

MORE LIGHT ON OLD WALLS: THE THESEUS OF THE CENTAUROMACHY IN THE THESEION*

I. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE THESEUS OF THE CENTAUROMACHY?

IN 1962 B. B. Shefton shed much light on the iconography of the centaumachy at the feast,¹ and in 1972 J. P. Barron shone more light on the relationship of this iconography to the lost painting of this subject in the Theseion.² Barron convincingly argued, from the evidence of early classical vase paintings and the west pediment at Olympia, that the mural painting in the Theseion was the source of this new theme, the misbehaviour of the centaurs at the wedding feast of Peirithoos, and that it was painted between 478 and 470 B.C.³ He further suggested that the composition was on more than one level, that it showed both the brawl at the banquet and the pitched battle outside, that the centrepiece of the scene was a pair of figures fighting back to back, and that an axe-swinging was present, among other things.⁴

Most of these inferences seem sound, and yet it is as difficult to visualise what the painting looked like as when Robert in 1895 suggested that the fragments of a krater in Berlin reflected the centre of the composition.⁵ These fragments seem to fit Barron's criteria as well as anything else, for the composition is on several levels, two heroes fight back to back, the one on the left swings an axe, and at his feet lies the tail of a centaur, which Robert (with more optimism than proof, I think) considered to be a centaur already killed; there is even a hint of the outdoor conflict. Barron does not, however, revive Robert's suggestion—wisely, I believe—nor does he offer another. Nevertheless I think it might be worthwhile to return to the problem of what the centre of this lost mural painting may have looked like and consider why it remains so persistently elusive.

First we must turn to Pausanias, our only source on the painting. 'In the sanctuary of Theseus', he says, 'is also a painting of the battle between the Centaurs and the Lapithae. Theseus has already killed a Centaur, but elsewhere the fighting is still undecided'.⁶ This gives us two clues as to what we should be looking for. First of all, the sanctuary is devoted to Theseus, and the hero, therefore, should be prominent. This seems to militate against the idea of a pair of figures fighting back to back holding the centre of the stage, for there is no reason for Theseus, in his own shrine, to share his honours so even-handedly with Peirithoos.⁷ Rather he should stand out clearly, uniquely, and unmistakably, as he does in the two friezes of the Hephaisteion (see below). Secondly, Theseus should be shown as one who 'has already killed a Centaur'.

It is surprisingly difficult to meet these conditions. There are too few dead centaurs in extant Greek art of the classical period and too many potential Theseuses. Dead centaurs

* I would like to thank Professor Martin Robertson for many helpful comments on this paper; in particular for drawing my attention to the Villa Giulia psykter and the support it lends to the hypothesis that a late archaic wall painting of the centaumachy once existed.

¹ B. B. Shefton, 'Herakles and Theseus on a Red-Figured Louterion', *Hesp.* xxxi (1962) pp. 330–68 esp. 338–44, 353–67.

² J. P. Barron, 'New Light on Old Walls: The Murals of the Theseion', *JHS* xcii (1972) pp. 20–45 esp. 20–33, 44–5.

³ Barron, *op. cit.* pp. 27–8.

⁴ Barron, *op. cit.* p. 33.

⁵ Berlin F 2403, *ARV*² 599.9. C. Robert, *Die Marathonsschlacht in der Poikile und weiteres über Polygnot, 18 Hall. Winkelmannsprog.* (Halle 1895) pp. 48–9. Robert repeated this suggestion in *Kentaurenkampf und Tragödienszene, 22 Hall. Winkelmannsprog.* (Halle 1898) p. 10.

⁶ Paus. i. 17.2 (Loeb ed. trans. W. H. S. Jones).

⁷ The west pediment at Olympia apparently equalises the two heroes, but there the intention was not to celebrate Theseus, as it manifestly was in the Theseion.

are so rare that the only one later than the mural painting and still within the fifth century B.C. that I can find is the fallen centaur from Bassae (slab XXVII in the British Museum), and his vanquisher is nowhere in sight. Candidates for Theseus, on the other hand, are so abundant that they help but little in our search for the central figure. Shefton discusses two types of Theseus within the tradition of the centauromachy at the feast, the bride-rescuer⁸ and the hammer-swinging,⁹ and Barron adds that, in some cases, Theseus appears to be the wrestler.¹⁰

Perhaps the best explanation of this multiplicity of types is that *none* of them reflects the original central figure of the mural. It seems clear that no single type has the authority that we would expect the original to have carried, and if the artists who have left us reflections of the centauromachy have for some reason rejected the original and settled for a makeshift instead, we can easily see how one type would be as good as another for them.

But what happened to the Theseus of the mural painting? Why does there appear to be no trace of him left?

My guess is that the original figure was simply not very suitable for adaptation and so found no reflection in such later works as have survived. For in fact, all that we have are selective adaptations of elements from what we assume the original mural painting to have been like. The sculptor at Olympia, the vase painters of Athens took what was useful to them from the great composition and disregarded what they did not need, for none gives us an accurate copy: they are all adaptations.¹¹

The constraints of adaptation are most vivid when we consider the demands of filling a pediment with a sculptured story. It seems clear that the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia takes its inspiration from the centauromachy at the Theseion,¹² but here there is no trace of a Theseus who has already killed a centaur. If in fact Theseus with a dead centaur formed the centrepiece in the mural painting, it is hard to imagine how the same image could also have served as the centrepiece of a pediment, the shape of which has such radically different compositional requirements. Perhaps the Olympia master, finding no way to use this painted image of Theseus, simply left it out, put the magnificent Apollo in the centre instead (to correspond with the central Zeus in the east pediment), and placed balancing groups (possibly derived from the mural) on either side, leaving behind a slight confusion as to who was who which lingered even into the second century A.D.¹³ The compositional problems faced by vase painters are less extreme in their demands, but one can easily see that a figure which did not lend itself easily to adaptation to their medium would not enter their repertory. I suggest, therefore, that the original painted Theseus, being unadaptable to other forms of art, just dropped out of the preserved tradition.

II. WHAT COULD THE THESEUS OF THE CENTAUROMACHY HAVE LOOKED LIKE?

What did the vanished Theseus look like?

⁸ Shefton, *op. cit.* pp. 341 ff. and 353 ff.

⁹ Shefton, *op. cit.* pp. 360 ff.

¹⁰ Barron, *op. cit.* p. 29 and note 79.

¹¹ Despite Barron's suggestion (*op. cit.* p. 24) that accuracy in the copying of an anatomical detail may prove accuracy in the copying of the whole composition, I doubt that this is so. Even in such obviously intentionally correct renditions as the copies of the shield of the Athena Parthenos, many liberties are taken and there is a great deal of variation (see E. B. Harrison, 'The Composition of the Amazonomachy on the Shield of Athena Parthenos', *Hesp.* xxxv (1966) pp. 109-33). In these instances a sculptural model is being reproduced in sculpture, albeit greatly

reduced; the adjustments that are necessary are very slight when compared to what is required in the way of modification when one medium is translated into another, that is, when a wall painting is used as the inspiration for a vase painting or for a sculptural group. Here adaptation is unavoidable, for what is suitable in one context is not in another.

¹² Barron, *op. cit.* pp. 26 ff., T. B. L. Webster, *Der Niobidmaler* (Leipzig 1935) p. 17, E. Löwy, *Polygnot* (Vienna 1929) pp. 56 ff. (I am grateful to Sir Ernst Gombrich for reminding me of Löwy's stimulating little book.)

¹³ Paus. v. 10.8 seems to preserve some legacy of this confusion when he identifies the central

The interior of a cup painted by the Foundry Painter and now in Munich (PLATE XIVa) shows a triumphant Lapith standing with his foot upon a dead centaur.¹⁴ The image is memorable and impressive; it is clearly unsuitable for a pediment and for most vases; it is appropriate only in a tondo, as here, or in a wall painting.

Miss E. B. Harrison mentions this cup in connection with her suggestion that the Theseus on the shield of the Athena Parthenos should be shown as drawing the first blood in the conflict, as Pausanias said he had in the centauromachy in the Theseion. She remarks that the tondo gives 'a fair idea of how a fifth-century artist treated such a group'.¹⁵ She carries the idea no further, for in fact there are two seemingly grave objections to the suggestion that the Foundry Painter's tondo is the closest thing we have to the central group of the centauromachy in the Theseion.

First: the hero here represented is armed and so belongs to the old type of centauromachy, popular long before the decoration of the Theseion, which portrays the battle of weapon-bearing Lapiths and tree- and boulder-wielding centaurs in the open, while it appears that perhaps the greatest innovation in the Theseion painting was the setting of the centauromachy at the wedding feast of Peirithoos, in the presence of women and boys and with men dressed for feasting rather than fighting.¹⁶ The figure in the tondo could, of course, easily be adapted to the new iconography. If the hero were to use a spit instead of a spear and if he were to wear only a brightly coloured cloak, arranged so as to set off his handsome nudity to advantage (one thinks of south metope No. XXVII from the Parthenon), as drawn in PLATE XIVb, this image would serve admirably as a Theseus who has already killed a centaur in the context of the centauromachy at the wedding feast, were it not for the second objection.

This objection is that the Foundry Painter's cup is almost certainly earlier than the mural paintings in the Theseion.¹⁷ This makes it impossible for it to have been a reflection of the painting in the Theseion. It does not, however, exclude the possibility that it, or more probably the work of major painting from which it was derived, was the *prototype* for the Theseus of the Theseion. It is a striking and powerful image, and to the Greeks it would be no blot on the Theseion painter's genius if he were to adopt, transform, and enrich it by placing it in a new context. Such practice was admired—it is the essence of the use of myth in Attic tragedy. I will not labour the point, but just give one example (from later in the fifth century) which illustrates the sort of imaginative re-use of pre-existing material which I think may have characterised the central group in the centauromachy of the Theseion.

The two friezes of the Hephaisteion both deal with the deeds of Theseus, and Theseus is dramatically presented in the centre of each frieze. In each he is an eye-catching figure—not because the artist has invented two striking new images for him, but on the contrary precisely because he has used two old ones. In fact, the Theseus on the east frieze is an

figure (now generally considered to be Apollo) as Peirithoos, which is certainly wrong. We have no way of knowing whether he was right in identifying Theseus, in this context, as the axe-swinger since when he looked at the pediment he was wholly dependent on what his guide told him. His identification of Theseus in the Theseion is, however, quite another matter. There he could read the inscription by the figure himself.

¹⁴ Munich 2640, *ARV*² 402.22. The Lapith stands with one foot on his vanquished foe in the traditional pose of the big game hunter—Heracles in the lion metope at Olympia places his foot on his quarry in the same way, but here it is possible that the Lapith is using his foot to give himself leverage

as he withdraws his spear from the dead centaur.

¹⁵ Harrison, *op. cit.* (supra n. 11) p. 127. O. Bendorff and G. Niemann, *Das Heroon von Gjölbaschi-Trysa* (Vienna 1889) p. 186 observed that the arrangement of subjects on the Munich cup (with 'Theseus who has already killed a centaur' on the inside and 'elsewhere the battle is undecided' on the outside) corresponds to the distinction between Theseus and all the others that is drawn in Pausanias' description of the centauromachy in the Theseion.

¹⁶ Barron, *op. cit.* (supra n. 2) pp. 25–8.

¹⁷ See G. M. A. Richter, *Attic Red-Figured Vases: A Survey* (New Haven 1958) p. 87, for a discussion of the Foundry Painter's work in the context of the vase painters of the first quarter of the fifth century.

adaptation of the Aristogeiton and that on the west frieze a version of the Harmodius, from the famous group of Tyrannicides made by Kritios and Nesiotes in 477/6 B.C.¹⁸ The statues were celebrated, and in this new context proved spectacular. The sculptor of the Hephaisteion had no qualms about deriving the central figure on both his friezes from the work of other artists. In fact it was just the association with the earlier group that enlarged the meaning of his image, for the sculptor (as Homer Thompson points out¹⁹), by making Theseus appear in the guise of the Tyrannicides, has reminded us that Theseus was supposed to have freed Greece from dreadful tyrants and has perhaps also hinted at the idea that Theseus was the founder of the democracy, an idea that was widely accepted in the fourth century. Could not something similar have happened in the case of the Theseion? An impressive wall painting such as we see reflected in the Foundry Painter's cup might have suggested the form of a Theseus who has already killed a centaur.²⁰ Couldn't the painter of the Theseion have adapted it, changed the context, and enriched the meaning?

III. A NEW CONTEXT FOR AN OLD IMAGE

By setting the centauromachy at the feast rather than in the open as previous artists had done, the painter of the Theseion gave a new ethical dimension to the theme. The traditional type often depicted the centauromachy either as a simple conflict of man and monster or as a demonstration of the advantages of superior weaponry, but there was never any suggestion of moral overtones in such representations. The portrayal of the centauromachy at the feast was new in art,²¹ and presented an ethical reinterpretation of the theme in terms of the struggle of civilisation against barbarity.

The idea of illustrating the contrast between the civilised and the savage was, of course, not new in art. Orientalising vase painters loved to show a rough and inhospitable Cyclops overcome by the co-operative efforts of a sociable Odysseus and his brave friends, as an example of the constant tension between civilisation and barbarity. By the fourth century B.C. Plato had fully internalised such conflict in the image of the soul itself divided into tame and wild parts.²² The Centauromachy in the Theseion stands somewhere between these two visions of what it means to be civilised and what it is that threatens the breakdown of civilisation.

Representations of Heracles fighting the centaur Nessos who has attempted to carry off

¹⁸ H. A. Thompson, 'The Sculptural Adornment of the Hephaisteion' *AJA* lxxvi (1962) pp. 345-7 and C. H. Morgan, 'The Sculptures of the Hephaisteion II: The Friezes' *Hesp.* xxxi (1962) p. 226 and see plates 78b, 81a, and esp. 82 for a comparison between the two images of Theseus on the two friezes and the Tyrannicides.

¹⁹ Thompson, *op. cit.* (supra n. 18) p. 347.

²⁰ If the prototype of the Foundry Painter's cup was a wall painting, it was probably destroyed in the Persian sacks of 480 and 479. This does not mean that the memory of such a powerful image might not have survived. (In a culture where pictorial images are scarcer than in ours, they are remembered better.) We know that the statues of the Tyrannicides carried off by the Persians were replaced in 477/6 by the bronzes by Kritios and Nesiotes, and some similar idea of 'reconstruction' of a treasured image might have suggested the modified re-use of the Foundry Painter's prototype in the Centauromachy in the

Theseion. See below, p. 164 (discussion of figure I in PLATE XV) and note 45.

²¹ Barron, *op. cit.* p. 25. Though new in art, the centauromachy at the feast seems to have long been known to literature, cf. Hom. *Odys.* xxi 295 ff.

²² *Phaedrus* 246 and 254. The behaviour of the two horses as described by Plato in *Phaedrus* 254 is remarkably suggestive of the motives behind the behaviour of the men and the centaurs at the wedding feast: 'The right-hand horse is upright and cleanly made; . . . he is a lover of honour and modesty and temperance, and the follower of true glory. . . . The other is a crooked lumbering animal . . . the mate of insolence and pride. . . . Now when the charioteer beholds the vision of love . . . the obedient steed, then as always under the government of shame, refrains from leaping on the beloved; but the other, heedless of the pricks and the blows of the whip, plunges and runs away . . .' (trans. B. Jowett).

Heracles' wife convey something of the same message about the difference between civilisation and savagery. They also portray the contrast between self-control and self-indulgence, responsible guardianship and irresponsible passion, lawful marriage and lawless rape, and they may have pointed the way to the development of the theme of the centauromachy at the feast in art.²³ But the Heracles iconography has its limitations: Heracles was only an individual. The theme of the centauromachy at the feast, by contrast, deals with a group, and this may have given it a special importance just after the Persian wars, for it was the united Greeks, not individual heroes, who defeated the Persians. During the conflict there must have been many bitterly remembered rapes. Herodotus records one instance in which the Persians, at a banquet with some Macedonians, induced the latter to bring in their wives, whom they then drunkenly assaulted.²⁴ The centaurs, intoxicated at the wedding feast, behaved very similarly.

If in fact the Foundry Painter's type was used for the central Theseus, it was transformed and enriched in meaning. The Theseus of the Theseion was no warrior but a guest, and the barbarity of the centaurs, committing a violation of hospitality (like that of the Persians in Herodotus' story), suggests an awareness of the complexity of the human condition, which is very different from the simple battle of man and beast out in the open. There is some intimation, perhaps, that the threat to civilisation is not always external: the fact that centaurs are half men is not forgotten. It is in the recognition of a concept of humanity so broad that even elements of bestiality have their place within it that much of the profundity of the new vision resides.²⁵

There is poignancy in showing an old type in a new role; such drawing on tradition is not due to poverty of imagination or lack of originality, but rather to an appreciation of the magnificent effects that can come from the transformation of a recognisable theme. This was the very time when Aeschylus was beginning to compose his dramas, and he was proud indeed to acknowledge his dependence on an admired tradition, for Athenaeus reports that he 'declared that his tragedies were large cuts taken from Homer's mighty dinners'.²⁶ Can there be any more persuasive illustration of the moral grandeur and evocative power that can be produced through the use of known motifs?

IV. HOW THE THESEUS MIGHT HAVE LOOKED IN CONTEXT

Vases that reflect the centauromachy of the Theseion make it quite clear that the mural painting was composed on more than one level.²⁷ One may wonder how the Theseus who has already killed a centaur that I have proposed as the centrepiece of such a painting might have looked in this sort of context. I therefore offer a *very tentative* reconstruction of how the central part of the Theseion centauromachy may have appeared (PLATE XV).

I have relied principally on five monuments (in addition to the Foundry Painter's cup). The first is the Florence vase,²⁸ which, having been painted in the sixties of the fifth century B.C., is the earliest extant representation of the centauromachy at the feast and one that bears clear traces of having been derived from a monumental painting.²⁹ Next is the west pediment at Olympia with its pictorial traits and early date. Then come two frag-

²³ Shefton, *op. cit.* pp. 353 ff.

²⁴ Herodotus v 18.

²⁵ Aeschylus' *Persians*, produced in 472 B.C., shows a similar breadth of vision, for the poet invites the same sort of sympathy for the Persians that the painter for the centauromachy probably invited for the centaurs. On the nature of centaurs, see also G. S. Kirk, *Myth—Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Cambridge 1970) pp. 151 ff.

²⁶ Athenaeus viii 347e (trans. C. B. Gulick, Loeb ed.).

²⁷ Barron, *op. cit.* pp. 28 and 33.

²⁸ Krater, Florence 3997, Florence Painter, *ARV*² 541.1.

²⁹ E. Pfuhl, *Masterpieces of Greek Drawing and Painting* (New York 1955) p. 61.

ments, one in New York,³⁰ and the other in Berlin,³¹ which show an arrangement of the figures on many levels. Finally I have given special attention to the Painter of the Woolly Satyrs' krater, since this vase portrays a centauro-machy at the feast on the neck and an Amazonomachy on the body, which suggests that a visit to the Theseion (where both subjects were portrayed) was the source of the iconography, and might also have provided the inspiration for some of the motifs.³²

Let us consider what we would expect to find. Naturally, Theseus with the centaur he has already killed would be central (A). Peirithoos (B), at whose wedding feast the fight broke out, ought to be shown rescuing his bride.³³ He alone of the Greeks should possess a sword.³⁴ The scheme at Olympia (Treu's reconstruction, figs. H, J and K)³⁵ presents just about what we would expect (my figure B and group D).³⁶

The axe-swinger (C) appears so frequently in what seem to be derivative works that I have felt obliged to include him.³⁷ The dramatically foreshortened centaur seen from the rear in the Painter of the Woolly Satyrs' krater greatly resembles a foreshortened horse seen from the rear in an Amazonomachy vase in Geneva.³⁸ Both are probably inspired by monumental paintings, very possibly monumental paintings by the same artist, for the painter who made this brilliant invention would certainly be glad to use it more than once.

One group of figures recurs significantly often: two heroes fighting back to back. These two heroes are separated by Apollo on the Olympia pediment; they are represented as adjacent in the Agora louterion,³⁹ the New York fragment,⁴⁰ and the Berlin fragment.⁴¹ I have shown this group twice (figures L and C, and B and E) on the assumption that it is more likely that the gifted Olympia master separated the linked figures in the group in order to interpose his Apollo, than that the vase painters assembled their groups from figures originally disjunct.⁴²

³⁰ Krater fragment, New York 06.1021.140. Painter of the New York Centauro-machy, *ARV*² 1408.2.

³¹ Krater fragments, Berlin F 2403, Niobid Painter, *ARV*² 599.9.

³² Krater, New York 07.286.84, Painter of the Woolly Satyrs, *ARV*² 613.1 and cf. M. Robertson, *Greek Painting* (Geneva 1959) p. 131.

³³ Cf. Shefton, *op. cit.* pp. 341-2.

³⁴ Shefton, *op. cit.* p. 359 points out that 'As host Peirithoos no doubt was more likely than anyone else to have had quick access to a regular weapon, whereas his guests, both Lapiths and centaurs, having reclined unarmed at the banquet were obliged to make do with what came easily to hand, lampstands, logs of firewood, spits, wine-vessels, sacrificial knives, tables and other implements.' Many vase painters, however, seem not to have felt constrained to adhere to this principle, for on a krater in Vienna (Kunsthistor. Museum 1026, Nekyia Painter, *ARV*² 1087.2) two heroes appear equipped with swords, while on the New York fragment (see above, note 30) a youth in the lower register, who certainly is *not* Peirithoos, wields a sword. See also Shefton, *op. cit.* p. 259, n. 116.

³⁵ I am using the letters of Treu's reconstruction, a drawing of which can be found in R. Lullies and M. Hirmer, *Greek Sculpture* (London 1957) p. 52.

³⁶ I believe the Agora Louterion (Fragment, Athens Agora P 12641, Curti Painter, *ARV*² 1043.1) could also be restored in this manner, though Shefton, *op. cit.* pp. 338-9, n. 38 and pp. 358-60

prefers to follow the scheme of the New York fragment (see above, n. 30).

³⁷ He appears as Treu's figure M on the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus facing to the right and again on the Painter of the Woolly Satyrs' krater (see above, n. 32) facing in the same direction. He is shown facing in the opposite direction in the Berlin fragment (see above, n. 31). Clearly the artists who drew on the centauro-machy in the Theseion for their inspiration felt free either to use figures as they appeared in the mural or to reverse them with respect to left and right. The axe-swinger, in compositions where the Theseion Theseus has been omitted, may be intended to represent Theseus (cf. Shefton, *op. cit.* pp. 360 ff. and Robert *Kentaurenkampf op. cit.* p. 10 and Robert *Marathon-schlacht op. cit.* p. 49); it is with this hero that Pausanias identifies him on the Olympia pediment (v, 10.8).

³⁸ Krater, Geneva MF 238, Geneva Painter, *ARV*² 615.1.

³⁹ Louterion fragment, Athens, Agora P 12641, Curti Painter, *ARV*² 1043.1.

⁴⁰ See above, n. 30.

⁴¹ See above, n. 31.

⁴² I have introduced two groups of figures fighting back to back for two reasons; first, the pairs of figures and their opponents as reflected in vases are not always the same, and second, the motif is a useful one for binding groups of combatants together and does not look repetitious when the actions and the adversaries of the heroes are varied. The master of

The leaping centaur who kicks his hind legs out behind him, my figure I, is a type that already exists in a portrayal of the outdoor centauro-machy (on a psykter in the Villa Giulia)⁴³ and then is taken over in representations of the centauro-machy at the feast.⁴⁴ The prototype for this figure, like that of the tondo of the Munich cup, was probably part of a late archaic wall painting. The painter of the Villa Giulia psykter was working at about the same time as the Foundry Painter and might have been impressed with the same monumental work of art. The composition of the psykter seems bolder than what we would expect from the limited skills of the draftsman, and the use of shading, unusual at this time, suggests some influence from wall painting. It seems likely that the painter of the Villa Giulia psykter excerpted this figure from a late archaic wall painting of the outdoor centauro-machy and that the Theseion painter, no less struck by it, adapted it for his new painting.⁴⁵ From the Theseion it was taken up into the new iconography of the centauro-machy at the feast by the Florence Painter, the Nekyia Painter, and the Bassae sculptor.⁴⁶

The rows of couches, so natural to the setting of the story, I have borrowed from the Painter of the Woolly Satyrs. They provide for some overlapping, which facilitates arrangement of the figures on at least two levels in something resembling recession. Spatial representation was at a rudimentary stage of development at this time and probably was most successful in outdoor scenes, especially in mountainous terrain where the ambiguity between higher up and further away could be exploited.⁴⁷ This fact favours Barron's suggestion that the pitched battle outside was also represented,⁴⁸ but some of the paraphernalia of the indoor scene would have been obligatory, and the couches would probably have been useful in working out some spatial relationships.⁴⁹ It is difficult to imagine an early classical Greek painter resorting to the *déjeuner sur l'herbe* setting in which Piero di Cosimo presents the tale.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, however unlike anything Greek Piero di Cosimo's painting looks, it is close indeed to the spirit in which the Centauro-machy in the Theseion must have been created, for though Piero di Cosimo follows the text of Ovid⁵¹ faithfully, yet he has imaginatively reworked the tradition. He has brought a new quality of compassion to the story of the Centauro-machy and by imparting the forms and emotions of the pietà to the fallen centaur caressed in the arms of his beloved, he has once again brought a new dimension to an old theme.

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the Olympia pediment (to mention only one example from sculpture) made similar use of balancing groups.

⁴³ Psykter, Villa Giulia 3577, *FR* I, pl. 15.

⁴⁴ As in the krater, Florence 3997, Florence painter, *ARV*² 541.1; the krater, Vienna Kunsthistor. Museum 1026, Nekyia Painter, *ARV*² 1087.2; and on the frieze at Bassae (slab XXVII, British Museum).

⁴⁵ I have suggested (p. 160) that there was a late archaic wall painting of the outdoor centauro-machy from which the Theseion painter drew some of his inspiration. I have also suggested that the group of a Lapith with a dead centaur that the Foundry Painter uses for his tondo on the Munich cup was derived from such a painting. The leaping centaur who first appears in the context of an outdoor centauro-machy and then becomes a frequent participant in centauro-machies at the feast also seems to have originated in a late archaic wall painting and this

strengthens the proposition that such a painting really did exist. It seems likely to me that the Theseion painter used these two motifs from an earlier wall painting in his new work. He may also have drawn other motifs from earlier sources. Certainly the image of the paired heroes fighting back to back which occurs very frequently in representations of the centauro-machy at the feast (see p. 163) is as old as Euphronios' Amazonomachy krater in the Museo Pubblico in Arezzo (see Pfuhl, *op. cit.* (supra n. 29) fig. 47).

⁴⁶ See n. 44.

⁴⁷ See M. Robertson, *op. cit.* (supra n. 32) pp. 128-9.

⁴⁸ Barron, *op. cit.* (supra n. 2) pp. 32-3.

⁴⁹ See Shefton, *op. cit.* (supra n. 1) p. 363.

⁵⁰ National Gallery, London.

⁵¹ Ovid *Met.* XII, 210-535.

The Sources of the Figures in the Reconstruction

- A. (Theseus)—cup, Munich 2640, Foundry Painter, *ARV*² 402.22.
- B. (Peirithoos)—west pediment at Olympia (Treu's K), and louterion fragments, Athens, Agora P 12641, Curti Painter, *ARV*² 1043.1.
- C. (axe-swinger)—west pediment at Olympia (Treu's M), krater fragments, Berlin F 2403, Niobid Painter, *ARV*² 599.9 (reversed), and krater, New York 07.286.84, Painter of the Woolly Satyrs, *ARV*² 613.1.
- D. (bride and Eurytion)—west pediment at Olympia (Treu's H and J).
- E. Krater, Florence 3997, Florence Painter, *ARV*² 541.1.
- F. Krater, Florence 3997, Florence Painter, *ARV*² 541.1.
- G. Krater, Florence 3997, Florence Painter, *ARV*² 541.1.
- H. Krater, Florence 3997, Florence Painter, *ARV*² 541.1.
- I. Krater, Florence 3997, Florence Painter, *ARV*² 541.1, Bassae frieze (slab XXVII in the British Museum), krater, Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum 1026, Nekyia Painter *ARV*² 1087.2, and psykter, Villa Giulia 3577.
- J. Oinochoe fragments, Florence and Munich, Shefton *op. cit.* pl. 109 d and p. 354 note 100.
- K. Krater, New York 07.286.84, Painter of the Woolly Satyrs, *ARV*² 613.1.
- L. Cup, Boston 00.345, Aristophanes, *ARV*² 1319.3 and oinochoe fragments, Florence and Munich, Shefton, *op. cit.* pl. 109 d and p. 354 note 100 (reversed).
- M. Cup, Boston 00.345, Aristophanes, *ARV*² 1319.3.
- N. Louterion fragment, Athens, Agora P 12641, Curti Painter, *ARV*² 1043.1 and krater fragment, New York 06.1021.140, Painter of the New York Centauromachy, *ARV*² 1408.2.



(a) Kylix, Munich 2640, by the Foundry Painter.
(Courtesy of the Antikensammlungen and Glyptothek in Munich.)



(b) A suggested Theseus for the Centaureumachy of the
Theseion



A suggested reconstruction of the central part of the Centauromachy of the Thesicon.

MORE LIGHT ON OLD WALLS