

## Bupalus in Scheria: Hipponax's Odyssean Transcontextualizations

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Hipponax frequently evokes Odyssean mythology in a lowered poetic register, and at least in a few instances he also conflates Homeric and contemporary contexts.<sup>1</sup> These parodies have been amply demonstrated, but few scholars have explored the poetic implications of such parody in any detail. In part this is the result of two obvious challenges—the fragmented state of Hipponax's surviving corpus, and our inability to construct clear historical or social contexts for his poetry. Nevertheless, I believe that we can make better sense of Hipponax's engagement with the mythology of Odysseus by drawing upon modern theories of parody. From this perspective I will assemble the Hipponactean material in order to argue that such poetry expects a particularly active type of intellectual involvement on the part of his audience. I do not believe that we can nail down the specific details of that audience response (e.g. conservative aristocratic or proto-democratic revolutionary), but we can recognize that Hipponax urged his audiences towards an evaluative process of decoding his parodies that differs from what we find elsewhere in archaic poetry.

What makes Hipponax unique in this regard is the way in which he preserves recognizable narrative contours of Odyssean myths while

<sup>1</sup> Citations of Archilochus and Hipponax come from West (1989–92) unless otherwise noted. Hipponactean *testimonia* follow Degani (1991). All translations are my own.

reducing the poetic register<sup>2</sup> and inserting contemporary Ionian figures, such as Bupalus and (probably) Hipponax himself.<sup>3</sup> This strategy bears similarities to allusion, in that both expect an audience to consider two narrative contexts at once, but allusions quickly evoke, rather than replay, the modelled scene. When, for example, Vergil writes *invitus, regina, tuo de litore cessi* (*Aen.* 6.460), he is quoting Catullus' high-style rendering (*invita, o regina, tuo de vertice cessi*, 66.39) of Callimachus' similarly high register 'Lock of Berenice' (fr. 110 Pf.)<sup>4</sup> This allusion opens various interpretive avenues that allow us to see Vergil's characters differently, but we never lose sight of the centrality of Dido and Aeneas. When, however, Hipponax tells the story of Odysseus among the Phaeacians with Bupalus somehow inserted into the tale, he demands a much more thoroughgoing and protracted involvement with the model text than Vergil asks of Catullus and Callimachus.

Athenian tragedy offers a different sort type of comparison, precisely because it replays and reworks large-scale mythical narratives. Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, for example, is filled with creative innovations on the Homeric accounts of Agamemnon's disastrous homecoming, such as the tighter focus on domestic issues, the expansion of Orestes' revenge, Pylades' role in that revenge, and, perhaps above all, the decision to have Clytemnestra, rather than Aegisthus, kill the king. Yet for all the flexibility of tragic mythopoeia, it maintains both Homer's high register and the rigid separation of mythical and contemporary narratives. Even the depictions of Athens in Athenian

<sup>2</sup> The *Odyssey* is frequently considered to be in a lower register than the *Iliad*. Aristotle, for example, links both epics in terms of the model they provide for Athenian tragedy (*Poet.* 1448b38–49a1) but later describes the ending of the *Odyssey* as having a comic effect (1453a35–56). I will, nevertheless, refer to the *Odyssey* as a model of high poetry in contradistinction to choliambic *iambos*, which marks the lowest extreme of the ancient literary hierarchy.

<sup>3</sup> Hipponax refers to himself by name, as did Sappho, and this may have served as something akin to the role of Cynrus, whose name stood as the *sphragis* or seal of 'authentic' Theognidean poetry. This is not the space for a detailed discussion of the relationship between Hipponax the poet and Hipponax the character. Suffice it to say that already in antiquity, this discrepancy was understood: Aristotle points to fr. 19 and 122 of Archilochus as examples of the poet speaking through a persona (*Rhet.* 3.17.1418b28). Athenaeus claims that Anacreon pretended to be drunk in his poetry though in reality he was a moderate and sober person (10.429b). For Hipponax's speaking persona, see Carey (2003).

<sup>4</sup> Callimachus' exact words do not survive. Fantuzzi (2012) 59–62 discusses this chain of related passages, as well as Statius' similar adaptation at *Ach.* 1652–4.

tragedy (as in the *Eumenides* or Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*) present the city in highly mythologized terms. The examples of historical tragedy, such as Aeschylus' *Persians* and Phrynichus' *Sack of Miletus*, reiterate this point that mythical and contemporary narratives tend to remain separate, whereas Hipponax brings them together. If we had more of Hipponax's poetry, we might find that he sustained this low-register engagement with a model text in a manner that parallels much later examples such as the role of the *Odyssey* in Petronius' *Satyricon*.<sup>5</sup>

Hipponax's technique of combining recognizable but degraded epic markers with contemporary figures lends itself to (and could derive from) visual art, since it blends a familiar frame with a new face. Such parodies of the Mona Lisa have become so rampant as to lose nearly all effect, but other modern examples maintain their edge: Banksy adding shopping carts into Monet's *Water Lily-Pond* (1899), Norman Rockwell's substitution of Rosie the Riveter (1943) for Michelangelo's Isaiah (1509), and Greenough's 1832 statue of a shirtless George Washington modelled on Phidias' Olympian Zeus all share something of Hipponax's flair.<sup>6</sup> In Greek literature, this combination of reduced style and contemporary insertions is quite rare. We see it in the *nekyia* from the *Silloi* of Timon of Phlius (third century BCE), which records Timon's account of his own Odyssean trip to the underworld, where he met and spoke with a variety of philosophical figures, and perhaps it was also present in Cratinus' attack on Pericles in his *Dionysalexandros*.<sup>7</sup>

I will make my case for reading Hipponax in this way in six steps. First, I will assemble the evidence for Hipponax's *Odyssean* poetry. Second, although Hipponax's poetic strategy is unique, it is not wholly without precedent, and I will show that Homer's Thersites

<sup>5</sup> West (1974) 142–3 discusses the connection between Hipponax fr. 78 and Petronius 131. Miralles and Pòrtulas (1988) 71–119 expand greatly upon that topic and read *Odyssean* themes in Petronius back into Hipponax.

<sup>6</sup> Greenough's statue is clearly a parody in terms of Hutcheon's model, which rigorously avoids any necessity for an element of ridicule (1985: 49–57). The history of Greenough's statue is interesting in large part because of the split between Greenough's classicizing intent and the often embarrassed or mocking popular reception of the hybrid image.

<sup>7</sup> Clayman (2009) 117–18. Comedy and satyr drama come close to this formulation, but neither inserts contemporary figures into recognizably mythological scenarios. For the role of Pericles in Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros*, see Bakola (2010) 181–208.

may have offered a model. Yet whereas Thersites exists to be beaten down in the *Iliad*, Hipponax's reprisal of the role of Odysseus was probably part of a victorious underdog story. Third, therefore, I will show how fr. 120–1 overlay contexts in a manner that differs importantly from Homer's evocations of the arguments of the beautiful Achilles in the mouth of the ugly Thersites. These lines foster an experience of 'transcontextualization', a term which Hutcheon uses to describe the overlapping narrative contexts of a parodic image and that of its parodied model.<sup>8</sup> This overlap is typically the intentional creation of the artist, who expects the audience to recognize and decode its impact by evaluating the relationship between the parody and its model.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in the case of fr. 120–1, Hipponax's words draw attention to the differing social contexts and social registers that separate Homer's heroic domain from Hipponax's contemporary Ionian story world. Fifth, I will demonstrate that Hipponax fr. 39 uses a more allusive strategy to evoke the Homeric account of Odysseus' meeting with Circe but with an inverted discourse strategy. Sixth and finally, I will return to visual images in order to suggest that the depictions of Odysseus and Circe from the Theban Cabirium may preserve a classical era reception of Hipponax's parodic poetry. These vases, like his poetry, draw viewers into an active intellectual assessment of their artistic programmes by overlapping seemingly inharmonious contexts into a new synthetic and multilayered whole.

### 12.1. HIPPONAX'S ODYSSEAN POETRY

Homer frequently emphasizes that Odysseus is capable of more than some characters initially expect. The Trojan Antenor states this explicitly to Priam, when he contrasts the dashing but limited Menelaus with Odysseus. He says that the latter looked like an inexperienced speaker (*ἄιδρις*) and seemed 'churlish and a dolt' (*ζάκοτος, ἄφρων*), yet as soon as Odysseus began to speak, everyone marvelled

<sup>8</sup> Hutcheon (1985) 8 and then *passim*. Her emphasis on the importance of replaying artistic cues in new and different contexts, in turn, relies on Vodička (1964).

<sup>9</sup> Riffaterre (1983) 128 describes this experience as a 'dialectique mémorielle', a phrase that emphasizes the audience's active role in interpreting parody. The artist provides the transcontextual overlap, but the audience determines their own experience of that overlap.

at his words and appearance (*Il.* 3.219–24). The *Odyssey* brims over with examples of this theme—the Phaeacian Euryalus discovers that Odysseus is a far better athlete than he had surmised (8.186–98), Polyphemus underestimates Odysseus and admits that he had expected a more impressive physical specimen (9.513–16), Circe reacts with surprise when Odysseus does not succumb to her magic (10.324–35), and nearly everyone on Ithaca (except Argus and, perhaps, Penelope) is stunned when a common beggar turns out to be the king returned (e.g. Telemachus: 16.213–19; Eurycleia: 19.467–77; the suitors: 22.42–3).

Rosen has been the most thorough in showing how this pattern of underestimating Odysseus' prowess based on assumptions about his physical appearance maps neatly onto the stories about Hipponax being ridiculed for his looks by Bupalus and Athenis only to demonstrate his true mettle through his (supposedly lethal) poetic excoriations of his enemies.<sup>10</sup> We can find further hints of this connection with the Homeric Odysseus throughout Hipponax's surviving corpus, but the richest evidence comes from the fragments found in *P.Oxy.* 2174, which relate to Odysseus' visit to Scheria.<sup>11</sup> Fr. 74 preserves part of a title (surely not original to Hipponax) built from the name Odysseus. Fr. 75 mentions seaweed, an interrogation about someone's lineage and a tidbit of food, *ψωμός* (also used to describe the 'bits' of human flesh that Polyphemus gobbled, *Od.* 9.374). This basic scenario (though without any clear verbal parallel) could be connected to Arete's questions directed at Odysseus after his first meal on Scheria (*Od.* 7.230–9). Most importantly, fr. 77 contains two damaged words that are regularly reconstructed as 'Phaeacians' and 'Bupalus'. Even at this bare-bones level, these reconstructions outline an unprecedented narrative in which Hipponax expects his audience to recognize the Homeric Odysseus interacting with the Phaeacians while also juggling a role for Bupalus, a local and contemporary

<sup>10</sup> Rosen (1987) and (1990). Carey (2008) 95 builds upon the work of Rosen and others to address the impact of Hipponax's parodies of Odysseus, and he excavates two narratorial strands in Hipponax's surviving oeuvre: the more familiar *déclassé* figure and a more normative voice of traditional values, who can be heard in fr. 115, 118, 128, and perhaps 26. The most important source for Hipponax being ridiculed for his ugly appearance are: *test.* 7, 8, 9a, 9b Dg.

<sup>11</sup> As recognized by Lobel (1941) 67, who published this papyrus. For detailed discussion of this text see Alexandrou in this volume.

character (whether stock or, more probably, historical).<sup>12</sup> Whatever the exact narrative details, Hipponax surely constructed this scene in a poetic register lower than that of Homer, and these fragments therefore preserve the best evidence for the combination of a degraded Odyssean episode with contemporary intrusions.

From here it becomes impossible to reconstruct plots or poems, but we can at least gather more Odyssean material.<sup>13</sup> Hipponax frequently mentions an Arete (fr. 12, 14, 16, 17, and possibly 15), whom he presents as his love interest (and possibly as Bupalus' mother) but who also strongly recalls the Phaeacian queen of the same name. Fr. 120 and 121 draw upon Odysseus' encounter with the beggar Irus (*Od.* 18.25–31), and a series of closely related *testimonia* (T19–19b Dg) derive from a poem in which Hipponax, using an oil jar (*λήκυθος*), recoups the role of Odysseus making his amazing discus throw in response to Euryalus' taunts.<sup>14</sup> Choeroboscos (*in Heph.* 3.1, which includes fr. 182 = *test.* 21a–d) preserves an etymology for the term *iambos* that may derive from a poem that included a poetic initiation scene, in which Hipponax encounters Iambe doing laundry by the shore.<sup>15</sup> Brown compares the seaside locale as a place to do laundry with Odysseus' encounter with Nausicaa, though he does not argue for any actual narrative connection.<sup>16</sup> Yet in light of

<sup>12</sup> On this series of fragments, see Degani (1984) 189–90; Masson (1962) 143–6; Rosen (1990) 22–5; West (1974) 142–3. Rosen surmises that Odysseus serves 'as a loosely veiled stand-in for the figure of the poet' (24–5), though also admits that Odysseus could alternatively be a third-person (25 n. 43); Masson is more conservative: 'il pouvait s'agir d'Ulysse ou d'un personnage assimilé au héros' (144). Carey (2008) 92–5 discusses the importance of an ethos of localism in Hipponax's poetry, including Hipponax's use of 'exotic dialect mixture', but Carey goes on to demonstrate that this local colour is part of a carefully constructed conceit designed to be accessible to a Panhellenic audience.

<sup>13</sup> I will not discuss fr. 72 (also from *P.Oxy.* 2174), but it too preserves a snippet of an Odyssean myth: the theft of the horses of Rhesus outside Troy. Tzetzes (ad *Hom.* 190) confirms that this fragment derives from Hipponax's account of the Iliadic tale of Odysseus and Diomedes stealing the Thracian king's foals. For discussions, see Masson (1962) 141–3; Degani (1984) 262–4; Miralles and Pörtulas (1988) 37–44.

<sup>14</sup> Rosen (1990) 11–17. Homer uses *λήκυθος* only at *Od.* 6.79 and 215, which are identical lines. Interestingly, Parthenius of Nicaea preserves a tale in which Odysseus fathers (and later, in ignorance, kills) someone named Euryalus (*E.P.* 3). Sophocles' fragmentary play *Euryalus* may well have drawn upon this myth.

<sup>15</sup> As argued, independently, by Brown (1988) and Rosen (1988b).

<sup>16</sup> Brown (1988) 490. Laundry and water-gathering were two of the prime opportunities for women and girls to gather, socialize, and gossip. The connection between these Odyssean and Hipponactean scenes may be more anthropological than textual. For a much later example that also involves invective, see Theodoret *Hist. Rel.*

the circumstantial evidence of fr. 75 and 77 we may wonder (and we can do no more than wonder) if we have the remains of a poem in which an Odyssean Hipponax washes up on the shore of Scheria only to find a sharp-tongued old crone rather than a princess day-dreaming about marriage.<sup>17</sup>

I would like to stress three points in assembling these Odyssean motifs among the fragments of Hipponax. First, these passages represent our earliest evidence for a poetic travesty of specific Homeric scenes (as opposed to the more general or typological mock epic tone of *Margites* and the epic parodies scattered throughout the Archilochean corpus).<sup>18</sup> Second, Hipponax's combination of epic narrative cues with contemporary figures, especially Bupalus but probably also Hipponax himself and Arete, is also new within our extant evidence. And third, these poetic innovations must have fostered a different experience for the audience when compared to that of other archaic poetry. Specifically, such scenes create a hybrid double, a burlesque icon of Homeric material, and anticipate that the audience will evaluate the relationship between the two. This doubling can, of course, be passively accepted as entertainment (or missed altogether by audiences who do not recognize the parodied model), but an actively engaged audience will maintain a split focus between the Hipponactean performance and the Homeric model. This, in turn, will naturally lead to critical reflections on the similarities and differences between the Homeric and Hipponactean story worlds. If we had a more complete picture of Hipponax's poetry and the social context of his performances, then we would better understand what

1.4.12–20, where girls try to flirt with Jacob of Nisibis, an ascetic saint, who responds by cursing the spring to dry up and the cursing the girls to grow prematurely old.

<sup>17</sup> The fact that Odysseus becomes the narrator of his own adventures soon after meeting Nausicaa could have suggested this scene as an apt choice for a poetic initiation, especially in light of Hipponax's own role as an autodiegetic narrator in some passages.

<sup>18</sup> Archilochus clearly composed poems about Heracles, but these may well have been narrative elegies that did not deflate the mythical tale. Similarly Sappho's description of the marriage of Helen and Menelaus, Demodocus' first and third song in the *Odyssey*, and Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* all present mythical stories that preserve the high epic register. Homeric mock epics, such as the *Margites*, by contrast, reduce the tone of epic by focusing on low-register subjects, but they do not travesty specific epic narratives or characters. Hipponax fr. 102 comes from a badly damaged papyrus (*P.Oxy.* 18.2175), and it seems to describe some of Heracles' labours and may, therefore, preserve a mythological travesty similar to his Odyssean poetry. See on this Alexandrou in this volume.

Bupalus is doing in Phaeacia and who exactly the Hipponactean Arete is. But these details would not in themselves answer the most important questions about an audience's experience of Hipponax's poetry. They would, rather, provide us with a stronger foundation for seeing how Hipponax integrates Homeric points of reference into his own narratives. The actual experience of transculturalization is not determined solely by the poetic script but emerges in the exchange between the artist and the audience's response to his parodic cues.

## 12.2. THERSITES PLAYS ACHILLES

Genette has argued that because of its formulaic repetitions of epithets, speeches, and stock scenes, Homeric epic 'is constantly liable, indeed exposed, to involuntary self-parody and pastiche'.<sup>19</sup> We can see an example of this in Homer's description of Thersites, who emerges as something of a degraded version of Achilles, and thereby parallels Hipponax's interactions with Odysseus.<sup>20</sup> This issue comes into sharpest focus when we assess the impact of Thersites' two direct quotations of Achilles' words.

Thersites, ugly and contemptible to the Homeric narrator, repeats a line (2.240, quoted and discussed below), which Achilles had spoken to Thetis (1.356) and which the goddess then used in her appeal to

<sup>19</sup> Genette (1997) 15. For Genette this is largely a theoretical exposure to parody, since he earlier distances these Homeric stylistic features from parody: 'These repetitions no more deserve to be called parody than those literary diversions called *centones*' (p. 13).

<sup>20</sup> In his summary of the *Cypria*, Proclus claims that it was Achilles, not Odysseus, who stopped the Achaean stampede towards the ships (*Chr.*, p. 105.9–10 OCT). This tradition thus places Achilles and Thersites in an even closer juxtaposition, and our *Iliad* may be consciously avoiding that version of the story in order to emphasize Achilles' choice to withdraw. On the differences between the portrayals of Thersites in the *Iliad* and *Cypria*, see Rosen (2003) and Marks (2005). Scholars have long wrestled with interpretations of Thersites' role in the *Iliad*. Barker (2009) 53–61 provides both a useful re-evaluation of the most important of these theories and a compelling reading that focuses on Thersites as a character attuned to matters of dissent in the epic. Barker highlights the verbal connections between Thersites and Achilles but avoids reducing that similarity to a source of humour. Thersites' words may echo those of Achilles, but the different contexts of those words lead to importantly different poetic effects. Nagy and Rosen have both discussed this scene in terms of its connections with the poetics of archaic *iambos*, but here I am more interested in Homer's presentation of Thersites' body, his reputation in the Achaean army, and what he says before Odysseus harangues and thrashes him.

Zeus (1.507), and this repetition shows the complexity in tone and function of such moments of potential 'involuntary self-parody'. On the one hand, Thersites receives neither patronymic nor toponym; Homer gives him a withering blazon from 'pointy' head (*φοξός*, 219) to 'lame' foot (*χωλός*, 217); he is the 'ugliest' Achaean (*αἴσχιστος*, 216), the 'most hateful' to Achilles and Odysseus (*ἔχθιστος*, 220), and is 'quarrelsome' (*νεικείσκε*, 221); and though he knows a great deal, it is all jumbled (*ἀμετροεπής, ἄκοσμα, μάψ, οὐ κατὰ κόσμον*, 213–15) and used in order to get a laugh from the army (215–16). Thersites' verbal performance, to be sure, differs starkly from Achilles' similar screed against the king in that Thersites' words are generally marked by 'massive correction', which produces a pronounced slurring in his speech, depicting him as 'without *meter*', yet when he twice quotes Achilles (2.240 = 1.356; 2.242 = 1.232) his words flow as smoothly as those of the great hero.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, Thersites is known outside the *Iliad* as Diomedes' cousin and therefore not a low-status figure or a common soldier. So although Thersites is certainly presented as a low-status figure by Homer, in other traditions his arguments with the Achaean brass could amount to a form of low-register but nonetheless elite competition among social equals.<sup>22</sup>

Thersites' two direct quotations of Achilles underscore the dynamics of transcontextualization within the *Iliad*. The first presents a contrast between the speakers' personal perspectives on Agamemnon's outrageous behaviour. When Achilles complains to his mother at 1.356, he speaks bitterly about his own situation: *ἡτίμησεν· ἐλὼν γὰρ ἔχει γέρας αὐτὸς ἀπούρας*, 'he has dishonoured *me*; for he has taken *my* prize and keeps it'. The effect is similar when Thetis repeats these words to Zeus, but we need to adjust the translation: 'he [sc. Agamemnon] has dishonoured *him* [sc. Achilles]; for he has taken *his* prize and keeps it'. When we hear this line a third time at 2.240, we can retain the translation of Thetis' words, but her emotional involvement now shifts to Thersites' outrage over the implications of Agamemnon's behaviour for the whole community. A king who will do such things to Achilles will not hold back from commandeering anyone's fairly allotted share.

A similar shift underlies Thersites' second quotation. If not for Athena's forceful intervention, Agamemnon would have died soon

<sup>21</sup> Martin (1989) 112–13, with original emphasis.

<sup>22</sup> As argued by Marks (2005).

after Achilles threatened him, saying: ἦ γὰρ ἂν Ἀτρεΐδῃ νῦν ὕστατα λωβήσαιο, ‘otherwise, you’d now be committing your last outrage’ (1.232). When Thersites speaks these same words (2.242), the personal again slides into the communal. The lame and bent Thersites poses no threat to Agamemnon as an individual, but had his hectoring of the troops succeeded, the king would have been left isolated and vulnerable. As Thersites recoups Achilles’ complaints about Agamemnon’s behaviour, the shift in context from a high- to a low-register speaker alters the impact of an argument that is basically the same (i.e. Agamemnon should not have taken Achilles’ prize) by moving from concerns that are primarily elitist and individual to a broader concern for the entire army’s interests.

Opinions differ about how best to understand Thersites’ role in the *Iliad*, but two points seem relatively clear. First, Homer’s blistering description of him—in terms of his ugly appearance, his disordered knowledge, his nearly unmetrical speech and his habit of contending against the main Homeric heroes—indicates that his haranguing of Agamemnon would have been heard in a lower register than that of Achilles in Book 1. And secondly, the exact quotation of Achilles’ words at 2.240 and 242, combined with the generally similar critique of Agamemnon, casts Thersites as a degraded foil to Achilles. Homer’s characterization of Thersites as a low-register doublet of Achilles thus offers a parallel to Hipponax’s presentation of his speaking persona (or perhaps other embedded characters) as a low-register version of Odysseus.

The obvious difference between these two relationships, though, is that Hipponax presumably used his connection with Odysseus as a narrative trick to highlight his own worth (even if he presents himself as something akin to a comic hero), whereas Thersites’ aping of Achilles merely leads to the violent and appropriate suppression of an ugly and low-register figure in a high-register poetic world that valorizes beauty. The Achaean soldiers roar with approving laughter at Odysseus’ treatment of Thersites and claim that this is his greatest achievement.<sup>23</sup> To beat down Thersites in the world of the *Iliad* is a fine thing and a source of mirth. In one way Thersites (like Achilles) saves the Achaean cause, since his performance comes at a moment

<sup>23</sup> Rose (1988) 21 sees the troops’ comment as a joke on Odysseus. I find this hard to accept, but it underscores the importance of how interpretation is conditioned by the assumptions and mental frameworks each reader brings to the text.

when the troops are on the verge of giving up the war effort altogether, but unlike Achilles, Thersites does so through his own degradation and humiliation. Like Thersites, Hipponax surely drew a laugh, but unlike Thersites he comes out on top.

### 12.3. ODYSSEAN TRANSCONTEXTUALIZATION

In some poems Hipponax's persona looks quite a bit like the ugly Thersites, particularly in terms of his relationship to a higher-register heroic model, but Hipponax's interest in Odysseus probably participates in a narrative of upstart vindication.<sup>24</sup> By blurring a contemporary Ionian context with Homeric episodes, Hipponax invites his audience to experience transcontextualization in two ways. As is typical of so much archaic poetry, he uses allusions to evoke specific Homeric scenes. And these allusions, couched as they are in Hipponax's low style, offer the basic infrastructure of parody, namely 'imitation with ironic distance'.<sup>25</sup> What is far less common is the intrusion of contemporary figures whose presence brings together the typically discrete worlds of myth and quotidian realism. The direct and explicit confrontation of these two realms simultaneously highlights the fact that they are typically separated in poetry (far less so in cult) and anticipates the audience's active evaluation of this unusual coming together. So just as we can assess the similar arguments of Achilles and Thersites in terms of their differing voices and contexts, so too can we attempt to understand certain Hipponactean fragments in terms of the overlapping Ionian and Homeric contexts.

An example of such transcontextualization appears in fr. 120 and 121 (both in iambic tetrameters and perhaps part of the same poem), which Rosen has shown to be modelled upon Odysseus' fight with Irus in *Odyssey* 18:<sup>26</sup>

λάβετέ μεο ταϊμάτια, κόψω Βουπάλου τὸν ὀφθαλμόν.

Hold my cloak. I'm gonna punch Bupalus in the eye.  
(fr. 120)

<sup>24</sup> What Rotstein (2010) 12–13 calls the 'iambic script'.

<sup>25</sup> Hutcheon (1985) 8 and 36. <sup>26</sup> Rosen (1990) 15–17.

ἀμφιδέξιος γάρ εἰμι κοῦκ ἀρματάνω κόπτων.

'Cause I'm ambidextrous and I don't miss when I swing.

(fr. 121)

The act of undressing in fr. 120 recalls the parallel Homeric moment when the disguised Odysseus reveals to the suitors that his body is more fit and muscular than what they had expected in light of his shabby outward appearance (18.66–74). And the combination of the words ἀμφιδέξιος and κόπτων in fr. 121 approximates Irus' threat about κόπτων ἀμφοτέρῃσι, 'swinging with both fists' (18.28). Irus' next words, χαμαὶ δέ κε πάντας ὀδόντας γναθμῶν ἐξέλαιμι, 'I'll knock all your teeth out of your jaw and onto the ground' (28–9) sound a good bit like fr. 73.4–5... [οἱ δέ μ<εο ὀ>δόντες / ἐν ταῖς γ[νάθοισι πάντες <ἐκ>κεκιν<έα>ται, 'all the teeth in my jaw have been knocked out', though these lines are fraught with problems.<sup>27</sup> By modelling these brawling scenes on Homer's description of Odysseus' fight with Irus, Hipponax invites us to contrast the narrative contexts.

Because we, Homer's audience, know all along that this mendicant is really Odysseus, the drama surrounding that fight emerges more from his efforts to maintain his disguise than from any inkling that Irus might stand a chance. Odysseus is proud enough to want to win the fight, but his real challenge is to do so without giving away his identity. He must exercise carefully calculated restraint, and we, the external audience, accordingly experience a different rush of excitement than do the suitors, who presume that they are going to witness a real, scrappy fight with an uncertain outcome. Odysseus tries to give the suitors a realistic show (i.e. sub-heroic, real-world), and this attention to the façade of realism reiterates that we are in a heroic world where beggars may turn out to be godlike kings in disguise.

Although much of the Hipponactean material lies below the horizon, we can strongly suspect that Hipponax counters Homer's heroic idealism with a brand of gritty realism. In the surviving fragments of his poetry we find no hint of magical transformations, powerful talismans or divine interventions. Instead we encounter medical

<sup>27</sup> Masson (1962) follows West (1989–92) in printing these words as part of fr. 73. Degani (1991) lists these lines separately as fr. 132, but he places daggers around the entire line. Yet if Hipponax did compose a verse about all of someone's teeth being knocked from the jaw (regardless of the other textual problems), then he probably was drawing upon Irus' threat.

therapies (fr. 58, 59, 78, 92, 105), poor substitutes (oil flask for a discus, T19 Degani; drinking from a pail in lieu of a cup, fr. 13; a bush instead of a broom, fr. 79), and complaints that the gods do not interact in the human world (fr. 32, 34, 36, 38). Although our evidence is terribly limited, it seems reasonable to conclude that the brawl(s) that Hipponax stages in fr. 120–1 played out as realistic fights. Such realism appears throughout the fragments of the archaic iambists, but rarely is this generic trait combined with such specific Homeric allusions. For example, Archilochus' comparison of the two types of military leaders in fr. 114 and the seduction narrative of the Cologne epode (fr. 196a) both clearly evoke Homeric epic, but they do not point towards specific scenes, as do various Hipponactean lines. None of this iambic realism, however, amounts to historical reality. Hipponactean realism is as much a poetic strategy as is Homer's typical idealism, but it spurs reflection on the differences between the two poetic worlds.<sup>28</sup> We can only guess whether his audience heard a critique of Homeric heroism or a derisive commentary on the grubby alleyways of Ephesus and Clazomenae or something else altogether, but Hipponax's juxtaposition of these two story worlds clearly presents the raw material (two points of reference with marked similarities but important differences) for making an inductive leap of some sort.<sup>29</sup>

Fr. 121 may encode a tiny hint that this theory fits with the ancient reception of Hipponax. Although this fragment pairs neatly with fr. 120 in its gritty realism, its first word, ἀμφιδέξιος, is rather unusual and not Homeric. Clearly Hipponax intends this word to mean 'ambidextrous' (as does Aristotle, *EN* 1134b34), but the word appears with a different meaning in a passage of Athenaeus that also involves Hipponax (15.697f–99c).<sup>30</sup> Amidst a rebarbative exchange between Ulpian and Cynulcus, two of Athenaeus' dinner guests, we get a spare

<sup>28</sup> Conner (1987) 17 famously described Thucydidean objectivity as 'a technique rather than a goal', and I am suggesting that Hipponax's realism functions in a similar manner. Carey (2008) 91 calls this Hipponax's 'illusion of transparency'. Such a theory brings Hipponax close to modern accounts of artistic neo-realism, though that term often encodes a liberal social agenda that we cannot definitively find in his poetry (though it certainly *may* be there).

<sup>29</sup> Hutcheon (1985) 8 describes such an artistic effect as 'a stylistic confrontation, a modern recoding which establishes difference at the heart of similarity'.

<sup>30</sup> Degani (1991), *s.v.*, provides many interesting parallel uses of ἀμφιδέξιος, but he does not include this example.

outline of a literary history of parody.<sup>31</sup> Much of this sequence consists of a citation of Polemon Periegetes (second century BCE, fr. 45 Preller), in which we hear that Euboeus of Paros (mid-fourth century and famous for having abused, *λοιδορησάμενος*, the Athenians in his verse) and Boeotus of Syracuse (fourth/third century) both became well known as parodists *διὰ τὸ παίζειν ἀμφιδέξιως*, ‘for playing with double meanings’. Polemon claims that these artists were more skilled at parody than their predecessors, and he then points to Hipponax as the first example of this style of poetry and provides the hexametric fr. 128 as an example.

It may not be a coincidence that Polemon uses the adverbial form of *ἀμφιδέξιως*, the adjectival form of which is first attested in Hipponax fr. 121, as a term of literary criticism to characterize two classical era poets who build upon the legacy of Hipponactean parody. Might Polemon have read Hipponax’s use of *ἀμφιδέξιως* metapoetically? The proximity of Polemon’s assessment of the later parodists and his reference to Hipponax encourage us to explore what such a reading might produce. If Euboeus and Boeotus became famous for playing ‘ambidextrously’ with their words, then Hipponax might be claiming more than a pugilistic facility with both fists. We have little to go on here, since the fragment is preserved in Erotian’s *Lexicon on Hippocrates* (α 31, p. 15.8 Nachmanson) in an explanation of how Hippocrates used the word *ἀμφιδέξιως* (‘having the same capabilities on both sides of the body’). Yet we can at least conjecture that Hipponax (or later readers, such as Polemon) understood this word to encode a message about multiple skill sets (e.g. not just physical dexterity but also poetic facility) or systems of meaning (e.g. external ugliness contrasted with more than expected salt.) In light of what I have argued above regarding fr. 120 and the blurring of the Homeric and sixth-century Ionian poetic worlds, the use of *ἀμφιδέξιως* in fr. 121 could even serve as a signpost of a transcontextualization that allows Hipponactean blows to land with obviously Odyssean impact.<sup>32</sup>

As the Homeric Odysseus frets about how to win his fight without killing Irus and thereby ruining his disguise, we experience a form of

<sup>31</sup> Ancient discussions of parody reveal a more restricted notion of this (strictly) poetic phenomenon. Householder (1944) 3 defines ancient parody as ‘a narrative poem of moderate length, in epic meter, using epic vocabulary, and treating a light, satirical, or mock-heroic subject’. For a quick and useful overview of early Greek parody, see Olson and Sens (1999) 5–12.

<sup>32</sup> For Hipponactean puns and word games, see: fr. 2, 2a, 47.2, 50.2, and 70.

realism (Odysseus' efforts to stage a 'normal' fight) that dips below the norms of the heroic world we are in (Odysseus would, in other circumstances, simply obliterate Irus). By contrast, when Hipponactean realism engages with Homeric contexts via allusions and characterizations we experience a form of cognitive dissonance that encourages evaluative reflection on the relationship between these two worlds. Hipponactean realism is no less artful than Homer's heroic ethos, but the contrast between the two is powerfully manipulated by Hipponax's frequent returns to Odyssean mythology.

Hipponax's strategy of blending Homeric and Ionian, high and low contexts is unusual, but we can find something similar in Sappho. She and Hipponax have little in common in terms of poetic form or style, yet their relationship to Homer brings them together as do their shared habit of referring to themselves by name in the third person.<sup>33</sup> Winkler's reading of Sappho in terms of double consciousness or 'a kind of cultural bi-lingualism', amounts to a type of gendered transcontextualization, and his approach, when shifted to account for poetic register, offers schematically similar insights into Hipponax.<sup>34</sup> Most importantly for my argument, Hipponax follows Sappho in framing his poetry in terms of something other than elite male norms and thus, as in the case of Sappho, subsumes Homer into a different contextual paradigm. But whereas Sappho preserves Homer's high register, Hipponax does the opposite.

Yet Hipponax formulates a stronger textual relationship with Homer than does most of Sappho's poetry. His persona probably plays the part of Odysseus throwing an oil flask (rather than a discus), and that same figure may woo Arete or scramble ashore only to find Iambe instead of Nausicaa. His use of Homer is more obvious than Sappho's (relying largely on the strength of the reconstructions outlined above), and the shifts are less subtle and more jarring. The experience of transcontextuality highlights the social distance between the high-status Odysseus, who sometimes *appears* to be in dire straits, and Hipponax's frequently sordid persona and the cultural distance between Homer's Scheria and Hipponax's Ionia.

<sup>33</sup> Carey (2008) 102 likens Hipponax to Sappho in terms of the poet's creation of a series of episodes that constitute an 'unordered but coherent oral corpus'; he suggests that 'Sappho is at least as effective as Hipponax in creating an enclosed and internally coherent world of experience.'

<sup>34</sup> Winkler (1990) 162.

Many details of Hipponax's back-alley world must have been familiar to his Ionian audiences, but that does not mean that such listeners saw, recognized, or experienced the plight of commoners with any sympathy. Hipponax's Phaeacian poetry brings a poetic version of squalid reality into the forefront of elite poetic discourse, and it is tempting to read this agenda as part of a new social movement. The rise of the polis and the widening franchise of the late archaic world may have made the Homeric ethos seem like an increasingly and narrowly aristocratic fantasy. Hipponax's presentation of Odyssean scenes could have served as a populist corrective.<sup>35</sup> Yet the gulf between Homeric privilege and Hipponactean grit could also have led to humour that further entrenched (rather than destabilized) such status hierarchies. But even if the latter model comes closer to historical reality than the more attractive idea of Hipponax as a social firebrand, the friction between the Hipponactean and Homeric versions of Odysseus' mythology required his audiences to navigate the transcontextual potential for abstract reflection on the stability of personal identities and the social realities of the contemporary Ionian world.

#### 12.4. HIPPONAX AND CIRCE'S *KYKE'ΩN*

In the previous sections I focused on the most overt of Hipponax's Odyssean transcontextualizations, such as putting Bupalus and the Phaeacians together in a poem with a title (surely not original) built from Odysseus' name (fr. 74–7) or his Arete, who is both a contemporary character (whether or not she is Bupalus' mother) and the Phaeacian queen. Such cases would invite an audience to participate in managing the overlapping narrative contexts. In this section I turn

<sup>35</sup> Morris (1996) 35 counts Hipponax among his 'middling' poets, suggesting that 'perhaps the most effective attack on elite pretensions came from Hipponax, who abused the delicacy, eroticism, and Orientalism that Sappho and others saw as sources of social power'. This may be correct, but Morris's own articulation of the 'middling tradition' centres on the idealization of the *metrios*, the adult male member of a civic community who is neither rich nor poor (pp. 28–31). Many of Hipponax's characters wallow in such squalor that they could serve as targets for the scorn and derision of either blue-blooded aristocrats or middling proto-democrats. Carey (2008) 96 calls this a 'caricature of poverty'. Degani (1984) 119–59 presents a valuable survey of modern perspectives on Hipponax.

to fr. 39, which shows a weaker, more allusive relationship to the *Odyssey* (though if we had more of the original poem we might find a more explicit scenario). Here we are dealing with a set of allusions rather than the replaying of a specific plot (the Scherian episode, brawling beggars) or reviving a Homeric character (Hipponax's Arete). Yet in conjunction with these more explicit engagements with *Odyssean* mythology in other poems, we may suspect that fr. 39 fostered a similar transcontextual experience. My discussion of this fragment will also lead to a concluding point about a potential ancient reception of this moment in the sanctuary of the Cabiri near Thebes.

Hipponax fr. 39 presents a dense allusive network that points towards various Homeric scenes. In these lines a speaker desperately begs for some barley with which to make a *κυκεών* as a remedy (*φάρμακον*) for *πονηρίη*, 'suffering' or more general 'wretchedness'.<sup>36</sup>

κακοῖσι δώσω τὴν πολύστονον ψυχὴν,  
ἦν μὴ ἀποπέμψῃς ὡς τάχιστα μοι κριθέων  
μέδιμνον, ὡς ἂν ἀλφίτων ποιήσωμαι  
κυκεῶνα πίνειν φάρμακον πονηρίης.

I'll hand over my long-suffering soul to anguish,  
unless you send me—fast as you can—  
a bunch of barley, so I can make from the groats  
a *kykeon* to drink as a remedy for my wretchedness.

With its combination of barley (*ἄλφιτα*), *φάρμακα*, and a *κυκεών*, this fragment recalls the scene in which Circe mixes potions for *Odysseus'* men and *Hermes'* subsequent warning to *Odysseus* about the *κυκεών* she will give him (*Od.* 10.234–6 and 290):

ἐν δέ σφιν τυρόν τε καὶ ἄλφιτα καὶ μέλι χλωρόν  
οἴνω Πραμνείῳ ἐκύκα: ἀνέμωγε δὲ σίτω  
φάρμακα λύγρ', ἵνα πάγχυ λαθοῖατο πατρίδος αἴης

and for them she concocted cheese, barley and pale honey  
with Pramnian wine. And she mixed into the grains  
powerful drugs, so that they would completely forget their fatherland.

τεύξει τοι κυκεῶ, βαλέει δ' ἐν φάρμακα σίτω.

She will make a concoction for you, and she'll toss drugs into the grains.

<sup>36</sup> Tzetzes preserves these lines in the same passage of his *On Metre* that contains fr. 22, 25, 30, 40, and 42. All of these fragments are in comparatively clean shape, but because Tzetzes selected them for metrical reasons, we have no wider narrative context. Rosen (1987) discusses fr. 39 in detail.

Rosen concludes that fr. 39 ‘easily calls to mind’ the Homeric passages involving a *κυκεών*, particularly these featuring Circe.<sup>37</sup> Yet Hipponax builds his lexical cues into a discourse context that differs radically from the Homeric scene. Most obviously, Circe offers a *κυκεών* intended to harm, whereas Hipponax’s speaker begs for a key ingredient in order to make a *κυκεών* for himself and thereby escape (rather than descend into) his *πονηρίη*, ‘wretchedness’, a condition that probably encompasses poverty, hunger, and sickness.<sup>38</sup> Whoever Hipponax’s two characters in fr. 39 may be (and the addressee may be a deity), they shade into a reconfigured conversation between Odysseus and Circe.

Further verbal echoes in Hermes’ words to Odysseus amplify this effect. The god says that he will save Odysseus from an evil end (*σε κακῶν ἐκλύσομαι ἢ δὲ σαώσω*, 286; cf. *κακοῖσι*, Hipp. fr. 39.1) by giving (*δώσω*, 292; cf. *δώσω*, Hipp. fr. 39.1) the hero a *φάρμακον* (287, 292; cf. *φάρμακον*, Hipp. fr. 39.4). The talismanic *moly* will ward off an ‘evil day’ (*κακὸν ἡμᾶρ*, 288), and Odysseus will be able to extort an oath from Circe that she will not do him harm (*κακόν*, 300 and 301). So whereas Hermes can deliver Odysseus from maltreatment associated with Circe’s *κυκεών* laced with *φάρμακα*, Hipponax’s speaker can only manage to deliver his own soul to suicide unless he can persuade his interlocutor to provide the ingredients for a *κυκεών* that will be an ameliorative *φάρμακον* for his wretched state. The Homeric Odysseus, as is fitting for a hero in an epic world, both confronts supernatural challenges and receives divine aid, whereas the Hipponactean speaker is provided with nothing (at least at this point in the narrative) and is in control of nothing more than the choice to end his life.

Two more potential connections deserve mention. First, Hermes warns Odysseus about how Circe will strike him with her *ράβδος*

<sup>37</sup> Rosen (1987) 423. From here, Rosen turns to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and its combination of hunger, invective, and a *κυκεών* in an Eleusinian ritual context. His thesis is convincing, but the Odyssean allusions hold further interpretive possibilities.

<sup>38</sup> In Homer a *κυκεών* is always prepared by someone other than the person who consumes it. In addition to the passage cited above, Circe prepares a *κυκεών* for Odysseus at 10.316; at *Iliad* 11.624 (expanded with the verb *κύκησε* at 638–41) Hecamede prepares a *κυκεών* for Nestor and his companion; and in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* the goddess refuses Metaneira’s initial offer of a cup of wine and instructs her to mix a *κυκεών* instead (208–11). The speaker in fr. 39, therefore, may be planning to do something unusual or inappropriate in mixing his own drink.

immediately after he has drunk her *κυκεών* (10.293, cf. 238, 319). Fr. 39 does not mention such a 'wand' (though it could have played a part in the complete poem of which we now have only these lines), but in fr. 79 Hipponax does combine a reference to someone's 'gold-gleaming staff' (*χρυσολαμπέτωι ῥάβδωι*, 7), followed two lines later by Hermes leading someone into Hipponax's house (9), and in three other fragments (6.1, 10.2, and 40.3) he uses a form of the verb *ῥαπίζεσθαι*, 'to be beaten with a ῥάβδος', in references to the *pharmakos* ritual.<sup>39</sup> If fr. 39 does evoke the scene of Circe offering a *κυκεών* to Odysseus, then the role of the ῥάβδος in this same Homeric passage might have held particular significance for Hipponax's audience.<sup>40</sup> If so, the heroic elevation of Homer's scene would again find a pedestrian complement in the evocation of an Ionian ritual.

Secondly, Hipponax's speaker in fr. 39 claims to have a *πολύστονος* spirit. This word is never used in Homer to describe a person's condition except when the disguised Odysseus claims to be *πολύστονος* and asks Penelope to forego asking about his identity (19.118).<sup>41</sup> The possibility of a connection with Hipponax's use of the same word is thin, but a few bits of support suggest that anyone who did associate the two passages would find interesting resonances. As Penelope interrogates Odysseus we again have a contrast between the hero's simulated beggary and the realistic degradation of Hipponax's speaker. And as with the contrast between Circe's unprompted offer of a *κυκεών* to Odysseus and the Hipponactean speaker's plea for an ingredient in a *κυκεών*, we again find a reversal of discourse strategies. Outside the world of Homeric poetry few beggars are likely to have enjoyed such earnest attention from a

<sup>39</sup> West (1974) 143–4 suspects that the staff in fr. 79 does not belong to Hermes, despite the epithet, and suggests that it might be Cicon's.

<sup>40</sup> Not long after Hipponax's career, his fellow Ephesian Heraclitus would say that Homer and Archilochus ought to be driven from the contests and flogged (*ῥαπίζεσθαι*, fr. 42 DK). Rotstein (2010) 257 suggests that Heraclitus might be alluding either to Hipponax or to an Ephesian scapegoat ritual known to both authors.

<sup>41</sup> At *Iliad* 1.445 Odysseus speaks to Chryses about the *πολύστονα κήδεα*, 'grievous sufferings' sent by Apollo; at 11.73 Eris is described as *πολύστονος*, but this means that the goddess *causes* much grief (a situation that actually makes her happy as she looks upon the battle); and at 15.451 Teucer shoots a *πολύστονος* arrow into the neck of Cleitus, and again the adjective means 'causing much suffering' rather than 'having experienced much suffering'. In *Odyssey* 19, we know that Odysseus will soon cause a great deal of suffering, but this is not the primary meaning in his response to Penelope (unless it is a carefully coded signal).

queen as Odysseus experiences at this point, and he asks Penelope to stop her inquiry. In fr. 39, however, the speaker must plead for material help and hope to receive assistance. Homer's simulated beggar enjoys the focalizing treatment of a hero, whereas Hipponax's indigent speaker struggles to get his interlocutor to hear his words. And finally, just prior to describing himself as *πολύστονος* Odysseus had praised Penelope and compared her sterling reputation to that of a blameless king, under whose rule 'the dark earth bears wheat and barley' (*κριθή*, 19.111–12; cf. *κριθέων*, fr. 39.2). So Odysseus, in the guise of a destitute beggar, mentions the material wealth that he should (and will soon again) control. He pretends to be helpless, though we know that the barley of Ithaca is rightly his, whereas the speaker of fr. 39 shows no sign of fabricating the wretchedness that has driven him to beg for a bit of grain.

#### 12.5. HIPPONAX AND THE THEBAN CABIRI

By way of conclusion, I would like to turn to a set of evidence that may incorporate an early reception of Hipponax's Odyssean mythology, namely the black-figure vases that depict the confrontation between Odysseus and Circe found in the Theban sanctuary of the Cabiri. At this site a distinctively low and parodic style of vase painting developed by the middle of the fifth century at the latest, and since a scholiast to Apollonius of Rhodes (1.917) notes that Odysseus had been initiated into the Samothracian Cabiric mysteries, the ritual and personal connection with Odysseus may have been particularly apt.<sup>42</sup> As parodic art, however, these vases must have produced something similar to the transcontextualizing effect of Hipponax's Odyssean poetry. The experience of double vision,

<sup>42</sup> Of the roughly twenty-six vases that depict recognizable mythological scenes, seven focus on Odysseus' encounter with Circe (Walsh (2009) 314–16, nos 89–95). Of those seven, five (nos 89, 90, 93–5 = Bedigan (2006) 14–15, nos 10–14) portray Circe offering Odysseus a drink. I am following the most recent dating of this material, the admittedly conservative estimate of Walsh (2009). The foundational work on this cult is Wolters and Bruns (1940). Greatly updated is Schachter (1986), and Schachter (2003) provides a quick overview. Bedigan (2006) and Daumas (1998) provide focused studies of Cabiric vase ware.

recognizing Odysseus in a familiar scene but seeing him as something other than the familiar hero, urges viewers to engage with the ambiguities created by such imagery.<sup>43</sup>

Five Cabiric *skyphoi* portray degraded caricatures of Circe offering a drink to an equally degraded Odysseus, and in three cases the vessel that Circe holds is itself a *skyphos* (Figures 1–3). This visual game of presenting a *skyphos* on a *skyphos* opens the door to a mutual penetration of contexts. The mythological scene intermingles with the social moments when members of the Theban cult drink from these *skyphoi*. This also sets up a provocative equation between the contents of the vessels. The artistic discourse emphasizes difference via similarity, since Circe's *κυκεών* threatened grave harm, whereas



**Figure 1.** Boeotian black-figure skyphos, c.400 BCE (British Museum, London (93.3-3.1) = Walsh 2009, cat. no. 94.76a–b)

<sup>43</sup> Scholars looking into these Cabiric scenes have sought to explain this distinctive artistic style in various ways. Most frequently, they have looked to the ritual experience itself (which may explain the scene of Circe offering Odysseus a magical brew but does not help much with the low style) or the proximity of the sanctuary's theatre. It has often been assumed that the images reflect theatrical practices, as argued by Daumas (1998), but Bedigan (2006) seeks to overturn this view by showing that many of the images do not show clear signs of theatrical conventions and may be more closely related to the experiential transformation undergone by the initiates.



**Figure 2.** Boeotian black-figure skyphos, c.420 BCE (University of Mississippi Museum, Oxford (1977.3.116) = Walsh 2009, cat. no. 95)



**Figure 3a and 3b.** Boeotian black-figure skyphos, c.400 BCE (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (G, 249) = Walsh 2009, cat. no. 93.77a–b)

the Theban draught (whether ritual or merely convivial) presumably did not pose such a threat.<sup>44</sup>

On the best preserved of these vases, the artist (known as the *Mystes Painter*) emphasizes similar interpretive tricks (see Figures 3a and 3b). The contents of the Cabiric *skyphos* could not, of course, be the same as the magical potion that the Homeric Circe used to transform Odysseus' crew, and we encounter a similar contrast when we put the two sides of this vase into dialogue. Opposite Circe's scene we find an image that, if not for the inscription, would surely be understood differently. A grotesque figure holding a trident scoots across the top of the sea on a raft made of amphoras. The trident is the universal and definitive attribute of Poseidon, yet the *Mystes Painter* explicitly labels this figure Odysseus. These conflicting marks of identity 'create and dissolve ambiguity at the same time, and as a result, they challenge the viewer to try and understand the artist's motives'.<sup>45</sup> Identities on this vase are unstable and contradictory. The figure on the raft both is, and is not, Odysseus, just as the contents of the Cabiric *skyphos* are and are not what Circe offers to Odysseus, and as the Cabiric initiate's identity may be unstable during the ritual. Furthermore, the vase even suggests a seamless Escherian confusion of temporal frames within the mythological narrative. Most fluidly, the Poseidon-like figure of Odysseus on the raft suggests a non-canonical account of how Odysseus both arrived at and departed from Circe's island. The painting on one side of the vase, that is, can simultaneously precede and follow that on the other.<sup>46</sup>

Once we see the *Mystes Painter's* interest in shifting identities, we can return to the image of Odysseus and Circe with Hipponax in

<sup>44</sup> It is possible that the Cabiric vase hinted at the transformational experience of cultic initiation, but even on this reading the shared theme of transformation between the Cabiric and Homeric contexts diverges into positive and negative alternatives.

<sup>45</sup> Mylonopoulos (2010) 202. Mylonopoulos responds to the artist's challenge with his own theory: 'we are dealing with an ironic comment on Poseidon's powerlessness and the inscription guarantees that the viewer understands that the male figure flying across the sea with the trident in his hand bears a striking resemblance to Poseidon, but he is not the god!' (p. 190).

<sup>46</sup> This fascinating image has yet to be fully explicated. The 'amphorraft' suggests cargo and trade, a delicate theme in the *Odyssey*, and Odysseus travels by raft or flotsam when he arrives to and departs from Ogygia. The loom is more prominently associated with Penelope than with Circe in the *Odyssey*, and one of the other Cabiric vases (which may depict Odysseus and Circe, but which does not involve a drink) has been interpreted as Odysseus encountering his wife at the loom (Walsh (2009) cat. no. 92).

mind. Hipponax frequently evokes Odyssean mythology, including Homer's account of Odysseus' encounter with Circe (fr. 39), in a lowered poetic register and at least in a few instances he also conflates Homeric and contemporary contexts. As the Mystes Painter presents a similarly degraded image of Odysseus being presented with Circe's *κυκεών*, we can see in the male figure's frontal gaze a question: do we recognize who he is? He doesn't look much like our typical image of the Homeric Odysseus, but the plentiful narrative clues establish this identification beyond a shadow of a doubt. But we might also wonder if the artist here winks at us with metaparodic effect to see if we can detect not just the Homeric but also the Hipponactean Odysseus in this image.<sup>47</sup> Our *testimonia* about Hipponax agree that his iambic aggression bursts forth as a response to humorous caricatures—sculpted or painted—of his physique.<sup>48</sup> Visual artistic caricature, that is, supposedly preceded and inspired the verbal articulation of Hipponax's poetic persona. While these *testimonia* give the impression that actual images of an ugly Hipponax were known in the classical era, the far more probable scenario is that these sources attest to well-known, if historically dubious, legend. Various people, that is, *thought* that such images of Hipponax really existed. At the level of cultural imagination, how would Bupalus have portrayed Hipponax? Surely he would have looked rather like the images of Odysseus that we find on the Cabiric vases.

<sup>47</sup> Morson (1989) 81–6 discusses metaparody as a parody of a parody, or a situation in which an audience cannot easily distinguish the parody from the parodied model.

<sup>48</sup> The *Suda* claims that Hipponax (s.v.) attacked Bupalus and Athenis because they had made offensive images of him (*ὅτι αὐτοῦ εἰκόνας πρὸς ὕβριν εἰργάσαντο*); Pliny states that Hipponax was so ugly that his enemies created a mocking image of him and displayed it to a laughing crowd (*Hipponacti notabilis foeditas vultus erat. Quamobrem imaginem eius lascivia iocosam hi proposuere ridentium circulis*, 36.4.12), and that his invective responded viciously to this affront; and ps-Acron, commenting on Horace, *Epodes* 6.14, claims that Bupalus was an artist from Clazomenae, painted a caricature of Hipponax as lame (like his choliambic metre, no doubt) in order to get a laugh (*hic Hipponactem quondam poetam deformem pro risu pinxit*).