

1-1-2009

A Depiction of a Comic Mythological Burlesque?

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Recommended Citation

Kenneth S. Rothwell, Jr. "A Depiction of a Comic Mythological Burlesque?" *Seminari Romani di cultura greca* 12.2 (2009 [2011]), 253-269.

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SEMINARI ROMANI DI CULTURA GRECA

XII, 2 - 2009



ESTRATTO

Edizioni Quasar

Questa pubblicazione è stampata con i contributi del Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità dell'Università di Roma «La Sapienza» e del Dipartimento di Antichità e tradizione classica dell'Università di Roma «Tor Vergata»

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I-00198 Roma; tel. 0684241993, fax 0685833591, email qn@edizioniquasar.it

ISSN 1129-5953

Direttore responsabile: Roberto Nicolai

Registrazione Tribunale di Roma n. 146/2000 del 24 marzo 2000

Finito di stampare nel mese di settembre 2011 presso Universal Book s.r.l. - Rende (CS)

KENNETH S. ROTHWELL, JR.

A Depiction of a Comic Mythological Burlesque?

In November 1798, Sir William Hamilton, afraid that Napoleon's troops would pillage his collection of antiquities in Naples, had hundreds of Greek vases put aboard the H.M.S. *Colossus* and sent to the safety of a London auction house. Napoleon might at least have sent them to the Louvre; as it happened, on the night of December 10/11, 1798, the *Colossus* foundered on rocks in the Scilly Isles and took its cargo to the bottom. Although salvage divers discovered the site of the wreck in 1974 and recovered over 30,000 fragments, our best record for many of the lost vases are the engravings made of them in the 1790's by Wilhelm Tischbein, a German artist who had come to Italy with Goethe and stayed to become director of the Academy of Painting in Naples¹.

One engraving, no. 35 from Volume 1 (Fig. 1), which has apparently been overlooked for the last two centuries, is of great potential interest to historians of Greek drama. Because the image survives only as an engraving, the date and manufacture of the original vase are uncertain – an issue we will return to below. Although any interpretation of this image can only be tentative, I will suggest that it illustrates the encounter of Amymone with a satyr from a mythological burlesque. Still, the image confounds: the satyr (if that is what he is) wears wings and what seems to be a theatrical bodysuit. My conjecture is that he is playing the part of Eros. I would also like to suggest that this amalgamation of bird and satyr costume, bizarre as it seems, is actually consistent with other theatrical costumes depicted in Greek vase-painting.

1. *Hamilton's Vase and Tischbein's Engraving*

In the engraving we see a tall, sturdy woman, wearing a long mantle that has been pulled over her shoulders and head so as to cover most of

* Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Classical Association of New England, the Classical Association of the Middle West and South, and the American Philological Association. I would also like to acknowledge helpful reactions to the image of several years ago from J. R. Green, Oliver Taplin, and Susan Woodford. Special thanks for careful comments are owed to an anonymous reader for *Seminari Romani*, and to Emanuele Dettori for editorial assistance.

¹ Tischbein 1791-95. The collection was published in four volumes; a fifth volume remained unpublished. For discussions of Hamilton's collections see Ramage 1990, Jenkins-Sloan 1996, pp. 40-64, Breed 1997, and Smallwood-Woodford 2003. For an account of the discovery of the *Colossus* see Morris 1979 and Morris 1984.



Figure 1: Plate 35 from Tischbein 1791-1795, I. Photograph thanks to Antonio Palladino of the Library, American Academy in Rome.

her hair². The mantle has a decorated border; an ankle-length chiton with close pleats is visible beneath it. Her face is in profile and three large beads of a necklace can be seen at her throat. She holds the hydria up to her chest with both hands; her hands are covered by the folds of the himation. The hydria is somewhat rotund, with no real shoulder, and is decorated below the handles with a simple band of alternating dark and light squares. She stands in contrapposto, with her weight on her left leg, as she observes the creature approaching her.

The incongruous winged and bearded figure on the right is, to my knowledge, unparalleled in vase-painting, but my guess is that he is a satyr. He is not ithyphallic (by the standards of satyrs, at least) and lacks the tail, horns or balding hair of a satyr, but he has a slightly snub nose, scruffy beard, thick lips, bristly hair, and ears that are somewhat elongated if not exactly pointed. He is shorter than the woman by a full head³. On his very human torso he wears what appears to be a bodysuit studded with tufts of fur or feathers (on which more below). A set of sizeable wings is attached to his back; they are folded down, rather than raised up. Although many wings in vase-painting are composed of an upper band that is solid or speckled, beneath which grow feathers proper, these wings are composed entirely of feathers. He stands in contrapposto, leaning on his right leg toward the woman, gesturing with his right hand and looking up at her as if to address her.

Unfortunately, the fact that we only have the engraving and not the original vase means that much about this image, above all the date, is difficult to determine. An engraving is an imperfect record, at one remove from the original painting and two removes if not more from any representation of a performance. Contemporary, late eighteenth-century taste would have guided

² For the Berlin Painter, at least, long mantles are reserved for deities, notes Kurtz, in Kurtz-Beazley 1983, p. 54, yet women of all social classes could be found with mantles by the fifth century, suggests Llewellyn-Jones 2003, pp. 139-142. A female figure carrying a trident and with a *himation* pulled over her head, depicted on a krater fragment, may be Amymone: Blatter 1991.

³ There are parallels for shorter satyrs encountering human or divine figures: see the figures on a bell-krater in Syracuse 23508, ca. 450-440 B. C., ARV² 613.6; Simon 1982, 133 and plate 31; LIMC VIII s. v. *Sileno* no. 34.

the engravers' hands. We also need to be alert to the fact that the engravers tended to 'improve' the original painting. Moreover engraving by its nature brings out clarity and definition, especially of facial features, where the painted originals may have merely been impressionistic⁴.

Nevertheless, we need not resign ourselves to pessimism. Tischbein and his student assistants attempted to be faithful to the originals and he later wrote that preparatory drawings were traced directly from the vases onto clear paper⁵. Many features, if traced directly, need not have been susceptible to distortion and might give an accurate sense of the original painting. Furthermore, although the vase in question (I 35) is lost, other Tischbein engravings can be compared with their originals. The 30,000 shards of pottery recovered from the ocean floor were sent to the British Museum, where numerous fragments have been matched up with their respective engravings⁶. Additionally, in 1798 several crates of vases were accidentally left on the dock in Naples and never sailed with the *Colossus*; they were sent to London separately and sold to Thomas Hope in 1801⁷. Comparison of these surviving vases with the engravings can reveal the engravers' techniques.

Let us take as an example a vase engraved by Tischbein (II 57, Fig. 2) but that escaped the shipwreck, became part of the Hope Collection, and later passed to the British Museum⁸. It depicts a young man carrying a spear and

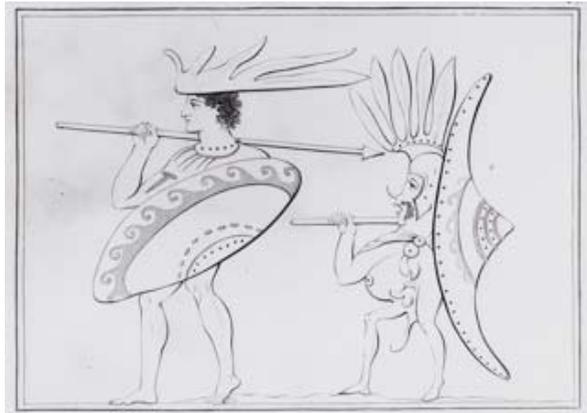


Figure 2: Plate 57 from Tischbein 1791-1795, II. Photograph thanks to Antonio Palladino of the Library, American Academy in Rome.

⁴ See Jenkins-Sloan 1996, pp. 53-58; Woodford 2001; and Smallwood-Woodford 2003, p. 21 s. Furthermore, we do not know what kind of vase this painting decorated or what other registers or pattern work were on it.

⁵ Quoted in Woodford 2001, p. 7 n. 8.

⁶ Published now in the CVA series by Smallwood-Woodford 2003.

⁷ Tillyard 1923 accounts for this now-dispersed collection.

⁸ Tischbein 1791-1795, II plate 57, an engraving of British Museum 1927.4-11.3. Illustrations of the vase may be found in Trendall 1967, p. 355, no. 933; Tillyard 1923, p. 168, no. 329 and pl. 43. 3-4.

shield, and wearing what appears to be a bird crest. The young man is followed by a shorter, evidently comic figure, akin to the “phlyax” type, who wears a crested helmet and carries a spear and shield. This is a Campanian bell-krater from the late fourth century, attributed by Trendall to the Majewski Painter. The technique is so clumsy (Trendall included it in his chapter on “Barbarism”) that the engraver, although reproducing the general scene, rescued the painter by endowing certain features with more detail. The faces of the two figures in the engraving, especially that of the warrior on the left, have a degree of clarity and definition that is lacking in the original vase. One of Tischbein’s stated goals was «purity of the outline of the figures»⁹ and we sense that here. The engraver gives the warrior a more heroic jaw-line. Both he and the phlyax figure are given eyes with visible pupils and eyelashes that, being somewhat more classical, might be found on a vase decades earlier. Tischbein also created a ground line for them to stand on whereas the painting seems to cut off their feet.

But this bell-krater now in the British Museum (Tischbein II 57) is an extreme case. Many of Hamilton’s vases were of better quality and did not need radical improvements. An example is a red-figure Apulian bell-krater at the Nicholson Museum of the University of Sydney showing three actors from a satyr play wearing shorts with attached *phalloi*, two holding satyr masks in their hands (Fig. 3). It has been attributed to the Tarporley Painter and dated to ca. 400 B. C.¹⁰ The engraving (Tischbein I 39, Fig. 4) is reasonably accurate, though the liberties taken need to be noted. The three actors have been given a ground line to stand on. Eyes, fingers, toes and strands of hair are more clearly articulated. The engraver has drawn a firmer horizontal line below the pectoral muscles of the figures on the left and in the middle, endowing them with somewhat more muscular chests, more characteristic



Figure 3: Apulian red figure bell krater. 420-380 BC. Attributed to the Tarporley Painter. The University of Sydney, Nicholson Museum NM 47.5. Photo courtesy of the Nicholson Museum; thanks to Michael Turner, Senior Curator.

⁹ Tischbein quoted in Woodford 2001, p. 7. Woodford notes the tendency of the eighteenth-century artists to improve and correct features such as hair and profile eyes.

¹⁰ Sydney, Nicholson Museum 47.05; *RVA* p 3.15; Tillyard 1923, p. 112, no. 210 and pl. 30; Turner 2004; Carpenter 2005, p. 228 s. & fig. 6; Cambitoglou-Turner 2008, pp. 17-19. A further comparandum is a bell-krater that was engraved by Tischbein (I 45) and that survived to be part of the Hope Collection; see Tillyard 1923, no. 323.

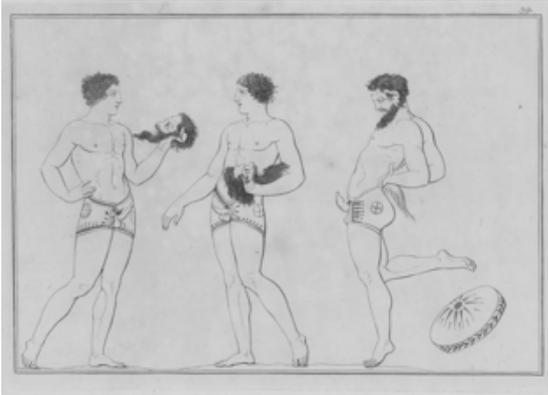


Figure 4: Plate 39 from Tischbein 1791-1795, I. Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library. For photographic assistance thanks to Robert Sennett of the Fine Arts Library, Harvard University, and to Widener Imaging Services.

of the mid-fifth century, and thus gives the impression that the figures were painted a few decades earlier than they really were. (By contrast fourth-century Attic and South Italian vases emphasize the vertical line of the sternum, between the pectoral muscles.) Schmidt has pointed out that this vase illustrates the tendency of the engravers to draw the contours on the right-hand sides of the figures with a thicker line, which gives an impression of volume and light that is

very different from what we see on red-figure painting¹¹. Nevertheless this engraving is much more reliable than Tischbein II 57¹².

Let us return to Tischbein I 35 (Fig. 1). As engraved, some characteristics point to the third quarter of the fifth century B. C. For example, the contour lines of the musculature on the torso of the winged satyr are largely limited to the waist (at the line of the groin) and the chest, where the horizontal contours beneath the pectoral muscles are emphasized. Moreover, nude bodies from the end of the fifth century and fourth century are wider in the hip and thighs than are those of this figure, and they tend to be rounder and less well defined. On the other hand, this satyr lacks the schematic abdominal patterns found earlier in the fifth century. The rendering of the male body, which could almost have been sculpted by Phidias or Polyclitus, seems to fall into what Boardman calls the "Parthenon Period," that is, the third quarter of the fifth century. One could do worse than to suppose (if we were, momentarily, to assume that the engraving was accurate) that the vase had been painted by Polygnotus or a related painter who typically indicated the nipples, the horizontal lines beneath the pectorals, and the line of the groin¹³.

¹¹ Schmidt 2005, p. 34 s.

¹² Another example of anatomical rendering is on one of the recovered fragments: a satyr with a line at the groin, similar to the line on the satyr of I 35, was copied with reasonable accuracy in Tischbein III 9 (Smallwood-Woodford 2003, catalog no. 31, plates 29 & 30).

¹³ Two examples are: (1) the torso of an athlete on a fragment of a kalix-krater, Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 13, fr. B 12, ARV² 1030.29; Matheson 1995, p. 282 and pl. 176. (2) A

Moreover woman's mantle, although it clings to her waist and thighs, has none of the billowing or see-through effects common at the end of the fifth century, and the fall of its folds points to the restraint of the middle of the fifth century. She recalls the "Aspasia" type in sculpture. The mantle has a border composed of a band with short lines off of it that is a hallmark of certain early fourth-century Paestan vases¹⁴, yet examples from Attic vase of the middle of the fifth century are not hard to find. In fact, this style of border decorates the mantle of Poseidon and the *peploi* of Amymone and her female companion in a depiction of the myth on a pelike of ca. 450 B. C. at the Villa Giulia¹⁵. The large beads of her necklace resemble those commonly found on vases by the Meidias Painter and others at the end of the century, though beads of such size also appear much earlier¹⁶.

Thus it is not out of the question that, should we ever find the original vase, it would prove to be an imported Attic vase of the third quarter of the fifth century; nevertheless, in light of the 'improvements' visible in other engravings, and assuming that the vase was found in Italy, it seems more likely to be South Italian from after 400. Certainly the necklace and hydria, two features less susceptible to distortion, would be slightly more consistent with such a date.

2. *The Myth of Amymone?*

Who is the woman? A prudent solution is to label her as a generic "Woman at a Fountain," yet the satyr-like figure is so peculiar that we expect something more specific. I suggest that she is the Danaid Amymone. Apollodorus summarizes her story: «Amymone, while looking for water, threw a javelin at a deer and hit a sleeping satyr; he jumped up and wanted to sleep with her. But the satyr took flight when Poseidon appeared on the scene. Amymone slept with Poseidon and he revealed to her the springs of Lerna»¹⁷. She later gave birth to Nauplios.

kalyx-krater of Theseus and the bull: New York, Metr. Mus. 56.171.48, "near Polygnotus" ARV² 1057.104; *Para.* 445; *Add.*² 323; Matheson 1995, p. 222 and pl. 165. I have benefited from the discussion of anatomy in vase-painting in Kurtz-Beazley 1983.

¹⁴ Trendall 1989, 197 and 203.

¹⁵ Villa Giulia 20846, Birth of Athena Painter: ARV² 494.2; *Add.*² 250; LIMC s. v. *Amymone* no. 20a. The same design is on Amymone's lower hem on a lekythos by the Phiale Painter, ca. 450-430 B. C.: New York, Metr. Mus. 17.230.35, ARV² 1020.100, *Add.*² 316; LIMC s. v. *Amymone* no. 21; Reeder 1995, p. 357, no. 113.

¹⁶ As on a cup of ca. 460-450 B. C. by the Pistoxenus Painter, ARV² 860.2, Athens Acr. 439; Boardman 1989, fig. 64. Amymone wears and holds necklaces with large white beads on a hydria by the Meleager Painter, ca. 400 B. C., New York, Metr. Museum 56.171.56, ARV² 1412.46 and 1693; *Add.*² 374; LIMC s. v. *Amymone* no. 60; Reeder 1995, no. 116. She wears a necklace with smaller beads on the lekythos by the Phiale Painter in New York (vd. n. 15). It has been suggested by a reader that the hydria that Amymone carries looks metallicizing and is possibly from fourth century rather than fifth century.

¹⁷ Apollodorus 2. 1. 4: Ἀμυμώνη ζητοῦσα ὕδωρ ῥίπτει βέλος ἐπὶ ἔλαφον καὶ κοιμωμένου Σατύρου τυγχάνει, κἀκείνος περιαναστὰς ἐπεθύμει συγγενέσθαι· Ποσειδῶνος δὲ ἐπιφανέν-

The moments of the story typically shown on fifth- and fourth-century vase-painting are: (a) the encounter of Amymone, carrying a hydria, with several satyrs at a fountain; (b) Poseidon's pursuit of her (he sometimes carries a trident); and (c) a tableau in which Amymone and Poseidon, in apparent tranquility, sit or stand by the fountain. They were occasionally joined by other figures, including nymphs, Hermes, Apollo, Aphrodite, and Eros. Eros is found on twenty-four of the sixty-five Attic or South Italian vase paintings of Amymone I have identified; he is especially common between 400 and 350 B. C., but appears as early as 460-450 as well¹⁸. Amymone's association with the hydria is such a fixed motif in iconography that even paintings of an otherwise unidentified woman with a hydria have been regarded as depictions of her.

It is of course possible that she is someone other than Amymone. Electra, for example, is shown on a fourth-century Campanian amphora heavily shrouded in a mantle, carrying a hydria, and surrounded by winged Furies¹⁹. I am unaware of any satyr-play featuring Electra, though she could have appeared in comic treatments of the Orestes myth (e. g. by Alexis of Thurii or others; see Kassel-Austin 1991, p. 118). The head of a woman in the comic mask of a phlyax play is labeled as Electra on a fragment of a mid-fourth century Apulian krater²⁰. Then again, the meeting of Electra and Orestes conventionally occurs at the tomb of Agamemnon, which is not shown here. Moreover Electra does not as a rule carry a hydria; and it is Orestes who draws the wrath of the Furies, not Electra alone. It is thus extremely unlikely that Electra is depicted here. Amymone is therefore the least improbable choice for the subject of this Hamilton vase²¹.

τοσ Σάτυρος μὲν ἔφυγεν, Ἀμμωνῆ δὲ τούτῳ συνενύσσεται, καὶ αὐτῇ Ποσειδῶν τὰς ἐν Λέρνῃ πηγὰς ἐμήμνησεν. – Also of interest are Hyginus, *Fab.* 169 and 169A (Marshall), and Lucian, *Dial. Marin.* 6 (= 78. 8 Macleod). Ancient literary references are collected in Roscher and in Simon 1981, p. 742, though Simon omits the *Amymone* or *Pelops* of Nicochares comicus, on whom more below.

¹⁸ The fundamental study of the iconography of Amymone is *LIMC I s. v. Amymone* (= Simon 1981) and more are in the Beazley database (www.beazley.ox.ac.uk). Also useful are Brommer 1938-39, pp. 171-176; Caskey-Beazley 1954, pp. 89-93; Brommer 1959, pp. 24-27; Trendall 1977; Kossatz-Deissmann 1978, pp. 55-61; Kaempf-Dimitriadou 1979, pp. 26-30 and 97-101.

¹⁹ Private collection: *LIMC III, s. v. Electra I* no. 19; Kossatz-Deissmann 1978, p. 94 and frontispiece. She also holds a hydria on a Paestan amphora (Boston 99.540); Trendall 1987, pp. 58-59, 174, 252, 254-256 (no. 2/1004), 259-260 (no. 1024); Kossatz-Deissmann 1978, p. 95 and plate 14.1; Padgett et al. 1993, p. 183.

²⁰ Basel, Cahn coll. 223; *LIMC III, s. v. Electra I* no. 50; Trendall-Webster 1971, p. 143, no. IV.34.

²¹ Aeschylus wrote a *Semele* or *Hydrophoroi* (fr. 219-224) in which women presumably carried *hydriai*, but we know nothing of it. A winged Boreas is shown pursuing Oreithyia, and in a small number of depictions she has dropped a hydria (Tischbein III 31; cf. *LIMC III s. v. Boreas* no. 50, a hydria of 440-430 B. C.), though the hydria is certainly not a standard part of the iconography; see Smallwood-Woodford 2003, p. 79. Polyxena was shown with a hydria at a fountain but nothing else indicates that it is she who is depicted here.

3. *A Theatrical Performance?*

I suspect that this scene derives from a comic burlesque of the Amymone myth. Admittedly the engraving does not advertise the fact that these are costumed actors. For example, we are not explicitly shown that they are on a stage, that the feathers are artificial, that they wear masks, or that there are cuffs of a bodysuit at the wrists or ankles²², but several factors should alert us to the possibility that the scene illustrates or at least was inspired by a performance.

(1) A simple, *prima facie* case can be made that this image derives from the stage and not from myth: we know of no version of the Amymone myth in which she is approached by a *winged* satyr and, although vase painters could show their independence from earlier visual or textual traditions when they depicted mythological episodes, adding wings to the satyr transgresses the conventions of the Amymone myth so spectacularly that a viewer would expect some motivation external to the iconographical tradition. This is the sort of innovation that we would expect from a comic playwright²³.

(2) The marks on the satyr's body, which at first glance look like some horrible skin disease, make sense if understood as a theatrical bodysuit. The satyr's body is so well proportioned and masculine that there is an incongruous, comic disparity between his human physique and his animal skin. It is as if a mere token of illusion were intended, not a serious attempt at a naturalistic portrayal of a satyr.

The tufts on his torso, which in Tischbein's rendering are generally composed of three or four short, slightly curving strokes clustered together, are probably meant to illustrate a furry hide. Already in the seventh century, long before they appeared in theatrical costume, satyrs were shown to be hairy, evidently in order to emphasize their wildness²⁴. Fifth-century satyrs have dots, half-circles, and dashes on their bodies that are clearly intended to represent body hair; similar marks can be found on the skin of fawns, horses, donkeys, centaurs, the Minotaur, and even on Actaeon as he is transformed into a deer²⁵. The legs of a satyr on a vase in Würzburg have marks that are nearly identical to those on the hide of the hinny that Dionysus rides on the same

²² In theory, we expect a painting of a comedy (and, to a lesser degree, satyr-play) to show a theatrical scene to be just that: an artifice performed by actors. See Green 1991 and Green 1994, p. 27; on indicators of satyr costume see Shaw 2005, pp. 82-85. Lissarrague 1990, p. 234, rightly warns that vases and drama «embody two different kinds of visualization».

²³ Recent discussions of this issue are Woodford 2003, pp. 105-114, and Small 2003, pp. 37-78. On mythological burlesque in general see Casolari 2003.

²⁴ LIMC VIII s. v. *Silenoi* no. 29c; see discussion in Krumeich et al. 1999, pp. 53-55 and n. 56.

²⁵ One should note, though, the way the painter of Villa Giulia no. 20846 has emphasized the masculinity of Poseidon by rendering «exuberant hairiness a feature normally characterizing the uncouth or the bestial, such as the Papposilenos» on his chest by depicting tufts of hair as concentric circles on his chest: see Reeder 1995, p. 359.

vase²⁶. One could regard the marks on our Tischbein engraving not as part of a costume but as a depiction of the natural appearance of a hairy satyr. Of course we also have clear evidence that such furry skin could be incorporated into the costume of a satyr-play. Several depictions show explicitly that actors are wearing a body stocking that is designed to give the appearance of a hide; one can see seams in the costume and lines that reveal that the bodysuit has ended at the wrists and ankles, leaving hands, feet and face bare²⁷. This is clearest on some depictions of Papposilenos, who was not uncommonly shown with white tufted tights.

Although the satyr's costume in I 35 lacks seams or explicit indications that he wears a bodysuit, other Tischbein engravings show satyrs in obvious costumes with virtually identical tufts on their bodies and cuffs at the wrists and ankles (Tischbein Vol. I plates 45 and 46). It is very hard to conceive of them as being feathered, so we must conclude that this was the engraver's convention for illustrating fur. (The similarity of the bodysuits, incidentally, is itself another point in favor of the winged creature in I 35 being considered a satyr.)

Nevertheless, we should not exclude the possibility that these are feathers; after all, the simple fact that he wears wings is itself an argument for this view. Moreover, feathers and the furry hide of satyrs follow virtually identical conventions in vase painting, and the marks bear similarities to the feathers on the two costumed bird dancers on a black-figure oenochoe in the British Museum²⁸. Some of these 'feathers' consist of short single strokes while others are circular or semi-circular. The bird dancers in the J. Paul Getty Museum are covered with dot-filled circles, a convention for feathers—or plucked chickens. The marks on the Tischbein engraving are composed of three or four lines that cluster together and curve in a way a feather might. Yet the parallel of the other Tischbein engravings speaks strongly for seeing these tufts as fur.

What drama could have inspired a depiction of Amymone? We know that Aeschylus wrote a satyr-play, the *Amymone*, which was performed as part of the *Danaid* trilogy, probably in 463 B. C.²⁹ Surviving fragments reveal nothing

²⁶ Würzburg 474, by the Ambrosios Painter, ca. 500 B. C., ARV² 173.10; CVA Würzburg 2 (46), pl. 3 (2204) 2; Simon 1982, p. 144, plate 32a; LIMC s. v. *Satyroi* no. 32. The Amasis Painter used two very short parallel strokes to depict hair on satyrs' bodies on an amphora in Würzburg L 265 and L 282, ABV 151.22; Para. 61.22; von Bothmer 1985, pp. 110-118. The strokes are not curved and could not be confused with feathers.

²⁷ A stamnos in Paris by the Eucharides Painter shows dark dots on the legs of satyrs, evidently a dramatic skin: Louvre C 10754; ARV² 228.32; Add. 99; Para. 347; Beazley 1958, pp. 91-95; Pickard-Cambridge 1968, p. 184 fig. 39; LIMC VIII s. v. *Silenoï* no. 33. There are also figures who are evidently satyrs with tufts over their bodies on a bell krater in Syracuse 23508, of ca. 460-450 B. C.; ARV² 613.6; Simon 1982, p. 133, pl. 31. On hairy satyrs consult also Hedreen 1992, pp. 109, 113-114, 125-129, 163.

²⁸ London BM 509, by the Gela Painter, ca. 480 B. C.; Green-Handley 1995, pl. 3.

²⁹ Frr. 13-15 discussed in Mette 1963, p. 54 s.; Garvie 1969, pp. 164-167; Sutton 1974, pp. 193-202, Krumeich et al. 1999, pp. 91-97, and Yziquel 2001, pp. 13-18.

of the plot, though they suggest that, in keeping with the tragedies that preceded it, marriage and sexuality were themes. Several vases painted within a few years of that performance show Amymone pursued by Poseidon, and one can suppose that they illustrate a memorable scene from Aeschylus or were indirectly inspired by it³⁰. Of course they are of dubious value in reconstructing the plot: did Poseidon pursue Amymone, as several vases from 460-440 B.C. show, and thereby prove himself to be no better than the lascivious satyrs, or was he shown to be her rescuer and lover, thus distinguishing himself from satyrs and endorsing a noble alliance of Eros and Peitho?³¹ A vase in Basel from ca. 460, revealing Amymone and Poseidon in amicable conversation, illustrates the latter interpretation³².

It is of course theoretically possible that Aeschylus presented a winged satyr on stage. The titles of his lost plays include *Glaukos Pontios*, *Proteus*, *Kirke*, *Leon*, and *Sphinx*, all of which seem to show an interest in animals, hybrids, and fantastic motifs³³. Nevertheless, the Hamilton vase, if no earlier than the third quarter of the fifth century, and more likely decades later, is probably too late to have been directly inspired by Aeschylus. Crucially, we have no evidence that Aeschylus costumed a satyr with wings and none of the vases that were supposedly inspired by any satyr-play show winged satyrs³⁴.

The outlandish violence done to the story by endowing a satyr with wings sounds more like the mythological burlesque of Old or Middle Comedy. Comic poets showed no scruple in parodying and distorting stories about the gods and heroes; in Aristophanes alone (to choose two examples) we find a dung-beetle that has been substituted for Pegasus (*Peace* 72-181), a feat which must have provided a priceless visual spectacle, and a wine-skin substitut-

³⁰ Brommer 1938-39, pp. 171-176; Simon 1981, p. 750; Simon 1982, pp. 147-148. Of course they may have been inspired by a reperformance of Aeschylus' play or a performance of a now-lost satyr-play, perhaps in the 420s: see Krumeich et al. 1999, pp. 94-97, who point out that there may be pre-Aeschylean sources as well. Mitchell 2009, p. 218, observing that none of the expected clues of drama are present, suggests that the scenes were stock images of vase-paintings.

³¹ Voelke 2001, pp. 236-238, discusses the tension discernible in fragments of Aeschylus' *Amymone* (esp. fr. 13 Radt) between the coarse erotic impulse so usual in satyrs and an interest in the institution of marriage. This might explain the absence of ithyphallicism. (My thanks to an anonymous reader for this observation.)

³² Simon 1982, p. 147 s., suggests that «this divergence from the iconographic norm for this subject matter comes from the theater itself rather than from the pictorial tradition».

³³ Krumeich et al. 1999, p. 90; Moreau 2001 sees Aeschylean satyr-play as generally marked by grotesque animality, and thus a close cousin to comedy.

³⁴ The tragic playwright Nicomachus I wrote an *Amymone* which took third place at the Lenaea of 364/3 B. C.: *TrGF* I, 36 T 2 = Camp 1971 = Mette 1977, III D 1 col. 6. 7-8. Because at least one satyr is integral to the myth, we can probably assume that this, like Aeschylus' version, was a satyr-play: Krumeich et al. 1999, p. 91 n. 4. But nothing survives of it, much less indications of a winged satyr. Shaw 2005, pp. 115-161, discusses experimentation in fourth-century satyr-drama, and we cannot dismiss this as a possible source. Carpenter 2005, p. 233, notes that depictions of satyr-plays on South Italian vases were less illusionistic and more fantastic than on Attic vases, and it is possible that this Hamilton vase is such a one.

ed for the infant Orestes (*Thesmophoriazusae* 688-761), which is illustrated on an Apulian bell-krater in Würzburg³⁵. Lowe writes that «the permeability of the boundaries of myth is crucial to its operation in comedy» and notes that mythological comedies had a predilection for episodes of divine rape and seduction, including Europa, Nemesis, Amphitryon, and Danae – all good company for Amymone³⁶.

The presence of a satyr hardly disqualifies the Hamilton painting as a comedy: after all, we know that comedies with the title of *Satyr*s were written by several comic poets beginning in the 440's³⁷. The *Dionysalexandros*, one of the earliest mythological parodies, had a satyr chorus³⁸. Little else is known of these comic satyrs, though Simon has suggested that comic satyrs would be even less graceful than those of satyr-plays³⁹.

Although one might expect a comic Amymone herself to be less dignified than the figure on the Hamilton vase – certainly on phlyax vases heroic and divine figures looked like buffoons – her decorum is not without precedent. On the “Choregoi” vase an aristocratic, elaborately dressed “Aegisthus” emerges from a door on our left to encounter three crude phlyax actors. He wears no mask «and his rather puzzled look suggests he has ventured into an unfamiliar world»⁴⁰. Here, similarly, a noble young woman from Greek mythology has come face-to-face with a preposterous creature. The encounter is visually compelling: the symmetry of the composition calls attention to the disparity in height. Her scrupulously covered body makes his nudity all the more striking. She almost seems to be protecting the hydria from him whereas, by contrast, on other vases of the Amymone myth it may have been sexually suggestive to have the mouth of the hydria pointed toward Poseidon⁴¹. The Hamilton satyr's chances of success with Amymone (if he is importuning her for himself) are especially bleak, but in this version we might conjecture that it is he who has enlisted Peitho in courtship of her; and Poseidon who has resorted to Bia.

³⁵ Würzburg H5697; Trendall-Cambitoglou 1978, p. 65, no. 4/4a; Taplin 1993, pp. 36-40; Small 2003, pp. 63-68.

³⁶ Lowe 2000, p. 263.

³⁷ Ecphantides PCG V p. 127, Callias PCG IV p. 49, Phrynichus PCG VII pp. 414-416, Cratinus PCG IV p. 232, and Ophelio PCG VII p. 97. Timocles wrote *Ikarian Satyr*s (PCG VII pp. 766-769) and *Demosatyr*oi (VII p. 757 s.). The phrase ἐν Σατύροις in *POxy.* 1801 (CGFP 343) 17, could be the title of another comedy. For a different emphasis on satyrs and comedy see Dobrov 2007. Storey 2005 offers a survey of satyrs in comedy.

³⁸ PCG IV p. 140, test. I 42.

³⁹ Simon 1997 (= *LIMC* VIII, s. v. *Silenoi*), col. 1114 on no. 34.

⁴⁰ Trendall-Cambitoglou 1991, p. 8; Taplin 1993, pp. 55-66. It is true that neither of the two figures on the Hamilton vase is shown in comic costume, but then again a respectable woman need not be expected to look comic and we know virtually nothing about the costume of satyrs in comedy.

⁴¹ As on a kalyx-krater in St. Petersburg by the Achilles Painter, *ARV*² 991.57; Reeder 1995, p. 355 s., no. 112.

The Amymone myth is known to have had a home in comedy. The comic playwright Nicochares, for example, wrote a play titled *Amymone or Pelops* (fr. 2 K.-A.), the alternative titles perhaps reflecting the fact that both Amymone and Pelops were pursued by Poseidon. The sole surviving fragment, in which Oenomaus and another character are drinking two parts wine to five parts water, is uninformative. Nicochares is credited with a Lenaea victory at the very end of the fifth century or early fourth century⁴² and won second prize with his *Lakones*, competing against Aristophanes' *Plutus* in 388 B. C.⁴³ The *Suda* reports that Nicochares was a contemporary (σύγχρονος) of Aristophanes; exactly how contemporary they were we do not know, though Nicochares may have been younger. His father was evidently Philonides, the fifth-century comic poet for whom three titles are attested and who seems to have been the producer of *Amphiaraos* (414) and *Frogs* (405)⁴⁴. Most of Nicochares' ten surviving titles point to mythological parody, among which we count the *Amymone or Pelops*⁴⁵. It would be rash to claim that Tischbein's engraving illustrates Nicochares' play, but neither can the possibility be excluded; after all, if he was an exact contemporary of Aristophanes his career would have started before 425 B. C., in the third quarter of the fifth century. And of course the vase was likely later. At the very least the Amymone myth had a place in the comic repertory.

Let me return to what is probably the central enigma of this painting: the satyr's wings. Elaborate plumage like this is often found on female figures, such as Nike, Iris, Eos, or the Furies, but also appears on Eros, Himeros, Pothos, Hypnos and Thanatos. I suggest that the Tischbein engraving shows a satyr who has taken on the wings of Eros. As noted, Eros is present on twenty-four of the sixty-five Attic or South Italian vases depicting Amymone. The general function of Eros is obvious: he confirms that we are witnessing an erotically charged scene. He is present on five or six vases from the fifth century that show Poseidon pursuing Amymone, as well as a large number from the fourth century that depict them in amicable company. The wings could mean that he has literally attempted to take on the role of Eros and is feigning the role of the youthful son of Aphrodite. To our eyes, he has failed completely: he may be shorter than she is, but he is obviously an adult male. Of course that may

⁴² *Inscr. Agora* I 7168; Shear 1971, p. 256 s.; Mette V C 1 col. 2, 8 = PCG VII p. 39 Nicochares test. 3. Shear suggested end of fifth century, as early as 412/411 B. C.; Edmondson 1982 argued for 403; Mette («ipse contuli») prefers the beginning of the fourth; Pickard-Cambridge 1988, p. 360, thought 403 too precise. The inscription is treated in Wilson 2000, p. 30 s.

⁴³ *Arg.* IV Aristoph. *Plut.* p. 323b19 Duebn. = PCG VII p. 45.

⁴⁴ See PCG VII p. 363 for Philonides and PCG III 2 p. 10 Aristophanes test. 23; he was also possibly the producer of *Proagon* and *Wasps* of 424 B. C.; see PCG III 2 p. 253 on *Proagon*, but see MacDowell 1971, p. 124, and MacDowell 1982. Consult now Brockmann 2003, p. 203.

⁴⁵ The prevalence of mythological comedy in his oeuvre might point to his being a playwright of a later generation. See Nesselrath 1990, pp. 188-191 and 203; Bowie 2000, p. 321.

have been the comic intent. Alternatively, one could suppose that the wings are simply an indication of his erotic excitement, rather like a phallus bird⁴⁶.

Yet we should also note that in images of pursuit the pursuer is frequently winged. A winged Boreas, for example, pursues Oreithya, Zephyrus pursues Hyacinthus, and Eos pursues Kephalos. When Hermes pursues a woman it is with conspicuously winged feet and hat. In the fourth century Zeus would be portrayed as an eagle seizing Ganymede⁴⁷.

As unprecedented as the winged satyr may seem, his appearance is not inconsistent with other costumes we have considered. In fact, the three representations we have of bird dancers seem to show that the costumes incorporated satyr elements. The dancers on the London "birds" oinochoe have cock crests as well as beards and elongated noses for which parallels can be found among other satyrs by the Gela Painter⁴⁸. The beards may simply indicate that they are adult male dancers, but they also resemble beards worn by other satyrs of the Gela painter⁴⁹. Moreover, the dancer between the *aulos*-player and the dancer on the right, appears to have an erect (horizontal, at least) phallus. His phallus is not immediately obvious because it is lightly silhouetted against his left thigh and its tip is not shown, but this protuberance between his left and right thighs cannot be easily explained as a fold in his costume. If the painter meant to draw a fold, as we see on the right dancer, he has done a very poor job of it⁵⁰. The bird-dancers on an Attic black-figure amphora in Berlin have not yet removed their cloaks to reveal their bird costumes, but the cockscombs on their heads are a good indication that they are meant to be perceived as cocks; they also have wattles hanging below their chins⁵¹. The ef-

⁴⁶ The satyr is not ithyphallic – but neither is his *membrum virile* quite dangling limply. Could the engraver have pared it down? At the same time, we note that in the *Isthmiastai/Theoroi* Dionysus teased satyrs for the small size of their infibulated *phalloi* (Aesch. fr. 78a 29); could the Hamilton painting have reflected such a tradition? A red-figure skyphos in Boston (08.31c; LIMC VIII pl. 767, *Silenoi* 122a) juxtaposes a satyr and a phallus-bird, as noted by Shaw 2005, p. 27.

⁴⁷ Numerous examples of pursuit are in Kaempf-Dimitriadou 1979. He also took on the form of a bird of prey when abducting Aigina and Thalia; see Kossatz-Deissmann 1978, pp. 33–42. Pliny says that Zeus was shown as an eagle first by the sculptor Leochares (NH 34. 79), an innovation possibly from Leochares himself (see Woodford 2003, p. 122). We cannot rule out the possibility that the winged satyr on the Hamilton vase was an imaginative artist's concoction.

⁴⁸ A virtually identical beard is on the face of a satyr on a black-figure amphora, Berlin Antikensammlung F1882, Haspels 1936, 213.178; CVA Berlin, Antikensammlung 5, p. 62 s., pl. (2191) 46.5–7.

⁴⁹ Taranto 6250, black-figure lekythos, ca. 480 B. C., *Para.* 215; Haspels 1936, 208.56; Trendall-Webster 1971, p. 26 fig. 1.18; and Athens NM 541, black-figure lekythos, *Add.*² 118, *Para.* 214.49, 250; Boardman 1974, fig. 235.1,2. Although the incised lines below their faces trace what is best described as beards, the beards are colored the same red as the protrusions on the crests. Were they meant to be wattles?

⁵⁰ Green 1985, p. 111, points out that similar lines on the leading leg of the dancer on the right would be folds in a garment, but he also finds it tempting to see the lines on the left dancer as a phallos.

⁵¹ Berlin F 1830, from Vulci. CVA (5) Berlin pls. 43,1–2 47,5, places it with the Dot-Ivy Group; Pickard-Cambridge 1962, pl. 9b; Sifakis 1971, pl. 6; Green 1985, p. 11. The CVA article suggests

fect, however, is that they have pig-faces with snub noses and protruding lips, a detail that may have been borrowed from the iconography of the faces of satyrs⁵². Finally, the "Getty Birds" wear erect *phalloi* and shorts that constitute the dress of satyr-players⁵³.

In sum, these three bird chorus costumes incorporate features of the satyr costume. The line between costume and satyr costume was not a rigid one. What seems to be portrayed in the Hamilton vase of Amymone resembles what Taplin calls a *satyralektryon*; he conjectures, «Could some comedian have invented the *satyralektryon*, and produced a whole chorus of them? This might explain the puzzles of the Getty Birds, but we have no evidence of any such thing, and it does seem very far-fetched»⁵⁴. And yet, if there is any validity to the hints I have pointed to, the invention may not have been unprecedented. The winged satyr in the Tischbein engraving, although not a cock, participates in this tradition.

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that the front bird wears a mask with a nose over his beak; the one on the left has a mouth under his beak (p. 56).

⁵² Pickard-Cambridge 1962, p. 152. Compare the noses on satyrs on a black-figure lebes in Cortona and a black-figure amphora in Würzburg, *ABV* 151,22; see Hedreen 1992, pls. 25 and 29. Reich 1903, p. 483, had remarked on their pig-like snouts.

⁵³ Green 1985, p. 111.

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ABSTRACT: A red-figure vase painting once in the collection of Sir William Hamilton, although only known from an eighteenth-century engraving, depicts a tall woman carrying a hydria and a shorter, male figure with wings and satyr-like features. The scene appears to be unparalleled, but may illustrate the encounter of Amymone with a satyr. It is possible that this painting reflects a performance of a mythological burlesque from comedy.

