

## For the Heroes are at Hand\*

(PLATE VIIIc, d)

The study of animal behavior is a newcomer to the interpretation of the rites and symbols of classical antiquity. Here its promise to produce new insights into old questions is fully matched by the threat of ready-made frames, into which scant and fragile fragments of evidence can only too easily be fitted.

It was recently proposed that phallic images, herms in particular, may be understood in the light of the behavior of certain species of primates, where an aggressive sexual posture signals capacity and readiness to protect one's domain.<sup>1</sup> A literal illustration of this notion, combining violence and sex with the defence of the homeland, would appear on an Attic red-figure vase published by Schauenburg in 1975.<sup>2</sup> The gist of the action is clear: a man clad only in Thracian mantle and sexually aroused rushes to an archer in Scythian dress, posed in the same direction, but bent forward (PLATE VIIIc and d). The Scythian's legs are in profile, his trunk and face turn toward the viewer, hands raised in front of the face on either side. There is also a painted inscription, which is described as running from the head of the pursuer to the archer's right foot: *εὐρυμέδον εἰμ[ι] κυβα[---] ἔστεκα*. Schauenburg restored the third word, legible only in part, as *κυβάδε*, a word otherwise unknown, closely related to *κύβδα*, and read: 'I am Eurymedon. I stand bent forward.' He also noted that other readings are possible, *κυβαλες* or *κυβατες*, suggested by Laser.<sup>3</sup> The entire utterance was assigned to the archer, who was taken to be Persian rather than Scythian. His name would be a reference to the river Eurymedon, and so to the Athenian victory there in the 460s BC. No doubt the barbarian's posture and words express acquiescence, but unwillingness and fear would be shown in his face and in the gesture of the hands raised in horror. The pursuer would be Greek, about to celebrate through his abuse of the Persian 'eine spezielle Form des Triumphus'. Schauenburg's understanding of the picture as the rape of Eurymedon was eloquently stated again by Dover: 'This expresses the exultation of the "manly" Athenians at their victory over the "womanish" Persians at the river Eurymedon in the early 460s; it proclaims, "we've buggered the Persians!"'<sup>4</sup>

Sadism and patriotism are sometimes allies but seldom funny, yet, as Schauenburg saw, the scene is thoroughly comic—the aggressor no less than the victim. I suggest that the comical element is the essence of the picture, and that what is being ridiculed is not the Persians, but 'heroic' characters, caught behaving like ordinary, incontinent men.

The case for the patriotic interpretation is weak. To begin with the name, its position near the aggressor's

\* I thank Gregory Dickerson who helped me with the puns. The title is a line from Aristophanes' *Heroes*, *CAF* i 468 no. 304, trans. J. M. Edmonds (1957).

<sup>1</sup> W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley/L.A./London 1979) 39–41.

<sup>2</sup> K. Schauenburg, *AthMitt* xc (1975) 97–121, pl. 25. The vase is now in Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, inv. 1981.173. For the photographs and permission to publish them I thank W. Hornbostel.

<sup>3</sup> Schauenburg (n. 2) 104 n. 38a.

<sup>4</sup> K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (London 1978) 105.

head makes it unlikely that it refers to the Scythian.<sup>5</sup> It is also odd that the site of Athens' victory should be singled out for abuse, even though it lay, at the time, in a territory under Persian control. Place or man, Eurymedon is a Greek name, given to Zeus and Poseidon as an epithet, to epic characters, and to fifth-century Athenians.<sup>6</sup>

If the point of the scene is the triumph of one country over another, the national traits of either man should be stressed, or at least clearly expressed. Instead the characterization is remarkably ambiguous. The pursuer is marked as a man of loftier condition by his nudity, and by the fact that he has the upper hand; at the same time, some of his features fit a barbarian. His mantle, a version of the Thracian *zaira*, is perhaps no more than an exotic accessory, but it is hard to explain away his beard, which takes the form of sideburns and goatee, like a Scythian's.<sup>7</sup> The archer's beard too, although longer and fuller, does not seem to grow on the cheeks. An important clue, the top of the cap, is lost, and has been restored on the vase; what is left, the one-piece suit and the *gorytos*, are standard items of Scythian dress.<sup>8</sup> Nothing indicates that this figure is Persian, although the painter has not skimmed on clues: incongruously, under the circumstances, the archer is dressed, since his dress best of all makes him recognizable; for the same reason he keeps bow and *gorytos*—but hanging from his arm, well out of the way.

It is moreover possible that the archer's raised hands mean something other than fear. The gesture differs

<sup>5</sup> Schauenburg (n. 2) 103 acknowledges that normally an inscription refers to the nearest figure, and notes exceptions.

<sup>6</sup> See the references given by Schauenburg (n. 2) 104, and J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford 1971) 334.

<sup>7</sup> On the Thracian mantle, and the alleged adoption of Thracian costume in Athens from 550 BC onwards, see H. Cahn, *RA* 1973, 13–15, and W. Raeck, *Zum Barbarenbild in der Kunst Athens im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Bonn 1981) 69–70. The form of the beard is characteristic of eastern barbarians; for Scythians see M. Vos, *Scythian Archers in Archaic Attic Vase-painting* (Groningen 1963) 56, and G. F. Pinney in W. G. Moon, ed., *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography* (Madison, Wisc. 1983) 127–9; for Thracians see Raeck 70. Raeck does not challenge Schauenburg's identification of the figures on the Hamburg oinochoe as Greek and Persian respectively, but is obviously troubled by the 'Greek's' beard: 'Möglicherweise verbirgt sich hinter den individuell anmutenden Merkmalen des Griechen (sorgfältig frisiertes Haar, Haarbüschel unter dem Ohr, Bocksbart) eine Pointe, die auf einen aktuellen Sachverhalt anspielt, etwa in dem Sinne, dass der Dargestellte es bekanntermassen mit Orientalen trieb (nach dem Sieg am Eurymedon?)' (285 n. 574).

<sup>8</sup> On the state of preservation of the oinochoe, see Schauenburg (n. 2) 97. It is notoriously difficult to distinguish Scythians from Persians in the vase-paintings, unless the action gives specific clues; on this point see Raeck (n. 7) 102–3 and 28. Of the items that he lists as generally more appropriate for Persians—scimitar, *pelta*, cuirass, *chiton*, shoes, full beard—our archer has only the shoes, and those are worn by Scythians on fifth-century representations, as Schauenburg himself notes, 108. Schauenburg's strongest argument for identifying the figure as Persian is the date he assigns to the vase: the late 460s. It is true that after 490 BC pictures of Scythians are extremely rare (see Vos [n. 7] 81–4); there exist, however, early classical ones, e.g. on the skyphos by the Pan Painter, *ARV*<sup>2</sup> 559.148; Vos 126 no. 416. Moreover, our oinochoe is early in the series of oinochoai of type VII, if it belongs next to the Boehringer piece (*ARV*<sup>2</sup> 363.26) by the Triptolemos Painter. This is dated around 480 BC by K. Scheffold, *Meisterwerke griechischer Kunst* (Basel/Stuttgart 1960) 198 no. 214. The Hamburg oinochoe should be dated after 480, perhaps as low as 470, but it is far from obvious that it was painted after the battle at the Eurymedon.

from the conventional one, given for instance to the henchmen of Busiris on the pelike by the Pan Painter,<sup>9</sup> in that the Scythian's hands are held not on either side of the head, but partially in front of the face, elbows jutting out at a wide angle. The posture is intelligible if one imagines that the hands rest against a solid surface: the Scythian is bracing himself, as a man in his position must. The support was omitted in order to afford the spectator a clear view. A parallel for this unusual twist of composition may be found on a lekythos by the Triptolemos Painter, where a woman is shown frontal, holding up a ribbon. The action has been interpreted as the tying of a fillet around a funerary monument, often shown on white lekythoi in the conventional side view.<sup>10</sup> If it is true that the woman is here 'literally "facing" the stele as she prepares to adorn it', the monument, like the archer's support, is left to the viewer's imagination.

From these observations I conclude that the pursuer is Eurymedon, and that the Scythian is his willing partner. Once the notion of rape has been abandoned the two become recognizable as characters with whom we are well acquainted: the warrior with his Scythian squire. The pair appears hundreds of times on Attic vases of the archaic period, in scenes that show the archer in battle with his lord, or standing by him in arming and chariot scenes.<sup>11</sup> It has been assumed that in these pictures the Scythians are elements borrowed from contemporary Athenian life, and Vos' theory that they served as a special corps of the army has long held the field.<sup>12</sup> This assumption was recently challenged by Welwei, who reminded us that there is no evidence of the actual presence of Scythians in Athens in the sixth century.<sup>13</sup> He argued that the character of the figures on the vases is epic, and that their function is that of escorts of the 'hoplites'. It is a fact that when the subject matter can be identified nearly all the scenes in which Scythians appear illustrate episodes of the epic sagas, and the vast majority belong to the Trojan cycle. Elsewhere I have tried to show that the Scythians are indeed creatures of the epic, originally conceived as the followers of Achilles, and as different from him as the Ethiopians are from Memnon. On the late archaic vases they are generic attendant figures, *hyperetai*, their costume and occasional ethnic characterization expressing function (squire) and context (epic).<sup>14</sup>

Against this background our picture acquires the force of parody: Eurymedon and his Scythian are caricatures of the epic hero with his squire. The 'hero' shares something of his henchmen's nature, and the latter in turn lets himself be treated like a slave.<sup>15</sup> A

<sup>9</sup> ARV<sup>2</sup> 554.82.

<sup>10</sup> Rhode Island 25.087; ARV<sup>2</sup> 363.29 bis. B. K. Hamanaka in *Aspects of Ancient Greece* (Allentown, Pa. 1979) 80–1. Note that Schauenburg (n. 2) 102, places the oinochoe in the circle of the Triptolemos Painter.

<sup>11</sup> See Vos (n. 7) 6–39, and Raeck (n. 7) 41–63, 319–22, giving a supplementary list of representations.

<sup>12</sup> Vos (n. 7) 61–80. Her views are adopted, with few modifications, by Raeck.

<sup>13</sup> K.-W. Welwei, *Unfreie in antiken Kriegsdienst* (Wiesbaden 1974) 9–32.

<sup>14</sup> Pinney (n. 7) 127–46; for Scythians in mythical and heroic scenes see Vos (n. 7) 34–9, and Raeck (n. 7) 62–3.

<sup>15</sup> Epic figures, such as Paris, Troilus, and, at the time of our oinochoe, even Achilles, are sometimes given barbarian traits and dress, see K. Schauenburg, *AuA* xx (1974) 88 ff., and Raeck (n. 7) 65.

comic interpretation brings out the point of the inscription. The position of the letters indicates that 'Eurymedon'—literally 'wide-ruling'—belongs to the mantle-clad figure. The picture makes it clear that there is a *double entendre* playing on the *εὐρύ-* half of the name. In Old Comedy *εὐρύς* qualifies the orifice of seasoned pathics, and the combination form *εὐρύπρωκτος*, wide-arsed, is a common term of abuse.<sup>16</sup> *εὐρύς* seems here an obvious reference to the Scythian. If so, the 'hero's' name is to be understood as a compound analogous to *ὕγρομέδων*, in which the adjective functions as a noun: he is Eurymedon in the sense that he *μέδει τὸν εὐρύν / εὐρύπρωκτον*. The word that follows carries the theme further, a variation of *κύβδα*, bent over, an adverb normally used of the posture adopted for anal intercourse. In a fragment of Plato Comicus, this position is personified by the god *Κύβδασος*, who appears in the company of *Λόρδων* (*λορδοῦν*) and *Κέλης*.<sup>17</sup> Analogy suggests that here *κύβδα* has been transformed into a *redender Name* for the Scythian, one to match his character and posture. *Κυβαλες* and *Κυβατες* are apparently possible readings; one wonders if the inscription would allow a restoration with an ending in *-as*, *Κύβδας* or *Κυβάδας*, to match the barbarian-sounding names of the police in Aristophanes' *Frogs* 608: *Διτύλας, Σκεβλύας, Παρδόκας*, Two-humps, Dog-face, and Stinker.<sup>18</sup> The inscription would then read: *Εὐρυμέδων εἰμι[ί]. Κυβά[δας] ἔστεκα*, and, as the position of the letters suggests, it should be divided between the two figures. 'I am Eurymedon', says the hero; 'I am Bendover', replies his obliging squire.

It is impossible to establish that the scene illustrates a story, rather than simply a pun, or that the name Eurymedon refers to a known epic character. It may have been chosen because it is well-suited to an heroic setting and lends itself to the *double entendre*. In type the joke is Old Comedy humor, in the tradition of mythological burlesque, where, in Hunter's words 'the gods and heroes are given entirely "human" reactions in "ordinary", i.e. non-mythological, situations'.<sup>19</sup> Of this genre, which may be as old as Attic comedy itself, little survives.<sup>20</sup> The episode shown on the oinochoe is not among those represented in the fragments, although the ingredients of the situation do exist in the fifth

<sup>16</sup> Puns and *double entendres* of this sort are frequent in comedy; see e.g. Ar. *Wasps* 84, the pun on Philoxenos' name. At *Ecl.* 1021 the youth despairs: *οἴμοι Προκρούστης γενήσομαι*, punning on the obscene sense of *προκρούειν*; see J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse* (New Haven/London 1975) 171. Later, *Anth. Pal.* xii 174 is entirely built around obscene puns on proper names; on these see G. Vorberg, *Glossarium Eroticum* (Stuttgart 1932) 284, 352. *εὐρύς* seems to have been often understood in an obscene sense (see LSJ s.v. *Εὐρώτας*, II), particularly in an homosexual meaning. See e.g. Ar. *Knights* 719–20, and Henderson 210–11. On *εὐρύπρωκτία* see also Dover (n. 4) 140–3.

<sup>17</sup> CAF i 648 no. 174; Henderson (n. 16) 178–80.

<sup>18</sup> Parodies of names of barbarian archers, according to the scholiast, followed by modern scholars, e.g. W. B. Stanford, ed., *Aristophanes, Frogs* (London 1958). For name endings in *-ās*, good for foreigners and scurrilous nicknames (both conditions apply here), see C. W. Peppler, *Comic Terminations in Aristophanes and the Comic Fragments* (Baltimore 1902) 41.

<sup>19</sup> R. L. Hunter, *Eubulus: The Fragments* (Cambridge 1983) 24. The possibility that the picture on the oinochoe was inspired by a comedy is brought up by Schauenburg (n. 2) 121.

<sup>20</sup> Among the earliest titles preserved is *Heroes* by Chionides, active eight years before the Persian War (*Suda* X 318); on fifth-century mythological comedy see now Hunter (n. 19) 22–30, with references.

century. As regards the use of the luckless *hyperetes*, a turn of events somewhat akin takes place in Euripides' *Cyclops*, 581–9, when Cyclops fastens on Silenus. The comic juxtaposition of military prowess and homosexuality is exploited by Aristophanes at *Frogs* 45–67 (Dionysus' service under Cleisthenes, or aboard the Cleisthenes).<sup>21</sup> This motif, but in an epic setting, appears in a fragment of Eubulus that deals with the diet of the Greeks during the long siege at Troy, and which, although a century later, makes a good caption for the scurrilous vignette:<sup>22</sup>

οὐδ' ἑταίραν εἶδέ τις  
αὐτῶν, ἑαυτοῦς δ' ἔδεφον ἑνιαυτοῦς δέκα·  
πικρὰν στρατείαν δ' εἶδον, οἴτινες πόλιν  
μίαν λαβόντες εὐρυνρωκτότεροι πολὺ  
τῆς πόλεως ἀπεχώρησαν ἧς ἔλλον τότε.

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<sup>21</sup> Stanford (n. 18).

<sup>22</sup> Hunter (n. 19) 75 no. 120.

### The Old Platform in the Argive Heraeum

In his recent article 'The Old Temple Terrace at the Argive Heraeum', J. C. Wright discusses the date of the platform supporting the remains of the earliest Argive Heraeum—in other words, the uppermost terrace of the Hellenic (*viz.* Classical) Heraeum.<sup>1</sup> Is it itself a Classical structure, or a late Bronze Age platform re-used to accommodate the first peripteral temple of the seventh century BC? Wright would connect both the platform and the temple upon it with the first stages of proper Hellenic culture, in the eighth and seventh centuries BC. On pp. 191 ff. he denies that I can possibly be right in following the oldest investigators and assigning this platform to the Bronze Age. But I must confess that his arguments, however learned, have so far failed to shake my conviction.

In the first place, as Wright readily concedes (192), the great blocks of this terrace are masses of conglomerate. They are just as big as those of Mycenae and Tiryns. And the whole wall-face, like much 'Cyclopean' work on many sites, is apparently full of gaps and cavities, and generally loose-jointed. This, I think, is a general characteristic of Bronze Age 'Cyclopean' work. Sometimes, of course, this just resembles enormous stones irregularly piled, presumably with the clay 'cement' and perhaps 'garretting stones' washed away in the course of ages. Take, for instance, the famous 'Cyclopean' Bridge at Lissa (on the road from Navplion to Epidaurus), or the rear, easterly portions (so far the least infected by 'anastylotes') of the Acropolis at Mycenae.<sup>2</sup> Or else, where a Mycenaean conglomerate façade has weathered, like the upper part of the façade of the Treasury of Atreus, the even, horizontal courses of large, dressed conglomerate blocks closely approach the state of the blocks in our Heraeum terrace.<sup>3</sup> Nor are the horizontal courses of the so-called 'causeway' in the valley south of the Acropolis at Mycenae very different, to my eye,

from those at the Heraeum.<sup>4</sup> I suppose that, at times, conglomerate naturally splits into more horizontal blocks—which would of course help the local Mycenaean masons.

A famous Mycenaean building, almost a terrace, the curtain-wall, with its 'casemates', around the south end of Tiryns, is made of large blocks, actually in 'coursed polygonal', but with large irregular gaps. It is well shown in Dörpfeld's drawings.<sup>5</sup>

In all these cases we have large blocks, for the most part loosely compacted, and put together in a way quite unlike the later Hellenic walls. Sometimes they are of enormous limestone blocks, rough-hewn (as in the normal stretches of the curtain-wall round the Acropolis of Mycenae), sometimes of dressed conglomerate (as in the Barbicans, or in the façades of the finest beehive-tombs). Terraces, in any case, are rare: and I shall suggest that that of the Argive Heraeum may not have started life as a real Terrace. But the Heraeum does use the Mycenaean material, conglomerate.

Next, we should reflect that, according to many authorities at the present day, Bronze Age sites in Greece might lie derelict for some period before the Classical builders approached them and employed them for their own structures. Serious building was apparently resumed at a considerable interval after the end of the Bronze Age.<sup>6</sup> But it would seem, from a natural interpretation of the few remains of the seventh century, that the first Hellenic buildings were small and crisp and nervous, with an over-conscious, over-conscientious approach to the need for hair-joints on elevations, ever afterwards the hallmark of Hellenic masonry. We find a similar obsession with visible hair-joints in the first Egyptian stone buildings, at Sakkarah.<sup>7</sup> Also, when I visited Minoan Crete, I remember seeing something of the sort there; e.g. in the north wing of the Palace of Hagia Triada. But in the first Hellenic buildings such an outlook is everywhere apparent; in the seventh-century temple of Thermon, and even more in its precursor, in the Temple of Artemis Knakeatis, in the first temple of Hera on Samos and in the Argive Heraeum itself. As late as c. 600 BC the Heraeum at Olympia still embodies the tradition of such craftsmanship, which Beazley might have called 'spruce and fine'.

I do not really think that the history of the famous city wall of Old Smyrna invalidates my point. Nicholls' description,<sup>8</sup> elaborate and cautious as he has made this, appears to contend that before Alyattes' capture of Smyrna in the early sixth century the *enceinte* of the little city on the hill of Bayraklı had passed through three distinct phases. It was first built in Geometric times, and was twice rebuilt before its capture.<sup>9</sup> First, of course, we must remember that on this outlying site necessity might be the mother of invention, that overwhelming Cimmerian or Lydian threats would be very real, and even the mere hinterland might prove uncontrollable. From Nicholls' drawings, as from his text, one gathers

<sup>5</sup> H. Schliemann, *Tiryns* (London 1886) 319, 320, pl. III.

<sup>6</sup> See A. M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece* (Edinburgh 1971) 394–8, a discussion of which, to do him justice, Wright shows himself perfectly conscious (193 n. 33).

<sup>7</sup> See S. Clarke and R. Engelbach, *Ancient Egyptian Masonry* (London 1930).

<sup>8</sup> *BSA* liii–liv (1958–9).

<sup>9</sup> See esp. Nicholls (n. 8) 118–19.

<sup>1</sup> *JHS* cii (1982) 186–201.

<sup>2</sup> See A. J. B. Wace, *Mycenae* (Princeton 1949) 22 and pl. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Wace (n. 2) pl. 40a.

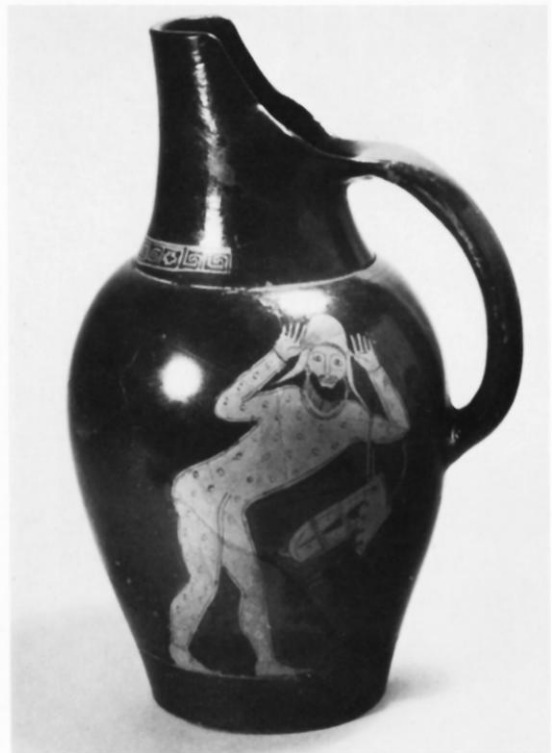
<sup>4</sup> Wace (n. 2) pl. 38a.



(a) Gold Sauceboat, Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin.



(b) *δέπας ἀμφικύπελλον*, Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, Berlin.



(c) and (d) Attic Red-Figured Oinochoe. Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, inv. 1981.173 (Courtesy W. Hornbostel).

SCHLIEMANN'S DISCOVERY OF 'PRIAM'S TREASURE' (a)-(b)  
FOR THE HEROES ARE AT HAND (c)-(d)