

Which of these painters work do you find more artistically pleasing and why? Discuss these pots and other works by both painters.

Exekias and the Amasis painter are renowned artists of their time, with well known pieces such as Ajax and Achilles playing a game and Dionysus sailing (both by Exekias) and the weavers, wedding procession and Dionysus and the two maenads (all by the Amasis painter).

The Amasis painter has set himself apart by portraying not only mythological scenes but also scenes from everyday life; the wedding procession and the weavers. The lekythos showing the weavers at work consists of eleven women; two at a loom, three weighing the wool, four spinning yarn, two folding cloth on a table and finally one overseeing the whole operation. There is no chronological order to the different activities.

The Amasis painter has attempted to show variation in the ages of the women, this is achieved by varying sizes of the women. Two small girls are at the loom whilst a lady sits pulling wool appears to be elderly in age as she is sitting down, larger than the other characters and has a slight hunched shape to her back. The space has been well filled by using all the elements of this process. Strands of wool hanging from their hands fill the gaps. The Amasis Painter has made them more aesthetically pleasing by making them wavy, it also makes it more realistic.

Although Exekias shows mythological scenes there are some everyday activities, for example Achilles and Ajax playing a game (black figure amphora). Even though Achilles and Ajax are great warriors they are playing a simple game. Exekias has paid attention to every single detail. The points of the spears are directed to the bottom of the handles, the handles go up and down and the shape follows through to the shields to each of the furthest sides of the field. Not only does this emphasise the shape of the handles but also shows the warriors ready to fight (in the battle of Troy) at any moment.

The superiority of Achilles has also been shown through small details. Achilles wears his helmet providing him with a greater height. The helmet fills the gap in the middle and brushes the boarder at the top. Also there are numbers leaving the heroes mouths, Ajax calls three whilst Achilles calls four insinuating that Ajax is loosing.

Not only does Exekias portray the characters personas but also a careful balance between them as they are in opposition. Both of their right legs precede the left, which is propped up on their toes. They also both play with their right arms and their spears rest on their left shoulders. As a result they appear in opposition as they are not facing each other.

The Amasis Painter also shows special occasions in the everyday lives of the ancient Greeks, for example the black figure lekythos showing a wedding procession. However I feel that not much attention has been paid to the detail. Even in comparison to other pots of the Amasis Painter. There is a simple regular pattern on some of the cloaks, making it plain. However other details have been added the bride holds her veil out with her left hand an artistic detail associated with weddings and also a space filler.

Both painter have approached the theme of Dionysus, The Amasis Painter depicts a more common scene of Dionysus and two maenads, whilst Exekias portrays the tale of Dionysus and the pirates.

Dionysus and the two maenads unlike other pots uses the whole field and has borders on the side of spirals giving the impression of shrubbery. Exekias on the other hand uses a tondo and fills the space. As a result of not having several friezes in the Amphora only three large figures fill the space. All the bodies are profile, Dionysus stands in the left facing right whilst the two maenads mirror him. We can tell it is a Dionysiac theme, as Dionysus holds a kantharos (a drinking cup) in his right hand and a wreath of ivy leaves around his head. Also both maenads wear ivy wreaths, hold a branch of ivy leaves and present Dionysus with wild animals. All of these items are strongly associated with this particular god.

Each of the character's garments have been carefully incised and each one is individual. However the material is not affected by the movement and is extremely regular and repetitive.

The tondo by Exekias has the impression of each feature flowing into others. The fluidity in the design emulates the use of the cup – drinking. The liquid would swirl and flow around the cup like the sensation Exekias was trying to portray. Once again Exekias' attention to fine detail has shown through. There are seven large clusters of grapes and seven slim dolphins. The ship on which Dionysus lounges has a small dolphin painted on the front, whilst the stern has been designed by the shape of a waterfall.

Overall I prefer the simpler but more detailed paintings of Exekias. The use of the black surrounding on the pot of Ajax and Achilles playing a game enhances the concentration depicted between the characters. Not only is he able to portray emotion but also include the design of the pot. IN the amphora the spears and shields subtly start and finish the handles and their backs follow the curve of the pot. In the tondo the cups use for drinking has been taken into consideration as Dionysus is associated with wine and when drinking from this particular cup the liquid would represent the sea.