird to the bird in Figure 13, and suggests that perhaps these large birds represent the same mythical cycle.

<sup>24</sup> Schaeffer 1936-7, 213.

<sup>25</sup> Karageorghis 1958, 384.

<sup>26</sup> The earliest literary reference in ancient Greek is *Iliad* 3.1-7. On the simile of pygmies and cranes in Homer see Muellner 1990 and Karageorghis and Vermeule 1982, 16. See Muellner 1990 for a discussion of the simile of the Pygmies and Cranes in Homer. The reference in Homer is not contemporaneous with the chariot kraters, but these sources offer a thorough explanation of the myth and its origin

To suggest that these examples represent mythological themes is stretching the evidence. The kraters are found in funerary contexts with no indication of why a myth of this kind would be important to the deceased. The scenes also do not convey any action that would suggest a conflict with the birds or even a hunt of the birds beyond the supposed flailing of the arms of the charioteers in the first example from Enkomi (13a).

A comparable composition with a bird that is larger than the human figures is found on *larnax* No. 5 from Tanagra (2a). Two “warriors” move to the right, followed by a large bird, and are separated by reed-like decorations. The bird following is huge in proportion and appears to be launching into flight, although his small wings would not be able to support it. The ends are decorated with abstract motifs and plants. One end has three tiers of horns of consecration, which provides mild religious overtones and suggests the façade of a shrine (2b). The scene is similar to those found on Mycenaean chariot kraters. The bird itself is similar to the birds found on the kraters, and the warriors on the *larnax* are similar to the grooms who march along side the chariots.<sup>27</sup> The depictions on this *larnax*, with similarities to the chariot kraters, can therefore be placed in the funerary context (especially since they occur on a coffin) and the horns of consecration recall a ritual setting similar to the Ayia Triada sarcophagus. Because of these funerary associations, the bird has funerary significance and may be a representation of the soul. Although this *larnax* is the only one in the group from Tanagra without overt reference to mourning or funerary scenes, the absence

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<sup>27</sup> Vermeule (1965, 130) argues these men are not warriors because they hold no weapons. Their legs, however, are greaved in the same type of tasselled linen leggings familiar in Mycenaean palace frescoes.

of direct conventional mourning gestures does not make this scene unsuitable for funerary iconography.<sup>28</sup>

Birds are also associated with the lyre. Epic performance was thought to occur in the court of chiefs, but Carter suggests that epic poetry was performed in a ritual rather than secular setting and that the lyre and the bird are shorthand for the gods being present at the performance, having been summoned by the lyre.<sup>29</sup> However, if the performance did actually occur in a ritual setting, as Carter suggests, it would be funerary when the scene is depicted on objects found in the grave. In this case, the lyre-player would summon the soul of the deceased or the souls of the ancestors, who are often honoured at the time of a funeral.

Carter's main conclusion is that these types of rituals, the honouring of ancestors, are more suitable occasions for epic recitations, rather than in the Homeric sense where the recitation took place in the chief's house at his request. Part of her comparative evidence is the Ugaritic *marzeah*, which is an association of prominent men who owned land or leased a house for their gatherings.<sup>30</sup> The same name is given to the drinking party that is held by

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<sup>28</sup> The mourning gesture is the most persistent aspect of Greek art. Even the winged *psyche* discussed in Chapter Six mourn their own lost body in this way, with the addition of extending both arms and turning the palms up. This may not in fact be a new gesture, but perhaps one that had been earlier reserved for intense mourning or for a particularly special death. This gesture may be performed by the two small figures, usually interpreted as mortals honouring the two larger figures next to them assumed to be gods, on a wall-painting from the Cult centre at Mycenae dating to the thirteenth century (see French 2002, colour plate 12).

<sup>29</sup> Carter 1995.

<sup>30</sup> Carter (1995 300-5) uses several texts (mostly Ugaritic, but also the Hebrew Bible) to explain the *marzeah* and how the ancestors were welcomed to take part in feast that included drinking and music.

this association, and lyre players are present during this feast.<sup>31</sup> I do not agree that the existence of the *marzeah* necessarily means that in the Greek examples the lyre players depicted in art are reciting epic. However, lyre players are associated with the summoning of ancestors, known as *R'pum* in Ugaritic mythology.<sup>32</sup> In Ugaritic art, birds are present in ritual scenes that show processions and lyre players; the birds may thus be interpreted as the ancestors come to the summons of the lyre. In Greek funeral art, if the bird represents the soul of the newly deceased, than birds may also represent the souls of the ancestors that can be summoned. This would explain the numerous birds on the Chania Pyxis, found in a tomb, that descend toward the lyre player (**19**). This use of the bird as the soul of the ancestor is perhaps also used outside of the funerary realm. For example, the fresco from the main court of the palace at Pylos shows a bird flying above a lyre player (**1b**). The fresco player and bird are set within a ritual context, which is signified by a pair of banqueters and a bull sacrifice (**1a**). Perhaps the birds on the handles of the gold cup found in Tomb IV at Mycenae (**10**) are an example of the same phenomenon that is found in the Near East. The birds are partaking in the ritual drink, and the person who drinks out of this cup would thus be drinking with the ancestors.

According to Carter, the scene on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus is the fullest depiction of epic performance in a ritual setting. It contains a ritual involving sacrifice, lyre-playing (or bardic performance), and libation. Two other examples show how the scene can be abbreviated. The Chania pyxis (**19**) shows a lyre player with two birds descending. One side

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<sup>31</sup> Ackerman (1989) studies an example of a *marzeah* in Ezekial 8:7-13.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of the *R'pum* and their possible association with the Sirens see Barnett 1986. See also L'Hereux 1974 for a discussion of Ugaritic and biblical *R'Pum*.

shows a man wearing a chiton holding a tall seven stringed lyre. Two birds with open wings descend above the lyre player. A horizontal band with vertical patterning separates the birds from the lyre player. To the left are two stacked horns of consecration divided by another horizontal band with vertical patterning. The centre of each horn holds a pillar topped by a double axe. The other side shows three birds with their wings outspread flying upward. The heads of three more birds float in the background. A fragmentary krater from Nafplion (**11**) shows a musician in a long robe playing a seven stringed lyre. This last depiction, Carter argues, is an abbreviated form of the same scene.

All of these artefacts are found in burials, and so Carter argues the scenes most likely refer to funerary rituals.<sup>33</sup> The lyre player at these rituals has a job to summon the soul or the ancestors to the sacrifice and the birds represent their presence. This combination of lyre player, bird, and sacrifice is not only found in funerary contexts. For example, a similar combination can be found on a fresco panel at Pylos, which covers the interior walls of the megaron (**1**). The fresco program consists of a bull among a procession of gift bearers in forehall 5, and the theme is continued in the main hall with a scene of tribute in the form of a bull sacrifice (**1a**) along with accompanying banquet and a male figure playing a lyre (Orpheus?) in the east corner with a large elaborate bird flying next to him (**1b**).<sup>34</sup> Birds represent the soul of the deceased at the time of funeral and during funeral rituals. This

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<sup>33</sup> Carter 1995, 294.

<sup>34</sup> Carter (1995, 296) suggests that this procession fresco is similar to an ivory plaque from Megiddo (Carter 1995, Figure 18.8). Ritual banqueting is frequent in Near Eastern and Minoan art (Preziosi and Hitchcock 1999, 162).

metaphor of comparing the soul to a bird can be extended to other types of ritual settings<sup>35</sup> where the presence of the soul of the ancestors is desired such as in the throne room as a way for the ruler to recall his ancestors or the ancestors of the people who empower him.

*Larnax* No. 2 from Tomb 6 at Tanagra was found with several curious figurines or “soul-birds” which decorated the lid of the *larnax* (4).<sup>36</sup> In the Bronze Age, birds are closely associated with the dead and are found in contexts where the presence of the dead would be felt most strongly. These birds would hover over the *larnax* similar to the Classical winged *psyche* that hover near the tomb on White-ground lekythoi, or next to the bier like the human-headed soul-birds in the Archaic Period, as will be shown in the following chapters.

*Larnax* No. 1 from Tanagra (3) does not have any birds, but there is a winged figure on one of its short ends that is said to be the first *psyche* in Greek art (3a).<sup>37</sup> The figure floats above the ground line (as do many of the mourners) but this one has unmistakable bat-like wings. They are stiff flange like excrescences from the wrist to the armpit, and from the top of the head sprouts a feathery plume.<sup>38</sup> The front of this *larnax* (3b) shows two thinly drawn

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<sup>35</sup> One other interpretation of these birds associated with lyres is perhaps that they are the embodiment of the abstract concept of winged words, *pteron epea*, that is so common in the Homeric epics. Carter surprisingly does not mention this possibility.

<sup>36</sup> Vermeule (1979, 65 n.49) applies the term “soul-birds” to these attachments. In his excavation reports, Spyropoulos (1970, 190) identifies these as attachments for a *larnax* and also suggests that these represent the soul of the deceased.

<sup>37</sup> Vermeule 1979, 65. Although I agree with the idea that the winged figure represents the soul of the deceased in this example, I do not think that it can be labelled “*psyche*” because this term is used in the Classical Period, and it may cause some confusion.

<sup>38</sup> Vermeule 1979, 65. See Immerwahr (1995, 117 n.51) for other examples of similar figures.

women standing in a rigid frontal pose with their heads in profile facing left. Their faces are extremely schematic and dominated by a huge round eye with bordering curves that look like eyebrows. A rain of red paint-drops, like blood or tears, falls from the cheeks and the hair is cropped short. The stringy arms are clasped on top of the head in a gesture of mourning. They wear long mainland robes with short sleeves and wide belts.<sup>39</sup> These women also have the “streamers” from their waists. The women on the back (3c) are similar, but they face right and are fleshier. One hand pulls at the hair and the other seems to beat the forehead. Along with the women on the opposite side, they form a double procession toward the painted short end with the winged figure. This *larnax* shows themes of mourning and death, and the bird creature appears to be a woman and may be a representation of the soul of the woman within the *larnax* as it departs her body. One must conclude that these birds and winged apparitions show that the Greeks made a distinction between the corporeal body that perished at death and the spirit that left the body and continued some kind of existence.<sup>40</sup>

The emphasis on the Tanagra *larnakes* is on the grim reality of death with its accompanying funerary rites, and two of them depict the *prothesis*, or laying out of the dead. The *prothesis* is popular in Geometric art, and its inclusion on the Tanagra *larnakes* is evidence that similar funeral rites were practised in the Mycenaean period as in later Greek periods. In the first example (5), the short side of the *larnax* has an upper register of

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<sup>39</sup> Vermeule argued this (1965, 127).

<sup>40</sup> Immerwahr (1995, 117) makes comparison to butterflies and bees found in Mycenaean chamber tombs. They are similar to the Tangarean soul-birds and the Mycenaean were clearly thinking of some other form of the soul.

mourning women and a *prothesis* in the lower register where it appears that two females are laying out an infant on a bier. The smaller size of the deceased may be a convention for representing the lower status that comes with death. One of the long sides (5c) of the *larnax* shows scenes of the hunt in the upper register and bull-leaping in the lower register, and most likely depict scenes of the type of activities the deceased participated in during his life, and they are the activities of the elite. The second example is a cruder drawing of a *prothesis* scene where again, the deceased is smaller than the other figures and appears to be a baby (6).

In all of the examples of Bronze Age art found in funerary contexts discussed in this chapter, the emphasis is on various aspects of the funeral ritual. The *prothesis* is a common occurrence, as are mourning women. These features continue into later Greek art. Scenes depicting funerary rituals are also common. The *ekphora* may also possibly be represented by the chariots on the chariot kraters. The bird figures into these depictions in prominent or conspicuous positions, and it can be interpreted as the soul released from the dead body, which remains close to its body until the proper rituals have been performed.

## Chapter Five – Birds in Greek Funerary Art of the

### Geometric Period

The Geometric Period is the bridge between Mycenaean art and later Greek art of the Archaic and Classical periods. Birds, single, in groups, or rows, are frequently depicted in Geometric art, both in figured scenes and in non-figural contexts. These birds have a primary function to serve as filling motifs, but birds alone or in combination with other elements such as horses, wheels, or chariots have a symbolic funerary value, serving as ideograms of the funeral, so to speak.<sup>1</sup> These funerary aspects of the bird continue on from the Mycenaean period, and the bird appears in similar settings as in Mycenaean art, and it can be said to represent the soul.

As in the Bronze Age, not all the birds in Geometric funerary art represent the soul. The placement of the birds within funerary scenes is important to understanding their iconographic value. For example, an amphora in Copenhagen shows a *prothesis* scene on its belly (27b). The bier is high-legged, and nine birds are arranged below. The four birds on the bottom row have their heads turned backward while the five on top appear to be hanging by their necks.<sup>2</sup> On either side of the bier wrapping all the way around the back of the vessel is a frieze of mourning women (27a). They are simply drawn with little details other than the hands clasped on top of the head. A vertical line of chevrons surrounded by two vertical dotted lines separates each figure. This arrangement recalls the Mycenaean krater known as

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<sup>1</sup> Benson 1970, 61-76 with references. For more examples of this well known phenomenon see also Ahlberg 1971, 139.

<sup>2</sup> Ahlberg (1971, 140) uses this as an example of how the birds may have played a part in the funeral ritual.

the Window Krater (15), which depicts a series of women framed in rectangles with thick edges filled with hatching who surround a chariot group placed on either side of the krater. These rectangles appear to be architectural elements and the women appear as if seen through doors or windows.<sup>3</sup> Although there are no birds on this krater, the arrangement of the figures is similar to that of the Copenhagen amphora and shows that there is evidence for influence of the chariot kraters on Geometric art. Both sides of the shoulder between the handles of the Copenhagen amphora show two canine creatures running toward the right. The rest of the vessel is decorated with geometric patterns. The birds under the bier in this *prothesis* scene are statically arranged in repetitive rows. They appear to be a part of the ritual in that they are awaiting sacrifice.<sup>4</sup> Although these birds are not quite filler motifs, they do not have further iconographic value beyond their role in the sacrifice.

The most striking similarity between Mycenaean funerary depictions and the Geometric ones are the mourning figures. Although there are on a handful of Mycenaean examples, the mourning gesture remains consistent with the hands held to the head, or one hand held to the head and one extended with the palm showing. Another aspect of the mourning figures that continues in the Geometric period is their attire. The well-known figure of a female on a Geometric vase from Fortetsa wears the same attachments and is a direct descendant of the earlier figures both on the Tanagra *larnakes* and the Ayia Triada

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<sup>3</sup> Similar panels are used on Mycenaean *larnakes* to divide mourning women, Karageorghis and Vermeule 1982, 18.

<sup>4</sup> A similar use of birds is used on a Krater in New York (14.130.15) where the birds seem to be piled between several of the participants in the funeral ritual.

sarcophagus.<sup>5</sup> A drawing of each of these figures is shown in Figure 22 to clearly illustrate the similarities. Birds are also present in the Geometric Period where the presence of the soul would be felt, such as at the *prothesis*, either under the bier, or on the bier, and they are still related to scenes with chariots and by extension the *ekphora*. For example, a Late Geometric Attic amphora from Athens (24) shows a *prothesis* scene on its shoulder of male mourners with hands clasped on their heads in a gesture of mourning. A bird with a hatched body is represented in a rightward direction below the bier, surrounded by a dotted circle (24b). This bird is especially demarcated by the circle of dots and clearly has special relevance or iconographic value in the scene. This bird attends the ritual taking place for the soul of the deceased and it is reasonable to suggest that this bird represents that soul. A frieze of men holding shields and spears moves right on the belly of the amphora. These armed men may be part of a procession during the *prothesis*, which approaches the dead, or it is a part of the procession to the grave. In either scenario, the armed men as a part of the funeral are evidence that this is the funeral of an elite man. Birds are depicted below the handles and wavy ridges that look similar to snakes are attached to the handles (24a).

This combination of chariots, warriors, and *prothesis* scene is common in the Late Geometric Period. Another example is a Late Geometric Attic amphora in Hamburg (25), which shows a *prothesis* scene on the neck with deceased on bier (25c.). Two men with one hand to their head in mourning and the other hand holding the bier cloth above the body stand next to two smaller mourning woman who stand next to the bier. Two women kneel below the bier with their hands to their heads in gesture of mourning. Between the man and

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<sup>5</sup> Vermeule 1965, 128.

the woman to the left of the bier a filler motif (chevron) has been turned into a bird, which Ahlberg argues illustrates the funerary function of the bird because it has been deliberately included within this funerary scene.<sup>6</sup> On the back of the neck several men stand separated by vertical lines so that they appear to be framed in windows. The paint is worn so that their actions are difficult to decipher (25b). The belly contains five two-horse chariots with two drivers each (25a). Above the foot, a frieze of men holding shields and spears moves right. The shields are small round shields (different than those shown on the amphora in the Athens National Museum discussed in the previous example). Nothing other than a geometric band is depicted below the handle (i.e. no bird). Two wavy “snake” attachments also are attached to these handles. And a similar snake-ridge follows the shoulder of the vessel where the handles attach to the body. There may also have been a snaky attachment on the rim, but it is not preserved. The body of the vessel shows a hunting scene. Combined with the *prothesis* and mourning on the neck it appears to be a vessel for the dead that exemplifies activities carried out in life. Hunting, as a sport or as a large expedition, would have been an elite activity, and combined with the *prothesis* scene, it is similar to the iconography of the Tanagra *larnax* that shows a *prothesis* on its short end and the hunt and bull-leaping on its long end (5). The bird between the mourning figures on the left is then a representation of the soul who is hovering near the bier mourning the loss of its body until after the completion of the rites, when it can continue on to the afterlife.

A similarly drawn bird perches on the edge of the bier in the *prothesis* scene on the neck of a Late Geometric Attic amphora in Baltimore (26c). Two women stand on either

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<sup>6</sup> Ahlberg 1971, 140.

side of the bier with their hands on their head in mourning, but the woman on the right of the bier, who appears to be smaller than the rest, has one hand on her head and the other is touching the bier. A fifth woman kneels below the bier with hands on head in mourning. On the reverse side of the neck of the Baltimore amphora, is a frieze of four mourning women (26b). The shoulder area shows a frieze of dog-like animals that appear to be running. The belly bears a similar chariot frieze as the amphora from Hamburg. The four chariots have three horses and an armed groomsmen follows each. Birds of a similar type are interspersed in the chariot scene. Three are visible on the same side as the *prothesis* scene. A frieze below the chariot frieze shows deer/stags grazing (26a). The birds interspersed with the chariot scene and the frieze of grazing deer suggest that this is not a scene of procession or *ekphora* during the funeral, but rather a scene of the hunt, which again alludes to the elite nature of this scene. The reverse is badly worn. Two “snake” attachments are applied to each handle and another “snake” is attached to the shoulder between the handles as well as a similar decoration on the rim. A bird perches on the left-most bier leg in close proximity to the deceased, which gives the bird a central and deliberate placement within the *prothesis* scene. This is a similar position to that of the birds on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus. Because of this conspicuous placement, I agree with Ahlberg that this bird has a function beyond that of filling motif.<sup>7</sup> The funerary symbolism of the bird is particularly apparent and is similar to the bird on the bier on the terracotta group from Vari, datable to the Orientalising Period (28). This terracotta group represents the *ekphora*, which includes

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<sup>7</sup> Ahlberg 1971, 140.

mourners, a child, and a bird perched upon the bier cloth.<sup>8</sup> The mourners are somewhat more subdued, since the mourning has been partly expressed and completed at the *prothesis*. The shroud can be lifted to see the image of the dead inside. The mourners are hooded and the small figure, a child, perhaps is crying on the shroud. The bird perched on the top of the bier cloth should be interpreted as the soul lingering with the body on its way to the grave awaiting the final rites so that it may find its way to the afterlife. Perhaps this soul-bird lingers so close to the body because it mourns its loss, as the Classical winged *psyche* do.

Some may object to the symbolic interpretation of birds in these *prothesis* scenes because the frequency of birds in *prothesis* scenes is relatively low. Birds occur much more frequently in the friezes that circle the vase, such as in chariot friezes. They even occur frequently on vases with chariot friezes but no *prothesis* scene. These vases, however, are also found in funerary contexts. Benson has shown that the combination of the bird and chariot is a Mycenaean idea, and in the Late Bronze Age this combination has funerary significance.<sup>9</sup> The bird is related to the chariot because they occur together so frequently. The chariot is associated with elite funerals, and the bird, when it appears on its own, may also carry these associations by extension. Ahlberg argues the bird may not be necessary in *prothesis* scenes themselves with their clearly funerary nature because they to a less extent demand the funerary ideographic function of the bird because the funerary nature of the scene is apparent. The bird may instead be a marker of elite status and only appear on vases

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<sup>8</sup> Birds occur in all three *ekphora* scenes associated with chariots, Ahlberg 1971, Figures 53-5.

<sup>9</sup> Benson 1971, 29.

depicting funerals of the elite.<sup>10</sup> I believe that they do, based on the continued association between the chariot, the *prothesis*, and scenes of the hunt on funerary vessels. These are the activities of the elite, and the bird is a common motif in these scenes and is often enough conspicuously placed, as is discussed in the examples above, for the bird to carry these ennobling associations. The bird can represent the soul of the elite dead in *prothesis* scenes found on Geometric pottery, and this provides a bridge between the Mycenaean soul-birds and the Archaic human-headed soul-birds and the Classical winged *psyche*.

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<sup>10</sup> Ahlberg 1971, 141. Benson (1971, 26-31, 61, 30) suggests that the birds in Geometric art have “ennobling associations”

## Chapter Six – Soul-birds in Greek Art of the Archaic and Classical Periods

In Greek art, the soul is depicted in funerary contexts during the Archaic Period as a human-headed bird and in the Classical Period as a winged human. Bird features are always present in depictions of the soul, but over time the soul is depicted with more and more human characteristics. This suggests that the bird-like qualities of the soul are important, but it also suggests that there may have been an even earlier stage where the bird with no human qualities represented the soul in certain funerary contexts.

The soul-bird, depicted in the Archaic Period as a human-headed bird, first appears in black-figured art during the last thirty years of the sixth century BC in *prothesis* scenes, scenes near the grave, and in scenes of death. For example, a funerary plaque from Attica (29) shows a *prothesis* scene with two females on either side of the bier clasping their hands on the top of their head in a gesture of mourning.<sup>1</sup> A figure with a human head, a bird body, and human feet sits beneath the bier with its wings outspread. This scene is most reminiscent of the Geometric *prothesis* scenes and is a clear descendent.

John Boardman calls this a siren, but concedes that it is “a true soul-bird.”<sup>2</sup> The Sirens are probably best known for their part in the *Odyssey* (12.39-54, 181-200), where their song was supposed to lure sailors and lead them to their death. As early as the Sirens are depicted in art, namely the early Archaic period, they are always depicted as human-headed

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<sup>1</sup> Painted clay plaques were used throughout the history of figure-decorated pottery in Greece, and for a little over a century (last quarter of 7<sup>th</sup> century – 530 BC), there were also plaques designed specifically for the tomb (Boardman 1955, 51).

<sup>2</sup> Boardman 1955, 59.

female birds, but in the Homeric epics the Sirens are not described as birds, and the origin of the bird qualities is unclear. The fact that they are represented as part bird and part man shows that a phenomenon of depicting supernatural entities as half man and half bird began in the Archaic period. As the figure of the siren becomes popular in art, it develops an iconography of its own moving away from the iconography of the soul-bird. Although the human-headed bird on this funerary plaque is similar to a siren, the funerary nature of the scene identifies this creature with the soul of the deceased. The birds flying overhead most likely signify an outdoor setting.<sup>3</sup> The position of the soul-bird beneath the bier is common in the Geometric period and Bronze Age. This funerary plaque distills the essence of Attic feeling in the funeral ceremony.

Another human-headed soul-bird flies over the dying Prokris, a hunting companion of Artemis, on an Attic red-figure krater (30). She became a follower of Artemis after her husband Kephalos had an affair. Prokris challenged Kephalos to hunt; she won and gave him her spear that was a gift from Artemis and never missed its mark. Some time later, when Kephalos was hunting, he heard a rustling in the bushes. Startled he threw the spear and killed Prokris who had been spying on him. The bird that hovers near Prokris has the same type of hair and facial features as Prokris and is clearly a representation of Prokris' soul that has just left her body.

In the Archaic Period, the soul can also be depicted as an *eidolon*, which is a full-size version of the deceased that is used when the artist desires to show the deceased in a more

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<sup>3</sup> Even though the normal setting for the *prothesis* is indoors, there are other parallels for an outdoor setting signified by birds, such as the plaque Tübingen plaque 1153 (Boardman 1955, 59).

palpable form. Two pots depict the Homeric scene of Achilles dragging the corpse of Hektor around the tomb of Patroklos. The soul of Patroklos in armour hovers above his tomb as an *eidolon*.<sup>4</sup> The first is a hydria by the Leagros group (31), and it shows Achilles about to drag Hektor's body in a four-horse chariot around the walls of Troy. A man and woman, most likely Priam and Hecuba, stand within a structure where Achilles drives past. The woman, Hecuba, stands with her hand to her head in mourning. A small, winged, armed man labelled Patroklos floats above the horses.

Another black-figure hydria (32) shows a similar scene. The four horses of the chariot are preserved, and above the horses' back a small rounded tomb is visible. Next to this tomb is a small man armed with a shield and spear, but with no wings. This is also the *eidolon* of Patroklos. An interesting feature of this vase is that the word *psyche* is inscribed next to the *eidolon*. The soul, as depicted in art, is referred to as the *psyche*, both in inscriptions found on pottery in the Archaic Period and by modern scholars when referring to the Classical Period. In the Archaic period, the human qualities of the soul become more prominent, but the avian nature of the *psyche* never completely disappears. In this example, however, the artist has not depicted wings, so he must label this figure *psyche* in order for it to be clear that it is in fact the soul of Patroklos. Either wings or the word *psyche* must be present in order to depict the soul. These two vases with Patroklos present at his tomb are a part of the transition from a soul-bird to the more human looking *psyche*. In the Bronze Age, there is an example of a part human part bird entity on Larnax No. 1 from Tanagra (3a) and it may have been a more common occurrence in the Bronze Age than is represented in the

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<sup>4</sup> For *eidola* in art, see Oakley 2004, 212.

archaeology, but there is a definite increase in this type of figure in the Archaic period. The avian characteristics are integral to the representation of the soul.

In the Classical Period, the soul, or *psyche*, is depicted most frequently on white-ground pottery as a winged miniature replica of the individual.<sup>5</sup> This is the final stage in the development of the soul. The soul has merged into a human form with wings. The concept of the soul has become unitary with one version of the soul that includes the psychological and eschatological attributes. The winged human *psyche* flutters around areas where the presence of the dead can be felt, such as the grave or in scenes depicting the underworld. The *psyche* or soul-bird is still concerned with the rituals performed that help it to achieve its proper place in the afterlife.

The *psyche* often flutters near the head of the individual and sometimes it actually will perch upon it such as on the white ground lekythos by the Achilles Painter (34). It is debatable whether or not the *psyche* denotes the deceased individual in a scene. Since the number of *psychai* can be greater than the number of individuals in a scene, they are best interpreted as marking a place where direct contact with the dead can be made.<sup>6</sup>

The small stick-like, winged silhouette on the lekythos by the Achilles Painter is of the standard type of *psyche* at this period. The *psyche* can appear in three different forms on the white ground lekythoi – full-sized human figures, or smaller figures atop the tomb

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<sup>5</sup> Oakley (2004) and Robertson (1992) together provide a comprehensive overview of the vase painting of the Classical period. See also Sourvinou-Inwood for a look at death to the end of the Classical period.

<sup>6</sup> See Burns 1994, 36 and Oakley 2004, 213.

otherwise known as *eidola*.<sup>7</sup> The wings are stretched out behind it, one arm is extended, and the other is raised to the head in a gesture of mourning for its lost body. Another common way of doing this was to extend both hands with the palms showing and not hold one hand to the head. These mourning gestures are common to Greek art in every period. The *psychai* on a lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter crowd around Charon to meet the new dead being brought to Hades by Hermes, the *psychopompos*, and they perform the two types of gestures of mourning (33).<sup>8</sup> The two on either side of Hermes have one hand on their head while the others behind Charon extend their arms with their palms showing.<sup>9</sup> The lekythos by the Woman Painter (35), which is perhaps the finest *prothesis* lekythos in white ground, most clearly shows beautifully drawn *psychai* in mourning gesture, with one hand to the head and the other extended with the palm up. These winged figures definitely represent the soul.

The soul develops more human characteristics as time goes on, but the avian qualities never fully disappear. These avian characteristics are important, and the birds in Bronze Age art are the antecedents for these soul-birds and human characteristics were a part of the conception of the soul.

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<sup>7</sup> Oakley 2004, 212.

<sup>8</sup> Oakley 2004, 116; Vermeule 1979, 9.

<sup>9</sup> For this gesture, see also Attic white lekythos by the Woman Painter, Kerameikos Inv. 4158, and the white lekythos attributed to the Revelstoke Group, Osaka Japan, Oka Collection (Oakley 2004, Figure 151 and 161).

## CONCLUSION

The ancient Greeks developed an elaborate system for taking care of their dead in hopes that the deceased would achieve a place in the afterlife. The method of burial was not always the same. Sometimes simple pits were used, and at other times elaborate tombs were built. The wealth of the burials fluctuated widely. Cremation and inhumation existed side by side. Although the physical aspects of the burial changed, the rituals performed for the dead had similar aspects.

The rituals were performed both to cleanse the family and community from the death, but also to help speed the soul of the individual on to the after life. The existence of the soul is an abstract concept, and the Greek conception changed throughout time. The immortal aspect and the psychological aspect of the soul were originally considered separate. But due to influence from various religious and philosophical schools of the thought, the immortal and psychological attributes began to merge into one concept under the term *psyche*.

In art, this merging of attributes is apparent. In the Bronze Age and Geometric period, the soul is depicted as a bird. This bird hovers near the rituals being performed for the deceased. In the Archaic period, the soul becomes more human, and the soul-bird acquires a human head. In the Classical period, the soul is depicted as a human with wings. The soul has basically become entirely human, which is evidence that the immortal soul has acquired all the psychological attributes that make man a cognitive being. The presence of the wings shows that the avian qualities are an important aspect of the soul as it is depicted in art.

Several scholars do not agree that the bird represents the soul in art.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this thesis is to reopen the discussion by studying the development of the bird in art and by tracing the origins of the winged creatures in Archaic and Classical Greek art. These winged creatures are definitely related to death and the soul. If the funeral context of earlier depictions of birds is foregrounded, a clearer understanding of their iconography can be reached. The aim of this thesis has been to show there are different interpretations available. In finding alternative interpretations, we may better be able to understand the eschatological beliefs of the ancient Greeks in the Bronze Age and early Iron Age.

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<sup>1</sup> Nilsson (1950) does not agree that the bird can represent the soul but that the bird represents divine epiphany. Benson (1970) argues for a relationship between the bird and the funerary realm, but does not suggest that the bird actually represents the soul. Carter (1995) does not go so far as to say the bird equals the soul of the deceased, but she makes comparisons between the bird and the souls of the ancestors. Lenz 1995 does not think that the bird represents the soul, but the harbinger of the epiphany of the gods.

## ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1a – Fresco from Throne Room at Pylos



Figure 1b – Detail of Fresco from Pylos



Figure 2a – Mycenaean Larnax No.5

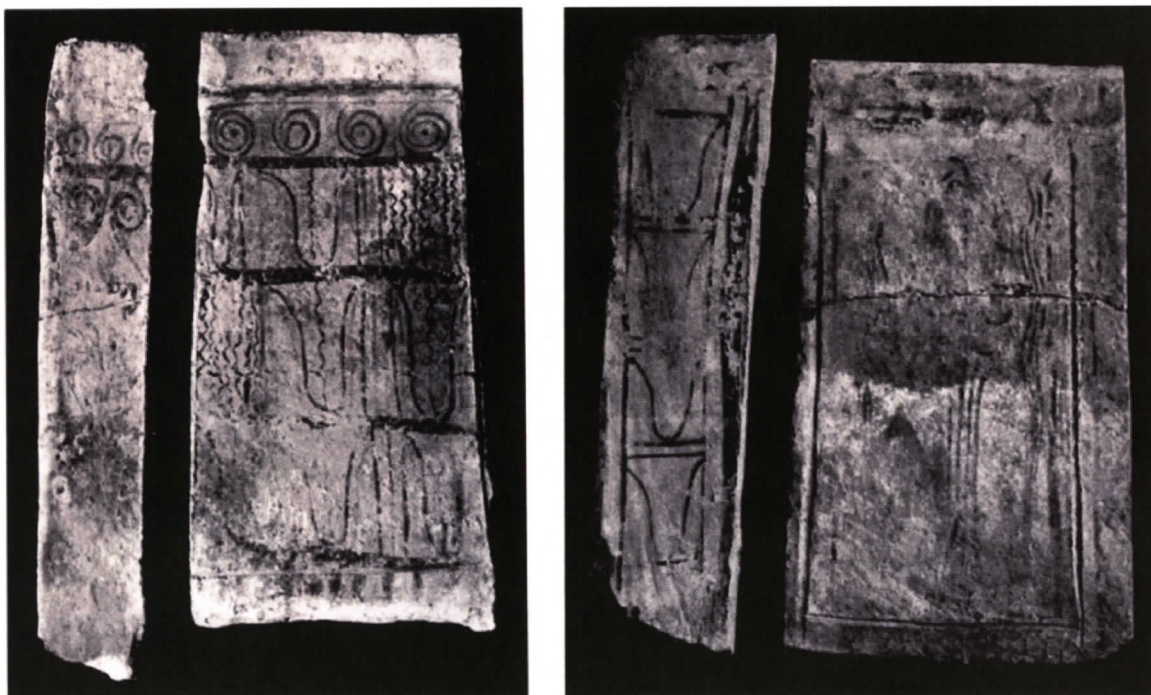


Figure 2b – Mycenaean Larnax No. 5, Short ends with horns of consecration



Figure 3a – Mycenaean Larnax No. 1, short end

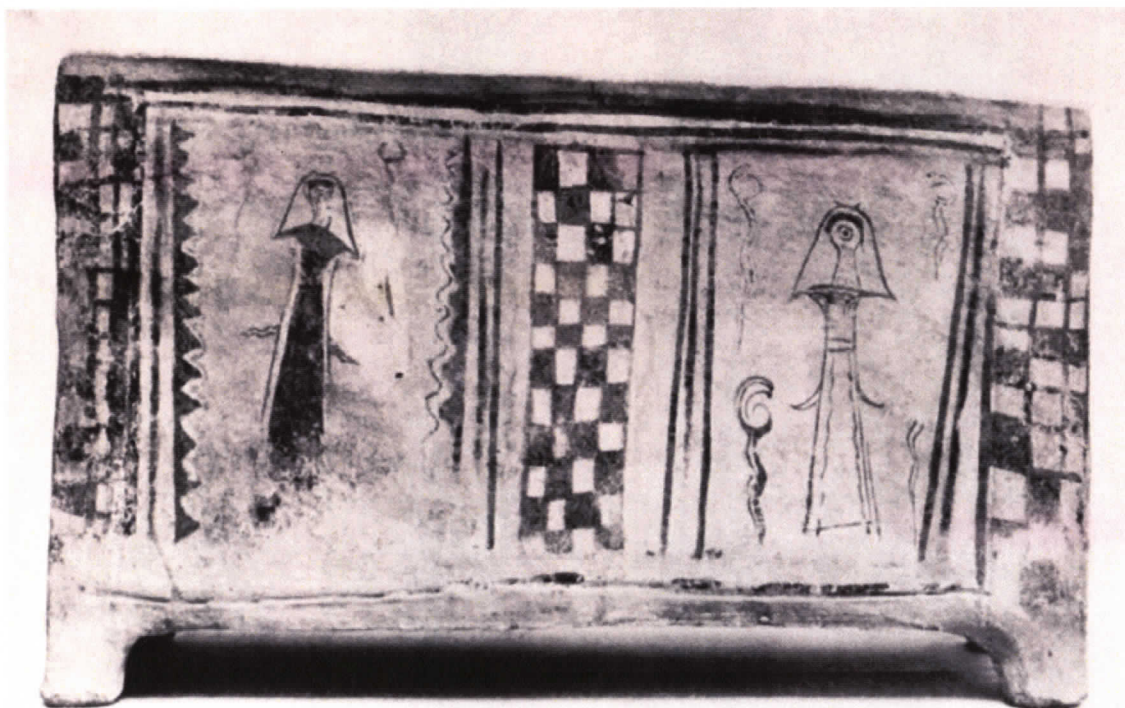


Figure 3b – Mycenaean Larnax No. 1, Side A



Figure 3c – Mycenaean Larnax No.1, Side B

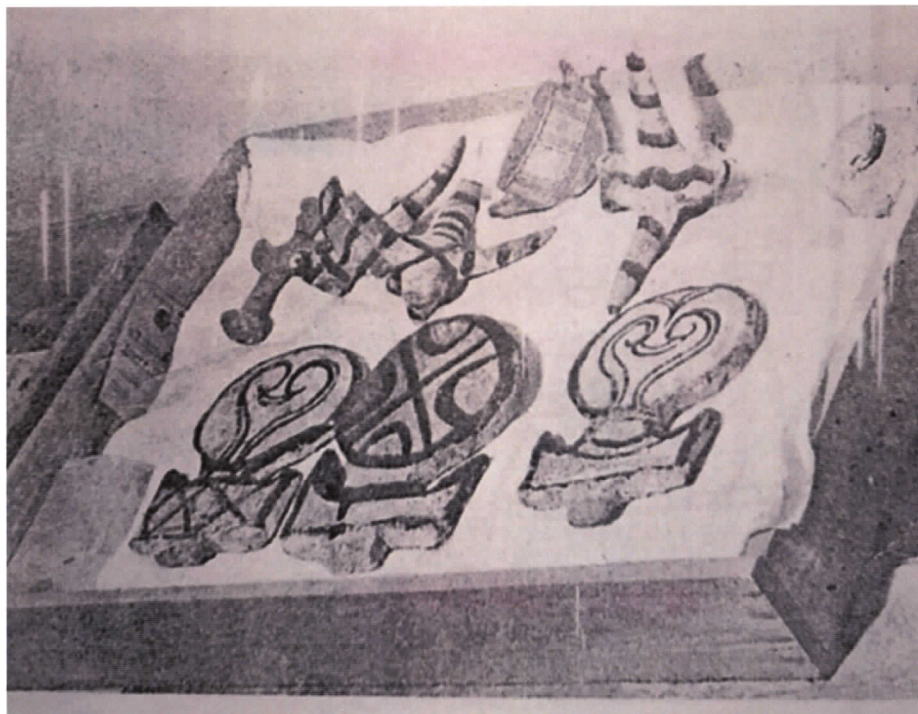


Figure 4 – Bird Attachments from Tanagra

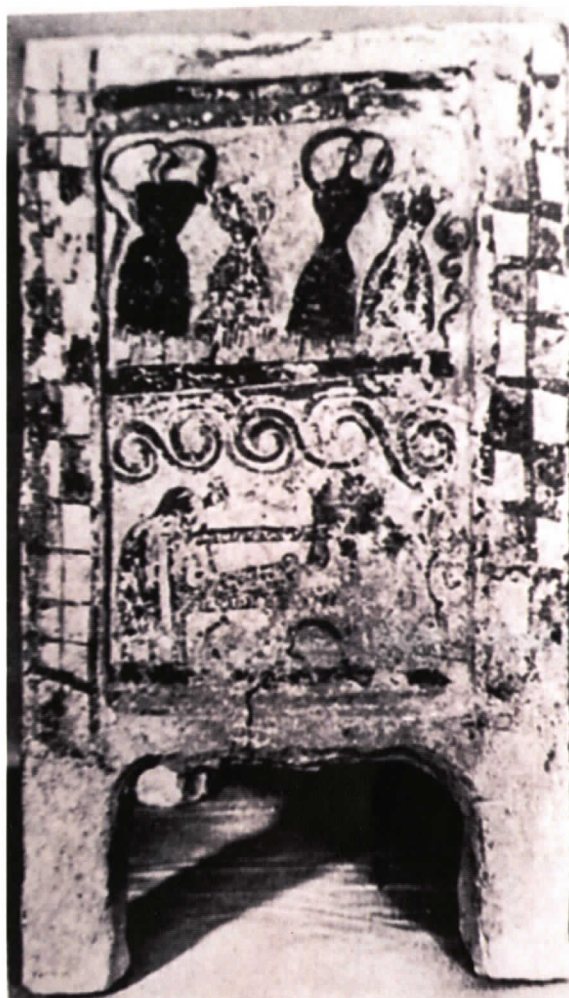


Figure 5a – Mycenaean Larnax with *Prothesis* scene



Figure 5b – Drawing of *prothesis* scene from Figure 5a



Figure 5c – Long side of Mycenaean Larnax showing hunt and bull-leaping

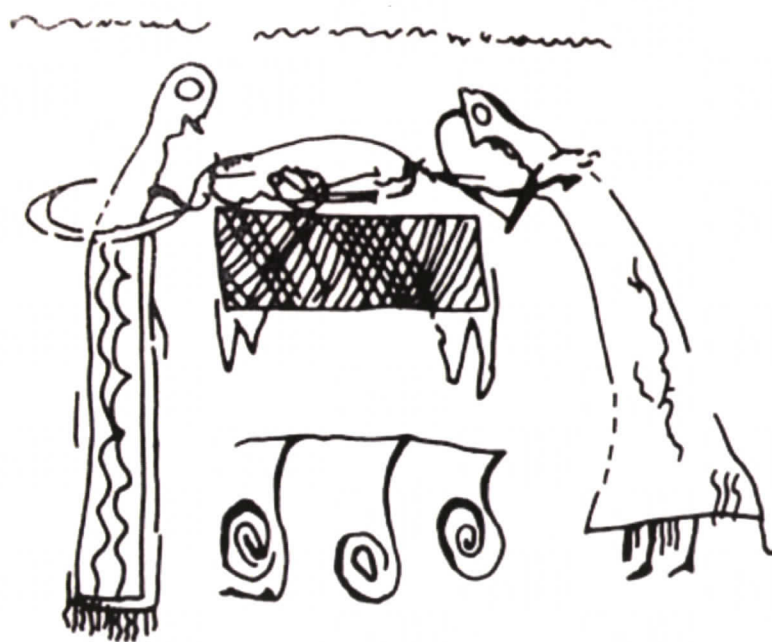


Figure 6 – Drawing of *Prothesis* scene on a Mycenaean larnax



Figure 7 – Signet Ring from Tiryns



Figure 8 – Embossed Gold cut-out from Shaft Grave III at Mycenae



Figure 9 – Gold inlay, from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae



Figure 10 – Gold Cup from Tomb IV at Mycenae



Figure 11 – Fragmentary krater from Nafplion



Figure 12 – Bell krater from Enkomi



Figure 13a – Open Krater from Enkomi, Side A

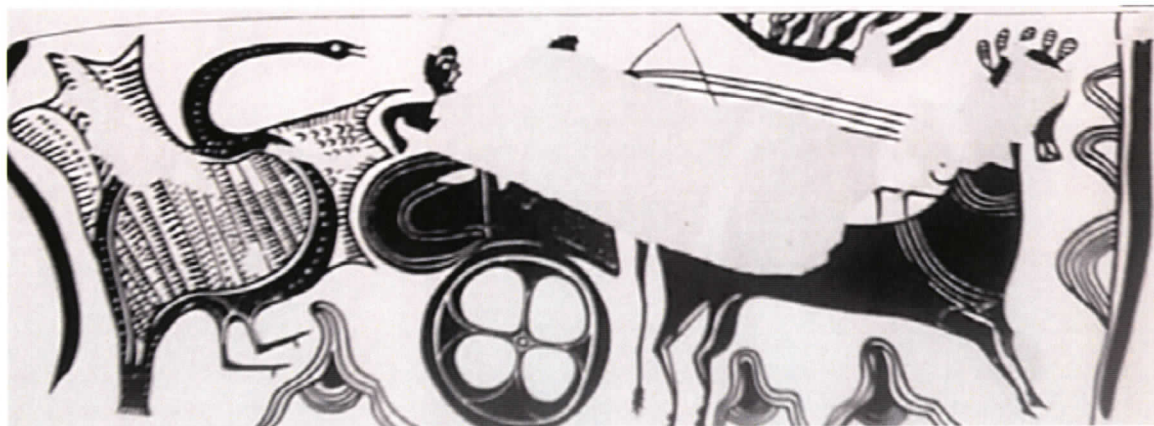


Figure 13b – Drawing of Side B of Open krater from Enkomi



Figure 14 a,b – Ras Shamra krater, Ugarit.



Figure 15a – Window krater, Side A showing fragmentary chariot scene



Figure 15b – Window krater, handle View showing women in “windows”



Figure 16a – Homage krater from Aradippou, Side A



Figure 16b – details of Side A of Homage Krater



Figure 16c – details of Side A of Homage Krater

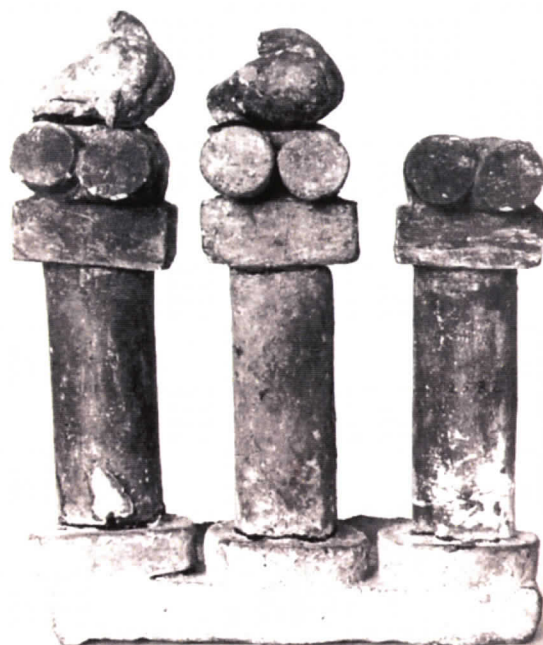


Figure 17 – Terracotta group of miniature columns with birds on top

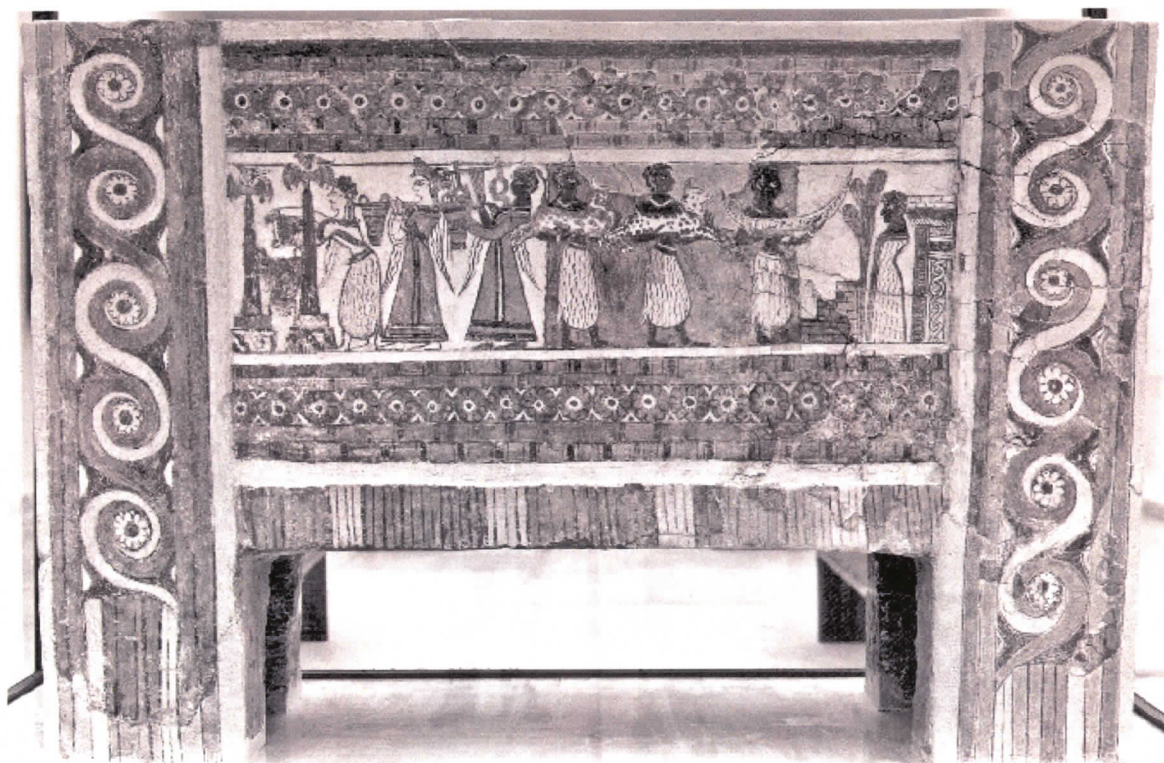


Figure 18a – Ayia Triada Sarcophagus, Side A

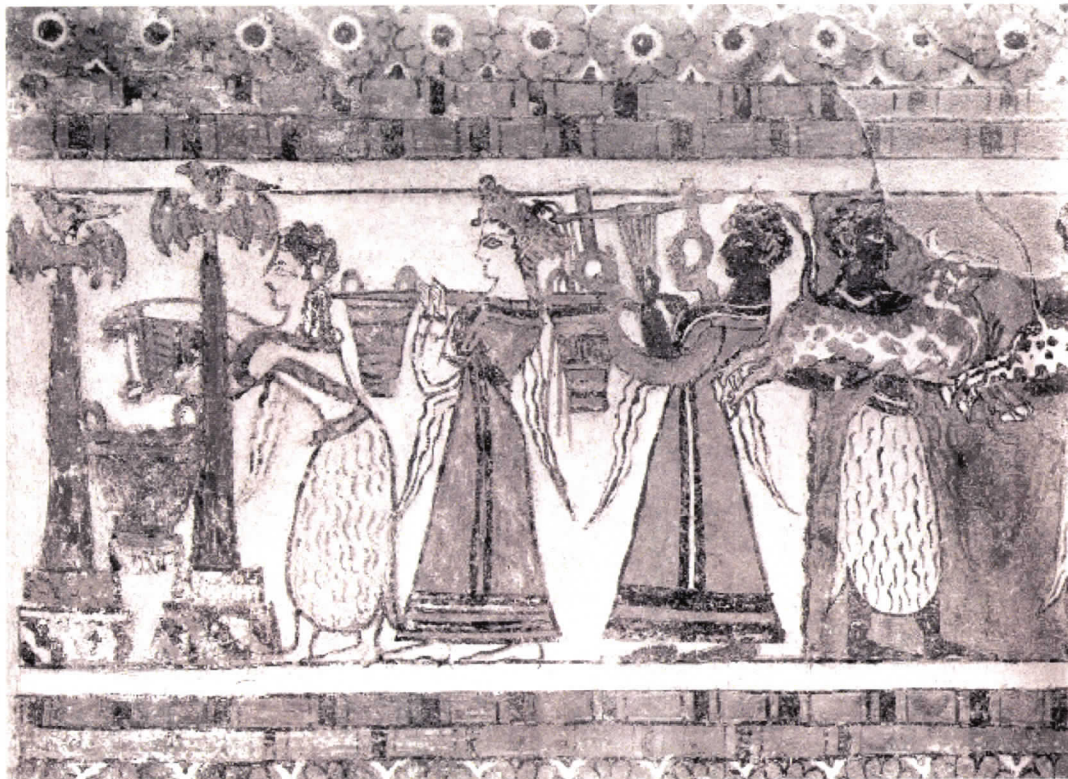


Figure 18b – Detail of Side A of the Ayia Triada Sarcophagus



Figure 18c – Ayia Triada Sarcophagus, Side B

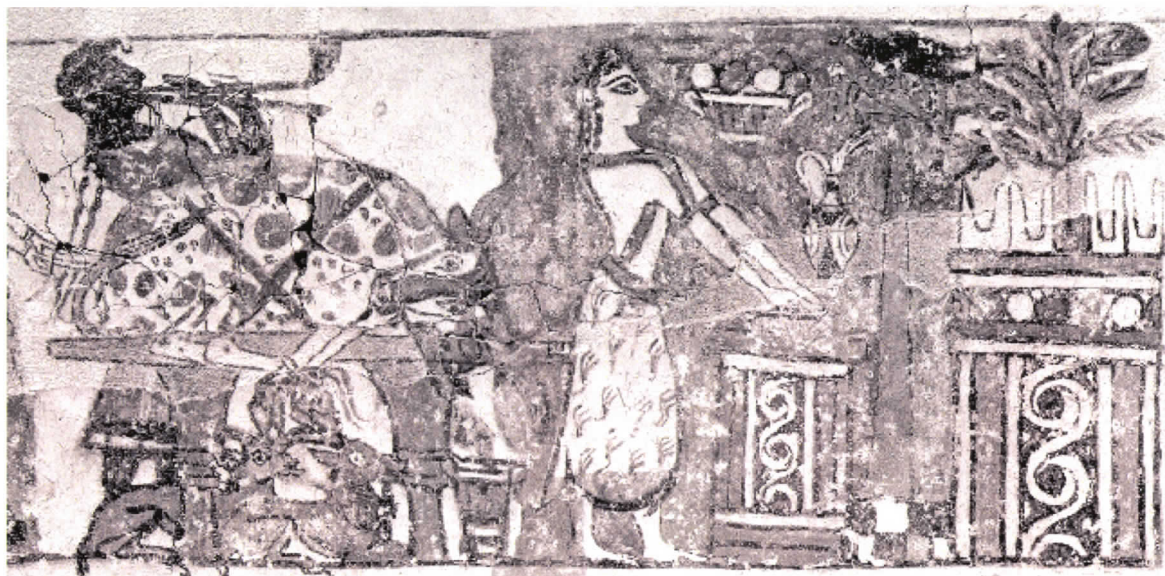


Figure 18d – Detail of Side B of the Ayia Triada Sarcophagus



Figure 18e, f – Short ends of the Ayia Triada Sarcophagus



Figure 19 – Pyxis from Chania



Figure 20 – Sanctuary Rhyton from Kato Zakro

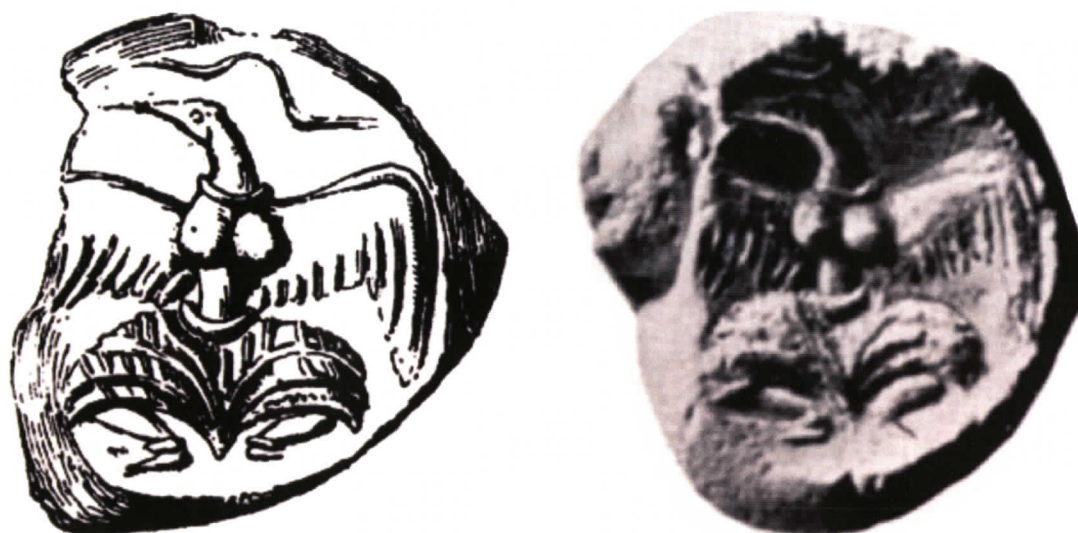


Figure 21 – Clay Sealing from Zakro



Figure 22a – Libation bearer from the Ayia Triada sarcophagus Side A (see Figure 18b)

Figure 22b – Female Figure from the Fortetsa pithos

Figure 22c – Winged creature from Mycenaean *larnax* No. 1 from Tanagra (see Figure 3)



Figure 23—Detail of Book of the Dead of Neferrenpet



Figure 24a – Late Geometric Attic Amphora



Figure 24b – Detail of shoulder of 24a



Figure 25a,b – Late Geometric Amphora,



Figure 25c –detail of neck of 25a showing *prothesis* scene



Figure 26a,b – Late Geometric Amphora



Figure 26c – detail of neck of 26a showing *prothesis* scene



Figure 27a,b – Late Geometric amphora

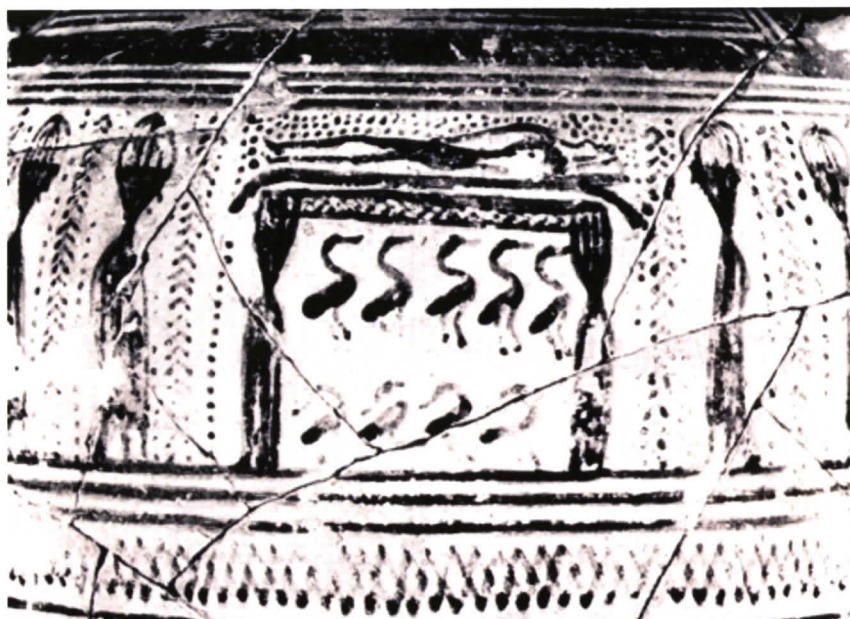


Figure 27c – Detail of belly of 27b

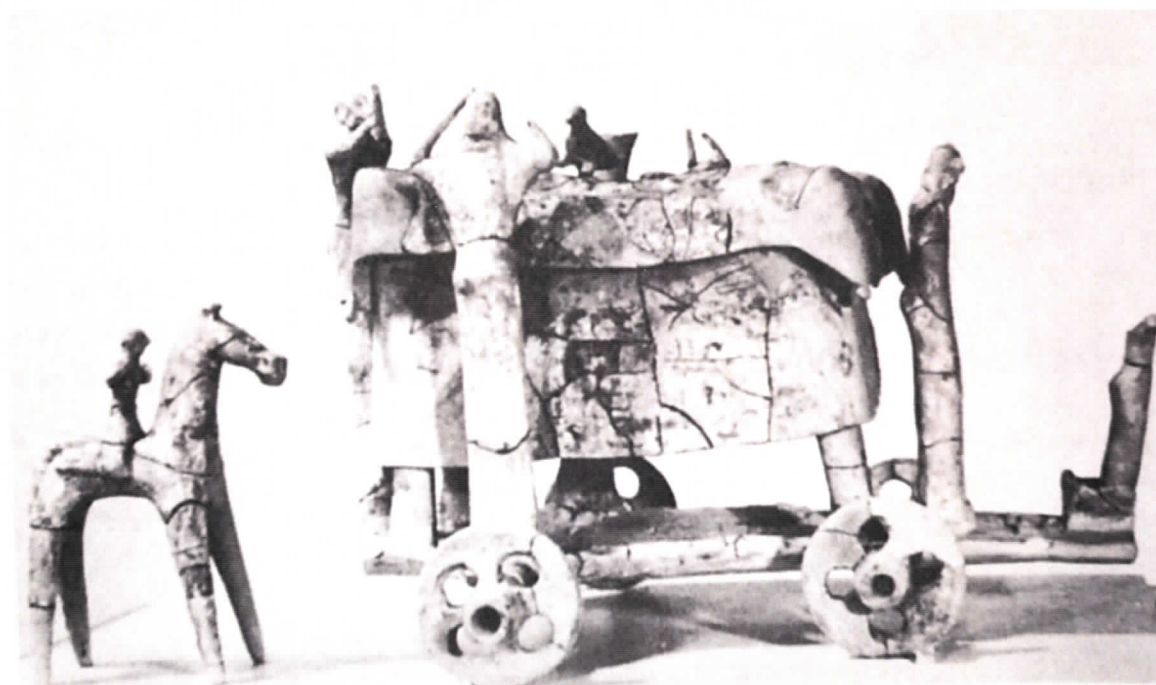


Figure 28 – Terracotta Funeral Cart



Figure 29 – Prothesis scene, Funerary Plaque



Figure 30 – Death of Prokris, Attic Red-figure Vase



Figure 31 – Achilles drags Hektor past Patroklos' tomb, Attic red-figure hydria



Figure 32 – Achilles drags Hektor past Patroklos' tomb, Attic red-figure hydria



Figure 33 – Hermes brings the dead to Charon, Attic White-ground Lekythos

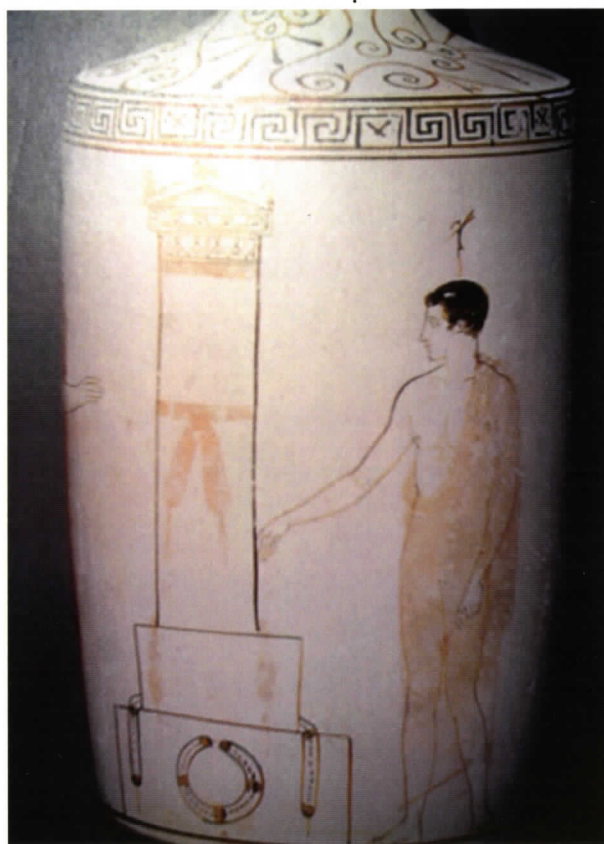


Figure 34 – Man visits the tomb, Attic White-ground Lekythos

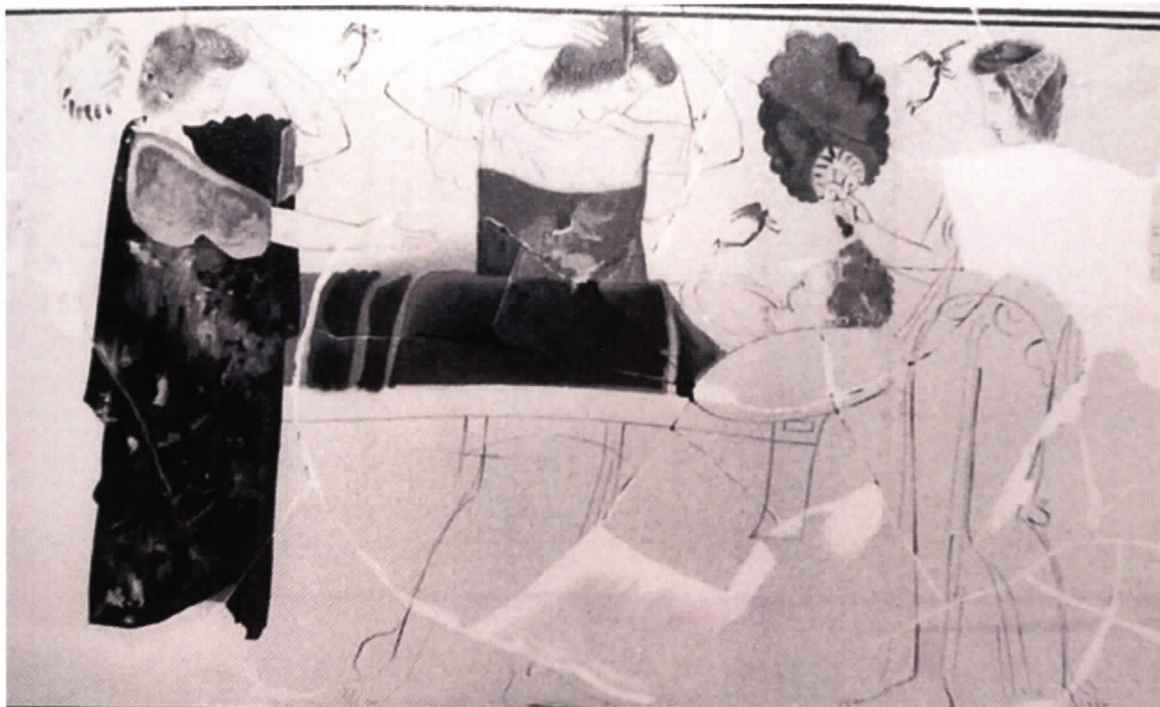


Figure 35 – *Prothesis* scene , Attic White-ground Lekythos

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## APPENDIX 1

### 1. *Iliad* 7.57-62

κὰδ δ' Ἀγαμέμνων εἶσεν ἐν κνήμιδας Ἀχαιοῦς:  
 κὰδ δ' ἄρ' Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ ἀργυρότοξος Ἀπόλλων  
 ἐξέσθην ὄρνισιν εἰκότες αἰγυπιοῖσι  
 φηγῶ ἐφ' ὑψηλῇ πατρὸς Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο  
 ἀνδράσι τερπόμενοι: . . .

And Agamemnon sat the well-greaved Achaeans down:  
 And then Athena and Apollo of the silver bow  
 Sat resembling birds of prey  
 On the loft oak of the father aegis bearing Zeus  
 Delighting in the men:

### 2. *Iliad* 14. 286-291

ἐνθ' ὕπνος μὲν ἔμεινε πάρος Διὸς ὅσσε ἰδέσθαι  
 εἰς ἐλάτην ἀναβὰς περιμήκετον, ἣ τότε ἐν Ἰδῇ  
 μακροτάτη πεφυῖα δι' ἠέρος αἰθέρ' ἵκανε:  
 ἐνθ' ἦστ' ὄζοισιν πεπυκασμένος εἰλατίνοισιν  
 ὄρνιθι λιγυρῇ ἐναλίγκιος, ἦν τ' ἐν ὄρεσσι  
 χαλκίδα κικλήσκουσι θεοί, ἄνδρες δὲ κύμινδιν.

There Sleep remained before the eye of Zeus beheld him  
 Having gone up to the lofty fir tree, which then  
 Had grown tallest in Ida and arrived through the upper ether:  
 There he sat having been concealed in fir wood branches  
 Like a clear sounding bird, whom in the mountains  
 Gods call chalkis, but men call kymindis.

### 3. *Odyssey* 1. 319-322

ἣ μὲν ἄρ' ὥς εἰποῦσ' ἀπέβη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη,  
 ὄρνις δ' ὥς ἀνόπαια διέπτατο: τῶ δ' ἐνὶ θυμῶ  
 θῆκε μένος καὶ θάρσος, ὑπέμνησέν τέ ἐ πατρὸς  
 μᾶλλον ἔτ' ἢ τὸ πάροιθεν.

Thus having spoken, grey-eyed Athena departed,  
 And like a bird she flew upward: and in his heart  
 She left strength and courage, and he remembered his father  
 More than before.

### 4. *Odyssey* 3.371-372

ὥς ἄρα φωνήσασ' ἀπέβη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη  
 φήνη εἰδομένη: θάμβος δ' ἔλε πάντας ἰδόντας.

Thus having spoken grey-eyed Athena departed  
Resembling a bird: and wonder seized al those watching.

**5. Odyssey 5.336-338**

ἦ ῥ' Ὀδυσῆϊ ἐλέησεν ἀλώμενον, ἄλγε' ἔχοντα,  
αἰθυίη δ' εἰκυῖα ποτῆ ἀνεδύσετο λίμνης,  
ἴζε δ' ἐπὶ σχεδίου πολυδέσμου εἶπέ τε μῦθον:

She took pity on Odysseus wandering and feeling pain,  
and she resembling a seabird she rose up from the sea in flight,  
and she sat upon the greatly bound raft and spoke this speech:

**6. Odyssey 5.351-353**

ὥς ἄρα φωνήσασα θεὰ κρήδεμνον ἔδωκεν,  
αὐτὴ δ' ἄψ ἔς πόντον ἐδύσετο κυμαίνοντα  
αἰθυίη εἰκυῖα: μέλαν δέ ἐ κῦμα κάλυψεν.

Thus speaking the goddess gave him the veil,  
and she herself again slipped into the surging sea  
resembling a seabird: and the black wave covered her.

**7. Odyssey 22. 239-240**

αὐτὴ δ' αἰθαλόεντος ἀνὰ μέγαροιο μέλαθρον  
ἔζετ' ἀναΐζασα, χελιδόνι εἰκέλη ἄντην.

And she rose up quickly and sat on the roof beam  
of the blackened megaron. resembling a swallow in their sight

## APPENDIX 2

### Early Pictorial: Late Helladic IIIA:1

I	1410-1390	LH III A: 1 early
II	1400-1370	LH III A: 1 early
III	1375-1360	LH III A:1 late

### Middle Pictorial: Late Helladic III A: 2

I	1365-1340	LH III A: 2 early
II	1345-1325	LH III A: 2 late
III	1330-1300	LH III A: 2 late

### Ripe Pictorial: Late Helladic IIIB

I	1300-1270/60	LH III B: 1
II	1275-1230/20	LH III B: 2

### Pastoral Pictorial: Late Helladic III B (Cyprus and the East) 1250-1220

### Transitional Pictorial: Late Helladic III BC (Greek mainland) 1230-1200/1190

### Late Pictorial: Late Helladic III C

	1200/1190-1165	LH III C: 1a
	1170-1140	LH III C: 1b