

Philogelos 216

216 Φθονερός ἰδὼν τὸν γείτονα θηριομαχοῦντα λέγει τῷ κυβερνήτῃ: Ἄρκος.

This joke from *Philogelos* (the Greek joke-book sometimes known under the names of Hierocles and Philagrios) has been thought unintelligible. The most recent editor, Thierfelder (Munich 1968) quotes previous commentators: 'Narratio lacuna laborare videtur. Quod superest non potest intelligi' (Boissonade); '... corriget qui intellexerit' (Eberhard).

The difficulty lies in the apparent juxtaposition of two quite different situations—the amphitheatre (θηριομαχοῦντα) and the ship (κυβερνήτη). But does κυβερνήτης really mean 'steersman'—even if ἄρκος, 'Bear, Ursa Major', is so close? The first use that LSJ records in the meaning 'governor' is in a sixth-century papyrus, and *Philogelos* is tentatively assigned to the fourth or fifth century. The metaphor, however, is frequently used in early Christian Greek (see Lampe, *PGL* s.v.). If the word means 'governor' here, the joke may be paraphrased:

An Envious Man saw his neighbour showing his prowess as a beast-fighter (*venator*) in the arena: so he shouted¹ to the governor (who was president of the games), 'The Bear!' (a much more dangerous animal²).

Not very funny, to the modern taste. We have to remember that the majority of the character-jokes in the collection are not jokes at all to the listener who looks for anecdote or twist. They are in the tradition (which goes back at least to Theophrastus) of the isolation and exaggeration of one trait, in circumstances that may range from the ludicrous to the natural. The grotesque extreme can be seen in the joke of the Envious Man who died of congestion of the bladder because of his reluctance to supply raw material to a fuller whom he envied: but the sickness of obsessive envy may be shown as well in more naturalistic situations. If we understand our joke in the way proposed, it is at least as funny as the one that precedes it:

An Envious landlord saw that his tenants were lucky: he evicted them from his house.

GARETH MORGAN

University of Texas,
Austin, Texas

¹ There are ample references to crowds shouting in the games, and notice being taken of them: they range from cries for release or death of a fallen gladiator (*ILS* 5134) to the complicated organized chants of the Byzantine Hippodrome. For some early examples, see Friedländer, *Sitt.Roms* ii 74f. Note especially the crowd calling upon Claudius to bring on another act: 'Palumbum postulantibus daturum se promisit' (Suet. *Div.Cl.* v 21.5).

² Cf. Mart. *Lib.Spect.* 21.7–8. A Pompeii advertisement for a *venatio* mentions 'bears' as the star turn (*ILS* 5147). In a mosaic from Nennig, in Germany, illustrated J. Pearson, *Arena* (London 1973) 125 a bear is mauling a fallen *venator* while two other men are trying to whip the beast away.

Herakles at the Ends of the Earth*

(PLATE III)

Representations of Helios in his chariot rising above

* This article stems from a discussion in a graduate seminar held at

the sea begin toward the end of the sixth century B.C., with a small series of black-figure vases, mostly lekythoi.¹ Five of them have been interpreted as illustrations of the myth of Herakles and the Golden Bowl of the Sun. In Pherekydes' version of the story, Herakles, vexed by the burning rays, threatened Helios with his arrows, and obtained the god's golden vessel to sail the Ocean to the land of Geryon.² Although the correspondence of the picture to the story is not literal, in fact largely limited to the cast of characters, such an interpretation is plausible for four vases.

On the lekythos in Athens by the Daybreak Painter, Herakles is crouching on a spur of ground which seems to emerge from the waves; he looks at the Sun in apparent awe.³ The scenes on the skyphos by the Theseus Painter in Taranto are akin to the Athenian piece: on one side Herakles rushes up the steep ground, on the other he sits on the rocky outline, his right hand gesturing toward the Sun.⁴ On a third vase, a lekythos in Cambridge, and on a fourth in Oxford, both Herakles and Athena are depicted on either side of Helios; on the Cambridge lekythos Herakles is actually striding toward the Sun, lifting the bow in his right hand.⁵ Only in this case can Herakles' attitude be taken as a threat; on all four vessels, however, the hero and the Sun look at each other, as if an exchange were to take place soon, and so are shown as the actors of the scene.

On the fifth case, a lekythos by the Sappho Painter in the Metropolitan Museum, once in the Gallatin Collection (PLATE III),⁶ the scene can be made to fit the legend of the Golden Bowl only by Procrustean means. Helios is once again shown frontally in his four-horse chariot and, as on the lekythos by the Daybreak Painter and on the skyphos in Taranto, Herakles is placed on a rocky elevation. But a number of other elements have been introduced. To begin with, the hero is depicted sacrificing at an altar and thoroughly intent on his task;⁷ his back is turned so that he appears unaware of the rising Sun. The rock on which he squats is rendered in outline, indicating the opening of a cave. Within it a

Bryn Mawr College during the Academic Year 1978/9. We wish to acknowledge the contribution of Antonia Holden, Ronald Lacy, and Jeffrey McCallum to the discussion. B.S.R. saw the possibility of the interpretation and G.F.P. provided the supporting evidence. We thank Richard Hamilton and Cedric G. Boulter for helpful criticism and Dietrich von Bothmer for the gift of the photographs.

¹ The list was assembled by C. H. E. Haspels, *ABL* 120–4; see also F. Brommer, *Vasenlisten zur griechischen Heldensage* (Marburg 1973) 68, and K. Schauenburg, 'Gestirnbilder in Athen und Unteritalien', *AntK* v (1962) 51. An earlier picture of Helios rising appears perhaps on a Thera neck-amphora: J. N. Coldstream, 'A Thera Sunrise', *BICS* xii (1965) 36.

² *FGrH* 3 F 18a; *RE* Suppl. iii (1918) 1061–2. There are three representations, all Attic, of Herakles afloat in the bowl. The earliest is on the olpe by the Daybreak Painter, Boston 03.783, *ABL* pl. 17, 3; *ABV* 378, no. 252 (Leagros Group), contemporary with the earliest depictions of the rising Helios (see n. 3). A general discussion in G. Jacopi, 'Figurazioni inedite e poco note di Ἡρακλῆς διαπλέων εἰς τὴν Ἡρακλῆς τοξεύων', *Bd'Arte* xxx (1936–7) 39–44.

³ Athens 513, *ABV* 380, no. 290 (Leagros Group); *ABL* pl. 17, 1.
⁴ Inv. no. 7029, *ABV* 518; *ABL* 120; *CVA* Taranto 2 (Italy xviii) pl. 10.

⁵ *ABL* 120, 123; Oxford 1934.372 and Cambridge G 100, the latter illustrated also by Jacopi (n. 2) fig. 8 on p. 42 (Stackelberg drawing).

⁶ Inv. no. 41.162.29, *ABL* 120–4, App. XI no. 6, pl. 32.1; *CVA* Gallatin and Hoppin Collections 2 (USA viii: 1942) 93–4, pl. 44.1.

⁷ On the spits see U. Kron, 'Zum Hypogaeum von Paestum', *Jdl* lxxxvi (1971) 138–44.