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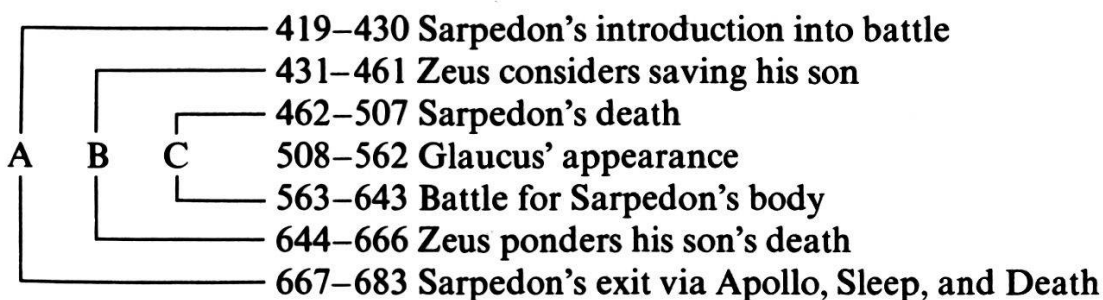
Memnon and Sarpedon

By Mark Edward Clark and William D. E. Coulson, University of Minnesota

The Euphronios krater purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1972¹ invites a new literary and iconographical study of the Memnon and Sarpedon stories. The portrayal of the removal of Sarpedon's body by Sleep and Death on face A (obverse) of the vase raises once again the question of the relationship of this scene from Book 16 of the *Iliad* to the story of Memnon's death as found in the *Aithiopis*. Specifically, it supports the arguments of Pestalozzi and Schadewaldt² for the priority of the Memnon story over that of Sarpedon in the *Iliad*, arguments that subsequently have been denied but not seriously refuted. The evidence for the priority of the Memnon story falls into two groups: literary and iconographical.

The Literary Evidence

Homer's Sarpedon episode (Il. 16, 419–683) forms a well developed ring:



Neo-analytic scholars have argued that the portrayal of Sarpedon represents the Memnon story of the *Aithiopis*, specifically that the cyclic version of Memnon preceded the Homeric text and that it has been adapted into the *Patrocleia* for the purpose of providing Patroclus a great and heroic deed³. The figure of

1 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972. 11. 10.

2 H. Pestalozzi, *Die Achilleis als Quelle der Ilias* (Erlenbach-Zürich 1945); W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*⁴ (Stuttgart 1965) 155–202.

3 W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias*, Hermes Einzelschrift 14 (Wiesbaden 1960) 318 (for literature up to 1960). See also, G. Schoeck, *Ilias und Aithiopis* (Zürich 1961) 23–25 and 58–61; K. Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter*, ed. Hölscher (Göttingen 1961) 341–48; see especially

Sarpedon, as Patroclus' fateful opponent, thus is derived from Memnon's confrontation with Achilles in the Aithiopsis⁴. Fenik⁵, on the other hand, and more lately Dihle⁶ have raised questions concerning the priority of the Memnon story over that of Sarpedon and have maintained rather that the two stories are mere parallels. In light of this recent hesitation to accept the conclusions of the neo-analytic school, the problem deserves a re-examination.

Parallel or a direct influence of the cyclic tradition upon Homer? The most striking similarity between the two stories is the removal of the body. According to the iconographical evidence for the Aithiopsis, Eos removes the body of Memnon from the battlefield to a far place where she washes and anoints it. After these rites she gives the body to Sleep and Death to carry to Ethiopia. The neo-analysts have claimed that in Iliad 16, 666ff. this motif is fulfilled for Sarpedon by Apollo as a substitute for Eos, performing his duties in this role as a representative of Zeus⁷. The objection to this interpretation is that there are many doublets in Greek mythology, of which this is another example; the similarity suggests a parallel rather than direct influence⁸. We, however, believe that the neo-analysts are correct on this point and that direct influence is more probable than the possibility that the Sarpedon ring is a mere parallel to the Memnon story. We shall consider three points which deal with the Homeric treatment of Sarpedon and which, we hope, will suggest that Homer has fashioned his story upon the Memnon motif of the Aithiopsis.

1. Sarpedon's *aristeia*: the Sarpedon episode represents a shortened version of Memnon's encounter with Achilles. This is suggested by the significant contrast between the portrayal of Patroclus in the ring (and the rest of Book 16) and the undeveloped figure of Sarpedon. Clearly, the intention of Book 16 is to portray Patroclus as a well developed figure who progresses dramatically toward his doom. For instance, three well placed poetic intrusions represent Patroclus' linear development from grief over the Trojans' success to boasting over Cebriones' death and final demise⁹. In addition, there is a clear nexus between Patroclus' development in the Sarpedon ring and his subsequent death. This becomes evident in Patroclus' impetuous charge against the city of

Howald, *Sarpedon*, Mus. Helv. 8 (1951) 112. In addition, for the "Prioritätsbeweise" of the *Aithiopsis* see Hölscher, "Rez. von W. Schadewaldt: *Von Homers Welt und Werk*", Gnomon 27 (1955) 392–6.

4 Kullmann, *Quellen der Ilias* 321; Schoeck, *Ilias und Aithiopsis* 23ff.

5 B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad*, Hermes Einzelschrift 21 (Wiesbaden 1968) 237.

6 A. Dihle, *Homer-Probleme* (Opladen 1970) 19–20.

7 Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk* 165–6; Kullmann, *Quellen der Ilias* 319ff.; Schoeck, *Ilias und Aithiopsis* 25.

8 Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes* 237; Dihle, *Homer-Probleme* 19–20.

9 16, 20 τὸν δὲ βαρὺ στενάχων προσέφη, Πατρόκλεες ἱπεῦ.

16, 744 τὸν δ' ἐπικερτομέων προσέφη, Πατρόκλεες ἱπεῦ.

16, 843 τὸν δ' ὀλιγοδρανέων προσέφη, Πατρόκλεες ἱπεῦ.

Troy (16, 651–655) and Apollo's warning to him to withdraw, since Troy is fated to fall neither to him nor to Achilles (16, 707–9). Thus, the Sarpedon ring is only another stage in the greater portrayal of Patroclus as an Achilles figure. Scholars, both neo-analytic and of the Parry school, have long noted that Patroclus is a second Achilles¹⁰; but, the motif of charging into the city is especially reminiscent of Achilles in the Aithiopsis. Achilles is slain while attacking the city of Troy immediately after he has killed Memnon¹¹.

In comparison to Patroclus, Sarpedon is found wanting in character portrayal. The real pathos of the ring arises not out of Sarpedon *per se* as a hero about to meet his death, but in the character and portrayal of Zeus who grieves for his son (431ff.) and who decides to avenge his son's death (644ff.). The sequence of Sarpedon's *aristeia* and death forms an A-B-C-Glaucus-C-B-A ring, unlike the linear progression of Patroclus. Perhaps the ring in itself can suggest that the story of Sarpedon represents a peculiar episode which reflects the influence of an older motif, such as the cyclic tradition of Memnon; but, the important factor here is the contrast between Patroclus and Sarpedon in that the latter is a vague and undeveloped Homeric character, but with sufficiently high credentials as an ἡμίθεος to provide his opponent a great heroic conflict. If the ring is viewed as a shortened heroic conflict with allusions to a standard heroic battle which adds heroic color to the passage, it is highly suggestive of some influence from a previous tradition.

In connection with Sarpedon's *aristeia*, the nature of this shortened heroic conflict can be specifically seen in the representation of the scales in the ring. From iconographical evidence, we can be certain that the two mothers, Eos and Thetis, were involved in a dispute to save their sons' lives¹². The most important moment in the dispute, indeed the turning point of the conflict, must have been the weighing of the scales. In the Sarpedon ring, however, the scales are relegated to a shortened motif, "abgekürzt" as Kullmann has called it¹³. Hector recognizes the scales only after Sarpedon has been killed and without any previous mention: γνῶ γὰρ Διὸς ἱρὰ τέλαιντα (658). The mere allusion to the scales at this point, as Dietrich has shown, is a sufficient conveyance of their import as a long standing concept¹⁴. The problem is, however, that there is no need for the scales

10 Armstrong, *The Arming Motif in the Iliad*, AJP 79 (1958) 347. Armstrong sees Patroclus as a "counterfeit" to Achilles. See also Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk* 179.

11 Compare *Iliad* 16, 655 (ῥσσαιτο προτὶ ἄστν) with Proclus' summary in the *Chrestomathia*: τρεψάμενος δ' Ἀχιλλεὺς τοὺς Τρῶας καὶ εἰς τὴν πόλιν συνεισπεσὼν ὑπὸ Πάριδος ἀναιρεῖται καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος (Kullmann 54, no. 62). The similarity is obvious: immediately after the death of Memnon, Achilles is slain by Paris and Apollo, while attempting to enter the city; in like manner, Patroclus is killed by Hector and Apollo while he tries to enter Troy (cf. *Iliad* 16, 712ff. and 830).

12 Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk* 164, fig. 22; Kullmann, *Quellen der Ilias* 316ff.

13 Kullmann, *Quellen der Ilias* 317; see also Schoeck, *Ilias und Aithiopsis* 25–26.

14 B. C. Dietrich, *The Judgement of Zeus*, Rhein. Mus. 107 (1964) 108.

at this time, and their appearance in this manner is unique in Homer. Hector's recognition of the scales is, of course, a preparation for his flight (656–662), a common motif in the *Iliad*¹⁵. But in the *Iliad* the motif of flight based on the recognition of the turning battle (γινώσκω always appears in this case) has little or nothing at all to do with the scales. The recognition never involves the scales, but rather the turning victory, the recognition of some god or god's works, or merely the awareness that the enemy is stronger¹⁶. In this instance, the scales can only have one meaning: they add to the heroic color of Patroclus' victory. Heroic color, developed through an allusion, is very suggestive of a tradition which is so well known that one mere line is sufficient to recall a previous situation or hero. We believe that in this case it is a matter of influence and not parallel development.

2. Zeus' attempt to save his son: the neo-analysts have argued that this represents Eos' attempt to save Memnon in the *Aithiopis*¹⁷. Zeus does later hesitate to permit Hector's death (22, 192–5) in a similar fashion as here, but the element of parenthood is completely absent in Hector's case¹⁸. It can be no mere accident, however, that Sarpedon is Zeus' son in light of the Eos-Memnon relationship of the *Aithiopis*. It is thus likely that the Homeric manipulation is directed towards retaining the particular type of relationship between a god (or goddess) and a hero. Yet, this fact creates a certain amount of tension within the Sarpedon ring, and indeed within portions of the poem which precede *Iliad* 16. Zeus at first grieves over his son's forthcoming death (432–8), and when Hera reminds him that Sarpedon's death had long ago been established by fate, *πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴση* (441), he appears to be below the Moirai in his inability to save his son¹⁹. The passive role which Zeus assumes by not defending his son (522) is, however, not in character with his actions earlier in the poem.

15 Cf. T. Krischer, *Formale Konvention der homerischen Epik* (Munich 1971) 67–72 on “Standhalten” and “Zurückweichen”.

16 Recognition and flight often involve the *ἐπεραλκῆς νίκη*, “the victory of turning fortune” (see *Il.* 16, 362 for Ajax's recognition of this; see also *Il.* 7, 26; 17, 627). That the victory of turning fortune has nothing to do with the scales is seen from 8, 171 where the sign of changing victory comes from Zeus' thunder and not from the scales which appeared earlier (8, 69–74). For the recognition of the gods or their deeds, see 5, 433–444; 5, 824 and again Ajax in the *Patrocleia* (16, 119–122). For an example of withdrawal due to the awareness that the other side is stronger, see 10, 358–9.

17 Kullmann, *Quellen der Ilias* 318; Schoeck, *Ilias und Aithiopis* 59; Reinhardt, *Ilias und ihr Dichter* 389.

18 See Reinhardt, *Ilias und ihr Dichter* 382ff., who attempts to trace the theological development from the Zeus of the *Aithiopis* to that of the *Iliad*. He may be correct in seeing Eos' “Mutterschmerz” in the portrayal of Zeus at the time of Hector's death (22, 192–5). Nonetheless, in Hector's situation, Zeus clearly does not perform the function of a parent, as in the case with Sarpedon.

19 H. Schrader, *Götter und Menschen Homers* (Stuttgart 1952) 127; W. C. Green, *Moirai, Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought* (Gloucester, Mass. 1958) 14, 124, n. 104.

He had previously saved Sarpedon from Ajax (12, 402–3) and had subsequently proclaimed the order of events which would involve the deaths of Patroclus, Sarpedon, and Hector (15, 64–8) in fulfillment of his promise to Thetis. It is clear from the last passage that the Homeric Zeus is equated with the Moirai and that had he wished, he could have prevented Sarpedon's death. This is, of course, in the realm of theological possibilities which in Homer, and indeed in many other poets, is subservient to the manipulation of a plot, as it is here. But in the second part of the ring (563ff.) Zeus is certainly not a passive spectator to events, and he assumes an active role in avenging his son's death (644–55), more in accord with the Zeus of Iliad 15. Here again, in light of this discrepancy in the character of Zeus, we believe that we are dealing with an influence rather than a parallel, an influence which was strong enough to make Homer momentarily change his portrayal of Zeus. Zeus' momentary passivity and inability to save Sarpedon can best be explained by maintaining that in this role he serves the function of a hero's mother confronting the Moirai.

3. Sarpedon's fate: Schadewaldt has argued from vase representations that in the Aithiopis Hermes holds the scales while Thetis and Eos each beg for their sons' lives (see n. 2); Reinhardt²⁰ and Howald²¹ have further maintained that in this role the Zeus of the Aithiopis is nonpartisan and that he remains aloof from the situation, calling for the scales to settle the dispute. When Zeus grieves for Sarpedon in the role of the mother-goddess, the necessity arises for the scales and a nonpartisan answer. This nonpartisan answer, we believe, is to be found in Hera's *πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴση*. Yet, the only previous indication of Sarpedon's death is in 15, 67, and one book earlier is hardly in keeping with the length of time implied by *πάλαι*. Furthermore, it would seem natural to have an appearance of the scales at this point, following the nonpartisan answer, as occurs in Hector's case (22, 179 and 209ff.). The most likely reason why the scales do not follow this statement is again due to motif shortening and the desire on the part of the poet to create an allusion to the scales. The attempt is made to portray Sarpedon's fate in the manner of a standard hero whose fate is contingent upon a *kerostasia*.

In addition, Hera's answer is superfluous and is really not the cause of Sarpedon's death. She gives a second and much more potent reason why Zeus should not protect Sarpedon: *ἀτὰρ οὐ τοι πάντες ἐπαινέομεν θεοὶ ἄλλοι* (443); and, the other gods will rescue their sons from death, if Zeus saves his son (444–9). This virtually negates any authority which the Moirai may have in respect to Sarpedon's death and may be an attempt on Homer's part to coordinate his view of Zeus here with that of Book 15. But the point still remains that Hera's first answer is not needed and is, in fact, somewhat out of place. The best

20 Reinhardt, *Ilias und ihr Dichter* 384ff.

21 Howald, *Mus. Helv.* 8 (1951) 113.

interpretation of the problem, we believe, is to maintain that the statement *πάλαι πεπρωμένον αἴση* again appears for the purpose of heroic color and is the shortening of a much larger motif from the Aithiopsis.

We have argued that the appearance of the scales, the portrayal of Zeus as the hero's parent in conflict with the Moirai, and Hera's role as an arbiter are all allusions to the cyclic tradition. This three-fold motif of a hero's encounter with the Moirai and his death is suggestive of Memnon's situation in the Aithiopsis and, taken together with the motif of the removal of the body, does seem to reaffirm the possibility that the Memnon story serves as the model for the Homeric Sarpedon episode. An interpretation of the various vase representations of Memnon's death further substantiates this.

The Iconographical Evidence

Representations on black- and red-figure vases illustrate scenes from the Memnon story of the Aithiopsis rather than the Sarpedon episode from the *Iliad*²². This attests to the popularity of the Memnon story at least in the 6th century B.C. The portrayal of Sarpedon in the arms of Sleep and Death on Face A of the Euphronios krater in New York represents a reworking of the Memnon story through the substitution of Sarpedon for Memnon in much the same manner as the poet of the *Iliad* has used the Memnonis as a source for the Sarpedon episode. Representations of the Memnon story can be broken down into four categories, and in each of these it is clear that it is Memnon who is represented and not his counterpart Sarpedon.

1. Achilles and Memnon fight over the body of Antilochus. Lung has collected 16 representations of this scene²³, of which two through inscriptions name Achilles, Memnon, and the body of Antilochus between them²⁴. There can be no doubt, therefore, that these representations have been inspired by the single combat in the Aithiopsis.

2. The *kerostasia*. Lung has collected 7 examples²⁵, to which can be added three others²⁶. Again, these scenes can be definitely linked to the Aithiopsis,

22 G. E. Lung, *Memnon, Archäologische Studien zur Aithiopsis* (Bonn 1912).

23 Lung, *Memnon* 34–36. The scene in which Achilles and Memnon fight over the body of a fallen warrior is called by Lung Type A. His Type B consists of scenes which contain two fighters, one of whom flees to the right or sinks to his knees. Lung has collected 24 examples of Type B scenes.

24 a) Ionic amphora in Würzburg: E. Gerhard, *Auserlesene griechische Vasenbilder* III (Berlin 1840–58) 205, figs. 3–4; Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*⁴ 159–60, fig. 21. b) Chalcidian amphora in Florence, no. 1783: E. Reisch, *Zu den Friesen der delphischen Schatzhäuser*, *Wiener Eranos* (Vienna 1909) 298; Lung, *Memnon* 35.

25 Lung, *Memnon* 14–19.

26 a) Black-figure Ionic hydria in the Villa Giulia: G. Ricci, *Una hydria ionica da Caere*, *Annuario della scuola archeologica italiana di Atene* n.s. 8–10 (1946–8) 47–57, pls. 3–6. b) Attic red-

since there is no formal *kerostasia* in Book 16 of the Iliad, where the scales simply form a background to the literary portrayal of Sarpedon's death.

3. Eos annoints and mourns over the dead body of her son. There are 6 examples of this scene²⁷, on two of which inscriptions name both Eos and Memnon. In each scene the female figure of Eos is clear; yet, in the Iliad it is Apollo who performs the functions of Eos for Sarpedon.

4. Sleep and Death carry Memnon to his homeland. Here, the identification of the scene as stemming from the Aithiopsis is far less certain; yet, strong arguments can be advanced for considering the dead body as that of Memnon and not of Sarpedon. There are 4 such scenes²⁸:

- a) Black-figure amphora, now in the Louvre, F 388²⁹
- b) Black-figure cup from Velanideza, now in the National Museum, Athens, 505³⁰
- c) Red-figure cup, now in the British Museum, E 12; signed by the potter Pamphaios and attributed to the Nikosthenes Painter³¹
- d) Red-figure krater, now in the Louvre, G 163³².

The scenes on the two cups (Athens and London) perhaps present the most positive evidence for the artistic popularity of the Memnon story. The cup from Velanideza portrays a bearded corpse in the arms of Sleep and Death being tended by a winged female figure who can be none other than Eos herself. To the right of this central group appears a bearded man dressed in high boots and wearing a *petasos*. He is surely Hermes who is the guide of this procession to Memnon's homeland. To the left of the central group, coming at the end of the procession, as it were, are a young woman and a youth, whom Robert (n. 30) identifies as the wife and perhaps the brother of Memnon, respectively.

The Pamphaios cup in London portrays a somewhat similar scene. The central group again represents a bearded corpse in the arms of Sleep and Death. To the right is a female figure with her right arm stretched towards the corpse. She can surely be none other than Eos who is bidding farewell to her son. To the

figure cup by Epiktetos in the Villa Giulia, no. 57912: U. Ciotti, *Una nuova opera firmata di Epitteto*, *Arti figurative* 2 (1946) 8–21, pls. 1–8; J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*² (Oxford 1963) 72, no. 24. c) Attic red-figure Nolan amphora by the Nikon Painter in the Louvre, CA 2243: Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*² 651, no. 11.

27 Lung, *Memnon* 51–55.

28 Lung, *Memnon* 57–60.

29 C. Robert, *Thanatos*, 39. Programm zum Winckelmannsfeste (Berlin 1879) 8–9.

30 Robert, *Thanatos* 17–18; H. Brunn, *Troische Miszellen: Kleine Schriften* III (Berlin 1906) 104–123; R. Holland, *Memnon in der Kunst*, in Roscher, *Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie* II (Leipzig 1894–97) 2676–79; Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*⁴ 160, fig. 24; J. D. Beazley, *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters* (Oxford 1956) 564, no. 580.

31 Robert, *Thanatos* 9–10; Schadewaldt⁴ 160, fig. 23; Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*² 126, no. 24.

32 Brunn, *Kleine Schriften* III (1906) 104, fig. 28; Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*² 227, no. 12.

left is another female figure with a *caduceus* in one of her hands. She can be identified as Iris, who, as the messenger of the gods, has called Sleep and Death to the place where Eos has washed and annointed Memnon's body. Von Bothmer and Beazley³³ both consider the corpse to be Sarpedon and not Memnon. Such an identification, however, is difficult to substantiate in view of the events in the Iliad and the presence of the two female figures on the cup. In the Iliad, it is Apollo who annoints Sarpedon's body and then delivers him to the arms of Sleep and Death, and it is Zeus who acts the part of the grieved parent. Neither divinity appears on the cup; rather, two female figures flank the central group, and the scene is best identified as stemming from the Aithiopis.

The literary origin of the scene on the black-figure amphora in the Louvre is harder to explain. It consists of an unbearded corpse in the arms of Sleep and Death; above flies an armed and winged εἰδωλον of the deceased. Such a scene is best viewed as derived from the Aithiopis, since there is no mention of an εἰδωλον in the rather detailed and highly descriptive passage in the Iliad (16, 663–83) about the death of Sarpedon. The origin of the remaining example (Louvre, G 163) is more ambiguous, since it represents simply a bearded corpse in the arms of Sleep and Death. The popularity of the Memnon story as an inspiration for artistic representations would favor an identification of the deceased as Memnon rather than Sarpedon.

The Euphronios krater in New York, however, definitely names the participants. Sleep and Death remove the body of Sarpedon in the presence of Hermes, while two flanking warriors, Leodamas on the left and Hippolytos on the right, look on. These warriors are not mentioned in the Iliad. Von Bothmer³⁴ considers Leodamas and Hippolytos to be Lycian and Trojan names, respectively, and suggests that they represent symbolically the Trojan battlefield where Sarpedon met his death. It is perhaps better to view them as symbolizing the Trojans and their allies who give the last honors to Sarpedon. The substitution of Hermes for Apollo represents a more important departure from the events told in the Iliad, where Hermes does not appear as the supervisor for the removal of the corpse. Hermes does, however, appear in representations from the Aithiopis as the holder of the scales in the *kerostasia* and as the leader of the so-called procession on the black-figure cup from Velanideza. It is evident, then, that the tradition of the Memnon story is still strong in the last decade of the 6th century B.C., in which the Euphronios krater can be placed. It is strong enough to cause Euphronios to depart from the scenes described in the Iliad by the substitution of Hermes for Apollo. This is a Hermes who plays an important role in the events concerning Memnon in the Aithiopis. Von Bothmer (n. 33) argues

33 D. von Bothmer, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bulletin* vol. 31, no. 1 (1972) 34–35; Beazley, *supra* n. 31.

34 D. von Bothmer, *Der Euphronioskrater in New York*, AA 1976, 485–512.

that the portrayal of Sleep and Death on the cup in London painted by the Nikosthenes Painter is an adaptation of the scene painted by Euphronios. Rather, the reverse of this idea should be argued. It has been suggested above that the scene on the Pamphaios cup can be none other than the removal of Memnon in the presence of Eos. It becomes clear, then, that Euphronios while using the Iliad as his immediate source of inspiration, adapted his iconography from depictions of the Memnon story, depictions such as appear on the cup from Velanideza and the Pamphaios cup.

Conclusion

The poet of the Iliad is obviously familiar with the events concerning Antilochus and Memnon in the Aithiopsis but has decided not to include these heroes in his story of Achilles. He does not intend for them to be his main figures but instead has constructed the Sarpedon episode in the Patrocleia to replace the Memnonis. Sarpedon, then, both literarily and iconographically becomes a substitute for Memnon. And the numerous vase representations depicting the death of Memnon rather than Sarpedon indicate that the Memnon story, at least by the end of the 6th century B.C., had a greater popularity than the Iliadic version.