

## NOTES

### Nereids and two Attic pyxides

(PLATE I)

In my quest for Aurai in Greek art, I have been surprised by the haste of commentators to label each and every running woman as a Nereid. Surely it should depend on the evidence. I begin with two Attic pyxides in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. The first GR 1. 1933 was given and published by Miss Lamb in *CVA Cambridge* ii pl. 26. In Beazley, *ARV* 297, this vase was said to be in the Manner of Douris. In *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 451 this vase has lost its own reference and acquired that of GR 10. 1934 (*Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Reports* xxvi [1934] 3, fig. 4; see the correction in *Paralipomena* p. 521 [Addenda II, to p. 376]). 'Nereids' is an inadequate description of either vase; for both include different sexes.

The pyxis 1. 1933 is not in good condition. The central figure is surely not the male, as Miss Lamb says, but a running woman taking up twice as much room as anyone else. She holds one dolphin and has lost another, so she must be the heroine Thetis. On one side of her stands a man with a dark beard, but he holds an old man's crooked stick, so he must be Nereus in spite of his dark beard: and a frightened Nereid rushes by him to the left: on a third side a stationary woman has just frightened a woman with a sceptre off her chair; the sceptre holder must be Doris. Here then we have a Peleus and Thetis scene, but there is no room for Peleus.

The *Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Reports* xxvi (1934) figured only one running woman on the pyxis GR 10. 1934. In the central scene (PLATE I 1) a protesting woman is being grasped by a man holding what is probably a sceptre, though the head of it is hidden. Two Early Classical inscribed vases show that Miss Lamb was right in labelling these figures Zeus and Aigina. They are a stamnos in the Vatican (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 484, 21) by Hermonax, and a column krater in New York (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 536, 5) by the Boreas Painter. On the latter vase (Richter and Hall, pls. 94 and 170, 86), Zeus' sceptre is in front of Aigina, and our vase confirms that the front and back of the New York vase are part of the same story. On our vase the heroine starts away but is checked by the hero's hand: she wears the most decorated long chiton. Two other, more plainly dressed ladies (PLATE I, 2-3) run towards a vigorous old man sitting erect inside a palace: his neat beard is white and he holds a bent stick in one hand and the other hand is flung forward in anger. Behind him a little boy, asleep, leans against a pillar.

The old man is Asopos, father of Aigina. What of the boy? Just any slave boy? It is possible, but children on Attic vases can generally be identified. We learn from Pausanias that Asopos had a grandson

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Oinomaos whose mother was called Harpina (v 22. 6, vi 21. 8). This name is suggestive—a little Harpe. Apollodoros also tells us (i 9. 21) that one of the Harpies pursued by the Boreads from Thrace to the Strophades, fell into the River Tigres and was drowned; the Tigres should be a tributary of the Asopos: or perhaps the newly baptised Harpuos, ex Tigres, gave his daughter Harpina to Asopos.

Once when I was proceeding from Patros to Loutraki by LTB, the ship bucked a little, but no rolling, till short of the Perachora peninsula, when the Northern draught between Helikon and Kithairon caught us and we nearly keeled over: all the deck-chairs but mine crashed on their sides, Poseidon had arranged a stanchion for me to cling to. Just so was the Harpe driven southwards inland. Shearwater still breed on the Strophades but I do not think that the lady was drowned. Apollodoros did not know that these birds swim and dive before they can fly, when, newly fledged and deserted by their parents, they stumble into the sea. So the woman rushing to her son Oinomaos will be Harpina, and the third woman Korkyra, Oinomaos' other island daughter: that island is rather harpe-shaped.

The condition of this vase is much better than that of its companion: its painter waits identification.

All rivers are children of Okeanos; so their children are Okeanids rather than Nereids. The two white feet beside the chariot of Okeanos and Tethys on the François vase (*ABV* 76, 1) have been thought to belong to Nereids, but Okeanids would be philologically preferable. Another Okeanid can be detected under the dark cave of the handle, next to this chariot. In front of the cave is Hephaistos and inside is a marine scaly beast with a fish tail: Nereus has been suggested, but far better would be the Okeanid Eurynome who assisted the bride Thetis to nurture Hephaistos in her father's cave. A statue of Eurynome near the junction of the Ladas and the Neda, is described by Pausanias (viii 41.4) as being woman above and fish below. If, as I think, the Oxford bronze mould shows a female creature, we have here a complete presentation of Eurynome, the Okeanid (Payne, *NC* pl. 45, 3).

In his *Berliner Maler* Sir John Beazley describes the figures on a small neck amphora in Harvard as Triton and a Nereid (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 200, 49). Although he lived in the sea, Triton's connection with any Nereid has not been recorded. Surely Nereus is more likely, but his love affair was not with a daughter but with the Okeanid Doris. Sir John notes that the lady wears shoes (*Vases in America* 38), which, he says, are unusual in this painter, and explains that she is running down the beach; but why should a sea-nymph find herself on a beach in order to meet a sea-deity? Doris, who gave her name to the Dorian race, lived by the

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Northern Asopos, and would have had need of shoes to reach the sea. There are many springs on those hills; I wonder which was Doris?

F. Fischer declares that all Okeanids and Nereids are chthonic (*Nereiden und Okeaniden*): doubtless he averted his eyes from all Greek springs, rivers and seas and from many Greek vases. Today the race of bookworms seldom seeks to emerge from their libraries.

It is to be concluded from our study that a single woman, whether running, standing or sitting, should not be called a Nereid without further evidence: if she carries a dolphin she is more likely to be Thetis, Doris or Amphitrite: it depends on her associates and attributes. Even when they bear Nereid names the matter is not certain. On a pyxis in New York, 40.11.2 (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 1213, 1) two quails accompany ladies with Nereid names, so the scene probably occurs in contemporary Athens, and not at the bottom of the sea. After all, my foreman in Ithaca is called Laertes (*AJA* xliv [1940] 429).

Still it is difficult to be logical when once embarked on phantasy. How did the horses of the divine chariots enjoy the journey to Nereus' palace on the François vase? Even the children of Boreas, though equally at home on land or sea, kept to the surface (*Il.* xx 228).

I deal elsewhere with the alleged Nereids of the 'Nereid Monument' and also those of the 'Nereid lekythos'. Clearly they are Aurai.

The ladies on horseback found at the temple of Asklepios at Epidauros cannot be Nereids, who really are not horsewomen. I suggest that they are Eos and Selene and have a cosmic meaning. Eos has a special connexion with this god, her name is on the altar before his temple at Kos.

I have to thank the Fitzwilliam Museum for the photographs of the pyxis.

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### A Sam Wide Group Cup in Oxford

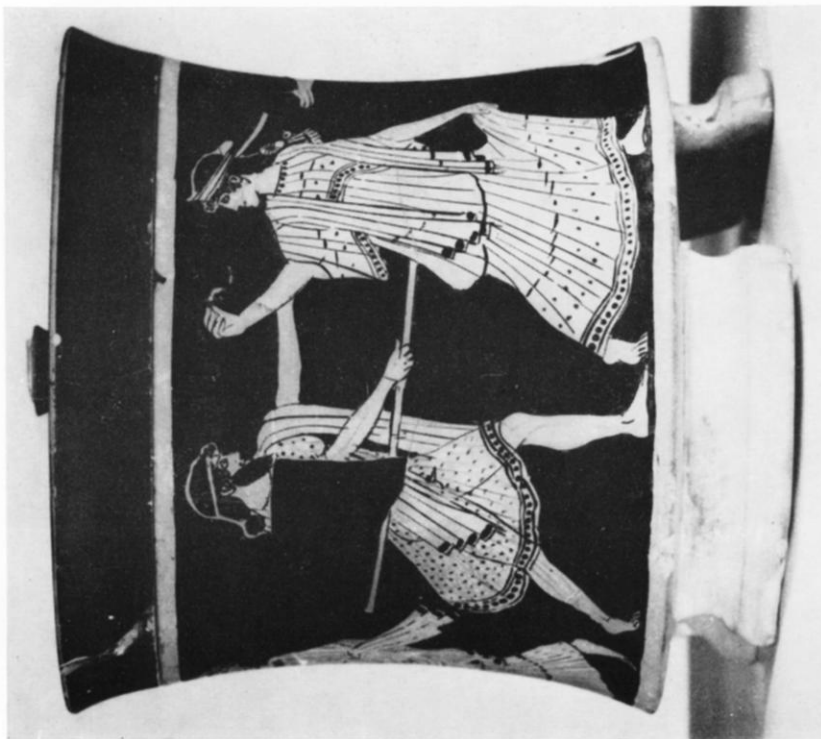
(PLATES II-III 1)

Mrs Ure has recalled attention in recent *JHS* Notes (lxxxviii [1968] 140 f.; lxxxix [1969] 120 f.) to the class of fifth-century Corinthian cups and other small vases studied formerly by Sam Wide (in *AM* xxvi [1901] 143 ff.) and her (in *JHS* lxxix [1949] 18 ff.). It is surely time the class had a name and, with Mrs Ure's approval, I suggest 'The Sam Wide Group'. Mrs Ure mentions a cup of the group in Oxford and I take this opportunity to publish it. It is in private possession but at present exhibited in the Ashmolean museum, whose photographs of it are shown here (PLATE II 1-2). The fabric and the outside decoration (partly painted handles, tongues on the lip, a band within the concave foot) are wholly normal for this group. The cup interior, which carries the figure decoration, measures 9.2 cm across. The paint is a

reddish brown, used with varying intensity from the pale wash for hatching to heavy stippling over painted areas (as the cloak). The scene is of Oedipus and the Sphinx—with a difference which is easier to describe than explain. Oedipus sits at the left, his petasos slung behind his neck, his sword drawn and held upright over his knees. A chlamys fastened round his neck appears to be raised in a protective gesture over his head. Passing from the ridiculous to the sublime we might compare the gesture of a Niobe protecting her child. The left arm holding the drapery is not shown, but this explanation seems the most plausible. The only alternative is that this is the rock on which we might expect the Sphinx otherwise to be sitting, and which can be shown in this form. The monster is perched on a column with a volute capital which is not strictly Ionic but of the type commonly seen on vases for structures or furniture. A high plinth over the volutes serves as base for the creature, rocking back on its haunches, balancing, it seems, on a springy tail. The blob on the plinth behind its tail might be taken for one of the physical manifestations of its extreme emotion. The head is clearly masculine, with a shock of bristling hair, beetling brows, compressed lips, and a comic expression of displeasure and violent concentration. The problem is to determine what it is doing. The arms are human, the legs feline, and the hands appear to be grasping the legs themselves or some other object which is also supported by the legs and concealed by them. The object continues in a bulbous excrescence from which spring three heavy drops or leaves. It bears no obvious resemblance to a known artefact, and since it is hatched like the Sphinx's body, we should perhaps assume that it is part of its body. Its foot? But it is Oedipus who had that trouble. Despite the anatomical difficulties it really does appear that the creature is masturbating. The masculinity of the features has already been remarked. It may seem a very odd way of expressing chagrin and disgust with Oedipus' solution of the riddle, and Oedipus seems to regard the act as a threat, but the scene hardly calls for an account of the sex life of Greek monsters. Other features are, however, worth comment since they reflect on the artist's knowledge of the myth. Oedipus' drawn sword suggests what is probably the original version in which Oedipus slays the Sphinx, and the monster neither commits suicide nor explodes in this expression of dismay.<sup>1</sup> On fifth-century Athenian vases Oedipus is usually dressed in chlamys and petasos, as here, but with two spears or a club, pondering the riddle and not attacking. The Sphinx is first shown on a column by about 475 B.C.,<sup>2</sup> suggested, perhaps, by the

<sup>1</sup> *ἐαντήν διεσπάραξεν* (*Σ. E. Phoen.* 50). For the Oedipus scenes on vases see Brommer, *Vasenlisten*<sup>2</sup> 340 f.

<sup>2</sup> *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 451, no. 1, by the Oedipus Painter; 485, no. 24, by Hermonax. When it appears with visitors, on a low base, on early fifth-century lekythoi, it cannot be the Theban but is probably a tomb monument.



Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge GR 10. 1934

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