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TURNING THE CUP: THEMATIC BALANCE IN THE GREEK SYMPOSIUM

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Abstract

The concept of “nothing in excess” was an important one in ancient Greek life. The guiding principle of moderation and/or balance appears in poetry from the 7th to the 5th centuries BCE and has been extensively explored by scholars. My research project adds to this scholarly work by considering for the first time the relationship between moderation and the visual. That is, I explore whether and how this key Greek notion was expressed in the images that appear on pottery of the time period. More specifically, I focus on pottery used in the symposium, a politically-charged aristocratic male drinking party, and examine objects from the University of Arkansas ancient Greek pottery collection. Using these sympotic containers, I intend to demonstrate that the same critical themes of balance and moderation are expressed as visual counterparts to the poetic tropes. In this project, I examine how ancient painters used contrasting themes on opposite sides of a vessel to express the importance of choosing a moderate path. These contrasts included male/female, civilized/barbarian, and upper/lower class comparisons. In this grouping I also consider bilingual vases, so called for their similar scenes on either side, with one red-figure and the other black-figure. These pots reflect a balance in the artistic style itself through the use of opposite methods. This relationship is similar to the communication of the importance of physical balance found in other containers.

Introduction

The iconic Greek phrase “μηδεν αχαν,” which translates as “nothing in excess,” was inscribed in antiquity over the entrance to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi and represents the importance of moderation in ancient Greek life (Plato, *Charmides* 165a). Several common terms in the ancient Greek language were used to define the virtue of moderation, such as *metrios*, meaning moderate or of a middle condition, *to metron*, meaning the mean between two extremes, and *mesos*, defined as middling, moderate, or midway (LSJ 436, 442). Leslie Kurke, Ian Morris, and others have focused on moderation and its relationship to the poetry of the symposium. I, however, reframe the issue by focusing instead on the pottery, which was as integral to the symposium as the poetry performed there, as well as the interconnection between the concepts of moderation and balance. I suggest that these two notions were intertwined in the Greek mind, for to be a moderate man meant to negotiate a careful balance between undesirable extremes in everyday life. My work concentrates specifically on the messages of balance and moderation in the figural scenes depicted on the pottery used in the late archaic *symposium* (c. 520-480 BCE), a politically charged aristocratic male drinking party. In this context,

I examine how the aristocrats received these messages by means of the method of thematic balance on the pot itself.

Messages of Moderation in the Symposium

The ancient Greek symposium, or drinking party, was an aristocratic adult male gathering that took place after dinner (Murray 6). It was an inherently private affair, taking place in the *andron*, or men’s room, of a private house with between 14 and 30 men. The only women permitted were the *hetairai*, female “companions” who entertained the drinkers (Neer 106). The entire event was highly ritualized, beginning with the pouring of *spondai*, or libations, to Zeus and the Olympian gods, to the Heroes of old, and to Zeus Soter, or Zeus the Savior, as a reminder of the religious nature of the gathering (Lissarrague 1990a, 25-26). Afterwards, the obligatory mixing of water and wine took place, an important custom which identified the drinkers as true Greeks. Only barbarians drank their wine neat, disrespectful as they were of its power (Murray 6). The *symposiarch*, the master of the party, chose the ratio of water to wine as well as the number of *kraters*, the large vessels used to mix the liquids, which the drinkers consumed. The mixture varied from 3:1 to 5:3 or 3:2, but, in general, the wine was diluted by at least half. Once the wine was ready, the participants reclined on large *klinai*, or couches, with two or three men on each (Boardman 126). Numerous entertainers were usually present, including acrobats, flute-girls, and the above-mentioned *hetairai* (Jones 185-198).

The symposium was an important affair in the life of an Athenian aristocratic male. The small group of attendees at each event often created friendships and, perhaps more importantly, political alliances. The act of sharing a cup with companions generated bonds among group members; it was a symbol of both political unity and cultural identity (Davidson 1997, 40). It was also a time for reinforcing proper codes of behavior, such as the importance of living a moderate lifestyle. An aspiring politician was expected to be present and to partake of the available drink without consuming to excess. A “drink-lover” was defined according to the length of his periods of drinking as well as the chronic nature of his condition. In the 5th century BCE, the Athenian statesman Antiphon advised those seeking political office “to avoid being tagged a ‘drink-lover’ and being thought to neglect your affairs overcome by wine” (Davidson 1997, 150-151). Too much drink caused negligence and political idleness. The other extreme, that of drinking only water, was no better: a “water-drinker” was considered anti-social, unsympathetic, and a dispassionate speaker. As Cratinus (5th century BCE) stated in his play the *Wine-flask*, “A water drinker would never give birth

to anything ingenious” (Davidson 1997, 151). Thus, moderate behavior in the symposium was not achieved through complete abstinence from wine and pleasure but rather through a careful balance of extremes.

The significance of balance and moderation was transmitted to participants of the symposium in various ways. Lyric verse composed by the poet Theognis (6th century BCE) for performance during the drinking party overtly communicates the notion (translation and emphasis mine throughout unless otherwise noted):

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ, μέτρον γὰρ ἔχω μελιθεός οἴνου,
 ὕπνου λυσικάκου μνήσομαι οἴκαδ' ἰών.
 ἦκω δ' ὡς οἴνος χαριέστατος ἀνδρὶ πεπόσθαι·
 οὔτε τι γὰρ νήφων οὔτε λίην μεθύων·
 ὃς δ' ἂν ὑπερβάλλῃ πόσιος μέτρον, οὐκέτι κείνος
 τῆς αὐτοῦ γλώσσης καρτερὸς οὐδὲ νόου...
 ...ἀλλὰ σὺ ταῦτα

γινώσκων μὴ πῖν' οἴνον ὑπερβολὰδην...

Moreover I, for I have the proper measure of honey-sweet wine,
 will think of evil-ending sleep going homeward.
 But I have reached the point when the most pleasing wine has been
 drunk by men;
 being not at all sober nor being excessively drunk;
 but whoever exceeds the proper measure of drinking, he no longer
 is master of his tongue nor mind...
 but you understanding these things
 do not drink wine excessively...(475-487)

Poetry, however, was not the only medium used; I propose that the images on vessels central to the sympotic process were utilized as well. With a few exceptions, I analyze various images appearing on *hydriai* (sing. *hydria*) used for holding water, *amphorai* (sing. *amphora*) used for storing and holding wine, kraters for mixing the two together, and *kylikes* (sing. *kylix*), cups for drinking the mixed wine. The scenes I study appear both in the interior of the kylix, known as the *tondo*, and on the exteriors of the various vessels, with pictures painted in either red-on-black, called *red-figure*, or black-on-red, called *black-figure* (Clark et al. 72, 138). In this work, I examine how ancient painters used contrasting themes on opposite sides of a vessel to express the importance of making moderate choices. These contrasts include male / female, civilized / barbarian, and upper / lower class distinctions. In this grouping, I also consider *bilingual* vases (Clark et al. 72), containers with a red-figure image on one side and a black-figure painting on the other. These pots, painted with opposite methods, reflect a balance in the artistic style itself.

In the 6th century BCE, the pre-Socratic philosopher Thales lived in the city of Miletus in Asia Minor. He was one of the Seven Sages of ancient Greek tradition, and Aristotle considered him the first true Greek philosopher (*Metaphysics* A 983b18). In his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, written in the 3rd century CE, Diogenes

Laertius attributed to Thales (via the writer Hermippus from the 4th century BCE) the statement:

τριῶν τούτων ἔνεκα χάριν ἔχειν τῇ Τύχῃ·
 πρῶτον μὲν ὅτι ἄνθρωπος ἐγενόμενος καὶ οὐ θηρίον,
 εἶτα ὅτι ἀνὴρ καὶ οὐ γυνή,
 τρίτον ὅτι Ἕλληνας καὶ οὐ βάρβαρος.

that because of three things he gave thanks to Fortune;
 first that he was born a human and not a beast,
 next that [he was born] a man and not a woman,
 third that [he was born] a Greek and not a barbarian (1.33).

Here is concrete evidence of the contrast between what is “ideal” and what is “other” from an author contemporary with the corpus of pots under consideration here. On one side is a human Greek male; on the other is a beast, a woman, a barbarian. Thus, it is not a surprise that through these same terms the messages of balance and moderation were often expressed on sympotic pottery. I suggest that a second popular method of expressing this contrast was by using thematic balance, where one side of the pot expressed the Athenian ideal and the opposite side the unwelcome “other.”

Thematic Balance: Man vs. Beast

The beastly “other” was often represented by the satyrs, the wine-loving followers of Dionysus. Indeed, painters often used satyrs as examples of immoderate behavior, and they are one of the most popular subjects of Greek vase painting, being found in mythological and sympotic scenes and as the companions and servants of Dionysus (Walsh 16). The ears and tail of a donkey, a snub nose, a bald forehead, a bushy beard, and a large, erect penis characterize these half-man, half-animal beings (Mitchell 156). Although in some instances satyrs are depicted as playful and good-natured, the great shortcomings of the animalistic creature make the satyr a common foil for the Athenian male.

Along with drunkenness and its accompanying idleness, satyrs add unquenchable lust to the list of shortcomings invited by excessive drink. François Lissarrague states, “Satyrs are characterized by an exuberant, excessive, and inexhaustible sexual energy, comparable only to their appetite for wine” (1990b, 65). In contrast to the form of these beasts, Aristophanes describes the ideal youth in the *Clouds*:

ἔξεις ἀεὶ
 στήθος λιπαρρόν, χροῖάν λαμπράν,
 ὦμους μεγάλους, γλώτταν βαιάν,
 πυγὴν μεγάλην, μόσθην μικράν.

You will always have
 a shining chest, radiant skin,
 large shoulders, a humble tongue,
 a large ass, a small penis (1011-1014).

While surely a joke of the comic poet, this poem nonetheless indicates the ideology that to have the enormous penis of a satyr was not in accordance with ideal aristocratic qualities. In

most Greek art, the male penis is short, thin, and straight, with a scrotum of an average size (Dover 125-35). Thus, the enlarged phallus, almost always exaggerated, becomes the most obvious representation of the satyr's licentious and drunken nature. The ithyphallic satyr becomes a laughable creature, not a model one. The purpose of the satyr was to imitate and distort the acts of humans, and therefore for a human to act like a satyr was disgraceful.

A red-figure krater by the Nikoxenos Painter (525-490 BCE) is a visual manifestation of Thales' first reason to be thankful to Fortune (Figure 1; *ARV²* 221.14, Mitchell 187). On side B (the lower in my image), athletes are training for the pentathlon. From right to left, there are a trainer, two boxers, an *akontist* (javelin thrower), an *auletes* (flute player), another *akontist*, a *diskobolos* (discus thrower), another *auletes*, and a runner (Mitchell 188). On side A, a parallel scene is composed entirely of satyrs. The beasts are practicing the discus, javelin, long jump, and boxing. There are also two trainers and a flute player. Side A is a parody of B, and reading the two together leaves the impression that the ideal Greek male should be strong, capable, and athletic, necessary traits in sport and in battle. The human trainers each hold the forked stick symbolic of their position; among the satyr athletes, the trainers are carrying around giant dildos, evidence of their sexual nature. Further, the satyrs train with full erections, something never shown in the painting of an average male athlete. In fact, the penis of an athlete is usually tied down with what is known as a *kynodesme* in order to prevent erections and provide comfort during competitions (Mitchell 188).



Figure 1 Krater, Attic RF; 525-490 BCE

Satyrs were a beastly foil for the ideal Athenian aristocrat. All knew their voracious appetite for wine and sex. Thus, their presence in the symposium was common, and their appearance on this krater is informative. The krater itself announces and reinforces the message that it is necessary first to mix water and wine to the proper proportion in the krater before consumption can occur. If anyone drinks too soon, before a balanced mixture is ready, he may quickly transform from the ideal male Greek on the first side of the krater to the sex-hungry satyr on the opposite side. Each time he looks at the krater, the reveler is able to see either what he ideally should be or what he may become if he is unable to control his habits.

I find this same contrast on an Attic red-figure kylix from 500-490 BCE. On one side of the kylix, a drunken youth rides on top of an inflated wineskin, as if it were a horse, while blowing

into a drinking horn. The normative image, of which this youth is a parody, is on the opposite side of the cup (Figure 2; *ARV²* 50.187; Mitchell 180). Here, a youthful warrior is departing for battle. A large shield lies near his feet, and he blows into a war trumpet to announce the departure. Again, the differences between the desired and the overindulgent are clear. The focus is living a lifestyle pleasing to the city. With too much wine, the drinker becomes a laughingstock, spending his time blowing into drinking horns and sitting on wineskins instead of marching to war for his city. In the end, an aristocrat who acts in this manner is no better than an uncivilized barbarian or satyr, his laziness and passivity leaving his city vulnerable to the physical and moral attack of external enemies.

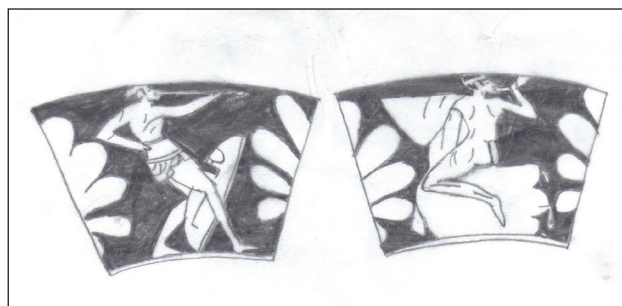


Figure 2 Cup, Attic RF; 500-490 BCE

Thematic Balance: Man vs. Woman/ Greek vs. Barbarian

The second reason for Thales' thankfulness was that he was "a man and not a woman." Women joined satyrs in their inferior "otherness." From the Greek poet Hesiod onward, men believed women to be polluted both morally and physically (*Works and Days* 753-755, Carson 136). Indeed, it was generally accepted that women were more susceptible to their desires than men and felt no need to control themselves. Beyond this sexual excess, men also feared the "passivity" of behaving in a womanish manner. Kenneth Dover demonstrated that in ancient Greek culture the penetrated sexual partner was considered the weaker one. This place was usually regulated to woman and slaves, while the male confirmed his power as the penetrator (100-102). Beyond this, however, for a male to act in a passive way during sexual relations was to give up his masculine status and denigrate himself to the inferior female (Skinner 14). Thus, because of this passive nature, women were not capable of achieving the same ideal as active men were. For a man to be compared to a woman was therefore degrading and suggested a moral and physical pollution that would lead to the loss of political power.

A red-figure *pelike* (pl. *pelikai*), 475-425 BCE, in the University of Arkansas collection demonstrates the distinction between male and female (Figure 3; Arkansas 57-24-21, *ARV²* 1063.1). A *pelike* was a jar used mostly for storing oil and wine for later use (Clark et al. 127). In general, it was wide-mouthed and continuously round from its neck to its foot, and it had two vertical handles. Side A of the University of Arkansas vessel shows two mounted figures with leather cuirasses, linen skirts, and war helmets riding to the right. Sir John Beazley identified these riders as Amazon warriors due to their similarity to figures on other pots

with inscribed Amazonian names (Maule 89). On the opposite side of the pelike are three beardless, cloaked Athenian males deep in conversation. The figure on the far left holds a staff and is facing the other two, while the one on the far right gestures with his hand for emphasis. The center figure has his arms entirely within his cloak and seems to be listening to the other two talk.



Figure 3 a-b: Pelike, Attic RF; 475-425 BCE (University of Arkansas Collections Museum Number 57-24-21, photographed by the author)

I suggest that the sympotic drinker would have recognized both a male-female and a Greek-barbarian opposition on this vessel. The actions and dress of the figures on each side indicate their different roles. The Amazons are warlike, barbaric women, ready for battle. They rush in on their horses, emphasizing action and physicality over consideration and assessment. They are women playing the active role of men, making them innately strange. This role upsets the balance between the sexes in the social and political landscape of the Athenians. The Athenians on the other side, in contrast, wear their normal cloaks, stand tall, and appear deep in conversation. This vessel suggests that, while certainly capable in battle, the Athenian male had to be thoughtful of all the possibilities and ramifications of a situation as well. Interestingly, the helmets of the Amazons are Attic in origin (Maule 89), which suggests that it is the noble Athenians who influence the barbaric other, not the other way around. This is a subtle message of reassurance to the viewer of the certain victory of the Athenians over any enemy. In the context of the symposium, the Athenian aristocrats represent a gathering filled with intellectual exchanges, songs, and entertainment. The Amazons, on the other hand, are a warning against immoderate behavior. The drunken one himself wages a war on the ideals of the city, just as the Amazons once did (Plutarch, *Theseus* 19), opens himself to the moral and physical penetration innate to women and pathics.

The images on the neck of a red-figure krater by Euthymides (510-490 BCE) again involve a contrast with Amazons (Figure 4a-b; *ARV²* 28.10; Neer 109). On side A is a battle between the Greeks and the Amazons. Herakles, appearing in the middle of the battle wearing his signature lion skin, is fighting on the side of the

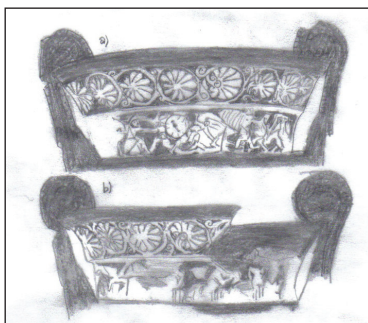


Figure 4 a-b: Krater, Attic RF; 510-490 BCE

Greeks. Other one-on-one battles occur around him between Greek hoplites and Amazonian warrior women. On the opposite side of the vessel, there is a very different scene: a relaxed symposium. Six men are reclining on a patterned mat, each with a pillow on which to rest his elbow. On the far left, the word *khairē*, “rejoice,” appears above two drinkers raising their cups.

The most obvious contrast on this vessel is between the Amazons on one side and the sophisticated Greeks on the other side. One is unsettling, one normative, as shown in Figure 4a-b. I further suggest that each side represents a certain aspect of the battle between the exemplary Greek and unacceptable barbarian influences. The physical battle on side A is the clearer conflict. Warriors from each side are fighting to the death to see who the winner will be. Herakles, one of the most famous Greek heroes, symbolizes all that is Greek. In the image, he has just knocked down an Amazon warrior and is about to finish her off. Thus, assurance is given regarding the mastery of the Greek over the barbarian and the male over the female.

On the opposite side, there is a second battle, but this is one of moderation rather than of arms. The two men on the far left are wearing Lydian hats, representing barbaric influences in the symposium. Again we see a battle between what is Greek and what is “other.” It is correct for the Athenian aristocrat to act properly, to drink moderately, and not to overindulge. The positive qualities of the noble should overcome the desires of the barbarian, just as Herakles overcomes the Amazon. The word “rejoice” is a call to drink and to enjoy the symposium, but the Lydians beneath it serve as a reminder not to overdo and through intoxication resemble a barbarian.

A debated red-figure *oinochoe* (pl. *oinochoai*) from c. 466 BCE provides another picture of the Greek-barbarian contrast (Figures 5a-b; Hamburg 1981.173; Neer 166). An *oinochoe*, which translates as “wine-pouring vessel,” was a pitcher or jug used for serving wine in the symposium (Clark et al. 118). Here, a single figure stands on either side: side A shows a Greek warrior and side B a barbarian. The Greek is completely nude except for a cloak tied around his neck and is striding quickly to the right. In his right hand he holds his erect penis, while he stretches out his left hand towards the barbarian on the opposite side. The barbarian has a large beard, is wearing tight, patterned eastern clothing, and has a quiver hanging from his arm. He is bent over, with his buttocks spread toward the approaching Greek, and holds his hands over

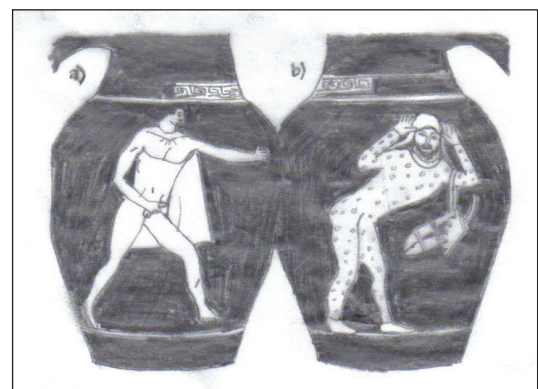


Figure 5 a-b: Oinochoe, Attic RF; c. 466 BCE

his head in a gesture of surrender or surprise. He faces outward as if addressing the external viewer. The barbarian's words inscribed between the two figures, *Eurumedon eim[i] kuba[de] esteka*, "I am Eurymedon; I stand bent over" (Mitchell 85), appropriately describe his position.

Multiple interpretations of this vessel are possible (Neer 164, Davidson 1997, 170, Dover 100-102). I, however, will focus on the depictions as another example of the triumph of the Greek over the barbarian. Here, the Greek warrior is the active figure and the barbarian the passive one. The Greek is the powerful, idealized penetrator, the barbarian the weak, effeminate penetrated. The barbarian is thus as much an example of effeminate weakness as of failure in battle. Again we have an example of the power of the active over the passive. The name of the barbarian, Eurymedon, provides more information about who he is. His name can be broken into two ancient Greek words: *eurus*, meaning "wide," and *Medos*, a term referring to the Persians (LSJ 233). Thus, the name is play on words, designating the barbarian as a "wide (ass) Persian," whose stance is a visual representation of his name (Mitchell 86). I see the oinochoe, then, as a specific representation of the cultural pride achieved due to the triumph of the strong, masculine Greeks over the invading passive Persians, as well as an amusing dirty joke.

There is still more here, however, when we consider the immediate historical context. At the time of the vase's production, the Athenians were at the height of their power after defeating the great threat posed by the Persian barbarians. Indeed, between 468 and 465 BCE, the Greeks won a great victory over the Persians at the mouth of the river Eurymedon in Pamphylia (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.100; Mitchell 85). At this site, both land and sea battles took place at the same time, with the Greeks winning on both fronts and destroying over 200 boats. This vase is a celebration of that victory, and any aristocrat who had fought in the battle certainly would have approved of the production of this vase and the messages it sends. One on side of the vessel is a strong, masculine, ideal Greek, while on the other is a passive, cowardly Persian. As wine was poured into his kylix from this pitcher, the images the Greek man saw would remind him of the victory and the virtues by which that victory was achieved. Moderation will lead to victory in both war and politics, while overconsumption could result in the loss of one's elite status and would have resulted in defeat against the Persians in that great battle.

Related to the concept of foreign barbarianism is the institution of slavery in Athens. The notion that it was not right for Greeks to enslave other Greeks became established very early. Indeed, the members of the Delphic *amphictiony*, or league to defend the sanctuary, in their first meeting swore not to remove the members of any state in their federation from their city (Aeschines, "On the Embassy" 115). Later, Herodotus stated that the people of Methymna on Lesbos enslaved the citizens of Arisba, even though they were of common ancestry, which suggests how unusual a practice this was (*Histories* 1.151). Indeed, civil war between Greek city-states as a rule led to the exile or execution of the defeated, not their sale into slavery (Garlon 13). Even slavery due to debts became rare in Greek cities. Instead, it was decided that only non-Greek barbarians were "naturally" fitted for a life of

servitude to their Athenian masters (Garlon 120). By the time of Plato and Aristotle, the idea was fully entrenched. Plato stated that other Greeks should not be enslaved in wars (*Republic* 5.471a), and Aristotle agreed with the concept of the "natural" slavery of barbarians (*Politics* 1).

Thematic Balance: Master vs. Slaves

Due to the number of slaves in the Athenian community, it is not surprising to find depictions on sympotic ware of slaves performing their duties in the symposium. Working slaves on one side of a vessel often contrast the upper-class Athenian revelers on the other. A red-figure *stamnos*, an alternative to the krater for mixing wine (Clark et al. 146), signed by the painter Smikros in the late 6th century BCE provides an example of this contrast (Figure 6a-b; *ARI*² 20.1; Neer 88). On side A is a typical Athenian symposium. Each male participant reclines on his couch while a hetaira attends to his entertainment. On the opposite side, two male slaves make sure the supply of wine does not run dry. Each slave has an amphora from which he pours wine into a large central krater. Around the krater are various other sympotic vessels used for serving wine. There is a similar juxtaposition on a red-figure krater (Figure 7a-b; *ARI*² 1619.3; Neer 112-144) from c. 500 BCE. Painted by Euphronios, this krater also shows a fancy symposium on one side and youthful slaves fetching wine on the other.



Figure 6 a-b: Stamnos, Attic RF; 510-500 BCE

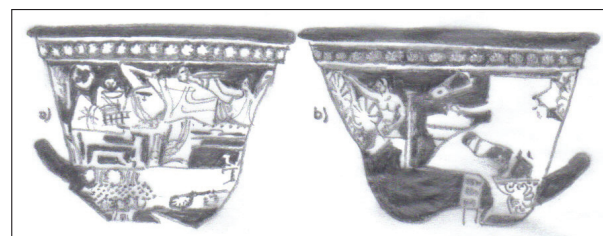


Figure 7 a-b: Krater, Attic RF; c. 500 BCE

On both vessels we see a thematic balance between the citizen Greek and the enslaved foreigner. As slaves were nominally barbarians and barbarians were "natural" slaves, the Athenian aristocrat identified himself with the members of the symposium and saw his foil in the working slaves. As such, he would remember the traits and ideals that distinguished him as a Greek elite. The slave may have fallen into the class of the sexually passive, just as women did, and, indeed, elites commonly used their young slaves as sexual objects (Davidson 2007, 555). Thus,

the image of the slaves was also a reminder of the weakness and effeminacy associated with the slave class, traits a citizen male did not want associated with himself.

Bilingual Vases

Painters set up a balance of contrasting themes, however, not only through showing the ideal on one side and the “other” on the opposite, but also in the case of bilingual vases, a method which is used only in the last quarter of the 6th century (Cohen 2). As discussed previously, the two main decorative styles in Attic vase painting were black-figure and red-figure. Black-figure pottery appeared first, derived from Corinthian pottery techniques in the late 7th century BCE. Red-figure was a creation of Athens herself, invented during the last quarter of the 6th century BCE (Cohen 2). The older method, however, was not immediately abandoned despite the advancement of this new technique. Indeed, early red-figure drawings appear on bilingual vases, with black-figure on one side and red-figure on the other. In this way, the vases were said to “speak” the languages of both techniques (Clark et al. 72), although each side could be painted by a different artist (Cohen 20). The extreme nature of these pots reflects the extreme contrasts in the political systems fighting for power at the time: rule by the many vs. rule by the few.

The period during which bilingual vases were popular (525-500 BCE) was a time of great political change in Athens. The tyranny of the Peisistratids fell in 510 BCE and ushered in the beginning of Athenian democratic reforms under Cleisthenes in 508 (ODCW 90). Even before this upheaval, however, change was being sought throughout the Athenian city. Citizens were unhappy with the status quo, both politically and artistically. One way this feeling manifested itself was through new methods of creativity and invention in vase painting (Cohen 18). Artists first used red-figure painting during this period, and it soon became the prominent style for all pottery. With this new style, the concept of the bilingual vase was born.

Amphorae and kylikes were the two main vase shapes to which the bilingual painting technique was applied (Cohen 19). On bilingual amphorae, side A was executed in red-figure and side B in black-figure. Due to this arrangement, it was necessary for the viewer to rotate the vessel 180 degrees in order to tell that the artists had employed two different techniques in its decoration. The paintings on the bilingual drinking cups were different from those on the amphorae. A black-figure image was usually painted in the tondo, while the exterior decoration was entirely in red-figure (Cohen 23). The earliest bilingual cups were eye-cups, vessels with pairs of large eyes decorating their exteriors. Most of these eyes were male, although female and animal eyes do exist. Explanations for the popularity of these eye-cups vary. Some believe that they had the apotropaic function of warding away evil spirits, while others associate them with the eyes of Dionysus, the god of wine, or with masks worn by actors in the theater (Clark et al. 90). Indeed, all of these explanations could explain their appearance as a popular decoration on drinking cups in the symposium.

The painters of the earliest bilingual vases used the old and new methods in ways that would complement, not compete with,

each other (Neer 22-23). In a few cases, similar scenes appear on each side of the same vessel, one in black-figure and the other in red-figure. This method is seen on an amphora from 515-510 BCE decorated by the Andokides Painter (side A) and the Lysippides Painter (side B), which shows Herakles driving a bull to sacrifice (Figure 8a-b, *ABV* 254.2, *ARV²* 4.7; Cohen 30-31). On both sides, Herakles walks behind a large bull holding a red tether and a bundle of sticks for use in the sacrifice. The skin of the Nemean lion is on his back, and he drapes full wineskins over his arm. He also has a club, a quiver of arrows, a sword, and a bow, although the latter detail is shown only on side B. On side A, Herakles, the bull, and a small tree in the background all appear in red-figure; on side B, they are all in black-figure. Sketch lines are visible on both sides of the amphora, but it is not known how the artists painted such a similar design on each side (Cohen 29).

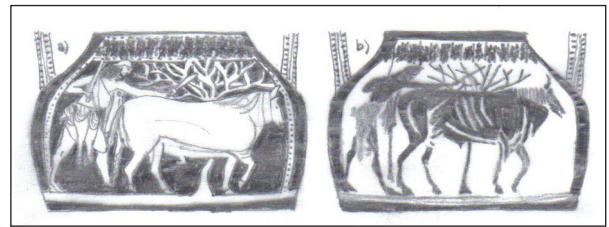


Figure. 8 a-b: Krater, Attic Bilingual; 515-510 BCE

With the images being so similar, the comparison of the old and new techniques must be the emphasis: “Neither side of the bilingual amphora is necessarily superior to the other; rather, the point seems to be that to have both versions, positive and negative, is desirable” (Neer 33). Here, the polar opposite images of the vase balance one another perfectly. Both sides are necessary to obtain this balance. In this way, I suggest, the artist sends the message of moderation to his viewers. Beth Cohen, however, reads the pot differently. To her, “the red-figure front is subtly emphasized over the black-figure back” (32). She sees the red-figure artist as seeking to reflect the details and movement of everyday life, while the black-figure artist is much more static and traditional. I suggest that this emphasis of the red-figure may be to show pride in the new Athenian method. Once again, a contrast is evident, but this time it emphasizes the Athenian over even the other ancient Greek city-states. Thus, the ideal Athenian is now the subject of emulation for all aristocrats, not the generalized Greek, and so the moderate qualities necessary for the Athenian elite to succeed become an even more vital subject for sympotic discussion.

The image on the remains of a bilingual eye-cup by the Andokides Painter (525-520 BCE) used the new method once again to emphasize what is Greek in contrast to what is barbarian (Figure 9; *ABV* 255.7, 256.21; *ARV²* 5.14, 37.1; Neer 39). The tondo and the stem of the cup are unfortunately lost. The exterior decoration on this cup is unique in that it is half in red-figure and half in black-figure. The division occurs directly under the handles, where two Greek hoplites are battling over a fallen soldier. One hoplite is in red-figure, the other is in black-figure, and the fallen soldier is divided by the two styles. On the other ends of the cup, between the eyes, appear Scythian warriors. On the black-figure side, two archers stand on either side of a tree. They are both beardless and wear the hats and clothes of the Scythians. On the

opposite side stands a third beardless Scythian blowing a trumpet. He is wearing tight, patterned clothing and has a bow at his side (Neer 38).

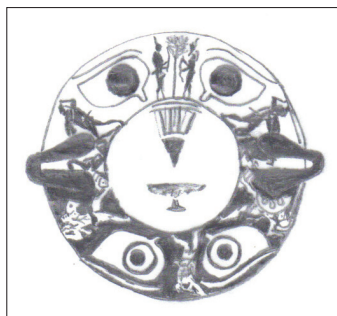


Figure 9: Cup, Attic Bilingual; 515-510 BCE

Contrasts abound in this work, with the red-figure/black-figure distinction being only the first. I see the contrasting designs as a message about the importance of moderation to the Athenians. The Greek hoplites fight only on either side of the handles located in the middle of the cup where the drinker held it. The Scythians, meanwhile, stand on the extreme ends, where the wine poured into the drinker's mouth. Thus, I suggest that the hoplites are associated with the balance and moderation implicit in the handles of the cup, while the Scythians are equated with the over-consumption of wine. Further, the hoplites actively battle over a fallen warrior, fighting with their spears. The barbarians, on the other hand, are static figures, either inspecting their arrows or blowing a trumpet (Neer 40). Thus, their warlike inadequacies are clearly apparent to all. Finally, the Scythians stand directly between the "eyes" of the eye-cup. It is therefore the face and traits of the barbarian that the drinker must beware of each time he takes a drink. For as he lifts the kylix to drink, the face of the cup and of the barbarian replaces his own. At that moment, both the drinker and his companions literally lose sight of the ideal Greek hoplites near the handles, being left with only a warning of the barbarism connected with intemperate living.

Another bilingual eye-cup with the signatures of Epiktetos as painter and of Hischylos as potter from c. 520 BCE is much more intact (Figure 10a-c; GR 1842.4-7.23; Cohen 38-40). In the tondo is a horseman in black-figure. The feet of the horse do not touch the border of the tondo, giving the image a feeling of motion which the static rider does not reciprocate (Cohen 39). The young man is also wearing a red garland upon his head and holds the shafts of a pair of spears in his hands as he rides. Around the rider is the signature of the potter: *Hischylos epoisen*, "Hischylos made [me]."



Figure 10 a-c: Cup, Attic Bilingual; c. 520 BCE

As is the norm with bilingual eye-cups, the exterior decoration is in the newer red-figure. The eyes are large, with standard red pupils and white rings. On side A of the cup, a satyr walks between the eyes holding a crescent-shaped shield, known as a *pelta*, in one hand and a drinking horn in the other (Cohen 39). A red ivy wreath sits on his head, and the erection common to satyrs is readily visible. A second satyr strides between the eyes on Side B, moving quickly to the left with his body contorted backwards. He is blowing upon a trumpet (*salpinx*) and wears the lip band (*phorbeia*) commonly worn in the 6th century BCE (Cohen 40). He, too, carries a *pelta* slung over his right arm and wears a garland of ivy upon his head, but he is carrying an oinochoe instead of a drinking horn in his right hand. The inscription *Epiktetos* is behind the satyr on side A, while the word *egraspen* is on side B. Together these inscriptions spell out "Epiktetos painted me," although the word *egraphsen* is misspelled. In order for the viewer to read the name of the painter, he must turn the cup all the way around, which forces him to negotiate his own sense of balance as he rotates the cup in his hand.

I find that once again the figures contrast the ideal and the objectionable. The ideal can be found in the black-figure tondo: the young aristocrat calm and dignified in his posture even as his horse is galloping. His picture becomes visible as the drinker consumes his wine, a reminder of the moderation the reveler should keep in mind as he enjoys himself at the symposium. In contrast are the exterior red-figure satyrs. They each hold drinking vessels, but neither of the vessels is proper for moderate drinking, emphasizing the failure common to the beasts. Further, I propose that the external satyrs should be viewed as a compilation of the two figures on the inside of the cup: the man and the horse. All three humanoid figures wear a crown of red ivy upon their heads. On the other hand, the two satyrs are connected to the horse through their similar bushy tails and heads, with the long hair of the satyrs being similar to the mane of the horse. Thus the intermediate figure of the satyr here serves as a warning to the drinker who considers himself analogous with the elite young horseman: immoderation is closer than you may think. The ivy-wearing Athenian aristocrat might easily transform into the ivy-wearing satyr, especially during the symposium. It is important for the aristocrat to act moderately, keeping in check the actions that may lead to an unbalanced life, just as the horseman balances bareback upon his horse and controls its movements. Only through constant vigilance will he hold his place among the nobility and not succumb to an immoderate lifestyle.

An even more extreme version of a bilingual cup from c. 480 BCE again emphasizes the metamorphosis possible in the symposium (Figure 11; *ARV* 1534/9; Lissarrague 1990a, 58). On one side is the face of a white woman, and on the other is the face of a black woman. The anthropomorphism of vases was common in the ancient Greek world. In a literalizing moment, vases such as this one were created in the forms of both animal and human heads (Lissarrague 1990a, 57-8). Further, when a human head is modeled, it is never a white male's head. The only vessels found have been white women, black males and females, Asians, and satyrs. Each time the drinker partook of his drink, the face on the opposite side of the cup replaced his own to everyone around

him. For a single moment, he was no longer the aristocratic male but instead an image of the undesirable. Thus, in the case of both beasts and humans, the object of this vase type was to remind the drinker, and those around him, of what they were not. The cup defines the opposite of the ideal drinker, bringing him literally face-to-face with the “other,” whether beast, woman, or barbarian, each time he took a drink.

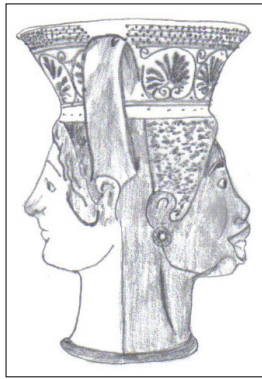


Figure 11: Kantharos, Attic Bilingual; c. 480 BCE

Finally, I conclude this survey of balanced contrasting themes with a red-figured bilingual amphora from 515-510 BCE with the signature of Andokides as potter (Figure 12a-b; Madrid, Museo Arqueologico Nacional 11.008; Cohen 26-7). On side A, the god Apollo plays the lyre for Artemis, Leto, and Ares, who snap their fingers to the music. On the opposite side, Dionysus stands in black-figure with two satyrs and two maenads flanking him. In his left hand, Dionysus holds a kantharos, his special drinking cup, by its stem, while with his right hand he holds a branching ivy vine. Indeed, the wandering vine connects all five of the figures on this side of the vessel together in a single celebration of the god.



Figure 12 a-c: Krater, Attic Bilingual; 515-510 BCE

I agree with Cohen’s statement that the “measured pairing of Apollonian and Dionysian compositions...enhance the positive and negative effect of this vessel” (27). Apollo and Dionysus each have a very important place in the symposium. Apollo, as the god of music, symbolizes proper proportions and order in the symposium, while Dionysus, as the god of wine, highlights wild frenzy and freedom of action and expression. On this amphora, we see the contrast explicitly with Apollo holding his lyre on one side and Dionysus his kantharos on the other. Gods surround Apollo; satyrs and dancing maenads surround Dionysus. One represents order; the other, ecstasy. The red- and black-figure contrast only serves to emphasize these differences more.

The important messages of balance and moderation appear in many forms in the symposium, including through the images on

opposite sides of vessels, which were meant to be read against one another. Contrasting themes convey the differences between who the ideal Athenian should and should not be. More specifically, I have discussed the contrasts between the exemplary aristocrat and immoderate beasts, women, and barbarians. These barbarians include both warlike ones outside of the realm of Athens and slaves within the Athenian homes. During the period from 525 to 500 BCE, artists began using the concept of bilingual to emphasize these differences. Thus, the images we have examined support similar messages of balance and moderation seen in the lyric poetry sung during the drinking party. Indeed, the two go hand-in-hand to teach these important virtues to the Athenian aristocrats of the late archaic period.

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- Despite his relatively recent academic focus in Classical Studies – preceded by intensive training in math, physics, and computer science – Matthew Naglak's humanities-based research is original, exciting, and inspired, and was recognized as such in its early stages by a prestigious State Undergraduate Research Fellowship from the State of Arkansas. As his mentor, I can confirm the quality and originality of his work: he developed the topic on his own and, based on his extraordinarily wide-ranging research, formulated its organization. "Don't Rock the Krater: Balance and Moderation in the Ancient Greek Symposium"—of which this Inquiry publication is a part—is a sophisticated interdisciplinary project that sheds new light on material important for Classical art historians, philologists, and social historians. With an innovative perspective, Matt's work explores the ancient Greek ideology of living a balanced, moderate, and measured life. From the 7th-5th centuries BCE, poets, politicians and philosophers alike publicized the importance of the moderate path, and one particularly popular locus for this expression was the ancient Greek symposium, a male-only drinking party key for cementing aristocratic political ties and social bonds. Scholars have explored this social phenomenon, noting, for example, the great irony involved in a small group of politically powerful elites espousing moderation, the mean, and traveling "the middle path." Matt's research, in turn, asks whether there is evidence that this same ideology of moderation was expressed visually as well as poetically. He thus shifts the focus to the ancient Greek painted pottery that circulated alongside the poetry at the symposium, including storage containers for wine or water, cauldrons for mixing wine with water (the krater of his title), and the variety of cups for drinking mixed wine. He includes in his data set several unpublished vessels from the University of Arkansas Museum Collections. As Matt's research demonstrates, these objects, with their painted figural scenes in red and black, have much to add to our understanding of ancient Greek expressions of balance and moderation. Indeed, Matt shows that the sympotic audience regularly viewed scenes depicting physical feats of balance, which communicate the message rather literally. In this vein, too, Matt considers types of drinking cups that themselves, due to their odd shapes and curved bottoms, required careful balance by their users who could not put them down without a wine spill. Matt's project extends from the literal to the metaphorical, as he also considers images – either within the same scene or on opposite sides of the pot – that harmonize the extreme opposites embodied by the divinities Apollo and Dionysus. Although diametrically opposed in their powers, when read together visually, these gods create a moderate balance that was ideal within the symposium and, by extension, in public, political life. With the analysis of several additional visual modes of balance and moderation, Matt puts these expressions in their larger political context. He suggests that they are connected to the shift of political power from the elite aristocrats – that is, those attending symposia – to a broader base of citizens gaining increasing power as the fledgling democracy of the late 6th century BCE emerges. As should be clear, this project makes critical interventions in Classical Studies at a variety of levels, and is a stellar example of the kind of original undergraduate research being conducted at the University of Arkansas.*