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The Monuments That Stood before Marathon: Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Archaic Attica

JAMES WHITLEY

Abstract

This paper seeks to relate the form of the Marathon tumulus to both tomb and hero cult as practiced in Attica in the Archaic period. Distinctions are made among various archaeological manifestations of hero cult and between two senses of the term *heros* in Archaic Greece. The named warrior heroes of the epic tradition are to be distinguished from the anonymous heroes whose cult was often located in or over Bronze Age tombs. The popularity or prevalence of various kinds of hero and tomb cult can be shown to change considerably between the eighth and early fifth centuries B.C., partly in response to political change. The genealogy of the Marathon tumulus can be traced back to the seventh- and early sixth-century aristocratic funerary complexes with tumulus, central cremation, and offering trench. Such practices seem to be a deliberate evocation of those described in the *Iliad*. This fact considerably alters our interpretation of the Marathon tumulus, which can now be seen as an example of the appropriation of aristocratic values and symbols to serve the needs of the new democracy.*

The tumulus at Marathon is not one of the major architectural achievements of fifth-century Athens. To some, therefore, it may seem a perverse choice for an exercise in art-historical explanation.¹ But, though

simple in form, this monument is not at all easy to explain. It is a monument that looks both forward to the full democracy of the late fifth century, and backward to the world of the Archaic aristocracy. It echoes in its design features of much earlier monuments, but, at the same time, anticipates forms of public commemoration that were to become current by the time of Pericles. Its role too is ambiguous, since it served to commemorate a battle, as a place of burial, and, in later times, as the locus of "hero cult." Hero cult is a complex issue, one too often treated simply as an aspect of Greek religion.² This approach is clearly inappropriate in our case: the Marathon tumulus, no less than the Cenotaph in London, or the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., is primarily a *political* monument, one intimately connected with collective Athenian identity and self-esteem. As such, its genealogy, its relation to earlier and later forms of commemoration, burial, and tomb and hero cult, is a matter of some importance.

Burials and hero cults have been popular topics in many recent discussions of early Greece. Many scholars have tried to link changes in mortuary practice

* This is a revised version of a paper I gave at Corpus Christi College, Oxford in October 1991. I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the discussion that followed, in particular Christiane Sorvinou-Inwood and Robin Osborne. For permission to reproduce illustrations, I am grateful to the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Athens and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations. I would also like to thank Anthony Snodgrass, Nick Fisher, Hans Van Wees, Ian Morris, Sanne Houbby-Nielsen, François de Polignac, Carla Antonaccio, and one anonymous referee of *AJA* for comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and Robin Osborne for encouraging me to publish it. They are, of course, not to be held accountable for any remaining mistakes, omissions, or errors of tact and judgment.

The following abbreviations are used:

- Antonaccio C.M. Antonaccio, *The Archaeology of Early Greek "Hero Cult"* (Diss. Princeton Univ. 1987).
Clairmont C.W. Clairmont, *Patrios Nomos: Public Burial in Athens during the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.* (*BAR-IS* 161, Oxford 1983).
Coldstream J.N. Coldstream, "Hero Cults in the Age of Homer," *JHS* 96 (1976) 8–17.
Jeffery L.H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic*

*Greece*² (Oxford 1990).

- Kearns E. Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica* (*BICS Suppl.* 57, London 1989).
Morris I. Morris, *Burial and Ancient Society: The Rise of the Greek City-State* (New Studies in Archaeology, Cambridge 1987).
Shapiro H.A. Shapiro, *Art and Cult under the Tyrants in Athens* (Mainz 1989).
Stupperich R. Stupperich, *Staatsbegräbnis und Privatgrabmal im klassischen Athen* (Diss. Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster 1977).
Whitley A.J.M. Whitley, "Early States and Hero Cults: A Re-appraisal," *JHS* 108 (1988) 173–82.

¹ For "explaining" historical artifacts, see in particular M. Baxandall, *Patterns and Intentions: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven 1984); and most recently J. Whitley, "The Explanation of Form: Towards a Reconciliation of Archaeological and Art-Historical Approaches," *Hephaistos* 11/12 (1992–1993) 7–33.

² This is the approach adopted by, among others, A.D. Nock, "The Cult of Heroes," *HThR* 37 (1944) 141–74; and L.R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford 1921).

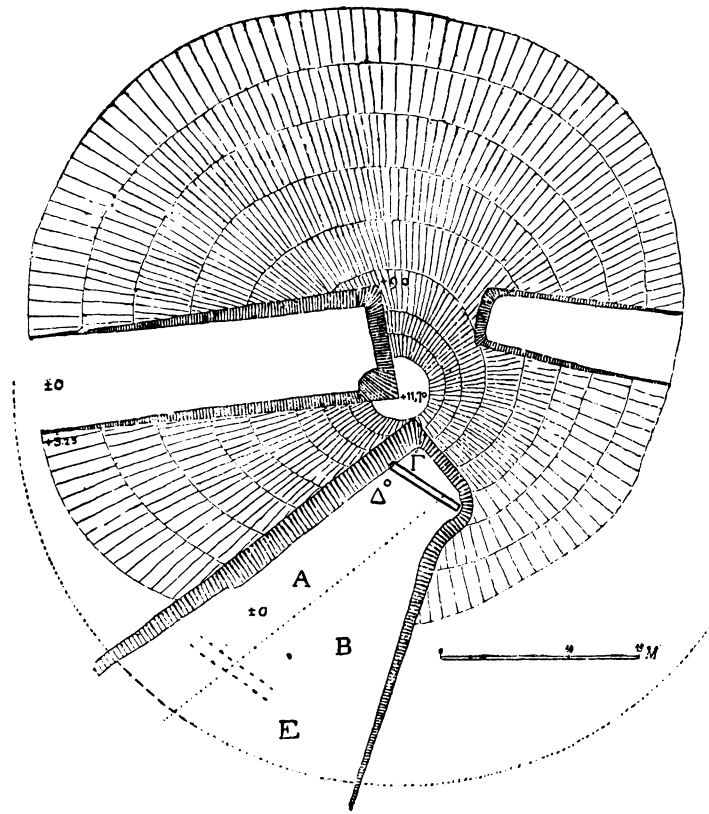


Fig. 1. Plan of the Marathon tumulus. E is the offering trench, and Δ the cremation tray. (B. Stais, *AM* 18 [1893] 49)

and the appearance of hero cults to the major transformations that took place in the Greek world between 750 and 650 B.C.³ Little interest has been shown in how these cults change through time, however, and the relationship of hero cult to other kinds of cult (cults to the dead, or cults to the gods) has received less attention than it deserves.⁴ In view of the considerable scholarly interest in the relationship between art, cult, and politics in Archaic Athens, this lack of attention is surprising. The popularity and nature of these cults, and the way such cults change through time, have an important bearing on the political and social development of Archaic Athens.

³ For hero cults and the "Greek Renaissance," see in particular the divergent views of J.N. Coldstream in Coldstream; and in *Geometric Greece* (London 1977) 346–48; A.M. Snodgrass, "Les origines du culte des héros dans la Grèce antique," in G. Gnoli and J.P. Vernant eds., *La mort: les morts dans les sociétés anciennes* (Cambridge 1982) 89–105; Snodgrass, *Archaic Greece: The Age of Experiment* (London 1980) 37–40; F. de Polignac, *La naissance de la cité grecque* (Paris 1984) 127–51; Antonaccio; I. Morris, "Tomb Cult and the 'Greek Renaissance': The Past in the Present in the 8th Century B.C.," *Antiquity* 62 (1988) 750–61; and Whitley.

For the significance of changes in mortuary practices in the late eighth century, see Morris; and J. Whitley, *Style and*

Terms such as tomb and hero cult require some preliminary definition (but see *infra* pp. 218–22). By hero cult I mean any cult whose object of veneration was a hero (*heros*), named or otherwise, but usually associated with a particular locality. By tomb cult I mean any cult whose locus was a tomb, whether that tomb was recent or ancient when it became the focus of cult, and whether that cult was of long or short duration. These two categories could overlap. Some (but not all) hero cults were tomb cults; some (but not all) tomb cults were cults of ancestors; and some (but not all) ancestors were also heroes.⁵ The picture is not, at first sight, as straightforward as some historians

Society in Dark Age Greece (Cambridge 1991) 162–80.

⁴ With one notable exception: F. de Polignac, "Sanctuaires et société en Attique géométrique et archaïque: Réflexion sur les critères d'analyse," in A. Verbanck-Pierard and D. Viviers eds., *Culture et cité: L'avènement de l'Athènes archaïque* (Brussels, forthcoming) discusses many of the issues raised in this article, from a slightly different perspective.

⁵ That not all ancestors were heroes can be simply demonstrated by reference to Kearns. There are over 129 named minor heroes in Classical Attica who received some kind of cult, but there are only 26 *gene* with eponymous hero-ancestors; see Kearns 64–79.

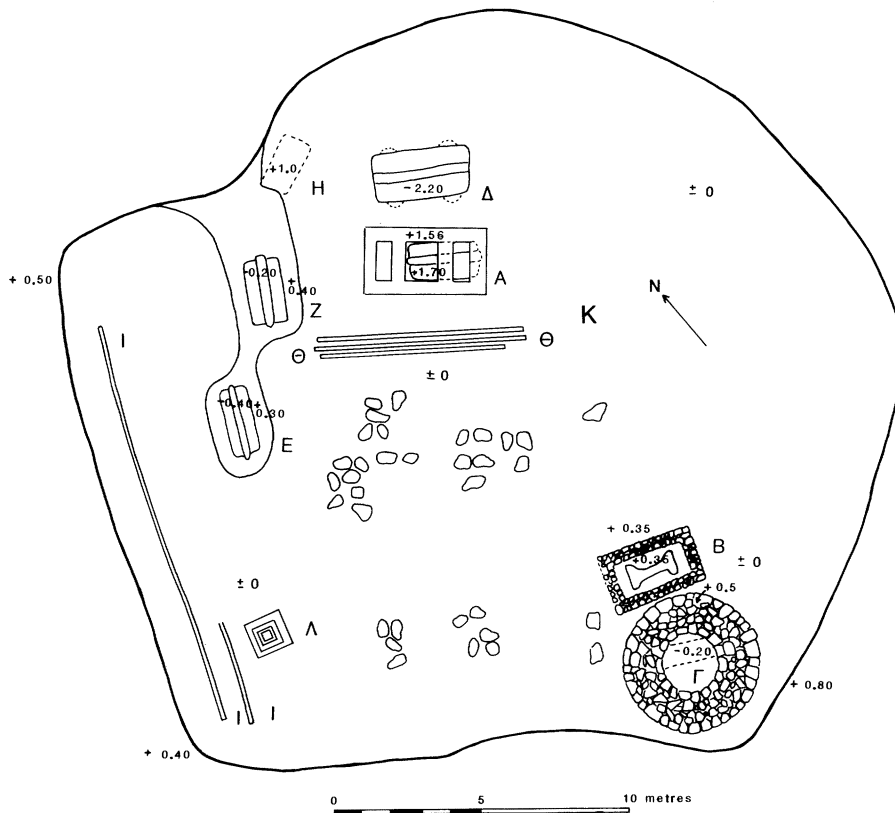


Fig. 2. The grave complex at Vourva. The offering trench is marked by the horizontal bars labeled θ on either side. (After B. Stais, *AM* 15 [1890] pl. XIII.3)

or philologists might wish it to be. Nonetheless, hero cult and tomb cult are clearly related, if complex, phenomena, which have rarely been treated together. This is a serious oversight, whose significance becomes obvious when we come to consider the Marathon tumulus itself.

THE MARATHON TUMULUS

In 490 B.C., the Athenians, having defeated the Persians at the Battle of Marathon, buried their war dead. The Athenian dead, 192 in all, were buried

where they fell, and covered by a great mound or tumulus, a form of burial that Thucydides at least (Thuc. 2.34.5) considered a singular honor.⁶ Details of the burial are not, as far as I know, recorded by any literary source, and we have to turn to the work of its excavators, Schliemann and Stais.⁷ Stais was by far the better, and in this instance the luckier, excavator, and it is his account I rely on here. There seem to be three principal elements to the burial (fig. 1): 1) a central cremation "tray," containing the cremated remains of the war dead, surrounded by black-figure

⁶ Thucydides may have been mistaken, however: see A.W. Gomme, *An Historical Commentary on Thucydides: Books II & III* (Oxford 1956) 94–103; and F. Jacoby, "Patrios Nomos: State Burial in Athens and the Public Cemetery in the Kerameikos," *JHS* 64 (1944) 37–66, esp. 47: "The burial of the Marathonomachai on the battlefield is not the exception, but the rule"; but see also the discussion by W.K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War* 4 (Berkeley 1985) 94–259; and Stupperich 64–66, 207–208. The burial of the 192 Athenians who were killed at Marathon is alluded to, but not described, by both Herodotos (6.117.1) and Pausanias (1.29.4, 1.32.3–5).

⁷ For Schliemann's excavations, see H. Schliemann, "Das sogenannte Grab der 192 Athener in Marathon," *ZfE* 16 (1884) 85–88. Schliemann found obsidian, pottery ("Topfware"), and faience, but little to indicate that the mound

was indeed the *polyandron* mentioned by Pausanias.

For Stais's excavations, see B. Stais, *ArchDelt* 1890, 65–71, and 123–32; *ArchDelt* 1891, 34–67, and 97; and esp. B. Stais, "Ο ἐν Μαραθῶνι Τύμβος," *AM* 18 (1893) 46–63, esp. 49; for the vases from the trench, see *ABV* 38 no. 2, 393 no. 18, 498 nos. 2, 9, 542 nos. 99–101, 544 no. 148, and 547 no. 229. The latest vases are black-figure lekythoi of early fifth-century date. For a brief summary of the excavations, see also N.G.L. Hammond, "The Campaign and Battle of Marathon," *JHS* 88 (1968) 13–57, esp. 14–17.

Pausanias's description (1.32.3) is succinct: τάφος δὲ ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ Ἀθηναίων ἐστίν, ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτῷ στήλαι τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν ἀποθανόντων κατὰ φυλὰς ἐκάστων ἔχουσαι. For further discussion, see Clairmont 95–99; and Pritchett (*supra* n. 6) 126–29, 166–67.

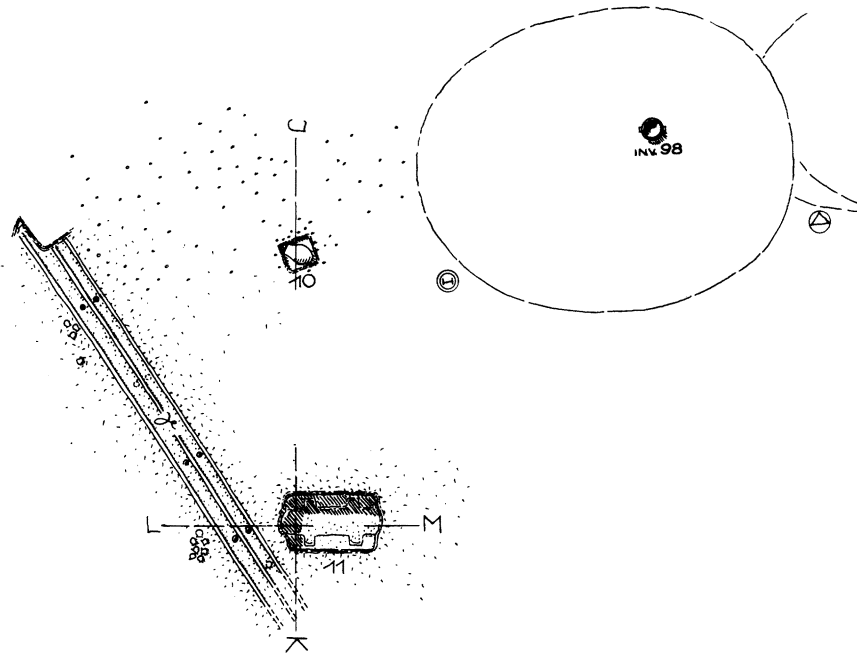


Fig. 3. Offering trench, Opferrinne γ , in the Kerameikos (Anlage XI), associated with grave 11. Mound I is not shown, since it was built over the grave and offering trench at a later stage. (K. Kübler, *Kerameikos* VI.1 [Berlin 1959] fig. 9, courtesy Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens)

lekythoi; 2) an exterior trench (which Stais called a *stemon*), not for cremations, but apparently for other offerings; more pottery was found in this trench; and 3) a tumulus or mound over the whole. In addition, a number of grave stelae were placed around the tumulus.

Stais could not help noticing the similarity of this arrangement to that of other tumulus/burial complexes he had excavated in Attica. He was reminded particularly of the site of Vourva,⁸ where, again, we have a tumulus with cremations, and an exterior offering trench filled with pottery (fig. 2).⁹ Vourva is not, as is Marathon, a monument of the early fifth century. The pottery from the offering trench (and the cremation) is early black-figure, dating probably from the last decade of the seventh century or the first few decades of the sixth, roughly a century earlier than the Marathon tumulus. No tumulus burials with

internal cremation trays and external offering trays are known from the early fifth century, or even the late sixth. The Sudhügel in the Kerameikos dates from the latter part of the sixth century, but has no offering tray.¹⁰ The grave mounds K, L, and M grouped around mound G in the Kerameikos¹¹ and the Rundbauten in the same cemetery,¹² all of which do date to the late sixth and fifth centuries, are tumuli of a sort, but much smaller than the Marathon tumulus, and again lack the crucial element of the offering trench.

The Marathon tumulus thus stands out from other contemporary structures. But perhaps there is a reason for this: the war dead were not simply buried, but heroized. We know from both literary and epigraphic sources that the Marathon war dead received heroic honors, at least in the first century B.C.¹³ But the manner of their interment does not recall anything

⁸ See Stais 1893 (supra n. 7) 53 for similarities.

⁹ B. Stais, "Ο τύμβος ἐν βουρβά," *AM* 15 (1890) 318–29; Stais 1890 (supra n. 7) 105–12; see also discussion in F. Bourriot, *Recherches sur la nature du genos: Étude d'histoire sociale athénienne, périodes archaïque et classique* (Paris 1976) 913–18. For the vases, see M.P. Nilsson, "Attische Vasen mit Tierstreifdekoratation," *JdI* 18 (1903) 124–28.

¹⁰ For the Sudhügel, see U. Knigge, *Kerameikos IX: Der Sudhügel* (Berlin 1976). Since shaft graves 2 and 3 date to the mid-sixth century, and the earliest graves dug into the mound to 510 B.C., the mound itself must have been con-

structed in the intervening period. There is no mention of an offering tray.

¹¹ For the grave mounds around the edge of mound G—mounds K, L, and M—that are datable to between 500 and 460 B.C., see K. Kübler, *Kerameikos* VII.1 (Berlin 1976) 63–90.

¹² U. Knigge, W. Koenigs, and A. Mallwitz, *Kerameikos XII: Rundbauten im Kerameikos* (Berlin 1980).

¹³ *IG* II, 471 (= *IG* II², 1006), line 26 reads πα[ρ]αγενόμενοι δὲ [ἐπὶ τὸ ἐμ Μαραθῶνι πολὺ] ἄνδρειον ἔστεφάνωσαν τε καὶ ἐνήγισαν τοὺς κατὰ πόλεμον τελευτήσα-

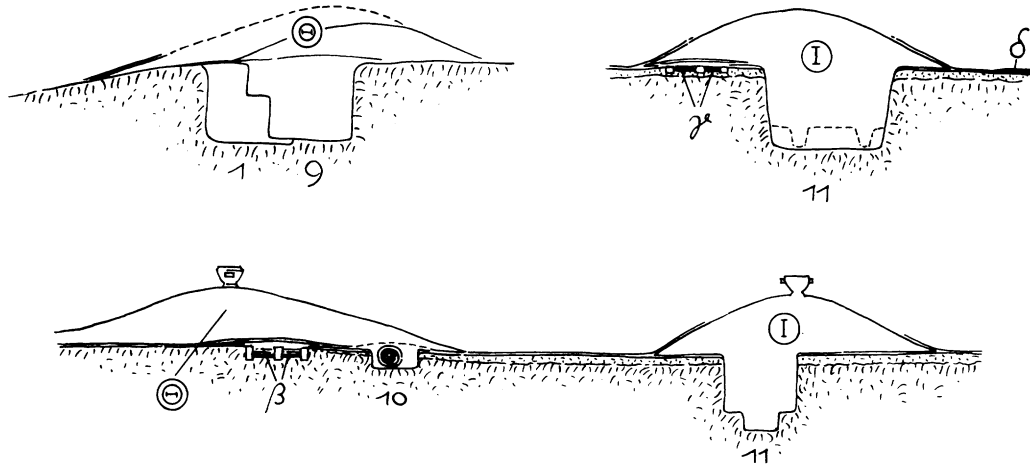


Fig. 4. Section through graves in Kerameikos showing the relationship between Opferrinne γ , mound I, and grave 11. (K. Kübler, *Kerameikos* VI.1 [Berlin 1959] fig. 8, courtesy Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens)

we can identify, archaeologically at least, as a hero cult. Instead it recalls burial practices that were widespread in Attica in the seventh and early sixth centuries, but that had fallen into disuse by the time of the Battle of Marathon. The Marathon tumulus is, then, a somewhat paradoxical monument, one that immediately raises questions of definition: What is hero cult, archaeologically speaking? What is tomb cult? How are we to make meaningful distinctions between the two?

TOMB CULT IN ARCHAIC ATTICA

I would like to answer these questions indirectly, by looking at the situation at the beginning rather than at the end of the period concerned (ca. 750–480 B.C.). In the latter part of the eighth century there were profound changes in both burial and cult practices in Attica. One of these was the introduction of the offering trench, or *Opferrinne*, exterior repositories of offerings, related to burials but not burials themselves (fig. 3). Early examples, all of Late Geometric II date, include several from the Kerameikos (Opferrinnen 1 and 2 and the Brandschicht über Grab 51¹⁴) and at least one from the Agora, pyre XII from the grave enclosure.¹⁵ These trenches were filled with mainly

ceramic offerings: terracotta figurines, kotylai, small lekythoi, neck-handled amphoras, and small clay cauldrons. These are not, strictly speaking, grave goods—they are not directly associated with any particular interment. Nor do they resemble the Brandschüttung, the pyre remains that were often swept in or over earlier Geometric graves; nor again do they appear to be the remains of a funerary meal, the *perideipnon*. They appear to be offerings to the dead—offerings no longer directly associated with burials and perhaps no longer associated with the funeral ceremony itself. In this limited sense, they resemble *cult* offerings more than they do grave goods as such.

In the seventh century such offering trenches become a more prominent feature of the burial record, a development that can most easily be traced in the Kerameikos cemetery.¹⁶ Here cremation again replaces inhumation early in the century, at least for adult graves. Grave goods, *sensu stricto*, are rare. Instead, cremations are placed under low tumuli, often marked by a ceramic marker, with no other objects close by (figs. 3–4). Outside the tumulus, and often at some distance from it, is the offering trench (fig. 3). This is a long trench, lined with clay, with three ridges dividing the trench into two long chan-

σιν ὑπ[ε]ρ τῆς ἑλευθερίας. This inscription dates to the first century B.C. Only Pausanias, writing in the second century A.D., talks about hero cult, when he notes (1.32.4): σέβονται δὲ οἱ Μαραθῶνιοι τούτους τε οἱ παρὰ τὴν μάχην ἀπέθανον ἥρωας ὀνομάζοντες. Whether or not the Marathonomachai were heroized in the fifth century is an open question, intelligently discussed by N. Loraux, *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration and the Classical City* (Cambridge, Mass. 1986) 29–30, 39–41.

¹⁴ See K. Kübler, *Kerameikos* V (Berlin 1954) 32–33, for

early Opferrinnen generally. For the Brandschicht über Grab 51, see 247, pls. 39–40; for Opferrinne 1, see 234, pls. 137–38 (the material from grave G47, pp. 240–41, pl. 79, may also belong to this); for Opferrinne 2, see pl. 138.

¹⁵ R.S. Young, *Late Geometric Graves and a Seventh-Century Well in the Agora* (*Hesperia* Suppl. 2, Athens 1939) 55–67.

¹⁶ K. Kübler, *Kerameikos* VI.1 (Berlin 1959) 87–92; Morris 128–37; D. Kurtz and J. Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs* (London 1971) 68–90.



Fig. 5. Clay stand with griffin protomes from Opferrinne γ, Anlage XI, Kerameikos 7013, inv. 148, cat. no. 52. (Photo courtesy Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens)

nels—what Stais had earlier called a *stenon*. Particular offering trenches were associated by the excavator, Karl Kübler, with particular interments, in discrete mortuary complexes. The finds from these offering trenches are, in general, much richer than compara-

ble material from the graves themselves. Grave goods are sparse, but the offering trenches are filled with a range of ceramic items that seem to have been made especially as funerary votives, such as an oinochoe depicting mourning women;¹⁷ clay cauldrons, sometimes with griffin protomes¹⁸ (fig. 5); and at least one thymiaterion in the form of a sphinx.¹⁹ Moreover, most of the finest Protoattic pottery whose provenience we can actually trace comes from these contexts (fig. 6).²⁰

We can, I think, quite reasonably speak of tomb cult when referring to the practice of placing offerings in these Opferrinnen, a practice that had spread to sites in the Attic countryside by the end of the seventh century B.C. Funerary complexes of this type, with central cremation beneath a mound and exterior offering trench, are found at Vourva²¹ (fig. 2) and Vari.²² The funerary complex at Veladineza may also have shared some of these features.²³ Although the peak in the popularity of this practice in the Attic countryside seems to have been ca. 600 B.C., by that time the practice was already in decline in Athens itself. As Kübler observes, offering trenches became rarer from 600 B.C. onward, and very rare from about the middle of the sixth century.²⁴ Tomb cult, at least in this narrow sense, had ceased to be important by the end of the Archaic period.

TWO KINDS OF HERO, FOUR KINDS OF CULT

What then of hero cult? Here we run into problems of definition, both of the term hero cult and the word hero itself. Hero (*heros*) is a word that is notoriously difficult to define.²⁵ In Archaic Greek literature, as M.L. West has pointed out, it appears to have had two separate senses.²⁶ To quote West:

In Homeric epic the word *heros* is applied rather freely to living men . . . in several places the most suitable meaning is 'warrior'. . . . Nowhere in epic is there any hint of religious significance.²⁷

¹⁷ Vase with mourning women and snakes, Kerameikos *Kanne* 149, cat. no. 49, see K. Kübler, *Kerameikos* VI.2 (Berlin 1970) 456–59, pls. 38–40, from Opferrinne γ, Anlage XI.

¹⁸ Clay cauldrons: see Kübler (supra n. 17) 461–64, pls. 43–45, all from Opferrinne γ, Anlage XI.

¹⁹ See Kübler (supra n. 17) 453–54, pls. 32–35. These too come from Opferrinne γ, Anlage XI.

²⁰ Particularly the pottery (the Kerameikos mugs, etc.) from Opferrinne β, Anlage IX, see Kübler (supra n. 17) 427–47, pls. 10–28.

²¹ For Vourva, see supra n. 9; for tumulus complexes generally, see Morris 136, 152–53.

²² For Vari, North Cemetery, see AA 1936, 123–25; AA 1937, 121–24; AA 1940, 175–77, esp. pl. 34; and *BCH* 61 (1937) 451, fig. 13. For the vases, see S. Papaspyridi-Karouzou, *Αγγεία του Αναγυροῦντος* (*ArchEph* Suppl. 48, Ath-

ens 1963).

²³ For Veladineza, see *ArchDelt* 1890, 15–28; and Bourriot (supra n. 9) 918–25; for early sixth-century vases, see *ABV* 16 nos. 5–6.

²⁴ See Kübler (supra n. 16) 87: “Erst im frühen 6. Jh. werden die Rinnen seltener” and Kübler (supra n. 11) 187–88: “Opferrinnen . . . sind seit der Mitte des 6. Jhs. nur mehr vereinzelt zu finden” and later, “Opferplätze und Opfergruben . . . sind jedoch von den Brandschüttungen nicht immer sicher zu scheiden.” Offering trenches become rarer, and other offering places become less easy to distinguish.

²⁵ For problems with the definition of “hero,” see Kearns 1–9. For the historiography of hero cult generally, see Antonaccio 1–29.

²⁶ M.L. West ed., *Hesiod's Works and Days* (Oxford 1978) 370–73, esp. 370.

²⁷ West (supra n. 26) 370.

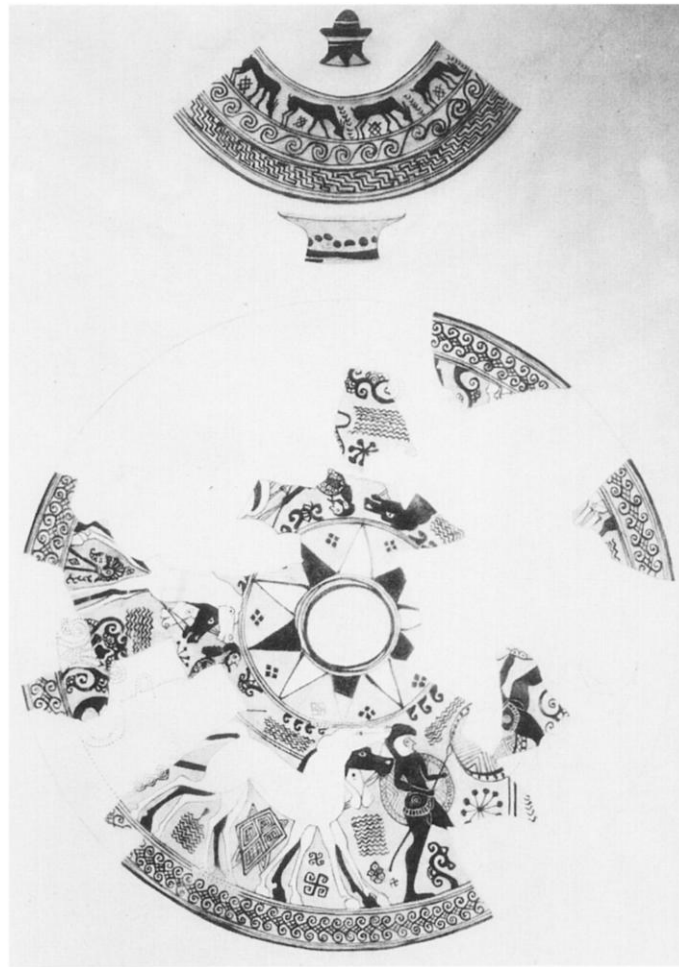


Fig. 6. Lid of pyxis with chariot procession from Opferrinne β , Anlage IX, Kerameikos 3006, inv. 75, cat. no. 28. (K. Kübler, *Kerameikos* VI.2 [Berlin 1970] pl. 19, courtesy Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Athens)

But West goes on to say:

This contrasts with the situation in later Greek literature, when a *heros* is someone who has died and is honored in death by religious observance. . . . Inscriptions show that this is no mere literary use but fully established in the language of cult.²⁸

And further:

Its two senses, the religious and the secular, are not derived from one another, nor from a single original sense. Each represents a particular facet of a system,

separately developed in the Dark Ages. As a secular and secularized term for young warriors, the word was preserved only in the epic tradition. As a religious term it survived independently of epic—on the mainland?—associated with the honored dead and more loosely with terrestrial *numina* resident in the district.²⁹

Given this distinction between the two senses of the word *heros*, we would expect that cult would only be associated with the latter, “religious” kind of hero, the honored dead somehow resident in the land, and tied to a particular locality. A quick glance, however, at

²⁸ West (supra n. 26) 370. See also comments of E. Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks*, W.B. Hillis trans. (New York 1972) 114–55.

²⁹ West (supra n. 26) 373. The distinction between “epic” and “cultic” heroes is also advanced by G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore 1979) 114–17, 151–73. Nagy is as insistent as West on this point: “The hero of cult must be local because it is a fundamental principle of Greek religion that his power is local. On the other hand the *Iliad* and the

Odyssey are panhellenic” (p. 116). For the application of this distinction to archaeological evidence, see A.M. Snodgrass, “The Archaeology of the Hero,” *AnnArchStorAnt* 10 (1988) 19–26, and Snodgrass, *An Archaeology of Greece: The Present State and Future Scope of a Discipline* (Berkeley 1987) 159–65. Some scholars, however, dispute the division between epic and cultic heroes; see H. Van Wees, *Status Warriors* (Amsterdam 1992) 6–8, 314–15, ns. 5–8.

the kinds of archaeological phenomena that have been termed hero cult in the Archaic period demonstrates that the situation is not quite so clear-cut. Four, perhaps five, types of hero cult can be distinguished, some of which have their antecedents in the Dark Ages. They are listed below.

1) Cults over the tombs of the recently heroized (which could be classified as either tomb or hero cults). Such cults were instituted soon after the death of the person or persons concerned, and we must presume that the identity of the person (that is, their name or names) was known when the cult was instituted. We have historical information about the cults established to the *oikist* in Greek colonies in Sicily and Magna Graecia, and the story of the heroization of Brasidas at Amphipolis (Thuc. 5.11.1) gives us some idea about how such oikist cults may have begun.³⁰ Such historical examples have clearly colored the interpretation of certain tomb cults in the Archaic period, in particular the so-called heroon just by the West Gate at Eretria. Here several warrior graves and children's graves were covered over and a triangular monument was then built on top. Traces of ash and charcoal indicate that some kind of cult took place at this site, whose importance has been continually emphasized by Claude Bérard.³¹ Dark Age antecedents for this

type of cult may be seen in the Mitropoleos plot on Naxos, and, less plausibly to my mind, in the so-called heroon at Lefkandi (where, apart from other problems with the identification, there is no evidence for cult).³² Such cults cannot, however, easily be distinguished on archaeological grounds from other tomb cults, that is to say family observances at tombs (cults of the dead) and the veneration of ancestors, unless we know that the person concerned was in fact heroized (which in these cases we do not). Nonetheless, there are no obvious parallels to this kind of cult in Attica in the Archaic period, unless we wish to classify all tomb cults, such as those in the Kerameikos, as hero cults of this type.

2) Cults to named heroes, particularly to heroes who figure prominently in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Despite what we might expect from West's strictures, there are a number of cult sites that seem to have dedications to epic heroes. We have early dedications from the Polis cave in Ithaca (bronze tripod cauldrons),³³ and some early (Late Geometric) votive deposits from the Agamemnoneion at Mycenae.³⁴ But the inscriptions that identify these shrines as those of Odysseus³⁵ and Agamemnon³⁶ respectively are very late. It is only from the Menelaion (or rather the shrine of Helen and Menelaus at Therapne, near

³⁰ For oikist cults generally, see I. Malkin, *Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece* (Leiden 1987) 189–266.

³¹ C. Bérard, *Eretria III: L'Hérôon à la Porte de l'Ouest* (Bern 1970); Bérard, "Topographie et urbanisme de l'Érétrie archaïque: l'Hérôon," in *Eretria VI* (Bern 1978) 89–95; and Bérard, "Récupérer la mort du prince: héroïsation et formation de la cité," in Gnoli and Vernant (supra n. 3) 89–105. The distinction between Attic tomb cults and the heroon at Eretria has been succinctly summarized by A.M. Snodgrass (pers. comm.): "offerings in the trenches in seventh-/sixth-century Attica are . . . not chronologically separable from the date of the burial or burials; whereas at Eretria at least there is a detectable lapse of time. There is some case for saying that these practices represent, respectively, mourning and heroization." See also discussion of the Eretria heroon in Antonaccio 328–36.

³² For the Mitropoleos plot, Naxos, which begins ca. 900 B.C., see V.K. Lambrinoudakis, "Veneration of Ancestors in Geometric Naxos," in R. Hägg, N. Marinatos, and G.C. Nordquist eds., *Early Greek Cult Practice* (Stockholm 1988) 235–46.

For Lefkandi, Toumba (datable to ca. 1000–950 B.C.), see M.R. Popham, E. Touloupa, and L.H. Sackett, "The Hero of Lefkandi," *Antiquity* 56 (1982) 169–74; *AR* 1980–1981, 7; *AR* 1981–1982, 15–17; *AR* 1982–1983, 12–15; and *AR* 1983–1984, 17; and P.G. Calligas, "Hero Cult in Early Iron Age Greece," in Hägg et al. (supra) 229–34. The "heroon" interpretation is widely disputed; see A.J. Mazarakis-Ainan, "Early Greek Temples: Their Origin and Function," in Hägg et al. (supra) 105–19, esp. 116; Mazarakis-Ainan, "Contri-

bution à l'étude de l'architecture grecque des âges obscurs," *AntCl* 54 (1985) 5–48, esp. 6–9. For other criticisms, see de Polignac (supra n. 3) 92 n. 146; J. Whitley, "Social Diversity in Dark Age Greece," *BSA* 86 (1991) 341–65, esp. 349–50; and Antonaccio 336–44.

³³ For the Polis cave, see S. Benton, "Excavations in Ithaca III: The Polis Cave I," *BSA* 35 (1934–1935) 45–73.

³⁴ For the Agamemnoneion at Mycenae, see J.M. Cook, "Mycenae 1939–52 III: The Agamemnoneion," *BSA* 48 (1953) 30–68; and Cook, "The Cult of Agamemnon at Mycenae," *Γέρας Αντωνίου Κεραμόπολλου* (Athens 1953) 112–18.

³⁵ The earliest inscription to Odysseus from the Polis cave dates to the second or first century B.C.; see Benton (supra n. 33) 54–55. There are earlier, Archaic inscriptions, but these appear to be dedications to Athena and Hera; see Jeffery 230–31, 234 no. 3; and *IG* IX.i, 653; see also discussion in Antonaccio 240–44.

³⁶ For the earliest dedicatory inscriptions to Agamemnon from Mycenae, see Cook, *BSA* 48 (supra n. 34) 64 nos. J1–J3, two of which he dates to the fourth, and one to the fifth century B.C. The dating of the fifth-century inscription, and indeed the early identification of the cult with Agamemnon, can be questioned, however: see C. Morgan and T. Whitelaw, "Pots and Politics: Ceramic Evidence for the Rise of the Argive State," *AJA* 95 (1991) 79–108, esp. 88–90, who have argued that the earliest dedications at the Agamemnoneion are in fact dedications to Hera; see also discussion in Antonaccio 236–40.

Sparta) that we have a built shrine, and early votive inscriptions (of seventh- and early sixth-century date), first to Helen, and then to Menelaus.³⁷ Two points should be underlined here. First, all these early heroa to epic heroes have, as shrines, earlier and stronger associations with *female* figures, goddesses and “heroines” rather than the warriors of the *Iliad*.³⁸ Secondly, while Odysseus, Agamemnon, and Menelaus are all heroes of epic, they are also local heroes, with particular associations with the territory in which they were venerated. They would therefore fit as easily into West’s second category as into his first. There is, moreover, very little evidence that epic heroes were widely venerated in Attica before the very end of the Archaic period.³⁹

3) Cults to named heroes, but not to heroes who figure prominently in the epic tradition, nor heroes who have been recently (or distantly) heroized. Either such heroes have a local following, but are almost unknown in myth, or they are minor figures in epic. In either case, they tend to be associated with a particular locality; they are local heroes. There is some evidence that such local heroes were venerated in Attica in Archaic times, but the evidence is, to say the least, ambiguous. The mention of Erechtheus in both

the *Iliad* (2.547) and the *Odyssey* (the *pukinon domon* of 7.81) may indicate that there was a cult to Erechtheus practiced on the Acropolis from an early date, but there is little archaeological evidence to support this.⁴⁰ Similarly, the discovery of kouros bases, iron weapons, and a seventh-century votive plaque depicting a ship found at Sounion has naturally prompted speculation that there was an early cult of Phrontis in the temenos of Athena near Sounion (Phrontis was Menelaus’s helmsman who drowned just off the cape of Sounion, and is thus a local hero). But the evidence is again far from conclusive.⁴¹ Equally, though there is much evidence for early activity in the Academy, including some Dark Age deposits that Nicolas Coldstream thinks are votive, there is to my mind little that we can definitely associate with an early cult to Akademos in Early Archaic times.⁴²

Not the recently heroized, nor named local heroes, nor the heroes of epic seem to have received much attention in Archaic Attica, judging from the archaeological record. There is, however, a fourth category of hero cult that figures very prominently in the archaeology of Archaic Attica:

4) Cults in or over Bronze Age, and sometimes Early Iron Age, tombs.⁴³ In a sense, then, these cults are

³⁷ For the Menelaion generally, see A.J.B. Wace, M.S. Thompson, and J.P. Droop, “Excavations at Sparta 1909: The Menelaion,” *BSA* 15 (1909) 108–57; and H.W. Catling, “Excavations at the Menelaion, Sparta, 1973–76,” *AR* 1976–1977, 24–42, esp. 35–37. For inscriptions, see *AR* 1975–1976, 14; *AR* 1976–1977, 36 figs. 25–27 (to Helen); and *AR* 1976–1977, 36–37 fig. 28 (to Menelaus); see also H.W. Catling and H. Cavanagh, “Two Inscribed Bronzes from the Menelaion, Sparta,” *Kadmos* 15 (1976) 145–57; see also discussion in Antonaccio 244–53.

The “Menelaion” may be a misnomer for this site. The earliest inscribed dedications are to Helen, and the earliest mention in our literary sources (Hdt. 6.61.3) speaks of a *hiron* of Helen at Therapne. It is only by the time of Pausanias that the “Helenion” has become the *naos* of Menelaus (Paus. 3.19.9).

³⁸ A point forcibly made by de Polignac (*supra* n. 3) 130–31 n. 12. See also references in ns. 35 and 37 *supra*.

³⁹ There are only a few dedicatory inscriptions to Herakles, from Mount Hymettos: see M.K. Langdon, *A Sanctuary of Zeus on Mount Hymettus* (*Hesperia* Suppl. 16, Athens 1976) 97–98; the cult of Herakles is identified by inscriptions no. 9 (p. 15) and no. 173 (p. 41), on sherds dating from the seventh to the early sixth centuries B.C. Herakles is not a hero who figures prominently in Homeric epic.

⁴⁰ See I. Iakovidēs, *H Μυκηναϊκή Ακρόπολις* (Athens 1962) 186 n. 361 for the Submycenaean vases apparently indicating Dark Age cult. For early mention of Erechtheus, see Hom. *Il.* 2.546–56 and *Od.* 7.81. For a skeptical view of the evidence, see Coldstream 16.

⁴¹ For Phrontis, see Hom. *Od.* 3.279–83; C. Picard, “L’hérôon de Phrontis au Sounion,” *RA* series 6, 16 (1940)

5–28; and H. Abramson, “A Hero Shrine for Phrontis at Sounion?” *CSCA* 12 (1979) 1–19; for criticisms of this identification, see Antonaccio 254–56.

⁴² For the Geometric “Sacred House” in the Academy built over an earlier, Early Bronze Age one, see F.D. Stavaropoulos, *Prakt* 1958, 5–13; and *ArchDelt* Chr. 16B (1960) 34. For the deposit of Late Protogeometric vases, see *Prakt* 1958, 8–9, pl. 6, with discussion in Coldstream 16. For epigraphical evidence for later cult, see generally Kearns 157. O. Alexandri, *AAA* 1 (1968) 101–103 records a *horos* stone for the Academy dating to ca. 500 B.C. The well-known black-figure sherd fragment from the Agora (P10507) that may depict the local hero Akademos cannot be regarded as direct evidence for cult; see E. Vanderpool, “Some Black-Figured Pottery from the Athenian Agora,” *Hesperia* 15 (1956) 120–37, esp. no. 26, 133–34, pls. 2–3; and J.D. Beazley, “Some Inscriptions on Greek Vases: VI,” *AJA* 58 (1954) 187–90, esp. 187 no. 1.

⁴³ *Supra* n. 3, esp. Coldstream, Antonaccio, and Whitley. Apart from Attica, it is the deposits from the Argolid that have been most discussed. See C.W. Blegen, “Post-Mycenaean Deposits in Chamber Tombs,” *ArchEph* 100 (1937) 377–90; J.C. Wright, “The Old Temple Terrace at the Argive Heraeum and the Early Cult of Hera in the Argolid,” *JHS* 102 (1982) 182–201, esp. 193; Morgan and Whitelaw (*supra* n. 36); Antonaccio 30–118; Whitley 178–81; and most recently C.M. Antonaccio, “Temples, Tombs and the Early Argive Heraeum,” *Hesperia* 61 (1992) 85–105. Many of these tomb cults undergo a revival in the fourth century or later; see S.E. Alcock, “Tomb Cult and the Post-Classical Polis,” *AJA* 95 (1991) 447–67.

tomb cults, but unusual ones, since there is a gap in time between the last (usually Mycenaean) interment and the first (Late Geometric or early seventh-century) offerings. Moreover, there are some indications that these cults were thought of as hero cults, though the identity of the hero venerated could not be firmly established. Indeed, what little epigraphic evidence we do possess suggests that no attempt was made to furnish these heroes with a name, an identity. An inscribed sherd from above Grave Circle A at Mycenae, dating to the Classical period, simply mentions "the hero."⁴⁴ Many possible contenders in the epic tradition could have been associated with the Grave Circle, had one actually been desired. Instead, the hero remained an anonymous figure. Indeed, it is remarkable how few dedicatory inscriptions come from later deposits in Mycenaean tombs—in fact, with the one exception noted above, there are *no* dedicatory inscriptions of Archaic date from such contexts. Associated graffiti and dipinti do not make any reference to the object or person venerated.⁴⁵ Such reticence is in complete contrast to the attitude of Archaic Greeks when it came to making dedications to the gods.⁴⁶ Nor can lack of writing skills be invoked as an explanation for this apparent reluctance to name anonymous heroes.⁴⁷ It could be argued that the occupants of these tombs were originally not thought of

as heroes at all, but a previous race of humankind. The Silver Race of Hesiod's *Works and Days* was thought to dwell beneath the ground (*hypochthonioi*) and were entitled to *timē* of some kind.⁴⁸ If this is so, then it only serves to underline the very real difference between heroes of epic and heroes of cult. Even when, in the Classical period, such *numina* had been assimilated into the category of heroes, they remained anonymous figures, to be treated quite differently from heroes of epic (see *infra* p. 226).⁴⁹

Offerings in Mycenaean tombs are common in late eighth- and early seventh-century Greece, particularly in the Argolid and Messenia, and in some cases the offerings are of sufficient quantity that we are justified in speaking of cult. In Attica, the tholos tomb at Menidhi and the oval tholos tomb at Thorikos received numerous offerings, and a chamber tomb at Aliko Glyphada a single Late Geometric pyxis. Aliko Glyphada is not, to my mind, an example of cult of any sort.⁵⁰ But Thorikos and, particularly, Menidhi are important cult sites, which merit our closest attention.

CULTS IN ATTICA IN THE EARLIER ARCHAIC PERIOD

Hero cults of this last kind seem to begin in Attica in the Late Geometric period. At Menidhi (fig. 7), the

⁴⁴ For the inscription from Grave Circle A, see H. Schliemann, *Mycenae: A Narrative of Researches and Discoveries at Mycenae and Tiryns* (London 1878) 115; Jeffery 174 no. 6; *IG IV*, 495. From Schliemann's account this does seem to have been found within Grave Circle A, despite Jeffery's belief (173 n. 3) that it had "strayed."

⁴⁵ E.g., the signature of Sophilos on a louterion from Menidhi; see P. Wolters, "Vasen aus Menidi I," *JdI* 13 (1898) 13–28.

⁴⁶ There are over 200 dedicatory inscriptions to Athena from the Acropolis that date to before 480 B.C.; see A.E. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Akropolis* (Cambridge, Mass. 1949). Although most of these date to the late sixth and early fifth centuries, some are of seventh-century date.

⁴⁷ There is no doubt that Attica was one of the more literate regions of Archaic Greece; see S. Stoddart and J. Whitley, "The Social Context of Literacy in Archaic Greece and Etruria," *Antiquity* 62 (1988) 761–72. Fairly widespread literacy is evident from the seventh century onward, judging from the Hymettos evidence; see Langdon (*supra* n. 39) 9–50. This makes the absence of dedicatory inscriptions to heroes of any kind all the more remarkable.

⁴⁸ For the Silver Race, see Hesiod (*Op.* 127–42); see also West (*supra* n. 26) 186–87: "The Silver men are identified with certain dead who, though respected as if in some way powerful or dangerous, do not walk the earth but are confined to the soil in which they lie. They lack personal iden-

ties: had they been identified with particular men of the legendary past, Hesiod would have had to attach them to his fourth race. There were numerous ancient graves which people treated with superstitious veneration without knowing whose they were." Antonaccio 373–74, 386–87 n. 54 is aware of West's arguments, but is not convinced by them.

⁴⁹ The only good information concerning anonymous heroes in Classical times comes from Attica. Twenty-five anonymous heroes received some kind of cult in Classical Attica, according to Kearns 139–207. Such heroes are usually identified by their locality, e.g., "hero of the saltmarsh" (Kearns 144) or "heroes of the plain" (Kearns 193).

⁵⁰ For Aliko Glyphada, see I. Papadimitriou, *Prakt* 1955, 96–97, grave δ, pl. 28e; see also Antonaccio 145–46. Perhaps related to these offerings in Mycenaean tombs was the marking off of seven LH III cist tombs by a wall in Late Geometric times, later thought to be the tomb of the Seven against Thebes (Paus. 1.39.2; Plut. *Thes.* 29.4–5). For the archaeological evidence, see G.E. Mylonas, *Prakt* 1953, 82–87; Mylonas, *To Δυτικόν Νεκροταφείον της Ελεύσιδος* (Athens 1975) vol. 2: 153–54, vol. 3: pls. λ and 145b; and Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton 1961) 62–63; see also discussion in Whitley 176; and Antonaccio 139–45. Whether or not these tombs were so identified as early as the eighth century B.C., there is, apart from some Late Geometric and later pottery (not illustrated), little or no evidence for cult here.

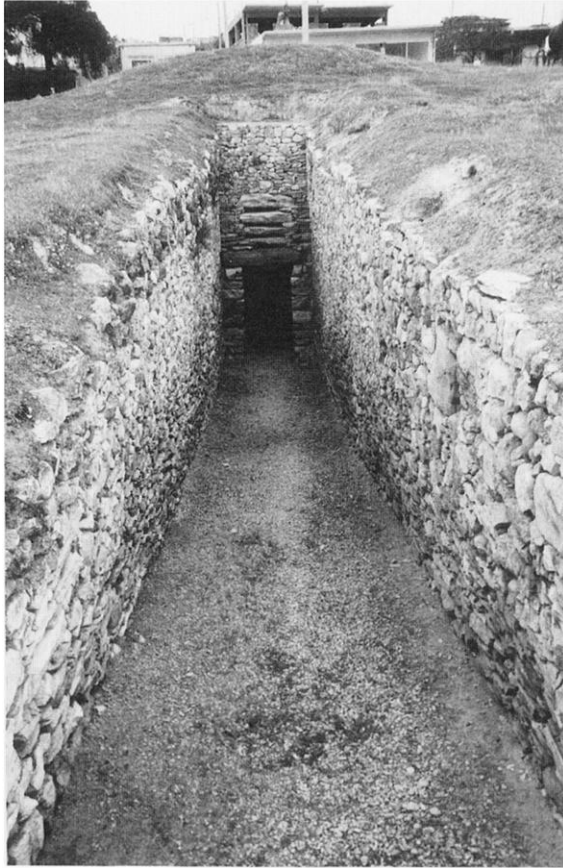


Fig. 7. The dromos of the Mycenaean tholos tomb at Menidhi. (Photo author)

earliest pottery found in the dromos of the tholos tomb dates to the Late Geometric II period (when Opferrinnen first appear in Athens);⁵¹ at Thorikos, the earliest finds are Protoattic and Protocorinthian

⁵¹ For the Archaic deposits in the Menidhi tomb, see H.G. Lolling, *Das Kuppelgrab bei Menidi* (Athens 1880), esp. Furtwängler 38–50; P. Wolters, “Vasen aus Menidi II,” *Jdl* 14 (1899) 103–35. For the earliest Geometric pottery, see also P. Kahane, “Ikonologische Untersuchungen zur griechisch-geometrischen Kunst,” *AntK* 16 (1973) 114–38, esp. 134. For the vase by Sophilos, see Wolters (supra n. 45). For the deposit as a whole, see also discussion in Antonaccio 132–36.

⁵² For the deposits from tholos tomb I at Thorikos, see J. Servais, *Thorikos I: 1963* (Brussels 1968) 29–41. The pottery (but not the Daedalic figurines) has now been published by M. Devillers, *An Archaic and Classical Votive Deposit from a Mycenaean Tomb at Thorikos* (*Miscellanea Graeca* 8, Ghent 1988). The finds consist of very little Protoattic, many Protocorinthian and Corinthian aryballoi, Subgeometric skyphoi, and black- and red-figure lekythoi. The earliest finds date to ca. 650 B.C., and the latest to the mid-fourth century,

pottery of the mid-seventh century B.C.⁵² Here Archaic votive deposits from the oval tomb were found in a layer immediately above some relict Mycenaean deposits. There is nothing like an offering trench at either site, though a bothros and an “offering stone” were found at Thorikos. Nonetheless, a number of points of similarity exist between tomb cults in offering trenches and hero cults in or over earlier, chiefly Mycenaean tombs. These similarities concern: 1) the character of the finds from tomb and hero cult (in particular the hero cult from Menidhi); 2) the ambiguity of the term, and the occasional difficulty in our distinguishing between these two kinds of cult; and 3) the duration of the cult in Mycenaean tombs and in offering trenches near Archaic tombs.

Both the tomb at Menidhi and the tumulus complexes of late seventh- and early sixth-century Attica show a marked preference for certain vessel forms. The so-called *louterion* is a particularly common shape at Menidhi, and may even have been preferred for cultic reasons.⁵³ Louteria are also common in the late seventh-/early sixth-century funerary complex at Vari.⁵⁴ Similarly, certain iconographic themes seem to have been characteristic of both contexts. Chariot scenes are common on vases from Menidhi, particularly louteria.⁵⁵ They are also frequently found on vases from seventh-century Opferrinnen in the Kerameikos.⁵⁶ More important perhaps is the fact that most of the Orientalizing pottery found in seventh-century Attica comes from these two contexts. Most of the finest Protoattic pots whose provenience we can actually trace were used as grave markers over adult graves, deposited in offering trenches, or placed in the dromos of the Menidhi tholos tomb. The richness of Orientalizing pottery from these contexts is in

though the bulk of the finds date to between 550 and 425 B.C. The finds from Thorikos have none of the “aristocratic” connotations of the finds from Menidhi.

⁵³ For louteria, see D. Callipolitis-Feytmans, *Les “louteria” attiques* (*ArchDelt* Suppl. 6, Athens 1965), esp. 43–65 nos. M1–M13 for louteria from Menidhi. Arguments for the significance of louteria in cult are presented by H. Kenner, “Das Luterion im Kult,” *ÖJh* 29 (1935) 109–54.

⁵⁴ For louteria from Vari, see Callipolitis-Feytmans (supra n. 53) 19 no. 11, 20 no. 13, 28 nos. 1–2, and 33 no. 1. Whether or not these louteria come from offering trenches is not clear, but I think it is likely.

⁵⁵ For chariot scenes, see supra n. 43; and Wolters (supra n. 51) 109 figs. 12–13 and 126 fig. 31.

⁵⁶ E.g., the lids of the pyxides Kerameikos no. 75 (cat. no. 28) and Kerameikos no. 76 (cat. no. 27), both with chariot scenes, and both from Opferrinne β, Anlage IX. See Kübler (supra n. 17) pls. 17–19.

marked contrast to the paucity of such finds from major sanctuaries and from the domestic sphere.⁵⁷ Most pottery from peak sanctuaries in the seventh century is Subgeometric, with only the rare Orientalizing sherd;⁵⁸ there is relatively little Protoattic pottery from the Acropolis, as Sarah Morris has pointed out.⁵⁹ The Agora well groups are filled with much Subgeometric and other domestic rubbish, but little of Protoattic date, and even less with Orientalizing themes.⁶⁰ Most of the pottery from children's graves in this period is Subgeometric.⁶¹

Such observations have led me to suggest elsewhere that the production and deposition of Protoattic pottery was, in part at least, determined by the needs of these two ritual occasions. The restriction of Orientalizing pottery to these two contexts can be seen as the revival, in highly modified form, of a principle of social rationing that had existed in the ninth century—a rationing of the use of “the Orientalizing” to occasions that were, at once, liminal and high-status, removed from day-to-day living.⁶² The elite groups of Archaic Attica (the aristocracy) more or less monopolized the use of Orientalizing pottery.⁶³ If this inter-

pretation is correct, the significance of Orientalizing pottery, and of the contexts in which it is found, is then out of all proportion to the actual quantities of material deposited. Neither the Menidhi tholos nor the Kerameikos Opferrinnen were areas of public cult. But the quality of the pottery found there and the similarities in iconography and style of the vases in both contexts make it more reasonable to suppose that what we are witnessing here are the rituals of an aristocracy, the Athenian Eupatridai.⁶⁴ The importance of such private, familial rituals is underlined when we consider the Athenians' apparent lack of concern for public cult in this period. Unlike nearby Peloponnesian states, such as Corinth or Argos, the votive deposits from seventh-century Attica are very poor, particularly in metals. A few griffin protomes and the odd Oriental and Egyptian import are the only objects from the Athenian Acropolis that can be confidently dated to the seventh century.⁶⁵ Athens took no part in early developments in temple construction—apart from the column bases on the Acropolis, it is doubtful if there is any seventh-century Attic architecture worth the name.⁶⁶ Energies that in

⁵⁷ See J. Whitley, “Protoattic Pottery: A Contextual Approach,” in I. Morris ed., *Classical Greece: Ancient History and Modern Archaeologies* (Cambridge, forthcoming). There has been a revival of interest in the archaeology of seventh-century Attica: see S.P. Morris, *The Black and White Style* (New Haven 1984); R.G. Osborne, “A Crisis in Archaeological History? The Seventh Century B.C. in Attica,” *BSA* 84 (1989) 297–322; and most recently, S. Houby-Nielsen, “Interaction between Chieftains and Citizens? 7th Century B.C. Burial Customs in Athens,” *Acta Hyperborea* 4 (1992) 343–74.

⁵⁸ For the Hymettos peak sanctuary, see Langdon (supra n. 39), esp. 11–41, 67–70; for the Tourkovouni peak sanctuary, see H. Lauter, *Der Kultplatz auf dem Turkovouni* (Berlin 1985).

⁵⁹ See Morris (supra n. 57) 9 ns. 38–39, with references; see also B. Graef and E. Langlotz, *Die antiken Vasen von der Akropolis zu Athen I* (Berlin 1925) xxxi, 23, 34–43; there are 71 Protoattic sherds, nos. 344–414. The “relatively” here means “relative to the numbers of black- and red-figure vases” from the Acropolis.

⁶⁰ For the Agora well groups, see E.T.H. Brann, “Protoattic Well Groups from the Athenian Agora,” *Hesperia* 30 (1961) 305–79; and Brann, *Agora VIII: Late Geometric and Protoattic Pottery* (Princeton 1962).

⁶¹ See Whitley (supra n. 57) and Houby-Nielsen (supra n. 57). Examples of children's cemeteries in seventh-century Attica include the cemeteries at Phaleron, Eleusis, and Thorikos. For Phaleron, see R.S. Young, “Graves from the Phaleron Cemetery,” *AJA* 46 (1942) 23–57. For Eleusis, see Mylonas (supra n. 50); and G.E. Mylonas, *Ο πρωτοαττικός Αμφορεύς της Ελεούσιος* (Athens 1957). For Thorikos, see J. Bingen et al., *Thorikos I* (Brussels 1968) 47–86; *Thorikos II* (Brussels 1967) 34–36; *Thorikos III* (Brussels 1967) 31–56; *Thorikos IV* (Brussels 1969) 72–108; and *Thorikos VIII* (Brussels 1984) 72–150.

⁶² See Whitley (supra n. 57); for the ninth-century pattern, see Whitley 1991 (supra n. 3) 116–37.

⁶³ The notion that tumulus burial, with Opferrinne, was reserved for an elite stratum of society depends on one accepting the force of the demographic arguments presented by Ian Morris to the effect that only a small segment of the population is buried in a manner that is archaeologically visible in the seventh or sixth century B.C., and that the *adult* burials we have excavated are probably those of an elite. See Morris 99–101 for demographic arguments, and 151–55 for the exclusive use of grave markers. For a recent restatement of these arguments, see I. Morris, “Burning the Dead in Archaic Athens: Animals, Men and Heroes,” forthcoming in Verbanck-Pierard and Viviers (supra n. 4); and Morris, “Everyman's Grave,” in A. Boegehold and A. Scalfuro eds., *Structures of Athenian Identity* (Baltimore, forthcoming). The only serious alternative explanation offered is that Attica suffered a drought during the late eighth century, whose catastrophic demographic effects lasted for nearly a century; see J. Camp, “A Drought in the Late Eighth Century BC,” *Hesperia* 48 (1979) 397–411.

⁶⁴ On the Eupatridai as an Athenian aristocracy, see Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 13.2 and discussion by N.G.L. Hammond, “Land Tenure in Athens and Solon's *Seisachtheia*,” *JHS* 81 (1961) 76–98, esp. 78. On the seventh-century conditions in Attica see Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 2. Arguments in favor of the cult at Menidhi being “aristocratic” are presented by Snodgrass 1980 (supra n. 3) 70; and Whitley 176–77.

⁶⁵ See Whitley (supra n. 57); and Morris 1984 (supra n. 57) 99 n. 48.

⁶⁶ For column bases on the Acropolis, see C. Nylander, “Die sog. mykenischen Säulenbasen auf der Akropolis in Athen,” *OpAth* 4 (1962) 31–77. A bronze gorgoneion is the only artifact assignable to the pre-sixth century temple; see Shapiro 19 ns. 7–8.

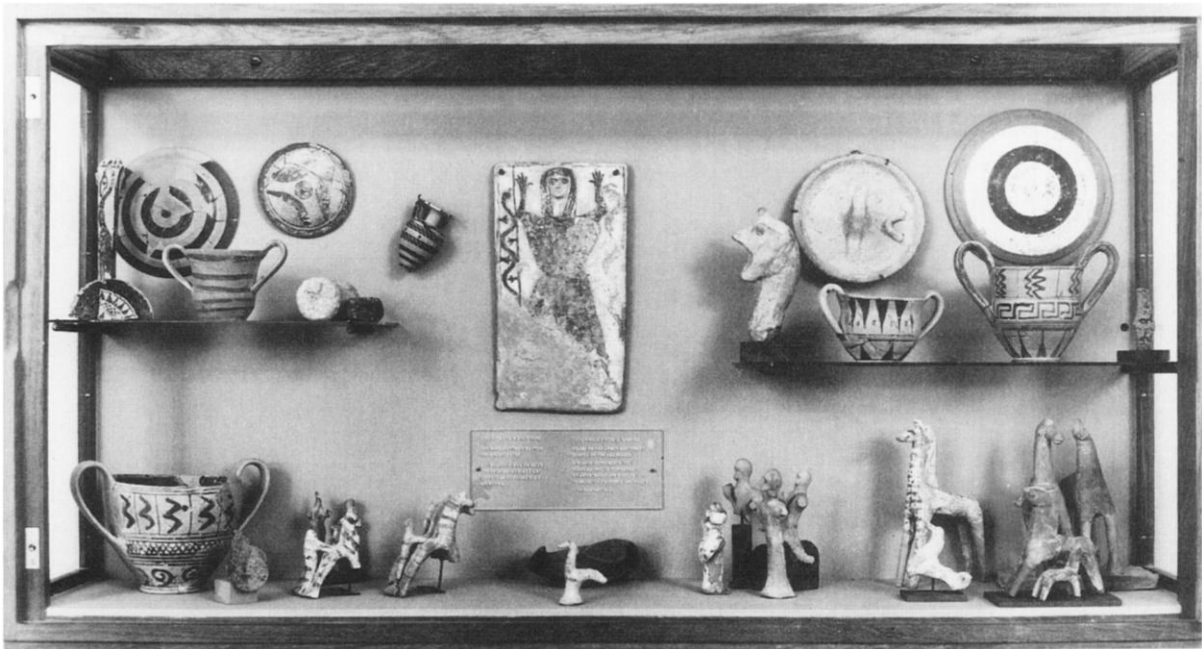


Fig. 8. Protoattic votive deposit from the Agora, Agora H 17:4. (E.T.H. Brann, *Agora VIII: Late Geometric and Protoattic Pottery* [Princeton 1962] pl. 30, photo courtesy American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations)

Corinth or Argos were concentrated in the embellishment of major, state sanctuaries to the gods were, in Attica, dispersed among the numerous minor cults to the honored dead and to the honored, if still anonymous, heroes.

Tomb and hero cult also shaded into one another in the seventh century. The problem of distinguishing between the two is, perhaps, at its most acute in the case of the Protoattic votive deposit in the Agora (fig. 8).⁶⁷ Here various Protoattic votives were found within an oval (possibly Late Geometric) structure directly over an EG I child's grave. This can be considered a tomb cult in that it was focused on a grave, but a grave that was 200 years old by the time the cult was instituted. For a number of reasons it may be treated as a cult to an anonymous hero. Two hundred years is too long a time for the identity of the person buried to be remembered in a society whose collective memory was still largely oral. (Indeed, Aeschines com-

mented on how easily the proper attribution of names and places could be forgotten, even in the more literate culture of the fourth century.⁶⁸) Furthermore, the character of the votive finds—terracotta shields and horsemen—recalls many of the finds from the tholos tomb at Menidhi.⁶⁹ Unlike Menidhi, however, there is little that is monumental enough in the tomb to lead a later worshipper to associate it with a remote “heroic age”—it is a very mundane burial. Moreover, while some of the finds may be reminiscent of Menidhi, others are equally reminiscent of some of the finds from the earliest Opferrinnen, particularly the “sacrificial pyres” from the Agora grave plot.⁷⁰

Tomb cults (or at least cult activity in offering trenches) and the hero cult at Menidhi are both prominent features of the archaeological record of Attica in the seventh century B.C. After 600 B.C., however, both practices decline.⁷¹ Offering trenches fall out of use during the course of the sixth century, particularly

⁶⁷ D. Burr, “A Geometric House and a Proto Attic Votive Deposit,” *Hesperia* 2 (1933) 542–640; and H.A. Thompson, “Activity in the Athenian Agora 1966–67,” *Hesperia* 37 (1968) 36–76, esp. 58–60. The pottery from the child's grave is in fact Early Geometric I rather than Protogeometric; see J.N. Coldstream, *Greek Geometric Pottery* (London 1968) 11.

⁶⁸ Aeschin. 1.125–27. Of course, Aeschines is speaking for rhetorical effect, but his comments are no less pertinent for that.

⁶⁹ Cf. the shields from Menidhi (Wolters 1899 [supra n. 51] 119, fig. 25) with those from the Agora deposit (Burr [supra n. 67] 609–14); and the horsemen from Menidhi

(Wolters 1899 [supra n. 51] fig. 26) with those from the Agora (Burr [supra n. 67] 614–21). For a discussion of this, see R. Hägg, “Gifts to the Heroes in Geometric and Archaic Greece,” in T. Linders and G. Nordquist eds., *Gifts to the Gods* (*Boreas* 15, Uppsala 1987) 93–99.

⁷⁰ For material from the Agora “sacrificial pyre,” see Young (supra n. 15) 55–67.

⁷¹ This generalization does not, however, seem to apply to Thorikos; see Devillers (supra n. 52) esp. 75–76. The finds from Thorikos are not as obviously aristocratic as those from Menidhi, and it is perhaps less surprising that the cult here lasts longer in the changed conditions of Classical Athens.

after 550 B.C. There are few, if any, votives of sixth-century date in the Agora deposit. The latest pottery that comes from Menidhi dates to before 460 B.C.; the last datable vases are one by the Brygos Painter and one by the Pan Painter.⁷² As these cults declined, other kinds of hero cult appeared—cults to epic heroes, or heroes of the new democracy. The result of this process was a complete reversal of the Archaic pattern.

THE LATE ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL PATTERN

In Archaic Attica, neither the recently heroized nor epic heroes, and few if any other named heroes, figure prominently in cult. But by the Classical period (or at least by the fourth century B.C.), judging from the lists given by Emily Kearns, there were, at the very least, 165 named heroes who received some kind of cult, and only 25 anonymous heroes.⁷³ Of these, by far the majority are local heroes, usually associated with particular places and sometimes with particular tombs. But there are also a number of figures from the epic tradition, some of whose cults appear to be particularly important. Aias received a cult both at Salamis and in the Athenian Agora;⁷⁴ cults to Herakles had been established both at Kynosarges and at Marathon by 490 B.C., judging from Herodotos;⁷⁵ and Theseus, Oedipus, and even Menelaus received some kind of cult.⁷⁶ Moreover, some new cults were

introduced to the recently heroized, an example being the one established to the Tyrannicides, Harmodios and Aristogeiton.⁷⁷ The prominence of named heroes in the Classical period did not mean that cults to anonymous heroes disappeared. New cults to anonymous heroes were established in the Athenian Agora in the fifth and fourth centuries, when building operations uncovered ancient, chiefly Dark Age, tombs—tombs that often then became the focus of cult.⁷⁸ But this fact does not alter the significance of the decline of the long-established, aristocratic cults that had been so prominent in the seventh century B.C.

There is little to suggest that heroes of epic, and other named heroes, became important objects of cult before the latter part of the sixth century B.C. Such a view is not revolutionary. It can be easily accommodated within the now generally accepted account of political and religious change in Archaic Attica: a seventh-century Attica dominated by a conservative, perhaps reactionary aristocracy; and a sixth century seen as the major period of reorganization and centralization of state cults. Such matters have received detailed attention from John Boardman⁷⁹ and Alan Shapiro,⁸⁰ among others. Peisistratos and his sons were, in all likelihood, responsible not only for the introduction of new festivals, such as the Panathenaia, but also for embarking on large-scale building pro-

⁷² Red-figure fragments by the Brygos Painter (*ARV*² 1469 no. 40bis) and by the Pan Painter (*ARV*² 558 no. 142) date to ca. 460 B.C. The quality and imagery of these finds are well in keeping with the aristocratic nature of the cult here.

⁷³ See generally Kearns, esp. 139–207. Most of the inscriptions by which these heroes are known are fourth century in date, so perhaps the contrast is a little overdrawn.

⁷⁴ For Ajax/Aias, see Kearns 46, 80–91, 141–42; Shapiro 154–57; and U. Kron, *Die zehn attischen Phylenheroen: Geschichte, Mythos, Kult und Darstellungen* (AM-BH 5, Mainz 1976) 171–76, esp. 172–74. The popularity of scenes of Aias on mid-sixth century black-figure vases (particularly those by Exekias) is not necessarily evidence for a cult of Aias having been instituted at this time. Examples of such scenes include “the suicide of Ajax,” Boulogne 558, *ABV* 145 no. 18; and “Ajax and Achilles playing dice,” Vatican 344, *ABV* 145 no. 13.

⁷⁵ For cults to Herakles, see S. Woodford, “Cults of Heracles in Attica,” in D.G. Mitten, J.G. Pedley, and J.A. Scott eds., *Studies Presented to George M.A. Hanfmann* (Mainz 1971) 211–25; see also Shapiro 157–63. Only the cults at Kynosarges, Marathon, and perhaps Melite seem to have been established before the end of the sixth century B.C. There is some epigraphic evidence for the cult of Herakles at Marathon, mentioned by Herodotos (6.116), namely an inscription, datable to ca. 500 B.C., regulating games in honor of Herakles; see *IG* I³, 2; E. Vanderpool, “An Archaic Inscribed Stele from Marathon,” *Hesperia* 11 (1942) 329–

37; Vanderpool, “The Deme of Marathon and the Herakleion,” *AJA* 70 (1966) 319–23, esp. 322–23. For the cult of Herakles on Hymettos, see *supra* n. 39.

⁷⁶ See Kearns 117–24, 168–69 (Theseus); 50–52, 189, 208–209 (Oedipus); and 185 (Menelaus).

⁷⁷ For Harmodios and Aristogeiton, see Kearns 150. Their cult was located either in the Agora, where they had statues, or in the Academy, where they were buried. For their presence in the Agora, see Paus. 1.8.5; Ar. *Lys.* 633; R.E. Wycherley, *Agora III: Literary and Epigraphical Testimony* (Princeton 1957) 93–97; and H.A. Thompson and R.E. Wycherley, *Agora XIV: The Agora of Athens: The History, Shape and Uses of an Ancient City Center* (Princeton 1972) 155–60. For the tomb in (or on the road to) the Academy, see Paus. 1.29.15.

⁷⁸ E.g., G.V. Lalonde, “A Fifth-Century Hieron Southwest of the Athenian Agora,” *Hesperia* 37 (1968) 123–33; Lalonde, “A Hero Shrine in the Athenian Agora,” *Hesperia* 49 (1980) 97–105; H. Thompson, “Some Hero Shrines in Early Athens,” in W.A.P. Childs ed., *Athens Comes of Age: From Solon to Salamis* (Princeton 1978) 96–105; see also Thompson and Wycherley (*supra* n. 77) 119–21.

⁷⁹ Boardman has largely concentrated on the political significance of the cult and iconography of Herakles; see J. Boardman, “Herakles, Peisistratos and Sons,” *RA* 1972, 57–72; and Boardman, “Herakles, Peisistratos and Eleusis,” *JHS* 95 (1975) 1–12.

⁸⁰ Shapiro.

grams at the Olympeion, Eleusis, and the Acropolis.⁸¹ That they also promoted the cult of the Panhellenic, epic hero Herakles is only too probable.⁸² Is it then mere coincidence that offering trenches begin to fall out of use in the time of Solon and all but disappear by the fall of the Peisistratids? Although there is no literary evidence to support the view that Solon, Peisistratos, or Cleisthenes specifically outlawed the kind of funerary cult we can observe in the offering trenches (which would not necessarily be covered by legislation regulating funerary display),⁸³ all the archaeological evidence seems to suggest that the sixth- and early fifth-century reorganizations of cult were incompatible with such private, or familial, devotions. By the end of the sixth century, cults to major heroes were well established, and Cleisthenes' reforms also involved a reorganization of hero cults.⁸⁴ Ten eponymous heroes were chosen for the new 10 tribes. Named and usually local heroes were promoted, and

"tribal" cults instituted.⁸⁵ The Tyrannicides, Harmodios and Aristogeiton, were elevated to the status of the "liberators of Athens," and received heroic honors from the state.⁸⁶ A more subtle change can be seen in the gradual elevation of Theseus to the position of primacy he enjoyed by the early years of the fifth century.⁸⁷ The new order, the new democratic state, required new heroes and new cults.

THE MARATHON TUMULUS RECONSIDERED

In this light, the practices evident at Marathon appear doubly paradoxical. The war dead died defending the new, Cleisthenic democracy—indeed, as the *Marathonomachai* they became its most characteristic representatives.⁸⁸ But the kind of burial they received recalled nothing so much as the old, pre-democratic manner of aristocratic burial; the cult that was their due revived practices that had been in steady decline for the past century (fig. 1). Is then the Marathon

⁸¹ For an account of the building programs under the Peisistratids, see J.M. Hurwit, *The Art and Culture of Early Greece, 1100–500 B.C.* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1985) 234–53; T. Leslie Shear, Jr., "Tyrants and Buildings in Archaic Athens," in Childs (supra n. 78) 1–15; see also Shapiro 18–47, 67–83, and 112–17.

⁸² See Kearns 117–23; Shapiro 157–63; see also Boardman 1972, 1975 (supra n. 79).

⁸³ For funerary legislation, see Stupperich 71–86; and now also R. Garland, "The Well-Ordered Corpse: An Investigation of the Motives behind Greek Funerary Legislation," *BICS* 36 (1989) 1–15, esp. 3–7. Contra Garland, see I. Morris, "Law, Culture and Funerary Art in Athens, 600–300 BC," *Hephaistos* 11/12 (1992–1993) 35–50.

⁸⁴ That Herodotos (5.66, 5.69–70) was well aware of the political significance of the reorganization of hero cults is shown, not so much in what he says about the Athenian Cleisthenes, but in his discussion of his namesake, Cleisthenes of Sikyon (Hdt. 5.67–68), who replaced the cult of the uncongenial "Argive" Adrastos with that of the Theban hero Melanippos, whose bones were duly "translated" from Thebes to Sikyon.

⁸⁵ For the eponymous heroes, see Kron (supra n. 74) 13–31, esp. 27–28; and Kearns 80–91. There is a widespread belief that Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 21.6) knew of over 100 hero cults that existed in Attica in the Late Archaic period, from which Cleisthenes chose 10 eponymous heroes. Aristotle's (or pseudo-Aristotle's) exact words are ταῖς δὲ φυλαῖς ἐποίησεν ἑπωνύμους ἐκ τῶν προκριθέντων ἑκατὸν ἀρχηγετῶν, οὓς ἀνεῖλεν ἢ Πυθία δέκα. It is true that an archegetes was normally a hero, but might equally well be an ancestor, or an individual who was the focus of the kind of cult we find in the Kerameikos Opferrinnen.

⁸⁶ It has been suggested that it was Cleisthenes who deliberately promoted the idea that the slaying of Hipparchos freed Athens from tyranny, and Cleisthenes who was instrumental in elevating the Tyrannicides to the status of heroes; see R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge 1989) 257–61, esp. 259–60: "The sus-

picion arises that Cleisthenes himself . . . fostered the tyrannicides as symbols of his new constitution"; see also C.W. Fornara, "The Cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton," *Philologus* 114 (1970) 155–80; and E. Kearns, "Change and Continuity in Religious Structures after Cleisthenes," in P. Cartledge and F. Harvey eds., *Crux: Essays Presented to G.E.M. de Ste. Croix* (Exeter 1985) 189–207. For the popularity of Harmodios and Aristogeiton as democratic heroes, see D.L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford 1962) 474–75 nos. 893–96. For the location of their cult, see supra n. 77.

This policy with regard to Harmodios and Aristogeiton would certainly fit in with a view of Cleisthenes as a centralizer, a creator of public cults from private ones, as indicated in Arist. *Pol.* 1319b, 19–27. For a discussion of Cleisthenes' overall intentions with regard to cult, and hero cults in particular, see P.J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenion Politeia* (Oxford 1982) 258–60.

⁸⁷ For the gradual elevation of Theseus, see in particular Hurwit (supra n. 81) 311–19; Shapiro 143–49; and Kearns 117–23 and 168–69. Theseus was the first Athenian hero we know whose bones were "translated," in this case from Skyros to Athens by Cimon in the early fifth century (Plut. *Cim.* 8.6–7); for a discussion see A.J. Podlecki, "Cimon, Skyros and 'Theseus' Bones," *JHS* 91 (1971) 141–43. The translation of bones was common in other parts of Greece in the Late Archaic period: Melanippos's bones were moved to Sikyon from Thebes by the tyrant Cleisthenes (Hdt. 5.67.2–3); and the Spartans brought back Orestes' bones from Tegea to Sparta by stealth (Hdt. 1.67–68). The idea, however, that heroes were there to protect the polis is perhaps one that only became popular in Athens during the Late Archaic period. See E. Kearns, "Saving the City," in O. Murray and S. Price eds., *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990) 323–44.

⁸⁸ For the Marathonomachai as exemplary figures for the Athenian demos, see Thomas (supra n. 86) 224–26. There are numerous references to the Marathonomachai in Aristophanes (*Ach.* 181; *Nub.* 986).

tumulus a deliberate evocation of a pre-democratic past? There is perhaps another way of looking at it. As Anna-Maria D'Onofrio has pointed out, aristocratic burial practices had already changed markedly during the course of the sixth century, from about 600 B.C. The complexes of mound, cremation, and offering trench, often crowned by a marker (which she calls, for convenience, a *sēma*), had been gradually replaced by wayside memorials, which frequently had inscriptions addressing a passerby, asking them to remember the person buried therein—a *mnēma*.⁸⁹ Is then the Marathon tumulus an evocation of not so much pre-democratic as pre-Peisistratid practices, and a repudiation of the too-recent past? Tempting as this explanation may be, it does not work. The Marathon tumulus incorporates features of both the *sēma* (in its sheer size) and the *mnēma* (it was surrounded by grave stelae, of a kind that would not have been uncommon under the Peisistratids⁹⁰).

Perhaps the Athenians who erected this monument were unaware, or at least barely conscious of, these resonances, which only appear paradoxical to the archaeologist. The Marathon tumulus, its cremations, stelae, and offering trench, may represent nothing more than an attempt to create an imposing and durable monument, while at the same time trying to accommodate both half-remembered ancient practices and current forms of honoring the dead. This view holds that most cultural phenomena are inexplicable, and attempts at explanation vain. Is then the Marathon tumulus essentially meaningless?⁹¹ Is its apparent similarity to earlier funerary forms purely

coincidental? I think not, and a clue to its meaning is again provided by the two senses of the word *heros*.

As West noted, the cultic and the epic senses of the word are unrelated. Cults in Mycenaean tombs must be classified as cults to *cultic*, not epic, heroes. What then of tomb cult? Cremation and burial beneath a tumulus are practices described in the Homeric poems. Both Patroklos and Hector are cremated, and their remains placed beneath a mound.⁹² The tomb of Ilos, the eponymous hero-ancestor of Ilion, is sometimes referred to as a *sēma*, and once as a *tymbos*, and is a prominent landmark in many battle scenes in the *Iliad*.⁹³ It is then not unreasonable to associate the practice of placing cremated remains beneath a tumulus with Homer's heroes, the heroes of epic. As J.M. Cook argued some time ago,⁹⁴ the spread of epic may have been responsible for the popularity of these practices among the aristocracies of Archaic Greece. Tomb complexes with central cremation beneath a mound, such as we find first in the Kerameikos and then elsewhere in Attica, may then be seen as an allusion to epic burial practices, and perhaps also an evocation, in material form, of the epic sense of the word *heros*. Such an evocation would certainly have held attractions for many members of the Greek aristocracy.

The epic sense of the term *heros* also implies "warrior." In the *Iliad*, warriors usually die in battle. Cremation beneath a tumulus might well be thought to be an appropriate honor for those who died in combat, at any period in Greek history. Certainly the state burial of warriors on the field of battle, and the erec-

⁸⁹ See A.M. D'Onofrio, "Aspetti e problemi del monumento funerario attico arcaico," *AnnArchStorAnt* 10 (1988) 83–96; and generally, S.C. Humphreys, "Family Tombs and Tomb Cult in Ancient Athens: Tradition or Traditionalism?" *JHS* 100 (1980) 96–126. The distinction between *sēma* and *mnēma* that D'Onofrio makes (and which I follow) is not a philological one, but simply an archaeological shorthand for describing the change in *function* of Archaic funerary monuments, a change from tumuli crowned by a marker, monuments that could be seen from a distance, to wayside memorials, which were meant to be viewed from the road, and whose inscriptions were meant to be read. The word *sēma* continued in use to designate the second type of monument, as many inscriptions attest; for example, the gravestone of Phrasikleia (Jeffery 78 no. 29); and the gravestone of Smikythos (F. Willemsen, "Archaische Grabmalbasen aus der Athener Stadtmauer," *AM* 78 [1963] 118–22).

⁹⁰ Stelae are known both from Pausanias's description (1.32.3) and from Schliemann's excavations; see Schliemann (supra n. 7) 88: "ich fand . . . unmittelbar unter der Oberfläche, das Bruchstück eines Wohlbehauenen und polirten Marmorblock, welcher zur Basis irgend eines Denkmals ge-

hört haben mag." The presence of a marble grave marker at Marathon is an indication that Archaic grave statues may well have lasted into the fifth century; on the date of the latest Archaic grave slabs, see now U. Knigge, "Ein Junglingskopf vom Heiligen Tor in Athen," *AM* 108 (1983) 45–56.

⁹¹ No one has actually claimed that burial customs are meaningless. But, until recently, there has been a very skeptical attitude among many classical archaeologists as to how much meaning we are able to read out of the evidence; see esp. Kurtz and Boardman (supra n. 16) 18–19.

⁹² Funeral of Patroklos (Hom. *Il.* 23.249–57); of Hector (Hom. *Il.* 24.790–803). See also A. Schnapp-Gourbeillon, "Les funérailles de Patrocle," in Gnoli and Vernant (supra n. 3) 77–88.

⁹³ For the tomb of Ilos, see Hom. *Il.* 10.415, 11.166, 11.371–72, 24.349. See also discussion in T. Hadzisteliou-Price, "Hero Cult and Homer," *Historia* 22 (1973) 129–44.

⁹⁴ Cook in *Γέρας* (supra n. 34) 112–18. The relationship between the popularity of Homer and the seventh-century fashion for tumulus burial is another question discussed by I. Morris, "Burning the Dead" (supra n. 63).

tion of a mound or *sēma* to mark where they fell, was a common practice in Late Archaic and Early Classical Greece.⁹⁵ If the Marathonomachai are to be seen as warrior heroes, then the cremation of the war dead and their burial beneath a tumulus are features that are not as difficult to explain.

Some support for these suggestions may come from an examination of Attic funerary iconography in the sixth century, particularly in the so-called High Archaic period of the late sixth and early fifth centuries. Alan Shapiro has argued that many funerary representations in this period have some kind of heroic reference.⁹⁶ Referring to funerary iconography in general, Shapiro suggests:

. . . the principal impulse behind most of these representations—specifically those associated with the tombs of men—is the heroization of the dead. By “heroization” I do not mean that the dead are turned into objects of cult or chthonic demi-gods . . . but rather that they are likened to the heroes whose *aretē* was celebrated in the Homeric poems.⁹⁷

In other words, the male, aristocratic dead in Late Archaic Athens are represented as heroes of epic, not of cult. There is thus a certain continuity in the associations of aristocratic burial practice in sixth-century Attica—a continuity of heroic reference. Whereas in the seventh century the idea of the epic hero was

evoked by the use of tumulus burial and cremation,⁹⁸ in the sixth various forms of heroic iconography came to the fore. Depictions of funeral games early in the century,⁹⁹ and warrior grave stelae and kouroi in its latter part,¹⁰⁰ are ways in which this heroic idea are played out. It is not then surprising that many of these sixth-century representations that appear to Shapiro to have heroic connotations are found in and around the sites of seventh-century funerary complexes with tumulus and offering trench, such as Vourva¹⁰¹ and Anavyssos.¹⁰²

If much of the history of aristocratic funerary iconography and funerary practice can be seen as the playing out of the idea of the epic warrior hero in various visual, architectural, and sculptural forms—the constant seeking of new ways in which the heroic ideal could be evoked to honor the aristocratic dead—how does this help us to interpret the Marathon tumulus? It perhaps makes the presence of both a tumulus and various grave stelae easier to understand. Both were means by which the Marathonomachai could be explicitly compared to the heroes of epic,¹⁰³ heroes whose *aretē* now serves the polis, not themselves.¹⁰⁴ Even so, there are still features that must appear to us to be a little out of place. Why, for example, is there an offering trench? To say that exceptional battles require exceptional honors, and a tumulus alone is not sufficient, does not explain why

⁹⁵ There are, however, certainly Late Archaic precedents for the Marathon tumulus. The Athenians who died at a battle at the Euripos River in Euboea in 506 B.C. seem to have been buried where they fell, and a marker, a *sēma* (tumulus?), placed over them, a fact preserved in an epigram attributed to Simonides; see D.L. Page, *Epigrammata Graeca* (Oxford 1975) 9 no. II, lines 85–86; see also Stupperich 206–207. For other possible precedents, see Jacoby (supra n. 6) 44–45; Clairmont 87–94; and Pritchett (supra n. 6) 153–66; see also discussion in Stupperich 67–70 and 206–24.

⁹⁶ See H.A. Shapiro, “The Iconography of Mourning in Athenian Art,” *AJA* 95 (1991) 629–56, esp. 631–44.

⁹⁷ Shapiro (supra n. 96) 630. For Homeric/heroic references in Archaic funerary practices, see Stupperich 62–64.

⁹⁸ And perhaps also evoked by certain iconographic features. Scenes of individual combat (*monomachiai*) are quite common on pottery found in the Kerameikos offering trenches, e.g., on Kerameikos inv. 73 cat. no. 20, from Opferrinne β, Anlage IX; see Kübler (supra n. 17) pls. 10–11. Such scenes are perfectly in keeping with the heroic ideal, the *heros* as warrior.

⁹⁹ See generally Shapiro (supra n. 96); for depictions of funeral games, see L.E. Roller, “Funeral Games in Greek Art,” *AJA* 85 (1981) 107–19.

¹⁰⁰ For grave stelae, see G.M.A. Richter, *The Archaic Grave-stones of Attica* (London 1961) no. 23 (20–21, fig. 86), no. 27

(22 figs. 83–85), and no. 33 (24 fig. 95); for kouroi, see Richter, *Kouroi: Archaic Greek Youths*³ (London 1970) nos. 63, 136, and 165.

¹⁰¹ For Vourva, see L.H. Jeffery, “The Inscribed Grave-stones of Archaic Attica,” *BSA* 57 (1962) 115–53, esp. 137 no. 44, NM 81a (the inscribed base); G.M.A. Richter, *Korai: Archaic Greek Maidens* (London 1968) 58–59 no. 91; and *ArchDelt* 1890, 103 no. 19.

¹⁰² For Anavyssos, see Jeffery (supra n. 101) 143–44 no. 57 (NM 4754 + 3851); Richter 1970 (supra n. 100) 118–19 no. 136; Jeffery (supra n. 101) 143 notes that the “whole area is very rich in graves,” and many tumuli were noted by E. Curtius and J. Kaupert, *Karten von Attika XVII* (Berlin 1887). Although there is no certainty that the Anavyssos kouroi and other inscribed gravestones listed by Jeffery (supra n. 101) 142–46 come from these grave mounds, the probability that they do is high.

¹⁰³ It is noteworthy that the association between burial in a tumulus or mound (*sēma*) and the epic hero lasted well into the fifth century, as evidenced by Aeschylus’s *Choephoroi* (lines 351–53, 722–24), a play usually dated to 459 B.C.

¹⁰⁴ For a different view of the significance of the Marathon tumulus, see Shapiro (supra n. 96) 644–45. For an account of how the values of the epic hero were transformed to serve the needs of the democratic polis, see N. Loraux, “Mourir devant Troie, tomber pour Athènes: De la gloire du héros à l’idée de la cité,” in Gnoli and Vernant (supra n. 3) 27–43.

this feature was chosen, and not another. We are still left with the paradox that, in honoring the defenders of the new democracy, the Athenians revived practices that were once the preserve of the old, pre-democratic aristocracy. This revival is more than mere nostalgia, more than a sneaking admiration for aristocratic superiority and display. There were simply no other symbolic forms available to the new democracy other than those that evoked aristocratic, and heroic, prowess. Aristocratic forms had to be “collectivized,” appropriated by the community as a whole for public, i.e., state, purposes. Attention has recently been drawn to how, later in the fifth century, words like *kalokagathia* were to change their meaning to suit the needs of a radical democracy.¹⁰⁵ The Marathon tumulus effected a similar but quieter transformation. It is perhaps no coincidence that aristocratic, funerary kouroi and marble grave stelae are much rarer after 490 B.C., almost disappearing entirely after the Persian Wars. The new democracy could allow only one kind of warrior hero. This surely marks the decisive

involvement of the democratic polis in matters of funerary display.¹⁰⁶

The Marathon tumulus, despite the simplicity of its form, is far from unambiguous in its meaning. It stands “betwixt and between” the symbolic order of the Late Archaic aristocracy and the demands of the new democracy, demands that were eventually to lead to the evolution of a new symbolic form, the *demosion sēma*.¹⁰⁷ If, for archaeologists, the tumulus at Marathon can come to represent the complexities surrounding the term hero cult, it, more than any other monument, also reflects the often contradictory feelings that the Athenians of the early fifth century may have held toward their pre-democratic past.

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¹⁰⁵ See discussion in J. Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens* (Princeton 1989) 289–92 on the transvaluation of values. I am grateful to H. Van Wees and Ian Morris for helping me to clarify my thoughts on this matter.

¹⁰⁶ This is the general argument in Morris, now elaborated for the fifth century and later periods in I. Morris, *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge 1992) 128–55. But it is also an argument that is in agreement, not only with the interpretation presented here, but with the

general arguments of Ober (supra n. 105) and Loraux (supra n. 13).

¹⁰⁷ On the central importance of the *demosion sēma*, see Paus. 1.29.4; Jacoby (supra n. 6); Clairmont, esp. 29–45; and Stupperich 4–31. Humphreys (supra n. 89) 96–126 has argued, convincingly to my mind, that the form of the public ceremony in the Kerameikos had a decisive effect on funerals and funerary cult in later Classical Athens.