



The Greek Libation Bowl as Embodied Object

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Imagine a visitor walking into a modern-day gallery of Greek vases. The inquisitive museum-goer inspects a glass case filled with painted pots displayed according to a principle chosen by the local curator – perhaps date, technique, site of origin, function or iconographic theme. The beholder's eyes fall upon a shallow bowl with a mound in the centre, such as the one seen in an example from the Yale University Art Gallery (plate 1). The artefact's accompanying label states that it is a Greek libation bowl, a *phiale*.¹ There is also an explanation: the central mound is known as an *omphalos* or a *mesomphalos* ('an *omphalos* in the middle'), and the making of liquid offerings to the gods was common in Greek and Graeco-Roman antiquity. Additionally, the visitor may be informed that the *phiale* was produced in various materials, especially metals, and that it originated in the Near East. Perhaps there is a helpful depiction of a figure holding a *phiale*, giving some idea of how this object functioned originally. Even if armed with extensive knowledge of Greek religion, the interactions of Greeks and non-Greeks or the roles of implements in ancient societies, the beholder is likely to move on quickly to more eye-catching items. Without special permission, our imaginary visitor would not be able to pick up the *phiale* and sense how it feels to the touch and how one might handle it. The ancient bowl would remain an object of contemplation, appreciated for its visual qualities and treasured for its value, antiquity and original function. Even if awe-inspiring, it would remain distant, seen from beyond the glass.

In varying degrees, glass cases, whether real or metaphorical, stand between us, as modern beholders, and objects from the past. As discussed in the introduction to this volume, the questions raised by this special issue of *Art History* on the 'embodied object' regarding the relationships between ancient artefacts and the body are generally underexplored in modern scholarship. That gap is notable with respect to one of the most pervasive religious implements of Greek antiquity, namely the *phiale*, also known by its Latin name, *patera*. This vessel served acts of piety, was dedicated as a gift to deities and was often portrayed in the hands of gods. Scholarship tends to focus on its origins, form and materials. Yet to gain a fuller understanding of its significance, especially its charge for those who commissioned, produced and offered it, one ought to go further. In particular, we might explore its instrumentality by considering its design and its handling. In other words, we should examine its relationship to the body.

Taking the experience of holding the *phiale* as its point of departure, this article examines the object's basic form and function, its unique relationship to the hand and the implications of this relationship for its active roles in ancient society. This perspective reveals how meaningful the *phiale* was, not merely a particular type of ritual

Detail of man extending a kylix (plate 12).

DOI:
10.1111/1467-8365.12383
Art History | ISSN 0141-6790
41 | 3 | June 2018 | pages 444-465

1 Attic black-figure *phiale*, 450–400 BCE. 4.8 (height) × 21.9 (diameter) cm. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery (Gift of Rebecca Darlington Stoddard, 1913.126). Photo: Yale University Art Gallery.



vessel. The Greek libation bowl gave material presence to numerous fleeting, intangible experiences. Likewise, it gave substantive form to worshippers' acts of devotion; the transformation of slaves into freedmen; anticipation of the gods' acceptance of offerings and their participation in rituals; emotions of grief; and even, in a unique case discussed here in the final section, an allusion to elusive sonic experiences.

The *Phiale*: A General Introduction from the Hand's Perspective

First, a fundamental question: How does one hold a *phiale*? Ancient images such as that of a woman approaching Athena (plate 2) together with an actual *phiale* indicate that to gain a firm grip on the bowl, one needs simply to insert the middle and/or ring finger into the hollowed back of the central mound and clasp the rim with the thumb. Fortunately, unlike the visitor in the imagined scenario with which we began, I was able to try out this procedure thanks to the generous help of Susan Matheson, curator of ancient art at the Yale University Art Gallery, and Sequoia Miller, an expert potter who was then completing a doctorate in art history and material culture (plate 3 and plate 4). Obviously, my experience in handling the *phiale* was subjective, conditioned by the facilities at Yale and fundamentally different from that of its makers and handlers in Attica of the fifth century BCE. The aim of this experiment was not to replicate ancient realities, but rather to gain a better grasp, in both senses, of the object and its unique design. Once I had picked up the vessel and held it securely in my palm, it felt surprisingly light and was easy to angle in various directions in a fluid motion (plate 5 and plate 6). Upon inserting my fingers inside the mound, I became aware of finger-shaped impressions in the clay, which the professional ceramicist proposed were the impressions of the potter's fingers. I could use these as guides for placing my own

fingers and thereby comfortably secure my grip. No foot, spout or handle directed my movement of the *phiale*; only my arm and wrist. Clasped by its internal hollow, the bowl became analogous to a glove or prosthesis.

It is worth repeating that my personal account is by no means fully compatible with ancient customs. At the same time, it focuses our discussion on key aspects of the object. First among these factors is size. The vessel's resemblance to a glove or prosthesis highlights the significance of fit.² Although I could easily hold the Yale *phiale*, which measures nearly 22 centimetres in diameter, it was slightly too large for my hand and was more comfortable for the palms of my colleagues, whose fingers are slightly longer. The basic need for a proper fit explains the relatively moderate range of sizes amongst



2 Woman holding out a *phiale* and a jug approaching Athena. Attic red-figure neck amphora, attributed to the Sabouroff Painter, c. 460–450 BCE. Height: 33.65 cm. London: British Museum (E324). Photo: © Trustees of the British Museum.

The Greek Libation Bowl as Embodied Object

3 Attic black-figure *phiale* held, and seen from the back. Photo: Jessica Smolinski.

4 Attic black-figure *phiale* held out, seen from the side. Photo: Jessica Smolinski.



the clay and metal *phialai* that have survived from antiquity and have been documented, often measuring between 9 and 20 centimetres, and mostly no more than about 25 centimetres. It also shows that the vast majority of surviving and documented bowls could have been used, at least potentially, and that the larger ones were designed with other purposes in mind.³ First-hand experience also highlights the object's weight, an inevitable product of its material(s) and size. Yale's clay *phiale* was light in my hand and could easily have been manipulated, even with liquids inside. Yet *phialai* were made from materials in varying weights, including not only clay but also metals such as bronze, silver and gold, and even gilded wood.⁴ Ornamentation could also determine the object's utility. The *phiale* at the Yale Gallery is relatively simple – its black surface and the decorative pattern around its omphalos would not be damaged by the introduction of liquids. Other clay bowls were embellished with figural decoration and slips that would not necessarily

have withstood regular usage. Presumably, metal *phiaiai* would have been highly durable, yet they are still notable for their elaborate decoration. Many exhibit intricate metal-work, as seen, for example, in a silver bowl, likely from the Greek East, that is engraved with lotus patterns along its curves and embossed with animals around the central mound, which was originally gilded (plate 7).⁵ Such a vessel, made with complex techniques and precious materials, presents quandaries about the extent of its intended use.

The ease of motion that I and my colleagues experienced in the Yale University Art Gallery when handling the *phiale* correlates with the vessel's functions, particularly its role in libations. Its unique design allows the performer of the ritual to manipulate it with ease, smoothly controlling the course and extent of the flow. The holder's complete mastery of the object is reinforced by the absence of handles, which could dictate (and even restrict) the direction of flow. In the opening to his seminal study of



5 Attic black-figure *phiale* held at a slight angle. Photo: Jessica Smolinski

6 Attic black-figure *phiale* held and tilted so that the interior is exposed. Photo: Jessica Smolinski.

7 Silver *phiale* (*omphalos* originally gilded), east Greek, late-seventh to early-sixth century BCE. Diameter: 21.92 cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Bothmer Purchase Fund, 1981.11.13). Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art.



the *phiale*, Heinz Luschey noted that the absence of handles renders it far more suitable for libations than the *kylix*, the Greek drinking cup, which is broad and normally has a foot and two handles, as depicted on the exterior of this Attic red-figure *kylix* (plate 8).⁶ Luschey also noted that when pouring out of a *kylix*, one could inadvertently wet one of the handles, a problem that is not encountered with the *phiale*.⁷ The handle-less bowl makes possible an outpour from any point.

The *phiale*'s appropriateness for ritualized pouring complements its close association with libations in Greek antiquity. The vessel is witnessed in the Hellenic world as early as the eighth century BCE, and at least from the turn of the fifth century BCE both ancient texts and material finds attest to its quintessential role for the libation, the most ubiquitous ritual in Greek antiquity.⁸ The religious act of intentionally pouring out liquids, whether water, wine, milk or honey, onto the ground, an altar or another surface was performed on numerous occasions, including at times of prayer or animal sacrifice; during visitation of the dead, as a soldier departed or returned from battle; when an oath was taken; or during the Greek banquet, the symposium. Libations, normally termed in Greek in words referring to pouring, namely *spondai* or *choai*, did not require specific apparatus and could have been performed using any implement, whether cup, goblet or jug. Still, in visual representations, as in texts, the *phiale* is the instrument most often deployed in and associated with the ritual.

In ancient literature, for example, Pindar evocatively relates how, when the Argonauts were about to set sail in search of the Golden Fleece, their captain held up a golden *phiale* and prayed to Zeus. Plato tells of the oath sworn by kings of Atlantis, who filled golden *phialai* with wine and poured libations.⁹ Correspondingly, in Greek imagery, the handle-less bowl with its distinctive mound appears most often as the instrument for ritual pouring performed by worshippers. For example, in the image on an amphora from c. 430 BCE (plate 9), a woman pours into a man's tilted *phiale* in such a way that the liquid flows from his dish down to the altar.¹⁰ Gods, too, are depicted in the act of libation: Athena is seen receiving liquid into her *phiale* which she then allows to fall to the ground (plate 10).¹¹

Although *phialai* are observed in the Greek world in the age of Homer, so in the eighth century BCE, the existence of similar vessels in the Ancient Near East led to

the oft-repeated observation, compellingly argued in Luschey's study, that the Greek *phiale* originated in cultures east of the Aegean.¹² Indeed, the libation is not uniquely Greek; it has precedents and parallels in the Ancient Near East, in various corners of the ancient Mediterranean and in the Etruscan world.¹³ An example on a neo-Assyrian relief dated to c. 645–640 BCE and originally from the north palace in Nineveh (today's Kouyunjik in northern Iraq) offers a telling comparandum to the Greek *phiale* and a Near Eastern bowl. The relief depicts King Ashurbanipal pouring a wine libation over the dead bodies of four lions that he had killed in a hunt (plate 11).¹⁴ Focusing on the question of handling, we note that the king supports the handle-less bowl in his right hand with his fingers; he does not cradle it in his palm, as a *phiale* is held. This apparently minor contrast is a useful reminder of the various types of bowls that could have been used for ritual pouring, the variations in depth and width and in modes of use among peoples and across regions. Most significantly, ritual pouring served different purposes.

The occasion portrayed in Ashurbanipal's relief is dramatically different from the context for contemporaneous Hellenic libations: on the relief we see a royal event, with the small vessel serving the king, who takes on the role of a priest.¹⁵ The accompanying inscription highlights the distinctly Assyrian nature of the event. The text opens with a declaration of Ashurbanipal's rule of the universe and continues by describing the involvement of Near Eastern divinities in his feat: Ninurta and Nergal commanded him to kill a lion with a mace; Ashur and Ninilil endowed him with supreme strength; he aimed Ishtar's terrible bow at his victims. The wine libation is merely the conclusion of a distinctly non-Greek event.¹⁶ Similar bowls may have been used across cultures and continents for similar rituals, but their significance varied according to context and norms.

8 Banqueters holding out Greek drinking cups with handles. Exterior of Attic red-figure kylix, Douris, c. 485–480 BCE. 12.6 (height) × 39.8 (diameter with handles) cm. London: British Museum (E49). Photo: © Trustees of the British Museum.



9 Man and woman making a libation at an altar. Attic red-figure amphora, attributed to the Phiale Painter (also known as the Boston Phiale Painter), c. 430 BCE. Height: 33.2 cm. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts (Gift of Mrs Henry P. Kidder, 01.16). Photo: © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Within the Greek world, the word 'phiale' referenced the vessel designated by this name in modern scholarship, namely the handle-less libation bowl with the mound in the middle. Notably, however, neither current terminology nor ancient language is always consistent. In modern scholarship, the term 'phiale' is used on occasion for a handle-less bowl without the middle mound, and in some rare cases a bowl with handles is labelled a phiale.¹⁷ The term 'phiale' is first attested in the *Iliad* in

reference to a cinerary urn or a type of pot,¹⁸ and only in post-Homeric literature is it used to designate the libation vessel. Still, overwhelming evidence suggests a general correlation between the ancient term and this particular object. Aristotle's analogies between the *phiale* and a shield, two round objects with distinctive central features, confirm the general identification of the word 'phiale' with the specific type of shallow dish found in archaeological excavations and seen in images.¹⁹

Our focus so far has been on the *phiale* as a libation vessel, yet textual and material evidence indicates that in the Greek world its function was not limited to this ritual. Indeed, the experience of handling a *phiale* confirms that it could have easily served



10 Athena and a female figure performing a libation. Attic red-figure amphora, attributed to the Achilles Painter, c. 460–450 BCE. Height: 34.6 cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art (Rogers Fund, 1912, 12.236.1). Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

II Ashurbanipal making a libation over lions. Detail of Neo-Assyrian gypsum wall relief from the north palace of Ashurbanipal, room S, Nineveh (Kouyunjik, Northern Iraq), c. 645–640 BCE. Photo: © Trustees of the British Museum.



various roles. One Athenian fourth-century BCE inscription mentions a *phiale* intended for purification rituals,²⁰ whereas ancient authors tell of occasions when the dish served for imbibing and rare depictions show a figure drinking from a *phiale*.²¹ Inscribed sanctuary inventories often list the *phiale* among their dedications,²² while countless such bowls – for example the fluted golden *phiale* dedicated by the sons of Kypselos in the last quarter of the seventh century BCE, reportedly at Olympia – have been uncovered in various shrines.²³ The ubiquity of ritual pouring in Greek antiquity helps explain these rich testimonia regarding vessels discovered in archaeological excavations, especially at sites of worship.²⁴

The Attachment to the Hand

Handling a *phiale* brings into focus its distinctive feature, namely the central mound that secures it in the hand. This element renders the vessel integral to the body. As noted, in the case of clay vessels, the potter might have left the imprint of his or her fingers within the mound. In texts from as early as the fourth century BCE, this aspect was labelled the *omphalos*

or *mesomphalos*,²⁵ the Greek word for navel, which correlates with the mound's central position and its spherical form, which recalls the oval *omphalos* of Delphi. *Omphalos*, however, also refers to the umbilical cord,²⁶ a term consonant with the mound's function in attaching the bowl to the body. Certain ancient commentaries took a light-hearted approach when writing of the *omphalos*. For instance, Athenaeus, a Greek author of the late second and early third century CE, quotes authors, primarily writers of comedy, who compared the vessel's mound to a drain-stopper, a bathhouse or a wine-strainer.²⁷ Athenaeus evokes a humorous discourse in which the spherical form proved ideal fodder for jokes, as a feature sufficiently familiar yet also sufficiently curious to prompt witty remarks.

While the *omphalos* resembles a handle because it enables a firm grip, in light of its interior location it is a *mesomphalos*, or, we may say, 'a handle from within'. This handle-like function of the *phiale*'s central mound brings to mind Georg Simmel's essay 'Der Henkel' (1911), in which the German philosopher and sociologist described what he called 'the principle of the handle' (*das Prinzip des Henkels*).²⁸ Simmel proposed that the role of the handle is 'to mediate between the work of art and the world while it remains wholly incorporated in the art form.'²⁹ This assertion echoes Simmel's earlier engagement with frames, and prefigures Jacques Derrida's 1978 deconstruction of the *parergon*.³⁰ Both philosophers focused on the intermediary character of an artefact, wholly integral and at once separate. Simmel emphasized the specific role of the handle, which he contrasted with the role of the spout: 'With the

12 Man extending a *kylix*. Interior of red-figure *kylix*, Douris, c. 485–480 BCE. 12.6 (height) × 39.8 (diameter with handles) cm. London: British Museum (E49). Photo: © Trustees of the British Museum.



handle the world approaches the vessel; with the spout the vessel reaches out into the world.³¹ This notion has a corollary in ancient language. The Greek term for handle is *ous* – literally ‘ear’ – and is found, for example, in Homer’s description of Nestor’s cup, which was said to have four handles or, literally, four ears.³² This terminology evokes the physical resemblance between an ear and a handle, but it also suggests an analogy between a body part which connects the body to the outside world through the sense of hearing, and a vessel part which connects the object to the user through the sense of touch.

Ancient imagery offers a rich range of visual reflections on handles and the handling of vessels. For instance, a cup from the early fifth century BCE presents a man holding out a *kylix* (plate 12). The man’s hand covers the entirety of the handle so that the receptacle into which wine is to be poured extends out beyond his arm. The exterior of the same cup (see plate 8) depicts reclining participants at a drinking banquet who extend their hands, holding their *kylikes*, indicating anticipation of the wine that will be poured from the attending youths’ jugs. One banqueter holds his *kylix* by the handle and the other two hold their cups by the feet. The vessels’ projecting features serve as points of contact between handlers and objects, with the receptacles themselves therefore either above or beyond the drinkers’ hands.

Such basic observations underscore the *phiale*’s lack of external features. Unlike the *kylix*, its form forces the user to cradle the *phiale* in the palm. The libation bowl held by the woman shown in plate 2 is entirely integrated into her hand. Echoing real-life experience, images present the *phiale* as part of the body, or as embodied in the sense of being in the body. Here, we might return to Simmel’s essay on the handle, in which he suggests that a tool that is external to the body is also assimilated into the body – a concept that is particularly apt for the *phiale*. Its integration into the hand is significant for its function, particularly in a social context such as the banquet. In the Greek symposium, participants held out their cups and also passed them around, in an act of sharing that reinforced the communal character of the event.³³ By contrast, when full and gripped from inside, the *phiale* could not be transferred easily from one participant to another, for the holder’s finger(s) would need to be released from within the central mound without causing spillage. Where the features of the drinking cup make it inherently social, the qualities of the *phiale* render it in the first place a personal object. When used, whether for libations or drinking, it becomes part of its handler’s body: it is embodied in the sense of being integrated in the body.

Phialai of the Gods

How does the handling of the *phiale* relate to its role as a gift to gods? Let us consider a bronze bowl uncovered on the Athenian Acropolis in the late nineteenth century.³⁴ The vessel, which has two concentric circles on the inside and a simple decorative pattern on its exterior, can be dated to c. 500–480 BCE thanks to its Greek inscription: ‘Ερμογένε[ς] ἀνέθεκεν ἀπα[ρχ]ὴν [τᾶθε]νᾶαι.’ ‘Hermogenes dedicated [this] to Athena as an *aparche* (first-fruit offering).’³⁵ Like countless similar items dedicated to the goddess in her shrine, the bowl connoted the piety and devotion of its dedicator, in this instance Hermogenes. A personal offering generally signifies the dedicator’s connection to the deity and gives material form to the devotional act of gift-giving. The choice of object to dedicate – such as an implement, a personal possession, a small figurine or a large-scale relief – is governed by factors that range from the personality of the deity and type of cult to the availability of funds.³⁶ The

nature of the item deposited, its value, form and instrumentality, however, also casts a specific light on the dedicatory act. Hermogenes' gift is indicative of his ability to offer something of material value, for it is made of highly prized bronze.³⁷ His *phiale* is not solely a commodity: as a ritual vessel 15.6 centimetres in diameter, it would have fitted easily in a hand and could have been used in the performance of libations. The placing of this object at a central sanctuary where ritual pouring took place suggests that Hermogenes himself may have held the *phiale* in his hand, poured a libation and prayed to the goddess as he made his first-fruit offering, although we cannot know if Hermogenes made libations to the goddess himself or had someone leave the item on his behalf.³⁸ This case exemplifies the broader appeal in antiquity of the *phiale* as an offering, whatever the practicalities of its deposition. The libation bowl evokes its dedicator's personal participation in ritual pouring and involvement in the making of the offering. It embodied its dedicator's physical engagement in an act of piety.

The *phiale* of Hermogenes is just one amongst numerous similar metal *phialai* that were deposited on the Acropolis, many of which have not survived, are not fully preserved or are unaccounted for, making even an approximate total number hard to calculate. Archaeological excavations in other major Greek sanctuaries have uncovered numerous libation bowls, sometimes in their hundreds, that had been deposited in antiquity. In addition to actual finds, epigraphic evidence also indicates the *phiale*'s appeal as a dedication. Inscribed for public record, inventory lists made by Athenian treasurers in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE enumerated dedications to Athena and other gods stored in the temples known today as the Parthenon and Erechtheion. Metal *phialai* appear frequently amongst the vessels listed, including hundreds of silver and gold bowls of considerable value. The number of catalogued *phialai* and the inventories' formulaic language give the impression that the objects were above all commodities, appreciated for their monetary value.³⁹ Often no indication of use or identification of dedicator(s) is noted, whereas weight and value are given as standard. The bowl appears as the equivalent of a particular weight of silver and gold or sum of money. Nevertheless, the decision to deposit a *phiale* in a holy site, rather than an object such as a wreath, armour, jewellery or coins, must not be ignored. This particular type of dedication evokes at the very least a notional participation in an act of libation. The record for a small bowl, a *phialion*, indicates that it is of less value, yet the dimensions noted are suggestive of the size of its dedicator's hand.⁴⁰ While we cannot know the details of the act of dedication, the bowl itself evokes a libation made by someone of smaller size, possibly a young adult or child.

More telling are entries that identify the dedicators. Among the twenty private offerings listed in the inventories of the Erechtheion were ten silver *phialai*, eight of which had been given by women. Some of these women are mentioned solely by their first name and others are given the name of either their husband or their father.⁴¹ While one must be cautious about drawing conclusions from such lists (especially as the evidence base is so small), we can speculate that the *phiale* was a popular private offering for women in various positions of social standing. Lysimache, mother of Telemachos, who according to the records offered the goddess a silver *phiale* decorated with a gorgon's head, may be the same person as the priestess of Athena who served the goddess for sixty-four years.⁴² The inventory brings to mind the relatively higher number of women who appear in Greek art of the Classical period holding *phialai* and performing libations than other members of society shown manipulating libation bowls.⁴³ Men, too, were dedicators of *phialai*.

Stephanos, son of Thallos, who was renowned for his wealth, offered a gold bowl that was stored in the Parthenon in the fourth century BCE.⁴⁴ On their own these records suggest the appeal of the vessel and its spread among different social strata, but its potency as gift becomes all the more apparent when the object is considered in relation to its function, implying that the devotees such *phialai* named participated directly in worship.

The libation bowl's forceful connotation of personhood is most evident in the case of *phialai* dedicated by freedmen, the *phialai exeleutherai*. Evidence from the Lycourgean period, c. 320 BCE, indicates that libation bowls were dedicated on the occasion of the manumission of slaves.⁴⁵ The libation bowl confirmed a slave's transformation from possession to freed person. This profound shift in status and identity was materially confirmed through the dedication of a type of vessel used in the performance of libations, which amongst their various ritual functions were also performed when ratifying agreements (much as legal documents today are signed in the presence of a notary).⁴⁶ The Lycourgean documents, which comprise the repetitive formulation of individual names followed by reference to a *phiale*, suggest the correlation of specific person and specific object. Each of these *phialai* connotes the attainment of autonomous personhood. For the Athenian state, such *phialai* seem also to have had a more prosaic purpose: the inventories of the Parthenon record their melting down and being turned into other metal objects.⁴⁷

There is another *phiale* mentioned in the inventories of the Athenian Acropolis worthy of attention: a gold bowl, which according to the inscribed records was held by the goddess' hand.⁴⁸ This is no inconsequential entry: it indicates that in the fourth century BCE, the statue of the goddess known as the Athena Polias, later reputed to be the holiest instantiation of Athens' patron divinity, clasped a *phiale*.⁴⁹ One cannot tell with certainty how the famed statue carried the vessel, whether by its side or extended outwards, in a gesture anticipating the reception of liquid. This text reveals, however, that Athens' most sacred object was like numerous other classical images of the gods, in which they were shown holding the same type of vessel in their hands. It invites us to consider the libation bowl's unique relation to divine bodies.⁵⁰

From the turn of the fifth century BCE onwards, and throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods, gods, goddesses and heroes were often portrayed holding out a *phiale*, or *patera*. Divinities are shown either extending the bowl as though awaiting liquid offerings, like the small Hellenistic terracotta of Aphrodite holding out her *phiale* (plate 13), or they are portrayed actively participating in the making of libations (see plate 10).⁵¹ These renderings of deities have been a subject of an animated scholarly discussion. For more than a century, authorities in classical art and archaeology and in the history of ancient religions have been contemplating the reasons for the representation of gods partaking in devotional activities.⁵² Mortals make offerings, sacrifices and libations in order to appease and thank the gods, in hope of divine good will. Why then should the gods – as the intended recipients of these rituals – engage in such religious activities themselves? Solutions for this quandary have suggested that images of gods performing libations serve as divine models for human piety; that they draw upon mythological narratives; that they encapsulate ideas about divine sufficiency; and, most recently, that they express a form of divine reflexivity. As I have argued elsewhere, no single framework can do justice to, or even give a comprehensive response to, this vast body of material.⁵³ It appears, however, that although such images are perplexing from a modern perspective, from the ancient point of view, they presented no theological

13 Terracotta figurine of Aphrodite holding a *phiale*, said to be from Taranto, third century BCE. Height: 20.3 cm. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art (Rogers Fund, 1912, 12.232.12). Photo: Metropolitan Museum of Art.



conundrum. It was perfectly normal to show and imagine gods engaged in rituals and holding out ritual implements.⁵⁴

The *phiale* recurs frequently in imagery of gods involved in rituals. In fact, the vessel is so commonly found in the hands of divinities (especially in free-standing statues and statuettes) that when a figure appears to be holding an object that is difficult to identify or has not survived, the logical assumption is that the figure held a *phiale*.⁵⁵ Paul Veyne suggested that the bowl in the hand of a deity is similar to the halo around the head of a Christian saint: both designate the figure's sanctity.⁵⁶ Indeed, the *phiale* in these instances is analogous to an attribute, suggesting a certain quality of the deity. Unlike the halo, however, a *phiale* is an implement that can be put to use. A *phiale* held by a deity evokes the receiving of liquids and even participation in ritual. Compare, for instance, the image of Athena not only holding the *phiale* but also actively partaking in a libation (see plate 10) with the image of Athena holding her armour and facing a worshipper (see plate 2). In the former, the

goddess is a recipient who is simultaneously engaged in a pious act; in the latter, the goddess cannot participate in any ritual, for her hands are full. The statuette of Aphrodite, then, suggests that the goddess is awaiting the pouring of a liquid into her vessel and that she may even partake in a libation, by letting some of the liquid trickle down. The small image alludes to the possibility of a divine engagement in the ritual.

Our observations regarding the handling of the *phiale* reveal the theological potency of this pervasive imagery. Upon securing the vessel in the palm, the handler of a *phiale* has complete control of its motion. A deity holding such a vessel may partake in the ritual, but that deity can also choose not to participate. The figure of a divinity with bowl in hand signals anticipation of an offering, but engagement in the ritual depends on the will of that god. As an attribute of the divine, the *phiale* does not merely designate sanctity, like a halo emitting light. Rather, it casts the relationship between mortals and immortals as one of interaction, albeit of an asymmetrical kind. The gods remain superior to mortals; they constantly await human acts of giving and, if they so choose, they can respond to the bringing of liquids to their vessels with participation in a divine libation.

Embodiments of the Immaterial

In Greek antiquity, libation bowls also functioned as gifts to the dead.⁵⁷ One such example is a clay *phiale* uncovered in a tomb in Athens (plate 14). The exterior's concentric sunk mouldings in alternating colours bedazzle the eye and endow this relatively humble dish with a luxurious allure. The letters ΣΟΤΑΔΕΣ ΕΠΟΙΕ, engraved on the black rim and transcribed as Σωτάδης ἐποίη[ε], assert 'Sotades made [it]'. Like 'Hermogenes' on the bowl from the Athenian Acropolis, 'Sotades' is associated with the placement of the object on which his name was engraved,

14 Exterior of Attic white-ground *phiale*, Sotades, c. 460–450 BCE. Diameter: 17 cm. London: British Museum (D8). Photo: © Trustees of the British Museum.





15 Attic white-ground phiale with cicada, Sotades, c. 460 BCE, Diameter: 16.5 cm. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts (Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 98.886). Photo: © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

that is in an Athenian tomb. Since this phiale was found together with other painted pots signed by the same maker, the tomb where it was discovered is now known as the ‘Tomb of Sotades’.⁵⁸ We cannot uncover much detail about Sotades the potter and/or Sotades the painter of pots, although he has attracted much scholarly attention. Whoever Sotades was, however, his name stands out on the surface of the vessel. Having noted the imprint of the potter’s fingers within the hollow mound of the phiale at the Yale University Art Gallery, we might hypothesize that Sotades left his personal imprint on the inside of this vessel (a possibility which I have not had occasion to put to the test). If finger marks are to be found there, then the name on the rim informs the bowl’s handlers that they might encounter Sotades’ imprint with their own fingers, hidden within. Sotades, his craftsman’s identity and the traces of his body are thus inseparable from the vessel he once made.

In light of its funerary context, the phiale is evidently an instrument for libations to the dead, for the pouring of such liquid offerings at the tomb was common practice in classical Athens.⁵⁹ Libations to the dead, or *choai*, were enacted on the Athenian stage in some of the most famous tragedies, notably the *Libation Bearers*, the second play in Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*, first performed in 458 BCE. The bringing of phialai to tombs is a subject often depicted on oil flasks, containers that served as funerary gifts.⁶⁰ Sotades’ vessel connotes a ritual of lamentation and the honouring of someone no longer alive. Measuring 17 centimetres in diameter and easily fitted within the palm, it could have been used for libations. Yet its interior is covered with a thick white slip that would not have withstood the regular introduction of liquids. It is therefore unclear whether this object was intended for actual use. Independent of any practical use, however, upon deposition in the tomb Sotades’ creation

evoked the making of a liquid offering to the dead. It thereby gave a material form to intangible emotions encapsulated in such a ritual – to loss, grief and hope for communication with the deceased.

Sotades' signature is found on another *phiale* uncovered in the same Athenian tomb and kept today in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The exterior's concentric bands in red, white and black replicate the pattern of the first *phiale*. The interior, however, holds a surprise: perched on the omphalos is a sculpted clay cicada (plate 15). Why a cicada? Herbert Hoffman noted the cicada's particular Athenian associations as a marker of autochthony and interpreted the insect as an identifier of the object's local origins, in Athens. At the same time, he took the resemblance of the vessel's overall form to metal Persian bowls to suggest that this *phiale* is a clay imitation of Near Eastern luxury items.⁶¹

Leaving aside possible Persian and Athenian overlays, another interpretative avenue opens upon a handling of the vessel and consideration of its ritual significance. Is there a link between the insect and libations to the dead? In antiquity, the cicada was distinguished by its distinctive sound.⁶² Writing in c. 700 BCE, Hesiod described the cicada's song in the *Works and Days*:⁶³

But when the artichoke flowers, and the chirping cicada sits in a tree and pours down its shrill song continually from under his wings in the season of wearisome heat, then goats are plump and wine sweetest.

Similarly, in Ps.-Hesiod's *Shield of Heracles* (395–396) the voice of the cicada 'pours forth'. 'Pour down, pour forth' – the English translation of *cheo*, the verb used in these Hesiodic passages – captures its original Greek use, for the term can describe the outpouring of sounds as well as the outpouring of liquids. The Greek word deployed for libations to the dead, *choai*, is derived from the same verb, *cheo*. When Sotades' *phiale* was held and angled, as was necessary for making a libation to the dead, the sculpted insect would be set in motion, as if enlivened. Anyone observing the handler's tilting of the bowl would thus be invited to imagine the cicada's shrill voice 'pouring forth'. That imagined sound may have held connotations particularly appropriate to the vessel's funerary context. In one of his later dialogues, from c. 370 BCE, Plato compared cicadas to the Sirens, whose music was alluring yet deadly. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates recounts that the insects originated from men who were so charmed by the Muses that they forgot to eat and drink, and therefore died. From these men came the cicadas, who, according to this tale, consumed no nourishment, yet thanks to the Muses will sing until their death.⁶⁴ The story, which belongs within its own philosophical discourse, echoes notions that tie the pleasures of music to death, as seen in the figure of the Sirens, whose seductive and dangerous songs had been recorded in Homer's *Odyssey*.⁶⁵ Depictions of Sirens are found on numerous funerary artefacts – including a *phiale* uncovered inside a tomb.⁶⁶

Like the first vessel signed by Sotades discussed above, this *phiale* with its cicada may not have been intended for practical use. Its form and site of deposition, however, are tied to funerary libations, and its emotive charge of grief and loss would have been reinforced by the sounds suggested by the sculpted insect. Taken in context, the bowl gave material form to sound, alluding to a funeral dirge, or perhaps the deadly song of a Siren. Just as the bird in the *Homeric Hymn to Pan* pours forth a tune of mourning, when cradled and gently angled the *phiale* with the cicada poured forth a sweet song of lament in the mind of the spectator.⁶⁷

The approach adopted for this article is seldom available. Rarely do we have the opportunity to hold ancient artefacts or manipulate them freely, not least because such objects are fragile and susceptible to damage. But we can learn much when we consider the interaction of object and body, in particular for artefacts such as Greek vessels, which were designed to be manipulated.⁶⁸ This approach can prove highly illuminating, and not only in the case of religious implements such as the libation bowl. When drinking cups were recognized as living instruments in the context of the Greek banquet, they could be identified as potential masks, hiding the identity of the drinker.⁶⁹ If we set the immobile museum piece in motion within its original context, new meaning emerges. Objects like the *phiale* prove to embody experiences, emotions and sensations. They may even give form to the intangible sounds of the past.

Notes

This article could not have been written without the kindness and generosity of Susan Matheson, Yale University Art Gallery, and Sequoia Miller, History of Art at Yale. Our discussions of the Greek libation bowl were eye-opening. I have also benefited from the input of colleagues and friends. I am especially grateful for the comments made by co-editors of this volume, Verity Platt and Michael Squire, and thank all those who participated when the material was first presented at Stanford in 2015: Benjamin Anderson, Francesco de Angelis, Nathan Arrington, Ruth Bielfeldt, Patrick Crowley, Jaś Elsner, Guy Hedreen, François Lissarrague, Richard Neer and Jennifer Trimble. I am also grateful to my Yale colleague Pauline LeVen for our conversations on all things cicada, and to Carolyn Laferrière for ideas about the handling of vases.

- 1 On the *phiale* in general, see Heinz Luschey, *Die Phiale*, Bleicherode am Harz, 1939; Carol Cardon, 'Two Omphalos Phialai', *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*, 6/7, 1979, 131–138; Ingrid Krauskopf, 'Phiale', *Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antiquorum (ThesCRA)*, vol. 5, Basel and Los Angeles, 2005, 196–201; Anke Schütte-Maischatz, *Die Phiale: Zur zeichenhaften Funktion eines Gefäßtyps*, Münster, 2011.
- 2 A similar observation was made by Dietrich von Bothmer and followed by Carol Cardon, although both based their observations only on imagery, rather than on first-hand experience: see Dietrich von Bothmer, 'A Gold Libation Bowl', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 21, 1962, 133, 154; Cardon, 'Two Omphalos Phialai'.
- 3 I follow here the observations of von Bothmer and Cardon referenced in n. 2.
- 4 A *phiale* made of gilded wood is documented in the inscribed records of the Erechtheion: see Diane Harris, *The Treasures of the Parthenon and Erechtheion*, Oxford, 1995, 211, no. 33.
- 5 First published in Dietrich von Bothmer, 'Notable Acquisitions 1980–1981: Greek and Roman Art', *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 38, 1981, 11.
- 6 Exterior view of a cup by Douris, c. 485–480 BCE. London, British Museum, E49
- 7 Luschey, *Die Phiale*, 7.
- 8 On libations in general, see Fritz Graf, 'Milch, Honig und Wein: Zum Verständnis der Libation im griechischen Ritual', *Perennitas: studi in onore di Angelo Brelich promossi dalla Cattedra di Religioni del mondo classico dell'Università degli Studi di Roma*, Rome, 1980, 209–221; François Lissarrague, 'Un rituel du vin: la libation', in Oswyn Murray and Manuela Tecusan, eds, *In Vino Veritas*, London, 1995, 126–144; Erika Simon, 'Libation', *ThesCRA*, vol. 3, 236–253; Milette Gaifman, *The Art of Libation in Classical Athens*, New Haven, 2018.
- 9 Pindar, *Pythian Ode* 4.191–5; Plato, *Critias* 120a. For discussion of the *phiale* in Pindar's poetry see Leslie Kurke, *UCL Housman Lecture: Pindar's Material Imaginary. Dedication and Politics and Olympian 7*, London, 2015, 16–23. For further references to *phialai* in libations, see Krauskopf, 'Phiale', 197–198.
- 10 Attic red-figure amphora, man and woman making a libation at an altar, attributed to the *Phiale Painter* (also known as the *Boston Phiale Painter*), c. 430 BCE, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 01.16.
- 11 Attic red-figure amphora, Athena and a female figure performing a libation, attributed to the *Achilles Painter*, c. 460–450 BCE, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 12.236.1.
- 12 The *phiale's* Near Eastern origins are often repeated in the literature, almost at every mention of the object no matter the context. See, for example, in addition to articles already cited here, Beth Cohen and Kenneth D. S. Lapatin, eds, *The Colors of Clay: Special Techniques in Athenian Vases*, Los Angeles, 2006, 194; Margaret Christina Miller, *Athens and Persia in the Fifth Century B.C.: A Study in Cultural Receptivity*, Cambridge and New York, 1997, 60.
- 13 Krauskopf, 'Phiale'.
- 14 Relief from the palace of Ashurbanipal, c. 645–640 BCE, British Museum, 124886.
- 15 Further on Ashurbanipal's libation and other neo-Assyrian libation scenes, see Mehmet-Ali Ataç, *The Mythology of Kingship in Neo-Assyrian Art*, Cambridge, 2010, 19–20, 90–94. Further on the significance of the libation and libation bowls in the neo-Assyrian empire, see Mattias Karlsson, *Relations of Power in Early Neo-Assyrian State Ideology*, Boston, 2016, x.
- 16 Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, London, 1861, vol. 1: plate 7, IX; Maximilian Streck, *Ashurbanipal und die letzten assyrischen Könige bis zum Untergange Niniveh's*, vol. 2, Leipzig, 1916, 306 no. Y.
- 17 See Luschey, *Die Phiale*, 163, nos. 37–9, for profiles of *phialai* without a mound, fig. 33 for a *phiale* with handles.
- 18 Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, ninth revised edition, edited by Henry Stuart Jones, s.v. *φιάλη*, Oxford, 1925–40; Homer, *Iliad* 23.243 and 23.270. Homer's description of the *phiale* is discussed at great length in Athenaeus, who cites other ancient authors. See Athenaeus, *Sophists at Dinner* 11.501a–d.
- 19 Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.4.
- 20 Harris, *Treasures*, 67 no. 6.
- 21 See e.g. Herodotus, *Histories* 9.80; Pindar, *Nemean Ode* 9. 51. For an image of a figure drinking from a *phiale* see an Attic red-figure amphora attributed to the *Telephos Painter* and dated to c. 470 BCE, showing a man with a sceptre drinking from the bowl (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, 270).
- 22 See epigraphic material assembled in Krauskopf, 'Phiale', 198–199. In addition, we might also note the so-called 'Lindian Chronicle', which was placed at the temple of Athena in Lindos: see more recently Carolyn Higbie, *The Lindian Chronicle and the Greek Creation of Their Past*, Oxford, 2003; Alain Bresson, 'Relire la chronique du temple lindien', *Topoi*, 14, 2006, 527–551; Verity Platt, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion*, Cambridge, 2011, 161–169; Kurke, *UCL Housman Lecture*, 21–33.
- 23 The golden *phiale* of the sons of Kypselos, the tyrant of Corinth in the seventh century BCE, is currently in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (inventory no. 21.1843). See the original publication, L. D. Caskey, 'A Votive Offering of the Kypselids', *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, 20: 122, 1922, 65–68. See also Luschey, *Die Phiale*, 133; L. H. Jeffrey, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, revised edition, Oxford, 1989, 131 no. 13; Antigoni Zournatzi, 'Inscribed Silver Vessels of the Odrysian Kings: Gifts, Tribute, and the Diffusion of the Forms of "Achaemenid" Metalware in Thrace', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 104: 4, 2000, 695.

- 24 In addition to discussion below of the Athenian Acropolis, see the references assembled by Ingrid Krauskopf from a wide range of sanctuaries including Delphi and Olympia (Krauskopf, 'Phiale', 198–199). Notable among these are the finds from the sanctuary of Hera at Perachora, where hundreds of *phialai* were uncovered: see Humfray Payne, T. J. Dunbabin and Alan Albert Antisdell Blakeway, *Perachora, the Sanctuaries of Hera Akraia and Limenia: Excavations of the British School of Archaeology at Athens, 1930–1933*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1940, 148–156.
- 25 The *omphaloi* of two *phialai* are among the items listed in the fourth-century BCE inventories of the Parthenon: see Harris, *Treasures*, 178 no. 352. The expression *mesomphalos* is found in writings from the late second century CE by Athenaeus, who cites the comic fourth-century BCE playwright Theopompos, who uses this expression. See Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 11.501f.
- 26 Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. *ὀμφαλός*.
- 27 11.501e–f. Generally, on Athenaeus and sympotic culture, see Christian Jacob, *The Web of Athenaeus*, trans. Arietta Papaconstantinou, Cambridge, MA, 2013; see also papers assembled in David Braund and John Wilkins, *Athenaeus and His World: Reading Greek Culture in The Roman Empire*, Exeter, 2000.
- 28 My discussion of Georg Simmel and handles owes much to conversations with Sebastian Zeidler. See Georg Simmel, 'Der Henkel', *Philosophie und Kultur* (1911), second edition, Leipzig, 1919, 116–124, and its translation: Georg Simmel, 'Two Essays', *Hudson Review*, 11, 1958, 371–385. Generally on Simmel as an intellectual, see most recently, Elizabeth S. Goodstein, *Georg Simmel and the Disciplinary Imaginary*, Stanford, 2017.
- 29 'Der Vermittler des Kunstwerkes zur Welt hin zu sein, der doch selbst in die Kunstform völlig einbezogen ist' (Simmel, 'Der Henkel', 121, with Simmel, 'Two Essays', 375–376).
- 30 See Georg Simmel, 'Der Bildrahmen – Ein ästhetischer Versuch' (1902), in Rüdiger Kramme, Angela Rammstedt and Otthein Rammstedt, eds, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen 1901–1908*, vol. 1, Frankfurt am Main, 1995, and Jacques Derrida, 'Parergon', *The Truth in Painting*, Chicago, 1987, 15–147; see further discussion in Monika Witsch, *Kultur und Bildung: Ein Beitrag für eine kulturwissenschaftliche Grundlegung von Bildung im Anschluss an Georg Simmel*, Ernst Cassirer and Richard Höningwald, Würzburg, 2008, 107–110; Eduardo De La Fuente, 'Frames, Handles and Landscapes: Georg Simmel and the Aesthetic Ecology of Things', in Thomas M. Kemple and Olli Pyyhtinen, eds, *The Anthem Companion to Georg Simmel*, London, 2016, 161–184; Michael Squire, 'Framing Bodies: Introduction', in Verity J. Platt and Michael Squire, eds, *The Frame in Classical Art: A Cultural History*, Cambridge, 2017, 256–258; and Verity J. Platt and Michael Squire, 'Framing the Visual in Greek and Roman Antiquity', in Platt and Squire, *The Frame in Classical Art*, 1–99, at 42–43.
- 31 'Mit dem Henkel reicht die Welt an das Gefäss heran, mit dem Ausguss reicht das Gefäss in die Welt hinaus', Simmel, 'Der Henkel', 121, with Simmel, 'Two Essays', 376.
- 32 Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. *ὄψς*. Homer, *Iliad* 11.632–7.
- 33 See Athenaeus, *Sophists at Dinner* 463f–464e for citations of earlier ancient accounts regarding various drinking styles among Greek city states and directions for passing around cups.
- 34 Athens, National Archaeological Museum, 7034; John Boardman et al., 'Greek Votive Objects', *ThesCRA*, vol. 1, 306 no. 159; André De Ridder, *Catalogue des bronzes trouvés sur l'Acropole*, Paris, 1896, 72–73 no. 219.
- 35 *Inscriptiones Graecae* I³ 559. The inscription was first published in A. G. Bather, 'The Bronze Fragments of the Acropolis', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 13, 1892, 126.
- 36 The bibliography on dedications is legion. For a general account, see Robert Parker, 'Dedication', *ThesCRA*, vol. 1, 269–281. See further F. T. Van Straten, 'Votives and Votaries in Greek Sanctuaries', in Jean Bingen and Albert Schachter, eds, *Le sanctuaire grec: huit exposés suivis de discussions par A. Schachter ... et al.*, Geneva, 1992, 247–284; Maria Letizia Lazzarini, *Le formule delle dediche votive nella Grecia arcaica*, Rome, 1976; Milette Gaifman, 'Visualized Rituals and Dedicatory Inscriptions on Votive Offerings to the Nymphs', *Opuscula: Annual of the Swedish Institute at Athens and Rome*, 1, 2008, 85–103; Gina Salapata, 'Greek Votive Plaques: Manufacture, Display, Disposal', *Bulletin antieke Beschaving*, 77, 2002, 19–42; Joseph W. Day, *Archaic Greek Epigram and Dedication: Representation and Reperformance*, Cambridge and New York, 2010.
- 37 Andrew Stewart, 'Why Bronze?', in Jens Daehner and Kenneth D. S. Lapatin, eds, *Power and Pathos: Bronze Sculpture of the Hellenistic World*, Los Angeles, 2015, 35–47.
- 38 On prayers and dedications see Day, *Archaic Greek Epigram and Dedication*.
- 39 Harris, *Treasures*, 177–180.
- 40 E.g. Harris, *Treasures*, 214 no. 48.
- 41 Harris, *Treasures*, 220.
- 42 Harris, *Treasures*, 171 no. 317 with 246 no. 31.
- 43 Gaifman, *Art of Libation*, esp. 111.
- 44 Harris, *Treasures*, 171 no. 319. The *phiale* weighed 198 drachmas.
- 45 David M. Lewis, 'Dedications of Phialai at Athens', *Hesperia*, 37, 1968, 368–380; Guy Labarre, 'Les métiers du textile en Grèce ancienne', *Topoi*, 1998, 791–814.
- 46 On libations marking treaties, see Simon, 'Libation', 237. See also Ernst Baltrusch, *Symmachie und Spondai: Untersuchungen zum griechischen Völkerrecht der archaischen und klassischen Zeit* (8.–5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.), Berlin, 1994, esp. 92–93.
- 47 Harris, *Treasures*, 159–160 nos. 253 and 258 (water-vessels), 168 no. 296 (jug).
- 48 Harris, *Treasures*, 209 no. 20.
- 49 On the so-called Athena Polias, see Cecil J. Herington, *Athena Parthenos and Athena Polias: A Study in the Religion of Periclean Athens*, Manchester, 1955; John H. Kroll, 'The Ancient Image of Athena Polias', *Studies in Honor of Homer Thompson*, *Hesperia Supplement*, 20, Princeton, 1982, 65–76.
- 50 On gods' bodies, see Robin Osborne, *The History Written on the Classical Greek Body*, Cambridge and New York, 2011, 185–215.
- 51 Milette Gaifman, 'Timelessness, Fluidity, and Apollo's Libation', *RES: Anthropology & Aesthetics*, 63/64, 2013, 39–52; Erika Simon, *Opfernde Götter*, Berlin, 1953; Gaifman, *Art of Libation*, 117–150.
- 52 See e.g. Kimberley C. Patton, *Religion of the Gods: Ritual, Paradox, and Reflexivity*, Oxford, 2009; Paul Veyne, 'Images de divinités tenant une phiale ou patère: la libation comme "rite de passage" et non pas offrande', *Metis*, 5, 1990, 17–29; Nikolaus Himmelmann-Wildschütz, *Zur Eigenart des klassischen Götterbildes*, Munich, 1959; Brigitte Eckstein-Wolf, 'Zur Darstellung spendender Götter', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, 5, 1952, 39–75; Adolf Furtwängler, 'Zwei Thongefässe aus Athen', *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*, 6, 1881, 106–18; Annie France Laurens, 'Intégration des dieux dans le rituel humain? L'exemple de la libation en Grèce ancienne', *Recherches et Documents du Centre Thomas More*, 48, 1985, 35–59.
- 53 Gaifman, 'Timelessness'.
- 54 For a similar position see Veyne, 'Images de divinités'.
- 55 See, for example, the so-called Piraeus Apollo, Piraeus Museum, P4645, with discussion in Carol C. Mattusch, *Greek Bronze Statuary: From the Beginnings through the Fifth Century BC*, Ithaca, NY, 1988, 75, with earlier bibliography.
- 56 Veyne, 'Images de divinités'.
- 57 See the examples of *phialai* found in hero shrines of the Peloponnese in Carla Maria Antonaccio, *An Archaeology of Ancestors: Tomb Cult and Hero Cult in Early Greece*, Lanham, 1995, esp. 149, 161.
- 58 Dyfri Williams, 'The Sotades Tomb', in Cohen and Lapatin, *The Colors of Clay*, 292–298, with further bibliography.
- 59 On libations to the dead, see for example Jean Rudhardt, *Notions fondamentales de la pensée religieuse et actes constitutifs du culte dans la Grèce classique*, Paris, 1958, 246–247; Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, second edition, Ithaca, NY, 2001, 113–115; Graf, 'Milch, Honig und Wein', 217–218; Sarah Iles Johnston, *Restless Dead: Encounters between the Living and the Dead in Ancient Greece*, Berkeley, 1999, 38–47; Gaifman, *Art of Libation*, 87–116.
- 60 Gaifman, *Art of Libation*, 87–116 with earlier bibliography.
- 61 See Herbert Hoffmann, *Sotades: Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases*, Oxford, 1997, 115–116. On cicadas and Athenian autochthony, see Malcolm Davies and Jeyarany Kathirithamby, *Greek Insects*, London, 1986, 111–133.
- 62 My discussion here owes much to the work of my colleague Pauline LeVen and to a chapter on the myth of the cicadas in her book, *The Music of Nature and the Nature of Music: Seven Readings in Greek and Roman Myths*, forthcoming.
- 63 Hesiod, *Works and Days* 582–585, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White; italics added: ἤμος δὲ σκόλομος τ' ἀνθεῖκα ἠχέτα τέττις / δεινδρέω ἐφεζόμενος λιγυρὴν καταχέυει τ' αἰδῖν / πυκνὸν ὑπὸ πτερύγων, θέρους καματώδεος ὄρη. / τῆμος πτόταται τ' αἴγες, καὶ οἶνος ἄριστος.

- 64 Plato, *Phaedrus* 258e–259e. My discussion here draws on LeVen, *Music of Nature*, chapter 2. For the classic study of Plato's cicadas see G. R. F. Ferrari, *Listening to the Cicadas: A Study of Plato's Phaedrus*, Cambridge and New York, 1987. The cicadas were also said to survive only on air or dew, see further discussion of cicadas and their various associations in Daniel S. Werner *Myth and Philosophy in Plato's Phaedrus*, Cambridge, 2012, 136, with further bibliography.
- 65 Homer, *Odyssey* 12.39–55, 167–200. For the classic discussion of Sirens in Homeric literature see Pietro Pucci *The Song of the Sirens: Essays on Homer*, Oxford, 1998, especially 1–10.
- 66 See *phiale* from Kamiros with Sirens, 500–480 BCE, London, British Museum B682 with discussion in Gaifman, *Art of Libation*, 73–74. For Sirens in funerary art, see Eva Hofstetter, *Sirenen im archaischen und klassischen Griechenland*, Würzburg, 1990, 151–186.
- 67 Homeric Hymn to Pan 18.
- 68 On the nature of Greek vessels, see the stimulating discussion in Richard T. Neer, 'Ancient Greek Vessels between Sea, Earth, and Clouds', in Claudia Brittenham, ed., *Vessels: The Object as Container*, Oxford, forthcoming.
- 69 François Lissarrague, *The Aesthetics of the Greek Banquet: Images of Wine and Ritual*, trans. Andrew Szegedy-Maszak, Princeton, 1990; Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux, *Le dieu-masque: une figure du Dionysos d'Athènes*, Paris and Rome, 1991; Richard T. Neer, *Style and Politics in Athenian Vase-Painting: The Craft of Democracy, ca. 530–460 B.C.E.*, Cambridge and New York, 2002.