

# The Leagros Group and the Mechanisms of Trade: Trademarks Revisited<sup>1</sup>

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This article is devoted to the study of a distinct group of letters, to their placement and their form as well as the manner they have been painted or incised: Trademarks on Athenian black figure vases of the late 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. Different models have been used, single marks, complex sets of marks, as well as combined marks and those added at various stages during the transport.<sup>2</sup> Those marks were the topic of two publications, by Rudolf Hackl in 1909 and by Alan Johnston in 1979, who arranged the marks into lists, resulting in a typology.<sup>3</sup>

In the following, I shall concentrate on one workshop, which has the advantage of combining the different typological strands. The comparison illustrates the different strategies with which the painters and traders prepared and carried out the transport. I chose the Leagros Group because of the surprisingly high number of trademarks<sup>4</sup> on its large vessels, hydriai and amphorae (smaller vessels were marked only occasionally).<sup>5</sup> The aim is to reconsider Johnston's suggestion of a direct collaboration between a specific painter and trader.<sup>6</sup> But to stop here would just rewrite Johnston's conclusions from a different angle.

My goal is rather to use the evidence for two purposes. The first point concerns the transfer of knowledge or: did painters in Athens know what their recipients in Etruria wanted? While much that has been argued on this topic, since solid conclusions can only be drawn from the two ends that are able to convey information: painters and traders.<sup>7</sup> A second field, at first glance a field for specialists, is that of attribution. As certain marks can be argued to indicate certain painters, this offers us a means to assign vases not yet classified: a method that moves beyond style. Groups or single painters would be more easily recognizable, and we would get a better idea of how many painters worked for the few potters, and of their relationship to each other.

This short contribution is part of a work in progress, which can only be realized by studying the originals. It already benefits from visits to museums and further visits will follow in the near future. A main reason for studying the objects in the museum is that only by looking at the original itself (and best by using a microscope) can the decision be made about the moment of incision, especially concerning pre-firing. Still, we profit from a change in publishing trademarks: instead of drawings<sup>8</sup> we now offer photographs.

In the following I shall introduce three networks that transported most of the large vases produced in the workshop of the Leagros Group. This group is the most productive workshop of the late 6<sup>th</sup> century in Athens. Their repertoire consists mainly of large vases, amphorae, and hydriai. Almost all of them were shipped from Athens to Etruria and almost exclusively to Vulci. As a whole, the Leagros Group is not difficult to define.

At least two potters produced the vessels and demanded a certain form of ornament: the Lea Potter was the main potter and the one exclusively employing painters of the group, and requested palmettes; on the other hand, the Club-foot Potter asked for lotus buds.<sup>9</sup> Shape and ornament work as a corporate design which both potters and painters prefer in order to promote their artistic personality.<sup>10</sup> This creates many problems in defining individual painters.<sup>11</sup> Beazley limited himself to just a few, the most prominent being Painters S and A whose vases will be the core subject of the following presentation.



Fig. 1: Kalpis Munich, Antikensammlungen SH 1729.



Fig. 2: Kalpis Würzburg, Martin von Wagner Museum der Universität L 323.

I would like to start with one clear example. The feet of two kalpides in Munich and Würzburg (figs. 1. 2),<sup>12</sup> which were both found in Vulci; they have matching marks (two marks each), and the IA is obviously incised by the same person while the second sign seems to differ a bit. Both marks have been added after the firing of the vase, incised with different instruments and to different depths. Two hands writing the same mark indicate a company with “employees”. The two trademarks indicate that these two vessels were transported by two traders and/or companies; the sequence of the two, however, is difficult to establish. A look at the vases themselves shows us that they share shape and ornament; they are the work of the same potter and painter, thus confirming Johnston’s thesis of a direct collaboration between painter and trader.

Let us now turn to the first of the three networks, that of the S Painter. The feet of two hydriai in Munich and London, respectively, show the same sequence of marks (figs. 3. 4).<sup>13</sup> With regard to the writing and the depth of incision, the following go together:  $\Lambda$ HKY:K $\Theta$ : $\Lambda$ H – the deltoid sign – the strokes and the neighboring  $\Lambda$ H. They give first a vase-name, probably lekythoi; Ionic numerals were confirmed by the same number of strokes, and finally  $\Lambda$ H, in two versions. The clean-cut edges of the signs show that the sequence of the first marks, including the first  $\Lambda$ H, have been incised prior to firing. The second, bigger  $\Lambda$ H, however, is incised in a deeper manner that left



Fig. 3: Hydria Munich, Antikensammlungen SH 1717.

more ragged edges, which means that it was added at a later point.<sup>14</sup> It certainly serves as a countermark<sup>15</sup> and proves the delivery of the vase to trader ΑΗ. The set of marks thus proves that the sequence of traders was clear from the beginning, even when the vase was still in the workshop. Two traders were involved, namely ΑΗ and the one using the monogram of the deltoid sign.<sup>16</sup> This close connection is further confirmed by the foot of another hydria in the British Museum whose Α of the ΑΗ has been used as the top of the triangle of the deltoid mark.<sup>17</sup>

So, what at first looks like a complicated system, in fact is quite simple and straightforward. According to the information from the feet of the above-mentioned large hydriai, two traders organized the transport to Etruria. But not only hydriai served as



Fig. 4: Hydria London, British Museum 1843,1103.84 (B 320).

media for this set of information but also belly amphorae (fig. 5).<sup>18</sup> Neck-amphorae provided the basic mark  $\Lambda H$ <sup>19</sup> or  $\Lambda H$  and the deltoid sign,<sup>20</sup> thus not necessarily all the information but obviously enough to secure the transport. The small vases, at least the lekythoi, do not seem to have been marked, other than the lids of neck-amphorae: they carried the deltoid sign on the underside.<sup>21</sup> This one mark was seemingly needed to confirm their belonging to the neck-amphorae of this painter, the more so since lids for neck-amphorae were produced at this time in one shape (“Einheitsform”).

To conclude, we have collected evidence for a network that transported master vases (hydriai and belly amphorae) with the complete set of information together with an assortment of smaller vases. This was done in two steps from the workshop to Vulci as indicated by the traders  $\Lambda H$  and the deltoid sign. The marking in the workshop proves that it was here where people prepared the shipping; if we were allowed to speculate, we would imagine that the master vase was laid on the shelf with the underside of its foot visible, and its accompanying vases put next to it.

That it was the workshop of Painter S, so-called and established by Beazley, is evident by the conformity of the hydriai in terms of shape and ornament. The combination of features of potting, ornament, as well as its mark stress that more vases have to be at-



Fig. 5: Amphora Type A Munich, Antikensammlungen SH 1413.

tributed to this workshop.<sup>22</sup> Trader  $\Lambda\text{H}$  additionally transported the hydriai painted by Phintias, whose vases travelled with a number of  $\text{XY}$ .<sup>23</sup> Phintias was one of the main painters in the workshop of the Pioneer Group, thus adding to the growing evidence for a strong connection between these two workshops.<sup>24</sup>

A second network transported vases by Painter A.<sup>25</sup> Several marks appear in different assemblages (figs. 6. 7), namely the dipinti  $\text{ME}$  and  $\text{AP}$ , as well as the graffiti  $\text{ME} - \Delta - \Delta\text{F}$  (as ligature) -  $\Sigma - \text{A}$ .<sup>26</sup> The  $\text{A}$  is certainly the best visible letter as it is deeply incised. What is striking is the consistent writing: in almost all cases it is done with a curved line. This letter consistently has rougher edges than the other marks and has therefore been incised later than those, and was the last added to the sequence.<sup>27</sup> I take this as an indication that this mark probably stands for an Etruscan, as suggested by A. Johnston and J. de la Genière.<sup>28</sup> This trader would have taken care of the last part of the transport to Etruria, and finally to Vulci. The dipinto is painted in black glaze, the same material used for the decoration that marks the opposite end. This has undoubtedly been added by somebody in the workshop, probably the painter himself, certainly pre-firing. As in the case of the workshop organization of Painter S, it de-



Fig. 6: Hydria Munich, Antikensammlungen SH 1708.

clares that the marked vase should be assigned to traders ME or AP respectively, the person who would eventually collect the piece. It is worth noting in this context that both abbreviations were also marked as graffiti, thus confirming that the vase has not been custom-made but chosen at some later point. This point seems to be when it was still in the workshop judging from the light incision with no apparent rough edges on the letters.

ME is most interesting because in two cases, the E has been combined with a  $\Delta$ . A. Johnston took this to be an over-incision;<sup>29</sup> in the case of Munich SH 1708 I disagree.<sup>30</sup> My argument would be that there is no intention to destroy the lower mark as is the case on a hydria in Leiden.<sup>31</sup> There several horizontal strokes covering the  $\Delta$ F, part



Fig. 7: Hydria London, British Museum 1837,0609.48 (B 314).

of the system of Painter A, in order to replace it with the mark BY: this is an interesting process, to which I will return. Both the marks ME and  $\Delta$  are furthermore characterized by their shallow incision, contradictory to the other marks with their deeply cut letters and rough edges; this supports the assumption of early marking. All other marks must have been incised later and therefore stand for the traders who covered the way from Athens to Vulci.

In comparison with the system of Painter S, there are similarities and differences. Again, vessels are marked in the workshop or just a bit later through dipinti or graffiti. The transport starts with two names – ME and AP – and from there takes a different way since several traders are involved:  $\Delta$  –  $\Delta F$  –  $\Sigma$ . If we accept this compilation as the network of Painter A, whose vases are the work of the Lea Potter and are decorated with palmette chains hanging upside down, further vases belong in this workshop.<sup>32</sup> One example is the hydria Munich SH 1708, which had been assigned by Beazley to the heterogeneous group of the Painter of Vatican 424.<sup>33</sup>

The third and last network is once more different. Mostly, it has single marks – as  $\Lambda E$  or BY – that indicate just one trader who acquired the vases on the market. In this case, the marks were added sometime after the firing process (since they have rough edges),





Fig. 8: Hydria Munich, Antikensammlungen SH 1719.

and were then shipped to their place of destination. The  $\Lambda E$ -Hydriai (fig. 8)<sup>34</sup> share the shape – they all are the work of the Lea Potter – and the ornament, a chain of palmettes alternately hanging and standing, with an inserted ivy leaf. In Beazley’s lists, these vases ended up in different groups, on the basis of stylistic criteria. If we, however, take shape, ornament and trademark as defining elements, the vases all belong together. The BY-hydriai (fig. 9)<sup>35</sup> are the work of two potters and therefore display two systems of ornament. Louvre F 302 proves that traders  $\Lambda E$  and BY occasionally worked together. The fact that vases are in danger of ending up in the wrong shipload is evident in the case of the hydria in Leiden that we have already seen. A third trader,  $\Pi$ , is involved in this network, through cooperation with BY. Therefore, single traders transport vases of



Fig. 9: Munich, Antikensammlungen SH 1715.

this painter who works for two potters, single traders who only occasionally cooperate. Their relationship to the workshop is more casual than in the networks of Painters S and A.

In conclusion, all three networks have confirmed Alan Johnston's thesis of a link between painter and trader, with different levels of intensity. For the first two networks, there are direct traces of traders ordering or choosing their commodities in the workshop. This enabled an intensive exchange of information, in both directions, with traders acting as agents. The painter could get to know what his recipients in Vulci would prefer, in terms of topic and composition, and he could relay to his potter what shapes they favored.

These different kinds of networks invite us to review questions such as commissions, or at least to think about the extent of influence traders and networks could take. Trading networks as well as workshops matter. This has been a first insight into the workshop of the Leagros Group. More networks have to be studied, and more letters and signs have to be scrutinized in order to get the whole picture of the export of these commodities to Etruria. In a second step these abstract networks have to be translated into the world of actual trade, with the aim to substantiate the process of transport.<sup>36</sup>

### Notes

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<sup>2</sup> Kreuzer 2017, pl. 78.

<sup>3</sup> R. Hackl, *Merkantile Inschriften auf attischen Vasen*, in: *Münchener archäologische Studien. Dem Andenken Adolf Furtwänglers gewidmet* (Munich 1909) 5–106; Johnston 1979. See also the important additions in Johnston 2006, particularly for the overall picture of “Trademarks, Trade and Economy” on p. 28–33.

<sup>4</sup> Over two-thirds of the vases of this group, according to Johnston 1974, 142. For the group see ABV 354–391; Kreuzer 2017, 81–82, for the trademarks see Johnston 1979, 45 and types 5E, 8E, 9E, 10E, 11E, 17E, 24E, 1F, 2F and 9F.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. the oinochoe Altenburg 209: BAPD 351235; CVA Altenburg (1) pl. 20, 6; Johnston 5E, 15. Many thanks to S. Reim for providing a photograph.

<sup>6</sup> Johnston 1979, 45.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the remark by Johnston 2006, 28.

<sup>8</sup> As for example in the early volumes of the CVA for the Munich Antikensammlungen, CVA Munich (1) for the black figure belly amphorae or CVA Munich (5) for the early red figure hydriai.

<sup>9</sup> Kreuzer 2017, 82.

<sup>10</sup> The neck-amphora add a second type of this corporate design by using a specific form of handle ornament, see E. Kunze-Götte, *Ornament und Werkstatt*, in: M. Bentz (ed.), *Vasenforschung und Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, Beih. 1 CVA Deutschland* (Munich 2002) 97–110.

- <sup>11</sup> B. Kreuzer, Töpfer und Maler, Klasse und Gruppe, in: S. Schmidt – N. Eschbach (eds.), *Töpfer Maler Werkstatt*, 7. Beih. CVA Deutschland (Munich 2016) 96–106.
- <sup>12</sup> Munich SH 1729: BAPD 302893; Kreuzer 2017, pl. 79, 2 and Würzburg L 323: BAPD 302899.
- <sup>13</sup> Munich SH 1717: BAPD 302031; Kreuzer 2017, pl. 78, 4 and London, BM 1843,1103.84 (B 320): BAPD 302044; Johnston 2F, 51 fig. 11h; 14F, 13.
- <sup>14</sup> If indeed after firing or just late in the process of drying remains open.
- <sup>15</sup> Johnston 1979, 222.
- <sup>16</sup> The foot of the hydria Stockholm 1968.123 further underlines the strong coherence by writing together LH and the deltoid mark: BAPD 302016; Johnston 1979, 153 2F, 44; C. Scheffer, *Two late Attic black-figured vases*, *MedelhavsMusB* 11, 1976, 32 fig. 5–6.
- <sup>17</sup> London, BM 1837,0609.49 (B 313): BAPD 301996; Johnston 1979, 2F, 43; for further examples see Johnston 1979, 221. Again, the marks have been incised in the same way – in terms of handwriting and depth of incision.
- <sup>18</sup> As Munich SH 1413: BAPD 302080; CVA Munich (1) p. 30; Johnston 1979, 2F, 52.
- <sup>19</sup> Johnston 1979, 2F, 3–5.
- <sup>20</sup> Johnston 1979, 2F, 12–14.
- <sup>21</sup> Johnston 1979, 3F 2–4.
- <sup>22</sup> As Munich SH 1716: BAPD 302020; Kreuzer 2017, pl. 78, 3.
- <sup>23</sup> Munich 2421 and 2422: BAPD 200126. 200127; CVA Munich (5) p. 17 and 15, as well as London, BM E 159: BAPD 200130; Johnston 1979, 2F, 34–36.
- <sup>24</sup> The same mark on the amphora of type A by the Leagros Group London, BM B 1837,0609.47 (B 158: BAPD 302100; Johnston 1979, 24E, 3 and fig. 10), and the pelike by Euphronios Rome, Villa Giulia: Johnston 1979, 24E, 10; CVA Rom, Villa Giulia (4) p. 21.
- <sup>25</sup> Johnston 1979, types 9E – 11E.
- <sup>26</sup> Kreuzer 2017, pl. 77, 2–4. 6; 78, 6; 79, 4.
- <sup>27</sup> These marks provide rare examples of writing along the road, by the trader himself or a member of his crew. This is opposed to all the marks that have been or seem to have been added in the workshop. Cf. also Johnston 1974, 144.
- <sup>28</sup> Johnston 1979, 211; J. de la Genière, *Quelques réflexions sur les clients de la céramique attique*, in: M.-C. Villanueva Puig et al. (eds.), *Céramique et peinture grecques. Modes d'emploi. Actes du colloque international Paris 1995 (Paris 1999)* 419; Johnston 2006, 28.
- <sup>29</sup> See Johnston 1979, 210 (11E, 21). 221.
- <sup>30</sup> Munich SH 1708: BAPD 302000; Kreuzer 2017, pl. 77, 2.
- <sup>31</sup> Leiden PC 33: BAPD 302052; Johnston 1979, 5E, 21 and 11E, 48 pl. 19.
- <sup>32</sup> Munich SH 1712 (BAPD 302029; Kreuzer 2017, pl. 77, 6) shares the marks (in different handwriting) and the palmette ornament (in different style) with the hydria SH 1713, a work of the Rycroft Painter (Kreuzer 2017, pl. 76, 4). SH 1712 and NI 9818 (BAPD 351199; Kreuzer 2017, pl. 78, 6), have, according to the A-mark, been transported by the same Etruscan trader as the previously mentioned vessels painted by Painter A. Furthermore, SH 1712 shares the same marks, the A and Z, with SH 1710 (Kreuzer 2017, pl. 77, 4). 1712 and 9818, however, complicate the picture because of their ornamental decoration: the palmettes differ in their direction from Painter A.

<sup>33</sup> ABV 359. 360, 5.

<sup>34</sup> See Johnston 1979, 17 E; all vases of the late 6<sup>th</sup> century are products of the Leagros Group, e.g. Munich SH 1714 and SH 1719: BAPD 302061 and 302008; Kreuzer 2017, pl. 78, 1 and 78, 5, in different handwriting.

<sup>35</sup> Johnston 1979, 5E, the overwhelming number being products of the Leagros Group. For the two potters, see Munich SH 1702 and SH 1715: Kreuzer 2017, Beilage 15, 2 and 22, 1; pl. 34, 5. 6 and 46, 3. 4. For the marks see Kreuzer 2017, pl. 76, 6 and 78, 2. The mark supports the attribution of the hydria London, BM 1837,0609.61 (B 306): BAPD 302063, assigned by Beazley to the Antiope Group I (ABV 365, 68) and by H. Bloesch to the Club-foot Potter (Bloesch Archive, Zurich), supports the attribution to the same group as SH 1715 as suggested on the basis of shape and ornament: Kreuzer 2016, 102.

<sup>36</sup> The remarks concerning stowing and packaging on board of the ship by Johnston 1974, 143 fn. 1 could be a starting point.

### Image Credits

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### References

#### **Johnston 1974**

A. W. Johnston, *Trademarks on Greek Vases, Greece & Rome 71*, 1974, 138–152.

#### **Johnston 1979**

A. W. Johnston, *Trademarks on Greek Vases* (Warminster 1979).

#### **Johnston 2006**

A. W. Johnston, *Trademarks on Greek Vases. Addenda* (Oxford 2006).

#### **Kreuzer 2017**

B. Kreuzer, *CVA München (19)* (Munich 2017).