

A NECK-AMPHORA IN THE ISRAEL MUSEUM

An unusual Attic Red-figured Neck-amphora with twisted handles and lid was given as a gift by Mr. Jan Mitchell to the Israel Museum.¹ The vase was broken and partially restored. Height, 50.5 cm. Diam. of lid : 18 cm.

Side A : Shows Amazonomachy. Theseus attacking an Amazon. Antiope his Amazon wife, ready to help him.

Theseus as a Greek hoplite, naked, in the centre of the scene, stands with feet apart, right foot in frontal view, head in profile.² His right hand holds a sword,³ his left arm passes through the inside of a large shield. He wears a crested Attic helmet decorated with a band of dots. The crest cuts into the tongue pattern on the shoulder. His hair appears

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¹ The vase was presented to the Museum by Mr. J. Mitchell in 1973; bought at a sale: Christie, July 12th, 1972. It was published by the author in the Israel Museum Cat. no. 124/1, pp. 50-51.

² For a similar Theseus as a naked Greek hoplite compare: (a) The Nolan Amphora, Oxford (Mississippi, ex. D.M. Robinson) *AJA* 60 (1956) Pl. 16 : fig. 71-72; D. von Bothmer, *Amazons in Greek Art* (Oxford, 1957) Pl. 81 : 4, no. 78, pp. 185-189. The Nolan Amphora was attributed by Beazley to the Polygnotos' Group (*ARV* p. 1058, no. 116). Here Theseus is holding a spear in his raised right arm. (b) Madrid 11013 — Bell-Krater, *CVA III Ic*, Pl. 17:2a,b; D. von Bothmer, *ibid.*, no. 92, p. 186, 188-9. Attributed by Beazley to the group of Polygnotos (*ARV* p. 1054, no. 51) Theseus' name is inscribed. (c) a clad Theseus appears on a pelike in Brussels, A 133, *CVA III Id* Pl. 1:1; Bothmer, *ibid.* no. 83, pp. 185, 188-189. Attributed by Beazley to the Christie painter.

³ Theseus has a sword in most compositions portraying his combat on foot against an Amazon. see (a) Pelike, Leningrad 3374, *JHS* 48 (1928) Pl. 4, p. 14. Bothmer, *ibid.* no. 84, p. 85. It is attributed by Beazley to the Christie painter (Polygnotos' Group) *ARV* p. 1048, no. 40. (b) Neck-amphora Syracuse 47834, from Pachino *CVA III Ic* Pl. 9:1. Bothmer, *ibid.* no. 80, pp. 185, 188-189. Theseus here has a similar shield and Attic helmet. See also n. 2 (b), (c).

under the helmet. At the right of the head, the name Theseus is inscribed: [ΘΗ]ΣΕΥΣ.⁴

The Amazon attacked by Theseus stands to his right, confronting him but already fleeing. Her head turned back, she raises her right hand in defense with a sabre over her head.⁵ In her left hand she clasps a straight bow; a quiver is attached to her waist, hanging on a stripe from her right shoulder. She wears an oriental garment: a sleeved and trousered combination with a short chiton and a corslet over it, decorated with a mask; on her head, an oriental cap.⁶

On the left side of the scene Antiope is standing as if ready to assist Theseus, with her head turned towards him. Holding a battle-axe in her right hand and a straight bow in her left, she is clad with a sleeved and trousered combination, tunic, skirt and oriental cap.⁷ Her name — ANTIOΠΕ — is inscribed at the right of her head.

Side B : Two young women are seen approaching the central figure, a bald and bearded man who is leaning on a stick, from opposite

⁴ v. supra n. 2 (b).

⁵ The Amazon archer seen fleeing to the right and looking back usually appears with an axe in her right hand, as on the Nolan Amphora, Oxford (Missi.), v. supra n. 2 (a); and on the Brussels Pelike A 133 she is wearing a similar sleeved and trousered combination; v. supra n. 2 (c). The Amazon on the Madrid 11013 Bell-Krater, v. supra n. 2 (b), has a sword in her raised right hand.

On a cup, Bryn Mawr, from Orvieto, Bothmer, *ibid* no. 71, p. 184, Pl. LXXX:5a the Amazon hoplite has her sabre raised above her head in a way similar to our Amazon's.

⁶ On a Kantharos, London E 157, CVA III I Pl. 34:2. Attributed by Beazley to the Alexander Group (ARV 1213 no. 2). On the obverse Theseus is attacking Andromache; she is very similar in her stance, has the same arms and differs only in having an axe in her raised right hand. She is wearing a similar corslet without the mask, over a short chiton, and an oriental cap.

Similar trousers and a similarity in the execution of the Amazon's face, can be seen on a Pelike, Syracuse 9317, CVA III I, Pl. 5:1-2; Bothmer, *ibid* no. 31, p. 173. Arias & Hirmer *Greek Vase Painting*, Pl. 191, attributed by Beazley to the Group of Polygnotos, ARV p. 1059 no. 137.

⁷ An Amazon named Melousa, fleeing left and looking around, wearing a light oriental costume similar to our Amazon's combination; her stance is also similar, but differs in that her axe is raised high over her head. see the Stamnos, Oxford 522, from Gela, CVA Pl. 29:3,4. Bothmer, *ibid.* no. 62, p. 182-183; attributed by Beazley to Polygnotos (ARV 1028 no. 3).

A mounted Amazon with a dress similar to that of our Antiope, appears on a Bell-Krater, Naples RC 161, from Cumae. Bothmer, *ibid.* no. 40, p. 178, Pl. LXXXIII:2, attributed by Beazley to the group of Polygnotos (ARV 1055 no. 74).

directions. The women's hands are outstretched in some kind of a gesture, and they are dressed in a himation over a chiton and wearing earrings;⁸ the woman on the left is wearing a diadem, the one on the right — a sakkos (a bag-like cover) over her hair.⁹ The man has on a himation and is wearing a fillet in his hair. He is depicted in the act of turning to the right.

Both the interior and exterior surfaces of the amphora's mouth and neck are painted black. Reversed are the egg pattern under the lip, and palmettes with scrolls on both sides of the neck. Below the twisted handles, a pattern of adorned palmettes with scrolls and spiral projections separates the two sides of the vase. On the shoulder there is a tongue pattern.

Under the picture a band of leftward meanders is interrupted at regular intervals by dotted saltire crosses (of the ten crosses nine are vertical and one diagonal). The lower part of the vase, from the bottom upwards, consists of a torus base painted black, a plain trochilus, a black flat band, and a narrow concave band bordered with two incised lines.

The lid is preserved, a rare occurrence. It is flat, topped with a button painted black with reversed bands at the base. The edge of the lid is decorated with a band of tongue pattern.

Our vase is characterized by a three-figured composition. Side A has the Amazonomachy as a trio combating on foot. The same composition occurs on many vases, with different trios appearing on them: Two Amazons attacking a Greek: an Amazon hoplite in the center defending herself with a sabre, an Amazon archer on the right, aiming at the Greek attacker on the left.¹⁰

A different trio consists of two Greeks attacking an Amazon in the

⁸ A very similar trio appears on a Neck-Amphora, Madrid 11097, *CVA* III Ic Pl. 19:1c; the man there looks alike, has the same stick and all are clad similarly to the figures on our vase. The women's gestures are also similar. The Amphora is attributed by Beazley to the Epimedes painter of the group of Polygnotos (*ARV* p. 1043 no. 2). Another similar three-figured composition can be seen on the Pelike, Syracuse 9317, *CVA* Pl. 5:2 (*v. supra* n. 6).

Another vase with similar figures is a Nolan amphora from Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, published by D.M. Buitron *Attic Vase Painting in New England Collections* no. 69 p. 124; attributed by Beazley to Polygnotos (*ARV* p. 1031 no. 44).

⁹ On the Pelike, Syracuse 9317, the woman on the left has a Sakkos (*v. supra* n. 6).

¹⁰ A cup, Bryn Mawr, from Orvieto, Bothmer, *ibid.* Pl. LXXX:5a no. 71 p. 184.

center.¹¹ Another trio shows a Greek attacking from the right and an Amazon in the center running to the left and defending herself with a spear; to her left another Amazon is seen rushing up.¹² A group of vases shows yet another trio composition: a Greek hoplite in the center followed by another, lighter armed Greek, attacking an Amazon who is fleeing to the right.¹³ This trio seems to come closest to ours; it differs from ours only in having Antiope as the follower of the Greek hoplite (Theseus).

That Antiope fought on the side of the Greeks is known from some literary traditions. At the same time there have been several vases depicting an Amazon who seems to be fighting on the side of the Greeks.¹⁴ The composition and the names of Theseus and Antiope inscribed on our vase allow us, for the first time, to establish that there existed a tradition that Antiope as Theseus' wife actually fought on his side against her own people.

On two other vases Theseus is seen attacking Antiope; the painter had followed, apparently a different tradition, according to which Antiope fought against Theseus.¹⁵ The three figures are quite similar to many of those appearing on the vases mentioned below; still, they differ in some details: Theseus' right foot is shown in a frontal view, while the feet of the other Greek hoplites who resemble him are shown in a

¹¹ v. Neck-amphora, London E 272, CVA III Ic, Pl. 11:2. Bothmer, *ibid.* no. 76 p. 185. Attributed by Beazley to Polygnotos (ARV 1031 no. 38).

¹² Neck-amphora Atlanta (Georgia) from Campania. Bothmer, *ibid.* no. 77 p. 185; attributed by Beazley to the group of Polygnotos.

¹³ Bothmer mentions 7 vases which show this trio, *ibid.* pp. 184–190, vases no. 79, 80, 83, 84, 92, 93, 96.

¹⁴ Bothmer, *ibid.* p. 166: "According to some of the literary traditions Antiope fought on the side of the Athenians and was killed by one of the invaders (Plu. *Thes.*, 27; Pausanias 1.2.1). This may well have been a feature of one of the big paintings, and the Amazon fighting on the Greek side recurs on a contemporary vase by the Niobid Painter." The vase is a Volute-Krater, Naples 2421, from Puvo. Bothmer, *ibid.* Pl. LXXIV:4; no. 6 p. 161. Attributed by Beazley to the Niobid painter. Bothmer also suggests that the Antiope that was identified by him on the Calyx-Krater (New York 07.286.86 from Numana, *ibid.* Pl. LXXIV:2, no. 2, pp. 161, 166), p. 166, is directing her attack against the Amazon on horseback rather than against the Greek.

¹⁵ (a) A Calyx-Krater, Ferrara T 1052, from Spina. Bothmer, *ibid.* no. 4 pp. 161, 170. Attributed by Beazley to the Achilles painter. (b) A fragmentary Calyx-Krater, Paris, Cab. Méd 421. Bothmer, *ibid.* no. 57, p. 181; attributed by Beazley to Polygnotos (ARV p. 1030 no. 30).

side-view. Theseus' shield is more elongated than is usual, and only part of the inside band is drawn.¹⁶ Antiope is here depicted as an Amazon follower of a Greek hoplite; she is there as an assistant, holding her axe in a non-combatant attitude; her posture is quite relaxed.

The Amazon who is shown defending herself is also different, in that her weapon is a sabre, instead of the usual axe. Most of the vases we have used for comparison show the Amazon wearing a short or a long dress, or a chiton.¹⁷ It is rare to find a corslet-wearing Amazon on vases depicting battles on foot; as a rule, Amazons with corslets appear on vases showing big battles.¹⁸

The vase's two sides differ in composition and execution. Side A is carefully executed, with symmetrical composition. The scene is centered around the figure of Theseus. On both sides of him Amazons are moving in opposite directions, closing the scene. The figures do not touch each other, but are interrelated by their gaze and body positions. Though they are flat, the figures seem to appear in a circular movement. All this emphasizes the dramatic element in the scene. The artist has utilized the convex shape of the vase in order to elongate the figures, thus intensifying the movement and the refined expression which characterize his style. On the other hand, Side B is carelessly drawn with figures in silhouette in a commonplace composition. The folds of the drapery are straight, concealing the body, and the feet are elongated.

The shape of our vase, a neck-amphora with twisted handles and its decoration of palmettes on neck and under handles, resemble those of a group of vases¹⁹ whose similarity in shape, ornament, figure composition

¹⁶ cf. Theseus and his shield: Nolan Amphora, Oxford, (Miss.) (v. supra n. 2(a)). Bell-Krater, Madrid 1013 (v. supra n. 2(b)) and a Pelike, Leningrad 3374 (v. supra n. 3(a)).

¹⁷ v. Bothmer, *ibid.* p. 189.

¹⁸ Bothmer, *ibid.* pp. 166-172; 188-189.

¹⁹ The Nolan Amphora, Oxford (Miss.) (v. supra n. 2 a); Neck-amphora, London E 272 (v. supra n. 11); Neck-amphora, Syracuse 47834 (v. supra n. 3 (b)); Neck-amphora, Madrid 11097 (v. supra n. 9); Neck-amphora, Berlin 2353, P. Jacobstahl *Ornamente Griechischer Vasen* (Berlin, 1927) Pl. 112; attributed by Beazley to Polygnotos (ARV 1031 no. 39); Neck-amphora, Oxford 1920, 59, CVA Pl. 16:56, attributed by Beazley to the group of Polygnotos (ARV p. 1058 no. 118).

All of these Amphorae are attributed to Polygnotos and his group. The patterns on some of these vases is nearly identical, whereas I could not find an identical pattern to that of our vase.

and details of drawing have led to their being attributed to the same painter from the group of Polygnotos (450–440 B.C.E.).²⁰

Apart from its shape and ornamentation mentioned above, our vase has other features which characterize the style of Polygnotos and his group: the rendering of faces with a long nose and the pupil near the inner corner of the eye, drapery drawn vertical, figures standing with feet apart, and the contrast between the execution of the two sides of the vases.²¹

What is singular about this vase is that its lid is preserved, and that the name Antiope is given to the Amazon who assists Theseus in the battle of the Athenians and the Amazons, fighting on her husband's side against her own people.

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²⁰ Mr. D. von Bothmer who saw the vase, attributed it to Polygnotos in a letter to Mr. J. Mitchell on Dec. 6, 1972.

²¹ see also, Beazley, *ARV* p. 1027; G.M.A. Richter, *Attic Red Figured Vases*, pp. 127–128.



Red-figured Neck-amphora
Side A



Side A



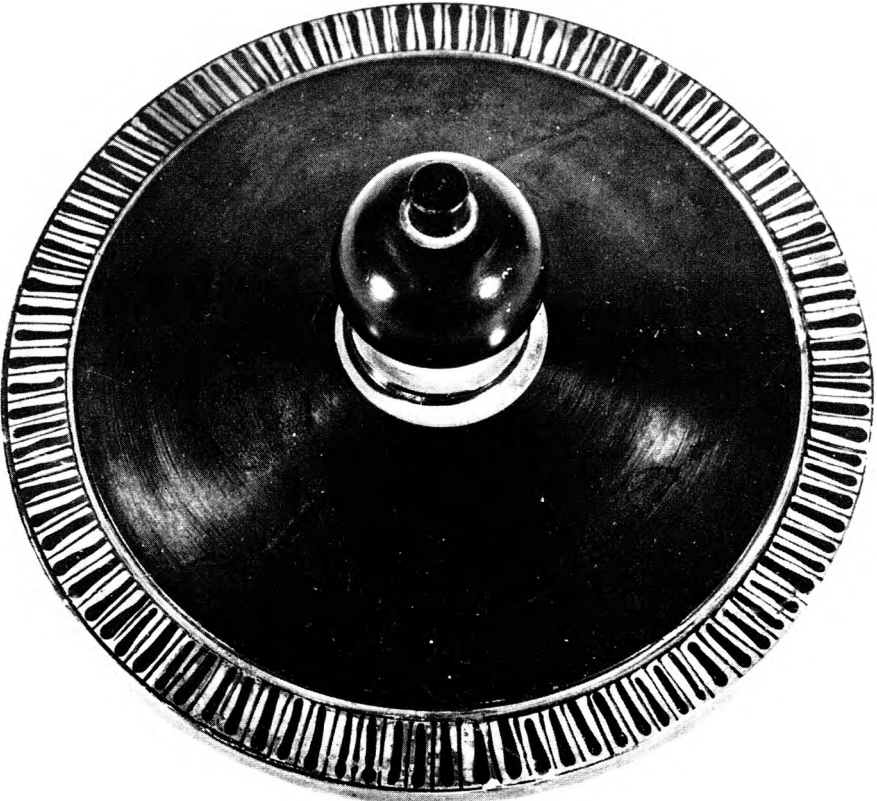
Side A



Side B



Side B



Lid