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Sex and pottery: Erotic images on Athenian cups, 600 - 300 B.C.

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of History
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Masters of Arts in History

by
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December 2003

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Keywords: Greek, erotic, images, painting, Athenian, cups

ABSTRACT

Sex and pottery: Erotic images on Athenian cups, 600 - 300 B.C.

by

Michael Lee Banner

Many pages have been written concerning erotic images on Greek vases but few studies have focused on the frequency of erotic images. This is an important concept in determining the significance of the erotic images. Various Athenian cups from the online holdings of the Beazley Archive were investigated, using simple tabulations and Chi-square analysis, for erotic images. Out of 7901 cups only 130 had erotic images. As cups with erotic images represented only a small portion of the sample, it was likely that they only appealed to the tastes of a small sub-set of the Athenian population. The context of these images is questionable and the historical community should use them with caution.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Coming to grips with human sexuality in the Western world has been a difficult intellectual enterprise. The study of human sexuality only began making significant progress in the last half of the twentieth century due in part to being troubled with egocentric and ethnocentric bias, lack of valid research methodologies, and a general reluctance of the Academy to discuss human sexuality as a valid area of research. Even in academic fields that most laymen would assume have researched human sexuality extensively there appeared to be less than an adequate understanding. For example, in an article for the *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Davis and Whitten lamented as late as 1987 that “human sexuality is not yet a coherent subspecialty of anthropology.”¹

If the study of sexuality was difficult for the social sciences that have living subjects to observe and learn from, then the problems of studying the sexual views and relationships of an ancient Greek society appeared to be almost insurmountable. Therefore, historians must obtain the information in a more indirect way. One rich source of information was primary documents from the period. Greek plays and other writings provided a rich source of information that has been well explored by historians and classicists. A second treasury of information, left for the historian’s investigation, was the pottery of the ancient Greeks. The Greeks had a long history of pottery and developed many forms to serve the various roles needed. While the utility and forms were relevant to historians, the paintings on the pottery were of particular interest in providing clues to life in ancient Greece.

Most of what is known about ancient Greece comes from Athens. While the whole of Greek civilization had a thriving pottery trade, this investigation focused only on Athenian pottery for three reasons. First, the sheer volume of material from ancient Greece, in the form of pottery, was staggering. One could spend a lifetime exploring the vast number of shards and complete pots. There is virtually nothing left of Greek textiles, leather, or woodwork due to decay, and works in bronze and marble were often destroyed to provide raw materials for ancient craftsmen. However, painted pottery has

¹ D. L. Davis and R. G. Whitten, “The Cross-Cultural Study of Human Sexuality,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 16 (1987) : 88.

withstood the rigors of time and decay. Once painted and fired, the pottery could be broken but it “is almost indestructible.”² The second reason for focusing on Athenian pottery was that the Beazley archive had a large number of items for inspection in its online holdings. The final reason for focusing on Athens was that current historians know more about the social life of this ancient city than of any other site in ancient Greece. The majority of the literature that remains is Athenian and Athenian pottery can play a significant role in our understanding of the city. Therefore, for the continuation of this discussion it must be kept in mind that only Athenian pottery was discussed.

Among the scenes depicted on the various shapes of pottery are some that maybe labeled as sexually graphic to the modern viewer. These erotic images were often displayed in contemporary social histories of the ancient Greeks. Social historians have written at length about the implications of the erotic scenes, but little was said about their frequency. The frequency of erotic images directly affects the role they play in our interpretations of social life in ancient Greece. Yet, historians were often silent about whether the scenes were an oddity or a common occurrence in Greek households. This question, of the frequency of erotic scenes, was fundamental to understanding whether the historians were depicting a sub-set of the population or had drawn conclusions about the population as a whole. For example, if the number of Greek vases containing graphic sexual content was only a small percentage of the artwork displayed on the pottery that has been found, then it was probable that painters were more likely to offer the market place a design based on non-sexual topics. That would imply that the sexually oriented scenes were likely commissioned items for a particular patron or at least made with the aim of being sold to a smaller subpopulation. If these images only appealed to a small subpopulation, there was no reason to believe that their tastes represented the social views of the whole population. A modern analogy would be to imply that the sexual mores expressed in modern bondage and discipline pornography from a metropolitan area represented the views held by the whole metropolitan area.

Cavalier argued that in all likelihood there were two tiers of artists and that the lowest tier was the “poorer, with less capability to carry inventory of unsold work, [and

² John Boardman, *Greek Art*, 4th ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), p. 32.

therefore] they would naturally have been less adventurous and even more conservative, unless acting under the direct influence of their patrons. Many would be forced to respond to aesthetics already established in the market-place rather than to innovate.”³ It must be kept in mind that the production of pottery was a business venture; the production of pottery was not art for art’s sake.⁴ Even if slaves or apprentices did most of the labor in the shop, they still needed to be feed and housed. There was also the reasonable speculation that whoever was funding the shop would have expected at least a marginal return on their investment. It seemed unlikely that even a higher tiered potter would have wasted the labor of the pottery in paintings that were unlikely to be sold to an end user. The concept of a patron contacting a painter to represent a scene or that individual buyers preferences affected the painter’s production was an important concept for modern historians. With personal diaries virtually nonexistent at this time, historians had little insight into the thoughts of the common man. With the exception of graffiti, the pottery may be one of the best windows remaining that crossed a wide social stratum. This stood in contrast to the literature that came from predominately the upper classes of Greek society. A small number of erotic images suggest that historians, when they use the pottery with erotic illustrations, are only speaking about an individual or sub-population’s mores and not the mores of the whole of ancient Athens.

Some of the academic community had concerns about using statistical studies, so a section of Chapter Two will explore the question of the validity of using simple statistical methods in more detail. However, from the examples above, the apparent usefulness of even a limited statistical study was apparent. Such a study will not provide absolute answers to our questions about the nature of Greek sexuality or provide some absolute answers about the pottery industry in Greece, but such a study will add to our understanding the very complex mosaic that was Greek life. For example, a study of the frequency of erotic paintings versus the number of other types of illustrations will add another piece of information to our understanding about the ancient Greeks. Moreover,

³ K. Cavalier, “Did Not Potters Portray Peisistratos Posthumously as Herakles?,” *Electronic Antiquity: Communicating the Classics* 2, no. 5 (March 1995), <<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/EIAnt/V2N5/cavalier.html>>, hosted by the Digital Library and Archive, last accessed 4-27-03.

⁴ John Boardman, *The History of Greek Vases: Potters, Painters and Pictures* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 9.

quantifying the number of erotic images will clarify their place in the wider context of Greek images. Using the frequency of images does have precedent in the study of Greek vases; Webster used this concept in *Potters and Patrons in Classical Athens*. While Webster's work will be explored further in Chapter Two, it should be noted that the process of assigning genres to the pottery illustrations does provide a useful way of systematically studying the topic. For example, by assigning a genre to the paintings it was possible to explore the preferences for a particular period or even a specific painters, at least as far as their work still exists for our inspection. While the results will not be conclusive in themselves, the data will still be useful in our understanding of the *Ceramincus*, the potters' quarter in ancient Athens, particularly when used in conjunction with the other limited sources the historical community possesses.

Once the frequency of particular genres was established, certain theories advanced by the historical community could be tested or at least the paintings could then be used more systematically as evidence for or against current ideas. For example, the main stream of historical thought concerning Athenian marriages was that Greek males took a wife to run their households and have children, not for companionship.⁵ Given this assumption, we would not expect to find illustrations that depict marriage, courtship, or domestic scenes on pottery that was used by males. This should be particularly true of the items that were used by males or their female companions at the symposium. The women attending the symposiums were generally

⁵ Pomeroy noted on page 64 that the "purpose of marriage was procreation." She also stated that women's work was focused on the home and wealthier women were expected to manage the family resources. As to the company a man preferred, she noted that *hetaira* received training that made "them more entertaining companions" than wives at social gatherings. Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*, 2d ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 72-73. While Blundell appeared to agree with Pomeroy on the function of wives in Athens, she goes a bit further noting that Xenophon stated "sexual enjoyment was not the object of marriage: men acquired wives in order to raise a family, not to satisfy their lusts, which were amply catered for in the streets and the brothels". Sue Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 102. While Flaceliere painted a more appealing picture of an Athenian wife's life, he was also quite clear that men married for family and home not companionship. Robert Flaceliere, *Daily Life in Greece at the Time of Pericles*, trans. Peter Green (Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965; London: Phoenix Press, 2002), 71-72. In the *Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World* the authors noted that an Athenian's focus was on the *polis* not on the family. John Boardman Jasper Griffin and Oswyn Murray, eds., *The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986; Oxford University Press, 1991; Oxford University Press, 2001), 256. The picture of life for a wife in Athens was perhaps depicted most darkly by Keuls. It was a narrative of misogynist males keeping company with other males and prostitutes, only using wives with little concern for their welfare or happiness. Even in regard to the marital bed, Keuls argued that citizen women regarded "sex as a painful duty, much in the vein of Victorian counsel to new brides: 'close your eyes and think of England' ". Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 114.

believed to be prostitutes, so they would probably have had little interest in the depictions of men's marriages or their respectable counterparts' domestic images.⁶

The symposium was normally held at the family home, within the men's area of the house called the *andron*, where his friends would be entertained for the evening. The *andron* was in a unique position in Athenian society. While the *andron* was in the confines of the home, it was also a place where a male would meet with his circle of friends. James Davidson noted that the room was designed to accommodate up to fifteen people. He argued that the narrow confines of the room created an "atmosphere [that] was correspondingly intense and intimate."⁷ While one could expect that the social norms of the sub-group would have been observed, it was questionable whether the larger set of social norms for the whole society would have been enforced in such an intimate setting.

According to Catherine Johns, "The Athenian symposium ... was a drinking and talking-party which, according to circumstances, seems to have ranged from a philosophical discussion-group of the most intellectually exalted kind to a no-holds-barred drunken orgy"⁸. Eva Keuls described the symposium as "the most characteristic feature of Athenian sexual and social life. Literally meaning 'drinking party', it was a unique gathering dedicated to a varying blend of eating, drinking, games of all sorts, philosophical discourse, and public sex with prostitutes, concubines, and other men, but never with wives."⁹ This made the pottery associated with the symposium the ideal candidate to explore the thoughts of men about various issues, including sexuality, from a wider stratum than other sources that were produced for the whole *polis*. By assigning genre types to the symposium ware, it would be possible to systematically study the images to determine if they supported current historical thought.

Before discussing the different variations of the cup designs that were the focus of this study, it is beneficial to note how researchers investigated Greek pottery in the past. While others attempted to systematically study pottery, Sir John Beazley provided

⁶ Boardman, Griffin and Murray 2001, *The Oxford History of Greece and the Hellenistic World*, 267.

⁷ James N Davidson, *Courtesans & Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 44.

⁸ Catherine Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and Rome* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 119.

⁹ Keuls, 160.

the form that dominated the last half of the twentieth century. In Chapter Two, this concept will be explored further. The publication of Beazley's "subject index to attributed Attic vases" changed the way pottery was investigated.¹⁰ Beazley's actual goal was to generate a catalog of vases that were attributed to certain painters. He listed over thirty thousand items and associated each with a particular painter or style. Beazley's three works, *Attic Black-Figure Vase-Painters* (1956), *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters* (second edition 1963), and *Attic Black-Figure Lekythoi* created an impetus for Webster's later work, *Potter and Painter in Classical Athens* in 1972.¹¹ Exploring Beazley's work and his subject indexes, Webster was able to build a large database for inspection. With the development of the World Wide Web, a large database of images and descriptions of Attic pottery became available for inspection. The Beazley Archive put the database online in 1998, with over 70,000 entries easily accessed from anywhere. The archive represented a significant advancement in the way researchers can access information about the Greek vases.¹² It was with the advent of the database that this study became possible.

One particular form of pottery that was generally agreed to have been most closely associated with the symposium was a particular design of cup.¹³ The *kylix* design, as this cup is now called, had a wide bowled interior used for drinking a wine and water mixture during the course of the evening throughout a symposium. While the cup had many variants, it was best typified by a wide round design, typically two short handles, and a single fluted base. While there were about thirty different variations of cups, the Beazley archive that was used for this inquiry limited the actual forms that were studied.

The pottery painters in their depictions of active symposiums often illustrated the *kylix* design as a common element in their compositions. The design has been associated with a type of game, called *kottabos*, which was often enjoyed at the symposium. While we are uncertain of the rules, it was believed that the game centered

¹⁰ T.B.L. Webster, *Potter and Patron in Classical Athens* (London: Methuen, 1972), xiii.

¹¹ Webster, xiii.

¹² Staff, "Beazley Archive: Introduction," <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/BeazleyAdmin/Script2/TheArchive.htm>>, last updated 9-21-02.

¹³ Robin Osborne, *Archaic and Classical Greek Art*, Oxford History of Art (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 17. Also see Andrew J. Clark, Maya Elston and Mary Louise Hart, *Understanding Greek Vases: A Guide to Terms, Styles, and Techniques* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002), 26.

on swirling a small amount of the wine mixture in the wide shallow interior of the cup and releasing --(or tossing)-- it at a target of some sort. Keuls noted that the game of *kottabos* could be played for such mundane items as shoes or other more exotic favors including kisses and even sex.¹⁴ It could be argued that the game accounts in part for the unusual design of the cup, particularly for the Type A, B, and C. It was likely that the images on these cups, because they were closely associated with the symposium, would have had represented the Greek male's mind at its bawdiest. It was also likely that these cups would display the greatest number of erotic images.

The archive put several styles or designs under the search heading of "cups". Figure 1 illustrated the various forms of cups that were sampled.

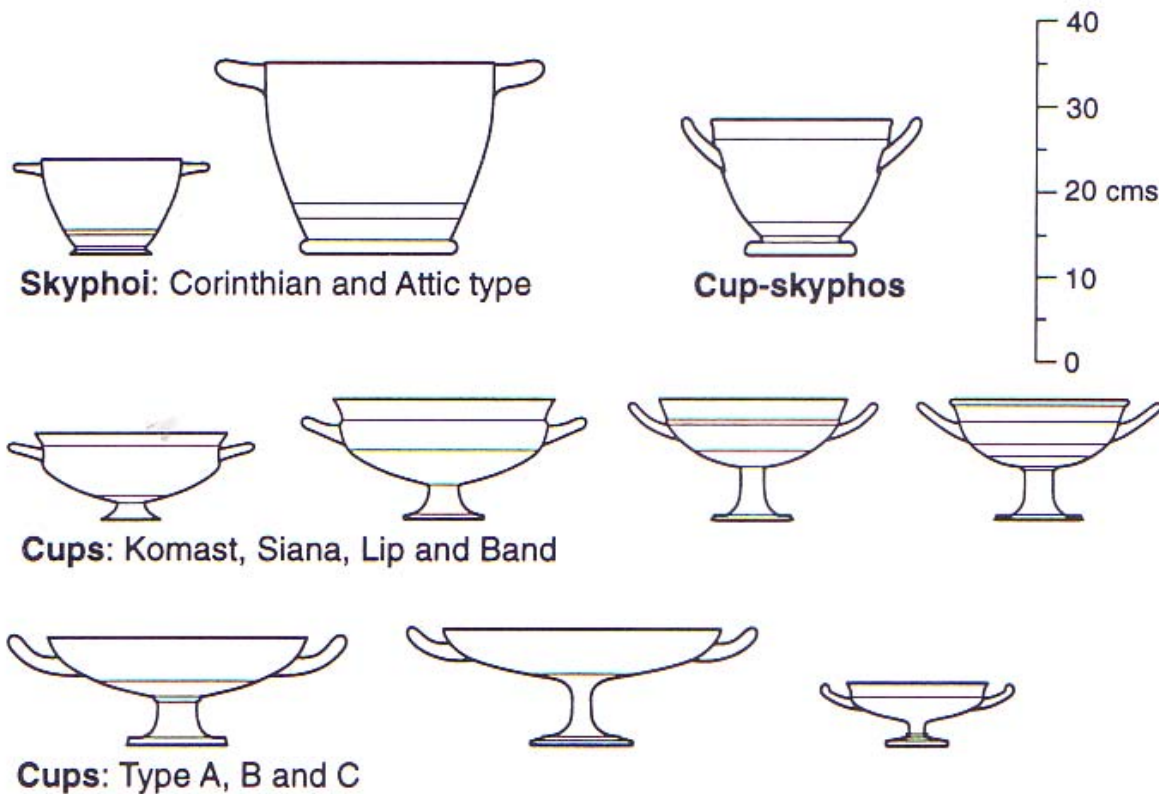


Figure 1. Cup Shapes¹⁵

The first example was the *Komast* cup that was popular from 600-575 BC.¹⁶ The cup was named for the scenes of the *komasts* that were often painted on its exterior. The

¹⁴ Keuls, 160.

¹⁵ Brian A. Sparkes, *The Red And The Black: Studies in Greek Pottery* (London: Routledge, 1996), 170.

komasts was a line of dancers and revelers that appeared to have spilled out into the street from the symposium.¹⁷ The *Siana* cup was named after the “village of Siana on the Greek island of Rhodes,” where examples of the cup were found. As shown in Figure 1, the foot and the lip of the cup were higher than the *Komast* cup, which was likely the influence for the *Siana* variant.¹⁸ The *Siana* cup was popular from 575-550 BC.¹⁹ Also, illustrated were the Lip and Band cups that were grouped together as the Little Master Cups. The cups were produced in 550-525 BC and often were uniquely painted with miniature designs. The cups “take their name from the miniature style of figure decoration which German archaeologists called *Kleinmeister*.”²⁰ By 540 BC Type A came to dominance, but in 500 BC Type B “supplants it to become the most characteristic” of the *kylix* design.²¹ Missing from Figure 1 was the *Gordion* cup, Cassel-cup, Droop cup, and the Stemless cup. The *Gordion* cup was the predecessor of the Little Master cups and was produced for a limited time around 560 BC.²² The Cassel-cup was a variant of the Band-cup that was small in size with the outside bowl covered in “bands of simple ornament.”²³ The Droop cup was named for its “first classifier” and was produced from about 560-510 BC. The Stemless cup was unique among the *kylix* design in that it “was thrown in one piece” with the “bowl joined directly to the foot.”²⁴ Figure 3 shows a screen capture of a data record for a particular vase from the Beazley Archive. It will be useful to identify each section of the data record before describing the data collection procedure used in this study. The section marked 1, in Figure 2, contains

¹⁶ D.C.Kurtz, “Greek Painted Pottery: An Introduction”, <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture1/Script/GreekPaintedPottery1.asp>>, archived at the Beazley Archive 1997-2003. Last accessed 10/20/03.

¹⁷ Clark, Elston and Hart, 107.

¹⁸ Clark, Elston and Hart, 107.

¹⁹ D.C.Kurtz, “Greek Painted Pottery: An Introduction”, “Cups (Kylikes)” <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture1/Script/GreekPaintedPottery1.asp>>, archived at the Beazley Archive 1997-2003. Last accessed 10/20/03.

²⁰ D.C.Kurtz, “Greek Painted Pottery: An Introduction”, “Pottery Shapes”, “Shapes”, “Shapes and Profiles of Greek Painted Pottery”, “Cups”, “Cups (Kylikes)” <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture1/Script/GreekPaintedPottery1.asp>>, archived at the Beazley Archive 1997-2003. Last accessed 10/20/03.

²¹ Clark, Elston and Hart, 108.

²² Staff, “Cups”, <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Test/Pottery%20Public/Script/Cupsnew.htm>> Last accessed 4-27-03.

²³ R.M. Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 3d ed. (n.p.: Methuen, 1960; reprint n.p.: Methuen, 1966; 2nd ed. n.p.: Methuen, 1972; New York: Routledge, 1997), 79.

²⁴ Clark, Elston and Hart, 109.

the “Database Record Number” that provided a constant way of retrieving the same record using the search query table provided by the archive.

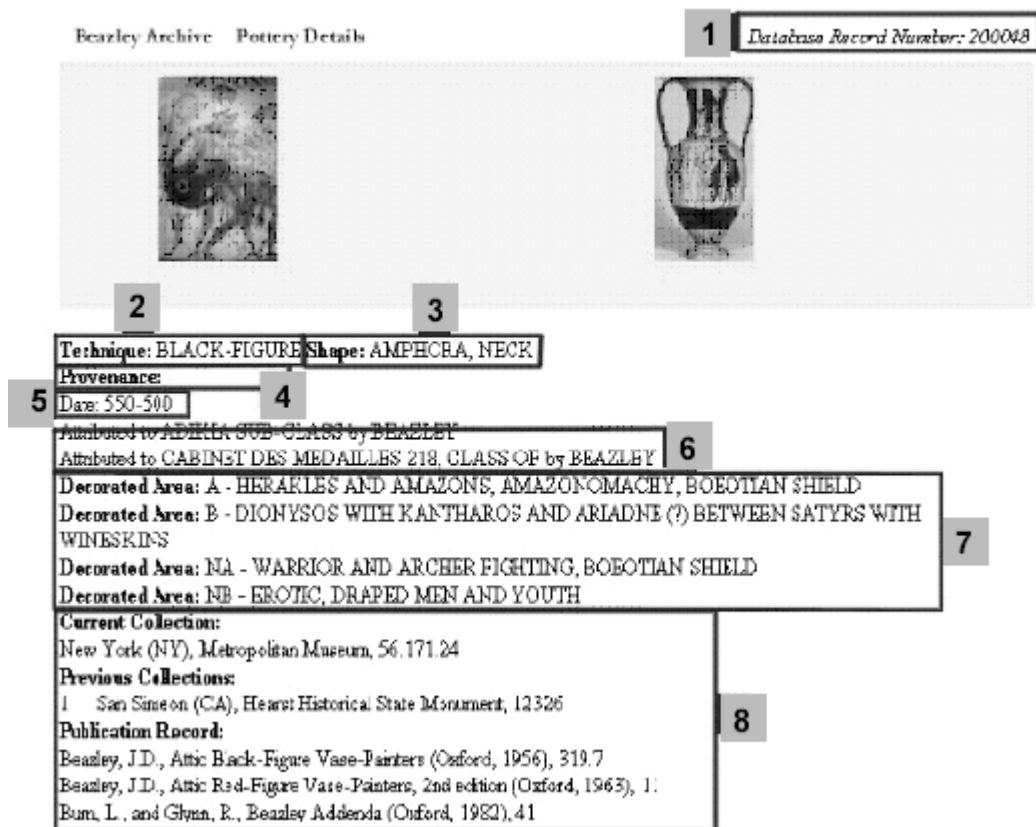


Figure 2. Screen Capture of a Data Record from the Beazley Archive; (1) Database Record Number; (2) Painting Technique; (3) Shape; (4) Find Location; (5) Manufacture Date; (6) Attribution; (7) Description of Decorated Area; (8) Collection and Publication Information.

The actual search table is located behind a password-protected firewall at:

<<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/test/Vases/ASP/default.asp>>

To actually retrieve the same record one must search the database by inputting the Database Record Number into the search category labeled “vase number.” Section 2, in Figure 2, was the area that denoted the technique used by the painter in creating the illustration.

The two dominant painting techniques used by the painters will be discussed in Chapter Two. Section 3 was where the archivist denoted the shape of pottery that was painted. For this study the shape was one of the variations of cups that were discussed previously. The next entry, section 4, contained the province where the artifact was

found. Section 5 contained the date the pottery was produced within a fifty-year span. Dating of pottery was a complex issue that was beyond the scope of this investigation, but the fifty-year span appeared to be a good compromise. The next section, section 6, denoted if the painting was attributed to a particular painter. As the concept of Attribution and connoisseurship was important to this investigation, Chapter Two will explore these ideas further. Next was the area that was the most speculative part of this study, section 7. The staff at the archive has spent the time to identify each decorated area for the archive user. This commentary provided the source material for the assignment of a genre to the illustrations. Section 8 contained the collection and publication history for the vase in question. This information was not used for this investigation.

Figure 3 was a screen capture of the data collection form. The sections marked in red assist in the following discussion of the various sections in the data collection form. Each data entry area has a corresponding area in the original cup database that was used in this study. The section labeled 1 in Figure 3 was for the collection of cup information from the Beazley Achieve record. The first of these categories was the Vase Number that corresponded with the Database Record Number from the archive record. This allowed for easy location of the cup within the Beazley Archive, if a question arose. With the exception of the entry "Pictures?" the rest of the information collected in section 1 had a one to one correlation to the data that was available from the achieve record. The "Pictures?" section was a binary entry from a menu that denoted if the cup in question had photos associated with it in the Beazley Archive. Section 2 was used for recording if the cup contained erotic images or not. This information was noted by the staff in their descriptions of the illustrations on the cup or was noted by the observer during this investigation. The only time this entry would have a positive value was if the achieve staff or the observer believed the vase contained an erotic image. Section 3 in Figure 3 was the first entry in the Decorated Area. It was in this area that the investigation observer attempted to assign a genre to the depiction on the cup from the commentary provided by the archivist. These entries were binary selections from a menu to aid in the speed of collecting the data and to help in later sorting.

Figure 3. Screen Capture of the Data Collection Form Used in Study; (1) Cup information from the Beazley Achieve record; (2) Erotic image input; (3) Genre selection

There were four separate areas for assigning a genre to the description that was provided in the archive record. Only one entry was selected for each area to assign a genre to the painting. Each depiction was treated like a discreet entity. This introduced an inherent weakness into the study; by examining each depiction on the cup the overall meaning of the paintings on the cup was lost. There was the possibility that there was more than one painting on the cup; at times there was one inside of the cup (the tondo) and the possibility of others on each side of the cup. Each had a genre or meaning in itself, but when the paintings on a cup are viewed as a whole, a secondary meaning arises. To explore these secondary meanings or to assign another genre to the vase as a whole was beyond the scope of this study. One of the goals was to explore the frequency of particular genres painted by the painters, particularly the ones with erotic content. Losing the secondary meaning of the cup painting would not appear to affect

this information. Four sections in the data collection form corresponded to the archive record area. If the cup under question had more than four scenes illustrated, then only those that contained information that could be assigned a genre were included. Each section of the Decorated Area on the data collection form was allowed only one entry. The first section available was the “mythical or cult” genre, see section 3 in Figure 3. This entry was only marked positive if the image contained a cult function, such as a sacrifice, or if only mythical individuals were shown. The entries marked courtship, marriage, and domestic were handled in the same manner. If there was a mythical component in the image, the entry with myth was marked positive. The other entries were left in their default condition. The next entry focused on the symposium and the komasts dancers. As with the earlier entries, if there was a mythical personage involved, the entry marked myth was noted positive. The “Life scene” was in many ways a catchall for the images that did not fall into the other genres. Some of the paintings focused on everyday activities such as farming, military service, or fishing, but the image did denote a human activity in a real setting. Like the others, if there was a mythical component then myth was marked positive. Due to procedural error, during the study, the category identified as “Military or Battle scenes” was rolled over into the “Life scene” category.

To briefly recap the methodology and goals before moving to Chapter Two, this study had the objective of using the simple statistical concept of frequency to study the vase paintings in a systematic way. Particular attention was paid to paintings that contained erotic elements. Using the commentary provided by the staff at the Beazley Archive, the illustrations on cups were assigned a genre from a fixed number of categories. Particular attention was paid to the type A, B, and C, cups as it was hypothesized that the highest number of erotic images would appear on this design. It was also hypothesized that these cups would have few or no images that would have depicted domestic scenes.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To properly cover the literature generated over the past three hundred years one would need to master at least three languages and spend a considerable part of their academic life studying the writings of archeologists, art historians, and ancient historians. Fortunately, there have been individuals who dedicated themselves to the study of this interesting aspect of Greek history. In the last half of the twentieth century, many fine publications have been made available to aid in understanding the various aspects of Greek pottery. It is now easy to explore a particular topic associated with this fascinating field without spending weeks shifting through volumes of literature targeted at specialists in the field. The goal of this chapter is not to be an exhaustive exposition but to touch on the various issues that are needed by the non-specialist to understand the results of this investigation.

As noted in Chapter One, the focus of this study was on the symposium cups. Cups were only a fraction of the pottery that was created for consumption in Greece and its associated colonies. As noted earlier, these items served a utilitarian function and were not generated just to satisfy the desire of the artist in some esoteric way. Pottery was a business that was needed by the community and provided subsistence for the potter.²⁵ However, there appeared to always be a desire on the part of the potter and/or the end user for some of the pottery to be decorated. The decoration painted on the pottery changed over time and has provided the specialist with an excellent tool for identifying a general chronology of Greek pottery. There are five major divisions; each section has at least two subdivisions, which cover a thousand years of Greek history.

Each of the divisions was an artificial construct of the historical, art-history, and archeology communities. Sparkes referred to these descriptions as the “picture-book” version of the history of Greek pottery because it ignored the “political and social background” and was often illustrated with the best of the vases that he called “lollipops.” He cautioned us that first and foremost the production of pottery by the Greeks was a business. Most of the wares produced were cheap house wares that

²⁵ Sparkes, *The Red And The Black*, 64-67.

were meant for daily activities. The majority of the production would “not deserve a second look by connoisseurs of fine work.”²⁶

Each of the five major divisions was noted by a distinctive style of painting. Of the five major divisions, only three were of concern to this investigation: the Orientalizing, the Archaic, and the Classical period. The first of the five major divisions or periods was the Geometric. The name Geometric was descriptive of the paintings of the period. In Athens the better vases of this period were traditionally large, often being used as grave markers or as urns for cremated remains. The painting used a dark line with a light ground to display simple to complex geometric patterns.²⁷ Boardman noted that weaving and/or textile work may have been the inspiration for the images on the vases. By the eighth century, figures and animals were beginning to appear in the paintings. While the figures were “heavily geometricized,” they were able to act out “quite complicated scenes.”²⁸

The next major division was the Orientalizing period. This period was known for the impact that the Near-Eastern arts had on the vase painters. Not only was an alphabet incorporated into the visual arts, but the motifs of the East were also integrated into the paintings. Animals, monsters, and various exotic images were now a staple of the “new visual vocabulary” for the vase painters.²⁹ Cook noted that the Greeks were only indirectly influenced by the Eastern images because painted pottery in the East was only “a minor craft.” The Greeks were not “overwhelmed” by the Eastern arts but modified and incorporated the new images to fit their own needs.³⁰

The Greeks developed several painting techniques, the two most notable were the black-figure and red-figure techniques. The black-figure style of painting dominated the Archaic period but slowly yielded to the more advanced red-figure technique that dominated the Classical period. The black-figure technique was developed by the city of Corinth around 700 B.C., and by 630 B.C. the Athenians used and perfected the

²⁶ Sparkes, *The Red And The Black*, 28-29

²⁷ Clark, Elston and Hart, 95.

²⁸ Boardman, *The History of Greek Vases*, 17-20.

²⁹ Clark, Elston and Hart, 120.

³⁰ Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 41.

technique. Over the course of the next 150 years, the black-figure technique dominated the pottery trade.³¹ According to Folsom, the black-figure style

“was ‘painted’ so that the figures and designs were presented against a red or orange-red background. ...In this technique, the whole vase was ‘painted’ with a film of weak concentration.” After the mixture had dried,“ figures were ‘painted’ in silhouette in the strong concentration - sometimes a rough preliminary sketch made with a blunt instrument was followed. Then details were incised with a sharp point and ornaments ‘painted’ in the thick concentration. A subsequent three-stage firing (oxidizing, reducing and final re-oxidizing) left the thinly ‘painted’ background of the pot red, while the figures and designs which had been ‘painted’ in the thick solution remained black.”³²

About 530 B.C. the red-figured technique of painting appeared in Attica and finally came to dominate the market place. In one sense, the technique was much the same as the black figured except the field and figure were reversed with the figure in red and the background in black.³³ The black and red-figured periods saw significant improvement in the artist’s representation of the human form. Folsom stated that the red-figure style of painting was a radical shift in the artistic paradigm for the adornment of pottery. He noted that it was more than just a “simple reversal” of color from the earlier technique. “The Black Figure technique is an engraver’s technique; the Red Figure is a draughtsman’s technique. The optical balance of dark and light also is totally different.”³⁴ With the red-figure style of painting, the figure could now assume the center stage with its “rounder illusion of humanity; the human figure became a study in itself (not as a component of a scene), a figure with muscles, individuality and moods.”³⁵

By the late fifth and early fourth century, Athens had lost domination of the western markets and the quality of the workmanship had fallen. Mid-fourth century Athenian pottery was “characterized by polychrome painting (white, yellow, blue, grey) with gilding and relief work.” While life scenes and myth were still popular, posing the figure took priority over narrative. In the Hellenistic age, painted pottery had virtually

³¹ John Boardman, *Athenian Black-Figure Vases: The Archaic Period* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 9.

³² Robert S. Folsom, *Handbook of Greek Pottery: A guide for Amateurs* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1967; reprint, Worcester and London: The Trinity Press for New York Graphic Society Ltd., n.d.), 42-43

³³ Folsom, 42-43

³⁴ Folsom, 129-130

³⁵ Folsom, 129-130

died out and any decoration on the pottery was added after firing. The major form of decoration was “produced in relief moulds.”³⁶

The largest part of the Athenian pottery trade was in producing pottery for particular functions within the larger society. Much of this production was in items other than the fine painted pottery so valued by collectors. Clay was a “fundamental resource” in ancient Greece that served many different purposes. Roof tiles, pipes for water distribution, bricks, and kitchen items were some of the products provided by the potter and associated workshops.³⁷ Greek potters were “business men” who produced “pottery to serve functional ends.” Sparkes presented an image of the pottery industry as a form of proto-capitalist enterprise driven by market forces both at home and internationally. He noted several areas of society serviced by the potteries. The first area was in the burial of the dead. The pottery quarter of Athens was located close to the chief cemetery for the city. The need to bury the dead quickly would have provided a demand for funerary items that could be purchased on the spot. Indeed, the need for pottery for the funerary and remembrance rituals was a major contributor to the local pottery trade. Graves presented an excellent environment for the preservation of pottery. Sparkes argued that this may be the reason we have so much of the painted pottery, and consequently, a distorted view of its importance in daily life. The life of women also provided a market for the potter’s skills.³⁸ Marriage had a need for a range of designs of pottery specifically suited to the ritual. Personal items like perfume bottles and cosmetic boxes were provided by the potter. Most domestic items were also made in clay; everything from dishes, to cooking pots, to weights for the weaving loom was a staple of the potteries. Sanctuaries also provided a market for the local potter. Items made specifically for decantation to the gods and those that were used for other more mundane purposes have been found in sanctuaries. The world of men, public and private, also demanded the skills of the potter; from personal oil jars (aryballos) to cups for the symposium. Occasionally, state items would have provided lucrative contracts for the lucky potters. One such contract would have been the hundreds of black-figured amphorae’s that were made for the Panathenaic games every four years. Also, harvest

³⁶ Sparkes, *The Red And The Black*, 22-27

³⁷ Sparkes, *The Red And The Black*, 64-67.

³⁸ Sparkes, *The Red And The Black*, 64-67.

time would have made great demands on the potter's quarter. The clay amphorae used for storage and transportation were produced in the thousands and has been found all over the ancient world. The pottery trade was brisk in the ancient world as the potter was the supplier of many needs.³⁹

Cook stated that the actual number of painters in Athens at any given time was likely very small. He estimated that the number of workers in the pottery trade during the fifth century was probably only in the hundreds of people, including skilled and unskilled labor. It should be noted that Cook used Beazley's *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters* to provide the information he needed for the estimate. By taking the number of attributed painters and using simple tabulation procedures he determined that two thirds of the painted vases were produced by five hundred recognized painters. Estimating that the working life of a painter would only be twenty-five years, Cook argued that the average number of painters at any one time would not have been greater than one hundred twenty-five. Even with such a low number of workers, Athens's potters were able to supply the "greatest part of fine pottery used throughout the Greek world."⁴⁰ J.M Hemelrijk warns us that a small pottery was quite capable of producing a large output. He used the example of "Cretan pithos-producers of the modern era" who can create 400 "enormous pithoi" each season, which is "only a few months" in length.⁴¹

It is believed that most of the potteries in the *Ceramincus* were family run operations that used a minimal number of workers. Hemelrijk once again used the example of the modern Cretan pithos-producers as a model of the shops that made-up the pottery quarter. He stated that these shops employ a "master, a sub-master, a wheel turner, a servant to prepare the clay, a stoker and a carrier (for the wood, clay and water)."⁴² Boardman noted that the scenes that show the potters at work typically showed a staff of six or more people. While it was questionable if these scenes were to be taken literally, they did appear to support Hemelrijk's claim. The actual social standing of the potters was difficult to determine. While there were instances when potters were noted as being wealthy, the most are unknown to us as individuals. They

³⁹ Sparkes, *The Red And The Black*, 68-87.

⁴⁰ Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 262.

⁴¹ Clark, Elston and Hart, 255.

⁴² Clark, Elston and Hart, 255.

may have been citizens, but it was just as likely many of them were not citizens. Many of the names inscribed on the pottery appear to be non-Athenian in origins, and some of the merchants wrote in an Ionic script. Boardman noted that if the potters were of mixed origins, it might help explain how they learned their understanding of foreign markets.

Whatever the social standing of the potters, there was little doubt that they had a prodigious output that has left an incredible number of items for our inspection in the twenty-first century. According to Webster, Beazley attributed “over 30,000 vases to their painters.” This large body of work by Beazley and the work of Professor Haspels provided the raw material that Webster used to create his own work, *Potter and Patron in Classical Athens*.⁴³ Using Beazley’s and Haspels’ lists of painted vases, Webster explored the relationship that potters had with their patrons and explored several issues that he believed could be answered using a systemic approach to investigate the data. Of interest to this investigation was the method that Webster used to systematically approach the topic. Of particular interest was the fact that Webster believed a “subject index to attributed Attic vases would be valuable in itself.”⁴⁴ By using lists and tables, Webster attempted to gain a larger perspective from looking at the whole than just the individual parts. The procedures that Webster used were simple tabulations of the genres listed by Beazley and Haspels. He did not use relative percentages or attempt to relate the number of genres back to the larger body of data.

While Webster was silent regarding the application of statistics to the investigation of Greek vases, his reviewers were not as reticent. Martin Robertson noted in his generally favorable review of Webster’s text that the free use of statistics was a questionable concept, citing that it was generally believed that only about 1% of the pottery produced still existed.⁴⁵ Michael M. Eisman noted concerns in his review of Webster’s text about the data sources that Webster used and their effect on the

⁴³ Webster, xiii.

⁴⁴ Webster, xiii.

⁴⁵ Martin Robertson, review of *Potter and Patron in Classical Athens*, by T.B.L. Webster, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 95 (1975): 295-296. Robertson is a noted scholar of Greek art and had an active career. Among his accomplishments, he has been the Yates Professor of Classical Art and Archaeology, Lincoln Professor of Lincoln College in 1978, Chairman of the managing committee of British School of Archaeology, Athens, Greece and has published several books on Greek art. *Contemporary Authors Online*, (Farmington Hills, Mich.: The Gale Group, 2003), reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*, 2003, <<http://www.galenet.com/servlet/BioRC>> (accessed October 19, 2003 through "Tennessee Electronic Library"), s.v. “Martin Robertson”.

statistical results. Eisman wondered if the number of attributed vases in the sources used by Webster truly represented “a reliable quantitative sample of total Attic production.” It was also questionable that we would ever possess an actual production number that could be agreed on by the community.⁴⁶

John Boardman has also expressed concerns about the application of statistics to the study of Greek pottery. While he acknowledges that statistical methods can shed light on certain questions, he went to great lengths to note that there are certain limitations to using these procedures. First, there was the problem that the data used to generate statistical information could change radically with a single archeological find. Boardman noted a single “shipwreck off Marseilles with six hundred Attic black-figure cups.” There is little doubt that a find of this magnitude or a new find the size of the Vulci would likely change the numbers of any statistical examination. Boardman also highlighted the fact that the pottery that we find in graves and sanctuaries may have been off the shelf items from a potter’s shop, but the customer for some reason chose them. The reasons why the item was chosen would greatly affect whether we have a truly random sample of the production in antiquity.⁴⁷

The use of statistical analysis of anything from antiquity is necessarily tentative. We can never be certain that the sample we have was a truly random or typical of what was produced in ancient workshops. However, this lack of certainty does not mean that historians should not use statistics to examine the data uncovered by archeologists. I think that would be an unfortunate course of action to choose for several reasons. First, most educated individuals know statistics are just as subjective as any other form of information. We do not stop writing and reading books because language has ambiguities and is subjective. Statistical information should be seen as another source of information for our evaluation that has just as many possibilities for errors as any primary source we currently include in our investigations. Another reason for using statistics in the exploration of Greek pottery is that a clear picture of what we have can emerge. While the statistics may not give a clear representation of what occurred in

⁴⁶ Michael M. Eisman, review of *Potter and Patron in Classical Athens*, by T.B.L. Webster, *American Journal of Archeology* 77, no. 4 (October 1973): 447-449. Eisman is an Associate Professor of Archeology at Temple University. Michael Eisman, “Faculty Web Page”, <<http://www.temple.edu/history/Eisman.html>>, last accessed 10/20/03.

⁴⁷ Boardman, *The History of Greek Vases*, 293-296.

ancient Greece, the result is very representational of the items we currently know to exist. This is important issue as to how much weight to give to a particular piece or a series of images. The context given to an image or a specific item is greatly affected by the place assigned to it in the larger body of evidence. Statistics exploring what has been found can provide the historical community with a perspective on how much influence we assign to the various images we encounter.

Boardman noted an excellent point that statistics on Greek vases could change with a single find. This is good advice in the use of statistics and the practice of most any kind of human investigation. A single find in the sands of the Middle East completely changed the way historians viewed the Gnostic communities of the past. The same could be said for many finds in numerous fields of inquiry. All information is dated and subject to change. Boardman's caution was a valid point that must be kept in mind when exploring Greek vases with statistical methods, but it is a valid point that must be monitored in all research endeavors.

Change has also been a constant in how the study of Greek vases has been conducted. Often as historians explore the history of a particular subject they encounter pivotal individuals who have shaped the way a subject was investigated. The study of Greek pottery was no exception. John Davidson Beazley, Professor of Classical Archaeology and Art at Oxford University, developed concepts that significantly changed the way Greek painted pottery was studied in the twentieth-century century. One author ranked Beazley "as one of the great figures of twentieth-century archaeology."⁴⁸ He was a prolific writer and a noted scholar who had the ability to systematically catalog thousands of vases. Beazley's work was described as having forged the "identification of individual artists" particularly in the study of red-figured vases.⁴⁹ Using his method, Beazley and others have claimed the ability to attribute painted vases to particular painters and workshops even when there were no signatures or written information available for study.

⁴⁸ Philippe Rouet, *Approaches to the Study of Attic Vases: Beazley and Pottier*, Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology, trans. Liz Nash (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1.

⁴⁹ Stephen L. Hyatt, ed., *The Greek Vase: Papers based on lectures presented to a symposium held at Hudson Valley Community College at Troy, New York in April of 1979* (Latham, New York: Hudson-Mohawk Association of Colleges & Universities, 1981), 24.

Beazley did not arise out of a vacuum, but stood on a foundation of inquiry that preceded his work. Greek painted pottery was noted as early as the late 1200s and was believed to have “fallen from heaven” from celestial makers. Overall, the writers and collectors of the Renaissance ignored Greek painted vases even though they had great interest in other types of items from antiquity.”⁵⁰ While interest in the vases increased, little actual progress accrued in the study of painted vases until the mid eighteenth century. Most of the discussion focused on the origins of the pottery, its artistic quality, and the subject matter displayed in the paintings. Many collectors and scholars were convinced the pottery was Etruscan in origin. Robert M. Cook⁵¹ argued, in his text *Greek Painted Pottery*, that the Etruscan enthusiasm started with “the forged Etruscan histories” from the late fifteenth century and any antiquity that was not obviously “Roman or Greek (then barely known) or Egyptian was likely to be classed as Etruscan.”⁵² Fortunately, by the mid-eighteenth century the pottery was recognized as Greek in origin. Donna Kurtz, the director of the Beazley Archive, a University Reader in Archaeology (Classical), and a Fellow of Wolfson College, noted “the most helpful clue to revealing the place of manufacture was the addition of letters in the Greek script, either incised or painted.”⁵³ “These had been noticed from the beginning of the eighteenth century, but it was some time before their significance was fully understood.”⁵⁴

In the eighteenth century, several collectors published plates of various Greek vases; the most significant was the joint venture of Sir William Hamilton and Pierre d’Hancarville.⁵⁵ Hamilton was the British ambassador to the King of the Two Sicilies for

⁵⁰ Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 288.

⁵¹ Robert Manuel Cook was Laurence Professor of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge from 1962 until 1976, specializing in the classification of archaic East Greek pottery. Caroline Malone, *Antiquity: an international journal of expert archaeology*, “Editorial”, “Robert Manuel Cook”, (Antiquity Publications Ltd: hosted by Internet Archaeology in York, 2000), <<http://intarch.ac.uk/antiquity/74-286editorial.html>> (last accessed Dec. 14th, 2002). Cook’s second edition of *Greek Painted Pottery* appeared as required reading or as supplemental reading for numerous undergraduate courses, see <<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/kis/schools/hums/classics/courses/ar.html>> and <<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/history/courses/4104/week11.htm>>.

⁵² Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 290.

⁵³ Staff, “Donna Kurtz,” <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/BeazleyAdmin/Script2/DonnaKurtzCV.htm>> (last accessed Dec 16th, 2002), archived at *Beazley Archive*.

⁵⁴ D.C. Kurtz , *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, “Ancient authors and modern archaeologists,” Page 1 of 5, . <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec.16th, 2002), archived at *Beazley Archive*.

⁵⁵ Rouet, 13.

thirty-six years, during which time he developed a considerable interest in Greek painted vases. He quickly amassed a notable collection of the vases that he in “part bought and part excavated by his own enterprise.” Up to this point, the plates published were crude and imprecise. Hamilton desired to publish “correct models for the designers” in the hopes that the plates would inspire manufacturers of his own time. With the aid of the roguish figure Pierre d’Hancarville,⁵⁶ the four volume set, *Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the Honble [sic] Wm Hamilton*, was published in 1766 and 1767. It was “the first great work on Greek pottery,” at least according to R.M. Cook.⁵⁷ Philippe Rouet, in his text *Approaches to the Study of Attic Vases: Beazley and Pottier*, took a skeptical view of the text and noted that the plates were excellent, though often not accurate, and the “text bears very little relation to the illustrations.”⁵⁸ Hamilton and d’Hancarville’s joint venture had the desired effect of exciting the manufacturers to start producing copies of the vases. Josiah Wedgwood established a factory in 1760 that he named “Etruria,” which produced some of England’s finest porcelain. One of its most famous pieces was a “blue jasper ware urn” produced in 1786; it was accepted by the British Museum, “becoming the first ‘modern’ vase in its collection.” The urn was a reproduction of one of the engravings shown in Hamiltons and d’Hancarville’s text.⁵⁹ Hamilton’s second text, *Collection of Engravings from Ancient Vases mostly of Pure Greek workmanship [sic]*, “established the current practice of outline drawing” and set the standard for future publications of the vases. “Ancient vases became a requisite of the connoisseur’s outfit.”⁶⁰

While the collectors of the eighteenth century provided us with an awareness of the origins of the vases and established the current process of publishing collections, the study of individual artists came into vogue during the nineteenth century. Under the

⁵⁶ Pierre Francois Hugues used the alias Baron Pierre d’Hancarville among many others. He was an interesting character even in the context of the 18th century. Rouet noted in his text, *Approaches to the Study of Attic Vases: Beazley and Pottier* (15), d’Hancarville was a “complete mythomaniac, an inveterate charmer, a blackmailer, crook, and pornographer, but also a true visionary.” Catherine Johns noted that d’Hancarville fabricated stories about secret cults and the Caesars that displayed “a hearty, and sometimes witty, taste for the obscene.” Johns also noted that while he did lapse into “faking” at times he “was a genuinely learned man. Johns, 22.

⁵⁷ Cook, 291-292

⁵⁸ Rouet, 13.

⁵⁹ D.C. Kurtz , *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, “Early collecting and study”, page 2 of 3. <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec. 16th, 2002), archived at *Beazley Archive*.

⁶⁰ Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 292.

leadership of German scholarship, considerable effort was expended to identify the various divisions in style and periods for vase painting with a particular focus on attempting to date the vases. Another issue pursued was the identification of the various painters. Some painters were known from the earliest explorations because of their signatures, but the vast majority of the pieces were not signed. “Even in Athens, where such signatures are found in some number . . . their total is estimated today to constitute less than 1% of the vases preserved.”⁶¹ With the discovery of Vulci, “one of the largest archaic and classical necropolises in the ancient world,”⁶² over 3000 painted vases were excavated by 1825.⁶³ Besides being a significant advancement to the study of the various periods and styles of Greek vase painting, the find also provided considerable numbers of signed pieces. Eduard Gerhard provided the earliest records for the find and by the time Wilhelm Klein, chair of Archaeology at Prague University, published his text, *Die griechischen vasen mit meistersignaturen (The Greek Vases with Master Signatures)*,⁶⁴ he was able to identify over one hundred potters or painters.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, it was nearly impossible at times to tell if the signature was of the vase painter, the potter, or a workshop stamp. Which was most important in the creation of a vase; painter, potter, or workshop? How one answered this question had a direct effect on the way the inscriptions were interpreted. Most of the disagreement was about the word *epoiesen*, which is typically interpreted as maker, or as “a maker’s trademark,” by current specialists.⁶⁶

While Klein focused his study on vases with signatures, Paul Hartwig’s 1893 text, *Die griechischen meisterschalen (The Greek Master Bowls)*,⁶⁷ took a different approach in assigning vases to particular painters. Rouet noted, “Hartwig’s work resulted in a decisive step forward for the practice of attribution. Indeed, his judgments were based

⁶¹ D.C. Kurtz, *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, “Early collecting and study”, page 3 of 3. <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec. 16th, 2002). archived at *Beazley Archive*.

⁶² Rouet, 26.

⁶³ Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 295.

⁶⁴ *Altavista*, “Babel Fish Translation”, German to English translation selected, <<http://babelfish.altavista.com/babelfish/tr>> (accessed Dec 7th, 2002), s.v. “Die griechischen vasen mit meistersignaturen.”

⁶⁵ Rouet, 26.

⁶⁶ Rouet, 27-28.

⁶⁷ *AltaVista*, “Babel Fish Translation”, German to English translation selected, <<http://babelfish.altavista.com/babelfish/tr>>(accessed Dec 7th, 2002), s.v. “Die griechischen meisterschalen.”

far more on stylistic analogy than on the study of inscriptions.”⁶⁸ While this was the first time that it was applied to Greek vase paintings, the application was not unique to Hartwig.

Art history took an unexpected turn when Giovanni Morelli, who was trained in the sciences and medicine, proposed that by studying anatomical details it was possible to attribute a particular painting with a painter.⁶⁹ While Morelli was not the first to apply this concept, his supporters argued “he revolutionized the method used by his predecessors, by applying to it the anatomical knowledge that he acquired in his youth.”⁷⁰ Another issue that tended to set Morelli apart was his use of photography as a means of systematically inspecting paintings for the seemingly insignificant details of anatomical variations. He believed that to understand a painter’s work well enough to attribute a painting involved examining a large body of the painter’s work with close attention to the painter’s treatment of various anatomical details. Photography provided a reliable method for this type of inspection for Italian paintings by Morelli as it did later for Beazley in study of Greek vase paintings.⁷¹ In 1880, Morelli published “*Critical Studies of Italian Paintings*” with the English version appearing in 1883.⁷² Some authorities question how much direct influence Morelli had on the later work of Beazley, but there was little doubt that Morelli’s theories affected others who did have a direct influence on Beazley’s work.

One of the individuals affected by Morelli’s theories was Adolf Furtwängler, a German archeologist. “The principal problem besetting the study of Greek sculpture was not the fragmentary condition, but the lack of originals. Although ancient sources named famous sculptors and mentioned, or even described their work, most of the examples

⁶⁸ Rouet, 31.

⁶⁹ D.C. Kurtz , *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, “Classical antiquities and fine art”, page 4 of 5, <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec.16th, 2002). archived at *Beazley Archive*.

⁷⁰ Rouet, 60.

⁷¹ Rouet, 63.

⁷² D.C. Kurtz , *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, “Classical antiquities and fine art”, page 4 of 5. <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec.16th, 2002). archived at *Beazley Archive*.

known to the 19th century were copies.”⁷³ Furtwängler believed it was possible to “relate anonymous works [sculptures] to ancient texts” in particular the writings of Pliny and Pausanias.⁷⁴ He was also a proponent of using photography in his studies as an aid to his method. Furtwängler’s most famous accomplishment with this method was “to reconstruct a statue, and identify it with descriptions by ancient authors.” The statue was the “Athena which three authors say Pheidias cast in bronze for the islanders of Lemnos to dedicate on the Athenian Acropolis in the mid-5th century.” Furtwängler proved that a head in one museum belonged to the body of a statue in another museum and was able to reconstruct the sculpture in a cast.⁷⁵ Furtwängler coauthored several books with excellent illustrations and made his “intention of publishing...a manual on Greek vase-painting, in which he could provide ‘a scientific basis’ for his stylistic observations, by means of individual descriptions.”⁷⁶ Furtwängler died in 1907, never completing this work. There is little doubt that Beazley was aware of Furtwängler’s work in Greek vases and was most likely aware of his success in identifying the Lemnian Athena.

Another individual who affected the study of Greek painted pottery indirectly was Bernard Berenson. He actually began his career as a student of Morelli and his “later use of Morelli’s method to attribute large numbers of paintings and drawings is well known.” Berenson’s article on his method, “*Lorenzo Lotto, An Essay in Constructive Art Criticism*, was published in 1895. Less well known is its dedication to an American classicist [and philanthropist], Edward Perry Warren.”⁷⁷ Warren was also a patron of Beazley and it was suggested that Berenson and Beazley met under the patronage of

⁷³ D.C. Kurtz , *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, “Ancient authors and modern archaeologists”, page 2 of 5. <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec.16th, 2002). archived at *Beazley Archive*.

⁷⁴ Rouet, 37.

⁷⁵ D.C. Kurtz , *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, “Ancient authors and modern archaeologists”, page 2 of 5. <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec.16th, 2002). archived at *Beazley Archive*.

⁷⁶ Rouet, 37.

⁷⁷ D.C. Kurtz , *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, “Classical antiquities and fine art”, page 5 of 5. <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec.16th, 2002). archived at *Beazley Archive*.

Warren.⁷⁸ While Beazley's method was similar to Morelli's, his use of lists and the "systematic nature of Beazley's attributions" were much closer to the methods used by Berenson.⁷⁹

Beazley was born in Scotland in 1885 and completed his undergraduate studies at Oxford by 1908. In the same year, he took a position as lecturer at Oxford University's Christ Church and in 1925 became Lincoln Professor of Archaeology.⁸⁰ During the time that Beazley was a student at Oxford, there were no formal classes in Greek painted pottery. So, like most connoisseurs and scholars of this period, he was forced to train himself.⁸¹ Exactly what influences played a role in the development of his method are unclear, but his method was consistent with his times. Finger printing techniques, handwriting analysis and even Freud's concept of the unconscious are all creations of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. There was little doubt that a scholar of Beazley's caliber was aware of the writings in his own field and the *zeitgeist* in the field of Art History was moving toward a scientific, or at least a systematic, system of analysis.

From 1910 to 1918, Beazley published numerous journal articles about various painters and their vases, displaying the results of his method for the academic community. In his article, "Citharoedus", published in 1922 in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Beazley gave a detailed view of his method for attributing vase paintings to painters. Beazley's style of writing was clear and precise. He opened the article with a short discussion of the various amphoras that were used by the red-figure painters, noting shapes and sizes of three forms of amphora. His attention then shifted to the particular vase that was the focus of the article. It was a red-figure amphora with a single painting on each side that was part of the Hearst collection in New York. Beazley provided a short description of the vase with some attempt at understanding the

⁷⁸ D.C. Kurtz, *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, "Sir John Beazley", page 1 of 2. <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec. 16th, 2002). archived at *Beazley Archive*.

⁷⁹ Rouet, 74.

⁸⁰ *Contemporary Authors Online*, (Farmington Hills, Mich.: The Gale Group, 2002), reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*, 2002, <<http://www.galenet.com/servlet/BioRC>> (accessed 12 Dec 2002 through "Tennessee Electronic Library"), s.v. "John Beazley".

⁸¹ D.C. Kurtz, *Greek Painted Pottery II: History of Collecting and Scholarship*, "Sir John Beazley", page 1 of 2. <<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/Pottery/Lecture2/Script/GreekPaintedPottery2.asp>> (last accessed Dec. 16th, 2002). archived at *Beazley Archive*.

iconography. After a brief discussion of the painting technique used on the vase in question, Beazley moved to a second amphora that was in the Rollin's collection. After providing a brief description and several remarks about the draftsmanship of the tracing that he was working from, Beazley systematically compared the anatomical details of the figures depicted on the two amphoras. This procedure was repeated for numerous vases, thirteen in total, from various collections. Each piece was compared with the original vase under question with notations about the similarities and differences of forms used by the painter. He demonstrated that a system of forms was at work in the various depictions that had numerous similarities. Beazley also investigated and compared the painters' usage of foreshortening, color, and overall design, placement of design and use of repeating patterns in the various bandings.⁸² Beazley's systemic approach to the interrogation of the illustrations was truly remarkable and the evidence he presented was quite convincing.

Besides demonstrating his method in the article, Beazley made some comments that were theoretical in tone. Beazley noted that the painter was influenced by nature, specifically the human figure, and the vase painter attempted to reproduce it in the artwork. Beazley also noted that the iconic aspect of the illustrations and the way they were executed represented the perceptions and musings of the individual artist. He stated that nature does not insist "that once you have drawn an ankle with black lines of a certain shape, you must put a vertical line on the chest, or a little arc in the middle of the deltoid.... A system so definite, coherent, distinctive, and in some respects so willful, is most easily intelligible as a *personal* system." He also answered the argument that the illustration should not be "segmented" in the manner of his method and in segmenting the illustration the gestalt effect would be lost to the observer. Beazley argued that, if his system were mastered, then as one walks through a museum they would have little doubt as to which vases are present and which was missing.⁸³

A second interesting theoretical discussion in the essay was based on the premise that the illustrations represented a system. He then represented the problem in an algebraic formula, E+R+D. In the formula, E represents the "execution", R "the

⁸² J.D. Beazley, "Citharoedus", *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 42 (1922), reprint (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1972), 70-90.

⁸³ Beazley "Citharoedus," 83-84.

system of renderings, and D the design” with the resultant being a unique work of the originator. If a individual simply copies the original work, the resultant was depicted as E: R+D The execution is the work of one person while the rendering and design is the work of another. Another possibility is that a person copies the illustration in another system of rendering creating a result based on the formula E+R: D where D is the work of another individual. He readily agreed that the vases inspected in his article could have been any combination of the discussion above. That said, he did not believe that the system of rendering, “R”, could be merely a “copyist system and no more.” Beazley argued that the copyist system would become corrupted over time with the influence of other systems and the results would no longer be true to the original. Beazley acknowledged that little was known about the actual workings of the shops but noted that the workshops of the *Ceramincus* were probably not set up for mass production based on a system using models.⁸⁴

Beazley’s essay was logical, well written, and quite convincing. The argument about the nature of the illustrations, that they were personal interpretations of the painter about an object in nature, was similar to the one used by the post-modernists to attack the narrative in the late twentieth century. He readily agreed that it was virtually impossible to distinguish the work of a student or school piece from the work of the original artisan “but not that in the majority of vases the designer of the drawings is different from the executant.”⁸⁵ Beazley’s ability to handle incredible volumes of information before the development of computers and easy personal photography was impressive. When this was added to his clarity in writing and logical arguments, it was easy to understand why his method and theories came to dominant the field.

Beazley had his critics from the beginning. Rouet stated that when Beazley’s first articles appeared in publications there was “little support for attributionism,” especially in France. One of the principal French critics was Edmond Pottier, “the great connoisseur of pottery who was responsible for the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* and the Campana Gallery at the Louvre.”⁸⁶ Pottier believed that attributionism was a passing fad that detracted from the more important work “concerning aesthetics and evolution.” Pottier’s

⁸⁴ Beazley “Citharoedus,” 84-85.

⁸⁵ Beazley “Citharoedus,” 85.

⁸⁶ Rouet, 109.

“main concern...was to stress that attributionism told us nothing about the way in which the workshops of the Kerameikos were organized, and that it resulted in imitations being on par with vase-paintings produced in a workshop known by a real name [inscription].”

By the 1940s, Beazley was already the source to quote, even before he published the cornerstone texts of his career. Benita Davenport Holland published an essay in the 1941 issue of *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, titled “A Kylix in the Fogg Art Museum: A Study of the use of Design in the Attribution of Greek Vases.” The article discussed the manner in which Greek painters dealt with the circular area inside the cup as a design component. Dealing with medallion-shaped surface when painting a two-dimensional image presented a unique problem to the ancient vase painters, who offered various ingenious solutions to the problem.⁸⁷ The relevant part of the article for this discussion was not the design considerations, but the footnotes. Out of 38 footnotes, over 30% concerned Beazley’s works, even before Beazley had published his list of red-figure painter attributions. In a review of Beazley’s text, *Potter and Painter in Ancient Athens*, written for the 1947 issue of *The American Historical Review*, Gisela M. A. Richter noted “Mr. Beazley, whose epoch-making contributions to the stylistic study of Athenian vase painting [has] put every student of the subject in his debt.”⁸⁸ Richter, author of fourteen texts about ancient artwork by the time she had written this review, was also a noted scholar of Greek vase painting with an impressive career.⁸⁹

In the 1950s, two reviews of Beazley’s work were equally uncritical of his methods. One was from Eugene Vanderpool, professor of Archaeology, American School of Classical Studies in Athens in a 1953 review for the *The American Journal of Philology* of Beazley’s *The Development of Attic Blackfigure*.⁹⁰ The other was by D. A. Amyx for the 1954 issue of *Classical Philology* reviewing the same text. Amyx stated: “The Sather Classical Lectures are meant to illuminate ancient *literature*. The lectures

⁸⁷ Benita Davenport Holland. “A Kylix in the Fogg Art Museum: A Study of the Use of Design in the Attribution of Greek Vases.” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 52 (1941): 41-63.

⁸⁸ Gisela M. A. Richter, review of *Potter and Painter in Ancient Athens*, by J.D. Beazley, *The American Historical Review* 52,4 (July, 1947): 713.

⁸⁹ *Contemporary Authors Online*, (Farmington Hills, Mich.: The Gale Group, 2002), reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*, 2002, <<http://www.galenet.com/servlet/BioRC>> (accessed 12 Dec 2002 through "Tennessee Electronic Library"), s.v. "Gisela M. A. Richter."

⁹⁰ Eugene Vanderpool, review of *The Development of Attic Black-Figure*, by J.D. Beazley, *Classical Philology* 74,2 (1953): 321-323.

have been mostly philologists, but a few archaeologists have been invited. No better scholar than Beazley could have been chosen [sic] to demonstrate the wisdom of this inclusive policy.⁹¹ Amyx already had published two texts on Greek vases by 1954 and was a professor at the University of California at Berkeley.⁹² In a 1965 review for *Classical Philology* of Beazley's second edition of *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters*, Amyx praised the three volume set. He described it as a "great work" and stated; " Among living scholars now working seriously and with some success in this field, it would be hard to find one who is not a pupil, a pupil of a pupil, or at least a self-proclaimed disciple and follower of his [Beazley's] teaching."⁹³

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, disagreements about the significance of Beazley's work and the relevance of attributionism arose. This changing state of scholarship was caused, in part, by the overall backlash against all forms of positivism, especially in light of emerging postmodern thought. In a review for the *Times Literary Supplement*, Mary Beard was very critical of Beazley's work and method. "It is becoming increasingly felt," she wrote, "that the eventual judgment on 'Beazleyism' will be essentially negative." She acknowledged that Beazley played an important role in the understanding of Greek pottery but was concerned that the more important point was to "understand how and why his approach carried the almost universal convention that it did and what effect that has had on ancient art history as a whole."⁹⁴ If even the "Great Bastille" of positivism--the natural sciences--was not safe from the subjectivist attack of post-modernists, there was little doubt Beazley's empirical method could not withstand a similar onslaught. Beazley's method was empirical and subjective, and his writings supported the overall progressive view of Western thought and its Eurocentrism.

James Whitley demonstrated this clearly in an essay for the 1997 issue of *Antiquity*, when he argued that we see the things that we expect to see. There is no experiment that occurs independently of the experimenter, no instrument that can cast

⁹¹ D.A. Amyx, review of *The Development of Attic Black-Figure*, by J.D. Beazley, *Classical Philology* 49,2 (April, 1954): 143.

⁹² *The Complete Marquis Who's Who*, 2001, reproduced in *Biography Resource Center*, (Farmington Hills, Mich.: The Gale Group, 2002), <<http://www.galenet.com/servlet/BioRC>> (accessed 12 Dec 2002 through "Tennessee Electronic Library"), s.v. "Darrell Arlynn Amyx."

⁹³ D. A. Amyx, "The Second Edition of Beazley's *Arv*: Review Article," *Classical Philology* 60 (July 1965): 186-188.

⁹⁴ Mary Beard, "Signed Against Unsigned", *Times Literary Supplement* 12 (1986): 1013.

an unjudgmental eye toward the subject because, ultimately, it is the human mind that has to interpret the data.⁹⁵

Vision is no longer seen as an act of passive recording. Rather, it is an active process of scanning objects for clues to answer certain questions. We do not see what is there, but what we are accustomed to see, or those things that may be relevant to our interests or which may help to answer our questions. We look for things, and what we look for is determined either by prejudice (that is, by our preconceptions) or by theories we wish to examine. The very act of seeing is a kind of scientific practice, a form of hypothesis testing. Connoisseurship as a scientific or scholarly method can be accommodated within this new paradigm. Beazleyites however have taken no interest in these issues. They still believe that it is possible to trust an [eye]. . . as if the eye could somehow be disconnected from the brain.⁹⁶

Later in the article, Whitley argued that no method could be practiced without some form of theory underpinning its actions. In this sense, Beazley's method was no exception because there are theoretical assumptions that must exist before the method can be applied. For example, the very nature of what is accepted as proof is dependent on a theoretical construct. Does the world function in a manner where $A+B$ always equals C ? The premise that the world works and has always worked in this fashion needs to be seen as a theoretical construct and subject to error.

Beazley was, in the broad sense, a conservative. He used a new 'scientific' technique, and facts scientifically arrived at, to validate a narrative which he had largely inherited from earlier scholars in the field . . . It is, moreover, a mistake to dismiss many authors of the earlier part of this century as being untheoretical, since reticence about theories must not be equated with the absence of powerful ideas or controlling metanarratives. But this mistake is repeated whenever a contemporary theorist or critic dismisses work of that period as 'naive empiricism' or consigns Beazley's work to the category of 'mere lists'. His *Attic black-figure vase painters* (1956) and *Attic red-figure vase painters* (1963) are much more than that. They are humanist narratives disguising themselves as scientific facts. They are lists which tell stories, stories in which many both inside and outside academia still profoundly wish to believe.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ James Whitley is a Senior Lecturer in Mediterranean Archaeology at Cardiff University. He published two texts on ancient Greece and has several articles published in scholarly journals. Unknown, *Dr. James Whitley*, <<http://www.cf.ac.uk/hisar/people/jw/>>, last accessed September 23rd 2002.

⁹⁶ James Whitley, "Beazley as Theorist," *Antiquity* 71, (March 1997): 40 (8), reproduced in Gale Group, *InfoTrac*, <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com/default>> (accessed 12 Dec 2002 through "Tennessee Electronic Library").

⁹⁷ Whitley, (online version).

These are claims that have been leveled at many besides Beazley and are valid points for discussion.

John H Oakley⁹⁸ wrote a response to the arguments presented by Whitley in the same journal a year later, *Antiquity* 1998, in "Why Study a Greek Vase-painter? - A Response to Whitley's Beazley as theorist." While some of Oakley's arguments were weak he did list numerous reasons to justify studying individual vase painters and how this was useful to the community. The one reason that he omitted was that it brings us pleasure to discover even the most trivial of facts about the past, even if they are subjective in nature. Oakley made an interesting point in his analogy of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's use of psychological profiles and the art historian's use of Beazley's method to determine information about an individual. While he over-simplified the FBI's methodology and omitted the entire statistical component of the method, Oakley's analogy was logical. Each was based on the theory that individuals leave behind unconscious clues that provide specialists with unique information about the individual. While his argument was logical, he did not explore the differences. Each time a criminal who has been profiled is captured the background of the individual is investigated to determine how much of the information matched the profiler's depiction. This provides a form of feedback for the practice of criminal profiling that is nonexistent for the connoisseur's method. It is highly unlikely we will ever capture the Berlin painter and that he, or maybe she, can be questioned to verify or deny the claims of the connoisseurs. While simple experiments could be performed to test the accuracy of Beazley's method, few art historians have explored this possibility.⁹⁹

John Elsner, a Fellow at Corpus Christi College, noted the similarities of Conan Doyle's "Holmesian" style of deduction and Beazley's method. In fact, he stated that "Beazley was a Holmesian detective" who zeroed in on the stylistic clues and found the

⁹⁸ John H Oakley is the Chair for the Department of Classical Studies at The College of William and Mary in Virginia. He had a distinguished academic career and has published numerous articles and books on ancient Greece with a focus on Greek art. John H Oakley, *CURRICULUM VITAE*, <http://www.wm.edu/CAS/classical_studies/jxoakl/CV.htm>, (last accessed Dec. 14th, 2002).

⁹⁹ John H. Oakley, "Why study a Greek vase-painter? - A response to Whitley's 'Beazley as theorist,'" *Antiquity* 72 (March 1998): 209(5), reproduced in Gale Group, *InfoTrac*, <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com/default>> last accessed 12 Dec 2002 through "Tennessee Electronic Library".

real men with real lives.”¹⁰⁰ By contrasting Doyle’s Sherlock Homes with a postmodernist detective created by Umberto Eco, Elsner argued that what guarantees our faith in the power of Homes’ deductive power, and in turn in Beazley’s method is our belief in the “superior genius.” All the clues may not equal a truthful representation. Elsner questioned if it was possible to find the individual by “analyzing the trivial details.” The concept was born out of the nineteenth century mindset when Realism and Empiricism were at their zenith. An unquestioned faith in this theoretical position was no longer acceptable in the twentieth century.¹⁰¹

In Elsner’s view, as in Beard’s and Whitley’s, Beazley was the ultimate disciple of Morelli’s system. If “a question mark at least must hang over the ‘reality’ of the artist invented by the Morellian method, then what do we actually know?”¹⁰² This odd question if taken to its logical conclusion implies that what we know if we do not have the absolute truth about something is ‘nothing.’ One must wonder if postmodernist will clamber for us to shutoff our word processors if the quantum theorist cannot provide the absolute truth about sub-atomic particles. Elsner argued that what we really have, with the uncertainty of Beazley’s method, was a well-organized system of labeling the vases. He also noted that many other possible veins of exploration were ignored in the preference for style over content.¹⁰³ The issues that the post-modernists have raised about historical study, science, and Beazley’s methods will likely be around for many years to come.

Another interesting argument that appeared in the last quarter of the twentieth century concerned the importance of the pottery and its role in Greek society. Brian A. Sparkes¹⁰⁴ noted, in a review of *Artful Crafts: Ancient Greek Silverware and Pottery* for the 1995 issue of *Antiquity*, that some scholars, since the early 1980s have challenged

¹⁰⁰ John Elsner, review of *Greek Vases: Lectures by J.D. Beazley*, by D.C. Kurtz, and *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Classical Period*, by John C. Boardman, *Antiquity* 64 (Dec. 1990): 951.

¹⁰¹ Elsner, 951

¹⁰² Elsner, 951

¹⁰³ Elsner, 952

¹⁰⁴ “Professor Brian A. Sparkes . . .retired from the Chair of Classical Archaeology at the University of Southampton, and well known for his work on Greek vase painting and its relation to Greek life and literature.” Unknown, *Leventis visiting Chair in Greek*, < <http://www.cpa.ed.ac.uk/bulletinarchive/1998-1999/03/news/07.html>> last accessed Dec. 17th, 2002, archived at The University of Edinburgh.

the communities' thoughts about the role of pottery in the ancient world.¹⁰⁵ Michael Vickers¹⁰⁶ is one of the scholars at the center of this controversy. Vickers argues that our view of the value of the pottery is distorted and that in many cases they were "surrogates" for the more valuable silver and gold vessels. He stated, "attribution of pots is an activity whose scholarly value is slight."¹⁰⁷ In many cases the pottery was simply copies of the more expensive metal items and the potter was not the original designer of the piece. He noted that, while there was probably not a parallel vessel in precious metal for each of the pottery shapes, that the silver and goldsmiths, not the potter, established acceptable design concepts.¹⁰⁸ Vickers also argued that silver and gold dominated the tables of the symposiums and what is known about the elites of the period "suggests that ceramic -- no matter how well crafted -- would not have figured large in their everyday experience." He supported his argument with the fact that tomb robbers did not bother to steal the pottery but left it in the ground or scattered about the site. Vickers further noted that it appears in the graves in such large numbers because it was valueless and "pottery was a cheap surrogate. . . pieces [that] were deposited in tombs by societies who preferred to keep the family silver above ground for the living whose need was greater."¹⁰⁹

Brian A. Sparkes, in his text *Greek Pottery: An Introduction*, acknowledged that attribution of vases did have some issues. He highlighted the problems with the method by asking a series of pointed questions. The questions were focused on how to quantify the subjective nature of the methodology. For example; how "characteristic must a painter's style be, to be his own?" "How far can a painter's talent be allowed to decay before he becomes another painter with a different sobriquet?" Sparkes also noted that

¹⁰⁵ Brian A. Sparkes, review of *Artful Crafts: Ancient Greek Silverware and Pottery*, by Michael Vickers, *Antiquity* 69 (Sept 1995): 619(3), reproduced in Gale Group, *InfoTrac*, <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com/default>> last accessed 12 Dec 2002 through "Tennessee Electronic Library".

¹⁰⁶ "Michael Vickers is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Oxford, Curator of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum and a Senior Research Fellow of Jesus College. He has taught at University College, Dublin and at the University of Texas at Austin. He has been a Visiting Member of the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton and is a Corresponding Member of the German Archeological Institute." Michael Vickers, *Michael Vickers*, <<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~vickers/>> (last accessed on Dec. 17th 2002), archived at Oxford University.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Vickers, *Ancient Greek Pottery* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1999), 4.

¹⁰⁸ Vickers *Ancient Greek Pottery*, 8-9

¹⁰⁹ Michael Vickers, review of *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*, by unknown, *Antiquity* 68 (June 1994): 460(2), reproduced in Gale Group, *InfoTrac*, <<http://infotrac.galegroup.com/default>> (accessed 12 Dec 2002 through "Tennessee Electronic Library").

perhaps other avenues of exploration have suffered at the expense of attributionism and the “returns” provided by connoisseurship “are now smaller than they used to be.”¹¹⁰

Sparkes was clear he did not support the current revisionist positions. He acknowledged, “the views expressed [by Vickers] are important and cannot be brushed aside.” The information presented in the text, according to Sparkes, raised “much broader issues than the status of pottery, and ask whether we do not treat archaeological material in a false manner and mistake the fragmentary parts for the perfect whole.” Sparkes presented a series of thoughtful questions to probe the theories presented in Vickers and Gill’s text. The questions were valid and logical, but he clearly believed that the continued practice of Beazley’s method had merit.¹¹¹

Beazley had a significant impact in the way Greek vases were studied and viewed by the whole academic community. His method was logical and quickly won acceptance from the larger community. Connoisseurship’s acceptance was so widespread that some later scholars asserted that other avenues of investigation had suffered. Only in the last quarter of the twentieth century did the origins of his method and its practice become a source of controversy that will continue into the twenty-first century. A significant portion of the controversy came from the fact that Beazley was a product of his times. Most of his work came from a time when the human observer was viewed as being an inactive and unbiased in the observations recorded. The human aspect of the observer can no longer be ignored; as Elsner noted, “today, for a while, the era of empirical certainty and complete explanatory systems is over.”¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Brian A. Sparkes, *Greek Pottery: An Introduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 116.

¹¹¹ Brian A. Sparkes, review of *Artful Crafts: Ancient Greek Silverware and Pottery*, (online version).

¹¹² Elsner, 952.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

As noted in the introduction, the sample for this study was collected from the on-line Beazley archive using the database search command; *Fabric* = Athenian, *Shape* = cup, *Shape Type* = Whole Vase, *Order Results By* = Vase Number. The goal was to gain access to as many cups as possible without using a complex search command. The archive database returned 7901 items as having the characteristics meeting the search criteria. Each of the items that was returned by the search command was labeled with information collected by the archivist. To briefly review the information that was provided with the cups, each of the data categories was listed in the Table 1 below with a short description of how the information was use or cataloged during the course of this study.

The information provided about a particular item listed by the Archive varied considerably within the predefined parameters detailed in Table 1. Because of this fact, the sample size under discussion varied considerably. For example, while the total sample was 7901 items, only 2218 items had an entry for the date of manufacture. There were exceptions to this variation of available data; one was under the heading of "Decorated Area," which had an entry for each cup under question. To allow for the fact that individual items had different amounts of information, the study database, which had been collected in Microsoft Access, was converted into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for tabulation. The spreadsheet was sorted into various worksheets to provide an easier way of evaluating the information. Each worksheet was summarized into a table and a chi-square arrangement, if this type of statistical analysis was relevant, for presentation in this study. This was done to simplify the presentation of the information contained in the various worksheets and when possible to test for statistical significance.

Table 1. Data Labels with Usage

Item Data Label	How the data was used in the study
Report On Vase Number:	The vase number provided a reliable method for receiving a single object from the database. If there was a question about the information that was cataloged in the database, which was created for this study, the item information was retrieved using the Vase Number.
Fabric:	The information in the section was always Athenian. This indicated that the clay that was used in the construction of the pottery came from the Attic region.
Shape:	The shape information noted which of the various designs the potter created. The Introduction provides a more detailed explanation of cup designs. The archivist often listed this information as “cup.”
Provenance:	If the archivist was aware of where the item had been found it was listed under this data label.
Date:	The date of the manufacture of the cup was listed in this data label. The date was listed for the item in 50-year increments.
Decorated Area:	This category of information was listed for each panel that appeared on the cup. The archivist had generated a short description of the image and noted which part of the cup the image appeared.
Current Collection:, Previous Collections:, Publication Record:	These heading were not used within the context of this study.

While the technology used in this study was complex and represented a relatively new way of handling vase data, its underlying methodology was no different from the methods used for the past 200 years. As was noted earlier, individuals have been collecting and cataloging information about Greek vases since the late 18th century. This was precisely the same activity that has been continued by the Beazley Archive using the new advances in computer technology. In addition, the methodology of tabulating the list compiled by others was not new to the study of Greek pottery. Webster used the same methodology in his study of Beazley's lists in the 1970's. This study has not used any advanced statistical methodology in its evaluation of the information available. Simple tabulation with relative percentages and the chi-square test were the most advanced mathematical concepts presented in this study. The chi-square test is among the most basic of statistical functions. Although numbers and computers were used during the course of this study, the information presented was still as subjective as any other form of communication that has been used in the past to discuss Greek vases. At the same time it was no less a valid source of evidence than any other used by historians and, arguably, was in some instances systematic than the current methods employed by some historians.

Another methodological issue that must be kept in mind while viewing the genre section of this study was that to assign a genre to each of the scenes described by the archivist was a laborious task that required repeated complex decisions on the part of the observer. While there were earlier attempts to assigned genre to particular vases and even lists of vases, there was no established methodology for the collection and handling of such a significant number of images. This increased the potential for errors. The observer also performed repeated complex decisions over a long period of time, which combined with the looseness of the genre definitions, was a possible source of error in the study. Because of the subjective nature of this component of the study and the very likelihood of error, it was inappropriate to use statistical analysis on the genre information. Any inferences based on the genre section should be based only on the most obvious of differences.

The goal of this section was to provide information about the data that resulted from this study. The entire sample 7901 items with 2218 (28%) having a manufacture

date listed by the archivist. Table 2 shows the distribution of the dated items, using the same overlapping fifty-year increments as listed in the archive. While the dates overlap, the data in each section were exclusive to the category.

Table 2. Number of Cups by Dates

Dated from 600-550 B.C.	Dated from 575-525 B.C.	Dated from 550-500 B.C.	Dated from 525-475 B.C.	Dated from 500-450 B.C.	Dated from 475-425 B.C.	Dated from 450-400 B.C.	Dated from 425-375 B.C.	Dated from 400-300 B.C.	Number of Sample dated by the archive
27	458	893	399	159	136	86	33	27	2218
1.2%	20.6%	40.3%	18.0%	7.2%	6.1%	3.9%	1.5%	1.2%	100.0%

The entire sample had the painting technique listed by the archivist. During the course of the investigation, the various painting techniques were cataloged as black-figure, red-figure, and other. The “other” category was either a mixture of techniques or rare techniques used by the cup painters. For example, vase number 200040 was a combination of techniques; black-figure on the inside of the cup and red-figure for the exterior. Another example was vase number 12369 which used a black-figure technique with a white ground.

As shown in Table 3, the “other” category represented only a little over 3% of the sample. The rest of the sample was almost evenly distributed between the two major painting styles of the Greek vase painters.

Table 3. Number of Cups by Technique

# Cups painted in the Black-Figure style	# Cups painted in the Red-Figure style	# Cups painted listed in the Other category	Total Sampled
3573	4070	258	7901
45.22%	51.51%	3.27%	100.00%

As noted earlier, the principle focus of this investigation was the cups used by Greeks at the symposium. Unfortunately, not all of the items found by the search command were identified as a specific style of cup. In many instances, the item was just noted as a cup and its particular style was not identified. Table 4 contains the number of various cups styles in the data sample and their relative percentages. Of the items sampled 4242 (53.7%) were simply listed as “cup”. This was not to say that the cup could not be identified.

Table 4. Number of Cups by Shapes

Cup	Cup A	Cup B	Cup C	Droop	Little Master Band	Little Master Lip	Siana	Skyphos	Stemless	Other	Total Sample
4242	540	298	93	122	871	501	429	264	526	15	7901
53.7%	6.8%	3.8%	1.2%	1.5%	11.0%	6.3%	5.4%	3.3%	6.7%	0.2%	100.0%

Often there were pictures of the cup and the actual style could have been discerned. It was beyond the scope of this limited exploration to include this type of evaluation. Of the items that were recognized, the Little Master cups represented the largest group identified. Nearly a thousand cups were identified as one of the type A, B or C cups. While it was known that the other designs of cups were used at the symposiums, the type A, B, and C cup was of particular interest because of its possible shape as a component in symposium and the game of *kottabos*.

The next factor considered about the data sample was the location where the item was found, listed as Provenance by the archivist. This does not imply that the item was manufactured in the find location, because in all cases the manufactured in the Attica region. The find location was not constant on the original data sheets from the archive. At times the archivists used modern names of locations, and at times they used the ancient names. During the study, the find locations were grouped into particular geographic areas. Finds on the Italian peninsula were divided between Etruria and Italy. Corsica, Cyprus, Rhodes, Sicily, and Spain were treated as individual areas, ignoring the name of the specific region or township where the cup was found. Finds in the Peloponnesus, Attica, Northern Greece, islands of the Aegean, and Eastern Anatolia were listed as Aegean. As with many of the data items, numerous entries did not have a find location under the data label Provenance. Slightly over half of the sample for this study was listed as unknown. Another 2.6% were identified as “other” because, while the find location was known, the location did not fit into the simplified schematic of the study.

Table 5. Number of Cups by Find Locations

Spain	Sicily	Rhodes	Italy	Etruria	Aegean	Cyprus	Corsica	Unknown	Other	Total
50	75	134	1373	1057	494	106	38	4370	204	7901
0.6%	0.9%	1.7%	17.4%	13.4%	6.3%	1.3%	0.5%	55.3%	2.6%	100.0%

Considerable work was done during the course of the twentieth century to identify the various painters. A large number of the sample had some form of identification of the painter associated with the specific item. Of the 7901 cups sampled, 5662 or 71.7% had a painter or a group identified. As expected, the actual number for any individual group or painter was typically low. Some painters were represented in considerable numbers; for example, the leafless group had 186 items listed; and the “manner of Haimon” painter had a 131 items listed. As the majority of the painters in the sample were represented in relatively low numbers, a table or list would have been very long and appeared to be of little use in typifying the data sample. The question of the painter’s identity was explored only when the sample was interrogated with a specific question. This method made the use of the painters’ identity manageable in the presentation of information and its meaning within a context.

One of the principal goals was to explore the numbers of erotic depictions on Greek cups. The word “erotic” was used in a liberal fashion during the course of this study. It was arguable what the typical ancient Greek thought about the various depictions by the painters. To state that one image was erotic within its original context and another was not was an unrealistic expectation. For example, it is unlikely we will ever know if ancient Greeks found the depiction of satyrs masturbating as erotic or not.

During the course of this study, typical 21st century Western cultural views were used to identify if a depiction was erotic or not. In most cases, the archivist provided the information about whether an image was erotic or not. Occasionally, the observer made a judgment decision. During the study the observer only labeled ten items as erotic without the label being applied by the archivist. Of course, the concept of simple nudity was exempted from consideration as erotic. It was apparent that notions concerning

nudity in ancient Greece did not fit the Judo-Christian concepts of current Western thought. This was particularly true concerning male nudity. Female nudity in ancient Greece was more complex and was beyond the scope of this study to explore at length. In Archaic and Classical Athenian public art, the female was virtually always clothed with only a few notable exceptions. The female nude came only into its own as a motif in public art during the Hellenistic age. The female nude was always a possible component of the vase painter's compositions. It has been argued that the depiction of nude females by the painters was a way of identifying them as prostitutes.¹¹³ This appears to be a parsimonious answer to the images of nude women on the cups. If it were true, determination of whether the image would be erotic or not becomes more complex. If the images had denoted honorable women, whom the viewer was unable to view in real life, then the images would likely to have been erotic. However, if they show the images of women who could be viewed nude without any effort except a walk into the streets, it was questionable how erotic these simple images would have been to an Athenian male of the period. These images were not included in the erotic totals. The application of current Western, specifically American, views and bias about the remaining erotic images likely skewed the data positively. There was little doubt that the numbers would change if an observer applied Islamic or Hindu religious and cultural norms to the images.

It was also likely that the archivist and the observer missed certain erotic iconography during this investigation. Most cultures have certain images that are culturally loaded with meaning that would appear benign to a member of another culture. For example, displaying a woman's face or bare leg from the knee down would be viewed as highly erotic by some cultures while in others it would be overlooked. Also, one does not need to drive on an American highway very long to learn that certain hand gestures are loaded with meaning! Another meaningful example of cultural expectations affecting interpretation related to the meaning of phallic representations. The herm with its phallic image probably was not particularly erotic to ancient Greeks. If the same image were placed in the front lawn of the typical American home, it would create a considerable stir in the neighborhood because it would be viewed as erotic in content

¹¹³ Pomeroy, 142-143.

and inappropriate for the setting. It was impossible to determine what affect this concept had on the study.

Another area that may have been affected by cultural expectations of erotic iconography was images that depicted a form of courtship that implied imminent sexual activity, particularly images of homosexual courtships and to a lesser extent heterosexual courtship scenes. Kilmer noted that scenes of homosexual intercourse were quite rare but suggested that homosexual courtship scenes implied the approaching action of sexual intercourse.¹¹⁴ This would have been an erotic depiction, at least in the mind of the ancient Greeks, and would have affected the results of the study. While Kilmer may be correct in his arguments, it was decided that it was to only label an image erotic if it had obvious erotic elements. For this reason courtship scenes of any type were not counted as erotic, unless it was labeled so by the archivist. Another area of concern was the scenes of women’s bathing or toiletry scenes that could imply imminent sexual activity, either heterosexual or homosexual. These images were also left out of the erotic image totals for this study unless the archivist noted them as erotic. While these were as likely to be erotic as Kilmer’s courtship scenes, they are equally difficult to interpret.

Of the sample population of 7901 cups, only 131 items had images that were determined to be erotic in content. This was less than 1.7% of the total sample. Even at this early stage, it became apparent that erotic images were rare on the painted cups. The distribution of the erotic images across the various painting techniques is shown in Table 6, and Table 7 contained the observed versus the expected results from the chi-square analysis.

Table 6. Number of Cups by Paint Technique

	Black-Figure	Red-Figure	Other	Total Sampled
Number in Sample	3573	4070	258	7901
% of Total	45.2%	51.5%	3.3%	100.0%
With Erotic Images	54	72	4	130
% of Total	1.5%	1.8%	1.6%	1.6%

¹¹⁴ Martin F Kilmer, *Greek erotica on Attic Red-figure Vases* (London: Duckworth, 1993), 11.

Table 7. Chi-Square Analysis of Paint Technique

Technique		Without Erotic Images	With Erotic Images	Totals
Black-Figure	observed	3519	54	3573
	expected	3514.21	58.79	
Red-Figure	observed	3998	72	4070
	expected	4003.03	66.97	

Degrees of freedom: 2.

Chi-square = 0.795700401785343

For significance at the .05 level, chi-square should be greater than or equal to 5.99.

The distribution is not significant.

The percentages of black-figure and red-figure in the sample were nearly equal, and the resulting number of erotic images associated with each technique remained roughly constant. The chi-square analysis indicated that the variations in the numbers in Table 7 were not statistically significant and were within a normal range. This indicated that there was no relationship between technique and the number of erotic images as defined within the study.

The next variable explored was the relative frequency of erotic images versus date of manufacture. The relative numbers with percentages based on date of manufacture within 50-year increments is listed in Table 8.

Table 8. Number of Cups by Date of Manufacture

	No Date was given by the archive	600-550	575-525	550-500	500-450	525-475	475-425	450-400	425-375	400-300	Total
Number of cups	5683	27	458	893	159	399	136	86	33	27	7901
% of sample with dates	71.9%	0.3%	5.8%	11.3%	2.0%	5.0%	1.7%	1.1%	0.4%	0.3%	100.0%
Number of cups with erotic images	78	0	11	23	7	7	3	0	0	1	130
% with erotic depictions	1.4%	0.0%	2.4%	2.6%	4.4%	1.8%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	1.6%

While the dates did overlap in the archive's description, each item was exclusive to its category in the study. Unfortunately, many of the cups in the sample did not have a date associated with the datasheet for the item in the Beazley archive.

Table 9. Chi-Square Analysis of Date of Manufacture

Dates		Without erotic images	With erotic images	Totals
575-525	Observed	447	11	458
	Expected	446.58	11.42	
550-500	Observed	870	23	893
	Expected	870.73	22.27	
500-450	Observed	152	7	159
	Expected	155.03	3.97	
525-475	Observed	392	7	399
	Expected	389.05	9.95	
475-425	Observed	133	3	136
	Expected	132.61	3.39	
	Totals	1994	51	2045

Degrees of freedom: 4

Chi-square = 3.3661450548631

For significance at the .05 level, chi-square should be greater than or equal to 9.49.

The distribution is not significant.

This resulted in some of the identified dated samples being small in comparison to the overall sample and in some cases the values ended up being equal to zero or less than five. When the number of squares in the table that contained a value less than five in the chi-square distribution becomes greater than 20% the test loses much of its predictive value.¹¹⁵ Table 9 was the results of a chi-square test on the data collected with the unusable information removed from the distribution. No data categories were collapsed; the unusable information was simply omitted. There was no statistically significant variation in the production of erotic images on cups in the sample based on the date of manufacture from 575-425 BC. In fact, many of the expected values were nearly the exact values observed.

The next area investigated was erotic images versus the design of cup. The relative numbers with percentages based on the shape of cup was listed in Table 10. As noted earlier, many of the cups were not identified by design in the archive database. The “other” category included cups that did not appear in a large enough quantity in the sample to justify listing them in categories. One of the most notable observations from this table was that there were no erotic images listed in the archive for the Stemless cup.

¹¹⁵ Davis S. Moore, *The Basic Practice of Statistics* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1995), 540.

Table 10. Number of Cups by Shape

	Cup	Cup A	Cup B	Cup C	Droop	Little Master Band	Little Master Lip	Siana	Skyphos	Stemless	Other	Total Sample
Number of Design in Sample	4242	540	298	93	122	871	501	429	264	526	15	7901
% of Design in Study	53.7%	6.8%	3.8%	1.2%	1.5%	11.0%	6.3%	5.4%	3.3%	6.7%	0.2%	100.0%
With Erotic Images	74	17	6	3	1	16	9	2	1	0	1	130
% of Design with Erotic Images	1.7%	3.1%	2.0%	3.2%	0.8%	1.8%	1.8%	0.5%	0.4%	0.0%	6.7%	1.6%

Table 11 contains the results of the first chi-square analysis of the cup designs for erotic content. The results for the A, B, and C design were collapsed for the chi-square test because the designs were very similar and it was believed that the collapsing of these fields would not affect the investigation in any significant way. The chi square test showed the distribution statistically significant differences in distribution. The A, B, and C designs showed almost double the number of erotic images. There was also a very low number of erotic images on Siana and Skyphos designs, less than half of what was expected.

Table 11. Chi-Square Analysis of Cup Shapes

Style of cup		No erotic images	With erotic images	Totals
Cup	observed	4168	74	4242
	expected	4166.98	75.02	
Cup A, B & C	observed	905	26	931
	expected	914.54	16.46	
Little Master Band	observed	855	16	871
	expected	855.6	15.4	
Little Master Lip	observed	492	9	501
	expected	492.14	8.86	
Siana	observed	427	2	429
	expected	421.41	7.59	
Skyphos	observed	263	1	264
	expected	259.33	4.67	
	Totals	7110	128	7238

Degrees of freedom: 5

Chi-square = 12.7849480205241

For significance at the .05 level, chi-square should be greater than or equal to 11.07
The distribution is significant.

Table 12. Number of Cups by Find Location

	# of cups in sample found	% of total sample	With erotic images	% with erotic Images
Spain	50	0.6%	1	2.0%
Sicily	75	0.9%	1	1.3%
Rhodes	134	1.7%	1	0.7%
Italy	1373	17.4%	10	0.7%
Etruria	1057	13.4%	21	2.0%
Aegean	494	6.3%	8	1.6%
Cyprus	106	1.3%	2	1.9%
Corsica	38	0.5%	0	0.0%
Unknown	4370	55.3%	85	1.9%
Other	204	2.6%	1	0.5%
Total	7901	100.0%	130	1.6%

The next issue explored was the find location of the cups. As noted earlier, the data record for each item has a data label for the find location of the item. Unfortunately, a little over half of the items did not have a find location listed. In Table 12 the numbers of items were listed with their find locations and relative percentages. For this chi-square analysis, Table 13, it was decided to collapse the find locations that contained a very small number of items into the “other” category.

Table 13. Chi-Square Analysis of Find Locations

Location Found		Without Erotic images	With Erotic images	Totals
Italy	observed	1363	10	1373
	expected	1350.41	22.59	
Etruria	observed	1036	21	1057
	expected	1039.61	17.39	
Aegean	observed	486	8	494
	expected	485.87	8.13	
Other	observed	601	6	607
	expected	597.01	9.99	
Unknown	observed	4285	85	4370
	expected	4298.1	71.9	
	Totals	7771	130	7901

Degrees of freedom: 4

Chi-square = 11.9424148443559

For significance at the .05 level, chi-square should be greater than or equal to 9.49

The distribution is significant.

This collapse was assumed to have little effect on the distribution of the sample. The distribution was found to be significant. The largest factor in this was the low number of cups with erotic images found in Italy. The actual number observed was half of what was expected from a distribution of this type. In fact, had it not been for the small sample size found in Italy, the chi-square would not have been near significance at a .05 level of confidence.

The final tables are in some ways the most complex of the group and the most subjective. During the investigation, each scene in the data sheet, under the heading of Description, for a particular item was assigned to one of fixed genres and entered into the sample. It must be kept in mind that a single cup could have a number of different scenes. One or more of the scenes could fit a particular genre and the others could be in entirely different categories. Table 14 is the results of the effort to assign genre to the different images described by the archivist to the entire population, the erotic subset, and finally to the erotic images individually. As was noted above, the categories were loosely defined and selected by the observer or the archivist. As with the erotic images, the “Marriage”, “Symposium”, and “Courtship” scenes were dominantly defined by the archivist.

Table 14. Number of Cups by Genre

	# Genre in total sample	# Genre in total erotic sample	# Genre in erotic images
Mythical or Cult	3441	61	23
Courtship	117	5	2
Courtship (myth)	0	0	0
Marriage	3	0	0
Marriage (myth)	3	0	0
Domestic	97	0	0
Domestic (myth)	2	0	0
Symposium or Komos	1241	33	6
Symposium or Komos (myth)	105	6	0
Life scene	6319	142	110
Life scene (myth)	931	7	5
Other	674	1	1
Total	6614	255	147

The attributed painters presented a problem in the presentation of the information as this data could not be tabulated in the manner of the earlier information. Eighty-one of the cups having erotic material in the sample were attributed. Table 15 contains the list of attributions and the scholar who made the attribution. If the attributed painter had more than three entries in the table, the name was highlighted. If there were two attributions, they were listed side by side.

Table 15. Painter Attributions

Attributed to	Attributed By:	Attributed to	Attributed By:
AKESTORIDES P	Beazley		
AMASIS P	Plaoutine		
ANTIPHON P	Beazley		
ANTIPHON P	Beazley		
ANTIPHON P	Beazley		
BO-GROUP by PAUL, E.	E. Paul		
BRISEIS P	Unknown		
BRISEIS P	Beazley		
BRISEIS P	Beazley		
BRISEIS P	Beazley		
BRYGOS P	SIGNATURE		
CHALCIDISING CUP	Unknown		
Circle of NIKOSTHENES P	Beazley		
Circle of NIKOSTHENES P	Beazley		
Circle of ONESIMOS	Unknown		
Compare to AFFECTER	Maffre		
Compare to EPIKTETOS	Belloni	Compare to CHAIRIAS P	Belloni
Compare to LINDOS GROUP	DE MIRO		
Compare to PROTO PANAETIAN GROUP	Williams		
Compare to TLESON P	Beazley		
COURTING CUPS, GROUP OF THE	Green		
COURTING CUPS, GROUP OF THE	Froning		
DOKIMASIA P	Beazley		
DOURIS	Beazley		
DOURIS	Beazley		
ELBOWS OUT	Beazley		
EPELEIOS P	Beazley		
EPIDROMOS P	Beazley		
EPIKTETOS	Beazley		
EPIKTETOS	Beazley		
EPIKTETOS	Beazley		
EPIKTETOS	Beazley		
EPIKTETOS	Beazley		
EPIKTETOS	Bizzarri		
ESSEN GROUP	Beazley		
FOUNDRY P	Bothmer		

Attributed to	Attributed By:	Attributed to	Attributed By:
FP CLASS	Stadler		
GENUINE QUERY	Unknown		
HEIDELBERG 211, P OF	Unknown		
HERMAIOS P	Guy		
HISCHYLOS POTTER	SIGNATURE		
JENA P	Beazley		
KISS P	Beazley		
KROKOTOS P	Weiss		
LEAFLESS GROUP	Beazley		
MAKRON	Beazley		
MAKRON	Stadler	HIERON POTTER	Unknown
Manner of DOURIS	Todisco		
Manner of EPELEIOS P	Beazley		
Manner of EPELEIOS P	Beazley		
Manner of EPELEIOS P	Beazley		
Manner of EPIKTETOS	Beazley		
Manner of EUERGIDES P	Beazley		
Manner of FOUNDRY P	Beazley		
Manner of LYSIPPIDES P	Unknown	Manner of ANDOKIDES P	Unknown
Manner of TARQUINIA P	Bothmer	ONESIMOS	Hoffmann
Near BRYGOS P	Beazley		
Near ELEUSIS P	Beazley		
Near XENOKLES P	Beazley		
ONESIMOS	Beazley		
ONESIMOS	Ohly-Dumm	ASHBY P	Guy
PAMPHAIOS POTTER	SIGNATURE	NIKOSTHENES P	Beazley
PAMPHAIOS POTTER	SIGNATURE		
PEDIEUS P	Beazley		
PEDIEUS P	Beazley		
PEITHINOS	SIGNATURE		
Perhaps AMASIS P	Unknown		
Perhaps GALES P	Beazley		
Perhaps ONESIMOS	Unknown		
PHINTIAS	Beazley		
PROTO PANAETIAN GROUP	Beazley		
Recalls BOSTON POLYPHEMOS, P. OF	Beazley		
Recalls CAYLUS P	Beazley		
Related to ANTIPHON P	Beazley		
TARAS P*	Brijder		
THALIA P	Beazley		
TOP BAND STEMLESS, CLASS OF	Beazley		
TRIPTOLEMOS P	Beazley		
TRIPTOLEMOS P	Beazley		
WEDDING P	Beazley		
WRAITH P	Bothmer		

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

Emily Vermeule noted, in a review of Webster's book, that the extensive number of tables and lists made the book hard to read and then stated that "one of Beazley's attributes was his mastery of English prose."¹¹⁶ Numbers, tables, and lists can make reading difficult. However, the numbers, tables, and lists of this investigation speak almost as eloquently as words about particular issues. They tell a story not only about ancient Greece but also about the views held by us in the twenty-first century. In fact, the numbers generated by this study say more about us than it does about the ancient Greeks.

One of the most striking aspects of the information was the small number of erotic images identified by the investigation. An ancient historian and friend once noted that he expected the number of erotic images to be quite high, at least in the ten percent range based on his extensive readings in the history of Greece. One does not have to read very many social histories of the Greeks before encountering descriptions of images on Greek pottery that detail some form of sexual activity. In actuality, at least for cups, the numbers of erotic scenes are very low. Less than 1.7% of the total population of 7901 items displayed content that could be labeled erotic by the archivist at the Beazley's archive or an independent observer. If being rare makes an item valuable, then the ancient Greek cups that display an erotic image are worth ten times their weight in platinum!

The sample of cups provided by the archive covered not only a wide period of time but a wide geographic area as well. The data included approximately eight thousand cups that were identified by find location and manufacture dates within a fifty-year window. Over three thousand were identified by find location and over five thousand had a painter attributed. It cannot be stress enough that this study encompassed thousands of items. Ask yourself when was the last time you counted a thousand of anything, much less eight thousand cups. In a study of this type, numbers

¹¹⁶ Emily Vermeule, review of *Potter and Patron in Classical Athens*, by T. B. L. Webster, *The American Historical Review* 78, no.5 (December 1973): 1432

lose their meaning over a period of time. We become desensitized to the magnitude of the numbers. Only 130 cups out of 7901 were labeled as containing erotic images during the study. This information shouts that Athenian cups with erotic images are very rare during the early twenty-first century and whispers the implication that they were rare in antiquity.

It is not certain that cups with erotic images were rare in antiquity. As discussed in Chapter 2, the cups likely found their way into the find locations for a reason. The sample that we hold in the twenty-first century may not be a truly representative sample of what was produced in the ancient *Ceramincus*. However, the small number of cups with erotic images from the sample does imply that they were rare in antiquity. The small number of cups with erotic images identified by date from over a hundred fifty years also supported this hypothesis. The deviation in numbers found in tables 8 and 9 could be explained by chance, as the data were not statistically significant. The same was true for the cups found in the various areas of the ancient world. With the exception of what is now modern Italy, excluding the area that was Etruria, the numbers were all within a range that can be explained by normal statistical variation.

It is possible that sample we have was not truly random for cultural reasons and the numbers of erotic images were much higher in antiquity than was shown within this study. For example, there may have been a taboo about putting them into the graves of the deceased and only a few decided to violate the belief. It may have been inappropriate to offer erotica as votives to the Gods. Archeologists and museum curators may have prevented these objects from being cataloged. While explaining these questions was beyond the scope of this study, this study did attempt to determine whether when the current historical community uses the erotic images they are discussing a subset of the larger population or characteristics of the whole population. Apparently when historians have used the erotic images from cups, they were discussing a very small subset of the cup population. It was also reasonable to believe that the images may represent only a small subset of the more general population of people in ancient Athens. While the ancient painters may have produced thousands of erotic images on cups, they are not available to us for inspection. To imply or state that the small number of erotic images on cups was representative of the behaviors of

typical Athenians or to draw inferences about Greek society based on them is more than the evidence will support.

Another question was whether the erotic images were commissioned for particular clients? The erotic sample found during the course of the investigation was too small to provide clear evidence on this question. One would expect to see spikes in production due to fads if the market for the cups was an early form of proto-capitalism. While unclear, the data did not appear to support this concept. Notice that the numbers of erotic cups produced during the two major painting techniques were about even. This idea was supported by the fact there was no significant statistical differences in distribution by time, technique, or location. Any inconsistencies were explained by normal statistical variations. In fact, the general results from the study suggested that Greek painters might have used a formulaic approach to selecting the images on the cups. They may have painted a certain number of genres for each firing and the erotic genre was one of the smallest. Table 8 showed that the number of cups with erotic images appeared to vary consistently with the overall number of cups. The same effect occurs in Table 12 with the number of erotic cups found in particular geographic areas. The impression was that they were always a very small sub-set of the overall body of cups. This idea is highly speculative but would provide an interesting hypothesis for a future study.

The study did indicate that the artists preferred life scenes and scenes focused on religious life. As expected, symposiums were also popular as a topic in the painting of cups. An interesting fact that appeared in the investigation was that courtship scenes, domestic scenes, and marriage scenes were almost as common as the erotic images. While this idea was outside of the scope of this paper, this was a remarkable concept for future investigation. Historians have not related these images to discussions about of value that Greek males placed on married life. The courtship scenes contained many images of pedophilic courtship, but there were images of heterosexual courtship as well. One wonders if the same logic that was applied by many historians when using the erotic images were applied to this small sub-set of courtship, marriage, and domestic images would a new narrative appear supporting a concept that Greek males valued

their marital relationships. This is the potential danger of using such small sample sizes of images to support a pet theory.

An alternate theory for the erotic images on some or most of the cups was that they were jokes. Michael Vickers stated that there was no evidence that the vases that we hold in such high regard were “ever regarded as a serious artistic medium in antiquity.”¹¹⁷ The value of Greek vases has been a hotly debated issue among specialists in the field both, but the peoples of the ancient world clearly did not value them enough to rob graves to get them. It is probably safe to say that the cups under discussion were not very expensive in the ancient world. So, it does not require a leap of faith to argue that some of the cups could have been made to appeal to a coarse sense of humor that is still a component of male drinking parties. We know that there were ancient versions of the modern dribble cup and cups that rattled because of pellets in the bases.¹¹⁸ Were the erotic images that we see on some of the cups meant to amuse the ancient viewer? This would account for the limited number of these images in such a large sample and the fact they appear to be a constantly minor item among other more active trade items. This would also account for the fact that almost double the number of erotic images appeared in Tables 10 and 11 of the type A, B, and C cups compared to the other types. In fact the distribution was significant due in large part to the fact that the number of images observed on the type A, B, and C cups was nearly doubled the expected number in the chi-square test. As was noted earlier, these cups were closely associated with the symposium and the game of kottabos. The number of erotic images on the type A, B, and C were in support of the earlier hypothesis that these cups would have the highest number of erotic images because they represented the Athenian male mind at its bawdiest.

Numerous books, articles, and monographs explore Greek pottery at the micro level. Scholars have spent endless hours poring over particular vases and images to pry

¹¹⁷ Michael Vickers Davis Gill, *Artful Crafts: Ancient Greek Silverware and Pottery* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 191.

¹¹⁸ See Michael Vickers, “A Dirty Trick Vase,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 79, no.3 (July 1975): 282. Michael Vickers, “Another Dirty Trick Vase,” *American Journal of Archeology* 84, no.2 (April 1980): 183-184. Michael Vickers, “A note on a Rattling Attic Black Glaze Cup in Dublin,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 90 (1970): 199-201. Michael Vickers, “An Ex-Rattling Cup in Oxford,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 77, no. 2 (April 1973): 196-197. Vickers and Jeffery, “Two More Rattling Cups” *American Journal of Archaeology* 78, no. 4 (October 1974): 429-431.

the smallest detail from the original sources. Historians have written about the implication of the images for one hundred years or more. Yet, no one has examined the information at the macro level. Scholars may use words like “a few”, “many”, “some,” but these words are never defined. One hundred thirty cups with erotic images sounds like a significant amount until it is put into perspective. Within the context of its actual size in relationship to the much larger sample of nearly eight thousand cups the one hundred thirty no longer sounds very significant. Archeologist and Art historians have valid reservations about applying statistical procedures to the vase data. In addition, there is little doubt that applying motifs, genres, or any other descriptive labels to the various vase images is an inexact business. While the statistical information provided by looking at the larger picture may not be accurate depiction of what happened in antiquity, it is accurate description of what information we now possess. If the community does not look at the larger picture of what they have collected, cataloged, and labeled, they do all of us an injustice. There is no doubt that the work being done by Dr. Mannack, Dr. Kurtz, and their associates at the Beazley archive is a step in the right direction in this post-Beazley world. It is my sincere hope that anyone who reads this thesis will not be impressed the next time a scholar holds up a hand full of erotic images on Greek cups as a smoking gun for the latest “pet” theory!

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