

**DIONYSOS COMES TO THRACE:
THE METAPHOR OF CORRUPTED SACRIFICE AND
THE INTRODUCTION OF DIONYSIAN CULT IN
IMAGES OF LYKOURGOS'S MADNESS¹**

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A small group of Attic vases from the fifth century B.C.E. depict the murder of the young Dryas by Lykourgos, the mythical king of Thrace.² The scenes vary in details but adopt a similar formula to show the boy's death: driven to madness by Dionysos, whom he had expelled from the country, the king lunges at his son with an axe while the god and his followers look on (Apollodorus *Bibl.* 3.5). The earliest certain examples of this subject appear on two mid-century vases, a column krater in a private Italian collection³ and a hydria in Krakow (Figure 1).⁴ In both scenes, the

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2 The myth is also represented on South Italian vases that are briefly discussed below; see Deichgräber 1939.291–303, Séchan 1926.74, Sutton 1975, and Griffith 1983.221–28. Some South Italian scenes show Lykourgos killing his wife, but Dryas is the only victim in the Athenian images.

3 Italy, Private Collection; Beazley Archive Database (hereafter BAD) 9022291. I was unable to secure permission to publish an image of this vase, but it is illustrated and discussed in Schauenburg 2004.171–74. The reverse shows an apparently unrelated scene of figures in conversation.

4 Krakow, National Museum 1225; *ARV²* 1121.17; *Beazley Addenda²* 331; BAD 214835. The vase has been repainted, but Beazley was able to make out the original lines and noted that “although small details have been added or lost, the representation is genuine in every essential” (1928.44).

boy sits on an altar and gestures futilely at his father,⁵ who advances from the left. Dionysos stands at the right holding a thyrsos and, on the Krakow hydria, a vine. Dancing bacchantes appear in both images, and the Krakow scene also includes a satyr and a mourning woman, most likely the boy's mother (Beazley 1928.45). The third image of the murder, more elaborate than the others in composition, appears on a hydria from the later fifth century (Figure 2).⁶ Here Dryas has already been beheaded, and he sinks to his knees before his father. The two are surrounded by dancing bacchantes, one of whom holds the boy's head; the rest carry swords, thyrsoi, a small animal, and a child. There is no altar in this scene, but the setting is clearly a sanctuary—two statues stand by the spot where Dryas falls, and Dionysos and Ariadne preside over the scene, reclining in the center of the upper register.⁷

This scant fifth-century visual record is a poor witness to the importance of the Lykourgos myth in antiquity. The king's madness was the subject of Aeschylus's *Edonoi*,⁸ and Pausanias reports that Dionysos's oldest sanctuary in Athens displayed paintings of Lykourgos and Pentheus being punished for their offenses against the god (ταῦτά τε δὴ γεγραμμένα εἰσὶ καὶ Πενθεὺς καὶ Λυκοῦργος ὧν ἐς Διόνυσον ὕβρισαν διδόντες δίκας, 1.20.3).⁹ At best, these accounts suggest the bare outlines of the Lykourgos myth as it was known in classical Athens, although Apollodorus's much later summary provides additional information. The mythographer tells us that when Dionysos arrived in Thrace, Lykourgos expelled him and took his followers captive, and the god punished him with madness: Λυκοῦργῳ δὲ μανίαν ἐνεποίησε Διόνυσος. ὁ δὲ μεμηνῶς Δρύαντα τὸν παῖδα, ἀμπέλου νομίζων κλῆμα κόπτειν, πελέκει πλήξας ἀπέκτεινε, καὶ ἀκρωτηριάσας αὐτὸν ἐσωφρόνησε ("Dionysos drove Lykourgos mad. And in his madness, he struck his son Dryas dead with an axe, imagining that he was lopping a branch of a vine, and when he had cut off his son's extremities, he recovered his senses," *Bibl.* 3.5).¹⁰ The

5 For the gesture, see Pedrina 2006.305–07.

6 Rome, Villa Giulia 55707; *ARI*² 1343; BAD 217561.

7 A fourth scene, on a hydria in the British Museum (E 246; BAD 9981), probably also shows this myth, although the identification is disputed. I discuss this image below.

8 Séchan 1926.63–79, Deichgräber 1939, Sutton 1971, 1975, and West 1990.27–32.

9 The painting is thought to date from the fifth century B.C.E. or possibly the fourth (Robertson 1972.47).

10 Trans. J. G. Frazier, Cambridge, Mass. 1921. For other ancient versions of Lykourgos's encounter with Dionysos (not all of which involve the murder of Dryas), see *LIMC*

general features of this version are consistent with the fifth-century vase paintings—there, too, we find the murder, the axe, and the vine—but numerous gaps remain, and a detailed understanding of the vase paintings has remained elusive. Previous scholarship on the scenes has tended to follow two lines of inquiry, the first of which stresses the influence of the *Edonoi* on the images.¹¹ It is certainly possible that some aspects of the images were inspired by Aeschylus’s play, but such a hypothesis does not take us very far toward understanding the specific presentation of the myth on the vases—and not only because the relationship between image and theater is now understood to be less straightforward than was once believed.¹² The *Edonoi* is extremely fragmentary, so the manner in which it handled Dryas’s death is a matter of conjecture, but the event would certainly have occurred offstage and could not have provided direct visual inspiration for the vase paintings (cf. Beazley 1928.46).

A different approach to the images emphasizes their Thracian features,¹³ since two vases (Figure 1 and the privately owned krater) show the king in patterned *zeira* (“mantle”) and *embades* (“boots”), clothing typically associated with that region.¹⁴ Despoina Tsiafakis suggests that the king’s ethnicity is the key to interpreting the imagery, since his brutish behavior would have been understood as a consequence of his barbarian nature.¹⁵ The Thracian reputation for savagery is well known,¹⁶ and the king’s ethnicity is sure to have contributed in some way to the Athenians’ understanding of his crime, yet the idea that his “wildness and savagery . . . were both barbarian characteristics opposed to the Greek ideal of self-control” comes up short as an explanation for the specific character

VI.1992.p. 309, s.v. Lykourgos I (A. Farnoux); also Vatin and Bruneau 1966.402–07 and Burkert 1983.177 n. 34.

11 Deichgräber 1939.291–303, Trendall and Webster 1971.49, and Sutton 1975.

12 This is a controversial topic with a large bibliography; for various points of view, see Green 1991, Giuliani 1996, Small 2003, and Taplin 1993, 2007.

13 Raeck 1981.88, Carpenter 1997.36–38, and Tsiafakis 2000.381–82.

14 On Thracian costume, see Hdt. 7.75, Raeck 1981.69–70, Hall 1989.137, Lissarrague 1990.210–16, Tsiafakis 2000.367, and Cohen 2001.247–51. The date at which Lykourgos was first associated with Thrace is uncertain, but Carpenter argues plausibly that the association was present even in the Homeric (*Il.* 6.130–40) account of Lykourgos’s encounter with Dionysos (1997.36); see also Faraone 2013 on the Thracian context of the Homeric episode.

15 Tsiafakis 2000.383–84. Cf. Kefalidou 2009.98, who suggests a link between madness and ethnicity.

16 Hall 1989.103–06, 137, Tsiafakis 2000.366 and *passim*.

of his offense (Tsiafakis 2000.382). One difficulty with this idea is that these images obviously do not show events of the painters' here-and-now, and it has become increasingly clear that we cannot easily retroject the familiar Hellene/barbarian opposition onto a mythical prehistory that was thought to predate the existence of those categories.¹⁷ Since the violence of the Lykourgos imagery is matched by scenes—for instance, the death of Astyanax¹⁸—in which Greek heroes commit comparable atrocities, it seems prudent to heed that warning here.

This article has two goals: first, to explain the specific form that Dryas's death takes on the vases and, second, to account for the Thracian emphasis in the characterization of the murderous king. Drawing upon an old observation that the images of Dryas's death share features with scenes of animal sacrifice,¹⁹ I argue that the painters employ the metaphor of a sacrifice gone wrong to make claims about Thrace and about the nature of Dionysian worship. The "motif of the corrupted sacrifice" has been most thoroughly explored by Froma Zeitlin, who shows that it may function on either a narrative or a metaphorical level to highlight the ways in which a death crosses the boundaries of what is acceptable in human society (Zeitlin 1965, 1966). Subsequent scholarship demonstrates that a fairly broad range of Greek texts and images manipulate sacrificial imagery to this effect,²⁰ and this is certainly true for images of Dryas's murder. I will argue, however, that the corrupted sacrifice has a second purpose in these scenes that is specific to the establishment of Dionysian worship in Thrace.²¹ Dirk Obbink notes that Dionysian myths characterized by extreme violence often commemorate the moment at which proper cultic worship was established and less civilized customs were left behind. The *sparagmos* ("dismemberment") of Pentheus, for example, is a perversion of normative sacrificial ritual and operates as an "inverted charter myth" for the worship of Dionysos in Thebes.²² In the same way, Lykourgos's murder

17 Miller 1995, Ferrari 2000, Gruen 2011. For in-depth discussions of Greek ideas about ethnicity, see Hall 1989, Hall 2002, and Mitchell 2007.

18 On these images, see *LIMC* II.1984.pp. 929–37, s.v. Astyanax (O. Touchefeu); also Morris 1995 and Hedreen 2001.64–90.

19 Séchan 1926.75, Sutton 1975, Di Marco 1987.168, and Viret Bernal 1997.

20 Loraux 1987.13–17, 31–48, Viret Bernal 1997, Durand and Lissarrague 1999, Henrichs 2000, Bremmer 2007a.139, and Topper 2010.

21 On Dionysos's relationship to Thrace, see Carpenter 1997.33–51, Isler-Kerényi 1999, Faraone 2013, and Iliev 2013.

22 Obbink 1993.68–75. The quotation is from p. 70 and refers to *sparagmos* and *omophagia* ("consumption of raw meat") in general. For another view of Dionysian violence, see Henrichs 1981.219–21.

of his child marks the transition from a less civilized state to a more civilized one that coincided with the god's arrival in Thrace. The images of Dryas's death are therefore less concerned with depicting the inherent barbarism of the Thracians than with commemorating the moment at which they acquired one important component of civilization: the cult practices associated with Dionysos.²³

DRYAS AND THE METAPHOR OF THE CORRUPTED SACRIFICE

In an article published in 1975, Dana Ferrin Sutton comments on the sacrificial character of Dryas's death as it is depicted on the hydria in Krakow (Figure 1). He does not seem to have been aware of the other Attic scenes of the murder (Figure 2 and the privately owned column krater), although he did consider several South Italian scenes that have features in common with the Athenian ones.²⁴ While I follow Sutton in seeing sacrificial allusions in the Krakow scene, and I believe that these allusions are also present in the other Attic images of Dryas's death (cf. Viret Bernal 1997.97), it is worth stating at the outset that the images of Lykourgos's madness depart in certain respects from the conventional iconography of sacrifice. I will therefore briefly review the case for the sacrificial interpretation before moving on to examine its implications in the Attic scenes.

Although much scholarship on Greek sacrifice has focused on the act of killing the sacrificial animal (Burkert 1983, Vernant 1991a, Parker 2011.124–70), those who study the images have noted the conspicuous absence of killing from the visual record, at least when *thusia* is concerned.²⁵ The stages of *thusia* that are most frequently depicted are the procession to the altar and the roasting of *splanchna* (“viscera”), although

23 On the “double” nature of Thracians—who were in one sense barbarians, but who were also the Greeks' nearest neighbors on the mainland and were credited with at least occasional contributions to Greek culture—see Parker 1987.203, Isler-Kerényi 1999.43, Sourvinou-Inwood 2011.117–23, and Sears 2013.

24 Sutton 1975; cf. Séchan 1926 on the South Italian images.

25 On the artists' apparent lack of interest in the moment of slaughter, see, especially, Durand 1989a.90–91, Peirce 1993, Van Straten 1995, and Georgoudi 2005. For other discussions of the iconography of sacrifice, see Durand 1986, 1989a, 1989b, Durand and Lissarrague 1999, Gebauer 2002, and Ekroth 2005. On the categories and meanings of Greek animal sacrifice, see Nock 1944.157–62, Henrichs 1981.213–19, 224, 2000.179–80, Berthaiume 1982, Detienne and Vernant 1989, Peirce 1993.251–58, Miller 2000.425–26, Ekroth 2002, 2013, Van Straten 2005, Bremmer 2007a, 2013.88, and Johnston 2012. *Thusia* may be roughly defined as the slaughter of an animal “in order to burn parts of it so as to make the

other moments, such as the butchering or consumption of meat, are also sometimes shown.²⁶ When the moment of death is depicted, it is normally in scenes of *sphagia* rather than *thusia*, although a few non-Attic images of *thusia* show the blow dealt by an axe or knife.²⁷ Myths of human sacrifice, when they are depicted in art, are represented in a few different ways (Mylonopoulos 2013). The sacrifices (actual or attempted) of Iphigeneia and Herakles are depicted according to the conventions of *thusia*: the former is led to the altar in what is clearly a conflation of wedding and sacrificial iconography,²⁸ while the latter is shown being conducted to an altar by Bousiris' henchmen and then, a few moments later, beating them back as they flee with the sacrificial paraphernalia.²⁹ Images of Polyxena's death, by contrast, correspond more closely to the iconography of *sphagia*; two sixth-century scenes show a group of men lifting the girl as one drives a knife into her throat,³⁰ in much the same way that a bull is shown being slaughtered on a famous amphora in Viterbo.³¹

Although there is no indication in the vase paintings or anywhere else that Dryas's death belonged to a narrative of human sacrifice such as the ones just discussed, the recurrence of sacrificial elements in scenes of Lykourgos's madness suggests that sacrifice operated as a metaphor there. As Sutton and, before him, Louis Séchan observe, the sacrificial allusions are especially strong in South Italian images.³² Like the Attic scenes, these images frequently set the murder in a sacred place marked by an altar or divine statues, and the dropped hydria on an Apulian krater in London and a dish full of sprigs on an amphora in Ruvo suggest that a ritual was in

smoke rise into the realm of the gods" (Johnston 2012.218). *Thusia* involved consumption of the sacrificial meat, whereas *sphagia* did not.

26 On depictions of sacrificial meat, see most recently Tsoukala 2009.

27 Axe: Berlin, Antikenmuseum 3419; Van Straten 1995, pl. 113 [V148]. Copenhagen, National Museum 13.567; Van Straten 1995, pl. 114 [V120]. Knife: Bryn Mawr, Ella Riegel Memorial Collection P 217; Durand 1986, fig. 27. On these scenes, see Peirce 1993.257, Van Straten 1995.107–08, and Gebauer 2002.288–89.

28 On these images, see Van Straten 1995.114.

29 On images of Bousiris' attempted sacrifice of Herakles, see Van Straten 1995.46–49, Durand and Lissarrague 1999.85–91, and Miller 2000.

30 London, British Museum 1897.7–27.2; *ABV* 97.27, 683; *Paralipomena* 37; *Beazley Addenda*² 26; BAD 310027. Çanakkale, Archaeological Museum; Sevinç 1996.256–57, figs 9–10. On Polyxena and *sphagia*, see Peirce 1993.253. A fragmentary Protoattic scene also shows a girl (possibly Iphigeneia) lifted and killed in this fashion (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 6.67; Vermeule and Chapman 1971, figs. 1–4).

31 Viterbo, Museo Archeologico Nazionale; BAD 10600.

32 Séchan 1926.75 (South Italian vases), Sutton 1975 (Attic and South Italian vases).

progress when the king's frenzy began.³³ Both of these vessels are common in images of sacrifice, and the leg of an animal lying on the ground next to Lykourgos on an amphora in Naples further suggests a sacrificial frame for the king's actions;³⁴ the leg joint was particularly important iconographically because it represented the honorary share of the sacrificial offering.³⁵ Scholars tend to agree that despite some variation in the identities of the onlookers, the number of the king's victims, and the details of the setting, the images of Lykourgos's madness are likely to have belonged to a single narrative.³⁶ Sutton summarizes this position as follows: "It is self-evident that a series of vases containing so many common elements must have a common inspiration. There is no reason for thinking this to have been a famous painting, for the vases do not represent the same moment in the action, but rather slightly different moments in a coherent sequence of events, and they do not adopt a common physical layout. Rather, there is every reason to adopt the conclusion of Séchan and Trendall-Webster that these vases illustrate a scene from a tragedy" (Sutton 1975.358).

Some of the images do, to be sure, include clear references to the stage—an aging *paidagogos* observes the massacre on the krater in London,³⁷ and a satyr wearing a tufted body stocking accompanies Dionysos on an Apulian situla³⁸—so the suggestion that many or most of the images were inspired by tragedy is not entirely implausible. Yet the issues surrounding theater and vase painting are too complex for this possibility to be treated as a certainty, and the existence of a common dramatic source is not the only possible explanation for commonalities among vase paintings. Sutton is correct, however, in observing that the painters all seem to have conceived of Lykourgos's madness in similar terms, and while the sacrificial elements are most explicit in the South Italian scenes, there is good reason to believe that those artists were continuing a visual tradition that is already observable in the Attic paintings.³⁹ The similari-

33 London, British Museum F 271; *RVAp* I 415–16, 5 pl. 147. Ruvo, Museo Jatta 32; *RVAp* I 267, 50.

34 Naples, Museo Nazionale 81953; *RVAp* II 497, 45 pl. 178, 2.

35 Tsoukala 2009. On the leg joint, see also Durand 1984.32 and Berthiaume 2005.

36 In the South Italian images, the setting is marked by an altar, a *naiskos*, or rocks and trees, and the king's victims may include both Dryas and other members of his family.

37 London, British Museum F 271; *RVAp* I 415–16, 5 pl. 147.

38 Peiresc Collection (formerly); *LIMC* Supplementum, 2009, s.v. "Lykourgos I," add. 3.

39 The relationship between Athenian and South Italian vase painting is complex, but it is common for South Italian images to continue themes and traditions known from Athens.

ties in setting and the consistency in the mode of execution both suggest that the Attic and South Italian scenes were following the same tradition, and certain details in the Attic scenes are indeed familiar from sacrificial imagery. Two vases, for instance, show Dionysos standing to the right of the altar as Lykourgos attacks his son (Figure 1 and the privately owned column krater), and the third shows him seated directly above the statues that provide the backdrop for the murder (Figure 2). Both positions have parallels in the iconography of *thusia*, where the deity (or his or her statue) may receive the sacrificial procession from behind the altar or one or more gods may observe the proceedings from the upper register. The aulos played by the satyr on the Krakow hydria (Figure 1) is common in sacrificial imagery but is not necessarily indicative of it; a more strongly suggestive detail, however, is the axe.

The double axe, or *pelekus*, was clearly important to the painters' conception of Lykourgos's madness—the king rarely wields any other kind of weapon,⁴⁰ and the axe is his weapon of choice even in scenes in which he is equipped with a sword (Figure 2). Greek authors associate the *pelekus* with activities such as battle, sacrifice, execution, and tree-cutting (see the list in LSJ³ s.v. *πέλεκυς*), but its range is more limited in the imagery (Viret Bernal 1997.97). It rarely appears in scenes of battle (although Theseus uses it against Prokrustes, and it is sometimes used against centaurs),⁴¹ and although tree- or vine-cutting is not often depicted, those vases that depict these activities show an instrument that more closely resembles a pickaxe than a *pelekus*.⁴² The images do, however, repeatedly associate the

On the relationship between Attic and South Italian vase painting, see Trendall 1990, 1991, Taplin 1993, and Carpenter 2009.

40 On an Apulian vase in Munich (Antikensammlungen 3300 [J 853]; *RVAp* II 535, 297 pl. 200), he points a sword at Dionysos, but I know of no other vase painting in which a sword replaces the axe.

41 Prokrustes: Athens, Agora Museum P 12561; BAD 31548. Athens, National Museum 515; *ABV* 518; BAD 330671. Athens, National Museum 1666; *ARV*² 1567.13; BAD 350911. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum 37.22; *ARV*² 565.36; *Beazley Addenda*² 260; BAD 206466. Laon, Musée Archéologique Municipal 37.996; *ABV* 703; *Paralipomena* 255; BAD 306781. London, British Museum E 442; *ARV*² 257.9; *Beazley Addenda*² 204; BAD 202927. Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional 11265; *ARV*² 1174.1, 1685; BAD 215557. Toledo, Museum of Art 63.27; *Paralipomena* 257; *Beazley Addenda*² 129; BAD 351546. Utrecht, University 34; *ABV* 560.517; BAD 331613. Centaurs: Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 00.344; *ARV*² 1318.2, 1319.2; *Paralipomena* 478; *Beazley Addenda*² 363; BAD 220534.

42 E.g., Herakles in Syleus's vineyard (Zurich, University 19; *ARV*² 661.94; *Beazley Addenda*² 277; BAD 207753).

double axe with sacrifice.⁴³ Sacrificial weapons of any sort are rare in Attic depictions of animal sacrifice, but a Corinthian aryballos and a Caeretan hydria both show the axe being used against a bull,⁴⁴ and axes appear with some frequency in scenes in which human beings are literal or metaphorical victims of sacrifice. A red-figure neck amphora shows Ino pursuing Phrixos with a double axe as he flees on a ram, presumably the one given to him by Nephele to escape the sacrifice Ino had arranged.⁴⁵ The Thracian women repeatedly use the double axe against Orpheus; while they tend to adopt a variety of weapons (including rocks, swords, and pestles), their frequent use of sacrificial spits to kill the hero suggests that their *pelekus* also carries sacrificial connotations.⁴⁶

The best parallel for the axe-wielding Lykourgos, however, and the one in whom the sacrificial metaphor is clearest, is Klytaimnestra, who uses the double axe against both Agamemnon and Cassandra on Athenian vases. As Zeitlin observed fifty years ago, both deaths are presented in sacrificial terms in the *Agamemnon*,⁴⁷ and Francine Viret Bernal shows that Attic painters likewise employed the sacrificial metaphor (Viret Bernal 1997). The metaphor is most developed in the Marlay Painter's image of Cassandra's death (Figure 3).⁴⁸ Here Klytaimnestra swings a large axe at Cassandra, who kneels next to an altar and gestures helplessly in supplication. The image of Cassandra taking refuge in a sanctuary is surely meant to recall her earlier violation by Ajax in the sanctuary at Troy, although it has clear sacrificial connotations as well; as Viret Bernal notes, Klytaimnestra even wears an apron of the sort that is familiar from scenes of sacrifice and butchery (Viret Bernal 1997.98). Except for Cassandra's position

43 It may be significant that in some areas, the double axe bore Dionysian connotations, on which see Georgoudi 2011. On animals sacrificed to Dionysos, see Vaello Rodríguez 2014.32–34.

44 Berlin, Antikenmuseum 3419; Van Straten 1995, pl. 113 [V148]. Copenhagen, National Museum 13.567; Van Straten 1995, pl. 114 [V120]. Aldrete 2014 examines evidence for how the axe was used in Roman animal sacrifice. Because his conclusions are based on the practicalities of slaughtering animals, it is likely that they also apply to Greek sacrificial practice.

45 Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 80265; *ARI*² 1161.1; BAD 215349. The story of Ino's attempt to have Phrixos sacrificed is recounted by Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 1.9).

46 For the iconography of Orpheus's death, see *LIMC* VII.1994.84–88, s.v. Orpheus ("La mort d' Orphée") (M.-X. Garezou). On the significance of the axe in scenes of Orpheus's murder, see Viret Bernal 1997.97.

47 Zeitlin 1965. On the controversy regarding Klytaimnestra's weapon in the *Oresteia*, see Davies 1987, Sommerstein 1989, and Prag 1991.

48 Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina 2482; *ARI*² 1280.64, 1689; BAD 216252.

next to the altar rather than on top of it, the arrangement of murderer and victim here is nearly identical to that of Lykourgos and Dryas on two of the Attic vases (Figure 1 and the privately owned column krater).

All these considerations suggest that Dryas's murder, like that of Cassandra, took part of its meaning from its relationship to more conventional animal sacrifices. Both Séchan and Sutton believe that the images depict a dramatic version of the myth in which Lykourgos was struck mad while performing a sacrifice (Séchan 1926.75, Sutton 1975.360), although Walter Burkert takes a different tack, suggesting that the sacrifice belonged to a pattern in which the king's punishment mirrored his original offense. Observing that the Homeric account has the god's nurses dropping their *thusthla* (*Il.* 6.134) and fleeing in terror when Lykourgos strikes them with his *bouplêx* (*Il.* 6.135), he reconstructs the myth in the following way: "An armed man bursts into a Dionysiac sacrifice prepared by the women who protect and care for the frenzied god. He pursues them to the sea, swinging the axe as one would to kill a cow—later versions depict him pursuing the frenzied god, himself in a frenzy, and, in this state, cutting down his own children with the axe: a victim for a victim."⁴⁹ This link between the king's crime and his punishment can help to make sense of the sacrificial character of Dryas's death, but it does not exhaust its significance.

For my purposes, what is most important about Dryas's murder is its adherence to the pattern of the corrupted sacrifice, something Zeitlin defines as "violent deeds of bloodshed [that] are portrayed not as murder but as murder in sacramental dress, that is, ritual slaughter" (Zeitlin 1965.464). Greek animal sacrifice, when performed correctly, cemented the human being's place in an ordered universe,⁵⁰ and Athenian images of animal sacrifice emphasize both the joy of the occasion and the measures

49 Burkert 1983.176–77 (with the quotation on 177). He translates *thusthla* as "sacrificial implements" and *bouplêx* as "ox-goad" or "axe," although he notes that the latter translation is disputed, and some have understood *bouplêx* to mean "whip" (177 n. 34).

50 Vernant 1991a.297–301, 1991b.280–81, Foley 1985.26–28, 38–40. Obbink notes a similar function for Dionysian ritual (1993.86). Sarah Iles Johnston 2012 argues that modern definitions of "normative" Greek animal sacrifice are too restrictive and that even rituals that appear abnormal or marginal to us could have been understood in antiquity as normal for a particular cult. While I agree with her assessment of the rituals themselves, the vase painters' representations of sacrifice are quite formulaic, so the manipulation of their conventions—such as we see in the imagery of Dryas's death—merits attention.

taken to ensure that the offering would be received favorably by the god (Peirce 1993). The positive values implied in the ritually correct sacrifice made its opposite, the corrupted sacrifice, a powerful metaphor for the dissolution of society and the disintegration of the relationship between gods and men (Zeitlin 1965.507–08, Foley 1985, Segal 1997.36–54, Bremmer 2007a.139)—and the sacrifice of a human being in place of an animal was the worst kind of corrupted sacrifice.⁵¹ Iphigeneia's death is perhaps the most famous corrupted sacrifice,⁵² although the pattern appears throughout Greek myth, and studies of tragedy, in particular, have shown that it was a motif with which the Athenians were exceedingly familiar.⁵³ As noted above, the corrupted sacrifice could also function as a metaphor for deaths that were not sacrifices in any literal sense: Cassandra's death belongs to this pattern, as does the murder of Dryas.

CORRUPTED SACRIFICE AND THE *SPARAGMOS* OF DRYAS

The two mid-century vases are remarkably similar in their presentation of Dryas's death (Figure 1 and the privately owned column krater), but the slightly later hydria in the Villa Giulia stands out for the complexity of its composition and for the specific manner in which it contextualizes the murder (Figure 2). The double axe, the sanctuary setting (indicated by a pair of statues), and the position of the god all link the scene to the sacrificial imagery discussed above, but the wildly dancing bacchantes who dominate the scene introduce a new element into our understanding of Dryas's death. Here the murder is framed by the imagery of *sparagmos*—one dancing bacchant holds the boy's head, while others carry thyrsos, swords, a hare, and even a small child. In the demeanor of the women and the general tenor of the scene, the image has its closest parallels in images of Pentheus's death (Figure 4),⁵⁴ where the Theban maenads dance ecstatically, clutching thyrsos, swords, and pieces of Pentheus's body—including, at times,

51 For Greek ideas about human sacrifice, see Henrichs 1981, 2000, Foley 1985, Loraux 1987.31–48, Hughes 1991, Vernant 1991a.295, Peirce 1993.254, Bonnechere 1994, Morris 1995.237–38, Van Straten 1995.113–14, Durand and Lissarrague 1999, O'Bryhim 2000, Bremmer 2002, 2007b, 2013, and Mylonopoulos 2013.

52 On the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, see Zeitlin 1965, Henrichs 1981.198–208, 2000 *passim*, Loraux 1987.34–47, Hughes 1991.83–85, 189–90, Durand and Lissarrague 1999.102–06, and Bremmer 2002, 2013.

53 Zeitlin 1965, Foley 1985, Segal 1997.36–54, Henrichs 2000 (with bibliography), 2004.189–91.

54 Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum; BAD 11686.

his head.⁵⁵ In those scenes, Dionysos may observe the proceedings quietly, but as on the Villa Giulia hydria, he does not participate.⁵⁶

In the case of Pentheus's death, the maenads' frenzy is a punishment from the god, and in this respect, the Theban women are similar to the Thracian king. The women on the Villa Giulia hydria are a different matter, since it is difficult to know either their precise identities or the impetus for their frenzy; comparison with other myths of Dionysian madness suggests that their behavior should be a punishment, and it has been observed that the maenad with the child suggests affinities with the myth of Minyas's daughters.⁵⁷ We know too little to speculate about what the women on the Villa Giulia hydria may have done to be driven to madness along with the king, but the larger thematic and visual parallels between the myth of Lykourgos and that of Pentheus can lead to a better understanding of the significance of *sparagmos* in the depiction of Dryas's murder.⁵⁸

Evidence for the historical practice of *sparagmos* is weak (Henrichs 1978.148, Obbink 1993.68–72), yet the ritual dismemberment of a wild animal is a recurring theme in Dionysian imagery.⁵⁹ Scholars often note that *sparagmos* was imagined as a form of inverted sacrifice: the victim was wild rather than domesticated, it was torn apart rather than being cut up systematically, and it was eaten raw rather than cooked. In the case of maenadic *sparagmos*, the killing was carried out by women rather than men in what would have been understood as a further departure from proper sacrificial practice (Foley 1985.210–11, Obbink 1993.69–70). In this respect, the *sparagmos* of Pentheus was a corruption of an already inverted sacrifice, and the sacrificial metaphor that is implicit in his manner of death is made explicit

55 Carrying the head: Berlin, Antikensammlung 1966.18; BAD 43279. Possibly also Rome, Villa Giulia 2268; BAD 13059. For the iconography of Pentheus's death, see *LIMC* VII.1994.306–17, s.v. Pentheus (J. Bažant and G. Berger-Doer); also Halm-Tisserant 2004 and Weaver 2009.17–34.

56 Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum; BAD 11686 (reverse of Figure 4). Paris, Musée du Louvre G 445; BAD 45070.

57 Kefalidou 2009.96 and Simon 2010.33. For a more general discussion of the scene within the context of representations of female bacchism, see Moraw 1998.241–42. Kefalidou sees on the Villa Giulia hydria a “fusion of figures, motifs and myths connected with Dionysiac madness” that is characteristic of late fifth-century representations of female bacchism (2009.96; cf. Griffith 1983.221 on the possibility of visual “contamination” from the Pentheus myth).

58 On these parallels, see Jeanmaire 1951.67, Sutton 1971.402–07, McGinty 1978.85–86 and passim, Coche de la Ferté 1980.176–77, Schefold 1981.181–89, and Faraone 2013.126.

59 Images of *sparagmos* are discussed in Halm-Tisserant 2004 and Weaver 2009.

in the *Bacchae*. There he is described as a sacrificial victim (*thuma*, 1246), and he is specially adorned (912–44) before being led to slaughter (1047), both treatments that were typically reserved for sacrificial animals.⁶⁰ While Pentheus's death does not offer an exact parallel for the death of Dryas—the Theban king does not share the boy's innocence, for one thing—the fact that both are portrayed as metaphorical victims of sacrifice is significant. With respect to the hydria in the Villa Giulia (Figure 2), the similarity between the two myths helps us to see that Dryas's death, like the death of Pentheus, could be represented through the conventions of *sparagmos* because *sparagmos* was also a perversion of the ritually correct sacrifice.

This understanding of *sparagmos* in the myth of Dryas can help us to make sense of an unusual scene on a hydria in London (Figure 5).⁶¹ The shoulder of this vase shows a man in Thracian dress devouring a child who hangs limply in his arms; Dionysos observes from the left, while a second man in Thracian clothing flees to the right. The scene has proven troublesome because it has no close parallel in either art or literature, and scholarship on the vase is divided over whether it shows a Titan devouring Zagreus or Lykourgos killing Dryas.⁶² In an early publication of the hydria, Cecil Smith noted the rarity of Greek myths involving cannibalism of a child, and ruling out the stories of Thyestes and Tantalos as possible subjects, he concluded that the vase had to show the death of Zagreus (Smith 1890.345). This identification continues to be repeated in spite of its obvious problems,⁶³ and if the alternate hypothesis connecting the scene to the madness of Lykourgos has not been wholeheartedly embraced, this may be because the image looks at first glance to be so different from those that show Dryas's death in a sanctuary.

60 Foley 1985.208–18, Obbink 1993.72–73, Segal 1997.36–42, and Henrichs 2000.188.

61 London, British Museum E 246; BAD 9981. The precise date of the vase is uncertain; it was originally thought to date to the beginning of the fourth century (Smith 1890.343), although more recent publications place it closer to the middle of the fifth (*LIMC* VI.1992.312, no. 15, s.v. Lykourgos I [A. Farnoux]; also Schefold 1981.87 and Tsiafakis 2000.382).

62 Zagreus: Smith 1890, BAD 9981, *CVA* London, British Museum 6 [Great Britain 8], pl. 100.2. Dryas: Raeck 1981.88, Tsiafakis 2000.381–82, Kefalidou 2009.95. Uncertain: *LIMC* VI.1992.312, no. 15, s.v. Lykourgos I (A. Farnoux); also Coche de la Ferté 1980, fig. 12 (caption), Henrichs 1981.225–26 n. 4, and Schefold 1981.87.

63 Both the Beazley Archive Database (record 9981) and the online British Museum database (http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=399142&partId=1) identify the subject as Zagreus and the Titans, although the latter notes the possibility of an alternate identification. See also Schefold 1981.87.

Yet the recognition that both types of scene draw upon the metaphor of the corrupted sacrifice would help to explain why Dryas's death could be shown as a *sparagmos* on the hydria in London even if no ancient literary version ever presented it as such. This hypothesis also accounts better for the presence and demeanor of Dionysos and for the behavior of the Thracian man on the right.⁶⁴ Although Dionysos's gesture has been interpreted as one of surprise,⁶⁵ Eurydice Kefalidou rightly recognizes that he seems completely approving of the central man's actions (Kefalidou 2009.95). In fact, men who quietly observe the violence unfolding before them are stock figures in images of erotic pursuit, where the father of the abducted girl often stands off to the side as his daughter is carried away.⁶⁶ The fleeing Thracian also has good parallels in those scenes, which frequently show the abducted girl's companions fleeing in terror. These formal parallels suggest that the central action on the London hydria is acceptable to Dionysos but horrifying to the man at the right. This scenario is incompatible with the Titans' murder of Zagreus, but it fits well with the madness of Lykourgos, whose altered state of mind would also account for the central figure's frontally turned face.⁶⁷

The graphic nature of the image on the London hydria—and to a lesser extent, the hydria in the Villa Giulia (Figure 2)—brings to the fore an aspect of Dryas's death that is implicit in the scenes that show him killed at an altar (Figure 1 and the privately owned column krater). A striking fact about the latter images is that in showing the boy killed with an axe at an altar, sometimes to musical accompaniment (Figure 1), they frame his death as an instance of *thusia*, a type of sacrifice that involved the sharing and consumption of sacrificial meat. Sarah Peirce shows that on Athenian vases, *thusia* is overwhelmingly associated with Dionysian celebration and commensality, unlike *sphagia*, which carried connotations of slaughter without consumption and which the literature and the imagery consistently associate with the battlefield.⁶⁸ Yet aside from their

64 On the problem of Dionysos's presence at the scene of Zagreus's dismemberment, see Scheffold 1981.87. Smith understands the inclusion of the adult god as an instance of prolepsis, although he admits that he is "at a loss to explain" the fleeing figure on the right (1890.347).

65 *CVA* London, British Museum 6 [Great Britain 8], pl. 100.2.

66 Several such scenes are illustrated in Kaempf-Dimitriadou 1979. For Dionysos's pose, cf. the standing man on Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 1972.850; BAD 5958.

67 For the connotations of the frontal face in vase painting, see Frontisi-Ducroux 1996.85–89.

68 Peirce 1993.251–58. On *sphagia* and the battlefield, cf. Henrichs 1981.213–19.

emphasis on the moment of killing, scenes of Dryas's death contain no hint of *sphagia*,⁶⁹ and the sanctuary setting places them squarely within the realm of *thusia*. The decision to represent human sacrifice as *thusia* was not inevitable; images of Polyxena's death, for instance, more closely follow the conventions of *sphagia*, emphasizing both the martial setting and the cutting of the throat and avoiding any reference to consumption of the victim.⁷⁰ By depicting the murder of Dryas as *thusia*, the painters have presented it as an especially gruesome form of corrupted sacrifice. The images of Dryas's death at an altar (Figure 1 and the privately owned column krater) are thus connected to scenes of his *sparagmos* (Figures 2 and 5) not only through the common theme of corrupted sacrifice, but also through the shared implication of cannibalism.

DIONYSOS AND THE THRACIAN KING

Why did the painters represent the death of Dryas in this manner, which does not simply draw upon the imagery of the corrupted sacrifice but goes so far as to introduce implications of cannibalism? Tsiafakis attributes the king's behavior to his Thracian ethnicity, noting that the Greeks understood the murder of family members to be permissible among barbarians (Eur. *Andr.* 175) and that the Thracians, in particular, had a special reputation for savagery (Tsiafakis 2000.381–82). The idea that Lykourgos's actions are a consequence of his barbarian nature gains some support from a mention in Herodotus of human sacrifice among Thracians (9.119)⁷¹ and from comparison with images of the Egyptian king Bousiris' men attempting to sacrifice Herakles. It has been observed that these scenes present the

69 The mode of killing also differs from what is standard in scenes of *sphagia*, which show the victim's throat cut by a knife (Peirce 1993.253–54). The death blow is not entirely absent from images of *thusia*, which may occasionally include it for purposes of humor (Peirce 1993.25–258), but this is unlikely to be the case with Dryas's murder. The latter finds a closer parallel in images of the attempted sacrifice of Herakles by Bousiris, another event that is presented as *thusia* with a human victim (Durand and Lissarrague 1999.85–91 and Miller 2000.425–26).

70 Polyxena's death is depicted on a black-figure "Tyrrhenian" amphora by the Timiades Painter (London, 1897.7–27.2; *ABV* 97.27, 683; *Paralipomena* 37; *Beazley Addenda*² 26; BAD 310027), and on a late Archaic sarcophagus found in a tumulus at Gümüşçay (Çanakkale, Archaeological Museum; Sevinç 1996.256–57, figs. 9–10). On the iconography of Polyxena's death, see also Peirce 1993.253–54, Durand and Lissarrague 1999.91–102, and Neer 2012.

71 For discussion, see Hartog 1988.190–91.

attempted murder as a *thusia* gone wrong—a choice that may well have been intended as a comment on the nature of the Egyptian people.⁷² It is questionable, however, whether the alterity of non-Hellenic peoples can explain every instance of barbarian misbehavior represented in vase painting. The problem is particularly acute when the subject is the mythical past, a time when distinctions the classical Greeks would observe between themselves and *barbaroi* of their own day were not a given. Thucydides, for one, imagined the past to have been a time characterized by universal barbarism (1.5–6), and studies of Greek art repeatedly show that the heroic age was envisioned as a time in which a simple dichotomy between Greek and barbarian did not always apply.⁷³ The complexity of ancient ideas about ethnicity and the past suggests that Lykourgos's connection to Thrace may not be the only or best explanation for the savage behavior illustrated on the vases.

In fact, one of Lykourgos's most notable features is his madness, which is as important as his ethnicity to our understanding of his crime.⁷⁴ His madness puts him in the company of numerous Greek heroes (Padel 1995, Kefalidou 2009), including Herakles, whose murder of his family was the subject of a play by Euripides. Significantly, that murder is framed as a sacrifice gone wrong, although in this case, the sacrifice operates on the level of narrative and not on the level of metaphor as it does with Lykourgos. The messenger reports that the hero was conducting a purificatory sacrifice when, overcome by sudden madness, he took up his weapons and killed his children and wife (*Her.* 922–1016).⁷⁵ Sutton sees enough similarities between that episode and the painters' renderings of Lykourgos's madness to hypothesize that Aeschylus's *Edonoi* included a scene in which the Thracian king was struck mad while preparing a sacrifice, and he suggests that both the images of Dryas's death and the Euripidean version of

72 Durand and Lissarrague 1999.85–91 and Miller 2000. On Greek ideas about *barbaroi* and human sacrifice, see Hartog 1988.190–91, Bonnechere 1994.237–43, O'Bryhim 2000, and Bremmer 2013.

73 See, e.g., Hall 1989.19–47, 54–55, Miller 1995, and Ferrari 2000.127–28. For discussion of the Thucydides passage, see Hall 2002.195–96. Bonnechere notes that when it came to ideas about human sacrifice, the customs of contemporary *barbaroi* were imagined to resemble the practices of an earlier age, and he lists Lykourgos as a representative of the latter (1994.237–43, with mention of Lykourgos on 241).

74 Kefalidou suggests that madness may have been correlated with ethnic or geographic otherness, but her examples seem disparate enough to resist this kind of generalization (2009.98).

75 On this episode as a corrupted sacrifice, see Foley 1985.147–204; on *Herakles* and Dionysian ritual, see Provenza 2013.

Herakles' madness were modeled on this Aeschylean prototype (Sutton 1975.359–60). Given the popularity of the sacrificial motif in the art and literature of this period, the reconstruction of a common Aeschylean model behind the vase paintings and the Euripidean play seems unnecessary. Yet the similarities Sutton observes between the two mad heroes are real, and they seem to argue against the idea that Lykourgos's savage behavior is due primarily to his ethnicity.

Images of the Ilioupersis raise comparable difficulties: these images consistently portray the Greeks as perpetrators of various atrocities, including the violation of suppliants (Morris 1995.241). It is far from clear that the Athenians saw scenes of the Trojan war as simple reflections of their own rivalry with Asia, and any attempt to equate the Greek and Trojan armies of legend with the Greek and Asian people of historical times is complicated by subtleties in Greek ideas about heroic ethnicity (Miller 1995, Ferrari 2000).⁷⁶ It is worth noting nonetheless that if we were to adopt such a strategy for interpreting the Ilioupersis scenes, it is the Greeks who would emerge as champions of atrocity and sacrilege; the condition of being foreign, especially in the heroic age, is not automatically identified with savagery.

So how should we understand Lykourgos's crime, and what role does Thrace play in this story? Parallels with the myth of Pentheus, which were noted above, suggest the outlines of an answer, and the reported pairing of these two heroes' punishments in the paintings in Dionysos's sanctuary invites us to consider them together (Paus. 1.20.3). Both heroes attempted to expel Dionysos from their cities, and both experienced punishments that were horrific enough to be expressed through the metaphor of the corrupted or inverted sacrifice. The excessive violence that is a characteristic of these and other Dionysian myths, and that is reflected in cultic epithets such as *Omestes* ("Raw-Eater") or *Agrionios* ("Savage"), prompts scholars to wonder precisely how such evidence reflects the experience of Dionysian cult. Obbink plausibly suggests that the violence in myths about Dionysos often functioned as a negative *exemplum*—myths of *sparagmos*, for example, were concerned with establishing how sacrificial ritual should not occur and not with setting down a model for the god's human worshippers. This is true of Pentheus, whose "death and prospective consumption is thus not unspeakable but clearly rejected in favor of a form of *thusia* practiced by

76 On the imagery of the Ilioupersis, see also Morris 1995 and Hedreen 2001.22–90.

the polis.”⁷⁷ Excessive violence within the Dionysian realm, in other words, seems to have been tied in many cases to the historical moment in which a culture was imagined to have advanced from a less civilized state to a more civilized one. It was not a reflection of either the culture’s typical customs or the traditional practices of Dionysian cult (Obbink 1993.74–75).

This position is consistent with Dionysos’s role as a civilizing figure. One of the paradoxes of the god is that although he is closely associated with the wild, the rustic, and the primitive, he is also credited with bestowing a variety of civilizing gifts upon human society.⁷⁸ This fundamental ambiguity enabled him to function as what Charles Segal aptly calls a “catalyst for . . . crises in the social order” (Segal 1997.55), and this is certainly one role he plays in Pentheus’s Thebes. The close structural similarities between his Theban adventure and his encounter with the Thracian king encourage an analogous understanding of the violence in the latter episode. In this reading, Lykourgos’s savagery is comprehensible as part of a class of myth that concerns the establishment of the correct procedures of Dionysian ritual. The images of Dryas’s death do not show how things were thought to be done in Thrace; rather, like scenes of Pentheus’s death, they articulate the opposite of what correctly performed Dionysian cult demanded.

Within this specific Dionysian framework, the corrupted sacrifice in the Lykourgos myth acquires a significance that goes beyond its emphasis on the terrible nature of the king’s crime. As a ritual expression of the ordered relationship between the human and divine realms, sacrifice held a prominent place in Greek discourses on the origins and development of civilization. The connection between sacrifice and human development is clearest in the Hesiodic account of Prometheus’s trick sacrifice, which resulted in the creation of the first woman (*Theog.* 535–84), but it is apparent elsewhere in Greek thought as well. The eschewal of human sacrifice was a defining feature of civilized life, and the practice of sacrificing human beings to the gods was assigned to long ago times and faraway places but not, as a general rule, to Greece in the present (Henrichs 1981, Hughes 1991, Bonnechere 1994).⁷⁹ The sacrificial imagery in the scenes

77 Obbink 1993.69–70, 74 (with quotation). Zeitlin’s argument (1990) that Thebes functions as an anti-Athens in tragedy may be relevant to this discussion, although note the comments of Blundell 1990.

78 For these various aspects of Dionysos, see Segal 1997.69–77, Isler-Kerényi 1999.44–46, and Hedreen 2009.

79 Kearns 2012 notes a similar pattern in ancient discussions of vegetarian sacrifice, which, like human sacrifice, played an important role in Greek discourses on the development of civilization.

of Lykourgos's madness is thus consistent with the theme of societal evolution that would have been an important aspect of Dionysos's arrival in Thrace.⁸⁰ In addition to underlining the horrific nature of Dryas's death, it helps to mark an important transitional moment in the imagined history of cultic practices in that region; as in Pentheus's Thebes, the establishment of Dionysian cult in Thrace is represented as having been preceded by a temporary reversion to a more savage and disordered form of ritual.

This reading of the images—which not only stresses perceived parallels between Thracian and Hellenic practices, but also understands Thrace as a region whose development was imagined to resemble, to some extent, that of Greek cities—is consistent with other evidence for contemporary Greek views of Thrace. Herodotus mentions twice that Dionysos was worshipped in this region (5.7, 7.111), and although scholars remain uncertain as to the identity of the local god the historian had in mind, the actual practices of the Thracians matter less to this discussion than do Greek perceptions of them.⁸¹ In the minds of at least some Greeks, Thrace was a region in which Dionysos received cult, and the images of Lykourgos's madness—which tend to stress the Thracian character of the king—helped to explain the circumstances of his arrival, which had involved rejection and punishment, just as they had in the Greek world.⁸²

This is not to say that Lykourgos is no different from any other hero of Greek myth, or that fifth-century stereotypes about Thracians would not have informed the Athenians' understanding of the images. While the claim that the king's savagery is primarily a reflection of his barbarian nature overstates the importance of his ethnicity,⁸³ the argument may hold true in modified form. Again a comparison with Pentheus's death is instructive. A red-figure cup by Douris shows the women of Thebes at work dismembering the young king (Figure 4), and the two maenads holding his torso wear leopard skins slung over their shoulders. The image does not show

80 A fragmentary pelike by the Pan Painter juxtaposes a Dionysian scene with one of Triptolemos's departure (Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum 81.AE.62; BAD 28880). If Robertson is correct (1986.83) that the Dionysian scene shows the god demanding a sacrifice from Ikarios, then here, too, we have an image that combines the theme of sacrifice with that of Dionysos's arrival in a new region.

81 On the importance of distinguishing "real" Thrace from "imaginary" Thrace, cf. Isler-Kerényi 1999.43. On Greeks and Thracians, see Tsiafakis 1998, 2000, Boardman 1999.229–38, Isler-Kerényi 1999.46–49, Boteva 2011, Marazov 2011, and Sears 2013. On oracles of Dionysos in Thrace, see Iliev 2013.

82 For Greek perceptions of Dionysos in Thrace, see Carpenter 1997.35–51 and Isler-Kerényi 1999.

83 For this view, see Tsiafakis 2000.381–82.

ordinary female behavior any more than scenes of Dryas's death show ordinary Thracian behavior, yet it does expose well-documented anxieties about female wildness, and the skins serve as a reminder of women's close association with the animal world.⁸⁴ In the same way, Lykourgos's Thracian costume is likely to have put Athenian viewers in mind of popular stereotypes about Thrace that would help to characterize his violent behavior even if they did not fully explain it.

If this picture of Thracian violence that emerges from scenes of Lykourgos's madness seems somewhat contradictory, it is because the Greek understanding of Thrace was not always internally consistent.⁸⁵ Thracians were, to be sure, cultural outsiders, but they were also the Greeks' closest neighbors on the mainland, and contact between the two cultures was frequent. Greek deities—including Artemis, Ares, and Hermes, in addition to Dionysos (Hdt. 5.7)—were believed to be worshipped in Thrace. As Cornelia Isler-Kerényi points out (1999.43), the alterity of the Thracians seems to have been less exaggerated than that of certain other nations with which the Greeks came into contact. As I have suggested in this paper, focusing too narrowly on this alterity in visual representations of Thracians puts us at risk of missing the more complex statements the images are making about this ethnic group.

CONCLUSION

While images of Lykourgos's madness would have evoked popular stereotypes about Thracian savagery, they do not present the king's behavior as uniquely Thracian, nor do they present his ethnicity as the primary explanation for the murder of his son. This last point is clear from the reactions of the non-Dionysian onlookers in two of the images: these figures—a mourning woman (Figure 1) and a fleeing man (Figure 5)—react in horror, suggesting that Lykourgos's murderous frenzy was no more acceptable among Thracians than it was among Greeks.⁸⁶ On the contrary, his actions

84 The links between women and animals in the Greek imagination are well known; several relevant images are illustrated in Reeder 1995.298–371.

85 Contradiction and inconsistency frequently characterize discourses about the foreign, as Said observes in his study of Orientalism (1978). For ancient examples of this phenomenon, see Hartog 1988 and Sourvinou-Inwood 2004.

86 The man in Figure 5 wears a Thracian costume; the kneeling woman in Figure 1 is thought to be Dryas's mother (Beazley 1928.45).

were as much of an aberration as those of the Theban maenads (Figure 4)—as the use of the sacrificial metaphor in each instance makes clear.

In the case of both murders, the Dionysian framework made the corrupted sacrifice particularly suitable as a metaphor, since it signaled the atavistic regression that was associated with the introduction of the god's cult; scenes of Dryas's murder (Figures 1, 2, and the privately owned column krater), moreover, employ iconography associated with *thusia*, a kind of sacrifice that in vase painting normally carried connotations of joyful Dionysian revelry (Peirce 1993). These points suggest that scenes of Lykourgos's madness were more concerned with making a statement about the nature of Dionysian worship than about the nature of Thrace. Nevertheless, these images raise some interesting points about Athenian perceptions of Thracians.

Most striking, perhaps, is their presentation of Thracians as a people whose cultural development in some ways paralleled that of the Greeks—or had at one time. It has been pointed out that the Greeks conceived of the Thracians as a culturally backwards people whose way of life resembled that of the Greeks' own ancestors (Isler-Kerényi 1999:43, 48, Tsiafakis 2000, Sears 2013), and this is certainly true. It is not, however, the stereotype that images of Dryas's death emphasize. As noted above, the Athenians seem to have understood Dionysos's arrival as a cultural turning point for any region, and myths about the introduction of his cult often foreground the cultural regression that preceded advancement (Obbink 1993:68–75). Because sacrifice occupied an important place in Greek discourses on cultural development, the manipulation of sacrificial imagery was a powerful way to make a statement about a civilization's regression or progression. The images of Dryas's death, like those of Pentheus's death, employ the metaphor of the corrupted sacrifice to show the cultural regression that was imagined to precede the establishment of the new cultic order introduced by the recently arrived god. The fact that the Thracians could be shown in such a way suggests that at the time of Dionysos's arrival, Thrace—like Thebes—was neither as savage as it once was nor as civilized as it would become. According to the vases, there was a time in the Thracian past when the process of cultural development looked much the same as it had in Greece.

The goal of this article has not been to suggest that the Greeks saw Thracians simply as northern versions of themselves or that the concept of alterity is useless for understanding images of *barbaroi*. On the contrary, this concept has long given scholars a productive framework for

approaching images. Yet it has also, arguably, obscured certain nuances of Greek ideas about foreign peoples and cultures, as I suggest for the vase paintings that depict Lykourgos's madness.⁸⁷ These images, which show Thrace in an earlier age, cannot be easily mapped onto a Hellene/barbarian dichotomy, nor is it possible to generalize from them about Athenian perceptions of Thracians, since their presentation of Lykourgos is shaped as much by his role in a certain type of Dionysian myth as by his ethnicity. The alterity of the *barbaroi* shown in Greek art has been well and thoroughly studied, and we would benefit now from greater attention to other facets of how the images present foreign peoples and places.

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87 Gruen 2011 offers a more general critique of the ways in which the concept of alterity has been employed in classical scholarship.

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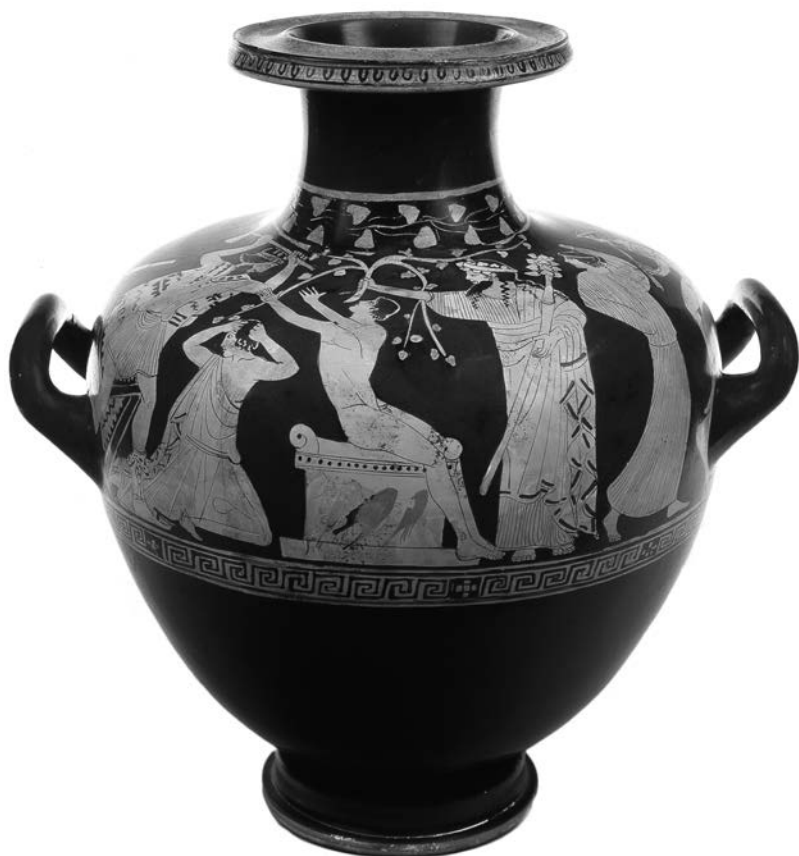


Figure 1. Lykourgos murdering Dryas. Athenian red-figure hydria. Krakow, National Museum 1225. *ARI*² 1121.17. © The Collections of the Princes Czartoryski Foundation.



Figure 2. Lykourgos murdering Dryas. Athenian red-figure hydria. Rome, Villa Giulia 55707. *ARV*² 1343. Photo © Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Etruria Meridionale.



Figure 3. Klytaimnestra murdering Cassandra. Athenian red-figure kylix tondo attributed to the Marlay Painter. Ferrara, Museo Nazionale di Spina 2482. *ARI*² 1280.64, 1689. Photo © Scala/ Art Resource, NY.



Figure 4. Death of Pentheus. Athenian red-figure kylix attributed to Douris. Fort Worth, Kimbell Art Museum. Photo © Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX/ Art Resource, NY.



Figure 5. Sparagmos of Dryas. Athenian red-figure hydria. London, British Museum E 246. Photo © Trustees of the British Museum.