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KLEITIAS, STESICHOROS, AND THE JAR OF DIONYSOS

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What relation is there between the François Vase, painted by Kleitias around 570 B.C., and Stesichoros? If the question is posed in broad enough terms, the answer will not be "None." Painter and poet did not operate within mutually alien cultural environments, and they deployed a common mythological inheritance. But is there any direct relation? Some have thought there is. In a rightly influential article, Andrew Stewart has suggested that the depiction of the gods' arrival at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis on the vase's main frieze, as well as two apparently earlier paintings of the same scene by his older contemporary Sophilos, may have been inspired by a performance of a Stesichorean poem on the wedding.[1] This suggestion is combined with a sophisticated and (at least to me) highly illuminating overall interpretation of the pictures on the vase.[2] Since I do not believe that the suggestion with regard to Stesichoros will hold water, I think it is important to distinguish Stewart's reading of the vase as a whole from the question of Stesichorean influence, for his integrated interpretation is in fact scarcely touched by the collapse of the Stesichorean hypothesis from which he hangs it.

The focal point of the discussion—as indeed of the painting, it is hardly too much to say—is the large amphora that Dionysos carries on his shoulder.[3] This amphora is taken to be the one which, according to both Homer and Stesichoros, was presented by Dionysos to Thetis. It is as well to bear in mind that this mythological jar is not an object with independent existence in the external world, but something more like Harmonia's necklace, or Oedipus' wife; too often it is treated as if it had a potentially verifiable history, fragmentarily recoverable from its literary manifestations. The identification of the jar on the vase with the Homeric jar is hermeneutically problematic, and will be touched on in the latter part of this paper. But the case for Stesichorean influence falls to the ground regardless.

[1] A. Stewart, "Stesichoros and the François Vase," in *Ancient Greek Art and Iconography*, ed. Warren G. Moon (Madison, Wisc. 1983) 53–74 (hereafter "Stewart"); cf. L.A. Milani, *Il Reale Museo Archeologico di Firenze* (Florence 1912) 148: "i suoi soggetti sembrano desunti da un epitalamio...riferibile forse a Stesicoro." No such poem by Stesichoros is otherwise known, but our evidence is still sufficiently lacunose not to exclude the possibility.

[2] In the wake of M. Robertson, *A History of Greek Art* (Cambridge 1975) 126. For a counter-reaction see now H. A. Shapiro, *CA* 9 (1990) 140–42.

[3] Cf. Stewart 55 for Dionysos' focal position. What grabs the attention is his full-frontal face and striking stance, together with the amphora's protrusion into the frieze-divider, symbolically breaking through the prescribed limits of containment.

1. Homer and the jar

It all started with Homer. The Homeric data concerning the jar are to be found all in a single cluster in the second Nekuia—Agamemnon's posthumous account of Achilleus' funeral in *Odyssey* 24. After Achilleus' cremation his white bones were collected; the account proceeds:

δῶκε δὲ μήτηρ
χρύσεον ἀμφιφορῆα· Διωνύσοιο δὲ δῶρον
φάσκ' ἔμεναι, ἔργον δὲ περικλυτοῦ 'Ηφαίστοιο.
ἐν τῷ τοι κεῖται λεύκ' ὀστέα φαίδιμ' 'Αχιλλεῦ,
μίγδα δὲ Πατρόκλοιο Μενοιτιάδαο θανόντος, κτλ. (73–77)

"Your mother gave
a golden jar; the gift of Dionysos
she said it was, the work of famous Hephaistos.
In that your white bones lie, shining Achilleus,
and mixed with them, of dead Patroklos son of Menoitios..."

The *Iliad* has a sort of companion-piece to this passage in Patroklos' posthumous request for the commingling of his bones with those of Achilleus (*Il.* 23.82ff., Achilleus again the addressee):

μὴ ἐμὰ cῶν ἀπάνευθε τιθήμεναι ὀστέ' 'Αχιλλεῦ,
ἀλλ' ὁμοῦ, ὡς τράφομέν περ ἐν ὑμετέροισι δόμοισι...
ὣς δὲ καὶ ὀστέα νῶιν ὁμὴ cορὸς ἀμφικαλύπτοι
[χρύσεος ἀμφιφορεύς, τόν τοι πόρε πότνια μήτηρ].
(83–84, 91–92)

"Don't put *my* bones apart from *yours*, Achilleus,
but in one and the same place, just as we were brought up in your family home, ...
so let one and the same coffin enclose our bones too
[—the golden jar that your lady mother gave you]."

The last line, effecting the identification of the cορός with the amphora of *Od.* 24, was evidently interpolated in order to bring the two passages into closer alignment; in the original Homeric form of the *Iliad* passage the amphora has no place.[4] What is common to both passages is the idea of Achilleus' and

[4] This needs to be expressly stated, for discussions of the amphora generally fail to realise that the verse is an interpolation, and that the jar's only Homeric occurrence—provided we define *Od.* 24 as Homeric—is in *Od.* 24. (In Lattimore's translation, depended on by Stewart, *Il.* 23.92 is embedded within verse 91 and its interpolated character occluded: "Therefore, let one single vessel, the golden two-handled amphora / that your mother gave you, hold both our ashes".) The evidence against the verse is overwhelming, comprising (i) its absence from the earliest extant manuscript, 3rd cent. B.C.; (ii) a scholiastic report that (at best) it was unevenly attested; (iii) the fact that Aeschines' quotation of the passage stops short at 91, but adds an equivalent verse earlier, 83b (showing both that the equation had been made by the 4th cent. and that the text here was still fluid); (iv) Aristarchos' recognition that the verse was interpolated from *Od.* 24; & (v) internal objection taken to the verse in antiquity on grounds of inconsistency between cορός and ἀμφορεύς. See S. West, *Ptolemaic Papyri* (Cologne 1967) 171; G. M. Bolling, *External Evidence* (Oxford 1925) 197–8; M. J. Apthorp,

Patroklos' joint occupancy.[5] The golden amphora itself gives the distinct impression of being an autoschediasma on the part of the poet of *Od.* 24, an elaboration of the traditional motif of the shared copóc, just as the Iliad passage may be seen as informing the Odyssey passage as a whole.[6] Be that as it may, the capsule history with which the jar is invested would be within the reach of any bard: the gift of Dionysos, the work of Hephaistos: the thing practically writes itself.[7] And whether or not the jar actually originated in this passage, it had no subsequent existence independent of it.

From a modern perspective we might regard the brief cascade of facts about the jar at *Od.* 24.74–5 as the rather mechanical provision of circumstantial detail, chronologically prior, genetically posterior. But in antiquity it gave automatic rise to questions of a quasi-historical nature. The gift was made by Hephaistos (who had also made Thetis' earlier gift to Achilleus, his new set of armor, and for that matter the previous set, lost to Hector) and was of gold—these stood in need of no explication, to be sure. But how had it passed from Hephaistos to Dionysos? And when and why had Dionysos given it to Thetis? The narrative has gaps, inviting suppletion.

2. The jar and Stesichoros

Stesichoros filled in the gaps, by a process of mythopoeic fabrication much like Homer's own. Thanks to the mythological ἱστορίαι incorporated in the D-scholia to Homer, we know how he put flesh on the Homeric skeleton, while staying within the confines of traditional mythology.[8]

Manuscript Evidence for Interpolation (Heidelberg 1980) *passim*; and for the scholia see Erbse's edition of the scholia *ad loc.*

[5] The continuation of the *Odyssey* passage, viewed neoanalytically, suggests that in Homer's version Patroklos displaces Antilochos (W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias* [Wiesbaden 1960] 40–42, cf. K. Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter* [repr. Göttingen 1969] 362). Thus the motif of the shared receptacle will be pre-Homeric.

[6] A different view is taken by G.A. Privitera, *Dioniso in Omero e nella poesia greca arcaica* (Rome 1970) 85–86, who sees Dionysos' gift of an amphora to Thetis as an item of pre-existent tradition imported by the poet into his adaptation of the *Aithiopis*' funeral rites. This is possible, and does not adversely affect my argument, but the grounds for it seem weak. (That the receptacle of Patroklos' bones in *Il.* 23 is a φιάλη, not an amphora, need not have inhibited the *ad hoc* innovation of an amphora here; and while the account of Hephaistos' refuge with Thetis at *Il.* 18.398ff. certainly cannot be disengaged from the account of Dionysos' refuge with her at *Il.* 6.130ff., I do not see that either passage presupposes the gift mentioned in *Od.* 24.) I wonder if the amphora was one of the prizes set out by Thetis in the *Aithiopis*' funeral games (cf. *Od.* 24.93ff.).

[7] It has been notorious since antiquity (cf. schol. *Od.* 9.198) that Dionysos is not overtly associated with wine in Homer, but it is now clear that that is a matter of Homeric aesthetics, as with Homer's depreciation of Dionysos overall. That the amphora was the gift of Dionysos is itself an additional piece of evidence, if any were needed, that Homer knew of Dionysos as wine-god.

[8] This is not the place for an exposition of Stesichoros' relation to Homer. I consider it beyond much doubt that Stesichoros knew the Homeric poems, *Od.* 24 included, but that is not necessary for the argument. What is clear, even on more

> Διόνυcoc Ἥφαιcτον γενόμενον ἐν Νάξῳ μιᾷ τῶν Κυκλάδων ξενίcας ἔλαβε παρ' αὐτοῦ δῶρον χρύcεον ἀμφορέα. διωχθεὶc δὲ ὕcτερον ὑπὸ Λυκούργου καὶ καταφυγὼν εἰc θάλαccαν φιλοφρόνωc αὐτὸν ὑποδεξαμένης Θέτιδοc ἔδωκεν αὐτῇ τὸν Ἥφαιcτότευκτον ἀμφορέα. ἡ δὲ τῷ παιδὶ ἐχαρίcατο ὅπωc μετὰ θάνατον ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποτεθῇ τὰ ὀcτᾶ αὐτοῦ. ἱcτορεῖ Cτηcίχοροc. (*PMG* 234)
>
> I number the three clearly marked stages:
>
> "(1) When Hephaistos was on Naxos, one of the Cyclades, Dionysos entertained him, and received from him the gift of a golden amphora.
>
> (2) Subsequently chased by Lykourgos and fleeing into the sea for refuge he was afforded a kindly reception by Thetis, and made her a gift of the Hephaistos-made amphora.
>
> (3) She gave it to her son for his bones to be deposited in after death.
>
> —The account is Stesichoros'."

And its genetics are palpable. Stage 1 effortlessly explains how Dionysos came into possession of the jar from its maker Hephaistos.[9] More significantly for our purposes, stage 2 explains how the jar passed in turn from Dionysos to Thetis.[10] This time the answer is conveniently supplied out of Homer himself. The Lykourgos story of *Il.* 6.130–37 is the one other Homeric passage expressly conjoining Thetis and Dionysos:

> Διώνυcoc δὲ φοβηθεὶc
> δύcεθ' ἁλὸc κατὰ κῦμα, Θέτιc δ' ὑπεδέξατο κόλπῳ (135–36)
>
> "Dionysos in fear
> plunged beneath the wave of the brine, and Thetis received him in her bosom."

Thus the two Homeric contacts between Thetis and Dionysos are satisfyingly brought into mutual connection, in accordance with the impulse to integration, if not to rationalization, that informs all phases of ancient Greek mythologizing; it is like joining up the dots.[11] No matter that in the Lykourgos story Dionysos ought to be an infant, and in any case would hardly have

fluid constructions of his mythological inheritance, is that he is elaborating the bare data that for us are to be found in *Od.* 24.

[9] The association of Dionysos with Naxos is not found in Homer but is demonstrably early.

[10] My analysis of the Stesichorean account differs somewhat from that of Stewart, who identifies (56) as the "two very interesting facts" added by Stesichoros that "Hephaistos was the original donor of the vase as well as its maker" (but how could it be otherwise?) and that "when Thetis gave the vase to Achilles it was with the explicit purpose of providing a receptacle for his bones" (but the Greek cannot be pressed so hard). To my way of thinking this misses the significance of the Stesichorean account.

[11] Stanford's comment on the *Od.* 24 passage, "He [sc. Dionysos], no doubt, gave it as a present to Thetis after she had received him kindly in his flight from Lycurgus," precisely replicates Stesichoros. But what is mythopoeia in a poet may be documentary fallacy in a commentator.

burdened himself with a metal amphora for his submarine flight from the ox-goad—that is simply the price paid for interconnection of the data: plausibility yields priority to coherence.

3. Kleitias and Stesichoros

The point to be made is a simple one, though it seems to have escaped both Stewart and his critics. In Stesichoros the jar was presented to Thetis not on the occasion of the wedding but on the occasion of Dionysus' taking refuge with her.[12] That Dionysos' gift is to be understood as having been made actually on that occasion is made inescapable both by the make-up of the above account and by echoes of the same account elsewhere in the Homeric scholia.[13] Of Kleitias' imagined or imaginable sources, it seems Stesichoros is the only one that can actually be ruled out.[14]

There remains only the muse who whispered Stesichoros to Stewart in the first place. All nine muses appear on the vase, all labelled, all with names more or less as in Hesiod's list in the *Theogony*, but instead of Terpsichore we find—Stesichore. Are we to read this, with Stewart, as an acknowledgement, a "neat" and "explicit" acknowledgement, to Stesichoros? Such an acknowledgement would be "unique in Attic vase-painting," but *einmal* is not always *keinmal*. But it will be agreed that if the vase painting in fact shows no connection with Stesichoros, the notion had better be dropped. And where Stewart thought to find such connection, in Dionysos' amphora, it is positively not to be found.

It may be worth adding, as Stewart himself allows, that at all other potential points of contact we are likewise disappointed. The most promising scene is the Calydonian Boarhunt depicted on the upper register of the obverse, but the names of the hunters given on the vase show a striking lack of coincidence with those given in the surviving fragment of Stesichoros' poem.[15] In sum, the evidence is uniformly unfavorable to the hypothesis of Stesichorean

[12] Stewart seems to half-recognize this, but tries to evade it: "one should note that since Hephaistos [a slip for Dionysos?] was, as it were, travelling light at the time of his sojourn with Thetis, the amphora could in any case hardly have been given to her then" (70 n. 5; echoed by Schaus [below, note 21] 120). This is to apply quite inappropriately realistic criteria. Such criteria are no more appropriately applied to Homer himself, of course: what sort of plausibility attaches to an underwater sojourn by Dionysos?

[13] On the amphora of *Il.* 23.92: τοῦτόν φασι Διόνυσον παρὰ Ἡφαίστου λαβόντα ἐν Νάξῳ Θέτιδι χαρίσασθαι, ἐπειδὴ διωκόμενον ὑπὸ Λυκούργου ἐδέξατο schol. T ad loc.; on Θέτις δ' ὑπεδέξατο at *Il.* 6.135: ἵν' εὐλόγως τὸν ἀμφορέα λάβῃ schol. T; on the amphora of *Od.* 24.74: ἥντινα [why fem.?—loss of e.g. δωρεάν, or leg. ὅντινα ?] δέδωκεν αὐτῇ ὁ Διόνυσος, ὅτε παρὰ τοῦ Λυκούργου διωκόμενος κατέφυγεν εἰς αὐτήν, schol. HQ ad loc.

[14] T. H. Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery in Archaic Greek Art* (Oxford 1986) 1–11, argues for the *Kypria* as Kleitias' source for at least some of the depicted features. That is plausible enough, if a literary source is in fact to be postulated at all.

[15] *PMG* 222. A newly published papyrus, P.Oxy. LVII 3876, has further fragments apparently of this poem.

influence; the idea remains tenable only in areas where it cannot be tested—areas that continue to diminish as new Stesichorean finds increase.[16]

In the absence of a mythological connection with Stesichoros the muse-name Stesichore becomes a will-o'-the-wisp. Whether the explanation in this particular case is to be formulated in terms of misremembrance or of variant tradition, it clearly belongs in the context of the various vagaries of name-forms on this as on other vases.[17]

So much for Stesichoros. But the vase on the jar remains.

4. The jar and the Wedding

The Stesichorean answer to the *zetema* posed by Dionysos' gift to Thetis in *Od.* 24, neat or strained according to one's point of view, was not the only possible one, or even the most obvious. As an event in Thetis' mythological life, Dionysos' refuge with her was a very marginal affair. At its center was the occasion which gave that life its meaning, her wedding with the mortal Peleus. Was not that wedding famously attended by the gods, and did not those wedding guests bring gifts?

In our surviving texts this celebrated event is not as well represented as it should be. We have many references in Pindar, Euripides and elsewhere, but Hesiod's account is lost, and in Homer the unsavoriness of its antecedents has led to its being severely muted.[18] Nor do we have the principal epic account, the *Kypria*, but the same source which gives us the Stesichorean ἱστορία of the amphora gives us the Kyprian ἱστορία of Achilleus' ash-spear, and this contains by way of background a capsule account of the Wedding: κατὰ γὰρ τὸν Πηλέως καὶ Θέτιδος γάμον οἱ θεοὶ συναχθέντες εἰς τὸ Πήλιον ἐπ' εὐωχίᾳ ἐκόμιζον Πηλεῖ δῶρα, Χίρων δὲ μελίαν εὐθαλῆ τεμὼν εἰς δόρυ παρέσχεν (*Cypria* F3 Davies). "At the wedding of Peleus and Thetis the gods gathered at Pelion in celebration [i.e. at the wedding feast] and brought Peleus gifts." Cheiron's ash-spear—to which we must return shortly—is the only gift specified here.[19] We do not know what details the poem itself gave, but I

[16] For salutary methodological warning against too facile assumptions of Stesichorean influence on early Greek art see P. Brize, *Die Geryoneis des Stesichoros und die frühe griechische Kunst* (Würzburg 1980).

I say nothing of chronology, since despite M.L. West (*CQ* 21 [1971] 302ff.) Stesichoros' dates cannot be regarded as settled, but I do think it unlikely that Kleitias would have heard or otherwise known of Stesichorean poems.

[17] Among the Muses, Πολυμνία is labelled Πολυμνις; cf. the centaur Οπλων ('Οπλεύς [Hes.] *Scut.* 180). The fact that Kalliope plays Pan-pipes is also somewhat disconcerting: that is not something she would do in Stesichoros!

[18] Homer strongly submerges the tradition that Thetis had marriage with a mortal forced upon her because she was destined to bear a son greater than his father (if indeed that is pre-Homeric), and has no truck with her physical capture and protean resistance. Apart from the references in *Il.* 24 (59–62, 537) the wedding is mentioned at *Il.* 18.84–85 and 432–34, where its forced nature is only implicitly acknowledged. For inherited Thetis-tradition as reflected in Homer see Laura Slatkin, *TAPA* 116 (1986) 1–24—though what she sees as Homeric *allusion* to tradition I see as Homeric *suppression* or *displacement* of it.

[19] That is of course not surprising, given that the ash-spear is the subject of the scholium (*Il.* 16.140); but we do have Apollodorus' parallel account (3.13.5,

presume it did not state what Dionysos' gift was: it had no cause to, there being no traditionally Achillean appurtenance that lent itself to association with Dionysos (unless of course one counts the amphora, but if that had been Dionysos' gift in the *Kypria* we would expect to know of it from the Homeric scholia on the amphora or elsewhere).[20] The important thing is the fixity of the tradition that the gods attended the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, bearing gifts. Since Homer had not fixed the occasion of Dionysos' gift to Thetis, it was inevitable that it should be sited at the Wedding. What is intriguing is that we find the association effected only on a vase painting.

5. When is a δῶρον not a δῶρον? The jar and Kleitias

Or do we? *Is* the amphora that Dionysos carries to the Wedding on the François Vase the same amphora that Dionysos is said to have given Thetis at *Od.* 24.74? It was apparently not until 1953 that the identification was proposed, and since then it has been more or less controversial.[21] The question is usually answered, whether in affirmation or denial, in terms of fit—the match between the Homeric data and the data of the vase. Rumpf argued that the amphora on the vase is empty (since it is tilted), but heavy (since Dionysos' knees are bent), therefore metal—gold. But each of these propositions has been contested.[22] The data of the vase, non-textual in nature (apart from the labels),

presumably but not certifiably drawn from the *Kypria*), where the only gifts specified are the ash spear from Cheiron and the immortal horses Balios and Xanthos from Poseidon (cf. *Il.* 16.866–67). The only wedding gift we encounter in Homer is a suit of armor from "the gods" (*Il.*18.84–85, cf. 17.194–97: untraditional [?] genealogy of Achilleus' armor). The Hephaistos-made knife that Peleus has in the Akastos story (schol. Pind. *Nem.* 4.95, quoting Hes. fr.209 M-W) tellingly becomes a wedding gift from Hephaistos in e.g. schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 3.167a; cf. Eust. 1090.43. (Stewart 63 comparably speaks of the suit of armor as "Hephaistos' own present," citing the Homeric passages, which in fact say nothing of the sort.)

[20] It is notable that Dionysos has prominence as a wedding guest only in the François vase and its Sophilan sisters and in a black-figure hydria in the manner of the Lysippides Painter, Florence 3790 (different scene: Peleus and Thetis in chariot, Dionysos and Thyone standing behind: Beazley, *ABV* 260.30; L.A. Stella, *Mitologia Greca* [Turin 1956] 57; I. Krauskopf, "Eine attisch schwarzfigurige Hydria in Heidelberg," *AA* 1977, 13–37).

[21] It was put forward by A. Rumpf, *Gnomon* 25 (1953) 469–70. Among those subscribing to it are Beazley, *Development of Black Figure*, revised ed. (Berkeley 1986) 97 n. 3*bis*; P.E. Arias, rev. and transl. B. Shefton, *A History of 1000 Years of Greek Vase Painting* (New York 1962) 289; J. Boardman, *Ant. Kunst* 19 (1976) 12 n. 34; Y. Korshak, *Frontal Faces in Attic vase painting of the Archaic period* 27 n. 39; J. M. Hurwit, *The Art and Culture of Early Greece, 1000–480 B.C.* (Ithaca 1985) 224. Among those rejecting it are D. Williams, *Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum* vol. 1 (1983) 33; G. Schaus, "Gold or clay: Dionysos' amphora on the François Vase," *Echos du Monde Classique / Classical Views* 30 (1986) 119–28; and T. H. Carpenter (above, note 14) 11.

[22] Schaus (above, note 21) rehearses the arguments against the identification, countering Rumpf's reasoning on its own naturalistic terms and laying stress on the fact that so far from looking a golden wonder of Hephaestan workmanship, the jar is "a very plain and common SOS amphora" (125; the point already anticipated and confronted by Stewart n. 4). But even if we are not allowed to entertain the possibility of a touch of irony on Kleitias' part, by Schaus' own

are inherently less accessible than the data of Homer,[23] and on all critical points, as well as many less critical, iconographical authorities are not in agreement.[24]

But over and above the iconographic problem there is the hermeneutic. Just what does it mean to speak of "identification" in such a context? It is a question that perhaps has not received the attention that it might. It should be immediately clear that without defining terms and premisses we cannot say that the amphora on the vase either is or is not the Homeric amphora, any more than we can say (without regard to the vase) that the amphora that Dionysos gave Thetis either was or was not given on the occasion of her wedding. We glimpse something of the dimensions of the problem, and of the inadequacy of a simple yes-or-no answer, if the question is posed in terms of response: Would (or Should, or Could) the viewer recognize in the jar carried by Dionysos the amphora that (according to Homer) he gave Thetis? Iconographic compatibility can be only negatively probative.

By its nature the identification cannot be explicit. The question is whether or not it is latent, available for effectuating. Homer does not say the amphora was a wedding gift, any more than he says it was given under water; what counts for more is that he does not say it was not. The Homeric datum is that Dionysos gave an amphora to Thetis—you have free choice of time and place—which subsequently served as repository for Achilleus' and Patroklos' bones. That datum is an item of mythological tradition—not as big an item as, say, Dionysos, or the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, but an item nonetheless, and a reading of the vase that fails to apply mythological tradition runs the risk of being etiolated.[25]

admission the SOS type "may have been only a memory of an earlier time" by Kleitias' day, and that, along with its sheer size, may be all that is needed. (Carpenter [above, note 14] 10 n. 33 questions whether the jar can properly be called an "SOS" amphora at all.) Whether the jar is made of gold or of clay appears to be iconographically indeterminate (we can have any color so long as it's black); one might note that in the classic account of the lapith-centaur fight in the *Shield* even the centaurs' fir-branches are of gold!

[23] The labels prove the point: trios of Fates, Graces, Muses, Nymphs or Horai are liable to be indistinguishable without them. (Sophilos' NΥΣΑΙ uniquely reverses the situation: the presence of the front-facing syrinx-player means that these are muses, but the label equivocates—they start out as nymphs!)

[24] Questions such as whether or not the jar is full of wine, or heavy, or made of gold are routinely taken to be answerable; whether rightly or not I cannot say, but they are different *in kind* from e.g. whether or not it is big. If we ask, Why is Dionysos carrying an amphora?, i.e. What is the significance of his being so portrayed?, we can readily frame an answer in terms of Kleitias' relation to Sophilos: Kleitias adds the amphora to Sophilos' routine vine-branch, and so goes his master one better. But beyond that all is discord. Similarly varied are readings of Dionysos' stance: is he staggering under the weight (Arias-Shefton), running (Carpenter), tipsy (Williams), dancing (Korshak), or what? For some general reflections on the semiotics of Attic vase-painting see C. Bérard, "Iconographie-Iconologie-Iconologique," *Études de Lettres* 1983, 5–37.

[25] It might be noted that the other wedding gifts are brought for the groom, not the bride, but Thetis is at least present (depicted by Kleitias, not by Sophilos, like the amphora itself). At the mythologically parallel wedding of Kadmos and Harmonia it is the bride who gets the gifts. It is worth bearing in mind that the abnormal circumstances—mortal marrying sea-nymph—entail certain departures

6. Cheiron's branch

In Kleitias' picture (though not, oddly enough, in Sophilos' on the Erskine dinos) Cheiron is at the head of the procession, as he will be again in Catullus 64.[26] The object that he is portrayed as carrying compounds the interpretive issue. In the *Kypria*, and no doubt elsewhere,[27] he brought to the wedding a verdant ash-branch, μελίαν εὐθαλῆ, which he had cut for a spear—a mini-aition of the Pelian ash-spear of Achilleus.[28] Is this to be recognized in the branch he carries over his shoulder on the vase, animal prey suspended from it? The branch is usually taken to be fir, but Stewart has argued on grounds of botanical similitude that it is indeed ash, and hence the spear-to-be.[29] But surely what needs to be brought to bear on the question is not an implied naturalism but a typology of iconographic differentiation and equation. The first thing to be noted is that the kind of branch Cheiron is portrayed as carrying here is the same kind of branch that he and other centaurs are conventionally portrayed as

from normal wedding conventions. The wedding feast can hardly take place at the bride's father's. (Euripides wickedly makes the same point, *IA* 704; he contrives to include the Nereids—dancing on the sand [1054–7].) Scholars' references to the building on the vase tellingly vacillate between "Thetis' house" (or Thetideion) and "Peleus' house"; cf. E. Courtney, *Prometheus* 15 (1989) 162–64. It seems to be settled dogma that the gods' visit is taking place the morning after the nuptial night. But not only is the bride's side of the family present in the Sophilan and Kleitian pictures (Nereus, Doris and Okeanos on the krater), the literary tradition makes it quite clear that it is to the wedding feast that the gods come, and such festivities can only be imagined as preceding the wedding-night, not as following it.

[26] As a local and an intimate of Peleus, Cheiron would naturally come first. One would assume the same for the *Kypria*, except that the festivities apparently took place at his residence. That makes Cheiron a stand-in for the father of the bride (hence the later tradition of Thetis as daughter of Cheiron?). Cf. Pind. *Nem.* 3.56, νύμφευσε κτλ. On the Erskine dinos Cheiron is given a position between Hebe and Themis, who follow Dionysos; the other Sophilan dinos, very fragmentarily represented, is unfortunately lacunose at both positions. Does Sophilos have iconographic reason for postponing him?

[27] In Catullus 64 Cheiron brings *silvestria dona* (279), but they turn out to be garlands of mixed flowers (280–84), and it is left to the other local deity, Peneios, to bring—not a mere branch, but uprooted tall trees: beeches, laurels, planes, poplars, cypresses; ash conspicuously absent. But this is a Hellenistic poem.

[28] εὐθαλῆ suggests it has not yet been trimmed. Did the phrase εὐθαλέα μελίην occur in the *Kypria*, I wonder? The Homeric genealogy is identical (Πηλιάδα μελίην, τὴν πατρὶ φίλῳ πόρε / τάμε Χείρων *Il.*19.390 [ath. Aristarchos] ~ 14.143 [om. Zenodotos]), except insofar that Homer does not identify the occasion as the wedding. Pind. *Nem.* 3.33 seems divergent. For a study of the spear in Homer see R. S. Shannon, *The Arms of Achilles and Homeric Compositional Technique*, Mnemos. Suppl. 36 (1975); for its earlier history, Kullmann (above, note 5) 234–36.

[29] His argument has been attacked by Schaus (above, note 21), who notes that the photograph and the drawing that Stewart provides from modern arboreal handbooks are not in fact of the branch but of the leaf, and rigorously and incontestably concludes, "the leaf could never support the weight of the three animals" (124). But since leaf and branch have in fact much the same structure, this is less damaging than perhaps he supposes.

carrying. On this very vase the centaurs in the centaur-lapith brawl wield branches which are typologically identical. Since it is not specifically ash that centaurs generically are associated with,[30] that must be a disincentive to seeing Cheiron's branch as ash. But the second thing to be noted is that Cheiron's branch, unlike those in the centauromachy, is strikingly long and straight, as well as single: nothing could more resemble a potential spear. And signification is not independent of context. Cheiron's gift of a branch, just as Dionysos' gift of an amphora, was inescapably embedded in tradition; from that perspective the identification imposes itself.

7. Of pots and poets

There is no contesting the fact that what Cheiron is portrayed as carrying, just as what Dionysos is portrayed as carrying, makes sense without reference to this mythological tradition. Most of the divinities carry objects characteristic of them, so that the presence of the branch, as of the amphora, could be said to be adequately determined. On Sophilos' London dinos Cheiron carries a club in one hand and in the other a branch which looks nothing like a spear and seems scarcely more than a vehicle for the miscellany of dead fauna that eyecatchingly dangles from it (five animals, four species), and Dionysos bears only a vine.[31] But there may be more than simple iconographical one-up-manship to Kleitias' modifications. I would not know how to define the point at which multivalency becomes a source of confusion rather than richness, but the narrative sophistication of Kleitias' iconography suggests that a minimally adequate interpretation may not be an exhaustive one. And if we approach from the other side, equipped with the mythological datum that Cheiron took a branch to the wedding, we will want to ask how it is even possible to dissociate the branch he takes to the wedding *here* from the branch he took to the wedding *there*.

It would be possible, I suppose, if an unbridgeable gulf separated painting and poetry. When Kleitias' depiction of the funeral games over Patroklos shows "almost total lack of overlap between the order and identities of the contestants" with Homer's account in *Il.* 23 (Stewart note 55), when his depiction of the Calydonian Boarhunt shows similar lack of overlap with the standard mythological accounts (to the extent of excluding both the Thestiadai and Eurytion), when, come to that, he depicts gods as arriving at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis without gifts, we might well think that there was a gulf of a kind. Stewart, in speaking of a "heavily aberrant pictorial tradition," means to suggest affinity with Stesichoros; but in fact the pictorial tradition is no less aberrant from Stesichoros than from the rest of the literary tradition. And when we add to

[30] Indeed, the *Shield* describes them as fighting the Lapiths with golden ἔλατα (188, 190); cf. e.g. Pind. fr.167 (~ Apollod. epit. 1. 22), Eur. *IA* 1058. Fir is standard equipment for centaurs in literature, just as (trimmed and bronze-tipped) ash is for human warriors. Not that ash is alien: Pholos' mother was an ash nymph.

[31] It is rather an embarrassment to Stewart's case that he is constrained to see Stesichoros behind Sophilos too, although the Stesichorean "acknowledgment," and the specific features he identifies as Stesichorean, are to be found only in Kleitias.

such discrepancies the fact that there are subjects, such as the Return of Hephaistos, which are almost the exclusive property of the painters, it becomes clear that the interface between the respective worlds of poet and painter is less extensive than we might have imagined.

Still and all, to revert to our starting point, the worlds they inhabit are not separate universes, hermetically discrete, and just as anyone familiar with Sophilos' depictions of the scene is free to allow Kleitias' iconographical departures to inform response to the latter's painting, so it is legitimate to effect the identification of Dionysos' amphora and Cheiron's branch on the krater with their mythological correlates and to integrate them into an interpretation which recognizes a sort of apotropaic countercurrent to matrimonial bliss (cf. e.g. Pindar), by applying the use to which each object was eventually put.[32] Catullus' undercutting treatment of the same wedding comes to mind, where the Fates (ersatz Muses) sweetly sing of Achilles' multiple slaughters in store, and the significance of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis could be said to lie wholly in the person of their son. Some may prefer to content themselves with simpler readings, resisting such contextual extrapolation unless more forcibly invited by the iconography. But it is hard to deprive of all suggestive potency the spear-branch which is to kill so many (Troilos among them, as in the frieze immediately below) or the amphora which owes its very existence to the provision of a receptacle for the hero son's white bones.[33]

[32] The notion that the krater was made as a wedding gift seems very attractive.

[33] I am very grateful to my colleagues Steven Lattimore, Sarah Morris, and Sander Goldberg for comments and advice, and to Andrew Stewart for graciously serving as the *Transactions*' referee.