



FIG. 60 Panathenaic prize amphora with horsemen throwing javelins at a target, early 4th century. British Museum, London, 1903.2-17.1

a javelin standing upright on horseback, but javelin throwing on horseback at a target (fig. 60) does not appear on prize Panathenaics until the very end of the fifth century. On prize vases competitors wear cloaks and some wear the *petasos*, a broad-rimmed hat, and the target is a shield on a post.⁹⁶ Never an Olympic event, the contest is listed on the fourth-century prize inscription with the special equestrian events offering prize vases. Xenophon (*Duties of a Cavalry Commander* 1.21, 25; 3.6; *On Horsemanship* 8.10; 12.12–13) strongly recommended proficiency in this skill for military reasons, and he mentions javelin throwing in cavalry proceedings at the Lyceum. The contest itself, the target, and Xenophon's interest all suggest that the development of the cavalry influenced the Panathenaic program in the late fifth and fourth centuries. Moreover, the *anthippasia*, a competition and display by tribal cavalry units, while not attested until the third century, may have been included in the Panathenaia earlier.⁹⁷

Tribal Events

The team and tribal events, which were limited to Athenian citizens, formed one of the most distinctive aspects of the Panathenaic Games. While bigger prizes were offered in open events to attract competitors from outside, this does not mean that the tribal events were of little importance in the eyes of the Athenians.⁹⁸ Probably de-

rived from ancient traditions of communal involvement, early processions developed into contests in military dancing, manly beauty, and torch racing, and these events were expanded and adapted to the Kleisthenic tribes and democracy.

Pyrrhic Dance

With probable roots in old hunting or war dances, pyrrhic dances in armor were held throughout Greece, including in both the annual Lesser and quadrennial Greater Panathenaia.⁹⁹ Legend says that Athena, having danced the pyrrhic when born from the head of Zeus, also danced the pyrrhic upon her victory over the Titans (Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 7.72.7); and the sixth-century popularity of the gigantomachy theme in Athenian art may suggest that such a contest dates at least from 566.

Plato (*Laws* 7.815a) gives a written summary of the movements danced in the pyrrhic:

It consists in imitating, on the one hand, movements that evade all kinds of blows and missiles—by dodging, giving way completely, jumping up, humble crouching—and then again striving to imitate the opposites to these, aggressive postures involved in striking with missiles—arrows and javelins—and with all sorts of blows.

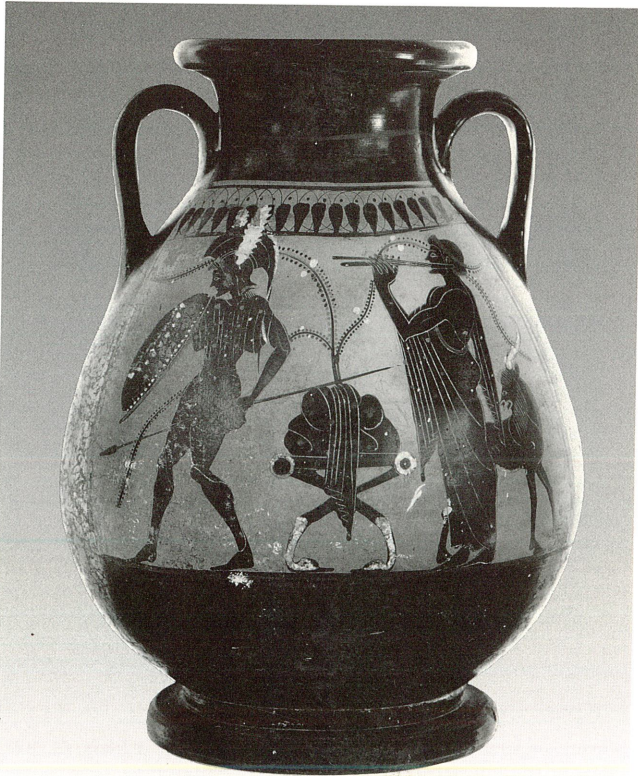
(trans. T. L. Pangle)

Pinney also offers a description derived from depictions on late Archaic and Classical vases:

On the vases, the dancers are shown, as a rule, equipped with the weapons of Athena herself: spear and round shield. Male pyrrhic dancers can be recognized with certainty only when judges, with their forked sticks, or the aulos player who pipes the rhythm of their movements are present. The dancers otherwise look just like warriors in heroic garb.¹⁰⁰

Together the descriptions allow us to identify with certainty a fine depiction of the pyrrhic dance, complete with a flutist on an Attic black-figure vase (cat. 48).

Performed in three age classes (*IG II²* 2311, lines 72–74; *Constitution of Athens* 60.4), the pyrrhic dance was



48 Pelike with pyrrhic dancer and aulete (reverse), attributed to the Theseus Painter, ca. 500

organized and financed liturgically, and awarded prizes of a bull and 100 drachmas for each class. In the late fifth century, a man claims to have spent 800 drachmas on the pyrrhic for the Greater Panathenaia and 700 on a boys' pyrrhic chorus for the lesser festival (Lysias 21.1,4). In Aristophanes' *Clouds* (lines 988–989) a conservative character, the Just Logos, complains that in the boys' event the effete Athenian youths now cover themselves with their shields and perform the dance poorly. However, a fourth-century base from the Akropolis (fig. 61) depicts nude pyrrhic dancers with shields; a clothed observer represents the sponsor (*choregos*), Atarbos, and an inscription records the tribal victory.¹⁰¹ Perhaps an aspect

of military training or possibly just in imitation of warfare, this was a Panathenaic event, but it belonged as much to the realm of dance as to that of athletics. Although its legendary significance and its military value may have waned over time, with its choruses of dancers and its musical accompaniment, the pyrrhic remained an integral and entertaining part of the Panathenaic program.

Euandria

This tribal contest in “manly beauty,” closed to outsiders, remains problematic.¹⁰² The fourth-century prize inscription records 100 drachmas and an ox for this event, but later in the fourth century the Aristotelian *Constitution of Athens* (60.3) mentions shields as prizes. Perhaps the prize changed, or probably there was a tribal prize and also individual shield prizes for winners.¹⁰³ According to N. B. Crowther:

The *euandria* was probably a beauty contest, as defined by Athenaeus [13.565f], in which the criteria were size and strength, as suggested by Xenophon [*Memorabilia* 3.3.13]. Since the contest involved strength, more than mere posing was involved. The competitors had to perform. The *euandria*, therefore, as far as can be ascertained, was a team event which incorporated elements of beauty, size and strength, perhaps as a celebration of manhood.¹⁰⁴



FIG. 61 Base from the votive offering of Atarbos with pyrrhic dancers, ca. 330–320. Akropolis Museum, Athens, 1338