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C L Á S I C O S

Investigación

Paloma Cabrera Bonet

IMAGES OF BLESSING: DIONYSIAN IMAGERY IN MAGNA GRAECIA

Guillermo Escolar EDITOR

Fundación BBVA

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El presente libro es resultado del proyecto «Cultos, literatura e iconografía de Dioniso en los siglos v y iv a. C.» del Programa LOGOS de ayudas a la investigación en Estudios Clásicos 2019, financiado por la Fundación BBVA.

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Foreword

Paloma Cabrera, Chief Curator of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid, was a world-renowned expert in ancient Greek iconography. While collaborating in a research project on Dionysus at the Complutense University of Madrid, she published an excellent chapter, «Dioniso en la iconografía arcaica: cultos y fiestas» in a volume coordinated by A. Bernabé, A. I. Jiménez San Cristóbal and M. A. Santamaría, *Dioniso. Los orígenes* (Madrid 2013, 401-421). She completed a second chapter, «Dioniso en las imágenes de los vasos del sur de Italia» which should have appeared in a second volume on Dionysus in classical times, but the increasing scope of her research made Paloma conceive a more ambitious project: a broad and exhaustive monograph on the topic, which should be published in English to achieve a wider dissemination. Jacqueline Cabrera Parajón translated her Spanish text to English. The resulting volume presented here is the fruit of many years of hard work.

This new book introduces us into an extremely interesting world, South Italian pottery of classical times, in which one of the most frequently represented and meaningful motives was Dionysus and the Dionysiac realm. The approach of Paloma Cabrera to the topic is of course mainly iconographic, but it is not limited to such perspective: her encompassing view and her extensive knowledge of ancient religion and philosophy allows her to make a profound analysis of the religious aspects of the vases, and to compare them with the literary and philosophical dimensions of the ideas implied in these images. She achieves a well-nuanced synthesis that reveals the extremely rich views of the users of these vases on life and death, on the afterlife and the hope of an otherworldly happiness. Not only does she integrate the rich contributions of the recent bibliography on these questions, but she also advances original proposals that take further our knowledge of the South Italian imagery on Dionysus and the sphere of the god, and on the underlying ideology, manifested in images as well as in texts.

Paloma's regrettable premature death in August 2020 interrupted the process of publication of this new book. However, as her friends and colleagues, we considered it a contribution of such importance that it deserved to be published posthumously: the translation was revised, the images were collected and inserted into the text, and the book was proposed to the editor. This edition has been culminated thanks to the invaluable help of the research project *Cultos, literatura e iconografía de Dioniso en los siglos v y iv a.C.*, funded by the program Logos-BBVA sponsored by the BBVA Foundation and Sociedad Española de Estudios Clásicos. The new series of the SEEC publications is inaugurated by this book. As members of this research project, in which Paloma was a fully committed participant from the beginning to her death, we express our heartfelt gratitude to BBVA and SEEC for their generous help with the publication of this volume.

Along our deep mourning for her absence, it is a great satisfaction for us to honour her memory with the edition of a work which will doubtless be an unavoidable reference in the study of the complex realm of the South Italian worldview and religious ideologies in classical times. In one of her many works, Paloma defined Dionysus' garden as a space of ambiguity, in which ecstasy and ultimate trance have an all-important role: the role of waking up from death, which is conceived as sleep in the landscape of dreams. This book left by Paloma is, paraphrasing her own words, an Eden-like garden, a space to enjoy an eternal banquet of unending wine and splendour.

Madrid, April 1st 2022

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I. Introduction

The study of Dionysian imagery in the production of red-figure vases in Magna Graecia and Sicily transports viewers to an enormous universe of graphic documents representing one central figure. Over the course of more than a century, this graphic documentation also represented a system of religious beliefs already in place and fully developed in Hellenic culture. However, in this new geographical and historical context, the figure of Dionysus acquired its own individual characteristics and a unique and very original identity, which would go on to achieve enormous transcendence in future historical developments. Delving further into this imagery allows viewers to discover the Italic Dionysus, who, in the words of Sophocles[1], «protects renowned Italy and reigns over the very frequented valley of the Eleusinian Deo», a different Dionysus from the one who lived in Athenian and other Greek images, even those that were contemporary. Dionysus reigned over Italy, or at least over South Italian imagery. From the middle of the 5th century BC until the end of the 4th century BC, hundreds of vases were produced in the workshops of Apulia, Lucania, Sicily, Campania and Paestum, which were most frequently destined for tombs. These vases were decorated with images of Dionysus and the members of his *thiasos*. The Italic Dionysus reigns over the Netherworld. The imagery on the vases that accompany the deceased's last voyage evoke a Dionysian world and the god of wine and vegetation, as well as the transformation, ecstasy and enthusiasm, the god of possessions and divine madness, the god who, through initiation practices, offered individual salvation and the promise of a blissful destiny, eternal happiness and beatitude beyond the grave. Nowhere else did Dionysian imagery have such a close connection with the Netherworld as in South Italy.

The start of the production of red-figure vases in Magna Graecia and Sicily has been established traditionally around 440 BC, although the current

[1] Soph. *Antigone*, 1117-1120.

tendency is to date it slightly earlier, between 450 and 440 BC[2], or even in the second quarter of the 5th century BC[3] The beginning of this production was linked to the arrival of the Attic painters in the west, which Furtwängler dated to a precise historical moment – the foundation of the Panhellenic colony of Thurii. However, it is currently linked to other factors including crisis or change in the interior of the Athenian Kerameikos, such as the policy of «great works» promoted by Pericles. Pericles prioritized the production of pottery workshops above other artisanal activities[4]. The start of production in this area could also be due to the excessive competition that existed and the artisans' need to access larger markets which were more easily accessible, where the massive diffusion of Attic figured vases during the 5th century BC was favored by the high demand of the local aristocracy[5].

The first workshops that produced red-figure vases in Italy were the result of a tradition that was a consolidation of local production and the use of red-figure vases imported from Athens. The first colonies that initiated this production were Metaponto, Syracuse and somewhat later, Taranto, where workshops were established that created vases with a strong Attic influence. This technological, stylistic and iconographic knowledge was concentrated in a few centers and did not constitute a phenomenon that was widespread throughout the area.

It is debatable whether we should speak of a real presence of Athenian artisans or simply of an Athenian influence. Modern researchers take the view first proposed by Denoyelle[6], that some of the first Magno-Greek artists, such as the Tarentins or the Pisticci Painter, who established the style of Metaponto, learned and worked in one of the great Athenian workshops in the middle of the 5th century BC. In the case of the Pisticci Painter, the proof is in his technical capacity, his ability to decorate numerous forms in the Attic tradition, and his precise iconographic references. However, in spite of the marked Attic influence in his style, his work also demonstrated strong Magno-Grecian characteristics. A similar or greater Attic influence is demonstrated by one of the first Sicilian painters, the Scacchiera Painter, possibly an Athenian immigrant who represented, according to Giudice[7],

[2] Lippolis 2008, p. 390.
[3] Denoyelle 2008, p. 341.
[4] Giudice and Giudice Rizzo 2004, p. 140.
[5] De Juliis 2004, p. 145.
[6] Denoyelle 2008, p. 342-343.
[7] Giudice 2002, p. 200.

the success of a constant presence on the island of Athenian communities which may have included groups of artisans.

The first Tarentinian production demonstrates a strong Attic style, inspired by the great vases of the Talos Painter or the Pronomos Painter. At the same time this early production reflects a series of stylistic experimentations and iconographic innovations, with its own specific personality, which help define the artistic identity of the production of vases in Apulia[8].

Athens is the model for the birth of Magno-Greek centers and perhaps, in some cases, there were Athenian artisans present at the very moment these workshops were created. Nevertheless, without the presence of an appropriate preexisting dynamic, born of traditional products and local artisanal handiwork, of the capacity of the artisans to adapt, of the interrelationships with the native population, and the relationships between city and colonies, the process would surely not have been successful[9]. In cities such as Taranto, Metaponto, and Syracuse, various factors coincided: the technical capacity required for the production of such complex pottery and the existence of a market that was open to exporting to the wealthy, Hellenized native communities of the interior, which quickly became the principal consumers of these vases.

During the second half of the 5th century, a system of production appeared, inspired by a multiplicity of Attic models, which gave rise to several workshops with different regional styles. The Lucanian school developed until 360 BC, when production in Metaponto ended, although it continued with a lesser amount of success and skill in various Lucanian centers in the interior. The Apulian school began a few years later, but in a different way from the Lucanian school. Its activity lasted until the final years of the 4th century BC. The Sicilian school commenced under strong Attic influence, but quickly developed a more specific regional decorative and figurative language. In the final decades of the 5th century BC, the influence and expansion of Sicilian workshops became evident in Campania –without that necessarily meaning that there was movement of masters from one region to another[10]– and drove the appearance of pottery workshops that resulted in new regional productions[11]. In Paestum, the technical, stylistic,

[8] Denoyelle 2008, p. 344.
[9] Denoyelle 2008, p. 347.
[10] Lambrugo 2004, p. 166.
[11] Pontrandolfo 1996.

and figurative apparatus of the production of red-figure vases was transmitted to the preexisting pottery workshops in such a natural way, that, in the opinion of Denoyelle[12], it is possible to think that the first artists from Paestum, Asteas and Python, were also Sicilian. The Sicilian, Campanian and Paestan productions ended at the end of the century.

The South Italian red-figure vase workshops were structured from the beginning to appeal to a broad, diversified demand, both Greek and native. Local aristocratic groups from all regions of South Italy, who were profoundly influenced by Greek culture and its religious beliefs[13], were highly influential in the process of establishing and developing the different centers of production, and in locating them away from city-colonies; they quickly became clients and consumers of the formal and decorative products, which were of the highest quality. This Hellenized elite turned to frequenting local workshops more than obtaining imported products in order to preserve the expressive means that demonstrated their wealth and status, their cultural affiliation, and their universe of political, social, and religious values. Demand also determined the monumental size and exceptional character of many of the vases created in these workshops, such as those in Apulia, for the aristocrats native to Canosa, Mesapia, and Peucetia, who used these colossal vases exclusively in tombs and elaborate funerary ceremonies to illustrate the opulence and leadership of their princes[14]. In the second half of the 4th century, in some regions such as in Daunia, the strong assimilation of Greek culture and the formation of a native identity that adhered to the colonial worldview resulted in the selection and adaptation of the iconography of some myths, imposed by a demanding and very determined native population[15].

These workshops produced a complete selection of vase forms developed by Attic ceramicists: kraters, amphoras, dinoi, loutrophoroi, hydriai, pelikai, *oinochoai*, lekythoi, cups, skyphoi, kantharoi, rytha, alabastrons, askoi, pyxis, lebetes, lekanides; they also included some new forms such as the situla. However, demand dictated some forms over others, and the krater, especially the bell-shaped krater, was the dominant form[16]. Further-

[12] Denoyelle 2011, p. 26.

[13] Torelli 2004, p. 190; Montanaro 2007, p. 193ff.

[14] Torelli 2004, p. 192.

[15] Giuliani 1999; Pouzadoux 2005, p. 187.

[16] Different regions show variations in different times: in Sicily the calyx krater is the main shape; in Apulia and Lucania the bell krater predominates in the first staged

more, characteristics of native pottery were also incorporated into these workshops' production of red-figure vases, as well as forms typical of Messapia, Peucetia and the area of northern Lucania, such as pots, kantharoid vases, *trozellai*, and *nestorides*. These ritual forms had taken on a symbolic role in native identity[17] and were reproduced by Greek workshops for the Peuketian and Lucanian elite. All the classical typological repertoire, and some new features such as the situla or the aforementioned native elements, were used in life and in death, but especially in the latter. The image of Dionysus and the Dionysian was used in all forms, without exception, including those of native origin, and particularly in kraters. There did not seem to be a preference for decorating drinking vases or vases for special rituals with the divine figure or his *thiasos*. Even the vases that were clearly feminine, such as the nuptial lebes or the lekanis, showed images of the god or his companions, or at the very least, a Dionysian symbol. Dionysus was ubiquitous in all types of vases in South Italy, and this intense presence serves to confirm the supremacy of Dionysus in the conceptual world of the consumers of these vases, be they native or Greek[18].

The analysis of South Italian Dionysian imagery[19] is bound by the parameters established by these circumstances of production, as well as economic, social, and, especially, religious elements. The following topics are addressed here: imagery referring to episodes from the god's mythical biography, his birth and infancy, his confrontation with the *teomachoi*, his participation in Gigantomachy, the episodes with the pirates, the bequeathing of the gift of the vine to mankind, his relationship with Heracles and the story of his love of Ariadne. Subsequently, there is an analysis of the

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of its development; in Apulia, from the 4th cent. BC onwards, monumental volute kraters acquire great protagonism; column kraters are fabricated for indigenous clients from Peucetia, Mesapia, and Daunia; in Paestum and Campania bell kraters predominate, while volute kraters are exceptional and column kraters are completely absent. Cf. De Juliis 2004; Denoyelle 2011, p. 28.

[17] Colivicchi 2004, p. 28.

[18] Isler-Kerenyi 2004, p. 244.

[19] Our analysis is not exhaustive. We have not been able to access all the existing witnesses, the thousands of South Italian vases documented in scientific publications or catalogues of the Antique market. For the episodes of Dionysus' mythical biography (chapter II) I have tracked all the preserved sources, but for the images that illustrate other aspects (chapters III and IV), the documents collected and cited are only examples of themes, motifs and ideas present in an inmensely wide repertoire, which is at times distinct, at times extremely reiterative.

scenes which, grouped under «promises of Dionysus», offer to those who request, purchase, or are buried with these vases a vision of mankind's anticipated destiny in the Netherworld, according to the god; these scenes speak of the Dionysian paradise that souls entered once the final threshold was crossed: the theme of *naiskos*, of the heavenly garden, an encounter with the god, participation in the Dionysian *komos*, in the Dionysian symposium, and the ceremony to honor him in his sanctuary. Finally, other essential aspects of Italian Dionysian iconography are addressed: his relationship with theater and with a figure of transcendental importance, the Dionysian Eros.

The study of these images sheds light on the imagery of societies that defined their own identities and legitimized their social structures according to Greek cultural parameters. This Greek influence could also be felt in the images chosen to accompany them in death, their symbolic, social, and religious universe, images that continue to wield influence through their power and effectiveness even after death. These images allow for an understanding of Dionysus and the Dionysian – an Italian Dionysus, similar to the Greek Dionysus but a different, rejuvenated Dionysus who exerts power over life and death, and a religious phenomenon that no longer structures or directs the community but rather the individual and his or her values and desires.

II. Biography of the god

One of the central characteristics of Dionysian iconography in South Italy is the reduced number of representations of the god's biographical events, in contrast to the large amount of Dionysian images that exist. The nature of Dionysus, his power, his sphere of action, and what he offers to his followers is developed with a great deal of intensity in other types of scenes that are not specifically mythological, i.e., which do not record, inspire, or recreate a mythological narrative. Only a small number of scenes do so when compared to the group of mythological representations from South Italy as a whole, and they are always related to the god's biography: his birth and infancy, his confrontation with the *teomachoi*, his participation in the Gigantomachy, the episode with pirates, and his encounter and subsequent union with Ariadne. One episode is missing from South Italian imagery: Dionysus' participation in the return of Hephaestus to Olympus. This episode is characteristic of his biography and enormously popular in archaic Attic imagery and, to a lesser extent, in classical imagery, but held no interest for the South Italian peoples and their clients[1].

1. Dionysus' birth and infancy

The first episode in the god's mythological biography is, logically, his birth. This myth was already known by Homer (*Il.* 14.235) and Hesiod (*Theog.* 940-942). Semele, the mortal daughter of Cadmus and Harmony, sister to Agave, Autonoe, and Ino, united with Zeus, awakening the jealous vengeance of Hera, and gave birth to Dionysus. The tragedians included the myth in their works and emphasized the theme of punishing the mortal woman

[1] We know only one Apulian instance of Hephaestus' return, an amphora by the Arpi Painter, where neither Dionysus nor any member of the Dioysiac parade is present: Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 28/90, pl. 360; Todisco 2008, p. 23 and 40-43, tav. XXXVII.

who had dared to overstep the limits of her condition. Aeschylus[2] portrays Semele as a victim of Hera's deception: Hera, under the guise of the nursemaid Beroe, induces in Semele the desire to view Zeus in his divine form and to embrace him as his wife did. The consequence is death, struck by Zeus' thunderbolt, and the premature birth of his son, who Euripides[3] describes among the devastating flames that raze the house of Cadmus. Zeus gathers up the newborn and deposits him in his thigh to complete his gestation. After Dionysus' second birth, Zeus delivers him to the nymphs, or, according to other authors, orders him sent to Hermes, who takes him to Nysa, the fabulous place where nymphs and Silenoi care for and educate the boy god.

Three different episodes were thus linked to the miraculous first birth –the death of Dionysus' mother after being struck by Zeus' thunderbolt, the second gestation in his father's thigh, and the second birth of the child Dionysus and his delivery to the nymphs of Nysa to conceal him from Hera's vengeful hatred–. This last episode had a long tradition in Attic imagery, while the other two did not. In South Italy, despite the enormous popularity of Dionysian iconography, the narratives of the death of Semele, the birth of Dionysus from his father's thigh, and his delivery to the nymphs were hardly reflected on vases.

1.1. The death of Semele

The only preserved testimony of the representation of the death of Semele is an Apulian volute-krater by the Arpi Painter (Figure 1)[4]. On one of its faces, and in two different records, the painter has connected two of these episodes: the death of Semele and the child Dionysus with Hermes, nymphs, and Papposilenus; the meaning of this scene will be discussed below. In the upper frieze, Semele, who is naked and lying on her mantle, is supported by two women. Zeus' thunderbolt appears from a great, radiating nimbus cloud, a metaphor for the prodigious and deadly divine epiphany, to obliterate the woman who, in childbirth, will give birth prematurely to the child Dionysus. Three other women surround the central group, gesturing and fleeing either horrified or marveling at the events, anticipating the disaster that is about to occur. Two satyrs close the scene, reminding viewers merely by their presence that the child who is born will

[2] Herrero de Jáuregui, forthcoming.

[3] E. *Bach*. 1-10; Macías Otero 2020, pp. 135 ff.

[4] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 28/96, pl. 362; Todisco 2008, pp. 46-48.

be the Lord of the *thiasos*. Some[5] have established the identity of the female characters: the two older women who are supporting Semele could be her mother Harmony and the nursemaid Beroe, and the three younger women are her sisters Agave, Autonoe, and Ino. After the death of Semele, because they are related to the god, they will go on to be protagonists of events in which Dionysus plays a fundamental role.

Figure 1. Apulian volute-krater by the Arpi Painter.
Tampa Museum of Art 87.36.

This scene differs greatly from its preceding Attic scene, a hydria from the Semele Painter, dated 390 to BC[6], the only known example of this theme. In that scene, the action seems to take place, not in the Palace of Cadmo, but in the open air, in the heart of nature. Semele is lying on a bed, in the manner of Ariadne in Naxos, her eyes closed, asleep or already dead. Around the bed sprout branches that ascend and form a type of grotto. At the top of the scene, Zeus is depicted in all his deadly majesty: his lightning bolt has left his hands and hovers over Semele. Next to him are Aphrodite, two Erotes and a woman with bridal gifts. Below, at the foot of the bed is Hermes, who already holds the child Dionysus in his arm; behind him is Hera. Next to Semele is Iris and behind her, a nymph. The dramatic tension, evoking that of a theatrical representation, reaches its peak at this moment.

In the Apulian volute-krater by the Arpi Painter, below and in the center of the lower register (Figure 1), the child Dionysus is naked and seated under flowering branches, bunches of grapes, and vine leaves, which form

[5] Todisco 2008, p. 47.
[6] *ARV*2 1343; *CVA* 1, pl. 48-50; Kossatz-Deissmann 1994, p. 720, n. 6.

a type of bower. At his feet, and only under his feet, sprout flowers, rosettes, and calyxes of flowers. Branches and flowers delineate a space that is the place of divine epiphany, which in this case is marked by a floral hierophany. The presence of the god has magically transformed nature, has aroused its fruitfulness and has brought forth the sweet fruit of the vine, its flowers and plants suffused with seductive perfume. These miraculously-generated herbal elements contain a space that can be imagined, in this mythical context, as a grotto. Dionysus extends his arm to shake hands with Hermes. Behind the child-god, a woman, one of the nymphs, also extends her arm to embrace him, while behind her, the old Papposilenus mimics her action. At the other end of the scene, three nymphs contemplate the central action or converse among themselves.

The issue is that we cannot be sure what specific moment this scene represents. Some[7] have described it as the moment the child Dionysus is delivered by Hermes to the care of the nymphs of Nysa, after his second birth. But the iconographic details pose some problems that make it difficult to accept this interpretation. Normally, in both the Attic and the South Italian tradition, to be addressed shortly, the scene of the delivery depicts the child Dionysus stretching his arms towards one of the nymphs while still in the arms of Hermes, thus emphasizing the decisive role entrusted by Zeus to the messenger god and Zeus' intermediary. Here, in the krater by the Arpi Painter, the child is seated in a well-delineated space by himself, a type of grotto made of vegetation. This could be the moment when Hermes leaves the child in one of the grottos, or simply in the meadow of Nysa, while the nymphs and Papposilenus, his tutor, arrive to take care of the child. This would be a marked deviation from the iconographic tradition. Kossatz-Deissmann[8] proposed a different, enormously suggestive meaning: the central scene does not represent the delivery of the child Dionysus to Nysa, but another moment. After the death of Semele, the palace of Cadmus in flames, the premature birth of the god provokes a marvelous action: Euripides recounts that

> his back was covered immediately by enveloping ivy, coiled, crowning him with its green branches, enshadowed (Eur. *Phoen*. 650-656).

[7] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, p. 926, n. 96; Todisco 2008, p. 47.

[8] Kossatz-Deissmann 1990b, pp. 203-210.

Philostratus also describes this event:

> Among the different peaks that form the flames, there is apparent, in the shade, a cave for Dionysus, more beautiful than those which Dionysus has in Assyria or Lydia, its surroundings filled with green shoots of the vine, sprouts of ivy and beautiful clusters of grapes, with his staff of fennel from the generosity of the earth, some of which seemed to grow forth from the flames (Philostr. *Imag.* I, 14).

This scene joins the events taking place in the upper frieze. After the premature birth of Dionysus and death of Semele, Hermes, commissioned by Zeus, collects the not-yet-fully-gestated child, who is safe from the flames that devour the palace, protected by the vegetation that he himself has brought forth, to take him to Olympus, for his subsequent birth from the thigh of Zeus. The nymphs and Papposilenus may simply be foreshadowing Dionysus' future stay in Nysa. Kossatz-Deissmann interprets this image as the background of a theatrical representation –*Semele* by Aeschylus or *Hydrophorai* by Sophocles– or, I might add, any allusion by the tragedians (especially Euripides) to the wondrous birth of Dionysus among the flames that the lightning bolt has unleashed. The multiplication of female figures could allude to or inspire the chorus of some of these tragedies, the chorus of water carriers, for example. In any case, whatever the moment represented in this scene is, the images from this krater are exceptional, and constitute the only documented South Italian example of the representation of the death of Semele and the subsequent events connected to her death and Dionysus' infancy.

The differences with the Attic scene are evident. On the hydria there are persons who are not depicted on the South Italian krater – Zeus, Aphrodite, and Eros, who, through their presence, sanction Zeus' love for the mortal woman, Iris. This presence is bewildering, as it is unprecedented in texts or images of this episode. Also present are Hera and, most importantly, Hermes, Dionysus' savior, who will take him to his father, and who in the Apulian krater appears in the lower scene. However, there are some points of contact that could suggest a single source of inspiration for the two images. The cave that is created by the branches above Semele's bed, branches which are brought forth by the immediate birth of the god, could allude to the epiphanic action described by Euripides, or to the cave made of foliage generated to protect the god from destruction. And while the scene is described as taking place in the middle of nature, it could take

place in the Cadmus Palace, as in the lower scene of the Apulian krater. The presence of Hermes in this episode –unrelated to the delivery of the child to the nymphs of Nysa after his second birth, although alluded to in the figure of the nymph, is also quite revealing–. The krater by the Arpi Painter appears to depict in two scenes what the Attic hydria represents –the death of Semele and the rescue of the child-god by Hermes to facilitate his second gestation–.

Another debatable question is the existence of possible Orphic connotations in the Apulian image. Todisco[9] maintains that Dionysus is represented here as the Zagreus god of the Orphics who dies torn apart by Titans –the immediacy of this event is shown by the ball held by one of the nymphs–, is reborn, and saves his followers and his mother Semele from eternal darkness. Semele, whose complete nakedness was shared simultaneously by the force of Eros and the maternal burden of Gaia, was assimilated with Thyone, whose death and subsequent *anabasis* from Hades by her son raised hopes of rebirth and salvation. If it is indeed the Orphic Zagreus, his mother would be Persephone[10]; after his first birth he would have been torn apart by Titans, his heart saved and, according to the Orphic version of the *Rhapsodies* or its sources[11], swallowed by Semele, who would gestate him again until he was struck by Zeus' lightning rod, and afterwards the pregnancy would be culminated in his father's thigh. If this were the case, Dionysus would already have been torn apart by Titans, which is alluded to, according to Todisco, by the ball in the hands of the nymphs[12]. However, if the Painter followed another Orphic tradition, this scene would represent the first birth, Zagreus as the son of Semele, who was then torn apart by the Titans after his second birth from the thigh of Zeus and returned to life –his third birth– from the

[9] Todisco 2008, p. 47.

[10] An Attic pelike of the 4th century shows Persephone handing to Hermes the newborn Dionysus Zagreus: *ARV*2, 1476, 1; Simon 1966, pp. 82-83, pl. 18-19. However, cf. Kossatz-Deismann 1990b, p. 207 who proposes other Reading of this base: Gea or Kore would be receiving the infant from Hermes.

[11] Bernabé 1998, pp. 29-40, p. 32 ff; Bernabé, forthcoming.

[12] The ball, or perhaps wool roll, may not allude to the toy with which the Titans distracted Dionysus, but to the the female status as *nymphé*: it is an element always associated to women in South-Italian iconography, as a symbol of their work and of the trousseau that is part of their dowry, or of the games of women in initiatory pre-nuptial rituals.

union of the dismembered remains[13]. It is difficult to determine whether the image represents the Orphic Zagreus or the Dionysus of the myth and the Dionysian religion in general; however, the funerary function of the vase imposes the incorporation of an eschatological (and, logically, redemptive) reading of the scene depicting the death of Semele and the miraculous power of the child-god, whether specifically Orphic or more broadly Dionysian.

1.2. Dionysus' birth from the thigh of Zeus

The second birth of Dionysus, after his gestation in Zeus' thigh of, is the theme of a volute krater from Taranto[14], from the end of the 5th century BC. It is the work of an Apulian painter who is named precisely for the scene that decorates this vase: The Painter of the Birth of Dionysus. The center of the scene is occupied by the seated figure of Zeus, from whose thigh the child Dionysus emerges. Dionysus is crowned with ivy and his hands extend towards a goddess holding a scepter, called by Trendall Hera Eileithyia[15]. The importance of the central group is emphasized by inscriptions that identify Zeus and Dionysus. Grouped together at a slightly higher level are Eros and Aphrodite, Pan, Apollo, and Artemis, and at a lower level there are three women (who, according to Trendall, are the Moirae[16]), Hermes, and a satyr, who seems to be leaning backwards with a gesture of astonishment.

This theme, rarely depicted in Attic vases[17], is unique in South Italian iconography, as it is only known in this vase and a second one that is now lost. The choice made by the Apulian painter reinforces the impression that there is a very close connection with contemporary Attic painters, especially with the Kadmos Painter, a connection that is perceived in other stylistic and iconographic details used by this painter[18]. The arrangement used by the painter to depict the scene of the birth of Dionysus –Zeus,

[13] This is the so-called Egyptian-influenced version: cf. Bernabé 1998, pp. 36-38.

[14] Trendall 1934, pp. 175-179; Trendall 1974, p. 53, n. 166, pl. 31; Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* I, 2/6; Gasparri 1986, p. 478, n. 667.

[15] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, p. 33.

[16] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, p. 33.

[17] The theme is represented for the first time in an Attic lekythos dated between 460 and 450 BC: ARV2, 533, 58; Gasparri, 1986, p. 478, n. 666. See also the fragment in Bonn (note 38). Cf. Díez Platas 2013, and chapter 3.3.2.

[18] Mugione 2005, pp. 175-186, p. 176.

seated, from whose leg the figure of a child arises in mid-torso, crowned with ivy, who extends his arms towards a female figure – is very similar to the one represented in a fragment of the Attic Krater by the Dinos Painter of Athens, preserved in Bonn[19]. The Painter of the Birth of Dionysus' production includes a selection of themes and arrangements that share many similarities with those produced by the workshop of the Kadmos Painter, and which appear to have appealed to an elite clientele in Taranto, Ruvo, and the Adriatic Etruria[20].

The Painter of the Birth of Dionysus depicts the birth of the god with a grandiose composition which includes several Olympic gods who are closely linked with Dionysus, such as Apollo, Aphrodite, Eros, and Pan, along with members of his future *thiasos*. This scene draws attention to the identity of the central female figure, who has an active and seemingly protective role. If she is Hera, as identified by Trendall, and not Eileithyia, come to pick up the newborn, as proposed by Gasparri[21], her intentions are unknown. It is more logical to identify the figure as Eileithyia, the goddess who protects childbirth and acts as midwife and protector of newborns, although in images from the classical period she no longer held the importance she occupied during the Archaic period. In the Attic vases her presence is only noted in the birth of Dionysus in the Bonn fragment[22]. In South Italian vases her presence is doubtful. In the Taranto krater, the goddess carries a scepter, which is typical of Zeus' wife and not of a goddess who is a midwife, even though that is her role in this scene[23].

The three female figures located in the lower area of the scene, together with Hermes, could be the nymphs of Nysa (although this contradicts Trendall's identification). This group of figures could be awaiting the delivery of the child, or might simply be an allusion to later events during Dionysus' childhood in Nysa. The image would therefore fuse two places, Olympus and Nysa, and two mythological time periods.

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[19] *ARV*2, 796, 3. Trendall 1934, p. 176, fig. 1.

[20] Mugione 2005, p. 177.

[21] Gasparri, 1986, p. 478, n. 667.

[22] Cf. note 38

[23] Olmos, 1986, p. 692, n. 72, who also identifies her as Hera.

Figure 2. Amphora from Naples (now lost). Cf. R. Olmos «Eileithyia», *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. III, p. 692, pl. 71.

The second vase that narrates the birth of Dionysus is an amphora from Naples (Figure 2), now lost, of which a schematic drawing remains[24]. The scene is made up of two planes; in the upper center is Zeus, seated on his throne. From his thigh arises the child Dionysus, who extends his arms, in his characteristic appearance, towards a woman. Here, the goddess has no scepter, but a cloth rolled around her arm, which seems very suitable for the midwife who is going to pick up the child. The problem is in the naming of this figure, as it could be Eileithyia or one of the nymphs of Nysa[25]. What is truly unique in the image from the Naples vase is the group of figures that attends the birth, which both seems and does not seem to take place on Olympus. In the lower plane, on what appears to be a rocky landscape, three women are represented. Two of them hold thyrsus in their hands, one rests on a *tympanum*, and the third raises a torch. They are, evidently, maenads. Behind Zeus' throne, and from what can be perceived in the drawing, a naked young man and a woman resting her arm on his

[24] Lenormant ap. Witte and Lenormant 1880, pp. 72-73; Trendall 1934, p. 176, n. 3, rated by the author as South-Italian; Olmos, 1986, p. 692, n. 71.

[25] Olmos 1986, p. 692, n. 71, acknowledges the same doubt.

shoulder contemplate the scene. Both appear to carry thyrsus, and therefore they are identified as members of the *thiasos*. But who is the young man? He cannot be a god, such as Apollo, for example, who is never represented with a thyrsus or with short hair; he must be a mortal, possibly a Bacchos, a *mystes*, who, already a part of the Dionysian *thiasos*, is present at the birth of the god. Temporal or spatial logic is not sought in these images. The message or doctrine that is transmitted and the ambiguities of the image that facilitate their meaning is the miraculous birth of the god, a birth that enabled the final liberation of mankind, his or her access to an otherworldly life, both beatific and eternal.

1.3. The god's delivery to the nymphs of Nysa

The representation of Dionysus' childhood as imagery dissociated from that of his second birth was more widely accepted in the iconography of South Italy, although this imagery never reached the frequency or popularity of the other scenes from the divine biography, or undoubtedly that of the representation of the *thiasos* or «the Dionysian».

South Italian imagery follows the Attic tradition very closely. In Athens[26], the first representations of Dionysus' childhood appeared shortly before the middle of the 5th century BC At times, it is Zeus himself who gives his son to the nymphs, although by 460 BC, Hermes appears as the intermediary, taking Dionysus to the nymphs or the Silenoi[27]. Soon a new motif appeared: Hermes makes a stop on his way and contemplates, with his head bowed low, the child who has been entrusted to his care, or plays with him, a scene of intimacy that in the 4th century would be represented in the Olympian Group by Praxiteles.

This is the attitude of Hermes, absorbed in the contemplation of the child-god, in a fragment of the Apulian krater (Figure 3), attributed to the Black Fury Group[28], dated between 390 and 380 BC. The fragment shows the moment of the delivery: Hermes, on the left and in profile, supporting his left leg on the head of a satyr, holds in one hand the caduceus and in his other hand, the child. The child is seated on Hermes' arm, but turns his body and extends his arms towards another figure. He is naked to the waist and wears a white conical cap, used as a child's cap in other Apulian rep-

[26] Gasparri 1986, pp. 505-506.

[27] Concerning the emergence of this theme in Attic iconography a close relation to theater has been proposed: Kossatz-Deissmann 1990b, p. 206.

[28] Kossatz-Deissmann 1990b, Tf. 34. 1

resentations, and in his hand he holds a branch, perhaps of ivy. Both his hands are open to grab onto the person who receives him, a nymph of Nysa. The action takes place in the middle of nature, possibly in a sacred enclosure, which in other images is marked with an altar.

Figure 3 Apulian krater attributed to the Black Fury Group.
(Kossatz-Deissmann 1990b, Tf. 34. 1.).

This is the landscape represented on the proto-Sicilian amphora of Palermo by the Painter of Locri[29]. Hermes, with the child in his arms, heads towards a woman, who is clearly meant to depict a maenad, because she holds in her hands a thyrsus and a panther while extending her arms to receive the god. Behind Hermes are a maenad and a satyr. An altar, situated between the first maenad and Hermes, synthesizes the sanctuary space, a place in the middle of nature, consecrated by the divine presence. A small fragment from a Sicilian skyphos by the Lentini-Manfria Group[30]

[29] Reinach 1889, Monum IX, p. 122, pl. X; Kossatz-Deissmann 1990b, Tf. 35, 1.
[30] Kossatz-Deissmann 1990b, Tf. 34, 2.

completes this meager group of South Italian images of the delivery of the child Dionysus to the nymphs.

There is an image on a fragment from a Lucanian skyphos that Trendall[31] interprets as «the child Dionysus being taken by Hermes». However, here, Hermes does not hold the child in his arms, as in the scenes of the child's delivery to the nymphs described above. The child is at a lower level than the messenger god, possible held by another figure that has not been preserved. This scene recalls the Attic images to a great extent.

A Lucanian lekythos[32] offers an unprecedented, unique view of the nymph's care of Dionysus: the boy god, with small horns on his forehead, is breastfed by one of the nymphs. In the same scene, Eros flies above with a dove in his hand and a youth, standing with a palm frond and a lekythos in his hand, contemplates the scene; a thyrsus adorned with ribbons and a panther help to highlight the Dionysian setting. This breastfeeding scene is unique, and has allowed Cassimatis[33] to propose a connection between the image and the Orphic formulas found on the tablets of Pelinna and Thurii that mention the animal (bull, ram), fallen into milk: the woman who breastfeeds would be Persephone, the youth a *mystes*, probably the deceased, and Eros the symbol of the rebirth of a blessed life. In any case, it is not certain that the child can be identified as Dionysus, since other options exist, such as Iacchos, a proposal made in the first publication regarding this vase[34].

2. The confrontation with the *theomachoi*

Images that narrate the confrontation of Dionysus with the famous *theomachoi* can also be found in South Italian red-figure vases. These *hybristai*, full of excess, fundamentally Lycurgus and Pentheus, but also Orpheus, opposed the god upon his return from Asia to Europe and the establishment and propagation of his cult, and were punished with madness, violence, and death. The madness of Lycurgus, the dismemberment of Pentheus, and the death of Orpheus were depicted by the South Italian painters, largely following the Attic narrative and iconographic tradition, but incorporating new details into the representation and meaning of these episodes from the god's mythological biography.

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[31] Trendall 1967, p. 124, n. 639.
[32] Trendall *LCS*, p. 174, n. 1010; Gasparri 1986, p. 481, n. 700.
[33] Cassimatis 2008, p. 61.
[34] Roulez 1865, p. 74.

Lycurgus, King of Thrace, is already mentioned in the *Iliad* (6.130) and in the *Europia* by Eumelus of Corinth (fr. 27 West) as an example of the punishments awaiting those who defy the gods. Lycurgus pursues the child Dionysus, who arrived in his country with his nursemaids, and the god, frightened, dives into the sea and is received by Tetis[35]. It is Zeus who inflicts punishment by blinding him. The tragedians enrich and transform the story. Aeschylus brought the legend to the stage, as did Polyphrasmon before him. In Aeschylus' tetralogy[36] known as *Lycurgeia* –which consisted of three tragedies, *Edoni*, *Bassarids,* and *Youths*, and a satirical drama, *Lycurgus*– Dionysus personally takes charge of his vengeance. When the god wanted to cross Thrace to engage against the Indians, Lycurgus blocked his path and captured the bacchants and satyrs of his retinue. However, the bacchants were miraculously released, and Lycurgus went mad. It is not known what final punishment Aeschylus chose for the haughty king, but in other versions, such as the one by Apollodorus (3.5.1), Lycurgus kills his son Dryas, thinking that he was cutting a branch from the vine. Afterwards, Lycurgus regains his sanity, but his crime causes the soil to be barren and he is condemned, by the will of Dionysus, to be dismembered by horses on Pangaeus Mountain. In later versions, Lycurgus, chasing the *thiasos*, threatened one of the god's nursemaids, Ambrosia, who, transformed into a vine, envelops, imprisons, and drowns the pitiless king.

The first representations of the myth appear in Attica around the middle of the 5th century BC[37] Athenian painters favored the episode which depicts Lycurgus' punishment by madness and culminates with his family's massacre, a subject that met with some success, although it was much more popular in South Italy.

The South Italian images of Lycurgus' madness present various innovations when compared to the Attic ones. First, the victim is not only Dryas but also Lycurgus' wife. Second, in some of the images, Dionysus vanishes in the presence of a figure who is subordinate, but more active: Lyssa, the demon of madness. Instead of punishing his adversary himself, the god acts through an intermediary and only appears in the background, sometimes near Ariadne, distractedly following the action. There is no evidence of Lyssa's involvement in Aeschylus' *Lycurgeia*, but there is evidence in

[35] Bernabé 2013, pp. 54-65; Jiménez San Cristóbal 2013, p. 283.

[36] Herrero de Jáuregui, forthcoming.

[37] Farnoux 1992, pp. 309-319.

another of his works, *Xantriai* (Wool-carders), on Pentheus.[38] Lyssa also appears in Euripides' tragedy *Heracles*, over the palace, before driving the hero mad. Third, in South Italian images, people and gods that originally had nothing to do with the story occasionally appear, such as Apollo and Hermes.

Figure 4. Apulian column-krater by the Painter of London F 57.
Ruvo, Museo Jatta 32.

The first of the two examples known to us in which the direct victim is the son and not the wife of Lycurgus, is an Apulian column-krater by the Painter of London F 57[39] (Figure 4). On the krater, the king is about to kill Dryas with a double ax. Dryas pleads for mercy, hugging the king's knees. A woman runs to the right, dropping her sacrificial tray. The central scene takes place under a schematic portico topped with a pediment. On the pediment, there is a representation of the bust of a female figure with an enveloping mantle on her head, possibly Lyssa. To the left, the grieving figure with a spear and a dog is perhaps a hunting companion of Dryas. According to Taplin[40], in this image there are various features that

[38] Herrero de Jáuregui, forthcoming.

[39] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 267, 50; Farnoux 1992, p. 312, n. 14; Todisco 2003, p. 418, Ap 48, tav. LIX.

[40] Taplin 2007, p. 67. On the theatrical connections of the images of Lycurgus, espe-

allude to its theatrical origin: the representation of Lyssa on the pediment above the aedicule, which reflects her *ex machina* appearance in the tragedy by Aeschylus or another author, and the presence of the grieving figure, possibly an imitation of the figure of the pedagogue or messenger[41] in the play.

The second example is a Lucanian bell krater by the Painter of Sidney[42] in which the king, accompanied by the inscription of his name, is depicted naked and brandishing the double ax. He directs himself towards Dryas, who, naked and kneeling, raises both arms, begging for mercy. A column behind the young man alludes to the palace where these events take place.

However, the majority of South Italian painters choose the queen as the immediate victim of Lycurgus' madness. In an Apulian calyx krater[43] (Figure 5) for which its painter, the Painter of Lycurgus, is named, the scene is divided into two registers, an upper one where the gods appear and a lower one where the human action occurs. The mood that presides over the two registers is quite different: Olympic calm versus violence, tension, and agitation. Of the gods of the upper register, Apollo stands out. Below the god, an altar possibly alludes to an unfinished sacrifice. Hermes is on the right, and on the left, there is a seated god with a spear and a woman who is standing. This scene is unique due to the unexplained presence of Apollo, and above all, because of the absence of Dionysus. In his place, as a kind of transferred representation, is the terrible figure of Lyssa, one of the Furies, surrounded by a radiated nimbus. Her wings and arms are entwined with a serpent, strongly associating her with the Erinyes[44], but her weapon is a stinger. Here, this represents not only Dionysus' vengeance or punishment of through madness, but also the restoration of justice after Lycurgus' wickedness, of his transgressions of divine laws[45]. Although humans and gods are strictly demarcated, the point on Lyssa's weapon is directed towards the king, who looks above before turning and striking his wife the

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cially with Aeschylus' *Edonians*, cf. Trendall and Webster 1971, p. 49.

[41] Todisco 2003, pp. 317-338.

[42] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 128, n. 651; Farnoux 1992, p. 312, n. 13. Todisco 2003, p. 398, L 37, tav. XXXVII.

[43] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 16/5; Farnoux 1992, p. 313, n. 28; Todisco 2003, p. 434, Ap 96, tav. LXXVI.

[44] Aellen 1994, pp. 82-84.

[45] Aellen 1994, p. 185.

final blow. Lycurgus, depicted as usual with his Thracian cap, is about to deliver a second blow with his deadly ax to his unfortunate wife. Dryas is already dead, and two attendants take his body. To the left, a young man appears to reproach Lycurgus and behind him is an old pedagogue. The king has caught his wife by her hair and, she, thrown on the ground, tries ineffectively and tragically to free herself.

Figure 5. Apulian calyx krater Painter of Lycurgus.
London, British Museum F 271.

The gesture of catching someone by the hair is absent in the Attic iconography regarding Lycurgus, but it appears in another South Italian image, a Lucanian volute krater by the Brooklyn-Budapest Painter [46] (Figure 6). In this example, Lycurgus grabs the queen's hair as she lies on the ground, while lifting the ax with which he will strike the deadly blow. Above and to the right, the winged figure of Lyssa, surrounded by

[46] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 114, n. 593, pl. 59, 7; Moret 1975, p. 219, n. 148; Farnoux 1992, p. 313, n. 27. Todisco 2003, p. 393, L 19, tav. XXXII.

a radiated nimbus, threatens the king with her long sting. On the left, a woman holds the inert body of Dryas. At the ends of the scene, a maenad with *tympanum* and a satyr acts as reminders of Lycurgus' sin, which consisted in opposing Dionysus and imprisoning the members of his *thiasos*.

Figure 6. Lucanian volute krater by the Brooklyn-Budapest Painter. Naples, Museo Nazionale H 3237.

The position of the victim is remarkably similar on both vases. The motif of grabbing someone by the hair before killing them has the same origin in both images, and is, in the opinion of Moret,[47] the free adaptation of a painter who finds the idea in contemporary images, and which is present in a great number of similar action scenes, such as the episodes of Hellen and Cassandra.[48]

Lyssa appears in six of the eleven vases that illustrate the madness of Lycurgus. She is represented more often than Dionysus. She is also pres-

[47] Moret 1975, p. 219.

[48] For Moret 1975, p. 238, the description that Orestes himself offers of Clitemnestra's death in Euripides' *Electra* (*El.* 1206-1209) brings automatically to the mind the Italian images of the Lycurgus' madness, with his victim fallen on the ground, her chest naked, and grabbed by the hair. The *aposiopesis* underlines both the avengers' out-of-mind-ness and the atrocity of the deed itself.

ent in a fragment of an Apulian krater by the Lycurgus Painter[49], which only retains part of the figure of Lycurgus, Lyssa, represented in half-length inside the nimbus, and the lower part of the figure of a seated god, accompanied by a female figure, possibly Dionysus and Ariadne. In this example, as in the calyx krater by the same painter and the Lucanian krater by the Brooklyn-Budapest Painter, the painter established direct visual contact between the demon and Lycurgus, who turns towards the Fury, as if he felt her presence. The radiated nimbus highlights the dazzling effect of her epiphany.

The presence of Dionysus is not obligatory in South Italian images. However, when he is represented, he is depicted in two different ways: When he is accompanied by Ariadne, as in the Apulian amphora by the Darius Painter[50], he seems to be present when the action takes place without taking an active part; or he himself may be the one to induce or unleash madness. In an Apulian amphora-loutrophoros by the Underworld Painter[51] (Figure 7), Lycurgus has just slain his wife, with a sword instead of an axe, and she falls, plunging over the king's arm. At his side, Dionysus, with a flowering narthex in his left hand, extends his right hand with a gesture that seems to order the attack on Lyssa, who is on the other side of Lycurgus. The winged demon, with serpents on his forehead, dressed as a Fury, advances a coiled snake towards the king while in his other hand he holds a stinger. In this case, Lyssa is accompanied by a panther, to underline his connection and mission of service to the god. At the far end of the scene, Hermes, who is seated with the caduceus in his hand, contemplates the action.

Dionysus' presence appears to be even more active in the Sicilian krater by the Locri Painter[52] (Figure 8), where the god shakes a bell before Lycurgus, who, dressed as a Thracian, pursues the terrified queen with his double axe while she flees before him[53]. It is not the demon here who disrupts

[49] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 16/29; Farnoux 1992, p. 313, n. 30.

[50] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 18/45; Gasparri 1986, p. 489, n. 798; Moret 1975, n. 105, tav. 90, 1; Todisco 2003, p. 469, Ap. 184, tav. CVII.

[51] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 18/297; Todisco 2003, p. 483, Ap 220, tav. CXVI.

[52] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 74, n. 374; Gasparri 1986, p. 489, n. 797.

[53] The little bell was present in the previous image of the Underworld Painter, hanging from Dionysus' *narthex* and in the hand of a maenad who follows the god, but is not used actively by any of the two characters.

the mind of the story's main character, but a musical instrument, the bell, which, shaken by the god, unleashes madness[54]. This instrument with a jarring, rhythmic, and perhaps frantic sound can unleash madness, just as the *tympanum* and cymbals induce an ecstatic trance among the participants of the *thiasos*[55]. This image is particularly unique because, in addition to the use of a bell as an instrument of madness, it is the only South Italian imagery in which the queen remains standing, fleeing before Lycurgus, even though there is no altar or statue when she can find refuge.

Figure 7. Apulian amphora-loutrophoros by the Underworld Painter. Munich, Staatliche antikensammlungen.

A new variation in the iconography of the Lycurgian myth, without any Attic antecedents, is the Apulian amphora by the Darius Painter[56] (Figure 9). This piece depicts Lycurgus, in the upper section and in the midst of a frenzied dance of the bacchae, about to strike his wife with an axe. Lyssa,

[54] Villing 2005, p. 379 points out that bells, instruments used as signals as they are, may be used in Dionysiac cult perhaps as a sign produced by the *mystai* from a blessed afterlife.

[55] Bells shaken in the hands of an ecstatic Dionysus who runs accompanied by Pappositenus, Eros, and a maenad, in a krater from Paestum in the Louvre: Denoyelle 2011, pp. 70-71, n. 8.

[56] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/45; Gasparri 1986, p. 489, n. 798; Moret 1975, n. 105, tav. 90, 1; Todisco 2033, p. 469, Ap. 184, tav. CVII.

this time without wings, has again become Dionysus' agent: from the other side of the scene, with his stinger crossed on his chest, about to strike his victim with it, he has driven the king mad by waving a snake rolled on his arm. The most decisive and innovative iconography features the queen, who has fled from the murderous insanity of her husband and taken refuge next to the statue of a goddess, who is raised on a pedestal, and whom she embraces while extending her arm in supplication before the king. A young man tries to contain Lycurgus' homicidal fury and seizes him strongly by the chest, but to no avail. Dionysus and Ariadne, seated to the extreme right of the scene, contemplate the massacre impassively. The action takes place immediately following the celebration of a sacrifice, which is suggested by the remains of the sacrificial victim that cover the soil. The altar that is present in the calyx krater by the Lycurgus Painter (Figure 5) alludes more directly to this moment, adding to the scene, as in the amphora by the Darius Painter (Figure 9), a sacrilegious component alongside the homicidal action of Lycurgus. Both instances of madness provoked by the god are represented here: the ecstatic and blissful madness of the maenads and the homicidal, sacrilegious, fatal madness of the *hybristes*. Everything is agitation, movement, and horror on the human level and serenity and calm on the divine plane.

Figure 8. Sicilian krater by the Locri Painter. Reggio Calabria, Museo Nazionale 5013

Figure 9. Apulian amphora by the Darius Painter. Naples, Museo Nazionale 81.953 (H 3219).

The motif of the supplicant who runs towards an unidentified divine statue to take refuge is not typical of the Lycurgian iconography, although it was enormously popular in other South Italian imagery, especially that which depicted the rape of Cassandra and the meeting between Hellen and Menelaus[57]. This painter found the entire motif, statue and supplicant, and inserted it in a context that is foreign to the story and to the iconographic tradition.

As has been mentioned, the images that depict the story of Lycurgus in the south of Italy contribute important innovations regarding the Attic tradition. The queen's murder, the presence of Lyssa, the passivity of Dionysus, or, better yet, his active participation with a musical instrument of strange function, the presence of other gods foreign to the story, and the inclusion of iconographic details, such as the flight and refuge of the victim before a statue, or the grabbing by the hair, extracted from other compositions and other stories, are innovative iconographies that contribute new expressions and feelings to the figure of the *hybristes* and the power of Dionysus.

Some have assumed that these new traits come from the theater, that the South Italian vases faithfully reflect Aeschylus' *Lycurgeia*[58]. Others think there was a new tragedy consecrated to Lycurgus, whose memory is retained in the Magno-Graecian iconography, composed after Euripides

[57] Moret 1975, pp. 9-42.
[58] Séchan 1926, p. 76.

following the model of his *Herakles*[59], since the Italian imagery of Lycurgus' madness strangely recalls the story of his death included in that tragedy (vv. 922-1015). However, it is possible that the painters themselves made the transposition, «enriching» the myth with foreign elements, taken from the parallel legend[60].

2.2. Pentheus

The legend of Dionysus and Pentheus, King of Thebes, is known especially through *Bacchae*, Euripides' horrific and devastating tragedy. This is the first preserved literary testimony of the myth and the one that narrates it most extensively[61]. According to the synthesized narrative of Apollodorus (3.5.2), Dionysus «arrived in Thebes and forced the women to surrender to the Bacchian delirium in the Kiteron, abandoning their homes. Pentheus, son of Agave and Echion, who had received the Kingdom of Cadmus, attempted to oppose these events and went to Kiteron to spy on the Bacchae, but was destroyed by his mother Agave, who had plunged into madness, because she thought he was an animal». The narrative of the events is clearly much richer and more complex in *Bacchae* and must also have been in Aeschylus' tragedy, *Pentheus*.[62]

The story of how Pentheus rejected Dionysus when the god arrived in his hometown of Thebes, and his consequent dismemberment (*sparagmós*) by the Bacchae in the Kiteron, was quite popular among the vase painters. The ten Attic images from the story, which normally depicted the horrendous *sparagmós*, predated Euripides' tragedy[63]. South Italian painters, however, did not choose the moment in which the dismemberment occurs, or when each of the maenads runs away with a part of the unfortunate Pentheus, but another moment that takes place prior to the myth –visually less terrible– when he is discovered or when the attack begins. This is the main innovation of the Magno-Greek painters: the transformation of the already-torn-apart hero from Attic imagery into a

[59] Marbach, 1927, col. 2434.

[60] Moret 1975, p. 243. In his opinion, South Italian painters proceeded as Euripides had done, but in an inverse sense. While the poet had retold Heracles' legend on the model of Lycurgus, painters would have created a new iconography of Lycurgus inspired in Euripides *Heracles*.

[61] Macías Otero 2020.

[62] Herrero de Jáuregui, forthcoming.

[63] Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, pp. 306-317, n. 1, 24, 25, 39-44, 65.

person who resists, defends himself, and counterattacks, although tragically without hope.

Normally, Pentheus is represented as a youth, in heroic nudity, with a chlamys over his shoulders, sometimes covered with a conical helmet, the *pilos*, and carrying spear and sword. The confrontation takes place in a wild, rocky, and wooded landscape, described with the proverbial economy of signs used by the vase painters, by means of lines of white dots, a stacking of small rocks, and a tree. In an Apulian hydria from the circle of the Ilioupersis Painter[64] (Figure 10), Pentheus, naked, with *pilos* and chlamys rolled up on his arm, his sword in hand, crouches, ambushed between two trees; the maenads have already discovered him and move towards him with swords, while one of them is still immersed in the madness of the *sparagmós* of an animal victim.

There were not many maenads, two or three in most cases, sometimes four, and they attack Pentheus with their thyrsus, although on occasions, they use swords. This is how they are represented in an Apulian patera by the Oxford Group 269[65] (Figure 11), and in an Apulian oinochoe by the circle of the Ilioupersis Painter[66]. They are scenes of great simplicity, in which the young king still remains standing, carrying two spears over his shoulder, and defending himself with a sword.

Figure 10. Apulian hydria from the circle of the Ilioupersis Painter. Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen 3267 (J 807)

[64] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 8/105; Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 2; Todisco 2003, p. 426, Ap 76, tav. LXX.

[65] Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 10; Todisco 2003, p. 430, Ap 88, tav. LXXIII.

[66] Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 9.

Figure 11. Apulian patera by the Oxford Group 269. Ruvo Museo Jatta J 1617

In an Apulian calyx krater from Spina[67] (Figure 12), two maenads attack the young Theban king with their thyrsus. Pentheus, on bended knee, tries to pull his sword from under his mantle which is rolled over his arm in order to defend himself. One of the maenads grabs Pentheus by his helmet, subduing him and mimicking the «grabbing by the hair» gesture, a conventional gesture adopted by the Attic and South Italian painters in various narrative contexts to indicate the homicidal intent of the assailant (cf. images of Lycurgus killing the queen)[68]. Pentheus' kneeling position is also an iconographic convention that is applied in much the same way in other narrative contexts, especially the purification of Orestes at Delphi[69]. Dionysus, seated at the right, and a young satyr to the left observe the scene. With a hand gesture, the god points to the impious and appears to give his maenads the order of attack. A schematic tree in the center, behind the figure of Pentheus, situates the scene at Mount Kiteron.

[67] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 7/111; Gasparri 1986, p. 489, n. 794; Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 6; Moret 1975, n. 50, pl. 58, 2.

[68] Moret 1975, pp. 212-13. Moret points out that it was the Meidias Painter who introduced the gesture of grabbing by the hair, and asks whether the difference observed between the icongraphy of the 5th cent. BC and of the 4th cent. BC may correspond to a transformation of myth that would be manifest in the literary level. In the *Bacchai sparagmos* begins by the left arm, and it is Pentheus himself who takes out his headdress to make himself known (in vain) to his mother. By contrast, in Theocritus (26.20-25) Agave takes Pentheus' head in her hands, as in the Italian images.

[69] Moret 1975, p. 107.

Figure 12. Apulian calyx krater from Spina. Ferrara, Museo Nazionale 20482

Both gestures, the kneeling position and grabbing someone by the hair, come together in the image on the Campania amphora by the Aegisthus Group[70], where the size of the decorative field only allows for the presence of one maenad hitting Pentheus with her thyrsus. Very similar to this is the scene on an Apulian patera by the Ilioupersis Painter[71] (Figure 13), in which Pentheus, with his right knee resting on rocky ground, at the foot of a tree, wields a spear with which he attempts to defend himself. Two maenads with spears at either end of the scene approach him, while a third maenad grabs the spear which Pentheus holds. The movement of the bacchants, with their rippling clothing, the head of one of them thrown backwards, and with their nebris unfolded, is infected with divine *mania*, a force which is necessary to later commence the *sparagmós*. It has been sug-

[70] Moret 1975, p. 114, note 6; Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 15.

[71] Moret 1975, n. 51, pl. 59; Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 7; Todisco 2003, p. 426, Ap 74, tav. LXIX.

gested that when they appear as three, these bacchants can be identified as the daughters of Cadmus: Agave, Ino, and Autonoe[72].

Figure 13. Apulian patera by the Ilioupersis Painter. Naples, Museo Nazionale 82039 (H 2562).

Pentheus' kneeling position is repeated in an Apulian situla by the Painter of the Dublin Situlae[73]. Two maenads, one with a sword, another with a thyrsus, attack the young man. What is remarkable about this scene is the presence –in a prominent place, and on a higher plane– of Dionysus and Ariadne, who are seated; Ariadne is holding a thyrsus and the god a jar. They seem completely oblivious to the scene that is taking place on the lower level, as their glance is directed at the small figure of Pan, who approaches them holding a situla in his hands as if he were preparing the divine banquet. On the right, Eros appears, flying with a tray of fruits, ribbons, and an alabastron in his hands, illustrating the nuptial gifts and the celebration of the hierogamy (cf. cap.II.6.2). It seems as if the painter wanted to synthesize two messages in one image: the celebration of the union with the god that leads to mystical bliss on the one hand, and on the other the punishment that awaits those who oppose such rites, blessed immortality versus death.

This mixture of festive atmosphere and tragic action is reflected in a fragment of an Apulian volute krater by the Painter of the Dublin Situlae[74],

[72] Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 317.

[73] Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 12; Cambitoglou 2006, p. 100, n. 21.

[74] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* I, 15/34; Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 11.

where the banquet krater lies at the feet of Dionysus and Ariadne, and in an Apulian volute krater by the Baltimore Painter[75] (Figure 14). Here, in a flowering and rocky landscape, the Bacchants and a satyr holding thyrsus, *tympana*, and situla flock to meet the god, who is standing on the left side of the scene. Next to him is a *thymiaterion* where incense burns. In the center, Pentheus, who is naked, tries to defend himself with a sword from the attack by the two maenads, one of whom grabs his hair while threatening him with a thyrsus, and the other grabs him by the arm and attacks him with a lit torch. It seems as if the King of Thebes has burst into the midst of the feast of Dionysus and his *thiasos*. A Nike flies to crown the god, indicating that the death of Pentheus at the hands of his bacchants –and here also a satyr who wields a sword– is his victory.

Figure 14. Apulian volute krater by the Baltimore Painter. Basel, Gal. Palladion.

As in the case of the images of Lycurgus, the South Italian painters sometimes included a Fury when the subject of their work was Pentheus. An example is a fragment of an Apulian vase, now lost[76], in which the preserved scene depicted two levels: in the lower level, the figure of Pentheus is retained, and he is identified by an inscription; he is armed with spears and behind him is a maenad who raises a *tympanum* on high. In the upper level, the only figure preserved is the lower part of a Fury, seated and dressed in a short tunic, with a serpent coiled around her arm, and who

[75] Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 16.
[76] Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 13.

has been identified as Lyssa[77]. The demon, sent by the god himself or as his dramatic substitute, would have unleashed a maenadic madness, and would have acted as Dionysus' agent to carry out, by way of the bacchants, the punishment of the sacrilegious, a similar role that it would seem he played in Aeschylus's *Wool-carders* directing the chorus of the maenads[78].

In all the images explored thus far, Pentheus appears naked and armed, never disguised as a woman, as in Euripides' version. It has been suggested that these images illustrate an older version of the myth, the confrontation between Pentheus and Dionysus in combat, of which some traces can be found in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* (25-26) and in Euripides' *Bacchae*, as spoken by Dionysus[79]:

> And in the event that the city of the Thebans attempts to bring my bacchants from the mountain, with anger by the force of arms, I will join my maenads and I will command them as their general (E. *Ba*. 50-52).

Euripides' tragedy repeatedly invokes and refers to what was possibly the common version of the myth, in which Pentheus left to openly attack the maenads with military force. Euripides did so to accentuate the novelty and distinctiveness of his revision of the story. Pentheus' disguise is, therefore, essential in the Euripides' version.

This version by Euripides is possibly the model for two Apulian images. The first is that of an Apulian patera by the Thyrsus Painter[80], in which three maenads occupy the entire scene on one side, and on the other, there is a *tympanum* leaning against a tree. The central figure, unlike the other two figures that approach her, wears a short tunic, covered with a nebris, and she also wears boots. The other two figures, wearing long chitons and barefoot, are clearly attacking, one with a thyrsus and the other with a tree branch. The difference in clothing, and in their attitude, are the elements that make it possible to distinguish the central figure and identify it as Pentheus, cross-dressed as a maenad. The second, more dubious image is that from an Apulian bell krater[81] (Figure 15) in which, to the left of the scene, there is a seated figure with short hair but dressed in a chiton that reaches

[77] Kossatz-Deissmann, 1992a, p. 326, n. 17
[78] Herrero de Jáuregui, forthcoming.
[79] Macías Otero, 2020.
[80] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 10/190; Taplin 2007, p. 156.
[81] Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 3; Todisco, 2003, p. 410, Ap 19, tav. L.

the floor, and who carries a large tree branch on his shoulder. Two female figures approach from behind with swords in their arms. The figure on the left has been identified as Pentheus[82], possibly in the moment he is discovered by the maenads. In *Bacchae*, Pentheus hides at the top of a pine tree, which the women who are possessed take down, along with their prey. Although this is a detail that the painters do not reflect faithfully, they possibly allude to it by depicting the tree or tree branch that Pentheus holds. The decisive element used to identify this piece as following the Euripidean model is not the pine tree, but Pentheus' disguise.

Figure 15. Apulian bell krater. Lecce, Mus. 638.

The South Italian painters also narrate the final outcome of Pentheus' tragic story. In a Sicilian skyphos[83] (Figure 16), two maenads are seen walking, one with a thyrsus and her head thrown back in an ecstatic trance; the second, possibly Agave, carries a sword in one hand and Pentheus'

[82] Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 3. By contrast, Todisco 2003, p. 410, Ap 19, identifies as Pentheus the second female figure on the right drawing a sword. If it is the case, we do not know why the painter follows the model of the *Bacchai* for Pentheus' travestism, but does not show him defenseless, and uses another iconographic tradition to represent him armed with a sword.

[83] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 199, n. 14; Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 45; Todisco 2003, p. 493, S 1, tav. CXXV.

head in the other. In a fragment from the Apulian hydria by the Circle of the Birth of Dionysus Painter[84], the god and his entourage of bacchants celebrate the triumph over the *theomachos*. Dionysus drives a chariot pulled by deer, preceded by two maenads. One of them, Agave, with eyes bulging from her sockets, possessed by divine frenzy, runs with a sword in one hand while the other hand raised on high would seem to hold –precisely that area is missing in the preserved fragment– the head of her son.

Figure 16. Sicilian skyphos. Boston , MFA 03.824.

2.3. Orpheus

The inclusion of a third *hybristes,* Orpheus, is problematic, since the connection with Dionysus is given only by the narrative of his death at the hands of the Thracian women in Aeschylus' tetralogy about Lycurgus and by the characterization of the maenads as his assassins. The topic is presented for the first time in *Bassarids*, where it is told that Orpheus was dismembered by the Bassarids as punishment by Dionysus for having neglected his cult, or for having renounced the god, and honored Heli-

[84] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 2/21; Bazant and Berger-Doer 1992, p. 308, n. 67; Todisco 2003, p. 410, Ap. 18, tav. L.

os-Apollo[85]. However, there were many other versions of his death that did not specifically link him to Dionysus[86], and it is not known which of these was the source used by both Attic and South Italian painters.

The images of the episodes of Orpheus' death appeared first in Athens in the workshop of the Brygos Painter, before appearing in literature. Of all of his life's adventures, this one is of particular interest to the painters of the period from 490-480 to the decade 430-420 BC. These painters did not represent his dismemberment but rather his death by means of diverse instruments. The topic survived, slightly modified, in South Italian painting of the 4th century BC

As occurs with the figure of Pentheus, in South Italian imagery Orpheus strongly resists when confronted with the maenads' attack, emphasizing in this way the heroic tone of the scene and of the individual, who is, nonetheless, powerless against the homicidal, although sacred, madness of his attackers. On an Apulian calyx krater from Taranto (Figure 17) by the Painter of Athens 1714[87], Orpheus occupies the center of the scene. Consistent with the process of 'barbarization' of non-Greek heroes, he is dressed in the Eastern fashion, his head covered by a tiara. His attire is practically identical to what he wears in an Apulian skyphos by the Black Fury Group[88]. In the Taranto krater, his position, with his knee resting on a pile of pebbles and his right leg extended back, is that of a supplicant kneeling at the altar, an innovation with respect to the iconographic tradition of Attica, where the hero, in flight, attempts in vain to escape from his persecutors, or collapses when reached by the furious women. The persecution theme is abandoned by the South Italian painters, the inevitable consequence of the adoption of the type known as «kneeling», following the model of Orestes in Delphos or Actaeon[89]. At least five bacchants form a circle around him, similar to the pack of dogs that will destroy Actaeon, and they wield swords and stingers as spears. The hero appears to use his lyre as a means of defense, as in the skyphos by the Black Fury Group. Orpheus raises the lyre above his head and holds a pebble in his right hand that he prepares to fling at his enemies. It was not possible to give the Thra-

[85] Herrero de Jáuregui, forthcoming; Tortorelli Ghidini 2013, pp. 149 ff.
[86] Garezou 1994, p. 82.
[87] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* I, 8/150; Moret, 1975, p. 113, n. 49; Garezou 1994, p. 87, n. 63.
[88] Garezou 1994 p. 87, n. 61.
[89] Moret 1975, p. 113.

cian poet a real weapon, hence the use of a natural instrument of defense. Although perhaps his action should be interpreted differently: he tries to safeguard his most prized possession, the instrument of his sacred office.

Figure 17. Apulian calyx krater by the Painter of Athens 1714. Taranto, Museo Nazionale 52.407.

This Orpheus who strikes back constitutes such an iconographic novelty that some scholars suggest there was an influence of parallel motifs. Additionally, it appears that the imagery of the supplicant kneeling before the altar –which had already been employed with Lycurgus and Pentheus, and that is represented here by a regularly stacked pile of pebbles– was adapted to this episode. Also, this image reproduces, and combines with the above imagery, the 'grabbing by the hair' motif, in this case by Orpheus' tiara, which has been observed in the images of Lycurgus and Pentheus.[90] In Attic iconography, Thracian women generally pierce the fugitive with their weapons, without seeking to immobilize him. If, as an exception, the women place their hands on him, it is only to grab his arm or his shoulder, or his lyre, but rarely his hair. In the Taranto krater, Orpheus' resistance bestows an element of combat on the episode, and the gesture is explained not so much by referencing its Attic antecedents but by analogy with the other Apulian images of the same type.

[90] Moret 1975, p. 113.

The third image of the death of Orpheus is that of the Apulian calyx krater from Amsterdam, also by the Black Fury Group[91]. Here, Orpheus, in the center of a landscape abundant in shrubs and plants, defends himself boldly from the attack of the furious women. He does not kneel, although his right leg is flexed and one foot is significantly higher than the other, betraying the influence of the imagery of the kneeling supplicant, which was so popular in the images of South Italy. He defends his kithara, which was grabbed from one of his arms by a maenad with the object of tearing it from him. The attack is not solely directed against him, but also against the instrument that accompanies the song denying Dionysus. An angry maenad is set to pierce the poet with her sword while a frightened fawn flees from the tumultuous violence unleashed in the forest where, perhaps, moments before, Orpheus had seduced and calmed the natural world with his song.

3. Dionysus in the Gigantomachy

While Dionysus had been a regular participant, and the most popular figure in the struggle between the gods and the Giants in Attic iconography from the beginning of the subject's representation[92], there is hardly a place for him in the vase painting of Magna Graecia depicting this fight between Olympic forces and the children of Gaia. This subject, with or without Dionysus' participation, did not enjoy popularity in South Italy[93]. Other aspects of Dionysus' divine life were more interesting than his confirming, through his participation in the Gigantomachy, his membership in the Olympian realm, such as the hegemony of Zeus and the triumph of order over chaos, or transmitting the idea of a Dionysus who guaranteed cosmic order, and therefore harmony and continuity[94]. His victory over the Giants was not a singular and specific demonstration of the god's power, such as the one he revealed in his confrontation with the *teomachoi*, against those who wished to oppose him and the establishment of his rites and worships.

South Italian vases that depict Dionysus in the Gigantomachy are mostly Apulian and closely follow the compositional and iconographic guidelines created in Athens by the painters there, and especially, by the

[91] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 7/22; Garezou 1994, p. 87, n. 60.

[92] Carpenter 1997, p. 16; for the archaic images, cf. Díez Platas 2013, pp. 334-338.

[93] Of the fifteen instances collected by Vian 1988, pp. 234-236, n. 389-403, the god is present only in three vases: n. 389, 392 and 397.

[94] Isler-Kerenyi 2004, p. 245.

scene painted by Phidias inside the shield of the Parthenos[95]. The first element adopted is the composition in various levels, a design that appeared in Attic painting between 440 and 430 BC, influenced by Polygnotus. There were two compositional variants in Attic images of the Gigantomachy[96]; in the first, gods and Giants face each other in singular combat, usually reserving the highest position for the Olympians, although some, such as Athena and Heracles, are in contact with the Giants. Above, the celestial vault is symbolized by either a crescent moon or by an arch. In the second variant, gods and Giants are separated by the celestial vault, the boundaries of which are marked by Helios and Selene. The Giants climb a rocky terrain and throw projectiles at the gods. Apulian painters adopted the first variant and not the second when painting large vases, especially volute kraters.

Young and beardless Giants predominate in Apulian vases. The painters accent their savagery; most are wearing only a cloak or animal skin that floats on their backs and they fight with stones and rocks, as well as with spears or swords, although, as time passes, traditional weapons tend to disappear. Some implore the victor or attempt to escape while others have their legs cut off in the lower frame, meaning that they were destroyed as they emerged from the earth. The greatest innovation introduced by South Italian painters is that of anguiped Giants coexisting with anthropomorphic and youthful Giants.

It is not known whether the anguiped Giant was a creation of the Attic or South Italian painters. The oldest document is an aryballistic lekythos from Berlin[97], dated between 400 and 375 B.C., which brings together the two types of Giants fighting against Dionysus[98], mounted on a chariot drawn by griffins. It is suggested that the style of this piece confirms that it was created by an Athenian painter, but, in any case, the anguiped Giant was an enormously popular motif in South Italy, and except for the

[95] Carpenter 1997, p. 34; Vian 1988, p. 262.

[96] It has been thought that vase painters were inspired more or less directly by the Gigantomachy painted by Pheidias in the inner shield of the Parthenos, but it is debated whether the painting combined the two types of composition, or only the first or the second one. Cf. Vian 1988, p. 266.

[97] Gasparri 1986, n. 631; Vian 1988, p. 234, n. 389; Gasparri and Vian qualify it as Apulian; however, Simon 1975, p. 42, n. 200, considers it Attic.

[98] Vian 1988, p. 234, n. 389, interprets the second figure that opposes Dionysus as a Giant; Schefold 1984, p. 104, fig. 135, interprets it as Heracles.

lekythos of Berlin, remained unknown in Attic imagery. There was possibly some contamination, or confusion, with the figure of Typhon, who was always represented as a hybrid, with a human upper half and the lower body of a serpent[99]. The anguiped Giant evolved from the anthropomorphs, and received an animal skin; they used weapons such as rocks, tree trunks, clubs, and torches. Also, in imitation of the anthropomorphs, the Giants may have had a shield or sword.

As for Dionysus, his presence in South Italian representations of Gigantomachy is certain in three cases, but the images perfectly document the adaptations of the Attic innovations produced during the second half of the 5th century BC. He is depicted as a beardless youth with long hair, dressed in a short chiton, sometimes covered with pardalis or nebris, wearing leather boots, *embades*, of Thracian origin. He is no longer represented as a hoplite, nor in the characteristic pose of attack of the hoplite[100], and he uses the thyrsus as a weapon to attack the Giants.

On an Apulian volute krater from the Bari Museum, whose painter is closely related to the Lycurgus Painter[101] (Figure 18), to the left and in a rugged, mountainous landscape, Dionysus, wearing a short chiton and a richly embroidered himation with pardalis, his head cinched with a ribbon, attacks a young Giant on his knees with a thyrsus, and grabs him by the hair. The Giant emerges from the earth and defends himself wielding a sword, raising his left arm in front of his head, with a skin coiled on his arm to form a shield. The figure of the kneeling Giant, evidenced in all great Attic Gigantomachy of the late 5th century[102], retained the favor of the Apulian painters in the 4th century. On the other hand, the Giant is «grabbed by the hair» by the god, a gesture we have seen in other scenes of combat or confrontation (Cf. Cap. II.2.). In the archaic Attic iconography of Gigantomachy, gods grab their opponents by the helmet and direct

[99] Touchefeu-Meynier 1987, p. 151; Vian proposes that this collusion took place in Magna Graecia, where the anguiped Giant was conceived, for already in Aeschylus and Pindar Zeus' battle against Typho takes place under the Etna: Vian 1988, p. 253.
[100] Carpenter, 1997, p. 18.
[101] Vian 1951, n. 395, pl. XLVII; Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* I, 16/44; Moret 1975, pl. 60, 2; Gasparri 1986, p. 476, n. 641; Vian 1988, p. 235, n. 392.
[102] Moret 1975, pp. 114-115, pl. 60, 1-2. According to Von Salis 1940, p. 112, the kneeling Giant was already in Phidias' composition in the inner shield of the Parthenos; Schauenburg 1962, p. 57, n. 70, distinguishes an Attic and an Italian tradition, both of which would descend from the Parthenos' shield, but through different intermediaries.

their extended arms towards their adversaries with their attributes to manifest all their power and break the enemy's resistance. When the Giants' appearance changes at the end of the 5th century, this motif reappears in the form of «grabbing by the hair»[103], imagery that, as observed, lends itself to multiple uses in different legendary contexts.

Figure 18. Apulian volute krater closely related to the Lycurgus Painter. Bari, Museo Archeologico 4399.

A satyr with two torches and a feline approach from the right to assist their lord. The participation of components of Dionysus' *thiasos*, either maenads or satyrs, is an ancient motif that has been documented since the beginning of the 5th century BC[104] However, the animal cortege, which was so popular in archaic images, where dogs, lions, panthers, and snakes acted not so much as weapons of the god but as divine «metamorpho-

[103] Moret 1975, pp. 209-210.
[104] Vian 1988, p. 261.

ses», temporal appearances of Dionysus in the form of animals that follow each other during battle and are represented simultaneously[105] disappear in South Italian images, or are reduced to a brief allusion, as in the Bari krater. Here, the animals serve either to assist their lord as living weapons, or as the manifestation of his power of transformation and all that entails. To the right of this scene, Athena and Heracles, in a group symmetrical to that of Dionysus and the satyr, fight a bearded Giant whose legs are fused with the ground, while a lightning bolt strikes the vanquished. This krater's Gigantomachy is simplified,[106] as the powerful figure of Zeus in his chariot and other gods are missing, but the figures of Dionysus, Athena, Heracles, and the defeated Giants perfectly illustrate the violence of this decisive combat and synthesize the entire cosmic turmoil that involved the forces of heaven and earth.

Compared to the brevity of the Bari krater, the monumental composition of the Berlin krater by the Underworld Painter[107] (Figure 19) is distinctive. In the Berlin krater, gods battle Giants in various registers. In the center of the upper register, Zeus' chariot, driven by Nike, presides over the scene. The Father of the gods wields the lightning bolt in his hand. To the left, Poseidon riding on a winged horse shakes his trident. To the right, Aphrodite, with a palm adorned with ribbons, watches as Eros ties the hands of a Giant behind his back. In the central register, Poseidon's opposing Giant raises a rock with his hands. Then Athena wields her spear. At her side, Zeus' opponent lies fallen, his face against the ground, his spear broken. To the right, Hermes confronts a Giant who attacks him with a rock. In the lower register and to the left, Dionysus, represented with a crown, nebris, and endromides, wields a narthex, adorned with ribbons and ending in the point of a spear. He grabs a kneeling Giant by the hair, who fights with a club. By his side, a fallen bearded Giant, his chest bloodied, has dropped his sword and brings his hands to his head. In the center is the

[105] Díez Platas 2013, p. 338.

[106] There is a similarly abbreviated scene in the relief on the medal of a calene cup in the University of Göttingen dated in 180 BC (Gasparri 1986, p. 476, n. 632; Vian 1988, p. 214, n. 79), in which Dionysus, dressed with a short *chiton* and a *himation*, accompanied by a panther, attacks with his thyrsus a naked Giant, armed with shield and sword, in whom the panther sticks its teeth and nails. The position of the kneeling Giant, with the left leg bent, and the right one stretched, repeats a motif very much used by the painters of previous centuries that had already become canonical.

[107] Schauenburg 1984, p. 140; Vian 1988, p. 235, n. 397.

Giant who is fighting Athena and to the right Heracles[108] raises his club against another Giant. Dionysus is not especially prominent. He is one of many gods in that great divine assembly, actively restoring order against the threat posed by the *hybris* of the Children of the Earth; he is a guarantor of cosmic order and justice.

Figure 19. Apulian volute krater by the Underworld Painter.
Berlin, Antikensammlung 1984.44.

Alongside these two canonical versions of Gigantomachia and Dionysus' involvement in the combat, two Apulian vases offer a new perspective on this episode, in which one of the figures has been interpreted as Dionysus. One is an amphora by the Darius Painter preserved in a private collection in Switzerland[109] (Figure 20), and the second is an amphora by the

[108] On the role of Heracles in the Gigantomachy and his function as model, cf. Hoffmann 2002, pp. 133-134.
[109] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 18/49; Lohmann 1986, pp. 150-157, Tf. 27, 1; Aellen 1994, p. 67, n. 45, pl. 55.

same painter preserved in the Hermitage Museum[110]. The two vases are similar. In the upper frieze, Zeus, riding in a chariot driven by Hermes, advances to the right towards a carriage drawn by panthers and driven by a bearded warrior, dressed as a hoplite and armed with a shield, helmet, spear, and armor. In the center, a female figure wearing a short tunic, nebris, and boots, identified as Artemis, Hecate, or a maenad, carries two torches in her hand. Above her, and flying towards Zeus' chariot, Nike carries a ribbon in her hands in the first vase. The entire scene takes place in a flowery landscape under the arch of the celestial vault. Both scenes have been associated with the Gigantomachy[111], as preparation for battle. However, identifying the figure to the right riding a chariot drawn by panthers has been problematic. Trendall[112] thought it may be Dionysus, despite his appearance as bearded and dressed as a hoplite, which is completely unusual in the figuration of the god from the middle of the 5th century onwards, and especially during the 4th century. His argument was based on the panther-drawn chariot, a feline associated with Dionysus, since no other god drives a chariot drawn by panthers. Lohmann[113] argued that this figure was an armed Giant, although the chariot is not appropriate for Giants either, since it is indispensable that their feet remain in contact with the earth. According to Vian[114], the chariot driver could have been Ares. Finally, the most appropriate and best-fitting interpretation is that of Aellen[115], who does not see in these images a scene from the Gigantomachy, but rather from the Titanomachy: the Titans are gods and not wild beings like the Giants, which is why Zeus' adversary is carrying the weapons of a hoplite and enters the combat in a chariot, as does the father of the gods, thus presenting himself as an equal. Aellen even proposes a specific name for this figure: Hyperion, since the luminous arc of the Swiss amphora alludes to his function as father of the stars. The central female figure would be a Fury who heads towards Zeus and turns his torch against the Titan. In this image she acts as a symbol of the restoration of cosmic justice and order, a function she performs in heaven, on earth, and in the underworld among gods and mortals.

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[110] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 18/50; Gasparri, 1986, p. 474, n. 612; Lohmann 1986, pp. 150-157, Tf. 27, 2; Aellen 1994, p. 67, pl. 45

[111] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 18/49; Lohmann 1986, pp. 150-157.

[112] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, p. 494; *contra*, Lohmann 1978, p. 152.

[113] Lohmann 1986, p. 153.

[114] Vian 1988, p. 252.

[115] Aellen 1994, p. 68.

Figure 20. Apulian amphora by the Darius Painter, private collection, Geneva (Aellen 1994, pl. 45).

On the other hand, given that the representation of the Gigantomachy is indistinguishable from that of the Titanomachy[116], the other great cosmic combat that pitted gods against primordial forces of the cosmos (although it is probable the Titanomachy was never represented), it is possible that Apulian clients who purchased vases to be buried in with these images could evoke or remember, while contemplating Dionysus fighting against a Giant, the Orphic myth of his dismemberment by the Titans. While the intention was not necessarily to directly depict the myth, it could have been to subtly allude to the death suffered by the god at the hands of the Titans, who were then fulminated by Zeus, who brought Dionysus back to life, thereby alluding to the very origin of man, born of the ashes and the blood of the Titans. The image could serve as a reminder of a lesson learned and as a hopeful message: like Dionysus, mortals, with the help of the gods, can overcome the violent and disorderly passions of the soul, the brutal irrationality that their Titanic nature contains and triumph over death to resurface in a new, beatific life. Thus, the Giants, and also the Titans, are one and perhaps the most important of the *hybristai* that Dionysus overcomes and over which he manifests his power, which in this case is quite extraordinary, since it is the power of resurrection, to grant life after death.

4. Dionysus and the pirates

The episode of Dionysus and the Pirates held little interest for the South Italian painters as well as for the Attic and other Greek artists over the

[116] Bazant 1997, p. 31.

centuries. This episode from the god's biography has been made known through *Homeric Hymn 7*, in which the poet narrates how Dionysus, under the guise of a young man of great beauty, with beautiful hair and covered with a purple cloak, appeared «by the shore of the barren sea on a jutting headland»[117]. Suddenly, a ship of Tyrrhenian pirates arose from the sea and the pirates, confusing him with a prince, kidnapped him to demand a good ransom. He was transferred to the pirate ship and bound by ropes; but the restraints could not hold him and the helmsman, when he saw him, guessed that he was a god and suggested he be let go. The captain refused and soon prodigious events took place: fragrant wine bubbled around the ship, a vine grew to the highest point on the sail and clusters of grapes hung down from it, and around the mast, a vine of ivy was interwoven with dense flowers. The god then transformed into a lion and brought a bear into being beside him. The lion jumped over the captain and the terrified sailors, who leaped overboard into the sea and became dolphins. Only the helmsman, who Dionysus took under his protection, was saved.

The myth told in the *Hymn* was highly successful, as documented by numerous literary notices from Greek and Roman times. By the end of the 5th century, the satirical drama *Cyclops* by Euripides (vv. 11-14) had already alluded to this myth in recounting that when Silenus learns that Hera had sent the Tyrrhenian pirates after Dionysus, he cast himself into the sea with his children to search for him. The theme returned in *Naxiaka* by Aglaosthenes, who wrote that the god was in Naxos, accompanied by his companions and nurses when the pirates appeared[118]. Other later versions[119], such as those by Apollodorus, Philostratos, Hyginus, Propertius, Seneca, and Nonnus, indicate that Dionysus, or the god and his companions, were travelling by sea –some explicitly mention that he was travelling towards Naxos– when the pirates appeared.

Compared to the relatively frequent portrayal of the myth in literature, its iconographic representation was quite rare and has caused great controversy, as many of the images previously considered to be illustrations of that episodic myth, are today no longer thought to be connected to it[120].

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[117] *Homeric Hymn 7 to Dionysus*, vv. 2-3, translation West 2003.

[118] Hedreen 1992, pp. 67-70.

[119] Collected and commented by Herrero de Jáuregui 2013, and more broadly Paleothodoros 2012, pp. 456-459.

[120] Csapo 2003; Paleothodoros 2012.

Even the famous Dionysus' cup by Exekias, once viewed as being inspired by the hymnic narrative, is now seen as a representation of the god aboard a ship, lying down as a guest at a banquet, lord of the vineyard and the sea, but without any reference to the myth of the pirates[121]. The key to the old interpretation was based on the representation of the half-man, half-dolphin figures, either dolphins with human legs or men with dolphin tails, images that alluded to the metamorphosis of the pirates the moment they leapt into the sea. Although most of the images did not contain the portrayal of the god, dolphin-men and other elements such as the ship and the ivy leaves justified this interpretation as the illustration of the myth of Dionysus and the pirates. An even older representation was that of the Samian black-figure cup from 540-530 BC[122], which depicted fifteen dolphins and dolphin-men around a frieze of thirteen dolphins surrounding a racing warrior. Additionally, the *episema* of the shield of Athena containing a dolphin with human legs, in a fragment of an Attic Panathenaic amphora from the late 6th century BC[123] is also considered a representation of this myth, as is the scene represented by a follower of the Micali Painter in an Etruscan amphora from Toledo[124], where six dolphin figures with human legs leap into the sea, except for the last figure, which is a human with a dolphin tail. Other images of dolphins playing the flute or with characters dancing with legs and fishtails, are not necessarily allusions to or representations of the Homeric myth[125], nor is that of a white-ground lekythos by the Beldam Painter[126]. This piece shows a figure sitting on a rock, behind whom a ship looms, while other characters tie the hands and feet of two figures who are already falling into the sea, where a dolphin and an octopus swim. The identification of a scene painted on an Etruscan Genucilia plate found in

[121] Daraki 1982; Díez Platas 2013, p. 362; However, Paleothodoros 2012, pp. 462-466, still defends the connection of Exekias' cup with the myth of the pirates.

[122] De Spagnolis 2004, fig. 46.

[123] De Spagnolis 2004, fig. 47.

[124] Rasmussen and Spivey 1986; De Spagnolis 2004, fig. 67; Paleothodoros 2012, pp. 459-460.

[125] Some instances are: a Corinthian cup of 590-570 BC: Csapo 2003, fig. 4.10-11; an Attic cup of 580-570 BC in Villa Giulia: De Spagnolis 2004, fig. 48; a Pontic black-figure amphora of 540-530 BC: De Spagnolis 2004, fig. 49. Cf. Csapo 2003, pp. 78-90; Paleothodoros 2012, pp. 459-460.

[126] Haspels 1936, p. 172-3, pl. 50, 1a-1d. Haspels says that it cannot be a representation of the Homeric myth because there appears no metamorphosis of men into dolphins. Likewise, Cristofani 1984, p. 16, nota 10.

Rome, from the end of the 4th century BC[127], is also not certain. The most convincing interpretation is that of Csapo[128], who proposes that these dolphin-men had nothing to do with the myth of the pirates and that, simply put, they symbolize the power of dance, as they combine the leaping animal par excellence with the part of human anatomy most responsible for soaring and dancing; furthermore, the dolphin-men are associated with komastic dance, circular dance and cultic dance, especially the dithyramb, and thus a close association with Dionysus was established.

The first representation that undoubtedly illustrates the episode of Dionysus and the pirates, and the most complete, is that of the frieze that decorates the Athenian Lysicrates Monument[129], erected in 335-334 BC to commemorate the choregos Lysicrates winning a prize in a contest, possibly with a dithyramb. In the frieze, the scene takes place on the coast. The god and his companions are holding a banquet, but the pirates attempt to burst into the feast to kidnap the god. The members of his *thiasos* race to defend him and prevent the kidnapping, fighting against the pirates. At the end, some pirates have fled and throw themselves into the sea, where they suffer a metamorphosis; their bodies are transforming. Their head is already a dolphin while their torso and legs are still human.

The frieze of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates is the first Athenian representation of the myth, although it differs from the version in the *Homeric Hymn* in a striking way. However, such images and the way of depicting the myth had no continuity in Attic vase painting. The vase painters of the 5th and 4th centuries BC had no interest in this theme, and when the Monument was built, the production of Attic pottery had almost reached its end. However, the story's visual and narrative richness brought about important consequences in South Italy.

In Magna Graecia, it appears that the episode of Dionysus and pirates did not appeal much to painters or sculptors, as only four pieces are known to narrate the myth. However, the theme was the subject of a magnificent, innovative, and surprising pictorial representation: the image on an

[127] De Spagnolis 2004, fig. 52: the first figure from the left holds a dolphin by its tail. Mario del Chiaro 1974, pp. 65-66, interprets this figure as Dionysus holding one of the pirates transformed into dolphin, while his Friends await the same destiny. A sylized vine occupates the superior part of the scene, as if springing from the mast. Against this interpretation, cf. Csapo 2003, p. 83, n. 41.

[128] Csapo 2003, pp. 79-90

[129] De Cou, 1893; Kossatz and Kossatz-Deissman 1992, pp. 471-472.

Apulian calyx krater by the Underworld Painter[130] (Figure 21). In the center of the scene lies a figure, asleep on a bed richly adorned with a panther skin, on a mattress and cushions. The long-haired figure, his torso bare, his legs covered by the mantle, and with a garland of flowers around his neck, raises his arm to his head and drops his hand on his forehead. It is Dionysus, who sleeps after the banquet with the members of his *thiasos*. Objects lying at the foot of the bed –amphora, situla, kantharos– indicate his recent celebration. A naked youth, with a chlamys on his back and sword in hand, has approached the god, lifted the part of the mantle that covered his torso, and contemplates the body and face of Dionysus. He is one of the pirates, as indicated by the ship bow at the far right of the scene, a ship to which two of his companions are headed, one carrying a wineskin on his shoulder, another carrying items stolen from the *thiasos*: a thyrsus, a phiale, and an oinochoe. A dolphin depicted next to the ship –not a complete figure, but a dolphin with no indication of human form– could be an allusion to the future transformation of the pirates.

Figure 21. Apulian calyx krater by the Underworld Painter. Galerie Günter Puhze, *Kunst der Antike* 28, 2014, n. 9.

[130] Cabrera 2018; Galerie Günter Puhze, *Kunst der Antike* 28, 2014, n. 97. Although this image was initially interpreted by Schauenburg 2008b, p. 119ff as Theseus abandoning Ariadne in Naxos and her encounter with Dionysus, such intepretation has been discarded, since it was based on a mistaken identification of the protagonist.

The god is not flustered; nothing interrupts his sleep, not even the tumultuous combat that unfolds around him. At the far left of the scene, one of the pirates tries to hold a maenad by her arms and with her becomes part of a group that appears to be performing a dance. On the upper level of the scene, a satyr, with the pardalis over his arm and a situla in hand, attacks a pirate with a cane; the pirate defends himself with a sheathed sword in one hand and a rock in the other. A maenad runs from the left to help her companion, wielding the thyrsus against the pirate. Behind her, another maenad, with a panther skin over her dress, thyrsus in one hand and a theatrical mask in the other, watches the action as she retreats. At the opposite end, a third maenad holds a small *tympanum* on high and gestures animatedly at the combatants.

The scene is unique and quite exceptional. There is no doubt that the episode depicted on the krater represents Dionysus and the pirates, but this is not the moment narrated by the Lysicrates Monument, although it may well have been executed under its iconographic influence, as they are practically contemporary pieces. In the Monument, the attack of the pirates is insinuated to have taken place during the celebration of the banquet; in the krater, the scene takes place at a slightly later time, when the banquet has already ended. In the Monument, Dionysus is awake, although he remains passive. In the krater, he is asleep, as if he were under the effects of wine. And although on the krater the fight between the pirates and the members of the *thiasos* had already begun, the transformation of the pirates into dolphins had not yet begun. All the members of the *thiasos* –satyrs and maenads– take part in the combat; in the former the maenads are more numerous, while on the Monument, women do not appear. The action depicted on the krater, as in the Athenian frieze, takes place on land, on the coast, as indicated by the presence of the bow of the ship and a conch shell drawn between two figures. However, the most unique characteristic is the sleeping figure of Dionysus, depicted in the same position that becomes canonical when representing Ariadne, abandoned and asleep in Naxos, lying on her left side on a bed, her right arm raised and leaning on either her head or the pillow. The pirate's gesture, raising the mantle to discover the half-naked body of the god, a gesture of unveiling and of wonder at the magnificent and divine epiphany, overwhelmingly recalls the erotically charged moment when Dionysus discovers the sleeping Ariadne. The compositional layout of this krater is similar to that of the Taranto krater[131] (Figure 34) by a painter close to the

[131] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 2/25; Bernhard and Daszewski 1986,

painter of the Birth of Dionysus, with the representation of the encounter of Dionysus and Ariadne. In the Taranto krater, in the center of the scene, Ariadne reclines and sleeps; to the right, Theseus, with his sword drawn from its sheath, walks away towards the ship, as the pirates did in the krater by the Underworld Painter. In the Taranto krater, Dionysus approaches the sleeping Ariadne from behind the bed, as the pirate did in this krater; there, maenads and satyrs accompany their lord, here they defend him. There appears to be an iconographic contamination of the two themes, and this contamination could help place the action in Naxos. In any case, it is the first and only occasion in which Dionysus is depicted asleep and unveiled, an extremely significant iconographic innovation, as will be seen presently.

The question is to decipher which mythological source was used by the painter. Both the scene from the Lysicrates Monument and that of the krater by the Underworld Painter differ from *Homeric Hymn* 7 in a salient manner. The Apulian vase situates the pirates' attack on the coast, as do the Hymn and the Monument, but this is the only common ground among the three narratives of this part of the episode. Moreover, Dionysus is not alone on the frieze and the vase, but rather accompanied by his *thiasos*, and the pirates are attacked by satyrs in one and satyrs and maenads in the other, characters who are not present in the Hymn. On the other hand, the frieze pinpoints the pirates' transformation on the coast, an event that narratively takes place later on the krater, while in the Hymn this event takes place on the high seas. Both works use as a source a narration or mise en scene of the mythical episode different from that of *Homeric Hymn* 7, possibly a dramatic piece. The victorious dithyramb that the Lysicrates Monument commemorates has been suggested as its source. It is impossible to guarantee the source of inspiration for the vase, but the theatrical mask held in one of the maenad's hands could be a direct reference to its inspiration.

The two representations also differ from other preserved literary works. In Apollodorus[132], Dionysus rents a trireme of Tyrrhenian pirates to travel from Icaria to Naxos. The abduction takes place on the high seas, when the pirates row by Naxos and set sail for Asia, a situation repeated by Hyginus[133], Ovid[134],

Addenda, n. 96; McNally 1985, fig. 5.

[132] Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.5.3.

[133] Hyginus, *Fabulae*, 134.

[134] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 3.595 ff.

and Nonnus[135]. Philostratus' version[136] shares with the image described here only the presence of the Bacchic retinue on the ship that Dionysus pilots, but it diverges from the myth by setting the episode on the sea and the god and his *thiasos* on a ship that is to be attacked by pirates. The geographical location of the myth and of the images is controversial. The mention of Tyrrhenian pirates is not enough evidence to place this episode in a specific geographical area[137], since the very name is elusive and was used as a convenient term to define a band of cruel and barbaric roving «outsiders», an archetype similar to many other mythical peoples, an example of the otherness of that which is located on the other side of the boundaries of Greek civilization[138].

Most of the later authors place the abduction and Dionysus' subsequent astonishing epiphany that causes the metamorphosis of the pirates into dolphins in the area surrounding Naxos. Naxos is the god's destination in Apollodorus, Ovid, Hyiginius, and Servius. It has been proposed[139] that the original source that specified this island was Aglaosthenes' *Naxiaca*[140], and that the pirate episode was one of a constellation of Dionysian narratives originating in Naxos, such as the return of Hephaestus and the encounter of Dionysus and Ariadne. The krater by the Underworld Painter could provide new evidence in favor of this location, due to its overwhelming similarity with the contemporary iconographic treatment of the images of the encounter between Dionysus and Ariadne. It might have been logical for the Apulian painter to have another, closer location in mind, such as Sicily or South Italy, a fact that is documented from the second half of the 4th century as part of anti-Etruscan Roman propaganda[141], but the connection to the episode with Ariadne is so obvious that the use of Naxos as a likely setting is compelling.

There is no other South Italian image depicting this episode from the god's mythical biography in such a complete and direct manner as the krater by the Underworld Painter. Iconographic documents that may be

[135] Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 45.105-172.
[136] Philostratus, *Imagines* 1.19.
[137] On the ethnic origin of Tyrrhenian pirates, their posible association with Aegean peoples, or later, from Etruria, see lately Paleothodoros 2012, pp. 466-471.
[138] Romm 1994; Hartog 1996; Cambron-Goulet 2007.
[139] Hedreen 1992, 68-70.
[140] Hyg. *Astr*. 2.17.
[141] Cristofani 1984, p. 16.

related to this myth do exist. In a Campanian bell krater[142] (Figure 22), Papposilenus, accompanied by a satyr and a maenad, rows in a boat next to dolphins swimming. Members of the *thiasos* carry wine and musical instruments for the symposium. Such a unique representation references a sea voyage to an island where a banquet will be held. It has been proposed[143] that the scene suggests a literary or theatrical model, such as Euripides' *Cyclops*. Silenus travels with the *thiasos* to find the kidnapped Dionysus and takes with him wine to intoxicate the kidnappers and thus free Dionysus more easily. The dolphins would be an allusion to the pirates' transformation. In spite of such a suggestive connection to satirical drama and the myth of the pirates, the image is ambiguous enough to leave it open to interpretation. It could be linked, in its funerary function, to the passage of waters required to attain Dionysian paradise, where the heavenly feast is offered to the blessed followers of the god.

Figure 22. Campanian bell krater. Trendall, *LCS*, p. 246, n. 139.

[142] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 246, n. 139; Kossatz and Kossatz-Deissmann 1992, Tf. 108.1
[143] Kossatz and Kossatz-Deissmann 1992, p. 471.

Other South Italian pieces that represent the myth of Dionysus and the pirates are two fragments of limestone reliefs found in Taranto[144] (Figure 23), which belong to a small metope and a frieze from funerary buildings. Both depict dolphins jumping from the prow of a ship into the sea. Their fragmented condition does not allow for a complete view of the figures, but since the dolphins are not jumping along the prow of the ship but from within the ship, their transformation, beginning with their head, is inferred.

Figure 23. Two fragments of limestone reliefs found in Taranto. Taranto Museum. N. inv. 211.

Finally, a recent find has added new elements to the iconographic repertoire of the myth of Dionysus and the pirates: a set of seven clay figures covered in gold foil that decorated a funerary crown, found in a tomb of Nuceria Alphaterma in Campania, from the 2nd century BC. They depict

[144] Bernabó Brea 1952, pp. 209ff., fig. 109 and 193; Kossatz and Kossatz-Deissmann 1992, Tf. 108, 2-3; De Spagnolis 2004, fig. 68.

hybrid figures with human legs and dolphin heads and torsos[145]. The group has been linked to the myth of the Tyrrhenian pirates, although there is no hint of storytelling in these figures. The Dionysian connection has been established by the presence of bovine protomes that decorated the same crown[146].

Except for the krater of the Underworld Painter, the remaining sparse and problematic South Italian images related to this episode focus more on the pirates' transformation, on the leap into the sea, and on the *katapontismos* that provoke metamorphosis. Evidently, the purpose of both the myth and the images was to demonstrate the power of Dionysus, the god's desire to reveal his divinity among mortals, and punish those who opposed him. The metamorphosis that the pirates undergo evidences his power, which is also punitive, and his ability to transcend boundaries between the human and the divine, the human and the bestial, life as well as death. However, the focus on the moment of the leap into the sea, as the Tarantinian reliefs possibly illustrate, reflects something more. The leap into the sea, the *katapontismos*, is to enter into the space of the gods, of protean creatures, to cease to exist as unfinished beings so as to achieve a rebirth as multiform, multiple creatures who accumulate opposing and radically innovative experiences and perceptions. Only the «tuffatore», the one who leaps into the altering depths of the sea and then resurfaces, as illustrated in the famous slab of the Paestum tomb, can overcome the limits of his mortal condition and acquire through the watery journey, through aquatic depths, a new identity and an immortal essence[147]. Moreover, in addition to its evident funerary and redemptive connotations[148], as a metaphor of the passing from death to life, from the pathway to the beyond, the dolphin's metamorphosis occurs at a time of madness and terror; later authors repeat the idea that the pirates were possessed by a bacchic delirium and the desire to dance, and therefore they leapt into the sea.[149] Their form and essence dissolve so as to acquire, in the ecstasy and madness inspired by Dionysus, a new form of being. This is the lesson that is conveyed to mor-

[145] De Spagnolis 2004, pp. 17-40, fig. 58-62.

[146] De Spagnolis 2004, p. 73.

[147] D'Agostino and Cerchai, 1999, p. 65; Cabrera 2003, pp. 138-139.

[148] Daraki 1982; Bottini 1992; D'Agostino 1999; Cabrera 2003.

[149] Nonnus, *Dionysiaca* 45.166-170: «And thus, under the influence of the madness that deprives of reason, diving into the deep, they danced on the calm waters like sea-crossing dolphins».

tals: the need to be immersed in a madness blessed by the god, for that is the only means to achieve a definitive transformation.

However, the krater by the Underworld Painter leads to another aspect of the myth and, above all, to other meanings. The unique image of a sleeping Dionysus evokes the image of the deceased, enveloped in the sleep of death. It is a model image and a promise of the future for those who abandon their human, mortal condition and, in union with the god, in the celebration of the sacred symposium, in the leap forward into the depths, and in the renewing metamorphosis, will awaken to a new and immortal existence.

5. Dionysus and Maron

Having discussed the confrontation with the *hybristai*, both divine and human, the next episode from the god's biography to be examined represents a contrasting aspect, as it is an episode showing his benevolent relationship with men. This episode is not found in contemporary written sources and is only documented iconographically in an Apulian vase by the Painter of the Dublin Situla in the Rothschild collection[150] (Figure 24): the delivery of the vineyard to Maron, King of Thrace.

This character appears in the *Odyssey* (9.195-211). Homer tells that Maron, son of Euanthes, was one of Apollo's priest, patron of Ismarus. When Odysseus and his companions attacked Maron's city, Odysseus spared his life and that of his wife and son, and Maron repaid him with opulent gifts, among them twelve amphoras of wine that was sweet, strong, and delicious, named the «drink of the gods». Odysseus used this wine to make Polyphemus drunk and was thereby able to blind him. Hesiod establishes Maron as the son of Euanthes, and Euanthes as the son of Dionysus, and therefore Maron is the god's grandson[151]. Euripides, however, claims that Maron is the son of Dionysus and a student of Silenus (*Cyclops*, 141-143)[152]. No other Greek source that speaks about Maron is found prior to the 4th century BC, nor is there any source that refers or alludes to the episode represented on the Rothschild situla. It is not until the 1st century BC when a more complete reference is made, and that is in the works of Diodorus Siculus, who states that Maron, an expert in the cultivation of the vineyard (*Bibliotheca historica* 1, 18, 2), formed part of the expedition

[150] Cambitoglou, Chamay, and Campagnolo 2006.

[151] Hesiod, fr. 238 Merkelbach-West. Cf. Bernabé 2013, p. 47, nota 61.

[152] Macías Otero 2012.

with which Dionysus-Osiris toured the entire inhabited world to instruct the human race in the cultivation of vineyards and the planting of wheat and barley. After visiting Asia,

> …he crossed the Helespont into Europe. In Thrace, he killed the King of the Barbarians, Lycurgus, who opposed what he had accomplished, and left Maron, who had aged and was elderly, in charge of the cultivation of that territory and made him founder of his eponymous city, which he named Maronea. And his son Macedon was left as king of what he named Macedonia and entrusted the agriculture of Attica to Triptolemus (*Bibliotheca Historica* 1, 20, 1-3).

Figure 24. Apulian situla by the Painter of the Dublin Situla. Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire. Legs Edmond de Rothschild, 1998, A 1998-0301. Side A

The extraordinary strength and quality of the wine that Maron presented to Odysseus quickly linked Maron and Dionysus, and this link brought about the fame that the city's eponymous wines acquired[153]. No other work prior to the 4th century BC has been preserved which could serve as a reference or that could coincide in its narrative with the scene

[153] Cf. also Athenaeus, 1.26a, 33d.

represented on the Rothschild situla.[154] Nor has any earlier image been found that depicts this character. Maron appears only in another contemporary vase, a Sicilian krater from Lipari[155]. This krater, perhaps influenced by a dramatic piece, depicts the episode in the *Odyssey* in which the Thracian king, a youthful figure dressed in the oriental fashion, presents a wineskin of the famous wine to Odysseus in the presence of Ampelis, representative of winemaking, and Opora, one of the Horai, specifically Autumn, which is the time of the grape harvest. However, the scene is linked to an Odyssean episode and not to the biography of Dionysus nor to his beneficent action, which in ancient iconography was exclusively connected to Icarius and Attica[156]. It is possible, therefore, that at some point prior to the 4th century BC a mythical episode was formed in which Maron acquired a new role: he was entrusted by the god to transmit to the Greeks the cultivation of the vineyards. The association from the time of Homer with a special wine of great quality and strength and the fame of the wines of Maroneia could have allowed for this mutation, which was consecrated by Diodorus Siculus, and was iconographically documented for the first time in the Rothschild situla.

In this vase, where the principal figures are named with inscriptions, Maron is seated in the center of the scene on a sumptuously carved diphros, holding a scepter in his hand, feet resting on a footstool. He is depicted receiving the vine, a long, leafy stem laden with clusters of grapes, from Dionysus by way of a satyr, who hands it to Maron while holding a thyrsus and a situla in his other hand. The god, dressed in a short robe, holds the thyrsus and the kantharos, as he looks at Maron. Aphrodite, Eros, Eirene, and Peitho are also in attendance.

In this image, Maron is also represented as the repository of the gift that Dionysus offers humanity, as he is the hero, founder, and king of the city of Maroneia, so famous for its wine. As such, he holds the scepter and is shown as a young man, or miraculously rejuvenated, in the very prime of life. Therefore, as Campagnolo[157] points out, he is not dressed in the Thracian manner, for at the time he becomes king and founder, when he receives the signs of civilization from Dionysus, he could not appear as anything but a true Greek. He is surrounded by deities and personifica-

[154] Campagnolo 2006.
[155] Trendall, *LCS Supp*. 3, p. 275, n. 46g; Kossatz-Deissmann 1992b, p. 362, n. 2.
[156] Díez Platas 2013, p. 43ff.
[157] Campagnolo 2006, p. 41.

tions of good omens that form the appropriate framework for the scene which takes place in Thrace after Dionysus' travels, while also illustrating and highlighting the conditions and consequences of the gift of the vine and the Dionysian drink, as symbols of civilization and prosperity. The solemnity and sacred nature of the scene are evidenced by Peitho's gesture when feeding a *thymiatherion*.

The association between Peitho and Dionysus is another innovation in this vase. This figure is named in an Apulian krater from St. Petersburg[158], accompanying Triptolemus. Demeter's emissary, standing in the chariot pulled by serpents, is ready to depart on his mission to teach men how to cultivate wheat and he receives a libation from the goddess. Other figures observe the departure: Pan and two Horai with ears of wheat in their hands – guarantors of Triptolemus' action, whose work they will complete. To the left are Aphrodite, Eros, and Peitho; and to the right is a river, named Neilos, which runs through the entire bottom of the scene and places the scene on the Nile River, in Egypt. This serves as a reminder of the account by Diodorus Siculus in which the Egyptians assimilated Isis as Demeter[159] and Dionysus-Osiris entrusted Triptolemus with the teaching of agriculture in Attica. The role of Peitho in this scene cannot be easily deciphered, although surely she will be the inspiration for the words and the driving force behind the Triptolemus' actions. Thanks to Peitho, Demeter's ambassador brings fruitfulness to men and successfully fulfills his mission[160].

The Rothschild situla offers a parallel to the message of the St. Petersburg vase: Aphrodite, who contributes to the success of the harvest, Eros, the cosmic force of generation, Eirene, the peace that brings forth abundance, and Peitho, persuasion, the inspiration of words and teaching, all surround the other civilizing hero, witnessing another repository of the gift of nourishment that the deities gave humanity. Above all them, Diony-

[158] Aellen 1994, pp. 101-102, pl. 118-119.

[159] Aellen 1994, p. 123, asks whether it would be posible that the painter in Saint Petersburg's vase had knowledge of this version in the second half of the 4th cent. BC, and therefore assimilated the two goddesses, Isis and Demeter—and assimilation already made by the Greeks established in Egypt. He points out that Isis was not an unknown goddess in Magna Graecia in this time. In any case, Aellen points out that there is no proof that the painter aimed to identify Demeter and Isis, and that the inscription Neilos just proves that he did not want to align himself with the Athenian version of the myth, perhaps for political reasons.

[160] Aellen 1994, p. 168.

sus is present to bequeath his gift to man in the person of Maron, to teach him the cultivation of the vine and the consumption of wine. The god offers himself as a benefactor of humanity. His gifts are not limited to this earthly domain, since, in a vase that is ultimately destined for the tomb, the message of salvation depicted in this scene underlies the narrative of this mythic episode. The vine, received by Maron to continue its cultivation, grants immortality. Like Maron, miraculously rejuvenated and heroized,[161] those initiated in the gift of Dionysus receive from the god, as well as from the deities who accompany him in this image, the promised benefits: happiness, abundance, transformation, and regeneration in a new, eternal, and blessed life.

6. Dionysus and Heracles

The iconographic union of Dionysus and Heracles has a long and prolific tradition. Since ancient times, the god and the hero –who share a somewhat ambiguous situation on Olympus, for being on the border between god, man, and fellow Thebans and sons of Zeus[162]– are found in two subjects much adored by Attic painters: the apotheosis of the hero and the symposium of Dionysus and Heracles. From the 5th century onwards, they also appear in the representations of the Gigantomachy[163].

Since the Archaic Period, the hero's apotheosis has been the appropriate setting for the combined presence of Dionysus and Heracles[164], shown as a divine assembly attended by the god for the hero's presentation before Zeus by the goddess Athena, or with him riding in on a chariot. The Archaic scenes, however, never narrate Heracles' death. They revolve around his entrance to Olympus without alluding to the pyre where the hero was immolated and his mortal being consumed. Attic painters after 460 BC introduced the theme of the hero's self-immolation on the pyre on Mt. Oeta, rejuvenation, and immediate ascension to Olympus. Around 420 BC, painters' interest centered on the scene of the burning pyre, nymphs pouring water over it with their hydrias, at times including the presence of Philoctetes and the hero being transported on high in a chariot driven by Nike, Athena, and occasionally Hermes[165]. On Attic vases, the abandoned

[161] Campagnolo 2006, p. 47.
[162] Boardman *et alii*, 1988 and 1990; Bernabé 2013, p. 83.
[163] Cf. Chapter II.3 in this book.
[164] Carpenter 1986, pp. 99-123; Díez Platas 2013, pp. 340-344.
[165] Cf. Boardman 1990, p. 132 for the Attic imaged with the theme of self-immola-

pyre contains armor, something that Heracles never wore but symbolizes the abandonment of the mortal body from which he emerges reborn.

Figure 25. Volute krater from Ruvo by the Lycurgus Painter. Milan, H. A. Coll. 260.

Apulian painters inherited this compositional scheme from the Athenian masters[166] and introduced some Dionysian characters, and even the

tion in the pyre, associated to the tale of Philoctetes, and of the flame-extinghishing nymphs. Boardman proposes that these themes were created at the same time in a date previous to 460 BC, but there is no known literary text that has them together; it may perhaps have been a lost theatrical play.

[166] For the dependence of the compositional pattern of Apulian images from Attic ones, especially those of the Kadmos Painter, cf. Mugione 2005, p. 179. According to Mugione, the krater of the Painter of Dionysus' Birth (DH 02) stages some distinct iconographic signs that, on the one hand, show the capacity of uniting and recomposing different Attic traditions, and on the other hand, of elaborating a consistent language of their own. The first element is Nike running with the pedestal of the *kottabos* before the chariot, documented in an amphora by the Talos Painter, and the second one is the laurel-crowned own flying over the chariot.

god himself at times. Thus, on a volute krater from Ruvo by the Lycurgus Painter[167] (Figure 25), while nymphs extinguish the flames of the pyre, Heracles climbs into a chariot driven by Nike to be taken to Olympus. He is preceded by Papposilenus. At the top, Eros takes part in the scene. On another volute krater from Tokyo by the Underworld Painter[168], the scene is replicated, although the painter introduces new figures –an Olympian assembly: Aphrodite, Artemis, Apollo, Zeus, and Hermes– and a figure associated with the Dionysian realm –Pan–. Unexpected spectators in these images include Eros, Papposilenus, and Pan, suggesting the hero's imminent wedding to Hebe (Eros) and his relationship with the Dionysian realm (Papposilenus and Pan). The most innovative image is from the volute krater from Bari by the Painter of the Birth of Dionysus[169] (Figure 26). In this example, Heracles' apotheosis takes place in the upper register of the image – a young Heracles is transported in a carriage driven by Athena and accompanied by two Nikes, one standing behind, with the goddess' shield and spear, the other in front with a *kottabos* stand in her hands. In the lower register – and this is the remarkable innovation – Dionysus, shown with kantharos and thyrsus in his hands, and Ariadne, holding a narthex, feast together accompanied by a satyr and a maenad, represented in a compositional scheme that is applied in the scenes of Dionysus and Ariadne's hierogamy[170]. The presence of the divine couple in this scene is nonsensical unless it is to establish a semantic union between the two themes: Heracles' apotheosis and that of Ariadne, both mortals who conquered immortality, sanctioned by the hero's marriage to Hebe in one case and the god in the other. The passage of Heracles, like that of Ariadne through her union with Dionysus, is a model for those taking this image with them to the grave. Heracles is received by the gods and enjoys new life and the pleasures of the feast and the eternal banquet that Dionysus promises to all those who follow him[171].

[167] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 16/13; Boardman 1990, p. 129, n. 2919.
[168] Boardman 1990, p. 129, n. 2920.
[169] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 2/9; Boardman 1990, p. 130, n. 2927; Mugione 2005, p. 179; Carpenter 2011, p. 258, fig. 5.
[170] Cf. cap. II.7.2.3.
[171] Dionysus and Heracles are also closely linked in the Derveni krater, a piece whose relevant soteriological content is self-evident: Grassigli 1999, p. 133, fig. 8.

Figure 26. Volute krater from Bari by the Painter of the Birth of Dionysus. Brussels, Musées Royaux A 1018.

Another apotheosis image can be found on an Apulian oinochoe[172], in which Heracles sits at the center of the scene and gazes at Athena to the right, while Nike, holding a tray of libations in her hand, offers him the victory crown. On the far left, Dionysus is seated with a thyrsus and phiale in his hand and is present at the moment when the hero's apotheosis is confirmed. The moment captured is not a celebration of the divine symposium, but rather a snapshot of his new state after his entry into Olympus and his acceptance in the universe of the gods. His protector Athena and Dionysus represent all deities. The painter has chosen them precisely for their special ties to the hero.

The apotheosis of Heracles coupled with the celebration of a banquet is also the subject of a tin cup from Spina, whose creator remains unknown, from the end of the 5th century BC[173] (Figure 27). In the scene, Heracles is driven in a chariot and accompanied by other chariots carrying deities: Dionysus, Ares, and Athena; Eros flies next to Dionysus and a panther runs next

[172] Schauenburg 1983a, fig. 17.15.

[173] Boardman 1990, p. 131, n. 2935 and p. 162, n. 3313.

to the god's chariot. The central register depicts a banquet attended by Aphrodite, Ares, Dionysus, Ariadne, Papposilenus, Apollo, Heracles, and Hebe. Hebe offers a crown and a phiale to the hero while Erotes and felines fill the scene. The consolidation of both themes, the apotheosis and the divine banquet, is magnificently expressed in this cup. The apotheosis became a standardized image in the Calenian relief cups of the 3rd century BC[174].

Figure 27. Tin phiale from Spina. New York, MMA 39.11.4

The hero's wedding to Hebe after his entry into Olympus is the subject of a volute krater from Berlin[175] (Figure 28). The scene, which is developed over two sections, depicts the bride and groom in the presence of a variety of deities and personifications, identified by inscriptions. Hebe sits on her bridal bed at the center and is being cared for by two women, possibly the Charites. At her side, Heracles stands with a richly embroidered mantle over his hips. Leaning on his club, he outstretches his hand toward Zeus. Behind the god is his wife Hera. On the opposite end of the scene are Aphrodite and Himeros, the creators of this amorous encounter. Eros flies above the bride and groom and extends his hands over their heads, bless-

[174] Boardman 1990, p. 130-31, n. 2936 and 2937.
[175] Berlin F 3257. Cf. Aellen 1994, pp. 169-172, pl. 114.

ing their union. In the lower left-hand section, Apollo holds a branch and Artemis holds two torches to perform a ritual: Eunomia burns incense in a *thymiaterion*. To the right of the scene, Dionysus arrives at the race riding in a panther-drawn chariot preceded by Euthymia, who dances on the tips of her toes while shaking her torch and holding a small *tympanum*. It is Aellen's opinion that Eunomia, the personification of order, law, and measure, the mirror of Apollo, represents the hero's arete and piety, since Heracles, more than any other mortal, embodies perfect and exemplary behavior. Euthymia, the personification of happiness, who is associated with feasts and wine and therefore linked to Dionysus, also signifies the absence of disturbances of the soul and the body. Apollo and Eunomia represent one aspect of the hero. Dionysus and Euthymia represent another. The wedding of Heracles and Hebe ends the hero's toil and suffering and represents an ideal state, symbolizing the end of all earthly misfortune, a blessed state with exemplary value for anyone buried with this image.

Figure 28. Apulian volute krater from Berlin. Antikensammlung F 3257.

The hero's newly achieved status after his apotheosis and marriage to Hebe affords him the possibility of partaking in the banquets of the gods,

and especially Dionysus', for it is wine and Dionysus that sanctify his newly acquired immortality, his essential transformation. Dionysus' and Heracles' symposium were added by Athenian painters at the end of the 6th century BC. It is a scene that was not associated with any known narrative or mythical episode[176]. In the rugged landscape of the myth, both share kantharos full of the pure wine that only gods and heroes can imbibe safely. Throughout the 6th and 5th centuries BC, Heracles and Dionysus did not share a bed with any other symposiast. They are the only participants in the feast, which sometimes takes place in a space similar to the andron by the presence of klinai and trapezai and sometimes in a rocky area, a transgressive scenario suited to them, lying directly on the ground and attended to by satyrs. The purpose is the heroization of Heracles, who, by way of the feast, reaches the convivial bed of a god as an equal.

The banquet of Dionysus and Heracles is rarely depicted in South Italian art. The most prominent image is the one on a Lucanian crateriform vase[177], in which the god, thyrsus in hand, and the hero, a club resting on his shoulder, share a bed covered by an animal skin, while a young man who may be Iolaos lies at the foot of the bed. An auletris livens up the banquet with the sound of a flute and a young satyr carries a phiale and an oinochoe to pour a libation. In an Apulian column krater by the York Painter[178], Heracles appears holding a cup, along with a thyrsus-wielding Dionysus, both reclining in front of a table. A maenad and a satyr round out the scene. On an Apulian oinochoe (Figure 29) associated with the Ilioupersis Painter[179], both Dionysus, reclining on a bed with a cup and thyrsus in his hands, and Heracles, seated on a lion skin and crowned with ivy, bearing an oinochoe and a club in his hands, revel in the sounds of the flute being played by a bearded satyr seated at the far end of the scene. A maenad runs to the bed with a phiale and a thyrsus. An exemplary image for mortals, Heracles is the hero who reached the beatific realm of Dionysus, while becoming a god himself through suffering and effort, but also through his mystical union with the god. This ideal symposium, an image that is heavily imbued with death within the space of initiation takes place not on Olympus but in the paradise Dionysus offers his followers.

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[176] Díez Platas 2013, p. 344; Verbanck-Pierard 2013.

[177] Trendall, *LCS, Supp*. III, pl. X, 3.

[178] Boardman *et alii* 1988, p. 819, n. 1509.

[179] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, p. 441, n. 130a; Schauenburg 1963, p. 117; Schauenburg 1983a, pl. 17, 8a-b; Boardman *et alii* 1988, p. 819, n. 1510.

Figure 29. Apulian oinochoe associated with the Ilioupersis Painter. Taranto, Museo Nazionale I. G. 8264.

The message is the same in other images in which the hero appears feasting without the presence of Dionysus, but is instead attended to by satyrs. In the Apulian volute krater from Taranto[180], which depicts the birth of Dionysus, and which names the painter on the neck of the krater, Heracles is depicted reclining on the ground, on a lion's pelt, his quiver hanging in the background. Next to a tree, young satyrs arrive with symposium instruments –a jug and tray filled with fruits– one of them carrying a trapeza. The landscape is a rugged mountain where Heracles usually goes on his exploits, a border territory for a hero who crosses borders, but it is also sometimes the idyllic landscape of the Dionysian space. Although Heracles is the only symposiast, the connection to Dionysus is evident, as indicated by the presence of the satyrs, who in other images attend the symposiums of both individuals, and by their presence on a vase whose main image depicts the story of the god's birth from Zeus' thigh. While the main image confirms the divinity and acceptance of Dionysus among the Olympic gods, the image of Heracles alludes to the same, the celebration of the banquet that confirms his apotheosis, his acceptance among the immortals.

A similar scene is depicted on a Lucanian bell krater by the Brooklyn-Budapest Painter[181] (Figure 30), in which Heracles is shown facing forward, reclining on a bed next to a tree bearing fruit, while receiving a crown from a young satyr. Heracles can be identified by the quiver that hangs in the background. Behind a tree stands a naked female figure with a situla and a jug in her hands, possibly a maenad who is tending to the hero during

[180] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1 2/6. (descripción p. 33); Gasparri 1986, p. 478, n. 667; Boardman *et alii* 1988, p. 819, n. 1515.
[181] Boardman *et alii* 1988, p. 819, n. 1514.

the celebration of the symposium. The tree alludes to the rugged landscape where the wayward symposium takes place, but it is not any ordinary tree, as the fruit that sprouts from its branches has been drawn with great detail. Could the tree allude to the mythical apple tree of immortality that grew in the Garden of Hesperides? Although this could be nothing more than an element alluding to a generic mythical landscape, the buyer of the vase may have envisioned the mythical apple tree, an indispensable key in the process of Heracles' heroization and acquisition of immortality. If so, the next step, considering the Dionysian setting of the scene, would be to identify it with another mythical and idyllic landscape, the Dionysian paradise.

Figure 30. Lucanian bell krater by the Brooklyn-Budapest Painter. Warsaw, Mus. Nat. 147389.

A phlyax version of this theme contains Heracles, the protagonist of numerous phlyax images, feasting alone, attended to by satyrs. In the Apulian bell krater from London[182], the grotesque and stout hero reclines

[182] Trendall and Webster 1971, IV, 25; Boardman *et alii* 1988 p. 820, n. 1522.

on a lion's pelt on a stage riser and grabs chunks of meat from a bowl at his side. Two old, white-haired, and bearded phlyakes watch him. One holds a thyrsus and a small *tympanum* and the other a thyrsus which he uses to signal the hero. The scene is a parody of the banquet of Heracles, whose gluttony and excess consumption of wine are proverbial. In this example, the satyrs from other scenes have been replaced by phlyakes[183], though they maintain their traditional Dionysian attributes.

Heracles is the main character and the favorite hero of many comic scenes possibly extracted from or inspired by theatrical performances. In these scenes he is immersed in a festive and frenzied Dionysian atmosphere. This is reflected in an image from the Apulian bell krater by the Corego Painter[184], in which Heracles, facing forward with his head in a three-quarter profile, stands on a rock, balancing the sphere of the earth on his shoulders, as he momentarily stands in for Atlas, a situation that two satyrs seem to have taken advantage of to steal his weapons: one steals his quiver and the other his club. Taplin points out that there is no positive indication that this scene derives from a satirical drama, but it would not be surprising if the painter was inspired by one. Likewise, the scene depicted on a Sicilian olpe in the Adrano Group[185] (Figure 31) shows Heracles lying inebriated in front of a closed door, above which an old woman is peeking out and tossing the liquid from a jar onto him. Satyrs and maenads surround the group, and a vine laden with bunches of grapes grows at the bottom of the scene. Todisco interprets the image as a comic version of the Auge myth[186] –the door depicted in the scene is then the door of the sanctuary where the young girl who Heracles raped while in a drunken stupor was a priestess–. The hero's excesses with food, drink, and love, as well as his penchant to impose upon the hospitality of others is parodied here. The presence of satyrs and maenads refers to the satirical nature of the work that inspired it, or simply indicates that the Dionysian *thiasos* is the appropriate setting for Heracles to participate in delights, ecstasy, frenzy, and excess and where he can become a comical, gluttonous, intoxicated, and lascivious character.

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[183] Cf. chapter IV.1.1 in this volume.

[184] Taplin 2007, p. 34, fig. 14.

[185] Todisco 2006, pp. 213-223, fig. 1-3.

[186] Todisco 2006, p. 220, collectes the information about comical works that treated this theme. Todisco recalls that the topic was handled from a phlyax-oriented perspective in a vase from Lentini (fig. 6) and that Rhinthon dedicated two of his hilarotragedies to Heracles and Telephus, respectively.

Figure 31. Sicilian olpe in the Adrano Group. Todisco (2006), fig. 1-3.

A brief reference can be made to two types of scenes that do not directly refer to any mythical passage, but the reference is significant from the point of view Heracles' connection to the Dionysian domain and the exemplary character of the hero in the realm of death where Dionysus reigns. Two Lucanian vases by the Primato Painter depict Heracles in scenes of idealized serenity with a female figure with Dionysian features. On one of the vases, a volute krater at Christie's[187] (Figure 32), a young Heracles is naked, with a lion pelt over his left arm and hanging to the ground, leaning on his club. He raises a branch in his hand showing a woman in front of him. She holds a large branch in one hand, perhaps a thyrsus (although the pinecone at the top is missing), and a phiale in her other hand. On a volute krater from Naples[188], the bearded, naked hero wearing a laurel wreath, a lion's pelt over his arm, is seated, holding a pitcher in one hand and his club in the other. He turns his head towards a woman, who sits behind him and offers him a crown while holding a ribbon. Behind her is an enormous upright thyrsus. Both scenes are difficult to decipher due to the lack of information specifying the mythical context and the ambiguous identity of the women. The hero is known to have had several wives and he was associated with many other women, but in the realm of death, and taking into account the idyllic quality of the representations, the painter does not seem to intend to represent a well-known mythological episode, but rather to refer generically to Heracles' blessed fate. The woman could be Hebe, his Olympian wife, since the crown she wears in both images could allude

[187] Christie's, Sale 2709, 6 June 2013, New York, lot n. 577.
[188] Boardman *et alii* 1988, p. 822, n. 1535.

to her marriage to the hero. On the other hand, the crown and ribbon she holds on the krater from Naples alludes to his wedding and triumphant entry into the realm of the gods. In the Christie's krater, she receives the hero with a phiale for libations, a welcome libation, while he shows her a branch, which could symbolize an element of the renewal and transformation necessary to enter his realm[189]. The Dionysian elements, such as the upright thyrsus behind the woman and the flowering branch adorned with ribbon, indicate that the place where this mortal transforms into an immortal being by overcoming hardship as well as by marrying a goddess may be the blessed and idyllic afterlife where Dionysus reigns.

Figure 32. Apulian volute krater. Christie's, Sale 2709, 6 June 2013, New York, lot n. 577.

On the other hand, on a South Italian calyx krater from Boston[190] (Figure 33) depicting Heracles' apotheosis, the hero occupies the center of the

[189] It might also be a sign for that apple-tree in the Garden of the Hesperids, that offered him fruits of immortality, but in this case it might be asked: why the branch and not the fruit, which is iconographically more significant?

[190] Boardman 1990, p. 155, n. 3215.

image, seated in a position of rest, naked and leaning on his club. Behind this figure stands a tetrastyle building (although only three columns are represented) and underneath is a low altar with two steps painted in white with small white dots, indicating offerings. In front of the hero, a young man stands with two spears on his shoulder, and behind him a bearded satyr moves his arm forward and tilts his body back in a characteristic gesture of amazement at the epiphany of the divine hero. On the left, a satyr offers Heracles a tray, and a seated maenad with a thyrsus and a *tympanum* watches the hero. The presence of the tetrastyle building and the altar underneath it closely connect this image to Attic vases dated between 420 and 350 BC paying tribute to the divine hero and celebrating his reception on Olympus and his imminent marriage to Hebe.[191] Normally, the scene is the same as the one created by the painter of the South Italian krater: Heracles, seated and leaning on his club, receives a welcome libation presented by Nike or Hebe, in the presence of Athena, the Dioskouroi, like the young man of the krater,[192] and Hermes. On occasion he receives the victory crown from Hebe.[193] The difference with the South Italian vase is that in the Attic vase the members of the Dionysian *thiasos* are not present, and neither is a satyr with a tray or phiale to complete the welcome libation. Libation celebrates those who have managed to attain immortality after a great deal of struggle and hardship. The scene takes place on Olympus,

[191] Verbanck 2012, interprets these vases as specially commisioned to celebrate one of the most important moments in the Athenian civic life, the celebration of the Apatouria, a festival in which ephebes and brides were integrated in the phratries, and where a wine offering was made to Heracles, patron of the ephebes and of initiation rituals for the young, in local sanctuaries possibly temporal, erected for the occession by the phratries; the images promoted religious customs renovated in the small local *temenoi*, where community bonds and civic life were reinforced in a polis weakened by the Peloponnesian wars. The images celebrate thus Heracles as god, in an idyllic Olympian scene, but alluding always to his patronage over ephebes recently introduced into the phratries. The presence of Hebe reinforces this interpretation, not only as goddess of youth and age-transitions, but also as bride, for the newly married girls were celebrated as such in this festival.

[192] Boardman *et al.* 1990, p. 155, n. 3215 ask whether this figure could be Dionysus, which I consider improbable, since the young male carries two spears, an attribute of the Dioscuri in the Attic images that were used as models—these figures, according to Verbanck- Piérard 2012, p. 25, are rather than mere representations of the Dioscuri, ideal figures of young males.

[193] Laurens 1990, pp. 162-164, n. 3321, 3324, 3325.

where the hero's wedding to Hebe occurs, the rite that, together with his rise and welcome by the gods, will confirm his immortality. It is difficult to determine whether the image from the South Italian krater held the same meaning as those of the Attic vases, which are so strongly linked to a particular festival and very specific civic rites. In this sense, the painter seems to have broken away from the Athenian models to introduce a new reference to the Dionysian cults and rites through the figures of the members of the *thiasos*, who welcome and celebrate the divinity of the hero in an idyllic setting where ivy branches sprout all about in celebration of his entry into the Dionysian paradise.

Figure 33. Calyx krater from Boston. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 1921-272.

7. Dionysus and Ariadne

Dionysus' encounter with Ariadne –the Cretan princess and daughter of Minos, abandoned by Theseus in Naxos after helping him out of the labyrinth– is of transcendental importance to his mythical biography. The encounter is decisive, as it culminates in the hierogamy, the couple's sexual connection, a matrimonial union that was a model of fidelity, as Ariadne was Dionysus' only lover. The South Italian painters were not very interested in the first episode of this story –Ariadne's abandonment in Naxos– except as a means to provide justification for Theseus, initi-

ate the narrative of his transcendental consequence, or depict Ariadne, first asleep and then awakened by Dionysus, in a motif with profound eschatological significance. Both in Attica and in Magna Graecia, painters' interest always focused on the theme of hierogamy, a fundamental aspect of Dionysus' mythical biography; they also focused on the themes of the heroine, as well as the Dionysian religion, as it provided the model marriage and the apotheosis or heroization of the mortal who joins the gods, especially a woman who became immortal after her divine marriage.

7.1. The encounter between Dionysus and Ariadne in Naxos

The story of Dionysus and Ariadne is linked to Theseus. There were two different narrative traditions regarding this triangular relationship and the young woman's fate[194]. In the *Odyssey* (XI, 321-325), Ariadne finds herself in Hades among the women who inhabit the Underworld. She is said to have suffered a violent death at the hands of Artemis, instigated by Dionysus' accusation, but the motive is unknown. This version of the story was set out in Epimenides' *Cretica*, where it is explained that she had betrayed Dionysus by giving Theseus the crown forged by Hephaestus, a wedding gift from the god, to illuminate the dark passages of the labyrinth with its brilliance and then escape with him. This tragic ending was also alluded to in the *Cypria*[195]. The second, possibly Athenian, version has reached present times by way of Pherecydes[196], who may have been inspired by an epic poem, the *Theseid*, written at the end of the 6th century BC. In the poem, Theseus meets Ariadne before Dionysus and the princess helps him kill the Minotaur and escape the labyrinth using a skein of wool. Next, she flees with him and is abandoned on the Isle of Dia, which was later annexed by Naxos, where Aphrodite announces that she is to be the bride of Dionysus. The god then appears and marries her.

It was the latter version that became more successful among later Greek and Latin authors[197] and the one that was adopted by the painters of Attic vases. The episode of Ariadne's abandonment on Naxos by Theseus and her encounter with Dionysus began to interest Athenian painters at the beginning of the 5th century BC, and was possibly inspired by a large mural

[194] Bernabé 2013, pp. 34-46.
[195] Epimenides fr. 38B; *Cyp.* Procl. arg. 29 Bernabé; cf. Bernabé 1979, pp. 113-114.
[196] Martín Hernández 2013, pp. 204-206.
[197] Bernhard and Daszewski 1986, p. 1050.

painting depicting the events taking place in Naxos[198]. They then created a new motif whose popularity grew over the centuries, although representations of the motif were initially scarce.[199] In the first Attic images,[200] Ariadne is lying on the floor, fully clothed and asleep, as Theseus gets out of bed and walks away. This theme changes its iconography essentially at the end of the 5th century with the Kadmos Painter,[201] who was the first to introduce an Ariadne who is awake and lying on a bed, as Dionysus approaches with Eros, who will crown her. This group is contrasted by the one formed by Athena offering the crown to Theseus, who is ready to embark. The depiction of a sleeping Ariadne corresponds to an older tradition, while the image of the wakeful heroine, tending to Dionysus, also seems to be an innovation of the Kadmos Painter maintained in some Attic vases from the 4th century BC.[202] It is important to highlight that these images are exceptional in Attic Dionysian imagery. The lack of interest of the painters of 5th century Attic vases in this pictorial history is astonishing; and when they do illustrate it, they tend to absolve Theseus[203] by making it clear that he leaves Ariadne by divine intervention and not out of his

[198] Bernhard and Daszewski1986, pp. 1050-1070; Carpenter 1997, p. 64. Pausanias (1.20.3) said that in the sanctuary of Dionysus Eleutherios, in the southern side of the Acropolis, there was a great mural painting with «Ariadne asleep and Theseus heading for the sea and Dionysus coming to pick Ariadne», a composition which mist have been previous to 425 BC. Cf. Tiverios 2011, p. 172, nota 60.

[199] There are only four Attic vases, three of them from the beginnings, and one of the end, of the 5th century, that represent Ariadne's abandonment and show both Theseus and Dionysus: cf. Tiverios 2011, p. 162.

[200] Bernhard and Daszewski, 1986, n. 52-53; Díez Platas 2013.

[201] Metzger 1951, p. 111, n. 6; Bernhard and Daszewski, 1986, n. 94; Tiverios 2011; Isler-Kerényi 2015, p. 113. In this work by the Kadmos Painter, a calyx krater in Syracuse, Athena crowns Theseus, in presence of his father Poseidon, while the comrades of the hero get on the ship. Ariadna is veiled and sits on a rock covered with cushions, Eros crowns her and Dionysus, bearded, approaches her. For Varin 2004, p .34 in this scene there is no hiatus between the departure of the Athenian hero and the divine wedding, so there is no time for Ariadne's suffering; this version of the story is conceived to glorify Theseus, unifier of Attica, under the protection of Poseidon and Athena, and his action is justified by the glorious enterprise he has undertaken; the nostalgy of the hero for the woman he has been forced to leave adds a touch of humanity to his greatness.

[202] Metzger 1951, p. 112.

[203] Mills 1997, p. 251; Vatin 2004, p. 34; Isler-Kerényi 2015, p. 114-116, prefers to think that Athena acts in solidarity with Dionysus against her protected hero Theseus.

own desire to do so, as demonstrated by the apologetic version of the story told by Pherecydes. Generally, Ariadne's encounter with Dionysus is much more popular than her abandonment by Theseus.

Figure 34. Calyx krater from Taranto by a painter close to the Painter of the Birth of Dionysus. Taranto, Museo Nazionale 52.230.

Similarly, South Italian painters bestowed little interest on this episode, of which two definite examples and a questionable one exist. The theme is depicted on Apulian vases only in the early stage, in the first quarter of the 4th century BC, on a calyx krater from Taranto by a painter close to the Painter of the Birth of Dionysus[204] (Figure 34), and on a stamnos from Boston by the Ariadne Painter[205] (Figure 35). Both painters chose the same moment, Theseus' departure while Ariadne sleeps. In Lucanian pottery, there is a remarkable example in a chous from the Reggio Group[206] (Figure 36). It is remarkable because the figure interpreted as Ariadne is

[204] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 2/25, pl. 12, 2; Bernhard and Daszewski, 1986, n. 96; McNally 1985, fig. 5.
[205] Trendall 1974, p. 50, n. 84, pl. 23a; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 1/104; Bernhard and Daszewski, 1986, n. 54; McNally 1985, fig. 7; Vatin 2004, p. 38, fig. 18.
[206] Trendall, *LCS Sup.*II, p. 161, n. 317b; Frel 1979, pp. 71-73, pl. 18.

neither lying down nor sleeping, which became customary in South Italian imagery from this time on; she is instead depicted sitting on a rock covered in branches of ivy that extend from behind and above the figure as if welcoming her into a cave. She is situated in front of the bearded figure of Dionysus – another unusual, unique aspect – who holds a pitcher in one hand and a thyrsus in the other, and is followed by a maenad with a torch. This image, dating to the beginning of the 4th century, appears rooted in an earlier iconographic tradition, that of the Attic images that depicted Ariadne awake and sitting on her bed[207], and especially the iconographic scheme created for this episode by the Kadmos Painter[208].

Figure 35. Stamnos by the Ariadne Painter. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 00.349.

[207] Calyx krater by the Polygnotus Painter: Bernhard and Daszewski, 1986, n. 111.
[208] Tiverios 2011, p. 167, figs. 1-7.

Figure 36. Lucanian chous from the Reggio Group. Trendall, *LCS Sup.*II, p. 161, n. 317b.

The two Apulian vases present greater changes. In the stamnos from Boston, the recumbent figure of Ariadne, semi-naked, baring her torso, occupies the center of the image. She is lying on her left side on a bed, her arm resting on the pillow. From this moment on, this will be the characteristic posture of Ariadne, abandoned and asleep. In time, she will move her arm behind her head and the expression on her face will reflect her abandonment more dramatically[209]. This expression and attitude will be repeated by other Dionysian figures who are asleep, such as the maenads[210], the satyrs[211], and the Hermaphrodites[212]. Her eyes are firmly shut in sleep thanks to the drops that Hypnos lets fall on her. To the left, Theseus begins to leave and heads towards a boat of which only the bow is seen. Athena is

[209] This image will have its reflection in Hellenistic statues, e. g. in the Vatican Ariadne, a copy of an original dated around 200 BC: Bernhard and Daszewski, 1986, n. 118.

[210] For instance in an Apulian krater in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, n. 1984.323.2., or in a calyx krater in Paestum: Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 44, n. 92, pl. 11, c.

[211] McNally 1985, p. 167, 172-173; also in the Derveni krater: Grassigli 1999, fig. 7.

[212] Ajootian, 1990, p. 276, n. 56-59; Cabrera 2015.

sitting above. Her gaze towards the ship explicitly directs the hero towards his obligations to continue on his path alone. Dionysus is not present, but Theseus' departure, and above all the recumbent position of Ariadne and her semi-naked body, remind the viewer of the consummation of their union and the continuation of the story. Although the image on the stamnos does not particularly contribute to the enrichment of the myth, it provides a new vision of Ariadne, one that is especially sensual and desirable, which will be exploited abundantly in later iconography.

While the scene from the Taranto krater has not been fully preserved, the theme and main characters can be readily identified. Again, at the center of the scene lies a sleeping Ariadne and to her right, Theseus, his sword drawn, walks away towards the ship. The essential originality here is the presence of Dionysus, who approaches the sleeping woman to rouse her, gently caressing her breast. Dionysus disrupts the restless and lonely slumber of a vulnerable, abandoned, and betrayed figure, whose nakedness exposes her to the sexual desire of a man's gaze. Members of the *thiasos*, a maenad and a satyr above, and possibly another satyr below, accompany their lord and bear witness to this decisive encounter. Above the scene flies a winged figure, Eros.

The presence of Eros rather than Hypnos places the emphasis on the god's coming union with the young princess and her future glorious destiny. However, Eros and Hypnos are so similar that it is fully impossible to distinguish one from the other. The Attic painters chose one over the other indiscriminately to be a character in this episode. When the painter accentuates the abandonment of Ariadne by Theseus, Hypnos is represented, and when the arrival of Dionysus is alluded to, Eros or Himeros is placed in the scene. But the two figures can be confused for one another and this confusion seems to be intentional[213]. The combination of pleasure and sleep can have a double meaning: Hypnos refers to the abandonment, to the loss of human love, but that loss is necessary to obtain divine love, expressed through Eros, and the acquisition of a new state of being. Ariadne's slumber[214] is close to ecstasy, a coming out of oneself, a state of unconsciousness similar or very close to that of death, a state of dissolution of boundaries placing the sleeper at the frontier in a liminal space where her identity is transformed, where she acquires the essential quality of the «other» and can merge with the «Other» par excellence. In

[213] Aellen 1994, p. 174.
[214] McNally 1985, pp. 161-170.

funerary vases such as these[215], the images always have a double meaning, an underlying, eschatological and salvific meaning. Hypnos alludes to the transformative slumber that death brings, to the abandonment of the mortal being, so as to achieve immortality by uniting with the god. Eros is the guarantor of transformation, of the origination of a new life beyond death. The caress with which Dionysus awakens Ariadne is much more than an erotic gesture. It is the «magical» touch that only gods know how to effect, such as the «touch» or divine breath that Zeus gave to Io, with which he restored her human form, freed her from her suffering, and, at the same time, planted in her the seed of something new[216].

Both vases have several significant elements that are inspired by the iconographic scheme engendered by the Kadmos Painter. Beyond the obvious differences between the two painters, the use of the same theme, a precise iconographic variant that tends to underline the nexus between Dionysus, Ariadne, and Theseus and other singular grammatical signs, such as the bow of the ship and Theseus with his sword drawn, attests to the adoption of precise structures linked to the Attic tradition of the Kadmos Painter –who seems to have had a privileged market in Taranto, Ruvo, Adriatic Etruria, and Sicily[217]– structures which could have circulated within the same workshop.

The image of the sleeping Ariadne and her immediate awakening by Dionysus, an encounter of fundamental and existential consequence for the heroine, evokes the image of the deceased in the slumber of death. It is a model image and a promise of a future for those who abandon their human, mortal condition and attain a new beatific and immortal existence via union with the god.

7.2. The hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne

The hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne was a theme widely depicted in Southern Italy through various «representations» composed of different phases of the wedding ritual that translated compositional schemes or iconographic innovations made previously by Attic painters. Many of the

[215] Equally in the Derveni krater, where different sleeping figures appear over the vase's shoulders, above the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne: Grassigli 1999, fig. 6-7: Isler-Kerenyi 2015, pp. 229-233. Sleep and waking up is the main motive in the images of side A and the shoulders of this exceptional piece.

[216] Aeschylus, *Suppliant women*, vv. 1065-1068; Cabrera 2014, pp. 65-66.

[217] Mugione 2005, p. 177; Tiverios 2011, p. 174-175.

scenes have been analyzed elsewhere and not linked to a common theme –namely, the wedding of Dionysus and Ariadne– but it is important to recognize this link in order to provide a fuller, more consistent meaning for South Italian Dionysian iconography. Thus, some scenes depicting Dionysus and Ariadne mounted on a chariot pulled by wild animals have been interpreted as images of Dionysus' victory after his return to the East, but there are significant elements that allow for a different reading. These are images of the nuptial pompe, husband and wife's procession to their new home. Images of Dionysus and Ariadne celebrating the symposium have been interpreted as one of many scenes in which the god is feasting alone or accompanied by his wife and not as an image of the wedding banquet. There are different moments, actions, and scenes in the account of the marriage of Dionysus and Ariadne, but all of these images express the transcendental union of a mortal with a god and serve as a paradigm and model to those with whom these images are buried.

7.2.1. The nuptial pompe

Some South Italian images show Dionysus and Ariadne riding in a chariot pulled by wild animals. This is the case of a Leningrad bell krater attributed to the Darius Painter[218], in which Dionysus, holding the thyrsus and the reins in his hands, drives the chariot pulled by two deer. Ariadne is seated in the chariot next to the god. She is veiled and directs her gaze to a young satyr with a torch who is following the divine couple. Vine branches sprout above the couple creating a kind of canopy. Two Eros preside over the scene from above. One flies with a branch in his hands and the other is seated, holding a wreath of flowers and a musical instrument called the «Apulian sistrum», which in South Italian iconography is always linked to erotic, nuptial scenes[219] and funerals. A maenad leads the chariot with a thyrsus and a *tympanum* and turns her head towards the couple. In the main scene on another volute krater from Arpi, attributed to the Baltimore Painter,[220] under the gaze of the Olympians – from left to right, Pan, Arte-

[218] Schauenburg 1957a, Tf. VIII, Abb. 13; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/115.

[219] Smith 1972, pp. 129-130; Lepore 1991, p. 104; Salapata 2002, pp. 415-416, and 421, who points out the tight iconographic link of this instrument with Aphrodite and Eros, since it ends up being a symbol of the bride or the unmarried girl; she proposes its link with the Adonian feasts, and concludes that in funerary contexts it would symbolize the rebirth and new life in Elysium.

[220] Schauenburg 1984, Abb. 36; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 27/29, pl. 326,2.

mis, Apollo, Hera, Zeus, Hermes, Eros, and Aphrodite – Dionysus holds both the reins and the thyrsus and drives a cart pulled by two lions at whose feet branches and clusters of vine sprout out from the ground. Next to him, Ariadne intensely peers at the god as she clings to the coach. The couple are accompanied by a maenad who dances wildly behind the chariot and, in what has been preserved from the scene, a satyr bears a situla for the celebration of the coming symposium. Eros flies over the chariot and gazes down at the couple.

Although the scenes from both vases can be interpreted in different narrative contexts –the celebration of Dionysus' victory after his triumphant expedition to the East or the arrival of the god and his companion accompanied by the *thiasos* to celebrate the feast[221]– various details indicate the nuptial context of this carriage procession, the pompe associated with the transfer of the bride to her new home, a rite of passage that sanctions her transformation and acquisition of a new existential status. The representation on the Leningrad krater of Ariadne with a veil affords her a very specific status, that of nymph and Dionysus' companion. On the other hand, the presence of Eros, who alludes to the erotic and fruitful component of this union and is an indispensable character in Attic wedding scenes from the second half of the 5th century BC, is a reference to beauty or the desirability extended to the bride and the necessary fertility of women. It is precisely the sprouting of vines in both images that could be understood not only as the epiphanic manifestation that accompanies Dionysus, but also as the announcement of the fruitful fertility that the union of this couple will promote in nature and the metamorphosis that will be provoked in those who come together with the god. The presence of Aphrodite and Eros among the Olympians in the Arpi krater intensifies this meaning. Although it is a repetitive and usually iconographic scheme in Apulian vases, the inclusion of the Olympic assembly continued to be used in other narrative contexts and, in this case, indicates the formal acceptance of the union by all the gods, the arrival of the bridal couple to

[221] If fact, Dionysus comes in a chariot pulled by panthers alone, without Ariadne: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 23/226, pl. 279, 1. The chariot pulled by savage animals, normally panthers, is his usual vehicle to travel at a fast pace, to be suddenly transported, sometimes in enormously meaingful places, as the divine garden, a Paradise-like space symbolized in images throughout the many flowers, cocoons, branches, tendrils, and vegetal rolls: cf. the image on the neck of a volute krater in Naples (Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 30/20, pl. 393).

their new home on Olympus, and the apotheosis of the bride, her reception as an equal among immortals.

Figure 37. Volute krater by the Baltimore Painter. Naples. Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 27/30, pl. 326, 3.

Another vase by the Baltimore Painter, a volute krater from Naples[222] (Figure 37), even more explicitly depicts the bridal scene. The same composition is repeated as in the Arpi vase. Under the gaze of a smattering of Olympians –Persephone, Apollo, Hermes, Zeus, Aphrodite, Eros and Hera– Dionysus drives Ariadne in a carriage, this time pulled by two panthers. They are preceded by Eros, who flies with an oinochoe and a phiale in his hands, and a satyr with two torches, followed by a paniskos wielding a pitcher and a thyrsus, and a maenad who helps Silenus rise from the ground. The details that demonstrate the bridal substance of this hurried, boisterous, and festive march include Ariadne's veiled face, as she is performing the act of *anakalypsis*, or removing the veil, a rite of passage for brides symbolizing the woman's sexual availability and receptivity towards the groom as well as showing off her desirable charms; the *iynx* placed in Eros' hands by the bride's mother in the upper register, the magical instrument that unleashes erotic desires and loving passion[223];

[222] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 27/30, pl. 326, 3.

[223] On the *iynx*, cf. Gow 1934, pp. 1-13; Schauenburg 1976, p. 32; Tufnell 1983, pp. 57-66.

and the louterion depicted behind Aphrodite, an element necessary to perform the bride's ritual bath and which is usually present in Attic and South Italian images on nuptial *lebetes* and other vases used by women and given as wedding gifts[224]. The objects carried by Eros and the members of the *thiasos* announce the evening celebration of the wedding feast in accordance with the rituals of Bacchus. The Baltimore Painter[225] liked this topic, as evidenced by three volute kraters depicting the same scene with no significant variations: one from Arpi[226] and the other two on the antique market[227] (Figure 38).

More problematic is the image of the calyx krater from Madrid[228] (Figure 39) attributed to the Painter of Athens 1714. This calyx krater depicts Dionysus holding the narthex and the reins in one hand and a pitcher in the other, and a female figure with a *tympanum* in her hand riding a chariot pulled by two deer. A satyr holding a situla and a *kottabos* pedestal follows. Who is the woman accompanying Dionysus to the feast? Is it Ariadne or a maenad? No special feature –neither veil, nor the presence of Eros, allusion to the bridal ritual through the *iynx*, the louterion, or the «Apulian sistrum»– indicates for certain that the female figure is the divine bride, except possibly her very presence in the chariot, which Dionysus would never share with any other woman.[229] It is not known whether the theme is the nuptial pompe, the procession towards the wedding feast, or simply a

[224] Reeder 1995, pp. 126-128. Images of louterion in Apulian *paterai*, a type of vase linked to female transitions: Schneider-Herrmann 1977; in South-Italian nuptial *lebetes*: Cassimatis 1993 and Matesanz 2007.

[225] The Baltimore Painter represented the apotheosis of another mortal in a similar composition: he painted in the neck of a volute krater of the Walters Art Museum de Baltimore (Lohmann 1979, p. 177, A 21 01; Mayo 1982, n. 71, p. 175) Aphrodite and Adonis mounted in a chariot pulled by four horses, a chariot guided this time by the goddess, who holds the reins in her hand while with the other hand she grabs Adonis, accompained by Eros and a female winged figure, perhaps Nike. Significantly, this scene is represented in the krater's neck, where usually are scenes of transition like anodoi of female and male characters springing from flower calyces in the midst of an exhuberant vegetation (cf. Cabrera 1998).

[226] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 27/28, pl. 326,1.

[227] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Suppl. I, p. 152, n. 23c, pl. XXVII; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Suppl. II, p. 275, n. 23f, pl. LXXI, 3-4; Eisenberg, 1991, n. 74; Eisenberg 2012, n. 117

[228] Museo Arqueológico Nacional n. 11050: Schauenburg 1957a, Tf. VIII, Abb. 14; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 8/154.

[229] A different view for archaic black-figure images in Díez Platas 2013, p. 377.

procession towards the symposium that Dionysus assiduously shares with his *thiasos* and initiates into the Dionysian paradise. In any case, whether it was the painter's intention to represent one event or the other, the bridal procession or march to Dionysus' symposium, whoever was buried with these images could interpret them two ways: first, by understanding that Ariadne's wedding to Dionysus (her union with the god) was a prerequisite to attend the sacred feast promised to his followers, and, second that Ariadne is always and above all the paradigm for the divine bride, the eternal nymph who is continuously reliving her wedding and passage into a new life, through images.

Figure 38. Volute krater in the antique market. Trendall, note 245-246

The wedding procession that transports this bride and groom has a very different tone than the procession that transports mere mortals represented on wedding vases throughout the 5th and 4th centuries BC by Attic painters. In those images, even if the main characters were mythical individuals, such as Hector or Andromache, the civic value of the ritual was of foremost importance to maintain the social cosmos when creating a new family unit. Although present and pitched towards the interest of aristocratic groups and not the city as a whole, these values are not overriding.

They are instead removed from the main eschatological message, as the city is removed from the scenes where the wedding pompe takes place: surrounded by nature, in an idyllic and harmonious environment that is utterly not urban, on the road to Olympus, or to be more precise, on the way to Dionysian paradise.

Figure 39. Apulian calyx krater attributed to the Painter of Athens 1714. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional n. 11050.

7.2.2. The abduction of Ariadne?

A different approach to the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne has been seen in Attic images of the late 5th and 4th centuries BC. These images show the god running quickly and embracing a woman, accompanied by members of his *thiasos*. They have been interpreted as scenes from the abduction of Ariadne. Von Salis argued that this type of scene was derived from a monumental painting depicting the wedding of Dionysus and Ariadne and, specifically, the escorting of the bride to the bridal *thalamos*[230]. Metzger also assumed that this motif was created in mural painting, and that the god was accompanying his companion in a mad dash, attended by members of

[230] Von Salis 1910, p. 133.

the *thiasos* in the moments after the Naxian encounter, foretelling his triumphal march[231]. Hedreen noted that this painting might be the one mentioned by Pausanias (1.20.3) in the sanctuary of Dionysus Eleuthereus[232]. Vatin argued that in the paintings Ariadne is not abducted in the manner Oritia, Persephone, or so many others were by a male abductor, but on the contrary, she is the one who holds a drunken Dionysus hostage. His intoxication is a manifestation of his very nature, a sign of the euphoria he will share with his wife[233]. All of the images more or less explicitly included this group of depictions are part of a larger theme: the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne. It was noted that these images transformed the god's motives in pursuing a young girl or taking her by grabbing her wrist[234], the characteristic gesture of *cheir epi karpo,* a motif immersed in an iconographic undercurrent which, during the first half of the 5th century, used the theme of erotic persecution and abduction as metaphors for marriage, and presents the union of Dionysus and Ariadne as an idyllic adventure charged with eroticism, feeling, and romanticism.

Following the innovations of the Attic painters at the end of the 5th century and beginning of the 4th, especially the Codrus Painter, the Pronomos Painter, and the Meleager Painter[235], South Italian painters also adopted this theme. On an Apulian bell krater from a private collection,[236] Dionysus, a pitcher in hand, reaches his left arm over Ariadne's shoulders, while Ariadne holds a situla and gazes intently at the god. Both walk beneath a tall trellis of vines, while a young man accompanies them, carrying a *kottabos* stand and a box, and a bearded satyr carries a wine amphora on his shoulders. On the neck of a volute krater from Naples[237], the clearly inebriated god walks unsteadily, leaning on Ariadne's shoulder, while a maenad with a thyrsus and *tympanum* leads the way and two satyrs, one with a torch and another with a thyrsus and crown, are at the back of the procession.

Something different is seen in the image on a Paestan calyx krater attributed to Asteas[238] (Figure 40), in which Dionysus, this time not under

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[231] Metzger 1951, p. 116.
[232] Hedreen 1992, p. 60, note 103.
[233] Vatin 2004, p. 48.
[234] Sabetai 2011, p. 141; Isler-Kerényi 2015, pp. 113-118.
[235] Gasparri 1986, p. 483, n. 718-723.
[236] Schauenburg 1981a, Abb. 18.
[237] Schauenburg 1974, Abb. 37.
[238] Gasparri 1986, p. 453, n. 319.

the influence of wine, with a lyre and thyrsus in his hand, directs his intense gaze at a woman, whom he grabs by the wrist and takes quickly across rough terrain. She looks back at the god and rests her hand on his shoulder. A young satyr accompanies the festive procession with the rhythmic sounds of the aulos and a maenad with a thyrsus leads the way. The woman's posture indicates that she is Ariadne, since physical contact with the god is not common for maenads, and additionally, the gesture of Dionysus which convincingly recalls the *cheir epi karpo* may indicate that this is part of the bridal ritual, leading the bride to the *thalamos*, although it could also be another narrative context: the festive atmosphere that precedes or follows the symposium.

Figure 40. Paestan calyx krater attributed to Asteas. Lipari, Museo Archeologico Eoliano 11.807.

The motif can no longer be understood to be the abduction of Ariadne and it cannot allude to marriage even in a metaphorical sense, since there is no violence or persecution, but rather the intimacy of a number of gestures accentuating erotic passion and feeling. The issue is whether these images somehow allude to the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne, their wedding, or if they are simply a representation of the bridal couple walking towards the symposium. There are some elements, as seen in the theme of the couple in a carriage, that allude to the bridal ritual, albeit subtly,

such as Dionysus' gesture in the Paestan krater, the intimate gazes, and the embrace, but there are many others that clearly indicate the celebration of the symposium, such as the effects of wine on Dionysus, the presence of elements of a symposium: amphora, situla, the *kottabos* pedestal, and perhaps a wedding feast.

7.2.3. The wedding banquet and conjugal union

In the Attic iconography of the last quarter of the 5th century, the meeting of Dionysus and Ariadne is shown on a bed or a *kline*, a motif that acquired iconic status from this time on[239], both in the narrative context of the encounter in Naxos[240] as well as in the celebration of the wedding feast. Thus, on an Attic krater by the Dinos Painter[241] that represents the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne before the *thiasos*, the god lies on a *kline* with a thyrsus on his shoulder and raises a kantharos to his lips. Ariadne is seated at his feet, covered by a veil and wearing *nymphides* painted white: footwear worn by brides in Attic iconography to represent their journey to a new home and a new metaphorical phase in their lives. Ariadne holds a crown to give Dionysus. They gaze into each other's eyes. Eros is about to crown Ariadne. The *thiasos* surrounds the couple and watches them. A young satyr holds a brass rhyton with equine protome. A maenad beats the *tympanum* and a young woman dressed in a talar tunic carries a tray laden with food. A golden volute krater stands at the foot of the bed. This image merges iconographic elements extracted from the scenes of the symposium and wedding scenes: the divine symposium is evoked by the presence of Dionysus as banqueteer, the young Satyr who acts as the *pais*, the wine-pourer, and the young woman carrying food and glasses for drinking and libations. The bride, the presence of Eros, and wedding gifts seem to indicate the couple's happy day. The shared *kline* may, in this context, signify both the bed of the symposium and the marriage bed. This fusion of erotic/nuptial elements and elements related to the symposium raises a question. How should this scene be classified –as a divine symposium, a divine wedding, or the consummation of the couple's union?– In Sabetai's view[242], the term

[239] Sabetai 2011, p. 143.

[240] For instance in the Syracuse krater by the Kadmos Painter: Bernhard and Daszewski, 1986, n. 94. Cf. note 220.

[241] Sabetai 2011.

[242] Sabetai 2011, p. 141.

hierogamy incorporates all of these aspects. The subject of marriage in the context of a symposium is also used by the Codrus Painter in the famous cup at the British Museum[243], in which various divine couples –Zeus and Hera, Poseidon and Amphitrite, Ares and Aphrodite, Dionysus and Ariadne, and finally Pluto and Persephone– share the *kline* and hold libation phialai or wedding paraphernalia such as an alabastron. The image is an emblematic visualization of the importance of marriage, the divine union that involves the entire cosmos from the heavens to the underworld. This is not a specific wedding feast, but the celebration of the Olympic symposium highlights marital bliss and harmony. Likewise, the presence of symposium components and of a wedding is evident in the so called Attic «Totenmahl reliefs» of the late 5th and 4th centuries. These are votive reliefs depicting a man lying on a *kline* and a woman sitting at the foot of a bed, sometimes performing the gesture of unveiling, surrounded by the elements of symposium, and may have inspired the Dinos Painter to represent the wedding of Dionysus and Ariadne[244]. The theme of a divine feast in which Dionysus and Ariadne participate was once again taken up years later in the tin phiale from Spina[245] (Figure 27) –already mentioned above– in which the couple revel in the wedding feast accompanied by Papposilenus, Ares, Aphrodite, and Apollo, although this time the celebration is for the wedding of Heracles and Hebe.

The Dinos Painter, on the other hand, detaches the episode of the shared encounter on the bridal bed from any narrative development in time and space, with no connection to the Naxian encounter; instead, the episode is integrated within the framework of the divine feast and the celebration of the *thiasos*,[246] although the nuptial resonances are there, always present in scenes such as this one of a ceremonious nature with ritual overtones to signal the sanctified nature of the union. Other Attic vases of this time, such as the volute krater by the Pronomos Painter,[247] take on this motif of Dionysus and Ariadne sharing the *kline*, but in a very specific narrative context – the celebration of victory in a dramatic contest of a satirical

[243] Beazley, *ARV*2, 1269.3; Kossatz-Deissmann 1992c, n. 11; Díez del Corral 2005, fig. 2-3.
[244] Sabetai 2011, pp. 149-151.
[245] Boardman et al. 1990, p. 130-31, n. 2936 and 2937.
[246] Sabetai 2011, p. 143.
[247] Isler-Kerenyi 2015, p. 206, fig. 108.

drama, unless, as Sabetai proposes,[248] the satirical drama was a gift for the occasion of the wedding of Dionysus and Ariadne.

South Italian painters followed this line of representing the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne by depicting the encounter in a shared bed. On an Apulian volute krater[249] (Figure 41), in a space where a fertile vineyard grows, Dionysus, with symposiast ribbons wrapped around his head, shares the bed with Ariadne, who sits at his feet and offers him a shallow patera with a libation; below is a footstool where she rests her feet. Two Eros approach with gifts to celebrate the union: a kantharos with which Dionysus will initiate his young wife into the pleasures of wine, a bridal crown, and a phiale to perform the libation that will ultimately consecrate the marriage. Meanwhile, a satyr offers a billy goat an ivy branch. The composition of the image highlights the presence of the couple under a kind of canopy formed by branches, leaves, and bunches of grapes, creating a large space that only concerns the couple, an intimate space that they do not share with any other figure, and which evokes the *thalamos*, where the sexual union of the bride and bridegroom takes place.

Figure 41. Apulian volute krater. Hurschmann, Hoffmann, and Knoll 2003, Abb. 37.

[248] Sabetai 2011, p. 143.

[249] Hurschmann, Hoffmann, and Knoll 2003, Abb. 37.

On an Apulian loutrophoros from Naples[250] (Figure 42), Dionysus and Ariadne, with hands clasped and eyes locked, share a richly decorated bed; the god holds a thyrsus while she holds a mirror –also a nuptial symbol–. In front of the bed stands a small three-legged table with food and a kantharos. The *kline* and the couple are situated below a leafy pergola of vine leaves and grape clusters, elements that define and sanctify the Dionysian space. At the foot of the bed, a flutist plays the aulos for a female figure who dances while fully enveloped in a cloak. A young satyr with a narthex in his hands approaches the *kline* carrying bands or ribbons to the couple as a symbol of their union. At the opposite end, a maenad with a *tympanum* admires the couple. The presence of these symposium elements –the table, the bed, dancing to the aulos– is less pronounced here than in other images, as the author seems to have placed greater emphasis on nuptial elements –the mirror, the ribbons, the gestures of the protagonists, whose hands are clasped–. This emphasis, and the relationship of the image with the other side of the vase, in which Helena is lying in bed with Paris, seems to indicate that it is a marriage scene, but as with the vase by the Dinos Painter, the encounter on the shared bed is presented as an episode detached from any narrative development in time and space, with no connection to the Naxian encounter.

Figure 42. Apulian loutrophoros. Naples, Museo Nazionale.

[250] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 15/44; Cambitouglou 2006, p. 62-63, n. 4.

Other images do not offer such a clear identification of Ariadne, for no other reason than that the female figure who shares the bed with the god is not situated next to him, but at his feet, there is no indication of physical contact between them, and there are no nuptial indications as evident as those of the above-mentioned vases, so there is no assurance whether the celebration is that of a wedding banquet or the symposium that Dionysus usually holds with his *thiasos*. Thus, on the lid of an Apulian lekanis –a vase used specifically by women and commonly given as a wedding gift– by the Iliupersis Painter[251], Dionysus and a woman attend the celebration of the sacred symposium. They recline side by side in the *stibadeion*. In front of the bed there is a tray of fruit and a krater that a satyr is getting ready to fill with wine from a potbellied amphora. Dionysus holds his thyrsus in one hand and offers the kantharos of wine to his companion, who gazes at him while holding a double flute in her hand. Around him, the *thiasos* noisily and bawdily celebrates the feast. At the foot of the bed, a maenad burns incense in a *thymiaterion* and at the other end, another maenad dances ecstatically while holding a thyrsus in her hand, her head thrown back and her dress swirling with the movement of her body. Behind, a young satyr runs with two torches in his hands and a maenad carries offerings to an altar. On an Apulian dinos by the Painter of the Louvre MNB 1148[252] (Figure 43), Dionysus, with a phiale in one hand and the end of symposium ribbons in the other, lies on the *kline*, at whose feet a female figure holds a double flute in her hands. Again, a pergola of leaves and clusters of grapes as well as a tree and branches frame the bed. To the left, a young satyr observes the couple and extends his arm in a gesture of astonishment at the divine epiphany. To the right, another young satyr comes toward the bed carrying a torch and a situla in his hands. Around him, the festive *komos* ensues, as the *thiasos* arrives to the celebration: Silenus mounted on an ornamented mule and carrying a large decorated krater on his shoulders, a satyr with a thyrsus and ribbons appears to strike the mule's legs, and a maenad walks with a thyrsus, situla, and large clusters of grapes in her hands. In a dinos at the British Museum attributed to the Painter of the Dublin Situlae[253] (Figure 44), the bed is not even represented, and the banquet takes place under a

[251] Schauenburg 2000, p. 59, abb. 237-238.

[252] Trendall and Cambitoglou 1983, *RVAp*, Supp. I, 20/278c, pl. XX, 3-4; a practically identical image by the same painter is Trendall and Cambitoglou 1983, *RVAp*, First Supp. 20/278b, pl. XX, 1-2.

[253] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 15/33, pl. 141, 1-3; Gasparri 1986, p. 485, n. 742.

lush pergola loaded with clusters of grapes and vine leaves; the couple sits on the ground. With the thyrsus leaning on his shoulder, Dionysus offers a kantharos to the woman seated next to him, who gazes at him fiercely while holding a thyrsus and a *tympanum*. A maenad burns balls of incense in a *thymiaterion* and another plays the aulos. At the end of the scene, a young satyr pours the contents of an amphora into a krater. On a pelike from Malibu[254], the *kline* is not represented, but there is physical contact and greater intimacy between the couple, and Eros flies over them with a ribbon in his hands to bless their union. A *kline* in which the couple can lie down during the celebration of the symposium is not used in the volute krater from Toledo attributed to the Creusa Painter[255] either. Dionysus is seated on the ground, leaning on his thyrsus and holding a kantharos. Next to the god sits a woman who rests her hand on his shoulder and resolves to crown him. Both are represented under a sinuous line that appears indicative of a rock or perhaps a cave[256]. Behind it extends a stem and branches of a vine, whose clusters are picked by Pan and a young satyr. Other components of the *thiasos* come to the celebration; a maenad walks with instruments for the banquet, a situla, and a *kottabos* pedestal; a satyr carries a flutist on his shoulder. At the end of the scene, two maenads play with a fawn while a hare runs under their feet and a satyr leans against a rock and watches over his companions. There is no precise indication with which to identify the female protagonist but her physical contact with the god and above all the tenderness expressed in her posture and gaze suggest that it is Ariadne. There is also no guarantee that the scene relates to the wedding feast of the Cretan god and princess, since a more evocative element remains elusive –the bridal bed or *thalamos*– but hosting the banquet that the god usually celebrates with the *thiasos* with Ariadne present causes the wedding banquet of Dionysus and Ariadne culminating in their hierogamy to be constantly reenacted and updated.

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[254] Cambitoglou 2006, pp. 102-103.

[255] Mayo 1982, n. 6, p. 63; Gasparri 1986, p. 485, n. 741.

[256] As in the famous Dionysiac cave, the space of initiation and transition that in the realm of myth was the setting of Dionysus' *katabasis* to the Underworld and his *anodos* with Semele: cf. Bérard 1974, pp. 103-115. Could there be in this image an allusion to Ariadne's transition, or to the passage of the *bacche*, the initiated female assimilated to her, from the dark underworld to which she was doomed to the Dionysiac Paradise, from the mortal to an inmortal existence?

Figure 43. Apulian dinos by the Painter of the Louvre MNB 1148. Trendall and Cambitoglou 1983, *RVAp*, Supp. I, 20/278c, pl. XX, 3-4.

Figure 44. Apulian dinos attributed to the Painter of the Dublin Situlae. London, British Museum, F 304.

That same temporal indetermination is present on the lid of a polychrome pyxis from Canosa[257], where the image of the hierogamy of Diony-

[257] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. inv. 1999/99/149; Olmos 2003; Tiverios 2008, p. 207, fig. 8.

sus and Ariadne is found inserted in an iconographic system narrating the triumph of the god over his adversaries, the *hybristai*, and the divine couple's apotheosis. The scene is set around a central group, Dionysus and Ariadne, seated on a rock. The god rests, naked, in an almost frontal position, with the thyrsus and *tympanon* to his left, leaning against the plants in the background. The very nearly indifferent gaze coming from his tilted face remains positioned toward no particular listener. He is welcomed by Ariadne who leans towards him, gazes at him, and solicitously attends to him, resting her head on his shoulder. Around them is a circular frieze in which members of the *thiasos* face a rider armed with swords, tree branches, and torches. It is difficult to pinpoint the identity of the figure, though it may be one of the famous *theomachoi*, Pentheus or Lycurgus, enemies full of excess, who confront Dionysus upon his return to Europe from Asia and oppose his cult. The scenes of violence and movement on the frieze are juxtaposed with the calm contentment of the medallion and the rest of the god encapsulated in the mythical couple's embrace. According to Olmos, «the identity of this central group can also be discussed: is it Dionysus and Ariadne as in the loving couple on the bronze krater from Derveni? Or is it the beginning of the happiness of love and death, a blessed member of the entourage of Bacchus' followers? Both options allude to the attributes of the god, the thyrsus, and the maenads' percussion instrument. His nakedness takes him to the ideal sphere of representation, perhaps not without erotic radiance. The human body achieves divine fullness in its natural nudity and in repose. Within the scene depicted one can find, in addition to the god, the owner of the vase, he himself a new Bacchus»[258].

Equally challenging is the identification of the female figure that accompanies Dionysus on a bell krater by the Helbig Painter[259], in addition to the temporal indetermination of the scene. The god, with a thyrsus leaning on his shoulder and holding a kantharos, directs his gaze towards a woman who looks back while holding the «Apulian sistrum» on high. There is no physical contact between the two main figures in the scene, only their intense gaze. Both are sitting at an elevated altar on a simple base. A young satyr, with a torch and situla in his hands, watches the couple. Eros holds a large tray in one hand and a crown in the other. The scene takes place outdoors, in wild terrain that is nonetheless marked as a sacred place of ritual, as indicated by the presence of the altar where the couple are sitting and

[258] Olmos 2003, pp. 421-422.

[259] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 14/214, pl. 132, 3.

two skulls hanging in the background. Who is she? Is she Ariadne, a maenad, or the deceased being welcomed by the god into Dionysian paradise? The presence of the «Apulian sistrum» and the other bridal elements – the crown, the ribbons hanging in the background, Eros – could allude to the female figure being a nymph, and in that case it would be Ariadne, not a maenad as suggested by Trendall, or the mortal woman who was united with the god and would become a new Ariadne after her death. The theme of the encounter on the shared bed has been put aside, so it cannot be argued that this scene represents the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne, nor is the rugged sanctuary the most common or appropriate scenario. However, there is an explicit allusion to it, a remembrance of that sacred union that was actualized in the mythical union of the god with his mortal initiates.

Figure 45. Dinos. New York, Collection Rothschild nº 20.

In other images there are clearer indications of the woman's identity, or at least elements, especially nuptial ones, that give the viewer the sense that it is Ariadne. Thus, on a dinos from New York[260] (Figure 45), where Diony-

[260] Cambitoglou 2006, pp. 98-99.

sus lies on a *stibadeion*, a woman stands at the foot of the bed, accompanied by Eros and a maenad wearing a crown. The woman appears to be covered by a veil, which would point to her being the divine bride. Also, in the Apulian calyx krater by the Painter of Athens 1714[261] (Figure 46), Dionysus lies on a richly decorated bed, with a kantharos in his hand. At the foot of the bed, a female figure plays a ten-string harp. Next to the bed is a bearded satyr with a thyrsus in his hand and a maenad with a thyrsus who presents the god with a *thymiaterion* painted white. In front of the bed, there is a small, three-legged table with white eggs on it, a tray, and a situla. A branch of ivy and a theatrical mask hang in the background. The female figure is unknown, but in another image, an Apulian lekythos on the antiquities market[262] (Figure 47) offers some indication. The scene is divided in two registers. In the bottom register, there is the *kline* with a long-haired, bare-chested masculine figure. He bears no readily-identifiable attributes, and therefore one is not certain that it is Dionysus, but his long hair indicates that he is a god and not a mortal, as mortals are always depicted with short hair. A woman sits at the foot of the bed, resting her feet on a footstool alongside a dove, and she plays the ten-stringed harp. Behind her, Eros offers up an alabastron, and at the other end a woman carries a fan, a cist, and ribbons, while another Eros burns incense balls in a *thymiaterion*. In the upper register, Aphrodite presides over the scene, sitting next to a hydria, with the *iynx* in her hands, turning her gaze to Eros, who points to the *iynx*; a woman with a kalathos in her hand heads towards her. On both sides of the goddess, there are two couples, a man and a woman on each side. The women sit, in polite conversation with ribbons and boxes in their hands. The whole scene is largely related to the bridal domain: the presence of Aphrodite and Eros, the *iynx*, the dove, the water hydria for the bride's bath, the gifts carried by the women, and the alabastron offered by Eros. The harp being played by the woman is an instrument that always appears in scenes clearly referring to weddings in Apulian iconography, one always played by female figures[263]. The bed, with connotations of the

[261] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 8/152, pl. 67, 1; Gasparri 1986, p. 457, n. 379.
[262] Galerie Günter Puhze, Kunst der Antike, Katalog 30, 2016, n. 86; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp*, Second Supp., p. 283, n. 62-1.
[263] The harp seems in the Apulian images an instrument linked to the nuptial scenes, or with important allusions to the status of bride (scenes of encounter between a man and a woman who plays the harp in front of Eros, and nuptial symbols like the alabastron, the louterion, ribbons, mirror, pigeon, etc.): Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp*

symposium, may in this case be the bridal *thalamos*. It is not known who the woman sharing the bed with Dionysus is, but considering the wedding allusions present in the image, it can be none other than Ariadne. This also applies, although with less certainty, to the figure from the previous krater.

Figure 46. Apulian calyx krater by the Painter of Athens 1714. New York, MMA L 63.21.6.

The image on an Apulian situla by the Painter of Ruvo 1364[264] is more explicit with regard to the identity of the woman and the erotic and nuptial context of the scene. Dionysus is lying on a bed under a pergola of leaves

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II, pl. 205,5; 306, 1; 307, 3. Cf. also an Apulian alabastron in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston which represents the wedding of Menelaus and Helen, where both figures appear with their written names, an Eros crowns Menelaus, and a woman plays the harp: cf. Kahil and Icard 1988, p. 514, n. 68.

[264] Trendall and Cambitoglou 1978, *RVAp* I, 7/43; Montanaro 2007, p. 285, fig. 140. The situla was found in Ruvo, in a grave along with other Apulian vases in which the theme of the woman as bride predominated, although the largest vase was a volute krater with a naïskos scene with a man as protagonist. We do not know whether the deceased buried in that grave was a male or female, but perhaps the abundance of female images and allusions to the nuptial rite could favour the latter possibility: Montanaro 2007, pp. 282-292.

and vine tendrils, with a small, three-legged table underneath. The god embraces and kisses a woman with the aulos in her hand, standing next to the bed. Eros watches the scene from above. A maenad offers her lord a phiale and a satyr crowned with myrtle turns his gaze towards the couple while holding a ladle in his hand. A hare runs quickly in front of the bed. The erotic tone of this image plainly indicates that the woman can only be Ariadne, that the feast taking place beneath the vines may just be the one celebrating the hierogamy of the god and the heroine, and that the bed is, in this case, not only the bed of the symposium, but also the bridal *thalamos*.

Figure 47. Apulian lekythos. Antique market (Galerie Günter Puhze, *Kunst der Antike*, Katalog 30, 2016, n. 86).

Other vases offer similar images with markedly erotic tones in the context of the celebration of the feast, as in the Apulian calyx krater by the Hippolyte Painter[265] (Figure 48), even though in this scene the main protagonists do not lie down on the *kline*. With his thyrsus resting behind him, Dionysus is sitting on a hill, with a mantle wrapped around his legs. He embraces and kisses Ariadne, who is depicted with her back towards the

[265] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/13, pl. 170, 3.

viewer. She wears a transparent tunic that clearly shows off her body, especially her buttocks, and she lifts her cloak above her and the god's heads. Eros flies in to crown the couple. A satyr with a thyrsus leaning on his shoulder is emptying the wine contained in a wineskin inside a krater. Next to a fawn, a maenad with a thyrsus and phiale in her hands directs her gaze toward the lovers. A theatrical mask lies on the ground, and ribbons and a «Apulian sistrum» –further symbols of a wedding– hang in the background.

Figure 48. Apulian calyx krater by the Hippolyte Painter.
Basel, Antikenmuseum inv. 468.

The representation of the bridal *thalamos* is evident in the image on the Apulian pelike attributed to the Salting Painter at the Victoria and Albert Museum.[266] There is no indication here of the celebration of the symposium, except for the presence of the bed and the symposium ribbons tied around Dionysus' head. Both protagonists are lying outdoors on a richly decorated *stibadeion* and the branches of two trees extend to frame the

[266] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 15/6, pl. 137, 5; Gasparri 1986, p. 486, n. 762.

scene to the sides and from above, creating yet another sacred place to set the scene. Below the bed, large coiled vines covered in buds and calyxes sprout continuously on both sides, inspired by the fertility unleashed by the union of Dionysus and Ariadne. The lovers kiss and embrace, as Ariadne rests her head on the god's chest, raising her arm and resting her hand over his head to bring her lips closer. A woman, possibly a maenad, a *nympheutria*, or a maenad acting like a *nympheutria*, approaches the bed with a crown and a box in her hands, while another maenad behind the bed holds ribbons to tie her hair. With wings unfurled encompassing the entire space where the sacred union takes place, Eros is perched on one of the branches at the top and watches the lovers. There are no precise elements, attributes, or other figures to confirm the identity of the protagonists, and perhaps they are not necessary, since the buyer could recognize the couple without needing an explanation of who they are, as a mythical model that could be transformed into any man or woman who contemplated the scene and could, just like Dionysus and Ariadne, come together in an erotic encounter as a metaphor for the most momentous union with the god and a prerequisite for transformation into a new immortal entity as they crossed the boundary into death. This union overflowing with eros, takes place precisely in the sacred garden, as indicated by the exuberant and spontaneous generation of plants, flowers, and branches, a space that in South Italian iconography is the setting for plant metamorphosis viewed as the spectacular reflection of the metamorphosis of death and the passage, from that moist, varied, and endless sprouting of fruitful existence.

The eroticism of these scenes finds parallels, or perhaps inspiration, in the vivid imagery of the description of a mimus on Dionysus and Ariadne at the end of Xenophon's *Symposium* (9. 2-7), which describes a pantomime that took place at a symposium held in Athens in 421 BC, in which a dance master from Syracuse placed an elegant chair at the center of the room and announced that Ariadne would enter her and Dionysus' bridal chamber, and that afterwards Dionysus would arrive inebriated from a feast with the gods. Dionysus would approach her and both would start playing. Ariadne then entered the scene dressed as a bride and sat on the divan. A short while later, announced by the sound of flutes, the young Dionysus entered, sat on her lap, and gave her a kiss. But when Dionysus stood up and helped Ariadne to get up, «from that moment on, it was a matter of seeing the steps and the figures of the lovers kissing and embracing». The description of the pantomime is framed in the atmosphere of an Athens which, at the end of the 5th century BC, empha-

sized marriage and portrayed it in a more romantic, erotic, and emotional manner. It had the intended effect, as Xenophon completed the account by saying «At last, seeing the guests who embraced as one and retired to bed, bachelors swore they would marry, and husbands galloped away in search of their wives to enjoy similar caresses». Whatever the intention of Xenophon's account –moralizing, pedagogical, or otherwise– his description is perhaps a reflection of the open acceptance and display of relationships laden with passion, eroticism, and sensuality within the framework of a conjugal union, and that union was modeled on Dionysus and Ariadne at the end of the 5th century and throughout the 4th century BC.

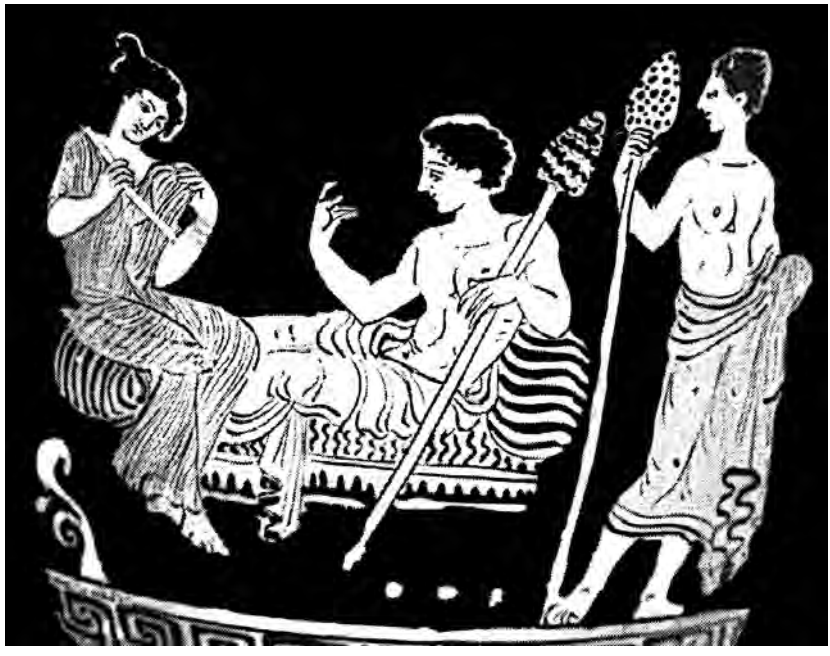

Figure 49. Apulian bell krater by the Dioskouroi Painter. Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 4/188, pl. 31, 3.

Figure 50. Apulian bridal lebes from the Egnazia Group. Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/144, pl. 185, 3.

In fact, there are many South Italian images depicting the conjugal union, following the structure of the erotic encounter on the symposium bed or the shared nuptial *thalamos*, as well as following the scheme of the erotic encounter in the bed of clearly mortal couples. Thus, on a bell krater by the Dioskouroi Painter[267] (Figure 49), a masculine figure with short hair, bare torso, and a thyrsus leaning on his shoulder, reclines on a bed, at whose feet a female figure sits with an aulos in her hands, while a young man with a thyrsus observes the scene. This can clearly be seen as the theme of the symposium since there is no allusion to the bridal ritual and the woman does not present any objects or make any gestures that would allude to one, the symposiast holding the thyrsus is not Dionysus, and the female figure is not a maenad or Ariadne. She may be an initiate who has attained mystical beatitude in Dionysian paradise and shares the bed with a woman at the divine symposium, as Dionysus did with Ariadne by uniting with her. There is also no explicit allusion to a wedding in the scene on a calyx krater by the Painter of Athens 1714[268], in which a bearded male

[267] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 4/188, pl. 31, 3.
[268] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 8/153, pl. 67, 3.

shares the symposium bed with a woman and holds the kantharos out to a satyr who holds a wine skin, while a maenad approaches with a tray laden with food and an alabastron in her hands. The elements of the symposium are clear, but the alabastron carried by the maenad charges the scene with erotic connotations that could represent the conjugal union of the mortal couple, the celebration of their wedding feast, or their sexual union, all in the realm of a Dionysian paradise, since the celebration is welcomed and shared by members of the *thiasos*. Likewise, the erotic encounter on the bed shared between mortals is represented on the pelikes by the Lycurgus Painter[269] and other painters[270] which contain no explicit references to the symposium or the Dionysian realm, although there are references to the wedding ritual, such as Eros crowning the hugging and kissing couple, the contents of an alabastron being spilled on them, Aphrodite on a swan, one woman releasing a dove, more incense balls burning in a *thymiaterion*, another woman with a box and ribbons in her hands, and a dove flying with ribbons in its beak. In addition, the bridal lebes from the Egnazia Group[271] (Figure 50) contains a couple who share the same *kline* yet do not embrace or kiss but rather gaze at one another. The woman extends her arm to touch the man and holds an aulos in her hand. Eros flies in to crown the couple, a woman holds a box and a mirror, another woman holds a box, and a young man, perhaps the *pais amphithales*, observes the scene's protagonists. On the pelike from the Zurich Group 2657[272], a mortal couple sits on a *kline*, gazing at each other while being crowned by Eros and accompanied by a young man holding a phiale and a woman with a fan in her hands. Another example can also be found on the neck of the volute krater by the Arpi Painter[273] that narrates the birth of Dionysus in its main scene. A young man holds a kantharos in his hands and touches a woman, who gazes back at him while holding an alabastron in one hand and presses against his thigh with the other. Two Eros arrive with bridal wreaths and flower garlands. In other scenes of conjugal union it is not necessary for the

[269] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 16/2, pl. 146, 1 and 16/4, pl. 146, 4.

[270] Especially in three pelikes of the Bari Group 3720 (Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 28/101-103, pl. 364, 1-3), in which the same pattern of the couple embracing and kissing in a shared bed, even in one of them with the same callipygian shape that we saw in the figure of Ariadne in the calyx krater of the Hippolytus Painter (DA 15).

[271] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/144, pl. 185, 3.

[272] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/368, pl. 206, 3.

[273] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 28/96, pl. 362.

couple to share the bed. Sometimes, as in a bridal lebes by the Painter of Athens 1714[274] (Figure 51), the couple sit with no furniture, the woman resting her arm on the man's shoulder while performing the gesture of *anakalypsis*, while the man moves his hand towards her, both gazing fixedly at one another. Eros flies with ribbons with which he will bind the couple and sanction their union, as two women stand on the side with wedding gifts. Another example is a Paestan lebes by a follower of Asteas[275] (Figure 52), where a woman sits on a plant stem and raises her arm to attract her partner, who embraces her from behind and they kiss, while Eros offers a crown and a phiale with fruit.

Figure 51. Apulian bridal lebes by the Painter of Athens 1714.
Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 8/162, pl. 68, 2.

[274] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 8/162, pl. 68, 2.

[275] Mayo 1982, n. 108, p. 232; Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 198, a; also in other *lebes* from Paestum of the Naples Painter 1778 (Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 275, n. 24, pl. 171, c), with an adolescent youth, perhaps the *pais amphithales*.

Figure 52. Paestan lebes by a follower of Asteas. Mayo 1982, n. 108, p. 232.

All of these images represent men and women in the celebration of the wedding ritual, the wedding feast, or the conjugal union on the *thalamos*, all of them providing a version of this erotic ritual, or at least the tenderness and feeling behind it. They also all follow the model of the representations of Dionysus and Ariadne's hierogamy[276].

The South Italian images of the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne, in addition to the images narrating the prologue of the meeting in Naxos, are used to legitimize a particular social and political discourse, that of the elite who are buried with these images and express themselves through the heroization of the deceased, since, as indicated by Grassigli in relation to the principal scene of the Derveni krater[277], any hierogamy implies the birth of a hero, the birth of the founder of a line of superior men. The sexual

[276] Even in the polychrome vases from Centuripe there are representations of the nuptial ritual in which Dionysus is present. According to Vatin 2004, p. 81, the reason of their presence, is that entering into the married life means breaking earlier ties with the family and previous habits, washing the stains of the past in the inaugural bath, beginning a new life like Ariadne entering the blessedness of a divine existence, and it is Dionysus who guides successive lives; in marriage, as in death, forgetting the past is the condition and promise of the future.

[277] Grassigli 1999, p. 139; Tiverios 2008, p. 207, however, thinks that the Derveni krater does not develop the theme of hierogamy between Dionysus and Ariadne, but the triumph of the god. Grassigli's reading, in our opinion, is more accurate.

and erotic dimension refers in this regard to maturation or admission into a new echelon that leads to marriage, an aspect that concerns not only men but also women, whose role as a vehicle of wealth and lineage are essential to the perpetuation of the existing social order. The union of Dionysus and Ariadne is exemplary, as it is a paradigm of marital bliss which serves as a model to sanction marriage between mortals. No other divine union could also offer a more explicit and adequate model to fulfill the yearning for transcendency and the hope of a fully actualized life after death to those who followed their life-transforming teachings and chose these images to accompany them in the passage from death towards a beatific afterlife, where a man's identification with Dionysus and a woman's with Ariadne could be fulfilled.

III. Dionysus' promises. A catalogue of images

Dionysus' relationship with his followers is the most extensively developed aspect in Dionysian imagery. Although this aspect was also characteristic of Attic imagery, South Italian vases offered new, critical contributions. The god's iconography cannot be addressed without discussing «the Dionysian» and of all the elements which, although they do not represent the divine figure directly, are part of his world. This includes the mythical characters who make up his *thiasos*, the mortals who enter his orbit or sphere of action, the spatial elements or objects represented and which, when used by these mortals or immortals, are symbols of the Dionysian, of the god and his power. It is that power, which is intrinsic to the very nature of the god, that is offered to those who were initiated into his rites and who believed in the promise of an eternal and blessed life in a paradise of the beyond. The images of Dionysus and «the Dionysian» place before the eyes of the society that shares these beliefs and is buried with these beliefs, the entire catalogue of the promises that Dionysus offers his followers, promises for those who, through the bonds that are established with the god during life, obtain individual salvation, the final liberation and triumph over death.

1. The pact with Hades

The catalogue opens with an image that is key to understanding the salvific power of the god: the image on the Apulian volute krater by the Darius Painter in Toledo[1]. This famous scene is dominated by the palace of Hades; inside are Pluto and Persephone, husband and wife, who observe Dionysus, the newcomer, who looks across to them and extends his hand to Hades. Behind Dionysus are the members of his *thiasos*, with a maenad named Akheta, who dances with a *tympanus* and thyrsus in her hands.

[1] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Suppl. II. p. 508, 18/41al; Johnston and McNiven 1996; Olmos 2008, p. 291-293; Bernabé 2009, p. 113, fig. 6.5.

Another maenad named Persis located higher in the scene holds a thyrsus and torch; next to her sits a satyr named Oinops, who holds a drinking horn and double flute. Another member of the Dionysian company is a small Paniskos taunting Cerberus, who is tied and relegated to the foot of the building. Hermes, on the other side of the palace, is witness to the unusual action. The figures behind him, to the right of the scene, are all named, and are the antithesis of Dionysus' company: Actaeon sits above, with a strigil in his hand, and is addressed by Pentheus; beneath him is Agave, leaning on a louterion. These three Theban individuals, relatives of Dionysus, are three important and mythical *hybristai*, mortals who either did not recognize the power of the god or defied him. The vase thus contrasts two worlds: the world of the god's followers and the world of those who oppose him. Johnston and McNiven[2] noted that this group is a reminder that those not initiated, or worse still, those who reject Dionysus are forever excluded from the rewards granted by the god. They concluded that although the three Cadmeans are not actively punished, as are other famous condemned figures in the scenes of Underworld, their fate simply seems to be exclusion from a good life after death[3]. Thus, the members of the *thiasos* are a mythical transposition of the *bebakcheumenoi* or those initiated in Bacchus or Dionysus Lyseus, the liberating god of those blessed after death, who represented the promised rewards also on the Orphic tablets[4]. However, Johnston rectified her initial interpretation of the group and proposed a new reading: Dionysus and his *thiasos* are welcome visitors in Hades; all horrors disappear with his arrival; his presence nullifies

[2] Johnston and McNiven 1996, pp. 34-35.

[3] An opposed opinion (which I do not share) in Slater 2004, p. 229, note 31: «This is an odd reading, because it presupposes a good life after death, and then assumes that death is not a punishment».

[4] This opinion is shared by Graf 1993, p. 256; Moret 1993, p. 301; and Johnston and McNiven 1996, p. 35. Radically opposed was Torjussen, with surprising assertions, like for instance p. 91: «we have no specific clues on the Apulian vases as to what kind of life awaited the dead beyond the grave, and certainly nothing specifically Dionysiac except for the unique appearance of the deity on the Toledo krater», or in pp. 99-100: «the image of Dionysus could be taken from a popular myth which did not necessarily have anything to do with the deceased's afterlife. I thus find it safer to interpret the main scene more or less separated from the deceased and also separated from the vague eschatological beliefs of a cult from mainland Greece, a cult with which it is unlikely that the deceased or the Darius painter had any contact». We can by no means agree with Torjussen's opinions.

even the worst transgressions, freeing those who committed them from the punishments they would otherwise have received, announcing the power of the god to overcome death and liberate even those who opposed him[5].

However, the focus of this image from the point of view of the viewer or from the point of view of most of the characters in the image –Persephone, Hermes, Agave and Akheta– is not the figures located on either side of the infernal palace, but the action of the handshake between Hades and Dionysus, a gesture that seals this unusual pact between the god of life and the god of death[6]. Although Dionysus' *katabasis* and the pact he establishes with the Lord of the Underworld had another cause according to the mythical account, the action of taking his mother Semele from Hades and bringing her with him to Olympus demonstrates that the action and the divine pact are models for all mortals who follow the god.

The compositional layout repeats that of another well-known scene, from the krater by the Underworld Painter from Munich[7], in which it is Orpheus who arrives along with a small family group before the Lords of Death[8].

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[5] S. I. Johnston »Dionysus and the Underworld—Again», unpublished lecture at the Conference «Redefining Dionisos», at the Universidad Complutense, Madrid, February 5, 2010, makes this new reading based on the corpus of Apulian images of the Underworld, and taking into account the meaning of the mythical and gestual relations between the characters to the right, and the objects associated to them: specifically, the strigil hold by Acteon, sign of his probable activity in the Afterlife; the louterion on which Agave leans, interpreted as an element of purification for her, and the absence of Furies.

[6] Graf 1993, p. 256; Moret 1993, p. 304; Johnston and McNiven 1996, pp. 29-30.

[7] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/282, pl. 194; Moret 1993, n. 17; Aellen 1994, n. 50.

[8] Schmidt 1975, pp. 105-137; Moret 1993; Schmidt 2000, pp. 98-99; Cabrera 2018. These figures, do they represent the initiated in the Orphic mysteries, or more broadly, all those who believe in the salvation of the soul and a blessed afterlife existence? It is evident that the Orphic initates would see in the figure of Orpheus their guide and protector, who has descended to the Underworld to discover the secrets of life and death and to intercede in favour of his *mystai*, the one who, through his teachings, transmitted during the initiation, indicated them the practice of the way of life necessary to reach salvation, and who showed them, as someone who has been there previously, the way to Hades and what happened there. The coincidence in the salvific message of Orphic images and texts confirms it. However, I do not believe that this mediating function of both characters, the divine and the human, was exclusive for the initiates in the Orphic mysteries.

Here, as in the case of Orpheus[9], it is Dionysus who intervenes on the behalf of his followers. As Olmos[10] states, «the message of the pact is clear: those initiated into the mysteries of Dionysus, the *mystai*, will be free from the wheel and find rest from all evil. The vase clarifies the representation of Dionysus as a divinity of Orphism. It widens and illuminates the presence of so many other Dionysian images in the South Italian world». Whether he is strictly linked to Orphism or not, or there is simply an expression of eschatology present in Dionysian mysteries, the image that dominates the set of Dionysus' promises places the god on equal footing with the deities from the Underworld, who, by following the pact, ensure the passage of the deceased and their welcome to the afterlife and allow Dionysus to fulfill his salvific function, bestowing on his faithful what he promised them in life.

What does Dionysus offer his followers, those initiated into his mysteries and mortals? Having been legitimized by the Lord of the Underworld himself, how does Dionysus' mastery over death begin? How is it realized and how does it take place? What spatial and semantic realms does this mastery encompass in imagery? What are the promised gifts that the souls receive once they have crossed the border into death?

2. Crossing the threshold of death – the *naiskos* scenes

In South Italian vases, especially those from Apulia, the main iconographic element that defines the landscape of death is the *naiskos*[11], a small, white temple usually raised on a decorated podium, in the interior of which the deceased is represented. The white color used for the temple and the figures inside allude not only to the marble used in funeral buildings and sculptures, but also to the ideal, sacred nature of the cemetery space, the entrance hall of the realm of the Underworld, and the heroic character of the deceased who is buried there. The *naiskos* is thus conceived as a burial monument, housing the sculpture of the deceased, idealized in its representation, but also as a *heroon*, as a sacred building, the temple where the heroic cult is officiated. On the sides of the temple, men and women, and sometimes other mythical figures, approach the tomb with offerings. This is the basic structure of the *naiskos* scenes, but the inexhaustible variations on this theme[12] realized by South Italian

[9] Bernabé and Jiménez 2008, pp. 66ff; Bernabé 2009, p. 113; Cabrera 2018.
[10] Olmos 2001, p. 306.
[11] Pontrandolfo *et alii* 1998; Cabrera 2013.
[12] Lohmann 1979.

painters allow viewers to delve into the religious symbols that underlie these scenes.

The *naiskos* can house the figure of a male or female, an old man or a youth, a child, a warrior, an athlete, an actor, or a poet. All ages and genders are represented. Their attitudes and numbers also vary. The material elements that accompany the deceased in these temples –furniture, vases, offerings, weapons, musical instruments, sporting equipment, and pets– are allusions to the space they occupy and are socially sanctioned for each age and gender; there are precise symbols of the deceased's social status, of their function in the civic order, and of his or her privileges.

The cemetery's landscape is rounded out with other types of monuments. On Apulian vases the funerary stele is intricately linked to the *naiskos* since it decorates the back of the same vase. This monument is a pillar, adorned with white and black ribbons, raised on a podium decorated and sometimes topped with a large cup with raised handles. This cup is a kantharos, a heroic vase typical of the Dionysian realm, which contains the sacred liquid in its pure state, a ritual object, symbol of the power that the wine and Dionysus embody. The participants in this funeral ritual also come before the commemorative stone with offerings.

The burial place, presided over by the *naiskos* or the stele, is invariably surrounded by a group of figures who bear gifts in their hands. Who are these characters who surround the naiskos? At the first level of interpretation it can be said that those who surround the *naiskos* are family members and close friends of the deceased and celebrants of this cult to the deceased's heroism, who come with offerings for the deceased and for the gods of the Underworld. They may include mythical figures who give the scene a new, transcendent dimension, loaded with religious significance.

On a volute krater from Bari,[13] those who surround the *naiskos* that houses the figure of a young man are Apollo, seated and holding a kithara, and Hermes, leaning on a louterion, along with a woman and a youth. Hermes' presence indicates the essential quality of the liminal space of death, where the psychopomp god of the border between life and death presides, and also signals the transit that has already taken place. Apollo, Lord of Prophecy, of the word and of music, god of ecstatic possession and transformation, is present to welcome the deceased to a new realm where

[13] Lohmann 1979, A 59, Tf. 12, 1; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 16/ 41, pl. 154, 2.

the deceased's soul, by being possessed by the divine new knowledge of truth and beauty, will obtain its final beatific end. In a volute krater from the Louvre[14], a Fury sits next to a *naiskos*; this hellish spirit holds a caduceus, symbol of the psychopomp divinities, and a torch with which to light the shadows of the Other World. She is present next to the *naiskos* as an instrument of divine justice, the executrix of divine will and its essence, representative of a cosmic law that must be fulfilled at the moment of death and, consequently, of rebirth to a new life[15].

Figure 53. Apulian volute krater from the collection of John Werner Kluge. Christie's, Sale Catalogue 7 December 2011, lot n. 128.

However, it is the Dionysian characters, or those with Dionysian attributes, who express in a special way the worth and sense of space offered by the *naiskos*. On an Apulian volute krater from the collection of John Werner Kluge[16] (Figure 53), a female figure with a fan and a situla surround the funerary monument which houses the figure of a warrior armed with shield and helmet, affixed to his horse by the reins. On the other side of the

[14] Lohmann 1979, A 575, Tf. 42, 2.
[15] Aellen 1994, pp. 82-90.
[16] Mayo 1982, p. 178, n. 73; Christie's, Sale Catalogue 7 December 2011, lot n. 128.

monument is a satyr with a thyrsus and oinochoe. A plant sprouts inside the *naiskos*. It is evident that here, the characters placed next to the monument are not relatives of the deceased, but the same members of Dionysus' retinue who come to the space where the passage from life into death takes place to welcome the fallen warrior and lead him to the realm of the god in the world beyond this mortal one. Sometimes it is not a figure from the *thiasos*, but another mortal man or woman who is represented next to the *naiskos* with a thyrsus in his or her hand, as in a volute krater by the Baltimore Painter at the Walters Art Museum,[17] and in a volute krater from Christie's[18] (Figure 54). Similarly, a volute krater from a private American collection[19] (Figure 55) depicts a youth with a thyrsus, a cluster of grapes, and a flower –which will be discussed further– in his hands, the entire panoply of symbols that allude to the initiated and transformative Dionysian space, as well as to his salvific power.

Figure 54. Apulian volute krater. Christie's, Sale Catalogue 12 December 2002, lot n. 14.

[17] Mayo 1982, pp. 175-176, n. 71.
[18] Christie's, Sale Catalogue 12 December 2002, lot n. 148; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Sup. II, n. 25/9d.
[19] Mayo 1982, p. 180, n. 74.

Figure 55. Volute krater from a private American collection.
Mayo 1982, p. 180, n. 74.

Occasionally, the mythical figure enters the small temple and sits next to the deceased, further demonstrating his role as a character who welcomes the deceased to the Afterlife, and to indicate that the space of the *naiskos* is not seen as being of this world, but of the world beyond this one. Thus, on a volute krater from Ruvo[20] (Figure 56), a young satyr inside the *naiskos* receives a woman, the deceased, and offers her a libation to welcome her to her new home, to the infernal gynaeceum where she will join with the god, Hades or Dionysus, to achieve – as the mythical bride Ariadne or Persephone did – divine status, since a wedding to an immortal is necessary to triumph over death and achieve immortality. In an Apulian amphora from a private American collection[21] (Figure 57), it is Eros and a young *mystes* with a thyrsus in his hand who receive the deceased in the interior of the *naiskos*. The deceased, a woman, holds a cluster of grapes and a white duck that Eros has given her, an erotic symbol that alludes to her proximate nuptials with the god. In another Apulian amphora from Cahn[22] (Figure 58), it is psychopomp Hermes who is inside this space to welcome and lead the deceased to her immortal destiny.

[20] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 30/ 3, pl. 391, 4.
[21] Mayo 1982, p. 183, n. 76; Christie's, Sale Catalogue 7 December 2011, lot n. 131.
[22] Cahn Auktionen AG, 13 November 2015, lot n. 79 a.

Figure 56. Apulian volute krater from Ruvo. Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 30/ 3, pl. 391, 4.

Figure 57. Apulian amphora from a private American collection. Christie's, Sale Catalogue 7 December 2011, lot n. 13.

Figure 58. Apulian amphora. Antique market. Cahn Auktionen AG, 13 November 2015, lot n. 79 a.

While some of the characters surrounding or entering the *naiskos* provide a key that opens the scene up to a new dimension, the life beyond earthly confines, beyond the cemetery space, the objects that they carry and present to the viewers indicate that the location pertains to Dionysus. In a volute krater from Basel[23], the funerary monument, presided over by a gadrooned cup, the drinking cup, is surrounded by four figures, three women who are standing and a youth who is seated. Two of them hold bunches of grapes in their hands, among other objects. The youth carries a large branch with fruits. The offering of the fruit of the vine draws the viewer into the world of Dionysus. Could the god be seen in the masculine figure? Normally, Dionysus is depicted naked and with long, curled locks falling onto his shoulders. Dionysus' hair[24] differentiates the divine figure

[23] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/290, pl. 199.

[24] This proble of identifying the figure with short hair is pointed out by Jacquet-Rimassa 1998, who in p. 31 maintains that the absence of iconographic units like the kantharos,

from mortals, who always have short hair. However, if he is not the god, he resembles him. In a volute krater from Bari,[25] the central character, sitting on a small temple, holds a large cluster of grapes and a *tympanum* and is surrounded by three women and a young satyr –a configuration reminiscent of the *naiskos* scenes–.

The cluster of grapes, the fruit of the vine, Dionysus' gifts to mankind, the instrument of possession and transformation, are held by both male and female figures located next to the *naiskos* that houses the image of the deceased[26]. Additionally, as mentioned, there are the thyrsus, *tympanum*, or instruments of the feast: situla, oinochoe, phiale, trays with food or, even, in a volute krater from Bonn[27], a young man who prepares to place a calyx krater at the feet of the monument, preparing the sacred symposium in which the deceased, a character of idealized youth, takes part and celebrates his entrance to the Dionysian paradise.

The images of the *naiskos*, a window that opened to the afterlife, or the funerary monument, do not paint a picture of a real landscape, or at least not solely of a landscape that could be real, but rather they represent a symbolic, religious, and mythical landscape. Whoever is located there is not only in the cemetery space, but also in the blessed kingdom of the afterlife, an ideal and luminous space, a paradise where the final, definitive transformation takes place. For this reason, Eros sometimes appears as one of the characters that surrounds the monument, as in a volute krater from Madrid[28] (Figure 59), ready to welcome the deceased. Through his generating power, Eros grants the deceased a new life, while indicating that this funerary space is the antechamber of a beatific afterlife, the Dionysian paradise where, as we will see (chapter IV. 2), Eros also has his domains.

The power of Eros is necessary to operate the transformation that takes place immediately, and which in South Italian iconography has a

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long hairs or the headdress, make the identification with Dionysus doubtful, and recalls that it would be erroneous to identify all thyrsus-carriers with Dionysus.

[25] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 16/41, pl. 154, 2.

[26] Examples are extremely abundant; we may cite just those illustrated by Trendall and Cambitoglou, RVAp, n. 12/125, 17/1, 17/6, 17/17, 17/22, 17/37, 17/39, 17/49, 18/1, 18/199, 18/287, 18/290, 18/297, 18/315, 19/17, 20/69, 23/1, 23/2, 23/11, 23/231, 23/239, 23/247, 23/254, 23/269, 23/273, 25/12, 27/3, 27/5, 27/8, 27/15, 27/17, 27/41, 28/41, 28/67, 28/115, 29/1, 30/15, 30/22, 30/32.

[27] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 16/14, pl. 150, 1.

[28] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. inv. 1998/92/1.

very particular expression. It is common for images to depict the inside of the *naiskos* with a large female head sprouting from the ground or from a floral calyx, as in a krater from Toronto[29], or a krater from Christie's[30]. It is the image of the *anodos*, the transit or way, the action of emerging from the earth, of rebirth. The mythical model for this image is the transit that Persephone undertook when she was returned to her mother, to light and life. The goddess' transit is an action that is constantly renewed in the periodic sprouting of nature, but also in the death of mankind. The image is therefore a mirror for the mortal who lies in the tomb: just as Persephone, who reigns over those who died, the deceased has triumphed over death and makes the journey to the afterlife, entering the kingdom of the blessed. The images that decorate the necks of these vases are complementary: a woman's head in profile, endowed with wings, sprouts above the scene of the *naiskos*. On one vase, an even more definitive substitution has been made: the *naiskos* does not house the image of the deceased, but of a plant[31]. In an amphora from Toledo[32], and in a hydria from Madrid[33] (Figure 60), an acanthus has been represented inside the *naiskos,* from which a succession of flowers, buds, and tendrils sprout. A woman and a youth stand at its sides; the woman in the Toledo amphora holds a cluster of grapes in her hand. Both characters are wrapped in an aura of idealized bliss, at rest, absorbed in contemplation of the action taking place inside the small temple. The image of a static and already-formed plant is not the subject of contemplation, but the fruitful action of sprouting, of the inexhaustible metamorphosis of the plant element, an action presided over by Eros or Dionysus. What is contemplated by and what overwhelms the characters who participate in the scenes on the Toledo and Madrid vases is the magnitude of the metamorphic action. It has already taken place: death, the definitive initiation which has turned the mortal, ephemeral, and withered into seed and renewed bud; the deceased has been replaced, following the dissolution of the human form, by the perfect image of the plant, an expression of the inexhaustible force of life.

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[29] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 28/140 and 144, pl. 368, 5-6.

[30] Christie's London, Sale Catalogue 25 april 2001, lot 288.

[31] Other examples of the plant in the inner part of the *naiskos*: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 19/129, 25/1, 25/18, 27/6, 28/63, 28/132, 28/135.

[32] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 27/41, pl. 328.

[33] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. inv. 1999/99/125. Cf. Cabrera 1999.

Figure 59. Apulian volute krater. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. inv. 1998/92/1.

Figure 60. Apulian hydria. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. inv. 1999/99/125.

3. Entering the Paradisiac garden

Once the deceased had crossed the threshold from death by way of the antechamber of the *naiskos*, he or she entered a metaphorically ideal space: the Garden of the Gods. This space is depicted in images as a landscape defined by the wonderful, exuberant, and magnificent; the perpetual and instantaneous bloom of plants, flowers, buds, garlands, tendrils, palms, and acanthus; by fertile and primal nature in constant growth and transformation. A landscape thus configured, representing action of sprouting, of wonderful and splendid growth, of spontaneous germination, is a recurrent motif in South Italian iconography, especially in Apulian vases.

Figure 61. Apulian pelike, Painter of the Citharist siren. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, 1999/99/142

This magnificent garden –presided over by Dionysus, who rides across it mounted on a panther-drawn carriage[34]– is the realm of Eros. There are

[34] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 30/20, pl. 393.

numerous images of the god depicted as a young hermaphrodite; however, in the majority of cases, he is represented as an adolescent who emerges, walks, flutters, or rests on a lush and extraordinary profusion of flowers, buds, tendrils, and spirals (Figure 61). He carries an enormous cluster of grapes, rides on a panther, or attends to Aphrodite in her epiphany in the Sacred Garden.[35] In this symbolic landscape, a space of transit, Hermes[36] appears (Figure 62), the messenger and psychopomp god, happy ambassador of souls who attends to initiates to lead them to the blessed kingdom of Dionysus, as indicated by the great cluster of grapes in one of these images and the panther who accompanies him. Here, also, sirens sing over enormous calyxes of flowers[37]. One siren sets the rhythm with the Dionysian *tympanum* and at her feet there is a xylophone[38]. Another siren, on a volute krater from Madrid[39], strums the kithara with a gesture of deep emotion. A sphynx with a watchful eye is the means by which the journey towards and through this blissful garden is made[40]. Other demons transit in this liminal site: winged female figures with flower garlands[41], winged female heads that sprout flower calyxes[42], demons that participate in the plant metamorphosis of this wonderous environment and have transformed the lower part of their bodies into acanthus leaves that are rolled into endless spirals[43]. These figures are innumerable, as are those that sprout in this fertile landscape adorned with a Phrygian cap[44], for whom many names have been proposed: Paris, Orpheus, Adonis, Attis, Dioskouroi, Amazons, Artemis, Bendis, Dionysus, or a member of Aphrodite Urania's *thiasos*[45]. There, too, the melancholy horned head of Io[46] springs up in that explosion of plant

[35] Schauenburg, 1957, fig. 1; Schauenburg 1984, fig. 18, 20, 23 and 36; Schauenburg 1989, fig.22 and 28; Schneider-Herrmann 1977, pl. VI, fig.3 and pl. VII, fig. 2; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 23/231, pl. 280, 1; Lohmann 1979, Tf. 15, 1.

[36] Schauenburg 1957b, Tf. 45, 1; Schneider-Herrmann 1977, pl. XV, fig. 5.

[37] Jucker 1961.

[38] Schauenburg 1984, Abb. 21; Schauenburg 1989, Abb. 24 and 32.

[39] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. inv. 1998/92/1.

[40] Aellen, Cambitoglou, Chamay 1986, p. 18, 104-106.

[41] Sichtermann 1966, K.75, pl. 133.

[42] Schauenburg 1984, Abb. 14.

[43] Schauenburg, 1984, Abb. 25.

[44] Sichtermann 1966, K.75, pl. 132.

[45] Schauenburg, 1981b, p. 486; Kossatz-Deissmann, 1990a, p. 516.

[46] Yalouris 1990, p. 669, n. 63 and 64; Todisco 2006, p. 199, cat 1c; Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 3 June 2009, lot n. 136.

life, referring to the exemplary fate of the one who wandered aimlessly on earth, pioneering new paths, those that mankind had never before forged, and who is now a permanent model for mortals on the ornate vases of death.[47] The most beautiful image is that of a dish from Ruvo[48] (Figure 63), on which a female figure – once again, impossible to name – who is held up by two winged spirits, possibly Eros or Himeros, flies or perhaps descends over an overflowing and inexhaustible profusion of flowers, buds, calyxes, and fronds. The Erotes carry the characteristic objects of Dionysian rituals: the situla and the torch, an image of the deity or of the initiated, the soul transported over this mystical landscape in the realm of beauty, of the love and contentment that the god of ecstasy promises.

Figure 62. Apulian dish or patera, Schneider-Herrmann 1977, pl. xv, fig. 5.

At times, the symbolic landscape becomes the scene of mythical actions: Perseus kills Medusa,[49] Boreas kidnaps Oreithyia,[50] Ganymede is

[47] Cabrera 2014.
[48] Sichtermann 1966, K.79, pl. 138
[49] Schauenburg 2000, Abb. 217.
[50] Schauenburg 1984, Abb. 33.

carried away by a swan,[51] an Arimaspus battles a griffin,[52]Bellerophon mounted on Pegasus kills the Chimera,[53] Phrixos rides over a ram,[54] an Eastern character rides on a griffin[55] or on a horse while chasing a hare.[56] Nonetheless, in most cases, female heads without any attributes arise out of this exuberance of plant life, unnamed characters who could be goddesses or mortals and appear as mirror images of the deceased, emerging to a new life in the afterlife. This figure is sometimes simply a small woman sitting on a huge flower, almost hidden among the magnificent, extraordinary overabundance of this wonderous garden,[57] with a fan and a box on her lap – perhaps alluding to the *liknon*, or the mystical cist containing the objects of the ritual of initiation. Images of erotic hunting, of a struggle, or of transit are all metaphors for death.

Figure 63. Dish from Ruvo. Museo Jatta. Sichtermann 1966, K.79, pl. 138.

[51] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 25/1, pl. 294
[52] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 16/7, pl. 148, 4
[53] Schauenburg 1989, fig. 5; cf. Schauenburg 1979b.
[54] Schauenburg 1957b, fig. 2
[55] Schauenburg 1957b, Tf. 42
[56] Schauenburg 1984, Abb. 15
[57] Schauenburg 1984, Abb. 1 and 22

Figure 64. Situla from Dublin. Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 15/37, pl. 142, 1; Cambitoglou 2006, p. 76, n. 10.

In this divine garden that Dionysus[58] walks through and shares with Aphrodite and Eros, the members of his *thiasos* are not forgotten. In a Dublin situla[59] (Figure 64), a maenad with thyrsus, *tympanum*, and panther skin dances with her hair vibrantly shaking, almost floating, above a flower that emerges from two acanthus leaves, among flowers, calyxes, buds, and tendrils. In an alabastron from Rome[60] (Figure 65), a pointy-eared satyr, covered in animal skin and playing a kithara, appears among this prolific environment of plant life. On the neck of an Apulian volute krater[61], a maenad runs possessed through this garden, brandishing a thyrsus, raising her *tympanum* high, and accompanied by a fawn. On the neck of an Apulian volute krater from Basel[62], the head of a satyr/Pan sprouts from a flower's calyx among plant scrolls.

[58] Cf. note 330.
[59] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 15/37, pl. 142, 1; Cambitoglou 2006, p. 76, n. 10.
[60] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 21/22, pl. 232, 7
[61] Schauenburg 1979a, Abb. 22.
[62] Lohmann 1979, A 787, Tf. 37, 2.

Figure 65. Alabastron from Rome. Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 21/22, pl. 232, 7.

The Garden of Dionysus Antheios is a fertile landscape, a space of continuous transformation, of inexhaustible generation, located outside of human time and space; a marvelous garden, magical in its sacred manifestation of plant life. It is the garden of brilliant, shining Dionysus, but also of Dionysus Lysios, who unleashes, and Eleuthereus, who liberates. It is the sacred garden where life bursts forth in all its fullness, where flowers continuously sprout as well as plants, vines, branches, scented fruits, and perfumed buds, an image of the universal *physis*, of the generative process that is movement and action, emergence and commencement, a process that extends and develops over time. Whoever enters this Garden acquires and participates in the germinative and transformative force of that cosmic *physis*, for that is where the definitive metamorphosis takes place, that which transforms the deceased who was buried with the vase into a new entity, a divine one. The image that this garden transmits is a metaphor for death, a mirrored reflection, in which living through death results in new life. This is also the teaching conveyed by an Orphic bone tablet from Olbia which expresses the formula *bios-thanatos-bios*[63]. The Garden of Dio-

[63] Graf 1993, p. 242.

nysus is a space of ambiguity and, essential for all symbolic landscapes, of radical otherness, the space of encounter with the god and of a transcendent and liberating epiphany.

4. Encounter with the god

Having entered the Garden of Dionysus, the deceased is welcomed by the god himself or by members of his *thiasos*. The images of encountering the god are conceived as static scenes of repose and blessed serenity, in a space that is always exterior, filled with plant life, flora and sometimes nocturnal, lit by torches carried by individuals. Some scenes are quite complex and involve numerous figures: firstly, Dionysus and members of his *thiasos*, and naturally the *mystes*, the deceased who has entered the Dionysian paradise and already contemplates the god face to face. Others involve only the god and the deceased, sometimes identified as a mythical figure, a member of the *thiasos*. At times, especially in the case of women, it is difficult to distinguish between the female deceased and maenads, since they can have any of the Dionysian symbols or instruments in their hands, but that ambiguity, that fusion of identities is intentionally sought after, since Dionysus favors such a transformation by incorporating the deceased as members of his mythical followers.

Apulian images usually offer a staging of the most complex encounter, at times indistinguishable from a scene of a meeting between the god and his *thiasos* and the preparation of the tumultuous banquet or feast. In general, these are scenes with three or more characters: Dionysus, a female figure, and a satyr. On a Madrid situla[64], in a mountainous landscape insinuated by white dotted lines, long-haired Dionysus sits on a hill and holds in his hands the alabastron that contains the perfume of immortality; a maenad carries a narthex adorned with a white ribbon and offers him the triumphant crown; a young satyr holds a flaming torch embellished with a ribbon of white pearls; a second maenad holds a narthex in one hand and an herbal garland in the other; an oinochoe, a tray with white fruits, and a situla at Dionysus' feet are the apparatus for a future celebration of the symposium. On a calyx krater by the White Sakos Painter from Sotheby's[65] (Figure 66), Dionysus, sitting on a section depicted with undulating ground, with a flowering thyr-

[64] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 1999/99/133; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. II, p. 105, n. 35b; attributed by Trendall to the Situlae Painter of Dublin, though recently Cambitoglou 2006, p. 124, has proposed to call the painter of this situla «The Painter of the Three-Gods-Symposium».

[65] Sotheby's London, Sale Catalogue 10 July 1989, lot 257

sus in his hand, the kithara beside him, contemplates a female figure who walks to the left, carrying in her hands a situla and a *thymiaterion*; to the right of the god, a satyr with a torch and situla arrives, walking on tip-toe. On a calyx krater by the Underworld Painter[66] (Figure 67), Dionysus is seated in the center of the scene, holding a thyrsus and a tray. Eros flies above him with ribbons in his hands; surrounding him are satyrs and maenads with thyrsus, *tympana*, *situlae*, torches, branches of fruit, and a crown. One of the satyrs is placing the krater on the ground for the wine which is to be immediately consumed. On a bell krater by the Group of the Dublin Situlae[67] (Figure 68), the god is standing with a thyrsus and kantharos in his hands. In front of him a maenad with thyrsus and tray prepares to burn incense balls in a *thymiaterion*, while a satyr approaches with a thyrsus and situla. An immense bunch of grapes and vine branches hang from the background. The action of offering perfume and incense is highlighted here in the foreground. There may be an exchange of offerings among the god and his companions, although it is usually his companions who present *kantharoi*[68] *oinochoai*[69], *phialai*[70], alabastra[71], crowns[72], or ribbons[73]. On a patera by the Underworld Painter[74] (Figure 69), the god, sitting on the ground, receives a satyr with an herbal crown while he presents a phiale, an action that is illuminated by the torch held by a female figure leaning on a louterion, an allusion to the ritual bath of the bride, who could be Ariadne. A goat lies at his feet. A nuptial evocation can also be perceived in a pelike from Yale University[75], where Dionysus, sitting with a phiale in his hand, receives a crown from a female figure with a cluster

[66] Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 8 Juny 2001, lot 169; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. II, I, 18/318a.

[67] Sotheby's London, Sale Catalogue 12 December 1988, lot 169; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. II, p. 105, n. 34c; Cambitoglou 2006, p. 114, n. 28.

[68] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 112, n. 581, pl. 47, 5.

[69] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* I, 16/17, pl. 150, 3.

[70] Some examples: Schauenburg 1972a, Abb 48; Lucan bell-krater of the Painter of Creusa: Trendall, LCS, p. 92, n. 469, pl. 44,3; Gasparri 1986, p. 455, n. 344; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 4/ 67, pl. 25, 5; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 4/201, pl. 32, 1.

[71] Schauenburg 1986, Abb. 19.

[72] MAN 32654: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 9/42, pl. 72, 3; Schauenburg 1981a, Abb, 12; Trendall, LCS, p. 88, n. 429, pl. 41,3.

[73] Günter Puhze, *Kunst der Antike* 12, lot 212; Trendall, *LCS*, p. 88, n. 429, pl. 41,3.

[74] Cahn Auktionen, Auktion 7, 3 november 2012, lot 256.

[75] Schauenburg 1972a, Abb 8.

of grapes in her hand while another woman, seated behind the god, holds a mirror and a ball of wool. Eros presides high above the scene with a crown in his hands while a fawn grazes quietly at the god's feet. Eros, the crown, the mirror, and the ball of wool could allude to the nuptials of Dionysus and Ariadne, which are also the nuptials of those who are buried with this image. All of these images depict the supernatural fullness of the *bakkhoi*, the followers of Dionysus; in them breathes the blessed stillness of the encounter with the god in his blessed beyond.

Figure 66. Apulian calyx krater by the White Sakos Painter. Antique market (Sotheby's London, Sale Catalogue 10 July 1989, lot 25)

Figure 67. Apulian calyx krater by the Underworld Painter. Antique market (Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 8 June 2001, lot 169).

Figure 68. Apulian bell krater by the Group of the Dublin Situlae. Antique market (Sotheby's London, Sale Catalogue 12 December 1988, lot 169).

Figure 69. Apulian patera by the Underworld Painter. Antique market (Cahn Auktionen, Auktion 7, 3 november 2012, lot 256).

Figure 70. Apulian situla by the Varrese Painter. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 1992.317.

The mythical identity of the figure presented to Dionysus cannot always be confirmed by appearances, clothing, or attributes. Thus, for example, in a volute krater from Melbourne[76], the god, seated with a thyrsus in his hand, encounters a woman lacking any of the usual Dionysian instruments, who holds a phiale and a crown while the god presents the kantharos with the transformative wine; a female winged figure, possibly Nike, stands above the two figures. This woman has not been portrayed as a maenad, at least not in an obvious manner. Is it the deceased? The viewer cannot be sure, but the presence of Nike may allude to the triumph over death that the god has bestowed. There are many images[77] in which Dionysus encounters a female figure who bears no specific Dionysian elements: the god is sitting or standing, holding a thyrsus and a phiale, and the woman is standing in front of him, or seated at his side, contemplating the god, sometimes offering him a ribbon, a crown, or a tray of fruit. At times it is the god who

[76] Schauenburg 1972a, Abb 48.

[77] Some examples: Trendall, *LCS*, p. 88, n. 429, pl. 41, 3; LCS, p. 112, n. 581, pl. 57, 5; LCS, p. 217, n. 96, pl. 85, 5; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 9/129, 12/113, 12/35; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 25/10a.

offers the woman the victory crown[78]. On a situla from Boston by the Varrese Painter[79] (Figure 70), Dionysus, a satyr, and a female figure are depicted within a space that is bordered by the magical growth of the vine; Dionysus holds the thyrsus and the heroic kantharos, which he offers to a woman. This woman is located considerably beyond the bower, holding a phiale and ribbons. Next to the god there is a female figure with a thyrsus, possibly Ariadne, holding an oinochoe while leaning on a louterion, an element that also serves as backdrop to a sleeping satyr, alluding to the bridal ritual[80]. It is the moment of the initiate's entry into the Dionysian paradise, the realm where the wedding takes place and of the mystical union that leads to eternal bliss and blessings. On the neck of a volute krater from Switzerland (Figure 71), a woman with a *tympanum* and crown in her hands encounters the god, who is seated, holding a thyrsus in one hand and a tray of fruit and a garland of flowers in the other. Behind the god, Eros approaches, carrying a calyx krater. The presence of the crown in the woman's hands and Eros rather than any other member of the *thiasos* accentuates the erotic character of this encounter, and suggests that the female figure represents a female initiate –the *tympanum* would be a symbol of the initiation– who will join the god in nuptials, as a new Ariadne, and celebrates with him the sacred wedding feast. In a bell krater from Lecce[81], the woman is sitting on the ground beside the god, absorbed in mutual contemplation. The woman holds a mirror and on the ground there is a tray laden with fruits. A satyr with a torch and a maenad with a thyrsus and *tympanum* accompany the scene's protagonists. Who is the female figure? The woman does not possess any Dionysian attributes and the mirror is a symbol that can have several meanings[82]. It is not only a wedding gift but also an instrument of knowledge since when gazing into the mirror, the woman contemplates the *eikon* and also the *eidolon*. Her reflection is an anticipated understanding, a promised vision of the transformation and dissolution in the god's regard. One sees oneself not as who one was, but as who one has become, a new image after the dissolution of

[78] Trendall, LCS, p. 101, n. 529, pl. 52, 1.

[79] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 13/35, pl. 111, 2.

[80] Symbolic allusion to an «eschatogamy» that has also been alleged for other South-Italian images of encounter between men and women in Dionysiac surroundings: cf. Burkert 1987, p. 105; Smith 1972, pp. 41, 93, 115, 257, 262.

[81] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 14/186; Gasparri 1986, p. 485, n. 744, pl. 386.

[82] Cassimatis 1998.

human nature in this new state of existence. Therefore, when considering the female figure, is it Ariadne or an anonymous mortal? The dichotomy is meaningless since the woman will assume the mythical identity as she crosses the border of death and joins the god.

Figure 71. Volute krater. Switzerland.

In the Paestan vases, while there are exceptions with larger compositions[83], the encounter with the god is generally more intimate, as only the encounter's two protagonists are present in these simpler images, which are adapted to smaller surfaces. Usually, the protagonists are a satyr[84], a maenad[85]. Papposilenus or an actor disguised as such[86], or a phlyax[87]. However, on other occasions the protagonists are characters without Dionysian characteristics, figures of young people who carry a thyrsus, but are not satyrs[88], or a young Pan[89] who is so humanized that he is

[83] Trendall, *RFVP*, 2/128, pl. 48, 2/132, pl. 52, 2/137, pl. 59, 2/138, pl. 59, 2/240, pl. 89, 2/244, pl. 91, 2/245.
[84] Trendall, *RFVP*, 2/18, 2/23, 2/37, 2/44, 2/46, 2/53, 2/175, 2/229, 2/232, 2/233, 2/235, 2/261, 2/301, 2/405.
[85] Trendall, *RFVP*, 2/24, 2/33, 2/43, 2/273, 2/274, 2/289, 2/302.
[86] Trendall, *RFVP*, 2/25, 2/50, 2/171, 2/230, 2/253, 2/263, 2/268, 2/275, 2/292, 2/305, 2/283, 2/139a,
[87] Trendall, *RFVP*, 2/26, 2/63, 2/64, 2/238, 2/278, 2/279, 2/281, 2/284.
[88] Trendall, *RFVP*, 2/34, 2/62.
[89] Trendall, *RFVP*, 2/2, pl. 87c and 2/231, pl. 85e; Denoyelle 2011, p. 86, n. 16 and p. 88, n. 17.

indistinguishable from a young mortal, except for two very small horns, as well as women without Dionysian characteristics[90] who exchange offerings with the god such as crowns, ribbons, *phialai*, vases, birds, and especially eggs (cf. cap. IV. 1.), objects that take on a symbolic value connected to mystical rituals[91].

It is not always Dionysus who welcomes the deceased once he or she has crossed the border into the realm of death. It is often the members of the Dionysian *thiasos* who perform this function. These scenes are also conceived as static scenes of blessed repose in an exterior, nocturnal location. It is not easy to distinguish the *mystai* from the members of the *thiasos* or from the god himself. In many scenes a young man of idealized youth with short hair is found in the center of the scene, seated while holding a thyrsus and surrounded by satyrs and maenads. In an Apulian situla by the Painter of the Dublin Situlae[92] (Figure 72), the painter has drawn a satyr with a situla who offers a libation over a phiale held by a maenad; next to them, in the center of the scene, is the figure of a naked youth, sitting on the ground, with thyrsus and ribbons in his hands, his short hair held together by a *tainia*. He contemplates a female figure who offers him a crown, the symbol of a wedding, but also of triumph. Other images repeat this same theme and share the same difficulty of identifying the main figure[93]. Trendall identifies all these figures as Dionysus. Why not see the *mystes* as the central figure, received by the *thiasos* and incorporated into the god's retinue, with the thyrsus in his hand as symbol of having attained membership, as another component of these designs? The ambiguity of this figure might be intentional, as only the short hair indicates that it is not Dionysus, a very subtle and not always unambiguous point. This allows for the possibility of fully identifying the *mystes* with the god, a possibility suggested by the images and confirmed by

[90] Trendall, *RFVP*, 2/35, 2/385, 2/409, and pl. 239, e.

[91] In some graves in Paestum eggshells were deposited along vases that present scenes of egg-offering to Dionysus: Mugione 1996, p. 246.

[92] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 15/35a; Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 3 Juny 2009, lot 132.

[93] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 3/13, pl. 14, 1 and 3/33, pl. 15, 3; Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 9 December 2008, lot 107; Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 8 Juny 2004, lot 36 and lot 334; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/332, pl. 203, 3; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 6/169, ; Gasparri 1986, p. 455, n. 346; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 15/14, pl. 139, 3; Trendall, LCS, p. 92, n. 468 and 469, pl. 44, 1 and 3; Trendal, *RFVP*, p. 346, n. 634, pl. 225a.

some Orphic texts: «venturous and fortunate god you will be, from the mortal being who you were»[94].

Figure 72. Apulian situla by the Painter of the Dublin Situlae. Antique market (Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 3 Juny 2009, lot 132).

Something similar happens in the images in which the *thiasos* encounters a female figure. On a Paestan krater by the Dirce Group[95], a woman is seated in the center with a thyrsus in her hand, leaning on a *tympanum*; a satyr and a maenad standing on either side watch her. The figure could be interpreted as Ariadne or a maenad, although differences in posture and the attention with which others contemplate her seem to indicate that she could be the divine bride. Another question could also be posed: Could the mortal woman reflected here be one who, initiated in Dionysus' mysteries, hoped to achieve both the definitive union with the god in the beyond and her transformation into a new Ariadne? The same question can be posed when viewing another Paestan krater by the same group[96], in which the woman in the center, who is naked and lacks any attributes except a mirror, is attended to by a satyr and a maenad; or in an Apulian

[94] Gold Tablet from Thurii L9: Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal 2008, p. 100.
[95] Trendal, *RFVP*, p. 25, n. 7, pl. 2a.
[96] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 27, n. 14, pl. 2d.

calyx krater by the Lycurgus Painter[97] (Figure 73), in which a woman in a central position, with a fan in her left hand and a thyrsus in her right, is welcomed by a youth with a branch and a situla and by a maenad with a *tympanum* and thyrsus, while the Erotes fly overhead with Dionysian bridal symbols in their hands: crowns, a mirror, a cluster of grapes, and a phiale. The presence of the Erotes and of the objects characteristic of the bridal ritual or of the bride's belongings might suggest that the painter wanted to represent Ariadne, before whom a young man stands –not a satyr, therefore a *mystes*– which could also indicate that she, too, was an initiate. As stated above, the ambiguity is possibly sought intentionally to offer those who are buried with these vases the highest expectations of identifying with the members of the divine retinue or, by insisting on the absence of mythical features and reflecting on the mortal characteristics of the deceased, to guarantee with this image the future fulfilment of Dionysus' promises, i.e., to be welcomed into the paradisical realm and into the company of the god.

Figure 73. Apulian calyx krater. Richmond, Museum of Fine Arts 81.81.

[97] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. 1, p. 55, n. 34a; Hermary, Cassimatis and Volkommer 1986, p. 892, n. 489b; Cambitoglou 2006, p. 18, n. 33.

In other images, however, it is not as difficult to identify the protagonists: the reception of the deceased by members of the *thiasos* is clear. On an Apulian column krater by the Baltimore Painter[98] (Figure 74), an Oscan warrior, sitting on the ground and dressed in the short tunic characteristic of indigenous attire, wearing a pilos helmet, leaning on his shield with two spears over his shoulder, is received and attended to by two satyrs and a maenad in a rustic, plant-filled space where vine branches hang. The satyrs, holding *situlae* in their hands, contemplate the warrior, who is to receive the crown of victory from the maenad. On a column krater by the Rueff Painter[99], there is an Oscan youth, dressed in a short tunic and seated on the ground, who is attended to by a woman with a branch and a chest with eggs, and by another Oscan youth with a spear, and another *mystes* who already fulfilled his blessed destiny, who extends a kantharos as a sign of his inclusion in the realm of the god. This is also evident in a calyx krater from Paestum[100], attributed to Python (Figure 75), which on the main side represents the myth of Cadmus' struggle against the dragon. On side B, a young Pan, completely humanized except for a tiny tail and small horns painted in white, receives a young couple, a man and a woman, without any Dionysian attributes. Both are represented in the same manner, standing in profile and gazing at the young Pan. The woman exchanges eggs with the mythological being. The depiction of these characters, possibly a married couple, intensifies their anonymity; however, the presence of a member of Dionysius' retinue, with ivy leaves that frame the scene and the connection with side A, the origins of Thebes and the Cadmeans, which are also the human and family origins of Dionysus, serve as reminders that the god's followers are assured their entry into the Dionysian realm, in the blessed kingdom of the afterlife. The image also exalts the nuptial commitment, the idea of the conjugal union as the legitimation of the social order, and of marriage as an idyllic picture where joy and happiness of the eros is attained, filled with transcendent expectations that extend even beyond death.

[98] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. 1, 27 50a; Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 9 December 2005, lot 190.
[99] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 9/245, pl. 85, 1. Other similar examples: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 13/196, 13/197, 14/105, 20/333, 23/145a, 23/145b.
[100] Trendall, RFVP, p. 143, n. 241, pl. 90; Denoyelle 2011, p. 92, n. 18.

Figure 74. Apulian column krater by the Baltimore Painter. Antique market (Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 9 December 2005, lot 190).

Figure 75. Calyx crater from Paestum, attributed to Python. Paris, Louvre K 33 bis.

5. Participating in the Dionysian komos

Once the transit has been completed and the encounter with the god has occurred, Dionysus or the members of his *thiasos* lead the deceased in a hasty race to celebrate the orgiastic *komos*. This is an essential element of Dionysian ritual, which the god triggers by his mere presence, inducing in his followers an ecstatic trance, both collective and widespread. This ritual allows for the integration of the mortal initiate into the wild, noisy, and frenetic space of the *thiasos*, where the *mystai* delight in the intense experience of happiness and euphoria that leads to the liberation of the soul and mystical union with the deity.

It is the *komos* that precedes or follows the divine banquet. While the human *komos* takes place after the symposium, the *komos* in which the god and his retinue participate is not defined temporally. In fact, in many images, the satyrs march with drinking cups or filled wineskins in their hands, with the *thymiaterion* and the pedestal of the *kottabos*, as if coming with all necessary tools, ready to prepare the banquet. On the other hand, the state of inebriation, euphoria, and disinhibition that is characteristic of the human *komos* is the product of the previous consumption of wine at the symposium, which is why it takes place once the dining ritual has ended. However, in the *thiasos*, this state does not always occur after the banquet; it is permanent. This is another of Dionysus' promises: an offer to the blessed *mystai* to be in a constant, continuous state of being possessed, in ecstasy, euphoria, and enthusiasm, not subject to temporal variations or fleeting and perishable situations. Perhaps the temporal vagueness of the images highlights precisely the permanence of Dionysus' liberating effects on his followers, both mythical and mortal, before and after their incorporation into the *thiasos*, before and after their participation in the divine symposium.

The male deceased joins the *thiasos* as a *bacchus*, to become a new Dionysus. As was the case in the encounter scenes, South Italian images at times do not distinguish between one and the other. The female deceased becomes a new maenad or the divine bride. These images offer the initiated, and in general all mortals, this promise through the proliferation of scenes in which female and male characters fully integrate into the bacchic *komos*, are received or accompanied by other characters or by the god himself, and scenes in which it is impossible to distinguish between the mortal and the mythical or divine being.

Figure 76. Calyx crater from Paestum by Asteas. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional n. inv. 11094.

Most of the images depict the *komos* in scenes that are filled with movement, a procession of people that run, dance, or move lightly on rough and flowery terrain, where plants and flowers sprout incessantly at their feet; they carry Dionysian attributes, musical instruments or wineskins and vases used during night-time banquets. On occasion, Dionysus is present and participates in the *komos* riding a panther, as on the B side of the famous Asteas vase depicting the «madness of Heracles» (Figure 76) and on other Apulian vases[101], or on a lion[102], or driving a chariot pulled by panthers[103], deer[104], or griffins[105], or riding on a centaur playing the flute[106],

[101] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 84, n. 127, pl. 47; Schauenburg 1983a, fig. 17.1a, fig. 17.19a, fig. 17.35 and 17.39; Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 11e and pl. 47

[102] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 10/23, pl. 86, 5.

[103] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 23/226.

[104] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Sup I, 18-71c.

[105] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 13/21.

[106] Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 95c.

or accompanied by Ariadne on a mule[107]. All is agitation, noise, madness, and frenetic movement. The god sometimes precedes the festive procession[108], or stands in the middle of the *komos*[109], or close the march[110]. He usually appears with a thyrsus and *kantharoi* in his hands, but he sometimes marches carrying a kithara or lyre[111] or playing an instrument with an ecstatic gesture[112]. This same gesture is seen in another Paestan image[113] (Figure 77), in which the god dances enthusiastically to the sound of two bells that he shakes above his head, and on an Apulian lekanis[114], in which he walks with his head thrown back, preceded by a satyr and a maenad with *tympana*, who turn to contemplate him. At times the god, under the effects of wine, walks leaning on a companion[115]. Dionysus is always accompanied by satyrs and maenads, but on occasion others form part of this *komos*, especially in Paestum ceramics, including Papposilenus[116]. Pan[117] (Figure 78), Eros[118], and a phlyax actor[119] (Figure 109).

[107] Trendall, *LCS* Supp. 1, p. 74, n. 348a.
[108] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 4/3, pl. 22, 1; 4/75, pl. 26, 5 and 4/140, pl. 29, 4.
[109] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 4/75, pl. 26,5 and 7/41, pl. 56, 3; Trendall, LCS, p. 77, n. 392, pl. 36, 3 and p. 167, n. 931, pl. 73, 4; Trendal, *RFVP*, pl. 50.
[110] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 4/141, pl. 29, 5; Trendall, *LCS*, p. 109, n. 559, pl. 55,1.
[111] Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 10c.; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, n. inv. 32661.
[112] Schauenburg 1981a, Abb, 19.
[113] Denoyelle 2011, p. 70, n. 8.
[114] Schauenburg 2000, p. 51, Abb. 201.
[115] Gasparri 1986, p. 448, n. 265; Schauenburg 2008a, p. 45, Abb. 117.
[116] Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 105e and 107a.
[117] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 159, n. 277, pl. 102ª; Denoyelle 2011, p. 100, n. 21.
[118] Denoyelle 2011, p. 70, n. 8.
[119] Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 71e, pl. 26ª.

Figure 77. Bell krater from Paestum, attributed to the Painter of Louvre K 240. Paris, Louvre K 241.

Figure 78. Bell krater from Paestum, attributed to Python. Paris, Louvre K 243.

Another promise that Dionysus offers his initiates is being infected with *mania*, immersing oneself in divinity through blessed madness, which in images is expressed by movement, frenetic dancing, ecstatic attitudes, omophagia, and *diasparagmos*. Ecstatic attitudes inundate the god's followers in scenes of the *komos*[120], but *mania* is expressed more precisely in scenes where all the intensity of the experience of possession is realized, i.e., frenzy, the trance that is provoked by frenetic dancing. On an Apulian volute krater by the Painter of Ruvo 1092[121] (Figure 79), the bacchic *komos* is filled with agitation and movement: the panther-drawn cart that transports Dionysus, satyrs and maenads running, and to the left, a maenad kneeling on the ground, her chest bare and her head completely thrown back, sustained in her trance by Eros. On a Campanian pyxis by the Revel Painter[122], a serene, restful, and beatific atmosphere and the Dionysian world in movement, infected with *mania* and enthusiasm, combine in a scene in which the members of the *thiasos*, situated on two levels of rough terrain, dance or remain seated, contemplating their companions: above and to the left, a maenad dances with her head thrown back and an ivy branch in her hands; in the center and in marked contrast, another maenad sits contemplating a companion who dances with ecstatic gestures and a *tympanum* in her hands, while a satyr approaches her with a floral wreath. Below and to the left, a satyr with an ivy branch in his hands and a maenad dance possessed by frenzy and music, and two maenads, one of them seated, watches them and encourages them with gestures.

In the Dionysian world, music and dance acquire intense characteristics; they possess unknown dimensions since they emanate as magnificent wonders from divine madness[123]. Madness erupts in the celebration of the

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[120] Trendall, *RVAp* I, 6/155, pl. 49, 1; 9/83, pl. 76, 5; 14/236, pl. 135, 1; Schauenburg 2000, Abb. 201; Trendall, *RFVP*, 1/48, pl. 5a; 1/98, pl. 12d; 1/100, pl. 13a; 2/59, pl. 30a; 2/126, pl. 45; Trendall, LCS, p. 199, n. 18, pl. 79, 6 and p. p. 394, n. 253, pl. 153, 3; Mayo 1998, p. 203, n. 87.

[121] Trendall, *RVAp* II, 23/226, pl. 279, 1.

[122] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 212, n. 66, pl. 83, 1.

[123] The god is called «thunderer and roarer» (Pindar, *Dithyramb* fr. 75 S-M). Bacchic music is the exaltation of the *thorybos*, the disordered and thundering noise; it is excitement, roaring, melody of the extraordinary. The sound of the flute and of the percusión instruments are the agents of all this frenzy. *Krotaloi*, *kymbaloi* and tympanus accompany with their savage resounding the wounding, strident noise of the flute, and they mix in accelerated rythm, ascendent, sharp and unmeasured, in order to raise frenetic and ecstatic dance. Not only specific instruments produce the

bacchic feast and results in a metamorphosis. Fused with nature, brandishing the thyrsus[124], crowned with ivy, maenads dance, tossing their hair about, with serpents entwined along their arms[125]. They turn their faces to the sun with ecstatic gestures and, possessed by the god, they break the bonds of their corporal prison, acquire superhuman qualities, and launch themselves into *omophagia* and *diasparagmos*[126].

Figure 79. Apulian volute krater by the Painter of Ruvo 1092, Trendall, *RVAp* II, 23/226, pl. 279, 1.

trance, but also the modes, speacilly the Phrygian mode, which according to Aristotle, «makes men enthusiastic»: «all Dionysiac transportation and all analogous agitation found their expression in the aulos rather than in any other instrument, and these emotions receive the melodic accompainment that is proper to them in the Phrygian mode among all other modes» (*Politics*, 1342 b). Cf. also Menier 2001, pp. 233-241.

[124] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 10/190, pl. 91,3.

[125] Schauenburg 1979a, pl. 41, Abb. 5.

[126] Schauenburg 1979a, pl. 41, Abb. 6.

Figure 80. Apulian situla by the Painter of the Dublin Situla. Geneva, MAH Musée d'art et d'histoire. Legs Edmond de Rothschild, 1998, A 1998-0301. Side B.

As in the scenes of encounter with the god, in those that depict the Dionysian *komos*, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the deceased and the members of the *thiasos*, and even Dionysus himself. In a Dublin situla from the Rothschild collection[127] (Figure 80), Dionysus, naked and with short hair, with thyrsus and phiale filled with branches in his hands, walks on tip-toe, as if dancing, while turning his head back to watch a maenad. In front of him in the race, there is a maenad with thyrsus and phiale in hand and a satyr with a thyrsus who follow, as well as a maenad who raises a *tympanum* on high. On an Apulian bell krater from Madrid[128] (Figure 81), the central character, a naked youth with short hair who is surely Dionysus, runs carrying a kithara while turning his head towards a satyr who plays a double flute. A satyr with a wineskin over his shoulders and a maenad with torches precede him in this hurried race. In an Apulian column krater from Vienna,[129] a satyr with a thyrsus and a cluster of grapes and a maenad with thyrsus and phiale precede the march of a naked youth with short hair who shoulders his thyrsus. In a calyx krater from Copenhagen,[130] a young man with short hair, holding a kantharos in

[127] Chamay 2006, pp. 31-33.
[128] Museo Arqueológico Nacional n. 32661.
[129] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 12/29, pl. 99, 3.
[130] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 387/212, pl. 132, 1; Gasparri 1986 p. 455, n. 357.

his hands, marches, followed by a woman with a phiale and ribbons in her hand. The glances that the protagonists interchange establish a relationship of intimacy greater than that formed between other members of the *komos*. They could be the divine couple, Dionysus and Ariadne, attending the symposium celebration or even their wedding banquet (Cf. cap.II.7.2.). The objects that are carried by another female figure, possibly a *nympheutria* maenad, a cluster of grapes and a box from which an alabastron peeks out, could allude to the bridal ritual. Taking these images into account, the same question can be asked as in the encounter scenes: Is the male figure the deceased, Dionysus himself, or a *mystes* identified with the god? Is the female figure a maenad or Ariadne herself? Although the image proposes an immediate interpretation, because the viewer sees Dionysus' *komos* and *thiasos* and no explicit presence of mortals, the person who acquired any of these vases in order to be buried with them could see, as in so many images, a preview of what he himself or she herself was going to experience once the threshold of death had been crossed and could, therefore, identify with any of them through mystical initiation.

Figure 81. Apulian bell krater. Madrid,
Museo Arqueológico Nacional n. 32661.

Figure 82. Apulian situla. Madrid,
Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 1999/99/132

However, there are other images in which the presence of the *mystes*, the mortal who has entered the blessed kingdom of Dionysus and has welcomed the *komos*, is unambiguous. In the Madrid situla[131] (Figure 82), a youth with the naked beauty of the blessed, runs with demonic lightness, almost on tiptoe, in pursuit of a woman. He carries an enormous cluster of grapes in his left hand and a crown in his right. The fruit of the vine is a symbol of fertility, immortal nourishment for the initiated in the mysteries of the god; the crown is the acknowledgement of triumph and a wedding gift for the future nuptials with the Lord of the Vine. The woman could be a maenad or an initiate; in her hands she holds a lit torch and a box and she turns her face towards her pursuer. The light that illuminates the darkness of night and death and that accompanies and announces the arrival of the bride to her new home is a common element in the nightly feasts of the *thiasos*. On an Apulian bell krater from Madrid[132] (Figure 83), two naked youths accompany a woman holding a *tympanum* aloft in a race. They could be the *mystai* who receive the deceased when she enters paradise,

[131] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 1999/99/132: Cambitoglou 2006, p. 76, n. 11.
[132] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 1999/99/124. A similar scene in Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 5/208, pl. 40, 5.

initiated in Dionysus as indicated by the *tympanum*, instrument of maenadic and bacchic possession, symbol, too, of her new condition. They lead her quickly to the encounter with the god, to the celebration of the sacred symposium. On the B face of a Lucanian *nestoris* from the British Museum,[133] the central figure is a youth with short hair who runs carrying a large bell krater in his arms, preceded by a maenad with a situla and another youth with a lyre in his hands who dances and gestures while turning his head back. They are followed by a satyr with an amphora filled with wine on his shoulders and a maenad with a *tympanum*. While in this example it is the central figure who carries the krater in his arms, a function that Dionysus would never perform, he could be the individual who was being initiated and received by the *thiasos*, and could be identified as the deceased. There is no doubt about the identity and mortal nature (now transformed) of the protagonists in the image from a column krater by the Leteo Group[134] (Figure 84) in which two young Oscan warriors, the first one with a torch and a tray of fruit, the second with a shield, lance, and helmet in his hands, precede the march of a female figure holding a tray and situla, surely a maenad who accompanies the *mystai* on their way to the banquet.

Figure 83. Apulian bell krater. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 1999/99/124.

[133] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 113, n. 582, pl. 58.

[134] Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 5 December 2001, lot 470; a similar image with two young Oscans participating in the *komos* Schauenburg 2000, Abb. 198.

Figure 84. Column krater by the Leteo Group. Antique market (Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 5 December 2001, lot 470).

6. Sharing Dionysus' symposium

Accompanied by the god or his companions that are already integrated into the bacchic *thiasos*, the deceased enjoys another one of the promises Dionysus offered in life: to share wine with him in the eternal splendor of the feast, to enjoy endless inebriation, music, and pleasures of the senses, i.e., to experience an extreme otherness, which negates their ephemeral and fleeting nature so as to transcend time and become an instrument of mystical *euphoria*, the very essence of blessed immortality[135]. The South Italian iconography of the symposium is imbued with all aspects of Dionysus, not only as god of wine, the central nucleus of his theology and his rites, but also in his role as liberating god of earthly ills. The symposium, cultural center of Dionysism, is depicted in South Italian images above all in images of happiness, an eternal Dionysian happiness[136].

South Italian images present Dionysian *euphrosyne* through the notion of the symposium as a place of multiple pleasures. First of all, the space where the action takes place is seen as an open space, in the heart of nature,

[135] On the theme of the heroizing banquet in the Afterlife, cf. Cumont 1942, pp. 255-256; Vernant 1989, pp. 291-293; Burkert 1987, p. 105; Versnel 1990, pp.150 ff.; Cabrera 1998.

[136] Jacquet-Rimassa 1998, p. 40.

a place where plants, flowers, and trees of all species –and especially the vine– grow spontaneously, or rather by the power of fertility emanating from the god. It is a many-hued place, eternally young and renewed, fragrant, perfumed by delicious scents exuded by flowers and clusters. In summary, it is an idyllic and timeless place. In many images[137], the symposium takes place in an area where a vine branch grows laden with leaves, tendrils, and clusters of grapes, and forms a vine arbor that extends like a canopy above the scene. This divine pergola houses the god and his companions under its sweet, fresh shadow, allowing them to delight in the pleasures that this idyllic setting provides for them.

Secondly, there are the pleasures of the consumption of wine and resulting *euphoria*, of its inebriating and liberating effects. The instrument of liberation is the kantharos of wine in the hands of the god, the Dionysian cup par excellence which contains pure wine that causes intoxication and divine *mania*. The transport vases such as amphora or situla, or the great wineskin, a more rustic receptacle that satyrs carry on their shoulders or pour into kraters, allude to this consumption, the sacred communion with the god. Afterwards come the pleasures of music[138], a source of joy and happiness, performed by instruments with ecstatic features to accompany the dancing and games, especially the *kottabos*, the playful manipulation of wine that becomes the ritual gesture and establishes a close connection with the divinity[139]. In the majority of scenes, one of the members of the *thiasos* plays an instrument: the double flute[140] or *tympanum*[141], and sometimes the harp[142], which accompanies the dance movements of satyrs[143] and maenads[144]. Furthermore, in many scenes, the *kottabos* pedes-

[137] Some instances: Cambitoglou 2006, p. 122, n. 34; Schauenburg 1981a, Abb. 15; Schauenburg 1991, Taf. 36, 1; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 13/35, pl. 111,2; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. I, pl. CV, 1 and XX, 1 and 3; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 12/151, pl. 107, 1; Trendall, LCS, p. 112, n. 577, pl. 57, 3-4; Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 146, n. 245, pl. 92.

[138] Jacquet-Rimassa 1999.

[139] Jacquet-Rimassa 2008.

[140] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 526, n. 696, pl. 207, 6; Trendall, *LCS Supp.* I, pl. XXIV; MAN 1999/99/133.

[141] Sotheby's New York, Sale Catalogue 14 December 1994, lot 99; Schauenburg 1972b, taf. 24, 3.

[142] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* I, 8/152, pl. 67, 1; Gasparri 1986 p. 457, n. 379.

[143] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 5/64, pl. 37, 5.

[144] Schauenburg 2000, p. 59, abb. 237-238.

tal is present so that the god and his companions can play with the cup, held by one of the handles with his finger[145].

Figure 85. Apulian calyx krater by the Painter of Athens 1714. London, BM F 275.

However, in South Italian images, this pleasure is not usually collective and communal. When painters represent Dionysus' symposium, the god is the sole participant, and does not usually share bed and drinks with other members of the symposium[146], except, as will be seen, in a unique case or when alluding to hierogamy with Ariadne (cf.cap.II.6.2). In these images, as in an Apulian calyx krater by the Painter of Athens in the British Museum (Figure 85), Dionysus reclines on an animal skin[147], on the *stibadeion*[148], or on the floor leaning on cushions[149]. He carries the thyrsus and

[145] Schauenburg 1972b, taf. 24, 3; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 5/64 and 7/45, pl. 56, 4; Schauenburg 1981a, Abb, 15.

[146] The motif of Dionysus as only symposiast has its origins in Attic black-figure pottery. Cf. Díez Platas 2013a and Fehr 2003.

[147] Apulian calyx krater by the Painter of Athens 1714. London, BM F 275. Cf. Schauenburg 1972b, taf. 24, 3.

[148] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 6/212, pl. 52, 1, 7/45, pl. 56, 4 and 8/152, pl. 67, 1.

[149] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 5/64, pl. 37, 5.

at times a kantharos and is surrounded by members of his *thiasos*, satyrs, maenads, and, occasionally, Papposilenus[150], Pan[151], and Eros[152]. Dionysus' companions act as his servants, assistants at his symposium, cupbearers or musicians, but not as dinner guests. The satyrs carry all the necessary tools for the feast: crowns, *phialai*, wineskins, amphoras, krateres, *situlae*, *oinochoai*, the drinking horn, and torches for illumination. A small table with cups or cakes is usually available at the foot of the bed. At times, the god is not reclining, but seated in a chair on a pedestal, or sitting directly on it[153]. On an Apulian krater by the Bologna Painter 425[154], a short-haired youth, a narthex in his hand, seated in a chair atop a pedestal, with a cup held by the handle on his fingers, contemplates a maenad placing a saucer on the pedestal of the kottabos, while a satyr dances with a *tympanum* in his hands. In the same manner, on a Lucanian krater by the Dolon Painter in Sydney[155], the figure with short hair is seated in a chair on a pedestal, watching a satyr who sets out to adjust the saucer on the *kottabos* pedestal, while a maenad approaches with a phiale and crown. Neither of these scenes would seem to allude to the symposium if it were not for the central figure who prepares to play *kottabos*. Could the central figure be Dionysus? It is possible that the figure could be Dionysus, represented here not as a member of the symposium, at least not in the established, canonical way, but as god of the symposium, almost as a cult image.

As in so many South Italian scenes, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish whether the figure of the solitary member of the symposium is Dionysus or a mortal. This is the case, for example, of the image on a bell krater by the Chequer Painter in Madrid[156], in which a bearded figure is lying on the *stibadeion* contemplating Eros, who flies towards him to offer him a garland, while a satyr approaches the bed with a kantharos in his hand. This is also the case on a krater from Vienna[157], in which the sole short-haired symposium member, with thyrsus and phiale in hand, watches a nude woman who approaches the bed with a situla and a torch in her

[150] Trendall, LCS Supp. I, p. 104, n. 46a, pl. XXIV.
[151] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/14, pl. 171, 3.
[152] Trendall, LCS Supp. I, p. 104, n. 46a, pl. XXIV.
[153] Schauenburg 1981a, Abb, 17.
[154] Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 10 December 2004, lot 500.
[155] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 101, n. 522, pl. 50, 6.
[156] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 11022: Trendall, *LCS*, p. 197, n. 1, pl. 78, 1.
[157] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 4/110, pl. 28, 3; Gasparri 1986, p. 457, n. 378.

hands. Another example is the Apulian krater from Ruvo[158], in which a youth with short hair is lying with a thyrsus in his hand, while two maenads with thyrsus and *tympanum* and a satyr with situla and a drinking horn all approach him. On the Matera krater[159] (Figure 86), there is a similar figure lying on the bed while a maenad offers him a harp with which to accompany the singing; a *tragos* lies at the foot of the comfortable bed, object of Silenus' attention, who offers him a branch. In all these images, the central figure's status appears to be purposefully ambiguous[160]: while nothing keeps us from identifying the recumbent figure as Dionysus himself, nothing prevents viewers from also seeing the deceased reflected there. Why is it not possible to see here the *mystes*, the initiate in Dionysus, who, after death, has entered the Dionysian paradise and enjoys, like the god, an eternal symposium? This purposeful ambiguity seeks to reinforce the god's message of salvation and the promise of union with the deity until an identity inseparable from that of Dionysus is attained.

Figure 86. Apulian krater from Montescaglioso.
Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Matera.

[158] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 4/97, pl. 27, 3; Gasparri 1986, p. 457, n. 377.
[159] Bottini 1992, p. 134, fig. 36.
[160] Jacquet-Rimassa 1998, p. 31.

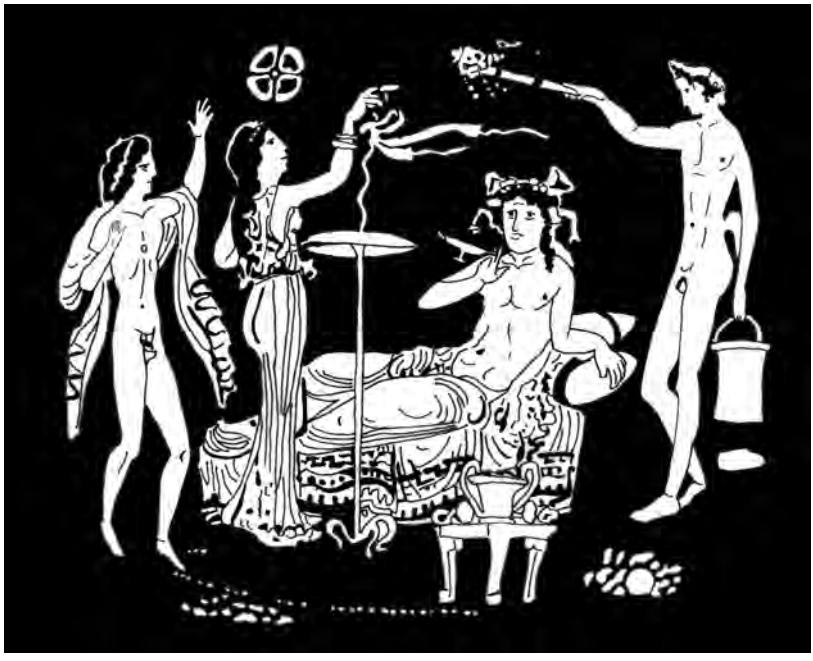

Figure 87. Apulian volute krater. Edinburgh, National Museum of Scotland 1873.21.1.

This is what another Apulian image promises in a more explicit manner, by representing the *mystes* in the presence of the god, attending his banquet. In an Edinburgh krater[161] (Figure 87), Dionysus, bound by the ribbons of the symposiasts and lying on the bed, plays *kottabos*; the kantharos and small cakes rest on a small table. A satyr holds a lit torch over the god's head and has a situla in his hand. A woman burns small incense balls on a tall *thymiaterion* in front of the bed. To the left of the scene, a naked youth bursts into this sacred space. He raises his arms in an expressive gesture of admiration and surprise at the god's epiphany. How can this figure not be seen as a *mystes*, the initiated who, after surpassing all challenges, and especially the most decisive one of all –the challenge of death– enters the Dionysian paradise where the god awaits with wine, the instrument of mystical *euphoria* to grant the promised gifts?

At times, South Italian painters purposefully confuse the image of the restful, beatific encounter with the god with images of the symposium

[161] Trendall and Cambitoglou 1978, *RVAp* I, 7/45, pl. 56, 4; Carpenter 2011, p. 261, fig. 7.

offered by the members of his *thiasos*[162], or with the moment of the preparation of the symposium. On an Apulian volute krater from Berlin[163], the scene, divided into two levels, depicts the meeting between the *thiasos* and their god. Above, Dionysus is seated on the ground with a large tray in his hands, surrounded by maenads and a satyr that offers gifts. Below, Silenus extracts wine with an *oinochoe* from a krater, while a young satyr dances to the rhythm of the aulos played by a maenad. Is this a scene of the *thiasos*' encounter with the god or Dionysus' symposium? There is no point in forcing a conclusion one way or the other, for although the god is not lying down or holding the kantharos, he is offering his followers the reward of the sacred banquet, as it is either already unfolding at his feet or his companions are hurrying to prepare it[164].

In these images, Dionysus or the *mystes* are solitary members of the symposium because they are models of individual *euphrosyne*, since, as pointed out by Fehr[165], «they visualize the subjective individual notion of happiness: the frame of reference is not a community of drinking companions, but only his very own person, with his own way of enjoying the symposium, without contemplating structures, norms and controls of any type of social context». The scene does not take place in the context of the polis, but in the realm of death and the afterlife, where cohesion with other mortals is not sought, but rather individual and personal salvation: something intimate, ineffable, and non-transferable.

The Dionysian symposium is not always a solitary endeavor. At times, it is shared with other gods or mortals. On a unique, enormously distinctive vase, an Apulian situla from Madrid[166] (Figure 88), three members of the symposium lie on a bed below a leafy pergola laden with large clusters of grapes, leaves and vine tendrils. To the right is Dionysus, identified by his characteristic attribute, the narthex, holding a pomegranate in his hand, the fruit of immortality, which Hades, Lord of the Dead, gave Persephone to eat to force her to return to him in the kingdom of shadows. Hermes sits next to the god, with the caduceus in his hand and

[162] This happened also in 5th cent. BC Attic images: cf. Metzger 1951, p. 127.

[163] Schauenburg 1991, Taf. 42, 4.

[164] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. I, 18/64c, pl. XIII, 3.

[165] Fehr 2003, p. 23.

[166] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. inv. 1999/99/133. This vase has been recently attributed to the «Painter of the Three-Gods' Symposium»: Cambitoglou 2006, p. 124.

a kantharos, the heroizing cup characteristic of Dionysian rituals, in his other hand, seeming to converse with Dionysus. To the far left of the bed, a figure holds a laurel branch while raising his head upwards. It is Apollo, enthusiastic –in the bacchic sense of the word– at the sound of music. The three wrap their heads with refreshing and sacred laurel crowns. In front of the bed there is a small table heavy with fruits and white pastries and a calyx krater. Next to the end of the bed, and on a carpet, Pan participates in this banquet, albeit marginally. The hybrid god, he of hirsute legs and goat horns, does not share the bed with the other gods, since his sphere is not the civilized one, that of the *kline* or the table, but the wild and natural earthly one. However, in this case, the *stromata* or carpet lends an exotic touch, luxurious and colorful, to his «bed». Pan turns to the *pais*, a young cupbearer who extends a phiale while holding a jug in his other hand. At the far right of the scene, an auletris enlivens the magical atmosphere of this divine banquet with her double flute. Dionysus presides over this garden of inexhaustible delights and presides over the encounter and the feast that is celebrated there. His companions are Hermes, the psychopomp god, who knows hidden, subterranean pathways –the caduceus and the kantharos allude directly to the god's funerary functions and his objective of initiation– Apollo, with whom he shares the sanctuary of Delphi, and who has allowed himself to be seduced by Dionysian pleasures, and Pan, member of the *thiasos* and the embodiment of the bucolic charms of the Bacchic paradise. It is the divine feast that, as the promise of the future, is offered in the eyes of mortals, the eternal symposium in which *mystai* participate in the blessed life bestowed upon them as a reward after death.

In a dinos from the British Museum[167], the symposium takes place in the same setting: the sacred space of Dionysus' garden. Here, the members of the symposium, lying on a single bed, the middle figure playing *kottabos*, the others holding phialai and branches, are not iconographically defined by specific attributes. Similarly, in another dinos from London[168], below a pergola covered in branches and clusters of grapes from which a phlyax mask hangs, four members of the symposium share a bed, their brows encircled by ribbons. The two on the left, both kneeling, hold a rhyton in their hands, and raise the cup while looking directly at the viewer, sharing with him the enthusiasm that possesses them, inviting

[167] Trendall and Cambitoglou 1978, *RVAp* I, 12/151, pl. 107, 2
[168] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. I, p. 79, n. 71d, pl. XV, 1.

him perhaps to participate in this sacred symposium. The central symposiast holds a phiale in his hands and gestures with his arm, encouraging his companions to express, as they are in fact doing, the joy that wine and music bring them. On the far right, a symposiast holds ribbons and looks at a woman, possibly a hetaira, with a kithara in her hands, who is hugging him. Eros, with ribbons in both hands, stands over this last guest, watching the couple. An auletris enlivens the banquet with the sound of the aulos. A standing youth, possibly the cupbearer, contemplates the symposiasts; the *trapezai* laden with pastries, a calyx krater, and the *kottabos* pedestal stand at the foot of the bed. In these two scenes there are no mythical references; the realm where the banquet takes place seems fully human. However, in an Apulian krater from Christie's[169], a satyr with thyrsus and torch and a maenad with situla and alabastron attend to symposiasts lying on the same bed. Similarly, in a Lucanian oinochoe from the Budapest Group[170] (Figure 89), the symposiasts recline on two different beds underneath two vine branches, with the *trapezai* at their feet; they appear to be mortals, except for one, with long hair, who is watched by his companion on the bed – a bed consisting of a panther skin, unlike that occupied by the two other symposium members – and who could be the very god himself. Are the images on all these vases those which the Madrid vase promised? Are the *mystai*, the *Bacchoi*, having celebrated the joyful prize of the perpetual and inexhaustible feast and its pleasures –wine, music, dance, eros– in the beatific kingdom of the blessed? Although they cannot be identified as the gods typical of that scene, they themselves are gods: «happy you who are blessed, you will be a god instead of a mortal», according to one of the Orphic tablets from Thurii[171]. Dionysus, the god who shares wine with mortals, has fulfilled the promise he offered – guests for one night have become guests for eternity.

[169] Christie's London, Sale Catalogue 30 april 2008, lot 151.
[170] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 112, n. 577, pl. 57, 3-4.
[171] Bernabé and Jiménez 2008, pp. 99ff.

Figure 88. Apulian situla. Madrid,
Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. inv. 1999/99/133.

Fuigure 89. Lucanian oinochoe from the Budapest Group.
Trendall, *LCS,* p. 112, n. 577, pl. 57, 3-4.

7. Honoring the god in his sanctuary

The religious celebration to honor the god is another aspect that should be framed within the collection of pleasures and blessings that the *mystai* receive upon entering the Dionysian paradise. *Thysia*, the sacrifice of an animal victim, and everything that it entails –the sacrificial procession, the consumption of meat and wine, the music and dancing that accompany the feast– all carry the implicit connotation of feasting, celebration, joy, the delivery of gifts, and reciprocal gifts or *euphrosyne*, an absolutely transcendent concept in the Dionysian religion. Starting in the 6th century BC, Attic images already associated this concept with decorative themes that combined *thysia* with the symposium and the *komos*, in which the Dionysian *thiasos*, as well as Dionysus himself, participated.[172] South Italian painters used the images of animal sacrifice and the offering in honor of the god in the same manner, as a visual metaphor for *euphrosyne* granted by the god; however, these images go further by placing the celebration in a non-human realm, in the space that, once death has been overcome, welcomes the *mystai* to the Dionysian paradise, a place that endows *euphrosyne* with a mystical and eternal quality.

In South Italian images, the celebration of *thysia* and of the offering take place in a natural location, which is not defined by architectural elements, but by the presence of the god or of his effigy, and by cultural objects and actions. This sanctuary does not have a precise geographical location, nor does it need one. It is a symbolic space that is iconographically depicted on many occasions as a garden. Dionysus' sanctuary, where *mystai* and the members of the *thiasos* celebrate and honor the god, is also suggested by a variety of elements, such as the floral garland hanging in the background, the ox skull, the *thymiaterion*, and the xoanic effigy of the god.

On a volute krater by the Painter of the Birth of Dionysus in Naples[173] (Figure 90), the scene takes place in the heart of nature, on rugged terrain that marks the two levels where the figures are situated. On the bottom in the center is the altar; an ox skull hangs from the front of it, and flames leap up, which will be used to roast the meat from the sacrificial victim. Behind the altar, a maenad carries a small goat in her arms, ready to slit its throat with a knife. Next to the altar the xoanic statue of Dionysus stands; he is depicted with a long beard, embroidered tunic, boots, polos over his head, and the

[172] Peirce 1993, pp. 240 ff.

[173] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 2/8; Gasparri 1986, p. 495, n. 863.

thyrsus and kantharos in his hands. Nearby, there is a secondary table on which an oinochoe for libation rests and upon which another maenad prepares to lay a tray with offerings: pastries in a pyramid shape and eggs. The god is present at the celebration. He receives and blesses the ritual celebrated in his honor. He is seated in the upper level of the scene on a hill on the ground, leaning on the narthex. Next to him, a female figure with a *tympanum* held high –Ariadne or a maenad – sits and contemplates him. To the right of this figure, a veiled woman stands in front of a *thymiaterion*, thyrsus in hand, and she proceeds to make a libation over a calyx krater placed at her feet, possibly an initiate who participates in the celebration in a solemn and reverential manner. To the left of the god, Silenus is seated on a panther skin, next to a theatrical mask hanging in the background, holding a cup in his hand in the gesture of a *kottabos* player. At the far left, a maenad with a torch in her hand dances in an ecstatic trance while another seated companion rests. Below, two maenads also dance, one accompanies her dance with a *tympanum* and the other, possessed by enthusiasm, shakes the krotalos.

Figure 90. Volute krater by the Painter of the Birth of Dionysus.
Naples, Mus. Naz 82922 (H2411).

All the elements of the cult are brought together in this image: the presiding god for whom the ritual is intended and his followers, who act as celebrants and assistants, the sacrificial victim, the altar, the auxiliary table, the instruments of sacrifice and subsequent libation, the offerings of the first fruits and perfume, the statue of the god, the theatrical mask, music, and dance, the symposium cups and the game. All of this represents the otherness of the Dionysian cult: it is not the solemn sacrifice, preceded by orderly *pompe*; the sacrifice is not made by a male, but by a woman. It is not the usual victim, but the *tragos*. Dance is not choral or measured, but individual and ecstatic and the music is thunderous. The ritual does not take place within the framework of the city in a space domesticated by man, but in an environment of forests, mountains, and hunting places. The symposium does not take place in a constructed sanctuary on shared beds but in this wilderness, on the ground and alone. This ritual, however, fosters a relationship with the deity different from the more terrible aspects that were outside the experience of those who are human and civilized, which Dionysus leaves to his possessed maenads: *diasparagmos* and *omophagia*. At least in this case, the victim is torn apart by the instruments and rules of normative sacrifice, and the flesh is cooked. *Thysia*, *komos*, symposium, theater, the encounter with the god: all areas of Dionysian theology are depicted in this image that introduces viewers to the otherness of the sacrifice, the liminality of the god and his trance-inducing rites, to the transformation, and to the mystical union with the god, all of which takes place in the idyllic space of the actions that bring his followers the blessed happiness of Dionysian paradise.

In a calyx krater from Matera[174], the epiphany of Dionysus is represented: a youthful figure crowned with a long *tainia* braided with a garland, seated in front of his simulacrum. Next to him there is a satyr and a maenad. The figure, with almost Apollonian strokes, holds a large lyre, which alludes to the encounters of the symposium and Orpheus' singing[175]. His followers carry the *tympanum* and the aulos, instruments of dance and ecstatic song. The symbolic objects of privilege are at the god's feet: the krater and *liknon*, container for the first fruits used in initiating ceremonies.

[174] Botini 1992, p. 133, fig. 37.

[175] Botini, 1992, p. 134.

Figure 91. Calyx krater by the Painter of Dijon. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 32651.

On a calyx krater by the Painter of Dijon in Madrid[176] (Figure 91), in the center of the scene and in a natural setting where plants sprout, a young satyr, with a phiale in his hand, leads a ram to the altar. Behind the altar, represented in slight perspective, Dionysus awaits, holding a narthex in his right hand. On the opposite side, a maenad, with a *tympanum* in one hand, brings forth the narthex adorned with ribbons. A garland hangs above in the background, alluding to the sacred space where the divine epiphany and the religious act take place. It is possible that the god will act as officiant –he is sometimes called Dionysus Aigobolos, «he who kills the goat»– while the satyr, an almost duplicate image of the victim, acts as an assistant in this ritual, leading the ram to the altar. The sacrificial space is configured here by the presence of the altar, the only indispensable element.

[176] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 32651: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 6/98.

Figure 92. Apulian bell krater. Basel. Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 9/249, pl. 85, 5.

In a phiale krater by the same painter from Taranto[177], the god, with thyrsus and torch in his hands, receives the offering by the altar from a woman holding a crown, and he offers her the libation. In an Apulian bell krater from Basel[178] (Figure 92), the officiant is a youth with a thyrsus, who, in the presence of a satyr with kantharos and thyrsus in hand and a maenad with a thyrsus and *tympanum*, pours the contents of the kantharos over the flames that burn on the altar. Who is the youth? Could it be Dionysus or the *mystes* who, having been received by the members of the *thiasos*, has entered the blessed realm of the god and celebrates with them the blessings and the feast of the offering? The identity of this figure is not completely certain, but the assimilation of the central figure with the god could have been possible for the person who is buried with this vase.

The cult in which the members of the *thiasos* participate can take place before a herm: on a Lucanian krater by the Pisticci Painter[179], two

[177] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 6/90, pl. 46, 1.
[178] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 9/249, pl. 85, 5.
[179] Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 12 December 1991, lot 126A.

satyrs are depicted in this ritual environment, sanctified by the presence of the herm, the altar, and an ox skull hanging in the background. One of them is prepared to offer a libation with an oinochoe in honor of the god and the other, with thyrsus in hand, contemplates his companion as he begins to walk away. In another krater by the same painter from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York[180] (Figure 93), a satyr and a maenad, both with thyrsus, present themselves before the herm, the only element that defines the ritual space, since there is no altar. Who is the god who receives their veneration? Who does the herm represent?[181] In both of these images, the herm, with its head, long beard, and erect phallus, an image that is also common for Dionysus, has a caduceus drawn on the pillar, which could identify it more precisely as being Hermes[182]. It cannot be specified whether Hermes is being venerated in a Dionysian sanctuary, or Dionysus in Hermes' sanctuary. In any event, the herm acquires a metaphorical value: Hermes is the god of borders[183], who presides over and facilitates transit, the god who crosses boundaries and plows through the paths of death, the one who guides and protects those who cross uncertain boundaries of social space, but also the boundaries of life; he allows for the mutation that occurs at all boundaries, where those who cross over acquire a new identity. The message conveyed by the herma, the effigy of Hermes, could not have been better received than in the realm of death and the Dionysian, since Dionysus himself is the god of boundaries par excellence.

[180] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 24, n. 75.

[181] The Hermaic pillar was an Attic creation of late archaic times, conceived as a monument that would mark paths indicating distances and that offered inscribed messages of good luck and happiness for travellers. It was logical, therefore, that these pillars were consacrated and carried the effigy of the travelling god, who knows all paths. The majority of *hermata* had a prominent erect phallus, symbol of fertility and instrument of sexual magic, both apotropaic and for good luck. Therefore, they are also iconographically associated to Aphrodite, Eros and Dionysus, gods of fertility. Nothing allows to think of a sanctuary of Hermes each time that the Hermaic pillar appears beside an altar or is associated to a sacred ceremony. Cf. Devambez 1968; Kahn 1979, Siebert 1990, p. 373ff.

[182] Siebert 1990, p. 373ff.

[183] Kahn 1979, p. 210.

Figure 93. Krater by the Pisticci Painter. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 96.18.57

Figure 94. Apulian volute krater by the Darius Painter. Princeton, Art Museum 83.13.

A final reflection can be made on an image that is quite unique in terms of the Dionysian cult. The image is the scene on the back of an Apulian volute krater by the Darius Painter in Princeton[184] (Figure 94), in which the painter depicts in the main scene the theme of Medea in Eleusis. On side B, Dionysus presides over a scene of his cult performed by members of his *thiasos*. They consist of the god, Pan, a satyr, and four maenads. One of the maenads rushes to take a cluster of grapes and a tray with branches, pomegranates, and eggs to a small building where the cult takes place. The satyr, with a large branch adorned with ribbons and a torch in his hands, contemplates his companions. The scene of this offering takes place around a small structure represented in perspective, a fountain, as depicted by two lion head spouts from which water flows. The fountain is located on the back wall of the aedicula, in the interior of which a cross torch is depicted; this torch is attributed to Demeter and Kore and is a symbol of the Eleusinian cult. An ox skull and a phiale are depicted below the building. In all certainty, a thematic and conceptual connection exists between the scenes on either side of the vase; the fountain could allude to the sanctuary and the mysteries of Eleusis. However, the significance of the scene on the B side is derived from the interpretation of the image on the main face, inspired, perhaps, by an unpreserved play by Carcinos, as suggested by Trendall[185]. Medea is on her way to Athens to become the wife of Aegeus[186] and enters the Eleusis sanctuary, represented by a building with an architrave on which the painter has written «Eleusis to hieron». According to Massa-Pairault's interpretation[187], she entered as an initiate, as a woman who follows Demeter's *thesmoi*, since her desire is for her children, whom she has not killed in this version of the myth, to convert, according to the Athenian custom, to become *paides aph'hestias*, children initiated at the expense of the city. Medea's desire is to obtain for her children the immortality offered to the initiates of Eleusis. That is why a Heracles *mystes* approaches the children who, sitting on an altar, expect to be admitted to the temple, and it is what two young men with a strigil and aryballos represent, along with a small

[184] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. I, p. 78, n. 41a, pl. 12, 1-2; Trendall 1984; Schmidt 1986; Schmidt 1992, p. 394, n. 68; Moret 2004; Giuliani and Most 2007; Massa-Pairault 2016.

[185] Trendall 1984, p. 13-14; Taplin 2007, p. 240.

[186] In Euripides' *Medea*, she receives a promise of hospitality from the King of Athens (vv. 746-753).

[187] Massa-Pairault 2016, p. 25.

table with Eleusinian symbols –miniature cross torches– located to the left of the temple; these are images of the *initiandi* that prefigure the fate Medea desires for her children[188]. It is in this sense that the connection to the scene on the B side is made: Dionysus is also present in Eleusis and, like the Eleusinian goddesses Demeter and Persephone, the god can welcome the initiates and grant them immortality. Although it is symbolically located in the ritual space of Eleusis, could the fountain allude to the source –cited by the Orphic tablets– from which the initiates must drink in the Afterlife, i.e., the fountain of Mnemosyne, which grants the liberation of all forms of earthly life and the end of the cycle of reincarnations, which is blessed immortality?[189] Even if there was no connection to theology or the Orphic *teleté*, since the image of the fountain could simply signify the purifying nature of initiation in this life and not in the other, the images on this vase still suggest a connection between Dionysus and Eleusis. The images related to the theater and the myth of Medea, with its Athenian connections, link Dionysus to Eleusis and propose a reading of his cult that is very similar to the Eleusinian mysteries and, as such, represents a means of obtaining the liberation of the soul and an eternal *euphrosyne* in paradise for the *bacchoi*, the initiated into these cults.

[188] Massa-Pairault 2016, p. 25.

[189] Bernabé and Jiménez 2008, p. 32-35. The same question is posed by Massa-Pairault 2016, p. 29, who adds another complementary reading for this sacred aedicula, quoting Lippolis: the fountain reflects those places where «families turn into special protagonists of religious commensality that is expressed in the identitary cults commemorating the foundation of the colony of Tarentus or in Thesmophorian cults mostly performed by females and open to individual initiative».

IV. Other aspects of Dionysus and the Dionysian

1. Dionysus and theater

Dionysus is patron of the theater, as theatrical performances arose from his cults. It is not unexpected, therefore, that the god is seen in images on South Italian vases as being connected with actors and their performances or with theatrical objects, especially masks, whether tragic or comic. Theater, which developed spectacularly in Magna Graecia during the 5th and 4th centuries BC, served as a source of inspiration for South Italian painters[1]: there were numerous mythical themes represented on vases that oftentimes depicted the theatrical scenes themselves. Vase painters owed a good deal to the specific versions created by the great tragic or comedic authors, which were surely represented in the numerous theaters scattered throughout the cities of Apulia, Campania, Sicily, and Lucania. In fact, a new theatrical genre developed in Magna Graecia, called Phlyax, a form of burlesque in which mythical themes and characters were mixed with hilarious actions and situations. This genre had its own repertoire and also adapted themes from Attic Old and Middle Comedy; its most famous author at the end of the 4th century BC was the Tarantine Rhinthon. Many South Italian vases illustrate this type of burlesque farce typical of Magna Graecia[2], which was characterized as a mixed theatrical form that brought together different forms of spectacle, especially comedy, satirical drama, and mime with its dancers, acrobats and flutists[3]. The theme analyzed here

[1] The bibliography on the relation of vase painting with theater, in Attic or Magna Graecia, is extremely abundant, so let us indicate the basic works of reference: Séchan 1926; Webster 1967; Webster 1969; Trendall and Webster 1971; Webster 1978; Kossatz-Deissmann 1978; Todisco 1996; Todisco 2003; Taplin 2007.

[2] Bibliography on this theatrical genre and its relationship with the phlyax vases is equally numerous but the basic works are: Trendall 1967; Trendall and Webster 1971; Gigante 1971; Trendall 1991; Todisco 1996.

[3] Dearden 1995, p. 84-86.

is not the scenes inspired by the theater and represented on South Italian vases, and not even the few problematic images in which a Phlyax version of the god can be documented[4], but rather the link between Dionysus and theatrical elements – masks or depictions of actors – in the iconography of Magna Graecia, especially from Apulia and Paestum.

Two categories can be distinguished in the scenes in which Dionysus and his *thiasos* come into close contact with theatrical elements[5]: those in which the god appears to be accompanied by or closely interacting with an actor or a character wearing a theatrical mask, and those in which a theatrical mask appears as an accessory in a non-theatrical narrative context. Scenes depicting theatrical figurations will not be addressed, not even those that depict the Phlyax theater, parody epic themes, or extract their plot from Attic comedy –although they feature the presence of actors dressed in masks– since their connection to Dionysus and the Dionysian universe is conceptual, not formal, and only results from the god's patronage of representation and everything surrounding the world of theater.

1.1. Dionysus accompanied by actors

The first category of scenes are characteristic of and exclusive to the production of vases in Paestum, where characters with phlyax masks appeared next to Dionysus or in Dionysian scenes decorating kraters and even more infrequently decorating skyphos and cups. This type of decoration was original and entirely different from the legacy of Apulian ceramicists[6].

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[4] Tonellotto 2012, p. 40, note 13. She points out that the irreverent characteristics of the theatrical scenes in which the Olympians are protagonist would be sign of the preeminence in the Italian sphere of the Dionysiac cult, «espressione di un dio che, pur integrato nel pantheon olímpico, ha conservato l'originaria valenza di 'estraneità' rispetto ai valori consolidati dalla religiosità tradizionale» (p. 41).

[5] This theme has been widely analysed by A. Tonellotto 2012, who has collected all the vases with this type of scenes from Sicily and Magna Graecia. She classifies the scenes in four categories: scenes with Dionysus as god of the theater and patron of actors; scenes in which the phlyax or the mask are associated to Dionysus in scenes of Bacchic cult; scenes in which the mask acquires an autonomous value and expresses the transition to a new status after death. Our classification, though taking into account all these aspects, is simpler.

[6] The iconographic relation Dionysus-phlyax is exclusive from Paestum, but in other producing centers, Apulia, Campania or Sicily, the phlyax is inserted in the Dionysiac procession along satyrs and maenads, even though the god does not appear; cf., for example, the krater of Melbourne in the col. Geddes: Tonellotto 2012, tav. VIb. The

Figure 95. Apulian bell krater by the Choregos Painter.
Cleveland, Museum of Art 89.73.

There is a unique image that presents a precise reading of the relationship between Dionysus and the phlyax actors: it is an Apulian bell krater by the Choregos Painter in Cleveland[7] (Figure 95), in which Dionysus' head, with his hair tied back with ribbons from the symposium, sprouts from the ground up to just below his shoulders. Along with him, and resting on his shoulders, sprouts a vine trunk that grows upwards and extends its branches, laden with clusters of grapes, throughout the scene. There are two phlyakes, one on either side of the god. The one on the left wears the attire of a slave and raises himself on his toes to reach for grapes. The other one, represented as Papposilenus, is situated on a small platform, holding a large skyphos in his hands. It is a unique scene, from Dionysus' *anodos*: the god of the vine, of wine, of the renewal of nature, in a prodigious and magnificent epiphany, attended by the two phlyakes. The *thymiaterion* located

only exception is an Apulian calyx-krater with a scene of *komos* in which Dionysus guides a procession formed by a phlyax and a dancing maenad: Tonellotto 2012, tav. VIIb.

[7] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* Supp. II, p. 493, n. 1/125; Green 1995, pl. 8 a-e; Tonellotto 2012, tav. VIIIa.

at the extreme left of the scene highlights the sacred and ritualistic character that Dionysus' *anodos* announces and requires. In this example, the actors, immersed in a ritualistic activity that goes beyond the theatrical, are but assistants and servants of the god, who welcome their epiphany with amazement, and are recipients of his gifts: first of all the gift of wine, as their gestures indicate, by picking grapes from the vine or holding the drinking cup that contains the wine, a function that in other images is performed by satyrs[8]. Indeed, why are they performing this action instead of the satyrs, when both are often present in other Dionysian images, and they are, as will be seen, interchangeable? Because the gift that Dionysus offers also includes, along with or through the wine, the gift of transformation, the ultimate metamorphosis that initiation promises and death grants and that these characters with their costumes and masks symbolize. The uniqueness of the image, however, lies not in the actions of the phlyakes but in the astonishing and exceptional Dionysian *anodos*. The painter has chosen to represent the god in the moment of transit, emerging into light, crossing the threshold between two worlds, an image which, on a vase destined for the tomb, emphasizes the character of initiation and salvation contained in its message of resurrection and renewal.

The image on the Cleveland krater is unique among Magna Graecia production. The most common scenes that represent the god accompanied by actors, which are exclusively Paestan, depict phlyakes or an actor disguised as Papposilenus in the act of offering gifts to Dionysus or exchanging them with the god, or accompanying him in the *komos* that precedes the symposium or during the festive nocturnal procession.

Encounters between the god and actors are represented under various compositional themes, which are always composed of two characters: the god may be standing in front of the actor, and the actor may be standing or sitting; or, conversely, the god may be seated and the actor standing. In some cases, the actor is dressed as Papposilenus, as in the bell krater by Python in the Louvre[9], where this character, with a thyrsus on his shoulder, holds a plate filled with eggs and offers one to Dionysus. An actor dressed as Papposilenus also appears on the Asteas' krater in Madrid[10]

[8] Green 1995, p. 119, points out that their role as companions of Dionysus is still provisory, still in evolution, and that the theme will be collected in later vases of the mid-4th century where the comic actors do the same things as the satyrs.

[9] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 157, n. 253, pl. 95e; Denoyelle 2011, p. 98, n. 20.

[10] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 1998/55/2.

(Figure 96), in which the god holds the plate of eggs and Papposilenus takes one, a gesture which is repeated on an Asteas' krater from Salerno[11], below a female mask hanging in the background, as in the Madrid krater. Sometimes, the god offers Papposilenus an ivy crown, as in the Florence krater[12]; Papposilenus receives it by resting his hands on the god's legs, a gesture that is repeated in other scenes that depict Dionysus' encounter with members of his *thiasos* or with Eros[13]. On other vases, such as a krater from the British Museum,[14] it is the phlyax wearing the attire of an elderly person who encounters the god and dances before him with the *kalathiskos* on his head, which was typical of dances from the Karneia festival[15]. In others, such as the Asteas krater from Madrid[16] (Figure 97), the phlyax wears the attire and mask of an enslaved person and offers the god a cake. At times, the space where the encounter takes place is characterized by the presence of an arula, a sign of the sacredness of the event, as in the Python krater in Hanover[17], where Dionysus holds eggs and phialai in his hands and the actor holds a crown and a bird, both under a window where the head of a woman is seen and a female comedy mask rests on a plinth. Another example is the krater by the same painter in the Louvre[18], in which the god, resting his leg on a plant stem next to an arula with eggs, holds a basket also filled with eggs; on the other side of the vase, a phlyax, with a torch in his hand and a large basket filled with pomegranates and cakes, runs towards an arula followed by an anade. It is sometimes Dionysus who offers the bird to the phlyakes, as in the Liverpool krater[19] (Figure 98). The Paestan images insist on the act of offering gifts to Dionysus or exchanging them with the god, thereby engaging in the reciprocity of the offering, emphasizing the objects that are part of the initiation ritual.

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[11] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 123, n. 171, pl. 71c.

[12] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 158, n. 268, pl. 99a.

[13] For instance, the krater in Madrid in which Eros is leaning on Dionysus' knees, who sits and offers him an egg: Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 73, n. 60, pl. 30c.

[14] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 68, n. 26, pl. 22c.

[15] Papadopoulos 2014, with abundant bibliography and discussion on this type of dancing and the festival in which it took place in Magna Graecia, based in the image of a Lucan krater in Taranto by the Karneia Painter.

[16] Museo Arqueológico Nacional n. 11060: Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 74, n. 64, pl. 31c.

[17] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 159, n. 279, pl. 102e; Green 1995, pl. 10d.

[18] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 163, n. 306, pl. 107e; Denoyelle 2011, p. 104, n. 23.

[19] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 159, n. 281, pl. 103c; Tonellotto 2012, tav. VIIIc.

Figure 96. Krater by Asteas. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 1998/55/2.

Figure 97. Krater by Asteas. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional n. 11060.

Figure 98. Bell krater from Paestum attributed to Python.
Liverpool, World Museum M 10711.

The presence of the woman in the window in the Hanover krater and the bird in the hands of the phlyakes bring to mind Green[20], who explains that in these scenes there is a fluid exchange between the world of the theater and other areas of the Dionysian world. There are many Paestan scenes in which an actor playing an enslaved person climbs a ladder leaning on a window from which a woman peers out, or in which a phlyax who represents Zeus, accompanied by another who represents Hermes, takes the ladder to climb to a window out of which a female figure leans[21]. Green postulates that these scenes represent a well-known theme from the comedic stage, and that both the Hanover and Wurzburg kraters[22] (in

[20] Green 1995, p. 109.
[21] Green 1995, p. 109, pl. 10 a-c.
[22] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 159, n. 278, pl. 102c.

which Dionysus and a phlyax are under the window; the god holds eggs in his hands, and the phlyax a torch, with the *kottabos* pedestal next to an arula) represent a scene from a romantic comedy in which the god himself may be involved. This is also the case of the bird in Dionysus' hands or in the hands of the phlyakes on the Hanover and Liverpool kraters, which could be considered to be a gift of love or an erotic symbol. In my opinion, although the connection between these images and the themes of comedic scenes –which is indubitable– cannot be ruled out, the purpose is not so much to offer a comic vision of these loving exchanges, whoever the protagonist may be, but to highlight the erotica which, under Dionysian rule, can transport someone to another state. In fact, the windows depicted in the South Italian images, either empty or with women, constitute a border space, a space between the here and the beyond, a space through which what lies beyond can be glimpsed, and the woman who leans out could be in another world[23].

Figure 99. Python krater in New York. Green 1995, pl. 11a.

[23] Cassimatis 1995.

Figure 100. Krater by Asteas. Madrid,
Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 11028.

The concurrence of Dionysus and the phlyakes also occurs in Paestan scenes of the *komos*, in which the god rushes to the banquet, accompanied by an actor and, at times, other members of the *thiasos*. In a Python krater in New York[24] (Figure 99), Dionysus and Ariadne depart for the banquet mounted on a cart pulled by an actor dressed as Papposilenus, adorned with cushions, mantles, a crown, and an ivy garland. Dionysus holds the thyrsus and a phiale in his left hand and rests his right hand on Ariadne's shoulder; she plays the double flute, and a bird rests in her lap. A maenad, peeking out from under an undulation in the ground with an ecstatic gesture, completes the scene. On a bell krater by the Manchester Painter[25], the vehicle used by the divine couple is a mule, guided by a phlyax holding the reins and followed by a satyr with a torch and a cluster of grapes. On a Python krater from Sidney[26], the god walks with a thyrsus and a kantharos following an actor wearing the garb of Papposilenus, holding a situla in his hand while with his other hand he plays a flute. A phlyax mask hangs

[24] Green 1995, pl. 11a.
[25] Green 1995, pl. 12a; Tonellotto 2012, tav. VIa.
[26] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 158, n. 269, pl. 99c

aloft above a garland of ivy. On a bell krater by Asteas from Paestum[27], the phlyax that precedes Dionysus carries a situla in his hand and a large basket filled with cakes on his head. On a plate by Asteas[28], Dionysus rides a griffin, Papposilenus pushes the animal by leaning on its flank, and a phlyax, with a torch in his hands, pulls on the reins. Above, there is a window where an anade looks out. On the plate's exergue, a naked youth crawls on his hands and feet. In another Asteas krater from Madrid[29] (Figure 100), a phlyax with a torch and situla in his hands precedes Dionysus in the procession, turning his face to gaze on the god, who holds a kantharos and eggs in his hands. The procession was sometimes louder or more agitated, as in the krater by the same painter from Geneva[30], in which the phlyax walks on tiptoe, throws his head back, and raises his right arm, as if he were performing a dance in ecstasy, while holding a tray in his hand. This theme is repeated in another Pyhton krater[31]. On a krater from the antiquities market[32] (Figure 101), it is the god himself who plays the double flute as he walks to accompany the phlyax' dance; he is depicted with raised arms, his hands joined together over his head. On a calyx krater from the Louvre Painter K 240 at the Getty Museum[33], it is a satyr who carries Eros on his shoulders; Eros plays the double flute accompanying Dionysus' wild, nocturnal, festive procession, with a kithara in his hand, and an elderly phlyax bearing a torch.

The variety of these narrative and compositional themes on the Paestan vases is enormous[34] The relationship between Dionysus and the actor, phlyax, or Papposilenus, a figure extracted from the universe of satirical drama, manifests his vocation as god of the theater. However, the emphasis is placed on the phlyakes' insertion into the Dionysian *thiasos*[35] and on the

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[27] Trendall, *RFVP,* p. 123, n. 172, pl. 71e.

[28] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 134, n. 223, pl. 83b; Green 1995, pl. 12d; Tonellotto 2012, tav. VIIa.

[29] Museo Arqueológico Nacional, n. 11028: Trendall, RFVP, p. 124, n. 177, pl. 73c.

[30] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 72, n. 36, pl. 26a.

[31] Schauenburg 1982, tav. 131, 1.

[32] Galerie Günter Puhze 4352.

[33] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 46, n. 101, pl. 13b; Tonelloto 2012, tav. Vb.

[34] Some examples hitherto unmentioned: Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 13a, pl. 28e, pl. 29a, pl. 31a, pl. 72a, pl. 81b, pl. 85c, pl. 87e, pl. 97e, pl. 101e, pl. 102f, pl. 104a, pl. 105b and e, pl. 107a, pl. 117b, pl. 120b, pl. 167a, pl. 241a and c.

[35] Tonellotto 2012, p. 65, underlines that the conrrepsondence and exchangability of phlyakes with other members of the *thiasos* allows considering that the primitive

relationship of reciprocity between the god and the actor in the exchange of offerings, especially eggs, a symbol of life and rebirth after death, whose meaning of initiation and mystery is well-known[36]. The phlyax in these scenes acts as Dionysus' privileged interlocutor, and occupies an intermediate ground between theatrical spectacle, a religious ritual form placed under the patronage of the god, and the Dionysian initiation rituals.

Figure 101. Krater from the antiquities market (Galerie Günter Puhze 4352).

Intermediaries between the Dionysian mysteries and theatrical spectacle, members of the *thiasos*, interchangeable in their functions with the figures of satyrs, Sileni, and Paniskoi, the phlyakes compliment figurative

nature of the phlyax as a daemon of vegetation associated to Dionysus was present in the collective memory of painters and commissioners.

[36] Bottini 1992, pp. 65-66; Mugione 1996, pp. 245-246; Pontrandolfo 2000, p. 125; Tonellotto 2012, p. 54. Tonellotto (p. 55-56) retakes the statement by Sestieri 1939 (not consulted by me) about the image of a phlyax holding a phiale with eggs represented on an Apulian plate in Reggio Calabria: «le uova simboleggiano la rinascita dell'anima nel dio, e il costume fliacico la trasformazione dell'uomo in *mystes*, che partecipa al corteggio divino e si assimila alla natura divina».

expressions of another kind that, especially in funerary mural painting, tend to express eschatological beliefs that find room in the decorative program along with the representation of the crucial moment of transit and the sequence of acts of the funeral ritual, acts that in Paestum also included theatrical performances[37].

1.2. Dionysus in scenes with masks

The scenes in the second category, those containing one or more masks in non-theatrical narrative contexts, are numerous in Apulia and Paestum. Dionysus is present in most of these scenes. The narrative context in which masks are inserted is varied: the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne, the celebration of the divine symposium and of the *komos* which precedes it, the offering in the sanctuary of the god, and the meeting of the *mystai* and members of the *thiasos* with Dionysus. In these scenes, masks hang in the background, lie on the ground, or are held by the god or a member of his *thiasos*, or sometimes even Eros. They act as yet another symbol of the Dionysian universe, contributing to designating the space as sacred and ritual, and underlining the religious significance of the actions carried out there and of the objects used.

There are two Apulian vases that represent the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne and the divine banquet that takes place after their union; these vases have been mentioned in previous chapters. The first is a calyx krater by the Painter of Athens 1714[38], in which Dionysus celebrates the divine symposium, likely by Ariadne's side. An ivy branch hangs from the background and on it a theatrical mask hangs on ribbons. The second is a calyx krater by the Hippolyte Painter[39] (Figure 48), in which Dionysus embraces and kisses Ariadne, and a theatrical mask lies on the ground. The atmosphere of the symposium in both scenes, as well as the god's reclining posture and the presence of instruments and symposium vases, such as kantharos, the wineskin, the krater, and the situla, the *phialai* with eggs or cakes, the *kline*, the *trapezai,* and the *thymiaterion* indicate the celebration of Dionysus and Ariadne's wedding banquet. It has been stated[40] that the masks which hang in the background in symposium scenes allude to the celebration in the god's shrine at a banquet held in his honor after winning

[37] Portrandolfo 2000, p. 133.
[38] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 8/152, pl. 67, 1; Gasparri 1986, p. 457, n. 379.
[39] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/13, pl. 170, 3.
[40] Green 1995, p. 99 and 118; Castaldo and Rocconi 2012, p. 352.

a theatrical contest, masks which had been offered in that shrine as proof of the god's triumph and recognition of his patronage. However, here, the viewer is not at the god's shrine – if we are to understand it as a real, historical, formalized space – but in the idyllic and mythical realm of the Dionysian paradise, in an extraordinary Beyond where the union of Dionysus and Ariadne continues to be constantly actualized, where the endless feast of wine is celebrated, and where the sacred union is commemorated by a nuptial banquet. Masks here are nothing but a Dionysian symbol, as are the kantharos, the thyrsus, and the *tympanum*, a specific symbol with its essential meaning, as will be seen shortly. The space represented on the volute krater by the Painter of the Birth of Dionysus in Naples[41] (Figure 90) –already mentioned above– is more clearly defined as a shrine. Green[42] indicates that the spirit of this scene is similar to that of the Attic krater by the Pronomos Painter[43], but there are no actors wearing masks; instead there is a mask hanging in the background that acts as a symbol characterizing the power of the god.

Masks also appear in South Italian images depicting the conjugal union, both under the structure of the bed referencing the symposium and in the shared nuptial *thalamos*, with couples who are clearly human and who follow the model of the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne. Thus, in a calyx krater by the Painter of Athens 1714,[44] there is an image of a bearded male and a woman who share the symposium bed, situated below a female theatrical mask hanging by ribbons. The mask, depicted in the center of the scene and on a scale that highlights its presence, confirms that the action takes place in the Dionysian realm and the transformation that is being wrought on the celebrant couple.

Other theatrical masks appear hanging from the background, from the thyrsus, or lying on the ground in the context of the symposium that the god celebrates with his *thiasos* – both that which celebrates his union with Ariadne and that which he offers his followers in the blessed Beyond. The first image represents the *komos*, the festive march that precedes the symposium: on a Paestan bell krater by the Painter of the Louvre K 240[45] (Fig-

[41] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 2/8; Gasparri 1986, p. 495, n. 863, pl. 405.
[42] Green 1995, p. 95.
[43] Gasparri 1986, p. 493, n. 835.
[44] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 8/153, pl. 67, 3.
[45] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 45, n. 94, pl. 11e; Schauenburg 1983a, fig. 17.38; Green 1995, pl. 11d.

ure 102), Dionysus, mounted on the back of a panther, marches towards the banquet accompanied by his *thiasos*. He carries a crown in one hand and a thyrsus in the other; a female mask, possibly of a hetaira, hangs from the thyrsus. Preceding him is a maenad playing the double flute and a child, the wine-pourer *pais*, with aulos in his hands. Behind the god, Papposilenus marches, naked and holding a tray with eggs, raising his right hand, with a thyrsus resting on his shoulder from which a second mask hangs. It is the god himself who carries the mask as an attribute, alluding not only to the domain and scope of his patronage, but also to his power.

Figure 102. Paestan bell krater by the Painter of the Louvre K 240. Paris, Louvre K 240.

The Apulian calyx krater from the British Museum by the Painter of Athens 1714[46] (Figure 85) is another example of the images in which the divine symposium is being prepared or celebrated. In this krater, Dionysus, with a thyrsus resting on his shoulder, reclining on a luxurious bed, cup in hand, attends to the gestures of a maenad who prepares the pedestal for the game of *kottabos*, while a satyr pours wine from a wineskin into a krater

[46] Schauenburg 1972b, taf. 24, 3; Green 1995, pl. 5b; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 8/151.

and another maenad holds the *tympanum* on high. A table laden with eggs and a situla is represented at the foot of the bed. There is a tray with eggs on the ground and a female theatrical mask hangs in the background over the god. On a bell krater by the Libation Painter[47], Dionysus, lying on the *pardalis*, attends to a satyr with a situla in his hand who is readying the *kottabos* pedestal. A maenad holds the double flute, and a comedy mask of an elderly person hangs in the background. On a calyx krater by the Darius Painter[48], the atmosphere may not be that of the symposium, but some elements of the symposium are present: Dionysus is seated over an undulation on the ground holding a thyrsus. He is surrounded by satyrs and maenads who hold a crown, a torch, a tray, a *tympanum*, two clusters of grapes, and a phiale. Next to the god there is a *thymiaterion*. In the background, a comic mask of an elderly person hangs over Dionysus. In the same manner, on a Paestan calyx krater by Asteas[49], the atmosphere is not specifically that of the symposium. Dionysus is seated on a palmette and not lying on a bed, but there are elements of the symposium: a *trapeza* with eggs, the cup in the god's hands, the flute in the hands of a satyr who approaches him. A mask hangs in the background over the god. In some cases the mask does not hang in the background, but is held and presented by one of the members of the *thiasos*, as in the calyx krater from Tampa, by the Darius Painter[50]. Here, Dionysus is seated on an undulation in the ground with the thyrsus resting on his shoulder; he directs his gaze toward a maenad, who rests her foot on a rock and holds the comic mask of an elderly man in her hands, in the act of offering it to the god. A satyr rests on a pillar while holding the *tympanum* on high, and Eros flies over the god with ribbons in his hands. The elements of the symposium –a calyx krater, a kantharos, and a situla– lie at his feet.

An environment that is more in accordance with the symposium is seen in two Paestan vases in which the mask is used as a hanging element in the background. In a calyx krater by Python,[51] Dionysus is lying on the symposium bed with a cup in his hand, preparing to play *kottabos*. An

[47] Trendall, LCS, p. 410, n. 334, pl. 163, 3. Trendall interprets the reclining figure as a young man, but leaning over the *pardalis* could indicate that it is the god. See, however, what has been said in chapter III. 6 above.

[48] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 18/64; Green 1995, pl. 6a.

[49] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 104, n. 137, pl. 59 a.

[50] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp. II, p. 92, n. 64; Green 1995, pl. 6d.

[51] Green 1995, pl. 11c; Tonellotto 2012, tav. Xa.

auletris, seated at the foot of the bed, enlivens the scene while two maenads offer the god a crown and an egg. Next to the bed, Papposilenus holds an oinochoe with wine. Two masks hang in the background: one is feminine and the other of an enslaved person. In another calyx krater from the Vatican[52] (Figure 103), instead of representing Dionysus' solitary feast, Python depicts three members of the symposium with bare torso and long hair cinched by ivy crowns who share the same bed. They prepare to play *kottabos* with the cups in their hands. At the foot of the bed there is an auletris at the far left and a child satyr with a ladle in his hands on the right, acting as a wine-pourer; in the center is Papposilenus or an actor dressed as Papposilenus, asleep after the effects of the wine, with a double flute in his hands. Three masks hang in the background. In the center there is a tragic female mask. On the left is a comic mask that represents an enslaved person and on the right is one representing an elderly man. Where does this symposium take place and who are its members? Trendall[53], while acknowledging the strong Dionysian characteristics of the scene, reinforced by the presence of Papposilenus and the child satyr, believes that the three young members of the symposium are actors paying homage to the god of theater and the symposium. However, the question is whether a complimentary reading is possible –which does not exclude the previous one– and which asks whether these three young people, whose appearance is absolutely identical to that of Dionysus on other Paestan vases[54], could be mortals not only celebrating the god in this life, but sharing the wine and joy of the feast with him in the afterlife. On a vase destined for the tomb, this latter meaning could be accurate. Perhaps the boundaries between one world and the next are not as sharply defined, and are more permeable than first believed. The image itself establishes this permeability by introducing mythical figures such as the child satyr or Papposilenus. In this case, the young members of the symposium could be the blessed embraced by Dionysus in his paradise, in that space of eternal pleasure, which contains wine, theatrical performances, and music. The same can be said of the practically identical images on two Apulian dinos by the Darius Painter[55] or of a krater

[52] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 146, n. 245, pl. 92; Green 1995, pl. 11b; Tonellotto 2012, tav. xb.
[53] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 147.
[54] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 147.
[55] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* Supp.I, pl. XV 1-4; Tonellotto 2012, tav. IX a.

from Campania[56] in which the comic masks hang in the background of a symposium celebrated by idealized young people.

Figure 103. Paestan bell krater attributed to Python. Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco AD 1 (inv. 17370).

A Paestan calyx krater from Lipari[57] offers a complementary image to the Vatican krater. Dionysus, with a thyrsus from which a small bell hangs and a kantharos in his hands, is seated in the center of an undulation on the ground. A female figure with bare chest approaches the god with a double flute in her hand and a thyrsus resting on her shoulder, from which a comic mask hangs. Behind the god, there is another woman, standing and covered only in a short perizoma. She holds the aulos in one hand and offers Dionysus an egg. To the far right, a seated satyr drinks from a cup and holds an egg. There is a table with eggs and a calyx krater that rests on the ground; an ivy garland and a female mask hang in the background. The perizoma which the central female figure wears is similar to that worn by two female figures who perform acrobatics: one

[56] Trendall, *LCS*, p. 460, n. 70 and 71, pl. 178, 1-2.

[57] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 44, pl. 11a; Gasparri 1986, p. 494, n. 844; Pontrandolfo 2000, p. 126, fig. 23.

is represented on a Paestan calyx krater by the Painter of Louvre K240[58] in the presence of Dionysus and two phlyakes. The other is on a lathe turned by an actor and phlyakes, represented on a Paestan skyphos from Oxford[59]. This clothing, as recalled by Pontrandolfo, is similar to that of the actors depicted on the Attic krater by the Pronomos Painter, where the main scene depicts Dionysus and Ariadne sharing a *kline* within the context of celebrating victory in a theatrical contest for satirical drama; others propose (cf. cap. 7.2.3) that this scene may represent the celebration of satirical drama as a gift on the occasion of the divine couple's wedding. While women are figures associated with theater and performances, or with a variety of entertainment at the symposium, masks also allude to that world and the transformation that the god promotes. Is it a dancer who performs at Dionysus' symposium, specifically a mortal, or is it a maenad who has taken on this role? The question may not make sense, for the mortal woman, in the realm of death and of Dionysus, is always a maenad.

Other types of scenes in which masks appear are those that represent meeting the god. These are static scenes, normally with two characters, although in some cases several members of the *thiasos* are present, in which a woman, a youth, a satyr, or a maenad encounter Dionysus and establish a closer, more intimate relationship by way of gestures, attitudes, and expressions. At times, the god is seated and the character with whom he establishes contact is standing, and at other times the reverse is seen, the figure of the man or woman is seated and the god is standing. In some images it is the god who holds the mask and in other images it is the character who meets him. The place where the encounter takes place is the open, flower-patterned space of nature, a space that is made sacred by the presence of the god and, sometimes, by an altar, a funerary stone, or a herma.

[58] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 46, pl. 12f; Pontrandolfo 2000, p. 128, fig. 25.
[59] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 69, n. 33, pl. 24f; Pontrandolfo 2000, p. 129, fig. 26b.

Figure 104. Apulian bell krater by the Tarporley Painter. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 3/2, pl. 13.

On an Apulian krater by the Tarporley Painter[60] (Figure 104), Dionysus, who is standing, encounters a young satyr who holds a torch and dips an oinochoe into a krater. The god holds a mask in his left hand and a thyrsus in his right. On a Paestan oinochoe from Geneva[61], the meeting is between the god, who holds a female mask in his hand, and Papposilenus in the presence of a maenad while the mask of an enslaved person hangs in the background. On a bell krater by the Eton-Nika Painter from Bari[62] (Figure 105), the encounter takes place with a maenad. Dionysus is seated on an altar and holds the thyrsus and a female mask. The maenad approaches him with a kantharos and a situla in her hands. On another bell krater by the Bucranium Group from Lecce[63], a maenad with a thyrsus is

[60] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* 1, 3/2, pl. 13.
[61] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 133, n. 216, pl. 82c.
[62] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 4/82; Schauenburg 1985, taf. 37, 2.
[63] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 5/78; Lecce, *CVA* II, pl. 25. A similar schema, more complex due to the presence of Pan with situla and oenochoe and a maenad

seated on a decorative vegetable scroll and holds a tray of fruits in her hand. Dionysus is standing, leaning on a pillar, and he addresses her by showing her a mask that he holds in his hand. On a Paestan bell krater from Asteas in Melbourne[64] (Figure 106), Dionysus, with a thyrsus and phiale in his hands, a small bell tied to his wrist, encounters a maenad resting on a funeral stele, holding a thyrsus and the mask of an elderly person in her left hand, as she offers the god an ivy branch. Is this the deceased, transformed by the god in death into a maenad, holding the symbol of her transformation? Her attitude and its symbolic meaning could be the same as in the Apulian *naiskos* scenes, in which the deceased, represented from within, holds a comic mask[65], a sign of his or her initiation into the mysteries and blessed transformation.

Figure 105. Apulian bell krater by the Eton-Nika Painter. Bari, Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 4/82; Schauenburg 1985, taf. 37, 2.

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with a mirror, in an Apulian krater by the Group Grape-Vine: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 14/215; Green 1995, pl. 7 a.

[64] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 68, n. 24, pl. 21c.

[65] Volute krater by the Underworld Painter in Malibu: Green 1995, p. 101, note 42; Tonellotto 2012, tav. XI a. On the debate about whether these youths in the interior of *naiskoi* with masks are actors or just heroized characters, cf. Tonellotto 2012, p. 59.

Figure 106. Paestan bell krater from Asteas. Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Felton Bequest, 1980 (D391-1980).

Figure 107. Apulian bell krater by the Judgement Painter. Green 1995, pl. 7e.

On occasion, the encounter takes place with a non-mythical character, a youth, as in the Apulian calyx krater by the Prisoner Painter in Munich[66]. Here, Dionysus, seated in a chair in the center of the scene, with the narthex resting on his shoulder, holds a female mask; a youth stands in front of him with a thyrsus in his hand. The scene also features a satyr sitting on an amphora, a seated maenad with an aulos in her hand, and a standing satyr tilting the drinking horn to his mouth. In this scene, it is not possible to know if the youth is presenting the mask to Dionysus or, on the contrary, if it is the god who is giving the mask to the youth because both hold it. However, it is evident that the mask is used as a symbol that is suggestive and full of meaning –the youth, an initiate, a *mystes*, may be showing the mask as a sign or a password of transformation, a necessary requirement for entry into the paradisical realm of Dionysus, just as the thyrsus that he holds is a sign–. On the other hand, he could also be receiving the mask from the hands of the god as a symbol of the gift that the god offers him: metamorphosis and mystical union with the divine being. It is the same meaning evidenced in another image, in another Apulian bell krater by the Judgement Painter[67] (Figure 107), in which Dionysus, seated on an undulation on the ground, with his thyrsus resting on his shoulder, accompanied by a satyr with a situla, offers a phiale to a youth who approaches him with a branch in his hands and, what is most peculiar, with a theatrical mask over his head, which is thrown back[68]. The young man has used the mask, a sign of his initiation, but now before the god, who receives him with a welcome libation to the blessed paradise, he shows his true, transformed face. The image on a Paestan bell krater from Naples[69] (Figure 108) reinforces the significance of this symbol. Here, Dionysus, who sits on the

[66] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 4/79; Green 1995, pl. 7b; Tonellotto 2012, tav. XIb.

[67] Mayo 1982, p. 117, n. 39; Green 1995, pl. 7e.

[68] Green 1995, p. 100, interprets the figure of the youth as a young actor encountering Dionysus in his sancturary after the performance, and being offered wine by the god, but, as Green himself argues, the problem is that the figure is too young for being an actor and that he does not wear actor's cloths; later (p. 101) he says that the young man participates in the Dionysiac world, and to express this participation the painter uses one of the most powerful symbols in such world. In my opinion, the mask in this image is not a symbol of the profession of the carrier, but of his status of *mystes*, initiated in the mysteries of Dionysus, and of the change undergone in his own nature through initiation and death.

[69] Trendall, *RFVP*, p. 64, n. 9, pl. 17 e.

ground with the victory crown on his head, offers Eros the mask; Eros touches it. The god who triggers prodigious metamorphosis and reigns over death, who has generative powers, welcomes the Dionysian sign of power, which is also his own. For those who are buried with this symbolic image, the mask will be anticipated knowledge, a vision of the promised transformation and dissolution in the eyes of Eros, the god that generates eternal life. This symbol is sometimes the only image that is represented on a piece of pottery[70].

Figure 108. Paestan bell krater. Naples, Museo Nazionale.

2. The Dionysian Eros

Eros is a fundamental figure and is depicted frequently in South Italian iconography[71]. While in his first appearances in Italiot images he remained

[70] In small vases like choes, oenochoai, lekytoi, skyphoi, or lekanai, in Apulian and Paestan style with red gigures, or in Gnathian style: cf. Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 22/428, pl. 253, 2; Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 140 e-f; Webster 1951; Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid n. 2008/106/3.

[71] On the representations of Eros in South Italian vases, cf. Smith 1972; Schneider-Herrmann 1970; Schneider-Herrmann 1977; Albert 1979; Schauenburg 1981c; Schauenburg 1983b; Hermary, Cassimatis, Vollkommer 1986, LIMC III; Isler-Kerenyi 2004; Cassimatis 2008.

close to the Attic figure, starting in the last decades of the 5th century BC, he transformed to become the Italian Eros: a feminized figure, a hermaphrodite, adorned with jewels, whose scope of action expanded considerably and in parallel with the broadening of his significance.

Like the Eros of contemporary Attic vases[72], the Eros of South Italian images is the son of Aphrodite (who he always accompanies in Olympic assemblies), the god who triggers love and erotic desire, often using his magical instrument, the *iynx*, or bow and arrow. He exercises his seductive power over lovers, both human[73] and divine, and also participates in erotic persecution[74]. As in Attic images, he is present inside the gynaeceum, among women, and in the various stages of the nuptial rites, especially in images of the bride's bath[75], or in the nuptial *pompe* that transports the bride and groom. However, in South Italy he accompanies the mythical bride and groom, and he is present at and blesses the marital union, both mortal and immortal[76]. It is not this Eros who will be addressed. Instead, the Eros described here is a member of the Dionysian *thiasos*. This Eros joins Dionysus, not as an intermediary, but as the figure who offers man his gifts, who triggers man's transformation, the Dionysian Eros.

In South Italian images, Dionysian symbols, those expressing the power and blessings that Dionysus bestows upon mortals, are adopted by Eros to confirm his close bond with the god and his own power, which expands and manifests in a graphic way the expectations of salvation that the Dionysian religion offers. In the South Italian images, Eros is often the only figure represented, alone, isolated, and usually in a lush environment – a space which will be discussed below – either standing or seated, resting, flying, or walking, but always carrying attributes and objects which are generally associated with rituals. These objects include items clearly and exclusively linked with the Dionysian sphere of influence. Thus, he is seen

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[72] Metzger 1951, pp. 41-58, p. 84; Hermary, Cassimatis, Vollkommer 1986, *LIMC* III, pp. 935-942.

[73] Some examples: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/200, 18/201, 18/210, 18/218, 18/368, 18/388, 23/42, 27/44, 27/90, 28/58, 28/101, 28/102, 28/103; Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 120a, 129c, 147, 151 a, 154a, 198a, 219c, 232.

[74] These images appear exclusively in Lucan vases of the second half of the 5th cent. BC: Trendall, *LCS*, pl. 2, 3 and 5, pl. 3, 5, pl. 16, 1-2, pl. 21, 5

[75] Some examples: Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 76; 171b, 226a, 227c, 229.

[76] Fort he images of the hierogamy between Dionysus and Ariadne, cf. chapter II.7.2 above.

with the thyrsus[77], with a cluster of grapes in his hands or next to him[78], with an ivy leaf[79], a *tympanum*[80], and with banquet vases[81]. In addition to the more familiar attributes that have been mentioned, in some images he is also associated with a cross torch[82], an attribute of Demeter and Kore and sign of the Eleusinian cult, an allusion to the initiation that Dionysus and the Eleusinian deities promote and the liberation they grant to the initiates.

Eros claims an important presence in the Dionysian thiasos in scenes where he is seen actively participating in the encounter between Dionysus' followers, either mythical or not, with the god[83], in scenes of the *komos*[84] and the symposium[85]. In a Paestan vase he is even portrayed having an intense familiarity with the god, as he is leaning on his knees[86]. His presence always alludes to the god's transformative power and the idyllic atmosphere of bliss, tinged with eroticism, sensual pleasure, and happiness, in that other world that the images depict and offer to those mortals

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[77] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* I, 9/71; *RVAp* II, 26/399.

[78] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/246, 20/76, 20/218, 20/289, 21/295, 21/297, 23/183, 25/35, 25/47, 25/68, 25/69a, 26/86, 26/120, 26/259, 26/355, 26/508, 26/513, 27/103, 27/106, 28/46.

[79] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/266, 23/81, 26/60, 26/101, 27/112.

[80] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 11/45; *RVAp* II, 20/53, 20/85, 20/87, 20/187, 22/99, 23/49, 23/81, 23/176, 25/74, 26/75, 26/447, 27/63, 27/89, 27/192, 27/195, 28/46, 28/60, 28/79.

[81] Carrying a situla: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 20/53, 20/166, 20/167, 20/216, 20/299, 22/99, 26/503, 27/90, 27/105, 27/126, 27/162, 27/224a, 29/131, 29/140, 29/146, 29/231, 29/232, 30/15; carrying other vases: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 25/10a, 28/88, 29/101.

[82] Eros with tympanus and four-armed cross torch: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 27/192, 27/195, 28/79; with a grape cluster and cross torch: Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 26/508.

[83] Other examples: Schauenburg 1981a, Abb, 12; Schauenburg 1986, Abb. 19; Trendall, *LCS*, pl. 139, 6; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/5, 18/7, 18/117, 18/319, 23/42;

[84] Other examples: Sotheby's New York, Sale Catalogue 14 December 1994, lot 100; Schauenburg 1976a, Abb. 33; Christie's New York, Sale Catalogue 4 Juny 1999, lot 40; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAP* I, 4/44; Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 12b, pl. 82a.

[85] Other examples: Sotheby's New York, Sale Catalogue 14 December 1994, lot 99; Schauenburg 1991, Taf. 36, 1; Trendall, *LCS*, p. 121, n. 610; Gasparri 1986, p. 457, n. 381; Schauenburg 2000, Abb. 93.

[86] Trendall, *RFVP*, pl. 30c.

initiated in Dionysus as an anticipatory promise of the rewards they will receive in the afterlife.

It is traditionally in the female domain where Eros applies his power, in a world of women also linked in the images with Dionysus through Bacchic symbols[87]. Many Apulian scenes portray the encounter between a woman holding a thyrsus, a *tympanum*, a cluster of grapes, and an ivy leaf and Eros[88]. Who is this woman and where does the encounter take place? Is it Ariadne or a maenad, as the attribute indicates, or is it a mortal? It could possibly be all three. In South Italian iconography, Eros fulfills the same function as Dionysus and the members of his *thiasos*: to welcome those who crossed the threshold of death and introduce them to a blissful afterlife in the Dionysian paradise. The woman is a mortal, initiated in the mysteries of the god, who after the mystical union with Dionysus is transformed into the new Ariadne, into a member of the *thiasos*. Eros performs this final renovation. She will show the god the signs of her initiation, the necessary symbols of transformation: the thyrsus, the *tympanum* (which is sometimes raised), and the cluster of grapes. Eros will show the objects that allude to the erotic sphere and the conjugal union that the woman who enters the Dionysian paradise must necessarily fulfill: alabastron, crown, mirror, ribbons, boxes and xylophone. In other images[89], the god gives chase to the woman, as if it were an erotic pursuit; they carry the same symbols, in a representative scheme that is a duplicate of the *komos* scenes in which members of the *thiasos* participate.

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[87] There are also many scenes in which Eros exercises his power over a man of idealised youth and a woman in an outdoor, flowery landscape; these are common in Apulian *paterae* (Schneider-Hermann 1977); the characters wear wedding symbols, which makes Schneider-Hermann 1970, pp. 86 ff and 1977, p. 29 assume that these vases reveal traces of a cult of Eros related to the initiation of girls in pre-nuptial fertility rites, a cult protected by Dionysus, when his symbols are present, and Aphrodite, although neither of them appears among mortals in these scenes. However, we believe that these scenes draw a symbolic space, not a place of worship, a paradisiacal environment and we could see here the *mystai*, the blessed in the beatific Beyond, transformed by the saving power of Eros. Some examples: Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 18/245, 18/246, 18/274, 18/343, 18/345, 18/350, 18/357.

[88] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 9/55, 12/47, 12/153, 14/232; *RVAp* II, 18/244, 20/175, 20/200, 20/300, 20/317, 20/330, 23/127, 23/179, 23/183, 25/65, 26/43, 26/88, 29/155, 30/135.

[89] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 20/5, 20/53, 20/76, 20/87, 20/166, 20/218, 20/248, 20/330, 23/179, 23/184.

Above any other meaning, in South Italian images Eros is the cosmic and primordial Eros whose presence triggers the metamorphosis of nature, who unleashes the fertile power of the natural world, that universal *physis*, fountain of vigor and vitality that is revealed in a burst of forms, colors, scents, and sensations within a sacred space. Eros governs nature. He is Lord of all that is damp and moistened. At the same time, he is in the bright flower that sprouts and opens to the light, in the light touch of dew that glimmers over plants and grasses at daybreak, nurtures them and quenches their thirst[90], he is in the nourishing zephyr, in the seed that germinates after a long winter's sleep, in the scent of flowers that inundates sweet gardens, in the delightful fruits that fall from refreshing pergolas and in all that is and flows in a multiplicity of manners, transforms, participates in unfamiliar essences, and makes them their own[91]. His magical power infects all of nature –plants, animals, mankind– and triggers prodigious metamorphosis.

In South Italian images, the mythical landscape where the god's actions take place, where his generating power is most strongly expressed, acquires the qualities of those *hieroi topoi*, meadows, gardens, and groves, sacred spaces, all paradisiacal and primeval, fertile, abundant and florid[92], the customary home of the gods who enrich them. They are the scenes of hierophanies and hierogamies, spaces that evoke the words of Plato (*Symposium*, 196 b); in those images, the life of the god takes place among flowers, and where there is a place that is filled with flowers and their scent, there he settles and remains. There are numerous images of the god, depicted as an adolescent, who emerges, walks, flutters, helps free a bird from a flower[93], or rests on a lush profusion of flowers, buds, tendrils, spirals, and scrolls[94], Sometimes he is the diminutive Eros of bucolic poetry, a character from a charming miniature world of flowers and bees, of rose petals on which the god sleeps[95], and of branches on which he perches like a bird[96]. On an Apulian pelike in Madrid (Figure 61), hermaphrodite Eros perches lightly

[90] Clarke, 1974.
[91] Cabrera 2005.
[92] Motte 1973.
[93] Trendall and Cambitouglou, *RVAp* II, 21/35.
[94] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 21/20, 21/24, 21/26, 21/27, 27/21, 29/211, 30/3; Lohmann, 1979, A21b; Hurschmann, Hoffmann and Knoll 2003, Taf. 53.
[95] Hermary, Cassimatis, Vollkommer 1986, p. 916, n. 779a
[96] Lasserre 1946, p. 208.

on a calyx flower that emerges amid a profusion of acanthus leaves, flowers, tendrils, plants, and plant scrolls. The god has triggered the continuous metamorphosis of uncontainable nature. On the superhuman scale of this plant-based landscape, Eros softly touches the flower with the tips of his naked feet, and through that magical act, from that subtle contact, the germinating force moves in both directions: natural and divine fertility are transmitted and spread in intimate, inseparable reciprocity, without distinguishing origin and end, cause and effect. His unfurled wings encompass the entire space to welcome, protect, and stimulate growth.

In this flower-filled garden, space of constant generation and transformation, Eros wields his power. He attends to Aphrodite there in her wonderful, revealing *anodos*[97]; there he welcomes a woman and offers an enormous flower. Eros is the gardener of this paradisiacal, primeval garden. He cares for its fruits, flowers, and plants. He waters them and gathers them[98]. In myth and ritual, *anthologia* and carpology are intimately linked to the initiation transit of the maidens who enter the nuptials. The flower-gathering –segregation and transport to a new place, to a new existence– announces the wedding transit, but in the context of death, it is a metaphor for the salvation transit. On some Apulian vases, Eros flies with a prodigiously-sized flower in his hands[99]. The god has picked the perfect flower in the garden of death. On an Apulian krater from Milan[100], Eros is seated on a mound of rocks in a space where plants sprout and a verdant garland drapes in the background. He holds and shows a woman the prodigious flower: a plant with three overlapping calyxes. The woman, leaning on a pillar, perhaps a reference to the tomb or the threshold in which she finds herself, holds a mirror in one hand and a garland of flowers in the other and contemplates the god. Behind Eros, a satyr with a situla and branch raises a kantharos and offers it to the woman. The god and the satyr show the deceased two powerful symbols of transformation: wine and plants. Both are passwords for those who will ask for the sign of their initiation to enter into Dionysus' blessed paradise. It is also a welcome gift as well as a wedding gift for those who will celebrate their nuptials with the god, and the prior vision and

[97] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 23/39, 23/226, 23/231, 27/516, 28/87, 29/101; Lohmann 1979, A531; Trendall, *RFVP*, 2/963, pl. 145.

[98] Cf. the description of Eros' epiphany in the garden in Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe* 2.4.

[99] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 26/35, 26/36.

[100] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 14/108, pl. 123, 5.

promise of transformation. Other Apulian images repeat this theme: Eros offering a flower to a woman[101], but sometimes it is a *mystes*, or Dionysus himself –again, we see the impossibility of distinguishing one figure from another– who shows the woman the flower[102]. In other images, the symbol is transferred to the initiated, who raises the flower before Eros as a sign and confirmation of the action that has already taken place[103]. It is also presented by other *mystai* when they welcome the deceased to the blessed place in scenes of *naiskos*[104]. The flower is sometimes held by a woman who appears within the funeral temple[105]. The final substitution, the ultimate metamorphosis, takes place in some images inside the funerary *naiskos*, which no longer houses the image of the deceased, but of a plant (cf. cap. III.3.). After the dissolution of their human form, the deceased has been replaced by the perfect image of the plant, a manifestation of inexhaustible life force. An image of renewed life, the flower and the plant are symbols of the deceased who has been initiated and revived in the realm of the god. The Dionysian Eros has exercised his power by eliminating borders, bringing together natures that have been riven, even uniting in his own hermaphrodite image various potential forms of existence –male, female, plant– as is typical of a god of all beginnings[106], including the god who signifies initiation, by unleashing the germinating force that sparks transformation. He is the first and last actor, ultimately presiding over the image of the *naiskos*[107], the singular space of death. The image of the deceased, the flower, and the god are but images of the same perfect reality. After being harvested by Eros, we are transplanted in order to come back to a new life. This is the promise and the final gift the god grants to mortals: removing the boundaries and individual forms in order to fuse them into a single divine being.

[101] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 18/249, 20/1, 20/250, 20/299.
[102] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 13/82, 14/142; *RVAp* II, 19/56a, 19/102, 20/57a.
[103] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* I, 14/25; *RVAp* II, 19/86, 20/9.
[104] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 17/27; Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp*, Supp I, 13/22a and 22b, 18/16d.
[105] Trendall and Cambitoglou, *RVAp* II, 28/48.
[106] Isler-Kerenyi 2015, p. 221.
[107] Schauenburg 1977, Abb. 1-2; Schauenburg 1981c, Abb.1; Schauenburg 1983b.

V. Conclusions

The images on Southern Italian vases forge a new version of Dionysus, similar in various aspects to the god from Attic images, but different in many other ways. The overwhelming presence of the god and the Dionysian in red figures vases from Magna Graecia and Sicily confirm the importance of this figure and of his religion's theology, which was undoubtedly connected to death, eschatological beliefs, and redemptive aspirations as seen in these vases which were destined for the grave. In South Italian iconography, Dionysus' domain is death, and the god's relationship to death is key to accurately interpreting these images, which show enormous variability within the same common theme. This variability reflected the need to adapt to diversified demands, and can offer some understanding of how the Dionysian religion developed in the 4th century BC in Magna Graecia.

These images demonstrate the limited interest of painters and their clients in scenes that narrate episodes from the god's biography, except for his love story with Ariadne, the most frequently represented mythical theme. Images of his births and the child god's delivery to the care of the nymphs of Nysa are scarce in South Italian vases. The interest in these images lies in legitimizing his divine filiation as the son of Zeus, conceived by the king of gods himself and in presenting the extraordinary birth of the god, including the death of his mother Semele, within a redemptive reading which confirms the child god's miraculous power, power that made possible the ultimate liberation of humankind and access to a blessed and eternal afterlife. The images of the god's birth highlight Dionysus' essential ability: he saves those who follow him from eternal darkness, as he saved his mother, whose death and subsequent *anabasis* from Hades by her son aroused hope in rebirth and salvation.

Episodes of confrontation with the *hybristai*, his adversaries, both mortal and immortal –Lycurgus, Pentheus, Orpheus, the Giants, and the pirates– are essential stories in the Dionysian mythology and iconography.

They all convey the same message: Dionysus' power leads all to ecstasy and madness, but a madness that is a blessing, because it is through this madness that a metamorphosis occurs, the transformation necessary to push boundaries and achieve a new existence. Whoever does not accept this blessed madness is possessed by another madness, which is devastating and characterized by deception and illusion, or by blind and arrogant reasoning, which sow pain and death. The god acts not only to avenge and punish those who do not recognize or accept his divine power or those who wish to impose chaos, disorder, and savagery, but he also acts to restore order and justice in the cosmos. Dionysus is an instrument of cosmic justice, sanctioned by Zeus, to impose order, the habitual order of what comes to pass, which in his realm and for mortals follows the path of life, death, life. Compared to these images of destruction, violence, and madness, there is only one image that has been preserved of a mythical episode that narrates the bestowing of the gift of the vine to Maron; it is an idyllic and peaceful image that pays tribute to Dionysus' power as a benefactor and extraordinary provider of gifts that offer benefits not only in this world, but that extend to the beyond. The god will grant to those who accept and venerate him and initiate themselves into his mysteries the offerings of happiness, abundance, and a new, eternal, and blessed life.

The images connecting Dionysus and Heracles in South Italy, the god's participation in scenes of the hero's apotheosis or in the banquet they share, emphasize the aspects that constitute the central purpose of the Dionysian religious message: the promise of an eternal and blessed life beyond death. The hero is a model for mortals. He is a hard-working man who attains immortality through suffering, effort, and overcoming challenges. His *areté* and compassion grant him the final triumph over death, his deification. The path the hero takes becomes the model of the initiatory journey taken by the Dionysian devotee. In this sense, he is a paradigm of humankind's endeavor to reach salvation after death, a salvation directed by Dionysus, the god with whom the hero has an exceptional relationship. He is the instrument of divinity that encourages mortals to make an effort and overcome obstacles so as to find the path of final liberation by rebirth as immortals. Both are figures that guarantee access to Olympus: the god who promises salvation and the hero who conquers it.

The South Italian images of the hierogamy of Dionysus and Ariadne, together with those that narrate the prelude to the meeting in Naxos, highlight various themes and concepts of transcendental significance: sleep-death, awakening, sexuality, eroticism and fertility, marriage and

union with the god, all of which are fundamental concepts in life and death.

The union of Dionysus and Ariadne is a paradigm of marital bliss, a sanctified model of human matrimony. Moreover, the transcendental significance of this theme makes sense not only in life, but especially in death. Dionysus is the god who awakes those who are asleep: only he can accomplish this. He plucks Ariadne from the world of death and returns her to life, revealing her true self, stripping her of the body's façade and exposing her soul, endowing her with a form of consciousness and a different, superior existence. This action is a metaphor for the journey of initiation, of the «awakening» of the one who is initiated to a new life and who, once death has been overcome, is offered a state of eternal blessedness. Dionysus is also the god who loves and joins Ariadne in matrimony. This union, understood as a journey, is exemplary: for the bride, who abandons her state of *parthenos* to become *nymphe*; for the woman who enters a new and higher realm; for Ariadne, who overcomes her mortal nature to become immortal; for the deceased who is buried with this image and who hopes, as does the young princess, to achieve transformation into a divine entity and enjoy a blessed, full, and fruitful life in the beyond. No other divine union offers a more explicit, appropriate model to fulfil the longings for transcendence and the hope for a full life after death for those who followed his teachings in life. It comes as no surprise, then, that they chose these images to accompany them in the transit from death to a blessed life, where the identification of men with Dionysus and women with Ariadne is then complete. South Italian images of the love between Dionysus and Ariadne, of the couple ensconced in reciprocal contemplation, evocative of eternal blessings and of their hierogamy, reveal that this union promises erotic joy, a state of total and eternal happiness, and perpetual ecstasy. Moreover, they show that the mystical union with the god is the culmination of the process of initiation that leads to the beatitude of immortals.

When considering South Italian Dionysian imagery, viewers are always faced with imagery that is characterized by the deliberate indetermination of the precise or explicit time in which the mythical narrative takes place. Dionysus' and Ariadne's march, driving a carriage or walking quickly, accompanied by members of the thiasos, the meeting of the couple in a shared bed, where they celebrate the symposium or when they kiss and embrace: could all of these images refer to the same event, the celebration of the wedding between the god and the mortal woman? Is the march by carriage or on foot the one that took place after the Naxian encounter,

which sanctified the couple's union with the celebration of the nuptial ritual? Or is it disconnected from that moment, and simply the *komos* that precedes or follows the celebration of the banquet? Does the depiction of the divine couple celebrating at the banquet with the *thiasos*, sharing the symposium bed, embracing and kissing, illustrate the celebration of their wedding and their conjugal union; or is it a timeless narrative, that of a perpetual celebration of the Dionysian banquet in the blessed paradise that the god offers as a gift to his initiates? The question is perhaps meaningless for the painter of these scenes or for the person who acquired the vase and its image for burial, since the time and mythical context would not need to be explained, but rather all precise times, moments, and meanings would merge. The painters surely did not intend to exclusively narrate a specific moment or episode from the divine biography, but instead they represented exemplary situations that conveyed the teachings of what the Dionysian religion offered to the men and women who chose these images to accompany them in their transit to the world beyond as means of salvation. The couple's march, the *komos*, the celebration of the banquet, and the sexual encounter are constant and perpetual; they are moments of hierogamy and moments of the Dionysian life which the blessed initiates enjoy in the afterlife. It would not make sense to define one specific time or distinguish one moment from another, since Ariadne is perpetually the divine bride, the one who was awakened to a new life and united with the god, and that union is forever actualized in each image depicting Dionysus and Ariadne.

As has been noted, the majority of South Italian Dionysian imagery does not refer to any particular episode from the god's mythical biography, but more broadly to «the Dionysian», that which manifests his power, which in the realm of South Italian imagery is the power that grants life after death. Most of the images represent the god and his followers, both mythical and human, in precise actions that offer a picture full of hopes and expectations. The message that all of these images transmit is the same: the belief in a blessed existence presided over by the god, who saves his followers from death and grants those initiated in his mysteries eternal happiness and euphoria in the joy of the mystical union, the wine shared, the pleasures of an eternal symposium, and the delight in a transformed, liberated existence. South Italian images thus depict these concepts by showing the pact that Dionysus sealed with Hades to legitimize this power and by presenting an extensive graphic catalog of the god's promises and gifts to those initiated in his mysteries, in his rites, and in his worship, but

also, in a broader sense, to those who believe in his power and who yearn for a full existence in a life beyond death.

What does Dionysus offer mortals? South Italian images respond through metaphors. All the symbols and gestures introduce the viewer to the mysticism of Bacchic rites and to the liberating and blessed eschatogamy. Their destiny is to enter the divine entourage as *bacchoi*, to participate fully in the ecstatic tumult of the thiasos, in the eternal feast of the afterlife, to achieve a blessed existence, a new, joyful, and full life, to enter the Dionysian paradise and a radically new sphere of existence, and to achieve total and definitive union with the god.

Images from the cemetery prepare for the decisive journey to the Dionysian realm *par excellence*. South Italian vases, especially those from Apulia, depicting characters surrounding the *naiskos* or the funerary headstone, provide iconographic clues that allow us to interpret the cemetery space and the funerary ritual as a Dionysian place or space. The characters could be an allusion to or the memory of family members or close friends who performed the farewell ritual, but they are primarily *mystai*, companions of the initiate on his or her journey. They may also be the blessed, who welcome the deceased to the afterlife and offer key objects to accompany him or her on the journey, so as to be recognized as a follower of the god's mysteries, symbols of the deceased's initiation and of his or her membership in the community of the chosen, necessary to enter the Dionysian paradise. Sometimes they are the members of Dionysus' thiasos who come to the place where the transit from death occurs to welcome the deceased and lead him or her to the god's realm in the afterlife. In fact, are there any great differences between the *mystai*, the deity, and the god's mythical followers? They are present as witnesses and helpers for the transit that begins with the act of death itself, welcoming the initiate to his or her definitive home.

Once the threshold of death has been crossed by way of the anteroom of the *naiskos*, the deceased enters the paradisiacal garden, an Edenic space where the action of sprouting, of the splendid growth of vegetation, of the spontaneity of propagation is a metaphorical image for rebirth. Here, this sacred action, symbol of fertility *par excellence*, stimulates the cosmic power to generate life: Eros. This is where human and divine nature merge, in the garden of Dionysus Antheios, and where the *mystes*, who undergoes this transformation, will spring into a new life.

In this sacred, transcendent place, the space of the Dionysian *telete*, the encounter with and in The Other occurs: the ultimate possession by the god, the dissolution of the self, and the reunification in the divine. South

Italian images depict the supernatural abundance and beatific stillness of the encounter with the god in the blessed Beyond. Death-Initiation leads to the contemplation of the god, a contemplation that is understood as revelation, for to see the god face to face is to contemplate the divine self. The encounter with the god finally frees the soul from its earthly bonds and, through mystical union, the initiate acquires an existence that is radically different and immortal.

According to South Italian images, another promise that Dionysus offers his followers is participation in the *komos* that precedes or follows the divine symposium, in the wild, noisy, frenetic space occupied by the *thiasos*, where *mystai* enjoy the profound experience of joy and euphoria. The images present a procession of characters who run, dance, or move while carrying Dionysian attributes, musical instruments, or vases used during the nighttime banquet. In this celebration, the *mystes* becomes infected with *mania*, drenched in divinity by way of a blessed madness which in images is expressed by movement, frenetic dancing, and ecstatic attitudes. In this ritual of possession, fully immersed in the Otherness of the divine, the boundaries between mortals and gods rupture and are blurred at the height of ecstasy and enthusiasm. Images of Dionysian madness are models for those who aspire to a final liberation after death and the ultimate union with the deity.

Dionysus shares wine, his most precious gift, with the deceased, *mystai* who have entered his paradise. The symposium, which in South Italian images depicts the god celebrating alone or sharing with other gods and mortals, is the location of Dionysian *euphrosyne*, the experience of intense and eternal happiness, achieved by the consumption of the sacred drink, instrument of mystical euphoria, by the pleasures of that fertile setting where the celebration takes place, of ecstatic music and dance, of eros and other pleasurable entertainment. It is an individual *euphrosyne*: intimate, deep, and non-transferable. The images multiply the message by offering an idyllic picture of the *bacchoi* celebrating the joyful reward of the banquet, the perpetual and inexhaustible feast, in the abode of the blessed.

The images of the encounter with the god, of the participation in the *komos* or in the Dionysian symposium, often persist in depicting the ambiguous identity of the protagonists. Often, in these contexts, painters represent the god's mythical followers, satyrs and maenads, and not mortals – at least not mortals that can be specifically differentiated from the former. In any event, and in spite of the constant presence of the *thiasos*, does the promise that Dionysus offers his followers not also signify the

ability to merge with the god in his company, to participate with him, as satyrs and maenads do, in the *komos*, the banquet, the dance, or celebration? In death, the boundaries between real and mythical, the mortal and immortal are dissolved by the god's transformative power. The images offer those who are buried with them this promise: as *bacchoi*, as initiates into the mysteries of Dionysus, they will be transformed, acquiring a new personality, that of companion to the god, and in that company they will experience mystical union with the divinity, eternal fulfilment and happiness. The deceased assumes this mythical identity upon crossing the threshold of death and joining the god. The *thiasos*, in their encounters with the god or in the celebration of the *komos* and sacred feasts, is but a visible and hopeful model of the transformation and the divine possession seen in the *mystes*, who believes in the saving power of the god. Likewise, it is at times difficult to distinguish between Dionysus and the mortal if the *mystes* is represented as a naked youth of idealized beauty, holding any of the Dionysian attributes. However, this purposeful ambiguity exists to reinforce the god's salvific message through the promise of fusion with the deity until the initiate achieves an identity inseparable from Dionysus'.

Finally, the promise of *Euphrosyne*, of beatific happiness, is also offered through images depicting religious sacrifice and ritual in honor of the god. This ritual is performed in a natural setting, consecrated by the god's presence, with an altar and other indicators and abounds with actions that depart from the norm and that represent The Otherness of the Dionysian cult, a ritual that fosters a relationship with a deity that is different – more intimate and transcendent. These images introduce the viewer to the liminality of the god and his rites, which induce trance, transformation, and the mystical union with the god.

South Italian images also depict other aspects of Dionysus and the Dionysian by portraying the god in close contact with *phlyakes*, actors or theatrical masks. These images synthesize various aspects of the Dionysian religious universe that once again insist on the god's power of salvation. The mask is a symbol and manifestation of the god, and, together with the disguise, was a component that was certainly present in Dionysian mysteries. The theater itself can be viewed as an essential part of Dionysian initiation, since the initiate, like the actor, enters the sacredness of the Dionysian world by way of masks and disguises, assuming an identity different from his own. Images show actors joining the thiasos –an incorporation not exclusively motivated by theatrical representation, but by a deeper relationship with the god– by means of the mask and disguise. These trans-

formative elements, much like wine, are instruments of divine possession and bring about a state of ecstasy. They offer a way of coming out of oneself to acquire a new identity, which in Dionysian mysticism is a divine entity. Both elements, mask and disguise, are fundamental components of the Dionysian mysteries, as they manifest the close connection that exists between the metamorphosis that takes place by donning theatrical attire and that which, through the ritual of initiation, allows followers to be transfigured and to enter into symbiosis with the deity. Both are symbols of backward and forward movement, since the transformation that they cause allows for entrance into the realm of Dionysus, and entrance into this realm allows for the final transformation. This is not only an allusion to the festive atmosphere of the world of theater, to the ritual celebrated and shared in this life, a sign of the identity of a Hellenized community, but the expression of the acquisition of the deceased's new identity; furthermore, it represents the state of beatitude, happiness, pleasure, and evasion that the theatrical spectacle itself entails. This state is achieved by those who, after having been initiated into the mysteries of the god, are allowed to cross the threshold between one world and the other to attain a blessed and eternal life after death.

Actors and masks are featured as indispensable Dionysian symbols in scenes of the encounter between the god and his followers that takes place in a timeless setting, a sacred and idyllic space where sacrifice, feast and symposium occur, as do the pleasures associated with the god: the celebration of wine and of the gifts that Dionysus offers the initiates. The celebration does not transpire in this world, as part of or after a theatrical performance, but in the beyond, where the transformation has taken place, where masks and disguises have allowed for a final liberation and union with Dionysus, god of metamorphosis and theater.

The South Italian images also depict Eros, an androgynous Dionysian Eros, a member of the *thiasos* and bearer of Dionysian symbols. He is the son of Aphrodite, and triggers love and erotic desire; but he also joins Dionysus to offer mortals his gifts. He is the cosmic Eros who sparks the process of metamorphosis, who cultivates and collects souls in death to transplant them into a new life in the Garden of Dionysus. He is a model of transformations, of the synthesis of human nature, both male and female, plant and animal nature, the god who offers an understanding that death dissolves individual limits and structures to fuse them all into one divine being. He originates all that is in the world; he is the god of beginnings, including initiation, the hypostasis of eroticism, of sensual pleasure, of

happiness and Dionysian blessings, all of which are the results of the metamorphosis that he himself has facilitated. Eros is but another manifestation of Dionysus.

The images of Dionysus on South Italian vases depict a god who is especially close to mankind, who welcomes mortals into his company, who establishes a relationship of reciprocity with them, accepting their offerings and presenting them with gifts. His most precious gifts are wine and masks, instruments of possession and transformation. His figure, continually repeated on vases destined for death, surrounded by different characters – satyrs, nymphs, maenads, and simple human beings – as well as animals, plants, and inanimate objects, are all charged with Dionysian content until they become metaphors, symbols that replace the image of the god, that proclaim and guarantee to those who are buried with them the promise of a new life, filled with happiness and blessings in the afterlife, and entrance into the Dionysian paradise.

A matter of debate has been, and continues to be, whether the message of salvation contained in these images is the transposition of a specific religious doctrine. In this sense, one of the most productive and widely discussed and documented analyses has been with regard to the relationship between South Italian images and Orphism. Although at present the readings are more nuanced, offering less mechanical correlations, they have proposed corresponding content that broadens the interpretations of both the imaginary and religious worlds. It is quite possible that in many South Italian images, there are echoes of the practices and expressions that are present in Orphism, although the ambiguity of the iconographic language does not allow us to establish firm distinctions between these spheres that are so closely linked.

In any case, the prominence of Dionysus and his role in the liberating eschatology of certain religious beliefs of Magna Graecia remains a presence in South Italian imagery. Those who believed in a life after death, followers of religions that were broadly characterized by salvation, such as the Dionysian religion, Orphism, and the Eleusinian religion, would see in the Dionysus of the red figures vases a god who offers hope in transcendence, in a full and eternally joyous life in the Beyond. In these images, the message cannot be more convincing: the god has the power to offer life after death. The iconography of South Italian vases speaks thus by depicting the gifts that the god offers to those who are initiated into his mysteries, in his rites and in his cult, but also, in a broader sense, to all of those who believe in his power and who yearn for a full existence beyond death.

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Table of illustrations[1]

[1] [Note of the editors]. This table lists the figures numbered in Paloma Cabrera's posthumous text and offers the location of the pieces. In the few cases in which the reference to the precise museum inventory has not been found, the main bibliographic reference given in the footnotes of Paloma Cabrera's text for each piece has been kept.

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