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What does the clothing say about the killer? Some thoughts on textiles in depictions of sacrifice in Archaic Athens

Karine Rivière

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ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

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CECILIE BRØNS AND MARIE-LOUISE NOSCH

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Preface

The present volume is the result of the conference *Textiles and Cult in the Mediterranean Area in the 1st Millennium BC*, held in Copenhagen in November 2013 and hosted by the National Museum of Denmark and the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research, University of Copenhagen. Experts from the fields of Ancient History, Assyriology, Classical Archaeology, Semitic Philology, and Classical Philology came together to explore the role of textiles in ancient religion. They generously exchanged ideas, research results, and presented various views, theories, and methods. It was a specific aim to cross disciplinary boundaries, both between cultures and chronological phases, but also to keep the focus of textiles and garments as visual, tactile, and material items. While most of the articles in this volume originate as papers held at this conference, several contributions were added in order to broaden the scope of the topic. The present volume thus includes the Roman period and Late Antiquity and a larger geographical area including Palmyra.

The present volume addresses topics such as textile production in sanctuaries, the use of textiles as votives, and ritual dress from different perspectives: epigraphy, literary sources, iconography, and archaeological material. Obviously, such topics are challenging, since the textiles themselves usually have disappeared today due to the climatic and environmental conditions in the Mediterranean area.

The book is organised geographically: the first part is dedicated to Greece, the second to Italy, and the third to the Levant and the Near East. Furthermore, there is a final section on Late Antiquity. There are eight contributions dealing with Greek evidence, five with evidence from Italy, and seven with Near Eastern evidence, while one chapter on Late Antiquity ends the book. The chronological period covered in the articles generally spans from the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE to Late Antiquity. Each contribution is a separate chapter with footnotes and bibliography. While we have attempted consistency, each author's style is respected, e.g. choice of British or American English including punctuation.

A very large part of the articles deal with aspects of ritual dress. This can possibly be explained by the fact that there is an abundance of iconographical sources on this particular topic – from Greek vase painting to Roman sculptural arts. Furthermore, there is a wealth of written sources in Greek and Latin describing the dress of e.g. priests and priestesses. The second most common topic in this book is textile production in ritual contexts. The majority of articles focusing on this topic is based on the presence of textile tools recovered in ritual contexts, while some also include written sources. It seems that generally more scholarly attention is being paid to inconspicuous finds such as loom weights and spindle whorls in excavation reports etc., which provide essential knowledge of possible ritual production in sanctuaries. Only a minority of the articles deal specifically with the topic of textiles as votive offerings. This is not surprising, given the difficulty in identifying this custom since the textiles themselves have left no trail in the archaeological record and only few written sources attest to the custom. Yet the offering of textiles appears to have been an essential part of ancient ritual practice, which deserves much more scholarly attention. Although the present book includes 21 articles, there are still topics, which are not or only briefly touched upon, such as how textiles were specifically incorporated into the ritual practices. In this respect, especially their use to dress cult images deserves more attention.

It is our hope that this book will bring textiles to the attention of a wider range of scholars of the ancient Mediterranean world, in particular scholars specialising in ancient ritual and religion and that it will inspire to new international conferences and publications dealing with this until now neglected topic.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to those individuals and institutions who have contributed to the success of the conference and to the editorial work for the publication. First and foremost for the generous financial support from our sponsors and hosts providing the institutional and financial framework for this conference: the Danish National Research Foundation's Centre for Textile Research (CTR), the National Museum of Denmark,

the Saxo Institute, University of Copenhagen, and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. This publication benefitted from the editorial assistance and advice of our colleagues Peder Flemestad, Cherine Munkholt, Jonathan Wiener, and Neil Stanford. We also warmly thank Ana Cecilia Gonzales for photographing the Palmyra portraits in the Ny Carlsberg

Glyptotek for the articles in this volume. Finally, we warmly thank all participants for their insightful and stimulating papers, lively discussions, inspiring exchange of ideas, both during the conference and in continued exchanges after the conference.

Cecilie Brøns & Marie-Louise Nosch

What does the clothing say about the killer? Some thoughts on textiles in depictions of sacrifice in Archaic Athens

Karine Rivière

Attic vase paintings allow us to understand what clothing may have signified in cultic contexts in the 6th century BCE. Indeed, any detail featuring a vase painting points to a general discourse about reality, rather than to reality itself. Clothing, especially, may be seen as a polysemic sign used to express various thoughts about the function and meaning of cults in Athenian Archaic society.

Numerous images of cults painted on Attic Archaic vases show at least one moment of the Greek ceremony named *thusia*, which will be called “sacrifice” for our purposes.¹ During this ceremony, which may begin with a solemn procession, an animal victim is ritually slain and its carcass butchered to be shared between gods and mortals. Some parts are roasted for the gods, others are boiled and roasted to be eaten by mortals – some may even be taken away to be eaten later somewhere else.

Numerous scholars have developed theories to interpret the meaning of the whole set of gestures that could be combined during a Greek sacrifice. Walter Burkert, especially, following Karl Meuli, argues that these gestures would help people to forget about the violence of sacrificial killing, which would be compared to murder if the victims were not ritually slain.² Jean-Louis Durand expresses similar thoughts in his scholarship on Attic Bouphonia.³ According to him, images of victims driving themselves towards sacrifice, systematic refusal to picture the moment

the victim is slain, as well as myths justifying sacrifices of domestic animals suggest that people of the ancient world tried to avoid feeling guilty of murder during ritual killing. On the other hand, theories from the Parisian school of anthropology, around Jean-Pierre Vernant and Marcel Detienne, deal with the moments that follow the killing, presenting sacrifice as a matter of butchery and cooking.⁴ This is not the place to discuss the problems raised by the theories about Greek sacrifice,⁵ but it shall be pointed out that Attic documents are usually considered as sources speaking for the entire Greek world, and that Archaic and later sources are generally studied together, as if Greek sacrifice had not changed in hundreds of years.

No theory has so far been developed from a careful study of clothing in the images of sacrifice. However, such a study would help us to understand, in an original way, what Archaic Athenians thought about their own rituals. Depictions of sacrifice display considerable variety from the Archaic period onwards. As women do not appear in these images as often as men, reflecting the fact that they generally play a minor role in the ceremony, we shall concentrate on men’s clothing in order to develop a better understanding of what the choice of clothing reveals about the ideas that

1 A large selection of such images is presented in van Straten 1995 and an even larger one in Gebauer 2002.

2 Cf. Burkert 1983, to be compared with Vernant 1981.

3 Durand 1986.

4 See especially Berthiaume and Detienne 1982; Detienne and Vernant 1979.

5 Cf. Patera 2012, 9–15: the introduction summarises and reviews the major theories developed about Greek sacrifice in the 20th century.

the painters and their audience, projected over the ritual killing and sharing of a sacrificial victim.⁶

To begin with, studying men's garments in images of sacrifice suggests that, in Archaic Athens, sacrificial ceremony is not necessarily linked to any prestige display through clothing.⁷ Apart from particular clothes such as the ceremonial costume of musicians or the military panoply, Attic Archaic painters distinguish between three scenarios of male dress for sacrifices: 1) sacrifices where men all wear the same simple clothes, or appear naked, 2) sacrifices where men all wear more elaborate clothes, and 3) sacrifices where some wear simple and others more elaborate clothes. It shall be noted that in most cases men appear naked, or wearing a loincloth, or a simple *himation* over a naked body. The *himation* covering a *chiton* or even the *chitoniskos* often appears more elaborate, and hence decorated textiles are primarily attested on these costumes.

The elaborate costumes occur less often than the plainest ones. Sacrifice seems to have been more often represented as an occasion to dress quite simply, and less often as a proper place to display one's prestige through elaborate clothing. The occurrences of elaborate clothes on images of sacrifice raise more questions, as nothing proves that these clothes signify high social status. For instance, a black-figure band cup of the middle of the 6th century BCE shows a procession towards an altar; behind the altar stands a woman in front of a statue of Athena Promachos; she shakes hands with the man leading the procession (Fig. 2.1).⁸ Both the woman behind the altar and the man leading the procession wear garments that are obviously different from the ones worn by the other characters. In both cases, the distinct garment underlines the prominent position in the frame, and both signs point towards a higher importance. Indeed, it is generally accepted that the woman is a priestess, and it has been argued that the man may be some official, perhaps with both political and religious privileges, like the Athenian *Basileus*.⁹ However, the image itself gives no clue about the actual meaning of the distinctive male clothing: it can mean high social or political status, but it can just as well point towards high religious status, or even high religious

status linked to high social status.¹⁰ The same conclusions may be drawn about processions where all attendants wear elaborate garments.¹¹ They may represent aristocratic sacrificial processions, or processions of ritual officials, but they may just as well merely express the idea of a beautiful, solemn ceremony.

It would be tempting to think that elaborate garments rendered in vase paintings do not indicate social prestige, either because they rather indicate religious prestige, or because they do not point towards prestige at all, and to then suggest that in 6th-century, post-Solonian Athens, where features of the later Periclean democracy settle step by step, people preferred to depict their sacrifices as ceremonies where social status would not be displayed. Reality must of course have been more complex. Nevertheless, the fact that plain garments occur far more often in images of sacrifice may testify that the ceremony was more eagerly pictured as a place where social differences were hidden rather than displayed through clothing.¹²

This may be compared to what is known about clothes worn to honour the gods in Archaic Greece.¹³ According to Herodotus, people could attend a religious ceremony with the most beautiful outfits: in order to offer to his deceased wife the finest clothes possessed by Corinthian women, the tyrant Periander invites them to join a religious ceremony, persuaded that women will come with precious garments; he is not mistaken.¹⁴ Even if in some cases religious ceremonies could have been an occasion to display prestige through clothing, choosing what to wear to honour the gods would have been influenced by social norms including the value of modesty.

6 For overview and comparative study of representation of women in Attic images of cult practices, see Connelly 2007; Kaltsas *et al.* 2008.

7 The idea of religious ceremonies as occasions to display prestige or to control prestige display was first developed in Mills 1984. The author makes clear that "chronology problems will not be a primary concern" (257), and her conclusions mostly rely on Classical and Hellenistic testimonies. It will be shown here that Archaic sources can only lead to more nuanced hypotheses.

8 Private collection, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 3.

9 Hypotheses are discussed in Gebauer 2002, 28–34.

10 Cf. Ober 1989, 57–58: control over religion may have helped Athenian aristocrats to maintain their political power in the context of an emerging "egalitarian" democracy.

11 For instance, see Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. no. F 1690, Gebauer 2002, 684, fig. 5, or Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 1441, Gebauer 2002, 685, fig. 9.

12 These thoughts about vase paintings should be compared with the conclusions about Archaic sculpture presented in von den Hoff 2008, 110: the fact that portraits of cult officials are lacking from Archaic Athens suggests that "in this *polis*, cult officials did not choose to represent themselves or to publicly define their status in this way during the Archaic period, even if concern with cult status was not entirely excluded from the competitive practices of Athenian aristocrats. Nevertheless, the prestige associated with cult and ritual itself was high".

13 Cf. Lee 2015, 214–218. The authors give a general account of what is known about proscriptions and prescriptions of dress in Greek sanctuaries, and about the dress of religious officials from the Archaic to the Roman period. This useful synthetic discussion can be used to look for parallels, but does not in itself account for the peculiarities of Archaic testimonies.

14 Her. 5.92.

H. Mills reminds us that displaying prestige through clothing was regulated from the 6th century BCE onwards.¹⁵ A sumptuary law attributed to Solon and dealing with garments appropriate for funerals, unfortunately only known from later sources, offers the best example.¹⁶ Archaic sumptuary laws restricting prestige display through clothing in a religious context are lacking. One could only mention an Arcadian regulation from the end of the 6th century.¹⁷ Some details of the inscription are still unclear, but it seems to oblige women who wear varicoloured or embroidered garments¹⁸ while honouring Demeter Thesmophoros to offer them to the goddess:

“If any woman anywhere shall be wearing a brightly coloured robe, it is to be consecrated to Demeter Thesmophoros. If she does not consecrate the garment, let her, being unfriendly as regards a sacrificial garment, be outlawed, and let whoever is Demiurgos pay out thirty drachmas. If the Demiurgos does not pay, or if he does not have authority over the impious act, ten years shall be the duration of the curse in this latter event.”¹⁹

Later regulations state that white is appropriate for cult practices,²⁰ but it seems unlikely that the aim of the Archaic statement was to have women dress in white. Indeed, the etymological meaning of the adjective used to describe the garments suggests that the regulation only concerns varicoloured or embroidered pieces: plain robes could have

been worn without being consecrated.²¹ It is often stated that the regulation forbids women to wear a prohibited garment. If these garments were considered luxury items, it would be the only known Archaic text regulating prestige display through clothing in a religious context. On the other hand, if the garments were forbidden because they were considered inappropriate for cult practices, then the text would be the only known Archaic example of clothing regulation linked to ritual purity concerns. However, the inscription does not contain any of the known Greek prohibition formulas, and it is far from being as explicit as other regulations from later periods, strictly forbidding individuals from wearing specific types of clothing, either because they are considered expensive,²² or because they can pollute a sanctuary.²³ The Archaic regulation says nothing about how precious or how impure the incriminating garments may be. It is only stated that the clothes, if worn, have to be consecrated. The fact that they need to be offered to the goddess suggests that they were *agalmata*, thought to please her. Perhaps the aim of the law is not to influence women’s clothing habits, but only to make sure that offerings that could please the goddess shall belong to her. The woman “being unfriendly as regards a sacrificial garment” or “ill disposed towards the ritual” would not be the woman who wears inappropriate clothes, but the woman who refuses to offer the goddess what belongs to her, after having proved publicly that she owns such *agalma*. In that case, the 6th-century regulation would officially enforce habits that are known throughout the entire Greek world from the 8th century: highly valued or prestige objects are more and more eagerly dedicated in sanctuaries, which gradually concentrate a huge amount of wealth.²⁴

Archaic sources do not tell us how people actually dressed, but give an insight into the written or unwritten rules that could have influenced clothing for ritual practices. It may have depended on the need to display prestige, on the necessity to obey social norms of moderation, and perhaps even on the idea that fabrics that could please the gods would

15 Mills 1984.

16 Plut., *Sol.* 25.1.

17 Robinson 1943. His interpretations are reviewed in Beattie 1947. Commentaries concerning the problematic religious aspects discussed here can be found in Sokolowski 1962, 71; Mills 1984; Dubois 1986, 195–202; Thür and Taeuber 1994, 269–273. Some scholars have expressed doubts about the Arcadian origin of the inscription, cf. Jost 1985, 325–326. However, the specialist in the Arcadian dialect, Laurent Dubois, supports Margherita Guarducci’s and Lilian H. Jeffery’s attribution of the text to the Arcadian city of Pheneos, cf. Jeffery 1949, 30–31; Guarducci 1959–60, 239–242; Dubois 1986, 197.

18 The editor of the inscription supposes that it concerns garments from the town of Deraia, cf. Robinson 1943, 193–194. This interpretation is generally not admitted. Dubois hesitates between Michel Lejeune’s and Arthur James Beattie’s hypothesis: according to him the garments mentioned could be either embroidered, made of the skin of wild animals, or even be from the Island of Thera, cf. Dubois 1986, 197–198. Beattie’s hypothesis of a varicoloured or embroidered garment seems more satisfying, since it relies on parallel inscriptions mentioning similar garments, cf. Beattie 1947, 67–68.

19 Trans. Beattie 1947.

20 A set of examples is discussed in Gawlinski 2012.

21 Considering that the law indeed concerns hide garments or even Theraean garments, one is led to similar conclusions.

22 The Arcadian Hellenistic regulation *IG V²*, 514, from Lykosoura, explicitly forbids anyone entering the Sanctuary of Despoina to wear gold, purple fabrics, etc. As is the case in the Archaic regulation, prohibited clothes have to be consecrated to the goddess.

23 Compare Sokolowski 1969, 33. The 3rd century regulation from Patras prescribes purification ceremonies in case someone had defiled the sanctuary by wearing a forbidden garment.

24 Claude Rolley gives an account of the archaeological evidence of the fact that from the 8th century onwards, objects of great value are no longer placed in aristocratic tombs, but in sanctuaries, Rolley 1983.



Figure 2.1. Attic black-figure cup, Stavros Niarchos private collection, 575–525 BCE (after Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 3).

rather have been dedicated than worn.²⁵ Thus, the way Attic vase painters depict, through the choice of clothes, social values attached to sacrifice seems not to have been too far from what is attested elsewhere in Archaic Greece.

Sacrifice may have been an occasion where common social values could be displayed, but it is first and foremost a religious ceremony, and Attic vase painters present sacrifice as an occasion during which religious hierarchies can be exhibited. Indeed, among the attendants who may play a role during the ceremony, the ones who handle offerings seem more important than others. The way painters use clothing to distinguish those attendants suggests that, in a society which tries not to represent social hierarchies, cultic hierarchies are respected.

Depictions of the long loose ungirdled *chiton* suggest some tension between images where cultic hierarchies are emphasised and images where the most important roles seem to be shared among equals. In the Archaic period, this garment is always worn by characters who can be securely

identified as priests.²⁶ These characters are represented leading a procession²⁷ or pouring a libation over the “sacrificial fire”, where the gods’ share is burned and the *splanchna* roasted.²⁸ In one case, the long, loose, ungirdled *chiton* seems to be worn by a man holding a knife and explicitly named “priest”.²⁹ In one other Archaic depiction, it may be a priest who holds the sacrificial knife. On a black-figure amphora from the middle of the 6th century, a man wearing a short, ungirdled *chiton* slits a bovine’s throat with a knife, while nine other naked men are busy lifting the victim high, holding it still, or approaching the celebrant that shall receive its blood (Fig. 2.2).³⁰ The *chiton* of the man holding the knife seems to be too short to be seen as a sacerdotal garment. And if length is indeed a criterion, this example would remind us that the priests were far from the only ones who could handle the sacrificial knife in Archaic Greece. Indeed, in the only Archaic text that describes what

25 Ritual purity concerns will not be discussed here, since the Archaic evidence of clothing related to ritual purity is very scanty. Only Hom., *Od.* 4.759–769 and 17.46–60, suggests that a clean garment, whatever shall be the garment’s form, colour, or value, can help a ritual be successful, but it does not seem mandatory at all. Compare *Il.* 6.285–312.

26 Mantis 1990.

27 Paris, Louvre, inv. no. F 10, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 2.

28 Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. 1911.617, Gebauer 2002, 761, fig. 244.

29 Rome, Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia, no inv. no.

30 Viterbo, Museo Civico, no inv. no, Gebauer 2002, 726, fig. 134.



Figure 2.2. Attic black-figure amphora, Viterbo, Museo Civico, no inv. no., 550–500 BCE (after Gebauer 2002, 726, fig. 134).

could have been a sacerdotal function during sacrifice, the priest says the prayer, pours the libation over the sacrificial fire, but does not seem to slay any victim himself.³¹ The fact that characters in sacerdotal robes are more often depicted leading a procession or pouring a libation than slaying a victim suggests that the latter function may have been seen as less important, less representative, or even rather new. Priest or no priest, the man handling the knife could have been clearly distinguished from the other participants through his garment: painters would eagerly have used distinctive clothing to highlight a prominent cultic function.

Actually, no known Archaic document proves that the long, loose, ungirdled *chiton* was the actual garment worn by priests when officiating. It could have been a mere iconographic convention, allowing painters to represent a priest without any possible confusion in scenes where a priest was required. Indeed, characters not dressed in sacerdotal garments are pictured leading processions, pouring libations, or even handling sacrificial knives. For instance, on a black-figure amphora from 530–520 BCE, a man in a decorated *himation* over a *chiton* leads a procession

towards an altar.³² He is probably not meant to be a priest, as there is a priestess welcoming the procession behind the altar. In an Early Classical vase painting, a man in *himation* pours a libation over the sacrificial fire burning on a herm's altar, while younger men deal with other offerings.³³ The man pouring a libation is probably not a priest: no priest ever appears in images of sacrifice honouring a herm. Finally, on a red-figure cup from the second half of the 6th century, the young man in loin-cloth handling the knives does not seem to have a different status from the five other, naked men who hold the victim still (Fig. 2.3).³⁴ As there is no need to be a priest to perform priestly functions, a specific conventional sign was required to mark a character as a priest without any possible confusion.

On the other hand, however, priestesses are not pictured in any specific garment. The elegant clothes they often wear in vase paintings are not necessarily used to denote their sacerdotal function: priestesses are usually positioned nearest

31 Hom., *Il.* 1.446–474.

32 Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 1441, Gebauer 2002, 685, fig. 9.

33 Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, inv. no. 127929, Gebauer 2002, 759, fig. 240.

34 Florence, Museo Archeologico, inv. no. 81600, Gebauer 2002, 727, fig. 136.



Figure 2.3. Attic red-figure cup, Florence, Museo archeologico Etrusco, inv. no. 81600 (after Gebauer 2002, 727, fig. 136).

or behind the altar and the divinity, a position that does not support any other identification. The elegant garment of priestesses only underlines a prominent cultic function, which other signs have made obvious.³⁵ The same could be said about priests. One of the oldest images of sacrifice shows, behind the altar the procession approaching, with a man holding a horn.³⁶ He is dressed in *himation* and *chiton*, as are other attendants. It has been argued that the man with the horn should be similar to the *komasts* who also hold horns in contemporary scenes.³⁷ However, he stands behind an altar, just as the priestesses do, and this allows us to interpret him as someone having an official cultic charge. If so, then the sacerdotal garment would seem useless as long as other signs mark the man out as a priest, as is the case for priestesses, and the hypothesis of the sacerdotal male garment as a mere iconographic convention would be strengthened.

The long, loose, untied *chiton* could have been, or not have been, the actual garment worn by Athenian priests performing priestly functions. The fact that it occurs in some images, however, testifies that sometimes painters needed to represent a priest: the presence of a priest could have been considered necessary for some sacrifices – but not all. In at least one case, the possible priest is dressed as the other attendants. This would express the fact that

before having a major cultic function, the priest would be a citizen among others.

Occurrences of the sacerdotal garment in images of sacrifice reveal two opposite conceptions. On one hand, clothing can underline a more important cultic function. What is true of priests and priestesses is also true of characters that are not undoubtedly marked as priests, but still wear a garment that distinguishes them from others, like the alleged *Basileus* from the image discussed above.³⁸ In this exceptional representation, religious hierarchies are notably structured and presented: the closer a character is to the altar, the more important his role during the ceremony shall be, and the more elaborate clothing he wears. On the other hand, other images show the sacrifice as a ceremony where honours are shared among equals, especially when the ceremony honours a herm. On a black-figure neck amphora from the end of the 6th century, two men, with identical beards and garments, honour a herm.³⁹ One holds the sacrificial basket,⁴⁰ the other leads the victim. Both hold twigs. There is no hierarchical difference between those two equal men, each in charge of a particular kind of offering. Sacrifice can be pictured as a religious ceremony where

35 Cp. Private collection, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 3, and Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 1896, Gebauer 2002, 685, fig. 8.

36 Tarento, Museo Nazionale Archeologico, inv. no. I. G. 4346, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 1.

37 For a full discussion of the evidence, see Gebauer 2002, 25–26.

38 Private collection, Gebauer 2002, 683, fig. 3. A parallel example would be Athens, National Museum, Acropolis collection, inv. no. 2298, Gebauer 2002, 695, fig. 39.

39 Art market, Gebauer 2002, 693, fig. 31.

40 About the identification of the three-handled basket as a “sacrificial basket” used to carry offerings and equipment needed for sacrifice, see Richter 1926, the more recent study presented in Schelp 1975, and the developments in van Straten 1995, 162–164.

religious hierarchies are respected and displayed, but also as a meeting where the parity among citizens of the emerging democracy can be stressed.

Finally, sacrifice is thought of as a religious ceremony expressing human concerns. And indeed, the sacred offering is also a matter of butchery. Again, clothing helps painters depict this ambivalence, especially with clothing attributed to attendants who lead victims, who deal with the killing, who take care of carcasses, and who roast *splanchna* over the sacrificial fire. These attendants are usually dressed in the same way: they are either naked, or wearing a garment light enough to be taken off easily or at least allowing one to move freely, such as a plain loin-cloth or a *himation*. These clothes seem to be as appropriate as nudity for tasks that appear violent, arduous, and dirty, as is the case in some images.

Firstly, even if in some Archaic images victims seem to walk willingly towards their own sacrifice,⁴¹ in many other depictions they seem to refuse to keep walking or and sometimes try fleeing. In order to control them, attendants in charge need to be strong enough and to wear clothes light enough to let them handle the situation. And indeed, in such cases, the costume generally attested is one of the light plain ones mentioned above, including nudity.⁴² In some cases, however, people in more elaborate garments lead victims. Explaining these exceptions can offer a better understanding of the ambiguity of Archaic Athenian sacrifice. For example, on a black-figure amphora mentioned above, a sheep walks calmly next to an attendant dressed in an elaborate costume of a decorated *himation* over a *chiton*.⁴³ A closer look reveals that the elegantly dressed man does not lead the victim. It proceeds willingly and calm, neither bound nor urged by a stick nor pushed by a hand grasping its horn (the closest hand holds an *oinochoe*). On another black-figure amphora from the middle of the 6th century, a piglet in a sacrificial procession is not led but carried by a man wearing a decorated *himation* over a *chiton*.⁴⁴ This image may be compared to contemporary ones, where a man dressed in a plain loin-cloth or *himation* tied round the waist, roughly holds a piglet chosen for sacrifice by one leg.⁴⁵ In comparison, the way the piglet is held here shows

no sign of violence, and even seems tender. These examples suggest that, instead of light plain clothes, that may point towards the violence of the procession, elaborate costumes can be a part of a system of signs concealing any form of sacrificial violence. Painters have pictured both violent and tranquil ceremonies.

However, plain garments may also be worn by attendants even when leading the victim do not look difficult, for instance on a fragment from a black-figure *dinos* of the middle of the 6th century.⁴⁶ Here again, the victims seem to lead themselves. The loincloths worn by the men walking beside them may not be linked to a painful procession, but can function as signs of the future killing or butchering of the victims, which can also be a difficult moment. And indeed, one of them carries knives. In fact, contrary to what Durand has stated, vase painters have pictured sacrificial killings, and even violent ones, at least in the Archaic period. No such image is known from the Classical period. It is true that the actual killing of the victim was rarely represented, but that does not automatically mean that the depiction of it was taboo. In an image commented on above, nine naked men are needed to lift a bovine and hold it still while its throat is slit.⁴⁷ In another one, five naked young men have trouble restraining a bovine while a young attendant in a loincloth prepares the knives.⁴⁸ A *himation* suspended in the frame suggests that one young man even had to undress before dealing with the victim. These pictures show how difficult and violent the killing can be, especially when the victim is a large animal. The nakedness or light garments of the attendants seem to be, in both cases, the most appropriate wear. But attendants may also wear light clothes even when killing does not have to be particularly difficult, for instance when the victim is a much smaller animal.⁴⁹ While choosing such clothes, painters could have pictured even easy killings as somehow hard or dirty.

Nudity or light clothing seems to be appropriate in depictions of men busy with carcasses and meat. A Late Archaic image shows harsh contrast between a priest in a brightly decorated sacerdotal garment holding a *kantharos* to pour a libation, and his attendant in loincloth roasting *splanchna*⁵⁰ (this contrast alone may suggest that the priest is not supposed to handle bloody matter). Again, there are

41 For example in the images of *Bouphonia*, such as Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 1824, Gebauer 2002, 713, fig. 90.

42 For instance Tampa, Tampa Museum of Art, inv. no. 86.52, Gebauer 2002, 710, fig. 81; Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum, inv. no. KAS 74, Gebauer 2002, 709, fig. 80.

43 Munich, Antikensammlungen, inv. no. 1441, Gebauer 2002, 685, fig. 9.

44 Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. F 1690, Gebauer 2002, 684, fig. 5.

45 Art market, Gebauer 2002, 706, fig. 68; Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 1962.62, Gebauer 2002, 706,

fig. 69.

46 Athens, National Museum, Acropolis collection, inv. no. 607, Gebauer 2002, 684, fig. 4.

47 Viterbo, Museo Civico, no inv. no, Gebauer 2002, 726, fig. 134.

48 Florence, Museo Archeologico, inv. no. 81600, Gebauer 2002, 727, fig. 136.

49 Paris, Louvre, inv. no. G 112, Gebauer 2002, 727, fig. 135.

50 Palermo, Museo Archeologico, inv. no. V 661a, Gebauer 2002, 759, fig. 238.

exceptions that require an explanation. On a black-figure column krater from the second half of the 6th century, two attendants dressed in decorated *chitoniskos* deal with sacrificial meat in front of a herm.⁵¹ The first one roasts the *splanchna*, the second one cuts small pieces of meat over a table. Some distinctive parts of the former victims are displayed in the frame, such as its head below the table, behind which lies a sacrificial basket. The painter obviously depicts sacrifice for what it is: the killing and butchery of a domestic animal. However, the presence of a sacrificial basket is enough to emphasise that the victim was ritually consecrated. Thus, the beauty of the clothes, far more elegant than the plain loincloth usually depicted, can function as another sign concealing the violence and reminding us of the solemnity of the ceremony.

Through clothing, vase painters reveal the ambivalence of sacrifice in Archaic Athens. To sacrifice, violence must be somehow inflicted on a chosen animal victim, and some kind of dirty work must be done. The violence and dirt are sometimes expressed, and accepted, without taboo, at least in the Archaic period. However, the fact that painters also do their best to banish all traces of violence or dirt from their pictures suggests that even if it is ritual, killing an animal may have aroused disturbing emotions that people tried to conceal.⁵² Huge gaps in our documentation can account for the differences between Archaic and Classical images of sacrifice, but it is also possible that, among the opposite thoughts about sacrifice displayed in earlier documents, the one idea that would become dominant in the Classical period is that the guilt of performing a sacrificial killing had to be dispelled.⁵³

The thoughts developed here are not intended to shape an interpretative system that would be too strict, but to

try to define a framework that could help us understand how painters used clothing as a polysemic sign, and what discourses it is used to build. Through clothes used as signs, and through the possible dialogue with other signs, Attic Archaic vase painters have depicted sacrifice both as a sacred ceremony and as a feast for mortals. Vase painters' depictions of sacrifice respect religious hierarchies, but also assert the norms and values of an emerging "egalitarian" post-Solonian Athens. Painters also attempted to depict both the sacred and merely pragmatic aspects of sacrifice by showing that the solemn ceremony can be a violent matter of blood and butchery – from which priests might have stood away. Sacrificial violence could have been shown and accepted, but from the Archaic period onwards, it seems appropriate to conceal it. It is not possible to determine whether such Athenian testimony may reveal the thoughts of the whole Archaic Greek world. However, it still alerts us to the fact that the discourse the Greeks built over their own sacrifice could have evolved during almost one entire millennium of history, as could have the ceremony itself.

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- 51 London, British Museum, inv. no. B 362, Gebauer 2002, 736, fig. 123. Van Straten dates the vase to the period from 540 to 520 BCE, but Gebauer rather dates it to 520–500 BCE.
- 52 Stella Georgoudi has rightly demonstrated that the idea of a systematic concealment of the guilt inspired by sacrificial killings was not relevant, see Georgoudi 2005. However, we shall not go as far as to consider that the ancient Greeks were never bothered by the violence of sacrificial killings, and did not think that the difference between sacrifice and murder had to be made obvious, because it was not.
- 53 In this perspective, it shall also be noted that depictions of knives carried in a procession without being hidden in the sacrificial basket are known from the Archaic, but not from later periods. Cf. Athens, National Museum, Acropolis collection, inv. no. 2473, discussed above. In Classical Athens, during the procession, the knives were to be hidden in the sacrificial basket, as described in Ar., *Pax* 947 or Eur., *El.* 810–811. The Archaic vase discussed here, as well as Homeric depictions of sacrifice, suggest that the concern about hiding the knives in a basket during the procession may not have been a major one in the Archaic period.

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