

# FIVE COMIC SCENES FROM ATHENS

(PLATES 34–37)

FOUR unglazed household water pitchers painted with comic figures probably borrowed from the theater were found in the filling of an ancient well in the Athenian Agora in the spring of 1954.<sup>1</sup> The well lies just inside the southeast corner of the market square, close to the Panathenaic Way. It had been filled with a vast amount of pottery of the end of the fifth and the start of the fourth centuries before Christ. One of the latest datable pieces is a red-figured oinochoe (Pl. 36, b) showing two Nikai at a tripod,<sup>2</sup> made presumably in the closing years of the fifth century. The well was thus apparently abandoned and used as a dump soon after 400 B.C.

The unglazed oinochoai with painted polychrome decoration from this well-filling represent a category hitherto unknown in the Agora collections. Only one other jug like them has indeed so far been located; it is in London, and was purchased in Athens in the late nineties (Pl. 37, a, c). The Trustees of the British Museum have kindly given us permission to publish it here with the four examples from the Agora.<sup>3</sup>

This seems to be the first compact group of vases found in Athens itself decorated with informal caricatured scenes related to the theater, comparable to the phlyax vases from South Italy or the Kabeiric group of Boeotia.<sup>4</sup> The fact that three of the five scenes have parallels from South Italy reinforces the belief that the phlyax vases reflect scenes from Athenian Comedy.<sup>5</sup> Because of the interest of theater scenes contemporary with Aristophanes, the following notes and descriptions are published by the excavator in order to make this new material quickly available to students in the specialized field of theatral representation.

<sup>1</sup> City grid, Q 15: 2 (Well to North of Nymphaeum). I am indebted to Professor T. B. L. Webster for much helpful comment on these vases, as further noted below. For the date of the deposit, I have followed the suggestions made by L. Talcott and B. Philippaki; the bulk of the material appears to be only slightly later than the group published by P. E. Corbett, *Hesperia*, XVIII, 1949, pp. 298–351. The photographs are by Alison Frantz, except that of 5, by P. E. Corbett. The water colors are by Piet de Jong.

<sup>2</sup> Inv. P 23896. H. 0.218 m.; diam. 0.179 m. The front part of the mouth restored in plaster; the handle mended in antiquity. Partial relief contour; details in dilute glaze and white.

<sup>3</sup> I am particularly indebted to Professor Bernard Ashmole for his generosity in allowing me to include this piece, and to P. E. Corbett for his careful description of it (below, 5, p. 82).

<sup>4</sup> M. Bieber, *History of the Greek and Roman Theater*, Princeton, 1939 (hereafter *H.T.*), p. 93, note 30, suggests that the Kabeiric vases do represent informal farce; A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*, Oxford, 1927, p. 269, denies any theatral connections.

<sup>5</sup> See T. B. L. Webster, *Class. Quart.*, XLII, 1948, pp. 15–27 and *Bull. John Rylands Library*, XXXVI, 1954, pp. 563–587.

Although a distinct group of vases such as this with roughly executed grotesque figures has not before been found in Athens, occasional caricatures and theatral scenes do appear on Attic red-figured vases especially in the late fifth century. The best known is the oinochoe in the Louvre by the Nikias painter where Herakles and Nike appear in a chariot drawn by centaurs and preceded by a flute player (Pl. 34, b).<sup>6</sup> It is perhaps not surprising to find certain similarities between the Louvre oinochoe and our pots. The rendering of the hair on **1** and the beard and hair of the second figure on **3** is very like that on the figures of the Louvre oinochoe. The lips of the figures on **3** seem closer to theater masks than those on the Louvre figures, but the reverse is true for the eyebrows: the figure on **1** has relatively normal eyebrows whereas both the flute player and the centaurs have one eyebrow raised and one down.

The pitchers themselves are old friends: oinochoai of thin, gritty, micaceous, russet to gray-brown clay with large trefoil mouth, a single rolled handle sloping down from the rim, and a ring foot (Pl. 37, b). A glance at the Agora shelves shows that they are ordinary domestic pitchers familiar to many Athenian households.<sup>7</sup> The figures on these few with painted scenes are drawn directly on the unglazed surface in matt brown or red outline and then filled in with solid colors. The quality of paint and range of colors—black, white, pink, various shades of blue and green—are like those used on terracotta figurines. A similar use of matt paint on the same unglazed gritty fabric is found on some decorated kernoi from the Agora of the beginning of the fourth century.<sup>8</sup> There the decoration is apparently limited to leaves and wreathes. The technique of outline drawing with colors added for the solid masses is essentially the same as that of matt-painted white-ground lekythoi. Outline drawing on unglazed clay is also found on a few fragments of Corinthian oinochoai of the late fifth century,<sup>9</sup> but the workmanship of the Corinthian pieces is far finer and there is no direct

<sup>6</sup> Louvre N 3408: *A.R.V.*, p. 848, no. 22; Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung*, fig. 572; see now Rumpf in *A.J.A.*, LV, 1951, pp. 9-11, figs. 5-7. I am indebted to M. P. Devambez for new photographs of this vase. Other red-figured caricature and theater scenes of the late fifth century include: oinochoe from the Athenian Agora with Hephaistos at the forge (Inv. P 15210: G. van Hoorn, *Choes and Anthesteria*, Leiden, 1951, fig. 19); oinochoe with Perseus in the Vlastos collection (*J.H.S.*, LXV, 1945, pl. V); and two small choes with children dressed as actors (Louvre CA 2938: van Hoorn, fig. 147; and Athens, Nat. Mus. Inv. 17752: *A.J.A.*, L, 1946, p. 132, fig. 10; van Hoorn, fig. 148).

<sup>7</sup> The fabric is traditional for cooking-pots, jugs and water jars; cf. *Hesperia*, Supplement II, p. 199. It is remarkable for its thinness and for the fact that it appears regularly to have been moulded or slip cast, not made on the wheel, although the ring foot (as in our examples) may be thrown, and separately attached. The history of the oinochoe shape shown here, in this fabric, may be traced in Agora deposits at least from the early sixth century into the fourth century B.C. Several examples identical with ours, but undecorated, came from the closely contemporary well near the southwest corner of the Agora which contained the water clock, *Hesperia*, VIII, 1939, pp. 274-275.

<sup>8</sup> Examples were found in a kernos pit (*Hesperia*, VIII, 1939, p. 208) which can be dated by a red-figured chous, Inv. P 12293 (van Hoorn, fig. 254), found with them.

<sup>9</sup> van Hoorn, p. 57 and fig. 457 (from Corinth: *Hesperia*, VI, 1937, p. 310, fig. 40); fig. 458 (Athenian Agora Inv. P 16427).

relationship with our pots. These seem closer both in drawing and spirit to the grotesque figures on the vases from the Kabeirion in Boeotia.<sup>10</sup> Minor differences in detail on the five painted oinochoai, such as the presence or absence of a wide white fillet around the neck of the pot or differences in the rendering of leaves and inscriptions, might suggest different hands, but the five almost certainly come from the same workshop and are of the same date, that is close to 400 B.C. Let us now look at the individual pieces.

1. Tyro and her sons, Pelias and Neleus. Pl. 34, a.

Agora Inv. P 23856. Pres. H. 0.14 m. Broad band of white around neck of pot, on which is painted a wreath of bluish-green ivy leaves. Pink for face, black for hair, white for inscription.

Only the upper part of the oinochoe is preserved, with part of an inscription and the head of the right-hand figure. The inscription is incomplete at the left but can easily be restored to read [ΙΗΕΙΑ]Σ ΤΥΡΩ ΝΗΛΕΤΣ,<sup>11</sup> and the picture identified as the recognition scene from Sophocles' *Tyro*. Her twin sons by Poseidon were exposed at birth; as young men they return to free her from her wicked step-mother Sidero, bringing with them the σκάφη in which they had been cast out as a means of identification. In literature this was one of the familiar recognition scenes, ridiculed by Aristophanes in *Lysistrata* (line 139 and scholia), cited by Aristotle in the *Poetics* (c 16) and described by Menander in the *Epitrepontes* (lines 108-116). In art the scene was popular in Italy. The three figures are found on six "Etruscan" mirrors one of which is inscribed "Pelias, Tyria, Nele," and more elaborate versions of the scene, including the step-mother and father, appear on a bronze situla and on a miniature terracotta altar (and fragment of its mould) from Medma near Rosarno in Calabria.<sup>12</sup> The latter is of Italian origin and said to be a local copy reflecting an Attic original of the late fifth or early fourth centuries; Rizzo<sup>13</sup> suggests that it may be a copy of an Attic votive relief commemorating a dramatic victory. On the inscribed Etruscan mirror (Fig. 1)<sup>14</sup> Neleus is at the right as he is on our painted oinochoe where one could restore an almost identical grouping. A small terracotta

<sup>10</sup> The group of pots with caricatures drawn in outline from Rhitsona in Boeotia offers a close parallel for a very small class of highly individualized pots (A. D. Ure, *J.H.S.*, LXIX, 1949, pp. 18-24).

<sup>11</sup> I assume that the short vertical white hasta between the *omega* and *nu*, clearly visible on photograph and drawing, is an error on the part of the artist. He would seem to have started the *nu* in its normal position directly after the *omega*, then noted that the point of the leaf intruded, so moved the letter further to the right and forgot or was unable to erase his initial false stroke.

<sup>12</sup> L. Séchan, *Études sur la tragédie grecque dans ses rapports avec la céramique*, Paris, 1926, pp. 219-230; for full list of representations and bibliography see note 9, p. 224 (to which add C. Robert, *Hermes*, LI, 1916, pp. 273-302); Engelmann, *Jahrb.*, V, 1890, pp. 171-179.

<sup>13</sup> *Mem. della R. Accad. di archeologia, lettere, e belle arti di Napoli*, IV, 1919, pp. 123-158; see also Séchan, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

<sup>14</sup> Gerhard, *Etruskische Spiegel*, CLXX; Rizzo, *op. cit.*, fig. 3, p. 137, also reproduced in Roscher, *Lexikon*, s.v. Neleus. Figure 1 here from Rizzo's illustration.

group in the National Museum at Athens of a woman with two babes in a shallow tub or boat at her feet probably represents the beginning of the story, the exposure.<sup>15</sup> Our pot would seem to be the first example of the famous recognition scene so far found in Athens, and probably the earliest of those known.



FIG. 1. Etruscan Mirror. Tyro and Sons

## 2. Komast. Pls. 35, a; 37, b.

Agora Inv. P 23900. H. 0.245 m.; diam. 0.18 m. Intact except for two holes in wall and a few chips and cracks. Wide band of white around the neck with rounded ends hanging down to either side of the picture. Brown for outlines; bright pink for flesh; black for hair and oinochoe; white for boots.

A single dancing figure fills the panel formed by the pendent ends of the band around the neck of the pot. He wears a scarf swinging from his arms, and boots with turned-up toes and wide cuffs.<sup>16</sup> There are traces of a white fillet around his head.

<sup>15</sup> *Jahrb.*, VI, 1891, p. 61, pl. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Undecorated cuffed boots reaching half-way up the leg such as these are sometimes worn by komasts in Attic pottery of the fifth century, cf. van Hoorn, figs. 109, 173. They are also often worn by silens on South Italian pottery of the late fifth and fourth centuries, cf. A. D. Trendall, *Frühitaliotische Vasen*, Leipzig, 1938, pls. 4 d, 10 a, and 27 b, and Trendall, *Paestan Pottery*, London,

He carries a staff in his right hand and a black oinochoe hangs from his left arm. With thick lips and the big, possibly padded, belly the figure is not unlike those of comic actors.<sup>17</sup> A red-figured oinochoe of about 420 B.C., in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, shows a dancer similarly equipped with oinochoe, staff and cuffed boots.<sup>18</sup> The presence of the oinochoe there as in our caricature suggests that the reveller is celebrating the Anthesteria.

### 3. *Obeliaphoroi*. Pls. 35, b; 36, a.

Agora Inv. P 23907. H. 0.245 m.; diam. 0.185 m. Mended from many pieces; considerable fragments of wall missing. Around the neck a broad white band with a hanging rounded end at each side and a shorter bit above extending nearly to rim of pot. From this band hang three ivy leaves with veins naturalistically rendered. Brown for outlines; pink for flesh; green for leaves and spit; black for hair, beard and boots; white for garment, *obelias* cake and wide band around neck of pot.

Two bearded running figures carry a white object on a spit. The leader wears a short white garment, a chitoniskos or exomis, slipped below his right shoulder, and probably a double fillet. The second man wears a white cap and black cuffed boots. The broken horizontal line across his thighs suggests that he too may be wearing a short chiton. Both have the exaggerated noses and lips of caricature, which may be intended to represent comic masks. The scene is almost duplicated on a phlyax bell-krater of the early fourth century in Leningrad (Pl. 36, c).<sup>19</sup> Here two grotesque figures in phlyax costume carry a similar white object in their upraised left hands and the one at the right carries a situla in his right hand. They are preceded by a flute player. Dr. Bieber suggested that two slaves were carrying a juicy roast in preparation for a feast.<sup>20</sup> The object carried on both vases would seem rather to be an *obelias* cake, the large loaf baked on a spit and carried on the shoulders of *obeliaphoroi* in processions in honor of Dionysos.<sup>21</sup> According to Pollux the loaves were of one, two, or three

1936, fig. 61, pls. VIII, XXXIV c. It is not always possible to distinguish the corthurni of tragedy, borrowed from Dionysos, the high boots of travellers, and the ordinary shoes of daily life, probably worn in comedy, from each other. See Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, Oxford, 1953, pp. 228-234, p. 235 for recent discussion and bibliography.

<sup>17</sup> Professor T. B. L. Webster suggests, by letter, that the figure might be a woman and compares it with that of Konnakis on a fragment of the mid-fourth century from Tarentum, *J.H.S.*, LXVII, 1947, p. 14, fig. 2.

<sup>18</sup> *B.M.M.A.*, XXXIV, 1939, p. 231, fig. 1; also van Hoorn, fig. 173.

<sup>19</sup> Bieber, *H.T.*, p. 280, fig. 378, reproduced here by courtesy of the Princeton University Press. See Webster, *Class. Quart.*, XLII, 1948, p. 24 for date.

<sup>20</sup> Bieber, *H.T.*, p. 281. Two blobs of white on the phlyax krater are perhaps white frosting rather than meat drippings. Cf. Pollux, VI, 79: *ὀνομάζετο δέ τινα καὶ πηνία, ἃ τοῖς πλακοῦσιν ἐπιτίθετο προσεοικότα πηνίοις· λευκὰ δ' ἦν τὴν χροάν.* Heydemann, *Jahrb.* I, 1886, p. 285, note 132, identifies a white coating on a round cake as *πηνία* or sugar-icing. Perhaps the gravy (*ἔτνος*) which the daughter of Dikaïopolis ladles on to the round cake in the mock celebration of the rural Dionysia is an Aristophanic version of sugar-icing (*Acharnians*, line 246).

<sup>21</sup> Athenaeus III, 111b; Pollux VI, 75 and Photius, *s.v.* *ὀβελίας ἄρτος*.

*medimnas* in size, and Photius writes:—ὄβελίας ἄρτος· περιπλασμένος μακρῷ ξύλῳ καὶ οὕτως ὀπτώμενος· γίνεται δὲ παραμήκης καὶ γαστροῦδος. Similar long twisted objects on spits found on some red-figured choes have been identified as *obelias* cakes by van Hoorn.<sup>22</sup> One is also shown leaning against a herm beside which maenads dance, on an unpublished calyx-krater in the National Museum at Athens.<sup>23</sup> Pictures of *obelias* cakes on the choes, therefore, need not mean these cakes were present only at the Anthesteria. They may well have been carried in other Dionysiac processions.<sup>24</sup> On two of the choes the *obelias* is held vertically by a single figure,<sup>25</sup> and on the others it is placed approximately vertically in the background. With the two ends of the spit to use as handles, the large size of the *obelias* both as described and shown, and the statement of Athenaeus (III, 111b) that they were carried on the shoulders of the *obeliphoroi*, it seems safe to assume that in the processions the *obelias* cakes were carried by two bearers just as shown on the two caricatures.

*Obeliaphoroi* is known as the title of a comedy by Ehippos probably written in the three-seventies.<sup>26</sup> Our pot is too early by at least twenty years to reflect this play, but many Middle Comedy titles are repeats of Old Comedy titles, so there may well have been an earlier comedy of the same name.<sup>27</sup> The fact that we have both an Athenian and a South Italian copy of the scene suggests that it represents a comedy or perhaps informal farce rather than merely two *obeliphoroi* from a procession.

#### 4. Dionysos and Phor —. Pl. 34, c.

Agora Inv. P 23985. Max. dim. ca. 0.155 m. Twelve joining fragments from one side. Badly damaged surface. Flesh apparently in pink over white underpainting, not in pink directly on the clay as on the other examples; hair in white; inscription in black.

The surface is badly damaged and the picture hard to decipher. Apparently two grotesquely fat figures face each other with an indeterminate object, possibly a dog, between them. The exaggerated fatness suggests the padded figures of comic actors although an accurate portrayal of a comic actor does not seem to have been intended. The padding in actors' costumes was limited to the body, and the legs are usually shown as of somewhat more normal dimensions.<sup>28</sup> The names of the two figures are

<sup>22</sup> van Hoorn, p. 42, figs. 45, 225, 226, 227, 228, 256.

<sup>23</sup> Athens, N.M. 12909: Calyx-krater. A, maenads at herm; B, two youths.

<sup>24</sup> Pickard-Cambridge, *Dram. Fest.*, p. 59, suggests that *obeliphoroi* formed part of the procession of the City Dionysia.

<sup>25</sup> van Hoorn, no. 345, fig. 45; and no. 370 (not illustrated, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Inv. 97. 605).

<sup>26</sup> Athenaeus VIII, 359 a and XI, 482 d (Koch, *C.A.F.*, II, pp. 258 f., nos. 15 and 16); the play was also called *Homoioi*. See Webster, *Class. Quart.*, n.s. II, 1952, p. 15, for the date.

<sup>27</sup> I wish to thank Professor Webster for this suggestion.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. the actor on an oinochoe in the Louvre, CA 2938 (van Hoorn, fig. 147), or the early phlyax figure on the calyx-krater by the Tarporley painter in the Metropolitan Museum (Bieber, *H.T.*, p. 282, fig. 381; also Beazley in *A.J.A.*, LVI, 1952, pp. 193 ff.: ca. 400 B.C.). Assuming the

partially preserved in neat black letters. The  $\text{ONY}\xi\text{O}\xi$  at left can be restored as  $[\Delta\iota\acute{o}]\nu\nu\sigma\omicron\varsigma$ . The name of the figure at the right, of which only the first three letters,  $\Phi\text{OP}$ , are preserved, presents more difficulties. The only proper name beginning with  $\Phi\text{op}$  and associated with Dionysos that I have been able to find is that of Phormio, the Athenian general who in Eupolis' comedy *Taxiarchoi* is said to have given lessons in campaigning to Dionysos.<sup>29</sup> The restoration  $\Phi\text{op}[\mu\acute{\iota}\omega\nu]$  would be a possibility, but without clearer details in the picture, certainly no more than a possibility. The adventures of Dionysos are legion.

### 5. Man Rowing a Fish. Pl. 37, a, c.

British Museum, 98.2-27.1. H. 0.245 m.; diam. 0.184 m. Purchased in Athens. Mended from several fragments, a few small pieces missing and the surface flaked away from one big area. Red for outline; light blue for fish, and a lighter shade, almost pale green, for fins; pink for oarsman; orange brown for oars. Mr. Corbett adds that a fragment of the figure was examined under microscope and was said to have behaved like fired clay; all the colors resist hot water, heat and alcohol.

A figure seated on a blue fish is rowing to the right with a pair of very long oars. He rests his feet on the back fins using them as a stretcher and seems to be looking around over his left shoulder to see where he is going. The scene is closely paralleled on a phlyax vase (Fig. 2),<sup>31</sup> except that the oars are missing there and the fish as shown in the drawing has a short snout. The fish on the vase in the British Museum is certainly not a dolphin and the one on the phlyax vase, in spite of the snout, is most unconvincing as a dolphin. The fat fish, however, may well be substituted for a dolphin to enhance the comic effect, and so the subject of the scene is probably to be sought among dolphin riders.

Dr. Bieber has suggested either Taras or Arion as the rider on the phlyax vase; but the Athenian parallel connects the original of the scene with Athens rather than South Italy, so Taras becomes improbable. Arion of course has impeccable connections

object between the two figures to be a dog, Professor Webster suggests some connection between our scene and the Louvre oinochoe noted above, where a boy dressed as a comic actor faces a dog.

<sup>29</sup> Koch, *C.A.F.*, I, p. 325; Schol. Aristophanes, *Peace*, line 347. The play was probably performed in 427 B.C. (Kaibel, *R.E.*, s.v. Eupolis, col. 1231). A Phorkys is listed as a companion of Dionysos, and not identified as the sea god, by Höfer, Roscher, *Lexikon*, III, col. 2435, and by J. Schmidt, *R.E.*, s.v. Phorkys, col. 536, with reference to Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, XXXIX, line 101. In that passage Dionysos is exhorting his followers before the sea battle in India and is boasting of his powerful friends and allies, including Poseidon, Glaukos, Melikertes and Proteus. The natural interpretation would seem to be that it was the sea god Phorkys who was named in company with the other powerful sea figures. Thus on the evidence of Nonnus there is nothing to suggest a special connection between Dionysos and Phorkys that might reflect an otherwise unknown earlier story.

<sup>30</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Peter Corbett for the details and description of this pot, which I have not seen.

<sup>31</sup> Bieber, *H.T.*, p. 275, fig. 372, from a Tischbein drawing, reproduced here by courtesy of the Princeton University Press; the vase now lost.

with the world of the theater but can the rider be Arion without a lyre? Other known dolphin riders such as Melikertes and Palaemon have no direct connections either with Athens or with the theater. Some of the nameless riders found on Attic black-figured pottery do seem to be borrowed from the theater, as for instance the warriors on a black-figured skyphos in Boston<sup>32</sup> and possibly the nude youth on a black-figured lekythos in the Robinson collection.<sup>33</sup> Sir John Beazley has suggested that the youth



FIG. 2. Dolphin Rider on a Phlyax Vase

on the lekythos may be Theseus on his trip to the bottom of the sea, reflecting the version of the story told in the dithyramb by Bacchylides (XVI, lines 97-100) where Theseus is said to be carried by dolphins.<sup>34</sup> The adventures of Dionysos with the Tyrrhenian pirates in which the sailors are turned into dolphins was also the subject of a dithyramb. But neither the version in the Homeric *Hymn to Dionysos* (VII) nor that shown on the monument of Lysikrates seems to demand a rider on a dolphin. It would be hazardous to suggest an identification between anyone of these and our caricatured rower.<sup>35</sup>

It is for specialists in the field of theater representation to decide whether the scenes on the five vases are taken from the formal theater, tragedy, comedy, dithyramb,

<sup>32</sup> Boston 20.18: Bieber, *H.T.*, p. 67, fig. 78. F. Brommer in an article on "Delphinreiter" in *Arch. Anz.*, LVII, 1942, pp. 65-75, suggests that the helmeted riders represent the chorus from an early comedy. E. Bielefeld, *Arch. Anz.*, LXI-LXII, 1946-7, pp. 48-54, suggests a dithyramb and connects the scene with the story of Phalanthos (I am indebted to Professor Webster for this second reference).

<sup>33</sup> *C.V.A.*, Robinson Collection, i, pl. 37, 3; C. H. E. Haspels, *Attic Black-Figured Lekythoi*, Paris, 1936, App. XV, no. 14.

<sup>34</sup> The suggestion by Beazley is quoted by Haspels, *op. cit.*, pp. 151 f., and reaffirmed by Beazley in *J.H.S.*, LVIII, 1938, p. 268. A very similar youth on a dolphin is used as a filler on a hydria by the Kadmos painter in Berlin (*A.R.V.*, p. 805, no. 21; *Mon. Ined.*, 14, pl. 2). A relief from Thasos may be a later version of the same figure, *B.C.H.*, XLVII, 1923, p. 347, fig. 15, there identified as Arion.

<sup>35</sup> For possible connections between the rider on the fish and the Anthesteria, cf. two miniature red-figured choes which show Eros riding a dolphin (van Hoorn, figs. 370, 371) and a third with a single fat dolphin (van Hoorn, fig. 518). On the latter cf. H. R. W. Smith, *C.V.A.*, San Francisco, i, 1943, p. 47.



satyr-play, or from more informal burlesques performed at one or another of the Dionysiac festivals. The five scenes would seem all to be associated with the world of the theater directly or indirectly through Dionysos and his festivals. The first by its inscription is related to Sophocles' *Tyro* (or a burlesque of the same). The second, if correctly interpreted, is associated with the Dionysiac festival of the Anthesteria. The *obelaphoroi* on the third were members of processions in honor of Dionysos and the name was used for a later comedy. The fact that this scene is repeated on a phlyax vase suggests that it was taken from a specific play of some sort. The fourth scene portrays Dionysos himself; while the fifth, the man rowing a fish, is also repeated on a phlyax vase and so presumably also reflects a specific play. The two scenes repeated on the phlyax vases may well be copied from common originals in some more serious art form. Séchan and Rizzo<sup>36</sup> suggest an Athenian victor's monument as the original for the *Tyro* scene on the Italian terracotta altar. This could also have served for our vase and for the Etruscan mirrors.

Were these informal pots perhaps not made to be sold at one of the festivals of Dionysos, possibly the Anthesteria? We know that choes were sold at that festival.<sup>37</sup> Although it was not essentially a dramatic festival as were the Lenaea and the City Dionysia, trials for comic actors, ἀγῶνες χυτρινοί, were held on the third day,<sup>38</sup> and plays are reflected on some of the red-figured miniature choes associated with the Anthesteria.<sup>39</sup> Possible connections with the Anthesteria are also suggested by the fact that the painted pots are oinochoai, a shape especially associated with the Anthesteria, that two of them have big ivy wreaths on them resembling the wreathed choes of the festival,<sup>40</sup> and that one seems to represent a reveller at the Anthesteria.

These lively, colorful pots on display at some temporary booth or push-cart would have brought an extra note of gaiety to any festival, just as do the grotesque terracotta animals still sold at the festival of Hagia Marina, celebrated each July on the Plateia Theseiou just to the west of the Agora.

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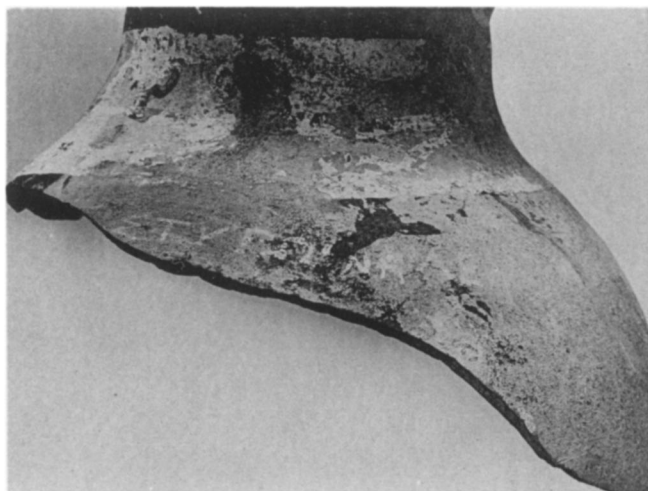
<sup>36</sup> See above page 78 and note 13.

<sup>37</sup> [Scylax] Peripl., 112, Müller, *Geogr. Gr. min.*, 1882, I, p. 94; cf. Deubner, *Attische Feste*, Berlin, 1932, p. 97.

<sup>38</sup> [Plut.], *Vit. X Orat.*, 841 f and Schol. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, line 218. Cf. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dram. Fest.*, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> van Hoorn, p. 36 and figs. 145-148 (the miniature choes, figs. 147 and 148, will almost certainly be connected with the Anthesteria); S. P. Karouzou, *A.J.A.*, L, 1946, pp. 123-139 and Pickard-Cambridge, *Dram. Fest.*, p. 10, note 5, for comment on Mrs. Karouzou's article.

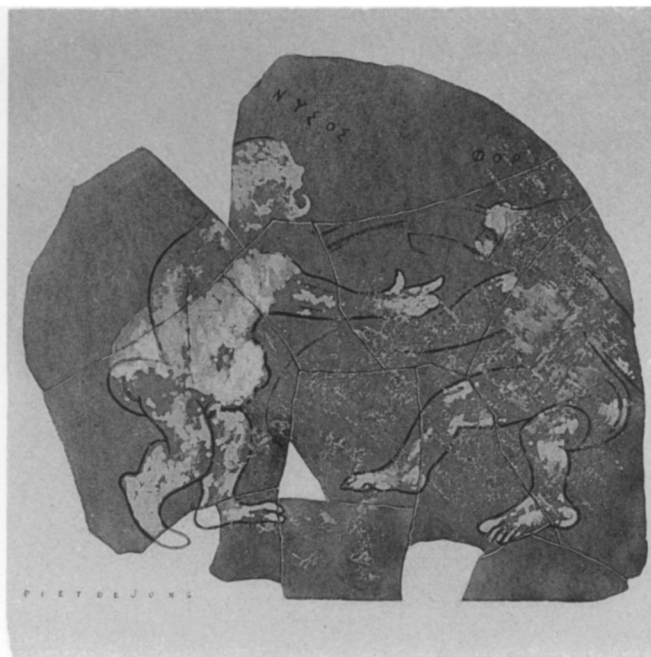
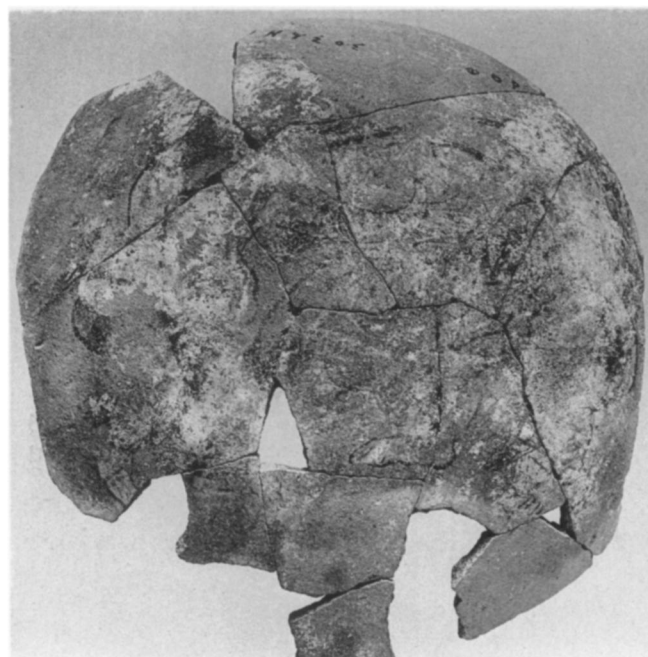
<sup>40</sup> For wreaths on the necks of red-figured choes see for example van Hoorn figs. 295, 300, 449, 451; for those around the necks of the choes shown in the pictures, *ibid.*, figs. 1, 2, 9, 85, 86, 173. For neck ornament rendered as wreaths and as head-bands, see J. D. Beazley, "Two Swords: Two Shields," *Bulletin van de Vereeniging tot Bevordering der Kennis van de Antieke Beschaving*, XIV, no. 1, 1939, pp. 12-13.



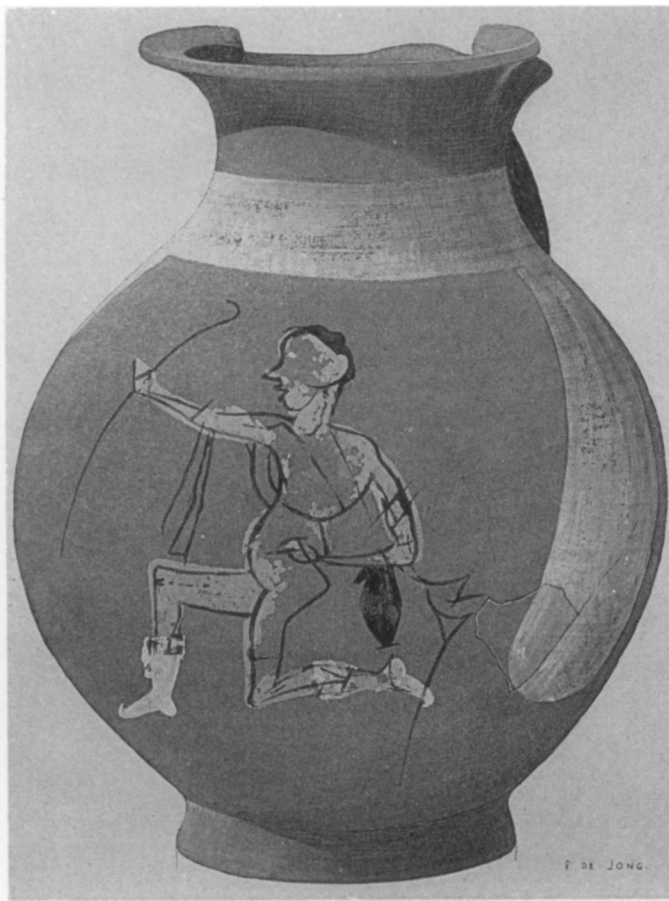
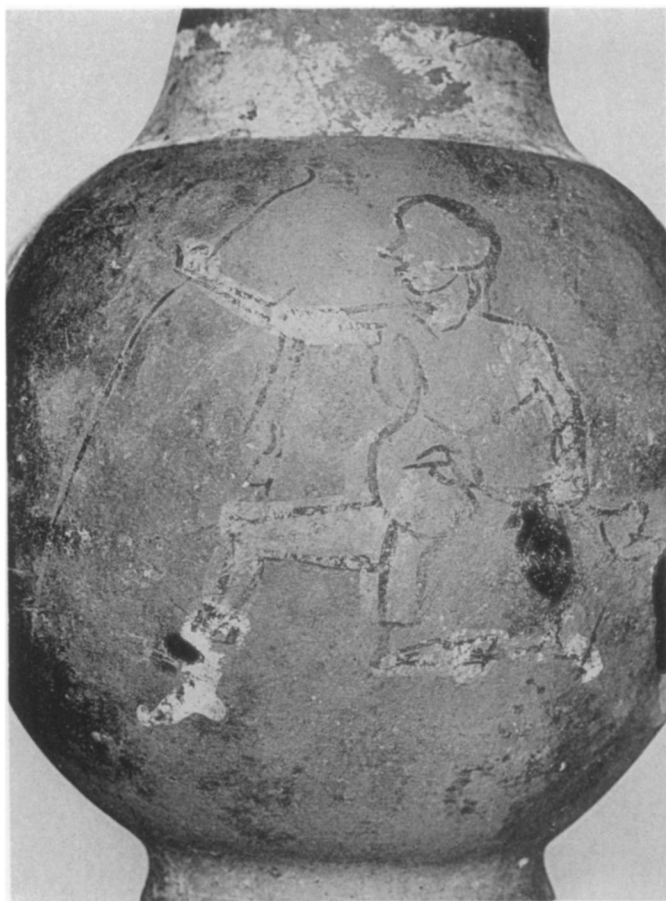
a. Polychrome Oinochoe 1:  
Tyro and Sons (Agora Inv. P 23856).  
Water Color at right by Piet de Jong



b. Red-Figured Oinochoe Louvre N 3408: Details of Centaurs and Flute-player. (Courtesy of Musée du Louvre)



c. Polychrome Oinochoe 4: Dionysos and Companion (Agora Inv. P 23985). Water Color at right by Piet de Jong

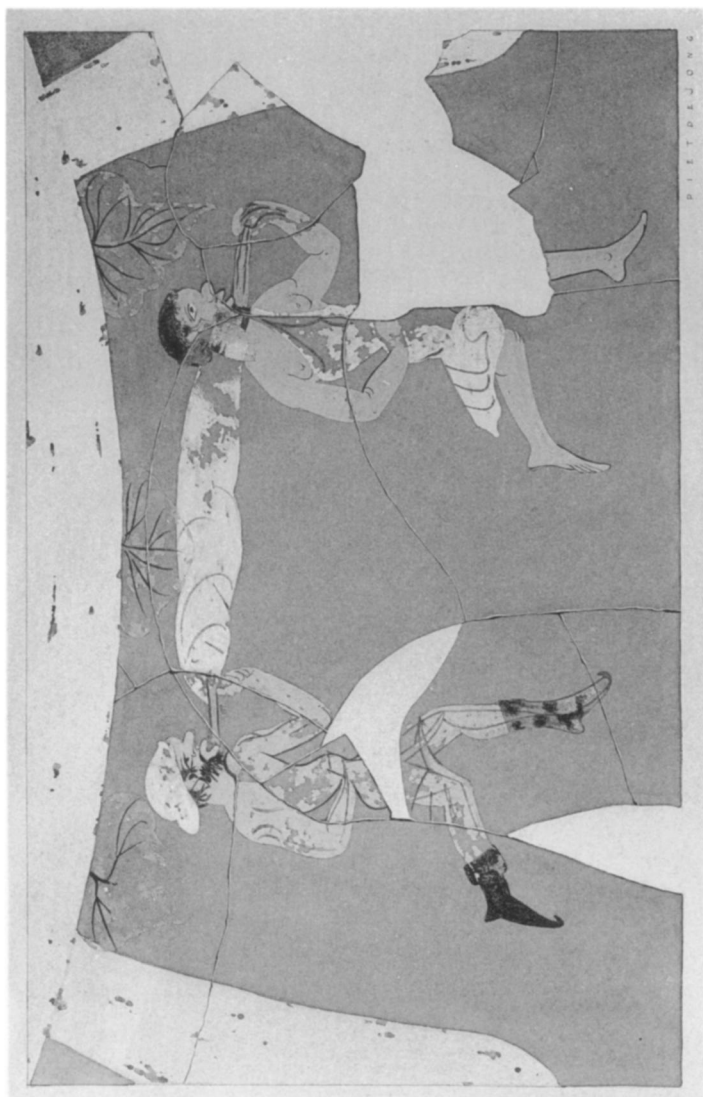


a. Polychrome Oinochoe 2: Komast (Agora Inv. P 23900). Water Color at right by Piet de Jong

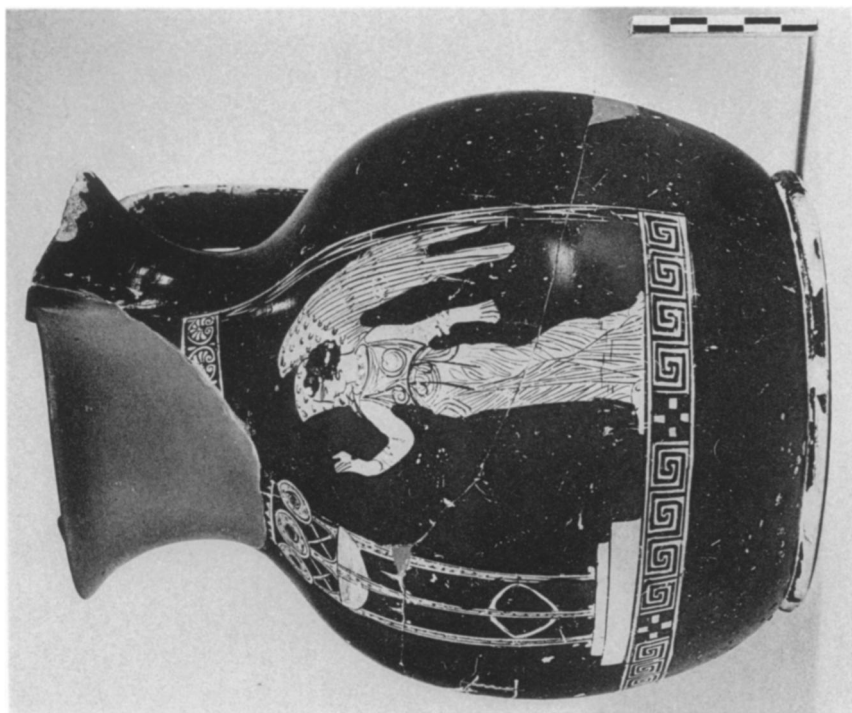


b. Polychrome Oinochoe 3: *Obeliaphoroi* (Agora Inv. P 23907).

MARGARET CROSBY: FIVE COMIC SCENES FROM ATHENS



a. Polychrome Oinochoe 3: *Obeliaphoroi*. Water Color by Piet de Jong



b. Red-Figured Oinochoe (Agora Inv. P 23896).

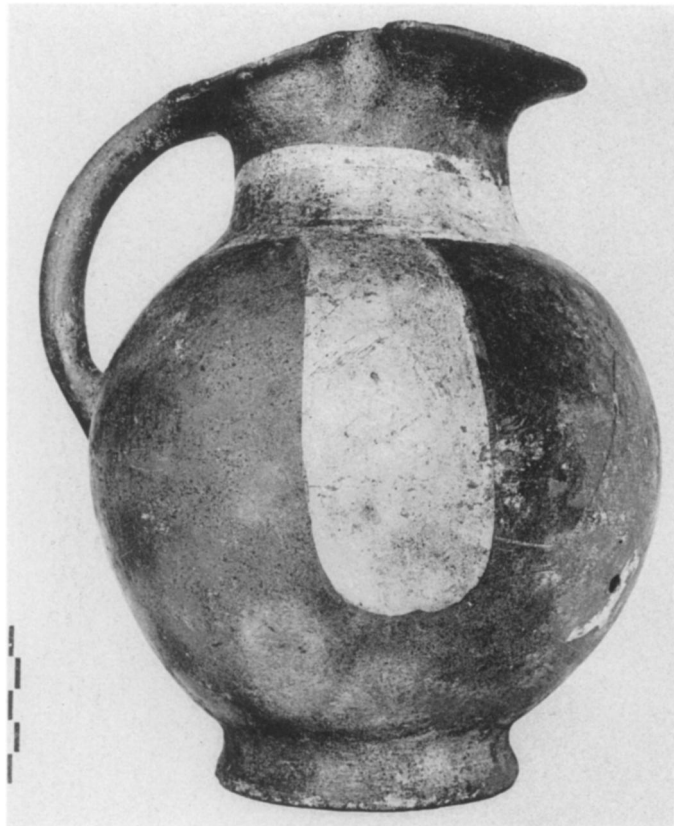


c. Phlyax Bell-Krater in Leningrad.

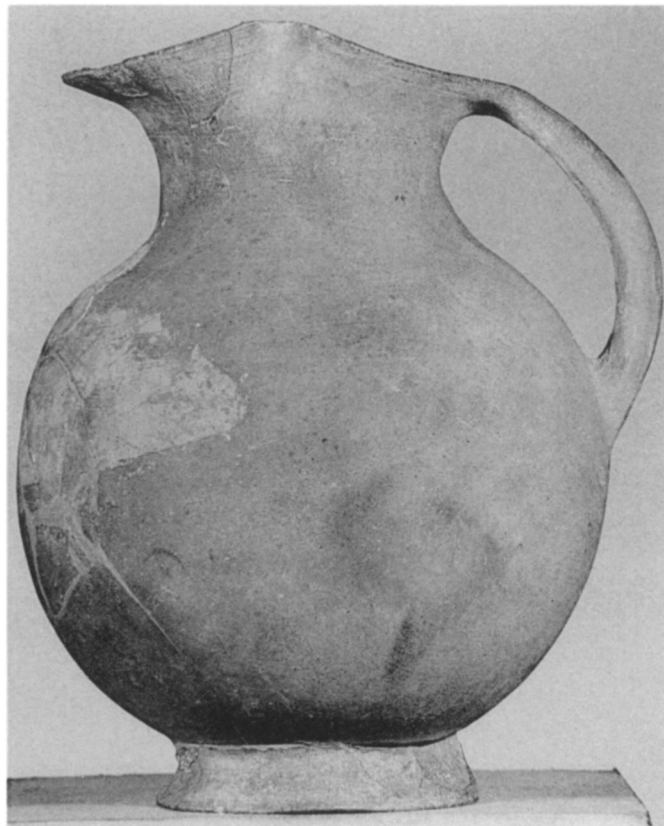




a. Polychrome Oinochoe 5: Man Rowing a Fish  
(British Museum 98.2 — 27.1).  
(Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)  
Water Color at right by Piet de Jong



b. Polychrome Oinochoe 2.



c. Polychrome Oinochoe 5