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ORGIASTIC ELEMENTS IN IBERIAN ICONOGRAPHY ?*

It does not prove difficult today to document the orgiastic elements of Mediterranean iconography which were imported during the pre-Roman period into the Iberian Peninsula, as they especially centre on images from Greek pottery and are in the main published¹. They are cut down principally to examples of Archaism such as the Attic komast cups which we find in the Tartessian area, that is to say, in an Atlantic area of Andalucia²; and, above all, to images from Attic pottery from the last decades of the 5th century and the first half of the 4th century, with Dionysiac and symposiac scenes which appear in Iberian contexts, especially in the East and South-East of Spain³. Already outside the peninsula, on the island of Ibiza, it would be necessary to add the Dionysiac images which are documented in the terracottas and scarabs which come from the funerary world, and which show us a Western and Punic version of the widespread phenomenon which the Mediterranean Dionysism represents⁴. We will not be dealing with these here, but we will allude to the probable Punic influence in the adoption of Dionysiac designs in the Iberian world.

Instead, it might be more adventurous and speculative to interpret the meaning of these images to show them in the context of the indigenous society which accepted them : did they have an orgiastic sense comparable to the Greek version or not ? Did they take on a new meaning ? In these cases we lack definite references from the society

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¹ M.C. VILLANUEVA PUIG, *Images de Dionysos et son cortège dans la céramique grecque du IVe s. en provenance de la Péninsule Ibérique*, in *REA*, 89 (1987), fasc. 3-4, p. 297-317; G. TRIAS, *Cerámicas griegas de la Península Ibérica*, Valencia, 1967, *passim*.

² R. OLMOS, *Comastas en Tartessos. En torno a la iconografía del vino y de la danza simposiaca en la Península Ibérica*, in *Athlon (Homenaje F. Rodríguez Adrados)*, II, Madrid, 1987, p. 683-696.

³ M.C. VILLANUEVA PUIG, *art. cit.*, p. 313, tableau 1: Murcie, Albacete; Andalousie.

⁴ Terracottas: M.J. ALMAGRO GORBEA, *Corpus de las terracotas de Ibiza*, Madrid, 1980, pl. CLXXI-CLXXIII (satyr masks); pl. CCV (satyr); pl. XXIV-XXVI; pl. XXXVII, 2-3 (Tambourine players); pl. XXXVII,1 (maenad with thyrsos), etc. Scarabs: J. BOARDMAN, *Escarabeos de piedra procedentes de Ibiza*, Madrid, 1984, n° 211-212 (satyr masks); n° 213-215 (satyrs).

itself such as texts or wide-ranging, unbroken series of local images which correspond with those of Greece – and, therefore, there exists here the danger of mechanically transferring interpretations of other Mediterranean cultures, such as that of the Greeks or the Punics, to this area of the far west. It thus proves essential in this case to accept the narrow scientific limits of some comparative methods, as well as of the following general supposition : that the far west shared certain characteristics of the Mediterranean cultural *koine* to which it pertained, but it modified and changed them under its own ideological categories and social conditions⁵. The indigenous interpretation always contributes something new. If we accept this point from the start, which archaeological analyses of the last few years appear to corroborate, we will be able to develop the lines of argument which follow. If, on the other hand, we do not accept it, the examples which follow will have value solely as imported images in their original Greek interpretation, in other words, from the point of view of their origins, and therefore taken out of context. They will contribute little – only, perhaps, their dispersion and some thematic variants – to what we know.

Archaic drinking cups and a primary symposiac iconography

In the Tartessian world of the southern peninsula, together with the *athyrmata* characteristic of the two way trade which the *kerdos* claim, the Phoenicians and later the Greeks introduce the fashion for wine, both its production and its consumption⁶. The huge amount of evidence on pots makes us suspect that as well as this trade, some of the ideological and religious tendencies were also introduced, which the trade and consumption of wine supported. We possess here, however, hardly any other documentary evidence except for iconography. The arrival of Greek products was accompanied from the first decades of the 6th century by attractive pottery such as Ionian, Corinthian, Laconian

⁵ Cf. R. OLMOS, *Interprétations ibériques des vases grecs: le IVe. s. av. J.C.*, in *Ancient Greek and Related Pottery, Allard Pierson series* vol. 5, Amsterdam, 1984, p. 218-223; ID., *Quelques observations sur l'assimilation de l'iconographie grecque dans le monde ibérique*, in *Iconographie classique et identités régionales*, Paris, 26-27 mai 1983, Paris, 1986 (*BCH, Suppl.*, 15), p. 155-165.

⁶ Phoenicians: H.G. NIEMEYER, *Griechische Keramik in Phönizischen Faktoreien. Der Befund der Kampagne 1967 in Toscanos (Málaga)*, in *Ancient Greek and Related Pottery*, *op. cit.*, p. 216. Greeks: P. CABRERA, R. OLMOS, *Die Griechen in Huelva. Zum Stand der Diskussion in Madrider Mitteilungen*, 26, 1985, p. 67-8.

and Attic cups⁷. Among these last the komast cups are especially remarkable, with dancers of a demonic character moving their limbs under the influence of drink⁸. There now exists today a certain recurrence of these cups and skyphoi, some by the KY Painter, in the port area of Huelva, where Greeks and Phoenicians established a trade based on the exchange of metals with the Tartesian aristocrats⁹. In the same way as happens with other imported elements from the Eastern Mediterranean – such as the world of aromatic plants and perfume, associated with the cult of Astarte/Aphrodite¹⁰ – it is very possible that these images, which illustrate an ecstatic world associated with wine and agrarian rituals, at the same time serve to show the new ideology associated with the consumption of the drink. Images from komast cups in Huelva reflect a dynamic world, and perhaps show the first introduction of ecstatic elements from Hellenic sources to Tartessos. It is necessary to add to these, from the same time, and in a similar historical context, the examples with satyrs and maenads which decorate, above all, lekythoi and cups, such as the fragment of an attic band cup found in 1990 in the Castle of Fuengirola, in Malaga or a black figured lekythos from a aristocratic burial in Pozo Moro, in Albacete¹¹.

Local Komasts ?

The commercial legacy, and, to a certain extent, the ideology of Tartessos can be found in the old Cadiz *polis*, situated beyond the columns of Hercules. Ampurias, the Phocaeen emporion in the West, also had a part in this trade. Ampurias would eventually also have to a certain extent the function of a *polis*. It was possibly through these colonies that many of the Mediterranean fashions and forms will be introduced into an indigenous society of a strongly aristocratic character¹². A local statuette in bronze, found in Capilla-Badajoz – behind which had been the old Tartessian hinterland – shows a silen,

⁷ P. CABRERA, R. OLMOS, *art. cit.*, p. 65-73.

⁸ P. CABRERA, R. OLMOS, *art. cit.*, pl. 7 c.

⁹ F. GONZALES DE CANALES *et alii*, *Nuevos Komastas en Tarteso*, in *Revista de Arqueología*, 120, Abril 1991, p. 14-17.

¹⁰ R. OLMOS, M. FERNANDEZ MIRANDA, *El timiaterio de Albacete*, in *AEspA*, 60 (1987), p. 211-219.

¹¹ M. ALMAGRO GORBEA, *Los relieves mitológicos orientalizantes de Pozo Moro*, in *Trabajos de Prehistoria*, 33 (1978), p. 273, pl. III.

¹² R. OLMOS, *Los griegos en Tartessos*, in M.E. AUBET (ed.), *Tartessos*, Barcelona, 1989, p. 513-514.

who dances drunkenly as a symposiast¹³ (Fig. 1). It has been supposed that perhaps here the type of Greek silen had been introduced into the western toreutic, transformed through some model of the semitic *polis* of Gades. Datable to the first half of the 5th century through its stylistic characteristics, this naked figure of komast and satyr is perhaps the only local example we have today of this well known Greek type.

Other dancers around an amphora on local funerary urns are later¹⁴. Their iconography above all seems to respond to the agonistic rather than the Dionysiac side of wine; the amphora was probably a prize in a fighting contest. Other, later images on pots from the inner Iberian area have been associated with these examples, with dancers around what has been thought to be an amphora, but what could also be a great flower¹⁵ (Fig. 2). The raised hands of the men facing each other could be for good luck with the growth of their crops, such as on the old archaic komasts of Attica. The relation of the Attic prototypes with these late images, however, is purely accidental.

The Dionysiac theme and the Iberian funerary world in the 4th century

The images of the banquet and the Dionysiacs which we see repeatedly on many Attic craters, especially during the first half of the 4th century B.C., probably had a deeper influence in the religious beliefs of the Iberians from South-East and Eastern Spain. The majority of these vases have been found in the Iberian necropolis and are occasionally used, when covered with a lid from local workshops, as funerary urns.

The Dionysiac theme lets us introduce the two sides of the Bacchic *thiasos*, the dynamic and the serene, in a synthesis which overcomes the contradictions. A significant number of the examples found in Spain centre on the romantic motif of a crowned Ariadne, attended and entertained by maenads and satyrs, probably as an initiate into the entourage of the god (Fig. 3) : her figure is picked out in white, and already unmistakeable characteristics and attributes of her new

¹³ R. OLMOS, *El Sileno simposiasta de Capilla (Badajoz)*, in *Trabajos de Prehistoria*, 34 (1977), p. 371-388.

¹⁴ E. KUKAHN, *Caja funeraria ibérica con representación en relieve*, in *IX Congreso Nacional de Arqueología*, Valladolid, 1965, p. 293-296; V. PINGEL, *Ein figürlich verziertes Bronzeblech aus dem iberischen Heiligtum von Despeñaperros (Prov. Jaén)*, in *Madrider Mitteilungen*, 12 (1971), p. 131-137.

¹⁵ Cf. R. OLMOS, *art. cit.* (n. 2), p. 693. A. GARCIA Y BELLIDO, *Arte ibérico en España*, Madrid, 1980, fig. 161.

situation accompany her, such as the *thyrsos* and *tympanon*, which are occasionally white like the bright body and clothes of the initiate herself¹⁶ (Fig. 4). Like the other maenads she is also able to have her hair loose and not tied back in the *sakkos* or *sphendone* which are the symbols of domestic *virtus* or *arete* of the traditional Athenian woman¹⁷. In fact, their absence here is a particularly characteristic aspect of the liberated status which is promoted by the new religious beliefs.

We may be able to interpret the majority of these images in the light of the *Bacchae* of Euripides, since they illustrate the general feeling towards Dionysism at that time, and show some of the characteristic boundaries of the theatrical story. There are many variations, but many of the scenes appear to celebrate the *hieros gamos* of the recently married girl, who, accompanied by a Dionysiac *thiasos*, waits for the arrival of the god : a translation into the religious sphere of the theme of the bride who waits, in the human festival, for her groom on the morning of the *epaulia*¹⁸. In more than one example there is an erotic theme (Fig. 5) : *eros* is introduced between the god and the initiate, emphasizing the presentation of the new divine couple before the cortège of maenads and satyrs¹⁹. Ariadne occasionally responds here with an ambiguous gesture of *enkalypsis/anakalypsis* the expression of modesty of the recently wed, of her *aidos*²⁰.

As is well known, in the Greek world of that time, the content of these Dionysiac scenes can be translated symbolically into the funerary world. After her initiation, Ariadne is the prototype of the mortal in the kingdom of the beyond, in her transition. She celebrates her new status in her triumph. Wedding and death yet again merge in the Greek perception : again and again in rituals life is seen as a *telos*, an arrival at fulfilment or *entelecheia*.

Many other vases from this period found in the South-East of Spain (fundamentally eastern Andalucia) show other variations on the Dionysiac world, such as the celebration of Apollo in the presence of Dionysos (in several instances it has yet to be discovered if the scene

¹⁶ M. C. VILLANUEVA PUIG, *art. cit.*, p. 304, 308-310.

¹⁷ *Ex. gratia*, Bell crater from Villaricos (Almería); cf. M.C. VILLANUEVA PUIG, *art. cit.*, fig. 1.

¹⁸ G. TRIAS, *op. cit.*, pl. CXCVI-II, CXCIX (Villaricos); CCVII, CCX (Cerro del Real, Tutugi); CCXX (Toya), etc.

¹⁹ G. TRIAS, *op. cit.*, pl. CCVII.

²⁰ *Loc. cit.*

takes place in Delphi or in a sanctuary of Attica)²¹. As well as this, Eros, as an ambiguous being and androgynous, each time plays a more important role on these vases found in the Iberian context of the South-East of Spain. He is a demon ἐν τῷ μεταξύ who belongs to various different worlds : as a youth he is always found on his way between two worlds. He is also a hermaphrodite, with the ambivalence which characterises him, he is a man and at the same time a woman : and the wings linked to Eros are in part from the animal world, but above all from the supernatural. The ambiguous being from all these spheres fulfils, better than any other, the characteristic functions of a demon in transit. To this he joins his seductive power which is expressed on several vases from those times by the music of the *aulos*²².

Up until now we have dealt with the Greek interpretation. We think there is the possibility of an Iberian interpretation in that funerary sense which we see in many other examples (griffins as protectors, horsemen as heroes, etc.)²³. Thus, the banqueting scenes, sometimes surrounded by Dionysian vine tendrils, probably illustrate a world similar to that of the Italian representations in the Campanian and Etruscan tombs (Fig. 6) : we should understand here the identification of the Iberian who is buried with these vases with a theoretical symposium in the beyond²⁴. The image could reflect the social status of the dead man, shown in the luxury of he who is reclining on the *kline*, of the wine, of the music, and above all, in the heroic plenty of the symposium.

For their part, the Dionysian scenes can also receive this treatment as scenes from beyond the grave, also, often, heroic, which we find similarly in other Mediterranean contexts. In the 4th century it was one of the designs on craters in the Macedonian area : let us remember the great gilded bronze crater from Derveni, which contained the ashes of the dead man²⁵; and in the Southern Italian world, where the theme of a

²¹ *Ex. gratia*, Bell crater from Baza (Granada) F.J. PRESEDO VEJO, *La Necrópolis de Baza*, Madrid, 1982, pl. XVII, 2.

²² *Ex. gratia*, Bell crater from Toya, G. TRIAS, *op. cit.*, pl. CCXXX. For a funerary interpretation of the winged being in South Italian Red Figured Pottery, cf. K. SCHAUENBURG, *Flügel Gestalten auf Unteritalischen Vasen*, in *JdI*, 102 (1987), p. 199-232.

²³ R. OLMOS, *Vaso griego y caja funeraria en la Bastetania Ibérica*, in *Homenaje a C. Fernández Chicharro*, Madrid, 1981, p. 259-268.

²⁴ *Ex. gratia*, G. TRIAS, *op. cit.*, pl. CCXII (Cerro del Real, Tutugi), CCXXXVIII (Castellones de Ceal), etc.

²⁵ Cl. ROLLEY, *Les Bronzes grecs*, Fribourg, 1983, p. 170-173, ill. 158-160; B. BARR-SHARRAR, *Dionysos and the Derveni Crater*, in *Archaeology*, 35, 6, Nov/Dec.

Bacchic orgy was especially common as a funerary image, particularly on craters.

The Iberian buried his ashes in craters with scenes of this sort, or else used these vases to furnish his tomb. This plan is particularly common in eastern Andalucia. A settlement on the coast, Villaricos, in Almeria, was able to be one of the places through which these influences penetrated. The Iberian necropolis co-existed here with the Punic. The Punics were able to be those who introduced these products in the Peninsula. They were also able to be the transmitters of this Dionysiac-funerary ideology which extended to the Southern Italian area, and which subsequently links it to the Macedonian Dionysian movement which we see illustrated in the iconographic symbolism and in the ritual of the afore-mentioned crater from Derveni. In the burials from the nearby Punic settlement of the island of Ibiza, Dionysiac and orgiastic elements are documented, assimilated by this western semitic people : we know of bronze cymbals and some terracottas which bring us to the iconography surrounding Dionysos, such as masks, satyrs and maenads, accepted as a Hellenic style among the Carthaginians especially strongly from the 4th century onwards²⁶. It is thus probably through the Punic peoples of Villaricos and Ibiza that the funerary ideology of Dionysism passes to the Iberian world.

In what might the orgiastic element of this iconography consist ? I am thinking about the possibility of an Iberian interpretation in the sense of his identification with the images on the vases. He who possesses the crater and its image for his burial is possibly shown as the central figure, often seated and attended by a group of semi-divine beings (satyrs, erotes, maenads). The image may illustrate his blessed state beyond the grave, his initiation into that world of plenty and light, a sort of *laetae sedes* where he is welcomed²⁷ (Fig. 7). It is precisely because of the recurrence of this theme that it does not seem to us to be in any way accidental²⁸. Together with this Iberian interpretation it is also more than possible, though we cannot today be certain, that there arrived also an echo of the Dionysiac world which in the 4th century

1982, p. 13-19; R. BIANCHI BANDINELLI, *Il cratere di Derveni*, in *DArch*, 8 (1974-75), p. 179-200 = *L'arte classica*, Roma 1974, p. 199-219, ill. 22-23; etc.

²⁶ Cf. *supra* n. 4; on cymbals, B. DE GRIÑO, R. OLMOS, *La pátera de Santisteban del Puerto (Jaén)*, in *Estudios de Iconografía I*, Madrid, 1982, p. 74-75, ill. 2.

²⁷ *Laetis sedibus* Hor. (*carm.*, I, 10, vv. 17-18); E. FRAENKEL, *Horace*, Oxford, 1957, p. 162-163.

²⁸ In a similar way, M.C. VILLANUEVA PUIG, *art. cit.*, p. 311-312.

recovered an unwonted strength in the Mediterranean. We do not know – nor will it be an easy matter to arrive at the answer – if in these cases the dead man on these vases aspired to be initiated, by means of this supposed identification with the image, into the *orgia* or activities of the Dionysiac religious ritual.

The Iberian imitation of forms and designs : the Dionysiac element

As occurs with other themes, however, the designs on painted pottery do not find a subsequent continuation in the characteristically Iberian iconography. The Iberian imitates Hellenic forms, for example in the local craters with their characteristic proportions and style, but the artist does not copy the figurative elements in such a clear manner²⁹. He prefers to use as decoration his own identifying signs such as bands, circles, and quarter circles.

Only in the following centuries (3rd-1st B.C.), that is to say in the complete Ibero-Hellenistic period, will the Iberian translate to his pottery certain elements from the Mediterranean source which he soon makes his own. He introduces, for example, the element from the Dionysiac source of the wreath of ivy. In some examples, such as on an Iberian vase which we conventionally call a kalathos from the Necropolis of El Cabecico del Tesoro (Murcia), it is possible to maintain the original symbolic value of the ever-green ivy – like ὑγρὰ φύσις – which birds peck³⁰ (Fig. 8). But yet again in the local imitation and recreation we ask up to what point, under the formal introduction of the Hellenic and Mediterranean decorative motif, there also underlies a certain and parallel introduction of content. In other examples we find birds pecking different sorts of flowers, like stylised poppies, a expanded Mediterranean drug which in Iberian funerary beliefs could also to be linked with the transformation of life after death³¹ (Fig. 9).

On the other hand the introduction of the Dionysiac motif in the funerary world on a later Ibero-Hellenistic silver patera from

²⁹ Cf. V. PAGE, *Imitaciones de influjo griego en la cerámica ibérica de Valencia, Alicante y Murcia*, Madrid, 1984; J. PEREIRA, C. SANCHEZ, *Imitaciones Ibéricas de cerámica ática en Andalucía in Ceràmiques gregues i hellenistiques a la península ibérica: Empúries 18-20 març 1983*, Barcelona, 1985, p. 87-100.

³⁰ L. PERICOT, *Cerámica Ibérica*, Barcelona, 1984, p. 27-29, ill. 31-32.

³¹ Kalathos from Alcoy, L. PERICOT, *op. cit.*, p. 142, ill. 196. For the funerary idea cf. the seated goddess from Elche holding poppies in her right hand. Cf. A. BLANCO, *Die klassischen Wurzeln der iberischen Kunst*, in *Madriider Mitteilungen*, 1 (1960), p. 116, pl. 24 a.

Santisteban del Puerto (Jaén) appears much more clear, in that the designs from the Hellenic tradition of friezes – erotes and centaurs – are mixed with the characteristic Iberian design of the wolf which devours – or throws up – a human head³² (Fig. 10).

The arrival at the world of the dead, which is indicated by the human head which appears from the jaws of the monster, is accompanied, on the main frieze which surrounds it, by a *thiasos* of male and female centaurs, with various orgiastic elements : the crater which introduces the banquet, the flute player, the lyre player, the tambourine player, and the player of cymbals, the female centaur who offers a libation, she who grasps her breasts in an oriental manner, or she who laments and presents a large tray with offerings in her hand. The torches which one of them carries place the situation of the festival in the orgiastic enchantment and sacredness of the night, “inter sacra deum nocturnique orgia Bacchi” (Verg., *Georgics* IV, 521).

The representation of nature in transformation and the female divinity

Iberian pottery, however, can conceal under some of its symbolic images the seed of a world of images which could be related to ecstatic religious experiences. We deal here with the extension to other distinct areas of Dionysism not only the Graeco-Roman concept of *orgia* – that is to say in its later sense as the manifestation of a communicative (and, perhaps, initiatic) religion which was not exclusively Dionysiac, – but to other local religious experiences such as the Iberian case concerning a female divinity. Thus the pottery of Elche shows a dynamic human, animal and plant world, in continual genesis and transformation, which illustrates the conception of the metamorphosis of a lush and fecund natural world³³. This conception of divine nature, which in its anthropomorphic manifestation is personified by a great goddess of vegetation who rises up from the earth surrounded by *protomai* of birds and of wolves together with lush vegetation, includes a transforming side in a manner similar to the examples from the Mediterranean Dionysiac religion, which involves all nature³⁴. There are many

³² Cf. B. DE GRIÑO, R. OLMOS, *op. cit.* (n. 26). Cf. also, K. RADDATZ, *Die Schatzfunde der iberischen Halbinsel*, 1969, p. 251-256, pl. 63-64.

³³ R. OLMOS, *Original Elements and Mediterranean Stimuli in Iberian Pottery : The case of Elche, part 1*, in *Mediterranean Archaeology*, 2 (1989), p. 101-109; for part II see *Mediterranean Archaeology*, 3 (1990), p. 7-25.

³⁴ R. OLMOS, *art. cit.* (1990), pl. 9-10, pl. 11, 3, etc.; L. PERICOT, *op. cit.* (n. 30), ill. 105-108, 128, etc.

examples in the pottery of Elche, but we are going to limit ourselves to one late vase from this settlement : in the Hellenic fashion a female figure wears a tunic with *kolpos* and *apoptygma*, which points to her particular sacred character which is not local : it is an archaic and foreign costume³⁵ (Fig. 11). As is characteristic in Elche for this type of sacred representation, her frontal face includes the observer in her transforming activity which shows her divine character : around her, attracted by the divine presence as if she were a magnet are distributed the different aspects of the animal and plant world connected with her. The position of her feet which recalls, at least formally, the form of a maenad dancing, serves to illustrate even more her uncontrolled activity. In these images the animal, plant and human world entwine and merge to form one.

This unreal presence of animals around the goddess brings us to the wide universe of Iberian religion, where the transforming elements play a very important role. The catalysing divinity of this religion is usually female, with ecstatic characters which recall from Greek religion some of the orgiastic elements of the cult of Demeter. The great number of representations of this female divinity in the eastern area can also enlighten us, albeit in a negative way, as to why the imitations of the Dionysiac world of the 4th century which we saw on Attic craters did not take root. There is a huge difference between the two types of representation, and in their essential content it was difficult for the Iberian to understand the narrative complexity of the Greek myth which is shown on 4th century Attic vases. It was not possible to imitate them – nor did the Iberian claim to – and they were accepted as an external fashion, which, probably, disappeared when the importation of the vases stopped. On the other hand, these local vases from Elche, which repeatedly showed an iconographic world which the Iberian found easy to understand, can explain the existence of a cult dating from the 4th century B.C., probably of an urban character, which implies a *polis* such as Elche was in the Hellenic period. Its theme shows the tension implicit in this juxtaposition of the *polis* with the natural world : the plant and animal symbols point at a goddess of fecundity in a cosmic and wide sense – at a *dea genetrix* – and not only at a *dea frugifera*, like the

³⁵ R. OLMOS, *art. cit.* (1990), pl. 12, ; L. PERICOT, *op. cit.* (n. 30), ill. 127 and frontispice.

goddesses of wheat and cultivated fruits, in the style of Tanit or the *Cereres*³⁶.

There is in these Iberian images of the epiphany of the female goddess a transcendence over the contradiction existing in the hostile natural world, which ancient man often perceived as a world of irreconcilable opposites. We must not, however, only interpret the contradictory coexistence of incompatible beings in many of these Iberian images through this ecstatic character. Thus, it is possibly not a religion which overcomes these contradictions which allows the coexistence of rabbits and humans in a joint procession as we see on a vase from Elche³⁷. The men, with processional branches in their hands, walk together at the side of the rabbits, towards the left. It could be thought that here also it is that sacred world of the goddess and that which is celebrated which permits the strange and peculiar coexistence of the timid animal with man in a common procession. It may remind us, for example, of the peculiar relation between maenads and hares in Attic and South Italian pottery of the 4th century, which expresses the beatitude and brotherhood of the Dionysiac natural world. No. In this example this interpretation may only be partly true, for the painter is guided also – and above all – by internal decorative rules which allow him to create an unreal figurative world to illustrate symbolically on the space of the pot the juxtaposition of one type of being with another.

Conclusion

In our present state of knowledge we know of imported, religious and ideological elements of an ecstatic nature in the, firstly Tartessian and, later, Iberian societies. They are found in the images. To define the indigenous perception of the natural world more precisely and the interpretative attitude which accompanied these images is a more difficult task because of the ignorance today of the local mythologies.

In relation to the more archaic time – the Tartessian period and area – the Dionysiac iconography and the komasts can be associated with the introduction of an aristocratic and propagandaic ideology surrounding the wine, and, along with its prestige, to its power of metamorphosis and its communicability.

Later, above all during the first half of the 4th century, the Dionysiac element becomes incorporated through Attic vases. The Iberian

³⁶ On Roman *Cereres*, finally E. SIMON, *Die Götter der Römer*, München, 1990, p. 43 sq.

³⁷ L. PERICOT, *op. cit.* (n. 30), ill. 153.

funerary belief agreed with its transforming ideology, through the Greek and Punic filters. Its particularly rich area was the so-called Iberian Bastetania, in eastern Andalucia. We later find this funerary interpretation in the afore-mentioned patera from Santisteban del Puerto, a local but hellenised product.

Finally, in the Ibero-Hellenistic period, an iconography developed around the transformation of nature presided over by a female divinity. The presence of this divinity filled all nature, which, as in the Dionysiac religion, would convert into *entheos*. Also in those images from Elche the divine *cosmos* superimposed itself on the tension and mad activity. In this dynamic the frontal faces of the goddess do not include only the world represented there but also, as if there were communication with he who looks, they regard the possessor of the vase, the spectator³⁸. Through this image a cult is pointed at. But for the moment it is not possible to be more precise about the natural world of the myths related to this cult.

This world of transformation and tension which, at present, we know above all through the area of Iberian images could include today in this colloquium a discussion of the different concepts of *orgia* in the ancient world and its evolution in the different Mediterranean religious beliefs. This term had not one single sense but various : as a polysemic concept it could be used in different ways, though it was usually applied to Dionysian rites, as is clearly indicated in *Etymologicum Magnum* (629,38), s.v. ὄργια · τὰ μυστήρια · κυρίως δὲ τὰ Διονυσιακά. But it would be necessary to analyse and determine all the meanings of this word in the religious context which would allow us to test its validity or otherwise in Iberian phenomena as described here. Perhaps one day it will be possible to extend this concept by studying through the iconological, archeological and literary sources religious phenomenons of the ancient world which inter-relate, but are at the same time different.

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³⁸ L. PERICOT, *op. cit.* (n. 30), ill. 127, 129, 138, 151, etc.; R. OLMOS, *art. cit.* (1990), pl. 13, 2.

Fig. 1 : Silen as comast from Capilla (Badajoz). 1st. half of the 5th c. B.C. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid.

Fig. 2 : Fragt. of an Iberian vase from Alloza (Teruel). Dancers around a great flower. Drawing García y Bellido, 1980.

Fig. 3: Attic bell crater from the Iberian necropole of Toya (Jaén). Ariadne entertained by maenads and satyrs. Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Drawing by courtesy of Dra. Carmen Sánchez, 1991.

Fig. 4: Attic bell crater from the Iberian necropole of Villaricos (Almería). Ariadne dancing between maenads and satyrs. Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Drawing by courtesy of S. González, 1986.

Fig. 5: Attic bell crater from the Iberian necropole of Galera (Granada). Eros, Dionysos and Ariadne between Maenads and satyrs. Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Drawing by courtesy of S. González, 1986.

Fig. 6: Attic bell crater from the Iberian necropole of Baza (Granada). Banqueting scene. Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Drawing by courtesy of Dra. Carmen Sánchez, 1991.

Fig. 7: Attic bell crater from the Iberian necropole of Toya (Jaén). Eros crowning a youth. Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Drawing by courtesy of Dra. Carmen Sánchez, 1991.

Fig. 8: Iberian "calathos" from the Necropole of Cabecico del Tesoro (Murcia). Birds pecking ivy. Museo Arqueológico de Murcia.

Fig. 9 : Iberian “calathos” from Alcoy (Alicante). Birds pecking poppies ? Museo de Alcoy.

Fig. 10 : Ibero-hellenistic silver patera from Santisteban del Puerto (Jaén). Centaurs in a banquet. Museo Arqueológico Nacional. Madrid.

Fig. 11 : Iberian goddess as potnia, encircled by animals. Museo de la Alcudia (Elche).