

# NOTES

## Onesimos and the interpretation of Ilioupersis iconography\*

The Ilioupersis cup of Onesimos in the J. Paul Getty Museum offers a unique opportunity for the study of Ilioupersis iconography (PLATES Ia and Ib).<sup>1</sup> The tondo in the cup's interior features the murder of Priam, and the surrounding circular zone contains eight further scenes of the sack—in all, nine scenes decorating a single surface.<sup>2</sup> In his recent article on the cup, Dyfri Williams has discussed the iconography of each of these scenes individually.<sup>3</sup> In this paper I hope to complement Williams' acute observations by drawing attention to the visual and thematic interaction among the nine scenes when viewed in combination. It is only through consideration of the scenes as a group, I believe, that the narrative significance and ethical implications of the individual scenes can be fully appreciated.

It was not uncommon for Greek artists to represent two or more scenes from the story of the Ilioupersis on a single work of art. The earliest known example is a seventh-century relief pithos from Mykonos, on which are depicted the wooden horse, Menelaos' recovery of Helen, and a multitude of Achaian warriors murdering Trojan children and capturing Trojan women.<sup>4</sup> The practice of juxtaposing Ilioupersis scenes is employed by Attic vase-painters from the middle of the sixth century onwards. Lydos, for example, depicts the death of Priam once in combination with the recovery of Helen<sup>5</sup> and once in combination with Aias' attack on Cassandra.<sup>6</sup>

\* I am greatly indebted to Oliver Taplin, who first introduced me to the Ilioupersis cup of Onesimos in the J. Paul Getty Museum and who during the course of my work has offered numerous insightful suggestions. I would also like to thank Dr. Dyfri Williams for kindly facilitating my access to his invaluable publication of the Onesimos cup, Bob Connor and Robin Osborne for their advice and encouragement, the three anonymous referees whose acute comments have contributed much to the final revision of this article, and the J. Paul Getty Museum for allowing me to reproduce photographs of the Onesimos Ilioupersis vase (PLATES Ia and Ib).

<sup>1</sup> Malibu 83.AE.362, 84.AE.80 and 85.AE.385, *BA* (= *Beazley Addenda*) 404; published by D. Williams, 'Onesimos and the Getty Ilioupersis', *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum* v (1991) 41-64 (henceforth referred to as Williams). Williams 47 dates the cup to between 500 and 490 BC.

<sup>2</sup> The cup is unusually large. Williams (n. 1) 47 records its diameter as 46.5 cm. This rarely employed scheme of cup decoration is particularly well suited to the simultaneous presentation of multiple, thematically related scenes. Compare the arrangement of the deeds of Theseus on a large red-figure cup of the Penthesilea Painter, Ferrara 44885 (T 18C VP), *ARV* 882.35 and 1673, *Para* 428, *BA* 301.

<sup>3</sup> For further general information on the iconography of the sack of Troy in the early fifth century see J.-M. Moret, *L'Ilioupersis dans la céramique italote* (Geneva 1975) esp. i 53-60. For information on specific episodes see in the notes below.

<sup>4</sup> See M. Ervin, 'A relief pithos from Mykonos', *AD* xviii (1963) 37-75.

<sup>5</sup> Black-figure amphora, Berlin F 1685, *ABV* 109.24, *BA* 30. For illustrations see M. Wiencke, 'An epic theme in Greek art', *AJA* lviii (1954) 285-306, fig. 14, and T.H. Carpenter, *Art and myth in ancient Greece* (London 1991) fig. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Black-figure amphora fr., Paris Louvre F 29, *ABV* 109.21 and 685, *Para* 44, *BA* 30, 560-540 BC. For an illustration see P. Demargne, 'Athena', *LIMC* ii.1 (1984) p. 967.

One of the more elaborate examples among Attic pottery is the Vivenzio Hydria, on which the Kleophrades Painter has grouped five Ilioupersis scenes side by side.<sup>7</sup> Monumental examples include Polygnotos' wall-painting in the Knidian Lesche in Delphi<sup>8</sup> and the series of metopes along the north side of the Parthenon.<sup>9</sup> The choice of scenes and their arrangement on these works are often influenced by the artist's interest in visual or narrative connections. The Mykonos pithos, for example, exhibits a narrative progression from neck to body: the wooden horse, depicted in isolation on the neck, forms a prelude to the scenes of slaughter and enslavement depicted on the body below. The Kleophrades Painter arranged the five scenes on the Vivenzio Hydria in an ABCBA pattern according to visual and thematic parallels. In the centre is the murder of Priam, flanked on either side by a struggle involving an Achaian warrior and a Trojan woman. This group of three is in turn surrounded by scenes of relative calm: at the far left Aineias escapes with his family, while at the far right Akamas and Demophon rescue their grandmother Aithra.<sup>10</sup>

Onesimos' cup with its nine Ilioupersis scenes presents the most complex surviving example of this phenomenon. The choice and positioning of a scene within the circular, or rather octagonal arrangement of the cup's interior are influenced by its thematic relation to the other scenes and reinforced through visual similarities.<sup>11</sup> The outer scenes, each positioned on a corner of the octagon, are balanced with or contrasted against the neighbouring scenes and the scenes directly opposite, while the tondo provides a unifying focus in the centre. For example, in the tondo of Onesimos' cup the aging king Priam extends an arm in supplication to Neoptolemos. In the scene to the right an elderly woman, Theano, extends an arm in supplication to a Greek warrior. (For clarity I will refer to the surrounding scenes using compass directions, with this scene as East.) And in the

<sup>7</sup> Red-figure hydria, Naples 2422, *ARV* 189.74, *Para* 341, *BA* 189, c. 480 BC. For illustrations see E. Simon, *Die Griechischen Vasen* (Munich 1981) pls 184-88. On the iconography of the vase see J. Boardman, 'The Kleophrades Painter at Troy', *AK* 19 (1976) 3-18.

<sup>8</sup> Polygnotos depicts the immediate aftermath of the sack rather than the sack itself. See Pausanias x 25-27. Compare also Polygnotos' painting in the Stoa Poikile at Athens, Pausanias i 15.

<sup>9</sup> See J. Boardman and D. Finn, *The Parthenon and its sculptures* (London 1985) 232 and 234.

<sup>10</sup> The scenes also exhibit a chronological progression from left to right. Aineias' escape from Troy, the far left scene, occurs before the Achaian attack in the Archaic and Classical literary sources (in contrast to the later version recorded by Vergil). See Proklos' summary of the *Ilioupersis* in A. Bernabé, *Poetae Epici Graeci* I (Leipzig 1987) 88-89 lines 8-9, and Sophokles *Laokoon* fr. 373 (Radt). The three central scenes belong to the attack proper. The rescue of Aithra in the scene to the right takes place after the Achaians have captured the city; see Proklos' *Ilioupersis* summary 21-22 (Bernabé).

<sup>11</sup> Critics since F.G. Welcker have noted the importance of doubling and parallelism in the epic development of the cycle episodes; see W. Kullmann, 'Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker über Homer und den epischen Kyklos' in *Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker: Werk und Wirkung, Hermes Einzelschriften* xlix (1986) 118. It is not surprising therefore that the artists employ similar techniques in their representations of the Trojan saga.

scene directly opposite (w) another elderly woman, Aithra, holds a similar pose. The alignment of these scenes along a single axis and the visual similarities shared among them lead the viewer to consider them together as a group and to explore each in relation to the others. Doing so, we will immediately notice that the theme of supplication is of particular interest to the artist, and we might next proceed to examine the significance of Priam's futile supplication of Neoptolemos in contrast to the successful supplication in the lateral scenes.<sup>12</sup> Similar significant parallels unite all nine scenes into a symmetric web of connected themes and ideas, inviting the viewer to examine and to interpret.<sup>13</sup>

I begin my analysis in the tondo with the death of Priam, which, as the central and the largest scene, is the first to attract the viewer's attention.<sup>14</sup> The basic structure of the scene is traditional. Priam has taken refuge at the altar of Zeus Herkeios, and Neoptolemos prepares to strike him with the body of the child Astyanax. A less common feature is the figure of Polyxene, positioned pictorially between the old man and the warrior, and identified by an inscription.<sup>15</sup> Her appearance as a horrified spectator may in part be meant to correspond with our own sense of horror as we observe the scene. On the ground behind the altar lies the body of a dying Trojan, perhaps to be identified as Deiphobos, the second of Helen's Trojan husbands.<sup>16</sup> Thus, we witness

<sup>12</sup> See pp. 133-4 below for further interpretation of this combination of scenes.

<sup>13</sup> The exterior of the cup features two episodes from earlier stages in the Trojan saga: the taking of Briseis from Achilles and the fight between Hektor and Aias. The relationship between interior and exterior scenes does not seem to be governed by the immediate visual and thematic similarities operating among the interior scenes. I therefore do not discuss the exterior scenes in this paper.

<sup>14</sup> For the Priam/Astyanax scene in Greek art of the sixth and fifth centuries see Wiencke (n. 5) and O. Touchefeu, 'Astyanax I', *LIMC* ii (1984) 929-37.

<sup>15</sup> Note that Onesimos uses this same combination of Priam, Neoptolemos and Polyxene to decorate the tondo of a slightly earlier cup, Vatican, no inv. no., and Berlin 2280 and 2281, *ARV* 19.1 and 2, *BA* 153. Only fragments remain. See A. Stenico, 'Nuovi frammenti della kylix berlinese con l'Iliupersis di Euphronios, conservati nei Musei Vaticani', *Acme* vi (1953) 497-508, pls 1-2; and H. Speier, 'Die Iliupersisschale aus der Werkstatt des Euphronios', in R. Lullies (ed.), *Neue Beiträge zur klassischen Altertumskunde* (Stuttgart 1954) 113-24. For the most recent reconstruction of the fragments and the attribution to Onesimos, see D. Williams, 'The Iliupersis cup in Berlin and the Vatican', *JBerMus* xviii (1976) 9-23, figs 6 and 7. Although the female figure in the tondo is not identified with an inscription, comparison with the Getty cup suggests that she is Polyxene. See Williams (n. 1) 50.

<sup>16</sup> Williams (n. 1) 51 suggests that 'Onesimos might perhaps have made a slight slip and written Daiphonos instead of Daiphobos'. I suggest that rather than an error, the name Daiphonos is for Onesimos an alternative to Daiphobos (or Deiphobos). Compare the tondo of Onesimos' earlier Iliupersis cup (on which see n. 15). Three inscriptions appear on and below the altar: ΔΙΟΣ above the moulding, ΗΙΕΡΟ in the middle, and ]ΝΟΣ retrograde below the base. These inscriptions have been read together as ΔΙΟΣ ΙΕΡΟ[Ν] [ΤΕΜΕ]ΝΟΣ by Speier (n. 15) 114. I suggest instead two separate inscriptions: ΔΙΟΣ ΙΕΡΟ[Ν] for the location and ]ΝΟΣ for the name of the fallen warrior. It would be normal for the inscription to originate near the warrior's head, and therefore it is written retrograde. Perhaps

the deaths of three generations—old king, warrior and young child.<sup>17</sup> The entire ruling dynasty is exterminated in the sack.

From the tondo the eye moves easily to the scene directly above, as it alone among the surrounding scenes shares the same orientation. Here Onesimos has chosen to depict the rape of Cassandra, an episode with immediate affinity to the murder of Priam.<sup>18</sup> Both scenes feature a suppliant taking refuge at a religious sanctuary and threatened by a Greek soldier. Cassandra and Priam both extend an arm toward their attackers in a desperate but unsuccessful plea for mercy. While the statue of Athena provides a striking symbol of the divine in the Cassandra scene, Onesimos highlights the divine element also in the Priam scene by adding to the altar the inscription ΗΕΡΚΕΙΩ—an extremely rare feature in representations of Priam's death.<sup>19</sup> Thus in both scenes the religious sanctuary is clearly identified, the sacrilege manifest. The combination of these two scenes along the same axis and with the same orientation, hardly accidental, serves to highlight the theme of sacrilege as one of the principal concerns of the overall composition.<sup>20</sup>

This concern with religious violation is a factor also behind the inclusion of Polyxene in the tondo. Epic tradition records that the Greeks sacrificed Polyxene at the tomb of Achilles shortly after the sack of Troy.<sup>21</sup> Among Attic vase-paintings the gruesome episode survives only on a Tyrrhenian amphora by the Timiades Painter: three Greek warriors hold Polyxene above a mound while Neoptolemos slits her throat.<sup>22</sup> In the later sixth century a less violent representation of the episode appears on a black-figure vase of the Leagros Group: a Greek warrior leads Polyxene by the hand toward the

this figure is [ΔΑΙΦΟ]ΝΟΣ as on the Getty vase.

<sup>17</sup> See Williams (n.1) 51.

<sup>18</sup> For the iconography of Cassandra see J. Davreux, *La légende de la prophétesse Cassandre d'après les textes et les monuments* (Paris 1942), and O. Touchefeu, 'Aias II', *LIMC* i (1981) 336-51.

<sup>19</sup> The altar itself, a notable feature of the story already in its epic renderings, was still a particularly potent image in late Archaic and Classical Athens, where the altar of Zeus Herkeios served as a focal point of the home; see, for example, Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 55. The only other known example of an inscription on this altar in the Priam scene occurs on Onesimos' earlier Iliupersis cup (nn. 15 and 16).

<sup>20</sup> Other examples of the combination include a black-figure amphora by Lydos (n. 6); the Vivenzio hydria of the Kleophrades Painter (n. 7); red-figure cup fragments, Akropolis 212, Touchefeu (n. 14) no. 17, c. 500 BC; fragments of a red-figure cup by the Steiglitz Painter, Akropolis 355, *ARV* 828.29, 480-470 BC; and a red-figure volute-krater of the Niobid Painter, Bologna 268, *ARV* 598.1, *Para* 394, *BA* 265, 475-450 BC.

<sup>21</sup> See Proklos' summary of the *Iliupersis* 22-23: ἐπειτα ἐμπρήσαντες τὴν πῶλιν Πολυξένην σφαγιάζουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως τάφον (Bernabé).

<sup>22</sup> London 1897.7-27.2, *ABV* 97.27 and 683, *Para* 37, *BA* 26, 565-550 BC, J. Boardman, *Athenian Black Figure Vases* (London 1974) fig. 57. On the disputed provenance of the 'Tyrrhenian' amphorae see T.H. Carpenter, 'The Tyrrhenian Group: problems of provenance', *OJA* iii (1984) 45-56, and B. Ginge, 'A new evaluation of the origins of Tyrrhenian pottery: Etruscan precursors of Pontic ceramics', in J. Christiansen and T. Melander (eds), *Ancient Greek and related pottery* (Copenhagen 1988) 201-10. The uncertainty does not significantly affect my arguments.

tomb of Achilles.<sup>23</sup> The painter avoids depicting the act of sacrifice itself and instead depicts the moment before, the preparation for sacrifice. Onesimos, by placing Polyxene face to face with Neoptolemos, achieves a similar effect. Here she looks on as Neoptolemos murders her father; directly above, her sister Cassandra, similarly famed as a beautiful daughter of Priam, is attacked by Aias; and soon she herself will join the victims, with Neoptolemos again the agent.<sup>24</sup> All three of these episodes involve violation in a religious context. Cassandra and Priam are attacked while suppliant at religious sanctuaries, and Polyxene is to be murdered as a sacrificial victim. The allusion to that abhorrent human sacrifice here adds an even darker dimension to the sacrilegious murder of Priam; it suggests that Priam's death be understood not only as violation of a suppliant, but perhaps also as a corrupted form of sacrifice.

The Cassandra scene and the tondo are complemented by a third scene (S) positioned along the same axis, but with the opposite orientation. Menelaos rushes toward Helen with the intent to murder her, but at the sight of her beauty his anger subsides and he drops his sword.<sup>25</sup> Onesimos has developed the relationships between this scene and the two above, particularly the Cassandra scene, by devising a number of visual similarities. Priam and Cassandra each extend one arm toward the attacking Greek, and Helen in the scene below extends both arms toward the advancing figure of Menelaos. Cassandra and Helen are further associated through their posture and clothing. Cassandra cowers in fear of Aias, and Helen crouches before Menelaos. With only a cloak hanging over her shoulder, most of Cassandra's body is exposed;<sup>26</sup> and although Helen is clothed, Onesimos paints a distinct outline of her lower body beneath the thin chiton.<sup>27</sup> The two scenes also share the same gen-

eral composition. Aias attacks from one side of Cassandra while the statue of Athena stands on the other. Likewise, Menelaos advances on one side of Helen, and a female figure, probably the goddess Aphrodite, stands on the other.<sup>28</sup> But while the visual similarities invite the eye to compare the top and bottom scenes, the viewer cannot ignore the fundamental difference between the two episodes. Menelaos' intent to kill Helen is thwarted by divine intervention, represented by Aphrodite and by the small figure of Eros. Cassandra, in contrast, receives no direct support from the gods. Athena appears, but only as a statue. Unlike Menelaos, who has dropped his sword, Aias still wields his weapon (not surviving) and disregards Cassandra's plea for mercy. While Helen's beauty mollifies, Cassandra's beauty incites. A similar tension exists between the Helen scene and the tondo. The small, naked body of Astyanax suspended in the air parallels visually the small, naked figure of Eros below.<sup>29</sup> But the figure of Astyanax is employed to heighten the theme of violence: the child functions as a weapon in the hands of Neoptolemos. In contrast, the figure of Eros represents the divine agent of restraint.

Onesimos' purpose in seeking balance exceeds simple aesthetic delight in visual symmetry. By including multiple visual parallels, the artist is able to highlight individual elements and thereby to sharpen thematic distinctions. While observing the iconographic similarities, the sensitive viewer will simultaneously be struck by the contrast in dramatic content. Helen, Priam and Cassandra are all suppliants, but Helen's plea for mercy is successful, while those of Priam and Cassandra are not. This striking distinction prompts a series of further questions. Does Helen survive because she is a Greek, while the others suffer because they are Trojans? Might the extensive parallelism express irony or elicit disapproval? Should we question why Helen, the very root of the war, escapes without injury, while the innocent Cassandra is attacked and Astyanax murdered? Before tackling such questions, however, we must take into account the remaining scenes.

The scenes located on the oblique axes, the four scenes immediately adjacent to the Cassandra and Helen scenes, involve fighting between Greeks and Trojans. Directly to the left of the rape of Cassandra (i.e. NW), a Trojan woman, one knee already pressed to the ground, swings a large pestle against an attacking Greek warrior.<sup>30</sup> In the oblique scene to the left of this (SW), a

body, and the decision to do so has provided a parallel with the Cassandra scene. Note also that as the century progresses the iconography of Helen's recovery becomes further assimilated to that of Cassandra.

<sup>28</sup> See Williams (n. 1) 56 for the suggested identification of this figure as Aphrodite.

<sup>29</sup> I am grateful to Oliver Taplin for pointing out this parallel.

<sup>30</sup> The remains of an inscription suggest that this figure may be Hekabe. Williams (n. 1) 54 notes, however, that the figure appears too young to be Hekabe and suggests instead Klymene, a slave of Helen whose name appears at *Iliad* iii 144. Because of the figure's active resistance I would more readily identify her as a Trojan, perhaps belonging to the royal house. See p. 7 below. For other armed women in Iliupersis scenes see, for example, the Iliupersis cup of the Brygos Painter (n. 24) and the Vivenzio hydria of the Kleophrades Painter (n. 7). Note also the presence of a pestle in the tondo of the Getty cup; see Williams (n. 1) 51-52.

<sup>23</sup> Berlin 1902, *ABV* 363.37, *Para* 161, *BA* 96, late 6th c. BC, E. Vermeule, 'The vengeance of Achilles', *BullMFA* lxiii (1965) fig. 6. The same scene appears on a red-figure cup by Makron, Louvre G 153, *ARV* 460.14 and 481, *BA* 244, J.D. Beazley, 'A cup by Hieron and Makron', *BullVereen* xxix (1954) 12-15.

<sup>24</sup> A similar combination of Priam and Polyxene is found on the Iliupersis cup of the Brygos Painter, Louvre G 152, *ARV* 369.1 and 1649, *Para* 365, *BA* 224, P. Arias, M. Hirmer and B.B. Shefton (tr. and rev.), *A history of Greek vase painting* (London 1962) pls 139-41. As a warrior leads her away by the hand, Polyxene looks back upon the murder of her father. The Brygos Painter has borrowed the combination of Polyxene plus warrior (found on the Leagros Group amphora, n. 23) and transferred it to a new location. In the resulting double composition the suggestion of Polyxene's imminent death provides a parallel to the immediate death of Priam. Similarly, on both of Onesimos' Iliupersis cups the fates of Polyxene and Priam are implicitly compared.

<sup>25</sup> For Helen see L. Kahil, 'Hélène', *LIMC* iv (1988) 498-563, esp. 499-500 for the literary sources and 537-52 for the recovery scene.

<sup>26</sup> On the characteristic nudity of Cassandra see Touchefeu 351.

<sup>27</sup> For a similar suggestive representation of Helen's body compare the Makron skyphos Boston MFA 13.168, *ARV* 458.1 and 481, *Para* 377, *BA* 243, Simon (n. 7) pl. 166. Note that transparent clothing is found on the Getty vase also on the figures of Akamas, Demophon (W) and the pestle-swinger (NW). The technique cannot be considered unusual. Nevertheless, the painter did have the choice of whether or not to reveal Helen's

Trojan woman holding an axe prepares to assist in a struggle between two figures.<sup>31</sup> On the opposite side of the cup's interior, immediately to the right of the Cassandra scene (i.e. NE), a fully armed Greek warrior attacks a Trojan armed only with a sword and naked except for a cloak; another naked Trojan already lies dying on the ground below. The fourth oblique scene (SE) is missing, but I conjecture that another scene of male combat originally balanced that to its left (NE).<sup>32</sup> The result would then be four scenes of fighting arranged symmetrically around the tondo—two scenes featuring Trojan women set opposite two scenes involving only men.<sup>33</sup>

While the symmetry of this arrangement links the fight scenes visually—each lies along an oblique axis—they are also related by a common thematic element. None of the three surviving scenes represents a proper combat. Rather, they are corrupted images of combat. Although traditional in depictions of the sack of Troy, women bearing weapons, especially impromptu weapons like pestles, do not properly belong in combat with men; they are not equal opponents to the Greek warriors. And like his female counterparts, the fighting Trojan man (NE) is not adequately equipped to ward off the Greek attack. The cloak thrown over his shoulder alludes to the surprise attack of the Greeks. Either he was woken from sleep and had time to grab only this garment, or he was wearing it while celebrating the supposed departure of the Greek army.<sup>34</sup> Naked and unprepared, he is no match for the heavily armed Greek.<sup>35</sup> Together these three scenes highlight the inequality of the fighting during the sack. Furthermore, they offer an interpretative context for the adjacent scenes along the vertical axis (N-S).

<sup>31</sup> The fragmentary inscription suggests that this is Andromache; see Williams (n. 1) 56.

<sup>32</sup> Williams (n. 1) 56 suggests that the space 'was probably filled by a fight scene'.

<sup>33</sup> This arrangement is reminiscent of Onesimos' earlier Ilioupersis cup (n. 15). On one side of the exterior are two pairs of fighting men; on the other are two groups, each consisting of a Trojan woman fleeing from a Greek warrior. As on the Getty cup, scenes of male combat are balanced against groups composed of women and warriors.

<sup>34</sup> Compare the cloaks worn by the Trojan men on the Brygos Painter's Ilioupersis cup (n. 24). Men in scenes of feasting and celebration often wear similar cloaks. See for example a cup by Douris, Cab. Méd. 542, ARV 438.133 and 1653, *Para* 375, BA 239, Arias (n. 24) pl. 148; a skyphos by the Brygos Painter, Louvre G 156, ARV 380.172 and 1649, *Para* 366, BA 227, Simon (n. 7) pls 151-53; and a cup by the same, Würzburg 479, ARV 372.32 and 1649, *Para* 366 and 367, BA 225, Simon (n. 7) pls 154-56.

<sup>35</sup> Male nudity can, of course, convey a wide range of meaning in Greek art. In scenes of combat nudity may be employed as a heroic convention. It may sometimes be associated with imminent or immediate death. In the context of the sack of Troy, however, the iconographic contrast between naked and fully armed warriors appears to be a deliberate attempt to represent an imbalance between the Achaians and Trojans, an imbalance that was probably traditionally recorded in poetic accounts of the Ilioupersis; see Apollodoros *Epitome* v 20 for the Achaian assault on the sleeping Trojans. For the theme of unequal combat compare *Iliad* xxii 124-25, where Hektor says of Achilles, ...κτενέει δέ με γυμνὸν ἔδοντα/ αὐτῶς ὡς τε γυναῖκα, ἐπει κ' ἀπὸ τεύχεα δῶ.

Like the Trojan men and women in the fight scenes, Cassandra, Priam and Astyanax are all defenceless victims. And although the attack of Menelaos is ultimately averted, Helen too belongs in this category. Here the sack is represented less as a glorious military victory than as a slaughter of the helpless.

Two scenes remain to be explored. Near the handle to the left of the tondo, Aithra, mother of Theseus and slave to Helen, is rescued by her grandsons Akamas and Demophon (W).<sup>36</sup> Directly opposite is another scene of rescue: Odysseus spares the Trojan Antenor and his wife Theano (E).<sup>37</sup> Like the Cassandra and Helen scenes on the vertical axis, the Aithra and Antenor scenes are intended to complement each other and the tondo that lies between them. In each scene along the horizontal axis an elderly figure raises an arm in a gesture of supplication toward a Greek warrior—Aithra to her grandsons, Priam to Neoptolemos, and Theano to Odysseus. Another visual link between the scenes is formed by the use of added white for aging hair. In addition, both the meeting of Aithra with her grandsons and the murder of Priam are located at an altar.<sup>38</sup> In essence the three scenes share the same subject: an elderly figure supplicates a warrior. But as in the vertical axis, one of the three scenes along the horizontal axis stands in contrast to the other two. The success of supplication in the lateral scenes is the antithesis of Priam's failure in the tondo. In contrast to the turbulent movement in the centre, the lateral figures are still. This disparity highlights the suffering of Priam and his family. While Aithra is reunited with her family and Antenor's family is spared, Priam and his family are brutally attacked by the Greeks.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> On Aithra see U. Kron, 'Aithra I', *LIMC* i (1981) 420-31, esp. 420 for the literary sources and 426-27 for the rescue.

<sup>37</sup> For Antenor see Williams (n. 1) 55-56, and M.I. Davies, 'Antenor I', *LIMC* i (1981) 811-15, esp. 812 for the literary sources and 813 for the rescue at Troy. See Pausanias x 26.7-8 for the rescue of Antenor in the wall-painting by Polygnotos in the Knidian Lesche at Delphi. The skin hung over Odysseus' shoulder in this scene, as Williams tentatively suggests, must be the skin which Odysseus hangs before Antenor's house as a sign to the Achaians not to attack. See also Sophokles *Aias Lokros* fr. 11 (Radt) and Strabo xiii 1.53.

<sup>38</sup> We might, furthermore, suspect that the Antenor scene also took place at a sanctuary, since Theano is the priestess of Athena. The literary sources, however, place the family of Antenor in their home at the time of the sack; see Pausanias x 26.7-8.

<sup>39</sup> Compare the arrangement of scenes on the Vivenzio Hydria (n. 7). In the centre Neoptolemos murders Priam. At the far left Aineias leaves the city with his father and son, and to the far right Aithra is rescued by her grandsons. As on Onesimos' Getty cup, the death of Priam is contrasted with two scenes of survival. The arrangement on the Vivenzio hydria also emphasizes the theme of family. Already at *Iliad* xx 302-8 the eventual survival of the family of Anchises and Aineias is explicitly contrasted with the destruction of the family of Priam. The Kleophrades Painter's depiction of Aineias escaping with his father and son provides a foil to the death of Priam and Astyanax and reflects the contrast in family fates as observed in the *Iliad*. In addition, the Kleophrades Painter extends this theme into the Aithra scene through the addition of a small female figure, analogous to the figure of Aineias' son opposite (both placed below round shields), and again to be contrasted with the dead figure of Astyanax in the central scene.

To appreciate fully the significance of this contrast it is necessary to explore further the myths of Aithra and Antenor. The rescue of Antenor's family is motivated by his past support of the Achaian cause. When Menelaos and Odysseus came to Troy as ambassadors seeking the release of Helen, they were received by Antenor, who not only entertained his guest hospitably, but also foiled a Trojan plot to murder the ambassadors.<sup>40</sup> In the *Iliad* Antenor is represented as an opponent of hostilities and an advocate of returning Helen to Menelaos.<sup>41</sup> It is because he sympathized with the Greeks, protected Menelaos and Odysseus, and opposed the abduction that he and his family are spared at the sack.

The rescue of Aithra is similarly motivated through support of the Achaian cause. Her slavery began before the Trojan War, when the Dioskouroi rescued Helen from her previous abductor, Theseus.<sup>42</sup> In response to Theseus' act Helen's brothers sacked the city where she was held and, in addition to recovering Helen, also enslaved Theseus' mother Aithra. Later, when Paris abducted Helen, Aithra went to Troy as Helen's slave, and this second abduction gave the family of Theseus a chance to make good the previous error. Akamas and Demophon took part in the campaign against Troy and recovered Aithra when the city was taken—the scene depicted here by Onesimos. In return for their services in the war, Aithra will soon be freed from slavery. The Aithra episode can thus function both as a warning of the retribution which follows abduction and as an example of the rewards that follow the campaign against abduction. Aithra was enslaved in response to the abduction of Helen and is now freed as a consequence of abduction thwarted. Furthermore, Onesimos complements these themes of the Aithra scene in the scenes immediately adjacent (NW and SW), where we see a repetition of the sequence of abduction, sack and enslavement observed in Aithra's past history. As a consequence of Paris' abduction of Helen, the Trojan women in these scenes are soon to be taken captive by their Greek adversaries. Their present fate parallels Aithra's past suffering and contrasts with her present release.<sup>43</sup>

The themes developed in the Aithra and Antenor scenes illuminate the reasons behind the death of Priam. The lateral scenes express advocacy of the Greek cause, condemnation of abduction and reward for its opposition. Between them is Priam, who as leader of the Trojans must ultimately accept responsibility for failing to return Helen to the Greeks. The alignment of the

three scenes thus emphasizes the theme of punishment in contrast to reward. Though brutal and sacrilegious, Priam's death is a consequence of his actions.<sup>44</sup> Further support for this interpretation may be provided by the fallen warrior labelled with the inscription  $\text{JA}\Phi\text{ONO}\Sigma$ , if the suggested identification of this figure as Deiphobos is correct.<sup>45</sup> Even after the death of Paris the Trojans refused to return Helen to the Greeks and instead married her to another of Priam's sons, Deiphobos. Onesimos depicts the death of Deiphobos together with the murder of Priam because like his father, Deiphobos refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Greek claim upon Helen. His inclusion here complements the opposition between Antenor, spared because of his sympathy to the Greek cause, and Priam, whose death is motivated by his unwillingness to return Helen. Meanwhile, immediately below we see Helen herself, perhaps not the willing adulteress we may have suspected, but instead a pawn manipulated by the men of Troy.<sup>46</sup>

The overall picture formed by these scenes is one of horror and brutality transgressing the norms of warfare. As they abuse and slaughter defenceless Trojans, the Greeks dare even to violate the sanctuaries of the gods.<sup>47</sup> Two instances of mercy, however, stand out in opposition to the scenes of violence. The depictions of the rescue of Aithra and the sparing of Antenor suggest a sense of legitimacy in the Greek attempt to recover Helen. Noting the thematic contrast between these scenes and the tondo, the viewer cannot ignore the fact that the suffering of Priam and his family originates with the past errors of the Trojans themselves. The Greek victory is excessively severe, but the Trojan side is far from blameless.

The extensive visual and thematic symmetry which has led to this interpretation of the work can only be the result of a degree of deliberate arrangement and construction. The multiple parallels represent a conscious attempt to form links among the scenes. In part, the artist achieves interaction by manipulating traditional elements—for example, the altar in the Priam scene and the analogous statue in the Cassandra scene, and the similar gestures of Priam and Cassandra. While some of the scenes are composed in essence according to inherited iconographic patterns, others, I suggest, have been influenced more by the artist's desire to create parallels. The appearance of Aphrodite and Eros (s), figures which occur in no previous surviving examples of the recovery scene, may have been determined less

<sup>40</sup> See *Iliad* iii 205-8 for Antenor as host. For the plot see *Iliad* xi 138-42 and Apollodoros *Epitome* iii 28-29. Antenor's hospitality and protection of the ambassadors probably formed part of the *Kypria*. Compare also Bakchylides 15 for the reception of the embassy by Antenor and Theano.

<sup>41</sup> See *Iliad* vii 344-78, where Antenor urges that Helen be returned, Paris refuses and Priam tacitly sides with his son.

<sup>42</sup> See Kron (n. 36) 420 for a discussion of the Aithra myth in early literature. Aithra appears already at *Iliad* iii 143-44 as an attendant of Helen.

<sup>43</sup> This relationship between the Aithra scene and those adjacent would encourage a search for a similar relationship between the Antenor scene and its neighbours, but the lack of one adjacent scene and the obscurity of the other make even speculation difficult.

<sup>44</sup> Note that the Aineias scene appearing on the Vivenzio hydria would not provide a suitable thematic replacement for the Antenor scene on the Onesimos cup. In contrast to Antenor, who opposed the Trojan claim to Helen, Aineias actually accompanied Paris on his journey to Sparta. With the inclusion of Aineias, the artist would weaken the theme of retribution, expressed here in the contrast between Priam and Antenor.

<sup>45</sup> See n. 16 above.

<sup>46</sup> Compare Euripides *Troades* 959-60, where Helen tells Menelaos that Deiphobos married her against her will. On the differing representations of Helen in Greek literature see J.Th. Kakridis, 'Problems of the Homeric Helen', in *Homer revisited* (Lund 1971) 25-53.

<sup>47</sup> Compare Williams (n. 1) 61 on the intensity of the brutality and sacrilege. I would, however, disagree with Williams' interpretation of the cup as a 'Greek celebration of the Greek defeat at Troy'.

by iconographic precedent than by the artist's wish to create doublets with Astyanax (tondo) and the statue of Athena (N) in the scenes above. Similarly, the rescues of Aithra and Antenor, not found in art before this cup,<sup>48</sup> may have been developed specifically to contrast with the fate of Priam.

In cases of compositional originality and grandeur in vase-paintings, it is sometimes doubted whether the credit for innovation belongs to the vase-painter. Onesimos, one might argue, did not author the design, but only followed a plan originally executed in a monumental medium, sculpture or wall-painting. Such scepticism is in this case, I believe, unwarranted. The circular geometry of the cup's interior, as I have argued, is highly suitable, indeed conducive to the observed interaction among the Ilioupersis scenes. While we might imagine that a similar depiction of the Ilioupersis existed on a monumental work—a wall painting with similarly circular geometry or a large, round shield—contemporary comparative evidence is lacking.<sup>49</sup> No doubt, there are many missing links in the history of Ilioupersis iconography, but in this instance I think it unfair to underestimate the contribution of the painter.<sup>50</sup> If my analysis of the combination of Ilioupersis scenes is valid, then we must credit Onesimos with a deep appreciation of the significance of the images represented and with a remarkable ability not only to transmit tradition, but to shape and even to supplement it according to his own designs.

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<sup>48</sup> Attempts have been made to identify Aithra's rescue in black-figure vase-paintings, but the identification is doubtful; see Kron (n. 36) nos 59-65. Apart from the Onesimos cup, the earliest certain representation of the scene appears on a red-figure calyx-krater by Myson, BM E458, ARV 239.16, *Para* 349, *BA* 201, Kron no. 66. The Krater is dated to between 500 and 490 BC and is therefore contemporary with the Onesimos cup.

<sup>49</sup> Compare the much earlier Kretan bronze shields and Phoenician bowls decorated with concentric bands of figures. The shield on Pheidias' Athena Parthenos seems not to have been decorated according to the geometric scheme employed by Onesimos.

<sup>50</sup> Onesimos' previous interest in the Ilioupersis theme is demonstrated by his earlier Ilioupersis cup (nn. 15 and 16). The Priam scene in the tondo of the earlier cup (very similar to that of the Getty cup—n. 16) and the exterior scenes of fighting and pursuit (comparable to the fight scenes on the Getty cup—n. 33) perhaps represent earlier stages in Onesimos' development of the iconography.

### Ctesias, his royal patrons and Indian swords\*

Like his predecessor Herodotus, Ctesias has a great deal to report of marvellous springs, lakes and other bodies of water.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in one of the most noteworthy tales in his book on India, he describes a remarkable well which produces not water but gold. The story has never been discussed in full. A recent scholar, in fact, in one of the few allusions to it, reproduces the account, but only in part, namely the lines which concern the gold.<sup>2</sup> The original narrative, however, includes much more, for it deals, in addition, with the iron found at the bottom of the well and with its remarkable properties, as well as with the two swords of this metal which Ctesias allegedly received, one from the queen-mother, the other from the king.

The story deserves to be examined as a whole, for it raises a variety of interesting questions. We want to know such things as its source, whether Ctesias' own imagination has played a major role here, as has been believed,<sup>3</sup> whether anything in the tale has a genuine connection with India. Other issues too are involved, namely those that have to do with Ctesias' stay at the Persian court.<sup>4</sup> Is it at all likely that he was given a sword by the king, quite apart from the one supposedly given by the queen-mother? What was his relationship to his royal patrons? Does this part of his narrative shed any light on the role played by Greek doctors at the Achaemenid court?

Ctesias' tale is known only at second hand from Photius' summary of the *Indica*.<sup>5</sup> In Jacoby's edition of the fragments of Ctesias it appears as follows (*FGrH* 688 F 45.9):

περὶ τῆς κρήνης τῆς πληρουμένης ἀν' ἔτος ὕγρου χρυσοῦ, ἐξ ἧς ἑκατὸν πρόχοι ὄστρακίνοι ἀν' ἔτος ἀρύονται· ὄστρακίνοὺς δὲ δεῖ εἶναι, ἐπεὶ πῆγνυται ὁ χρυσὸς ἀπαρυόμενος, καὶ ἀνάγκη τὸ ἀγγεῖον θλᾶν καὶ οὕτως ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτόν. ἡ δὲ κρήνη τετράγωνός ἐστιν, ἑκκαίδεκα μὲν πηχῶν ἢ περιμετρος, τὸ δὲ βάθος ὀργυῖα· ἐκάστη δὲ προχοῇ τάλαντον ἔλκει. καὶ περὶ τοῦ

\* I am very grateful to two anonymous referees of the journal for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.

<sup>1</sup> K. Karttunen, 'A miraculous fountain in India', *Arctos* xix (1985) 55-65, at 58, draws attention to this predilection of Ctesias. For bibliography on Ctesias' *Indica* see J.M. Bigwood, 'Ctesias' *Indica* and Photius', *Phoenix* xliii (1989) 302-16, at 302 and Bigwood, 'Ctesias' parrot', *CQ* xliii (1993) 321-7.

<sup>2</sup> P. Lindegger, *Griechische und römische Quellen zum Peripheren Tibet ii* (Zürich 1982) 104. The comments of Karttunen, *India in early Greek literature* (Helsinki 1989) 8-9 n. 18 are very brief.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. by Lindegger (n. 2) 104, who also suggests influence by Herodotus. A recent article by J. Romm, 'Belief and other worlds: Ktesias and the founding of the "Indian wonders"' in *Mindscapes: the geographies of imagined worlds*, ed. G.E. Slusser and E.G. Rabkin (Carbondale IL 1989) 121-35, treats the work as in large measure a product of the author's fantasy.

<sup>4</sup> The story is not mentioned by T.S. Brown, 'Suggestions for a vita of Ctesias of Cnidus', *Historia* xxvii (1978) 1-19, by B. Eck, 'Sur la vie de Ctésias', *REG* ciii (1990) 409-434, or by J. Aubberger, *Ctésias: Histoires de l'orient* (Paris 1991) 4-10, in her comments on Ctesias' life.

<sup>5</sup> For Photius' emphasis on marvels and other aspects of his summary see Bigwood, 'Ctesias' *Indica*' (n. 1).



(a) Attic red-figure kylix, Collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, California, 83.AE.362, 84.AE.80 and 85.AE.385, Onesimos, 500-490 BC, terracotta, height 19cm and diameter 46.5 cm.



(b) detail