

Pithecusan Humour.
The Interpretation of 'Nestor's Cup' Reconsidered

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Νέστορος : ε[c. 2]ι : εὐποτ[ον] : ποτέριον. /
ὁς δ' ἄν τῷδε πίσει : ποτερι[1-2] : ἀτίκα κῆνον /
ἡμέρος ἡαιρέσει : καλλιστε[φά]γο : Ἀφροδίτες.

Although the literature concerned with the inscribed cup found in a cremation grave on Pithecusae (modern Ischia) in 1954 is large¹), I believe that the interpretation can be taken further and therefore venture to add my own contribution. The following pages

¹) *Select bibliography*. This gives the discussions of the inscription to which I have referred in the notes (where I give the author's name only, adding, when necessary, year and/or page). The most complete bibliographical information is found in Rüter & Matthiessen (231 and passim). I have included a few items to which I have not referred in the notes, as a supplement to Rüter & Matthiessen.

Buchner & Russo, *Rend.Linc.* 8TH S. 10 (1955) 215–234, pll. 1–4. Page, *CR N.S.* 6 (1956) 96f. Woodhead, *SEG* 14 (1957) no. 604. W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*³ (Stuttgart 1959) 413–416, 488f. Manganaro, *Siculorum Gymnasium N.S.* 12 (1959) 71–74. Webster, *Glotta* 38 (1960) 253. LSAG (see abbreviations below) 235f., 239, pl. 47.1. Guarducci, *Rend.Linc.* 8TH S. 16 (1961) 3–7. Carpenter, *AJPh* 84 (1963) 83–85. Metzger, *REA* 67 (1965) 301–305, pll. 16–17. E. Heitsch, *Aphroditehymnus, Aeneas und Homer* (Göttingen 1965) 43. Hommel, *Gnomon* 38 (1966) 611. M. Guarducci, *Epigrafia greca* 1 (Rome 1967) 226f. Raubitschek, *Fondation Hardt, Entretiens* 14: *L'épigramme grecque* (1967, publ. 1968) 9–11. Graham, *Acta of the Fifth International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy*, Cambridge 1967 (Oxford 1971) 9–17. Burzachechi, *ib.* 125f., 132. Buchheit, *Gymnasium* 75 (1968) 521f. Rüter & Matthiessen, *ZPE* 2 (1968) 231–255. ML (see abbreviations below) no. 1. Alpers, *Glotta* 47 (1969) 170–174. Dihle, *Hermes* 97 (1969) 257–261. Marcovich, *La Parola del Passato* 24 (1969) 219–223. Guarducci, *Rend.Linc.* 8TH S. 25 (1970) 51–57. West, *ZPE* 6 (1970) 171–173. Langdon, *AJA* 77 (1973) 195. Vox, *Belfagor* 30 (1975) 221f. Watkins, *Department of Linguistics, Harvard University, Indo-European Studies* 2 (Cambridge Mass. 1975) 401–432. *Pithekoussai* 1, *La Necropoli: tombe* 1–723 (1952–1961), scavate da G. Buchner e descritte da G. Buchner e D. Ridgway. *Monumenti Antichi dei Lincei*, nuova serie monografica, pp. — (forthcoming).

The reader will find it useful to bear in mind the following abbreviations in addition to those universally known:

ABV J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford 1956).
Buck C. D. Buck, *The Greek Dialects* (Chicago and London 1955).

are divided into four sections: I. Date (pressing the early date, against Carpenter). II. State of preservation (correcting some current errors). III. Restoration (pressing the case for ε[ιμ]ι and ποτερι[ο]). IV. Interpretation. In section IV, which is the main section, I suggest that the first line can be understood neither as verse nor as straightforward prose, but can be interpreted in a way which removes the difficulties inherent in either interpretation. It is necessary to clear some ground in advance all through the article, but even so, explicit refutation of *all* statements with which I disagree would be an absurdity, and the reader is requested to understand that I am implicitly contradicting anything incompatible with my account.

I. *Date*. It is universally agreed that the cup was made in the eighth century B.C. In spite of this, Carpenter in his review of LSAG in 1963 considered that the inscription should be dated on epigraphical grounds to the middle or third quarter of the sixth century, and takes issue with the early dating because he feels that 'the whole hypothesis of epigraphic style as trustworthy chronological evidence is here imperilled.' His solution to this problem is as follows: 'How an advanced sixth century *graffito* could appear on a late eighth or early seventh century Aegean vase is anyone's conjecture. Perhaps Nestor found the skyphos in a family vault or secured it from some temple repository and, struck by its quaintness, adopted it for his symposia and marked it as his own by engraving his "amiable verse." Stranger things than this have taken place, to the mystification or mortification τῶν ἔπειτα.' The extreme feebleness of this explanation is apparent, and, at the same time, Carpenter considerably overstates the late appearance of the inscription²).

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- DAA A. E. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Acropolis* (Cambridge Mass. 1949).
 FH P. Friedländer & H. B. Hoffleit, *Epigrammata* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1948).
 GVI W. Peek, *Griechische Vers-Inschriften 1* (Berlin 1955).
 LGVI P. A. Hansen, *A List of Greek Verse Inscriptions down to 400 B.C.* (*Opuscula Graecoromana 3*, Copenhagen 1975).—This includes for each item: dating, metrical description, select references, incipit, names.
 LSAG L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford 1961).
 ML R. Meiggs & D. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford 1969).

²) (1) Material from the late eighth and early seventh centuries is so scarce that a very early instance of punctuation should not cause worry. In addition

However, the case against Carpenter is much more clear-cut than this, and of much greater methodological importance: When suggesting the sixth century date, Carpenter cannot have been aware that 'Nestor's Cup' comes from an archaeological context indisputably of the eighth century. Two years later, Metzger showed that Carpenter's date is inadmissible in any serious discussion of the inscription. Metzger's article, which is based not only on the first publication but also on information concerning the campaign of the following year (1955) supplied to him by Buchner, is clear and conclusive and should have consigned Carpenter's date to oblivion once and for all. Unfortunately, however, this has not entirely been the case. "'Nestor's Cup" was found in a cremation grave, in many scattered fragments which were embedded in the black ashes of the pyre together with no less than 25 other vases, likewise burnt and for the most part broken in many fragments.' (Dr. Buchner, private communication). The pottery found in this and the adjoining graves is of the eighth century. One corner of the grave which contained the cup was disturbed by a burial containing two funerary amphorae of a date not later than the beginning of the seventh century, the last sherds of our cup being recovered from the earth used for filling in the hole dug for this new burial (campaign of 1955; cf. Metzger). Dr. Buchner informs me that the date of the burial will be given in Pithekoussai 1 as c. 725–720. This date is based 'on both stratigraphical and archaeological evidence'; for full details see the forthcoming publication. Dr. Buchner further writes: 'The date of the manufacturing of the vase cannot be fixed very precisely, but it can quite well be 10 or even 20 years earlier than the burial. I should say

to the Corinthian sherds LSAG pl. 18.1 (dated there to c. 700?; cf. Boegehold, GRBS 15 [1974] 25–31 with reff.), we find seventh century examples of punctuation of one kind or another, at least at Athens (Pease, Hesperia 4 [1935] 242 no. 38; cf. LSAG p. 76 no. 5c), at Argos (Heermance ap. C. Waldstein, The Argive Heraeum 2 [Boston and New York 1905] 185; cf. LSAG pp. 153, 156 no. 1), and on Thera (IG 12.3.763; cf. LSAG p. 323 no. 4). (2) The retrograde script and the division into lines gives no lead for epigraphical dating. (3) In discussing the geminated lambda, Carpenter overlooked a very early, in fact almost contemporary, instance of a word with a geminated consonant, viz. *χαρίφερτα* in the Mantiklos epigram on a bronze statuette commonly dated to the first quarter of the seventh century (LSAG pl. 7.1; cf. LGVI 341); cf. also *περικαλλές* in an inscription dated to the late seventh century (cited by Marcovich 221; LSAG pl. 26.3; cf. LGVI 378). (4) For the ductus and general impression of the lettering cf. e.g. LSAG pl. 45.1 (LGVI 467; Ithaca c. 700) and the Mantiklos inscription mentioned above.

therefore, that *around 720* is the *latest* possible date for the inscription, which *can* be also some 10 or more years older.' It goes without saying that in dating the burial as narrowly as within five years, Dr. Buchner is unlikely to command universal agreement. A discussion of the matter would make little sense just before the appearance of Pithekoussai 1, nor shall I in due course be able to give an authoritative opinion on the finer stylistic points involved, including the dating of the Protocorinthian aryballoi found in the grave³). However, apart from quite marginal uncertainties, the inscription on 'Nestor's Cup' is fixed firmly in time. Epigraphical dating can *never* take precedence over a date based on stratification, and one can add that it should not normally take precedence over the stylistic date of an item with no (known) stratigraphical context. Epigraphical dating is indispensable in many contexts, and is for instance fundamental for my own work on early verse inscriptions, but the dangers of the method should not be underestimated, and its limitations were seen very clearly by Dr. Jeffery in her great work on archaic inscriptions. Others should follow her example and realize that epigraphical dating is *not* 'trustworthy chronological evidence' in the way in which Carpenter will have it. The relative values of the available methods for dating inscriptions are set out very clearly in Graham's important paper read to the Fifth International Congress of Greek and Latin Epigraphy (see note 1).

II. *State of preservation.* At the beginning of this article, I have given all letters preserved and added two indisputably correct supplements. Of the four lacunae, the contents of the other two are disputed, and I shall discuss these presently. Langdon has pointed out that the less complete form of the inscription given in the first publication has shown an astonishing tenacity. Unfortunately, Langdon's note is marred by one omission and two wrong assertions⁴), and I therefore set out explicitly the differences between the first publication with its accompanying facsimile and our present knowledge of the inscription. (1) *ποτέριον*. The final nu exists on an additional fragment, mentioned already in Buchner's postscript (234). The two dots visible after nu in Metzger's pl. 16, which are believed by Langdon to be punctuation in spite of their faintness and the short distance between them, are defects in the reproduction

³) Cf. Rüter & Matthiessen 235f. with reff.

⁴) Likewise, Webster's information is incomplete, and Rüter & Matthiessen's (240f.) includes an error.

of the photograph: Dr. Buchner assures me that not even the slightest scratch exists on the sherd. (2) $\acute{\alpha}\nu$. The nu was erroneously omitted from the inscription, but a small nu was added under the line. Metzger's photographs are no help here, but Guarducci is most explicit on the matter: 'Alla l. 2 il *ny* di $\acute{\alpha}\nu$, tralasciato in un primo momento dall'incisore dell'epigrafe, fu da lui aggiunto successivamente al di sotto della riga. Il frammentino contenente il piccolo *ny* fu rinvenuto dal Buchner nel corso di una successiva esplorazione della tomba . . .'⁵). The new facsimile which will appear in Pithekoussai 1 shows a very clear nu placed between the sixth letter of line 2 (tau) and the fifth letter of line 3 (rho). The fact that nu does exist on a sherd renders it unnecessary to refute Dihle's $\acute{\alpha}\langle\pi\acute{o}\rangle$ which would also have been unacceptable for other reasons⁶). (3) $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\iota$. Epsilon and sigma exist on one of the additional fragments. Cf. Metzger's pl. 17. (4) $\eta\acute{\iota}\mu\epsilon\rho\omicron\varsigma \eta\alpha\iota\rho\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota$. The letters $\omicron\sigma\eta\alpha\iota\rho$ are found on the same fragment; there is no punctuation between the two words. Cf. Metzger's pl. 17.

III. *Restoration*. Of the two controversial lacunae, the one in the first line has called forth in print no less than fifteen different suggestions⁷), of which all save two are, in my opinion, of the utmost improbability. That so many restorations exist, is due to a curious misconception which keeps haunting the study of Greek epigraphy. When the epigraphist meets a lacuna, he should not be satisfied with restoring something which fits the space and/or traces and is passable Greek, he should, before proposing or accepting a restoration, ask whether or not the supplement would have been idiomatic in the context and at the time and place in question. A very simple example will illustrate my meaning. If particles used as padding do not normally appear at the beginning of early lapidary

⁵) 1970, 52 n.4. The same is stated more briefly by her, 1967, 226 n.1 (where her further statement that all the lacunae save one have been filled in by fragments found after the first publication, is a slip). Langdon and Watkins (427 f. n.4), who both state explicitly that Webster was wrong in maintaining the existence of the nu, are themselves in error and must have failed to consult Guarducci's observations.

⁶) Watkins (cf. the preceding note) refutes Dihle's emendation on syntactical grounds 405-415, 428 f.

⁷) $\xi[\rho\omicron\omicron]$; Buchner & Russo (226 and 232), with the following alternatives suggested but discarded: $\epsilon[\acute{\iota}\kappa\omicron]$, $\epsilon[\acute{\iota}\kappa\epsilon]$, $\xi[\mu]$, $\epsilon[\acute{\iota}\mu]$ (subsequently suggested by Schadewaldt, Webster, and Jeffery), $\xi[\mu\mu]$, $\xi[\sigma\tau]$ (adopted by Watkins 421-426); $\xi[\nu \tau]$ Page; $\xi[\sigma\tau\alpha]$ or $\xi[\theta\lambda\omicron]$ Woodhead; $\xi[\nu \tau\omicron]$ Manganaro; $\xi[\tau\omicron]$ Hommel ap. Schadewaldt and 1966; $\mu[\acute{\epsilon}\nu] = \mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ or $\mu\acute{\eta}\nu$ Guarducci 1961; $[\gamma' \acute{\epsilon}\nu]$ (sic) Marcovich.

epigrams, and there are only two instances of an epigram beginning with η from before 400 B. C., and if $\rho\alpha$ is not found in early lapidary epigrams while $\alpha\rho\alpha$ is found just once, then it is impermissible to restore with Friedländer (and Peek) the Homeric [$\eta \rho\acute{\alpha} \tau\iota$] ς at the beginning of an archaic Attic epitaph⁸); and if hyperbaton is almost entirely alien to the dignified simplicity of the archaic Attic epitaphs, then it is equally impermissible to restore with Wilamowitz [$\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha$] ς as the first word, to match the last word of the pentameter $\epsilon\nu[\rho\omicron\rho\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\varsigma]$ ⁹). On 'Nestor's Cup' we have a personal name in the genitive, an χ , and the designation of a vessel, and we should now ask for a word which would be an idiomatic substitution for the χ , not generally in a hypothetical and unknown context of ancient Greek, but specifically in the context of a statement found incised on an archaic piece of pottery. If the filling of our lacuna (which, including the traces on either side, will accommodate four letters at the most) is approached from this angle, we find that there is only one answer: the word must be $\epsilon\iota\mu\acute{\iota}$ (possibly spelt $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\acute{\iota}$). Whereas nothing else can be thought of which even vaguely resembles something known to us from vase graffiti, there are no less than four *very* early instances of name in the genitive + $\epsilon\iota\mu\acute{\iota}$ + name of vessel; I list them in chronological order according to Dr. Jeffery's datings¹⁰): *Φοράρο ἡμὶ γύλιξ* τ[(Rhodes, 8th c. ?); *Ταταίεις ἐμὶ λέκρυθος· ἡὸς δ' ἄν με κλέφσει θυφλὸς ἔσται* (Cyme, c. 675–650 ?); *Θαρίο εἰμὶ ποτέριον* (Athenian Agora, c. 650); *Δολίωνός ἐμὶ γυλίχνη* (Smyrna, end of 7th c. ?). Considering the extent of epigraphical remains from the eighth and seventh centuries, one could with some justification call this a massive array¹¹). Further, the type of statement exemplified here (personal

⁸) IG 1².984 = FH 87 = GVI 1488; cf. LGVI 34.

⁹) In this particular instance we have, I believe, to admit that it does not seem possible to find a supplement which is idiomatic in an archaic Attic epitaph.

¹⁰) LSAG pll. 67.1, 47.3, 1.4, 66.69.

¹¹) A later instance is LSAG pl. 72.63.T 108 (Nymphaeum, 5th c.): *Εὐθυμίας ἐμὶ* (sic) *ἡ γύλιξ*. Cf. also *Γοργίνιος ἐμὶ ὁ κότυλος καλὸς καλὸς* (Thisbe; DGE 440.4 = SEG 3.377 = FH 177b; cf. LGVI 462 where I date: c. 450–425 ?) and *Βοσπορίχων ἐμὶ τοῦ Τιμώριος γύλιξ* (on a vase of the late fifth or early fourth century; E. v. Stern, *Theodosia und seine Keramik* [Odessa 1906] 11 = Wolters, AM 38 [1913] 195 = FH 177f.). A related type of inscription gives only the name in the genitive with the addition of $\epsilon\iota\mu\acute{\iota}$. The reader can easily find some of the many examples for himself, either in LSAG or in Burzachechi, *Epigraphica* 24 (1962) 32f. A painted Attic inscription from the middle of the sixth century might also deserve mention here (Beazley, JHS 52 [1932] 178 = ABV 162, *Eucheiros* no. 1): *καλὸν εἰμὶ ποτέριον*.

name in the genitive + $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\acute{\iota}$ + designation of object in the nominative, e.g. $\sigma\eta\mu\alpha$) is a very generally employed one, as is conveniently seen from Burzachechi's survey¹²). The spelling to be expected is $\epsilon\acute{\mu}\acute{\iota}$, and it will be recalled that the surprising number of different supplements have been called forth by the fact that the space is very ample indeed for just a mu. Mu is a very broad letter in this inscription, and I do not think that it would be absurd to restore this letter in the space available¹³). Further, Rüter & Matthiessen drew attention (244–246) to the fact that iota cannot with certainty be assumed to be preserved in the breach, but possibly has to be accommodated in the missing part. However, the difficulty is solved even more easily. Already the first editors contemplated $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\acute{\iota}$ for $\epsilon\acute{\mu}\acute{\iota}$, although they rejected this possibility. Then the solution was advocated independently and in rapid succession by Schadewaldt (488), Webster (253 n.3), and Jeffery (235 n.3). Schadewaldt gave no reasons, while Webster and Jeffery referred to other early examples of the spelling with $\epsilon\iota$ very much older than the time for which the iota could be expected. An explanation was given by Sturtevant¹⁴) who ascribed the spelling $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\acute{\iota}$ to the analogy of $\epsilon\acute{\iota}$ with the genuine diphthong. In Attic $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\acute{\iota}$ was used to the entire exclusion of $\epsilon\acute{\mu}\acute{\iota}$. The earliest example dated with reasonable certainty is on the cup of c. 650 mentioned above (example mentioned by both Webster and Jeffery). The graffito found on a Hymettus sherd (mentioned by Webster)¹⁵) may be even older, and a couple of instances on SOS amphorae (mentioned by Jeffery)¹⁶) are perhaps not much later than 600. Of other instances from the first half of the sixth century I mention the gravestone to -linos¹⁷) and a painted inscription on an amphora of the Tyrrhenian Group¹⁸). Sixth century examples later than these are plentiful. Outside Attica, no single area has yielded enough material to show fixed local usage, with the sole exception of Rhodes where $\eta\acute{\mu}\acute{\iota}$ (or $\epsilon\acute{\mu}\acute{\iota}$) was consistently used.

¹²) Epigraphica 24 (1962) 3–54.

¹³) Cf. also the discussion of the word $\pi\alpha\rho\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}[o]$ below.

¹⁴) JAOS 57 (1937) 150 and The Pronunciation of Greek and Latin² (Philadelphia 1940) 34 n.9.

¹⁵) Young, AJA 44 (1940) 3–7.

¹⁶) Jeffery, BSA 50 (1955) 69 nos. 6 and 11; cf. LSAG p. 77 nos. 10f. and 10h.

¹⁷) G.M.A. Richter, The Archaic Gravestones of Attica (London 1961) no. 1 = LSAG p. 71 no. 15. Richter dates the monument to c. 600 while Jeffery would place the inscription at c. 575.

¹⁸) IIA² pl. 3 no. 6; cf. ABV 96 no. 14; c. 570.

However, without claiming to have searched widely or thoroughly, I am able to cite no less than ten instances of *εἰμί* with iota down to 480; I list them in chronological order according to Dr. Jeffery's datings (the references in brackets are to the plates of LSAG): Thasos, c. 625–600? (58.61); Boeotia, end of 7th c.? (7.3c); Miletus, c. 550–540? (65.40); Acrae, c. 525–500? (51.12); Gela, late 6th c.? (53.50); Teos, late 6th c.? (66.61); Megara Hyblaea, c. 500? (52.26); Megara Hyblaea, c. 500–485? (LSAG p. 270.28, not illustrated); Eretria, c. 500–480? (6.13). It will be noticed that the list contains (1) two instances as early as the seventh century; (2) four instances from the West; (3) one instance from Eretria (which together with Chalcis founded Pithecusae). This collection of material, both Attic and non-Attic, suffices to dispel any anxiety about the form *εἰμί*. I do not think that a supplement can legitimately be doubted when, as in this case, it fits the remains, is orthographically possible, is idiomatic in the context, and, in spite of strenuous efforts on the part of scholars, is the only supplement for which a parallel, let alone several parallels, can be found.

In line two, the choice is between *ποτερί[ο]* and *ποτέρι[ον]*. The former is generally accepted, but the latter, advocated by Page, should be refuted explicitly. Page stressed that there is too much space for the omicron alone, and that the space will very conveniently accommodate *ον*. It is easy to agree that the space is somewhat ample for an omicron; but it should be noticed (1) that the space taken up by the second and fifth omicrons in line one is not much shorter; (2) that there is very ample space round the punctuations in line one; and (3) that on the other hand the two cases of *νο* which are cited by Page as taking up no more space than the lacuna in question both occur towards the end of a line where the letters would seem to be slightly more crowded than in the middle. It seems to me that in order to believe that the lacuna contained *ον*, one must posit that the omicron was rather smaller than the smallest preserved omicron in the inscription; otherwise, its circle would have touched one of the preserved fragments¹⁹). The language clearly requires a genitive, not an accusative, since the sense is 'he who drinks from this cup', not 'he who drinks this cup of wine'. An accusative would indicate that the cup was used as a measure, and this would also seem to require the addition of a genitive indicating

¹⁹) Of others who consider that there is no room for *ον*, I mention Guarducci (1961, 4 n.3) and Marcovich (223).

the drink. Dihle in suggesting the superseded emendation mentioned above under II maintained that a genitive to indicate the vessel was unacceptable. Watkins (see note 6) has saved me the trouble of showing in detail that this is not so; usage with *πίνω* varies, and whether I am right or not in thinking that there simply was a certain amount of confusion rather than a fixed pattern, it remains that the genitive is among the possibilities; cf. Od. 19.62 *δέπα ἐνθεν . . . ἔπινον*. In my opinion, an equally important point is that *τῶδε* would, if it were a possessive genitive meaning 'this man's', give the reader a false lead. The reader who read *τῶδε πίεσι* would automatically have understood *τῶδε* as directly governed by *πίεσι*, would not have realized his mistake until he read *ποτέριον*, and would then have had to go back. As I have occasion to remark again later, the author of this very competent epigram cannot be credited with giving his readers false leads of this type²⁰). When authors use both an accusative and a genitive in connexion with *πίνω*, it seems that they were careful to let the accusative precede the genitive to avoid this; cf. Il. 4.345 f., 8.232. Thus considerations of space, of language, and of style alike are decidedly in favour of *ποτερί[ο]*, and it seems unnecessary to go into the improbability of a text which refers to the owner as 'this man' without naming him.

IV. *Interpretation*. The second and third lines consist of two very competent hexameters, and thus pose no problem of interpretation in regard to form. Not so the first, which has been variously interpreted as prose, an iambic trimeter, a catalectic trochaic trimeter, and a lyric line. I hope to show that none of these possibilities is entirely correct but that the first is nearer the truth than the rest. However, it is a necessary preliminary to discuss the possibility of Nestor as an actual name in the late eighth century. I should like to stress that the important question at this point is *not* that which has been asked repeatedly and mostly answered in the negative: was Nestor the owner of our cup rather than the epic Nestor? The question is: may one consider the use of the name Nestor possible in the given circumstances at the end of the eighth century? It is

²⁰) Marcovich suggested that a dative should be read; this is certainly possible with *πίνω* (cf. Od. 14.112), but the earliest case of omission of the iota in the dative other than before a vowel is of the fifth century; the Lesbian instance of *τῶ* for *τῶι* LSAG p. 360 no. 11 ('first quarter of 5th c. ?') = Buck 24 = DGE 638 seems to me to be due to confusion, and other (certain) examples are even later. The suggestion of *τῶδε* (= *τοῦδε*) *πίεσι ποτερί[οι]*, not yet to my knowledge made by anyone, would be as unacceptable as *τῶδε πίεσι ποτερί[ον]* in that it gives the same false lead to the reader.

common knowledge that heroic names started reappearing only in the fourth century, but there are in fact a number of instances from before 400. I select a few examples; the list can easily be amplified from literary and epigraphical sources²¹). The earliest known use of a heroic name is roughly contemporary with 'Nestor's Cup': Pollux (9.83) knows of one Agamemnon, king of Cyme in Asia Minor, whose daughter was married to the historical King Midas of Phrygia²²). A king of Chios (7th c. or earlier) was called Hector²³). Known names of Olympic victors include *Ἰκαρος* or *Ἰκάριος* 'Υπερησιεύς, *Θάλπιος Λάκων*, and *Πολυνείκης Ἡλεῖος*, who won victories in 688, 680, and 632²⁴). Archilochus had a friend named Glaucus²⁵). Athenian statesmen include Acastus (7th c., *Ἄθ. πολ.* 3.3), Alcmeon, Lycurgus son of Aristolaides, Pisistratus, and Ephialtes. Other statesmen include Cadmus from Cos. The Milesian *στεφανηφόρος* of 507/6 was one Astyanax²⁶). Attic funerary inscriptions include two of around 500 to men called Aeneas²⁷). A Thessalian dedication of the mid fifth century carries the name *Πατροκλέας*²⁸). I round off my selection with the most unexpected and unbelievable of all names carried by men before the fourth century, namely Charon. Even if one were to maintain that the historian of that name is of the fourth century, and that Aristotle²⁹) in letting Archilochus' fr. 19 (West) be spoken by a carpenter of that name made a mistake, the acceptance of the fact that a Phocian epitaph of c. 500 was erected to a physician called Charon is unavoidable³⁰). Dr. Buchner informs me that all

²¹) The following examples have been taken from Dihle 259; F. Bechtel, *Die historischen Personennamen des Griechischen bis zur Kaiserzeit* (Halle 1917) 571–580; LGVI passim. I have not attempted to exhaust these three sources.

²²) Cf. H. T. Wade-Gery, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge 1952) 7, 65 n. 21.

²³) Paus. 7.4.9–10 = FGrH 392 (Ion) F 1. Cf. Wilamowitz, *Kleine Schriften* 5.1 (Berlin 1937) 145f., and Wade-Gery, l.c. 6–8.

²⁴) Africanus ap. Eusebium 1 p. 196 Schoene (*Ἰκάριος*) and Paus. 4.15.1 (*Ἰκαρος*); Africanus l.c. ('Cod. *θάλπιος*, sed *ος* erasum' Schoene, who for obscure reasons prints *Θάλπις*); Africanus l.c. p. 200 and Paus. 5.8.9.

²⁵) Addressed or mentioned in frs. 15, 48, (96), 105, 117, 131 West. A memorial found in the Thasian Agora (SEG 14.565 = LSAG pl. 58.61 = ML 3; cf. LGVI 165) shows him to have been a historical person.

²⁶) Milet 1.3 (Berlin 1914) no. 122.I.20.

²⁷) IG 12.1019 (a physician) and 1010 = GVI 57 and 149; cf. LGVI 65 and 79.

²⁸) IG 9.2.1098 = DGE 601; cf. LGVI 355 (where I date: c. 450?).

²⁹) Rhet. 1418b23.

³⁰) FH 86 = GVI 1384 = LSAG pl. 13.11; cf. LGVI 131.

ἀκούω, whence as reminiscence or mockery Aristoph. Pax 663; Semon. fr. 42 Bergk, West = 27 Diehl = Simon. PMG 525 *ῥεῖα θεοί* (but see West ad loc.); Aesch. fr. 39 Nauck = 445 Mette *εἶλκον ἄνω* (but see edd.); Eur. El. 1058 *ἄρα κλύουσα* (but see edd.); Aristoph. Vesp. 902 *ποῦ δ' ὁ διώκων* (but see edd.). The small number of instances and the apparent notoriety achieved by the only reasonably certain example which does not involve a polysyllabic name (or epithet), makes the use of initial anaclasis to accommodate a trisyllabic name exceedingly improbable, especially of course at the beginning of a text. The hiatus after *εἰμί* is, however, even more improbable, since 'hiatus is foreign to iambus'³⁶. The only exceptions in the iambographers are in connexion with *εἰ* and *οἶ*, in *Διωνύσου ἄνακτος* (Archil. fr. 120.1 West)³⁷, and in two instances of *ῆ* which may be *ῆ'* = *ῆέ*. The only instance we can add to this from tragedy is at Soph. Phil. 759 where the line is divided between two speakers and the second speaker begins with an interjection. It is true that metrical errors in inscriptions are countless, some of them very elementary indeed, but the author of the two hexameters was no mean poet³⁸, and I find it very hard to understand how anyone can believe that the author of those hexameters could have committed an error as elementary as to allow a hiatus in a trimeter³⁹. Contrary to that of the hexameter, the development of the iambic trimeter was not towards stricter rules but towards greater free-

³⁶ M. L. West, *Studies in Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin 1974) 115, whence I borrow the information on the iambographers.

³⁷ Cf. West, l.c. 131.

³⁸ The hiatus in the second hexameter is of course legitimate; cf. e.g. h. Hom. 2.102 *φιλοστεφάνου Ἀφροδίτης*, ib. 5.1 *πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης*, Od. 18.592 *καλλιπλοκάμῳ Ἀριάδῃ*. It is perhaps worth noting here that the pattern also appears in a Laconian dedication which I date to the first half of the sixth century (LGVI 383a; Mastrokostas, AAA 3 [1970] 427f., dates much too late): *Φιοστεφάνοι Ἀφροδίται*.

³⁹ It might be objected to my reasoning here that we do not know that the author of the first line and the author of the two hexameters were identical. However, to me it seems very far-fetched to imagine the possibility of two authors behind an inscription which has been inscribed by one hand and from the point of view of content forms so much of a unit. The only way of imagining that the author of the hexameters was not the author of the first line would be to assume that the hexameters are a quotation. But until a convincing context in which to place the joke (see pp. 40ff. below) contained in the hexameters (and a joke it must by necessity have been also in its original context) is suggested, I shall maintain without hesitation that this explanation is even more far-fetched than the above.

dom⁴⁰). But the case against the trimeter is, if possible, even stronger. The extreme scarceness of instances of anaclasis makes it very hazardous to posit a case at the very beginning of a text, and to this we can add one radical difference between e.g. a poem by Archilochus or a tragedy by Aeschylus and the present inscription. In the cases of Archilochus and Aeschylus the reader or listener had some rough knowledge of what he was going to read or hear, or at least he knew that it was going to be poetry. In the case of 'Nestor's Cup' the lines were inscribed with the object of being read by whoever saw the cup for the first time without previous knowledge of the content or intention of the inscription. To such a reader the beginning was a trite *prose* formula frequently found incised on vases, and the quantities of the first five syllables (—○○—) did nothing to undeceive him. I have shown above that the appearance of the name of Nestor at the beginning would not have aroused suspicion on the part of a reader with no previous knowledge of the inscription. That reader would not have known that anything was amiss till he reached the third word. Only bad and incompetent authors give their readers false leads of this type, and once more we are back to the complete incompatibility of the standard of versification of the trimeter and the hexameters⁴¹).

Both the hexameters and the end of the first line make it clear that the first line is not a simple statement in prose, but let us leave our ancient reader in the middle of the line for the moment and revert to the question of metres in order to ensure that the ghost has been laid and will not walk again. It is a widespread belief among classicists that any metre could be used in an early verse inscription. I mention at random Wilamowitz, Hommel, Peek, Guarducci, and Gentili. However, a quick inspection of my LGVI, where a metrical description of each item is given, will show the restraint and circumspection exerted in the choice of metre for inscriptions. Alleged instances of hexameters combined with anything other than penta-

⁴⁰) My belief that the iambic trimeter did not even exist at the time when this graffito was written but originated from Archilochus, is a matter of faith, and should therefore be kept out of this argument.

⁴¹) I cannot follow Watkins (417–421) in assuming that we have an earlier form of the trimeter which started with an 'Aeolic base', and that the trimeter accordingly is not of inferior quality. I shall not elaborate the objections, but only mention that he has not even tried to account for the hiatus. To extend the theory of an earlier form of the iambic trimeter to cover this too, would be a *reductio ad absurdum*.

meters, prove on closer inspection to be due not to intention, but to incompetence on the part of the author or inscriber. An example chosen at random will illustrate this. On the Dipylon Jug⁴²⁾ we find a hexameter followed by three syllables and some unintelligible letters; a suitably tailored interpretation of these letters makes it possible to understand what follows the hexameter as a dactylic dimeter⁴³⁾. However, following, with slight modification, Dr. Jeffery's interpretation, one may assume that the inscriber, who obviously had a considerable struggle with his task, made several errors in continuation, and then, finding that he was nearing the handle of the jug, gave up after scratching a few random letters in frustration. There are only three instances from before 400 of hexameters and iambic trimeters in the same inscription⁴⁴⁾, and in all three the trimeter is the signature of the artist(s) and thus to all purpose and intent a separate inscription. Only in literary tradition do we find the combination of hexameters and trimeters. Here the Margites has been constantly invoked from the first publication of the inscription. The ascription of the Margites to Homer both in the Platonic Alcibiades II (147b) and in Aristotle's Poetics (1448b30) makes it impossible to believe in a date later than the sixth century, but we lack convincing evidence to prove an origin earlier than this⁴⁵⁾. Whatever its date, the Margites is, however, not a case in point, since its whole comical effect seems to be based on the continual breaking up of the epic style through the insertion of trimeters. In particular the fragment which is commonly considered to be the beginning of the poem illustrates this; the unsuspecting audience hearing the Margites for the first time must have been uproariously amused when the bard recited the third verse, which proved to be not a third hexameter but an iambic trimeter. The aim achieved by the change of metre is the steep drop in stylistic level,

⁴²⁾ IG 12.919 = IIA² pl. 1.1 = LSAG pl. 1.1; cf. LGVI 447.

⁴³⁾ Thus e.g. Hommel, RhMus 88 (1939) 199.

⁴⁴⁾ DAA 133, DAA 244, LSAG pl. 62.29; cf. LGVI 291, 197, 437.

⁴⁵⁾ According to Zenobius 5.68 = Archilochus fr. 201 West = Margites fr. 5, a line occurs in both Archilochus and the Margites; but this shows nothing about priority. Eustratius' statement (In Arist. Eth. Nic. 6.7 = Archilochus fr. 303 West = Margites, testimonia p. 155 Allen, 70 West) that Archilochus and Cratinus and Callimachus mentioned the Margites and attested that it is by Homer, may be due to confusion with Cratinus' Archilochi (thus, tentatively, Meineke, FCG 1 p. 188, and others) or to an inaccurate expression which for Archilochus covers nothing more than the verse mentioned above (West).

whereas the use of an iambic trimeter followed by hexameters does not serve any comparable purpose⁴⁶). The reader may find it relevant to recall here that Archilochus does not appear to have combined hexameters and iambic trimeters, and that in combining dactyls and iambs he nowhere, to our knowledge, lets a shorter line precede a longer one. It is significant that other instances of the combination of hexameters and iambic trimeters are either uncertain or much later: The date of the Eiresione quoted in Vit. Hom. Hdt. 33 is quite uncertain, and the text does not allow us to decide whether the 10¹/₂ hexameters and the 2 trimeters linked together with a *καί* formally belong in the same poem. The two isolated lines from Xenophanes fr. 14 Diels = 12 Diehl = B 14 West indicate nothing about Xenophanes' way of combining hexameters and trimeters, and the text is quite possibly not in order (cf. West ad loc.). A funerary epigram (AP 13.14 = Simon. 98 Diehl = GVI 417) to an athlete who won an Olympic victory in 472 consists of an elegiac couplet, two trimeters, and a hexameter, and was certainly never inscribed; even if it were composed on the occasion of the man's death, this could take us into or beyond the third quarter of the fifth century, and one very strongly suspects that it is a fourth century composition⁴⁷). Critias (4 Diels, West = 2 Diehl) in an elegiac context replaces one pentameter by an iambic trimeter, and tells us explicitly and at length that he does this in order to accommodate the name Alcibiades, and that this is something new (*νέοισιν ὑμνήσας τρόποις*). A dedication by an Olympic victor of 388 consists of an elegiac couplet and an iambic trimeter accommodating the man's name⁴⁸). Among those of the above cases where anything can be said about the structure of the composition, there is none which begins with an iambic trimeter.

On the other metrical interpretations of the first line of the inscription a brief word will suffice. Guarducci (1961, 6) believes the line to be a catalectic trochaic trimeter. I shall not repeat those of my arguments put forth against the possibility of an iambic tri-

⁴⁶) Buchheit's attempt at seeing a parodic purpose in the use of an iambic trimeter in the inscription is not only rather feeble, but also based on a restoration of the first line which I have shown above to be impossible.

⁴⁷) In spite of J. Ebert, *Griechische Epigramme auf Sieger an gymnischen und hippischen Agonen* (Halle 1972) no. 15, there is not the least possibility of considering this a victor's dedication rather than an epitaph.

⁴⁸) Heph. p. 60 Consbruch = Simon. fr. 188 Bergk, 152 Diehl = Ebert, l. c. no. 34.

meter which equally apply to this solution, but only add that the catalectic trochaic trimeter is not an established metrical possibility at all⁴⁹), and, even more important, that Guarducci's interpretation rests on one of the restorations which I have shown to be unacceptable. For the interpretation of the line as an adonean plus a lecythion (based on the restoration *εἰμί*) tentatively put forth by Russo (229) and Rüter & Matthiessen (248), I have no time. In addition to applicable arguments above, the reader will find that it has been adequately dealt with by West.

We left our ancient reader when he had just stumbled over the word *εὔποτον*. Whereas the first two words gave him no reason to believe that he was reading anything but a prosaic owner's inscription, he now finds that this is not the case. The word *εὔποτος* is rare; it is not found in epic, but Aeschylus uses it three times (Pr. 676 and 812; Pers. 611). The next recorded instance is in prose and as late as Eratosthenes (ap. Ath. 482b) where the word is for the first time applied to drinking cups, and the sense is obviously 'convenient to drink from'. Personally, I have no compunction in affirming on the basis of our knowledge that *εὔποτος* was born as a poetic epithet. But even if anyone were to maintain that the word originated in contexts as dull and/or colloquial as those where the English 'convenient to drink from' would be possible, he will, I believe, have to admit that the addition of the word *εὔποτος* lends poetic colouring to the simple statement of ownership. Having established that the first line is not verse, we must look for some other explanation, and here the content of the hexameters will shed so much light on the working of the author's mind that we shall be able to provide an explanation. It was noticed already by Russo (230–232) that the hexameters are modelled on a well known type of curse, which is exemplified by the Teian public imprecations from c. 470⁵⁰), and that a very close parallel to the pattern of our inscription is provided by the nearly contemporary (c. 675–650?) vase graffito from Cyme mentioned above (p. 30): *Ταταίεσ ἐμὶ λέγουθός· ἡὸς δ' ἄν με κλέψῃσι θυφλὸς ἔσται*. The reader of our inscription would at once recognize the formula and believe that he was reading an ordinary curse against anyone who stole the cup or conceivably against anyone

⁴⁹) The only instance is Archilochus ap. Heph. p. 18 Consbruch = fr. 29 Diehl, 197 West, on which see Wilamowitz, *Griechische Verskunst* (Berlin 1921) 264 n.1, and D. Korzeniewski, *Griechische Metrik* (Darmstadt 1968) 70 n.89.

⁵⁰) SIG³ 37–38 = Buck 3 = ML 30.

who broke it⁵¹). The reader, who can only be imagined as a guest in the owner's house, found instead that the curse was directed against the one who used the cup. To this his reaction must have been one of surprise and dismay, since forbidding a guest to drink from a cup must have offended against all rules of hospitality. However, when he reached the second hexameter, he was once more surprised when learning that if he drank from the cup, he would not as the beginning suggested perish miserably or become blind or suffer some other divine reprisal; instead he would be seized by amorous feelings, neither an unexpected nor an undesirable result of using the cup for its intended purpose⁵²). The *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* joke has been stock in trade for humorous writers ever since Aristophanes, and even before our inscription was found, the Margites showed that it was already old then. Contemplating the first line in the light of the interpretation of the hexameters, we now find that it makes sense. It is well known that authors are prone to repeat knowingly or unconsciously their little tricks and mannerisms, and what would be more natural than our author's making a crescendo of *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* jokes in the first line and the following hexameters? The joke in the hexameters is undoubtedly the better, but the precursor is not to be despised either: having been lured into believing that he is reading a plain and pedestrian standard formula, the reader is pulled up with a start when finding the word *εὔποτον* in the middle of it.

It has been stressed above that the owner of the cup *could* have been called Nestor. When, after so far interpreting the inscription, one asks the question: *was* the owner of the cup called Nestor?, the answer is, in my opinion, that he *may* have been, and that this may have inspired the joke, but that general probability is against it.

⁵¹) Cf. CIG 545 = G. Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca* (Berlin 1878) 1132 = E. Hoffmann, *Sylloge Epigrammatum Graecorum* (Halle 1893) 421 = FH 177e.

⁵²) I believe that another mock curse is found on the foot of an Attic cylix of the second half of the fifth century (O. Benndorf, *Griechische und sizilische Vasenbilder* [Berlin 1868–83] pl. 29.11 = FH 177g): *Μελανθίο εἰμί· ἥσστις ἄλλος εἶπαι φσορόιε*. A minor tragic poet called Melanthius was the laughing-stock of Athens for a variety of reasons, including that he was *λεπρός* (Aristoph. Av. 151 with schol.), and although Benndorf is content to call this a 'sonderbarer' coincidence and Friedländer to make no comment, I think we must recognize that there is a connexion. The inscription would be explained by the assumption that the ownership is fictitious, and that we here have a little private jest on the unfortunate Melanthius so eagerly assailed by the writers of comedy (reff. in *Der Kleine Pauly*).

However, the question seems immaterial, since in any case a special and elaborate point being made in epic language about a cup belonging to one Nestor, by a person who had no knowledge of the epic Nestor and *his* cup, would be such an unbelievable coincidence that I am somewhat puzzled at its having been suggested in earnest. The reason for this suggestion could be that 'ironische Bezugnahme auf einen Gegenstand der mythischen Überlieferung' is felt by some to be unacceptable for the period. Dihle (258, whence the quotation), in a context which need not concern us here, thinks it impossible even for the sixth century. In fact, however, we have no knowledge about this. At the present day, it is possible to combine genuine religious reverence and the feeling that there is nothing wrong in telling jokes about the Saints or God himself, and I fail to see why we should a priori exclude a corresponding attitude to the epic heroes in archaic Greece.

We are not yet at the end of the jokes contained in these three lines. Let us recall how Nestor's Cup of the Iliad is described (11.632–637):

.....
 δέπας περικαλλές, ὃ οἴκοθεν ἦγ' ὁ γεραιός,
 χρυσείοις ἤλοισι πεπαρμένον· οὔατα δ' αὐτοῦ
 τέσσαρ' ἔσαν, δοιαὶ δὲ πελειάδες ἀμφὶς ἕκαστον
 χρύσειαι νεμέθοντο, δύω δ' ὑπὸ πνυθμένες ἦσαν.
 ἄλλος μὲν μογέων ἀποκινήσασκε τραπέζης
 πλείον ἑόν, Νέστωρ δ' ὁ γέρον ἀμογητὶ ἄειρεν.

With this description in mind we can answer the question of why the author has chosen precisely the word *εὔποτος* rather than e.g. *ἠδύποτος* which is found both in literature⁵³) and on vases of the fifth century⁵⁴). *εὔποτος* was chosen because it is the grossest possible misnomer: Nestor's Cup was not good or convenient to drink from, but an absurdly heavy and awkward monstrosity. Yet another joke is of course found in the very fact that this very humble earthenware vessel is posing as Nestor's Cup.

Whether or not the author has made a conscious opposition between the old Nestor known to us from the Iliad and inclinations

⁵³) Od. 2.340, 3.391, 15.507; h. Hom. 2.49, 7.36.

⁵⁴) v. Stern, *Philologus* 72 (1913) 547 = FH 1771 (included in an incised hexameter) and Wolters, *AJA* 11 (1896) 147–149 (two examples, each painted on its own as the main decoration).

which we should expect to have been furthest from his thoughts⁵⁵), I shall not try to decide, but it is a possibility which deserves a mention here.

Any reflections on our author's source of knowledge of Nestor's Cup must of course remain uncertain. His source may well have been something substantially identical with the Machaon episode in the eleventh book of the Iliad which includes the elaborate description already quoted; but one should at least mention the possibility of a different inspiration which, if correct, would add a further dimension to the fun. Our author could have had in mind the epic occurrence known from the Cypria in which, after the rape of Helen, Menelaus takes council with Nestor⁵⁶). One fragment of the Cypria (13 Allen = 12 Bethe = Ath. 35 c) lets someone offer Menelaus some of man's cure-all in which to drown his sorrows:

*οἶνόν τοι Μενέλαε θεοὶ ποίησαν ἄριστον
θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀποσκεδάσαι μελεδῶνας.*

It is very likely that the person in question is Nestor⁵⁷), and that the passage contained some reference to or description of Nestor's Cup. Perhaps our author purposely suggested an effect of drinking from Nestor's Cup opposite to the one intended by Nestor when he offered Menelaus a drink.

I should stress that in mentioning the Iliad and the Cypria, I do not imply anything concerning the actual existence of these poems at the time: I am solely concerned with the epic episodes (at some point incorporated into the two poems) which elucidate our inscription and may have been its inspiration. I do not believe that our inscription can usefully be drawn into the discussion of epic problems such as the Homeric question.

Even if the last two points of interpretation do not find acceptance, I hope that I have left no doubt about the thoroughly jocular nature of the inscription or about its amazing literary sophistication⁵⁸).

⁵⁵) Rüter & Matthiessen 254.

⁵⁶) Proclus, Chrestomathia, Cypriorum enarratio p. 103 Allen = 153 Bethe².

⁵⁷) Cf. e.g. G.L. Huxley, Greek Epic Poetry (London 1969) 135.

⁵⁸) My specific interest in 'Nestor's Cup' was sparked off by its being included in a seminar given by Prof. W.M. Calder III (New York) en route through Copenhagen in 1972. Since then I have discussed this particular inscription with a considerable number of people, and I mention here with special gratitude in chronological order Professors J.C. Christensen (Copen-