

The Origin of Nudity in Greek Athletics*

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Some scholars who have written on the subject of nudity in Greek athletics have neglected to investigate the prehistoric period and quite understandably so.¹ The lack of material evidence and the conflicting ancient sources make such an investigation a difficult undertaking. It is the purpose of this paper to show that nudity in Greek athletics had its roots in prehistoric Greece and was connected with the warrior-athlete whose training and competition in the games was at the same time his preparation for war. The distinction between warrior-athlete and athlete is that both were nude but the former wore in certain events some parts of his panoply which he discarded as time went on.

In 520 B.C. the armed race (Fig. 1) was introduced at Olympia which can partly be explained as a reminiscence of the warrior-athlete. The competitors were nude except for a helmet and greaves, and carried a shield. It is possible that this kind of race was practiced in some local competitions before its introduction into the Olympic program. Similar races were held at Nemea and according to Philostratos were of great antiquity.²

In Athens an attempt had been made at the close of the sixth century to introduce loincloths into athletic competitions. This is evident from a small number of black figured Athenian vases (Figs, 2,3) that depict athletes wearing loincloths. This attempt apparently failed, and nudity again became the fashion in athletics. It is possible that this is what Thucydides and Plato had in mind when they wrote that the introduction of nudity in the games had taken place just before their own time. The small number of these vases (520-500 B.C.)

* I am grateful for the useful criticism and comments of anonymous reviewers of this Journal.

1. For references see James Arieti, "Nudity in Greek Athletics," *The Classical World* 68 (1975): 431-436. Also see Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art* (London, 1957), pp. 21, 162, 163. These studies offer an admirable help toward understanding a phenomenon within a higher civilization. When, however, one tries to find the origin of the problem, which is lost in the dark mists of prehistoric time he cannot use the same reasoning (self-control, health and beauty arguments) to explain it. If one does so he must be ready to admit that all races of the world began their existence on earth at the bottom of the scale with the exception of the Greeks. But the Greeks, like all other human races, commenced their career at the bottom of the scale and worked their way up from savagery to civilization and admittedly retained some survivals of that old condition. This paper tries to explain the same problem, which is nudity in Greek athletics, by looking into the animal part of human nature, the early condition of the human race, its emotional nature and reasoning, its mental and moral powers, and its protracted struggle against fear.

2. Philostratos Gymn 7. For Philostratos as an inaccurate source see E. L. Bowie, "Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic," *Past and Present* 46 (1970): 17. For more on the armed-race see Aristophanes *Birds* 291; Plato *Laws* 833a; Pausanias 2.11.8; 5.12.8; 6.10.4; Pollux 3.3; Philostratos Gymn. 8, 24.



Red-figure Attic Vase. E. Norman Gardiner, "Notes on the Greek Foot Race," *JHS* 23 (1903) fig. 14. (Courtesy of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies).

prompted some scholars to raise the question of reintroduction of loincloths in athletics.³ This was not an attempt to "reintroduce" but rather to introduce loincloths in the games because prior to these vase representations there is nothing in Greek art to indicate the existence of loincloths in athletics. The alleged change from loincloths to nudity is not illustrated in any Greek art.

Thucydides wrote that the Spartans "were the first to bare their bodies and, after stripping openly, to anoint themselves with oil when they engaged in athletic exercise." Dionysios of Halicarnassos believed that "The first man who

at the close of the sixth century to introduce the loincloth and that this temporary fashion is the reason for Thucydides' statement?" See E. Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1930), p. 191 (hereafter cited as AAW). On loincloths see, e.g., J. C. Mann, "Gymnazo in Thucydides 1.6.5-6," *Classical Review* 24 (1974): 77, who wrote: "While the representations of athletes on vases had usually portrayed them naked, it may be that an attempt to reintroduce loincloths had been made in Greece before Thucydides' time (as suggested by E. N. Gardiner [AAW] ad fig. 163 .)'. James Arieti, "Nudity in Greek Athletics," [431 11.31 said: "E. Norman Gardiner [AAW, p. 191] suggests, on the basis of a vase belonging to the end of the sixth century in which the athletes wear a white loincloth, that an attempt may have been made to reintroduce the loincloth at this time. But Gardiner is himself very uncertain on this point, raising it simply as a question, and there is no real evidence that the loincloth was re-introduced." Both Mann's and Arieti's statements are inaccurate since Gardiner did not say "reintroduce" but "introduce" (See Gardiner, AAW p. 191).



Attic stamnos of the late 6th century, B.C., E. Norman Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford, University Press, 1930) fig. 182. (Courtesy of Oxford University Press).

undertook to strip and ran naked at Olympia, at the fifteenth Olympiad, was Acanthus the Lacedaemonian.⁴

There is a rival tradition told by Pausanias about Orsippus of Megara, “who won a foot-race at Olympia running naked at a time when athletes used to wear loincloths in the old style.” There is a Hellenistic epitaph about Orsippus that was inscribed on the athlete’s tomb in Megara saying that he was the first of the Greeks in Olympia crowned naked and that before him all athletes girded themselves during the games. It is evident that the Megarians were making a counterclaim to Sparta’s and wanted to show that a native of Megara was the first naked victor. The story about Orsippus seems ambiguous and doubtful since there are a number of different stories about his performance in the race. According to the Homeric scholiasts (on *Iliad* 23.683) Orsippus not only lost the race but he tripped, fell, and died when his loincloth came adrift. A different tale mentions Orsippus not as a winner in the race but as a loser because he became entangled in his shorts.⁵

Another tradition points to the Athenians as the inventors of nudity in athletics. A runner, according to this tale, leading the field lost footing and fell

4. Thucydides 1.5.6. (The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1928) Trans. by Charles Foster Smith; Dionysios of Halicarnassos 7.72.3 (The Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1928) Trans. by E. Gary.

5. Pausanias 1.44.1. (The Penguin Classics. Great Britain, 1971) Trans. by Peter Levi; I.G 7.52; Joseph Fontenrose, “The Hero as Athlete,” *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 1 (1968): 93; F. Bohringer, “Cults D’Athlètes en Grèce Classique: Propos Politique, Discours Mythiques,” *Revue des Etudes Anciennes* 81 (1979): 14.



FIG. 3

Attic stamnos of the late 6th century B.C., E. Norman Gardiner *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford University Press, 1930), fig. 163. (Courtesy of Oxford University Press).

because his shorts floated freely down to his legs; so the Athenian archon Hippomenes in order to prevent any recurrence of the accident, enforced, by law, that all men in the future should exercise naked.⁶

So while the majority of traditional sources assign nudity in athletics as early as the 8th century B.C., Plato and Thucydides believed that it happened not long before their own era.

It appears from two Homeric references to boxing and one to wrestling that athletes girded themselves during their athletic competitions. These three citations prompted some scholars to conclude that nudity was not a practice among the Mycenaean Greeks, assuming that Homer described in his epics Mycenaean sport practices. But there is enough evidence to show that many of the games and athletic practices described in Homer's epics were anachronistically introduced by the poet into his epics. The Homeric epics, it has been pointed out, reflected athletic practices of many ages, including the poet's.⁷ It becomes clear that the Homeric athletes girded themselves for the contact events. Unfortunately the poet did not say anything about loincloths for

6. Isidoros *Orig. Et.* 18.172.

7. See *Iliad* 23. 685; 23. 710; *Odyssey* 18.76; John Mouratidis, "Greek Sports, Games and Festivals Before the Eighth Century B.C." (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1982). pp. 193.219, 235-237.

the other games. Do we have to assume that they contended naked in these events? It is hard to say. One might well suggest that the Homeric references to loincloths in athletics reflect a practice of the poet's own time since the material evidence shows that nudity was not unknown in Mycenaean Greece.

It is possible that Ionia, Homer's own birthplace, was influenced by the existing practice in the oriental world. In the time of Herodotos (5th century B.C.), the Lydians, and barbarians in general, believed that it was a disgrace for a man to be seen naked. This Anatolian attitude towards nudity was apparently shared, to some extent, by the Greeks who lived in areas under Anatolian influence. An indication of this influence is that the inhabitants of the coast of Asia Minor borrowed and adopted various elements of oriental dress as well as various hair styles. Moreover, the Persian pointed hat and shoes with effeminate connotations and the long-sleeved chiton were adopted by the Phrygians and Ionian Greeks during the period of Persian rule.⁸ Furthermore the luxurious Ionian clothes that Herodotos often describes were rather characteristic of the oriental world.

Some authors point to Thersites to show that to be seen naked was considered indecent in the Mycenaean or Homeric times. Thersites was threatened by Odysseus with the public degradation of running naked to the Greek ships. This punishment must have been a shameful and humiliating one, but this must have been due not only to his nakedness but also to Thersites' ugly physical appearance which the poet described in detail. Thersites appears only once in the *Iliad* and even though his presence is brief, it is important because he personifies unheroic, even antiheroic features, and these are reflected in his appearance. Homer and the later Greek poets and writers made a clear distinction between the ugly and the beautiful, the young and the old. Homer had a deep appreciation for physical prowess and beauty as is evidenced in many passages in his epics. Hector wanted to fight with Achilles and die young and handsome instead of dying old and ugly.⁹ Tyrtaios believed that:

It is shocking when an old man lies on the front line before a youth: an old warrior whose head is white and beard gray, exhaling his strong soul into the dust clutching his bloody genitals in his hands: his flesh naked. But in a young man all is beautiful when he still possesses the shining flower of lovely youth.¹⁰

Plato also spoke of the old men in the gymnasiums who are wrinkled and unpleasant to the eye.¹¹ Plato's view of the old men in nude was shared by the artists of ancient Greece, whose sculptures of old men were usually clothed.

Athletic nudity was unknown in Minoan Crete. Even though sports and games were connected with the great Minoan civilization, there is nothing to indicate

8. See Herodotos 1.10. Greek nudity, of course, shocked the Romans, who believed with Cicero and Ennius that to strip in public was the beginning of evil doing. (See Cicero *Tusc. Disp.* 4.33.70); Larissa Bonfante, *Etruscan Dress* (Baltimore, 1975), pp. 83, 101.

9. *Iliad* 2. 261-263. For Thersites' case see L. P. Wilkinson. *Classical Attitudes 10 Modern Issues* (London, 1978), p. 83: Homer (*Iliad* 2.216-219) told of Thersites: "This was the ugliest man who came beneath Iliion. He was bandy-legged and went lame on one foot, with shoulders stooped and drawn together over his chest, and above this his skull went up to a point with the wool grown sparsely upon it." (Trans. by Richmond Latimore, Chicago, 1951); C. M. Bowra, *Homer* (London, 1972), p. 156; *Iliad* 22.71

10. *Greek Lyric Poetry* Edit. and trans. by Willis Barnstone, (Bloomington and London, 1967), p. 40.

11. Plato *Rep.* 452 b.

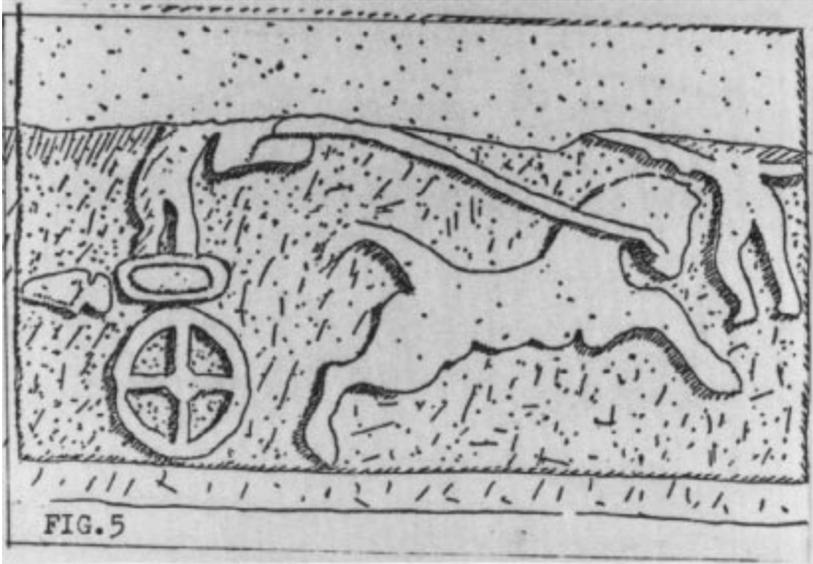
that the Minoan athletes exercised in the nude. The close artistic ties of Crete with the Cyclades, in general, and Thera, in particular, seem to gain the approval of many writers. The recent excavations of S. Marinatos casts new light upon the relationship of Crete with Thera in prehistoric times. Numerous objects of art found on the island of Thera show that the links with Crete were very close. An impressive fresco from Thera, discovered in 1970, and dated 1500 B.C., represents two children boxing. Marinatos is of the opinion that this fresco is "the oldest existing example of art representing the real anatomy of a child's body."¹² Each child wears one boxing glove on his right hand, and a blue cap upon which curls of short and long hair are apparently attached. Both children, between eight and ten years of age, wear loincloths. Thus Minoan Crete and the Cyclades offer no solution to the problem of the origin of nudity in Greek athletics.

Mycenaean and Geometric Greek art clearly show that games in honour of dead heroes were a common practice among the Greeks. Mycenaean, Geometric, and early Archaic warriors (Fig.4) are sometimes represented as exposed in the parts below their breastplate. This exposure is particularly noticeable during funeral games and other religious ceremonies for the dead. On three tall limestone slabs (*stelai*), found at Mycenae and dated 1600 B.C., are represented chariot-races. All three *stelai* are decorated with chariot scenes. There is one charioteer (Fig.5) for each chariot and all three chariot drivers are naked and unarmed, except for the sword. These chariot-races were held as part of the funeral ceremonies for a chieftain, and as such, were considered proper themes for decoration of *stelai* erected over graves. The so-called Silver Siege Rhyton



Early Archaic Corinthian aryballos. K. Friis Johansen, *Les Vases Sicyoniens* (Paris-Copenhagen, Edouard Champion, Pio Paul Brenner, 1923) Pl. 34(2).

12. See S. Marinatos, *Excavations at Them.* Vols. I-IV (Athens 1967,1971),*passim*; E. Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age* (Chicago, 1964), pp. 77, 116, 120; J. Caskey, "Excavations in Keos, 1963," *Hesperia* 33 (1964): 314; S. Marinatos. "Life and Art in Prehistoric Thera." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 57 (1971): 358,363, 367; idem, "Les Egéens et les Iles Gymnésiennes," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 95 (1971):6; idem "Divine Children," *Archaiologika Analekta ex Athenon* 12 (1971): 407,408.



Figured Mycenaean Stele (c. 1600 B.C.). George Mylonas, "The Figured Mycenaean Stelai," *AJA* (1951) fig. 3 stele 1429. (Courtesy of the Archaeological Institute of America).

found at Mycenae shows on the fringe of the water three naked slingers stretched full height, act as a shielder for four or five naked archers as they draw their bows. In the same scene a naked warrior comes rushing past them. In addition, the Siege Rhyton shows six collapsed naked men, who could be interpreted as the dead.¹³

A fragment of Mycenaean chariot krater from Enkomi (Cyprus) (Fig.6) depicts a naked standing male figure who holds two variously interpreted objects in his hands; in front of the nude man there is a robed male figure who wears a sword; in this composition small vases have been placed in the field; in front of the robed man there is a two horse chariot within which there are two robed figures. It has been presumed that this scene depicts a funeral ceremony and that the vases are prizes at funeral games, like the series of tripods on a Dipylon vase. The most recent interpretation of this scene by M. I. Davies is that the nude figure "may well be an ordinary athlete with what in classical times were two of his common attributes: a pickaxe and either a pointed marking stake or strigil." Davies believes that this interpretation "would cast some light upon the conservative transmission of athletic customs and equipment from the Mycenaean into the classical period."¹⁴

A fragment of another krater from Enkomi represents two nude figures

13. George Mylonas, "The Figured Mycenaean Stelai," *American Journal of Archaeology* 55 (1951): 137-147 (hereafter cited as *AJA*). Also see Vermeule, (*Greece in the Bronze Age*, pp. 92, 101, 102) who finds Mylonas' argument "persuasive."

14. A. S. Murray, A. H. Smith and H. B. Walters. *Excavations in Cyprus* (London, 1900): p. 9; M. I. Davies, "Thoughts on the Oresteia Before Aischylos," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 93 (1969): 220,223 (quotes) (hereafter cited as *BCH*). For other interpretations of this scene see *ibid.* pp. 214,223.



A fragment of Mycenaean chariot krater from Enkomi (c. 1300 B.C.). H. W. Catling and A. Millett, "A study in the Composition Patterns of Mycenaean Pictorial Pottery from Cyprus," *BSA* 60 (1965) Pl. 58 (2). (Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

confronted with their arms extended (Fig.7). This scene represents a boxing contest possibly at funeral games. Pairs of confronted nude athletes that remind us of the classical boxing scenes form the sole subject of a Mycenaean vase (Fig.8). It has been suggested that the scene depicts confronted boxers.¹⁵

A Geometric krater dated second quarter of the eighth century B.C. now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York shows a procession of chariots and warriors. The warriors are nude, but each bears a helmet, two spears and a sword. Archaeologists interpret this scene as funeral games or a procession accompanying the body to the tomb. The presence of a tripod in this krater rather indicates the existence of funeral games. M. Laurent gave examples of tripods on Geometric vases and convincingly suggested that they were prizes in boxing contests.¹⁶ A Geometric cup from Athens (Fig.9) (now at the Copenhagen Museum) represents funeral games. On one side there are two naked men preparing to stab each other with swords." An Argive Geometric

15. Murray, Smith and Walters, *Excavations in Cyprus*, pp. 9, 37. Also see Arne Furumark, *The Mycenaean Pottery: Analysis and Classification* (Stockholm, 1941), pp. 437.443-435 who sees in this scene a boxing contest.

16. G. M. A. Richter, "Two Colossal Athenian and Geometric or Dipylon Vases in the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *AJA* 19 (1915): 389,390. Pl. xxiii; S. Benton, "The Evolution of the Tripod-Lebes," *Annual of the British School of Athens* 35 (1934.35): 105, 108, 109; (hereafter cited as *LISA*); Marcel Laurent, "Sur un Vase de Style Géométrique," *BCH* 25 (1901): 143-145.

17. The scene reminds us of the single combat between Aias and Diomedes in the funeral games of Patroclus. This event did not survive into historical Greece and it is reasonable to assume that it died out along with the hero of the Geometric period. It is known from literary and archaeological sources that armed combats in the form of a game were practiced in Mycenaean Greece. Fragments of frescoes from Pylos represent duels of men with



A fragment of Mycenaean krater from Enkomi (c.1300 B.C.). H. W. Catling and A. Millett, "A study in the Composition Patterns of Mycenaean Pictorial Pottery, from Cyprus," *BSA* 60 (1965) Pl. 58(1) (Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).

shard from the Argive Heraeum represents nude boxers beside a deep tripod. (Fig. 10). A Geometric vase from Boeotia shows two nude boxers or wrestlers trying to win a tripod.¹⁸ A Geometric bronze statue from Olympia represents a nude charioteer with a conical helmet (Fig. 11). Early Proto-Attic and Proto-Corinthian vases also depict nude athletes. On a Proto-Attic vase (Fig. 12) we clearly see two nude wrestlers,¹⁹ while an early Proto-Corinthian aryballos from Ithaca represents two nude boxers beside a tripod.²⁰

This type of nudity in Greek art shows that the early Greeks believed that there was in nudity something heroic and sacred. The Greek warrior-athletes of these periods used their nudity to either inspire fear or horrify their adversaries. Apparently the Greeks believed that the naked body of the warrior-athlete was an object upon which the adversary looked with fear and panic. It has been well suggested by L. Bonfante that:

swords. It is suggested that these duels should be reckoned as sports rather than warfare, and that they find an echo in the duel of the funeral games of Patroclus. [See T. B. L. Webster, *From Mycenae to Homer* (London, 1958). p. 551. For more on the painted frescoes discovered by Blegen at Pylos, see Carl Blegen, "The Palace of Nestor Excavations of 1954," *AJA* 59 (1955): 31-37. Another Geometric vase found on the Athenian Agora shows a scene of two chariots one driven by a naked man with a sword, the other by a man with a helmet. (See Ubung, *Hesperia* Suppl. 11.69. Grave xiii).

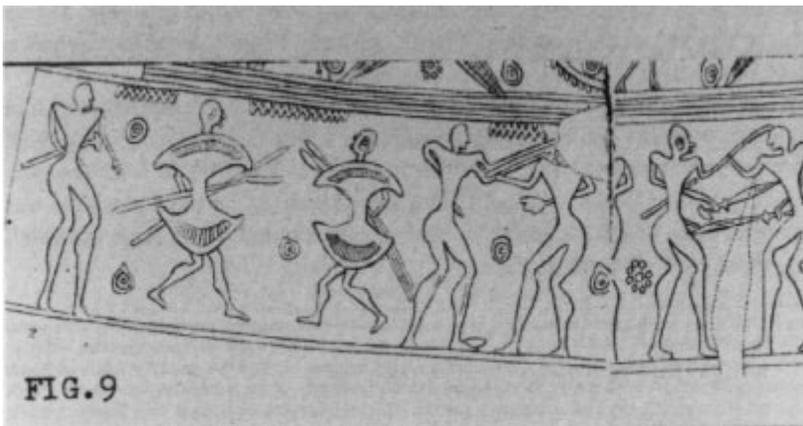
18. See Laurent, "Vase de Style Géométrique," fig. 1. For nude athletes who try to win a tripod see figs. 3.4.

19. A Proto-Attic amphora from Athens, now in Oxford, shows long-armed nude runners. [See I. M. Cook, "Proto-Attic Pottery," *BSA* 35 (1934-35): 197 Pl. 568. Similar scenes with naked figures in fairly rapid motion occur on several vases of the same period. [See *ibid.*, Pl. 38A].

20. See Benton, "Evolution of the Tripod-Lebes," fig. 14. To the same period belongs a seal from Corfu, now in the Ashmolean Museum, which shows two nude boxers beside a tripod [see *ibid.* p. 1091.



A Mycenaean Vase from Enkomi (c. 1300 B.C.). H. W. Catling and A. Millett, "A study in the Composition Patterns of Mycenaean Pictorial Pottery from Cyprus," *BSA* 60 (1965) Pl. 60(1). (Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).



Attic Geometric cup from Athens. Peter P. Kahane, "The Cesnola Krater from Kourion," in Noel Robertson, ed., *The Archaeology of Cyprus* (Park Ridge, N.J.: Noyes Press, 1975) fig. 17. (Courtesy of Noyes Press).



An Argive Geometric shard. Erich Pernice, "Geometrische Vase Aus Athen," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 17 (1892) fig. 10. (Courtesy of Gebr Mann Verlag GmbH).

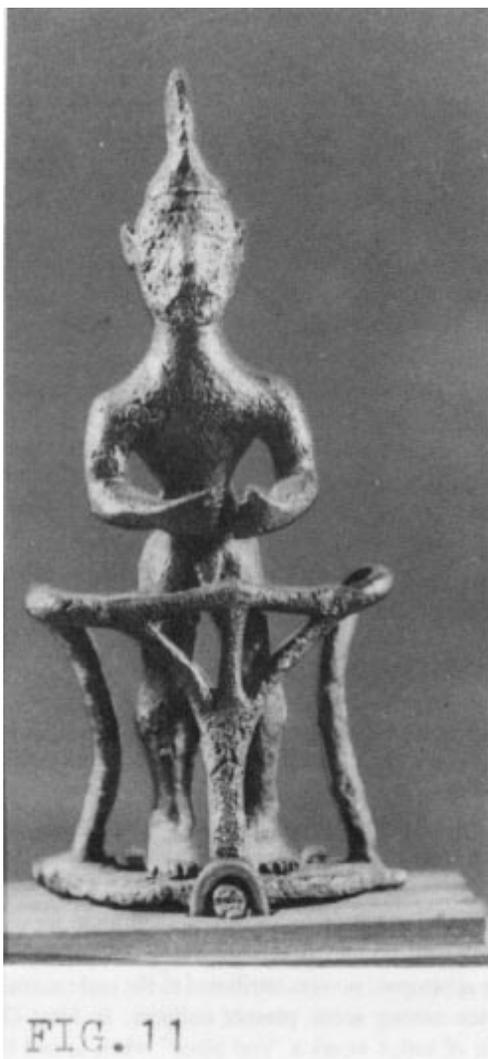
The Greeks felt so strongly about nudity that it was thought to have a magical effect (c.f. the apotropaic use of the phallos, gestures against the evil eye, etc.). Their athletes were thought to be protected in some way by their nudity.²¹

Primitive warriors are sometimes represented nude for either "magic, i.e. apotropaic purposes" or for "psychological shock effect" and "to ward off danger."²² The apotropaic powers attributed to the male sexual organ is a belief still in existence among some present cultures. In New Guinea the naked Papuan warrior of today wears a "cod-piece" when armed for warfare; these cod-pieces are made of straw painted in red or yellow and are undoubtedly not meant to hide the penis; on the contrary they are just as aggressively exhibitionistic as the European cod-pieces of the sixteenth century.²³ Marco Polo was

21. Bonfante, *Etruscan Dress*, p. 102.

22. See Wilkinson, *Classical Attitudes to Modern Issues*, pp. 83, 89; Bonfante, *Etruscan Dress*, p. 102. For references on the "apotropaic" phallus see Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley, 1979), p. 161, 1x3.

23. Torkil Vangaard, *Phallos: A Symbol and its History in the Mule World* (New York, 1972), p. 166. On the European cod-piece of the sixteenth century the author says: "While the suits of armour lost the slender elegance which the Gothic ones had possessed a new excrescence developed below the breastplate-the cod-piece. It was a conspicuous representation of a penis, big and arching upwards. It cannot have had any practical significance, but was meant as a phallic exhibition, a demonstration of power, a threat signal of the same nature as the helmets hammered into the shape of lion masks which appeared simultaneously. The man in armour with his



A Geometric bronze statue from Olympia. Nick Stourmaras and Nick Corbetis, eds., *Olympia* 1971 fig. 3. (Courtesy of Mike Roberts Colour Production).

cod-piece and the baboon exhibiting his erect penis as an aggressive signal to other baboons to keep off aim at the same effect" (p. 165). The author also notes that tendencies towards genital activity of an aggressive nature are repressed in our present civilization and that today's men are not conscious of potentials like those openly expressed in the Near East and—at least verbally—among the ancient Norsemen. This means, according to the author, that rational understanding of the aggressive aspects of phallic symbolism is lost too; and this in turn indicates that appreciation of the signal function of a phallic symbolism in dominance-submission patterns has vanished from the consciousness—notwithstanding that these patterns still remain unchanged and alert of action below the threshold (p. 191).



A Proto-Attic Vase. Cecil Smith, "A Proto-Attic Vase," *JHS* 22 (1902) Pl.11 a. (Courtesy of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies).

surprised to see in the province of Maabar, India that men went to battle naked with only a lance and a shield. In the Trichinopoly District of Bengal, when in the rainy season tanks and rivers threaten to blow up their banks, men stand naked on the embankments; and if too much rain falls, naked men point firebrands at the sky, as in the case of rain-magic. This nudity is supposed to "shock" the forces that sent the rain and cause its cessation. To a primitive warrior the phallus was an emblem of power having prophylactic virtue against the attacks of the enemy. Roman soldiers marching into battle carried phallic symbols on their standards. The peculiar state of the sexual organ of a warrior engaged in mortal combat is a matter well recognized in the Polynesian superstition.²⁴

24. H. Yule, *Marco Polo* (London, 1929), 2: 274,275,278. I. Wise, *Notes on the Races, Castes and Trades of Eastern Bengal* (London, 1883), p. 369; W. Crooke, "Nudity in India in Custom and Ritual," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 49 (1919): 248; George Ryley Scott, *Phallic Worship* (New Delhi, 1975), p. 109, Géza Rohelm, *Animism, Magic and the Divine King* (London, 1972), p. 21. Also see W. G. Gudgeon, "Phallic Emblem from Atiu Island," *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 13 (1904-1905): 193. Among the Kiwi Papuans of British New Guinea the penis of a slain foe is cut off and dried. Before a fight a small piece of it mixed with banana is given to the young warriors to make them stronger. [See Gunnar Landman, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 1281. Also see Rohelm, *Animism, Magic and the Divine King*, p. 20.

The apotropaic use of the phallus is clearly exposed in the Greek *herms* which consisted of a square stone pillar surmounted by a man's bearded head and bearing an erect phallus. They stood in front of houses as house-guards,²⁵ in the market places, at intersection²⁶ and at the frontiers, always facing away from the guarded premises. The same type of sculpture can be found in some present cultures, such as on Borneo and Nias, Bali and the Nikobar Islands as objects of superstition against the spirits of the Dead.²⁷

W. Burkert wrote on the meaning of the display of phallus:

I cannot find any real explanation before ethology observed that there are species of monkeys, living in groups, of whom the males act as guards: They sit up at the outposts, facing outside and presenting their erect genital organ. This is an "animal ritual" in the sense noted above: the basic function of sexual activity is suspended for the sake of communication; every individual approaching from the outside will notice that this group does not consist of helpless wives and children, but enjoys the full protection of masculinity.²⁸

Scientists also observed that within a group of squirrel monkeys, one animal

25. The continued belief in the apotropaic power of phallus seems to account for its appearance on the doorways of new buildings in major cities of India. The guardian figures often protecting either side of the entrance to a Saivite temple in India, have noticeable erect sexual organs. [See Clarence Maloney, *The Evil Eye* (New York, 1976), pp. 114, 1251. For the same purpose representations of human phalli are curved upon the exterior timbers of dwelling places in Central Borneo [See Frederic T. Elworthy, *The Evil Eye* (London, 1957), p. 1071. Legba or Lekpa is a phallic divinity whose worship is very prevalent throughout the Slave Coast of Africa. The phallus is seen everywhere, in front of houses, in the streets and public places, sometimes alone, but more frequently in connection with the image of Legba who is always represented as squatting down and looking at the organ of generation, which is enormously disproportionate [See Alfred B. Ellis, *Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slaves Coast of West Africa* (London, 1966), pp. 41-421].

26. It is believed that evil powers are frequently associated with intersections. Custom and law in England prescribed that the suicide should be buried at a cross-road. Criminals were also executed at intersections. A similar custom exists among a number of African tribes. Plato in his *Laws* (9.873) says that if a person murders his father, mother, brother or son then the officials would execute him, and throw him out, naked, at a specified place where three roads meet outside the city. So, since intersections are believed to be the dwelling place of evil spirits, ghosts and demons and as such, are considered unlucky and even dangerous, some expedients are resorted to in order to ward off their danger. Ithiphallic divinities are frequently found at cross-roads with the purpose of repelling the evil forces that dwell there. In Japan, phallic symbols were set up on roads and worshipped at intersections and frontiers as protectors of travelers. The primitive function of all ithiphallic deities which were placed at cross-roads and frontiers was to provide protection against the unfriendly beings and evil spirits. For these observations and more, see *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, s.v. "Cross-Roads," (hereafter cited as *E.R.E.*)

27. Wolfgang Wickler, "Socio-Sexual Signals and their Intra-Specific Imitation Among Primates," in *Primate Ethology* ed. Desmond Morris (Chicago, 1967), pp. 132, 139. The consecration of the stone-phalli that appear on the prehistoric Phrygian tumuli served the same purpose. These phalli were primitive symbols of life and immortality expressing in the clearest way the belief that death was the source of new life. [See Gorges Perrot and Charles Chipiez, *History of Art in Phrygia, Lydia, Caria and Lycia* (New York, 1892), p. 48; L. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford, 1921), p. 3571. We can discover scattered traces of the same expression of this idea in Greece. A small tumulus near Megalopolis (Arcadia) with a finger of stone standing on it and called the "Finger Tomb" may be interpreted as a tumulus crowned with a phallus, and it is associated with the goddesses called the Maniai, whose name raises the suggestion of a Phrygian origin. (See Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, p. 357). For the story of the "Finger Tomb" see Pausanias 8.34.2-4. Further evidence has been provided by the discovery of an inscription (ca. 300 B.C.) found under a stone-phallus on a small mound that may have been a tumulus near Thespias, recording a dedication by the religious officials of the city "to the spirits of the dead." [See Paul Jamot, "Fouilles de Thespias," *BCH* 19 (1895): 3751. Also see Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, p. 357. In ancient tombs, notably in Egypt, Norway, Italy and India, phalli have been buried with the dead, perhaps to ward off evil from the dead. [See J. A. Dulaure, *Les Divinités Génératrices, ou Du Culte du Phallus Chez les Anciens et les Modernes* (Paris, 1905), p. 43; Philip Rawson, *Primitive Erotic Art* (London, 1973), p. 761.

28. Burkert, *Structure and History*, p. 40. The same point of view has been expressed by other writers as well (see Vanggaard, *Phallos*, Pp. 71-75, 102, 165).

indicates dominance by display of penile erection with thigh spreading aimed at the face of another, lower-ranking monkey. It has been pointed out that there is a correlation between penile display and rank-position, and that the lower-ranking group members show much less genital display. In certain monkey species there is a close connection between ownership of territory, territorial demarcation, social dominance, and the display of the male genitalia. "Phallic demonstration to mark frontiers," W. Burkert argued, "is not to be found among the apes, who live in the trees, but with farther relatives who hold territories." The display of sexual organs is a ritual which derived from sexual activity, yet serving social and not reproductive purposes. It is the most powerful signal with respect to group hierarchy, but definitely distinct from the reproductive process. It is believed that the genital display is an important social signal by which the animals communicate and that it is ritualized and seems to acquire the meaning, "I am the Master."²⁹

The importance of primate studies in anthropology has been often emphasized.³⁰ Erections of human penises outside of the sexual activity may occur in aggressive or threatening situations.³¹ Freud wrote that a number of persons reported that they experience the first signs of excitement in their genitals during fighting or wrestling with playmates. Erections of human penises are frequently in association with aggressive or fearful dream situations. It has been emphasized that penis-exhibition can have a purely aggressive role, and that the contraction of the muscular tissue of the human member, causing the erection, may occur without erotic arousal, as an expression of aggression.³²

Many scholars point out that the erect penis may symbolize dominance and power. Bronze Age people of Scandinavia and northern Italy equated phallic power with the power of the spear, the sword and the axe as is evident from their petroglyphs. Other military objects, especially clubs, can carry analogous phallic symbolism. The club of Legba, the phallic god of African Dahomey, was many times carved as a phallus and was regarded as an offensive weapon.³³ The giant prehistoric figure cut in the chalk downs near Cerne Abbas in England is ithyphallic and carries, like Heracles, a club.³⁴ Supernatural power is often

29. Wolfgang Wickler, "Socio-Sexual Signals," in Morris, *Primale Ethology*, pp. 111, 116; Burkert, *Structure and History*, p. 45 (quote); H. Detley et al., "Studies in Social and Sexual Behavior of the Squirrel Monkey (*Saimiri Scireus*)," *Folia Primarologica* 1 (1963): 49, 62.

30. H. Hooton, "The Importance of Primate Studies in Anthropology," *Human Biology* 26 (1954): 179-88.

31. Wickler, "Socio-Sexual Signals," p. 128. Paul D. MacLean, "New Findings Relevant to the Evolution of Psycho-Sexual Functions of the Brain," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 135 (1962): 296 wrote: "One sees combative behaviour even in the nursing babe, which will angrily fight the breast if no milk is forthcoming, and at the same time develop penile erections."

32. S. Freud, *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*. Trans. by A. A. Brill (New York, 1948), p. 68; Ernest Hartman, *The Biology of Dreaming* (Springfield, Mass., 1967), p. 189; idem, *Sleeping and Dreaming* (Boston, 1970), p. 209; Vanggaard, *Phallos*, p. 74.

33. Vanggaard, *Phallos*, p. 14; A. B. Ellis, *Ewe-Speaking Peoples*, pp. 41-42. Also see *E.R.E. s.v.* "Phallism."

34. Rawsom, *Primitive Erotic Art*, p. 73. The belief that the phallus symbolizes power is still common among some primitive tribes. In British New Guinea when the harpoon maker selects a tree which seems suitable for the making of a harpoon shaft he presses his erect phallus against the trunk of the tree so that the harpoon shaft might be straight, strong and perfect (See Landman, *Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea*, p. 120).

conceptualized by the Apaches as phallic in origin. In addition the Apaches equate arrow and phallus in their everyday conversation.³⁵

There exists a large phallus symbolism that according to some authorities even includes sceptre, mace, etc. The Egyptian king of the gods Amon-Re is depicted in the temple at Karnak with a very large erect phallus³ (Osiris, the protector of Egypt, was represented on statuary with the phallus exposed and erect. The exaggerated sexual organs of the early Roman, Greek and Egyptian phallic deities are in agreement with the importance attached to sexual virility and power. The Greek *herms* conveyed a message of power and protection. Even the *herms* that Hipparchos, son of Pisistratos set up in 530 B.C. between the village and market place, "while exhibiting moral epigrams, marked the territory of the tyrant." In ancient Scandinavia the statue of god Frey or Frico was equipped with a large phallus. In the National Museum of Copenhagen there is a wooden image of a phallic god from the Celtic Iron Age.³⁷

The phallic sign was also a gesture against the evil eye and disease. In some cases the exhibition of the phallus as a means of combating the effects of the evil eye took a realistic aspect, as in the baring of the sexual organs, and there can be little doubt that among some cultures, and on special occasions nudity is practiced with this specific object in view.³⁸ Amulets of phallic nature were, and still remain in some parts of the world, the most common for the prevention of disease and the protection from death in battle, evil spirits, evil eye and other supernatural disasters. They have been made and worn all over Europe, as well as in India, China and Japan as supernatural energizers.³⁹

35. L. Bryce Bayer, "Stone as a Symbol in Apache Folklore," in *Fantasy and Symbol: Studies in Anthropology Interpretation* ed. R. H. Hook (London-New York, 1979), pp. 223-25.

36. Wickler, "Socio-Sexual Signals," 129-31, f. 17. For more on the phallic symbolism in Egypt and Italy, see Elworthy, *Evil Eye*, pp. 153-55.

37. Scott, *Phallic Worship*, p. 55; Burke & Structure *and History*, p. 40 (quote); Vanggaard, *Phallos*, pp. 84-85; *E.R.E.*, s.v. "Phallism."

38. Scott, *Phallic Worship*, p. 105. For more references about the effectiveness of the phallus against the evil eye see Burke, *Structure and History*, p. 40; and Bonfante, Erruscan, p. 102. The phallic sign was common over a blacksmith's forge in Italy in order to protect the horses that came to him to be shod since the horses were particularly liable to malign influence; so the smith naturally provided the best possible protection for the horses by which he got his living. [See George Dennis, *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, (London, 1907), 2:119]. In Rome, Fascinus, later identified with the foreign god Priapus, was a very ancient god and was represented under the form of a phallus. It was believed his main duty was to avert evil and evil spirits. Victorious generals had the image of Fascinus before their cars in their triumphant march in Rome in order to be protected against the evil eye (see *E.R.E.*, s.v. "Phallism"). In the archaic Shinto religion of Japan the phallus was a sacred object and was offered at village shrines of the rice country to avert catastrophe such as famine or disease (see Rawson, *Primitive Erotic Art*, p. 72). On the island of Nias when a disease has broken out, then odd and frightful figures with extraordinary large organs of sex are set up to frighten away the evil spirit causing the sickness (*E.R.E.*, s.v. "Phallism").

39. J. G. R. Forlong, *Rivers of Life* (London, 1883) I: 189; Rawson, *Primitive Erotic Art*, p. 76. The evidence shows that in some cases the phallus and its symbolism are not apotropaic but rather to secure fecundity. A very common characteristic in the Dionysiac service was the "phallophoria," the carrying round of the figure in wood of the male sexual organ, a rite which is a form of the magic of fertilization. A similar ritual has been observed to be still performed by the Greek Christians in the neighbourhood of Visa, the old Bizye, the capital of the old Thracian kings. [See R. M. Dawkins, "The Modern Carnival in Thrace and the Cult of Dionysus," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 26 (1906): 191-206; Farnell, *Cults of the Greek Stares*, 5: 1071. For more on the origin of the "phallophoria" see Henri Auguste Couat, Arisrophane et *l'Ancienne Comedie Attique*, (Paris, 1902), pp. 182, 276, 381. Similar phallic processions were and in some cases still are performed in order to remove barrenness and secure fertility. In certain processions in honour of Legba in the Slave Coast of West Africa, the phallus is borne aloft with great pomp, fastened to the end of a long pole, something that reminds us of the "phallophoria" described by Aristophanes. (For references in honour of Legba see Ellis, *Eve-Speaking*, p. 44). A similar phallic

The importance of the human body and its symbolism as an incarnation of energy and power has been emphasized by many writers. Kenneth Clark noted that “it was the Greeks, by their idealization of man, who turned the human body into an incarnation of energy.” Furthermore,

The Greeks discovered in the nude two embodiments of energy, which lived on throughout European art almost until our own day. They are the athlete and the hero; and from the beginning they were closely connected with one another.⁴⁰

It is probable that the early Greek warrior-athlete or hero-athlete believed that his nudity acted as a screen which guarded him from many evils and at the same time provided him with power and energy for his duties.

This belief in the nudity of the warrior-athlete was concentrated on Heracles, the hero in whose honour the games at Olympia may have been held until Zeus was brought there and took over the Olympic festival. There is, indeed, a close connection between Heracles and this kind of nudity. Enough evidence exists to show that Heracles' aboriginal aspect was warlike and heroic. Both material and literary sources indicate that Heracles originally appeared as a warrior. The most primitive figures found at Olympia represent nude warriors armed with large helmets, small shields, and spears. These helmeted statues that may represent Heracles were votive offerings of the victorious athletes dedicated to him, and took the form of the hero. In a later age, the votive offerings of Olympia often took the form of the Olympian-Zeus in whose honour then the Olympic Games were held.⁴¹

Heracles has been “traditionally a nude hero”⁴² and he appears nude in many vase representations and other artifacts of the 7th century and early 6th century. Sometimes he appears naked and lightly armed fighting against enemies.⁴³ Heracles appears naked in the temple of Zeus at Olympia in the metope of the Cretan Bull. Gardiner believed that this story is old and that nakedness by the artist without any support from tradition is not conceivable. Again, the same can be said of the scene in the metope where Heracles appears nude receiving from Atlas the apples of the Hesperides.⁴⁴ At Corinth, we learn from Pausanias that there was an archaic naked image of Heracles which was believed to be the

procession has been observed in Nigeria. [See E. R. Dennett, *The Religious and political System of the Yoruba* (London, 1910), p. 951. At Trani, by Naples, a huge wooden phallic image called “Il Santo Membro” was carried in procession annually until the eighteenth century. (See Rawson, *Primitive Erotic Art*, p. 75). During the latter part of the nineteenth century, in big cities of Japan phallic festivals took place in which enormous floats were exhibited. At several of these festivals, a surging mass of nearly naked young men carried a gigantic papier-mâché phallus, sometimes forty feet long. [See Micheal Czaja, *Gods of Myths and Stone* (New York, 1974), p. 1741. There is enough evidence to show that phallic processions were customary in many countries and were of great antiquity. Herodotos (2.48-49) also mentions similar phallic processions in Egypt.

40. Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art* (London, 1957), pp. 162, 163.

41. For these observations made about Heracles see John Mouratidis, “Heracles at Olympia and the Exclusion of Women from the Ancient Olympic Games,” *Journal of Sport History* 11 (Winter 1984): 41-55.

42. Bonfante, *Etruscan Dress*, p. 28. The Chaldaeans covered as a rule with ample drapery the forms of their gods; but for the goddess of love and fecundity, and the demi-god whom many compare to the Greek Heracles, they had recourse to all the frankness of nudity (see Perrott and Chipiez, *History of Art in Phrygia*, p. 92).

43. See Ruth Glynn, “Heracles, Nereus and Triton: A Study of Iconography in Sixth Century Athens,” *AJA* 85 (1981): 121-132; John Boardman, *Greek Sculpture: The Archaic period* (New York and Toronto, 1978), p. 261; idem, *Archaic Greek Gems* (London, 1968), n 210, 198; idem, *Greek Gems and Finger Rings: Early Bronze Age to Lav Classical* (London, 1970), pl. 266.

44. E. Norman Cardiner, *Olympia: Its History and Remains* (Oxford, 1925), p. 221, figs. 111, 112

work of Daidalos.⁴⁵ Generally, the hero is depicted nude in early Greek art which represents old legends. One cannot escape the conclusion that these early nude appearances of the hero were based on the uncontested authority of tradition. On Heracles and his nudity, Evelyn Harrison emphasized that:

There is just one dweller in Olympos for whom the banqueting pose, the heroic nudity, the short hair and the powerful physique are all truly characteristic and that is Heracles. He alone comes nude into the presence of Zeus and the other gods. The nudity of the athlete, the fighter, the laborer is his, and it is the true mark of his identity, the badge of his career.⁴⁶

Heracles' nudity is in accordance with the observations made above about the phallic symbolism⁴⁷ and the nudity of the warrior-athlete. He was the most popular hero of the Greeks, known as *alexikakos* and *apotropaios* (an averter of evils) as strong and great, as founder of the Olympic Games, as a helper in all difficulties, as a great athlete, as the protector of the race, as an averter of death, as a nude warrior-athlete *par excellence*, as the hero of heroes, and as a guardian angel.

It is reasonable to assume that since Heracles was the hero in whose honour the Olympic Games were possibly held, then his protégées, the athletes, were trying to imitate the nudity as well as some other characteristics of their patron. From earliest times, the Greek gods and heroes boastfully displayed their physical energy and demanded such a display from their zealots and enthusiasts.

The material evidence indicates that the warrior-athlete was not a prevailing theme for the artists of the late Geometric period (750-700 B.C.). The athletes of this period carried no weapons and wore no helmets. More emphasis has been given to the bodies of the athletes and particularly to their long arms and strong legs, rather than to their aggressive and warlike features. In the Proto-Attic and Proto-Corinthian art, there are no traces of the warrior-athlete. The last fifty years of the 8th century was probably the period when the nudity of the warrior-athlete developed into athletic nudity. This was the same period when the widespread practice of hero cults, connected with competitive games occurred. The popularity of athletics and a number of practical considerations were responsible for the change from the warrior-athlete's nudity to athletic nudity. It is very important to bear in mind that the last part of the 8th century is by tradition the eve of the beginning of nudity in Greek athletics and is the

45. Pausanias 2.4.5. Farnell (Greek *Hero Cults*, p. III) regarded this naked image of Heracles as Dorian dedication of about 600 B.C.

46. Evelyn Harrison, "Athena and Athens in East Pediment of Parthenon," *AJA* 71 (1967): 44.

47. Farnell said that the Lacedaemonian cult of the "Finger of Heracles," supposed to have been bitten off by the Nemean lion it possibly arose from a phallus on a tomb which accidentally became associated with Heracles (See *Greek Hero Cults* p. 357) Farnell was probably right since the so-called "Finger of Attis" is interpreted by many as phallus as well (see *E.R.E.*, s.v. "Hand"). The ancients believed that the middle finger of either hand had a phallic connotation. Ancient Roman authors mention that the middle finger fully extended and held upright represented the Penis and the closed fingers and thumb on each side signified the testicles. (For references see Scott. *Phallic Worship*, p. 108). For more about Heracles and the phallic symbolism see: J. C. P. Deanna, "Du Divin au Grotesque," *Revue d'Ethnographie et des Traditions populaires* 7 (1926): 31; Alexandre Colson, "Hercule Phalophore," *Gazette Archéologique* 3 (1877): 169; J. E. Harisson, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1912), p. 383 n. 2.

period that scholars assigned the so-called “heroic nudity” which rather indicates that nudity in Greek athletics had something to do with heroes or warriors. The late 8th century is also when the start of the series of statues of naked Greek kouroi appeared. All kouroi do not represent Apollo, since many have been discovered in cemeteries where they must have served as tombstones representing human beings. Furthermore in archaic times kouroi were used for victors in the games⁴⁸

Why was nudity in athletics a unique Greek phenomenon, since the primitive human response in using nudity for aggression, from which athletic nudity was developed, was common in other cultures as well? In order to answer this question, one should consider another aspect of Greek life, rather unique in Greek lands, the hero cult,⁴⁹ which was connected with games. ‘O Greek heroes and gods proudly displayed their physical energy and demanded the same thing from their devotees. The presence of Heracles at Olympia was of prime importance for the survival of the custom of nudity in Greek athletics because he was, by tradition, a nude hero and a nude warrior-athlete *par excellence* whose nudity was imitated by the athletes.

If nudity was seen as beneficial to the warrior-athlete, why was it retained only in athletics since classical warriors needed protection and assertiveness at least as much as athletes? The Greeks while winning their way to classical civilization retained the custom of nudity in athletics but they were not conscious of the aggressive aspect of it as were their remote ancestors. In other words, the custom of nudity persisted into a higher civilization but the practice of endeavouring to secure protection in this manner had been lost or abandoned. This was the main reason that the classical warrior had no comprehension of this feeling of protection. This is also the case with a number of present tribes among whom the habit of nudity for aggression prevailed but is rapidly disappearing as they gradually come under the influence of modern civilization. The Classical Greeks felt so strongly about their nudity that they believed that to be ashamed to be seen naked in the gymnasium was the characteristic, the proof and the sign of a barbarian. The reason why the Greeks fell in love with their nudity is not the purpose of this paper. That task has been well done by other writers.⁵¹

48. G. M. A. Richter, *Kouroi: Archaic Greek Youths* (London, 1960), p. 1. Also see Bonfante, (Efruscan, pp. 20, 28) who writes that the Etruscan equivalent of a Greek kouros wears a perizoma. The second half of the 8th century, as the period of the change from the warrior-athlete nudity to athletic nudity, should be regarded with some reservations because the scanty material evidence may be misleading. In addition, one cannot exclude the role of artistic convention in the material evidence cited here.

49. Herodotos (2.50) mentioned that heroes have no place in the religion of Egypt. Also see Peter Kahane, “The Cesnola Krater from Kourion in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: An Iconological Study in Greek Geometric Art,” in *The Archaeology of Cyprus: Recent Developments*, ed. Noel Robertson (Park Ridge, N.J.: Noyes Press, 1975), 185. For a thorough investigation of the hero cult in both prehistoric and historic Greece see Erwin Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks* (London, 1950), pp. 115-155; Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults. passim*; A.D. Neck, “The Cult of Heroes,” *Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944): 141-173.

50. See Rohde, *Psyche*, pp. 116-117; Mircea Eliade, *A History of Religious Ideas from the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Chicago, 1978), pp. 285, 313. For references found throughout ancient Greek literature, concerning the games held in honour of the Greek heroes see: Lynn E. Roller, “Funeral Games in Greek Art,” *AJA* 85 (1981): 107, 119.

51. Fardiner (AAW, p. 58) wrote: “It is not merely that exposure to the air and the sun-bath are, as doctors now tell us, the very best physic, but it served as a valuable incentive to the youth of Greece to keep themselves in gwd

Nudity survived in Greek athletics because it was supported by heroic tradition and religion. So the use of nudity for aggression and apotropaic purposes which is characteristic of the early stages of human society and which reflects the animal part of human nature survived with an unusual persistency and beyond recognition in the historical period and found refuge under the mantle of one of the most illustrious aspects of Greek civilization: the athletics.

condition. The Greek with his keen eye for physical beauty regarded flabbiness, a pale skin, want of condition, or imperfect development as disgraceful, and the ill-developed youth was the laughing-stock of his companions.” Kenneth Clark (*The Nude*, p. 19) commented: “So our surmise that the discovery of the nude as a form of art is connected with idealism and faith in measurable proportions seems to be true, but it is only half the truth. What other peculiarities of the Greek mind are involved? One obvious answer is their belief that the body was something to be proud of, and should be kept in perfect trim.” Yet, Clark continued, “But in fact Greek confidence in the body can be understood only in relation to their philosophy. It expresses above all their sense of human wholeness. Nothing which related to the whole man could be isolated or evaded; and this serious awareness of how much was implied in physical beauty saved them from the two evils of sensuality and aestheticism (p. 21). James Arieti [“Nudity in Greek Athletics,” 436] argues “The public nakedness which does not, in the 1970’s shock us as it shocked the Romans-though it does, perhaps, seem somewhat uncivilized for the Greeks-enabled the athletes to show the complete control they exerted over their bodies. Since they were the only people to compete naked, they could well believe they were the only people capable of such self-control: here, perhaps, was a clear superiority over the barbarians, who had to hide themselves both to avoid tempting others and to conceal their own lack of control.” For more references regarding the practice of nudity in Greek athletics, see *ibid.*, pp. 434 n. 10, 435 ns. 13. 14.