

ending -τικά in line 8. This is that the inscription is a public one, that Marcius Celer is the founder of an alimentary scheme, and that the παῖδια are the beneficiaries.

Several of the alimentary inscriptions of Italy are on statue-bases set up by *pueri puellaeque alimentari* to the emperors, or in one case to a *quaestor alimentorum*.²⁰ In alimentary schemes such as that of Basila at Atina, of Hadrian at Antinoopolis, and of the unnamed benefactor at Xanthos, the children who benefit are the offspring of citizens. If the same is assumed here, then the word ending -τικά in line 8 should be, not [οἰκε]τικά, but one of equal length, [πολι]τικά, perhaps spelled [πολει]τικά. Liddell and Scott cite an inscription of Naples which shows that in the local Sebasta there was a class of entrants called παῖδες πολιτικοί, 'boys with citizen fathers', just as there was a class of βουλευτῶν θυγατέρες, 'daughters of councillors'.²¹ If the restoration [τὰ πολι]τικά παῖδια τὰ [ὑπ'] αὐτοῦ ἀνα[τρεφόμενα] is correct, the syntax may imply that, unlike the foundation at Xanthos, this one involved a *numerus clausus* of beneficiaries, as did that of Licinnius Longus at Oenoanda (if it was alimentary) and several of the western foundations.²² In lines 8–9 the word [αἰ]ώνιον, restored by Bean, now receives its natural interpretation. When applied to liturgists, this word implies that the person had established, or had had established in his name, a foundation of which the revenues were to help defray the expenses of the position in perpetuity: thus the unknown benefactor at Xanthos set up his scheme εἰς αἰῶνα.²³ Lastly, τροφέα. Using coins, inscriptions, and literature, Louis Robert collected a large number of references to wealthy citizens honored as *tropheis* for having supplied grain to their cities, to visitors or to a whole region such as Lycia.²⁴ In none of Robert's instances is the word *tropheus* clearly to be applied to the founders of alimentary schemes, rather than to men who had made outright gifts of grain (or of funds to buy it); but the word can no doubt cover such a scheme, and indeed the benefactor at Xanthos is praised for 'educating and nurturing' (παιδεύειν καὶ τρέφειν) the recipients of his generosity. In short, the inscription of Attaleia is to be understood as a public one, set up by the children of citizens in honor of a Roman senator who had established an alimentary foundation for their benefit.

The alimentary schemes of Lycia and Pamphylia, if the present argument is correct, are attested in Oenoanda, Xanthos, Attaleia and Sillyon, and where they can be dated belong to the reign of Hadrian or

slightly later. On the present evidence, they are the only private alimentary foundations known in the Greek east. Why these two regions, which during most of the principate formed a single province, should have a concentration of such schemes is unclear: but both were very productive of grain, and their urban élites, being highly Romanised, might have been receptive to a type of benefaction favoured by Nerva and his successors.²⁵ As for L. Marcius Celer and his scheme at Attaleia, as a member of the oldest senatorial family known from the province he must have had many connections with Italy, the apparent source of alimentary schemes; if he served in Greece under Hadrian, first-hand knowledge of the emperor's benefactions there may have provided an additional stimulus.²⁶

It is curious that Pamphylia also yields what may be the only epigraphical evidence for the imperial *alimenta* of the late empire. A fourth-century statue-base at Side carries the inscription Ἀνατροφή Αὐγ(οὔστα). This was understood by the first editor to refer to an otherwise unknown empress, but Robert and others have pointed out that it is a personification of imperial nurture. The *Theodosian Code* shows that there were still *alimenta* in the reign of Constantine: but while this inscription may imply such a scheme at Side, it might refer to a system more like the Roman *frumentationes*, such as is attested in Oxyrhynchos in the later third century.²⁷

C. P. JONES

University of Toronto

²⁵ It has been suggested to me that there is a parallel in the *sitometroumenoi*, a *numerus clausus* of citizens receiving grain, attested in certain cities of Lycia under Hadrian and Pius, but the nature and origin of this phenomenon are disputed: Balland, 213–21; Garnsey, 262–5; M. Wörle, *Stadt und Fest im kaiserzeitlichen Kleinasien*, *Vestigia* xlix (Munich 1988) 124–30.

²⁶ It appears to be a pure coincidence that the senator T. Helvius Basila (above, at n. 2) is attested in an inscription of Attaleia as governor of Galatia-Pamphylia: S. Mitchell, *Chiron* xvi (1986) 23–5.

²⁷ Bean, *Side Agorasi ve Civarindaki Binalar* (Ankara 1956) no. 47, with the discussion of Robert, *Rev. Phil.* xli (1967) 82–4; cf. also *Bull.* 1977, 519; Balland, 196 n. 177 (on p. 197). Constantine: *Cod. Theod.* xi 27.1–2. Oxyrhynchos: Balland, 218–21; Garnsey, 265–6.

Odysseus on the Niobid Krater

(PLATES II–III)

This paper began with a seminar given in 1973 by David Gordon Mitten. His help and that of many others at Harvard, the University of Michigan and at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens has been of great value. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the helpful criticisms of Martin Robertson, Evelyn Harrison and Vincent Bruno; my obstinacies are of course my own.

The Niobid krater has been the object of perceptive discussion since its first publication. The works of earlier scholars referred to most often in the text are listed below and cited by the author's name alone:

Barron, J., 'New light on old walls: The murals of the Theseion', *JHS* xcii (1972) 20–45.

Christos, Ch., 'Ho Polygnotos kai mia angeiographia me epeisodion ek tis Homerikis Nekyias', *AE* (1957) 168–226.

Jakobsthal, P., 'The Nekyia krater in New York', *Metropolitan Museum Studies* v (1935) 117–45.

Jeppesen, K., 'Eteokleus Symbasis', *Acta Jutlandica* xl, no. 3 (1968).

Simon, E., 'Polygnotan painting and the Niobid Painter', *AJA* lxxii (1963) 43–62, with bibliography.

Six, J., 'Mikon's fourth painting in the Theseion', *JHS* xxxix (1919) 130–43.

²⁰ For such statues, Duncan-Jones 301–2; for a *quaestor alimentorum* so honored, *CIL* xi 5395 (*ILS* 6620: Asisium); for the expression *pueri puellaeque alimentari*, *CIL* ix 5700, xi 5957, 5989 (*ILS* 328), xiv 4003 (*ILS* 6225); in *CIL* xi 6002 *alimentari* is used alone.

²¹ Naples: *IG* xiv 748 lines 5–6 (*IGRom* i 449), G. Buchner, *Par. Pass.* vii (1952) 408 (*Bull.* 1955, 300b; *SEG* xiv 602; cf. L. Moretti, *Iscrizioni agonistiche greche* [Rome 1953] pp. 168–9). Cf. R. M. Geer, *TAPA* lxvi (1935) 211, citing the expression πολιτὰ παῖδες from the entries in a contest at Carian Aphrodisias (*CIG* 2758 A ii lines 4–5).

²² Above, at n. 9. Balland, 197–8, argues that alimentary foundations in the Greek east were characteristically civic and egalitarian, those of the west (including the imperial *alimenta*) exclusive: but if the present arguments are accepted, this distinction will appear too schematic.

²³ A. Wilhelm, *Reisen in Kilikien*, *Denkschr. Wien* xlv 6 (Vienna 1896) 153–4; L. Robert, *Documents de l'Asie Mineure méridionale* (Paris 1966) 83–5.

²⁴ Robert, *Hellenica* vii (1949) 74–81, xi/xii (1960) 569–73.

The Niobid krater in Paris (Louvre G341)¹ is not one of the masterpieces of Greek vase painting. The vase is not even one of the best works of the artist, who receives his name, the Niobid Painter, from the rare depiction of Apollo and Artemis killing the children of Niobe on the reverse. The vase is, however, one of the touchstones of the history of ancient Greek art. The Niobid krater has this distinction because it is the earliest contemporaneous witness to the new developments in mural painting in the Early Classical Period, developments best understood from the descriptions of the traveler Pausanias six centuries later.² The actual quality of the Niobid krater is therefore secondary to its documentary value.

Since the krater's discovery in 1881, most discussion has focused on the iconography of the scene on the obverse, showing a group of warriors with Athena (PLATE IIa).³ The ambiguity of the scene comes from the large number of figures and the lack of action or iconographical evidence to help in their identification. Of the 11 figures, only Herakles (figure 6 on PLATE IIb),⁴ with his club and lionskin and Athena (4) in her aegis and helmet are clearly identifiable. The other figures have only the trappings of normal warriors. They all wear swords, carry spears, and with one exception have shields and helmets. Without iconographical hints, these figures can be identified only in the context of the scene itself.

The literary sources lead us to expect that the monumental painters of Early Classical Athens displayed the character of each figure through the pose and the compositional relationship to other figures. This cannot be judged without an understanding of who the figures are. Yet, for the scene on the Niobid krater, the identity of the figures is still for many a matter of continuing uncertainty, despite close examination over the last century. Our knowledge of the works of the major artists of this period is almost entirely based on literary descriptions, since the paintings themselves are lost. The krater as a contemporaneous monument is therefore an important source for the understanding of a crucial moment in the history of Greek art.

The scene on the krater is particularly important because of its complexity and monumental quality, and perhaps also its failures as a work of art. These support the often made suggestion that the vase painter was in

this case attempting some sort of copy of a lost monumental work. The spatial organization and well-knit composition make this picture such an excellent illustration for Pausanias' description of the paintings by Polygnotos at Delphi. Individual poses, such as standing with one leg raised (10) or sitting with the knee clasped (8), find direct parallels in these descriptions.⁵ Furthermore, the half-hidden figure in the upper left (2) illustrates a reference to one of the painter Mikon's innovations.⁶ All of these monumental features are found often enough in later vase painting, but here they appear early and in an unusually dense group. Moreover, certain features of this scene are rare or otherwise unknown in what remains to us of the Niobid Painter's work,⁷ and that artist's unfamiliarity with the new depiction of space is clear from the way the foot of the man seated right of center (8) projects across space to rest on the knee of his reclining companion (7). Such defects evidently result from an attempt to translate the new achievements of mural painting into a medium which offered relatively restricted possibilities for the representation of depth.

A monumental prototype, therefore, has been convincingly posited for this composition and attempts to explain the vase painting have connected it either to masterpieces known from literary sources, or to proposed suitable homes for an unrecorded work. In fact, all of the known monumental paintings of the early Classical period which could possibly have been the model for the scene on the Niobid krater have been recognized in it, unfortunately with major objections in every case.⁸ One of these, however, can be strengthened by evidence from within the vase painting itself to produce a viable interpretation with interesting connections to what we know about early Classical painting.

Twenty-five years ago, Chrysanthos Christos argued that the obverse of the Louvre krater depicts the heroes in the underworld at the time of Odysseus' visit.⁹ This subject was portrayed during the early Classical period by Polygnotos in the Knidian Lesche at Delphi as we know it from a description of that work given by Pausanias (x 28-31). The Polygnotan mural was clearly different from the Niobid Painter's composition, although the two designs seem to have had a number of points in common.

⁵ In Polygnotos' *Nekyia* at Delphi, Pausanias describes Antilochos as having one foot raised (x 30.3) and Hector sitting with his left knee clasped in both hands (x 31.5).

⁶ Zen. iv 28; see R. Wycherley, *The Athenian Agora iii. Literary and epigraphical testimonia* (Princeton 1957) 44 no. 96.

⁷ Among these are the four-section abdomen, the lined faces (6, 10) and the three-quarter-view heads. (The reverse of the krater has one three-quarter-view head.) See the discussion in Barron 23-5.

⁸ The bibliography for the problem is listed chronologically by Simon 61-2. To be added to her list are: E. Löwy, *Polygnot* (Vienna 1929); C. Weickert (n. 2); Christos (1957); Jeppesen (1968) and (n. 4) and *Acta archaeologica* xlii (1972) 110-12; E. Harrison, *ABull* liv (1972) 390-402; Barron (1972); Robertson (n. 2); E. Simon, *Die griechische Vasen* (Munich 1976) 133-5; R. J. Clark, *Catabasis* (Amsterdam 1979) 126; U. Kron, *LIMC* i (1981) 441, #229; R. Blatter, *LIMC* ii (1984) 597-8, #32.

⁹ Christos 179-95. Christos' interpretation appeared too late for inclusion in *ARV²* or Simon's bibliography, and its length and publication in Greek have won it less consideration than it deserves. (It is cited only by Jeppesen [n. 4].) The argument presented here was substantially developed before Christos' article came to the author's attention. More recently, Christos' theory seems to have been altered along the lines presented here by Th. Karagiorga, *AE* (1972) 46.

¹ Louvre G 341: *ARV²* 601.22, found at Orvieto: W. Helbig, *Bulletino* x (1881) 276-80. The vase and its painter are named after the scene of the killing of the Niobids on the reverse because of the ambiguity of the subject of the obverse, for which it often used to be called the 'Argonaut krater'. The Herakles side of the krater overlaps both handle zones and shows greater care in the execution and so is clearly the obverse.

² Paus. x 25-31. See the discussions in C. Weickert, *Studien zur Kunstgeschichte des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. I. Polygnot* (*AAWB* 1947 no. 8 [Berlin, 1950]) 9-14, 20; Simon 48, 51; M. Robertson, *A history of Greek art* (Cambridge 1976) 266-70.

³ Jacobsthal 124 despaired that an explanation of the scene would ever be found; other scholars have left the scene unidentified (see the bibliography in Simon 62). The lack of explicit clues, such as labels, may indicate that the scene imitates a model which was sufficiently well known to potential patrons that the painter did not feel the need to explain his scene (so Christos 279, and Jeppesen 27).

⁴ Henceforth, when different figures on the vase are referred to, the numbers assigned to them by Jeppesen, *Acta Archaeologica* (Copenhagen) xli (1970) 158, fig. 3, here PLATE IIb will appear in parentheses. I would like to thank Prof. Jeppesen for providing me with this figure.

Christos identifies the man behind the hill at the top left of the scene (2) as Odysseus because his position separates him from the other heroes, all dead. Using the text of the *Odyssey* and descriptions by Pausanias of figures in Polygnotos' Delphic *Nekyia*, Christos identifies the other figures as follows:

Odysseus	Achilles	Patroklos		
Polydeukes	Athena	Herakles	Thersites	Kastor
Agamemnon		Hektor		
		Sarpedon		

Polydeukes (1) and Kastor (11) were identified by Robert.¹⁰ Agamemnon (3), Achilles (5) and Patroklos (9) are the last shades who talked with Odysseus before he encountered Herakles (6). Homer uses the speeches of these dead warriors to reveal their respective characters: Agamemnon is bitter about his death and concerned for his son, Achilles almost repudiates the high price he placed on honor in the *Iliad*, and Herakles is concerned about Odysseus. After talking to Herakles, Odysseus cuts short his tour, frightened off by a rush of shades. The seated figure at the bottom of the scene (8) is interpreted as Hektor, in the pose given him by Polygnotos, who showed the Trojan, 'seated, with both hands around his left knee, in an attitude expressing strong grief' (Paus. x 31.5). The reclining youth below (7) is seen as Sarpedon, the most likely companion of Hektor in this setting. These two balance Achilles and Patroklos above in a particularly elegant pattern of victors and vanquished which neatly expresses how closely intertwined the fates of these four heroes were. Finally, the wrinkled older man on the right (10) is seen as balancing Odysseus (2) and so should be his anti-heroic opponent in the *Iliad*, Thersites.¹¹

There are problems with Christos' interpretation. He locates the scene in Hades because the dying Niobid on the right side of the reverse of the vase seems to flee into the space of the obverse. This space must therefore be the Niobid's destination, the land of the dead.¹² This is not demonstrable. The two scenes need not be continuous, and there is no parallel for the depiction of a dying figure entering Hades. Nor is there any reason to ignore the parallels found by Gardner in the last century which identify the two figures at the bottom of the scene (7 and 8) as Theseus and Peirithoos.¹³ Iconographically, these are better identifications for the figures than Hektor and Sarpedon, in spite of the comparison with the pose of Polygnotos' Hektor. Most important, the figure behind the hill (2), whom Christos named Odysseus, does not fit the iconography of that hero. This figure is unbearded, which is unparalleled for a representation of Odysseus in vase painting.¹⁴ Furthermore, the warrior over the hill is a subsidiary figure, balancing the horse's head by his position and hardly visible when the vase is viewed from the front,¹⁵ and so is unlikely to be the narrator of the *Nekyia*.

¹⁰ C. Robert, *Annali dell'Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica* liv (1882) 280; Christos 182–5; Simon 49–50.

¹¹ Christos 182–93.

¹² Christos 179–81. Simon rejects a parallel argument, 46.

¹³ Originally identified by E. Gardner, *JHS* x (1889) 124; see the arguments in Simon 45.

¹⁴ As Christos 188 acknowledges.

¹⁵ Simon 44.

The older man on the right whom Christos labels Thersites (10), however, deserves closer examination. His place in the composition, balancing Athena,¹⁶ indicates his importance. He stands nearly frontal with his head turned to his right (PLATE IIc.) His right hand is extended, addressing someone in the group rather than reaching for the spear in front of him. His right leg is raised and the foot, set on a high rock, is twisted outward; the pose is awkward and clearly gave the painter some difficulty. The face has been executed with care also, the cheeks lined with experience. Only the figure of Herakles shows similar detailing of the face.¹⁷ All previous identifications of this figure have depended on the prior interpretation of the scene. If the scene shows the Argonauts, he is the pilot Tiphys, but if it shows the Seven against Thebes, he is Adrastus. The one exception is that he has been called Oedipus,¹⁸ since the petasos and cloak identify him as a traveler. The young challenger of the sphinx was often depicted in this manner, but no such portrayal of an older Oedipus is known.¹⁹ The figure is more suitable for Odysseus, who is normally shown as an older man with a petasos, much more suitable in fact than the figure over the hill (2) whom Christos saw as Odysseus.

Like the figure on the Niobid krater, Odysseus lacks a distinguishing attribute. He is usually portrayed²⁰ as a mature man, with curly hair and beard, often wearing a petasos.²¹ He appears in this manner, though without the petasos, on an inscribed sherd in Athens which may have been executed by the Niobid Painter himself

¹⁶ Harrison (n. 8) 394 implies this by pairing the goddess and the old man. Christos 192–3 says that the old man balances the warrior half hidden on the left (2), but this figure actually aligns with the horse's head.

¹⁷ H. Kenner, *Weinen und Lachen* (Vienna 1960) 38 and P. Girard, *REG* vii (1894) 360–361 discuss facial expressions.

¹⁸ Simon 47–48.

¹⁹ F. Brommer, *Vasenlisten*³, 481–4; W. Hornbostel, *Aus Gräbern und Heiligtümern* (Mainz 1980) 126–7; G. Cressedi, *EAA* iii (1960) 217–19; C. Robert, *Oedipus* (Berlin 1915) passim. Oedipus appears occasionally with a beard before the sphinx (e.g. on the well known kylix by the Oedipus Painter in the Vatican: *ARV*² 451.1 and 1654; Robert, *op. cit.* 51, fig. 16) but he is always youthful. Particularly revealing here is the contrast between the youthful Oedipus with the sphinx and the shaggy Odysseus with Nausikaa on London E 156: *ARV*² 1281 (recalls the Marlay Painter): *CVA* British Museum iv, pl. 34.1 (227). According to O. Höfer, *Roscher* iii, 735, the tradition of a wandering, elderly Oedipus dates from Euripides' *Phoenissae* at the end of the fifth century.

²⁰ See especially O. Touchefeu-Meynier, *Thèmes Odysséens dans l'art antique* (Paris 1968) 288–9; J. Schmidt in *Roscher* iii 654–81; E. Paribeni, *EAA* vii (1966) 1046–51; F. Brommer, *Odysseus* (Darmstadt 1983) 110–11.

The problem of heroes without clear iconography is discussed by C. Robert, *Archäologische Hermeneutik* (Berlin 1919; reprinted, New York 1975) 39 and more recently by E. Dusenberry, *Hesperia* xlvii (1978) 226. The Disney Painter oinochoe in New York, Metropolitan Museum 28.97.24 (*ARV*² 1265.15 and 1688; *EAA* iii [1960] 141, fig. 172) presents a similar iconographical problem. A middle-aged archer with long hair and beard is shown alone. As Richter points out (G. Richter and L. Hall, *Red-figured Athenian vases in the Metropolitan Museum* [New Haven 1936] 187, pl. 150, 152), his 'untidy hair and unarmorial looks suggest that this is no regular archer, but Odysseus'. Beazley seems to have originally suggested this interpretation (*AV* 447.9) and later added (*ARV*² 1688) 'if Odysseus, an extract from a "slaying of the suitors".'

²¹ According to Touchefeu-Meynier, (n. 20) 288, n. 7, Odysseus' pilos first appears in the last third of the fifth century BC. See Brommer (n. 20) 110–11.

(PLATE IIIa).²² The similarities are striking, especially the arrangement of the hair and bushy beard. An even closer comparison to the figure on the Niobid krater, however, is the Odysseus on a pelike in Boston by the Lykaon Painter (PLATE IIIb).²³ Although he is seated here, his physiognomy, accoutrements, and even the pose with the raised right leg, are similar.²⁴

Both the Niobid and Lykaon Painters used the same pose because it had a specific meaning, even though the Niobid Painter could not manage it very well. The motif of standing with one foot on higher ground originated in monumental painting, as is to be expected since it is unavoidably linked to the depiction of landscape elements and the rendering of space by successively receding stages.²⁵ People who stand with one foot propped up in vase paintings²⁶ are paying attention—watching an event, listening to music or engaged in conversation—and this is apt for Odysseus on the Lykaon Painter's pelike, where he talks to Elpenor in the underworld. A similar interpretation is to be given to the pose on the Niobid krater.

Odysseus gestures and directs his gaze across the scene to the left. Although this allows him to see and address anyone in the scene except Kastor on the right, he should be connected with the warrior with the shield in the left foreground (3). With the re-interpretation of the scene as Odysseus in Hades, the man with the shield can be identified as Ajax. In the past, figure 3 has often been interpreted as turning away from some other person in the group, as Pausanias describes the two wives of Kephalos doing to each other out of jealousy in Polygnotos' *Nekyia* at Delphi (Paus. xi 29.6).²⁷ When Odysseus meets Telamonian Ajax in the underworld, the dead hero refuses to talk, and just turns away (*Od.* xi

543–66). Ajax was an important hero on his own in Athens and the mature, bearded warrior with his splendid shield device makes an excellent portrayal of the Salaminian.²⁸ Notably, he is the only figure on this side of the krater who does not face the central axis. If he is the object of Odysseus' outstretched right hand, the whole painting is unified by the long diagonal of the emotional axis.

Christos interpreted the man with the shield in the left foreground (3) as Agamemnon, nearest to Odysseus, and talking to Polydeukes (1), his brother-in-law.²⁹ Iconographically, the figure fits Agamemnon, though it seems strange that the artist would show that hero talking to Klytemnastra's brother after delivering his bitter speech about wives to Odysseus (*Od.* xi 406–456). Furthermore, Jeppesen has shown that Polydeukes stands on a projection of rock which overlaps the spear of the hero with the shield. The Dioskouroi is therefore closer to the viewer than the man who is supposed to be talking to him, and it is only one of Reichold's few errors in drawing that makes it appear that they are face to face.³⁰

Christos is surely correct in identifying the two figures on either side of Herakles (5 and 9) as Achilles and Patroklos. In the catalog of men in *Odyssey* xi, the other major characters besides Herakles and Ajax are Agamemnon and Achilles. Neither of these figures can be Agamemnon since they are both unbearded; in the fifth century Achilles and Patroklos lost the beards they had in Archaic art.³¹ The characterizations of the

²² Athens Agora P 18538, inscribed |ΣΣΕΥ| :*ARV*² 611.40 and 1661 (manner of the Niobid Painter, 'maybe an early, delicate work by the painter himself'); *Para.* 396; not in Touchefeu-Meynier. P. Corbett (*Hesperia* xvii [1948] 189–90) suggests that this shows the hero during his mission to Skyros before the Trojan War; F. Brommer (*AA* [1965] 115–19) proposes Odysseus returning to Ithaka disguised as a beggar.

²³ Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 34.79: *ARV*² 1045.2 and 1679. This comparison is also made by Harrison (n. 8) 394 n. 29.

²⁴ Odysseus also stands with one leg raised in two later underworld scenes, the San Severo sarcophagus in Orvieto (Touchefeu-Meynier [n. 20], 140, no. 236, pl. 22.2) and a relief in Paris (Louvre 574: *ibid.* 137–8, no. 231, pl. 21.3). In both cases the hero faces to the right and so the left leg is against the background and therefore raised. A figure in a similar pose on a bronze relief is identified as Odysseus by D. Thompson, *Hesperia* xxxviii (1969) 242–51.

²⁵ Compare the description by Pausanias (x 30.3) of the figure of Antilochos in the Delphic *Nekyia*. Many examples can be cited from later vase painting: P. Jacobsthal, *Die melischen Reliefs* (Berlin 1931) 190–2; G. Neumann, *Gesten und Gebärden* (Berlin 1965) 118–19; and T. McNiven, *Gestures in Attic vase painting* (Diss. University of Michigan 1982) 58.

²⁶ Figure 5 also has his foot propped slightly. As will be seen below, this is in order to link him with figure 9, the youth with the helmet in his outstretched hand.

²⁷ So Six 132; Simon 50; Jeppesen 11. Harrison (n. 8) 392 says that the figure has not turned from the center, but is about to turn toward it. It is difficult to tell from the position of the feet just what he is doing, but I would interpret their position as showing that he is stepping up to the left. In this light, it is tempting to compare the description Pliny (*Nat.* xxxv 58) gives of a painting by Polygnotos that was in the Portico of Pompey, 'in which there was some doubt whether he has depicted the figure with the shield as moving upward or downward'. (Trans., J. J. Pollitt, *The art of Greece*, [Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1965] 96).

²⁸ Ajax seems to be portrayed with a beard throughout Attic vase painting, whether playing draughts with Achilles, fighting, quarrelling with Odysseus or falling on his sword. See in general, Friis Johansen (n. 31) 66, 172; O. Touchefeu, *LIMC* i (1981) 312–6; for the draughts-players, K. Schefold, *JdI* lii (1937) 68–70; on the suicide, K. Schefold, *AK* xix (1976) 71–7. Ajax has a beard on the *Nekyia* krater (PLATE IIIc) and in the Delphic *Nekyia* (Paus. x 31.3). On a black-figure amphora by the Swing Painter in Munich (1494: *ABV* 308; *CVA* Munich vii, pl. 360) a figure in the underworld has been interpreted as Ajax turning away with balled fists.

Pausanias (x 26.3) mentions a snake on Menelaus' shield in the *Iliupersis* at Delphi and gives a dubious interpretation of it. No positive interpretation of this feature is possible: G. Chase, *HSPH* xiii (1902) 82–3; M. Robertson, *ABSA* 62 (1967) 10. A shield, though usually a Boeotian one, is an important part of Ajax's iconography in the Archaic period: Friis Johansen (n. 31) 66.

²⁹ Christos 185–6. See O. Touchefeu, *LIMC* i (1981) 256–74.

³⁰ Jeppesen (n. 4) 157.

³¹ So K. Friis Johansen, *The Iliad in early Greek art* (Copenhagen 1967) 133, 178; P. Bocci, 'Achille', *EAA* i (1958) 25–33; D. Kemp-Lindemann, *Darstellungen des Achilleus in griechischer und römischer Kunst* (Frankfurt and Bern 1975) esp. 139–41; A. Kossatz-Deissmann, *LIMC* i (1981) 114–22 and plates passim. Achilles is shown unbearded in contrast to the bearded Ajax on the latest (ca. 430 BC) of the series of draughtsplayers, a column-krater by the Hephaistos Painter (Berlin 3199: *ARV*² 1114.9; *Para.* 452; *JDAI* lii [1937] 70, fig. 1; *LIMC* i (1981) pl. 100 Achilleus 420).

That Patroklos undergoes a parallel change becomes evident from the discussion in Friis Johansen, *op. cit.*, e.g. 230. The tradition is confused, however. Both heroes were shown as young and unbearded in Polygnotos' *Nekyia* at Delphi (Paus. x 30.3) and on a stamnos by the Kleophrades Painter (Villa Giulia 26040: *ARV*² 188.63; see the interpretation in Friis Johansen, *op. cit.*, 184–6, fig. 75). On the Sosias Painter's famous cup (Berlin F2278: *ARV*² 21.1) Achilles is portrayed as unbearded while Patroklos has a sparse beard. Achilles has a sparse beard on the name-piece of the Penthesilea Painter (Munich 2688: *ARV*² 879.1) but none on that of the Achilles Painter (Vatican 16571: *ARV*² 987.1).

In the *Symposium* (line 180), Plato has Phaedrus argue that Achilles

massive, armored hoplite on the left and the slender, almost nude warrior on the right make a fine distinction between Achilles, declared the stronger in *Il.* xi 787, and Patroklos, who was stripped of his armor after death.

The only figure remaining unidentified is the warrior in full armor half hidden behind the hill in the upper left corner (2) whom Christos identified as Odysseus. This figure has, perhaps, invited more speculation than any other figure on the krater. He is shown from behind and expresses surprise or greeting with his right hand, probably looking to Odysseus since that hero is the newcomer.³² He is unbearded and so not Agamemnon, armored and so not Elpenor. The only feature which makes him unusual is that he is isolated from the rest of the figures by the crest of the hill. As Christos noted, this could be an indication that he is neither one of the dead nor a hero with divine protection. This would make him one of Odysseus' mortal companions, Perimedes or Eurylochos, who have a part in the rituals at the pit in the opening of *Odyssey* xi, but who are not mentioned again during Odysseus' later wanderings in the underworld.³³ In a similar way, the companions were shown at the top of Polygnotos' *Nekyia* at Delphi. In a similar composition showing Theseus under the sea, Helios, also an inhabitant of another sphere, is shown beyond the crest of the hill.³⁴

Bringing together the identifications accepted or made here produces a scene of the Homeric underworld with the following characters:

Eurylochos (?)	Achilles	Patroklos		
Polydeukes	Athena	Herakles	Odysseus	Kastor
Ajax		Peirithoos		
		Theseus		

This differs significantly from the identifications made by Christos, who saw the scene as depicting the same event. Odysseus has been moved from the upper left of the field to the right. The elegant balance found by Christos between Achilles with Patroklos and Hektor with Sarpedon is lost with the return to Gardner's identification of Theseus and Peirithoos. In its place, this interpretation focuses on the spurning of Odysseus by Ajax, an episode powerful enough to have inspired the encounter between Dido and Aeneas in Virgil. The connection with the *Nekyia* of Homer has been strengthened at the expense of connection with the *Nekyia* of Polygnotos.

A literary text, even one so well known as Homer, must be used with caution when interpreting a painting. The artist himself shows that he took liberties with the storyline, telescoping the narrative to gather a collection of the greatest heroes in Greek legend when these appear singly or in pairs in the poem.³⁵ Athena is an addition to

Homer's account, since she does not appear in *Odyssey* xi, and the presence of the Dioskouroi is only mentioned in reference to their mother Leda (*Od.* xi 300–4). Theseus and Peirithoos are never actually seen because Odysseus' terror gets the best of him. Furthermore, the artist has taken Odysseus away from the sacrificial pit at which he speaks to most of the heroes in the poem, and has allowed him to wander among the dead. At the very end of the eleventh book in Homer, after Odysseus attempts to reconcile Ajax (*Od.* xi 567–630), the poet seems to do the same thing, for Odysseus describes the tortured malefactors who could not have come to him. This is when he comes upon Herakles. What we are given by the vase painting is a pessimistic image of the afterlife to match Achilles' evaluation of his condition (*Od.* xi 488–91), a group of Greece's most dynamic heroes in forced inactivity, a tableau of the damned.

Webster long ago objected to the placement of this scene in Hades on the grounds that Athena, an Olympian goddess, could not be present in the underworld.³⁶ That opinion, stated without evidence, has been accepted by some scholars and ignored by others.³⁷ It deserves re-examination here as part of the proposal that the Niobid krater shows Odysseus in the underworld.

There is no tradition that the Olympian gods visited Hades under normal circumstances. That is certainly the point behind the abduction of Persephone. On the other hand, the idea that the Olympian gods were somehow excluded from that realm is a late one, only appearing explicitly at the end of the first century AD. In Silius Italicus' *Punica*, the young Scipio visits the underworld and sees the radiant ghost of Homer, who, he says, might be a god except that no gods ever come there. Statius is even more to the point: in the *Thebaid*, Herakles acknowledges his debt to Athena, who would even have gone, 'comes in via mecum Tartara, ni superos Acheron excluderet'.³⁸ For these authors, as for Webster, Athena has no place in the underworld. A century earlier, however, Ovid described in horrific detail Juno's trip to the land of the dead in order to summon Tisiphone.³⁹ The goddess is not happy to be

assumed, but also well demonstrated, as in Friis Johansen (n. 31) 127, 188–91, 202–6, 226. These examples show a close dependence on the *Iliad* for the names and situations portrayed. See also J. Boardman, *AK* xix (1976) 11. Friis Johansen (n. 31) e.g. 190, 206, also gives instances where figures from a series of events are united in one scene to allow the artist to make a broader point.

³⁶ T. B. L. Webster, *Der Niobidenmaler* (Leipzig 1935) 15–16.

³⁷ Webster is followed by: Simon 43–4; Harrison (n. 8) 390; C. Picard, *RA* 1960, 110. For scholars who disagree with this opinion, see note 41.

³⁸ Silius Italicus, *Pun.* xii 784–5; Stat., *Theb.* viii 512–13.

³⁹ Ovid, *Met.* iv 432–80. Juno's purification after her return from the underworld recalls Apollo's fear of *miasma* from an encounter with death in the prologue of Euripides' *Alkestis* (22–3). Here we have a fifth century source, one closer in time to the Niobid krater, but one whose relevance is ambiguous. Apollo is worried about being inside with the corpse, suggesting that the rules of pollution affect him just as much as they do the average Athenian (D. Kurtz and J. Boardman, *Greek burial customs* [London 1971] 146, 149–50). This is of doubtful relevance to the underworld, where even unburied corpses are left behind. In any case, while *miasma* is to be avoided if possible, it does have a standard remedy available in purification rituals. Compare Artemis' leave-taking with Hippolytos, *Hip.* 1437–8 and the Apulian vase in Taranto (*RVAp* i, 435.12a) where Athena watches with Achilles as Thanatos touches Memnon, who is accompanied by Eos.

was the young, prettier ἑραστής and not the ἑρώμενος of Patroklos, contradicting Aeschylus, so there was disagreement even in ancient times. See the discussion in T. Lenschau, 'Patroklos (2)', *RE* xviii 4 (1949) 2280–1.

³² Jeppesen 24, n. 19 and (n. 4) 160 demonstrates that he cannot salute Athena, but the actual object of his attention is not clear.

³³ The discussion of this episode by Clark (n. 8) 37–8 is especially insightful.

³⁴ Paus. x 29.1. For Theseus under the sea, see Bologna 303 by the Kadmos Painter: *ARV²* 1184.6; Six 139–41; Barron 40–1; Robertson (n. 2) 256.

³⁵ That some artists followed a literary source closely is often

there, and must be purified afterward, so this demonstrates the extent of her need for vengeance.

Homer mentions the gods' disgust for the inhabitants of the underworld who might be exposed by earthquakes (*Il.* xx 65) and there is no doubt that visiting the land of the dead is an act of desperation. Athena implies that just such a compulsion led her to make the descent with Herakles.⁴⁰ Otherwise her complaint in the *Iliad*, when Zeus will not allow even her to enter the battle before Troy, lacks a point:

εὔτέ μιν εἰς Ἄϊδαο πυλάρταο προὔπεμψεν
 ἐξ Ἑρέβευς ἄξοντα κύνα στυγεροῦ Ἄϊδαο,
 οὐκ ἂν ὑπέξεφυγε Στυγὸς ὕδατος αἰπὰ ῥέεθρα.

(*Il.* viii 367–9).

The goddess has gone to Hell with Herakles as a favor to Zeus, the biggest one she can think of, and she expects special treatment in return.

There is also plenty of evidence in vase painting that Athena accompanied Herakles when he went to fetch Cerberus.⁴¹ Sometimes the goddess is shown there with Hermes, sometimes alone, but she appears with Herakles in vase paintings of this labor more regularly than anywhere else.⁴² Nor need it be argued that Cerberus marks the boundary of the underworld, so that Athena can remain carefully outside.⁴³ On an early fifth century cup by the Aktorione Painter, a poorly preserved Athena stands with Hades and Persephone under the roof which indicates either their palace or their gate.⁴⁴ Herakles and Cerberus are outside, Athena is inside. On a later depiction of the rescue of Theseus from Hades, Athena sits on a rock on the right while Theseus is pulled from a similar rock on the left.⁴⁵

The objection against the presence of Athena in Hades was originally raised against Six's interpretation of the scene on the Niobid krater as a rescue of Theseus by Herakles.⁴⁶ Although Athena's presence can be explained, Six's interpretation should not be revived because Herakles seems totally unaware of Theseus and Peirithoos (7 and 8), which is unparalleled among the representations of the rescue.⁴⁷

If Odysseus is present with Herakles and Theseus, such a lack of connection between rescuer and rescued is logical and specifically Homeric. In the eleventh book

of the *Odyssey*, the hero begins by interviewing Teiresias and the other souls at the sacrificial pit, but later seems to travel through the underworld encountering various sinners and figures from legend until he meets Herakles.⁴⁸ Although Odysseus does not actually see them, Theseus and Peirithoos are soon mentioned as present. Homer therefore presents a version of the myth in which Theseus is never rescued.⁴⁹ The lack of any visual relationship between Theseus and Herakles on the krater, when such relationships were so crucial in the monumental paintings which artists such as the Niobid Painter were imitating, is easily explained if the painting follows the Homeric tradition rather than the one seen in most portrayals of Herakles and Theseus.

Reference to the *Odyssey* also explains two unusual features of the figure of Herakles on the Niobid krater. The wreath which the hero wears may be an indication that he has already undergone apotheosis.⁵⁰ This again may be an explicitly Homeric feature, since the poet puts Herakles in his catalogue of men but then explains that, of course, this is only a phantom (εἶδωλον) of the hero because he is actually sharing Hebe's couch on Olympos (xi 606–10). Likewise, the lines beneath Herakles' eyes, which compare with those of figure 10, may reflect his sadness at seeing Odysseus in the underworld, enduring labors similar to his own (xi 617–26).⁵¹

Two other portrayals of Homeric Nekyia are known in Attic vase painting. The Lykaon Painter's pelike in Boston (PLATE IIIb), already mentioned for the close comparison of its Odysseus, has fewer figures on a much larger scale so that the effect of the whole is very different. The scene depicts the encounter between Odysseus and one of his sailors, Elpenor, who broke his neck just before Odysseus sailed for the realm of Hades. Elpenor remained unburied and as an unsettled spirit is the first ghost Odysseus encounters in Homer's account. On the pelike, Odysseus sits or crouches over the pit in which he sacrificed the rams. He gazes at his recently dead companion, who rises from a reed-filled river while Hermes approaches from the right.⁵² This episode formed the central encounter in Polygnotos' *Nekyia* at Delphi, and represents a different point in the narrative from the scene on the Niobid krater.

The other vase painting which shows a Homeric view of the underworld is the *Nekyia* krater in New York (PLATE IIIc and d),⁵³ name-piece of the *Nekyia*

⁴⁸ Odysseus only meets Herakles in Hades, because he was long departed before the Trojan War, as we know from the story of Philoctetes, who had inherited Herakles' bow and arrows and used them at Troy (Soph. *Ph.* 262; Apollod. iii 155.)

⁴⁹ See the discussion in Paus. i 17.4–6. Modern treatments are by H. Herter, *RE² Suppl.* xiii (1973) 1177, paragraph 102; Clark (n. 8) 128 and n. 7.

⁵⁰ Simon 46. P. Mingazzini, *AttAL* ser. 6, i (1925) 413–90, illustrates many scenes where Herakles is wreathed. See also S. Karouzou, *CVA Athens* ii, III Hg. p. 10. Apotheosis is not the only meaning of such a wreath (cf. W. Wrede, *MDAI(A)* xlii [1916] 262–4), but it is the most likely here. Jeppesen 18 notes that the only other figure on the krater with such a crown is Apollo, on the reverse.

⁵¹ This suggests the melancholy mood of the scene which has been recognized by some scholars and denied by others. The problem is that sadness is difficult to isolate in a work so in line with Early Classical ('Severe') tradition.

⁵² Note that Hermes may easily have been added by the vase painter: Touchefeu-Meynier (n. 20) 286.

⁵³ New York, Metropolitan, 08.258.21: *ARV²* 1086.1; Jacobsthal figs. 6–10.

⁴⁰ Compare Herakles' statement in *Od.* xi 623–6 and Helios' threat, *Od.* xii 382.

⁴¹ See F. Brommer, *Herakles* (Münster/Köln 1953) 43–5 and in *Studien zur griechischen Vasenmalerei* (AK Beiheft vii) (Bern 1970) 50 n. 4; W. Felten, *Attische Unterweltdarstellungen* (Munich 1975) 12–13; G. Roux, *RA* (1949) 904; and G. Beckel, *Gotterbeistand in der Überlieferung griechischen Heldensagen* (Bayern 1961) 17–18, 43–4. None of these sees a problem in Athena's presence in Hades.

An unidentified female figure in a Middle Corinthian version of the Cerberus scene has been identified as Athena: H. Payne, *Necrocorinthia* (Oxford 1931) 130, fig. 45c; P. Demargne, *LIMC* ii (1984) 958 #11.

⁴² E. A. Amburger, 'Athena und Herakles in der Kunst der Antike' (unpublished dissertation, Berlin 1949) as quoted by E. Rohde, *CVA Gotha* i, p. 44.

⁴³ As do Simon 46–7; M. Robertson, *JWI* xv (1957) 99.

⁴⁴ Altenburg 233: *ARV²* 137.1; P. Hartwig, *Jdl* viii (1893) 163 with drawing, and E. Bielefeld, *CVA Altenburg* ii, pl. 67.2. On the traditions concerning the den of Cerberus, see S. Eitrem, 'Kerberos', *RE* ii 1 (1921) 278–9.

⁴⁵ A pelike in Kertch, not in *ARV²* or *Para.*: A. Boltounova, *Mélanges Michalowski* (Warsaw 1966) 287–92, there dated ca. 375.

⁴⁶ Six 133.

⁴⁷ Felten (n. 41) 51–2; Christos 181; Simon 45; Webster (n. 36) 15.

Painter. The top register of the calyx krater presents a row of figures, of which all except the subsidiary figures over the handles are labeled. From the left (PLATE IIIc) are Hades with his scepter, Peirithoos with his legs crossed and Theseus shown seated frontally facing Herakles to the right. Next come Hermes with clear attributes and a pensive Meleager leaning on a stick. After three anonymous and undistinguished figures over the handle come two equally undistinguished mantle-men who are labeled Elpenor and Ajax on the left side of the reverse (PLATE IIIId). To their right, Palamedes clutches one of the columns of Persephone's palace, inside of which the goddess herself sits. An anonymous youth and man complete the circuit.

The scene on the obverse has been interpreted as a rescue of Theseus,⁵⁴ but that can only be done by divorcing the two segments of the register, which would be very unusual.⁵⁵ The presence of Elpenor, Ajax and Palamedes on the reverse show that although Odysseus is not depicted, he is not far out of mind. Palamedes and both Salaminian and Locrian Ajax died during or just after the Trojan War. Each of these heroes died with a grudge against Odysseus.⁵⁶ Elpenor's only importance is in *Odyssey* xi, when he fell to his death as Odysseus was leaving Circe's isle for the trip to Hades. The only connection between these heroes is Odysseus; in any case they can only appear before Persephone long after the apotheosis of Herakles. The scene therefore follows the Homeric tradition which leaves Theseus unrescued.

In their rendering of space, the Niobid, Lykaon and Nekyia Painters' depictions of a Homeric underworld are very different. The Niobid Painter attempted to present a broad panorama (PLATE IIa), although this is in part negated by the curve of the vase. The ground has been broken up into hillocks ranked to indicate recession by overlapping and is studded with foreshortened shields and spears. The eleven figures present foreshortened limbs and three-quarter view heads in an attempt to open the space around them. Failures have already been noted, but it is the grand attempt which makes this vase so important.

The Lykaon Painter's narrower focus makes his similar techniques of rendering space more effective. Odysseus sits on a hillock (originally rendered with lines of added white) in the foreground. Behind this the carcasses of the sacrificial rams sprawl across a low rise which in turn overlaps Elpenor. The dead sailor stands among the river reeds (again, once in added white) and leans against the rocks of the background. The space is all foreground, the overlapping limited, and there is only one row of figures to be dealt with spatially. The confusion of the Niobid Painter's larger scheme is avoided as is its grandness.

⁵⁴ So Jacobsthal 123; G. Richter, *Attic red-figured vases. A survey* (New Haven 1958) 130-1.

⁵⁵ See the list given by J. Oakley in *Ancient Greek and related pottery* (Allard Pierson Series 5), ed. H. A. G. Brijder (Amsterdam 1984) 125-7. Of these sixty examples only Bologna 298 (ARV² 1018.62; Jacobsthal #9) and the krater from Pitchvni in Soviet Georgia (BCH xcvi [1974] 915-17, figs. 9-9a) have a divided scene in the top register. Even these are tightly connected by narrative. On the Nekyia krater, the placement of Hades at one end of the frieze and Persephone at the other argues for a comprehensive view.

⁵⁶ Friedländer, *AA* 1935, 31-2. Jacobsthal 130-1 n. 70, notes that the two appear in the Hell described by Socrates in *Apology* 41a.

The Nekyia Painter, on the other hand, almost avoids the portrayal of space. Theseus and Peirithoos (PLATE IIIc) sit on hillocks, and Theseus is even shown frontally seated, which is rather rare. All the rest of the figures stand on a groundline forming an evenly spaced, isocephalous frieze. The result is a decorative pattern which eliminates the conflict between a depiction of depth and that interplay of shape and surface which is the hallmark of the best Greek vase painting in the previous centuries.

In terms of composition, which is dependent on the depiction of space, these three vase paintings are also very different. The Niobid Painter's *Nekyia* (PLATE IIa) is tied together by balancing pairs, set on either side of the central axis: Theseus (7) and Peirithoos (8), Achilles (5) and Patroklos (9), Athena (4) and Odysseus (10), and Polydeukes (1) and Kastor (11). Herakles, Theseus and Peirithoos form a triangle in the center of the field. Gestures unite Peirithoos with Theseus and Eurylochos (2) with his captain, Odysseus (10). But most importantly gestures link Odysseus with the alienated Ajax (3). The symmetry of the whole is thus tempered by one crucial asymmetry. These are the kind of relationships that Pausanias indicates existed in Polygnotos' great version of the subject at Delphi. It is likely that the Niobid krater shows all or at least a large section of a monumental composition.

In contrast, Odysseus' interview with Elpenor in Hades as shown on the Boston pelike (PLATE IIIb) resembles a single group from such a larger composition, for example Theseus and Peirithoos on the Niobid krater (7 and 8). In just this way, the encounter with the dead sailor was only one of the many groups in Polygnotos' *Nekyia* at Delphi (Paus. x 29.8). This process of extraction then is a different approach to the problem of translating figures and compositions from large-scale mural paintings onto the side of a vase.

The Nekyia Painter also imitated a lost work of monumental painting. This is clear in the great contrast between the lifeless figures of Elpenor or Ajax (PLATE IIIId, top left), who could be the anonymous inhabitants of the reverse of any fourth-rate pot, and the expressive and unusual figures of Meleager leaning on his staff or Palamedes clutching at the column of Persephone's palace (PLATES IIIc top right and IIIId center).⁵⁷ An arrangement of figures in rows around the girth of a krater may not seem monumental, but as was seen above, there were at least two other very different approaches to the imitation of monumental painting practised in this period. The Nekyia Painter functioned as a piecework copyist, but sacrificed his composition on the altar of decoration. Peirithoos, Theseus and Herakles remain in a group, and are framed by Hades and Hermes (PLATE IIIc), but the other figures form at best pairs and then only because they face each other. The return to the multiple friezes of Archaic art appears to be an invention of the Niobid Painter and the best examples also have monumental connections, including the Nekyia Painter's other attributed vase.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Jacobsthal 132; Friedländer (n. 56) 23-4, 29-32.

⁵⁸ Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum 1026: ARV² 1087.2; Jacobsthal 132, figs. 14-15. Double register calyx kraters begin with the Niobid Painter (Jacobsthal 136-40), for example his krater in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 72.850. The connection between double register kraters and monumental painting can best be seen in two kraters from Spina, both showing the Gigantomachy with very similar groups of

These three scenes of the underworld, painted within a decade or two and each relating in its own way to monumental painting, show Athenian vase painters making a concerted effort to return their art to the important position it had held half a century earlier. Varied experiments were being made in the middle of the fifth century to compete with the developments in monumental painting: the depiction of space, more elaborate compositions, the portrayal of ethos. The restrictions of size and color and the conflict between the two-dimensional illusionary space of the painting and the actual three-dimensional shape of the vase meant that the battle was already lost. The Niobid krater shows one of the earliest attempts to deal with the new formal vocabulary of mural painting on a vase. With its failures, the fate of Athenian vase painting was sealed.

TIMOTHY J. MCNIVEN

The Ohio State University at Marion

figures, but in different formats. The fragmentary krater by a member of the school of the Peleus Painter (Ferrara inv. 2892, T300 VT) has the figures organized in registers, that perhaps by the Painter of the Woolly Satyrs (inv. 44893) spreads them across a 'Polygotan' hillside: *ARV²* 1041.7 and 1680, *Para* 446; N. Alfieri and P. E. Arias, *Spina* (Munich 1958) p. 11. 66–7, 69–73.

It is possible that the Nekyia krater in New York may be copied from the same prototype as the Niobid krater, but this is difficult to prove. This was also suggested by Friedländer (n. 56) 23, n. 1.

Lactantius, Hermes Trismegistus and Constantinian Obelisks

In a recent article in this journal (*JHS* cvii [1987] 51–57) Garth Fowden has argued that the obelisk from Karnak erected by Constantius II in Rome in 357 had been promised to that city by his father Constantine, as Ammianus Marcellinus states, and was not originally intended, as was claimed in the (lost) inscription on its base, for Constantine's new foundation at Constantinople.¹ The interesting suggestion is made that Constantine might have been in touch with Athenian religious experts over the matter,² and the project is seen as an earnest of 'his desire to conciliate the pagan Establishment of Old Rome'.³ The point of this piece is to enlarge on the possible significance of the obelisk to contemporary Christians that is hinted at by Dr Fowden.⁴

Constantine paid three visits to Rome as emperor, in 312, after winning the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, in 315 during the celebration of his Decennalia, and in 326 for his Vicennalia;⁵ on at least one of these occasions, he gave offence to non-Christian Romans by declining to

The authors would like to express their thanks to Dr Fowden for his kind advice.

¹ Garth Fowden, 'Nicagoras of Athens and the Lateran Obelisk', *JHS* cvii (1987) 51–7; *Amm. Marc.* xvii 4. 12–14; Dessau *ILS* 736.

² *JHS* cvii (1987) 51–2, 56–7.

³ *JHS* cvii (1987) 56.

⁴ *JHS* cvii (1987) 56 indicates that a phrase in *Amm. Marc.* xvii 4 recalls the Hermetic *Asclepius* 24 and points out that Hermes was much used by Christians seeking pagan witnesses to Christianity (on which see further G. Fowden *The Egyptian Hermes* [Cambridge 1986] 198–212).

⁵ T. D. Barnes *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass. 1982) 71, 72, and 77 gives the sources.

perform the customary procession to the Capitol to offer sacrifice.⁶ It was only during the last of these visits that Constantine was master of the East, and so in a position to offer an obelisk to the City. A Christian was Prefect of the City at the time; perhaps he owed his appointment to a desire by the emperor to avoid embarrassing differences of opinion over the ceremonies to be celebrated.⁷ Certainly Constantine was well-aware of the unChristian sensibilities of traditional Romans: his *Oration to the Saints* explained that Vergil had felt himself impeded from prophesying Christ more plainly because he had been intimidated by the pagan grandees of ancient Rome.⁸

But Constantine may have had more in mind when he decided to offer an obelisk than a desire to keep some of the Senate happy some of the time. Christian significance may be discerned in an oblique manner. Dr Fowden points to a reminiscence in Ammianus' account of Constantine's act of a phrase from the *Perfect Discourse* attributed to Hermes Trismegistus and recalls that Hermes was a favourite prophet of Christians associated with Constantine, notably of Lactantius, once tutor to Constantine's eldest son.⁹ Lactantius was probably dead by 326,¹⁰ but Acilius Severus, Prefect of the City at the time of Constantine's visit had over the years exchanged two books of letters with Lactantius.¹¹ A distinctive view of the overall history of paganism was held by Lactantius; in this view Hermes Trismegistus and Egyptian religion occupied a particular place. It is these ideas of Lactantius which might provide a Christian rationale for the erection of an obelisk.

⁶ Zosimus ii 29.5 places this incident in 326, which accords with the late date he accepted for Constantine's conversion to Christianity. F. Paschoud, 'Zosime 2, 29 et la version paienne de la conversion de Constantin', *Historia* xx (1971) 334–53 (=his *Cinq études sur Zosime* [Paris 1975] chapter 2) prefers 315, and T. D. Barnes *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass. 1981) favours 312.

⁷ A. Piganiol *L'empereur Constantin* (Paris 1932) 112 ff. argued that Constantine's benefactions to S. Peter's Rome (*Liber Pontificalis* 34) included lands in the East, and so they too must date from after the victory over Licinius in 324. The City Prefect of 326 was Acilius Severus, on whom *PLRE* I, s.n. Severus 16. Hitherto ignored in the controversy over Constantine's failure to sacrifice at the Capitol has been a small piece of a glass souvenir plate, showing Constantine and Severus in front of a façade bearing an inscription commemorating the Vicennalia. This was first published by L. Bruzza 'Frammento di un disco di vetro che rappresenta i vicennali di Diocletiano', *Bull. Com. Rom.* x (1882) 180–90, and correctly identified by H. Fuhrmann 'Studien zu den Consulardiptychen verwandten Denkmälern I: eine Glaschale von der Vicennalienfeier Constantins des Grossens zu Rom in Jahre 326 nach Chr.' *RomMitt* liv (1939) 161–75. In front of Severus, as Dr Anna Wilson points out to us, is part of a garland like those put round the necks of sacrificial animals (as, for instance, on the Tetrarchic Decennalia base from the Roman Forum); one must suppose that the makers of souvenirs showed Constantine as about to offer sacrifice whether he did or not. Severus was not the first Christian Prefect; he was preceded by Ovinus Gallicanus, Prefect in 316–17, on whom, E. Champlin, 'Saint Gallicanus (Consul 317)' *Phoenix* xxxvi (1982) 71–6.

⁸ *Oratio ad sanctos* 20. The emperor praises Vergil's proper use of poetic licence; on this notion Lactantius also had ideas: *Divine Institutions* (*Inst.*) i 11.24.

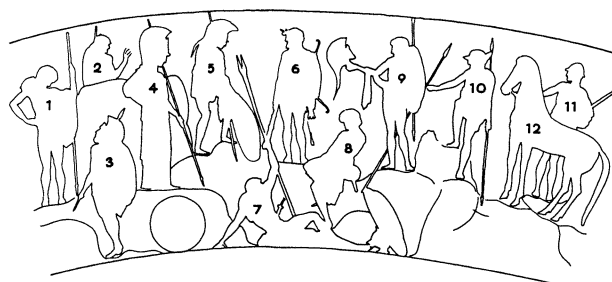
⁹ Above note 4. For Crispus and Lactantius, Jerome *Chron.* ad ann. 317 AD; Jerome *de viris illustribus* 80.

¹⁰ E. Heck *Die Dualistische Zusätze und die Kaiserreden bei Lactantius* (Abhandlungen Heidelberg Akad. 1972) 167 ff. suggests that Lactantius died before completing his revisions of *Inst.* for the second edition dedicated to Constantine.

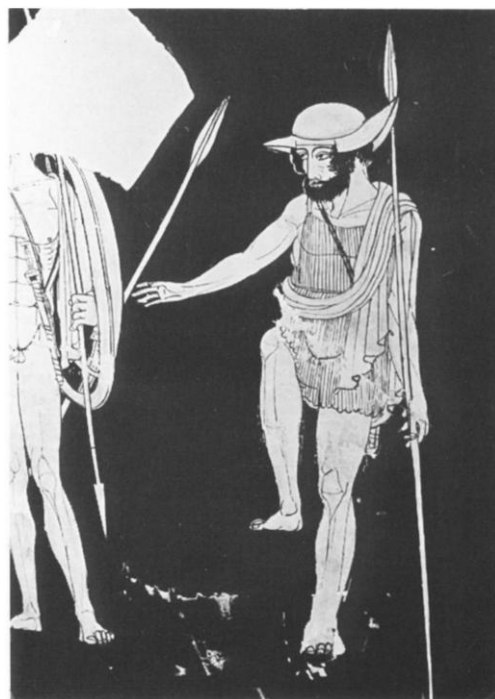
¹¹ Jerome *de viris illustribus* 80 and 111.



(a) Paris, Louvre G 341 (after Furtwängler-Reichold, *Griechische Vasenmalerei* II, pl. 108).



(b) Diagram of Fig. 1 (courtesy, K. Jeppesen).



(c) Odysseus, Louvre G 341 (photo: Chuzeville; courtesy, Louvre Museum).



III(a). Odysseus, Agora P 18538 (courtesy, American School of Classical Studies at Athens)



III(b) Elpenor, Odysseus, Hermes, Boston 34.79 (courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



III(c). New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 08.258.21, detail. (photo: Museum, Rogers Fund)



III(d) New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 08.258.21, detail. (photo: Museum, Rogers Fund)