This volume, dedicated to Alan Shapiro, follows the format of the two previous volumes of Athenian Potters and Painters (and, as in volume 2, with 32 splendid pages of colour plates). This is unfortunate. The papers appear in alphabetical order of their author, regardless of chronology or subject-matter, with no attempt to shape the book to make papers that talk to each other appear next to each other. Bibliographical references are buried in the notes at the end of each chapter, with no consolidated bibliography. Most extraordinary of all, there is no index. For those professionally interested in Greek painted pottery (the volume does not in fact limit itself to Athenian potters and painters and shows rather minimal interest in potters), it is no doubt convenient to have these papers between a single set of hard covers, but for any Greek archaeologist or historian who wants to know whether there is anything here for her, there is no way of telling. They would have a better chance of finding what is interesting here if these papers had been in a journal whose text could be searched online.

What are they going to be missing? Most importantly, a paper by Philip Sapirstein (whose name is misspelled in the contents list), which is a companion piece to his paper on ‘Painters, potters and the scale of the Attic Vase-Painting Industry’. Sapirstein charts the numbers of attributions to particular black- and red-figure painters against the number of years they are thought to have been in operation and shows that the average number of pots a year for the more prolific painters is 8.2 (not including Makron, for whom the number is 20.7, a figure inflated by the identification of his hand on a large number of fragments). Sapirstein then points out that many painters, who are believed to have worked over a number of years, have nevertheless had many fewer pots ascribed to them. When painters who also pot or who always work with the same potter are compared for whom the number is 20.7, a figure inflated by the identification of his hand on a large number of fragments), Sapirstein then points out that many painters, who are believed to have worked over a number of years, have nevertheless had many fewer pots ascribed to them. When painters who also pot or who always work with the same potter are compared with painters who work with a number of potters, a consistent pattern emerges, in which the former produce on average 5.5 surviving pots a year, the latter 8 a year. Chronologically the former dominate black-figure vase-painting, the latter become important in red-figure vase-painting. Sapirstein estimates annual pot-production at Athens at 50 000 at its height, but produced by as few as 120–200 workers.


1 Sapirstein 2013
In his view many of the separate painters whom Beazley distinguished cannot have been separate individuals, but simply represent different styles, more than one of which may have been practised by the same individual. More than half a century since Robert Cook’s pioneering work on quantification of pot production, Sapirstein has moved the discussion on significantly. This impressive number-crunching on spatial illusionism and Timothy McNiven looks at Athenian pottery production that have not been much discussed, and raises serious questions about the significance of the stylistic differences that caused Beazley to differentiate painters. It needs to be read with Guy Hedreen’s preview here of the arguments that he has now published elsewhere, which question the criteria for identifying the individual artist.

Also attempting to understand the world of Athenian painted pottery as a whole is the paper by Kathleen Lynch and Stephen Matter on the pot trade. They take three sites in Anatolia, Sardis, Daskylion and Gordion, and record the numbers of black-figure, red-figure, and black-gloss pots from each. These show that we do not have a straightforward distance-decay model – Gordion yields more pottery of each type than either Sardis or Daskylion. The trade with Gordion is exceptional in both quantity and quality, and a case is made for that trade coming via Daskylion, but also for its specificity (Attic pots get no further east). As the authors stress, the data here are of very poor quality (and what has been excavated at the three sites is rather different), but the picture that emerges, of particular pots being specifically selected to satisfy particular markets, reinforces that established by earlier studies.

In this volume a case for the particular selection of shape and iconography by the Theban market is made by Phoebe Segal in relation to a red-figure kantharos in Boston attributed to the Brygos Painter and showing Zeus pursuing Aigina and Zeus pursuing Ganymede. Sheramy Bundrick identifies a group of Attic pots as coming from a tomb at Foiano excavated in 1879 and suggests that since they ‘evoke status, celebration, and protection’ they were particularly appropriate for their burial use. David Saunders’ paper, discussed below, concludes with comments on the high quality and unusual iconographies of Athenian pots that end up in Etruria. Robert Sutton and Yannis Kourayos publish fragments of Attic pottery from the Apollo sanctuary at Mandra on Despotiko (off Antiparos), noting an increase in quantity and quality of red-figure over black-figure and accounting for this by ‘a combination of local economic prosperity and redirection of high quality pieces closer to home as the western market for Attic pottery met competition from local production’ – explanations which import assumptions that need rather more justification. They claim deliberate selection in the mix of Dionysian, komos and symposion scenes found here – something the small size of sample cannot really support. Closer to home Heide Freilinghaus shows that some red-figure cups have indeed been discovered in the Kerameikos.

Only two papers look at potters. Stefan Schmidt draws attention to the ‘conspicuously increasing number of new shapes in the last decade of the sixth century’ (shapes like the pelike, kalpis and bell-krater and various shapes of oinochoe) that were inspired by everyday pottery not by metalware, and argues that they reflect increasing self-confidence by potters. He links this self-confidence with potters and the like having confidence to take increasing part in running the state. Athena Tsingarida examines late 6th and early 5th century BC mesomphalic phialai, linking some to Euphronios and some to the workshop of the Class of Agora P10359 stemless cups, and arguing for workshop links between Euphronios, Kachrylion, Hegesiboulos and Sotades. Unfortunately, after its first two correct appearances, the Agora inventory number is repeatedly misprinted as P 10350 (the number of a lekythos), making the argument impossible to follow. Sonia Klinger publishes four pots/fragments (one of them Corinthian) from the Museum of Mediterranean Archaeology at Nir David in Israel.

Almost all the other papers relate either to particular painters or particular iconographies. Mario Iozzo looks at plates by Paseas (misprinted as Pasteas on the contents page). Michael Padgett discusses a particular krater by the Suessula Painter, wanting to explain its iconography by invoking a special commission by ‘a partisan of the Thirty Tyrants and of the pro-Spartan/pro-Persian party at Athens’ (p. 152). David Saunders discusses a red-figure calyx-krater attributed to the Syleus Painter and situates it in the context of other Athenian amazonomachies. Alan Shapiro discusses the attribution of the Robinson Group of Panathenaic amphoras to the Kleophon Painter and links the presence of both under-sized Panathenaic amphoras in the group and the unique presence of a kitharode on a Panathenaic amphora in the Hermitage to the crisis of Athenian finance and oil supply during the Peloponnesian War.

Beth Cohen discusses the depiction of baskets, nets and cages on Athenian pots with a particular focus on spatial illusionism and Timothy McNiven looks
at symposial space in relation to the depiction of the couch. Joan Mertens discusses chariots, and Martina Seifert departure scenes involving chariots, in black-figure; both are keen to link chariots in art, and their disappearance from art, to styles of life. Tyler Jo Smith looks at komast dancers in early red-figure, somehow linking the lack of innovation in these figures to the emergence of public drama. Seth Pevnick discusses dogs on a cup by the Triptolemos Painter (a cross reference to Tsingarida’s paper, to which a dog is central, would have been appropriate, but these volumes do not cross-reference papers).

Nathan Arrington looks at white-ground lekythoi and how they convey the presence of the dead, and Thomas Mannack at the use of kalos inscriptions on vases for the dead. He suggests that both the shapes and the iconography of pots with kalos inscriptions were ‘aristocratic’ (by which he means primarily ‘connected to the symposium’). On the basis of the distribution of the names across Etruria, Mannack suggests that what name was used did not matter to Etruscan customers, but that they liked to have inscriptions of some kind.

Mark Stansbury O’Donnell looks at Menelaos and Helen in Attic painted pottery, noting the dramatic change between the late 6th century BC black-figure, when it is most popular for Menelaos to lead and Helen to stand, and the early 5th century BC red-figure where Helen flees and Menelaos chases, and noting also the increasing frequency during the 5th century BC of the dropped sword, suggesting that, in at least one case, humour is intended. Susan Rotroff discovers a scorpion on the shoulder of a stamnos and resurrects Charles Seltman’s suggestion that the head vases of African women exposing their teeth in a smile might be meant to represent the Lamia. Keely Heuer suggests that the high number of Athenian pots of 6th and 5th century BC date found in Italy and Sicily with painted and plastic heads indicate Athenian targeting of known Italian interest in the motif, and suggests that isolated heads in Italian red-figure were intended to replace Athenian examples. Frank Hildebrandt discusses the gigantomachy on both Attic and Apulian pots, Thomas Carpenter Pelops and Chrysippos simply on Apulian pots.

There is much valuable observation here, but many of the suggestions for how to explain the observations are, at best, underdetermined by the evidence. Few would have survived discussion with Greek archaeologists and historians more generally. It is good to air such ideas in conferences, but the process of converting a conference to a book needs to involve much more engagement between contributors and with critical readers than is on display here.


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Studies of ancient dress continue, I am pleased to observe, to grow apace. In the past year alone I can think of close to a dozen publication that have dealt with the production, wearing, or meaning of clothing in Classical antiquity and I’m alerted to the fact that we can expect more in the near future. This is very pleasing given that some eighteen years ago I organized an international conference on the theme of women’s dress in the ancient Greek world in which I highlighted what I conceived to be the plight of ancient dress-studies – which was certainly true then for Greek dress (work on Roman costume was faring better at the time). Indeed, in the 2002 published proceedings of that conference I used my editorial privilege to note that the study of ancient Greek dress was in a perilously moribund state and I called for scholars to turn their attention with more vigour and creativity towards the theme of clothing and its potential for accessing the socio-cultural world of the ancient Greeks. The time was ripe, I advocated, to claim ancient dress back from the hands of the art historians (whose interest fixated only on ‘the drape’) and to read the clothing of the ancient past through the mirror of recent developments and methodologies in the social sciences.

The last decade has seen a significant burgeoning of serious studies of dress in antiquity, and while I am not ascribing this success in any way to my 2002 call-to-arms, I do think that the problems and potentials I saw with dress-studies at that time were