

THE BOSTON RELIEF AND THE RELIGION OF LOCRI EPIZEPHYRII*

THE three-sided Boston relief (PLATE XIIIa), which is to be dated in the second quarter of the fifth century, has been the object of a long controversy with regard both to its subject matter and to its authenticity, which has been doubted by some scholars.¹ The authenticity of the monument will be taken for granted here, since the work of Jucker,² and especially the recent exhaustive stylistic and scientific study by Ashmole and Young³ leave no possible room for doubting it. Another aspect of the relief which I will take for granted in this paper is the artistic milieu which created it, since it has been convincingly shown⁴ that it is of South Italian, and more specifically Epizephyrian Locrian, origin. The object of the present paper is to discuss the iconography of the monument, especially with reference to the cult and religious environment of the city in which it was produced.

The interpretation of the central scene and the two side-panels of the Boston relief is still a matter of controversy, although many hypotheses have been put forward since the monument first appeared in the antiquities market.⁵ Discussions of the iconography of this relief tend more often than not to connect the problem, in some way or other, with the subject matter of the Ludovisi throne (PLATE XIIIb), another three-sided relief belonging to the artistic environment of Locri Epizephyrii,⁶ but of a much higher artistic quality. The interpretation of the scenes on the Ludovisi throne has not provoked the same amount of controversy, and it would, I think, be a fair statement that the interpretation of the central representation as the birth of Aphrodite⁷ is now generally accepted—more accurately, it is the new-born Aphrodite being assisted out of the sea, and to the shore, by the Moirai or the Horai. On each of the side-panels a female figure is shown, a naked pipe-player on one, a heavily draped young matron burning incense in a thymiaterion on the other. They have been interpreted as hetaira and young bride or wife, two contrasting figures associated with Aphrodite's Locrian cult.⁸

* This paper is an only slightly modified version of a lecture delivered to the Hellenic Society on March 29, 1973, and subsequently also at Oxford.

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor B. Ashmole, who has given me invaluable practical help in the preparation of the lecture, and to Mr J. Boardman and Professor P. H. J. Lloyd-Jones who kindly read the text of the lecture and discussed it with me.

¹ The following is a rather selective bibliography among the numerous discussions of the Boston relief:

F. Studniczka, *JdI* xxvi (1911) 50–192 (full publication); L. Alscher, *Götter vor Gericht: Das Fälschungsproblem des Bostoner 'Throns'* (Berlin 1963) with useful bibliography; B. Ashmole, *JHS* xlii (1922) 248–53; *ib.*, *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* lxiii (1965) 59–61; *ib.*, *AntK* xiv (1971) 159–60; W. Young and B. Ashmole, *Boston Bulletin* lxvi (1968) no. 346 pp. 124–66; F. Baroni, *Osservazioni sul 'Trono di Boston'* (Rome 1961); F. L. Bastet, *BABesch* xxxviii (1963) 1–27; H. Boyd Hawes, *AJA* xxvi (1922) 278–306; L. Byvanck-Quarles van Ufford, *BABesch* xi (1936) 1–16; *ib.*, *BABesch* xxxvi (1961) 60–3; Rhys Carpenter, *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* xviii (1941) 41–61; L. D. Caskey, *AJA* xxii (1918)

101–45; *ib.*, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Catalogue of Greek and Roman Sculpture* (Cambridge Mass. 1925) no. 17, pp. 30–48 (with bibliography: pp. 33–4); J. Colin, *RA* 1946, 23–42; 139–72; A. von Gerkan, *ÖJh* xxv (1929) 125–72; H. Jucker, *MusHelv* xxii (1965) 117–24; *ib.*, *MusHelv* xxiv (1967) 116–19; Ch. Kardara, *ArchEph* 1964, 52–82; H. Möbius, *Charites* (Festschrift Langlotz, Bonn 1957) 47–58, with bibliography (esp. nn. 34–6); *ib.*, *AA* 1964, 294–9; H. Prückner, *Die lokrischen Tonreliefs* (Mainz 1968) 89–91; E. Simon, *Die Geburt der Aphrodite* (Berlin 1959) *passim* (hereafter Simon, *Geburt*).

² *Op. cit.* (n. 1).

³ B. Ashmole, *Boston Bulletin* lxiii; W. Young and B. Ashmole, *Boston Bulletin* lxvi (*cf.* n. 1).

⁴ B. Ashmole, *JHS* xlii, 248–53; *ib.* *Late Archaic and Early Classical Greek Sculpture in Sicily and South Italy* (Oxford 1934) 18.

⁵ *Cf.* bibliography n. 1; on the history of the relief and its find *cf.* E. Nasch, *RömMit* lxvi (1959) 104–37.

⁶ For the attribution *cf.* Ashmole *op. cit.* (n. 4).

⁷ For a discussion of this interpretation *cf.* Simon, *Geburt, passim*.

⁸ *Cf.* Caskey, *Boston Catalogue* 42; *ib.*, *AJA* xxii, 117–18; Simon, *Geburt* 20–9.

There are no compelling grounds for expecting a connection between the subjects of the central scenes of the Boston relief and the Ludovisi throne. According to Caskey,⁹ the similarities between the two monuments can be due to one of two causes: 'either they were both designed as parts of some larger structure, or one was made as a companion piece to the other, and to serve a similar use'. The former alternative involves the difficulty of the divergent dimensions of the two reliefs;¹⁰ the second alternative may be a plausible explanation, but it is not the only one that can be derived from the evidence. What is suggested by the evidence is, in my opinion, first, that the artist of the Boston relief set out to imitate the *design* of the Ludovisi throne, and second, that it is highly plausible that in Roman times the two reliefs were used together;¹¹ however, from this it does not follow that we should *a priori* exclude the possibility that the Boston relief was carved in imitation of the design of, but not as a companion piece to, the Ludovisi throne. Again, although it probably had the same structural role as the Ludovisi throne, whatever *that was*,¹² it need not have been created for the same cult, or set up in the same sacred place, as that relief—although they both belonged to the religious environment of Locri Epizephyrii. Consequently, it seems to me that there is no reason why the interpretation of the Boston relief should depend upon, or be influenced by, the subject matter of its nobler counterpart.

The action represented in the central scene of the Boston relief is not, of course, in itself difficult to define; the controversy concerns the circumstances under which the action is taking place, the personalities of the participants, and therefore also, ultimately, the significance of the action.

A winged youth is holding a pair of scales, on each pan of which a young male figure is represented; a woman is sitting on either side of the winged youth, one represented in an attitude of sorrow, while the other, the one on the side of the heavier pan which is going down, is making a gesture of rejoicing. Young male figures weighed against each other in scales held by a superhuman being are not unknown in Greek iconography; they can be found in the representations of *kerostasia* or *psychostasia*, in which Zeus, or, much more frequently, Hermes, weighs the *κῆρε θανάτοιο* of two warriors, an act which will show which of the two is going to die.¹³

On some of the representations of the psychostasia of Memnon and Achilles on Greek vases, the divine mothers of the heroes, Eos and Thetis, are shown on either side of Hermes with the scales; Thetis, whose son Achilles will live, is represented rejoicing, while Eos shows distress at the prospective death of Memnon.¹⁴ In some cases, whether by accident or design, the balance is shown in equilibrium. Where this is not the case, the heavier side,

⁹ *Boston Catal.* 34.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.* 34–5; cf. also Carpenter 46–50; Carpenter's thesis is that the Boston relief was carved later than the Ludovisi throne, but for use in the same monument, as a true companion piece.

¹¹ *Boston Bulletin* lxvi, 159; Nasch, *op. cit.* (n. 5).

¹² Many suggestions have been made with regard to the function of the two three-sided reliefs, the way they were used (cf. e.g. *JHS* xxii, 252; *JdI* xxvi, 83–96; *ArchEph* 1964, 79–80). To these I would like to add, very tentatively, yet another: I would like to suggest that the two reliefs may not have had a primarily structural, 'functional' use, but a religious-decorative one; that each (separately) may have constituted a very small parapet, secured, directly or indirectly, in the ground, both at the base and at the vertical ends of the side-panels, on uneven ground, possibly a hill, to be viewed from below, perhaps in a way not dissimilar to that of the parapet of the balustrade of

Athena Nike on the Athenian Acropolis. But I have no intention of pressing this suggestion which I consider no more than just another possibility.

¹³ Cf. *JdI* xxvi, 132–5; L. D. Caskey and J. D. Beazley, *Attic Vase-paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, iii (Boston 1963) 44–6 (hereafter *CB*); C. C. van Essen, *BABesch* 1964, 126–8; K. Schauenburg, *BonnJb* clxi (1961) 227–8; G. E. Lung, *Archäologische Studien zur Aithiopsis* (Bonn 1912) 13–27.

¹⁴ Stamnos by the Syracuse Painter, Boston 10.177 (*ARV*² 518, 1; *CB* pls. 82, 3; 83; Simon, *Geburt* fig. 47); cup, Louvre G 399 (E. Pottier, *Vases antiques du Louvre* iii (Paris 1922) pl. 140; Simon, *Geburt* fig. 49); neck-amphora by the Ixion Painter in Leyden AMM 1 (A. D. Trendall, *The red-figured vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily* (Oxford 1967) 339 no. 800; *BABesch* 1964, 126 fig. 1; 127 fig. 2; Simon, *Geburt* fig. 50).

the one which goes down, is the one which signifies death, as in Homer,¹⁵ and is accompanied by the sorrow of the corresponding mother.¹⁶ On all psychostasia scenes, the two figures on the pans are either represented as small warriors, or shown naked and unarmed, but winged; they are generally taken to represent souls.¹⁷

Now, if we consider the scene of the Boston relief, we can see that, although the general pattern of the representation is closely related to that of the psychostasia, the scene itself cannot be interpreted as psychostasia. Here, the heavier side, which in a psychostasia would denote death, going down towards Hades, corresponds to the rejoicing woman, and vice versa. Moreover, the youths on the scales have neither armour nor wings; they are also hanging from a rope, attached undoubtedly to the horizontal bar of the scales which is now missing, and are not, as in the psychostasia scenes, standing on the pans. For all these reasons,¹⁸ we can safely conclude that the scene is not a psychostasia, although the iconographical pattern of the psychostasia was adopted and adapted in order to render a different, if plausibly similar, theme.

The heavier pan of the scales, the one which goes down, is the winning side—(and therefore can reasonably be expected to be accompanied by rejoicing, as on the Boston relief)—when the weighing involves some type of transaction. Since it is young men who are being weighed on our scene, we cannot, obviously, be dealing with an actual transaction, but with some kind of decision concerning the two youths, a comparative assessment which could be iconographically expressed in terms of weighing. Iconographically speaking, then, the artist of the Boston relief adapted the psychostasia pattern—two youths being weighed against each other by a supernatural being with a woman on either side, one in sorrow, the other rejoicing—by altering the mechanics and the significance of the weighing, so that they correspond to that of a transaction in which the heavier side wins, in order to depict a theme for which the psychostasia pattern itself was inadequate, or inappropriate, or both.

Before we try to identify this theme, the identity of the participants in action must be discussed. In fact, I intend to establish first, as far as this is possible, the identity of the various figures on the basis of the iconography of each individual figure, and independently of any interpretation of the whole; I will only deal with the circumstances and the significance of the action at a second stage, and after any uncertainties over independent identification have been stated; in this way errors can be isolated and will not become self-perpetuating.

I shall start with the identity of the two women. To begin with, it is reasonable to assume, at least as a working hypothesis, that they are not ordinary mortal women, but goddesses, since they are shown as participating in the weighing of two young men conducted by a winged boy.¹⁹ There are two clues as to the identity of the two goddesses, one clue for each goddess, namely the two objects under the volutes of the lower corners of the central scene. They are clearly meant to define the two figures, in the sense that they indicate the area in which each goddess belongs.²⁰ The object associated with the sorrowing lady is a pomegranate, that under the cheerful one is a fish.

With regard to the smiling goddess characterised by the fish, there seems to be a more or less general agreement that she is Aphrodite,²¹ born from, and in, the sea. The fish not

¹⁵ *Il.* xxii, 209–13, kerostasia of Hector and Achilles.

¹⁶ Cf. the neck-amphora by the Ixion Painter and the stamnos by the Syracuse Painter; cf. also *CB* iii, 46 and Schauenburg *op. cit.* (n. 13) 227–8.

¹⁷ *CB* 44–5.

¹⁸ Another objection which has been raised against the psychostasia theory (cf. e.g. *ArchEph* 1964,

61) is that it should be Hermes or Zeus holding the scales if that were in fact the subject of the scene.

¹⁹ Cf. *Jdl* xxvi, 141.

²⁰ On 'attributes' cf. Studniczka *Jdl* xxvi 128–31; 141.

²¹ *Jdl* 141; cf. also e.g. Simon, *Geburt* 84–6; Ashmole, *AntK* 159–60. This definition of Aphrodite through her association with the fish was probably

only indicates the area with which Aphrodite is associated, the sea, but also refers to a fundamental episode in her myth, her birth in the sea. The pomegranate, a chthonic and fertility symbol, stands in a corresponding relationship with only one goddess, Persephone, who at Locri, as will be seen below, was worshipped under her double aspect of fertility goddess and Queen of the Underworld; it symbolises the area to which she belongs, the Underworld,²² and a fundamental episode in her myth, her final binding to Hades and the Underworld through the consumption of a pomegranate. In fact, the identification of the sorrowing goddess with Persephone, first established, like that of Aphrodite, by Studniczka,²³ is a popular one, and has not been challenged, to my knowledge, on iconographical grounds, and independently of a central hypothesis.²⁴

The symbols shown on the corners of the central scene also appear on the corners of the side-panels; a pomegranate on the corner of the side-panel next to Persephone, a fish on that on Aphrodite's side. This, in my opinion, suggests that the figures on the side-panels are not unconnected with the main scene, but that, whether or not they are directly concerned with the action, they certainly belong together, are closely associated, with the goddesses next to whom they are sitting.

On Persephone's side, a beautiful young man, naked but for his sandals, is sitting playing the lyre; the pomegranate denotes his association with the Underworld. If all hypotheses about the overall interpretation of the main scene are disregarded, and the question is asked in iconographical terms, 'which mythological young male lyre-player is associated with the Underworld?', the obvious answer is, of course, Orpheus. On even the most sceptical approach to his personality, he was by this time, beyond possible doubt, both an established lyre-player and one of the living visitors to the Underworld²⁵—apart from his more complex role as culture hero and founder of mysteries, which appears to have been established by the late sixth century, or the first half of the fifth at the latest.²⁶ So Orpheus' connection with the Underworld and with Persephone is well established.²⁷

It has been recently suggested,²⁸ in the framework of the hypothesis that the central scene depicts the story of Adonis (a hypothesis which will be briefly considered below), that the young lyre-player may be Hermes. However, in my opinion, there are some objections to this interpretation. Hermes was indeed the inventor of the lyre, but in the few representations in which he is associated with it,²⁹ first, normally there is a connection with the circumstances of the invention of this musical instrument, before Hermes passed it on to

determined by two factors; first, the *persona* of Aphrodite at Locri, and her birth from the sea is represented on one type of Locrian pinax (cf. Prückner 37 fig. 4); and second, by the representation of Aphrodite on the Ludovisi throne, which again records her connection with the sea.

²² Cf. *Jdl* xxvi, 129, 141; *JHS* xlii, 250.

²³ *Jdl* xxvi, 129, 141.

²⁴ Simon's identification (*Geburt* 82-4) does depend upon a central hypothesis, and is not much concerned with the specific iconography of the figure.

²⁵ Orpheus as a lyre-player: metope from the Sikyonian treasury at Delphi (c. 560); P. de la Coste-Messelière, *Delphes* (Paris 1943) pl. 42; stamnos in the manner of the Berlin Painter (*ARV*² 215, 12) etc. Cf. also Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1941) 1-4; 33; 165.

Descent to Hades: cf. Linforth *op. cit.* 16-21; 30-1; 167-8.

²⁶ Cf. Linforth 35; 38-49; 67-8; 170-1; G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge 1957) 38.

²⁷ It may be worth mentioning in this connexion the evidence offered by the *Rhesus*, a play with regard to which Ritchie has recently argued in favour of a Euripidean authorship and a date between 455 and 440 (W. Ritchie, *The authenticity of the Rhesus of Euripides* (Cambridge 1964)). Lines 941-4 of the *Rhesus* inform us that Orpheus was the founder of some very important mysteries in Athens, lines 964-6 that Persephone was believed to have some kind of obligation towards Orpheus. Linforth (*op. cit.* 61-4) suggests that we should connect the two items of information and conclude that Persephone's obligation towards Orpheus stemmed from the fact that he was believed to have instituted the mysteries most valued by the Athenians, the Eleusinian mysteries, in Persephone's honour. He also notes (171) that the only deity ever mentioned as honoured in the rites instituted by Orpheus is Persephone in this particular context.

²⁸ Ashmole, *AntK* xiv (1971) 159-60.

²⁹ Cf. on the subject N. Yalouris, *ArchEph* 1953-4 ii, 175-6.

Apollo, and second, even if this is not the case, Hermes is not defined through the lyre; his identity is clear through one or more of his normal attributes,³⁰ kerykeion, petasos and winged sandals—here he is wearing sandals but they are not winged. Another objection is that at Locri Hermes has a specific, if versatile, iconographical type which does not correspond to that of the naked youth of the Boston side-panel. Hermes on the Locrian pinakes³¹ can be both bearded and beardless; he can wear only a cloak, or both chiton and cloak; and he is always defined by at least one, normally more, of the following attributes: petasos, sometimes winged, kerykeion, winged sandals, ram. Once³² instead of the petasos he is wearing a strange headdress which appears to be made of feathers, in Red Indian style.

In these circumstances, it seems to me that the interpretation of the young lyre-player as Orpheus is iconographically the most satisfactory.

On the side-panel next to Aphrodite, an old woman characterised, like Aphrodite, by a fish is rather uncomfortably seated, an object now missing in one of her hands. This panel has been drastically interfered with, at some stage and for some unknown reason; its length has been considerably reduced, and the representation mutilated.³³ The activity of the old woman has been convincingly reconstructed:³⁴ she is spinning. Again, if we ask the question, who, in terms of Greek iconography, would an old woman be, who is represented as spinning, and is associated with the sea, and with Aphrodite, the answer is rather obvious, and has already been suggested:³⁵ she must be a Moira, indeed, one particular Moira, the spinner Klotho.

The Moirai are indeed associated with Aphrodite in Greek religious beliefs, and this association appears to be old, although it is reflected in a rather confused way in the existing sources. The clearest evidence comes from Pausanias (i 19, 2) who tells us that in Athens, in the sanctuary of Aphrodite in the Gardens, there was a statue of Aphrodite, resembling a Herm in shape, and inscribed with an epigram saying that Ourania Aphrodite was the oldest of the Moirai. Epimenides³⁶ associated Aphrodite, the Moirai and the Erinyes by making them sisters, daughters of Kronos, while the Orphic hymn to Aphrodite, on its own, of course, an unreliable source for classical Greek beliefs, mentions Aphrodite's power over the Moirai.³⁸ E. Simon, in discussing the Ludovisi throne, has made a case³⁹ for a distinct association in the representational, and plausibly also in the literary⁴⁰ evidence, of the Moirai with the birth of Aphrodite in the sea.

All this would indicate that both the association with Aphrodite, and her definition through the fish, can be satisfactorily explained if the old woman is interpreted as a Moira, an identification also suggested by her spinning, which points more specifically to Klotho.

We shall now consider the identity of the winged boy who is holding the scales. To begin with, it should be noted that, as Ashmole has remarked,⁴¹ his presence and role here may have been determined by the functional necessity to represent a standing figure of not excessive height, a requirement met by an adolescent daemon; this, of course, does not imply that this being would be inappropriate to the scene, and to the role in which he is cast.

A winged adolescent boy in the proximity of Aphrodite makes one immediately think of Eros; however, this identification is not necessarily correct here; after all, Persephone is also present, and there is a very different winged youth associated with her, Thanatos.⁴² More-

³⁰ Cf. e.g. A. Furtwängler, *Die Antike Gemmen* (Leipzig-Berlin 1900) p. xxxviii, 15.

³¹ Cf. *BdA* iii (1909) 11 fig. 10; 12 figs. 11–12; *Ausonia* iii (1908) figs. 33–41; P. Zancani Montuoro, *Atti Società Magna Graecia* 1954, 83–4 and pls. xiii–vi; Prückner pls. 1; 2; 24, 6; p. 17 fig. 1; cf. p. 78.

³² *Ausonia* iii, 187 fig. 40.

³³ Cf. *JdI* xxvi, 64; Caskey, *AJA* xxii, 114.

³⁴ Cf. Simon, *Geburt* 69 fig. 41.

³⁵ Ashmole, *AntK* xiv, 159–60.

³⁶ Epimenides fr. 19 Diels.

³⁷ (No note.)

³⁸ 55, 5.

³⁹ *Geburt* 46–55.

⁴⁰ Achaeus, *Moirai* fr. 27 Snell (27 N²); cf. Simon 46.

⁴¹ *AntK*, op. cit.

⁴² Cf. e.g. the Artemision drum with Alkestis' story: P. E. Arias, *Skopas* (Rome 1952) pl. v, 17. Much earlier representations of Thanatos as a naked winged youth can be found on vases; cf. e.g. the kalyx-krater Louvre G 163 by the Eucharides Painter

over, Eros appears twice in a cult context in the Locrian pinakes, once in the company of Aphrodite and Hermes⁴³ and once shown as a cult statue being passed from one woman to another,⁴⁴ and in both occasions he is represented, not as an adolescent, but as a charming child. This evidence is of course not decisive enough to exclude the interpretation of the winged youth as Eros, but it should make us cautious, and alive to the fact that the candidature of Thanatos, or even of an unknown winged daemon,⁴⁵ must be considered equally strong.

I should mention that a winged naked adolescent also makes his appearance in a fourth-century type of Locrian pinax,⁴⁶ where he is shown pouring a libation, and generally officiating, in front of a cult statue, a xoanon. Unfortunately, we cannot be certain of his identity, as we cannot be certain of the identity of the goddess whom the xoanon represents. However, in spite of some recent controversy on which more will be said below, the presence of the cock, and to a lesser degree of the kalathos, which appears to belong to Persephone on the fifth-century pinakes, indicate that we are in Persephone's sphere, and therefore also that the winged youth is either Thanatos, or, if he is Eros, a different kind of Eros from the charming child of Aphrodite.

With regard to the two youths who are being weighed, the most noticeable fact is that they are not standing on the pans, but are hanging from a rope, suspended from the vertical bar of the scales which is now missing, while only the tip of their toes is touching the pans. Even if the choice of the stance of the two youths had been determined by aesthetic and/or compositional, considerations, it cannot have been considered inappropriate to the content and context of the scene. In other words, the iconographical motif of the hanging stance must have been relevant to the subject represented. It has been remarked⁴⁷ that this stance was used to represent prisoners, and generally people undergoing a punishment. There is an exact iconographical parallel to the stance of the two youths on a South Italian vase⁴⁸ which shows the punishment of a thief. Therefore, it is very plausible, and should be kept in mind, that the same significance should be read into the stance of the Boston youths.

We can go no further on the evidence of the figures themselves and their stance; we cannot recognise, out of context, who they are, and why they should be shown in this way. All that can be said in addition to the above is that the two youths are differentiated, they are not shown as identical, duplicate, figures. The one on the side which goes down is represented frontally, the other, on the losing side, is shown in profile, turned towards the sorrowing Persephone, and with the head inclined downwards.

Having thus concluded the discussion of the individual figures, I shall now attempt to investigate the context, the circumstances in which the action is taking place, and its exact significance. This action can now be described in the following terms: a winged adolescent daemon is weighing two youths represented in the stance appropriate for showing punishment and imprisoned figures, in the presence of a rejoicing Aphrodite, on the side of whom the Moira Klotho sits spinning, and of a sorrowful Persephone, on the side of whom Orpheus sits playing the lyre.

We cannot be certain, at this stage, that Aphrodite's rejoicing and Persephone's sorrow are causally connected with the *result* of the weighing, that is, that Aphrodite supported, as it were, the youth who wins, and Persephone the one who lost, as we would be certain if this were an actual psychostasia scene. It is *a priori* equally possible that one goddess is rejoicing

(ARV² 227, 12; E. Pottier, *Vases antiques du Louvre* iii (Paris 1922) pl. 124).

⁴³ *BdA* iii, 12 fig. 12.

⁴⁴ *Ausonia* iii, 191 fig. 42.

⁴⁵ On unidentified winged Underworld daemons cf. G. Bakalakis, *Ἀνάγλυφα* (Salonica 1969) 17, with bibliography.

⁴⁶ Prückner pl. 34, 4.

⁴⁷ Kardara, *ArchEph* 1964, 75.

⁴⁸ A parallel suggested by Kardara (*op. cit.* 75 and pl. 20): Phlyax calyx-krater by the Tarporley Painter, New York 24.97.104; A. D. Trendall, *Phlyax Vases* (London 1967²) 53 no. 84; *ib. Frühitaliotische Vasen* (Leipzig 1938) pl. 28b.

and the other mourning for reasons associated with the weighing which is taking place, but independently of the actual result, and of which youth wins. If this is the case, the correspondence 'winning side—rejoicing, losing side—sorrow' would be due to the influence of the psychostasia scheme, of which this scene is, we saw, an iconographical variation.

There is no episode in the body of myths known to us, either complete or in vestigial form, in which Aphrodite and Persephone are associated with the weighing, or any kind of evaluation or assessment, of two youths. They are associated with some kind of assessment in connection with *one* youth, Adonis, and it has in fact been suggested that this is what is represented here.⁴⁹

Briefly, the story runs as follows: Adonis, offspring of a rather involved union, and born through a complicated process, was picked up, as a new-born baby, by Aphrodite, who entrusted him to Persephone to bring up; however, either immediately, or when he grew up to be a very beautiful youth, Persephone decided she wanted to keep him to herself, rather than return him to Aphrodite. Aphrodite, who was also interested in the handsome boy, objected; Zeus intervened as usual, and decided that Adonis should stay a third of the year with Aphrodite, a third of the year with Persephone, and have the remaining third to himself. Adonis, who reciprocated Aphrodite's feelings, gave up his own third to her, so in this love-contest between the two goddesses Aphrodite won.

This is the story which, it has been suggested, should be reflected in the Boston relief's central scene, a hypothesis which has gained more popularity than any other among scholars concerned with the problem.⁵⁰ It has also attracted a not inconsiderable amount of criticism,⁵¹ because it presents some difficulties, not easily overcome.

To begin with, it is difficult to believe that the awkward and equivocal duplication of Adonis into two youths was thought to be the best way of representing the subject, rather than, for example, the use of two Erotes weighed by Adonis. Then, as Picard first remarked,⁵² if that clumsy scheme *was* chosen, we would expect the two duplicates of Adonis to be made to look identical, rather than be explicitly differentiated. Even the way in which they are differentiated argues, I think, against the Adonis theory; the youth on Aphrodite's side is looking straight ahead, while Persephone's Adonis is turning towards the goddess whom he rejected. And why was the iconographical motif of the hanging stance considered appropriate for the duplicates of Adonis, who is not known to have been imprisoned or punished? Also, if, as was argued above, the young lyre-player is not Hermes—and Hermes' own relevance to the Adonis story is rather problematic—who is he, and what was his role in the proceedings?⁵³ And why is Zeus absent?

I do not think that these objections can find a satisfactory answer in the framework of the Adonis hypothesis. And there is a further, perhaps the most serious, difficulty; it concerns the character of the relationship between Persephone and Aphrodite at Locri, as it emerges from the representational evidence provided by the Locrian pinakes; a relationship which involves not rivalry, but friendly coexistence.

We shall now then turn to the pinakes series⁵⁴ and consider briefly the personalities and cult of Persephone and Aphrodite as they appear in these monuments. It is legitimate to explore whether the information on Locrian religious beliefs supplied by the pinakes can throw any light on the Boston relief: the pinakes and the three-sided relief belong to the

⁴⁹ Studniczka *op. cit.*; Ashmole, *AntK*, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Cf. Alscher 102 n. 14 and add Ashmole, *AntK* *op. cit.*

⁵¹ Cf. Alscher 102 n. 14; to it should be added: Ch. Picard, *Manuel d'Archéologie grecque. La sculpture* ii, 142 n. 1.

⁵² *Op. cit.*

⁵³ Studniczka suggested that he was yet another Adonis, but such a triplication is highly implausible.

⁵⁴ Publications of pinakes: P. Orsi, *BdA* iii (1909) 1–43; Q. Quagliati, *Ausonia* iii (1908) 136–234; P. Zancani Montuoro, *Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* v (1935) 195 ff.; *ib.*, *RIA* vii (1940) 205 ff.; *Rendiconti Accademia Napoli* xxix (1954) 79–86; *ib.*, *Atti Soc. M. Graecia* 1954, 71–106; *ArchStorCal* xxiv (1955) 283–308; *ib.*, *ArchClass* xii (1960) 37–50; *ib. Maryas* Suppl. i, Essays in memory of K. Lehmann (New York 1964) 386–95; Prückner *op. cit.* (cf. n. 1).

same religious environment, and moreover, the subject of the Ludovisi throne is also represented in one of the pinakes types.⁵⁵

Until very recently, it was generally accepted that Persephone was the main divinity in the cult reflected in the Locrian pinakes, sometimes accompanied by her consort Hades/Pluton.⁵⁶ However, in 1968, the claims of Aphrodite were put forward by Prückner,⁵⁷ who argued that Aphrodite's was the main cult of fifth-century Locri, and Aphrodite's the main cult reflected in the pinakes. Persephone, for Prückner, has only a very few types of pinakes belonging to her, which got accidentally mixed up with the main series which belong to Aphrodite.

The hypothesis of the accidental mixing of the two series is most unconvincing, in fact untenable,⁵⁸ both because of the circumstances of the finds and because of the amazing unity of the series, which leaves no doubt that one and the same cult is reflected throughout. Most of the reasons for which Prückner takes away types from Persephone to give them to Aphrodite are based on a *petitio principii* or on hypothesis built upon hypothesis; often his conclusions and classification are demonstrably wrong, as when he attributes to Aphrodite, which he does very often, scenes in which the main cult attribute is a cock, a bird which is not only a universal Greek chthonic symbol, but also belongs to the Locrian Persephone in those scenes in which her identity has not been doubted even by Prückner himself.⁵⁹ But he is no doubt correct in attributing some types to Aphrodite⁶⁰ and giving her a specific place in the cult which the pinakes reflect. However, this place is not, as Prückner unconvincingly argues, the predominant, it is the subordinate one; this is clear not only from the find spot, Persephone's sanctuary,⁶¹ and the number of types which, in an objective classification proceeding from the known to the unknown and not vice versa,⁶² belong to Persephone, but also from the 'Representation' scenes or 'ricevimenti' in which various divinities pay 'homage' to a seated Persephone, or pair of Hades and Persephone;⁶³ these various 'homage' types clearly indicate the principal divinities of the cult reflected in the pinakes: Persephone, often shown with her consort Hades.

The coexistence of a Persephone- and an Aphrodite-cult in a series which displays such a remarkable unity through cult symbols, cult furniture, vessels and other cult paraphernalia, can only be satisfactorily explained if we believe that the two cults, of Persephone and of Aphrodite (who was occasionally paired with Hermes), were closely associated at Locri.⁶⁴ Such a close relationship and association need not surprise us. Persephone at Locri is worshipped both in her role as Queen of the Underworld and as a fertility goddess; an illustration of this double aspect can be found in scenes which show Persephone and

⁵⁵ Cf. Prückner 37 fig. 4 and pp. 36-8.

⁵⁶ Orsi, *op. cit.* (cf. n. 54); Quagliati, *op. cit.*; Zancani Montuoro, *op. cit.*; A. W. Oldfather, *RE* s.v. 'Lokroi'; *ib.*, *Philologus* lxi (1910) 114-25; *ib.*, *Philologus* lxxi (1912) 321-31.

⁵⁷ Prückner *op. cit.* (cf. n. 1). Cf. also reviews: J. Boardman, *CR* xxi (1971) 144-5; G. Zuntz, *Gnomon* xliii (1971) 490-501; B. S. Ridgway and R. T. Scott, *Archaeology* xxvi (1973) 43-7.

⁵⁸ Cf. Boardman, *op. cit.*; Zuntz, *op. cit.* 492-4.

⁵⁹ Cf. Zuntz 499; cf. e.g. *BdA* 10 fig. 8; 11 fig. 9 etc.

⁶⁰ Cf. Zuntz 494-7.

⁶¹ Cf. P. Zancani Montuoro, *RendAccLincei* 1959, 225-32.

⁶² In my opinion, Prückner's main methodological fault is that he does not start with the scenes which indisputably belong to one or the other goddess and isolate the 'symbols' and cult objects peculiar to each of them. Hence, for example, his misplacement of the cock, upon which hang and follow many other

attributions. The attribution of the 'Gewand' series to Aphrodite depends on the—surely both illusory and irrelevant—similarity of the indoors environment to that of the woman-with-child type, which he interprets as representing Aphrodite and the Dionysos child—ignoring the fact that the child is sometimes female.

⁶³ Cf. Zancani-Montuoro, *Soc. M. Graecia* 1954, 79-90.

⁶⁴ Prückner (*op. cit.* 74) made the suggestion of such an association *en passant* while discussing the Abduction types of pinakes, mainly in order to get out of the difficulty of having cult objects which he had firmly, if unconvincingly, attributed to Aphrodite present in scenes which cannot but belong to Persephone's cycle. Meanwhile, Zuntz [*Persephone* (Oxford 1971) 158-73 *passim*] has considered this hypothesis seriously, and, of course, the presence of Aphrodite in the cult, but in a less conspicuous role, was never denied by Zancani Montuoro.

Hades with a sprig of grain and a twig, which indicate their association with vegetation.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Aphrodite was not only the flirtatious Homeric goddess of Love. She had also another, deeper, aspect in her personality; she was a demiurgic Aphrodite, the force who creates through love, such as is reflected for example in Aeschylus *fr.* 44 N², Sophokles *fr.* 855 N² and Euripides *fr.* 898 N². This connexion with fertility and creation is most appropriate to a cult like the one reflected in the Locrian pinakes, which was a particular concern of women, and more specifically of young girls, as is clear from the many scenes representing various ritual acts, always performed by girls.⁶⁶

This brief survey of the evidence offered by the Locrian pinakes has thrown, I believe, some light on the personalities of Persephone and Aphrodite and their relationship, but it has not offered any evidence for an association of the two goddesses with an action related, or similar, to the one represented on the Boston relief. This action then cannot be illuminated through any external evidence from the Locrian cult of Persephone and Aphrodite; it has to be deduced from the personalities of the participants and their spheres of interest as they have been defined so far, and from their relationship with each other.

If Aphrodite is considered in her aspect of goddess expressing the creative force generated through Love, there is one context—apart from that of Aphrodite's own birth—in which a Moira, and Klotho specifically, would be a very appropriate, perhaps the most appropriate, companion, especially if she is depicted as spinning; that of birth in general. Aphrodite is not herself associated with the actual process of birth, childbirth, of which normally Eileithyia, Artemis or Hera took care, but she was certainly connected with the birth of children in general—as she was connected with marriage—and it is very plausible that even in childbirth she was invoked, especially in Attica, under the name *Genetyllis*.⁶⁷ As for the connexion of the Moirai, and Klotho especially, with birth, it is well established, and the reasons for it self-evident.⁶⁸

Let us adopt then, as a working hypothesis, the view that Aphrodite and the Moira Klotho are here associated with the creative process of birth—which certainly fits Aphrodite's cheerful mood—and move on to Persephone. Her sorrowing attitude, her association with Orpheus (or at any rate with a youth in his turn connected with the Underworld), and the negative fact that there is nothing here to indicate a connexion with fertility—since the pomegranate can also be a purely chthonic symbol—make it likely that she is represented as an Underworld divinity, that she is shown in her character of Queen of the Underworld. Now if we ask the question 'is there any context which involves birth, Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld, preferably in a sorrowful mood, and the weighing or assessment of two youths who are represented in the iconographical scheme appropriate to, and used for, prisoners and punishment?' the answer is 'yes'—with some reservations, some difficulties which require explanation.

The context which I have in mind as answering to these requirements, is that which is best reflected in the following verses of Pindar (*fr.* 127 Bowra; 133 Bergk; 133 Snell):

οἴσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος
δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὑπερθεὺν ἄλιον κείνων ἐνάτω ἔτει
ἀντιδοῦ ψυχὰς πάλιν, ἐκ τῶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοὶ
καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφία τε μέγιστοι
ἄνδρες αὖξοντ' · ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἦροες ἀ-
γνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων καλεῦνται.

⁶⁵ Cf. *BdA* iii, 10 fig. 8.

⁶⁶ Cf. *BdA* iii, 8 fig. 6; 14 fig. 14; 15 fig. 16; 16 fig. 17; 17 fig. 18; 21 fig. 25; 22 fig. 26; 23 fig. 27.

⁶⁷ Cf. L. R. Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States* (Oxford 1896) ii, 655–6; M. Nilsson, *GGrR*³ 524–5;

cf. also Schol. Ar. *Nub.* 52; Schol. Ar. *Lys.* 2; Paus. i. 1, 5.

⁶⁸ Cf. B. C. Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods* (London 1965) 79–81; Nilsson *GGrR*³ 363 and n. 3; 524; cf. also Pind. *Ol.* vi. 39–42; *Ol.* i. 25–7.

The eschatological background of these verses⁶⁹ is the belief in a rebirth or reincarnation which, Pindar tells us here,⁷⁰ is the outcome of a judgment, an assessment involving a decision by Persephone as to whose atonement for the ancient grief she is going to accept. The part which would have told us what happens to those whose atonement she does not accept, is missing, so we know nothing of their fate; but those who have the good fortune to be considered as having paid off their debt, given adequate recompense for the ancient grief, are going to be reborn as kings and wise men, and after their death they will be worshipped as heroes.

Rebirth, then, preceded by a period of purgatory. The idea of a purgatory preparing people for a return to earth is frequently found in Plato, and Dodds found good reasons to believe that this doctrine was a Pythagorean invention.⁷¹ The doctrine of rebirth, whether or not it originated with the Pythagoreans, and specifically with Pythagoras himself, was certainly a very important part of Pythagorean belief, but by the first half of the fifth century it was not limited to Pythagorean circles; it had been adopted by non-Pythagorean philosophers, like Empedokles, and it is also found in Pindar, who was, of course, no Pythagorean, but who had come in contact with the belief in reincarnation in Sicily. We have no specific mention of Pythagoreans at Locri for the second quarter of the fifth century, the time of the Boston relief—unless it could be shown that Timaeus, the Locrian protagonist of the Platonic dialogue of the same name who voices Pythagorean beliefs, had been a real, historical, person.⁷² But it is generally believed that Locri, like the other South Italian and Sicilian Greek cities, had felt, at that period, the impact of Pythagorean doctrines,⁷³ which had gained great popularity, especially with prominent men among the Western Greeks. It has also been suggested by Dunbabin⁷⁴ that it was precisely at this time that the Locrian laws influenced those of Pythagorean Kroton.

The hypothesis which I am putting forward, then, with regard to the Boston relief, is that the iconographical motif of the weighing of the two youths was used for expressing, in representational terms, the idea of an assessment or judgment taking place in the Underworld after a period of purgatory and preceding a rebirth.

Because the weighing motif necessitates two parties assessed against each other, rather than two lots for one party, the idea of assessment took here the form of the judgment—expressed in terms of weighing—of two people, for only one of whom the outcome is favourable (since the weighing involves a winning and a losing side); from him Persephone is accepting atonement for the ancient grief, and he shall be reborn as a king or a wise man, as one of the privileged few. The fact that the two figures which are being assessed are represented as hanging from the scales, rendered through an iconographical motif appropriate to imprisoned figures and generally to people undergoing punishment, could either be explained through the general idea of the penalty paid to Persephone in the purgatory period, or depend on a specific belief that the (or some) sinners were hanging, ἀνηρτημένοι in the Underworld, a belief which we find in Plato's *Gorgias*⁷⁵ and which Dodds considers as plausibly Pythagorean.⁷⁶ The complex and controversial problem of the 'ancient grief', its nature and causes,⁷⁷ is irrelevant to this discussion, and need not, therefore, detain us. But

⁶⁹ On this fragment: H. J. Rose, *Greek Poetry and Life. Essays presented to G. Murray* (Oxford 1936) 79–96; caution should be exercised with regard to the Orphic approach of the author. Cf. also E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1951) 155–6 and n. 131; Linforth, *op. cit.* 345–55.

⁷⁰ Cf. a brief account of Pindar's eschatology in C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 89–95.

⁷¹ E. R. Dodds, *Plato, Gorgias* (Oxford 1959) 375.

⁷² As is argued in A. E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* (Oxford 1928) 10, 17, 25 and *passim*.

⁷³ Cf. E. L. Minar, *Early Pythagorean Politics in Practice and Theory* (Baltimore 1942) 41–2.

⁷⁴ T. J. Dunbabin, *The Western Greeks* (Oxford 1948) 72–3.

⁷⁵ Plato, *Gorgias* 525c.

⁷⁶ Dodds, *Gorgias* 375.

⁷⁷ Cf. bibliography n. 69.

this grief with which Persephone is involved in the Pindaric fragment provides an excellent reason for this goddess' mourning attitude on our relief.^{77a}

Aphrodite and Klotho would be associated with the new birth, the rebirth of the figure whom Persephone is releasing to the light of the sun. I do not think that the identity of the winged boy holding the scales is very important; compositionally the choice was successful, and this no doubt was the determining factor for putting him there. He may stand for life and the new birth, and be Eros, a demiurgic, cosmogonic Eros, pertinent to Aphrodite as creative force through Love, the kind of Eros who is found in the *Birds* of Aristophanes⁷⁸ and the *Theogony* of Hesiod,⁷⁹ the kind of Eros to whom Olen gave Eileithyia, the goddess of birth, for mother;⁸⁰ or he may stand for the nether regions, and be Thanatos, or any nameless winged daemon associated with death, conducting the weighing operation on the orders of Persephone, the Queen of the Underworld.

The interpretation which I am putting forward here, then, would involve, first, the doctrine of rebirth, a philosophical doctrine which was born, and always remained, outside the sphere of Greek state religion, although it was often seen in terms of, and referred to, divinities of the official Greek pantheon. Secondly, it would involve Aphrodite and the Moira Klotho in their character of divine beings associated with birth. Now, Aphrodite does appear as the demiurgic, the positive force, in purely philosophical thought, in Empedokles and possibly also in Parmenides,⁸¹ but she is not there associated with, or related to, rebirth, or Persephone, or a Moira. The Moirai also make their appearance in the tenth book of Plato's *Republic* in connection with reincarnation;⁸² but the circumstances are different, all three of them and not only Klotho are involved (plus Ananke who is represented as their mother), and there is no connection with Aphrodite. In my opinion, the roles of Aphrodite and the Moira Klotho, and their association with each other on the Boston relief, point towards their being represented in their character of divinities of the canonical Greek pantheon, and especially in their role of goddesses associated with birth. The same, I think, is true for the presence of Eros or Thanatos who performs the mechanical part of the operation in connection with Aphrodite or Persephone. As for Orpheus, on the one hand he was associated with the Pythagoreans and Pythagorean doctrine and was

^{77a} By this I do not, of course, mean that Persephone is mourning *because* of the weighing, that she regrets it; what I mean is that her attitude of grief is a reminder of the reasons for the whole operation. Greek art, and especially archaic Greek art, does not always show a 'snapshot' view of an episode of the story represented, but can interweave elements belonging to different moments of that story. (Cf. N. Himmelmann-Wildschütz, *Erzählung und Figur in der archaischen Kunst* (Akademie Mainz 1967: 2, 73-100); cf. also the review of this book by Hemelrijk, *Gnomon* xlii (1970) 166-71). An important element in these 'synoptical' narrative scenes is the 'hieroglyphic' figure which by its presence and/or iconography hints at, and stands for, earlier or later moments of the story than that of the main action. An example of such a figure which could be analogous to the mourning attitude of Persephone on our relief is Athena in the representation of Theseus struggling with the Minotaur on the black-figure cup signed by Archikles and Glaukytes, Munich 2243 (*ABV* 163, 2; *Paralipomena* 68; Himmelmann-Wildschütz pl. 7). In that scene Athena, by holding the lyre which Theseus played at a subsequent moment, when the victory over the Minotaur was celebrated with the

performance of the geranos dance, hints at this future stage in the story, and at the victorious outcome of the struggle which is taking place next to her on the pot.

As mentioned above, such synoptical scenes are much more frequent in archaic than in classical art, but, apart from the fact that the Severe Style of South Italy and Sicily has distinct lingering archaic traits, it should also be remembered that we find a fully 'synoptical' scene in a cup of the same period as our relief and in a purely early classical style, the whiteground cup British Museum D 5 by the Sotades Painter with the representation of Glaukos and Polyidos. (Cf. H. Philippart, *Les coupes attiques à fond blanc* (Brussels 1936) no. 65.)

⁷⁸ Vv. 691-700.

⁷⁹ Vv. 116-22.

⁸⁰ Paus. ix 27. On the demiurgic aspect of Eros cf. also Parmenides fr. 13 Diels; Sappho fr. 198 Lobel-Page; Pherecydes fr. 3 Diels; Akousilaos *FGrH* 2F6; Eur. *Hypp.* fr. 57.23 Bond.

⁸¹ Empedokles fr. 17 Diels; 128 Diels; 151 Diels and *φιλότης* throughout. Parmenides fr. 13 Diels.

⁸² Plato, *Republic* x. 616c-617e.

believed to have taught rites and beliefs which were felt to be similar to the Pythagorean ones,⁸³ and on the other hand he was a mythological figure, whose presence in the Underworld with his lyre was well-known in non-philosophical myth, and whose association with Persephone could be explained through the story of his *katabasis* which aimed at fetching his dead wife Eurydice back to the world of the living.

In any case, if my interpretation of the relief were accepted, we would have a mixture of Pythagorean beliefs, or, more accurately, of beliefs which originated in Pythagorean circles and never became part of Greek state religion, with figures and motifs belonging to Greek state religion and mythology. The problem that arises then is whether such a state of affairs is possible. Can this mixture be considered legitimate in a Greek work of art? In my opinion, the answer is yes.

If I am right in my interpretation, the artist of the Boston relief wanted to render in pictorial terms the idea of a rebirth after an assessment following a 'purgatory' period—whether or not exactly the same type of assessment and of rebirth as those reflected in the Pindaric fragment. And he chose to do this in terms of religious and mythological figures taken from Greek, and especially Locrian, state religion and mythology. Now, this is exactly the process followed by Pindar, when he introduces Zeus, Kronos, Rhadamanthys, Peleus, Kadmos and Achilles, and the traditional motif of the Islands of the Blest, in order to express a reincarnation theory in the second Olympian. It is the same method as that used by Plato, when he expresses his philosophical ideas in the myths as far as possible in terms of the traditional figures of Greek mythology. It is a process natural to the Greek mind, to use the old mould for casting the new belief.

I am suggesting then, that the artist of the Boston relief used traditional religious figures and motifs and their iconographical expression, and arranged them, to create his scene, according to the adapted model of another traditional assessment theme, that of the psychostasia, in order to express a non-traditional belief, the idea of purgatory and rebirth, which had not been expressed in iconographical terms before.

This interpretation would make the Boston relief an iconographically unique monument, but then, that it is unique, we know already.

The rendering of the subject may be judged stifled, and to some extent awkward, because the artist used traditional iconographical motifs for a theme which went beyond the expressive force of such motifs. To use T. S. Eliot's words:⁸⁴

That was a way of putting it—not very satisfactory:
A periphrastic study in a worn-out poetical fashion,
Leaving one still with the intolerable wrestle
With words and meanings.

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⁸³ Linforth, 168–9; Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational* 149.

⁸⁴ T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (London 1944) 17.



(a) The Boston Relief

(b) The Ludovisi Throne

THE BOSTON RELIEF AND THE RELIGION OF LOCRI EPIZEPHYRII