

The Uses of Vase-Depictions in Homeric Studies¹

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Homeric critics often rely on external evidence dating to a much later period than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (e.g., the scholia). Nevertheless, there is an important body of material, the ancient paintings of epic scenes, that literary critics have not utilized to its full potential,² and these depictions often include labels that provide our earliest written evidence for some aspects of Homeric myth. Ancient art, of course, has received proper attention from art historians and archaeologists, many of whose valuable works will be cited below, but the concerns of these scholars are often different from those of the Homerist. The aim of the present article is to explore some of the opportunities offered to Homeric Studies by the use of painted versions of epic scenes. For instance, I shall consider the prospect that Archaic paintings can provide new information and thereby enrich the explication of scenes in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, can confirm literary interpretations of the poems, and can even preserve some very early epic scenes that have not survived in written versions.

The present article focuses on the means by which the use of Greek painting, primarily Archaic vase-depictions, can facilitate the literary

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²Cf. Burkert 46–47 and Kannicht 70–86.

interpretation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. An explanation of the limits of this inquiry may be in order. First, attention is primarily paid to literary criticism, because, while specific links between Archaic poetry and painting have been made for a hundred and fifty years, literary analysis has least exploited the benefits offered by these important connections. And second, the limitation to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is chosen because these poems allow the most sophisticated literary analysis and may even have a unique position in ancient epic.³ In contrast, however important the Epic Cycle was, the fragmentary nature of the poems belonging to this group allows no more than the most rudimentary literary interpretation.⁴ Finally, other Archaic poetry (the Hesiodic works and lyric) will receive scant attention, in part because these works deserve an analysis of their own and in part because the links made between those works and vase-paintings have so far proven to be tenuous.

The attempt to make serious correlations between vase-depictions and the Homeric poems is beset with many uncertainties. For instance, some Geometric vases portray heroic scenes that could be related to the Iliadic or Odyssean traditions and, if so, would predate their articulation in the Homeric poems,⁵ but it is impossible to demonstrate this thesis. Similarly, pictures on later vases suggest some interesting connections with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* but do not provide certain evidence.⁶ Many of these difficulties are obviated when the

³Griffin argues that the Epic Cycle differed from Homer in focus (e.g., its interest in monsters) and style (its "indiscriminate passion for elaboration"). This approach is contrary to those who see a unified, protracted and durable tradition from which all the poems originated, e.g. Nagy.

⁴For an example of this obvious point, one may connect paintings of the Judgment of Paris with the *Cypria* (Procl. Chrest. 12–20 [Bernabé]); but while an analysis of the myth may be aided, the literary interpretation of the poem has not advanced. See Clairmont and Raab.

⁵For examples, see Fittschen 51 and 192–94; Friis Johansen (1961), esp. 26–47; Friis Johansen (1967) 23; and Brommer (1983) 51, 62, 65, 70 92, 95, 102. Cf. Snodgrass (1979). The shipwreck on a Geometric oenochoe in Munich (Inv. #8696) dating to 750–25 B. C. may depict Odysseus' mishap in Book 12 of the *Odyssey*, but there is no certainty; see Carter 52, who considers the Munich vase to be "the most convincing" of the examples alleged to be depicting a known epic scene. The earliest representations of Odysseus with Cyclops date to 670–650 B. C., which is usually thought to postdate the composition of the *Odyssey*, but there are some who advance a late date for the poem's composition. For instance, Carpenter 90–111 postulates a date of 630–20 B. C. Cf. West (in Heubeck et al.) 33–35. Convinced in part by ceramic evidence, Jensen 157 even places the date a hundred years later. And see now Nagy (1992) 33–36. Most modern critics place the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the period 750–700 B. C. For a recent defence of this dating, see Janko 228–31.

⁶An example is the "Pontic" amphora (540–30 B. C.) on which two heralds walk with three other men, a scene reminiscent of the embassy to Achilles in the *Iliad* (Rome, Mus. Conserv. 95). Nevertheless, the reverse of the same vase, which shows three heralds and two legates, suggests that the pictures are not representing specific scenes in myth.

names of the painted figures are inscribed on the vases, and luckily this practice of name-inscriptions began quite early (650–630 B. C.).⁷ In fact, artists considered labels so prestigious that those who were illiterate sometimes wrote nonsense inscriptions in imitation.⁸ As a result, the most important vases for the purposes of this article contain labels and date to the sixth and fifth centuries B. C.

From the standpoint of the literary study of the Homeric poems, probably the most interesting paintings are those that seem to deviate from the Homeric texts, but the interpretation of such divergences is again fraught with difficulty. There are many different reasons why painted and written versions of an epic scene might not correspond, and therefore, before attention can be paid to how these variant representations shed light on the Homeric poems, we must examine why paintings of heroic scenes sometimes differ from written versions. This initial investigation will also allow us to focus on some vases and vase groups that will prove to be important in the second part when we analyze the benefits that painting offers to Homeric Studies.

I. Why Painting Sometimes Deviates from Poetry

The relationship between Ancient art and literature has attracted attention since the eighteenth century,⁹ but a consensus on the connections has never been reached. One obvious part of the problem is that the two media have essential differences. Some things that can be articulated in words are impossible to depict in art. For instance, although there are many paintings of Achilles with his shield, no Greek artist of the Archaic or Classical periods ever tried to portray the multiplicity of scenes on the shield as described in the eighteenth book of the *Iliad*.¹⁰ The mere size of a vase would prohibit a depiction as complex as that in the poem, and not even a wall-painter is credited with such an endeavor.

⁷The earliest instances are on the Chigi Vase (Villa Giulia 22679), the Menelas Stand (Berlin A 42), and the Teletrophos Pyxis (Aegina K 267). I supply Amyx' chronology for the Corinthian vases, and see Morris 35–36 and 41–43 for the Menelas Stand. Guarducci 458 dates the earliest labels on vases to 675–650 B. C.

⁸Even the literate painters would sometimes add unnecessary labels for effect. One finds such obvious inscriptions as “altar,” “fountain,” “hydria,” and “seat” (Munich 1426 and Florence 4209, the François vase).

⁹For bibliography on the comparison of painting and written narrative, beginning with Lessing's *Laokoön*, see Stewart (1987) 40 and n. 9.

¹⁰*Il.* 18.478–608. Cf. Hofkes–Brukker 2. Bulas 12, repeated by Friis Johansen (1967) 181 without credit, points out that stars depicted on Achilles' shield on a cup in Berlin (F 2294) evoke Homer's description. Detailed pictures of the shield do appear on the Roman reliefs of the Augustan period by Theodorus (Stuart Jones, *Cap.* 172–76 [83a–b] and pl. 44 and Sadvrška 43–47, pls. 5–8).

Another example of written and painted versions diverging because of medium is the size of the Cyclops. Although Homer imagines Polyphemos to be so large that he ate two humans at each meal (*Od.* 9.288–93), usually the vase-painters did not show the monster as being even twice the size of a human.¹¹ While it would have been possible for the artists to have depicted Polyphemos and Odysseus' men in proportions closer to the Homeric narrative, the humans would have appeared very small; and because the painters (and Homer too) were more interested in focusing on the humans, the only remaining choice was to make the Cyclops smaller.

Sometimes misunderstandings arise because critics do not recognize that some changes are occasionally necessitated by moving from one medium to another. For instance, a recent criterion used to distinguish Achilleus' first and second armings on early black-figure vases is whether the Nereids are shown: the presence of Thetis' sisters is thought to indicate the arming in Phthia, because Homer describes Thetis as traveling alone for the second arming (*Il.* 19.3).¹² But a detail that does not draw attention in a verbal account might appear ridiculous in a painting. When the Homeric audience heard that Thetis was taking armor to Achilleus by herself, it probably did not wonder how she could carry the shield, cuirass, helmet, and greaves; but the painters had to visualize such details and therefore added the Nereids as helpers, which did not seem to be a great departure because Thetis' sisters had accompanied her when she had visited Achilleus in Book 18.¹³

A reason that is sometimes adduced to explain why a painted version of a heroic scene differs from the Homeric account is that the painter was ignorant or mistaken in his knowledge of the poem or tradition. The most famous instance ascribed to this cause occurs on the François Vase (ca. 570 B. C.), where the painter Kleitias depicted the chariot race in Patroklos' funeral games: his contestants in order of success are Odysseus, Automedon,

¹¹See Touchefeu-Meynier 9–79 and Cohen (in Buitron et al.) 31–73 for examples, the most important of which are Argos C 149, Berlin 3283, Eleusis (no inv. number), London B 154, Louvre F 342, New York 1876.76.12.6, Paris: Cab. méd. 190, Rome: Mus. Conserv. 172, and Rome: Villa Giulia (no inv. number).

¹²Kossatz-Deissmann (1981) 71 and 127; cf. Malagardis 393 and Miller 163. Although Friis Johansen (1967) 92–127 thought the earliest representations of Achilleus' arming depicted the occasion in Phthia, he did not believe the presence of the Nereids was a valid criterion in distinguishing the two arming scenes (126).

¹³This point is also noticed by Edwards 319. The addition of the Nereids is an example of collapsed action and artistic license, techniques treated below. The general point—that details that would be ignored in a verbal account might draw attention in a painting (or sculpture)—can be traced back to Lessing 23, who considered the sculptural group of the Laocoön to be modeled on Vergil's description.

Diomedes, Damasippos, and Hippo[tho]on (FJ, fig. 20).¹⁴ These names contrast with those in Homer, where the competitors from first to last place are Diomedes, Antilochos, Menelaos, Meriones, and Eumelos. John Beazley commented, “Kleitias, left to himself, did not remember the field, and could not find anyone who did; his learned friend was not at hand.”¹⁵ The assumption, of course, is that Kleitias intended to illustrate a verbal account and in particular the version of the *Iliad* that we have. Whether painters were mere illustrators of oral or written poems will be considered later, along with several alternative interpretations. But because Kleitias’ François Vase was created in the first decade in which Attic painters were depicting scenes recognizable from the *Iliad*, one might argue that Kleitias was not aware of the Homeric tradition. Nevertheless, this suggestion seems unlikely, because another Attic painter, Sophilos, had recently painted the same subject on Athens 15499 and had even taken the unusual step of naming his subject: Πάτροϋλος ἄτλα. A version of the games was certainly known, and it is unlikely that Kleitias’ memory was at fault.

Another example of a scene in which painters are considered mistaken or lacking in their knowledge of Homer occurs in two representations of the Embassy to Achilles in which one of the three ambassadors is labeled Diomedes (ARFH1, figs. 166 and 304.1). Bulas comments: “c’est par erreur que le nom de Diomède est inscrit à côté de ce personnage.”¹⁶ It is difficult to explain why two different artists (the Eucharides and Triptolemos Painters) would have made the same “mistake,” and it is interesting to note that those who attribute artistic divergences from Homer to the painters’ ignorance or mistakes are often those who most wish to show that Homer is the sole source of epic pictures on vases. If the painted version differs too much from the poems, these critics often prefer to blame the painter’s memory or knowledge rather than to consider other plausible alternatives.

One may agree with those early scholars who pointed out that the painter did not sit down to reread Homer before painting a vase and that it is even quite possible that the artists had never read the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* but had

¹⁴Florence 4209. For the abbreviated references for illustrations, see Friis Johansen, Boardman, and Touchefeu-Meynier in “Works Cited” at the end of this article.

¹⁵Beazley (1986) 32. The view goes back at least to Luckenbach, 496: “Einzig und allein ist die Verschiedenheit durch die mangelhafte Erinnerung an die Einzelheiten der Ilias hervorgerufen.”

¹⁶Bulas 5. Cf. Friis Johansen (1967) 173: “We must be right in concluding that ‘Diomedes’...is really Ajax, but that the painter has given him the wrong name.” Diomedes is the third legate on Louvre G 163 and Basel BS 477 and appears as a fourth member of the embassy on two other vases: Berlin F 2326 and Louvre G 146.

merely heard rhapsodes.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the centrality of the Homeric tradition in the Greek culture of the sixth and fifth centuries B. C. and the reliance on memory in an essentially illiterate society suggest that painters were well grounded in some version of the Homeric poems, as has been shown in study after study.¹⁸

A third reason why painted and written versions of Homeric epic do not always correspond might be called artistic license; that is, there are reasons why a painter might intentionally depart from an established poem, familiar as the verse might be from performances at religious festivals and constant quotation. This large category of artistic license may be divided into four sub-categories, the first of which pertains to iconographic traditions. For instance, one of the ancient associations of the home was a dog, as is seen in Exekias' famous depiction of the departure or return of the Dioscuri (*ABFH*, frontispiece).¹⁹ The idea that one's dog is an attribute of one's home, second only to spouse or parents, is so entrenched that, when the Etruscan Settecimini Painter wished to show the homecoming of Odysseus, he depicted Odysseus and Penelope with a dog between them (Parma C 161; *CVA* Parma II: IV B, pl. 7.2). Of course, some have looked at this picture and thought the painter made a mistake in representing Argos with Penelope and Odysseus.²⁰ Although it is not certain that the picture shows the homecoming in Ithaka or even that the two figures are Odysseus and Penelope,²¹ it is likely that the priority of the

¹⁷Luckenbach 499 and 516, Bulas 54. A number of more recent authors argue that some vases depict folk tales often known from childhood: Touchefeu-Meynier 283, Hemelrijk (1970) 169, Snodgrass (1979) 119–120, Cook (who cites the previous two authors and others), and Boardman (1991) 82. Nevertheless, such stories about Achilles and Odysseus must be based ultimately on the epic tradition handed down first by singers and later by rhapsodes.

¹⁸Luckenbach, Müller, Bulas, Friis Johansen (1967), Brommer (1983). Nevertheless, it is essential to ask how fluid a state the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were in at the time of Kleitias.

¹⁹Vatican 344. See Wrede 305, who points out that a dog is a normal ingredient of departure scenes.

²⁰Müller 84: "ein grosser Hund begrüßt freudig den Odysseus, ohne Zweifel Argos." Cf. M. P. Rossignani, *CVA* Parma II, IV B, pl. 7: "Presso il fianco della donna è il cane Argo." Beazley, *EVP* 54 is one of those who believe the artist made a mistake: "The painter remembered that Odysseus reached home, and was welcomed by his wife, and by his dog." Richardson 27–34 argues that the presence of a dog between Odysseus and Penelope on six Etruscan mirrors and some urns indicates that a living Argos was part of the Etruscan iconographic tradition of Odysseus' return. Nevertheless, the identification of the dog as Argos is not established.

²¹As will be discussed below, there is no way to distinguish arrivals from departures, and this picture may depict the departure of Odysseus, in which case Argos would be appropriate. Nevertheless, the homecoming would comprise a more dramatic subject. The vase has no labels, but the reverse side shows Odysseus and Circe with a companion half-turned into a pig, and there is agreement that the painter must be portraying an *Odyssey* subject on the obverse

painter's iconography has led him to portray a dog in Odysseus' homecoming that might be confused with Argos. A modern parallel occurs when Gorki Bollar, a painter of the Primitive Art School, entitles a painting "Ulysse" and depicts a man in a business-suit returning to his dog, wife, and children.²² That Odysseus had only one child is unimportant. Children and a dog are what one expects to find at home.

A second type of license that leads to an artistic divergence from the Homeric poems can occur when a painter adds labels to a genre scene in order to individualize it, but details appropriate to the generalized scene clash with the new context. The genre scene in painting corresponds to the "typical scene" of oral poetry. For the poet, a large number of set formulas and details of a battle scene, for instance, were always available to be applied both to unimportant, secondary warriors and to the protagonists of the poems.²³ By taking these general details and applying them to specific characters, the poet sometimes created complications, as when the man mourning his son had himself already been killed eight books earlier.²⁴ In similar fashion, painters had many general scenes, some representing departures of warriors, battles, and mourning. Without labels or iconographic help, the scenes remain generalized. But sometimes the painters, for whatever reason, identified the figures in these pictures.²⁵ For instance, a couple of warriors going to battle on a Corinthian kotyle dating to the middle of the sixth century are labeled Eurymachos and Promachos. These men are probably not the characters

too. Touchefeu-Meynier 246–48 disputes the identification of the man and woman as Odysseus and Penelope.

²²Musée international d'Art naïf 231 (Nice, France). I am grateful to the museum staff for explaining to me the twentieth century background of the painting and to Mme. Maria Teresa De Bellis of l'Académie de France à Rome for helping me to obtain catalogue material.

²³So, ἦριπτε δ' ἐν κονίῃς, used in the death scene of Hektor (*Il.* 22.330), is also employed for the deaths of Moulion (11.743) and Meges (5.75), with variations in the noun's ending. On typical scenes, see Arend and more current bibliography listed in Lowenstam, Chpt. 3.3–6. Heydemann's work on genre scenes in art is still valuable.

²⁴I refer of course to Pylaimenes, killed at *Il.* 5.576–79 but mourning his son at 13.658. Similarly, there are several references to Patroklos' armor being stripped by Hektor, even though Apollo had previously removed the armor. See Combellack 47–50, but cf. Kakridis, especially 292–96. For what may be a close parallel in vase-painting, see below, n. 41. Willcock (1977) 53 discusses problems that occur with ad hoc invention in poetry: "the composer is of course at liberty, like any creative artist, to put into the mouths of his characters unverifiable statements about past words and actions. In some cases an inconsistency arises with what is said elsewhere..."

²⁵Heydemann 173 asserts that individualizing a genre scene grants stature and universality. Friis Johansen (1967) believes that the painters added labels to appear learned.

known from the Homeric poems²⁶ but may have appeared in other poems. Nevertheless, neither explanation is likely. "Wide-battler" and "Fighter-in-the-vanguard" are good names to apply to warriors,²⁷ and the painter gains intensity for the picture by making it appear not the type of scene that might happen but one that has.²⁸

A more interesting example of a generic picture made specific by use of labels involves a popular scene on red-figure vases: so-called departure scenes. One group of these pictures usually shows a figure with a phiale facing a woman holding a oenochoe and sometimes surrounded by additional figures.²⁹ The person with the phiale may be human or divine.³⁰ It is unclear whether these scenes represent returns or departures³¹ or whether the wine is for libation, drinking, or both. Most of the pictures are generalized, with no labels or iconographic aids. Therefore, it is of interest when the Hector Painter chooses this genre scene for a neck amphora and converts it into the arrival/departure of Hektor by inscribing the names of Priam, Hektor, and Hekabe (Vatican 16570: *ARFH2*, fig. 140). Again, it is not clear whether this

²⁶There is a Boeotian named Promachos who appears in the *Iliad* only to be killed (14.476 ff.), and there is the suitor in the *Odyssey* named Eurymachos. The vase is Brussels A 1011, on which the name of a third warrior is also partially preserved (D[—]jos).

²⁷Sixth century Corinthian painting, in fact, is full of unidentified "heroic" names, and there are many examples of significant names on Attic vases. For instance, an amphora by Euthymides (Munich 2308) depicts an archer named Euthybolos ("Straight-shooter"), a warrior called Thorakion ("Breastplate") who is putting on his armor, and an athlete labeled Pentathlos ("Pentathlete"). See Heydemann 164, who lists many such examples. Compare the Homeric practice of "significant names." For instance, two men jumping over a gate in the *Iliad* are called Pylon and Ormenos, "Gate" and "Jumper" (12.187); and when Patroklos is sent out to prevent the Trojans from burning the ships, he routs the enemy by killing a warrior named Pyraichmes, "Firebrand" (*Il.* 16.287).

²⁸The painters often go in the opposite direction too, from a particularized scene to a generalized one. So, the Tarquinia Painter takes all the elements of the embassy to Achilleus (the muffled, grieving Achilleus, old man like Phoinix, figure like Odysseus with hands wrapped around his knees, man with herald's staff, and young man like Aias or Diomedes), and rearranges them in such a way that Beazley must identify the subject of this painting in his catalogue (*ARV²* 869.54) as "enigmatic scenes recalling the mission to Achilles" (Louvre G 264). Similarly, Douris could depict almost identically a genre scene of courtship in the palaestra and the embassy to Achilleus (London E 56 and Malibu 83.AE.217). See *GettyMusJ* 12 (1984) 245, #69.

²⁹The type is described by Simon 71 and Lissarrague 44–48. Examples are collected in *ABL* 14, n. 1. Departure scenes with chariots are treated by Wrede.

³⁰For divine figures: Poseidon on a stamnos in Vienna (inv. #3730) dating to 470 B. C.; Athene on a Nolan amphora in the British Museum (E 324). Also see Simon (1953), a detailed study of divine figures libating.

³¹Friis Johansen 268 also notes that arrival and departure scenes are indistinguishable, as do Blech 168–69 and von Bothmer (1985) 143. Cf. Lissarrague 44.

vase represents the warrior's departure or arrival, and although the presence of Priam might militate against the interpretation that the painter is depicting the return of Hektor in Book 6 of the *Iliad*, this possibility is not entirely to be rejected.³² In either case, once the painter shows Hektor with a phiale in his hand, for every fifth-century Athenian viewer brought up on Homer and hearing the epic poems at Panathenaic Festivals the picture immediately presents a contrast with the scene in the *Iliad*. The viewer cannot help but compare this picture, where Hektor holds the wine-cup, perhaps to libate and perhaps to drink,³³ with that Iliadic scene in which Hektor refuses to accept wine from Hekabe because he is unwilling either to pour a libation to Zeus while still begrimed with battle-gore or to drink and thus impair his fighting ability (*Il.* 6.258–68). Hence, if the vase depicts the scene in the *Iliad*, it diverges from it, but even if it does not represent that scene, it nevertheless opens a dialogue with the Homeric passage by presenting a significant contrast.

A third type of artistic license that might lead to divergences from the Homeric stories once again involves difference of medium. As Jane Harrison said, "Art has only one tense—the present."³⁴ Therefore, if the painter wishes to relate a story that has a series of events, all the incidents must be collapsed into one picture, or a particular moment of the narrative is chosen with allusions to earlier and/or later events. Another solution, although rarely used in the early period, is to show the same figure twice in the same painting.³⁵ More commonly, figures and details that are not joined in the written or oral

³²Simon 71 does not hesitate to connect the scenes: "Er [der Hektor Maler] dachte wohl an die Abschiedsworte der Hekabe an Hektor in der Ilias" (followed by quoting 6.258–60). See below for the practice in vase-painting of adding onlookers who are not mentioned in the corresponding Homeric episodes.

³³In addition to its use as a cup for libation, the phiale was also used for drinking wine, as is seen in various symposium scenes, where the banqueters are drinking from both kylixes and phialai. Examples are London E 453 and E 486, both about the same time as the Hektor Painter (450 B.C). Luschey 1027 collects passages in Pindar and Plato in which a phiale is referred to as a drinking cup. For further background on the phiale, see Cardon 131–33. The statement above that Hektor might drink from a phiale is not necessary for the present argument, but the Homeric passage seems to suggest that Hektor would libate and then drink. Lissarrague 45 assumes that the activity on the vases involves both functions.

³⁴Harrison 7. Cf. Luckenbach 508: "Wiederum stellt die Poesie die verschiedenen Momente nach einander dar, die Malerei vereinigt sie." The point can be traced back to Lessing 19–20, 23–24, 78–79. For the most recent discussion of "synoptic time," see Snodgrass (1989) 135–46 and 153–56, and for the related concept of "emplotment," see Stewart (1987) 29–34 and Boegehold.

³⁵The earliest instance of this technique may occur on the panel of the François Vase that depicts the return of the Athenian youths from Crete: Theseus may be shown not only accompanying the dancers but also swimming in the sea after retrieving from the bottom the ring that proves Poseidon to be his father. See Muellner 95, n. 72.

story are brought together in the painted version. The standard example of collapsed action is the Laconian cup on which we see Polyphemos still devouring one of Odysseus' companions, being offered wine, and being blinded all at the same time (T–M, pl. 3.1).³⁶ More complex is the series of vase-paintings showing the ransom of Hektor: Priam confronts Achilles with the body of Hektor under Achilles' couch (FJ, figs. 42, 44, 46).³⁷ In the *Iliad*, Achilles takes special efforts that Priam not see the body in his presence (24.582–86), but the painters diverge from Homer, in part so that they can collect all the different parts of the story into one picture. Also the subject of the painting is immediately clear and labels are unnecessary, because no other old man approaches a young man who is seated on a couch over a corpse. A synoptic view by collapsing action, then, often forces a painter to diverge from the Homeric story, but the intent is to tell a complex story with the continual “present tense.”

The final type of artistic license leading to departures from the Homeric text is that one most truly called artistic license. As suggested earlier, painters in the period we are considering did not see themselves as mere illustrators but as artists in a different medium with the same objectives as the poets. In pursuing these goals the painters might depict the same story differently in consecutive vases and might produce variations of the myth to present their own conception of the depicted story. Jane Harrison, before turning to the anthropological works for which she is most famous, worked on Greek art and in 1882 articulated the point being discussed here as follows:

Art in the time of vitality did not stoop to *illustrate* the works of poets. Artists caught, it is true, an inspiration from the poetic garb given to the myth; but they framed their own independent conceptions, and embodied them in such manner as the conditions of their own art suggested.³⁸

³⁶Paris, Cab. méd. 190. See Touchefeu–Meynier 14 and 63, Snodgrass (1989) 140–41; cf. Müller 2. Cohen (in D. Buitron et al.) 61 interprets the painting in terms of emplotment (see n. 34, above).

³⁷For lists of vases (the most important examples are Cambridge: Fogg 1972.40, Cassel T 674, Edinburgh L 224.379, Louvre G 153, Munich 2618, Toledo 72.54, Vienna 3710, and two vases in Switzerland: private), see Friis Johansen (1967) 267–68, *Heldensage*³ 464–66, and Kossatz–Deissmann (1981) 148–52. For interpretation, see Bulas 25–28.

³⁸Harrison 75 (her stress). Cf. Bulas 53: “presque dans aucun cas on ne peut parler d’une ‘illustration’ au text de l’Iliade dans le sens moderne du mot” and Vermeule 44–45: “[The painter] felt no inhibition about rearranging the details of poetry to highlight narrative and emotional ‘facts’ with the unity that a single picture demands.” Also cf. Luckenbach 494 and 501, Hofkes–Brukker 7, and Friis Johansen 40. Lessing 40 maintains that creative means are required to bridge the difference between the media of painting and poetry: “The poets gave

In addition, artists were as concerned with the traditions of painting as with the stories themselves, and vase-painters would watch the work of their fellow workers and sometimes follow in their footsteps. Therefore, once an artist departed from a known story, it was quite possible that others would follow.³⁹

An obvious example of artistic license occurs on some versions of the ransom of Hektor, where Priam is accompanied by a group of men and women bearing rich treasures (Vienna 3710, Munich 2618: FJ, figs. 42–43 and 46). In Homer, only Idaios attends Priam, and the treasure is left outside in the wagon (*Il.* 24.469–71), but the painters want to show what splendid gifts Priam is bringing (Bulas 28). The result is that the busy display of wealth on the vases contrasts sharply with the quiet, private scene in the poem, though the possible influence of drama on such depictions must also be considered (see below).

Sometimes it is difficult to identify examples of pure poetic license because one never knows whether the painter was inspired by a scene from an oral or literary source no longer extant. Nevertheless, let us consider some possibilities. In Euphronios' famous depiction of Sleep and Death removing Sarpedon to Lykia (New York 1972.11.10: *ARFH*1, fig. 22, and Bothmer 1976), we notice that Hermes seems to be overseeing the action, while in Homer Apollo had been sent to perform this duty (*Il.* 16.666 ff.). One easily recognizes how the painter felt Hermes was also appropriate to the scene in his role as psychopomp. In addition, Sleep and Death are surrounded by two figures labeled Hippolytos and Leodamas, neither of whom appears in the *Iliad* scene.⁴⁰ Euphronios wanted two more men to flank the central characters in the painting and merely invented the names or found unrelated characters in the tradition.⁴¹ Framing figures on vases, as Beazley once suggested, play as

[artists] a model, to be sure, but since it had to be translated from one art to another, they found ample opportunity to think for themselves." The thought is nicely expanded by Hurwit 170. A much greater distinction between the disciplines is made by Snodgrass (1979) 128: "the painter and poet were and are independent types of creative artists, with different sources, different interests, different techniques."

³⁹Robert (1881) 151 makes this point well in regard to a particular case when he says that Homer was not the immediate source but the only literary influence ("die Ilias [ist die] mittelbare, aber alleinige poetische Quelle").

⁴⁰Von Bothmer (1976) 485 believes that Hermes' role as messenger god also motivates his appearance on the vase. Hippolytus is entirely unknown to the *Iliad*, which however does mention a Laodamas (epic name corresponding to Attic Leodamas) as a son of Antenor (15.516–17). See von Bothmer (1976) 493, who also points out that there is a brief allusion to a Lycian named Laodamas in Quintus Smyrnaeus (11.20–21). The five men labeled on the reverse of the Euphronios vase in New York are a mixture of mythical, historical, and unknown figures (von Bothmer [1976] 494).

⁴¹Similarly, on another representation of the same scene by Euphronios (Fort Worth, Hunt 5), Sleep and Death are led by a figure labeled Akamas, most likely denoting the son of

insignificant roles as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (1931: 259), and consequently on a great number of labeled vases we meet many names unknown to us from other sources.

Finally a scene on a vase that was considered before might provide the most interesting example of artistic license. We recall that on the François Vase Kleitias had portrayed Odysseus as the leading competitor in the chariot race with Automedon, Diomedes, Damasippos, and Hippo[tho]on following in that order. Let us begin with the hypothesis that the painter did not “forget” his Homer but was presenting his own interpretation of the race. The last two contestants, like Beazley’s bystanders are unimportant, and probably, like Promachos and Eurymachos earlier, are provided significant names improvised for the scene (“Breaker-of-horses” and “[Fast]-horse”). Diomedes in the third position of the vase, however, is a significant contender, because he is the winner in the *Iliad*. Who, then, precedes Homer’s winner? In front of Diomedes is Automedon, who stands out as a charioteer but even more so as Achilleus’ charioteer. The suggestion is that Achilleus is so skilled a horseman that even his charioteer could beat Diomedes, Homer’s winner. But in front of Automedon is Odysseus. Is Odysseus, then, the best horse-racer? Kleitias cleverly suggests that this possibility is not the case. He places Achilleus at the finishing line, thereby intimating that if Achilleus had participated in the contest, he would have won. This interpretation not only reflects a Homeric motif, but also accords with the rest of the vase, which might be called an Achilleus or *Iliad* vase.⁴² It also supports reconstructions of a traditional rivalry between Achilleus and Odysseus.⁴³ Kleitias with his knowledge both of painted and sung traditions has formulated his own version, in which he suggests that Odysseus is a superlative competitor but still inferior to Achilleus.

Antenor, who had been killed prior to Sarpedon (Robertson 24), but possibly the label is referring to the Thracian of the same name (*Il.* 2.844–45). In either case, Akamas is absent from Homer’s narrative of Sarpedon’s removal.

⁴²The idea that Achilleus could have prevailed in the contests at the funeral games is articulated in Homer by Antilochos after the foot-race (*Il.* 23.791–92). All but one of the mythic scenes on the François vase are associated with the *Iliad* or Achilleus and his family. The central panel shows the marriage of Achilleus’ parents, while another panel depicts a famous exploit of Peleus, his participation in the Calydonian boar hunt (discussed below). Other scenes represented on the vase are Achilleus ambushing Troilos, the battle between the pygmies and cranes (*Il.* 3.3–7), the battle between the Lapiths and Centaurs (*Il.* 1.260 ff.), the return of Hephaistos (cf. *Il.* 1.590–94 and 18.395–405), and on both handles Aias carrying the dead Achilleus. The only panel that has no direct connection with Achilles or the *Iliad* depicts Theseus and the youths sent to Crete.

⁴³See *Od.* 8.75–82 and Nagy 15–65.

I have just suggested that Kleitias' version of the horse race in Patroklos' funeral games is his own interpretation, one that he has created from his knowledge of painting and poetry. And yet, it is possible that he was depicting a poetic version of a story no longer extant. After artistic license, then, we turn to the fourth and last explanation of why painters may have diverged from the Homeric versions of stories: they were influenced by alternative literary or oral accounts of the myth. Let us see whether we can identify any examples.

There is a group of black-figure vases dating from about 515 to 480 B. C. that show Achilles dragging the body of Hektor. Despite variations on each vase, the depictions are sufficiently similar to show that the subject was so popular that one painter after another wished to treat it—or that the depictions are reflecting the same source (FJ, figs. 48–55).⁴⁴ In these pictures Achilles has tied Hektor to the back of his chariot and is about to race off. Often one sees a tumulus with the eidolon of Patroklos flying above. Iris stands in front of the chariot, stopping it with some gesture.⁴⁵

Labels assure the identification, and it is not difficult to see that the pictures roughly depict the action in the *Iliad* between the middle of Book 22 and beginning of Book 24.⁴⁶ The techniques discussed above can explain some of the divergences from Homer. The action is telescoped so that, while Achilles is first tying Hektor to the chariot, Patroklos' funeral has already occurred, as is shown by the tumulus.⁴⁷ Also, the depiction of Patroklos' ghost

⁴⁴In fact, most of the vases come from the same workshop, that of the Leagros Group. The most important examples of Hektor's dragging are Boston 63.473, Cambridge: FitzMus GR 2.1955, Cracow 1245, Delos B 6137.546, Leningrad 173, London 99.7–21.3, Munich 1719, and New York 25.70.2. For a complete list, see *Heldensage*³ 345–46, Friis Johansen (1967) 264–65, and Kossatz-Deissmann (1981) 139–41. The lekythos listed as belonging to the Lamb Collection in Borden Wood (A 13 in *Heldensage*³ and 18i in Friis Johansen 1967) has been acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum (GR 2.1955).

⁴⁵Bulas 22 asserts that the gesture clearly shows that some order is being given. Vermeule 46 believes that “with a common Greek gesture for ‘Come!’ [Iris] draws [Achilleus’] attention toward the Greek quarter and the tomb.” The problem is that if the representations of Achilles dragging Hektor are modeled on the genre scenes of a warrior's departure, as both Vermeule 44 and Friis Johansen (1967) 143 argue, the same gesture is found in the departure scenes with a different meaning (see Wrede 259–60). Neumann does not appear to discuss the gesture.

⁴⁶Luckenbach 505 summarizes the details foreign to Homer as follows: the snake, eidolon, presence of demon, Odysseus, dog, Iris, woman, falling and fallen warriors, charioteer, and running of Achilles. Despite the number of divergences, Luckenbach does not believe an additional literary source should be considered.

⁴⁷Cf. Hofkes-Brukker 18. Vermeule 42 asserts that all the representations except the one in Boston show the dragging of Hektor in Book 24. Friis Johansen (1967) 144–51 argues that the depictions with Achilles' chariot standing still represent the action in Book 24 of the *Iliad*, while those with the chariot in motion depict Book 22 with elements from Book 24 added from

is a typical addition to be ascribed to artistic license. What is surprising, however, is the appearance of Iris, who in the *Iliad*, it is true, is sent by Zeus to visit Thetis with the ultimate aim of returning Hektor's corpse to his family but who never presents herself directly to Achilleus in the episode. It has been suggested that Iris' appearance in these paintings is just another example of collapsed action;⁴⁸ but if that were the case, one wonders why it would not be Thetis who stops Achilleus. Again, the liberal use of labels on these vases indicates that the painter could have depicted any figure he wished.

We have reached the cases in which it is most difficult to pinpoint the reasons why a painting does not correspond with the Homeric narrative. The substitution of Iris for Thetis could be another example of artistic license, with the painter choosing to depict the messenger god to deliver Zeus' command, just as Euphronios replaces Apollo with Hermes on the Sarpedon vase. On the other hand, the scenes with Thetis in Book 24 are so memorable and moving, as will be outlined below, that this substitution does not seem so simple. Of course, a painter could not depict the complexity of Iliadic scenes on a small vase (Iris rushing to Thetis, who then goes first to Zeus and afterwards to Achilleus), but showing Thetis would allude to and suggest the whole sequence of events. It is for this reason that it seems possible that the vases that depict Iris stopping Achilleus while dragging Hektor are influenced by an early work now lost to us. With no substantiating evidence, this hypothesis must remain just that, a guess. Nevertheless, because it is unlikely that very early Greek poems will ever be unearthed, this conjecture is presented here to indicate the *type* of picture that might reflect an early alternative or variant version of the *Iliad*. As will be seen later, the main use to Homerists of vases like those showing Iris with Achilleus does not require certainty that a lost poem is involved.

Because red-figure vases sometimes show scenes from tragedy and satyr plays,⁴⁹ it is necessary to consider the possibility that some depictions of epic

the artists' "confusion." It seems likely that there are elements from all three draggings in the depictions, and it is pointless to be dogmatic about which one is intended.

⁴⁸Friis Johansen (1967) 143. Cf. Bulas 22, who believes that painters merely simplified the story.

⁴⁹See Brommer (1959), Webster (1967) 44–50 and 73–84, Trendall and Webster, Kossatz-Deissmann (1978), Trendall (1989) 262–64, and Trendall (1991). Also: Luckenbach 559–60 and Simon 1981 and 1982. Most polemical are Hammond and Moon 383, who conclude, "Once it is realized that vase painters chose to paint scenes inspired by dramatic productions in ca. 520–ca. 460, scholars will be less diffident interpreting certain paintings as renderings of dramatic scenes" (the date 460 is specified presumably because there is general agreement that drama exerts an influence on painting after that date).

events are influenced not by Homer and the Epic Cycle but by tragic versions of the myths. Let us begin this analysis by considering a skyphos found in Chiusi dating to 440–435 B.C (Chiusi 1831: T–M, pl. 33.2–3). On one side a woman before a loom converses with a youth; on the other side a woman labeled Antiphata washes the feet of a man standing and dressed in traveling clothes, while another man, the end of whose inscribed name is –μαος, watches.

The identification of these scenes has never been in doubt. Although in the *Odyssey* Penelope never speaks to Telemachos in the gynaeceum, she is depicted before her loom on the vase. This detail is a typical example of artistic license, with the painter adding the loom to identify Penelope iconographically. The depiction of Odysseus' foot-washing on the other side of the vase deviates from the *Odyssey* in several respects: 1) Odysseus is dressed as a noble traveler, not as a beggar; 2) he is standing, not sitting; 3) Eurykleia is labeled Antiphata; and 4) [Eu]ma[i]os is present, although in the *Odyssey* he has already returned to his farm. None of these details is unusual for a vase: names are often different, and figures are added or removed at will. In this case, however, the deviations as a whole suggest a source known to us: Sophocles' *Odysseus Akanthoplex*, also called the *Niptra*.⁵⁰ In that play Odysseus' appearance was not altered to that of a beggar, and his bath took place in public, not in the palace, which would explain Odysseus' standing. The nurse in Sophocles' play may have been called Antiphata or even Antikleia.⁵¹ Finally, the other side of the vase may illustrate the prologue of the play, in which Telemachos is thought to have taken leave of Penelope.⁵² There is good reason, then, to suspect that the departures from the Homeric narrative on this vase are due in part to the painter's knowledge of Sophocles' play.

Another example of the possible influence of tragedy on vase-paintings leads to some important conclusions about the relationship of epic and tragic influences on vases. Mention was made earlier of those vases depicting the embassy to Achilles, in several of which Diomedes was one of the three or four ambassadors. In 1858 Brunn suggested that the embassy vases were depicting a scene from Aeschylus' trilogy of *Myrmidons*, *Nereids*, and

⁵⁰The thesis was first formulated in 1875 by Ribbeck 270–79 and 681–82, particularly 273, and greatly augmented by Robert (1895) 78–81.

⁵¹In discussing Pacuvius' *Niptra*, which loosely followed Sophocles' play, Cicero calls the nurse in Pacuvius Anticlea (*Tusc.* 5.16.46). While most modern editors of Cicero consider this name a mistake arising from a confusion between Odysseus' nurse (Eurykleia) and mother (Antikleia), the Chiusi vase provides some support for a name beginning Anti–.

⁵²The supposition, which is based on a comparison between the prologue of the *Trachiniae* with that of the *Niptra*, goes back to Wilamowitz 194–98 and Robert (1895) 81.

Phrygians.⁵³ Bulas strenuously debated the identification and argued that the vases predate the play and particularly the period when three actors were used (and what of the vases with three or four ambassadors?). Nevertheless, in the first half of the fifth century, Attic vases show embassy scenes with anywhere from one ambassador (Odysseus) to four.⁵⁴ The idea that Odysseus acted as the sole emissary in one scene of Aeschylus' *Myrmidons* was central to the analysis of Bernhard Döhle when he reconsidered the whole question and brought new light to the subject.⁵⁵ He argues that the production date of Aeschylus' trilogy was 490 B. C., exactly when the main group of vases portraying the embassy began to be produced.⁵⁶ Further he maintains that the scene in which Odysseus visited Achilleus as an ambassador influenced the vase-painters with the result that some showed Achilleus alone with Odysseus. But, because painters were not restricted to two actors like the tragedians, they returned to Homer for inspiration and portrayed embassies with three or four ambassadors, thereby combining features from both tragedy and epic. Döhle concludes:

Es wäre also falsch, die "Gesandtschafts"-Darstellungen als Illustrationen zu Aischylos' "Myrmidenen" zu bezeichnen: vielmehr liegt in der Synthese von Elementen epischer und dramatischer Herkunft eine ausgesprochene Eigenleistung, eine schöpferische Neugestaltung des Themas vor.⁵⁷

This process of synthesis may involve not only the fusion of epic and dramatic sources but also contributions from the traditions of painting. Deviations from Homer, then, may be due not merely to one of the causes discussed above but to any combination of them. For example, if we return to the embassy, we still have no literary explanation for how Diomedes has come

⁵³Brunn was the first to connect the description of Aeschylus' silent Achilleus (*Frogs* 911–13) with the vase-depictions showing the hero mute and mourning.

⁵⁴Bulas 9–10. The most important embassy scenes are shown on Basel BS 477, Berlin F 2176 and 2326, Cracow 1497, London E 56, Louvre G 146, Louvre G 163, Louvre G 374, Munich 8770, and Rome: Villa Giulia 50441. For a more complete list, see Friis Johansen (1967) 252–53, *Heldensage*³ 342–43, and Kossatz-Deissmann (1981) 107–111. Possible additions: Zürich University Inv. 3550, Getty 83.AE.217, and Athens Agora P 20244. See Kenner, Isler-Kerényi, and *GettyMusJ* 12 (1984) 245, #69 (but see above, n. 28).

⁵⁵Döhle 113–20, who believes that the middle group of Odysseus and Achilleus in representations with three ambassadors is the *Kernstück* inspired by Aeschylus' play. See also Kenner. For reconstructions of the lost play, see Schadewaldt, particularly 44–52, Döhle 68–95, Snell 1–24, and Taplin, especially 69–76.

⁵⁶There are two representations earlier than 490 (one a bronze), but they are not Attic and clearly belong to other traditions (Louvre C 321 and Olympia B 3600).

⁵⁷Döhle 125. This passage and Döhle's article were drawn to my attention by Kemp-Lindemann 136–37. On Döhle's point, compare Brunn 41.

to be one of the ambassadors on four different vases. Long ago Carl Robert suggested that Diomedes belonged to the iconographic tradition of the embassy, but one wonders how the hero entered it.⁵⁸ Do we have here an example of the influence of another epic story or even a tragedy other than that of Aeschylus? There is no convincing answer to this question, but the embassy scenes on vases provide an important instance of the very complexity of tracing the sources of the depictions. Vase-painters synthesized the traditions of painting with those of literature, sometimes using more than one literary source and almost always presenting the subject from their own unique perspective.⁵⁹

Hence, some vases whose representations differ from the Homeric narrative may have been influenced by other epic sources or by tragedies. Nevertheless, Luckenbach's formulation over a hundred years ago, that epic (namely Homer) and to a much lesser degree tragedy and satyr drama are the only literary sources of Greek vases with Homeric subjects in the Archaic and Classical periods, has never really been refuted.⁶⁰ On the other hand, the influence of the Epic Cycle is seen on vases with non-Homeric subjects (e.g., Achilles and Aias playing draughts, Achilles capturing Troilos, the death of Priam, Aias taking Cassandra).

⁵⁸C. Robert (1881) 142 and 150 believed painters evolved the tradition from *Il.* 9.696–702. Döhle (110 and 122, n. 3) also does not believe Diomedes' name is a mistake and seems to agree with Friis Johansen (1967) 177–78 that the hero's appearance on vases is due to the important role he plays in the two council meetings of Book 9. Taplin 73, n. 50, suggests that Diomedes might have been a silent companion to Odysseus in Aeschylus' embassy scene.

⁵⁹Other vase-depictions of Homeric subjects thought to be influenced by tragedies are: Achilles with Patroklos and Phoinix (Aeschylus' *Myrmidons*: Döhle 139–40); some representations of Thetis and the Nereids bringing arms to Achilles (Aeschylus' *Nereids*: Döhle 125–36, Trendall and Webster 54, Webster [1967] 142–43, Kossatz-Deissmann 1978: 13–23, Miller 161–63); the ransom of Hektor (Aeschylus' *Phrygians*: Döhle 136–39, Hammond and Moon 378–79, Webster [1967] 141); slaughter of Rhesos (Euripides' *Rhesos*: Trendall and Webster 112, Webster [1967] 167); representations of Nausikaa (Sophocles' *Nausikaa*: Hauser 32–33, Trendall and Webster 66, Webster [1967] 149–50); late depictions of Polyphemos (Euripides' *Cyclops*: Brommer [1959] 19–22 and Trendall [1991] 158–61).

⁶⁰Luckenbach 559–75. The role of lyric may be greater than Luckenbach believed; but while critics see tragic influence in some vases thought before to reflect only the Homeric texts (see above, n. 59), there is no comparable example with lyric. And see now Haslam, who argues against a connection between painting and lyric proposed by Stewart (1983), and Boardman (1991) 85, who asserts that the connection between sixth century lyric (and drama) and vase-painting is "generic only." In addition, because Hesiod and Homer do not overlap in the myths they relate, one does not look to Hesiod as a source for the vases being considered here. Nevertheless, knowledge of Hesiod seems to be reflected on some vases, for instance on those showing Thetis bringing arms to Achilles where some of the names for Nereids are not mentioned in Homer but are found in Hesiod (discussed in detail by Luckenbach 561). Finally, the role of folk tales and non-professional story-telling must not be discounted (see above, n. 17).

It is important to reiterate that sometimes, even often, it is impossible to pinpoint the exact reason for departures from the Homeric poems. Discrepancies in the funeral games on the François Vase, for instance, have been ascribed to Kleitias' ignorance or forgetfulness. The painter, however, could be following another poetic version that is now lost to us. Or, as suggested above, the painter could be presenting his own interpretation of the story. For our purposes, it is not necessary to learn the exact reason, as much as we might wish to know it, but merely to recognize the range of reasons that might explain the differences.

II. The Uses of Vases in Homeric Studies

Vases can be useful to Homeric scholars when the painted representations correspond to the Homeric versions, when they differ, and also when they depict stories not known to us from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. We shall begin with the advantages gained from the agreement of painting and poetry.

Vases that concur with Homer provide us with some idea of how successive periods pictured the Homeric poems. For instance, when one looks at paintings of Achilles in the fifth century, the most famous instance of which is that by the Achilles Painter (Vatican 16571: *ARFH*2, frontispiece and fig. 109), it may be difficult to imagine that this youth, almost effeminate in appearance, in his rage killed so many Trojans with his "dread, man-slaying hands" (*Il.* 24.478–79). But if we observe how depictions of Achilles evolve in art, we see that in the first half of the sixth century Achilles often appears as a grizzled, bearded warrior, not a callow youth (FJ, fig. 29).⁶¹ Perhaps it is only in the fifth century, when poets start to depict Achilles as the beloved of Patroklos,⁶² that the portrait of Achilles as a beautiful youth begins to prevail. For before that period and from the very beginning, the painters felt free to alternate between portraits of Achilles as a delicate youth or as an experienced soldier. The Camtar Painter (fl. 555 B. C.), for instance, showed Achilles both bearded and unbearded in different representations of the same scene (Louvre C 10521 and Boston 21.21: FJ, figs. 25–26).

It is valuable for the Homerist to pursue this evolution of portraiture because in essence the painters have become the first critics and interpreters of

⁶¹Examples: Nearchos, 570–555 B. C. (Athens, Acr. 611); Camtar Painter, fl. 555 B. C. (Louvre C 10521); Painter of London 76, fl. 550 B. C. (London 1922.6–15.1, Munich 1450, and Berlin 3763); Corinthian olpe, 550 B. C. (Brussels A 4); Exekias, 545–30 B. C. (Vatican 344), and some later examples: Priam Painter, fl. 515 B. C. (London 99.7–21.3); Leagros Group, fl. 510 B. C. (Boston 63.473).

⁶²For a partial list of such passages, see Clarke 381, n. 1 (though I do not agree with the conclusions of this article). Cf. Dover 197.

Homer. In portraying Achilles as a grizzled, bearded warrior, they are responding to and interpreting those parts of the Iliadic tradition in which Achilles sends many valiant souls of warriors to Hades (as seen in Books 20–22 of the *Iliad*). The portraits of Achilles as a sensitive youth, on the other hand, are based on those passages that focus on the hero's beauty, youth, generosity, and love of music.⁶³

Often the comparison of paintings and texts shows us how Greeks of the sixth and fifth centuries interpreted specific scenes in the poems. For instance, on three vases Athene and Apollo are shown watching the final combat between Achilles and Hektor (London E 468, Vatican 16547, Vatican 16563: FJ, figs. 91–92). Apollo's role on the vases is indicated by the arrow he waves in the air, the weapon with which he will assist in killing Achilles.⁶⁴ With this arrow the painters are not only indicating the immediacy of Achilles' death but also suggesting that in the act of slaying Hektor Achilles is killing himself, an idea that is supported by the Homeric passage in which Thetis warns her son that he will die very soon after Hektor's death (ἀντίκα, *Il.* 18.96).⁶⁵ The vase-painters are sensitive to this motif and depict it symbolically. Such examples allow us to see that the extant critical tradition begins with the painters, who furnish our first commentaries on the Homeric poems.

The second use of vase-depictions, when they correspond with the poems, is that they confirm the integrity of the work as a whole. That is, for those critics (unlike the present author) who believe that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* contain large accretions of a later period, vases may provide counter-evidence or at least supply a terminus ante quem. For example, while the tenth book of

⁶³E.g., *Il.* 6.618–20, 9.186–89, 9.485–93, 21.108–09, 24.656–70. The painters may not have known these precise passages (see above, n. 17), but, again, their knowledge of the poems would have included comparable material. The evolution of Achilles' depictions from a bearded to an unbearded figure is also a matter of date, because most heroes and many gods are bearded in the sixth century but not later. Nevertheless, the fact that the same painter might show Achilles bearded and unbearded in different representations of the same scene suggests that the painters did at times distinguish between images of this hero as a war veteran and as an inexperienced youth.

⁶⁴Allusions to the death of Achilles appear at *Il.* 21.111–113 and 22.359–60, the latter of which is cited in Bulas' important discussion (33). On the volute krater by the Berlin Painter (London E 468) we see Apollo at the point of abandoning Hektor (Bulas 33 and Friis Johansen [1967] 218, who refers to *Il.* 22.212–215). Apollo remains to observe the death scene on London E 468 and Vatican 16547. On all three vases the action is collapsed, so that Hektor receives his mortal wound while Apollo looks on or begins to depart.

⁶⁵See Lowenstam, Chpt. 2.10 for other textual evidence in the *Iliad* that suggests that Achilles is killing himself when he slays Hektor.

the *Iliad* was called into question by the Scholia and Eustathius,⁶⁶ a Corinthian cup dating 595/90–570 B. C. with Dolon loosely in the company of Achilles, Hektor, Aineias, Sarpedon, the Aiantes, and Phoinix may suggest, as Friis Johansen has put it, that “the Doloneia was known in Corinth as part of the *Iliad* at the beginning of the sixth century” (FJ, figs. 15–16).⁶⁷ Then, in the last decade of the sixth century, painters of Attic vases began to represent the capture of Dolon by Diomedes and Odysseus. It is curious that some of the passages in the Homeric poems which the Analysts confidently determined to be “late” are those for which we have the earliest artistic evidence.⁶⁸

Vases, then, whose depictions correspond to the Homeric narrative provide some advantages to the Homeric scholar, but vases that present scenes unknown to us from Homer are even more useful for several reasons. First, such scenes sometimes confirm and elaborate upon motifs in the poems. For instance, the *Iliad* emphasizes a medical metaphor: Achilles must take steps in Book 1 to cure the plague (ἀπὸ λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι, *Il.* 1.67); and in the midst of the ensuing quarrel he warns that a time will come when the army will need him to ward off destruction (ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι, 1.341). Phoinix uses the same formula when he says Achilles must protect him (9.495), and later Poseidon urges the Achaians to heal the breach with Achilles (ἀκεώμεθα, 13.115). Achilles becomes very interested when Machaon, the physician, is wounded in Book 11, because both doctors are wounded now, and Achilles is the only one left with medical knowledge (11.597–615 and 828–36). Achilles therefore infers that the army will need him all the more, for he is the only one now who can heal the Achaians both literally and metaphorically.⁶⁹ The immediate result, however, is that Achilles sends Patroklos to Nestor, an act that ultimately leads to Patroklos’ entry into battle and subsequent death.

With this Homeric background, it is interesting to look at the cup potted by Sosias and painted by the Sosias Painter in the last decade of the sixth century (Berlin F 2278: *ARFH* 1, fig. 50.1). Here we find Achilles tending an arrow wound on Patroklos’ arm. The scene is not known to us from literary

⁶⁶Scholiast T (introduction to Book 10) and Eustathius 785.14 assert that Homer composed Book 10 but not for the *Iliad*.

⁶⁷Friis Johansen 75, who cites Robert (1901) 574, who had previously concluded from this evidence that there existed a “Lay of Dolon” around 600 B. C. Although Cook 3 tries to argue that “Dolon” is a folk tale figure unrelated to the character in the *Iliad*, the cup shows at the very least that Dolon is a traditional epic figure. The Corinthian cup is Brussels, Bibl. roy. (Amyx 204.6), for which I provide Amyx’ dating.

⁶⁸A tripod leg, for instance, with the embassy to Achilles is dated to ca. 625 B. C. (Olympia Mus. B 3600). Cf. Burkert 47 for the general point.

⁶⁹For an expanded exposition of the medical metaphor, see Lowenstam, Chpt. 2.8.

sources; and while the vase may be inspired by an episode in the *Cypria*, it is just as likely that the painter is thinking of the evidence in the Iliadic tradition outlined above.⁷⁰ In either case, the medical image, the notion that Achilles is a healer, is confirmed by Sosias' cup, and other evidence from a later period indicates that Achilles' essential connection with medicine was already established.⁷¹

It is interesting to observe how the Sosias Painter utilizes the motif of healing. As in the *Iliad*, the painting focuses upon Achilles' medical expertise, and it is through this knowledge that Achilles can attempt to heal his fellow warrior and friend. Patroklos grits his teeth in pain, but we know that the episode depicted on the cup will turn out well. Patroklos' wound will heal; Achilles will have saved his friend. But this moment of success provides a sharp contrast with a time shortly afterwards when Achilles will not be able to save his friend and will sacrifice his own life as a result. The power of this painting, then, results from the juxtaposition between the present moment with its happy conclusion and the dark time to come. Instead of depicting the death of Patroklos or Achilles' response upon learning of it, the painter has subtly and effectively selected a scene that tells a wider story. And again, such an interpretation is useful to Homerists because it sends them back to the *Iliad*, where one recognizes the irony of Achilles' medical expertise: he can cure the Achaians but not those he would most desire to heal.

Vase representations that depict scenes unknown to us from Homer are also useful to the study of epic because they can reveal further implications in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and thereby enrich their interpretations. One such passage that gains from vase-painting is the embassy scene in the *Iliad*, in which Phoinix urges Achilles to renounce his anger and accept Agamemnon's gifts, as the men of old did (τῶν πρόσθεν, 9.524). Phoinix then tells the story of Meleagros as an example to be avoided by Achilles. It is an incident he remembers from long ago, not a recent one (9.527). By placing the tale in the distant past, with the men of yore, Phoinix provides a mythic paradigm withstanding the test of time and requiring immediate attention.

⁷⁰The Duke of Luynes first suggested that the vase reflects a scene in the *Cypria*, as noted by Luckenbach 597–98, who, on the other hand, suspects that the painter created the picture from his knowledge of the *Iliad*. Kossatz-Deissmann (1981) 115 is the most recent critic to name the *Cypria* as the literary source of the vase. Hofkes-Brukker 7 calls the picture a free invention of the painter.

⁷¹One of the mistaken etymologies of the name Achilles in antiquity was "loosener of grief" (ἄχος-λύειν). See *Erym. Mag.* 181.25–26 and Escher-Bürkli 221.

A different perspective on Phoinix' story is gained from one of the scenes on the François Vase (ca. 570 B. C.), a work intimately connected with Achilles and the *Iliad* (above, n. 42). With its 121 labels, the vase leaves little to guesswork, and on one of the top panels the Calydonian boar hunt is depicted with the hunters and dogs labeled (*ABFH*, figs. 46, 46.3). Directly in front of the boar, which has just killed Ankaïos (labeled Antaios) and a dog Ormenos ("Jumper"), stand Peleus and Meleagros. There are seventeen other warriors besieging the boar, but in the vanguard Peleus and Meleagros suffer the brunt of the boar's attack. This arrangement, in which Peleus is paired with Meleagros, is not unique but belongs to the artistic tradition, as is best indicated by the later band cup signed by Archikles and Glaukytes (*ABFH*, fig. 116),⁷² where some of the names of the other hunters are different but Peleus and Meleagros are still together, in this case immediately behind the boar.

This evidence from vase-painting provides us with a different perspective on Phoinix' speech. If the story of Peleus seconding Meleagros in the boar hunt is early enough to have been known to the Homeric tradition, a supposition that is most likely, Phoinix' mythic speech gains an ironic resonance. For it would be ironic for Phoinix to tell Achilles a story about his father's fellow warrior and friend. In fact, Achilles would already have heard many such stories about Meleagros. In Book 1.396–98 Achilles tells Thetis, "For often I heard you boasting in my father's halls how you alone of the gods warded off destruction from Zeus..."; and similarly we expect that Achilles often heard his father boast of his own exploits, including that of the Calydonian boar hunt. Achilles must have known the story of Meleagros by heart. Hence, one last irony is added to Phoinix' speech, which is riddled with ironies, when the old man tells Achilles not a new story but a very old one, as Phoinix himself admits. But, more importantly, it is a mistake for Phoinix not in fact to utilize a distant story but to select a tale involving Achilles' family connection. For Achilles, who already has reasons not to submit to the embassy, now honors his father's old friend by following his example, not avoiding it as Phoinix had advised.⁷³ In this way, then, the François Vase supplies information that can add to our understanding of the momentous embassy scene.

⁷²Munich 2243, dated to 540 B. C. For what may be an earlier example, see below, n. 74. On the Calydonian boar hunt in art, see de La Coste-Messelière 120–52, Daltrop 15–20, von Steuben 42–44 and 117–18, Schnapp, March 37–39, and Shapiro (1990b) 118–119.

⁷³On following the example of Meleagros, see Whitman 191. For the ironies in Phoinix' speech, see Lowenstam, Chpt. 2.6. Often warriors in the *Iliad* report to warriors what their fathers said (e.g., 11.786–89 and 9.254–58); the irony in the case of Phoinix is due to the fact that he speaks as if no one knew this story. Meleagros, by the way, was Diomedes' uncle.

Another advantage of vase-paintings that depict stories unknown to us from epic is that their inscriptions can provide us with the earliest written evidence for a myth. For instance, our earliest literary sources for Peleus' participation in the Calydonian boar hunt are [Apollodorus] and the scholia to the *Clouds*, but Kleitias antedates their information by several centuries.⁷⁴ In addition, paintings show that, while not illustrating epic, they respond not only to its stories but even to its very diction. For instance, when Amphitrite is identified on a Corinthian pinax as [Π]οτειδάφωνος ἄρῳιτις, we find the epic word for "wife," the poetic form of Poseidon, and a phrase that could form the second half of a hexameter with trochaic caesura.⁷⁵

Finally, we turn to the uses of vases whose representations diverge from the Homeric narrative. These alternative versions, when juxtaposed with the Homeric accounts, may draw attention to the Homeric artistry. For instance, earlier we looked at those vases that depict Iris stopping Achilles while he is dragging Hektor's body. It was surmised that these vases might reflect another rendering of the early events of Book 24. In any case, the comparison is instructive. The vases show Iris stopping Achilles' cruelty to Hektor's body and initiating the process of returning the corpse to Priam. This scene of Iris coming to Achilles in the equivalent of Book 24 would provide a nice ring composition with Book 1, in which Athene approached Achilles and prevented him from killing Agamemnon. But compared to these vase-representations, Homer's narrative in Book 24 is much more rich and moving. Homer works with a series of contrasts: first Iris goes to Thetis, who is already mourning Achilles' impending death. An immediate antithesis to this grief situated at the bottom of the sea is presented when Thetis travels to the top of the world and visits the carefree gods, the blessed gods who are for ever (24.99). Then Thetis, whom Iris had found mourning the loss of her living son, journeys to Achilles, who is mourning the loss of his dead friend. A less inspired or more hurried singer would have merely utilized Iris to bring the poem to a close; Homer used all the psychological tools available to make his narrative dramatic and moving. This power in creation, then, appears all the more vivid when the Homeric story is compared to a simpler, alternative version, in this case preserved on a vase.

⁷⁴[Apollodorus] 1.70 and 3.163 and the Scholia to *Clouds* 1063, as cited by Lesky 302. Even earlier than the François Vase is a fragmentary dinos in Athens (Agora P 334) showing the Calydonian boar hunt with inscriptions, one of which begins with a Π and may have denoted Peleus. See Young 440, von Steuben 43, and March 38 n. 38.

⁷⁵The pinax is Berlin F 487. The metrical phrase can be compared with *Od.* 11.266 and *Il.* 20.67. Berlin F 552 is inscribed [Ποτ]εδάφονι φάνακτι, another metrical half-line, attested at *Il.* 15.158 and six times in the *Odyssey*. Amyx 603 does not mention the metrical possibilities.

One of the disadvantages of having Homer at the beginning of our literary tradition is that we can compare his handling of narrative events with that of his predecessors only by making tenuous reconstructions. Vases, however, can provide the earliest alternative renderings that survive, and some of these versions on vases go back to the Homeric period and disclose versions of stories and poems known then. This statement is proven by the large number of vase-depictions of the Judgment of Paris. Although this story is mentioned in Homer (*Il.* 24.25–30), our more detailed vase-depictions are clearly not based on that short Homeric notice. Similarly, the elaborate representations of Neoptolemos' battle with Eurypylos are not predicated on the brief Homeric allusion (*Od.* 11.516–22).⁷⁶ Hence, vases furnish not only our earliest alternative versions of some Homeric stories but sometimes also our first view of stories known to the tradition and Epic Cycle although not utilized or delineated in the versions of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that we possess.

A further advantage that vases provide is that their depictions may help to reveal the evolution of the myths of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. This use, however, is based on the supposition that some vases are influenced by other literary or oral sources, and, as such, involves uncertainty. Nevertheless, one might consider as an example the thesis proposed above that the ransom of Hektor was initiated at one point by a mere message from Iris to Achilles and evolved into the more complex version found in Book 24 of the *Iliad*. Similarly, the story of Odysseus' foot-washing develops from the private scene with Odysseus, Eurykleia, and Penelope in the *Odyssey* to the public scene with Odysseus standing before Antiphata and Eumaios. Vases suggest many other alternative stories such as an embassy with Diomedes as one of the ambassadors and a story in which Agamemnon himself removed Briseis from Achilles' tent.⁷⁷ It is better for the literary critic, however, to utilize these different versions on vases by comparing them with the Homeric stories and observing the benefits of both the literary and painted depictions than it is to try to write a history of myth based on the unreliable supposition that such and such a vase reflects a verbal source now lost to us. For, as we have seen above, there are many possible explanations for why a vase-depiction might not correspond with our literary sources, and the explanation of an alternative literary source

⁷⁶Basel BS 498 and Würzburg 309, which show Neoptolemos leaving Eurypylos' body and killing his charioteer. The most recent discussion of these vases (with bibliography) is Shapiro (1990a).

⁷⁷Louvre G 146, but see Bulas 4, who summarizes an alternative interpretation formulated in the last century (Bulas cites Robert, who cites Brunn). The key Homeric passage is *Il.* 1.137–39: ἐγὼ δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἔλωμαι/ ἢ τεὸν.../ ἄξω ἐλῶν.

is only one of them (and not the most likely). Nevertheless, to dismiss completely the possibility that vases with epic subjects can reflect literary sources other than Homer is a mistake. Besides the example of the Judgment of Paris already provided, another piece of evidence may be adduced here to support this point. In Homer, Odysseus' name in the nominative is always spelled 'Οδυσσεύς or 'Οδυσεύς, but this spelling is never found on Archaic vases, which use the forms 'Ολυτές, 'Ολυτεύς, 'Ολυττεύς, and 'Ολυσεύς.⁷⁸ If these forms of the name do not come from the poems, they must reproduce how the names were pronounced by the people; but the folk must have learned these forms from the stories and poems they heard in their homelands.

The final use of vases to be discussed here is their service as an analogy to the oral processes that lie behind the Homeric poems. If one studies vases for a while, one sees that the painters followed the broad outlines of the Homeric myths (as we know them) but felt free to change any of the minor details and even some of the major ones. For instance, the painters knew that there was a chariot race among the funeral games Achilles held for Patroklos. Kleitias depicted such a race but changed the names of four of the charioteers and the order of their success. Critics like to say that the painter "forgot" or was insufficiently versed in the Homeric details, but this explanation must be wrong. The painter was not an illustrator of the poet. Kleitias followed the main plot of the well-known story but filled in the details as he imagined them. In fact, he saw in this story an opportunity to articulate some thoughts about the comparison of Achilles and Odysseus that he took from the poetic tradition or formulated himself. This method is how one worked with the traditional stories shared by both poets and painters: one added, abbreviated, embroidered, omitted, and "contaminated" one story with details of another. We also know these processes from Greek tragedy and Roman drama.

Homerists sometimes begin a work by paying obeisance to Milman Parry and the tenets of oral poetry and then continue by treating the Homeric works as very fixed texts. Of course, what we have now are fixed texts, but if Homer had told the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* the day after he had finished our versions, the resulting poems would have been different, as we know from studies of oral poetry (Lord 99–123). Again, vase-painting serves as an excellent parallel, because almost never do two versions of the same scene on vases correspond in

⁷⁸Luckenbach 561, who also mentions the fact that Homer's Kumothoe appears on vases as Kumatheia, Kumothea, Kumatothea, and Kumatothoe. Brommer (1983) 18 points out that twelve different forms of Odysseus' name are found on vases from the late seventh to fourth centuries, with the oldest being those with a lambda instead of a delta. Corinthian vases tend to use the delta form, while the name with lambda is found in Attic; see Threatte 484, sec. 40.04.

every detail. As Harrison said, “the servile spirit of the copyist was of late growth” (x), well after the period we are considering. For example, when we look at the labels on vases, especially at those of the less important figures, we see names we do not recognize. Who are Hippolytos and Leodamas on Euphronios’ Sarpedon vase? On the Boston pyxis Nausikaa’s companions are labeled Phylonoe, Leukippe, and Kleopatra, names that are invented or taken from elsewhere.⁷⁹ Over and over on vases with epic subjects we see details unknown to us from Homer. The reason is simple: to play with the tradition, especially in regard to details, was itself traditional. It is likely that the oral poets were also constantly altering their stories; as Malcolm Willcock says, “We must credit [Homer] with a pervasive technique of instant invention” (1977: 53). Again, although we have a fixed text of the Homeric poems and although the poems belong to a tradition going back a thousand years, there was tremendous fluidity: not only did the details of the stories change with every telling, but even the traditional diction was undergoing modification.⁸⁰

In creating works of art painters must have experienced the same conditions as the oral poets. If a customer desired a special vase for an important occasion and, of course, had the ability to defray the cost, the painter would create an unusually complex work with myths selected to parallel the present occasion. So perhaps, Ergotimos and Kleitias produced the François Vase for a wedding, richly decorated it with eight narrative scenes, and selected the marriage of Peleus and Thetis as the major picture because it served as a good parallel to the motivating event.⁸¹ On other occasions for less

⁷⁹Boston 04.18. Müller 107–8, suggests that the names may come from Polygnotos’ painting (see Pausanias 1.22.6); and the names Phylonoe and Kleotra [sic] are found together on Boston 99.539 (Hauser 23). One must not assume that all names unknown to us were improvised by the painter. For instance, Leodamas may be the figure mentioned in Quintus Smyrnaeus (see above, n. 40). Another example is the set of names that the painter of the Odyssey landscapes gives to the three scouts sent to explore the land of the Laistrygonians. Homer leaves these characters anonymous (*Od.* 10.100 ff.), and the figures mentioned in the Landscape are unknown to us as companions of Odysseus (with the exception of the herald). Nevertheless, the names must be traditional, because they appear in the list of companions provided by Tzetzes, who was a Homeric scholar and cites Homer as his source. The subject is discussed in my article, “The Sources of the Odyssey Landscapes” (forthcoming).

⁸⁰For fluidity of theme, see Willcock (1977) and again Lord 99–123; also Willcock (1964). For diction, see Hoekstra.

⁸¹For the most recent (and most convincing) work relating the François Vase to a marriage and marriage themes, see Stewart (1983), particularly 66–69. Stewart believes that the vase was commissioned by an Athenian. For the argument that there is no “program” on the François Vase, see Shapiro (1990b) 140–42. See Webster (1972) 62 for the thesis that commissioned vases were often sold later to Etruscans (Webster also discusses wedding vases: 105–106). On the other hand, Schefold 58 argues that the François Vase may have been destined for

wealthy patrons, a smaller vase with only one or two mythic scenes would be created.⁸² Similarly, the oral poets would embellish or abbreviate depending on the interest and generosity of the audience. One time Iris alone might initiate the end of an *Iliad*; on another occasion the rich complexity of scenes with Thetis, Iris, and Achilleus would be utilized. Unfortunately, we cannot observe the diversity of variations in the case of the epic poems, but we do have the vases, which ultimately show the same processes at work.

The non-fixity of myth was as essential to vase-painting in its vibrant period as it was to the tradition behind our Homeric poems. Although there were standard scenes such as representations of battle in both art and literature, painters and poets would tailor such typical material to fit particular heroes of interest. Sometimes, as noted above, such translations caused analogous mistakes. The processes of turning from generalized to specialized and back again, then, can be seen in both media, and each medium serves as a good parallel to the other.

Hence, for the Homeric critic who might grow too accustomed to working with fixed texts, the fluidity of myth in painting is a good antidote. It is also beneficial to read the art-historians, who are used to this variability. And by studying how the vase-painters dealt with their subjects and what sorts of variations occurred, Homerists find a close parallel to their own field.

Probably none of the uses of vase-painting for Homeric studies is being enunciated here for the first time (although fresh applications of these principles have been presented above), and individual critics have already utilized some of these methods in their works. Nevertheless, all literary critics of Homer should delve into early Greek art and particularly the vases, because a great deal more can be done in Homeric studies with these methods. In so doing the Homerist can move one step closer to Homer.

dedication on the Acropolis but was exported to Etruria because of the misfiring evident on its foot.

⁸²See Webster (1972) for the relation between potter and patron.

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Vases are cited by museum inventory number, subject, painter, and reference number in Beazley, Amyx, or appropriate catalogue. Vases with London inventory numbers belong to the British Museum, and those listed in New York are in the Metropolitan Museum. Other museums are identified in *ABV* and *ARV*².

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