

## *The Pan Painter's lekythoi at Gela*

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# Interaction and Identity Sicily and South Italy from the Iron Age to Late Antiquity

edited by

**Gillian Shepherd**

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In memoriam  
Sebastiano Tusa



*Cultural interactions: Sebastiano Tusa and Valeria Li Vigni admiring Indigenous Australian paintings, Kiwarr (upper left) and Ngurra (Country) (lower left) by Pulpurru Davies, and Minyma Kutjara (Two Sisters) by Kunmanara Stewart (right) in the Ian Potter Centre, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, in 2012. Photo by Alba Mazza*

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## 8

# The Pan Painter's *lekythoi* at Gela

Amy C. Smith

Whereas the tradition of connoisseurship has dictated that we treat figural fine-ware ceramics as individual artworks, so that each vase is in a class of its own, recent work on standardisation (e.g. Kotsonas 2014) gives us pause to consider the demands on ancient vase producers and whether they were tempted to standardise, if not mass produce, their works. For ancient Greek pottery, standardisation hardly stretches beyond an increasingly detailed level of classification yet ‘... specimens tend to fall into a few rather stereotyped groups ... this very tendency to standardisation increases their interest’ (Ure 1946: 38). We rightly approach the work of a first-rate red-figure painter in Athens, such as the Pan Painter, however, somewhat more cautiously, because the history of scholarship on Athenian fine wares has in fact pulled us in the opposite direction (Turner 2000; Oakley 2009; Sapirstein 2013). In this chapter I blend both approaches in consideration of a large group of red-figure *lekythoi* attributed to the Pan Painter (**Table 1**), at least 11 of which were found in tombs at ancient Gela in Sicily. These *lekythoi* are large oil jars decorated in a particularly refined style, with predominant iconography involving Nikai and other single figures, like his Oxford masterpiece (**Fig. 1**). Of the Pan Painter's *lekythoi*, however, a disproportionate number—11—were found in Gela, which is more than half of his 20 *lekythoi* with recorded findspots and more than a third of his total known output of 30. It is also worth pointing out another five of the 20 with known findspots, thus a total of 16, were found in Italy. After a brief introduction to the painter, I consider the evolution of the red-figure Attic *lekythos*, in terms of form and function, assess its popularity at Gela, and finally re-evaluate the Pan Painter's *lekythoi* at Gela in the context of his overall production of *lekythoi*.

The Pan Painter—famously named by Sir John Beazley in 1912 for his memorable image on the ‘B’ side, or back, of his name vase, a krater in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Boston, MFA inv. 10.185: BA 206276)—was undeniably one of the most wide ranging and prolific red-figure vase painters in Athens in the early Classical period, ca 480–460 BC (all dates hereafter are BC unless otherwise noted). The Pan Painter is well known for his bespoke images and variety of shapes decorated. I have previously discussed his small *pelikai*, perhaps executed under the influence or at the behest of a particular vase workshop, or as part of a particular commission, in which the Pan Painter minimised variability in favour of standardisation, to meet market demands (Smith 2014). These little *pelikai*, and the charming scenes that

No.	Beazley Archive no. (BA)	Museum/inv. no.	Findspot	Scene	Top frieze	Bottom frieze	Shoulder decoration	Ht (cm)	Diam (max)	Diam (mouth)
1	16290	Eretria	Eretria	Persephone		Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)		43.3	14.2	8.3
2	206410	Taranto MAN 4545	Taranto	Theseus & Ariadne	Meander (3)/ Saltire (1)	Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)	5 palmettes	39.7	13.9	8.1
3		16 <sup>th</sup> Ephorate, Aφου 505	Aphytis, Chalkidiki	Hermes slaying Argos	Maeander	Maeander	5 palmettes	38.8 <sup>1</sup>	14.3	8.1
4 (T90) <sup>2</sup>	206356	Boston, MFA 13.198	Gela	Hunter with dog		Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)		38.7	13.1	8.1
5 (T84)	206347	Providence, RISD 25.110	Gela	Nike with <i>thymiatieron</i>	Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)	Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)	5 palmettes	38.2	12.5	8.0
6	206365	St. Petersburg, Hermitage GR8068		Artemis with swan (WG)	Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)	Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)	5 palmettes	38 <sup>3</sup>		
7	6789	Fiesole, Coll. Costantini		Seated Eros playing <i>barbitos</i>	Maeander	Maeander	5 palmettes	37 <sup>4</sup>		
8	206355	Taranto	Taranto	Walking youth with <i>kithara</i>		Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)		36 <sup>5</sup>		
9	206351	Taranto 54383	Novoli (Lecce)	Zeus pursuing Ganymede with hoop		Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)		35.6 <sup>6</sup>		7.0
10 (T87)	206360	London, BM E759	Gela	Apollo with lyre & <i>phiale</i> into which Artemis libates with <i>otnochoe</i> (holding bow)	Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)	Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)	5 palmettes	35.5	11.8	6.6
11 (T91)	206361	Syracuse, MAN 15498	Gela	Hunter with dog	Maeander	Key	5 palmettes	35		
12 (T92)	206366	Syracuse, MAN 19900	Gela	Woman with wool (WG)	Maeander	Maeander	5 palmettes	35 <sup>7</sup>		
13 (T89)	206352	Adolphseck, Schloss Fasanerie 53	Gela (via Rome)	Woman w/ helmet & shield	Maeander	Maeander (4) / Cross-in-square (1)	5 palmettes	34.8	11.1	6.4
14 (T88)	206362	Adolphseck, Schloss Fasanerie 51	Gela (via)		Meander (3)/ Saltire (1)		2 Erotes	34.5 <sup>8</sup>		7.9
15	275733	Coll. Malcolm Wiener (NY)		Woman playing <i>barbitos</i>	Maeander	Maeander	5 palmettes	32.8	11.5	5.8
16	206354	St. Petersburg, Hermitage Gr13842		Hekate with torches		Maeander		32.5 <sup>9</sup>		
17 (T86)	206345	Oxford, Ashmolean 1881.1401	Gela	Flying Nike playing lyre	Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)	Meander (2)/ Saltire (1)	5 palmettes	31.7	12.1	8.3
18 (T83)	206357	Boston, MFA 01.8079	Gela	Eros with deer		Maeander		31.7	11.4	6.0

19	206348	Providence, RISD 35.708		Flying Nike playing lyre	Meander (4)/ Cross-in- square (1)	Maeander	5 palmettes	30.1 (pres.)	10.8	6.2
20	206353	Brussels, Bib. Royale 10	Capua?	Woman with mirror	Meander (2)/ Cross-in- square (1)	Meander (2)/ Cross-in- square (1)	5 palmettes	(19.2 (pres.))	9.3	NA
21	206363	Madrid, MAN Varez Fisa 1999.99.111		Nude boy, clapping (?), facing seated youth, playing lyre	Maeander (2)/Cross-in- square (1)	Red band	5 palmettes (BF)	27.3	9.0	5.4
22 (T85)	6285	Providence, RISD 56.061	Gela (via Syracuse)	Flying Nike with <i>oinochoe</i> & <i>phiale</i>	Maeander (2)/Saltire (1)	Maeander (2)/Cross-in- square (1)	5 palmettes	27	9.7	6.2
23	206350	New Haven, YUAG 1988.80.29	Agrigento <sup>10</sup>	Hermes with <i>phiale</i>	Maeander (4)/Saltire (1)	Maeander (3- 10)/Saltire (1)	5 palmettes	26.6 (pres.)	8.8	4.7
24 (T93, 96)	206412	Oxford, Ashmolean 1888.1402, V321 <sup>11</sup>	Gela	Caged bird; man leaning on staff	Maeander	2 rows of dots between 2 lines	5 palmettes	25.1	8.3	8.3
25	206364	Athens, NM CC1364, I602	Athens	Siren playing double <i>aulos</i>				18.2 <sup>12</sup>	6.7	3.8
26	7896	Basel, HC626B		Artemis	NA	NA	NA	Frg.		
27	9031720	Bochum, Ruhr Uni. 51209		Archer	Maeander	NA	NA	Frg.		
28	16921	Greifswald, University 352		Youth	NA	NA	NA	Frg.		
29	20229	Kerameikos 6027	Athens, Kerameikos	Nike	Maeander (?)	NA	NA	Frg.		
30	206346	Oxford, Ashmolean 1920.58		Eros playing <i>barbitos</i>	NA	NA	NA	Frg.		

Table 1. Distribution of Pan Painter lekythoi, organised according to height. Previous attributions to the Pan Painter or his 'manner' excluded from this list are: Harward Sackler 1991.28 (BA 28615); Berlin 1970.1 (BA 46163); Oxford, Ashmolean 1879.172, V313, 313 (BA 206394); Amsterdam, Allard Pierson 4593 (BA 9024937); Ex Cahn (BA 9034543); Naples M1411 (BA 206358); Haverford (BA 206359). For the last example see, however, *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 109 (1994), pl. 17.3–4. Notes: 1. <http://hermitage-www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/25.+archaeological+artifacts/543367>; 4. CVA Fiesole, Coll. Costantini 1.43; 5. CVA Taranito 3, III.1.3 pl. 2.3–4 (1578); 6. Mannino 2006: 100 no. 92; 7. Kurtz 1975: 206 pl. 24.3; 8. CVA Schloss Fasmerie pl. 38; 9. <http://hermitage-www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/25.+archaeological+artifacts/1003693>; 10. Acc. Beazley: CVA New Haven 1, 25–27 no. 21; 11. I dispute the attribution of this vase to the Pan Painter; 12. Restored foot, so height is meaningless

decorate them—such as the Berlin example decorated with a boy sacrificing a piglet at a herm (Fig. 2)—are a far cry from the grand mythic presentations by the same painter on larger and more refined *pelikai*. Compare the care with which he decorated the exceptional Busiris *pelike* in Athens (Fig. 3) or even medium-sized *pelikai*, like the one decorated with a furniture deliverer in Oxford (Fig. 4). The Pan Painter decorated even more *lekythoi*, single-handed oil jars that constitute about 14% of his output of 220 or so vases. Although the *lekythos* is one of his ‘favourite’ vase shapes (Smith 2006: 443), the Pan Painter’s *lekythoi* remain harder to subgroup than his *pelikai* because of the range of both sizes and iconographies they embody. Before I analyse his *lekythoi* and particularly the group that was found at Gela, I will consider the evolution of the Attic red-figure *lekythos*, the quintessential shape that he favoured.

### The evolution of the standard *lekythos*

*Lekythoi* come in many shapes and sizes (Fig. 5) and are ubiquitous in ancient Mediterranean graveyards, seemingly because the oil that they purportedly contained would have been useful for both funerary purposes and for the afterlife. The narrow body of this vessel does not provide a broad enough pictorial space for story telling



Figure 1. *Lekythos* decorated with a flying Nike carrying a lyre, attributed to the Pan Painter (no. 17). Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1881.1401 (BA 206345)



Figure 2. *Pelike* decorated with a boy sacrificing a piglet at a herm, attributed to the Pan Painter, 470–460 BC. Berlin Museums 1966.62 (BA 275276)



Figure 3. Pelike decorated with the death of Busiris, attributed to the Pan Painter, 470–460 BC. Athens, National Museum 9683 (BA 206325)



Figure 4. Pelike decorated with a youth carrying furniture, attributed to the Pan Painter, 480–470 BC. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1890.29 (BA 206330)

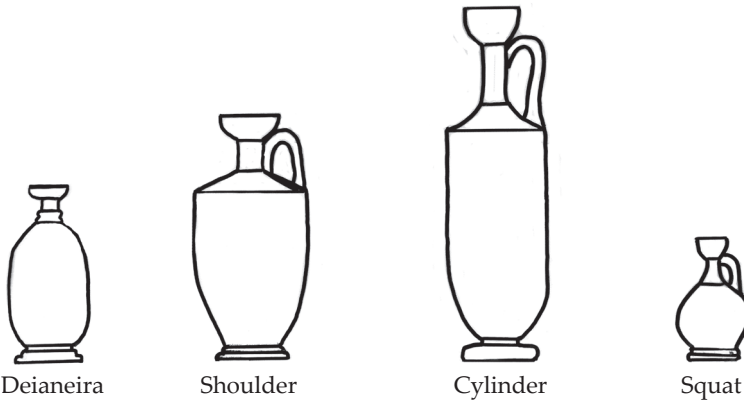


Figure 5. Drawings of various *lekythoi*, after <https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/tools/pottery/shapes/lekythos.htm> (consulted 31 January 2019)

but, as with Nolan amphoras, the form lends itself to depictions of single figures or pairs, if any figural decoration. Type I (also called Deianeira), the first of three principal types of *lekythoi*, characterised by an uninterrupted profile curving from neck to foot, predominates and is largely confined to Attic black-figure, in the first half of the 6th century, before the invention of red-figure (Moore & Philippides 1986: 43, 204). The type II *lekythos*, the quintessentially 5th-century Athenian oil jar with a carination at the shoulder, however, originated in the middle of the 6th century (Richter & Milne 1935: 15; Moore & Philippides 1986: 44; Moore 1997: 45). Type III—otherwise known



as the squat *lekythos* because it rests on a broad base—is characterised by the slight interruption of its profile between shoulder and neck, and becomes popular in the second half of the 5th century (Moore 1997: 45), thus after the time of the Pan Painter, whose *lekythoi* are therefore strictly type II.

Of the type II *lekythoi*, the most popular in Attic red-figure, also among white-ground wares, is the cylinder *lekythos*, introduced in the last third quarter of the 6th century, shortly after the invention of red-figure. The cylinder *lekythos*, named for its cylindrical body, eclipsed the so-called shouldered *lekythos*, named for its broad shoulder. The cylinder *lekythos* is also characterised by a calyx-shaped mouth, flat on top, with a slight offset between neck and sloping shoulder and disk or two-degree foot (Moore 1997: 45). The potter who worked with the Edinburgh Painter, perhaps Gales, may have developed this shape, which continued to be decorated in that workshop and by others with the black-figure technique. As Dyfri Williams (2017: 149) points out, the *lekythos* remained the most common shape decorated by late black-figure painters, well after 500. The Edinburgh Painter also first used white slip for the cylindrical body but, as early as 515, Psiax put white on the body of his black-figure palmettes (e.g. Jameson Collection, Paris, ABV 293.11; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 76; BA 320357; illustrated in Mertens 1977: pl. 3.1; see also Neils 2008: 64). Donna Kurtz suggests his white-ground products emerged in that time of experimentation, while Psiax was a member of the Nikosthenic circle, working under the influence of his ‘brother,’ the Antimenes Painter (Kurtz 1975: 9–12).

The Berlin Painter popularised the cylindrical *lekythos*—what Beazley called ‘standard’ (ARV<sup>2</sup> 675)—in the red-figure technique (Moore 1997: 45). He seized upon the inherent elegance of this vase shape, which he decorated with single red figures emerging from their lustrous black backgrounds. His successors, including the Pan Painter, followed his precedent in decorating standard *lekythoi* with the red-figure technique, while the Providence Painter first decorated them with white-ground and thus paved the way for the Achilles Painter (Oakley 1997: 98; 2017: 71–72). At the same time a ‘secondary’ type of cylinder *lekythos*—smaller than the ‘standard’, with a concave body, less finely worked, often without figural decoration on the body—emerged in the workshops of Beazley’s Class of Athens 581 and was produced alongside the ‘standard’ type (Williams 2017: 150).

The first generation of ‘standard’ white *lekythoi* eludes Athenian tombs, even those in the Kerameikos (Gex 2014: 321, following Felten 1976: 77). When a newer style of decoration, namely outline drawing with added colours, replaced the black-figure white-ground variant, in the first quarter of the 5th century, however, its Athenian craftsmen found primary markets for it in Eretria and Sicily (Gex 2014: 325). Among Sicilian sites Gela stands out as a primary market for Athenian ceramic products. As Kristine Gex has noted, whereas white *lekythoi* that travelled north to Eretria were decorated with funerary iconography, those that travelled west to Sicily were decorated with a variety of figures illustrating myth and the mundane (Gex 2014: 326). She agrees with John Oakley’s revised hypothesis that, after they had been tested abroad, these ‘special products ... caught on in Athens’ (Oakley 2003: 212–213, *contra* Oakley 2001: 107–108; Gex 2014: 325). When white *lekythoi* became exclusively funerary, from ca 440, moreover, the Geloans stopped importing them (Oakley 2003: 213; Gex 2014: 326). Once the fad had caught on in Athens (Oakley 2001: 108; 2003: 212), the majority of later white *lekythoi* were found in Attica and nearby Eretria (Oakley 2003: 207).

## Lekythoi to Gela

The occurrence of white *lekythoi* at Gela in the first half of the 5th century is in line with Attic imports to Gela, which stands out as a primary Sicilian market (Kurtz 1975: 139–141; de la Genière 1991). They include works by the best Attic artists of the time (Oakley 2003: 213; cf. Giudice 1998), seemingly directed at a Greek colonist market. No fewer than 34 examples of white *lekythoi*, all early, have been found at Gela (Kurtz 1975: 140; Oakley 2003: 207). One of them was painted by the Pan Painter (no. 11; see Kurtz 1975: pl. 24.3 and Oakley 2003: 213, no. 4).

That *lekythoi* were abundant in Geloan tombs comes as no surprise: oil was needed for graves and oil jars had been popular in graves even before the evolution of the Attic *lekythos* (de la Genière 2003: 149). Yet the numbers of Attic *lekythoi* at Gela are undeniably significant: Caroline Haspels named the most prolific black-figure *lekythos* painter the Gela Painter after that site because it is where the majority of his works had been found (Haspels 1936: 78–86; but now see Dias 2009). From the outset of Athenian production of red-figure, in 525, *lekythoi* were exported to Gela in increasing numbers, from almost 80 in the first quarter of the 5th century to 236 at its apogee in the second quarter of the 5th century, when the Pan Painter was working (here I follow the numbers usefully assembled by the contributors to the 2003 volume *Ta Attika* (Panvini & Giudice 2003) that adapt Beazley and Haspels' counts, with black-figure divided from red-figure in the first two quarters of the 5th century). This growth is in line with the global production of Athenian red-figure and is unremarkable. It is clear, however, that the *lekythos* was the most popular Attic ceramic import to Gela, especially in the time of the Pan Painter, in the second quarter of the 5th century. **Table 2** shows the relative number of *lekythoi* in comparison to the overall number of vases found at Gela. Gex (2014: 325) emphasises that Sicily and Eretria were not merely important export markets for the *lekythos* at this time, however, but that in fact they were the principal markets for the Attic *lekythos* in the first half of the 5th century, far ahead of Athens itself. The graves in the Kerameikos sporadically included red-figure *lekythoi* from as early as 500/490 (Kunze-Götte *et al.* 1999) and thereafter *lekythoi* in a various colours—black-figure and the standard white-ground variety from 440—sometimes as sets, e.g. Grave 273 (Kunze-Götte *et al.* 1999; Gex 2014, esp. 321, n. 8).

	All shapes	<i>Lekythoi</i>
500–475 (BF)	73+	58
500–475 (RF)	79	48
475–450 (BF)	2*	1
475–450 (RF)	236	153
450–425 (all)	88	57
425–400 (all)	2	1

Table 2. Numbers of 5th-century Attic vases found at Gela (from Beazley/Haspels counts, following Panvini & Giudice 2003). The number of hastily produced black-figure *lekythoi* contemporary with the Pan Painter's works is much larger than the amounts represented here

Increasingly, throughout the century, it seems that singleton red-figure *lekythoi* appear in non-Athenian Greek graves, like the one from Aphytis (Misailidou-Despotidou 2012; Smith & Volioti 2019) (**Fig. 6**).

The Pan Painter is better represented at Gela than his contemporaries, except for the Providence and Bowdoin Painters, who each sent 21 and 33 vases to Gela (mostly *lekythoi*). The Achilles and Phiale Painters, both also known for *lekythoi*, later surpass him. Giudice's (1974) presentation of the Attic red-figure *lekythoi* at Gela reveals that, in fact, *lekythoi* were the vast majority of the output of each of these painters found at Gela. Whereas these other four painters, especially the Bowdoin Painter, exported to Gela many more *lekythoi*



Figure 6. *Lekythos* decorated with Hermes slaying Argos, attributed to the Pan Painter (no. 3). Aphytis, 16th Ephorate, Aqv 505. Drawing by author



Figure 7. Nolan amphora decorated with draped youths, attributed to the Pan Painter. Brunswick, Maine, Bowdoin 1913.30 (BA 206318)

than any other shape, the proportion of Pan Painter *lekythoi* found at Gela is vastly out of proportion with his broader *oeuvre*. It is clear that he or more likely those for whom he painted these *lekythoi* (perhaps as a freelance artist) made a point of creating *lekythoi* for Gela, because they knew the Geloans or at least the Sicilians wanted them, seemingly primarily for graves.

### The Pan Painter's *lekythoi*

It has been widely understood, as noted above, that the Geloan preference for *lekythoi* reflects the need for *lekythoi* in funerary contexts. While all of the Pan Painter's Geloan *lekythoi* were found in funerary contexts, neither his amphora (Fig. 7) nor his *pelike* (Fig. 4) found at the same site were funerary. In noting the Pan Painter's preference for *lekythoi*, as well as *pelikai* and Nolan amphorae, Beazley (1974: 5) aptly remarks that '... most of our vases come from tombs, Greek and barbarian, in Italy and Sicily ... certain kinds of vase were more suitable for tomb-furniture than others, and may therefore bulk larger in our list than in the painter's workshop'. Could it just be that the Pan Painter took on a consignment of funerary vases that were subsequently shipped to Gela, as Ross Holloway (2003: 401) suggested of the two *lekythoi* now in Providence? That is, were these bespoke funerary vessels? If we are to consider the Pan Painter's Geloan *lekythoi* as some sort of special group, prepared especially for



graves in that necropolis, we should expect some consistency across the group in terms of form, if not size, decorative motifs, other aspects of style and iconography. Can any consistency be found?

### Form

Each of the Pan Painter's standard *lekythoi* is comprised of a cup mouth, with a cylindrical neck, broadening towards the flat shoulder, on a slightly bulbous rounded body, narrowing to a short pedestal foot. Despite superficial consistency, no two profiles match. With regards to form as well as decoration '... the Pan Painter was careful too that no two of these large (and valuable) *lekythoi* were the same' (Holloway 2003: 402). The relative inconsistency in shape—especially towards the feet—as with the two vases in the Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston (nos 4 and 18; see **Fig. 8**)—might be attributed to flawed restorations. Other inconsistencies, the great variety in the width of the mouths (see **Table 1**), for example, suggest that the *lekythoi* were not necessarily all shaped by the same potter. The Pan Painter's tendency to decorate a whole range of vases potted by all manner of craftsmen, in fact, is an important yet frustrating aspect of his individuality, in contrast to his contemporaries, especially the so-called Mannerists, with whom he has been classed. As a result, he provided us with a rather inconsistent dataset, across which it is hard to find standardisation by traditional criteria.



Figure 8. Two *lekythoi*, decorated with a hunter and dog and Eros with deer, attributed to the Pan Painter (nos 4 and 18). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 13.198 (BA 206356) and 01.8079 (206357)

### Size

Just as these *lekythoi* show slight variation in form, their sizes vary greatly. The heights of the Pan Painter's *lekythoi* range from large to extra large and fall into five size groups, as follows (all heights in cm): (i) 25–28; (ii) 31–33; (iii) 34–37; (iv) 38–40; (v) 43.3. I discount the smallest—the Athenian example decorated with a siren (no. 25)—at 18.2cm in height, because of its restored foot. That the largest example (no. 1, the sole member of group v) was found in Greece (Eretria) gives us pause to consider that the Geloan imports were not necessarily the grandest products the Pan Painter decorated. Less than half of the second largest group (iv) were found in Gela, while most (five) cluster in the median group (iii), measuring 33 to 37cm in height.

### Decorative motifs

The patterns across the variety of *lekythoi* are quite consistent. Most have a classic egg-dot frieze just below the offset neck and a distinctive chain of five palmettes on the shoulders (Fig. 9). Seventeen of the Pan Painter's 25 complete *lekythoi* (eight of his 11 from Gela) are decorated with this shoulder treatment, thus we note no difference between the overall group and the Gela subgroup. The Madrid *lekythos* (no. 21) has its palmette frieze in black-figure. Most *lekythoi* have decorative friezes on the cylinder, both above and below their figural scenes. These friezes are decorated with meanders, half interspersed with cross-in-square or saltire. On some of the *lekythoi*—the Eretria Persephone (no. 1), the Boston hunter (no. 4), two of the Taranto examples (nos 8–9), the St Petersburg Hekate (no. 16) and the Boston Eros with deer (no. 18)—the figural scenes so completely fill the body and overlap the shoulder that an upper frieze would be obstructive, as would a shoulder decoration. That is, the figures touch or overlap onto the shoulder and thus preclude shoulder patterns. Another exception is a black-bodied *lekythos* from Gela, now in Adolphseck, with Erotes approaching the central palmette (no. 14, Fig. 10). Perhaps here our painter was catering to all tastes; indeed, as Kurtz (1975: 11) observes, the simplicity of the black-bodied *lekythoi* was popular in Sicilian markets. The exceptions to the meander groundline are the Madrid *lekythos* (no. 21), whose nude boy and seated youth sit above a red band, while the shorter Athens siren and Adolphseck black-body of course have none. All three are in any case singletons and only the last was found at Gela.



Figure 9. Detail of 5-palmette chain on the shoulder of a *lekythos* decorated with Theseus & Ariadne, attributed to the Pan Painter (no. 2). Taranto, MAN 4545 (BA 206410)



Figure 10. Black-bodied *lekythos* decorated with Erotes on the shoulder, attributed to the Pan Painter (no. 14). Adolphseck, Schloss Fasanerie 51 (BA 206362)

The great variation in form, size and ornament on our Pan Painter's *lekythoi*, whether or not we limit ourselves to those that found their way to Gela, discourage an interpretation that any group of them was done as a special commission. We might consider therefore that these vessels could have been used for one purpose in 'daily life' and another as grave gifts: hypothesising reuse of ordinary household *lekythoi* as funerary vessels at Gela is a tempting possibility given the relative poverty of its necropoleis. In light of the pan-Mediterranean preponderance of *lekythoi* in tombs and the little wear on these vases to indicate earlier use in the household, however, might we simply accept that graves were the primary destination for *lekythoi*, at Gela as elsewhere? As Martin Robertson (1992: 130) rightly noted, while '... the mass-produced *lekythoi* of [the post-Pioneer era] were almost entirely for funereal use ... there is as of yet no specifically funereal iconography'. This observation certainly holds true of the Pan Painter's *lekythoi*, even among some found at Gela, as I explain below. Decorative motifs are relevant to style in a wider sense, but what of the painter's unique style, his or her 'hand', as evoked in the figural decoration?

### Figural decoration

The style of figural decoration across this group of *lekythoi* is consistent and indeed typical of the Pan Painter at his best. It is careful and detailed work, with none of the haphazard glazing or unfinished feet characteristic of his more 'banaisic' or sketchy style that I have observed on some of his *pelikai* (Smith 2014). Folds of clothing are fine and carefully detailed. I should admit that, in defining this group, I have denied some earlier attributions to the Pan Painter or his 'manner'.

Speaking in general terms, the variety of stories, scenes and characters shown on bodies of the Pan Painter's *lekythoi* are also largely in line with his overall *oeuvre*: each is decorated with a one- or two-figure composition that shows either divine or human figures, male and female, with more of the latter. The divinities, especially Nike, the goddess of victory (e.g. **Fig. 1**), are from among his favourites. Holloway (2003: 403) is right to note that Nike is common on red-figured *lekythoi*; she appears on slightly under a third of the red-figure *lekythoi* found at Gela. Sicilians were not alone in their taste for Nike on *lekythoi*; a quick search of the Beazley Archive reveals that 140 or almost 8% of the 1081 Attic red-figure *lekythoi* dating to the first half of the 5th century are decorated with Nike ([www.beazley.ox.ac.uk](http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk): checked 15 March 2020). One, found in a tomb, Borgo 396 (Orsi 1906: 175–176, pl. VI) actually has a label identifying her as NIKE, so it is likely that at least some of Gela's residents read these winged figures as Nike (for attempts to correlate imagery to marketing of Greek vases see Langridge-Noti 2013). And 'Every Geloan would have recognized the goddess of Victory on the tetradrachms of the city that began to be issued about 480 B.C. mirroring the same type in use in other cities of the Deinomenid Empire' (Holloway 2003: 403). These Nikai would have been cheerful presences whose attributes could even suggest that death itself might be overcome (Holloway 2003: 404). Must all winged female figures necessarily denote victory? These Nikai carry no crowns or fronds of victory but rather a variety of objects related to cult among other activities and are therefore as appropriate to death as to lively activities. Specific cult objects are the ritual vessels, *phiale* and *oinochoe* (as on no. 22) — which are used also by the Delian twins (no. 10) — and the incense burner or *thymiaterion* (no. 5). All three are found also in social occasions that have cultic overtones, like the *symposion*.

Nikai and other figures on these *lekythoi* carry musical instruments that are equally

appropriate to cult and social occasions, and in a sympotic context infer a human musician. Nike's instrument is a *chelys* or tortoise-shell lyre (no. 17; see also no. 19), a lightweight instrument that is appropriate for youths, following its adoption by Apollo (*Homeric Hymn* 4.20–60), for whom it signifies some sort of education, thus social status, but also 'citizen' women (Bundrick 2005: 15). Note the coexistence of Eros, women and lyres on other Attic red-figure vases by the Polygnotos Group, e.g. London, BM 1921,0710.2 (ARV<sup>2</sup> 1060.138; *Add<sup>2</sup>* 323; *CVA British Museum* 6, III.I.C.3; BA 213771) and Würzburg 521 (ARV<sup>2</sup> 1046.7; BA 213576). This juxtaposition emphasises and may have suggested the ways in which musical ability and/or music itself might make a woman attractive in a romantic way.

In a funerary context, as in the Tomb of the Diver at Paestum, the lyre could suggest Pythagorean beliefs (Robinson 2011: 59–60, following Holloway 2006). It was relevant also to the cults of Dionysos and Aphrodite. Or perhaps the musicians on our vases manifest music's significance as a means of communication of pain of loss or even erotic desire (Karoglou 2016). Sirens with or without lyres signify death. The siren on the Pan Painter's small *lekythos* found in Athens (no. 25) might then conjure the funereal dirge on her double *aulos*. Sheramy Bundrick (2005: 13) notes that 'artists had preconceived notions of the functions and associations of specific instruments, likely derived from societal attitudes and actual practice'. The music emanating from pretty much any instrument could be adapted to the right context, so perhaps it does not matter which instrument each figure holds.

While the ancient Greek terminology for instruments is fluid, most painters and certainly the Pan Painter indicated differences between these stringed instruments (on this matter see also Bundrick 2005: 14 and on stringed instruments see Maas & McIntosh Snyder 1989; Landels 1999; Wilson 2004, among others). He puts the *kithara* in the hands of a striding youth on a *lekythos* found at Taranto (no. 8). This is the concert instrument of professionals so the youth might be Apollo himself, shown here in his *kitharoidos* role. Elsewhere on his *lekythoi* the Pan Painter illustrates male and female musicians with the exotic lyre called the *barbitos* (nos 7, 15 and 30). This imported Lydian lyre, which Anakreon is said to have brought to Athens when Hipparchos invited him in 525 to join the Peisistratid court (Pseudo-Plato, *Hipparchos* 228c) thereafter signified leisure and revelry (Mathiesen 1999: 249–253). It is a 'bass' lyre, however, thus inappropriate for the high-pitched laments and dirges associated with death.

Is the iconography found in the Pan Painter's *lekythoi* at Gela any more 'appropriate for' or even tailored to a Sicilian crowd (Holloway 2003: 402)? If we limit our consideration to the 20 *lekythoi* with proveniences, there is no significant difference between those found in Greece, the rest of South Italy or Sicily. The Athens Siren (no. 25) is, as I have already established, an outlier. Another Athenian find is the Kerameikos Nike (no. 29). If we include the Aphytis Hermes (no. 3) and the Eretria Persephone (no. 1), these four genuine Greek finds exemplify the Pan Painter's larger iconographic range, at least as regards *lekythoi*, although without the human figures.

## Conclusion

In this group of 11 Pan Painter *lekythoi* found at Gela we have a coherent collection of red-figure vases that are fairly typical of Attic vases in Gela, in terms of shape and iconography. In terms of size and decorative style, however, they are far above

average. As regards shape and decoration, moreover, their relative coherence within the *oeuvre* of the Pan Painter confirms our suspicion that they were planned and executed at a particular time in the middle of the painter's career, probably the 460s. Yet we cannot be sure one way or another whether the Pan Painter planned the similarities among these vases at the behest of his 'boss', probably the workshop owner, or at the behest of an agent working on behalf of the consumers in Gela, as von Bothmer (1998: 549) mused with regard to the Nike *lekythos* (ARV<sup>2</sup> 561.8) decorated by an artist near the Pan Painter, in the Villa Kérylos at Beaulieu-sur-mer. Perhaps it was a bit of both.

In any case, the Gela *lekythoi* are a very high quality group of vases, greatly admired nowadays as presumably in the past. I earlier sought to understand how and why this high-quality group of funerary vases came to Gela. Attic trade with Gela being what it was, the idea of the Pan Painter's workshop—whether his or someone else's, as I have suggested elsewhere (Smith 2006)—receiving a large order for *lekythoi* (Onians 1991: 66) and his setting out to design each individually but with an eye on current market trends seems a reasonable working hypothesis. But they were not designed to be a set, not even at the potter's wheel, that is before they were 'painted'. And a bespoke commission of vases that are not quite a set but all made by the master, without any helpers on the decoration, seems unrealistic in economic terms, and vastly out of proportion with the economic standard exhibited by most Attic imports to Gela.

More likely, I think, would be that an order was made for large *lekythoi* and the owner/manager of the workshop cobbled together a good range of *lekythoi* that were painted by a particularly talented artist, who had decorated them with his individual figures—easier than multi-figure compositions—in his spare time, over a period of time, which might explain the variance both in size and shape. This group of *lekythoi* highlights his consistency in delivering vases decorated in a fine, refined style.

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## Abbreviations

ABV: Beazley, J.D. 1956: *Attic Black-Figure Vase-painters*, Oxford

ARV<sup>2</sup>: Beazley, J.D. 1963: *Attic Red-figure Vase-painters* (2nd edition), Oxford

BA: Beazley Archive Pottery Database: <https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk>

CVA: *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum*

Add<sup>2</sup>: Carpenter, T.H. 1989: *Beazley Addenda. Additional References to ABV, ARV<sup>2</sup> & Paralipomena* (2nd edition), Oxford



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