PYXIS:—HERAKLES AND GERYON.

THE vase which is the subject of the present memoir is a *pyxis* or small round box of a light yellow clay with a smooth surface, decorated with designs in a blackish brown, which is here and there varied with a patch of purple laid upon the black, or with a detail occasionally incised. It was acquired by the British Museum in 1865, and forms one of a set of eighteen¹ which were 'guaranteed' as having been found at Phaleron near Athens.

The lid is decorated with a circular frieze of animals, representing five lions or panthers; the most important representation, however, is that upon the body of the vase, which is encircled with a single frieze of figures, consisting of four lions, a bull (recognisable by the shape of its hoof and its horn), and a group which is obviously a rendering of the well-known myth of Herakles and Geryon—beside Geryon is a further group of three bulls.

The painting appears extremely rude, and this rudeness might seem at first sight to be the result of carelessness rather than of archaic ignorance in the artist. I shall endeavour however to show from internal evidence that the scene before us may be assigned to the earliest period of the representation of myths in vase-painting.

It belongs to that class of vases technically known under the term 'Oriental,' of which the centre of fabric was probably Korinth, and to which the character of the clay, the technique, and the arrangement of the scene, would naturally assign it. A

¹ The remainder, except a *pyxis* similar to this, are of the so-called Phaleron type; if the provenance could be relied upon, the series would be of great im-

portance to our knowledge of this class, but unfortunately, evidence on this point is rarely trustworthy.

C

A

D

B

reminiscence of this Oriental style is further shown in the patch of purple upon the flanks of the animals and in the rosettes introduced twice into the scene, both on the body and lid.

The subject here depicted, if, as I believe, it can be shown to be the earliest representation yet known of the myth, appears to have a special claim upon our notice.

First of all, I would call attention to the peculiar treatment of the subject by the artist. He has chosen as the field for his brush, a narrow horizontal band, such as would be only suitable for a continuous frieze of figures; but the central group, indeed the only important *dramatis personae* for his purpose, consists of but two figures, Herakles and Geryon, a group which would be unsuitable for any but a confined space like that of a metope. Having inserted these figures, what does he do to fill the remaining space? the bulls at the side of Geryon suggest a resource which he adopts in filling the vacuum with other bulls and lions,¹ in depicting which the painters of this style are clearly more at home than in the representation of defined myths, but which in the present case have no reference whatever to the action going forward; and I think this is a point in favour of the early date which I would assign to our vase. The artists of this style, accustomed only as yet to conventional friezes of animals, are beginning to feel the necessity of depicting something more than mere conventional ornaments, but as yet they have not learnt (as they do later in the so-called Protokorinthish style) to choose for their subjects those scenes which give them a sufficient quantity of figures to occupy the space at their disposal: such subjects for instance as that of Herakles and the Centaurs,² or the chase of the Kalydonian Boar, or the hunt³ of a lion or hare. The effort against conventionality is made in this case in the central representation, but the old tradition still survives in the animals introduced apropos of nothing, and in the two or three rosettes, traces of the *horror vacui* which lingered long both in the early Geometric and early Oriental vases as well.

¹ Such repetitions would not appear strange to those accustomed to the early relief vases where the impression from one cylinder is repeated *ad libitum*.

² See Furtwängler, in *Arch. Zeit.*, 1883, p. 153.

³ See Löschke, in *Arch. Zeit.* 1881, p. 34.

The same difficulty had already occurred to the artists of the Geometric style, and had been in their case surmounted by the introduction of the principle of vertical division of the horizontal bands, a principle which suited the tall angular forms of these vases better than the more rounded lines of the Oriental shapes; but for some time, on account of the obstacles thus presented to the treatment of a *frieze* surface, *i.e.* a surface which has considerably more length than height, we find the representations upon Geometric vases confined, in the shapes most generally adopted, to the tall narrow neck, while the rounder body of the vase is left comparatively undecorated; and this was no doubt one of the causes which rendered the struggle against conventionality more difficult for the painters of the Oriental than for those of the Geometric style. Such a division of scenes became necessary from the moment when the interest of the representation was for the first time transferred from the action going forward to the actors themselves, that is to say, when first abstract ideas, such as ploughing, as on the shield of Achilles, give place to the definite incidents and personalities such as figure on the chest of Kypselos, in which process of development, the shield of Herakles as described by Hesiod seems to give us the intermediate stage; and in the recognition of this principle, of the two main divisions of groups in relief we have, I think, an important clue to (1) the process of selection by which some scenes are preferred to others in early works of art of the Oriental type such as I have already referred to; (2) the development of a myth in order to adapt it to similar conditions; and (3), given this principle, the arrangement of the groups on certain works of art known to us only from description.

Of these last, the throne of Apollo at Amyklæ, as described by Pausanias, is a case in point. In all the suggestions for the arrangements of the decorations which I have seen there is one difficulty which seems to me very obvious, but which has never yet been fully recognized. I mean the plan of stringing together in one unbroken band a series of different scenes which present no connexion in relation with one another, an arrangement which it might be expected that Greek art, even of the most archaic period, would eschew. Now, when we examine the list of scenes which Pausanias gives us by the light of reproductions

of them in early art, we can guess with tolerable certainty what sort of space each would fill, and seeing on this plan how the scenes naturally fall into a symmetrical order, it seems to me that besides the horizontal divisions of the spaces on the Amyklae throne there would also be a set of vertical divisions as well. It is much more natural to imagine the selection of groups as due to a tectonic necessity than to mere chance; and thus it comes that on the chest of Kypselos we find the scene naturally divided into two main groups, the one consisting of those which would give the metope type, the other of those which naturally suggest a frieze: a division which was probably due to some constructive peculiarity in the form of the chest, which consequently presented to the artist a variety in the spaces intended for decoration.

As an instance of what I mean the tripod vase from Tanagra, published by Löschke, is worth quoting. There we have the artist dealing with just such a constructive necessity as I would argue the artists of the Kypselos and Amyklae works may have encountered.

A somewhat parallel case to that of our vase is shown in the Capua bronze *lebes*¹ in the British Museum, which bears upon the shoulder a narrow continuous band containing a series of figures, among which at least one definite incident is mixed up with conventional representations. But there are peculiarities about this bronze vase which make it as I think a special case. First of all, the roughness and want of finish of this band of figures correspond neither with its conception nor with the remaining ornamentation, both of which are free and spirited. Again, the central scene, showing Herakles running towards some oxen, looking back at a figure who is tied to a tree, is a treatment of our myth which, in spite of Minervini's learned disquisition, baffles interpretation, and the jumbling up of this with other scenes which have no reference to it is at least unusual. But these difficulties disappear if we assume that the artist, probably an Etruscan, has derived inspiration from some Greek work, probably a vase painting. It is obvious that the continuous band of this *lebes* divides naturally into at least six different and distinct scenes, of which the Herakles scene is but

¹ *Mon. Ined.* v. 25. *Annali*, 51, 42.

one; we might almost go farther and say that these six scenes had been ranged one above the other on the original work of art, from which the bronze engraver drew his inspiration, so that we should have three friezes of animals, and three scenes of human life. Furtwängler¹ has already compared this bronze to an example which he publishes of the 'Proto-korinthian' style, on which the same animals occur, similarly treated in every respect. It may well have been a large vase of this style which inspired the artist of the bronze *lebes*, who, however, did not fully understand every particular of the work he was copying: thus for instance the hare hunt of the original has been on the bronze transformed into the unintelligible hunt of a gazelle, which is as feebly drawn as the pursuing hounds are spirited. The nearest parallel I know among vase paintings is the Tanagra 'tripod vase,' already quoted; a form to which the scenes of our *lebes* would most naturally adapt themselves.

On the other hand, rough though the representation on this *lebes* is, Herakles is there already depicted in the guise, which after various vicissitudes became specially characteristic of him, carrying bow and club and wearing the lionskin. Now on our *pyxis*, though the artist has, it is true, not been competent to provide his human figures with faces other than the primitive 'Vögelgesicht,' yet he has paid sufficient attention to detail to indicate even the arrows within the quiver, and would have been quite well able, had he been so disposed, to give at least a club and probably a lionskin also to the hero. But here he is clearly nothing different in type from the Herakles on the Olympian bronze relief,² a 'kneeling' (running) archer in a short *chiton* with quiver at back, and nothing more. This same archer has in early vases a history of his own: starting from the nude figure, sometimes of doubtful identity, as on the early island gems and stamped relief-ware, he gradually assumes a distinct personality, and this personality when once established may in most cases be attributed to Herakles. The fact is, Athenaeus' statement that the club was not assigned to Herakles in Greek art before about 600 B.C. appears to be fairly borne out in fact. The type with lionskin, which may have been of Tyrian origin, is found in Cyprus long before it is

¹ *Arch. Zeit.* 1883, p. 162.

² *Ausgrabungen*, iv. xx. A.

known in Greek art, though the individuality of Herakles is otherwise already marked in Homer; there he is specially the mighty archer who dares even wound the gods with his arrows (E. 392), and as archer he continues at any rate down to the chest of Kypselos and later. On a Kyrenè vase (*Arch. Zeit.*, 1881, Taf. xii. 1) his bow and quiver are hung at his back, and he brandishes a club, but not, I believe, until the early Chalcidian style does the actual lionskin occur upon vases.

And so again with regard to Geryon. Klein¹ has suggested that representations of this scene may be divided into two main types: (1) Those in which Geryon appears as a winged monster, with three heads and bodies on one pair of legs; (2) those in which, as on the chest of Kypselos, he is composed of three figures joined together, *τρεις ἄνδρες ἀλλήλοις προσεχόμενοι*. Now this winged type, which Klein takes to be the earlier, is found at present only on two early Chalcidian vases, but that it existed also in comparatively late times has been conjectured from a reference in Aristophanes, *Ach.* 1082. Klein's argument that this type is 'artistically higher,' seems mainly based on the fact that the winged conception would naturally approach more nearly to the 'Oriental' original from which presumably the type was borrowed; but seeing that the earliest types we know both in literature and art,² are not winged, it seems to me just as likely that the original type may be that of the chest of Kypselos, which may have undergone subsequently the strong Oriental influence which permeates Chalcidian art. Moreover, another claim which he advances for the prior antiquity of the Chalcidian type, viz., the introduction of the cattle of Geryon into the scene, is answered by their occurrence upon our *pyxis*.

There are in the British Museum three other representations of this myth which would be important additions to Klein's list.

1. *Amphora*, from Kamiros, with smooth handles: black figures with purple and white on red panel.

(a) Athene, Herakles, Zeus, Kyknos, Ares.

(b) Athene, Herakles (lionskin, quiver, club), dead herdsman,

¹ *Euphronios*, p. 30.

² Cf. the Cyprus statue Cesnola, *Cyprus*, p. 156.

Geryon (τρεῖς ἄνδρες type), Erytheia (?): apparently Chalcidian.

2. *Kylia*,¹ published *Mon. Ined.* ix. 11.

3. *Kylia*, from Kamiros; careless style, black figures with purple and white.

(a) Bearded figure with mantle on arm.

(b) and (c) (continuous frieze around exterior), Herakles in lionskin (beneath whom lie dead herdsman and dog), striding forward exactly in attitude of the similar figure in De Luynes *Vases Peints*, viii. shooting arrow at Geryon (τρεῖς ἄνδρες type). Behind Geryon is one bull, behind Herakles four. The field is filled with boughs with white fruit.

Now of these examples No. 1 at least is probably Chalcidian, though, of course, later than Klein's two vases. No. 3 seems to be clearly an Athenian work, but the close correspondence between it and one of Klein's Chalcidians (De Luynes *ibid.* viii.), make it probable that we have two interpretations of the same original type, the Chalcidian, or winged, and the Athenian, a type without wings. No. 1 shows us that in later Chalcidian art the wingless type is known, and, until we actually meet with a Γηρύονης τετράπτερος in art, I do not think the punning allusion in the *Acharnians* is sufficient proof of the late existence of such a type in Athenian art.

In Klein's discussion as to the 'typology' of this myth he takes the Cyprus relief in stone as being the earliest representation known, and argues for the earlier or later dates of other representations in proportion as they correspond more or less with this his archetype, his reason being that in this relief there is an obviously Assyrian treatment. But if this is really an Assyrian work of the eighth century how can we account for the existence of a completely formulated myth in Assyrian art at this period? We have there Herakles, a definite personality

¹ Heydemann, in his description of this scene (*Annali* 1869, p. 247), finds a difficulty in explaining the curved parallel lines beside the figure of Athene. They are not, as he con-

jectures, part of a circle, nor part of a badly drawn shield; but belong to the outline of the colossal eye which has formed the left hand boundary of this group.

with bow and lionskin; we have the bulls of Geryon amplified, Assyrian fashion, into a confused herd, and the three-fold character of Geryon, ill-suited to an Assyrian treatment, is transferred to his dog,¹ who is shown as a very clearly-marked type with three heads. It seems to me much more probable that we have here a comparatively late rendering, by a foreign artist accustomed to the sight of Assyrian art, of a scene more properly Greek, and of which the type is already definitely fixed in Greek Art. However this may be, it is quite possible that we may separate an Orientalising treatment of myth, such as we have it on the Cyprus relief and bronze *lebes* (which is further reflected too in the Chalcidian winged type), from the more purely Greek type, such as we know it from our vase and the descriptions of Pausanias.

Examining the list of Geryon vase-scenes collected by Klein, we shall find that our vase will very well take a place at its head as the earliest of the examples there known. After the triple Geryon and Herakles types are once fairly fixed there is little alteration, except the gradual substitution among the spectators (where spectators are necessary) of definite personalities such as Athene, Eurytion, in place of some of the cattle.

The fact is, in the case of a myth like this, which is employed sometimes for a narrow space like the metope, sometimes for a wide space like the frieze, it is impossible to lay down a definite process of development in asserting that, since one scene is fuller in detail than the other, the fuller is therefore the older type. We may consider that our vase represents the transition stage in the earliest development of our myth; the earliest treatment of the Geryon legend that we know is that on the chest of Kypselos, where the representation is confined to the duel between the two figures, Herakles and the monster; the adaptation of this myth to a frieze surface, such as we see in process here, was in all probability the primary cause of the introduction of other figures. A representation like ours would give first of all the bulls, and perhaps the dog, and some of

¹ The dog is surely a late introduction of Greek art into this myth. May it have come in perhaps through the

medium of some scene like this, where one of the conventional lions might easily be mistaken for a dog?

these would gradually make way for human figures such as Athene, Iolaos, &c. ; we see the same principle in hundreds of archaic frieze-representations. To quote a single instance, we have in the British Museum a vase showing the contest of Theseus and the Minotaur, where four or five figures stand on either side of the central group, to which they have no possible relation except as serving to fill up the vacant space.

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