Picturing Death in Classical Athens

This is the first in-depth study of the pictures found on Attic white lekythoi. These funerary vases, placed in and on Athenian graves, have long been appreciated for their beautiful polychrome images that evoke the style of lost classical wall and mural paintings. The most important visual source for classical Greek funerary customs, they exhibit a range of subject matter, most of it connected with death. This richly illustrated volume closely examines the four major types of scenes: domestic pictures, the mythological conductors of the soul, the prothesis (wake), and visits to the grave. In addition to an analysis of the iconographical development of each type, it places these pictures in their historical, social, cultural, archaeological, and literary contexts, documenting relationships between the “rites of passage,” Athenian history, the changing perceptions of death in fifth-century Athens, and funerary epigrams and laments.

John H. Oakley is Chancellor Professor and Forrest D. Murden, Jr., Professor and Chair of the Department of Classical Studies at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. A scholar of Greek painting, he is the author of numerous books and articles, including The Phiale Painter and The Achilles Painter. He is the recipient of fellowships from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN CLASSICAL ART AND ICONOGRAPHY

SERIES EDITOR
H. A. Shapiro, The Johns Hopkins University

ADVISORY BOARD
William Childs, Princeton University
Roger Ling, University of Manchester
Sarah Morris, University of California, Los Angeles
Robin Osborne, Cambridge University
Olga Palagia, University of Athens
Jerome Pollitt, Yale University

Cambridge Studies in Classical Art and Iconography is a program of scholarly monographs that best represent the rapid and profound changes in the scholarship of one of the oldest and most respected disciplines in the humanities. A major goal of this series is to understand ancient art not merely as aesthetic objects, but as part of an intrinsic visual language of a distant culture. Books in this series will, typically, be devoted to studies of a single artist, stylistic issues, or iconography of a particular theme in a specific period. Interpretive in the broadest sense, these works will also provide a link between art history and other related fields in the study of classical antiquity, including history, philosophy, and religion.
PICTURING DEATH
IN CLASSICAL ATHENS

THE EVIDENCE OF THE WHITE LEKYTHOI

JOHN H. OAKLEY

The College of William and Mary
FOR ANNA SHAW BENJAMIN AND MARY B. MOORE
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>xix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>xxiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 DOMESTIC SCENES</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 THE PROTHESIS</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 MYTH AND MYTHOLOGICAL FIGURES</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 SCENES AT THE GRAVE</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 PUTTING THE PICTURES INTO CONTEXT</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Index</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of Greek Vase-Painters</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Illustrations

Plates I–VIII (Appear between pages 124 and 125)

Ia  Two women preparing to visit the grave, Attic white lekythos attributed to Near the Timokrates Painter, ca. 460 B.C.
Ib  Two women musicians, Attic white lekythos by the Timokrates Painter, ca. 470–460 B.C.
IIa–b  Prothesis, Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 450 B.C.
IIIa  Nike, Attic white lekythos by the Carlsruhe Painter, ca. 460 B.C.
IIIb  Amazon, Attic white lekythos by the Klugmann Painter, ca. 440–430 B.C.
IVA  Atalanta Lekythos. Painted white-ground terra-cotta, attributed to Douris, Greek, Athenian, 500–490 B.C.
IVb  Hermes escorting a woman to Charon, Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
VA–B  Hypnos and Thanatos with a warrior’s body at the grave, Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
VIa  Aeneas and Anchises, Attic white lekythos by the Brygos Painter, ca. 490–480 B.C.
VIb  Visit to the grave, Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
VIIa–b  Visit to the grave, Attic white lekythos by the Vouni Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
VIIIA–b  Visit to the grave, Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 440–435 B.C.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURES</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Deianeira-shaped black-figure lekythos</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>Black-figure shoulder lekythos by the Amasis Painter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>Red-figure cylindrical lekythos by the Tithonos Painter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D</td>
<td>Red-figure squat lekythos by the Kleophon Painter</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>X-ray of an Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter showing the interior container</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Seated woman making a wreath. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of Athens 1826, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Woman balancing a stick. Attic white lekythos by the Lupoli Painter, ca. 450 B.C.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Woman stuffing a pillow with wool. Attic white lekythos by the Pan or Brygos Painter, ca. 470 B.C.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Woman about to place a folded cloth into a wooden chest. Attic white lekythos attributed to Near the Providence Painter, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Woman seated on rock holding a fillet. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 450 B.C.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Woman adjusting her chiton before a hydria atop a base. Attic white lekythos by the Klugmann Painter, ca. 440–430 B.C.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Warrior. Attic white lekythos, ca. 450 B.C.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Youth in Thracian garb by a stele. Attic white lekythos, ca. 460–450 B.C.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Horseman. Attic white lekythos by the Reed Painter, ca. 420–410 B.C.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Seated man. Attic white lekythos attributed to the Manner of the Providence Painter, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Two women preparing a funerary basket. Attic white lekythos by the Timokrates Painter, ca. 470–460 B.C.</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Woman and a maid with a child on her shoulders. Attic white lekythos by the Timokrates Painter, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Two women by a kalathos. Attic white lekythos by the Timokrates Painter, ca. 470–460 B.C.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Two women, the seated one making a wreath. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of Athens 1826, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Woman reading to another woman. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of Athens 1826, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Two women with a crane. Attic white lekythos attributed to the Circle of the Villa Giulia Painter, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mistress and maid. Attic white lekythos attributed to Probably by the Nikon Painter, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Two women with armor. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 460–450 B.C.</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Artist/Period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Two women with a baby boy. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 460–450 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Two women preparing to visit a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 460–450 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Two women dressing. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 445–435 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24–25</td>
<td>Two women. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 445–440 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–27</td>
<td>Two women musicians. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 445–440 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Two women. Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29–30</td>
<td>Two women. Attic white lekythos attributed to the Manner of the Woman Painter, ca. 430–420 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Two women and winged boy (Eros?). Attic white lekythos, ca. 430 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Two women. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 440–430 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Two women playing with a top. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 460–450 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Youth departing or arriving. Attic white lekythos by the Timokrates Painter, ca. 470–460 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Youth departing. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of Athens 1943, ca. 450–440 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Warrior departing. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 440–435 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37–38</td>
<td>Woman and warrior. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 440–435 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Warrior departing. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of Athens 1826, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Woman and youth. Attic white lekythos by the Timokrates Painter, ca. 460 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Youth departing. Attic white lekythos by the Houston Painter, ca. 440 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42–44</td>
<td>Arming scene. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 440–430 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–46</td>
<td>Three women. Attic white lekythos, ca. 430 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Prothesis. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of the New York Hypnos, ca. 440–430 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Prothesis. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 420 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Prothesis: head of dead youth. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 430 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Prothesis. Attic white lekythos by the Woman Painter, ca. 430–420 B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
51–53 Prothesis. Attic white lekythos by the Triglyph Painter, ca. 410 B.C.

54 Prothesis. Attic white lekythos belonging to the Group of Huge Lekythoi, ca. 400 B.C.

55 Woman carrying dead boy. Attic white lekythos attributed to Near the Inscription Painter, ca. 460 B.C.

56 Athena. Attic white lekythos attributed to Near the Vouni Painter, ca. 460 B.C.

57–58 Kitharode and Nike. Attic white lekythos, ca. 460–450 B.C.

59–60 Persephone and Demeter. Attic white lekythos, ca. 450–440 B.C.

61–62 Muses on Helikon. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 445–435 B.C.

63 Danaé and the Golden Rain. Attic white lekythos attributed to the Workshop of the Beldam Painter, ca. 460 B.C.

64 Aeneas and Anchises. Attic white lekythos by the Brygos Painter, ca. 480 B.C.

65 Oedipus and the Sphinx. Attic white lekythos by the Lupoli Painter, ca. 450 B.C.

66 Akrisios at the tomb or cenotaph of Perseus. Attic white lekythos attributed to Near the Achilles Painter, ca. 450 B.C.

67 Charon. Attic white lekythos by the Tymbos Painter, ca. 460 B.C.

68–69 Hermes bringing a youth to Charon. Attic red-figure amphora of Panathenaic shape by the Kleophon Painter, ca. 430 B.C.

70–71 Hermes bringing a youth to Charon. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

72 Hermes bringing a woman to Charon. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

73–74 Charon and bearded man. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 430 B.C.

75–76 Boy with roller and mother awaiting Charon. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of Munich, ca. 435 B.C.

77–78 Boy awaiting Charon by the tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 425 B.C.

79 Woman awaiting Charon. Attic white lekythos by the Reed Painter, ca. 420 B.C.

80–81 Charon and a youth at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Reed Painter, ca. 420 B.C.

82–84 Charon and woman at a tomb. Attic white lekythos attributed to Group R, ca. 420–410 B.C.

85 Youth and woman at a tomb with Charon. Attic white lekythos by the Triglyph Painter, ca. 410 B.C.

86 Husband and wife by Charon’s boat, in which their son stands. Attic white lekythos, ca. 430 B.C.
Youth with an obol seated at a tomb with Charon and a woman. Attic white lekythos, ca. 420 B.C.

Hypnos and Thanatos with a body before a tomb. Attic white lekythos Associated with the Painter of London 1905, ca. 470–460 B.C.

Hypnos and Thanatos with the body of a young warrior. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

Hypnos and Thanatos with the body of a woman. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 420 B.C.

Hypnos and Thanatos with the body of a woman. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 420 B.C.

Hypnos and Thanatos with a body before a tomb, Hermes and Charon nearby. Attic white lekythos, ca. 430–420 B.C.

Hypnos and Thanatos with the body of a woman. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 420 B.C.

Hypnos and Thanatos on the finial of a gravestone. Attic white lekythos, ca. 420 B.C.

Two women at a grave; on the steps of the grave a hydria showing Hypnos and Thanatos holding a body. Attic white lekythos, ca. 450–440 B.C.

Hermes and a winged female divinity at the tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 425 B.C.

Hermes and a youth at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Phiale Painter, ca. 435–430 B.C.

Hermes Psychopompos leading a woman. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of Athens 1826, ca. 460 B.C.

Hermes and a woman at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Tymbos Painter, ca. 450 B.C.

Hermes and a woman at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Beldam Painter, ca. 480–470 B.C.

Woman at a tomb with a sphinx atop a base. Attic white lekythos, ca. 470–460 B.C.

Woman crying at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Inscription Painter, ca. 460–450 B.C.

Woman and man at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Inscription Painter, ca. 460–450 B.C.

Woman seated at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Tymbos Painter, ca. 450 B.C.

Prothesis and a tomb. Attic white lekythos attributed to Related to the Tymbos Painter, ca. 470–460 B.C.

Woman and a youth at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
118–119 Two youths at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

120–121 Old man and a warrior at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 450–445 B.C.

122 Black maid at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

123 Thracian maid and a woman holding a hare at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Phiale Painter, ca. 435–430 B.C.

124 Youth with a lyre by a tomb attended by a woman holding a hare. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of Munich 2335, ca. 430 B.C.

125 *Eidolon* (ghost?) of a woman seated on the steps of a tomb attended by two women. Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

126 Youth seated on a grave attended by another youth and a woman. Attic white lekythos attributed to Group R, ca. 420–410 B.C.

127–129 Woman at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Woman Painter, ca. 430–420 B.C.

130 Family at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 430 B.C.

131–132 Girl holding out a doll and a woman at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

133 Athlete and a woman at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

134–135 Woman and a man at a woman’s grave. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, 445–440 B.C.

136–137 Youth hunting a hare at the tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

138 Youth with a hoop at a tomb. Attic white lekythos, ca. 440–435 B.C.

139 Youths playing knucklebones at a tomb. Attic red-figure amphora of Panathenaic shape by the Kleophon Painter, ca. 430 B.C.

140 Traveler’s departure at a tomb. Attic white lekythos, ca. 425 B.C.

141–142 Warriors arming at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.

143 Fight at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Woman Painter, ca. 420 B.C.

144–145 Fight. Attic white lekythos by the Reed Painter, ca. 420–410 B.C.

146 Horseman at a grave. Attic white lekythos, ca. 440 B.C.

147 Persian and a woman at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Sabouroff Painter, ca. 430 B.C.
148 Two Persians. Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
149–150 Youth playing a lyre on a tomb attended by a man and a youth. Attic white lekythos attributed to the Group of Berlin 2459, ca. 430–420 B.C.
151–152 Two women and an eidolon at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Woman Painter, ca. 430–420 B.C.
153 Woman and a maid at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 430 B.C.
154 Types of grave monuments drawn on white lekythoi. Drawing: after Nakayama (1982), 279, Tabelle 1
155 Woman decorating a tomb. Attic white lekythos, ca. 430 B.C.
156–157 Kneeling man and a youth at a sarcophagus. Attic white lekythos attributed to Near the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
158–159 Man and a woman at a sarcophagus. Attic white lekythos by the Thanatos Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
160 Woman pouring a libation from a hydria near a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Painter of Munich 2335, ca. 430 B.C.
161 Acanthus column marking a grave. Attic white lekythos, ca. 430–420 B.C.
162 Women at a tomb. Attic white lekythos attributed to the Manner of the Bird Painter, ca. 430 B.C.
163 Women at a grave marked by a tree. Attic white lekythos by the Quadrate Painter, ca. 430 B.C.
164 Youths at a tomb decorated with a marble lekythos. Attic white lekythos, ca. 420 B.C.
165 Warrior and a woman at a tomb. Attic white lekythos attributed to the Manner of the Achilles Painter, ca. 430 B.C.
166 Youths at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Achilles Painter, ca. 450–445 B.C.
167 Woman and men at a grave with white lekythoi. Attic white lekythos attributed to the Revelstoke Group, ca. 420 B.C.
168 Woman and a warrior at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Bosanquet Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
169–170 Woman pouring a libation at a grave. Attic white lekythos by the Woman Painter, ca. 420 B.C.
171 Youth with a bird in a cage at a tomb. Attic white lekythos by the Bird Painter, ca. 430 B.C.
172 Two women at a tomb. Attic white lekythos attributed to the Workshop of the Achilles Painter and the Phiale Painter, ca. 440 B.C.
173 Attic marble lekythos with a tomb scene, ca. 400–375 B.C.
| 174 | Attic marble tombstone with a maid holding out a boy to his mother, ca. 420–410 B.C. | 221 |
| 175 | The Rites of Passage. Drawing: after L. Danforth, *The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (Princeton, N.J., 1972), 36, fig. 1 | 226 |
ABBREVIATIONS

AA Archäologischer Anzeiger
ABL C. H. E. Haspels, Attic Black-figured Lekythoi (Paris, 1936)
ABV J. D. Beazley, Attic Black-figure Vase-Painters (Oxford, 1956)
AchillesPt J. H. Oakley, The Achilles Painter (Mainz, 1997)
AE Archäologische Ephemeris
AJA American Journal of Archaeology
Alexiou, Lament M. Alexiou, The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition (Cambridge, 1974)
AM Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung
AntK Antike Kunst
ArchDelt Αρχαιολογικά Δηλώσεις
ARV² J. D. Beazley, Attic Red-figure Vase-Painters, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1963)
BCH Bulletin de correspondance hellénique
BM British Museum
BSA The Annual of the British School at Athens
BWPr Winckelmannsprogram der Archäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin
CAT C. W. Clairmont, Classical Attic Tombstones (Kölnberg, 1993)
City Beneath the City Λ. Πάρμακα – Ν. Χρ. Στουμπολέτης, Η Πόλη κάτω από την Πόλη (Athens, 2000)

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CVA Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum

DAI Deutsches Archäologisches Institut

DarSag C. Daremberg and E. Saglio, _Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines_ (Paris, 1875)

Fairbanks A. Fairbanks, _Athenian White Lekythoi_, vols. I and II (New York, 1907 and 1914)


Hame, _Nomizomena_ J. K. Hame, _Ta Nomizomena: Private Greek Death-Ritual in the Historical Sources and Tragedy_ (Ph.D. diss., Bryn Mawr, 1999)

Hoffmann, _Sotades_ H. Hoffmann, _Sotades. Symbols of Immortality on Greek Vases_ (Oxford, 1997)


JdI Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts

JHS _Journal of Hellenic Studies_

Kavvadias, _Sabouroff_ G. G. Kavvadias, _Ο Ζωγραφος του Sabouroff_ (Athens, 2000)


Koch-Brinkmann, _Polychrome_ U. Koch-Brinkmann, _Polychrome Bilder auf weissgrundigen Lekythen_ (Munich, 1999)

Kurtz, _AWL_ D. C. Kurtz, _Athenian White Lekythoi_ (Oxford, 1975)


LIMC _Lexicon iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae_ (Zurich, 1981–99)

MAR Museo Archeologico Regionale

MFA Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

MN Museo Nazionale

MNM _Monuments et mémoires. Fondation E. Piot_

MuM Münzen und Medaillen

Nakayama N. Nakayama, _Untersuchung der auf weissgrundigen Lekythen dargestellten Grabmaeler_ (Freiburg, 1982)
ABBREVIATIONS

NM National Museum
ÖfJ Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien
Pan J. D. Beazley, Panalipomena (Oxford, 1971)
PhialePt J. H. Oakley, The Phiale Painter (Mainz, 1990)
Pottier, Étude E. Pottier, Étude sur les lécythes blancs attiques (Paris, 1883)
RE Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
Reading Greek Death C. Sourvinou-Inwood, ‘Reading’ Greek Death to the End of the Classical Period (Oxford, 1995)
Riezler W. Riezler, Weissgrundige attische Lekythen (Munich, 1914)
Roberston, AVPCA M. Robertson, The Art of Vase-Painting in Classical Athens (Cambridge, 1992)
Shapiro, Personifications H. A. Shapiro, Personifications in Greek Art. The Representation of Abstract Concepts 600–400 B.C. (Kilchberg, 1993)
Thanatos-Kleophon F. Felten, Thanatos- und Kleophonmalen (Munich, 1971)
Vermeule, Aspects E. Vermeule, Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1979)
Waser, Charon O. Waser, Charon, Charun, Charos (Berlin, 1898)
Wehgartner, AWK I. Wehgartner, Attisch weissgrundige Keramik (Mainz, 1983)
Attic white lekythoi with polychrome decoration are very special vessels. Not only are some of the most beautiful of all Greek vase-paintings among their number, but more is known about them than perhaps any other major class of pottery from antiquity, with the possible exception of Panathenaic amphorae. For the most part, we know how the lekythoi were made, that they were oil containers, that they were called lekythoi in ancient Athens, that their function was primarily funerary, and that they were mainly produced and used in one region of the ancient world, Athens/Attica, for a limited period of time, ca. 470–400 B.C. Nevertheless, although scholars have paid considerable attention to them, no thorough study of the scenes decorating them exists. This book aims to remedy the situation by providing a detailed analysis of their pictures, while also seeking to find the reasons why these specific images were chosen and deemed suitable by ancient Athenians for their funerary rites – a basic question that has never been fully addressed.

The Introduction surveys the history of scholarship about these vessels and places them in their broad archaeological, artistic, cultural, and historical settings. Each of the four following chapters is devoted to a major category of scene: domestic, the prothesis, mythological, and visit to the grave. The primary approach in these four chapters is a traditional, iconographical one that looks at the images chronologically, observing how compositions continue or change over time and their relationship to each other, although readers will observe that I often look beyond these basic tenets. Special attention has been paid to individual vase-painters, pointing out their role in this process, a factor all too often forgotten in iconographical studies. The final chapter is iconological and seeks to place the images in their precise contexts. The reasons for the start and end of the white-ground lekythoi, as well as the social, cultural, and artistic reasons for the choice of the images depicted on them are explored. A variety of methodologies
is incorporated, including anthropological theory and semiotics. In addition, par-
allels between the images’ compositional structure and the attitudes toward death
displayed by them, and those exhibited in Greek literature, are used to support
the interpretations presented.

I have attempted to write a book that is of use to both student and scholar,
hoping that the former will forgive places where I have not given extensive
background information, and the latter where I have given too much. For this
reason I have kept the endnotes short, normally referring only to the most recent
and important discussions, which in turn refer back to earlier bibliography. No
compromise is ever really completely satisfactory to all, but my goal of making the
study useful to a broad audience is, I hope, an acceptable reason for any perceived
defect. As the reader will discover, the range of subjects and the amount of variety
in depicting any one subject on the lekythoi are greater than most scholars have
realized in the past, for which reason I have also tried to illustrate a good number
of the vessels I talk about. In this way this study may also serve as a form of
handbook.

Lists of lekythoi with specific subjects are given for Chapters 2, 3, and 4 to
facilitate easy reference and for the reader quickly to obtain an idea of just how
popular a specific scene was with a particular artist. These lists are not meant
to be complete, for too many lekythoi remain unpublished and in storerooms
inaccessible to scholars to make this feasible. When the header for a list starts with
“some,” this indicates that the list represents only a selection and is less complete
than others. No overall list is provided for Chapter 4, as the vast majority of the
more than two thousand known lekythoi show scenes at the grave, the subject of
that chapter, which makes such a list not only cumbersome but also logistically
impractical. The references to the individual vases are not complete, although I
provide one to an illustration whenever possible. The reader should consult the
references given for additional bibliography, particularly for vases cited in Beazley’s
lists.

The Bibliography lists only those works directly concerned with white-
ground lekythoi, so that it may serve as a research tool for those interested in the
subject. These studies are referred to in the Notes by the author’s last name and
year of publication, unless they are abbreviated. Other references are given in full,
with the exception of those found in the List of Abbreviations at the start of the
book. Translations are my own, unless otherwise noted. “White” and “white-
ground” are used interchangeably according to convention.

For access to the collections under their care, photographs, and/or per-
mission to publish I am indebted to: G. Fiorentini (Agrigento); H. Brijder,
W. van de Put (Amsterdam); H. R. Goette, N. Kaltas, V. Sabetai, J. Stroszeck,
O. Tzachou-Alexandri, I. Zervoudaki (Athens); S. D. Bundrick (Atlanta);
A. Shapiro (Baltimore); P. Blome, H. A. Cahn, V. Slehoferova (Basel); I. Bialas,
U. Kastner, I. Trabert (Berlin); I. Jucker (Bern); W. Geominy (Bonn); B. Breed, M. Comstock, J. Herrmann, Jr., L. Ross, C. C. Vermeule (Boston); C. Tytgat (Brussel); D. Mitten (Cambridge, Mass.); F. Giudice (Catania); K. Sommer (Cavigliano); R. Bell (Christchurch); R. Rosenzweig (Cleveland); B. Bungaard Rasmussen, M. Hermannsen, L. Leegaard (Copenhagen); N. Bookidis (Corinth); R. Hannah, S. Reeves (Dunedin); M. C. Lentini, R. Panvini (Gela); J. Chamay (Geneva); S. Klinger (Haifa); T. Berg (Hamburg); H. Pflug (Heidelberg); S. Gray (Hobart); V. Paul-Zinserling (Jena); M. Maas (Karlsruhe); R. Halbertina (Leiden); K. Lowe, D. Williams (London); M. Le Payer (Lyon); J. Stofflet (Madison, Wisc.); S. Buckley, K. Camp (Merion, Pa.); V. Brinkmann, M. Bentz, S. Moraw (Munich); S. Matheson (New Haven, Conn.); G. Max Bernheimer, D. von Bothmer, J. R. Mertens, C. Picon (New York); S. Hadjisavvas, V. Karageorghis (Nicosia); M. Vickers (Oxford); E. Giorgianni (Palermo); M. Denoyelle, A. Kardianou (Paris); J. Michael Padgett (Princeton, N.J.); G. Deschênes-Wagner (Québec); S. Schmidt (Regensburg); G. Andreassi (Taranto); B. von Freytag gen. Löringhoff (Tübingen); B. Kratzmüller, E. Trinkl, G. Wlach, A. Bernhard-Wälcher (Vienna); and I. Wehgartner (Würzburg). I also wish to thank Donna Kurtz and Thomas Mannack for facilitating use of the Beazley Archive; Dietrich von Bothmer for access to his photographic archive, as well as other favors; Leslie Ashbrook for help with proofreading; Stefan Schmidt, for kindly sharing preliminary versions of his work on lekythoi; Michael Padgett and Jenifer Neils for numerous references; and Nils Slater, for quickly sending copies of his work on Aristophanes. There are certainly others whom I have forgotten to mention, but I hope they will forgive my oversight, for I do appreciate their help.

Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York enabled me to write this book, and to both I am deeply grateful for their support. I also wish to thank the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and the Department of Classics at Princeton University for their Gastfreundschaft. While in Athens as an Elizabeth G. Whitehead Visiting Professor, I had the chance to develop many of my ideas in a seminar for the students on white-ground lekythoi. To the participants I wish to express my great appreciation for their help in refining my arguments. The College of William and Mary provided a semester research grant and book subsidy, as well as a home base to finish this project, all of which I gratefully acknowledge, and I am likewise indebted to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation for financial help with the cost of publication.

A special thanks goes to Alan Shapiro and the referees for their very helpful comments upon reading an earlier draft of this monograph. Alan very kindly helped procure this book for the series Cambridge Studies in Classical Art and Iconography, and I thank both him and Beatrice Rehl, senior editor at Cambridge University Press, for their help and support in seeing this book successfully through press.
This volume is dedicated to two people. The first is Anna Shaw Benjamin, the teacher who ignited my interest in archaeology. Without her encouragement at a very early stage I might never have become a classical archaeologist. She taught me how to consider broad questions using an interdisciplinary approach, a modus operandi in which she was far ahead of her time. The second is Mary B. Moore, my friend and colleague at the Agora in Athens and on the editorial committee of the Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. I have learned much from Mary over the years, both through conversation and by example, for her scholarship, among its many excellent qualities, always demonstrates the highest degree of accuracy and clarity. This is an attempt to say thank you to both for their enthusiastic, unfailing support and help over the years.

J.H.O.
Williamsburg, Virginia
October 1, 2002
PICTURING DEATH IN CLASSICAL ATHENS