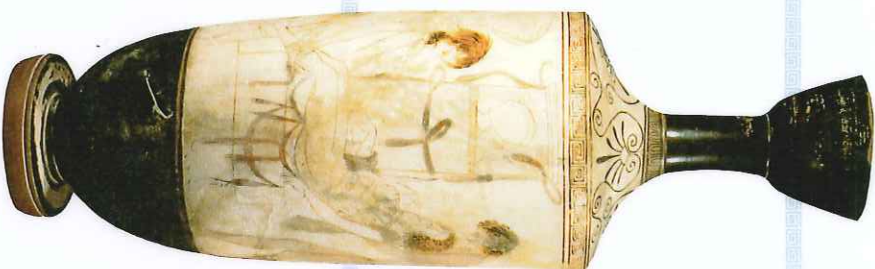


Funerals were important events in ancient Greece. The family of the dead person came together to grieve and pray to the gods. The body was prepared for burial with precious sweet smelling oils kept in slender clay oil flasks called *lekkythoi*. The *lekkythoi* were often decorated with scenes of dead people, especially young soldiers being laid to rest. When the pots were emptied of their oils they were placed on the grave as funeral offerings from the family.

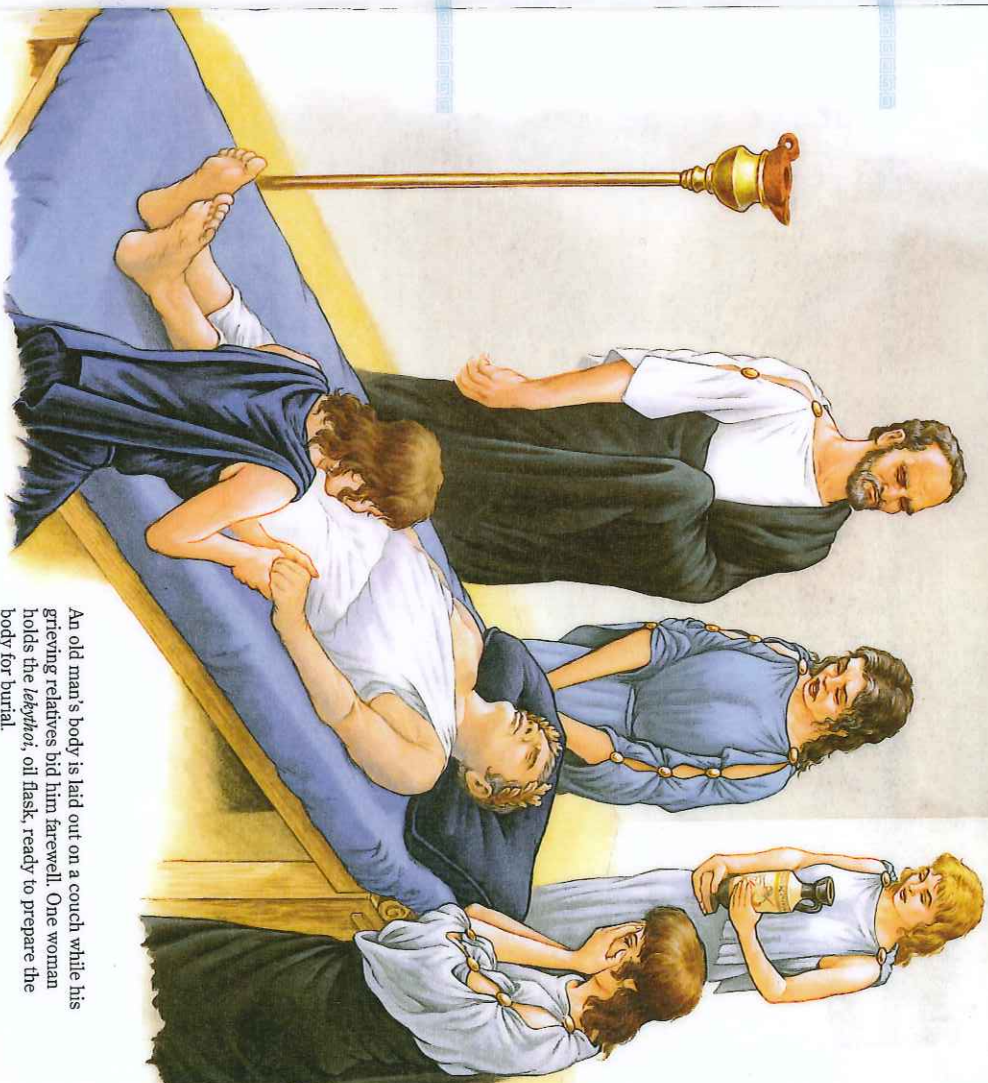


A tall, spindly kind of pot called a *lekythos* was used to fill the bath which a young bride took before her wedding. The pots were usually painted with scenes of weddings or funerals. Women who never married had these pots placed as markers over their graves.



MOURNERS

The dead body was laid out on a couch at home and friends and relatives came to pay their respects. A long procession accompanied the dead body to the cemetery which was usually outside the city. A group of women would follow the bier, weeping and tearing their hair in a ritual act of grief. Food, drink, pots and jewellery or weapons were often placed in the tomb for the use of the dead person in the next world. Rich people had marble grave slabs, or stone coffins called *sarcophagi*.



An old man's body is laid out on a couch while his grieving relatives bid him farewell. One woman holds the *lekkythoi*, oil flask, ready to prepare the body for burial.

THE AFTERLIFE

The Greeks believed that dead people went to the Underworld, which was ruled by Pluto. They were taken there across the river Styx by a ferryman called Charon. The relatives of the dead person sometimes left a coin on the body as payment to Charon. A wreath was placed on the head of the corpse. Some Greek gods gave people hope of a

life after death. Dionysus, for example, the god of wine, died and was reborn each year. The goddess Persephone came back from the Underworld every year to live with her mother, Demeter, the goddess of the grain harvest, during the spring and summer when the earth flourished.