

XII.—An Athenian Wineshop

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A red-figured cup by Douris shows a youth testing wine in a wine cellar, and is inscribed *τρικότυλος*, the earliest mention of the price of wine.

I

A small red-figured stemless kylix, lent by Dr. Jacob Rosenberg to the Fogg Museum of Art, bears as the only decoration a picture on the interior. A youth is shown in the center standing in front of an amphora which is on a stand to the left of the scene. With his right hand he grasps a soft shapeless object partially sunk into the neck of the amphora, probably a sponge. In his left hand, the youth holds a purse. Behind him, on the right, is a large pithos set directly into the ground. A jug hangs on the wall to the right of the youth's head. The vase has been published by Miss B. Holland and Professor G. H. Chase, and has been attributed to Douris.¹ It is not one of the painter's early works and should be dated about 470 B.C. Two rather faint inscriptions have not previously been recognized, although Chase saw a few letters. Between the back of the youth's head and the mouth of the pithos, running along the margin of the scene, is:

Η Ο Γ Α Ι Σ Κ Α Ν Ο Σ *ho paîs kalôs*

The second inscription is written retrograde, starting at the mouth of the youth and reaching down to the left of the neck of the amphora:

Τ Δ Ι Κ Ο Τ Ν Ν Ο Σ *τρικότυλος*

The gap after the first letter, which occurs elsewhere in Douris' writing, is due to faulty spacing; all letters are preserved, too faintly,

¹ No. 501.1937; B. D. Holland, *HSPh* 52 (1941) 41 ff. and plate 1 (attributed to a follower of Douris); G. H. Chase in *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, USA fasc. 8, Fogg Museum and Gallatin Collections, Fogg Museum plate 19.2 (in the manner of Douris); J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford, 1942) 968 (Douris). I would like to thank Professor George M. A. Hanfmann for his generous help in showing me this vase and the others in the collection.

however, for reproduction in a photograph. The rho seemed to me complete and not tailed.

Τρικότυλος usually denotes the capacity of a vessel, as do other compounds of *κοτύλῃ* (*δικότυλος*, *τετρακότυλος*, etc.), but here the amphora would of course hold (and presumably contain) much more than about $1\frac{1}{2}$ pints. Since the inscription starts from his mouth, it is not likely to be the name, or nickname, of the youth. A different meaning for *τρικότυλος* is provided by Hesychius, s.v. *τρικότυλος οἶνος*, οὗ τρεῖς κοτύλαι ὀβολοῦ πωλῶνται. This would then refer to the contents of the amphora: the youth is giving an estimate of the quality of the wine. Wine was commonly retailed in cotylae; in fact the verb *κοτυλίξειν* had come to mean simply "selling by retail."² It was equally common to quote a price according to the quantity that could be bought for an obol, as shown by the expressions *δέκα τοῦβολοῦ*, *μικρὸν τοῦβολοῦ*, etc., all of which indicate quality.³ The vase proves that the gloss in Hesychius describes a term current in the fifth century, and *τρικότυλος* is presumably to be taken as the name of a type of wine, derived from its price. It would then be preferable, in the text of Hesychius, to punctuate after *τρικότυλος*, instead of after *οἶνος*.

II

The same meaning of *τρικότυλος* is probably to be assumed for a passage in the *Thesmophoriazusae* of Aristophanes, as Boeckh long ago had thought, without, however, being followed by the majority of scholars since his time.⁴ The word is used in the famous wine-skin passage after the discovery by Euripides' father-in-law that the baby brought to the festival by one of the women is in reality a wineskin. He is questioning her about it (Ar. *Thesm.* 741-747):

—Τουτὶ τεκεῖν φῆς ; — <καὶ> δέκα μῆνας αὐτ' ἐγὼ
ἤνεγκον. — "Ἦνεγκας σύ ; — Νῆ τὴν Ἄρτεμιν.

² See Ar. *Plut.* 435-6; *Thesm.* 348; *LSJ*, s.v. *κοτυλίξειν*, and V. Ehrenberg, *The People of Aristophanes* (Oxford, 1943) 86; F. Heichelheim, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Altertums* (Leiden, 1938) 1.345.

³ Bekker, *Anecd.*, p. 111 s.v. ὀβολίας ἀπρους, and *LSJ* s.v. ὀβολός; Ehrenberg, *op. cit.* 162 f., 165, and 167 with note 22; Menander, *Epit.* line 4 Koerte³; Terence, *Andria* 369.

⁴ A. Boeckh, *Die Staatshaushaltung der Athener*³ (Berlin, 1886) 1.124 note d. See also the commentaries of Blaydes and van Leeuwen. Further Com. adesp. 1320 Kock (Kock separates Hesychius from *Thesm.* 743 and doubtfully ascribes the former to another comic poet). A. Willems, *Aristophane* (Paris, 1919) 503 and note 2. The scholium on line 743 reads: *τρικότυλον· τρεῖς κοτύλας οἴνου χωροῦν*.

—Τρικότυλον ἢ πῶς; εἰπέ μοι. —Τί μ' ἡργάσω;
 'Απέδυσας, ὠναίσχυντέ, μου τὸ παιδίον
 τυννοῦτον δν. —Τυννοῦτο; Μικρὸν νῆ Δία.
 πόσ' ἔτη δὲ γέγονε; τρεῖς χοῶς ἢ τέτταρας;
 —Σχεδὸν τοσοῦτον χῶσον ἐκ Διονυσίων.

The scholium, and most commentators, assume that the reference in line 743 is to the amount of wine in the wineskin, but this is very unlikely. In the first place, the quantity is ridiculously small, although it must be admitted that this very incongruity may hide an obscure joke. More important in rejecting this interpretation is the observation that the quantity of wine is mentioned a few lines afterwards: "How old is she? Three or four Choes?" The latter is clearly a pun on the double meaning of choes as units of measure and as a day of the festival of the Anthesteria, as Brunck was apparently the first to notice. The particular age of three or four years was chosen, it would seem, because children who had reached their third year were given a special celebration at the Choes festival in the spring; in the following fall they were entered into the phratry lists at the Apatouria. In Deubner's explanation, then, a child might be in its third or fourth year at the time of the entry at the Apatouria, depending on whether his third birthday fell between Anthesteria and Apatouria, or came after the Apatouria; and as a matter of fact, in one source the age is given in exactly this manner.⁵ Since the Apatouria and the Thesmophoria took place in the same month (Pyanopsion), it would seem plausible to detect an allusion to the Apatouria in the passage. We cannot know, however, whether such an allusion is also to be found in the woman's answer: "About that age, if you add the time from the last — Dionysia." Possibly she meant to say, "from the last Apatouria," but it is not known whether the Apatouria preceded or followed the Thesmophoria, since the exact date of the Apatouria cannot be ascertained.⁶ At any rate, by Dionysia she must mean

⁵ See L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin, 1932) 116 and 234; Deubner in *JDAI* 42 (1927) 190–91. Somewhat differently G. Busolt and H. Swoboda, *Griechische Staatskunde* (Munich, 1926) 2.960–61. According to Deubner, girls as well as boys were present at the Apatouria (Pollux 8.107), although at the registration of the three- or four-year olds we hear only of boys; but that may be because the passage in question is concerned with the term *Κουρέωρις* (schol. Plato *Tim.* 21B).

⁶ Deubner, *Att. Feste* 232 ff. The scholia on line 747 are corrupt, but the second one couples the "Dionysia" and Apatouria, conceivably with the same thought in mind as that stated above: . . . ἃ διέχει (Rutherford, δὲ ἔχει R) ἐκ Διονυσίων ἢ Ἀπατουρίων.

the Anthesteria, the festival which Thucydides calls τὰ ἀρχαιότερα Διονύσια (2.15.4). She is presumably thinking of its first day, the Pithoigia, when the new wine was opened and drawn. This particular baby had its birthday on the first day of the Anthesteria.

Thus Euripides' father-in-law wants to show how big the wine-skin is, but "3-4 choes" refers properly to the girl and her age, and as a measure of contents it is exaggerated, amounting as it does to 2-3 gallons. Line 743 should then be referred, not to the quantity, but to the quality of the wine, and I agree with Boeckh and Willems in translating: "Three-cotylae wine? Or of what price?"⁷ Hesychius' gloss may well be a comment on the Aristophanes passage as Boeckh had assumed, rather than on some other comedy as was Kock's opinion. This is especially plausible if we punctuate as suggested above.

III

It would seem that wine which sold at three cotylae for one obol, or eight drachmae a metretes, was rather high-quality wine, although this is difficult to establish with certainty since the few prices we have of the fifth century are all of expensive luxury wines which were imported. They are found in a series of graffiti on amphorae of the late fifth century from the Athenian Agora, which, if correctly interpreted, would seem to give prices ranging from 7-14 drachmae for jars containing roughly one-half metretes(?); and secondly in a story told by Plutarch from which it appears that in the time of Socrates Chian wine could be had for as much as a mina (a metretes?). Other prices are of the fourth century, or later, when prices were generally, though not uniformly, higher.⁸ For the year 330/29 the author of Demosthenes XLII gives the price obtained by the accused as 12 drachmae a metretes, but later adds that ordinarily the price should have been 4 drachmae only, which,

⁷ For πῶς in the meaning of "for what price?" see LSJ s.v. πῶς I b 4. "Ἡνεγκας in line 742 may also have a double meaning; perhaps the woman is compared to a καπηλὶς (shopkeepers are mentioned just before, line 737); cf. φέρειν as used in *Acharn.* 739, 760, 764. Differently van Leeuwen ad loc.

⁸ L. Talcott in *Hesperia* 4 (1935) 495 f. and 514-16, cf. V. Grace, *Hesp.* 3 (1934) 303-4; Plutarch, *De tranq. an.* 10, 470f. For later prices see Boeckh, *op. cit.* (above note 4) 123 ff.; A. Jardé in *DS* s.v. *vinum* 923; A. Segrè, *Circolazione monetaria e prezzi nel mondo antico* (Rome, 1922) 76 and 168-9; Busolt-Swoboda, *op. cit.* (above note 5) 1.198 note 4; J. A. O. Larsen in T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* (Baltimore, 1938) 4.391 ff.; Heichelheim, *op. cit.* (above note 2) 2.1031 note 8; J. H. Kent in *Hesp.* 17 (1948) 311 ff.

if it is to be believed, would be the lowest price on record. In 329/8 B.C., the public slaves in Athens used wine for the celebration of the Choes festival which was in fact *τρικότυλος*, i.e., it cost 8 drachmae a metretres.⁹ Somewhat later, in the *Epitrepontes* of Menander, a stingy old man mentions wine at 24 drachmae, as an example of very expensive wine, and in a comedy by Alexis 20 drachmae was similarly a high estimate.¹⁰ Taking into account the rise in prices since the fifth century, it would seem that a sum that would buy wine good enough for the public slaves in 329 must have bought a fairly good domestic wine in the early fifth century. Furthermore, the daily expenditure per person for food, although not definitely known for the fifth century and hence given differently by different scholars, was apparently not more than one obol per day.¹¹ It is true that 3 cotylae was considerably more than a single person would ordinarily consume in a day. The Spartans at Sphacteria received a daily ration of two cotylae of wine, together with two choinikes of grain, but theirs was a large allowance;¹² their servants received only half of that amount, and in general that seems to have been considered sufficient. Even so, to spend one third of one's food allowance on wine seems a fairly high proportion; in Tod's estimate, wheat, the main part of the diet, cost less than $\frac{1}{2}$ obol per day. *Τρικότυλος* wine, therefore, seems appropriate to a city youth such as appears on our vase; is he buying wine for a party?

IV

Returning to our vase, we see that its picture fits well a wine-shop, or perhaps rather a wine cellar functioning as a wineshop: the wine has been kept in pithoi, but it has been transferred to amphorae prior to use, and the selling would then be done right at the place of manufacture.¹³ The youth with his purse is familiar

⁹ IG 2/3² 1672, lines 204–5. Demosth. XLII 20 and 31. If the alleged threefold increase is not an exaggeration, it may perhaps be due to the grain famine of the years 330–326; see W. W. Tarn in CAH 6.448.

¹⁰ Menander, *Epit.* line 4 Koerte³; Alexis fr. 15 Kock, line 19. On the former, cf. Koerte in *Gnomon* 1 (1925) 21–2, with a discussion of prices of wine; also H. Fränkel in *AJPh* 58 (1937) 456–7.

¹¹ M. N. Tod in CAH 5.21–2; G. Glotz, *Ancient Greece at Work* (London, 1926) 286; Ehrenberg, *op. cit.* (above note 2) 168. A higher estimate in H. Franchotte, *L'industrie dans la Grèce ancienne* (Brussels, 1900) 1.327 ff.

¹² Thuc. 4.16.1.

¹³ For μεταγγισμός, see H. Billiard, *La vigne dans l'antiquité* (Lyon, 1913) 487 and 514 ff. For selling at the place of manufacture, see Ehrenberg, *op. cit.* 94 ff.

from other selling scenes, foremost among them the Phintias cup in Baltimore depicting the buying of vases.¹⁴ The irregularly shaped object with wavy lines on its surface, which the youth is holding in his right hand, is called a sponge by Chase, and this explanation seems the most reasonable. But a customer would hardly be wiping the neck of the amphora, as he thought. It is possible that such a sponge might serve as a temporary stopper after the opening of the amphora, but for this I have no good parallels.¹⁵ It might seem desirable to find an explanation which would connect the action with the meaning of the scene by assuming that the youth is testing the wine. Wine testing was a most important step in the buying of wine, since one could never be sure that water had not been added, or that the wine had not otherwise been tampered with.¹⁶ Vase paintings showing oil sellers likewise seem to emphasize the testing of the oil by means of a drop put on the arm of the customer so that he could smell it.¹⁷ In the parody of a wine-selling scene in Euripides' *Cyclops*, 149 ff., the satyr first smells, then tastes the wine. Our man may do either, perhaps using the sponge to drink from.¹⁸ In the *Geoponica*, however, a method for testing wine is described which reads like a commentary on our vase, and it is tempting to think that this is what we have here: *Τινὲς δὲ σπόγγον καὶ ὀνὴν ἐλαίῳ ἀλείψαντες, ἐμφράττουσι τὸ στόμα τοῦ ἀγγείου, καὶ ἐπιστρέφουσι· καὶ ἐὰν ὕδωρ ἔχῃ, διαρρηθήσεται διὰ τῆς σπογγίᾱς.*¹⁹

The little scene invites comparison with an earlier and more ambitious vase, a black-figured amphora in Brussels showing, on

¹⁴ CVA (above note 1) USA fasc. 6, Robinson Collection 2, plate 3.2 and pp. 12–3. Cf. also a red-figured amphora in Copenhagen, CVA plate 130; P. Hartwig, *Die Griechischen Meisterschalen* (Stuttgart, 1893) 173 note 2 and 379.

¹⁵ Professor Beazley referred me to Ar. *Acharn.* 463, where Dicaeopolis borrows from Euripides a little pot stopped up with a sponge (χυτρίδιον σπογγίῳ βεβυσμένον); but the exact significance of this sponge is not certain, although it may well have been a stopper.

¹⁶ Billiard, *op. cit.* (above note 13) 186, 486, 512 ff. and 533 note 5; *Geoponica* 7.7 and 15; *LSJ* s.v. *οἰνογέβαρης*, etc.; Ath. 15.700b (Nicostratus). Wine-tasting scene from the house of the Vettii: M. I. Rostovtzev, *Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft im Römischen Kaiserreich* (Leipzig, n.d.) 1, plate 13.3 and p. 215.

¹⁷ E.g., P. Clodé, *Les classes, les métiers, le trafic* (Paris, 1931) plate 34.2 and p. 84. Further, de Waele in *RA* 23 (1926) 292 and Laum in *RA* 27 (1928) 235.

¹⁸ Christ on the cross drank from a sponge (Mark 15.36, etc.), as Dr. E. L. Bennett reminds me.

¹⁹ *Geop.* 7.8.8 and similarly 7.9. According to Billiard, *op. cit.* (above note 13) 512, this method is quite valueless, but that does not mean that it would not have been used.

both sides, wine sellers and their customers.²⁰ On each side there are several groups of vendors and buyers; in two cases, a small and irregular object is being passed on between the two, and in the right hand group on side B the customer holds a string which disappears in the neck of the amphora, while the vendor has one hand inserted in it, and with the other holds a similar small object; thus, in this last scene the sale has presumably not been completed. The small objects are called money in *CVA*, but Philippart's idea that the wine is being tested seems to me more likely. The small objects are not vases; are they perhaps small sponges as in our scene? The Brussels amphora differs from the Douris cup in showing the retail in small quantities of wine in the *kapêleion*, while our vase seems to show a wine cellar and the sale of one (or more?) whole amphorae of wine.

²⁰ *CVA* (above note 1) Belgium fasc. 2, III H e, plate 16.5. H. Philippart in *L'Acropole* 5 (1930) 154 and 162, plate 3.2. H. R. W. Smith, in *AJA* 42 (1938) 315. I have seen photographs of this vase through the kindness of Professor Beazley, but I do not know how much of the figure holding the string is restored (cf. text in *CVA*).