Attic Pottery in the Achaemenid Empire

KEITH DE VRIES

Attic pottery in the sixth to fourth centuries B.C. achieves a fairly broad range within the Persian Empire, taking in Anatolia, Cyprus, Syria, Palestine, the Nile Valley down to Nubia, and, in a limited quantity, appearing at the distant capitals of Babylon and Susa.1

Within this range, the same types of Attic pots turn up from site to site, most of which are habitations rather than cemeteries. Lekythoi (perfume flasks) occur in considerable quantities and together with other, more scantily represented flasks—alabastra—amount to over a third of all the pottery. There is a heavy representation as well of kraters (wine bowls) and of kylikes and skyphoi (shallow cups); to a significant extent there also occur elaborately moulded deep goblets of the sort known as rhytons and head vases. Conspicuously lacking are oinochoi (wine-pouring jugs), with only two appearing in a list of 226 black- and red-figure pots in the Near East, exclusive of Anatolia and Cyprus, published by Christoph Clairmont in 1955 and with perhaps none of the period among the


Imports into Cyprus are summarized in E. Gjerstad, The Swedish Cyprus Expedition IV, 2 (Stockholm 1948) 269-81.


2The black- and red-figure pottery is listed in the Berytus 11:2 study and the black-glaze in Berytus 12:1 (supra n. 1). Of the pieces of the period which are included in the oinochoe section of the latter study and which have fairly assured proveniences, no. 391 (p. 6) may be too small to have the function of a wine jug and the others are mugs and would be used as drinking cups.

3Metzger (supra n. 1).

4Unpublished. Inv. nos. P3160, P2675 and 3242, P3151 and 3470, P3467; uninvetoryed sherd of 4 distinct pieces.

5For a good indication of the shapes current in Athens it-
hastefully bestowed on both sexes; hence the high number of lekythoi that have come from burials. In contrast, oinochoes were important items in a key feature of Greek life: the combined dinner and drinking party, or symposium, at which a usual procedure was for the boy waiters to use oinochoes for carrying wine from the krater to the cups drinkers would keep with them. 

A prevalent view has been that the Greek wares were brought to the East for use by Greek residents there, but the divergence just noted from the finds in Greek lands and the seeming incompatibility of the pieces in the East with Greek culture, usually strongly held to by Hellenic settlers in distant parts, make such a view dubious. And indeed the types of shapes reaching the empire seem admirably to match Eastern needs. In the Orient of the time, for example, men (like women presumably) made a full use of perfume, to judge from Greek accounts and from the depiction of perfume flasks in apparent association with male potentes in the Karaburun tomb paintings in Lycia and on the Persepolis reliefs. While the known low prices of Attic lekythoi suggest that they left Athens empty and thus would not directly be meeting a demand for perfume, one can understand how the Easterners with their penchant for scented oils might also desire handsome containers for them. The presence and absence of other shapes seem to conform to the kinds of vessels required for the Eastern banquets. As in Greece, they were an important aspect of life, but the procedure by which they were conducted was different. At these banquets, too, waiters took wine from a bowl but instead of carrying it in jugs to drinkers they normally brought it either in filled single cups or, in a fashion popular by Achaeenid times, handed it over in tankards taking the form of rhytons. The diners could then pour or release draughts of wine, when they desired, from the tankards into cups of broad, shallow phialae form. The general failure, then, of oinochoes to be imported into the empire is understandable and obvious: they had no standard part to play in the banquet. At the same time one can see that the popular imported shapes would furnish suitable equipment: the Greek kraters could double as Eastern wine bowls, the kylikes and skyphoi could be exotic substitutes for phialae, and the moulded plastic vessels would make appropriate tankards.

The anomaly of some oinochoes being imported into Anatolia for varying periods is perhaps explicable on the basis of being the vessels of hearths. For example, the presence of Attic pottery in Persia, having been carried by the army of Alexander the Great, could easily find its way to East Greek settlers in Lycia and the Hamitic Near East, perhaps even to Egypt or Babylonia. In any event, the potential and the actual efficiency of the oinochoe cup as a vessel and as a symbol of Greek culture could often see it find its way to the East. The information and the archaeological evidence are consistent with the hypothesis. Some evidence from Egypt, however, suggests that the vessels were brought in as souvenirs rather than as part of the symposium. In either case, it is clear that the oinochoe was an important item in the East.

7 Numerous depictions of Attic pots, as E. Pfeil, Malerei und Zeichnung der Griechen (Munich 1923) fig. 494 and M. Robertson, A History of Greek Art (Cambridge 1975) pl. 78 b, c. A scattering of non-Athec representations shows also that the custom was observed throughout the Greek world: Boeotia, Pfluehl, fig. 613; Corinth, O. Broneer, "Terracotta Alters von Corinth," Hesperia 19 (1950) 373, fig. 3 and pl. 110; Paestum, M. Napoli, La Tomba del Tuffatore (Bari 1970) pl. 33; Thasos, B.S. Ridgway, The Severe Style in Greek Sculpture (Princeton 1970) fig. 63. However, there are instances as well of the boy waiters filling the cups directly at the krater, as B.A. Sparkes, Pots and Pans of Classical Athens (Princeton 1958) fig. 19 (fig. 18, which is a detail of the pot Pfeil, fig. 254, may not be a scene of Greek life).


9 Ion of Chios (supra n. 6). Xenophon, Oikonomiak IV, 23 (I owe this reference to Prof. J.K. Anderson). Alexios, Epagogia in Athenaeus XV, 691d and EuxiKismoi in Athenaeus XV, 69c-1 (apparently a report of an Eastern banquet). M.J. Mellink, "Excavations at Karata-Semayijk and Emami, Lycia, 1973," AJA 77 (1973) pl. 44. E.F. Schmidt, Persepolis I (Chicago 1953) pls. 148-50, 183-84. At Persepolis the very fact that the reliefs are on palatial buildings suggests that the Baks borne by attendants would be used by the king.

10 See the evidence assembled by D.A. Amyx, "An Amphora with a Price Inscription in the Hearst Collection at San Sim- son," University of California Publications in Classical Archaeology 1:8 (1941) 179-98 and "The Attic Stelai III," Hesperia 27 (1958) 275-97. Lekythoi sold for 1 to 1 1/3 obols in the early fifth century, and Aristophanes in the late fifth century refers to a fine lekythos as worth one obol (Frogs, 1236). In contrast, kraters in the late fifth century sold for 4 to 4 1/2 obols.

11 Particularly illuminating are reliefs of the Nereid Monument: Moninis 10 (1875) pl. 18, slabs 97-98, and W.H. Schuchhardt, "Die Friese des Nereidenmonuments von Xanthos," Ath-Mitt 52 (1927) Beilage 14, Beilage 16, slabs 898a and 903. These are some variants in practice: in the Karaburun tomb, Mellink (supra n. 9) and M.J. Mellink, "Excavations at Karata-Semayijk and Emami, Lycia," AJA 76 (1972) pl. 58, figs. 15-17, it appears to be the waiter who holds the tankard and fills the cups from it at the need of the banquet. On the Satrap Sarophagus the waiter, unusually, fills the rhyton of the drunken by means of an oinochoe: I. Kleeman, Der Sarapen-Sarkophag aus Siden, Istanbuler Forschungen 20 (1958) pl. 13. An oinochoe also figures in a relief from Çavuşköy, but it is an inconspicuous small jug, used apparently as a dipper: E. Akurgal, Die Kunst Anatoliens von Homer bis Alexander (Berlin 1961) fig. 119, and J.M. Dentzer, "Reliefs au ‘Ban-quet’ dans l’Asie Mineure du V. siècle av. J.C.,” RA 1969, 208-209, figs. 4-5. The tradition of a cupbearer was a deep-rooted one in the East. Note G. Loud, The Megiddo Ieropaies (Chicago 1939) pl. 4 and P.E. Botta, Monumentes de Ninive 1 (Paris 1849) pl. 76. A revealing Greek depiction of the use of a rhyton and a phiala together is on a late-fifth-century Attic krater: H. Hoffmann, "The Persian Origin of Attic Rhyta," Amk 4 (1961) 25, pl. 12, 1.
ble, too, in terms of local ways and needs. The occurrence of the shape at Xanthos in the sixth century and its disappearance in the fifth may suggest that the Lycians had shared the banquet modes of the neighboring Greeks but then had adopted Eastern habits under the cultural impact of Achaemenid rule. The continuing import of oinochoes at Gordion in the fifth century may have little to do with banquet procedures (since the presence at the site of rhytons of Achaemenid form made in the local black-polished ware suggests that Eastern ways were observed), but instead be understandable from the traditional fondness for the jug shape in the region and the seemingly limitless uses to which it could be put. Jugs in early seventh-century Gordion are known to have served as containers for such widely varied goods as grain, needles, astragals, and in sixth-century Gordion for beer. Chances seem good that the red-figure oinochoes that reached Gordion were employed for ends undreamed of in Athens.

Beyond the fact that the shapes imported seem to satisfy Eastern needs, a further indication of the Easterners being the real customers is that in some instances the vase painters clearly adjusted the figured scenes to appeal to them. Mrs. Lily Kahil has demonstrated two striking cases embodied in rhytons from the Sotades workshop of ca. 460-450, one of which reached Memphis in Egypt and the other Meroc in Nubia. Both bear depictions of battles between Persians and Greeks, and in them it is the Persians that are winning. Of added significance is the fact that other rhytons from the shop reached the empire in some numbers and include one of the two Attic pieces known from Babylon and all but two of those reported from Susa.

Another attempt to cater to Eastern interests but a more naive one is seen on 13 of the 14 kylikes by the Pithos Painter that reached sites in the empire beyond the Aegean, ca. 500 B.C. In the medallion of these kylikes, a nude symposiast, a cliché of Greek cup painting of the time, is fitted out with the Persian cap, or tiara, and a silhouette horn rhyton is slipped into the field (fig. 1).

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15 The kylix illustrated (ARV² 140, no. 26) is from a grave at Fikellura on Rhodes: G. Jacobi, Clara Rhodos VI-VII (Rhodes 1932-1933) 184 and fig. 214. The pieces from the Persian Empire, being found at settlement sites, are fragmentary. See list, ARV² 139-41.

16 ARV² 1159, Manner of the Kleophon Painter, no. 27. A. Westholm in Swedish Cyprus Expedition III, 1 (Stockholm 1937) 249, 263, pl. 85, f-2.
workshop of the Kleophon Painter, a shop which like that of Sotades seems to have had a fairly sustained involvement in the Eastern trade, and the other that painters of oil containers in fifth-century Athens were giving some thought to their probable customers: thus, they tended to paint male scenes on the aryballoi (olive oil flasks used above all by athletes), female scenes on the red-figure lekythoi and alabastra, and worked out a funerary iconography for the white-ground lekythoi, which came to be reserved for bier and grave.\(^1\)

The way in which the personnel of a workshop might be aware of a market to which their pottery would be going and tailor their production accordingly is indicated by finds from a warehouse level of the early fourth century at Al Mina, at the mouth of the Orontes River. One establishment had a stock of lekythoi, of which J.D. Beazley judged eight or nine to be by one painter, three by a second, and one by a third; the attributed pieces, therefore, would come from only one to three shops.\(^2\)

If such a situation is at all typical of trade at the time, it looks as if particular workshops may have been selling in quantity to particular merchants.

A problem is posed by some lekythoi with elaborate Persianizing scenes (procession on camelback, fantastic hunt in a paraideisos) that have been found not within the empire but in Italy and in the Black Sea region. The combination of the particular shape and the particular scenes would, of course, suggest that the pieces had been made with the Eastern trade in mind. Various explanations seem possible. One is that the vases simply got into the wrong consignment. A more complex situation, though, is implied by the fact that numerous Persianizing kylikes by the Pithec Painter, considered above, have been found beyond the bounds of the non-Greek parts of the empire—in

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17 ARV² 1143-1157: Kleophon Painter, 3 of the 68 pieces come from sites in the empire; Manner of Kleophon Painter, 2 of 34; “recall both the Kleophon Painter and the Dinos Painter,” 2 of 3; Dinos Painter, 5 of 46; Manner of Dinos Painter, 2 of 27.

18 For a quick check, note the types of scenes on the aryballoi on the one hand and the alabastra and lekythoi on the other in G.M.A. Richter and Marjorie Milne, *Shapes and Names of Athenian Vases* (New York 1935) figs. 91-111. Beazley assembled the Attic aryballoi known in the 20s (supra n. 6, 187-215). The scenes on them tend not only to be male but specifically to have reference to athletics or other interests of youths and boys, who would be the main users of the shape in the gymnasion and palaestra. A few aryballoi with female themes (Beazley’s nos. 15, 17, 19) are perhaps explicable from the fact that women made some use of aryballoi during their bathing (187, n. 5).

On lekythoi and alabastra there is a higher proportion of male scenes than there is of female on the aryballoi, but the lekythoi and alabastra could, of course, be funerary offerings for both sexes, and the extant pieces are largely from graves.

The Architecture of Hasanlu: Periods I to IV

ROBERT H. DYSON, JR.

Today Hasanlu appears as a large mound located in the Solduz Valley of Azerbaijan in northwestern Iran. The site has been excavated over a period of ten seasons of two months each between 1956 and 1974 by a joint expedition of the University Museum of Philadelphia and the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York City. The following paper outlines the architectural remains found in the top levels beginning with Period I.

PERIOD I

Period I is the Islamic level of Hasanlu, the only date for which is indicated by two sherds of Laj Vardana ware dated to the thirteenth century A.D. Architectural remains excavated in the southwest quadrant of the Citadel Mound included a small structure with several small rooms around a central hall. Rubble foundations of a small tower which formed part of an enclosure wall (still visible in aerial photographs) were also uncovered.

Small finds included clay spindle whorls, a bone shuttle, and pottery sherds. This deposit was eroded to a depth of only about 30 cm. and rested on an older erosion surface representing a long hiatus following the prehistoric occupation.

PERIOD II

Period II was marked by the erection of a large free-standing structure in the southwest quadrant of the Citadel Mound. The structure consisted of an uncut stone foundation with large square and rectangular rooms. Distinctive features were a stairway leading up to a platform, several blocked doorways, and a semi-circular hearth and chimney built into a wall. The structure appears to have been built in part upon a collapsed segment of an older fortification wall (wall II) dating to period IIIB. The building itself stood directly upon this fallen brick work and upon the pitted surface of period IIIB with which it is associated. To the Persians, the focus of Bovon's and Hülser's studies are, of course, among the least likely of the subjects to have been prompted by a non-Greek market, aside from the variant of the theme that shows the Persians winning.

In the light of the continued acceptance of Attic oinochoes in inner Anatolia, a curious case is presented by some Persianizing scenes, noted by Schauenburg, which appear on high-beaked shape VII oinochoes, a vase form which has been suspected of having an Anatolian prototype. Schauenburg has reservations, though, about such a derivation of the shape; the piece on which his article centers makes ribald fun of an Easterner, and a later one shows an Eastern warrior in flight (ARV² 1330, Makaria Painter, no. 1; Para 479).

21 Lists, ARV² 139-41 and Para 334. The kylix in Moscow from Kerch, noted in Para, is Persianizing.
22 And, by extension, the scenes could become generalized in the Attic pottery production. Studies of representations of Persians on Attic pottery: A.S. Gow, "Notes on the Persia of Aeschylus," JHS 48 (1928) 133-58; H. Schopp, Die Darstellungen der Perser in der griechischen Kunst bis zum Beginn des Hellenismus (Coburg 1933); A. Bovon, "Les représentations des guerriers perses et la notion de barbare dans la 1re moitié du VIe siècle," BCH 87 (1963) 579-602; T. Hülser, Griechische Historienbilder des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. (Würzburg 1973). T. Hülser, "Ein Kelchkrater mit Perserkampf," AnK 17 (1974) 78-85; K. Schauenburg, "ETPÝMESIN EIMI," AtAMitt 90 (1975) 97-121. Battles of Greeks and Eastern life are generally so bizarre or so naive that it is doubtful that when the pieces were bought up in the East the scenes would have meant much more than the usual Greek ones.