

Zeitschrift:	Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique
Herausgeber:	Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique
Band:	64 (2018)
Artikel:	Brutal are the children of the night! : Nocturnal violence in Greek art
Autor:	Mylonopoulos, Ioannis
DOI:	https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-816255

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 16.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

V

IOANNIS MYLONOPOULOS

BRUTAL ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT!

NOCTURNAL VIOLENCE IN GREEK ART*

*Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter
Töteten der Sonne Glanz.
Ein geschlossnes Zauberbuch,
Ruht der Horizont - verschwiegen.
Aus dem Qualm verlorner Tiefen
Steigt ein Duft, Erinnrung mordend!
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter
Töteten der Sonne Glanz.
Und vom Himmel erdenwärts
Senken sich mit schweren Schwingen
Unsichtbar die Ungetüme
Auf die Menschenherzen nieder...
Finstre, schwarze Riesenfalter.¹
“Nacht”, Pierrot lunaire, A. Schoenberg, 1912*

* I would like to thank Angelos Chaniotis and Pierre Ducrey for the organization of the conference, the staff of the Fondation Hardt in Geneva for their wonderful hospitality, and Bernhard Blattmann for his musicological insights.

¹ Heavy, gloomy giant black moths / massacred the sun's bright rays / like a close-shut magic book / broods the distant sky in silence / From the mists in deep recesses / rise up scents, destroying memory / Heavy, gloomy giant black moths / massacred the sun's bright rays / And from heaven earthward bound / downward sink with somber pinions / unperceived, great hordes of monsters / on the hearts and souls of mankind.../ Heavy, gloomy giant black moths.

Albert Giraud's *Pierrot lunaire: rondels bergamasques* (1884) is, strangely enough, best known not in the French original,² but rather in the German translation by Otto Erich Hartleben (1892)³ thanks to a work that Arnold Schoenberg composed for the actress Albertine Zehme in 1912. For his *Dreimal sieben Gedichte aus Albert Girauds "Pierrot lunaire"* (op. 21), better known under its abbreviated title *Pierrot lunaire*, Schoenberg chose very carefully twenty-one poems from the fifty of which Giraud's work consisted and arranged them in three groups of seven.⁴ Interestingly, the poem *Nacht* ("Night") initiates the second group in which violence and crime dominate as general themes. The poem *Rote Messe* (Red Mass) that structurally stands in the very center not only of this group but of the entire composition could be even called aggressively and violently blasphemous.

Although the original title of the above-cited poem in French was *Papillons noirs*, Hartleben chose to call it *Nacht*; paradoxically, there is no single explicit reference to the night, neither in the French nor in the German text. It is the strong images captured in a few words that create an almost bloodcurdling atmosphere of the dangerous black night and justify the altered German title. Accompanied by Schoenberg's music, the text forces the listener into a world of black butterflies that massacre the bright light of the sun, scents that rise from deep recesses and annihilate memories, and hordes of monsters that sink on the hearts of men. There is no need to be literal and define in words the time in which these horrific incidents take place, monsters haunt us during the night, after the sun has died, when smell becomes more reliable than sight.

Schoenberg's and Hartleben's sound-paintings are reminiscent of Francisco Goya's almost a century earlier *Pinturas Negras*, one of the most powerful groups of paintings that thematize a fearful

² MARSH (2007).

³ GOUVAND (2004); TACK (2004).

⁴ DUNSBY (1992); VILAIN (2004); PUFFETT (2006).

lunar dark atmosphere, although the night as a temporal framework is not a unifying element.⁵ In general, however, night in Western painting is a rather desirable and often qualitatively neutral time setting, since it primarily gives painters the opportunity to experiment with light, colors, and shades. The night as the preeminent time of horrors and deadly danger, as exemplified in the *Nacht*, does not seem to dominate the imagination of artists: the night can be the temporal frame of Holofernes' decapitation, but it is also the time associated with the Nativity.⁶ Hieronymus Bosch' grotesque world can exist under a blue sky or in the darkness of night.

In the present paper, I will focus on the night within the context of ancient Greek art and place particular emphasis on acts of violence committed during the night. It will become obvious that ancient Greek artists — very much like their Western successors from the early Renaissance on — did not consider the night as the exclusive time frame for violence. However, depictions of nocturnal brutality often achieved a fascinating level of explicit goriness and cruelty.

1. Nyx personified

One can easily observe a shadowy presence or more accurately a prominent absence of the Night in the ancient Greek world of images, especially when it comes to a Greek particularity, the personification of abstract ideas, landscape elements, and geographical units in the form of male or more often female figures. If this were a study on personifications of the Night, it would have been a very short one: The most prominent example of Nyx in a narrative context, the female figure fighting a Giant with a vessel around which a snake is 'wrapped'

⁵ ARNAIZ (1996).

⁶ For reasons that go beyond the scope of the present paper, I avoid here the term 'nocturne paintings'.

from the North side of the so-called Pergamon Frieze is almost certainly not a representation of the personified Night. Whether or not she is one of the Moirai (Klotho) is not the subject of this paper.⁷ Thus we are left with several rather ambiguous and two certain examples of which only one is preserved.

On two red-figure lids of pyxides, both in the British Museum, a female charioteer is represented in a non-narrative temporal context. On the one lid, the female rider has been convincingly identified as Selene, while the winged charioteer could be Eos — very often shown winged — or Nyx.⁸ On the other example, a female charioteer is associated with Helios and Selene.⁹ Here too, the identification is not clear, it could be Eos, it could be Nyx, although the absence of the wings from the physique of the female charioteer could point to the latter identification.

A female bust in profile — in most cases on squat lekythoi — and accompanied by a crescent moon has been equally or even more problematic in its identification: Selene, Eos, Nyx and even Artemis have been suggested.¹⁰ The crescent moon has been used as an argument for the identification of female winged charioteers on a small number of red-figure column craters¹¹ and the tondo of a kylix in Berlin¹² as Nyx, but Eos is in my view a much better candidate, since her iconography as one of the winged mixanthropic personifications is well established.¹³ What seems important here is the fact that, if the

⁷ The figure has been identified in the past as Nyx, Persephone, and most recently — thanks to a name inscription attributed to her — as Klotho, SCHRAUDOLPH (2007) 202.

⁸ London, British Museum E776.

⁹ London, British Museum 1920.12-21.1.

¹⁰ Several squat red-figure lekythoi are decorated with such female busts — sometimes veiled, sometimes unveiled — accompanied by a crescent moon, see, for example, Berlin, Antikensammlung 3222; London, British Museum E658 and E659; Palermo, Mormino Collection 1450.

¹¹ Bologna, Museo Civico Archeologico AR3; Copenhagen, National Museum 7030.

¹² Berlin, Antikensammlung F2524.

¹³ REICHARDT (2007).

identification of the winged figure with Eos is correct, then the Dawn seems to be — at least visually — more closely associated with the end of the night than with the beginning of the day. Although a comprehensive discussion of the Night should include the Dawn, in this study, for reasons of space, I will not treat the figure of Eros.

There is a rather puzzling reference to an early image of Nyx in Pausanias' work: The ancient traveler mentions a small relief on the famous chest of Kypselos in Olympia, but he remains surprisingly silent about the exact iconography of the Nyx — perhaps because there was nothing remarkable about it — while he seems fascinated by the sleeping children she is holding in her arms, the one white the other black, both identified through inscriptions as Death and Sleep.¹⁴ There is nothing to support reconstructions of the Nyx in this relief as a winged personification, and R. Splitter has indeed reconstructed Nyx as a wingless kourotrophos-like figure¹⁵ very much like the image of Aphrodite holding Eros and Himeros in her arms on a fragmentary pinax from the Athenian Acropolis.¹⁶

To the best of my knowledge, there is only one securely identified and preserved image of the Nyx on a white-ground lekythos from the early 5th cent. BCE now in New York, a work attributed to the so-called Sappho Painter (fig. 5.1a-d). Here, a female charioteer (without wings) is explicitly identified as Nyx through an inscription (fig. 5.1b). Stylistically, the vase is certainly no masterpiece, quite the contrary. Iconographically, however, this is an exceptional work both in terms of possible meaning and in terms of structural conception. Compositionally, the personified Night and Dawn (fig. 5.1b-c) seem to move

¹⁴ PAUS. 5, 18, 1: "There is a figure of a woman holding on her right arm a white child asleep, and on her left she has a black child like one who is asleep. Each has his feet turned different ways. The inscriptions declare, as one could infer without inscriptions, that the figures are Death and Sleep, with Night the nurse of both (Νύκτα αὐτοῖς τροφόν)" (W.H.S. JONES).

¹⁵ SPLITTER (2000) 31 with fig. 10.

¹⁶ SHAPIRO (1993) 110 with fig. 62.

very swiftly on their chariots away from each other and towards the vertical handle of the small vase and an unusual scene of Herakles during a sacrifice that apparently takes place in some sort of mountainous landscape. Herakles kneels before the altar on which the parts for the gods are already burning while he holds two obeloi with both his hands with which he is roasting the meat parts for the communal meal (fig. 5.1d). The puzzling aspect is that the only creature he can share this ‘communal’ meal with is a dog, identified as such by a label, at the foot of the hilly structure, which some scholars have identified as the cavernous entrance to Hades; accordingly the dog should be seen as Kerberos.¹⁷ We should stress that dogs are often present in symposion scenes usually shown under the *kline* of a symposiast or under a table with food.¹⁸ In a rather twisted scene that combines symposion imagery with the ransom of Hector, Achilles is shown as a symposiast reclining on a bed and having a serving table with meat before him under which a dog lies, while the dead body of Hector is situated under a lower table behind the Greek hero.¹⁹ Just like the dog on the lekythos in New York defies the rules of sacrificial and post-sacrificial communality, the dog in the scene with the ransom of Hector creates the illusion of sympotic conviviality in the context of the truly dramatic final episode of the Iliadic narrative.

Both Nyx’ and Eos’ garments are rendered in an almost impressionistic style that create an airy feeling of the two goddesses flying through the skies. This particular element is standing in complete opposition to the overall careless style of the vase, especially with respect to the accuracy and delicacy of the incised lines. On the other side of the vase, almost as the compositional counterpart of Herakles, Helios rises on his chariot from the ground (= horizon) in a very typical posture

¹⁷ FERRARI PINEY / SISMONDO RIDGWAY (1981).

¹⁸ See, for example, London, British Museum B679.

¹⁹ Zurich, University Collection 4001. CARPENTER (1986) 116; RECKE (2002) 69.

for charioteers depicted frontally: two horses to the left of the figure, two to the right. Helios ‘stands’ between the backs of Nyx to his right and Eos to his left (fig. 5.1a). All three figures have some sort of astronomical symbols/attributes hanging over their heads.

Most scholars who have dealt with this vase so far have focused — rather understandably — on the sacrificial imagery (fig. 5.1d),²⁰ but the most intriguing feature of the entire composition is the fact that the very center of the whole scene is not the sacrificing Herakles but the rising Helios, since the part of the narrative focusing on the Theban hero is to be found under the handle. It is not of interest to this paper to question how the vase was exactly handled and accordingly how its imagery was perceived by the one who was holding it as opposed to those who were experiencing it visually either from the sides or frontally. The focus of the entire composition is thus the moment in time in which the night, the dawn and the sun are all present, that short liminal period during which the solitary hero is sacrificing on top of the hill. Herakles is not performing a nocturnal sacrifice and he is not conducting a ritual in broad daylight. Since he is already burning the divine part of the sacrifice on the altar and roasting the human one, the actual killing of the animal has already taken place during the darkness of the night. Thus the sacrifice itself in terms of the ritual killing was a nocturnal one, but the communal meal (with whom?) will take place during the day. In this context, there might be an alternative reading of the dog: the animal is accompanied by an inscribed label, just like every other figure in this composition and thus becomes almost equally important.²¹ The only figure that has no temporal background is Herakles, so that I wonder whether or not one could see in the figure of

²⁰ See, for example, GEBAUER (2002) 364-366.

²¹ The inscription is in my view an argument against the identification of the dog with Kerberos. The painter carefully inscribed all figures with their names, thus one should have expected the same accuracy with the dog of the Underworld.

the dog a symbol of Seirios (the Canis Major)²² as a reference not to the time of the day but to the time of the year, namely the hottest one.

The whole composition cannot be one of those images we are associating with the so-called Opfernde Götter, since Herakles is not one of them and they are usually shown performing libations and with the exception of Nike not involved in actual blood sacrifices.²³ The temporal liminality might be indicative of Herakles' own liminality,²⁴ the space of the sacrifice might be a visual anticipation of the future burning of Herakles' body on a mountain top, but it remains unclear why exactly the hero is shown performing a sacrificial ritual that visually follows all rules of a 'normative' sacrifice. One could even go as far as to suggest that the hero is sacrificing to his own father, Zeus, during the summer asking for rain. The process could be seen as reminiscent of rituals, such as those, for example, associated with Zeus Hellanios on Aegina.²⁵ At the same time, the image creates an interesting anticipatory visual link to the burning of Herakles' body on top of a mountain, a step that leads to the final deification of the mortal hero.

If the lekythos was used in a funerary context — and this is unknown because of its unrecorded provenance, although its state of preservation does point towards a sepulchral use — then the liminality of the vase itself might have added to the extraordinary imagery it bears. All interpretive attempts aside, the fact remains that this is the only certain example in which Nyx herself is used most probably as a temporal signifier.

²² One should emphasize that the abbreviated form *κύων* is often used instead of the full name of the dog-star *κύων σειρίου*, LIDDELL / SCOTT *s.v.* *κύων* V and *σειρίος*. On a possible representation of Canis Major and Minor see BARNES (2014).

²³ SIMON (1953); PATTON (2009) part I, esp. 57-99 and 161-180.

²⁴ Following J.-L. DURAND, JUBIER-GALINIER (1998) 83 suggested that Herakles is situated in a fantastical landscape that should enhance the hero's own ontological liminality: "le héros est précisément figuré entre ciel et terre, entre bêtes et dieux, si semblable aux hommes et pourtant déjà parmi les astres".

²⁵ KOWALZIG (2007) 201-218.

2. The crescent moon

If we move away from possible depictions of the Nyx as a mythological personified concept of the Night and turn our attention to the representation of the night as a temporal framework, then the crescent moon — either on its own or in combination with stars — acts as a visual signifier for this part of the day. In the majority of cases, the crescent moon functions as a quasi-attribute for mythological figures associated with the night, such as Selene.²⁶ The function of the crescent moon as a visual signifier of the night appears to be much clearer, when it accompanies the winged figure of Eos who surprisingly is visually more often associated with nocturnal rather than solar symbols.²⁷ Accordingly, Eos seems to be more closely associated to the end of the night than to the beginning of the day.

As part of a narrative, the crescent moon and stars appear to represent the night sky that Herakles bears on his shoulders in representations on vases associated with his encounter with Atlas.²⁸ To the best of my knowledge, only once does the crescent moon appear as a decorative element on a shield in a clearly mythological context: On an early-5th-century white-ground lekythos found in Agrigento we have a rather crude rendering of Ajax saving the body of Achilles from the battlefield.²⁹ Besides the obvious aesthetic use of the crescent moon as upper and lower supplements to the actual crescent-moon-like side-openings of the eight-shaped shield, I strongly suspect that the use of the crescent moon here has also a conscious temporal connotation signifying the end of the “battle” around Achilles’ fallen body at the end of a day’s fighting and the return of the hero’s remains to the camp of the Greeks.

²⁶ GURY (1994).

²⁷ WEISS (1986).

²⁸ See, for example, a white-ground lekythos in Athens from the late 6th or early 5th cent. BCE (Athens, National Museum 1132).

²⁹ Agrigento, Museo Archeologico Regionale C847.

3. Nocturnal violence

Angelos Chaniotis' statement that "more people found a violent death under the sun than in the darkness"³⁰ cannot be challenged. It would mean challenging the obvious. However, while quantitatively there can be absolutely no doubt about it — and the countless battle scenes clearly associated with daylight are proving this also visually³¹ — the question remains whether or not there might exist a qualitative difference between the kind of violent deaths that take place in the night, that is whether or not a very specific category of victims meet their end during the night and whether or not there are very specific ways in which they die. In the following, I will focus on episodes from the Trojan War before I turn my attention to the murder of children by their own mothers.

3.1. *Dolon*

Much attention has been given to the narratives surrounding the murder of Dolon and later of Rhesos by Odysseus and Diomedes. In the world of images, Dolon's murder or rather the moments before his violent end were certainly much more popular than the killing of Rhesos. Already Euphronios in an unfortunately fragmentary kylix dedicated his artistry to the portrayal of Dolon's capture³² and the motif continues throughout the further development of Athenian red-figure vase painting finding its way to the 4th century in products of the Lucanian and Campanian workshops.³³ The interesting aspect is that with one non-Athenian exception, artists do not depict the killing of Dolon but rather his capture. An exception appears to be a Campanian bell crater from the mid-fourth century in Syracuse

³⁰ CHANIOTIS (2017) 110.

³¹ RECKE (2002); MUTH (2008).

³² Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 743.

³³ LISSARRAGUE (1980); CIRIO (1997).

that shows the moment right before the killing of Dolon.³⁴ The iconography of the victim is clear: Dolon kneels on the ground, Diomedes is grabbing his head from behind and forces it back so as to expose the neck, while Odysseus is about to deliver the fatal blow. In the context of the visualization of the Dolon incident, this composition appears so extraordinary that scholars have attempted to see in this scene Achilles and Odysseus sacrificing a Trojan youth at the grave of Patroklos symbolized by the column behind Athena³⁵ whose presence reminds us of the Euphronios kylix. It is going to be a constant observation that without knowing the story behind the image there would have been absolutely no way to guess the time in which the incident takes place. There is no visual indication that the capture, interrogation, and subsequent killing of Dolon happened in the middle of the night.

3.2. *Rhesos*

The Rhesos story, closely connected to the Dolon narrative, is far less popular among Greek artists. One of the earliest — perhaps the earliest — renderings of Rhesos' murder is to be found outside of Attica, namely on a magnificent so-called Chalkidian amphora from the late sixth century, probably produced in or in the vicinity of Rhegion (fig. 5.2a-b). On the one side, Odysseus brutally pierces the throat of a Thracian soldier, while on the other Diomedes is about to do the same to Rhesos himself.³⁶ Yet again, there is no visual indication in the form of a crescent moon and/or stars that the temporal frame is the night. What makes the time frame clear, however, is that the Thracian soldiers and their king are shown sleeping, a fact that makes the murder appear far more hideous and cowardly than any killing on the battlefield.

³⁴ Syracuse, Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi 36332.

³⁵ CVA Siracusa, *Museo Archeologico Nazionale I*, 6: “È il sacrificio d'un prigioniero troiano, fatto da Achille ed Ulisse sul sepolcro di Patroclo”.

³⁶ TRUE (1995).

3.3. *The fall of a city*

The most violent nocturnal scenes in the context of the Trojan War are obviously associated with the fall of the city. Prominent among the victims is Kassandra who can be considered easily as one of the most tragic female figures of Greek mythology: raped by Ajax, enslaved by Agamemnon, and slaughtered by Klytaemnestra, the latter scene shown in its extreme brutality in the tondo of a kylix by the Marlay Painter in Ferrara.³⁷ The best-known incident in her tragic life and the one that most captured the imagination of Greek artists is her violation by Ajax, despite the fact that she had sought refuge at the statue of Athena. Only in Hellenistic literature do we read that the virgin was raped in front of the cult image.³⁸ Already in the early Archaic period, Kassandra's fate attracted the attention of artists, and small bronze panels originally decorating leather shield bands and showing the attack on Kassandra at the statue of Athena have been unearthed at the sanctuaries of Zeus at Olympia and Apollo at Delphi.³⁹ At least 83 Athenian vases are decorated with the scene of Kassandra's rape.⁴⁰ The earliest images appear around 580 BCE, while the latest can be dated to 400 BCE. The topic continues to fascinate vase painters in Southern Italy and Sicily, where it can be found decorating red-figure vases as late as the second half of the 4th century. In the context of Athenian vase painting, the scene is extremely popular between 540 and 520 BCE. Shortly after, painters lose their interest in the Kassandra topic, until it almost disappears from the repertoire between 480 and 460 BCE. A second climax in the interest of painters in this topic can be dated between 460 and 440 BCE, although from a purely numerical point of view the production of this period cannot be compared with the number of vases decorated with the same topic in the period

³⁷ Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina 2482.

³⁸ MASON (1959) 82.

³⁹ MANGOLD (2000) 39.

⁴⁰ RECKE (2002) 20.

between 540 and 520 BCE. Early depictions of the scene show Kassandra disproportionately small. However, other elements of her iconography and especially the degree of nudity appear to vary a lot. Both in black and red-figure vase painting, Kassandra can be depicted completely naked, with only a short cloak around her shoulders, or with a longer garment that is, however, open and reveals the defenseless nudity of the virgin.⁴¹ Only rarely is Kassandra depicted completely dressed with garments that cover (and protect from the eyes of the viewer) the entire body of the figure. The degree of nudity cannot be explained in terms of a chronological pattern.⁴²

Early representations of the scene show Athena without visually clarifying that the statue and not the divinity is involved. However, from 520/500 BCE on, an increasing number of painters depict Athena clearly as a statue placed on a pedestal. This kind of representation becomes canonical for red-figure vases from 500/480 BCE on, while late black figure painters still use both variations.⁴³ A small group of high quality vases dating to 500/480 BCE appear homogenous in the rendering of the strong relationship between Kassandra and (the statue of) Athena: Kassandra is not simply touching the statue or hiding behind it, she embraces the statue with her left arm, so that the two figures create together a closed surface almost pyramidal in shape.⁴⁴ The same images seem to emphasize Kassandra's nudity: the frontality of the naked upper part of the female body can be rarely found outside the context of representations dealing with prostitutes and demands an explanation. The truly exceptional, almost revolutionary, hydria attributed to the Kleophrades Painter in Naples adds to the iconography of the naked virgin the full representation of pubic hair (fig. 5.3a), while later painters, although they are not afraid to emphasize the virgin's nudity, they refrain from depicting such anatomical

⁴¹ CONNELLY (1993).

⁴² MANGOLD (2000) 58-59.

⁴³ MANGOLD (2000) 59; RECKE (2002) 24-26; HÖLSCHER (2010) 113.

⁴⁴ RECKE (2002) 26.

details. Not a single Athenian vase showing the violent encounter of Kassandra with Ajax at the statue of Athena makes clear that it took place during the night.

In the same night, Kassandra's father, Priamos is killed by Neoptolemos at the altar of Zeus. The theme appears around 580/560 BCE with a first climax around 560/540 BCE.⁴⁵ With the exception of two examples dating around 400 BCE,⁴⁶ the popularity of the topic ceases around 440 BCE. Achilles' equally brutal son can be shown killing Priamos either with a sword or more often with a spear. Iconographically, the above-mentioned hydria in Naples is yet again unique: The badly injured Priamos is sitting on the altar with the dead body of his grandson on his lap (fig. 5.3b). He touches with both hands his head in an intense gesture of grief, while Neoptolemos grabs Priamos's shoulder and is about to deliver the fatal blow with a specific type of sword. Although the single-edged, slightly curved sword (= *machaira*) can be used in battle scenes, this is one of the few times in which Neoptolemos is shown using it against Priamos. This type of sword reminds us of the smaller *machaira* (knife) used to kill sacrificial animals. Most probably, the painter consciously used this type of sword in order to create the impression of an unspeakable sacrifice about to take place at an altar, thus stressing the sacrilegious character of killing a defenseless grieving older person at an altar. Priamos himself is shown bold but with his remaining hair shaved and he lacks his usual beard, but is instead shown unshaven in a singular image of bodily neglect.

From the very beginnings of the theme of Priamos' murder in vase painting, artists bring together two temporally distinct incidents, the murder of the king and the murder of Astyanax, and Neoptolemos is very often shown using Astyanax as the weapon to kill Priamos. In almost every single case, the entire

⁴⁵ RECKE (2002) 42.

⁴⁶ Athens, Agora Museum P18849; Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina 5081.

body of the dead child is shown.⁴⁷ However, in a single case of raw brutality, Neoptolemos is using the severed head of the child, as if he is about to throw a stone at Priamos.⁴⁸ It is yet again the Kleophrades Painter who tries to do more with the narrative; he unites grandfather and grandson, but Astyanax is not a weapon, he is the reason for the old king's absolute grief as he lies dead and covered in blood on the lap of his grandfather. The blatant brutality of the child turned into a weapon is gone, but the scene acquires a subtler and much more intense emotional depth. Like the Kassandra narrative, the nocturnal temporal setting appears to be either completely irrelevant or considered as given by the artists who presuppose — rightly — the relevant knowledge of the myth by the viewers (and buyers) of their products.

4. Infanticide, a nocturnal horror

From the murder of a Trojan child by a foreigner and enemy, we turn to the murder of children by their own mothers. Most prominent examples of such violent mothers are Medea and Prokne. The best-known version of Medea's myth is the Euripidean one, according to which Medea kills first the young Corinthian princess Glauke with a poisoned garment and diadem and then murders both her sons in their sleep, before escaping in a chariot sent to her rescue by Helios (the Sun). The nocturnal infanticide is crowned — almost ironically — by a solar rescue. Despite the impact of the Euripidean tragedy, the myth of Medea is not very popular in Athenian art. The most significant vases decorated with scenes from the Medea narrative were produced in Southern Italy and Sicily after ca. 400 BCE and it was the escape scene that most attracted the interest of vase painters, although Medea's children are

⁴⁷ RECKE (2002) 43-44.

⁴⁸ Bonn, Akademisches Kunstmuseum 45.

often shown lying dead on the ground or more frequently on an altar-like structure.⁴⁹

The actual murder of Medea's children is rarely depicted. On a slender loutrophoros-like amphora from the time around 330 BCE decorated by the Ixion painter,⁵⁰ Medea is shown during the very moment of the murder as she is about to kill one of her sons near the statue of a divinity. The columns in the background could be a reference both to a house and to a temple. The fact that private cult within the house is very well attested does not allow a definitive answer as to the stage of the murder.

An extremely dense scene on a volute crater from the late 4th century attributed to the so-called Underworld Painter shows two different episodes from the Medea narrative in three friezes (fig. 5.4). The upper frieze is populated by divine figures on both sides of the entablature of a portico-like or temple-like structure and framed by tripods placed on columns — Herakles (standing) and Athena (seated) to its right, the Dioskouroi (one seated one standing and easily identified by the two stars between the two figures) to its left. In the middle frieze, the death of Glauke (named Kreontea) is depicted within the Ionic structure. Glauke lies already dead on an elaborate marble throne, while her mourning father, Kreon, tries in vain to rescue her. Glauke's mother, Merope, runs from the left towards the central scene. Behind her, the educator of Medea's children and a further female figure can be seen. On the other side of the structure, Hippotes, Glauke's brother and Glauke's nurse-maid are depicted. In the lower frieze, the tragedy continues: To the left, a male half-nude figure saves one of Medea's children. Medea herself dressed like an Oriental is about to kill her other son, who is standing on a small square altar with one arm stretched back towards his mother and the other stretched towards the sky (perhaps towards the divinities of the upper

⁴⁹ TAPLIN (2007) 114-125.

⁵⁰ Paris, Musée du Louvre K300.

frieze). The center of the scene is occupied by the dragon-chariot on which a male figure with long hair and dressed in a long cloak leaving the upper part of the body uncovered is depicted. Only thanks to an inscription can we identify the figure with Oistros, the personified Frenzy. It seems as if Medea is about to sacrifice her own child to the personified Frenzy.⁵¹ To the right of Frenzy, Jason and a further male nude figure (similar to the one saving one of the boys) are represented. Standing on a pedestal-like structure, the “soul” of Aetes, the father of Medea, is represented (identified through the accompanying inscription: *Eidolon Aetou*). Both his head and his open right hand point towards the lower frieze, although the figure itself stands between and thus connects the middle with the lower frieze. It seems as if the dead Aetes approves of the murders as part of his revenge against his daughter for the murder of his son by Medea during her escape with Jason from Kolchis. The fact that one of Medea’s children is apparently saved demonstrates that we are not dealing with the Euripidean version of the myth.⁵² As opposed to all other scenes discussed so far, this vase contains temporal indicators in the form of the two torches held by the figure of Oistros. Although this is the only instance of Oistros being anthropomorphized, there is no reason to see in the torches some sort of an attribute; they do seem to be an indicator of the nocturnal time frame of the scene. The Helios-sent chariot arrived with Oistros as its charioteer and the figure bears torches to illuminate artificially the nocturnal horrific scene.

Although Medea’s infanticide can be explained in a Greek context and from a Greek perspective as the unspeakable act of a foreigner who had already slain her own brother, the story of the Athenian Prokne is more complicated. The unusual motif was “explained” by authors of the fourth century: Prokne, the ideal Athenian woman, placed the honor of her Athenian fam-

⁵¹ MYLONOPOULOS (2013) 81.

⁵² TAPLIN (2007) 255-257.

ily over the life of her own son who was considered a non-Athenian.⁵³ This might also explain the difference in the popularity between the Medea and Prokne myths in the art produced and consumed in Athens. I will exclude here the marble statue from the Athenian Acropolis, a work of Alkamenes, and focus on the depiction of the story in vase painting.

On the interior of a kylix attributed to Onesimos,⁵⁴ the murder scene is elaborately composed: a standing female figure, Prokne, violently assaults her young son, held in the air by a second female figure, very fragmentarily preserved — traces of a foot, a hand, and the dress are visible — and most probably to be identified with Philomela. The boy is explicitly identified as Itys by an inscription. The scene must have been rather violently depicted, since there are traces of blood running down the upper part of the boy's body. It is not the moment right before, but the actual murder that the painter chose to depict. The image of a bleeding child held by two women must have been quite a drastic subject.

A slightly earlier representation can be found on the interior of a kylix decorated by an unknown painter around 510/500 BCE (fig. 5.5). Prokne is holding down the young boy on a big bed and is about to kill him with a long sword. The Thracian cap behind the boy's head characterizes him as a non-Athenian. Itys stretches his hand towards his mother's chin in a desperate attempt to receive mercy. The position of Prokne's arm holding the sword is awkward, but allows the painter to depict the face of a mother about to murder her only child.

On a mid-fifth-century hydria in Prague, the painter managed to capture the dramatic moment before the killing, while Prokne is still struggling with herself.⁵⁵ She is represented with her body turned away from the sleeping boy, but her face

⁵³ KLÖCKNER (2005).

⁵⁴ Basle, Private Collection, Cahn 599.

⁵⁵ Prague, Charles University 60.31 (the scene has been also interpreted as Medea standing over one of her children or Klytaemnestra contemplating Cassandra's murder).

(in three-quarter view) is looking back and down to Itys. With both hands she holds the long sword. The bed in the scene depicted in the tondo of the kylix from the late 6th century and the sleeping boy on the hydria make clear that the murder takes place at night.

5. Violence against the weak. A nocturnal monopoly?

At this point, one should raise the question whether violence against young women, children, and older people is something that needs to be exclusively seen as a product of nocturnal real or metaphorical darkness. Violent acts against virgins usually in the form of rape or attempted rape are often depicted in Athenian vase painting and in most cases this violence is rather solar in its temporal quality.⁵⁶ The significant difference to the rape of Kassandra is that we are usually dealing with violence 'performed' by male divinities who chase after young women.⁵⁷

If it were not for an infamous incident from the broader context of the Trojan War, mortal violence against children could be considered an exclusively nocturnal work. However, the murder of Troilos most probably takes place either at dawn or sunset, but not during the night.⁵⁸ Still, the brutal killing was certainly not bathed in sunlight. Troilos' murder by Achilles was described in the lost epic poem *Kypria*.⁵⁹ In the *Iliad*, there is only one reference to the young Trojan prince in the last rhapsody.⁶⁰ The most detailed literary accounts of the Troilos narrative date to the Hellenistic period. There were apparently various versions of the myth describing Troilos sometimes as

⁵⁶ SOURVINOU-INWOOD (1987); LEFKOWITZ (1993); STEWART (1995); COHEN (1996).

⁵⁷ For an interesting take on the subject, see DEACY (2013).

⁵⁸ ZINDEL (1974) 30-80; KNAUSS (2006) 163-171.

⁵⁹ FANTUZZI (2012) 14.

⁶⁰ HOM. *Il.* 24, 257.

a young man and more often as a boy. The aspect of a homo-erotic attraction between Achilles and Troilos is a late literary addition, although its presence in early depictions of the topic strongly suggests that homosexuality was indeed part of a now lost literary tradition.⁶¹

The mythological narrative shows Achilles ambushing Troilos (and his sister Polyxena) at a fountain, Achilles chasing on foot the rider Troilos, Achilles capturing Troilos and dragging him to the sanctuary of Apollo Thymbraios (where Achilles was to be killed later), and Achilles ‘sacrificing’ the youth at the altar. Hector recovers the mutilated body of his brother. Greek art depicted almost every single moment of the narrative, showing a particular interest in the ambush and chase incidents. An admittedly small group of black figure vases depicts the most brutally violent moment of the entire Achilles-Troilos-narrative: while Hektor accompanied by further Trojan warriors tries to recover Troilos’ body, Achilles is using the head of the boy as a weapon against his opponents. On a black-figure hydria Achilles is using Troilos’ head like a stone,⁶² while on a so-called Tyrrhenian amphora the decapitated body is covered by the altar (very similar to the Delphic omphalos!) and the head is functioning as a quasi-gorgoneion at the tip of Achilles’ spear against the Trojan warriors led by Hector.⁶³ On a kylix signed by Euphronios as a potter in Perugia,⁶⁴ the sacrilegious act is emphasized by the placement of the boy very close to the altar of Apollo and the killing is prepared in a way that is reminiscent of a *sphagion* sacrifice with the head of the ‘sacrificial’ victim brutally pulled back so as to expose the throat.⁶⁵

The murder of or — more generally speaking — violence against older people is truly a rare narrative in the world of images. Priamos’s killing is certainly the most prominent example,

⁶¹ VON DEN HOFF (2005) 233.

⁶² London, British Museum B326.

⁶³ Munich, Antikensammlungen 1426.

⁶⁴ Perugia, Museo Civico 89.

⁶⁵ MYLONOPOULOS (2013) 80-81; (2017) 78.

although a small number of vases do show the murder of elderly Pelias. Despite an obvious ageism in ancient Greece,⁶⁶ older people are indeed in most cases treated with the kind of respect that is not always shown to male children and even far less so to young women.

All the more puzzling appears Herakles' assault of Geras, the personified Old Age, a story that we only know through the available visual evidence.⁶⁷ Interestingly, the "accursed" Geras is considered by Hesiod as one of the rather numerous children of Nyx.⁶⁸ The power of Nyx of whom even Zeus is afraid becomes immediately apparent when one checks the list of her children according to the Hesiodic *Theogony*: From Doom (Moros), Destruction (Ker), Disgrace (Momos), Misery (Oizys), and Death (Thanatos) to Deceit (Apate), Old Age (Geras), and Strife (Eris).⁶⁹ Painful and destructive situations alongside powerful personifications such as Nemesis and the Moirai are seen in direct connection to the Nyx. Some of these nocturnal children, such as Hypnos and Thanatos will come to acquire a rather significant existence in Greek art,⁷⁰ while others will even become important cultic figures, like Nemesis.⁷¹ The inclusion of Geras in this rather gloomy list of Nyx' offspring demonstrates clearly what and how the Greeks were thinking of Old Age that Herakles was supposed to slay in a series of Athenian images that seem to preserve a mythological tradition otherwise lost.⁷² Still, violence against older people seems to have been more problematic in its representability than the violent treatment of young women and children.

⁶⁶ MINOIS (1989) 43-77; SCHMITZ (2009). BRANDT (2002) 41-50 is more nuanced in his understanding of old age in ancient Greece.

⁶⁷ SCHULZE (2003).

⁶⁸ HES. *Theog.* 225.

⁶⁹ HES. *Theog.* 211-225.

⁷⁰ MINTSI (1991); (1997); GIUDICE (2003).

⁷¹ BONANNO (2016).

⁷² SCHULZE (2003) 234.

6. Some conclusions

In his 1963 acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, the Greek poet George Seferis made a rather interesting comment about the real and symbolic significance of sunlight:

“When I read in Homer the simple words ‘φάος ἡλίοιο’ — today I would say ‘φῶς τοῦ ἡλίου’ (the sunlight) — I experience a familiarity that stems from a collective soul rather than from an intellectual effort. It is a tone, one might say, whose harmonies reach quite far; it feels very different from anything a translation can give. For we do, after all, speak the same language — a language changed, if you insist, by an evolution of several thousand years, but despite everything faithful to itself — and the feeling for a language derives from emotions as much as from knowledge. This language shows the imprints of deeds and attitudes repeated throughout the ages down to our own.”⁷³

Admittedly, sunlight plays an important role in the Greek poet’s work; for him, the sunlight is occasionally even equaled to the notion of “homeland”.⁷⁴ What comes as a surprise, however, is that a closer look at the Homeric use of the expression φάος ἡλίοιο reveals that from the 18 examples in the Homeric corpus, seven are associated to the sunset, while all others refer directly or indirectly to death. For F. Létoublon, the society that comes to life in the Homeric epics used the phrase “to see the light of the sun” in order to express the feeling of being alive; death, on the other side, equals the darkness of the underworld.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, death is not verbally rendered through an expression that places emphasis on the presence of darkness, but rather on the absence of light. Darkness and night are silenced even in a context with which they are intimately associated: Death.

⁷³ From G. SEFERIS’ speech on December 11, 1963, to be found in FRENZ (1969).

⁷⁴ LEONTIS (1995) 5-6.

⁷⁵ LÉTOUBLON (2010).

There can be no question that the world of images does reflect actual realities of nocturnal violence, but at the same time the conscious choice to visualize specific categories of that violence and ignore others says a lot about how Greeks and perhaps more specifically Athenians were thinking about violence in general and nocturnal violence in particular. As S. Muth has argued already, the victims of violence are significant in understanding the qualities of those performing the violent acts: one of Muth's main suggestions is that the elevated status and strength of the annihilated opponent elevates almost like an attribute the nature of the victor.⁷⁶ There is, however, absolutely nothing heroic or glorious about killing children and old men or about raping young women who had sought refuge at a cult statue. There is no story to be told about killing (while laughing) an ugly, frightened spy in the middle of the night (Dolon) or about sneaking into the camp of your enemy and killing him in his sleep (Rhesos). This might explain on the one side the relatively small number of images associated with the narratives of Kassandra, Astyanax, Priamos, Dolon, Rhesos when compared to the countless depictions of scenes from the Trojan War that have nothing to do with nocturnal activities and violence during the night. On the other side, the victims on whom artists apparently chose to focus are not only part of the "Other" (children, women, older people, foreigners), but also elements of society that are considered inherently weak, and brutal violence against them although not very honorable or glorious can at least be problematized visually. The hydria by the Kleophrades Painter is in this respect an almost social comment in visual terms against the atrocities of war and nothing can put more emphasis on them than the violence against someone who cannot defend him/herself.

⁷⁶ MUTH (2008) 551: "Überspitzt formuliert, kann man demnach die Opfer- und die Gewalt-Ikonographie (auch) als einen Teil der erweiterten Sieger-Ikonographie verstehen".

In this respect, the night of doom, destruction, disgrace, misery, deceit, strife, and death seems to have been considered the ideal background for staging the usually dark fate of the weak or the undeservedly miserable death of a hero, such as Agamemnon. Not much has changed in this kind of conception of the night across the centuries, so that even a brief survey of 19th century romantic opera would reveal that the weak suffer at night and they often suffer unjustifiably. The night is the time in which Vincenzo Bellini's Amina, Gaetano Donizetti's Anna Bolena, or Ambroise Thomas' Ophélie lose their minds or even their lives. Exceptional in this respect is Donizetti's Lucia, a nocturnal victim (of her brother, Enrico) and at the same time a nocturnal perpetrator (murderer of her unwanted groom, Arturo). Only rarely do we find in Greek art this kind of role reversal of the nocturnal victim, of the female, for example, that is able to defend herself and turn the tables on her male attacker: It is again the Kleophrades Painter on his iconic vase in Naples that presents the viewer with an image of female empowerment and a complete reversal of roles in the traditional theater of nocturnal violence. Here, it is a young Trojan woman who attacks a Greek soldier kneeling on the ground with a pestle (fig. 5.3c). It is almost ironic that the posture of the Greek soldier is not identical but indeed reminiscent of old Aethra in the following scene who is about to be freed from her Trojan slavery by her grandchildren: Demophon and Akamas. In the middle of the night, two female victims are shown fighting against their fate (the anonymous Trojan) or finally escaping it (Aethra). The night is not always that dark after all.

Works cited

ARNAIZ, J.M. (1996), *Las pinturas negras de Goya* (Madrid).

BARNES, J.T. (2014), "Asteras eirein: An Archaic View of the Constellations from Halai", *Hesperia* 83, 257-276.

BONANNO, D. (2016), "Figlia della notte e compagna di Aidos: Nemesis, Dike e il senso del limite in Esiodo", in D. BONANNO / P. FUNKE / M. HAAKE (eds.), *Rechtliche Verfahren und religiöse*

Sanktionierungen in der griechisch-römischen Antike (Stuttgart), 103-114.

BRANDT, H. (2002), *Wird auch silbern mein Haar. Eine Geschichte des Alters in der Antike* (Darmstadt).

CARPENTER, T.H. (1986), *Dionysian Imagery in Archaic Greek Art. Its Development in Black-Figure Vase Painting* (Oxford).

CHANIOTIS, A. (2017), "Violence in the Dark: Emotional Impact, Representation, Response", in M. CHAMPION / L. O'SULLIVAN (eds.), *Cultural Perceptions of Violence* (London), 100-115.

CIRIO, A.M. (1997), "Fonti letterarie e iconografiche della Dolonia", *Sileno* 23, 111-117.

COHEN, A. (1996), "Portrayals of Abduction in Greek Art: Rape or Metaphor?" in N.B. KAMPEN (ed.), *Sexuality in Ancient Art. Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy* (New York), 117-135.

CONNELLY, J.B. (1993), "Narrative and Image in the Attic Vase Painting: Ajax and Kassandra at the Trojan Palladion", in J.P. HOLLIDAY (ed.), *Narrative and Event in Ancient Art* (Cambridge), 88-129.

DEACY, S. (2013), "From 'Flowery Tales' to 'Heroic Rapes': Virginal Subjectivity in the Mythological Meadow", *Arethusa* 46, 395-413.

DUNSBY, J. (1992), *Schoenberg. Pierrot Lunaire* (Cambridge).

FANTUZZI, M. (2012), *Achilles in Love. Intertextual Studies* (Oxford).

FERRARI PINEY, G. / SISMONDO RIDGWAY, B. (1981), "Herakles at the Ends of the Earth", *JHS* 101, 141-144.

FRENZ, H. (ed.) (1969), *Nobel Lectures. Literature 1901-1967* (Amsterdam).

GEBAUER, J. (2002), *Pompe und Thysia. Attische Tieropferdarstellungen auf schwarz- und rotfigurigen Vasen* (Münster).

GIUDICE, E. (2003), "Hypnos, Thanatos ed il viaggio della morte sulle lekythoi funerarie a fondo bianco", *Ostraka* 12, 145-158.

GOUVARD, J.-M. (2004), "Métrique comparée de l'octosyllabe français et allemand : du *Pierrot lunaire* d'Albert Giraud à sa traduction par Otto Erich Hartleben", in M. DELAERE / J.H. PEETERS (eds.), *Pierrot lunaire. Albert Giraud–Otto Erich Hartleben–Arnold Schoenberg* (Louvain), 49-66.

GURY, F. (1994) "Selene, Luna", in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* 7.1 (Zurich), 706-715.

HÖLSCHER, F. (2010), "Gods and Statues. An Approach to Archaistic Images in the Fifth Century BCE", in I. MYLONOPOULOS (ed.), *Divine Images and Human Imaginations in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Leiden), 105-120.

VON DEN HOFF, R. (2005), "Achill, das Vieh? Zur Problematisierung transgressiver Gewalt in klassischen Vasenbildern", in G. FISCHER /

S. MORAW (eds.), *Die andere Seite der Klassik. Gewalt im 5. und 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Stuttgart), 225-246.

JUBIER-GALINIER, C. (1998), "Héraclès entre bêtes et dieux dans l'atelier des peintres de Sappho et de Diosphos", in C. BONNET / C. JOURDAIN-ANNEQUIN / V. PIRENNE-DELFORGE (eds.), *Le bestiaire d'Héraclès. IIIe Rencontre héracléenne* (Liège), 75-85.

KLÖCKNER, A. (2005), "Mordende Mütter. Medea, Prokne und das Motiv der furchtbaren Rache im klassischen Athen", in G. FISCHER / S. MORAW (eds.), *Die andere Seite der Klassik. Gewalt im 5. und 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Stuttgart), 247-263.

KNAUSS, F. (2006), "Vor der Ilias: Neun Jahre Krieg", in R. WÜNSCHE (ed.), *Mythos Troja* (Munich), 154-179.

KOWALZIG, B. (2007), *Singing for the Gods. Performances of Myth and Ritual in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Oxford).

LEFKOWITZ, M.R. (1993), "Seduction and Rape in Greek Myth", in A.E. LAIOU (ed.), *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies* (Washington, D.C.), 17-37.

LEONTIS, A. (1995), *Topographies of Hellenism. Mapping the Homeland* (Ithaca).

LÉTOUBLON, F. (2010), "To See or not to See: Blind People and Blindness in Ancient Greek Myths", in M. CHRISTOPOULOS / E. KARAKANTZA / O. LEVANIOUK (eds.), *Light and Darkness in Greek Myth and Religion* (Lanham), 167-180.

LISSARRAGUE, F. (1980), "Iconographie de Dolon le Loup", *Revue Archéologique* 1980, 3-30.

MANGOLD, M. (2000), *Kassandra in Athen. Die Eroberung Trojas auf attischen Vasenbildern* (Berlin).

MARSH, R. (2007), "A Multicoloured Alphabet": Rediscovering Albert Giraud's *Pierrot lunaire*", *Twentieth-Century Music* 4.1, 97-121.

MASON, P.G. (1959), "Kassandra", *JHS* 79, 80-93.

MINOIS, G. (1989), *History of Old Age. From Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Chicago).

MINTSI, E. (1991), "Hypnos et Thanatos sur les vases attiques (520-470 av. J.C.)", *Histoire de l'art* 15, 9-20.

— (1997), "Hypnos et Thanatos sur les lécythes attiques à fond blanc : Deuxième moitié du Ve siècle av. J.C.", *REA* 99, 47-61.

MUTH, S. (2008), *Gewalt im Bild. Das Phänomen der medialen Gewalt im Athen des 6. und 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Berlin).

MYLONOPOULOS, I. (2013), "Gory Details? The Iconography of Human Sacrifice in Greek Art", in R. GAGNÉ / P. BONNECHERE (eds.), *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece. Cross-Cultural Perspectives and Representations* (Liege), 61-85.

— (2017), “Emotions in Ancient Greek Art” in A. CHANIOTIS / N. KALTSAS / I. MYLONOPOULOS (eds.), *A World of Emotions. Ancient Greece, 700 BC - 200 AD* (New York), 72-85.

PATTON, K.C. (2009), *Religion of the Gods. Ritual, Paradox, and Reflexivity* (Oxford).

PUFFETT, K. (2006), “Structural Imagery: *Pierrot Lunaire* Revisited”, *Tempo* 60, no. 237, 2-22.

RECKE, M. (2002), *Gewalt und Leid. Das Bild des Kriegers bei den Athenern im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Istanbul).

REICHARDT, B. (2007), “Mythische Mütter. Thetis und Eos in der attischen Bilderwelt des 6. und 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.”, in M. MEYER (ed.), *Besorgte Mütter und sorglose Zecher. Mythische Exempel in der Bilderwelt Athens* (Vienna), 13-98.

SCHMITZ, W. (2009), “Schwer lastet das Alter: Alte Menschen im archaischen und klassischen Griechenland”, in W. SCHMITZ / H.-H. VON PRITTWITZ (eds.), *Alter in der Antike. Die Blüte des Alters ist aber die Weisheit* (Mainz), 23-27.

SCHRAUDOLPH, E. (2007), “Beispiele hellenistischer Plastik der Zeit zwischen 190 und 160 v.Chr.”, in C. BOL (ed.), *Die Geschichte der antiken Bildhauerkunst. III, Hellenistische Plastik* (Mainz), 189-239.

SCHULZE, H. (2003), “Herakles bedroht des Alter, oder das Alter bedroht Herakles: Ein Bildrätsel”, in R. WÜNSCHE (ed.), *Herakles – Herkules* (Munich), 234-237.

SHAPIRO, H.A. (1993), *Personifications in Greek Art. The Representation of Abstract Concepts 600-400 B.C.* (Zurich).

SIMON, E. (1953), *Opfernde Götter* (Berlin).

SOURVINOU-INWOOD, C. (1987), “A Series of Erotic Pursuits: Images and Meanings”, *JHS* 107, 131-153.

SPLITTER, R. (2000), *Die “Kypseloslade” in Olympia. Form, Funktion und Bildschmuck. Eine archäologische Rekonstruktion* (Mainz).

STEWART, A.F. (1995), “Rape?” in E.D. REEDER (ed.), *Pandora. Women in Classical Greece* (Princeton), 74-90.

TACK, L. (2004), “Transfert et traduction de Pierrot lunaire: une description sociosémio-tique”, in M. DELAERE / J.H. PEETERS (eds.), *Pierrot lunaire. Albert Giraud–Otto Erich Hartleben–Arnold Schoenberg* (Louvain), 85-108.

TAPLIN, O. (2007), *Pots & Plays. Interactions between Tragedy and Greek Vase-Painting of the Fourth Century B.C.* (Los Angeles).

TRUE, M. (1995), “The Murder of Rhesos on a Chalcidian Neck-Amphora by the Inscription Painter”, in J. CARTER / S. MORRIS (eds.), *The Ages of Homer. A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule* (Austin), 415-429.

VILAIN, R. (2004), “*Pierrot lunaire*: Cyclic Coherence in Giraud and Schoenberg”, in M. DELAERE / J.H. PEETERS (eds.), *Pierrot lunaire. Albert Giraud–Otto Erich Hartleben–Arnold Schoenberg* (Louvain), 127-144.

WEISS, C. (1986) “Eos”, in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* 3.1 (Zurich), 747-789.

ZINDEL, C. (1974), *Drei vorhomerische Sagenversionen in der griechischen Kunst* (Basle).

DISCUSSION

V. Pirenne-Delforge: Il est très heureux que cette communication nous permette de discuter le remarquable lécythe à fond blanc attribué au Peintre de Sappho. J'ai deux questions intimement liées l'une à l'autre à poser au sujet de l'iconographie de ce vase. La première concerne la représentation des entités cosmiques sur la face principale, Nyx, Eos et Hélios. Ne peut-on considérer qu'il s'agit d'une référence spatiale plutôt que temporelle ? La nuit et le jour se croisent aux confins du monde, et cette alternance est évidemment liée à la lumière du soleil. Donc, ce pourrait être une représentation de l'*eschaton* où Héraclès va pouvoir descendre dans l'autre monde. Ce qui m'amène évidemment à ma deuxième question : est-il inconcevable d'interpréter le chien comme un Cerbère et l'espace où il apparaît comme une entrée des Enfers, dont Héraclès tente de se propitier les dieux avant d'y descendre ? Je renvoie à ce sujet à l'article de Cécile Jubier-Galinier dans le 7^e supplément de *Kernos*, *Le Bestiaire d'Héraclès*.

I. Mylonopoulos: Let me start with your second question. Jubier-Galinier actually opposed the idea that the dog should be unequivocally identified as Kerberos. For her, the presence of the dog indicated the status of Herakles as being between gods (the personifications) and animals. Gloria Ferrari Pinney and Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway argued for an identification of the dog as Kerberos and saw in the whole scene, as you described, the preparation for the hero's *katabasis* into the Underworld. In my interpretation, the inscription identifying the dog plays an important role. We can either claim that the Sappho Painter is simply doing what artists such as Kleitias did, using inscriptions to identify animals and inanimate objects for

the sake of inscriptions on the surface of the vase, or we can place the inscription associated with the dog in the context of the other inscriptions on the vase. In this way, the inscription cannot simply mean “dog”, but is rather the name of the figure “Dog [Star]”. In addition, one has to emphasize that the dog occupies in the area under the handle the exact position that Helios has on the other side of the vase. Thus even compositionally, the artist is trying to show that the Dog is not just a dog. If the artist had wished to make clear that we are looking at Kerberos, then it would have been rather easy to inscribe the figure accordingly. To your first question: If one accepts the idea that the dog is Seirios, then the primary frame of the scene is a temporal one. Having said this, however, there is nothing to exclude a second more space-oriented layer of meaning. Quite the contrary, this would make the scene even more intriguing: the sacrificial ritual — that we are still trying to understand — takes place in a liminal time and space.

F. Carlà-Uhink: Would it be possible to read the lekythos ‘geographically’, considering the rising sun as an indication of the East, from which both Eos and Nyx move on their regular course towards the West, in which Herakles is located (and which would be compatible with the mythical material about his wanderings)?

I. Mylonopoulos: Basically, I avoid all too literal readings of imagery, but if we wish to go there, then the iconography of the scene shows that Nyx and Eos are moving in different directions. Thus I would be hesitant to talk about who is moving East and who is moving West. Like I mentioned in my previous answer, there is nothing against a ‘geographical’ reading of the scene. What I am proposing is that the main concern of the artist might have been the temporal rather than the spatial frame.

A. Chaniotis: Many thanks for this very original contribution. I would only add that the iconography that you studied

primarily appears on vases that were often used in a sympotic context. The images that you discussed were viewed in the flickering light of lamps. This must have certainly added to the dramatic and emotive impact of the images.

I. Mylonopoulos: Absolutely. This is something that one should consider for any sympotic vase — and it has been done already, but we need to be even more aware of the viewing circumstances (arrangement of lamps and/or candelabras in a convivial space, height of the light sources etc.).

A. Chaniotis: I think that it is significant to highlight the domestic, not public, context of viewing images of nocturnal violence. Although images of sacked cities and ambushes were seen in the safe and sheltered space of the house, they reminded how fragile this safety could be in a world dominated by war.

I. Mylonopoulos: Indeed. Usually, we tend to see these images in the context of victory and glory, but vases such as the hydria by the Kleophrades Painter make clear that the same imagery did function as a reminder of what could happen to anyone. If I am not wrong, this is something that Susanne Muth pointed out in her book on violence.

R. Schlesier: It is fascinating that a juxtaposition of Nyx and Eos is to be found in the visual evidence, and apparently not in the literary evidence. Yet in these nocturnal scenes, in which the night is indicated through such juxtaposition, no violence is visible. By contrast, in scenes, in which violence by night is the central feature of the narrative (as in the case of Rhesos, Dolon etc.), any visual reference to a nocturnal setting is missing. Does it mean that the night as the time when the violence takes place is considered irrelevant?

I. Mylonopoulos: I do not think that the nocturnal temporal frame is irrelevant, it is simply known. Visual elements, such as

the crescent moon and/or the stars, usually function as attributes of figures as in the case of the female busts on the squat lekythoi I showed, or they become almost part of the setting but not as temporal signifiers as in the case of some scenes showing Herakles lifting the sky so that Atlas can get the apples of the Hesperides. I think this is exactly what makes the small lekythos in New York so intriguing, all these personifications indicating the time, if I am correct, in which the sacrificial ritual that Herakles is performing takes place.

R. Schlesier: Luca Giuliani had argued, with regard to the iconography of mythical narratives on ancient Greek vases, that the knowledge of the viewers and users is a pre-condition for understanding a scene, since without such a knowledge, one would not be able to appreciate the divergence from the common representation of a particular story.¹ Do you think that this could apply to the material you presented us?

I. Mylonopoulos: I think that we tend to expect too much from an ancient viewer. A certain level of understanding made the images perhaps more easily ‘digestible’, but even if someone did not know the exact story, the images could help the viewer invent their own stories. It would take us too far, but I do think that our contemporary view of myths is more rigid than the ancient. This is why we have so many images that we cannot fit into a canon of literarily preserved myths. We do not always need to presuppose the existence of a lost tragedy whenever an image on a vase does not correspond to the version Euripides decided to promote or even invent. I firmly believe that ancient vase painters and artists in general were taking liberties with the stories they wished to tell that were not based on now lost versions of myths.

¹ See e.g. L. GIULIANI (2014), “Mythen- versus Lebensbilder? Vom begrenzten Gebrauchswert einer beliebten Opposition”, in O. DALLY *et al.* (eds.), *Medien der Geschichte – Antikes Griechenland und Rom* (Berlin), 204-226, esp. 221-223.

L. Dossey: As a continuation of Renate Schlesier's question regarding why the nocturnal setting was not made obvious in these vases, could it be because the night was simply not frightening in the 6th and 5th centuries BC? That is, an explicit nighttime setting would not have added anything to the horror of the scene. In one of the few of your examples where the nocturnal setting is clear — Rhesus's murder — perhaps it is the vulnerability of sleep that is frightening, not the darkness of the night. How would you respond? How scary was the night in Classical Greece?

I. Mylonopoulos: It is not the night setting that is *per se* frightening. The darkness allows for horrible acts to take place and in an almost circular flow these acts transform the absence of light during the night into a frightening time. I am not sure I can answer the question as to how scary the night in Classical Greece was, what the images that I studied show, however, is that violent acts know no time limit, they can happen during the day, they can take place at night. However, nocturnal acts of violence tend to be more brutal when they do find their way into the world of images. It's as if the implicit — and known — temporal frame of the night allows violence to become visualized in an even more brutal form. For nocturnal violent scenes, vase painters seem to go further than they are usually willing to do when depicting solar violence.

V. Pirenne-Delforge: Le vase apulien mettant en scène les épisodes terribles de la geste de Médée présente des torches pour signifier que le meurtre d'un des deux enfants se passe pendant la nuit. Y a-t-il une relation avec la mise en scène d'une tragédie ? Et peut-on placer ce vase produit par un atelier apulien sur le même pied que les vases attiques ?

I. Mylonopoulos: As I said previously, I do not think we should start looking for lost tragedies every time an image does not correspond to the Athenian canon. We can indeed expect

adaptations of well known plays, but we should also anticipate artists that were willing and able to change the narrative without the influence of a play. To your second point: we know that Athenian tragedies were produced in Magna Grecia and thus certainly influenced the local world of images. If someone is interested in the exact pairing of word and image, and expects that the path of influence is one-sided, then there should be a clear preference toward Athenian vases over those produced in other areas. However, as I have tried to make clear, this approach minimizes the importance of visual evidence to yet another tool for finding the original text, and I do not think that this should be the point.

V. Pirenne-Delforge: Dans la représentation que les Grecs se font de la vieillesse, Geras est une entité négative que la *Théogonie* d'Hésiode qualifie d'*oulomenon* (vers 225). Je ne pense pas que, en tant qu'enfant de la Nuit, Geras fasse partie des divinités 'neutres'. Le vase qui représente Héraclès s'apprêtant à frapper Geras de sa massue me paraît significatif de ce point de vue : le petit personnage est fortement marqué par les stigmates de l'âge mais, surtout, la posture d'Héraclès, massue à la main, prêt à frapper, ne place-t-elle pas la scène dans la lignée de ses travaux contre des entités malfaisantes ?

I. Mylonopoulos: The personified Old Age in Hesiod is indeed 'accursed'. This seems to correspond nicely to the small group of vases from Athens that depict Herakles fighting Geras. There is a very interesting early-fifth-century pelike in Berlin that shows Herakles fighting a winged small figure that is in its physique extremely reminiscent of Geras.² Scholars hesitate to call this figure Geras, but if it is true, then Geras could almost be seen as a daemon-like creature. There might be a reference to a winged version of Geras in Euripides' *Herakles* (637-654, esp. 653-654). However, old age as a stage in life is perceived

² Berlin, Antikensammlung 3317. *CVA Berlin, Antikensammlung XV*, 24-25.

much more ambiguously, and this is reflected both in our literary sources and in the ways older citizens and mythological figures are depicted in art, especially vase painting. I exclude here consciously the *genre* sculpture of the Hellenistic period.

K. De Temmerman: For some of the scenes that you have discussed I wonder about potential dynamics of foreknowledge of viewers on the one hand and clues given to them on the other. What is the significance, for example, of kylikes in which the horrible scene is in the center?

I. Mylonopoulos: I guess you mean the image in the tondo of a kylix. Here, one has to imagine the vase and its imagery while in use. We need to visualize a symposiast drinking his wine and, while the liquid vanishes, he encounters far too closely images of terrible acts (by men who lost control?) or even faces of terror (a Gorgoneion) reminding him of what can happen if he drinks too much and loses control. The truth is, however, that we can only speculate about the impact these images had.

P. Ducrey: I would like to ask a question on the Mykonos amphora. Is there a message, a comment against violence?

I. Mylonopoulos: Very tempting. The accumulation of truly violent scenes could indicate far too many things: an encyclopedic interest in what can happen during the sack of a city, a 'simple' episodic narrative of the imagined sack of Troy, or indeed, some sort of comment against violence and especially martial violence. What in my view could point towards the latter as the primary interest of the artist is the fact that the Greek warriors are shown attacking women and children. It seems as if the artist wishes the viewer to focus on the sufferings of the 'weak' in times of war. In this respect, the Mykonos pithamphora could be understood as a magnificent predecessor to the Kleophrades vase in Naples.

