

# Dionysus: The God of Theater











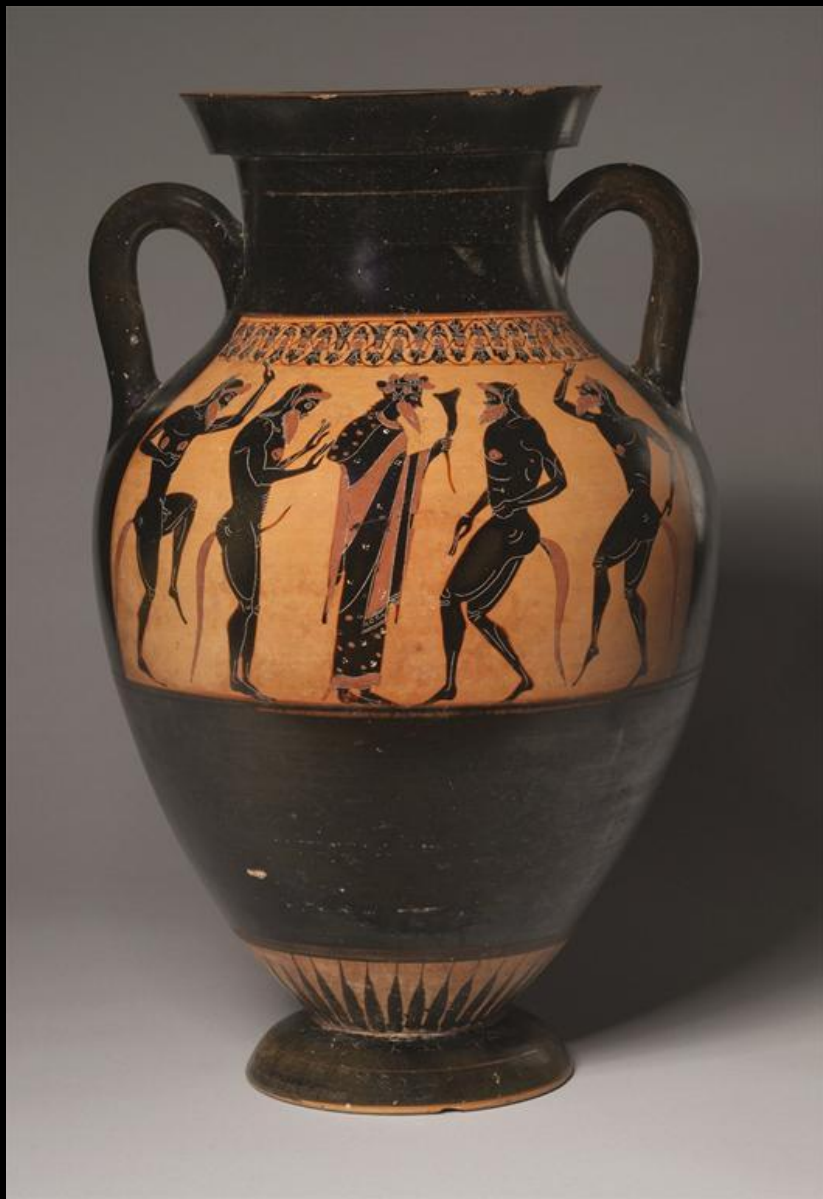












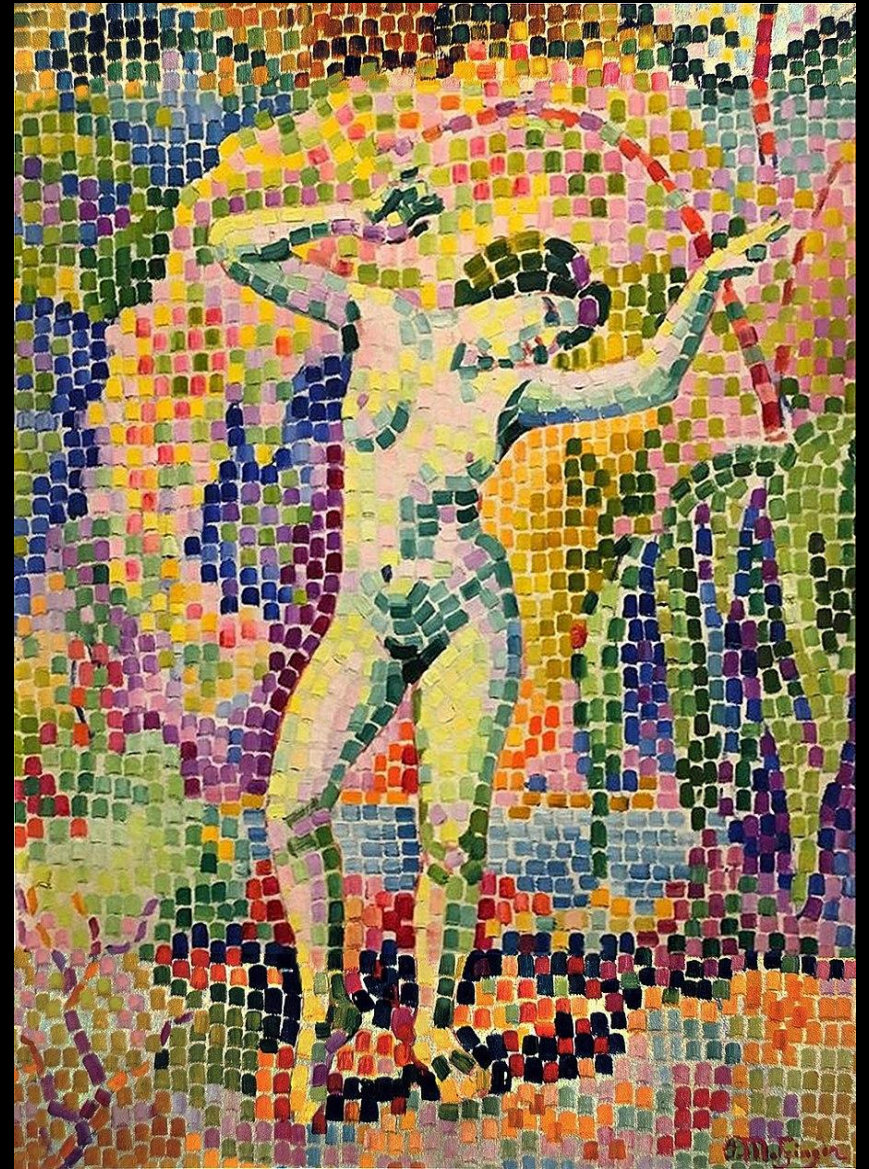
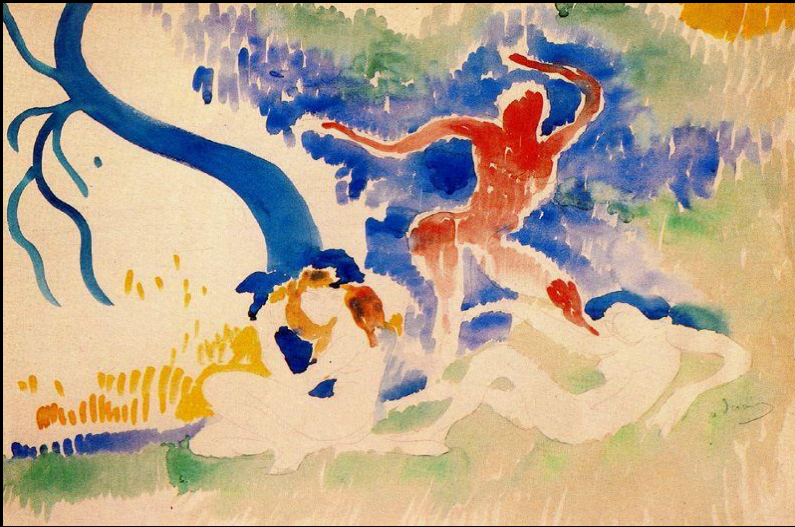
































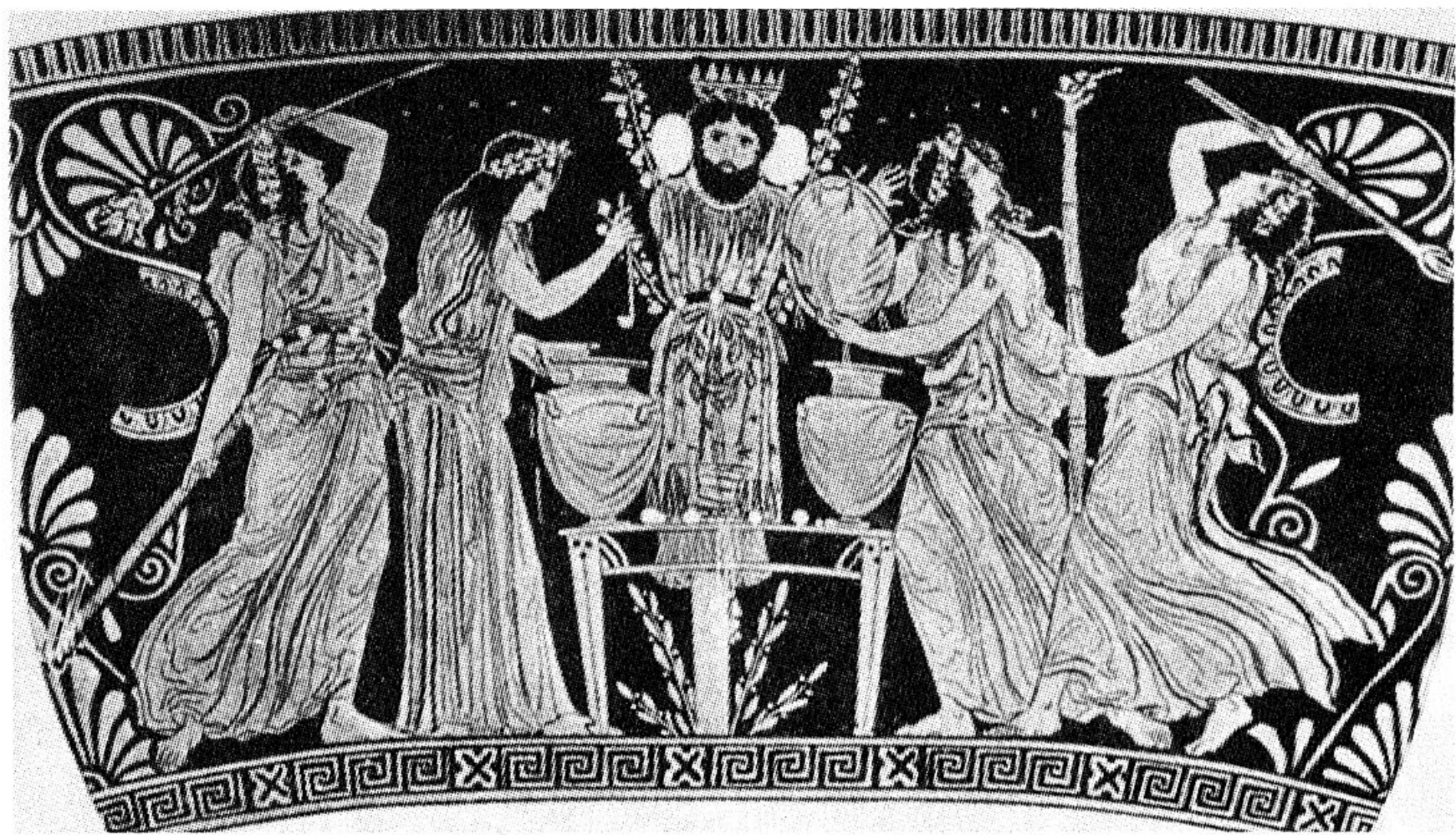














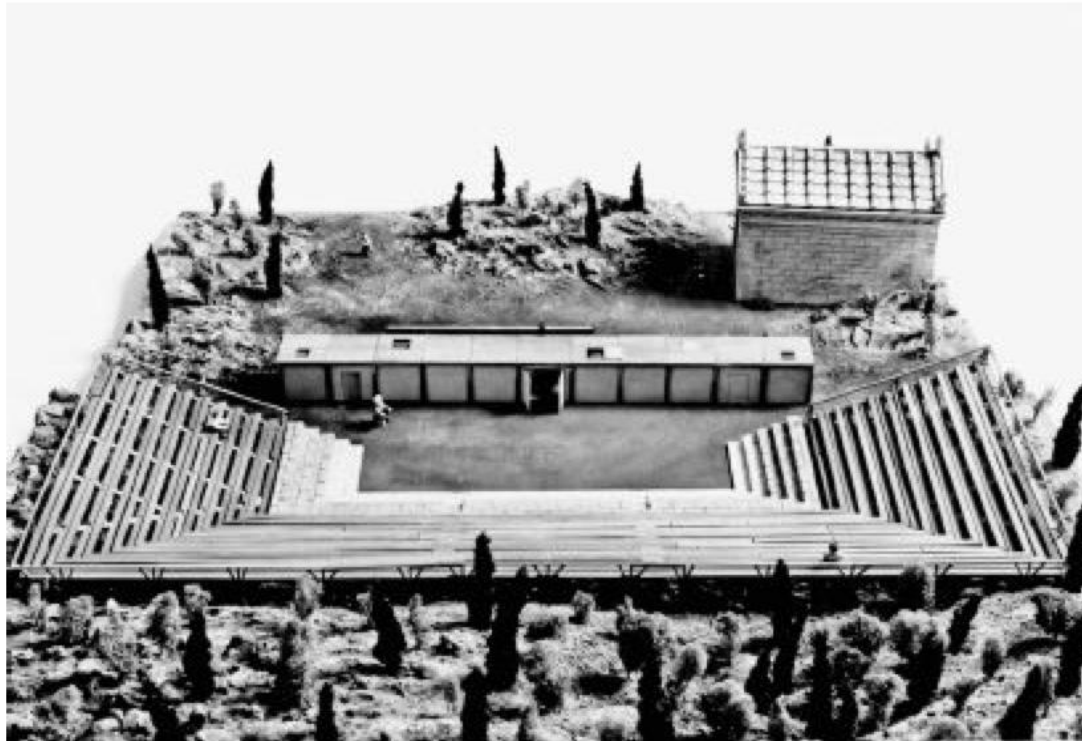


FIGURE 2.3

*Model of the Early Classical Theater of Dionysus at Athens. Photograph after Hans R. Goette, in E. Pöhlmann, Studien zur Buhnendichtung und zum Theaterbau der Antike: Studien zur Klassischen Philologie 93, edited by M. V. Albrecht, 1995.*









# Dionysus: The God of Theater?





Where on Nysa, which nourishes wild beasts, or on Corycian heights, do you lead with your thyrsos the thiasos of revelers, O Dionysus? Perhaps in the deep-wooded lairs of Olympus, where Orpheus once playing the lyre drew together trees by his songs, drew together the beasts of the fields. Blessed Pieria, the Joyful one reveres you and will come to lead the dance in revelry; having crossed the swiftly flowing Axius he will bring the whirling Maenads, leaving Lydia, giver of wealth to mortals, the father who they say fertilizes the land of beautiful horses with fairest streams.



# Discussion Questions

1. Does this play strike you as an endorsement or a condemnation of Dionysiac cult? Consider especially Agave's experience and that of the other bacchae.
2. Consider the main characters, Pentheus and Dionysus. Are these characters portrayed in a sympathetic light? Why do they come into conflict with one another?
3. Consider the secondary characters, the two old men, Cadmus and Tiresias. How does each react to Dionysus and his cult?