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ERIK ØSTBY

A Protocorinthian aryballos with a myth scene from Tegea

Abstract

During the preparation of the new exhibition in the Museum of Tegea it was discovered that one composed fragment from a Protocorinthian aryballos with a complicated, figured representation, found during the excavations of the Norwegian Institute at Athens in the Sanctuary of Athena Alea in the 1990s, joined with another fragment found by the French excavation at the same site in the early 20th century. After the join, the interpretation of the scene must be completely changed. The aryballos has two narrative scenes in a decorative frieze: a fight between two unidentified men over a large vessel, and an unidentified myth involving the killing of a horse-like monster by two heroes, with the probable presence of Athena. Possibly this is an otherwise unknown episode from the cycle of the Argonauts, involving the Dioskouroi, perhaps also Jason and Medea. The aryballos was produced by an artist closely related to and slightly earlier than the so-called Huntsmen Painter; he was active in early Middle Protocorinthian II, and demonstrates a skill astonishing for this period in creating a many-figured and sophisticated, narrative composition.

Keywords: Protocorinthian vase painting, Greek narrative art, Greek mythology, Tegea

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Introduction

During the excavations conducted by the Norwegian Institute at Athens from 1990 to 1994 in the Sanctuary of Athena Alea at Tegea, two small sherds from a Middle Protocorinthian (MPC) aryballos came to light. They were found in 1994 by the team directed by Professor Gullög Nordquist in the trench between the foundations for the inner colonnades of the Archaic temple, near the cross-wall between the *cella* and the *pronaos* of the Classical building. The two sherds turned up at different occasions and in dissimilar contexts, but it was immediately realized that they joined and belong to the same vessel.

The reassembled fragment carried part of a complicated, figured decoration with several human figures involved in what was at first understood as a battle scene, with one warrior kneeling with his back turned towards another who was apparently attacking him from behind with his raised spear (*Fig. 1*). This was not an ordinary Protocorinthian duel with warriors standing up and facing one another on equal terms, and the two female figures standing behind the scene, with a male figure squatting on his haunches and playing a flute between them, suggested that this was a mythological battle in a composition similar to the group of Zeus and the titan in the famous pediment from the temple of Artemis on Corfu.[1] With a tentative interpretation on these lines the fragment was presented by this author at the 16th meeting of the International Congress of Classical Archaeology (AIAC) at Boston in 2003 and published as a preliminary paper in the proceedings, in 2005.[2] Later, it was discussed by him in a separate, short section in the first volume of the Tegea publication, issued by the Norwegian Institute in 2014.[3] In those publications, it was presented as new evidence for narrative representations on vase-paintings from the MPC II period, close to works by the Huntsmen Painter, with a tentative suggestion for the interpretation as sketched above.

When that publication appeared, the reassembled sherd had found company. In the autumn of 2013, while the Ephorate of Antiquities in Arcadia was preparing the new exhibition in the renovated museum at Tegea, one of the assistants engaged in this task, Dr Eugenia Zouzoula, had observed that

[1] Frequently illustrated and discussed; see e.g. Schefold 1993, 177, fig. 181d.
[2] Østby 2005.
[3] Østby 2014a. In the catalogue of pottery in the same volume (Voyatzis 2014, 346) the sherd is listed as no. C-PC 72; see also Voyatzis 2014, 340, n. 159.

Fig. 1. The fragments of the aryballos found during the Norwegian excavations. The small fragment from the neck was found in the same context as the two figured sherds, but does not join them. Photograph: author.

Fig. 2. The fragment of the aryballos found by the French mission in the early 20th century. After Voyatzis 1990, pl. 32.

the sherd from our excavation joined with a larger fragment of the same Protocorinthian aryballos in the museum (*Fig. 2*). It had been found by the French mission under Georges Mendel and Charles Dugas who had been excavating in the sanctuary in the years from 1900 to 1910.[4] This piece had since then been on display in the Tegea Museum, and consists of the lower part of the aryballos up to and including some remains of the same figured frieze which occupied most of the surface on the fragment found by us. The aryballos as it has been joined by Dr Zouzoula is now exhibited in the new arrangement of the museum's displays (*Fig. 3*). It is still incomplete, since the upper part with the handle, the neck, the shoulder, and certain parts of the frieze is missing; but the figured frieze is now so complete that earlier misunderstandings can be corrected, and a safer reading be proposed.

The new discovery could at first only be briefly mentioned in a short appendix to the section in the Tegea publication, added in a hurry during the last days before the manuscript had to go to the printer.[5] A full publication of the recomposed vessel was clearly called for, and I thank Dr Zouzoula and the ephor of antiquities in Arcadia, Dr Anna Vasiliki Karapanagiotou, for their kind invitation to take care of this task.[6]

The piece from the French excavation was included in the general publication of Archaic material by Dugas in the *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* of 1921, together with other fragments of Protocorinthian pottery. It did not receive particular attention by him, nor afterwards.[7] What remained of the figured scene on that fragment was too limited for any certain interpretation, but the scene clearly included a four-legged animal with hooves and a long and narrow head, and

[4] Publications: Dugas 1921 (excavation report, and Archaic objects); Dugas *et al.* 1924 (temple and sculpture).

[5] Østby 2014a, 465. The tentative interpretation suggested there, as an early representation of the Calydonian boar-hunt, was premature and must be dismissed. The aryballos is now briefly mentioned, with the new illustration, in the new guide to the Tegea Museum: Karapanagiotou 2017, 68, fig. 66. It was presented by the author at a public lecture in the Norwegian Institute at Athens in the autumn 2017, then without the mythological interpretation suggested here.

[6] Thanks also to the photographer Jeff Vanderpool and the draughtsperson Christina Kolb for providing material for the illustrations *Figs. 3, 5, 6,* and *7* during a short campaign in the autumn of 2016.

[7] Dugas 1921, 420f., no. 329; illustrated 401, fig. 51. The piece is not mentioned by Amyx 1988. It is one out of five fragments from Protocorinthian vessels catalogued by Dugas, one from another aryballos (no. 328; larger, different) and three from oinochoai (nos. 325–327). Voyatzis 1990, 295, pl. 32, includes the piece as no. P67 in a total of nine Protocorinthian vessels from earlier excavations at the site (nos. P64–P72). None of the others has figured decoration.

Fig. 3. The recomposed aryballos, from two sides. Photograph: Jeff Vanderpool.

there was also something left of a person kneeling in front of the animal. Dugas suggested Theseus fighting the Marathonian bull as one possible interpretation, and Herakles with the Nemean lion has been considered by others as a vague possibility.[8] But the animal is neither a bull nor a lion, so these suggestions can easily be dismissed.

The discovery of 2013 does not seriously affect the date and attribution of the recently discovered fragment as proposed in the preliminary publications of 2005 and 2014, but it overthrows the interpretation as a mythical battle. There are still missing parts of some figures, but all are there to some extent, and the general character of the scene cannot be mistaken: it is the slaying of an animal or monster, probably with divine assistance.

The archaeological context

The two joining sherds found in the recent excavation were recovered from the stratigraphical units D1/73 and D1/74. Those units are the third and fourth floor, counting from above, of the five consecutive floors identified in the entrance to the later (called Building 1) of the two early and simple, apsidal cult buildings discovered between and underneath the foundations of the inner colonnades in the Archaic temple (*Fig. 4*).[9] Those floors succeeded one another with short intervals during the lifetime of the building, and they were extensively used for the deposition of votive objects. The archaeological material from Building 1, including the different floor levels in the entrance, is homogeneous of late 8th–early 7th century date, and suggests that it existed during the first quarter and perhaps some time into the second quarter of the 7th century BC.[10] Most of the Protocorinthian pottery from the excavation was found there. The bulk of it has been dated to Early Protocorinthian (EPC), but the certain or probable fragments of aryballoi—only eight, including our sherd—

[8] This was suggested by Dunbabin 1954, 445. The vase is included as a possible representation of the fight with the bull in *LIMC* V (1990), s.v. Herakles, 63 no. 2354, 66 (L. Todisco). Voyatzis 1990, 295, does not discuss the interpretation of the figures.

[9] See Nordquist 2014, 76–141 for the buildings, 98–108 for the stratigraphy of the floors; also Østby 2014b, 19–29.

[10] See the conclusions concerning the material from the building and its date, Nordquist 2014, 116–118.

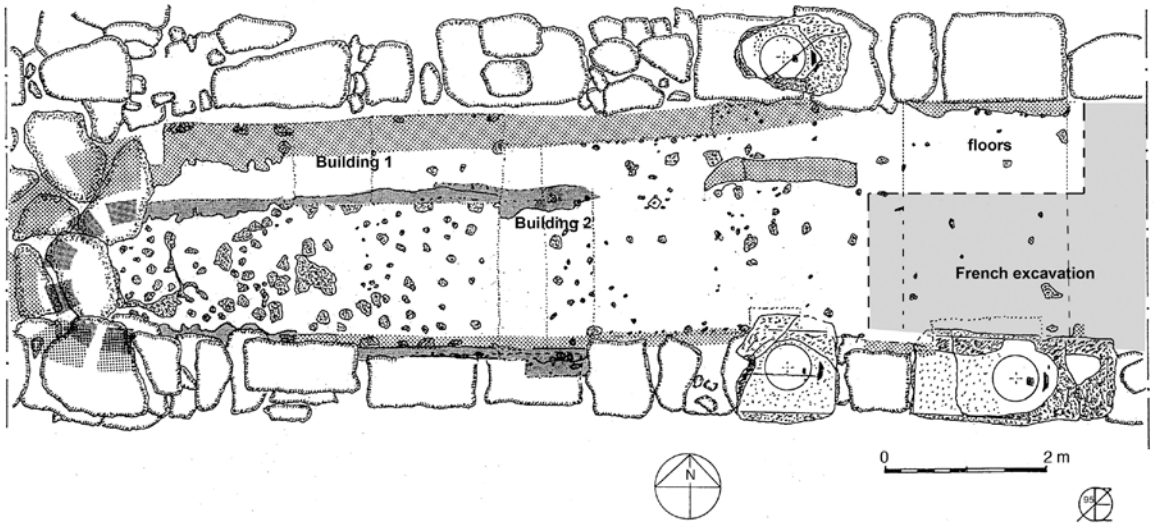

Fig. 4. Simplified plan of the excavation between the parallel foundations for the Archaic colonnades, with the outlines of the two early cult buildings, Building 1 and Building 2. The sherd was found in the area marked "floors", used for votive depositions in the entrance to Building 1. The fragment from the French excavation was probably found in the area marked by grey which in the recent excavations was found backfilled. Drawing: author.

have been assigned to MPC, with some exceptions (one EPC, one EPC–MPC, two MPC–LPC.[11] The approximate date of the destruction is given by another aryballos similar to the figured vase, but with simpler decoration. It was found in one of the post holes from the wall where it had fallen after the post had been removed and before the hole was filled; it gives a *terminus post quem* about 680–670 BC for that destruction, probably not much later.[12] From the circumstances of discovery it is clear that the aryballos with the figured scene was smashed and the sherds deposited in the entrance while the building was in use; but it had then been made quite recently. In the assemblage from that context it is a late item.[13]

There is no record of when and where the piece from the French excavation was found, and no information in their publication of 1921. Most of their 8th–7th century material apparently came from a deposit at the north-eastern corner of the temple, but they also excavated inside the temple in a context where they could have found their fragment.[14] They removed much soil between the Archaic foundations in the temple *cella*, exposing the four preserved *stylobate* blocks for the inner colonnades down to their foundations,[15] and there ought to be, and probably was, Early Archaic material in that soil. Most of that excavation did not go below the level of the platform of rough fieldstones between and under the two parallel foundations in the west end of the *cella*, probably connected with a building earlier than the Archaic temple;[16] but in some places their work went deeper. We could observe that behind the foundation for the cross-wall between the Classical *cella* and the *pronaos* the soil had been removed to considerable depth, in order to expose and study the foundations of that wall, and the resulting trench was afterwards backfilled. This disturbance includes the entire southern part of the entrance to the early 7th-century building, with most of the floors mentioned above.[17] This is probably where the French archaeologists found their part of the aryballos, at a

[11] The Protocorinthian sherd material from the excavation is catalogued by Voyatzis 2014, 320–351, figs. 70–74, pls. 28–29, nos. C-PC 1–72. See Voyatzis 2014, 339f., for a few other sherds with fragments of figures (not narrative), and for general observations on the Protocorinthian material.

[12] The aryballos from the post hole is catalogued as no. C-PC 70 (Voyatzis 2014, 346, 351 fig. 74; Nordquist 2014, 99f., with fig. 36 showing the vessel in its find-spot) and dated by Voyatzis to MPC I. Its shape is closer to globular and probably slightly earlier than the figured vase.

[13] See below, with note 58, for a discussion of its date.

[14] See Dugas 1921, 337f., on the layer called "*Couche B*" at the north-eastern corner of the temple and the material deposited there. The same layer was found and excavated inside the temple, but there is no specific mention of Archaic material found there. See comments by Voyatzis 1990, 23–26; Østby 2014b, 29f.

[15] Dugas *et al*. 1924, 11–13, explained those blocks and foundations as remains of an Early Christian church. They were identified as remains of an Early Archaic temple by Østby 1986, and this was confirmed during the excavation in the 1990s (Nordquist 2014, 71–73; Østby 2014b, 35).

[16] Dugas (see note 15 above) misunderstood this platform as a foundation for the cult statue in the Classical temple, but it must be earlier than the Archaic foundations which cross it. See Østby 2014b, 33f., where it is explained as a feature of a pre-Archaic building earlier than the Archaic temple, but later than the apsidal cult buildings 1 and 2.

[17] See for the disturbed areas Nordquist 2014, 58f. with fig. 2, and the general plan (pl. 1 after p. 118) for a precise definition of the disturbance behind the cross-wall. Some original stratigraphy remained under the disturbed area, and is discussed pp. 108f.

level corresponding to those where our sherds turned up, and at a horizontal distance up to about 2–2.50 m further south. Missing parts of the aryballos may still be recovered in layers which have not yet been excavated.

Description and interpretation

The aryballos, as it was assembled in 2013, is now exhibited as item 21 in case 10, room 4, in the Tegea Museum. The two joining sherds found by the Norwegian excavation carry the inventory number 3453; the piece found by the French mission has a different number, 0940.

The vessel is now preserved from the foot up to its shoulder, which starts bending back on the top of the joined sherd from our excavation. It has now a maximum height of 4.5 cm, and its maximum diameter can be calculated as 3.6 cm. The foot, with a slightly projecting rim, is about 0.2 cm high and has a diameter of 1.5 cm. The wall of the vessel is 0.4 cm thick. There are no traces of the attachment of the handle or the neck on what is now preserved of the vessel. The clay is a typical Corinthian very pale brown (Munsell 10YR 8/2). The paint is jet black, but in some places thinned to darkish brown; some flaking has taken place, but this does not create serious problems for the reading of the figures. There is a small area of damage on the surface to the left of the join between our two sherds, involving the thigh of the rear male figure and part of the surface between him and the woman standing behind him. There is no trace of additional colours (red, or white) (*Figs. 3, 5, 6, 7*).

A small fragment from the neck probably of the same aryballos was found in our excavation, in the same stratigraphical context as the two sherds with the figured frieze (illustrated *Fig. 1*). It does not join the other fragments, has not received a separate inventory number, and is not currently on display in the museum.[18] It is 0.8 cm high, 1.2 cm wide and 0.2 cm thick, and its reconstructed diameter is about 1.5 cm. The fragment carries the upper right part of a dark-dot rosette, with four dots at the points of as many crossing spikes. The total number of spikes would be five or six.

The decoration of the aryballos is organized in three zones, framed and separated by groups of three horizontal lines. The lowest zone is 1.5 cm high, including the three lines at the bottom; above them, it carries a double row of vertical rays of alternatively full and 2/3 height. The rays are sloppy and coarse, with irregular size and shape, irregularly wide feet and touching or overlapping the framing lines above and below. Above them a low frieze, 1.0 cm high including the lines below, carries three dogs with long, bushy tails chasing a hare. The animals are drawn as silhouettes, without incised outlines: on the hare incision is used only for the circular eye, on the dogs incised lines also describe their mouths, separate the heads from the necks, and define the muscles of the forelegs where they join the body. Another group of more irregular lines, two, three and at one point four, separates this frieze from the principal one, the full height of which, 1.9 cm, is preserved on the joined fragment from the recent excavation; it includes the framing lines below, and the first line and a tiny part of the second line above. Most probably there were also here three lines; the lower is overlapped by at least one figure. This fragment carries four complete or almost complete human figures and parts of two more.

Everything below the frieze is preserved on the fragment from the French excavation (*Fig. 2*), but it has only the lowest part of the figured frieze, with an interruption which has now been completed by the new fragment. The part which is missing from one of the male figures on the sherd from the Norwegian excavation is preserved on the other fragment, which also has the head and most of the body with legs and part of the tail of an animal, and the feet of three more human figures. The figures in the frieze are mostly drawn as silhouettes in black-figure with and without the support of incised outlines, applied without any evident system. There is also some use of painted outlines for the dress of the two women. Incised details in the figures are used very sparingly, mostly for the circular eyes. There are no filling ornaments in the empty space between the figures, and no traces of writing.

There are nine figures in the frieze, organized in two separate compositions. The principal group consists of six humans, four males and two females, all turned right facing a large animal which is being killed at the extreme right of the scene. Of the second group, separating the beginning and the end of the principal group, only the legs and feet of two figures are preserved; they are facing one another above a large vessel on the ground between them. The group is wide, covering almost one third of the entire length of the frieze, and it is placed at a point where the uppermost of the three lines underneath has been suppressed. Perhaps this is where the handle was fixed to the shoulder of the vessel. Both men are striding out, the man to the left with an exceptionally wide step, wider than any other figure in the frieze. Very little remains of his legs above the feet. The man to the right has lifted the heel of his rear foot, and his legs are preserved to above his knees. The advanced feet of the two men almost meet, but there is sufficient space between them for the low, conical foot of the vessel and the beginning of a wide bowl above it. Possibly it is a krater or a hydria, apparently with downturned handles fixed to the

[18] It is catalogued by Voyatzis 2014, 346, together with the other fragment of the aryballos; also Østby 2014a, 459f., fig. 1.

Fig. 5. Unrolled photograph of the aryballos. Photograph: Jeff Vanderpool.

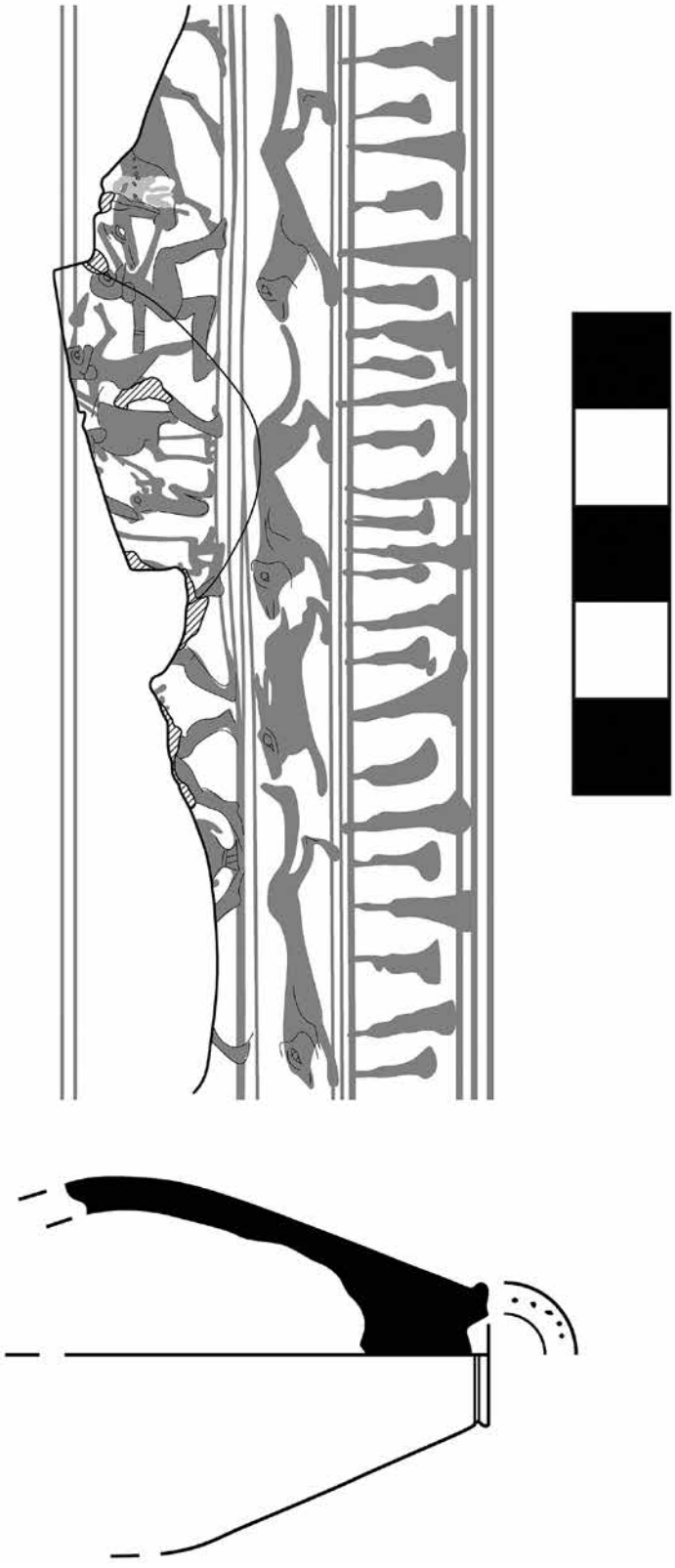

Fig. 6. Unrolled drawing of the aryballos. Drawing: Christina Kolb.

Fig. 7. Detail of the aryballos at Tegea: the central group, with the two women and the killing of the horse-monster. Photograph: Jeff Vanderpool.

lower part of the bowl.[19] It might be the prize of some contest, or the object they are literally fighting over.

The two men are not directly involved with the principal scene, and they may not have a specific identity. Protocorinthian art offers two parallels, two boxers on an EPC sherd from Ithaka and two wrestlers on an MPC aryballos from the Kerameikos in Athens; these couples have no specific identity.[20] In the 6th century there was apparently an iconographical tradition connecting such pictures with contests between the Argonauts at the funeral games for Pelias, a popular subject in Archaic art with a wide range of iconographical patterns.[21]

One of the shield-bands of bronze with mythological subjects from Olympia has such a representation with the names of Admetos and Mopsos (*Fig. 8*),[22] and according to Pausanias' description of the Kypselos chest in the Heraion at Olympia a fist-fight between the same two heroes at the same occasion was also represented there, probably in the same simple composition; inscriptions must have identified them since Pausanias could report their names.[23] Inscriptions would be necessary to define two men engaged in such fights; without attached names, or other indications, such boxing or wrestling matches would normally be understood as generic representations, not as mythological. In this picture, two details suggest that a particular fight might be intended. On the shield-bands and elsewhere, when there is an object between the fight-

[19] There is no clear evidence for this shape otherwise in 7th-century art. Bowls on high, conical stands do occasionally occur on Protocorinthian vases; this vessel seems to be of one piece, with a lower foot. See Shanks 1999, 77f., table 3.1, for a discussion of cauldrons, tripods, and stands in Protocorinthian vase-painting. Seven examples are listed in the table, nine are shown in the drawing Shanks 1999, 80 fig. 3.5; the shapes of the two vessels at the right end have clear affinities with ours.

[20] The sherd from Aetos on Ithaka: Benton 1934–1935, 108 no. 1, fig. 14; the aryballos in the Kerameikos Museum, Athens, no. 78: Amyx 1988, 25 no. B-2 ("near the Huntsmen Painter"); Benson 1995b, 174, pl. 41b. Two wrestlers are fighting on the neck of the slightly later Protoattic amphora from Kynosarges (National Museum Athens, no. 14497; Cook 1934–1935, 196–198, pl. 56).

[21] See for this subject *LIMC* VII (1994), 277–280, s.v. Peliou Athla (R. Blatter); Vojatzi 1982, 100–107 (with catalogue 121–126, nos. 98–116); Bol 1989, 76–78; Schefold 1993, 273–278. *LIMC* VII cit., 279 nos. 10–16, lists some possible representations with this composition; from the 7th century the list includes only the wrestlers on the amphora from Kynosarges (no. 10, see note 20 above), but the Protocorinthian aryballos from Kerameikos (see note 20 above) could also belong here. For those pictures where a tripod is shown between the fighters, Apollo and Herakles fighting for the Delphian tripod might be considered (critically discussed by Fittschen 1969, 28–32; see also Kunze 1950, 113–117); the vessel rules out that interpretation here.

[22] Museum Olympia, no. B 1010; Kunze 1950, 178f., pl. 14, IIIa; *LIMC* I (1981), 219f. no. 8, fig. in the text, s.v. Admetos (M. Schmidt); Schefold 1993, 273 fig. 294bis. Another of these pictures (Museum Olympia, no. B 4475**;** *LIMC* I cit., no. 9; *LIMC* VII (1994), 279 no. 16, s.v. Peliou Athla (R. Blatter); Bol 1989, 79f. n. 378, fig. 22) has letters which perhaps indicate Admetos, but not his opponent, certainly not Mopsos. Other 6th-century shield-bands with such couples show anonymous wrestling and boxing matches: Kunze 1950, 192f., pls. 11, IIe (wrestling, no object between); 14, IIIa; 66, XLIIb (fist-fights, both with tripods). Pl. 47, XVIIIe, has the same composition with Herakles, Apollo, and the tripod; see Kunze 1950, 115f.

[23] Paus. 5.17.10; *LIMC* I (1981), 219 no. 7, s.v. Admetos (M. Schmidt); *LIMC* VII (1994), 278f., no. 7, s.v. Peliou Athla (R. Blatter). According to Pausanias a flute player was standing between the two, so in this case probably there was not an object there.

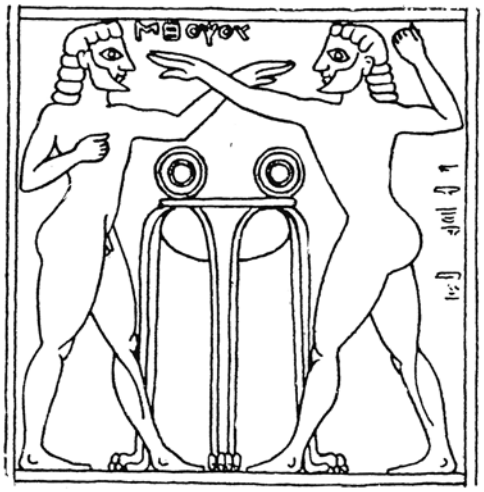

Fig. 8. Drawing of shield-band picture from Olympia, with the fight between Mopsos and Admetos. After Kunze 1950, pl. 14, IIIa.

ers it is always a tripod, it is never a vessel.[24] In this respect the Tegea aryballos is an exception, possibly with a meaning which cannot now be identified. Exceptional in this material, and possibly significant, is also the emphasis on the left-hand fighter by his wider step, perhaps suggesting that he will win the contest.[25] But if a specific event is intended, it could only be identified if there was a narrative or associative connection with the principal scene, to which these elements might give the clue.

Behind the fighter to the right, the principal group begins with the legs and feet of a male person. He is moving to the right in a wide step; his foremost foot almost covers one foot of the woman in front of him. The movement and the size of this man—he seems to outsize also the two huntsmen facing the animal—make it clear that he is not another member of the conversation group with the two women; he is concerned with what is happening at the right end of the frieze, and is perhaps rushing there to take part in the action. In that case, he is coming too late.

This could not be an ordinary hunt since two women are present, standing in front of this man (*Fig. 7*). Best preserved is the woman to the right, dressed in a long garment falling to her feet and outlined by a thick, black line without incision; behind her knee there is a break in that line. The upper part of her body is covered in a large shawl, defined as a black surface outlined by incision without inner details. She lifts it out in front of her by a raised arm, also covered by the shawl; that shawl is falling down to her knees, and a flap of it is hanging down in front of her. Her small feet are visible under the hem of the garment. Her body is turned right as the other human figures, but what remains of her head shows that it was turned back; apparently she was talking to the woman standing behind her, or possibly greeting the man rushing up from the left. Her head was painted in black with incised outlines defining her hair falling to the shoulder, as on the men in front of her. Black for the female skin is unexpected, against normal conventions, which had evidently not yet been established.[26] An unidentified, rectangular object of some sort is emerging and pointed downwards in front of her throat, and there is another, smaller object pointing downwards behind her shoulders. A pole rising diagonally from the shawl in front of her is not a part of the normal attire of Protocorinthian women; it is probably the shaft of a spear held by her left hand. This shaft, with its tip, must have continued across the framing lines above. If this is correct, we have an early representation of the goddess Athena, since the same weapon identifies her in other very early representations.[27] Almost all the rare female figures on Protocorinthian vases are goddesses, and this seems to be another such case; it would also, together with Athena blocking the gorgons pursuing Perseus on the famous Protoattic

[24] See for a general discussion of these pictures Fittschen 1969, 28–32, with a list of eight 8th–7th century examples with a tripod, but none with a large vessel; only tripods, or no object, on the items in the list *LIMC* VII (1994), 279 (see note 21; tripods on nos. 12, 13, 14), s.v. Peliou Athla (R. Blatter). There is also a bowl on two feet (tripod?) on the sherd from Ithaka, but no object on the aryballos from the Kerameikos (see note 20).

[25] See the observation by Kunze 1950, 192: "*der Hauptunterschied der anonymen von der mythischen Gruppe beruht auf der genau gleichen Haltung der Kämpfer*". On the shield-band pictures cited in note 22 above Admetos and Apollo have slightly wider steps than their opponents, on the other pictures the postures are identical.

[26] See for a parallel the two confronting women on an MPC aryballos in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (no. 18.91; Benson 1989, 51 no. 3; 1995b, 166, pl. 37d).

[27] The identification as Athena was first proposed by Østby 2005, 540; 2014a, 464. As here, she has only a lance, held vertically, on the Eleusis amphora (Museum Eleusis, no. 2630; *LIMC* II [1984], 958 no. 5, s.v. Athena [P. Demargne]; Schefold 1993, 78 fig. 61). This is the only other narrative representation of her in this early period where she has a weapon—but, as here, no shield. Protocorinthian representations of Athena as a *Palladion* with raised spear and a shield go back to the first quarter of the 7th century; see the discussion in Niemeyer 1960, 20–24, and early representations on a Protocorinthian *lekythos* in Oxford (Ashmolean Museum, no. G 146; *CVA* Oxford 2, pl. 1 (384) nos. 24, 36, 51, p. 59 no. 5; *LIMC* II cit., 965 no. 67) and a krateriskos on Samos (Museum Vathy; *LIMC* II cit., 960 no. 26; both together, Benson 1995b, 164f., fig. 1, and pl. 37a; Shanks 1999, 75 fig. 3.2, and 96 fig. 3.19, 1). Her dress is different from other, early pictures of her, but it is regular for Protocorinthian and early Corinthian women; in a period where the rules of traditional iconography had not yet been established, this is hardly problematic. See for early representations of Athena, most of them without weapons, *LIMC* II cit., 1016f., 1019.

amphora at Eleusis, be one of the first representations of Athena assisting heroes in a deed of violence.[28]

Only the lower part of the body is preserved of the woman standing behind her. Her garment is shorter, leaving more space for larger feet below, and it is drawn with less heavy, painted lines. There is no trace of a shawl on what is left of her body, but a flap in black is hanging down in front of her; this must be a smaller shawl covering only the top of her body. A dark trace in front of the flap, barely visible at the break of the sherd, is possibly from one of her arms raised up in front of her. Nothing of what is preserved in the picture can give a clue to her identity, as another goddess or as a mortal woman; but she has hardly the same status as the probable Athena. The shorter garment may indicate that. A stronger indication is given by a third figure between the two women, completely in black with incision only for his rear outline and the large, circular eye. He is squatting on his haunches playing a flute. He is connected only with the woman in front of him; his head, with no details except for the eye, is raised toward her, and he is physically linked to her by a strong line up from his elbow. Probably this is a rope or chain, defining him unequivocally as her servant and possession, and her as the more important of the two women. He is accompanying the action as flute players twice do in Protocorinthian battle scenes, twice in athletic competitions; on two of these vases the situation is or may be mythological.[29]

The animal which closes the composition to the right is being attacked and killed by two male hunters, both turned right facing their quarry. Both seem to be naked—at least, they do not wear any visible item of clothing or armour—and are represented in essentially the same way. The man who is kneeling on his left knee immediately in front of the animal has a long, rectangular scabbard crossed by two incised lines near its tip, hanging horizontally behind his body. He has full control of the situation and is now dispatching the beast without any further assistance. With his left hand he is grasping something that is growing up from its head, and with his right he holds his sword vertically, thrusting it from below into the throat of the animal. He has already used his weapon to cut open its front, where an oval area is reserved in the body, and some irregular lines and blobs in thinner, reddish paint probably indicate its entrails. The other man, behind him, covers the full height of the frieze: his head overlaps the horizontal framing line above, and the foot of his left leg crosses the first line underneath. He comes running up and wields his long spear with his raised, right arm—certainly his right, closer to us, although the shaft of the spear goes behind his head, not in front of it. He is aiming his weapon toward the head of the animal, immediately above the head of his companion; his left arm is stretched out in front of him, taking aim. Both men are bearded, with hair falling to the shoulder and indicated with incision lines surrounding the black surfaces. Hair and beard frame their faces, which were probably also covered with black (although most of it has flaked away),[30] and with an incised, large and circular eye as the only detail; there are only vague indications of the noses, none of the mouths. Both men have enormously long legs compared to their compressed trunks. Incision is used to define only some parts of their bodies, and different parts on the two figures.

The principal figure, focus of all attention and action, is the animal, turned left with its hooved legs stretched out in front as if resisting against a pull towards left, or perhaps attempting to escape from the confrontation. The head is long and narrow, with incisions for the large eye and the brows above, and a long, horizontal line for the mouth; there is also a tiny incision for the nostril. On the top of the head, where there could be a horn or an antler, there is a mushroom-like growth ending in a globe on top of a vertical stalk; it is distinguished by its stronger black colour from the hand which grasps it (*Fig. 7*). On its flank the animal has a horizontal line of small, pricked holes, indicating perhaps a line of dots. The long, curved object with a fluffy upper outline behind the hind-leg does not end in a hoof, and it does not have a bend at the knee as the leg in front; it is not the other hind-leg, set back. It can only be understood as the end of a long and furry tail, sweeping the ground behind. The two legs which are shown, must be understood as covering the inner legs in the same positions; the beast is not moving.

[28] See Shanks 1999, 73, where only six females are accepted—but on very strict criteria—out of a total of 360 human figures on Protocorinthian vases. Three of those are the goddesses on the Chigi oinochoe (Museo Nazionale di Villa Giulia, Rome, inv. no. 22679; *CVA* Villa Giulia 1, pl. 1, 4; *LIMC* II (1984), 997 no. 405, s.v. Athena (P. Demargne); Amyx 1988, 32 no. A-3; Schefold 1993, 127 fig. 120a; Hurwit 2002, 12f., fig. 8; D'Acunto 2013), two are the *Palladion* figures mentioned note 27 above. After the Eleusis amphora (see note 27 above) there are occasional representations later in the century of Athena assisting Perseus (ivory from Samos, Museum Vathy, no. E 1, *LIMC* II cit., 1003 no. 503**;** Attic bowl from Aigina, formerly Staatliche Museen Berlin inv. no. F 1682, *CVA* Berlin 1, 36–39 pls. 46–47 (93); *ABV* 5 no. 4; *LIMC* II cit., 958 no. 6; both, Schefold 1993, 85–86 figs. 67–68), but such representations remain rare until the Late Archaic period. See for these developments Beckel 1961; *LIMC* II cit., 1026f.

[29] A flute player is included on the battle scenes of the famous Chigi oinochoe (see note 28 above; D'Acunto 2013, 73 and 100–104 on the flute player) and on an aryballos from Perachora possibly with Paris killing Achilles (see note 62 below). A flute player is also present at a chariot-race on an aryballos in Bonn (Akademisches Kunstmuseum no. 1669; D'Acunto 2013, 26f., pl. 22, 1); another was present at the fist-fight between Mopsos and Admetos on the Kypselos chest in Olympia (Paus. 5.17.10; see note 23 above).

[30] The faces were supposed to be left unpainted Østby 2014a, 459f., but closer observation in 2016 has revealed faint traces of black.

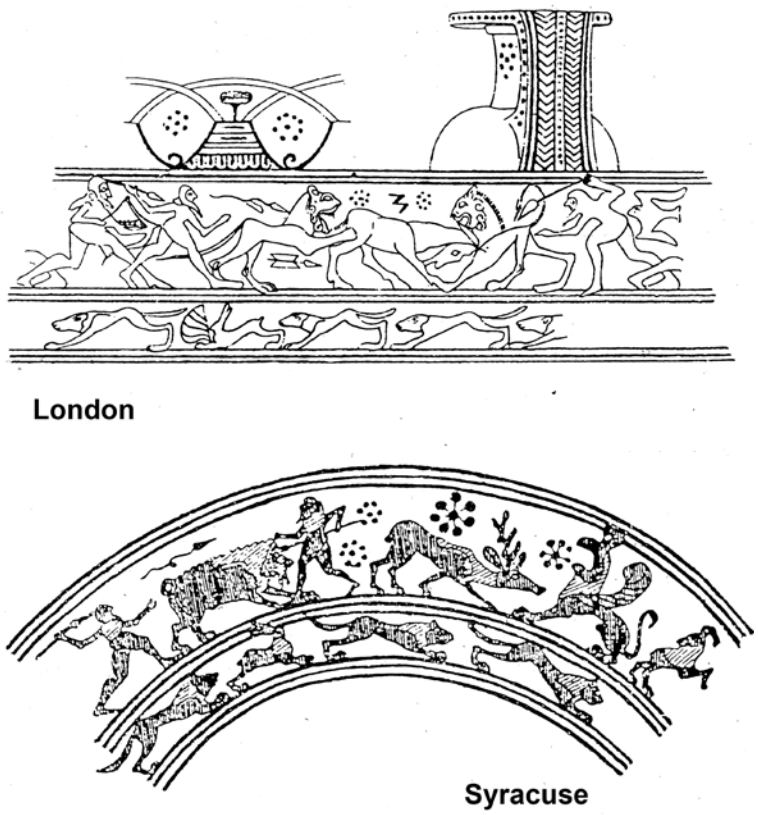

Fig. 9. Drawings of the figured scenes on the two aryballoi by the Huntsmen Painter in London and Syracuse. After Friis Johansen 1923, pl. 29.

The animal does not have a clear, zoological identity.[31] The hooved legs could be those of a bull, a boar, a horse, or a deer or fawn; but the head is certainly not that of a bull or a boar, as they are frequently represented on Protocorinthian vases, and their tails are completely different. The mouth has no tusks, as a boar would have. A horse could have such a head and body, but it should have a mane, and the long, curved tail is not a normal Protocorinthian horse-tail; Protocorinthian horses can have long tails, but they are smooth and vertical.[32] There is no parallel anywhere for animals with such tails on Protocorinthian vases. The pricked dots on the body could suggest a deer or a fawn, without antlers, and the head is quite similar to such animals on other vases;[33] but they do not have much of a tail at all. The identity problem is not limited to the tail. The object on its head can best be compared with a distinctive growth which is regular on the Greek griffin protomes of bronze in the Orientalizing period; it has been explained as a misunderstanding of a tuft of hair on the heads of Oriental griffins.[34] Griffins are quite frequent on Protocorinthian vases, and they have this knob (one is shown on *Fig. 9: Syracuse*), but it is not present on other beasts or monsters. If this is the same feature, it seems to define an animal with an unclear, mixed identity as some kind of fabulous monster, akin to the griffins, with a body close to, but not identical with, a horse. Most other such monsters include some part of a human body; this figure is one of the rare exceptions, composed only of animal parts, as the griffins and the *chimairai*.[35] But in difference from those, whose definitive and traditional shapes were established almost from the outset, this seems to be an isolated attempt to give shape to a being without a clear, visual definition; it is not part of a tradition.[36] The beast does not give the impression of being dangerous; it is not aggressive or threatening, at least not any more, as it is leaning back without making any effort to defend itself. But having it killed is evidently considered so important that not only two heroes, but also two women, one of them probably the goddess Athena, are involved.

Clearly this is a narrative scene, and it is mythological; the abnormal character of the beast, and the probable presence of Athena, allow no other conclusion. The key to the story is the animal; the 7th-century customer would recognize it, and through it the story that is represented. That key is lost to us, for we do not know enough about the stories circu-

[31] See for Protocorinthian representations of animals Friis Johansen 1923, 134f., and the plates.

[32] A horse with a similar head, no evident mane, and an unusually long, but differently shaped and draped tail, is represented on an aryballos from the Fusco cemetery in Syracuse (Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi, Fusco Grave 85: Shanks 1999, 96 fig. 3.19, 2; Amyx 1988, 25 no. B-3—"near the Huntsmen Painter").

[33] As on the Huntsmen aryballos in Syracuse (note 51 below, *Fig. 9*), from the same artistic environment.

[34] See for different explanations of these knobs Jantzen 1955, 46f.; Herrmann 1979, 12 with n. 11; Boardman 2002, 131.

[35] Griffins on Protocorinthian vessels: Friis Johansen 1923, 131, pls. 29, 1b; 34, 2; 37, 5; 38, 2a–b.4; for early griffins in general, Dierichs 1981. Shanks 1999, 102–105, discussing monsters, stresses their character of mixed beings; in the table 3.6 p. 104 this beast would be grouped together with other animal monsters, those without any human features. Most monsters in this group are winged, single-species figures (winged horses, winged goats, winged lions); mixed are griffins (who dominate) and *chimairai*, only the latter lacking wings. See for the early development of the *chimaira LIMC* III (1986), 256–259 s.v. Chimaira (A. Jacquemin); Protocorinthian and early Corinthian examples: 250–253 nos. 16–22, 38, 70, and Schefold 1993, 90–93 figs. 71–78.

[36] As could be expected in this period of lively development and experiment, there were also other aborted attempts to create monsters attested only in one example: e.g. the proto-*chimaira* with a human head on its back on an aryballos in Boston (Museum of Fine Arts no. 95.11; Amyx 1988, 33f., pl. 11, 2; Shanks 1999, 103 fig. 3.21; Benson 1995b, 174, pl. 41e).

lating in the Corinthian environment in the early 7th century BC to identify this beast. But a possible interpretation can perhaps be approached from a different angle if the two warriors killing the animal, who are so similar that they might be twins, actually are to be understood as such. In that case they would be the Dioskouroi. They are ancient figures in religion and mythology, known to Homer, but narrative texts involving them are only known from much later sources.[37] The first possible, but discussed illustrations of them go back to the early 7th century, but no certain ones appear until the early 6th, with two metopes from the Sikyonian *monopteros* at Delphi.[38] In later art they appear in different connections which never found fixed, iconographical patterns, but the only one which it seems possible to consider here is their participation in the expedition of the Argonauts.[39] There are references to this story in Homer and Hesiod, brief and suggesting that the audience is expected to be familiar with it, so it is clearly older than them;[40] but our later, literary evidence is limited to an extensive, but selective account in Pindar's *Pythian ode* 4 (vv. 170–253) until the *Argonautika* by Apollonios Rhodios, in the early 3rd century BC.[41] Through the figures of Jason and Medea the story was relevant in the Corinthian atmosphere, and it must have been treated in a poem involving them by the Corinthian epic poet Eumelos, who was active in the late 8th–early 7th century BC.[42] But it is not much used in art, it never developed a standard iconography, and there are no certain illustrations from it before the early 6th century.[43]

If the event illustrated on this vase is taken from the story of the Argonauts, it is not one that has found a place in any of the later text sources available to us for that cycle. Pindar as well as Apollonios Rhodios include the Dioskouroi in their lists of the participants, but there is no mention of them elsewhere in Pindar's account; Apollonios Rhodios knows them only for the memorable fist-fight between Polydeukes and the Bebrykian king Amykos, and in a passage where they ask the gods for a passage for the Argo to find Kirke and get a purification from her.[44] If they had been more actively involved in early versions of the myth, in episodes which were later for some reason forgotten or omitted, the Tegea aryballos might show such an episode. If this is correct, possible names come up also for the two partly preserved figures to the left: Medea behind Athena, and Jason running up behind her. 7th-century art, also Corinthian, knew these two figures, also in situations not known from literary sources.[45] There are also possible associa-

[37] They are first mentioned in Hom. *Il.* 3.236–242 (not present among the Greeks at Troy) and *Od.* 11.298–303 (exchanging life and death day by day between them). They are not known to Hesiod; the Homeric hymn to them (no. 33) is short and without any narrative content. See for the myths concerning them *RE* 5 (1905), 1112–1122 s.v. Dioskuren (E. Bethe).

[38] See for the representations of them in ancient art *LIMC* III (1986), 567–593 s.v. Dioskouroi (A. Hermary). Most of the possible 7th-century representations show them involved with Helena; see *LIMC* IV (1988), 505–507 s.v. Helene (L. Kahil). These objects include a Protocorinthian lekythos in Oxford (Ashmolean Museum no. G 146; *LIMC* IV cit., 512 no. 56; see also note 27 above) and a bronze corslet in Olympia, probably Cretan (Museum Olympia; *LIMC* III cit., 582 no. 175; *LIMC* IV cit., 512 no. 58). A special, much-discussed case is the Protocorinthian aryballos by the Ajax Painter in the Louvre (no. CA 617; *CVA* Louvre 8, 13f., III Ca, pl. 14, 1–4; *LIMC* III cit., 582 no. 174; *LIMC* IV cit., 507 no. 28; Amyx 1988, 23 no. A-1; Friis Johansen 1923, 143f., pl. 22, 1). Schefold 1993, 122–126, figs. 114–119, discusses these and a few other possible examples from Crete and Olympia (figs. 117–119; symmetrical groups similar to the corslet), and accepts them with a reserve, but they are not included in the lists *LIMC* III and IV citt. None of these identifications is certain; see severe criticism by Fittschen 1969, 161–165 (with a list of 13 possibly relevant items), and note 65 below for the problems concerning the Louvre aryballos. On the Sikyonian metopes they are on horseback in front of the ship Argo, on foot raiding cattle with the sons of Aphaireus (Museum Delphi, inv. nos. 1322–1323; *LIMC* III cit., 585f. nos. 215, 218; Vojatzi 1982, 40–48, 112 nos. 26–29; Schefold 1993, 264f. figs. 283–285); they could be represented in both ways, as the scene demanded (so also on the less certain, earlier examples).

[39] Representations of the Dioskouroi with the Argonauts: *LIMC* III (1986), 586 nos. 218–223 s.v. Dioskouroi (A. Hermary; the Delphi metope n. 38, and a few 5th–4th century red-figured vases). Early representations of them in other contexts (the Calydonian boar-hunt, with the Leukippides and the Aphairetides, or with Helena) are not relevant for this picture.

[40] Hom. *Od.* 12.69–72; Hes. *Theog.* 992–1002; Huxley 1969, 60. See for the literary sources still best *RE* 2 (1896), s.v. Argonautai, 743–787 (O. Jessen); updated and concentrated on the Archaic period, Vojatzi 1982, 11–22; Braswell 1988, 7–19.

[41] See on Pindar's account the commentaries Vojatzi 1982, 20f.; Braswell 1988. For Apollonios Rhodios, see e.g. the commentary by Fränkel 1968.

[42] Very little is known about this author, who was active after about 730 BC. See *RE* 6 (1909), 1080f., s.v. Eumelos (E. Bethe); Will 1955, 81–129; Huxley 1969, 60–79; Schefold 1993, 261–263; Debiasi 2015. In his epos *Korinthiaka*, as referred by Pausanias (2.3.10–11; see Huxley 1969, 64; Vojatzi 1982, 15f.; Braswell 1988, 10f.), Medea was brought back from Kolchis to Corinth as legitimate heir to the position of ruling queen, and Jason ruled through her. Consequently, Eumelos must have written something about the expedition of the Argonauts, but there is no evidence for how, or how much.

[43] For the Argonauts in ancient art, see *LIMC* I (1984), 591–599 s.v. Argonautoi (R. Blatter). For early representations possibly connected with the story, see also Vojatzi 1982, and Schefold 1993, 263–269. Vojatzi 1982, 48–51, also discusses some possible pre-Archaic representations. None seems certain before the metopes from the Sikyonian *monopteros* at Delphi; see note 38 above.

[44] In the lists of the participants: Pindar *Pyth.* 4, 171–173 (mentioned only as sons of Zeus, not by their names), and Ap. Rhod. 1.146–150. The fight between Polydeukes and Amykos and the ensuing battle: Ap. Rhod. 2.1–163, and briefly on the same event also 2.756, 795–810; their initiative for a visit to Kirke, 4.588–594. (See Fränkel 1968 for commentaries to these passages.) On a few 5th–4th century Attic red-figure vases they are shown involved in the death of Talos, in Crete: *LIMC* III (1986), 586 nos. 220–222 s.v. Dioskouroi (A. Hermary). Apollonios Rhodios does not mention them in that connection (4.1638–1688).

[45] Jason in the mouth of the dragon appears on two small Corinthian vases of the late 7th century, in Bonn and on Samos: *LIMC* V (1990), s.v. Iason, 632f., no. 30 (alabastron, Akademisches Kunstmuseum, no. 860) and no. 31 (aryballos, Museum Vathy, nos. 3431, 3490+; J. Neils); both, Vojatzi 1982, 89–91, 118 nos. 59–60. Medea is perhaps represented on

tions from the story of the Argonauts to the two men fighting over the vessel; named Argonauts were shown fighting at the funerary games for Pelias (Mopsos and Admetos, Jason and Peleus), and this general context has also been assumed for others of these early, anonymous wrestlers or boxers.[46] If a specific fight was intended, connected with the Argo expedition and with the participants in the principal scene, one might consider the fight between one of the twins, Polydeukes, and King Amykos. Polydeukes was already in the Homeric epos renowned as a fist-fighter (called πὺξ ἀγαθός: Hom. *Il*. 3.237; *Od*. 11.300), and his fight against Amykos was always remembered in art and literature.[47] But without inscribed names that association could only be a loose one, and the picture would remain open to several different interpretations.

Since our knowledge of early 7th-century art and literature, in Corinth and elsewhere, is so sorely limited, and since it is not with our present knowledge possible to identify the beast, it must be emphasized that the identification of the Dioskouroi, and the connection with the Argonaut epos, can only be a tentative and hypothetical suggestion. But it has the advantage of connecting the picture with a story and with figures known to be familiar and important in the cultural environment where the vase was produced, in the same way as other pictures on slightly later Protocorinthian vases.[48]

Background, painter, and date

No change is needed for the date and attribution suggested in the publications of 2005 and 2014 for the sherd from the recent excavation; those conclusions are confirmed and strengthened by the new situation. In the typological sequence of Protocorinthian pottery the sherd was dated to MPC I, I–II or early II, transitional since there are lingering MPC I techniques (limited and not yet confident use of incision, and still some use of outline painting).[49] The drawing of the figures was from the outset aligned with the works attributed to an artist called the Huntsmen Painter (or *Jägermaler*), but not as another work by the same person.[50] The identity of that painter is based on two closely related aryballoi in London (from Nola) and from Syracuse (both, *Fig. 9*), with two huntsmen killing a boar (Syracuse) or attacking two lions who are mauling a bull (London). A third aryballos, now in Brindisi, has convincingly been connected with them, but not as another work by the same man.[51] Various other vases, mostly aryballoi, have been attached to this group, which has been called the Nola-Falkenhausen Group; it may represent a kind of workshop or family enterprise with some basic common features and several different craftsmen.[52] Proposed dates range between the early and the later part of MPC II (*c*. 675–650 BC).[53] Separating works by individual artists within this group is difficult, and even the two aryballoi in London and Syracuse are not above that discussion.[54]

two early Etruscan vases from Caere: *LIMC* VI (1992), s.v. Medea, 388 nos. 1 (location unknown) and 2 (Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam, no. 10.188; M. Schmidt). On the Kypselos chest the two were shown together at their wedding: Paus. 5.18.3; *LIMC* V cit., 631 no. 10; Schefold 1993, 191f. Other early representations of the two together: Vojatzi 1982, 91–94, 118f. nos. 64–68; Schefold 1993, 268f.

[46] See notes 21–23 above for such pictures.

[47] See note 44 above. There is another extensive narrative in Theoc. *Id.* 22.1–134, but without any mention of other events from the Argonauts' cycle. In art, the fight appears occasionally from the 5th century onwards: *LIMC* I (1981), 738–742 s.v. Amykos (G. Beckel; 13 entries, most of them late). Kastor was renowned as a wrestler, but was not active as such in any known version of the Argonauts' story.

[48] That the battle scenes on the Chigi oinochoe and elsewhere might be connected with the rule of Kypselos and the hoplite reforms was suggested by Benson 1995b, 169–174, and this has later been extensively argued by D'Acunto 2013; see Shanks 1999, 107–119, for a different analysis. Local interest is obvious with the vases showing Bellerophon fighting the *chimaira*, at Aigina (Museum Aigina, no. 1376; Amyx 1988, 28 no. A-1, pl. 8; Schefold 1993, 89 fig. 70) and in Boston (Museum of Fine Arts, no. 95.10; Amyx 1988, 37, Chigi Group no. 2): both, Benson 1995b, 174, pl. 41c–d; *LIMC* VII (1994), 227 nos. 212–213 s.v. Pegasos (C. Lochin).

[49] It was dated MPC I by Østby 2005, 538; MPC I–II by Voyatzis 2014, 346; early MPC II by Østby 2014a, 462. Voyatzis 1990, 295 no. P 67, dates the sherd from the French excavation as MPC without qualification. See for the development of these techniques through EPC and MPC I Amyx 1988, 365–367, and still usefully Friis Johansen 1923, 112–115.

[50] Østby 2005, 541; 2014a, 462.

[51] London, British Museum no. WT 199/A 1052; Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi no. 13839; Brindisi, Museo Provinciale Francesco Ribezzo no. 1609. See for the aryballoi in London and Syracuse Friis Johansen 1923, 97 nos. 42–43, pl. 29, 1a–b.2a–b, with the drawings reproduced here and frequently elsewhere; Amyx 1988, 24 nos. 1–2, pl. 5, 2a–d (London aryballos), 368. With the Brindisi aryballos, Benson 1989, 50 nos. 1–3; Neeft 1991, 13; and Benson 1995a, 355–359 with figs. 17–19, for an extensive discussion of the three vases with photographs of the aryballoi in London and Syracuse and a useful drawing of the piece in Brindisi (photograph, Benson 1989, pl. 18, 3). The aryballoi in London and Syracuse were ascribed to one artist by Lorimer 1912, 348f., then by Friis Johansen 1923, 97, and this has been generally accepted; but observe note 54 below.

[52] Different such groupings including the Huntsmen aryballoi were proposed by Dunbabin & Robertson 1953, 176 (12 vases attributed to an Aetos Painter, including sherds from Ithaka), then by Amyx 1988, 24–26 (14 vases, five by or near the Huntsmen Painter, others more or less closely related). The Nola-Falkenhausen Group was defined by Benson 1989, 49–51 (10 vases, with the Aetos sherds relegated to a different group); increased by Neeft 1991, 13f. (19 certain and proposed attributions). See Shanks 1999, 42–50, on the production of this pottery in small, independent workshops.

[53] Later MPC II according to Amyx 1988, 367f., or about 660–650 BC; earlier according to Benson 1989, 49–51, who inserts the group in a phase dated by him about 675–660 BC and called MPC IA, coinciding with early MPC II in the system used by Payne, Amyx, and others. Neeft 1991, 13, dates the group to MPC I–II, pulling it still further back.

[54] See Benson 1989, 40, on the problems with individual attributions in this material. He has later (1995a, 356) expressed doubts about the at-

As it has now been restored, the Tegea aryballos has more details which confirm its connection with this group. The connection is particularly strong with the two aryballoi in London and Syracuse, less close with the one in Brindisi. The fully developed, conoid shape, with the container 1.5 times as high as its maximum diameter, is common to all four aryballoi; so is the height of the figured frieze which, including the framing lines, is equal to the height of the decorative zones below. All have the doubled ray ornament on the foot, which is shared by almost all the aryballoi in this group.[55] The execution of those rays is unusually careless and sloppy on the Tegea aryballos, more so than on the aryballos in London which shares the same approach; the precision is better on the aryballoi in Syracuse and Brindisi.[56] The hounds-and-hare motif recurs on the aryballoi in London, Syracuse, and Tegea (but not Brindisi); the drawing of the dogs is almost identical to the London aryballos, not quite so close to the piece in Syracuse. The Tegea aryballos seems to be an early example, perhaps the earliest known, where this is used as a secondary decoration; on later aryballoi it is a favourite and often their only figured decoration.[57] The rosette ornament on the fragment from the neck (*Fig. 1*) occurs on the necks of both Huntsmen aryballoi, but for this item the closest parallel is the aryballos at Syracuse; the Brindisi aryballos has what is probably a later development of this ornament, where the rosettes on the neck and in the figured frieze are reduced to circles of separate dots without the spikes, maintained only in the rosettes in the decorative frieze below the figured one. The posture of the warrior raising his spear is close to certain figures on the Huntsmen aryballoi—wide step, right arm raised with the spear and the left one stretched out in front; long legs and arms, body reduced to a minimum, face almost without details and framed by a continuous surface of hair and beard. But there are also significant differences: on the two aryballoi the men have long, pointed beards, but they are short and rounded on the Tegea aryballos, and the profiles of the faces are different. There are no filling ornaments in the empty spaces, as there are on the Huntsmen aryballoi and the Brindisi aryballos. The Tegea aryballos is closer to the two Huntsmen aryballoi than any other in this group, standing together with them at its beginning, but it is earlier than them; there is still something left of the painted outlines from the earlier MPC I period (on the other aryballoi this has completely disappeared), and the silhouette technique supported by incised lines has not yet been fully implemented. The date of the vase can be linked to those proposed for the Huntsmen aryballoi, perhaps ten to fifteen years earlier; a date at the transition MPC I–II, or in very early MPC II (about 680–670 BC), seems reasonable, and coincides with the archaeological context where the sherd was found in 1994.[58] But the Tegea aryballos is not an early work by the Huntsmen Painter. Our man was a better draughtsman than him—although not at the same level as the Ajax Painter, who was active in the same period; the Ajax Painter has a completely different and highly personal figure style with fewer and larger figures, as a rule in higher friezes with more vertical space.[59] Our painter and his colleagues used lower friezes with more, but smaller figures, and within this standard of his workshop the Tegea artist can demonstrate a skill in creating a rich and complicated, many-figured composition which seems unsurpassed in this early period.

The composition

Compositions with many figures are not rare on Protocorinthian vases, and they can display considerable skill in their formal arrangements, but their subject matter is not as a rule very sophisticated. Battle scenes are a favourite, either as a duel or groups of duels, or as two phalanx groups lined up against one another as on the Chigi oinochoe; occasionally, both kinds of fighting appear on the same vessel.[60] As a general rule these scenes are paratactically organized, and do not normally offer any clue to establishing a particular identity for the scene or an individual function of any of the participants; they are descriptive, not narrative, in the terminology of Luca Giuliani.[61] There is a cautious introduction of a narrative element in the battle scene on an aryballos from Perachora, where a crouching archer to the left, just in front of the flute player, is shooting an arrow into the leg of one warrior in the opposite group. In this case the identification as Paris killing Achilles in a fight near Troy seems likely,[62] and this gives an identity also to the

tribution of the two aryballoi in London and Syracuse to the same artist.

[55] Occasionally they are found also elsewhere; see Friis Johansen 1923, pls. 18, 1; 20, 1–2 (*skyphoi* by the Hound Painter) for some examples.

[56] See the illustrations published by Benson 1995a (n. 37).

[57] See Friis Johansen 1923, 86, and the discussion Amyx 1962, 128–133.

[58] See note 53 above for the dates of the Huntsmen aryballoi; note 49 above for previously suggested dates; and above, with notes 10–12, for the archaeological context. See Shanks 1999, 40–42, for the problems with the current chronological systems, which do not account for possible parallel lines of development; the Tegea aryballos could have been made at the same time as the Huntsmen aryballoi, by an older or more conservative person.

[59] On the Ajax Painter, see Amyx 1988, 23f. (catalogue), 367; Benson 1989, 43f.; Neeft 1991, 13; Benson 1995a, 342–353. The Huntsmen group is contemporary according to Amyx and Neeft; it is later according to Benson 1989, 49–51, and 1995a, 355, for no evident reason.

[60] On Protocorinthian battle scenes: Friis Johansen 1923, 154–156; Benson 1995b, 169–173; D'Acunto 2013. See note 48 above for a possible, historical background. According to Shanks 1999, 107, 65% of the human figures on Protocorinthian aryballoi are armed or fighting.

[61] Giuliani 2003, chs. 2–3.

[62] In the National Museum, Athens; Payne & Dunbabin 1962, 15–17, pl. 57, with the interpretation. It is accepted in *LIMC* I (1981), 182

battle; but the immediate impression is also here of a paratactical display of two many-figured groups lined up against one another, with the mythical incident as a not strongly emphasized, narrative appendix to what remains an essentially descriptive representation of an otherwise anonymous battle. The two aryballoi by the Huntsmen Painter are plainly descriptive, with symmetrically arranged groups of huntsmen or warriors framing their prey; there may be some message here on a symbolic level, but no reference to specific events.[63] The Brindisi aryballos has an array of four different two-figured groups perhaps with some kind of symbolism underneath, but it is not a straightforward narrative.[64] So far, the only known artist in the early Middle Protocorinthian environment who certainly attempted to tell specific stories is the Ajax Painter, who on four aryballoi attributed to him struggled with some success to describe mythical figures and events with a few dominant and carefully chosen figures.[65] But his approach to narrative art is completely different from the composition on our vase, where more and smaller figures are grouped and interacting in a far more sophisticated narrative syntax.

On the Tegea aryballos the descriptive type of representation seems the obvious choice for the group of two men fighting over the vessel; but a narrative content could be implied if its unusual features (the vessel, the different steps) were sufficient to create a connection with the principal scene. That connection might not go beyond a general association with an event involving several possible identities, such as the funeral games for Pelias;[66] this part of the picture could perhaps be understood in that way, as transitional between "descriptive" and "narrative" (not unlike the aryballos from Perachora discussed above). But in the principal composition there is no such ambiguity: each of the six persons involved has an individual and clearly defined part in what is happening, and they are related to one another and to the beast in such a way that an organized, understandable description of a particular event is created. The man who comes running to the scene from the extreme left comes too late to take part in what is happening; he is a frame to the composition, we cannot now make out his part in the story, but he is not irrelevant. The two women separating him from the principal scene participate in the action just by their presence, and since one of them probably is a goddess (as most other women on Protocorinthian vases), this is sufficient support for the action of the two heroes in front of her.[67] She demonstrates her control of what is happening by allowing herself a moment of distraction, turning her head to talk to the other woman, or perhaps to acknowledge the man rushing up from the left; but her body is turned toward the two men killing the beast, and she is linked to that group also through the flute player. Because of him, the two women cannot be separated in space or time from the slaughter. We might not understand any better the identity of the other woman, or her function in the picture, if she had been completely preserved; but if she has caused the entire action by invoking divine assistance in a difficult situation, her presence and her apparent conversation with Athena are needed to explain why this killing is taking place. The two men occupied with the beast are physically identical, distinguished only by their different postures and weapons; but they do not have equal part in the action, since the kneeling man in front has already finished off the beast with his sword, while his companion is running up a moment too late for his spear to be of any real use. At last comes the beast, the ultimate reason for what is taking place, concluding the line of participants who lead up to it and relate to it in different ways. With its unusually gruesome and spectacular death it concludes and defines the story, identifies the other figures and explains their behaviour.

There is a concern for symmetrical compositions on the aryballoi in London and Syracuse, and a symmetry is also present on the Tegea aryballos, but it is subtle and not obtrusive. In the group of seven figures the central one is the presumed Athena, in a position where her double directionality makes her a hinge linking the right and left part of the composition. Every figure has a separate identity and a function of its own, different from all the others, but all are linked together as parts of a single scene, unified in time and space and easy to understand for anybody knowing the story and able to recognize it through the beast which is being killed. As a narrative composition it seems far ahead of further developments of such illustrations in Archaic Greek art.

no. 848, s.v. Achilleus (A. Kossatz-Deissmann); Schefold 1993, 144, fig. 145; D'Acunto 2013, 102f.; but it is not discussed by Amyx 1988, 25 no. D-1. Another Protocorinthian aryballos occasionally mentioned as a possible parallel (*LIMC* I cit., no. 849; Louvre no. CA 1831) should not be so considered; see Amyx 1988, 652 n. 38.

[63] See for a similar composition with two hunters attacking a lion, on an oinochoe from Erythrae attributed to the Chigi Painter: Hurwit 2002, 8 fig. 4.

[64] One serious attempt to read symbolic contents into these three vases has been made by Benson 1995a, 355–359. See also Benson 1995b, on the development of narrative art in later Protocorinthian. Interesting attempts have been made to read a coherent message from the apparently unconnected scenes on the Chigi oinochoe; see Hurwit 2002, 16–19, and D'Acunto 2013 (social); Benson 1995b, 173, and Rasmussen 2016 (mythological).

[65] Some of those scenes are not easy to identify, and have been discussed; see Benson 1995a, 342–353, for an extensive discussion of the interpretations. The aryballos CA 617 in the Louvre is particularly difficult; see the references in note 38 above for the current interpretation as Helena between Theseus and the Dioskouroi, and Benson 1995a, 348–351 with ns. 27 and 30 on some alternatives, including male sex for the central figure.

[66] See the discussion above, with notes 20–22.

[67] See note 28 above for female figures on Protocorinthian vases, and for other early representations of Athena assisting heroes.

The decoration of this vase was created by an accomplished artist, all the more impressive because he stands at the very threshold to narrative art in Greek culture. He shares that position with his contemporary colleague, the Ajax Painter, who produced mythological illustrations in a different way, well known and widely appreciated; that painter was a better draughtsman, but he made simpler compositions with fewer figures. Years ago one of the foremost authorities on Protocorinthian pottery, Professor Jack Benson, wrote a fine paper on the narrative content of those aryballoi and devoted much space to the Ajax Painter.[68] At one point in his discussion of that artist, he remarked: "I hope that we shall some day know from excavation at least one other contemporary artist of stature who competed with this master".[69] With this aryballos by the man who may perhaps be called the Tegea Painter,[70] in the hope that future discoveries may produce more works by this remarkable artist, this wish of Jack Benson's seems now to have been fulfilled.

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[68] Benson 1995a; 342–353 on the Ajax Painter.
[69] Benson 1995a, 355.
[70] At present, no other attribution to him seems possible. The name was proposed by Østby 2014a, 463.

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