

# HOMO NECANS

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*The Anthropology of Ancient Greek  
Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*

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MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Berkeley Los Angeles London

*For Reinhold Merkelbach*

Originally published in German by Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin,  
under the title *Homo Necans* (1972).

University of California Press  
Berkeley and Los Angeles, California

University of California Press, Ltd.  
London, England

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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Burkert, Walter 1931–  
Homo necans.

Translation of: Homo necans.

Bibliography: p.

1. Rites and ceremonies—Greece. 2. Sacrifice.  
3. Mythology, Greek. 4. Greece—Religion. I. Title.

BL788.B8713 1983 292'.38 77-93473

ISBN 0-520-05875-5

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Printed in the United States of America

3 4 5 6 7 8 9

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements  
of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence  
of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48–1984.

would put more weight on sacrificial ritual, whereas the nomadic animal breeder, wary of slaughtering his proud possessions, would become a conquering warrior.

Among the Greeks, a military expedition was prepared and ended by sacrificial ritual. There was sacrifice before setting off, then adornment and crowning with wreaths before battle—all as if it were a festival. A slaughtered victim introduced the subsequent deadly action which, in Homer, is simply called *ἔργον*. Afterward, a monument, a *tropaion*, was set up on the battlefield as a consecrated, enduring witness. This was followed by the solemn burial of the dead, a privilege the victor could not deny his defeated enemy. The burial, almost as important as the battle itself, was far more lasting in its consequences, for it left an enduring “monument.” It almost seems as though the aim of war is to gather dead warriors, just as the Aztecs waged war in order to take prisoners to use as sacrificial victims.<sup>49</sup> The erected and consecrated monument is what endures, and it embodies the duty of the following generation. For war, necessary yet controlled because it is ritual, has this function above all: it must integrate the young into the patriotic community. The *senatus* resolves; the *iuventus* must fight. As a rule, the Greeks’ *σπονδαί* were for a period of thirty years at most. Each generation has the right and the obligation to have its war.

## 6. Funerary Ritual

It is a peculiarity of the human race that it cares for its dead. Hence, burials have been among the most important finds from prehistory. Along with the use of fire and tools, they testify to the process, starting in the early Palaeolithic era, by which man became man. Frequent attempts have been made to describe the extraordinary spiritual and intellectual step underlying this process, sometimes even

<sup>49</sup>See I.7 below. On decoration see Hdt. 7.208–209; Plut. *Lac. inst.* 238 f.; on the *σφάγια* see Stengel (1910) 92–102, (1920) 132–33; Casabona (1966) 180–93; Pritchett (1979) 83–90; *ἔργον* II. 4.470, etc.; on burial see Thuc. 2.34. On human sacrifice among the Aztecs see Hornung, *Geschichte*, 43. For the metaphor of sacrifice applied to war see, for instance, Pind. fr. 78. On the Delphic oracle for king Philip see Parke and Wormell (1956) #266 = Diod. 16.91; Paus. 8.7.6.

to interpret it as a first move toward a metaphysical, transcendent realm.<sup>1</sup> It is somewhat more certain that we are dealing with a human action which may vary from culture to culture but within a single community proceeds according to the same scheme with great constancy over many generations. Behind every burial there is a funerary ritual.<sup>2</sup>

However, the Palaeolithic era, in which burial evolved, was also the age of hunting. Thus, the ritual of hunting and sacrificing accompanied the funerary ritual from the start, each influencing the other. In prehistory and ethnology it generally holds true that dead men and dead animals are treated alike:<sup>3</sup> both rituals basically deal with death. It makes little difference whether one says that the quarry is treated like a dead man or whether a dead man is treated like the sacrificial quarry. Homo sapiens is also homo necans and homo sepeliens. Both rituals are, of course, complex, and one can hardly hope to discover the origins of each detail. Nevertheless we can observe that essential elements of funerary ritual derive from the ritual of hunting and sacrificing, inasmuch as the necessary functions deal with hunting rather than with the death of a member.<sup>4</sup> Did man come to understand death through the paradox of killing?<sup>5</sup> One's own death always seems far

<sup>1</sup>Müller-Karpe (1966) 229 speaks of a “metaphysischen Dimension.” The Pānians do not acknowledge death: see G. Devereux, *Symb.* Oslo 42 (1967), 85, 4.

<sup>2</sup>We can here give only a brief indication of the enormous complex of funerary rites. On prehistory see Maringer (1956) *passim*; Müller-Karpe (1966) 229–42, (1968) 348–71. For Greece see Rohde (1898) 216–58; Nilsson (1955) 174–99, 374–84; A. Chudzinski, *Tod und Totenkultus bei den alten Griechen* (1907); J. Wiesner, *Grab und Jenseits* (1938); M. Andronikos, “Totenkult,” in *Archeologia Homerica W* (1968); J. Pini, *Beiträge zur minoischen Gräberkunde* (1968); A. Schnauffer, *Frühgriechischer Totenglaube* (1970); on cremation see n. 17 below. On the particularly complex problem of how belief and ritual are related in funerary custom see R. Moss, *The Life after Death in Oceania and the Malay Archipelago* (1925), who concludes that the two coexist largely without being related, but that ritual will sooner influence belief than vice versa. K. Meuli's “Entstehung und Sinn der Trauersitten,” *Schweiz. Archiv f. Volkskunde* 43 (1946), 91–109, is also of fundamental importance.

<sup>3</sup>Meuli (1967) 160 on tree-burial; no less remarkable is the similar bone-interment, using red ochre, and the special treatment of the skull. See also H. Baumann, *Paideuma* 4 (1950), 198, 200.

<sup>4</sup>See Müller-Karpe (1968) 367 on cremation; in general, Girard (1972) 352–55. Baudy (1980) 102 stresses that in the wild, dead bodies are eaten by scavengers. Hence the fantasies of how the dead are eaten in the underworld, by Eurynome in Paus. 19.28.7; and by Hecate in a vase-painting, Vermeule (1979) 109. Modern hunters have the “great Halali” sounded at the burial of a hunter as at the end of a hunt: W. Frevert, *Das jagdliche Brauchtum* (1969<sup>10</sup>), 76.

<sup>5</sup>See B. M. F. Galdikas, *National Geographic* 157 (1980), 832, on an adolescent orangutan,



off and uncertain. But, when another dies, the frightening confrontation with death and the pleasurable shock of survival leave a deep impression.

The most widespread element in funerals—so obvious it may seem hardly worth mentioning—is the role played by eating, i.e., the funerary meal. Ethnology and religious studies have dwelt mainly on the bizarre and more or less unsuccessful attempts to feed the dead themselves, but it is more often the real and festive meal of the living “in honor of” the dead that is of primary importance. Thus, even while mourning the death of Patroklos, Achilles permits his companions to “feast the heart-pleasing burial.”<sup>6</sup> This unabashed statement refers to behavior that is offensive to anyone concerned merely with the dead individual, yet has not been expunged to this day, namely, that in an environment of grief, pain, and tears, the pleasure of the festive meal will thrive. At first the necessary combination of death and eating appeared only in the hunt. Starting here, the ritual meal functioned as a bond within the community.<sup>7</sup> This is not to say that cannibalism was the earliest form of honoring the dead.<sup>8</sup> The ritualization of hunting behavior made possible a twofold transferral: the dead could take the place of the quarry—a substitute more serious than what it replaces—but in the subsequent feast, his place could in turn be taken by the sacrificial animal.<sup>9</sup>

Sugito, who drowned his younger foster-sister, Doe: “Sugito . . . was staring off into space with a funny look that I had never seen before. He studiously avoided looking into Doe’s direction. After some time . . . he slowly approached. Then, standing on two legs, he raised both arms over his head and brought them down, fluttering, in front of him . . . [like] a shaman . . . performing rituals of obsequiousness to his god. . . . Sugito . . . knew perfectly well that Doe was dead. He had killed her.” On intraspecific killing with gorillas, see D. Fossey, *National Geographic* 159 (1981), 508–512.

<sup>6</sup> Il. 23.29, and cf. 24.801–804; Od. 3.309. For eating at the tomb in Geometric times see J. Boardman, *JHS* 86 (1966), 2–4; cf. M. Murko, “Das Grab als Tisch,” *Wörter und Sachen* 2 (1910), 79–160. Gregory of Nazianzus rails against eating and drinking in churches at the tombs of the martyrs: AP 8.166–69, 172, 175. After the burial, people met for the festive meal of the *τρίτα*, *ἐνατα*, *τριακάς*, *ἐνιαύσια*: An. Bekk. 268.19 τῇ τριακοστῇ γὰρ ἡμέρᾳ . . . οἱ προσήκοντες ἅπαντες . . . συνελθόντες κοινῇ ἐδείπνον ἐπὶ τῷ ἀποθανόντι. καὶ τοῦτο καθέδρα ἐκαλεῖτο.

<sup>7</sup>Besides this there is the psychological explanation that the sense of loss is compensated for, in a form of oral regression, by eating. This sense of loss could, however, manifest itself just as well through fasting; it is the ritual constraint that causes Niobe to eat after ten days: Il. 24.602–13.

<sup>8</sup>Allegedly the custom among the Massagetai; see Hdt. 1.216, *Dissoi Logoi* 2.14.

<sup>9</sup>S. Freud, *Totem und Tabu*, Ges. Schr. 10 (1924), 66–88 = Ges. Werke 9 (1940), 66–88, developed the idea of the ambivalence between love and aggression in relationship to the dead man.

The funerary meal for Patroklos shows very clearly that although feasting follows death, the death must be repeated immediately before the feast, through ritual killing. After the mourners circled the corpse three times while crying out in grief and swearing vengeance, many cows, sheep, goats, and pigs were slaughtered and “blood poured from the cups flowed all around the dead man.”<sup>10</sup> The corpse could hardly be placed more emphatically at the center of a bloody act which, however, at the same time also signals a pleasing meal for 10,000 Myrmidons. So too in Athens it was customary to eat at the grave; Solon was the first to forbid that cows be slaughtered there.<sup>11</sup> There was no thought of burning or burying such a cow whole, for the meat belonged to the living, while the dead man “took his fill” of the blood. The idea that the dead delight in blood obviously emanates from the reality of the ritual: the pattern of hunting calls for the bloody “act” at the place of death. Because death becomes killing, and the participant, a killer,<sup>12</sup> death itself becomes an act of the will, subject to performance and repetition. For this very reason it can be overcome through the festive meal, which confirms the survivor’s will to live.

The sacrificial analogies extend to the actions that precede and follow as well. There is a period of preparation, in which the corpse lies in state and is washed and adorned; a procession marks the transition from indoors to out. This is then followed by wild, ecstatic behavior, bloodshed, and a hearty meal.<sup>13</sup> The location in which the action takes place remains sacred forever after—distinguished by a monument as the realm of the extraordinary—whereas at home, the ordinary order is restored.

The most striking resemblances between hunting and funerary customs can be seen in the treatment of the bones. The funeral cere-

<sup>10</sup> Il. 23.34. For funerary sacrifice already in the Moustérien see Müller-Karpe (1966) 231–33. For horse-sacrifice in, and bull-sacrifice at, the royal tomb at Archanes (Crete), see *Archaeology* 20 (1967), 278–79.

<sup>11</sup> Plut. Solon 21.5; A. Martina, *Solone* (1968), #465–70; and cf. n. 6 above. For αἵμακουρία see Il.2 below.

<sup>12</sup>The central act in the great funerary festival of the Dajak on Borneo (Tiawah) is the killing of a buffalo—in earlier times, it was a man—whom each participant had to stab with a spear: F. Grabowsky, *Internat. Archiv f. Ethnographie* 2 (1899), 199; H. Schärer, *Der Totenkult der Ngadju Dajak in Süd-Borneo I* (1966), 20.

<sup>13</sup>A somewhat different, though no less characteristic, sequence is noted by Herodotus among the Thracians (5.8): τρεῖς μὲν ἡμέρας προτιθεῖσι τὸν νεκρὸν καὶ παντοῖα σφάζαντες ἱερῆα εὐωχέονται προκλαύσαντες πρῶτον. ἔπειτα δὲ θάπτουσι κατακαύσαντες ἢ ἄλλως γῇ κρύψαντες, χῶμα δὲ χέαντες ἀγῶνα τιθεῖσι. On the agon see n. 23 below.



mony often centers not so much on the corpse as on the bones from individual limbs. These are collected and solemnly deposited. The rhythm of the hunting ritual is, thus, repeated: death/tearing apart/restoration. In Çatal Hüyük, as among the Parsees, bodies were set out for scavenging birds, after which the bones were carefully deposited in household shrines at the feet of the Great Goddess.<sup>14</sup> Often a corpse was intentionally torn apart, only to be put back together again. In Egypt, the roots of the mummification ritual are much the same.<sup>15</sup> It was a widespread custom during the Neolithic to sever the head and preserve it in a sanctuary, like a Bukranion; head and thigh-bones are buried separately at Ugarit.<sup>16</sup> Until modern times, ruling houses of Europe used to bury certain parts of their dead in different sacred places. With the development of artisan skills, it became possible to substitute a symbol for the skull: the Roman *lararium*, for instance, preserved only the masks of the ancestors.

Among the Greeks and Romans, even cremation<sup>17</sup> was used for the avowed purpose of obtaining the bones quickly. The most sacred duty for the next-of-kin is to gather the bones (*ὀστολογεῖν*; *ossa legere*) from the ashes of the pyre. The fire that burns the corpse is described as a beast of prey, "tearing apart" the dead man with "a furious jaw."<sup>18</sup> The remains are then united forever in an urn. This act is at once a joining together and a foundation, as in the Latin word *condere*. When, as early as Homer's description of the death of Achilles, we find the wine jar of Dionysos serving as an urn,<sup>19</sup> it is merely the transforma-

tion of sacrificial ritual into that of the plant realm. The produce gathered by the farmer replaces the hunter's quarry; thus, gathering bones acquires new meaning.

There are, of course, aspects of funerary ritual that cannot be traced to the hunt. It is then all the more characteristic that these elements have frequently been taken up in the sacrificial ritual. Above all, lamentation<sup>20</sup>—weeping and wailing, tearing one's clothes and hair, scratching the face and beating the breast; then defiling oneself, *μαίνεσθαι*—smearing one's face, strewing one's head with clay, dirt, and ashes. The large part that aggression plays in these rites is evident.<sup>21</sup> It is an inevitable group reflex to offer to protect an endangered member against a hostile force by means of aggressive threats. When faced with the fact of death, this reflex aggression strikes out into a vacuum and hence returns in upon itself. With no enemy near, the hand raised to strike comes down upon one's own head.

Men, of course, often seek some external substitute as the butt of their rage: hence those funerary sacrifices that are and intend to be merely destructive. When a Hittite king died, for example, a plow ox was sacrificed while the king was invoked: "What you have become, this too shall become."<sup>22</sup> Achilles slaughters countless sacrificial animals, four horses, nine dogs, and twelve Trojans at the bier of Patroklos. Once again, death is mastered when the mourner becomes a killer. For this reason there is often no clear-cut distinction between merely destructive sacrifice and the sacrifice of the funerary meal (cf. n. 13).

Unbounded rage can be vented in a life-affirming form through fighting, through an agon. Karl Meuli demonstrated the extent and inner necessity of the connection between funerals and competitive contests:<sup>23</sup> it remains to say that an agon can accompany not only a

<sup>14</sup> Mellaart (1967) 241–45.

<sup>15</sup> A. Hermann, "Zergliedern und Zusammenfügen," *Numen* 3 (1956), 81–96.

<sup>16</sup> On burying the skull see Maringer (1956) 67–70, 78–86, 122–28, 220–22; Müller-Karpe (1966) 231–34, 239–40; (1968) 365–66. The skulls from pre-ceramic Jericho that have been formed into portraits are particularly impressive: see *Arch. f. Orientforsch.* 16 (1953), 384; Müller-Karpe (1968) 349. On skull-burial at Archanes (Crete) see *Archaeology* 20 (1967) 276–77; cf. Hdt. 4.26 on the Issedonians. For Ugarit see H. Th. Bossert, *Altisrien* (1951), on nr. 354.

<sup>17</sup> For post-Mycenaean cremation in Greece, see Müller-Karpe (1968) 351, 366–67; G. Mylonas, *AJA* 52 (1948), 56–81; V. R. d'A. Desborough, *The Last Mycenaeans and Their Successors* (1964<sup>2</sup>), 71; Schnaufer, *Totenglaube*, 36–45. Cremation is found among the Hittites, Hurrians, Troy VI, etc., by the second millennium: see Otten (1958) 5; U. Schlenther, *Brandbestattung und Seelenglaube* (1960); Pini, *Beiträge*, 19–21, 58–62.

<sup>18</sup> *Δάπτειν* *Il.* 23.183; *πυρὸς μαλερὰ γνάθος* Aesch. *Cho.* 325. *Ὅστέα λέγειν* already in *Il.* 23.239, 252; *συνθεῖς* Eur. *Hik.* 1126. According to Andron of Halikarnassos, *FGrHist* 10 F 10 = Schol. A *Il.* 1.52, Herakles at Troy was the first to use cremation, burning the body of the dead Argeios so as to be able to carry "him" back to his father: see *Il.* 7.334–35 (contradicted in Schol. A *ad loc.*); Thuc. 2.34.

<sup>19</sup> *Od.* 24.73–75. Cf. the Dionysiac bronze-crater from Derveni, which served as an urn:

*BCH* 87 (1963), 802, pl. XVI–XX. Bones (unburnt) had been deposited in clay vessels already at Neolithic Lerna: see Müller-Karpe (1968) 365.

<sup>20</sup> E. Reiner, *Die rituelle Totenklage der Griechen* (1938); E. de Martino, *Morte e pianto rituale nel mondo antico* (Turin, 1958). On *μαίνεσθαι* see, for instance, the law at Iulis (Keos), *SIG*<sup>3</sup> 1218 = *LS* 97, 24–31; Hdt. 6.58.1.

<sup>21</sup> On destructive rage in funerary customs see Meuli (1946) 201–207; *Antike* 17 (1941), 193–97; *Schweiz. Archiv f. Volkskunde* 43 (1946), 106–108.

<sup>22</sup> Otten (1958) 19; *Il.* 23.166–76, and cf. *Od.* 24.65–66. On bloody sacrifice at the interment and "opening of the mouth" in Egypt, see A. Wiedemann, *ARW* 22 (1923/24), 72–86.

<sup>23</sup> "Der Ursprung der Olympischen Spiele," *Antike* 17 (1941), 189–208; *Der griechische Agon: Kampf und Kampfspiel im Totenbrauch, Totentanz, Totenklage und Totenlob* (1968; orig. Habilitationsschrift Basel, 1926).

deposition ceremony for human bones but animal sacrifice as well. The Greek agon of historical times was a sacrificial festival. In Rome, the ancient sacrifice of the October-Horse was followed by a ritual battle between two groups. Similarly, the Macedonians would pretend to fight a battle after the dog-sacrifice at their Festival of Purification, the Xandika.<sup>24</sup> Myth applies the same pattern to the hunt, raising it to tragic seriousness in the story of the war between the Aetolians and the Curetes after the Calydonian Boarhunt.<sup>25</sup> Here, too, as soon as the quarry was killed, the warriors' accumulated energy struck into a vacuum; moreover, their bad conscience made them willing to suffer for their "action."

Even more prominent in funerary ritual than in sacrifice is the willingness to assume and recognize a pattern of renunciation after the fact. This willingness is primarily shown by offering food in the form of libations, *χοαί*. Milk, honey, oil, and wine, the precious commodities of a society familiar with dearth and hunger, were poured away irretrievably; similarly, grain was mashed into pap so it could drain into the ground. In southern regions, even water is a precious commodity and hence played a part in some libations. Like the sacrificial ritual, libation would have occurred outside the confines of everyday reality. There would have been a procession, then the restrained attitude of prayer, and finally the ecstatic cry (*ὀλολυγή*) at the moment of the libation.<sup>26</sup> No other act of destruction can be expressed by gestures so noble and sublime: Achilles pouring wine for his dead friend Patroklos, an unforgettable poetical image.<sup>27</sup> The artfully shaped libation vessels stress the grandeur of the proceedings. By renouncing personal profit, man can uplift himself; by humbling himself in spite

<sup>24</sup> On Olympia see II.2 below; on the Isthmia see III.7 below; on the October-Horse see Latte (1960) 119–21; U. W. Scholz, *Studien zum altitalischen und altrömischen Marsmythos* (1970); on the fight for the head see Festus 190 L. On the Xandika see Nilsson (1907) 404–406, who correctly compares the Platanistas-fight of the Spartan ephebes (406–407), which also occurred in connection with a dog-sacrifice (Paus. 3.20.8, 14.8–10).

<sup>25</sup> "For the head and the tufted hide of the boar," *Il.* 9.548; Apollod. 1.70–71; etc. H. Usener, the first to collect the ancient evidence for ritual combat (*ARW* 7 [1904], 297–313 = *Kl. Schr.* IV [1913], 435–47), saw in it a fight between Winter and Summer; objections already in Nilsson (1906) 413–14. The mock-battle among the Hittites (H. Ehelolf, *SB Berlin* [1925], 269–70; A. Lesky, *Ges. Schr.* [1966], 310–17) occurs in the context of a sacrifice, which, however, was not discussed by the editor.

<sup>26</sup> Aesch. *Cho.* 22–163, esp. 149 ff.; *Pers.* 610–18; for additional evidence see Stengel (1910) 178–86, (1920) 103–105; Casabona (1966) 231–97.

<sup>27</sup> Homer *Il.* 23.218–20; "Giesse, Myrmidone, den funkelnden Wein ins Land," Gottfried Benn, *Ges. Werke* I (1960), 129. See also Lucr. 3.434 f.

of his needs, he displays his wealth or at least his freedom. Alexander the Great acted in this way in the Gedrosian desert when he emptied into the sand a helmet filled with water.<sup>28</sup>

Here, the social significance of renunciation ritual and, for that matter, funerary ritual altogether, is clear. By keeping a space empty artificially, one can prevent grasping, greedy, aggressive individuals from clashing, or at least pretend to do so. The pleasure of inheriting possessions has to be masked and at least part of the dead man's property renounced. By playing out the breakdown of the social order, even in the easily neutralized act of self-defilement, that very order can be gotten under control. Such actions preserve the basic structure of society, because death is not perceived as an ending. Now, human culture needs continuity: to be able to go on, there has to be an authority recognized through the course of generations. Man's neoteny, the long period of time he spends in the process of learning, forged a new relationship between young and old, above all between son and father, in which the catastrophe of death became especially disturbing and dangerous. And the very elements that funerals took over from hunting and sacrificial ritual were the ones able to mend the rift, transforming death into killing, celebration into an eruption of aggression followed by reparation. In this way, there arose a post-humous duty toward the dead. A swing of the pendulum transformed symbolic parricide into an obligation to worship one's ancestors. Thus, fathers, chiefs, and kings have the most magnificent funerals; and a pile of stones, the monument left by collective stoning, will grow until it becomes a pyramid.<sup>29</sup>

Funerary ritual alone may almost be enough to confirm and insure continuity in the community. Indeed, among some peoples all else pales by comparison. Among the Greeks, rulers characteristically expected their vassals to participate in funerals as a sign of loyalty; the Spartans demanded it of the Messenians, the Corinthians of the Megarians.<sup>30</sup> But a funeral is dependent on circumstance and chance, whereas ritual requires repetition and regularity. Thus, funerary ritual can be repeated through funerary sacrifice. The act of killing re-

<sup>28</sup> Arr. *Anab.* 6.26 . . . ὥστε εἰκάσαι ἄν τινα ποτὸν γενέσθαι πᾶσιν ἐκείνο τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ πρὸς Ἀλεξάνδρον ἐκχυθέν.

<sup>29</sup> Among the Kabylai, a great hunter is buried beneath a pile of rocks, upon which new rocks are always thrown: see H. Baumann, *Paideuma* 4 (1950), 192; and cf. Plat. *Leg.* 873b; B. Schmidt, *NJb* 39 (1893), 369–95; Baudy (1980) 148f.

<sup>30</sup> Tyrtaios fr. 5.4 Diehl = Prato; Schol. Pind. *Nem.* 7.155b = Demon, *FGrHist* 327 F 19; Hippas of Erythrai, *FGrHist* 421 F 1.



establishes the context of death;<sup>31</sup> the dead man becomes the focus of attention once again, and thus his power is recognized and renewed. Inversely, the Greeks set a funerary monument at almost every place of sacrifice, a tomb that may or may not have been real: the hero had, then, his place at sacrifice beside the recipient god, the sacrificial pit beside the altar, the chthonic aspect beside the Olympian.<sup>32</sup> We see here how deeply sacrificial and funerary ritual permeated one another. By joining together to honor the dead, the survivors, and especially the young, would have been initiated, integrated into the continuity of the society, and educated in the tradition all at once. The rituals of sacrifice, funeral, and initiation are so closely related that they can be interpreted through the same myths and may even partially overlap. The myth tells of death and destruction, while in sacrifice an animal is killed. By encountering death as symbolized in word and ritual, succeeding generations are molded into successors. In this way society is consolidated and renewed.

Plutarch provides us with the most detailed description of a funerary sacrifice in Greece.<sup>33</sup> It concerns those who died at Plataea. The cult was active till the end of antiquity, and Plutarch was obviously an eyewitness: just before dawn, a procession was formed leading from the center of town to the outside, from the marketplace to the cemetery. The atmosphere was aggressive and warlike; a trumpeter gave the signal for war. But the wagons were loaded with myrtle branches and wreaths; a black bull trotted along in the middle of the procession. The young men carried amphoras with wine and milk, jugs of oil and salves. The archon of the city brought up the rear. As head of the civil authorities, he would normally have been forbidden to carry weapons and would always have worn white robes. But on the day of the sacrifice he was dressed in a purple mantle and was carrying a sword in his belt. Something extraordinary had replaced the everyday order, and bloodshed was imminent. The archon himself brought a water jug from the Bouleuterion. Thus, the procession

<sup>31</sup>Just as "blood is purified through blood," so funerary sacrifice (with an agon) counts as expiation for killing: Hdt. 1.166–67. Clytemnestra alone celebrates the Day of Death in open triumph, with sacrifices (Soph. *El.* 277–81); otherwise, the more profound ambivalence (n. 9 above) is concealed in gestures of propitiation toward the dead (*μειλίσσειν, ἰλάσκεσθαι*). Sometimes it is indeed the dead enemy who becomes a hero: Hdt. 5.114.2; Plut. *Cimon* 19.5.

<sup>32</sup>See, for example, Pelops-Zeus (II.2 below), Pyrrhos-Apollo (II.5 below), Erechtheus-Athena (III.1 below), Epopeus-Athena (II.5 below), Palaimon-Poseidon (III.7 below).

<sup>33</sup>Plut. *Aristides* 21, and cf. Thuc. 3.58.4; Paus. 9.2.5; Nilsson (1906) 455–56; on the penteteric agon Eleutheria see Paus. 9.2.6; Philostr. *Gymn.* 8.24.

moved toward the cemetery. No slaves were permitted: the archon himself drew water from a nearby well, then washed and anointed the steles rising up from the graves of the dead. The myrtle branches and wreaths were also evidently used to decorate the steles. These monuments had been set up over the men who fell in battle, and they were treated like guests of honor in the sacred ceremony.<sup>34</sup> The remaining participants had likewise come to the festival washed, anointed, and wreathed. In the time of Thucydides, robes were also brought for the dead and presumably laid upon the steles before being burned, for we know that a pyre was built in the center—though Pausanias also mentions an altar and statue of Zeus Eleutherios. Libations of milk introduced the sacrifice: children's food, in contrast to what followed.<sup>35</sup> Swiftly drawing his sword, the archon slit the black bull's throat so that the blood flowed onto the pyre. After this, he called the fallen warriors to supper, to "take their fill" of blood (*αἱμακονρία*). The remaining participants presumably ate their fill of the meat, but Plutarch does not say. Whatever was finally burnt on the pyre,<sup>36</sup> there were always libations of wine at the end. The archon mixed a krater of wine from the amphoras that were brought along, and, in all likelihood, poured it over the pyre, which had by now burned to the ground. He did so, as he announced, "for the men who died for the freedom of the Hellenes." In just this way, the lord of the sacrifice poured wine on a flaming altar, and Achilles extinguished the pyre of Patroklos.

Both battle and burial were reenacted in the bloody ritual. Death and victory alike were present in the act of killing. The Plataeans evidently had already experienced their victory as a sacrifice in the year of the battle: the votive offering they presented at Delphi after 479 was a bull.<sup>37</sup> The ritual celebrating the defeat of the Persians is therefore not a creation of the historical event but, rather, a traditional form assimilating that event. A unique occurrence was thereby given universal significance and transformed into an enduring obligation that lasted through centuries. Of course, this could not prevent the de-

<sup>34</sup>See AP 11.8; I.5.n.18 above.

<sup>35</sup>On milk libations see Serv. *Aen.* 5.78; K. Wyss, *Die Milch im Kultus der Griechen und Römer* (1914); Eisler (1925) 357–93; W. Deonna, *Deux études de symbolisme religieux* (1955), 21–31.

<sup>36</sup>For garments and seasonal fruits (*ώραία*) see Thuc. 3.58.4, and cf. *Od.* 10.523 = 11.31. See in general Luk. *Merc. cond.* 28 on *ἐναγίσματα*: *καταχέαντες μύρον καὶ τὸν στέφανον ἐπιθέντες αὐτοὶ πίνουσι καὶ εὐωχοῦνται*. . . .

<sup>37</sup>Paus. 10.15.1, 16.6.



struction of Plataea in 427, but the victors built a sanctuary of their own for observance of the cult.<sup>38</sup> The actors are interchangeable; the ritual remains.

## 7. *The Sexualization of Ritual Killing: Maiden Sacrifice, Phallus Cult*

If the themes of killing and eating are so intensely enacted in ritual that they are able to grip, move, and transform human personality, it is inconceivable that the most powerful human impulse, sexuality, would play no part. On the contrary, sexuality is always intimately involved in ritual. There is no social order without a sexual order; but, even so, sexuality always retains the quality of something extraordinary and strange.

Even among primates, sexual behavior is ritually redirected to demonstrate power and differences in rank. Among some primates, the male delimits his territory by facing outward and displaying his erect phallus. Rump-presentation as an invitation to mate is a gesture of submission inhibiting an aggressive response from the stronger partner.<sup>1</sup> It is astounding how corresponding behavior recurs in human ritual: the function of the phallus is "apotropaic." The Babylonians made their boundary stones in the shape of a phallus; the Greeks marked their territory with herms.<sup>2</sup>

Human sexuality was not alone in experiencing inordinate growth, even from the standpoint of externals.<sup>3</sup> Rather, it was part of a new tension brought about by the polarity of human existence. The

<sup>38</sup>Thuc. 3.68.3.

<sup>1</sup>On phallic display see Fehling (1974) 7–28; Burkert (1979) 39–41. On rump-presentation see Lorenz (1963) 203–204; Morris (1967) 158, 167–68; Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1970) 201–202; Fehling (1974) 28–38.

<sup>2</sup>F. X. Steinmetzer, *Die babylonischen Kudurru* (1922), 114–15. On the herms see H. Herter, *RE* XIX 1688–92, s.v. Phallos; *ibid.* 1733–44, on the apotropaic phallus.

<sup>3</sup>Morris (1967) 9 and *passim*.

family's supporter had to be emotionally bound to his wife, though regularly having to tear himself away from her to go out into the unknown and hunt. Separation and bonding are thus two aspects of a single situation. Sexuality defines the specifically male role just as much as does hunting and warring behavior. It does so, first, in the expectations and educative impulses of society in which women play no small part, and, second, in the psychological makeup that the male developed in this context. Hunting is, of course, fueled in part by the powers of aggression, which had their original function in mating fights. That is to say, from the very start it included an undercurrent of sexual motivation. Male aggression and male sexuality are closely bound up with one another, stimulated simultaneously and almost always inhibited together.

The actions of banging<sup>4</sup> and stabbing, thrusting and piercing thus all become ambivalent in deed just as they do in language. There is no need to enumerate the ubiquitous military metaphors for the sexual organs and activity. In ancient literature the *Cento nuptialis* by Ausonius takes pride of place, consisting as it does of nothing but Vergilian battle sequences patched together so as to describe a deflowering in great detail. Whether it be a stick or a club, a spear or a sword, a gun or a cannon, as a symbol of masculinity the weapon has been equivalent to and almost interchangeable with the sexual organs from Stone Age drawings<sup>5</sup> to modern advertising.

Thus, when enthusiastic, aggressive tension reaches its peak, particularly at the moment of success, it may suddenly turn sexual. If an opponent is defeated, this tension strikes into a vacuum and must find release in some other way. Therefore in hunting rituals, sacrifice, warlike fighting, and even in funerary cult, there are frequent periods of license during which sexual impulses stimulated earlier can express themselves freely.<sup>6</sup> Such practices, which have been observed by ethnologists, were of course already suppressed in the Greek ur-

<sup>4</sup>See, for instance, *Ov. Fast.* 2.425–46, and the evidence that Mannhardt (1875) 251–303 (esp. 256) assembles under the title "Schlag mit der Lebensrute."

<sup>5</sup>For the associations male/spear, female/being wounded, see A. Leroi-Gourhan, *Pré-histoire de l'art occidental* (1965), 119; La Barre (1970) 78, 170. For hunting as "making love to the animal" among modern primitives, see G. Reichel-Dolmatoff, *Amazonian Cosmos* (1971), 220. African hunters fear that the dying animal's revenge could affect their masculinity—they cover their genitals and perceive the symbolic castration in initiation as an anticipatory sacrifice to their prey: L. Frobenius, *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas* (1938), 71–79.

<sup>6</sup>Thus, after the gruesome sacrifice of the Tiwah festival (I.6.n.12 above): F. Grabowsky, *Internat. Archiv f. Ethnographie* 2 (1899), 199–200.