Paul Stavropoulos

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Hour 13—“Blessed are the Heroes”

• Very prominent is ancient Greek song culture

• *Olbios*-prosperous, happy, well-off (everyday context); blessed (special, initiated context)
  o Thesis for today: “The cult hero...is blessed after death and even the worshipper who worships the hero becomes *olbioi* just by being in contact with the hero; he can make any kind of contact.”
  o Meaning by way of connection

• Focus passage A (beginning of Odyssey 24)
  o Achilles is lamented by his mother Thetis, and a tomb is built for Achilles overlooking body of water called Hellespont

• It is OK to call a hero blessed after their death
  o Note Odysseus is alive → “to call Odysseus *olbios* is dangerous”
    ▪ Because only when they are dead can you see how their entire life has ended up→full circle
  o Line 3: “there you lay in the whirling clouds of dust all huge and hugely, heedless now of your chariot riding.”
    ▪ The François Vase—early 6th century BCE
      • Ajax (hugest of all Achaeans) and he is carrying Achilles
        o In death, Achilles’ body is bigger than Ajax
        o The importance of saving the body (remember battle for Patroklos’ body)
      • Other side; similar picture
        ▪ *Michelangelo’s Pieta*: Mary lamenting Jesus
          • Jesus is pictured hugely in death in the arms of virgin Mary.

• Modern Ritsos’ Poem:
Girl is celebrating beauty of boy, and you see this erotic hair, and have features described in sequence → hair, eyebrows, blue eyes, sweet smelling lips.

Song in modern Greek → tradition lives through in modern Greek.

The authorities started shooting at the demonstrators and a young man was shot and killed, and the old widowed mother is weeping over body of son.

- “Song of lament for the death of a beautiful young son.”
- “It crosses time zones rapidly,”
- Love song and lament wrapped in one.

Passage B: We see the tomb of Odysseus, as described by Teiresias.

- “The key word to our key word:” telos: goal, fulfillment, completion, end of life.
  - Deeper meaning: “successful passing through to the next life;” coming full circle.
    - Organically tied to nature, to vegetation, to everything that is natural
    - Shield of Achilles: full of nature, agriculture, plantations, and the shield itself is full circle.

Croesus wants the wise man to anoint him as the best person who exists.

- He makes the mistake in asking, “who is the most olbios” person in the world.
  - The person who is most olbios in all humanity is Tellos.
    - The name is a one-word story.
    - Even though Tellos, embodiment of telos, is not portrayed as a hero, still treated as one after death
    - “in this setting when you are concentrating in what happens after death, you forget about all the questionable things.”

- Herodotus’ first passage

Passage D → who is the second most olbios?

- The story of Kleobis and Biton → two boys who happened to be the boys of a priestess of Hera.
  - The oxen do not arrive on time, so the two boys, sons of a priestess of Hera, take the place of the oxen, and pull the sacred cart up this elevation.
The two boys die in the most beautiful, peaceful way and the moment may live forever.

Statues dedicated to them taken to Delphi, and have been recovered.

- Serenity on their faces

See a representation of Apollo.

- See the God “eye to eye”
- Natasha states how she has experienced something similar in India, where people were trying to get a glimpse of a statue eye to eye in order to have the same experience.
- “awesome and awful.” -Natasha

- Passage E → Homeric hymn to Demeter
- Go back to passage B: all heroes are localized.
  - Tied to nature and it is built into the ideology of heroes
  - You can view the trip of Odysseus as linear, but you can look at it as circular: he too will get recycled one day
  - “People who are making contact with the tomb of Odysseus will become olbioi.
  - *Dike: justice.* Tied to nature, grapevine, fields, blooming garden/orchard.
  - Disguised Odysseus compares Penelope to a just king, portrayed in a field
  - Reconnecting of Odysseus and his father, reconnecting to the world of ancestors, which shows reconnecting world of ancestors.
  - The father Laertes and son re-meet in the context of a thriving garden.

- Herodotus:
  - Hero communicates a message about justice through a sign (*Sema*).
  - The sign of the hero hinges on the word *tarikhos*,
    - In Egyptian religion (as expressed by Greek languages), the prototypical *tarikhos* is Osiris
  - They can reward the just and punish the unjust

- Passage I: Heraclitus
- God Apollo makes signs, he doesn’t say things
- Ancient Greek Religion, you think of his eyes looking down at you “like the noon-day sun.”
- When a historian says “I know,” attempting to see things from the eyes of Apollo and unbiased.