

A NOTE ON THE WÜRZBURG BELL-CRATER H5697 ("TELEPHUS TRAVESTITUS")

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A FEW YEARS AGO Anneliese Kossatz-Deissmann published a small bell-crater from Apulia (Plate 1), stylistically dated to about 370 B.C., on which is painted one of those scenes which have come to be known as "Phlyax" comedy.¹ She concluded that it depicted a local mythological travesty based on the *Telephus* of Euripides.² She also noted that elements of the travesty were influenced by Aristophanes' parody of the famous hostage scene of

The following works will be cited by author's name and page reference only: C. Bauchhenss-Thürdiedl, *Der Mythos von Telephos in der antiken Bildkunst* (Würzburg 1971, Beiträge zur Archäologie 3); M. Bieber, *History of the Greek and Roman Theater*² (Princeton 1961); A. Kossatz-Deissmann, "Telephus travestitus," *Tainia: Festschrift für Roland Hampe*, eds. H. A. Cahn and E. Simon (Mainz 1980); A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*² (Oxford 1968); T. B. L. Webster, "South Italian Vases and Attic Drama," *CQ* 42 (1948) 15–27. *PhV*² number references are to A. D. Trendall, *Phlyax Vases*² (London 1967, *BICS* Supp. 19). I would like to thank R. E. Fantham, M. B. Wallace, and the anonymous referees for many helpful suggestions, as well as the Martin-von-Wagner-Museum for permission to publish a photograph of the vase.

¹Kossatz-Deissmann 281–290, pl. 60. The vase is in the Martin-von-Wagner Museum of the University of Würzburg no. H5697. Cf. G. Beckel et al., *Werke der Antike im Martin-von-Wagner-Museum der Universität Würzburg* (Mainz 1983). Trendall attributes it to the Schiller painter (*The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia* [Oxford 1978] 65). No context is given for the vase.

²Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles (*Achaion Syllogos*), Agathon?, Iophon, Cleophon, and Moschion all are credited with tragedies which could have dealt with the incidents in Argos leading to the healing of Telephus by Achilles. Parody of the same incidents may have appeared in a satyr play by Sophocles, in a comedy by the Sicilian Deinolochus, and in one by Rhinthon of Taras, as well as in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*. No doubt there were other *Telephus* dramas (cf. Arist. *Poetics* 1453a21). For chronological considerations we can exclude Moschion and Rhinthon as possible direct or indirect sources of the parody on the Würzburg crater. The ascription of the satyric *Telephus* to Sophocles is extremely doubtful (see D. F. Sutton, "A Handlist of Satyr Plays," *HSCP* 78 [1974] 107–143, 138 and J. H. Oliver ap. T. J. Sienkewicz, "Sophocles' Telepheia," *ZPE* 20 [1976] 109–112, 111). Agathon's *Telephus*, thought to be satyric by D. F. Sutton (*The Greek Satyr Play* [Meisenheim am Glan 1980] 75) makes mention of Theseus, but it is difficult to see how he might fit into the cast (*TrGF* 39, F 4). We only know of a hostage incident in the plays by Euripides and Aristophanes, but a similar scene, with Telephus and the infant Orestes together on an altar, probably appeared in Aeschylus' tragedy. The reference to Aeschylus' *Telephus* in the scholion at *Acharnians* 332 as the object of Aristophanes' parody is probably a slip, but an educated one. The most compelling evidence for Aeschylus' use of a suppliant scene with Telephus and Orestes is a red-figure pelike in the British Museum (E 382)—see L. Séchan, *Études sur la tragédie grecque dans ses rapports avec la céramique* (Paris 1926) 127. There was, however, no "hostage" episode. In Aeschylus' drama *Telephus* held Orestes as part of the manner and form of supplication: no threat to the child was intended (C. Pilling, *Quomodo Telephi fabulam et scriptores et artifices veteres tractaverint* [diss., Halle 1886] 19; Séchan, *op. cit.*, 125 ff.). Therefore Kossatz-Deissmann (285) is right to



PLATE 1

Euripides' *Telephus* in the *Thesmophoriazusae* (689 ff.). This raises again the interesting question posed by Webster some 30 years ago in an article, which, though often cited, continues to be read with scepticism.³ Here Webster challenged the received opinion that the comic scenes illustrated by the fourth-century Southern Italian vases represented an independent, native tradition of Doric farce. He argued forcefully for the belief that the "Phlyax" vases illustrated Attic comedy. The Würzburg crater has serious implications for Webster's thesis, which the publication of the vase did not fully explore. In this paper I hope to probe a little further the two questions raised by the existence of the vase: What is the nature of the relationship between the scene depicted on the crater and the hostage scene in the *Thesmophoriazusae*? What does this relationship tell us about the relationship of Phlyax drama and Attic comedy?

insist that the Euripidean *Telephus* would be the object of the travesty depicted on the vase. The most recent full discussion of the *Telephus* tragedies of Aeschylus and Euripides appears in R. Aélion, *Euripide: Héritier d'Eschyle* (Paris 1983) 1.31 ff.

³Webster 15 ff. The ideas expounded in this paper were pursued in a number of later articles; see particularly: "Masks on Gnathia Vases," *JHS* 71 (1951) 222-232; "Greek Comic Costume: Its History and Diffusion," *BRyland's Lib* 36 (1954) 563-588; "Attic Comic Costume: A Re-examination," *ArchEph* 2 (1953-54) 194-201; "Scenic Notes," *WS* 69 (1956) 107-115; "More Dramatic Masks on Gnathia Vases," *AntK* 3 (1960) 30-36.

Dr Kossatz-Deissmann carefully noted the points of contact between the scene on the crater and the scene in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. A male character kneels with one leg on an altar in a pose typical of the iconography found on South Italian pots that depict suppliant scenes; among them are some which depict the hostage scene from Euripides' *Telephus*.⁴ In his right hand he holds a knife with which he threatens to stab a wineskin, evidently disguised as a baby (because it wears little shoes). All these details correspond exactly with the hostage incident in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. Euripides' kinsman seized the "baby" of one of the women (689), fled to an altar (695), and threatened to strike it with a knife (694). When the kinsman, as if to carry out his threat, removes the child's *himation* (730), he discovers that he is holding a wineskin filled with wine and wearing little shoes called *persikai* (734).⁵

To the character's right a woman carrying a large skyphos rushes in the direction of the wineskin. In the *Thesmophoriazusae* the woman who has been bereft of her "child" grabs a sacrificial bowl (*sphageion*) and runs to catch the "blood" of her "baby" (755 f.).

We could therefore enumerate the following points of agreement between the scene from the *Thesmophoriazusae* and the Würzburg crater: 1) the refuge on the altar; 2) the threatened wineskin; 3) the *persikai*; 4) the knife; 5) the woman with a large vessel rushing in the direction of the threatened wineskin.

With so many points of contact between the vase painting and the scene from Aristophanes' play, what is there to prevent an identification of one with the other? Dr Kossatz-Deissmann is able to adduce a single objection to the identification (289 f.):

Da das Weinschlauchmotiv so gut zu Aristophanes passt, wäre man versucht, hier eine unmittelbare Illustration der Thesmophoriazusen anzunehmen. Jedoch spricht allein schon die Königsbinde im Haar des Mannes dafür, dass hier nicht die bei Aristophanes gezeigte Alltagszene, sondern der Mythos gemeint ist.

⁴This pose is examined by J.-M. Moret, *L'Ilioupersis dans la céramique italienne* (Geneva 1975, Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana 14) 101 ff. Moret (134) mentioned the surprising lack of an Apulian example of Telephus in the *position agenouillée*. The Würzburg bell-crater now gives some indirect evidence for the tradition. A catalogue of representations of the hostage incident from the Telephus myth/tragedy and comic travesties thereof appears in Bauchhenss-Thürdiedl 87–91.

⁵K. Erbacher, *Das griechische Schuhwerk* (diss., Würzburg 1914) still appears to be the basic work on ancient shoes—I have not been able to see Otto Lau's *Schuster und Schusterhandwerk in der griechisch-römischen Literatur und Kunst* (diss., Bonn 1967). Erbacher concluded that closed shoes, such as those worn by the wineskin, were not used in Greece until the fifth century and that the impetus for this fashion came from the East (cf. A. Hug, *RE* 2 A, 1 [1921] 741–758, 746, s.v. *Schuh*). The exact shape of the *persikai* cannot be identified. For a recent discussion, see M. Miller, *Perserie: The Arts of the East in Fifth-Century Athens* (diss., Harvard 1985) 269.

No parallels are cited for this "regal headband" and, so far as I know, none appear on the "Phlyax" vases. Yet it alone is said to be inconsistent with the scene in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. But is a regal headband consistent with the myth as it was presented by Euripides? The answer is surely negative. We know enough about the *Telephus* to be certain that Telephus wore rags and disguised himself as a beggar. A regal headband is certainly an impossible addition to this costume. If Euripides' Telephus wore anything on his head it was a felt cap, *pilidion* (Ar. *Ach.* 439). He is shown wearing this felt cap in a number of the representations of the hostage scene.⁶ Webster, on the basis of a corrupt scholion (Tzetzes *ad Nubes* 920a), once suggested that Telephus became Agamemnon's doorkeeper.⁷ Dr Kossatz-Deissmann (290) seems to wish to adopt Webster's suggestion. It is, however, impossible to see how Telephus' becoming a doorkeeper could have contributed in any way to the plot of the *Telephus*. Even so, the objection remains: a regal headband is no more appropriate to a doorkeeper than to a beggar.

The solution to this problem is probably to be found in the *Thesmophoriazusae*. While disguising his relative, Euripides asks Agathon for a *mitra* and a *kekryphalos* (typical female headdress),⁸ but Agathon responds (257 f.):

ἡδὲ μὲν οὖν
κεφαλῇ περίθετος, ἣν ἐγὼ νύκτωρ φορῶ.

⁶In Bauchhenss-Thüriedl's catalogue Telephus wears a felt cap in numbers 51, 54, 60, 66, but other headgear in 52, 53. The scholiast to *Ach.* 439 indicates that, in his day, productions of Euripides' play frequently dispensed with this part of the costume. The mythological/tragic scenes on the Italiot pots often ignore the requirements of the myth and show the Mysian king in more sumptuous costume; but comedy and comic scenes could scarcely afford to pass up this vein of humour. Indeed, the *pilos* is worn by a comic terracotta figurine in Munich which portrays a parody of the hostage scene in the *Telephus* (see Bieber, fig. 178).

⁷T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London 1967) 45. The idea was endorsed by Eric Handley, *The Telephus* (London 1957, *BICS* Supp. 5) 32.

⁸R. Tölle-Kastbein argues convincingly in "Zur Mitra in klassischer Zeit," *RA* (1977) 23 ff., that in the fifth century a *mitra* is a headband about 0.04–0.05 m. in width, used, like a *tainia*, for tying the hair. The examples she gives are of objects not very different from the band worn by the suppliant on the Würzburg bell-crater. In Athens in the later fifth century the *mitra* was definitely associated with female costume as the present passage and such passages as *Bacchae* 833, 929 show (see W. J. Slater, "Artemon and Anacreon: No Text without Context," *Phoenix* 32 [1978] 185–194, 188 ff.). The Romans also seem to have regarded it as feminine or effeminate (see the passages cited by E. Schuppe in *RE* 15 [1932] 2217–2220, 2219 f.). In Ionia (*Thesm.* 163: Ἰωνικῶς goes with both verbs) and the East however it was worn by men. (Eastern male and unisex fashions were often adapted as women's fashions in Classical Athens; e.g., the *kandys*, a garment with non-functional sleeves worn by Iranian men, a relative of the Hungarian szür, came to be an exclusively female fashion in Athens—see Miller, [above, n. 5] 261 ff.) But even in Athens the *mitra* was associated with Dionysian cult (Slater, *op. cit.* 184, n. 16), victors, and poets (Tölle-Kastbein, Abb. 3 and 4, and C. Brown, "From Rags to Riches: Anacreon's Artemon," *Phoenix* 37 [1983] 1–15, 12, n. 60, and n. 63). A contemporary Apulian

"Take this —, rather, which I wear during the night." The meaning of κεφαλή περίθετος is disputed, as is, indeed, the text at this point.⁹ LSJ call it "a mask with wig attached;" this is an unlikely meaning.¹⁰ LSJ rely on the explanation of the scholiast and Suidas who seem to have used their imagination to find a plausible meaning for "put-round head." If the relative really puts on a new mask, what was the point of tonsuring the old one? Why is no mention made of the female mask when he is exposed by the women later in the play? Pollux (2.35) and Eustathius (*ad Il.* 22.470) are more credible: the former calls it an "adornment for women," the latter thinks it some kind of headdress: εἴτε κρήδεμνον αὐτή, εἴτε ἄμπυξ, εἴτε κεκρύφαλος, εἴτε ὁμοῦ πάντα ταῦτα μετὰ τῆς ἀναδέσμης. The *perithetos* must be a rough equivalent to the headgear requested; hence, some sort of headband.¹¹ Its resemblance to the *mitra* was close enough that the relative is able to describe himself as (940): ἐν κροκωτοῖς καὶ μίτραις. I will argue below that this is just a general way of saying "in female costume" (hence the plural) and though it is difficult to extract any specific information regarding the relative's appearance from this line, the general implication that the relative wears a female headdress of some sort is clear.

There are, then, at least six points of contact between the vase and *Thesmophoriazusae* 689 ff. if we add the feminine headband to our list, and the one major objection to an identification of the scene with the *Thesmophoriazusae* has proven illusory. There is not only no obstacle, but every reason to say that the Würzburg vase illustrates Aristophanes' play. Let us see if the other details of the vase in any way support or are consistent with the claim.

The garment worn by the suppliant on the vase does not disagree with the details of Aristophanes' play. It is considerably longer than the short *chitones* usually worn by "Phlyakes" but somewhat shorter than normal female garb. At *Thesmophoriazusae* 214 the relative removes his *himation* to don a *chiton* (*krokotos*) and a *himation* borrowed from Agathon (250–253).

Phlyax vase (PhV² 62) shows a woman wearing a headband comparable to that on the Würzburg bell-crater.

⁹The Ravenna manuscript writes κεφαλῇ which suggests κεφαλῇ (which is printed by the Juntine edition of the play). If this is right the object is simply something which encircles the head. The Oxford text and Coulon print κεφαλῇ. This is supported by Pollux, Suidas, and the scholiast.

¹⁰Cf. Van Leeuwen *ad loc.*: Personam comatam, quam voci tribui vim sinit lingua, significari non credo; nam glabrae faciei, quae tot modo iocos dedit, si novam nunc personam superinduci fingeret comicus, sua caederet vineta: inutilis sic fieret Euripidis sollertia, inutilis patientia sodalis. Neque vero *nudum* intellegendum est *capillamentum*; quae πρόσθετος κόμη vel πηνήκη dici solebat.

¹¹So B. B. Rogers, *ad loc.*, thinks it is a hood. H. Van Daele, *Aristophane*⁴ (Paris 1967) 29, translates "tour de tête."

In addition the text indicates the use of a *strophion* (255) and an *enkyklon* (261). When the relative is discovered by the women the *strophion* is stripped off him (640) and the *enkyklon* may be removed in the same scene to reveal that the relative has no breasts. The obscene burlesque that follows (643–648) may have been played by alternately raising front and back of the relative's *krokotos*. The relative is still wearing female garb during the parody of the *Helen* (851) and, indeed, lines 939–940 show that the relative remained clothed in Agathon's *krokotos* until the end of the play unless line 940 (cited above) is rhetorical exaggeration. The relative is not literally in "saffron robes and mitras:" we have seen above that Agathon gives him a headdress which is not technically a *mitra*. He is in any case not naked and on the whole the retention of the *krokotos* seems likely. We have no real indication of what this garment looked like. That it had an effeminate look is clear from its general function in the drama. Elsewhere it is said to be the garment of women and effeminate men. For the purposes of the *Thesmophoriazusae* it is only necessary that the robe be long enough to conceal the actor's *phallos*. A garment of that length is unusual for male characters on the South Italian vases. The three-quarter length of the garment on the actor of the Würzburg crater probably reflects an attempt by the artist to depict a *chiton* which was sexually ambiguous (or at least non-committal).¹²

Another odd feature of the vase is the mirror hanging above the actors. Dr Kossatz-Deissmann concludes that this is a bit of local colour to show that the scene is taking place in a sanctuary and notes that many hand mirrors have been found as dedications to such female deities as Hera and Artemis. Two immediate objections to this conclusion are: first, that the normal decor for altars and sanctuaries on the South Italian vases are wreaths and *boukrania*; secondly, that floating mirrors are a very common decorative motif on both Attic and South Italian vases of this period for scenes (especially domestic) involving women. Dr Kossatz-Deissmann is unable to cite any parallel for the use of mirrors in relation to altars in vase painting. Moreover, she runs into trouble when she tries to explain how dedications normally associated with female deities might appear beside the altar used in the supplication scene of the *Telephus* which, she believes, must have taken place in a sanctuary of Apollo.¹³ Her explanation is unconvincing (284, n. 14):

Vielleicht wurde hier Apollon gemeinsam mit seiner Schwester Artemis verehrt und der Spiegel ist als Weihgeschenk an Artemis aufzufassen. Es konnte sich aber auch

¹²The length of this garment is comparable with the three-quarter length garment worn by the tragic actor in the Würzburg fragment, Martin-von-Wagner Museum H 4600. I thank Erika Simon for this information.

¹³She refers to Bauchhenss-Thürleidl 31 f. P. Rau, *Paratragodia* (Munich 1967, *Zetemata* 45) 25 and Aélion (above, n. 2) 1.37 f., rightly argue against Webster (above, n. 7), Handley and Rea (above, n. 7, 37), and H. Strohm, *Gnomon* (1960) 605 (cf. J. P. Gould, "Hiketia," *JHS* 93

um eine Persiflage der Phlyaken handeln, dass man im heiligen Bezirk des Apollon ein Weihgeschenk aufhängt, das sonst in der Regel weiblichen Gottheiten zukommt.

One must consider the possibility that the mirror is just a decorative filler with no specific relevance to the stage set. Such is the case with the masks one frequently sees floating above the stage on "Phlyax" vases. But even here one might suppose that the motifs have some general reference to the illustrated dramatic scenes. Perhaps the masks are those of important characters in the drama not presently on stage. In the case of mirrors on both Attic and South Italian vases the relationship between the decorative motif and the illustration is clear. Mirrors symbolize a feminine ambiance.¹⁴ There is no reason to think that the mirror on the Würzburg crater relates any differently to the illustration: the feminine ambiance is surely that of the Thesmophoria.

Yet even if one prefers to see a more specific relationship between the

[1973] 74–103, 101 ff.), that the hostage scene took place on stage and was not merely reported by a messenger. It must have taken place in the same setting as the gathering of the Achaean chieftains, probably the interior of Agamemnon's palace. It is clear from *PMediol.* 1 and from the testimonia that the opening of the *Telephus* is set outside the Argive palace. A gatekeeper scene probably followed the opening monologue. Telephus, perhaps with the aid of Clytemnestra, was permitted to enter the palace. The scene could then have shifted to the interior of the palace through the simple expedient of bringing on the chorus of Argive chieftains—a simple allusion to the new scene would have been sufficient (cf. O. Taplin on scene changes in early tragedy, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* [Oxford 1977] 103–107). Moret (above, n. 4, 178 f.) gives good reasons for suspecting that the sanctuary setting of the scene on the Berlin crater 3974 is due to contamination from the iconography of Orestes at Delphi, and may in any case be mere embellishment on the part of the painter (*pace* H. Metzger, "Apollon 'lycien' et Télèphe," in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à Charles Picard* [Paris 1949] 2.746 ff.) Moret (above, n. 4, 25) found the same intrusive outdoor motifs in the decorative filler of vases depicting the rape of Cassandra, inside the *cella* of the temple of Athena. For the altar as a permanent stage-fixture, see C. W. Dearden, *The Stage of Aristophanes* (London 1976) 46 ff. or P. Arnott, *Greek Scenic Conventions* (Oxford 1962) 46 ff., who, however, overstates the case. I do not believe Dearden's claim that it was located on the *ekkyklema* (61) because of the use of the altar in the Agathon scene which I discuss below.

¹⁴E.g., an early Apulian hydria (Oxford 1974.345 = *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia* [above, n. 1] 1/14) shows a mirror floating above women winding wool, presumably in the *gynaieion*. A good example of a floating mirror that clearly has no narrative function but to emphasize femininity is that hanging above the bound Andromeda on an *oenochoe* in Bari (no. 1016 = L. Séchan [above, n. 2] 262 fig. 82 = *LIMC* Andromeda 16). For the connection of the mirror with femininity, cf. H. R. W. Smith, *Funerary Symbolism in Apulian Vase-Painting* (Berkeley 1976) 24: "... if one were compiling a key to Italiote chattel-symbolism this would be put at its very beginning—that a mirror is the most proper and sufficient sign of a nubile girl." Smith interprets the mirror as a special funerary symbol of fulfilment in the afterlife. While it is true that the floating mirror is commonly found on scenes of courtship and wedding preparation, I cannot see that its use is strictly limited to scenes involving maidens. It is in any case quite difficult to see any "eschatogamous" significance in the mirror of the Würzburg bell-crater. For examples of floating mirrors in the *gynaieion* in Attic pottery: London BM E773 (ARV² 805, 89), E774 (ARV² 1250, 32); hetaira scenes: New York MMA 12.231.1 (ARV² 468, 146).

mirror and the illustration, an easier explanation can be found than the one proposed by Dr Kossatz-Deissmann. A mirror is used in an earlier scene of the *Thesmophoriazusae*. Moreover, it appears in the play in the vicinity of the same altar which first serves as a place for sacrifice just outside Agathon's house and then, in a later scene, as the altar of the hostage-taking and suppliant episode.

In the opening scene of the play Euripides and a relative cross the stage¹⁵ and stop somewhere just outside of Agathon's house. Agathon's slave emerges carrying fire and myrtle branches "apparently intending to make sacrifice for the success of his poetry" (38). The servant walks towards the altar (and in the direction of Euripides and his kinsman) spouting lyrics appropriate for sacrifice (39 ff.). Agathon follows suit shortly afterwards on the *ekkyklema*. The altar is probably the centerpiece of the scene that follows. When Agathon refuses to accede to Euripides' request to defend him before the women of Athens, the kinsman offers to be Euripides' advocate. For this purpose he requires female disguise, which is borrowed from Agathon. In addition, to make his disguise more convincing, the kinsman's body hair is shaven and singed. For the singeing operation a torch or lamp is brought from within the house (237). The kinsman is asked first to sit while he is being shaved (221), then to bend over while his pubic hair is singed (236).¹⁶ It is not unlikely that he first sits on the altar, then holds onto it as he bends over, and indeed this would add some point to the *double entendre* at line 237: οἶμοι κακοδαίμων δελφάκιον γενήσομαι. The *delphakion* at once refers to a sacrificial pig (the kinsman is being burnt at the altar)¹⁷ and to female genitalia (Athenian women apparently used lamps to burn away their pubic hair).¹⁸

Significantly, in the midst of these operations Euripides produces a mirror from nearby so that the kinsman can admire his handiwork (233–235). The mirror may have been brought in by Agathon when he entered on the *ekkyklema* (perhaps implied by 140) or it is just possible that it could have been hung somewhere on the *skene* wall. Is it this prop which we see suspended on the Würzburg crater? Certainly the same altar is used by the kinsman for his hostage-taking. He sacrifices at this altar as Euripides leaves

¹⁵I use the term loosely to mean the area between the wall of the *skene* building and the orchestra, without necessary reference to other structures. The reconstruction of the action of the *Thesmophoriazusae* is as I imagine its performance in the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens.

¹⁶Line 224 may imply that the relative first moved to the altar after the shaving had begun (cf. Dearden [above, n. 13] 61) but I believe that the reference to the sanctuary of the Eumenides implies a movement in the direction of the wings.

¹⁷The scholiast points out that it was customary to remove the bristles of sacrificed pigs by singeing.

¹⁸Cf. Ar. *Lys.* 827, *Th.* 590, *Ec.* 12 f.; *Pl. Com.* fr.174, 15 K. and the Attic cup in the Manner of Onesimos (*ARV*² 331, 20).

and the chorus of women enter the theatre (279 ff.).¹⁹ The mirror on the Würzburg vase is conceivably a stage prop which hangs on the *skene* wall for convenience and is removed when needed for the action. Such a prop may be represented by a contemporary Apulian bell-crater in Milan (PhV² 45), where a jug hangs from a hook on the *skene* wall. The *oinochoe* has an obvious general relevance to the feast being prepared, but no apparent immediate connection with the action, except perhaps to give atmosphere to a festive or sympotic setting.

A third minor detail of the vase is consistent with the hypothesis that it depicts the *Thesmophoriazusae*. Although the character on the altar is clearly intended to be male, he is clean-shaven. This presents no great difficulty in itself, because the South Italian vases often portray beardless male comic characters. But it does not suit Telephus' disguise as an unkempt beggar. Furthermore the beardlessness of the character on the Würzburg crater stands in stark contrast to the iconographic tradition of the suppliant Telephus.²⁰ The clean-shaven appearance of the character on the Apulian bell-crater is apparently part of his female disguise. A close look at the detail of the actor's face will reveal a number of splotches around the mouth representing razor-stubble. This could be an allusion to the shaving scene earlier in the play.

In all there are six substantial points of contact between the Würzburg crater and Aristophanes' play and three further details of the illustration that are at least fully consistent with the view that the vase depicts *Thesmophoriazusae* 689 ff. There is no good reason to assign the illustration to an unknown farce and every reason to believe that we have a vase painting depicting the *Thesmophoriazusae*.

What, then, can this discovery tell us about the relationship of the South Italian vase paintings and Attic drama?

Though the question whether the Italiot vases could be used as evidence for Attic comedy has been hotly debated since the middle of the last century, the modern debate is usually thought to begin with Körte.²¹ He concluded that the vases were good evidence for Attic comedy, but supposed the source of the Attic influence to be New Comedy (earlier comedy was "unexportable"). The next real contribution to the debate was made by Trendall. Previously Heydemann had dated the "Phlyax" vases after 300 B.C. and

¹⁹The scene change may have been effected by the stage machinery. See the *παρεπιγραφή* after line 276. Cf. Dearden (above, n. 13) 52.

²⁰The Telephus of Graz 8641/2 is an exception, probably owing to contamination from the iconography of Orestes at Delphi—see Moret (above, n. 4) 110. The bearded Telephus appears even in comedy. The terracotta figurine in Munich (above, n. 6) sports a beard as well as a *pilidion*. But a bald and beardless comic Telephus-impersonator appears on a relief vase in Naples (see below, n. 34).

²¹A. Körte, "Archäologische Studien zur alten Komödie," *JdI* 8 (1893) 61–93.

believed them to be contemporary with the *hilarotragoidia* of Rhinthon (after 300 B.C.), hence the name "Phlyakes."²² When Trendall produced the first accurate stylistic dating of the Phlyax vases, setting the earliest around 400 B.C., the latest ca 320 B.C., any reason for connecting the vases with Rhinthon or New Comedy evaporated.²³ In 1948 Webster took the position that the "Phlyax" vases probably represented scenes from Attic drama. He associated the vases with Middle Comedy and pointed to thematic connections between the illustrations and the literary fragments.²⁴ Pickard-Cambridge and Beare were the dominant voices in the reaction to Webster's position. Pickard-Cambridge dissociated the "Phlyakes" from Attic comedy entirely and supposed some sort of parallel between them and contemporary Attic mime (?). One cannot help but feel that his real reason for dismissing the vases was an inability to reconcile his great love for Greek drama with the revulsion he felt for the details of production revealed by the vases "in their full hideousness and disgustingness."²⁵ Beare took a more extreme position, doubting whether the vases depicted stage performances at all: "these seem to me more like fanciful treatment of myth than copies of actual scenes in plays."²⁶ Since Webster, scholars have hedged their bets, acknowledging Attic "influence," but resuscitating the theory that the vases illustrate an independent Doric farce.²⁷

The arguments for a close association between Attic comedy and the "Phlyax" vases are the following:

²²H. Heydemann, "Die Phlyakendarstellungen auf bemalten Vasen," *JdI* 1 (1886) 260–313. The connection between Rhinthon and a kind of comedy called "phlyax" written and performed by "phlyakes" is attested by *AP* 7.414; *St. Byz.* 603; *Suidas* "Rhinthon;" and that between "phlyakes" and various forms of Doric comic entertainments by *Ath.* 14.621f.

²³A. D. Trendall, *Paestan Pottery* (Rome 1936).

²⁴Webster 19; Körte (above, n. 21) 62; Körte was supported by A. W. Pickard-Cambridge in the first edition of *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy* (Oxford 1927) 268.

²⁵A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, "South Italian Vases and Attic Drama," *CQ* 43 (1949) 57, and *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*¹ (Oxford 1953) 235 ff. The editors of the second edition judiciously withdrew his objections. Webster dealt with the mime theory in *ArchEph* (above, n. 3) 192 ff.

²⁶W. Beare, "The Costume of the Actors in Aristophanic Comedy," *CQ* NS 4 (1954) 64–75, 69. The debate between Webster and Beare continued in *CQ* NS 5 (1955) 94 f.; 7 (1957) 184 f.; 9 (1959) 126 f.

²⁷Bieber (129) speaks of the "Phlyakes" as pre-literary *hilarotragoedia* of native Italian inspiration but influenced by "wandering motifs" from the Greek mainland. E. Simon, *The Ancient Theatre* (London and New York 1982) 30 f., speaks of the continuation of the traditions of Doric farce, and points to the Würzburg bell-krauter as evidence of an equal influence from Attic tragedy and comedy. H.-D. Blume, *Einführung in das antike Theaterwesen* (Darmstadt 1978) 111, writes "Eine direkte Abhängigkeit [between Phlyakes and Old Comedy] erscheint angesichts der unterschiedlichen dramatischen Stoffe als unwahrscheinlich; wo sich motivische Parallelen ergeben, deuten diese auf die Euripideische Tragödie und die Mittlere bzw. Neue Komödie. So bleibt die gemeinsame Herkunft von einer wie immer gearteten dorischen Farce des Mutterlandes glaubhaft."

1. They are contemporary with Middle Comedy and die out soon after the beginning of New Comedy.
2. Paratragedy and mythological travesty are the themes of the illustrations and are thus in conformity with the impression we get of Middle Comedy from the fragments, titles, and testimonia.
3. The "Phlyax" vases are contemporary with South Italian vases which clearly show the influence of Attic satyr play and tragedy, especially Euripides.
4. An inscription on an Apulian calyx-crater gives snatches of dialogue in Attic dialect.²⁸ Other identifications of characters give Ionic not Doric forms of names, e.g., Φιλοτιμίδης. "Xanthias," a stock name for slaves in Attic comedy, appears on the same vase.²⁹ Known Athenian personalities like Phrynis and Pyronides (viz. "Myronides," Eup. *Demoi*) may also be identified.³⁰
5. The subjects of two Attic polychrome *oinochoai* are reproduced by two of the Phlyax vases.³¹
6. Attic terracottas of comic actors are similarly reproduced (Webster 20).
7. The costumes and masks are indistinguishable from what we know of Attic costumes and masks.³²
8. The "rustic stage" on the "Phlyax" vases is found on an Athenian *chous* from Anavyssos (ca 420 B.C.).³³
9. We know of no Sicilian comedy between Deinolochus, son of Epicharmus, and Rhinthon. Rhinthon is, moreover, described by our ancient sources as the first author of Phlyax plays.
10. It is believed that many Athenian potters emigrated to South Italy at the time of the foundation of Thurii, and during and after the Peloponnesian War. In any case the direct influence of specific Attic imports (such as the Pronomos crater) upon contemporary Italiot potters and painters can be documented.³⁴

These arguments suggest that the South Italian vase painters were either 1) directly influenced by Attic comedy or 2) influenced by an artistic medium

²⁸*PhV*² 84 (New York, MMA 24.97.104) = Bieber, fig. 512.

²⁹*PhV*² 45 = Bieber, fig. 509.

³⁰*PhV*² 58. See Trendall and Webster, *Illustrations of Greek Drama* (London 1971) ch. 4, 31 and Pickard-Cambridge 217.

³¹The subject of *PhV*² 12 is copied by *PhV*² 34, that of *PhV*² 9 is copied by *PhV*² 144. The Attic vases are illustrated by Pickard-Cambridge, figs. 84 and 87 and p. 216; the South Italian vases are illustrated by Bieber, figs. 496 and 511.

³²Webster (above, n. 3) *passim* and Pickard-Cambridge 217.

³³*ARV*² 1215, 1 (*PhV*² 1). See Webster, *ArchEph* (above, n. 3) 194 f.

³⁴On immigration: e.g., A. D. Trendall, *Frühitaliotische Vasen* (Leipzig 1938) 8, *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily* (Oxford 1967) 5 f., and *Early South Italian Vase-Painting* (Mainz 1974) 22 f.; R. M. Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*² (London 1972) 191. On the influence of the Pronomos vase: Trendall (above, n. 1) liii.

itself directly influenced by Attic comedy, or 3) drew their subjects from comedy which was heavily influenced by Attic comedy.

The new evidence of the Würzburg crater favours hypothesis 1) or 2) over hypothesis 3). The vase's agreement with the text of *Thesmophoriazusae* 689 ff. on so many points proves that Attic comedy was the South Italian painter's ultimate source. We are not dealing with a local comedy which included a small excerpt from the *Thesmophoriazusae* in the midst of a general mythological parody of the Telephus story; the details of the scene (the clean-shaven figure on the altar in female disguise and the substitution of the bibulous woman with a *sphageion* for the armed Agamemnon) presuppose too much of the plot of the *Thesmophoriazusae*.

To date, the Würzburg crater is the strongest confirmation of Webster's argument that the Italian paintings might depict Attic comedy, and Old Comedy at that.³⁵ No previous South Italian vase considered a candidate for the illustration of an Attic comedy has shown any really convincing correspondence with the text.³⁶ True, the Würzburg vase cannot be used to characterize the Phlyax group as a whole. It is but a single instance in which Webster's thesis holds good. At least there are reasons (stated above) why Attic comedy seems a likely subject for these illustrations. For an independent contemporary theatre in South Italy there is not a shred of evidence.

³⁵There is no reason why the Italiot Greeks would not fully appreciate the *Thesmophoriazusae*. The tragic/mythological vase paintings certainly show the requisite familiarity with Euripides. The play has little of purely parochial interest. In general, Webster (19) is quite right about the unfairness of taking Aristophanes' political plays as a universal model for the character of Old Comedy. Though this cannot be argued in detail here, the example of one of Aristophanes' contemporaries may suffice. Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros* and *Odysses* had purely mythological plots (like Epicharmus). Platonius (*diff. com. Prolegomena de comoedia* 1.1A, ed. J. W. Koster [Groningen 1975] 4 f., 29 ff., 47 ff.) tells us that the latter play had no parabasis and no choral lyrics, and ridiculed no one but was simply a spoof on Homer's *Odyssey*. The *Wineflask* was a domestic/literary drama. Aristophanes stood out, and survived, precisely because he represented the most distinctive side of Old Comedy.

³⁶E.g., Trendall and Webster (above, n. 30) ch. 4, no. 21; no. 24; no. 27; no. 32; no. 35. For an account, on the whole, sympathetic to these identifications, see M. Gigante, *Rintone e il teatro in Magna Grecia* (Naples 1971) 37 ff. It is interesting to note the existence of a relief ceramic (Naples 368) with a scene that clearly shows a comic version of the hostage episode in the *Telephus* and has been plausibly identified with Aristophanes' parody of this scene at *Acharnians* 325 ff., though the details of costume, in particular the *piledion* Dicaeopolis borrowed from Euripides, are missing: see Pilling (above, n. 2) 96.

Fewer Attic vases have been directly ascribed to known comedies. Far the best case for Athenian illustrations of a surviving Old Comedy is the recent discussion by J. R. Green of an Attic vase of the late fifth century B.C. in the Getty Museum (82.AE.83) in *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum* 2 (Malibu, Calif. 1985) 95–118. Green argues that the vase, which shows a flute-player and two *choreutae* dressed in bird costumes with *phalloi*, is an illustration of the *Birds* of Aristophanes.

Just how Attic comedy influenced the Italiot pot painters is another matter. As a general theory, we can discount direct inspiration from the text. Pot painters were simple tradesmen with little or no literary culture.³⁷ It is safe to say that in most cases the painters' sources are images, not text. By what media could these images be transmitted? Book illustration, easel paintings of comic performances, imported Attic pottery, and, of course, the performance of Attic comedy, have all been proposed as models for Italiot pot painters. Evidence is lacking for all of these suggested sources: the existence of illustrated books in Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. is highly improbable;³⁸ there is no evidence for *pinakes* of comic subjects in South Italy, or of local dramatic competitions which could have occasioned the production of votive paintings with dramatic subjects;³⁹ very few surviving Attic vases are comparable with the Italiot comic vases.⁴⁰ The only medium of comic illustration for which there is plentiful evidence is the terracotta figurine. Athenian coroplasts began to produce comic figurines at least as early as the earliest "Phlyax" vases; the terracottas were exported to South Italy and Sicily;⁴¹ moreover there is some evidence that they originally came in sets which, when composed, formed a tableau of a comic scene.⁴² Could the Italiot painters have used these terracottas as models?

Perhaps the most likely route by which visual images of Attic drama came to Southern Italy was dramatic performance by local or travelling troupes of actors.⁴³ Certainly, not every scene on a *Phlyax* vase was drawn from a

³⁷Cf. Séchan (above, n. 2) 574. A good example of this lack of literary culture is the treatment of Odysseus' branches in the Nausikaa vases: see F. Hauser, "Nausikaa: Pyxis im Fine-Arts-Museum zu Boston," *ÖJh* 8 (1905) 18–41, at 27. If Athenian potters in the age of Pericles were insufficiently familiar with Homer, then it is reasonable to suppose, *a fortiori*, that this was true of Italiot potters and dramatic texts.

³⁸Despite P. Mingazzini, "Pitture vascolari e frontespizi di drammi teatrali," *RPAA* 38 (1965/6) 69–77 and A. Bertino, "Sulla fonte di ispirazione delle scene di soggetto teatrale sui vasi a figure rosse del IV secolo a.c.," in *Archaeologica: Scritti in onore di A. N. Modona*, ed. N. Caffarelli (Florence 1975) 17–28. See K. Weitzmann, *Illustration in Roll and Codex*² (Princeton 1970) 225 ff.

³⁹As supposed by C. Watzinger, *Studien zur unteritalischen Vasenmalerei* (diss., Darmstadt 1899) 42 ff. See, Séchan (above, n. 2) 570 f.

⁴⁰Cf. Webster, *BRyland's Lib* (above, n. 3) 568. The vases published by M. Crosby in "Five Comic Scenes from Athens," *Hesperia* 24 (1955) 75–84, 76, and *PhV*² 3 do not alter this assessment.

⁴¹Webster, *BRyland's Lib* (above, n. 3) 566.

⁴²See J. R. Green, "Drunk Again: A Study in the Iconography of the Comic Theater," *AJA* 89 (1985) 465–472, at 469.

⁴³For travelling actors in this period, see K. Schneider, "Hypokrites: IX. Theatervorstellungen ausserhalb der Stadt Athen," *RE Suppl.* 8 (1956) 227 ff. and Pickard-Cambridge 279 ff. Gigante (above, n. 36, 99–103) surveys the question of the restaging of Attic tragedy in Magna Graecia.

painter's memory of a day in the theatre, but local performance may have been the ultimate source of some.⁴⁴

However the painters received knowledge of Attic drama, the subjects of their illustrations certainly reflect Southern Italy's fascination with Athenian drama in the late fifth and early to mid-fourth century B.C. "Attic comedy" became part of the common heritage of men like Alexis of Thurii, the Syracusan Philemon, and the many other non-Athenians who soon became its masters. The Würzburg crater, properly interpreted, can shed a little light on this process.

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⁴⁴To be sure, Italiot illustrations of tragedy frequently show scenes that never appeared on the Attic tragic stage (e.g., Louvre K 300—Medea slaying her children, or the calyx-crater by Asteas in Madrid showing Heracles slaying his children, both inspired by reported narratives in Euripides). It is quite likely that the phlyakographs also enjoyed considerable freedom in rendering comic scenes or even, at times, improvised upon their own repertoire without any direct inspiration from the theatre. Indeed, Moret's study (above, n. 4) shows that this happened in several instances.

Postscript to Csapo: *Würzburg Bell Crater*

POSTSCRIPT

This article was written in early 1985, but, owing to long delays related to technological improvements to *Phoenix*' production, did not appear in proofs until early 1988, shortly before the appearance of Oliver Taplin's "Phallology, *Phlyakes*, Iconography and Aristophanes," *PCPS* 213 (1987) 92–104. Taplin examines both the Würzburg bell-crater and the Attic calyx-crater published by J. R. Green (above, n. 36). I am delighted to find that Taplin's arguments and conclusions relating to the bell-crater are nearly identical to my own (though more condensed, as his article is a preliminary publication of a paper given in Syracuse, to be published more fully in *Dioniso*). Taplin makes an interesting reference to "iconographic parody" in the Würzburg bell-crater: fleeing women are a standard feature of the "tragic" vase paintings, the woman rushing towards the "relative" on the "Phlyax" version is an interesting reversal of this iconographic schema. At present, I am engaged in an investigation of the background and function of the fleeing woman on the "tragic" pots depicting the suppliant Telephus.