Attic Black-Glazed Pottery in the Collection of the Antikensammlung

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Athenian black-glazed pottery is among the material most often found in archaeological excavations. In Ancient Greece, it was common pottery for daily use, while figured pottery was mostly a luxury item. Based on analysis of mass finds at reference sites, especially in Athens, a detailed typology and chronology of Athenian black-glazed pottery has been established that makes it possible to identify and date not only the pottery itself, but also closed complexes and sites. The Antikensammlung (Collection of Classical Antiquities) in Berlin has a large and rich assemblage of this kind of ceramic, including all types of vases, as well as some rare and even unique specimens. As a result, a precise analysis of Athenian black-glazed pottery from the Antikensammlung offers not only a closer look into the everyday life of the ancient Greeks, but also a deeper understanding of ancient technologies, trade, and economic systems.

The Antikensammlung is one of the richest of its kind in Europe. Originally, it was the art collection of the kings of Prussia, assembled over the course of almost 350 years. The collection originated in the 16th century, when the prince-electors of Brandenburg began to amass their first collections of rarities, comprising souvenirs, antiques, and simple curiosities.

The Antikensammlung has a very comprehensive collection of Greek and Roman art, in particular ancient Greek art from the 10th to the 1st century B.C. It also holds numerous Roman objects, including many rarities from Etruria, Cyprus, and the Northern Black Sea region[1]. While Greek vases form a large part of the collection, plain black-glazed vessels make up only a small part of this pottery. This is not surprising, as the acquisition of figured wares was generally favoured because of their more attractive appearance. The permanent exhibition in the Altes Museum in Berlin displays only a few examples of plain black-glazed pottery (fig. 1).

The storeroom of the Antikensammlung, however, houses thousands of artworks from different periods and territories. Among these are many ancient Greek masterpieces, including a nearly unknown group of Attic black-glazed pottery, which was published only once in 1885 in two volumes by the curatorial assistant of the Berlin museums at the time, Adolf Furtwängler[2]. This fundamental work, titled »Beschreibung der Vasensammlung im Antiquarium«, provides information about the places and dates of acquisition, and sometimes the location of the finds. Unfortunately, such detailed information is available only for objects collected before and during Furtwängler's time at the museum.

Origin of the Objects

As part of the current project[3], I analysed some 200 vessels from the storeroom of the Antikensammlung. Most of the objects were acquired or donated, though part of the collection consists of material from archaeological excavations carried out by the Berlin museums. The majority of the collection, however, was bought at auction – including the objects selected for this article. The latter also include four vessels purchased at the beginning of the 20th century in what was then Southern Russia, indicating that they were found in the Black Sea region of Ukraine. The find-spots of two of these vases are known (Olbia Pontica and Panticapaeum in Taurica), while other items were found in Nola (Campania, Italy), Boeotia, Lindos (Rhodes, Greece), and Smyrna (Turkey). Unfortunately, for the remaining five objects selected for analysis here, no information about where they were found or acquired is available.

Attic Versus Atticised

The first aim of my preliminary analysis was to distinguish objects originated in Athens from those made in other centres, including Italy and Asia Minor, which produced very similar items in imitation of original Athenian vessels. The tendency to create works similar to Athenian ceramics is called ›Atticising‹, a term that sums up the phenomenon very

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1 U. Kästner, Zur Geschichte der Berliner Vasensammlung, in: M. Bentz (ed.), Vasenforschung und Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. CVA Beihefte 1 (Munich 2002) 133.

2 Adolf Furtwängler (1853–1907) was a German archaeologist, art historian, and museum director. He completed the catalogues of his predecessors, Konrad Levezow and Eduard Gerhard, and added newly acquired objects. In his 1885 catalogue, he also included black-glazed pottery from the collection. Furtwängler organised the objects by epochs, styles, genres, and shapes, and added interpretations of graffiti and inscriptions (A. Furtwängler, Beschreibung der Vasensammlung im Antiquarium [Berlin 1885]; Kästner 2002, 137). The numbers in his catalogue are now used as the inventory numbers for fine Greek and Etruscan ceramics acquired before 1885.

3 The International Scholarship Programme at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz (National Museums in Berlin – Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation).

1 Attic black-glazed pottery from the Antikensammlung (inv. 1966.31, F 2708, F 2576, V.I. 3978, V.I. 4982, 61)

succinctly[4]. The same trend likely also occurred in other categories of art. Yet Attic black-glazed wares have several important characteristics that distinguish them clearly from other pottery: in particular, a unique black glaze, a complex system of ornamentation, and certain morphological features. Moreover, classical Athenian pottery was usually made of fine orange-brown clay, the result of both mixing and transportation processes[5]. All these attributes make it possible to determine the centre of production of a vessel and its type and subtype, and to date it, in some cases to within a span of 10 to 25 years. The context of the finds plays an important role in distinguishing Attic from non-Attic material, of course, but the exact find-spot and other important information is rarely available for items in museum collections.

Italian objects generally have some features that make it possible to differentiate them from Athenian ones. First, the black circle and dot ornamentation usually found on the bottom of Attic vessels is painted less neatly or even omitted entirely on Italian ones. Moreover, the bottoms of Italian vessels usually have an extra layer of crimson tone wash. Finally, Italian pottery often has stamped ornamentation that is not typical of Attic works, reflecting the taste of local buyers instead.

The Etruscans were among the most active buyers of Attic wares in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. Yet, as previously mentioned, they also often produced similar ceramics themselves. From the time of the Peloponnesian War, Italian craftsmen started to create imitations of Athenian pottery, which were of high quality and able to compete with the originals. Nevertheless, the same amount of Athenian wares continued to be imported until the middle of the 4th century B.C.[6]. At the same time, Bucchero pottery, which was produced using a different technique, became more common in the region[7]. Yet, even a closer look at the Antikensammlung confirms the unbroken popularity of Athenian pottery among the Etruscans: more than half the collection was found in Etruria, most probably in graves. It is well established that Athenian potters produced very fine examples for wealthy consumers in the Italian market, as shown by the fact that expensive Athenian pottery was a basic part of the burial inventory in the tombs of wealthy Etruscans[8].

4 J. Hayes, Greek and Italian Black-Gloss Wares and Related Wares in the Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto 1984) 43.

5 Hayes 1984, 21.

6 Hayes 1984, 21.

7 F. Knauß – J. Gebauer (eds.), Black is beautiful. Griechische Glanztonkeramik (Munich 2019) 31.

8 M. A. Rizzo, Le anfore da trasporto e il commercio etrusco arcaico, 1 (Milan 1990) 89–92.

The Invention of Black-Glazed Pottery

Athenian black-glazed pottery was one of the most popular items in Ancient Greece. A plain version of the more expensive figured pottery, it was made using almost the same techniques. The tradition of making completely black-glazed pottery dates to the Archaic period. The first totally black vases were from Laconia, Eastern Greece, and Athens. In addition, workshops in Corinth, Boeotia, Elis, and southern Italy also produced similar wares. However, from the second half of the 6th century B.C. to the end of the 5th century B.C., Athens began to dominate the ceramics market. As a result, Attica also held a leading position in the production of black-glazed pottery during this period.

Black-glazed pottery was initially invented for a rather practical reason: glazed pottery was more useful than analogous pottery without glazing, the structure of which could be affected by leftover liquids and other residue due to the porosity of the clay. (I am referring here primarily to pottery used for drinking and holding oil). Also, it was much more pleasant to drink from a glazed vessel than an unglazed one, as it did not spoil the taste; even silver and bronze vessels added a metallic taste to beverages. This is another reason why plain black-glazed ceramics for daily use were so popular from the 6th to the 4th century B.C., with potters prioritising functionality over appearance[9].

The main typological basis for the analysis of the pottery in this article is the full typology of shapes of black-glazed pottery from the 6th to the 4th century B.C. developed by Lucy Talcott and Brian Sparkes[10]. They divided ceramics into shapes, then types and subtypes, based on morphological features (such as the shape of the handles, body, rims, or foot). There are variants of some types, as well as unique examples that deviate from known shapes. What sets this typology apart is the underlying idea of the constant development of form: before creating an excellent ware, the master had to experiment with many shapes in order to perfect a vessel. This explains why the modern typology includes many objects that occupy an intermediate place between different types. In addition, some shapes adopted the main features of others, guided by the trends of the time and the fashion for certain forms.

I began by dividing all the black-glazed material from the Antikensammlung into two large groups according to the morphological principle of ›open‹ and ›closed‹ types. While this categorisation does reflect functional aspects, it is based mainly on the morphology of the shapes. Following the typology of the Athenian Agora, ›open‹ types were analysed first: vessels used for drinking liquids (cups, skyphoi, and kantharoi) and for serving food (bowls, small bowls, and plates). The second group consists of ›closed‹ vessels, used for storing oils (such as lekythoi and askoi) and for holding or serving wine or water (oinochoes, pelikes, amphorae, kraters, and psykters). In addition, a group of vessels for special purposes (lekanides and pyxides), used to store various small items, such as cosmetics and jewellery, was singled out.

The most comprehensive examples from all groups in the collection were then selected for this article.

Skyphoi

The skyphos, used from the 6th to the 4th century B.C., was one of the most common – and capacious – shapes for drinking. The shape of the body changed only very slightly over a long period of time. It is composed of the following elements: a sturdy cup and two small handles, in which the thumbs rested while the cup itself was held in the hands. This construction with handles also made it very easy to pass the cup: the holder could insert a thumb into one handle, while another person could take the cup by the other handle. Also, the large size of the cup meant it was not necessary to refill it very often, reducing the need to handle other vessels. Finally, the handles were convenient for hanging skyphoi on the wall. Since ancient houses did not usually have special cupboards for storing pottery, it was attached to the wall, as can be seen in scenes on vase paintings[11].

The skyphos from the Antikensammlung chosen for analysis here, inv. 30848 (fig. 2), belongs to the Attic ›type A‹ and can be dated to 470–460 B.C.[12], as demonstrated by several analogous materials[13]. Skyphos ›type A‹ is an Athenian adaptation of earlier types, and the first examples of this shape appeared in the middle of the 6th century B.C. The example in question here is quite large, with a height of 10.3 cm and a diameter of 14.2 cm at the rim and 9.5 cm at the foot. It was purchased by Theodor Wiegand[14] at an art market in the south of the Russian Empire (now modern Ukrainian territory) in 1918. The museum database indicates Olbia Pontica as the find-spot. This is very plausible, as many ancient objects from sites in the Northern Black Sea region were sold at art markets, and governments were largely unable to regulate art trading at that time.

The skyphos is well preserved. It was restored from several pieces; both handles are made of plaster and were probably added during a recent restoration. The cup has many scratches on the walls, rims, and resting surface of the foot. This may indicate that the skyphos was used (and moved) a great deal. The black glazing is inhomogeneous: black and shiny on one side, fired red on the other, and brown on the foot. Such differences in colour may indicate firing mistakes (during the oxidation and reoxidation process in particular). There is a reserved zone on the bottom of the cup and on the resting surface of the foot, which is quite common for skyphoi from the 5th century B.C.

A notable feature of this skyphos is the inscription on the wall, just below the rim, which most probably indicates its owner. It reads »ΙΣΜΗΝΣΕΙΜΙΚΥΛΙΧ«, which means »I am the kylix of Ismene«. (Interestingly, the ancient Greeks referred to both cups and skyphoi as ›kylices‹, which was probably a term for drinking vessels in general.) A graffito (an incised mark) was the prevailing method of marking vessels for commercial purposes. It was also used to announce ownership or to inscribe dedications or numerical signs. It is not unusual to see an

9 Knauß – Gebauer 2019, 31.

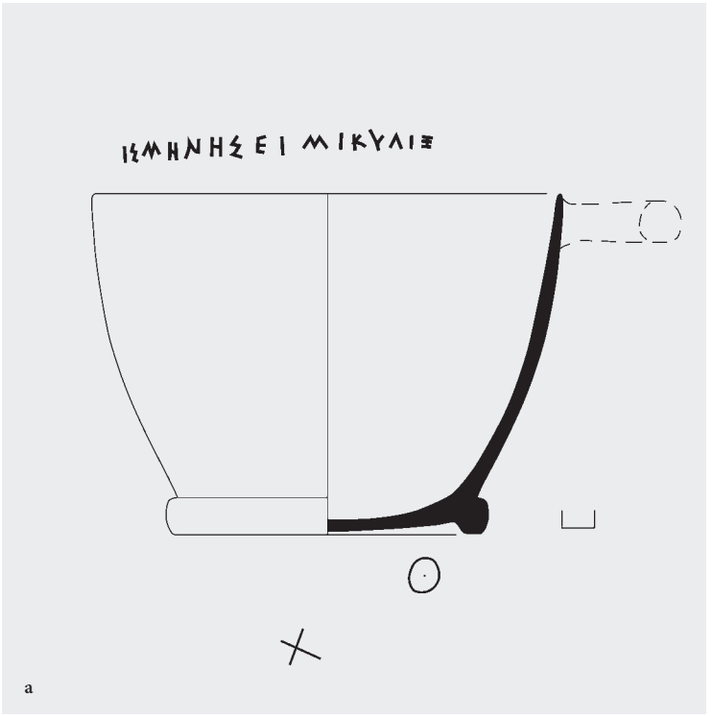
10 B. Sparkes – L. Talcott, Black and Plain Pottery of the 6th, 5th and 4th Centuries B.C. The Athenian Agora XII (Princeton 1970).

11 Knauß – Gebauer 2019, 16.

12 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 259 no. 342.

13 U. Knigge, Der Südhügel, Kerameikos 9 (Berlin 1976) 147 pl. 36, 8; CVA Altenburg 2 (Berlin 1960) pl. 80, 3; CVA Prague Université Charles 2 (Prague 1978) pl. 89, 1. 5.

14 Theodor Wiegand (1864–1936) was a German archaeologist who worked for the Berlin museums as a foreign director in Constantinople and was the science attaché at the German Embassy. From 1912 to 1930, Wiegand was director of the Antiquities Department of the Berlin museums. During his scientific career, he conducted many archaeological investigations around the world on behalf of the museum (Kästner 2002, 139).



2 Skyphos, 470–460 B.C., black-glazed pottery, Olbia Pontica (inv. 30848): a – drawing; b, c – photos

inscription indicating that a given vessel belonged to a given individual, which was simply an owner's mark[15]. The skyphos in question also has graffiti on the bottom: two crossed lines and a circle with a dot inside, which was common throughout the ancient world and could be a protective symbol[16]. ›XO‹ could also be interpreted as a monogram of chi (X) and omicron (O), but this is less likely here as they are incised separately. (›X‹ alone as a dipinto – a painted mark – could also simply serve to set one vessel apart from another.) Moreover, as the cup already has an inscription indicating the name of its owner, the graffiti cannot be an abbreviation of the latter's name. Consequently, we can assume that it is a commercial trademark, as ›X‹ on its own can also be a regular countermark[17].

Cups

The cup was the most popular shape for drinking. Its characteristic elements are a wide shallow body, two horizontal handles, and a high foot. There is a wide range of types of black-glazed cups. The shape owed its popularity to its elegance. But, unlike skyphoi, which were very comfortable to hold, cups were not. It was not especially easy to drink from such a broad shape while reclining during a symposium. This slowed down the consumption – and, consequently, the effect – of alcohol. The most popular shape for drinking in the 5th century B.C. was the ›type C‹ cup (with concave lip), whose shape – of the lip in particular – encouraged more careful drinking. This type was usually produced as plain black-glazed pottery[18].

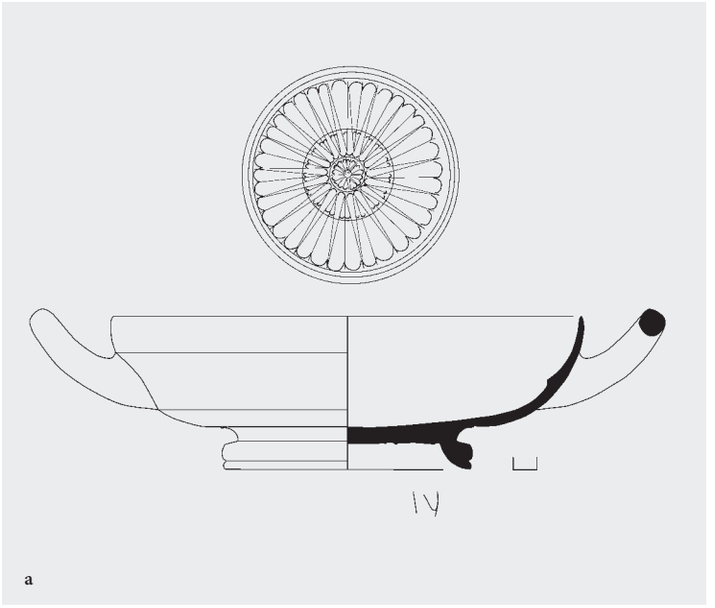
Besides stemmed cups, stemless cups were also very popular. Though more massive, they were much easier to produce and use in everyday life, as they did not break as easily. The most common cups were large ones (with a diameter of 15–22 cm at the rim and a height of 5–8 cm). The main trend seen in their development was the evolution from a large, massive shape to the more graceful forms of the late 5th century B.C. The stamped ornamentation became more complex;

15 A. Johnston, Trademarks on Greek Vases (Wiltshire 1979) 1. 5. 6.

16 V. Papanova – P. Dyatroptov, Граффити с пригородных усадеб Ольвии. Північне Причорномор'є в античну добу (Hraffyty s pryhorodnikh usadeb Olvyy. Pivnichne Prychornomoria za antychnoi doby) (Kyiv 2017) 87–90 nos. 21. 26. 33.

17 Johnston 1979, 207. 214.

18 Knauß – Gebauer 2019, 16–17.



3 Stemless cup, 450 B.C., black-glazed pottery (inv. 33526): a – drawing; b, c – photos

however, at the end of the 5th century B.C., the general quality deteriorated, and stereotypical standard stamps appeared. The group as a whole has the same proportions, and the types and subtypes are determined by certain features, such as the shape of the foot and of the rim.

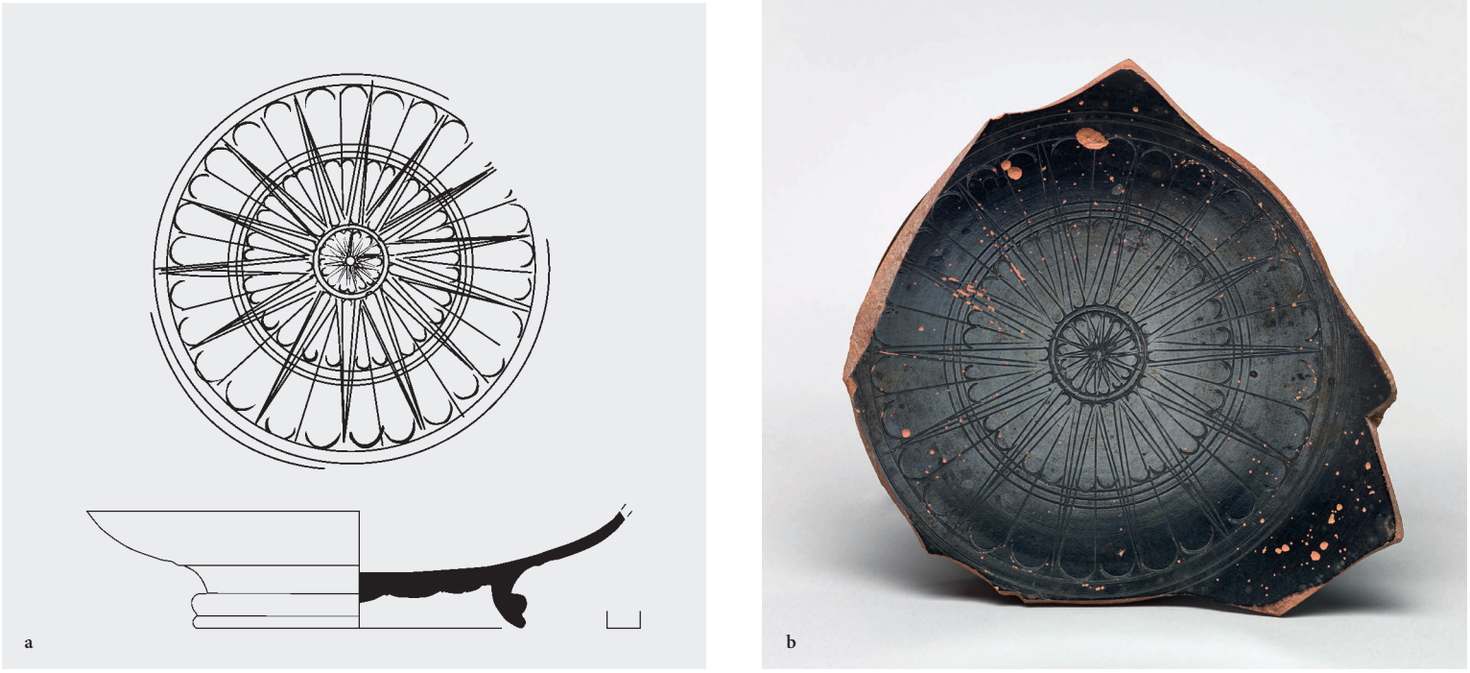
The next two examples from the collection are cups with a plain rim, subtype ›delicate class‹, which were mass produced from the second quarter of the 5th century B.C. The shape is usually composed of a shallow bowl with two horizontal handles, which are attached in the middle of the walls and rise to the level of the rim, almost in a straight line. There is a ring foot that is convex on both sides. There are usually reserved panels on the handles. The bottom is often decorated with complex, refined stamped ornaments. The morphology of the cups is more massive, which made them less fragile and thus easier to transport. Constituting a significant portion of exported pottery, this type of cup was sold all around the Mediterranean[19].

One of the examples from the Antikensammlung is the stemless cup, inv. 33526[20] (fig. 3), dated to about 450 B.C.[21]. This cup belongs to the large stemless type, with a height of 6.5 cm and a diameter of 20.2 cm at the rim and 11.2 cm at the foot. Restored from pieces, it is now presented as a whole. It is entirely covered by black glaze, which is usual for this type of stemless cup. The glazing is inhomogeneous: the outer surface of the cup is a shiny black, with some reddish and brownish areas; the inside is black and dull, which indicates misfiring.

The inside of the cup is decorated with a complex stamped ornamentation composed of three concentric levels. The first is a central rosette, a small circle surrounded by petals that are rounded at the top. This rosette is encircled by large tongues, also rounded at the top, followed by another tier of larger tongues. The concentric levels of decoration are separated by two incised lines, and the outermost level framed by three lines. The bottom of the cup features a graffito (›IV‹), most probably a monogram composed of iota (I) and upsilon (V). In this case, it could be either a commercial trademark or an abbreviation of its Etruscan owner's name. Similar inscriptions with these meanings can be seen in other collections[22]. Also, as there is no detailed information available about the find-spot of this cup, both options are possible, considering that many objects in the museum's collection come from Etruscan graves or settlements.

Another example of the large stemless, ›delicate class‹ cup type is inv. 30853 (fig. 4), which dates to ca. 430 B.C.[23]. It was found in Southern Russia – in other words, on a site in the Northern Black Sea region

19 Knauß – Gebauer 2019, 18.
20 CVA Altenburg 1960, pl. 80, 9.
21 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 269 nos. 483. 484. 490.
22 Johnston 1979, 225.
23 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 269 no. 490.



4 Large stemless ›delicate class‹ cup, ca. 430 B.C., black-glazed pottery, Northern Black Sea region (inv. 30853): a – drawing, b – photo

(now modern Ukrainian territory) – and bought by Theodor Wiegand in 1918[24]. Only the bottom part of the cup is preserved. It is of regular size for this type: the fragment has a height of 3.3 cm, and the foot is 11.2 cm in diameter. The surface of the bottom is moulded, which is characteristic of the second half of the 5th century B.C. The glaze is black and shiny, fired red on one side of the bottom. There are many scratches on the cup, probably the result of active use of the ware; in some places, the glaze is chipped. An intricate decoration adorns the inside of the cup: three tiers of a stamped geometrical motif, almost identical to the previous example. Here, too, the central rosette is surrounded by two incised lines, and the only difference is that the second and third level of decoration are separated by three, not two, incised lines.

In addition to stemmed and stemless cups, many other types of intermediate vessels exist that can be placed somewhere in the middle of the current typological scheme: cup-skyphos and cup-kantharos, for example. Ancient potters were always trying to create new shapes based on popular forms, and to make them more useful and practical for daily use. These attempts sometimes led to the invention of new types and subtypes. One such example is the cup-skyphos, a very common shape for drinking that has an intermediate form between the skyphos and the stemless cup. It usually has a wide bowl, much deeper than a stemless cup, but with handles that are morphologically similar to those of the latter, attached to the central part of the walls.

The example from the Antikensammlung, inv. V.I. 4982, 61[25] (fig. 5), is a cup-skyphos with heavy walls[26] dated to 400–380 B.C.[27]. In general, this type, produced between the second quarter of 5th century B.C. and ca. 380 B.C., was less popular than the thin-walled kind. The example here was bought at auction from the collection of Merle de Massonneau in Yalta on 14 June 1907[28]. The place of finding is Southern Russia (the Northern Black Sea region). Resembling a stemless cup, it has massive walls and a deep body. The thickened rim bends outward. The handles are attached to the bowl in the middle and rise to the level of the rim (though the body is slightly asymmetric, with one handle stopping 0.5 cm below the rim). The cup-skyphos has a height of 6.8 cm and a diameter of 13.5 cm at the rim and 7 cm at the foot. Rather well preserved, it has a shiny black glaze that indicates a high quality of production.

The vessel is decorated with reserved zones on the bottom, with a central dot and four concentric circles. A reserved and incised line emphasises the junction between the body and the foot. The cup has a small, detailed stamp in the middle of the bowl, consisting of five linked palmettes within a circle of enclosed ovules surrounded by an incised line. The glaze has chipped off from almost the entire area of the motif,

24 Kästner 2002, 139.

25 U. Kästner – M. Langner – B. Rabe (eds.), Griechen, Skythen, Amazonen (Berlin 2007) 67 no. 26.

26 CVA Pilsen, Musée de La Boheme de L'ouest 1 (Pilsen 2000) pl. 26, 4–6; P. Alexandrescu, La céramique d'époque archaïque et classique (VII–IV s.), Histria 4 (Bucharest 1978), 87–88 pl. 65, 561, 567b; U. Knigge, Der Bau Z, Kerameikos 17 (Munich 2005) 150 no. 299, 156 nos. 351. 352.

27 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 280 nos. 621. 622.

28 Alexandre Merle de Massonneau (dates of birth and death unknown) was a banker and the owner of a large collection of rarities. He lived in Yalta, Crimea, at the beginning of the 20th century. The Antikensammlung purchased many ancient pieces from him from the territory of what was then the Russian Empire, in particular objects found in the location of the ancient cities of Panticapaeum and Olbia (Kästner 2002, 139).

5 Cup-skyphos with heavy walls, 400–380 B.C., black-glazed pottery, Northern Black Sea region (inv. V.I. 4982, 61): a – drawing; b, c, d – photos

making the incised part of the design even more visible. The cup also has a graffito on the bottom: a loop drawn with plain lines, most probably a seller's mark[29].

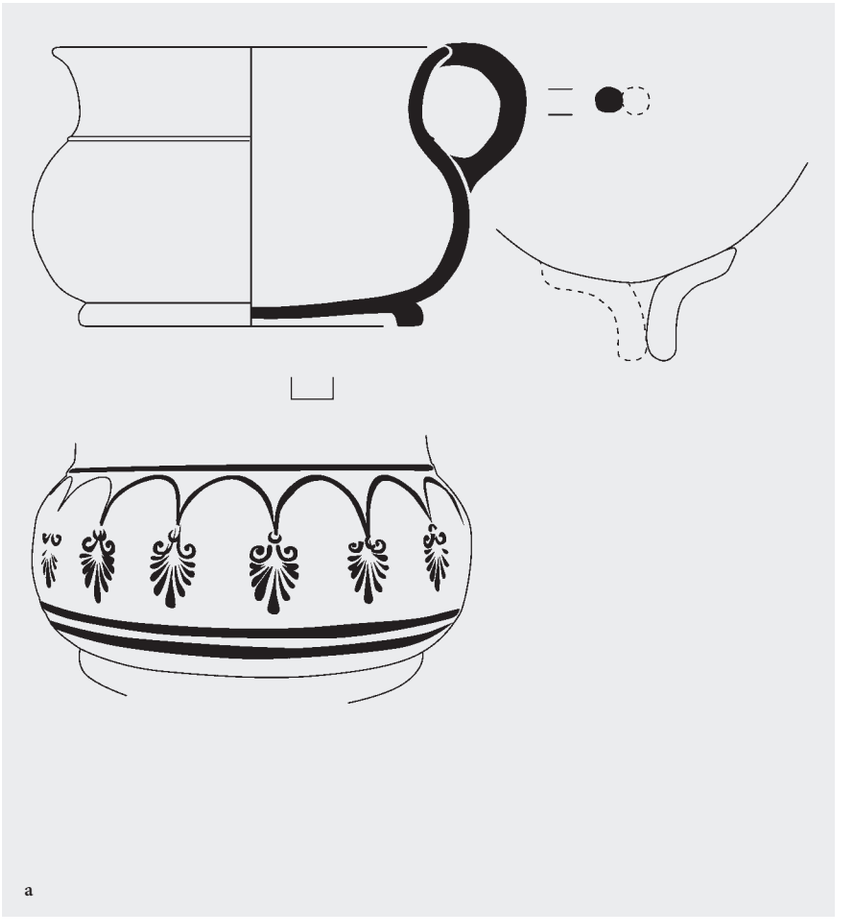
Mugs

Another common shape for drinking was the mug, which was quite easy to produce and can be considered both an ›open‹ and a ›closed‹ shape. A similar type of vessel is still popular today. With a capacious bowl that stands on a flat bottom and has one handle, it was an ideal shape for travellers.

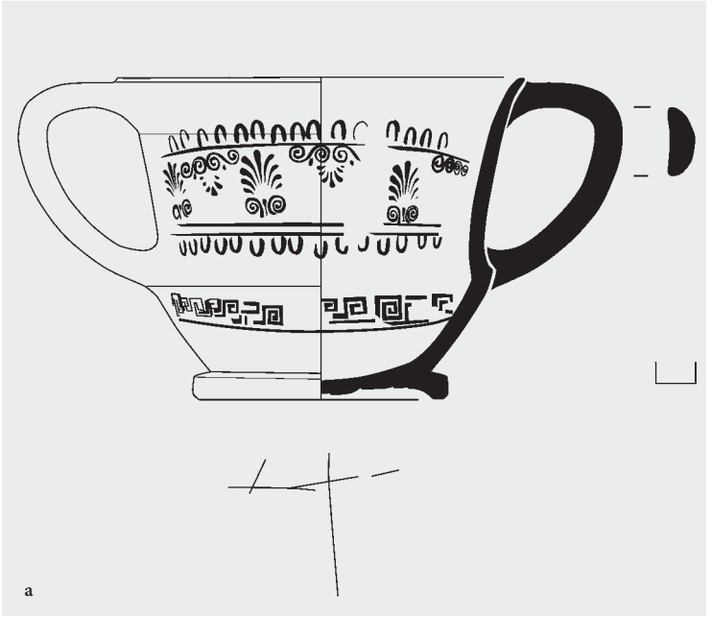
The mug from the Antikensammlung, inv. 1964. 5 (fig. 6), dates to ca. 430 B.C.[30] and belongs to the ›Phidias‹ type[31]. It has a height of 7 cm and a diameter of 10.3 cm at the rim and 9.1 cm at the foot. The bowl is well preserved, but one part of the double handle is missing. The black glaze is inhomogeneous, red in colour on one side of the body (where it was misfired) and a deep lustrous black on the other.

This piece merits special attention due to its rare external decoration: a stamped motif consisting of twenty linked palmettes that covers almost the entire outer surface of the wall. In addition, the palmettes are connected by small incised arcs that reach up to a horizontal line encircling the body. The bottom is reserved and decorated with a black central dot surrounded by a small black circle, another reserved circle, and then a black band. The resting surface of the ring foot is also reserved.

29 Kästner – Langner – Rabe 2007, 67.
30 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 252 no. 230.
31 CVA Pilsen 2000, pl. 23, 2. 3 – similar small pot with stamped ornament.



6 Mug, ca. 430 B.C., black-glazed pottery (inv. 1964.5): a – drawing, b, c – photos



7 Kantharos, 450–425 B.C., black-glazed pottery (inv. F 2778): a – drawing, b – photo

Kantharoi

The kantharos is the second type of popular ›open‹ black-glazed drinking vessel. Characteristic of the form are two vertical handles that rise to the level of the rim. The Antikensammlung has a nice example, inv. F 2778 (fig. 7), with external stamped decoration[32]. It belongs to the sessile kantharoi[33] subtype with low handles and dates to 450–425 B.C.[34]. This type was most common in the 5th century B.C.

Regarding the history of this particular kantharos, unfortunately we know only that it comes from the Gerhard Collection[35]. Very inaccurately restored from fragments, it has a height of 9 cm, with a diameter of 11 cm at the rim and 10.6 cm at the foot (making it very symmetrical and stable). It has a shiny black glaze, and the walls show traces of its application by brush. The body consists of a compact bowl, the upper part of which is cylindrical, with walls that expand slightly upwards, while the lower part is shallow and hemispherical. The handles rise from the junction between the two parts of the bowl and reach the rim. The foot is massive, comprising three levels, the thickest and widest in the middle. The vessel is completely glazed and has a moulded bottom.

There is a graffito on the bottom, in the shape of a few crossed lines, very carelessly rendered. It could be a protective symbol of some sort or have no meaning at all. A complex design covers almost the entire external surface of the wall, demonstrating how the ancient masters tried to use every possible surface for decoration, and how successfully this was done in the case of this particular concave wall. The stamped motif was applied in two distinct sections: an upper decoration on the main part of the body, and more ornamentation on the lower part, just below the rib. The first consists of a line of ovules above an incised line; below this are upside-down palmettes with double volutes that create a spiral, interspersed with three large palmettes, beneath which are two incised lines and a row of upside-down ovules. The lower section of the motif consists of a meander pattern between two incised lines. Due to the poor condition of the kantharos, some of the decoration is missing, but, judging from the main parts, it is likely that the design appeared on both sides of the vessel.

Lekythoi

Another major group of vessels are ceramics for oils and balms: lekythoi, aryballoi, askoi, alabastra, and amphoriskoi. Aryballoi were usually used by men at the palestra and baths, while alabastra were generally used by women. Lekythoi, the most common type of container for storing oil, were used by both women and men. They are often found in graves, as they were used to anoint the deceased and as part of burial inventories. Their shape made them very suitable for pouring oil by drops[36].

The two lekythoi from the Antikensammlung presented here both have rather interesting external stamped ornamentation. They are of the squat lekythos type, a shape that was especially popular for black-glazed pottery in the second half of the 5th century B.C., with a bulbous body, wide foot, and tall neck with a small open mouth. The body, which can differ slightly in shape (as demonstrated by the two examples of different sizes here), always has a noticeable curve with sloping shoulder[37].

The first example of the squat lekythos type, inv. F 2763[38] (fig. 8), dates to ca. 425–400 B.C.[39]. It was found in Smyrna (today Izmir, Turkey) and gifted to the museum collection by Friedrich Spiegelthal[40]. The vessel is complete and well preserved, with a height of 12 cm and a diameter of 3.3 cm at the rim and 5 cm at the foot. Rather poorly fired, it is orange in some areas, shiny black in others. The glaze is poorly preserved, chipped in some places. The lekythos also has an interesting morphological feature: the mouth is slightly deformed, probably because it was accidentally distorted while being made. The bottom is reserved.

The vessel features complex decoration, in the form of a stamped ornament that covers almost the entire surface of the walls. It consists of three bands of palmettes: a row of 15 palmettes at the base of the neck; then, lower down, a band of 27 palmettes followed by a line of vertical volutes, and, finally a third band of 30 palmettes (upside down); the palmettes on the main part of the body are connected to each other by overlapping arcs.

The other example is the squat lekythos, inv. 4982, 64 (fig. 9), dated to ca. 425–400 B.C.[41] Like the cup-skyphos discussed above (fig. 5), it was also bought at auction from the collection of Merle de Massonneau in Yalta on 14 June 1907. Found in Panticapaeum (now the location of the modern Ukrainian city of Kerch in Crimea), it is smaller than the previous example, with a height of 8.1 cm and a diameter of 2.6 cm at the rim and 4.7 cm at the foot. The shape is fully preserved and covered entirely with shiny black glaze, except on the bottom, which is reserved.

The body is decorated with a complex stamped motif comprising several tiers. The first line of palmettes, upside down, is located just below the neck. The largest portion of the ornament covers the main part of the walls. It is composed of two bands of palmettes: 16 on top and 21 (upside down) on the bottom. Between these two rows of palmettes is an additional row of smaller horizontal palmettes, framed above and below by two incised lines. These horizontal palmettes are unusual in shape, resembling lotuses more than palmettes and comprising two volutes, a central heart shape, two pairs of small petals, and three large petals.

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32 Furtwängler 1885, 787 no. 2778.

33 CVA Prague 1978, pl. 65, 1; F. Schippa, Officine ceramiche falische. Ceramica a vernice nera nel Museo di Civita Castellana (Bari 1980) pl. 14, 216.

34 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 281 no. 633.

35 Friedrich Wilhelm Eduard Gerhard (1795–1867) was an employee of the Antikensammlung, for whom the museum created the position of ›archaeologist‹, which only one other person held after him (U. Kästner – D. Saunders, Dangerous Perfection. Ancient Funerary Vases from Southern Italy [Los Angeles 2016] 35). He received permission to travel and acquire rarities on behalf of the museum. In 1837, he was appointed curator of ancient vases at the Königliche Museen zu Berlin (Royal Museums in Berlin) (Kästner 2002, 136; Furtwängler 1885, 21).

36 Knauß – Gebauer 2019, 26.

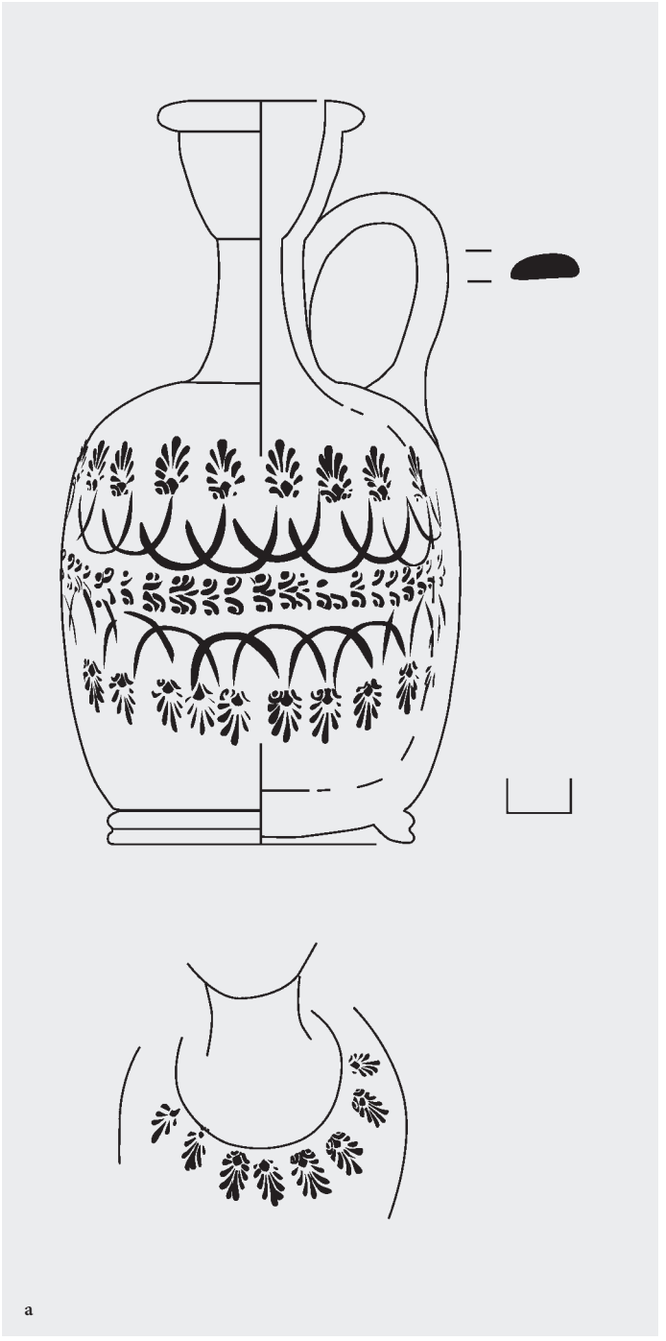
37 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 153.

38 Furtwängler 1885, 786 no. 2763.

39 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 314 no. 1120.

40 Friedrich Wilhelm Spiegelthal (1829–1897) was a Swedish consul in Smyrna (Turkey). In 1873, he donated a large collection of ancient pottery to the museum (Furtwängler 1885, 25).

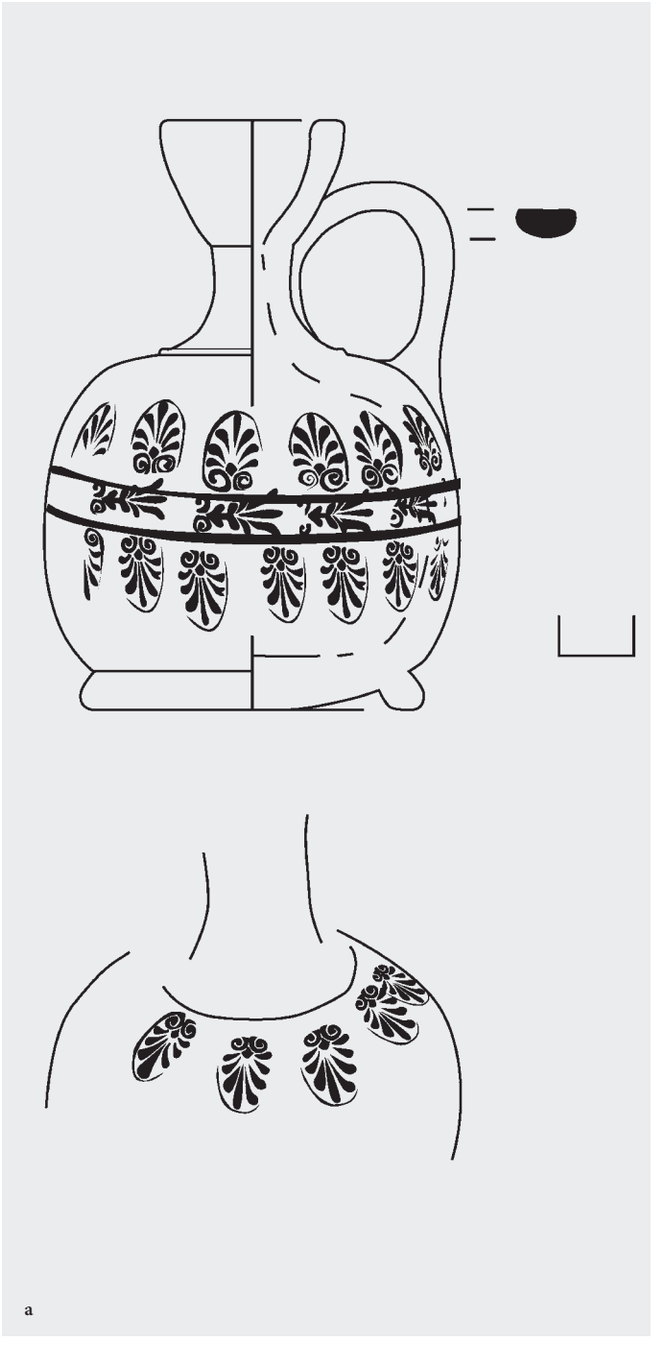
41 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 314 no. 1120 – similar shape; CVA Altenburg 1960, pl. 81, 8 – similar piece from the beginning of the 4th century B.C.



a

b

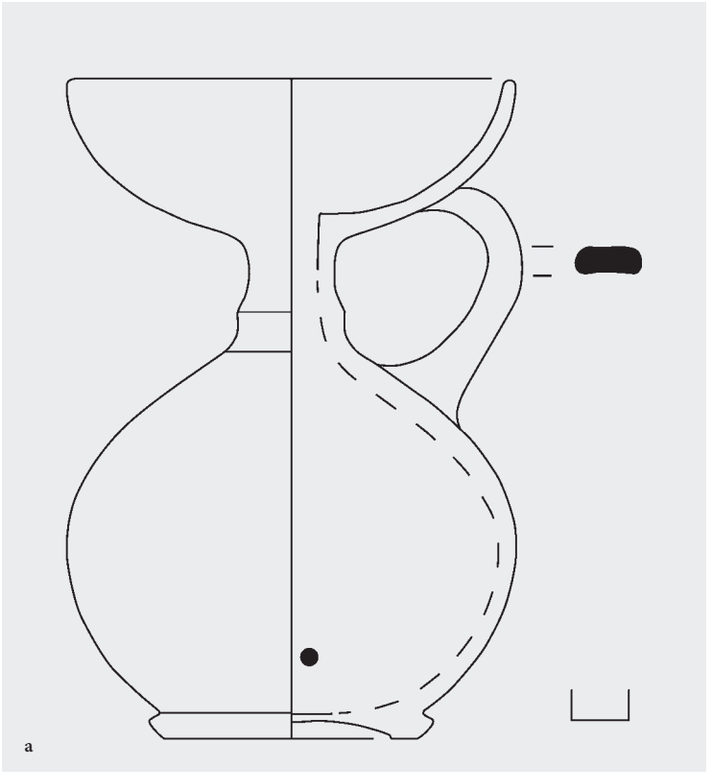
8 Squat lekythos, ca. 425–400 B.C., black-glazed pottery, Smyrna (inv. F 2763): a – drawing, b – photo



a

b

9 Squat lekythos, ca. 425–400 B.C., black-glazed pottery, Panticapaeum (inv. V.I. 4982, 64): a – drawing, b – photo



10 ›Talcott‹ lekythos, 4th century B.C., black-glazed pottery, Thebes (inv. F 2708): a – drawing, b – photo

The next lekythos, inv. F 2708 (fig. 10), is a perfume pot dating to the 4th century B.C., a rare example of an Athenian oil flacon[42]. Scholars sometimes call this type of vessel an ›aryballos‹[43], but in modern terminology it is known as a ›Talcott‹ type lekythos. The shape appeared at the turn of the 5th to 4th century B.C., originating in Athens in clay. Subsequently, local potters in Southern Italy and Sicily started to produce the same type. The shape later became popular in metal[44]. Though not a common type of lekythoi, it was found all around the Mediterranean, in the Northern Black Sea region and in central Greece, and even in Macedonia and in Egypt.

The perfume pot here was found in Thebes (Boeotia) and acquired by museum workers in 1879[45]. The vessel is complete and well preserved, with a shiny black glaze. It is 11.8 cm in height, with a diameter of 8 cm at the rim and 5 cm at the foot. The pot has a low ring foot, pear-shaped body, and broad saucer rim with a flat edge on top. There is a slight ridge at the junction of the body and the neck. A heavy strap handle with squared sides spans from the shoulder to the middle of the mouth. The pot is glazed all over, except for the bottom, which is decorated with a circle, and at the junction of the body and the foot, where there is an orange band in reserve. Another interesting feature of this perfume pot is that it contains a clay ball inside the body, which probably served mainly to mix oil, though it can also be used as a rattle.

Amphoriskoi

Amphoriskoi – small amphorae that precisely imitate the shape of large amphorae in miniature – were also used to store oil. Ranging in height from 6 cm to 17 cm, some were produced as black-glazed pottery. Generally, only the most precious oils were kept in amphoriskoi. Black-glazed amphoriskoi were very popular and always had a fairly standard shape comprising the following elements: an egg-shaped body, a carefully crafted profiled foot requiring a special stand for stability, a narrow neck with a ›collar‹ at the junction of the shoulder and the neck, two slender vertical handles from the shoulder to the neck, and a bulging throat with projecting lips that are flat on top. The mouth is small enough to be closed with a cork or a sponge[46].

42 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 315 no. 1201; P. Themelis – G. Touratsoglou, *Οι Τάφοι του Δερβενίου* (Athens 1997) 75 no. B23 pl. 86 – same shape, made of metal.

43 Hayes 1984, 74 no. 123.

44 N. Zimmermann, Beziehungen zwischen Ton- und Metallgefäßen spätklassischer und frühhellenistischer Zeit. Internationale Archäologie 20 (Rahden 1998) 42. 45. 164.

45 Furtwängler 1885, 776 no. 2708.

46 U. Knigge, Die Eridanos-Nekropole, AM 81 (Berlin 1966) 112–135, suppl. pl. 40, 3; Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 155–157; G. E. Mylonas, *Το δυτικόν νεκροταφείον της Ελευσίνας (Athens 1*975) suppl. pl. 315 no. 423, 371 no. 749; CVA Pilsen 2000, pl. 30, 2. 4; I. Chechulina, До деякий питань типології аттичного чорнолакового посуду закритого типу. Перший всеукраїнський археологічний з'їзд, матеріали роботи (Do deiakykh pytan typolohii attychnoho chornolakovoho posudu zakrytoho typu. I Vseukrainskyi arkheolohichnyi zizd: materialy roboty) (Kyiv 2019) 411.

11 Amphoriskos, 430–420 B.C., black-glazed pottery, Lindos (inv. F 2761): a – drawing, b – photo

The first example of this shape is an amphoriskos, inv. F 2761 (fig. 11), dated to 430–420 B.C.[47]. It was found at Lindos (Rhodes Island, Greece) and purchased in 1881[48]. Of medium size, it has a height of 13.2 cm and a diameter of 3 cm at the mouth and 1.5 cm at the foot. Restored from fragments, it is poorly preserved. The glaze is mostly black, but was fired red in one area of the wall.

The amphoriskos has several rows of elaborate geometrical ornamentation. The first part of the stamped motif is a ring of ovules under the neck of the pot. The middle of the wall features, from top to bottom: two bands of ovules, two incised lines, a meander pattern, two more incised lines, a band of volutes (carelessly rendered), and, finally, two more bands of upside-down ovules (the ovules both above and below are separated by short vertical incised lines).

The second example of an amphoriskos from the Antikensammlung, inv. V.I. 3188 (fig. 12), dates to ca. 420 B.C.[49]. According to the museum database, it was bought by a certain Sarresbonne[50] in 1890. The vessel is well preserved. The glaze is black and shiny, though one side is fired brown, indicating mistakes during the firing process. Compared to other examples, this amphoriskos is rather small, with a height of 8.8 cm and a diameter of 2.5 cm at the mouth and 1 cm at the foot.

The flacon features an interesting and finely executed stamped ornamentation, applied in several rows, as was traditionally done. First, there is a ring of ovules below the neck. Next, a band of palmettes (reminiscent of the unusual palmettes from fig. 9, lekythos inv. V.I. 4982. 64), followed by a geometrical meander pattern and a band of upside-down palmettes.

The third example of a stamped amphoriskos, inv. V.I. 3978 (fig. 13), stands apart from the others because of the ribs on its walls. It is dated to 430–420 B.C.[51]. It is also bigger than the others, with a height of 16.7 cm and a diameter of 3.4 cm at the mouth and 2.4 cm at the foot. The shape was restored and is complete, except for part of one handle, which is missing. The glaze is a lustrous black.

What is most interesting about this piece is its decoration. Almost the entire surface is covered with stamps or ribs, making full use of every morphological feature of the ware. The first part is just below the neck: a ring of ovules and a geometrical meander pattern, framed above and below by two incised lines. The central part of the body is decorated with carefully executed vertical ribs that extend roughly halfway down the vessel. Finally, the lower part of the body features a geometric meander pattern, incised line, row of separated volutes, band of palmettes, and another ring of upside-down palmettes, which are connected by incised semicircles. As a whole, the elements of the stamped decoration and ribs are rendered in a uniquely delicate way.

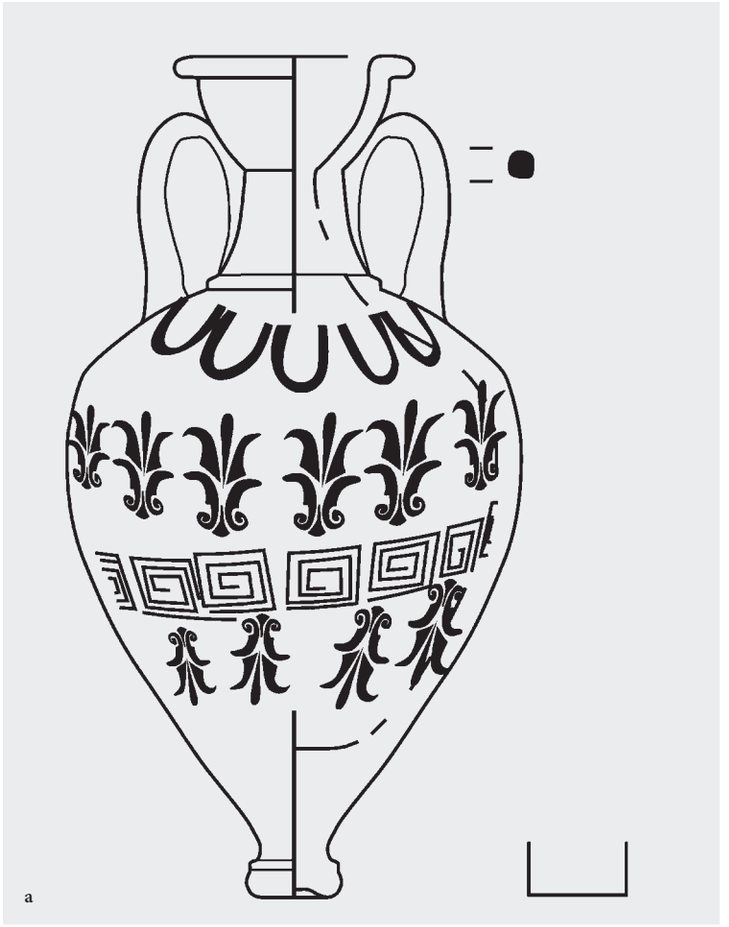
47 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 316–317 no. 1150 – similar shape; 1151. 1155 – similar stamp.

48 Furtwängler 1885, 785 no. 2761.

49 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 317 no. 1159 – similar shape; 1155 – stamp; CVA Pilsen 2000, pl. 30, 2. 3 – similar shape, from the end of the 5th century B.C. – stamp is identical; Mylonas 1975, suppl. pl. 371 no. 749.

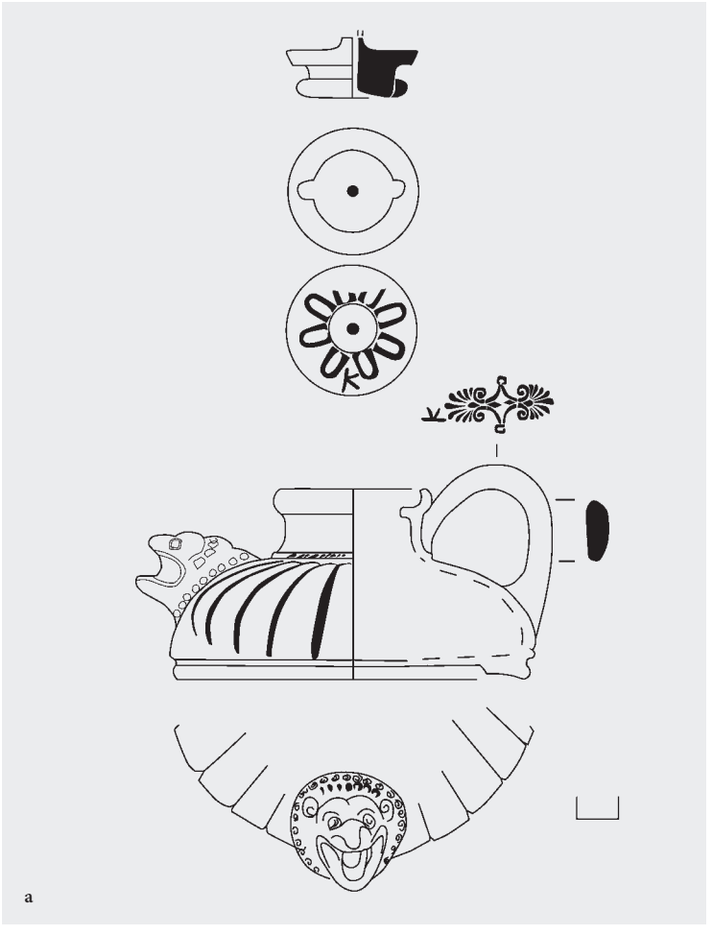
50 Unfortunately, we do not have any additional information about this individual or the place of acquisition.

51 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 316–317 no. 1150 – similar shape; 1150. 1153 – similar stamp.



12 Amphoriskos, ca. 420 B.C., black-glazed pottery (inv. V.I. 3188): a – drawing, b – photo

13 Amphoriskos, 430–420 B.C., black-glazed pottery, (inv. V.I. 3978): a – drawing; b, c – photos



a

b

14 ›Lion askos‹, 400–350 B.C., black-glazed pottery (inv. 1966.31): a – drawing, b – photo

Askoi

Askoi were used for similar purposes as amphoriskoi – that is, above all to store expensive oils, liquids, honey, and incense. They were also used to pour oil into lamps and libations at funeral ceremonies. There are many types of this shape. Originally, it was made without a lid. However, as the form developed, so did the wish to close the upper part of the askos, leading potters to create another type that included a lid. The spout can be made in the shape of a lion's head or as a tube. A characteristic feature is the lid, which has two semicircles on the inside, one opposite the other, to seal the askos when the lid is placed on it, so that nothing can spill. Askoi are usually completely covered with glaze. In general, this type belongs to the first half of the 4th century B.C.[52].

A unique item from the collection is the ›lion askos‹, inv. 1966.31 (fig. 14), a black-glazed relief askos (or guttus) with a lid and stamped ornamentation, dated to 400–350 B.C.[53]. The morphology of the vessel is unique, with a spout in the form of a lion's head in relief. (The tradition of using relief decoration on black-glazed pottery came from metal production: more expensive metal wares were usually decorated with additional figure elements, to cover junctions or simply to add attractive components[54].) The askos consists of a capacious closed bowl with a symmetrical opening on top (for adding oil) and a high round band handle, oval in cross-section. The bottom is almost completely flat; the low ring foot with a broad sloped resting surface has a double curve that projects slightly on the outer face. The askos is 4.8 cm in height, with a diameter of 4 cm at the mouth and 9 cm at the foot. The hole of the spout is very small, making it convenient for pouring oil. The lion's head is sculpted very professionally, with clearly rendered eyes, nose, ears, and an open mouth that forms the hole of the spout. The animal's mane is also clearly depicted. The pot is well preserved; only small parts of the lid are missing, and there is some chipping on the rim. The glaze is shiny and black.

The lid has some special features: the top is decorated with a ring of eight ovules and an incised ›K‹ (which also appears on the handle of the askos). This may serve to indicate the correct position to open it: the two letters must be turned 45 degrees to each other for the lid to open. Indeed, the lid is made specifically to prevent its easy opening, with special protrusions that make it impossible to open without turning it. The body is decorated with vertical ribs that end in semicircles at the shoulder. The bottom is reserved, with some additional decoration in the form of a dot and three lines. The neck is decorated with a ribbon pattern in relief. On the handle, in addition to the aforementioned ›K‹, there is also a stamp consisting of two palmettes mirroring each other.

A few direct parallels to this piece exist from the Northern Black Sea region. One is from Olbia Pontica, also with a spout in shape of lion's head[55]. Another is a red-figure askos from Chersonesus, which is

52 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 157–160.

53 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 319 nos. 1189–1191.

54 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 15.

55 I. Chechulina, Аттична чорнолакова кераміка з експозиції Миколаївського обласного краєзнавчого музею »Старофлотські казарми« (Attychna chornolakova keramika z ekspozytsii Mykolaivskoho oblasnoho kraieznavchoho muzeiu »Staroflotski kazarmy«) Eminak, 1.33 (Mykolaiv 2021) 204–218.

identical in morphology and depicts lions on the body, a rather interesting detail[56]. Both vessels date to the 4th century B.C. Very similar relief decoration in the form of a lion's head can also be found on a black-glazed oinochoe from Olbia Pontica[57] and on a guttus with a lid from the necropolis of Apollonia Pontica[58]. A comparable vessel dated to 400–350 B.C. is stored in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek in Munich (no. 207)[59].

It is worth noting that the Antikensammlung has other examples of figured askoi of the guttus type with spouts in the shape of a lion's head, but they all come from Italian workshops (for example, V.I. 4817, F 3822, F 3823 – which can also be used as a sieve). This shows that this type of askos was also very popular in the Italian region, where it was actively produced in imitation of the Attic originals.

Lekanides and Pyxides

The next group of black-glazed pottery consists of ceramics used for special purposes – namely to store jewellery, cosmetics, or other small items: lekanis and pyxis. We will take a closer look here only at the first category.

The shape of lekanides was quite stable, changing little over time and comprising a broad bowl, two band-shaped horizontal handles, and a lid (which was sometimes omitted). Lekanides could be used both for ordinary household purposes and for storing toiletries. The black-glazed version probably also sometimes served as tableware. Lekanides were a common wedding gift. In some cases, they were used as a part of burial inventories. Figured pottery usually shows images describing women's lives. It was also not rare to find jewellery and cosmetics inside such pots. Based on this, it is possible to conclude that such ceramics were used mostly by women and girls[60].

The lekanis with a lid and ribbon-shaped handles was the most common type and the most widespread in the second half of the 5th century B.C. After 400 B.C., red-figured lekanides became more popular, so fewer plain black-glazed ones were produced, and, over time, they gradually disappeared[61].

The lekanis with a lid in the Antikensammlung, inv. F 2576 (fig. 15), dates to ca. 425–400 B.C.[62]. Found in Nola (in what is now the region of Campania in Italy), it was part of the Koller Collection[63] before being acquired by the museum in 1828[64]. Its body is of standard middle size, with a height of 5.1 cm and a diameter of 11 cm at the rim and 6.2 cm at the foot. The diameter of the lid is 11.9 cm, its height 4.5 cm. The pot, presented in its complete form (lid and body), is well preserved. The lustrous black glaze is in rather good condition, with scratches only on some parts of the body, probably from use. The lekanis has reserved zones on the resting surface of the foot and on the bottom. The latter is decorated with a dot, a small circle, and a band. The top of the rim is also reserved. There are a few additional reserved areas on the lid (the resting surface, outer edge and interior of the handle, and a cone inside the lid).

What is most fascinating about this vessel is how it was repaired in ancient times. Repairing damaged pottery was common practice in antiquity. If a pot was considered to be of a certain value, its owners would try to prolong its life by mending it, taking great care to make these repairs as inconspicuous as possible[65]. Moreover, repair was common not only for luxury items, but also for regular pots, including plain ones and kitchenware. This once again demonstrates that the practical utility of things was a priority in ancient times. As a result, even if a pot was not special or of any particular material value, an attempt was still made to use it for as long as possible, to avoid waste. While aesthetic aspects were also considered, they were not the primary aim of repair[66]. What purpose a vessel served might change after it was mended – especially in the case of amphorae and other wares originally used to hold liquids. However, this was not an issue for lekanides, which were used to store dry goods, so they could continue to be used for the same purpose for decades following a repair.

The lekanis in question was damaged and repaired by ancient craftsmen in the manner typical of ancient times[67]. First, holes were drilled into the lid – two pairs of holes (one pair each toward either side of the lid) and three holes in the centre. Staples made of lead were then used to join the two parts so the lid could be used again. They were cast in the holes of the pot to create a tighter connection[68]. They comprise three elements: two plain, approximately 1.5 cm staples and a V-shaped one, each ›arm‹ of which is approximately 2.5 cm. The former connects the two parts of the lid on either side, while the latter, whose shape is reminiscent of an anchor, connects it beneath the handle.

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56 H. Belov, Керамика конца 5-4 веков до н.э. из некрополя Херсонеса. Труды Государственного Эрмитажа XVII (Keramyka kontsa 5–4 v. do n.e. yz nekropolia Khersonesa) Trudi hosudarstvennoho ermytazha, XVII (St. Petersburg 1976) 113 fig. 1.

57 E. Levi, Итоги раскопок Ольвийского теменоса и агоры (1951–1960). Ольвия. Теменос и Агора (Itogi raskopok ol'vijskogo temenosa i agory (1951–1960). Ol'viya. Temenos i agora) (Moscow, Leningrad 1964) 16

58 T. Ivanov, Античная керамика с некрополя Апполонии. Апполония. Разкопките в некропола на Аполония през 1947–1949 г. (Antichnaya keramika iz nekropolya Apollonii. Apoloniya. Razkopite v nekropola na Apoloniya prez 1947–1947) (Sofia 1963) 506 pl. 110.

59 Knauß – Gebauer 2019, 172 no. 207.

60 Knauß – Gebauer 2019, 24–25.

61 CVA Altenburg 1960, pl. 80, 13. 14; Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 164–168; Mylonas 1975, suppl. pl. 381 no. I16–787; E. Kunze-Götte – K. Tancke – K. Vierneisel, Die Nekropole der Mitte des 6. Jhs. bis Ende des 5. Jhs. Die Beigaben, Kerameikos 7, 2 (Munich 1999) 21 no. 44, 4 pl. 13, 1; 25 no. 62, 3 pl. 16, 1; 27 no. 66, 3 pl. 17, 1; 32–33 no. 79, 4 pl. 21, 6.

62 Sparkes – Talcott 1970, 321–323 nos. 1239. 1220; Kerameikos 17, 2005, 207 no. 765; Kerameikos 7, 2, 1999, 129–130 no. 489, 13 pl. 88, 1; suppl. pl. 4 no. 353, 2.

63 Baron Franz von Koller (1767–1826) was an Austrian military attaché. He served in Naples, Italy, from 1815 to 1818 and from 1821 to 1826. A famous collector of ancient antiquities, he amassed some 10,000 ancient objects; archaeological excavations and immediate restoration work were carried out in his name and under his direct supervision. In 1828, Frederick William III, the Prussian king, bought a large collection of pieces that belonged to Koller (some 3,000 inventorized items). There is some information about find-spots, mostly recorded by Raffaele Gargiulo, the Neapolitan dealer and conductor of archaeological excavations in Italy, who was also one of the restorers who reassembled many of the ancient vases from fragments (Kästner – Saunders 2016, 21. 35; Kästner 2002, 135).

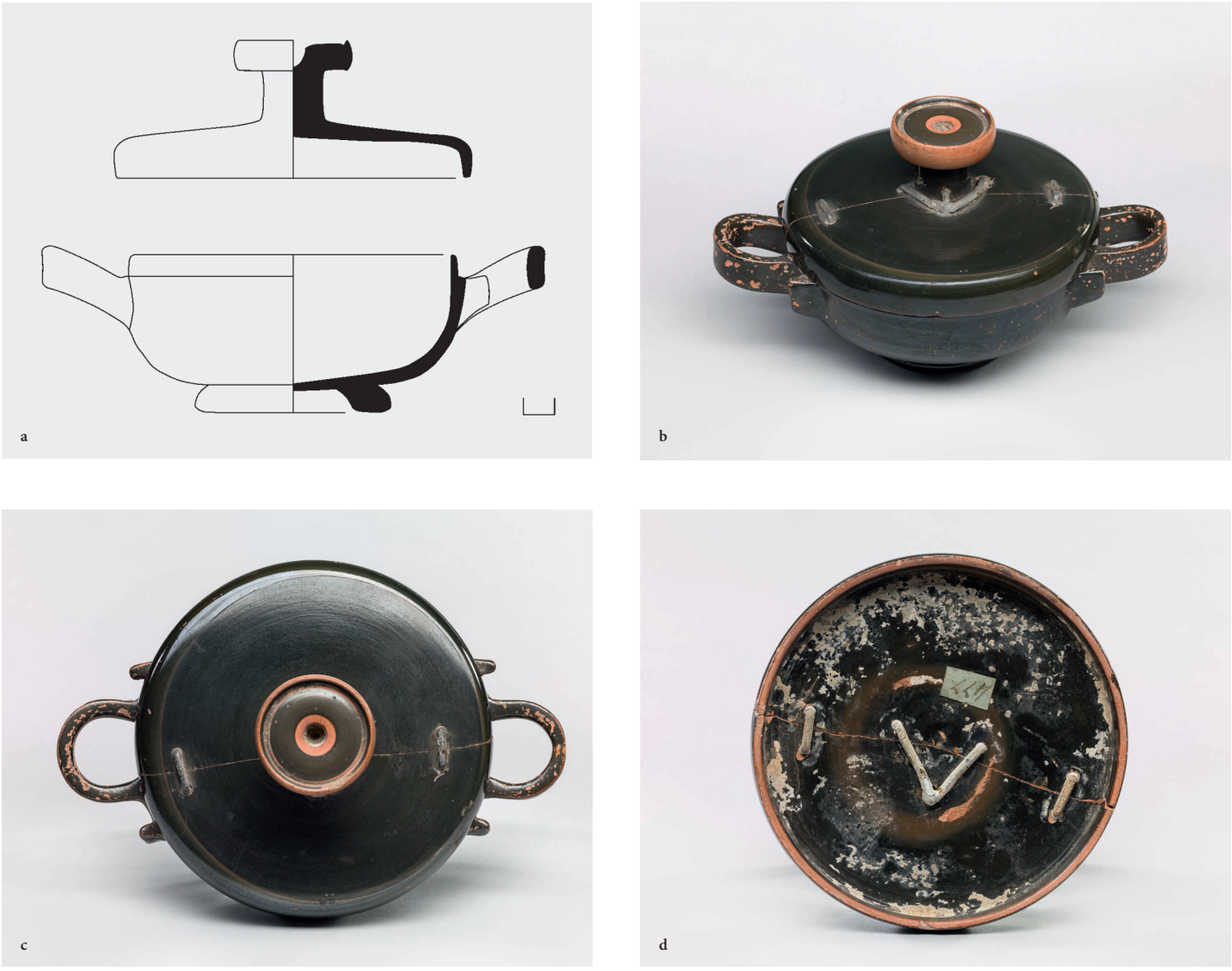
64 Furtwängler 1885, 727 no. 2576.

65 A. J. Clark – M. Elston – M. L. Hart, Understanding Greek Vases. A Guide to Technical Terms, Styles, and Techniques (Los Angeles 2002) 140.

66 A. Schöne-Denkinger, Reparaturen, antik oder nicht antik? Beobachtungen an rotfigurigen Krateren der Berliner Antikensammlung und Anmerkungen zur Verwendung geflickter Gefäße in der Antike, CVA Deutschland Beiheft 3 (Munich 2008) 25–26.

67 M. Elston, Ancient Repairs of Greek Vases in the J. Paul Getty Museum. The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal 18, 1990, 53–68.

68 In general, Etruscans usually repaired vases with bronze, while in Athens lead was mostly used (S. Pfisterer-Haas, Antike Reparaturen, CVA Deutschland Beiheft 1 [Munich 2002] 55–56).



15 Lekanis with a lid, ca. 425–400 B.C., black-glazed pottery, Nola (inv. F 2576): a – drawing; b, c, d – photos

It is worth mentioning that the extra protrusion in the middle of the V-shaped staple was not necessary and was most probably added to make the repair look more attractive. In addition, closer examination reveals that some kind of glue, which is clearly visible only on one side of the lid, also joins the two broken parts. While it has not yet been proven, it is reasonable to suppose that craftsmen sometimes used some sort of liquid adhesive to mend broken vessels. In this respect, this lekanis opens new avenues for future investigations in the field of ancient repair techniques. It and material like it should be examined further using unintrusive modern methods of analysis. In this particular case, for example, an X-ray of the lid would reveal how far the extra central protrusion of the V-shaped staple penetrates the handle. These sorts of investigations would help to increase general knowledge about ancient repair techniques.

In conclusion, as this article demonstrates, the Antikensammlung holds examples of almost every type of Attic black-glazed ware from the Late Archaic to the early Hellenistic period. The objects chosen for closer examination here represent vessels from the period 450–350 B.C., covering a century of pottery making. This sampling of materials shows almost all the technical aspects of ceramics production. This includes different forms of decoration, such as complex incised and stamped ornaments and unique relief adornments. The vessels also show different possible ways to mark tableware, including, first and foremost, inscriptions announcing ownership (one of the most popular reasons for marking pottery), as well as graffiti for commercial purposes, trademarks, and ›protective‹ symbols. In addition, one of the examples reveals new evidence of ancient repair techniques – namely, the use not only of simple lead staples but also of special liquid adhesive, the pre-

sence of which has not been shown before. Taken together, all these minute technical and decorative details attest to the deep care and attention with which each vessel was made, used, and preserved.

In presenting the most valuable and interesting finds from the collection of black-glazed vessels in the Antikensammlung, this article demonstrates that the entire collection merits further detailed study and attention. A comprehensive analysis of these materials would make it possible to compile a complete catalogue of finds, which would be a reliable source both for identifying analogous pieces during archaeological excavations and for analysing similar collections in other museums around the world. To date, only a few such volumes devoted entirely to black-glazed pottery have been published, which represents a major gap in the study of ancient Greek pottery.

Credits

2a, 3a, 4a, 5a, 6a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 10a, 11a, 12a, 13a, 14a, 15a: Iryna Chechulina, Kyiv. – 1, 2b, 2c, 3b, 3c, 4b, 5b–d, 6b, 6c, 7b, 8b, 9b, 10b, 11b, 12b, 13b, 13c, 14b, 15b–d: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung (Johannes Kramer, public domain)