

of imagery found on a particular shape with the vase's function. An early, and very influential, attempt in this direction was offered by Ingeborg Scheibler's 1987 article on the belly amphora (*Jahrb. DAI* 102, 1987, 57–118), an approach that she later pursued in a study of the skyphos (*Ant. Kunst* 43, 2000, 17–43). In recent years, several dissertations adopting versions of this methodology have been written on other shapes, including no fewer than three just a few years apart on the epinetron (P. Badinou, *La laine et le parfum. Épinetra et alabastres: forme, iconographie et fonction. Recherches de céramique attique féminine* [Leuven 2003]; C. Mercati, *Epinetron. Storia di una forma ceramica fra archeologia e cultura* [Città di Castello 2003]; F. Heinrich, *Das Epinetron. Aspekte der weiblichen Lebenswelt im Spiegel eines Arbeitsgeräts* [Rahden/Westf. 2006]). It is noteworthy that these recent studies have often focused on shapes associated with women, as part of the larger enterprise in classical archaeology of elucidating the lives of ancient women, especially in Athens, where we have the richest evidence.

Stefan Schmidt's book, based on a Habilitation submitted to the University of Augsburg in 2001, continues on this path, but with some notable new twists and turns. The book comprises four monographic studies of different shapes, three of them with pronounced female associations: the lekythos (oil flask), the pyxis (round box), the chous (a small jug, mainly for men and boys), and the hydria (water vessel). The link among the four investigations, as well as the distinctive feature of Schmidt's project, is his thesis that in the later years of the fifth century, these (and presumably other) shapes in Attic red-figure become primarily bearers of specific messages for the Athenians who used them in life and placed them (often in deliberate groupings) in their loved ones' graves. The ›rhetoric‹ of the book's title refers to the author's argument that the messages conveyed by the vase-paintings are analogous to the art of verbal persuasion that flourished in Athens in the last third of the fifth century, traditionally though to have been introduced by the Sicilian Gorgias about 427 and soon evident not only in the Assembly and the law courts, but also in other literary genres, such as tragedy and historiography. The ›communicative‹ value of the imagery referred to in the book's subtitle is measured in the relationship between the function of the vase and its real or imagined context of use. Although in his Introduction, Schmidt makes the obligatory nod in the direction of modern theorists like Roland Barthes and recent work on perception and visual communication, the body of the book is grounded in a thorough application of traditional methods of archaeological scholarship, along with strategic deployment of literary texts to establish a historical and social context, but is not weighed down by large amounts of theory.

For each of the four chapters, Schmidt provides a wide-ranging study that traces the shape back to its origins in Attic black-figure of the sixth century and then follows it through each generation down to the last

Stefan Schmidt, *Rhetorische Bilder auf attischen Vasen. Visuelle Kommunikation im 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* Publisher Dietrich Reimer, Berlin 2005. 329 pages, 137 figures.

The scholarship on Attic figured pottery has a long tradition of dissertations and monographs on specific shapes. In earlier years, such studies focused primarily on questions of form, ornament, and usage and include such now-classic books as Barbara Philippaki's on the stamnos (*The Attic Stamnos* [Oxford 1967]), Erika Diehl's on the hydria (*Die Hydria. Formengeschichte und Verwendung im Kult des Altertums* [Mainz 1964]), and Donna C. Kurtz's on the white lekythos (*Athenian White Lekythoi. Pattern and Painters* [Oxford 1975]). These studies generally paid less attention to iconography and made little attempt to try to correlate the range

decades of the fifth, where the new ›rhetorical‹ quality of the imagery becomes clear against the background of what came before. The collection of images is equally wide-ranging, but with a rigorously applied limitation that distinguishes Schmidt's method from that of earlier studies of shape and iconography. In order to ascertain as closely as possible what the imagery means to Athenians (and to avoid the distracting question, often posed in recent years, whether some imagery on Attic vases may have been directed at Etruscan or other non-Greek buyers), he focuses in the first instance on vases found in a documented excavation context in Athens and Attika – burials in the Kerameikos, well deposits in the Agora, graves in various locations in the city and the outlying demes. Only when the meaning and function of a shape and its imagery has been established on the basis of these examples, does Schmidt adduce others found outside Attika that conform to the framework. While other scholars of iconography have paid lip service to the caveat that most of the Attic vases we have today were not found in Greece and may have been made for the overseas market (cf., among many recent studies, R. Osborne, *World Arch.* 33, 2002, 277–295), Schmidt is the first to take seriously the implications of this dilemma by building his study exclusively on those vases from an Attic context. The results are often strikingly original and illuminating.

Each of the four shapes studied presents a somewhat different set of issues with regard to its function and the rituals of daily life or cult. The white lekythos is usually agreed to have the closest correlation to one specific use – as a funerary offering – but Schmidt considers it within the larger context of all lekythoi, including black- and red-figure, as well as variations like the squat-lekythos. A close study of Agora wells reveals that by the second quarter of the fifth century, the shoulder lekythos is exclusively funerary, while its earlier domestic functions have been assumed by the squat lekythos. Black-figure lekythoi, whether on a white ground or not, display a very wide range of subjects that cannot be subsumed under one heading, like ›eschatological‹, but rather, following a suggestion of Robin Osborne, refer to the ›social person‹ of the deceased. The 470's are the decisive turning point for the shift to exclusively funerary scenes on lekythoi, and Schmidt believes that the earliest painters of funerary white lekythoi (the Timokrates Painter, the Painter of Athens 1826, the Inscription and Tymbos Painters) developed out of the black-figure tradition. He then follows the increasing complexity of the images on white lekythoi after the middle of the fifth century and, where possible, attempts to reconstruct a ›program‹ comprising multiple vases in the same tomb that may portray the same individual in different stages of life and death. As he rightly suggests, the familiar game of guessing who is the deceased and who is the survivor is too schematic, as the agenda is more complex and nuanced than this (on this problem see also J. H. Oakley, *Picturing Death in Classical Athens. The Evidence of the White Lekythoi* [Cambridge 2004]

173–191 and *passim*). In extreme cases, elements that don't seem to go together at all are juxtaposed in the same scene, for example two youths hunting near a grave stele, or the odd combination on the example that graces the cover of the book (Athens, Nat. Mus. 1957): a woman carrying a large tray of offerings, accompanied by a girl, at a stele, alongside a youth seated in front of a tumulus, turning to look back at a hare. Noting that this vase was found in the same tomb as the famous epinetron by the Eretria Painter and several other lekythoi and a pyxis, Schmidt speculates that the collective imagery was intended to represent as much of the family as possible. The seeming confusion of the lekythos Athens 1957 could suggest that the scene was hastily revised when the youth died unexpectedly – an intriguing idea but hardly capable of proof.

An excursus on the wedding and funerary *loutrophoros* in the later fifth century clarifies the development Schmidt sees in the white lekythos, as the *loutrophoros* gradually takes on ›rhetorical‹ qualities celebrating the deceased (for instance, as horsemen and warriors) in the manner of epigrams and funeral orations. When both the lekythos and the *loutrophoros* start to be made in marble during the 420's, the notion of different kinds of rhetoric for different audiences is very apparent. The pottery version, made for a single occasion, carries explicit references to death, while the marble version, as a permanent marker, does not (which aligns them rather with the marble stelai).

In the case of the pyxis, Schmidt's second case study, there is no a priori reason to suspect a specific ceremonial or ritual function, though Schmidt raises the question whether it might have acquired one in the course of the fifth century. The black-figure pyxis in the Archaic period, of whatever type (usually the tripod-pyxis) cannot be associated with women or any other single group (in fact its imagery is more often ›male‹: symposium, komos, chariot-race, Herakles and Dionysos), or with any particular use. Only from the second quarter of the fifth century can we be more secure in associating the pyxis with cosmetics, traces of which have been found inside. By the mid-fifth century, the imagery of pyxides is overwhelmingly drawn from the lives of women, and by the later years of the century, Schmidt can document the nuptial associations of the pyxis, both in burials, where it is found alongside a pair of *lebetes gamikoi* (vessels for the nuptial bath), and in depictions of pyxides in wedding scenes on nuptial shapes, often as a gift from a youth to a woman. According to Schmidt's paradigm, the vessel becomes steadily less important for what it contains (whether incense, cosmetics or jewelry) than as a canvas to display the values and virtues of the women who used it.

In a more daring move, Schmidt argues that representations of traditional heroic and divine myths on Classical pyxides have been refashioned in unusual ways (›pointierte Mythenbilder‹) in order to speak more directly to the Athenian women who used them and identified with certain figures. Thus, such scenes as

the Judgment of Paris, the Birth of Aphrodite, Danae on Seriphos, and the pursuit of Aegina by Zeus and of Oreithya by Boreas are all revised to give a female perspective on an old story. In the last decades of the fifth century, large female gatherings, for example of Muses or Nereids, occur on pyxides, their inscribed names giving them almost the quality of personifications. These give way in turn to actual gatherings of abstract personifications, usually in the retinue of Aphrodite. Schmidt rightly observes that the modern categories of myth, personification, and allegory do not work when applied too rigidly (as perhaps by this reviewer), for all convey similar messages to the girls and women to whom the vases were addressed. The chapter concludes with a look back to the lekythos, to show that its evolution, and that of the pyxis, toward vessels directed at women as users and viewers are more parallel and synchronized than has previously been recognized.

The chous, subject of Schmidt's third chapter, presents a very different set of questions, since its very name would seem to associate it with a specific festival, the Anthesteria, whose first day was known as »choes«. (For recent reconstructions of the festival published too late for Schmidt to take account of, see S. C. Humphreys, *The Strangeness of Gods* [Oxford 2004] 223–275; R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* [Oxford 2005] 290–305.) Yet in origin, as Schmidt shows, the chous did not have a ceremonial character and was but one of several types of oinochoe (wine jug) made for household use. He suggests that, while other oinochoai derived from metal prototypes, the chous more likely grew out of a coarse-ware vessel, and until well into the fifth century, more choes are simply black-glazed rather than decorated, with a few well-known exceptions such as the Amasis Painter's in New York (Metropolitan Mus. 1978.11.22; D. v. Bothmer, *The Amasis Painter and his World* [Malibu 1985] cat.33). Yet the standard volume of the full-sized chous argues for its use in the drinking competitions that we know formed part of the Anthesteria.

Like earlier scholars, Schmidt acknowledges that the miniature choes are a separate category that should not be lumped together with the full-sized model. As he points out, the miniatures have a brief lifespan of a few decades in the late fifth century and the beginning of the fourth, while the full-size chous was produced continuously over almost two centuries. There is general agreement that the miniatures, which virtually all depict young children (of both sexes), have some connection to children's participation in the Anthesteria. The most hotly debated issue is to what extent the full-size chous can be associated with the festival – rarely, sometimes, or almost always? The skeptical view, first outlined in a short article by Andreas Rumpf, has been argued in greatest detail by Richard Hamilton (*Choes and Anthesteria* [Ann Arbor 1992]). Schmidt, after a careful, diachronic review of all the evidence takes the more nuanced position that, when approaching the imagery of choes, one should look first for links with the

world of Dionysos and the consumption of wine (which are indeed quite prevalent) in the broader sense, rather than for specific illustrations of the festival, and that, in light of the wealth of Dionysian imagery, it would be counter-intuitive to deny any association with the Anthesteria, the god's most famous festival.

One of the most intriguing clues is Schmidt's observation that most depictions of a chous occur on choes, and even when depicted on other shapes, the chous is usually held by a reveler (*komast*). The implication is that, while other types of oinochoe were typically used at the symposium, the chous was carried by its owner with him wherever he went – a hint at the aitiology of the festival, involving Orestes and the distribution of individual choes to avoid sharing a vessel with the polluted matricide.

Schmidt is able to show that from the 470's on, there is an increasingly close association between red-figure choes and the Anthesteria, first in a large group that depict a *komast* traveling to or from the celebration, then, after the mid-century, with new themes even more closely tied to the festival from the workshops of the Eretria and Meidias Painters. One of these is the extraordinary and enigmatic one recently published by Olga Tzachou-Alexandri (in: J. H. Oakley / O. Palagia, *Athenian Potters and Painters* [Oxford 1997] 473–490), which includes Prometheus and Epimetheus, as well as a mask of Dionysos in a *liknon* (basket). The vase is here given an interesting reading in the context of the festival. Schmidt is able to include in his model scenes with no overt reference to the Anthesteria by suggesting that they conjure up a festival atmosphere, once that would remind viewers of their favorite events and activities, even if not at the Anthesteria itself. A special case is the assemblage of choes found in the tomb of Dexileos, including one that depicts the Tyrannicides statues (incorporating the heroes in the festivities), all, in Schmidt's interpretation, combining to define the »social person« of Dexileos and the celebrations he would have enjoyed in his short life.

In discussing the miniature choes, Schmidt contests a commonly held idea that they were gifts to children at a specific moment of initiation, for example at age three, since the skeletal remains found in the relevant child burials do not suggest a common age. Instead, he sees the vessels mainly as toys, used by children in life to let them participate in the festivities and later deposited, rather than made as grave-goods. The themes were chosen for the parents who bought them, not for the children who used them (cf. G. Ham in: *Rites of Passage in Ancient Greece*, ed. M. Padilla [Lewisburg 1999] 201–218).

The final chapter, titled »Hydrien. Gefäße für Wasser und Gefäße der Frauen«, is perhaps the most challenging for Schmidt's methodology, for while no one would doubt the first part of this heading, that the *hydria* is a water-jar, the specific association with women for which he wants to argue is more problematic. For the Archaic period, Schmidt canvasses a wide variety of

uses for the hydria, some limited to the metal ones (for instance as prizes in the games), but in many cases with the clay hydriai competing with the metal ones as a cheaper alternative. In the Classical period, the red-figure hydria is no longer found in households (or in Agora well deposits from houses), that is, it was not being used at private symposia, but rather in public dining.

There are also noticeable shifts in the iconography. The range of subjects on black-figure hydriai is not different from that on other shapes (all reflecting primarily aristocratic values, in Schmidt's view), with the striking exception of the many fountain-house scenes (seventy out of thousand-one-hundred black-figure hydriai) that represent an early instance of correlating shape or function with imagery. After reviewing the much-debated question of the status of the women in the fountain-house scenes, Schmidt concludes that the primary message is a celebration of the water and its many virtues, and less attention was paid to the individuals who carry it or bathe in it. And whoever they are, it is the women's attractiveness that is of greater concern than their social status. To the fraught question, how much ›reality‹ is there in scenes such as nude bathing women, Schmidt responds, »there is only the reality of the image«.

Schmidt sees the increasing focus on women begin with red-figure hydriai and kalpides (a very similar shape) of the early fifth century. In order to trace an iconographical development in exemplary fashion, he compares the range of scenes depicted by two painters a generation apart who both favored the hydria: the Leningrad Painter in the second quarter of the fifth century and the Phiale Painter in the third. The result is that the rather heterogeneous repertoire of the earlier painter has narrowed by the time of the later one to a focus on women's scenes, including housework, dance (probably in a cultic context rather than hetairai), erotic pursuits, and musicians. To the age-old question, ›hetairai or respectable women?‹, Schmidt answers that this is a modern way of categorizing ›situative‹ images, while the Greek painter and his audience were not interested in a clear differentiation of women's roles. For the mythological scenes, Schmidt attempts a reading as metaphors for women's lives, particularly as meditations on marriage in the novel treatment of such heroines as Andromeda and the Danaids.

By the time we reach the Washing Painter's hydriai in the 420's and later, the shift toward women's scenes is complete, often with allusions to marriage and the wedding. Schmidt is once again leery of seeing a lot of hetairai on the vases of this period, even when women are shown nude (and wearing a garter!). Rather, for him they refer chastely to the bridal bath, just as depictions of working with textiles allude to wedding preparations. Schmidt concludes that, like the chous (and unlike the loutrophoros, lebes or pyxis), the hydria was never associated with only one type of use, but that by the late fifth century, the messages it projected were very much aligned with those of the dedicated wedding vessels.

In sum, Stefan Schmidt's book offers an often original and illuminating new approach to the study of Attic vase imagery. Weaving together insights from semiotic analysis of (mainly) French classical scholarship with a rigorously applied focus on archaeological context, the method developed here represents a major step forward in our understanding of painted pottery and its communicative role in the complex and sophisticated culture of High Classical Athens.

Baltimore

Alan Shapiro