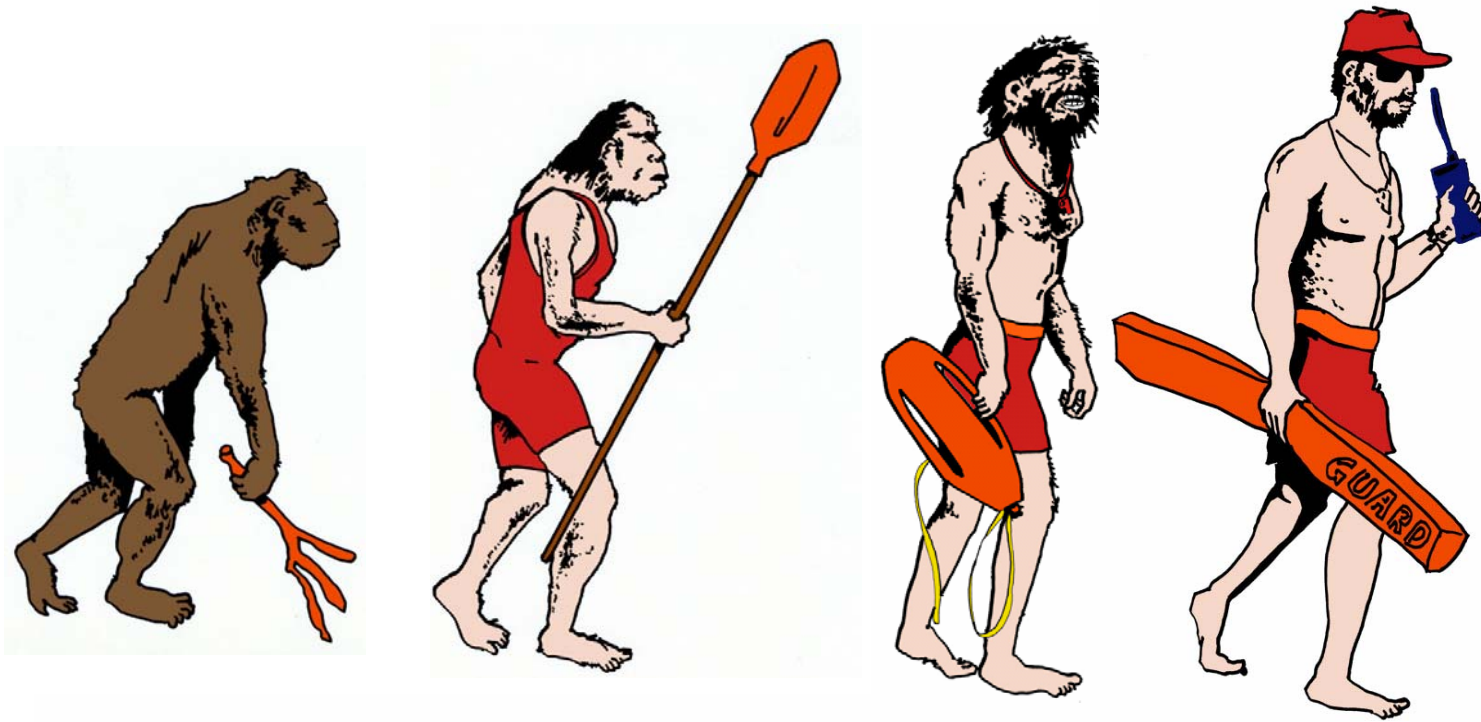


Was Drowning a Cause of Death in Ancient Greece?



Stathis Avramidis MSc^{1,2}

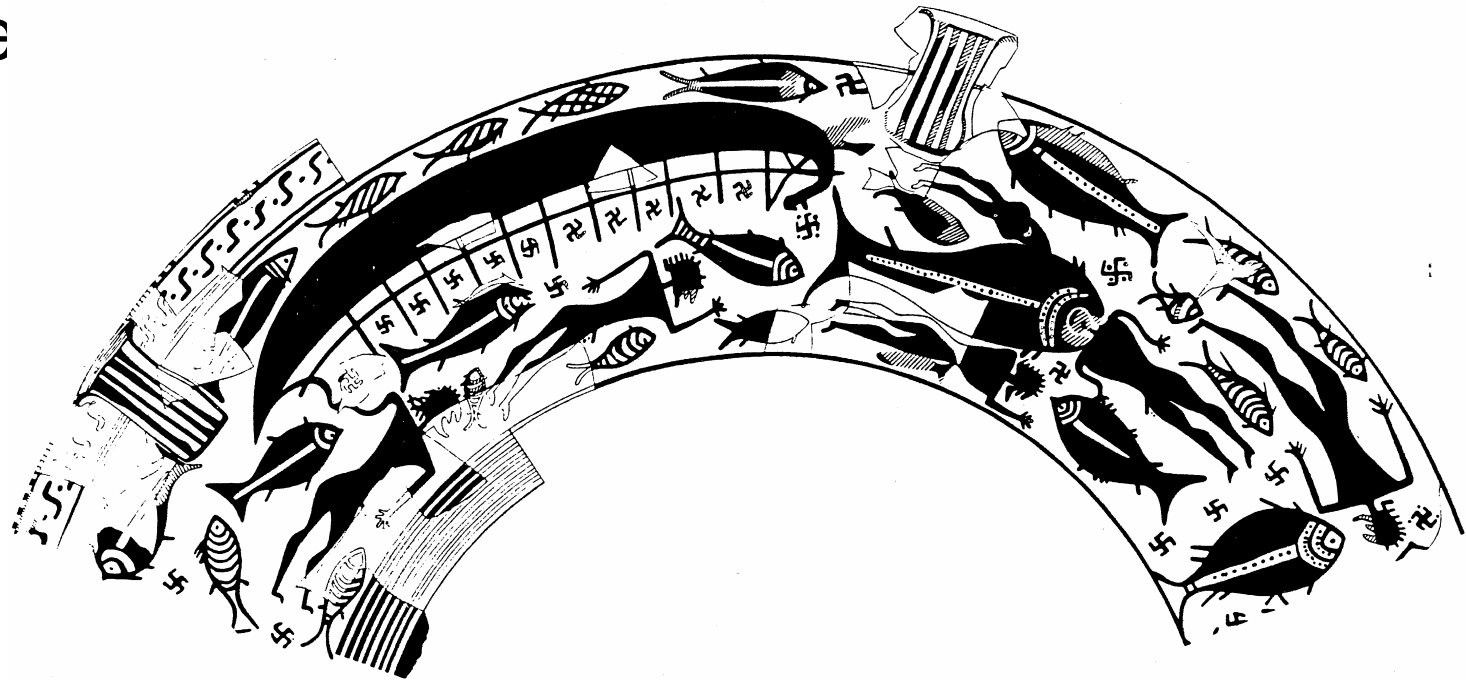
Eleftheria Avramidou BSc^{1,2}

¹Leeds Metropolitan University, UK

²European Lifeguard Academy, GR

Purpose

Drowning incidents are reported since the ancient years in many nations. The purpose of this study was to examine weather drowning/near drowning was a cause of death in Greek mythology and ancient history and under what circumstances it occurre



Subjects and Method

Greek history of Lifeguarding is divided in 4 periods. This study examined the 'Early or Ancient Period' (Avramidis, 2005). The key words drowning, near drowning, Greek mythology, ancient Greece, were used in the literature search that was undertaken through references provided by electronic libraries and textbooks. The results were presented similarly to another related study (Barbetakis *et al.*, 2004). The literature search found 43 narratives but only 32 cases were analyzed further. Cases not referring to D/ND of humans were excluded.

Results

Males (15, 47%), females (4, 12%) or multiple casualties (13, 41%) were involved in mythological (18, 56%) and other historical (14, 44%) drowning (21, 66%) and near drowning incidents (11, 34%) that occurred due to human initiative (17, 51%), with 'God-intervention' (13, 39%) or 'Semi god-intervention' (3, 9%) in seas (27, 82%), lakes (2, 6%), rivers (1, 3%), and disasters (flood or tsunamis) (3, 9%).

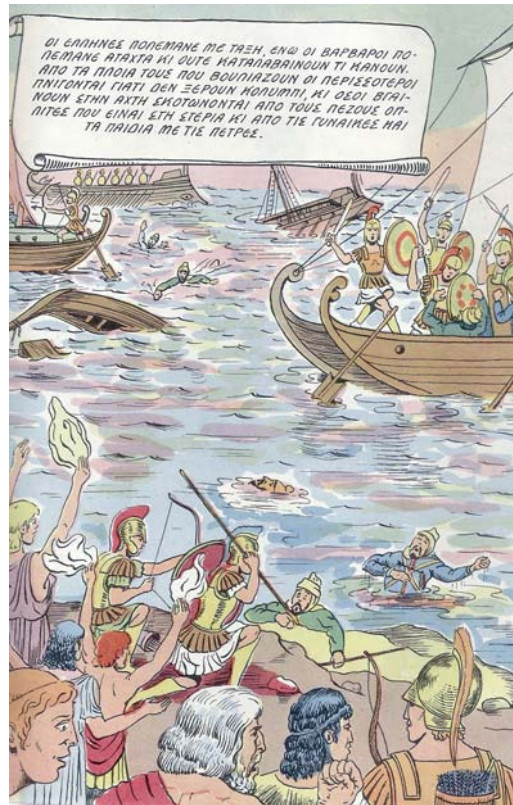
Conclusions

Although more research is required in the field, drowning was a cause of death in ancient Greece and Mythology. Human initiative or 'God intervention' were the most frequent risk factors of drowning/near drowning in the present sample usually occurring at the sea, but also in lakes, rivers floods and tsunamis.

Sample of Ancient & Mythological D/ND



Danae with her baby try to survive in the sea



Persians drown in the Battle of Salamis



Ikarus drowns trying to escape from Crete island

Sample of Ancient & Mythological D/ND



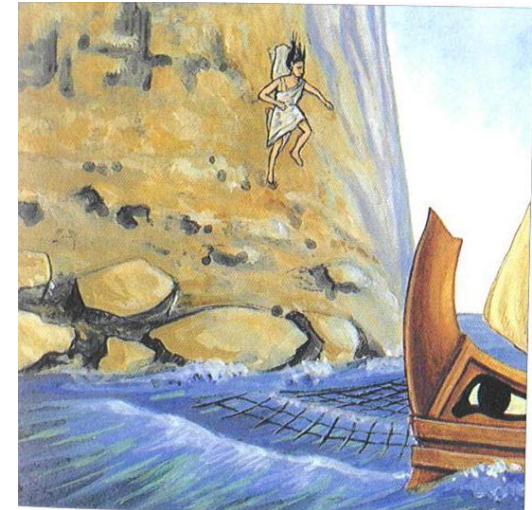
Arion is rescued by a dolphin after he was thrown in the sea by pirates



Hylas drowns in a lake seduced by water nymphs



Odysseus is rescued by Ino



Vritomartis drowns trying to escape from King Minos

References

- Cotterell, A., and Storm, R. (2004). *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Mythology*. Singapore: Hermes House
- Barbetakis, N., Liratzopoulos, N., Efremidou, E., Karanikas, M., Pavlidou, E., Minopoulos, Y., Manolas, K.I. (2005). Homer's Iliad: Thoracic Trauma at the Field of the Battle. In, *3rd Congress of Hellenic Society of Trauma and Emergency Operation, Abstract Book*, (p. 89), Athens: Hellenic Society of Trauma and Emergency Operation
- Avramidis, S. (2005). *The History of Greek Lifeguarding*. Athens: European Lifeguard Academy