

Erik Østby:
C-PC 72: SHERDS FROM A MIDDLE PROTOCOLICORINTHIAN
PICTORIAL ARYBALLOS

Inv. no. 3453. Locations, F. nos: D1/73 (from sieve) and D1/74-2; *Figs 1–2*.

The fragments include two joining sherds from the body of a pyriform aryballos, originally positioned at and below the point of maximum diameter (reconstructed as 4.2 cm), and a small piece from the neck (reconstructed diameter 1.4–1.6 cm).¹ Put together, the two joining body sherds are 1.8 cm high, 3.25 cm wide and 0.4 cm thick; the neck fragment is 0.8 cm high, 1.2 cm wide and 0.2 cm thick. The clay is a typically Corinthian very pale brown (10YR 8/2); the paint is jet-black and dark reddish brown.

Preserved on the neck fragment is the upper-right half of a dark dot rosette, with four dots at the points of as many crossing spikes.

The figurative scene, 1.5 cm high, is framed above and below by horizontal lines. Above the figures, one line is partially covered by the head and the weapon of the fighting male figure, but it is visible behind and in front of him; a small part of another line is preserved above the space between two fighting figures. Probably there were three such lines; the usual three lines are preserved under their feet. In the small space preserved below these lines a small, dark trace with a curved outline remains, which should probably be interpreted as the hind-quarter of a running dog.² There are no fill-in ornaments in the figurative frieze, where five human figures are more or less completely preserved: two fighting male figures to the

right, and two female figures standing to the left, with a small, crouching figure between them. The figures are defined partly by incision lines in black-figure technique, partly by painted outlines or as plain silhouettes without incision.

The battle scene shows the final defeat of a warrior, of whom only the rear outline is preserved. He has clearly attempted to escape and has then fallen onto his knees leaning forwards, overtaken by his opponent who is raising a spear above his head and is about to thrust it into the head of the enemy crouching in front of him, who makes no attempt to turn towards his persecutor to put up resistance or plead for mercy. His hair continues without interruption and covers his cheeks, so clearly he was bearded; the trace of an incised, round eye remains in the area of his face, which is left unpainted. The lower outline of his beard is defined by an incised line which rather illogically crosses his hair, which is long enough to cover his shoulder. The scabbard of his sword, crossed by an incised line close to the tip, projects horizontally immediately below it. The rear outline of his back, which is unnaturally short, continues into his buttocks; most of the kneeling leg is lost, but the calf and the foot set with the toes in the ground are preserved. Except for the face, the figure is rendered entirely in dark paint, with outlines and inner details provided by incised lines.

The attacking figure, the best preserved in the composition, is shown taking a long stride, with abnormally long legs compared to the rest of his body; the rear, left leg is outlined by incisions, while the right one is depicted as closer to us only through the dark surface. There is an incision line defining the buttocks, but no other details are indicated on his body; probably he is to be understood as naked. One arm is stretched forth toward the crouching figure, the hand is not articulated; the other arm – probably the right one – is raised, aiming the spear with its huge point diagonally downwards. The weapon passes, as always in these representations, behind his shoulder and head, although it is held by the arm closest to us. Only the silhouettes, without incised lines, describe the arms and the weapon. The head is cursorily shaped in the same way as the first figure, with a dark area of hair and beard framing the face area,

A preliminary version of this text was presented at the AIAC meeting in Boston in 2003, and published in the acts from that conference (E. Østby, "Another early mythical representation in Greek art: An MPC sherd from Tegea," in C. Mattusch and A. Dunahue (eds), *Classical archaeology in Boston. The proceedings of the 16th International Congress of Classical Archaeology*, Oxford 2005, 538-42). Any reference to this paper, or to the text presented here, should take account of the Postscript at the end of the text.

¹ Although it does not join with the other pieces, it is safe to assume that this fragment belongs to the same vase as the two others; it was discovered in the same stratigraphical unit, and among the rich sherd material from this site there is otherwise very little Protocorinthian pottery of this type. The clay is identical.

² The curve of the dark area seems too complex to permit the other explanation which might otherwise be possible: the top of a spiral hook, like those used on aryballoi by the Corneto painter (Amyx 1988, pl. 2.4–5).

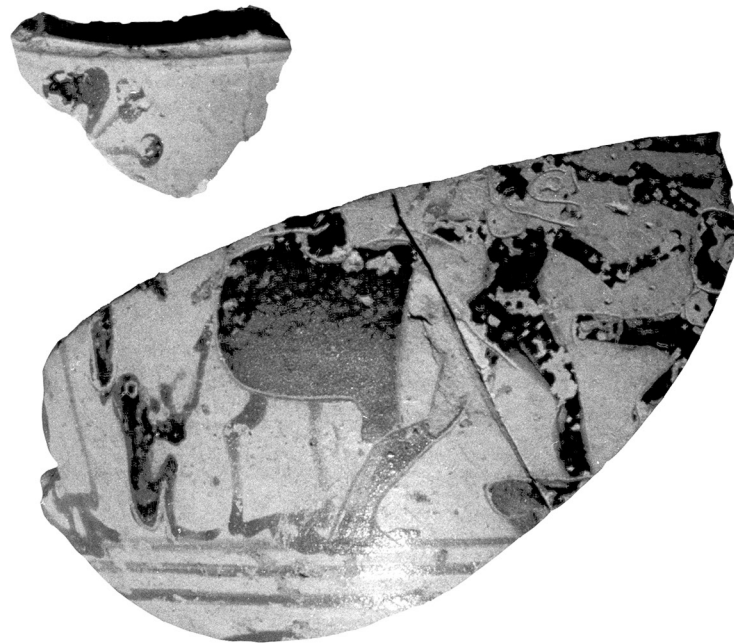


Figure 1. The sherds from the Middle Protocorinthian aryballos C-PC 72. (Photo: Østby)

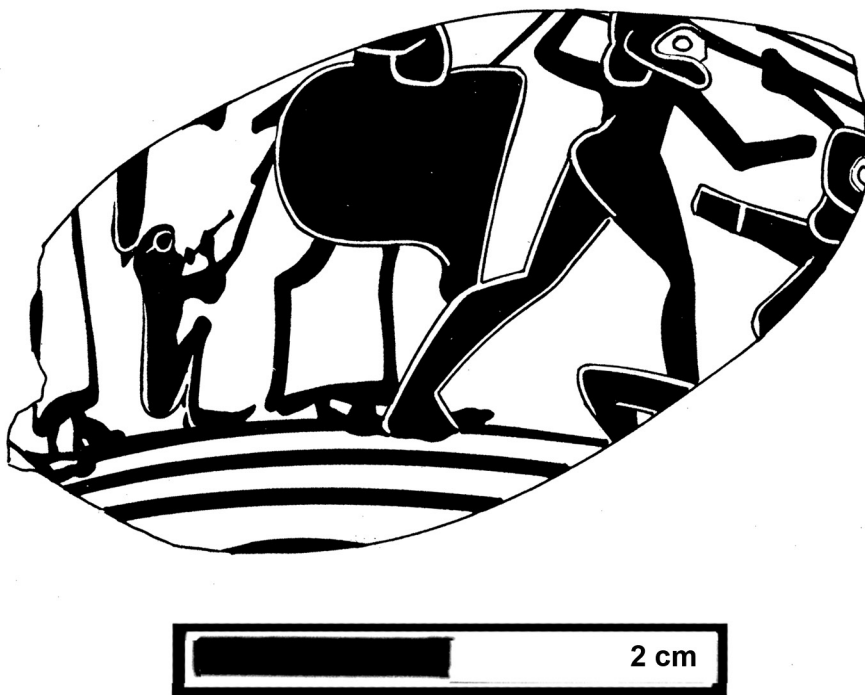


Figure 2. Drawing of the two principal sherds from the aryballos C-PC 72. (Drawing: A. Hooton)

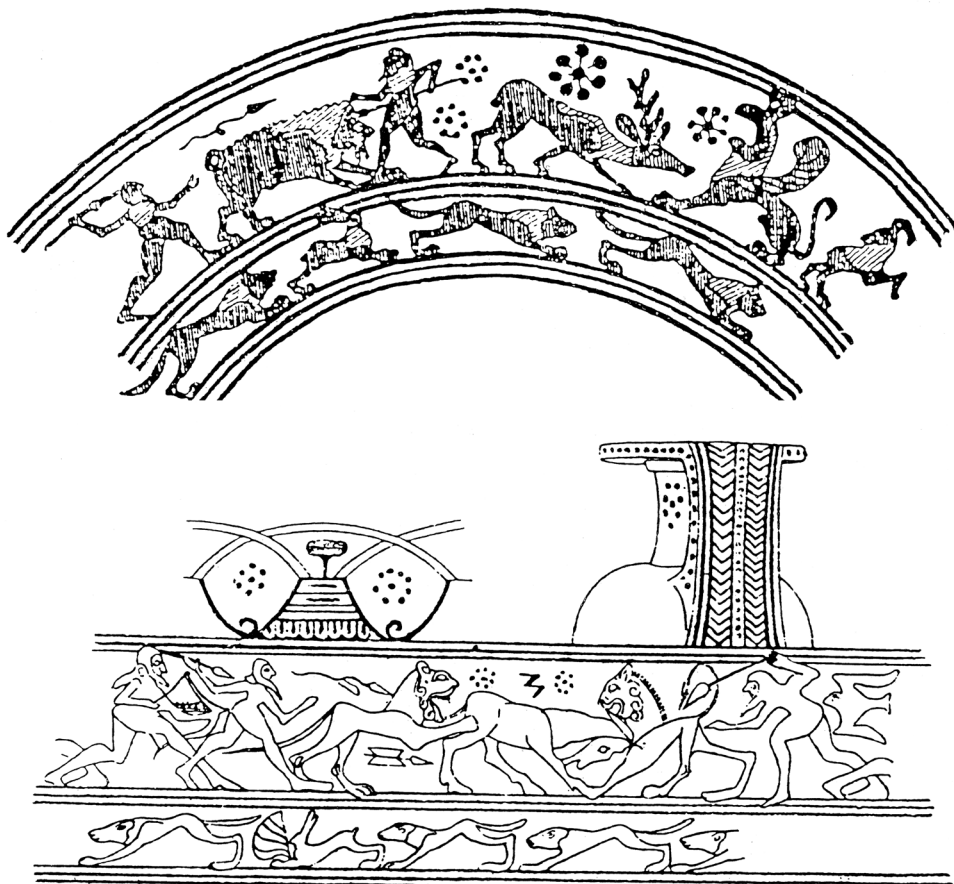


Figure 3. Decorated aryballois by the "Huntsmen Painter". Above, Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale, inv. no. 13839 (from Syracuse); below, London, British Museum, inv. no. WT 199 (from Nola). (After Friis Johansen 1923, pls 1.b and 2.b)

which is left unpainted. A circular eye is rendered only by incision; behind the beard another incision defines hair that falls to the shoulder. Only a short and incomplete, vertical incision line in front of the eye defines the face profile; the nose and mouth are not rendered.

The figure standing behind the attacker is clearly female, wearing a dress falling to her feet. It is defined by a painted black outline (without incision). A dark cloak, outlined by incision, covers the upper part of her body, but not her head. In front of her body the cloak is clearly to be understood as hanging from her arm, which is stretched toward the two fighters, but covered by the garment. Only the lower part of the head is preserved, but it is enough to see that it was turned backwards, away from the battle scene in front of her; apparently she is talking or somehow communicating with a second female figure behind her. Her hair falls to the shoulder, as on the male figures. Strangely, what remains of her face above the chin line is painted dark, as is her hair. There is a small, unexplained projection from her rear shoulder, and also a thin pole rising diagonally from her shoulder which may possibly be understood as a lance or similar weapon, but its lower part does not emerge

behind the figure. Behind her, a small figure, rendered in dark silhouette with incision only for the rear outline and the circular eye, is sitting on his haunches playing a flute. His head, which is raised towards the woman in front of him, is rendered as a simple globe with a slightly concave front, a large eye, and a tuft of hair waving behind the skull. He is also connected with the woman by a thick, dark line parting from the arm holding the flute. It is unnaturally long if it is to be understood as his second arm, and is perhaps better understood as a chain or rope; in any case, it establishes a close and precise connection between the two figures.

The last figure to the left is also female, with the lower part of an ankle-length dress indicated by a painted outline without incision, as with the other female figure. A dark flap outlined by incision is hanging in front of the body, probably from an outstretched arm, but the cloak could not have covered the upper part of the body as completely as on the other female figure. There is also a dark trace barely visible at the upper break of the sherd, in front of the flap, which may represent her arm stretched out horizontally toward the woman in front of her.

Protocorinthian aryballoi decorated with human figures are rare, even more so when discovered in sanctuaries, as this piece was, rather than in graves.³ The fragment provides valuable evidence for a poorly documented stage in the development of Protocorinthian figure painting, after the Early Protocorinthian globular aryballoi, with figures in outline painting and only tentative approaches toward true black-figure technique, and before the developed pyriform aryballoi with complex figure compositions by the Ajax painter and his contemporaries who worked in fully developed black-figure.⁴ Within this development the Tegean aryballos is transitional. It has the developed pyriform shape and the ambitious, apparently coherent and unitary, composition of the later works, including such conventions as the hound-and-hare motif on the secondary frieze⁵ and the three parallel lines separating the friezes; but it is executed in a still tentative and immature black-figured style, where the incision lines are still used rather casually, without a clear system, and where significant remains of the older outline drawing still appear. In the general development of Protocorinthian vase painting, its place should be with the works by the Toulouse or the Corneto painters in Middle Protocorinthian I, in the first quarter of the 7th century.⁶ A comparison with works by the Corneto painter is of some interest, since he decorated aryballoi of this pyriform type in a similar, tentative black-figure style with little incision; but the only human figure found on a vase attributed to him, a young shepherd on an aryballos from Kamiros, is nothing like the figures here and actually seems more progressive; it has far more incision and follows established conventions for the dark male skin.⁷

This observation notwithstanding, parallels for the individual style and representational character of the piece must clearly be sought in the following Middle Protocorinthian II period.⁸ This is a period where

³ Compare Shanks 1999, 119 with fig. 3.26 p. 121, and 179 fig. 4.5, for these statistics. According to his calculations, only one out of 38 PC aryballoi (2.6%) has human figures.

⁴ For recent accounts of this stage of Protocorinthian development (MPC I, according to the system first developed by H. Payne and followed by Amyx and others), see Amyx 1988, 23–5 and 366–7; Benson 1989, 35–51 (with a slightly different period system); Neeft 1991, 11–4; Benson 1995. For the chronological system see also C.W. Neeft, *Protocorinthian Subgeometric aryballoi*, Amsterdam 1987, 301–80; and critical comments by Shanks 1999, 41–2, who also proposes an analysis of the social background for Protocorinthian pottery production, 42–50.

⁵ For a discussion of this motif see D.A. Amyx, “A ‘Pontic’ amphora in Seattle,” in *Hommage à A. Grenier* (Coll. Latomus 58), vol. 1, Bruxelles 1962, 128–33.

⁶ Amyx 1988, 21–2 and 361–7; Benson 1989, 41–4 and 48–9; Neeft 1991, 12. The period would be MPC IA (690–675) in Benson’s system (see note 4 above).

⁷ On the Corneto painter and the vases attributed to him: Amyx 1988, 22 and 366–7. The aryballos from Kamiros (Amyx 1988, 22; G. Jacopi, *Clara Rhodos* 4, 1931, 389 fig. 444) is not included in the more extensive list of attributions to the Corneto workshop proposed by Benson 1989, 48–9.

⁸ Or MPC IB in Benson’s system, where, however, the Ajax painter is inserted in MPC IA (1989, 43–4).

individual personalities and characteristics have proved hard to establish. The exception is the Ajax painter, whose basic production has by general agreement been identified in four fine aryballoi,⁹ but his work shows no point of contact with our fragment; his clear and emphatic drawing of facial features and abundant use of fill-in ornaments are clearly produced by a very different artistic personality. The Tegean piece is definitely closer to another important group of ambitious aryballoi of this period, which have been very differently treated: lumped together as the work of a presumed “Aetos painter” by certain scholars, grouped as the work by the so-called “Huntsmen painter” (or “Jägermaler”) and his followers or pupils by others, and non-committally defined as a “complex” (“Nola-Falkenhausen complex”) by others.¹⁰ Within this group, the strongest affinities of our aryballos lie with the two principal works attributed to the “Huntsmen painter” long ago: two aryballoi from Nola and Syracuse.¹¹ The dot-rosette on the neck, which recurs on those two aryballoi, and the hound-hare chase which appears as a secondary motif on both (and on most of those assumed to be close to this painter), are additional elements which support this link. On the Nola aryballos one of the hunters comes close to being a replica of the victorious warrior on our vase, striding out with long legs that carry an almost crippled body, waving arms without hands, and he has the head hair continuing without a break into the beard so that the facial area is framed from above and below. There are, however, also important differences. The beard of the Nola hunter is long and pointed, not short and rounded as here; his hair is longer, and the face has a fully developed profile with nose and mouth and is rendered in the same dark colour as the hair and the rest of the figure, as called for by normal conventions. The rendering here, where male faces are left unpainted (but, apparently, female ones are painted dark, quite the opposite of later conventions) and no real definition is given to the facial features except the eye, is definitely unusual. It is clearly the product of a situation where some fundamental conventions had yet to be established.

A clear evaluation of these similarities and differences in terms of individual attribution is difficult, particularly since there is so much uncertainty and confusion about

⁹ Amyx 1988, 23–4; Benson 1989, 43–4; Neeft 1991, 13; Benson 1995, 342–53, with a suggestion for the chronological sequence of the four pieces.

¹⁰ Aetos painter: Dunbabin and Robertson 1953, 176; Huntsmen painter and his environment: Amyx 1988, 24–6. Most of these vases are put together in a Nola-Falkenhausen group by Benson 1989, 49–51 and 1995, 353–9, who prefers to avoid individual attributions. He puts the group in MPC IB, later than the Ajax painter, which seems very doubtful to me.

¹¹ Friis Johansen 1923, pl. 29.1a–b (no. 2 pl. 29.2), 97 nos 42–43; Amyx 1988, 24 nos 1–2 (no. 2 pl. 5.2a–d); Benson 1995, 355–9, figs 20.17–19; Shanks 1999, 141 fig. 3.33. The two vases were first attributed to one artist by H.L. Lorimer, “Notes on the sequence and distribution of the fabrics called Proto-Corinthian,” *JHS* 32, 1912, 348–9. Benson 1995, 356, argues against the attribution to one painter.

the general structure of this heterogeneous and vaguely defined group. Our aryballos seems at any rate at least as close to the two principal works by the Huntsmen Painter as any of those considered “close” or “related” to him.¹² (Fig. 3) The vase is certainly earlier than the two from Nola and Syracuse – where the black-figure technique is fully developed, without lingering painted outlines, and the normal conventions for male skin colour have been established – and it might conceivably be accepted as an early work by the same painter, who would in that case afterwards have made important changes to his representation of the human head and face. If this is the case, he would be contemporary with and working in the same environment as the painter(s) of three kotyle sherds from Aetos on Ithaca, which have also been connected with the Huntsmen Painter or his environment.¹³ The human figures on these sherds actually have some similarities with those on our sherd, particularly a lack of clear details in the face profile, where only the circular shape of the eye remains significant; but these figures also have pointed beards and lack the distinctive, coherent framing effect of hair and beard. Our man is a better artist, close to these persons and contemporary with them, but a different individual with a personal style that seems impossible to connect with any other figured vase presently known. The piece he has left us is sufficiently ambitious and successful for him to deserve an individual name, and his artistic personality seems clearly defined and should be easily recognizable if more of his work turns up in the future. I would propose the “Tegea Painter” as a convenient name for him.

Fighting and battles seem to have been a primary concern of Protocorinthian vase-painters, a substantial part of their figurative output bear such representations.¹⁴ In this regard, the scene on our sherd is typical. But this battle scene is profoundly different from those conventional duels or battles where the warriors face each other wearing more or less complete hoplite outfits replete with shields, helmets and/or cuirasses (but frequently nothing else), which appear on other Protocorinthian representations. As a rule, these are clearly to be understood as typical battles, without any attempt or intention to connect them with specific names or situations.¹⁵ In our case, such

an intention must be presumed. For one thing, neither opponent carries any item of armour apart from their weapons – the spear, and the sword which is indicated by the projecting scabbard – and both are apparently naked; this is highly unusual, and has a parallel only in one complicated and extensive battle scene from the same artistic group; this may be another mythical battle.¹⁶ They are not represented as conventional warriors, although the victorious warrior is portrayed in a pose identical to what we see in typical battle scenes. The position of the second warrior demonstrates that this is no longer a battle on equal terms, as these hoplite battles regularly are; the outcome has been decided, and the defeated party has shamefully, and in vain, attempted to escape. The message of victory and defeat was clearly important, and becomes even clearer with this composition than it would have been if the defeated warrior had been shown already dead on the ground.

The position of the victorious warrior stands in the tradition of the “smiting god” which goes far back in Egyptian and Oriental art and was known also in Mycenaean and Geometric Greece;¹⁷ but it is less easy to quote precise parallels for the connection with the fallen figure in front of him. His precise position is not perfectly clear; he may have fallen on both knees, thus anticipating a posture which is repeated three times on the slightly later battle scene on the Macmillan aryballos.¹⁸ But it seems equally probable, since the outline of only one foot is shown, that the artist used a posture where only one knee rested on the ground. This would make a two-figured composition which can be traced back to early Egyptian art, where it is found on the Narmer plaque and elsewhere;¹⁹ later it appears frequently in Assyrian

groups on aryballoi from Brindisi and (possibly) Cerveteri: Benson 1989, 50, Nola group no. 2, pl. 18.3 (also *id.* 1995, 359 fig. 20.19); *ibid.* 51, Falkenhausen group no. 3, pl. 18.5. Two aryballoi from the Lechaion cemetery and from Perachora have extensive and possibly mythical battle scenes, further discussed below: Amyx 1988, 25 no. B 1, pl. 6.1 (also Eliot and Eliot 1968, 348–51, pl. 102.2, and Boardman 1998, 92 fig. 171.1–2; see M.D. Stansbury-O’Donnell, *Pictorial narrative in ancient Greek art*, Cambridge 1999, 23–6, for an interesting analysis of the composition); Amyx 25 no. D 1, H. Payne and T.J. Dunbabin, *Perachora II*, Oxford 1962, 15–7, pl. 57 (interpreted as the battle of Achilles’ death; Schefold 1993, 144–5 fig. 145). The famous hoplite battles on the Chigi olpe and the Macmillan aryballos are slightly later, and clearly general (Amyx 1988, 31–2 no. 1, pl. 11.1–2 (aryballos) and no. 3 (olpe); Boardman 1998, 93 fig. 176.1–2 (aryballos) and 94–5 fig. 178.1–3 (Chigi olpe)).

¹⁶ Two warriors (from opposite groupings!) on the aryballos from the Lechaion cemetery, cited last note.

¹⁷ For this type in Oriental art, see the accounts by D. Collon, “The smiting god, a study of a bronze in the Pomerance collection in New York,” *Levant* 4, 1972, 111–34, and for a more general discussion R. Houston Smith, “Near Eastern forerunners of the striding Zeus,” *Archaeology* 5, 1972, 176–83.

¹⁸ See the references last note.

¹⁹ Narmer plaque: C. Vandersleyen, *Das alte Ägypten*, Berlin 1975, pl. 238.a, and K. Lange and M. Hirmer, *Ägypten*, Munich 1967, pl. 5, and frequently elsewhere. See also the later (New Empire), informal drawing Vandersleyen, pl. 335.a, and the Middle Kingdom relief from Gebelein Lange and Hirmer, pl. 82.

¹² As listed by Amyx 1988, 25–6.

¹³ First published by M. Robertson, “Excavations in Ithaca V,” *BSA* 43, 1948, 13–5, fig. 5.19; and S. Benton, “Further excavations at Aetos,” *BSA* 48, 1953, 284 nos 693 and 695, figs 18 and 17 (the latter also illustrated by Benson 1989, pl. 16.1). According to Dunbabin and Robertson 1953, 176 nos 1, 1.a and 2, these are the work of an “Aetos Painter”, a younger companion of the Ajax Painter, leading up to the Bellerophon Painter and the Boston Painter”; Amyx 1988, 25 (with references), lists these pieces as “other attributions” to the Huntsmen painter, but without conviction. Benson 1989, 45, separates them from what he calls the Nola-Falkenhausen group.

¹⁴ Compare Shanks 1999, 107: 65% of the human figures on Protocorinthian aryballoi are shown armed or fighting. A historical analysis of the phenomenon is sketched *ibid.* 107–19.

¹⁵ From the Nola-Huntsmen group there are such anonymous battle

battle reliefs²⁰ and in Egyptianizing Oriental art of the same period, such as the widely diffused Phoenician metal paterae.²¹ However, this would seem to be its first appearance in Greek art, and here it must be seen as early evidence of knowledge – direct or indirect – of Egyptian and/or Oriental models. In monumental Greek art such groups first seem to appear in the group of Zeus and a giant or titan in the right-hand corner of the Corfu pediment, where it may have a special significance not dissimilar from what has been suggested above.²² In the later Archaic period it is used quite frequently and without special intentions in pictorial art.²³ In our context it must be considered as a novelty, inspired by Oriental representations, and chosen because of its inherent message of a total and shameful defeat. But the loan from the Orient stops there; no known Oriental representation includes anything comparable to the combination of the flute-player and the two women. That part of the composition must have been created in a Greek environment and for purposes based on Greek culture.

This battle is unique in the Protocorinthian context also for another reason: there are women present. Women are rare on these vases as a general rule, and they are never involved in battles of any kind elsewhere.²⁴ The status of the two opponents as heroic or mythological figures, indicated by their lack of clothing or armour, is still more clearly emphasized if the pole emerging above her shoulder can identify the female figure standing right behind them as Athena. If correct, this identification would

²⁰ For a few such examples, see W. Orthmann, *Der alte Orient*, Berlin 1975, pls 203.a, 214, 236.

²¹ G. Markoe, *Phoenician bronze and silver bowls from Cyprus and the Mediterranean*, Berkeley 1985, has six bowls in his catalogue where such compositions are included, in some cases in the centre of the decoration: nos Cy 2, 170–1 and 244–5; Cy 5, 174–5 and 251; Cy 8, 177–8, 256 and 258; E 1, 188–91 and 274–6; E 2, 191, 278 and 283; E 10, 198–9 and 303.

²² Corfu pediment: G. Rodenwaldt, *Korkyra I, Der Artemistempel*, Berlin 1940, 158–61; Scheffold 1993, 177 fig. 181.d. The observation by H. Payne, *Necrocorinthia*, Oxford 1931, 243, is still valid: “The giant whom he is dispatching is a variant of a motive very common from the early sixth century onwards, but not found earlier: the warrior struck down as he retreats and strikes back at his adversary.” One of the Penteskouphia plaques, of about the same period, may have had a similar composition, but only the escaping figure is preserved: *Antike Denkmäler II*, Berlin 1908, pl. 39.4.

²³ This composition is used for the battle group on the Nessos amphora (Scheffold 1993, 113 fig. 98); see *ibid.* 324 fig. 363 and 313 fig. 344 for two Corinthian examples (Achilles – Memnon and Hektor – Aias), and 252 fig. 271 for a Laconian one; these are all of the early 6th century. Three battle groups of this type are inserted in the battle scene on the rim of the exaleiptron by the C painter (*ibid.* 292 fig. 311), and in the early 6th century it is frequently used for Amazon fights; see D. von Bothmer, *Amazons in Greek art*, Oxford 1957, pls 2–14, for numerous examples, used alongside with other compositions and clearly without any particular significance. It is also frequent on shield-band reliefs: Scheffold 1993, 247 figs 265–266 (Heracles and Geras), 201 fig. 201 (Athena and Enkelados), 204 fig. 207 (Apollo and Tityos), 258 fig. 280 (Theseus and Minotaurus).

²⁴ See Shanks 1999, 73, who accepts only six females out of 360 human figures in this material – but on very strict criteria. In Archaic Attic vase painting women present at battle scenes become frequent, and occasionally they even hold spears; see M.D. Stansbury-O’Donnell, *Vase painting, gender, and social identity in archaic Athens*, Cambridge 2006, 187–229, for these representations.

make this figure one of the first Archaic representations of the goddess, about contemporary with the Athena figure on the Eleusis amphora and comparable to it; there, as well, she is identified only by a lance, and by the context.²⁵ The situation might also be a similar one: on the Eleusis amphora Athena has already taken up her function of providing divine support to a hero performing a dangerous deed,²⁶ and such a situation might conveniently explain her presence here, although the motif of Athena assisting heroes does not otherwise appear in Corinthian art until much later.²⁷ The crouching figure playing the pipe behind her fits somewhat uncomfortably into such a context. He is borrowed from the regular hoplite battles, where he is an indispensable tool for helping the soldiers keep the rhythm while advancing; this is the obvious function of the pipers on the Chigi olpe and on the battle scene on the aryballos from Perachora,²⁸ and his presence here might be understood as an indication that the battle was a more extensive one, not limited to the two figures of which we have traces. As in those larger battles, his task must have been to incite the warrior or warriors by his music; but this was hardly a regular hoplite battle, since there is no armour, helmet or shield to be seen, and he seems also for other reasons to act on a different level. He might be understood as a normal human child or a dwarf, but such a detail as the wavering tuft of hair defines him rather as some minor, obedient daemon, physically linked to Athena and acting on her service. His position in the composition helps to make this clear; although his function is obviously connected with the fight, he is located between the two women, and somehow represents the connecting link between them and the warriors. Athena’s apparent lack of interest in the battle itself is hardly casual, her head is turned backwards apparently to exchange remarks with the second female; are these two goddesses deciding between them the outcome of this fight?

There was clearly an interest in extensive and com-

²⁵ Eleusis amphora: Scheffold 1993, 78 fig. 61; *LIMC II* (1984), 958 no. 5, pl. 702; etc. Protocorinthian representations of Athena as Palladion go back to the first quarter of the 7th century: *LIMC II*, 960 no. 26, pl. 705 (skyphos from Samos), and 965 no. 67, pl. 711 (aryballos in Oxford; also Scheffold 1993, 124 fig. 115); also, respectively, Shanks 1999, 75 fig. 3.2 and 135 fig. 3.31. On these representations she has a shield and waves her lance; on the Eleusis amphora she has only the lance and keeps it vertically in front of her. See note 29 below for a possible Athena fighting the giants on the aryballos from Lechaion.

²⁶ For a general discussion of such scenes in ancient art, see the study by Beckel 1961. Battle scenes with gods assisting are frequently described in the Iliad and the epic cycle (*ibid.* 13–8; *LIMC II* (1984), 1003), but illustrations of such scenes do not appear until late: see next note.

²⁷ First in the Early Corinthian representations of Heracles and the hydra (Scheffold 1993, 234–9, figs. 246 and 252.a–c; *LIMC V* (1990), 35–6). Pictorial representations of Homeric duels with divine figures assisting are otherwise unknown until Late Archaic Attic art: Beckel 1961, 18 and 26. One possible, earlier example is represented on a Melian amphora where two female figures frame a duel scene on the neck: so K. Fittschen, *Untersuchungen zum Beginn der Sagenarstellungen bei den Griechen*, Berlin 1969, 178 (Boardman 1998, 128 fig. 250). This interpretation is possible, but cannot be proved.

²⁸ For these, see note 15 above.

plicated battle scenes in the “Huntsmen-Falkenhausen” environment; two other completely preserved aryballos with scenes of this type are known from their production, and they are sufficiently special to have invited attempts at mythological identifications.²⁹ We may quite safely assume that our sherd is a fragment of a third representation of this kind, and it is perhaps, in our case, clearer that it must have had a specific meaning; the battle scene and the group of conversing females cannot be understood as two paratactical, unconnected pictures.³⁰ This is adequately demonstrated by the flute-player, whose position convincingly and emphatically connects the two parts of the composition.

In the context of a general battle these elements are so unusual that they might have provided a clue to the meaning, if they could be read together with the rest of the frieze. However, the well-known, general difficulties involved in interpreting also far better preserved Protocorinthian compositions³¹ (including the two other large battle scenes from this artistic group), demonstrate that this cannot be taken for granted. This artist, who worked at the very beginning of the long and complicated development of Greek narrative art, simply may not have had the means to unequivocally define the scene he had in mind. But we may reasonably accept this modest sherd as a mythical illustration, which is only partly understandable to us because it is only partially preserved, and it was probably not yet shaped according to an established iconographical pattern. With all its tentative and immature approaches, it provides valuable evidence that the challenges of complicated, narrative compositions were being faced in Corinth in this period, not only by the Ajax painter, but perhaps also by craftsmen preceding him.

Postscript November 2013

A few days before this text was delivered to the printer, I was informed by the team preparing the new exhibition in the museum of Tegea that this sherd could be joined with the fragment of an aryballos discovered by the French excavations early in the 20th century. The piece was published in Dugas, *Sanctuaire*, 420 no. 329 and 401 fig. 51, and has inv. no. 0940 in the Tegea museum. The join was made by Dr E. Zouzoula.

With this discovery, much of what is written above has immediately become obsolete.

²⁹ See the references note 15 above. For the Lechaion aryballos, both a battle from the Trojan war (Eliot and Eliot 1968, 349–50) and a gigantomachy featuring a fighting Athena (G. Ahlberg-Cornell, *Myth and epos in early Greek art* (SIMA 100), Jonsred 1992, 148, fig. 272.a–b) have been proposed; for the Perachora piece, the death of Achilles (Scheffold 1993, 144 fig. 145).

³⁰ Mostly it is assumed that the composition of Protocorinthian vase decorations is casual. See e.g. Amyx 1988, 367: “Unity of subject is not... a matter of much concern to Protocorinthian vase-painters”; and remarks by Shanks 1999, 74–5, on typically paratactical arrangements. Observe, however, the intriguing attempt by Benson 1995 to demonstrate such a concern, directly influenced by Homer and epic poetry; our fragment supports this line of thought.

³¹ See the general discussion of these problems by Benson 1995. A. Snodgrass, *Homer and the artists*, Cambridge 1998, 83–8, discusses such problems connected with two famous representations.

The fragment from the French excavations preserves the lowest part of the vessel, with a double line of rays in the lowest zone, concluded above with two lines; then a narrow hound-and-hare frieze (one hare, three dogs with long, bushy tails), and the lowest part of a frieze with a figurative motif above the three lines separating it from the dogs. The full height of the frieze is preserved only on our sherd.

It is now clear that the interpretation suggested above is fundamentally mistaken: the scene is a hunt, not a battle. The male person to the right is crouching in front of a large animal, and has perhaps been wounded by it; the hunter behind him is directing his spear not towards him, but towards the animal. Of the animal the head with a long snout is preserved, and parts of the four legs and feet with hooves or cloves. It is certainly not a bull, as cautiously proposed by Dugas (who saw this as a possible representation of Theseus and the Marathonian bull); although no tusks can be seen, it seems more likely to be a boar. The presence of the women and the piper, not normal participants in an everyday hunt, seems to confirm the mythological character of the scene. This could be the first known representation of the hunt for the Calydonian boar.

Behind the group of women and piper, the feet and parts of the legs of three male figures are preserved, all in strongly striding postures. Behind the animal, two men stand facing one another across an object of which only the lowest part is preserved, perhaps the foot of a krater. The third man turns his back to them and is facing in the same direction as the women and the two men in front of the animal, concluding that part of the composition, which is the principal one with six human figures in addition to the animal.

The stylistic and chronological analysis of the sherd, as discussed above, seems unaffected by the new discovery.

The aryballos will receive a separate publication later on, with adequate illustrations.

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