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# Winckelmann's influence on the Neoclassical reception of Greek vases

Amy C. Smith

European Neoclassical enthusiasm for Greek vases, from the middle of the eighteenth century, manifested itself in two distinct ways: the acquisition of original ancient vases and the dissemination of new 'artworks' inspired by their example. This cultural movement – which recalled the cultural styles of classical antiquity – was decidedly born in the Italic peninsula, percolated through learned circles in Rome, Florence, and to a lesser degree Naples, and disseminated via young artists, Dilettanti, and other 'curiosi' on the Grand Tour, some of whom took their newly acquired tastes back to their home countries.<sup>1</sup> While the Neoclassical movement in literature began in the middle of the seventeenth century, Neoclassicism in decorative and visual arts is generally understood to have begun perhaps a century later and therefore bridged from the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment to the beginnings of Romanticism, in the early nineteenth century. The librarian, antiquarian, and *cicerone* Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768) was therefore in the right place – Rome – at the right time – from 1755 – to exert significant influence on the Neoclassical movement in general, and on the developing tastes for ancient vases, in particular. His influence – through personal encounters and his writings – was yet more significant because of his involvement in both aspects of Neoclassical engagement with Greek vases noted above. While he did not collect vases, he advised those who did both before and after purchases.<sup>2</sup> His enthusiasm for ancient vases, especially those found in Campania, suspected to be of Greek workmanship, encouraged others in their acquisition and may have contributed to an increase in their value. By favourably comparing the drawings on the vases to those of Raphael, who had executed the best art of the Renaissance, moreover, he raised the humble ceramic vessel from the status of an archaeological curiosity to that of high art. As is

<sup>1</sup> Hubertus Kohle, 'The road from Rome to Paris. The birth of a modern Neoclassicism', *Jacques Louis David. New perspectives*, Dorothy Johnson, ed. Newark, Del.: University of Delaware Press, 2006, 71-80; Katherine Harloe, Christina Neagu, and Amy C. Smith, eds, *Winckelmann and Curiosity in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Gentleman's Library*. Oxford: Christ Church, 2018. For Dilettanti and Winckelmann's influence on the British see Jason Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti. Archaeology and Identity in the British Enlightenment*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, 164-65; Katherine Harloe, 'Winckelmann's reception in Great Britain,' in *Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768) ein europäisches Rezeptionsphänomen / fenomeno europeo della ricezione. Akten des Vorlesungszyklus. Rom 2017/2018*, Ortwin Dally, Maria Gazzetti, and Arnold Nesselrath, eds. *Cyriacus. Studien zur Rezeption der Antike* 15. Berlin, 2021, 143-56.

<sup>2</sup> For Winckelmann's humble collection of coins, however, see Andrew Burnett's contribution to this volume. See also the Winckelmann Faun (sculpted head) now in Munich's Glyptothek: Barbara Vierneisel-Schlörb, *Klassische Skulpturen des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* Munich: C. H. Beck, 1979, 235-38, no. 22, figs. 105-109.

well known, Winckelmann actively urged artists and craftsmen to use antiquities as the basis of their recreation of new 'artworks' in the spirit of Greek antiquity, although his encouragement of the use of vases for such purposes is less well known.<sup>3</sup> Indeed Winckelmann's influence on the evolving taste for Greek vases in and after his time is often overlooked by scholars, because he devoted so little of his writing to the vases, which he came to understand only in the last years of his life, through trips to Naples. This problem is perhaps increased by the complicated revision history of his *History of the Art of Antiquity* (*Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*). This article seeks to fill this gap, by tracing Winckelmann's revolutionary role in integrating this fundamental archaeological material—ancient ceramics—into the history of art. As Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann has already established, 'like many other apparent innovators, [Winckelmann] created an attractive combination out of already existing concepts and methods' and '...antiquarians supplied Winckelmann both with most of the matter for his books and also with much of his method, which is now identified with that of art history....namely, the analysis of the formal or stylistic particularities of object in order to place them in historical context.'<sup>4</sup> Winckelmann failed, however, to convincingly place the origins of Greek vases in Greece and therefore to put them in their correct historical context, which is why they remained misunderstood although widely appreciated through the nineteenth century. This article therefore considers first the art historical tools with which Winckelmann was equipped, then considers the history of the 'study' of Greek vases up until his time, then Winckelmann's consideration of both the Greekness and the beauty of vases found in Campanian and farther South on the Italic peninsula, and finally the evidential basis of the Greekness of vases formerly known as Etruscan.

### Winckelmann's intellectual crucible

The study of the history of art was well afoot in Winckelmann's Germany before his time; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann has sufficiently negated Winckelmann's claim that he created a new history of art distinct from a history of artists.<sup>5</sup> He has traced a continuous line of academic art historians, from the painter and historian Joachim von Sandrart (1606–1688) to Winckelmann's contemporary, the architect and architectural historian Friedrich August Krubsacius (1718–1789), which is briefly summarised here. The painter and historian von Sandrart—the Vasari of the

<sup>3</sup> Amy C. Smith, 'Winckelmann's Elegant Simplicity: Drawing three in two dimensions and vice versa', in *Drawing the Greek Vase*, H. Caspar Meyer and Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarianism, the history of objects, and the history of art before Winckelmann', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 62: 3, July 2001, 541 and 533.

<sup>5</sup> DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarianism', lxii, pp. 523-41, following Wolf Lepenies, 'Fast ein Poet: Johann Joachim Winckelmanns Begründung der Kunstgeschichte', in *Autoren und Wissenschaftler im 18. Jahrhundert*. Munich: Hanser, 1988, 91-120. See more recently Matthias Rene Hofter, *Die Sinnlichkeit des Ideals. Zur Begründung von Johann Joachim Winckelmanns Archäologie. Stendaler Winckelmann-Forschung*, 7). Ruppolding: Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2008.

North'—organised his *Teutsche Academie* (1675–1679)—the first major book in German that discussed the history of art—around the lives of ancient, Italian, German, and Netherlandish artists.<sup>6</sup> Sandrart's work went beyond biographies and it consisted of a compendium of art theory and practical advice; guides to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; a discussion of artistic symbolism; and descriptions and illustrations of antique objects found in contemporary art collections.<sup>7</sup> Sandrart worked towards a universal history, expanding temporally to the middle ages and geographically as far as China, as did his successor, Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723).<sup>8</sup> In the eighteenth-century other Germans were writing the history of art as a history of genres or objects, organised according to stylistic periods: Johann Friedrich Christ's 1747 book on artists' monograms—compiled from his observations of original objects—aimed to provide a basis for the construction of a history of art based on epochs, nations, schools, and individual masters.<sup>9</sup> Citing Fischer von Erlach's *Entwurf einer historischen Architektur* (1721) as a major influence, Krubsacius—a leading figure in the Dresden cultural scene that Winckelmann enjoyed—juxtaposed the schemata of 'origin, rise, and fall' and universal historical trajectory, as did Winckelmann, in his history of architectural ornament (written in the 1740s).<sup>10</sup>

All these art historians employed autopsy in their teaching and research, that is, first-hand investigation. Sandrart, seemingly influenced by his contacts at Altdorf University, was emphatic, for example, that medals (and coins) were already popular evidence for history:

All the famed [writers] who have experience with history have made known to the world how highly necessary is the study and knowledge of medals, because they alone give the stamp of truth in the history of the ancients, and more credence is often to be placed in a medal, than in diverse authors or books. For even though they are no doubt mute, still their forms and reverses speak with more certainty. They settle accounts in dubious matters, they light upon history with pure truth, and they never are silent. Indeed, with their temper they outlast everything imaginable, and show at the same time pure truth together with the excellence and

<sup>6</sup> Wilhelm Waetzoldt, *Deutsche Kunsthistoriker*, third ed. Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1986, 23-42, classifies him as Winckelmann's forerunner. See also Christian Klemm, 'Pfade durch Sandrarts Teutsche Academie', *Joachim von Sandrart Teutsche Academie der Bau- Bild- und Mahlerer-Künste Nürnberg 1675–1780 in ursprünglicher Form neu gedruckt mit einer Einleitung von Christian Klemm*. Nördlingen: Verlag Dr. Alfons Uhl, 1994, 12, 19.

<sup>7</sup> DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarianism', 528.

<sup>8</sup> See DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarianism', 532. On China see Michael Sullivan, *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1973, 93 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Johann Friedrich Christ, *Anzeige und Auslegung der Monogrammatum*. Leipzig: Caspar Fritschens Wittwe, 1747, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Krubsacius, *Gedanken von dem Ursprunge, Wachstume und Verfall der Verzierungen in den schönen Künsten*. Leipzig: Breitkopf, 1759, 15-16. See DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarianism', 540.

immortality of the art of imagery in a small piece of metal. Therefore, the most excellent scholars have all had recourse to lessons in metal.<sup>11</sup>

The use of autopsy as an approach to objects went beyond German scholarship and was central to European intellectual life. The French traveller Jacob Spon (1647–1685), for example, urged gaining direct empirical knowledge from antiquities—coins as well as sculptures—not just books, in his *Archaeographia* (1685).<sup>12</sup> In and just after Winckelmann's time, of course, Baron d'Hancarville, also known as Pierre-François Hugues, and other alter-antiquaries gained sovereignty 'over objects and their history, combining and recombining them,' starting at the endpoint of historical positivism, that is, letting objects speak for themselves without further interpretation.<sup>13</sup>

The terms *Geschichte der Kunst* and *Kunstgeschichte* were current in contemporary German language before Winckelmann started his career in the 1740s.<sup>14</sup> Many anticipated the study of objects in a Winckelmanian, that is, historical manner.<sup>15</sup> Sandrart's work, which related and compared inherited histories to empirical observation of objects, while engaging in connoisseurship and *Kritik*, clearly proscribed for Winckelmann a path that combined literature on art, including biographies, with material necessary for art criticism.<sup>16</sup> As Kaufmann has concluded, however, Winckelmann enhanced an attractive combination of existing concepts and methods—lists of monuments and objects; historical narrative in a universal framework connecting monuments and objects; and setting monuments and objects apart as 'art'—with approachable and thus accessible eloquence.<sup>17</sup>

It is clear also that a long tradition in the autopsy of objects, archaeological and artistic, had developed in Germany before Winckelmann's time. Despite Kaufmann's work, however, Winckelmann is still glorified. Alain Schnapp, for example, has suggested Winckelmann 'destroyed the antiquarian model which made history subservient to object' and 'set out to explain a culture by its objects.'<sup>18</sup> Yet others in the seventeenth century had also put art and archaeology—objects—before the history rather than the other way around. Kaufmann aptly compared the stylistic methodologies that the Liège Jesuit, Alexander Wilthelm, applied to his seventeenth-century study of ivory diptychs, and Giovanni Morelli (1816–1891)

<sup>11</sup> *Teutsche Academie* 2, part 2, 81. Translation by DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarianism', 530.

<sup>12</sup> See Peter N. Miller, 'Coda: not for lumpers only', Benjamin Anderson and Felipe Rojas eds, *Antiquarianisms. Contact, Conflict, Comparison*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, 216-17.

<sup>13</sup> Hönes, *Kunst um Ursprung*, 16.

<sup>14</sup> DaKosta Kaufmann, *Antiquarianism*, 538.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas DaKosta Kaufmann, 'Before Winckelmann: Towards the Origins of the History of Art', Gerhild Scholz Williams et al ed, *Knowledge, Science and Literature in the Early Modern Period. University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures*, 116, 1996, 71-89.

<sup>16</sup> DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarianism', 529, with previous scholarship ns. 29-30.

<sup>17</sup> DaKosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarianism', 541.

<sup>18</sup> Alain Schnapp, 'The Antiquarian Culture of Eighteenth-Century Naples,' in *Rediscovering the Ancient World on the Bay of Naples, 1710–1890*, Carol C. Mattusch, ed. *Studies in the History of Art* 79. CASVA Symposium Papers 66, 2013, 123.

employed for his study of old masters.<sup>19</sup> Both relied on first-hand study and comparisons of details to identify the hands of unnamed artists and relative dates of individual art works. Such first-hand investigation and analysis was closely related to the forensic approach to anatomical investigation or autopsy that Morelli learned and taught in his medical career at University of Munich. It is no coincidence that Winckelmann also had learned such autopsy skills in anatomy classes, when he attended lectures by polymath Johann Heinrich Schulze (1687–1744), at Halle University. The invitation to Schulze's 1738-39 seminar indicates that in his classes he was teaching students how to situate objects, namely coins, in history according to the way they looked, dating them not merely according to what they depicted, or their inscriptions.<sup>20</sup> Schulze had studied and earlier taught at Altdorf, where presumably he had acquired his skills and interest in teaching with coins. In conclusion it appears that Winckelmann had relied heavily on the teachings of his predecessors and teachers.

### **Greek vases on the continuum from natural history to art**

The discovery of actual ancient art on the Italian peninsula inspired artists through the Renaissance to emulate the spirit of ancient art rather than to copy it. Only in the nineteenth century did artists begin to replicate antiquities with such faith to the originals that one might refer to a derivative artwork as a copy rather than an adaptation. The 'ancient' figures—whether mythic or historic—represented in most Renaissance and indeed Neoclassical art were inspired by ancient writings, especially Ovid and Philostratus, rather than the examples of ancient art to which they had occasional access. The works of Sandro Botticelli, for example, are based on contemporary literature and scholarly commentaries. His *Calumny of Apelles* (1494–1495), now in the Uffizi, adapts Lucian's second century AC description of Apelles' famed artwork from the fourth century BC.<sup>21</sup> The emphasis on texts for source material gave priority to panel/mural paintings and sculptures the ancients had attributed to famous artists.<sup>22</sup> But what of the humble ceramic vases to which commentators from Greek and Roman antiquity had shown little interest? Herodotus' story (5.85) of an embargo on the use of Athenian pottery in Aeginetan

<sup>19</sup> Alexandri Wilthelmi, *Diptychon Leodiense ex Consulari Factum Epicopale et in Illud Commentarius*. Liege: 1659 and *Appendix ad Diptychon Leodiense*, Liege: 1660. See DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarianism', 536, and Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarian Connoisseurship and Art History before Winckelmann: Some Evidence from Northern Europe', *Shop Talk. Studies in Honor of Seymour Slive*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Art Museums, 1995, 76-77. Cf. Carlo Ginzburg, 'Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm', in *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, John and Anne C. Tedeschi, trans. London: Hutchinson Radius, 1990, 96-125.

<sup>20</sup> Johann Heinrich Schulze, *Einladungs-Schrift zu einem Collegio Privato über die Muntz-Wissenschaft und die daraus erläuternde Griechische und Römische Alterthümer*. Halle 1738. DaCosta Kaufmann, 'Antiquarian Connoisseurship', 130-32, 340. For more on this matter see in this volume Andrew Burnett, 'Coins and Winckelmann. Winckelmann and coins'.

<sup>21</sup> Angela Dressen, 'From Dante to Landino: Botticelli's Calumny of Apelles and its sources', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz*, 59: 3, 2017, 324-39.

<sup>22</sup> Particularly Pliny, in books 34-36 of his *Natural History*.

temples is the rare indication that the ancients valued their vessels. In his story of Roman settlers re-founding Corinth after Mummius' sack of 146 BC, Strabo (8.6.23) gives us the first indication of the value of vessels as archaeological artefacts. Apparently the Roman settlers ransacked old graves to sell *necrocorinthia* ('objects from Corinthian graves'), mostly bronze vessels and *ostrakina toreumata* ('terracotta reliefs') yet later 'ceased to care much for them, since the supply of earthen vessels failed and most of them were not even well executed.'<sup>23</sup> Ristoro d'Arezzo, a 13<sup>th</sup>-century monk, gave them a more spiritual value, in his speculation that chance finds of black- and red-figure fragments on Italian soil had 'fallen from heaven'.<sup>24</sup> Twentieth century art historians wondered if such chance discoveries had influenced Medieval arts.<sup>25</sup> In the early modern period Piero della Francesca, Antonio Pollaiuolo, and others began to paint figures whose images were favourably compared to those found on 5<sup>th</sup>-c. Athenian vase paintings.<sup>26</sup> Similar images are also found, however, in ancient manuscripts to which these painters may have had access.

Yet Winckelmann's German predecessors were happy to include vases among categories of objects under investigation in their histories of art. Sandrart, for example, had a section on vases at the end of his historical overview.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps this is because Renaissance artists had begun to collect ancient pots. In his *Lives*, for example, Giorgio Vasari talks of the interest in Arretine vases that his own great-grandfather, Lazzaro (1380-1452) shared with his son Giorgio (1416-1484), even reproducing 'the colours red and black in terracotta vases that the inhabitants of

<sup>23</sup> Humfry Payne, writing in 1931, did not believe this story although he liked it well enough to call his catalogue of Corinthian pots *Necrocorinthia*.

<sup>24</sup> Ristoro d'Arezzo, *della Composizione del Mondo*, 1283, trans Robert M. Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, third ed. London: Routledge, 1997, 275.

<sup>25</sup> This section is a reworking of part of my 2018 article: Amy C. Smith, 'Greek vases in Naples' ottocento laboratory of curiosity', Harloe et al, eds, *Winckelmann and Curiosity*, 9-36. For Medieval influence see my survey in that article on p. 25, which summarises: Brian Sparkes, 'Commonly called Etruscan vases', in *The Red and the Black. Studies in Greek Pottery*. London: Routledge 1996; Maurizio Harari, "'Toscantà = etruscità', Da modello a nito storiografico: le origini settecentesche', *Xenia* 15, 1988, 70 n. 2; Nancy de Grummond, 'Rediscovery', Larissa Bonfante ed, *Etruscan Life and Afterlife. A Handbook of Etruscan Studies*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986, 25-26; Michael Greenhalgh, *Donatello and his Sources*, New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982, 7-9; Ernst Gombrich, 'Bonaventura Berlinghieri's Palmettes', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 39, 1976, 234-36; Fritz Saxl, *Lectures*. London: Warburg Institute, 1957, 151. For a more thorough treatment see also Ronald Higginson, *A history of the study of south Italian black- and red-figure pottery. BAR International Series 2226*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011, 5-18.

<sup>26</sup> Greenhalgh, *Donatello*, 17-19; Fern Shapley, 'A student of ancient ceramics, Antonio Pollajuolo', *Art Bulletin*, 2: 2, December 1919, 78-86; Michael Vickers, 'A Greek Source for Antonio Pollaiuolo's Battle of the Nudes and Hercules and the Twelve Giants', *Art Bulletin*, 59: 2, June 1977, 182-87, and 'Imaginary Etruscans: Changing Perceptions of Etruria since the Fifteenth Century', *Hephaistos* 7-8, 1985-86, 156. For those who suggest it is a coincidence see Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1969, 189 n. 7.

Arezzo had produced until the time of King Porsenna'.<sup>28</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–1492), the first collector of Greek vases, was offered vases found in Italy and Greece (transferred via Venice), respectively, by Lazzaro (noted above) and the humanist Poliziano (Agnolo Ambrogini), although the exact findspots are unknown.<sup>29</sup> Other humanists and artists included vases in their sketchbooks. This practice culminated in Cassiano del Pozzo's *Museo Cartaceo* or paper museum, for which from c. 1620 he commissioned artists, including Poussin, to draw the antiquities of Rome.<sup>30</sup> While better known for its images of architecture and sculptures in Rome, Cassiano's museum of images included drawings of vases among the 'minor arts'.<sup>31</sup> Giovanna Cesarini has traced evidence of Neapolitan antiquities collections back as early as 1606.<sup>32</sup> By the 1630s, as Maria Masci has clarified, a tradition of the study and collection of ancient vases had already evolved in the south of Italy.<sup>33</sup> Neapolitan antiquaries had begun to admire and collect 'Cuman' vases, which were celebrated everywhere', that is, ancient vases from ancient tombs in Cumae in Campania.<sup>34</sup> Cumae had been the first Greek colony on the Italic peninsula, founded in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, and Winckelmann admired their coins, which he understood to be even older than those of Neapolis (Naples).<sup>35</sup> Similar vases emerged from other Greek cities in Campania: Calvi, Capua, and especially Nola.<sup>36</sup> The sixteenth-century physician Ambrogio Leone had revived knowledge of Nola's ancient history, with geographic details such as Greek tumuli at the east end.<sup>37</sup> By the first half of the eighteenth century, perhaps unsurprisingly, its tombs had been excavated by the

<sup>28</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architetti*. Florence: Lorenzo Torrentino, 1568, 3.266-67. This is the first indication of Florentine claims of an Etruscan heritage for the finest ancient pots.

<sup>29</sup> Eugène Müntz, *Les collections des Médicis au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle: le musée, la bibliothèque, le mobilier*. Paris: Librairie de l'art, 1988, 57. For Greek vases in his collection see also Greenhalgh, *Donatello*, 18; 1989, 237; Toby Yuen, 'Giulio Romano, Giovanni da Udine and Raphael: Some Influences from the Minor Arts of Antiquity', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42, 1979, 263-72.

1979; Vickers 1977, 187.

<sup>30</sup> Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano Dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts*. Munich: Hirmer, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Elena Vaiani, *The Antichità Diverse Album. The Paper Museum of Cassiano Dal Pozzo. A Catalogue Raisonné*. London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Giovanna Cesarini, *Italy's Lost Greece: Magna Graecia and the making of modern archaeology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, 44.

<sup>33</sup> Maria Emilia Masci, 'The Birth of Ancient Vase Collecting in Naples in the Early Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Collections* 19: 2, November 2007, 216.

<sup>34</sup> Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Il Forastiero*. Naples: Gio Domenico Roncagliolo, 1634, 14. On the significant contribution of Neapolitan antiquaries see also Claire L. Lyons, 'Nola and the historiography of Greek vases', *Journal of the History of Collections* 19: 11, November 2007, 239-47.

<sup>35</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, 174 (1.3.3.1). Here I use the numbering of Harry Mallgrave's recent translation of the first edition (1.3.3 = Part 1, chapter 3, section 3): Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity*, trans Harry Francis Mallgrave, Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2006. For Winckelmann and coins see Burnett's article in this volume.

<sup>36</sup> Winckelmann singles out Nola as producing the most: *History*, 1.3.3.2 (175).

<sup>37</sup> Ambrogio Leone, *De Nola patria*. Venice, 1514.



proto-archaeologists Marchese Felice Maria Mastrilli (1674–1755?) and Gianstefano Remondini. Mastrilli displayed and published his vase collection in *Spiega de' vasi antichi* (of which a 1755 manuscript is now in the Getty Museum).<sup>38</sup> Mastrilli was one of the earliest to show an interest in determining provenance through fabric analysis, having noticed that his Nolan vases had a darker, shinier black<sup>39</sup>: it is now known that this shinier black 'glaze' characterises Athenian manufacture. In 1746 Mastrilli wrote to the renowned expert Antonio Francesco Gori (1691–1757), who himself had wondered about the seemingly Greek elements on so-called 'Etruscan' vases.<sup>40</sup> It was in the best interests of Gori the Florentine, however, to flatter his rulers, the Medici grand dukes, as neo-Etruscan kings, which he did at length in his texts. At the same time he assented to their assumption—following the precedent of Thomas Dempster's *de Etruria regali* (1616)<sup>41</sup>—that all ancient vases found on the Italian peninsula were made and deposited under Etruscan rule.<sup>42</sup> Accordingly, he adapted the ancient texts to support this appropriation: Pliny the Elder's 'maior pars hominum terrenis utitur vasis' in *NH* 35.160 (meaning 'the greater part of mankind uses clay vases') was misprinted as 'maior pars hominum Tyrrhenis utitur vasis' ('the greater part of mankind uses Etruscan vases').

At first glance the debate whether to give the ancient Greeks or Etruscans credit for the finest figure-decorated vases seems a matter of prioritising a traditional Hellenic prejudice over hard archaeological evidence, such as findspots. As early as 1501 the Venetian poet Publio Fausto Andrelini (1462–1518) had composed a poem that likened the elegant figures 'painted' on an ancient cup to the works of Apelles, court painter to Alexander the Great.<sup>43</sup> In discussing vase decorations 'painted in a single colour, paintings that the ancient Greeks called Monochromata', Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613–1696), logically remarked that they could not have been made in Arezzo and Tuscany (contra Vasari) since they were found in the South of Italy, where the Tuscans never ruled.<sup>44</sup> As Masci points out, this is perhaps the earliest mention of the emerging tussle between Neapolitan and Tuscan scholars.<sup>45</sup> It is true that few figure-decorated vases were found in Etruria

<sup>38</sup> Claire L. Lyons, 'The Museo Mastrilli and the culture of collecting in Naples, 1700–1755', *Journal of the History of Collections* 4.1, 1992, 1–26. See also Lyons, 'Nola'.

<sup>39</sup> Paolo Maria Paciaudi, in Naples, observed the same patina particular on vases from Nola and wrote to Gori about it on 9 September 1743: Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana MS B VII 23, c. 29.

<sup>40</sup> Naples, 14 March 1746: Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana MS B VII 18, c. 585.

<sup>41</sup> See Mauro Cristofani, 'Sugli inizi dell' 'etruscheria'. La pubblicazione del *De Etruria regali* di Thomas Dempster', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité* 90.2 (1978) 557–625.

<sup>42</sup> On Winckelmann's involvement with Gori and Florentines see also Stefano Bruni et al., *Winckelmann, Firenze e gli Etruschi. Il padre dell'archeologia in Toscana. Catalogo della mostra* (Firenze, 26 maggio 2016–30 gennaio 2017). Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2016; and Barbara Arheid, Stefano Bruni, and Mario Iozzo, eds, *Winckelmann, Florenz und die Etrusker. Der Vater der Archäologie in der Toskana*. Pisa: Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2017.

<sup>43</sup> Lyons, 'Nola', 241. Cf. Giulio Cesare Capaccio, *Neapolitanae historiae* (Naples 1607).

<sup>44</sup> G.P. Bellori, *Nota delli Musei, Librerie, Gallerie & ornamenti di Statue, e pitture, ne' Palazzi, nelle Case, e ne Giardini di Roma* (Rome 1664) 65.

<sup>45</sup> Masci, 'The Birth of Ancient Vase Collecting', 215–24, 217. For an excellent survey of the 'intellectual genealogy' of the late eighteenth to nineteenth-century debates regarding the

before the nineteenth century, while the vast majority recorded before the end of the eighteenth century were found in South Italy or Sicily. The Neapolitan cognoscenti knew that the Greeks had colonised and culturally dominated these lands for hundreds of years. So, despite the relative lack of proof in the form of finds from Greek soil (which would continue through Winckelmann's time), they had begun to recognise the Greekness of these vases.<sup>46</sup> In 1745 Sebastiano Paoli compared the arguments of both parties and agreed with the Neapolitans that the vases '...which are called Etruscan and which with greater reason might be named Campanian'.<sup>47</sup>



Figure 1 Engraving of a Greek terracotta figurine from Syracuse, Sicily. After Cesare Gaetani, *Dissertazione del signor conte Cesare Gaetani e Gaetani siracusiano Sovra un antico Idoletta di creta*. Rome: Salvioni 1761, 244.

At the same time academics in Sicily pushed more strongly to identify their terracotta antiquities with the Greeks. Salvatore Maria di Blasi in Palermo emphasised that some ancient vases found in Sicily should be attributed to the ancient Greeks who had also colonised that island.<sup>48</sup> In the same decade Gabrielle Lancillotto Castello, Prince of Torremuzza (1727–1794), identified a distinct class of Sicilian terracotta figurines characterised by a 'gusto Greco' (Greek taste) style that

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Hellenization of Etruria, see now Corinna Riva, 'The Freedom of the Etruscans: Etruria between Hellenization and Orientalization', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 25: 2, June 2018, 101-26.

<sup>46</sup> Dodwell's pyxis, found in Corinth in 1805, was perhaps the first Greek vase with a proven Greek findspot: Daryl A. Amyx, *Corinthian vase-painting of the Archaic period*. Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press, 1988, 205-206, pl. 86

<sup>47</sup> Sebastiano Paoli, *De Patera Argentea Forocorneliensi, olim (ut fertur) S. Petri Chrysologi, Dissertatio*. Naples: 1745, 249.

<sup>48</sup> Salvatore Maria di Blasi, *Dissertazione sopra un Vase Greco-Siculo figurato nel museo Martiniano... in Saggi di Dissertazioni dell'Accademia Palermitana del Buon Gusto*. Palermo, 1755, 1.218.

had been falsely taken as Etruscan.<sup>49</sup> A few years later, in 1761, Conte Cesare Gaetani della Torre of Syracuse (1718–1805) penned a more impassioned defence of Greco-Sicilian manufacture, with a Winckelmanian 'language' of aesthetics, inviting viewers to contemplate a figurine of a satyr (fig. 1).<sup>50</sup> Jaimee Uhlenbrock therefore suggests that Winckelmann's object-based and aesthetic approach influenced Sicilian intellectuals.<sup>51</sup>

Academic curiosity increased in step with the market for 'Campanian' vases and Neapolitan collections, which were beginning to gain the interest of northern European scholars. As Masci has shown, the Neapolitan lawyer Giuseppe Valetta (1636-1714) gave drawings of his vases to the Dutch Classical scholar, Jacobus Tollius (1633–1696), who intended to publish the collection. After Tollius' premature death, the drawings and the potential publication passed to his student and successor at University of Duisburg, Heinrich Christian Hennin (1658–1703).<sup>52</sup> Hennin clearly perceived them as evidence of Greek culture, because he asked Godofredus Christianus Goezius in a letter to

... report to [Valetta] that the Cuman Vases, which I received from Tollius, will perhaps be included in the *Thesaurus Graeco* by Gronovius. Should they not find appropriate place in that publication, I will publish them separately, adding my explanations' (Amsterdam, 15 July 1698).<sup>53</sup>

Hennin was not able to live up to this promise. Valetta's collection was purchased by Cardinal Gualtieri and eventually moved to the Vatican, but by 1766 it was once again on the market, as was Mastrilli's. Sir William Hamilton, 'his Britannick Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary at the court of Naples' from 1764 to 1800, purchased from both collections.<sup>54</sup> It would be more than half a century, however, before northern scholars would confidently admit the Greekness of these vases. This is where Winckelmann had an important role to play.

<sup>49</sup> Gabrielle Lancillotto Castello, principe di Torremuzza, 'Idea di un Tesoro che contegna una generale raccolta di tutte le antichità di Sicilia proposta da Gabriele Lancillotto Castello, Principe di Torremuzza, Palermitano à Letterati Siciliani Amanti delle antiche Memorie della Patria', in *Opuscoli di autore siciliani* 8, 1758 (repr 1763), 3.

<sup>50</sup> Cesare Gaetani, 'Dissertazione del signor conte Cesare Gaetani e Gaetani siracusano Sovra un antico Idoletta di creta', Palermo, 1761, 244. See Jaimee P. Uhlenbrock, 'The reception of Greek figurative terracottas in the Age of Enlightenment', *Journal of the History of Collections* 32: 1, 2020, 32.

<sup>51</sup> Uhlenbrock, 'The reception of Greek figurative terracottas', 34. For Winckelmann's similar influence on academics and artists in the UK see Hans-Christian Hönes, 'Norm und System. Winckelmann und die Royal Academy', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft* 46, September 2019, 167-88.

<sup>52</sup> Masci, 'The Birth of Ancient Vase Collecting', 217.

<sup>53</sup> Univ. Amsterdam, MS Died 72 Dc. See Masci, 'The Birth of Ancient Vase Collecting', 223 n. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Nancy Ramage, 'Sir William Hamilton as collector, exporter, and dealer', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 94: 3, July 1990, 469-80.

**On the Greekness and beauty of 'Campanian' vases**

Coincidentally in 1764, when Hamilton arrived in Naples, Winckelmann published his most influential work, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, which devoted only a few pages to a discussion of the figured vases of Campanian origin, awkwardly sandwiched into the chapter devoted to art among the Etruscans and neighbouring peoples.<sup>55</sup> He maintained that they were the work of Greek artists resident in the region and refuted the 'common Opinion, that these are Etruscan Works', but stopped short of recognising that the ancient vases found in Campania were made in Greece.<sup>56</sup>

Consequently, [Greeks] also practised their arts here at an early date, and at the same time, probably, taught their neighbours, the Campanians, who dwelt in the heart of the land. We understand, therefore, by what nation a portion of the vases of terracotta, which have been frequently disinterred in Campania, and especially about Nola, from the tombs there, were executed and painted. But if we are willing to relinquish to the Campanians the honour of many of these productions, it cannot be derogatory to them if we regard them as scholars of the Greek artists.<sup>57</sup>

It is clear that Winckelmann, probably so as to avoid making enemies, was steering a middle road between the competing interests of the Neapolitans and the Florentines, both of whom hosted him on his visits to their collections in the 1760s. In this passage he singled out Nola, whose vases he particularly admired for their simplicity. He had encouraged the painter Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–1779)—his friend to whom he had dedicated the *Geschichte*—to buy a collection of three hundred Nolan vases that came on the market in 1759.<sup>58</sup> Winckelmann had intimate knowledge of these vases as evidenced by his iconographic notes elsewhere in *Geschichte*, e.g. in discussion of an Amazon with a Thessalian hat.<sup>59</sup> He also clearly identified Greek workmanship on these vases. When Anne Claude Comte de Caylus (1692–1765) commented on Mengs' collection, he retorted that Caylus 'made a

<sup>55</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, 174-79 (1.3.3).

<sup>56</sup> Higginson, in *A history of the study of south Italian*, 2011, 35, asserts rather than Winckelmann 'was the first to categorically take black- and red-figure vases away from the Etruscans and lay them squarely with the Greeks' but then details his confusion re. dates.

<sup>57</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, Lodge, 2nd edition, 249 (III.IV.7). Here, with Roman numerals, I refer to book 3 of Giles Henry Lodge's albeit imperfect translation of parts of the longer and thus more detailed posthumous version, *The history of ancient art among the Greeks* (1850), which is more specific with regard to vases that Winckelmann studied on his trips to Naples, particularly in 1767, as noted below. In *A history of the study of south Italian*, 2011, 37, Higginson rightly notes that Lodge translated some of Michel Huber's French translation of 1789 without citing it, which simply adds to the confusion about what Winckelmann actually said.

<sup>58</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, 176 (1.3.3.B).

<sup>59</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, 225 (1.4.2.C.b.aa).

common mistake and took all painted terracotta pots to be Etruscan.<sup>60</sup> Writing in 1758 about a vase in Caylus' collection, moreover, Winckelmann said it was 'Greek not Etruscan'.<sup>61</sup>

Yet Winckelmann avoided opportunities to correct the Etruscan mistake in print and was so fickle on the topic in his writings that his biographer Carl Justi thought he kept changing his mind (alternating between Greek, Campano-Greek, and Etruscan copies of Greek sculptures and paintings).<sup>62</sup> By 1757, when Winckelmann and d'Hancarville shared lodgings in Hamilton's vase cabinet, they were sufficiently apprised of the evidence for Greek identity. Winckelmann refused Hamilton's invitation to write his catalogues, so the task fell to d'Hancarville, although Pascal Griener has published letters between Hamilton and d'Hancarville that suggest they had planned the catalogue together from the beginning.<sup>63</sup> Winckelmann also passed the publication of many Vatican vases onto Giovanni Battista Passeri. It is clear from the title of Passeri's resulting 1767 publication—*Picturae Etruscorum in Vasculis* ('Etruscan Pictures on Vases')—that Passeri preferred the Etruscan claim: 'Even if those vases... were made by Campanian artists, I cannot understand why we should deprive them of their Etruscan name. In fact, Campania, and especially Capua, where most of these vases have been discovered, were colonies of the Etruscans.'<sup>64</sup> This is the same year in which Johann von Riedesel had drawn Winckelmann's attention to the beautiful Sicilian terracotta figures.<sup>65</sup> Since this was Winckelmann's last living year, however, it is a likely conclusion that he simply ran out of time to develop and publish his thoughts in light of these 'discoveries'. Even in Italy, however, Etruscomania persisted far beyond Winckelmann's death. While Piranesi affirmed the purported Etruscan origins of the vases with his perception of their high quality, in 1769, Josiah Wedgwood named

<sup>60</sup> In a letter to Bianconi, July 1758: *Winckelmann Briefe* vol 1, 395. Contra Caylus' assertion in a letter to Paciaudi, Paris, 2 Feb 1761; Nisard 1877, 1.228.

<sup>61</sup> Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Lettere italiane*. Milan: Feltrinelli, 1961, 322.

<sup>62</sup> Carl Justi, *Winckelmann und seine Zeitgenossen*, third ed. Leipzig: Vogel 1923, 3.418.

<sup>63</sup> Pascal Griener, *Le antichità Etrusche Greche e Romane 1766-1776 di Pierre Hugues d'Hancarville. La pubblicazione delle ceramiche antiche della prima collezione Hamilton*. Rome: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1992, 118-20. On d'Hancarville see Hönes, *Kunst um Ursprung*; Noah Heringman, *Sciences of Antiquity: Romantic Antiquarianism, Natural History, and Knowledge Work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, ch 3; Francis Haskell, 'The Baron d'Hancarville: An Adventurer and Art Historian in Eighteenth-Century Europe', Francis Haskell, *Past and Present in Art and Taste*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, 30-45.

<sup>64</sup> Giovanni Battista Passeri, *Picturae Etruscorum in Vasculis*. Rome: J. Zempel, 1767, 5. In his *History*, Winckelmann had admitted that it '... was in the earliest times considered a part of Etruria; however, the people did not belong to the body of the Etruscan state but instead existed independently' (1.3.3).

<sup>65</sup> Johann von Riedesel, 'Reisen des Freiherrn Johann Hermann Riedesel zu Eisenbach durch Sicilien, Großgriechenland, den Archipelagus nach Konstantinopel und durch Großbritannien in den Jahren 1767, 1768 und 1770', in *Briefen an seinen Freund Winckelmann, seine Schwester die Gräfin Gegenfeld geb. Riedesel zu Eisenbach und seinen Vetter den Freiherrn Diede zum Fürstenstein*. Jena: Frommann, 1830, 117.

his new factory 'Etruria'.<sup>66</sup> In 1806, Luigi Lanzi (1732–1810)—Curator of the Florence Gallery from 1776 and 'founder' of Etruscology<sup>67</sup>—refuted it in his work on Etruscan vases, correctly identifying their Greek origins.<sup>68</sup> The lag in English-language scholarship was even greater. In a footnote in the introduction to his 1822 catalogue, *Ancient Unedited Monuments: Painted Greek Vases*, James Millingen noted that 'Winckelmann first noticed the fallacy of this [Etruscomaniac] appellation' citing—tellingly—the Italian edition of *Geschichte*.<sup>69</sup> Incidentally, Millingen wrote this in the time when James Christie's was transforming his *Disquisition upon Etruscan Vases* (1806) into *Disquisitions upon the painted Greek vases and their probable connection with the shows of the Eleusinians and other mysteries* (1825). Winckelmann's *Geschichte* wasn't translated into English, of course, until Giles Henry Lodge's 1850 attempt.<sup>70</sup>

### Greek words for Greek pots

The fundamental evidence for the Greek identity of the majority of Greek vases—especially those found in Sicily and South Italy, was in the Greek writing found on some of the vases. Again, Neapolitan scholars had identified these inscriptions long before Winckelmann's mention of them in *Geschichte*.<sup>71</sup> Francesco Ficorini (1664–1747), the dealer who had negotiated Cardinal Gualtieri's purchase of Valetta's collection, told Gori that the collection contained a vase with an inscription in Greek giving the painter's name—'leggeva in greco il nome di Massimo...'—and that such vases were found at Cumae.<sup>72</sup> Winckelmann rightly doubted the authenticity of this particular inscription.<sup>73</sup> Paoli favoured the Neapolitan argument for Greek origins in part because of the inscriptions: '...Greek letters appear quite frequently, Etruscan letters more rarely'.<sup>74</sup> In 1754, Alessio Simmaco Mazzocchi (1684–1771), the most renowned Neapolitan antiquary, published five vases with Greek inscriptions, all of which had been found in Campania, specifically in Nola and nearby Sant'Agata dei Goti.<sup>75</sup> He understood them to have been made by the Greeks on account of the Greek inscriptions. Winckelmann was disappointed on meeting Mazzocchi in Naples 1758 to find the aged antiquary senile and overexcited about oriental

<sup>66</sup> Giambattista Piranesi, *Diverse maniere d'adornare i Cammini ed ogni altra parte degli edifizii desunte dall'architettura Egizia, Etrusca, e Greca*. Rome: Generoso Salomoni, 1769 13.

<sup>67</sup> Maria Elisa Micheli, 'Lanzi und Winckelmann: Eine Anmerkung', in *Winckelmann, Florenz und die Etrusker*, 2017, 263; Riva, 'The Freedom of the Etruscans', 103.

<sup>68</sup> Luigi Lanzi, *de Vasi Antichi Dipinti*, Florence: Fantosini, 1806, 15

<sup>69</sup> James Millingen, *Ancient Unedited Monuments: Painted Greek Vases*, 2 vols. London, 1822–1826, 1.3, n. 1.

<sup>70</sup> For its publication history see Sarafianos' n. 2 in this volume.

<sup>71</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, 176 (1.3.3.B).

<sup>72</sup> In a letter from Rome, 6 July 1734: Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, MS A LXII c. 109.

<sup>73</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, n. 269 (1.4).

<sup>74</sup> Paoli, *De Patera Argentea*, 250.

<sup>75</sup> Giovanna Cesarini, 'The antiquary Alessio Simmaco Mazzocchi: Oriental origins and the rediscovery of Magna Graecia in eighteenth-century Naples', *Journal of the History of Collections* 19: 2, November 2007, 249–59, but see also Giovanni Salumeri, 'Commentaries II. The Italian and European context of Neapolitan eighteenth-century antiquarianism', *Journal of the History of Collections* 19:2, November 2007, 265.

influence, but properly cited Mazzocchi's work in his *Geschichte*, where he referred to some of the scholarship on Mastrilli's vases:

Three vases, marked with Greek writing, are contained in the Mastrilli collection at Naples, which were made known, from the first time, by the Canon Mazzocchi, badly drawn, and worse engraved; but they appeared afterwards more correctly drawn at the same time with the Hamilton Vases. Another vase, with the inscription ΚΑΛΛΙΚΛΕΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ, 'The Beautiful Kallicles' is contained in the same collection; there is, moreover, to be seen there a cup of terracotta, with Greek letters on it. But the most ancient writing of all is on the above-mentioned vase belonging to Mr. Hamilton; and in the following chapter I shall make mention anew of these, as well as of other pieces marked with Greek writing. Now, as not a single one of these works with Etruscan writing on it has hitherto been discovered, it follows of course that the letters, no longer to be distinguished, on two beautiful vases in the collection of Signor Mengs at Rome, are not Etruscan, but Greek: one of them I have published in my *Ancient Monuments*.<sup>76</sup>



Figure 2 The Meidias Painter, *Meidias hydria*: Attic red-figure hydria, signed by Meidias, ca. 420 BC. London: British Museum 1772,0320.30.+ (E224). Photo museum.

This 'vase belonging to Mr. Hamilton' was the large hydria now known as the name vase of the Meidias Painter (fig. 2). It was his favourite vase, displayed like

<sup>76</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, Lodge, 2nd edition, 262–63 (III.IV.13).



Figure 3 The Taleides Painter, *Taleides amphora*: Attic black-figure amphora, signed by Taleides, ca. 540 BC. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art 47.11.5. Photo museum.

a pet at his feet in Joshua Reynolds 1777 painting of him (fig. 3). Despite the resulting fame of this vase its epigraphic details were not included in Reynolds' or other contemporary illustrations of it, not even those in Hamilton's catalogue, penned by d'Hancarville, from which so many subsequent artistic and scholarly treatments derived.<sup>77</sup> The labels, which were executed in dipinti made of white clay (kaolin), have since largely faded, so that nowadays they can only be recognised through the ghosts that remain where the letters once were, elusive to museum visitors, scholars, and even photographers.

Winckelmann must have read the writing on Hamilton's *Meidias hydria*, which constitutes labels identifying no less than twenty-six of its figures and an artist's inscription identifying the potter Meidias (on the shoulder).<sup>78</sup> Yet he did not

<sup>77</sup> Pierre-François Hugues d'Hancarville, *Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman antiquities from the cabinet of the Honourable William Hamilton*. Naples, 1766, pls. 127-30. Vicky Coltman, 'Sir William Hamilton's Vase Publications (1766-1776): A Case Study in the Reproduction and Dissemination of Antiquity', *Journal of Design History* 14: 1, 2001, 1-16. For Wedgwood's use of it see also Smith, 'Winckelmann's Elegant Simplicity', Nancy H. Ramage, 'Owed to a Grecian urn: the debt of Flaxman and Wedgwood to Hamilton', *Ars Ceramica* 6, 1989, 8-12, and 'Wedgwood and Sir William Hamilton: Their personal and artistic relationship', *Proceedings of the Thirty-fifth Wedgwood International Seminar*. Birmingham, Al.: Birmingham Museum of Art, 1990, 71-90.

<sup>78</sup> London, BM 1772,3-20.30+ (E224). Beazley Archive Pottery Database 220497.



spell it out in his description. Indeed, Winckelmann's comments in the posthumous edition of *Geschichte* were dispersed and seemingly cobbled together from either an unfinished draft or perhaps some preliminary notes. They have thus been taken as a suspect source, now eclipsed among English readers because of Mallgrave's 2006 translation of the shorter first edition.<sup>79</sup> When Winckelmann published his first edition in 1764, he had had little experience of Greek vases and had not observed Hamilton's collection in person. By the late 1760s, however, having visited Hamilton's collection and become aware of the Neapolitan and Southern Italian ideas about Greek identity of many of the figure-decorated ceramic vessels, he was ready to write much more about the importance of Greek vases in his history of Greek drawing, cut short by his untimely death in 1768.

Up to and including Winckelmann's career, collectors showed relatively little interest in the provenience of archaeological materials, which has skewed the history of art. The foregoing discussion of Greek v Etruscan workmanship of ancient vases found on the Italian peninsula indicates one of the many pitfalls that misled humanists, antiquarians, and other curiosi, as well as their scholarly successors. Few scholars worried about the provenance of archaeological material until the categorical work of the German archaeologist, Friedrich Wilhelm Eduard Gerhard (1795–1867), which ushered in a century-long secretarial phase of archaeology, with balanced foci on provenance studies and typologies. It was Gerhard who authoritatively published the Greek inscriptions on the Meidias Painter's name vase (**figure 2**).<sup>80</sup> Meidias might have been the first identified Attic, i.e. Athenian vase manufacturer but for Winckelmann's death, since Winckelmann had dismissed Valetta's 'Massimo' inscription.<sup>81</sup> Luigi Targioni meanwhile published the signature of another Athenian artist, named Taleides, on an amphora now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, that had been found in 1800 in Agrigento (a.k.a. Girgenti) in Sicily (fig. 4).<sup>82</sup>

At the time this amphora belonged to a Captain Felice Nicolas—formerly superintendent at the Royal Factory of Porcelain in Naples and before that an excavator of the Necropolis at Paestum—who had acquired it while he was stationed in Palermo. He quickly sold it to Thomas Hope who, having just purchased the leftovers of Hamilton's second collection (as discussed below), took it to England. On his stop in France, Hope showed the *Taleides amphora* to Aubin Louis Millin, who exposed it to the scholarly world through an illustration in his *Monumens antiques* in 1806.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> See Riva, 'The Freedom of the Etruscans', 105-107 for an admirable summary of the problematic revisions to *History*.

<sup>80</sup> F. W. Eduard Gerhard, 'Über die Vase des Midias [Vorgelegt in der Akademie der Wissenschaften am 24 October 1839]', in *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*. Berlin: Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1839, 295.

<sup>81</sup> See n. 68.

<sup>82</sup> Luigi Targioni, in a letter to Giovanni Gherardo de Rossi, published in *Giornale di Napoli* 1801. See Dietrich von Bothmer, with notes on the inscriptions by Marjorie J. Milne, 'The Taleides Amphora', *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 1947, 221-28.

<sup>83</sup> Aubin Louis Millin, *Monumens antiques*. Paris: Laroche, 1806.



Figure 4 Engraving of the upper scene of the *Meidias hydria*. After d'Hancarville, *Collection*, pl. 130 (no. 3). Courtesy Christ Church Upper Library, Oxford.

### Elegant simplicity

Winckelmann's more significant contribution to the study of Greek vases was his aesthetic response to the illustration of figures, which highlighted Greek vases and their importance. In the same section of *Geschichte*, on 'The Painting and Drawing on these Vases', he compared the images on these ancient vases to those of Renaissance masters:

The drawing on most vessels is such that the figures might deservedly find a place in a drawing by Raphael, and it is remarkable, that no two with identical images are to be found.... Whoever views and appreciates the masterly and delicate drawing on these vessels, and whoever understands the process for applying colours to such fired work, will find in this sort of painting the greatest proof of the general correctness as well as the facility of these artists in drawing.<sup>84</sup>

D'Hancarville made a similar analogy a few years later in the first volume of his catalogue of Hamilton's first collection, *Antiquités Etrusques, Grecques Et Romaines, Tirées Du Cabinet De M. Hamilton, Envoyé Extraordinaire De S.M. Britannique En Cours De Naples (1766–1767)*. In his treatise on 'Of Sculpture and Painting' he invited the reader to examine a 'little piece', a detail of the figures on the upper scene of *Meidias' hydria* (fig. 2) which he described as 'not unworthy of Raphael himself'.<sup>85</sup> With these words, Winckelmann and d'Hancarville prioritised the artistic

<sup>84</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, 176 (1.3.3.B).

<sup>85</sup> D'Hancarville, *Collection* 2.144. At over a half meter tall this hydria is hardly a 'little piece' so one wonders if d'Hancarville himself saw or even remembered viewing it. *Collection* included some vases that did not belong to Hamilton and did not include all of Hamilton's

quality of the vases and particularly the drawings with which they are decorated over their role as archaeological evidence of Greek culture.

With or without their Greek and particularly Athenian proveniences, the simple and elegant style of the 'Campanian' vases—those decorated in the red-figure style in particular—clearly appealed to the tastes of collectors, as well as Winckelmann, Mengs, and other artists.<sup>86</sup> Hamilton and Wedgwood shared this aesthetic interest, emphasising their elegance and simplicity, in their letters, in which neither party described the vases as either Etruscan or Greek.

And just as Raphael's first sketch of his ideas — the contour of a head or a whole figure drawing with a single unbroken sweep of a pen—reveals the master to the connoisseur no less than his finished drawings, so the great dexterity and assurance of ancient artists are seen in these vessels more than in other works. A collection of them is a treasure trove of drawing.<sup>87</sup>

In his elevation of these vase images to the realms of high art, Winckelmann compared them to Renaissance drawings rather than the painted works of art of, for example, Botticelli. Figural decoration on ancient black- and red-figure vases, which is nowadays customarily referred to as paintings, are more appropriately understood as drawings—as Winckelmann knew—insofar as they communicate an image primarily through the drawn line. *Curiosi* who contemplated Greek vases had begun to appreciate contours and other such simple lines that conveyed the figures on ancient vases. These and the outlines of the vases themselves were disseminated through *disegni* and other such published illustrations that became increasingly popular through the Neoclassical era.<sup>88</sup> As Michael Vickers put it, 'Admiration of the simplest kind of Greek vase decoration and active dislike of the most ornate seems to be due to a largely unconscious modernism on the part of the *cognoscenti*'.<sup>89</sup> At the end of the eighteenth century, the identification of the makers of these Greek vases subsided beneath a growing aesthetic appreciation for their forms as well as their decorations. Given the Enlightenment enthusiasm for artists' names, as Deborah Lyons points out, 'it is ironic that another century passed before scholars went about identifying individual painters and potters.'<sup>90</sup> In the early twentieth century, adapting the Morellian method, John D. Beazley categorized vases according to stylistic criteria and attributed them to the hands of specific artists. This

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own collection. Of the forty-one vases Hamilton obtained from the Mastrilli Collection, now in the British Museum, only sixteen were published in D'Hancarville, *Collection*, 1.166. See Lyons, 'Museo Mastrilli', 20.

<sup>86</sup> Alex Potts, 'Greek Sculpture and Roman Copies I: Anton Raphael Mengs and the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 43, 1980, 150-73.

<sup>87</sup> Winckelmann, *History*, 176 (1.3.3.B).

<sup>88</sup> For contour see Smith, 'Winckelmann's Elegant Simplicity'.

<sup>89</sup> Michael Vickers, 'Value and Simplicity: Eighteenth-century Taste and the Study of Greek Vases', *Past & Present* 116, August 1987, 104.

<sup>90</sup> Lyons, 'Nola', 246.

introduced elements of scarcity and selectivity that ensured a continuing increase in the investment value of Greek vases.<sup>91</sup>

The Neoclassical movement was motivated in part by a preference for simplicity and symmetry—perceived virtues of Greek and Roman antiquity according to the tenets of Classicism in the Renaissance—in contrast to the overly ornamental and thus sentimental Rococo styles that preceded them. While Neoclassical sculptors exalted Pheidias' generation in the golden age of Athens, they copied the baroque Roman copies of Hellenistic sculptures. Similarly, Neoclassical architects imitated ancient, largely Roman, monuments pictured in drawings and engravings that filled their lacunae and corrected their eccentricities. As had their Renaissance predecessors, Neoclassical architects based their revived ancient paintings on textual sources, the glyptic arts, and a few Roman examples e.g. from Nero's Domus Aurea and more recently from the excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum. The latter did much to fuel the ongoing debate between Winckelmann and others on his preference for Greek versus Roman art. When Winckelmann favourably compared Greek vase paintings to those of Raphael, however, the Neoclassicists turned their attention in droves to Raphael's works, which were better known and more easily accessible, rather than relying on their familiarity with Greek vase paintings.

Most figures in Neoclassical art, for example, Josiah Wedgwood's jasperware vases, were inspired more by imagery found in glyptic arts—sculptures, reliefs, gems, and coins rather than drawings on ancient vases. Wedgwood was frank about his efforts in a letter to Erasmus Darwin:

And first I only pretend to have attempted to copy the fine antique forms, but not with absolute servility. I have endeavoured to preserve the stile and spirit or if you please the elegant simplicity of the antique forms, and in doing so introduce all the variety I was able, and thus Sir W. Hamilton assures me I may venture to do, and that it is the true way of copying the antique.<sup>92</sup>

Wedgwood's primary illustrator, John Flaxman, in fact, had been inspired by the antiquities he viewed when Wedgwood sent him to Italy in 1787.

In elevating the humble ceramic vase to a work of art rather than a mere archaeological artefact, Winckelmann and d'Hancarville had therefore encouraged an increase in their perceived value. D'Hancarville was bolder in insinuating their value:

... such is the value of the singular Collection which we present to the Public, that of all of the Collections that can possibly be made either of

<sup>91</sup> Lyons, 'Nola', 246. For Beazley see Diana Rodríguez Pérez, Thomas Mannack, and Christina Neagu, *Beazley and Christ Church: 250 Years of Scholarship on Greek Vases*. Oxford: Christ Church, 2016; on the method see Philippe Rouet, *Approaches to the study of Attic vases: Beazley and Pottier*. Oxford monographs on classical archaeology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

<sup>92</sup> July 1787: Keele University, Mss. E26-19002. Coltman, 'Sir William Hamilton's Vase Publications', 8-12.

marbles, Bronzes, Medals or engraved Stones, this alone is capable of indicating the successful progress of Painting and design; and as in a Gallery of Pictures one endeavours to unite those of the Master from Ghiotti, and Cimabue down to our time, so in this Collection, one may see the stiles of the different periods in the Arts of the Ancients.<sup>93</sup>

In 1772, accordingly, Hamilton sold his first collection to the British Parliament for a mammoth £9,600. This included 175 terracottas, which garnered little notice.<sup>94</sup> It is impossible to judge how much of a profit Hamilton made on the sale of this first collection. While it is clear that the Neapolitan market for vases was buoyant when he arrived there less than a decade earlier, it continued to grow so much that in 1787 Naples' Bourbon government enacted legislation to control the antiquities trade.<sup>95</sup> It is clear, however, that an appreciation of the drawings on Greek vases, which perfectly appealed to the Neoclassical admirers, had already encouraged the market. Hamilton was so impressed with his Nolan vases that he went back to Nola to build a second collection.<sup>96</sup> He published this second collection, between 1791 and 1795, under the title *Collection of Engravings from Ancient Vases mostly of Pure Greek Workmanship Discovered in Sepulchres in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies*,<sup>97</sup> so it is clear that by then he was aware of the Greek origins of his vases and was also unafraid to advertise it. Was he aware of the effect it might have on their value?

While few artists seem to have known or cared about whether they were copying Greek or Roman precedents, it is exactly at this time, at the turn of the eighteenth to nineteenth century, that antiquarians came to the realisation that most of the red- and black-figure vases emerging from tombs on the Italic peninsula were the products of ancient Greek workmanship. D'Hancarville suggested in Hamilton's catalogue that the vases were made by Greek colonists in Campania.<sup>98</sup> For this he is often cited as the one who figured out that they were Greek.<sup>99</sup> D'Hancarville was clearly hedging his bets and, as Michael Vickers and David Gill have demonstrated, d'Hancarville wilfully misinterpreted the evidence to enhance

<sup>93</sup> D'Hancarville, *Collection*, 1.168.

<sup>94</sup> Uhlenbrock, 'The reception of Greek figurative terracottas', 29. See also Ramage, 'Sir William Hamilton'.

<sup>95</sup> Roberto Santoro, 'Un contributo alla riflessione teorica sull'arte attraverso le carte della real segretaria luogotenenziale. La politica culturale del Regio Museo Borbonico di Palermo (1818–1824)', dissertation Università di Palermo, 2011, 25.

<sup>96</sup> When he shipped this collection, which he thought finer than the first—because it had more Nolan, i.e. Athenian, vases—1/4 of it sank off the Scilly islands, on 10 December 1798; most of the rest were sold to Thomas Hope.

<sup>97</sup> Wilhelm Tischbein, *Collection of Engravings from Ancient Vases mostly of Pure Greek Workmanship Discovered in Sepulchres in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies*, Naples, 1791–1795. See Lezzi-Hafter et al. 1980 and Lyons, 'The Museo Mastrilli', 9.

<sup>98</sup> D'Hancarville, *Collection*, 2.134. See also 86, 94, 108 and especially 126–36.

<sup>99</sup> D'Hancarville, *Collection*, pls. 127–30. Yet he failed to note the inscriptions, discussed below. For d'Hancarville on the Greekness of Greek vases see e.g. Thomas Mannack, 'The study of Greek vases before Beazley', in *Beazley and Christ Church* 2016, xxx.

the perceived value of Hamilton's collection.<sup>100</sup> Did this realisation contribute to the increase in the value of ancient vases with figural decoration at the same time? Perhaps, but of course the value of neoclassical copies was also raised, at least in Naples (Porcinari), Paris (Sèvres), Berlin, and Wedgwood's Etruria, so that Greek vases still seemed comparatively cheap. And did the evolving taste for these vases result from the perception that they were original Greek products or for their aesthetics, in terms of both form and decoration? Even Flaxman's simple line drawings, with their figural profiles, which most closely resemble the style of Greek vase paintings, digress from the most part from the drawn originals on the vases.

## Conclusion

In his zeal for Greek originals Winckelmann had turned the focus on archaeology: at first coins, then gems, and — at the time of his death — he had plans to excavate Olympia where original Greek masterpieces might rise up out of their muddy graves. The discovery of wall and panel paintings might also have required visits to Greece as well as miracles of preservation unimaginable in Winckelmann's time. Winckelmann's realisation that many of the figure-decorated ceramic vessels emerging from tombs in Italy preserved Greek paintings or drawings came late in his life, seemingly too late for him to write an authoritative word on the subject. Northern European antiquarians, *curiosi* and eventually scholars were slow to discover the truth that had been known to Neapolitan men of letters, that most of the figural-decorated ceramics found in Sicilian, Campanian and even Etruscan tombs, were original products from 6<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> century Greece.<sup>101</sup> Ironically Winckelmann's appeal to classical Greek aesthetics was widely embraced when the nineteenth-century excavations in Etruscan cemeteries at Vulci, Tarquinia, and Cerveteri revealed a plethora of finely executed classical Attic vases.

Winckelmann succeeded in influencing collectors and other cognoscenti with his ideas of both the artistic excellence of these vases and their importance as original creations of his beloved ancient Greeks. Presumably due to his untimely death he failed to publish his joined-up thoughts on these matters, and thus left it to the next generation of Classical scholars to confirm the Greek origins of these vases. Perhaps the field of Etruscology would have proceeded more clearly had he sufficiently distinguished Greek from Etruscan art.<sup>102</sup> Winckelmann was fundamental in elevating the value of Greek vases because he was the first to compare the illustrations on Greek vases with those by the Renaissance masters, which were highly valued in monetary and other ways in eighteenth-century Europe. His timing was perfect; this was when large numbers of vases were coming out of Campania and Sicily. The small numbers in Etruria would be greatly

<sup>100</sup> Vickers, 'Value and Simplicity', 98-137, and 'Value and Simplicity: A Historical Case', Michael Vickers and David Gill, *Artful Crafts: Ancient Greek Silverware and Pottery*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, 6-14.

<sup>101</sup> Joan Mertens overplays the discovery of the Etruscan necropolis at Canino (in 1828) as Greek vase painting's 'first significant appearance in modern Europe' in 'Reflections of an Italian Journey on an Early Attic Lekythos?', *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 28, 1993, 5-11.

<sup>102</sup> Riva, 'The Freedom of the Etruscans'.

supplemented by the nineteenth-century excavations of Canino and others.<sup>103</sup> So, thanks to Neapolitan and Sicilian academic interest, encouraged by Winckelmann's aesthetic and historicising enthusiasms, Greek vases—and to a lesser degree other terracottas—began to be collected not just as oddities, miscellaneous fragments of past histories, but as desirable art. As Winckelmann saw it, a Greek vase might be an exemplar of both a functioning object that evidenced daily life in ancient Greece and excellent art. The same appeal pertains today.

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<sup>103</sup> Ruurd Binnert Halbertsma ed, *The Canino Connections: The history and restoration of ancient Greek vases from the excavations of Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino (1775-1840)*. Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2017.