

# THE WORLD OF GREEK VASES

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# The Incontinence of Civic Authority: Pictorial Iambos in Athenian Vase-painting

by RICHARD NEER

This paper is about the relationship of two worlds: the symposium and the Agora, the Athenian elite and the Athenian state. More specifically, it is about the way state power appears through the lens of aristocratic social forms, in particular the red-figured pots and cups that served as paraphernalia at the symposia of the upper class.<sup>1</sup> Along the way I will touch upon some larger issues of the relationship between vase-painting and poetry, iambos in particular, and about the sort of documentary value that vase-painting may or may not possess.

I will begin with some well-known pieces and work my way to some less familiar ones. To start, a cup in Copenhagen by Epiktetos, normally dated to circa 520-514 BC, shows a young craftsman, nude and wreathed, cradling a herm between his thighs and working it attentively with a tool (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> In the field above are the words  $\text{ΙΠΠΑΡΚΗΟΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ}$ . The name appears on about a dozen other vases by Epiktetos, and is usually associated on chronological grounds with Hipparkhos Kharmou, eponymous archon in 496/95 BC and the first to be

ostracised in 488/87 BC.<sup>3</sup> He seems just the right age to have been *kalos* c. 520 BC. For reasons that need not detain us here, it is believed that this Hipparkhos Kharmou was probably a grandson of the tyrant Hippias, hence a grandnephew of the better-known Hipparkhos son of Peisistratos, the one who was struck down by the tyrannicides Harmodios and Aristogeiton in 514 BC.<sup>4</sup> That said, the Copenhagen cup is a bit of a special case, because the elder Hipparkhos, the son of Peisistratos, had a special association with herms. The pseudo-Platonic dialogue that bears his name tells us that Hipparkhos caused herms to be erected midway between Athens and each of the rural demes, each inscribed with a sententious bit of wisdom like “walk with just intent” or “deceive not a friend”.<sup>5</sup> Fragments of one such herm have actually been found, confirming the story.<sup>6</sup> Could our craftsman be caught in the very act of writing such an inscription? He certainly seems to be involved in detail-work of some sort. Then again, the pose is so contrived – a big slab of stone is not easily held in the crook of one’s arm

1. On symposia, red-figure, and class see Neer 2002, 9-26. For a recent treatment of symposium and polis, with specific regard to pottery, see Steiner 2002, with references to earlier studies.
2. Copenhagen, National Museum 967 (Beazley Archive no. 200586).
3. Shapiro 1989, 120.
4. See Davies, *APF* 451.
5. Plato, *Hipparkhos*, 228b-229d: He proceeded, with the design of educating those of the countryside, to set up figures of Hermes for them along the roads at the midpoint between the city and every deme; and then, after selecting from his own wise lore, both learnt from others and discovered for himself, the things that he considered the wisest, he threw these into elegiac form and inscribed them on the figures as verses of his own and testimonies of his wisdom, so that in the first place his

- people should not admire those wise Delphic legends of ‘Know thyself’ and ‘Nothing overmuch,’ and the other sayings of the sort, but should rather regard as wise the utterances of Hipparchus; and that in the second place, through passing up and down and reading his words and acquiring a taste for his wisdom, they might resort hither from the country for the completion of their education. There are two such inscriptions of his: on the left side of each Hermes there is one in which the god says that he stands in the midst of the city or the township, while on the right side he says: *The memorial of Hipparchus: walk with just intent*. There are many other fine inscriptions from his poems on other figures of Hermes, and this one in particular; on the Steiria road, in which he says: *The memorial of Hipparchus: deceive not a friend*.
6. Kirchner & Dow 1937, 1-3.



Fig. 1. Attic red-figure cup by Epiktetos. Copenhagen, National Museum CHRVIII 967 (photo © National Museum, Copenhagen).

– that we should probably not push such details too far. For present purposes, the point is simply that the pairing of *Hipparkhos kalos* with a representation of a herm under construction seems a little much for coincidence – even though the elder Hipparkhos, the one who set up the herms, was probably too old to be considered *kalos* at the time this cup was made.

So which Hipparkhos is it – the younger or the elder? Alan Shapiro is surely correct to take a holistic view. While acknowledging that *Hipparkhos kalos* normally refers to the younger man of that name, still he observes that “no Athenian could have read the inscription without thinking of the herms of [the elder] Hipparkhos”. Shapiro concludes that, “thanks to a convenient homonymy, Epiktetos was able to praise one member of the tyrant family and commemorate another at the same time”.<sup>7</sup> In short, it is both. This conclusion seems very sensible, and very much in keeping with the punning sensibility of Late Archaic red-figure.<sup>8</sup> But I’d want to quibble on just one point: is praise quite exactly what is going on here?

7. Shapiro 1989, 126.

8. See Neer 2002.

9. Oxford, Ashmolean Mus. 310 (Beazley Archive no. 201526).

By way of answering, it is useful first to examine a similar case: Paseas’ plate in Oxford with the inscription, ΜΙΑΤΙΑΔΕΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ· (Fig. 2).<sup>9</sup> Dated by style to the latter part of the sixth century BC, the plate presumably refers to Miltiades the Younger, who would go on to be the hero of Marathon before dying in disgrace in 489 BC. When the plate was made, however, Miltiades ruled as tyrant in the Thracian Chersonese, in which capacity he served the Great King Dareios on his Scythian campaign of 512 BC. It has not escaped the notice of commentators that the rider on the plate wears oriental costume, and some have even suggested that the figure is in fact a portrait of Miltiades himself, having ‘gone native’ as it were. Unfortunately, there is nothing that could count as evidence to prove this claim. It is more useful to stick to the visual facts, and to drag out an old chestnut: the affinity between Paseas’ horseman and a contemporary statue from the Athenian Akropolis known as the Persian Rider (Fig. 3).<sup>10</sup> The similarity is striking, extending even to the rhomboid patterning on the trousers, and it has been noted that the plate’s exergue line is curiously truncated: it does not run all the way across the tondo, as is the norm. This abbreviated line suggests nothing more than a



Fig. 2. Attic red-figure plate by Paseas. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 310 (Photo courtesy Ashmolean Museum, Oxford).

10. Athens, Acropolis Mus. 606. On this piece see Eaverly 1995, 100-107. For the affinity see Payne and Mackworth-Young 1950, 52.



Fig. 3. 'The Persian Rider'. Athens, Acropolis 606 (photo: Department of Classical Archaeology, University of Aarhus).

statue-base, and it seems plausible at least that Pseas has paired Miltiades' name with a representation of a prominent dedication in the local sanctuary.<sup>11</sup> It would be nice to know who dedicated the Akropolis statue, and I am not suggesting that it was necessarily Miltiades (although Wade-Gery thought so).<sup>12</sup> The point is, rather, that this plate trades on a certain, somewhat ambivalent, relationship between *kalos*-name and figure. While those who take the inscription as an identifying label are probably too optimistic, still the text does gloss the image. It plays an exoticizing statue on the Akropolis against a text naming a prominent, medizing expatriate. Beyond that it is dangerous to go. We can at best get a whiff of what may once have been a rather pungent commentary if we note that, according to Herodotos, the image of a Persian atop a horse was the very one that Dareios chose to commemorate

his accession to the throne.<sup>13</sup> A Persian rider is, in the Greek mind at any rate, an emblem of the Great King's power. This is dangerous ground, but Pseas' plate does establish the setting of a *kalos*-inscription into a pointed, and politically charged, relationship with the accompanying image – even if, in this instance, we cannot specify the precise nature of the commentary.

Returning, then, to Epiktetos and Hipparkhos. As mentioned earlier, the name appears on quite a few vessels, and most of them bear perfectly innocuous scenes. A good example is a banal cup with a hoplitodromos, now in Naples.<sup>14</sup> Others, however, are quite ribald, like a cup in Boston showing a satyr mounting a wineskin (Fig. 4), or, better still, a cup in the Villa Giulia, showing an hetaira atop a penis-bird (Fig. 5).<sup>15</sup> Pairing these two with the herm-cup in Copenhagen reveals a certain thematic consistency to go with the name Hipparkhos: all three share a fairly obvious attention to big, somewhat comical, and blatantly eroticized objects emerging from between the legs of the central figure. Interestingly, the Villa Giulia piece omits the *kalos* entirely: Epiktetos simply writes *Hipparkhos* over the figures, like a label. Is he naming the hetaira or the bird, or did he simply forget to write the adjective? Whatever



Fig. 4. Attic red-figure cup by Epiktetos. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 95.34 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Catharine Page Perkins Fund. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

11. On statues in vase-painting see De Cesare 1997.

12. Wade-Gery 1951.

13. Herodotos 3.88.3.

14. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale H2609 (Beazley

Archive no. 200473).

15. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 95.34 (Beazley Archive no. 200591); Rome, Villa Giulia 57684 (Beazley Archive no. 200468).



Fig. 5. Attic red-figure cup by Epiktetos. Rome, Villa Giulia 57684 (Foto della Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Etruria Meridionale).

the exact intent, judging by the result it is hard to say that this image is quite exactly praising Hipparkhos. There is a nice parallel here with some vases, recently discussed by Shapiro, in which the name Leagros, without *kalos*, is applied to satyrs.<sup>16</sup> For Shapiro, it is all a bit of joke – Leagros is a satyr, that is, a Casanova, a Lothario, a Don Juan. In the case of Hipparkhos, however, there is probably more afoot. The pairing of bawdy or even scurrilous imagery with the name of a tyrant (or, strictly speaking, a tyrant's brother and/or grandson) seems like a good way to get in trouble.

Moreover, we know quite well what Greek tyrants considered to be praise: we have reams of it from Pindar in the form of high-flown drinking-songs and noble odes. And we know what sort of thing they did not find flattering: we have it in the form of invective poetry, chiefly lyric monody and iambic. Melic abuse finds its supreme voice in Alkaios, who attacks Pittakos, tyrant of Mytilene, in language that strains with some difficulty to remain within the protocols of upper-class decorum.<sup>17</sup> Alkaios, that

is, uses lofty diction and evokes the pleasures of an elitist lifestyle of orientalizing luxury and divinely-sanctioned privilege, even as he heaps scorn upon Pittakos as a traitor to his class. When he insults the tyrant it is with relatively tame epithets like 'fatty', *phúsgôn*, 'drag-foot', *sarápoda*, and 'base-born', *kakopatridês*. The iambographic tradition, by contrast, embraces just these terms by way of exploding all the pretensions of the panhellenic elite. As represented by Arkhilokhos and Hipponax, it is deliberately, extravagantly coarse, attacking all that men like Alkaios held dear. Alkaios declares Pittakos a drag-foot, and he means it to sting; but Arkhilokhos takes the opposite tack and says that he'd actually prefer a squat, bow-legged captain with a full heart to a beautiful, long-haired scion of the upper class (fr. 114). What Alkaios disdains, Arkhilokhos celebrates – and pointedly so.

As Ian Morris has argued, the two genres, the two sorts of invective, do not correspond to two different social classes, but to two radically opposed cultural and political positions within the Greek upper class: if Alkaios hates the tyrant in the name of reactionary, elitist politics, the iambographs hate men like Alkaios, whether they rule as tyrants or as aristocrats.<sup>18</sup> The one at least aspires to decorum, while the other is deliberately indecorous, to put it mildly. Arkhilokhos gives graphic descriptions of fellatio, and narrates in detail how he deflowered the daughter of his enemy. Hipponax, active in the third quarter of the sixth century BC, heaps abuse upon his great enemy, one *Boupalos* or Ox-Dick, describing him as "a motherfucker, fooling with these words the sons of Erythrai, with [his mother] Arete preparing to draw back his ill-omened foreskin ...".<sup>19</sup> The name Arete means 'virtue', and elsewhere Hipponax makes much of the allegorical possibilities, describing how he went to Arete/Virtue in the night, how she "bent over for me facing the lamp", and so on.<sup>20</sup> In another fragment, Hipponax viciously satirizes the elite obsession with Eastern luxury,

16. Shapiro 2004.

17. On Alkaios and abuse see Kurke 1994.

18. Morris 2000, 155-91.

19. Hipponax fr. 12. Translated after Rosen 1988, with modifications.

20. Hippo. fr. 17.

with an account of sitting in an outhouse while simultaneously masturbating, shitting, and getting spanked by a Lydian whore. It goes on and on, very fragmentary but very pungent. The important thing to emphasize is that such invective is not merely or trivially personal. Iambic invective, like the more decorous abuse of Alkaios, is often explicitly political. These men are travestyng their political rivals, whether as named individuals or as a group.

Both lyric monody and iambic were composed for performance at symposia, that is, at the drinking-parties for which most Athenian fineware was produced. But it is pretty clear that the labeling of a whore on a penis-bird with the name Hipparkhos has more in common with Arkhilokhos and Hipponax than with Alkaios' highflown rhetoric, still less with the flattering language that Pindar employs in his sympotic drinking-songs.<sup>21</sup> Specific tropes even cross over from iambos into vase-painting. Arkhilokhos fr. 119 describes a prostitute: "and to fall upon her wineskin that works for hire, and to thrust belly against belly, thighs against thighs." Falling upon a wineskin has a sexual connotation surely pertinent to images like that on Epiktetos' Boston cup. Having seen that Paseas could juxtapose the name Miltiades with a statue of a Persian rider, it is tempting to suppose that something similar is afoot in this instance. The satyr 'falling on his wineskin' makes an ironical counterpoint to the name Hipparkhos immediately above, regardless of whether the name refers to the son of Peisistratos or the son of Kharmos or both. Without over-reaching it is fair to say that this pairing is not flattering to Hipparkhos – and, what is more, that it employs the imagery of iambic abuse.

Something similar is afoot with the cup in Copenhagen, although in this case it is possible

to be more specific. Epiktetos pairs *Hipparkhos kalos* with a stonemason at work, just as Hipponax characteristically denigrates his opponents by calling them craftsmen, *banausoi*. Boupalos he insists is a mere sculptor, while one Aeschylides he calls a potter (fr. 117), and another victim named Mimnes is a painter (fr. 28). Of course we should take these epithets with a grain of salt: Boupalos is no more a sculptor than he is on terms of sexual intimacy with his own mother, or the possessor of an especially unfortunate foreskin.<sup>22</sup> To call your enemy a *banausos* is a standard trope of Greek invective in both the melic and the iambic traditions. On grounds of class alone, therefore, the juxtaposition of the name Hipparkhos with an image of a wretched laborer at work on a herm is at the very least a form of *lèse majesté*, again familiar from the iambographic tradition. The tyrant's project of erecting herms permits a pictorial cheap-shot, as Epiktetos implies that Hipparkhos is like a stonemason. That the inscription can read perfectly well as *Hipparkhos is doing well, Hipparkhos kalôs* with an omega, only adds to the joke, transforming the inscription into an ironic name-tag.

But there is more to the matter. Comparison with the Hipparkhos cups in Boston and in Rome brings out the obvious sexual humor in this picture. Just as the prostitute rides the penis-bird, just as the satyr falls upon his own wineskin, so the herm is itself a phallus of sorts – an upright and overtly phallic pillar with an erect penis attached. It is resting 'between the thighs', *mêrôn metaxú* in Greek, a phrase that Arkhilokhos uses to refer to a tumescent penis (fr. 66 IEG). The position is flagrantly unrealistic, stone herms are heavy, one cannot hold them this way, but the craftsman seems to be banging away on this large erect thing, performing *kheirourgia*, 'hand-work', *dephô*, 'to work with the hand', both terms

21. It is perhaps significant in this regard that the first book of Hipponax was entitled the *Khutropodion*, or 'little pot'.

22. Contra Rosen 1988. Rosen acknowledges that Hipponax' representation of Boupalos is highly stereotyped – a feature that extends even to the name itself, a *hapax* which translates as 'Bull-Dick' – even as he insists on the historicity of the figure and his occupation. Yet Rosen himself ac-

knowledges that the only external evidence for Boupalos' existence and his status as a sculptor comes from Pliny (*NH* 36.11). Although Pliny weaves a full genealogy, it seems most likely that he is simply rationalizing what he read in Hipponax. That is, he infers from Hipponax that a sculptor named Boupalos existed, and then integrates that sculptor into his history at an appropriate chronological point. For this observation see Sheedy 1985, 625.

that in Attic comedy refer to masturbation.<sup>23</sup> More compelling than any of these linguistic or contextual references, however, is the simple visual analogy between Epiktetos' handworker and the figure of the satyr *déphomenos*, in Beazley's euphemism (Fig. 6).<sup>24</sup> The visual rhyme is unmistakable. To one unacquainted with the indecorous imagery that adorns so many Athenian vases, it may seem perverse to find such vulgar connotations to Epiktetos' handworker. From within the visual world of this pottery, however, it is actually rather difficult to do anything else. A cup near the Antiphon Painter, now in Boston, makes the identical joke and thereby brings the point home: here a satyr, his own penis tied back in a dog-knot, works busily at an enormous column between his legs (Fig. 7).<sup>25</sup> This is not subtle stuff. On offer here is what we might call pictorial iambos, a visual equivalent to the sort of scurrilous, obscene, and highly politicized invective that characterized some Greek symposia. The gist is not simply that Hipparkhos is like a stonemason because he set up herms, but that he is a wanker because he set up herms.

What is it about erecting herms that makes a tyrant like a masturbating satyr? Part of the answer, surely, is that the juxtaposition of phallic herm with moralizing message was too good an opportunity to pass up. If indeed we are to imagine our poor craftsman in the act of inscribing one of the tyrant's high-minded dicta onto the stone, repetitively working it with his right hand, then the irony becomes truly vicious. But it is useful to set Hipparkhos' actions in the context of a broader Greek discourse about tyrants and the marking of territory. Deborah Steiner has observed that, in Herodotos, to 'cut up', *katatemnô* (Hdt. 2.108.4), the internal boundaries of a state is an action characteristic of tyrants and hubristic kings.<sup>26</sup> The pharaoh Sesostrius uses forced labour to partition Egypt with an intricate system of canals and dikes (Hdt. 2.108-109) even as he erects statues and stelai to mark his conquests (Hdt. 2.102.4-5); Steiner observes that these stelai, marked with female genitalia, are anti-types to the Attic herms.<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere in Herodotos, the tyrannical Deioeces reorganizes the kingdom of the Medes as a series of concentric rings ema-

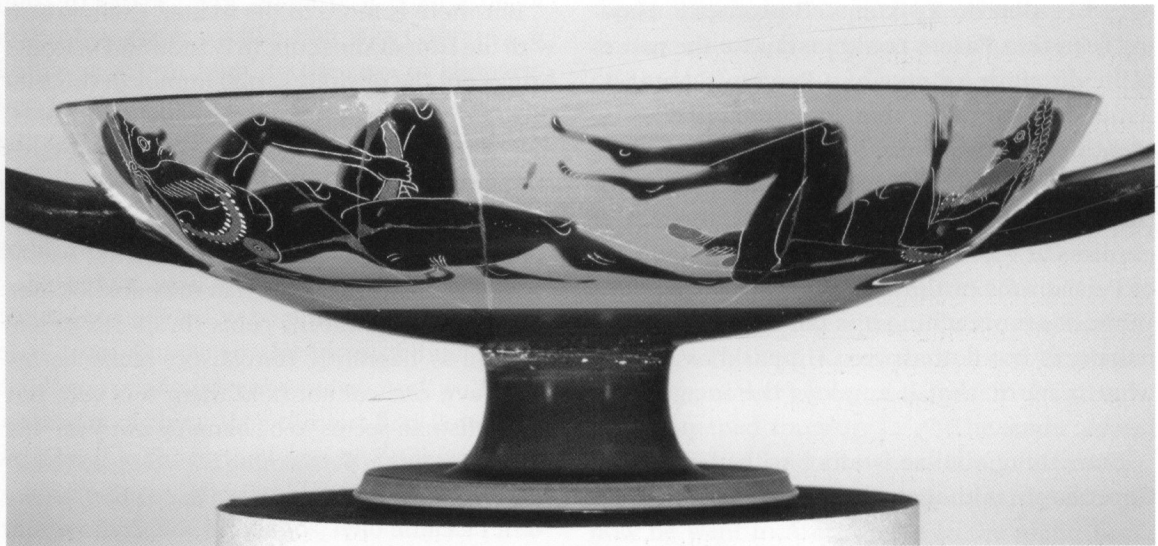


Fig. 6. Attic black-figure cup by the Amasis Painter. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 10.651 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Edward Perry Warren. Photograph 2008 © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

23. Henderson 1991, 220-22.

24. Cup by the Amasis Painter. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 10.651 (Beazley Archive no. 310515).

25. Cup near the Antiphon Painter. Boston, Museum of Fine

Arts 62.613 (Beazley Archive no. 275647).

26. Steiner 1994, ch. 4 and p. 146. On boundary stones see more recently Ober 2005, 182-211.

27. Steiner 1994, 128-29.



Fig. 7. Attic red-figure cup near the Antiphon Painter. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 62.613 (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift in the memory of Arthur Fairbanks. Photograph2008 © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

nating from himself at the centre of a seven-walled palace, at the centre of a capital city, at the centre of the country. Dareios likewise has a mania for the establishment of boundary-markers, even as he gerrymanders the Persian empire into new administrative districts for the purposes of taxation. For Herodotos, these actions are transgressive, overweening: he describes them with the verb *huperbainō*, to overstep (Hdt. 3.89.1). The result is what might be called the paradox of the boundary-stone: the establishment of unnatural terrestrial boundaries amounts to transgressing a natural or ethical one. To set limits is to trespass.

The paradox of the boundary-stone is but one aspect of a more general characteristic of tyrants: their overweening desire for mastery over others derives from a lack of control over the self, a root powerlessness or, in Plato's terms, *akrateia*. Because the tyrant cannot control his appetites, therefore he is driven to grasp after more, more, more power. Although master of the state he is slave to his desires; or, bet-

ter, because he is slave to desire, therefore he seeks after mastery. As Simonides tells Hieron, in Xenophon's dialogue on tyranny, "It seems as if the satisfaction of the sexual appetites were the only motive that produces in you the craving for despotism".<sup>28</sup>

It so happens that Hipparkhos is a paradigmatic figure in this regard. The story of his death at the hands of Harmodios and Aristogeiton turns on this very point. As described in Herodotos and Thucydides, Hipparkhos desires the young Harmodios, notwithstanding the fact that the boy is already the *erōmenos* of Aristogeiton.<sup>29</sup> On being rebuffed, Hipparkhos vents his spleen on Harmodios' family by insulting his sister. Insatiable lust thereby leads Hipparkhos to a fatal double *hubris*: he has wronged Aristogeiton by pursuing his boyfriend, and he has wronged Harmodios by disrespecting his sister. The tyrannicides can only respond by killing the man, setting upon him in a rage that is, according to Thucydides (6.53.3), *erōtikos* or 'erotic' in the case of Aristogeiton, and *hubrismenos* or 'outraged' in the case of Harmodios. Erotic hubris is characteristic of a tyrannical incontinence.<sup>30</sup>

One might compare this material to Sokrates' argument in the *Gorgias* (494d-e) that Kallikles' ideal of a happy tyrant, a despot who can satisfy all his desires, is in its logical extension a *kinaidos*, a catamite, who will do anything for pleasure, even to the point of being anally penetrated. The tyrant's power of limitless self-gratification is, to repeat, ultimately a form of powerlessness, *akrateia*. The road to *kinaidia*, however, begins with something as simple as scratching an itch.

"Now if a man felt very itchy and had unlimited opportunities for scratching himself, happiness for him would be a life of perpetually scratching his itches, yes?"

"You're ridiculous, Sokrates."

"Well, I managed to shame Polos and Gorgias, but do not you give in to shame! Be a real man and give me your answer."

"O.K. I admit that the scratching man would have a pleasant life."

28. Xenophon, *Hiero* 1.26. Compare Polybios, 6.7.

29. Thucydides 1.20, 6.54-59; Aristotle, *Athenaiōn Politeia* 18-19.1.

30. On the tyrannicides in vase-painting see Neer 2002, 168-81 with further references; Schmidt, this volume.



"And if it's pleasant, it's also happy?"

"Yes."

"Now, if he were to scratch only his head ... – do I have to take the questions any farther? You see what your answers will be, Kallikles, when I lead you along the entire series that starts here? The end point to which such questions are directed, the life of the *kinaidoi*, is not that a terrible and shameful and awful thing? Or would you dare to say that such people are happy when they have unlimited access to what they want?"

"Are not you ashamed of yourself, Sokrates, taking the argument in that direction?"<sup>31</sup>

The tyrant cannot control his appetites, and specifically he cannot control himself; he starts off scratching his head, and pretty soon he is scratching something else – and the next thing you know, he is no better than a woman, or a *kinaidos*.

Returning to the herm-cup, it seems that Epiktetos is combining several existing tropes about tyrants. The tyrant is depraved, cannot control his appetites, hence is sexually shameful specifically with regard to self-control, i.e., masturbation, and this quality manifests itself in his attempt to cut up and reorder the countryside. One might parse the cup, accordingly, as suggesting that at the very moment Hipparkhos exercises his power, the very moment he sets his mark on the Attic *khōra* by erecting herms, the very moment he asserts his own cultural status by inscribing moralizing messages – at that very moment, he reveals himself to be no better than a wage-laborer, no better than a man who scratches his own itches, incontinent and base. That is the joke here: the abusive charge hurled at the tyrannical man.

The Villa Giulia cup may be more explicit in omitting the tag-*kalos* entirely and simply applying the name *Hipparkhos* to a whore on a penis-bird, or to a penis-bird ridden by a whore – either way, a figure of incontinence. But the special profundity of the Copenhagen cup lies in its deft exploitation of the god Hermes himself. As the god of boundaries, hence of transgressions, Hermes is a special patron of iambic poetry: Hipponax, at any rate, invokes him on

several occasions (frs. 3, 3a, 32, 34, 35, 177). The Roman-era metrician Heliodorus drew attention to this aspect of the corpus with reference to the line, "For I'll speak thus: Cyllenian Hermes, son of Maia".<sup>32</sup> Noting that this line violates the protocols of meter by employing dactyls where it should not, Heliodorus stated wryly that "Hipponax overstepped many of the boundaries in his iambs". It is a lovely observation. The metrical irregularity corresponds to the content of the statement: Hipponax artfully 'oversteps the boundaries' of meter in the very act of pronouncing the name of Hermes, god of boundaries. Put differently, Hermes is the appropriate name to invoke in violating the bounds of rhythmic decorum.

Epiktetos adopts a similar strategy within the genre of pictorial iambs. If his theme is the tyrant's transgression of boundaries in and through his manufacture of boundaries, then there could be no more fitting iconography than that of Cyllenian Hermes. Like a good iambograph, Epiktetos presses decorum to its limit, oversteps the bounds of good taste, while charging Hipparkhos with transgression: and, with an art equal to that of any poet, he weaves this transgression into the very fabric of the image. Look at the border of the tondo: it crops the adze and the stool like a porthole, establishing itself as a visual limit, even as the workman rests his foot against it as though it were part of the scene. So the pictorial boundary is at once there and not there, stated and transgressed, much as Hipponax used the choliambic foot precisely in order to overstep it, in and with the name of Hermes.

From sixth-century pictorial iambs and the incontinence of tyrants, one may turn by way of counterpoint to the fifth century BC and the incontinence of democracy. Representations of the machinery of Athenian government are notoriously rare in vase-painting, a fact that I have discussed at length elsewhere.<sup>33</sup> Simply put, those aspects of Athenian civic life uncongenial to elitist aristocrats do not appear in the iconography. So, for instance, there are no hoplite

31. Plato, *Gorgias* 494c-e. Translation by J.J. Winkler.

32. Heliodorus ap. Hipponax fr. 35.

33. Neer 2002, 135-68.

phalanges, but lots of individually brilliant epic heroes; no naval battles in the age of Themistokles and Kimon and the Delian League, but instead mythical scenes of Boreas and Orytheia, or Athena with ships' sterns; no scenes of the state Council or Assembly, but plenty of upper-class drinking-parties; and so on. The world of vase-painting is for the most part an elitist one, oftentimes opposed to the communitarian ideology of the Greek polis. It is, therefore, a world far more congenial to Alkaios than to Hipponax: and indeed it is the former who appears alongside Sappho on the Brygos Painter's famous vase in Munich.<sup>34</sup> In this situation, it is worth paying special attention to those scenes of Athenian governance that do appear.

Ten years ago, Jacques Chamay published a pair of these scenes.<sup>35</sup> One, in a Swiss private collection, is tentatively attributed to Douris (Fig. 8). It shows a laborer crouching on the ground; he is bearded and balding, an unflattering image of the *banausos* that is fully in keeping the upper-class prejudice against artisans. With his left hand he places a cylindrical object atop a smaller, conical element that is set into a stand. In his right hand he holds a hammer as if to strike the cylinder. Leaning on a staff before him is an adult male, clad in a himation: he holds a bag in one hand. In the field between the two hangs a key. Chamay identified this scene, rightly no doubt, as the Athenian mint (that is as far as he goes, but it is an important insight). The workman is striking a coin: the cylindrical object is the die, the conical member the punch; in between we are to imagine the flan of metal that, when the hammer falls, will be struck into one of the city's famous 'owls'. The key in the background refers to the heavy security that such an operation entails. As for the man with the bag, Chamay suggests that he must be a magistrate, and the bag is to be understood as full of newly-minted coins. Here one might quibble that the bag could equally contain blank flans, and the magistrate could be doling them out to the workman at his feet. That Douris

did not provide enough information for us to decide one way or another suggests that this level of detail was not significant. The bag is a purse, whether for coins or flans it does not matter.

This point is actually significant. Similar bags appear on numerous other vases, and there has been lively debate as to whether they should be taken as change-purses or as containers for *astragaloï*, knucklebones employed in a game of chance. For Gloria Pinney, coins would be inappropriate for many of the contexts in which the bags frequently appear: school-scenes, music-lessons, the *gynaïkeion*.<sup>36</sup> But the bags do appear as well in nakedly commercial scenes – even at a vase-shop, on a cup by Phintias.<sup>37</sup> In any event, the minting scene in Geneva must



Fig. 8. Attic red-figure cup by Douris. Geneva, private (after Chamay 1996, 80).

34. Munich, Antikensammlungen 2416 (Beazley Archive no. 204129).

35. Cup by Douris. Geneva, private (Beazley Archive no. 28804). See Chamay 1996.

36. See most recently Pinney 2002, 14-15. See also Meyer 1988; Reden 1995, 195-211.

37. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins B4 (Beazley Archive no. 200139).

settle the question definitively: purses are for holding money. Their presence in schools, music classes, and women's quarters is reminder that all three are potential sites of commerce. Teachers in Greece are servants for hire (think of the sophists), whatever the subject, and the women in question are to be taken for courtesans or *hetairai* precisely because they are in the presence of such purses. The man on the Berlin Painter's oinochoe in San Antonio is not inviting the woman for a friendly game of knucklebones, he is offering her money for sex (Fig. 9).<sup>38</sup> It is the purse that allows to recognize these women as courtesans, not housewives. It functions as an iconographic signpost, associating the scene in which it appears with the market economy and wage labor.



Fig. 9. Attic red-figure oinochoe by the Berlin Painter. San Antonio 86.134.59 (after Shapiro 1995, 139).

38. San Antonio 86.134.59 (Beazley Archive no. 352487).

39. Reden 1995, 200.

As Sitta von Reden has observed, in all of these scenes the moneybags are exclusively a property of the *erastes*, the patron, the client.<sup>39</sup> They establish a social and economic hierarchy between the citizen and the males and females with whom he does business. Money is power. In courtship scenes, however, some moralizing or satirical intent does seem likely (divine suitors never hold moneybags). When, as on a piece by Makron (Fig. 11), an *erastes* counts out coins in the presence of an *erômenos*, the result is a travesty of the polite fiction that upper-class pederasty was a form of gift-exchange quite distinct from the crass world of the Agora.<sup>40</sup> Moneybags are a way to disembed certain social relationships in a way that is frankly indecorous.

The Geneva cup, itself a unicum, borrows its basic composition from scenes of this sort. The standing male with staff and cloak, holding out a bag of coins to a seated subaltern, conforms to the pattern of a client soliciting a prostitute. The worker, for his part, has the marks of class inscribed onto his very body, in the form of his comically balding pate. He is funny-looking, more like a satyr, or Alkaios' base-born, drag-footed Pittakos, than a *kalokagathos*. In illustrating the Athenian mint, Douris does not offer straightforward *realia* but something closer to comedy. He presents the democratic state as spectacle of naked commerce and class. The mint is like a brothel populated by the base and the low. Tame stuff by the standards of Hipponax or Epiktetos, but all the same an important reminder that coinage, as an extension of civic control over economic affairs, was greeted with much suspicion and even loathing in upper-class circles.

Leslie Kurke has written most eloquently on elite resistance to the introduction of coinage. The minting of coin, she has argued, represents

the state's assertion of its ultimate authority to constitute and regulate value in all the spheres in which general-purpose money operated simultaneously – economic, social, political, and religious.

40. Bochum, Ruhr Universität, Kunstsammlungen S 507 (Beazley Archive no. 275245).

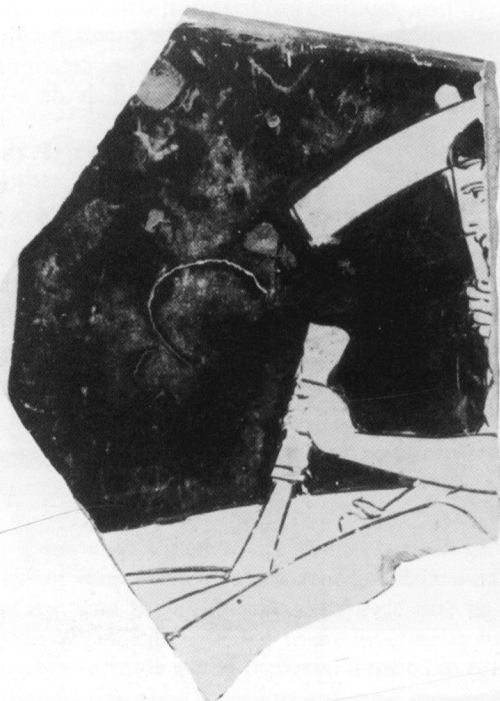


Fig. 10. Attic red-figure cup fragment. New York, private (after Chamay 1996, 83).

Thus, state-issued coinage as a universal equivalent, like the civic agora in which it circulated, symbolized the merger in a single token or site of many different domains of value, all under the final authority of the city.<sup>41</sup>

Coinage was a universal solvent, applicable to all situations, under the imprimatur of the state, and thereby posed a direct challenge to traditional, aristocratic systems of gift-exchange, the circulation of ranked prestige goods, and the social hierarchies they embodied. Aristocratic resistance to this encroachment took many and diverse forms, which Kurke has traced in detail. For our purposes the most relevant is perhaps Herodotos' portrait of Dareios as a *kapêlos*, a merchant, crass in the extreme, replacing the traditional relationships

of reciprocity, kinship, hospitality, and ranked 'spheres of exchange', with naked cash transactions in which the daric is the true master of all.<sup>42</sup> The crassness of the money economy consists in its universalizing of exchange – coins are good everywhere for everything – and in its disembedding of relationships hitherto rooted in traditional social forms.

Douris' picture of the Athenian mint is very much in keeping with this tendency. The mint is like a brothel, like a place in which the *hetaira* or 'female companion' is revealed for a *pornê*, a whore; it dishonors everyone involved, like a man offering money to a young boy for sex; its inhabitants are shameful, ugly, *aiskhros*, and base-born.<sup>43</sup> It is in this guise that the democratic government enters the iconography of red-figure, from which it is otherwise all but absent.

But it is in Chamay's second example that the invective becomes truly powerful (Fig. 10).<sup>44</sup> Roughly contemporary with the Douris cup, the fragment shows the same scene: once again, we have a man minting coins. This time, however, the punch does not rest on the floor but is cradled between the thighs; the workman, a youth this time, holds the cylindrical die in his left hand and a hammer in his right. This pose is as improbable in its own way as that of Epiktetos' stonemason. One slip with the hammer and this man will do himself serious injury; Douris' version seems far more plausible in this regard. But the similarity with Epiktetos is not entirely fortuitous, because here again it is necessary to acknowledge the visual context that determines such departures from the real. Juxtaposed against the man's penis, the long cylindrical shape projecting from his thighs, grasped firmly in one hand, carries an obvious association in the obscene world of sympotic imagery. As with Epiktetos, we have here a coarse pun of sorts, that associates the minting of coins with a want of self-control ordinarily associated with satyrs – or with tyrants. On offer is another ex-

41. Kurke 1999, 12-13.

42. Kurke 1999, 65-89.

43. On *hetaira* vs. *pornê* in this context see Kurke 1999,

175-219.

44. Cup fragment. New York, private (Beazley Archive no. 28805).

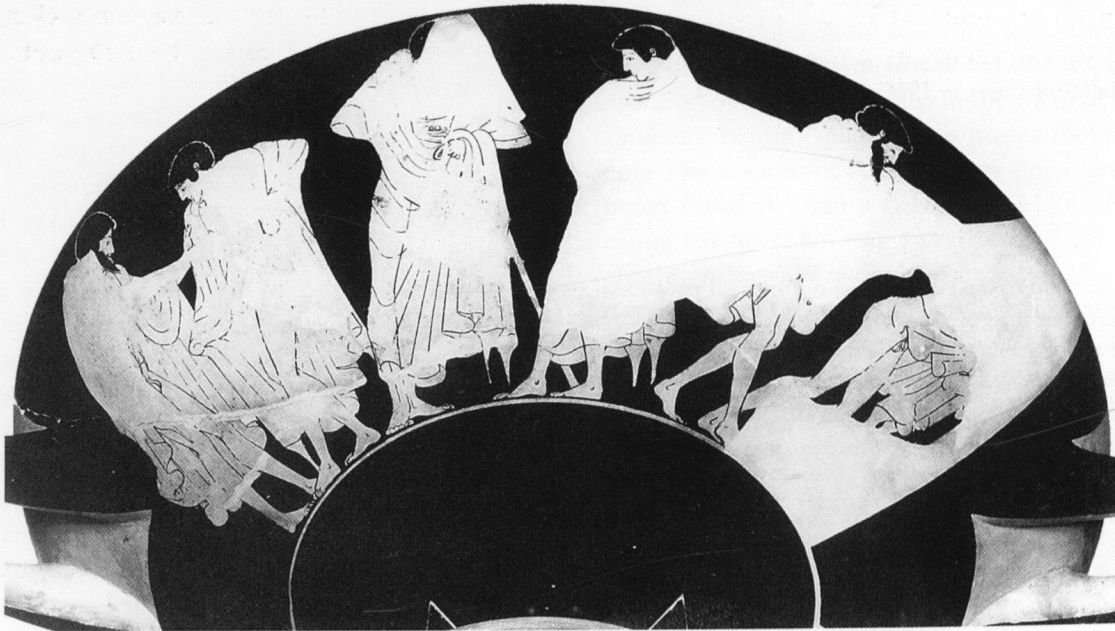


Fig. 11. Attic red-figure cup by Makron. Bochum, Ruhr Universität, Kunstsammlungen S 507 (after Kunisch 1997, Taf. 76).

ample of pictorial iambos, the target this time being not the tyrannical Hipparkhos but the Athenian state in its capacity as minter of coins. Like Epiktetos and Hipponax and Douris, and indeed like fifth-century critics of democracy, the anonymous painter of this cup still uses class as a way to demean his target: the polis

is represented by the lowly *banausos*. Like his archaic ancestors, the painter also uses sexual incontinence – and, specifically, the loss of self-control exemplified in masturbation – to figure political authority gone awry. If Hipparkhos was *dephomenos* in erecting herms, and thereby marking the Attic *khora*, here it is the state itself

that has lost itself in striking coinage, and thereby challenging traditional regimes of exchange. *Dēmokratia* is *akrateia*; the rule of the mob, like the rule of the tyrant, is no rule at all.

The two minting scenes thus complement one another. The Douris cup figures minting as a version of a negatively-valued social relationship: as a version of the crassly mercantile exchange of money for sex that characterizes the relationship of *pornē* and client. The fragment in New York, on the other hand, presents minting in more ‘Hipponactean’ terms as a form of incontinence. The one reveals what is at stake in the other: coinage is incontinence because it turns the city government into a whorehouse – that is, it disembeds aristocratic social relations – and thereby leads to *akrateia* and ruin just as surely as, for Plato, scratching an itch leads to *kinaidia* and tyranny. Together with Epiktetos’ cup, they represent a tradition of pictorial iambos in Athenian vase-painting, a tradition that preserves upper-class resistance to the encroachments of the Athenian state, be it tyrannical or democratic.

In conclusion, I want to note a telling difference between the Hipparkhos cups and those that depict mints. Epiktetos is firmly within an Archaic tradition of iambic abuse, artfully lampooning the Peisistratids as base, incontinent, and transgressive. If his idiom is indecorous by comparison with Alkaios’ attacks on the tyrant Pittakos, still it conforms to an established tradition of attacking tyrants from within the discourse of the Greek upper class. The adaptation of this tradition to the predicament of Athenian democracy is noteworthy. The iambographic stance, traditionally a means for deflating the pretensions of the elite or the tyrannical, here turns to face the democratic regime. If iambic is a way pointedly to celebrate the lowest common denominator, then its employment for anti-democratic ends is telling. Distinctions of genre that held good in the sixth century BC are breaking down in the fifth, as the critics of democracy employ any means at their disposal to criticize the Athenian state.

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