The Theseus Painter
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A. SHAPES AND STYLE

I. VASE SHAPES AND STYLE OF PAINTING AND DRAWING

1. Shapes

In contrast to most late black-figure painters and workshops, the Theseus Painter decorated a rather large variety of shapes. Late black-figure painters tended to specialise in a few shapes, to a greater degree than is generally the case in the run of Attic black-figure. Specialisation of this kind is particularly common among late black-figure painters of small shapes. The Haimon Painter and his group, for example, mainly turned out lekythoi. The CHC and Leafless Groups, on the other hand, comprise almost exclusively painters of skyphoi and cups, respectively.

Although the Theseus Painter might rightly be considered a specialist in skyphoi, as they represent the majority of his known output (126 skyphoi, of a total of 211 attributable vases), the attention he paid to other vase types must not be underplayed. His second most common shape, though much less numerous than the skyphos, is the lekythos: 25 attributable specimens. The painter's other shapes range widely: loutrophoroi (14, of which most are fragments); pelikai (9, among them a neck-pelike); kyathoi (9); cups (6) and a related cup-skyphos; olpai and oinochoai (2 and 6, respectively); alabastra (5) and kalpides (4) as well as one plate. There are also three undetermined fragments. Two of them were introduced by Beazley, who regarded them as amphora fragments; more likely, they stem from large closed shapes like the kalpis or, more probably, the pelike.

Among the other late black-figure painters who worked on more than one shape are the relatively accomplished lekythos specialists, gathered and described as such by Haspels. For example, the Athena Painter also adorned oinochoai, the Gela Painter neck-amphorai, oinochoai and olpai. The Edinburgh Painter also has oinochoai, lekanides, neck-amphorai, belly-amphorai and a hydria, and the Diosphos Painter onoi, pyxides, neck-amphorai and alabastra. In comparison, the Sappho Painter shows far greater diversity: lekythoi, alabastra, pyxis, kalpis, column-krater, plaques, loutrophoroi, amphora and bail-vase. In this respect, however, none of them equals the Theseus Painter.

Furthermore, with the exception of the Theseus Painter, the largest number of a single vase type by each of these painters comprises lekythoi. Although the Theseus Painter appears among Haspels' groups of lekythos painters, lekythoi, as remarked, form a relatively small part of his extant output. The percentages of lekythoi in the totals of vases attributed to those painters, as based on ABL, ABV and Para, are: Gela Painter, 82.7% lekythoi; Edinburgh Painter, 56.8%; Sappho Painter, 93.2%; Diosphos Painter, 64.8%; Athena Painter, 82.2%. In contrast, of the 211 vases assigned to the Theseus Painter, 11.9% are lekythoi (see also Tables 1 and 2); in Haspels and Beazley's lists the portion was slightly higher, 14.6%.

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52 ABL 241-47; ABV 539-71; Para 269-87; Beazley Addenda 1 133-37. Only a very minor part of this group consists of cups and cup-skyphoi as well as some other small shapes.
53 CHC Group, ABV 617-23; Para 306-308; Beazley Addenda 1 144. Leafless Group, ABV 632-53; Para 310-14; Beazley Addenda 1 145-46.
54 ABL 255-60; ABV 522-33; Para 260-65. The Athena Painter might also have decorated several other shapes like a hydria, loutrophoroi and a neck-amphora, provided he is also the red-figure Bowdoin Painter (ARP p 677-95; Para 405-407; Beazley Addenda 1 279-80; Kurtz and Boardman, Athena-Bowdoin Painter) which, according to both Haspels and Beazley, was very likely.
55 ABL 205-15; ABV 473-75; Para 214-16.
56 ABL 215-20; ABV 476-79; Para 217-19.
57 ABL 232-41; ABV 508-11; Para 248-50.
58 ABL 225-29; ABV 507-508; Para 246-47.
Each type of vase decorated by the Theseus Painter can, of course, be characterised as a group according to shape, dimensions and decoration. Within each such group, however, notable differences may occur. For instance, his large and small kalpides can be divided into two distinctly different groups; they differ not only by their ornamentation, but also especially by their form (rims and feet) and dimensions. The individual vase shapes will be discussed in chapter II-IV.

2. Style of painting and drawing and other characteristics

The Theseus Painter is in many respects a true representative of Attic black-figure of the late sixth and early fifth centuries: he belonged to a declining tradition which was much overshadowed by the innovators working in red-figure and, therefore, merely a mediocre practitioner of Attic vase-painting. Nevertheless, many of his vessels, especially most of the larger ones and a good number of skyphoi, display considerable craftsmanship. The work is at the level of, or sometimes even better than, that of other competent late black-figure artisans like the Edinburgh Painter, Gela Painter, Sappho Painter, Diosphos Painter and Athena Painter.

Since Beazley’s early observation that the Theseus Painter was the "one sound painter" among "a number of hacks" in the White Heron workshop, several scholars have paid attention to his individual style. Its defining elements are found especially in the incising and, to a somewhat lesser degree, the figurework and the use of added colour.

The figurework is generally rather roughly executed, with little eye for detail. Yet it is adequate for the depiction of a wide variety of figures in diverse stances, animals, objects and, in several cases, even detailed elements defining the figures’ surroundings. Qualitative differences are evident, however.

As a rule, the Theseus Painter’s incising and painting can be fairly easily distinguished from that of other hands, in spite of some considerable changes which occurred during his career. His early and very late vases differ markedly and can be stylistically linked only by a chain of development over the years, which I arrange in early, middle, transitional, late and very late phases. Problems of attribution arise rarely.

Another noteworthy feature consists of occasional differences in the treatment of details in pairs of vases. This can be seen on the skyphoi with Dionysoi in a ship-cart (Cat. nos. 2 and 8, pls. 2 a and 4 a-b) and the skyphoi with amazon and griffin. In my opinion, such differences can only be explained in terms of chronology, which is one of the reasons why I regard Acropolis 1281 and Boston 99.523 as early (Cat. nos. 2 and 6, pls. 2 a, 3 a-b) and place both London B 79 and Guardia Perticara in the painter’s middle period (Cat. nos. 8 and 10, pls. 4 a-b, 5).

Composition

In comparison with other late black-figure painters, the Theseus Painter was quite adept at arranging figures in a scene. Their placement and interaction are often rather well chosen and measured. In many instances the figures and other elements overlap, but are rendered in a manner which avoids crowding or visual confusion. They are often placed in a setting of either natural or, less often, architectural features which create an environment for them. The even spacing of the black glaze on the orange (or white) ground is another means by which the Theseus Painter achieved a scene’s unity. Haspels rightly remarked that this quality is lacking, for example, in the work of his close colleague, the Athena Painter: "The Theseus Painter gives atmosphere to his scenes [...]. The Athena Painter does not achieve such unities, as his figures stand isolated beside one another, in the tradition of Euthymides, carried on by the Berlin Painter." The arrangement and proportions of figures are also determined, of course, by the shape and

59 See above, n. 17, Beazley, Review Baltimore, 89.
60 See esp. ABL 142-43, 150; Eisman, Kyathos, 441-42, and the descriptions of the Theseus Painter’s style on kyathoi, 451-85; Malagardis, Skyphoi.
61 ABL 150.
dimensions of a vase, as also observed by Haspels: "More than anyone I know, the Theseus Painter allows his proportions to be influenced by the low field of his skyphoi and the high field of his lekythoi." The contrast is clearly exemplified by the Kanellopoulos skyphos (Cat. no. 78, pl. 33 a-b) which has a lower figure frieze and, consequently, very squat satyrs. Generally, the figure arrangements of his skyphoi and other broad or large shapes are more balanced than those of most other types of vases.

The Theseus Painter's arrangement of pictorial elements is somewhat more dynamic than, for example, that of the Athena Painter. Greater versatility marks the figures' stances and the compositional devices. Nevertheless, the painter generally shows a preference for quite static figures, walking, standing or sitting. Strong movement occurs rarely; see for example the jumping man of Taranto 4449 (Cat. no. 44, pl. 19 a).

Some inconsistencies are seen in his manner of filling the pictorial space, which are not linked to the differences in the shapes. Sometimes he appears determined to fill a limited field as fully as possible. Good examples are the skyphoi on which Herakles is seen reclining with another figure; the main figures, trees, additional figures like goats and other items are crowded into the available space. Elsewhere, however, the Theseus Painter limited the subject to a single figure for the entire surface.

Painting: secondary decoration
As a rule, each particular vase type painted by the Theseus Painter shows its own decorative system. Standardisation is generally lacking in the secondary ornaments. Over his career there is some variation in the amount of attention paid to them and to the manner of painting motifs like palmettes or pictorial elements. Even within a shape group the decorative system can frequently differ completely; see below, for example, the classes of oinochoai or the variations in the shoulder decoration of lekythoi. Only in the case of the skyphoi is the Theseus Painter's secondary decoration nearly always the same. These matters will be further dealt with below in connection with the individual vase shapes.

Painting: human figures
The painting of the Theseus Painter's human figures can often be described as somewhat crude. Their stances are in many instances quite stiff, though much more relaxed and natural than those of other painters of Heron Class skyphoi. The naked male body is to a high degree standardised; see for example the interchangeable walking naked youths of the Theseus Painter's ephedrismoi vases (Cat. nos. 54-63, pls. 25-27, fig. 12) or the comparable naked men and youths in his komoi (Cat. nos. 45-49, pls. 20-22, 23 a).

The parts of naked male bodies generally consist of rather shapeless blobs of paint largely defined by incising, with heads, arms and legs often executed quite carelessly. On the whole, however, the painter manages to give an impression of anatomical adequacy. Although the contours of muscles and other anatomical details rendered in paint look rather cursory, they are generally not formally incorrect. Sometimes, however, parts are somewhat exaggerated, like the curves of shoulders, arms, lower arms, buttocks, thighs and calves.

In other details the Theseus Painter often displays a certain roughness in his brushwork; for example the square, block-like chin of the central youth in Amsterdam 2178 (Cat. no. 58, pl. 27 a, fig. 12); the frequent complete absence of noses; or the occasionally extremely long, clown-like feet. The necks of his male figures are often placed too far back or, on the other hand, too far forward on the bulging shoulders

62 ABL 145.
63 Other rare examples of 'uncharacteristic' or 'violent' movement are scenes in Havana, Lagunillas coll.; London 1926.11-15.1; Taranto 4447; Laon 37996; Toledo 63.27; New York 06.1021.49; Acropolis 1280; Armont, Pinney coll., Athens Goulandris 265; Athens, NM 515 (Cat. nos. 11, 13, 17, 29-30, 76, 125-126, 136, pls. 5 b, 6 a-b, 8 a-c, 13 a-e, 32 b-c, 38, 43 a-b).
64 Athens, NM 132626, Malibu 96.AE.96, Agora P 1383, Cat. nos. 163, 171, 177, pls. 52 a, 55 a-b, 56 d-e, g.
of figures with frontal bodies and profile heads. 65 Similarly incongruous are the unnatural positions of the shoulder and raised arm of the central komast in Agora P 1547 and of Hefhaistos in Goulandris 265 (Cat. nos. 48 and 126, pls. 21 c and 38 e, figs. 19-20) or the deeply arched back of the amphora carrier in Agora P 1548 (Cat. no. 46, pl. 21 a). Equally incorrect is the very low left arm of the amphora carrier in Taranto 4591 (Cat. no. 50, pl. 21 d); see also the contorted jumping man with raised knees in Taranto 4449 (Cat. no. 44, pl. 19 a). Often something is wrong with the anatomy of mantle-figures; see for example the strangely protruding elbow and back/shoulder view of the male bystander leaning on staffs who watch Herakles performing in Syracuse 53263 (Cat. no. 22, pl. 10 a-b) and their counterparts in Athens, NM 13916 and San Antonio 86.134.54 (Cat. nos. 53 and 128, pls. 24 a-b, 39 d, f). Also the features of heads are frequently somewhat misshapen; for instance, they often include relatively huge blobs for the forelocks and the hair at the nape of the neck and of protruding mouths accompanied, in the case of men, by rather thin, pointy beards.

Typical figures of the Theseus Painter are his naked amphora carriers. Most of them are provided with a pointy, Panathenaic-shaped amphora which they bear on their shoulders. In most cases they have a lowered head and a sharp S-curved contour from the shoulder to the buttock. They occur in his early work, going into the middle period, as well as on later vases. 66 Some amphora carriers are paired, bearing a pole to which the amphora is attached between them.

On the other hand, the Theseus Painter sometimes depicted very accurately the more complicated stances of figures; see for example Herakles climbing the shore in Taranto 4447 (Cat. no. 13, pl. 6 a-b); the twists of the bodies of Herakles and Alkyoneus wrestling in Taranto 4448, the kneeling satyr of Naples 81154 (Cat. nos. 13 and 24, pls. 6 c-d and 11 a-d, figs. 2, 22); Theseus fighting Skiron in Toledo 63.27, Laon 37996 and Acropolis 1280 (Cat. nos. 29-30 and 76, pls. 13 a-e and 32 b); and the entangled bodies of the pancratiasts in New York 06.1021.49 (Cat. no. 42, pl. 18 a-b, fig. 18). Also remarkable are the few heads portrayed in frontal view, which belong to satyrs (London 1902.12-18.3, Lecce 560, Basle, Cahn Collection HC 1405, London B 513, Cat. nos. 18, 38-39, 166; pls. 8 e, 16 b-d, 53 a, c; fig. 23 a-b) 67 and, in one instance, Alkyoneus (unpublished, once Athens market, Cat. no. 109). 68 The Theseus Painter's satyrs are seldom ithyphallic (see for example fig. 23 b).

Noticeable difference may also mark movement. For example, the male figures of Taranto 4449 (Cat. 44, pl. 19) dance wildly, some of them even jumping into the air. In contrast, the Theseus Painter's pyrrhic dancers look more as if they are walking quite statically rather than dancing, 70 they can be recognised as dancers only by their attributes, setting and accompanying auloi-player. Maybe the reserved movement of the pyrrhic dancers was intended to express the more dignified nature of their weapon-dance as compared to the exuberant komos-like setting of Taranto 4449.

In contrast, the Theseus Painter's range of variation in female figures is much more limited. The hair is generally depicted long and loose, falling in curly strands or in waves on to the shoulders (figs. 24-27). It is seldom arranged in a krobilos, which apparently never occurs on skyphoi; for example the lekythoi Athens, Goulandris 265 and London 1904.7.8.5 (Cat. nos. 126 and 138, pls. 38 c and 43 e). A female figure is usually dressed in a standard chiton, rarely in a peplos (for example the Winchester skyphos, Cat. no. 4, pl. 1 c-d). Even clearly recognisable and defined figures like Athena do not deviate much from this standard, despite their greater importance and the addition of attributes. The gestures of females are also much fewer than those of males: female mourners (compare Cat. no. 181, pl. 57 g), for example, are not significantly different from the women bystanders in fearful attitudes who watch Theseus and his adversaries (Cat. nos. 29-30, pl. 13 a, c-e).

The relative sizes and proportions of the Theseus Painter's human figures are usually rather constant.

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65 See, for example, Agora P 1545; Herakles, once Philadelphia market (Cat. nos. 25 and 127, pls. 12 c and 39 e).
66 See Agora P 1544, P 1548, Taranto 4591, Athens, NM 498, Naples 81082, Malibu 86.AE.147 Cat. nos. 45-46, 50, 80, 155, 143, 193-97, pls. 20 a-b, 21 d, 34 c, 49 e, 59 a, 61 a-b, 62 c, fig. 5, and esp. Agora P 1544 and 1548.
67 Tampa 86.52 and Stuttgart KAS 74, Cat. nos. 40-41, pl. 17 a-c. Compare also Aegina 107.UF.15, Cat. no. N61.
68 See Y. Korshak, Frontal Faces in Attic Vase-painting of the Archaic Period (Chicago 1987) 5-11. Side A and B of Lecce 560, nos. 65-66 (Cat. no. 38, pl. 16 b-d); London 1902.12-18.3, no. 68 (Cat. no. 18, pl. 8 d-e); London 513, no. 69 (Cat. no. 166, pl. 53 e). Also reported as having frontal faces (based on descriptions by Haspels, ABL 143) are figures on an unpublished skyphos in Basle, Kambli coll. (Cat. no. 117).
69 See once Basle market, Lecce 560 and the tondo of London B 446 (Cat. nos. 37-38, 173, pls. 15 c-d, 16c-d, 55 f).
70 Bonn 307, San Antonio, once Brussels, Theodor coll., Cat. nos. 143, 152, 168, pls. 46 a-b, 48 a-b, 54 a.
Small youths are exceptional.\textsuperscript{71} Only once is the scale completely wrong: in Delos B 6142 (Cat. no. 73, pl. 31 a-b) the horseman is much smaller than Athena, but the discrepancy results from the limited space below the handle where the horseman is placed.

Painting: animals and fantastic creatures

The Theseus Painter seems to have enjoyed painting non-human creatures, both real and imagined.\textsuperscript{72} In his animals he often displays the full extent of his craftsmanship, combined with care and inventiveness besides; see for example the goats of the Winchester College skyphos (Cat. no. 4, pl. 1 c-d); donkeys of Mississippi 1977.3.69 (Cat. no. 7, pl. 3 c-e); cattle of Taranto 4448 (Cat. no. 14, pl. 6 d); ostriches of Guardia Pertica 215223 (Cat. no. 36, pl. 16 a). His evident fondness for animals is reflected by their great variety; in addition to the foregoing: rams;\textsuperscript{73} deer;\textsuperscript{74} lions;\textsuperscript{75} owls;\textsuperscript{76} cocks;\textsuperscript{77} birds, pigeon-like\textsuperscript{78} or a species of a bird of prey,\textsuperscript{79} which look basically the same but can be distinguished by their contexts; snakes (white),\textsuperscript{80} fish,\textsuperscript{81} and even a turtle (white)\textsuperscript{82} and dolphins.\textsuperscript{83}

Fantastic creatures were apparently one of the Theseus Painter's specialities: the female monster of Acropolis 1306 and Monpoli, private collection (Cat. nos. 15-16, pl. 7); the strange boar-like creature on side B of the latter (and possibly Acropolis 1306, for part of such a creature seems to be preserved on a separate fragment belonging to that vase); the round, two-legged, chequered griffin of Boston 55.923 and Guardia Pertica (Cat. nos. 6 and 10, pls. 3 a and 5 a). Vases depicting these creatures seem to appear at least in pairs, sometimes whole series, while hardly recurring in the work of other painters. The Theseus Painter also depicted the more usual kinds of fantastic creatures like the hippocamp of New York 17.230.9 (Cat. no. 3, pl. 2 b) and the winged horses of Helios in Taranto 4447 (Cat. no. 13, pl. 6 a-b). However, they too are carefully rendered, in a more decorative and precise way than are the run of his human figures.

Painting: nature and architecture

Although the Theseus Painter often illustrated natural elements, he, like vase painters in general, had few subjects at his disposal to evoke the outdoors. Haspels earlier noted the tree that often stands prominently in the centre of a picture, especially on skyphoi.\textsuperscript{84}

These trees vary (fig. 34). Most of them are short and wide, with curving trunks, like pollard willows. Others are high and thin. Very characteristic are the trees with two intertwined trunks which often grow from a single base and cross or meet each other higher up, for example those below the handles of ephedrismos skyphoi (Cat. nos. 54-63, see pl. 25 b). On the lekythos which was once in the Philadelphia market (Cat. no. 127, pl. 39 a) a fernlike tree stands behind Pholos. In many cases there is an incised vertical line down the middle of the trunk.

Generally, the tree consists of a few curving branches with leaves in the form of dots or, occasionally,

\textsuperscript{71} Taranto 4591, Utrecht 29, Berlin 3230, Cat. nos. 50, 162, 164, pls. 21 c-d, 51 b, 52 b.
\textsuperscript{72} ABL 143.
\textsuperscript{73} White and Levi coll.; Conservatorium; Oxford 1934.327 (Cat. nos. 32, 70, 141, pls. 15 a, 29 d, 45 a-c).
\textsuperscript{74} As Lecce 560 (Cat. no. 38, pl. 16 a-b).
\textsuperscript{75} As in Havana, Lagunaillas (Cat. no. 11, pl. 5 b).
\textsuperscript{76} As Delos 6140 (Cat. no. 72, pl. 30 d).
\textsuperscript{77} As Delos 6140 (Cat. No. 72, pl. 30 c).
\textsuperscript{78} Syracuse 53263 (Cat. no. 22, pl. 10 a-b).
\textsuperscript{79} As Naples 81159 and once Basle market (Cat. nos. 33-34, pl. 14).
\textsuperscript{80} As Toledo 63.37 and Naples 81159 (Cat. nos. 30, 33, pls. 13 e, 14 b).
\textsuperscript{81} Taranto 4447 (Cat. no. 13, pl. 6 a-b).
\textsuperscript{82} Acropolis 1280 (Cat. no. 76, pl. 32 b).
\textsuperscript{83} Kerameikos 5671 (Cat. no. 129, pl. 40 a-b). See also Kurtz and Boardman, Athena-Bowdoin Painter, esp. 88; S. Vidali, Archaische Delphindarstellungen (Würzburg 1997) esp. 60-64.
\textsuperscript{84} ABL 142-43
more elaborate form (like the 'ivy leaves' of the Collisani lekythos (Cat. no. 134, pl. 42 a-c). White dots
often represent fruit (see the Havana skyphoi with Herakles and the lion, and Mt. Holyoke 1925.BS II.3,
Cat. nos. 11 and 19, pls. 5 b, 9 a-b, see also fig. 34).

As stated, the tree frequently occupies the centre of the composition, attracting much attention. But
often it is situated at the side of the scene or under the handle. The branches often fill large expanses
across the surface, especially on skyphoi, a usage which seems to derive from the Krokokots Group.
Sometimes the Theseus Painter depicted branches without including a trunk.

Rocky structures are generally depicted as large, shapeless forms, often elaborated with colour or
incising.\(^{85}\) On the lekythos once in the Philadelphia market (Cat. no. 127, pl. 39 a-c) a cloud-shaped band
in diluted paint below the shoulder indicates the ceiling of Pholos's cave. Water is similarly portrayed, in
reverse, at the bottom of the skyphos frieze with Helios (Taranto 4447, Cat. no. 13, pl. 6a-b). Fire is
represented (like water) in diluted paint and applied in ray-shaped strokes (see Agora P 9273, Louvre F
342, Cat. nos. 95 and 165, pls. 36 j, 52 c).

Architecture is denoted in abbreviated form. Basically, one or more Doric columns support a
superstructure: a solid architrave with an ovols on top (Louvre CA 1837, Cat. no. 140, pl. 44 d);
motetf or open spaces between crossbeams (Acropolis 1295, Cat. no. 94, pl. 37 a); and, again, a solid
architrave (Uppsala 352, Cat. no. 161, pl. 51 a).

Vases, headgear and musical instruments
The Theseus Painter appears to have been fond of depicting a wide variety of pottery shapes, often quite
accurately delineated, even shapes which he never actually decorated himself: neck-amphorai, either
Panathenaic-shaped or otherwise,\(^{86}\) belly-amphorai,\(^{87}\) calyx-kraters;\(^{88}\) phialai and oinochoai;\(^{89}\) lekythoi
and alabastra;\(^{90}\) kothion exaleiptron.\(^{91}\) Some portrayals conceivably represent metal ware, like a dinos on
a tripod,\(^{92}\) kantharoi,\(^{93}\) and drinking-horns.\(^{94}\) Curiously, the Theseus Painter is not known to have illustrated
the skyphos, even though it was the shape he most often decorated.

Headgear, other than the obligatory kinds like (Athena's) helmets, Herakles' lion's-head or Hermes'
petasos, are rare, being mostly confined to turban- or mitra-shaped headdress.\(^{95}\) We also find Scythian
caps and other types,\(^{96}\) poloi\(^{97}\) and a very rare cap with a female bust on top.\(^{98}\)

The Theseus Painter represented a few kinds of musical instruments: krotalai,\(^{99}\) trumpet\(^{100}\) and

\(^{85}\) As Laon 37996 and Toledo 63.27, White and Levi coll., Naples 81159, once Basle market, San Antonio 86.134.54 and a
lekythos in a German private coll. (Cat. nos. 29-30, 32-34, 128, 133, pls. 13 c and e, 14, 15 a, 39 e-f, 41 e).
\(^{86}\) In several of his komoi, with amphora-bearers (Cat. nos. 45-46, 50, 155, 194-96, pls. 20 a, 21 a and d, 49, 160 c), as well
as Tampa 86.52, Stuttgart KAS 74 and Malibu 86.4E.147 (Cat. nos. 40-41, 193, pls. 17 a and c, 59 a).
\(^{87}\) Athens, NM 13916 (Cat. no. 53, pl. 24 a-b).
\(^{88}\) Both sides of Munich 1678 (Cat. no. 154, pl. 49 a-b)
\(^{89}\) London 1902.12-18.3, Dresden ZV 1680, Mt. Holyoke 1925 BS II.3, Delos B 6140 (Cat. nos. 18-20, 72, pls. 8 d-e, 9 a-c,
30 d).
\(^{90}\) The alabastra once in the market (Cat. nos. 202-203, pl. 164 a and c).
\(^{91}\) Utrecht 29 (Cat. no. 194, pl. 51 b). Compare also an alabaston fragment in Tubingen, S/10 1729, CYA 5, pl. 34.3, which
might be by or near the Theseus Painter. The fragment has been attributed to the Theseus Painter, based on a comparison to the
women on the two alabastra in the market by the Theseus Painter. The style, however, is cruder and more angular.
\(^{92}\) Collisani coll. R. 32 (Cat. no. 134, pl. 42 a).
\(^{93}\) Port Sunlight 5019 (Cat. no. 153, 48 b).
\(^{94}\) See, for example, Naples 81154, Agora P 1545, once Kropatschek coll., Bari, Cotecchi a coll., Agora P 1543 (Cat. nos.
24-28, pls. 11-12).
\(^{95}\) Syracuse 26857 and Berlin 2005 (Cat. no. 1 and 145, pls. 1 a-b and 46 c). See also Kurtz and Boardman, Booners, 50-56.
\(^{96}\) Scythian caps on Boston 99.523, Guardia Perticari and once Lucerne market (Cat. nos. 6, 10 and 130, pls. 3 a, 5 a, 40 c).
\(^{97}\) See, for example, St. Petersburg 4498, London B 346, Madrid 10930 (Cat. nos. 71, 159-60).
\(^{98}\) Syracuse 26857 (Cat. no. 1, pl. 1 a-b).
numerous auloi. Although a stringed instrument often occurs, it is always the same type: a lyre, strikingly, this applies even to Herakles and Apollo who are generally more closely associated with the kithara.

Colour
The Theseus Painter used quite much added red and white, especially in his earlier work. In addition, he made relatively frequent use of added yellow, which was otherwise rarely employed by Attic painters. His late vases are the least colourful, with added red and white appearing less often and added yellow not at all.

Red generally marks fillets, beards, parts of clothing, blood, meat, satyr's tails and animals' necks. White generally colours female skin, but also the white herons below the handles of skyphoi and the white fruit of trees, applied directly on the clay surface. It is also used for (zigzag) patterns on furniture and architectural elements; clothing: floral wreaths; bellies and horns of animals; silhouette animals, often painted against rocks; hair of old men (and sometimes younger ones, see Alkyoneus in Taranto 4448, Cat. no. 14, pl. 6 e). We can also note the uncommon chequered motif of white and black blocks on the round bellied griffins of Boston 99.523 and Guardia Perticara (Cat. nos. 6, 10, pls. 3 a, 5 a). In one instance, chitons are painted entirely white on a white-ground vase: the lekythos Cambridge G 3.1955 (Cat. no. 131, pl. 40 d-e), where the cream-coloured chitons stand out against the rather bright white ground.

The Theseus Painter rarely depicted shield-devices in white. The few examples are: panthers or lions, ox protome and eagle of London 1926.11-15.1 (Cat. no. 17, pl. 8 a, e); wreaths and tripod of San Antonio 86.134.157 (Cat. no. 152, pl. 48 a-b).

Added yellow, the trait which directly links the Theseus Painter to the Kroko'tos Group, occurs much less often than either added red or white and was employed much more selectively; It is mainly seen on the painter's skyphoi. He frequently used it to colour hair, especially for females, but on vases of the Theseus Painter and of other painters of the Sub-kroko'tos Group added yellow also marks the hair and garments of males.

In addition, added yellow colours the sun-disk above Helios' head in Taranto 4447 (Cat. no. 13, pl. 6 a-b); the herons in the middle of either side of the Winchester College skyphos (Cat. no. 4, pl. 1 c-d), the snake placed on a rock in Toledo 63.27 (Cat. no. 30, pl. 13 e); the grapes and the edge of the press-bed of Acropolis 1290 (Cat. no. 77, pl. 32 d-f); the flowers or wreaths of the human figures and donkey of Acropolis 1282 (Cat. no. 66, pl. 23 d); and the spindles of Herakles' chair and the oinochoe carried by Athena in London 1902.12-18.3 (Cat. no. 18, pl. 8 d-e). Lastly, a yellow stripe sometimes accentuates the lower edge of a garment, indicating either its border or the hem of the yellow chiton worn under it.

101 See, for example, Acropolis 1281, Mt. Holyoke 1925 BS II.3, Kerameikos 5671 (Cat. nos. 2, 19, 129, pls. 2 a, 9 a-b. 40 a-b).
103 Apollo, for example, St. Petersburg 4498, London B 346 (Cat. nos. 71, 192, pls. 30 b, 159, pl. 50 a); Herakles, Syracuse 53263 (Cat. no. 20, pl. 10 a-b).
104 On vases with wounded adversaries of Theseus (Cat. nos. 30 (Prokustes' hip), 76 (Skiron's chest), pls. 13 d, 32 b).
105 Malibu 96.AE.96 (Cat. no. 171, pl. 55 b).
106 A turtle on the rock on Acropolis 1280 (Cat. no. 76, pl. 32 b); snake on Toledo 63.27 and Naples 81159 (Cat. nos. 30, 33, pls. 13 e, 14 b); deer and snake on Naples 81159 (Cat. no. 33, pl. 14 a). See also the silhouette fishes in the water on Taranto 4447 (Cat. no. 13, pl. 6 a-b).
107 A white wreath possibly also adorns the shield of Bonn 307 (Cat. no. 143, pl. 46 a-b); on the other hand, it might be red.
109 Ure, *Kroko'tos*, 95. See, for example, Athens, NM 362, Ure, *Kroko'tos*, 93, no. 17, 95; CVA Athens 4, pl. 35. For examples of the yellow hair of male and female figures by the Theseus Painter see Winchester College skyphos, sea god of New York 17.230.9, female of Toledo 63.27 (Cat. nos. 3-4, 30, 44, pls. 1 c-d, 2 b, 13 e, 19 b).
110 The herons below the handles of that vase are the usual white ones.
111 This trait, as observed by Ure, is typical of the Sub-kroko'tos Group. Ure also maintains that the extensive use of yellow was inherited from Exekias. For yellow borders see Ure *Kroko'tos*, 93, 95; for yellow inherited from Exekias, *ibid.*, 102;
Drawing

Technically and stylistically, the Theseus Painter is primarily notable for his powerful and flowing incising. For the depiction of human and animal figures as well as other elements he depended much more on his capabilities as a draughtsman than as a painter. Most generally, the incising, not the painting, defines his style. In contrast to the often clumsy painting, the incisions are usually very accurately and carefully executed, although the amount of detail is regularly quite limited. He strove, it seems, to link as many individual anatomical features as possible by using the smallest number of curving and curling lines; for instance, sometimes only a single line indicates the collarbone, shoulder contour and biceps. Moreover, the differences that sometimes occur in the incising of a single vase can be remarkable; for instance, on a lekythos in a German private collection compare the stiff incising of the satyr on the left side with the more flowingly lines of his companions (Cat. no. 133, pl. 41 d-e).

Drawing: human figures

The Theseus Painter was no master at rendering details like, among other things, facial features; in this regard he contrasts with his close colleague the Athena Painter whose drawing of anatomical details like cheekbones, abdominal muscles or legs is often much more detailed. On the other hand, the Theseus Painter was highly skilled at giving an impression of accuracy by employing relatively few long and flowing incisions while, in fact, actually defining a small number of details. Haspels concisely characterises his incising as "swinging" and describes some aspects of his manner and style of incising:

In his figures the incisions are characteristic: he makes the most of long flowing lines. For instance, where possible he will combine collarbone, shoulder-outline and biceps incisions in one long easy swinging stroke; or he will give the outline of beard, ear, neck hair all in one; or he combines in bearded faces, the outline of the face with the lip: so only one little incision, forking from main one at the end is needed to indicate the mouth [...] He uses this abbreviated mouth in bearded faces as well: here it varies from a little triangle, like a fishes mouth gasping, to a more rounded shape with an extra line in the middle, which makes the people all look like discontented mumblers [...] When he incises the outline of the face, the mouth is indicated either by a single line or hardly at all [...] The people with properly worked out mouths are apt to look like his goats. In naked figures he makes much of the inscriptions of the rectus abdominis, rendering them by a number of parallel horizontal incisions [...] His uncovered heads often have a prominent tuft on the forehead, sometimes painted red, with incisions for the hair in front [...] His occasional frontal heads [...] have this crest doubled, erect and smart.113

Other distinctive incised traits of male figures are the (often very) schematic eyes, composed of an oval and a stroke below or at each side (figs. 6-7, 10, 12, 16 a-c). Sometimes only the contour of the eye is indicated (figs. 3-5, 9, 11, 15) as either a circle or an oval. However, the Theseus Painter also drew more carefully executed black-figure eyes of standard type: curving lines with a circle inside or two concentric rings with strokes or hooks at one or each side of the eye (figs. 1, 8, 13).

The most common, characteristic ear is rendered in two parts: one line for the upper contour (often continuing into the hair at the neck or the forehead) and one for the earlobe ending in an upward curl inside the ear (figs. 12, 13, 16 a-b, 18, 22). Often the two lines are attached, creating an almost figure-eight ear. Rarely the Theseus Painter also drew double circular or semicircular ears (see fig. 11).

Malagardis, Skyphoi.
112 ABL 156.
113 ABL 142-43. See also Eisman, Kyathos, 441.
Sometimes the ear is simply outlined on top as a rounded protrusion in the hair contour (figs. 10, 14-15, 21). This simplified rendering is mostly met in the later work. On the earlier vases, whose drawing is as a rule better, the nostril, cheek and moustache are often indicated by small curving strokes: a tear shape for the nostril, a curving stroke for the round cheek, and sometimes a straight stroke at the side of the mouth (see figs. 2, 6-7, pls. 13 f, 23 e). Generally, a single stroke defines the moustache. Mouths, too, are usually rendered simply by one line, though sometimes they have the form of a semicircle or half oval with a stroke in the middle, which creates a large mouth with thick lips, sometimes accentuated by added red or white.\textsuperscript{114} In many youths the contours of the rather heavy jaws are delineated. The borders of beards are usually drawn as two separate lines: the upper one quite angular, with a point in the centre at the level of the cheek, and regularly connected to the ear or hair at the temple; the lower edge is either indicated by strokes for the hair of long beards or by a single line for shorter ones (compare figs. 10, 14).

In various combinations, the forehead, hair, beard and ear are often drawn rather ingeniously, connected to each other by a few incisions: two curving lines for the contours of the forehead, with strokes for the hair at the top, often joined to one of the composite parts of the ear, which in turn is often linked to the beard or the hair at the neck (figs. 2, 12, 16 a-c, 18, 20, 22). The typical forehead is not always included, however: on some – especially later – vases only the inner hair contour is drawn (figs. 9-10, 15). In contrast to the painter's common practice, the frontal faces of the satyrs in Lecce 560, Basle, Cahn collection HC 1405, and London B 513 are incised in somewhat greater detail than usual (Cat. nos. 38-39, 166; pls. 16 b-d, 53 a-c, figs. 23 a-b, full nose-contour, more detailed moustache, lines in the forehead). Wreaths and fillets can be very simply indicated as two parallel lines for the contour. But very elaborate variants also exist, with carefully drawn ivy leaves along both sides.\textsuperscript{115}

The naked male body also shows several standard features. Very commonly the torso in frontal view has a line consisting of two waves for the chest muscles, often placed very low, whereas the nipples, if present, are high and very close together (figs. 12, 16 d, 17, 22). A vertical line sometimes divides the chest (figs. 4, 9). Collarbones are indicated as one or two short lines (depending on whether the figure is viewed from the front or the side) with a curl at the end. The inner markings of the biceps are generally drawn as a single curving, flowing line, often connected to the shoulder contour and frequently even to the collarbones (figs. 1 b, 12).

The fingers of open hands are indicated by parallel straight lines. Clenched fists are drawn quite rectangularly, often with the knuckles of the index and middle fingers defined by small knobs and the outer contour of the thumb extending from the wrist in a curving, elegant line: these hands look very much as if they are mittened (figs. 11-12, 16 a-b, d, 18, 22). Over time, the fists become more angular. In some rare instances, the whole contour of a spread hand and fingers is incised, for example some auloi-players (figs. 1, 21).

The bellies of naked males nearly always have several slightly curved or, sometimes, straight horizontal lines. For the genitals, in many cases, there are two curly or circular lines in combination with straight strokes (figs. 4, 16 d and e, 17 19); sometimes the genitals are drawn slightly more carefully (figs. 1, 22). Occasionally the Theseus Painter's anatomical incisions are elaborate; see for example the uncharacteristic, extensive incising of the abdominal muscles of the bent body of Alkyoneus in Taranto 4448 (Cat. no. 14; pl. 6 d; fig. 22) and, to a lesser degree, those of the right-hand amphora carrier in Stuttgart KAS 74 (Cat. no. 41, pl. 17 e).

Also somewhat special is the incising of the pancratists of New York 06.1021.49 (Cat. no. 42; pl. 18 a-b; fig. 18), who are exceptionally full of lines. Further, notable incising marks the frontal seated youth of the 'forge' skyphos in Salerno (Cat. no. 79, pl. 34 a-d). The special postures of these figures seem to have made the Theseus Painter alter his routine and pay more attention to the incising, which causes the figures to appear somewhat atypical. Also the almost 'rubbery' arm with which the amphora carrier of Taranto 4591 (Cat. no. 50, pl. 21 d) shoulders his burden evidently posed difficulties for the Theseus Painter.

The drawing of male legs is generally highly standardised: one or two curving lines on the thigh, connected to a curl at the end for the knee or in combination with one or more curving strokes for the

\textsuperscript{114} See, for example, the monster of Acropolis 1306 or the satyr of St. Petersburg 4498 (Cat. nos. 15 and 71, pls. 7 a and 30 a).

\textsuperscript{115} As the fragment Basle, Cahn coll. HC 1469 (Cat. no. 51, pl. 23 b).
knee. On later vases, the thigh line is often omitted and the kneecap indicated by one or sometimes two semicircles or half-ovals (figs. 4, 10, 14). As a rule, there is a curving line for the calf and, for the ankle, a line on the lower leg with a hook at the bottom. The contours of heads, bodies and limbs are rarely fully outlined.

In several cases the robes or short mantles of males are indicated by a few curving lines, often following the body contour, with wavy or zigzag lines for the folds hanging from the arms or shoulders (figs. 6, 9-10, 14-15, 16 a, 20, 21). The Hermes on side B of Bologna C 44 (Cat. no. 9, pl. 4 e) wears a chitoniskos with unusual, straight vertical lines in the upper part.

Exceptional is the satyr on side B of London 1902.12-18.3 (Cat. no. 18, pl. 8 e) because of his frontally depicted head, carefully incised abdomen and, even more remarkable for the Theseus Painter, the incised dots indicating body hair. The latter recalls the identical treatment of earlier satyrs, for example, by Lydos and the Amasis Painter.116

The incisions of female figures are more limited. Inner hair contours are sparsely indicated and there is sometimes a rudimentary indication of an ear. As a rule, a female has the standard almond-shaped eye and a simple line for the mouth, both thinly incised in the added white. The most notable incisions of females are generally the folds of mantles and other garments, most usually chitons (figs. 24-27). They are often more elaborately treated than those of males, with many curving, wavy and parallel lines for the folds and sharp or curving zigzag lines for hems and sleeves (see the female aulos-player of Agora P 1544 and the Athena of Berlin 2005 (Cat. nos. 45 and 145, pls. 20 a and 46 c, figs. 25-26). A few peploi have simply decorated borders, for instance, the circles between lines on the peploi of the maenads of Winchester College (Cat. no. 4, pl. 1 c-d).

**Drawing: animals**

It is noteworthy that the Theseus Painter showed much more concern for detail and carefulness in his incising of quadrupeds as compared to that of humans. Nevertheless, his typically flowing, almost decorative incising style can also be discerned in the numerous animals (figs. 28-33).117 His basic manner of drawing most of animals is alike. Nearly all of them have an elaborately incised face, with detailed, standard black-figure eyes.118 Characteristic are his goats, with long parallel strokes for beards (figs. 24, 32), as earlier noted by Haspels119 who even sees the painter as having a 'mania' for them: they appear indeed to be his favourite animal.

The ears of most animals are generally defined by circular or spade-shaped incising, with a circle inside; the (large) shoulder blade is, as a rule, an elegantly curving and wavy line. The inner markings of legs are generally linked by curving and hooked lines, which are not always indicative of the animal's true

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116 For similarly hairy satyrs see examples by the Amasis Painter: Würzburg L 265 (ABV 151,22; Para 63; Beazley Addenda4 43); Kavalla 983 (Para 65; Beazley Addenda4 43); Basle K 420 983 (Para 65; Beazley Addenda4 43); New York 1985.57 (Bothmer, Amasis, 110-12, no. 18); Samos (Bothmer, Amasis, 117, fig. 71). Similar satyrs by Lydos: London 1848.6-19.5 (ABV 109,29; Para 44; Beazley Addenda4 30); New York 31.11.11 (ABV 108,5; Para 43; Beazley Addenda4 29).

117 See, for example, Taranto 4448 (Cat. no. 14, fig. 31, pl. 6 d, bulls); Mississippi 1977.3.69 (Cat. no. 7, pl. 3 c-e, donkeys); Boston 99.523 (Cat. no. 6, fig. 28a, pl. 3 a-b, lions, bulls); White and Levi Coll. (Cat. no. 32, pl. 15 a, ram); Lecce 560 (Cat. no. 38, fig. 33, pl. 16 c-d, deer); Stuttgart KAS 74 (Cat. no. 41, pl. 17 b, boar). See also the description of Andreae, Herakles, 190-91, concerning the bulls on side B of Taranto 4448: 'besonders die Rinder der Rückseite zeugen von eine über das dekorative hinausgehende begabung. Nicht nur die massige, stammige Form der Widerkauer, die mächtigen Rinderschädel, die langen schön geschwungenen Hörner und die kräftigen kurzen Beine sind sicher getroffen; besonders wirkungsvoll werden die auch in ihrer Bewegungen der glotzenden voranschreitenden, dem hochwerfen des Kopfes und dem sich-auf-anderdrängenden prächtvoll erfaßten Tiere durch die farbige Behandlung [...]. Die Binnenzeichnung ist sparsam und sicher: zwei falten auf der Stirn, doppelt abgesetzte Backenknochen, am oberen Rand länger behaarte Ohren, die linie des Schulterblatts und, bei dem dritten Rind von rechts von den mehr zu sehen ist, die Rippe auf dem Leib. Die kurzen striche unter dem Blatt der Rinder geben das Buggelenk an, über den sich die Haut bei dem Rind mit hochgeworfenem Kopf anders zusammenzieht als bei denen mit gesenkten Kopfes. Die Beinmuskulatur wird nur durch ein Häckchen angegeben das wol Speiche und Ellen andeutet soll.'

118 Compare, for example, the bulls on Taranto 4448 (previous n.) with Hermes on that same vase. See also the 'griffin' of Boston 99.523 (fig. 28b, Cat. no. 6, pl. 3 a).

119 *ABL* 143.
anatomy, although, once again, the Theseus Painter succeeds in creating a general impression of naturalness.

Inscriptions and graffiti

None of the few inscriptions on the Theseus Painter's vases is legible, which is not surprising as most of the vase painters surrounding him, like the Athena Painter and the Krokokotos Group, are not known to have been literate either. Similarly, very few inscriptions were written by other late black-figure painters who specialised in small shapes. Work by the Gela Painter shows no inscriptions at all, and only a handful of vases by the Edinburgh Painter, Sappho Painter and Diosphas Painter are furnished with inscriptions, mainly kalos names and the names of personages like Herakles, Apollo, Hera, etc.\(^{120}\)

The Theseus Painter's nonsense inscriptions occur mainly on skyphoi; others are met on three pelikai, an oinochoe and a cup, (see note 50). The 'letter shapes' are very limited and blob-like, but one or more circles (O) are always included and vaguely recognisable forms resembling S, N, T and L may sometimes be discerned.\(^{121}\)

According to M. Reho-Bumbalova, however,\(^{122}\) side A of the skyphos in a Monopoli private collection (Cat. no. 16, pl. 7 e) bears a meaningful diagonal word between Herakles and the female monster. She reads οίχιΩ<ωνα>δικας or something similar which could, in her opinion, be interpreted as the perfect of οίχιμα.\(^{123}\) The proposal that a vase by the Theseus Painter has a legible inscription is very attractive, although I find it for several reasons not very plausible. First of all, this would be the only such inscription known in the work of the Theseus Painter. Secondly, the letters of the Monopoli skyphos are not significantly different from those which the Theseus Painter scribbled elsewhere, and their carelessly defined shapes make different readings of the letters unavoidable. Thirdly, the connection between the picture's subject and the supposed written comment is elusive. Moreover, meaningful inscriptions in late black figure are very rare, being mostly confined, as noted, to names and the like. Such a nearly abstract comment seems too sophisticated for late black-figure, especially if it is the painter's only known legible inscription.

Otherwise, the inscriptions of the Theseus Painter's vases consist of graffiti incised after firing. Two of them are votive texts. The one on side A of Delos B 6138 (Cat. no. 74, pl. 31 A, fig. 81 a), found in the Heraion at Delos, reads ΑΠΙΣΤΟΤΕΘΗ ΑΝΕΘΕΚΕΝ ΗΕΠΗΙ ΒΑΙΚΥΑΕΩ.\(^{124}\) The partial graffito of Acropolis 1295 (Cat. no. 94, pl. 37 a, fig. 81 b) appears on the rim and has been restored as ἱερα [τες 'Ἀθηναίας....]κλείει ἀνέθει]κεν by Langlotz.\(^{125}\)

The other graffiti are written under the feet of four skyphoi and consist of marks. The mark of Syracuse 53263 (Cat no. 22, fig. 81 c) finds no definite counterpart\(^{126}\) and includes numerals which might indicate that the skyphos was sold at five for a drachma.\(^{127}\) According to A.W. Johnston, the one under the foot of Naples 81082 (Cat. no. 155, fig. 81 d) is Leagran in the broadest sense.\(^{128}\) The mark of Naples Stg. 118 (Cat. no. 132, fig. 81 e) also has no counterpart.\(^{129}\) The two marks under the foot of Naples 81159 (Cat. no. 33, fig. 81 f) are not mentioned in Johnston.\(^{130}\)

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\(^{121}\) N.Y. 06.1021.49 is mentioned in H.R. Immerwahr, *Attic Script: A Survey* (Oxford 1990) 91, no. 75, "coarse letters and imitation letters at head height", pl. 24, fig. 103.

\(^{122}\) Reho-Bumbalova, *Vaso inedito*, 56.

\(^{123}\) Meaning 'leaving', 'going', 'fleeing', 'disappearing'.

\(^{124}\) For a variation see also, Dugas, *Délos X*, 179, with no. 595.


\(^{129}\) Johnston, *Trademarks*, 94, no. 9, type 9.B.

\(^{130}\) Although one of them resembles type 9.E in Johnston, *Trademarks*, which is a very common mark.