Reading the Chigi Vase

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READING THE CHIGI VASE

ABSTRACT

Long considered one of the technical masterpieces of Archaic Greek vase painting, the Protocorinthian Chigi vase (ca. 640 B.C.) has defied attempts at interpretation. Its imagery has most often been understood as a random assortment of exquisite but unrelated scenes—hunts, horsemanship, the Judgment of Paris, and a hoplite battle. It is argued here that there is in fact a logic behind the choice of scenes, and that the vase displays a pliable thematic unity, focusing upon the stages of maturation of the Corinthian male and the interpenetration of the everyday, the exotic, the heroic, and the divine in the lives of mortals.

There was a time, not very long ago, when no one bothered thinking much about why particular subjects were painted on particular Greek vases, or why specific scenes are found together on the same vase.[1] The hard distinction between myth and genre was the only distinction that mattered, and since a scene on a pot had to be one or the other, the choice was inherently uncontroversial: myth was always appropriate because, well, the Greeks liked myth, and genre scenes were natural, too, because the Greeks had daily lives like everyone else. Consequently, the search for programmatic or thematic relationships between two or more scenes on a single vase was rarely undertaken: the iconography of Greek vase painting was virtually a random thing.

That time has passed. We now recognize categories of imagery in which the distinction between the generic and the mythological, between the mortal and the heroic or divine, is not as strict. Consider certain scenes on Attic Late Geometric and Archaic vases, for example, where the every-

1. In completing this article, I have benefited greatly from the assistance and advice of many people, including Alfred Acres, Judith Barringer, Larissa Bonfante, Anna Rastrelli (Museo archeologico, Florence), Rex Wallace, the very helpful anonymous referees for *Hesperia,* and, above all, Anna Maria Moretti (Villa Giulia), who graciously allowed me to remove the Chigi vase from its vitrine for study and photography. My research was also greatly facilitated by residence as a visiting scholar at the American Academy in Rome, by a University of Oregon Summer Research Award, and by a University of Oregon Humanities Center Fellowship. I am very grateful to and for all.

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day life is given a heroic character through the depiction of Dipylon shields or battle chariots,[2] or where (on a few works by the Amasis Painter) Dionysos makes his epiphany among mortal men who are on routine hunting expeditions.[3]

Over the last three decades, the choice of subject has also attracted intense attention, from a variety of perspectives. In the 1970s, for example, John Boardman began to interpret Attic vases painted during the Peisistratid era as political, even subversive, documents. Exekias's famous scene of Ajax and Achilles amusing themselves with a board game when they should be out looking for Trojans to kill[4] is, in Boardman's view, really a thinly veiled allusion to lax behavior at the Battle of Pallene, ca. 546, when Athenians allegedly played dice as Peisistratos attacked and won his final tyranny (Hdt. 1.63). The presence of the Lakonian cult heroes Kastor and Polydeukes on the back of the same vase supposedly indicates Exekias's pro-Spartan sympathies as well: taken together, the scenes on the Vatican amphora comprise an antityrannical manifesto cloaked in myth. Problematic as Boardman's "current affairs" approach sometimes is (and important as it is to remember that a privately owned pot is not the same as a work of public propaganda), it has had more than its fair share of proponents, and it has helped clarify the ideological dimension—the political reflections—of many Greek images.[5]

The syntagmatic relationship between scenes on many other nonpolitical pots is also clearer now. We may not know why the Protoattic Nessos Painter chose to paint the myth of Herakles and Nessos on the body of his name-vase in New York (ca. 675–650) or Exekias, on his fragmentary krater from the north slope of the Acropolis (ca. 530), the combat over Patroklos's corpse. But the odd-looking lion attacking a deer on the neck panel of the Nessos amphora and the lion fights on the Exekian krater surely function like Homeric similes: the heroes fight centaurs or each other the way lions maul deer or cattle.[6] More broadly, recent structuralist, anthropological, semiotic, and narratological studies have firmly established not only that black- and red-figure vase painting is a "construct" encoding cultural themes and social attitudes, but also that Archaic and Classical vase painters could approach their task with specific programs and messages in mind, that there is often a correlation between subject and vase shape, and that the particular combination of scenes on a vase could have paradigmatic value (by pairing heroic and mortal behaviors, for instance).[7]

All in all, the search for thematic unity on a vase is now an orthodox enterprise.[8] One Archaic vessel has been especially fortunate in the

2. See, e.g., Snodgrass 1980; Hurwit 1985b and 1993, esp. pp. 34–36; and Sinos 1998.

3. See von Bothmer 1985, pp. 46–47; Stewart 1987, pp. 36–38.

4. Vatican 344; Beazley 1986, pls. 64–65.

5. Major documents in the debate include Boardman 1972, 1978a, 1984, 1989; Williams 1980, p. 144, n. 55; and Cook 1987; see also Sparkes 1991a, pp. 69–71. For a recent investigation of the use of the Dioskouroi in Athens,see Shapiro 1999; and for an uncompromising attack on those who would find political content beneath Archaic imagery, see Neer 2001, esp. pp. 292–294.

6. New York Nessos amphora: Hurwit 1985a, p. 174 and fig. 72. Exekias's North Slope krater: Beazley 1986, pl. 73; Markoe 1989, esp. pp. 94–95, pl. 5:a–b.

7. The literature is now vast, but see, for example, the various essays in Bérard 1989, Hoffmann 1977 and 1988, Lissarrague 1990, Scheibler 1987, Steiner 1993, and Shapiro 1997. Generally, also Stansbury-O'Donnell 1999, pp. 118–157.

8. This is not to say that the scenes on a pot are *always* thematically related; even for Bron and Lissarrague 1989, p. 21, "there is very often no direct link,

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devotion it has attracted: the François vase (ca. 570), by Kleitias and Ergotimos, which (despite disagreement over details and possible poetic inspiration) has emerged as an anthology of myths chosen to narrate the heroic pedigree, career, and death of Achilles, with a countercurrent of scenes relating to the broader theme of marriage—unhappy marriage, on the whole, but marriage nonetheless. With the battle of pygmies and cranes on the foot to supply comic relief, the François vase is perhaps the closest approximation to a "painted epic" in the 6th century.[9]

I explore below the extent to which some organizing principle or principles may be at work on an even earlier masterpiece of the Greek vase painter's craft: a small polychrome pot whose pieces were found in 1881 during the excavation of a huge Etruscan tumulus accidentally discovered on the property of Prince Mario Chigi, atop Monte Aguzzo, above the village of Formello, about 3.5 km north of Veii. The vessel is now on display in the Villa Giulia.[10]

THE VASE

The Chigi vase (Fig. 1) is perhaps the earliest-known example of a kind of wine jug conventionally known as an olpe—an ovoid or sagging pitcher with a flaring mouth and a vertical ribbed handle that is fixed to the rim with a pronglike feature ending in circular disks (rotelles).[11] It is usually assigned either to the second phase of the Middle Protocorinthian period (MPC II) or to the Late Protocorinthian (LPC) period, but it is at any rate almost always given a date of around 650–640.[12]

other than proximity, between the different images decorating a vase." And there are still a few scholars who insist that the search for iconographic coherence on a vase (or, for that matter, in the sculpture of a temple) is a waste of time, the anachronistic exercise of a modern, literate temperament that (conditioned by fixed texts) seeks programmatic logic and thematic unity where the ancient mind (conditioned by a predominantly oral culture) did not. See Small 1999, p. 573, n. 24, who believes such attempts are doomed to failure "because [the problem of iconographic unity] is solely a modern one." Cf. Ridgway 1999, pp. 82–94, who believes that the sculptural programs of ancient temples did indeed bear messages, but that they may not have been as logically or carefully constructed as the modern mind (long shaped by written texts and the "controlled messages of Christian art") would like or expect. See also Stansbury-O'Donnell 1999, pp. 124–129, on problems of what he calls "paradigmatic extension."

9. Stewart 1983; Schaus 1986; Carpenter 1986, pp. 1–11; Haslam 1991; Isler-Kerényi 1997.

10. Villa Giulia 22679; Amyx 1988, p. 32, no. 3.

11. The modern use of the word olpe, restricted to such ovoid wine jugs, does not correspond with ancient use, when "olpe" could indicate the small perfumed-oil flask we know as the aryballos; see Amyx 1988, pp. 488–489, 560–561; Sparkes 1991b, p. 63. The Etruscans loved the shape and faithfully copied it in vast numbers; Amyx 1988, pp. 488, 686.

12. Benson (1986, pp. 105–106) places the beginning of the Chigi Painter's career in the MPC II period (660–650 B.C.); Boardman (1998, p. 87) dates the vase "late in MPC, near 650 or later"; Payne (1933, p. 23), Simon (1981, p. 50), and Amyx (1988, p. 369) date it to LPC, ca. 640. Ducati (1927, p. 70) dated the Chigi vase and the tomb to the beginning of the 6th century; Karo (1899–1901, p. 8) dated the vase similarly. Mingazinni (1976) has attempted to revise radically Archaic pottery chronologies and dates the Chigi vase to ca. 570; his arguments have not been widely accepted.

Salmon (1984, p. 106) notes that although Corinthian vases had found their way to Etruria from the mid-8th century on, high-quality Corinthian imports began to arrive in significant numbers around 650 (his date for the Chigi vase). This is precisely the time when Etruscan society experienced "greater social stratification and centralisation of power . . . accompanied by the development of an increasingly elaborate and varied elite material culture" (Arafat and Morgan 1994, p. 112). The importation of Corinthian pottery appears to be a symptom of these phenomena. But, as Small (1994) argues in the case of Attic painted vases, the importation of foreign vases may tell us less about the general course of Etruscan culture and fortunes than is often thought.

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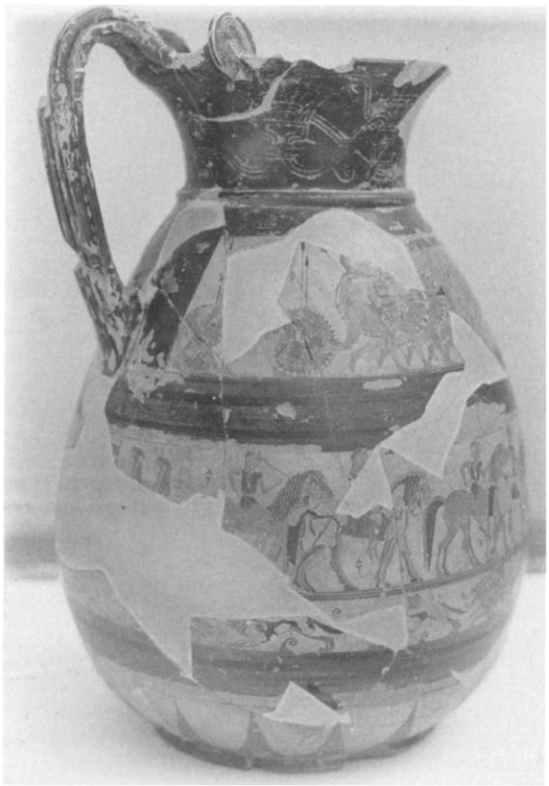

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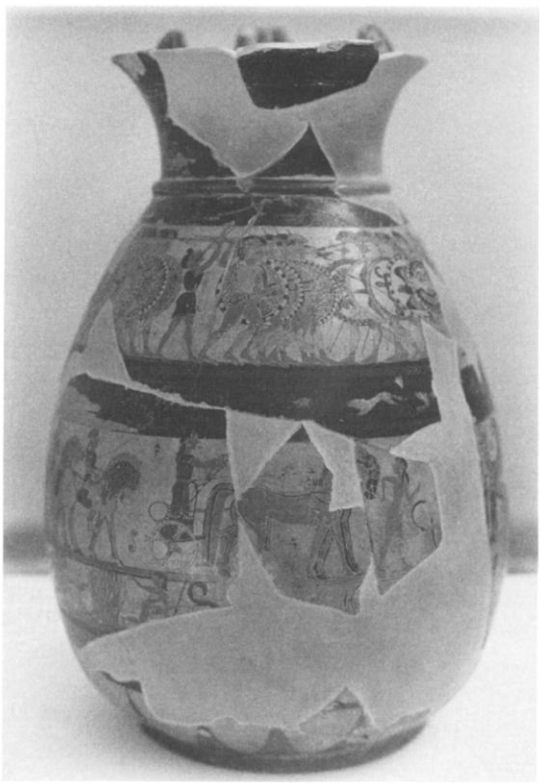

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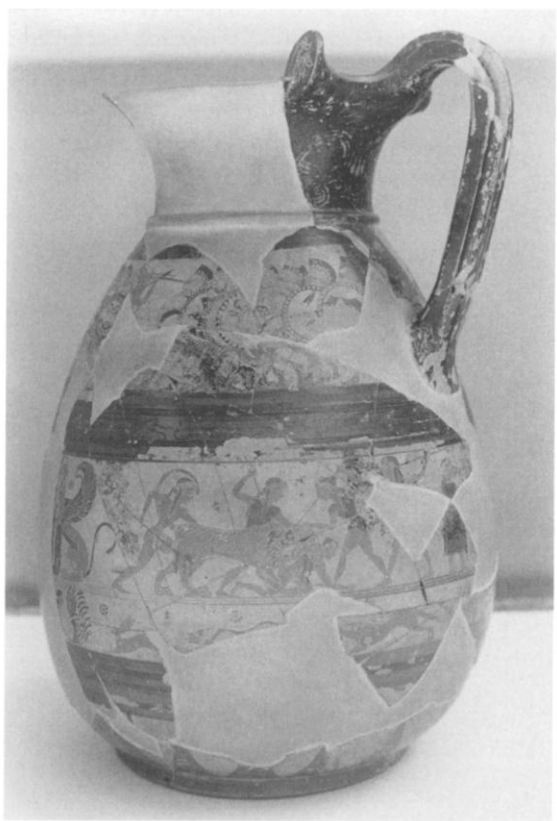

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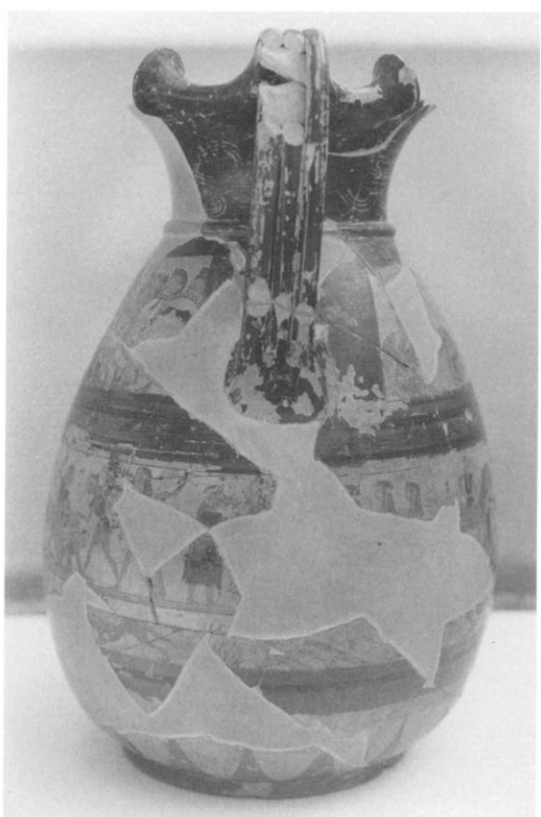

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Figure 1 *(opposite).* **The Chigi vase. Rome, Villa Giulia 22679.** Photos author

Figure 2. Chamber tomb from Monte Aguzzo. Museo archeologico, Florence. Photo author

The vase was deposited in a monumental tomb that, judging from its rough ashlar and quasi-polygonal masonry, was built before the end of the 7th century—perhaps even as early as 630.[13] The tomb consisted of a 5-m-long corridorlike dromos, two narrow, corbel-vaulted side chambers (one of which, 3.35 m long and 1.90 m wide, has been reconstructed in the courtyard of the Museo archeologico, Florence; Fig. 2), and a large main chamber (7.4 m long and 2.55 m wide) at the back. It was in this main chamber that the pieces of the Chigi vase were found. The relatively close dating of the vase and tomb means that although the tomb might have remained in use for more than a single generation, the Chigi vase *could* have been made and painted at Corinth, exported to Etruria, and buried on Monte Aguzzo all within the course of a few decades, and perhaps a lot less. And that, together with the vase's exceptionally rich figured decoration, raises the possibility in turn that the Chigi vase (like, perhaps, the François vase two generations later) was a commissioned piece, specifically made for an Etruscan in the market for items that would, with their foreign cachet, display the owner's good taste, offer him paradigms of Greekness to emulate, or both.[14] This possibility admittedly remains small,

13. For the date of the Monte Aguzzo tomb, see Åkerström 1934, pp. 17–18; de Agostino 1968, pp. 109, 111; Steingräber 1981, p. 492; and A. De Santis, in Bartoloni et al. 1994, p. 35 (where it is suggested that "una datazione all'orientalizzante medio"—that is, a date even before 630—is possible for the tomb).

14. For Greek vases and the Etruscan market, see generally Rasmussen 1991 (Corinthian pottery); and Arafat and Morgan 1994 and Small 1994 (Attic pottery). For the François vase (which was given special treatment when it was shipped to Etruria, with struts added to prevent its handles from breaking), see Cristofani et al. 1981, p. 101; Isler-Kerényi 1997.

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but the likelihood that this unique vase arrived in Etruria as "saleable ballast" is minuscule. It was surely a special purchase.[15]

The tomb on Monte Aguzzo was apparently ransacked twice: first sometime in antiquity, and then in late 1880 or early 1881, when the inhabitants of Formello, who had been given the right to dig on Prince Chigi's properties, rediscovered and entered the tomb before Rodolfo Lanciani could be entrusted with its more systematic (but still poorly published) excavation.[16] Some 500–600 impasto, high-quality bucchero, Italo-Geometric, and Corinthian potsherds were found in the same chamber as the pieces of the Chigi vase (about three-quarters of the vessel is preserved). The finds, though plentiful, were otherwise modest, with the exception of a bucchero vessel (datable to the last quarter of the 7th century) inscribed in five lines with two of the earliest-known Etruscan alphabets, some almost incantationlike, nonsensical syllables (for example, *azaruazaruazaruas*), and a dedicatory inscription that, though open to interpretation, seems to indicate that the vase belonged, or had at some point belonged, to someone named Atianai.[17] If Atianai was the principal occupant of the main chamber of the tomb on Monte Aguzzo, we in all probability also know the name of the Etruscan owner of the Chigi vase.

Although incision is abundantly used for outlines and details, the vase is notable for a refined polychrome technique in black, reddish-purple, and various shades of yellowish-brown that is usually thought to owe much to contemporary wall or panel painting.[18] We are, in fact, told that a Corinthian (Ekphantos) invented the art of painting in color (though we are not told precisely when) and we hear of panel paintings produced as early as the 8th century.[19] But there is nothing to indicate that such production was extensive in the 7th century, and it may be doubted whether painters were particularly specialized this early. The few scraps of preserved 7th-century free painting, from the walls of the Temple of Poseidon at Isthmia (ca. 650) and the metopes of the Temple of Apollo at Thermon (ca. 630), might well have been the work of one of the few Corinthian

Figure 3 ***(opposite)*****. The MacMillan aryballos. H. ca. 6.5 cm. British Museum 1889.4-18.1.** Courtesy Trustees of the British Museum

15. For the controversial theory that Greek painted vases had virtually no intrinsic or monetary value, see Vickers and Gill 1994. Its many critics include Small (1994), who points out that in later centuries Etruscan consumers purchased Attic painted vases for a variety of reasons—to sit as decorative objects on a shelf, to serve as storytelling *objets d'art* (like the François vase) or as souvenirs (like Panathenaic amphoras), and, above all, to be deposited expressly in tombs. Small argues that although the Etruscans do not seem to have actually drunk from or dined using Attic painted vases, no single explanation for the importation of Attic pottery is sufficient. A similar variety of uses, and a similar selectivity of production and consumption, can be assumed for earlier Protocorinthian imports as well.

16. Ghirardini 1882, p. 292; Ward-Perkins 1961, p. 47.

17. The vase itself belongs to Rasmussen's classification 1d; see Rasmussen 1979, p. 72. For the "Formello alphabet" and the dedicatory inscription (*mi atianaia achapri alice veneliSi/ velthur zinace*), see Ghirardini 1882; Buonamici 1932, pp. 107–108; von Vacano 1965, pp. 76–77; Boitani, Cataldi, and Pasquinucci 1975, p. 229; Pallottino 1978, pl. 94; Agostiniani 1982, p. 76, n. 127; Cristofani 1985, p. 87 (who translates the dedicatory inscription as "I am [the vase] of Atianai. Achapri [?] dedicated [gave?] me to Venel. Velthur made me."); and Pandolfini and Prosdocimi 1990, pp. 24–26. We do not know what the word *achapri* means.

18. Payne 1931, pp. 92–98; Robertson 1975, p. 53.

19. See Plin. *HN* 35.16 (Ekphantos) and 35.55–56 (Boularchos's painting of the "Battle of the Magnetes," dated by Pliny before the 18th Olympiad, or 708 B.C.); see also Schaus 1988.

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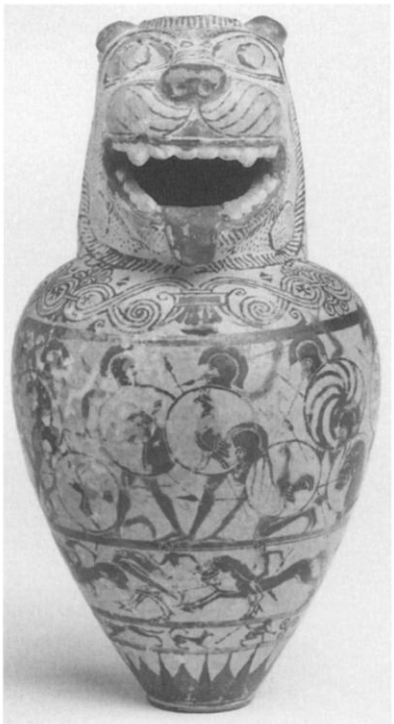

craftsmen who primarily painted polychrome vases and who might have easily adjusted their techniques for different media upon commission; the Isthmia fragments bear decorative patterns and a horse's mane comparable to those found on Protocorinthian pots, and the Thermon metopes are even made of baked clay.[20]

The origin of the painter of the Chigi vase, if not the vase itself, is also at issue. The person who labeled a few figures on the back (see below, Fig. 8) did not write Greek like a Corinthian: he wrote like an Aiginetan, in the opinion of some, or a Syracusan, in the opinion of others.[21] It seems likely that either the writer was not the same man as the painter (a possibility we should not dismiss too hastily) or the painter was not a native of Corinth.[22] But in any case the warm, creamy, buff-colored fabric of the vase is recognizably Corinthian and its provenience is not in doubt.[23]

Though the Chigi vase is far larger than an aryballos (the tiny perfume flask that is the quintessential Protocorinthian product), it is still not very large (H. 26 cm) in comparison with other Greek vases and so demanded the skills of a consummate miniaturist. This artist—properly known as the Chigi Painter—is generally credited with at least three other works as well: a fragmentary olpe from Aigina, an aryballos in Berlin, and the British Museum's MacMillan aryballos (where, in its lower friezes, less than a centimeter high, the artist worked on a nearly microscopic scale; Fig. 3).[24] The Chigi Painter is also considered the central figure in a small group of polychrome vase painters working in the middle of the 7th century (the Chigi Group),[25] and a recently published

20. Cf. Hurwit 1985a, pp. 161–162. It is true that the small wooden pinakes from Pitsa differ from even the most colorful of Corinthian vases in technique and style (red and blue predominate), but since they date to the second half of the 6th century they cannot fairly be used to suggest great differences between free painting and works like the Chigi vase a century earlier. For the general problem (though focusing on the 6th century), see Amyx 1983. It is also useful to keep in mind that even such later vase painters as the Athenian Euthymides (ca. 510) could execute independent panel paintings (such as his chocolate-brown warrior on a plaque from the Acropolis) with a different range of color from that seen on his pots; see Boardman 1975, p. 54, fig. 53.

21. Payne 1931, pp. 38–39 (Aiginetan, following Rumpf); Jeffery 1990, pp. 125, n. 3, 264 (Syracusan). See also Lorber 1979, pp. 14–15, no. 13; Wachter 2001, p. 31.

22. See Amyx 1988, p. 602, where he points out the danger in assuming "that the writing on [a Corinthian] vase was in every case provided by the vase painter himself"; and Payne 1931, p. 39, where it is suggested that "the inscriptions on Protocorinthian vases show us foreign artists working at Corinth, in the Protocorinthian style."

23. Some have doubted a Corinthian origin for the Chigi vase; for example, Rambo (1918, p. 13, n. 1) believes that the vase is Etruscan, giving as her reasons its use of landscape in the lowest zone, its findspot near Vulci [*sic*], and the supposedly "sub-Mycenaean" costume of the flute player in the battle scene. I assume that Payne (1931, p. 182, n. 1) is being ironic when he calls Rambo's conclusion "a real contribution."

In the opinion of Karo (1899–1901, p. 7), "der Thon ist warmgelb und nicht sehr fein, also von dem hellen, grünlichen, feingeschlämmten Thone der gewöhnlichen protokorinthischen Vasen verschieden." But even he considers it "ein Beispeil der höchsten Blüte des protokorinthischen Stils" (p. 8).

No works incontrovertibly by the painter of the Chigi vase have been discovered at Corinth itself, though fragments of an aryballos and alabastron related to his style have been found at Perachora (Amyx 1988, p. 32, C.1 and C.2) and a fragmentary alabastron with a hoplite battle scene found at the so-called Potter's Quarter in western Corinth was attributed to the artist (the MacMillan Painter) by Dunbabin and Robertson 1953, p. 179; Amyx (1988, p. 38, no. 7) prefers an assignment to the broader "Chigi Group." For other sherds from the Potter's Quarter with affinities with the Chigi Group, see *Corinth* XV, iii, nos. 285, 288, 289, 304, and 341.

24. Amyx 1988, pp. 31–32, 369–370.

25. The group also includes the Boston Painter and the Sacrifice Painter; Amyx 1988, pp. 33–37.

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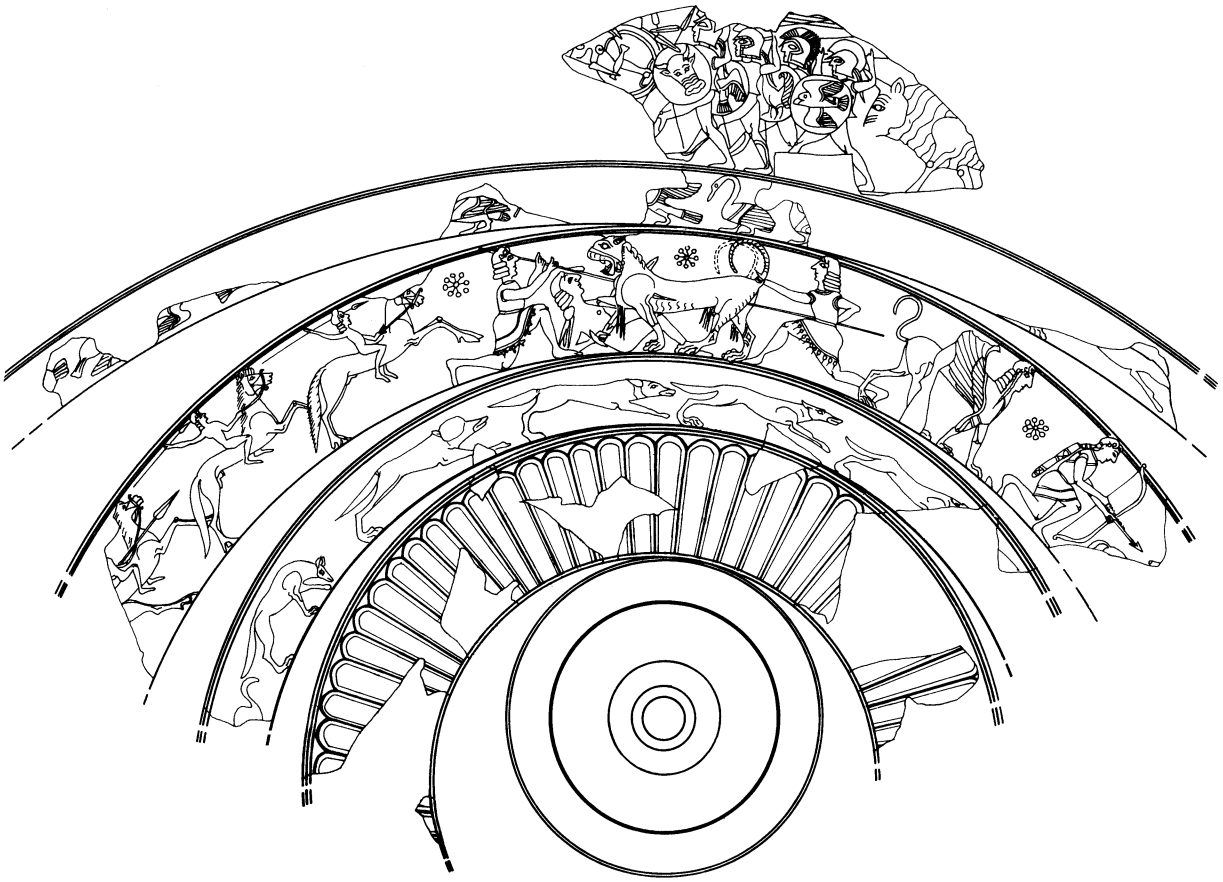

Figure 4. Oinochoe from Erythrai, drawing. Scale 1:2. After Akurgal 1992, p. 84, fig. 1:a

fragmentary oinochoe from Erythrai in Asia Minor, with similar scenes of warfare, hunting, and horsemanship, is likely to come from his circle if not from his own hand (Fig. 4).[26]

THE SCENES

The inside of the rim of the Chigi vase is decorated with hatching and white pinwheel rosettes, while fine lotus palmettes adorn the pronged handle and rotelles (Fig. 5). On the exterior, between the neck and shoulder (again covered with lotus palmette chains painted in white over a dark background) and the base (with two abstract zones, one with black rays that lead the eye upward, the other of reddish-purple horizontal stripes against a dark ground), there are four figured bands or friezes (I–IV).

I. In the lowest frieze (2.2 cm high), three nude short-haired hunters use a pack of long-tailed dogs to ambush long-eared hares (and, in one case, a vixen) from behind four or five bushes that have the fluidity of aquarium plants (Fig. 6). These are the only elements of landscape found in any zone. One kneeling hunter carries a *lagobolon,* or throwing stick, as he signals a companion carrying a brace of dead hares on his back to stay low behind a bush. There is no clear indication in the preserved fragments of the sort of trap or net found in other representations of hare hunting.[27] Filling ornaments (hooks, crosses, pinwheel rosettes, S-spirals, zigzags,

26. E. Akurgal, cited in Cook and Blackman 1970–1971, p. 41 (attribution to the Chigi Painter); Neeft 1991, p. 15 (E-1); Akurgal 1992 (attribution to the "Erythrai Painter"); Schnapp 1997, p. 478 (5 bis); Boardman 1998, p. 278.

27. See, e.g., Schnapp 1989, figs. 99–100. A few arching lines preserved below the front hooves of the chariot team in the zone above might belong to such a trap.

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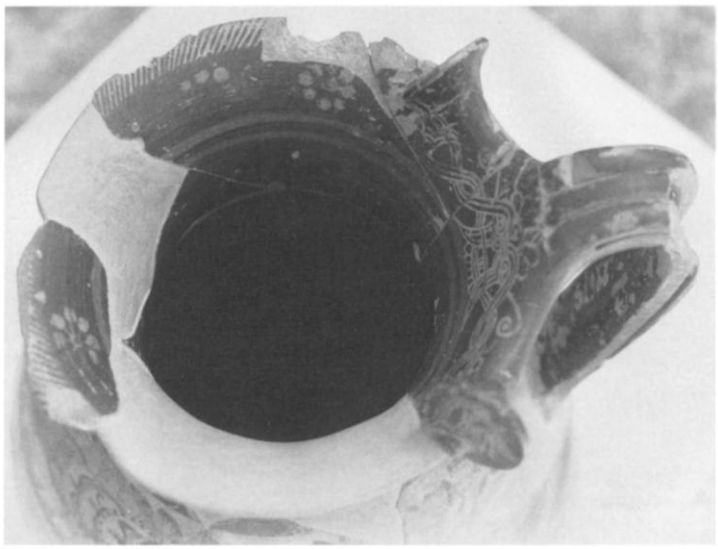

Figure 5. Chigi vase, rim and mouth.
Photo author

Figure 6. Chigi vase, detail.
Photo author

and lozenges formed of opposing triangles) are lightly scattered in the spaces between the figures. The direction of the pursuit is mostly right to left.[28]

II. The next frieze (4.6 cm high) appears at first glance to be a collection of four or five formally discrete elements, with more abstract ornaments—S-spirals, lozenges, zigzags—tastefully strewn about. First, there is a parade of long-haired horsemen, wearing tunics, riding bareback, using

28. For the hare hunt, see Anderson 1985, pp. 32–34, and Schnapp 1997, pp. 180–181.

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only reins and halters, and moving fairly stiffly from left to right (Fig. 1:a). Each rider also leads a riderless horse, and so these youths are probably not jockeys themselves (like the racers on the MacMillan aryballos; Fig. 3)[29] but squires (*hippostrophoi*) leading mounts for absent companions or warriors (*hippobateis*), as we know them from other vases of the period and afterward, at Corinth and elsewhere.[30] Perhaps, as some think, those missing warriors are to be found dismounted and fighting on foot in the zone above.[31] Alternatively, the four squires could be holding the horses for other youths in the same zone (as we shall see) or for use in a team. For next comes a light four-horse chariot, driven by a lone youth but led by another (this time nude) youth on foot, who looks back upon his fellows over his shoulder (Fig. 1:b).[32] Although the S-spiral hovering between the lead rider and the chariot has the character of a punctuation mark, the horsemen and chariot are probably part of the same procession.

The parade is brought to an abrupt halt by a static bicorporate sphinx—a monster with two bodies but a single face, who wears an elaborate floral crown (or else the ornament grows out of her head) and who, like a good Archaic figure, smiles a little smile (Fig. 6). Sphinxes are usually innocuous members of the Protocorinthian menagerie and take their place in frieze after frieze beside lions, panthers, boars, goats, and birds, singly or in pairs. They are never found in a Protocorinthian narrative context,[33] and there is no hint that they could also be, in Greek art and imagination, destroyers of men and posers of existential questions. Even so, it is worth recalling the sphinx or sphinxes who carry off a fallen warrior from the battlefield on a roughly contemporary relief from the acropolis of Mycenae (sometimes thought to be Corinthian in origin).[34] The Chigi sphinx may not be as sinister a creature as those but, given the brutal scene to follow (in which a youth is savaged), it may nevertheless introduce intimations of mortality or (as I shall suggest) liminality. At all events, while creatures such as double-lions are known in Near Eastern and Mycenaean art,[35] the double-*sphinx* seems to be a specifically Corinthian invention, and this example may be the first of her strange breed.

Next to the sphinx, a nearly symmetrical and self-contained lion hunt takes place (Fig. 7). Four youths (one nude but belted, the others wearing cuirasses) spear a magnificent beast that has caught a fallen comrade in its jaws—he is the only human casualty found on the vase. Purplish blood pours out of all (apparently mortal) wounds. Whether lions actually roamed

29. It is possible that they are leading the horses to a starting line for others to race, and it is interesting that, according to Pausanias (5.8.8), horse racing was introduced to the Olympic Games in the 33rd Olympiad, or 648 B.C.—close to the date of the Chigi vase and MacMillan aryballos.

30. Greenhalgh 1973, pp. 84–88, 96–146; Simon 1981, pl. 67 (Lakonian hydria by the Hunt Painter, ca. 555).

31. Cf. Greenhalgh 1973, pp. 85–86.

32. Five chariots race around the second frieze of the Chigi Painter's aryballos in Berlin (Amyx 1988, p. 32, no. 2), and the chariot here may be such a racer being led to the starting line by the youth on foot.

33. Amyx 1988, p. 661.

34. Payne 1931, pp. 89–90; Boardman 1978b, p. 39, fig. 35; Fuchs and Floren 1987, pp. 192, 205.

35. For an 8th-century plaque in New York with a double-bodied winged lion from Ziwiyeh in Iran, see Osborne 1996, fig. 42 (Metropolitan Museum 51.131.1). For a double-bodied lion on a Mycenaean lentoid gem (Athens, National Museum 2316), see Mylonas 1983, p. 192, fig. 148.

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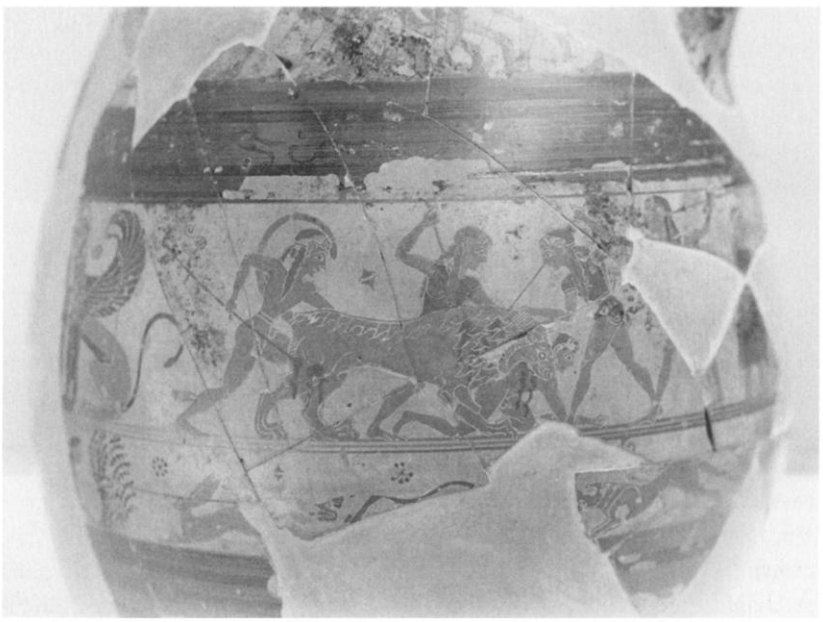

Figure 7. Chigi vase, lion hunt.
Photo author

the 7th-century Peloponnese is impossible to say, given the present state of evidence.[36] But it is also beside the point. For even if the Chigi Painter had seen one in the wild (or in a cage) or had seen an imported lion skin, the lion he painted and incised here, with its flamelike mane, is usually thought to be based on Neo-Assyrian models: the Chigi Painter was a rough contemporary of Assurbanipal (669–626 B.C.).[37]

Horsemen participate directly in the lion attack depicted on the oinochoe from Erythrai (Fig. 4), and so we may wonder whether the whole passage on the Chigi vase from the horsemen and chariot to the lion hunt is a Protocorinthian revision of imagery found in the palace reliefs of Nineveh or Nimrud, where kings and their entourage, riding chariots and horses, slaughter animals by the dozen. Seventh-century Corinthians like the Chigi Painter might have seen such images on imported Assyrian

36. Lions are so common in Minoan, Theran, and Mycenaean art, and their representation is at times so detailed, that Aegean artists and their audiences are likely to have seen them in the wild; see Morgan 1988, pp. 44–45. Lion bones and teeth have actually been found in Late Bronze Age contexts at Kea, Kalapodi, and Tiryns (see, e.g., Boessneck and von den Driesch 1979 and 1981), though that evidence is equivocal (the teeth may have been imported as amulets). Herodotos (7.125–126) says that lions were present in northern Greece as late as 480 (when they attacked the camels of Xerxes' invasion force). Though it is sometimes wondered what kind of lions these were (mountain lions?), there is another story that at the end of the 5th century the great pankratiast Pouly-damas (an Olympic victor in the year 408) killed a lion with his bare hands in emulation of Herakles. This beast was said to have come from the region of Mount Olympos, and that it was a "real" lion is suggested by Lysippos's later representation of the renowned feat in relief on a statue base at Olympia (ca. 337); see Paus. 6.5.4–6; Moreno 1995, pp. 91–93. Nevertheless, by the beginning of the 4th century, according to Xenophon (*Cyn.* 11.1–4), one had to leave Greece for foreign lands (such as the mountains of Mysia) in order to hunt lions. Cf. Arist. *Hist. an.* 579b7, 606b15; also Anderson 1985, pp. 4, 55–56. As far as Corinthian vase painting is concerned, lions virtually disappear from animal friezes around 575–550; Payne 1931, p. 67; Amyx 1988, pp. 664–665.

37. Payne 1931, pp. 67–69; Brown 1960, pp. 170–176; Amyx 1988, p. 663 (who, citing representations of female lions with manes, doubts Corinthian vase painters were directly familiar with real ones).

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ivories, metalwork, or textiles.[38] The lion on the Chigi vase is the earliest-known example of the Assyrian type in Protocorinthian vase painting—the normal Protocorinthian lion had previously been based on Hittite models—which suggests a sudden exposure to strong Assyrian influence, somehow precipitated by Assurbanipal's conquests and fostered, perhaps, by the policies of Kypselos, who overthrew the aristocratic Bacchiads and established a tyranny in Corinth around 657, toward the beginning of the Chigi Painter's career.

Finally, below the handle, in a spot that would have been obscured by the forearm of anyone actually pouring from the vase, is the only explicitly mythological scene on the olpe (and, with the exception of the scene with the frontal and non-narrative double-sphinx, the only one with female figures): the Judgment of Paris (Fig. 8). This is the earliest extant representation of the myth, but the story was presumably familiar (to the Greeks, anyway) from popular folktale as well as from the cyclic epic *Kypria*.[39] Set between the lion hunt and the last rider of the procession, this scene, too, is formally self-contained: to the left, a long-haired Paris (who here goes by his usual Homeric alias, Alexandros), then the missing Hermes (identified by the tip of his *kerykeion*), who presents the divine beauty contestants Hera (who is all but lost), Athena (who is helmetless but labeled *Athanaia* and who carries in her hand a floral ornament reminiscent of the lotus palmette chains on the rim and neck of the vase),[40] and, last, Aphrodite (in appearance she is nearly identical to Athena but *Aphrod*[*ita*] is inscribed vertically beside her). The discovery of the bucchero vessel with the Etruscan *abecedaria* in the same tomb suggests that its occupant, whether or not he was named Atianai, knew the myth, or knew Greek, could at least have sounded out the labels.[41]

Now, this inconspicuously placed scene seems to announce the themes of beauty, decision, and ultimately marriage (if we loosely regard the subse-

38. It is, of course, unlikely that a Protocorinthian vase painter would have visited Assyrian capitals himself. See Frankfort 1970, figs. 211–214; also Gunter 1986; Barnett 1956, pp. 232–233, fig. 2. Anderson (1961, p. 15) suggests that horseback riding becomes more popular in the 7th century than it had been before because of Near Eastern influences, and Payne (1931, p. 71) even suggests that the type of horse seen on the Chigi vase is indebted to Assyrian models.

39. The Judgment would also be depicted seventy or eighty years later on the elaborate Corinthian mythological encyclopedia known as the Chest of Kypselos, made of cedar, ivory, and gold, and copiously inscribed (Paus. 5.19.5). While a variety of Greek myths and mythological figures invade Etruscan art in the century after 650, the Judgment of Paris had no impact until around 550, when the myth appears for the first time on the so-called Boccanera panels from Cerveteri and the so-called Pontic amphora in Munich by the Paris Painter; see Spivey and Stoddart 1990, p. 100, fig. 51; Brendel 1978, pp. 153–157. For the iconography of the Judgment in general, see Clairmont 1951; and *LIMC* VII, 1994, pp. 176–188, s.v. Paridis Iudicium (A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

40. In later vase painting Athena is sometimes shown holding a branch or flower in her hand; see, e.g., *LIMC* II, 1984, pp. 960, 1005, 1011, nos. 31, 523b, 583, 584, pls. 706, 758, 761, s.v. Athena (P. Demargne). On the Chigi vase the device may be an attempt to feminize this most masculine of goddesses. At the same time, in many early representations of the Judgment there is little to differentiate the three contestants, either in appearance or attributes; see, e.g., *LIMC* II, 1984, p. 958, no. 10, pl. 703, s.v. Athena (P. Demargne); *LIMC* V, 1990, pp. 324–325, no. 455b, pl. 238, s.v. Hermes (G. Siebert); *LIMC* VII, 1994, p. 178, nos. 9, 12, 13, pl. 107, s.v. Paridis Iudicium (A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

41. Cf. Boardman 2001, who suggests these labeled figures "are the only figures that might have puzzled the Etruscan buyer" (p. 31).

One might note here the tradition that the Greek alphabet was introduced to Etruria by the Corinthian merchant Demaratus, a Bacchiad refugee who settled in Tarquinia after 657; see Spivey and Stoddart 1990, p. 96. In fact, the alphabet was probably introduced by Euboeans by 700 or so.

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Figure 8. Chigi vase, Judgment of Paris. Photo author

quent union of Paris with Helen of Sparta as a marriage), which might at first suggest that the Chigi vase was commissioned as a wedding present. But there may be more to it than that. The contest, after all, ultimately led to war, the subject of the zone above. This display of females and Paris's imminent choice had disastrous consequences, sending the strong souls of many heroes to Hades as surely as did the epic anger of Achilles.

On the vase, however, judgment has not yet been rendered. Moreover, the contest's winner was not just any goddess: she was Aphrodite, with Apollo the most important deity of Corinth, the city's patron goddess and protector. She was probably introduced to Corinth from the Near East by the end of the 8th century—her analogue is the Phoenician Astarte—at the time of the unification of the Corinthian polis by the aristocratic Bacchiads (they may have promoted her as a unifying force in the *synoikismos*). At any rate, when Aphrodite arrived she brought with her the phenomenon (unique in Greece) of sacred prostitution, an activity centered in a poorly preserved temple of Aphrodite atop Acrocorinth as early as the 7th century, around the time of the Chigi Painter.[42] It is possible, then, that the depiction of the Judgment, which of course resulted in the selection of Aphrodite, Paris's illicit relationship with Helen, and the Trojan War, operates on more than one level. First, it acts as a warning to the (male) symposiast or banqueter to avoid such decisions himself: the female of the species (divine or mortal) is dangerous.[43] Second, it may reflect the relatively recent selection and establishment of Aphrodite in the city (the goddess may make her first appearance in Corinthian sculpture around the same time as the creation of the Chigi vase).[44] The scene, with its erotic overtones, furthermore hints not at marriage but at the sacred prostitution—and in the words of Pindar, the charms of "young women, hostesses to many, handmaidens of Peitho"—for which lascivious Corinth was so famous, and which, for Strabo, was even the principal source of Corinth's proverbial wealth.[45]

42. For sacred prostitution at Corinth, see Salmon 1984, pp. 398–400; and Williams 1986, p. 21, who argues that the sexual activity itself would have taken place in the city below Acrocorinth (a difficult hike), and that only the proceeds would have been dedicated above.

43. On many later vases Paris himself realizes the danger and attempts to flee; see, e.g., Beazley 1986, pls. 21.2 (C Painter), 35.3, 35.5 (Lydos); also Gantz 1993, p. 569.

44. *LIMC* II, 1984, p. 47, no. 359, s.v. Aphrodite (A. Delivorrias et al.) is Corinth Museum 4039, a terracotta statuette in *pudica* pose datable to the mid-7th century. The goddess also appears (with Pegasos) on an early-7th-century plaque from Perachora; Williams 1986, p. 14. Aphrodite appears later on the Chest of Kypselos not only in its Judgment scene, but also in one panel with Medea and Jason and in another with Ares (Paus. 5.18.3, 5). For Aphrodite and early Corinth, see also Blomberg 1996, pp. 82–84.

45. See Salmon 1984, p. 398; Pindar, fr. 107 Bowra (Ath. *Deipnosophistai* 13.573c–574c). See also Kurke 1996.

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III. The narrow third frieze (2.5 cm high) represents another hunting scene, with badly faded white hounds chasing four white mountain goats, three stags, and one hare over a dark background marked by an occasional white pinwheel rosette (Figs. 6–7). The mostly clockwise chase echoes the predominant direction of the hare hunt on the lowest frieze, but here (as in most Protocorinthian hare hunts) the dogs are on their own: there are no human figures lying in ambush or directing the dogs in their pursuit.[46]

IV. The battle scene of the fourth zone (5.2 cm high), which is not technically a frieze since it is interrupted by the handle, has always received most of the scholarly attention given to the vase (Fig. 9). The reason is that it is usually considered "the earliest unequivocal representation of what is known as 'hoplite warfare,'" thought to have been developed just a generation or two earlier.[47] Its representation of hoplite warfare, however, is not so unequivocal. The Chigi warriors do not carry short swords like standard hoplites and some of them (like Geometric warriors and Homeric heroes) carry two spears—one for overhand thrusting, the other a reserve or even a throwing spear. A soldier with two spears but no sword is not the sort of hoplite Tyrtaios—the Chigi Painter's rough contemporary—had in mind when he advised: "let [our man] close hard and fight it out with his opposing foeman, holding tight to the hilt of his sword, or to his long spear."[48]

The Chigi warriors are certainly heavily armed foot-soldiers fighting side by side in close array, with *hoplon* overlapping *hoplon.* But either hoplite tactics, as the Chigi vase (and a few other Protocorinthian vases) depict them, had not yet uniformly reached their "classic" stage of development or the Chigi Painter did not intend an exact documentation of military tactics; he may instead have used all those spears to create pleasantly intricate linear patterns, for example, or to give an impression of sheer numbers and the claustrophobia of battle, or even to elevate his warriors to heroic rank (or all of the above).[49] His goal, after all, was to decorate a vase and convey certain ideas with its imagery, not to produce a tactical training film.[50]

In any case, two armies, each aligned in two unequal ranks with perhaps a little more space between them than a classic hoplite phalanx ought to have, meet just to the right of center (Fig. 9). It is the instant when the lines first collide (the *othismos,* or "push"), and no one has yet fallen or died.

46. Schnapp 1997, p. 180.

47. Osborne 1996, p. 164; also Cartledge 1977, p. 19; and Murray 1980, pp. 125–126, who describes the battle as "the most successful portrayal of hoplite tactics which has survived." Salmon (1977, p. 87) concedes that the Chigi battle is an inaccurate representation of hoplite warfare but still "depicts very effectively the essential nature of hoplite tactics . . . [successfully] representing massed formation in a pleasing manner." But perhaps our conception of hoplite warfare and the hoplite reform in the 7th century is not as accurate or complete as is often thought; see, e.g., Krentz 1985. [See also P. Krentz's article "Fighting by the Rules: The Invention of the Hoplite *Agôn*" in this issue of *Hesperia. –Ed.*] See also Shanks 1999, pp. 107–119, 126–130. Generally, see Hanson 1991.

48. Tyrtaios 8.33–34 (trans. Lattimore). The next lines (35–38), incidentally, indicate that light-armed fighters could dart out from the ranks of the hoplites to throw javelins and even rocks at the enemy, and then return to the protection of the hoplites' shields.

49. Cf. Anderson 1991, pp. 18–20; Salmon 1984, pp. 73–74; for Homeric heroes with two throwing spears, see, e.g., Patroklos at *Il.* 16.139–141.

50. Cf. Shanks 1999, p. 129.

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Figure 9. Chigi vase, battle scene.
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The army on the left, in fact, has been caught off guard: its front rank sets only four men against five while, at the far left (Fig. 1:a), two soldiers are still arming—spears of unequal length, fitted with throwing loops, lean beside them—and cohorts carrying only one spear have to run to join the fray. Like the army he painted, the Chigi Painter has seemingly nodded, too, since there is one head too many for the nine shields of the second rank and the four soldiers in the front rank have five pairs of legs (Fig. 9).[51] But what the army on the left lacks in preparation and arithmetic it gains in lyricism, as the self-absorbed, pompadoured *auletes*—spatially isolated and additionally set off by the dark color of his tunic—sets the rhythm for the advance with his double-flute (strapped tightly around his head).[52]

51. This has been taken as evidence that the Chigi Painter has compressed and transferred to the small surface of his vase a larger battle painting, with many more figures, found on a wall or panel, the numerical discrepancies arising during the process of translation. On the one hand, Robertson (1975, p. 53) doubts that the meticulous Chigi Painter could have been so clumsy, suggesting instead that the Chigi Painter merely "felt he had not spaced the legs quite right and that the composition needed thickening in that area." On the other hand, Robertson finds it difficult to believe that the vase painter could have conceived of such a battle "unaided" by the inspiration of a wall painting; cf. Payne 1933, p. 14. For Shanks (1999, p. 115), the problem apparently does not exist, since in art as in reality the individual hoplite had no identity apart from the massed formation: the "body" of the phalanx is all that matters and the loss of individuality makes the numbers irrelevant. But the individuality of the hoplites *within* the army attacking from the right is clearly emphasized by their different shield blazons, and on the MacMillan aryballos, in any case, the Chigi Painter surely nodded once again, since he painted the fifth warrior from the left, moving right, with his shield blazon visible, when we should be looking at its emblemless interior.

52. Another flute player appears on a Protocorinthian aryballos from Perachora; Amyx 1988, p. 25 (D.1). The Spartans used flute players to help keep their formations even and tight as they attacked (Thuc. 5.70).

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Another reason the battle scene has been the focus of most discussions of the Chigi vase is its suggestion of pictorial depth, with its layers of overlapping shields simply but effectively indicating spatial recession (such Classical works as the Nereid Monument, 250 years later, do not represent depth any better).[53] The shields of the hoplites advancing from the right—the only shields whose blazons we can see—bear the expected emblems of power, prowess, and ferocity: birds of prey, bull's head, growling lion's head, and a boar (Figs. 1:c, 6). One shield is, however, unusual for its *gorgoneion.* Within the imagined scene Medusa's frontal-faced, tongue- and tusk-baring scowl is, of course, intended to frighten the enemy away. In reality its function was also apotropaic, meant to fend off evil spirits from those enjoying the wine poured from the olpe itself. It is worth noting that bronze shields with *gorgoneia* are known from 7th-century Olympia and also from Carchemish, where one was probably lost by a Greek mercenary fighting in defense of the city against the Babylonians.[54]

THE READING

What, if anything, do these various friezes and scenes have to do with one another? How should we read the imagery on this vase? Is this vase about anything? The answer has most often been "no."

The usual way of looking at the Chigi vase has been as a random assortment of exquisite but disconnected images. So, for example, John Boardman has suggested that the Judgment of Paris was "presumably painted somehow as an afterthought,"[55] and Tom Rasmussen has concluded that it is unlikely that anyone will be able to find "a connecting thread running through all the major scenes. . . . Many Greek vases of all periods show quite unrelated scenes at different levels or on opposite sides, and there is no need to search for unity of theme at this early date even on such a rigorously planned work."[56] For Rasmussen, then, the Chigi Painter knew what he was going to paint on the vase before he sat down to the task—how else could it be "rigorously planned"?—but he had no point to make. This view has been the scholarly consensus.

There have in the past been a few minority opinions; for example, I argued once that the Chigi vase "for the most part displays the kinds of activity a Corinthian youth of about 640 could be expected to engage in and show off his *arete.*"[57] The hunting, equestrian, and battle scenes, in other words, display the skill, courage, and elitism of the ideal Corinthian male, though this interpretation cannot quite accommodate the lion hunt—not to mention the divine beauty contest—unless we posit the existence of lions and divinities in the 7th-century Corinthia. Robin Osborne has more recently agreed that "it seems unlikely that the combination of scenes here is accidental," but he sees "no single way to 'read' these images" and drops the subject after vaguely suggesting that "the themes of display, decision, and pursuit that run through the figured decoration here suggestively open up critical paths for any viewer."[58]

If the vase has a single overarching theme, it is surely the *agôn* (competition, struggle, contest)—a concept that subsumes the hare and lion hunts, the battle, the Judgment of Paris, and possibly the cavalcade, if the

53. Hurwit 1985a, pp. 160–161; Robertson 1975, p. 431.
54. Boardman 1980, p. 51 and fig. 20.
55. Boardman 1993, pp. 31–32.
56. Rasmussen 1991, p. 62.
57. Hurwit 1985a, p. 158.
58. Osborne 1996, p. 164.

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horsemen and charioteer are to be considered potential racers. But the idea of the *agôn* is too broad to be of much use: it is hard to think of many Greek works of art that do *not* concern conflict or competition in some way. Beyond this it is possible to read the imagery of the vase more tightly along two dominant axes: 1) the vertical, up and across the stack of figured zones; and 2) the horizontal, around the second zone (the main one).

That the imagery was not randomly selected and deployed—and that the Chigi Painter engaged in some degree of advance planning—seems likely from a number of considerations. The squires of the middle frieze, again, might be holding horses for hoplites in the battle zone above (unlikely, but not impossible) and the inconspicuous position of the Judgment of Paris on the back of the vase (Fig. 1:d) seems an appropriate choice for a painter whose interest in mythological narrative was on the whole minimal. (Alternatively, it is possible to argue that the handle functions as a pointer, leading the eye down to the scene, and thus emphasizing it. But from the perspective of a reclining banqueter having his cup filled by a slave or attendant pouring from the olpe, the scene would have been virtually unnoticeable.) As significant, perhaps, is the direct and surely not coincidental alignment of the grinning frontal faces of the double-sphinx and the gorgoneion of the shield in the zone above (Fig. 6)—a short axis of (female) apotropaism that would have been completely visible to the putative (male) symposiast. So, too, it may not be accidental that the flute player sounding the notes of the attack in the battle scene is placed almost precisely above the boy gesturing to his companion to stay down in the hare hunt two zones below (Fig. 1:b)—a short axis of signaling and signalers.[59]

But there is also a longer vertical axis and it delineates a process of maturation across the three principal zones: the boys hunting hares in the lowest zone are, with their short hair and nudity, in fact mere boys (hare-hunting, relying upon trickery, is especially associated with adolescents);[60] the horsemen, charioteer, and lion hunters (and even the figure of Paris) in the second zone, with their long hair and tunics, are more properly youths; and the heavily armed foot soldiers of the top zone are presumably men (the small *auletes* is short-haired, like the boys in the lowest zone, though his coiffure is different). The vertical axis, in other words, marks a progression of the Corinthian male from boyhood, to youth, to full manhood—transitions all made in the context of various *agônes,* a Corinthian *paideia* loosely comparable to the three-stage *agôgê* that marked the public education and military training of males at Sparta.[61] There is, as far as I know, no evidence for an analogous system at work in 7th-century Corinth (Bacchiad or Kypselid) and it would be unwise to argue for such an institution on the basis of a few vases. Nevertheless, the same progression appears on the Chigi Painter's aryballos in London (Fig. 3) and, to a lesser degree, on the Erythrai oinochoe (Fig. 4), where boys are missing from the hare hunt below.

There can be no question of the role hunting played in the education, initiations, and ethos of a hoplite society.[62] Indeed, the hunting engaged in by the boys and youths in the lower zones on all three vases can be seen as preparation for the warfare of the men above. The various notions that hunting is a rehearsal for battle, that man is an animal who exists to be hunted like any other animal, and that war is a subcategory of hunting (or

59. Stansbury-O'Donnell 1999, pp. 71–74, fig. 29, finds a similar viewing axis on the Chigi Painter's aryballos in Berlin, where a "nucleus" of two groups of opposing warriors in the main frieze is aligned with the lion's head spout above, two racing chariots in the zone below, and a confronting lion and bull in the zone below that. In fact, the alignment is not precise: the space between the two chariots is just to the left of the axis established by the opposition of warriors in the zone above, so that there is a slight deflection from the purely vertical. This asymmetry is characteristic of the Chigi vase, as we shall see below.

60. Vidal-Naquet 1986, pp. 118–119.

61. Forrest 1968, pp. 51–54. The origins of the *agôgê* are notoriously murky. It is possible that the regimen was instituted or more rigorously codified in the aftermath of the battle of Hysiae, which Sparta lost to Argos in 669, but it could be much later, the product of a lengthy evolution rather than a single reform. See, for example, Kennell 1995, p. 146, who dates the foundations of the *agôgê* to the early 6th century.

62. For which see Vidal-Naquet 1986, pp. 117–122; Schnapp 1997, pp. 123–144.

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hunting a subcategory of war) are well documented later. "The exercise [of hunting] itself is the best possible training for the needs of war," writes Xenophon in the *Cyropaedia* (1.2.10), and for Aristotle "the art of war is from one point of view a natural mode of acquisition. Hunting is a part of that art; and hunting ought to be practiced both against wild beasts and against men who, though intended by nature to be ruled by others, will not submit, for that kind of war is by nature just" (*Pol.* 1256b, 20–26).[63] The vertical progression from hunt to battle on the Chigi vase (as well as on the MacMillan aryballos and the oinochoe from Erythrai) seems to be an early expression of this ingrained Greek attitude, and it may suggest the sort of initiatory practices expected of youths in Archaic Corinth. From this point of view, the Chigi vase is a programmatic piece, designed to inform its buyer and audience—Greek symposiast or Etruscan banqueter—of what makes a man a man.[64]

This vertical axis, with its paradigm of Greek maleness, is grounded in the generic 7th-century present: Corinthian boys really hunted hares and Corinthian youths really rode horses and chariots and Corinthian men really fought other men (even if a few of those shown fighting on the vase wield two spears, like Homeric heroes). The horizontal axis, on the other hand—that is, the course of the second zone—moves from concrete reality to fantasy and myth. Genre fades away when the parade of horsemen and chariot—itself a heroizing vehicle, often used to dissolve the boundaries between mortals and heroes[65]—reaches the double-bodied sphinx (Fig. 6). In later myth and art, again, the (single) sphinx can be both a dangerous and erotic interlocutor of youths, "posing them riddles of what life and manhood may be when they are still too inexperienced to understand," combining "the clawed body of a man-eater with the wings of a raptor and a face made for love," a female destroyer of males.[66] But she can be a faithful guardian as well as a predator: in sculpture she is by the end of the 7th century the marker of tombs, squatting atop grave stelai, protecting the dead as the "dog of Hades," as she is known in one funerary inscription.[67]

The Orientalizing creature on the Chigi vase may function as a similar kind of sign, a boundary marker signaling a new and different level of being. For on the other side of her is the lion hunt and the only human casualty on the vase (Fig. 7). Even if lion hunts did take place in the 7th-century Peloponnese, they must still have been considered rare and exotic occasions. This example is still more likely to be a reference to Eastern hunts. It is surely quasi-heroic as well: these Corinthians are killing (and

63. See also Xen. *Cyn.* 1.18, 12.1–8; *Anth. Pal.* 14.17, quoted in Rihll 1993, p. 84, from Burges 1876: "hunting is a practice for war; and hunting teaches one to catch a thing concealed; to wait for those coming on; to pursue the fleeing." Cf. Isoc. *Panath.* 163, who states that next to the universal human war against savage beasts, the most righteous and necessary war is the one that the Greeks perpetually fight against their natural enemies, the Persian barbarians. See also Lissarrague 1989, p. 43, who notes the fusing of the usually "separate spheres" of the hunter and hoplite on some vases; Rihll 1993, pp. 83–84; Schnapp 1997, pp. 150–156.

64. It is possible that even the polysemous Judgment of Paris scene plays a role in this outline of maturation, if (instead of warning men about the danger of Woman or indicating civic pride in the city goddess, Aphrodite) it refers to the kind of choice men must make when they take a bride and so embark upon a new stage of life.

65. See Sinos 1998, pp. 75–78.

66. See Vermeule 1979, p. 171.

67. See Richter 1961, p. 6.

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in one case dying) like the heroes of their own legends and epic similes as well as like Assurbanipal and the other Great Kings of Nimrud or Nineveh. It is as if these five youths have dismounted the four horses and chariot held by the squires on the other side of the sphinx and have stepped across or behind it into another ontological realm, one very far from that of the hare-hunting boys in the zone below.[68] An association between the equestrians and the lion hunters seems to be confirmed not only by the numbers—five hunters correspond to the four riderless horses and the chariot—but also by the Erythrai oinochoe (Fig. 4), where horsemen actually participate in the hunt.

This hunt, probably to be thought of as taking place in some vaguely imagined Eastern landscape or mountainside, is followed by the only scene of pure myth on the vase, the Judgment of Paris (Fig. 8), managed by Hermes, god of transitions. The Judgment scene is supposed to have occurred on Mt. Ida in the Troad, close to areas that still boasted lions in the Classical period; for a Corinthian of the 7th century, this setting was, like Aphrodite herself, sufficiently Eastern.[69] The sphere of heroes and divinities and the sphere of the exotic East, in other words, have merged, and so perhaps has the sphere of everyday life. As we progress around this middle zone, we seem to proceed from reality to Orientalizing/heroic to divine realms. But what appear to us as different levels of being may not have seemed so to the Archaic temperament, just as in the supposedly documentary hoplite battle of the upper zone, the presence of two spears in the hands of many warriors may be an attempt not so much to fill space or activate the scene as to give that "reality" a heroic or epic tinge. Taken together, these images may suggest, instinctively or by design, the interpenetration of the everyday, the heroic, and the divine in the lives of men. This axis, perhaps, shows what makes a man a hero: leonine courage and the company and favor of the gods. But it hints as well at the permeability of the boundaries between the mortal and divine and, with the ambiguous doubleness of the double-sphinx, the mauling of the youth by the lion, and the imminent, fateful decision of Paris, the dangers of such an existence.

We can only wonder whether the Etruscan owner of the Chigi vase would have grasped its logic. But he might well have been struck by the formal asymmetry of its imagery, seen in the inequality of the armies of the battle frieze—their collision takes place just to the right of center (Fig. 1:b)—or in the displacement of the heraldic sphinx from the center of the vase, where we might have expected it, or even in the Judgment of Paris, which is not set with perfect symmetry along the line of the handle above but is shifted a little to the right (Fig. 1:d). This off-centeredness encouraged the turning of the vase in one's hands, and that very action would have encouraged a process of association and obliquely reinforced the kinds of transitions articulated along the axes of the vase. Like Paris, who has not yet made his choice, the viewer is offered options—different courses to follow, one vertical, one horizontal—rather than a single, rigid, controlling thematic structure. In this way, the unity or thematic armature of the vase is pliable. And this may be what the Chigi Painter relied upon from the start—the virtues of displacement, the intricacies of iconographic association, and the dynamic pleasure of the tangent.

68. Cf. Schnapp 1997, pp. 181, 192, who also notes the contrast between the lion-hunting "heroes" of this zone with the simple "jeunes hommes" of the hare hunt.

69. The *Iliad* (24.28–30) sets the location of the Judgment only in "Paris's courtyard." The *Kypria* and Euripidean tragedies set the scene specifically on Mt. Ida; see Gantz 1993, pp. 567–571.

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