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Pelops Joins the Party

*Transformations of a Hero Cult within
the Festival at Olympia**Gunnel Ekroth*

Ask anyone to name a Greek festival and it is highly likely that the answer will be the festival of Zeus at Olympia at which athletic games were performed every fourth year.¹ This is surely one of the most famous, if not *the* most famous of all festivals of antiquity. The *panegyris* and the games at Olympia were carried out for more than a thousand years, an impressive track record, though during this period their contents underwent changes due to religious, political and athletic reasons.² Olympia was always primarily a sanctuary of Zeus, but a number of other divinities were worshipped here as well. Pelops, the hero mythically connected with the origins of the games and who was buried in the midst of the Altis, occupied a special place. The cult of Pelops was part of the programme of the festival at which the Olympic Games took place, though he may also have received sacrifices on other occasions.³ Within the Olympic festival, the sacrifices to Pelops are thought to have taken place on the evening of the third day, which coincided with the full moon.⁴ The next morning, there was a procession followed by the religious highlight of the festival, the great sacrifice to Zeus.⁵

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The mythic background of Pelops is diverse and inconsistent.⁶ He originated from Asia Minor, more precisely Phrygia, where his eventful childhood included him being dismembered and served as dinner to the gods by his father Tantalus. Subsequently, revived and equipped with a new ivory shoulder replacing the one eaten by Demeter, the adult Pelops came to Greece and Pisa, the district around Olympia, where he challenged King Oenomaus in a chariot race to win the hand of his daughter Hippodameia. After winning her by the help of deceit, Pelops ruled Pisa and Elis happily ever after and finally came to give his name to the entire Peloponnese. The myths surrounding Pelops and their link to Olympia, the festival and the games are a highly complex matter. Some ancient traditions have it that Pelops founded the games or even that they were instituted in his honour, but no myth directly locates the chariot race with Oenomaus or any other event of his life at this site.⁷ His clearest connection to Olympia is the fact that he was buried there.

In modern scholarship, Pelops has often been claimed to be a very ancient hero at Olympia. His cult has been considered as a Mycenaean or even earlier feature, which constituted the original ritual focus of the festival, only gradually to be replaced by Zeus; the origin and purpose of the games have thus been seen as the funeral games for the dead hero.⁸ The structure of the rituals and athletic events at the festival has been taken as bringing out a 'polar tension' between Pelops and Zeus. In addition, it has been argued that the myth of how Pelops was dismembered, boiled and brought back to life served as an *aition* to the sacrifices to Pelops and to the foot race, thought to be the original contest of the games.⁹ This view of the role and function of Pelops at Olympia takes the cult as having been more or less the same throughout the centuries.¹⁰ The available written sources have been combined with little consideration of distinctions in time and purpose, while the archaeological evidence has been noted, but rarely considered in a comprehensive manner.

This paper will discuss Pelops' role and function within the festival from the perspective that the sources at our disposal only give us glimpses of the long history of Pelops' cult; the evidence must in each case be evaluated within its contemporary context to divine whether changes have taken place. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence, now enriched by the results of the resumed investigations of the earliest phases of the sanctuary, will be considered in depth to elucidate the information from the written sources.

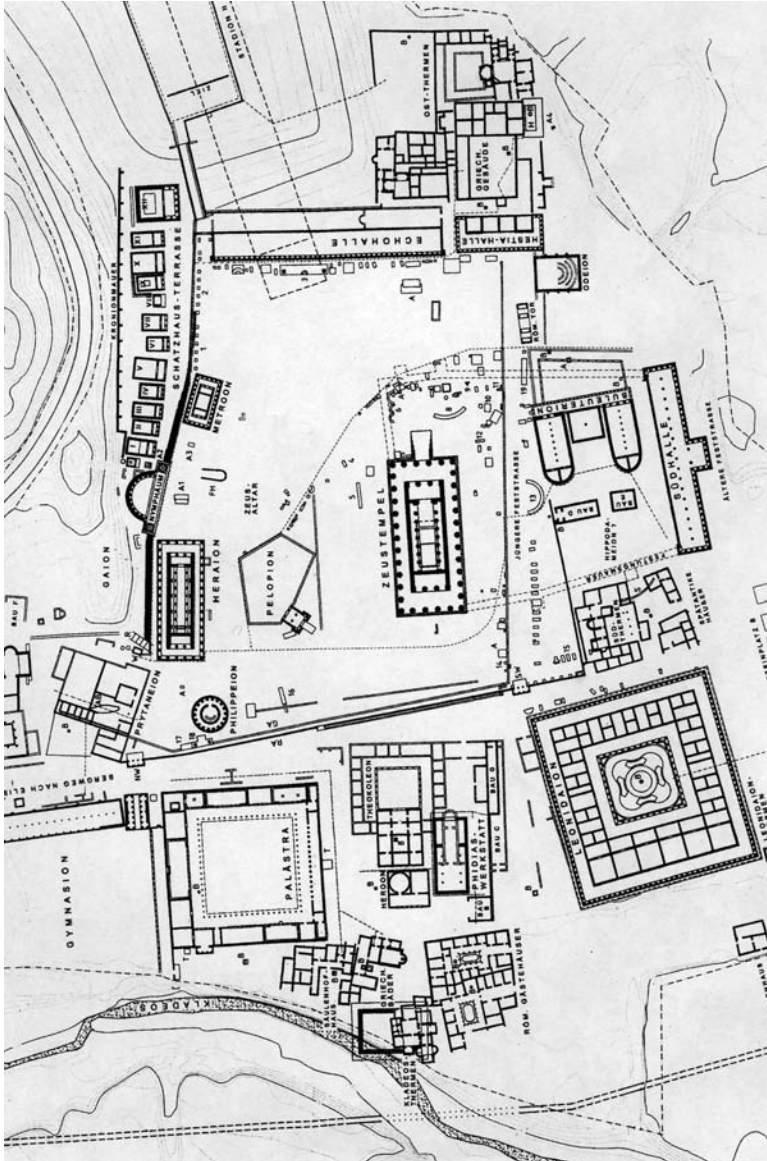


Fig. 4.1. Olympia. Plan of the sanctuary.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING

The precinct of Pelops, the Pelopion, has been identified in the centre of the Altis, based on Pausanias' description (5.13.1) (see Fig. 4.1). According to him, Pelops had his own separate enclosure, which is to the right as you stand at the entrance of the temple of Zeus. There is no epigraphical mention of the Pelopion, but a rim sherd of a late Classical Elean skyphos with the incision [II]EΛOIII, found at the eastern corner of the precinct wall, confirms the identification.¹¹ The area has been excavated on several occasions and traces of a propylon and a wall surrounding the precinct can be seen today.¹²

The recent archaeological excavations in the Altis, from 1987 to 1996, have provided us with new insights into the earliest history of Olympia (see Figs. 4.2–3) and shed light on many assumptions and

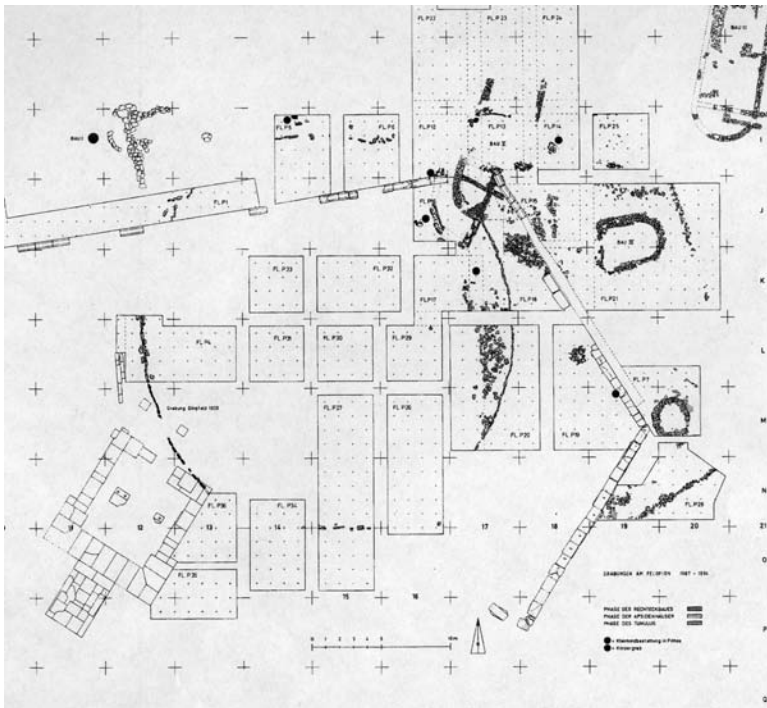


Fig. 4.2. Olympia. Plan of the Pelopion and the prehistoric remains found at the site.

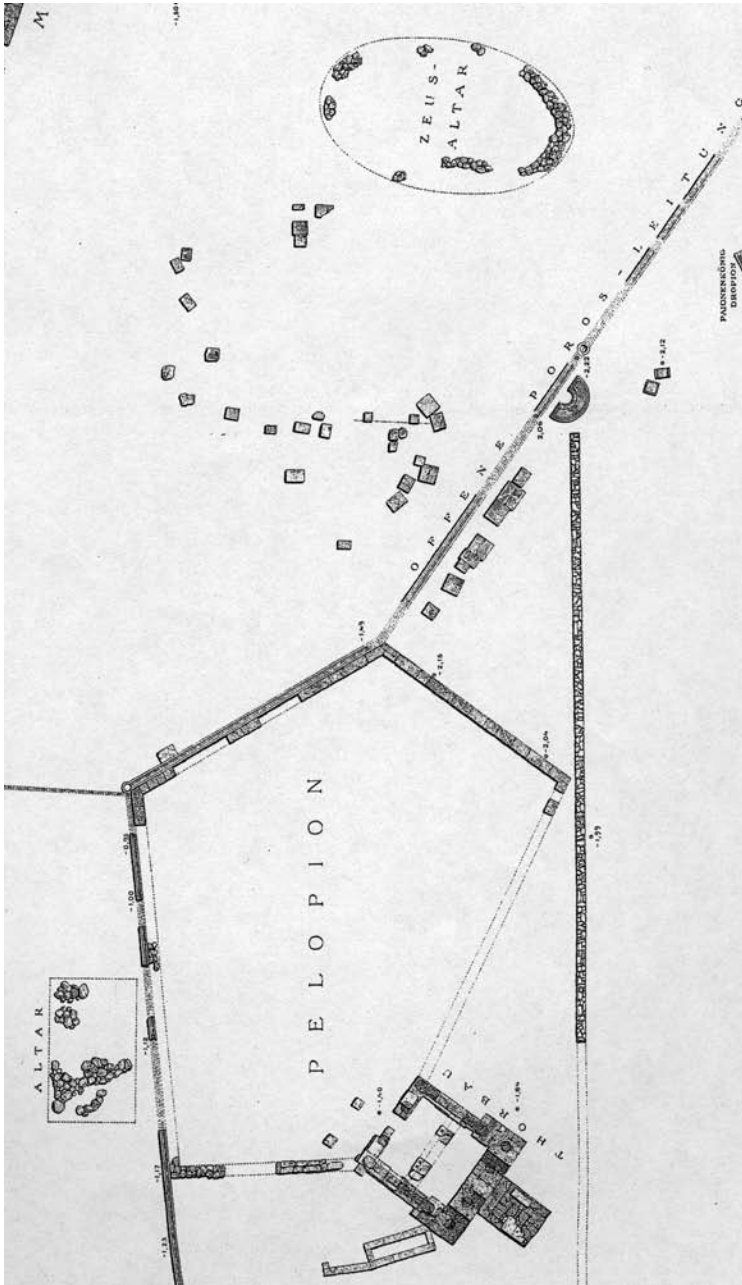


Fig. 4.3. Olympia. Stone plan of the remains of the Pelopion. To the left the remains of the propylon can be seen. From the eastern corner of the enclosure runs a water conduit (*öffentliche Poros-Leitung*), while the structure labelled *Zeusaltiar* (altar of Zeus) is the foundation of the Early Iron Age building VII.

misunderstandings found in earlier scholarship. The area where the Pelopion is situated housed the oldest activity at the site. The Pelopion itself was centred on a prehistoric mound dating to the Early Helladic (EH) II period (c.2500 BC), above which there was a series of buildings and burials dating from the Early Helladic (EH) III to the Middle Helladic (c.2000 BC).¹³ Later in the Bronze Age, these early levels were sealed with a thick layer of sterile sand derived from the river Cladeus to the west, which regularly flooded the area. Significantly, there is no Mycenaean level above the flood deposits, and no continuity, cultic or other, can for the present be demonstrated between the Bronze Age and the Iron Age.¹⁴

Evidence for the earliest cultic activity at Olympia, dating to the mid-eleventh century BC, comes from a thick layer in the northern part of the Altis, extending from the west of the so-called Heraion to the southern parts of the later Pelopion, and continuing eastwards approximately to the location of the Metroon.¹⁵ This layer, usually called the Black Layer or *schwartzte Schicht*, contained unstratified material from the mid-eleventh to the late seventh centuries BC: figurines of bronze and terracotta in the shape of animals, humans, and chariots, fragments of full-scale and miniature tripods, cauldrons, and protomes, weapons, spits, jewellery, and pottery.¹⁶ The finds were mixed with ash, charcoal and animal bones.¹⁷ The Black Layer seems to have been spread out in several phases with a final levelling in the late seventh or even the sixth century BC, judging by the date of the latest pottery recovered.¹⁸ The character of the finds indicates cult activity in the form of animal sacrifices and ritual meals, presumably taking place within the same area.

In the publication of the new excavations at the Pelopion, Helmut Kyrieleis has suggested that the material in the Black Layer derives from the earliest altar of Zeus. This was situated to the north-west of the later Pelopion, on top of the foundations of an EH III building, which were reused as an altar in the Early Iron Age (see Figs. 4.2 and 4.3: here labelled 'Altar').¹⁹ Around 600 BC, the altar of Zeus was moved further to the east, to the location referred to by the written sources of the historical period, and the sacrificial debris from the previous altar was completely levelled and spread out, which resulted in material from all periods being mixed.²⁰

The date of the introduction of the games is difficult, if not impossible, to establish.²¹ The literary sources offer several alternatives of when, by whom and for whom the games were established.²² Some

kind of games may have been part of the festival already in the earliest period of the sanctuary, but there is no change in the archaeological record which corresponds to the traditional date of the introduction of the games in 776 BC.²³ From around 700 BC, simple wells were being dug to the north-west and south-east of the Altis in which pottery, animal bones and cooking equipment have been found, i.e. signs of more visitors coming to the festival. One reason for the more intense activity at Olympia may be that games now formed part of the festival and therefore increased the attraction of the sanctuary.²⁴ The levelling of the Black Layer in the late seventh century BC constituted a major reorganization at Olympia and the festival by this time must have increased in importance, attracting more visitors, perhaps due to the games having developed a more varied programme.²⁵

Helmut Kyrieleis has demonstrated that the Black Layer does not support the assumption that Pelops was worshipped in Olympia at the Pelopion at this early date, contrary to what is often claimed. The extension of the Black Layer showed no sign of being centred on a particular area corresponding to the later Pelopion, and the votive material found in the vicinity of the prehistoric mound consisted of the same kinds of objects as those recovered elsewhere in this stratum.²⁶ Any links between Pelops and specific types of votives, which would allude to his mythic history, such as horses, wagons, chariot groups, tripods, or particular kinds of sacrificial animals, are difficult to sustain if the material is analysed in a more comprehensive manner.²⁷ The mound may have had religious significance in the Early Iron Age period, but it does not seem to have been the focus for any particular cult and there is no evidence for it being identified as the tomb of Pelops. All in all, the Black Layer is best seen as connected with the earliest phase of worship of the main divinity at the site, Zeus, to whom the festival was dedicated.²⁸

THE ARRIVAL OF PELOPS

Judging from the archaeological evidence, the cult of Zeus as well as the festival and the games seem to precede Pelops' presence at Olympia. We must be careful not to take the antiquity of the cult of Pelops for granted, as myth alone does not support a prehistoric

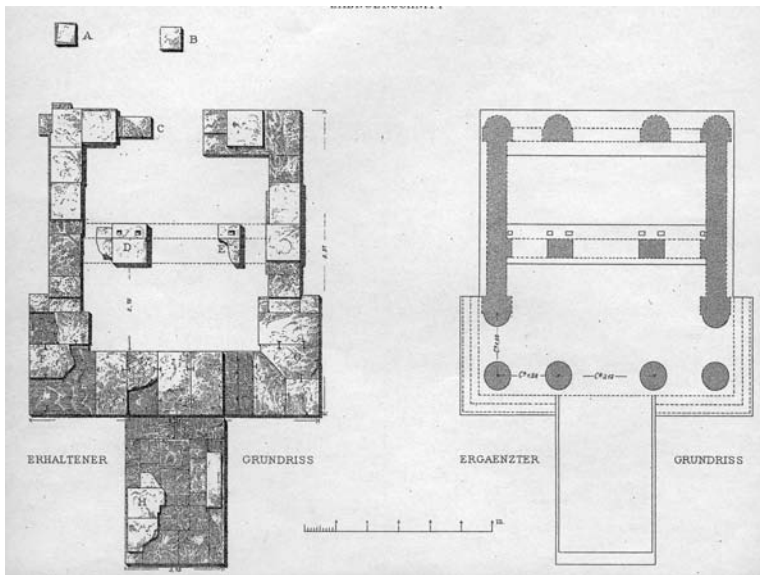


Fig. 4.4. Olympia. Plans of the propylon of the Pelopion. To the left, the preserved state at the time of the excavations; to the right, the reconstructed layout of the plan.

origin. The hero was introduced or added to a festival which had existed long before his arrival.

When do we have any evidence for a cult of Pelops at Olympia? The earliest physical remains at the Pelopion are difficult both to interpret and to date, mainly due to the fact that they were excavated so early and not published in sufficient detail. The stratigraphy indisputably shows that the activity at the Pelopion began after the Black Layer had been levelled at the end of the seventh century BC.²⁹ Under the propylon visible today (see Figs. 4.1, 4.3, and 4.4), there are scanty remains of an earlier structure usually taken to represent an older propylon of a more simple kind.³⁰

This propylon is thought to have been connected to an enclosure surrounding the sacred area, following the outline of the later, preserved precinct wall. The history of this wall is far from clear and it seems to have had different phases.³¹ None of the preserved sections of the wall actually joins the propylon remains.³² Preceding this wall, Dörpfeld postulated the existence of a fence of square stone posts linked with wooden bars, but none of the posts were found *in situ*,

only as reused in later contexts; they could have come from any other small precinct located within the Altis.³³ Furthermore, if there was a fence or a wall at this period, the earliest propylon would have been placed inside the enclosure, and not outside and in front of it, a location which seems highly unlikely.³⁴ Thus, arguments for any kind of early enclosure are weak.³⁵ If there was no fence or wall, we should consider alternative interpretations for the appearance of the early propylon.

The remains of this propylon consist of two square cut blocks (see Fig. 4.4 left: A and B), as well as a short stretch of wall (C), further to the south-west.³⁶ Presumably, this wall continued to the south-east, but was removed when the later propylon was built. I would suggest that we could reconstruct these remains as the base for a simple tetrastylon, consisting of four columns, joined by an architrave and perhaps having a roof, permanent or temporarily, constructed by an awning or branches.³⁷

Tetrastyla have been more or less overlooked in modern scholarship, but they were in fact quite common in sanctuaries, in particular in connection with altars, as well as being used to mark graves or sacred sites, and to protect statues.³⁸ Remains of what seem to be early examples of structures of this kind have been recovered at Kalapodi and at Isthmia.³⁹ At Olympia, a wooden base, dated by its find context to the late seventh century BC, may have been the lower section of a post for such a baldachin or tetrastylon.⁴⁰ Pausanias (5.20.6) mentions that the remaining column of the house of Oenomaus, in the centre of the Altis, was surrounded by a tetrastylon, and in the market place at Elis he saw a monument dedicated to Oxylus consisting of four oak pillars, which held up a roof.⁴¹

In Attica, tetrastyla were especially connected with Heracles. Reliefs and vase paintings show Heracles standing or sitting in front of or inside such a monument, and it has recently been suggested that the tetrastylon was a reference to a funerary aspect of his cult.⁴² Though the Attic evidence cannot be directly applied to Olympia, a connection nonetheless exists between Pelops and Heracles. One of the earliest traditions of the foundation of the games, given in Pindar's tenth *Olympian Ode* (l. 24–5), states that Heracles established the contest by founding six altars next to the ancient tomb of Pelops, while according to Pausanias, it was Heracles who assigned the precinct to Pelops.⁴³

Thus, it would be possible to envision the early phase of the Pelopion as consisting of the unfenced prehistoric mound, identified

as the tomb of the hero, and, at its foot to the south-west, a tetrastylon of a simple kind, perhaps even made of wood.

How do we link this structure to the cult of Pelops and the festival of Zeus? Here, Pindar comes in, our earliest written source for a cult of Pelops at Olympia.⁴⁴ In *Olympian* 1 (usually dated to 476 BC), after having described the mythic background of Pelops, Pindar gives an intricate description of the ritual activities:

νῦν δ' ἐν αἵμακουρίαις
ἀγλααῖσι μέμκται,
Ἄλφειοῦ πόρῳ κλιθείς,
τύμβον ἀμφίπολον ἔχων πολυξενωτάτῳ παρὰ βωμῶ.

And now he partakes
of the splendid blood sacrifices
as he reclines by the course of the Alpheos,
having his much-attended tomb beside the altar thronged by visiting
strangers.⁴⁵

This passage is highly interesting due to its specific content and unusual vocabulary.⁴⁶ If we locate the ritual actions outlined and the terminology used within the larger context of Greek cult in general, and the sacrificial rituals for heroes in particular, I find that Pindar's text can be interpreted as referring to three kinds of rituals: a libation of blood—*haimakouria*, *theoxenia*, and *thysia* sacrifice, followed by consumption of the meat.

There are several references to Pelops as a banqueter, which suggest the performance of *theoxenia*, a ritual at which the divinity was invited as an honoured guest and perceived as being present during the accomplishment of the rite. Pelops reclines, *klitheis*, as a departed in his tomb, as well as a symposiast at a banquet. His tomb is *amphipolos*, 'much-attended' or 'much visited', but the term also evokes *amphipoloi*, servants bringing food and drink. The use of the verb *meignymi* recalls the mixing of the wine at a banquet, though Pelops as the guest of honour partakes in the drinking by the libations of blood, *haimakouriai*, instead of wine.⁴⁷ An analogy between Pelops and Hieron within the ode has also been observed: Pelops reclines as a guest at a banquet, while Hieron's table is often surrounded by guests.⁴⁸ The vocabulary evokes a ritual where Pelops is perceived as being present and worshipped at his tomb as an honoured guest, offered a table with food and a couch to recline at, while enjoying his meal. The outpouring of blood, *haimakouria*, was an important part

of the *theoxenia* and constituted a particular means for attracting the attention of the hero, in order to invite him and procure his presence at the sacrifices and the festival, including the games.⁴⁹

Since blood was offered to Pelops, animal sacrifice must have taken place, presumably of several victims, as *haimakouriai* is in the plural and designated as *aglaaisi*, splendid or magnificent. There is nothing in Pindar's text suggesting that the meat would not have been eaten, and the ritual can be taken as being a regular *thysia* sacrifice.⁵⁰ The animals must have been slaughtered at the altar, *bomos*, mentioned in line 93, and the thigh bones and tails burnt. This altar is described as *polyxenotatos*, 'visited by many foreigners', a term also meaning 'entertaining many guests', suggesting the distribution of the meat to a large number of worshippers present, followed by a collective meal.⁵¹ Portions of meat from these victims may also have been presented to Pelops, perhaps placed on a table, in accordance with the practice at *theoxenia*.

The image of Pelops being worshipped as a reclining hero participating in the feast following the sacrifice, which can be deduced from Pindar's text, is a cultic scenario in which a tetrastylon, of the kind suggested at Olympia, fits well. Temporary shelters, either tetrastyla or circular, raised to house the divinity when offered a *theoxenia* ceremony, are known from other cults, for example that of Zeus Sosipolis at Magnesia on the Maeander.⁵² The posited tetrastylon of Pelops may have housed the *kline* and table of the hero, and here he reclined, receiving his meal while watching the libations of blood, which were probably performed on the mound itself, perhaps in a pit dug out for that purpose.⁵³

A further link to the practice of *theoxenia* within the festival at Olympia is provided by an interesting mould-made terracotta, found in the fill from a well to the south of the workshop of Pheidias (see Fig. 4.5).⁵⁴ This small object, 3.6 × 6.3 cm, depicts a metal tray of the kind used at sacrifices for holding meat.⁵⁵ On the tray are represented the back leg of the sacrificial victim, its head, a spit with five pieces of meat, two round breads, an omphalos bowl, two bundles of grapes and two oblong objects, which may have been tongues or sections of back meat.⁵⁶ What we see depicted here is surely the offerings at a *theoxenia* ritual, an elaborate and rich meal of the kind which would have been offered to an important divinity such as Pelops.

There might even be a reference to the ritual activity surrounding the tetrastylon of Pelops in the lists of religious functionaries at Olympia. Among the sanctuary officials recorded in an inscription



Fig. 4.5. Olympia. Terracotta model showing *theoxenia* offerings.

of the first century BC is a person designated *steganomos kai mageiros*.⁵⁷ The title *steganomos* may refer to this official being responsible for putting up roofs or tents in connection with ritual meals, so why not also the arrangement of the tetrastylon of Pelops?⁵⁸ That the *steganomos* was also a *mageiros*, a cook, and is mentioned together with the *kathemerothytes*, the person performing the daily sacrifices at Olympia, indicate a context of sacrifice and feasting.⁵⁹ If this association is valid, it shows that the *theoxenia* ritual in the tetrastylon at the sacrifices to Pelops were an element well integrated within the festival.

If we now turn back to the arrival of Pelops, the archaeological evidence points to Pelops being added to the festival of Zeus sometime after the major architectural reorganization of the sanctuary around 600 BC.⁶⁰ A date some time in the sixth century BC may be proposed for the earliest architecture at the Pelopion, though the structure may be later.⁶¹ Pindar's *Olympian* 1 is usually dated to 476 BC, and if we accept a connection between his description and the physical remains, the latter must have been present when Pindar composed his ode. Pindar's language, especially the use of *nyn*, 'now', seems to reflect the contemporary cultic situation of the festival at Olympia.⁶²

The reasons for the introduction of the cult of Pelops may have been diverse. The festival was clearly transformed in the sixth century BC, just as the actual sanctuary underwent major changes. The addition of Pelops may have had political undertones, linked to the

administration of the sanctuary by the city of Elis, which aimed at increasing the status and religious potential of the sanctuary and the festival by instituting a cult of a hero well established on the Peloponnese, and who could be recognized and honoured by all Greeks coming to the festival.⁶³

The sixth century BC also witnessed an intense increase in the number of hero cults. A trend discernible within athletic festivals of the same period is the inclusion of a hero cult, an action which can be seen as part of the mythic construction of the games. The situation at Olympia may here be closely paralleled with that at Nemea, where the earliest phase of the Heroon of Opheltes dates to the second quarter of the sixth century BC.⁶⁴ Opheltes is in the mythic tradition explicitly linked both to the site of Nemea, where his death took place, and to the games, which were instituted in his honour.⁶⁵ Pelops' connection with Olympia and the games seems originally to be more superficial. Though some versions of the myth of Pelops locate the race with Oenomaus in the region of Olympia and later traditions connect him directly with the games, the earliest evidence actually placing him at Olympia is Pindar, who is also the first source mentioning him being buried there and having a cult. It is possible that the cult of Opheltes at Nemea may have inspired the establishment of the cult of Pelops at Olympia and its integration into the festival.⁶⁶

PELOPS WITHIN THE FESTIVAL

The Pelopion was an important monument within the Altis and its location was certainly due to the prehistoric mound being identified as the tomb of Pelops. We now have to consider the cult and the precinct within the wider setting of the sanctuary and festival activity.

The area east of the Pelopion formed the centre of the Altis, and the ash altar of Zeus, of which no traces have been found, was located here.⁶⁷ The apsidal Early Iron Age building VII in the centre of the Altis (see Figs. 4.1 and 4.3: here labelled 'Zeusaltar') may still have been visible in the Archaic period; due to its size and location, this was perhaps the earliest cult building for Zeus, in which his statue was kept.⁶⁸ To the north, the open area was monumentalized by the treasury terrace, constructed in the sixth century BC, and by the earliest stone temple, erected around 600 BC and presumably

dedicated to Zeus.⁶⁹ Further to the east was the stadium where the athletic events took place. The first race track is dated to around 550 BC, and it continued further west into the Altis than did the later stadium visible today.⁷⁰

If the centre of the Altis was clearly in the east, why did such an important cult place as the Pelopion face west? The western entrance has been seen as a sign of the chthonian nature of the cult of Pelops, which was to be separated from the cult of Zeus, but there is in fact no evidence to support this assumption.⁷¹ I would suggest that this orientation of the Pelopion was chosen, not to mark a distinction from the principal god, but because the cult of Pelops formed part of the festival activities set in the western part of the Altis.

That the western side of the Pelopion was the more important is suggested not only by the location of the hypothetical tetrastylon and the later propylon (see below), but also from the distribution of Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic finds in this area; these traces of activity post-date the levelling of the Black Layer.⁷² The majority of the more precisely located finds from the old excavations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were recovered either within the later wall or to its west or south-west. Hardly any object is recorded as having been found to the east of the Pelopion.⁷³

So, what was the use of the west Altis and why would the sanctuary of Pelops face in this direction? In the Geometric period, the main entrance to the sanctuary was probably in the west.⁷⁴ The presence of the Black Layer in the north-western part of the Altis indicates that this area was used for sacrifices and ritual meals from an early date. That dining took place here in the Archaic and Classical periods also is evident from the wells found under the later Prytaneion, all containing animal bones and pottery of the kind used for eating and drinking; the area to the north of the Prytaneion seems to still have been an open campsite in the mid-fourth century BC.⁷⁵ The Prytaneion itself was used for meals for magistrates and invited guests, and it was here that the athletic victors were invited to dine.⁷⁶ Further south, near the later workshop of Pheidias, seventeen wells, dating from the sixth to the fourth centuries BC, have been found.⁷⁷ In addition, one of the earliest buildings in this area, the Heroon, dated to the mid-fifth century BC (see Fig. 4.1), due to its plan and manner of construction, has been suggested to evoke temporary tholoi of the kind raised in Greek sanctuaries used for meals at festivals.⁷⁸ The archaeological evidence indicates that the western part of the

Altis most likely served as one of two principal dining areas for visitors to the sanctuary (the other being the area to the east of the Altis, north and south of the stadium), filled with temporary huts and tents for the visitors who stayed and dined here during the festival.⁷⁹ This picture derived from the archaeology accords well with Pindar's statement that the whole area outside the Altis was used as a *Festwiese*, a field for the worshippers to dine in.⁸⁰

If Pelops was worshipped with animal sacrifices and *theoxenia* at a simple tetrastylon facing the area where the visitors dined, we can indeed picture the open space in front of his sanctuary as visited by many guests, just as Pindar claims (*Ol.* 1.90–3). Furthermore, it is possible that meat from the sacrifices to Pelops, and perhaps also from the victims sacrificed to Zeus, was distributed here.⁸¹ A large number of metal weights have been recovered at Olympia, predominantly outside the Altis.⁸² Interestingly, the only group of weights found within the Altis comes from the area to the west and north of the Pelopion, and these weights could have been used when meat from sacrifices was divided into portions and distributed.⁸³ Weights have also been found inside and around the Prytaneion, where meals of course took place, and the same use could be proposed for these objects.⁸⁴ Finally, among the finds, with a provenance south and west of the Pelopion, are fragments of Archaic and Classical bronze cauldrons and basins, which may have been used at the distribution and cooking of the sacrificial meat as well.⁸⁵ Thus, we can picture Pelops not only as a reclining banqueter, but also as overseeing the distribution of the meat from the sacrifices to the visitors.⁸⁶

A feature considered central in the myth of Pelops is his dismemberment, boiling, and revival in a cauldron, a story which has been taken as a reflection of the importance of cauldrons and boiling within the real sacrifices at Olympia.⁸⁷ Furthermore, this narrative of the child hero being cooked and brought back to life has been argued as serving an *aition* to the sacrifice of a black ram to Pelops, a ritual described by Pausanias.⁸⁸ However, one reason for the significance of the cauldron and the boiling of meat in the myth may simply be that boiling constitutes the most convenient way to prepare meat for a large number of participants at a sacrifice, and, judging from the osteological evidence, most meat eaten in Greek sanctuaries was in fact boiled.⁸⁹ Therefore, the boiling motif can more specifically be suggested to evoke Pelops' role at the preparation and distribution of meat at the major sacrifices, which were essential components of the festival at Olympia.

Interestingly, boiled meat is also encountered at the games for the dead and heroized Aleximachus, outlined in a Hellenistic private cult foundation established by his father Critolaus on Amorgos.⁹⁰ Here, the meat of the boiled ram was to be placed in front of Aleximachus' statue and later distributed as prizes in the athletic contests. The term used for placing the meat in front of the statue is *paratithenai* (to place or put beside), a term often employed to describe *theoxenia* rituals.⁹¹ The scenario of boiled meat, games and *theoxenia* for the hero found in the cult foundation of Aleximachus can be envisioned for Pelops as well, reclining in his tetrastylon and overseeing the distribution of meat. In fact, the ritual layout in the cult foundation for Aleximachus may even have been inspired by the cult of Pelops at Olympia.

Within the festival, Pelops can be seen both as the happy host reclining and enjoying his meal and as the hero overseeing the distribution of meat, certainly a central feature of any *panegyris*.⁹² Considering the number of visitors, sacrifice, meat distribution, and dining must have been ongoing events during all days of the festival, although the great sacrifice to Zeus took place in the middle.⁹³ Pelops, therefore, had an important role to fulfil.

The western part of the Altis seems to have been a dining area for the regular visitors to the festival, but it also housed the more prestigious dining for the athletic victors, magistrates, and prominent guests in the Prytaneion.⁹⁴ Considering the myth of Pelops' chariot race with Oenomaus and the tradition of him instituting the games, it is possible to imagine Pelops as being particularly linked to the athletic victors.⁹⁵ In *Olympian* 1, Pindar speaks of the victors gaining fame in the racecourses of Pelops and enjoying it for the rest of their lives.⁹⁶ Just as Pelops conquered and won, and therefore was honoured by *theoxenia*, so the Olympic victors were honoured with a prestigious meal of meat in the Prytaneion and perhaps also in the open, to the west and south-west of the Pelopion, where they would consume the meat in the presence of the hero.⁹⁷

A final monument which may be fitted into this context of athletic victory, cult, and dining at the festival is the Philippeion, situated to the north-west of the Pelopion. This tholos was constructed in 338 BC by Philip of Macedonia, housing statues of the Macedonian royal family.⁹⁸ The building may have had some kind of ritual connotations, though its inconspicuous location, that is, not in the eastern part of the Altis, has been considered as enigmatic.⁹⁹ However, round

buildings in sanctuaries were in several cases used as dining rooms and they seem in fact to have been especially favoured in Macedonia.¹⁰⁰ Perhaps a *theoxenia* ceremony, similar to that of Pelops, was staged within the Philippeion in front of the statues. The king and his family may have been honoured at the festival in the same manner as Pelops, the great-grandfather of Philip's ancestor Heracles, if they were presented as dining in the company of both Pelops and the victorious athletes.¹⁰¹

PELOPS AND THE ELEAN POLITICAL AGENDA

In the Classical period, the Pelopion was remodelled.¹⁰² A propylon was constructed, consisting of a four-column porch, with an inner dividing wall, presumably with doors, and two columns in antis in the back (see Fig. 4.4). This structure was joined to a built enclosure wall, surrounding a pentagonal or hexagonal area in the middle of which the prehistoric mound was situated.¹⁰³ The height of this wall, which may have been a massive stonewall or a mud-brick construction, is unknown, as only the stone footing remains. Nothing is known of the inner arrangements of the precinct, and the size and elevation of the mound in this period cannot be determined. These building activities are difficult to date precisely, but, according to the latest investigations in the Pelopion area, the propylon itself seems to have been constructed in the fifth century BC and presumably the wall dates to the same period.¹⁰⁴

The Pelopion was now fenced in, closed, and could even be locked, and there was apparently no free admission or entrance. To what extent this process corresponds to any changes in the festival and the games or to other circumstances is a matter of conjecture. The attraction of the festival and the games seems to have waned after the mid-fifth century BC, though there is nothing to suggest that Pelops did not continue to occupy the role as the principal hero of the games and the festival all through the Classical period, receiving and entertaining the athletes and the visitors in the western Altis, outside the Pelopion.¹⁰⁵

In the fifth century BC, a number of building projects were undertaken in the sanctuary, such as the erection of the temple of Zeus and reconstruction work at the stadium, the Prytaneion and the

Bouleuterion, to mention a few. The constructions at the Pelopion can be seen as part of this architectural embellishment.¹⁰⁶ It is possible that more valuable votive offerings were now kept in the Pelopion, and the enclosure was constructed to protect them.¹⁰⁷

However, the political developments of the Early Classical period may also have contributed more directly to equipping the Pelopion with a precinct wall and a monumental entrance. It seems clear that Olympia always constituted a vital component to the local identity of the polis of Elis, the city in charge of the festival and the games from the early sixth century BC; the city's prytaneion was at Olympia, not in Elis, and official decrees were put up in the sanctuary.¹⁰⁸ Elis underwent a *synoikismos* in the 470s BC and the city seems to have manifested its presence in the sanctuary more prominently in the fifth century BC.¹⁰⁹ The temple of Zeus, the major new addition to the sanctuary, was paid for by the Eleans and completed in the second quarter of the fifth century BC. In the sculptural programme of this building, Pelops plays an important role, since the east pediment depicts the moments before his chariot race with Oenomaus to win Hippodameia.¹¹⁰ The choice of the myth of Pelops for the decoration of the temple has been seen as a demonstration of local Elean pride and as a desire to create a long and glorious mythical past for the city of Elis: an important concern after the *synoikism*, highlighting Pelops as the founding hero of Elis in the same sense and for the same reasons as Theseus was in Athens.¹¹¹ A large, more well-defined precinct marked by a propylon may have been an additional expression of Pelops' importance as the national hero of the Eleans in the Classical period. Moreover, the enclosure may have served to protect the tomb of Pelops in order to prevent the bones, and by consequence the power of the cult, being transferred elsewhere, a fate of heroic bones known from other instances.¹¹²

If Pelops in the fifth century BC was worshipped at Olympia not only as the hero of the festival, but also as the national hero of the Eleans, it may also be possible that some aspects of Pelops' cult as a poliadic divinity were reserved only for Eleans at this period. The cult of poliadic divinities constituted an important means for a polis to articulate its identity and establish group cohesion, especially by letting participation in the cults be open to citizens only, and, as the ultimate means for marking exclusion or inclusion, by carefully restricting who could eat the meat from the sacrifices or where this meat could be taken.¹¹³ In this context, it is important to remember

that even in Panhellenic sanctuaries it was the controlling city (Elis, in the case of Olympia) which decided who could participate in the sacrifices, festivals, and games linked to a certain divinity, and that all visitors, by not being citizens of that city, were by definition *xenoi*, a status affecting their access to the local cults.¹¹⁴

Seen in this light, the wall and propylon of the Pelopion may have been constructed to control access to the poliadic aspect of Pelops' cult, which in that case was located within the walls of the Pelopion. This was definitely the case on Delos, where the cult place of the Heros Archegetes (or Anios) was delimited by a high wall and the entrances to the main building were marked by the inscription 'It is not allowed for foreigners to enter'.¹¹⁵ The sacrifices to this Delian hero, who was the mythical king of the island and whose cult was almost exclusively confined to Delos, took place inside the Archegeion on the open courtyard, surrounded by high walls and entered by gates, which could be closed by doors, thus restricting free access also in a physical sense.¹¹⁶ When a cult intimately connected with the political identity of a city or community was located within a sanctuary frequently visited by foreigners, such physical restrictions of access seem to have been considered necessary in some instances, and such a situation may have contributed to erecting the enclosure around the Pelopion.¹¹⁷

This suggestion is admittedly hypothetical, and there is at present no contemporary evidence from Olympia apart from the enclosure itself to clarify the role and function of Pelops in the Classical period. In the end, we can only conclude that the Pelopion was walled and given a propylon in the fifth century BC, a significant change which has received surprisingly little attention in the scholarship on Olympia.

PAUSANIAS' PELOPS

After the Classical remodelling of the Pelopion we know next to nothing of the fate of the precinct, apart from the propylon being re-stuccoed in the Roman period.¹¹⁸ It is conceivable that this restoration was linked to Emperor Hadrian's interest in Greek sanctuaries and their festivals. The substantial works he undertook at Olympia may very well have included the renovation of the entrance

to the Pelopion, especially since he extended the cult place of another major hero in a Panhellenic sanctuary, that of Palaemon at Isthmia, with a round temple and a new offering pit.¹¹⁹

Our principal source of the later cult of Pelops is the account offered by Pausanias in the second half of the second century AD.¹²⁰ He describes the Pelopion as enclosed by a stone wall, *θριγκὸς λίθων*, and that trees and statues were found inside it. The famous ivory shoulder blade, which Pelops was given when Demeter had eaten the original one, had disappeared from the temple of Hera when Pausanias visited the sanctuary, and the rest of Pelops' bones were apparently no longer kept in the Altis.¹²¹ Nevertheless, Pelops' prominence as a cult figure for the Eleans was certainly intact in the second century AD, as Pausanias informs us that the Eleans venerated him more than any other hero at Olympia, just as they venerated Zeus more than any other god.¹²² As for the actual worship of Pelops, Pausanias states that the hero received an annual sacrifice by the magistrates, the victim being a black ram. The *mantis* received no share, while the woodcutter, one of Zeus' servants, was given the neck. Anyone, Elean or foreigner, who ate of the meat was barred from the cult of Zeus.¹²³

This text has frequently been drawn on when discussing Pelops' role and function within the festival at Olympia during the Archaic and Classical periods, but the problems with using Pausanias' account as a source for conditions more than six hundred years earlier have often been overlooked. It is important to note that Pausanias' accounts of hero cults, as that of Greek religion in general, are highly influenced by contemporary conditions and notions and are therefore not necessarily valid for the situation in earlier periods.¹²⁴ In fact, the information provided by Pausanias suggests that Pelops' role and function within the festival cannot have been the same as in the Archaic and Classical periods.

Pausanias' description of the cult includes some very specific and unusual ritual details. Whoever ate the meat from Pelops' sacrificial victims could not participate in the cult of Zeus, since they had become impure. It should be pointed out that the sacrifice to Pelops, leading to the participants being polluted by eating the meat, is more or less unique among Greek hero cults, contrary to what is often claimed. Sacrifices to heroes may contain elements which underline an impure and mortal quality in the recipient, usually the burning of all or a larger quantity of the meat, or the discarding of the blood, but,

as a rule, participation in a hero cult does not pollute the worshippers.¹²⁵ The best (and apparently only) parallel is, in fact, the one offered by Pausanias in the same passage: participation in the cult of Telephus at Pergamum prohibited entry to Asclepius, a condition remedied with a bath. No such purifications are referred to in the case of Pelops, which is surprising. It is difficult to see how it would have been possible for athletes and visitors in the Archaic and Classical periods to participate in the sacrifices to Pelops on the third day of the festival, if this led to pollution and exclusion from the sacrifices to Zeus the next morning. How this was dealt with in the Roman period is an open question. It may be significant that the sacrifice mentioned by Pausanias was performed annually, which means it was not exclusively linked to the games and therefore the connection with Zeus may have been less pronounced. It is also possible that the cult of Pelops in the Roman period gradually became more separated from both the games and the cult of Zeus.¹²⁶ If that was the case, Pelops may have adopted a different role within the festival than in earlier times.

Furthermore, it is surprising that Pausanias does not mention any altar of Pelops where these sacrifices were performed. Since the consumption of the meat from Pelops' victims led to a ritual impurity which prevented any participation in the cult of Zeus, these sacrifices can hardly have taken place on the ash altar of the god. The lack of any mention of an altar for Pelops is all the more remarkable, since Pausanias lists seventy other altars at Olympia, three of which are said to be located just next to the Pelopion.¹²⁷ One explanation for this silence could have been that the altar of Pelops was located inside the Pelopion. If Pausanias did not come to Olympia when the annual sacrifices to the hero took place, the Pelopion may have been closed at the time, and he was therefore only told about the rituals and never saw them or the altar.¹²⁸

Another unique feature in Pausanias' description of the cult of Pelops is that the neck of the sacrificial victim was given to the woodcutter. The use of this part of the victim as a choice or honorary portion is not encountered in any Greek sacred law or sacrificial calendar, the preferred cuts usually being back legs and tongues.¹²⁹ The only parallel I know of for selecting the neck for a particular purpose is the funerary sacrifice in the entrance to the Maussoleion at Halicarnassus (mid-fourth century BC). The sheep and goats from this deposit were divided and the bodies had in many cases been laid down in sections in a more or less correct anatomical order.

Completely absent from among the bones were the vertebrae of the lower neck, which presumably had been removed for some reason.¹³⁰ Though there is of course a great distance in both time and place between the sacrifice in Carian Halicarnassus and the rituals at Olympia in Pausanias' time, it is nonetheless interesting that the only comparison for a particular handling of the neck of the victim comes from a funerary sacrifice in Asia Minor, the region from which Pelops originated.

In Roman times, the funerary aspects of the hero and his worship seem to have become more pronounced, just as in a number of other hero cults described by Pausanias.¹³¹ In fact, Pausanias mentions another hero cult connected with the festival at Olympia which also contained funerary traits, that of Achilles at Elis, who was bewailed by the Elean women at sunset at the beginning of the festival (6.23.3). Furthermore, the tradition that the athletic events at the major Panhellenic sanctuaries originated in the funerary games of the dead heroes, worshipped at the same sites, is mainly documented in Roman or antiquarian sources. In the case of Pelops, all sources claiming that the festival and the games belong to him date from the Roman period or even later.¹³²

The cult of Pelops, as presented by Pausanias as a polluting hero cult, with a black victim and the *mantis* receiving no share of its meat (presumably not to restrict his participation in the cult of Zeus), is more compatible with hero cults of the Roman period than those of earlier, Greek times. In this sense, the cult of Pelops may be compared with the cult of Palaemon at Isthmia. This cult was reinstated around AD 50–60; the large-scale holocaustic sacrifices performed were probably a Roman reconstruction of the earlier cult, influenced by contemporary Roman perceptions and tastes.¹³³ The changes that took place in the cult of Pelops can be linked to the gradual separation of gods and heroes discernible in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, probably arising from a desire to distinguish older, traditional and epic hero cults from those directed to recently heroized mortals by adopting certain sacrificial rituals.¹³⁴

Pausanias stresses the importance of the cult of Pelops, but his description makes it difficult to perceive the hero as occupying the same role within the festival as during Archaic and Classical times. The festival may have been the same, but Pelops was clearly different. It is even difficult to ascertain whether the sacrifices of Pelops described by Pausanias were part of the festival in the second century

AD or if they represent an independent cult. In any case, Zeus and Pelops of the Roman period seem to have been more ritually separated than previously. The ritual dichotomy between Zeus and Pelops, evoked by scholars principally on the basis of Pausanias' account, may therefore be a late, post-Classical, and mainly Roman development, and not an original feature of the Olympic festival.¹³⁵

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Based on the extant archaeological and written evidence, the cult of Pelops at Olympia must be considered an Archaic feature added to the religious set-up of the sanctuary and festival of Zeus, where this god had been worshipped for several centuries before the hero was introduced. It seems likely that the cult of Pelops was established some time after the festival and the games had begun to grow in importance and attract more participants and spectators. The worshippers of Zeus came to identify the tumulus as the ancient tomb of Pelops, *archaion sema Pelopos* (Pind. *Ol.* 10.24). Once the cult of Pelops was instituted, the tradition surrounding the festival and the games may have been modified to accommodate the hero and explain his presence. The modern belief that the festival was originally that of Pelops is an inference based on the assumption that hero cults belong to an older stratum of Greek religion which was gradually replaced by the cult of 'Olympian' gods, an evolutionary perspective with little support in the ancient evidence.¹³⁶

Why the cult of Pelops was added to the festival cannot be ascertained, but it arose at a time when hero cults came into being all over Greece, and the cult of Pelops can be seen as part of this trend. All major sanctuaries came to house hero cults, and at those sanctuaries where Panhellenic games took place, these games became mythically and ritually connected with a specific hero. Nevertheless, the tradition that they originated as funeral games for the same heroes seldom seems to have been prominent until later times. The choice of Pelops as the hero of the games may have been dictated by the political motives of the Eleans, the city controlling Olympia in the early sixth century BC.

The cult of Pelops did not remain static through the centuries; this is evident from the analysis of the archaeological and literary

evidence. Initially, Pelops, buried in the centre of the sanctuary and honoured above all other heroes, has to be seen as the hero of the festival and the games, but also as the paragon of the victorious athlete and the eternal winner celebrating his victory. He reclines as a banqueter in his tetrastylon next to his tomb, is honoured by *theoxenia*, and receives not only the visitors coming to the games, but also the athletes, who won and received immortal fame, just as Pelops did. At his precinct, animal sacrifices were performed and the meat was divided, boiled, and distributed, a procedure overseen by Pelops; in the open area to the west of the Pelopion the visitors and the athletes dined in his company.

In the Classical period, the Pelopion was reorganized and surrounded by a wall entered by a monumental propylon. This change may be seen as a part of the general embellishment of the sanctuary in the fifth century BC, but it may also be linked to the political agenda of the city of Elis. When the political power of Elis grew, Pelops was promoted as the national hero of this city state and the cult of Pelops may have taken on an additional aspect. Since his cult was now also being promoted as a poliad cult for the city of Elis, this specific aspect of his worship may have been reserved for Elean citizens. The enclosure is suggested to have been erected to restrict who could participate in this cult and also to safeguard the hero's tomb and his bones. The principal part of the cult of Pelops, taking place outside the Pelopion, was presumably still a part of the festival and open for all athletes and visitors.

In the Roman period, finally, judging from Pausanias' account in the second century AD (our only extant source), the cult of Pelops had undergone the same changes as other Greek hero cults, which were of interest for the Romans. The funerary aspects in the worship of Pelops become more pronounced, especially by the cult now having an element of pollution, which led to it being more separated from the cult of Zeus. Pelops cannot have occupied the same role within the festival. The ritual antagonism between Pelops and Zeus, seen by some as the original nexus of the festival and the games at Olympia, may in fact be a later, Roman development. This dark and uncanny Pelops was clearly different from the joyous festival hero of the Archaic period.

NOTES

1. The festival of Zeus, the *panegyris* or *heorte*, seems to have existed independently of the games, see Sinn (1991), 46–51; Pind. *Ol.* 6.68–70; Strabo 8.3.30.
2. On the changes of the festival focus in relation to the cult of Zeus, see Sinn (1991). For the athletic programme, see Lee (2001); Scanlon (2002), 32–8. The pattern of dedicating votives also differs over time, see e.g. Himmelmann (2002); Morgan (1990), 30–47; (1993), 22–7; Siewert (1996).
3. Pausanias (5.13.2) speaks of annual sacrifices to Pelops, as do the *scholia vetera* to Pindar (*Ol.* 1.146d [Drachmann]).
4. Lee (2001), 48–50. Mommsen (1891), 1–5, argued that the sacrifices to Pelops took place on the eve before the festival began; see also Weniger (1904), 130. However, as Lee (2001), 50, points out, the evidence is not conclusive and we only know that the sacrifices to Pelops were performed on one evening some time before the sacrifices to Zeus.
5. At least, this was the organization of the programme in the Early Classical period through to the Roman period, see Lee (2001).
6. For the myth of Pelops, see Bloch (1897–1909), 1866–75; Lacroix (1976); *NeueP* 9 (2000), s.v. Pelops 1; Pache (2004), 84–94.
7. Lacroix (1976), 329–34; Pache (2004), 88–94. For Pelops as the originator or recipient of the games, see Phlegon of Tralles, *FGrH* 257, F 1.6, the scholia to Pindar, *Hypothesis Isthmiorum* and Hyg. *Fab.* 273.5; cf. Pindar calling the stadium *dromoi Pelopos* (*Ol.* 1.155).
8. Mommsen (1891), 5; Körte (1904), 227–8; Dörpfeld (1935), 25–6, 119–22; Herrmann (1980), 62–3, 68–9; Ziehen (1942), 70; Rohde (1925), 117; Pache (2004), 93.
9. Burkert (1983); Nagy (1986), 79–80; Krummen (1990), 168–83; Pache (2004), 92; *OCD*³, sv. Pelops.
10. Herrmann (1980); Burkert (1983); Nagy (1986).
11. Kyrieleis (2006), 15 and pl. 8.2.
12. Dörpfeld (1892), 56–7; (1935), 118–24; Kyrieleis (2002; 2006).
13. Dörpfeld (1935), 118–22; Eder (2001), 202–3; Kyrieleis (2002), 215–16; Rambach (2003), 241–9; Kyrieleis (2006), 25–7.
14. For Mycenaean finds, all from mixed layers, and presence at the site, see Eder (2006), 189–92; Kyrieleis (2006), 61 n. 233, 78 n. 316; Rambach (2002b), 200; Knauss (2004).
15. See Kyrieleis (2006), 35, 46, 61; cf. Furtwängler (1890), 2–4; Mallwitz (1972), 84–8; (1988), fig. 6.2; Morgan (1993), 22–7. The earliest pottery is sub-Mycenaean, mid-eleventh century BC, see Eder (2001), 204; (2006), 143.

16. For specific groups of finds, see Heilmeyer (1972; 1979); Maass (1978); Philipp (1981).
17. For the animal bones recovered in the excavations of 1987–96, see Benecke (2006).
18. Kyrieleis (2006), 27–55. For indications of various levelling horizons, see Furtwängler (1890), 2–3; Schilbach (1984); Mallwitz (1999); Kyrieleis (2002), 217.
19. Kyrieleis (2006), 33–48, 54–5. The finds in the Black Layer were particularly prominent at this concentration of stones, see Furtwängler (1890), 2; cf. Dörpfeld and Borrmann (1892), 163; Curtius and Adler (1897), pl. 6b; Mallwitz (1988), fig. 6.2.
20. Kyrieleis (2006), 46–55.
21. For a discussion, see Mallwitz (1988), 79–81, 94–9. The chronology of the introduction of the various contests lies beyond the scope of this paper, see Lee (2001).
22. On the difficulties in reconciling the literary traditions surrounding the beginning of these events, see the discussion by Ulf (1997).
23. Schilbach (1984), 236; Morgan (1993), 25–6; Valavanis (2006), 143–4. Cf. Sinn (1991), 35–7, who argues that one reason for the early attraction of Olympia was the oracle of Zeus, especially in matters of war.
24. Mallwitz (1999), 188–99; Gauer (1975); Eder (2006), 205.
25. This is also the period of the earliest monumental architecture: the so-called temple of Hera, constructed around 600 BC, see Kyrieleis (2006), 48–55; Mallwitz (1966); cf. Moustaka (2002) and Kyrieleis (2006), 60–1 for this building being the first stone temple of Zeus; the embankment for the treasury terrace created at the turn of the eighth–seventh centuries BC, see Schilbach (1984), 235–6; Mallwitz (1999), 220–2.
26. Kyrieleis (2006), 55–61; (2002), 219; Mallwitz (1972), 92.
27. Kyrieleis (2002), 219; Mallwitz (1988), 86. The figurines display a rich variety, including not only cattle and horses, but also rams, dogs, hares, and beetles, see Heilmeyer (1972; 1979); cf. Himmelmann (2002). To connect the horse and charioteer figurines with horse races, often suggested to constitute a link to the myth of Pelops and the institution of the games, is problematic, since these figurines represent a great number of different types, including what seems to be war chariots, see Mallwitz (1988), 96; Morgan (1993), 23; Himmelmann (2002), 95; Ratinaud (2007). Even to see the tripods as prizes in early athletic contests is not convincing, considering that there are as many as 200–300, and they are probably better regarded as prestigious votive offerings of individuals, i.e. examples of conspicuous consumption by elite visitors, see the discussion by Maass (1978), 2–4; Sinn (1991), 35; Morgan (1993), 24–6; Ratinaud (2007).
28. Kyrieleis (2006), 55–62; Mallwitz (1988), 89.

29. Kyrieleis (2006), 55–8. Dörpfeld's Pelopion I, (1935, 25, 37, 118–24) corresponds to the EH II *tumulus*, but has no connection with the later cult of Pelops.
30. Dörpfeld (1892), 57; (1935), 118–22; Rambach (2002b); Kyrieleis (2006), 55–61.
31. Dörpfeld (1892), 57; (1935), 118, 121; Curtius (1897), 73–4. The latest excavations at the Pelopion could not provide any more precise dating for the wall, see Kyrieleis (2006), 58 n. 219.
32. If the enclosure of this phase followed the later precinct wall, the stone plan showing the actual preserved remains, found in the earliest excavations, demonstrates that there would have been an awkward match between the southern end of the western wall and the north-western corner of the propylon, see Curtius and Adler (1897), pl. 6b and my Fig. 4.3.
33. Dörpfeld (1935), 121–2, fig. 25; cf. Kyrieleis (2006), 57–8. For the use of stone posts, see also the temenos of the Seven against Thebes, found at Argos (Pariante 1992, 195–7 and pl. 35) and the monument for the eponymous heroes on the Athenian agora (Camp 1986, 98–9).
34. See the placement of this propylon in Dörpfeld (1935), 121, fig. 24.
35. Stephen G. Miller (2002), n. 3, has also recently doubted the existence of this wall. He points out that an enclosure wall is only mentioned by Pausanias (5.13.1), not by any earlier source, such as Pindar.
36. Dörpfeld (1892), 57; (1935), 37, 119–22, figs. 21–2, and pl. 5, lower profile; Curtius and Adler (1892), pl. 42. The plans published in Curtius and Adler (1897), pl. 6b and (1892), pl. 42, are not entirely consistent as to the eastern extent of wall C.
37. Due to the scantiness of the foundations, Dörpfeld (1892), 57, suggested that the columns probably were of wood.
38. Meißner (1959), 178–83; Rupp (1974), 360–73; Cooper (1988), 280; Weber (1990), 35–50.
39. Kalapodi: Felsch (1991), 86; Isthmia: Gebhard (1993a), 158. Cf. Ohnesorg (2005), 234–5.
40. Mallwitz (1982), 261–70, found north of the East baths.
41. Paus. 6.24.9. There was also a similar monument at Sikyon, Paus. 2.7.2–3.
42. Stafford (2005), 400–6. For the iconographical evidence, see van Straten (1979); *LIMC* IV (1988), s.v. Herakles, 801–2, nos. 1368–80.
43. Paus. 5.13.2. In Pausanias' time only the later propylon must have been visible.
44. Though the designation Peloponnesos, 'the island of Pelops', found already in the Homeric hymn to Pythian Apollo (*Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 250, 290, 419, 430, 432), is an indication of Pelops being an important figure already at an earlier date, the early myths do not connect Pelops to Olympia. It is only by the text of Pindar that we have written evidence for a cult at this site.

45. Pind. *Ol.* 1.90–3; trans. by W. Race (Loeb).
46. The evidence is discussed in Ekroth (2002), 171–2, 178, 190–2; cf. Slater (1989); Gerber (1982), 141–5; Currie (2005), 74–5. Cf. Pelops' sceptre being honoured each day with *theoxenia* at Chaeronea, Paus. 9.40.11–12.
47. For the meaning of the *haimakouria*, see Ekroth (2002), 171–2, 190–2.
48. Gerber (1982), 142.
49. For this particular use of blood in hero-cults, see Ekroth (2002), 265–8.
50. The pouring out of the blood is a modification of the standard procedure at *thysia*, where also the blood normally would have been kept and eaten, see Ekroth (2002), 242–51.
51. Whether the altar is that of Pelops or of Zeus, is of less importance, see further below, n. 81.
52. *LSA* 32: 7–9, 43–5: 197–196 BC; Jameson (1994), 41–2. For temporary structures in sanctuaries, such as tents and baldachins, see Wacker (1996), 91–5.
53. For the staging of *theoxenia*, see Jameson (1994). Since tetrastyla were also used in connection with altars (see Ohnesorg 2005, 234–5), it is possible that the tetrastylon at the Pelopion marked the site where the sacrifices were performed. On the digging of a pit for the libation of blood, see Ekroth (2002), 191.
54. Hausmann (1996), 6–7, no. 4, pl. 1. The well went out of use in the Hellenistic period but the terracotta may be earlier.
55. For meat trays of this shape, often represented in relief on marble cult tables, see Gill (1991), 69–86, pls. 20–34.
56. Hausmann's suggestion (1996, 6) that the two thin objects are lower front legs of a goat seems implausible, since such parts have hardly any meat on them and would therefore not be selected as choice portions. Metacarpals and metatarsals were usually discarded at the initial butchering, before the meat of the animal was divided and distributed, see Ekroth (2008a), 261. The omphalos bowl may also be a fish plate, as the one shown on a Late Classical/Early Hellenistic lead table with offerings from Miletus, see Krumme (2007) (I am grateful to Michael Krumme for providing me with this reference).
57. Dittenberger and Purgold (1896), no. 64, line 33, dated to 28–24 BC, the 189th Olympiad.
58. Cf. *IG* II² 2499, a decree of the orgeones of the Athenian hero Egretes (306/5 BC), stating that his sanctuary had a *hieron* (shrine), an *oikia* (dining room), an *optanion* (kitchen) and a *stege*, the latter usually taken to mean an improvised shed or shelter, see Ferguson (1944), 80 with n. 27.
59. The *mageiros* and *kathemerothytes* are also listed in another contemporary inscription, which does not mention the *steganomos*, see Dittenberger and Purgold (1896), no. 62, 36–24 BC.

60. Kyrieleis (2006), 55–8.
61. Kyrieleis (2006), 57, 79, argues that the cult of Pelops must have been established in the sixth century, around 600 BC at the earliest, in connection with the reorganization of the sanctuary. Dörpfeld (1935), 37, 123, suggested a date contemporary with the construction of the ‘Heraiion’, which he dated to the ninth century BC. Mallwitz (1972), 80, 134; (1988), 86, has also proposed an Archaic date.
62. Nagy (1986), 83, finds that the passage reflects the official aetiology of Olympia.
63. Kyrieleis (2006), 80–3.
64. Bravo (2006), 11, 32, 212. Also at Isthmia there may have been a cult of Palaemon in the early fifth century, see Pind. *Isth.* frg. 5; Pache (2004), 137.
65. Bacch. 9.10–14; Bravo (2006), 81–163, 223; Pache (2004), 95–143.
66. See Bravo (2006), 216–27, esp. 223.
67. Kyrieleis (2006), 49–55, argues that around 600 BC the altar of Zeus was moved from its previous location (to the north-west of the prehistoric mound to the east of the Pelopion) in connection with the levelling of the Black Layer and the erection of the first stone temple.
68. Rambach (2002a). When Building VII was discovered in (1880), it was misinterpreted as the foundations for the ash altar of Zeus, see Dörpfeld and Borrmann (1892), 161–3; Curtius and Adler (1897), pl. 6b.
69. For the treasury terrace, see Mallwitz (1999), 220. On the first stone temple and its identification, see Moustaka (2002); Kyrieleis (2006), 48–55, 60–1.
70. Mallwitz (1988), 94–9. Mallwitz (1999), 185–6, emphasizes the separation of cult and athletic activity. For the suggestion that Stadium I may have ended no less than 20 m from the Pelopion, see Brulotte (1994).
71. Deneken (1886–90), 2495; Farnell (1921), 357e; Ziehen (1942), 70. Cf. Burkert (1983), 96–7, taking the western entrance of the Pelopion as one element of the polar tension between the ‘dark’ Pelops and the ‘light’ Zeus; cf. Scanlon (2002), 87. On the difficulties of identifying ‘chthonian’ traits in hero cults, see Ekroth (2002), *passim*.
72. The finds from the Black Layer have to be left aside, since this material was deposited at the end of the seventh century before the cult at the Pelopion was established.
73. *To the west*: Philipp (1981), nos. 100, 123, 456, 825, 1120, 1146; Bol (1978), nos. 167, 210, 275, 278, 335, 339d, 348; Br 11563; 349; Br 11606, 400b; Gauer (1991), nos. Le 166, Le 222, P 4, P 17, M 2; Philipp (2004), nos. 16, 52, 62. *South-west of the Pelopion*: Bol (1989), no. A 266; Philipp (1981), nos. 125, 129, 582, 897; Bol (1978), nos. 263, 302, 305, 350; Br 10282, 399a; Gauer (1991), nos. Le 96a, Le 234, Var 28; Kunze (1991), 106, nos. 36, 37; Philipp (2004), no. 15; Hitzl (1996), nos. 161, 389, 414,

438. *To the south*: Gauer (1991), no. M 19. *To the southeast*: Bol (1978), nos. 338: Br 9853, 348: Br 9854. *To the east*: Gauer (1991), no. Le 243.
74. Kyrieleis (2003b), 96–110. For the flooding of the west Altis, see Kyrieleis (1992), 22; (2003b), 94–5, fig. 3; Knauss (2004), 31.
75. Schauer (2003), 155–205; Kyrieleis (1992), 21–2. The decrease in digging wells after 450 BC may be a result of the water drains constructed within the Altis in the fifth century BC, but also of Olympia and the games declining in popularity in this period, see Mallwitz (1999), 194–6.
76. Paus. 5.15.12; cf. Lee (2001), 74–5. The location of the Prytaneion at this date has been disputed. Most scholars, including Mallwitz (1988), fig. 6.2; Kyrieleis (2003b); Stephen G. Miller (1971); (1978), 86–91 and 235–9, and Schauer (2003), consider it to have been located to the north-west of the ‘Heraion’. Mallwitz (1981) suggests a separation between the sanctuary of Hestia and the Prytaneion, while Sinn (*NeueP* 8, (2000), 1177) proposes that the Prytaneion was not moved to the north-west until the Roman period.
77. Schilbach (1995); Mallwitz (1999), 193; Kyrieleis (2003b), 95. For cooking equipment from this area, see Kunze and Schleif (1944), 96–104.
78. Mallwitz (1972), 266; Wacker (1996), 85.
79. Kyrieleis (1992), 21–2; Sinn (1993), 95–6; Wacker (1996), 80–107. Under the courtyard of the palestra, metal parts from a tent have been found, see Wacker (1996), 91 and n. 67; cf. Kyrieleis (2003b), 95.
80. Pind. *Ol.* 10.45–6: οὐ πολλὸν ἴδε πατρίδα πολυκτέανον ὑπὸ στερεῶ πυρὶ / πλαγαῖς τε σιδάρου βαθὺν εἰς ὀχετὸν ἄτας. On the concept of *Festwiesen*, see Sinn (1992), 183.
81. I have argued earlier that the altar, *bomos*, mentioned in Pind. *Ol.* 1.93, is to be identified as that of Pelops (see Ekroth 2002, 191), opposing the view that a hero could not have a *bomos*. However, it is possible that this altar is actually that of Zeus, where the main sacrifices took place, though in that case Pelops must have had his own altar as well, or his sacrifices were performed on the altar of Zeus.
82. For the weights and their distribution, see Hitzl (1996), 102–3, and pl. 43; cf. Baitinger and Eder (2001), 192–4, on the weights as evidence for the importance of Olympia as a market place linked to the games. For a different interpretation of the use of the weights, see Siewert (1996), who suggests that they were dedications made of metal offerings which had been melted down.
83. Hitzl (1996), 96–7 and pl. 43; nos. 22, 61, 76, 86, 149, 159, 161, 178, 299, 302, 389, 402, 403, 411, 414, 438. Hitzl dates the weights from the Archaic period to the early 4th century BC, while Siewert (1996) has proposed a chronological span from 430 to 350 BC. For the weighing of meat at sacrifices, see Ekroth (2008a), 270–2.

84. Hitzl (1996), 99: 12 weights inside the Prytaneion, 19 to the north of the building, and 5 to the south.
85. Gauer (1991), Le 96a, Le 166, Le 222, Le 234, Le 287a, Le 304, Le 333, P 4, P 16, P 17, M 2, M 19, Hy 22, Var 28. On the *panegyris* for attracting visitors hoping to be given free meat and wine, see de Ligt and de Neeve (1988), 399.
86. A parallel to Pelops' role at Olympia can be found in the cult of Neoptolemos at Delphi, which was linked to both the *theoxenia* festival of this sanctuary and the distribution of meat, see Kurke (2005), 95–103.
87. Pind. *Ol.* 1.48–50. Burkert (1983), 100–1; Nagy (1986), 79; Slater (1989), 495–7; Krummen (1990), 160–83; cf. Hdt. 1.59.
88. Burkert (1983), 100–1; Nagy (1986), 77–81.
89. On the boiling of sacrificial meat, as well as the osteological evidence, see Ekroth (2008a), 274–6 and (2008b), 99–102.
90. *LSS* 61, 74–82; late second century BC.
91. *LSS* 61, 77–9: τοῦ κριοῦ τὰ κρέα [όλο]μελή ἀποξέσαντες παρατιθέτωσαν τῷ ἀγάλματι. For the terminology, see Gill (1991), 12–14; Jameson (1994), 36.
92. On the importance of meat distribution, as well as market functions, at Greek festivals, see de Ligt and de Neeve (1988), esp. 399.
93. Lee (2001), 51–2 and 75.
94. For the athletes dining in the Prytaneion, see Paus. 5.15.12; Lee (2001), 74–5.
95. Krummen (1990), 162, suggests that athletes must have offered a thanksgiving sacrifice to Pelops after the competitions.
96. See Pind. *Ol.* 1.93–9.
97. Further to the south, to the west of the temple of Zeus, grew the wild olive tree from which branches for the wreaths given to the victorious athletes were cut (Paus. 5.15.3).
98. Schleif and Zschiezschmann (1944).
99. Schleif and Zschiezschmann (1944), 2; Huwendiek (1996).
100. Cooper and Morris (1990), 75. Due to stylistical traits in the architecture, the architect of the Philippeion may have been Macedonian, see Stella G. Miller (1973).
101. Schultz (2007) has suggested that the architecture of the Philippeion and the setting of the statues may have been intended as a viewing place, a *theatron*, and that hymns may have been performed here. A *theoxenia* ceremony does not seem incompatible with such a performance. Peter Schultz informs me (personal communication) that the floor of the Philippeion just inside the door is worn, an indication of the building being frequently entered. On Philip's kinship with Pelops, see Stella G. Miller (1973), 192.

102. For the remains, see Dörpfeld (1892), 56–7; (1935), 25 and 118–21; Mallwitz (1972), 133–5; Kyrieleis (2006), 58.
103. See Curtius (1897), 73–4; Dörpfeld (1892), 57; (1935), 118 and 121; Mallwitz (1972), 134. The preserved sections are built in different techniques, cut blocks to the east and more irregular, polygonal stones to the west.
104. Kyrieleis (2006), 58 and n. 219; (2003a), 31–2. Miller (2002), 249 n. 3, has suggested that the propylon and the wall may not even be contemporary, though according to Kyrieleis (2006), 58 n. 219, the monumentality of the propylon calls for it having been connected to the wall.
105. On the decline of the games, see Mallwitz (1999), 196. In Olympia at large, there are some changes in the votive practices during the fourth century BC; for example, official weights stopped being produced after the late fourth century BC, see Hitzl (1996); Siewert (1996).
106. Mallwitz (1972), 94–6; Baitinger and Eder (2001), 189. The programme of the Olympic Games was also reformed after the Persian Wars, see Lee (2001).
107. Pausanias (5.13.1) mentions statues in the Pelopion in the second century AD, but there is no Classical evidence to clarify the situation. For Classical finds from the precinct and the area around it, see above n. 73. The Archaic stone of Bybon, weighing 150 kg, seems to have been displayed inside the Pelopion, see Dittenberger and Purgold (1896), no. 717; *ThesCRA* I (2004), 314, Dedications, no. 201, sixth century BC.
108. On Elis' relation to Olympia after the victory over Pisa in the 570s BC and the political use of the sanctuary, see Wacker (1996), 113; Morgan and Coulton (1997), 112–14; Baitinger and Eder (2001), 188–90; Roy (2002), 256–60; (2004), 489–501, esp. 496–8; Nielsen (2007), 29–54.
109. For a review of the sources for the *synoikism* of Elis, as well as its effects, see Roy (2002), 249–64; Hansen and Fischer-Hansen (1994); Morgan and Coulton (1997); Baitinger and Eder (2001), 188–90. For the effect of the *synoikismos* on Olympia, see Crowther (2003), 61–2.
110. For the temple and the sculptures, see Barringer (2005); Säflund (1970); Herrmann (1987), 57–148. The conflict with Pisa, dated to approximately the same time, ended with Elis conquering the city, and the spoils from this victory are usually thought to have funded the construction of the temple of Zeus. Tulunay (1998) has suggested that the central figure in the west pediment is to be identified with Pelops and not Apollo.
111. Kyrieleis (1997); Wacker (1996), 113; M. C. Miller (2005); cf. Kyrieleis (2006), 79–83, for the political motivation of the introduction of Pelops' cult in the sixth century BC. Also the west pediment has been proposed to bear a similar message, see Heiden (2003).

112. On the transfer of heroes' bones for political purposes, see Boedeker (1993); McCauley (1999).
113. For the particular role of poliad divinities, whether gods or heroes, within a city's pantheon, see Sourvinou-Inwood (1990), 307–12.
114. For the presence of *xenoi* in sanctuaries, see Funke (2006); Sourvinou-Inwood (1990), 296; Crowther (2003), 63; Krauter (2004), 53–113.
115. Butz (1996), esp. 78–82, dated for the late fifth to the early fourth century BC. She suggests that the prohibition was meant to exclude Athenians from the cult.
116. On the myth and cult of the Archegetes Anios and the remains of the Archegesion, see Bruneau (1970), 413–30.
117. The epigraphical evidence attests several instances of *xenoi* being banned from cults which were of particular concern to the identity of the community and where the consumption of the meat from such sacrifices had to take place within the sanctuary, presumably in order to assure that only those entitled to eat it received a share, see LS 96, 24–6, c.200 BC, concerning religious changes on Mykonos after the island's *synoikism*; cf. Ekroth (2002), 320–5; Butz (1996).
118. Dörpfeld (1892), 57.
119. At Olympia, Hadrian enlarged the stadium, modernized the Prytaneion, the Bouleuterion, and the Theokoleon, and had baths built, see Scanlon (2002), 54–5, cf. 40–63 on the Olympic Games in the Roman period; cf. Mallwitz (1972), 108–9. For Hadrian's work at Isthmia, see Gebhard (1993b).
120. Paus. 15.13.1–7.
121. Paus. 5.13.6; 6.22.1.
122. Paus. 5.13.1.
123. Paus. 5.13.2–3: *θύουσι δὲ αὐτῶ καὶ νῦν ἔτι οἱ κατὰ ἔτος τὰς ἀρχὰς ἔχοντες: τὸ δὲ ἱερεῖόν ἐστι κριοῦ μέλας. ἀπὸ ταύτης οὐ γίνεται τῶ μάντει μοῖρα τῆς θυσίας, τράχηλον δὲ μόνον δίδοσθαι τοῦ κριοῦ καθέστηκε τῶ ὀνομαζομένῳ ξυλεῖ. ἔστι δὲ ὁ ξυλεὺς ἐκ τῶν οἰκετῶν τοῦ Διός, ἔργον δὲ αὐτῶ πρόσκειται τὰ ἐς τὰς θυσίας ξύλα τεταγμένου λήμματος καὶ πόλεσι παρέχειν καὶ ἀνδρὶ ἰδιώτῃ: τὰ δὲ λεύκης μόνης ξύλα καὶ ἄλλου δένδρου ἐστὶν οὐδενός: ὅς δ' ἂν ἢ αὐτῶν Ἑλείων ἢ ξένων τοῦ θυομένου τῶ Πέλοπι ἱερείου φάγη τῶν κρεῶν, οὐκ ἔστιν οἱ ἐσελθεῖν παρὰ τὸν Δία.*
124. Ekroth (1999); on the difficulties of Pausanias as a source for Greek cults from the Archaic and Classical periods, see also Pirenne-Delforge (2006).
125. On the relation between hero cults and pollution, see Ekroth (2002), 237–42, 263–5, 330–2.
126. Pausanias (5.13.1) speaks of his enclosure as being separate (*ἀποτετμημένον τέμενος*) inside the Altis.

127. For the list of altars, see Paus. 5.14.4–5.15.11; Weniger (1909). The altars next to the Pelopion were dedicated to Dionysus and the Graces, to one of the Muses and to the nymphs, see Paus. 5.14.10.
128. Another reason for not including the altar of Pelops may simply have been that the rituals of Pelops consisted of annual animal sacrifices while the 70 altars in Pausanias' list were used for monthly sacrifices of frankincense, cakes, olive branches, and wine by the Eleans. The ash altar of Zeus, on which daily sacrifices, both private and Elean, were performed, is also dealt with separately, see Paus. 5.13.8–11. Hölscher (2002), 334–8, points out that the ritual space of the monthly sacrifices by the Eleans does not correspond to the religious space around the entrances to the major buildings.
129. See Le Guen-Pollet (1991); Ekroth (2008a), 264–7.
130. Jeppesen, Højlund, and Aaris-Sørensen (1981), 67. Missing from the deposit were the section from the 4th or 5th to the 7th cervical vertebrae, or even the first two thoracic vertebrae.
131. See Ekroth (1999), 148–57.
132. Evjen (1992), 101; Mallwitz (1999), 198; Scanlon (2002), 28. For the evidence, see Rhode (1925), 141 n. 22 (Rhode, however, takes the funeral games to be the origin for the Panhellenic games); Nagy (1986), 74; Pache (2004), 84–180. At Olympia, there are a number of different versions of who founded the games for whom. According to Pindar, Heracles founded the games for Zeus (*Ol.* 10.24), while Pausanias names several founders as well as refounders, though always with Zeus as the recipient (5.7.6–5.8.5). The tradition that the Olympic Games originally belonged to Pelops is found in the second century AD Phlegon of Tralles (*FGrHist* 257, F 1.6), the scholia to Pindar (*Hypothesis Isthmiorum*) and Hyginus (*Fab.* 273.5). See also Ulf (1997) on how the various literary accounts of the festival, the games and their institutions were influenced by contemporary political and historical situations.
133. For the cult of Palaemon in its Roman context, see Ekroth (2002), 80–1 and 124–5; see also Gebhard (1993a and 1993b). Significantly, the bone evidence from the offering pits in the Palaemonion (AD 50–early 3rd century) constitutes the only osteologically demonstrated holocaustic sacrifice to a hero, see Gebhard and Reese (2005), esp. 137–9. Another instructive case of the same *interpretatio romana* of what constituted an old and traditional Greek cult are the rituals to Artemis Laphria at Calydon, most likely an Augustan reconstruction, see Pirenne-Delforge (2006).
134. Ekroth (2002), 123–6, 307–8, and 334 n. 88.
135. Burkert's (1983) analysis of the cult of Pelops strongly emphasizes an antithesis between Pelops and Zeus, see also Nagy (1986), 77–81;

Herrmann (1962), 62–3. Kyrieleis (2006), 56, remarks that though cult separates Pelops and Zeus, myth underlines their closeness, Pelops being the protégé of the god.

136. For the problems with this evolutionary view of hero cults, see Ekroth (2002), 335–41.

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