

# CELEBRATING DEATH AT THE SANCTUARY OF ORTHIA: A *PROTHESIS* SCENE, THE IVORY CORPUS AND RITUAL LANDSCAPES IN THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

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*The corpus of carved ivories from the sanctuary of Orthia at Sparta forms one of the most cosmopolitan assemblages from Archaic Laconia. One image within this corpus, however, has remained an anomaly: a mirror-image scene on two plaques showing three figures mourning a deceased male in the prothesis ritual. The puzzling nature of these plaques rests on the dearth of imagery elsewhere in Laconia from this period displaying the prothesis, unlike Attica. These images have been viewed as representing a mythical death or a commemoration of an actual death, tied to a period in Sparta's history when elite groups claimed power through ostentatious ritual, but their overall meaning within Orthia's sanctuary remains obscure. I argue, however, that these plaques are not anomalies within the ivory corpus, nor are they divorced from the broader ritual programme in Orthia's sanctuary – rather, the ivory corpus itself represents a unified composition that merged scenes showing ideal activities for Spartan citizens with heroic episodes from myth, geared towards the achievement of everlasting kléos. The semantics of these combined iconographies are clarified via comparison with cultic implements described in ancient literature alongside extant examples of multi-scene figural pottery from the seventh and sixth centuries. This paper thus highlights the mythological and ideological meanings of the prothesis plaques within the broader ivory corpus, and elucidates the role of complex figural iconographies in the elaboration of heroic ideals centred on Spartan citizens in this period.*

## INTRODUCTION

When the sanctuary of Orthia at Sparta was first unearthed at the start of the twentieth century it revealed a number of surprises, not least the wealthy array of finds in ivory, bone, bronze and terracotta dating to the eighth and seventh centuries BC. Such evidence for artistic prowess combined with early material connections to Crete, Mesopotamia and the Levant, prompted the excavators to remark on ‘the artistic reputation of the early Spartans, which had been buried beneath the militarism of their descendants’ (Droop 1929, 52). While acknowledging the sensationalism in this statement, it is hard to overestimate the cosmopolitan nature of the early finds from this sanctuary that tied Sparta into long-distance artistic, technological and socio-religious networks (Marangou 1969, 206) traditionally referred to as the ‘Orientalising Period’.<sup>1</sup>

Two pieces within the ivory corpus caused some consternation among the original excavators because of their rarity within the ivory corpus and in Laconian art more generally. The pieces comprise mirror-image *prothesis* scenes on relief plaques. Richard Dawkins (1929b, 211), in his chapter on the ivories, stated: ‘These reliefs seem to have no place in the regular development of the art as shown by the great majority of examples found ... a foreign origin is possible’ (cf. Fragkopoulou 2011; Morgan 2016, 229). My aim in this paper is to suggest that these *prothesis* plaques, while displaying imagery that is rare if not completely unknown in Archaic Laconia,

<sup>1</sup> On the concept of ‘Orientalising’ see Riva and Vella 2006; Gunter 2009; 2014; López-Ruiz 2014; Nowlin 2021.

nonetheless express ideologies very much in line with the semantic relationships encompassed in the ivory corpus as a whole. These relationships express heroic and eschatological ideals that have been recently emphasised in the iconographic programmes of a number of different media across the Archaic Greek world (Petit 2011; 2013; 2019), and the *prothesis* plaques are integral to this messaging in the ivory corpus.

This analysis will take place on several scales, from the *prothesis* plaques themselves, to the ivory corpus, to comparisons to other examples of complex figural art in the Archaic period. These multiple scales also allow for the fullest semantic reading of this *prothesis* scene, by placing it within its iconographic and historical contexts (Petit 2011, 17), and they provide an inroad to a deeper understanding of the interlocking symbolisms of the larger votive assemblage. I begin with an introduction to the ivory corpus, focusing on chronology and display within the sanctuary. I then turn to the *prothesis* plaques, first articulating their connections to the Greek *prothesis* ritual, but emphasising subtle references in their imagery to a possible specific mythological episode, which serve to enhance the more generic aristocratic ideal of the attainment of immortal *kléos*. I turn next to the broader ivory corpus, comparing the configurations of imagery in the assemblage to other iconographic programmes on cultic implements as known from textual and archaeological sources to further elucidate the stress on *kléos* and the afterlife woven through complex figural compositions. Throughout, I consider the broader social and religious setting of this corpus. This multiscale analysis allows us to contextualise a previous anomalous image within its ritual assemblage, and a previously anomalous assemblage (the ivory corpus) within the socio-religious landscape of Archaic Sparta.

## THE SANCTUARY OF ORTHIA AND THE IVORY CORPUS

### The ivories from the sanctuary of Orthia

The sanctuary of Orthia was excavated by the British School at Athens under the direction of Richard Dawkins from 1906 to 1910, and subsequently published in a single volume in 1929.<sup>2</sup> The most conspicuous remains of the sanctuary are Roman,<sup>3</sup> but the original Doric temple dated to the sixth century BC and was refurbished in the Hellenistic period (Fig. 1) (Dawkins 1929a, 3). Slightly to the south of this Doric temple, however, was an earlier deposit with evidence of an earlier temple whose northern half was cut through by the building of the later Doric temple, and an earlier Archaic altar (Luongo 2011, 84–5; 2015, 73–4, fig. 9). Below these structures the excavators uncovered an even earlier altar, partially underneath the earlier Archaic altar, along with remains of a peribolos wall and cobble-stone paving.<sup>4</sup> Excavations concentrated in this general area and, importantly, distinguished a thick layer of sand below the level of the sixth-century Doric temple, dated by the excavators to c. 600 BC, and associated with an extensive restructuring of the site (Dawkins 1929a, 15–16). Below the sand layer was ‘a rich

<sup>2</sup> Dawkins 1929c. Earlier reports were published annually in the *Annual of the British School at Athens*. The School spent another five seasons, from 1924–8, at the site, but the 1929 volume was based on the original work in 1906–10 (see Lamb 1927; Dawkins 1930; R. W. V. Catling 1994; Muskett 2014 for additional pieces). See Luongo 2011; 2015; 2017 for a review of the excavation notebooks.

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias 3.16.7–11; Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus* 18.1; *Instituta Laconica* 40. Orthia was paired with Artemis in the Flavian period (Woodward 1929, 293), but was identified with Artemis at her sanctuary in Messenia by the 2nd century BC (Themelis 1994, 106–7; Luraghi 2008, 281–2; Boutsikas 2020, 135–6, 142–9). Based on epigraphic and iconographic evidence, some argue that the fusion between Artemis and Orthia must have been underway by the 6th century BC (Kaasgaard Falb 2009, 145; Kennell 1995, 136; Pipili 1987, 43–4; cf. Boss 2000, 231), although Artemis and Orthia are still occasionally presented as distinct deities in later periods (e.g. *IG* 5<sup>2</sup>, 429, c. 360 BC) (Budin 2015b, 25). On Orthia’s relationship to Artemis (particularly Artemis Limnatis) in Messenia: Koursoumis 2014, 206, 215–17; Luraghi 2008, 124. The name *Artemidos Orthosias* appears on an inscription from Mount Hymettus dated to c. 420 BC (Möbius 1924, 16).

<sup>4</sup> Recent reassessments of the excavation notebooks and photos, however, have suggested that the structure Dawkins identified as a peribolos wall may in fact be an early apsidal temple (Luongo 2011, 89–90).

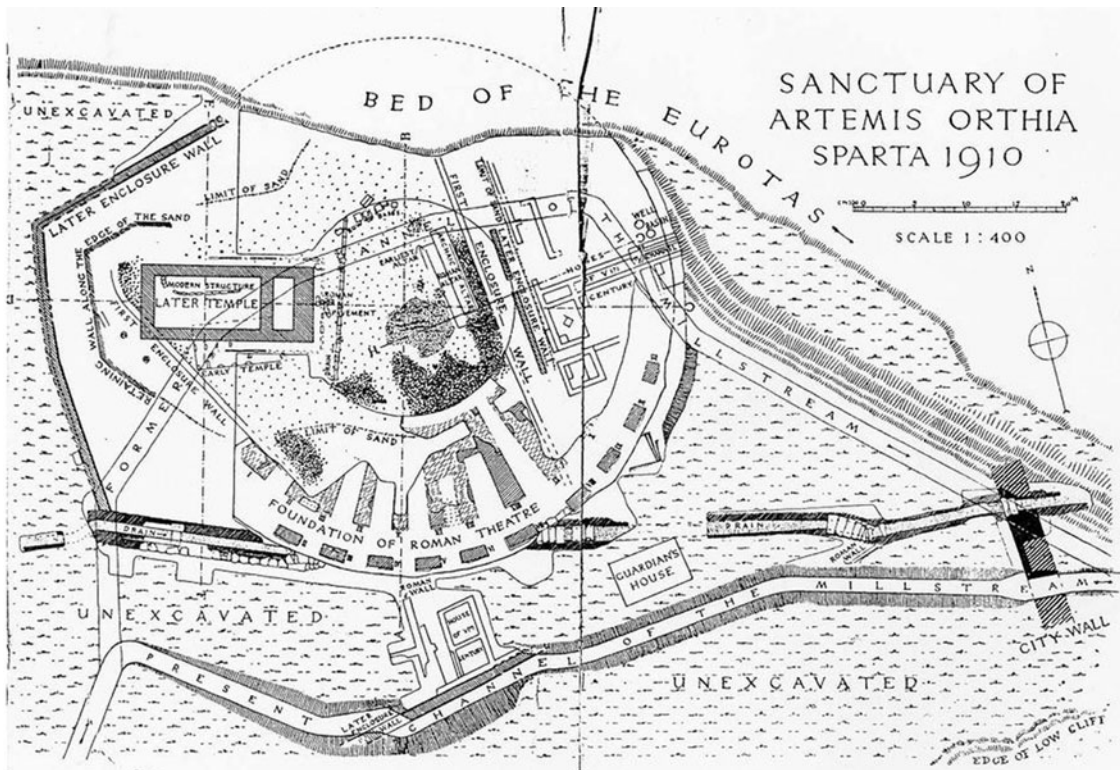


Fig. 1. Plan drawing of the sanctuary of Orthia (Dawkins 1929c, pl. I).

stratum of dark earth containing votive offerings in great abundance; its upper part was marked by pottery later to be identified as Laconian I and II [identified as contemporary with the earlier Archaic temple] while the lower part, resting on the virgin soil, was full of sherds of Geometric vases' (Dawkins 1929a, 4). This rich earth was thick – as much as half a metre thick in the centre – and it covered around 30 m<sup>2</sup>, reaching to the Archaic altar, and possibly beyond (Fig. 2) (Luongo 2017, 595–6). Charred bones were found in the deepest sections of this deposit alongside Geometric pottery, although no structural remains were found this deep except for a small piece of wall (Dawkins 1908–9, 11; Luongo 2011; 2017).

The majority of the ivories were unearthed underneath the sand layer, and most came from the stratum of dark earth, which Dawkins (1929a, 18–19; 1929b, 203–4) dated as early as the tenth century BC.<sup>5</sup> In the 1929c publication, Dawkins classified 44 ivory and 38 bone plaques into eight styles (Styles I–VIII), noting that the ivories in particular were found almost solely under the sand layer, associated with Geometric, Proto-Corinthian and Laconian I and II pottery (Appendix 1, Table A1:1).<sup>6</sup> While early reviews of the 1929c volume accepted the stratigraphic dating via pottery below the sand layer (Wade-Gery 1930; Kunze 1933), subsequent studies reoriented Dawkins' stylistic and stratigraphic dating of the early finds, notably those by John Boardman in 1963 and Lila Marangou in 1969 (see also Lane 1933–4). Their works have been discussed elsewhere (Carter 1985; Léger 2017, 132), but, in general, Boardman lowered the dates of associated pottery by several decades, and re-dated the crucial sand layer from 600 to 570/560 BC based on the pottery, while Marangou rearranged many of Dawkins' stylistic

<sup>5</sup> Recent reassessments of pottery from this stratum of dark earth suggest a date at the end of the ninth and early eighth century for the first phase of the sanctuary (Luongo 2017, 597–8).

<sup>6</sup> See Dawkins 1929b; Carter 1985, 118–20. On the relationship between ivories from the Samian Heraion and the sanctuary of Orthia: Marangou 1969, 194–7; Fragkopoulou 2012; see also Pipili 2018, 132–4.

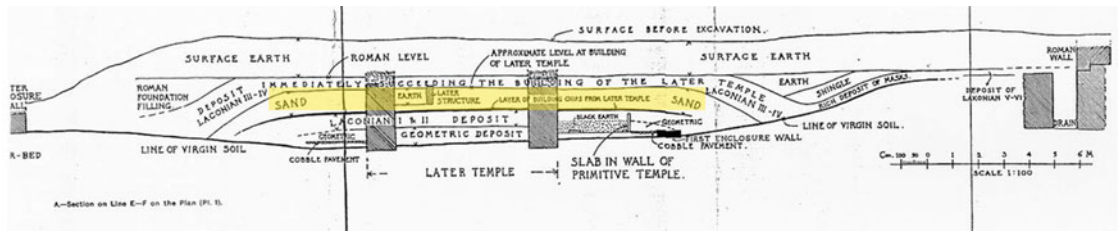


Fig. 2. Sectional drawing of the sanctuary of Orthia, highlighting the sand layer (Dawkins 1929c, pl. II:1).

categories of the ivories, pushing the earliest ivories (Dawkins' 'Style I') down to the first quarter of the seventh century (Appendix I, Table Ar:2).

The Orthia ivories have been connected to Assyrian and North Syrian schools of the ninth and eighth centuries BC via Crete (Marangou 1969, 203–13; Carter 1985, 126; Tournavitou 2019, 641–2), and Jane Carter (1985) stressed similarities to the local Iranian style at Hasanlu, destroyed c. 800, which also borrowed from Assyrian and North Syrian motifs and styles.<sup>7</sup> The enrichment of Orthia's sanctuary in the eighth and seventh centuries was likely a direct result of Sparta's conquests in Messenia and its inclusion, via newfound wealth and political power, into long-distance artistic and technological networks (Cartledge 2002, 103–4). These networks and styles were wrought, in large part, by the cultural authority of the expansive Neo-Assyrian Empire. The acquisition of materials like ivory and the necessary crafting skills reflected local Spartan elites' management of this new connectivity, as well as their self-definition within both Laconia and larger eastern Mediterranean exchange networks (Gunter 2009, 5, 12; cf. Feldman 2012; 2014). The Orthia ivories reveal not only striking stylistic connections to Crete and the Near East, but also religious and mythological ones as well, most notably with the numerous appearances of the Mistress and Master of Animals (Fig. 3). Furthermore, these long-distance connections somewhat temper Boardman's and Marangou's lower dates for the ivories. Konstantinos Kopanias, in his study of stylistic parallels between the earliest Orthia ivories (Dawkins' 'Style I') and those from the Idaean Cave and the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, suggests a date around the late eighth–early seventh century for these early plaques. These parallels suggest a transference of techniques and/or craftspeople from the Idaean Cave to Sparta at this time.<sup>8</sup>

While stylistic and subject-matter affinities between Sparta, Crete and Assyria/North Syria may be noted in the earliest ivories, these evolved in subsequent ivory styles (Styles II–V) to reflect more immediate tastes, particularly through showing heroes such as Heracles and Perseus alongside the Mistress of Animals. Indeed, while Dawkins (1929b, 248) considered the ivory plaques to derive from Near Eastern inspiration, he also cautioned that 'in front of whatever foreign influences there were and strongly submerging them, we must recognise a very definite local character'.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> On Aegean and Near Eastern ivory carving: Winter 1976a; 1976b; Mallowan 1978; Barnett 1948; 1982; Muscarella 1980; Carter 1985; Fitton 1992; Herrmann 1992; Sakellarakis 1992; 1993; Wicke 2010; 2013; Feldman 2014; as well as papers in *Albortientalische Forschungen* 42.1 (2015). The study of ivories in the Mediterranean and Near East originally focused on identifying stylistic groups tied to particular regions of production (Poulsen 1912; see Barnett 1957; Winter 1981; Wicke 2013; Suter 2015; Cinquatti 2015). Recent years have seen a shift towards understanding local production of ivories (Naeh 2015) and also towards the consumption of portable luxury objects, rather than tying them to static workshop origins (Vella 2010; Feldman 2014; 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Kopanias 2009, 128–30; cf. Carter 1985, 155–6; Marangou 1969, 204–5. Kopanias highlights the use of the St Andrew's cross on garments of female figures from Style I plaques from Orthia's sanctuary. This same motif appears on the *polos* of ivory female figurines from the Idaean Cave on Crete dated to c. 700–650, as well as on seals dated to c. 725 BC (Kopanias 2009, 128–9; Sakellarakis 1992, 116; 1993). Stampolidis and Kotsonas (2006, 346) note the dearth of imported ivories elsewhere on Crete, suggesting, for the ivories, 'that their local production was essentially affiliated with this sanctuary'.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Marangou 1969, 185–6, 195–6; Morgan 2016, 229. Marangou (1969, 202) asserts that the ivories in Laconia show a unity and development in their locally produced styles unparalleled elsewhere in the Greek world. In a more

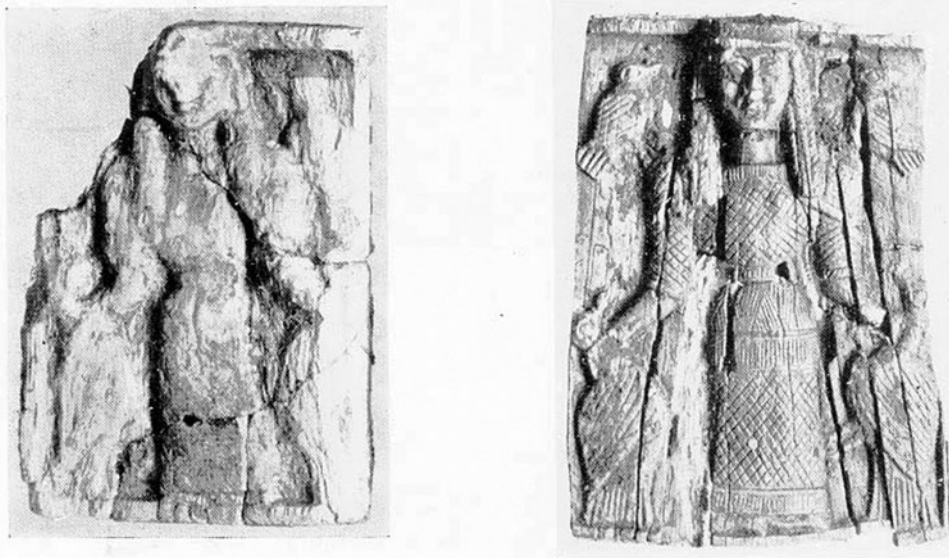


Fig. 3. (left) Ivory plaque from the sanctuary of Orthia showing the Mistress of Animals (Dawkins 1929c, pl. XCVIII:1); (right) Ivory plaque from the sanctuary of Orthia showing the Mistress of Animals (Dawkins 1929c, pl. XCVIII:2).

Plaques from Styles II–V show mythological scenes such as Perseus killing Medusa (Fig. 4), Heracles battling the Hydra, Heracles killing a centaur, a man wrestling monsters, and Prometheus attacked by an eagle. Other plaques display more generic scenes of beasts, warriors and rituals. Numerous other ivory objects, including combs, protomes and seals, also made up this corpus. These include ivory figurines displaying couchant beasts, in particular sheep and lions devouring animals, often with relief carvings on their undersides. Related plaques and figurines were made in bone, which were occasionally found below, but more frequently above, the sand layer, suggesting that bone eventually replaced ivory as a medium for carving.<sup>10</sup>

### Displaying and dating the plaques

How these ivory plaques may have been displayed is significant for understanding the *prothesis* plaques, as is the chronology of the corpus. Given the small size of the earliest (Style I) plaques, averaging around 4–5 cm in length, Dawkins suggested that they were affixed to the catch-plates of fibulae, which also turned up within the sanctuary finds, a suggestion repeated in later publications (Dawkins 1929b, 204; Marangou 1969; Carter 1985, 124; 1989, 369–70; Cavanagh 2019, 660). The Style I plaques are smaller, using shallower carving techniques than those used in Styles II–V. These early pieces, which most closely resemble those from the Idaean Cave, Nimrud and Hasanlu, may have been used on fibulae, or at least were quite dissimilar to Styles II–V – Dawkins noted that the Style I plaques were found solely with Geometric pottery.

judgmental tone, Barnett (1948, 14) called the ivory corpus from the sanctuary of Orthia ‘the most important though duller in Greece’ and lamented how ‘the reflections of the East conveyed by the ivories are to my eyes curiously confused and distant as if seen through a glass darkly; perhaps this is because they are conveyed through some intermediary which we do not at present know’.

<sup>10</sup> Dawkins 1929b, 204. The two sources of ivory are hippopotamuses and elephants, from either Egypt or Syria (Ben-Shlomo and Dothan 2006, 6). Syria is regarded as the main source of ivory for the Aegean (Tournavitou 2019, 628; Krzyszkowska 1990, 12–18; cf. Papadopoulos 2017, 943–4; Feldman 2012, 199–200 on the Levant). The majority of Syrian ivories in the Iron Age came from elephants, and the industry in general was in decline after the 8th century BC, possibly due to the extinction of elephants in this region (Wicke 2013, 549–50; Çakırlar and İkrām 2016).



Fig. 4. Drawing of ivory plaque from the sanctuary of Orthia showing Perseus killing a Gorgon, height = 8.9 cm (Dawkins 1929c, pl. CVI:1).

The latter styles, which include the *prothesis* plaques, are later stratigraphically and stylistically than Style I, but they are not necessarily ordered chronologically – Dawkins considered Styles II and III contemporary, while Style V was considered a more developed version of Style II (Style IV was reserved for the *prothesis* plaques – discussed below), but not necessarily much later in date. Style II plaques were found with Geometric to Laconian I pottery, and were given a wide date range, from the early eighth century to c. 650 BC, while one plaque from Style V was dated to c. 740–710.<sup>11</sup> Marangou (1969) subsequently rearranged pieces from these groups into new groups on more refined stylistic grounds, dating them primarily from the 660s to the 620s BC (Appendix 1, Table A1:2), yet the connection between stylistic and stratigraphic dating has

<sup>11</sup> Dawkins noted that Style V plaques were found with Laconian I sherds, and also in some cases Geometric and Proto-Corinthian sherds, and rarely Laconian II.

proven difficult to sustain in some cases, and several of Marangou's stylistic groupings have been subject to criticism (e.g., Carter 1985, 140). In their analyses of lead figurines from the Meneleion excavations Cavanagh and Laxton (1984) found that contextual and stratigraphic data did not map cleanly on to typology or style (cf. Braun and Engstrom 2022). Dawkins seems to have recognised this issue. Discussing the Style V plaques, he noted, 'When the examples are thus arranged according to what we have of stratigraphical evidence, it is not possible to trace any actual development from one to another' (Dawkins 1929b, 211). Yet, almost in the same breath, he cautioned against relying on associated pottery to arrive at fixed dates, suggesting that the stratigraphical evidence 'must not be too closely pressed in its details and only accepted as a general guide' (Dawkins 1929b, 211). While a close re-analysis of the excavation notebooks and a reconstruction of the stratigraphical contexts of the ivories and other early finds is certainly a desideratum (see Luongo 2011; 2015; 2017), this paper will take Styles II–V as a unit for reconstructing their iconographic programme, leaving out Style I as likely earlier chronologically, and Styles VI–VIII as later, seeing as most pieces from these latter groups were found above the sand layer. Styles II–V roughly map on to Marangou's Groups B–H. She treats some pieces from Style V separately and included two of Dawkins' Style I plaques in Group B.

The reason for taking Styles II–V as a general unit ties into how they were displayed, and how their iconography worked together in a larger semantic programme. Importantly, Dawkins recognised that some plaques, particularly those from Style III, could not have been affixed to fibulae (Dawkins 1929b, 209). More recent interpretations have suggested some of these pieces may have originally decorated furniture (Kopanias 2009, 130 and nos 62 and 63) or other implements.<sup>12</sup> The dedication of decorated furniture to the gods in their sanctuaries is known from the ancient sources, in particular the Chest of Cypselus at Olympia, the Throne of Apollo at Amyclae (in reality not a throne but a much larger monument) and the Throne of Zeus from the Idaean Cave.<sup>13</sup> Some of these plaques very possibly did decorate one or more cultic implements or furniture pieces – a few are quite large, approaching 10 cm in length. Some specimens, namely from Style II, have small holes along their vertical axis, possibly to attach them to bronze fibulae (Marangou 1969, 19; Carter 1989, 369). Yet most plaques from Styles III and V, as well as the *prothesis* plaques (Style IV), do not in fact appear to have holes, meaning they could have been inlaid into furniture or other implements. Even when holes are present, these do not necessarily indicate that they were meant for fibulae. Indeed, Carter (1989, 369) suggested that the later bone plaques, some with their backgrounds cut away (*à jour*) and others with drill holes in the corners, were instead affixed to chests. Many ivory plaques from the Levant and Assyria, for instance, show drill holes in various places along with grooves for attachment, which were interpreted as means of affixing them to furniture (Feldman 2006, 141–2; see artefacts in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: 61.197.1; 59.107.21; 57.27.5; 61.197.11). One of the plaques from the sanctuary of Orthia also displays curvature in its profile, suggesting it was attached to a rounded object (Dawkins 1929c, pl. XCVII:1). Even if some pieces from Styles II–V did belong to fibulae or came from separate objects, I propose that the iconographic programme of these styles as a whole was more unified than previously surmised. The *prothesis* plaques in particular, grouped together as Style IV (Marangou's Group G), provide an inroad to examining this unified programme, modifying previous assumptions that these images were anomalies in the corpus.

<sup>12</sup> Kopanias noted a similar pattern of interpretation for ivory plaques from Megaron 3 at Gordion, dated to c. 750–700 BC, later argued to be furniture fittings. The Nimrud ivories are regarded as decorative panels from furniture (Winter 1976a).

<sup>13</sup> Claudia Suter (2015, 42–3) notes the preponderance of ivory carved for furniture starting in the 8th century. Feldman (2015, 107–9) discusses a number of sites in the Levant, including Zincirli and Hamah, which produced ivory inlays for furniture, horse trappings and weapons. Sakellarakis (1988, 210) also asserted that the Idaean Cave ivories once decorated furniture.

SYMBOLISM ON THE *PROTHESIS* PLAQUES**The *prothesis* plaques**

The *prothesis* scenes, shown on two separate plaques (Fig. 5ab), appear atypical at first glance.<sup>14</sup> One plaque is mostly present, but very damaged (Fig. 6a), measuring 8.7 cm high and 7.6 cm in width. The second plaque is only about one-sixth complete, but the remaining relief is in quite good shape (Fig. 6b). Like terracotta plaques, they were presumably painted (Salapata 2014, 50), but the surfaces are too worn for any paint to remain. In their complete form, the two plaques were mirror images of one another. The scene shows a bearded male corpse wrapped in a shroud and lying on a bier. Behind the corpse, at the head, stands an old man leaning on a staff in a long cloak. He is facing two women in long dresses whose hands are raised in mourning. The one in front has one of her hands on the corpse, a common gesture in Attic *prothesis* scenes (Richter 1942, 83; Taylor 2014, 16). At least one of the females wears a *polos*. The female standing closest to the male on the more complete plaque is, unfortunately, fragmentary, but given the amount of space between her head and the border of the plaque, and the similarities in dress between the two females, it is likely that she also wore a *polos*.

Dawkins (1929b, 211) assigned these plaques to their own category – Style IV – and noted how different they were in artistic style and subject matter, suggesting a foreign origin. Recent interpretations continue to suggest that they came from outside Sparta (Fragkopoulou 2011, 91–3; Morgan 2016, 229), although little elaboration is offered on these interpretations beyond Dawkins' assumption. Furthermore, these more recent studies do not take into account the stylistic analyses by Marangou (1969) and Carter (1985) that place them more or less in the sequence of Laconian ivory carving. Seeing as they were found with Geometric pottery yet also some lead figurines, Dawkins (1929b) originally assigned them a date range of c. 900–740 BC. Boardman (1963) assigned them a date on or before 650 BC, while Marangou (1969, 51), in her revised stylistic scheme, placed them in the 640s, stating that the form of the plaques, while modelled in low relief was 'rein lakonisch'. Carter (1985, 148) agreed with Marangou on this date, noting the large, ringed eyes with plastically rendered eyeballs, which grow out of earlier reliefs from Marangou's Group B and Group E, dated anywhere from 660 to 620 BC.<sup>15</sup> These plaques thus fit squarely within the general carving styles of the ivory corpus, negating Dawkins' original assumption that they must have been of foreign origin.

The *prothesis* plaques, while fitting into the Laconian stylistic corpus of ivory carving, nevertheless portray highly anomalous subject matter. The *prothesis* is virtually absent from Archaic Laconian imagery, a lacuna some scholars attribute to Sparta's social reforms in this period that limited personal displays of luxury.<sup>16</sup> The *prothesis* imagery, which seems to have its origins in Amarna-period Egypt and Late Minoan (LM) IIIA2 Crete, proliferates in first-millennium Greece on Attic Geometric pottery.<sup>17</sup> The mature Geometric style, particularly that

<sup>14</sup> The plaques are currently in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens under the numbers NM 15518 and NM 16432.

<sup>15</sup> Marangou 1969, 50–3. Marangou notes similarities between the ringed eye of the older man and an ivory head of a bearded man, belonging to her Group E (Dawkins 1929c, pl. CLXVII n. 1). The thick, Daedalic-style hairlocks of the female figures also find parallels in other finds from Orthia's sanctuary (Marangou 1969, 50–1). This hairstyle lasted into the later seventh century, as witnessed in terracotta figurines and plaques from the Menelaion and Orthia's sanctuary. See Wace, Droop and Thompson 1908–9, fig. 3 nn. 32 and 37 for comparisons as well as Dawkins 1929c, pls XXIX–XXXI.

<sup>16</sup> Förtsch 2001, 98–9. The limitation on funerary ostentation is made explicit in Plutarch's *Instituta Laconica* 18. The reality behind these laws is debatable, but if they did occur, they are generally dated to c. 550 BC or slightly later (see Hodkinson 1997), which does not explain the absence of *prothesis* scenes in the 7th century BC. For the literary sources on Archaic Sparta, see Figueira 2016.

<sup>17</sup> The earliest *prothesis* scenes in Greece date to the Late Bronze Age on larnakes and on a fragmentary krater (Montecchi 2016; Baughan 2013, 394 n. 95; Cavanagh and Mee 1995). See Hiller 2006 for the Egyptian origins and routes of transmission of *prothesis* imagery to Greece in the Bronze Age–Geometric period (also Benson 1970; cf. Montecchi 2016, 691). Scholars such as Benndorf (1869) and Zschietzschmann (1928) represented the *prothesis* as a ceremony associated with loud, corporeal expressions of pain and grief, whose representation shifted from a public ceremony to more private scenes by the 5th century BC. To date, the majority of funerary scenes in



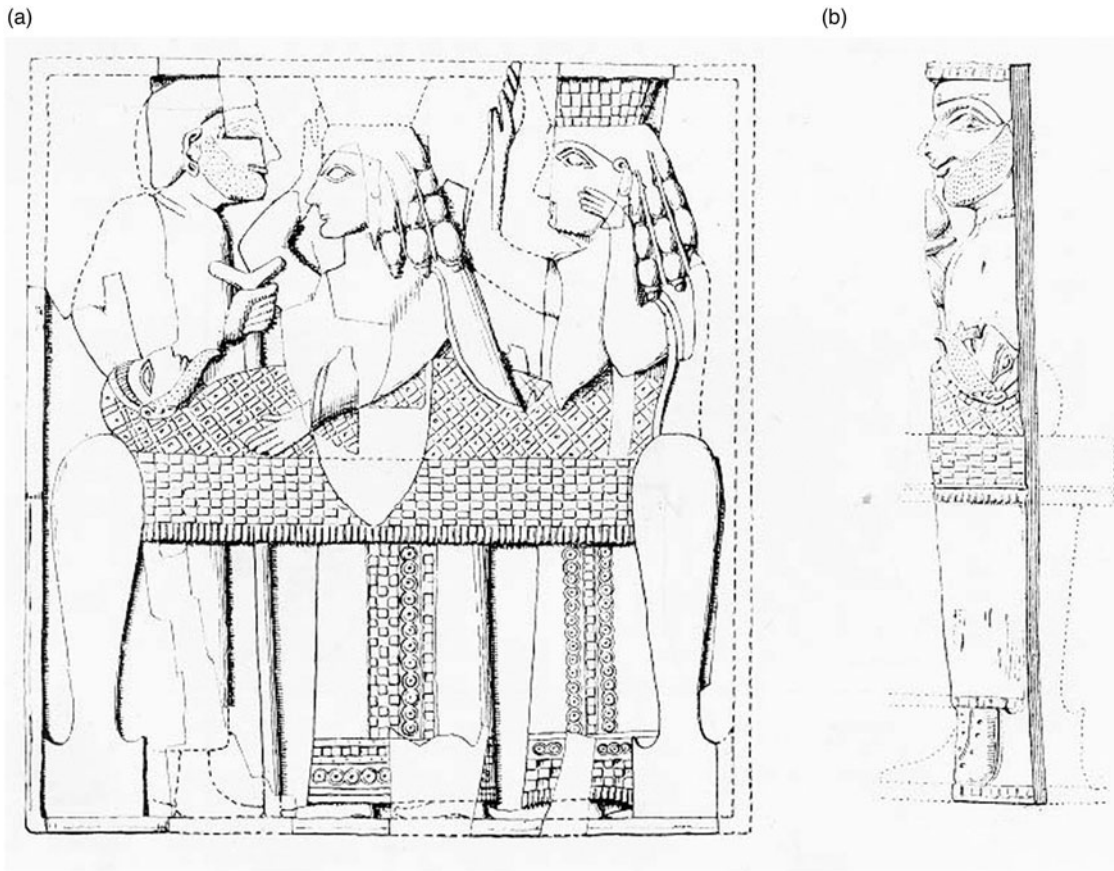


Fig. 5. Drawing of ivory plaques from the sanctuary of Orthia showing mirror image *prothesis* scene; height of (a) is 8.7 cm (Dawkins 1929c, pl. CII:2–3).

of the Dipylon Painter, portrays elaborate scenes full of individuals mourning the deceased, reminiscent of episodes from the Homeric epics (Fig. 7).<sup>18</sup> The portrayal of the *prothesis* continues in Black Figure plaques (Fig. 8) along with *loutrophoroi* and *phormiskoi* of the seventh and sixth centuries and on white-ground *lekythoi* in the fifth century, with scenes becoming increasingly private and domestic in nature.<sup>19</sup> Additional examples of this funerary rite come from Italy, Anatolia and Egypt.<sup>20</sup> Can we fit the *prothesis* plaques into the general characteristics of the Attic *prothesis* from this same period?

Geometric art can be found in Gudrun Ahlberg's 1971 monograph. To this corpus, Brigger and Giovannini (2004, 198 n. 46) add an Attic Krater (MN 806) and another fragment. See also Kauffmann-Samaras 1973, pl. 127b.

<sup>18</sup> Morris 1987, 50. Ahlberg (1971, 39–40) noted that, in most cases, the deceased was male. Mourners were shown in two groups: women interacting directly with the deceased, and those standing further back, gesturing in lamentation, comprised of males and females (see also Taylor 2014, 6–7).

<sup>19</sup> Oakley 2004, 76; Diogo de Souza and Barcellos Dias 2018, 72–3. On the Black Figure plaques: Richter 1942; Boardman 1955; Mommsen 1997, 68–71. Shapiro (1991) has suggested that Attic Black Figure scenes, combined with contemporary grave stelai and kouroi, continue the tradition of heroising the dead throughout the Archaic period. See Alexiou 2002, 22–3; Garland 2001, 28; Sourvinou-Inwood 1983; 1991; Zschietzschmann 1928, 30. Cf. Baughan (2013, 395 n. 100), who suggests that the rarity of the more public *ekphora* in Athenian art after the 7th century, especially in relation to the continued prominence of *prothesis* scenes, may signal a shift to more private funerary rituals well before the 5th century (Taylor 2014, 5; cf. Diogo de Souza and Barcellos Dias 2018).

<sup>20</sup> For the Chiusi stelai see Jannot 1984, 368–80; Taylor 2014. For the Paestum tombs see Pontrandolfo and Rouveret 1992, 48–50; Kurtz and Boardman 1971, 310–11, fig. 78. See Ahlberg 1971, 214–19, nos 51–2 and Mommsen 1997, 14–15 for examples outside Attica, and Baughan 2013, 190–2 for the *prothesis* in Anatolia.



Fig. 6. (a) (left) Photograph of Fig. 5a; height 8.7 cm (photograph by author, courtesy of the National Archaeological Museum, Athens, NM 15518). (b) (right) Photograph of Fig. 5b (photograph by author, courtesy of the National Archaeological Museum, Athens, NM 16432).



Fig. 7. *Prothesis* scene on Dipylon amphora, c. 760–750 BC (photograph by author, courtesy of the National Archaeological Museum, Athens, NM 804).

While certainly stemming from similar traditions, the scene differs from many Attic depictions of the *prothesis* in that a male stands at the head of the corpse rather than females, as is customary on Attic vessels and plaques from the seventh century.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, specific details of the figures on

<sup>21</sup> On this practice, see Shapiro 1991, 634. Taylor's (2014) study of the mid-late Archaic Chiusine reliefs, however, found that gender roles were much more mixed in these scenes than on Attic scenes (see also Humphries 1983).



Fig. 8. *Prothesis* scene on Black Figure pinax, c. 500 BC (© Walters Art Museum 48.225).

the ivory plaques diverge from Attic traditions, which only in rare cases lend themselves to mythical, divine or narrative interpretations.<sup>22</sup> The *prothesis* plaques, in fact, seem to anticipate fifth-century white-ground lekythoi scenes in terms of the smaller number of mourners and the inclusion of idiosyncratic features, although these plaques lack the private nature of the fifth-century examples, as will be discussed below.<sup>23</sup> The old man on the Spartan *prothesis* plaques is in very plain dress, while the two women wear elaborate skirts and *poloi*. Furthermore, the man seems to have shaved or cut his beard: stippling on the chin, more apparent on the fragmentary plaque, suggests the presence of the ‘five o’clock shadow’, whereas all other males on contemporary ivory plaques from the sanctuary have protruding beards. On Attic Black Figure plaques showing the *prothesis*, all males likewise have full, protruding beards.

It is possible that these plaques are referencing a specific death, to be discussed in the next section. My intent, however, is not to pinpoint a precise, fixed identity for the deceased and the mourners; rather, I intend to use these plaques to illuminate ideologies of *kléos* through death via the intertwining of mythical paradigms and actual ideals of Spartan citizens, which can also be read through the broader ivory assemblage at the sanctuary. In the next sections, I demonstrate the narrative and normative meanings of this particular *prothesis* scene through its iconographic significations, before turning to the broader ivory corpus.

### The death of a hero: narrative and normative considerations

Marangou (1969) suggested that the context of these plaques – namely Orthia’s sanctuary – must mean this scene symbolised a mythical death, of either a god or hero. In his 2001 monograph

<sup>22</sup> Snodgrass 1987, 136–47; Whitley 1991, 50–3; cf. Jannot 1984, 368; Taylor 2014, 21. See Diogo de Souza and Barcellos Dias 2018, 63–4 for discussion of differing scholarly interpretations of Attic *prothesis* scenes.

<sup>23</sup> There are a few Attic terracotta plaques from the 7th century – possibly metopes on tombs – that show only three individuals mourning the deceased, but these are typically parts of larger sets showing further mourners (e.g., Metropolitan Museum of Art 14.146.3a; Richter 1942).

Reinhard Förtsch argued instead that this scene could not be a mythical *prothesis* (p. 97). Förtsch asserted that the character of these plaques was more in line with the private funerary nature of Attic Black Figure plaques, and that the Laconian pieces must have represented brief attempts by the aristocracy to assert their distinction before this tradition was suppressed. Their prominence was derived from heroism achieved through battle in service to the state, as described by poets like Tyrtaeus (Förtsch 2001, 98–9). Yet there are several points of divergence from Attic models, as discussed above. Furthermore, that the plaques may represent an actual death does not negate the imagery having divine or mythical connotations (Whitley 1991, 52). As Luca Giuliani (2013, 30) asserts, ‘To position “everyday life” and “mythological narrative” as alternatives only creates confusion because the two do not operate on the same level and therefore cannot function as opposites that exclude one another.’ I would take this statement further and suggest that not only are they not opposed to one another – these two spheres inform and intersect with one another in striking ways. Nanno Marinatos (2002, 154) argues that genre and myth, the normative and the narrative, can be intertwined in iconographic programmes:

... genre and myth meet at an *axis defined by social tradition*: myth and genre express the same values. Thus, genre imagery can easily be turned into a specific story by the addition of a single inscription which specifies the name of the hero ... if normative rather than narrative considerations determine the choice of motifs, the *same scene* could be used with or without minor alterations to designate many different characters and the message would remain the same. [emphasis added]

Likewise, Jeffrey Hurwit (2002, 1–2) writes ‘We now recognize categories of imagery in which the distinction between the generic and the mythological, between the mortal and the heroic or divine, is not as strict.’ Many other Geometric and Archaic scenes – for instance, ship ‘abduction’ scenes – have likewise been read as mythical paradigms evoking general heroic atmospheres (Langdon 2006, 207). Hurwit (2011, 13), however, argues that we should not write off specific mythical/narrative meanings that would ultimately enhance the link between the achievement of heroic status and the sentiments and ideologies expressed in a particular myth: ‘the assimilation would be easier, the identification more complete, and the status more exalted and secure when the myth or hero was specific rather than vague’. These porous boundaries form the very heart of the matter, and are key to understanding the ideological aspirations expressed through this scene and through the ivory corpus as a whole. Key within these interpretations of course is the larger symbolic system into which a particular image, with its narrative and normative meanings, is inserted. Thierry Petit (2011, 15) rightly points out that, just as the decoding of languages requires complete sentences rather than isolated words, ‘ce sont les documents qui présentent ces combinaisons de motifs et la “syntaxe” de leur articulation sémantique qui doivent avoir notre préférence’. This methodology essentially asks us to interpret singular instances of iconography as parts of larger systems of symbolism that worked in concert with one another, whose overall meaning could be read by ancient viewers. Such an approach allows us to mine the deeper social meanings inherent in seemingly anomalous imagery, a good example being the Judgment of Paris scene on the Chigi Vase, analysed by Jeffrey Hurwit (2002) as referencing broader themes of elite *paideia*, on which more below. This syntax will be examined in the following sections, first within the larger ivory corpus and comparative Archaic figural compositions, and then within the archaeological context of the sanctuary.

Turning for now back to the *prothesis* plaques, we can first consider their narrative meanings. There are a few major reasons to see this *prothesis* scene as having mythological connotations, which serve to enhance – rather than negate – its association with more generic ideals of heroic *kléos* arguably expressed by the plaques and the corpus as a whole. The unique placement of the (living) older male and two females is telling, as is the shaven face of the older male. The two main mythological contenders for this scene in its Laconian context are: (1) the death of Hyacinthus, a Spartan prince accidentally killed in mythical traditions by a discus thrown by his

lover Apollo and worshipped near the village of Amyclae,<sup>24</sup> and (2) the *prothesis* of Hector as known from Book 24 of the *Iliad*, a suggestion originally put forth by T.J. Dunbabin (Marangou 1969, 53; Förtsch 2001, 97).

Certainly Hyacinthus is an attractive candidate at first glance: the Spartans faithfully mourned his death on an annual basis in the *Hyacinthia*, and Pausanias (3.18.9–3.19.5) described a tomb to Hyacinthus underneath an altar and statue of Apollo alongside a famous ‘throne’ wrought by Bathycles (see below). The sanctuary at Amyclae shows more-or-less continuous activity from the end of the Bronze Age into the Archaic period. Its votive findings and associated myths seem to suggest cults to the mortal Hyacinthus and to Apollo.<sup>25</sup> While the death of Hyacinthus is thus enticing as an interpretation, it is difficult to sustain an argument that incorporates the full range of iconography on these plaques. Hyacinthus’ death by Apollo, furthermore, is known from Hesiod’s *Catalogue of Women* (Frag. 102, Oxyrhynchus Papyri 1359 fr. 3), but the *Hyacinthia*’s first mention is in Herodotus (9.6–7). Scholars suggest this festival developed earlier than its first literary mention – namely in the late eighth or early seventh century, when Amyclae was incorporated into the Spartan polis and evidence of cultic activity increased within the sanctuary (Vlachou 2018, 95; cf. Vlachou 2017; Conde 2008; Dietrich 1975). But there is less certainty that all of the elements associated with the later known festival were in place (the fullest description is found in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae* (4.139d–f)). Marangou (1969, 53) pointed out, moreover, that the festivities mourning Hyacinthus seemed to have nothing to do with his *prothesis*, nor does he have a clear relationship to Orthia.<sup>26</sup>

The particular combination of two females, one older male with a shaven face, and a mature deceased male makes the second suggestion – the *prothesis* of Hector – more attractive. Indeed, Marangou (1969, 53) ultimately favoured this reading as ‘die einzige “wahrscheinliche, wenn auch nicht zu beweisende” Interpretation’. This latter understanding allows us to identify all four figures, with an old man, Priam, facing Hector’s wife Andromache and mother Hecuba, and all three mourning a deceased Hector. Another possible extant example of Hector’s *prothesis* is witnessed on two metopes from the north frieze of the first temple of Hera at Foce del Sele in southern Italy, which dates to the sixth century BC and portrays a number of episodes from the Trojan War. In one metope, two women raise their hands in mourning, interpreted as Helen and Andromache. One woman holds a child, possibly Hector and Andromache’s son, Astyanax. The metope next to this one shows the *prothesis* of a corpse on a bier, with another figure, possibly Hecuba, standing over it (van Keuren 1989, pl. IV). According to Pausanias, the Throne of Apollo at Amyclae also showed a scene of Trojans bearing libations to Hector (3.18.16).

In examining comparanda for the depiction of Hector’s *prothesis* in Archaic art, we might draw further connections to Crete. While this island was likely the source for early ivory carving styles, as discussed above, it also furnishes a possible image of a deceased Hector from a sanctuary setting in the form of an incised one-handled cup from the Iron Age/Archaic sanctuary of Kommos dating to the seventh century, originally published by Maria Shaw (1983), and recently reinterpreted by Antonis Kotsonas (2019a). The cup is incised in similar fashion to contemporary vessels in Gortyn, and may come from this site. It shows three individuals, one lying face-down in an elaborate frame. Kotsonas identifies this figure as Hector’s body lying, dishonoured, in the camp of the Achaeans (see *Iliad* 22.395; 23.24–5; 24.18), with Priam (the figure on the left) arriving before Achilles (on the right) to beg for his son’s body.

<sup>24</sup> See Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women*, Fragment 102 (*POxy* 1359 fr. 3). Cf. Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.10.3, Pausanias 3.1.3; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.162–219; Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 2.80–4. The sanctuary is located on the hill of Agia Kyriaki, about 5 km south of Sparta (Eder 2013, 393). See Malkin 2003, 112 n. 211 for ancient sources on ‘pre-Dorian’ Amyclae.

<sup>25</sup> Herodotus 9.6.1–7; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.218–19; Pausanias 4.19.4; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4.139d–f. Cult remains date back to the Late Helladic (LH) IIIB2/IIIC (Cartledge 2002, 69–70; Delivorrias 2009; Kennell 2010, 31; Eder 2013, 393; Vlachou 2017).

<sup>26</sup> But see Vlachou 2017 on a large terracotta head of a female wearing a *polos* and snake from the Amyclae sanctuary, possibly suggesting the presence of a female divinity at this site.

The other side of the cup, which is fragmentary, depicts individuals who seem to be engaged in a footrace, interspersed with birds, possibly running towards a ‘Tree of Life’.<sup>27</sup> A Laconian III kylix from Orthia’s sanctuary likewise depicts four individuals racing around a tree (Dawkins 1929c, pl. IX; cf. Pipili 2018), and the similarities between the Orthia votives and Gortyn have been noted elsewhere (Marangou 1969, 46; Carter 1985, 156–7; Salapata 2009, 330 n. 4). These types of contests may have been staged at the death of an important individual, akin to the funerary games of Patroclus. Overall, if Kotsonas’ interpretation of the Kommos cup is accurate, then we have a more-or-less contemporary depiction of Hector’s death – albeit a different stage of his death – from central Crete, a region with stylistic ties to Sparta through ivory carving, as well as political and social ties (Kotsonas 2019b, 399–400). Both examples derive from cultic settings, to be further explored below.<sup>28</sup>

To consider the finer details of the plaques: Priam is frequently depicted as an old man in the *Iliad* (e.g., *Iliad* 24.560, 599, 618, 683). While we have no evidence from the *Iliad* suggesting that Priam shaved in mourning,<sup>29</sup> early fifth-century Attic red-figure vases show Priam with a stubbly face, including a kylix attributed to the Briseis Painter possibly showing Priam approaching Achilles (Fig. 9).<sup>30</sup> The comic word *πριαμούομαι* meant ‘I shave my head to look like a tragic Priam’, and the masks of Priam were seemingly shown as clean-shaven.<sup>31</sup> One issue with this interpretation is that the third female (Helen?) is missing, although this may simply be due to spatial constraints. Hector’s *prothesis* is rare in Greek art, so there are no clear conventions for its portrayal.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, not all early narrative art was inspired by Homer’s works, given the large corpus of oral traditions circulating in the Greek world.<sup>33</sup> Even in cases where the subject matter reflects the Homeric poems – as arguably is the case with the *prothesis* plaques – we cannot assume, in this early period, direct knowledge of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* in the forms that we presently know them (Snodgrass 1998, 150; 2006; cf. Borg 2010, 98; Hurwit 2011, 4–5; Knodell 2021, 224). Finally, we should not assume a one-way translation from myth to iconography, but recognise that artists might take their own liberties with the portrayal of a particular scene, perhaps for mundane reasons (e.g., the space available), but perhaps to intensify narrative or normative meanings.<sup>34</sup> In the case of the plaques, the three mourning figures fit nicely into the space, and room is left to underscore the subtleties of the scene, including Priam’s shaved beard, which invokes narrative meanings, and the females, whose headgear – the *polos* – suggests divinity (see below), which invokes normative meanings.

<sup>27</sup> The tree in particular is heavily restored, although this motif is not unknown in Crete in this period (e.g., Levi 1945, pls XV:2, XX:2). A second, fragmentary incised cup from Kommos found with the other cup also shows a warrior, possibly running, near a palmette (Shaw 1983, fig. 3).

<sup>28</sup> Other examples of funerary imagery from sanctuaries in this period include a possible *prothesis* scene on an Attic vessel from Isthmia, a plaque from the sanctuary of Hera at Samos showing a warrior carrying his dead companion, and possible clay plaques from Ithome (Fragkopoulou 2011, 89 and n. 19 for bibliography).

<sup>29</sup> Although there is reference to the cutting of the hair as part of the funerary rituals (*Iliad* 24.163–5; *Odyssey* 4.197–8, 24.46) (see Petropoulou 2011, 589 and n. 56).

<sup>30</sup> LIMC VII, 1994, 515, no. 69, pl. 403, s.v. ‘Priamos’ [J. Neils]; Osborne 2008, 47–8, fig. 2.5ab; Kotsonas 2019a, n. 124. Cutting the beard in mourning is not well attested in the Greek world. This custom is known in the Levant: the Ugaritic account of El mourning Baal’s demise has the elderly king of the gods cut his locks (*Keilschrifttexte aus Ugarit* 1.5.6.11–25); biblical accounts suggest that this custom was popular in Israel (Isaiah 15:2; Jeremiah 41:5).

<sup>31</sup> *Com. Adesp.* Fr. 414 K.–A. on *πριαμούομαι*: “‘I shall be Priam’d’”: Shaved; because the tragic mask of Priam has a shaven face’ (trans. Edmonds 1961, 490–1; cf. Cowan 2014, n. 10). Pollux (*Onomasticon* IV, 133–54) also describes various kinds of special masks, including one of Priam, possibly also referring to its close-cropped appearance (cf. Sutton 1984, 182).

<sup>32</sup> Priam’s visit to Achilles’ tent to retrieve Hector’s body, on the other hand, is not: this scene is repeated in Black and Red Figure vase painting (Giuliani 2013, 139–56).

<sup>33</sup> Lowenstam 2008; Langdon 2008; Snodgrass 1998, 143, 147. See Ahlberg-Cornell 1992 on Greek iconography from the early and mid-7th century related to the Epic Cycle and Pipili 1987, 83 for Spartan uses of epic in art. Imagery from the sanctuary of Orthia also relates to episodes not in the Homeric epics – e.g., the ivory comb depicting the Judgment of Paris from the *Cypria* (Ahlberg-Cornell 1992, fig. 70; Dawkins 1929c, pl. CXXVII).

<sup>34</sup> Lowenstam 2008, 1–2. See Giuliani (2013, 151–2) on liberties that later vase painters take with the scene of Priam ransoming Hector’s body from Achilles, to highlight the core of Achilles’ character.



Fig. 9. Tondo of kylix attributed to the Briseis Painter, possibly showing Priam with shaved beard coming to ransom the body of Hector from Achilles (© Trustees of the British Museum).

### Divine females

We can take the intertwinement of the normative and narrative even further through turning to the females on the *prothesis* plaques, whose accoutrements underscore the normative ideas of the immortal *kléos* that heroes would enjoy. They wear the Cretan *epiblema* and embroidered skirts with similar – though not identical – designs composed of checkers and circles with dots in the centre. The fringed hems of the skirts were popular in Cretan art of the seventh century BC, and derived from Hittite and Syrian fashions.<sup>35</sup>

The most distinctive iconographic element on the females, however, is the *polos* worn by at least one (and likely both of them), an accoutrement with links to divinity. Malcolm Bell (1981, 81, nos 64–84), for instance, noted a class of standing, clothed, *polos*-wearing females at Morgantina. Bell was adamant that they represented deities. From the seventh century BC, he argued, the *polos* was ‘the characteristic adornment of goddesses ... There are few occasions, if any, when it is worn by mortals’ (Bell 1981, 81; cf. Levi 1945, 31; Marangou 1969, 29–30). In the Levant, Anatolia and Mesopotamia, female figures, often naked, wear the *polos*, and are frequently identified as goddesses.<sup>36</sup> The naked standing female with a *polos* appears in the Greek world in the Iron Age, particularly on Crete, possibly by way of itinerant Levantine artists or else the transfer of figurine and mould technology via Cyprus.<sup>37</sup> The nakedness alongside the *polos* is generally taken to denote a goddess in these cases.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Benda-Weber 2016, 8–9, fig. 10. On the funerary importance of textiles: Taylor 2014, 19–21, 23; Vlachou 2017, 31–8. See Boutsikas 2020, 136 and Luginbill 2009 on the dedication of a robe to Orthia in Alcman’s *Louvre Partheneion*, a rite with ties to the Messenian Orthia.

<sup>36</sup> E.g., Mesopotamian Ishtar (Collon 2001, pl. 33:240); Levantine goddesses (Budin 2015a, 317, fig. 4, 329, fig. 22); Anatolian goddesses (Winter 1976a, 46, fig. 31; Naumann 1983, 18–19, 20, 23, pls 5:2–4, 6:3, 7:1; Roller 1999, figs 4, 7–11; Baughan 2013, 89–92).

<sup>37</sup> Böhm 1990; Erickson 2009, 365 n. 37 for bibliography. Many sites throughout Crete in the 7th century have yielded figurines and plaques of a nude female with *polos*. From Grave 13 of Athens’ Kerameikos cemetery came five nude female ivory figurines in a *polos* (Böhm 1990, 24–6; Coldstream 2003, 130–2). See Vlachou 2017, 28–9.

<sup>38</sup> Erickson 2009, 364; Miller Ammerman 1991, 204, 226; Marinatos 2000, 82; Budin 2003, 64 n. 91. See Böhm 1990, 87, for critiques on the classification of such figures as goddesses and, more recently, Uhlenbrock 2016, 6–9.

More recently scholars have approached the assumption that the *polos* equals divinity with greater caution, and have instead suggested this accoutrement indicates mortal females engaged in ritual (Marconi 2010, 327) or else draws a link between mortal and goddess.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, the *polos* does not show up in *prothesis* imagery, but it is not absent from the realm of death. Cybele sometimes appears in divine funerary banquet stelae wearing a *polos* or mural crown across Italy, Greece and Anatolia, from the Archaic to Roman periods.<sup>40</sup> Greek funerary figurines often feature females in *poloi* (Bell 1981, 82; Higgins 1954, nos 846–51, 860, pls 118, 122). Examples from the Archaic period show a seated female in a *polos* with a plank-body decorated with geometric designs holding a child, thought to represent the protective and regenerative power of a deity (Hadzisteliou Price 1978, 1–9; de Polignac 1995, 44–5).

While the *polos* is often associated with deities, we should recognise that mortals may wear it in ritual settings, possibly in the likeness of a goddess. This link with divinity is significant when interpreting the normative, heroic meaning of the *prothesis* plaques. While the mythological reading would suggest we see these females as mortal characters – namely Hecuba and Andromache – the mourning of dead heroes by females took on special valency in epic, linked to the *kléos* of the deceased. This sense of *kléos* amounted to a heroic code that Michael Silk explains as ‘the logical chain which links death, glory, art, and immortality. Death is inescapable ... yet certain acts ... can achieve the glory that outlives finite life, so long as they are perpetuated in art’ (Silk 1987, 70, cited in Perrell 2008, 93–4; see also Vernant 1982; Nagy 1979, 149). The *kléos* of dead heroes was inscribed into memory first through funerary laments, the *thrénos*, and the *góos*.<sup>41</sup> These acts of commemoration had divine connotations, not least in their ability to bestow immortality upon heroes. Not all scholars agree that the *góos* sung by females was a medium for the bestowing of *kléos* (Derderian 2001, 43; Murnaghan 1999, 213; Holst-Warhaft 1992), although Helen is frequently singled out from other women as having almost divine powers in bestowing *kléos* (R.P. Martin 2008, 126; Clader 1976, 2; Pantelia 2002; Clarke 2019, 326–7). Furthermore, other females in the *Iliad* who spontaneously perform the lament upon first seeing a dead hero are likened to goddesses. At *Iliad* 19.282–6, Briseis is likened to ‘Golden Aphrodite’ when she catches sight of Patroclus’ body. As she begins wailing, she is ‘a mortal woman alike to goddesses’. At *Iliad* 24.697–706, Cassandra is also likened to Golden Aphrodite when she sees her father, Priam, returning with Hector’s body, and breaks into a wail.<sup>42</sup> The linking of mortal females with divine power upon lamenting the deceased suggests subtle yet significant connections between the act of lamenting and the deceased’s attainment of immortal fame through ritual and commemoration. Such sentiments may similarly be expressed subtly through the *polos* worn by the females on the *prothesis* plaques, and can also be read within the iconographic programme of the ivory corpus and the wider votive assemblage found at the sanctuary of Orthia.

Elsewhere in the Greek world, including mainland Greece, Sicily and southern Italy, scholars generally assume enthroned females with the *polos* also symbolise a goddess, most often Hera or Cybele (Merker 2000, 328; Erickson 2009, 374; Barfoed 2013, 99–100).

<sup>39</sup> Merker 2000, 327; Gawlinski 2015, 103. 5th-century BC terracotta figurines of girls characterised as ‘dancing girls’ from Corinth and Athens often sport a *polos* (Davidson and Thompson 1943, 114–18; see also Nicholls 1995, 435–6). In the Hellenistic period, brides wore a type of crenelated *polos* that derived from the Hittite wall-crown worn by Cybele (Thompson 1954, 100; Müller 1915, 87–8, 466–551). On priestesses mimicking goddesses through their adornments: Connolly 2007, 104–15.

<sup>40</sup> See Mitropoulou 1996 for examples. Carter (1995) draws associations between aristocratic banquets and funerary rites through the use of the *klinē* in Bronze and Iron Age Greece (cf. Baughan 2013, 215–16).

<sup>41</sup> See Derderian 2001, chapters 1 and 2, for detailed readings into terms used for mourning in the *Iliad*. See also Vermeule 1979, 15–17, for terms and practices of mourning.

<sup>42</sup> These lines seem to evoke Aphrodite’s spontaneous mourning of Adonis (Faraone 2021; Sappho Frs 140a, 168 (Lobel and Page 1955); Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 387–96; Bion, *Epitaphios Adonidos*; Theocritus, *Idylls* 20.34–6; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.717–27; Plutarch, *Life of Alcibiades* 18.2–3; Lucian, *De Dea Syria* 6–8; Ammianus Marcellinus 22.9.15; Origen, *Homilies on Ezekiel* 8.14; Jerome, *Commentary on Ezekiel* 3.8.14; Cyril, *Commentary on Isaiah* 18.1–2; cf. Propertius 2.13).



### The normative meanings: from myth to actuality

In terms of the normative meanings, who were the ‘actual heroes’ invoked through Hector’s *prothesis*? I suggest this image – and its insertion in the wider ivory corpus – evoked ideals associated with the elites of Sparta, ideals which increasingly became applied to the wider citizen body in the seventh and sixth centuries, as evident from the contemporary poetry of Tyrtaeus. In later periods Orthia’s sanctuary was the focal point of training and competition that became known as the *agōgē*, which reinforced social categories between citizenry (*homoioi*) and outsiders (*perioikoi* and *heilotai*) (Kennell 1995, 137; Ducat 2006, 69–117; Des Bouvrie 2009; Waugh 2009; Kōiv 2015, 52; Thommen 2017, 15; Flower 2018, 431, 435). This system of initiatory trials included various athletic and choral contests celebrated in the summer festival known as the *Gymnopaediae* (Pettersson 1992, 52–6; Kennell 1995, 75; Flower 2018, 439–40), also connected to Orthia, based on inscriptions linking worship of Orthia to this festival (Rose 1929, 406). Scholars have linked the eighth- and seventh-century finds, including the ivories, to early assertions of unity and power amongst Spartan elites (Morgan 2016, 237, 254; Des Bouvrie 2009), although there is no evidence for the *homoioi* or *agōgē* in the seventh century.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, the votive findings below the sand layer, which include bronze and lead jewellery, bronze and ivory figurines, and ivory plaques and seals, do suggest activities of elites who had the means to procure these materials and craft techniques, which could have extended to control over both the iconographic repertoire and ritual activities conducted at the sanctuary. In the final section I consider more practical aspects such as the accessibility of these votives to citizens within the sanctuary in the seventh century, but it is possible that these ivories were originally the result of a more exclusive elite. Nonetheless, the seventh and sixth centuries seem to be a transformative period in Sparta, when a greater number of citizens accessed communal cults in and around the sanctuary, and it is certainly possible that the symbolism on the ivories could have gradually referenced a wider (male) citizen body over the course of this period.

Tyrtaeus’ poetry may signal this social shift, offering striking examples of the normative meanings of *kléos* through death, using mythical characters to underscore values of collective heroism in defence of the *polis*. These poems seem to be a direct exhortation of a unified citizen body to fight for the *polis* in the contexts of the Second Messenian War (Suda iv.610.5 Adler), stressing the status of *athánatos* a dead warrior achieves through his *kléos* won in service to the state (10.1–2; 12.31–2).<sup>44</sup> Through his words Tyrtaeus brought male citizens together into a cohesive hoplite phalanx to defend the *polis*.<sup>45</sup> His poems expanded the illustrious genealogy from ‘unconquered Heracles’ to all citizens and not just the royal bloodlines (fr. 11.1), and thus the achievement of *aretē* to all who stood firm and fought in the face of bloody slaughter, contrasted with great shame for those who fled or allowed the elderly to die in front (fr. 12.1–14; cf. 10.1–10).<sup>46</sup>

The appeal to *kléos* is strengthened by subtle allusions to Homeric heroes like Hector, who exhorted the Trojans with the reminder that it was not unseemly to die for one’s homeland (*Iliad* 15.494–9) (Bowra 1938, 65; Tarkow 1983, 53). Tyrtaeus in fact refers to death as *kalòs thánatos* (10.1–2, 30), which appears in the *Iliad* in the line πάντα δὲ καλὰ θανόντι περ (22.73), spoken by Priam in his plea to Hector. Both Tyrtaeus’ and Homer’s passages contrast the great pity of an old man who lays dead with the beauty of those who die young, for whom ‘all is

<sup>43</sup> The term *homoioi* first appears in Xenophon: *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 13.7, *Hellenica* 3.3.5 and *Anabasis* 4.6.14.

<sup>44</sup> Gerber 1999; cf. Bremmer 2006, 23 n. 82; Faraone 2006. Beyond Tyrtaeus, the Hippocoontides in Alcman’s *Louvre Parthenaion* are given the epithets ἔξοχον ἡμισίων, a phrase referring to the generation of heroes and promise of immortality after death (Ferrari 2008, 22 and n. 3; Nagy 2005, 83–9; cf. Boutsikas 2020, 135; Luginbill 2009, 33; Bremmer 2006, 24–5). See Nobili 2011 and 2016 on elegies performed for the war dead at the *Gymnopaediae*, reflected in Simonides’ later elegy (Fragment 11), which summons the Muse to help the poet commemorate the *aretē* of the recently dead, whose *kléos* will be immortal (*P. Oxy.* 59.3965; Boedeker 1995, 219).

<sup>45</sup> Athenaeus (14.630f) explains how young men would learn Tyrtaeus’ poems in their schooling and sing them both marching on campaign and eating at their mess. On the emergence of the hoplite phalanx at Sparta, see Cartledge 1977.

<sup>46</sup> Although see Luginbill 2002 on Fr. 12 West, which arguably leans more towards individual heroism than communal glory.

seemly' (*epéoiiken*) – even (or especially) when death comes in battle (Tyrtaeus 10.27; *Iliad* 22.71; Garner 2014, 8–12). The compelling appeals to strive for such an honourable and beautiful death on behalf of the *polis* illuminate the normative messaging in the *prothesis* plaques. The connection to these lines from the *Iliad* augments the connection of honourable death with Hector, who, despite being a non-Greek, is a hero whose ideals are to be emulated, as one who fought and died for his city. As Marinatos (2002, 168) notes, it is fitting that the *Iliad* ends with the mourning of Hector (cf. Whitley 2002, 227).

We cannot be absolutely sure that every viewer would have seen Hector in these plaques, particularly from the etic position of the 'omniscient modern viewer' (Lynch 2017, 133–4). It is possible that an entirely different episode was intended, but the general themes of heroism, commemoration and immortal fame nonetheless cut through any specific reading. Indeed, the intertwining of the specific and the generic in much of Archaic Greek art, as outlined by scholars like Hurwit and Marinatos (discussed above), allows us to grasp the complexities of this polysemic imagery, and to see meaning and interpretation as dynamic rather than fixed. In other words, recognizing this intertwining allows us to speak in terms of 'both ... and ...' rather than 'either ... or ...', highlighting the porous boundaries between categories we often impose on ancient art: these plaques can reference an actual hero, but may also reference more generic ideals of dying a death worthy of mourning and commemoration, one which bridges mortality and everlasting fame. These porosities, indeed, seem to be a hallmark of complex figural art in the Archaic period, to which I turn next.

#### PLACING THE *PROTHESIS* PLAQUES IN THE IVORY CORPUS

The *prothesis* plaques are but two small pieces of a larger corpus, and while they appear anomalous, a closer consideration of the interlocking symbolisms of the corpus suggests an iconographic programme analogous to arrangements and symbolisms on other Archaic-period media, some extant in the archaeological record and some known only from textual sources. A comparison with these other media can thus be instructive for understanding how the varied iconographies of the ivory corpus could have been interwoven into larger figural compositions that expressed normative messages to viewers. Fig. 10 shows the subject matter of the ivory plaques from Styles II–V, leaving out ivory combs, seals and *protomai*. These other objects will be discussed, alongside iconography in other media, such as bone, terracotta, lead and limestone, but it is important to consider the plaques as a unit, given the suggestion that many of these pieces may have decorated furniture or cultic implements. The first task is thus to consider how the ivory plaques may have worked together as a series of interwoven iconographies, and I will use several examples of Archaic figural art to clarify their overall composition. I take as a starting point two well-known pieces described by Pausanias and connected to Laconia that were rife with iconography, each of which ended up in sanctuaries and contained connections to Laconian art and ritual, in order to explore how we might envision the Orthia ivories working together. I then turn to extant pieces of art from the seventh and sixth centuries to clarify some of the deeper semantic meanings of these compositions focused on death and *kléos*.

#### Archaic figural compositions in text and art

In Book 5, Pausanias provides an extensive description of a famous dedication at Olympia, the so-called Chest of Cypselus (5.17.5–5.19.10; cf. Herodotus 5.92), the second longest descriptive excursus in his work (Snodgrass 2006, 424). He depicts it as carved out of cedar wood with figures sculpted in ivory, gold and the cedar wood itself, and describes five horizontal scenes, with the second and fourth divided into smaller, separate panels (not unlike metopes) and the first, third and fifth registers forming longer compositions (similar to an Ionic frieze). One remarkable feature of the Chest is the extensive use of text, including hexameter epigrams,

## Ivories from the Sanctuary of Orthia

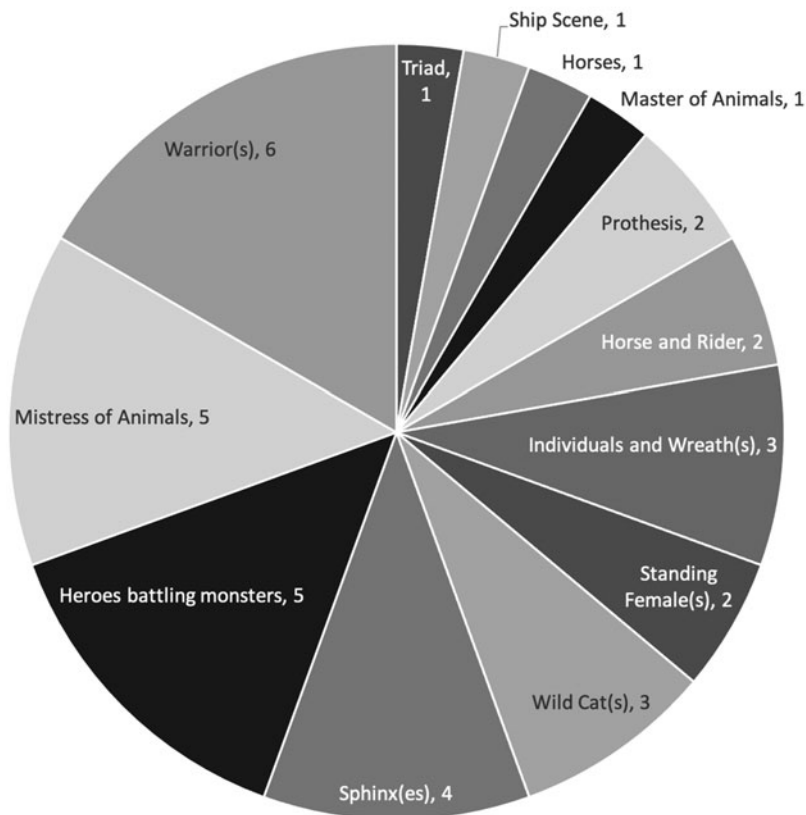


Fig. 10. Subject matter on the ivory plaques from the sanctuary of Orthia, showing Styles II–V (after Dawkins 1929b).

which are clearly integral to Pausanias' ability to identify characters and scenes.<sup>47</sup> While it is worth considering to what extent Pausanias is truthfully describing the art, Barbara Borg (2010) notes how precise he is in describing the direction he takes around the chest. He expresses instances where he cannot figure out certain schema, including why Artemis has wings on her shoulders (5.19.5).<sup>48</sup> Others have suggested that the compositions he describes match iconographical schemes and inscriptions on Middle Corinthian pottery from the early sixth century (Payne 1931, 125; Amyx 1988, 397–429; Splitter 2000, 51–3; Carter 1989, 362; Borg 2010, 84). Nonetheless, the chest was unique in its use of allegory and personification (Borg 2002), matched only perhaps by the Shield of Heracles (Ps.-Hesiod, *Shield* 139–317).

Pausanias suggests that Eumelus of Corinth was the sculptor (5.19.10), and some scholars argue the Chest was a work of Corinth (Snodgrass 1998, 109; Splitter 2000, 50–3). Jane Carter, conversely, suggested that the carvers may have been Laconian, based on a number of ivory *à jour* relief figures from a hoard, discovered in 1939 at Delphi, containing gold, ivory, silver and bronze objects damaged in a fire and placed in two bothroi around the end of the fifth century

<sup>47</sup> Snodgrass 2006, 425. Pausanias uses the word *larnax* to describe this Chest, which suggests a rectangular box, but many scholars have suggested that it was instead a round, barrel- or beehive-like container, given its name, *kypsele* (Roux 1963, 279–86; Carter 1989, 360–1; Splitter 2000, 148–60; Borg 2010, 81–2). See reconstruction by W. von Massow in Snodgrass 2006, fig. 23:1.

<sup>48</sup> He also makes some mistakes, including assuming Iolaus to be taking part in funerary games, when in reality he probably belongs to the adjacent scene showing Heracles slaying the Hydra (Borg 2010, 83–4; see also Snodgrass 2006, 426; Habicht 1985).

BC (Carter 1989; Amandry 1939). These *à jour* reliefs contained various scenes, including the Calydonian boar hunt, the ambush of Troilos, and the departure of Amphiaraios, among others (Carter 1989, 357–8). The excavator compared the choice of scenes to those on the Chest of Cypselus (Amandry 1939, 105), although there have been debates over their stylistic origins (Amandry 1939, 106; Marangou 1969, 191–2). Carter (1989) suggested that the Delphi reliefs were the product of a Laconian school of carving, based on a number of stylistic markers noted in the Orthia ivories. The decline in ivory sources at Sparta meant that carvers had to use the cheaper medium of bone after *c.* 570, and may have welcomed the opportunity to apply their skills at Delphi on ivory. Given the close association between the Delphi reliefs and the Chest of Cypselus, Laconian carvers may have also been involved in the creation of the latter.<sup>49</sup>

It is worth considering another piece dedicated in a sanctuary that was rife with iconography, and which was located much closer to the sanctuary of Orthia, namely the Throne of Apollo at Amyclae. This monument was also discussed by Pausanias (3.18.9–3.19.2), who tells us that Bathycles of Magnesia made it. Unlike the Chest of Cypselus, Pausanias does not give as detailed a description of this monument (3.18.10). Perhaps the greater brevity given to the Throne as opposed to the Chest was because this ‘Throne’ was in reality a much larger monument. The various imaginative reconstructions going back to the early nineteenth century suggest the difficulty of envisioning what it actually looked like, however (Faustoferri 1996; Bammer 2008; Delivorrias 2009). The precinct of Apollo at Amyclae was known to contain a circular stepped altar, which formed the base for the *xoanon* statue of Apollo that stood in the middle of the Throne and under which the tomb of Hyacinthus was located (Pausanias 3.19.1–3).<sup>50</sup> Delivorrias (2009, 134) suggests that the throne was a three-storey construction, made out of marble and wood using Doric and Ionic details, with the images described by Pausanias painted on wooden *pinakes*.

Both the Chest and the Throne thus provide examples of large, multi-scene iconographic compositions that appeared in sanctuaries, and were connected in some way with Laconian artists, whether through similar style and medium (the Chest, via the Delphi ivories) or through location (the Throne). Whether or not Laconian artists made the Chest and/or the Throne is less important than using these pieces to envision how the Orthia ivories from Styles II–V may have worked together as a complex iconographic composition. The breakdown of the subject matter in the ivory corpus (Fig. 10), the Chest (Fig. 11) and the Throne (Fig. 12) reveals propensities towards scenes showing agonistic acts (heroes battling monsters, battle scenes and horsemen), monsters and ritual scenes (including deities) (see Appendix 2, Tables A2:1 and A2:2, for iconography included in each category). There are finer-grained connections too: both the Chest and Throne show the Judgment of Paris/Alexander, a type not popular in figured pottery, although it appears on the Chigi Olpe (see below) and on an ivory comb from the sanctuary of Orthia.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Carter 1989, 374. Carter noted that the bothroi at Delphi lay just 10 metres west of the Treasury of the Corinthians, which Herodotus remarked was actually the Treasury of Cypselus (1.14). This association prompted Carter (1989, 371) to suggest that a Cypselid – possibly Periander – may have dedicated an ivory-figured chest at Delphi using Laconian ivory carvers in gratitude for the Oracle’s support of Cypselus. The reason for the Chest of Cypselus being dedicated at Olympia rather than Delphi may have been due to Delphi’s role in the First Sacred War (594–585 BC), prompting Periander to court the patronage of Olympia (Carter 1989, 373–4). Pausanias does mention a number of other pieces at Olympia that were made by Laconian artists, who were all students of Dipoinos and Skyllis, and whose subject matter mirrored scenes on the Chest of Cypselus and Throne of Apollo (5.17.1–2).

<sup>50</sup> Excavations at Amyclae by Christos Tsountas uncovered a circular foundation, suggested first to be the throne and later to be the altar; subsequent excavations uncovered a rectangular building (Fiechter 1918, 135), but many of these remains were used as *spolia* in the rebuilding of the church of Ayia Kyriaki. See, most recently, Delivorrias 2009 for discussions of the throne’s reconstruction and Bilis and Magnisali 2009 for ongoing study of the *spolia*.

<sup>51</sup> Ahlberg-Cornell 1992, fig. 70; Dawkins 1929c, pl. CXXVII. See LIMC VII, 1994, 177, nos 1–2, s.v. ‘Paridis Iudicium’ [A. Kossatz-Deissmann], showing this scene on an amphora dated to *c.* 520/510 BC (Munich, Antikensig. J 107) and an amphora from Vulci in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (1960.790), *c.* 510 BC. For further examples in pottery and other media from the Archaic to Roman periods along with commentary see LIMC VII, 1994, 178–88, s.v. ‘Paridis Iudicium’ [A. Kossatz-Deissmann].

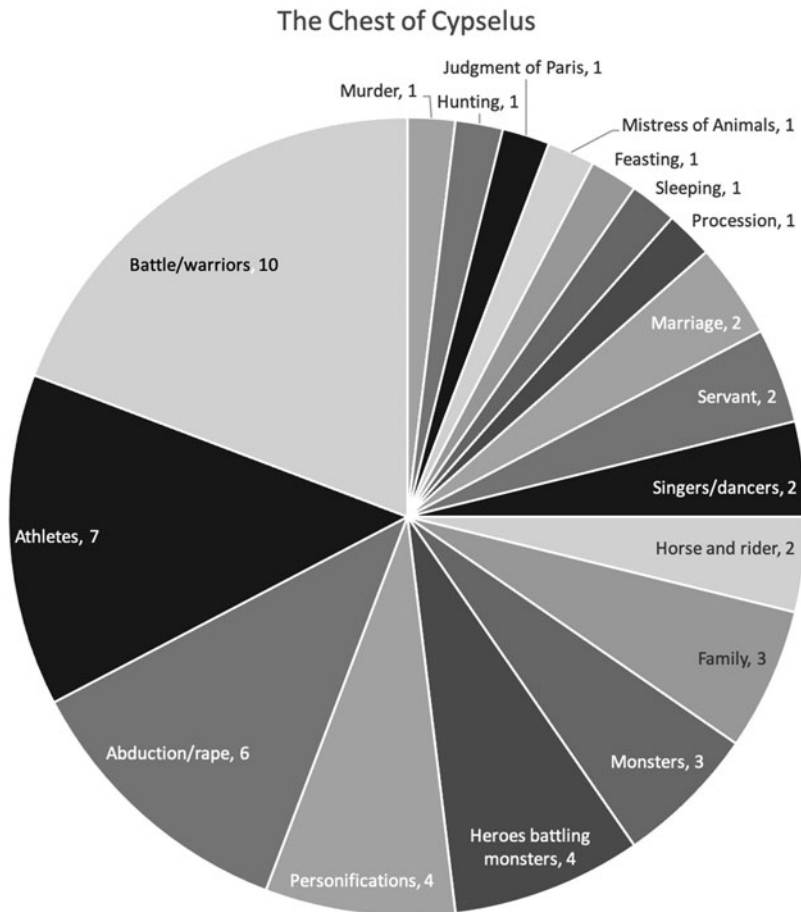


Fig. 11. Subject matter on the Chest of Cypselus.

Singular scenes of hunting appear on the Chest (5.19.2 – Calydonian Boar) and the Throne (3.18.5 – Melanion and Atalanta holding a deer), and may be suggested by one of the Orthia ivories showing a man in short dress with spear and hunting dog.<sup>52</sup> Subtler connections exist between the Throne of Apollo and the Orthia ivories: both show Perseus killing Medusa (3.18.11; Medusa's sisters chase Perseus on the Chest: 5.18.5) and Heracles battling the Hydra (3.18.13) and centaur (3.18.12, 16). Both contain sphinxes and wildcats (3.18.4). Furthermore, the Throne contained an image of Trojans bearing libations to Hector (3.18.16), which may connect to the *prothesis* plaques arguably showing the mourning of Hector. The two scenes of apotheosis on the Throne – Hermes bearing Dionysus to heaven<sup>53</sup> and Athena leading Heracles to heaven (3.18.11)<sup>54</sup> – also suggest similar themes that centre on the attainment of fame and even immortality for heroes at their death, particularly Heracles, through *kléos* won via their glorious deeds in life.

There are some obvious differences as well. Both the Chest and Throne show several abduction/rape scenes (e.g., Ajax and Cassandra on the Chest at 5.19.5 and the rape of the daughters of Leucippus on the Throne at 3.18.11), imagery that is largely absent from the Orthia ivories.<sup>55</sup> The

<sup>52</sup> Dawkins 1929c, pl. CIII:2. Boar-hunting scenes are known from Laconian pottery fragments (e.g., Louvre E670). This episode also forms a prominent scene on the François Crater.

<sup>53</sup> Dionysus' apotheosis: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 4.604–19; Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 16–19, 66.

<sup>54</sup> On Heracles' apotheosis, see most recently Daniels 2021. The first extant scenes of Heracles' apotheosis on vase painting date to c. 600 BC (Larson 2021, 448).

<sup>55</sup> One large semi-circular ivory shows a ship departure scene with a male and female grasping hands, a type of scene often interpreted as an abduction scene on Geometric pottery (Dawkins 1929c, pls CIX and CX; see Langdon 2006).

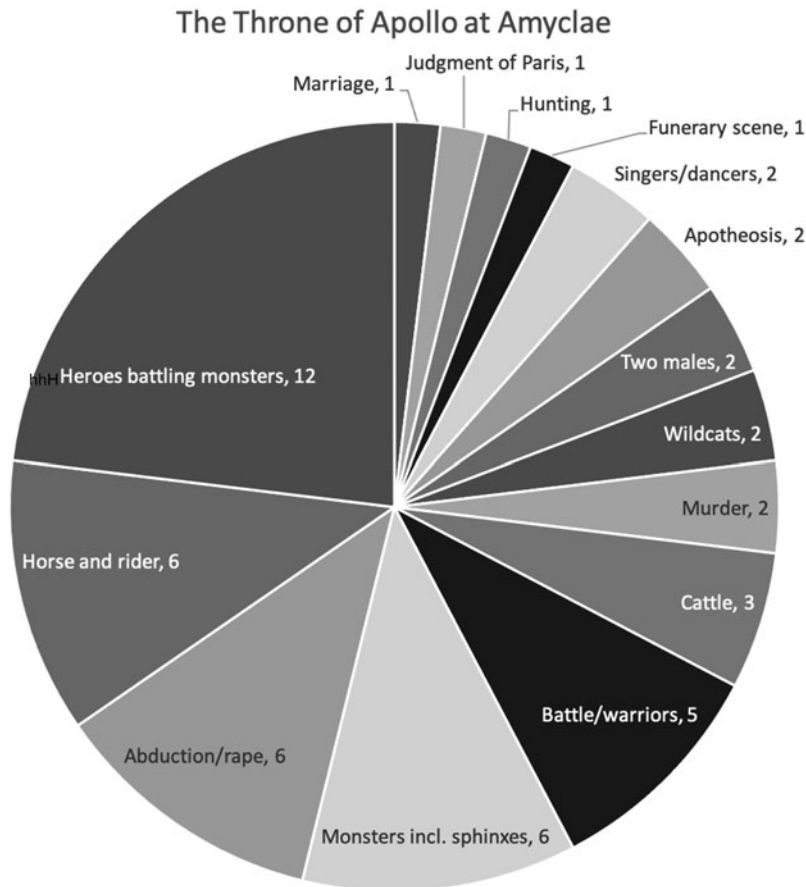


Fig. 12. Subject matter on the Throne of Apollo.

obvious propensity towards the Mistress of Animals on the Orthia plaques is absent from the Throne's imagery. Pausanias inadvertently identifies a singular Mistress of Animals on the Chest by describing Artemis as winged and holding a lion and leopard (5.19.5). Despite some differences, the overall thematic arrangements suggest a focus on mythical models that combine agonistic scenes (battle, hunting, athletics) and ritual scenes. Jennifer Neils (2013), in her reading of the scenes on the François Crater (see below), proposes interconnecting themes that draw from nuptial, agonistic and political/religious contexts, and these same contexts can be seen as interwoven throughout the monuments that Pausanias describes, as well as the Orthia ivories. This brief comparison with the Chest of Cypselus and the Throne of Apollo, combined with the argument that many of the plaques from Orthia's sanctuary decorated furniture, suggests that we could have a forerunner to these famous monuments described by Pausanias in the ivory plaques, particularly those from Styles II–V. Even if not all of the plaques belonged on the same monument, envisioning their iconography as a unified programme allows us to articulate the deeper semantic meanings this imagery may have held for worshippers at the sanctuary, and moreover allows us to position previously anomalous pieces like the *prothesis* plaques as inherently linked to these meanings.

### Eschatological themes in Archaic figural art

With the *prothesis* plaques in mind, it is necessary to consider the interweaving of funerary themes throughout complex figural art in the Archaic period. The Throne of Apollo contained eschatological themes, as discussed above, including apotheosis and ritual scenes connected to death (e.g., Trojans bearing libations to Hector). Other elements include the use of sphinxes, one each under the horse of each of the two sons of Tyndareus (3.18.4), creatures which often frame

heroic compositions of hunting and battle and which frequently signify the transition to the afterlife (see below). The context of the sanctuary of Apollo at Amyclae, which held the tomb of Hyacinthus, Apollo's lover who met a tragic end and was mourned yearly by the Spartans (see above), also underscores the mortuary connotations that were laced through these elaborate compositions, such that the Throne is sometimes referred to as a funerary monument (e.g., Bammer 2008, 89). These mortuary connotations point towards a life full of glorious feats that resulted in immortality, whether through apotheosis, as with heroes such as Heracles, or through *kléos*, as with many of the other heroes who appear in these compositions, including Hector.

If we turn to other media that show multiple figured scenes, namely painted pottery, we can see similar combinations of agonistic and ritual scenes celebrating the upbringing of elite males that also hint at the transition to a glorious afterlife through *kléos* gained from these activities. The Chigi Olpe, a work of Corinth dating to c. 630 BC and discovered in the main chamber of a tomb at Monte Aguzzo, shows several registers of figural scenes.<sup>56</sup> The progression from the bottom of the vase, which shows nude youthful hunters ambushing hares, to a middle register showing a procession of horsemen and a lion hunt, to the top register, displaying warriors in full hoplite regalia, has been interpreted as an idealised maturation of aristocratic males through agonistic activities: 'a Corinthian *paideia* loosely comparable to the three-stage *agōgē* that marked the public education and military training of males at Sparta'.<sup>57</sup> This messaging may have had particular valence within the interrelated contexts of banqueting and funerary rituals, where an *olpe* would be used (Osborne 1996, 165; Hurwit 2002, 2; Petit 2019, 433–4; Tuck 1994). The François Crater, discovered in an Etruscan elite tomb in the necropolis of Fonte Rotella near Chiusi and dated to c. 570/560 BC, likewise demonstrates an idealised representation – in this case using specific mythical episodes. The Crater contains 270 figures and 121 inscriptions, signed twice by the painter Kleitias and the potter Ergotimos. Scholars have suggested it nonetheless contains a coherent programme of subjects and symbolisms, akin to Archaic poetic compositions, which celebrate the life cycle of the hero.<sup>58</sup> This life cycle included not only agonistic activities but also nuptial and ritual ones as well, particularly marriage: the François Crater shows the wedding of Peleus and Thetis as well as the dance of Theseus and the youths (Hedreen 2011; Olsen 2015). The Chigi Olpe contains one of the earliest extant scenes of the Judgment of Paris, which resulted in marriage, in the middle register, a tale known from the *Kypria* and featured on the Chest of Cypselus, the Throne of Apollo and an ivory comb from the sanctuary of Orthia (Hurwit 2002, 12). This scene was frequently interpreted as out of place on the Chigi Olpe, yet Hurwit (2002, 16) fits it into the vertical progression of the vase which represents the movement from boyhood to manhood, thus integrating it into the larger iconographic syntax. This scene represents another essential stage in the route to manhood, namely marriage (Hurwit 2002, 18). The dangers associated with this particular marriage perhaps hint at the broader perils a hero must inevitably face, alongside hunting, war (the outcome of Paris' marriage) and, ultimately, death.

There are further motifs on this vase that are often written off as decorative or 'orientalizing' elements, which link the life cycle of elite youths centred on agonistic activities with the ideals of commemoration through *kléos* following death, ideals which arguably underlie the *prothesis* plaques. The alignment of the frontal-faced antithetical sphinx on the Chigi Olpe with the gorgoneion on the shield of one of the hoplites in the above register suggests a sense of apotropaism at work (Hurwit 2002, 17; cf. Giuliani 2016/17, 199–200; Winkler-Horaček 2015,

<sup>56</sup> There are several phases of the tomb's use-life: the first phase dates to c. 675–650 BC, but most objects come from the second phase, c. 630–600 BC (including the Chigi Olpe). There is a third phase as well, c. 600–580 BC (Petit 2019, 433; Hurwit 2002, 5 n. 13 for references).

<sup>57</sup> Hurwit 2002, 17; cf. Giuliani 2016/17. On the lion hunt in Greek art see Markoe 1989.

<sup>58</sup> Isler-Kerényi 1997, 523–5; Torelli 2013, 85–6; Neils 2013, 126–7. Episodes include the Calydonian Boar Hunt, ritual dancing of Athenian youths, the funeral games of Patroclus, the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs, the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, the ambush of Troilus by Achilles, and the return of Hephaestus to Olympus by Dionysus (see Torelli 2007, 62–3; 2013, 95; Neils 2013). See Snodgrass 2006, 427–30, for discussion of how the Chest of Cypselus in fact may have also portrayed the wedding of Peleus and Thetis.



Fig. 13. Detail of sphinx and lion hunt on the Chigi Olpe by Sailko (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0).

287–90). Yet the sphinx's persona is more than simply apotropaic: this creature derives from royal funerary and political contexts in Egypt and the Near East over the Bronze Age, as a guardian of divine and royal power, frequently placed on thrones or in gateways (López-Ruiz 2020). On the Chigi Olpe it seems to function as a 'boundary marker' between the equestrian procession to the left and the lion hunt on the right (Fig. 13). Thierry Petit (2019, 441) has argued that the sphinx forms a key element in signalling the transition to an illustrious afterlife, where one's glory through agonistic activities is commemorated, signalled by the sphinx's place as a large and imposing figure next to the lion hunt with the only human casualty on the vase (see also D'Acunto 2012, 60; cf. Torelli 2007, 66–7). The sphinx's role in the transition to the afterlife is reflected in slightly later vase painting beginning *c.* 560 BC showing the creature actually carrying deceased youths (Tsiafakis 2003, fig. 7). No doubt this creature retained its broader associations with high status derived from the east: it can thus be connected to the agonistic glory of elite youths in life that wins them commemoration in the afterlife, just as Hector's agonistic glory won him everlasting *kléos*.<sup>59</sup> As a boundary marker, the sphinx also signalled the transit to the afterlife in the Archaic period, appearing on vessels like *loutrophoroi* (Louvre CA 2985) and atop grave stelae (e.g., Metropolitan Museum of Art 11.185).<sup>60</sup> A funerary epigram on

<sup>59</sup> López-Ruiz 2020, 298. This arrangement is also seen on a plaque from Mycenae, with two sphinxes over the body of a fallen warrior (Boardman 1978, 39, fig. 35). The sphinx's close connection to warriors is witnessed on pottery and bronzes in the eighth and seventh centuries on Crete where the sphinx appears helmeted (Lebessi 1976, pl. 44; Levi 1945, pl. XX:3; Tsiafakis 2003, 79).

<sup>60</sup> Cultic stands show sphinxes from cemeteries at Knossos and Lefkandi: Pappasavvas 2004; 2017; Popham and Lemos 1996, pls 6, 147; H. W. Catling 1995. Other grave goods from the Toumba cemetery show sphinx imagery including amulets, faience rings and bronze bowl fragments (Popham and Lemos 1996, pls 63, 133–5 and 144; Duploux 2006, 156–7). On sarcophagi with sphinxes: Petit 2004, figs 1–4; 2006a; 2011, fig. 38; 2013, 218 and fig. 12; Hermary and Mertens 2014, 337–8. On stelae with sphinxes: Petit 2011, figs 96, 109; 2013, 223; Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 271; Richter 1961.





Fig. 14. Upper Register of François Vase by Sailko (Creative Commons Attribution 3.0).

the base of a funerary column that once held a sphinx from Demetrias in Thessaly even spells out the vital role of the sphinx as guardian of the tomb.<sup>61</sup>

Turning to the François Crater, we find four sphinxes: two flank the Calydonian boar hunt, turned towards the action, each with a foreleg raised towards a chain of palmettes and lotuses (Fig. 14). Two more sphinxes flank an animal fight in the fifth register, again with foreleg raised towards vegetal motifs. These are often regarded as framing elements for hunts (Neils 2013, 154) and as signifying a thematic parallel between human hunting on the top register and the brutal animal hunt below (Barringer 2013, 159). But the sphinxes also link vertically with a central character on the François Crater, namely Dionysus, who occupies a central place in the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, and is portrayed returning Hephaestus to Olympus (an act for which he wins the right to sit among the other Olympian gods) (Isler-Kerényi 1997, 529; Torelli 2013, 98; Petit 2019, 440–1). The Throne of Apollo also shows Dionysus' apotheosis (Pausanias 3.18.11), which, alongside Heracles' rise to heaven, underscores the end goal of a life centred around illustrious activities. To mortals, the illustrious afterlife came about not through becoming a god per se, but through the immortality of *kléos*, commemorating dead warriors through memory and celebration, as underscored by Tyrtaeus.

The sphinx combined with the vegetal motif is significant for further apprehending its longstanding and cross-cultural funerary connotations. In the Archaic Greek and Cypriot worlds, vegetal designs show up on temple roofs, grave stelae, sarcophagi and pottery, frequently guarded by sphinxes.<sup>62</sup> These ornaments represent the Tree of Life, which had a long, variegated history of use across the Near East, Egypt and the Aegean (Lightbody 2013; Echols 2020; Balogh 2020). Its meaning is rarely discussed in ancient literature outside the Hebrew Bible (Echols 2020). Yet its ubiquitous appearance across these regions suggests that explicit explanations were not needed; rather, this image contained a 'constellation of interrelated meanings' that connected earthly beings with the nurturing aspects of the divine (Balogh 2020,

<sup>61</sup> Volos Museum no. 650; Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 271–2 and nn. 665, 670–1 for bibliography. See Tsiafakis 2003, 82, for a Saite-period Egyptian funerary inscription in which the sphinx announces itself as guardian of the tomb who will ward off intruders.

<sup>62</sup> Petit 2013; Danner 1989; Demisch 1977. Laconian painters, such as the Naucratis Painter and the Hunt Painter, depict floral ornaments, often with volutes, flanked by waterfowl or roosters, as does Proto-Attic pottery (e.g., Moore 2003, figs 3 and 6). The rooster is linked to death and hero worship at Sparta through its appearance on stone and limestone stelae known as 'hero reliefs', which appear starting in the 6th century BC, including on the well-known Chrysapha relief (Tsouli 2016, 358; Pavlides 2011b, 118; Hibler 1993, 201; Stibbe 1991, no. A1). The rooster also appears on the Kommos Cup (Kotsonas 2019a).

32–3). Despite its complex meanings, the link with protection and rejuvenation in the afterlife is also apparent across numerous regions (Echols 2020, 20–2; Balogh 2020, 46–50, 63–8). Echols (2020, 27) concludes his survey of the Tree of Life in Near Eastern literature by suggesting that the Tree and its equivalents functioned ‘as instruments of hope for immortality by people in most of the ancient Near East’. The sphinxes as guardians of the Tree marked them as guides to the afterlife: on the François Crater the Tree is signified by the vegetal ornaments that the sphinxes flank and raise a paw towards; on the Chigi Olpe this motif is represented in shorthand, with vegetation emerging from the head of the sphinx (Demisch 1977, 82; Petit 2013, 217–18; 2019, 441–2; cf. Fischer 2013). The Olpe and Crater thus allow us insight into how eschatological themes could be interwoven with broader heroic ideals in the Archaic period that included participation in agonistic activities.

### Eschatological themes in the Orthia ivories

With the imagery from the pieces described above in mind, we can further expound upon the interlocking themes of the ivory corpus, focusing on iconography shared between these examples that straddle the heroic (agonistic activities in life) and funerary (commemoration for these activities after death) spheres. One of the ivory plaques from Styles II–V shows a sphinx with forepaws resting on a vegetal motif and vegetation emerging from the head (Fig. 15) (Dawkins 1929c, pl. XCVII:1), while other plaques show lions or panthers with forepaws on vegetal motifs (Dawkins 1929c, pls XCVI:3 and CXI). One ivory carving, heavily restored, shows an antithetical sphinx motif with one paw each on a vegetal ornament (Dawkins 1929c, pl. CLXXVII). Two more ivory sphinx plaques, not included in Dawkins’ publication, appear in Marangou’s (1969, pls 34, 35) volume. These vegetal motifs along with the sphinx continue to be popular elements in the thousands of small lead figurines proliferating in the sixth and fifth centuries.<sup>63</sup> The motif of the vegetal ornament growing out of the head is witnessed on several sphinxes in the Orthia ivories as well as sixth-century Laconian pottery from Sardis and Samos.<sup>64</sup> Among the Orthia ivories, there is one instance of a winged goddess akin to the Mistress of Animals (but without animals in this case), with the vegetal design emerging from her head.<sup>65</sup>

The imagery of warriors and horsemen appearing in the ivory corpus might also evoke eschatological themes, although they very well could be referencing actual Spartans and/or specific narratives now lost to us. Germane to the discussions above, agonistic themes relate to the idealised lives of citizens, but agonistic glory also looks forward to the everlasting *kléos* expected from deeds like war and hunting, expressed on examples like the Chigi Olpe, and underscored by Tyrtaeus. Earlier scholars such as Benson (1970) emphasised the significance of the horse, as well as the chariot, for ennobling the journey to the afterlife.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Dawkins 1929c, pls CLXXIX–CC; Wace 1929; Boss 2000; see also Cavanagh and Laxton 1984. The sphinx is also common on ivory plaques and on ivory combs, on Laconian pottery (Dawkins 1929c, pl. VIII), and on relief jars (Dawkins 1929c, pl. XI). It also appears as limestone, ivory and terracotta statuettes (Dawkins 1929c, pls XXXIX:5, LXXIII, CLXIX:4, CLXXVI:5). ‘Tree of Life’ motifs appear on relief jar fragments from the sanctuary (Dawkins 1929c, pls XIII and XIV) and terracotta disc acroteria and antefixes (Dawkins 1929c, pls XXII–XXV). Vegetal motifs also show up as relief carvings on the undersides of ivory figurines (Dawkins 1929c, pls CLVII, CLX:3) along with imagery of sphinxes and various types of birds.

<sup>64</sup> For example, Metropolitan Museum of Art 14.30.26; Louvre E664; Dawkins 1929c, pl. XCVII:1. Note also the Mistress of Animals with vegetation emerging from her head on the neck of a Cycladic amphora from the so-called ‘Purification Pit’ on Rheneia (interpreted as containing exhumed grave goods), c. 700–675 BC. The body shows two heraldic horses on either side of a Tree of Life (Mykonos Archaeological Museum no. 1A 401).

<sup>65</sup> Dawkins 1929c, pl. XCIII:1. A Style I plaque shows two individuals standing on either side of a Tree of Life motif (see Carter 1987, fig. 19; Marangou 1969, 17–19, fig. 7). Similarities can be seen in ivory examples from Nimrud (British Museum 118147) and Hazor (Naeh 2015, figs 12–13).

<sup>66</sup> See also Hurwit 2002, 19; Giuliani 2016/17, 199; Petit 2013, 227–8; 2019, 444. Horse-and-rider figures often replace the Tree of Life motif on the roof ridges of temples in the western settlements, and may symbolise the Dioscouri (e.g., Euripides’ *Electra* 1233–7) (Marconi 2007, 46–8; Danner 1989, 152; but cf. Petit 2013, 226 n. 82). For funerary themes involving horsemen from Cyprus: Petit 2006b; from Crete: Levi 1945, pls V:1, X:2; from Thessaly and Boeotia: Salapata 2014, 195.

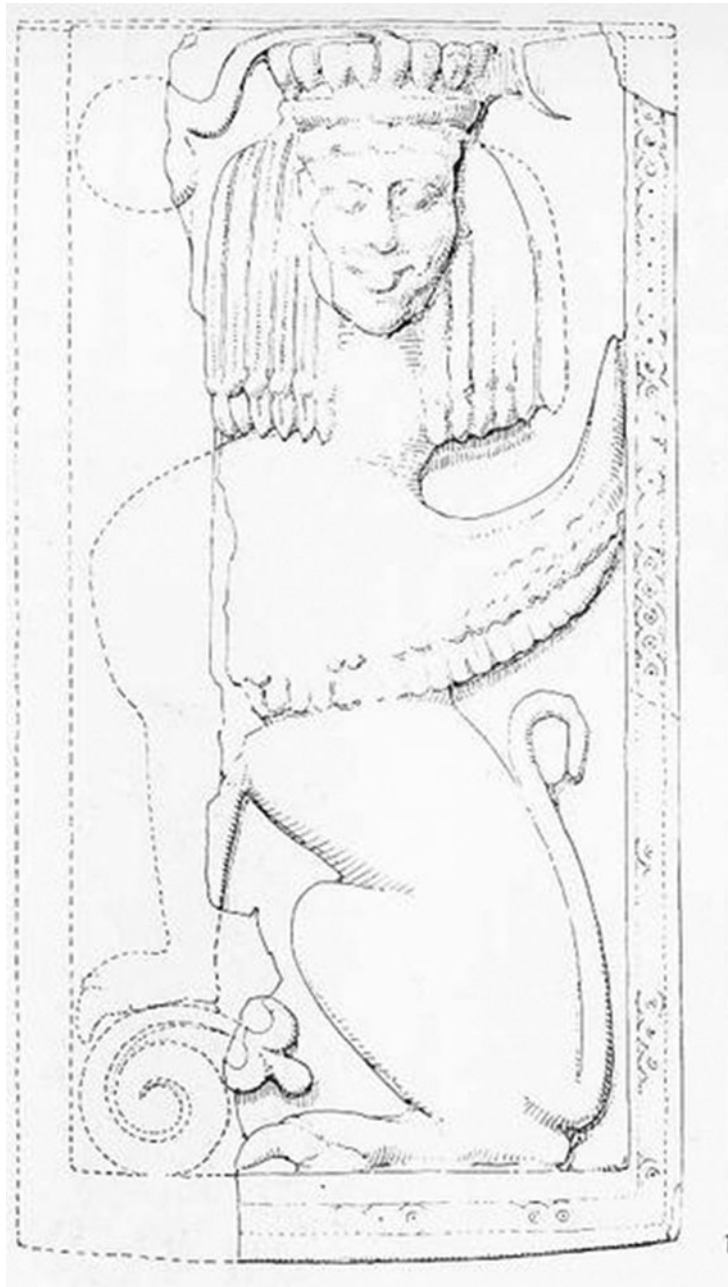


Fig. 15. Ivory plaque showing sphinx with paw on volute (Dawkins 1929c, pl. XCVII:1).

The horse more generally indicated high status and *aretē*.<sup>67</sup> In some cases the Dioscouri were represented by this motif – for instance on the Throne of Apollo, where they were also associated with sphinxes and wild cats; nonetheless, the divine associations of these

<sup>67</sup> Salapata 2014, 195–6. The horse is the most frequently attested animal in the iconography of Orthia's sanctuary (Waugh 2012). While a few ivory plaques show warriors on horseback, numerous terracotta and lead figurines (and one example in ivory) show a female's head between two horse heads. Terracotta examples: Dawkins 1929c, pl. XXXII; ivory example: Dawkins 1929c, pl. CLXXII; lead example: Dawkins 1929c, fig. 123. Terracotta figurines also show a female riding a horse (Dawkins 1929c, pl. XXXIII). One ivory plaque shows the winged Mistress of Animals with a horse behind her (Dawkins 1929c, pl. CVII:1).

twins, who straddle mortality and immortality, would be appropriate in these polysemic compositions.<sup>68</sup>

The Mistress of Animals, already mentioned above, is another motif with a long history in western Asia that may augment the funerary meanings.<sup>69</sup> This imagery appears on Minoan and Mycenaean glyptic art in the Late Bronze Age, but does not re-emerge as an artistic subject in the Greek world until the ninth century (Barclay 2001; 2013, 148). This image adopted multivalent meanings and forms across different regions, contexts and time periods, but it is important to note the Mistress of Animals's appearance in funerary art of the ninth–sixth centuries. There are around 200 documented examples, most dating to the seventh century BC, which were found either in graves or in sanctuaries (Fig. 16). In the seventh century, the Mistress of Animals was especially represented in grave assemblages. Corinthian alabaster and aryballoi also display this motif in the Black Figure technique, and were found in graves or sanctuaries around the Mediterranean dating to c. 650–600 BC (Spartz 1962, nos 92–123; Barclay 2013, table 1). Certainly, this distribution does not prove that votives and pottery with the Mistress of Animals were meant solely for the funerary sphere, and may simply indicate the final destination of these items. Yet several striking examples occur in cemeteries on Crete, painted onto funerary urns, including the ninth-century burial urn from Tomb 107 at the North Cemetery of Knossos, and later examples come from funerary contexts at Arkades (Coldstream 1984; Marinatos 2000, 126; Levi 1945, pl. XII). The Mistress of Animals appears on the handles of the François Crater, standing over an image of Ajax bearing the body of Achilles, with her placement possibly signalling transitions in life stages, including to death (Fig. 17) (Lezzi-Hafter 2013; cf. Neils 2013, 120). On the Orthia ivories she most frequently holds waterfowl, but there is one instance of her appearing with a horse and snake, both animals with heroic connotations.<sup>70</sup> Waterfowl may hold a special connection to the sanctuary, which sat in a flat, marshy hollow (Pipili 1987, 76), and evoke eschatological themes as creatures who leave and return with the seasons.<sup>71</sup>

Other creatures suggest the interrelated heroic and funerary spheres, including the gorgon. This creature appears on a plaque showing Perseus murdering Medusa (Fig. 4), and on another small plaque showing a sphinx with a gorgon's head (Dawkins 1929c, pl. CII:1; Marangou 1969, no. 37), a motif that remains 'isoliert innerhalb der ganzen griechischen Kunst'.<sup>72</sup> It also appears on Laconian pottery from the sanctuary, including Laconian II *lakainai* (Dawkins 1929c, pls VII–VIII), and on bone and ivory seals (Dawkins 1929c, pls CXXI:3, CXXLV:21, CLXXIII:6). The gorgon, like the sphinx, is connected to death, appearing, for instance, on the fourth-century *heroon* of Limyra, a fifth-century sarcophagus from Golgoi and a sixth-century grave

<sup>68</sup> Salapata 2014, 202; Boutsikas 2020, 142. On the tondos of three kylikes by the Laconian Rider Painter a horseman appears, flanked by winged Nikes, an eagle and water birds, with the same vegetal motif growing from his head (British Museum 1842,0407.7; Louvre E665; BM B1; St Petersburg 183; Pipili 1987, 76, figs 108, 109). These horsemen may represent the heroised dead (Stibbe 1974; Pipili 2018, 147). Pipili (1998, 93) has also linked Laconian ceramic art to markets abroad such as Samos, however, so we cannot localise the meanings of the Rider Painter's scenes strictly in Sparta.

<sup>69</sup> The Master of Animals has a much longer development, emerging in Mesopotamia in the fourth millennium BC and spreading to Anatolia, Syria, the Levant and Cyprus by the mid-second millennium BC (Counts 2008; Costello 2010; Collins 2010; Barclay 2013, 143–4). The female version appeared in the mid-to-late second millennium in northern Syria and Cyprus (Barclay 2013, 145; Cornelius 2004, 45–58). Scholars often refer to the Mistress of Animals as the *Potnia Theron*, connected to Artemis, after a line in Homer (*Iliad* 21.470–1; also Pausanias 5.19.5), although it is difficult to fix this figure to a single identity (Burkert 1985, 13; Léger 2017, 10; Müss 2008, 672 and n. 29).

<sup>70</sup> See Salapata 2006 n. 54 for more examples and bibliography, and n. 55 for literary sources that connect heroes with snakes throughout antiquity (also Salapata 2014, chapter 5; Guralnik 1974, 183–6).

<sup>71</sup> See Dissinger 2017 on waterfowl in Cypriot art as afterlife symbols. See Petit 2019, 444 n. 150 for more bibliography on waterfowl and their link to the afterlife. See Dawkins 1929c, pl. CXXIII for examples of bone reliefs fashioned as waterfowl from Orthia's sanctuary.

<sup>72</sup> Marangou 1969, 129. See also Dawkins 1929c, pl. CXXLV:2: an ivory seal with a Gorgon's head on the body of a harpy. A ceramic plate from Kamiros dating to c. 600 BC shows the gorgon as Mistress of Animals (British Museum 1860,0404.2).

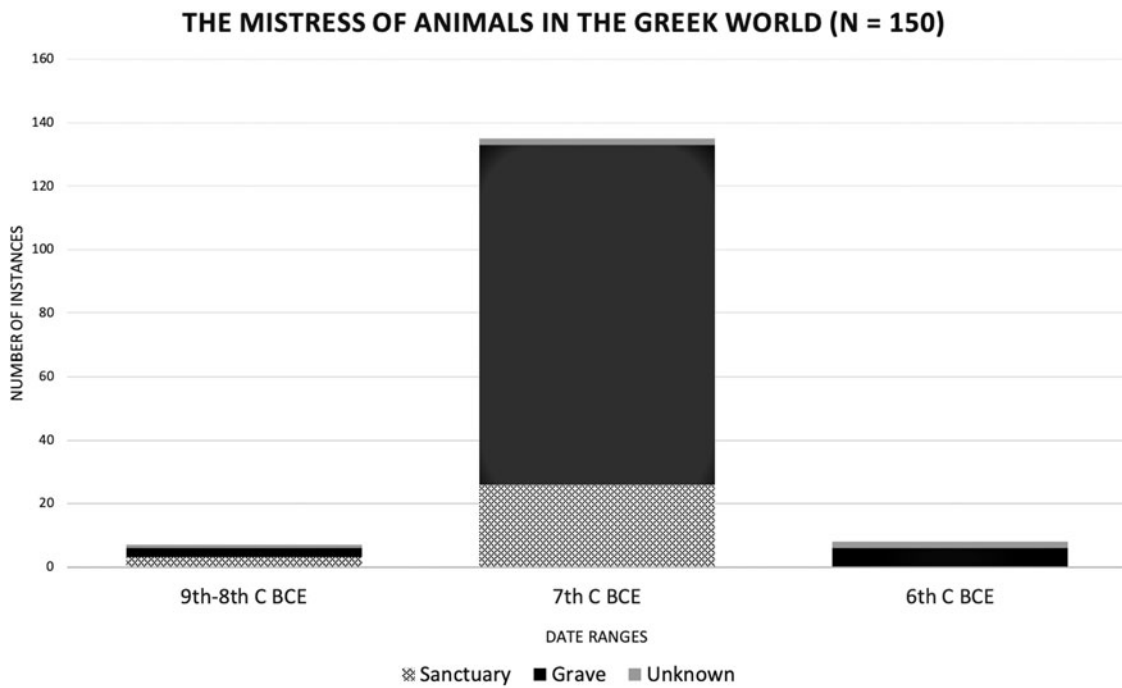


Fig. 16. Mistress of Animals imagery in the Greek world, 9th–6th centuries BC, excluding Corinthian vase painting (after Barclay 2013, table 1).



Fig. 17. Handle of François Vase showing Mistress of Animals over Ajax and Achilles by Sailko (Creative Commons Attribution 3.0).

stele from Attica showing a winged gorgon running below a youth (Museum of Metropolitan Art 74.51.2451; Marinatos 2000, fig. 3:17; Sourvinou-Inwood 1991, 273; Hurwit 2002, 17). The sphinx and gorgon represent, in life, challenges to be overcome for males (Marinatos 2000, 64–7; Tsiafakis 2003, 78–83; Giuliani 2013, 37–44). They are integral in facilitating, through otherworldly trials, the achievement of heroic status worthy of *kléos*. This relationship may relate to the group of terracotta masks from mainly sixth-century levels at the sanctuary, which have also been interpreted as representing ritual enactments of heroes battling monsters.<sup>73</sup>

Overall, if some of these plaques did indeed decorate a piece of furniture or other cultic implement, as with the Chest of Cypselus and Throne of Apollo, it is possible that these themes worked together in ways similar to the Chest and Throne, as well as figured pottery. The mirror-image *prothesis* scene in particular would be fitting as a symmetrical ornament on some type of cultic implement, surrounded by other symbolisms evoking the ideals of a proper life for Spartan citizens. Thus, rather than being anomalies in the corpus, their mirror-image symmetry very well could have served as a focal point for a semantic programme centred on agonistic activities in life leading to the promise of everlasting *kléos* after death by featuring a hero, possibly Hector, who fought and died to defend his city. This programme could have included a mix of scenes drawn from daily life, including warriors and hunters, combined with mythological scenes and images like the Mistress of Animals and the sphinx that evoked earthly trials for citizens and their promised commemoration as a result of these activities.

Further imagery includes females holding wreaths, which may signify athletic victory or participation in festivals that employed wreaths such as the *Gymnopediae* (Pipili 1987, 78). In one scene a large female in fringed skirt, possibly Orthia (only her lower body remains), crowns a small youth who barely reaches her knees.<sup>74</sup> This combination of images would arouse familiarity on the part of the viewers, with scenes suggesting ideal activities for a Spartan citizen, but also a heightened awareness of divine meaning behind these acts that culminated in the promise of *kléos*, particularly when placed within the sanctuary of Orthia. The mythological and generic scenes are thus inherently polysemic: their meaning extends far beyond familiar stories and situations. We might borrow Paul Zanker's (1987, 284) term in reference to Augustan reliefs, *Andachtsbilder*, 'contemplative images', which Karl Galinsky (1992, 471) elaborated on: 'They are rooted in rich artistic, literary, religious, and mythological traditions ... At the same time, it is not a matter of purely subjective and impressionistic understandings, which would lead to misinterpretation, but the variety of evocations operates within the framework of a clearly established overall meaning.'

#### ACCESSING THE IVORIES IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

The interlocking symbolisms of the corpus suggest an iconographic programme that emphasised agonistic ideals that resulted in *kléos* after death for citizens who lived up to those ideals. But if we are to relate the normative meanings expressed by the iconographic programme in the ivory corpus to the Spartan citizens who were arguably taking part in rituals in the sanctuary, how might they have engaged with these ivories? Who saw – or was meant to see – the implement(s) that these plaques decorated is a difficult question: they may have been commissioned by an exclusive elite group that controlled rituals at the sanctuary (alongside the procurement and carving of ivory). Any cultic implement they decorated may thus have seen restricted engagement if it was housed within the temple. Nassos Papalexandrou (2021, 42–3) suggests

<sup>73</sup> Dickens 1929, pls XLVII–LXII; Carter 1987; Burkert 1992, 49; Kennell 1995, 136–7; Marinatos 2000, 59–66; Des Bouvrie 2009, 164–5; Rosenberg 2015. Similar masks come from Samos, Thera, Gortyn, Taras, Tiryns and Mycenae (Marinatos 2000, 63; Langdon 2007, 174–5; S.R. Martin 2014 on masks from Tel Dor). See Jameson 1990 on aristocratic rites of passage related to Perseus and the wearing of masks at Mycenae.

<sup>74</sup> Dawkins 1929c, pl. CIV:3. The wreath in Laconian art may also symbolise a marriage ritual, as seen with one scene of a male and female both grasping wreaths. On wreath imagery in weddings: Oakley and Sinos 1993, 7–9, 14.

that the wealthy dedications at the sanctuary of Hera on Samos were kept inside the temple and saw a rather restricted audience, and certainly a passage from the *Iliad* reveals that worshippers at the temple of Athena at Troy needed to have the priestess unlock the doors for them (6.293–304). Whether as separate votive dedications (e.g., on fibulae) or as part of a unified programme on a single implement or set of implements, these plaques may have been sequestered from public view. Ioannis Mylonopoulos (2011, 284–8) on the other hand notes many instances in literature across the Archaic to Hellenistic periods where the interiors of temples do appear open and accessible, at least at certain times of the year, necessitating barriers around the most sacred part of the *cella* – the cult statue. No doubt entire ethnic and/or gender groups could see restrictions on their entry into the very *temenos* (Mylonopoulos 2011, 287 n. 75), but for citizens, Greek temples were generally more accessible to the public than Egyptian temples or temples in the Near East (Miles 2016, 219). It is thus difficult to imagine the implement(s) would have been completely and permanently kept out of public view.

The broader landscape around the sanctuary of Orthia in Limnai also seemed to be a burial ground in the Protogeometric and Geometric periods, raising further questions about who was accessing this area (Christesen 2018; Raftopoulou 1998). Some evidence of votive deposits around these graves was noted by the original excavators of Orthia's sanctuary, as well as more recent research (Wace 1905–6, 288–93; Pavlides 2011a, 563; Salapata 2013, 195; Christesen 2018). Issues of starting dates for this votive activity, its continuity through time, and its relationship to actual hero or tomb worship are difficult to resolve with any certainty (see in general Antonaccio 1994; 1995; Ekroth 2002). Most of these graves remained quite modest in their offerings (Christesen 2018, supplementary material; cf. Papapostolou 2011; Tsouli 2013, 160–1; 2016, 369–71). Still, this activity around the sanctuary suggests a ritual focus on this area that extended beyond a narrow elite worshipping a deity.

Indeed, a concern with commemorating the dead by a wider community sees increasing emphasis in Archaic Sparta. Within and beyond Limnai, scholars have noted heroic imagery emerging by the late seventh century in the form of terracotta and stone plaques, both over graves and at hero shrines, that seem to evoke hero worship.<sup>75</sup> These plaques show the deceased enthroned, often associated with serpents, drinking vessels and smaller-sized worshippers. Pavlides (2011a, 551) has argued that they signify a shift in emphasis away from individual citizens and onto local heroes who exemplified a more communal ideology. The bestowing of *kléos* onto a wider citizen body is indeed notable in Tyrtaeus' poetry, as discussed above (Fuqua 1981; Tarkow 1983; cf. Luginbill 2002). Invoking this poetry, Massimo Nafissi (1991, 284) sums up this shift, arguing for funerals of the fallen as 'un momento centrale per la manifestazione, in forme tradizionali, del prestigio aristocratico', extending the traditional motif of personal and aristocratic *kléos* 'ai valori ed agli interessi della collettività'.<sup>76</sup>

The discussion of mortuary ritual in Archaic Sparta is not meant to force a direct association between grave practice, hero worship and the *prothesis* plaques, but is meant to spark reflection on how the iconography of the ivory corpus fits into this complex and changing social nexus, particularly in Limnai. We might locate the corpus at a transition point in Spartan society, as emphasised by

<sup>75</sup> Salapata 2014. Around 2500 fragments of these plaques were found associated with grave BB98 in Limnai (Pavlides 2011a).

<sup>76</sup> One instance where communal identity was focused around ostentatious burial was at the death of one of the Spartan kings. Herodotus describes the regal traditions at Sparta, comparing the funerary customs for kings to those of the Persians and other 'barbarians' (6.56–9; cf. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.3.3; *Constitution of the Lacedaimonians* 15.9) (Millender 2018; Flower 2018, 445–6). If a king died in battle and his body was not retrieved, the Spartans made an effigy of him and carried it on a bier with sumptuous garments, as with King Leonidas (Petropoulou 2011, 596; Schaefer 1957; cf. Toher 1999). Moreover, in some instances (such as the death of Pausanias), the Spartans created a duplicate image (Thucydides 1.134.4). Invoking this episode and others, Nicolas Richer (1994, 96) suggests that kings and heroes were represented 'd'une façon dédoublée' to connect them to the protective entities of Sparta such as the Dioscouri. The connection of this doubling aspect to the dual *prothesis* plaques, while separated by 200 years, is hard to ignore. Perhaps these same mentalities governed the plaques' creation as duplicates of one another, although this mirror-image scene was likely suited to its symmetrical portrayal upon a cultic implement.

scholars like Nafissi and Pavlides and reflected in the poetry of Tyrtaeus. Indeed, the similarity that the later, sixth-century, lead figurines above the sand layer display towards the seventh-century ivory corpus in terms of their iconography, including sphinxes and Tree of Life motifs, suggests this symbolism continued to have relevance for Spartans, even as ivory usage died out. While the cessation of ivory at Sparta was likely due to the decline of the ivory industry in the Levant starting in the eighth century (Wicke 2013, 549–50; Çakırlar and Ikram 2016), the emergence of this imagery on the tens of thousands of lead figurines does suggest a larger subset of the population using these motifs, rather than the advent of Spartan ‘austerity’ in the sixth century (Hodkinson 1998). These iconographies thus could have relevance both for a narrow elite and a wider citizen body.

Ultimately, the plaques’ discovery as fragments underneath the sand layer may suggest that, at their time of deposition, they had been removed from their original contexts, possibly because of damage to the original implement they decorated, or as part of the broader refurbishment of the sanctuary. Yet, they likely remained the property of Orthia and had to be treated as such, buried underneath the sand layer with other early votives.<sup>77</sup> Thus, unlike at Olympia and Amyclae, Orthia’s implement(s), decorated with ivory plaques showing themes similar to those on the Chest and Throne, had long since disappeared by the time Pausanias visited Sparta.

## CONCLUSION

Having discussed the relationships between the *prothesis* plaques, the votive assemblage and the ritual landscape of the sanctuary of Orthia, it remains to return to the argument that these plaques represent – on one level – the mourning of Hector. While the *prothesis* plaques could plausibly indicate this mythic episode, they simultaneously could hold deeper normative meanings for viewers, emphasizing the attainment of *kléos* through magnificent deeds, particularly when placed amidst the other iconography in the corpus. These ideologies of immortal fame were therefore not relegated solely to myth, but were expressed in Archaic poetry and art within Sparta and beyond. Such arguments encourage a deeper understanding of the connection between mythical compositions and shifting social norms in this period, a connection that can be ‘read’ within the symbolism of the ivory corpus as well as the cultural context of this sanctuary. Within their seventh-century contexts, these plaques, when viewed in this multiscale fashion, become an integral part of the iconographic programme represented by the ivory corpus rather than an anomaly within the assemblage. Despite Dawkins’ original puzzlement over their place amongst the ivories, their style and especially their funerary subject matter fit very profoundly into the symbolic repertoire of the sanctuary and, above all, into Spartan and broader Mediterranean mentalities of the seventh century BC, suggesting that Sparta, like the *prothesis* plaques, was not so anomalous in this period.

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<sup>77</sup> On this practice, see Ekroth 2017.



## APPENDIX I: IVORY AND BONE STYLES FROM THE SANCTUARY OF ORTHIA

Table AI:1 Ivory and bone styles from the sanctuary of Orthia based on Dawkins 1929b.

Style Type	Number	Associated pottery	Dating (from Dawkins 1929b)	Material	Description	Subject Matter
Style I	6	Almost entirely Geometric	800–700 BC	Ivory	Shallow carving, almond-shaped eyes	Mistress of Animals; bearded male and female on either side of a Tree of Life; horse-and-rider
Style II	16	Geometric, Proto-Corinthian, Laconian I	First half of eighth century to seventh century BC	Ivory	Larger, more deeply carved	Winged Mistress or Master of Animals; lions and sphinxes; male and female grasping wreath; standing female
Style III	4	Geometric, Proto-Corinthian, Laconian I	Late eighth, early seventh century BC	Ivory	Contemporary with Second Style; plaques not used for fibulae	Prometheus, male killing centaur, winged Gorgon
Style IV	2	Geometric	Mid-eighth century BC	Ivory	Two examples, which are the same scene ( <i>prothesis</i> ) but mirror images of one another; low relief; excavators postulated a foreign origin	<i>Prothesis</i> scene
Style V	14	Geometric, Proto-Corinthian, Laconian I, Laconian II	Seventh century BC (one example <i>c.</i> 740–710)	Ivory	‘The best reliefs’, a more developed phase of the Second Style	Hero and Hydra (Hercules?), ‘Knight and Squire’, male on horseback, male with dog, male being crowned, male between a lion and a griffin, male killing Gorgon (Perseus?), sphinxes, warriors, relief of departure by ship, winged figure and horse
Style VI	7	Laconian IV and V	Late seventh to early fifth century BC	Bone	Contemporary with new temple	Heraldic horses, centaur, female carrying pomegranate
Style VII	30	Laconian III to Laconian VI	Mainly sixth century, but into fourth century BC	Bone	Background of the design is cut away so that object is freestanding	Birds, warrior, female in cloak, couchant lion, reptiles, turtles
Style VIII	3	Laconian I, III, IV	650–500 BC	Ivory and bone	Chariot groups; 2 in ivory, 1 in bone	Human figures in chariots drawn by horses; one example is fragmentary

Table A1:2 Marangou's (1969) groupings of ivories (leaving out individual ivories).

Group	Number	Dating	Material	Description	Subject Matter
A	4	690–680 BC	Ivory	Shallow carving; almond-shaped eyes	Mistress of Animals; bearded male and female on either side of a Tree of Life
B	4	660s BC	Ivory	Deeper carving; slimmer figures; rounded eyes	Mistress of Animals
C	5	660–620 BC	Ivory	Softer, more elegant and detailed shapes	Male and female holding wreath; Mistress of Animals; Master of Animals
D	3	660s–650s BC	Ivory	Shallower carving; finer, incised details; heads turning to left; wig-like hair	Standing female with plant emerging from head; sphinx; lion
E	3	660s–620s BC	Ivory	Detailed incisions of hair and wings; bulging eyes; defined lips; rich ornamentation of robes; deeper carving than Group D	Sphinx with gorgon head; man's head; triad
F	3	620s–600 BC	Ivory	Non-Daedalic hairstyles; legs wide apart; heraldic composition; increasingly rounded wings	Sphinx reliefs
G	2	640s BC	Ivory	Low relief; large eyes; defined lips; rich ornamentation of robes; rounded and softer contours than those from Group E	<i>Prothesis</i> reliefs
H	3	640s BC	Ivory	High relief; rounded Daedalic faces; bulky bodies	Nessos-Prometheus Group

APPENDIX 2: CATEGORIES ESTABLISHED FOR THE CHEST OF CYPSELUS AND THE THRONE OF APOLLO

Table A2:1 Iconographic categories from the Chest of Cypselus.

Hunting	1	Melanion with Atalanta holding a young deer
Mistress of Animals	1	Artemis with wings gripping a leopard in her right hand and lion in left hand
Musicians	2	Heracles enthroned with woman behind him playing a Phrygian flute; Muses singing with Apollo leading the song
Horse and Rider	2	The Dioscuri
Marriage	3	Medea enthroned with Jason and Aphrodite on either side; Theseus holding a lyre and Ariadne gripping a crown; Judgment of Paris
Monsters	3	Atlas; two centaurs
Heroes battling monsters	4	Heracles battling the Hydra; Phineus the Thracian, with sons of Boreas chasing harpies away from him; Heracles' fight with Geryon; man shooting at centaurs – likely Heracles
Personifications	4	Woman holding two children – Night nursing Sleep and Death; Justice striking Injustice; two women pounding mortars with pestles, wise in medicine-lore; Doom as a female with talons and beast-like teeth
Abduction/rape	6	Idas bringing back Marpessa after Apollo carried her off; Zeus personifying Amphitryon to sleep with Alcmena; Ares as Enyalios leading Aphrodite; Thetis as a maid with Peleus taking hold of her; Boreas who has carried off Oreithyia; Ajax dragging Cassandra from the image of Athena

Athletes	7	Funeral games of Pelias; Jason and Peleus wrestling; Eurybotas throwing the quoit; Melanion, Neotheus, Phalareus, Argeius, Iphiclus in a running race; Iphiclus winning and Acastus holding out a crown to him; Tripods set as prizes for winners; Iolaus as victor in chariot race; Oenomaus chasing Pelops and Hippodameia
Other	7	Dionysus lying in a cave; women sleeping in a grotto and a man upon a couch; two maidens in a mule-cart; Aethra daughter of Pittheus under the feet of Helen; maidens outside of a cave; Amphiaraus and Amphilocheus; Eriphyle and daughters; daughters of Pelias
Battle/warriors	9	Baton driving chariot of Amphiaraus; Amphiaraus with foot on chariot and sword drawn, turned towards Eriphyle in anger; chariots with pairs of horses; military scenes with foot soldiers and two-horse chariots; Achilles and Memnon fighting; Ajax fighting Hector with Strife in between them; Coön fighting for Iphidamas against Agamemnon; Polyneices fallen on his knee, with Eteocles rushing on him; two-horse chariots with women driving them

Table A2:2 Iconographic categories from the Throne of Apollo.

Hunting	1	Hunting of the Calydonian Boar
Funerary scene	1	Trojans bringing libations to Hector
Athletes	1	Games of Acastus
Marriage	2	Judgment of Paris; gods bringing marriage gifts to Harmonia
Musicians/dancers	2	Phaeacian dancers and Demodocus singing; Magnesian dancers
Apotheosis	2	Hermes bearing infant Dionysus to heaven; Athena taking Heracles to heaven
Wildcats	2	A leopard on one side by Castor; a lion on the other side by Polydeuces
Cattle	2	The bull of Minos; Hera gazing at Io as a cow
Horse and rider	5	Anaxias and Mnasinous on horseback; one horse carrying Megapenthes; Nicrostratus on horseback; sons of Tyndareus on horses, one on each side
Monsters	6	Echidna and Typhos; Tritons; Atlas; Chiron; two sphinxes: one each under the horses of the Dioscuri
Abduction/rape	6	Poseidon and Zeus carrying Taygete and Alcyone; rape of daughters of Leucippus; Cephalus carried off by Day; Athena running away from Hephaestus; Perithous and Theseus seizing Helen; binding of Hera by Hephaestus
Battle/warriors	8	Tyndareus and Eurytus; Heracles killing children of Actor; Apollo and Artemis shooting Tityus; battle of Centaurs at cave of Pholus; combat of Achilles and Memnon; Heracles avenging himself upon Diomedes; Adrastus and Tydeus stopping the fight between Amphiaraus and Lycurgus; Admetus yoking a boar and lion to his chariot
Heroes battling monsters	14	Story of Menelaus and Egyptian Proteus; single combat of Heracles and Cycnus; Perseus killing Medusa; Heracles with the giant Thurius; Heracles fighting Nessus; Heracles slaying the Hydra; Heracles bringing up the Hound of Hell; Bellerophon destroying the beast in Lycia; Calais and Zetes driving harpies away from Phineus; Heracles strangling a lion; fight between Heracles and Oreius the Centaur; fight between Theseus and Bull of Minos; Heracles wrestling Achelous; Heracles driving off the cattle of Geryon

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**Γιορτάζοντας τον θάνατο στο ιερό της Ορθίας: μια σκηνή πρόθεσης, το σύνολο των ελεφαντοστέινων αντικειμένων και λατρευτικά τοπία στην Αρχαϊκή περίοδο.**

Το σύνολο των ανάγλυφων ελεφαντοστέινων αντικειμένων από το ιερό της Ορθίας στην Σπάρτη συγκροτεί ένα από τα πιο κοσμοπολίτικα σύνολα από την αρχαϊκή Λακωνία. Όμως ένα εικονογραφικό θέμα από το σύνολο παραμένει μια απόκλιση: μια κατοπτρική σκηνή σε δύο πλακίδια που απεικονίζει τρεις μορφές οι οποίες θρηνούν έναν νεκρό άνδρα σε τελετή πρόθεσης. Η αιγιματική φύση αυτών των πλακιδίων έγκειται στην έλλειψη απεικονίσεων οι οποίες να εικονίζουν την πρόθεση από άλλα μέρη στη Λακωνία αυτής της περιόδου, αντιθέτως με την Αττική. Αυτές οι εικόνες έχουν ερμηνευτεί ως αναπαραστάσεις ενός μυθικού θανάτου ή ο εορτασμός ενός πραγματικού θανάτου, συνδεδεμένες με μια περίοδο στην Σπαρτιατική ιστορία όταν ομάδες της ελίτ διεκδίκησαν δύναμη μέσω επιδεικτικών τελετών, αλλά η συνολική τους σημασία μέσα στο ιερό της Ορθίας παραμένει ασαφής. Ωστόσο, υποστηρίζω ότι αυτά τα πλακίδια δεν είναι ανωμαλίες εντός του συνόλου των ελεφαντοστέινων αντικειμένων, ούτε είναι αποκομμένα από το ευρύτερο τελετουργικό πρόγραμμα στο ιερό της Ορθίας. Αντιθέτως, το σύνολο των ελεφαντοστέινων αντικειμένων καθαυτό αντιπροσωπεύει μια ενιαία σύνθεση που συνένωσε σκηνές οι οποίες δείχνουν εξιδανικευμένες δραστηριότητες των Σπαρτιατών πολιτών με ηρωικά επεισόδια από τους μύθους, προσανατολισμένες προς την κατάκτηση του αιώνιου κλέους. Η σημασιολογία αυτών των συνδυασμένων εικονογραφιών ξεκαθαρίζεται μέσω της σύγκρισης με τελετουργικά σκεύη που περιγράφονται στην αρχαία γραμματεία παράλληλα με σωζόμενα παραδείγματα πολυπρόσωπης γραπτής κεραμικής του εβδόμου και έκτου αιώνα. Επομένως, το άρθρο αυτό δίνει έμφαση στις μυθολογικές και ιδεολογικές σημασίες των πλακιδίων με την πρόθεση μέσα στο ευρύτερο σύνολο των ελεφαντοστέινων αντικειμένων, και διευκρινίζει το ρόλο των σύνθετων εικονιστικών εικονογραφιών στην επεξήγηση των ηρωικών ιδεωδών, τα οποία ήταν επικεντρωμένα στους Σπαρτιάτες πολίτες της περιόδου.

Μετάφραση: Στ. Ιερεμίας