

Some Ghostly Appearances in Greece: Literary and Artistic Sources

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RESUMEN

This article aims to explore the topic of ghosts in ancient Greece, presenting as an example the cases documented in Homer and in Lucian, two authors whose treatment of the topic is sometimes similar and sometimes contrasting, but who demonstrate in any case the continuity of this theme in Greek literature, and how the idea of the soul of a dead person contacting the living was commonly accepted by the Greeks. Moreover, the information provided by iconographical representations can help us to understand the way the souls of the dead were imagined visually, although the images do not always match the literary descriptions.

Palabras clave: Ghosts, souls of the dead, Homer, Lucian, death in Greece, necromancy.

Algunas apariciones fantasmales en Grecia: Fuentes literarias y artísticas

ABSTRACT

Este artículo pretende explorar el tema de los fantasmas en la Grecia antigua, tomando como ejemplo los casos atestiguados por Homero y por Luciano, dos autores que nos proporcionan datos a veces semejantes a veces en contraste, pero que demuestran en cualquier caso la pervivencia de este tema en la literatura griega y cómo la idea de un muerto que contacta con los vivos era una idea aceptada comúnmente en el mundo griego. Por otro lado, el testimonio de las representaciones iconográficas puede ayudarnos a entender la forma en que las almas de los muertos eran concebidas visualmente, aunque las imágenes no siempre se corresponden con las descripciones literarias.

Key words: Fantasmas, almas de los muertos, Homero, Luciano, muerte en Grecia, necromancia.

According to the most common Greek belief, when a person dies the psyche or soul leaves the body and flies away to the Underworld. Once in Hades the dead cannot return to the upper world. There is always a very clear separation between the world of the dead and the world of the living and only a few heroes, such as Odysseus or Heracles, are allowed to pass through the gates of Hades and visit the Underworld alive¹.

¹. Myths and beliefs about the afterlife in Greece are examined in the works, for instance, by J. Bremmer, *The Early Concept of Soul* (Princeton 1983); E. Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Ancient Greeks* (London. Reprint 1987) ; S.I. Johnston, *Restless Dead, Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley 1999) ; J.N. Bremmer, *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife* (London 2002). S. I. Johnston, *Religions of the Ancient World* (Harvard 2004).

However, although this is the usual situation after death, popular beliefs in Greece, as in many other cultures, supposed that in certain cases the dead could return to earth. In this article it is my intention to examine how some Greek literary and artistic sources represent the concept of a ghost, what characteristics are ascribed to ghosts, and at what times ghosts have the capacity of returning to earth to contact the living.

Ancient Greek literature provides us with information about and examples of the different circumstances in which the dead could visit the living. And an idea can be deduced from our sources: some premature dead (the so called *aoroi*) have a different destiny after life and they are not allowed to enter Hades, particularly those who died violently (*biaiothanatoi*) and also those who have not been buried (*ataphoi*). They are still between Hades and earth, and can become dangerous for the living².

As it would take too long to examine here all the literary evidence and sources about the dead who return to the living world, I have selected two authors -Homer and Lucian- whose works are very different in genre and in date of composition, but who can offer, in my opinion, some interesting and contrasting details about the treatment of this topic and its continuity over time. On the one hand, Homer testifies to the earliest image of the appearance of a ghost contacting the living, which is one reason why his evidence is significant for further studies on this subject. In his vision of death he includes the possibility that, in certain cases, the dead can return to earth and communicate with the living. In Lucian, the same theme -the appearance of a ghost who can communicate with the living- is recreated as a fictional motif. The author -with a parodic and satiric intention- takes from his own time and from his predecessors certain beliefs and fantastic themes to develop -as we shall see later- a genuine collection of horror tales. Of course, these are not the only examples of ghostly appearances and supernatural phenomena in Greece. Greek literature in general abounds with incidents in which the living and the dead interact; they play, for instance, an important role in some Greek tragedies, where the poets, probably inspired by Homer, use ghosts as dramatic characters³. And stories of hauntings and other kinds of ghostly manifestation seem to have been as popular in ancient Greece as they are today⁴.

² In some cases ghosts who have died violently can appear even after having been buried when they want to punish their murderers as revenge and warning are popular reasons for the dead to return. This is in particular the case of some ghosts in Greek tragedy. However, ghosts can also be invoked by special rituals (rituals of necromancy) and then appear on earth to accomplish some tasks sued by the living. Although we already find this idea in Aeschylus' *Persians*, it becomes more common in later sources (cf. Johnston, *Restless* (n. 1 above) 11 and 31 ff.).

³ On the presence and role of ghosts in Greek tragedy see, for instance, R.B. Hickman, *Ghostly Etiquette on the Classical Stage* (Iowa 1938); R. Bardel, "Spectral traces: Ghosts in Tragic Fragments" in Mc Hardy, F.-Robson, J.-Harvey, D., *Lost Dramas of Classical Athens* (Exeter 2005), 83-112; M. Aguirre, "Fantasmas trágicos: algunas observaciones sobre su papel, aparición en escena e iconografía" *CFC (G)* 16 (2006), 107-120.

⁴ D. Felton, *Haunted Greece and Rome. Ghost Stories from Classical Antiquity*, (Austin 1999).

We may start with Homer. In Homer there are two passages which show the appearance of a ghost: one in the *Iliad*⁵ when Patroklos appears to Achilles in a dream, and the other in the *Odyssey*⁶ when Odysseus meets the soul of Elpenor in Hades. In both cases Homer presents us with the same idea: the deceased request burial because they cannot enter Hades. They are two clear cases of *ataphoi*, unburied bodies, and they show the importance of funerary rites in order to be placated⁷. However, if their situation in the afterlife is similar, their deaths are quite unlike each other. Patroklos's death was a heroic death in battle -killed by Hector-, Elpenor, by contrast, was a non-heroic death, as he broke his neck in Circe's palace after having drunk too much wine. Homer, then, doesn't distinguish the afterlife situation according to the cause of death (we can see the same idea in general in all the Book 11 of the *Odyssey*). What is much more important is that each was unexpected and premature. Both ghosts give particular details related to how they want to be buried as they are conscious of the situation of their body: "...plant on my tomb the oar I rowed with..." says Elpenor (*Od.*11.77) and Patroklos wants to be buried in the same urn as Achilles when he dies: "...Do not let my bones be laid away from yours, Achilles, but let them be together..." (*Il.*23.83).

Iconographical representations of these scenes show a clear discrepancy between text and image. Patroklos, the "heroic" ghost, is represented as a small winged man in his warrior armour on an Attic pelike (440 BC, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts). Elpenor, by contrast, is a "good looking" ghost with the appearance of a normal naked man in front of Odysseus on a black-figure lekythos (510-500 BC, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts). -I shall develop later some more ideas on the different depictions of ghosts in art.

Doubtless, Elpenor's circumstances are different from those of Patroklos: his soul is already in Hades -where Odysseus meets him-, whereas his body is still in Circe's palace. But, although Elpenor is already in the Underworld, he is not completely incorporated into the realm of the dead, as he asks Odysseus to be buried, so that he will not anger the gods (*Od.*11.51-78). Patroklos has been killed in the battlefield as a consequence of Achilles' anger and his body has been neglected because of Achilles' urgent desire of revenge against Hector. His ghost is described as a normal man, with the same appearance he had when he was still alive: "Then the ghost of poor Patroklos came to him, in all ways the image of the living man, in size and voice, and lovely eyes, and dressed in the clothes that he used to wear on his body. The ghost stood over his head and spoke to him (Achilles)..." (*Il.*23.65-68)⁸. Another

⁵ *Il.*23.65-92.

⁶ *Od.*11.51-78.

⁷ On the importance of a proper burial see for instance D. Felton, *op.cit.* (n.4 above), 10 ff. On the other hand, the subject of the unburied and unwept corpse is a significant motif in Greek tragedy (see, for instance, Bardel, "Eidola in Epic, Tragedy and Vase-Painting" in N.K. Rutter & B. Sparkes (ed.) *Word and Image in Ancient Greece* (Edimburgo 2000).

⁸ Patroklos' ghost is not an angry ghost; he does not want any revenge for his death. And it is interesting to notice that in the *Iliad* there is no reference to a ghost of Hector when his corpse is still unburied and has been mistreated. He actually could be an angry and vengeful ghost. According to R. Bardel, *op.cit.* (n.7

difference between them is the way in which they appear: one through a ritual of necromancy (Elpenor); the other one (Patroklos) in a dream and in this aspect Homer anticipates the most common ghostly manifestations in later sources⁹.

The word used in the Homeric poetry to refer to the ghost is *psyche*, regarded as an entity that survives the death of the body and is considered as a shadow of something which leaves the body at the moment of death¹⁰. The word *eidolon*, which usually describes a being with the same appearance as a person (and not necessarily a dead person), is also used by Homer for the ghost or soul¹¹. In *Il.* 23.72 and also in *Od.* 11.476 and 24.14, the formulaic expression *eidola kamonton* is used in apposition to *psychai* and *nekroi*.

Some characteristics and behaviour of ghosts are given by the poet in these two passages and also in the *Odyssey* in Book 11 and in Book 24 when Hermes guides the suitors to the Underworld. In Homer a ghost can speak normally; that is the case of Elpenor and Patroklos -as we have just seen- and also the case of the souls whom Odysseus meet in Hades (such as his mother Antikleia or Agamemnon); however, the suitor's souls are squeaking like bats in *Odyssey* 24 (6-10). They retain some emotions and feelings, they remember their lives and the circumstances of their deaths and they are conscious of the situation of their corpse¹². Like many other ghosts in ancient literary sources, they have a particular knowledge of the past and future¹³. They also have the figure of a normal human person, even with their armour stained with blood (*Od.* 11.41), but they are never described as having a frightening or dis-

above), 147 in the representation on a black-figure lekythos (c. 510 BC, Delos Museum) with Hektor's corpse and two small *eidola*, who are probably the soul of Patroklos and the soul of Hektor, the artist wants to show the relationship between both deaths, to remind us of Achilles's violation of the cosmic order because he has both deaths in his hands.

⁹. For instance Darius' ghost in Aeschylus' *Persians* is invoked by a ritual of necromancy while Clitemnestra's ghost in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* appear to the Erinyes in a dream. See M. Aguirre, *op.cit.* (n. 3 above), 108 and 111.

¹⁰. It is not easy to say whether the *psyche* of the dead person is considered in Homer as the same as the *psyche* of the living person. See Sourvinou-Inwood, *Reading Greek Death* (Oxford 1995), 56. See also Bremmer, *op.cit.* (n.1 above), 70-124 and J.Warden, "Psyche in Homeric Death Descriptions", *Phoenix*, 25 (1971), 95-103.

¹¹. The word *eidolon* is also the word used for stage-ghosts in ancient Greek tragedy. An interesting analysis of the use of this term in Bardel, *op.cit.* (n. 8 above), 140-160.

¹². In most of our sources ghosts reflect the state of their bodies and death (see D. Ogden, *Greek and Roman Necromancy* (Princeton 2001), 221).

¹³. Patroklos prophesies Achilles' death in *Iliad* 23.80-1. Tragic ghosts are particularly wise ghosts who appear precisely to reveal things -either from the past (Polydoros in Euripides' *Hecuba*) or the future (Darius in Aeschylus' *Persians*)-. Obviously the case of Teiresias in *Odyssey* 11 is not exactly the same because he had been already a prophet when he was alive. Ghosts are usually described as having a particular wisdom and that is why they are invoked in necromancy (see D. Ogden, *op.cit.* (n.12 above), 219 ff.). On ghosts used for magic and divinations see also S. I. Johnston, *Ancient Greek Divination* (Chichester 2008) 162-163 and 171-175. On the other hand, the dead's special knowledge of the future is similar, in some way, to the knowledge which some sea gods and monsters show, such as Triton, Nereus, etc.(see E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death In Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley 1979), 190-209).

gusting appearance. However, they are not real, they are like shadows or dreams¹⁴. In a strict sense they are not dangerous or vengeful, but the living who see them may experience some fear of them "...a pale terror began to master me..." says Odysseus in *Od.* 11, 40-45. But, actually, they inspire more pity than fear (this idea is constantly repeated in *Od.* 11 and *Il.* 23).

Ultimately these ghosts are mythical characters, and they have a role in epic poetry as also in drama. The poet gives them movement and voice to participate in certain moments of the action¹⁵. Their story is the story of their death¹⁶, the story of their life after death, and also the story of their relationship with the living; but not just with any living person, rather with a particular hero who has the privilege of contacting them or being visited by them. As life and death are always connected in Homeric poetry, their situation after death is important in the development of events, and their interaction with the living has a specific logic because their intervention was (and still is) important for the living, as the action of the living will be important for them. There is a kind of reciprocal necessity: Odysseus needed the help of the soul of Teiresias such as Patroklos and Elpenor needed Odysseus' help to be buried¹⁷.

Anyway, these supernatural encounters in Homer do not have the effect of providing the poem with an extraordinary or horrific atmosphere. Although it is usually argued that the Homeric epics had less prodigious events than other epic poems -the poems of the epic cycle-, we have to accept that Homeric poetry abounds in extraordinary events: in the *Odyssey* in particular we find numerous other encounters with supernatural: the magic of Circe, the enchanting voice of the Sirens, etc.

Visits from the Underworld represent the concept of death as something familiar: it is the normal destiny for mortals which cannot be avoided. In Homer death is always terrible, dark, undesirable. The situation of the dead in Homer is not pleasant, it is much better being alive, as Achilles says in *Od.* 11. 487-491, but, at least, the normal situation of being properly buried is what everybody hopes for so that they do not attract the anger of the gods.

Almost a millennium later than the probable date of composition of the Homeric poems, Lucian, with his satirical treatment of the beliefs about the afterlife, turns the idea of the ghostly visit into a real horror story. The *Philopseudes* ("Lover of Lies"), considered as an ironic anthology of tales about the supernatural, offers some inte-

¹⁴. Insubstantialness is one of the usual characteristics of ghosts (see, for instance, Ogden, *op.cit.* (n. 12 above), 220). The normal Homeric image of the *psyche* is like smoke which escapes from the body (*Od.* 11.207). See Johnston, *Restless* (n. 1 above), 8. There is a connection between ghostly manifestations and dreams reflected in the fact that in many of the earlier occurrences in Greek literature ghosts appear in dreams (see Felton, *op.cit.* (n. 4 above), 19)

¹⁵. According to Bardel (*op.cit.* (n. 8 above), 152), ghosts in Book 11 of the *Odyssey* are connected to narrative strategies, as the poet places them within a given context, space and time.

¹⁶. In the case of Elpenor his ghost reveals his own death which was ignored by Odysseus. In the same way - and probably under the Homeric influence- Polydoros'ghost in Euripides' *Hecuba* testifies his own death.

¹⁷. Patroklos appears in the *Iliad* as a secondary narrator/focalizer presenting his circumstances and his attempts to enter Hades (see Sourvinou-Inwood, *op.cit.* (n.10 above), 15). Ghosts, then, provide us with information about the Underworld and what happens after death. In this sense they are approaching both worlds.

resting ideas about ghosts, their behaviour and their contact with the living. The central motif of this work is a conversation about the supernatural, to criticize beliefs in magic and supernatural manifestations.

In one of the stories the ghost of a woman visits her husband complaining that one of her slippers has not been burned with her. Eventually, the husband, Eucrates, finds the slipper, and it is burned. This female ghost is represented -unlike Homeric ghosts- as something more real and tangible, because Eucrates can embrace her. However, she also disappears when she hears a dog barking ¹⁸.

More interesting is the tale of the haunted house, a house in Corinth where nobody dares to live because of a supernatural and horrific presence. The brave philosopher who dares to stay one night in the house knows exactly what to do. He uses his Egyptian books of spells to fight against the ghost. The ghost is described as a black and long-haired creature who turns into a dog, a bull or a lion. He is so dangerous that he kills anybody who tries to stay in the house ¹⁹.

The words used by Lucian for the ghost are *phasma*, *daimon*, *psychai*, *nekron*. These ghosts are shown as having more power to interact with the living and can become dangerous for them. Lucian is not concerned to relate how they died: there is no mention about the circumstances of their deaths. In one sense the reason for their visit to earth is the same as we found in Homer: They want to be properly buried so as to go to Hades or they demand something related to their burial. The difference lies in how their appearance is conceived. If Patroklos' ghost appears harmless and gentle when talking to his dear friend Achilles, the unburied and most probably violently killed ghost who haunts the house in Corinth, reacts with violence to his situation. So, he attacks everybody who tries to live or stay in the house where he had probably been the victim of a murderer, just like in a modern ghost story. Other elements which we find here also remind us of modern ghost stories: When the philosophers dig and find the bones in a corner of the room and they are buried, the ghost disappears and the house recovers its normal condition without being troubled by supernatural presences anymore.

These stories in Lucian are intended to provoke fear in the audience. The intention of the author is precisely to contrast the prodigious and extraordinary events which are reported with the serious character of the philosophers who discuss the verisimilitude of those beliefs in magic and supernatural phenomena -beliefs which

¹⁸. *Philops.* 27. This story is probably inspired in the tale of Melissa and Periander, one of the oldest Greek ghost stories (Herodotus 5.91 h . See Ogden, *op.cit.* (n.12 above), 59, and D. Ogden, *In search of the sorcerer's apprentice. The traditional tales of Lucian's Jover of Lies*, (Classical Press of Wales, 2007), 195-204). According to Felton (*op.cit.* 80-81) the similarities between the two stories do not imply derivation. Lucian's story is probably an independent variation of a more general theme, that of a ghost requesting a proper burial sued by Lucian for his satyriizing purposes.

¹⁹. *Philops.* 31. For this story and other tales about haunted houses see, for example, E.R.Dodds, *The Ancient Concept of Progress and Other Essays on Greek Literature and Belief* (Oxford 1973); D. Felton, *op.cit.*; A. Stramaglia, *Res inauditae, incredulae: Stori di fantasmii nel mondo greco-latino* (Bari 1999); D. Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in Greek and Roman World* (Oxford 2002).

seem to be very common in Lucian's time-²⁰. Some of the stories could have been invented by Lucian or inspired by certain popular tales or by other similar predecessors (in Herodotus, Pliny, etc.)²¹. According to some scholars, such as C.P. Jones or A. Stramaglia²². This type of story could have been a narrative motif in antiquity. They are, in a way, a literary precedent of our modern ghost-story. Lucian recreates the atmosphere of horror and mystery and, at the same time, of the real and the familiar, a combination which centuries later will characterise the traditional ghost-story²³.

However, the image of ghosts is constructed not only by poets or other literary authors, but also by other narrators of myths and beliefs: the visual artists, especially vase painters. We have already seen the representation of the ghost of Patroklos and the image of Elpenor in Hades. In general ambiguity and inconsistency characterize the way in which ghosts are represented in vase painting. Two representations of the funerary stele show a ghost represented as a little figure hovering over the tomb. An Attic white lekythos (5th century BC, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts) shows a woman's ghost as a miniature version of her, sitting on top of the stele. Another small image of a ghost over his tomb is the image of a warrior in an Attic red-figure askos (500-490 BC, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts).

In images of dead warriors, like Sarpedon or Patroklos, we find the same small winged man representing the soul leaving the body, for example on an Attic black-figure amphora in the Louvre (early 4th century BC). And also in images of Charon (with or without Hermes) artists depict small winged creatures representing the dead in Hades. They are scenes involving the reception or transportation of generic souls to the Underworld. This is an iconographical motif which appears in Charon images from early 5th century BC²⁴ and which we do not find in other scenes in Hades (for instance in images of Odysseus in Hades, etc.). Sometimes, Charon transports a dead person represented as a normal human person in form and size.

This idea of conceiving a ghost as a tiny winged creature fits very well with the metaphor which describes ghosts as bats. Other sources also give us the same idea of the *psychai* as "fair-winged birds"²⁵. Artists are probably inspired by traditional beliefs about what happened after death and they depict the ghost or the soul with the characteristics which are given to them since Homer. Images of small winged creatures might represent the idea of the insubstantial character of the souls and/or the idea that they move very fast when they leave the dead body and go to Hades²⁶.

20. See M. Aguirre, "Verdad o mentira: lo mitológico y lo fantástico en Luciano", *CFC*, 10 (2000), 219-220 and n.1.

21. A compilation of Greek and Roman texts about ghosts and magic in Ogden, *Magic* (n. 19 above).

22. C.P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge 1986); A. Stramaglia, *op. cit.* (n. 19 above), 77, 88 ff.

23. See M. Aguirre, "Verdad" (n. 20 above), 226-227.

24. Sourvinou-Inwood, "Charon", *LIMC*, III, 210-225. On the different variants of Charon scenes see Sourvinou-Inwood, *Reading* (n. 10 above) 322-323 and 327, ff.

25. For instance in Sophocles, *O T*, 175 (see Ogden, *Necromancy* (n.8 above), 223).

By contrast, in scenes of mourning around the stele we also find ghosts represented as a normal human person. In these cases it is sometimes difficult to know if it is a ghost, or to distinguish which of them is the dead person and which is visiting the grave with gifts for the dead. An Attic white lekythos (470-460 BC, National Museum of Athens) shows a funerary stele between a man and a youth. Here it is more likely that the young man is the dead person. Another Attic white lekythos (last quarter of 5th BC, National Museum of Athens) shows the image of a dead young soldier sitting on the steps of his own grave²⁷.

The different iconographical *schemata* -to follow the terminology of Sourvinou-Inwood²⁸- emphasize different aspects of the semantic field "deceased" and "death". In any case, an image of the dead as a normal human figure seems to be more appropriate to represent an individual as contrasted with the idea of an indeterminate group of souls. The small winged *eidola* are conceived as indeterminate souls, and at the same time they can represent the *psyche* of an individual hero at the moment of death (in scenes of death in battle), associated with the transition from life to death. Sourvinou-Inwood²⁹ argues that those small winged souls are part of the landscape of the Underworld. However, there are images of the Underworld without any small winged souls, but rather with normal human sized figures (in representations of the god Hades and other mythical characters in the Underworld). According to several studies on Attic white lekythoi³⁰, small winged souls were probably first introduced in connection with the Charon scenes. On the other hand, some of the images show a discrepancy in the idea of the unburied ghost returning to earth: the ghost shouldn't be there if the corpse has been already buried. Doubtless artists wanted to show the connection between soul and body representing both at the same time and in the same place. It is, however, supposed that in these cases the soul is already in Hades.

26. These minuscule winged creatures are portrayed with the appearance of dragonflies (see Ogden, *Necromancy* (n.8 above) 221), but they also look like some modern images of fairies (see D. Purkiss, *Troublesome things. A history of fairies and fairy story*, (London 2000)). On the relationship of fairies with dead and the Underworld see Purkiss, *op.cit.* 20-21 and 48, ff. Sometimes the souls have a more human appearance and the wings are different, as in an Attic black figure lekythos (c. 500 BC and in Frankfurt, Liebighaus, 560. See F.Eckstein-A. Leguer, *Antike Kleinkunst in Liebighaus* (Frankfurt 1969) no. 65 pl. 65). Although Homer compares the souls with bats (*Od.* 11.6-10), in artistic representations they never look as bats. J.J.Winkler in his article "Lollianos and the Desperadoes", *JHS* 100, 155-186 discusses three of the most common appearances of ghosts in antiquity: black, white and like smoke but he does not refer to the significance of their representations in art.

27. For a description and comment of this scene cf. R. Osborne, *Archaic and Classical Greek Art* (Oxford 1998) 193-195. On many examples of scenes around the funerary stele on Attic white lekythoi we can identify an image of the dead person. The artist's interest focus on the familiar aspect of death depicting the dead person in a domestic environment, appearing together with the survivors.

28. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Reading* (n.10 above) 336.

29. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Reading* (n.10 above) 337, and also Bardel "Eidola" (n.8 above) 149

30. A. Fairbanks, *Athenian White Lekythoi* (New York and London 1914); D.C. Kurtz, *Athenian White Lekythoi: Pattern and Painters* (Oxford 1975). For a general study of iconographical representations of the

In conclusion, the appearance of a ghost seems to be a commonly accepted idea in Greek world. On the one hand, we find the ghost as a literary character who is able to act and decide and to have an influence on the living. They come to visit the living to confirm their "other" existence, their existence in the Underworld. Life in the Underworld, as Vermeule affirms³¹, cannot be described or conceived with ideas or language other than those used for the living. That is why ghosts are conceived with no very well defined or consistent characteristics and always with aspects very similar to the living³².

On the other hand, according to this Greek concept of ghosts as being in some way alive and human, they can be represented in art with form and physical entity. They appear most frequently near their own dead body or their funerary stele³³, showing that both, body and soul, exist at the same time: the body to be buried in accordance with the normal funerary rites, the soul to go to its final destiny, its new residence in Hades.

eidola cf. E. Peifer, *Eidola und andere mit dem Sterben verbundene Flügelwesen in der attischen Vasenmalerei in spätarchaischer und klassischer Zeit* (Frankfurt 1989). A detailed commentary of an image of Clytemnestra's *eidolon* in a mirror in M. Aguirre, "Fantasmas" (n. 3 above), 113-115.

³¹. Vermeule, *op.cit.* (n.13 above) 28 ff.

³². Nevertheless, it seems that insubstantialness is one of the most significant characteristics of Greek ghosts.

³³. Where they are still sensed on earth, cf Vermeule, *op.cit.* (n.13 above) 31.



1. Attica black-figure hydria (510 BC). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. Achilles in his chariot and Hector's corpse. On the right a small ghost representing Patroklos near his tomb.



2. Attic red-figure pelike (440 BC). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. On the left Elpenor's ghost in front of Odysseus. On the other side, Hermes



3. Black-figure amphora (5th BC). Hypnos and Thanatos carrying a dead warrior. Small *psyche* flying over him.



4. Attic red-figure askos (500-490 BC). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.
Small ghost over his tomb.



5. Attic white-ground lekythos (5th BC). Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.
Charon on his boat and small winged soul.