

HUMOUR IN GREEK VASE-PAINTING

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L'humour dans la peinture de vases grecs

Résumé. – L'article passe en revue les différentes formes d'humour rencontrées dans la peinture de vases grecs des VI^e et V^e s. av. J.-C. La 1^{re} partie traite des calembours visuels, dans lesquels les peintres jouent avec les codes de l'image. La 2^e partie analyse la comédie de situation, c.-à-d. la façon dont des histoires bien connues peuvent être tournées en ridicule dans les représentations, par le biais d'un déplacement du statut des personnages et de l'humour dans les scènes de vie quotidienne. La 3^e partie porte sur la caricature des difformités physiques. La dernière partie étudie l'utilisation des personnages de satyres dans la parodie de la mythologie et de la vie quotidienne. Ces images n'ont pas le théâtre satyrique pour origine, et les satyres sont un moyen de se moquer des thèmes du répertoire de la peinture de vase elle-même, tant dans les scènes mythologiques que dans celles touchant à la *Polis*.

Mots clés. – Monde grec. Grèce. Peinture. Vase. Iconographie. Humour. Calembour. Ridicule. Caricature. Parodie. VI^e / V^e s. av. J.-C.

Abstract. – This paper investigates the different forms that humour takes in Greek vase-paintings in the sixth and fifth centuries B. C. The first section focuses on visual puns, in which the painters play with the codes of imagery themselves. The second discusses situation comedy, i.e. ridiculed well-known narratives, the degradation of status and humour in everyday life. The third concentrates on caricature, where physical deformities are considered. The last section examines the use of satyrs in mythology and everyday life parody. These depictions are not inspired by satyr plays; satyrs are used to mock stock vase-painters' themes, in mythological scenes as well as in the realm of the *Polis*.

Key-words. – Greek world. Greece. Painting. Vase. Iconography. Humour. Pun. Ridicule. Caricature. Parody. 6th / 5th century B. C.

According to Semos of Delos, cited by Athenaeus, a Parmeniskos of Metapontum stood laughing at the sight of an old wooden cult statue (*xoanon*) of the goddess Leto in the island of Delos¹. Centuries had passed since it had been first sculpted and, although it was still revered in the time of Parmeniskos, it must have been shapeless². Parmeniskos laughed because in his eyes the statue was grotesque. Ignorance of another culture can be the starting point of laugh-

1. Semos of Delos cited by Ath., 14.614 a-b = *FGI, Hist.*, III 396 F10. See P. Bruneau, *Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale*, *BEFAR*, 217, 1970, p. 209, n. 4.

2. See also Hdt., 3.37: "And he [Cambyses] entered the temple of Hephaistos [in Egypt] and burst into laughter in front of the statue". On humour in Herodotus, see D. Lattiner, No laughing matter, *TAPA*, 107, 1977, p. 173-182.

ter. In this investigation of humour³ in vase-painting there is a genuine risk of over-interpreting objects. Over two thousand years have passed since the vases were made; Greek culture has faded with time, and we possess only its vestiges.

However real, this difficulty is not insurmountable. Whereas there are a few publications on individual comic pictures⁴, there is no comprehensive study on humour (*to geloion*)⁵ in Greek art. The general impression conveyed by these articles is that these pictures are peripheral representations, seldom found in vase-painting. It is not my intention to attempt to write my own theory of Greek humour, but rather to discuss how Greek vases can be used to understand some mechanisms of humour. Theories on humour are too distant from the object of their study. There are numerous ancient and modern theories on the laughable but they are, to a large extent, lifeless. They are not the material of laughter, but abstract discourses on the laughable. Some have tried to keep humour in the boundaries of a general theory of the incongruous, others within the limitations of a theory of superiority. Humour is too subversive and volatile to be bound into a general theory. There are, unfortunately, in this study more obstacles than ignorance or the temptation of theory. Within an idealistic world-view in which the "Greek" universe, *kosmos*, was conceived as beauty, in which art was beauty, shaped with order and harmony, there would seem to be little room for comedy, in so far as dignity and idealism are incompatible with humour. This conception of archaic and classical Greek art has often been overstated by scholars and pervades many scholars' views of the subject. This may be the reason why humour has seldom been recognised or investigated in Greek art. The study of Aristophanes, Old Comedy in general and many other comic passages in texts unrelated to Comedy, have taught us not only what the Greeks laughed at, but the very mechanisms of humour in Athens of the time: strangely enough, although we do not laugh at precisely the same things as Athenians did in the 5th century B. C., because we do not share the same culture, taboos and references, the mechanisms through which humour is conveyed, remain the same. There is a great variety of comical mechanisms in literature.

Based on a thorough comparative study between thousands of vase-paintings to discover which were the stock-themes and which images differed from these, at least four comic mechanisms seem applicable: visual puns, situation comedy, caricature and parody. Each of these mechanisms subverts and reveals the stylistic conventions as well as the stock-themes of mythology and daily life in Greek vase-painting. Through these mechanisms, most of the cultural values, social and otherwise, of Athens could be turned upside-down.

3. I use the word "humour" in its modern accepted meaning, as a comprehensive word, for all that is ludicrous or amusing. The mechanisms of humour in representations were studied at length in my doctoral dissertation, *Comic pictures in Greek vase-painting, Humour in the Polis and the Dionysian World, in the Sixth and the Fifth Centuries B. C.* (Oxford, D. Phil. Trinity Term 2002). I would like to thank Prof. J. Boardman for having read this paper and offered many suggestions for its improvement.

4. E.g. A. Bélis, *L'Aulète et le jeu de l'oie*, *BCH*, 116, 1992/2, p. 497-500; C. Picard, *Humour chypriote*, *RA*,

1964, p. 58-60; A. Brownlee, *A black-figure parody of the ransom of Hector*, *RA*, 1989, p. 3-21; H. Büsing, *Das "attische Saltz"*, *Humor auf Vasenbildern*, *AW*, 24, 1993, p. 335-346; E. Keuls, "The social position of Attic Vase Painters and the birth of caricature", in *Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium on Ancient Greek and related Pottery*, Copenhagen, 1988, p. 300-313.

5. See O. Taplin, "Paratragedy in Comedy and in comic vase-paintings", in E. Pöhlmann, W. Gauer eds. (*Griechische Klassik Blaubeuren*, 75), Nuremberg, 1993, p. 111. See also S. Halliwell, *The uses of Laughter in Greek culture*, *CQ*, 41, 1991, p. 280.

1. VISUAL PUNS

A pun is a word used in such a way as to suggest two or more meanings or different associations, or the use of two or more words of the same or nearly the same sound but with different meanings, so as to produce a humorous effect, a *play on words*. Some pictures are "visual" puns because their maker played, in the same benign and reductive way as the conceiver of a play on words, on the surprising combination of different images and meanings to provoke laughter. Aristotle writes in *Rhetorics* that (humour) "arises when it is unexpected"⁶. If pictures on Greek vases repeatedly present certain scenes which were depicted in the same manner, surprise and possibly humour could be created by a painter simply by changing some expected elements in his depictions, or by adding some incongruous ingredients. S. Freud⁷ explains that it is the absurd juxtaposition of incongruous elements which arouses laughter, because the mind cannot choose one explanation in preference to another, and this perplexity ends in laughter. In the case of visual puns, there is often no explanation for an incongruous element except the whim of the painter. Sometimes, figures depicted in a scene interact with the decorative parts of the vase. In other cases, the vase itself appears to come to life.

On a red-figure cup in Berlin (fig. 1)⁸, five satyrs revel in sexual acrobatics. On both sides of the scene, two sphinxes are facing the handles. One of their paws is raised as is usual for decorative sphinxes. The fifth satyr, on the right, turns his back on his companions. Grabbing his erect penis in his right hand, he is about to assault the sphinx on the right, as if it was a living creature playing a part in the scene⁹. But the viewer knows, from other pictures, that this is impossible. Unlike scenes involving Oedipus or the old Thebans in which a sphinx is set inside the frame, the sphinxes on the cup in Berlin are used to frame the scene and cannot take part in its narrative. A red-figure cup in London¹⁰ (fig. 2) displays the same decorative sphinxes, framing a scene in which a man stands between two horses. The painter could have substituted two columns or palmettes for the sphinxes without affecting the narrative of the scene. Satyrs are lustful creatures. What makes this situation comical is the exaggeration of the satyr's randiness. He is so excited that he takes a statuesque decorative figure for a living "female" creature, standing passively in the scene, whom he could rape. What is more, whereas satyrs often try to rape male or female figures indiscriminately, this is the only depiction in which a sphinx is in danger of being assaulted by Dionysos' bestial follower. The humour is based on the painter's playful transformation of the conceptual limits which exist between what is fra-

6. Arist. *Rhet.*, 3. 11. See also *Tractatus Coislinianus*, 6. 5 (ed. R. Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy*, London, 1984, p. 36): humour arises "from things contrary to expectation".

7. S. Freud, *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*, Frankfurt/Main, 1978.

8. *ARV*², 1700 (Copyright Museum, Jutta Tietz-Glugow).

9. See also Attic black-figure kantharos, Thebes, Arch. Mus., 6051, *ABV*, 30.8; *CVA, Greece*, 6, *Thebes, Archaeological Museum*, 1, pl. 5.3.

10. *ARV*², 88.1, 1625 (Copyright courtesy of the British Museum). For an earlier use of the sphinx as a decorative corner-figure, see a Tyrrhenian neck-amphora in Paris, Louvre, E862, *ABV*, 102.94.



1. Red-figure cup. Berlin, Antikensammlung, 1964. 4.

2. Red-figure cup. London, British Mus. 1920.6-13. 1.



med and what frames the scene. Satyrs are shown over and over again playing comically with different levels of understanding.

Cups decorated with large "masculine" (*i.e.* with a tear duct) eyes¹¹ were produced between 550 and 500 B. C. The eye-motif is often interpreted as apotropaic. Although there is an old tradition of painting eyes on vases¹², cups and a number of vase shapes decorated with large "masculine" eyes cease to be produced at the turn of the fifth century. Had they lost their "magical power" or did buyers suddenly not feel the need to be protected anymore? The so-called "Eye-cups" had simply lost the power to please the viewer. A great number of cups with eyes painted on the exterior have a *gorgoneion* painted in their tondo, probably because it fitted well in a round composition and not because of the *gorgoneion*'s alleged apotropaic function. Any connection between the *gorgoneion* and the large eyes remains purely speculative. The large eyes have been considered to be *gorgoneion*'s eyes. The large eyes with very few exceptions are "masculine"¹³. The *gorgoneion*'s eyes in the tondo of the same cups are "female", *i.e.* almond-shaped. From their respective shapes, the *gorgoneion* and the eyes painted on the exterior of the cups have distinctive characteristics; large eyes are not *gorgoneion* eyes. And, according to J. Boardman, "frightening faces, like the *gorgoneion*... must have become such a cliché in Greek art and decoration that it no longer terrified"¹⁴. M. Eisman writes that for vase-painting "in general large eyes were only a decorative fad and no particular symbolic interpretation is warranted"¹⁵; and J. Boehlau: "Only one eye is needed for this purpose"¹⁶. The large eyes are a *pars pro toto* of a face. Painters also added noses, ears or corner-palmettes instead and eye-brows to the large eyes to transform the vase into a face. This anthropomorphism brought the vase to life¹⁷. A Chalcidising cup in Munich¹⁸ (fig. 3) shows large eyes topped by brows with a nose in between, and ears bearing earrings on each side. The large eyes were neither comical nor unexpected. However, when painters make fun of the eyes or the faces through additional visual puns, the representations become truly comical. Two large staring eyes with eyebrows and flanked by two large palmettes are displayed on each side of a red-figure cup in Munich¹⁹. On one side, a nose is set between the eyes but, on the other, an aulos-case is hanging between. Because the viewer expected to see a pair of eyes with a nose, the artist painted an aulos-case which looks like a nose, because of its vertical position between two eyes and its narrow shape. Although aulos-cases are often found hanging in the background of pictures, its presence here is unexpected and amusing. Similarly, on a Chalcidian cup in Copenhagen (fig. 4)²⁰, a dog is shown in full-face between two large eyes. D. Mar-

11. *E.g.* Munich, Antikensammlungen, 2585, *ARI*^o, 48.158; K. Vierneisel, B. Kaeser eds., *Kunst der Schule, Kultur des Trinkens*, Munich, 1990, p. 413, fig. 74.5.

12. *E.g.* a seventh century B. C. Ionian multiple eye bowl from Naukratis showing two pairs of eyes: London, B. M., 1888.6-1.392; J. Boardman, *Early Greek Vase Painting*, London, 1998, fig. 283.

13. D. A. Jackson, *East Greek Influence*, London, 1976, p. 68.

14. See J. Boardman, *The history of Greek vases*, London, 2000, p. 240.

15. M. Eisman, *Are Eyes apotropaic?* *AJA*, 76, 1972, p. 210.

16. J. Boehlau, *Die Ionische Augenschalen*, *AM*, 25, 1900, p. 76: "ein Auge genügt für diesen Zweck".

17. J. Boardman, *The history of Greek vases*, p. 277.

18. After A. Rumpf, *Chalkidische Vasen*, Berlin, 1927, pl. 178, cat. 244.

19. Antikensammlungen, 2581, *ARI*^o, 41.31, 55.11; K. Vierneisel [see n. 11], p. 419, fig. 75.5 a-b.

20. After A. Rumpf, *Chalkidische Vasen*, p. 37, cat. 260, pl. 186.



3. Chalcidizing cup. Munich, Antikensammlungen, 589.



4. Chalcidian cup. Copenhagen, Nat. Mus., no inv.

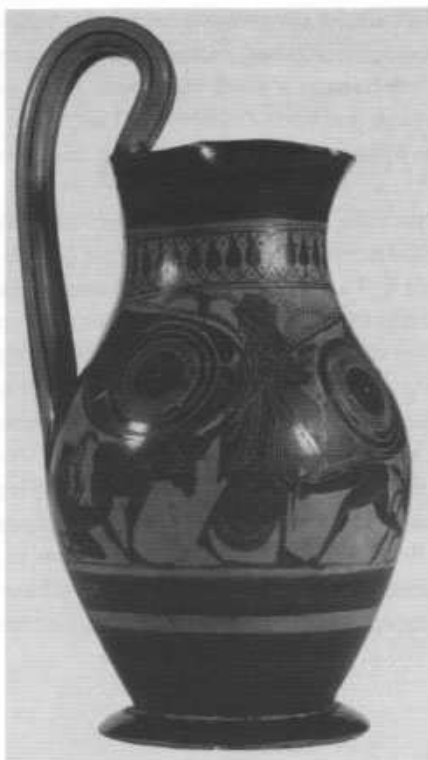
tens describes it as a *calembour visuel*, i.e., a visual pun²¹. The dog is made to look like a nose: it is sitting upright with its front legs straight and it is looking upwards. The general shape of the dog resembles a thick black vertical line, but, because it is crouching, the rear legs are pointing outwards, recalling the nostrils of noses painted between eyes. But it is not a nose, and there is the essence of a visual pun: it is a harmless game the painter plays with well-known images²². The comical nature of this image resides in the impossibility of choosing one way or the other to look at the picture. There is no solution: the dog is a nose, and the nose is wagging its tail. On a black-figure olpe in Berkeley (fig. 5)²³, Dionysos walks to the right, between two eyes

21. D. Martens, *Une esthétique de la transgression, Le vase grec de la fin de l'époque géométrique au début de l'époque classique*, Brussels, 1992, p. 316. See cup, Boston, M. F. A., 99.518; K. Vierneisel [see n. 11] p. 210, fig. 34.1.

22. See also an erect phallus between two eyes on a cup in Boston, M. F. A., 08.31 d, *ARV²*, 43.55, 56.23;

E. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens*, Berkeley, 1993, p. 80, fig. 65.

23. *ABV*, 436.2, 445.11 (Copyright of the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology and the Regents of the University of California).



5. Black-figure *olpe*. Berkeley 8.3379.

6. Red-figure *pelike*. Berlin, Antikensammlung, F 2172.



supported by satyrs. Both satyrs carry the eyes exactly like other satyrs usually carry wineskins on their backs: they hold the wineskins from one of the tied openings (on this vase the eye's tear duct). The painter manages an exquisite visual pun, because "a wineskin full to bursting"²⁴ and an eye are very similar in shape. He has traded the decorative function and meaning of the eyes for two wineskins. Only satyrs, because of their deep-seated gluttony for wine, could perform such a comical transformation. The eyes cannot be simultaneously the frame and the content of a scene. When looking at a visual pun, the viewer is disorientated because it is impossible to choose an exclusive way to see the picture²⁵.

As with satyrs who in many scenes use their erect penis as an "aulos-case hanger"²⁶, a red-figure *pelike* in Berlin (fig. 6)²⁷, attributed to the Pan Painter, shows a very unusual herm with an extended phallos, which is longer than half the length of its whole body and a large

24. F. Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet*, Princeton, 1990, p. 142.

25. The large eye motif is corrupted in many ways by painters: it becomes the body of sirens as for example on a neck-amphora in London B. M., B215, *ABV*, 286.1; *LJMC*, VII, pl. 9, r.v. "Thetis" 12. For an "eye-ram", see a cup in Rome Antiquarium Municipale, 17417; M. Stein-

hart, *Das Motiv des Auges in der griechischen Bildkunst*, Mainz, 1995, pl. 5.1.

26. See a plate in Paris, Cab. Méd., 509, *ARV*², 77.91; F. Lissarrague, *De la sexualité des satyres*, *Méa*, 2, 1987, fig. 6.

27. *ARV*², 581.4 (Museum photo, Copyright Jutta Tietz-Glagow).

bird is sitting on the phallos. The scene is humorous because the herm's protective or religious functions are forgotten. Only its most striking feature is emphasised, its erection. Often a symbol of virility for men and fertility for women, it has become a perch for a bird. Birds must have perched on herms, but the phallos was not as long, and birds did not "kiss" herms, as our bird seems to be doing on the vase. It could also be a parody of supplication: men and women supplicated a herm by touching its chin or beard²⁸.

Visual puns combine contrasting images to provoke laughter. They corrupt the way in which iconography operates on vases. Figures may interact with decorative elements or with the actual frame of a composition instead of being inside it. This type of humour is based on visual memory and immediacy. Painters change small details in well-known series of images to produce a comical effect. This kind of humour is strictly visual. Pictures may refer incidentally to mythology or cultural phenomena, but they usually avoid narration. Painters simply amused themselves from time to time without thinking too much about the eventual purchaser. Painters were flesh and blood human beings, who laughed and joked as any man. J. Boardman writes: "They signed their works freely... threw mottoes and challenges, even let their figures speak in modern cartoon style. 'As never Euphronios' boasts Euthymides"²⁹, on a belly amphora in Munich³⁰. Scholars often consider imagination to be trivial. But, could we not imagine in the late sixth-century Athens, a vase-painter in his workshop in the Potters quarter, sketching his tenth daily "eye-cup" and suddenly deciding to transform facetiously what was a serious image into a comic one?

2. SITUATION COMEDY

In situation comedy, humour derives largely from the particular conjunction of characters and circumstances. Often used on stage, in Old Comedy, it is the easiest way to provoke an immediate response from an audience. It functions similarly in vase-painting. It consists in a comical narrative. It is created by the intrusion in a scene close to reality of an element that disturbs an established order. It may also arise when there is a complete inversion of an initial situation. In situation comedy, it seems, at first, that only the *situation* arouses laughter. In fact, the performance of the actors is crucial: some hilarious plays can be ruined because they are performed badly. Likewise in vase-paintings, where the humour of a scene can be enhanced or lessened depending on the talent of the painter.

It is the final stage of the quest for the Erymanthian boar, Herakles' delivery of the boar to Eurystheus, which contributes most effectively to the investigation of situation comedy. The

28. See for example column-krater, Bologna, Mus. Civ. Arch., 206, *ARV²*, 537. 12; E. Govi, *Le ceramiche attiche a servizio nera di Bologna*, Bologna, 1999, p. 41, fig. 13.

29. Boardman, *ARPH*, I, 30.

30. *Antikensammlungen*, 2307, *ARV²*, 26.1, 1620; Boardman, *ARPH*, I, fig. 33. 2; E. Keuls, "The social position of Attic Vase Painters and the birth of Caricature", in *Proceedings of the 3rd Symposium on Ancient Greek and related Pottery*, Copenhagen, 1988, p. 306, fig. 9.

capture of the Erymanthian boar is the third task imposed by Eurystheus upon Herakles³¹. When he brought it back to Mycenae alive, Eurystheus, terrified by Herakles and the living boar, threw himself into a *pithos* he had prepared as a hiding place³². In black- and red-figure, Eurystheus hides in a *pithos*, a part-buried large storage jar. He observes Herakles' return, bearing an enormous boar on his back or over his head. Eurystheus is usually shown waving his hands, in despair and supplication. On a cup in Paris³³, Herakles approaches Eurystheus who is hiding in his *pithos*. A small distance away stands Athena, a woman and an old man. Eurystheus is king of Mycenae. To see a man of superior status running for shelter in his own palace generally inspires amusement. Degradation is what makes the viewer laugh in this scene; "the fact of making the character base" as it is formulated in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*³⁴. In Euripides' *Herakleidae*, the aged Iolaos, Herakles' companion, hates the feeling that he might be considered a "stay-at-home" (*oikourema*), a word which usually refers to a woman staying-at-home³⁵. Eurystheus, on the other hand, is labelled a coward twice in the play³⁶.

To find a king hiding in a *pithos* is amusing, but this representation occurs many times in vase-painting and in other art forms. After all, with so many depictions, we can assume that the viewers expected to see Eurystheus in a *pithos*, as Herakles delivered the living boar. To what extent was such a well-known picture amusing without the surprise effect? The frequency with which this scene was depicted suggests that it was not primarily surprise which was pleasurable to the viewers but the ridiculed surrogate of royalty and a comic archetype. The humour of this scene is based on the fact that despite Eurystheus' belief that he has set yet another impossible task for Herakles, his cousin does return after all with his mission accomplished. Bergson says: "Not infrequently comedy sets before us a character who lays a trap in which he is the first to be caught. The plot of the villain, who is the victim of his own villainy, or the cheat cheated, forms the stock-in-trade of a good many plays"³⁷. Eurystheus, on behalf of Hera, orders Herakles to perform an impossible task, to bring the boar back alive. When Herakles returns, Eurystheus hides from the very boar he had required Herakles to capture. Herakles remains faithful to the king throughout the whole story, yet the king uses his monarchical power to force the tasks on him. By so doing, the situation becomes ironic because it is to the disadvantage of the king himself. Underlying these comic archetypes is the urge for natural justice. We could almost imagine the train of thoughts of a viewer: "Ha! Eurystheus gets what he deserves: Herakles did fulfil his task victoriously after all." Perhaps the *crux* of the matter and the source of the urge for natural justice is that Eurystheus did not behave as a king should from the beginning³⁸.

31. Soph., *Trach.*, 1089; Hyg., *Fab.*, 30; Quint. Smyrn., 6.220.

32. Diod. Sic., 4.12.2; Apollod., *Bibl.*, 1.187.

33. Louvre, G17, *ARI*⁶, 1599.18, 62.83; *CVA, France*, 17, Paris, *Musée du Louvre*, 10, pl. 6.1.

34. *Tractatus Coislinianus*, VI, 5-6 (ed. R. Janko, *Aristotle on Comedy*, p. 36). See also D. F. Sutton, *The Catharsis of Comedy*, London, 1994, p. 7-16.

35. Eur., *Herakl.*, 700. See Eur., *Hip.*, 787, *Or.*, 926.

36. Eur., *Herakl.*, 832, 836.

37. H. Bergson, *Le Rire : essai sur la signification du comique*, Paris, 1900, chap. 2.2: "Inversion".

38. For another mythological coward (apart from satyrs), see Peleus taking shelter up a tree surrounded by wild beasts on two black-figure vases: *oinochos*, New York, M. M. A., 46.11.7, *ABV*, 434.3; Boardman, *ABFH*, fig. 230. Neck-amphora, Rome, Villa Giulia, 24247; *CVA, Rome, Villa Giulia*, 1, pl. 9.3-5. See M. J. Milne, Peleus and Akastos, *Bull. Metrop. Mus.*, 5, 1946-47, p. 255-260.

The comedy of these pictures lies in the irony of the situation³⁹, but also resides in the way the artists paint the story; the visual comedy of the scene can be more or less effective, depending on the imagination and the talent of the painter. Sometimes, the humour of a situation may be enhanced through surprising though minor changes in the composition of a picture. The painter may depict Eurystheus running into his *pithos*, or lifting the lid of the *pithos* and taking a peep from his hiding place at Herakles. Some painters show Herakles with one foot on the lip of the jar, preparing to tip the boar into the *pithos*. This position emphasises Herakles' superiority over his cousin, and reminds one that he should have rightfully been king instead of Eurystheus: a king *manqué*. A *lekythos* in Syracuse⁴⁰ (fig. 7 a-b) is described by S. Luce: "A variant of this is found on one very remarkable vase... painted by a man with a delicious sense of humour, which shows on side A, Herakles lifting the boar, and on side B, Eurystheus in alarm getting into the *pithos* as rapidly as he can"⁴¹.

Humorous archetypes exist also in everyday life situations. On a *pelike* in Munich (fig. 8 a)⁴², a woman is seated on a *klismos* with her left hand on her thigh, reclining. In front of her is an elevated lamp stand, on the top of which has been placed a small bundle of cloth. A cat perches on the foot of the lamp stand. On the other side, a butcher is cutting meat with his *machaira* (fig. 8 b). On this *pelike*, the two sides must be observed as one complete narrative. The cat is climbing up the pole because it has sensed food under the cloth⁴³. It must be meat that the butcher on the other side of the vase has already cut and has placed there expressly to be out of reach of the cat. The woman seated in front of the pole is leaning her head on her right hand. Her eyes are shut, she is sleeping. It is rare to find a figure sleeping in such a fashion. In vase-painting, although there are a few pictures which include sleeping figures such as Herakles, Polyphemos, Ariadne, Medusa, Geryoneus, Alkyoneus, most sleeping female figures are maenads about to be raped by satyrs. It seems that during the figures' sleep, something always happens. Satyrs try to rape maenads, or rob Herakles' weapons, Odysseus blinds Polyphemos and Perseus beheads Medusa. The only two scenes where nothing happens are a woman holding a sleeping child in her arms⁴⁴, and an archer sleeping on a cup in Basel (fig. 9)⁴⁵. On this last example, a Scythian, with his eyes closed, is asleep. The scene is divided by a thick line: above, the Scythian is sleeping, and below, is a large *rhyton*. It is almost like a rebus puzzle: a sleeping Scythian added to a drinking horn means "he drank too much and fell

39. The Return of Hephaistos drunk to Olympus is also a typical comic archetype. So is Hermes infant, who, having stolen Apollo's cattle and hidden it in a cave, pretends to sleep while Apollo and Maia gesture in anger above his *liknon* on a Caeretan hydria in Paris, Louvre, E702; J. M. Hemelrijk, *Caeretan Hydriae*, Mainz, 1984, p. 10-12, fig. 4, pl. 29-30. See also a cup, Vatican City, Mus. Vat., 16582, *ARI*², 369.6, 1649; T. Carpenter, *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece*, London, 1991, fig. 106.

40. *ABV*, 375.218; from Perrot, 10, p. 210-211.

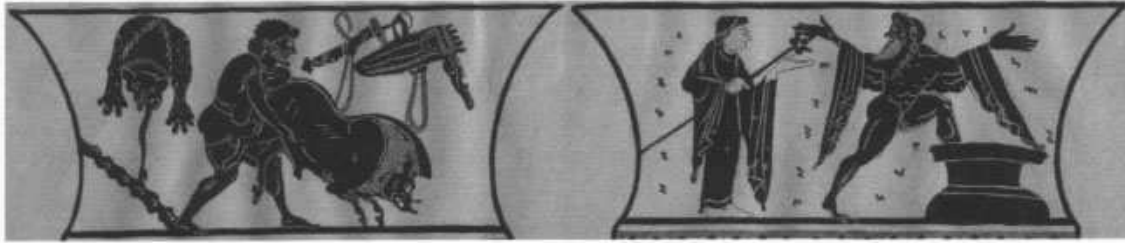
41. S. B. Luce, *Studies of the exploits of Herakles on vases*, *AJA*, 28, 1924, p. 313.

42. 8 a, drawing A. G. Mitchell; 8 b, Museum Copy-right.

43. See a *lekythos* from the New York market (in the Beazley Archive Database, no. 28056). See also a *pelike* in Malibu, Getty Mus., 86.AE.476; J. Padgett, "The Workshop of the Syleus Sequence: A Wider Circle", in J. H. Oakley et al. eds., *Athenian Pottery and Painters*, Oxford, 1997, p. 222, fig. 11-12. See a *pyxis* in Berlin, Antikensammlung, F2517, *ARI*², 917.205; *CVA, Berlin*, 3, pl. 137.6, 138.

44. Red-figure *alabastron*, Providence (RI), Rhode Island School of Design, 25.088, *ARI*², 624.88.

45. Courtesy of the museum, photo Claire Niggli.



7 a-b. Black-figure *lekythos*. Syracuse, Mus. arch. regionale Paolo Orsi, 21965.



8 a-b. Red-figure *pelike*. Munich, Antikensammlungen, 2347.



9. Red-figure cup. Basel, Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig, BS 1423.



10. Red-figure hydria. Madrid, Mus. arq. nac., 11117.

asleep". If this archer is a "Persian", the Greek painter is simply mocking the miserable warriors in the other camp, who drink instead of training. But if we consider this archer's appearance *à la lettre*, he is dressed as a Scythian. The Scythians who would have come into contact with Athenian painters frequently were most likely members of the Athenian police force, the "Scythian archers"⁴⁶. A common expression during *symposia* was "to drink like a Scythian" (*skythizein*: to drink immoderately)⁴⁷. As he is drunk and asleep, he is incapable of guarding anything. Such a parallel may suggest that the woman on the *pelike* in Munich was supposed to keep an eye on the meat, but fell asleep "on duty".

Women were frequently the target of male jokes and criticism. On a red-figure hydria in Madrid (fig. 10)⁴⁸, attributed to the Berlin Painter, two women are standing at a fountain house, which consists of a Doric column erected on a one-stepped *krepis* with a lion's head spout shown in profile. From their gestures and their poses they seem to be conversing. The woman on the left is drawn smaller than the other to fit into the composition, because she is carrying a hydria on her head. The "taller" woman has left hers beneath the fountain spout. Both women wear a tiara which indicates that they are neither slaves nor servants, but probably citizens⁴⁹. On the far right, a hydria is overflowing with water which is pouring out of the lion-head spout⁵⁰. The woman on the left is carrying her hydria vertically which implies it is full, and that she is about to leave. Moreover, her feet are pointing towards the left. Her head, however, is turned towards the other woman. With these simple elements, the overflowing hydria, the gestures of discussion, the indications of departure of the woman on the left and her lingering (head turned right) the painter has shown two women gossiping (*lalein phylarein*)⁵¹. Because they are lost in conversation, the woman on the right forgot her own hydria under the fountain head. A similar scene of gossiping ladies (they all wear chitons and *himatia* and hair-fillets) is shown on a black figure *lekythos* in Thebes⁵². Four women are standing in a queue at a fountain. Three of them carry their *hydriai* horizontally on their heads, they hold them with one hand and make gestures of discussion with the other. The first woman looks round to chat with the one behind. She has misplaced her hydria below a lion's-head spout from which water streams half in the vase and half outside. This is a typical scene of situation comedy. Aristophanes would surely have agreed. In *Thesmophoriazousae*⁵³, Woman "A" complains about Euripides who describes them as "gossips" but then, as L. Taafee says: "After this indictment of Euripides, she turns to a revelation of the truth about women... In short, her

46. According to Andoc., 3. 5, this police force would have been instituted ca 446/5. For an earlier date (ca. 470) see V. J. Hunter, *Policing Athens*, Princeton, 1994, p. 145-149.

47. Hieron. Rhod., *ap. Ath.*, 499 f.

48. *ARV²*, 209. 167 (J. D. Beazley drawing, courtesy of the Beazley Archive).

49. See L. Hannestad, "Slaves and the fountain house theme", in *Ancient Greek and Related Pottery*, 1984, p. 252-255.

50. See the inscription on a black-figure *pelike*, Vatican City, Mus. Vat., 413; F. Lissarrague, "Graphain: Écrire et

dessiner", in *De l'Antiquité à Paul Klee, L'image en Jeu*, Paris, 1990, p. 201-202, fig. 13-14: "already it is full it is overflowing".

51. R. Olmos, L.-J. Balmaseda, El tema de "Las Muchachas en la fuente" en unas hidrias aticas del museo arqueologico nacional, *AEA*, 50-51, 1977-1978, p. 25.

52. *Arch. Mus.*, 6151, *ABl.*, 108; *CVA, Thebes, Archaeological Museum*, 1, 69-79, pl. 62. 3, 63. 4.

53. *Ar. Thesm.*, 393. See also *Ar., Lys.*, 627: "those gossiping women".

speech has revealed that Euripides actually tells the truth about women⁵⁴. These two vases are the only ones I am aware of, among the many representations of ordinary women filling their *hydriai* at fountain houses, or at fountains⁵⁵, in which women have let their *hydriai* overflow. This detail is shown in a different context on a hydria in St. Petersburg⁵⁶, also attributed to the Berlin Painter. Polyxene is at a fountain, whilst Achilles is crouching behind. Her hydria is overflowing. This detail probably indicates that she has just noticed him and, in her terror, has forgotten her hydria. Usually, in the depictions of the flight of Polyxene, her hydria is spilled as on a hydria fragment in Paris⁵⁷, or broken as on a hydria in London⁵⁸, yet, with the exception of the St. Petersburg vase, the hydria is never shown overflowing.

The interest of the hydria in Madrid and the *pelike* in Munich, as well as many other comic or serious paintings, is in what we may refer to as visual immediacy, the fact that everything in the picture is happening at the same time and painted consequently in such a way that the viewer must "read" the picture in a global way. If someone was to describe the situation, he would have to describe the protagonists, the place, the actions which happen at the same time, etc. On the hydria in Madrid there is an immediate impression, as if everything was seen at the same time. On the Munich *pelike*, if one observed only a part of the picture or glanced only at one side and then at the other without creating a mental picture of the whole narrative, the sleeping woman would not be comic. On the hydria in Madrid the whole narrative is displayed on one side, but if one did not notice the detail of the overflowing hydria, the scene would appear to be quite commonplace. It would remain an odd detail of no particular consequence to the general meaning of the picture. Details in comic pictures are as important as the reading of a vase in its totality. Vase-paintings often share similar compositions, and it is often easy to take some explanations for granted and yet to dismiss other more unusual details because the general meaning is considered to be the "usual one". Pictures are structured, and work within a strict framework of visual codes. Sometimes, an unusual element, which does not seem at first to fit in the picture, is not the result of a mistake made by the painter or a detail that can be left aside. It may totally change the eventual interpretation in the most unexpected ways.

3. CARICATURE

A caricature is a grotesque or ludicrous representation of persons or things by the exaggeration of their most characteristic and striking features. Deformity and ugliness made people

54. L. Taafe, *Aristophanes & Women*, London, 1993, p. 90.

55. I. Manfrini-Aragno, "Femmes à la fontaine, réalité et imaginaire", in *L'image en jeu*, Lausanne, 1992, p. 127-148. See also E. Diehl, *Die Hydria*, Berlin, 1964, p. 131, p. 230-231. E.g. black-figure hydria, Brussels, M. R. A. H., R346; *CVA, Bruxelles, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, 2, pl. 16.1.

56. St. Petersburg, Hermitage, ST1588, *ARV*², 210.174; B. Knittmayer, *Die Attische Demokratie und ihre Helden*, Heidelberg, 1997, pl. 19.1.

57. Louvre, CP10651 (in the Beazley Archive Database, no. 12421).

58. B. M., 1899.7-21.4, *ARV*², 297.15, 296, 1643; *LIMC*, VII, pl. 346, z.v. "Polyxene" 15.

laugh. The idea that deformity could have been a subject of amusement (from Thersites in Homer to dwarfs at banquets) is in perfect agreement with the ideal of *kalokagathia*. Anything other than beauty and goodness was ridiculous and ridiculed. Hephaistos, pygmies and dwarfs used to arouse laughter as representatives of *otherness*. Because caricature and stage masks of comedy share exaggerated and abnormal rigidity the first is often confused by scholars with the second⁵⁹. Masks *are* caricatures. Moreover, when painters want to show figures wearing masks they are able to do so clearly.

On an *aryballos* in Paris (fig. 11)⁶⁰, a naked dwarf carries a hare on his left shoulder between two draped men in a surgery. He is infibulated, balding, and bearded. The young (beardless) doctor is shown on the other side treating a patient under the supervision of a man seated opposite him. The other patients stand in a queue. Among all these fine men, the hairy chested dwarf turns around to face one of the other patients. The latter weighs heavily on his cane and keeps his other hand to his hip in a relaxed fashion. The incongruity of the dwarf's presence in the queue is surprising and amusing. None of the patients carry a satchel with money to pay the doctor. The dwarf carries a dead hare on his shoulder: could it be his method of payment? The dwarf is infibulated. This is comical for the following reason: infibulation is a common practice essentially among athletes at the palaestra. The only painting (fig. 12) which displays dwarfs training, shows them with oversized genitals. Like satyrs, dwarfs are often shown macrophallic. It is well understood that infibulated satyrs are a visual joke. Infibulated dwarfs should be considered so too. The hare indicates an erotic context, well-known in vase-painting of the *erastes* and *eromenos*. The *erastes* asks a favour (*charizesthai*) of the *eromenos* by offering him a hare⁶¹, sometimes a dead hare. The humorous effect is created by the presence of the hairy dwarf at the place of the expected handsome *eromenos*. V. Dasen says: "The dwarf is in the same age-group as his *erastes*, while in courting scenes one of the lovers is older. The unusual location of this meeting enhances the comedy of the parody; the two men are shown not in a palaestra, a place suited to the appraisal of naked bodies, but in a clinic, among sick or injured people"⁶². The presence of a flying Eros, hovering exactly above the "beautiful couple" on the shoulder of the *aryballos* is another assurance of the erotic interpretation⁶³. On a *pelike* in St. Petersburg (fig. 12)⁶⁴, two dwarfs exercise in the *korykeion*, the boxing grounds, hitting a large punch-bag⁶⁵. This is a *hapax* in Athenian vase-painting. The bag has the appearance of a sow that one of the dwarfs hits with his hands and feet. As

59. See for example the caricatured faces of all the figures in an apotheosis of Herakles on an *oinochoe* in Paris, Louvre, N3408, *ARV*², 1335.34, 1690; Boardman, *ARFH*, II, fig. 321. I have followed this line of reasoning for almost every caricature found on many *kantharoi* from the Kabirion sanctuary, near Thebes, which, through the use of caricature, parody mythology and everyday life situations.

60. *ARV*², 813.96 (Copyright Museum).

61. See cup by the Clinic Painter, Paris, Cab. Méd., 812, *ARV*², 808, 811.37; A. De Ridder, *Catalogue des vases peints*

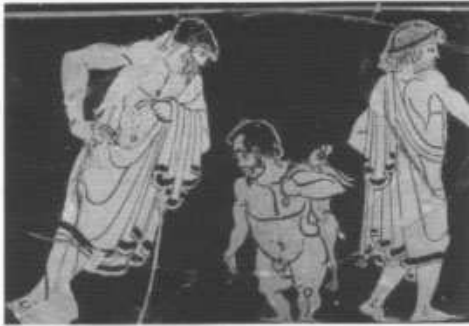
de la Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, 1902, p. 471, fig. 110. See also cup, Berkeley, Univ., 8.922, *ARV*², 808, 811.38; *CVA*, University of California, I, pl. 26.

62. V. Dasen [see n. 60] p. 222-223.

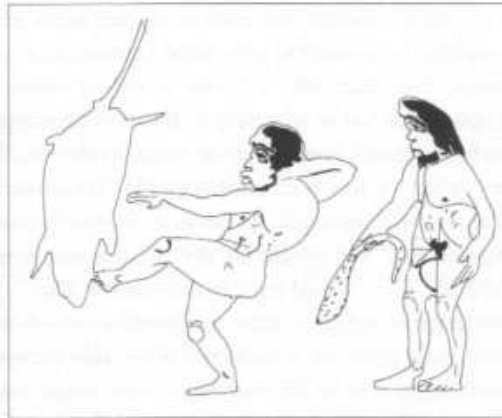
63. See A. Greifenhagen, *Griechische Erosen*, Berlin, 1957; H. A. Shapiro, "Eros in Love: Pederasty and Pornography in Greece", in *Pornography and representation in Greece and Rome*, 1992, p. 53-72.

64. *ARV*², 1134.11 (drawing A. G. Mitchell).

65. See Philostr., *Gymn.*, 57.



11. Red-figure *aryballos*. Paris, Louvre, CA 2183.



12. Red-figure *pelike*. St. Petersburg, Hermitage, B 1621.



13. Red-figure *askos*. Paris, Louvre, G 610.



14. Red-figure cup fragment.
Athens,
Nat. Mus., Acropolis coll., 2.1073.

with grotesque pygmies⁶⁶, dwarfs are used in a ludicrous fashion, and the St. Petersburg dwarfs have a dim-witted caricatured face, brought out by their thick lips and large droopy eyes. Dwarfs never trained at the *palaestra*; it is the dwelling of free and beautiful youths. This could very well be a parody of the usual boxer, who is traditionally depicted as a stout and strong athlete in vase-painting. Boxing athletes were easy to parody because of their stocky appearance.

66. See for example a *rhyton* in St Petersburg, Hermitage, 679, *ARV*², 382.188, 1649; Boardman, *ARFH*, I, 233: "realistic plump dwarfs", fig. 258.

Physiognomy was used to explain some unusual figures in vase-painting. The close examination of an individual's facial features and morphology might reveal the disposition of the mind, the character⁶⁷. In the works of some vase-painters, such as Onesimos⁶⁸, or even Euphronios⁶⁹, it is tempting to speak of physiognomy, because some figures are differentiated by hairy chests, longer hair or bushy eyebrows. These paintings have undoubtedly what Beazley called "a touch of naturalism"⁷⁰. To speak of physiognomy is however unnecessary and possibly anachronistic. As far as individualisation in vase-painting is concerned, precise identification was not sought by the artisans and physiognomy was reduced to the production of "types". The "Aesop cup" in the Vatican City⁷¹, on which a caricatured bearded man seems to discuss with a fox, is often compared to an *askos* in Paris (fig. 13)⁷². On one side a bald deformed man leans on a staff; the other side shows a roaring lion. The man's body is absurdly small compared to his enormous head, larger than the whole body. He is leaning on a staff; his cloak is folded under his left arm and hangs off the staff. This bald man is strikingly caricatured⁷³. His attitude is that of many nonchalant strollers at the palaestra. With such a huge head and pensive attitude, this figure could be a caricature of a sophist⁷⁴; not a sophist in particular but what the common artisan in the Potters quarter thought of sophists, who spent their time thinking⁷⁵, or chatting at the palaestra. Views on sophists, or philosophers in antiquity were diverse. In *Clouds* Aristophanes gives a very critical and comical view of what was probably thought of intellectuals and "wandering wonder-workers" in Athens by most Athenians: "Bah! Good-for-nothings, I know. You're talking about those vagabonds, those pallid faces, those barefooted wanderers"⁷⁶; "lazy, supplied with food for doing nothing"⁷⁷; "who never went to the baths to wash"⁷⁸. Socrates himself, in a discussion on the needs of the philosopher, clearly despises the body, while holds in the highest regard the soul⁷⁹. According to D. Metzler the lion is as symbol of hoplite virtue routing out the sophist parasite⁸⁰. The vase-painters are possibly mocking wandering sophists, leaving one banquet to attend another. Some of them were careless of their looks and of what others could think of their external appearance⁸¹. On a cup fragment in Athens (fig. 14)⁸², a man is crouching in order to defecate. He is shown in a rare

67. R. Garland, *The Eye of the Beholder, Deformity and Disability in the Graeco-Roman World*, London, 1995, p. 88-89.

68. See cup in Basel, Antikenmus., BS439, *ARV²*, 323.56, 1604; Boardman, *ARFH*, I, fig. 230.

69. Compare Herakles' neat hairstyle and beard, his fine eyebrows, to Antaios' on the calyx-krater, Paris, Louvre, G103, *ARV²*, 14.2, 1584, 1619; Boardman, *ARFH*, I, fig. 23.

70. J. D. Beazley, *Attic vase-paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts*, 2, Boston, 1954, p. 25.

71. *Mus. Vat.*, 16552, *ARV²*, 916.183; D. Metzler, *Porträt und Gesellschaft*, Berlin, 1971, p. 94-95, fig. 7.

72. Copyright Museum. F. Lissarrague, "Aesop, between man and beast: ancient portraits and illustrations", in B. Cohen ed., *Not the classical ideal*, Boston, 2000, fig. 5.2.

73. For a different view, using the principles of physiognomy, see V. Zinserling, *Physiognomische Studien in der*

spätarchaischen und klassischen Vasenmalerei, WZ Rostock, 16, 1967, p. 571-575.

74. P. Zanker [see n. 72] p. 32-39.

75. Sophists called themselves *frontisai*, "thinkers".

76. *Ar., Nub.*, 102-103.

77. *Ar., Nub.*, 334.

78. *Ar., Nub.*, 837.

79. *Pl., Phdr.*, 64 d, 65 a. See K. J. Dover, "Classical Greek Attitudes to Sexual Behaviour", in A. K. Siems ed., *Sexualität und Erotik in der Antike*, Darmstadt, 1988, p. 279.

80. D. Metzler, *Porträt und Gesellschaft*, Berlin, 1971, p. 101.

81. See *Ar., Nub.*, 146-147, in which a flea jumps from Khairaphon's head to Socrates' which implies that both are flea-ridden and dirty.

82. After B. Graef, E. Langlotz, *Die antiken Vasen von der Akropolis zu Athen*, 2, Berlin, 1933, pl. 83, no. 1073.

attitude⁸³: he pinches his nose in a comic way because of the smell. He seems to be standing amongst stones. His head is huge in comparison to his body, as in the previous scenes. This enables the painter to exaggerate the figure's protruding lips, unkempt hair, large nose, fluffy beard and to show his teeth⁸⁴.

Caricature was a free exercise to the extent that certain relatively "inexpensive" media made it possible. Even though vase-paintings could be exquisitely wrought, whether the finest Athenian or the *kantharoi* produced for the Kabirion, they were not considered to be great objects of art in antiquity in comparison to wood-panelled paintings or wall paintings. Thus, the freedom of expression of vase-painter was that much greater, taking into account market needs and ever changing fashion.

4. PARODY

Vase-painters who produced parodies had to be certain that the viewer would recognise a traditional scene, or a canonical motif, by giving sufficient details, but, at the same time, they needed to include other well-chosen details to transform the canonical picture into something comical. Vase-paintings are not "read" as texts. The codes of imagery were obvious to people living in Athens in the fifth century B. C. and some scholars may feel that two thousand and five hundred years is too long a span of time to understand these codes without an appropriate lexicon. However, by examining many thousands of paintings, patterns and codes of imagery emerge, and the pictures become, to a certain extent, as "decipherable" as texts.

On a red-figure neck-amphora in Naples (fig. 15)⁸⁵, a winged female figure wearing a tiara is pursuing a young man. He is a hunter, wearing the *petasos*, a *chlamys* and holding hunting lances. The winged female has dropped a *kerykeion*. She cannot be a Nike nor can she be Eos pursuing Kephalos or Tithonos. Here the *kerykeion* indicates clearly that the winged female must be Iris. She is the female counterpart to Hermes as the divine messenger and carries a *kerykeion*, symbol of messengers. She is usually winged, stands motionless or runs, but not after a young man. The Naples Iris' feet are above the ground as if in an imaginary flight. It is more common to see Iris pursued than pursuing: depictions of Iris pursued by satyrs are well known. The young hunter is running away, casting an eye behind to see how close Iris is. She is not trying to deliver a message but trying to get hold of the young man. In this scene, the key is the *kerykeion*. In many scenes, it has been argued, objects such as drinking horns are not "real objects", only signs of the presence of wine. But in depictions of Iris, the *kerykeion* is

83. See also a cup, Boston, M. F. A., Res 08. 31 b, *ARV²*, 174. 22; E. Vermeule, Some erotica in Boston, *Ant. Kios* 12, 1969, p. 14, fig. 14. A man with a cloak over his shoulders, wreath and a staff, bends forward, having defecated, and cleans himself with a stone. See *Ar.*, *Pax*, 1228-1239.

84. See also a cup fr., Athens, Nat. Mus.; E. Keuls [see n. 30] p. 311, fig. 16.

85. *ARV²*, 1058. 117 (drawing A. G. Mitchell).

15. Red-figure neck-amphora. Naples, Mus. Capodimonte, no inv.



16. Red-figure *oinochoe*. Rome, Mus. Vaticano, 16535.



never dropped, she consistently holds it tightly⁸⁶. She must have dropped it in her haste. The series of pictures that come to mind is Menelaos dropping his sword and running towards Helen, under the influence of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, as on an *oinochoe* in the Vatican City (fig. 16)⁸⁷. In this abundant series, Menelaos drops his sword because it has become use-

86. See for example red-figure neck-amphora, Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmus., 203, *ARV*², 202.73; *LJMC*, V, pl. 485, s.v. "Iris" I 19.

87. *ARV*², 1173.3; after A. Furtwängler, K. Reichhold, *Griechische Vasenmalerei*, Munich, 1904-32, III, 307, fig. 147.

less in so far as lust has taken over his desire for revenge and the recovery of his honour. In her erotic pursuit, Iris drops her *kerykeion*. In this parody⁸⁸, the goddess is made more human and thus degraded. The other side shows a youth with sword pursuing a woman. It is not a coincidence that this precise scene should be depicted: it recalls Menelaos' episode of the "fallen sword".

In vase-paintings, parodies can be achieved in different ways. Satyrs are often used. In some mythological scenes their presence is appropriate; in others they seem out-of-place, because they are used to ridicule serious, tragic or heroic deeds. Some scenes have been understood as depictions of satyr plays. In most cases however these satyrs were used by painters to mock known depictions. F. Lissarrague in his numerous publications on the subject has not researched humour as such⁸⁹, but he has analysed most aspects of the playfulness of satyrs and, in his works on satyrs and others, has shed new light on vase-painters' visual games.

A satyr is a hybrid mythological being, half-human and half-animal. His ears and tail are those of a horse. He is also identifiable as a satyr from a snub, squashed nose, a bald forehead, a bushy beard and an erect penis. The moral character of satyrs is nothing but a list of foibles. In literature, satyrs are cowards, drunkards and lustful creatures⁹⁰. The satyr is the antithesis of the hero⁹¹, and is considered less than a man: in this respect he is similar to an ape, which was considered by the Greeks as a laughable imitation of man. Satyrs are called "beasts" and "apes" in Sophocles' *Ichneutai*⁹². They are comic figures *per se*. Satyrs are found in conventional mythological scenes in the black- and red-figure techniques, ranging in date from the early sixth century until the late fifth century. Satyrs often escort Dionysos at his wedding with Ariadne. They are also often represented at vintages, or escorting Dionysos in *The return of Hephaistos*. Satyrs are shown on numerous vases serving and drinking pure unmixed wine from wineskins or *amphorae*. Finally, satyrs pursue maenads on countless vases. The antithetic representations of human and satyr love-making are represented on each side of a *pelike* in London⁹³. On one side a man and a woman, both fully clothed, hold each other in an embrace and gaze in each others eyes. On the other side, an ithyphallic satyr runs away with a captive maenad on his shoulder. As we have seen earlier, satyrs destabilise traditional iconography. If satyrs can jump head first into kraters⁹⁴, and can play with the actual decoration of a vase, it seems probable that they could also be used to parody canonical mythological scenes. They are elements of disorder which by their mischievous presence make common scenes unexpected and surprising.

88. Compare also Achilles tending Patroklos on a cup in Berlin with the great hero Diomedes in full gear having his forefinger tended by Sthenelos on a Chalcidian amphora. In Hom., *Il.*, 5.111–113, Diomedes' shoulder is tended by Sthenelos, not his finger! Cup in Berlin, Antikensammlung, F2278, *ARV*², 21.1, 1620; T. Carpenter, *Art and Myth in Ancient Greece*, London, 1991, fig. 301. Chalcidian amphora (ex-Pembroke and Hope); M. Grmek, D. Gourevitch, *Les maladies dans l'art antique*, Paris, 1998, fig. 36, p. 71: "un détail amusant".

89. Except in a recent article F. Lissarrague, "Satyres, sé-

rieux s'abstenir", in M.-L. Desclos ed., *Le rire des Grecs*, Paris, 2000, p. 109–122.

90. Eur., *Cycl.*, 635–648.

91. Even in Gigantomachies in which satyrs appear as Dionysos' allies.

92. "Beasts": 147, 153; "apes/monkeys": 128.

93. B. M., W40, *ABV*, 384.20; E. Keuls [see n. 22] fig. 319–320.

94. See for example a cup, Geneva, Mus. d'Art et d'Hist., 16908, *AdP*, 178; *CVA*, Genève, Musée d'Art et d'Hist., 1, pl. 9.2.

The use of satyrs in parody is still controversial, although the idea has been proposed by a number of scholars⁹⁵. As soon as satyrs are found in place of famous heroes or pestering them, most scholars have turned to satyr plays to explain the presence of the satyrs in such unusual scenes.

Satyr plays appear in the fifth century. Unfortunately, we possess only fragments of satyr plays. Scholars are usually confronted with mere titles of plays. Before the discovery of papyrus fragments in the course of the twentieth century, scholars worked on quotations from satyr plays in the writings of various ancient authors. Only two satyr plays are known to us in a substantial form: *Ichneutai* of Sophocles presented about 445, and *Cyclops* of Euripides presented about 440. According to R. Green: "They [satyrs] often seem, in a 'carnavalesque' way, to have upset the *status quo*, the normal order of things, only to have order restored at the end of the play. Their function was one of humour and release"⁹⁶. To look for the content of these lost plays in vase-paintings is highly tempting. It is also satisfying to scholars to seek literary parallels for incongruous pictures, and to explain them through satyr plays. Most authors who have studied representations of satyr play associate specific satyr plays to some vases produced in the fifth century⁹⁷. The general tendency is to consider that vases illustrate drama and not that vase-painting was a popular art form, with its own traditions.

Satyr plays were parodies of known myths: the hero was never *satyrised*, but the chorus was made up of 12 to 15 actors disguised as satyrs. The criteria used to recognise a satyr player are a smooth or hairy loincloth (also called by some scholars trunks or shorts) to which actors attached a tail and an erect phallos; satyr masks are sometimes held in hand⁹⁸. Some scenes in which satyrs are in the presence of an auletes may have been inspired by satyr play. It is clear from the famous Pronomos vase in Naples⁹⁹, that because masks covered the entire head, painters gave other details to let the viewer distinguish actors represented on a vase from mythological beings. An actor wears the satyr trunks, a satyr does not.

Satyrs' activities often include badgering heroes, but there is no compelling need to turn to drama to explain such pictures. Often iconography alone can easily provide an adequate

95. E.g. J.-M. Moret, *Edipe, La Sphinx et les Thébains*, Rome, 1984, p. 140, n. 5; F. Lissarrague [see n. 89] p. 112, 117-118.

96. R. Green, E. Handley, *Images of the Greek theatre*, London, 1995, p. 23.

97. O. Jahn, *Perseus, Herakles, Satyrn und Vasenbildern das Satyrdrama*, *Philologus*, 27, 1868, p. 1-27; L. Campo, *I Drammi satireschi della Grecia antica*, Milano, 1940; E. Buschor, *Satyrspiele und Frühes Drama*, Munich, 1943; F. Brommer, *Satyrspiele*, Berlin, 1959; M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater*, Princeton, 1961; T. B. L. Webster, *Monuments illustrating Tragedy and Satyr Play*, *BICS*, Suppl. 20, 1967; D. F. Sutton, *The Greek Satyr Play*, Meisenheim Glan, 1980; D. F. Sutton, A handlist to the fragments of the Greek Satyr Play, *Anc. W.*, 3, 1981, p. 115-130; E. Simon, "Satyr-plays on Vases in the time of Aeschylus", in D. C. Kurtz, K. Sparkes eds., *The eye of Greece*, Oxford, 1982,

p. 123-148; D. F. Sutton, "Scenes from the Greek Satyr Plays illustrated in Greek vase-painting", *Anc. W.*, 9, 1984, p. 119-126; B. Seidensticker ed., *Satyrspiele*, Darmstadt, 1989; B. Seidensticker et al. eds., *Das griechische Satyrspiel*, Darmstadt, 1999.

98. For example: cup, Munich, Antikensammlungen, 2657, *ARV*², 475.267; N. Kunisch, *Makron*, Mainz, 1997, p. 33, fig. 70, pl. 163.507. Bell-krater fr., Bonn, Akademisches Kunstmus., 1216.183-5, *ARV*², 1180.3; *CVA*, Bonn, Akademisches Kunstmuseum, 1, pl. 32.11-13. *Lebes*, Athens, National Museum, 13027, *ARV*², 1180.2; F. Brommer, *Satyrspiele*, Berlin, 1959, fig. 2. Hydria, Boston, M. F. A., 03.788, *ARV*², 571.75; *LIMC*, VIII, pl. 770, s.v. "Silenoi" 153.

99. Volute-krater, Naples, Mus. arch. naz., 81673, *ARV*², 1336.1, 1704; M. Bieber [see n. 97] fig. 32.

interpretation. On a column-krater in Athens¹⁰⁰, Prometheus has just thrashed two satyrs who are rubbing their backs and chests. Satyrs like to steal. What could be more amusing than to harass Prometheus? Prometheus is the most renowned thief in mythology, having robbed Zeus himself of his fire. Satyrs stealing Prometheus' stolen fire is a comical reversal of the initial situation. On a black-figure *oinochoe* in Oxford¹⁰¹, produced in the 530s, before satyr plays were first introduced in Athens, Dionysos, while reclining, is watching intently a satyr dance before him. While thus engrossed, another satyr robs him of his wineskin¹⁰². A number of vases show satyrs (none are wearing satyr trunks) stealing Herakles' weapons in his sleep¹⁰³. They range in date from the last decade of the sixth century until the end of the fifth¹⁰⁴. The last cup of the "series", in Ferrara, was produced in the 440s. There are no signs of the theatre in this scene. Even if the earlier Padula krater was linked to the theatre because of the presence of an auletes, by the time the Ferrara cup was produced the leitmotif of a sleeping Herakles being robbed by satyrs had already become a stock scene¹⁰⁵. With the one exception of the Padula krater and its aulos-player, not a single scene depicting Herakles being robbed by satyrs shows a theatrical connotation. All are based on the same comical motif of Herakles' temporary powerlessness. Herakles, the strongest, proudest and most reckless hero in Greek mythology, is powerless. In these scenes, satyrs, as always, are cowards and mischievous characters, which take advantage of the indisposition of the hero (who is shown either asleep or ascending to Olympus) so as to pilfer his weapons. This series of vases starts in the late sixth century and continues throughout the fifth. It was therefore a comical motif, already known in black-figure and treated in various fashions in later red-figure.

The *Return of Hephaistos* is another traditional scene dating from at least the early sixth century. On the François Vase a drunk Hephaistos rides a mule among ithyphallic satyrs. On a calyx-krater in Vienna¹⁰⁶, Hephaistos, with a wineskin, hammer and tongs walks¹⁰⁷ in the company of Dionysos who is holding a *thyrsos* and a *kantharos*. An actor of satyr play playing the kithara and wearing the smooth satyr trunks, decorated with a cross, leads the group. This is

100. Nat. Mus., 1167, *ARV*², 1104.6; F. Brommer, *Satyrspiel*, Berlin, 1959, fig. 44.

101. Ashm. Mus., 1965.105, *ABV*, 525.11 (in the Beazley Archive Database, no. 330778).

102. In Greek, *kleptein* meant "to steal" and "to rape", two activities favoured by satyrs. Cf. J. Henderson, *The Maculate Muse*, New Haven, 1975, p. 156, S 232.

103. J. D. Beazley, *Herakles Derubato, Apollo (Salerno)* 3-4, 1963-1964, p. 3-14. See also S. Karouzou, *Herakles satyrikos*, *BCH*, 60, 1936, p. 152-157; I. McPhee, *An Apulian Oinochoe and the Robbery of Herakles*, *Ant. Kunst*, 22, 1979, p. 38-42; F. Lissarrague, "Héraklès et les satyres", in *Les Vases à mémoire, exposition de céramique grecque dans le Midi de la France*, 1988, p. 142-143.

104. *Volute-krater, Padula*, Mus. Arch. Luc. Occ., *ARV*², 1699; B. Seidensticker et al. eds., *Das griechische Satyrspiel*, Darmstadt, 1999, pl. 7. *Pykter* in Brussels, M. R. A. H., A1312; *CVA, Bruxelles, Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire* 3, pl. 27. 4. *Hydria, Salerno*, Mus. naz., 1371, *ARV*², 188.67; F. Frontisi-Ducroux, *Du masque au visage, Aspects de l'identité*

en Grèce ancienne, Paris, 1995, pl. 25. *Hydria, Vatican City*, Mus. Vat., 16509, *ARV*², 623.72; E. Simon [see n. 97], fig. 36 a. *Cup, Ferrara*, Mus. naz. di Spina, T269CVPA, *ARV*², 1270.15 (in the Beazley Archive Database, no. 217224).

105. See F. Lissarrague, "Un peintre de Dionysos: le peintre de Kléophradès", in F. Berti, C. Gasparri eds., *Dionysos, mito e mistero*, Bologna, 1989 p. 264. See also a *pelike* contemporary of the Ferrara cup on which satyrs steal Herakles' weapons from his funeral pyre, Munich, *Antikensammlungen*, 2360, *ARV*², 1186.30, 1685 (in the Beazley Archive Database, no. 215719).

106. *Kunsthistorisches Mus.*, 985, *ARV*², 591.20; T. Carpenter, *Dionysian Imagery in Fifth-Century Athens*, Oxford, 1997, pl. 14 a; F. Brommer, *Hephaistos, Der Schmiedagöt in der Antiken Kunst*, Mainz Rhein, 1978, pl. 3.1.

107. Walking instead of riding the mule is an artistic variant of the scene, not a proof of theatrical inspiration as suggested by F. Brommer [see n. 106] p. 12-16.



17 a-b. Red-figure volute-krater. Munich, Antikensammlungen, 2381.

the only example from at least one hundred and fifty scenes of Hephaistos' Return which depicts a satyr player. While it may be a good illustration of the interplay between drama and vase-painting, it should not be used as an example of a direct inspiration from a specific scene in a play. The *Return of Hephaistos* existed a century before the krater in Vienna and antedates by many decades the creation of comedy and satyr play; it is such a traditional scene that the krater in Vienna's singular theatrical connotation could be considered as a way of saying to the viewer: "This is a funny story as are satyr plays"¹⁰⁸. Not only are the non-theatrical representations overwhelming, but they were already depicted many decades before satyr plays were produced.

When satyrs are the main protagonists of a scene, especially if they are not set in mythological scenes, they cannot be satyr players. On one side of a volute-krater in Munich (fig. 17 a)¹⁰⁹, ithyphallic satyrs are practising the *pentathlon*: discus, javelin, long jump, and boxing are represented. Two wearing long robes are holding big objects, in the way trainers in athletic scenes hold a forked stick. On the other side (fig. 17 b), humans are practising the *pentathlon*. From left to right are a trainer (recognisable from his forked stick), two boxers, an akontist, an auletes, another akontist, a *diskobolos*, a second auletes and a runner. Because satyrs are set in the civic space, in such an unexpected performance, this painting has been considered to be inspired by satyr play. Two different plays have been cited to interpret the picture. Aristias, in 467, presented a satyr play of his father Pratinas called *Palaistai*, which

108. See vases on which satyrs try to rape Hephaistos' mule: cup, New York, M. M. A., 12.234.4, *ARI*², 630.2; F. Brommer [see n. 106] pl. 2.2. See also calyx-krater, Paris,

Louvre, G162, *ARI*², 186.47; F. Brommer [see n. 106] pl. 7.1.

109. *ARI*², 221.14 (Museum copyright).



a



b

18 a-b. *Pelike*. Genoa, Mus. civ. arch. figure, 1150.



19. Red-figure neck-amphora. Paris, Louvre, G 222.

involved satyrs boxing¹¹⁰, and Aeschylus' *Isthmiastai* in which satyrs prepared the Games at Corinth¹¹¹. Both sides of the vase are clearly one ensemble. The presence of an aulos-player in a scene with satyrs is often used as proof of a drama setting. In fact, his presence may be irrelevant: hundreds of vases in black- and red-figure show aulos-players among athletes where neither satyrs nor actors are present. According to M. Vos: "Athletes were accompanied by flute-music during their exercises in the palaestra, and at contests, where the public paid attention not only to the athletic performances, but to the music as well. A good flute-player was so highly appreciated that in Olympia a stele was erected in honour of the auletes Pythokritos of Sikyon who, in the early sixth century played six times at the Olympic Games for the *pentathlon* [Paus. 6.14.10]"¹¹². This scene is a parody, not a satyr play. A viewer simply needed to turn the vase and look on its other side, to find human athletes practising the *pentathlon*. There are two phallic jokes in this picture: the trainers are usually recognisable from their forked sticks (fig. 17 b). The satyr-trainers (fig. 17 a) carry phallos-sticks or giant dildoes instead¹¹³, similar to the one a satyr on amphora in Boston holds above his head¹¹⁴. The second joke is the satyrs' permanent sexual erection. Satyrs are always in erection and not only are human athletes never shown in erection but they are almost always infibulated, which of course prevents erection: their penises are firmly attached to ensure comfort during exercise¹¹⁵.

On a *pelike* in Genoa (fig. 18 a)¹¹⁶, an infibulated satyr is seated on a rock. He faces a draped satyr (fig. 18 b). The first satyr's attitude is relaxed; his hands are folded around his left knee to avoid rocking backwards. He sits upright and is attentive to the other satyr's movements and speech. The speaker's head is tilted slightly backwards as if he was searching for inspiration. He keeps his left hand on his hip while making a sweeping gesture with his right arm, inadvertently uncovering his huge erection. These two satyrs might be parodying an orator and his audience. A neck-amphora in Paris¹¹⁷ (fig. 19) shows a man with one arm draped in his mantle, standing on a podium. In front of him, a listener is leaning on his cane in the "usual" citizen's attitude. As there are no musicians present at the scene, the man on the podium is not singing, as may be the case on some other vases, where the presence of an auletes or a kitharist are noted. What is more, his particular stance, the arm wrapped in the mantle finds many parallels elsewhere. A statue of Aeschines¹¹⁸ shows the orator with his arm wrapped in a mantle. According to Aeschines himself, referring to the time of Pericles, "it was considered a moral failing to move the arm freely, as is common nowadays, and for this reason speakers did their best to avoid it"¹¹⁹. In the same passage he even refers to a statue of

110. E. Simon [see n. 97] p. 130.

111. E.g. F. Brommer, *Satyrspiele*, Berlin, 1959, p. 60, fig. 59.

112. M. F. Vos, "Aulodic and Auletic contests", in *Enthousiasmos, Festschrift für M. J. Hamelrijk*, Amsterdam, 1986, p. 121.

113. Boardman, *ARFV*, I, 111: "His [Nikoxenos P.] satyr athletes might also be conceived in a mocking spirit (their trainer uses a large phallos in place of a cane)".

114. Amphora in Boston, M. F. A., 98.882, *ARV*²,

279.7; J. D. Beazley, *Attic red figured vases in American museums*, 1967, 58, fig. 37.

115. M. F. Vos, *CVA, Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden*, 1, 1983, 20-21; see also E. J. Dingwall, *Male infibulation*, London, 1925.

116. *ARV*², 262.37 (drawing A. G. Mitchell).

117. *ARV*², 272.7; after E. Pottier, *Vases antiques du Louvre*, Paris, 1897-1922, pl. 130.

118. Early Augustan copy of a statue ca. 320 B. C., Naples, Mus. naz.; P. Zanker [see n. 72] p. 46, fig. 26.

119. Aeschin., *In Tim.*, 25.

Solon in the Agora of Salamis who kept his arm hidden beneath his mantle. Solon's statue and a similar statue erected in honour of Aeschines, probably were the reasons why Demosthenes mocked Aeschines by saying that he stood like a "handsome statue before the Assembly"¹²⁰. According to P. Zanker: "The orator was expected to demonstrate extreme modesty and self-control in his appearances before the Assembly, and particularly to avoid any kind of demonstrative gestures"¹²¹. He adds that "the motif of one arm wrapped in the cloak had been a *topos* of the Athenian citizen since the fifth century and would continue into late antiquity, both in art and in life, as a visual symbol of *sophrosyne*"¹²². Our satyrs on the neck-amphora in Genoa are pretending to be what they cannot be: citizens of the Athenian *Polis*. While the seated and comically infibulated satyr seems to strike the correct pose, the other has lost his self-control and his temporary *sophrosyne* (ethical and moral correctness) in the excitement of oratory, making sweeping gestures and drawing the attention of the viewer to his erect penis, thus to his satyric nature. Conversing citizens may make a large gesture with one arm as the two figures on a *stamnos* in Frankfurt¹²³, but they keep their other hand beneath their mantles and remain draped. There are many vases which display draped satyrs standing, running or dancing alone in the tondo¹²⁴; some may be leaning on a staff or conversing with a youth as on a *chous* in London¹²⁵. They are probably visual puns playing on the thousands of depictions of citizens, often seen leaning on a staff, standing alone or discussing with youths.

According to H. A. Shapiro: "When the Greeks wanted to express their deepest feelings, their fears and fantasies, they put them into myth. So, for example, satyrs, the mythological bestial followers of Dionysos thought to be in a permanent state of sexual arousal, are occasionally shown on vases performing sexual acrobatics (with each other or with maenads) far removed from the stylised poses and gestures of *erastes* and *eromenos*"¹²⁶. As always, there are comical exceptions. On a *pelike* in St. Petersburg (fig. 20)¹²⁷ a draped satyr, leaning on a knotted staff, presents a hare to a seated youth on a block. The hare is a well-known love gift from the *erastes* to the *eromenos* and, as H. A. Shapiro argues, it is usually depicted in stylised poses and gestures in vase-painting. A neck-amphora in Rome (fig. 21)¹²⁸, displays a similar scene to that on the *pelike* in St. Petersburg: a man leaning on his knotted staff offering a hare to a youth. The satyr on the St. Petersburg *pelike* holds the animal in extension, in exactly the same fashion as the *erastes* on the neck-amphora in Rome. The ultimate and most unlikely attitude one expects from a satyr is one of style and modesty.

120. Dem., *De Cor.*, 129.

121. P. Zanker [see n. 72] p. 45.

122. P. Zanker [see n. 72] p. 49.

123. Mus. für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, B411, *Para.*, 352; *GVA, Frankfurt Am Main*, 2, pl. 74. 1.

124. See a black-figure cup in Orvieto, Mus. Civ., Coll. Falna, 2606; *CVA, Orvieto Falna*, 1, pl. 21. 1-3, 26. 4. Cup in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Mus., 152; *CVA, Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum*, 1, pl. 22. 1-2. Neck-amphora in London, B. M., E335; *CVA, London, British Museum*, 5, III. Ic. 9, pl. 65. 1 a-b.

125. B. M., E532; F. A. Beck, *Album of Greek education*, Sydney, 1975, pl. 17. 89.

126. H. A. Shapiro [see n. 63], p. 58.

127. *ARV²*, 531.33 (drawing A. G. Mitchell). See also a *pelike* in Pregny, Baron E. de Rothschild, *ARV²*, 531.34 (in the Beazley Archive Database, no. 206010).

128. *ARV²*, 284.3 (Copyright Museum) See also a Panathenaic amphora, Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, PC80, *ARV²*, 183. 7; *CVA, Leiden, Rijksmuseum van Oudheden*, 1, pl. 122. 1-2.



20. Pelike. St. Petersburg, Hermitage, 734.



21. Red-figure neck-amphora. Rome, Villa Giulia, 50462.

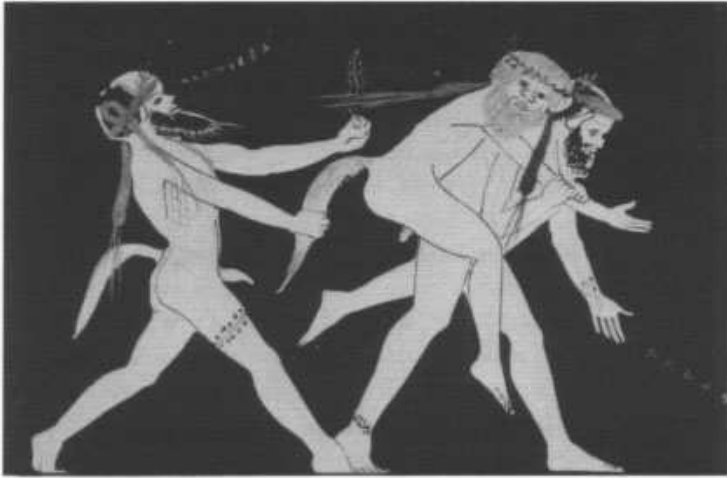
When satyrs are not represented as a chorus but replace heroes in well-known mythological scenes, they cannot be satyr-players. I will only give two examples of these parodies¹²⁹.

There is an unusual representation of the game of *ephedrismos* (from *ephedrizein*, "to be carried on someone's back") on a neck-amphora in Boston (fig. 22)¹³⁰. The game consisted of trying to knock down an erect stone by throwing balls or stones from a distance. Players who missed the target had to carry the winners on their backs blindly, as the winners covered the

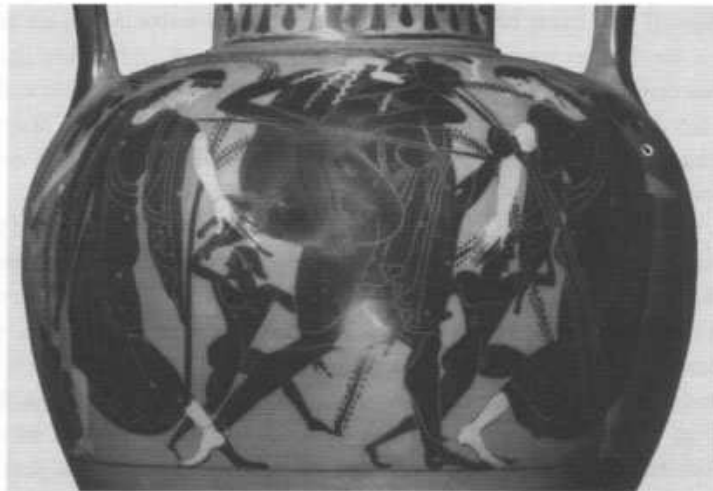
129. Among many other examples, compare a *lekythos* on which a satyr is carrying a harpe and a severed head [Paris, Louvre, CA1728, *ARV*², 677.10; F. Brommer, *Satyrspele*, Berlin, 1959, 33, fig. 25] to a *lekythos* showing Perseus running after having severed Medusa's head [Sao Paulo, Mus. Arte Arq., 67/1; *ARV*², 1668; *LIMC*, VII, pl. 300, s.v. "Perseus" 163]. Compare the old and bent satyr pulled towards a cauldron by a maenad on a bell-krater in Ancona [Mus. Arch. Naz., 3198; E. Simon [see n. 97], pl. 35 b] to Pelias about to be murdered by Medea on a cup in the Vatican City [Mus. Vat., 16538; M. Schmidt, "Medea at work", in G. Tsentskhladze et al. eds., *Periplous*, London, 2000, p. 267, fig. 3]. The other side of the Ancona parody shows a satyr family; the satyr on the left seems to be playing with a young satyr child with his maenad-mother to the right. Pelias or Papposilenos was triumphantly rejuvenated but because this is the world of satyrs and comic exaggeration, he has not become a youthful satyr in his twenties, but a satyr boy. The rejuvenation was a little too successful! Compare two column-kraters attributed to the same painter both depicting Jason and the golden fleece, but one shows Jason [New York, M. M. A., 34.11.7, *ARV*², 524.28; G. Hafner, Jason, Frauen angenehm, *RdA*, Suppl. 16, Rome, 1995, pl. 17] whe-

reas the other shows a satyr instead of Jason and Dionysos instead of Athena [Bologna, Mus. Civ. Arch., 190, *ARV*², 524.27; B. Seidensticker et al. eds., *Das griechische Satyrspiel*, Darmstadt, 1999, pl. 12 b]. Compare *lekythos* showing a satyr pulling a youth from a cave to three seated goddesses [Tübingen, Eberhard-Karls-Universität, Arch. Inst., D68, *ABL*, 117.229; *CVA*, Tübingen, 3, pl. 47.1-4] to a neck-amphora fr. in Copenhagen [Nat. Mus., 13440, *ABV*, 86.13; *LIMC*, VIII, pl. 106, s.v. "Paridis iudicium" 7]. Compare the Theban *papposilenoi* seated in front of the sphinx on a *stamnos* in Würzburg [Univ., Martin von Wagner Mus., ZA20, on loan from Tokyo, coll. Fujita; *LIMC*, VIII, pl. 771, s.v. "Silenoi" 160] to the usual scene on a hydria in Basel, *Antikenmus. und Sammlung Ludwig*, BS411; *CVA*, Basel, *Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig*, 1, pl. 48.1-3. See also a *pelike* in Paris, Louvre, G228, *ARV*², 250.14, 254; *CVA*, Paris, *Musée du Louvre*, 6, III. Ic. 34-35, pl. 44.1, 45.2-3.8.

130. *ARV*², 654.13, 1572, 1664; after L. Caskey, J. D. Beazley, *Attic Vase Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston, 1931-63, II, pl. 45, 85, p. 38.



22. Red-figure neck-amphora. Boston, Mus. Fine Arts, 76.46



23. Red-figure neck-amphora. Munich, Antikensammlungen, J 1187.

losers' eyes with their hands¹³¹, all the way to another stone called a *dioros*. This game is represented in both black- and red-figure. On a neck-amphora in Copenhagen¹³², two ithyphallic satyrs are playing *ephedrismos*. One of them is carrying the other on his back, his eyes covered by the carried satyr. He is walking towards the *dioros*. It is somewhat incongruous yet nonetheless comical to find satyrs playing a human game. On the neck-amphora in Boston (fig. 22)

131. Poll., *Onomast.*, 9.119.

132. Nat. Mus., 99, *ARI*^o, 287.24; *Ant. Kunst*, 37, 1994, p. 1, pl. 11.4.

produced a little earlier than the *oinochoe* in Berlin, two satyrs seem to be in the middle of a game of *ephedrismos*. A third, with a sprig in hand, is running after them, holding onto the tail of the carried satyr. On the other side of the vase a satyr leans on a staff. The difference between this depiction and other representations of satyrs and humans playing *ephedrismos*, is that the satyr being carried is an elderly white haired papposilenos. No depiction of *ephedrismos* ever shows an old man or a papposilenos. There is, however, another very common mythological scene in which an old man is carried on a warrior's back: Aineas fleeing Troy in flames with his son Askanios running beside him and his father Anchises on his back. This scene is usually depicted in black-figure but is also present in red-figure. Anchises' hair is usually white, to indicate his advanced years, and hence his inability to run beside his son. On a neck-amphora in Munich (fig. 23)¹³³, women are fleeing beside the main protagonists: Aineas is running while carrying his father. Askanios, is running after them, holding onto his father's leg. On a neck-amphora in Würzburg¹³⁴, a fleeing Aineas is carrying Anchises and bends down to take his son by the arm. He is leaving a building to his left, perhaps representing Troy. Most of the scenes in black-figure show Anchises mounted piggy-back fashion on Aineas. In red-figure, as on a red-figure hydria in Naples¹³⁵, Anchises' position has changed: he is back to back with Aineas, who holds him from the chest. Askanios walks beside his father. The scene depicted on the Boston neck-amphora is burlesque. Decent and heroic figures, such as Aineas and Anchises, as well as a tragic situation, such as leaving a destroyed and burning Troy, are comically debased by the use of satyrs. The painter's visual game is magnified and the subsequent amusement heightened by reference to satyrs playing (the human) *ephedrismos* on the one hand and the epic flight of Aineas on the other.

On a hydria in Champaign-Urbana¹³⁶, Herakles strides to the left, carrying apples in his left arm and with his right waves his club above his head. Three women stand in the centre of the scene. To the right, a snake is coiled around a fruit tree bearing apples. This scene depicts a version of one of Herakles' deeds: to bring back to Eurystheus the golden apples of the Garden of the Hesperides. In some depictions Atlas helps Herakles¹³⁷, in others the Hesperides themselves offer him the apples. Our hydria shows the latter version. Traditionally, the guardian of the tree was a fierce dragon with a hundred heads, an offspring of Typhon and Echidna. In some depictions, were it not for the apples and the presence of the young Hesperides, a viewer could confuse this scene with the hydra of Lerna. This is why the monster is often depicted as a snake. Sometimes, Herakles is shown attacking the monster without the help of the Hesperides. On a fragmentary volute-krater in Malibu¹³⁸, Atlas, at the far right, stands holding up the sky, Herakles, naked except for his lionskin, approaches the apple tree of

133. *ABV*, 392.10 (Museum copyright).

134. Univ. Martin von Wagner Mus., 218, *ABV*, 316.2 (in the Beazley Archive Database, no. 301643).

135. *Mus. Arch. naz.*, H2422, *ARV*², 189.74, 1632; *LIMC*, VIII, pl. 401-402, s.v. "Ilioupersis" 11.

136. Krannert Art Mus., 70.8.4; *CVA*, Urbana-

Champaign, Krannert Art Museum, pl. 22; *LIMC*, V, pl. 288, s.v. "Hesperides" 7.

137. As in literature: see Apollod., 1.3.51; 2.5.10-11; Paus. 2.13.8; 5.18.4.

138. Getty Mus., 77.AE.11, *ARV*², 187.52, 206.130; *J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*, 4, 1977, p. 64-69, fig. 1-12.



24. *Chous*. London, British Mus., E539.

the Hesperides. A many-headed snake guards it. Herakles approaches from the left, wielding his club with his left hand and is getting ready to pluck the apple with the right. On a *chous* in London (fig. 24)¹³⁹, a satyr, identifiable from his horse tail and ears, his snub nose and scruffy hair and beard, approaches a snake coiled around the trunk of a tree. The satyr wields a club in his right hand and bears a hunter's or a hero's *chlamys* across his left arm and shoulder. The reference to the Hesperides and Herakles is clear from the details of the club, the snake, the tree, and its fruit. To see a satyr in a heroic posture, mimicking Herakles' actions is comical enough, but the painter has altered yet another detail so as to underline his parody. As satyrs are always gluttons, and apples, golden or otherwise, would not interest them, the painter has drawn wine jugs in place of the expected apples.

The dynamics of parody operate here in two distinct directions: Herakles is mocked but so is the satyr. Visual parody is a game and, as such, does not harm its original and serious model. When satyrs are substituted for heroes or gods, the latter are not really the objects of fun. Rather it is the satyr who is ridiculed. Moreover, to parody a model is to pay homage to it. While it is always a certain temptation to seek explanations in literature which could unravel the oddity of certain pictures, such pictures can be explained satisfactorily more often than not through parody, through comparison with other pictures. Satyrs seem to have been the painters' prime and preferred choice in parody and other kinds of humour. The centrality of the satyr in this context is not so difficult to comprehend. As farcical mythological characters, satyrs do things that men cannot do. As iconographical figures they play with pictures, but, being almost human, they also resemble men in many ways and act out men's fantasies. On the other hand, they must endure the many foibles they have been given, such as boast-

139. *ARI*⁶, 776.2 (Courtesy of the British Museum).

fulness and cowardice. Men laugh *at* them rather than laugh *with* them. They are used in the parody of the *Polis* to debase much human activity, but at the same time they do not really disturb the social order.

Students of ancient Athens have long known that the Greeks were humorous in literature, but the diversity of humour in Athenian vase-painting is equally impressive. Even if it seems that some painters, in Athens, were more prone to depict humour than others (the Nikosthenes Painter, the Nikoxenos Painter, the Brygos Painter, the Geras Painter, etc.) and that there are more comic pictures in red-figure than in black-figure, in fact humour was widespread and is found on most shapes of Athenian vases, in black- and in red-figure. When one encounters irregularities or eccentricities in vase-paintings, rather than turning for an explanation to literary evidence, it is crucial to rely on visual interpretation as one's first resource. They may need to be understood as humorous pictures. Vase-painting is made of complex visual codes and these incongruous, surprising and often comical pictures can only be properly understood through comparison to and contrast with the more "usual" pictures. One must be prepared to set aside preconceptions and biases about ancient art and accept the possibility that a vase-painter in antiquity was capable of making a joke in his work! Once this "fact" is accepted, it is only a small step to obtaining a simple, elegant and satisfactory solution to the interpretation of a large number of pictures. In this light, many such pictures will need to be reassessed and reinterpreted. While satyr plays can broaden our knowledge of satyrs and their uses in the Greek *psyche*, they are *not* useful to explain the presence of satyrs in unusual scenes in vase-paintings. The humour in these vases can be compared to the humour of the theatre only in so far as they use the same "types" of mechanisms of humour. Satyrs were used by painters as an excuse for iconographical play. This is especially true in visual puns, where the objects of ridicule are none other than the rules and codes of imagery themselves. Laughter is a moment of rupture with the seriousness of everyday life's expectations, occupations and thoughts. Most of the vases discussed in this paper were produced in Athens and their pictures are understandable only with reference to Athenian vase-painting and Athenian culture and life in its broadest sense. We may venture to say that the Potters quarter in Athens must have been at times a very enjoyable workplace.

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