

Gender and hierarchy in early Athens

In: *Mètis. Anthropologie des mondes grecs anciens*. Volume 11, 1996. pp. 209-232.

Résumé

Gender and Hierarchy in Early Athens (pp. 209-232)

Le concept de genre, autant que celui de hiérarchie, joue un rôle essentiel dans l'interprétation des pratiques funéraires grecques du premier âge du fer. Une des particularités d'Athènes durant cette période est ainsi la présence de «tombes féminines riches» nettement différenciées, sans équivalent dans les autres régions. Ailleurs en effet, la principale ligne de partage par genre passe non pas entre hommes adultes et femmes adultes, mais entre hommes adultes «guerriers» (généralement incinérés) d'un côté et «enfants» sexuellement indifférenciés (le plus souvent inhumés) de l'autre. On peut cependant montrer que les tombes féminines athéniennes rentrent bien dans le cadre général du symbolisme funéraire grec de l'époque géométrique, dans la mesure où elles paraissent occuper une position intermédiaire entre les deux pôles des sépultures masculines adultes et des sépultures d'enfants. L'usage de l'urne cinéraire les rapproche ainsi des tombes masculines, tandis que l'offrande d'objets figuratifs en trois dimensions les rapproche des tombes d'enfants. L'exemple des représentations de chevaux illustre bien cette division par genre: les images à deux dimensions proviennent plutôt des tombes masculines, les figurines en trois dimensions plutôt des tombes féminines. L'article se termine par une réflexion sur les raisons de la disparition de ce genre de sépulture à la fin du VIII^e siècle.

Citer ce document / Cite this document :

Whitley James. Gender and hierarchy in early Athens . In: *Mètis. Anthropologie des mondes grecs anciens*. Volume 11, 1996. pp. 209-232.

doi : 10.3406/metis.1996.1056

http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/metis_1105-2201_1996_num_11_1_1056

GENDER AND HIERARCHY IN EARLY ATHENS

The Strange Case of the Disappearance of the Rich Female Grave*

Athens was in many respects an unusual community in Early Iron Age Greece. For one thing it seems to have been exceptionally large. Though large, it was not an urban centre, if by that we mean a densely packed, nucleated settlement, of which the contemporary site of Zagora on Andros is an example. To judge from the indirect testimony of well deposits and graves, it seems to have been a loose agglomeration of hamlets, each with its own cemetery. Still, it is difficult to get a clear picture of the settlement of Dark Age Athens, and so to define what made it distinctive. We are not so handicapped however when it comes to the study of symbolic practices. It is the focus on the symbolic practices, particularly on the manner in which the dead were buried, that enables us to see more clearly the ways in which this society distinguished itself from its contemporaries. Of all the communities of Early Iron Age Greece Athens is unique in having a distinctive form of burial for women, particularly for rich women of middling years, and it is the implications of this fact I wish to draw out. My subtitle however – «the strange case» – perhaps implies that here is a problem which can be solved by the application of a certain deductive logic, in the same way that the

**Acknowledgements*

This paper was first given at a seminar organised by François de Polignac at the Centre Louis Gernet in Paris on the 18th October 1996. The seminar was very informal and helpful, and the trip to Paris that I enjoyed in every sense wonderful. I could not have had a better setting to «fly a kite», as the phrase has it. I would like to thank everyone who attended for their comments, and especially to François de Polignac for inviting me. I would also like to thank all those who have offered useful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, in particular Douglass Bailey, Sian Lewis, Ian Morris, Robin Osborne, Anthony Snodgrass and Hans Van Wees. I remain responsible for any remaining mistakes or omissions.

fictional Sherlock Holmes solved his cases by the attention paid to apparently insignificant details. In this sense, I must admit, my title is misleading. The disappearance of such graves is undoubtedly a problem for archaeologists and historians – at least for those who regard the interpretation of archaeological evidence (and the strange cases that archaeology throws up) as a part of the historian's task. But it is not a problem that can be solved by deduction – that is through inferences arrived at by a knowledge of observable processes in the natural world, processes which can in turn be explained by the application of uniform principles or laws. The study of symbolic practices is simply not amenable to such an approach. Furthermore, gender and hierarchy are not so much uniform principles, as contemporary conceptions, part of our own framework of understanding. Gender and hierarchy are dimensions of variation, ideas whose meaning changes from time to time and place to place. As such they require an approach that is, broadly speaking, contextual and interpretative, not dissimilar to those which have been applied to various periods in prehistory¹.

All past societies had their own ideas concerning what was good and praiseworthy for men and women, old and young, rich and poor. These ideas affected their material practices, and so can be seen (albeit in a refracted fashion) in many patterns in the archaeological record. This observation is particularly true of mortuary practices, since the manner in which persons were buried is intimately connected with ideas of what roles were appropriate for them in life². Funerary rituals, quite apart from their other functions, give us an indication not of what the deceased actually did and suffered, but what she or he should have done, given the position that he/she occupied in society. During the ritual in which the deceased passes from life to memory (and perhaps on to the next world) she/he is represented retrospectively in an idealized form. Hence burial practices are intimately connected with the ways in which past societies imagined their own social order. Cemeteries give us a picture not of how society was, but how it ought to have been.

It is in this light that we should view the archaeology of hierarchy and

1. See for example the arguments put forward by Ian Hodder, *Reading the Past*, Cambridge, 1986; and by Julian Thomas and Christopher Tilley, «The Axe and the Torso: Symbolic Structures in Neolithic Brittany», in C. Tilley (ed.), *Interpretative Archaeology*, Oxford and Providence, 1993, pp. 225-234.

2. For arguments to this effect, see James Whitley, *Style and Society in Dark Age Greece: The Changing Face of a Pre-Literate Society*, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 23-34. For a general review of attempts to relate burial evidence to historical questions in the ancient world see Ian Morris, *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity*, Cambridge, 1992.

gender in early Greek society. In recent years it is hierarchy that has received most attention from those ancient historians who have grasped the potential of anthropological ideas. Many scholars (myself included) have tried to discern the hierarchical principles upon which early Greek society was based. This task has entailed the application of concepts borrowed from anthropological evolutionary theory (such as egalitarian, ranked or stratified societies) and the attempt to construct social models through ethnographic analogies³. An interest in hierarchy is natural, given that one of the chief problems in early Greek history lies in explaining how it is that state societies emerged when they did, and why it is that states emerged as they did, with their (to Near Eastern eyes) bizarre citizenship structure. In no sense do I wish to disown this approach – we must continue to test our ideas about early Greek society in a rigorous fashion, and the construction of social models, and their scrutiny in relation to the available empirical evidence, is the only means of so doing. Nonetheless, despite some recent work, less attention has been given to gender as has been paid to hierarchy⁴. This is clearly something of an oversight, as gender is at least as important a structuring principle as hierarchy in all human societies. It is however a term which is frequently misunderstood. Some problems of definition need to be addressed.

Gender does not mean sex. Rather, gender is a cultural variable, a particular and culturally specific interpretation of the apparently natural,

3. Ideas have been borrowed from the American cultural anthropologists Morton H. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society: An Essay in Political Anthropology*, New York, 1967; and Elman R. Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* 2, New York, 1971, whose definitions of various kinds of political order remain indispensable. Recently, attempts have also been made to make use of other ethnographic analogies, particularly the example of the «big-man» societies of Melanesia, to try to understand the pre-state societies of Early Iron Age Greece. Examples of such proposals include the articles by Walter Donlan, «The Social Groups of Dark Age Greece», *Classical Philology*, 80, 1985, pp. 293-308; Bjørn Qviller, «The Dynamics of Homeric Society», *Symbolae Osloenses*, 56, 1981, pp. 109-55; Edward Ch. L. Van der Vliet, «Big-man, Tyrant, Chief: The Anomalous Starting Point of the State in Classical Greece», in M. Van Bakel, R. Hagsteijn and P. Van der Velde (eds), *Private Politics: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to «Big-Man» Systems*, Leiden, 1986, pp. 117-126; and myself, James Whitley, «Social Diversity in Dark Age Greece», *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 86, 1991, pp. 341-65.

4. Recent work includes the volume by Agneta Strömberg, *Male or Female? A Methodological Study of Grave Gifts as Sex Indicators in Iron Age Burials from Athens*, Jonsered, 1993; and myself, see Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2).

biological division between the sexes⁵. The best illustration of how particular constructions of gender affect culture is given by Henrietta Moore, Jane Goodale and Gillian Gillison. Moore points out that gender is more than a set of associations generated by the terms «men» and «women», more than different cultural ideas about what «masculinity» and «femininity» entail. She is at pains to rebut the notion that there is a universal association of men with culture and women with nature⁶. Indeed in many cultures the chief symbolic division do not fall along these lines at all. For the Kaulong of New Britain, the basic faultline in their conception of the universe divides the unmarried from the married. It may seem strange to us, but the unmarried state is strongly associated with the safety of home, whilst being married (that is, enduring rather than enjoying sexual relations with the opposite sex) is dangerous, indeed life-threatening, and is for the Kaulong associated with the dangerous wilds beyond the village⁷. For the Gimi of Papua New Guinea on the other hand, male/female relations are strongly associated with the house and the settlement⁸. This does not, as for the Kaulong, endow either settlements or such relations with strong positive connotations, since men identify most strongly with the uninhibited potency of uncultivated nature. The wilderness, for the Gimi, is a place of ancestral, phallic power.

It follows from these (and other) anthropological observations that gender in past societies may not correspond at all with our notions of masculinity and femininity. Indeed to talk of «masculinity» and «femininity», to confine our interest to relations between the sexes, is to fail to appreciate the full implications of the concept of gender. As Moore has put it:

«gender should not be understood and analyzed as a pair of fixed categories, but rather as a set of historical relations gender is not a separate entity or domain which can be included or excluded in the analysis of social phenomena, but rather it is a set of processes and relations which

5. For arguments to this effect, see Margaret W. Conkey and Joan M. Gero, «Tensions, Pluralities and Engendering Archaeology: An Introduction to Women and Prehistory», in J.M. Gero and M.W. Conkey (eds), *Engendering Archaeology: Women and Prehistory*, Oxford, 1991, pp. 3-30; and Alison Wylie, «Gender Theory and the Archaeological Record: Why is There No Archaeology of Gender?», in Gero and Conkey, *op.cit.*, pp. 31-54.

6. Henrietta Moore, *Feminism and Anthropology*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 12-41.

7. Jane C. Goodale, «Gender, Sexuality and Marriage: A Kaulong Model of Nature and Culture», in Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern (eds), *Nature, Culture and Gender*, Cambridge, 1980, pp. 119-42. See also Moore, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 6), pp. 16-20.

8. Gillian Gillison, «Images of Nature in Gimi Thought», in C. MacCormack and M. Strathern, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 7), pp. 143-73. See also Moore, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 6), pp. 20-21.

are enmeshed in all aspects of everyday life. Gender differences are cross-cut by age, status and class differences. They are used as symbolic markers for other forms of difference, and, in consequence, domains of social life apparently quite remote from relations between the sexes become highly gendered, and, in turn, the specific understandings of gender in the particular social contexts under consideration are shot through with the differences produced and reproduced in those domains of social action»⁹.

In discussing gender in Early Iron Age Greece, we should not then confine our investigation to the ways in which men and women were treated in death. Gender in our society may primarily involve differences between adult women and men, and, for the term to retain any kind of sense, gender must retain some connotations of «male» and «female». Anthropology however has shown the limitations, and the essential ethnocentricity, of a simple «male/female» concept of gender, and has shown how the symbolic divisions of any particular society may fall in unexpected places. Concepts of gender may affect class and hierarchy, and gendered divisions may involve age quite as much as sex. So a consideration of gender requires us to look at the graves of children as well as adults. For these reasons it is probably best to think in terms of gendered, symbolic divisions within the culture, divisions which cross cut age as well as sex, rather than divisions of gender.

It has long been recognised that burial customs vary from region to region in Early Iron Age and Archaic Greece. Tholos tombs were in use in Crete and Thessaly throughout the Dark Ages; in the Argolid cist tombs (sometimes with multiple inhumations) were preferred; inurned cremation was the most common rite for adults in Athens throughout most of the Early Iron Age¹⁰. These differences in custom or rite have traditionally been interpreted as a mark of regionalism and sometimes of ethnic affiliation. Whatever the merits of this idea, what concerns me (and what is much more important in social terms) is the ways in which different regions mark out differences between adult males and females on the one hand and between adults and children on the other. Here I would like to embark on a brief survey of the different regions of Greece, or at least those regions where we possess enough osteological information to determine whether a grave was that of a man or a woman.

9. Henrietta Moore, «Epilogue», in Gero and Conkey, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 5), p. 409. For the importance of looking at the representation of children in relation to concepts of gender, see now Joanna Sofaer Derevenski, «Age and Gender at the Site of Tiszapolgar-Basatanya, Hungary», *Antiquity*, 71, 1997, pp. 875-89.

10. Anthony M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece*, Edinburgh, 1971, pp. 147-76.

In Euboea, there do seem to be some general patterns evident throughout the Dark Ages and into the Archaic period. One feature of Euboean burials is the male warrior grave. The so-called «hero» whose cremated remains were placed in an antique bronze urn beneath the large building at Lefkandi Toumba clearly falls into this category, as do a number of other «warrior graves» at Lefkandi¹¹. Warrior graves are marked by a recurrent pattern of artefacts, chiefly the presence of an iron sword and a spearhead of either bronze or iron. Despite the difficulty that the excavators had in isolating any human bone from the cemeteries at Lefkandi, it is remarkable how many graves we have which are both osteologically male and which are also furnished with weapons. Toumba tomb 14,1 (a cremation) certainly falls into this category, as does Palia Perivolia grave 47 (an inhumation)¹². To be sure, there are a number of rich female graves (the spouse, if that is what she was, of the so-called «hero» is one of them) but there are few recurrent associations of artefact, few patterns of symbolic femininity which would allow us to make an educated guess as to the exact number of female graves. Certainly the «rite» and associated grave goods of the only other osteologically female grave, T.14,2 are quite different from those of the so-called «queen» of Lefkandi¹³. Nor is it easy to discern any pattern in the manner in which children were interred, since we have so very few osteological determinations of children's graves¹⁴. When we come to the eighth-century in Euboea, the symbolic division seems not so much to be between adult male and adult female as between adult male and (sexually undifferentiated) child. As Kouroniotis noted some time ago, adults were universally cremated in 8th century Eretria, whilst children were interred in amphoras or pithoi¹⁵. This pattern has been confirmed by later excavation. The so-called «heroon» at the West Gate of Eretria, datable to around 700-680 B.C. is a monument built over a cemetery of warrior graves and children's graves. Whilst adult males were cremated and then placed in

11. For the «Toumba» burial, see Mervyn R. Popham, L.H. Sackett and P.G. Calligas, *Lefkandi II: The Protogeometric Building at Toumba: Part 2: The Excavation, Architecture and Finds*, London, 1993. For the pottery from here, see Richard W.V. Catling and Irene S. Lemos, *Lefkandi II: The Protogeometric Building at Toumba: Part 2: The Pottery*, London, 1990.

12. Mervyn R. Popham, L.H. Sackett and Petros G. Themelis, *Lefkandi I: The Iron Age: The Settlement: The Cemeteries*, London, 1980, pp. 160-1, 175-6 and 432-5.

13. Popham et al., *Lefkandi I* (*supra* n. 12), pp. 175-6 and 435-6; compare finds from the «queen» of Lefkandi, see Popham et al., *Lefkandi II.2* (*supra* n. 11).

14. J.H. Musgrave, «Appendix», in Popham et al., *Lefkandi I* (*supra* n. 12), pp. 429-46.

15. K. Kouroniotis, «Angeia Eretrias», *Archaiologiki Ephemeris*, 1903, pp. 3-5; and K. Kouroniotis, «Goldschuck aus Eretria», *Athenische Mitteilungen*, 38, 1913, p. 290.

bronze urns, the unburnt bodies of children were placed in trenches¹⁶. As the excavators of both cemeteries could not fail to remark, there is a similar pattern in the manner of burial of the Lefkandi «hero» as there is in these «warrior» graves: adult males are cremated and placed inside bronze urns, and these cremations are usually accompanied by swords and spearheads. There is no place here for prominent, dead women¹⁷.

Of interest here is the evidence from the earliest Euboean colony at Pithekoussai, which has been thoroughly excavated and now published. The burial data has recently been summarised by Ridgway¹⁸. Here, as in eighth-century Euboea, the burials of children are generally inhumations. Very young children and new-born infants were buried in amphoras (*enchytrismoi*), with few if any grave goods. Adults were both inhumed and cremated, but cremations under tumuli (reminiscent of heroes' burials in the Iliad) are noticeably richer than those of other adults. The sex of these adult burials is difficult to discern, and so we cannot be certain whether these cremations under tumuli were always those of adult males (in one case this was certainly not true¹⁹). It is however clear that the symbolic pattern we see here fits in

16. Claude Bérard, *Eretria: Fouilles et Recherches III: L' Hérôon à la porte de l'Ouest*, Bern, 1970. For other interpretations of these finds, see C. Bérard «Récupérer la mort du prince: Héroïsation et formation de la Cité», in G. Gnoli and J.-P. Vernant (eds), *La mort, les morts dans les sociétés anciennes*, Paris, 1982, pp. 89-105; and F. de Polignac, *La naissance de la Cité grecque*, Paris, 1984, pp.140-157.

17. Recent sporadic finds from Eretria have tended to confirm this pattern. These finds include: a ninth-century cremation with sword, see A. Altherr-Charon, «Eretria: Chantier du temple d'Apollon», *Antike Kunst*, 24, 1981, p. 83, and S. Huber, «Les fouilles dans le sanctuaire d'Apollon à Erétrie», *Antike Kunst*, 36, 1993, p. 122; and a Late Geometric trench inhumation, see K. Reber, «Die Grabung in Haus IV von Eretria: Kampagne 1992», *Antike Kunst*, 36, 1993, pp. 130-1. It is unfortunate that we do not, as yet, have any osteological information regarding either of these graves. The trench inhumation is certainly not that of a fully-grown adult, but the reasoning behind its interpretation as «Das Grab eines Mädchens» (Reber, *art.cit.*, p. 130) must be questioned.

18. See David Ridgway, *The First Western Greeks*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 45-82. I regret that I have not had the time to re-examine Ridgway's interpretations myself. This would involve a full-scale analysis of the information from the site report, Giorgio Buchner and David Ridgway, *Pithekoussai I: La Necropoli: Tombe 1-723 scavate dal 1952 al 1961*, Rome, 1993, which would be the subject of at least one Ph.D. thesis.

19. For the sexing of the Pithekoussai graves, see F.R. Munz, «Die Zahnfunde aus der griechischen Nekropole von Pithekoussai», *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1970, pp. 452-75. At least one of the cremations under tumuli, the grave with «Nestor's cup», was not that of an adult male; see Oswyn Murray, «Nestor's Cup and the Origins of the Greek Symposium», *Annali di Archeologia e Storia Antica. Dipartimento di Studi del Mondo Classico e del Mediterraneo Antico*, n.s. 1, 1994, pp. 47-54.

remarkably well with the pattern from contemporary Euboean graves; that is, there is a sharp symbolic divide between cremated (perhaps male and certainly rich) adults on the one hand and inhumed children and babies on the other.

It has often been remarked that the manner in which the warriors in Eretria and Lefkandi were buried is strikingly reminiscent of the descriptions of the burials of the heroes Patroklos and Hector in the *Iliad*²⁰. Some have implied that these similarities indicate that the contemporaries of the Toumba and Eretria warriors viewed them as heroes²¹. I myself have argued that the cremations beneath tumuli that appear in 7th century Attica may be deliberate evocations of the burials of warrior heroes in epic²². There has been a long history of such interpretations, and the debate has concentrated on two, logically distinct possibilities: either the description of the burial of heroes in the *Iliad* reflected Euboean Dark Age practices; or ideas from Epic influenced the burial practices of eighth-century Greece. But to state the relationship between epic and actual burials in this way is misleading. What the epic descriptions reflect are not so much burial customs in a straightforward manner so much as an underlying cultural idea of what it is to be a warrior, and what it is to die a warrior's death. For we have to be careful on the subject of warrior graves, careful not to interpret them in a literal manner, as if the artefacts buried with someone in death were a straightforward indication of what that person did in life. «Warrior graves» are to be found in many cultures, and at many points in the archaeological sequences of many European countries. In at least one of these cultures – Early Anglo-Saxon England – it has been convincingly demonstrated that «warrior graves» are not so much interments of men who had wielded weapons in life so much as burials of high-status individuals, often individuals too young to use a sword. The «weapon ritual», as Härke has called it, is not then a metonymic statement of what that man (or boy) has done and suffered

20. For a description of the burials of Patroklos and Hector in the *Iliad*, see Homer, *Iliad*, XXIII. 250-7; XXIV. 790-801. For the relation between these descriptions and burial practices at Lefkandi and Pithekoussai respectively, see Carla M. Antonaccio, «Lefkandi and Homer», in O. Andersen and M. Dickie (eds), *Homer's World: Fiction, Tradition, Reality*, Bergen, 1995, pp. 5-27; and Ridgway, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.18), p. 50.

21. See Mervyn R. Popham, L.H. Sackett and Eva Touloupa, «The Hero of Lefkandi», *Antiquity*, 56, 1982, pp. 169-74.

22. See James Whitley, «The Monuments that Stood Before Marathon: Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Archaic Attica», *American Journal of Archaeology*, 98, 1994, pp. 213-30. In some ways this article develops ideas first put forward by John M. Cook, «The Cult of Agamemnon at Mycenae», *Geras Antoniou Keramopollou*, Athens, 1953, pp.112-18.

in life²³. Rather it is a metaphorical statement for a certain kind of masculine ideal, which in turn conveys the sense of high status. It seems to me equally likely that Greek «warrior graves» are metaphors. Warrior graves are evidence for a highly gendered, cultural ideal of masculinity²⁴. They do not tell us much directly about Dark Age social reality (*pace* Thucydides, *Historiae*, I.6-8).

To return to our survey of Greek burial practices: at first sight the Argolid in the eighth century does not seem to fit this Euboean pattern. Robin Hägg could find no consistent pattern in the burial customs that would distinguish either age or sex classes²⁵. Nonetheless, the cemeteries of Argos are some of the few where an osteological examination of the bones has been undertaken²⁶. Adult men were not generally cremated, but inhumed in cists or (more rarely) in trenches. The pithos burials which became common in the late 8th century do not seem to mark out the graves of children (as they might in Pithekoussai). Rather, as Hägg has argued, cist graves and pithos graves appear to mark out class and wealth distinctions in the 8th century B.C., rather than those between adults and children²⁷. But on closer examination Argos does not seem to be an exception at all. The most spectacular graves of the 8th century B.C., like those of Euboea, are those of warriors. They include the tombs from the Theodoropoulos and Stavropoulos plots, and, most splendid of all, the cuirass tomb, T.45, with its bronze armour, iron axes, obeloi and firedogs²⁸. Moreover of the (relatively few)

23. See Heinrich Härke, «"Warrior Graves?" The Background to the Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Ritual», *Past and Present*, 126, 1990, pp. 22-43. For the relevance of Harke's ideas to early Greece, see J. Whitley, «Tomb Cult and Hero Cult: The Uses of the Past in Archaic Greece», in N. Spencer (ed.), *Time, Tradition and Society in Greek Archaeology: Bridging the «Great Divide»*, London, 1995, pp. 47-9.

24. For a cross-cultural survey of ideas of masculinity, see David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*, New Haven, 1990.

25. Robin Hägg, *Die Gräber der Argolis in submykenischer, protogeometrischer und geometrischer Zeit I: Lage und Form der Gräber*, Uppsala, 1974.

26. R.P. Charles, «Étude anthropologique des nécropoles d'Argos: Contribution à l'étude des populations de la Grèce antique», *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 82, 1958, pp. 268-313; and R. P. Charles, *Étude anthropologique des nécropoles d'Argos: Contribution à l'étude de la Grèce antique*, Paris, 1963.

27. Robin Hägg, «Burial Customs and Social Differentiation in 8th Century Argos», in R. Hägg (ed.), *The Greek Renaissance of the Eighth Century B.C.: Tradition and Innovation*, Stockholm, 1983, pp. 27-31.

28. For the Theodoropoulos grave plot, see Deilaki, *Archaïogikon Deltion B Chronika*, 28, 1973, pp. 97-9; for the Stavropoulos grave plot, see Deilaki, *Archaïogikon Deltion B Chronika*, 26, 1971, pp. 81-2. For the cuirass tomb, see Paul Courbin, «Une tombe géométrique d'Argos», *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 81, 1957, pp. 322-386; P. Courbin, *tombes géométriques d'Argos I*, Paris, 1974, pp. 40-41.

graves whose bones have been examined by Charles, all graves with weapons or armour datable to the 9th or 8th centuries B.C., namely T.6/2, T.14/2, T.45, T.176/2, and T.179, were all those of men aged between 20 and 40. All were cist graves. Conversely, the great majority of interments of identifiable infants and children under 10 years of age (T.9, T.15, T.38, T.43, T.53, T.131, T.134, T.152 and T.195) were interments in pithoi, amphoras or kraters, not unlike the *enchytrismoι* of Pithekoussai²⁹. Whilst it is true that there are female graves in the cemeteries of Argos, these are few, and they are not distinctive. The pattern of finds in the richest female grave, T.23, is not repeated elsewhere. As in Euboea and Pithekoussai, there is no package of attributes associated with women, or even with rich women. Women are buried in a manner «betwixt and between» those of adult male warriors on the one and young children on the other.

What of the situation in Crete? It is only from Knossos that we have a sufficient quantity of published graves and osteological evidence to make any inferences at all about gender and status (and precious few of these³⁰). Grave types (that is recurrent packages of artefacts, grave architecture and

29. For the publication of these graves, see Courbin, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 28) and for the osteological information, see Charles, *art.cit.* (*supra* n. 26) and *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 26). All the graves of children under ten years of age that Courbin published were interred in pithoi or painted ceramic vessels. The only graves which indubitably contained the remains of children and which break this rule (being inhumations in either cists or trenches) are graves T.163 and T.169. Tombs 32, 89 and 129 are only children's graves according to Courbin's supposition, and Courbin produces no consistent argument (in the absence of osteological information) in support of his thesis that they were indeed children's graves.

30. No studies were ever made of the human remains from the Fortetsa tombs excavated by Payne and Blakeway and published by James K. Brock, *Fortetsa: Early Greek Tombs Near Knossos*, Cambridge, 1957. Musgrave has published an osteological study of the bones from a tomb on the Lower Gypsadhes in J.N. Coldstream, P.J. Callaghan and J.H. Musgrave, «Knossos: An Early Greek Tomb on the Lower Gypsadhes Hill», *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 76, 1981, pp. 141-65. The recent publication of the material from the North Cemetery, as presented by J.N. Coldstream and H.W. Catling, *Knossos North Cemetery: Early Greek Tombs*, London, 1996, has helped matters less than one might have hoped. There do appear to be some early «warrior graves», see H.W. Catling, «Heroes Returned? Subminoan Burials from Crete», in Jane B. Carter and Sarah P. Morris (eds), *The Ages of Homer: A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule*, Austin, 1995, pp. 123-36. Still, J.H. Musgrave, «The Human Bones», in Coldstream and Catling, *op.cit.* (*supra*), pp. 677-702, does not feel confident in identifying any of the cremated remains from any urn later than the sub-Minoan period as being either male or female. We cannot therefore be sure that any of the post-Subminoan graves with weapons discussed by A.M. Snodgrass, «Iron», in Coldstream and Catling *op.cit.* (*supra*), pp. 575-597, were «warrior graves» in anything other than a symbolic sense.

grave rite consistently associated with particular age or sex classes) are extremely hard to discern in Iron Age Knossos, and there is little in this site to suggest that children were buried in a distinctive way, and little positive evidence for rich female interments³¹. However there do seem to have been a number of warrior graves – interments, largely inurned cremations, accompanied by iron weapons of some kind – often the «package» of iron swords and spearheads that we find elsewhere. These graves are, for the most part, cremations in pottery vessels, often coarse rather than painted. Examples of such warrior graves date from all periods. To confine ourselves to the Fortetsa cemetery, they include the interment in pot no. 14 (Fortetsa 153), a coarse krater probably of Early Protogeometric date, from tomb XI, associated with a corroded mass of iron weapons; the interment in the MG 4-handled pithos no. 12 (Fortetsa 452) from tomb X, associated with a short sword, a whetstone and some fragmentary iron spikes; and (most spectacular of all) the interment in Tomb P no. 67 (Fortetsa 1409), a Late Geometric/Early Orientalising four-handled pithos, associated with a mass of iron axes, spearheads, knives, a sword, an obelos and arrow heads³². Of course, we cannot be sure that these graves are male, as no osteological analysis was ever undertaken on the Fortetsa material, but it is more than likely that they are. If then Knossos does not exactly fit the pattern of some parts of mainland Greece, where the main symbolic axis seems to have been between adult male at one end and sexually undifferentiated child at the other, it does support the notion that the ideas of masculinity, weapons and warrior status were closely intertwined in Dark Age Greece.

Is there a general pattern that can be discerned from these different regions? For one thing, there seems to be no distinctive type of grave assemblage or rite for important adult women. To be sure there are some rich female graves, and in some cases one can make an educated guess that the grave is female from the grave goods. But what is lacking in Euboea, Argos and Knossos is a symbolic package associated with «femaleness». Certainly there is no single artefact type universally associated with «femaleness» in every region of Early Iron Age Greece. It is a reasonable inference, for example, that dress pins in Knossos are generally associated with women's graves, whereas in eighth-century Argos we know that long pins are associated equally with adult men and women. On the other hand

31. Though the interment in the Late Orientalising polychrome pithos 8 from Tomb II in the Fortetsa cemetery (Fortetsa no. 956) may fit the bill; see Brock, *Fortetsa* (*supra* n. 30), pp. 84-97.

32. For these see again Brock, *Fortetsa* (*supra* n. 30).

there are, in every region we have so far considered, two grave types which can generally be associated with age and sex classes, and which may indicate where the «gendered» divide actually lay in Early Iron Age and Archaic Greece: the «warrior» grave (adult male graves associated with weapons) on the one hand; and children's graves (usually inhumations) on the other. I want to suggest that these two grave types constitute the two poles of the Early Iron Age symbolic axis. I would go further, and say that the gendered division of Early Greece is not so much between adult men and women (or «masculine» and «feminine»), as some have supposed, as between male warriors on the one hand and sexually undifferentiated children on the other³³. In graphic form, we have a set of associations that would look like this:

adult male: child
 heros : *nepios*
 (warrior)
 weapons : personal objects
 cremation: inhumation

This diagram (as all such sub-structuralist diagrams must be) is of course a bit of an exaggeration and something of an oversimplification. The set of associations I list here seems to work best for Euboea in the eighth century B.C. But I would argue that this crude diagram does nonetheless represent an important structuring principle of Early Greek life and thought. And, as a structuring principle, it helps to explain the apparent similarity between the 10th century «hero's» grave at Lefkandi Toumba and the graves at the West Gate of Eretria without having to argue for an undemonstrable continuity in practice between the tenth century and the eighth.

In this universe of symbolic forms, where there seems to be no place for women except as an intermediate category between warriors and children, Athens is certainly unusual. For in Attica, from the beginning of the Dark Ages, female burials are always consistently richer than male. Moreover in Athens, from about 1000 B.C., sharp divisions become apparent between adult and child graves on the one hand and adult male and adult female graves on the other. For most of this period, from Protogeometric times onwards, adults were cremated and placed in ceramic urns, whereas the unburnt bodies of children (where their graves can be found) were interred in

33. In this respect I disagree with Michael Shanks, «Style and the Design of a Perfume Jar From an Archaic Greek City State», *Journal of European Archaeology*, 1, 1993, pp. 77-106.

cists or pits. Adult male cremations are generally interred in neck-handled amphoras; adult females in belly-handled amphoras. As elsewhere in Greece, many male adult interments are warrior graves, graves with swords and spearheads as grave goods. A good example of this type is the so-called Areopagus Warrior Grave, dated to the very beginning of the Geometric period around 900 B.C.³⁴. Women are interred with a range of distinctive ornaments, of which the iron dress pin and bronze fibula are the most characteristic.

The fact that female graves are no less «rich» than male is unique in Early Iron Age Greece. Here the quantity and value of grave goods (as measured by a crude wealth scale) is certainly no less, and in many cases more, than the richest male grave³⁵. To be sure, the quantity and value of grave goods in 10th and 9th century Athens is small compared to contemporary graves in Lefkandi, and there is nothing in Iron Age Greece to compare with the extravagance of Early Phrygian or Early Etruscan funerary display. Perhaps «rich» is the wrong word. It would be more accurate to say that, in 10th and 9th century Athens, there are a number of adult male and adult female graves with a distinctive pattern of grave goods – a distinct symbolic package. In the 9th century in particular a number of graves are marked out first by a number of choice imports from the Near East (or by the presence of artefacts whose production would have required «imported» skills) and by distinctive designs on the urns or grave markers found in these graves. The male graves G42 and G43 in the Kerameikos, and the female graves G41 and the «Grave of a rich Athenian lady» are the best known of these two categories of grave³⁶. Rich male graves are marked by kraters, and the

34. Carl W. Blegen, «Two Athenian Grave Groups of About 900 B.C.», *Hesperia*, 21, 1952, pp. 279-94.

35. For example, in the Protogeometric period, the highest wealth score for an osteologically male grave (Kerameikos grave 40) is 40, whereas the highest wealth score for an osteologically female grave is 67 (see Whitley *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), p. 109 fig.10). In the succeeding ninth century, the contrast is even more marked: the highest wealth score for an osteologically male grave (the Areopagus warrior grave; Blegen, *art.cit.* (*supra* n. 34) is 87, much less impressive than either of the spectacularly wealthy adult female graves, the grave of a rich Athenian lady, which scores 318, and Kerameikos grave 41, which scores 132 (see Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), p. 124 fig. 12)

36. For the Kerameikos graves G2 and G43 (male) and G41 (female) see Karl Kübler, *Kerameikos V: Die Nekropole des 10. bis 8. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1954, pp. 209-56. For the «grave of a rich Athenian lady» from a cemetery near the Areopagus, see Evelyn L. Smithson, «The Tomb of a Rich Athenian Lady circa 850 B.C.», *Hesperia*, 37, 1968, pp. 77-116.

ashes of the deceased then placed in a neck-handled amphora, whereas the cremated remains of rich women are interred in belly-handled amphoras. The children's graves however are very rare, much rarer than they ought to be given expected patterns of child mortality³⁷. This pattern of distinctive and «rich» adult male and adult female graves persists into the early eighth century, with the elaborate grave markers we find in that aristocratic grave plot known as the «Dipylon». Here too, the gender divide is observed, with large kraters still marking the graves of men, and monumental belly-handled amphoras those of women³⁸. Even when cremation ceases to be the predominant, distinctive rite for adults in the late 8th century B.C., rich female inhumations are still to be found³⁹.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly how unusual a pattern this is for Early Iron Age Greece. Distinctive rich female graves are found nowhere else. It is perhaps for these reasons that some scholars have interpreted the gender division in Athens in more familiar terms. For the graves of adult men and women do seem to be consistently associated with particular types of grave vases. If kraters stand for men, and belly-handled amphoras for women, might it not be that there are further symbolic associations to be found? For are not kraters where wine is mixed, but amphoras where water is carried? John Boardman has stated this case most succinctly:

«The equation – wine : water = man : woman – is of a type which, I

37. Ian Morris, *Burial and Ancient Society: The Rise of the Greek City State*, Cambridge, 1987, pp. 97-109.

38. Examples of male graves with monumental kraters include grave III from the Dipylon (for which see A. Brückner and E. Pernice, «Ein attischer Friedhof», *Athenische Mitteilungen*, 18, 1893, pp.73-191) and grave G25 from the Kerameikos (see Kübler, *Kerameikos V* [*supra* n. 36], pp. 209-56). Only in this last case is it known from the bones that the grave is male. Female graves marked by monumental belly-handled amphoras include grave I from the Dipylon cemetery (Brückner and Pernice, *art.cit. supra*) and whatever grave (we are not sure which) accompanied Athens NM 804. See discussion in J.N. Coldstream, *Greek Geometric Pottery*, London, 1968, pp. 29-41; Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), pp. 137-62; and, most recently, Barbara Bohen, «Aspects of Athenian Grave Cult in the Age of Homer», in Susan Langdon (ed.), *New Light on a Dark Age: Exploring the Culture of Geometric Greece*, Columbia MO, 1997, pp. 44-55.

39. Late Geometric Ib and Late Geometric II rich female graves include VdAK1 in the Kerameikos (for which see B. Freytag, «Ein spätgeometrisches Frauengrab vom Kerameikos», *Athenische Mitteilungen*, 89, 1974, pp. 1-25); grave XVII (G12:17) from the Agora grave plot (see Rodney S. Young, *Late Geometric Graves and a Seventh-Century Well in the Agora*, Athens, 1939, pp. 76-93; and a grave at Erechtheion Street (see Maria Brouskari, *Apo ton athenaiko Kerameiko tou 8ou pro Christou aiona* [Athens, 1979]). See again Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), pp. 137-180.

believe, many might find easily acceptable, and it may even be correct. If it is correct it suggests that the different shapes were chosen for burials because of their different usage in a social context and not in a religious one.»⁴⁰

If this is so, then in Athens a more familiar concept of gender might have prevailed, or at least to have cross-cut the warrior/child division I have been arguing for. Is Athens simply an exception to a general Greek cultural rule, or is there some way in which the «structuring principles» discerned in other regions of Greece also apply to Athenian Dark Age burial practices? The fact that there are distinctive types of graves for both warriors and children in many periods in the Athenian sequence would suggest that Athens does fit into this general pattern. Of course, there is a danger here that I am trying too hard to make the evidence fit the model, and not to construct a better model that would more comprehensively account for the known facts. I want to argue however that Athens does conform to the wider Greek pattern, though in a peculiar way. For in Athens the «gender division» has further ramifications that are not immediately apparent – a point which can be demonstrated by an examination of a kind of evidence not usually associated with divisions between the sexes, namely representations of horses.

In his idiosyncratic review of my own and Ian Morris's work John Papadopoulos does make one fair observation⁴¹. I failed to include in my analysis the representations of horses that appear on vases from Protogeometric and Geometric graves in Athens. This was clearly an oversight, as the significance of both two-dimensional pictures and three-dimensional terracotta horses have been the subjects of some major studies. In his publication of the Geometric material from the Kerameikos, Kübler proposed that plastic representations of horses found more frequently in female graves might have had a chthonic significance («chthonische Bedeutung»)⁴². J. L. Benson undertook a major study of horse images, trying to trace a tradition that linked Geometric figured drawing with Mycenaean⁴³. Evelyn Smithson went so far as to suggest that the terracotta horses found

40. John Boardman, «Sex Differentiation in Grave Vases», *Annali di Archeologia e Storia Antica. Dipartimento di Studi del Mondo Classico et del Mediterraneo Antico*, 10, 1988, p. 172.

41. John Papadopoulos, «To Kill a Cemetery: The Athenian Kerameikos and the Early Iron Age of Greece», *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*, 6, 1993, pp. 175-206.

42. K. Kübler, *Kerameikos V* (*supra* n. 36), pp. 27-8.

43. J.L. Benson, *Horse, Bird and Man: The Origins of Greek Painting*, Amherst MA, 1970.

on the tops of Middle to Late Geometric pyxides may be connected to the social standing of the deceased⁴⁴. Smithson's suggestion has found favour with many other authors. For Snodgrass the horse was «that partly symbolic standby of aristocratic societies everywhere»⁴⁵; for Coldstream such horses are «confined to well-furnished graves, and .. are most naturally explained as badges of knightly status»⁴⁶. Horses may indeed be associated with status differences, that is with hierarchy. But they may also be associated with gender in both a broad and a narrow sense, since there seems to be a difference in the contexts of two-dimensional representations of horses on the one hand and three-dimensional on the other.

Two-dimensional figures of horses are to be found on the following pots from known Athenian Dark Age contexts:

1. (Fig. 1). Kerameikos Inv. 560: a belly-handled amphora from Protogeometric grave 18 [PG18] in the Kerameikos⁴⁷. Associated with an iron pin, a foot of a krater, a beaker and a jug in a cremation grave. Sex of deceased: «vermutlich männlich»⁴⁸.

2. Kerameikos Inv. 911: an amphora with handles from shoulder to lip, an «Amphora mit Randhenkeln», from Protogeometric grave 28 [PG28] in the Kerameikos⁴⁹. Associated with a neck-handled amphora, 2 globular pyxides, an oinochoe, and an iron sword, arrowhead/lancehead and knife. Sex of deceased: male⁵⁰.

44. Smithson *art.cit.* (*supra* n. 36), pp. 93-97.

45. Snodgrass, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 10), p. 414.

46. J.N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece*, London, 1977, p. 77. All the above articles deal with the iconographic evidence from Athens. The significance of the depictions of horses to be found in the Argolid may be slightly different; see John Boardman, «Symbol and Story in Geometric Art», in W.G. Moon (ed.), *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography*, Madison, 1983, pp. 15-36; and Susan Langdon, «The Return of the Horse Leader», *American Journal of Archaeology*, 93, 1989, pp. 185-201.

47. Wilhelm Kraiker and Karl Kübler, *Kerameikos I: Die Nekropolen des 12. bis 10. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1939, pp. 192-3 and plate 56; K. Kübler, *Kerameikos IV: Neufunde aus der Nekropole des 11. und 10. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1943, plate 27; Vincent R.d'A. Desborough, *Protogeometric Pottery*, Oxford, 1952, p. 24 and plate 5.

48. E. Breiting, «Die Brandreste aus den protogeometrischen Amphoren», in Kraiker and Kübler, *Kerameikos I* (*supra* n. 47), p. 259.

49. Kübler, *Kerameikos IV* (*supra* n. 47), pp. 34-5 and plate 27; Desborough, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 47), pp. 41-2 and plate 6.

50. Kübler, *Kerameikos IV* (*supra* n. 47), pp. 2-3.

3. Kerameikos Inv. 1254: an EGII-MGI type I pedestalled krater from Kerameikos cremation grave G43⁵¹. Associated with a neck-handled amphora, an amphora «mit Randhenkeln», a jug, a kantharos, a bronze bowl and a gold diadem. Sex of deceased: undetermined «unbestimmbar»⁵².

4. Kerameikos Inv. 290: a type II MGII pedestalled krater from Kerameikos cremation grave G22⁵³. Associated with a neck-handled amphora (+ lid), an «Amphora mit Randhenkeln», 3 skyphoi, a hand-made vessel, 2 oinochoai, a kantharos and a pyxis (+ lid). Sex of deceased: male⁵⁴.

5. Kerameikos Inv. 1255: an LGI type I pedestalled krater, said by Kübler to have come from inhumation grave G26 but re-assigned by Krause to grave G25⁵⁵. I have followed Krause in this instance. The krater is then to be associated with an oinochoe, a pyxis [+ lid] and a jug. Sex of the deceased in grave G25: male⁵⁶.

Does the archaeological context of these images tell us anything about their possible significance? One striking fact is that all these representations are to be found in graves which are clearly male. In the cases of graves PG 18, PG28, G22 and G25 the skeletal material was clearly identified by Breitingner as male. Grave G43 falls squarely between other male graves in any of my CLUSTAN analyses⁵⁷. Moreover graves PG18 and PG28 fall into clearly «male» CLUSTAN groupings in the analysis where motifs were not considered, the analysis that most clearly brought out differences in gender symbolism in this period⁵⁸. Similarly graves G22 and G25 fall into «male» CLUSTAN groupings⁵⁹. The artefacts associated with these pictures of horses (kraters, «Amphoren mit Randhenkeln» and neck-handled amphorae) are

51. Kübler, *Kerameikos V* (*supra* n. 36), pp. 238-9 and plate 22; Coldstream, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 38) pp. 13-15.

52. Kübler, *Kerameikos V* (*supra* n. 36), p. 26.

53. Kübler, *Kerameikos V* (*supra* n. 36), pp. 222-4 and plate 20; Coldstream, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 38) pp. 21-8 and plate 5f.

54. Kübler, *Kerameikos V* (*supra* n. 36), p. 26.

55. For the krater itself, see Kübler, *Kerameikos V* (*supra* n. 36), p. 227 and plate 23; Coldstream, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 38), p. 46. For re-assigning the krater to grave G25, see Gunter Krause, *Untersuchungen zu den ältesten Nekropolen am Eridanos in Athen*, Hamburg, 1975, Tab. 24.

56. Kübler, *Kerameikos V* (*supra* n. 36), p. 28.

57. Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), pp. 123-37 and figs 12 & 13.

58. Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), pp. 108-9 fig 10.

59. Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), pp. 152-5 figs 15 & 16.

generally those which accompany male graves in each of the relevant periods; they form part of a male symbolic package. But there is little to connect such images with martial prowess, or the activities of warriors or «knights». Only grave PG28 can be considered a «warrior grave», even though a killed sword was found around the belly of the neck-handled amphora NM 18045, which has an image of two horses in the neck panel⁶⁰. In short, even though pictures of horses on vases do appear to be related to some notion of masculinity, they do so in a weak sense. It is worth remembering that the image on Kerameikos Inv. 560 (from grave PG18) is on a vase shape generally used to contain the cremated remains of women, the belly-handled amphora. A second important point is that none of these graves is remarkably rich. The «wealth-scores» for these graves range between 14 and 44⁶¹. Even grave G43, with its elaborate krater and gold diadem, is not well furnished compared to contemporary female graves such as Kerameikos grave G41 and the «grave of a rich Athenian lady» in the Agora, which score 132 and 318 respectively⁶².

The picture is further complicated when we come to consider female graves. No two-dimensional image of a horse appears on any pot in any Athenian Dark Age female grave, to my knowledge. But the terracotta horses that decorate the lids of Middle and Late Geometric pyxides (e.g. fig. 2) are found predominantly in female graves⁶³. Of the five graves with horse-pyxides that appear in Strömberg's Category A, where the sex of the deceased has been determined osteologically, four are female⁶⁴. Moreover most of these graves are rich, with wealth scores ranging between 34 and 224, and they generally fell into «female» grave groups in my CLUSTAN analyses⁶⁵. Such observations do tend to confirm the view that horse-pyxides are a mark of high status⁶⁶. But why then should horses appear as two-dimensional pictures in male graves, but as three-dimensional models in female? A marked preference for three-dimensional, plastic representations does seem to be a characteristic of female Athenian graves of Dark Age

60. Benson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 41), pp. 32-59 and plates IV.1, V and IX.1.

61. Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), figs 9-10, 12-13 and 15-16.

62. Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), p. 127 fig. 13.

63. Strömberg, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 4), pp. 88-90; Barbara Bohen, *Kerameikos XIII: Die geometrischen Pyxiden*, Berlin, 1988, pp. 8-9 and 125-7.

64. The graves are: Agora graves XVII (G12:17) and XVIII (G12:9) from the Agora grave plot (Young, *op.cit.* [*supra* n. 39], pp. 76-93); and Kerameikos graves G89 (Kübler, *Kerameikos V* [*supra* n. 36], pp. 267-8) and VdAK1 (Freitag, *art.cit.* [*supra* n. 39]).

65. Whitley, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 2), figs 15 and 16.

66. Susan Langdon, *From Pasture to Polis: Art in the Age of Homer*, Columbia MO, 1993, pp. 103-9; see also Langdon, *art.cit.* (*supra* n. 46) *ibid.*

date. Smithson notes that three-dimensional representations of granaries and chests, which she also links to high status, are only found in women's graves⁶⁷. More remarkably perhaps it seems that almost all three dimensional objects of tenth-century date in the Kerameikos cemetery are to be found in female graves. This is true even of such things as clay tripods, clay openwork stands and models of deer – representations which we in our culture might think of as «male» – which have been found in Protogeometric graves 4, 39 and 48 in the Kerameikos⁶⁸.

There is one class of grave I have not yet touched upon in my tour of tenth- and ninth- century Athens: inurned cremations in shoulder-handled amphoras. From what little osteological evidence we possess these graves (Kerameikos G7; Agora grave D 16:2) seem to be interments of young women – women less old and perhaps less adult than those interred in grave G41 in the Kerameikos and the «Grave of a Rich Athenian Lady». Like the «grave of a rich Athenian lady» however at least one of these (D 16:2) is furnished with a small model «in the round» as one of the grave goods: in this case a pair of clay boots⁶⁹. This object connects this grave with a contemporary child's inhumation from Odhos Ayios Dimitrios. Clay boots,

67. See Smithson, *art.cit.* (*supra* n. 36), pp. 93-7 and discussion p. 96 n. 45. Three dimensional models (of chests rather than granaries) have been found in Protogeometric graves in the Kerameikos, PG 13 and 22 (Kraiker and Kübler, *Kerameikos I* [*supra* n. 47], p. 187 Inv.771; Kübler, *Kerameikos IV* [*supra* n. 47], p. 32 Inv. 924). PG 22 is not known to be a female grave from the osteology, but as Smithson (*art.cit.* [*supra* n. 36], p. 96 n. 45) drily observes «hair spirals and pins have yet to be found in a male grave» (at least in Athens). The same observation applies to the chest discovered in an apparently female Protogeometric grave in Nea Ionia. See Evelyn L. Smithson, «The Protogeometric Cemetery at Nea Ionia», *Hesperia*, 30, 1961, pp.165-6 no. 42.

68. Most of these three dimensional objects have been found in the Kerameikos. Two clay tripods (Inv. nos. 554 & 555) were found in PG grave 4 (Kraiker and Kübler, *Kerameikos I* [*supra* n. 47], pp. 95-7 & 183; plates 63-5). According to Breiting, *art.cit.* (*supra* n. 48), p. 258, the bones from this grave were «Alter: adult; Geschlecht: wahrscheinlich weiblich». A clay openwork stand (Inv. 2028) was found in PG grave 48 (Kübler, *Kerameikos IV* [*supra* n. 47], pp. 44-6) and a three-dimensional model of a deer in PG grave 39 (Inv. 641; see Kübler, *Kerameikos IV* [*supra* n. 47] pp. 39-41). Both of these graves are apparently «wahrscheinlich weiblich» (Kübler, *Kerameikos IV* [*supra* n. 47], p. 2). It should be noted however that this pattern does not persist into the ninth and eighth centuries. Of the three Geometric graves in the Kerameikos where clay tripods have been found, G2, G71 and G74, graves G2 and G74 are certainly male (Kübler, *Kerameikos V* [*supra* n. 36], p. 26).

69. For Kerameikos grave G7, see Kübler, *Kerameikos V* (*supra* n. 36), p. 26. For grave D 16:2, see Rodney S. Young «An Early Geometric Grave Near the Athenian Agora», *Hesperia*, 18, 1949, pp. 275-97.

it seems, were thought to be objects thought appropriate for both young women and children, as if somehow young women and children were somehow alike⁷⁰.

There may then be a further dimension to gender and burial in 10th, 9th and 8th century Athens. It seems to be no coincidence that clay models, that is representations in three dimensions, occur predominantly in the graves of women and children. Nor may it be insignificant that the grave goods of adults in general and adult males in particular seem to have suffered more damage in the course of the funeral ceremony than those interred with children. The «killed sword» (where the sword is effectively wrapped round the neck-handled amphora) is a well-known feature of ninth-century «warrior grave» in Athens, and the usual explanation for this custom is that the intention was to associate the sword more closely with the person being buried than would be the case if the sword were simply interred together. But burning a body and «killing» a sword are alike in one respect: both are processes whose end result is to make both sword and body more abstract, less like the concrete objects or persons they once were. Just as burnt bodies and used but now useless weapons become more abstract in death, so it is surely appropriate that the representations of that status symbol the horse (where they do occur) are of a more abstract, two-dimensional kind than the models found in female graves. Instead of a simple «male/female» gender division then, we may have a series of gradations which could be represented in this way:

male	female	adolescent	child
abstract			concrete
damaged			whole
burnt			unburnt
flat			round
weapons			personal
			ornaments
age			youth

In this scheme of things, adult women are placed somewhere «betwixt and between» adult males at one end and children (sexually undifferentiated) at the other. When buried, they share some of the characteristics of adult males (inurned cremation) and some of children (burial with complete objects and

70. The bones from D 16:2 were never examined, so we have to rely for our osteological information on the Kerameikos grave G7 (for which see Kübler, *Kerameikos V* [*supra* n. 36], p. 26). For the child's grave from Odhos Ayios Dimitrios 20, see *Archaiologikon Deltion B Chronika*, 19, 1964, pp. 54-5 (and discussion in Coldstream, *op.cit.* [*supra* n. 46], p.30).

three-dimensional representations). This suggests a notion of gender completely alien from our modern experience. I do not here wish to explore the question of whether this idea of gender (which I have «read off» the archaeological evidence) has any warrant in any literary account, though it is at least consistent with the notion of the warrior hero we encounter in epic.

I must emphasize at this point that, to locate the distinctive rich female grave groups of ninth- and eighth-century Athens in an overall symbolic scheme, is not thereby to minimise the significance of this phenomenon. Rich and distinctive female graves have always posed difficulties of interpretation for anthropologically-minded archaeologists, as there seems to be few if any ethnographic parallels for such phenomena. It is, in particular, difficult to resist two, very different siren calls. The first is to interpret this evidence in a literal-minded fashion, to infer simply that rich female graves indicate high-status women. We must remember that, just as in the case of «warrior» graves, the distinctly female symbolic package represents, not direct statements about the individual women concerned, but cultural ideas about the role of important women. The second temptation is simply to dismiss the evidence. As Elizabeth Rega has pointed out, it is inconsistent and perverse to say that, on the one hand, rich male graves indicate the existence of a ranked and patriarchal society, but that rich female graves are merely indirect reflections of the status of husbands or fathers⁷¹. Locating these graves in a universe of Athenian Early Iron Age symbolic forms is simply one step towards a richer and, one hopes, more historically accurate interpretation of the archaeological evidence. It does not diminish their importance, nor does it detract from the plain fact of these graves: that the status of women was somehow different in Athens than in the rest of Early Iron Age Greece, and that the status of middle-aged women in particular was probably quite high. This fact makes the disappearance of rich female graves even more of a mystery.

For disappear they certainly did. There are no obvious successors to the late eighth-century rich female inhumations such as VDAk1 in the Kerameikos or graves XVII and XVIII in the Agora grave plot⁷². This problem is more than just a question of our inability to age and sex cremated bones from the more thorough cremations of 7th century Attica. There are, in the seventh century, no attributes that would provide us with *prima facie* grounds for saying that a grave is female. Seventh-century Attic

71. Elizabeth Rega, «Age, Gender and Biological Reality in the Early Bronze Age Cemetery at Mokrin», in J. Moore and E. Scott (eds), *Invisible People: Writing Gender and Childhood into European Archaeology*, Leicester, 1997, pp. 229-47.

72. For these graves see references in note 39 (*supra*).

graves are generally of two types: adult cremations beneath tumuli, sometimes marked by a grave marker, and often associated with offering trenches filled with Orientalising pottery; and children's graves, generally inhumations in trenches or pits, usually associated with Subgeometric pottery. I and others have argued that the adult cremations are generally those of males, and that the practice of cremation beneath tumuli is a deliberate evocation of «heroic» burial practices, that is of the manner in which the warrior heroes of the *Iliad* were interred⁷³. If so, there seems to be no symbolic space left for adult women. The symbolic division which places adult males at one end and children at the other, so characteristic of other parts of EIA and early Archaic Greece, seems to have reasserted itself. The broader gradations of the Athenian Dark Age seem to have collapsed, leaving no place for adult women who had acquired some recognition within their society. How can we account for this?

To infer that the disappearance of rich female graves is simply a function of the «rise of the polis», of the wider assertion of a collective male «hoplite identity», is clearly to misinterpret the situation. For Athens was by no means a normal, or progressive, polis in the seventh century B.C. Indeed, as many authors have pointed out it seems to have been a remarkably conservative society⁷⁴. Even so, this does not make the re-assertion of a symbolic axis so characteristic of other parts of Early Iron Age Greece in seventh-century Athens any less of a paradox. For it was only after the end of the Dark Ages that Athens completely conformed to the symbolic norms of other regions of Greece at a slightly earlier period. Henceforth women in Athens were to appear in funerary representations as mourners or monsters,

73. For example, Whitley, *art.cit.* (*supra* n. 22). More detailed arguments to this effect have been put forward by Sanne Houby-Nielsen, «Interaction Between Chieftains and Citizens? 7th Century Burial Customs in Athens», *Acta Hyperborea*, 4, 1992, pp. 343-74; Houby-Nielsen «"Burial Language" in the Archaic and Classical Kerameikos», *Proceedings of the Danish Institute in Athens*, 1, 1995, pp. 129-190; and Houby-Nielsen, «The Archaeology of Ideology in the Kerameikos», in R. Hägg (ed.), *The Role of Religion in the Early Greek Polis*, Stockholm, 1996, pp. 41-54.

74. There has been much recent discussion concerning 7th century Attica, and though there is considerable disagreement on many issues, the conservatism of the region (at least as compared to Corinth) does seem to be widely accepted. See the various arguments put forward by Ian Morris, *op.cit.* (*supra* n. 37); Sarah P. Morris, *The Black and White Style: Athens and Aegina in the Orientalizing Period*, New Haven, 1984; Robin Osborne, «A Crisis in Archaeological History? The Seventh Century B.C. in Attica», *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 84, 1989, pp. 297-322; and myself, J. Whitley «Protoattic Pottery: A Contextual Approach», in I. Morris (ed.), *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies*, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 51-70.

but not in burials as recognisable social types, as people who had an important role in society at large. It is only in the sixth century, with the emergence of the kore as a sculptural type, that individual women are accorded any kind of individual recognition in funerary representations, and it is perhaps a measure of the cultural changes that had taken place since the ninth and eighth centuries that the women accorded such recognition are unmarried «maidens», and not the mature ladies whose bones have been found in the rich burials of the Geometric period⁷⁵.

(University of Wales, Cardiff)

James WHITLEY

75. For recent discussion of the significance of the kore as a sculptural type, see Anna Maria D'Onofrio, «Korai e Kouroi Funerari Attici», *Annali di Archeologia e Storia Antica. Dipartimento di Studi del Mondo Classico e del Mediterraneo Antico*, 4 1982, pp. 135-70; and Jesper Svenbro, *Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece*, Ithaca, 1993, pp. 8-25.



Illustration non autorisée à la diffusion

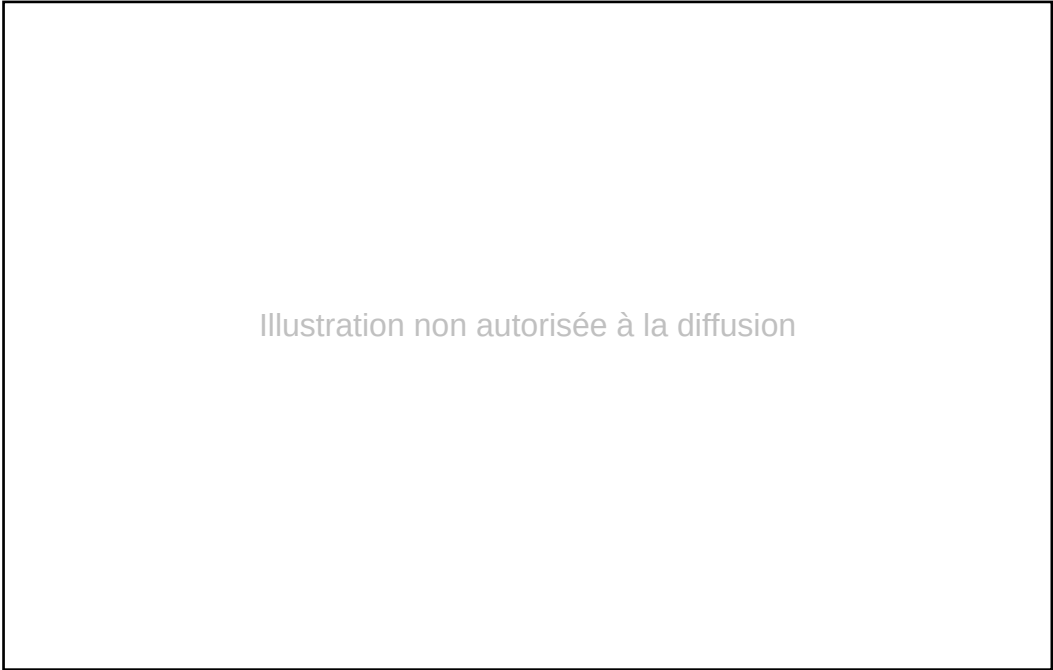


Illustration non autorisée à la diffusion

Fig. 1. Kerameikos Inv 560, a belly-handled amphora from grave PG18. After Kraiker and Kübler, *Kerameikos I*, Berlin, 1939, plate 56. (Photo courtesy Deutsches archäologisches Institut, Athen).

Fig. 2. Kerameikos Inv 775, a horse-pyxis, from grave G89. After Bohen, *Kerameikos XIII*, Berlin, 1988, plate 29, 5. (Photo no. KER 12483, photo courtesy Deutsches archäologisches Institut, Athen).