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# The Dodwell Vase: Agamemnon and Thersander in between epic cycles* **

## From Edward Dodwell's loot to Dodwell Painter's masterpiece

Often named the "Dodwell Vase" or "Dodwell Pyxis", this renowned piece now in the State Collections of Antiquity in Munich (no. 327)[1] was "found" by Edward

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** I would like to express my gratitude to the Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek in Munich for providing me new high-resolution photographs of the vessel. I would like to thank Professor Irene Polinskaya for the fruitful comments and suggestions on the inscriptions of the vase. I am also very grateful for the advice of the three anonymous reviewers, for their most useful feedback and astute suggestions, which I have since incorporated to the benefit of the essay. Otherwise stated, all illustrations belong to public domain. This research was funded by FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology, under projects UIDB/04311/2020, IUDP/04311/2020 and SFRH/BD/135864/2018.

We will make use of the following abbreviations when referring to catalogue numeration: *BV* = O. Jahn, *Beschreibung der Vasensammlung der König Ludwigs in der Pinakotek zu München*, 1854; *CorVP* = D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting of the Archaic Period*, 3 vols., Berkeley, 1988; *GkV* = J. L. Benson, *Die Geschichte der Korintischen Vasen*, Basel, 1953; *NAGVI* = R. Wachter, *Non-Attic Greek Vase Inscriptions*, Oxford, 2001; *Notice* = *Notice sur le Musée Dodwell et Catalogue raisonné des objects qu'il contient*, Rome, 1837; *NC* = H. Payne, *Necrocorinthia. A Study of Corinthian Art in the Archaic Period*, College Park, 1931; *ODP* = M. Blomberg, *Observations on the Dodwell Painter*, Stockholm, 1983; *SH* = J. Sieveking, R. Hackl, *Die Königliche Vasensammlung Zu München. Erste Band*, München, 1912. On prosopography, the abbreviations follow the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*.

1 *Catalogue concordance*: *LIMC* Agamemnon 1; *CorVP* p. 205 A-1; *ODP* no. 3; *GkV* p. 73, no. 1; *NC* 861; *SH* 327; *BV* 211; *Notice* p. 36, no. 11 (in Rome). Further and earlier bibliography on the vase, beyond the works presented in this essay, can be found in R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 59-61; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 206; J. Sieveking, R. Hackl, op. cit., pp. 26-27; O. Jahn, op. cit., p. 65. *Published photographs*: F. Knauss, *Die Kunst der Antike. Meisterwerke der Münchner Antikensammlungen*, München, 2017, p. 12; *LIMC*, vol. 1, pl. 191; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting*, pl. 86, nos. 1a-b; M. Blomberg, op. cit., pl. 4, no. 10a; F. Lorber, *Inschriften Auf Korinthischen Vasen*, Berlin, 1979, pl. 14, no. 52; J. Sieveking, R. Hackl, op. cit., p. 26, fig. 37 and pl. 10, no. 327 (the best photograph in public domain: Fig. 3 in this essay). Wikimedia Commons provides further public domain photographs online. Two new recent photographs are included in this article, of

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Dodwell near Corinth in early December 1805, near a village then known as Mertese[2]. Searching for ancient tombs, known to locals to be rich in treasure, and following Pausanias' itinerary, Dodwell's entourage encountered a "miserable" hamlet to the southeast where the cottages were full of ancient vases. They persuaded the locals to lead them to their find spot, where the villagers broke open a group of sepulchres with human remains and several vessels[3]. Then, the locals tipped Dodwell on a previous plunder, as told in his rendition of the whole affair:

> The villagers of Mertese informed me, that a Jew of Corinth, who had lately been digging in this spot, had found several vases. On my return to Corinth, I immediately called upon him, and found them heaped in a corner, with other rubbish. He, however, knew, or pretended to know, the value of an inscribed vase, which he showed me; and which, with some difficulty, I bought of him. The design of the figures, and the forms of the letters are of the most ancient character; and probably no vase of terracotta has yet been discovered that belongs to a period so remote[4].

Dodwell goes on to describe and aggrandize the purchase and its antiquity, proposes an interpretation of the figures, inscriptions, and includes drawings of the piece (Fig. 7), later profusely reproduced[5]. Having returned from Greece in 1806, the traveller and painter establishes himself and his collection at Rome with the intention of publishing a comprehensive work[6]. The vase quickly aroused attention among scholars and specialists who were staying or traveling through Italy before the

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the lid (Fig. 10) and of the vessel damage (Fig. 9), both by Renate Kühling. *Selected illustrations*: H. Payne, op. cit., p. 306, fig. 141 (pyxis form scheme); T. Lau, *Die Griechischen Vasen. Ihr Formen Und Decorationssystem*, Leipzig, 1877, pl. 3, figs. 1a-b, pl. 4, fig. 1 (best illustrations in public domain: Figs. 1 and 2 in this essay); E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour Through Greece: During the Years 1801, 1805, and 1806*, II, London, 1819, p. 196, pl. 1-4; J. B. D'Agincourt, *Recueil de fragmens de sculpture antique en terre cuite*, Paris, 1814, pl. 36; H. Moses, *A collection of antique vases, altars, paterae, tripods, candelabra, sarcophagi, &c. From various museums and collections, engraved on 170 plates, with historical essays*, London, 1814, pl. 3. *Inscription illustrations*: R. Arena, "Le Iscrizioni Corinzie Su Vasi", *RAL*, serie 8, 13, II, 1967, p. 78, fig. 16; L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, Oxford, 1961, p. 131, no. 14a (at the *Poinikastas* Digital Archive); O. Jahn, op. cit., pl. 4, no. 211; E. Dodwell apud D. Raoul-Rochette, *Deux Lettres À Mylord Comte d'Aberdeen, Sur l'Authenticité Des Inscriptions de Fourmont*, Paris, 1819, pl. 3.

2 The location should be near Mount Brielthi, between modern day Galatiki and Athikia, but its identification is still uncertain. D. Amyx, "Dodwelliana", *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*, 4, 1971, 7, n. 15; J. Weisman, *The Land of the Ancient Corinthians*, Göteborg, 1978, pp. 59-68, 77, nn. 80-83; T. Gregory, "Contrasting Impressions of Land Use in Early Modern Greece: The Eastern Corinthia and Kythera", in S. Davies, J. L. Davis (edd.), *Between Venice and Istanbul: Colonial Landscapes in Early Modern Greece ca. 1500-1800 A.D.*, Princeton, 2007, p. 179, n. 36.

3 E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour …*, II, pp. 193-197.

4 Ibidem, p. 197.

5 Ibidem, pp. 197-199.

6 The earliest comment on this we were able to find stems from a footnote in a work on sculpture in Rome: "[…] il Sig. Edward Dodwell, giovane di genio, e di cognizioni molto estese, il primo che arricchirà la Republica litteraria di un' opera frutto de' suoi viaggi, che dará contezza esatta delo

publication of his journeys[7] and, by 1814, possibly to his own dismay, reproductions already circulated in his colleagues' works[8]. However, his *A Classical and Topographical*

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stato presente della Grecia in relazione ai monumenti e alli situazione, accennate, o descritte dagli Istoriografi, Geografi, e Viggiatori antichi." (L. Re, *Riflessioni antiquarie sulle Sculture Capitoline: dedicate agli artisti e agli amatori delle antichita*, II, Roma, 1806-1807, p. 10, n. 2).

7 An 1808 work on reliefs in Rome, discussing the labelling of figures in Antiquity, indicates the vase was being studied by Johan Åkerblad two years after Dodwell's return: "[ … ] e' que vasi dipinti di remota antichità con simili iscrizioni, del qual genere uno vidi ultimamente presso il sig. Dodwell portato da Corinto, la cui interpretazione aspettiamo dal dotto viaggiatore Akerblad." (T. Piroli, G. Zoëga, *Il bassirilievi antichi di Roma*, Roma, I, 1808, p. 61, n. 1). "Appena arrivato a Roma il Sig Dodwell, ebbi il bene di conoscerlo ed insieme con tutti i dilettanti dell' antiquaria, che allora quivi si trovarono, di ammirar le tante belle cose che dal suo viaggio in Grecia. [ … ] più vasi dipinti, e massimamente uno antichissimo con greche lettere, trovato non lungi da Corinto, e di cui forse altrove avrò occasione di parlare;" ( J. D. Åkerblad, *Sopra due laminette di bronzo trovate ne'contorni di Atene: dissertazione d'un membro onorario dell'academia libera d'archeologia di Roma*, Roma, 1811, pp. 3-4). Åkerblad, though, would not be the first to publish the find.

8 Seroux D'Agincourt, also in Rome, while working on his *Recueil de fragmens de sculpture antique en terre cuite*, gained access to the vase and had prepared illustrations by 1810, when he gifted one of the chalcographic printing plates of, certainly, the Dodwell pyxis to Friederich August Wolf, due to the description. "[ … ] der andere eine sehr merkwürdige altgriechische, bemahlte, irdene Vase mit Thierfiguren, welche der gelehrte und kunſt liebende Dodwell (der seit ein Paar Jahren in Rom lebt) zu Korinth fand. Auf ihrem Deckel sind außer Thier-Figuren (worunter zwey thebanische Sphinre) auch menschliche, und dazwischen griechische Schrift [sic]." (F. A. Wolf, "D'Agincourt", *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*, July 10, 1810, 2). Further, D'Agincourt's name was also becoming associated with the vessel: "La découverte d'un vase grec, retrouvé naguère par Dodwell, dans un tombeau près de Corinthe, et gravé par les soins de M. d'Agincourt, prouve que cet art étoit connu même dans la Grèce propre, s'il n'étoit point venu des Grecs asiatiques." (G. Micali, "Tableau de L'Italie avant la Domination des Romains", *Annales des voyages, de la géographie et de l'histoire*, 13, 1811, 331). D'Agincourt's work and the delays in publishing his own journeys might have prompted Dodwell to divulge the piece and his finding. In early 1812, news of Dodwell's travels, publishing intentions and, specifically, the discovery of the vase appear in a Milanese literary magazine: "Il Sig. Eduardo Dodwell, ritornando in Italia da Atene e da altre parti di Grecia, dove ha fatto eseguire alcuni scavamenti, aprire sepolcri, e dissotterrare vari monumenti antichi, ha recato con seco un grande numero di bellissimi disegni, delineati in parte da lui, e in parte da un valente pittore Romano, che gli fu compagno de viaggio. Egli ha portato altresì molte iscrizione greche, e fra queste alcune preziose in dialetto Eolico e Beotico; parecci vasi dipinti di quella specie, che per gran tempo fu chiamata Etrusca, ed uno, particolarmente, antichissimo con greche lettere, trovato non lunghi da Corinto, ed oltre a tutto ciò, una copiosa raccolta di medaglie greche, quali assai rare, e quali finora non publicate, vari idoletti, e pietre incise; e laminette di bronzo, ed alti monumenti curiosi, che meritano di essere attentamente considerati da tutti i buoni amatori della erudizione antiquaria. Il Sig. Dodwell sta ora preparando in Roma una magnifica descrizione dell'importante suo viaggio." (*Il Poligrafo Domenica*, January 5, 1812, 10-11). In the same year Dodwell also publishes some plates of reliefs seen during his journey in a small Italian booklet (E. Dodwell, *Alcuni Bassirilievi della Grecia discritti e publicati in otto Tavole*, 1812, Rome). In 1813, a year before D'Agincourt's publication (and death), Dodwell himself had felt the need to send notice of his find: "Engländer Dodwell hat in der Nähe von Corinth uralte Gräber offen laffen, und darin Basen mit und ohne Inschriften gefunden, die er bekannt machen will. Unter andern entdeckte er eine Vase mit einem Gemählde, das acht Jäger darstellt, die einem Eber (vielleicht den Calydonischen) verfolgen und deren Namen beygeschrieben stehen, in denen sowohl ein p als k vorfömmt [sic]." (*Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen unter Aufsicht d. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 75, May 24, 1813, 830). Another 1813 publication, from Rome and before the *Recueil*, also gives news of the piece and its importance but does not reproduce it nor describe its contents

*Tour through Greece*, and the illustrations of the vase, would be delayed for five more years. This postponement was not only due to the magnitude of the endeavour but, also, to the burdens imposed on British expats consequent to Napoleon's occupation of Italy[9]. To these, later, were added the high publishing costs involving colour plates, together with publication fees charged to the author to offset legal deposit requirements, and, rather curiously, an earlier negotiation with the French Government intending to have it published first in France[10]. Opening the *Tour*, Dodwell is candid on his disappointment with the dissemination of his findings:

> Indeed, the access which the Author has had to well-stored libraries, since his return to England, has convinced him that many of the observations and discoveries, for which he might once, perhaps, have claimed the palm of novelty, have been anticipated by the publications of those who travelled after him[11].

Nevertheless, Dodwell became associated with the piece. After the publication of the voyage in 1819, fame of the pyxis continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century, being alluded to in various studies and reproduced as an example of Corinthian vase-painting in reference works, collections, manuals and epigraphical anthologies. In addition to the widespread circulation of Dodwell's *Tour* and the

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(J. Millingen, *Peintures antiques et inédites de vases grecs: tirées de diverses collections, avec des explications*, Rome, 1813, pp. IV, IX, n. 7). Seroux D'Agincourt's and Henry Moses' works, both from 1814, seem to have been the earliest to publish reproductions of the vase, at least the more widely circulated ones: "un monument infiniment précieux à tous égards dans l'histoire des vases grecs" (J. B. D'Agincourt, op. cit., p. 96). Of these rival publications, only Moses certainly worked with Dodwell's blessing, as both had collaborated on the pyxis plates later used in his *Tour*. Furthermore, his reproductions are unmistakably different from D'Agincourt's (H. Moses, op. cit., pl. 3), who, in fact, published an imperfect reading of the inscription, to the point Dodwell himself tried to correct. "Le inscription de ce vase, regardé comme le plus ancien qu'on connaisse, et qui, sous ce rapport, intéresse si fortement la paléographie grecque, avoit été donnée d'une manière incorrecte, et nous en publions une copie plus exacte, qui nous a été communiquée par M. Dodwell lui-même [sic]." (D. Raoul-Rochette, p. 83, n. 4).

9 "These travels would have made their appearance some years before, if the intentions of the Author had not been frustrated by a long detention upon the continent, to which he was subjected by the government of Bonaparte. [ … ] And during the long interval, in which he was one of the victims to the violence of the late French government, the Author embraces with satisfaction, the opportunity which is now afforded him, of expressing the grateful sense, which he will ever entertain, of the generous treatment which he experienced from Mons. de Tournon and Mons. Norvins de Monbreton, who, from the situations which they held at Rome, might greatly have aggravated the inconvenient and distressing circumstances of his captivity; particularly at such a place as Rome, where courteous hospitality and disinterested kindness to strangers, are so little practiced." (E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour …*, I, pp. IX-X).

10 These latter setbacks are known to us because in April 17, 1817, Dodwell's case and predicaments were explicitly invoked in the House of Commons (!), during a debate on legal deposit requirements, moved by a petition from British booksellers and publishers to have them waived or reduced. The proceedings further inform us that, by then, the work was all but ready and might have been previously titled *Antiquities of Greece* (T. H. Hansard, *The Parliamentary Debates*, London, 1818, pp. 154-158).

11 E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour …*, I, p. III.

vase's own aesthetic merits, its celebration was also probably due to its perceived remote antiqueness, to the fact that Agamemnon pictured in an unknown story was bound to captivate any scholar, and to being an early testimony for Corinthian epichoric archaic script, with, at the time, unexpected letters accounting for some of the earliest more puzzling inscription readings[12].

In 1832 Dodwell dies in Rome, where the vase, together with his legacy, remained in an eponymous museum by the Capitoline Hill. By 1837, the pyxis is first catalogued (mistakenly as a kylix) by the *Istituto di corrispondenza archeologica*, in order to arrange for sale of the collection to a public or private buyer[13]. In 1840, a significant part of the collection is bought by the philhellenic Ludwig I of Bavaria and the vase is taken to Munich to be displayed, first, at the *Alte Pinakothek*. It was one of several acquisitions and incorporations that increased the museum holdings throughout the century. The pyxis survived the 1944 bombings that damaged the collection and, since 1967, is shown in the renewed *Antikensammlungen*[14].

In the twentieth century, scholarship would reframe the pyxis' importance for Art History: it became representative of a cohesive and popular circle of painters in Archaic Corinth, and its author seemingly identified as the foremost and eponymous member of the school. Humfry Payne, in his 1931 ground-breaking work on Corinthian Art *Necrocorinthia*, already identifies a group of vessels with a "painter of the Dodwell Pyxis" and with those "in continuation of his style". The group is later expanded by Darrell Amyx, Robert Hopper and Jack Bensons[15]. The fundamental author among them is Amyx, who had picked up where Payne left off and, by 1943, while commenting on a pyxis in the Hearst Collection, had established the history, evolution and influence of the school. His 1971 article *Dodwelliana* became the main comprehensive systematization of the work of painter and his circle, their style and chronology, later expanded in the 1988 *Corinthian Vase-Painting of the Archaic Period*[16]. Meanwhile, in 1983, Mary Blomberg had published a monograph on the painter, expanding on stylistic analysis, introducing a statistical review of the whole corpus,

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12 Cf. J.-B. D'Agincourt, op. cit., p. 94; D. Raoul-Rochette, op. cit., pp. 83, 127-128; E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour …*, II, pp. 197-198; W. Abeken, "Vasi con dipinture Archaiche", *Annali dell'Instituto di Corrispondenza Archaeologica*, 8, 1836, 308-310; O. Jahn, op. cit., pp. cxlvi-cxlviii; A. S. Rhousopoulos, "Sopra un vasetto corinzio con iscrizioni d'un carattere antichissimo", *Annali dell'Instituto di Corrispondenza Archaeologica*, 1862, 50-55. As per its popularity, allusions are too numerous to list.

13 W. Abeken, loc. cit., 1836, 309, n. 1; *Notice …*, pp. iv-vii, 36, no. 11.

14 *Wochenblatt für Zweibrücken, Homburg und Cusel*, 39, March 29, 1840, p. 2; O. Jahn, op. cit., pp. vi, 65; D. Amyx, "Dodwelliana", loc. cit., 3; F. Knauss, op. cit., pp. 12-21.

15 H. Payne, op. cit., p. 63; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vases in the Hearst Collection at San Simeon*, Berkeley, 1943, pp. 223-225, 232, no. 126; R. J. Hopper, "Addenda to Necrocorinthia", *ABSA*, 44, 1949, 213, no. 16b, 220, no. 11, 222, no. 20, 240, no. 2; J. L. Benson, op. cit., pp. 45-47, 98-99. For a more comprehensive history of the catalogue see D. Amyx, "Dodwelliana", loc. cit., 3-6; M. Blomberg, op. cit., p. 13.

16 D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vases in the Hearst Collection …*, pp. 224-225; Id., "Dodwelliana", loc. cit.; Id., *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 205-223, 320-322, 346-349. See also C. W. Neeft, *Addenda et Corrigenda to D. A. Amyx, Corinthian Vase-Painting in the Archaic Period*, Amsterdam, 1991, pp. 59-62.

its elements and visual details, and establishing various baselines. Blomberg also argued for drastic revision of Payne and Amyx's chronologies, and proposed various hypothesis of further interpretation to mixed reception, with the newly identified pieces being incorporated into the Amyx catalogue[17].

Around 70 works are attributed to the painter and more than 200 to his followers, most notably among them the Painter of Athens 931, the Geledakis Painter, and the Ampersand Painter. Consensus has the circle active, at least, during the first quarter of the sixth century BCE, working throughout the whole Middle Corinthian period until the dawn of Late Corinthian I[18]. The school, whose popularity is attested by findings across the Mediterranean, specialized in animal friezes following popular patterns, namely with lions, panthers and herbivores, surrounded by peculiar filler ornaments, from flowery and leaf-like to vermicular and dotted, fighting *horror vacui*, sometimes cumbersomely so. The Dodwell painter is considered the foremost artist of the school, the most influential and creative regarding the use of themes and shapes, capable of unmistaken quality but also hasty at times. He is noticeably recognized by the form of his animals' posture and shoulder lines, and the use of filler[19].

## The Dodwell Pyxis: scenes and scenery

The vase is a Middle Corinthian convex "Type B" pyxis without handles, of black-figured technique, with incised detail, characteristically using both black and a reddish purple for figures and borders over yellowish clay. Its height is 14 cm with lid (11.5 without) and the diameter is 15.5 at the broadest. A third of the vessel is broken (Fig. 9) and the lid is slightly damaged. The pyxis is consensually dated early in the Dodwell Painter's career, in the beginning of the sixth century, with Amyx assessing it Early Middle Corinthian[20].

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17 M. Blomberg, op. cit.; D. C. Kurtz, "The Dodwell Painter", *CR*, 35:1, 1985, 156-157; C. D. Von Kaenel, "Observations on the Dodwell Painter by Mary Blomberg", *Gnomon*, 58:6, 1986, 566-568; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 346-349, 424, n. 83; P. Lawrence, "Dodwellians in the Potters' Quarter", in *Studies in Archaic Corinthian Vase Painting*, Princeton, 1996, pp. 140, n. 28, pp. 141-144.

18 H. Payne, op. cit., p. 63; R. J. Hopper, loc. cit., 167-168; L. Banti, "Dodwell, Pittore di.", in *EAA*, II, 1960, pp. 44-45; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 205, 384-385, 387; P. B. Katz, "Hill-Stead 46.1.95: a 'lost' work of the Painter of Athens 931", *Babesch*, 72, 1997, 1-20; M. Steinhart, "Dodwell Painter", in *Brill's New Pauly*, IV, 2004, cols. 608-609. Blomberg argues for the painter's career to start in the middle of EC. M. Blomberg, op. cit., pp. 47-50, 71. Cf. P. Lawrence, "On the Evidence of Style", in M. Del Chiaro, W. R. Biers (edd.), *Corinthiaca. Studies in Honor Darrell A. Amyx*, Columbia, 1986, pp. 88-96.

19 D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vases in the Hearst Collection …*, p. 224; Id., "Dodwelliana", loc. cit., 16-18; Id., *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 384; M. Blomberg, op. cit., pp. 21-30, 32-33. For the criteria see D. Amyx, "Dodwelliana", loc. cit., 19-21.

20 P. Lawrence, "On the Evidence of Style", op. cit., pp. 88-89; H. Payne, op. cit., pp. 63, 305-306 (c. 600 BCE); L. Banti, loc. cit. (600-590/70); D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 205-206, 428 (upper part of 595/90-575); M. Blomberg, op. cit., pp. 35-40 (argues for an earlier date, in the end of the seventh century). For the question of Corinthian pottery chronology, see D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 397-434; C. W. Neeft, "Absolute Chronology and Corinthian Pottery", in R. Panvini, L. Sole (edd.), *La Sicilia in età arcaica. Dalle apoikiai al 480 a.C.*, Roma, 2012, pp. 485-496.

The body has two similar animal friezes, roughly close in height, intermixed with black filler ornaments, most notably rosettes, leafy motifs and vermicular forms. Parallel borderlines, some black and others purple, frame the friezes, and in the middle, between them, a border filled with an alternated dotted pattern. Figure details (horns, tails) sometimes cross borders. Animals are black with detail and contrast added through purple, more noticeably to their necks. Their shapes are standardized, less detailed and a bit clumsy, as is common in Middle Corinthian.

The upper frieze (Fig. 1) has one stag (*1*), two swans (*2*, *5*), two lions (*3*, *10*), two bulls (*4*, *9*), two panthers (*6*, *8*) and one goat (*7*). The damaged section can be reconstructed using similar forms from the vessel, although in between the lion (*10*) and the stag another swan or, more likely, filler elements, might have been figured. The panthers face right, while all the prey face left. The lions are the exception, both facing the prey they corner as if hunting together, while, inversely, the panthers hunt alone, mimicking actual hunting behaviour of the species.

The lower frieze (Fig. 2) has two panthers (*11*, *13*), one deer (*12*), one goat (*14*), one lion (*15*) and the beginning of a sphynx (*16*). The remainder of the frieze is too damaged to be reconstructed, but it would not be surprising to find a second sphynx facing the remaining one with animals and filler in between. Again, the prey face left and the predators right. These animal friezes are a typical "orientalising" theme, characteristic in Corinthian archaic vase painting, often with lions and panthers hunting, and also common for this vase shape[21].

The lid (Figs 3, 10) makes the work somewhat of an outlier among the painter's output, bringing "human figures into his world of beasts"[22] with a narrative scene, labelled characters (the sole extant case), and a larger variety of filler ornaments. As the lid is only slightly damaged, the frieze can be seen in full. The top of the lid-knob (Fig. 8) has a flowery motif, within a circular border, and the curve repeats the same dotted pattern as the one between the lower friezes. The inner curve is partially blank, with strokes towards two parallel circular lines that, together with an outer purple line, frame the scene. The painter used purple to add detail to the figures in their clothes, armour, necks, muscles and blood.

It has been noted that the lid frieze displays a complex, tripartite scheme, somewhat asymmetrically dividing a hunt scene, a household scene, and inserting a third group[23]. This last one comprises of two sphynxes closing on a swan and facing each other (*17-19*), surrounded by filler ornaments in the manner of the lower friezes, dividing the scenes. A similar swan (*22*) also separates the scenes in the opposite side, possibly intended to be placed in opposition, but ultimately moved for need of canvas. When

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21 D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 367, 449, 663-667; J. Boardman, *Early Greek Vase Painting*, London, 1997, pp. 181-182.

22 D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 384.

23 J. B. D'Agincourt, op. cit., p. 94; E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour …*, II, p. 198; F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 46; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 565; A. Avramidou, "Tracing the oikos in Pre-Classical Corinth: The Perspective of Iconography", in R. Laurence, A. Strömberg (edd.), *Families in the Graeco-Roman World*, London / New York, 2012, p. 67.


Fig. 1. Illustration of the upper frieze (T. Lau, op. cit., pl. 4, fig. 1).

fitting the lid onto the vase lip, one can conjecture matching the third group with the facing lions and second hypothetical sphynx group on each of the friezes below.

The remaining filler ornaments, however, are different in the rest of the vase, and more diverse between them. Only under the boar's head and in the "third group" are they similar to those across the body friezes below. While not uncommon for the period, they further the case for oddity[24]. According to Blomberg, this work shows the most diverse number of filler types among the vases associated to the painter. In fact, the more "geometric" filler motifs deployed, such as the internally divided

24 H. Payne, op. cit., pp. 63, 156-157. Together with the inscriptions, and if not for the animals, some authors would question if both pieces had been painted by different hands. R. Wachter, op. cit., p. 60; F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 45.

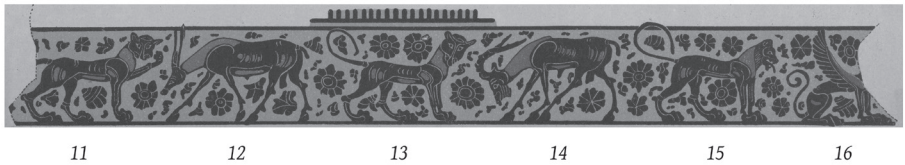


Fig. 2. Illustration of the lower frieze (T. Lau, op. cit., pl. 4, fig. 1).


Fig. 3. Photograph of the lid (J. Sieveking, R. Hackl, op. cit., p. 26, fig. 37).

circle, rhombus and rosettes in quarters, seem to have been unique to this piece, while other rare motifs return only in pieces from his late career[25]. Was he experimenting?

On the other hand, those ornaments are not the sole differing elements deployed: so are the inscriptions and human figures. By partially altering the filler ornaments one accompanies and furthers the change of scenery, a contrast shown both in the lid and between body and lid. This variation might be significant in the heterogeneity of the piece. The hunt continues, in part, the theme of the lower friezes, but one where humans insert themselves into the wilderness as the predators, while the house itself stays behind and is outside of the wild. Both scenes are surrounded by those different filler ornaments and, more importantly, letters, clear signs of a human environment. One conjectures the extrinsic ornaments could amount to letter-like invocative scribblings, motifs that tried to approximate themselves to letterforms as ornaments. Such deployment of filler would still anchor all friezes to the style, while being responsive to a change in the background of the lid frieze at the same time: the world of men enters in the world of beasts. Filler adds to the visual language elements to establish the landscape, set the themes, and complexify the scenery.

In order to read each of the scenes in the lid, as most human figures face right, one works with the expectation of that direction of visual scanning[26]. First, we see a young man (*a*) with a chlamys over a seemingly long chiton. He holds a *kērykeion*, a herald's staff, in his right hand, while extending his left arm, as if greeting someone. Thus, we can assume this figure to be an outsider, arriving at the setting from somewhere else and travelling with a message, albeit not necessarily intended for this place. He might be stopping by. The painter gave further attention to this figure by briefly switching to the outline technique (the sole instance in the vase) to draw the chiton folds hanging under the mantle and over the feet (Fig. 6).

The young herald is arriving to a house. Inside there are women and children. The slower pace of movement contrasts with the hunting scene. First, a long-braided woman (*b*) wearing an unbelted peplos has stopped a naked child (*c*) from running, who, in turn, now faces her as if contesting the restraint (Fig. 6). This light-hearted note of a youngster wanting to join the adults in the hunt shows the household and hunting scenes are connected in one narrative, but further suggests something darker: the child is now facing left, as the prey of the friezes below do, and would surely die if allowed to join the hunt. By wearing an unbelted peplos, the first women represented might be inferred to be pregnant, further reinforcing the image of a mother protecting her child. A second braided woman (*d*) wearing a belted peplos extends her arm rightward. The ink from a nearby filler ornament seems to have dripped and bonded her hand with the pattern[27].

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25 M. Blomberg, op. cit., pp. 16-19, 39-40. Blomberg further conjectures possible meanings and functions of filler in relation to myth.

26 R. Osbourne, A. Pappas, "Writing on Archaic Greek Pottery", in Z. Newby, R. Leader-Newby (edd.), *Art and Inscriptions in the Ancient World*, Cambridge, 2007, p. 147.

27 Earlier authors saw here an unknown object. E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour …*, II, p. 198; F. Lorber, op. cit, p. 46, n. 287; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 565.

Next, let us turn to the hunting scene. The Hunters are moving between two birds following a large and beastly boar (*20*), bigger than the humans but still within the proportions of the wild animals shown in the friezes below. He is charging in spite of having already been struck by a spear and four arrows (three stuck in the back, one in the torso) and started to bleed as a result. One hunter (*g*) has fallen with his spear under the boar, his arm painted purple signaling the seriousness of the injury. He tried to strike the beast and failed (the spear is intact, still held by the fallen hunter), amplifying the perception of danger from fighting the animal. As the predators of the friezes below, he faces right. The painter has, in fact, incorporated a theme often found in representations of the famous Calydonian hunt, that of a fallen dead hunter under the monstrous boar[28]. A third, smaller bird (*21*), stands by while the beast is pursued by a running hunter (*f*), with a plumed attic helmet, a quiver on his back, holding a composite bow. Accompanying him follows another hunter (*e*), protected with greaves and a blank shield, spear in hand, at the ready.

Finally, we reach the last hunter (*h*), facing left, as the prey, being threated. Dressed with a short chiton and no armour, he grabs the boar by the tusks with one hand, while striking his head with a short sword with the other (Fig. 5)[29]. A most daring strike, fatal for the man if unsuccessful, for the painter chose a climactic moment, with the blade just about to gore the beast. Most interestingly this hunter is not at all like the others. He is young and beardless, does not fight from a distance, is unarmoured, yet tries to deliver the killing blow up-close. Like the young man arriving at the house, this figure also is made distinctively from the rest, given detail and placed at the limit to frame the scenes.

Clearly there is a story being told, linking two scenes in a way beyond simple juxtaposition, as indicated by the child held back from running. The hunters have already left the house, although the chase is ongoing and the killing blow about to happen. Yet, the child's behaviour, challenging time, binds the subject changes across the scenes to a larger story: Snodgrass' "synoptic convention"[30] is being deployed to further anchor the disparate matters across the geometry of the composition. On the left, the arrival of a *xenos* to the house. To the right, a boar hunt, going somewhat awry just before its end. The hunters seem to share among themselves just one full set of hoplite armour (no cuirass though), further suggesting they belong to only one *oikos*, with the head of the household being out hunting. Inside the house, only women and children remain. Death is hinted on the left, shown on the right. But the conclusion is left suspended: will the hunters return with a slain beast or with the man's corpse?

The painter seems to have strived for parallels and oppositions in composing the scene across house and wilderness. Most noticeable are the two young men framing

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28 J. Barringer, *The Hunt in Ancient Greece*, Baltimore, 2001, pp. 4-5, 149-173.

29 Some authors see small spear, or just the boar spear tip, as an alternative. J. Sieveking, R. Hackl, op. cit., p. 27; F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 46.

30 A. Snodgrass, "Narration and Allusion in Archaic Greek Art", in *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece*, Edinburgh, 2006 [1981], pp. 381-406; Id., *Homer and the Artists. Text and Picture in Early Greek Art*, Cambridge, 1998, pp. 55-65.

the narrative. When one arrives, the other has left. In each scene, they are distinctive in their roles. One fights among men while another is protected by hospitality of women, slaves and children. The flanking sphinxes and lion motifs might have an added significance in reinforcing the imperfect parallel, although their deployment is much more often non-narrative in Corinthian vase painting[31]. Yet, the two figures face each other as well, symmetrically, with the majority of the composition in between them.

With two scenes happening simultaneously, the connection between them would be on the viewers' minds, as two sets of events are brought into frame without a clear sequence[32]. The two young men, both symmetrically positioned with their backs to the sphynxes, respectively start and end their specific stories. The frieze snapshots a moment in time, not concluding what happens next. One young man is about to enter the house, greeting whomever he meets first, the other holds the blade inches from the victim, in the middle of landing the blow. These moments, albeit static, are full of activity: arriving, running, restraining from running, arguing, hunting, shooting, striking, falling, dying, killing. But the staging also hints of things to come: the household will welcome the *xenos*, greet the returning hunters and mourn the dead, and the two figures furthest from each other must meet. But not yet. The names of Agamemnon and Thersandros certainly matter, but one should note they are not required to conclude this general storyline from the composition.

## The lid inscriptions

Edd. Wachter, *NAGVI*, COR 33; Amyx, *CorVP*, p. 565 no. 33; Lorber, *I. Korinthische Vasen* 52; Arena, *RAL*, serie 8, 13:2, 1967, no. 18; Jeffery, *LSAG*, p. 131 no. 14a (*Poinikastas*, Digital Archive); Payne, *NC*, p. 163 no. 11; Schwyzer, *DGE* 121.1; Blass, *SGDI* 3120; Kertschmer, *GV*, p. 26 no. 42; Kertschmer, *HSF*, 29, 1888, p. 173 no. 38; Cauer, *Delectus*² 73; Rhousopoulos, *AdI*, 34, 1862, pp. 53-54; Jahn, *BV*, p. 65 no. 211; Abeken, *AdI*, 8, p. 309 nn. 1, 4; Boeck *CIG* 7; Rose, *Inscriptiones vetustissimae …* 7; Dodwell, *Tour …*, II, 1819, pp. 197-198; Dodwell apud Raoul-Rochette, *Deux Lettres À Mylord Comte d'Aberdeen …*, 1819, pp. 83 n. 4, 127-128; D'Agincourt, *Recueil …*, 1814, p. 94.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (*a*) | Ἀγαμέμνōν | Agamemnon |
| (*b*) | ᾽Άλκᾶ | Alce |
| (*c*) | Δōρίμαχος | Dorimachos |
| (*d*) | Σᾶκίς | Secis |
| (*e*) | Ἀνδρύτᾶς | Andrytas |
| (*f*) | Λάϙōν | Lacon |
| (*g*) | Φίλōν | Philon |
| (*h*) | Θέρσανδρος | Thersander |

31 H. Payne, op. cit., pp. 50, 89-90; D. Amyx, "Dodwelliana", loc. cit., 18; Id., *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 661.

32 Cf. J. P. Small, "Time in Space: Narrative in Classical Art", *ABull*, 81:4, 562-575.

**(a)** Ἀγαμέμνōν Dodwell || **(b)** ᾽Άλκᾱ *dor.* = ᾽Άλκη Amyx: ᾽Άλκα Kertschmer: Ἀλκά Boeckh. || **(c)** Δōρίμαχος *spurio cum diphtongo* Wachter: Δōρίμαχος *aut* Δορίμαχος Amyx: Δōρίμαχος Schwyzer: Δορίμαχος Boeckh. || **(d)** Σᾱκίς *dor.* = Σηκίς Kretschmer: Σάκις Boeckh. || **(e)** Ἀνδρύτᾱς Boeckh || **(f)** Λάϙōν *corr.* Jahn: Πάϙōν *p. c.* Rhusópulos: Πάφōν Boeck. || **(g)** Φίλōν Dodwell: Ἄφιλον Abeken. || **(h)** Θέρσανδρος *corr.* Dodwell: Θέρσανδρον D'Agincourt.

The lid shows a group of eight painted captions, one for each human figure, making the vessel the painter's sole work yet to be found with writing. The *legenda* are progressive inscriptions, six of them (*a*, *b*, *d*, *e*, *f*, *h*) centrifugally read from figures' heads out to the edge of the lid. The name of Philon (*g*), the figure fallen under the boar, is progressive and does not start from, but ends on, the head, forced by the available space. Dorimachos' caption (*c*) is another outlier regarding orientation of writing. It is read progressively but centripetally, starting from the lid edge, ending by the head of the figure, and with the peculiarity of having its final M (*san*) inverted, as if beginning a boustrophedic turn. This solution markedly differs from the expected similar resolution at the end of Thersander (*h*).

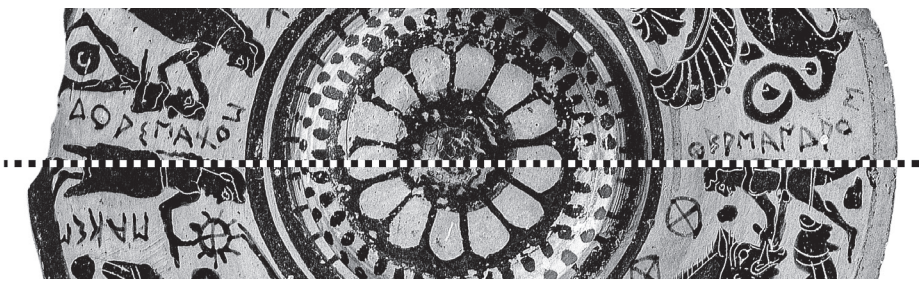

Fig. 4. Dorimachos' and Thesandros' captions in reference to the common rotation position. Courtesy of Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, photograph by Renate Kühling.

This odd direction could have resulted from the technique striving for ease and economy of writing practiced by the artist. Dorimachos' and Thersandros' captions are both approximately on the same diametric line of reference for a rotation (Fig. 4). This allows the painter to apply two names in one turn (*c* then *h*), progressively, and turning their endings upwards; in the first case so as to wrap the line around the figure's head[33]. The inverted M might not be meaningless in this process. According to Blomberg, incision patterns indicate the painter was right-handed, rotating the pieces clockwise with the left hand, while working with the right[34]. To minimize the amount of turns, the painter could have started with Agamemnon (initial position),

33 I am indebted to Professor Polinskaya for this insight, pointing me this key for the interpretation.
34 M. Blomberg, op. cit., pp. 67-68; D. C. Kurtz, loc. cit., 157.

then turned the lid to fill Alce, Dorimachos and Secis, the three labels standing somewhat aligned (first rotation).

However, in between naming Alce and Secis, he seems to have made a sudden mistake in writing Dorimachos. The painter might have wrongly started the caption with the M (maybe thinking of Secis), writing progressively and from the child's head. He then overcomes this misstep by keeping the rest of the name unfilled, skipping it to fill Secis; and then turning to fill Andrytas and Lacon (second rotation); then Philon (third rotation); and finally positioning Dorimachos and Thesandros in opposition (fourth rotation). He would then restart the caption, keeping it progressive, this time from the border and thus re-using the sibilant at the end. Thesandros would be the last label painted (see the rotation in Fig. 4).

This scenario for the letter orientation keeps the assumptions of the economy of writing and also maintains Wachter's "starting-point principle" of having labels begin close to the figures' heads and continue outwards (a tendency with numerous exceptions)[35]. The relative irregularity of Dorimachos' letters, written gradually smaller and closer together, could also support this reading, as the painter had to fit the characters before an unmovable final ϻ. We see similar irregularities when the artist was confronted with no space to write in the direction of previously painted elements, as in Agamemnon and Philon. In all, this conforms to figures being painted before their *legenda* but, most importantly, indicates that some of them had specific names, thought out beforehand. This would stop the painter from correcting mistake in a different way, namely using any throwaway name staring with a sibilant. Overall, though, lettering is inconsistent in size and spacing and not the most elegant[36].

Regarding the script, the use of ϻ as sibilant, together with lunar γ, regular δ, Corinthian ε, 4-dash crooked ι, the velar-plosive ϙ, and the "blue" complementary signs (φ = /*ph*/; χ = /*kh*/), is consistent with the Corinthian epichoric alphabet. The archaic aspect of several forms, namely the progressive α, short legged asymmetric λ, and asymmetric υ, would point to the early mid sixth century BCE, at the latest[37]. As to the dialect, the writing of ᾽Άλκᾶ (for ᾽Άλκη) and Σᾶκίς (for Σηκίς) is consistent with Doric, spoken in Corinth. However, if in Dorimachos the first *o* is a long [ō] representing a spurious diphthong that resulted from the loss of the [w], as Wachter deduces, two inconsistencies between dialect and script arise: 1) the diphthong would be expected to have to been written *Oϒ* as this was characteristic for the script (although less so before the end of the sixth century); 2) for the period, the digamma is assumed to still being graphed in Corinth[38]. Watcher's solution is to read a possible Ionic intrusion, taken from literary tradition, to name the figure[39]. Interestingly, this is consistent with the

35 R. Wachter, op. cit., p. 228; F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 114.

36 F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 46. Contra L. H. Jeffery, op. cit., p. 126.

37 L. H. Jeffery, op. cit., pp. 114-116; M. Guarducci, *Epigrafia Greca*, vol. 1, Roma, 1967, pp. 171-172; F. Lorber, op. cit., pp. 96, 99.

38 R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 245-246, 335; M. Guarducci, op. cit., p. 172; L. H. Jeffery, op. cit., p. 115.

39 R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 60, 322-323.

scenario in which the painter makes a mistake in Dorimachos' caption: he had in mind an established name for the child. And this takes us directly to the problem of identifying which figures and what story we have at hand. How one interprets the captions and who is behind each *legenda* is crucial, as there is no literary parallel for this exact scene. One should start off from the two labels that refer to known heroes.

## Agamemnon's fragmented youth

The name needs no introduction and makes the vase one of the earlier extant iconographical representations, if not the earliest, to identify the hero with an inscription[40]. Following the conjectured direction of visual scanning he would be the first figure. The visual language indicates his youth and differentiates him from the group. His position and movement show him arriving at the house, while his status is singled out by the *kērykeion*. The staff could also represent his famous sceptre, indicating the royalty of his ascendency[41]. But it seems much more likely a herald's staff, drawn with the characteristic entwined circle and a half, as often found in the representations of Hermes[42]. However, the two scenes have no clear parallel in literature. So, what can we know of Agamemnon's youth?

Regarding what can be deemed as "youth" for a short mythographic survey, let us consider that an unmistakable transition to adulthood in Ancient Greece would expect marriage and domain over one's household[43]. Unfortunately, only fragments of stories associated with that period of Agamemnon's life remain. Among the quarrels between Atreus and Thyestes, there is the episode of the time Agamemnon, together with Menelaus, was sent by his father to fetch his exiled brother. In Seneca's *Thyestes*, they are meant to bring him back for the infamous banquet. In Hyginus, they are to return him to atone for his crime. The three all meet at Delphi, when consulting the oracle, the brothers on how to find their uncle, Thyestes on how to avenge his brother[44]. Both versions are late testimonies, but do echo the sending of a herald to convince Thyestes to return, under the guise of reconciliation in the Atreid saga. This is consistent with our knowledge of fragmentary plays going back, at least, to

40 The second earliest inscription and representation also happens to be from a Corinthian vase (*LIMC* Agamemnon 62 = Aias I 122) from the same period, representing the suicide of Aias. O. Touchefeu, I. Krauskopf, "Agamemnon", *LIMC*, vol. 1, 1981, pp. 267-268, 273; R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 51-52, 315.

41 F. Lorber, op. cit., pp. 1979, 46; O. Touchefeu, I. Krauskopf, op. cit., pp. 258, 273; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 565. Cf. *Il.* 2.45-47, 2.99-108; J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death*, Oxford, 1980, pp. 9-12.

42 F. Velasco, "Un aspecto del simbolismo del kerykeion de Hermes", *Gérion*, 8, 1988, 39-52.

43 N. S. Rodrigues, L. N. Ferreira, "Tornar-se adulto na Antiguidade Clássica: normas, práticas e representações", in A. C. Fonseca (ed.), *Jovens Adultos*, Coimbra, 2014, pp. 92-96, 102-108.

44 Sen. *Thy.* 295-333; Hyg. *F.* 88.5-8. Cf. S. F 247 Radt; Eur. F627 Kannicht; Apollod. 2.14; Eur. Sch. *in Or.* 15; Enn. trag. 136 Manuwald; Sen. *Ag.* 28-38.

Sophocles' *Thyestes at Sicyon*, notwithstanding the possibility of earlier elements[45]. A fragment from that lost play has Thyestes referencing that he has received a less than savoury instruction from the god of Delphi:

> None is wise except he whom the god honours.
> Yet once you observe the gods, even if outside justice
> you are called to advance, thither must you walk,
> for nothing of what the gods instruct is shameful[46].

The tables would then turn, setting Thyestes' revenge and return to power and, also, the exile or escape of Agamemnon and Menelaus. Either as children or as young men, they would wander across the Peloponnese and would ultimately take refuge at Sparta, in the house of Tyndareus[47]. There, both brothers would meet Clytemnestra and Helen, and Agamemnon would find support to retake his father's seat. Tyndareus would organize the betrothal of his daughters, the famous wooing of Helen, and bequeath Sparta to Menelaus. In another version, known to Euripides, Agamemnon takes her as his wife after killing her first husband, Tantalus, precisely a son of Thyestes[48]. Strikingly, in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Clytemnestra reminds him of his previous condition of precariousness and dependence:

> But my old father Tyndareus shielded you
> when you became suppliant and, in turn, you married me[49].

Taking back Mycenae (or Argos), succeeding or banishing Thyestes, obtaining sovereignty over various domains in the Peloponnese and, finally, marrying Clytaemnestra brings us to a situation known in the Homeric Poems[50]. One cannot stretch Agamemnon's youth beyond these events, nor the ability of the vase to bear

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45 A. *Ag.* 1577-1610; S. F 247 Radt; Apollod. *E.* 2.12-13; *SB* 20.14599.19; Paus. 2.18.1; *Schol.* Stat. *Theb.* 4.306; *Myth. Vat.* 1.22, 2.170, 3.8.16; *LIMC* Thyestes 1 (340-330 BCE). A. C. Pearson et alii, *The Fragments of Sophocles*, vol. 1, Cambridge, 1917, pp. 185-187; A. Lesky, "Die Griechischen Pelopidendramen und Senecas *Thyestes*", in *Gesammelte Schriften. Aufsätze und Reden zu antiker und deutscher Dichtung und Kultur*, Bern, 1966, pp. 522-526; R. Tarrant, *Seneca's Thyestes. Edited with introduction and commentary*, Atlanta, 1985, pp. 38-43; E. Vermeule, "Baby Aigisthos and the Bronze Age", *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, n.s. 33, 1987, pp. 122-152; T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth*, Baltimore, 1993, pp. 550-552; J. Segurado e Campos, *Séneca. Tiestes*, Lisboa, 1996, pp. 9-27; M. Pipili, "Thyestes", *LIMC*, vol. 8, 1997, pp. 20-22.

46 S. F 247 Radt: σοφὸς γὰρ οὐδεὶς πλὴν ὅν ἂν τιμᾷ θεός. / ἀλλ' εἰς θεοὺς ὁρῶντα, κἂν ἔξω δίκης / χωρεῖν κελεύῃ, κεῖσ' ὁδοιπορεῖν χρεών· / αἰσχρὸν γὰρ οὐδὲν ὧν ὑφηγοῦνται θεοί. See A. C. Pearson et alii, op. cit., pp. 187-188. Cf. J. Segurado e Campos, op. cit., p. 13 for a translation that reads κελεύῃ in the 3rd person singular of the active subjunctive.

47 Apollod. *E.* 2.14-15; Paus. 1.33.8 = *LIMC* Agamemnon 4 (c. 430 BCE); *LIMC* Thyestes 2 (340-330). Cf. *Il.* 2.106-107; Eur. *Or.* 13-21.

48 Hes. F 19, 154-155, 247 Most; Stesich. 85, 87-88 Finglass; Eur. *IA* 49-71, 391-394, 1148-1161; Apollod. 3.10.6-11.2; *E.* 2.15-16; Paus. 2.18.2, 2.20.9, 2.22.3; Eur. Sch. *in Or.* 16; Hyg. *F.* 78; Sch. *Od.* 4.430 Dindorf; Tz. *H.* 1.460-465.

49 Eur. *IA* 1155-1156: πατὴρ δὲ πρέσβυς Τυνδάρεώς σ' ἐρρύσατο. / ἱκέτην γενόμενον, τἀμὰ δ' ἔσχες αὖ λέχη.

50 *Il.* 1.113-115, 2.106-107, 2.569-580; *Od.* 4.517-518. Cf. Sch. *Il.* 2.106 Erbse; Sch. *Od.* 4.517 Dindorf; Eusth. *in Il.* 2.106-108; *in Od.* 4.517. T. Gantz, op. cit., pp. 540, 545.

these narratives beyond the reasonable. Still, we can be informed by those earlier episodes when reading the pyxis lid and inserting it within the general scaffolding of the Atreid saga. Agamemnon's wanderings, if alluded to in the pyxis lid, would point to an episode during (1) the brothers' quest to find Thyestes, or (2) their exile; or even (3) before reclaiming Atreus' former seat. Amid these (and possibly other) narratives, Agamemnon would visit a house while its master was out hunting. Such a story would not contradict the epic tradition nor require a consistency structuring Agamemnon's tales beyond the reasonable[51].

The visual elements in the scene unequally support the suitability of these broad strokes. The lack of power during Agamemnon's boyhood – as either Atreus or Thyestes rule – hamper us from reading his staff as a sceptre. Secondly, the absence of Menelaus in the lid suggests a rendition with the hero alone, which could also imply an episode later in his struggles, but can also just reflect an archaic variant where he was sent alone to Delphi. Subsequent stories would have the hero closer to adulthood, while in the pyxis he is clearly young, not a child, but not yet an adult. In Seneca's play he is unmistakably younger, as innocence would make the brothers perfect messengers to unwittingly collaborate in their fathers' sins[52]. Most interestingly, the notice that Agamemnon acted as Atreus' herald is consistent with his representation in the lid: wearing a mantle and holding a *kērykeion*.

On the other hand, a story of Agamemnon wandering away from his home, while out of power, and before regaining control over his father's household is not wholly without parallel. In fact, it would be in line with a recurrent motif of the Tantalids – Atreus, Thyestes, Aegisthus, Orestes – being repeatedly exiled: first, out of power and returning home, later, for revenge (or to suffer revenge, later on) and atonement[53]. Agamemnon would not (and will not, in a later arrival to *his* house) be different in this respect. Moreover, these journeys from precariousness to stability could comprise stories of overcoming youthful shortcomings, status and hardships, triumphs that would not only further the hero's maturity, not unlike Telemachus in the *Odyssey*[54], but also culminate with his achieving adulthood and proper status: marrying Clytemnestra and retaking his home.

In this context, should we not expect such stories to have circulated? What these fragments echo could point in that direction. In other words, have we been fortunate that the Dodwell painter filled this lacuna? Our interpretation does not outright ruin the framework extant sources allow us to draw, nor does it fit easily together.

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51 The lid composition might not require one to have grasped a fixed chronological unfolding of Agamemnon youthful wanderings, but just the expectation referenced by his youth relative to later stories during his adulthood. Cf. J. P. Small, loc. cit., 562-563.

52 Sen. *Thy.* 308-333.

53 Cf. *Od.* 3.255-310; 11.457-461; Pi. *P.* 11.14-22, 31-39; A. *Ag.* 1583-1586, 1605-1611; Eur. *El.* 585-595, 699-746; *Or.* 812-815, 982-1012; Sen. *Thy.* 35-45, 237-244; Apollod. *E.* 2.10-12; Hyg. 87-88; Sch. Eur. *in Or.* 4-14, 998.

54 N. S. Rodrigues, L. N. Ferreira, op. cit., pp. 88-92. Interestingly, the story of a young man prevailing over a dangerous boar in the lands of his future father-in-law was an episode also conveyed in the *Odyssey*, among the travels of Odysseus' youth. *Od.* 19.395-466.

We must stress that Agamemnon is also attested as a proper, non-Heroic, name, but rarely and much later, far distant from the period of the vase[55]. Further, we should assess whether this attribution holds when identifying the remaining labels.

## Thersander from Argos to Anatolia

As we have pointed out, the figure in opposition to Agamemnon is also visually distinctive: unlike his fallen companion and remaining hunters, he strikes the boar closest to the danger, directly facing the tusks and the beast's momentum, unarmoured and renouncing the use of spears or bows as the other hunters carry. He is younger, yet should win the day with his blow. Thus, it is captivating that this second young man, also framing the scene, can be directly named from literary tradition as well and, more specifically, from archaic Greek epic.

Frustratingly, there are at least four Thersandroi in Greek Mythology, besides being attested as an historical name at the end of the sixth century BCE in nearby Sicyon[56]. Early authors have identified the figure in the lid with Thersander, son of Sisyphus, thus associating him with a mythical ruler of Corinth[57]. However, not much is known about the hero beyond his genealogy[58]. This identification would also place him among an older generation of heroes than that of Agamemnon, hindering a straightforward identification in the composition. We also have later mentions of one Thersander, a son of the Heraclid Agamedidas, and a Thersander of Crete, of whom next to nothing is known[59].

However, there is a more prominent figure to be considered: Thersander, son of Polynices, one of the Epigonoi. This figure is connected to Boeotia[60], having become king of Thebes after the successful second campaign against the city. His story was part of early Theban myths, told in the lost epic poems *Thebaid* and the eponymous *Epigoni*, the latter bringing that cycle to its close[61]. The few extant fragments pale

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55 *IG* IX 1², 2.385; D.S. 37.16; *Ath. Mitt.* 13 (1888), 306.b.17; RKilikien 196.2; *P. Mich.* 183.1; JRCil.2.270.6; Heberdey-Kalinka, *ZR* 50.5.

56 *SEG* 11.244; M. Guarducci, op. cit., p. 337. The name is attested in later epigraphic and literary sources. The *LGPN* attests at least 41 more cases. If so, the Dodwell pyxis would, nevertheless, be the earliest case.

57 J. B. D'Agincourt, op. cit., p. 95; E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour …*, II, p. 199; P. A. Boeckh, *CIG*, 1828, no. 7; O. Höffer, "Thersandros", in W. H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexicon …*, vol. 15, 1916, col. 662; P. Coste-Messelière, *Au Musée de Delphes*, Paris, 1936, p. 142, n. 2; K. Scherling, "Thersandros", in *PW*, vol. 5a, II, 1934, col. 2452. The *LIMC* opted for a non-committal approach, having the piece in a separate entry instead. P. Müller, "Thersandros I", in *LIMC*, vol. 7, 1994, p. 920; G. Berger-Doer, "Thersandros II", in *LIMC*, vol. 7, 1994, pp. 920-921. Cf. Pi. *O.* 13.49.54; Eur. *Med.* 1381-1383; Apollod. 1.9.3; Paus. 2.2.2; Arist. Sch. *Rh.* 1363a. See infra n. 60.

58 Paus. 2.4.3, 9.34.7, 10.30.5; Sch. *Od.* 11.326 Dindorf.

59 Paus. 3.16.6; Q.S. 10.80-84.

60 Thersander, the Sisyphid, was also linked to Coronea and Haliartos in Boiotia in later sources, which might reflect confusion between figures. Paus. 9.34.7; Steph. Byz. 73.7-10, 377.12-21; Sch. *Il.* 2.503 Erbse; Eusth. *in Il.* 2.503.

61 T. Gantz, op. cit., pp. 492-519.

compared to later testimonies, but these narratives were known in Antiquity, with Homer and Pindar referencing them, and this generation of heroes also being the subject of lost tragedies[62]. Thersander, however, is poorly attested, even among the usual suspects of mythographers and Pausanias, and almost nothing is known of his childhood. Let us thus broaden the scope of related stories to better grasp the mythographic outline of this hero.

After fleeing from Thebes to Argos, Polynices finds refuge with king Adrastus and marries his daughter, Argia, begetting Thersander. There, Polynices tries to raise support for war against his brother. Amphiaraus and, knowing he would die if he joins the enterprise, leaves the decision to Eriphyle, his wife. She is bribed by Polynices with a necklace Aphrodite had formerly given to Harmonia, and assents[63]. The archaic tradition that has Oedipus die of old age in Thebes, has Polynices and Argia in the city for the funeral with an entourage (including at least Alcmaeon, Amphiaraus' son, another of the Epigonoi)[64]. Regardless, the war is famously fruitless[65].

Thersander would then grow up in Adrastus' household, at Argos. Ten years later, having received an oracle, the descendants of the seven who were defeated at Thebes gather for a second campaign under Alcmaeon, and Thersander becomes one of the leaders[66]. Again, Eriphyle's consent is required, and Diodorus and Apollodorus have Thersander, like his father before him, use a robe, another of Harmonia's heirlooms, as a bribe[67]. The campaign is successful. After a string of victories, the Thebans flee the city under the instructions of Tiresias, and Thebes is sacked[68]. Thersander reclaims the throne, starts to rebuild the city and continues the dynasty[69].

However, Thersander's deeds would not end here. He later joins the Trojan War on the side of the Greeks, participating in the mistaken plunder of Mysia. During the subsequent battle, Thersander would have shown himself as a formidable warrior until a final confrontation with king Telephos, who ultimately kills him in combat. In Dictys, his body is recovered and given a proper funeral by Diomedes, another of the Epigonoi. This scene has been read in a late sixth century BCE calyx fragment.

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62 Ibidem, pp. 522-525. On the fragments, E. Cingano, "Epigonoi", in M. Fantuzzi, C. Tsagalis (edd.), *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Ancient Reception*, Cambridge, 2015, pp. 254-260. There are fragments and notices of three plays named *Epigoni*, two of them by Aeschylus and Sophocles, and of nine titled *Alcmaeon*, two of them by Sophocles and Euripides.

63 Hdt. 4.147, 6.52; Apollod. 3.7.2; D.S.4.65.5-6; 4.66.2-3; Stat. *Theb.* 3.378-384; Hyg. *F.* 69.5; Sch. Pi. *O.* 2.76d; Sch. Eur. *in Ph.* 135. Cf. *Thebaïs* 7 West; *Od.* 15.246-267; *LIMC* Amphiaraos 7 (570-550 BCE); Pi. *N.* 9.8-27; S. *OC* 1291-1330; Eur. *Ph.* 74-80, 337-350, 422-425; Paus. 9.5.12, 9.41.2; Sch. *Od.* 11.326 Dindorf.

64 Hes. Fr. 192-193 West. Cf. *Il.* 23.678-680. T. Gantz, op. cit., pp. 502, 504-505; E. Cingano, "Riflessi dell'epos tebano in Omero e Esiodo", *IFilolClass*, 2, 2003, pp. 65-69.

65 A. *Sept.* 804-874; Eur. *Ph.* 1352-1424; Paus. 5.19.6. T. Gantz, op. cit., pp. 514-519.

66 *LIMC* Thersandros II 3 (500-480 BCE), 4 (450-440), 5 (440-430); *P. Oxy.* 61.4099.i.2; Apollod. 3.7.1-2; D.S.4.66.1; Paus. 2.20.5, 9.9.4, 10.10.4; Hyg. *F.* 71; Eusth. *in Il.* 4.407; Sch. Pi. *O.* 2.81 f. Cf. Pi. *P.* 8.38-60; Eur. *Supp.* 1213-1226. See E. Cingano, "I nomi dei Sette a Tebe e degli Epigoni nella tradizione epica, tragica, e iconografica", in A. Aloni, E. Berardi et alii (edd.), *I Sette a Tebe. Dal mito alla letteratura*, Bologna, 2002, pp. 27-62.

67 Apollod. 3.7.2; D.S. 4.66.3. Cf. Schol. Eur. *in Ph.* 671. T. Gantz, op. cit., p. 525.

68 Apollod. 3.7.3-5; D.S.4.66.4-67.1; Paus. 9.33.1.

69 Pi. *O.* 2.43-45; Paus. 7.3.1, 9.5.13-14, 9.8.7. Cf. D.S. 4.67.1; Strab. 9.2.32.

According to Pausanias there was also a tomb attributed to Thersander in Elaia, by the mouth of the river Cacius in Asia Minor[70]. Most importantly, the Mysia narrative integrated another lost archaic epic poem, the *Cypria*, that begins the Trojan cycle.

This last story is not alluded to in the *Iliad*. According to West, it should be read among the independent tales of Achilles later included in the cycle to fill nine years' worth of war[71]. And, again, the story was well known among classical authors and we know Telephus' tale was extensively treated in tragedy[72]. The earliest references to it are found in the *Ehoiai* and Archilochus, fragments brought to light among the Oxyrhynchus papyri, indicating the narrative was known in the seventh century BCE before its inclusion in the composition of the *Cypria*. The epic is often dated to the beginning of the sixth century BCE, consistent with the earliest iconography, although many of the tales included in the poem were much earlier and circulated independently[73].

The Epigonoi, though, are themselves in the *Iliad*. Diomedes, Sthenelus and Euryalus participate in the Trojan war, and their previous success against Thebes, where their fathers had failed, are emphasized in the poem. However, such references allude to what were, by then, well-known tales and narratives, not necessarily the lost *Epigoni*, composed not earlier than the seventh century BCE[74]. The figure of Thersander is also problematic. The hero is not mentioned in the earliest sources, consistent with the underrepresentation of the Epigonoi in extant archaic materials. However, proposed reconstruction of an *Ehohai* fragment and its importance to the cycle could indicate an early association to the tales[75].

## Archaic epic cycles and the bridging of traditions

Thersander's placing in both the *Epigoni* and the *Cypria* connects these epic cycles by inscribing the hero in the same generation Agamemnon would have belonged

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70 *Cypria* arg. 36-40 Bernabé; *LIMC* Thersandros II 6 (c. 510 BCE); Apollod. *E.* 3.17; Paus. 9.5.14; Dict. 1.14, 1.17, 2.2; Sch. Pi. *O.* 2.76c. M. L. West, *The Epic Cycle. A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics*, Oxford, 2013, p. 107. Vergil tells of his survival and participation in the Trojan Horse episode. V. *A.* 2.250-264; Hyg. *F.* 108.

71 Cf. *Il.* 2.300-329; *Cypria* arg. 33-35 Bernabé. M. L. West, op. cit., pp. 105-109; T. Gantz, op. cit., pp. 576-577.

72 T. Gantz, op. cit., pp. 578-579; F. Jouan, *Euripide et les legends des Chants Cypriens. Des origins de la Guerra de Troie à l'Iliade*, Paris, 1966, pp. 222-255; F. Knauss, "Erster Versuch. Landung im falschen Land.", in R. Wünsche (ed.), *Mythos. Troja*, München, 2006, pp. 132-135.

73 Hes. F 165 West; *P. Oxy.* 4078. F. Jouan, op. cit., pp. 14-31; A. Lesky, *História da Literatura Grega*, Lisboa, 1995, p. 136; A. Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists*, op. cit., pp. 42-43; M. L. West, op. cit., pp. 16-26, 58-65.

74 *Il.* 2.559-569, 4.370-410. Eriphyle's tale, Alcmaeon and Amphlocus are known in the *Odyssey* (11.326-327, 15.246-248). A. Lesky, *História da Literatura Grega*, op. cit., p. 102; E. Cingano, "Riflessi dell'epos tebano …", loc. cit., 71-72; Id., "Epigonoi", op. cit., pp. 243-246. The absence of Thebes among the Boiotian contingent in the catalogue can reflect an assumption of postbellum Thebes in myth, and certainly provides an opening for the *Cypria* to fill the vacuum with the Mysian expedition. Later traditions rectify the participation (Paus. 9.5.15). E. Cingano, "Epigonoi", op. cit., pp. 251-252.

75 Hes. F 117.21 Most (= 165 West). E. Cingano, "I nomi dei Sette a Tebe e degli Epigoni …", op. cit., pp. 34-35; Id., "Riflessi dell'epos tebano …", loc. cit., 76; Id., "Epigonoi", op. cit., p. 246.

to and amidst those whose loyalties lie with him. In representing these two heroes as young men in a complex narrative, the pyxis lid should not be ignored in this context of archaic Greek epic. Choosing fundamental figures from both cycles (one closes the first saga and participates in the beginning of the next one; and the other is Agamemnon, no introduction needed) and making them mythically synchronous to the viewer implies a generic sequential organization of tales that fill in the gap between Thebes and Troy, allowing them to coexist. In fact, the lost *Epigoni* would similarly complement the Trojan cycle linking and clarifying stories, heroes, and roles, as did the *Cypria*[76]. As Ettore Cingano points out,

> the Epigonoi were to play a seminal role in the chronological and thematic sequel of events of the epic cycle, serving as the main junction between two traditions which were originally independent and accounted for the two major events of the mythical age[77].

The perception that both these cycles, Theban and Trojan, were the most preeminent, somewhat alike to a degree, that their arcs communicated and were continued, one by the other, is attested in the archaic sources, sanctioning the comparison and exploration of parallels and bridges between stories and heroes. This is made clear by Hesiod in *Works and Days*, thematically and grammatically, regarding the Age of Heroes[78]:

> Evil war and dreadful battle
> under the seven-gated Thebes on Cadmean land
> destroyed some fighting for Oedipus' cattle
> and others on ships over the abyssal depth of the sea,
> bringing them to Troy for lovely-haired Helen[79].

The vase's painter seems to have engaged in a similar effort, bridging both cycles through visual language, and having the two heroes, with roughly the same age, stand in parallel and opposition in one same story. The characterization of Thersander is consistent with the outline of his tales: we see a young, victorious fighter that, unlike the older hunters, prevails in a fight where others have failed or, as his companion under the boar, died. Thus, the hunt reflects the story of the Theban campaigns and the hero's role in them. Furthermore, having Thersander die in the *Cypria* adds another grim mirroring to the parallel framework: in Mysia, it would be his turn to fail in the first expedition to Troy, leaving others, and Agamemnon, to later succeed in the second.

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76 E. Cingano, "Riflessi dell'epos tebano …", loc. cit., 58; Id., "Epigonoi", op. cit., pp. 251-254; M. L. West, op. cit., pp. 21-25, 56-60.

77 E. Cingano, "Epigonoi", op. cit., p. 253.

78 Cf. *Cypria* F 1 Bernabé; Sch. *Il.* 1.5 Heyne. T. Gantz, op. cit., p. 510; E. Cingano, "I nomi dei Sette a Tebe e degli Epigoni …", op. cit., pp. 53, 73-76.

79 Hes. *Op.* 131-135: καὶ τοὺς μὲν πόλεμός τε κακὸς καὶ φύλοπις αἰνὴ / τοὺς μὲν ὑφ' ἑπταπύλῳ Θήβῃ, Καδμηίδι γαίῃ, / ὤλεσε μαρναμένους μήλων ἕνεκ' Οἰδιπόδαο, / τοὺς δὲ καὶ ἐν νήεσσιν ὑπὲρ μέγα λαῖτμα θαλάσσης / ἐς Τροίην ἀγαγὼν Ἑλένης ἕνεκ' ἠυκόμοιο.

Fig. 5. Detail of Thersander striking the boar. Courtesy of Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, photograph by Renate Kühling.

Moreover, the participation in the Mysian debacle suggests the bridging of the epic cycles in tradition had to expect Thersander to have previously met Agamemnon, as the former had also answered the call to arms. He could had been included among Helen's suitors, as other Epigonoi[80], becoming bound to Tyndareus' oath, or another tale would have compelled his recruitment[81]. The lid could represent precisely the last hypothesis, the moment when Agamemnon arrives and will inevitably (but not yet) meet his counterpart in the far end of the scene. Furthermore, he will meet Thersander who will have returned from a successful hunt. This invokes the tradition of Agamemnon's future expedition having been joined by the slightly older, already experienced Epigonoi, in spite of being associated to the same generation. And, lastly, choosing Agamemnon's youth for a setting is effective, as it does not contradict the Homeric Poems but explores a theme left unsaid. Whether it represents an episode from or included in the *Epigoni*, it is, obviously, impossible to know. The narrative, however, would not unreasonably be out of place.

The two young heroes frame the scenes in front of them, with their backs to two sphinxes, who are themselves facing each other and locking the prey. The same pattern is repeated in the upper frieze with two lions and, possibly, in the lower frieze with sphinxes. As we noted, the placement of such dual figures was common both for the period and the painter and, for the most part, non-narrative. However, in to virtue of one of the heroes represented, one must stress that the lions and sphinxes are closely related to Thebes and to Thersander's ancestry. The sphynx is famously associated with Oedipus. Polynices is explicitly linked with the heraldry of the lion

80 E. Cingano, "Riflessi dell'epos tebano…", loc. cit., 58, n. 12, 72, n. 73.

81 Cf. *Il.* 23.296-299; *Od.* 24.115-119; *Cypria* arg. 30-35, F 19 Bernabé.

in the Theban cycle: when arriving as suppliant to Argos, Adrastus recognizes him as the lion he had once been prophesized, to whom should he marry his daughter, Argia, Thersander's mother[82].

On the other hand, these duplicates also bring the viewer's focus to the comparison between the two young heroes. The painter's choices in the manner of representing them highlights how Thersander can be viewed as a parallel figure with Agamemnon in Myth: both would have been, in their youth, fatherless due to fraternal quarrels; away from their ancestral seat; suppliants to another household where they marry and find support to reclaim their home. These parallels would not just be in the painter's mind, but also in the viewers', as the heroes are deployed precisely in opposition and framing the scenes, inviting one to compare and contrast.

Furthermore, considering this parallel of youngsters still to meet and to attain maturity, the motif of the hunt should be brought to sharper focus. First, because the activity is closely related to the practices and imagery of initiation into adulthood into Ancient Greece, a status that both Thersander and Agamemnon are to achieve in the future, but, in this moment, do not have. Second, because such relation hinges in understanding the hunt as a preparation and substitute for future battles, thus contributing to the maturation of the heroes and their forthcoming victories[83]. And, by picturing Thersander about to slay the beastly boar, the artist reinforces the display of a young hero overcoming his current dependence and further alludes to the victories yet to come. Be it at the gates of Thebes or in the Mysian plain.

Certainly, other stories were known, as we can deduct, for example, from Pindar's knowledge of both cycles and, specifically, the Mysian campaign[84]. In the *Second Olympian*, he directly references Thersander and synthesises a short outline of the figure:

> But Thesander survived Polynices, who had fell, and in contests of youth
> as in battles of war
> was celebrated, a defending scion to Adrastus' house[85].

This brief sketch is one of the few archaic mentions of the hero. Nevertheless, it includes much of the scaffolding of his tales transmitted in later sources: of one being victorious where his father failed; the recognition of his warring prowess; the link to Adrastus' household and stories, where his father had come as suppliant and had married into the royal line. Most interestingly, there is an allusion to achievements, *neois aethlois*, suggesting more tales were known of his youthful deeds and capacities[86].

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82 Eur. *Ph.* 409-422, *Supp.* 132-146; Apollod. 3.6.1; D. S. 4.65.2-3; Hyg. *F.* 69; Stat. *Theb.* 1.390-400; Sch. Eur. *in Ph.* 409. T. Gantz, op. cit., 1993, 508-510.

83 See J. Barringer, op. cit., pp. 11-53.

84 Pi. *I.* 8.49-50; *O.* 9.70-75. M. L. West, op. cit., pp. 44-45, 56.

85 Pi. *O.* 2.43-45: λείφθη δὲ Θέρσανδρος ἐριπέντι Πολυνείκει, νέοις ἐν ἀέθλοις / ἐν μάχαις τε πολέμου / τιμώμενος, Ἀδραστιδᾶν θάλος ἀρωγὸν δόμοις.

86 Nevertheless, athletic competitions and hunting could also be framed in parallel. J. Barringer, op. cit., pp. 37-42.

Pindar's sketch, in its essential elements, is not that different from the Dodwell Painter's, and the similarity strengthens the case for Thersander to be represented in the lid.

Moreover, the fact that the comparison between heroes does not draw a complete symmetry in characterization is further relevant. The differences are consistent with the dissimilitude in the same mythological background we have been underlining: their activities are unequal with respect to warring skill: herald and hunter; one fights with the men while the other arrives at the house, where the women stay behind and children are prevented from joining the fight. This differentiation indicates the seniority of Thersander in the comparison being made, in which the Theban youngster is already older albeit belonging to the same generation of heroes. Also, their deaths will occur sequentially, with Thersander falling first, in Mysia, and Agamemnon later, on his return from Troy. Thus, the imperfect comparison again speaks to the knowledge of the viewer of things to come: Agamemnon is pictured arriving to a house, the same setting where later, in his own home, he will be killed. These choices make sense if, in fact, specific heroes are being compared: they are only similar in some aspects, in others they are dissimilar, yet in either direction they are consistent with their stories.

As we have seen, elements of these tales can go back to the seventh century BCE. The dating of the vessel (early sixth century) and its cycle-bridging intention are consistent with the period when the mythological cycles were being articulated and completed, with the same purpose, within epic tradition. If we work with West's proposal for the *Cypria*, the pyxis would have been produced precisely in between the latter part of the period associated with structuring of pre-cyclical composition (mid-seventh century), the period of the poem composition (580-530 BCE), and that of its circulation and popularity (580-300)[87]. If our hypothesis is correct, the inscription would be one the earliest reference to Thersander in Greek art (while still being one of the earliest for Agamemnon).

By the time of the painter, Corinthian audiences could have been aware of some sequential intertwining of the cycles and the synchronous mythological proximity of its heroes. We know that the Theban epics were regularly preformed in nearby Sicyon during the sixth century BCE, linked to stories of Adrastus as its mythic ruler, and that, in some traditions, the Epigonoi would had recruited allies from Corinth[88]. Moreover, both Corinth and Sicyon were thought to have been under Agamemnon's domain in the *Iliad*[89], and let us recall that the sending of young Agamemnon by Atreus to bring his uncle back may have been part of the lost play *Thyestes at Sicyon* (would he have been expected to have visited the Corinthia on his way to Delphi, by land or sea?). Local stories about these figures and their wanderings might also

87 M. L. West, op. cit., pp. 40-41, 63-65.

88 Pherecyd. F 115 Fowler; Hdt. 5.67; Paus. 9.9.4. E. Cingano, "Clistene di Sicione, Erodoto e i poemi del Ciclo tebano", *QUCC*, 20:2, 1985, 31-40; Id., "Epigonoi", op. cit., p. 250. Again, the late confusion with a Corinthian Thersandros might reflect the same figure. See supra n. 60.

89 *Il.* 2.569-580; Paus. 2.4.2. The departure is reflected in vase painting. J. Boardman, op. cit., pp. 183-184. See infra n. 94.

have developed upon, or been the source of, elements entwined in the filling and bridging of the cycles.

Corinthian art during the period of the pyxis indicates awareness of relevant episodes that went on to integrate the epic cycles. Most famously, the chest of Cypselus (dated to the first half of the sixth century BCE) described by Pausanias, included the episodes of Eriphyle's bribe, Amphiaraus' departure for war, and Polynices and Eteocles' final combat[90]. Works of archaic Corinthian pottery, many of them with inscriptions, also indicate the knowledge of stories beyond the Homeric Poems[91], some included in the *Cypria*[92], others in the remaining epics filling in and structuring the Trojan Cycle[93], and even some from the Theban Cycle, although in markedly less numbers[94]. And while the Dodwell Painter specialized in animal friezes, a few works

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90 Paus. 5.17.7-8; 5.19.6. H. Payne, op. cit., pp. 139-141; H. Von Steuben, *Frühe Sagendarstellungen in Korinth Und Athen*, Berlin, 1968, pp. 37-40; T. H. Carpenter, "The Trojan War in early Greek art", in M. Fantuzzi, C. Tsagalis (edd.), *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Ancient Reception*, Cambridge, 2015, pp. 189-190. The chest also represented episodes included in the archaic epics, as the Judgment of Paris and the fall of Troy.

91 For an overview, see H. Payne, op. cit., pp. 134-142; F. Lorber, op. cit., pp. 110-121; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 632-646; R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 293-320. The availability of these episodes is in line with the popularity and preferences of the time. A. Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists*, op. cit., pp. 128, 141-147.

92 Cf. also R. Scaife, "The *Kypria* and its Early Reception", *ClAnt*, 14:1, 1995, 164-192. *i. Chiron receiving Achilles: LIMC* Achilleus 44 (c. 600-575) = *NAGVI* COR46a-b; R. Scaife, loc. cit., p. 182. *ii. The Judgment of Paris: LIMC* Alexandros 5 (c. 640-630 BCE, the *Chigi Olpe*) = *NAGVI* PCO 2; *CorVP* p. 32 A-3. *iii. The Marriage of Paris and Helen: LIMC* Alexandros 67 (c. 595-570) = *NAGVI* COR 24, *CorVP* p. 196 A-5. *iv. Telephos in combat at Mysia: LIMC* Telephos 98 (c. 570-550) = *NAGVI* COR Gr. 13; *CorVP* pp. 24 AP-1, 388, 597 no. 13; *v. Embassy to Troy: LIMC* Odysseus 43 (c. 570-550) = *NAGVI* COR 74; *CorVP* pp. 264 no. 1, 391. *vi. The slaying of Troilos: vi.1. CorVP* p. 640 no. 9 (c. 620-570) = *NAGVI* COR 51. *vi.2. LIMC* Achileus 365 (c. 595-570) = *NAGVI* COR 44, *CorVP* p. 641 no. 10. *vi.3. LIMC* Achileus 251 (c. 570) = *NAGVI* COR 27; *CorVP* p. 201 no. 1. *vi.4. CorVP* p. 640 no. 8 (c. 570-550) = *NC* 1404, p. 214.

93 *i. Achiles and Memnon: i.1. LIMC* Memnon 29 (c. 595-570 BCE) = *NAGVI* PCO 4; *CorVP* p. 234 A-1. *i.2. LIMC* Memnon 30 (c. 580-570) = *NAGVI* COR 24A. *i.3. LIMC* Memnon 31 (c. 560) = *NAGVI* COR 93; *CorVP* p. 639 no. 4. *i.4. LIMC* Memnon 32 (c. 560) = *NAGVI* COR 114. *i.5. LIMC* Memnon 33 (c. 570-550) = *NAGVI* COR 80; *CorVP* p. 265 B-1. *ii. Death of Achilles: ii.1. LIMC* Achilleus 897 (c. 570-550) = *NAGVI* COR 77; *CorVP* pp. 264-265 A-1. *ii.2. LIMC* Achilleus 478 (c. 550) = *NAGVI* COR 88. *iii. The Suicide of Ajax: iii.1. LIMC* Aias I 118 (c. 675-650) = *CorVP* pp. 23 A-3, 367. *iii.2. LIMC* Aias I 120 (c. 620-590) = *NAGVI* COR 12; *CorVP* p. 147 no. 1. *iii.3. LIMC* Aias I 121 (c. 620-590) = *CorVP* p. 124 no. 44. *iii.4. LIMC* Aias I 119 (c. 595-570) = *NAGVI* COR Gr. 9; *CorVP* p. 158 no. 10; F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 50, no. 62. *iii.5. LIMC* Aias I 122 (c. 595-570) = *NAGVI* COR 23; *CorVP* p. 197 A-2. *iii.6. LIMC* Aias I 124 (c. 595-570) = *NAGVI* COR 14; *CorVP* p. 342 AP-3. *iii.7. LIMC* Aias I 123 (c. 570-550) = *CorVP* p. 637 no. 16. *iii.8. LIMC* Aias I 31, uncertain (c. 600) = *NAGVI* COR 38; *CorVP* p. 636 n. 45; F. Lorber, op. cit., pp. 47-48, no. 54. *iv. The Trojan Horse: iv.1.* J. Paul Getty Museum 79.AE.76.2. (c. 580-570) = A. Bukina, "Ilioupersis on a Corinthian Black-figured pyxis in the State Hermitage Museum", *AK*, 53, 2010, 6, n. 21. *iv.2. CVA* France 7.18 (c. 570-550) = *CorVP* pp. 642-644; *NC* 1281. *v. The Fall of Troy: v.1.* Hermitage Museum B.2397 (c. 595-570) = A. Bukina, loc. cit., pp. 3-11. *v.2. LIMC* Helene 192 (c. 570-550) = *NAGVI* COR 76; *CorVP* p. 319 B3.

94 *i. Departure of Amphiaraus: LIMC* Amphiaraos 7 (c. 570-550 BCE, unfortunately lost in World War II) = *NAGVI* COR 66; *NC* pp. 139-141; T. Gantz, op. cit., p. 507. *ii. Tydeus and Ismene: LIMC* Ismene I 3 (c. 560-550); = *NAGVI* COR 113; R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 299-300; T. Gantz, op. cit., pp. 513-514; H. Von Steuben, op. cit., pp. 37-41.

of his authorship represent humans, heroes and gods in historical and mythological scenes. Most notably, an elaborate olpe with Heracles and the Hydra that, although not inscribed, shows these kinds of subjects were not restricted to him, nor was the painter hindered by the complexity of such compositions[95].

Nevertheless, the Dodwell Painter's bridging effort would not require him to have learnt and lifted episodes specifically from the written epics once they were established. He could have adapted cyclic material as well, imperfectly introducing figures and names from the narratives he knew, completing the images with solutions and formulas that seemed proper to him, at the time[96]. Yet, such innovations would still make him part of the entwining process of epic cycles of the period. The narrative complexity of the scene supports the patching of unknown tales from early Greek myth, partially reworking them to create space for young Agamemnon and Thersander to meet, and for the scene to allude to future events in myth known by the audience. Of course, one cannot reject the possibility of a lost episode from the *Epigoni* or an analepsis from the *Cypria*[97], or even the chance that the painter represented another bridging-effort from an unknown tradition of the time. Regardless, the intention of linking epic cycles in the vase follows a thin line between creation and representation.

## Dorimachos, the spear-fighter

As we have noted, the painter seems to have revealed his intent to name a specific Dorimachos, not just any filler figure. This intentionality is supported by Wachter's notice that the name is not consistent with the Corinthian dialect and script of the time, when [w] after a liquid consonant would have been preserved as *Δορϝιμαχος, deriving it from Δορύ (wood, spear). It would have been taken from a literary non-Corinthian tradition, possibly Ionic and epic, which crystallized the form from another dialect[98]. If so, this unknown figure could be a third character taken from the archaic epic sources the painter knew and further argues for a mythological scene. However, while we lack any literary parallel, Dorimachos is attested as an historical name, albeit two centuries later than the label in the pyxis lid[99].

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95 P. Amandry, D. Amyx, "Héraclès et l'Hydre de Lerne dans la céramique corinthienne", *AK*, 25:2, 1982, 107-109; M. Blomberg, op. cit., pp. 21-30; *CorVP* 208 A-44. For the suggestion that choosing a household themed episode is also consistent with social changes in post-cypselid Corinth, see A. Avramidou, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

96 J. Boardman, op. cit., pp. 266-267; M. L. West, op. cit., pp. 41, 53-54, 331; T. H. Carpenter, op. cit., p. 178.

97 R. Scaife, loc. cit., 169-170.

98 R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 60, nn. 232-235, 237, 333.

99 Ibidem, p. 60. A late Corinthian vase inscription is possibly mediated through popular etymology. (D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 270, 585; R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 108, 342). Deriving from Δορύ allows Δοορίμαχος and, also and more commonly, Δωρίμαχος, in Boeotian and Doric, similar to the one for the Dorians themselves (P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire Etymologique de la*

Fig. 6. Detail of the arrival and household scene. Courtesy of Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, photograph by Renate Kühling.

Nevertheless, following Wachter's reading, one recognises how the figure is consistent with the characterisation of the other two heroes, striving for distinctiveness and alluding to a larger background. First, the consequent meaning of the name, the "spear-fighter" is meaningful as given precisely to a child who is manifestly not fighting with a spear but, rather, stopped from running in the direction of those who are. This hinders us from considering it outright a "speaking" label, somehow reflecting the function or activity of the figure, without nuance or some sense of irony[100].

An alluring possibility is to consider that the name given to this figure corresponds to the system Svenbro conceptualized as "Child as a signifier", in effect, a patronymic that informs us of his father's feats and *kleos*. This system would bring Dorimachos in line with figures such as Telemachus (and other traditions of Odysseus' progeny), another young man hardly named in reference to his own actions but more easily related to his father's wanderings and participation in the Trojan War[101]. This hypothesis, moreover, specifically works if the audience was aware of the precise stories and the background of its characters – as one knows of Odysseus' long plight away from home. It might even relate the young man to Andrytas, one of the hunters who fights with a spear.

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*Langue Grecque*, Paris, 1983, pp. 294, 305; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 565; R. Wachter, op. cit., p. 60, n. 232). The *LGPN* attests at least 45 cases more, starting from the fourth century. The Dodwell pyxis would be, again, the earliest case.

100 D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 556. R. Wachter, op. cit., p. 58. We will return to this problem when discussing the remaining names.

101 J. Svenbro, *Phrasikleia. An Anthopology of Reading in Ancient Greece*, Ithaca, 1993 [1988], pp. 64-79. I must thank the anonymous reviewer that pointed me in the direction of Svenbro for this interpretation.

On the other hand, should the name express a clear occupation and action, we cannot reject the possibility that it could work as a reference to potential or future events, deployed with the characterization of a child restrained from joining the hunt. This would bring this figure closer to the painter's choices for Thersander alluding to his background in the Theban Cycle: a young man who prevails where before others have failed. We have already observed how the synoptic convention can be seen in Dorimachos' action and Secis' reaction to it, in order to entangle the depicted events unfolding in the scenes in a coherent whole: protecting the "spear-fighter" from joining the real spear-fighters that have already left, one of whom has already died, while the hunt itself is about to end. Yet, although Dorimachos still wants to run towards the chase, he must stay at home as Agamemnon is about to arrive.

The painter might have been playing with viewer expectations, suggesting what would happen next to Dorimachos in a story, unknown to us but not to his audience, similar to that of Agamemnon and Thersander. Being prevented by a woman, maybe his mother, from joining the fight is quite a strong and common image in early Greek myth, especially to those who knew the fate of the child beforehand (such as Althea or Thetis). The restraining act could imply a premonition alluding to the unknown narrative of Dorimachos, eventually related to an episode involving the other heroes, or maybe just inserted as part of the effort in bridging epic traditions.

In the absence of a heroic Dorimachos, Odette Touchefeu has suggested that the figure might be an allegory of royal power (as well as the staff Agamemnon holds). She noted that, in Chaeronea, the community conserved a relic said to be the sceptre of Agamemnon and named it precisely Δορύ, "the Spear". Following the etymology, in the pyxis lid there would be someone that fights for it, not just *with it*, and thus connected with Agamemnon[102]. This local tradition is transmitted by Pausanias, who writes that, in his time, the special staff was actually object of a preeminent cult:

> Among the Gods, the Chaeroneans honour above all the sceptre that Homer tells Hephaistos had made for Zeus, and then Hermes having seized from Zeus gave to Pelops, who then bequeath it to Atreus, who gave it to Thyestes, from whom Agamemnon took possession. This is thus the sceptre they worship and they call it *Dory*. And, above all, the distinction given to its owners proves there is something divine about it; and they say it was found on the borders of their lands and Panopeus' in Phocis, and the Phocians also found gold with it, but for them they were glad to get the sceptre instead of the gold. I am persuaded that it was carried to Phocis by Electra, the daughter of Agamemnon. It has no temple built by the community, but each year the priest keeps the sceptre in his house; and daily they sacrifice and set a table full of all kinds of meats and cakes[103].

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102 O. Touchefeu, I. Krauskopf, loc. cit., 258, 273-274.

103 Paus. 9.40.11-12: θεῶν δὲ μάλιστα Χαιρωνεῖς τιμῶσι τὸ σκῆπτρον ὃ ποιῆσαι Διί φησιν Ὅμηρος Ἥφαιστον, παρὰ <δὲ> Διὸς λαβόντα Ἑρμῆν δοῦναι Πέλοπι, Πέλοπα δὲ Ἀτρεῖ καταλιπεῖν, τὸν δὲ Ἀτρέα Θυέστῃ, παρὰ Θυέστου δὲ ἔχειν Ἀγαμέμνονα· τοῦτο οὖν τὸ σκῆπτρον σέβουσι, Δόρυ ὀνομάζοντες. καὶ εἶναι μέν τι θειότερον οὐχ ἥκιστα δηλοῖ τὸ ἐς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιφανὲς ἐξ αὐτοῦ· φασὶ <δ'> ἐπὶ τοῖς ὅροις αὐτῶν καὶ Πανοπέων τῶν ἐν τῇ Φωκίδι εὑρεθῆναι, σὺν δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ χρυσὸν εὕρασθαι τοὺς Φωκεῖς,

Schachter notes how this complex ritual seems to have developed from the procedures of a yearly public office, with Δορύ having been an insignia associated to its holder, and its name being comparable to symbols used in fourth century Thebes[104]. Nevertheless, it is striking that the crystallization of behaviours could amplify into a whole cult around the relic, and the association with Agamemnon should have been crucial in that process, as narratives about the sceptre would certainly have sustained the importance of its worship. Curiously, the story is preserved in Boeotian context, the land of the *Thebaid*, the *Epigoni* and of Thersander.

That the painter and his audience would have read Dorimachos as a reference to Agamemnon's royalty, implying they were aware of such tales or of a relation to this peculiar name for the sceptre, one cannot know. This hypothesis would also have to square with the stories of Agamemnon being away from power in his youth and the passing on of a tradition, one that also happens to be present in a Corinthian archaic vase from the sixth century BCE and in a second century CE Boeotian cult. However, Chaeronea's *Dory* is being identified with the one in the *Iliad*[105]. Pausanias' comment that he had become convinced of this one story further suggests that he was aware of more than one narrative on the sceptre. Both testimonies could have branched off from a common tradition. Yet, Touchefeu's conjecture is a tough sell. But not an unfruitful path for interpretation.

More importantly, the stronger case for reading, in the pyxis, the young Atreid as holding a *kērykeion* and not his royal staff, is consistent with his status of a scion still to regain his household and domain. Naming the figure "*Dory*-fighter", could signal to the future battles, in the Trojan cycle, when Agamemnon holds primacy over the Greeks. Thus, entertaining Touchefeu's insight and assuming Wachter's interpretation of the label, the name might be consistent with what we have advanced for the painter: a forewarning of things to come. Like Thersander, we find a figure we that would eventually fight and die for Agamemnon, during the time that he holds the *Dory*. The introduction of such a figure explicitly reinforces and illustrates the premonition: visually the child wishes to fight but cannot, as he is physically stopped for his protection – he will have to wait. Again, we return to the painter, his moment in time, and his effort of bridging epic cycles through the meeting of youths: Agamemnon will meet Thersander and Dorimachos, Thersander will retake Thebes. Will Dorimachos also fight for the Atreid later, as Thersander does in Mysia? Having Dorimachos about to run to Thersander from the place of Agamemnon's arrival is, in our opinion, a choice to stress movement, link all the youngsters, and set in motion the succession of events.

Would Dorimachos have been a lost heroic figure, one that would fight for the sceptre that, during Agamemnon's youth, was held by Atreus and, later, Thyestes?

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σφίσι δὲ ἀσμένοις ἀντὶ χρυσοῦ γενέσθαι τὸ σκῆπτρον. κομισθῆναι δὲ αὐτὸ ἐς τὴν Φωκίδα ὑπὸ Ἠλέκτρας τῆς Ἀγαμέμνονος πείθομαι. ναὸς δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῶι δημοσίαι πεποιημένος, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἔτος ἕκαστον ὁ ἱερώμενος ἐν οἰκήματι ἔχει τὸ σκῆπτρον· καί οἱ θυσίαι ἀνὰ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν θύονται, καὶ τράπεζα παράκειται παντοδαπῶν κρεῶν καὶ πεμμάτων πλήρης.

104 A. Schachter, *The Cults of Boiotia*, vol. 1, London, 1981, p. 199.

105 *Il.* 2.99-108.

This complements Wachter's dialectal insight. Or is it just a teleological name of a figure created by the painter to structure and fill the link between the two heroes, informed by their mythological background and archaic epic? Dorimachos as "spear / sceptre-fighter" borders on a speaking label, even if infused by myth and pictured somewhat jokingly. This could even imply some tradition for Δορύ-sceptres as insignia of power, not necessarily Agamemnon's. Either way, we find the Dodwell painter engaging with complexity in representing these figures and, despite the answers to these questions being almost certainly lost, the naming of Dorimachos seems intentional and meaningful for the whole scene.

## The others: filler names, innovations or intruders?

The remaining figures allow an even less clear path to consider heroic names, if any. Like Dorimachos, one expects them to serve some purpose and contribute towards accomplishing the painter's intention. The youthful character of Agamemnon and Thersander could make them suppliants in a foreign home, or maybe wanderers meeting before their eventual retaking of their ancestral seat but, in the meanwhile, they are interwoven with this household. The scene suggests a group of hunters and of household members that, taken together, the viewer should immediately recognize. Elements, as Dorimachos running towards the hunt, a pregnant woman protecting her child, or the hunters sharing pieces of one set of armour between them, suggest a close group: the hunters' home. They are deployed to fill and bridge the space between the heroes being linked and compared.

Alce, the woman who holds the youngster, is the first figure in the house. She might be related to him, maybe his mother, less likely a slave, and stops him from running to the right. Her unbelted peplos further suggests that she is expecting a child. If so, the figure might correspond to the wife of the house, the mother of Dorimachos, whose first instinct is to protect her son. Her name has been associated to Ἀλκή, meaning strength, but one that derives precisely from the ability of one to defend and protect another[106]. Such a label provides this figure with a designation proper to her actions, to protect Dorimachos, further foreshadowing his unknown story: a speaking label from her function in the scene. In Greek myth, figures named Alce appear only, and puzzlingly, in late sources, but as an historical name it attested earlier[107]. Wachter hypothesizes a hypocoristic name, one that abbreviates to the first section of a compound name, and here Touchefeu reads another allegory for royal power[108].

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106 D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 565; P. Chantraine, op. cit., pp. 57-58. Ἄλκη, followed by most editors, means elk. Ibidem, p. 62. A. Avramidou, op. cit., pp. 67, 80, n. 42.

107 Most famously a fourth century Athenian slave and *hetaira* (Is. 4.19-23). The *LGPN* attests 10 more instances, yet all later than the vase and the Isaeus. Diodorus names a daughter of Cybele Alce, the Latin Anthology names one Amazon, and there is a tradition associating one of Actaeon's hounds, which might have come from being a common Greek dog name. D.S. 5.49; Ov. *Met.* 3.217; Hyg. *F.* 181; *PLM* 4.111 Baehrens. Cf. X. *Cyn.* 7.5.

108 R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 60, 249-250; O. Touchefeu, I. Krauskopf, loc. cit., 258.

After Dorimachos, and facing right towards the hunt, one finds Secis, the second woman. Extant attestations of this name indicate it was a common term used for a house-slave and, when used as a proper name, one probably given precisely to household servants[109]. Touchefeu, tackling this label, once more proposes an allegory for royal power, relating it to *sakos* (shield), but it seems likelier the label describes her activity, a house-slave, as most editors have read[110]. Thus, Secis would amount to another speaking name, deriving from her function and status, and the designation is consistent with the household setting: while the men left for the hunt, only the women, children and slaves stayed at home.

Next, let us consider the three remaining hunters. Philon was an immensely popular common name, but here, due to its basic meaning, it might just give filling to the fallen friend[111]. This is consistent with the characterization of Thersander, succeeding where his older "companion" has failed. Lacon is a well attested ethnic common name[112]. It might signal a generic placeholder to locate the scene, somewhere in Lakonia (where Agamemnon will ultimately find refuge), but, otherwise, it is the most difficult filler name to explain. Andrytas follows Lacon holding a shield and a spear. While not a *hapax*, the name is only attested as historical, later and scantily[113]. Etymologically, it seems derived from the root of *anēr*, close to *androtēs* (manhood, courage) and *andrynomai* (becoming a man)[114], with meanings possibly relatable to the theme of young heroes overcoming their plights, boar hunting, and premonitions of future wars (is he a "maker/former of men", concerning the suffix -τας?). One of these, Lacon or Andrytas, should be the head of the household. Lacon, advancing first in the hunt, seems visually more fitting. Andytas, with a spear, could be related to Dorimachos, should one read the child's patronym as Svenbro's "signifier".

These five labels bring us to the crux of the problem of filler names in Greek vase painting. While there are various examples of heroic names in heroic scenes (as mythological scenes), and historic names with historic context (as signatures or votives), the whole dataset is not that straight cut. Genres overlap. Labelling can make an everyday scene seem heroic or, instead, fill a mythical model with figures and names known outside of Myth. Intruders abound, historic names in heroic or heroic-like scenes, or heroic themes filled with historic names, and even gibberish names are found. Labels in commonplace, ordinary scenes can be nonsensical or

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109 Ar. *V.* 764-779; Epicharm. test. 1, F 123 Kassel-Austin; Pherecr. F 10 Kassel-Austin; *SEG* 42.846.4; *P. mich.* 3.157.3; Ael. Dion. 18.13; Poll. 3.76; Sch. Ar. *V.* 768 Koster; Hesych. 18.480. P. Kertschmer, "Die korinthischen Vaseninschriften", *HSF*, 29, 1888, 174. The vase inscription is the earliest attestation. P. Chantraine, op. cit., pp. 997-998.

110 F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 46; O. Touchefeu, I. Krauskopf, loc. cit., 258; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 384, 565; R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 60, 258.

111 P. Chantraine, op. cit., p. 1204.

112 F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 46, n. 286; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 565; R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 61, 259. The *LGPN* indicates 68 instances, the vase inscription being the earliest. It also late attested as one of Actaeon's hounds. Ov. *Met.* 3.219; Hyg. *F.* 181. Cf. supra n. 107.

113 IG 7.420.36; *IChoix Delphes* 125.3.103; *SEG* 54.577.3.20. Amyx also relates to a Geographer Ἀνδροίτας in A. R. Sch. 2.159b Wendel. D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, p. 565.

114 P. Chantraine, op. cit., pp. 87-88.

borderline so. All the above underscore the practice of using names to fill out less important characters in the scenes with a degree of liberty and a narrower link between a figure and a specific label. Labelling can follow the necessities of the composition without being bound to established names. Sometimes this leads to more meaningless names, at other times for using historical names known by the painter, and also for plasticity in deriving from popular etymologies, variations in repetitions with slight changes, or intending some allusion to the themes represented.

We find ourselves on the diffuse border between decoration and writing. Nonsensical inscriptions, for example, can still have some logic to the illiteracy of the painter (and reader) even if just due to boredom, some sound-like approximation, the understanding of labels as filling ornaments, and the expectation of a label, any label or letter (even of mock-letters), to figure in the finished product[115]. Across vase inscriptions there can also be found Amyx's "throwaway names": short names, often hypocoristic, readily used irrespective of myth, scene or context (thus bordering on meaningless); "horsey" names: compounds with members from the root ἱππ(ο)-, for the obvious needs painters often find; ethnic names, as we have seen with Lacon; and Wachter's "speaking labels": that relate the name to what the figure is actually doing, its function, status, meaning and framing in the scene, communicating visually and semantically at the same time[116]. Overlap across these categories is evident and does not outright preclude heroic usage or rule out a name from having been commonplace.

The remaining names on the lid seem to belong more to these categories of filler captions, formulaic and easy to compose and to adjust to the painter's intent, even if taken from everyday life[117]. Besides Lacon, an ethnic name, Alce, Secis, Andrytas and Philon can be understood as speaking labels. Notwithstanding the possibility of some of them being reflective of lost traditions, they appear to be choices of proper and meaningful filler to reinforce and complement the bridging of epic heroes framing the scene. Naming Alce speaks to the future of Dorimachos, with some irony, as Philon alludes to the heroic feats of Thersander both in Thebes and Mysia. Having Secis to illustrate a house where Agamemnon arrives to and where he will meet Thersander, can allude to the wanderings of the first and the raising of the second, both during their youth away from each one's ancestral seat. These choices seem to signal premonitions the painter deployed in order to anchor the scene to some tradition.

## Missed connections in the wilderness of Greek Mythology

We have proposed that the generic names given to the figures in the hunt and the house, filling the moment in time pictured across the lid frieze, contribute to link major figures in two archaic epic cycles, with the painter having made these choices

115 D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 601-602; R. Osbourne, A. Pappas, op. cit., p. 153.

116 Ibidem, pp. 143-145. On this question see also D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 551-556; R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 249-261.

117 Ibidem, p. 260.

informed by what happens in those cycles to those figures before and after that moment in time. This reading is not easily accommodated in the categories proposed by Wachter, who considers the composition to belong among "pseudo-heroic scenes" (stereotypical scenes populated with non-heroic names and the odd hero) and not with "mixed Scenes" (heroic scenes and characters with some intruders unattested in myth)[118]. The latter category seems closer to the intentions the Dodwell painter seemed to have acted upon. But should we also outright reject it as heroic?

The presentation also limits how stereotypical the scene can be considered. While the painter could certainly have worked informed by the famous mythological model of the Calydonian Boar, his hunt is clearly different from Meleager and Atalanta's quest, and not one name corresponds to known traditions[119]. Having the hunt being modelled from everyday, historic, genre scene is also not straightforward. The boar-hunt subject is attested since the Middle Protocorinthian period, the dataset is limited and scenes are maybe too disparate to establish a common model. Even so, the pyxis lid seems an outlier compared to examples from Corinthian vase painting[120]. Apart from just one other vase, the pictured boar is much more dangerous than the rest, and characterized clearly as a threat, even having killed first. But it is the sole case where the fallen figure has a spear, a hunter who attacked and failed: further signalling how perilous the quest is. The hunters do not use dogs, as in half the extant cases, nor ride to the hunt or bring strength in numbers but, instead, the scenes show one youth participating and a child restrained from joining. Thematically, the balance of forces is turned upside down. It is also the only case where a short sword is used (unlike spears, pikes and arrows) and, precisely, by the youth, not by the seasoned hunters.

In all, the pyxis lid seems more complex than a simple victory over the beast. The composition goes beyond the hunt, connecting it to another group of figures, both schematically and through characterization, as the interaction of Secis and Dorimachos shows. One assumes the house belongs to those men who left to slay the

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118 Ibidem, pp. 283, 384.

119 Ibidem, pp. 324-325; F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 46; H. Von Steuben, op. cit., pp. 42-44. Blomberg suggests the labels might have been felt to distinguish precisely the composition from the more famous Caledonian counterpart. M. Blomberg, op. cit., p. 30. For a completely opposite reading, arguing for the ignorance of the painter in representing the famous boar, see P. Coste-Messelière, op. cit., pp. 138-143.

120 H. Von Steuben, op. cit., pp. 42-44; F. Lorber, op. cit., p. 114; D. Amyx, *Corinthian Vase-Painting …*, pp. 666-667. Together with the Dodwell Pyxis, we list 13 cases: *i.* MPC II (*CorVP* p. 24 A-2). *ii.* MPC II, possibly mythological in subject (*CorVP* p. 666 no. 1). *iii.* EC, with hunting dog (*NC* 461 = *CorVP* p. 110 C-1). *iv.* MC, the famous aryballos in the Louvre naming the Dog-Hunt Painter, with a fallen man under the boar, but no spear (*NC* 806 = *CorVP* p. 163 A-1). *v.* MC, flanked by riders (*Perachora* 2.263 = *CorVP* p. 666 no. 3). *vi.* MC, flanked by spearmen (*NC* 991 = *CorVP* p. 197 A-3). *vii.* MC (early), the *Dodwell Pyxis* itself. *viii.* MC, an oenochoe with a boar hunt that could have been of the Dodwell painter but, unfortunately, has been repainted limiting the usefulness of the analysis (*NC* 1129 = *CorVP* p. 209 AP-8[8]; D. Amyx, "Dodwelliana", loc. cit., 13). *ix.* MC (*CorVP* p. 231 C-1). *x.* MC (late), with hunting dogs (*Corinth* 8.2.130 = *CorVP* p. 199 AP-1). *xi.* LC, from the Andromeda group, pseudo-heroic, with hunting dogs (*NAGVI* COR 102 = *CorVP* p. 260 A-6). *xii.* LC, also from the Andromeda group, very similar, with hunting dogs (*NAGVI* COR 104 = *CorVP* p. 260 A-8). *xiii.* Undated fragments, non-heroic (*NAVI* COR 109 = *CorVP* p. 666 no. 3).

threat. (Would this create an opportunity to have them meet Thersander, wandering in the wilderness?). Yet this house is about to welcome one visitor, none other than Agamemnon. To categorize the composition in the pyxis lid as a mixed or heroic scene, one hinges on assessing of whether it is based in literary tradition and how the artist worked on its reception by creating, adapting and reworking myth. If the painter's intentions can mean that he would be engaging in some kind of composition himself, interested in bridging and structuring epic cycles in common with the efforts of the time, then his canvas is not entirely oral or written, but also visual. Archaic artists were interested in telling such stories, and well capable of innovating and improvising from disparate source material[121]. This engagement hinders a clear categorization that depends on the representation of known epic stories in literature and on having written and oral support as the main repository for those narratives and their reworking during the period of their establishment as text. The Dodwell pyxis makes use of another medium to deploy mythology, think and work with it, and blurs the lines with labels[122].

We fully acknowledge our bias in wishing to read a lost story of Agamemnon in the lid, a tendency that has certainly contributed to the celebration of Dodwell's "purchase" and is amplified by the framing of a case study. Scholarship, though, has tackled this bias, arguing for a conservative interpretation in view of absence of textual attestation[123]. On the other hand, criticism of text-driven approaches to geometric and archaic art would certainly underline the precariousness of arguing for the influence of a lost tale on the artist. Particularly if we cannot even know if such a story was included in lost epics that were maybe starting to circulate at the time the pyxis was produced and, even if they were, noting that many episodes included were available before and independent of those poems[124]. However, we are not proposing a clear-cut dependence and reception of epic.

Our hypothesis, not completely ascribing to Touchefeu's allegories nor resolving the problem by simply assuming an unknown story or variant (but not excluding the possibility of it to be entangled in the composition)[125], argues for some nuance and complexity between filler and epic when considering the reception and uses of myth in artistic creation as shown in the vase. What most strongly implies a response to epic tradition and the participation in the efforts to rework, re-structure and fill in the gaps across cycles is not just (or necessarily) the use of a specific story linking Agamemnon and Thersander, but the bridging effort itself shown by the painter,

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121 A. Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists*, op. cit., pp. 153-163.

122 M. Gaifman, "Visual Evidence", in E. Eidinow, J. Kindt (edd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion*, Oxford, 2015, pp. 55-56.

123 D. Amyx, "Dodwelliana", loc. cit., 3; F. Lorber, op. cit., pp. 46, 114; R. Wachter, op. cit., pp. 60, 324.

124 A. Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists*, op. cit., pp. 142-143.

125 O. Touchefeu, I. Krauskopf, loc. cit., pp. 258, 273-274; M. Blomberg, op. cit., pp. 16, 30; H. Von Steuben, op. cit., pp. 44, 89. For the supporters a lost Corinthian tradition or epic, J. Barringer, op. cit., p. 248, n. 120; E. Langridge, "The Boar Hunt in Corinthian Pottery", *AJA*, 95, 1991, 323; K. Schefold, *Gods and Heroes in Late Archaic Greek Art*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 197-198.

which would make choosing such a story relevant in the first place. The pyxis author was making use of his full range of skills, working with the *legenda* and deploying the visual devices available within his style and technique, to tell a story that brings the two heroes, visually, together. These choices reveal a parallel endeavour to those that were being made through poetry. Once that is established, allusions to episodes and stories before and beyond that which is being shown (as Agamemnon's *kerykeion* or Thersander's triumph) can more plausibly be argued to have been influenced by familiarity with the traditions, suggesting that a dialogue has been established across different media. Other, more "material" elements, as the details of Dorimachos' label and spelling, make this case stronger.

In the lid, there are two known and important heroes from two archaic epic cycles. What is known of the cycles and of their narratives allow for those heroes to be there. Their characterization is consistent with, and makes references to, the general scaffolding of their mythological backgrounds. A third figure can also be heroic, considering linguistic, epigraphical and, possibly, visual and literary evidence. Its characterization could reference and entangle his background in myth, similarly to what the painter has done with the other two heroic labels, albeit an unknown tradition to us. The remaining figures that fill the scene link the heroes with a complex narrative. Two of them are drawn in close connection with those with literary backgrounds, maybe to reference that very same literary background. Most names given to the figures, while filler names, amount to speaking labels, expanding upon what is happening in the scene and referencing the same mythological scaffolding. Their characterization, visually and onomastically, is developed, playing with symmetries and premonitions, even ironies, that reference the epic cycles and the larger landscape of myth the viewer would be aware of. Along these lines, the figures, heroic and most of the non-heroic, can be framed in relation to epic.

Agamemnon is not just any name. Nor would Thersander be. In this context, Dorimachos might have also been recognizable to the audience, even if not to us. To name a figure Agamemnon would be, then as now, immediately inviting the viewer to frame the scene in the heroic past. Labelling the figures might have been important in pointing this out. In face of the variety of characters in local stories and variants in Myth, traditions reworked and lost to us, extant lacuna in our knowledge of heroes, even for preeminent ones, and having in mind the cultural context of archaic epic in bridging cycles (precisely with figures such as Thersander), a nuanced interpretation seems healthier.

Furthermore, making the case for the pyxis lid to be embedded in the archaic efforts to bridge epic cycles, structure them, and fill the spaces between and inside them, does not nonetheless require the Dodwell painter to have wholly created this link between heroes. The possibilities of how this bridge came to be are many. Epic tradition is the most alluring. The fact that there is a connection between Agamemnon and Thersander through the *Cypria*, always noting that our knowledge of lost epics is extremely fragmented (and more so for the *Epigoni*), should not be ignored. Stories of Agamemnon's youthful wanderings (or lack of stories on his youth) might have provided the opportunity to anchor another link. The lid could represent an effort from a lost tradition, an unsuccessful branching exercise at the time, now a dead end in

the transmission of archaic epic: for one must also account for failure in History and not every finding must be a testimony of success in literary tradition. Besides, local stories and variants could have filled the gaps as well. Reworked traditions could be articulated to fit the expectation of communities, families and individuals to extend their past and ancestries back to the time of Thebes and Troy. Finally, one should not reject the possibility of the painter having partially improvised on a story, or from the opportunity to tell a story, having taken elements both from epic tradition and the "vernacular network"[126].

Above all, it seems unreasonable to expect archaic painters, while making use of material that resonated with archaic epic, not to have engaged in reworking and adaptation of stories, but to have limited themselves to representation while reserving creation solely for poets. In fact, the possibility for "mixed", "pseudo-heroic" and "genre scenes" following heroic models indicates some degree of plasticity to play with in the reception of epic, if not outright implying such explorations in their logic. Even if some, or most, of the results became liminal, unpopular, and doomed to fail. The desire to complete, order and connect the stories of archaic epic might explain this apparent outlier. Labelling limits possible interpretations and points to a direction, to an intention, made clear through those who could read. They would then convey and speak to others, leading them to follow the arrival of Agamemnon to a home, where a child is stopped from joining a dangerous hunt, where Thersander delivers the killing blow (or, conversely, starting from the hunting climax up to the arrival of the *xenos*). Reading aloud would invite the audience to establish the association between the young heroes, even if making it up, filling the gaps, or elaborating on, the story that has unfolded and is about to continue[127]. One can imagine the reader holding the lid and pointing to each figure to speak their names. Then the damage is done: the listeners recognize a narrative or become aware that one must exist to bring those two heroes together. The future conquerors of Thebes and Troy are now about to find out about each other.

Consider the myth.

Two young men far from their ancestral home, belonging to the same generation of heroes albeit from different "cycles", not unlike each other, both with deeds to come and yet to prove themselves, are provided with the opportunity to meet. The choice of young suppliant heroes who yet have to regain their lost possessions is an interesting twist for a pyxis: a ceramic box for keeping jewellery and prized trinkets[128]. Does this choice also speak to its former owner? Other stories already permit the intersection of these heroes (such as the Mysia debacle), providing precedents the audience should have been aware of. The intention of displaying a narrative link between heroes, either by choosing a story, now lost to us, or partially creating

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126 A. Snodgrass, "Poet and Painter in eight-century Greece", *PCPS*, n.s., 25, 118-130.

127 Cf. A. Snodgrass, "The Uses of Writing on Early Greek Painted Pottery", in N. K. Rutter, B. A. Sparkes (edd.), *Word and Image in Ancient Greece*, Edinburgh, 2000, pp. 25-26; J. Svenbro, op. cit., pp. 44-63.

128 M. H. da Rocha Pereira, "Vasos Gregos: Mensagem de Cultura e Arte", in *Obras Completas*, vol. 4, Coimbra, 2016 [2009], pp. 95-97; J. Boardman, op. cit., 1997, pp. 10-11; R. M. Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, London, 1997, p. 223.

one from known elements or efforts to bridge the tales, bringing the youths together, has the painter compose an arch out of filler figures, choosing readymade but not inappropriate formulas for captions. Linking two heroes from two epics, one ending, the other beginning, the artist composes, drawing and writing, the story. But that distinction is ours: he was just painting.


Fig. 7. Dodwell's pyxis as reproduced in his work (E. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour* …, II, p. 196 pl. 4).

Fig. 8. Detail of the lid-knob and the lid frieze (Wikimedia Commons).

Fig. 9. Photograph of damage. Courtesy of Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, photograph by Renate Kühling.

Fig. 10. New photograph of the lid. Courtesy of Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München, photograph by Renate Kühling.

▾ **Abstract**: This comment to the famous Dodwell Vase, an archaic Corinthian pyxis representing two figures bearing heroic names (Agamemnon and Thersander), proposes that the composition establishes a link between two archaic epic cycles: Troy and Thebes. In this essay, we will present a concise story of the discovery of the vessel, introduce the main questions surrounding the piece, and offer a reading of the scenes and inscriptions on the vase. This proposal analyses the figures in light of their mythographic and literary traditions, and hypothesises on the painter's intention to depict the two heroes, together with other figures and two interconnected scenes, taking into consideration the development of archaic epic cycles.

▾ **Keywords**: Agamemnon; Thersander; Corinthian Vase-painting; Archaic Epic; Dodwell Vase.

## I
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