

## THE HERO ON A SANDAL

The existence of a ἥρωσ ἐπὶ βλαύτη at Athens is attested by Pollux: ἡ δὲ βλαύτη σανδαλίου τι εἶδος· καὶ ἥρωσ Ἀθήνησιν ὁ ἐπὶ βλαύτη· ἀνέθηκε γὰρ τις σκυτοτόμος βλαύτης λίθινον τύπον.<sup>1</sup> Pollux apparently believed that the shoemaker who dedicated a copy in stone of a sandal was responsible for the description of a hero in terms of it.<sup>2</sup> This was however a lame attempt to explain an old cult title. Given a sandal, it was easy to invent the sandalmaker. Judeich suggests that Blaute was a name derived from the shape of a site where the hero was a sandal-saint especially worshipped by shoemakers.<sup>3</sup> Miss Harrison conjectured, and the conjecture has been regarded with favor, that Βλαύτη and Βλάττα were Hellenized versions of Phoenician Balaat,<sup>4</sup> in other words that a Semitic title of the goddess was erroneously identified with a Greek word βλαύτη for “sandal.” This is unlikely, although the cult probably came to Attica during an early period of contact of Athens with Cyprus.<sup>5</sup> The phrase ἥρωσ ἐπὶ βλαύτη does not favor the interpretation that βλαύτη is a name for Aphrodite but rather an object which was her attribute. It is possible that the name Βλάττα, which Lydus, quoting Phlegon, says was a name of Aphrodite among the Phoenicians,<sup>6</sup> was rather a Cypriote title for the goddess which meant “Purple” like the Greek word βλάττα.<sup>7</sup> It would then be simply a translation of her ethnic like the Latin *purpurissa*<sup>8</sup> and the Greek *πορφυρή*,<sup>9</sup> although the latter has been referred to the rosy complexion of the goddess.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Cyrus Gordon informs me that Canaan, the coast of which was Phoenicia, derives its name from a Hurrian word meaning “purple dye.” This shows the antiquity of “purple” as a designation of the land whence the Cypriotes derived their cult of the “purple” goddess. A name of the same character was that of the early Attic Porphyron, the “purple” king who established at Athens a shrine of the Heavenly Aphrodite.<sup>11</sup> If the primary meaning of βλαύτη and βλάττα

<sup>1</sup> VII, 87.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Keramopoulos, *Ἀρχ. Δελτ.*, XII, 1929, pp. 79-80.

<sup>3</sup> *Topographie*<sup>2</sup>, p. 286.

<sup>4</sup> *Primitive Athens*, p. 109, note 4.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Preller-Robert, *Griech. Myth.*, I, p. 348, note 5. The contact may have been contemporary with the figurine of a nude Aphrodite which was found in a shaft grave at Mycenae.

<sup>6</sup> Lydus, *De mens.*, I, 21.

<sup>7</sup> Liddell, Scott, Jones, *Lexicon*, s. v. Cf. ὀξύβλαττα and βλαπτόσημος.

<sup>8</sup> Serv., *Aen.*, I, 720: dicitur (Venus) purpurissa.

<sup>9</sup> Anakreon, II, 3.

<sup>10</sup> See Liddell, Scott, Jones, *Lexicon*, s. v.

<sup>11</sup> Pausanias, I, 14, 7.

was red or purple-red, then *βλαύτη* could mean the purple (sandal) and *βλάττα* the "purple" (goddess). An inscription from a wall at the Beulé Gate, and therefore near the site where Pausanias found the sanctuary of Aphrodite Pandemos, mentions the duty of the astynomoi to bathe the images (of Aphrodite and Peitho) and to provide a purple garment, *πορφύραν*, which must have been for the goddess.<sup>12</sup> Hence a Cypriote title meaning purple would have been doubly appropriate. When Hesychios defines *βλαύτη* as a place in Athens he may have meant that a sanctuary there was known as "The Sandal" from an important symbol within it. In a second inscription which is of the Roman period *Blaute* is seemingly used as a name of Aphrodite: *εἴσοδος πρὸς σηκὸν Βλαύτης καὶ Κουροτρόφου ἀνει[μέ]νη τῷ δήμῳ*,<sup>13</sup> but the word may refer to the hero on the sandal, while the title coupled with it, *κουροτρόφος*, may be that of Aphrodite. Sophocles invoked the goddess under that title.<sup>14</sup>

The sanctuary of The Hero on a Sandal which stood somewhere near the Beulé Gate has been identified by Keramopoulos as that of Aigeus.<sup>15</sup> This early king of Athens, believing that his son Theseus had perished in Crete, threw himself from the wall near the site of the Nike bastion, and received from the Athenians an heroön presumably where he fell. But Keramopoulos does not believe that Aigeus had anything in common with Aphrodite except, as one might say, the partition wall of their shrines. But the name Aigeus is derived from *αἶξ*, *αἰγός*, "goat," a derivation which acquires additional significance from the title *Ἐπιτραγία* of Aphrodite at Phaleron. This goddess played an important part in the story of Theseus, the son of Aigeus. The Delphic oracle advised Theseus to make Aphrodite his guide and fellow-voyager to Crete. While Theseus was sacrificing a female goat on the shore of the sea, the animal suddenly became a male. This miraculous transformation gave Aphrodite her title *Epitragia*, but just why is not clear.<sup>16</sup> Possibly the goat Aigeus as the associate of the goddess had something to do with it. *Epitragia* means "upon a goat" and applied to Aphrodite shows that tradition put her on a goat which was not a sacrificial victim. The title found expression on coins of Elis which represent Aphrodite riding on a he-goat as she did also in a statue by Skopas. In a relief at Sparta the goddess again appears on a running goat.<sup>17</sup> Her left arm is around the neck of the animal. Two Erotes play with the ends of her garment. One is reminded by these representations of the Zeus-bull and Europa. In both cases the motif is erotic. The title *Epitragia* raises the question whether the epitheton *Pandemos* when applied to Aphrodite originally meant "vulgar." Farnell after a searching study of the title comes to a negative conclusion.<sup>18</sup> Aphrodite *Ourania* was just as vulgar as the *Pandemos*. It is possible that the common word *πάνδημος* was confused with and then

<sup>12</sup> Dittenberger, *Sylloge*<sup>3</sup>, 375.

<sup>13</sup> *I.G.*, II<sup>2</sup>, 5183.

<sup>16</sup> Plutarch, *Theseus*, 18; Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, II, pp. 631-633.

<sup>17</sup> *Cat. Sparta Museum*, p. 137.

<sup>14</sup> Athenaios, 592a.

<sup>15</sup> *Αρχ. Δελτ.*, XII, 1929, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 659-661.

substituted for an original and similar \*παν(ο)δαμος which meant "taming Pan" and corresponded in formation to the Homeric *ἵππόδαμος* "taming a horse."<sup>19</sup> Pandemos in such sense would be the equivalent of Epitragia.

The presence of Aphrodite Epitragia at Phaleron may mean that she arrived there on a goat by sea, the Aegean, to which a proper name meaning goat was given. Certain coins of Carian Aphrodisias represent Aphrodite riding on a sea-goat,<sup>20</sup> a motif which is hardly to be explained by the Dorian use of *αἶγες* to denote high waves.<sup>21</sup> Aigeus was a double of Poseidon who included among his titles that of Aigaios while numerous cities with cults of Poseidon had names containing the root *αἶγ*. Both Poseidon and Aigeus were said to have been the father of Theseus. The two traditions that Aigeus threw himself into the sea or from the acropolis may be reconciled by the assumption that the sanctuary of Aigeus presumably near the Nike bastion<sup>22</sup> had a "sea" like that of Poseidon in the Erechtheion. That an intimate relation existed between Aigeus and Aphrodite is obvious. He introduced her cult into Athens in a sanctuary near another of Poseidon.<sup>23</sup> Further the Aegean and Myrtoan seas mingled with each other. The Myrtoan extended from the southern point of the Peloponnesus to the headland of Sunium including the Saronic gulf. The name of this sea was derived from the word for myrtle, the tree which was sacred to Aphrodite.<sup>24</sup>

But how did it happen that the Hero on a Sandal who has been identified correctly with Aigeus came to be named with reference to so trivial an object as a sandal? Certainly the dedication by a shoemaker of a stone model of a sandal was not sufficient to give the hero his name. The answer is furnished by a Delian group which was set up by one Dionysios of Beirut in the second century B.C. (Fig. 1).<sup>25</sup> The generally accepted interpretation of the group is that it represents an attempt upon Aphrodite by Pan in which the goddess assisted by Eros threatens the aggressive goat with her sandal.<sup>26</sup> This interpretation was perhaps facilitated by the traditions that the goddess had used her sandal on Eros, and that Omphale had applied it to Herakles, and by the verb *βλαντρόω* "to strike with a sandal." The objection to this interpretation is not so much that the sandal is turned the wrong way for such use, as that none of the three figures shows any sign of struggle. The goddess is not posed for resistance<sup>27</sup> and does not appear in the least alarmed. Eros smiles as if pleased with

<sup>19</sup> The accent does not conform to that for such compounds.

<sup>20</sup> Imhoof-Blumer, *Kleinasiatische Münzen*, pl. IV, 14.

<sup>21</sup> Hesychios, *s. v.*

<sup>22</sup> Pausanias, I, 22, 5.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 14, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Pauly-Wissowa, *R.E.*, *s. v.* Myrtos, col. 1180.

<sup>25</sup> Bulard, *B.C.H.*, XXX, 1906, p. 614 and plates XIII-XVI. The group is now in the National Museum at Athens.

<sup>26</sup> Cook, *Zeus*, III (1940), p. 1020, accepts Bulard's interpretation.

<sup>27</sup> For resistance in such scenes see the marble group in Dresden (Brunn-Bruckmann, 731) where the attacking satyr gets a straight arm to the face. For the tense facial expression in this



Fig. 1. Aphrodite, Pan, and Eros

his efforts to bring the two together. Finally such a Puritanic conception of Aphrodite defending herself against passion could hardly have inspired the donor of the group who came from Beirut and who according to the inscription dedicated the statues to his ancestral gods on behalf of himself and his children.<sup>28</sup> The dedication was certainly not intended as an amusing theme of low character. The use of the plural *θεοῖς* shows that Aphrodite and Pan and perhaps Eros are the ancestral gods of the donor while the phrase *ὑπὲρ τῶν τέκνων* restates the idea of *κουροτρόφος* in the previously cited inscription of Roman date. Both the group and its inscription should be considered in the light of an altar at Olympia which was dedicated to Pan, Aphrodite, and Good Fortune.<sup>29</sup> Apparently the intimacy of Pan and Aphrodite had good fortune as a sequel.

The Delian group has no immediate connection with the Aphrodite of the west slope of the acropolis but rather with the Phoenician goddess who was as openly erotic as Pan. Yet since the Phoenician-Cypriote cult of Aphrodite spread to Athens, the Delian group may throw some light upon the *βλαύτη* of the sanctuary there. In the group (Fig. 1) Aphrodite holds a sandal in vertical position

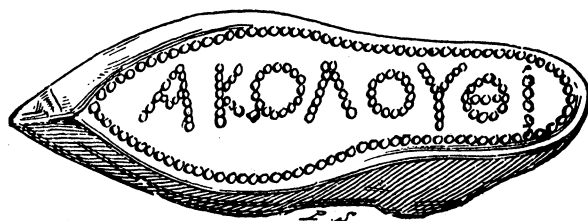


Fig. 2. An Inscribed Sandal Vase

so that the bottom of the sole can be seen by one who is behind the goddess. The sole is reddish as was the *solea rubra* of the mistress in Persius (V, 169) and may have been the sculptor's idea of the sandal called *βλαύτη*. The significance of the group lies in the custom of the ancient harlot of wearing a sandal the sole of which had hobnails so set that they left an imprint of the imperative *ἀκολούθει* "follow." The evidence for this is a terracotta vase in the form of a sandal of the second century after Christ which was found in lower Egypt (Fig. 2).<sup>30</sup> The assumption that the sculptor of the Delian group had such a sandal in mind gives a consistent explanation of it. The nude Aphrodite is the harlot goddess of the donor's homeland<sup>31</sup> who provoked the reproach from the Christian fathers of being a whore worshipped by

symplegma see *Festschrift Paul Arndt*, p. 99, fig. 8. Compare with this a terracotta from Capua (Winter, *Typen fig. Terrakotten*, II, p. 406, no. 5; Levi, *Terrecotte Figurate*, p. 124, fig. 100). In this the goddess is not repelling the advances of Pan nor seeking to protect herself with drapery as Bulard maintains (*loc. cit.*, p. 616) but gently places her hand on Pan's head. The same raising of drapery is seen in statues of Leda and the swan where there is not the slightest indication of resistance (Reinach, *Rep. Stat. Gr. et Rom.*, I, pp. 193, 195, 197-198).

<sup>28</sup> *B.C.H.*, XXX, 1906, p. 612 for the inscription.

<sup>29</sup> Pausanias, V, 15, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Cabrol et LeClercq, *Dict. d' Arch. Chrét.*, s. v. chaussure à inscription, fig. 2747; cf. Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire*, s. v. solea, p. 1389. There is a reference to inscriptions of this kind by Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, II, 11.

<sup>31</sup> For a sanctuary of the harlot Aphrodite at Abydos see Athenaios, 572e.



Fig. 3. The Stele of Silon

Kinyras.<sup>32</sup> Her sandals, one of which she has removed from her foot, indicate that she has been walking about.<sup>33</sup> Pan, the *capere libidinosus*, having read ἀκολούθει imprinted in the dirt of the road, has obeyed the imperative and has just overtaken the goddess. By putting the sandal in her upraised hand the sculptor has stressed its importance, but not even the realism of the Hellenistic age would permit him to inscribe the imperative upon the sole. The importance of footwear as an indication of erotic intention is further shown by the *κορίποδες* which Hesychios defines as ὑποδήματα μοιχικά and by the *λευκὸν ὑπόδημα* which was μᾶλλον ἑταιρικόν.<sup>34</sup> There is probably a reference to such a sandal in a fragment of the *Moirai* of the Athenian comic poet Hermippos, who in that comedy took a fling at Pericles for his relations with Aspasia.<sup>35</sup> The poet, alluding perhaps to the Athenian strategos, describes a warrior putting on his cuirass, adjusting his greave about his ankle and then, instead of mentioning a military boot, unexpectedly says *βλαύτης δ' οὐδείς ἔτ' ἔρωσ λευκῆς*. It is quite possible that the *ἔρωσ βλαύτης λευκῆς* equates Aspasia the courtesan with the courtesan goddess Aphrodite. Her attribute the *βλαύτη* was of sufficient significance to designate a hero on the west slope of the Athenian acropolis as *ἦρωσ ἐπὶ βλαύτη*. In this *ἔρωσ* can there have been a play on *ἦρωσ*?

The identity of this hero with Aigeus was happily suggested by Keramopoullos, but how can that Athenian king have been a hero on a sandal? It has already been noted that the name of Aigeus means "goat." He may be then an hypostasis of Pan the goat and the same goat

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis and Osiris*, p. 31.

<sup>33</sup> Aphrodite, nude except for sandals, reappears as Voluptas in a drawing by the younger Peter Vischer figured by Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege*, pl. XXIII.

<sup>34</sup> Pollux, VII, 92.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Pickard-Cambridge, *Select Fragments of the Greek Comic Poets*, p. 180.

which gave Aphrodite her title of Epitragia at Phaleron, for this title means "upon a goat." These two titles simply state the domination of the goddess over the goat. When this goat was anthropomorphized as Aigeus the king, Aphrodite could no longer be represented as Epitragia in the same realistic way as before. A substitute was found in the representation of his human form on the inside surface of the sole of a sandal, the *βλαύτη*, of the goddess. When wearing such sandal Aphrodite stood upon the hero, once a goat but now of human form. This conjecture is based upon a remarkable stele of the fourth century B.C. which was discovered at Athens, but not in situ (Fig. 3).<sup>36</sup> On the inside surface of a large sandal-sole is carved in relief a male figure. The only explanation thus far offered of this motif, which is without parallel in Greek art, is that the stele was set up by its dedicator Silon in the sanctuary of "the hero on a sandal." Since the figure is that of a suppliant one may conclude that Silon has taken the place of Aigeus, thus identifying himself with the associate of the goddess. The snake below the sandal on the stele alludes to the chthonic character of the cult. Such a sandal with a figure in relief could not have been worn. The relief is secondary. The first figures of the sort were painted and were very probably of eastern origin. Egyptian sandals had such figures which represented captives, so that when the sandal was worn the wearer stood upon his captive.<sup>37</sup> Aphrodite may have brought with her from Phoenicia or Cyprus her professional sandal.

The goddess and her attribute were frequently commemorated in art. A small bronze was found on the eastern slope of the Athenian acropolis representing her with the sandal as in the Delian group.<sup>38</sup> From the condition of the back the inference has been made that the figure formed a group with Pan and Eros. Keramopoulos, noting several examples of Aphrodite with the sandal from Alexandria, Syria, and Cyprus, concluded that the goddess was not so represented originally in the eastern seats of her worship, but that after her Oriental name Balaat had appeared in Greece as *Βλαύτη* she returned to her homeland with a new attribute, the sandal, which was derived from her misunderstood name.<sup>39</sup> Although Athens from the fourth century disseminated some art types along the eastern littoral of the Mediterranean, this does not mean that the ideas expressed by these types were foreign to that littoral.

The development briefly summarized seems to have been as follows. The coin-types of Carian Aphrodisias reveal a tradition that a goat carried Aphrodite on the sea, thus serving the function of the divine bull which setting out from Phoenicia carried Europa across the sea to Crete. Both animals were theriomorphic deities. The goat, later anthropomorphized as Aigeus, shared an heroön with the goddess just as the serpent-tailed Cecrops did with Athena. Both Aigeus and Cecrops became kings of Athens. Aigeus was eclipsed by Poseidon, disputing with him the parenthood of Theseus but giving his name apparently without opposition to the Aegean sea.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

G. W. ELDERKIN

<sup>36</sup> 'Εφ. 'Αρχ., 1906, p. 243, fig. p. 246. Cf. Keramopoulos, 'Αρχ. Δελτ., XII, 1929, pp. 79-80. The male figure closely resembles that on another Athenian stele which is also of the fourth century (Nat. Mus. no. 1329).

<sup>37</sup> Wilkinson, *The Ancient Egyptians*, II, p. 336, figure.

<sup>38</sup> Marinatos, 'Αρχ. Δελτ., VIII, 1923, p. 175, fig. 1.

<sup>39</sup> 'Αρχ. Δελτ., XII, 1929, p. 82.