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Representations of Greek Tragedy in Ancient Pottery: a Theatrical Perspective

In this article, Christian M. Billing considers the relationship between representations of mythic narratives found on ancient pottery (primarily found at sites relating to the Greek colonies of south Italy in the fourth century BC, but also to certain vases found in Attica) and the tragic theatre of the fifth century BC. The author argues against the current resurgence in critical accounts that seek to connect such ceramics directly to performance of tragedies by the major tragedians: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Using five significant examples of what he considers to be errors of method in recent philologically inspired accounts of ancient pottery, Billing argues for a more nuanced approach to the interpretation of such artefacts – one that moves beyond an understanding of literary texts and art history towards a more performance-conscious approach, while also acknowledging that a multiplicity of spheres of artistic influence, drawn from a variety of artistic media, operated in the production and reception of such artefacts. Christian M. Billing is an academic and theatre practitioner working in the fields of ancient Athenian and early modern English and European drama. He has extensive experience as a director, designer, and actor, and has taught at a number of universities in the UK and the USA. He is currently Lecturer in Drama at the University of Hull.

SCHOLARS AGREE that very little visual evidence, if any, survives to document the theatrical practice of classical Athens. Given the Athenacentric nature of most criticism of ancient Greek drama (and the prioritization of the fifth century of which most historical schools of criticism have been guilty), this

situation has led, until quite recently, to a relative lack of interest in the reconstruction of ancient stage practice through consideration of vase paintings and other ceramics.¹ As soon as one looks outside Athens, however, and beyond the supposed high point of fifth-century tragedy, a considerable amount

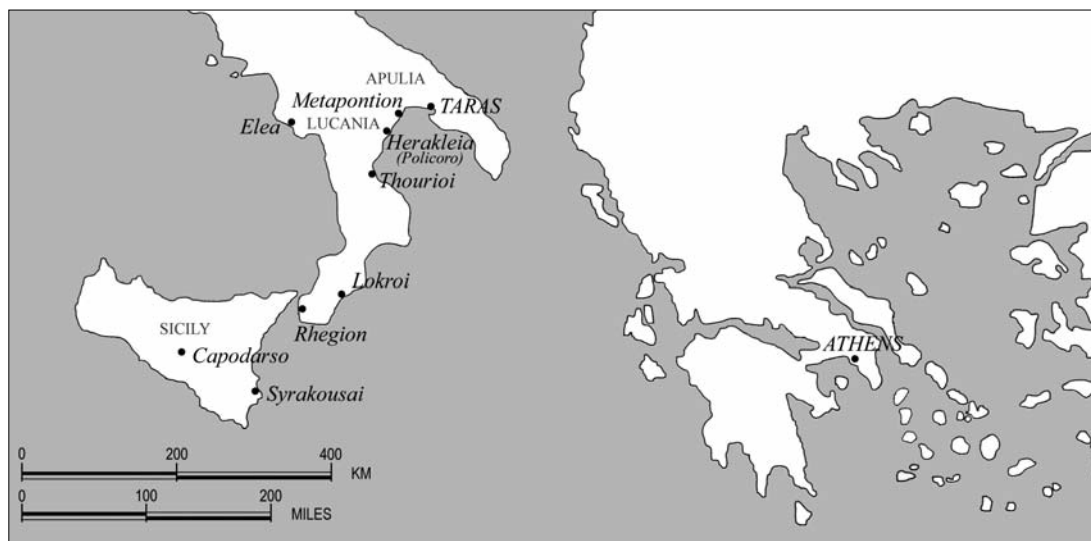


Figure 1. The Middle and Eastern Mediterranean, showing Athens and south Italian sites for pottery finds.

of evidence for a variety of theatrical practices begins to emerge.

Such evidence is principally drawn from the cities of *Megale Hellas* (Greater Greece, or modern day Sicily and south Italy), particularly Taras and the ancient settlements that bordered the modern-day Gulf of Taranto: Metapontion, Herakleia and Thourioi (see Fig. 1). While sites of this sort clearly provide evidence depicting colonial theatrical performances (mostly comedy) from the fourth century BC onwards, the question is still hotly debated as to whether such ceramic evidence has any place in commenting upon surviving Athenian play texts and the stage practices that went with them, particularly in relation to the most sought-after subject of the majority of philologically inspired enquiries: the tragic drama of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

Theatre flourished in the *poleis* of *Megale Hellas* during the fifth, fourth, and third centuries BC and a significant amount of visual evidence depicting what looks like theatrical subject matter exists on vases from a number of sites dated within the hundred years from 425 to 325 BC.² Championing the utility of pottery from this period in the reconstruction of ancient theatre practice, Oliver Taplin has asserted:

Despite Nietzsche's obituary, tragedy survived Euripides. Alongside the 'canon' of old 'greats', new tragedies continued to be produced at the city Dionysia and beyond; and they were very highly thought of by their public.³

Taplin was justifiably cautious to begin his first book-length study of this subject by relating evidence (primarily collected from *Megale Hellas*) so strongly with post-Euripidean tragedy. Both the historical period from which the majority of such ceramics date and the geographical location in which they are found preclude direct reference to first performances of the works of Aeschylus; and although a twenty-five-year overlap does exist between the early part of the period from which most south Italian pottery survives and the first performances (in Athens) of the mature works of Sophocles and Euripides, scholars can find precious little hard

evidence to link the mythic themes found in south Italian vase painting to initial performances of works by the other major tragedians. Indeed, even the fact that all of Aristophanes' extant drama can be dated within the first part of the hundred-year time frame from which the best ceramic evidence exists cannot be said to constitute proof that any surviving south Italian vase painting depicts the staging of Old Comedy.

Problematic 'Authority' in Vase Paintings

Despite this obstacle, several scholars still insist that the pottery of *Megale Hellas* can help shape our understanding of both Old Comedy and fifth-century tragedy. Taplin, for example, claims that Italian ceramics provide 'clear evidence' that both tragedy and Old Comedy were neither too Athenian nor too ephemeral to have precluded successful performances outside the city that created them.⁴ As he sees it, the *poleis* of *Megale Hellas* had strong enough links with Athens to see the exportation of both genres of performance: because Italian cities were the export markets for a number of other cultural commodities, Taplin sees no reason why this should not also have been the case for theatre.

He argues that, as Athens declined in influence during the fourth century,⁵ the *poleis* of *Megale Hellas* took over the production of certain previously Athenian commodities, with some, the city of Taras in particular, becoming particularly famous for exquisite vases and theatrical festivals.⁶ This is true. The problem, however, is that a combination of advanced ceramics production and a well-established tradition of theatrical performance has made south Italy not merely the best source for scholars who seek to unearth evidence of performance conventions in the Greek colonies during the fourth century and beyond (a worthwhile theatre-historical endeavour), but also, much more problematically, the pre-eminent repository for artefacts that are either tacitly or directly used to comment upon the dramatic texts and stage practices of Athens in the age of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

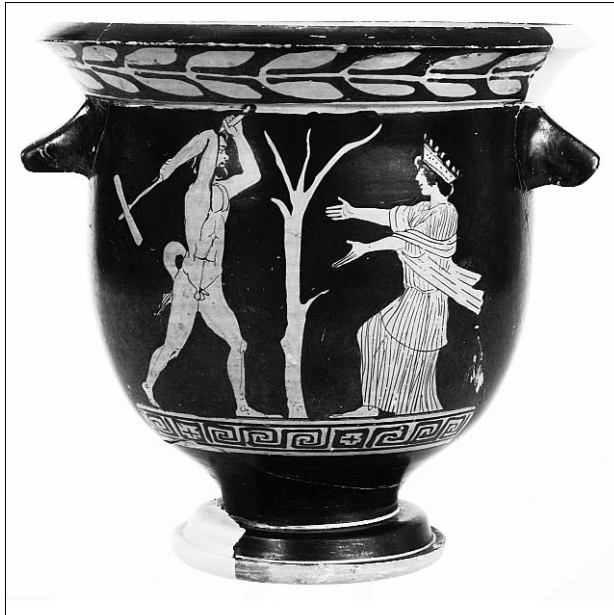


Figure 2 (left). Early Lucanian Bell Crater by the Pisticci Painter, depicting a Satyr with Large Hammer (Matera 9975). Photograph © 2008, reproduced by permission of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Metaponto.

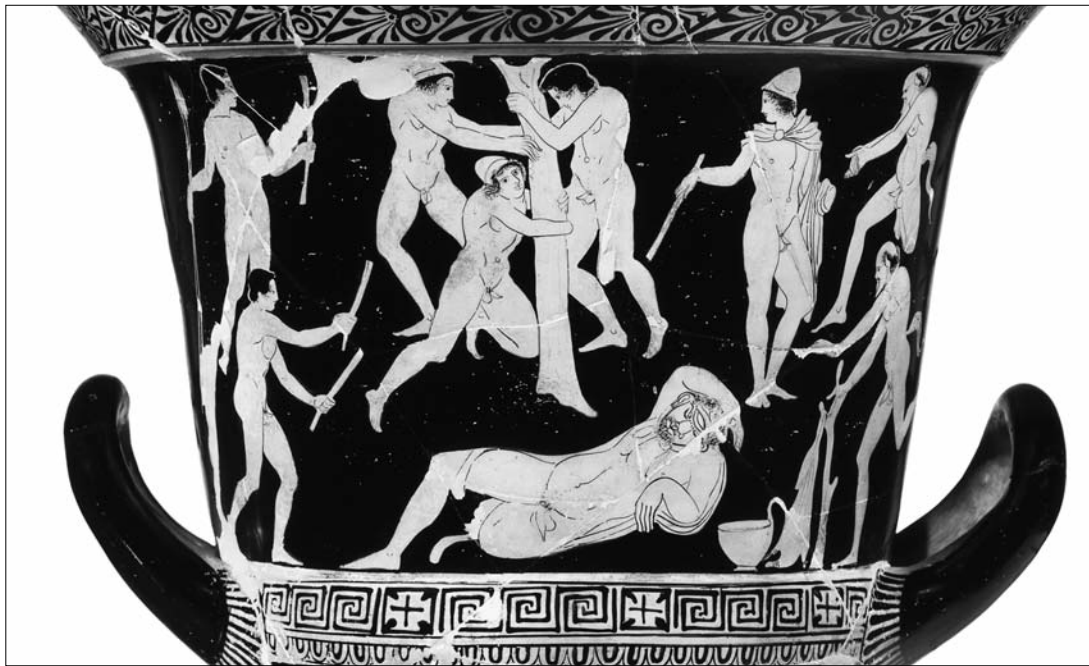


Figure 3 (below). Early Lucanian Calyx Crater by the Cyclops Painter, depicting the Blinding of Polyphemos (British Museum 1947.7-14.18). Photograph © 2008, the Trustees of the British Museum. Reproduced with permission.

In 1971, in what had been the standard work on this topic before the publication of Taplin's *Pots and Plays* in 2007, classical art historians Trendall and Webster observed:

Red-figured pottery of local manufacture makes its appearance in South Italy in the third quarter of the fifth century BC, and almost from the start vase painters show a remarkable interest in subjects associated with dramatic performances. One

of the earliest vases by the Pisticci Painter, the first of the colonial vase painters, represents a scene from a satyr play [Fig. 2] and some years later his pupil, the Cyclops painter, decorated a vase with the blinding of Polyphemos [Fig. 3], the inspiration for which almost certainly came from the *Cyclops* of Euripides. During the fourth century, scenes from Attic tragedies are frequently found, especially on larger Apulian vases, which by their size were particularly well adapted to such representations. As the characters are often shown

Figure 4 (right). Large Fragment of a Sicilian Calyx Crater by the Capodarso Painter, possibly depicting the Oidipous myth (Museo Archeologico Regionale 'Paolo Orsi', Syracuse 66557). Reproduced by permission of the Assessorato ai Beni Culturali e Ambientali and E. P. of the Region of Sicily – Palermo.



Figure 5 (below right). Sicilian Calyx Crater by the Capodarso Painter, possibly depicting a stage structure (Caltanissetta, Museo Civico 1301 bis). Photograph reproduced with permission of the Superintendency of Cultural and Environmental resources and Department of Education of the Region of Sicily. Reproduction or duplication in any format without prior authorisation is forbidden.

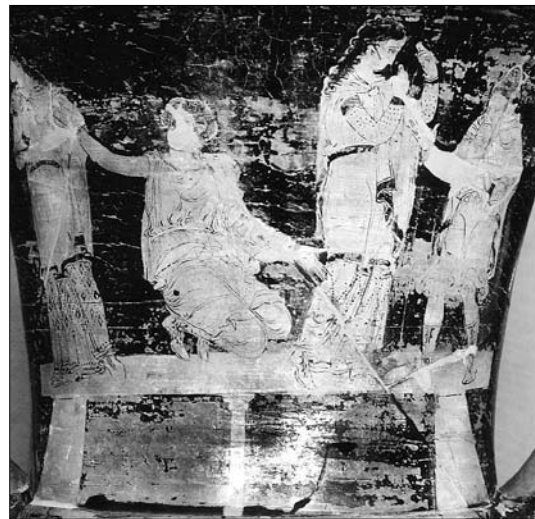
wearing stage costumes, there can be little doubt that such vases are directly connected with theatrical performances, and on two [Figs. 4 and 5] the actual stage is shown, as it is more frequently on vases with comedies or Phlyax plays.⁷

Almost none of Trendall and Webster's assertions concerning the inspiration for subject matter, the presence of costumes, or evidence of stages can be proven. Yet despite this, their method of relating Athenian tragedy to ancient ceramics has steadily gained popularity – to such an extent that in 2005 Martin Revermann asserted that south Italian vase paintings have:

gained new authority . . . because the iconography of a number of south Italian objects [can] beyond reasonable doubt be shown to be inspired by plays first performed in Athens several decades earlier.⁸

Revermann states that: 'The crucial link between Attic drama of the fifth century and fourth-century south Italian pottery ha[s] been established' and that accordingly 'much else now continues to fall into place'.⁹

The establishment of this 'crucial link' comes largely in the work of Taplin, Green, and Csapo. Of these, Taplin has argued most strongly that because theatres in the form of (or inspired by) Attic auditoria may be found at Rhegion, Locroi, Elea, Castiglione di Paludi, and Metapontion, modern scholars



can presume that the production activity that went on within them was not all that much divergent from earlier Athenian practices.¹⁰ Yet, as David Wiles has recently shown, the architecture of Attic theatres was itself extraordinarily diverse, even in the fifth century. Hence a subtle variety of staging practices were necessary, even within the Athenian demes.¹¹

If such conclusions derived from recent archaeological discoveries relating to theatre spaces in Attica are true, how can one possibly unify stage practice across a variety of culturally divergent colonial south Italian sites, and map such an amalgam across to

what was taking place in one particular theatrical context (the major dramatic festivals of Athens), sometimes up to a century earlier?

The Nature of 'Good Evidence'

As with most scholarship dealing with the relationship(s) between ancient theatre and vases, there is often a degree of truth in the arguments of philologist-iconographers (a term I use here generically to describe those who seek in some way to connect vase-based

depictions to the performance of particular plays, most often by the major tragedians); yet the more one presses such enquiries, the more tenuous the claims become. Connections to Athens were strong in south Italy, most evidently in the city of Thourioi (established as an Athenian colony in 444–3). It is true that Thourioi's founders wanted a *polis* so Athenian in style that its town plan was drafted by Hippodamos and its laws codified by Protagoras; amongst the city's first settlers were Herodotus and Lysias. Yet Thourioi was not Taras, which was still more obstinately not Athens. Of Thourioi, Taplin has noted:

Since red-figure vase painting was first crafted in this part of the world at about the same time [as the city was founded] it has been plausibly suggested that Athenian potters came to Thourioi. . . . On this reconstruction, the Athenian exports of drama and vase painting were both taking root round the gulf of Taras by the last quarter of the [fifth] century.¹²

Generalizing outwards from this, the most Athenian *polis* he can find, Taplin observes of the area in general: 'It would not be surprising if the colonists brought Athenian drama with them to the gulf of Taras.'¹³ In the light of only circumstantial evidence, he goes on to suggest that vases such as those depicting Medea now held in Cleveland and Policoro (Figs. 6 and 7) – both produced

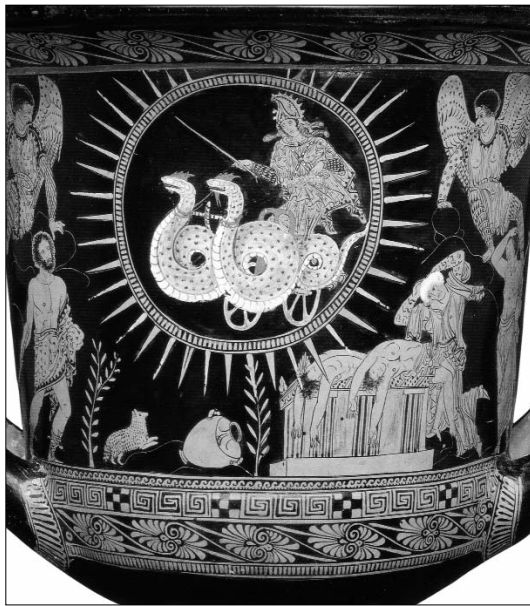


Figure 6 (above left). Attributed to the Policoro Painter (South Italy, active 420–380 BC). *Lucanian Calyx Crater*, c. 400 BC. Red earthenware with added white, red, yellow, and brown wash; H. 50.5 cm. © The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna Jr., Fund 1991.1. Reproduced with permission.

Figure 7 (left). Early Lucanian Hydria by the Policoro Painter, depicting Medea in her Chariot (Policoro, Museo Nazionale della Siritide 35296). Reproduced with permission.

some thirty years after Euripides' play was first staged in Athens – constitute 'good evidence' that 'Athenian-style tragedy' was being performed at yet another ancient Italian site, Herakleia, by the turn of the fourth century.¹⁴

There is, however, a world of difference between (i) the 'plausible suggestion' that theatre inspired by Athenian dramatic *exempla* was being produced in certain Athenian colonies; (ii) the notion that south Italian vases provide 'good evidence' of what that practice was; and (iii) the supposition that such ceramics can tell us anything at all about earlier Athenian plays or stage practices.

Even if Taplin is right, and Athenian theatre-makers and potters came hand in hand to Thourioi, such a fact does not render unproblematic the majority of interpretations of vases depicting theatrical material offered by philologically inspired iconographers – particularly those relating to the performance of tragedy. Can it, for example, be said that Athenian forms of drama replaced indigenous performance traditions entirely, rather than merging with them to produce new hybrids?¹⁵ Surely the former assumption is a fantasy indulged in by those who wish to prioritize the purity of a supposedly superior fifth-century Athenian theatre, which conquered through its own excellence everything that lay before it.¹⁶

While I am willing to accept that cultural connections between Athens and certain cities in south Italy led to an assimilation of Hellenic myths into colonial cultures (and that this then led to the depiction of various Hellenic-inspired heroic narratives on a number of vases), I am unable to accept claims that the performance of particular tragedies had a direct and provable influence on the decoration of any given surviving vase. Nor can I accept that such artefacts represent Athenian stage practices in any way. Accordingly, I disagree with Taplin's assertion that late fourth-century Sicilian calyx craters 'are important because they come closer than any others to showing tragedy in performance; [representing] themselves as scenes from the theatre as well as narratives of myth';¹⁷ and that the graphic depiction on certain vases of

events never actually presented on stage but recounted in messenger speeches signifies that: 'those who witnessed the tragedy can "see" the scene the messenger described' and accordingly that such ceramics 'show them . . . the myth *as they envisaged it under the spell of the play*' (my italics).¹⁸

How can one possibly speculate with due rigour about a unified mind's-eye image, created by diverse audience members separated from the modern scholar by significant cultural, geographical, and temporal distances? And, more importantly, what does such speculation about imagined audience response(s) have to do with the material practices of ancient theatre?

Even a cursory glance at ceramics representing tragedy and comedy reveals two very distinct phenomena: comic vases almost ubiquitously present what seems like a particular moment from a play in performance, tantalizing scholars with something that, on the surface at least, appears to be a snapshot of dramatic action – although even here the vases are much less problematic with regard to New Comedy than they are with regard to its Aristophanic counterpart, perhaps because the former may be proven to have developed in the colonized region instead of being imported to it, as is said of the latter. Tragic vases, on the other hand, while they clearly depict various versions of myths (that may or may not have been dealt with by a variety of dramatists), more often than not provide little or no evidence of how the 'scene' depicted reflects actual stage practice.¹⁹

Tragic Vases: Myth or Performance?

A sizeable number of south Italian vases depict mythological scenes that one might consider tragic in tone. These are generally identified by the fact that they contain 'ornate clothing, scenes of suffering and catastrophe', and display a "theatricality" of treatment'.²⁰ Problems arise, however, when one attempts to move beyond the attribution of a particular myth for any given vase to assertions that the image constitutes reference to a particular playwright's version of that myth, or, most problematically of all, to claims that

a vase represents performance of a particular scene from a particular play.

In this regard, the divide is strong between 'text-driven'²¹ philologist-iconographers such as Séchan, Taplin, Trendall, Webster, Green, and Handley – whose project has been actively to seek *Illustrations of Greek Drama, Images of the Greek Theatre*, to see *Greek Drama through Vase Painting*, or to link *Pots and Plays* – and the so-called 'autonomous' iconologists who have sought to interpret each artefact on a case-by-case basis (Robert, Moret, and more recently Small, Giuliani, and Revermann).²² Critical fashion has thus swung throughout history from erring on the side of autonomous composition to the assertion of very close connections to theatrical performance, and back again; but the debate has not been won by either side.

In order to convince us of the value of their approach, philologist-iconographers assert that ancient artists 'were not at work to provide visual aids for textbooks and lectures [but that scholars] can, with care, use them in that way as aids to a modern imagination'.²³ Herein lies the crux of the problem: certainly, vases exist that may be used as 'aids to the modern imagination' (they unquestionably help to make nice coffee-table books, or striking and appropriately 'historical' front covers to Penguin editions); but *are* any of them, as Green and Handley put it, 'inescapably' linked to the theatre; or, as in Taplin's words, 'one of the richest treasure stores of visual material bearing on drama from any period of world theatre before the invention of photography'?²⁴

Examples of vases that are said to relate to theatre have certain distinguishing qualities: the presence of masks; structures that resemble platform stages; inscriptions of the names of characters; elaborate costuming – yet the utility of such ceramics in providing material evidence of actual stage practice is very much a matter of opinion.

Overview of the Problems

Problems not always dealt with by philologist-iconographers may be summarized as follows:

(i) Vases were conceived of, constructed, and decorated as objects of commercial value. Accordingly, the scenes painted on them needed to be made attractive to buyers – an obvious reason for their 'theatrical' (i.e., elaborate) decoration.

(ii) If such vases do represent theatrical practice, the fact that most dealing with dramatic subjects have been unearthed in *Megale Hellas* could equally well constitute evidence not of imported Athenian stage practice, but of the numerous revivals and adaptations of Athenian drama enacted by foreign artists (with a variety of sometimes radically different staging practices according to indigenous performance traditions, type of company, audience, venue etc.). They may also represent different plays entirely.²⁵

(iii) Because the mythic narratives contained within theatrical spectacle could just as easily have been recounted by word of mouth, there is no evidence whatsoever that any vase painter actually saw any given play in performance before painting the myth(s) that were its subject matter on a vase.

(iv) Not even half of the plays of the fifth century are illustrated in any manner on pottery. Even by the most generous of estimates (that of A. D. Trendall), 'illustrations cover only 40 of the 82 plays of Aeschylus, 37 of the 123 plays of Sophocles, and 48 of the 87 plays of Euripides'.²⁶ Most of the more interesting examples relate to comedy. Frustratingly also, a significant number of the supposed illustrations of tragedy are said to depict plays no longer extant, making the positive identification of particular scenes all but impossible.

(v) Until the late fifth century, the dating of vases is often based on stylistic changes in artwork, with vases only loosely attached to absolute calendar dates. As Cook points out, in this field 'absolute dating is precarious'.²⁷ Only dating from the fourth century onwards becomes relatively accurate (as a result of more complete accounts of the potters and painters in the latter periods); but these limits of accuracy take us well outside the dates of the fifth-century Athenian tragedians and

mean that any dating of vases used to imply depictions of works by these poets may be seen as suspect (as below in the case of the Boston *Agamemnon* vase).²⁸

(vi) In their hurry to connect particular vases to the performance of specific scenes, scholars with a philological imperative often ignore visual evidence from the rest of the artefact because they seek to prioritize one aspect of the object's representation(s) above all others. To date, only one vase has been discovered that depicts 'theatrical' scenes on both sides²⁹ – the Cleveland calyx crater depicting *Medea* and *Telephus* – yet the non-theatrical scenes that decorate all the other so-called 'theatrical' vases (illustrations which obviously contribute to the aesthetic unity of such artefacts) are frequently suppressed in philological discussions of them.

Examples of scholars ignoring these key issues crop up in the majority of surveys of Greek drama in relation to ceramics. For reasons of space, I shall here limit my analysis to five examples of what I consider to be obvious errors in method. These will, I hope, stand in for numerous others and thus highlight some of the fundamental problems concerning philologically inspired interpretations of tragic vases.

Some Misreadings

In 1971, Trendall and Webster chose to arrange ceramic material by theatrical genre and subdivided their most substantial sections (on tragedy) by tragedian (clear evidence of a textual and not artefactual or theatre-historical approach).³⁰ Trendall and Webster make a variety of unsubstantiated claims, including one in which they assert that an Attic red-figured bell crater by the Lykaon Painter (Fig. 9) represents a scene from Aeschylus' *Toxotides*.

Significantly, they assert that this vase depicts a moment in performance, not merely a representation of the myth in question.³¹ Yet the vase shows Aktaion being torn to pieces by dogs – an element of the play that Trendall and Webster assert 'was told in a mes-

senger speech'.³² Ignoring any evidence that would seem to preclude the scene being anything other than a painter's mind's-eye configuration of a moment from the myth of Aktaion rather than performance of Aeschylus' lost play, Trendall and Webster focus on the usual strands of evidence: (i) tragic costuming; (ii) Aktaion's horn mask; (iii) inscriptions above the actors (including one that identifies the main figure as Euaion, the son of Aeschylus described as *tragikos* (actor/poet) in the Suda lexicon); they also assert that (iv) the presence of Zeus and Lyssa (representing madness) is evidence of performance, asserting, 'If Lyssa was a stage figure a dialogue in which Artemis urged her to action is probable.'³³

All of this is, of course, plausible (for it is easy to speculate about lost plays), but also entirely redundant because Trendall and Webster fail to see that the theatrical 'moment' that they consider the vase represents would never have been performed on stage. As a result of their single-mindedness of method, they ignore not only the dramatic convention of the messenger speech (in which events were not presented, but recounted), but also (even if Aeschylus' lost play did break with that convention) the preclusive impracticalities of training real dogs to 'act' out such a vicious attack.

The desire to link dramatic-looking vases to performance has also led well-respected museums to display misleadingly described vases. In 1996, Bolin and Corthell pointed out that the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, was incorrectly displaying a calyx crater by the Dokimasia Painter (Fig. 8) under the title 'Scenes from the *Oresteia*'.³⁴ The vase in question depicts the deaths of Agamemnon and Aegisthus (with Clytemnestra appearing in both images). The costumes are not quite as elaborate as most other supposed depictions of Greek tragedy, and the characters lack the decorated boots often worn by tragic actors. Bolin and Corthell point out that these factors were ignored by the museum, which in 1996 gave the performance text to which the vase supposedly related as if it were fact.

Bolin and Corthell set the museum's spurious claims alongside observations made

Figure 8 right). The Dokimasia Painter, *Mixing bowl (Calyx krater) with the killing of Agamemnon*. Greek, Early Classical Period (about 460 BC). Place of Manufacture: Greece, Attica, Athens. Ceramic, Red figure. Height: 51 cm; diameter: 51 cm (Boston, William Francis Warden Fund, 63.1246). Photograph © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reproduced with permission.

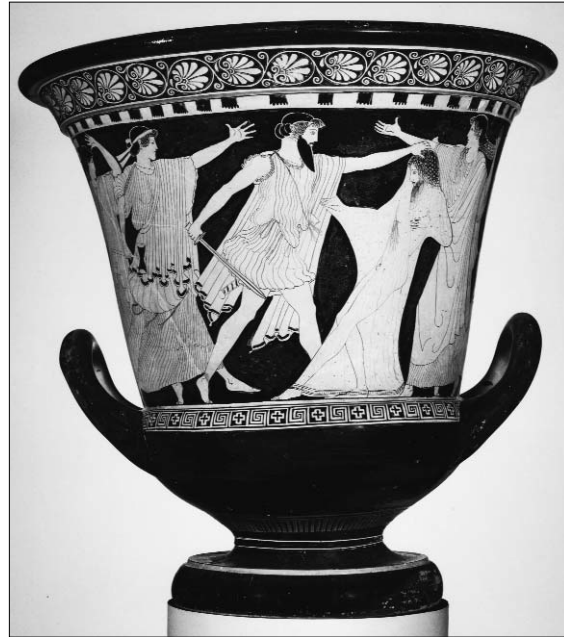
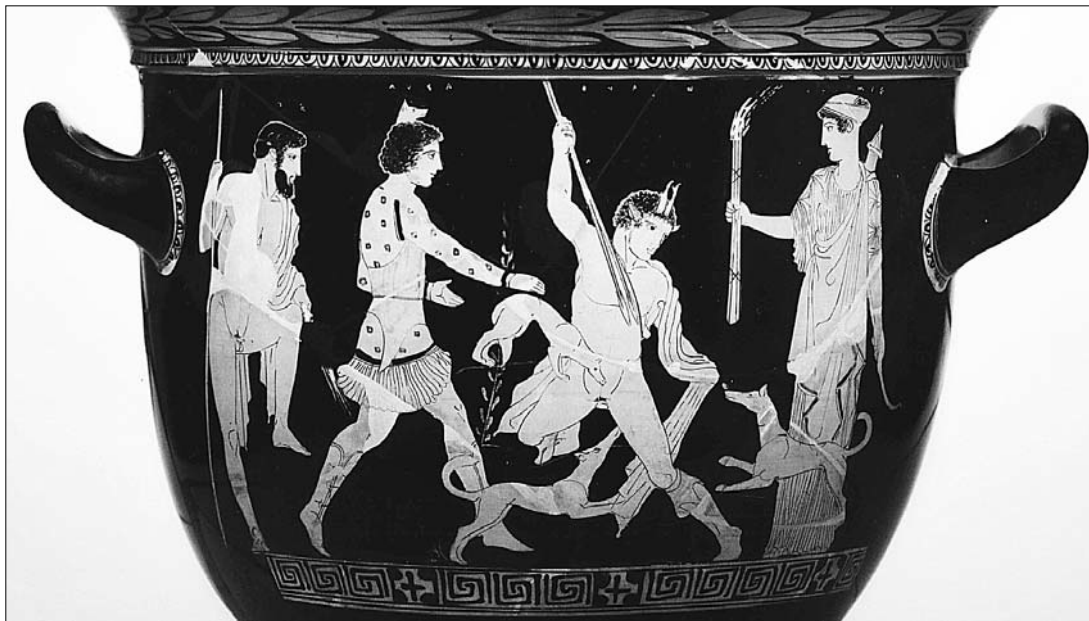


Figure 9 (below). The Lykaon Painter, *Mixing Bowl (bell krater)* Greek, classical period (about 440 BC). Place of manufacture: Greece, Attica, Athens. Ceramic, Red Figure. Height: 37.8 cm. (Boston, Henry Little Pierce Fund 00.346). Photograph © 2008 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Reproduced with permission.



over two decades earlier by John Boardman, which show that Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* was first performed several years after the creation of the Boston Calyx Crater:

The *Agamemnon*, with the king enveloped in a cloth, recalls Aeschylus' treatment of the story, but on conventional dating the vase is earlier than the production of the *Agamemnon* (456 BC). . . . We should therefore suppose this version of the story to be the invention of an earlier poet.³⁵

Like Boardman, Bolin and Corthell accordingly conclude that Aeschylus' plays had not yet been written when the vase was painted and that the Museum should therefore not connect it with the *Oresteia*. My own correspondence with the Museum has revealed that they no longer do so;³⁶ but there is a secondary point in all of this, one that Bolin and Corthell do not detect: while Boardman allowed his readers to know that the Boston

vase was not the holy grail of philological iconography (scenes from a play that forms part of the only surviving trilogy of tragic plays presented at the city Dionysia), he did so somewhat grudgingly – and refused to reject completely the notion that the Boston vase is connected to theatrical performance.

The language Boardman uses is guarded; he speaks of ‘conventional dating’ (would more radical dating provide a glimmer of hope that this *is* the *Oresteia*?); in addition, he tells his readers exactly what they should ‘suppose’ and leads them (through juxtaposition with Aeschylus) to presume that he means an earlier *dramatist* when he says ‘an earlier poet’. Thus, while Boardman feels duty bound to disabuse his readers of the erroneous notion that the Boston vase represents the *Oresteia*, he still leaves them thinking that the vase documents performance of an earlier *play*. Such a case demonstrates the reluctance that even the most authoritative scholars have in moving away from the idea that representations of myths that happen also to have become the subject matter of tragic dramas must in some way be connected to theatrical texts and performances.

An Oedipal Moment

My third example is the fragmentary Sicilian red-figure calyx crater by the Capodarso Painter, excavated at Syracuse in 1969 (Fig. 4). A number of scholars have claimed that this artefact represents a scene from the *Oidipous Tyrannos* of Sophocles.³⁷ Taplin was confident enough of this identification in 1993 to provide readers with the relevant line references to accompany the vase, identifying the moment as

Oidipous Tyrannos 989 ff. [in which] the old messenger from Corinth tells Oidipous, with some pleasure and drawing out of his revelations, that Polybos and Merope were not his parents; and that he himself (1022 ff.) had taken the infant Oidipous to Corinth from Mount Kithairon, where he had been given him by a shepherd of Laios.³⁸

Taplin observes: ‘During this stichomythia, Iokaste sees the whole truth, as is clear when she is consulted at 1054 ff.’ He adds:

Once the scene at about *Oidipous Tyrannos* 1042 is brought to mind, the Capodarso Painter’s composition makes sense and gives the viewer the pleasure of recollecting a powerful moment of theatre (a moment singled out by Aristotle at *Poetics* 1452^a 24).³⁹

The sentiment is echoed in *Pots and Plays*, in which Taplin places the Capodarso vase first amongst his entries for Sophocles and talks of the vase’s demonstration of theatrical ‘blocking’.⁴⁰ Plot summary, the employment of theatrical jargon, and repeated use of the word ‘Oidipous’ do not, however, demonstrate any irrefutable connections between the Capodarso Painter’s vase and performance of Sophocles’ play; nor does citation of Aristotle’s *Poetics* (which refers to the Sophoclean text and not to the Sicilian artefact).

Taplin ignores several key reasons why this vase cannot represent performance of *Oidipous Tyrannos*. Others he dismisses: the presence of several extraneous characters is put down to either: (i) differences between ‘a performance in fourth-century Sicily [and one in fifth-century Athens]’;⁴¹ or (ii) artistic licence on the part of the painter which led him to ‘balance up a four-part scene divided by three pillars’.⁴² Taplin claims:

It is no objection to [my] interpretation that [*Oidipous*] two little daughters are present during this scene, even though they would surely not have been in Sophocles’ original staging (and are very unlikely to have been in any subsequent restaging). In the play they are . . . brought on to be reunited with their blind father/brother in a final scene of great pathos at lines 1462–1523. For anyone who knows the play, they are a memorable element; their presence here on the pot adds an extra emotional twinge to the scene.⁴³

Such admissions are staggering; for in an account of what he considers to be one of the strongest pieces of evidence of a vase depicting the staging of a fifth-century Athenian tragic text (and despite repeated references to it being a ‘scene’ in performance), Taplin is forced to concede that the Capodarso vase depicts either a form of Sicilian staging radically divergent from Athenian practices (a supposition for which he has no hard evidence whatsoever) or that the aesthetic considerations of two-dimensional representation

on a vase outweigh practicalities as basic as the number of characters depicted, the fact that the line reference of the supposed performed moment relates not to a single instant but several (989 ff.; 1022 ff.; 1042; 1054 ff. and 1462–1523), and the fact that the pot shows ‘a long strip of floor with pillars at the back, suggestive of a stage, *but not a realistic representation of one*’.⁴⁴ If all this is the case, how can one possibly trust anything else about the vase’s depiction?

Given such imprecision and uncertainty, it is rather odd that Taplin concludes his chapter on ‘Tragedy and Iconography’ in *Comic Angels* with the statement that:

a Sicilian painter in the c. 330s [broke] the convention observed by all the other tragedy-conscious vase painters, that the paintings, like the drama they reflect, should not explicitly declare their theatricality . . . and . . . set out to capture one particular dramatic moment.⁴⁵

He adds that in doing so, the Capodarso Painter provided:

an explicitly theatrical scene, which is baffling without reference to a particular narrative in a particular play [and in doing so he] has done something that the painters of comic vases – the so-called ‘Phlyax vases’ – had been doing for more than half a century.⁴⁶

In *Pots and Plays* Taplin concludes equally strongly:

This vase is especially telling, not only because it gives us striking evidence about costume and gesture, but also because it picks this powerful yet unmelodramatic scene [supposing] quite a subtle appreciation on the part of the viewer. By showing Iokaste’s wordless moment of horror, it surely appeals not to someone who has read the play, but to someone who has seen it in performance.⁴⁷

Such a lack of theatrical awareness in criticism dealing with vases is depressing, but not uncommon. Jocelyn Penny Small (who generally argues against the notion of theatrical depiction) has accepted the Capodarso Oidipous as theatrical because ‘the figures are elaborately dressed and have quite expressive faces that resemble caricatures’.⁴⁸ She goes on to state that:

most interesting about this vase . . . is the lack of action on the part of the figures, in contrast to what is normally seen on south Italian vases with scenes drawing from myth. The figures really do appear like a cast delivering and receiving lines. The messenger faces us the viewers, whilst the two adults stand still listening.⁴⁹

Small subsequently talks of a ‘static feeling of representing a play’.⁵⁰ The fact that a competent classicist and art historian here writing about the performance of tragic drama can state that theatrical presentation consists of ‘caricatures’ engaged in a ‘lack of action’, and is of the opinion that actors deliver lines to audiences while fellow performers stand frozen in space listening is revealing.

The Medea Vases

The last two examples that I have space to discuss in this essay are those of the Cleveland (Fig. 6) and Policoro (Fig. 7) *Medeas*. The former only came to light in 1983, but Trendall and Webster say of the latter (which was available to them): ‘It seems reasonable to assume that the painters drew their inspiration from Euripides’ play’, adding that: ‘since Medea is wearing stage costume, there can be little doubt of dramatic influence’.⁵¹ Taplin observes of the Policoro vase that it ‘was conceivably painted while Euripides was still alive’ and ‘belonged to a lover of tragedy . . . especially perhaps of Euripides’.⁵²

One wonders why the connection with Euripides is so certain, given that there are eight recorded dramatic versions of the *Medea* in antiquity and many aspects of these vases’ depictions are at odds with what we have in the surviving Euripidean playtext.⁵³ Perhaps Taplin, Trendall, and Webster are so sure that these are illustrations of the Euripidean stage because, in contrast to other *Medea*-inspired vases such as Paris, Louvre CA2193 (*Medea* presenting a poisoned dress to Creusa) or Paris, Louvre K300 (*Medea* slaying a child), these vases depict a section of the play that Euripides might actually have presented on stage: the escape of *Medea* in her chariot. But *could* he have done so in the manner in which they here appear? Taplin’s certainty about the vases’ connections

to performance is derived from the label ΜΕΔΕΙΑ (Policoro); by Medea's oriental cloak and cap (both vases); and from the positioning of Medea, Jason, and the dead sons (both vases). He points out that when looking at these ceramics:

Any modern viewer cannot help thinking at once of the final scene of Euripides' tragedy. A sceptic might well accuse this response of being hastily prejudiced by our obsession with our surviving literary sources. But the association is not, in fact, so naive: . . . it is highly likely that Euripides invented both the story of Medea killing her children herself, and her escape from Corinth in a supernatural flying chariot. Thus the scene [depicted on both vases] is not merely 'the myth': it is Euripides' particular myth.⁵⁴

Such is the vases' connection to one particular version of the myth – which may just as easily also have been recounted orally, or in written form to a vase painter as seen in a theatre.

Notwithstanding the assertions of the philologically inspired scholar, however, the Policoro vase and its Cleveland counterpart have a number of attributes which indicate that neither object can possibly be a record of Euripides' play in performance. In both cases: (i) there is no indication of the *mechane* that would have been required to hoist Medea's chariot above the other actors (following line 1316); (ii) Medea's chariot is either drawn by or decorated with snakes (a typical late-Hellenic association for the heroine, but not an attribute evident in the Euripidean text, which mentions only a chariot at 1320–2); (iii) Jason is naked (not acceptable tragic stage practice); (iv) extraneous human figures are present: the *paidagogos*, a seated woman (possibly Aphrodite), and a winged figure (possibly Eros) in the Policoro Medea; the nurse and the *paidagogos* in the Cleveland; (v) the slaughtered children are not located in Medea's chariot (as stated at 1317–22 of Euripides' play), but are lying on the floor (Policoro) or on an altar (Cleveland).

Furthermore, in the Cleveland Medea these somewhat significant discrepancies are augmented by the fact that: (vi) a solar nimbus (which would have been virtually

impossible to stage in a fifth- or fourth-century theatre) surrounds Medea's chariot; (vii) two extraneous objects (a lamb and an amphora) also appear in the scene; and (viii) a pair of winged female figures (possibly Erinyes) frame its top corners. If the latter were independently flown in to make their appearance on what appear to be line-drawn boulders underneath, the staging of this scene would have required the use of three cranes, operated above bulky scenery.⁵⁵

So much, then, for Taplin's speculation that the vases 'may have followed a south Italian staging in which the children were not in the chariot [because of] problems of practical staging'⁵⁶ – a presumption that in itself reveals an opinion that south Italian theatre practice was less sophisticated than Athenian, which, if true, would also mean that colonial theatre is of little use in the reconstruction of earlier Athenian practices.

Even Taplin is forced to concede that the Cleveland and Policoro vases are 'at variance with the play as we have it'.⁵⁷ He acknowledges the significance of: (i) the position of the boys; (ii) the presence of the *paidagogos*; and (iii) the pulling of the chariot by snake-like dragons. But other discrepancies (key to theatrical readings of these images) to him 'seem trivial'.⁵⁸ Taplin cites three reasons for the discrepancies he considers 'significant':

(i) painters have their own stories and their own story patterns, and there is no reason why they should be following any literary version. . . . While the basic situation . . . may have been derived from Euripides' recently performed play . . . the painters do not need Euripides or the theatre to justify them.⁵⁹

(ii) between 431 and the time of the painting . . . , some other playwright put on a version of Medea, and it is this work that is reflected here.⁶⁰

(iii) actors in reperformances of Euripides' play had already introduced their own stagings, regardless of [Euripides'] original staging in Athens in 431. If the original viewers of this pot had seen Euripides' play, it most probably had been in a local re-performance [which] would have been adapted . . . to suit available resources and strengths.⁶¹

Despite these admissions, however, Taplin still attempts to privilege: (i) theatrical performance; (ii) Euripides rather than any other

dramatist; and (iii) fifth-century Athens over the fourth-century colonies, particularly when he later asks: 'how likely is it that . . . contemporary viewers of [these vases] would have been able to look [at them] and totally shut out from their minds what they had heard about and probably seen in the theatre?', concluding: 'Is it really plausible that a minor playwright could have made such an impact on Western Greek [i.e., South Italian] audiences that he displaced the epoch-making Euripides?'⁶²

The Funerary Connection

Other recent studies of the Cleveland and Policoro vases have avoided the pitfalls of linking them directly to performance of a particular text in the theatre, instead choosing to consider social context above dramatic content. Luca Giuliani contextualizes vases of this type against funerary ritual, arguing:

These vases . . . were deployed exclusively for funerary ritual. The iconography of these vessels [accordingly] explores and interacts with the key themes of the funeral (death, suffering, the human condition, praise for the deceased). Functioning both as narratives and allegories, these vases have a consolatory effect by presenting *a fortiori* tragic examples of human suffering. As such, some of them might have featured as cues for someone delivering a funeral speech.⁶³

Giuliani is right to emphasize the significance of a funerary context; one of the reasons why so many vases of this type have come to light is because cemeteries are often the best source for ceramics, and there was a move from cremation to inhumation in south Italy during this period.⁶⁴ Yet a funerary context provides its own problems, as Guzzo has pointed out:

One must bear in mind that the available evidence is exclusively funerary [which] means that modern interpreters have assemblages at their disposal [that] have undergone an ideological selection by those people who took care of the last voyage of the deceased.⁶⁵

Philologically inspired critics such as Taplin frequently ignore in their analysis of individual vases such aspects of a complex cultural

phenomenon. They are accordingly only looking at a very small piece of a much larger puzzle.

Returning briefly to the Cleveland *Medea*: in 2005 Revermann proposed that, because the subject matter of both sides of this calyx crater refers to (actual and attempted) infanticide (a poor theme for a burial object), the Cleveland vase was not in fact a funerary artefact, but rather an object intended to act as a sophisticated literary conundrum – the prompter of competitive dialogues at the *symposia* attended by a wealthy social elite.⁶⁶ He asserts that, 'It is in this context . . . that most theatre-related vessels, be they inspired by tragedy, comedy, or satyr play, make perfect sense.'⁶⁷

The latter half of Revermann's article, in which he expounds 'strategies of interpretation . . . that make sense of mythologically inspired vessels like the Cleveland *Medea* crater at the symposium',⁶⁸ is a fascinating and worthwhile analysis. In many ways, it is precisely the kind of scholarship that constitutes the way forward in the study of antique ceramics – asking not what a given artefact depicts (be it stage practice or some other literary or artistic version of the myth in question) but who made it, why it was made, and how it was used. However, in an otherwise highly illuminating article, even Revermann fails adequately to distinguish between performed theatre and mythological subject matter (or even between the various genres of drama). Such omissions testify, once again, to the fundamental lack of awareness of issues pertaining to theatre and performance that continue to plague this type of scholarship.

The Case of Comedy

Comedy is another kettle of fish entirely, and comic vases have, in certain cases, helped scholars to understand the development of drama in south Italy during the fourth and third centuries (a strand of research ably conducted by Margarete Bieber and others from the 1930s onwards). Crucial differences between the social functions and performative natures of tragedy and Old Comedy, how-

ever, make the interpretative strategies applicable to visual artefacts relating to each genre entirely different.

Because ancient comedy was often overtly metatheatrical, vase painters could easily choose to evoke it by highlighting the material realities of performance (costumes, masks, platforms, stage machinery, and so on). Conversely, because tragedy focused predominantly upon myth (with metatheatrical elements, if any occurred, relatively covert), ancient vase painters represented it with an absolute minimum of theatre-practical referents. Certain indicators may well be present on 'tragic' vases in order to trigger performance-related associations in a viewer's imagination (adding certain kinds of pleasure, and monetary value not otherwise attainable); but it is very difficult for the modern scholar to ascertain whether a given mythic vase is specific to any particular performance or play. It might just be the case that 'tragic' vase paintings employed generic theatrical markers in order to indicate that the subject matter also related in some way to the theatre – a supposition which, if true, most probably indicates a desire to widen and heighten the appeal of commercially available artefacts.

Visual Aesthetics and Cultural Heritage

It is of course possible that theatrical performances in Greek colonies during the fourth century BC constituted an art form approximating or exceeding the dynamic, creative, high-status qualities of Athenian drama in the preceding century. It is equally possible that such performances generated numerous compelling images, both actual (appearing onstage) and imagined (in the mind's eyes of audience members): these most probably related to a variety of well-known myths. Visual activity of this type was one of the theatre's great strengths, after all, serving to support its well-defined role in the creation of a shared cultural topography amongst Greek audiences in the colonies and elsewhere.

The more visually aware members of theatre audiences (including painters) were obviously profoundly aware of the theatre's

visual aesthetic, as well as its popularity and cultural kudos; so when potters and painters collaborated on art works for sale to elite patrons, the economic and aesthetic value of deploying mythological subject matter (also evident in a number of other cultural arenas, including theatre) was seldom neglected. Yet precisely *because* the ancients encountered their mythical heritage in a variety of forms (literary works, sculptures, friezes, panel, wall, and vase paintings as well as theatre), no single medium can be said to have dominated the development and circulation of this shared cultural aesthetic.

This central fact makes it impossible to say with any degree of certainty whether any one art form refers or alludes directly to any other. While the complex cultural codes, conventions, histories, functions, uses, and economic conditions surrounding vase painting mean it is insufficient for critics to argue that vases passively depict theatrical performances, I willingly concede that it would also be obtuse to assert that vase-based iconography was, or was trying to be, isolated from influences derived from other media – including those derived from theatre.

Scholars must acknowledge the fact that vase painters in antiquity did not achieve impact through originality, but rather by demonstrating their creative understanding of a particular myth in relation to numerous other literary and artistic works in which it had been deployed. Because vase painters sold to elite markets (in which explicit cultural cross-referencing was much prized), we often find in high-quality ceramics instances of thematic connections between and across many artistic media.

In the light of these facts, analysis of ancient vases needs to be subtly nuanced in order to profit from appropriately pluralistic methods of interpretation. In relation to the theatre, this task has not only to do with an individual critic's understanding of myth, written texts, and art history; it also requires an awareness of *performance*, particularly what production activity actually entails in a material sense (by which I mean the ways in which theatre-makers collaborate creatively in enabling the written script of a play to

materialize in four dimensions in front of live audiences).

In this regard, Taplin gives the game away early in *Comic Angels*, when he talks of Carl Robert's 'reaction against the nineteenth-century tendency to think of vase painters as holding a papyrus-roll in one hand and a brush in the other'.⁶⁹ His reference to monological, text-based thinking is revealing, for theatre is not just about scripts (those two-dimensional aspects of drama that can be committed to papyrus or paper, or bound in volumes with the words Aeschylus, Sophocles, or Euripides embossed on their spines).

Performance is a living art form. A play's themes and any relationships to myth that may occur in the written words so dear to those lovers of language, the philologists, do not in and of themselves constitute performance. The latter phenomenon is about embodied space in real time. Most importantly, it includes the various substantial technicalities that make for aesthetically pleasing visual spectacle.

It would, of course, be nice to know about such material aspects of theatre-making in the context of Athenian tragedy. What did the stage of the theatre of Dionysos look like? How high was its *skene*? How did the *eccyclema* and the *mechane* work? How many actors were included in the chorus? How did they move? In what shapes? Unfortunately, we do not have answers to these questions, and pottery has not yet provided them. Most philologically inspired scholarship relating to tragic iconography seems doomed to failure with regards to such provision; for there is a world of difference between the sort of classically educated scholar whose liberal, middle-class existence includes the regular reading of texts and frequent visits to the theatre as a passive spectator, and the kind of practical knowledge one acquires as a student or a maker of drama.

Notes

1. As Revermann puts it: 'The study of south Italian vase painting has traditionally been regarded as a somewhat dubious exercise, belittled by archaeologists for the vessels' alleged inferior artistic quality and treated with caution by text-focused students of ancient litera-

ture who question the value of these vases for literature in general and Athenian drama in particular.' See Martin Revermann, 'The "Cleveland Medea" Calyx Crater and the Iconography of Ancient Greek Theatre', *Theatre Research International*, XXX (2005), p. 3.

There are, of course, significant exceptions to this stance – mainly in the work of two scholars. The first of these is Séchan, whose doctoral dissertation, later to become *Études sur la tragédie Grecque dans ses rapports avec la céramique* (Paris, 1926), still stands as a monument to the study of ancient tragedy through vase painting. To this can be added the achievements of T. B. L. Webster and A. D. Trendall, whose study on this subject led to exemplary publications dealing separately with tragedy, comedy, and satyr play. More recently, Oliver Taplin has published in this area (see list of References following).

2. Cf. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 1.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 3–6; p. 31–47 (comedy); p. 21–9 (tragedy). Cf. also Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 2–46.

5. For a discussion of the decline of Athens in the fourth century BCE, cf. A. D. Trendall, 'On the Divergence of South Italian from Attic Red-Figure Vase Painting', in Jean-Paul Descoeudres, ed., *Greek Colonists and Native Populations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 218 ff.

6. Cf. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 12, as well as G. L. Brauer, *Taras* (New Rochelle, NY, 1986) and Nicholas Purcell, 'South Italy in the Fourth Century BC' in *CAH*, VI, both cited in Taplin.

7. Trendall and Webster, *Illustrations*, p. 11.

8. Revermann, 'Cleveland Medea', p. 3. Revermann argues that proof of the link has been supplied by Green, Taplin, and Csapo (the relevant works appear in the list of References following).

9. Revermann, 'Cleveland Medea', p. 3.

10. Arguing against the dominant modes of analysis offered by the historicist and French schools (which point to cultural specificity and to the 'Athenianness' of tragedy), Taplin asserts cultural non-specificity and universality in the spread of tragedy, observing: 'It seems quite likely . . . that before 400 BC Athenian troupes of players were travelling elsewhere in the Greek world to mount performances of tragedy. Possibly Athenian choruses travelled with them, but it may often have been the case that locally trained choruses provided the songs. . . . Thus, during the period from 450 to 350, tragedy went, piecemeal, from being primarily and predominantly Athenian to being shared – like epic, like sculpture, like music – throughout the whole Greek world' (Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 7). For a discussion of this issue that is more nuanced than that provided by Taplin, cf. K. Mitens, *Teatri greci e teatri ispirati all'architettura greca in Sicilia e nell'Italia meridionale* (Analecta Romana Instituti Danici, Sup. 13, 1988).

11. Cf. David Wiles, *Tragedy in Athens: Performance Space and Theatrical Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), especially p. 23–63. Most interesting in the context of my own article are p. 44–9, which describe the ways in which Greek theatres of the fifth century made use of the landscape in which they were set, thereby making them significantly different one from another. Wiles asserts that the trend to 'normalize' our understanding of the archaeology of fifth-century theatres began with the work of Ernst Fiechter, who: 'seems to have been a man obsessed with geometrical perfection and determined to make Athens conform to the ideal of Epidauros. . . . Fiechter's Apolline view of the Greek theatre stems from a view of Athens as the acme of

European civilization. Theatre fell into the self-justifying category of "art", and social context was of no interest to him. Nor was archaeological context. . . . His reconstruction is entirely a projection backwards from later remains, and effectively takes no stock of [earlier archaeological] finds. . . . Fiechter's vision has had an extraordinary hold over subsequent scholarship because of the way it salvages a balanced, orderly, and hermetic environment for the Greek tragedians. Two important followers in essentials were Arthur Pickard-Cambridge (in his still standard monograph on the theatre published in 1946) and John Travlos' (Wiles, p. 45).

12. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 16.
13. *Ibid.* Cf. also *Pots and Plays*, p. 6–15.
14. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 17. Cf. also *Pots and Plays*, p. 117–23.
15. For a discussion of indigenous performance traditions cf. Hugh Denard, 'Lost Theatre and Performance Traditions in Greece and Italy', in Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
16. As Taplin does, observing: 'Given that the whole activity of tragic theatre was the invention of Athens during the previous century, can it really be maintained with any credibility that the performances did not include fifth-century Athenian tragedy? It is rather more plausible to suppose, on the contrary, that the productions were often, or even predominantly, Athenian "classics"' (Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 13). Other critics, such as Giuliani (1996), disagree and point to the lack of evidence of Athenian texts in Apulian performance.
17. Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 19.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
19. I have substantial reservations about a number of aspects of the ways with which Old Comedy has been dealt, in particular by Taplin; but the issue will have to remain the subject of a future article.
20. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 22.
21. The term is Taplin's. I find it problematic (see the conclusion to this article).
22. Cf. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 20.
23. Green and Handley, *Images*, p. 13.
24. Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 2.
25. Theatre professionals who have dealt with touring shows to a variety of venues will know how the architecture of different spaces, particularly 'found' spaces, and the type of audience performed to, alters scenographic practice, blocking, even dramaturgy itself.
26. Trendall and Webster, *Illustrations*, p. 1.
27. Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, p. 268.
28. The most accurate chronology may be found in Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, p. 266–7.
29. Cf. Revermann, 'Cleveland Medea', p. 3.
30. In 2007, Taplin did the same.
31. Trendall and Webster, *Illustrations*, p. 62.
32. *Ibid.* (They cannot be sure, of course, as the play no longer survives.)
33. *Ibid.*
34. Cf. Philip Bolin, and Mathew Corthell, 'Mixed Messages in Greek Theatre: an Examination of Vases and Written Histories' <<http://www.ccs.neu.edu/home/zorkon/vase.html>>, accessed 10/04/08. The website of the Museum now lists the vase as 'Mixing bowl (calyx krater) with the killing of Agamemnon / The Dokimasia Painter / Early Classical Period, about 460 BC'. My personal correspondence has revealed that the Museum no

longer asserts the link to Aeschylus, perhaps in recognition of their initial error.

35. Boardman, *Athenian Red Figure Vases: the Archaic Period*, p. 137.
36. Cf. Note 34, above.
37. Cf. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 29; A. D. Trendall, 'Farce and Tragedy in Southern Italian Vase Painting', in T. Rasmussen and Nigel Spivey, ed., *Looking at Greek Vases* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 170, and Trendall, 'South Italian Red-Figure Vase Painting', in Jean-Paul Descoeudres, ed., *Greek Colonists and Native Populations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 227.
38. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 28–9. Cf. also *Pots and Plays*, p. 91–2.
39. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 29.
40. Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 91–2.
41. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 29.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 92.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 90. (My italics.)
45. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 29.
46. *Ibid.*
47. Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 92.
48. Jocelyn Penny Small, *The Parallel Worlds of Classical Art and Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 54.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. Trendall and Webster, *Illustrations*, p. 96.
52. Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 117.
53. Cf. Small, *Parallel Worlds*, p. 51. Moret cites the authors of the various *Medeas* as: Neophron, Euripides II, Melanthis I, Carcinus II, Dikaiogenes, Theodorides, and Antiphon (cf. Moret, *L'Ilioupersis dans la céramique italique* (Geneva, 1975), p. 263).
54. Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 117.
55. Boulders such as these are a feature of Apulian vases. Cf. A. D. Trendall, 'On the Divergence of South Italian from Attic Red-Figure Vase Painting', in Jean-Paul Descoeudres, ed., *Greek Colonists and Native Populations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 222.
56. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 22.
57. Taplin, *Pots and Plays*, p. 119.
58. *Ibid.*
59. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*
63. Giuliani, as summarized in Revermann, 'Cleveland Medea', p. 12.
64. Guzzo, 'Myths and Archaeology in South Italy', p. 134.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 136. Cf. also Gherardo Gnoli and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *La Mort, les morts dans les sociétés anciennes* (1982).
66. Cf. Luca Giuliani, 'Rhesus between Dream and Death: on the Relation of Image to Literature in Apulian Vase Painting', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, XLI (1996) p. 71–86; 'Sleeping Furies: Allegory, Narration, and the Impact of Texts in Apulian Vase Painting', *Scripta Classica Israelica*, XX (2001), p. 17–38, and Martin Revermann, 'The "Cleveland Medea" Calyx Crater and the Iconography of Ancient Greek Theatre', *Theatre Research International*, XXX (2005), p. 3–18.
67. Revermann, 'Cleveland Medea', p. 12.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
69. Taplin, *Comic Angels*, p. 21.

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