Stamnoi

61. Attic Stamnos, 24.13
Figs. 86–87

Shape and ornament: Stamnos, with sharply inclined, slightly curving handles. Mouth in two degrees. Ridge at juncture of neck and body. Handles cylindrical. Fillet with ridge in centre at juncture of body and torus foot. Interior completely glazed. Egg pattern on mouth. Shoulder tongues framed by reserved line above, reserved and glaze line below. Figural zone provided with reserved ground-line. Lower edge of foot reserved.

Subject: A: Hermes conducting two goddesses. 1: goddess in chiton and mantle, holds dove, facing right. 2: goddess in chiton and mantle, holds sceptre, facing right. 3: Hermes in chitoniskos, chlamys, winged boots, and petasos, holding kerykeion, walking right, head turned left.

B: woman with two attendants. 1: woman in chiton, mantle, and fillet, facing right. 2: woman in peplos and mantle, holds mirror, facing right, head turned to left. 3: woman in chiton, mantle and fillet, facing left.

The presence of Hermes on side A makes it clear that this should be understood as a scene from the broader subject of the Judgment of Paris, the conducting of the goddesses to Mt. Ida to be judged by the Trojan prince. The identification of the subject is complicated by the appearance of only two goddesses with Hermes. As the top of the staff held by A:2 is restored, only its thickness and the internal lines suggesting a faceted surface indicate that it is a sceptre rather than a spear. Beazley and Clairmont took it as a sceptre, and therefore identified her as Athena. Raab (1972, 89–90, 171), in recognition of the damage, thought it more likely a sceptre. Accordingly, the figure should be Hera, not Athena. The dove held by A:1 is paralleled as an attribute of Aphrodite in depictions of the Judgment on Attic and south Italian vases (Raab 1972, 85; LIMC VII, s.v. Parides iudicum, pl. 127, no. 108). Without any of the normal attributes, A:1 is difficult to identify as Athena, who therefore is absent.

The woman at the centre of the second side, B:2, was identified by Clairmont as Aphrodite in the company of two Horai. She is sometimes shown in this fashion at the Judgment, preening, accompanied by attendants (compare LIMC VII, s.v. Parides iudicum, pl. 109, no. 20). This visual presentation of the goddess here is paralleled in Sophokles’ satyr play on the Judgment of Paris, in which Aphrodite’s concern with her beauty, as with B:2, is embodied in the motif of the mirror [Fr. 361 P]. Clairmont speculated that B:3, as a Hora, might hold a piece of fruit, but damage to the vase in this area makes it impossible to determine what, if anything, was held in the left hand. Alternately, the woman preening herself at the centre of B is the mortal pendant to the beauteous goddesses, and the visual ellipsis of the full procession on side A is employed to balance both sides of the vase with three-figure compositions.

Attribution and date: By Beazley to the Tyszkie-wicz Painter; 480–70 B.C.

Dimensions and condition: Height: 37.4 cm. Width: 31.5 cm. Diameter of mouth: 21.7 cm. Diameter of foot: 14.7 cm. Broken and repaired, with repainting along joins. Repainted: A: 1: chin, right arm and wrist, left hand, and chest to left of dove. 2: lower neck, top of right shoulder,
Subject: Continuous frieze of women in a procession. A: 1 [underneath left handle]: woman in chiton and mantle, with fillet, facing right. 2: woman in chiton, mantle, and fillet, holding skyphos, walking right. 3: woman in chiton, mantle, fillet, and wreath, holding parasol (skiadeion), walking right, head turned left. 4: woman in chiton, mantle, and wreath, holding skyphos, walking right. B: 1: woman in chiton, mantle, and fillet, walking left, head turned right. 2: woman in chiton, mantle, and sakkos, with fillet and wreath, holding skyphos, facing right, in front of chair (klismos). 3: woman in chiton, mantle, and wreath, playing aulos, walking right.

The vase is one of a group referred to as Lenaia vases because of their initial association (Frickenhaus 1912) with that Dionysian cult, although whether they depict events of that cult or of the same god's Anthesteria is a matter of long dispute (Hamilton 2003). The Villa Giulia Painter produced a series of stamnoi, including the Detroit vase, which are not only included in this group, but are all very close in composition and iconography: Boston 90.155, Louvre G408, and Florence 4005. The women on these stamnoi have attributes, skyphoi, krotala (castanets) and aulos (double flutes), consistent with the celebrations of Dionysian cult. And although the women on the Detroit vase are dressed in a manner appropriate to Athenian women, one (A:4), she playing the krotala, has her hair loose, in the manner of a maenad. All this is consistent with Athenian women acting the parts of maenads in the worship of Dionysos, and is supported by another stamnoi by the Villa Giulia Painter, depicting the women with the same attributes in the presence of an image of the god: Louvre C 10762, and Boston 90.155.

The depiction of the procession on the Detroit vase is erratic: the musicians play, but the other figures move left or right, and some stand still. As Maurizio (2001, 29–32) points out, the processions identified with the Anthesteria were markedly informal and practiced in smaller social units, in contrast with