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Mythological Representation of the Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos Story on a Tyrrhenian Amphora (IUAM 73.6) in the Indiana University Art Museum

By Megan Lynne Thomsen

Ancient myths often occupy a significant role in the culture of past civilizations. This power is exemplified in many artworks from these periods. One of the richest sources of this ancient Grecian history can be traced through amphorae, ceramic wear elaborately decorated with figures and designs. The following piece explores this fascinating subject in greater detail ...
Introduction

This thesis is an examination of mythological representations on Archaic Attic black-figure "Tyrrhenian" amphorae, with a specific focus on a vase in the Indiana University Art Museum (#73.60). This amphora is an example of a particular class of vessels made in Greece during the 6th century B.C., but specifically for export to Etruria. I have written a description and formal analysis of this vase and have researched, with the help of my thesis advisor, Prof. Glowacki, the frequency of the Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos myth on Tyrrhenian amphora, as well as in other Etruscan artistic contexts, in order to explore the reasons for the popularity of Greek heroic myths in Etruscan art.

I suggest that the Etruscans were fascinated with Herakles not only because of his demi-god status and his great deeds, but also because of his ability to "bridge" the human world and the divine through his conquering of death by visiting and returning from the Underworld as well as his ascending to Mt. Olympos at his "death" to live with the immortal gods. His story, along with myths of other great Greek heroes, filled the main figural zone of several known Tyrrhenian amphorae, many of them apparently found in tombs, so it is logical to assume that there may have been some connection between the heroic myths and the Etruscan conceptions of death and the afterlife. This connection between myth, art, vessel, and function was the beginning of my research into Greek and Etruscan mythology, which I will explore in the following chapters in light of the history and context of the Tyrrhenian amphorae themselves.

When I was a freshman here at Indiana University, I enrolled in an honors class taught by Prof. Glowacki called H203: Myth and Image in Ancient Greece. Through the slide lectures on mythology, ancient Greek art, and the weekly sessions in the Indiana University Art Museum, I began to look at vase painting and sculpture not only as art forms but also as a product of the society in which they were produced and used. In the spring of 2001, I had the opportunity to work as an Honors Teaching Intern under Prof. Glowacki for the same Myth and Image course and this time, after three years of classical art and archaeology classes, I was still struck by the motivation behind the art. I was able to look at the pieces from a completely different point of view, but I also had the chance to see through the eyes of the students who were just being introduced to the themes and conventions of Greek art for the first time, and to gain yet another perspective.

My interest in Tyrrhenian amphorae came after researching and writing a short report on the IUAM vessel two years ago for C413: Art and Archaeology of Greece with Prof. Klein. In particular, I was fascinated by the relatively small number of vases, like Tyrrhenian amphorae, that were painted and exported specifically for the Etruscan market. Thus this past year I began to dig deeper and learn all that I could about the 6th century Greek and Etruscan cultures that produced, traded, and used Tyrrhenian amphorae.

In the following chapters, I will first provide a brief history of Tyrrhenian amphorae and the scholarship on them, followed in Chapter 2 by an examination of the Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos myth in Greek literature and art, since that is the mythological narrative scene depicted on the IUAM amphora. Chapter 3 provides a
systematic description and formal analysis of IUAM #73.6, based upon my own first-hand observations in the museum. In the final chapter I discuss this Greekmade vessel and its mythological decoration in light of its (probable) Etruscan context, and summarize how this heroic scene compares with other myths chosen to decorate Tyrrhenian amphorae.

Chapter 1: Tyrrhenian Amphorae ... a Brief History

Early Studies

When the first catalog lists and excavation reports were published for Etruscan cities and cemeteries in the 18th century, the special class of black-figure painted amphorae that were much later to be christened "Tyrrhenian" amphorae started to appear on lists of objects found in the Etruscan tombs. For example, the earliest published reports documenting these distinctive vases came from the sites of Marciano della Chiano (1705), Orvieto (1706), and Sarteano (1710). Scholarship specifically focusing on these amphorae, however, did not appear until about 15 years later.¹

Buonarota, in 1724, was the first to comment on the origin of the amphorae. He held that since they were all found in Italy, the amphorae must have been made near the sites where they had been discovered. Italian origin remained the popular theory until 1754 when Mazocchi recognized the "griechischen Charakter" of the painting through epigraphical study. Nine years later, Winckelmann added support to Mazocchi's theory, but this time on strictly "stilistischen Gründen."²

After this initial debate as to the origin of the amphorae, the subject was left virtually untouched until 1831 when Gerhard began organizing all pottery known to him into three categories: Greek, Etruscan, and "Tyrrhenian" (basically all the vases that wouldn't fit into either of the other two categories).³ Once this third, enigmatic group was identified, scholars started to research the provenance of these vases so that they could move them out of the "limbo" of the "Tyrrhenian" designation into a more specific category. The first scholars to do this were Bunsen (1834), Rochette (1834), and Kramer (1837), who all agreed that the amphorae were of Attic style. In the same year as Kramer, Creuzer likewise published an article asserting that the amphorae did indeed, have "ein athenischer Provenienz."⁴

Until this point the amphorae were referred to as the "ägyptisierende" or "all'egiziana" part of Gerhard's Tyrrhenian group. The term "tirreno-egiziane"⁵ Was also used, though rarely. Despite the fact that most scholars believed these amphorae to be of Greek origin, the subname from Gerhard's list stuck and was only slightly changed by

¹ Thiersch 1899, p.10
² Thiersch 1899, p.1
³ von Bothmer 1944, p.161
⁴ Thiersch 1899, p. 3
⁵ Thiersch 1899, p. 2
Kramer to "tyrrheno-ägyptischen." In the years following, other names were introduced, such as "korinthischen," "dorisierend," "phönizischen," and "asiatisierenden," but no one term was established as the definitive group name.

From the late 1870s to the end of the 19th century another name began to emerge from stylistic studies: "invention attique avec la technique corinthienne." The name switched from "Corinthio-Attic" (Holwerda 1890) to "Attico-Corinthian" (Pottier 1899), and was finally removed from Corinthian style and technique altogether by Thiersch with the publication of his book "Tyrrhenische" Amphoren in 1899. In his careful analysis of what vases remained in Gerhard's Tyrrhenian group, Thiersch decided to discard all the earlier hyphenated attempts to name the vases and keep the misnomer "Tyrrenian," "after having purified and specified the range of its application." His opinion was that although this name didn't describe the provenance of the amphorae, it was not altogether inappropriate for a group of vases that were "made largely, if not exclusively, for the Etruscan market."

Thiersch's analysis not only solved the name problem for these "Tyrrenian" amphorae, it also provided the first in-depth study of their role in the trade of ideas and products between Greece and Etruria in the second quarter of the 6th century B.C. He discussed how these Athenian pots were made specifically for export and how possibly they were filled with Attic olive oil and aimed at the Etruscan market which was already importing Corinthian wares. Archaeological evidence shows that the Etruscans were quite fond of Corinthian pottery, and so it seems logical that the Athenians adopted some of their styles in order to "corner the market."

Characteristics of Decoration on Tyrrhenian Amphorae

By around 590 B.C. the Corinthian style of pottery that had been so popular in Etruria was losing its appeal, so the Athenians had to bring in new innovative ideas to their pottery in order to keep the interest of the Etruscan import market. The result of this overhaul was the so-called Tyrrenian amphora, which have been dated to the second quarter of the sixth century. This is a type of ovoid neckamphora with a spreading echinus foot that ranged in size from 31-50 cm, with an average at 40 cm. They are characterized by their distinctive bands of painting that fill all the available space on the amphora. These bands start at the neck with chains of lotus-palmette designs followed by figural and mythological scenes in the handle zones. Below the main figural scenes,

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6 Thiersch 1899, p.3  
7 Thiersch 1899, p.5  
8 von Bothmer 1944, p.161  
9 von Bothmer 1944, pp.161-162  
10 Thiersch 1899, pp. 8-9  
11 Scullard 1967, p.181  
12 Carpenter (1983) suggests that Tyrrenian amphorae should be dated closer to 560-530 B.C. rather than the second quarter of the 6th century because he believes that the imagery and inscriptions on the amphorae point to a lower date. For the purposes of my paper, I will stick to the earlier, more traditional dates.  
13 Thiersch 1899, pp.14-15
bands of animals reminding one of the Corinthian style fill the lower half of the amphora, leaving room at the bottom for a small band of rays, also a common feature seen on Corinthian pottery.

It is the animal and figural bands that made up most of Thiersch's seminal analysis of Tyrrhenian amphorae. He identified the Corinthian influence and evolution of the design and iconography that became standard for the painters of Tyrrhenian amphorae. Thiersch described the decoration and development of the vase basically from top to bottom. He thus began with cataloging and studying the lotus-palmette chains and then moved on to the many animals, both realistic and fantastic.

In order to discuss the figural and mythological scenes, Thiersch divided the 60 amphorae known to him into those with and without "Punktband" or dicings. "Punktband" are narrow strips of decoration full of vertical dashes and dots located just below the human figural scene. They are a common feature of later Tyrrhenian amphorae. He then divided the categories further according to the number of animal bands and/or additional lotus-palmette bands. Unknowingly, Thiersch all but separated the Tyrrhenian amphorae into the same groupings that later scholars would attribute to different painters/workshops. Although Thiersch himself claimed that all of the amphorae were done by one painter or workshop, his careful division and cataloging paved the way for later scholars to assign the Tyrrhenian amphorae to different painters.

Before painters were assigned, though, a great deal of time was spent creating a "template" of sorts for Tyrrhenian amphorae and their unique decorative bands. Although the lotus-palmette chain on the neck zone was a familiar holdover from Corinthian vessels, individual design and variety in orientation developed on the Tyrrhenian amphorae. What later would be interpreted as separate artists' hands can sometimes be identified by their lotus-palmette designs. For example, we now know that some artists even include an additional lotus-palmette band below the figural frieze and above the animal frieze.14

Below the lotus-palmette design comes the scene that defines this particular type of amphorae and truly separates it from Corinthian style: the human figural scene. The Athenians were fond of narratives and this is probably why the field tended to be flooded with letters, even if they were gibberish. Painters who were literate liked to fill the field with captions. Those who wrote gibberish also liked captions, but their vases tended to be later dated and used repetitions of the same few nonsense words on every pot. Thiersch completed a preliminary study on the gibberish letters, to be followed nearly 90 years later by T.H. Carpenter.15 Their analyses reveal that similar letters are always found with the same painter and perhaps some were even attempts to form non-Attic letters.16 For example, the IUAM amphora 73.6 does have nonsense inscriptions that follow with "Herakles" letters, as described by Thiersch, but the rest of the inscriptions seem to be carelessly drawn letters that cannot be understood, even within a nonsense letter context.

14 Thiersch 1899, pp. 69-86
15 Carpenter 1983
16 Carpenter 1983, pp. 288-289
Whether or not the painters of Tyrrhenian amphorae could actually read, they seemed to take great pride and joy in labeling everything they could, including full names of heroes and even inanimate objects such as Thrones. An illustrative comparison can be found in our day: American fascination with Japanese and Chinese writing finds itself manifested on the numerous products seen with kanji characters on them. Americans, like the ancient Etruscans, may have no idea what it actually means, but the presence of written language inspires awe and impresses intelligence on those in possession of it. The Etruscans who purchased these amphorae for use in their homes and tombs may have had no idea what the inscriptions said, but rather recognized the iconography of the story and so "filled in the gaps" with their mythological knowledge, thereby completing the "sense" of the narrative with or without "sensical" inscriptions.

The human figural scenes themselves usually consisted of a myth on one side and a general scene or other myth on the back side. "Although many of the myths which appear on these pots were also painted by earlier artists, the painters of the Tyrrhenian amphorae liked to emphasize violence," and they "introduced scenes which are not myth but life, particularly scenes of reveling and of sexual encounters."

Before the production of Tyrrhenian amphorae, scenes of lovemaking and revelry (komos scenes) were not frequent in vase-painting unless integral to a mythological narrative. When one keeps in mind the Etruscan market for which these vases were produced, the scenes of reveling, games, and partying may have represented to the Etruscans all of the activities that went along with a funeral. Because Etruscan tomb-paintings frequently show feasting and wrestling, perhaps the "everyday life" scenes on the reverse of Tyrrhenian amphorae show the connection of the funeral activities of mortals to the mythological hero fighting death as the deceased enters the Underworld. Some heroes typically found on Tyrrhenian amphorae are Herakles (the most popular), Theseus, Achilles, along with Amazons, and mythological fights/wars that could be interpreted as good (the hero) fighting evil (monsters/enemies/death).

Below the human figural scene are usually one to three bands of animals, by which Thiersch further divided his list of Tyrrhenian amphorae. These animal friezes seem to be in clear imitation of the Corinthian style of vase-painting. Earlier Tyrrhenian amphorae tended to have more (2-3) bands of animals while the later painters preferred a row of dicing and/or a lotus-palmette frieze before one or two rows of animals. The animals were usually seen in lines processing towards the front center of the pot or in antithetical pairs facing each other, sometimes with a third animal of the same species in the center. The amphora in the IUAM contains such an example of a heraldic pair with a central figure between. The three sirens shown on the band immediately beneath the Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos scene are very similar to those depicted on the example illustrated by Thiersch.

17 Kanji are the "fancy" characters that were taken from the Chinese language by the Japanese and are used as symbols for nouns and verbs, which are then supplemented/conjugated with the simplerlooking Japanese alphabet system.
18 Osborne 1998, p. 95
19 Carpenter 1983, p. 287
The animals commonly depicted in these bands were lions, panthers, goats, geese, griffins, sphinxes, sirens, bulls, stags, cocks, and boars. While some of these are representations of actual animals, most of them are fantastic hybrids. Strange, oriental-looking animals are traditionally said to help lead the deceased to the Underworld in Etruscan society, which could explain the popularity of Corinthian wares with the Etruscans and why the rows of animals were kept on Tyrrhenian amphorae.20

The last element of the amphorae, and the last detail borrowed from the Corinthians, are the rays rising from the top of the foot up to the lowest band of animals. These rays serve not only to fill space, but also to draw the viewer's eye away from the bottom and back up to the figural bands and the more "important" part of the decoration. Perhaps showing the declining attention to detail as these vases continued to be produced, the rays seen on Tyrrhenian amphorae are always haphazard, uneven lines that sometimes cross into the lowest animal band. Due to the careless nature in which these rays were drawn, it seems that they were not kept as an important part of Corinthian style, but as an easy way to fill space at the bottom of the amphora where the field would not permit many or non-distorted animals.

**Attribution Studies: Identifying Painters and Workshops**

Once Tyrrhenian amphorae had been identified as their own stylistic group, further analysis revealed that they could be separated into the hands of individual painters. Rumpf first identified three amphorae to the same hand in 1923, and then in 1934 Beazley started to organize the Tyrrhenian amphorae listed by Thiersch into painters of his own. Beazley connected four amphorae to a painter he named "Goltyr," and then a few years later identified the artist of three vases as the Komos painter. Both Rumpf and Beazley also grouped together a small number of Tyrrhenian amphorae that they left unnamed, but later became known as the O.L.L. Group. It was not until 1944, however, that all of Thiersch's amphorae were finally assigned to painters by von Bothmer.21

The painters of these amphorae, though they may have added inscriptions to their friezes, did not sign their names to their work and so they all remain anonymous with only the modern names that Rumpf, Beazley, and von Bothmer assigned to them. Working on the approximately 90 amphorae known to him at the time, von Bothmer divided Tyrrhenian amphorae into the hands of eight painters. In addition, Beazley later added the painter of the O.L.L. Group (not accepted as part of the Tyrrhenian amphorae group by von Bothmer) and the Archippe Painter (a painter of Tyrrhenian hydriae), which will be discussed below.

1. The Timiades Painter is named for a fallen soldier on one of the pieces (ABV #46) and his works include sensical inscriptions, "interesting" mythology, and

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20 Haynes 2000, p.164
21 von Bothmer 1944, p.162
reverse zones filled with heraldic animals. His amphorae are without dicing and he prefers to include two bands of animals.22

2. The Goltyr Painter, who was named in a letter by Beazley as short for "Golochow 'Tyrrenian'," is best known for his unique animals, especially "bulb-headed" rams. He also tends to draw scenes with warriors, especially in Amazonomachies, which have peculiar shield designs, and he favors two bands below the figural frieze, sometimes substituting one floral for an animal band.23

3. The Kyllenios Painter got his name from an amphora depicting the Birth of Athena which has inscriptions for almost every object both animate and inanimate (Thiersch no. 26; ABV #14). Characteristic of his style are stiff warriors and three animal bands.24

4. The Prometheus Painter got his nickname from his depiction of the Liberation of Prometheus (ABV #28). His name piece is also sometimes put into the O.L.L. group (which will be explained later). Although he doesn't stick to any particular myth, he likes to draw his roes and heraldic sphinxes in a unique way.25

5. The Pointed-Nose Painter may be the easiest to identify--by the profiles of his warriors. He uses only a few nonsense inscriptions, which he copies on every vase. He varies the number of bands on his amphorae, but his animals are "quite remarkably individual" with truncated muzzles and goose-like sirens.26

6. The Castellani Painter, who is named for the collection that his name vase is in (ABV #42), is the earliest of these artists to include dicing under his figural scenes and the rest of the painters listed after him can be assumed to include it. He also employs a panther as a characteristic shield device and he likes to include a palmette-lotus band under his main frieze.27

7. The Fallow Deer Painter is, as his name might imply, known for his animals. His deer have a row of white spots running along their backs and his panthers have peculiar tails. He consistently paints two bands of animals and prefers horsemen on the reverse figural frieze.28

8. The Komos Painter, first identified by Rumpf, is very similar to the Fallow Deer Painter, and has also been called the Guglielmi Painter. He is one of the later painters and thus has nonsense inscriptions, which are identical on all of his pieces. His preference is for three bands of animals and while not all of his

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22 von Bothmer lists Thiersch nos. 3, 4, 12, 15, 10, and five amphorae not listed in Thiersch. See ABV nos. 5, 18, 46, 19, 27, 1, 96, 4, 68
23 von Bothmer lists Thiersch nos. 33, 6, 5, 32, 34, 35, and three amphorae not listed in Thiersch. See ABV nos. 62, 114, 52, 63, 104, 90
24 von Bothmer lists Thiersch nos. 26, 30, 27, and 21. See ABV nos. 14, 69, 58, 70
25 von Bothmer lists Thiersch no. 24 and two amphorae not listed in Thiersch, including the name vase. See ABV nos. 28, 6, 97
26 von Bothmer lists Thiersch nos. 16 and 2. See ABV nos. 72, 87
27 von Bothmer lists Thiersch nos. 59 and 57. See ABV nos. 42, 45
28 von Bothmer lists Thiersch nos. 46, 40, 43, 44, 45, 41, and one amphora not listed in Thiersch. See ABV nos. 32, 40, 93, 77, 23
obverse scenes are of specific myths, he does tend to favor the Herakles and Nessos myth.29

9. The O.L.L. Group stands for Oxford-Leipsic-Louvre, and the painter of this group loved Amazons and a single row of animals.30 This group is much disputed and "in shape, style, and composition these amphorae differ more from the "Tyrrhenian" group than any two "Tyrrhenian" vases among themselves."31

10. The Archippe Painter is known for hydriai (which I do not include in this study) and is a contemporary of the later Tyrrhenian painters.32

Painters that are known for specific myths tend to stick to them. For example, the Goltyr Painter was fond of Amazonomachies and painted various myths including Amazons. Also, the Komos/Guglielmi Painter seemed to like Herakles myths and so his works include the Herakles and Nessos myth and Amazonomachies with Herakles. In addition to sticking with particular myths, von Bothmer and Beazley found that no painter who painted "punktband" or nonsense inscriptions was ever found to leave them out or write sensibly, and the reverse is always true.33 For instance, the Timiades Painter is known for his inscriptions and two rows of animals directly below the figural frieze, and no vase has ever been attributed to him that has a row of punktband or nonsensical inscriptions. In the same sense, the Fallow Deer Painter and the Komos Painter always include a row of punktband and their painting style is not found on any amphora that is without punktband.

Earlier painters were typically "cleaner" than later painters are and they tend to have sensical inscriptions and no dicing. The later painters were not as careful as the earlier artists, and they seem to spend less time on figural scenes, inscriptions (which are usually nonsense), and basically just the vase in general. They include more bands of simple filler, like dicing or lotus-palmette chains, and their animals are fewer and less detailed. These later painters were probably just copying a style that they knew would sell in Etruria and therefore were not as careful as the earlier artists who created the Tyrrhenian scheme of painting.

Market Considerations

The Tyrrhenian amphorae flourished in their market because they chose a shape not employed in Corinth and they added to and adapted both the Corinthian and Attic black-figure styles. Although this may seem innovative, these vases are regarded as a

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29 von Bothmer lists Thiersch nos. 47, 50, 51, 48, 52, and one amphora not listed in Thiersch. See ABV nos. 98, 57, 105, 38
30 Beazley put this group together and although other archaeologists like to discount them as not Tyrrhenian, I will keep them in for the sake of comparison.
31 von Bothmer 1944, p.163. See ABV nos. 10, 26, 53, 54, 64, 55, 125
32 I include the Archippe painter in my list only to show all the named artists connected with the Tyrrhenian Group formed by Beazley, but will not be referring to his work in my paper. See ABV nos. 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133
33 von Bothmer 1944, p.164
'lower class' by most scholars, who consider "the draughtsmanship [to be] careless and rough ... a pretentious and inferior style, which offers cheaply all the latest improvements of the leading masters of Athens and Corinth."34 (In more modern terms, the Tyrrhenian amphorae are regarded now-and may have been regarded in antiquity-as the Target knock-off version of the name-brand Pottery Barn dishes; they took a popular style and in the midst of reproducing it changed some points to suit their own tastes and made it quicker and more cheaply than the others.)

Since the Tyrrhenian amphorae were supposedly being made in vast quantities, it is easy to understand why the painting is not quite up to par and why the inscriptions tend to be nonsensical, perhaps "showing painters often too hurried to clean their brushes."35 Whether or not these artists were "too hurried to clean their brushes" or simply illiterate and trying to copy letters, their quality does not play a strong role in the art historical development of Attic black-figure. Despite the seemingly large export market for Tyrrhenian amphorae, their overall quality was not as high as other black-figure being produced in the Kerameikos. While an objective comparison on quality cannot be made, the painters of the Tyrrhenian amphorae did employ more amusing and sometimes creative art than the higher quality pieces. According to von Bothmer, "Their compositions are fresh and vigorous; there is something piquant and interesting even in their ludicrous pride in their own literacy."36

Recent scholarship

Although the Tyrrhenian amphorae may be "fresh and vigorous," little scholarship has been done on them since von Bothmer's article in 1944. Identified as an enigmatic group within Attic black-figure, they are usually listed as a low-quality black-figure export group that were popular for only about a quarter of a century. The most recent research into Tyrrhenian amphorae comes from T.H. Carpenter in two articles that were published in the Oxford Journal of Archaeology in the early 1980s.37 In his second article, he addresses the fact that while an extensive catalog has been made of the shape, style, and subjects of Tyrrhenian amphorae, their provenience or lack thereof is usually pushed to the background.

Of the approximately 250 Tyrrhenian amphorae that had been found at the time of Carpenter's OJA article, only 48 vases from 16 sites can be given a concrete provenience.38 These 48 vases come from Beazley's Attic Black-figure Vase Painters list of 121 Tyrrhenian amphorae and the additional 130 known to Carpenter are from his own research and are not published, so I cannot say whether they have known proveniences or not. The most prevalent findspot is Vulci with 22 examples, followed closest by Cerveteri with nine known vases.

34 Cook 1997, p. 76
35 Cook 1997, p. 76
36 von Bothmer 1944, p.164
38 Beazley 1956, pp. 94-104
In his article "The Tyrrhenian Group: Problems of Provenance," Carpenter continues his discussion started in his article from the previous year on the letterforms found on Tyrrhenian amphorae and introduces a comparison of these amphorae with other black-figure vases at their same findspots to help discover a possible provenience for the "homeless" vases. He argues that perhaps some of what scholars have called "nonsense" inscriptions may actually have been attempts at Greek letterforms other than Attic ones, such as Eubean, Corinthian, and Boeotian. He began his research by studying the development of Attic letterforms in the 6th century and then comparing them to vases of non-Attic origin. He also acknowledged that his research may not find a definitive answer because sometimes the letters are drawn so badly that they cannot fit into a group and those put into groups may have just been a slip of the brush.39

Of the vases with known findspots, only four of the ten painters are represented, as cataloged by Beazley; they are the Komos/Guglielmi Painter, the Goltyr Painter, the Pointed-Nose Painter, and the O.L.L. group.40 Upon further research into Beazley's catalog, I can find no pattern for specific myths at specific sites, but only the specific myths that a painter favors. Each painter tends to have the highest number of vases at Vulci, but this is not surprising because about half of the vases with known provenience come from Vulci, so that no comment can be made on certain sites favoring certain painters.

With so few vases having concrete findspots it is difficult to discuss the distribution of Tyrrhenian amphorae and the trade market throughout Etruria for them. Also adding to the problem of research is the fact that not much has actually been done in comparison with other black-figure vases, and as Bothmer puts it, "of the 90 'Tyrrhenian' amphorae known to me, almost half are either completely or partially unpublished, and of the published one half are reproduced in the publications on too small a scale."41

So, while the history of scholarship on Tyrrhenian amphorae still leaves many questions left unanswered, the research that has been done lays a firm foundation for future discovery of the "whys" of Tyrrhenian amphorae and what impact they had on the civilization that imported them. Now that they have been cataloged, with descriptions of their figural scenes, the next logical step is to study what myths were chosen and understand why these Greek myths were so important to the Etruscans so as to create a specialized export market for them. In the next chapter I will discuss the development of one particular myth depicted on several Tyrrhenian amphorae, including IUAM 73.6: Herakles rescue of Deianeira from the centaur Nessos.

39 Carpenter 1984, pp. 52-54
40 Beazley 1956, pp. 94-104. 41 von Bothmer 1944, p. 163
41 von Bothmer 1944, p. 163
Chapter 2: The Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos Myth and its Representation in Athenian Vase-Painting

Whenever Herakles' great deeds and adventures are chronicled, his twelve labors are usually the focus of discussion. Far less attention is given to his many other stories, but it is in fact one of these "lesser" tales that starts the cycle that eventually leads to his death. The hero's ultimate downfall began with the myth in question here: Herakles' rescue of Deianeira from the centaur Nessos.

As with most stories from the ancient world, this myth probably began as oral tradition. It is not until the end of the 8th century or the beginning of the 7th century BC that an allusion to the myth appears in Hesiod's *Ehoiai*. In listing Deianeira as a daughter of Oineus, Hesiod comments, "[she] contrived dreadful deeds in the folly (?) of her mind, when anointing a chiton with a drug she gave it to the herald Lichas to convey. And he gave it to lord Herakles son of Amphitryon sacker of cities." This mention of the chiton and the drug is an allusion to events that will take place after Herakles has shot Nessos: the centaur will give Deianeira a "love potion," and this will ultimately lead to the hero's death.

The first actual written account of the episode may have been in a lost poem by Archilochos, where the author detailed the attempted ravishment in which Deianeira reminds Herakles of his combat with the river-god Acheloos for her hand, and the subsequent death of Nessos. The myth does not seem to have been popular in early Greek literature, but it is a subject depicted in several examples of archaic vase-painting. The story appears again in literary accounts in the 5th century B.C. from Sophocles in his *Women of Trachis* and Bacchylides' dithyramb about Deianeira and the ruin of Herakles.

Whether or not the ancient writers included the Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos myth in their repertoire, the story was well known to the ancient Greeks. In order to understand it fully, one has to go back to Herakles' fight with Acheloos. Deianeira, the daughter of Oineus, the king of Kalydon, was being wooed by the river-god Acheloos, who could take many forms -- a bull, a snake, and a half-man/half-bull. Deianeira, however, was not favorable to this wooing. As fate would have it, Herakles showed up, challenged, and ultimately defeated Acheloos in combat. After conquering the river-god, Herakles was given Deianeira's hand in marriage by Oineus and they eventually produced a son, Hyllos. One day while at a feast in Kalydon, Herakles, seemingly unaware of his strength, reprimanded one of Oineus' servants a bit too hard and accidentally killed him. The servant boy was Eunomos, a nephew of Oineus', and although the killing did appear to be an accident, Herakles and Deianeira were exiled from Kalydon.

After leaving Kalydon, Herakles and Deianeira made their way to Trachis and came to the Evenus river. The river was flooded at the time and, although Herakles could make it across, his bride Deianeira could not. The couple, therefore, sought out the centaur Nessos, who offered his services as a ferryman across the river. This may have

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1 Perseus Project 2002, s.v. Hesiod
2 Translation from Gantz 1993, p.432
3 Gantz 1993, p. 432
been the same Nessos that Herakles had driven from Arcadia years before, but the centaur now claimed to be a reputable ferryman, having received the commission from the gods for his virtue. While it is unclear whether or not Herakles truly believed the centaur, the hero did hire Nessos to carry Deianeira across the river.

At first, all seemed to be going well with the crossing, but while Herakles approached the opposite shore he heard a cry from his wife as the centaur attempted to accost her. Accounts differ, but since Nessos and Deianeira were so far away from Herakles, either on the banks of the river or still in it, Herakles had to use his bow and arrow to reach the offending centaur. Since Deianeira screamed when the centaur had started to assault her, the attempted rape was never completed. But even the attempt caused Herakles to shoot and kill the brash ferryman.

While this moment of violence and death is the favorite "snapshot" for vasepainters (see below), the most intriguing part of the myth happens after Nessos is shot. Herakles had used one of his arrows tipped in the venomous blood of the Lernean Hydra, so that the centaur died not only of his wound but also of poison. Before his death, however, the wily centaur convinced Deianeira to take a sample of his now contaminated blood (and/or semen) to use someday as a love-potion on Herakles. Why Deianeira should believe the centaur who just tried to rape her is never adequately explained, but it seems that Nessos hit a nerve when he asked if Herakles still sought other women while being married to her. The centaur tricked her into believing his blood would be a love-potion to make Herakles love only her. Knowing of Herakles' "wandering eyes," Deianeira believed the dying creature and took the deadly fluid to keep handy to spread on Herakles' cloak -- if and when the time should come.

After arriving at and establishing a home in Trachis, Herakles set off again on adventures that took him away from home for months or years at a time. In his play The Trachiniai, Sophocles relates the feelings of Deianeira about being left at home and her reaction when Herakles sends home Iole to be his new concubine. Some sources relate that Herakles had sought Iole's hand in marriage before he had wed Deianeira, while others imply he simply wanted to take her as a concubine. Either way, her arrival at the home of Deianeira stirred the memory of Nessos and the promised "love-potion". Deianeira then used the potion on Herakles cloak, which then melted itself to his skin, eating it alive and driving him mad, which leading to his death.

The literary accounts of the Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos story seem to serve merely as springboard for Herakles' eventual downfall. The artistic sources, however, typically focus on the moment of violence when Herakles attacks Nessos after the attempted rape. Perhaps for the ancient Greek artists this moment was chosen because it was an easier way of representing and reminding viewers of how Herakles fell later in life, while at the same time depicting the drama and violence that was so popular in narrative art. That is, seeing Herakles fighting Nessos might have triggered a "Nessos-potion-Deianeira-Iole-mantle-Herakles-madness-death" train of thought for the Greeks, who would have been familiar with the entire story, including the death and apotheosis of their great hero. For the Etruscans, on the other hand, who actually purchased many of the Greek vases showing this episode, the scene depicted could have had another
significance. Herakles fighting and winning over an "unnatural" monster like the centaur may have spurred a train of thought such as "Herakles (man) fighting Nessos (monster/death) but winning in the end". As scholars have noted, Herakles is seen quite a lot as the "favorite subject of Orientalizing narrative art" because "he is, after all, the monster slayer par excellence, the prototypical defender against the inexplicable and abnormal." Herakles' popularity in vase-painting is one that spans both centuries and painting styles, but "most representations of [his] deeds, however, were made on Attic black figure vases between 550 and 500 BC." His scenes were usually of some violent action and his "only quiet moments in black-figure are with his patron or at his apotheosis." Some of the earliest known depictions of Herakles are from the 8th century BC where "we find reproductions of the legends concerning the lion, the hydra, the doe and the birds." Fitting in with the theme of violence, Herakles-Nessos scenes were some of the earliest Herakles scenes in black-figure and others, including many of his more famous labors, didn't appear until the second quarter of the 6th century BC. In fact, the canonical early on, but were more popular in the Classical period after their appearance on the temple of Zeus at Olympia.

The Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos myth is first seen in Athenian vase-painting on a large Middle Protoattic neck amphora from the second quarter of the 7th century B.C. On this vase, Herakles is striding across the panel with his sword to kill Nessos while Deianeira waits in a chariot. The artists' depiction of the myth is unique among all painted versions of the H-D-N story in that Herakles is striding to the left as the victor when he is normally moving right. This peculiar representation may be explained by the fact that this is a very early example of mythological narrative in Athenian vase painting, and the artistic convention of showing the victor attacking from left to right has not yet become a standard feature. Although the artist has chosen to have Herakles moving from right to left, he has indicated the main character in this scene by reserving his skin in the color of the clay, much like Odysseus in the well-known Eleusis Amphora painted around the same time.

The New York amphora also differs from later depictions in terms of the placement of characters and the moment chosen. Deianeira is seen here in a chariot holding the reins of fours horses while Herakles heads off to fight the offending centaur. One can only assume that the artist has chosen to depict the events after Nessos had attacked Deianeira and Herakles has rescued her and stowed her away safely in the chariot while he returns to kill Nessos. The centaur is already falling to the ground in pain, so it would seem that Herakles is striding with the second or final blow. It is also interesting to note how the artist is not yet comfortable drawing a seamless man and horse combination, but emphasizes the separate man with a horse's hind quarters attached

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6 Hurwitt 1985, p.156
5 Brommer 1986, p. 6
6 Boardman 1985, p. 224
7 Nibbi 1969, p. 44
8 Brommer 1986, p. 6
9 Shapiro 1994, pp. 156-158; Morris1984, pp. 65-70
to his back. In addition, although the chariot is given a place of prominence in the background, which would indicate dry land and perhaps cause problems with a riverine setting, elements of water are present. Along the bottom of the frieze are four swamp birds and filling the open space throughout the scene are stacked zigzags that could indicate waves/water. Also, directly above and below the main figural scene are bands of running spirals; another allusion to the water setting that is such an integral part in the literary versions of this myth.

The next appearance of the H-D-N myth in Athenian vase painting is on the Nessos (or Nettos) Painter's name vase from about the last quarter of the 7th century. The neck panel of this Late Protoattic (or early black figure) funerary amphora is decorated with a sword-bearing Herakles moving to the right and grabbing the hair of the centaur Nessos. Both characters are identified by painted inscriptions. Although Deianeira is entirely missing from this scene, the iconography of Herakles and Nessos appears similar to what become the iconographic standard of the myths as seen on Tyrrehnian amphorae and other blackfigure pieces of the mid-6th century B.C, but there are still significant differences. Herakles is shown here with a clearly articulated mustache, but perhaps without a beard, and he does not wear his characteristic lion skin. He and Nessos both have painted inscriptions around their heads, providing their names and probably indicating that the Nessos/Nettos Painter or someone in his workshop was literate. Nessos himself is shown with a long, "wild" beard and although his head is turned away, he is reaching out and touching Herakles' chin in supplication. The background field is littered with rosettes and other filler-designs common to Late Protoattic pottery, but they give no obvious indication of the action taking place near water. One of the few suggestions of water may be the curly-queues drawn hanging from the "ceiling" of the scene that resemble wave crests, but these would make more sense at the bottom of the scene -- unless the artist intended the scene to be underwater! Other elements that may have pointed to a riverine setting are the band of running spirals directly above the main figural scene, the row of ducks that decorate the rim, and the few zigzag designs in the background of the figural scene which may be reminiscent of the stacked zigzags on the Nessos Amphora. Although these elements seem to relate to water, their placement in separate bands and small size may indicate that they were just decorative designs which no longer had any specific "water" meaning. Overall, it seems that the river may not have been the most important consideration in the 7th century artists' conception of the narrative and even hints at the possibility that there may have been other versions of the episode that have not survived.

Whether or not it fits perfectly with literary sources, Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos iconography becomes fairly regularized in Archaic black-figures of the 6th century B.C., when it is the most popular. In fact, the most common appearance of the story is on Tyrrehnian amphorae, such as the example in the Indiana University Art Museum. This myth is rarely depicted after the 6th century B.C. 11

10 Linders, R. et al., LIMC V1,1992, pp. 838-847, nos. 1-16, pl1s.1-16, s.v. News
On the 6th century vases, Herakles is usually shown with his lion's skin knotted across his chest and the "mask" of the lion over his head. The back paws of the lion's skin hang down between his legs and are usually incised with spots or lines to indicate fur. Around the skin he wears a belt at his waist, both to secure the lion's skin and hold his scabbard. It is not until red-figure that his lion's skin flows free like a cape without belt or hangs over his shoulders as a mantle. The hero is typically shown bearded, especially in black-figure.

Besides his club, Herakles is also known to wield a sword or bow, but he is most frequently shown with a sword in the H-D-N myth. The only known example of Herakles actually using a bow and arrow on Nessos, as fits with the myth, is a black-figure hydria made in Caere about 520 BC. He is shown striding, with arrow ready, towards a fleeing Nessos, who once again is not a seamless centaur but an awkward man/horse combination. Deianeira has her hands raised in front of her and is either trying to run towards Herakles or get out of the path of the deadly arrow. Deianeira's role in all these scenes is always to be stuck in the middle of these two fighting male figures. Herakles is almost always on the left side of the scene fighting across to the right and thus employing the artistic convention of the victor striding from left to right. Although the "victor usually acts from left to right," when he is the main focus of the myth, he "may be placed not at the extreme left, in the wings, but nearer the centre" to help balance the composition and draw the viewer's attention to the main action.11

In some instances, "behind [the victor] there might be a companion, if appropriate to the story," and on several Tyrrhenian amphorae with the H-D-N myth and other scenes with Herakles fighting Athena stands behind the hero as patron and additional support in battle if need be (Fig. 3).12 Athena is usually identified by her aegis, shield, helmet, spear, or even caption, but sometimes she may look like an ordinary woman whose importance is inferred only by her proximity to Herakles and the fact that she warrants a caption, even if it is gibberish.13

Additional companions, opponents, or spectators are often added to the "wings" of the field to balance and basically just fill space. In the case of a myth like the H-D-N story, there are only 3 characters and a whole handle zone to fill, so the painter had to improvise. According to John Boardman in his History of Greek Vases, "in sixth-century black figure, where the available fields are always filled, the sides of a panel or frieze may be occupied by 'onlookers', unnamed mortals [who] seem more than just a filling device though they can seldom pretend to have any role in the action."14 These "filler mortals" in the H-D-N scene may be centaurs, men with weapons who stand ready to help Herakles, or just unconcerned chatting men and women.

In black-figure, and especially in Tyrrhenian amphorae, Herakles tends to stride with his left leg and arm forward and grasp some appendage of Nessos (usually his right arm, tail, or hair). His right arm wields his sword, which is shown drawn back against his

11 Boardman 2001, pp. 184-185
12 Boardman 2001, p.185
13 Fittschen 1970, p.161
14 Boardman 2001, p.187
body as if he is getting ready to thrust it into Nessos. The only problem, and perhaps what is keeping Herakles from thrusting his sword is, again, Deianeira being stuck between them. She can be shown standing with her hand up in supplication, seated on Nessos' back, or hooked under the crook of Nessos' arm and hanging awkwardly as she is being dragged off. Although Deianeira can be shown on Nessos' back or in his arms, the attempted rape is never actually depicted. Despite the favor for violence in Herakles scenes and Tyrrhenian amphorae, Nessos is always just carrying Deianeira away, so the deed is only alluded to and not explicitly represented.

In some cases where the area available is small or the artist wanted to focus on the fight, Deianeira may be omitted altogether. When Deianeira is shown, though, she usually has one or both of her hands up in supplication, wild thrashing about, or even reaching out for Herakles. In most cases Deianeira has added white for her skin, but in later black-figure her skin is left completely black with no incision for facial features. In the Classical period she is usually part of the scene, but she shows no indication of alarm or struggling, and she is always fully and meticulously clothed with no real disarray of her garments caused by her abduction.

Nessos is always shown trying to flee or turn away from Herakles in both black and red-figure vase-painting. His front legs are always bent, sometimes down to the "ground," and this is especially emphasized in the cases where the artist has drawn the front half of Nessos as a complete man. The bent legs, especially in combination with bent arms, are reminiscent of the knielauf (or running kneel) position used as a convention by 6th century artists to indicate speed. Also, having Nessos' legs bent to the ground could be another way to show how Herakles is victorious in bringing Nessos down, literally.

Although Nessos is running away from Herakles, his head is always turned back to watch his pursuer. He is drawn with a full, bushy beard and wild hair—signs of an uncivilized creature. He may also be shown wearing a crown of leaves, have horse ears, and have added red on his bare chest which further emphasizes his distance from the world of man. His mouth is often shown open as if crying out in pain and fear at the prospect of his fate.

Nessos arms are usually bent as though he is pumping them for speed, but he is getting nowhere because Herakles usually has grabbed his right wrist and is coming in with his sword or club for the kill. This simple action allows the artist to show speed and motion without drawing the viewer's eye away from the center of the frieze. Nessos' left arm is typically occupied with carrying Deianeira, but may also be shown reaching out and away from Herakles. In the tangle of characters Herakles may not be able to grab Nessos' right hand and sometimes it is raised to his head in a gesture of grieving or suffering. Not only shown with centaurs, "in Greek art it also indicated general dismay, but not always at ill fortune; [the gesture of hand to the head] can be used thus for a warrior destined for death and for a randy satyr, an archetypal Keatsian Bold lover, overwhelmed by the prospect of a sleeping maenad to molest."15 So, in all the frenzy

15 Boardman 2001, p.177
inherent in the scene, Nessos could have his hand up both to show his excitement over having captured Deianeira, but also at his realization of his own forthcoming death.

So, whether it was seen as the impending death of Nessos, the innocent mistake of Deianeira that leads to Herakles' demise, or the hero literally slaying "death" itself, this myth epitomizes the Tyrrhenian amphorae's love for violence. Through the popularity of these hero myths among the Etruscans, the painters of the Tyrrhenian amphorae brought new stories and iconography to the art of blackfigure vase-painting. A regular set of iconography was established in the Archaic period for the Herakles-Deianeira-Nessos myth on black-figure vases, which will be seen in the description of IUAM 73.6 in the next chapter.
Chapter 3: Description of IUAM 73.6

The Tyrrhenian amphora in the collection of the Indiana University Art Museum (IUAM 73.6) is a paradigm for the shape, style, and iconography that define Tyrrhenian amphorae as a class. Not only is it nearly the exact average size for a Tyrrhenian amphora, its main decorative panel depicts a myth very popular with the "Tyrrhenian Group" of painters: Herakles' rescue of Deianeira from Nessos. Although it has appeared in two separate publications, the vessel has not yet been the subject of a complete, formal analysis.¹ Prior to its purchase by the Indiana University Art Museum in 1973, the vessel resided in relative obscurity in Athos Moretti’s collection in Bellinzona, Switzerland.² It does not appear in any of the lists provided by Thiersch, Beazley, or von Bothmer and therefore remains unattributed to a specific artist. As the following description will make clear, the IUAM amphora is a very impressive example of this class of artifact in terms of preservation, the quality of its painting and incision, and the careful attention given to its figural scene. The vessel has been dated in stylistic ground to ca. 575-570 B.C.

Description³

The amphora is intact except for several small nicks and chips on the body. It measures 39.7 centimeters tall from foot to rim. The painted decoration on the body is divided into four panels of figural decoration, depicting an upper band with human figures on both sides, followed by three bands of animal/monster friezes.

The main figural panel on the obverse (Side A) depicts Herakles pursuing a fleeing centaur (Nessos), while a female figure (Deianeira) stands between the two with her hands up in supplication. Herakles, on the left hand side of the scene, is wearing a short kilt-like garment (chitoniskos) and short-sleeved shirt. He is also dressed in his traditional lion skin, which is knotted across his chest with the back paws hanging down loose between his legs. The head of the lion is worn like a helmet, with the jaws of the animal framing the hero's face and chin. Herakles, with his left foot forward, is striding from left to right towards the center of the panel. He holds a sword in his lowered right hand, while he appears to grab Nessos' tail with his left hand. The artist probably chose to include the convention of the opponent striding from left to right being the victorious one. Herakles' right hand holds the sword in a low position because Deianeira, directly in front of him, is holding her hand up in supplication. She wears a long dress decorated with added white dots and incision and a red shawl (mantle or himation). She is standing in the middle of the two main characters, but is in front of the fleeing Nessos. Herakles' hand disappears behind her back in reaching for Nessos' tail. The centaur is in a knielauf position with his right arm raised and left arm down, indicating his speed as he tries to

² Information provided by the Indiana University Art Museum
³ This description is modeled after the formula used by von Bothmer (1985) in his catalog of vases by the Amasis Painter
flee. His head turned back to watch his pursuer. Nessos has long hair and a full beard, indicated by incision, and he also has horse (not human) ears, showing his barbarity.

The main characters are flanked on either side by groups of three people, two women and a man each respectively. The woman on the far left wears a very plain dress and a red shawl. She has dark hair that is presumably long and tied up at the back of her neck. She seems to be in conversation with the man in front of her, who has his head turned back to the left. He also wears a long plain garment with a red shawl and his hair is tied back on top with a headband. He carries a spear in his left hand that is pointing behind the woman in front of him and towards the main scene. This could mean that he is armed and ready to help Herakles if the need arises. The next woman, directly to the left of Herakles, wears a red dress and a fancy shawl decorated with asterisk stars. The inscription along her back might have been a clue to her identity, but the writing is jibberish and she has no attributes. In other similar vases with this myth, however, the spot left of Herakles is reserved for Athena and it is probable that the goddess was intended here as well.

On the far right side of the panel, there are also three figures, but the artist must have felt there was a bit too much extra empty space because a floral tendril was painted growing out of the handle. The woman on the far right is wearing a red dress with a shawl and both garments have fancy incisions along the hemline. Directly in front of her, facing the center, unlike the man on the left, is an unbearded male figure wearing a long white garment and a red shawl. He has an incised headband on his curly hair. He also carries a bow in his left hand with a rather large arrow already on the string and pointing, again, behind the woman in front of him and toward the center scene. The woman in front of him is immediately next to Nessos but on a forward plane, so she is not directly in his path of escape. She wears a black dress and red shawl with incision along the bottom hemline.

This entire panel, like the animal bands beneath it, have all of the figures converging in the center. This artistic element directs the visual focus and helps to emphasize the Herakles-Nessos-Deianeira scene as the main attraction of the amphora.

On the reverse panel (Side B), four horsemen ride from left to right. Again, the artist may have felt that there was too much extra empty space in the top left corner of the panel, so he put in a bird flying toward the right behind the horsemen. The four horses run from left to right and they overlap each other a little to show that perhaps they were riding abreast of each other. The horse on the far left has a red tail and a white mane. A young man wearing a cape rides on the horse bareback but holds reins. The second horse, like the first and the other two, has its front legs up to show speed and motion, but this horse's mane is incised. The youth riding the second horse does not wear a cape but he also has his hair tied with a headband and rides bareback while holding the reins of his horse. This youth has his head turned back to the left and seems to be talking to the boy behind him. The turned head, which also occurs with the fourth boy, could also be an artistic convention to keep the mind's eye within the panel and not have it galloping off the right end of the panel and past the vase.
The second set of riders are practically identical to the first except for some clothing and incised details. The third horse, like the first, has a white mane but no red tail, and the youth wears a thinner cape that is flying back in the wind. The fourth horse has a very plain mane and less incision than the other horses. The boy on his back looks left to the third youth and wears a longer cape that falls on the horse's back. This scene, unlike that on the obverse panel, is one of daily life and not myth. It is typical for Tyrrhenian amphorae to split the two sides with the specific and the general.4

Below the figural panels are three bands filled with wild and fantastical animals. The first band directly below the figural panel on side A shows three sirens flanked by two panthers. On side B, the animals appear in two groups: two boars facing a central panther, and two sirens framing a crane. The second band, on side A, depicts two antithetical lions flanked by two boars and, on side B, two panthers framing a wild goat, with an additional siren. The lowest animal band shows a wild goat grazing to left and flanked by two panthers on the front, and a panther flanked by two grazing rams on the back.

Added color and incision give detail to these bands of animals. The sirens, like the women above, have white faces and skin and almond-shaped eyes with black dots for pupils. It is interesting to note how the artist uses different eye shapes to determine gender in both the animals and humans. Males are drawn with large, rounded eyes and no pupils, with the only exception being Herakles, who has an additional circle and a pupil in his eye. The female eyes are all almond-shaped with pupils and painted, not incised, like the males. The white on the sirens immediately identifies them as female creatures. They also have added red and white on their wings, along with a great deal of incision detail. Red paint appears on the masculine animals around their necks and along their underbellies. The fantastical and strange animals show the orientalizing influences of this vessel and style of painting, but the inclusion of the wild goat brings in a more Greek flavor to the amphora.5

### Dimensions and Condition

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<th>Dimension</th>
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<th>Side B</th>
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There are no breaks on the vase, but several small to medium-sized chips and

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4 Osborne 1998, pg. 95
5 For the East Greek "Wild Goat" Style, see Cook 1997, pp. 42-43
nicks are visible, especially on the mouth, neck and shoulder areas. While the main body, foot and mouth of the pot are burnished, the neck area is not. There is a small blemish on the foot (approx. 5.5 cm) where the potter attempted to fix what one can assume was an accident in removing the pot from the wheel. Fingerprints are evident in the smoothed out repair, but barely visible under the black paint. Also, the lower right section of the amphora was misfired, resulting in a reddish tint on some of the animal bands and the rays above the foot.

**Shape and Decoration**

A flaring mouth angles out parallel to the neck. The top of the mouth is flat and painted, and the outside of the mouth has three engraved grooves/rings circling the mouth that give the impression of stacked coils. The inside of the mouth is painted black down to where the top of the handles attach with two painted red circular stripes near the top. Below the mouth, the rounded handles attach in the top third of the neck and are painted completely black. Evidence of a coarser shaping tool than used on the rest of the amphora is seen on the handles, and is easily visible through the paint. The neck piece is attached to the body with a small raised coil of clay painted red. A string of five lotus and palmettes can be seen on both sides of the amphora with the far right lotus/palmette on the reverse running into the top handle connection point. This panel is rooted by a red stripe. Below the red coil is a tongue-patterned design that circles the pot, except under the inside of the handles. The tongue pattern is drawn in black and filled with alternating red and black paint.

The main figural panel is below this design, with a red stripe as its base and the bottom part of the handles connecting in the middle of the panel. Due to the "hasty" painting of Tyrrenian amphorae, the tops of the figures heads may sometimes break through the top of the figural scene into the tongue pattern. The bottom double stripe of this panel, which also creates the roof of the lower panel, circles the widest point on the body of the amphora. The next panel down is both roofed and based by a double line, unlike the next three lower panels which have only a single line. The bottom panel is decorated with 21 rather haphazard rays that sometimes extend into the panel above them. The spreading echinus foot is painted black to about half a centimeter from the edge with a red stripe encircling the lower half of the foot. The underside of the foot is unglazed.

**Added Colors**

*Red*, two lines on the inside curve of the mouth, on top and bottom outside edges of mouth, and inside grooves/ridges; line forming roof of lotus and palmette design; central pods of lotus and palmettes; raised coil between neck and body; filler in tongue-patterned design; shawls of two far left figures, Deianeira and figures placed second and third from the far right on side A; dress of figure third from left and figure on far right; face area of lion skin on Herakles; chest of Nessos; tail of far left horse and necks of all
horses on side B; wing bends on all sirens and cranes; necks of panthers, boars and rams; underbellies of panthers and lions.

White, Women's faces, hands and feet on side A; Herakles' sleeves, hilt of sword, kilt, and dots on lions mouth; decorative dots on Deianeira's dress; figure with bow's dress; Nessos head band; flower blossom on far right; horses' manes on far left and second from right on side B; heads and necks of sirens; stripe below wing bend on sirens and cranes; boar's tusk.

**Inscriptions**

Four painted inscriptions are found on the figural panel of side A possibly serving as captions for characters in the myth represented. The inscriptions are gibberish, but appear to be labeling Herakles (four letters), Deianeira (four letters), Nessos (five letters), and another woman, possibly Athena (six letters). Although the inscriptions are nonsense, the letters used in the Herakles inscription follow a set of nonsense letters used to label him, as described by Thiersch.\(^6\)

\(^6\) Thiersch 1899, pg. 142
Chapter 4: Conclusion

The Etruscans were well known in the ancient world for their seafaring and trade, not just with Greece but with other civilizations in the Mediterranean and surrounding continents.¹ The trade market with Greece began as early as the 7th century B.C. and continued to develop throughout the 6th century B.C., the time of Tyrrhenian amphorae. While this strong trade market provided an economic reason both for the production (by the Athenians) and the importation (by the Etruscans) of this specialized class of vessel, it may have been the popularity and appeal of the Herakles (and other heroes) on the vases that kept them in demand. Herakles was seen by both Greeks and Etruscans as the ultimate hero who fought dangerous, wild creatures and won everlasting glory. When he died as a mortal man, he was even rewarded by the gods and elevated into their immortal circle.²

It has been argued that the central point in the religious lives of the Etruscans was a "belief in fate, a worship of the chthonian deities and the primitive forces which alike create and destroy."³ In this regard, concern for the afterlife was something very important to the Etruscans. As they worried what would happen to them after death, they seem to have used Herakles to illustrate several important concepts. Herakles was known to the Etruscans as Hercle (with stories similar to the Greek version), so the presence of this Greek hero on Tyrrhenian amphorae provided a familiar point of reference. "New" adventures involving Hercle/Herakles probably did not confuse them, but may have added to the hero's prestige and served to connect him further with the concept of triumph over death. In the story of Herakles fighting Nessos, or any other monstrous foe, the Etruscans may have seen good defeating evil. As Herakles once even went to the Underworld and returned alive, essentially defeating death itself, he became a symbol of hope for good in the afterlife.

In addition to Herakles, several other Greek heroes and mythological characters were frequently depicted on Tyrrhenian amphorae. Since a catalogue of all Tyrrhenian amphorae is currently impossible, due to the incomplete nature of publication, I have selected as the source of this data only those vases listed by Beazley in his monumental work, Athenian Black-Figure Vase-Painters. Although this list is incomplete, I believe that it may still be taken as a representative sample of Tyrrhenian amphorae as whole. Of the 69 vases with specific, recognizable heroes, at least 22 (and possible as many as 41) depict Herakles, making him the most popular hero by far. Theseus is shown 17 times and Achilles six. Stories involving the Amazons appear 23 times, and the Trojan War on 13 occasions. The Greek gods (Dionysos and/or his companions, Athena, Hephaistos, Apollo) are shown far less frequently.

Popular stories involving Herakles include: his fight with the Amazons (at least 14), Nessos (6), the Lernean Hydra (2), and his fight with the centaurs (1). Episodes relating to the Trojan War (13) are also popular, including Achilles' ¹ von Cles-Reden 1956, p. 522
² Saflund 1993, p. 73
³ Von Cles-Reden 1956, p. 76
The ambush of Troilos (4), Achilles & Hector fighting over the body of Troilos (3), the ransom of Hector (1), and the sacrifice of Polyxena (1). The Herakles-Nessos Deianeira scene on IUAM 73.6, therefore, clearly represents one of the "mainstream" myths on Tyrrhenian amphorae.

The iconographic repertoire of Tyrrhenian amphorae did not stop with myth and heroic depictions, but also included scenes of everyday life and repeated bands of animals and exotic monsters. Occupying the same prominent space as the mythological scenes, but on the reverse of the vessel, are generic scenes. In the case of IUAM 73.6, four youths riding horses on Side B, may have represented the aspect of still-living mortals participating in daily life activities or funeral games. The two sides of the vase could then be read as funerary iconography in the following way: While Herakles (the deceased) is fighting Nessos (death), those who are still living celebrate his passing into the afterlife with funeral games and competitions like horseback riding. Other vases show dancing, races, organized fights, feasting, and even lovemaking. Parallel themes can be seen in Etruscan tomb paintings.

An interesting characteristic of the scenes on Tyrrhenian amphorae is the prevalence of violence that is not seen as regularly on Attic black-figure vases intended for a domestic (i.e. Greek) market. The Etruscans favored gruesome scenes in their art and that "taste" is also represented in the scenes depicted on Tyrrhenian amphorae. These human sacrifices and murders that are so uncharacteristic of Greek art come out in full force with the Etruscans and show their "spiritual submission to that older, more primitive world of the Mediterranean peoples."4

The exotic animals seen in bands on Tyrrhenian amphorae may also have been understood in terms of funerary iconography. On the one hand, the Etruscans seem to have favored Orientalizing motifs and monsters, perhaps indicating their strong connections with the eastern Mediterranean world.5 But mythological creatures like those shown on Tyrrhenian amphorae also have meaning in Etruscan religion, where they are said to "symbolize the transition from this life to another existence."6 This may partially explain their presence/popularity in bands on Tyrrhenian amphorae, but it should also be kept in mind that these creatures are also frequently shown in association with scenes of "everyday" life, perhaps emphasizing the connection between all of the panels to the afterlife.

In conclusion, the mythological and other scenes chosen for IUAM 73.6 are typical of these imported vases that the Etruscans placed in their tombs. While the story of Herakle-Deianeira-Nessos could be understood on several levels, I believe the scene was popular among the Etruscans because it symbolized and reinforced several important aspects of funerary beliefs: good versus evil, the hero conquering danger/death, heroization of the deceased, and possibly even the promise of reward in the afterlife. That is, perhaps the presence of such a vessel with "positive" and heroic imagery served not only as a status symbol but also as a type of "good luck charm" for the deceased.

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4 von Cles-Reden 1956, p. 94.
5 Bonfante 1986, p. 48
6 Haynes 2000, p.164
The popularity of Tyrrhenian amphorae, although connected with important Etruscan beliefs in the afterlife, dwindled in the quarter century after the creation of IUAM 73.6, followed soon by dwindling draughtsmanship and then the disappearance of this class of vessel altogether. While Attic-made Tyrrhenian amphorae were no longer being produced much past the middle of the 6th century B.C., the Etruscans still did appreciate the shape and incorporated it into the repertoire of their own Bucchero ware which grew in quantity and quality after the inspiration of such fascinating Greek imports.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{7} Bonfante 1986, pp. 68-72
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Indiana University Art Museum (#73.6)
Photograph by Michael Cavanagh & Kevin Motague
This essay delves into the role played by the futurist artistic movement in Italian society from its inception in 1909 until demise about ten years later. Futurism’s obsession with violence and war as a national cleansing agent had a long term impact on Italian society...
On December 9 and 11, 1914, Filippo Tomaso Marinetti and other futurists converged on a lecture hall at the University of Rome to harass professors whose lectures they felt were too pro-German and pacifist, and therefore anti-Italian and anti-futurist. They burst into the hall, proclaiming futurist slogans and distributing leaflets. The futurists succeeded in interrupting the lecture and stirring the interest and excitement of many students who subsequently joined the band as it progressed to other university buildings after having been ousted by university officials from their original target, the Institute of Criminal Law. Even after the futurist agitators had retreated, students acting independently later “continued the actions and pelted their professor with apples, potatoes, and light bulbs” (Berghaus 76-8).

This event was characteristic of futurist demonstrations, which typically employed spectacle and general pandemonium to gain attention. Futurists often printed lists of their ideas, or copies of their many manifestos, on fliers which they then distributed, sometimes by such dramatic means as flinging them from the high points of a cathedral to rain down on those passing by (Berghaus 50). The futurists were a colorful group, unique in their methods as well as their goals.

Given their often unconventional, even bizarre, beliefs and means of attracting attention, it would be easy to write the futurists off as a bunch of demented artists, as many people at the time undoubtedly did and some continue to do. It would be too shallow, however, to dismiss futurists as just crazy. Likewise, it would be too simple to overstate futurism’s importance to the formation of such subsequent ideologies as Italian fascism, or to suggest that futurism was a sort of “proto-fascism.” Futurism did have long term importance for Italy through its contributions to the mélange of ideas in Italian society during the era leading up to and including the two World Wars. Among the more prominent of these ideas was the futurist obsession with war. As art historian Richard Humphreys has defined it, “Futurism celebrated war” (Humphreys 64). By virtue of its contributions to Italian society in the form of increased awareness of, and appreciation for, violence as a cleansing and reforming agent, futurism, though esoteric, did in fact have a lasting impact on Italy. What remains to be explored is how.

Futurism appealed to a diverse spectrum of people, from university students to the bourgeois artists who made up Marinetti’s circle of followers. Undoubtedly, the reasons these factions had for being attracted to futurism were as varied as the identities of the members themselves. Futurism did target certain groups, especially the young, whom futurists saw as Italy’s hope. War, they believed, played a vital part in educating the youth of a nation. Here, as on several other points, futurist ideology coincided with later fascist ideology. It is difficult, if not impossible, to believe that two movements that overlapped so extensively, in their time, place and interactions, could have no effect whatsoever on one another.

In futurism a ‘cult of violence’ was created which found expression in progressively more tangible forms from the movement’s inception with the First Futurist Manifesto, published February 20, 1909. At this nascent stage in the movement’s development, Marinetti had only just introduced the concept of a cleansing violence. He referred to this cleansing agent as “war, the world’s only hygiene” (Marinetti 42), a
vehicle by which Italy could be driven into a new position of greater importance in European (and, by extension, world) affairs.

From the beginning, futurism was an artistic movement like no other. In its founding manifesto the movement’s leader, F.T. Marinetti- the so-called “caffeine of Europe,” laid out the futurists’ objectives, which painted a picture more of the culture they envisioned than of the art itself. Futurism began with a set of goals articulated in the Parisian newspaper Le Figaro, on February 20, 1909 for the entire world (or so Marinetti hoped) to see. Unlike other artistic movements, futurism’s directives were spelled out before a single brushstroke had been made or a single poem written. Also unusual about the movement were the goals enumerated in this list. Marinetti described sweeping changes to be made not only in art itself, but also in Italian society in general. The futurists wanted to awaken Italians to the possibility of a completely new way of life and impassion them to establish it. They believed futurism could be the catalyst that would help Italy escape from what they saw as the prison of its past. As Marinetti put it, “today we establish Futurism because we want to free this land from its smelly gangrene of professors, archaeologists, ciceroni, and antiquarians. For too long has Italy been a dealer in second-hand clothes. We mean to free her from the numberless museums that cover her like so many graveyards” (Marinetti 42). The only method futurists could imagine for bringing about this freedom was total destruction of the existing order. They wanted to liberate Italy from the control of people who were, in futurist eyes, hopelessly embroiled in the country’s stagnant past with no desire to break out of the mold, therefore consigning Italy to a static position while the rest of Europe advanced. Italy would be left behind her contemporaries with little hope of catching up.

The most efficient (and perhaps satisfying) way of destroying the present order was through “war- the world’s only hygiene” (Marinetti 42). Futurists felt that this confrontation between past and present would undoubtedly be violent, given the human tendency to cling to the familiar. Thus, unlike other artistic movements, futurism set out with a socio-political agenda. Futurists wanted to be the instigators of an entirely new culture in Italy, one that looked forward rather than back. In order to create the atmosphere in which this new culture could be born, futurists felt a need to utterly destroy the existing order through violent conflict, ultimately resulting in the overthrow of the old and installation of the new. War, futurists believed, was a solution for Italy’s problems.

Futurists’ desire for violence would not be satisfied immediately. It would still be five years until Italy entered World War I in 1915. In the meantime, futurists produced the greater part of the body of their art. From the first futurist painting, Giacomo Balla’s Street Light (1909), futurist art departed from the traditional in almost every respect. Futurist painters often took as their subject modern technology, which included the mechanics of war, such as trains, factories, and (later) weaponry (e.g. Gino Severini’s Canon in Action, 1915). Their art glorified war and the means of making it. Even in paintings with no explicit connection to war, futurists emphasized the themes of movement, especially speed. Balla’s Abstract Speed: The Car Has Passed (1913) and Rhythm of the Violinist (1912) are good examples. In Rhythm of the Violinist, a painting treating a cultural subject, the emphasis is on the movement of the violinist’s hand. In
Abstract Speed, Balla’s entire focus, seems to be on the portrayal of speed, as the car of the painting’s title is not even in the picture. The painting shows only the movement of the air currents created by the car’s rapid passage. Umberto Boccioni painted working factories in Factories at Porta Romana (1909) and city buildings under construction in The City Rises (1910). Futurists were well aware of the rapidly changing world around them and did not want Italy to be left behind. Finally, even at this early stage futurist painters were drawn to violence as a subject, for example Boccioni’s Riot in the Gallery (1911).

Futurist art was not confined to painting, but also encompassed writing and theatre. Marinetti, for example, was a prolific writer. It was here, in writing, that futurist art dealt the most with politics, exemplified by Marinetti’s and others’ many manifestos. Futurist art, no matter the medium, was consistently vibrant and alive. Boccioni in 1910 wrote in a letter, “…I understand the fever, passion, love, violence meant when one says to oneself: Create! … How I understand Marinetti’s dictum: No work that lacks an aggressive character can be a masterwork” (Humphreys 25). Futurist style was meant to awaken the emotions and the senses and to evoke a reaction. It was not the variety of art one looked at in a gallery, commented, “that’s nice” and strolled on; this was precisely the reaction futurists abhorred. Marinetti proposed to destroy this sentiment by freeing Italy from “numberless museums… so many graveyards” (Marinetti 42). Futurism united artistic and political expression in the frequent serate, evenings of poetry reading or performances of futurist plays in which political beliefs were proclaimed. These gatherings, playing on the diverse groups represented in the audience— from socialist laborers, to students, to bourgeois intellectuals— were designed to provoke the spectators and often ended (like the scene at the University of Rome in December 1914) with flying produce.

As 1914 and the beginning of World War I approached, futurists became more and more concerned with the role that Italy would play in any major European war. Their demonstrations were often decidedly anti-Austrian. For example at the serata of September 15, 1914 Carlo Carrà ripped up an Austrian flag while Marinetti, holding the French and Italian flags, proclaimed “Long live France and Italy!”; demonstrations of the following day in the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele futurists burned several Austrian flags on a funeral pyre in front of the cathedral, creating an uproar for several hours (Berghaus 74-5). The two days’ actions, though likely not the sweeping triumph Marinetti claimed, did earn the futurists mention in the Prefect of Milan’s report to Rome. The official report downplayed the magnitude of these incidents, noting benignly in closing that “…the police were able to render them powerless. Marinetti, Buccione (sic.) and the other eight companions were taken to the Questura and then sent to prison. They will be charged in accordance with art.133 of the penal code” (Berghaus 75). As Berghaus notes, it would have been in the prefect’s interest to understate the events. The fact that the demonstrations received more than passing reference suggests that they were perhaps more serious than the report implies, though not of the momentous proportions that Marinetti would have had his readers believe. Nevertheless, whatever the ramifications of
such futurist activities may have been, it is important to remember that when futurists took action, people took notice both of their actions and what they had to say.

At this time, the main hub of futurist activity was Milan, the base of Marinetti’s circle. This is not to say, however, that all futurists were in Milan. Avant-garde circles in other cities were interested in futurism and paid close attention to futurist maneuvering. Florence, for example, was outside Marinetti’s Milanese circle, both geographically and ideologically. In the early years of futurism (ca. 1909-14), the Florentine avant-garde was at once like Milanese futurists and unique. These early Florentine (by Milanese/Marinettian standards) quasi-futurists were longer about merging the realms of art and politics. The first futurist serata did not take place there until December 12 1913. The bulk of activity before this took the form of publishing journals (first Leonardo and later La Voce and Lacerba), the material of which was initially meant to be only artistic, but which became increasingly political (Adamson 124-5). In the years of La Voce, these Florentine futurists were at first hesitant to endorse war and initially opposed it with Libya in 1911 (Adamson 123). The first issue of Lacerba (August 15 1914) after World War I broke out devoted its front page to Papini’s “Italy’s Duty” (Il dovere dell’Italia), which called attention to Italy’s “duty” to intervene in the war.

How then, given the tangible opportunity to fight, did futurists make this necessary and cleansing war palatable? Futurism benefited from the general belief in European society at this time that war provided a necessary formative experience to youth and was a rite of passage to adulthood. The futurists were very much concerned with separating themselves- and all of Italy- entirely from the past and commencing a complete ‘new,’ distinct from any connection to the old (Hinz 176-7). As Marinetti proclaimed in the Founding Manifesto, “we want no part of it, the past, we the young and strong Futurists!… the oldest of us is thirty” (Marinetti 43).

Implicit in futurism was also the perception of war as “sexy” (Blum 99). War was a sort of proving ground for young men, an experience in which they could demonstrate the strength of the male “aggressive, ‘metallic,’ virile soul” (Blum 100). Futurist literature is saturated with references to strong youth, a “utopian uomo metallizzato” (metallic man) (Blum 103). On another level this youth was to be the saving force that would rise to the challenge of rescuing Italy (la patria) from the seemingly endless cycle of passéist authorities which kept her rooted in the past. Marinetti graphically described Italy as a maiden in distress, the “‘divine’ body of Italy, synthesis of all women” in need of rescue by “brothers in arms” (Blum 102). This futurist “eroticisation of war” (Blum 99) contributed to its appeal, making violence more attractive to youth, who then stepped up and fulfilled their duty to their homeland by fighting in World War I.

Futurist interventionism did not have quite the energizing effect on Italian society that its proponents would have liked. Among interventionist forces, futurists were rather unimportant in the larger scheme of things. This is not to say that futurist discourse mattered not at all. On the contrary, futurists were militant in spreading their beliefs and
it would have been difficult to avoid them in intellectual and aristocratic circles, where futurists were found in the highest concentrations.

Given their enthusiasm for war and violence, it is little surprise that several futurists set off to fight as soon as Italy entered World War I. Futurists saw the war as the catalyst that could begin Italy’s transformation. Reflecting this attitude, futurists at first perceived the war in grandiose terms, *guerra come festa* (festive war) (Berghaus 82). In reality, war did not prove to be a crucible in which Italy would be purified of her past. Any romanticized notion of warfare disappeared, at least from the minds of those futurists who fought and saw the trenches first hand. Certainly bourgeois artists like Boccioni and Marinetti had a very different frontline experience from the average foot soldier. Marinetti was given considerable freedom of movement and was never actually engaged in front-line combat (Berghaus 83). Despite firsthand experience with the bleak realities of trench warfare, futurists never became as disillusioned with the concept of war as they might have been. Boccioni, in a letter to a relative early in the war, wrote that, despite conditions, “my Futurist ideal, my love for Italy, and my infinite pride in being an Italian all drive me irresistibly to doing my duty” (Berghaus 83). Among the casualties of the war were several futurists, including Antonio Sant'Elia and Boccioni himself, both killed in August 1916. But those futurists who survived continued to support war. Thus, in spite of Italy’s less than stellar experiences in World War I, futurist hopes were not crushed. They still believed war and violence to be the means of achieving a rebirth of Italian culture on a new plane, where Italy would be capable of taking its rightful place among the other European nations and competing with them.

In fact, it was after the war that futurists became allied for a time with other forces which gave the movement the necessary support to be a force of some significance, if only for a short time. Futurists joined with the *arditi*, the former ‘military aristocracy’ and forerunners to fascist terror squads (Berghaus 96), who were looking for a way to continue their military experience in civilian life. The futurists were a natural group for *arditi* to join, given their glorification of violence and their continued insistence that a war would enable Italy to take her rightful place among the European nations. World War I had not accomplished this goal, therefore the *arditi* were assured of the need for another fight in Italy’s future, in which they would gladly participate.

Finally, with the emergence of the Futurist Political Party (FPP) in Italy in 1918-19, futurism found purely political expression for the first time. In January 1919, a request went out from the Public Security Office asking the prefects of cities mentioned in a letter by Emilio Settimelli to provide information about futurist activity. The Quaestor of Rome reported (on 8 February) on the success of the FPP that:

> “Until now, the number of adherents is limited due to the shortage of propaganda material and the eccentricity of the ideas advocated by political Futurism. Especially amongst the popular masses they do not go down too well. However, it cannot be excluded that in the course of time this Party could gain considerable political force, especially by winning support from students and young people in general who,
because of their age, have a mentality that is easily excited by Futurist propaganda” (Berghaus 105).

Though by no means a major political party, the FPP had gained enough support to warrant attention from the government.

Even here, at its highest point as a political movement, futurism’s strength was derived from those with which it was aligned. During this period, opportunity for the intermingling of theories was at the greatest. While futurists and *arditi*, among them some of the earliest fascists, were united in the (temporary) alliance provided by the *Fasci di Combattimento* (veterans’ organizations) and the FPP, their cultures inevitably overlapped, allowing for the exchange of ideas. Over the next several months, as the *arditi* gradually moved farther to the right, favoring fascism from among the many political movements afoot in Italy at the time, the alliance began to unravel.

Both political scientist Manfred Hinz and historian Emilio Gentile cite Marinetti’s statement that Italian fascism represented the ‘minimal program’ of the futurist revolution (Hinz, Gentile 77). The two movements were diametrically opposed in their ultimate aims and therefore forever incompatible. Futurism was in many respects democratically inclined while fascism sought to be a totalitarian regime. The *Programme of the Futurist Political Party* (1918) described a reformed Italian government with improved benefits for women, workers, and veterans, such as legalized divorce, equal pay for men and women, and an eight hour working day. In spite of these eventually fatal differences, fascists and futurists agreed on the means for the changes each group felt were needed in Italian society: violence. As Berghaus goes to great lengths to illustrate, it is not unreasonable to believe that some of futurism’s ideas, by a sort of osmosis, were carried over into other movements. These concepts were important, if only as contributors to the general opinion of society (or at least intellectual and aristocratic circles- those in power, or in a position to assume power) toward war and violence.

Historian Richard Jensen offers the valid argument that it is absurd to draw a direct line of causation from futurist example and ideology to fascist action. Jensen argues that futurism in fact contributed nothing to fascism, and that it could not have because of its limited membership and eccentric nature (Jensen 4). While there is certainly merit in Jensen’s observations, one must question just how coincidental the similarities between futurism and fascism were.

With the end of the alliance between futurists and *arditi* and the rise of fascism to power in Italy, futurism essentially dropped out of sight. The futurist group from the beginning had been composed of members from a broad political spectrum, from moderates to radical leftists. The resulting fragmentation once futurists and *arditi* went their separate ways was therefore not surprising. Some futurists shifted to the right and fascism while others shifted farther left. Futurism as an active movement dissolved as World War II loomed on the horizon. Futurists themselves did not disappear. Balla, for example, continued to paint into the 1950’s. But the vibrant movement of Marinetti’s *Founding Manifesto* had gone forever.
What then, if anything, did Italian futurism leave behind besides a number of great works of art? Considering the very nature of the futurist movement, scepticism regarding the extent of its real impact on Italian history is reasonable. Futurism tended to be elitist, though its desire was always to appeal to the masses, the “crowds” exalted in Marinetti’s initial *Manifesto* (Marinetti 42). It also lacked an explicitly defined plan to accomplish the goals set out in that original *Manifesto* and others. Marinetti’s list of objectives is unrestrained and impressive in its sheer artistry, but it offers no concrete methods for achieving the goals set forth besides an expansive need for the cleansing effects of war. Futurism’s ideology, however, did appeal to enough individuals to give the Futurist Political Party a membership of about 17,000 in 1919 (Berghaus 145) and attracted several former *arditi*. It was not so marginal a force as it might seem at first glance.

Aside from being an important artistic movement, futurism’s legacy lay more in the fusion of its concepts to other movements (i.e. fascism) and their propagation from those sources, rather than in the impact futurists’ ideas had as proponents of purely futurist discourse. Futurist theories impacted Italian society after merging with other, less esoteric ideologies than futurism. But impact is not to be confused with creation. The boundaries between fascist and futurist spheres were fluid and, as a result, it is impossible to divide one from the other entirely. However, it is possible to state with certainty that fascism was not born of futurism, it was simply affected by it.
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Victoria Calabro, *Bustle*
Intaglio print, lace
Small Town America: The Search for Identity

By Ashley Large

Batesville, IN exemplifies the idyllic small town America that is such an anomaly in our hurried state of society. This examination of the societal glitch looks at how Batesville’s citizens use the past that surrounds them as a means of moving through the present and into the future ...
Take a moment to imagine this scenario. You are in your car, a dented old sedan, driving down Highway 46 in rural southeastern Indiana. Your radio is on, playing an old classic rock song and it is a beautiful day in the late spring. Coming out of Bloomington, a college town, you pass the quaint town of Nashville, where well-to-do ladies go to shop at the many small boutiques. Continuing down the road, you read a sign telling you that you have just entered Gnaw Bone, a congregation of RV lots, flea markets, and gas stations. Leaving Gnaw Bone, you proceed down 46 past the occasional house with the obligatory lawn gnome adorning the yard. You roll into Columbus, a larger town known for its collection of famous architecture. More rural road brings you to Hartsville, where the speed limit drops from 55 mph to 30 mph in 20 feet, the source of many speeding tickets that brings in much of the town’s income. Your car coasts past many pig farms that you cannot see, but can most definitely smell, and into Greensburg, a busy community that boasts a tree growing out of the courthouse roof. Finally, you reach the destination of your journey: Batesville, a town of roughly 6,000 inhabitants, a casket factory, a hospital furniture company, and a funeral insurance firm. The town, you learn, was founded on November 3, 1852, when the railroad that ran from Indianapolis to Cincinnati laid tracks through Ripley County, and next year, 2002, is its sesquicentennial (Batesville Area Historical Society).

Batesville is a veritable treasure chest of rural American culture, not to mention German-American heritage. Family names that were common in 1852 are still familiar today. It is a town that fits the familiar phrase, “a place that time forgot.” The original movie theater in the center of town, named the Gibson after its original founder, still exists as a glorious uniplex that only shows one movie for two weeks at a time. An old fashioned soda fountain sits next door to the movies, catering to the theater crowd but not staying open too late. Aged houses line the streets. Children ride their bikes to the corner drug store for penny and nickel candy, and later, may visit their many relatives and friends who live on the lanes near their own houses. In the high school gym, the bleachers seat half the population of the town, and at least that many show up for basketball games on Friday and Saturday nights. In the parking lot of the casket factory, signs proclaim, “Casket Parking Only.” Crowning the main avenue through town is a permanent banner that reads, “You can’t beat Batesville.” In essence, Batesville is small town America, a place where everyone knows your face, your name, and your reputation, for better or for worse.

It is easy to believe that this quaint idyll has disappeared from the scene of American cultural life and that, as an overly imaginative writer, I have painted this picture from various television shows. Although it may seem like Mayberry, Andy Griffith does not live in Batesville. The town is an actual community in rural Indiana, and the lifestyle described above is a reality for its citizens. Yet, in the present hurried state of society, Batesville is an anomaly. In this essay, I will endeavor to unearth the benefits of towns such as Batesville, describing further the way that its citizens use the past that surrounds them to move through the present and into the future. Furthermore, I will put this in a larger context, by charting the trend in popular culture that encompasses a yearning for the past, particularly a past that exists in towns such as Batesville.
In *The Past is a Foreign Country*, author David Lowenthal outlines the benefits of living with the past, as the residents of Batesville have done and will continue to do. Lowenthal quotes Henry James, “Only in a country where newness and brevity of tenure are the common substance of life would the fact of one’s ancestors having lived for a hundred and seventy years in a single spot … become an element of one’s morality” (Lowenthal 38). While Batesville has not arrived at its 170th anniversary, next year marks its 150th, and the town just as surely roots its identity to its historical presence as the New England towns that James describes. Indeed, Lowenthal points out that this sort of persistence of place is a large part of the way that people use history and the past to their benefit.

As Lowenthal explains, “The surviving past’s most essential and pervasive benefit is to render the present familiar” (Lowenthal 39). He asserts that long gone events, characters, and objects help people to make sense of the present by connecting it to a history that makes everyday events intelligible. “Without habit and the memory of past experience, no sight or sound would mean anything; we can perceive only what we are accustomed to” (Lowenthal 39). The keywords here are familiarity and comfort. The idea of change does not coincide with small town life, for aren’t such places prized for their uncompromising distrust of the changing times? Because the present is entrenched in the past, life in small towns is familiar and uncomplicated. It is easily digested because there is nothing unusual about it. Life in a small town is meat and potatoes, without the spice of change.

This is true in the community of Batesville. For instance, the town’s social spots still cluster around both the church, predominantly Catholic but with several Protestant sects, and the allied organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus, the Knights of Saint John, and the local chapter of Masons. It is not improper for a man who is an active member in one of these associations to bring his wife and children to the meeting house, most likely housing a bar, on a weekend. He and his wife will socialize at the bar while the children entertain themselves within view of the adults. In larger towns and cities, bars are generally not family gathering places. However, Batesville, like other small towns, has kept the old-world “pub” where people go to socialize and relax with their families in tow. Using this past tradition, one that can still be found in countries such as England, Ireland, and Germany, small towns have made their social scene into a familiar atmosphere that their ancestors recreated in America and in which they feel comfortable. Essentially, a rave club would not prosper in Batesville. Even coffee shops do not do well because they are not very conducive to a loud, family gathering.

Probably the most important benefit of using the past is the sense of identity one can gather from previous events and past identities. Lowenthal says that knowing who “I am” must necessarily draw on who “I was.” The “ability to recall and identify with our own past gives existence meaning, purpose, and value” (Lowenthal 41). Without an identity, a person lacks individuality and a sense of being special. Whereas in the conference rooms of big businesses this may not be a consideration, it is of utmost importance in everyday life. People seek their identity in all kinds of places, if not within themselves. Music, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, among thousands of other
categories, are used to denote identity. The past holds a gold mine of sources from which one can construct an identity.

Interestingly, the area around Batesville holds a perfect example for discussing the idea of identity in the past. Less than five miles outside of Batesville is the hamlet of Oldenburg, Village of Spires. This small community provides an excellent example of how the past influences and molds present identity. Oldenburg is home to a Franciscan convent, the nuns of which run the Immaculate Conception Academy, a private high school, recently made co-ed. The town was platted by two German-American men in 1837, and it quickly became an attractive place to settle for German immigrants who had been living in Cincinnati (Batesville Historical Society). It is nestled in the hills of Franklin County, and while electricity has come to the town, not much else has changed in the last century. Most important for this illustration, however, is one interesting fact. All of the street markers in Oldenburg are written in German, in calligraphy that is supposed to mimic traditional German script. Everyone is familiar with the “Wasser Strasse” [Water Street]. Even the corner convenience mart calls itself the “Kleine Laden” [small store]. The town prides itself in its identity as a place that upholds its German heritage. Its “German-ness” has become its calling card. This is a perfect example of how identity rooted in the past can allow a plot of land just north of the Ohio River to describe itself as a little piece of old Germany.

Lowenthal provides three other compelling reasons why people allow themselves to be guided by the past. These include validation, guidance, and enrichment. As Lowenthal explains, “The past validates present attitudes and actions by affirming their resemblance to former ones” (Lowenthal 40). People feel more comfortable living out existences that uphold traditions that have preceded in times gone by. In turn, with the present reaffirmed, people are given guidance, for the past teaches us about the present and the future. “Study of the past might enable men to foretell, if not forestall, the future” (Lowenthal 46). Lastly, the past, with its support and authentication, enriches the present. Virginia Woolf explains, “The present when backed by the past is a thousand times deeper than the present when it presses so close that you can feel nothing else” (Lowenthal 48). Essentially, the present is humanized by the past. It becomes less an uncharted jungle and more a secure homestead when given the glow of reminiscences, memories, and traditions. Every object in the present holds a thousand meanings when it is given a history. A field, an old car, or a town all take on special meaning in the present because of what they were and what they meant in bygone eras.

An excellent demonstration of this idea can also be found in Batesville. The town is home to two large manufacturing corporations. Their factories line Pearl Street and keep the local economy flowing. These institutions have been in existence in some form or another for about as long as people have called Batesville home. Generations of families have spent their lives employed in these factories precisely because of the history they have with these companies. A son may decide to work in the casket plant simply because his father supported the family by doing so. In this case, the past provides both validation and guidance to the young man in need of a job. The continuance of his father’s employment history is the path of choice, because it is rooted
in the past and takes precedence over going to the city to find a job. After the young man has followed his father into the workforce, his employment experience in Batesville’s factories will be enriched by the very fact that this line of work has become a family “tradition.”

Lastly, the past provides world-weary people with an escape from a present reality that is, for many reasons, unacceptable. “In yesterday we find what we miss today. And yesterday is a time for which we have no responsibility and when no one can answer back” (Lowenthal 49). In the larger scheme, this need for alternative existences is answered in activities and clubs such as the Society for Creative Anachronism or in Civil War re-enactments. Living in Batesville, however, is a form of escape. Without condescension one can say that people often choose to stay within the confines of small town life simply because the world outside is too complicated to cope with, especially for those who have called Batesville home their entire lives. Others who move into the town, particularly families affiliated with the several companies based in Batesville, people who are not small town natives, find their new existences to be a welcome change from their rushed and frantic prior lives.

While these benefits have been described on a small-town level, exploring popular culture’s yearning for times long past proves fruitful in this sort of study. Because society craves these benefits in ways described by Lowenthal, several cultural manifestations of the need for a narrative of the past can be seen outside of the realm of small-town Batesville. As Lowenthal explains, “We also enrich life by stretching present feelings backward” (Lowenthal 48). For those who do not live within the brew of small-town life, this is often the only path open to them. Sometimes, the past must be made to fit the needs of the present and to answer the need that it evokes in people.

The radio has been the medium of many of these cultural phenomena. An example can be found on local FM station WFIU, on whose airwaves Tom Roznowski, host of Hometown with Tom Roznowski, gives “an audio walking tour of Terre Haute, Indiana, in the summer of 1926” when it was known as the “Crossroads of America” (Tom Roznowski). Although the town was given this moniker because US Routes 40 and 41 meet in its environs, Roznowski acknowledges that Terre Haute is a crossroads in another way. “It represents an enduring American cultural icon: the classic American Midwestern hometown, and all of the images it brings to mind of past and present” (Tom Roznowski). Another, similar radio show airs on National Public Radio (NPR), hosted by Garrison Keillor. His show, A Prairie Home Companion, is broadcast from Minnesota and tells of the old-fashioned community of Lake Wobegon and its equally charming past. Keillor “pokes at the heart of American sensibilities and sensitivities” (A Prairie Home Companion).

Obviously, the market for such sentiments, as expressed in these programs, is wide enough to give Roznowski and Keillor sizable audiences. Like the residents of Batesville, much of larger American society seeks the familiarity of what was once common American culture but now can only be found on television, on radio shows, and in the occasional rural village. The success of Hometown and A Prairie Home Companion demonstrates Lowenthal’s idea that people seek familiarity in the past.
These programs fulfill a need in society to remind itself of “a simpler time” when “things were good.” They also allow listeners to escape into the past and to reconnect with something that they are missing in modern culture.

Similar to the idea of nostalgic radio shows, the current craze for genealogy also illustrates one of Lowenthal’s points. Genealogy websites are common, family tree software crowds store shelves, and how-to genealogy books fill bookstores. America has fallen in love with its ancestors and it has become an expensive passion. Many are willing to spend hundreds of dollars in fees to dig up parish records, ship registries, and cracked old gravestones. The expense to which Americans are willing to go speaks of the depth of this need to chart their past.

This trend falls under Lowenthal’s idea of the search for identity that many Americans find hidden in their family trees. Often, these searches lead seekers to small, forgotten towns where their ancestors first made a life in America. Whatever they may find, genealogists discover something in the past in which they can root their identity, whether it be an ethnicity, an occupation, or a religion. Like little Oldenburg, genealogy enthusiasts are looking for answers and distinctiveness in their pasts, for a meaningfulness that they cannot find in the larger milieu of present-day society.

“The consequences of our heritage are more momentous than those revealed in nostalgic dreams and time-travel fiction, for they concern real rather than make-believe worlds…” (Lowenthal 35). It is true that worlds are created for the present that revolve around the past. What went before brings comfort in familiarity and helps seekers to form the identities for which they yearn. The past enriches people’s lives, and gives guidance as it validates present-day actions. These needs are fulfilled differently for different people. Residents of Batesville continue in their close existence with the past, while others seek it on television, on the radio, and through their family trees. One thing cannot be denied: comprehending the importance of history in the present and understanding its usage in today’s culture will give a clue as to what underlies modern society’s restless searching for itself.
Works Consulted

Lydia Buriss, *Woman on Chair*
Watercolor
France’s Confrontation with its Past: Evolving Reactions to the Vichy Period

By Ruth Schachter

This essay examines the historiography of France; tracing French attitudes about the Vichy regime of occupied France from after WWII until the present...
Historiography does not merely reflect findings of dates and names; it also mirrors the beliefs, culture, and politics of a society at a given time. A study of the historiography of Vichy France provides an example of the complexities of historical research. World War II was a defining moment in France’s history; however, the role the French government played in the war has been continuously reinterpreted and disputed. Researching the history of the French government during World War II requires an analysis and appreciation of the complex issues of collective memory, responsibility, and history.

At a press conference on September 21, 1972, French president Georges Pompidou asked, “Has not the time come to draw a veil over the past, to forget a time when Frenchmen disliked one another, attacked one another, and even killed one another?”¹ This remark was made in defense of his controversial pardoning of Paul Touvier the previous year. Touvier had been the head of Milice intelligence in Lyons and had reported directly to Vichy. An ideological anti-Semite with strong anti-Democratic tendencies, he was sentenced to death twice in absentia during the immediate postwar era but had been allowed to escape and go into hiding. After the pardon by President Pompidou, public outrage forced him back into hiding for the next seventeen years under protection from the Church. Finally, in 1989, the Church forced him out of their institutions, and in April 1994 he was charged with and convicted of complicity to commit crimes against humanity and sentenced to life in prison.²

The unfolding of the Touvier saga is emblematic of the evolution of French identification with its past. It also illustrates the complexities that a historian would have faced at various points in trying to document the case, from denial of responsibility, to public outcry, to outright condemnation. The historian would also have had to deal with various institutions’ own evolutions in sentiment, thus adding to the difficulty. Public sentiment, the government, and the Church have each had their own intricate confrontation with the past. The Vichy period of 1940-44 has often been referred to as the “dark years.”

In 1944 the Vichy government ended and France once again became one of the Allies. The country emerged victorious when the war ended; the destruction caused by the war was quickly buried under the positive aspects of victory and rebuilding. The myth of French strength was largely propagated by General Charles de Gaulle. Immediately after the end of Vichy, on August 25, 1944, he made the statement, “Paris! Paris humiliated! Paris broken! Paris martyred! But Paris liberated! Liberated by itself, by its own people with the help of the armies of France, with the support and aid of France as a whole, of fighting France, of the only France, of the true France, of eternal France.”³

By uttering these words, General de Gaulle managed to shape the public’s opinion and memory of World War II. He focused on the heroism of the French people and claimed that the French had always been his supporters. Vichy, in this view, was the product of a

² Ibid, 18.
few extremists, but they did not represent the French spirit or the French majority who
had resisted the government and been a large part of the general resistance against the
Germans.

In addition, other political groups besides the Gaullists were interested in
perpetuating this denial of any sort of complicity. The Communist Party supported de
Gaulle’s ideas because it needed to explain its neutrality during the Nazi-Soviet Pact.
Conservatives were interested in saving the reputation of Vichy leader Marshal Philippe
Petain as a passive resister to German occupation. Technocrats, interested in post-war
economic planning, feared any sort of liability from the Vichy legacy.4 In the era of the
Nuremberg trials and closed archives, the war years were to be “deleted from our
history,” as the most prominent prosecutor of Vichy leaders put it. Stanley Hoffman
comments that both the Gaullist and Communist rhetoric of the time “agreed on a reading
of those years that was not encumbered by nuances. The purges were going on, and,
especially in the beginning, they amounted to a symbolic (and often quite real) excision
of cancer.”5

A slight change in attitudes began in the mid-1950s and continued until the end
of the 1960s, under de Gaulle’s leadership. The French historian Robert Aron wrote the
first comprehensive historical work on the period, Histoire de Vichy, in 1954. This was
followed by his work of 1957, Dossiers de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. In his writings,
Aron preserved the idea of limited French sovereignty. Vichy, he argued, was a
government that strove to protect the French people from Nazism. He favorably quoted
Petain’s characterization of the Vichy regime, “National in foreign policy, hierarchical in
internal policy, coordinated and controlled in its economy, and overall social in its
spirit.”6 Aron therefore became a kind of apologist for the Vichy government; he did not
pardon their actions completely; however, his angle clearly was that the Germans were
the ones truly in charge. Petain was also characterized as “archaic and paternalistic.”*
The Vichy government was thus portrayed as one that did its best to serve French
interests under harsh conditions.

Aron also perpetuated a trend common in the postwar years that differentiated
between two different Vichys, that of Petain, and that of Pierre Laval. Marshal Petain
was an elderly man when he took charge of the government. He had been a World War I
hero; there was no way by which French society could reconcile his heroism with the
 collaborationist attitudes of the regime during World War II. Thus, Aron painted a
picture of Petain as signing the armistice of 1940 under duress. The armistice was a
temporary break in France’s true fight against Germany, and therefore characteristic of
Petain’s paternalistic attitudes. Petain was portrayed as a father figure who was doing
what was best for his country by signing the armistice, but in a dual role, he was the
father figure who was still attempting to improve his nation’s position. In an analysis of
Aron’s work, Martin Evans writes, “As head of state he [Petain] then could play out a

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*All translations are by the author.

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subtle double game, keeping the Nazis at a distance whilst he entered into secret negotiations with the Allies. In contrast, for Prime Minister Pierre Laval, scapegoated as the archetypal self-seeking opportunist, the armistice opened the way to a reversal of alliances. The dual image was a way for French society to maintain the heroism of its former war hero and leader.

Although this common view of Vichy as a passive government that did not truly believe in or promote Fascist policies has largely been disputed, it is necessary to show the intricacies involved in achieving greater historical accuracy. The fact remains that by 1940, France was by and large destroyed and demoralized. A real fear of complete German victory permeated French society, and to a certain extent Laval could be seen as maximizing opportunities for France. The post-war complete condemnation of Laval must be tempered with an acknowledgement of the complexities of the era. Stanley Hoffmann points out that Aron’s book does illustrate the complexities within the Vichy regime, and that it was not monolithic in character.

In addition, Aron used letters written by French people in order to show the lack of support for the Vichy government, thereby solidifying de Gaulle’s assertion as the leader who truly captured and embodied French sentiment. Professor William Cohen points out that the underlying sentiment in these letters is just as telling as the actual prose. In other words, the French had a long tradition of criticizing political leaders, even ones that held popular support. It is not enough to just read the letters written during World War II, it is also necessary to remember the climate of criticism inherent in French society.

Changes in French society in the late 1960’s forced a change in its approach to history. Charles de Gaulle left power in 1969 and died the following year, thus bringing an era to an end. The younger generation of French citizens was embroiled in bitter protests over the Algerian War and other issues related to government. They sought to challenge the established leadership which was mainly Gaullist. The younger generation of French was more embittered and wanted to confront the injustices of the past. 1968 saw the production of the made-for-television French documentary, The Sorrow and the Pity. This film started to debunk myths of French resistance. A deluge of books and articles followed that explored the phenomenon of collaboration. Young people viewed the previous “official” version of history as paternalistic and a lie, and they were inundated with material that confirmed their ideas. This new pessimism, however, was “more passionate than scholarly.”

Within this context, Robert Paxton’s Vichy France, a new scholarly history of Vichy came out. First published in English in 1972, this book put forth the idea that the collaborationist sentiment of the Vichy government enjoyed widespread support. It also contained the notion that the Vichy government wanted to change society through authoritarian reforms, and that it openly engaged in anti-Semitic practices above and beyond what the Nazis required. This work completely contradicted earlier recollections.

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8 Discussion with Professor William Cohen, Indiana University. 12/03/01.
It is important to note that the historian in this case was American, and that it was over a year before his book was translated and published in French. It was not only his scathing criticism of French society that angered some people, but the argument was put forth that he could not understand what it had been like under occupation. Therefore, the anger levied at this historian was not solely in response to his historical arguments, but also to his national background and detached approach. Nonetheless, the book was popular with members of the younger generation who sought to condemn their leaders for their actions during and since World War II.

Paxton’s work opened floodgates. The notoriety of this publication is emblematic of the sensitivities involved in historical work. *Vichy France* is considered groundbreaking in many respects. Scholars criticize it, however, for truly failing to take into account that the Germans did have an influence, and that the Vichy officials were not wholly independent. Rousso writes, “In the heat of intellectual passion, Paxton at times pushed the logic of his case so far that he appeared to give too little weight to the undeniable constraints imposed by the Germans and the situation. The power of the argument and the occasional excess were truly shocking and caused something of a scandal.”10

Controversies and complexities surrounding French wartime identity and responsibility continued in the subsequent years. Gone was the myth of complete resistance, but arguments surrounding the different levels of complicity by Vichy officials were evident in French public opinion of the 1970s and 80s. It was during this time that a number of people from the Vichy government were indicted: Jean Leguay in 1979, Klaus Barbie in 1983, and during the early 1990’s Paul Touvier, Rene Bousquet, and Maurice Papon.11 These last decades of the twentieth century also saw an increase in the French Jewish community’s efforts to keep memory alive, as well as to shine light on the responsibilities of the Vichy regime. In contrast, there were also Holocaust deniers who gained notoriety during this time. While public opinion about France’s World War II actions continued to fluctuate, it can be said that the public became more willing to confront its past. People understood that the Vichy era had not been monolithic. Although debates raged about indictments and different degrees of collaboration, the French were truly interested in understanding their history.

Government, however, did not always reflect public sentiment. With the exception of handing down indictments and holding notorious trials, it remained largely ambivalent on the subject of war responsibility. At this point also a historian may find ambiguity surrounding Vichy France research. Sometimes there was no clear line between those who collaborated with the Vichy regime and those who resisted. The hesitancy of some to identify and take responsibility for their pasts weighed heavily on the national psyche in general. The tensions between those who wanted to explore the past and their largely silent leadership only intensified this struggle. That many Vichy officials were still in the postwar government further heightened frictions. Silence on the issue of responsibility was viewed with suspicion and hostility. Historians attempting to

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research the era were faced with the strong opposing forces of those yearning to find out and take responsibility, and those who wanted to suppress and deny.

The best example of the complexities involved in studying Vichy France is the case of French President Francois Mitterand. His personal history embodied the duality of French identity. He believed in liberty and equality, but he also strongly believed in nationalism, order, and French grandeur. He moved politically from left to right when the situation called for it. It was not until the end of his life that he openly acknowledged his earlier right-wing tendencies. He had been a sincere supporter of Petain in 1941 and an official in the Vichy regime for a year and a half. He received the Francisque Gallique medal in 1943 for his work in government. Perhaps even more telling, Mitterand continued his friendship with Rene Bousquet, an indicted Vichy official, until the latter’s death, and he continued to lay wreaths on the tomb of Petain from 1986 to 1992. The historian researching Vichy France is thus confronted with issues such as how to interpret the role of political officials. In addition, there is the constant, nagging issue of memory; a historian must delve into public sentiment and views, politicians’ personal views, and the overriding political climate of the times.

In 1995 Jacques Chirac became the first French president to publicly decry his country’s role in World War II and especially in the Holocaust. He told the French people that they and their state owed a “debt which can never be repaid” for the wartime treatment of the Jews. While that statement did not bring consensus to French public opinion, nor did it help historians to find a single way to explain Vichy France, it did further illuminate the path memory and history have taken in French culture.

As historians continue to delve into French history and specifically the Vichy era, it is important to note the national and cultural sensitivities involved. What has become even more clear is that there was no uniform French government, there was no uniform public sentiment, and there continues to be discord over the responsibility of the French government in World War II. As in all historical research, the historian must examine every primary and secondary source intensely to understand the meaning as well as the context in which it was recorded. The Vichy government of France is one example of a time of division, controversy, and complication for the historian to research.

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12 Ibid. 9.
13 “Facing History,” Economist, April 2000, 41.
J.S. Harrison, *My Dads*

Photo
Striving to further understand the complexities of the Garden Story in the Hebrew Bible, this essay closely reads several passages of the text in an attempt to separate the actual writings themselves from their dominant interpretations...
The Garden Story is one of the best-known stories of the Hebrew Bible. No doubt, the story of the first humans fascinates us in part because it seems to provide some clues to the origins of human nature. Clues are all we have, for the text is also one of the most difficult to understand, full of ambiguities, apparent inconsistencies, and mysterious allusions. Far from making the story inaccessible, however, the difficulty of the text makes the story all the more powerful; instead of providing answers, it forces us to grapple with questions about human nature and even the nature of God, and to attempt our own answers.

Countless commentators have provided their own answers, and the diversity of their interpretations bears witness to the richness of the text—many of the interpretations directly contradict each other! Through the ages, however, some interpretations have become better known than others; indeed, some have become so popular as to attain a quasi-canonical status. As James L. Kugel points out, most people today think of the Garden story as one that tells “about some fundamental change that took place in the human condition, or what is commonly called the Fall of Man;” they also think that the serpent represents the devil, and that paradise is “the reward of the righteous after death.” Indeed, these interpretations are so widely accepted that it is difficult for many people to distinguish them from the text itself, which does not explicitly support any of the interpretations above.

These traditionally dominant interpretations are problematic for two reasons. First, the text contains ambiguities enough to prompt other readings that are equally persuasive—or at least, equally imaginative. But the more important reason is that the elevation of the interpretations—which are, after all, only interpretations—to the level of doctrine, in both Jewish and Christian traditions, has effectively discredited the other readings.

The ambiguity of the text is a purposeful one; the author or authors sought to invite questions, not to eliminate them. We should therefore be suspicious of readings that discourage dialogue. As Gerhard von Rad eloquently states:

The narrative raises many more questions than it answers about “the” original state and “the” Fall. In theological thought and even more in popular, conceptions about just these subjects [have] grown all too stable. Furthermore, one must remember that also non-biblical mythical ideas about the blessedness of man’s original state have merged unnoticeably with Christian thought. The exegete must free himself of all these burdens. There is perhaps no other biblical text which is so inflexible with regard to this confused massed of stalled questions and whose witness proceeds from a road as narrow as a razor’s edge. One misses the road completely if one does not entrust oneself to it completely.

With that in mind, I want to read closely several passages of the text, with several objectives. First, because “non-biblical mythical ideas” have “merged unnoticeably with

Christian thought”—and, to a lesser degree, with Jewish thought—I seek to distinguish the traditionally dominant interpretations from the actual text. Second, I will offer some alternate interpretations that conflict with the dominant ones, to show the diversity of exegetical possibilities offered by the ambiguities of the text. Finally, I will conclude by examining the ethical implications of this diversity, for Genesis is one of the founding books of our civilization, and a text from which much of its moral fabric is drawn.

A Summary of the Text and of the Interpretations

To free ourselves of von Rad’s “burdens,” it will be useful to compare a summary of the text with a summary of the traditionally dominant interpretations. Beginning with the relevant introductory material in Genesis 2, a summary of the Garden story might read like the following. After the creation of the first man, God places him in the garden of Eden, “to till it and watch it,” with the following command: “From every fruit of the garden you may surely eat. But from the tree of knowledge, good and evil, you shall not eat, for on the day you eat from it, you are doomed to die [or: you will surely die]” (Gen 2:15-17). God then creates the animals and the woman. In Genesis 3, the serpent, the “most cunning” of all animals, tells the woman that if she eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, she will not die, as God has said, but her eyes will be “opened” and she will become like elohim (God or gods), knowing good and evil. The woman eats of the fruit and gives some to the man, who also eats. Their eyes are “opened” and they know they are naked, and they hide from God. God punishes the serpent and the humans, and drives the humans out of the garden of Eden.

Even from such a brief précis, some of the previously mentioned ambiguities are apparent. What are God’s motives in forbidding the humans to eat of the tree of knowledge? Once they eat the fruit, why do the humans not die immediately, or within the day, as God said they would (“on the day that you eat from it, you will surely die” Gen 2:17)? How does the serpent know so much about the tree of knowledge? What is the serpent’s motivation in “tempting” the woman?

A summary of the traditionally dominant interpretations that attempt to answer some of these questions might run as follows. God creates the humans perfect, pure, and immortal and places them in Paradise (the garden of Eden). God then places a prohibition on the tree of knowledge for a reason that we cannot understand, but that was nonetheless for the good of the humans. The devil, or Satan, comes in the form of the serpent or uses the serpent in some way to tempt the woman. The woman introduces sin into the world by disobeying God and eating of the fruit. God punishes the humans by making them mortal and by expelling them from Paradise.

These interpretations are familiar, but are they supported by the text? Entrusting ourselves to the text, as von Rad urges, let us take a closer look at Genesis.

The Prohibition

3 All textual references from Genesis are from Robert Alter’s translation (New York: Norton, 1996).
Why does God place a ban on the tree of knowledge of good and evil? It would seem that this knowledge would be good for humanity; it is one of the characteristics that distinguishes us from the other animals, and that allows us to have any kind of moral system, secular or religious. It is, therefore, problematic to the religious interpreter that God prohibits the humans from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. What kind of God would want to withhold this knowledge?

Von Rad claims that we cannot know the reason for the prohibition, and that it would be blasphemy to discuss God’s motives.

To seek a purpose in the divine prohibition, as exegetes have often done, is in our opinion not permissible; the question cannot be discussed…. The snake (Gen. 5 3.1) was the first to open discussion about the prohibition. The most that we may derive from this is that the command was certainly well intentioned, again dictated by God’s providence; for the forbidden fruit was not good for man, and taken by him in disobedience, it necessarily would work destructively upon him.4

In von Rad’s interpretation, we have an affirmation of the first axiom of Christianity: God is perfect, and by extension, omnibenevolent; therefore, the prohibition can only have been “well intentioned.”

John Calvin offers a different interpretation; the ban is not as an arbitrary limitation, but a just and necessary warning against human pride:

Concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we must hold, that it was prohibited to man, not because God would have him to stray like sheep, without judgment and without choice; but that he might not seek to be wiser than became him, nor by trusting to his own understanding, cast off the yoke of God, and constitute himself arbiter and judge of good and evil.5

For Calvin, the important principles are humility and obedience to God. Humans cannot judge good and evil without God’s guidance; it is only by “c leaving to God” obediently that humans can become “more wise.”6

Von Rad’s interpretation is unsatisfactory; it does not search for an answer, but avoids the question, by appealing to a theological principle. Calvin attempts an answer, but he, too, assumes that God is omnibenevolent; God did not impose an unjust limitation on the humans, but a necessary and benign limitation.

The text of Genesis, however, does not explicitly state that God is omnibenevolent; if we suppose for a moment that He7 is not, entirely new interpretations

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4 Von Rad, op. cit., 81.
6 Ibid.
are possible. Could it be that God prefers to keep this special knowledge of good and evil to himself and to the celestial beings? Genesis 3:22 provides some clues: “And the Lord God said, ‘Now that the human has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he may reach out and take as well from the tree of life and live forever.’” God clearly wants to keep some distance between the humans and the divine beings, at least in terms of immortality. He also seems to express regret, and even fear, that the humans have acquired the knowledge of good and evil, becoming like “one of us.” Is this a selfish, imperfect God? In any case, unless we assume God’s omnibenevolence and avoid the question altogether, God’s motives are entirely unclear.

The Serpent as the Devil

How does the serpent know so much about the tree of knowledge? Why does the serpent seek to “tempt” the woman to disobey God? Some interpreters have proposed that the serpent is not just an animal, but a pawn of the devil, or even the devil himself. One of the earliest sources of this interpretation is 1 Enoch 69:6, largely from the second century BCE: “The third [angel] was named Gader’el; this one is he who showed the children of the people all the blows of death, who misled Eve….”8 This document identifies the serpent with Gader’el, a fallen angel; later interpreters would identify the serpent with Satan, or the devil. If the serpent is the devil, or a symbol of evil, then the serpent’s knowledge and motivation are easy to understand.

The text of the Garden story, however, gives no specific evidence to support this interpretation. To the contrary, the text suggests that the serpent is no more than an animal: “Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the beasts of the field that the Lord God had made” (Gen 3:1). The writer takes great pains to describe the serpent explicitly as a “beast of the field,” recalling by verbal echo the creation of the animals in Genesis 2: “And the Lord God fashioned from the soil each beast of the field…” (2:19). The serpent is an animal, just like any other, and created in the same way as all the other animals. The punishment scene also provides support for this interpretation:

And the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

Cursed be you
    of all cattle and all beasts of the field.
On your belly shall you go
    and dust shall you eat all the days of your life.
Enmity will I set between you and the woman,

7 As a literary character, God is male (in the Hebrew text, the verbs are most often conjugated in the masculine third-person singular).
8 The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, vol. 1, James H. Charlesworth, ed. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983). The text is composite, but this section can be dated with reasonable accuracy to about 200 BCE. For specifics, see E. Isaac’s notes in pp. 6-7.
between your seed and hers.
He will boot your head
and you will bite his heel” (Gen 3:14-15).

This is, in effect, a folk etiology, an explanation of why the serpent slithers on its belly, and why humankind and snakes are enemies.

Even if the serpent is merely an animal, its character remains unclear. Is the serpent somehow still “evil”? Genesis 3 does not provide much information about the serpent, but putting the above passage from Genesis 2 into context provides a clue: “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the human to be alone, I shall make him a sustainer beside him.’ And the Lord God fashioned from the soil each beast of the field…” (2:18-19a). God creates the animals to remedy a situation that is “not good,” but fails; for none of the animals is a suitable partner for the human (“no sustainer beside him was found” Gen 2:20b). Although this passage does not explicitly characterize the serpent as “bad” or “evil,” it implies that God’s creation is not perfect. In an imperfect world, the serpent may well be evil, a mistake of God’s creation.

On the other hand, this passage has an echo in Genesis 1, the first Creation story, where God’s creation is indeed perfect:

And God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that crawls…and the winged fowl of each kind, and God saw that it was good (1:21).

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of each kind, cattle and crawling things and wild beasts of each kind. And so it was. And God made wild beasts of each kind and cattle of every kind and crawling things on the ground of each kind, and God saw that it was good (1:24-25).

It is not clear which verse announces the creation of the serpent: v. 21 gives rise to the “great sea monsters,” reminiscent of serpents, and “every living creature that crawls”; vv. 24-25 bring forth “wild beasts of each kind” and “crawling things.” In both cases, the key phrase is “…and God saw that it was good.” In Genesis 1, the serpent is part of God’s perfect creation, and so must necessarily be “good.”

Thus we have two conflicting accounts of the creation of animals. In the first Creation story, the creation is “good;” in the second, flawed. In sum, the description of the serpent is framed to be ambiguous.9

9 It should be noted that von Rad also opposes the “serpent as devil” hypothesis (as do many other exegtes, both religious and secular), although his reason is theological rather than literary: “It would be well to withhold from this beginning of the narrative the great theological weight that the exposition of the church, almost without exception, has given it. The mention of the snake here is almost incidental; at any rate, in the “temptation” by it the concern is with a completely unmythical process, presented in such a way because the narrator is obviously anxious to shift the responsibility as little as possible from man. It is a question only of man and his guilt…” (op. cit., 87). Von Rad again criticizes the popularity of an interpretation that has grown “all too stable” (see p. 2 above).
The “Temptation” and “Fall”

If the serpent is evil (or the devil), the motivation behind the temptation is clear. If, however, the serpent is not evil, the motivation is harder to understand. What does the serpent have to gain from “tempting” the woman into eating the fruit? The cunning animal presumably foresees God’s wrath and the terrible consequences of this act; the serpent must believe that it will gain something that outweighs the consequences. Could it be that the serpent wants the humans to become like *elohim*, that is, knowing good and evil, because it thinks this would be “good” for the humans? In this case, the serpent becomes a Prometheus figure, a martyr willing to take the consequences of God’s wrath for the betterment of humankind.10

This casts more doubt on the character of God. In fact, the serpent seems to be more in the right than God is. Compare God’s prohibition in Genesis 2 with the serpent’s words in Genesis 3:

[And the Lord God said,] “But from the tree of knowledge, good and evil, you shall not eat, for on the day you eat from it, you are doomed to die [or: you will surely die]” (2:17).

And the serpent said to the woman, “You shall not be doomed to die. For God knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will become as gods [*elohim*] knowing good and evil” (3:5).

The serpent’s words turn out to be exact; the humans’ eyes are opened, and they do not die. God’s words, on the other hand, seem like an empty threat, a bluff to keep the humans from eating of the tree of knowledge.

To resolve this apparent problem, exegetes have been quick to suggest that the punishment for the Fall was mortality, and not instant death. Dating from about 100 CE, one of the oldest sources for this interpretation is 2 Esdras (also known as the Fourth Book of Ezra): “And you laid upon him [Adam] one commandment of yours; but he transgressed it, and immediately you appointed death for him and for his descendants” (3:7).11 This implies that God initially created humans immortal; there is, however, nothing in the text to support this. God’s reason for driving the humans out of the Garden is to keep them from reaching for immortality: “Now that the human has become like one

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10 Although I arrived at this interpretation independently, the Gnostics had a similar view: they saw the serpent as a benign spirit that, through the magical and mystical tree, brought knowledge of the “spiritual element” to the humans—against the wishes of the other “rulers” or gods: “With death you shall not die, for it was out of envy that it said this to you. Rather, your eyes shall open and you shall come to be like gods, recognizing evil and good.” “The Reality of the Rulers,” in Bentley Layton’s *The Gnostic Scriptures* (Garden City, Doubleday: 1987), 90:6-10.
11 *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1. For specifics on the date, see B. M. Metzger’s note on p. 520.
of us, knowing good and evil, he may reach out and take as well from the tree of life and live forever” (Gen 3:22). The humans might have taken from the tree of life and gained immortality, but otherwise they remain mortal, as they have been.

This passage also highlights the serpent’s uncanny knowledge; he accurately predicts even God’s thoughts. God voices the fear that the human has become like elohim, “knowing good and evil,” echoing almost exactly the serpent’s words to the woman earlier in the chapter (“For God knows that on the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will become like gods [elohim], knowing good and evil” Gen 3:5). Thus the cunning serpent outplays God and brings knowledge to the humans. The Punishment God has the final word in pronouncing the punishments. First God questions the humans:

[And He said,] “From the tree I commanded you not to eat have you eaten?”
And the human said, “The woman whom you gave by me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” And the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent beguiled me and I ate.” And the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed be you…” (Gen 3:11b-14a).

As many commentators have noted, the man shifts the blame to the woman, who blames it on the serpent. The serpent has no one to blame, but also no chance to speak in self-defense; God does not question the serpent, but proceeds immediately to pronounce the sentence. What is the meaning of this silence? Why does God not give the serpent a chance to speak?

Both Jewish and Christian interpreters have noted this puzzling silence, but have explained it in different ways. Rashi explains that we should not give such “seducers to idolatry” the opportunity to justify their crimes:

From here we infer that we should not occupy ourselves with what may be in favour of one who seduces people to idolatry, for had He asked it, ‘Why has thou done this?’, it could have answered him, ‘When the words of the teacher and those of the pupil are contradictory whose orders should be obeyed?’”

That is, the serpent could have defended himself by claiming that the humans, rather than listening to his advice, should have obeyed God instead. In denying the serpent the opportunity to speak, God was teaching us a subtle point about how to deal with idolaters and seducers to idolatry.

Terrence E. Fretheim, a Christian scholar, suggests a different interpretation: “This shows that the purpose of the inquest was to lead to the admission of guilt; the inquest of the serpent would have served no purpose.”

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13 In the Hebrew, serpent is a masculine noun.
14 T. Fretheim, Creation, Fall, and Flood (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1969), 86.
allknowing and perfectly just. He questioned the humans to extract confessions, that they might admit their sins and be forgiven, but the serpent would never have admitted guilt, so God does not need to question him.

In light of the alternate interpretation of the serpent as a Prometheus figure, however, the serpent’s silence becomes poignant, a heroic acceptance of unjust blame. God’s hasty pronouncement of punishment looks suspiciously like an attempt at a cover-up—is God afraid of what this crafty animal’s response might be? Rashi’s imagined response for the serpent seems closer to the mark than expected: if the serpent retorted, “if You told them one thing and I another, should they not have obeyed You?” how could God respond?15 Given a chance, the serpent could challenge God’s authority, pointing out the selfishness of prohibition and the unjustness of the punishment. Instead, he remains silent, accepting the punishment of a furious God, for the sake of humanity.16

**Conclusion**

These are only some of the many ambiguities posed by the text of Genesis 3; my examination is by no means exhaustive. But the above examples illustrate that the traditionally dominant interpretations are not definitive—and, at best, still only interpretations. Moreover, the text supports other readings—even contradictory readings—at least as readily as it supports the traditionally dominant ones. I have offered some of my own secular interpretations; even within the Jewish and Christian traditions there are many contradictory and conflicting interpretations. Calvin and von Rad, for example, have very different opinions on the Prohibition.

My objection to the traditionally dominant interpretations is not that they are “wrong,” but that over time, they have risen to the level of dogma. As a result, they exclude other interpretations, and in doing so, miss the point entirely. The text invites us to struggle with difficult questions, and to venture an answer—but not to claim that we have found “the” answer.

The beauty and the meaning of the Garden story, and of Genesis in general, lie precisely in the ambiguities of the text. They reflect our ambiguous world, and allow a wealth of diverse, even contradictory interpretations. Biblical Hebrew, which lacks vowels and punctuation, seems inherently suited to provide opportunities for beautifully ambiguous readings; the very language seems to discourage fundamentalism. This flexibility is what makes Genesis a powerful text that has endured for centuries; relevant as ever in our era, Genesis remains a compelling voice for openness and dialogue.

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15 Rashi, op. cit., 15.
16 Cf. the Gnostic interpretation of the punishment: “Moreover, they [the rulers, or gods] threw humankind into great distraction and into a life of toil, so that their humankind might be occupied by worldly affairs, and might not have the opportunity of being devoted to the holy spirit.” “The Reality of the Rulers,” in Layton, op. cit., 91:7-10.