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THE RETURN OF HEPHAISTOS, DIONYSIAC PROCESSIONAL RITUAL AND THE CREATION OF A VISUAL NARRATIVE*

Abstract: The return of Hephaistos to Olympos, as a myth, concerns the establishment of a balance of power among the Olympian gods. Many visual representations of the myth in Archaic and Classical Greek art give visible form to the same theme, but they do so in a manner entirely distinct from the manner in which it is expressed in literary narratives of the tale. In this paper, I argue that vase-painters incorporated elements of Dionysiac processional ritual into representations of the return of Hephaistos in order to articulate visually the principal theme of the myth. The vase-painters structured the myth along the lines of epiphanic processions in which Dionysos was escorted into the city of Athens. Like Dionysiac epiphanic processions, the procession of Hephaistos, Dionysos and the wine-god's followers is distinguished visually by drunkenness, ostentatious display of the phallus and obscene or insulting behaviour. To judge from the aetiological myths associated with them, the epiphanic processions symbolized the triumph of Dionysos over, and his belated acceptance by, those who denied his status as a god. By structuring the visual representations of the return of Hephaistos along the lines of such Dionysiac processions, artists conveyed visually the idea that the myth also concerned the triumph of a god over those who rejected him, and his acceptance among the Olympians. It is not necessary to assume that the vase-painters relied on a detailed poetic account of the myth to create their representations of it, because they employed elements of religious spectacle, an inherently visual phenomenon, to convey the essence of the story.

I. INTRODUCTION

A FUNDAMENTAL theme of the myth of the return of Hephaistos to Olympos is the balance of power among the gods. The few surviving ancient literary accounts of the myth describe a disruption of the hierarchy on Olympos and its stabilization through the acceptance of the offbeat Hephaistos and Dionysos among the Olympian gods. The fullest surviving version of the story is attributed to the late Roman rhetorician Libanios: Hera banished Hephaistos from Olympos because she was ashamed of his lameness. In response, Hephaistos sent a throne to his mother, a chair of his own cunning design and manufacture. When Hera sat down on the gift, she found that she was held firmly in place by tricky, invisible bonds; none of the gods could free her. They determined that Hephaistos must be brought back to Olympos, since only he could operate the throne. Ares attempted to bring Hephaistos back by force but failed, having been driven away by fire. Dionysos alone was able to persuade Hephaistos to return to Olympos, by making the smith-god drunk. In return for mediating the crisis successfully, Dionysos was made one of the Olympian gods.[1] The myth describes the achievement of a stable balance of power on Olympos as a series of reversals among the gods: Hera throws Hephaistos out of heaven, Hephaistos incapacitates her, the gods are foiled by his cunning workmanship, Ares is turned by the smith-god. The crisis is averted and harmony established through the permanent readmission of the marginalized Hephaistos and the acceptance of the new, unconventional outsider, Dionysos, into the pantheon. Stability is achieved by incorporating different forms of divinity into the pantheon, instead of trying to exclude them.

Several motifs in the account just summarized – the inability of the gods to free Hera, Ares' assertion that he would bring Hephaistos back, and probably the ideas that Dionysos was made one of the Olympian gods on this occasion and that the gods laughed at Hephaistos – occur also

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[1] For the text assigned to Libanios, see Lobel and Page (1955) 272.

in fragments of an early sixth-century poem by Alkaios, perhaps the earliest surviving literary remains of the story.[2] Though skimpy, the fragments are enough to suggest that the themes emphasized in the account attributed to Libanios – the dynamic nature of power among the Olympian gods, the disruption of their society, and the necessity of accepting Dionysos and Hephaistos in their number – were part of the myth from the moment the tale was first articulated. There is also considerable evidence in early Greek art as well as poetry for one of the fundamental premises of the myth as interpreted above, namely, the image of Dionysos and Hephaistos as marginal or outsider deities. In epic poetry, Hephaistos is lame and a weakling, the antithesis of the handsome and strong Ares (Hom. *Od.* 8.308-11). The gods laugh at Hephaistos when they watch him struggling to walk and feebly imitating the beautiful cup-bearer Ganymede.[3] Hera threw him off Mount Olympos out of shame over his infirmity (Hom. *Il.* 18.395-405, *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 316-21). Poets even questioned his parentage: in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Hephaistos appears to be the son of both Zeus and Hera (see *Il.* 1.577-9, 14.338; *Od.* 8.312), but Hesiod (*Theog.* 927-9) claims that Hera bore Hephaistos without a father at all.[4] Hephaistos is most at home among the Sintians of Lemnos, who do not even speak Greek (Hom. *Il.* 1.593-4; *Od.* 8.283-4, 294). In early sixth-century Athenian representations of the celebrity-studded wedding party for Peleus and Thetis, Hephaistos is differentiated from the rest of the Olympian gods by his mode of transportation – he rides sidesaddle on a mule while most of them ride in horse-drawn chariots – and is relegated to the back of the pack.[5] In fifth-century Athens, Hephaistos is an important figure, but the mythological narrative at the origin of that importance exemplifies the negative characterization of the god in epic poetry: his attempt to have his way with the goddess Athena was pathetic and resulted in a premature ejaculation.[6] To effect the return of this god, once ostracized but suddenly essential, the Olympian gods must rely on another god from outside their usual society. In epic poetry, Dionysos plays no role in the politics of Olympos. He is also a weakling, chased into the sea by a mere mortal, and protected by babysitters (Hom. *Il.* 6.130-7). Because Zeus sired Dionysos on a mortal, Semele, his divinity was frequently questioned (compare *Hymn. Hom. Dionysos*), and he was persecuted by Zeus's lawful wife Hera, who drove the wine-god mad (Eur. *Cycl.* 3). In the visual representations of the marriage of Peleus and Thetis, Dionysos too does not ride in chariots like mainstream gods and goddesses, but goes on foot, like lesser or non-Olympian deities.

The return of Hephaistos was immensely popular in Archaic and Classical Greek art, and especially in Athenian vase-painting, but the visual representations do not give visible form to the idea of the disruption of power relations among the gods in the same manner in which it is communicated in literature.[7] Very few of the visual representations depict the causal turning-points in the myth that are related in literature: Hera's expulsion of Hephaistos, the goddess

[2] See Alkaios *fr.* 349 in Campbell (1982). Many scholars have thought that the poem was a hymn to Hephaistos, but Snell (1966) argued that it was probably a hymn to Dionysos. See also Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1895) 219-23, who hypothesized that the story was treated in an even earlier *Homeric Hymn*, and Merkelbach (1978), who argued that *P.Oxy.* 670 may contain parts of such a hymn.

[3] Hom. *Il.* 1.599-600. Compare Alkaios *fr.* 349d in Campbell (1982), which may have been part of the narrative of the return of Hephaistos: 'and the immortal gods laughed'.

[4] See also *fr.* 343, possibly by Hesiod, in Merkelbach and West (1967).

[5] London 1971.11-1.1, fragmentary dinos, *Para* 19.16bis, Sophilos, *LIMC* 4, pl. 402 Hephaistos 185; Florence 4209, volute krater, *ABV* 76.1, Kleitias, *LIMC* 4, pl. 402 Hephaistos 186.

[6] For the sources and visual representations, see Hermary and Jacquemin (1988) 629-30; Shapiro (1995) 1. The story was told in the epic *Danaïs*, which is of uncertain date but presumably not later than the end of the Archaic period: see Bernabé (1987) 122, no. 2. It was also depicted on the Archaic throne at Amyklai: Paus. 3.18.13.

[7] For general studies of the iconography, see Brommer (1937); Brommer (1978); Carpenter (1986) 13-29; Hermary and Jacquemin (1988); Hedreen (1992) 13-30; Shapiro (1995) 1-14; Carpenter (1997) 41-9.

accepting her throne, Dionysos making the smith-god drunk, or Hephaistos freeing his mother.[8] Most visual representations of the story do not even depict an action or event occurring on Mount Olympos, where the *dénouement* of the story occurred. They depict, instead, the journey from the place where Dionysos made Hephaistos drunk to the home of the gods. The journey is not itself a turning-point in the story but is instead logically dependent on, or derivative of, two other pivotal events, namely, Hera's ejection of her son from the home of the gods and Dionysos' persuasion of him to return to Olympos.

Most visual representations of the return of Hephaistos also devote considerably more space to the depiction of the wine-god's entourage of silens and nymphs than to the representation of the story's protagonists. Furthermore, the comportment of the silens and nymphs in the visual representations seems, at best, superfluous and, often, counterproductive. The so-called François vase of *c.* 570 BC (PLATE 3a) is the most detailed and perhaps the earliest surviving Athenian vase-painting of the return of Hephaistos. It is unusual in that it includes the Olympian gods awaiting the arrival of their saviour. But it is similar to most other visual representations of the story in that it depicts silens and nymphs accompanying Dionysos and Hephaistos, and performing no action in the absence of which the story would not advance. One silen carries a full wineskin, another plays the aulos, and a third, unable to control his horse-size libido, has grabbed a nymph and carries her in his arms. One of the nymphs also makes music on a little pair of cymbals.[9] Hephaistos is already drunk, not in need of more wine; the journey to Olympos could be completed without music, and the lack of self-control exhibited by the third silen suggests that the silens and nymphs were potentially counterproductive to effecting the return of Hephaistos to Olympos. The impression that the presence of silens was disruptive is even greater on a cup in New York of around 540 BC (PLATE 3b). Among the many dancing silens and nymphs, one very bad silen places his left hand on the rump of the donkey, prepares to grasp his erect penis with the other hand, and leers at us.[10] Other vase-paintings of the return of Hephaistos or Dionysos on a donkey confirm the suspicion that this silen is about to attack the donkey sexually.[11] The sexual assault on the smith-god's donkey does not advance the story in any obvious way, to say the least,

[8] Of those actions or events, the only one that is depicted in Athenian vase-painting is the banquet at which Dionysos made Hephaistos drunk. The few examples of the banquet include: London 1837.6-9.35 (B 302), *ABV* 261.40, by or near the Lysippides Painter, *c.* 510 BC, *LIMC* 3, pl. 362 Dionysos 556, the earliest surviving example. See also: Ferrara 3033, volute krater, *ARV*² 1171.1, Polion, *CVA* Ferrara 1, pl. 12, Alfieri, Arias and Hirmer (1958) figs 110-11. On this vase-painting, see Froning (1971) 67-75; Beazley (1989) 64 with pls 33-5; M. Robertson (1992) 246. Athens, NM 16258, unattributed red-figure chous, *LIMC* 4, pl. 390 Hephaistos 110. Two other vase-paintings may also depict the symposium of Dionysos and Hephaistos: Oxford 1954.230, *ARV*² 1422.1, Nostell Painter, *LIMC* 3, pl. 363 Dionysos 559; Würzburg H 5708, calyx krater fragments, *ARV*² 1339.5, near the Talos Painter, *CVA* Würzburg 2, pls 42-4, *LIMC* 6, pl. 311 Mimos II 1. For an interpretation of the fragmentary vase-painting in Würzburg, see Simon (1978). On the subject of the banquet of Dionysos and Hephaistos, see also Cremer (1981).

[9] Florence 4209, volute krater, *ABV* 76.1, Kleitias and Ergotimos, *LIMC* 8, pl. 747 Silenoi 22, Cristofani, Marzi *et al.* (1980) figs 92-3; Simon, Hirmer and Hirmer (1981) fig. 56. The followers of Dionysos are identified by the collective names '*silenoi*' and '*nymphai*', which are written on the vase.

[10] New York 17.230.5, band cup, *Para* 78.1, Oakeshott Painter, *LIMC* 4, pl. 394 Hephaistos 139a.

[11] Silens engage in sexual intercourse with donkeys in the following vase-paintings of the return of Hephaistos: Louvre E 860, Tyrrhenian amphora, *ABV* 103.111, *CVA* Louvre 1, pl. 8, no. 4, good photos also in Beazley Archive no. 310110; London 1914.3-17.6, mid sixth-century Attic black-figure cup fragment, *JHS* 49 (1929) pl. 16, no. 9 (in this scene, the silen also looks out at the viewer); Florence 3809, Attic black-figure hydria, *c.* 540 BC, *CVA* Florence 5, pl. 9, nos. 3-4, pl. 11, nos. 1-2, *LIMC* 8, pl. 755 Silenoi 55, and Korshak (1987) 82, fig. 3 (the silen is also looking out); Tarquinia 1553, late sixth-century Attic black-figure neck amphora, *CVA* Tarquinia 2, pl. 34, nos. 2-3; Tarquinia, late sixth-century Attic black-figure neck amphora, *CVA* Tarquinia 2, pl. 21, nos. 1 and 4. It seems likely that Florence 3900, Attic black-figure eye cup, which I know of only through Inghirami (1852) 3: pl. 262 (drawing), also depicted a silen assaulting Hephaistos' donkey. Cracow inv. 30, band cup, *ABV* 156.84, Amasis Painter, Bothmer (1985) 209, fig. 109, may also depict an imminent sexual assault on the donkey. Perhaps also Samos K 6778, skyphos fragment, Affecter, Kreuzer (1998) 168 and pl. 36, no. 193. For a silen assaulting the donkey of Dionysos, see Toronto 919.5.143, oinochoe, *ABV* 442.4, *CVA* Toronto 1, pl. 26, nos. 1-2. For a silen assaulting a don-

and yet it is a prominent motif in early visual representations of the return of Hephaistos as a visual narrative. In fact, it occurs on an amphora in Oxford, one of the two or three earliest Athenian vases to depict the myth (PLATE 4a-b).[12] The amount of responsibility felt by the silens for the task of restoring harmony on Mount Olympos is conveniently summed up in the name borne by one of them on the sensational, recently published fragmentary krater by Lydos.[13] Sprawled under Hephaistos' donkey is a silen holding a wine-cup and the shorn hoof of an animal, grinning at us. His lack of interest in the return of Hephaistos is conveyed by his lazy posture, by his interest in the viewer of the vase rather than the protagonists in the story, and by his name, ΟΥΚΑΛΕΓΟΝ, which means 'I don't care'.

In this paper, I address the divergences between literary accounts and visual representations of the return of Hephaistos with respect to the presence of silens and nymphs, their behaviour, and the moment in the story chosen for representation. I argue that visual representations of the return of Hephaistos do in fact embody the thematic emphases on the disruption of power relations among the Olympian gods and the importance of the acceptance of Hephaistos and Dionysos among the Olympians. The visual representations give form to those themes in a manner unattested, however, in the extant literary tradition. As I hope to demonstrate, in the visual representations, the myth corresponds to a particular form of Dionysiac processional ritual. In the vase-paintings, there are several readily identifiable characteristics of terrestrial processions, not just those in honour of Dionysos; but there are also characteristics that are closely comparable to rituals unique to or closely associated with the wine-god. To take up the general processional characteristics first, gods have more effective modes of transportation than a donkey, especially the clever god Hephaistos. In the *Iliad* (18.372-421), Hephaistos fashions rolling tripods and is assisted in his movements around his workshop and home by golden automatic girls. On two late sixth-century red-figure cups, Hephaistos rides in a special winged chariot surely of his own devising.[14] Why is he not travelling by means of his own invention in the return to Olympos? When Hephaistos' mount is juxtaposed to other divine vehicles, the donkey reflects the smith-god's status *vis-à-vis* the other gods. But in the return of Hephaistos, the donkey makes it possible to conceive of the journey to Olympos as a slow-moving terrestrial religious procession.[15] Representations of the journey of Hephaistos to Olympos almost invariably

key with no rider, see Vienna IV 151, Attic black-figure lip cup, Bernhard-Walcher (1992) 118-19, no. 58. For remarkable images of silens assaulting the donkey of Dionysos, including an image that appears to depict a silen attempting, like a rock climber clinging upside down, to make it possible for the donkey to penetrate him, see Paris, Cab. Méd. 343, skyphos, *Para* 93.1, Krokotos Painter, *CVA* Cab. Méd. 2, pl. 69.

[12] Oxford 1920.107, amphora of Panathenaic shape, *ABV* 89.2, Burgon Group, *CVA* Oxford 2, pl. 9, nos. 1-2, Korshak (1987) 81, fig. 2. The vase probably dates to the period 570-560 BC, and is close in date to the François vase. See Beazley (1986) 81-2. The iconography is discussed in detail below.

[13] New York 1997.388a-eee, *BMMA* 56.2 (Fall 1998) 8, *LIMC* 7, pl. 91 Oukalegon II 1. The vase dates to the second quarter of the sixth century BC. For illustrations, a description of the fragments and a discussion of the inscribed names of the silens, see Kossatz-Deissmann (1991) 131-5. The vase-painting, fragmentary though it is, is extraordinary in several ways beyond the one mentioned in the text. The shorn hoof held by the silen underneath the donkey must be the product of a *sparagmos*, the ritual dismemberment of an animal, a practice that is treated solemnly and seriously in most ancient and modern literature. Yet here, the practice is trivialized by the casualness or carelessness with which the silen handles the shorn hoof; in the vase-painting, it appears to be a joke. Noteworthy also is the extraordinary detail included in the depiction of the *pardalis* worn by the nymph; on the basis of this image, one could practically reconstruct such a garment. Note also the amount of detail in the representations of the kraters used to mix the wine, including representation of the figural decoration on the vases. Yet all of this realistic detail has been employed to give visible form to an imaginary event.

[14] Berlin F 2273, *ARV*² 174.31, Ambrosios Painter, and Florence 81600, Shapiro (1995) 4, pl. 73c-d. On the cup by the Ambrosios Painter, Hephaistos is identified by name.

[15] For the donkey as a status-marker, see Wiesner (1969) 532-3; Hoffmann (1983) 62. Some reservations about that interpretation may be found in Shapiro (1995) 9, 12.

include one or more silens and/or nymphs making music on the aulos, kithara, cymbals or krotala.[16] Music is a regular feature of processions. Several vase-paintings of the journey to Olympos include other things usually associated with sacrificial processions in Greek art, such as sacrificial animals, torches or an altar. On a mid sixth-century dinos in Paris (PLATE 4c), silens lead a bull and goat, and on an Early Classical kalpis in Indianapolis (PLATE 5a-b), there is a goat, an altar and a torch-bearer.[17] The hallmark of a procession is a crowd of participants, which the mythical followers of Dionysos happily supply.

In addition to those readily apparent characteristics of processions, the iconography of the journey to Olympos is closely comparable to processional rituals unique to the worship of Dionysos at Athens. As I propose to show, the return of Hephaistos is structured like so-called epiphanic processions in honour of Dionysos at Athens in which the god is conveyed bodily, triumphantly, into the city by his worshippers for his festival. Affiliated with those processions are also several ritual practices that essentially effect an inversion of ordinary norms of behaviour. The rituals of inversion include immoderate drinking, hurling abuse and, arguably, displaying the phallus. The offensive, obscene or excessively drunken behaviour of the silens in the return of Hephaistos may be understood as the analogue in the mythical narrative of those ritual practices. The epiphany procession not only provides visual parallels for the iconography of the return but also, more importantly, symbolizes the very themes that appear to be important in the myth. The processions are associated with aetiological myths that, like the myth of the return of Hephaistos, describe the rejection of a god and his subsequent triumph over those who discounted his divinity. The association of rituals of inversion with processions of the epiphany sort seems to symbolize the idea that excessive, unrestrained, uncivilized behaviour comes to Athens from the outside, just as Hephaistos, in his disruptive mode, is envisioned as a force external or foreign to Olympos.[18]

In the interpretation advanced in this paper, I envision Athenian vase-painters constructing visual representations of the return of Hephaistos by extracting elements of spectacle from Athenian religious life and employing them in the vase-paintings in order to give recognizable form to the principal themes of the myth. The aim of the vase-painters was not, like documentary photography, to record the rituals but rather, like narrative poetry, to convey a story effectively.[19] Unlike poets, however, the vase-painters did not convey the story by representing the series of events linked through cause and effect that set the story in motion and bring it to its conclusion. Instead, the vase-painters represented a single event in the story and incorporated into the representations visual motifs that carried connotations of the themes important in the myth, namely, rejection of a deity, inversion of norms and triumphant re-entry of the spurned god. In the interpretation presented here, the divergences between the literary accounts and the visual representations of the myth reflect different strategies employed by writers and vase-painters to convey the story. The divergences are a measure of the creativity or originality of the vase-painters in discovering visual phenomena which evoke themes that writers represented differently. The divergences do not necessarily reflect a lack of interest on the part of vase-painters in conveying the myth of the return of Hephaistos effectively.

[16] For examples of the silens playing the aulos, see Hedreen (1992) 27 n.47.

[17] Paris, Louvre E 876, dinos, *ABV* 90.1, Painter of Louvre E 876, *LIMC* 4, pl. 394 Hephaistos 138b, *ClAnt* 12 (1993) fig. 10; Indianapolis 47.34, kalpis, *ARV*² 579.83, Agrigento Painter, *LIMC* 3, pl. 363 Dionysos 561a.

[18] Compare Lonsdale (1993) 83-8. The interpretation advanced in this paper dovetails with Lonsdale's suggestion that the return of Hephaistos is related metaphorically to ritual, although Lonsdale arrives at his conclusion via a different route and is concerned almost exclusively with poetic accounts of Hephaistos.

[19] Compare the methodology articulated by Peirce (1993) 226-7. Peirce argued that vase-paintings of sacrifice, or *thysia*, can be understood as conceptualizations of ritual, rather than documentary reproductions of it.

Because it suggests that the vase-painters are representing the same basic story and thematic emphases as the literary accounts, but employing different approaches to storytelling, the interpretation presented in this paper is incompatible with the popular theory that the principal subject or interest of visual representations of the return of Hephaistos is the activity of the Dionysiac thiasos, not the structure of the Olympian pantheon. Shapiro wrote: 'it is clear that the principal reason for the story's great popularity with Athenian vase-painters of the second half of the sixth century is that it provided an excuse for a boistrous Dionysiac thiasos, one of their favorite motifs'. Carpenter suggested that 'it seems that Lydos [on a krater in New York] is more interested in the procession than in the myth or its protagonists'.[20] Their identification of the compositional or pictorial emphasis on the followers of Dionysos is correct, but the implication that the aim of the vase-painters was not to convey effectively the myth of the return of Hephaistos is open to question. Apart from the arguments presented in the body of this paper – that the procession of silens and nymphs contributes positively to the theme of social and political disruption on Mount Olympos – there are two objections to the theory that the emphasis on the Dionysiac thiasos in visual representations of the return detracts from their coherence or effectiveness as visual narratives. First, silens and nymphs are not the ever-present companions of Dionysos in sixth-century Athenian art. They do not accompany Dionysos when he appears in the battle of gods and giants, the birth of Athena, the introduction of Herakles to Olympos, or the wedding of Peleus and Thetis.[21] On the François vase, for example, numerous deities both major and minor attend the wedding reception in honour of Peleus and Thetis, including Dionysos, but the silens and nymphs are not present in this narrative context, whereas they are present in the return of Hephaistos depicted on the other side of the same vase. Indeed, one function of Dionysos in the visual representation of the wedding appears to be to bring the wine, but he carries a heavy amphora himself in that scene, while a silen carries the wine for the god in the return of Hephaistos.[22] In Sophilos' vase-painting of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, nymphs are present among the numerous guests, but they do not accompany Dionysos, and the silens are not present at all.[23] Sophilos was familiar with silens as ravenous for nymphs and as skilled in the Dionysiac art of wine consumption, as several other fragmentary vase-paintings reveal, so the absence of silens and nymphs as companions of Dionysos at the wedding cannot be due to ignorance of those minor deities on the part of the painter.[24] In short, vase-painters did not include silens and nymphs as companions of Dionysos in other assemblies of gods and goddesses, so their presence in vase-paintings of the return of Hephaistos, which led those rural beings into the very throne room of the gods, cannot be accounted for on the theory that they accompany Dionysos wherever he goes. The second point is that there are few visual representations of the followers of Dionysos that predate the earliest representations of the return of Hephaistos. Among the handful of examples that predate the François vase (PLATE 3a), several depict silens pursuing nymphs and several others represent silens preparing for a party.[25] But the evidence is not enough to suggest that a fully fledged iconography of the Dionysos thiasos preexisted the creation of the iconography of the return of Hephaistos and was available to be coopted into the visual representations of that myth. The evidence is also not sufficient to refute

[20] Shapiro (1995) 7; Carpenter (1986) 26. See also Brommer (1937) 202: 'many images recall only distantly the actual story ... often it is clear that the original meaning is lost and that they depict without thought only the old forms, which became types'.

[21] For silens, see Hedreen (1992) 70-1. For nymphs, see Carpenter (1986) 56, 76, 99-102; Halm-Tisserant and Siebert (1997) 893-4.

[22] On the significance of the amphora, see Carpenter (1986) 11; Haslam (1991).

[23] London 1971.11-1.1, dinos, *Para* 19.16bis, *GVGettyMus* 1 (1983) 24, fig. 28.

[24] Istanbul 4514, *ABV* 42.37, Bakir (1981) pl. 35, fig. 66. Once New York, market, dinos fragment, *Greek and Etruscan Art of the Archaic Period* (catalogue of an exhibition at Atlantis Antiquities, New York, 26 April – 26 June 1988) 55, fig. 48. See now Padgett (2003) 237, no. 53.

[25] The earliest representations of silens and nymphs in Athenian vase-painting are discussed by Carpenter (1986) 80-3; Hedreen (1992) 74.

the inverse of that hypothesis, namely, that the development of the iconography of the return of Hephaistos was instrumental in the creation of visual images of the mythical throng of followers of Dionysos.[26]

Given its emphasis on the creative role played by vase-painters in adapting the myth to the medium of vase-painting, the interpretation presented here is also largely incompatible with the theory that vase-paintings of the return of Hephaistos were based on a particular literary account of the myth. Wilamowitz argued that a lost *Homeric Hymn to Hephaistos* was the source of both Alkaios' poetic account and Kleitias' visual representation of the return of Hephaistos.[27] Because the hypothetical hymn does not exist, the argument is neither provable nor refutable, but several considerations (in addition to the interpretation advanced in this paper) militate against Wilamowitz' hypothesis. The discrepancies between the earliest literary accounts and visual representations of the return of Hephaistos – the presence of silens and nymphs and the emphasis on the journey in the latter – discourage the hypothesis that a single poem was the prototype for both the subsequent literary and artistic traditions. Several scholars have also convincingly argued that one part of Kleitias' visual representation of the myth in particular, the presence of Aphrodite, does not necessarily accord well with Wilamowitz' reconstruction of the contents of the lost hymn.[28] There are also general objections to any argument for a direct derivation of visual representations of the return of Hephaistos from a specific poetic prototype.[29] If such a poem existed, it is unlikely that vase-painters of the early or mid sixth century would have been able to consult a text of it. Moreover, the kind of relationship between poetry and art envisioned by Wilamowitz – essentially that of an illustrator depicting faithfully and in detail a particular text – seems conceptually problematic in the oral milieu of the Archaic period. The model advanced by Carl Robert for the interpretation of visual representations of myth – that the myths were transmitted not via a fixed, canonical written form, but through a dynamic process, a constantly changing folk tradition to which art as well as poetry contributed – is more compatible than Wilamowitz' model with the interpretation advanced here.[30] The vase-paintings examined in this paper arguably presuppose only a general knowledge of the myth of the return of Hephaistos – that Hera ejected her son from Olympos, that he immobilized her with one of his inventions, and that Dionysos alone was able to persuade Hephaistos to release her – not a specific literary prototype.

The interpretation proposed here suggests that the relationship between visual representations of the return of Hephaistos and religious ritual is indirect and nuanced, not a simple cause-and-effect relationship as envisioned in some earlier scholarship on the intersection between myth and ritual.[31] On the one hand, there is no compelling reason to believe that the myth was created specifically to account for the elements of processional ritual incorporated into the visual representations of it. The processions proposed in this paper as models for the visual representations of the journey to Olympos have nothing to do (so far as one can tell) with the worship of Hephaistos or the re-enactment of his return to Olympos.[32] The important themes of the myth

[26] I have argued elsewhere (Hedreen (1992) 4-6, 70-9) that many sixth-century vase-paintings of Dionysos together with silens and nymphs that have generally been understood to depict no specific time, place or story may in fact represent Dionysiac myths set on the island of Naxos, including the story of the god's union with Ariadne and an initial encounter between Dionysos and silens on the island. In my opinion, the prominence or importance of the Dionysiac thiasos in early Greek art, insofar as it is understood as a timeless image of an ever-present entourage, has been overestimated.

[27] Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1895) 218-22.

[28] For details, see Shapiro (1995) 8-9.

[29] The brief argument that follows is laid out in detail in Hedreen (2001) 3-18.

[30] Robert (1881) 5-11.

[31] The earlier scholarship on the relationship between myth and ritual is discussed at length by Versnel (1993) 15-88.

[32] Schöne (1987) 44-5 recognized many similarities between the iconography of Hephaistos' journey to Olympos and actual cult practices, and she noted the particular importance of the procession. But she argued that the continuity of the iconography over six generations of painters was best explained on the hypothesis that one particular procession (perhaps that of the Lenaia) served as a model for the vase-painters, and that the procession enacted the myth, with the gods represented by cult-statues or actors.

concern the achievement of a stable balance of power among the Olympian gods, not the foundations of a religious festival or procession. The earliest surviving literary account of the tale, that of Alkaios, probably predates the earliest Athenian representations of the story, and thus attests that some form of the story was already in circulation outside Athens when the earliest Athenian vase-paintings of it were created. In other words, the visual representations of the return of Hephaistos were not created from scratch specifically to explain Athenian rites. Graf's formulation regarding a series of stories and rituals that concern war and women applies nicely in the present context: 'myth and ritual do not correspond in details of content, but in structure and atmosphere'.[33] On the other hand, the appropriation of ritual practices for the creation of the iconography of the return of Hephaistos is noteworthy, as I hope to show, because the elements appear to have been chosen not merely for their visual aptness (a procession is one way, it is true, to depict Hephaistos' return home) but also for what they symbolize within the larger context of Greek religion. The incorporation of the epiphanic form of procession – with its attendant immoderate drinking, insulting behaviour and obscene display – into the visual representations of the myth of the return of Hephaistos suggests that early sixth-century vase-painters already conceived of those rituals as pertaining to the rejection and ultimate acceptance of a deity, and to the disruption and inversion of social or political norms. In this way, the vase-paintings may tell us something about how the rituals were understood in the Archaic period.

II. THE TRIUMPHANT ARRIVAL OF DIONYSOS

Nilsson pointed out that, among processions in honour of ancient Greek gods, there are many that bring sacrificial victims or gifts to the deity, who receives them in a sanctuary. There are also a few processions that conduct the deity itself to the sanctuary. Even if the two forms of procession occasionally merged, they symbolize fundamentally different human actions: giving something to a god, on the one hand, and receiving the deity hospitably, on the other. The latter form of procession, which Nilsson called an epiphany, is common only in the worship of Dionysos.[34] Several cities in Asia Minor, for example, celebrated a festival of Dionysos known as the *Katagôgia*, the 'bringing in' of the god.[35] In this section of the paper, I argue that the visual narrative of the return of Hephaistos to Olympos is structured essentially along the lines of an epiphanic procession. The similarities between the iconography and the ritual (so far as it can be reconstructed) go beyond superficial visual resemblance (both include groups of people or demigods on foot escorting a deity): as a symbolic act, the ritual 'bringing in' of Dionysos is comparable to the plot of the myth of Hephaistos' return because both are characterized by the themes of initial rejection of a god and his subsequent triumph.

Ship-car

Two Athenian festivals of Dionysos featured processions in which Dionysos was brought into the city, one of which is attested archaeologically, the other known from literary references. Four late sixth- or early fifth-century Athenian black-figure vases depict Dionysos and two silens being transported in a ship on wheels (e.g. PLATE 6a). In addition, the ship-car is depicted on a late Archaic or Early Classical lead strip from Sicily; the wheeled boat carrying Dionysos and two silens is pulled by eight other silens.[36] Frickenhaus demonstrated that the ship-car must be

[33] Graf (1984) 254.

[34] On this point, see Nilsson (1916) 315-16; Peirce (1984) 183.

[35] In addition to Nilsson, see Henrichs (1969) 237-8; Bömer (1952) 1940, no. 122; Burkert (1988) 82, 84, 87.

[36] Three of the vases are skyphoi: Athens, Acropolis 1281a, fragments, *ABL* 250.29, Theseus Painter, *LIMC* 3, p. 492 Dionysos 827; London B 79, *ABL* 250.30, Theseus Painter, *LIMC* 3, pl. 398 Dionysos 828; Bologna 130, *ABL* 253.15, near the Theseus Painter, *CVA* Bologna 2, pl. 43, nos. 1-4, *LIMC* 3, pl. 398 Dionysos 829. One is

understood as a part of a sacrificial procession that is also depicted on two of the vases.[37] He argued that several vase-paintings from the third quarter of the sixth century depicting Dionysos travelling by sea, and the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysos* that narrates the god's abduction by pirates, are probably also related to the ritual custom of escorting Dionysos into town on a ship. The custom must therefore have been practised at Athens by the second half of the century at the latest.[38] Frickenhaus assigned the ship-car procession to the City Dionysia, but his attribution is not as widely accepted as that of Nilsson. Nilsson argued persuasively that the ship-car procession was part of the Athenian festival of the Anthesteria, because at Smyrna in Ionia, during a festival in the month of Anthesterion, Dionysos was escorted into the city in a trireme.[39] Bravo has recently advanced a speculative but highly attractive interpretation of a fragmentary poem of Anakreon in which he believes that the arrival of Dionysos by sea for the Anthesteria is invoked.[40] The Anthesteria (and thus perhaps the ship-car procession) is of considerable antiquity: Thucydides (2.15.4) refers to it as the 'older' Dionysia, claims that it was brought to Ionia by Athenian colonists (i.e. during the Dark Age), and believes that it predated Theseus' *sunoikismos* of Athens.[41]

The myth of Dionysos and the pirates can be understood as an *aition* for the ship-car procession, and the myth is noteworthy because it suggests that the god's arrival by sea was envisioned as a triumph over adversaries.[42] In the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysos*, the god is kidnapped, taken aboard ship and bound by pirates. But the bonds would not hold, and the sight of other miraculous and uncanny events, such as a large grapevine growing up the mast, caused the sailors to throw themselves into the sea, where they became dolphins. Exekias' beautiful red-ground cup-painting of Dionysos relaxing aboard a vine-laden ship, sailing on a sea filled with dolphins, can be understood not only as an idealized image of the god in the ship-car but also as a visual narrative representation of Dionysos triumphant over his adversaries.[43]

εἰσαγωγή

There is evidence to suggest that an epiphanic procession was also part of the programme of the City Dionysia, and the myth associated with the ritual also emphasizes its triumphal character. Every year, the cult statue of Dionysos Eleuthereus was removed from its temple home near the theatre to the Academy outside the city walls. The statue was subsequently escorted back into the city in a procession known as the εἰσαγωγή, as if to re-enact the arrival of the god to the

an amphora fragment: Tübingen S.10/1497, unattributed Attic black-figure, *CVA* Tübingen 3, pl. 6, no. 4. For the lead strip from Sicily, see de Miro (1982). The design of the lead strip appears to be dependent in part on the Athenian vase-iconography. On the ship-car procession generally, in addition to the references that follow, see Usener (1899) 115-27; Lehnstaedt (1970) 92-3.

[37] Frickenhaus (1912). This conclusion was also reached in a careful analysis by Peirce (1984) 166-8.

[38] For vase-paintings of Dionysos travelling by sea, see Auffarth (1991) 217; Hedreen (1992) 67-70. Frickenhaus suggested that the ship-car procession originated in the sixth century, because he believed that it was part of the City Dionysia (see below). Compare N. Robertson (1985) 290-5. The type of wheel employed on the ship-car is of an ancient type, however, perhaps suggesting that the vehicle was of even greater antiquity: see Burkert (1983) 201.

[39] See Nilsson (1916) 326, 332-5; Deubner (1932) 102. The principal source for the ritual in Smyrna is Philostr. *V. Soph.* 1.25.1. See also Aristeides, *Or.* 17.5 and 21.4. That the ship-procession was known in Asia Minor as early as the sixth century BC is suggested by fragments of the mid sixth-century Klazomenian neck amphora found at Naukratis: Oxford 1924.264, published by Boardman (1958). There remain scholars who prefer to assign the ship-car to the City Dionysia: see Burkert (1983) 201; N. Robertson (1985) 292-3.

[40] Anakreon *fr.* 346 part 6 in Campbell (1988) 44-5. See Bravo (1997) 30-4. The key words in Bravo's interpretation of the poem are πάννυχος, [ἰ]χθυοέντων, Παλλάδ[ος] τηλόθεν and [ἄ]νθεσιν (lines 16-20), which he understands in reference to a Dionysiac dance occurring on the occasion when Dionysos journeyed over the sea from afar to the city of Pallas Athena for the festival of the flowers, the Anthesteria. See also Bravo's suggestion (pp. 94-5) of another reference to the arrival by sea during the Anthesteria in the difficult Hellenistic poem printed as *fr.* 917 in Campbell (1993) 300-3.

[41] On the antiquity of the festival, see Burkert (1983) 213-14; Simon (1985) 271; Lonsdale (1993) 122-3.

[42] On the association between the myth and the procession, see especially Auffarth (1991) 218-19.

[43] Munich 2044, type A cup, *ABV* 146.21, Exekias, Simon (1985) 282-8, fig. 279.

city.[44] The procession bearing the statue of Dionysos Eleuthereus into the city was not the grand sacrificial procession that preceded the musical and theatrical performances of the festival. In origin, in fact, the procession bearing the statue of Dionysos may date to the late sixth century BC. According to Pausanias (1.38.8), the cult statue of Dionysos Eleuthereus came to Athens from Eleutherai in neighbouring Boiotia. It is generally assumed that the statue was transferred to Athens when the city annexed Eleutherai: many scholars believe that the annexation occurred in the mid or late sixth century, during the tyranny of Peisistratos; and Connor has advanced a comprehensive argument that it may have occurred during the first years of the democracy.[45]

The εἰσαγωγή may post-date the creation of Athenian iconography of the return of Hephaistos, but the myth associated with the procession is worth considering in relation to the visual narratives, because it helps us to understand how such a procession might be conceptualized. The statue of Dionysos Eleuthereus was brought to Athens by a legendary missionary named Pegasos, but it was rejected by the Athenians.[46] In response, the god sent a disease of the male genitalia to the Athenians. The oracle informed them that they must receive and honour the god in order to avert the predicament. The Athenians made models of the erect penis and carried them in the grand procession in order to honour the god and commemorate their affliction.[47] The aetiological myth is significant because it connects another element of processional ritual, the practice of carrying the phallus, with the desire to atone for the initial rejection of the cult and to welcome Dionysos into the city. The importance of the theme of welcoming the god for this festival was emphasized by Sourvinou-Inwood: 'if the [aetiological] myth expresses the core of the festival as perceived by the participants, then this core was the reception and welcoming of the god'.[48] The aetiological myth has obvious affinities with the return of Hephaistos to Olympos as it is represented in art: a god rejected by a society is ultimately welcomed into its midst via a procession that can only be called phallic.

The triumph

Both aetiological myths associated with Athenian epiphanic processions of Dionysos are characterized by the same idea, that the god Dionysos triumphs over non-believers and persecutors. A similar storyline underlies Euripides' *Bakchai*, and here too one finds processional ritual, the epiphany of Dionysos, and triumph over adversaries closely interrelated. As Seaford and others have noted, in the *parodos* of the play, the chorus speaks of itself as 'bringing in Dionysos', Διόνυσον κατάγουσαι (line 85), a choice of words that probably evoked the ritual *Katagôgia* attested for many cities in Ionia, which may have been analogous to the ship-car procession of the Athenian Anthesteria.[49] In the *parodos*, the chorus also envisions the god as having made an appearance, an epiphany, among his worshippers: 'immediately the whole land will dance whenever Bromios leads the thiasos ...'.[50] In the prologue of the play, Dionysos claims that he has returned to his city of birth having already established his religion throughout the Near East (13-22).[51] He claims that he will lead his followers in battle against the Thebans if necessary (50-2). The entrance of the chorus into the orchestra mimics a Dionysiac procession that accompanies the epiphany of the god, and represents the triumph of the god over non-believers.

[44] See Paus. 1.29.2 and Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 59-61; Sourvinou-Inwood (1994) 281-5.

[45] See Connor (1989). For the traditional view, see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 57-8, 60. For some reservations about the argument of Connor, and for arguments in favour of an earlier date for the core of the City Dionysia, see Sourvinou-Inwood (1994).

[46] Paus. 1.2.5 associates Pegasos with King Amphiktyon.

[47] The story is preserved in schol. Ar. *Ach.* 243: see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 57. On the story and a related *aition*, see Sissa and Detienne (2000) 234-5.

[48] Sourvinou-Inwood (1994) 277. See now Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 72-5. See also Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 60: 'the reenactment of the god's advent does not look like an afterthought and probably goes back to the earliest days of the festival when, after his first cold welcome, it was desired to make amends by doing him special honour'.

[49] Dodds (1960) 77-8; Seaford (1981) 270.

[50] Eur. *Bacch.* 114-15, trans. after Seaford (1997) with note on line 115. See also lines 135-40.

[51] On the authenticity of these lines, see Diggle (1994) 444-53; Seaford (1997) 149.

The triumphal character of the epiphanic procession is also brought out through its comparison to the Roman triumph. Dionysios of Halikarnassos (*Ant.* 7.72.11) compared the practice of insulting notable persons during a Roman triumphal procession to the Athenian habit of hurling insults from carts, a custom to which we will return. A further link between the triumphal procession and Dionysiac ritual is the word θρίαμβος, the Greek term employed to speak of the Roman triumph. Versnel has argued that the word originated as a ritual cry invoking and accompanying the epiphany of Dionysos, and that the Latin word *triumpe* similarly originated as a ritual cry of invocation. He emphasized that the word θρίαμβος could only have been brought into relation with the Roman triumph 'because also in the Greek term the meaning of triumphing was discernible'.[52] Dionysos was even credited in antiquity with the invention of the triumphal procession.[53] Versnel suggested that a bona fide triumphal procession is not found in Greece before the Hellenistic period, when Alexander's military conquest of India was identified with the mythical conquest of the Near East by Dionysos. Several Hellenistic kings identified their military victories with the conquests of Dionysos, and the great procession of Ptolemy Philadelphos, which included many floats (the closest parallel for which is the Athenian ship-car of Dionysos), represented Dionysos' triumphant return from India among other events in the life of the god (Athen. 5.200d).[54] Versnel argued that there was a more or less fundamental step taken from 'a cyclic annual festival to a political-historical celebration of a victory'.[55] By cyclical festival, he had in mind the Athenian Anthesteria and the epiphany of Dionysos celebrated in the ship-car procession. It is possible, however, that the practice of celebrating the arrival of a leader or military victor through the use of Dionysiac processional ritual predates the Hellenistic interest in the campaigns of Alexander. In 291 BC, the Athenians welcomed Demetrios Poliorchetes into their city as Dionysos: he was accompanied by choruses and a model phallus. The affinities between his arrival and processions traditionally in honour of Dionysos were emphasized by the temporary renaming of the City Dionysia as the Demetria.[56] In the sixth century, the tyrant Peisistratos re-entered the city of Athens accompanied by a woman, Phye, masquerading as Athena.[57] As Bömer noted, the sensational triumphal return of the tyrant was not modelled on a procession in honour of Athena, because she does not make that sort of epiphany at her festivals.[58] Insofar as the dramatic little procession stages an epiphany of a god, it resembles Dionysiac epiphanic processions such as the ship-car procession or perhaps the εἰσαγωγή. And because it represents a deity escorting another figure back to his home, after a period in which he was an outcast, the Phye episode resembles the return of Hephaistos to Olympos. The visual narrative of the return of Hephaistos to Olympos already expresses the idea of a political triumph of Dionysos insofar as the myth concerns the balance of power on Olympos.

κῶμος

The visual representations of the return of Hephaistos have often been compared to one type of procession in particular, the κῶμος. Lissarrague noted that the visual representations of the return in which silens carry the implements of the symposium characterize the procession as a *kômos*.[59] The word *kômos* is used to describe a variety of excursions that follow drinking, from

[52] Versnel (1970) 16-48, 253 (quote). As Versnel notes, the word θρίαμβος is related in form and meaning to the words διθύραμβος and ἴαμβος. There appears to have been a processional form of διθύραμβος in the Archaic period: see D'Angour (1997). And ἴαμβος has well-known affinities with the practice of hurling abuse from carts: see Brown (1997) 13-25.

[53] Versnel (1970) 235.

[54] Rice (1983) 83-6.

[55] Versnel (1970) 253, 290, 300 (quote).

[56] For the procession, see Athen. 6.534c-f. For the significance of the reception of Demetrios and its relation to the procession of the City Dionysia, see Connor (1989) 18-19; Sourvinou-Inwood (1994) 277-8. For further speculation on the origins of the rituals of arrival and reception of rulers, see MacCormack (1981) 17-19.

[57] Hdt. 1.60.

[58] Bömer (1952) 1973 no. 342.

[59] Lissarrague (1990) 203-4.

public processions to the more or less informal drunken meanderings that followed many symposia. In the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (480-2), the first occurrence of the word, Hermes gives the lyre, his own clever invention, to Apollo, and bids him 'to bring it to the rich banquet and lovely *khoros* and the glorious *kômos*, a pleasure night and day'. For our purposes, it is important to note that the *kômos*, even an apparently informal one, often betrays traces of the pattern of disruption, violence and triumph identified earlier as characteristic of the Dionysiac epiphanic procession. As a social custom, the *kômos* differs from the festival procession in scale and in its private (as opposed to public) character, but not in its basic symbolism.

To take up violence and triumph first, in view of the fact that the *kômos* was preceded by a more or less lengthy drinking party, it is not surprising that it is often described in literature as unruly and prone to violence. The best-known testimonium is a fragment of a comedy of Euboulos in which Dionysos said: 'three bowls only do I mix for the temperate – one to health, which they empty first, the second to love and pleasure, the third to sleep. When this is drunk up wise guests go home. The fourth bowl is ours no longer, but belongs to violence (ὕβρεος); the fifth to uproar, the sixth to drunken revel (κώμων), the seventh to black eyes. The eighth is the policeman's, the ninth belongs to biliousness, and the tenth to madness and hurling the furniture.'[60] The connection between intoxication and disorderly behaviour will surprise no one who has experience with wine-drinking. But the link is not merely physiologically determined. The unruliness of the *kômos* is also an assertion of the prerogatives of its participants. As Murray nicely put it, 'the *kômos* [is] the ritual drunken riot at the end of the *symposion*, performed in public with the intention of demonstrating the power and lawlessness of the drinking group'.[61] To judge from the use of the word in Pindar, the *kômos* is closely associated with the epinician or victory ode, which reinforces the associations between it and the idea of triumph.[62]

The second characteristic of the *kômos* especially important for our purposes is that komasts set out not merely on a random drunken walk through town, but often with the idea of visiting the house of another and requesting admission.[63] Admitting such an unruly mob into one's house carried the risk that one's own symposium – or sleep – would be completely disrupted. In Plato's *Symposium*, the orderly drinking and conversation of Socrates and his associates are disrupted twice by the arrival of disorderly *kômoi* from the outside: first by the appearance of Alcibiades in a state of intoxication much greater than that of Socrates and friends (212e-214a – he proposes that Socrates drink straight out of the psykter in order to catch up) and then by the arrival of a second *kômos* (223b): 'suddenly a large crowd of revellers came to the door; and finding it open ... they walked straight in among the guests and lay down. And everything was full of commotion, and everybody was compelled – but no longer with any order – to drink a great deal of wine.'[64] In Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (978-86), the disruptive impact of war is compared to that of the arrival of an unruly komast at an orderly symposium: 'he crashed our party and inflicted all kinds of damage, upending, spilling and fighting'.[65] The connections between heavy drinking, disorderly conduct, the assertion of prerogatives and the reception of a *kômos* are worth noting because the plot of the return of Hephaistos brings together the same ideas. In the visual narratives, the temporary triumph of Dionysos and Hephaistos over the other gods is manifest visually in the manner in which the journey to Olympos is conveyed: as a drunken and disorderly *kômos* procession of silens and nymphs into the midst of the orderly world of the Olympians.

[60] The passage is quoted by Athen. 2.36b-c, trans. after Gulick (1927-41) 1.157.

[61] See Murray (1990) 150.

[62] For the use of the word in Pindar, see Heath and Lefkowitz (1991); Carey (1991) with further references.

[63] This aspect of the *kômos* was emphasized in particular by Heath (1988) 180-2. Compare Eur. *Cycl.* 38-40.

[64] Trans. after Benardete (2001).

[65] Trans. after Henderson (1998a). A further example: Aristotle (*fr.* 558) associates the rise of the tyrant Lygdamis to power on Naxos with a *kômos* to the house of a rich man; the rich man received the *kômos* hospitably, but the komasts insulted him and his daughters, a riot broke out, and Lygdamis, the leader of the komasts, seized power. The story is recounted by West (1974) 27.

Immoderate wine-drinking

The triumphant arrival via procession of an unruly throng and its disruptive effect on sober society are not the only elements of the *kômos* that are paralleled in public epiphanic processions.[66] The disruption of the orderly drinking practices of the symposium attributed to the arrival of the *kômos* also occurs on a city-wide scale during the Anthesteria, when Dionysos most likely made his epiphany in the ship-car procession. The second day of the festival, known as Choes, featured a drinking contest in which the Athenians, at the sound of a trumpet, consumed a dangerous amount of unmixed wine as quickly as possible. The ritual is best known from a lengthy passage of Aristophanes' *Acharnians*.[67] Already in antiquity, the rules of the drinking contest suggested that it was an inversion of the ordinary customs governing the symposium: the participants drank unmixed wine from their own personal jugs (choes) in silence, rather than wine mixed with water in a communal mixing bowl amidst conversation and song.[68] Following the drinking contest, there was a drunken procession to the sanctuary of Dionysos in the Marshes for the depositing of festive wreaths that Aristophanes called a κραιπαλόκωμος, a 'drunken *kômos*' (*Frogs* 211-19).[69] This particular procession, informal as it may have been, is of interest in connection with the return of Hephaistos because the circumstances surrounding it are similar to those surrounding the journey to Olympos: in both the ritual and the myth, the participants or protagonists undertake a journey after drinking excessively. During the festival, the immoderate drinking ensures that Athenians experienced once a year the full, undiluted power of Dionysos' gift. Just so, in the myth, immoderate drinking ensures that Hephaistos is temporarily under the control of Dionysos, and also, consequently, that the rest of the Olympians experience the power of Dionysos as god of wine.

A relationship between the drinking contest and drunken *kômos* to the sanctuary of Dionysos in the Marshes, on the one hand, and Athenian vase-painting of the return of Hephaistos, on the other, seems very likely on a chous in New York by the Eretria Painter (PLATE 6b).[70] Many Classical red-figure choes depict men meandering with choes in their hands: the vase-paintings probably represent the throng of staggering drunks referred to by Aristophanes, and they suggest that the walk to the temple was a spectacle.[71] The vase-painting in New York is unusual among representations of the return of Hephaistos for the degree of drunkenness exhibited by both Dionysos and Hephaistos, and it is the product of some original thought or reflection on the part of the artist because it is unique in depicting the two gods on the same mule. The vase-painting exemplifies the manner in which an actual processional ritual may have served as a model for envisioning the mythical return of Hephaistos to Olympos.

[66] For the *kômos* as part of a major public festival, compare perhaps also the law of Euegoras (Dem. *Meid.* 20.10), in which the *kômos* is enumerated among other important constituent parts of the festival of Dionysos Eleuthereus: 'during the City Dionysia the procession and the boys [choruses] and the *kômos* and the tragedies and the comedies'. It is uncertain precisely what the word *kômos* means in this context: see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 63 n.5; Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 78-81.

[67] See Hamilton (1992) 10-15.

[68] See Deubner (1932) 96-9; Auffarth (1991) 211-13. The custom was unusual enough that it attracted an aetiological explanation: in this way, the Athenians were able to feast Orestes without incurring any of the pollution that he carried as a result of the murder of his mother: see Eur. *IT* 947-60 and the sources and source-analysis in Hamilton (1992) 15-26.

[69] Dover (1993) 223-4 takes the word to mean 'hung-over *kômos*', but Hamilton (1992) 46 n.121 has persuasively argued for taking the expression to mean 'drunken *kômos*'. He has rightly questioned (42-50) the notion that the journey to the sanctuary of Dionysos in the Marshes occurred on the day following the drinking contest.

[70] New York 08.258.22, chous, *ARV*[2] 1249.12, *LIMC* 3, pl. 364 Dionysos 565.

[71] The best-illustrated corpus of choes is Van Hoorn (1951). Literary testimonia assure us that the festival took its name from a particular shape of pot, the chous, used specifically on the occasion of the festival: see Hamilton (1992) 28 T27 and T28. Many scholars have questioned the extent to which one can assume that the activities depicted on choes reflect activities that actually occurred during the festival of the Anthesteria. For a review of the scholarship, see Hamilton (1992) 64-81. Hamilton is correct to point out that one cannot rely on the imagery on large choes as documentary evidence with

III. OBSCENITY

In visual representations of the return of Hephaistos, our attention is frequently drawn to the sexually stimulated condition of the silens. In most instances, including the earliest known examples (PLATES 3-4), the silens parade large, erect penises and even the donkey is ithyphallic. In some instances, special attention is drawn to the donkey's erect phallus by means of an oinochoe that hangs by its handle from the member, as if it were a convenient hook.[72] Long ago, Frickenhaus suggested that the many ithyphallic creatures accompanying Hephaistos are the mythological analogue of a procession like that of the rural or City Dionysia, in which the participants carry models of the erect penis.[73] The earliest detailed literary sources for the custom is the vivid description of Dikaiopolis' utopian rural Dionysia in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*, in which Dikaiopolis orders his slaves to carry a large model penis: 'Xanthias, hold that phallus up straight! ... You two must keep the phallus erect behind the Basket Bearer!'[74] On the basis of the description of Dikaiopolis' ersatz festival, one envisions the rural Dionysia of Attica as consisting of small processions with a single model phallus each.[75] But many such models were carried in the grand procession of the City Dionysia.[76]

One mid sixth-century Athenian black-figure cup, dating to within a decade or two of the earliest representations of the return of Hephaistos, provides an impression of what such a phallus-procession might have looked like, and some guarantee that the ritual custom already existed when the iconography of the return was created (PLATE 7a).[77] On each side of the cup, diminutive male figures support a platform on which is mounted an enormous phallus. Riding on the platform on one side of the cup is a large silen.[78] His proprietary grip on the pole suggests that, already by the early sixth century, there was a close affinity between the conception of the silen as a mythical figure and phallic processions. For our purposes, several later vase-paintings are important because they exemplify the manner in which vase-painters incorporated the phallus-procession into the mythical life of silens. On an early fifth-century cup in Brussels (PLATE 7b),

which to reconstruct the festival, because some of that imagery almost certainly has nothing directly to do with the Anthesteria. But some choes-paintings include representations of choes within the scenes, and in those cases it seems likely that the imagery is related to the use of the vessels during the Anthesteria: see Simon (1983) 94-6. As Hamilton himself noted (p. 67), the 'argument that nothing on the choes need refer to the Choes contest does not mean that nothing *can* refer to it, or to the Anthesteria as a whole'.

[72] E.g. an unattributed mid sixth-century Boiotian kantharos in Dresden ZV 1466, *JdI* 52 (1937) 203, figs 3-4, Kilinski II (1990) pl. 17, nos. 3-4, among the earliest representations of the return of Hephaistos in Archaic art.

[73] Frickenhaus (1917) 3.

[74] Ar. *Ach.* 243 and 259-60, trans. after Henderson (1998a). Another early source of information about the phallus-procession is Herodotus 2.48-9, who attributes the introduction of this rite to Melampous and compares it to Egyptian customs.

[75] Compare the analysis of Plut. *De cupid. div.* 527d. For the Rural Dionysia, see Henrichs (1990) 259 with n.8, 262, 269-70.

[76] For the procession of the City Dionysia, see Nilsson (1916) 325-6; Cole (1993). Among the non-Athenian evidence for this kind of ritual practice, two characteristics of Dionysiac processions – the carrying of phalli and travelling by ship – are combined in a single procession in one instance. On the fragments of a sixth-century Klazomenian amphora, Oxford 1924.264, a silen and fat man wielding phalli ride on a ship carried by men. The procession represented on the fragments has affinities with Athenian representations of both the ship-car procession and the phallus-procession: see Boardman (1958).

[77] Florence 3897, unattributed mid sixth-century black-figure cup, *LIMC* 8, pl. 766 Silenoi 120. For a study of the imagery of the cup, see Csapo (1997) 265-79. To the vase-paintings that document phallus-processions in honour of Dionysos, add the one on a small fifth-century red-figure bell krater, probably Boiotian in origin, published by Brommer (1985) and illustrated in Auffarth (1991) 223, figs 6-7. One side of the vase depicts Dionysos riding in a *liknon* on a cart to which is affixed a large model phallus similar to the one depicted on the cup in Florence.

[78] The large size of the silen relative to the proportions of the figures carrying the platform has suggested that it is an effigy of a silen mounted on the platform: see Hedreen (1992) 129-30. Although it is not possible to determine if the size of the silen is a reflection of his importance in the action, rather than an attribute of an effigy, it is worth noting that huge effigies are attested for certain Roman processions: see Versnel (1970) 264-6.

a silen-*aulete* leads a procession of gymnastic silens that features, as its centre-piece, a fabulous phallus-bird.[79] Csapo has argued that the phallus-bird on this cup has its origins in the paraphernalia of the phallus-procession, because the reins on the bird correspond to the ropes on the large model phallus on the cup in Florence.[80] One must also acknowledge, however, that the scene is mythical in the sense that most of its iconographical elements could not have existed or been reproduced in a real procession, at least not in a form resembling closely what is depicted on the cup. On the cup in Brussels, mythical beings are celebrating a phallus-procession; or, to put it another way, the subject-matter of this scene of mythical silens is religious ritual.[81] An Early Classical amphora by the Flying Angel Painter also exemplifies the manner in which vase-painters attributed real religious practices to the silens of myth: a silen carries a phallus-stick as if in a procession, and a father-and-son pair of silens watch it pass by.[82] The painter has imagined a community of mythical worshippers. Just so, one can envision phallus-processions like those occurring during the rural or City Dionysia as models for the creation of the visual representations of the emphatically phallic procession of Hephaistos to Olympos, which is a mythical event.

In the return of Hephaistos, however, the significance of the phallic element goes beyond merely suggesting that the conception of the iconography is indebted to the spectacle of the Dionysiac phallic procession. The phallus cannot be understood simply as an attribute of the silens, because it has been incorporated into the action of the visual narrative. In several early representations of the return (e.g. PLATE 3b), a silen has grabbed his penis with one hand, placed the other hand on the rump of Hephaistos' donkey, and looks out of the picture toward the viewer. The visual motif of the silen looking out of a vase-painting and toward the viewer has been explored in detail by Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux. As she notes, the silen not infrequently looks out of the picture in a moment of sexual ecstasy. She argues that the significance of the turn of the head lies not so much in the fact that the silen makes eye contact with the viewer as in the fact that he has disengaged from the action unfolding within the image. In order to convey the overpowering, absorbing quality of the physical sensation of sexual release, or of impending release, the vase-painter turns the silen's head away from visual contact with the other figures in the vase-painting, a formal device that Frontisi-Ducroux compares to the rhetorical term *apostrophe*.[83] Frontisi-Ducroux also notes, however, that, in many cases, the frontal face of the silen seems to serve to draw the viewer's attention to the scene or action of the image. Contributing to that effect is the depiction of the body of the *en face* silen, in those instances, in profile: our eyes are arrested by the direct address of the silen's frontal gaze, but his body directs our attention toward the other figures or objects in the picture plane, and to the silen's interactions with them.[84] Just so, in some representations of the return of Hephaistos, our attention is caught by the intense stare of the *en face* silen, and it is directed toward the outrageous act he is about to perform by the profile orientation of his body and the pointer-like quality of his erect penis. On the amphora in Oxford (PLATE 4a-b), however, there is even more. This vase is important because it is among the few explicitly to include the Olympian gods in the visual representation of the return: the gods watch attentively and gesticulate from the other side of the vase. By

[79] Brussels A 723, cup, *ARV*² 317.15, Proto-Panaetian Group, *LIMC* 8, pl. 767 Silenoi 121.

[80] See Vallois (1922) 99 n.1; Csapo (1997) 283-4.

[81] The model phallus or phallus-stick finds its way into other mythical or imaginary contexts involving silens, e.g. the Gigantomachy: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 11, cup-skyphos, *ARV*² 513, perhaps Painter of Bologna 228, Schefold (1981) figs 128-9; and perhaps also Boston 13.95, fragmentary cup, *ARV*² 403.36, Foundry Painter, CB 2: pl. 10. Or into silen athletics: e.g. Munich 2381, volute krater, *ARV*² 221.14, Nikoxenos Painter, Simon (1982) pl. 34a. Or pornography: Boston 08.30a, *ARV*² 135, wider circle of the Nikosthenes Painter, *AntK* 12 (1969) pl. 10, no. 1.

[82] Boston 98.882, amphora, *ARV*² 279.7, Flying Angel Painter, CB 3, pl. 82, no. 124. For the association between the portable phallus-stick and sacrificial ritual, see Paris, Louvre G 742, frag. pelike, *ARV*² 555.90, Peirce (1993) 244, pl. fig. 5.

[83] Frontisi-Ducroux (1995) 108. On this function of the *en face* view in general, see her pp. 81-97. Compare Greifenhagen (1929) 73; Korshak (1987) 3, 11, 23.

[84] Frontisi-Ducroux (1995) 109.

engaging the eye of the spectator, the silen ensures that his sexual assault on the donkey will be noticed by the viewer, and in this visual narrative, viewers of the scene also include the gods. In other words, in this instance, the presence of the phallus is not automatically accounted for by its being attached to a silen, nor is it merely a passive reflection of a ritual practice on which the artist may have modelled his visual representation: in this scene, the phallus is actively employed to create an impact on the gods and the viewer.

Accustomed as one is to ithyphallic silens and male nudity in general in Greek art, one perhaps underestimates the significance of the silen's obscene display. Early literary accounts of the reaction of the gods to the sight of sexual activity suggest that the effect would not have been negligible: the gods would most likely have been ashamed, and possibly amused, but they would not have been indifferent. Having spied the nymph Kyrene out of doors and on her own, Apollo asks Cheiron in Pindar's ninth Pythian ode (lines 26-41) if it would be appropriate to rape her on the spot; Cheiron responds that 'both gods and humans are ashamed to engage openly in sweet love'.[85] A similar modesty characterizes the refusal of the goddesses to be eyewitnesses of the adulterous couple, Ares and Aphrodite, when Hephaistos caught them *in flagrante* in his bed: 'the goddesses stayed away for shame (αἰδοῖ), each in her own house'.[86] Among heroes, even pragmatic men such as Odysseus, there is shame in revealing the genitalia to women. Before supplicating Nausikaa, Odysseus concealed his genitals behind a leafy branch (Hom. *Od.* 6.129) and informed her companions that he was 'ashamed (αἰδέομαι) to be naked in the midst of fair-tressed maidens'.[87] Several gods found the sight of Ares and Aphrodite entwined to be very funny (Hom. *Od.* 8.326). To judge from the jokes that they cracked, however, the humour lay in the triumph of the slow-moving, crippled smith-god over the swift war-god, rather than in the sight of gods engaged in the sex act. Hermes' fantasy suggests that a sense of shame is operative even in a god of thieves whose emblem is the phallic herm (8.339-42): 'would that this might happen, lord Apollo, far-shooter – that thrice as many ineluctable bonds might clasp me about and *you gods, yes, and all the goddesses too might be looking on*, but that I might sleep by the side of golden Aphrodite'. Hermes' wish makes some of the gods giggle, but to the older god Poseidon, the sight of Ares and Aphrodite locked in sex is not funny at all, and must be brought to a halt, whatever the price (8.344-56). If the parallels in poetry are an accurate guide, the sight of the silens approaching Mount Olympos, parading their large erect phalli and assaulting Hephaistos' donkey with them, would ordinarily have been a source of shame to the gods. It is also possible that the sight would have made some gods laugh. In Pindar's tenth Pythian ode (line 36), Apollo laughs seeing the ὕβριν ὀρθίαν – 'erect insolence' – of donkeys' phalli.[88] But in either case, the presence of silens making a spectacle of their sex organs will have had a disruptive effect on the gods.

IV. RITUAL ABUSE

There is a big difference between amusing the gods and offending them, because a genuine offence is likely to result in a titanic reaction. Precisely the same pair of opposing actions – causing offence and giving pleasure through humour – appear to have been mediated in certain ritual practices associated with the worship of Dionysos and Demeter. In those ritual contexts, actions that ordinarily would be a cause of offence are instead a source of harmless delight. The deliberate acts of an offensive or insulting nature are another sign of the inverted social order that defines those ritual occasions as well as the return of Hephaistos.

[85] For some aspects of the Greek notion of shame, see Ferrari (1990); Williams (1993) 78-9. See also Hdt. 1.8.

[86] Hom. *Od.* 8.324, trans. after A.T. Murray (1995).

[87] Hom. *Od.* 6.221-2. Note also Odysseus' discretion in this regard at 19.344-8. Homeric heroes are not always so reticent about bathing in front of women: see Heubeck, West and Hainsworth (1988) 307.

[88] On this passage, see Lissarrague (1987) 65.

For understanding Athenian visual representations of the myth, the most relevant form of ritually licensed insult was the proverbial 'abuse from the carts'.[89] In Plato's *Laws* (637a-b), Megillos asserts that Spartan law prohibits institutions or activities that encourage excessive pleasure or riotous behaviour (ὕβρεσι); not even a festival of Dionysos may excuse the behaviour of a heavy drinker 'such as I once saw involving wagons in your city [i.e. Athens]'. The link between riding on wagons and abusive behaviour is also attested by a fragment of Menander ('there's some very abusive ribaldry upon the wagons') and a passage of Demosthenes ('you raise your voice, calling me decent and indecent things, as from a wagon').[90] As noted earlier, Dionysios of Halikarnassos (7.72.11) compared the practice of mocking famous people during the Roman triumphal procession to 'those participants in processions at Athens who ride in carts'. The origin of these allusions to outrageous behaviour from carts or chariots is explained by later lexicographers: 'in Athens in the festival of the Choes those revelling on wagons mocked and reviled those they met and they did the same later in the Lenaia'.[91] Some sources may also connect the practice with the City Dionysia, because they simply specify 'the Dionysia' as the occasion for the custom of hurling abuse from wagons, and writers often understood the unqualified expression 'Dionysia' to refer to the City Dionysia.[92] More importantly, hurling abuse from carts is closely associated with participating in a procession. Both Demosthenes and Menander employ the word πομπεία, 'procession', as a synonym for abuse or mockery.[93] Dionysios compared the Roman custom of insulting notable persons specifically during a triumphal procession to the Athenian custom of hurling abuse from wagons; moreover, in his description of the *pompa circensis* (7.72.10), mockery was supplied by men dressed as silens and satyrs.

In scholarship, ritually sanctioned abuse and the display of the phallus have been treated largely as separate religious practices. Hurling abuse is often thought to be apotropaic in intention, that is, meant to ward off religious pollution or evil spirits. By contrast, the display of genitalia is often understood to be procreative in intention, that is, aimed at encouraging the fertility of plants, animals and humans.[94] But the relationship between phallic display and abuse is in fact close and of considerable importance to understanding the role of obscenity in the visual narrative of the return of Hephaistos. Ancient references to the practice of abusing people from carts do not specify precisely what form the joking took. From the passage in Demosthenes quoted earlier, one may guess that the insults are verbal. But several considerations suggest that they might also have been both obscene and visual. Demosthenes described the insults as ῥητὰ καὶ

[89] For the sources and general discussion, see Nilsson (1916) 323-5; Fluck (1931) 34-51; Burkert (1983) 229 n.18; Peirce (1984) 111.

[90] Men. *Perinthia* fr. 5 in Arnott (1996-2000) 2.490-1; Dem. *Coron.* 18.122. See also the explicit statement of Harpokration: 'πομπείας καὶ πομπεύειν: the equivalent of λοιδορίας καὶ λοιδορεῖν', which he attributes to Demosthenes. The text is in Hamilton (1992) 59 and 171, T81.

[91] Photios *s.v.* τὰ ἐκ τῶν ἁμαξῶν, translation and text after Hamilton (1992) 26, 158 (T22). Virtually identical accounts may be found in the *Suda* and Apostolios. The presence of ritual abuse during the festival of the Anthesteria is also asserted in Bekker, *Anecd.* 1.316 (text in Hamilton (1992) 38, 163 (T45)); a scholion to Aristophanes' *Knights* (text in Fluck (1931) 41-2 test. 21) reiterates the association of the practice with the Lenaia. The scholion to the *Knights* makes reference to Dem. *Coron.* 18.122, quoted earlier.

[92] Schol. Luc. *Iupp. trag.* 44 and *Eun.* 2; texts in Fluck (1931) 34, 36 test. 10, 11. For the manner of referring to the City Dionysia, see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 57. See also Cole (1993) 33, who advances other arguments in favour of the idea that ritual abuse was practised at the City Dionysia.

[93] Dem. *Coron.* 18.11; Men. *Perinthia* fr. 5, quoted earlier. The passages are cited by Harpokration and other lexicographers as examples of the metaphor; see the texts in Fluck (1931) 36-7 test. 12-14; Hamilton (1992) 59, 81 (T81).

[94] See, e.g., Hartmann (1929) 43 (specifically on silens); Fluck (1931) 29; Herter (1938) 1699. On this point, see Burkert (1985) 105: 'rites with sexual emphasis are generally understood in terms of fertility magic in Frazer's sense. The Greek evidence, however, always points most conspicuously to the absurdity and buffoonery of the whole affair.' See also the valuable remarks in Connor (1989) 17; Eliade (1971) 69 with n.36. See Halliwell (1991) 294-5 and n.58, with further bibliography sceptical of the fertility-magic interpretation.

ἄρρητα, 'things that can and things that cannot be spoken of', which suggests that some of the insults concerned matters ordinarily kept private, such as those pertaining to sex. Several scholia to Lucian speculate that the function of the carts was to make mockers more visible to others, suggesting that the outrageous behaviour was not only verbal but in some way also visual.[95] An association specifically between carrying the phallus and hurling insults is suggested by Aristophanes' representation of the Dionysiac phallus-procession in the *Acharnians*. Dikaiopolis sings a hymn to Phales and hails the personification of the erect penis in a fashion – 'fornicator, pederast' (line 265) – that Cole has identified as a parody of ritually sanctioned abuse.[96] The hymn also contains a very obscene and graphic image of the rape of a country girl. Cole also pointed out that the so-called *phallophoroi* who accompany the bearer of the phallus in the well-known description of Dionysiac ritual performers by Semos of Delos also engaged in mockery: having sung a hymn to Dionysos, they would then 'jeer (ἐτώθαζον) at whomever they wished'.[97]

Ritually sanctioned abuse was characteristic of cults of Demeter, and in the ancient sources for those cults, the display of genitalia and the hurling of insults are related practices. In Aristophanes' *Wasps*, Philokleon remembers the abuse he experienced during the Eleusinian Mysteries: 'I can play teenage tricks (τωθάσω) on [my son], the same tricks he played on me when I stood for initiation (πρὸ τῶν μυστηρίων).'[98] Several ancient sources refer to a practice localized at a bridge along the processional way from Athens to Eleusis and therefore called γεφυρισμός: a woman, a man or several persons sat on the bridge and mocked the initiates as they passed by.[99] Hurling insults was part of other festivals in honour of Demeter as well. Apollodoros (*Bibl.* 1.5.1) claims that women make mocking jokes at the Thesmophoria, presumably the Athenian festival. Diodoros (5.4.7) says that people speak shamefully to each other during the Thesmophoria in Sicily. Mockery also occurred during the women's rite of the Haloa in Eleusis, and at a festival of Demeter near Pellene, where men and women exchanged insults with each other.[100] With respect to the worship of Demeter, what needs to be emphasized is, first, the close relationship between the practice of insulting people and obscenity, and, second, the importance of visual spectacle in ritual abuse. In the cults of Demeter that featured ritual abuse, there also occurred the display of genitalia. At the Stenia, during which women exchanged insults with each other, women also carried models of the male and female genitalia, and the banquet table was laid with cakes formed in the same shapes.[101] During the Thesmophoria in Syracuse, cakes were made out of sesame and honey in the shape of the female pudenda and carried around in honour of Demeter (Herakleides of Syracuse in Athen. 14.647a). Kleomedes compared the language employed during the Thesmophoria to that used in brothels, which suggests that the language as well as the visual symbols of the festival concerned sex.[102] The explicit display of the female body was possibly even part of the rite of *gephyrismos*. One of the ancient sources for the rite defines γεφυρίς as 'a prostitute on the bridge'.[103] Rusten has called attention to the possible significance of the stage business in Aristophanes' *Wasps* (1362-3), in

[95] See the texts printed in Fluck (1931) 34-6, test. 10-11.

[96] See Cole (1993) 26.

[97] See Cole (1993) 33. The passage of Semos is preserved in Athen. 14.622c-d. In a later source (Athanasios, *Hist. Arian.* 57.4), a man hurling abuse also displays model phalli. For the passage, see Csapo (1997) 273-4.

[98] Ar. *Vesp.* 1362-3, trans. after Henderson (1998b) 393.

[99] The sources are collected by Fluck (1931) 52-5. According to one account (Hesych. *s.v.* γεφυρίς), prominent citizens were singled out by name for insults.

[100] The principal source for the Haloa is schol. Lucian *Dial. meret.* 7.4 printed in Fluck (1931) 13; for the festival of Demeter near Pellene, see Paus. 7.27.10. The practice of hurling insults occasionally occurred in connection with the worship of other gods, including Damia and Auxesia on Aigina and Apollo on the island of Anaphe. For the former, see Hdt. 5.83.3; for the latter, see esp. Ap. Rhod. *Argo.* 4.1719-30 and Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.9.26. For other sources, see Fluck (1931) 20-2, 59-62.

[101] Sources in Fluck (1931) 15-17; Parke (1977) 88.

[102] Kleomedes, *Kykl. theor. met.* 2.1, part of the text in Fluck (1931) 19. See also Diod. 5.4.6.

[103] And attributes the definition to one Herakleion, who, according to Fluck (1931) 52, was a grammarian of the Hellenistic age.

which Philokleon intends to mock his son in the very manner in which his son mocked him during the Eleusinian mysteries. Philokleon is accompanied by a naked flute- and call-girl (for the latter aspect of her work, see esp. line 1346) and, when he sees his son approaching, he instructs her to 'take this torch and stand still, so I can play teenage tricks on him' (αὐτὸν τωθάσω νεανικῶς) (1361-2). In this scene, the naked entertainer is not necessarily superfluous to the 'teenage tricks' that Philokleon has in mind: the spectacle of a nude female body as well as the hurling of insults together may constitute the τωθασμός represented in this passage.[104]

The verb used by Philokleon in this passage, τωθάζω, occurs in several other descriptions of ritual abuse in classical literature, and in them, as Rusten emphasized, the display of the body's private parts is an integral part of the abuse. Herodotos (2.60) described an Egyptian festival in which revellers travel by boat: 'some of the women ... shout mockery (τωθάζουσι) of the women of the town; others dance, and others stand up and expose their persons. This they do whenever they come beside any riverside town.'[105] In the *Politics* (1336 b 14-17), Aristotle proposes prohibiting obscene visual representations in painting or sculpture, except in the case of those gods for whom the law also allows τωθασμός.[106] It is perhaps noteworthy that even Philokleon's verbal τωθασμός is obscene as well as derogatory: 'you there! Yes you, you psychotic pussy squeezer!'[107] In this respect, the abuse spoken by Aristophanes' chorus of mystic initiates in the *Frogs* is also noteworthy. The *parodos* of this play is generally held to reflect some of the public rituals of the Eleusinian mysteries.[108] In its hymn to Demeter, the chorus hopes that it may 'say many funny things and many serious things too, sporting and jesting (σκώψαντα) in a manner befitting your festival ... '(389-92). And when the chorus gets around to offering ritual abuse – 'would you like us then, all together, to make fun of Archedemos?' (416-17) – two of the three victims are ridiculed in graphic language for sexual preferences or practices.

The earliest literary source for ritual abuse in the worship of Demeter, the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, includes an *aition* or mythical account of its origins. In the hymn, Demeter departed from the realm of gods for the world of men in anger over Hades' abduction of her daughter Persephone and Zeus's complicity in the crime. She wandered unrecognized until she came to Eleusis (90-7). In the house of Keleos, the king of Eleusis, Demeter declined the comfort of a fine chair, food or drink, covered her face with her veil, and did not greet or smile at anyone – such was her grief for Persephone – until Iambe jested with her and 'mocking with many a joke moved the holy goddess to smile and laugh and keep a gracious heart'.[109] The ritual dimension to Iambe's joking is suggested by the very next line of the poem: 'Iambe, who later pleased her moods as well.' The point in the future to which this line refers should probably not be construed as some other mythical incident in which Iambe cheered the goddess up, but to the role played by Iambe in the aetiology of the cult of Demeter at Eleusis.[110]

One would like to know precisely what kind of jokes were capable of ameliorating the anger and grief of a major goddess, but the ancient sources leave us in the dark for the most part concerning this central mystery. In the hymn, the language concerning Iambe's clowning is without parallel in Archaic poetry. The noun χλεύη (line 202) is unattested before the Hellenistic age,

[104] See Rusten (1977).

[105] Hdt. 2.60, trans. after Godley (1926).

[106] The passage is printed and discussed in Fluck (1931) 11-12.

[107] Ar. *Vesp.* 1364-5, trans. after Henderson (1998b). For the assignment of these lines to Philokleon, see Rusten (1977) 157-9.

[108] On this point, see Richardson (1974) 214; Graf (1974) 40-50; Dover (1993) 61-2, 247-8; Bowie (1993) 228-40.

[109] Lines 202-4, trans. after Foley (1994) 12.

[110] See Richardson (1974) 223; Brown (1997) 17 n.20. Apollodoros and Diodoros (*loc. cit.*) cite the myth of Iambe's entertaining of Demeter as the reason why women make cutting jokes or speak shamefully during the Thesmophoria at Athens and in Sicily. Philikos' hymn to Demeter appears to connect the rites of the Thesmophoria at Halimos with the story of Iambe cheering up the sad goddess; see Page (1941) 402-7, esp. line 7.

when it occurs in an epigram together with γέλωτα καὶ λάσθην, 'funny things and insults'.[111] Σκώπτουσα (or παρασκώπτουσα, depending on how one reads line 203) is also without parallel in Archaic poetry. In one passage of Herodotos (2.121), the verb is explicitly linked to causing laughter rather than insult, so as to engender a positive attitude in the listener. But in Aristophanes, the word is used for insults that are meant to tease people, for example for their physical appearance ('mock bald men', *Clouds* 540), and that ought to make the victim angry ('flare at anyone who mocks you', *Clouds* 991).[112] In later references to the story, however, there are indications that Iambe's intervention was understood to be obscene and perhaps visual. Diodoros (5.4.7) implied that Iambe's jokes were obscene because he called them 'shameful speech', αἰσχρολογία. According to the *Etymologicum Magnum*, Iambe made Demeter laugh by playing, saying useless things and making useless gestures (παίζουσα καὶ ἀχρηστολογοῦσα καὶ σχήματα ἄχρηστα ποιοῦσα).[113] The reference to body language connects this description of Iambe's joking with the accounts about Baubo, her counterpart in the Orphic tradition. According to Clement of Alexandria and Arnobius, when Demeter would not accept the hospitality offered her because of her grief, Baubo uncovered her private parts and displayed them to the goddess, and at the sight of this, the goddess laughed.[114] The literary tradition, reticent and sparse as the evidence is, suggests that what made Demeter laugh, and what constituted the paradigm for ritual abuse in the goddess' cult, was thought to be obscene, and sometimes imagined to be visual.[115]

One piece of evidence concerning the nature of iambic poetry provides further indirect support for the hypothesis that the abuse associated with the worship of Dionysos and Demeter was, in part at least, obscene. It is not possible to examine in detail all the evidence for the nature of iambic poetry, its possible relationships to the cults of Demeter and Dionysos, and the link between it and Iambe in the myth of Demeter.[116] But one particular testimonium seems especially relevant to the subject of this paper, because it suggests that obscenity was a fundamental part of what is meant by the concept of *iambos*, and what links ritual joking or abuse to the worship of Dionysos. In the Hellenistic inscribed life of Archilochos from the poet's shrine on Paros, there are traces of a poem of Archilochos that was judged to be 'too iambic' by the Parians.[117] Only the first word of each line of the offending poem survives on the stone, but what is legible appears almost certainly to be obscene.[118] The first word of the poem is the name of Dionysos. The second line was plausibly reconstructed by Luppe as οὐδ' ἃ στυάζ[ει, who took the verb to be a form of στύω, meaning 'to make stiff'.[119] The third line begins with the word ὄμφακες, 'unripe grapes', which may have something to do with Dionysos' role as the god of wine, but is also used in Nonnos for the breasts of an adolescent girl; this word too would not be out of place

[111] See *Anth. Pal.* 7.345 and Richardson (1974) 221. For the implication of barbed insult in the expression γέλωτα καὶ λάσθην, compare Hdt. 6.67. In the epigram, it is implied that the funny things and insults concern a book that suggests that the author was a lascivious bisexual who frequented brothels. So in that case, one may suppose that the jokes would be obscene.

[112] The translations are after Henderson (1998b).

[113] See Brown (1997) 23. The text is in Fluck (1931) 24.

[114] Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.20.1-21.2; Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 5.25-6. For a detailed analysis, see Olender (1990) 87-90.

[115] Compare Vernant (1991) 114; Bartol (1993) 36.

[116] Thanks in part to the discovery of the Cologne epode, it now appears that personal attack on historical individuals was not the sole or even principal function of iambic poetry. It appears that the representation of obscene language, the sex organs and sexual situations served in part at least to shock in a general way, and to amuse, and was licensed perhaps by the ritual contexts out of which the poetic practice grew. See especially Dover (1964); West (1974); Miralles and Pòrtulas (1983); Bartol (1993); E. Bowie (2001). I have addressed the affinities between iambic sexual narratives and visual representations of silens in a separate paper.

[117] The stone was published by Kontoleon (1952/1955). The text is printed as testimonium 3 in Gerber (1999b). The anecdote in question is contained in the very fragmentary col. 3, lines 12-55.

[118] The five verses in question, lines 31-5, or *fr.* 251, are usually thought of as part of a single poem, but see Luppe (1993), who argued that the lines may be quotations from several different poems.

[119] See Luppe (1993) 145.

in an obscene poem.[120] The fourth line contains the words σῦκα μελ[ιχρὰ, 'sweet figs'; as a sexual metaphor, the expression has numerous parallels in the poetry of Archilochos, Hipponax and others.[121] Finally, the fifth line of the citation contains the unusual word οἰφολίωι. West aptly translated the adjective, which may be an epithet of Dionysos and which derives from the verb οἴφω, as 'the screwer'.[122]

In ancient religion, ritual abuse appears to have had several social, political and religious functions, but for my purposes the most interesting is its contribution to the inverted social order of the festival. The clearest and most detailed illustration of the interrelationships between mockery, social class and the inversion of class distinctions occurs in Theognis (53-63), and the passage is illuminating even though it does not explicitly refer to a festival: 'this city is still a city, but the people are different, people who formerly knew neither justice nor laws, but wore tattered goatskins about their sides and lived outside this city like deer. And now they are noble, Polypaïdes, while those who were noble before are now base. Who can endure the sight of this? They deceive one another and mock one another, knowing neither the distinctive marks of the base nor those of the noble.'[123] The lines are significant because here the practice of mocking or laughing at each other is related to ignorance of class distinctions and an inversion of the ordinary social order of the city: the base are now noble and the formerly noble are now base. In the return of Hephaistos, obscenity, employed as a means of giving offence, is also coupled with an inversion of the customary social hierarchy among immortals. The parallel is even closer because the ones doing the mocking in Theognis – the formerly base, now noble ones – used to live outside the city like deer, dressed in goatskins: in their rude lifestyle, and in their spatial association with the outside of the city, they are closely comparable to the silens.[124]

In sum, a review of the evidence pertaining to ritual abuse shows that, in Dionysiac festivals at Athens, the practice was closely associated with participation in processions, and that, in cults of Dionysos and Demeter, the insults could be obscene and visual. In the procession to Olympos (PLATES 3a-4a-b), the image of the silen sexually assaulting Hephaistos' donkey, in full view of proper gods and goddesses, may have been a good approximation of ritual abuse. It may have been intended to amuse the viewer, but it also serves the narrative function of signalling the temporary inversion of ordinary life on Olympos.

V. THE NARRATIVE INTERACTION OF MYTH, RITUAL AND VASE-PAINTING

In this paper, I have argued that vase-painters incorporated elements of Dionysiac processional ritual into representations of the return of Hephaistos in order to give visible form to important themes of the story. The vase-painters structured or articulated the myth visually along the lines of an epiphanic procession in which Dionysos was escorted into the city of Athens. Like Dionysiac epiphanic processions, the procession of Dionysos, Hephaistos and company to Olympos is marked by drunkenness, ostentatious display of the erect penis and obscene, insulting behaviour. To judge from the aetiological myths associated with them, the epiphanic processions symbolized the triumph of the god Dionysos over, and belated acceptance of him by, those who denied his status as a god. The plot of the return of Hephaistos suggests that the mythical procession to Olympos would have conveyed similar ideas, namely, the triumph of Hephaistos over the gods who rejected or slighted him, and the acceptance of him and Dionysos

[120] Nonn. *Dion.* 1.71 (to describe the breasts of Europa), 48.957 (of Athena's breast). Compare *Anth. Pal.* 5.20, 12.205.

[121] The possible sexual allusions in the words for unripe grapes and sweet figs were recognized by West (1974) 25.

[122] West (1974) 25. On the word, see also Lehnus (1980).

[123] Trans. after Gerber (1999a). Compare also Theognis 1109-14.

[124] Nagy (1990) 390, who discusses this passage at some length, notes that the silens are dressed in goatskins in Eur. *Cycl.*

among the Olympians. The vase-painters did not rely on a detailed poetic account of the myth in order to create their representations of it, but employed instead elements of religious spectacle, an inherently visual phenomenon.

The interpretive approach taken in this paper can account for elements of ritual in several representations of the return of Hephaistos that have attracted the attention of historians of drama. Those scholars have argued that certain vase-paintings of the story represent choral performances of the myth, but the arguments essentially treat iconographical elements as non-narrative when it is possible to understand them as contributing to the story. The point is not that the myth cannot have been the subject of Archaic choral performances, only that the vase-paintings cannot be relied upon as documentary evidence that it was. In two early sixth-century Corinthian black-figure vase-paintings, among the earliest surviving representations of the return of Hephaistos in Greek art, the god is escorted or accompanied by padded dancers rather than silens.[125] There are good reasons to believe that some padded dancers represent men dressed in costume. Their presence in representations of the return of Hephaistos, however, does not necessarily mean that the myth is the subject of actual choral or quasi-dramatic performances of padded dancers.[126] The presence of padded dancers can be accounted for by the hypothesis that the dancers were featured in Corinthian Dionysiac processional ritual on the basis of which the vase-painters constructed their visual representations of the return. A comparable problem dogs the interpretation of an Early Classical Athenian red-figure krater in Vienna. The obverse of the vase depicts Hephaistos walking and weaving, trying to maintain his balance, Dionysos preceding him but looking back in concern, and a silen walking ahead, playing the kithara, and wearing the shorts of satyr-play.[127] Some scholars have taken the presence of the shorts as an indication that the subject of the scene, the return of Hephaistos, was the subject of a lost satyr-play.[128] But dramatic performances, including satyr-play, were such a significant component of the programme of the City Dionysia that a silen wearing the costume of satyr-play might be an appropriate visual motif in a vase-painting of the return of Hephaistos, in which the vase-painter hoped to convey the idea that the return to Olympos was like the grand procession of the City Dionysia, the theatre festival.[129] Webster suggested that the return of Hephaistos on the mid sixth-century Athenian dinos in Paris (PLATE 4c) is a representation of the song sung by komasts depicted in the adjacent frieze on the vase; and I once argued that the presence of sacrificial animals in the procession accompanying the return of Hephaistos on the same vase points to a festival occasion during which the myth was re-enacted.[130] But the presence of sacrificial animals in this scene and in the vase-painting on the kalpis in Indianapolis (PLATE 5a) can be understood from a narrative perspective. The sacrificial elements have come along with the other characteristics of the iconography of procession in particular because the narrative is one of triumph.[131] When the procession successfully reaches Mount Olympos, the silens will celebrate the accomplishment with a sacrifice.

If the similarities between the visual representations of the return of Hephaistos and the rituals of Athenian Dionysiac festivals have not been highlighted before, that may be due in part to differences in media. As I have tried to show, however, there was probably a visual dimension

[125] Athens, NM 664, MC amphoriskos, *LIMC* 4, pl. 393 Hephaistos 129, Seeberg (1965) pl. 24; Carpenter (1986) pl. 5. London 1867.5-8.860 (B 42), MC column krater, *LIMC* 3, pl. 361 Dionysos 549, Carpenter (1986) pl. 4b. For the two vases, see Amyx (1988) 234, 497, 621-2. Comparable perhaps is Thebes R 31.187, Boiotian black-figure skyphos, Kilinski II (1990) 46, pl. 24, no. 1.

[126] The scholarship is reviewed in Seeberg (1971); Hedreen (1992) 130-6.

[127] Vienna 985, calyx krater, *ARV*² 591,20, Altamura Painter, *LIMC* 3, pl. 362 Dionysos 555.

[128] See, e.g., Simon (1982) 131-2; Krumeich, Pechstein and Seidensticker (1999) 44, 47, 59.

[129] It is also possible, though not certain, that the costumes of drama were worn during the procession itself: see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 61-3.

[130] See Webster (1954) 584; Hedreen (1992) 136.

[131] Compare Peirce (1993) 242-5, esp. n.98.

to the practices of hurling abuse during the worship of Dionysos and Demeter, and the visual display of the phallus itself may have been a form of ritually sanctioned offence. The visual representation of silens employing their phalli in obscene ways may be a close visual approximation of ritual abuse. The epiphanic form of procession itself, in which Dionysos was escorted physically into the city of Athens, is an essentially visual phenomenon. One of the fundamental metaphors underlying the ritual programmes of the Anthesteria and City Dionysia is spatial – Dionysos and his peculiar powers come to the city from the outside – and, as such, can be communicated in the spatial medium of painting. But perhaps the chief reason why the similarities between the visual representations and the rituals have not been highlighted is differences in function. The visual representations were created not to explain the rituals but to give visible form to a story. They occur on vases that were intended for use in private symposia and not, so far as one can tell, in connection with any particular festival of Dionysos or Hephaistos. The myth itself belongs to a body of mythology about the creation of stability in the pantheon that is certainly relevant to Greek religious belief in general but does not appear to stand in close relation to particular festivals. That body of mythology appears to operate largely within the poetic tradition and to be of considerable antiquity.[132] The myth of the return of Hephaistos and Athenian Dionysiac rituals almost certainly pre-existed their union in visual representations around 580 BC, and were perhaps independent of each other prior to that point in time. It is conceivable that the myth originated in the prehistoric period as an *aition* or explanation of a festival or procession, but the surviving literary and visual representations of the story do not necessarily lend themselves to that interpretation.[133] In fact, it seems possible that the prominent role of obscenity, the active participation of the followers of Dionysos and the processional character of the journey to Olympos are aspects of the narrative that originated in the creation of visual representations of it. By braiding elements of Dionysiac ritual into a complex tale about power among the gods, however, the vase-painters identified a set of themes common to both the rituals and the myth. In this way, the visual representations tell us something about how the rituals were understood in the Archaic period. Insofar as the vase-paintings tell us about those rituals, however, they do so via visual mythological narrative, and not as visual records of ritual.

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[132] Consider, for example, the myths in the *Homeric Hymns* as interpreted by Clay (1989).

[133] Webster (1958) 43-5 and Seeberg (1965) speculated that an annual ritual in which a magician releases a goddess of fertility from winter bondage is the foundation of the return of Hephaistos as a myth. They argued that the earliest visual depictions of the myth reflect enactments of the ritual. But their theory does not explain how the myth came to be concerned with the establishment of a stable balance of power on Olympos, which is a unique event in the history of the cosmos, not an annual one.

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(a) Florence, Museo archeologico 4209, volute krater, *ABV* 76.1, Kleitias and Ergotimos (photograph: Hirmer Verlag München)

(b) New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 17.230.5 (Rogers Fund, 1917), band cup, *Para* 78.1, Oakeshott Painter
(photograph: Metropolitan Museum of Art)

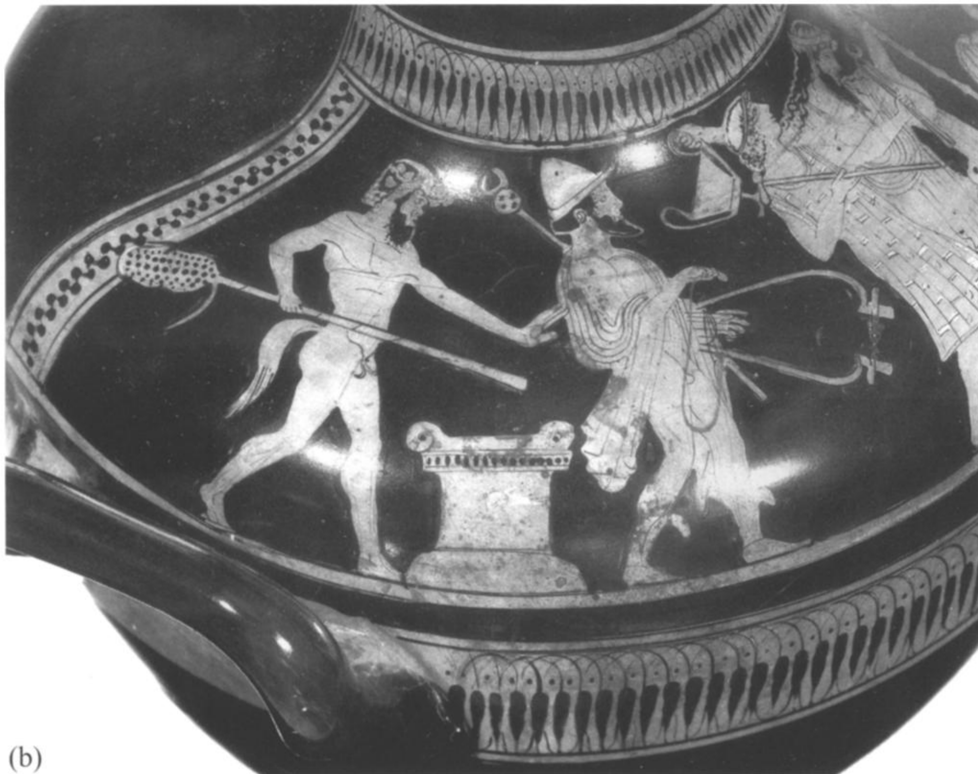
(a)

(b)

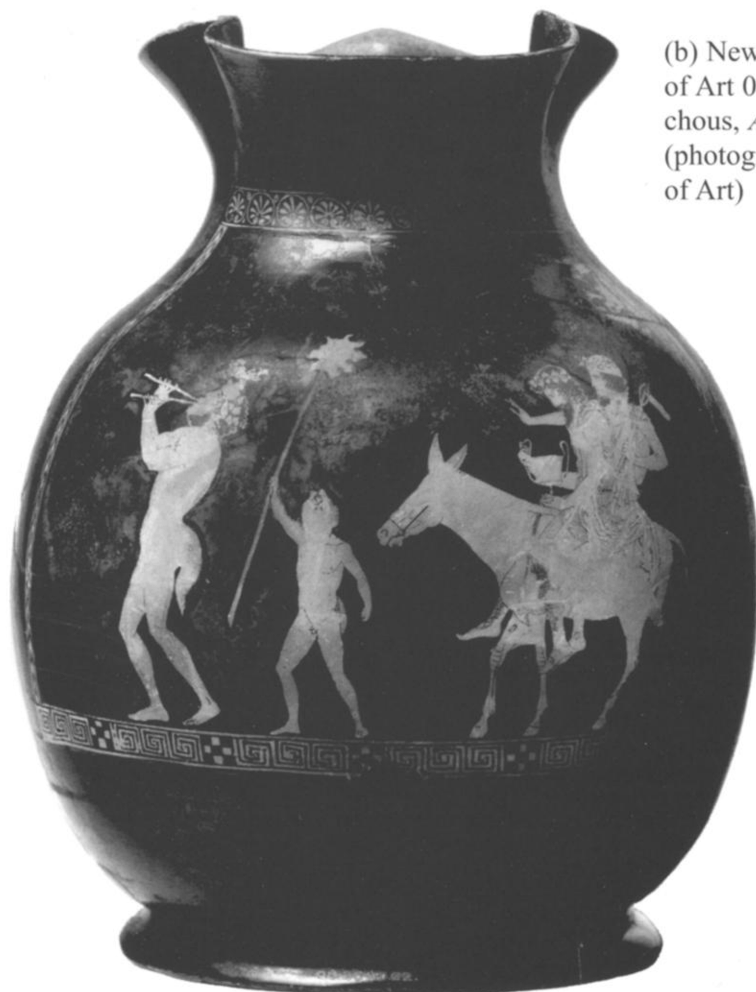
(a & b) Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1920.107, amphora of Panathenaic shape, *ABV* 89.2, Burgon Group (photograph: Ashmolean Museum)

(c) Paris, Musée du Louvre E 876, dinos, *ABV* 90.1, Painter of Louvre E 876 (photograph: Réunion des musées nationaux; Chuzeville)

(a & b) Indianapolis Museum of Art 47.34 (gift of Mr and Mrs Eli Lilly), kalpis, *ARV* 2 579.83, Agrigento Painter
(photograph: Indianapolis Museum of Art)



(a) Athens, National Museum, Acropolis 1281a, skyphos fragments, *ABL* 250.29, Theseus Painter (photograph: Archaeological Receipts Fund (TAP))



(b) New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 08.258.22 (Rogers Fund, 1908), chous, *ARV*[2] 1249.12, Eretria Painter (photograph: Metropolitan Museum of Art)

(a) Florence, Museo archeologico 3897, unattributed
mid sixth-century Attic black-figure cup
(photograph: Soprintendenza archeologica per la Toscana, Firenze)

(b) Brussels, Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire A 723, cup,
*ARV*² 317.15, Proto-Panaetian group
(photograph: Musées Royaux, Brussels)