THE IMAGERY OF THE ATHENIAN SYMPOSIUM

The late sixth and early fifth centuries BC were a dynamic time in the history of the symposium, and hundreds of vase paintings from this period show people engaged in sympotic activities. Most scholars have understood these images as illustrations of contemporary Athenian practices, but such an interpretation cannot account for the enormous variety of settings, costumes, and participants in the images, nor is it easily reconciled with recent methodological developments in the study of vase painting. Noting the close link between the symposium and the polis in ancient thought, this book approaches the images not as documents of contemporary sympotic practice but as vehicles for exploring what it meant to be a Greek community. It argues that many of the images depict imagined ancestral symposia and that they thus shed new light on how the Athenians envisioned the history of the symposium and its importance to their city.

Kathryn Topper is Assistant Professor of Classics at the University of Washington. She has held fellowships from the Center for Hellenic Studies, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and the American School of Classical Studies at Athens. Her articles have appeared in the Journal of Hellenic Studies, the American Journal of Archaeology, and Hesperia.
THE IMAGERY OF THE ATHENIAN SYMPOSIUM

KATHRYN TOPPER

University of Washington, Seattle
## CONTENTS

- **Illustrations**
- **Acknowledgments**
- **Introduction: Vase Painting and the Symposium in Athens**
- **1 Ancient Visions of the Sympotic Past**
- **2 Symposia of the Primitive**
- **3 Eros, Service, and the Oinochoe**
- **4 The Symposium and Its Foreign Pasts**
- **5 Female Symposiasts and the Limits of Civilization**
- **6 Symposia of the Present?**
- **Conclusion: Vase Painting and the Sympotic Past**
- **Notes**
- **Bibliography**
- **Index**
ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Attic red-figure psykter, Kleophrades Painter. Republic of Italy, Ministry of Culture, Department of Archaeology L 2007.42.3. 


3. Corinthian black-figure column krater (Eurytios krater). Paris, Musée du Louvre E 635.


### Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Attic red-figure kylix, Ashby Painter.</td>
<td>London, British Museum E 64.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and 17.</td>
<td>Attic red-figure head kantharos, Toronto Class.</td>
<td>London, British Museum E 786.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Attic black-figure skyphos.</td>
<td>Athens, Agora Museum P 32413.</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Attic black-figure stamnos, Michigan Painter.</td>
<td>Würzburg, Universität, Martin von Wagner Museum L 326.</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Attic red-figure kylix, Oltos.</td>
<td>Compiègne, Musée Antoine Vivenel 1093.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Attic red-figure kylix, Oltos.</td>
<td>Tarquinia, Museo Archeologico RC 6848.</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 and 25.</td>
<td>Attic black-figure amphora.</td>
<td>Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum GR.27.1864.</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Attic red-figure kylix, Hegesiboulos Painter.</td>
<td>New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 07.286.47.</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Attic red-figure kylix, Euaion Painter.</td>
<td>Geneva, Musée d’art et d’histoire 10519.</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Attic red-figure kylix, Painter of Bologna 417.</td>
<td>Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 16552.</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Tomb of the Diver, east wall.</td>
<td>Paestum, Museo Archeologico Nazionale.</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 and 33.</td>
<td>Attic red-figure kylix.</td>
<td>London, British Museum 1895.10–27.2.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Attic red-figure kylix fragment, Stieglitz Painter.</td>
<td>Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr College P.955.</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
37. Attic red-figure kylix, Tarquinia Painter. Aberdeen, University 748. 99
38. Attic black-figure amphora, Manner of the Mastos Painter. Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek 1562. 103
40. Attic red-figure kylix tondo, Thalia Painter. Berlin, Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen V.I.3251. 110
42. Attic red-figure skyphos. Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection 86.AE.265. 113
43. Late Corinthian amphora, Tydeus Painter. Paris, Musée du Louvre E 640. 116
44. Apulian red-figure stamnos, Ariadne Painter. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 00.349a. 117
45. Attic red-figure psykter, Euphronios. St. Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum B 1650. 119
46. Attic red-figure hydria, Phintias. Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek 2421. 121
49. Attic red-figure kylix, Triptolemos Painter. Berlin, Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen F 2286. 125
50 and 51. Attic red-figure kylix, Ashby Painter. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 1993.11.5. 126
53. Attic red-figure bell krater (fragment), Nausicaa Painter. Paris, Musée du Louvre G 345. 129
54. Attic white-ground lekythos. London, Market, Sotheby's. 131
55. Attic red-figure kylix tondo, Foundry Painter. Kassel, Antikensammlung T 664. 137
56. Attic red-figure kylix tondo. Athens, National Archaeological Museum 1357. 138
Illustrations

57. Attic red-figure kylix tondo, Antiphon Painter. Berlin, Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen F 2303. 139
58. Attic red-figure kylix, Nikosthenes Painter. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum GR.1.1927. 140
59. Attic red-figure kylix tondo, Near Thorvaldsen Group. Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 80565. 141
60. Attic red-figure stamnos, Smikros. Brussels, Musées Royaux d'art et d'histoire A 717. 148
61. Attic red-figure calyx krater, Euphronios. Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek 8935. 149
62 and 63. Attic red-figure volute krater, Euthymides. Aidone, Museo Archeologico 58.2382. 151
This book has benefited from the advice and generosity of many people, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge them here. My greatest debt is to Gloria Ferrari Pinney, who supported the project from its earliest stages, providing feedback on drafts and discussing ideas with me over the course of several years; thanks are hardly adequate. A second person whose influence is difficult to measure is Guy Hedreen, who commented on portions of the manuscript and shared his own work-in-progress with me, and whose input has more than once changed the course of my thinking. At Harvard University, where the book originated as a dissertation, I thank the Department of the Classics and especially my readers, Albert Henrichs and Gregory Nagy. I have been exceptionally fortunate at the University of Washington to find colleagues who make it a pleasure to come to work each day, and I am grateful to all of them for their advice and support. I wish in particular to thank Alain Gowing, who helped secure funds for the illustrations, and Douglas Machle, who processed payments to a number of museums.

I carried out the early research for this project at the libraries of Harvard University, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, and Bryn Mawr College, and I thank the librarians at each of those institutions, as well as those at the University of Washington, for their assistance. My research in Athens between 2003 and 2005 was supported by fellowships from Harvard University, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation; more recently, the Kress Foundation and the Department of Classics at the University of
Acknowledgments

Washington generously granted funds to cover the illustration program. For advice about acquiring photographs or for answering questions about specific objects, I thank Carla Antonaccio, Ioanna Damanaki, John Fappas, Hallie Franks, Melissa Haynes, Jenifer Neils, Victoria Sabetai, Tyler Jo Smith, and the staff at the Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies.

At Cambridge University Press, I am grateful to Beatrice Rehl, Amanda Smith, and Isabella Vitti for their help in seeing the project through to completion. Thanks are also due to the anonymous readers, especially one reader whose comments made me think more broadly about certain implications of my arguments. An early version of Chapters 1 and 2 appeared in the *American Journal of Archaeology* (113.1) as “Primitive Life and the Construction of the Symptotic Past in Athenian Vase Painting,” and I thank the journal for the permission to print a revised version of that text here. For her role in the copyediting and production process, I thank Peggy Rote at Aptara, Inc.

Everyone who has undertaken a project of this size knows that there are people who were instrumental to its completion but whose influence is difficult to describe concisely. These are people who have at various times offered friendship, humor, and encouragement, and who occasionally change the way one sees the world. I end, then, by thanking Ruby Blondell, Melissa Haynes, Deborah Kamen, Sarah Levin-Richardson, David Petrain, Laurialan Reitzammer, Laurie Sweet, Jarrett Welsh, and my family.