

A BLACK-FIGURED DEINOS

We cannot help feeling, on looking at early black-figured vases, that the painters allowed themselves to give rein to their natural high spirits. In rendering as well as in choice of subjects there is an abundance of life, a naive humor, a love of violent action, that give ample evidence of pleasure taken in the execution of the work. Vigor, rather than elegance, is the keynote; though the figures are sometimes rather crude and more than a little misshapen, we must feel that to this very crudeness is due some of their remarkable life. Sophilos may be taken as the transition from vigor to elegance as the ideal; on the Acropolis deinos, elegance; on the Pharsalos fragments, vigor.¹ With Klitias elegance has become supreme; the technique of drawing has been mastered; his figures are always carefully drawn, his scenes arranged with an eye to composition.

The Agora deinos² is of especial interest because it comes at just the period when this struggle between elegance and vigor was at its climax; elegance, perhaps unfortunately, to win; for there were to be few like Exekias and Phrynos who could combine the two, and many who contented themselves with mere decorativeness degenerating into mannerism and, eventually, work like that of the Affector. It seems almost as though the painter of our deinos had foreseen what was to come and had packed into one vase as much spirited action as he could.

About half the body of the deinos is preserved, mended from many fragments. Its rounded bottom is undecorated and shows scratches and traces of wear from resting on a stand. The interior and the flat, slightly projecting rim are glazed black; the clay is Attic with an orange-pink surface. The entire body of the vase, from the broad black band above the reserved resting surface up to the rim, is decorated.³

Of the three friezes separated by double ground lines, the lowest is a simple animal band; a boar walking left between two facing sirens, and a bull walking right between

¹ Acropolis deinos: E. Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung der Griechen*, Munich, 1923, fig. 202. Pharsalos fragments: Y. Bégüignon, *Monuments Piot*, XXXIII, 1933, pp. 43 ff. and pl. VI.

² Agora catalogue no. 1712—P 334. Picture in *Hesperia*, II, 1933, p. 466, fig. 17. Measurements: Height, 0.195 m.; greatest diameter, est., 0.342 m. It was found in Section A', in a fill of small stones as from a fallen wall. The other sherds found with it were, in the main, of much the same period, although there was a considerable admixture of geometric. The chipping of the surface is perhaps due to the falling stones. I should like to thank Miss Lucy Talcott for information on its unearthing, as well as for other useful help and criticism.

³ For another deinos similarly treated without ornamental pattern around the rim, cf. London fragment 88—6—1—588, published by Payne and Beazley in *J.H.S.*, 1929, pp. 256 ff., no. 10, and pl. XV, 11.



two facing lions. Even in this conventional decorative scheme the love of action is apparent; the bull lowers his head defensively against a lion, unfortunately broken off, who cuffs him with his paw. The animals are characteristic of the period: the first quarter, probably the second decade, of the sixth century. They are lions and sirens rather than panthers and sphinxes; healthy robust creatures rather than elongated space-fillers. The lion with his typically Attic "flame" mane is close to the lions of Payne's *Deianeira*

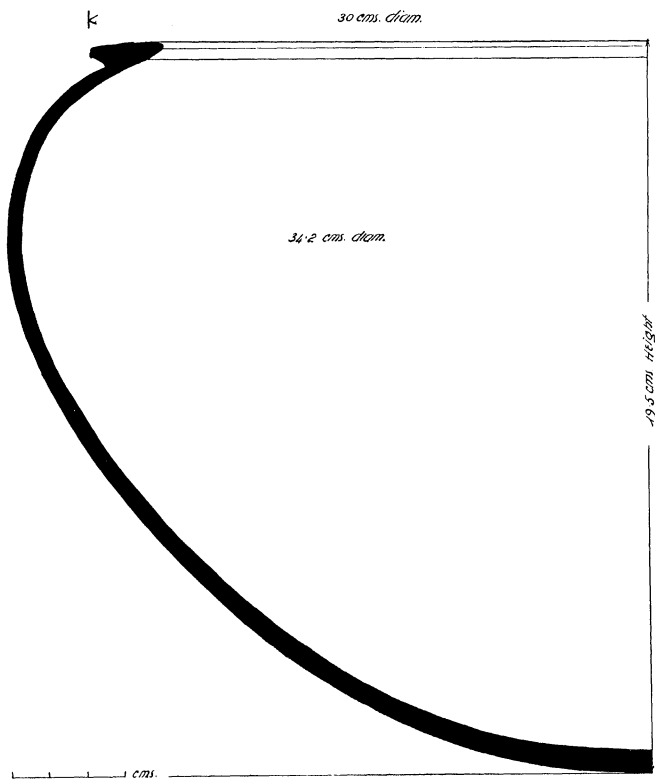


Fig. 2. Profile of Deinos. Scale 1:2

group.¹ The sirens too, with their hair falling in three pointed locks, are of a common early type. They show, however, a characteristic touch to be observed also in the human figures of the upper friezes: they wear little caps, their ears are covered by their hair, and the tresses are fastened at the nape of the neck by clasps very like the conventionalized ear of the period turned on its side.² All the animals are of usual types; but they have traits that are individual. We note the shoulder incisions of the boars and the bull, which

¹ H. G. G. Payne, *Necrocorinthia*, Oxford, 1931, pp. 191 ff.

² That they are little caps and not mere fillets bound around the hair is shown by two figures: the priest whose tresses are red, while the back of his head is left black, and Akastos, whose hair is treated with the same colors, reversed.



Fig. 3. Detail of Deinos

run up to the top of the back, where they are flattened out; and the stylized spirals below their eyes.¹ The very large double-circle eye imparts an expression of sagacity to the siren behind the boar; an expression somewhat belied by the low brow, the elegant coiffure, and the pleased smile of the mouth suggesting that she has just come from the hair-dresser's. In this frieze there is nothing hasty or crude;² animal bands at this period were a matter of routine. The Calydonian boar in the middle frieze is almost exactly like the one in the animal scene below; he is calm and unperturbed, and even wears, although he has but a single-circle eye, the same shrewd expression. There is nothing to be gained by crude drawing in a scene of slow motion; from it we derive a notion of the skill of our painter when he wanted elegant figures rather than vigorous action.

From the uppermost frieze, too, we can see how well he could draw. A long lotus and palmette band fills most of the space; if we may venture on a restoration, we might suggest two such bands, front and back, with small scenes between. In character, the vegetable ornament is very like that of Sophilos,³ though rather less carefully done: plump, heavy lotus flowers and widely opened fan-like palmettes. Distinctive, however, is the variation between the flowers: for example, the changing width of the incised band at the base of the lotus petals. The way in which the floral ornament is sliced down the middle at the ends of the band is unusual. I can find no example of such treatment in a horizontal decorative band of this sort at this period, although a lotus-palmette band used vertically as the border of a panel and so cut in half is not uncommon.⁴

Of the scene to the left of the palmette band there is little preserved; the feet of a man on tiptoe approaching from behind another person in a long dress, who stands contemplating the vegetable forest before her; perhaps a silen sneaking up to surprise an unconscious nymph.

The scene at the other end of the lotus-palmette band, the right edge of which is preserved, is almost complete: a comast scene. Four naked youths hold their revels, two on each side of the great footed amphora which is the centre of attraction. The outer figures left and right brandish drinking horns as they dance in grotesque positions; to the left of the amphora a third plays the double flute; he seems just to have reached a climax in the music, perhaps a shrill finale, so intent is his expression; and the fourth, a fat fellow, holds out a kantharos in his right hand as though arrested in the very act

¹ Purple-red is added: for the sirens, on chests, faces, and inner wing bands; for bull and boar, belly stripes, necks, ribs and haunches; for lion, belly stripe, mane, mouth, ribs and haunch; for all the animals, the pupil of the eye.

² Unless the three spots of purple-red spilled in front of the face of the left-hand siren may be so regarded.

³ Pfuhl, *op. cit.*, fig. 202; better in Graef-Langlotz, *Die antiken Vasen von der Akropolis zu Athen*, Berlin, 1925, pl. 26.

⁴ Graef-Langlotz, *op. cit.*, no. 474, pl. 17. The horizontal band with ends sliced down appears however at a later date on Tyrrhenian amphorae; cf. Louvre E 817; Pottier, *Vases Antiques du Louvre*, Paris, 1901, pl. 58; also, *C.V.A.*, Louvre, III H d, pl. 1, nos. 4 and 10.

of offering a toast.¹ Comast scenes of this sort are of Corinthian origin; the Attic adaptations of the scene have been discussed by Greifenhagen and, later, by Payne,² who distinguishes at least three hands, with none of which does it seem possible to connect our deinos. The beginning of the sixth century was a period in which Corinthian influence was strong in Attic vase-painting; the comast scene was probably merely a stock scene in the general repertory of the painters, not the specialty of one hand or even one shop. Its use here as a subsidiary scene increases the probability of this suggestion.

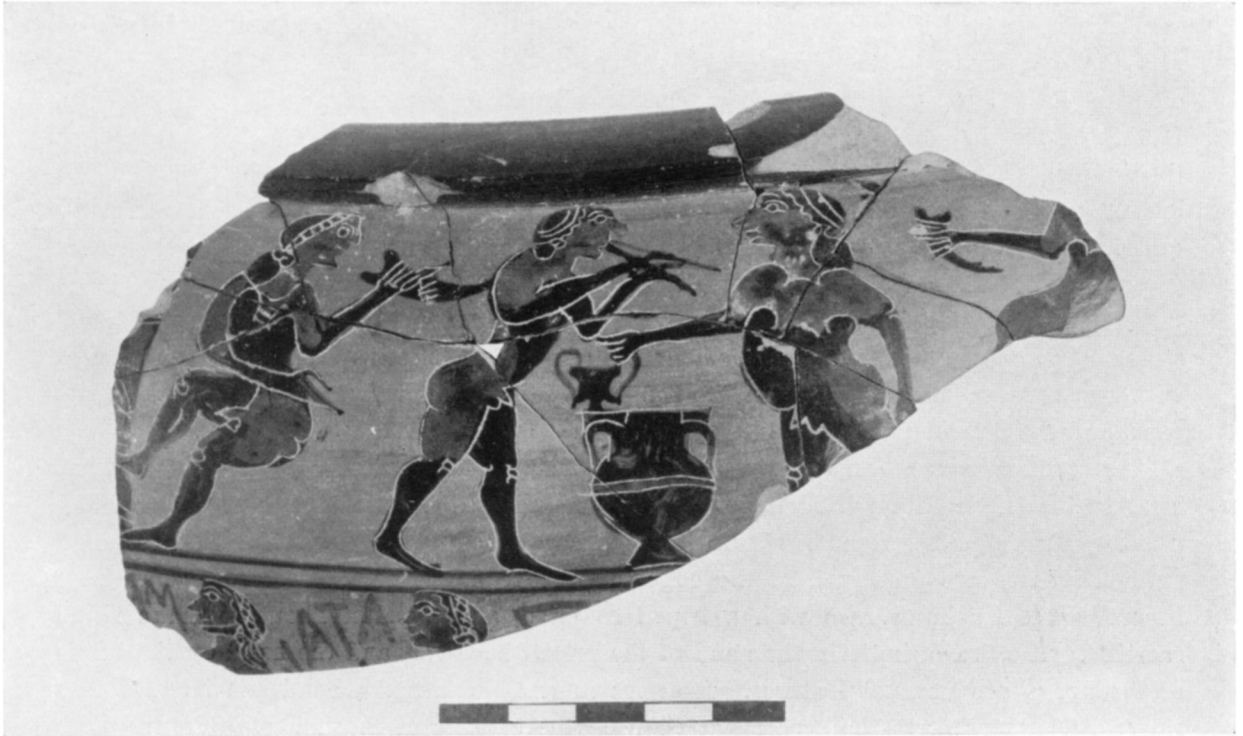


Fig. 4

Here we notice for the first time the effectiveness of crude drawing. We have noted above the careful work of which our artist is capable. It is possible that he drew these grotesquely misshapen figures because he knew no better; his training in the elaborate detail of the animal style had provided small preparation for the problems of representing the nude human figure in action. We may, however, compare his method with that of Sophilos on the Pharsalos vase. Sophilos, who must have been his contemporary, seems

¹ Added purple: faces, chests and upper arms, haunches, and a band around the body of the amphora.

² A. Greifenhagen, *Eine attische schwarzfigurige Vasengattung und die Darstellung des Komos im VI. Jahrhundert*, Königsberg, 1929; Payne, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 ff.

almost to have had two styles at his command: the careful restrained style on which he seems to have prided himself, and a rough, sketchy and yet vital style which he used for the subsidiary details in which he was not greatly interested. His little figures on the grandstand are just as crude and grotesque as our comasts and boar hunters, and crude and grotesque in much the same way. It is often difficult to tell the difference between drawing that is merely careless and drawing that is crude because of the archaic ignorance of the painter; and perhaps it is dangerous to assert that any painter at this period was capable of "better" work. But with examples like the Nessos painter and the Gorgon painter who came before, and with the internal evidence of the fine careful detail incision of which our painter was capable, I am tempted to think that he consciously clung to the older style which Sophilos had discarded or relegated to minor details of his scenes. I think he realized that his figures would have more life and vigor if hastily sketched in; their outlines, then, he drew in a rapid impressionistic manner, filling in the detail at leisure in a more careful way. His object was lively movement and he achieved it by quick sketching. It may be objected that all comasts were meant to be somewhat grotesque; but the same method is applied to the figures of the lower frieze, figures in no way intended to be grotesque. The details are carefully done, and done in an individual style: the knee-caps and incisions behind the knees, the chest markings, and the mouths with the short vertical line at their ends are characteristic; again we meet the little caps, and the hair bound by ear-like clasps.

The central frieze, the narrowest but most important, shows parts of three scenes. That to the left is rather hard to explain; a man dressed in a long robe stands, holding a drawn knife in his right hand, facing a great tripod. The nose and forefeet of a galloping horse are preserved at the edge; the scene might be interpreted as one from funeral games: a horse race with a tripod as prize, and a priest about to make ritual sacrifice. The drawn knife in the hand of the priest, however, and the hand on the bridle of the horse, are unusual features. It seems impossible that the hand can be that of a rider; it is tempting to think of a variation on the capture of the unhappy Troilus, with Achilles seizing the bridle of his horse as he flees. But why the tripod, and the waiting priest? The fragmentary condition of the scene seems to render impossible a satisfactory explanation.

To the right we have another group, complete and not uncommon; again reminding us of Sophilos. A hairy silen is engaged in the pursuit of a nymph, who flees to the right, looking back to take aim before she throws the stone she holds in her left hand. The silen is a wild shaggy mountain creature, ithyphallic and snub-nosed like the Lindos silen of Sophilos.¹ His favorite occupation is the pursuit of nymphs: his snub-nose, wildly tangled hair and beard—how unlike the neat pointed horizontal chin-beards of the other figures!—and horse's tail betray his subhuman character. He provides confirmation of

¹ Chr. Blinkenberg, *Lindiaka II-IV*, København, 1926, pp. 32 ff.; also *Lindos, Fouilles et Recherches 1902-1914*, Berlin, 1931, no. 2629 and pls. 126, 127.



Fig. 5. Side of Deinos

Blinkenberg's suggestion that the silen was originally a mountain being and only later came to be associated with Dionysos. The shaggy type, with incised hair on the body and a painted fringe, is Ionic; our nearest parallel, however, is on a Chalcidian vase in the Castellani collection.¹ The nymph, as though used to being hunted by silens and always prepared for the worst, wears the short loose dress which facilitates flight; her expression is not especially alarmed.

This mountain scene is a good transition to another, the most important and interesting on the vase: the Calydonian boar hunt. The great boar walks towards the right, attacked from in front and behind. Of an expiring victim lying beneath him, and of the wound in his own throat, from which the blood flows down, he seems to take no notice. Perhaps he relies on the help of Artemis, who sent him to chastise the little men who now attack him.

Of these there are at least five.² To the left a figure in a short dress, whether male or female it is hard to determine, holds in his right hand a stone that he is about to throw; in his left, the leash of a dog. The way in which his dress and the stone in his hand echo those of the nymph behind him implies that he is merely a transitional figure and not Akastos; surely Akastos would not have gone out unarmed to hunt the Calydonian boar, for the destruction of which all the mightiest heroes of an heroic age had been summoned. Let us call him a nameless transitional figure. The man in front, armed with spear and dagger, is Akastos, a regular member of the band that hunted the boar; the dog who leaps up, barking excitedly, to bite with his little red teeth the haunch of the boar, is ΘΕΡΟΝ. Of the first letter of his name only a small curved bit is preserved; another dog, in this case a bitch named ΘΕΡΟ, appears in the Calydonian boar hunt on the Archikles cup.³

Let us for a moment consider our other dog. It is drawn entirely in outline, with eye incised and dotted with red, and incised mouth. The only other dog so drawn that I call to mind is the one under the couch of Herakles on the Eurytios krater;⁴ but its inner details are drawn in black. Incision on the unglazed clay is a unique device; we are led to suspect that our painter drew his dog in outline, and then changed his mind about filling it in, perhaps because he felt that a dog in black crossed by the legs of two figures would confuse their outlines and spoil the effect. He certainly did not intend to fill the

¹ Mingazzini, *Vasi della Collezione Castellani*, Roma, 1930, no. 419 and pl. XXXVII. Also in A. Rumpf, *Chalkidische Vasen*, Berlin, 1925, no. 111, pls. 98, 99. This psykter is, of course, much later than our deinos. Compare also the silens on the Pheneus cup, Pfuhl, *op. cit.*, fig. 164.

² On this frieze purple is added for feet, rim, and handle-supports of the tripod; face and hair of the priest; silen, face, chest and upper arms, tail, and phallus; nymph, face, upper chest, and the stone in her hand; boar hunters, faces and chests; eye and teeth of the dog; the boar as the one on the animal frieze below.

³ J. C. Hoppin, *A Handbook of Greek Black-Figured Vases*, Paris, 1924, p. 60; *Wiener Vorlegeblätter*, 1889, pl. 2.

⁴ Payne, *op. cit.*, pl. 27; Pfuhl, *op. cit.*, fig. 176.

reserved outline with white, for he nowhere uses white;¹ nor could he have intended to use red, for on none of his animals does he use broad washes of color. Having put in the outline and then thought better of filling it with black, he did the best he could by adding the details as unobtrusively as possible. It seems hardly likely that he was experimenting; incision on the plain surface of the clay is obviously an anomalous procedure. We are tempted to speculate on the possibilities of erasure, and to conclude that it was impossible without either scratching or smearing.

To return to the boar hunt: the figure lying wounded under the boar is as new to mythology as the outline dog to the technique of vase painting. His name, written retro-

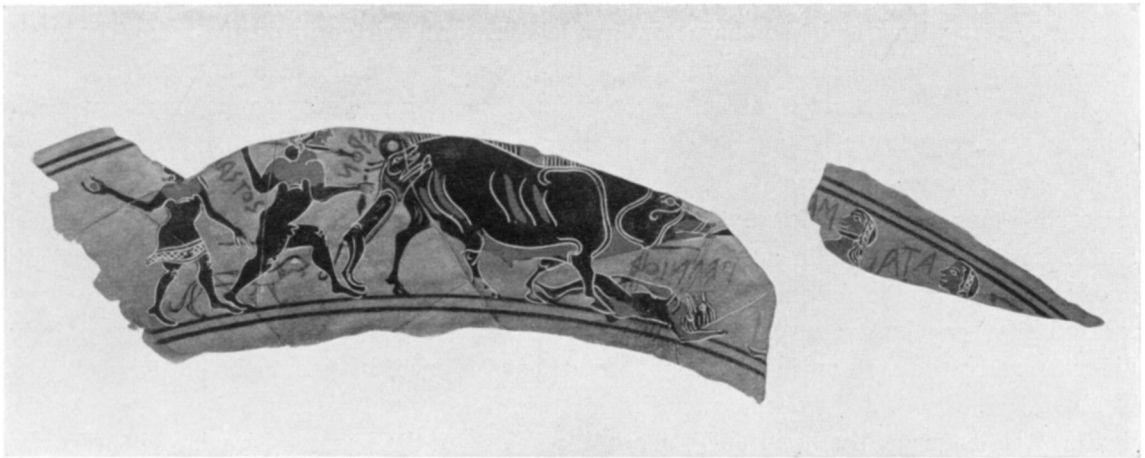


Fig. 6. The Boar Hunt. (From a Water Color by Mary Wyckoff)

grade over his prostrate form, is ΠΕΛΑΙΟΣ. The usual victim of the boar in mythology and vase painting is Ankaïos;² Antaios, perhaps due to a mistake, on the François vase. The substitution of another here suggests that our painter was following a different tradition. The etymology of the name is simple enough: Πήγαι-ος, the man from the springs; nothing to do with πηγός, strong, from which Πήγασος³ is usually derived. Πήγαι must have been a common place name in antiquity; but perhaps it is significant that there was a place so named in Arcadia.⁴ Our Πήγατος then, may have been a follower of Atalante, the Arcadian huntress. He makes his first appearance in mythology at the very end of his earthly

¹ Although there are many things about this deinos that are very like the work of Sophilos, the absence of white would of itself make it impossible to attribute it to him, for he was very fond of white and used it on every occasion.

² Apollodorus, I, 8; Pausanias, VIII, 45, 2 (the pedimental sculptures of Scopas on the temple at Tegea); Callimachus, *Hymn* III to Artemis 215 ff.; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VIII, 379 ff.; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 173 and 174.

³ Roscher's *Lexikon*, s. v. *Pegasos*.

⁴ Pausanias, VIII, 44, 4; VIII, 53, 3.

career; he lies, completely deflated, beneath the boar, one knee drawn up, and with cross-incised eye—the first use of this common comic-strip device to depict bedazement.

The other characters, with the comast dancers, are on a fragment which does not join directly; its position, however, is made certain by the names of the persons who appear on it. Meleager and Atalante, the chief antagonists of the boar, must naturally be placed in the front rank of its attackers. Only the heads of these two are preserved; of a third, only the first letter of his name *Η-Ηέλεις*, who often appears. Or might it not even be *Ηέλαιον*? Meleager in the foreground is about to give the boar its death-blow; his spear tip is at its very mouth. We may take it that Atalante, in accordance with tradition, has been the first to wound the beast, and that hers is the spear sticking in its chest.

The letters with which the characters are labelled are written in purple-red. The Attic alphabet in its early form is used, much as Sophilos used it, with names written indiscriminately from left to right and retrograde. As many moderns cannot make up their minds which way to write an N, so our painter with his sigmas.

Like most early myths, that of the Calydonian boar hunt has come down to us in an almost hopelessly tangled form. We may perhaps distinguish three versions: an epic, a lyric, and a dramatic. In the Homeric account (*Iliad* IX, 529 ff.), Atalante does not appear at all; and, so far as can be determined from badly preserved fragments, Hesiod seems to have treated the boar hunt and the tale of Atalante's race for the golden apples as entirely different and unrelated episodes (*Hesiod*, fragment 135 and fragments 21–22 respectively, Teubner, ed. Rzach). In the drama the interest has shifted from the boar hunt to the death of Meleager at the hand of his mother, who threw the brand with which his life was tied up into the fire (fragments of plays by Sophocles and Euripides in Nauck², pp. 219 and 523 respectively). We know from vase painting, however, that by the beginning of the sixth century the Atalante and Meleager legends had been contaminated, since Atalante has become a regular member of the band of hunters. There must have been a version current at the time which is lost to us. Athenaeus (III, 95 d) mentions a *Συοθήραι* by Stesichorus, which must have embodied in literary form the scene of the boar hunt as we have it in early black figure. It is interesting to note that Ovid mentions a member of the hunt called Pelagon, a name nowhere else connected with the boar hunt, but which appears on a sixth century vase depicting an Amazonomachy (*Monumenti* XII, Tav. IX). Ovid took the name certainly from some literary source, and probably from one very nearly contemporaneous with the vase. There must, however, have been varying versions even in the sixth century, since our Pegaïos here replaces the usual Ankaïos as the victim of the boar. We restore the name Meleager although the preserved letters apply just as well to Melanion, the suitor of Atalante who often appears. On the reverse of the Pelagon vase, Melanion appears in a boar hunt in which neither Meleager nor Atalante takes part. We might suggest that in the early sixth century there were many mutually contradictory versions current until order was brought into chaos by a formal literary retelling of the tale by Stesichorus or some other lyric poet; there certainly was a formal source

on which Ovid drew. On the mythology see Kühnert in Roscher's *Lexikon*, 2592, s. v. *Meleagros*.

All the figures of the Calydonian boar hunt show the characteristic devices of drawing noted above: the hasty, yet spirited, outline rendering; the little caps and ear-like hair clasps; the vertical line at the ends of mouths; the peculiar chest and knee-cap incisions; the neat, pointed, nearly horizontal beards. We notice too a particular fondness for cross-hatching: on caps and dress borders, and on the lotuses. These characteristics of style point to a very individual painter; a painter who could draw with as much elegance as any when he wanted to, but who realized, and protested against, the danger of too much attention to drawing for its own sake. At a time of change and improvement in technique, he looked back to the more robust tradition of an earlier day.

Our vase, finally, in addition to its own artistic and mythological interest, furnishes remarkable confirmation of Payne's brilliant chronological sketch for early Attic black figure.¹ Here we have, on the same vase, many of the elements which he has already grouped close together in the first quarter of the sixth century: the comasts, the early Vourva style animals, the Deianeira group lion, very nearly the same vegetable ornament as that used by Sophilos. Even the silen's tail is almost a replica of the horses' tails of Acropolis 474 and the Gorgon deinos in the Louvre.² No single vase better illustrates the quality and the variety of Attic vase painting in the first quarter of the sixth century.

¹ Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

² Acropolis 474: Graef-Langlotz, *op. cit.*, pl. 17; Louvre deinos: *C.V.A.*, III H d, pls. 14–17.

RODNEY S. YOUNG